

NORTHIAM

PARISH ACTION PLAN

THE RESULTS

So here we are: an Action Plan for Northiam, created from over twenty hours of public discussion, over fifty committee meetings and over 500 completed questionnaires. To everyone who contributed - well done! And now the real work begins ...

There is a lot of talk about 'community' and the future of villages. From the Action Plan process, there is clearly a demand to build more of a community in Northiam, to create closer ties between people, foster co-operation and reap the benefits that people working together can achieve – socially, environmentally and politically. What people fear for Northiam is that the village loses its amenities and its identity, that neighbours become strangers and everyone looks to someone else to solve their problems or provide their entertainment.

There is the potential in Northiam to make the parish a lively, active and positive community – if people are prepared to contribute. This Action Plan contains what the people of Northiam identify as projects that are important to us all. Now we need people to come forward and ensure their success. Over the next few months, there will be a lot of communication asking for assistance in turning these plans into reality. Please help as best you can.

The Parish Council welcomes the publication of this Action Plan.

The Council is committed to doing whatever it can to turn the identified Actions into finished projects for the benefit of the village and will be reporting regularly on progress.

The Council wishes to thank the Action Plan committee and other parishioners who have assisted with the preparation of the Plan and hopes that others will now come forward to help the good work continue so that together we can build a strong local community.

Jeremy Exley
Chairman, Northiam Parish Council

28 September 2007

YOUR RESPONSE

A total of 503 questionnaires were returned, containing the views of 766 adults in the parish of Northiam.

The results of each question are attached in the last section.



COMMUNICATIONS

<i>Major project</i>	Review role of newsletter – origin, content, relationship with Parish Magazine, purpose, circulation, contributors, frequency, funding etc
<i>Other projects</i>	Review availability and use of noticeboards with regard to favoured communications Review website project with regard to favoured communications
<i>Future project and related issues</i>	While the parish is to invest in more web information, should it also examine access to the Internet for those without computers?

The section that attracted most attention was communications, as to be expected from our numerous public meetings: most people want to know more about what is going on in the parish. Indeed, there were 4,908 ticks to these suggestions in total. All three options of newsletter, noticeboard and website received support across all categories – the support for website information was surprisingly strong given that Internet access is not universal and perhaps suggests that the Parish would benefit both from providing website information as requested and providing Internet access for people without home access.

The newsletter is the most popular medium overall and deemed the most appropriate for most categories of information, apart from Parish Council minutes, church news and bus times (where noticeboards are preferred) and news on opportunities for training (where a website is perceived as the best medium). For regular updates on the availability of venues such as the village hall, then both noticeboards and a website are given preference. However, the differences

between the votes is often small, suggesting that, in most cases, all three channels should be used. And that's a lot of work.

We recognise the excellent work currently being done with the Parish Magazine and the high regard in which that publication is held. The survey suggests that more needs to be done to extend the range of information included and to make the publication freely available throughout the parish.

A common theme in the meetings was the benefits that accrue to the parish through more and wider communications: not only an opportunity for more people to become involved in the affairs of Northiam but also a constantly reinforced message that Northiam is a potential community, where people should become involved in local affairs. Such sentiment is born out in the next section.



THE WELCOME PACK

<i>Major project</i>	Review creation and distribution of a Welcome Pack - origin, content, relationship with County Council, purpose, circulation, contributors, frequency, funding etc
<i>Future projects and related issues</i>	If people recognise that local things are done by local people, what more can be done to encourage local people to contribute their time/expertise to Northiam? What can local shops/businesses do to publicise themselves and increase their role in the parish?

The number of people supporting a Welcome Pack is 532 while 58 oppose it. All ideas for inclusion in the Welcome Pack received the support, ranging from 338 ticks for "If there is something you want to do in Northiam, speak up! People are keen to support new ideas" to 541 people agreeing that we should publicise the need to "Support local shops and services if you can".

Of particular interest is the response to the suggestion: "Being a village means we rely on local people to get involved with the activities in the parish." The number of people agreeing with this sentiment is 419, but the total number of volunteer forms completed end of the questionnaire is only 87. So, presumably, there are over 300 people in Northiam who recognise that we rely on local people, as long as it's not them!

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

<i>Major projects</i>	Make contact points for Parish Council, Police, Neighbourhood Watch and emergency services available Either examine use of CCTV coverage for Northiam or explain why this is not a project
<i>Other project</i>	Improve ease of communications of nuisance and anti-social behaviour
<i>Future project</i>	Establish mechanisms to investigate and deal with particular nuisances

The public meeting on Crime and Community Safety was the first themed discussion held to promote ideas for the Parish Action Plan and was well attended, with an obvious bias in favour of those who saw anti-social behaviour as a current problem in Northiam. In our survey, the number of people who regard anti-social behaviour as a problem and those that don't is almost equal (269 to 259); however, that is still a lot of people who are having trouble with other people in the parish. The most common causes of anti-social behaviour are nuisance from vehicles, vandalism and people dumping rubbish.

