A topographic map of the Shipton Gorge area, showing contour lines, roads, and geographical features. The map is the background for the title text.

SHIPTON GORGE VILLAGE APPRAISAL 1989

VILLAGE APPRAISAL 1989

The last, and as far as we are aware, only appraisal of Shipton Gorge Parish took place in 1979 and this present document, prepared ten years later, seeks to modify and update the original to give a current view of the village and its development.

Village Appraisals serve two purposes - firstly they present a factual picture of a village at a point in time, in this case late 1989, and secondly they include the views of the villagers themselves with regard to their community. This second element was obtained by way of a questionnaire which was distributed to all households in the parish after the original draft copy of the factual material had been prepared. The results from these questionnaires are listed at the end of the document.

Initiated and financed by the Parish Council, this Appraisal has been prepared by a committee consisting of the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. Mrs. Mary Boughton, Cllr. Mrs. Pamela Bates, Mrs. Christine Hewlett and Mr. Brian Crabtree. The production of this document was only possible because of the help and participation of the residents of the parish and the committee would like to record their thanks to everybody who helped by giving factual material, suggestions, constructive criticism and for attending the parish meeting to discuss the finished document.

The Appraisal begins with a section on the medieval history of the village and how it came to have the unusual name that it bears today. For this we are indebted to the late Mr. Jim Chaplin who, in 1980, wrote and published a substantial document on the village's history, simply entitled 'Shipton Gorge' and from which much information has been extracted. Information has also been taken from the booklet 'Shipton Gorge - Some Notes From Its History' also produced in 1980 by the then Shipton Gorge Preservation Society. Both these publications are invaluable reading to anyone who is interested in learning more about the early history of the village.

A small number of the 1979 Appraisal are being re-printed and will be available for sale to those that wish to compare the two documents.

THE NAMING OF THE VILLAGE

The first written reference to Shipton Gorge seems to be in the Domesday Book of 1086, and at that time Shipton was called Sepetone, from the Saxon meaning sheep farm. It was a manor both before and after the Norman conquest in one of the six royal estates in Dorset. The other part of the parish, Sturthill, then called Sterte or Sterta had been given to the first Norman Sheriff of Dorset Hugo Fitz Grip, but by 1086 had passed to his widow. In 1212 Sterte was held, along with other manors, by Alured of Lincoln. No details are known about Shipton as it was part of the royal estates, but later another Norman family, the Maurewards, became tenants-in-chief of the manor of Shipton when it was given to Thomas Maureward in 1260. Some time before 1285 the manor of Shipton came into the possession of the Gorges family, who had originally come to England in 1066 with William the Conqueror. The village at that time continued to be known as Shipton Maureward after the previous owner. In 1461 the Gorges family found themselves without a male heir and the estate went, with the marriage of an only daughter, to a Devon family, the Coplestones. From this time Shipton Maureward became known as Shipton Gorges. It was the Coplestone's who built 'Court House' in the field just south-west of the church, still called Court field, and a branch of the family lived there for nearly two hundred years. No trace remains of the house today but there is a splendid well just inside the field. Meanwhile, Sterte had become Stertell and there were three farms and several smaller holdings as well as a village in the southern part of it. Nothing remains above ground today but the site is still known as Chapel Close. The village lingered on, but that too has gone. There was only one house standing in 1839 although the name is still preserved by the two farms, Lower and Higher Sturthill. During the Civil War the Coplestone's supported the King and their lands were confiscated and about this time Shipton Gorge became the property of the Strangways family, also Royalists, who later became the Fox Strangways and Earls of Ilchester. They continued to own the village until 1910 when it was sold off in lots.

So there is no 'gorge' in Shipton Gorge, but just the history of the de Gorges family who left the village with the name it still carries today.

CHARACTER OF THE PARISH

The physical character of the parish remains unchanged and the following is reproduced from the 1979 appraisal:

"The parish, which is smallish by West Dorset standards, is a rough east-west rectangle in the north west corner of the Bride Valley. It extends from Innsacre in the west, east to include Shipton Hill and St. Luke's Cottage, south to Lower Sturthill and Hammiton Hill, west to St. Catherine's Cross and Bennett's Hill Farm, and then north via Bonscombe to Innsacre again. The village lies two miles east of Bridport, about a mile south of the A35 road. It is fourteen miles from Dorchester and two miles from the sea at Burton Bradstock.

