

Soulbury Parish Plan 2010

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Introduction

Parish of Soulbury

Soulbury is a village and also a civil parish in Buckinghamshire. It is located in the Aylesbury Vale, about three miles South of Milton Keynes urban area and three miles North of Wing. The name is Anglo Saxon in origin, and means 'stronghold in a gully'. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the village was recorded as Soleberie.

The parish contains the hamlets of:

- Hollingdon in the West
- Chelmscote on the Stoke Hammond to Leighton Buzzard road
- Bragenham to the East of the River Ousel
- Stockgrove to the North East on the border with Bedfordshire
- Liscombe to the South East of Soulbury



The parish extends as far as Rammamere Farm on Watling Street. Rammamere Heath is managed with King's Wood in Heath and Reach as a nature reserve.

Soulbury

Soulbury gave its name to Solebury Township, Pennsylvania, which was founded by Quaker settlers from Soulbury. There is a public house in Soulbury called The Boot. Its pub sign features a boot of the Duke of Wellington, but the tradition of the Soulbury Boot is said to be much older than that. It is said that the Devil himself once came to the village, but the villagers came to fight him off. One of them took his sword and cut off the Devil's foot and as it fell to the ground it turned to stone. The stone came to be known as the Soulbury Boot. Although fascinating, this story is said by some to have been made up by a previous pub landlord in order to attract visitors.

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Background to the Plan

Community-led plans have been around in one form or another for hundreds of years, where communities have come together to appraise their area to decide what might be required for the future.

The Local Government Act 2000 gave more weight to these documents as it placed more focus on the importance of social, economic and environmental issues. The plans of local communities are having more and more influence on services provided in local areas and add weight to the data needed to support Buckinghamshire County Council's strategy for the future.

Our objective must be to protect, improve and control development of our environment, based on information provided by residents through the questionnaire.

Consultation Process

The development of the Soulbury plan first began in 2007 when residents of the parish were invited to an open meeting in the village hall and given the opportunity to have their say on the parish development.

From the information collated at this meeting, a steering group was set up to drive the process forward. With the assistance of a number of volunteers within the parish, the information gathered at this meeting was collated and formed the basis of the final questionnaire.

The Parish Survey

Every household within the parish was invited to complete the survey which was delivered and collected by a team of volunteers. Questionnaires were completed anonymously but postcodes were requested to link ideas with location. Households were offered questionnaires for each resident.

The Parish Plan will:

- reflect what is important to the community
- form an action plan
- show a way of continuing improvement
- outline where the parish wishes to be in the future with ongoing reviews



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Response

The analysis is based on 265 completed questionnaires out of a total of 441 delivered. These covered all the hamlets within the parish.

The majority of responses came from residents aged 31-50 or older.

The written comments about life in the parish, together with the responses to the YES/NO tick boxes, forms the basis on which the final plan has been produced.

Analysis

All questionnaire responses were fed into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the % weighting of answers as required. The written comments were analysed manually into subject groups.

These analyses form the main part of the plan.

The final page of the questionnaire asks for comments on life in Soulbury Parish. Out of 265 returned questionnaires, 75 respondents had comments to make, most of which had already been covered in the questionnaire. The following list highlights the key points raised:

Community Hall to be developed within the church - there is a strong weighting towards this idea.

Restrict unnecessary signage within the parish.

Parish Council to encourage more environmental awareness.

Possible re-siting of playground to Millennium Green.

Improve interaction within the parish.

Traffic calming required through village.

Favourable comments about Playgroup, W.I., Youth Club, Millennium Green and Cricket Club. All these activities would benefit from working more closely together.

Newsletter funding – suggestion made that this should be self-funding through advertising etc. Write up in Leighton Buzzard Observer would keep residents up to date with current activities. Soulbury web page to be kept up to date with minutes of Parish Council meetings, etc.

Request for church and clock to be illuminated as a focal point within the village.

