

# Edlesborough Parish Plan



## The EDaN Project (Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall) July 2008

'Now this (plan) is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Winston S. Churchill - after the battle of El-Alamein, 1942

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**Front cover photo**: Looking west across Edlesborough (village green in centre) and Northall to the top right of the picture. (*Photo courtesy of Dave Brown - member of London Gliding Club*) For aerial photo of Dagnall, please see page three.



The county signs are far more impressive than the village name signs (see later) This one is on the A4146 approaching Dagnall from the south

## Acknowledgements and thanks

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#### The Parish Plan Steering Group:

Pat Bender, Kathy Bovington, Elizabeth Braiden, Adrian Bush, Karen Coppen, Ceri Davis, Kathryn Day, Tony Denson, Richard Dorrance, Richard Evans, Canon Malcolm Grant, Vicky Lee, Tim Sanders, Steve Thurgood, Robert Tigg, Alan Williams\*, James Wright, Christine Yates, Mick Yates. (*\*Indicates Parish Councillor*)

#### Parish Plan writing team:

Elizabeth Braiden, Richard Dorrance, Alan Williams, James Wright.

#### Members of the Action Teams:

Who are too numerous to mention but thanks to all who have and are giving their time to *make things happen* and to those who completed the questionnaire and gave us such a good and valuable response.

#### **Terms of reference**

The terms of reference for the Parish Plan Steering Group are available to view on the Edlesborough Parish Council website. www.edlesborough.gov.org

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#### Schools

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Finally, our thanks to any other helpers and supporters we may have omitted to mention. Our sincere apologies to anyone we have missed out.

## Foreword by Chairman of the EDaN Project Steering Group

Early in 2007, Edlesborough Parish Council organised a series of open meetings to explore the possibility of producing a Parish plan. Following these meetings, a number of local residents and local business people formed a Steering Group to take this project forward with initial funding from the Parish Council, Bucks Community Action and D.E.F.R.A.

The plan covers all the villages of the parish viz. Edlesborough Dagnall and Northall hence the name of the EDaN Plan was born. The Steering Group comprises 20 individuals who have contributed their time and other resources to get us to this point. We also have a mailing list of key supporters, not least of whom are members of the Parish Council, together with others who have given us practical support over the past year or more.

Please read the document in full to appreciate the views of our community on current and future aspects of life in our parish. We have done our best to represent them fairly in this plan. The good news is that people here appreciate greatly the rural life in our villages and want to work to retain the village environment. The plan as written (see pages 14-35 of this document) focuses mainly on the current and future issues, that if implemented would enhance our satisfaction further.

It is important to recognise that though this Plan is an important milestone in the evolution of our parish it will only have real value if the actions are implemented.

The Parish Council has approved the plan and the job now is to 'get it done'. With your continued support and a few more volunteers, it is within our grasp! Please join us - our contact details are at the end of the Plan.

Alan Williams

Alan Williams Chairman - EDaN Project Steering Group



Dagnall Village aerial view

## Introduction

Parish Plans were announced in the year 2000 as a "Rural White Paper" which set out the Government's plans for the countryside. They were created as components of the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages initiative, now re-named as Community Led Appraisals.

In Buckinghamshire, each parish has been encouraged to consult local residents and compile a plan recognising successes for the area, as well as areas for improvement. The goal is to achieve socially and economically active communities that address their own priorities and are equipped to shape their own future. County and District Councils are, in part, measured on the local initiatives in their overall plans.

Our objective here is twofold. First, to provide all residents and local businesses with information about the EDaN Project proposals and what has been done so far.

Second, to provide information to those organisations that can provide us with support to bring the various projects to fruition.

This Parish Plan is intended to provide parishioners with a better sense of community and awareness of how they can contribute as individuals.

The EDaN Plan:

- Identifies the features and local characteristics people value
- Identifies local problems and opportunities
- Spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future
- Informs the Parish Council and other local Government bodies of the needs of our community
- Prepares a plan of action to achieve this vision

The process has given all residents and businesses of the parish the opportunity to have their say and become more involved in the life of the village.

Based on the responses to the questionnaire, projects have been defined to address the main themes. Some issues cross more than one project team - we have tried to address the relationships and priorities in the definition of each team. For example, the safety of cyclists and pedestrians may be addressed in separate cycle-ways, new footpaths and reductions in speed. Each of these is in a separate project, as they are deemed important in their own right. Successful implementation of each of the projects will have a multiplied benefit as a result.

Our parish has added challenges in that we are on the border of two other counties and a different police authority. Our postal headquarters is in another county (Bedfordshire) and the nearest large hospital (Luton) is outside our Primary Care Trust area.

Over time, the historic boundary of Buckinghamshire has been overlaid with other organisational administrative boundaries that were set up without regard to county boundaries. Our parish lies within a different government strategic planning area (South Eastern) from our neighbouring counties and yet another area (Milton Keynes and South Midlands) regarding government growth areas! As such, this presents us with additional challenges, as we have to work with several authorities to achieve our objectives; but ones that we are happy to accept.

The Steering Group was established to develop the Parish Plan and to work with the individual project action teams through to implementation. The Plan is intended to cover a period of 5-10 years. Part of the Steering Group's role going forward will be to keep the focus on the actions and to ensure their continued relevance. From time to time, the plan will be updated to reflect the current situation and will be reviewed with the Parish Council.

Finally, even before the formal publication of this Plan, information collected from a number of sources has been used as input to the development of Buckinghamshire's rural strategy.

## Location and geography

The Parish of Edlesborough is situated at the foot of the Chiltern Hills in the County of Buckinghamshire and comprises three separate villages all in the Vale of Aylesbury. The parish boundary has borders with Bedfordshire to the east and north and Hertfordshire to the south.

The eastern end of the 85mile (137Km) long Ridgeway National Trail is close to the parish at the historic site of lvinghoe Beacon and the historic Icknield Way (B489) road from Dunstable.

The largest village in the parish is Edlesborough. Northall lies approximately 1.5 miles to the northwest along the A4146 and Dagnall 2.7 miles to the south east, again on the A4146. Dagnall, it should be noted, lies within an area designated as a 'Chilterns area of outstanding natural beauty' (green shaded area on map) and consequently has different planning regulations from the other two villages.

The parish is located approximately 14miles (22.5Kms) by road east, northeast of Aylesbury, 9 miles (14.5Kms) north of Hemel Hempstead and 4miles (6.5Kms) west Dunstable.

The Parish is approximately 5 miles (8Kms) long and 1.5 miles (2.4Kms) across at its widest point. The A4146 passes through the entire length of the Parish from Dagnall through Edlesborough to Northall with most of the population living to the east of this road.

This 'geographic spread' of the three villages presents a particular challenge to ensure a cohesive parish plan to benefit all of the communities. The Steering Group has always tried to ensure this point is kept in mind when formulating recommendations, plans and proposals.



Map by courtesy of Buckinghamshire County Council Mapping Department

The name **Buckinghamshire** is Anglo Saxon in origin and means *the district (scire) of Bucca's home. Bucca's home* refers to Buckingham in the north of the county, and is named after an Anglo-Saxon landowner. The county has been so named since about the 12th century; however, the county itself has existed since it was a subdivision of the kingdom of Mercia (585–919).

## A brief overview of the three villages in the Parish (History, demographics, amenities and character of village)

The three villages have a long and considerable history. What is presented here is just a flavour of what is documented elsewhere.

The names of our three villages have meanings derived from old English:

- Edlesborough means 'Eadwulf's beorg' i.e. 'hill or barrow of a man called Eadwulf'. (The church of St. Mary the Virgin stands high on a mound or small hill).
- **Dagnall** derives from the old English *Dagganheale*, meaning 'nook of land belonging to a man called Dagga'
- Northall means 'nook of land in the north

In 1801, the population of the parish of Edlesborough was 997 and whilst it doubled in the 1870's, it fell back to 1117 by the year 1951. However, there was a dramatic increase over the next 40 years from 1334 inhabitants in 1961 to 2754 for the three villages in the parish by 2001, an increase of 106% resulting from several major housing developments. Since 2001, the population has increased slightly with for example 15+ new houses built in Northall, and some 'infill' development in Edlesborough.