The relief and structure of the parish is varied. Shipton Hill (588 ft) is a landmark for miles around, it is a steep sided mass of Upper Greensand chert, isolated by landslips which have left it surrounded on all sides by an irregular tumbled surface of Fuller's Earth clay. Hammiton Hill is similar but at a lower level (394 ft). West of the slipped area, roughly west of Loder's Lane, the northern hillier part, Cobbett Hill/Barr Hill consists of low hills of clay, rising to over 300ft. To the south, the clay thins out leaving only a few thin patches on the flatter areas where the soil barely covers the limestone of the Inferior Oolite. Rockway, the fields to the north of it and the Bowhole fields, are typical of this. Below the limestone lies the Bridport and Yeovil sands, alternate beds of foxmould and sandstone. Here steep-sided gullies have been cut into the sands as seen in Chapel Street and its continuation along Brook Street, in the valley down to Innsacre, in that up from Lower Bonscombe to Bonscombe Farm, in the Mocombe valley and in that between Smacombe and Lower Lynch. The southern strip of the parish is very different. The view south from the church shows a gentle sloping, east-west clay floored valley, rising on the far side to the St. Catherine's/Bennett's Hill Farm ridge. This is the result of a major east-west fault, along the line of Burport Lane and the church ridge, which has lowered the Oxford clay several hundred feet below the Bridport Sands. It forms the lowest part of the parish, dropping to 130 ft where Markets Lane crosses the parish boundary.

The fields round the village are mostly under pasture and separated by quick-set hedges. They vary much in size and pattern. The parish is rather bare of trees. Now that the elms have gone, the few hedgerow trees are either oak or ash. There is only one small wood in the parish, Hammiton Wood, over to the east, and only a few poor copses in the open areas. There are more trees along the steep valley sides."

Schedule of Ancient Monuments by English Heritage

Within the parish there is a Round Barrow on top of Hammiton Hill. The earthworks on the top of Shipton Hill lie within the parish of Loders. The Royal Commission mentions the Lynchets on the south slope of Bonscombe Hill forming four terraces from 25 to 40 ft. wide.

In 1969 the late Mr. Jim Chaplin, a resident of Shipton Gorge found two carved stone heads in the land being cleared for the construction of Rockway. These heads are thought to have been of Celtic origin and are now to be seen in the Archaeological Department of Dorset County Museum.

Conservation Area

In 1987 a Parish Poll was held on a proposal that the central part of the village be designated a Conservation Area. The result of the poll was 54 votes in favour and 94 votes against.

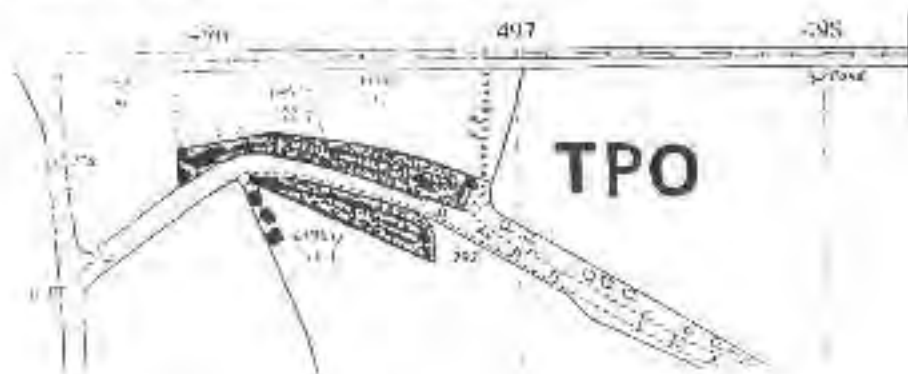
Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There is one site in the parish and this covers an area of about half an acre around the 'Old Lime Kiln' quarry, but new buildings are now built on part of this and others very close to it.



Tree Protection Orders

These exist on the copses north and south of Barr Lane, just to the east of 'Stoneacre' and also on the double row of oak trees in the fields north and south of Markets Lane and Bredy Lane.



Footpaths and Bridleways

There are 18 footpaths and 7 bridleways within the parish. A new Definitive Map was produced in 1989 and this is reproduced on the cover of this Appraisal and on a separate page will be found the list of the names, numbers and grid references of all the footpaths and bridleways.

Saunders Richardson Wood

In 1985, under the terms of the will of Mrs. M. Richardson of Bridport and once resident of Shipton Gorge, the Woodland Trust became the owners of about three acres of land bordering Smacombe Lane on the eastern edge of the village. This low-lying land has a stream running through it. Part of it was once a hemp field and another part a cider-apple orchard, which had become derelict in recent years. In accordance with its national policy, The Woodland Trust has replanted a substantial part of the land with English native deciduous trees and shrubs, namely Alder, Ash, Willow, Lime, Wild Cherry, Crab Apple, Aspen, Field Maple and Hazel. The terms of the bequest preclude general public access to the land, nevertheless the area makes an important contribution to local amenity and, with its diversity of habitat types, is a valuable haven for wildlife.

Listed Buildings and those of Special Architectural or Historical Interest

The village lies entirely within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In the 1979 appraisal three listed buildings are mentioned and all are Grade 2 - Innsacre and its Coach House (which has its own ghost), Sunnybank and Lower Sturthill. In the Department of Environment's current list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest these are now joined by Home Farmhouse in Brook Street, Old Manor Farmhouse in the centre of the village, the Barn north of Old Manor Farmhouse in Chapel Street (this has recently undergone extensive alteration into dwellings), Nos. 1 and 2 Port Lane and The Little House in Church Path (formerly the village school). The Parish Church of St. Martins is also a listed building. In the report of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Lynch Cottage, Cumberland Cottage and Brook Cottage are also mentioned.