Favourable comment from outlying resident of the parish regarding historical connection with the village.

Flooding - as a result of poor drainage maintenance.

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Clubroom notice board a disgrace - needs to be waterproof, lockable and regularly updated.

Stockgrove area - some residents feel they are a forgotten part of the parish and some feel they have more affinity with Great Brickhill and would have liked to have seen the parish boundary changed. However, there are some residents who do feel part of the parish and support the various activities.

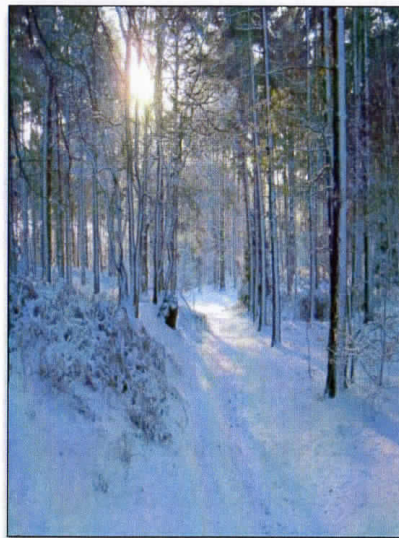
Positive comments regarding the Open Gardens day and the Hog Roast.

Parish Council should deal with local issues at source, referring to Aylesbury Vale District Council for finance only.

Very little investment in parish. Residents feel we should look after what we already have.

To conclude on a final positive comment that was received :

**“ Please keep this beautiful area
green for future generations ”**



This plan will form a working document which will be reviewed and updated based on working group progress on the various tasks identified.

The success of this plan will depend on you, the residents, becoming involved with the various working groups in order to achieve the desired result.

For more information about the Soulbury Plan or to make any offers of assistance, please contact the Steering Group on 01525 237654 or email housley2@tiscali.co.uk



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Statement by Soulbury Parish Council

The Parish Council welcomes this Parish Plan so well researched and produced by the Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Ian Housley, which reflects the wishes of those who participated in the questionnaire and thus encompasses the views of all the parishioners of Soulbury.

This document is very important as it will be used by Soulbury Parish, Aylesbury Vale District and Buckinghamshire County Councils to monitor the development of the Parish and implement where possible the changes required by the residents. We distributed several hundred questionnaires and had a very high return rate, which demonstrates that the residents do care about the Parish and its future. This lays the ground for the organisation mentioned above to work as the development and changes can be held accountable to the Parish Plan. These issues include planning, social and environmental issues.

The Parish Council has started working on many of the recommended actions raised in this Plan. Others will take longer and some may not be possible. The issues will involve the whole parish in one capacity or another, and the residents can take part in the implementation, which will generate a better cohesion of all those living in the Parish. The Parish Council will have to prioritise the actions from the Plan into those for immediate or longer-term action; this will be determined by the Parish Council and the Parish Plan Committee before the Plan is published. The issues raised by the residents of the parish will be taken seriously. This Plan and all the hard work that has gone into the document will not be of any benefit to the parish unless we implement the Plan's conclusions, and it will need local people to review and update the Plan regularly.

Acknowledgements

Soulbury Parish Council appointed a Committee to undertake the Parish Survey and to produce the Parish Plan in March 2007. The Steering Group consisted of: Ian Housley (Chairman), Sam Mardlin, Carla Donatelli, Chrissie Frisbee, James Mansfield-Sturgess, Simon Mansfield-Sturgess, June Wright, Elizabeth Caplan, Barbara Young, David Kempster and Sarah Allwood (Community Impact Bucks).

Soulbury Parish Council would like to thank the Committee for distributing and collecting the Parish Survey questionnaire, and for transcribing and analysing the results.

The valuable participation by all the parishioners who responded to the Parish Survey Questionnaire is much appreciated.

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Communications, Facilities, Policing & Support Groups

Communications

The survey suggested the need for improved communications within the parish.