In 2004 the total parish population was made up as follows: Edlesborough 1852, Dagnall 511 and Northall 397 making a parish total of 2760 inhabitants.









## How the Total Population of Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall has changed between the years 1801 to 2001

**Edlesborough,** once part of the Bridgewater estate is now primarily a residential village. The majority of the community is located to the east of the A4146 road that links it to the other two villages.

The history of Edlesborough dates back to the times of the Roman occupation and it was of some importance in the Middle Ages by the fact that in 1332 the Assizes of the county were held in Edlesborough. Today, the history is very evident in two large structures. The beautifully restored 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Tythe Barn in the High Street now offers prestige office accommodation and the church of St. Mary the Virgin dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century that sits atop a large mound and is visible as a landmark from afar. Unfortunately, the church is no longer in regular use due to its condition. The fabric of the church is now maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust. The churchyard however is maintained by the Parish Council at a cost of approximately £4,000 per annum. There is both a Methodist Church in the High Street and a Baptist Church. The Parish Council are also making efforts to improve access to the churchyard.

The village was served by five public houses but over the past 25 years this has reduced to two, The Bell, located opposite St. Mary's church and The Travellers Rest (now part of the Vintage Inns chain) which operates mainly as a restaurant.



Edlesborough Church the core of which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century with many additions in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries Edlesborough has a large village green, perhaps one of the largest in England and referred to by some villagers as 'the jewel of the village' (see cover photograph). The village green has a cricket pitch, football pitch, two tennis courts, a basket ball net, small playground for young children and a small brick pavilion erected in the early 1980's to replace a very tired WWII army style wooden hut.

Lady Marion Alford the Countess of Bridgewater founded Edlesborough School in 1849. Located in the High Street it offers co-educational places for children in the age range 4 to 11. The school has expanded over the past 20 years to accommodate the increase in population and now has approximately 270 pupils from Edlesborough and surrounding villages.



Edlesborough School – expansion has been mostly at the rear of the original buildings pictured above

The village 'Memorial' Hall, which is maintained by the Parish Council, is over 105 years old. It had a major refurbishment in 2007 with new floor foundation with hardwood covering and redecoration internally and externally. The hall is highly used by the villages for a large variety of meetings and private functions as well as providing accommodation for the 'under 5's pre-school' group. The village halls in Dagnall and Northall are owned and run by the village hall management committees and maintained through rental charges and other fund raising or donations.



Edlesborough Memorial Hall - June 2007 after refurbishment internally and externally.

The village has several historic buildings including the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Tythe Barn in the High Street and a number of well maintained thatched cottages. The oldest of which is believed to date from the 1500s.



Edlesborough Tythe Barn dates from 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century and was in use as a farm building up until the early 1980s when it was converted into prestige offices.

Edlesborough has a small shopping centre that comprises general stores with an integrated sub Post Office and a long established and well known combined electrical goods, bicycle and carpet shop run by the Janes family since 1948. The family had a shoe shop from the 1890s. The village also has a florist, a hairdresser,

a small café, two estate agents and a company making weathervanes, automatic gates and decorative metal products. There is a small private garage, Edlesborough Autos, offering MOT tests and servicing and on the A4146 a used car sales company, NMJ Motorhouse.

On the outskirts of Edlesborough at Sparrow Hall Farm, there is a small business centre with units occupied by a diverse range of companies including a quality furniture store, a children's book publisher and an archery shop. The village also has a variety of other small businesses, some operating from private homes, many of which advertise in the parish magazine 'Focus' distributed monthly to all households and businesses. In Slicketts Lane, there is the 'Arts and Crafts' shop; run for over 40 years by Carrie Lovell who with Beryl Wagstaff published a booklet in the mid 1970's titled 'The Romance of Edlesborough' that includes Carrie's poetry and local history.

There is also a busy modern surgery with four doctors, nurses and an associated dispensing pharmacy plus a dental practice all in the same premises.



Edlesborough Church viewed from Sparrow Hall Farm Business Centre on the outskirts of the village



**Dagnall** village lies to the south of the parish and like Edlesborough, many of the newer properties lie to the east of the A4146.

Local resident Geoff Spencer has published much of the history of Dagnall. His booklet 'A history of Dagnall' is available from Dagnall School with profits donated to the school.

Dagnall has had a variety of names. In the 12th century, it was Daganhalle, in the 13th century Dagehal and by the 15th century Dakenhald. At the compilation of the Doomsday book, it formed part of Eddinberg (Edlesborough) in the Yardley Hundreds now part of the Cottesloe Hundreds.

By 1664 part at least of Dagnall had passed to John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, and from this date descended through the Earls and Dukes of Bridgewater to the 3rd Earl Brownlow who was Lord of the Manor until his death in 1921.

Writing in the mid 19th Century the Reverend W H Kelke said this about Dagnall:

"Towards the southern extremity of the parish of Edlesborough and about a mile off the Icknield Way is a large hamlet called Dagnall, containing four or five hundred inhabitants. As seen from the neighbouring eminence, this hamlet has a picturesque and romantic appearance. Farmhouses and cottages, many of them being of early date appear scattered over an undulating well-wooded valley, formed by a circuitous course of the Chiltern Hills".

The Ashridge Estate and the 'Straw Hat Industry' of Dunstable and Luton dominated the working lives of the people of Dagnall in the 19th Century. At the census taken in 1841, there were 75 houses in Dagnall housing 78 families with a total population of 382, the inhabitants principally employed in the straw plait trade.



Dagnall Village Church and School built by Lord of the Manor, Lord Brownlow in 1863

William Gadesden at his bake house in Dunstable Road Dagnall ceased trading and was demolished in 1965



At the end of the 1970's, there was a post office and shop as there had been since the census of 1881.

The post office closed in 1985 and the shop in 2000 and now 2 farm shops remain selling bread, milk, eggs, fruit, vegetables, and home produced pork. The village currently has one public house, The Red Lion and a shared church (Methodist and Anglican). Dagnall has a first school with places for up to 50 children who attend from aged four to seven when they transfer to a variety of other schools in the area including Edlesborough.



Dagnall Village School (on the A4146) for 4 to 7 year old girls and boys

The village hall is small and in much need of extension and upgrading, to meet current and future needs of the community. (See page 15 for village hall improvement projects).

Surrounding the village is farmland with views to lvinghoe Beacon and Ashridge forest to the west. The rolling natural landscape, sitting at the foot of the Chiltern Hills gives it status as a Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whipsnade Zoo borders Studham Lane on the eastern edge of the village.

There are some local businesses evolved from farm diversification including a livery yard, a paddock maintenance business, horsebox construction and repair specialist and B&H Autos a car and commercial vehicle repair and servicing company. Dagnall is poorly served by public transport, although this is under review. **Northall** village is a large rural hamlet with a population of over 400 located on the A4146 that it straddles for about half a mile in length to the north of Edlesborough. It has a thriving village hall with a new children's playground, a large Baptist chapel, and a public house 'The Swan'. Several older public houses have been converted into private houses. There used to be a petrol station, a school, a shop and two bakeries but these have all closed down. The village is surrounded by farmland. Several residents operate small businesses from their homes, some of which employ local people.

The village was formerly part of the Ashridge Estate of the Earls and Dukes of Bridgwater. It still has a few very high gabled cottages, with thickly latticed windowpanes, which are indicative of having been designed in the 19th century.

Although many of the 155 residential properties (2007 Electoral Role) are predominantly 19th century, there has been some infilling with new houses, most recently near the Swan Public House.

There are historical references to Northall going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its most notable claim to fame is that it was the home of Dick Turpin, the highwayman, who robbed stagecoaches as they passed near lvinghoe Beacon on the ancient Icknield Way at the foot of the Chiltern Hills.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of its inhabitants earned their money from making straw plait that supplied the hat-makers in Luton. It is said that the many plum (damson) trees in the village were used as a source of dye for the straw, although there are plausible alternative explanations unrelated to the straw plait industry.

The busy A4146 dominates the village, providing both access to amenities and also a source of nuisance due to the speed and

density of the traffic especially heavy lorries carrying landfill waste north then empty on their return.