HOUSING

The oldest houses in the village lie sheltered and near the water table in the Chapel Street/Brook Street valley, with the church in a dominant position above. The newer developments, Peas Hill, Quarry Close, Rockway and Rosamond Avenue are on the limestone plateau to the north, exposed to the winds but with wide views. A few scattered farmsteads surround the village, mostly near the parish boundary.

There are now 176 separate dwellings in the parish, an increase of 27 since 1979, of which 7 are conversions from agricultural buildings. Eight comprise the small development 'Quarry Close', the others partly 'in fill' and partly on the edge of the village.

The types of property compare as follows:-

	1979	1989
Detached houses	39	53
Semi-detached	18	20
Terraced	19	33
Bungalows	67	63
Flats	6	6
Inn	1	1

Construction remains mainly of stone (134 dwellings) though the Quarry Close houses bring the total of brick construction to 30. Roofs are mainly tiled (120) and the remainder slate, although the 4 thatched roofs still remain (one recently re-thatched).

The number of holiday homes has increased from 13 in 1979 to 23 in 1989. Privately rented (or tied) houses have reduced from 14 in 1979 to 9 in 1989. Council rented homes have reduced from 16 to 14, two houses having been purchased. The remainder (130) are owner occupied, an increase of 27.

Occupancy compares as follows:-

	1979	%	1989	%
Dwellings occupied by 1 person only	33	22	34	19
by two people	55	37	72	41
by three or more	45	30	46	26
	133		152	
Holiday homes	13	9	23	13
Empty (for sale)	1	2	1	1
TOTAL	149		176	

In numerical terms the whole of the increase in dwellings (27) is accounted for by increases in the number of two person occupancy (17) and in the number of holiday homes (10), the latter being the more significant change, having almost doubled. In percentage terms the changes are less significant: of those dwellings which are holiday homes half are of modern construction, half are older modernised cottages or conversions from agricultural buildings. Of those dwellings occupied by two people only, 38 (just over half), are occupied by retired couples. Those occupied by single people only, house mainly retired persons, 20 women and 8 men living alone, the remaining 6 being working men or women.

At the end of 1989 there were three satellite television receiver dishes erected on properties in the parish.

POPULATION

The present adult population is 290 (1979 - 269) and there are 71 children and young people (1979 - 54), increases of 8% and 31% respectively. An increase of 12% in the total since 1979.

Approximately 140 are of pensionable age (an increase roughly in line with the increase in total population) although several continue in part or full time employment. This represents just half of the adult population as it also did in 1979.

The increase in under 18's is significant; of the total:

Under school age	19
Primary school age	26
Secondary school age	21
Further education, Y.T.S. or apprenticed	5
Total	71

The under 18's now represent 20% of the population of the parish (17% in 1979). Since the figures were compiled a further 5 babies have been born in the village! Although no statistics are available, by inference the average age of the population must now be lower than in 1979.

The turnover in population noted in 1979 continues; of the 152 households now in the village 56 have moved in within the last 5 years, 19 of these retired people, 21 are families with children. This figure does not include a number who have moved in and subsequently left within the 5 years.

Origins

In 1979 it was thought that 40 of the 133 households were of 'local' origin (30%). Although the criteria for this estimate is not known, it is not now thought that this meant born in the parish. For this appraisal it was decided that if either the householder or partner were born in the parish this would qualify them as "local", or if of Dorset origin as "Dorset". On this basis, then of the present 152 households, 10 can be considered as "local" and a further 38 "Dorset", a total of 32%, showing little change on the 1979 position.

EMPLOYMENT

In 1989 there were 84 people in the parish in full time employment (68 men and 16 women), 29% of the population. There were 44 people (36 of them women) in part time employment, 15%. In 1979 the figures were 29% and 11% respectively. There has thus been a significant increase in the number in part time employment, the majority of them women.

Of the total number in employment, 20 are self employed (13 of them men) and whilst based in the parish the nature of their business takes them largely outside it. There is only one business, a mail-order company, providing employment, which has business premises within the village.

The numbers employed in agriculture remain roughly the same as in 1979. There are 14 men and 2 women employed full time and 3 women part time, of which 3 men are employed outside the parish.

There are a wide range of skills represented by over 30 different occupations. Agriculture remains the single largest employment, the other ones being:-

Electrical/mechanical engineering	10
Secretarial/clerical	9
Retail	8
Local government/Civil service	7
Factory	6
Domestic	6
Building	6
Teaching	6
Sales	5
Nursing and other medical occupations	4
Others	42

Of the occupations listed above only engineering and building are entirely male, whilst domestic, secretarial, clerical and nursing are entirely female. The majority of people work in Bridport or locally in the parish, but many travel to other centres of population in Dorset or Somerset.