There is general support both for more communication on contact points for dealing with nuisances (question 6; 81%); and for the use of CCTV (question 7; 69%).

There are two types of response to this information. One is to provide greater reassurance to concerned local people with a greater expenditure on surveillance and police presence. The other is to provide more facilities for people to do positive things in the parish and to encourage the growth of community. The first one will see a rise in council tax and the second will see more people becoming involved in the activities of the parish.

TRANSPORT & ROAD SAFETY

<i>Major projects</i>	Review parking arrangements in the parish in order to make the most of current facilities and identify opportunities for others Review restrictions on parking on verges, their communication and enforcement Examine the viability of paths along the roads, particularly Dixter Road and Station Road
<i>Other projects</i>	Examine the potential for road-calming measures throughout Northiam Investigate the potential for other, non-daily bus services based on support shown
<i>Future project</i>	Examine the viability of a roundabout at the southern end of the village and publicise the benefits if appropriate

Some of the more interesting and imaginative discussions took place in the public debate on transport and road safety. Everyone is always concerned about this issue and the support for traffic calming measures is consistently between 63% and 77%, while paths are supported for Dixter Road and Station Road by 289 and 236 people respectively.

The idea of a roundabout to replace the triangle at the southern end of Northiam village, in order to facilitate easier traffic flows and turning, especially at school times, is opposed by the majority (52%) of those completing the form. Nobody at the meetings found fault with the idea, so we are at a loss to explain the objection. However, the idea clearly lacks support and would require a clear communication of benefits to earn local support.

The support for bus services seems low. Less than 20 people expect to use a bus on any of the suggested new routes or times on a daily basis and only a monthly route between Northiam and Battle came close to achieving 100 votes.



LOCAL ECONOMY

<i>Major projects</i>	<p>Create a local directory of businesses, services and skills</p> <p>Promote zero rates to be paid by businesses with turnover less than £50,000</p> <p>Examine the potential to encourage tourism for Northiam, for joint promotion with Dixter and K&ESR, and the creation of maps at car parks</p> <p>Examine the viability of a local organisation to promote work in the parish (perhaps in conjunction with neighbouring parishes)</p>
<i>Other projects</i>	Publicise results of self-employed questions to prompt individuals to take on related projects

The discussions on the local economy produced a number of good ideas and the survey suggests that they have general support. Over 500 people would use a directory of local businesses, services and skills, which would both encourage existing local enterprises and, presumably, make it more attractive to create such ventures locally.

Tourism is also strongly supported, with 429 for and 152 against encouraging tourism in and around Northiam. The ideas from our discussions are generally well received, particularly a joint promotion for Northiam with Great Dixter

and the K&ESR railway (407 votes). There is also strong support for a public toilet, which is an expensive amenity for a parish of our size to maintain.

There is support from 434 (81% of the people who answered) for a local organisation to promote work in the parish.

The number of people operating a business in the parish is lower than we expected, with only 66 ticks. Of the suggestions made in our public meetings, both the local business forum and promotion to nearby parishes attracted support of over 50%.

EDUCATION & LEISURE

<i>Major projects</i>	<p>Investigate the purchase of the pub and its regeneration as a parish community centre (including the PR activities necessary to ensure its purchase!)</p> <p>Examine potential for adult education classes in the parish (or access to classes elsewhere)</p> <p>Examine extension of library services</p> <p>Investigate potential for live events, especially music, in the parish</p> <p>Establish more facilities for children</p>
<i>Other projects</i>	Pass on Women's Institute data to the WI (already done)

The largest figures in the survey of facilities and activities required are for daytime and evening adult education classes. Other figures may encourage people to investigate further in their own areas of interest.

The number of ticks for children's facilities seems low, but the demographic data at the end reveals that our sample includes families with only 71 children under 11 and 72 young people between 12 and 18. The excess of ticks over the sample number of children is explained partly by incomplete data and doubling of results where both parents complete the survey, but more significantly by the number of grandparents

who host children in Northiam and are looking for facilities.

The question of the future of the pub site opposite the Post Office is one that seems to be lacking a public forum. Other parishes are benefiting from funding initiatives to support local communities and are buying and running the pub themselves, often in conjunction with other required local services and amenities. A total of 332 people (63%) support such an initiative for Northiam, with 191 opposing it: both figures are significant. Any team of people taking on this project will clearly need to communicate the benefits to the local community to ensure that their support is gleaned – 27 people did specify an interest in developing this project on the Volunteer

The largest figures in the survey of facilities and activities required are for daytime and evening adult education classes. Other figures may encourage people to investigate further in

their own areas of interest.