The Swan pub in Northall on the A4146 at the corner of South End Lane

Unlike many villages in the County, Northall has retained a balanced distribution of ages with many families with young children living in the village alongside older generations. Indeed over a third of the households in the village have children living at home.

Many of the children attend school in Edlesborough until aged 11 and then transfer to others schools in either Wing or Aylesbury both of which involve a bus journey of 20-45 minutes.

In the 1801 census, Northall was approximately the same size as Dagnall and Edlesborough with 331 inhabitants in 66 houses, whereas the other villages in the parish have grown considerably, Northall is today the smallest of the three having only doubled in size in 200 years.



The A4146 in Northall in the days before heavy traffic



Some improvements with artistic inspiration in all the village road signs would be nice as part of village beautification!

## Community consultation and communication process – residents give their input

## Open days and village fetes.

We held four Open Day's during May and June 2007 covering the three villages at which residents and local businesses were invited to learn more about the EDaN Project, their village and most important give their input to the Parish Plan by placing suggestions on 'post-it' notes on display boards or ticking one they agreed with. This was the first major step in the consultation process and provided the input used to construct the survey questionnaire.



Residents place 'post-it' notes on boards with suggestions and issues in their village and the parish

In addition, the Steering Group had a table at the village fetes in Edlesborough and Dagnall to discuss the project and again solicit input from residents. All of this was analysed to form the basis of the questionnaire.

## The survey questionnaire and response - Autumn 2007

In late September 2007, an eight-page questionnaire was distributed to every household and local business by a team of volunteers.

The same team then collected the completed questionnaires about 2 weeks later. In some cases, multiple visits were made to ensure a high response rate. Their dedication proved rewarding with an overall response of 67.5%.

In summary:

- Over 1100 questionnaires distributed (One per household or business)
- Total response 743 (67.5%)
  - Edlesborough 481
  - Dagnall 150
  - Northall 99

(Approximately in proportion to households surveyed)

 300+ questionnaires had additional comments written at the back

Extra copies of the questionnaire were available on request to the Steering Group secretary and it was also posted on the Edlesborough Parish Council website for download and selfprinting.

The analysis was performed by inputting the data to an SPSS database that provided tabulated analysis. This saved many hours of laborious manual analysis.

## Keeping the residents informed – Focus magazine and Parish Website

To keep the residents informed about the progress and activities of the EDaN Project a short report is regularly published in the Focus (parish magazine) that is distributed monthly free of charge to each household.

The Edlesborough Parish Council website (www.edlesborough.gov.uk) provided a section for the Parish Plan EDaN Project where minutes of Steering Group meetings, details and photographs of open days and the presentation of results from the questionnaire have all been posted.

#### Questionnaire results feedback meetings

After sharing the results with the parish council in a special meeting, the Steering Group held six open meetings (two per village) in village halls during the period 29<sup>th</sup> February – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008, one on a Saturday morning and another on a weekday evening.

Over 150 people attended these meetings and they provided lively discussion on the results with further feedback and endorsement of the proposed issues for action planning.

At these 'presentation sessions', attendees were invited to put their name and contact details on lists as volunteers to join the EDaN Project Action Teams.



Example of village data presentations shown at EDaN Project Open Days



Attendees listen intently at EDaN Project results presentation in Edlesborough

At the presentation days, residents signed up as volunteers for EDaN Project Action Teams



## Parish priorities (EDaN Project Action teams)

In this section, we set out recommendations for action in or affecting the Parish of Edlesborough over the next ten years.

- Action: Describes the proposed initiative. These will result from the activities of the Action teams or by the authority responsible such as the Parish Council, AVDC or BCC etc.
- **Priority:** Specifies the importance of the issue to the community as expressed by the residents.

Priority 1 HIGH Critically important to the current and/or future well-being of the residents.
Priority 2 MEDIUM Highly important
Priority 3 LOW Important but not urgent

- **Partners and collaborations:** Describes who will be responsible for initiating this aspect of the Plan and who will be responsible for carrying out the action, if different. It also identifies collaborations that may be necessary to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Timescale:** Specifies the likely duration of a project For each project, detailed plans will support these outline indications.

Short-term:Now to 2 yearsMedium-term:2 to 5 yearsLong-term:5 to 10 yearsSpecific Timescale:has defined end date (e.g. Post Office<br/>retention project)Continuous process:Project that continues for the<br/>near future

## The projects are summarized in table format on pages 33-35.

## Specific issues to be addressed

The following pages provide a summary of the 'current situation', the 'survey results' and 'recommendations' for each of the specific issues that emerged from the questionnaire results.

Quotes in italics on pages 16-31 are taken from comments added to completed questionnaires.

The full results presentation is available on the Edlesborough Parish Council website and detailed results and respondents' comments from the questionnaires will be made available to each of the Action Teams. It is felt they are too detailed to include in this document but can be made available upon request.

During the process of identifying the top issues to address, a meeting was held between some members of the Parish Council and representatives of the EDaN Project Steering Group to identify the areas of responsibility and current activities of the Parish Council to ensure there was no duplication of effort.

This also ensured that EDaN Project Action teams could direct their efforts to support Parish Council activities and understand the priorities.

Recommendations are made for investigation, planning and execution by the Project Action teams.

The resource implications, especially financial, for each project need to be determined by the Project Action teams as part of their planning process.

Leaders of each Project Action team will be announced in Focus and posted on the Edlesborough Parish Council website (www.edlesborough.org.uk) as the teams are established.

## **Village Hall Improvements**

## **Current situation**

For **Northall**, plans have been submitted and approved and funding has been obtained to carry out the work. The plans are displayed on the notice board in the hall and were there when our village meetings took place. A new play area opened in May 2008.

In **Dagnall**, plans were proposed and circulated to villagers for comment long before the EDaN questionnaire was issued. The plans are largely unchanged but as yet no funding has been identified and plans have not been submitted for approval. A fundraiser has now been co-opted by the Village Hall Committee to restart the project.

## **Survey Results**

A number of households in both Dagnall and Northall identified village hall improvement as number 2 and number 5 respectively in their priorities for the future.

Recommendations (Priority: N/A, Timescale: Short)

- The **Northall** plans for a new porch, additional storage space and improved access are complete, funded by Section 106\* Amenity Contributions from developments at Kircutt Close and The Swan. No EDaN Project action is required in Northall.
- The Dagnall plans will be activated when funding is identified



New play area at Northall Village Hall opened in May 2008



Current Dagnall Village Hall located on Dunstable Road in the centre of the village (Extension plans are for the right hand side into the car park)



Northall Village Hall located in South End Lane off the A4146

\*Note: Section 106 Amenity Contribution payments are required from developers to be paid to the local Parish Council and must be used in the relevant village for sport and leisure amenities only.

## Youth facilities

## **Current situation**

The facilities for young people in the villages vary but are mainly focussed on specific interest areas e.g. Cubs/ Scouts or sporting activities such as football or tennis. There is a youth club for the under 12s in the Baptist Church in Edlesborough but nothing for older age groups. In Dagnall, there is a monthly 'chill out' at All Saints' Church for 11-16 year-olds. There is a perception that vandalism and anti-social behaviour are linked to there being 'nothing to do' for young people in the villages.

### Survey results

The provision of youth facilities ranked highly on the list of priorities for action by respondents to the survey (see appendix B). In Dagnall it ranked fifth, in Northall and in Edlesborough it ranked fourth. Many people in their comments linked the problems with some young people to the lack of a shelter or meeting place while others expressed concern that it would draw other young people into the villages.

"More and more teenagers congregate on the green at night during the summer. Give them something to do or somewhere to go."

"In our opinion anti-social and aggressive behaviour of our own local young people, is the biggest problem of concern currently in our village, and the provision of more equipment/facilities for them will not solve the problem."