FARMS AND AGRICULTURE

There are 10 farms in the parish, although two are no longer working farms, their land being let as keep. Of the eight working farms, two are based in the village, Home Farm and Manor Farm and the rest scattered mainly around the perimeter of the parish. In the extreme east, Lower Sturthill has been owner occupied since the early part of the century, its soil mainly clay and its only product milk. Higher Sturthill is the only tenant farm left in the parish, its soil mostly clay with some lighter ground below Shipton Hill, and again its main product is milk. Shipton Hill Farm, once a smallholding is now also a substantial dairy farm. Home Farm in Brook Street is run in conjunction with Bennett's Hill Farm; there is no milking at Bennett's Hill which raises young stock and feed for the dairy herd at Home Farm. The original Manor Farmhouse has been extensively restored into two dwellings, currently holiday homes, and a new Manor Farmhouse built below King George V Field. The farm is arable and beef. Lynch Farm is another dairy farm and the only one in the parish which is owned by a farmer with many other farms in the County, with the farmhouse, a bungalow, being occupied by the dairyman and his family. Icen Farm has recently become a working farm again, and has a flock of Poil Dorset breeding ewes, the first large flock in the parish since 1965 when Manor Farm ceased keeping sheep.

The individual farms are all relatively small ranging in size from 45 to 300 acres, and most are run, as in 1979, by the owners and their families.

EDUCATION

The village school was closed in 1949 when the number of children was reduced to eight. The children were then taken to Burton Bradstock School, as the primary age children still are currently 22. Burton Bradstock School, once threatened with closure, is now secure for the future having over 100 pupils on the roll. The secondary school for the area is Colfox School just outside Bridport, and the number attending from the parish has increased from 4 in 1979 to 19 in 1989.

In 1985 free school transport to both schools was withdrawn by the County Council and concessionary fees were introduced. This move was strongly opposed by the parents and Parish Council with support from District Councillors, School Governors, press and public; but to no avail and fees are now paid for school transport by the majority.

There are six children attending other schools in the area, and some under fives attend playgroups at Burton Bradstock and Bridport.

There is a good range of Adult Education Evening Courses run at Colfox School.

TRANSPORT

Private cars

At present only 18 of the 152 households do not have a car, 12% (17% in 1979) and 43 households have two or more, 28% (13% in 1979). There are also 17 light commercial vehicles.

Buses

There is one service to Bridport on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings only, leaving the village at 10.00am and leaving Bridport for the return trip at 1.10pm, allowing about two and a half hours in Bridport. The current price of a single adult fare is 43p. There are no afternoon or evening services and the times do not allow for other than short shopping trips. Due to the increase in car ownership only a handful use the bus regularly, many of these being children.

A Transport Survey was carried out by the Parish Council in conjunction with Dorset County Council in 1987 and as a result a Friday morning bus to Dorchester was provided on a trial basis, but this was insufficiently used and withdrawn in 1989.

There is a service from Axminster to Weymouth, via Bridport and Dorchester, which can be joined at the A35 about a mile from the village and this is used by some.

Since de-nationalisation of public transport in the mid 1980's, the various services are obtained by companies through tender and this means that future public transport will only be provided if financially viable.

Taxis

There are two taxi proprietors based in the village.

Traffic in the Parish

The recent increase in building on the northern edge of Burton Bradstock has made a noticeable increase in traffic through the village, particularly along Feas Hill through to the A35 and Dorchester.

It is only the cul-de-sacs, Rockway and Rosamond Avenue, which have pavements and only Rockway has street lighting.

There are no one-way roads or speed limits in the parish.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Water

All the houses are on the mains water supply except for five, Innsacre, Bennett's Hill Farm, Lower Sturthill and two at Bonscombe. The public supply comes from the chalk at Litton Cheney via the reservoir at Barr Hill. This is connected to the Wessex Water Board ring main.

Wessex Water confirmed in 1987 that there is a potential to increase the population served on the existing system by up to 50%, providing that development is spread evenly throughout the extent of the existing village, but that any concentrated development, of even 20 houses, might require off-site mains.

Sewerage

There are 22 outlying houses not on the main sewer, principally in the Sturthill area, but also Innsacre, Bonscombe, Stoneacre, Smacombe, Shipton Hill Farm and Bennet's Hill Farm. The sewage disposal plant is situated off Markets Lane.

Wessex Water stated in 1987 that the plant is operating at its design limit, serving some 300 persons, and that if there was any further significant development, there would need to be an uprating of the works to provide the necessary additional capacity, therefore any developer is likely to be required to make a contribution towards this.

Gas

The gas main which has for many years run to the south of the village, was extended and laid throughout the main streets of the village in late 1987, and 48 properties were connected.