Actions :

Improve Soulbury Newsletter, website and noticeboard

Website and noticeboard to be kept updated

Use of Leighton Buzzard Observer for communications

Village Hall

48% felt a new building was required and **32%** felt there was no need for a new building, whilst there was some interest in the possibility of using the church. A new hall or use of the church was considered to be too ambitious under the current economic climate and we should concentrate on making the best of what we have.



Actions :

Establish an identity for the hall (e.g. Village Hall, Club Room, Parish Hall)

Improve the facilities

- ✓ Kitchen and toilet facilities have been replaced
- ✓ Further improvements underway

No Cold Calling / Neighbourhood Watch

75% of residents supported the creation of No Cold Calling and Neighbourhood Watch areas.

Actions :

Investigate the creation of these schemes

- ✓ Police are currently looking for volunteers

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Support Groups

41% of residents highlighted the need for elderly support groups, with **24%** indicating the need for support for teenagers.

Actions :

Form working groups to look at these areas

Seek volunteers

Playground

Respondents' views regarding the current playground showed that **45%** would like to see the facilities improved, although it seems there were further views with regard to the playground being moved to the Millennium Green, which would be more accessible for parents and their children, together with it being a more social area.

Fundraising for the playground was included in the questionnaire. However, this did not get much support from respondents.

Actions :

Improve current facilities

✓ New equipment is on order

Investigate move to Millennium Green

✓ Discussions are underway



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Travel, Road Safety, Road & Verge Maintenance

Bus Services

The survey highlighted that only **11%** of residents currently use the limited service. However, various requests were made for improvements/changes to the service.

Actions :

Involve Buckinghamshire County Council Access Forum
and transport companies
Set up working groups

Speeding

Over **80%** of respondents felt there was a constant or occasional speeding problem within the Parish.



Parking

50% of respondents raised issues with parking on Chapel Hill, Brook Cottages and Stockgrove Country Park.



Lighting

70% of respondents felt that lighting was adequate. However some areas were noted as requiring attention : The Mead, The Green and High Road.

Actions :

Set up Working Groups on speeding/parking/lighting
Discuss with Buckinghamshire County Council and Soulbury Parish Council

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Road and Verge Maintenance

Although **70%** of respondents were happy with the overall condition of roads and verges, 76 adverse comments were registered. Areas of concern included Bragenham Lane, Heath Road and Hollingdon Lane.

Defects included potholes, overhanging hedges and poorly maintained pavements.

Actions :

Report any issues to Buckinghamshire County Council and Soulbury Parish Council



Bypass

80% of respondents were happy with the effect of the bypass. Areas for improvement included:

Actions :

Address accumulated litter on the verges

Report any issues to Soulbury Parish Council

Improve village signage to encourage motorists to use the bypass.

- ✓ Some improvement has already been seen on this point.



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Development, Housing, Conservation & Recycling

Parish Design Statement

71% of respondents supported the creation of a Parish Design Statement, with **69%** stating that they would like to see no change to structures within the Parish.

Action :

Produce Statement through Soulbury Parish Council and working group.



Parish Development

85% felt that there should be no further development on green field land.

Village Shop

43% of respondents supported the need for a village shop or Post Office.

Action :

Soulbury Parish Council and working party to investigate feasibility

Conservation / Wildlife Strategy

66% supported the creation of a wildlife strategy. Areas for consideration included the Millennium Green, along with areas in Hollingdon and Stockgrove and re-instatement of the pond in Soulbury. Comments were also received on the preservation of the Church, The Boot and the Jubilee Fountain.

Action :

Working group through Parish Council





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Recycling

66% were satisfied with the Aylesbury Vale District Council collection. Over **80%** of respondents felt that the weekly collection should be maintained with only **16%** thinking that a fortnightly collection would be adequate.

Fly-tipping and Dog Fouling

40% felt there was a problem in the parish, **50%** felt there was no problem, **10%** had no comments.