*"I believe the facilities for our teens need improving - there isn't much for them to do safely - a well provided meeting place, well supervised would be great."* 

## Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Medium)

- Create youth shelters in each village (These must be lit)
- Establish a youth club for teenagers
- Consult local Police Community Support Officers on proposals for youth facilities (they have experience of other villages in the area)



Example of a Youth Shelter – modern style and open view



Another example in use in Milton Keynes – more traditional design

## Luton postcode impact

#### **Current situation**

Edlesborough and Northall have a Luton (LU) postcode, Dagnall has a Hemel Hempstead one (HP). There is a perception that the Luton postcode has an adverse effect on both house prices and the cost of property and car insurance. Perhaps more importantly there are key agencies such as the Police and the Fire Service who use postcodes to identify locations and associated responsibilities. These agencies have been known to dispute responsibility for a particular location – not something needed during an emergency!

#### **Survey results**

Parishioners were asked to give their level of satisfaction / dissatisfaction on eleven items, and were asked to say which three they most wanted improved. In Edlesborough more than 30% selected postcode as one of the three items for improvement, placing it a close third (behind visibility of police and anti-vandalism measures). In Northall, this item was chosen by a similar percentage of the village, though it was in fourth place, pavement maintenance being higher here (see appendix A).

Overall, levels of dissatisfaction were high, with three times as many being dissatisfied as satisfied in Edlesborough (252 and 82 respectively), and four times as many dissatisfied as satisfied in Northall (47 and 11 respectively).

"Why when we are in Bucks do we have LU6 postcodes?"

"Pine Road is in Bucks not Luton Beds."

*"I find the postcode aspect really annoying - telephone directories delivered do not always cover my county area."* 

"We really object to having a Luton postcode as it increases our car and home insurance premiums disproportionately as we feel we are miles from Luton. We also get annoyed that frequently we appear to be labelled as Bedfordshire with our postcode even though we live in Buckinghamshire."

**Recommendations** (Priority: Low-High, Timescale: Short to Medium)

- Investigate the possibility of changing the LU6 Postcode
- Work with the Post Office and Royal Mail to ensure that the correct county responsibility is used on locating software
- Work with Post Office, Royal Mail and County authorities to reclassify areas moved into Bucks (e.g. was part of Eaton Bray)
- Establish the true situation with home and car insurance companies to ensure that the villages are not penalised by having a Luton postcode

#### Important note for parish residents with LU6 and HP4 postcodes

If you are dialling 999 to request the emergency services you will be asked for your postcode where you live or where the emergency is. If this is in Edlesborough, Dagnall or Northall please ensure you tell the operator that, despite the LU6 or HP4 postcode your area IS covered by the Thames Valley Police!

(This information is from the Edlesborough Parish Council Website).

## Drainage (to prevent flooding)

## **Current situation**

Edlesborough and Northall are supplied with water and sewage services by *Anglian Water*. *Thames Water* supplies Dagnall.

In all three villages, the sewers are estimated to be between 35 and 60 years old, and were constructed before several major housing developments were built in Edlesborough (e.g. Good Intent, Jacksons Close, The Pastures, Swansons, Waterside and others). Perhaps more fundamentally, the population of Edlesborough has almost trebled (~600 to ~1700) since the sewer was installed. In Dagnall, the majority of the village suffers flooding following heavy rain and regular overflows of mains sewage have occurred.

In Edlesborough, the sewer is very badly designed, *(Anglian Water admit this)*, with a number of corners and junctions that are less than 90° and much of it is also relatively shallow. There are regular overflows of sewage in some areas. These problems tend to occur soon after heavy rain due to surface water entering the sewer, which it is not designed to carry. Anglian Water company are adamant that they have no responsibility for surface water, but have declined to investigate why rain water enters the sewer so quickly and in such great volumes.

The flooding in parts of Edlesborough in July 2007 was deep enough to go over the top of adult Wellingtons!



Essential footwear in parts of Edlesborough in 2007

In Northall, work was undertaken in April 2008 by the water company to clear the ditches and sewers in the area to prevent any repeat of the flooding experienced at the end of 2007. It is anticipated this work will solve the problems experienced in 2007.

### **Survey results**

Drainage problems and flooding were mentioned in general terms at the open day. The issues were only included in the questionnaire where priorities for the future were sought. 'Improve drainage to reduce flooding' was placed second overall (280/743), in Edlesborough and Northall. It was the top priority in Dagnall (69/150).

## Recommendations (Priority: Medium, Timescale: Short-Medium)

- Establish effective communications with Anglian Water and Thames Water companies
- Establish communications with other bodies to ensure adequate provision of surface and foul water drainage
- Create a programme of works with the appropriate authorities to correct weaknesses in the existing drainage systems



Dagnall floods at crossroads of A4146 and B4506 roads. Several other areas in Dagnall are also affected after heavy rain.

## Footpaths, pavements and cycle-ways



#### **Current situation**

For the purpose of this Plan, pavements and footpaths will be treated separately. Pavements are defined as paved footpaths running alongside roads. Footpaths are defined more broadly as tracks for pedestrians not necessarily paved, and generally not alongside a road.

All three villages have some pavements with some gaps; some very narrow ones; some too close to main roads; some poorly maintained, with overhanging branches and damaged surfaces. The greatest absence is along the A4146 in Northall - it is necessary to cross the road twice to walk down the village.

A network of footpaths already exists (see Parish Council signs or website for detail), though some are also bridle paths, and become very muddy and rough as a result. Some follow routes well away from roads, so may be regarded as less secure. There are no dedicated cycle ways.

## **Survey results**

Levels of dissatisfaction with pavement maintenance were high, especially in Northall. (Edlesborough – 33% dissatisfied; Dagnall – 44%, and Northall 57%). In both Dagnall and Northall, it was seen as the third (of eleven) most important aspect in need of improvement. In addition, there were areas where extending existing pavements was popular, and others where widening and improved maintenance were required, the former being most common in Northall and the latter in Dagnall. (Detailed analysis available for the action group.)

New footpaths and new cycle-ways were widely and strongly supported for four routes: Northall to Edlesborough; Dagnall to Edlesborough; Dagnall to Ringshall and Edlesborough to lvinghoe Aston.



"Northall needs better lighting and better footpaths on A4146."

"Footpath in Edlesborough is necessary regardless of nimbys."

"The footpath on the south side of Dunstable Road (Dagnall) has been reduced to single file because of lack of maintenance."

Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Medium)

- Extend, widen, and maintain pavements as required
- Improve the surface of footpaths to make them usable in all weathers
- Create cycle-ways to connect the three villages, (and lvinghoe Aston) and possibly away from the main road
- Promote new facilities to increase use (especially travel to and from school)

The above recommendations will be developed in close consultation with the Edlesborough School Travel Plan working party. (see Parish Council website under News & Campaigns).



## **Street lighting**

### **Current situation**

Everything exists ranging from no lighting at all, to some streets that are lit to town or city standards. Even considering only the main thoroughfares, there is a very wide variation. It is impossible to generalise except to draw attention to the variation. This may well be the root of dissatisfaction where it exists, in that people walk from a well lit area, to a less well lit street, and notice the contrast. In fact the contrast means that eyes have to accommodate to the change, which takes time.

The distance between streetlights has a bearing on signage relating to speed limits – for example, the use of reminder speed limit signs, and the use of painted roundels on the road surface are restricted (by Buckinghamshire County Council) to areas with sparse lighting. It may also be the case that cars drive more quickly in well-lit streets than in unlit ones.

## **Survey results**



When asked for levels of satisfaction with lighting in their village, 59% of those who expressed a view were broadly satisfied, with 41% holding the opposing view. Those living in Northall were least satisfied, with only 45% being satisfied.

When parishioners without street lighting in their street were asked for their views on this situation, 84 said that they were happy with it, 50 said they would like some lighting and 73 said that they would like lighting throughout their village.

For both questions (lit and unlit), respondents were asked to write in the names of streets they would like lit or improved. These answers paint a rather different picture, with approximately 300 comments added.

One in 5 (59) of these related to the inadequacy of the lighting in the High Street, Edlesborough. Pebblemoor and The Green were the next most frequent comments with 34 and 33 respectively. These added comments appear to express much higher levels of dissatisfaction than the questions. A further 38 commented on the generally poor levels of lighting. 23 comments related to the inadequacy of repair of existing lights, and only 7 of 300 comments related to any reduction in lighting (5 suggested switching lights off at midnight, or similar).