Electricity

All houses and farms are connected. In 1987 when the gas main was extended, underground ducting was laid the full length of Brook Street and Chapel Street as far as Periwinkle, in readiness for future under-grounding of cables. Rockway, Quarry Close and a section of both Brook Street and Chapel Street already have underground cables.

Telephone

Of the 152 households in the parish, 138 have telephones. In addition to the public call box in Brook Street there is now a pay 'phone in the New Inn. Despite representations, British Telecom confirmed in 1988 that the red telephone box in Brook Street would not be preserved as 'of special interest' and would eventually be replaced by a more modern version.

Post Office

The sub-post office in the centre of the village was down-graded by the Post Office to a 'community office' in early 1988 and the shop that was run in conjunction with it was closed. At the end of 1989 when the post-mistress retired a new shop and community Post Office was opened in Chapel Street. The village welcomed this new venture which not only provides an essential service but gives the village another central meeting place and helps keep the community alive.

The community Post Office provides all the services reasonably expected from a small office. There is only one other post-box which is sited at Peas Hill. There are two postal collections on each weekday and one on Saturday mornings. There is one morning delivery daily apart from Sunday.

Public Library

A County Council mobile library van stops at Peas Hill every other Thursday from 2.40pm to 2.55pm. The small library at Burton Bradstock is open four times in the week and the larger library at Bridport is open daily except for Thursdays.

Refuse Collection

There is one collection weekly and an amenity tip for household refuse at Bothenhampton near Bridport.

Street Cleaning and Drains

The maintenance of the highways in the parish is the responsibility of the County Council. At irregular intervals their workmen tidy the verges and clean the drains and ditches. Nevertheless, when there are heavy rain storms the drains are blocked by leaves and rubbish, water from the fields above Rockway and from the tarred roads and driveways pours down Chapel Street into Brook Street, sometimes flooding the houses at the lower end, although drainage in this area has been improved since 1979.

Due to the agricultural nature of the parish, the passage of cattle along the roads occasionally causes hazardous road conditions.

SOCIAL SERVICES

For surgeries, clinics, chemists and a general hospital the village has to rely on Bridport and for more specialised treatment on Dorchester and Weymouth. The full range of services such as 'Meals on Wheels', home helps and the district nurse are available when needed. The nearest office of the Department of Employment and of the Department of Health and Social Security are in Bridport. The Citizen's Advice Bureau is also in Bridport and open on weekday mornings.

Deliveries and Services

Various tradespeople deliver in the parish. Apart from the usual deliveries of milk and daily, evening and Sunday papers, the village is also served by a baker on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday, fishmongers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and coal merchants on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Many other local traders will deliver on request; e.g. butchers, grocers, greengrocers and bottled gas suppliers.

Operating within the parish there are three hairdressers and a registered child-minder.

VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS

Church

The church, dedicated to St. Martin, stands on a small plateau on the south side of Brook Street from where it is visible from most of the village. Floodlit on Saturday and Sunday evenings it is a prominent feature of the village. The tower is c.1400 but the remainder of the fabric was entirely rebuilt in 1862 when the architect was J. Hicks of Dorchester with whom Thomas Hardy worked as a pupil. The contractor, from a village of masons, was one of the Swaffield family. St. Martins was always a 'chapel of ease' from Burton Bradstock but now forms one of the parishes served by the Bride Valley Team Ministry led by the Rector of Burton Bradstock. There is a stair turret on the south side of the tower which houses four bells, one dated 1655, which were restored when the treble was added in 1911. The bells are rung each Sunday for service. The church congregation on average represents something rather less than 10% of the adult population.

The church is now the only place of worship in the village, the Methodist Chapel in Chapel Street having been closed in the 1960's after over a hundred years of use.

The Bride Valley Team Council produce a parish magazine, 'The Bride Valley News' which contains both church and village news and is distributed free to every household in the valley.

Village Hall

Situated just below the church this is the centre of village activities and is used by many groups and individuals from both inside and outside the parish. The hall was given to the village in 1936 by Mrs. Elizabeth Hansford in memory of her late husband Mr. Herbert Hansford. In 1985 after protracted negotiations it was placed in Charitable Trust on a lease from the Diocese of Salisbury. The Charity Commission are the 'holding trustees' and the 'managing trustees' are a group of residents, currently nine. One from each village organisation (Village Society, Parish Council, Parochial Church Council, Table-tennis Club and Ladies Afternoon Club), three annually elected villagers and one co-opted member.

In 1987 an extension was built onto the existing hall which provided a new large kitchen and new toilets. The cost of the improvement was £12,952, of which £4,120 was raised within the village through fund-raising events and donations and the remaining amount from grants from Parish, District and County Councils. In 1989 new double-glazed windows and new curtains were fitted.

Hire charges are purposely fixed at a very reasonable level by the management committee so that everybody can make maximum use of the hall, and therefore the Trust is not financially self-supporting through these. However, fund-raising by the management committee/trustees has become a regular feature of village life providing social as well as financial gain, and the hall is very well supported.