Comments on fly tipping indicate that the main areas of concern are Stockgrove/Heath Road, Hollingdon Lane and Bragenham Lane

Comments on dog fouling indicate the main problem areas are the Millennium Green, the Soulbury bus shelter, Stockgrove Park, Rammamere, Oakwood, the Bridleway to Stoke Hammond and Dean Farm Lane also in the villages more generally on pavements and front gardens.

Residents would like to see :

- More litter bins
- Litter action groups
- More dog fouling bins and notices

A litter-pick has since been organised in Soulbury. An additional dog fouling bin has been installed on the Millennium Green.

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Footpaths, Rights of Way, Cycle Paths & Bridleways

When asked "Do you think pedestrian access/safety needs improving?", **52%** of those residents who replied to the Parish survey did not feel the need for improvement.

However, there were some general views that highlighted the following areas for safety improvements:

Crossing on the Green (Soulbury)

Crossing by bus stop on Stewkley Road (Soulbury)

A review of the speed limit along Hollingdon Lane through the village



In addition, the following areas were highlighted as requiring improvements in pedestrian safety:

Soulbury village to 3 Locks area

Soulbury village to Leighton Buzzard

Soulbury village to Liscombe Park

Stockgrove to Great Brickhill

Stiles on Rights of Way are not always dog friendly (some have since been changed)

There were over 100 comments covering the following general points, when residents were asked what could be done to make the countryside more attractive:

Reduce litter

Footpath maintenance, although **54%** felt that footpaths were adequately maintained

Need for improved signage

Plant additional trees and wildflowers

Improve drainage to prevent flooding

Parking issues on Soulbury High Road and Stockgrove Country Park

Verge and road maintenance



There were many views raised on cyclist safety and the provision of cycle ways. Whilst some people are satisfied with the present situation, others advised they would like to see:

Footpaths

Cycle ways

Speed limits amended

Improved verge maintenance

Action :

Raise with Buckinghamshire County Council and Soulbury Parish Council

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Business & Land Owners

With this question we hoped to establish the types of business within the parish. However, responses to this were very limited indeed and as a result do not truly reflect what business activity currently takes place within the parish.