In Northall, twenty people added that the A4146 needed improved lighting. In Dagnall, 13 people wanted improvements to the A4146 lighting, and 11 wanted better lighting in Nelson Road.

"The stretch between the shops in Edlesborough and the village hall is very dark despite some sparsely placed street lights."

"Repairs need to be done more quickly.... out of order for 3 months."

"There are not enough lights in the village. I used to walk the village in the evening, I no longer feel safe to do so because of lack of lights."

## Recommendations (Priority: Medium, Timescale Short)

- Investigate further the potential for improving street lighting according to survey feedback and make priority recommendations to the Parish Council
- Investigate the impact of turning street lighting off after midnight

## Village beautification

#### **Current situation**

At the open days there were many improvement requests on the topics of bulb and tree planting, provision of more seating, floodlighting of Edlesborough Church, and general removal of litter. Edlesborough has a large village green, which was the subject of many positive comments at the open days, including 'the jewel in the crown'. There are currently 15 benches on the green, and some trees, principally on the perimeter. Edlesborough also has grass verges, with no bulb planting, except on the A4146 near Sparrowhall Farm entrance.

Dagnall has many grass verges, where there has already been extensive daffodil planting by the Village Hall Committee. It also has a roundabout, with no beautification but this represents an opportunity for improvement, (perhaps via local company sponsorship).

Northall has very few flowerbeds along the main road but there are several opportunities to improve the overall aspect of the village.

#### Survey results

Parishioners were asked to choose their top three of 16 possible priorities for the future. Beautifying of villages came third overall, and was chosen by about 38% of all respondents. It was third choice for both Edlesborough and Northall, and fourth in Dagnall.

Removal of litter was covered in a different question. Overall, 441 households were satisfied with removal of litter whereas 204 were dissatisfied. In priorities for improvement, it was low on the list for both Edlesborough and Dagnall, but in the middle (6<sup>th</sup> of 11) in Northall (see appendix A).

"There are many areas of land in the village which would benefit from landscaping and planting both permanently and seasonally."

"Beautifying the village to create a sense of pride."

**Recommendations** (Priority: High, Timescale: Short/Continuous)

- Plant bulbs, flowers and trees in key places
- Work with local farmers and Councils for sympathetic countryside maintenance
- Encourage villagers to take part in 'Best kept village' competitions
- Establish litter clean-up teams to meet regularly



The Travellers Rest pub and restaurant – Edlesborough at the junction of A4146 and B489 More floral decoration of this type in the villages would be desirable!

## **Domestic waste collection**

## **Current situation**

The management of waste in the county is a joint responsibility between the county and district councils. Aylesbury Vale is responsible for collection and Buckinghamshire County Council is responsible for providing sites for the disposal of waste. General household waste is collected weekly whilst plastic, can and paper waste is collected fortnightly and glass monthly. Green waste – mainly grass is collected weekly provided the waste is placed in special green bags provided by the council at a cost of £4.50 for 20 bags. In Edlesborough and Northall, bags are available for purchase from Sue Parker, in Dagnall it is Anne Thompson. However, there is no separate district collection for this so the bags are thrown into the general household waste compactor!

Before the survey, considerable attention was paid in the media to the problems created by the introduction of a bi-weekly household waste collection. In addition, Aylesbury Vale had announced that a new bin would be issued in 2008 for green waste. However, this has changed and the plan is now to have a joint collection of kitchen and green waste in the same new bin. Unfortunately, the County Council's plan to provide recycling facilities for this waste has been delayed and the new bins and collection cycle are not expected before 2010.

Aylesbury Vale District Council provides a skip (or freighter) at regular intervals for all forms of waste but this is usually heavily oversubscribed. Households need to take waste to the local household waste sites. However, the nearest site for Aylesbury Vale is a long way from the village.

**Note:** the issue of litter is being addressed under the project covering village beautification.

## Survey results

The overwhelming response from the survey feedback was that garden waste collections should be introduced. Eighty-five percent of all responses favoured this. On the subject of weekly collection, 87% of all respondents stated that the weekly collection must be retained and only 13% felt that they could cope with a fortnightly collection.

"With regard to general household waste collection, it should remain weekly and the size of the bins increased as the current small bins are totally inadequate."

"The introduction of garden rubbish collection is a great idea as my rubbish consists mainly of it and would reduce my household dustbin considerably. I am not in a position to take it to the tidy tip and the tidy tip for Edlesborough is about 14 miles away."

## Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Short)

- Clarify the current position of AVDC and Bucks CC plans for green waste and kitchen waste
- Campaign for the preservation of the **weekly** collection for household waste



Brown bins for kitchen/green waste of the type expected to be introduced by AVDC and BCC but when?

## Transport

## **Current situation**

The provision of buses to the three villages and outlying areas is poor. In part, we seem to suffer by being on the border of three counties and the links from this parish to the main centres of business and population are ignored. Car ownership in the parish is high partly reflecting the isolation of the villages from adequate public transport. There are no buses that link the villages of the parish and the frequency is so poor it can take more that 4 hours for someone to return to their village from a visit to the doctors. The nearest train stations are Tring, Leighton Buzzard Cheddington and Berkhamsted. However, there are no bus services from any of the three villages to these train stations so commuters need to drive.

Young people have to rely on parents to get to and from events in the evenings with the result that many young people are denied access to the facilities in the larger surrounding towns. The population of the parish is aging in line with national trends and it is likely that more facilities for older and disabled people will be needed. For example, the infrequency of a bus service to Luton and Dunstable Hospital is a concern.

## **Survey results**

Twenty percent of respondents indicated that they would be more willing to use buses if they were more frequent. Sixty-five respondents indicated that they would be willing to use a bus to Tring station if a service was provided.

Overall, an increase in passengers of 300% might be expected for existing routes if the services were improved. More cooperation and integration of transport facilities is required between Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire to enable the Parish to be integrated into the routes to the main towns of Aylesbury, Tring, Hemel Hempstead, Luton and Milton Keynes. To address some of the local needs we asked questions concerning community transport to cover some of the needs. The exact needs are still to be determined but could include any or all of the following:

- Dial-a-ride
- Mini-bus
- Private car volunteers

The good news is that 18 people indicated that they would be willing to be drivers while 78 people expressed an interest in using the facility.

*"I can get to Leighton Buzzard about twice a week but getting to the dentist/doctor or pharmacy for regular medicine by public transport is not practical as it would involve a wait of over 3 hours in Edlesborough for a bus back and it is too far for me to walk."* 

".... as I am over 70, my driving licence is subject to review every 3 years. My health is not too good and one day, perhaps soon, I will not be allowed to drive. I do not wish to leave my house but living in Northall will be very difficult, as I have no family to fetch & carry."

## Recommendations (Priority: Medium-High, Timescale: Short)

- Increase frequency of buses to key destinations
- Explore new routes
- Establish a community transport facility



## Traffic management/speed

## **Current situation**

The A4146 road passes through all three villages in the parish and all lie, in part, on the A4146 for a distance of 5 miles (8Kms).

The speed along this road varies from 60 mph as it passes houses near The Travellers Rest restaurant, where the A4146 intersects the B489, down to 30 mph through the villages of Dagnall and Edlesborough. Through the third village, Northall, the speed limit is currently 40mph.

Furthermore, the traffic on the A4146 rarely stays within the speed limits. This also applies to some local roads through the villages.

In the entire parish area there is only *one* speed camera (near Edlesborough church) and *one* VAS (approaching Northall from the north on the A4146)

Traffic volumes on the main A4146 have steadily increased due to a number of factors:

- A significant expansion of homes in and around the Leighton Buzzard area (especially in the past 2 years)
- M1 and A5 traffic delays due to road works on the M1
- More recently due to the opening of the Stoke Hammond bypass and the impact of the large waste lorries travelling to and from the landfill site at Newton Longville. Road signage encourages this traffic to use the A4146 rather than the A5 or the A41 that are designed for HGV traffic
- Our village roads (and we are forced to count the A4146 as a village road) are not wide enough in places for two HGV trucks to pass and vehicles mount the pavement to pass or to avoid a road traffic accident



Speed signs and 'gates' on A4146 approaching Dagnall from the south The entrance to Dagnall School is just 120metres (~130yards) on the right Vehicles often approach the bend at excessive speed and the school is close.