Village Shop

Run in conjunction with the community Post Office, this is open until 9pm each evening and makes life much easier for many people in the village although it is mainly used for 'odd items', most people using the shops in Bridport, Dorchester or Poovii for their main shopping trips.

Village Pub

There is only one pub in the village, The New Inn at Peas Hill, so called because it replaced a house which was destroyed by fire in the early 19th century. It is owned by the Bridport brewers J. C. & R. H. Palmer and is run by a tenant landlord and his wife. The New Inn is a busy village pub and another very important meeting place where news and views are exchanged. The pub boasts two dart teams: a table-skittle team and a quiz team and is the base of the Shipton Gorge Village Football Team. All of these teams participate in local leagues. In common with the current trend, the New Inn provides good home-made food which is served in its restaurant/family room which was added to the property in the mid 1980's when the old outside toilets were also incorporated into the building.

Playing Field

The playing field, sited at the top of Port Lane, was given to the County Council by Mr. George Sawways of Innaacre House in 1936 as his contribution to the 'King George V Memorial Fund' for the use of the children of Shipton Gorge to provide a place where they could play safely, and it is still known as the 'King George V Field'.

The field was, at that time, being used as allotments and it was not until 1947 that it was re-seeded as a playing field. In 1952 the stone gate posts were built, but it was not until 1961 that it was officially declared open, and it was then that the present swings and slide were installed. In 1963 the present metal barrier-type gates replaced the old wooden ones, and a see-saw was erected (later replaced in 1976). Over the years various additions and improvements have taken place, mainly funded by the Parish Council with grants from the National Playing Fields Association, the County Council and much local fund-raising - these include a Climbing Frame in 1975, a Roundabout in 1978 and rubberized Safety Surfacing around the swings and roundabout in 1988. The Parish Council owns two lawnmowers for cutting the grass and these are put to good use by one or two young men in the parish who are paid a nominal fee for this work. Safe storage for these mowers, has always been a problem for the Parish Council and so in 1989 it was decided to build a small stone shed in the field to house these and other maintenance equipment this is due to be built during 1990. The Parish Council pays the County Council an annual peppercorn rent for the field and has responsibility for its maintenance and day to day running, which is a major burden on its finances.

In 1989 the Parish Council resolved to form a Charitable Trust in order to broaden the base of involvement and responsibility for the field and to relieve some of the physical burden which falls at present, as it has in the past, on one or two Parish Councillor's shoulders. It will also enable fund-raising for equipment and maintenance to take place on a wider scale. It is envisaged that this Trust will be run along similar lines to the Village Hall Trust but with the Parish Council, via the Trustees, retaining overall control. A new long lease from the County Council is being negotiated at present.

Parish Council

Shipton Gorge Parish Council consists of nine elected members and meets regularly every other month, with additional meetings when necessary. It has a Planning Committee which deals with all planning applications concerning the Parish, and various other committees (Finance, Playing Field and Housing) with their own terms of reference and responsibilities. One Councillor sits on the Board of Governors of Burton Bradstock School (for alternate terms with Burton Bradstock Parish Council) and another is a Village Hall Trustee. The Council has a part-time paid Clerk.

Over recent years elections for the Parish Council have all been contested with no options to fill casual vacancies when they occur, showing a healthy interest in parish affairs. The present Council is representative of a cross-section of the village community.

1989 saw the last year of the old rating system and future Parish Council funding will come through the new Community Charge system.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Village Society

The Society was formed on 1st January 1987 as a result of the amalgamation of the existing Preservation Society, Community Association and the Flower and Vegetable Show. All residents in the Parish are members and no membership fee is charged. The aims of the Society are:-

- a) To foster the rural character of the village
- b) To raise funds for the Society and some other local good causes
- c) To organise various social and cultural activities for its members

The routine affairs of the Society are conducted by a committee of fourteen and the A.G.M. is normally held in October/November of each year. An annual newsletter is published in April/May and distributed free to all households in the parish.

The principal source of funding is the Annual Village Fete which is held in mid July. The Society's recent events include - Annual Flower and Vegetable Show, Bonfire party, Children's Easter party, Christmas social evening, Shopping trips, Lecture series, Carol evening, Quiz evening etc.

Table-tennis Club

The Table-tennis Club meets on one afternoon each week from October to April inclusive.

Ladies Afternoon Club

The Ladies Afternoon Club meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from September to May, providing a social afternoon where ladies can meet, discuss and participate in handicraft work if desired, along with a cup of tea.

Allotments

Almost half an acre of land, belonging to the District Council, is available for allotments behind the Council houses in Pear Hill, although only a very few are worked.

In 1990 the District Council is to use part of this land to build a car-park for the use of the residents of the Council houses to alleviate the parking problems.