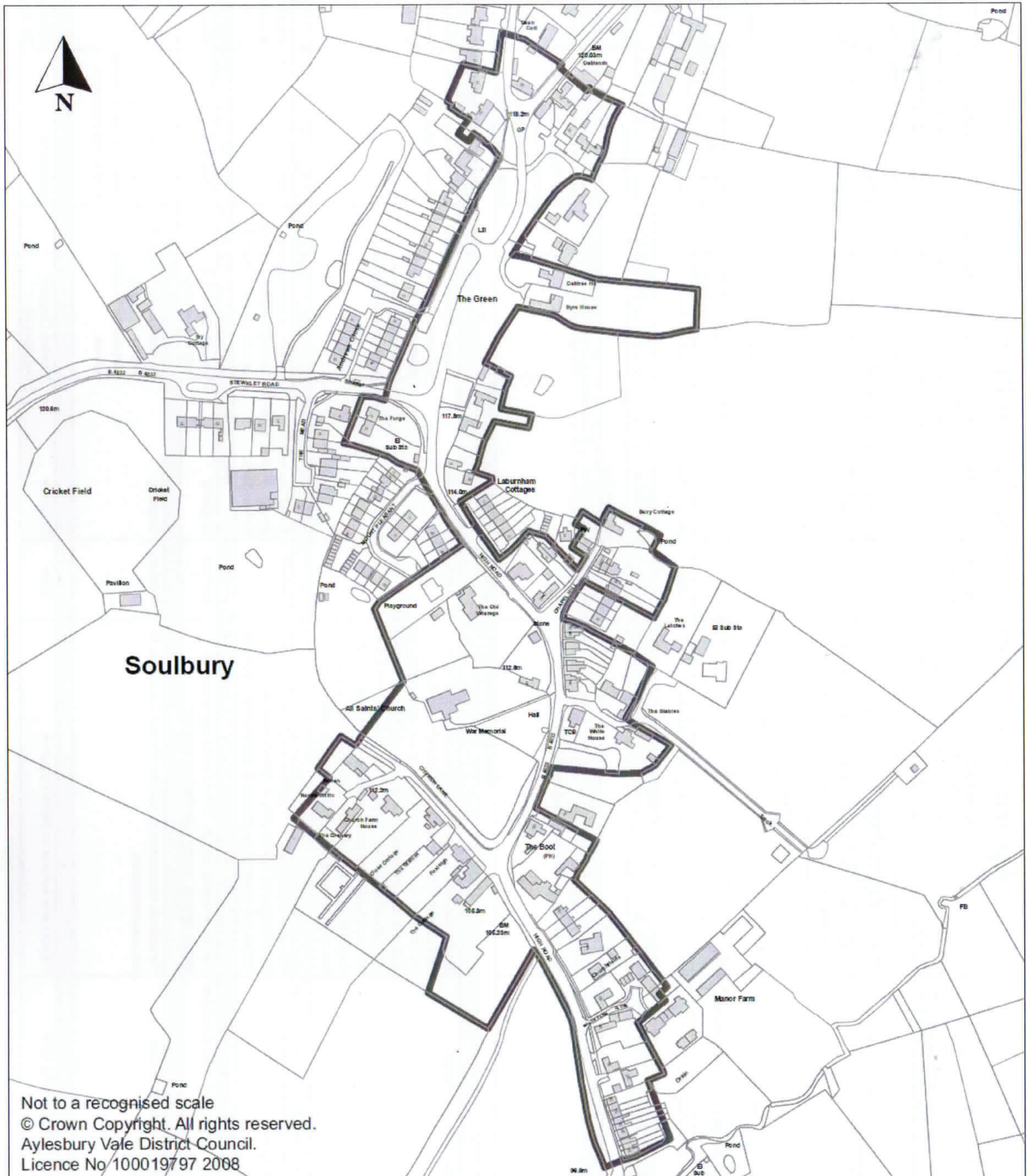
Types of Farming

From the very limited responses on this subject, the main areas are arable and livestock. However, from the information received it is not possible to quantify any meaningful data.



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Appendix A – Soulbury Conservation Area