## **Survey results**

Over 50% of respondents supported action to implement some form of traffic calming on all the specified roads. The favoured methods of traffic calming are speed cameras and VAS devices. Few people were in favour of speed bumps or chicanes on the minor roads (with a recognition that these forms of control are not allowed for 'A' roads in Buckinghamshire).

In Northall 80% of respondents, want the speed reduced to 30mph. Overall, 64% of respondents thought that the absence of a restricted speed limit around The Traveller's Rest needed attention. The majority of those who sought a lower speed limit favoured 40mph with 18% feeling that 30mph is more appropriate.

"The most important improvement of life in Northall by far would be the lowering of the 40mph limit to 30mph and the policing of such a measure either by (speed) camera or more police presence."

"The speed of cars and motor cycles along Pebblemoor is beyond belief, someone will be killed but apparently this is the fact - someone has to be killed, not seriously injured like recently, ridiculous".

"The blind bend by the Tring Road houses linked to high vehicle speeds make this a treacherous road. The required new speed limit i.e. 40mph must start some distance before the houses on Tring Road".

Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Short)

- Enforce current speeds using VAS or similar systems
- Use 'Speedwatch'/ 'SID' facilities to train drivers to respect speed limits
- Campaign to *reduce* speed limits on selected roads
- Campaign with villages in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire to reclassify the A4146 to a 'B' road if appropriate (this road was the *B486* in the early 1970s)



Parish resident doing speed checks in Northall on A4146. Recommendation is to reduce the speed limit through Northall village from 40mph to 30mph to be consistent with Edlesborough and Dagnall.



Waste lorry travelling north on A4146 in 30mph zone close to Edlesborough Church, negotiating the bend where the road narrows at the brow of the hill.



Another waste lorry in 30mph zone on A4146 in Edlesborough and braking as it approaches the one and only speed camera in our Parish. (Travelling south just past The Bell public house)

## **Road safety**

## **Current situation**

The issue of speed is dealt with under a separate topic and as such is excluded from this project overview. Generally, the issue of road safety addresses the areas of safety related to individuals and particularly children in this project area. Residents raised three issues related to this topic when we canvassed opinion at our Open Days.

Safety in crossing the road for school children is one specific area of concern. Two of our villages are directly bisected by the A4146 and the speed of traffic is an issue in Northall where the current speed limit is 40 mph. However, the general speed limit of 30mph is rarely observed and this indicated a specific need to:

- Provide a safe means of crossing for children near their schools or near school bus stops.
- Provide safety barriers in the form of railings to protect the children from the traffic and the traffic from the children close to the school.

The above will be in cooperation with the Edlesborough School Travel Plan. (see Parish Council website News & Campaigns).

Our village roads have become a training ground for HGV drivers. No one is sure how this came about or what, if any, permissions were needed or sought. The result is a constant stream of large vehicles on our village roads driven by inexperienced drivers. This needs to be addressed to identify the potential safety issues to our residents.

## Survey results

Overall, approx 90% of responses approved of the provision of some form of controlled crossing at specific points in each village related to getting to schools or school buses.

Additionally 90% of respondents felt that railings should be provided at schools and school bus stops as an additional safety feature.

In the case of HGV trainees while 39% were in favour of banning them, 47% felt that they have to learn somewhere. The caveat that some households placed on this support was that they should avoid times at the start and end of the school day.

Recommendations (Priority: Medium-High, Timescale: Short)

- Erect safety railings at schools and school bus stops in the three villages
- Provide recommendations for safe crossings at schools and school bus stops
- Work with local HGV training companies to restrict operating times in and around the school locations



Peak time congestion in High Street outside Edlesborough School (on right near white van) At school start and finish times this creates a potential safety hazard.

## Parking



#### **Current situation**

At the open days, three areas of Edlesborough village were highlighted as having parking problems: the High Street close to the shops and Post Office; the doctors' surgery; and the car park off Pebblemoor. All of these affect households in all three villages, as the last potentially serves both the school and the playgroup.

The parking on the High Street serves a useful purpose, in that it reduces the speed of passing traffic. Cow Lane (close to the surgery) is very narrow. The parking area provided around the surgery building accommodates approximately 15 cars, though people who work in the surgery, the pharmacy and the dental practice probably take most of these. The doctors have no duty to provide parking for patients. There is a vacant piece of grass between the last houses on Cow Lane, and the Surgery area.

The car park off Pebblemoor is the responsibility of the Parish Council. At the start and end of the school day, and the playgroup sessions, the environs (Pebblemoor and the High Street) are full of cars, and quite a hazard for passing traffic and pedestrians. The car park is also widely used for events in the village hall, when the football club is in action, and during Edlesborough Autos' opening hours.

#### Survey results

Views were sought on both the frequency of use of each of the car parks, and the degree of difficulty encountered in finding a parking place. Edlesborough High Street near the shops is used with the greatest frequency with approximately three quarters of householders parking there in the month before the survey, many of them many times. Parking near to the doctors' surgery is also used by considerably more than half of all households responding, though less often. Two thirds of households never use the Pebblemoor car park. Success in finding a space is lowest at the surgery, with only 28% saying that they were usually able to find a parking space. The equivalent figure for the High Street is 49%, and that for the Pebblemoor car park is 60%.

While no questions were included about street parking close to Edlesborough School, this was the subject of some very strongly worded comments at the end of the questionnaire. These, without exception, expressed the view that parking caused a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, and caused an obstruction.

"The High Street is completely blocked pre and post school start and finish time in Edlesborough. I am shocked by how many mothers drive when they live in the village and could walk their children to school. The parents (at Edlesborough School) park anywhere they can, blocking pavements for walkers and creating a danger for children running out from behind parked cars". (See photo on page 26)

## Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Short)

- Control parking in Edlesborough High Street near school
- Review parking at Cow Lane surgery (or encourage walking)



Parking outside surgery in Cow Lane causes restricted access by larger vehicles to properties beyond where lane is very narrow.

## Housing

## **Current situation**

Sustainable rural communities need a wide range of housing in order to thrive, prosper and adapt to change.

The rise in property prices excludes a significant number of people who play important roles in rural communities yet are unable to afford to live in our villages. At the other end of the scale, we have an aging population many of whom live in larger homes. These people would like to stay in the villages and move to smaller lower cost bungalow-type properties that are suitable for those who want to release equity and/or need a property to meet their mobility needs.

Today there is an increasing number of homes occupied by older people. This reduces the possibility of families coming to live in the villages thereby affecting the school age population. Without young people in our villages, we will lose essential elements of a rural community and become a predominantly aged community.



## **Survey results**

The survey asked people to say how much more development they favoured. The possible answers were "much more", "some more", "a little more" and "no more". In only one case – 'retirement bungalows for purchase' – did those favouring some development outnumber those opting for no more development.

Retirement bungalows for rent were second most popular with 221 opting for some development while 250 opposed any.

In spite of the fairly negative views on even limited development, there is a small need expressed for affordable housing, which should be explored further

"I live on my own in a large house. I know of several other single people in the village in similar circumstances (usually through the loss of a loved one). I love living in Edlesborough but given the opportunity to move to a low maintenance high quality 2 bedroom bungalow I would do so freeing my house up for younger growing families. Perhaps this might become possible in the future. I would not want them to be specifically for single older people as I believe a good social mix would be the best answer."

**Recommendations** (Priority: Medium, Timescale: Medium)

- Create affordable bungalows for purchase or rental by local older people to be able to downsize in the villages
- Create affordable rural housing for rent or purchase by local people and/or local employees

**Note:** The word 'affordable' is intended to define: high quality, low maintenance and economical to run accommodation. This incorporates schemes such as shared ownership, social rented and similar for eligible households.



Affordable housing example from Cornwall

## Police presence, response and anti-vandalism

### Current situation

While most young people in our three villages are law abiding and responsible, the incidence of vandalism and anti-social behaviour is *perceived* to have grown in recent years. However, only three incidents of vandalism were reported in Edlesborough in the first five months of 2008. Part of the perception may be in line with national trends and publicity and some due to the increase in the population of vounger people in Edlesborough and the adjoining village of Eaton Bray.