Football Team

A village Football Team was started in 1989. The team takes part in the Sunday Pubs League. The team consists mainly of village players and uses the New Inn as its base.

Women's Institute

Sadly the Shipton Gorge Women's Institute closed due to lack of membership. It was founded in March 1951 and the last meeting was held on 10th November 1988 when there were thirteen members present.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

Copy of the Statement annexed to the Definitive Map in respect of Shipton Gorge Parish - the Definitive Map is held by the Shipton Gorge Parish Council Footpath Liaison Officer.

Footpath No. 1

From Cuckoo Lane (Grid Ref 497915) to Join Path No. 2 (Grid Ref 499915)

Footpath No. 2

From Barr Lane (Grid Ref 499917) to road opposite Post Office (Grid Ref 499915)

Footpath No. 3

From Barr Lane (Grid Ref 497919) to Cobbett Hill (Grid Ref 497922)

Footpath No. 4

From Cobbett Hill (Grid Ref 497922) to Lodders Parish boundary east of Innsacre (Grid Ref 497925)

Footpath No. 5

From Barr Lane (Grid 500916) to Join Path No. 6 on Shipton Hill (Grid Ref 508921)

Footpath No. 6

From Icen Lane via Shipton Hill (Grid Ref 513921) to Loders/Shipton Lane at Parish boundary (Grid Ref 503923)

Footpath No. 7

From St. Luke's Farm (Grid Ref 516921) to Cuckold's Corner (Grid Ref 518925)

Footpath No. 8

From Path No. 14 at Hammiton Wood via Sturthill (Grid Ref 513916) to Chilcombe Road (Grid Ref 524920)

Footpath No. 9

From Path No. 8 (Grid Ref 517916) to Join Path No. 17 (Grid Ref 517917)

Footpath No. 10

From Path No. 11 near Sturthill Farm (Grid Ref 521916) to Chilcombe Parish Boundary (Grid Ref 524915)

Footpath No. 11

From Path No. 8 at Sturthill Farm (Grid Ref 521917) to Chilcombe Parish Boundary (Grid Ref 524914)

Bridleway No. 12

From road at Higher Sturthill (Grid Ref 512920) to Loders Parish boundary on Shipton Hill (Grid Ref 509922)

Footpath No. 13

From Bridport/Dorchester road at Nine Bottles (Grid Ref 523924) to Chilcombe Lane (Grid Ref 524922)

Bridleway No. 14

From Icen Lane at Hammiton Wood (Grid Ref 510916) to Chilcombe Parish boundary (Grid Ref 524909)

Bridleway No. 15

From Icen Lane via Hammiton Hill (Grid Ref 509915) to Burton Bradstock Parish boundary (Grid Ref 510908)

Bridleway No. 16

From Path No. 15 (Grid Ref 510911) to Burton Bradstock Parish boundary thence to Cathole Copse (Grid Ref 509910)

Bridleway No. 17

From St. Luke's Farm (Grid Ref 516921) to Burton Bradstock Parish Boundary (Grid Ref 516914)

Bridleway No. 18

From Brook Street (Grid Ref 498915) to Burton Bradstock Parish boundary at Cathole Copse (Grid Ref 510908)

Footpath No. 19

From Path No. 18 at St. Martin's Church (Grid Ref 498914) to St. Catherine's Cross (Grid Ref 495907)

Footpath No. 20

From Road at The Plot (Grid Ref 496912) to Lane, near Parish Hall, also joining Path Nos. 18 and 19 (Grid Ref 498914)

Footpath No. 21

From Burport Lane (Grid Ref 494915) to Lane, near Bennett's Hill Farm (Grid Ref 488909)

Bridleway No. 22

From West End of County Road (Grid Ref 486915) to Bothenhampton Parish boundary (Grid Ref 484915)

Footpath No. 23

From Burport Lane (Grid Ref 491916) to Bothenhampton Parish boundary thence to Walditch (Grid Ref 485919)

Bridleway No. 24

From Bonscombe Farm (Grid Ref 492921) to Bothenhampton Parish boundary (Grid Ref 488923)

Footpath No. 25

From Junction of Path No. 6 at Icen Lane (Grid Ref 513921) to Loders Parish boundary thence to Traveller's Rest Inn (Grid Ref 515924)

A booklet giving some recommended walks within the parish using the footpaths and bridleways is available from both the New Inn and the Village Shop. This booklet was compiled by Chris Wales from walks devised by Miss Joan Ballard while she was Footpath Liaison Officer for the parish, a post which she held for many years. Proceeds from the sale of the booklet are donated to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

CONSULTATION WITH THE VILLAGE

Following the completion of the main part of this Appraisal, draft copies were shown to all households in the Parish, and a Questionnaire left with each household for completion. These were completely anonymous and asked for resident's views on various subjects appertaining to the village.

These were later collected and the information collated - the questions and the answers are shown on the following pages and make a fitting conclusion to this document.