Appendix B – Summary of Action Plans

	ACTION	PROPOSAL COMMUNICATIONS, FACILITIES, POLICING & SUPPORT GROUPS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST	MONITORING
1	Communications Improve communications within parish.	Improve new sletter, website and notice board. Website and notice board to be kept updated. Use Leighton Buzzard Observer.	High	Continuous.	Parish Council. Volunteers and village groups.	Cost of notice board(s) and printing etc.	Parish Council. Parish Plan Steering Group.
2	Village Hall/Club Room Establish name.	Village Hall or Club Room or other? Name proposed at meeting of 1/3/2010 - SOULBURY PARISH HALL. Signboard to be erected on village/parish hall, when the improvements take place.	High	Immediate.	Parish Council.	None.	Parish Council.
	Improvements to existing village hall currently in progress.			In progress	Parish Council.	?	Parish Council.
3	No Cold Calling & Neighbourhood Watch						
	Local police have this in progress.	Local police currently looking for volunteers.	High	By summer 2010	Local Police.	None.	Parish Council. Local Police.
4	Support Groups						
	Form working groups, bear in mind Youth Club has just closed.	Ask for volunteers who are interested for elderly & teenagers.	Medium	When working groups established.	Individual working groups.	Not known.	Individual working groups.
5	Playground Improve playground.	Move to Millennium Green. Parish Council have planned to order new equipment.	High	By summer 2010	Parish Council.	New equipment funded by donation from proceeds of Soulbury Ball and grant from AVDC.	Parish Council.
TRAVEL, ROAD SAFETY, ROAD & VERGE MAINTENANCE							
6	Bus Services Try to get improved service through village/parish	Bucks County Council Access Forum is currently discussing bus services in Buckinghamshire. Working group required to be set up immediately, so that we can establish something more specific from the village what they want. This feedback will then be communicated to the Access Forum via County Councillor. Time is of the essence if we want Soulbury considered at this Access Forum.	High	Immediate.	Lead - Bucks County Council. Bucks Community Action, working group & transport companies.	No cost implications at this stage	Bucks County Council. Parish Council. Working group.
7	Road Safety Review of key issues: speeding, calming, parking, signage & lighting	Set up working group. Liaise with Bucks County Council/Bucks Community Action/Police etc. Introduce calming measures & signage as required.	Medium	ASAP for working group. End of year for Action Plan.	Lead - working group through Parish Council. Bucks County Council.	Unknown	Parish Council. Working group.
8	General Road & Verge Maintenance						
	To improve general condition of road & verges throughout the parish	Set up working group. Liaise with Highways to target priority areas (via Parish Council).	Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council & Highways dept.	Unknown	Parish Council.
9	Pavements Improvements to pavements, including overhanging hedges.	Residents requested to contact Parish Council with issues/complaints.	Medium	Ongoing	Bucks County Council. Parish Council. Residents in some areas.	Should be borne by BCC, but PC may need to support along with some residents	Parish Council and residents.
10	By-Pass Ongoing vigilance for all regarding litter.	Report any issues to Parish Council.	Low	Ongoing	Parish Council. Highways.	Unknown	Residents to report through Parish Council.

ACTION		PROPOSAL		PRIORITY	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST	MONITORING
		DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, CONSERVATION & RECYCLING						
11	Parish Design Statement			Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council & working group.	Unknown	Parish Council. Working group.
	Produce Statement	Publish & distribute through Parish. This to cover various structures within the community ie beacon on green, renovation of fountain, village hall improvements & church maintenance.						
12	Parish Development							
	Investigate feasibility of village shop.	Working group to investigate feasibility of this project.		Low		Parish Council & working group.	Unknown	Parish Council. Working Group.
13	Conservation/Wildlife Strategy							
	Prioritise areas for action.	Community to instigate areas for action.		Medium	Ongoing	Residents group through Parish Council.	Unknown	Working group.
14	Recycling							
	Collection of cardboard and garden waste.	Additional bins for collection.		Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council & Aylesbury Vale District Council.	Unknown	Parish Council.
15	Fly Tipping/Dog Fouling							
	Report incidents of fly tipping and dog fouling.	Try to identify culprits.		High	Ongoing	Lead - Residents. Parish Council. Police.	Ongoing	Residents & Parish Council.
FOOTPATHS, RIGHTS OF WAY, CYCLE PATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS								
16	Improve pedestrian access/protection and cycle protection (safety).	Proposal for additional pedestrian/cycle routes - Soulbury village to 3 Locks area - Soulbury village to LB - Soulbury village to Liscombe Park - Stockgrove to Great Brickhill Improve stile/gates where necessary Proposal for pedestrian crossing - Soulbury Bus Stop on Stew Key Road - Soulbury Green Proposal for speed restriction in Hollingdon for pedestrian safety		Medium	To be advised	Bucks County Council.	Quite considerable	Parish Council.
17	Improve the aesthetics of the countryside on all footpaths, rights of way, cycle paths & bridleways.	Proposal for routine maintenance on the following: - verges - existing signage - overgrowth of vegetation - uneven/unsafe surfaces - stiles/gates - improve natural landscaping such as trees and wildflowers - improve drainage for the prevention of flooding Proposal for plan/action on the following: - litter including fly tipping debris - new signage - preventing cars parking on pedestrian areas		Medium	Continuous throughout the year	Parish Council & Bucks County Council.		Parish Council & Bucks County Council.