Some of the problems experienced are also believed to be caused by youths from outside the village. The quantity of drug and alcohol waste found on or near Edlesborough Green increased over recent years and is believed to fuel the increase in crime. However, volunteers who clear litter from the green report some reduction in drug abuse waste in the past year. Some people feel intimidated by small gangs of young people who occupy the green especially after dark. There is very little hard data to confirm these beliefs but the perception that the situation has become worse is enough to take action. The *perception* may not be the *reality*.

**Note:** Since the survey was completed in October 2007, the police have established quarterly surgeries in the Edlesborough Village Hall. However, these meetings have so far, been poorly attended by residents and may need to be advertised more widely.

## Survey results

Anti-vandalism measures were voted as the second most important topic of dissatisfaction by the people of Edlesborough village and the police visibility or lack of it scored highly in first or second in each village placing it as the number one issue of dissatisfaction overall. It is felt that a greater police presence would help to deter vandalism and anti-social behaviour. A causal factor is stated as the 'lack of things to do in the evening' for the young people of the parish. This is covered in a separate project

to establish youth facilities. Examples of comments received are as follows.

"Policing in the village or lack of it is becoming very serious, the vandalism by hooligans is out of hand."

"I spend a lot of time walking around the village with mv 3 year old. I have yet to see one 'walking the beat' and getting to know the locals face to face. I thought this was the whole point of PCSO's ?"

**Recommendations** (Priority: High, Timescale: Short)

- Work with Thames Valley Police (Buckinghamshire) and Bedfordshire Police to improve coverage in the parish.
- Work closely with Community Support Police to reduce antisocial behaviour, reduce, and eliminate vandalism.
- Promote higher attendance at PCSO Quarterly Surgeries



One of the two Police Community Support Officers (from Thames Valley Police) on Edlesborough Village Green. They also patrol Dagnall and Northall.

## **Edlesborough Post Office sustainability**

## **Current situation**

The General Stores in Edlesborough is also home to the local sub Post Office (PO) as it has been for many years. The PO serves an average of well over 500 customers per week from the surrounding village residents and businesses. At the time of writing, (June 2008), the future of this PO is unclear, but by 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008 Post Office Ltd will advise whether this branch is planned for closure. If this is the case then a six-week public consultation period will follow immediately, ending on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

Post Office Ltd is expected to announce its final decision on about Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

The current PO has one serving position but the owners of the Edlesborough General Stores have stated they can be flexible to extend this to two counter positions should the need arise to accommodate more customers.

As in many other communities, the Post Office not only provides a window to the world via its services and to Royal Mail, it is also important to the viability of the local general stores upon which many residents of the parish and surrounding area depend.

## **Survey results**

In Question 41 of the questionnaire residents where asked to rank their *top three priorities* from a list of 16.

The results in the table on the right, speak for themselves. Retention of the Post Office in Edlesborough was ranked as the top priority by 546 out or 747 (73%) of respondents and much higher than the next three priorities. *"We are all anxious about losing our Post Office. We would all ask for it to be left alone".* 

**Recommendation:** (Priority: High, Timescale: before 26<sup>th</sup> Aug 2008)

• To respond to any potential threat of closure, an action team to be set up to prepare a submission to Post Office Ltd. Plus other local actions of support.

Subject - Top 4	Response	Edlesborough	Dagnall	Northall
Retain Edlesborough post office	546	1	2	1
Drainage	280	2	1	2
Beautify villages	239	3	4	3
Youth shelter	170	4	5	4
Improve village hall			2	5

## Ranked priorities for future (Q41)

This action team will utilise the experience gained by many other communities facing post office closures and well documented on the CAPOC (Communities Against Post Office Closures) website www.postofficeclosures.org.uk. Aylesbury Vale District Council is also actively investigating what can be done to minimise the impact of closures and the Action Team is in contact with them.





## Village co-operative shops

#### **Current situation**

The parish has one general store in Edlesborough that sells a variety of fresh and processed foods, milk products, alcohol, newspapers and magazines. It also houses the local sub post office.

Dagnall has two farm shops that sell fresh vegetables, eggs, milk, bread, fruit, potatoes and home produced pork. In Northall, a farm sells fresh eggs.

Shops that used to exist in Dagnall and Northall closed down some years ago. Today, most people use the Edlesborough shop to supplement their weekly shopping from supermarkets in the surrounding towns. All of the major supermarkets offer a delivery service for products ordered via the web for a charge of approximately £5. There are occasional mobile traders who offer fish and frozen products from a van.

There is concern that if the sub post office closed in the Edlesborough General Stores it may potentially have a negative effect on the overall business.

## **Survey results**

Prompted by specific issues raised at our Open Days we addressed the questions about village shops to the residents of Dagnall and Northall only. In Dagnall 133 (89%) out of 150 of households responded that they would shop in a local co-operative and 22 households volunteered to work in it. In Northall, the figures are 81 out of 90 would use a community shop and nine volunteered to work in it.

"Northall needs a village shop. A paper shop/coffee shop"

Recommendations (Priority: High, Timescale: Short)

- Create facilities for shopping in the villages of Dagnall and Northall by setting up one or more of the following:
- Establish a community based e-shopping capability using one of the major supermarkets
- Encourage the village shop in Edlesborough to deliver to the villages of Dagnall and Northall
- Establish formal cooperatives owned by the community and staffed by volunteers

The Action Team may determine other or additional methods to provide shopping assistance for those not able to travel regularly outside the community to shop for provisions.





ViRSA supports rural communities wanting to set up and run a community owned shop. They provide practical assistance through their website (www.virsa.org), a network of community retail advisers, a national office and various publications.

Community ownership is often the only viable option for villages wishing to retain or introduce a local shop. ViRSA is a national charity dedicated to supporting villages wishing to provide this service.

### Village Design Statement (VDS) A Vision for the Parish and three Villages Design Statements

#### Current situation – a vision with respect to preparing VDS's

The Parish of Edlesborough seeks to remain an independent, distinctive rural community, conserving and enhancing its environmental and architectural heritage for the benefit of current villagers and future generations. It is our intention to ensure our three villages move forward in harmony whilst recognizing that the geographical spread between them has led to each developing its own distinctive community character and requirements.

The recommendations and projects contained in this Parish Plan seek to sustain and reinforce our community and foster activities and facilities that enhance them. These will include the development of facilities and resources appropriate to young people and the provision of affordable housing.

The Plan encourages beneficial change but neither change for its own sake nor change that does not benefit our residents. The residents do not wish to see large-scale change and look to the Edlesborough Parish Council to ensure developments are sympathetic to the current parish environment.

There is already much activity by the Parish Council and residents to reduce the adverse impact of heavy road traffic on the village, especially the recent dramatic increase in waste lorries on the A4146 passing through all three villages en route to land fill sites.

The plan also seeks to enhance public transport and other links to neighbouring communities via new or improved footpaths, cycleways and pavements. Overall, our aim is that Edlesborough Parish residents will want to continue to live in the parish and contribute to bringing this Plan to fruition such that others will wish they could also live here.

### **Survey results**

This topic was **not** included in the Questionnaire and came to light later. At the time of writing this report, (June 2008) none of the villages in the Parish of Edlesborough has a *Village Design Statement* but the EDaN Project Steering Group recognises the need for a VDS to be produced.

### Recommendation (Priority: Low, Timescale: Medium)

 An action team should be formed to develop three Village Design Statements in conjunction with the Parish Council and local groups for submission to AVDC and BCC.

Note: See Natural England (formally English Nature) website: www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/landscape/village/ introduction.asp for more information about Village Design Statements.