The whole Village Appraisal including the results of the Questionnaire were presented to the village and discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 1990, before the publication of this completed document during the Summer of 1990.

QUESTIONNAIRES

There were 152 households issued with questionnaires plus 3 classed as holiday home at the end of 1989 when the appraisal was compiled.
138 replies were received, giving a 91% response

Question 1

How many years have you lived in Shipton Gorge ?

Answers

Of the 138 responding the length of residence varied from 3 months to 57 years, with an average length of residence of 12 years.

- *43 households have been in the village for less than 5 years (31%)
- 32 households have been in the village from between 5 and 10 years (22%)
- 35 households have been in the village from between 10 and 20 years (26%)
- 17 households have been in the village from between 20 and 30 years (13%)
- 6 households have been in the village from between 30 and 40 years (4%)
- 5 households have been in the village for over 40 years (4%)
- * includes 5 who have been in the village for less than 1 year

Question 2

The village has increased by roughly 20% in the last 10 years, would you like to see this rate of increase continued ?

Answers

34 answered YES
95 answered NO
5 answered 'Don't know'

4 replied that they would be happy with some increase but not as much as 20%

Question 3

The Parish Council has actively discouraged development of the green fields surrounding the centre of the village, do you agree with this policy ?

Answers

121 answered YES
13 answered NO
4 answered 'Don't know'

Question 4

The Parish Council has always resisted the extension of street lighting within the village. Should this policy continue ?

Answers

85 answered YES
44 answered NO
9 answered 'Don't know'

Some people had very strong views against more street lighting while some of those answering NO felt that more street lighting might help prevent crime.

Question 5

There are 15 footpaths and 7 bridleways within the parish. How many of these do you use ?

Answers

112 households use the footpaths and bridleways, 31 of them regularly. Only 25 don't use them at all.

Perhaps the new Definitive Map on the cover of this Appraisal and the list of footpaths and bridleways might encourage more use.

Question 6

Do you use the Village Shop ?

Answers

52 households use the shop regularly and another 77 occasionally. Only 9 don't use it at all.

Question 7

Do you use the Village Community Post Office ?

Answers

71 households use the Post Office regularly, 54 occasionally and only 13 not at all.

Question 8

Where do you do most of your shopping ?

Answers

120 households (87%) do most of their shopping in Bridport. 6 mainly use the Shipton shop and 12 mainly elsewhere.

Question 9

Are you satisfied with the Playing Field amenities ?
And do you use them ?

Answers

114 are satisfied with the Playing Field amenities, only 7 expressed dissatisfaction.

54 households use the Playing Field - 39% of those responding

Question 10

Do you feel that adequate use is made of the Village Hall ?

Answers

76 thought that adequate use was made of the hall, but 35 did not. Various suggestions for improved use were made and these have been passed to the Village Hall Management Committee.

Question 11

Are there any services that you feel the village is short of and that might be provided ?

Answers

There were many suggestions, but only a few were made by more than two people. 6 thought that an improved bus service is needed

5 felt that the frequency and efficiency of the W.D.D.C. road sweepers should be improved

4 people would like to see a Doctor's surgery in the village

There were 3 suggestions each for a 30 m.p.h. speed limit through the village, better street lighting (See question 4), a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and for a co-ordinated Help and Emergency Service by villagers for the collection of prescriptions etc.

The other individual suggestions ranged from a swimming pool and tennis courts to a village cat catcher !

Question 12

Do you read the notice board ?

Answers

112 households read the notice board, 26 do not

Question 13

Do you read the Bride Valley News ?

Answers

135 households read the Bride Valley News, only 5 do not

Question 14

Do you feel sufficiently informed about village activities ?

Answers

Only 18 households felt that they were insufficiently informed, the remainder were satisfied

Question 15

Are there any eyesores in the parish that could reasonably be improved ?

Answers

One person commented, perhaps rightly, that 'eyesore' was putting it too strongly. The question also asked for things that could reasonably be improved, but many of the remarks obviously did not take note of this. The comments were various:-

15 replies mentioned litter of one sort or another

14 replies mentioned individual dwellings as being unsightly

10 replies commented on parking at Peas Hill

8 replies concerned the state of the allotments behind the Council houses

7 replies commented on the untidiness of farms

5 replies concerned apparently abandoned vehicles

4 replies said they would like to see the land between the Church and Brook Street tidied, and 4 more that the village hedges needed attention

3 replies commented on untidiness around the Notice Board

There were a number of other comments, although out of the 138 completed forms received 63 had 'No comment' or felt that there were no eyesores in the village.

Question 16

a) Have you ever been to a Parish Council meeting ?

b) Are you satisfied that your Parish Council is looking after your interests in the way you want it to ?

Answers

85 replied that they had been to a Parish Council meeting (62%) but 53 had not.

99 were happy with the way the Parish Council is looking after their affairs (72%) but 28 were not. Of these 28, only 12 had attended a Parish Council meeting.

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