Part of Edlesborough showing western end of village green and tennis courts

Issue for improvement or change	Desired outcome	Recommendations or actions	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Approximate timescale	Partners (*Lead) and others
Drainage and flood	Freedom from surface water flooding and sewage	Establish good communications with local water companies, Council authorities and other bodies to ensure adequate provision of surface and foul drainage.	Medium	0-2 years	Project Action teams*. River Ouzel Water Board, Anglian
prevention	spills	Create a program of works with the appropriate authorities to correct weaknesses in the existing drainage systems	Medium	2-5 years	Water, Thames Water, AVDC.
		Extend, widen, and maintain pavements as required.	High	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Bucks
	Well maintained walking	Improve the surface of footpaths to make them usable in all weathers.	High	2-5 years	CC, Rights of Way team
Footpaths pavements and cycle-paths	surfaces and new facilities for bicycles	Create cycle-ways to connect the three villages, (and lvinghoe Aston) and possibly away from the main road.	High	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Bucks CC, Sustrans, Rights of Way team
		Promote new facilities to increase use (especially travel to and from school).	High	2-5 years	Project Action team*
Luton post code	Clear identification of location and fairer insurance treatment	Investigate the possibility of changing the LU6 postcode	Low	2-5 years	
		Work with the Post Office and Royal Mail to ensure that the correct county responsibility is used on locating software.	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Royal Mail, Emergency Services, Bucks CC
		Work with Post Office, Royal Mail and County authorities to reclassify areas moved into Bucks	Medium	0-2 years	
		Establish the true situation with home and car insurance companies to ensure that the villages are not penalised by having a Luton postcode.	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Insurance Companies.
Village hall Improvements	Plans previously developed are implemented	No EDaN action is required	N/A	0-2 years	No action from EDaN
Street lighting	Appropriate lighting according to need	Investigate further the potential for improving street lighting according to survey feedback and make priority recommendations to the Parish Council	Medium	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Parish
		Investigate the impact of turning street lighting off after midnight.	Medium	0-2 years	Council, Bucks CC

Issue for improvement or change	Desired outcome	Recommendations or actions	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Approximate timescale	Partners (*Lead) and others	
	Attractive villages capable	Plant bulbs, flowers and trees in key places		0-2 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, AVDC, Bucks CC,	
Village beautification		Work with local farmers and Councils for sympathetic countryside maintenance	High			
	of winning competitions	Encourage villagers to take part in 'Best village' competitions			Local Farmers	
		Establish litter clean-up teams to meet regularly			l	
	Household and green	Clarify the current position of AVDC and Bucks CC plans for green waste and kitchen waste	High		Project Action team*, AVDC,	
Domestic waste collection	waste collections that meet our needs	Campaign for the preservation of the <b>weekly</b> collection for household waste	High	0-2 years	Bucks CC	
Transport	More frequent buses moving people to/from key locations	Increase frequency of buses to key destinations	Medium	0-2 years	Project Action team*, AVDC, Bucks CC Highways, Local Bu Companies	
		Explore new routes	Medium	0-2 years		
		Establish a community transport facility	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*. AVDC, Bucks CC Highways, BCA Rural Transport Partnership Officer	
	Well regulated traffic	Enforce current speeds using VAS or similar systems	Medium	0-2 years	Project Action team* Bucks CC, Thames Valley Police	
Traffic management and		Use 'Speedwatch'/ 'SID' facilities to train drivers to respect speed limits	High	0-2 years	Project Action team* Parish Council, Bucks CC, Thames Valley Police	
speed controls	speeds on all Parish roads	Campaign to reduce speed limits on selected roads.	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council	
		Campaign with villages in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire to reclassify A4146 as a 'B' road	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council	
Road safety	Safe crossings for children and adults at key locations	Erect safety railings at schools and school bus stops in the three villages.	Medium	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, Bucks CC	
		Provide recommendations for safe crossings at schools and school bus stops	High	0-2years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, Bucks CC, Safer Routes to Schools	
		Work with local HGV training companies to restrict operating times in and around the school locations.	Medium	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Department of Transport, HG <sup>v</sup> training companies	

Issue for improvement or change	Desired outcome	Recommendations or actions	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Approximate timescale	Partners (*Lead) and others
Parking congestion	Residents who walk/cycle or park in designated	Control parking in Edlesborough High Street near school	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, AVDC, Bucks CC and Police
improvements	locations	Review parking at Cow Lane surgery and encourage walking	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Local Doctors, Primary Care Trust, AVDC, Bucks CC and Police
	Meet demand for	Create affordable bungalows for purchase or rent by local older people to be enable them to downsize in the villages.	Medium	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, AVDC, BCA Housing Enabler
Housing development affordable housing		Create affordable rural housing for rent or purchase by local people and/or local employees.	Medium	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, AVDC. BCA Housing Enabler
Police presence and anti-	Elimination of vandalism and anti-social behaviour	Work with Police in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to improve police coverage in the parish.	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Thames Valley And Bedfordshire Police
vandalism	in the parish	Work with Community Support Police to reduce anti-social behaviour and reduce and eliminate vandalism	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, Thames Valley And Bedfordshire Polic
Edlesborough Post Office NOT listed for closure	Edlesborough Post Office remains open and any threat removed	Establish action team to prepare submission to Post Office Ltd (May require some funding to produce submission to Post Office Ltd)	High	Must be complete before 26th August 2008	Project Action team*, AVDC, Post Office Ltd
Youth facilities	Reduction or elimination of youth problems in the villages	Establishment of youth shelters in each village and extended youth club facilities	Medium	2-5 years	Project Action team*, Parish Council, AVDC, BCA i-van team
Village cooperation shop	Convenient access to general shop goods	Create facilities for shopping in the villages of Dagnall and Northall by setting up one or more of the following: 1. Establish a community based e-shopping capability using one of the major supermarkets 2. Encourage the village shop in Edlesborough to deliver to the villages of Dagnall and Northall	High	0-2 years	Project Action team*, AVDC, Local Suppliers, ViRSA, BCA Community Projects Officer
		<ol> <li>Establish formal cooperatives in each village owned by the community and staffed by volunteers</li> </ol>			
Preparation of Village Design Statements	VDSs for each village are accepted and used by planning authorities	Establish group to work with Parish Council and others	Low	1-2years	Edlesborough Parish Council AVDC, PlanningAid Southeas BCA

BCA - Bucks Community Action

APPENDIX A: Details of responses to questions 26-36 in survey

*Question: Considering the topics covered in questions 26 to 36, which three do you most want to be improved?* 

		Edles-		
Торіс	Dagnall	borough	Northall	Total
Visibility of police	78	260	45	386
Noise and speed of HGVs on A4146	82	100	66	254
Condition of road surfaces	46	137	20	206
Luton postcode	2	145	31	181
Anti-vandalism measures	15	155	10	179
Pavement maintenance in villages	52	82	36	172
Dog mess cleaned up by owners	27	115	10	153
Mobile phone signal strength	35	96	9	140
Cooperation between Thames Valley police and Beds police	13	94	12	119
Removal of litter	2	55	20	88
Utilisation of allotments	1	2	2	7
Total (people)	150	481	99	743

**Note:** Total for the three villages do not add up to overall total as some people did not answer the question that asked where they lived.

#### APPENDIX B: Overall priorities - Question 41 responses in survey

Q41. Thinking about the future, what projects/expenditure would you most favour? Rank top 3

**Note:** requests have been put forward for additional pavilion facilities by cricket, tennis and football clubs. Your EDaN committee has combined these into a shared facility!

Rank Order		Dagnall	Edles- borough	Northall	Tota
1	Ensure Edlesborough Post Office stays open	65	404	69	546
2	Improve drainage to reduce flooding	69	165	42	280
3	Beautifying of villages eg extensive bulb, tree etc. planting	57	139	40	239
4	Youth shelter / meeting place	35	120	15	170
5	Improvements to village halls	65	28	12	107
6	Fitness / gym facilities (indoor)	14	68	13	95
7	More playground equipment	31	47	8	86
8	Improve / extend sports pavilion (showers, storage, etc)	5	66	12	85
9	Set up U3A (University of the third age) for villages	19	46	8	74
10	Bowling green	6	40	9	55
11=	Purpose built pre-school building in Edlesborough	0	55	12	51
11=	Secure outside play area for pre- school in Edlesborough	3	40	6	51
13	Improve Edlesborough scout hut	4	20	5	29
14	Additional sites for football pitches	5	19	3	28
15	Skateboard park	4	16	1	21
16	BMX track	5	6	4	15

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