The number of ticks for children's facilities seems low, but the

HOUSING & THE ENVIRONMENT

<i>Major projects</i>	<p>Investigate potential for local energy saving, water saving and recycling projects e.g. communal composting</p> <p>Investigate joint project with Dixter to make the verges more attractive</p> <p>Enter Northiam in Best Kept Village - and explain what everyone has to do in order to win it</p> <p>Examine a local standard for road signs, bollards etc. for greater consistency and aesthetic appeal</p>
<i>Other projects</i>	Use the data on housing needs

The local perception of property development in Northiam to meet future requirements shows the smallest local demand for large family houses; every other category showed significant support.

People generally support the ideas that came from the public meetings, with the highest number (550) and the highest positive percentage in favour (92%) of local energy saving and related conservation projects. All ideas were supported by at least 76% of those answering with a minimum support of 420.



HEALTH & WELL-BEING

<i>Major projects</i>	<p>Investigate the establishment and management of a Farmer's Market</p> <p>Publicise the fact that all events in Northiam are non-smoking</p>
<i>Other projects</i>	<p>Investigate potential for local classes on cooking and nutrition</p> <p>Establish a range of fitness activities for beginners, families with children and people with limited mobility</p>

One person wrote on their form, "It will never happen" against the suggestion for a Farmer's Market. Only 44 people opposed the idea and a huge 554 people say they do want this for Northiam. Strongest support was for Friday, Saturday or "any" day, with over

100 votes each. Our two nearest local Farmer's Markets – Rolvenden and Brede – are on Thursday and Friday respectively, but both suffer from lack of car parking space and low local use. Northiam is better placed than either to host such facilities.

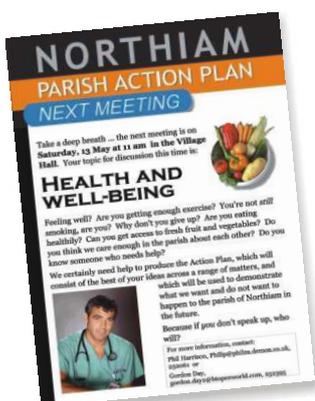
There was also huge support for using local shops to buy locally-produced food – and yet the experiment of

having a local fishmonger outside Londis on Friday morning was abandoned due to lack of customers. Was this simply lack of knowledge?

While most people are not facing difficulty in accessing affordable fresh food, there are 91 people who do, with the lack of local choice the main reason given. Hopefully, a Farmer's Market will make this easier. If it ever happens.

Local classes on cooking and nutrition are potentially going to attract 100 people, while opposition to smoking is currently at 84% for all local events.

The various specific suggestions show enough support to be taken further.



THE RESULTS

1 What information about Northiam do you require on regular basis?	Newsletter	Noticeboard	Website
The Agenda for the Parish Council meeting	169	157	156
Parish Council minutes	169	136	184
Local clubs and societies	210	137	153
Opportunities for training and funding for community groups	104	84	115
Sporting facilities and events	151	121	142
Social events	233	145	149
Bus times and fares	179	188	147
Services available at the Surgery (e.g. smoking cessation and physiotherapy)	223	111	139
Adult education classes	182	105	160
Hall availability, booking fees and contact details	93	136	133
Church services and activities	117	125	100
Other information	24	13	18

2. Do you think a Welcome Pack for newcomers to Northiam is a good idea?

Yes	No
532	58

3. Which of the following do you think we should include in a Welcome Pack as a definition of the character of Northiam?

3. Which of the following do you think we should include in a Welcome Pack as a definition of the character of Northiam?	Please tick all that apply
Being a village means we rely on local people to get involved with the activities in the parish.	419
If there is something you want to do in Northiam, speak up! People are keen to support new ideas.	338
Consideration for neighbours is important in our village.	508
Support local shops and services if you can.	541
The lanes are narrow and used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, so keep your speed down.	514

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

4 Do you regard anti-social behaviour as a problem for you in the parish?

Yes	No
269	259

5 Which of the following anti-social behaviours affects you?	Regularly	Rarely
Nuisance from neighbours (their noise, security lights, pets, bonfires, fireworks etc.)	84	221
Rowdy and nuisance behaviour (drunkenness, yobbish groups, verbal abuse etc.)	93	209
Vandalism	124	204
Fly-posting	32	169
People dumping rubbish	110	196
Nuisance from vehicles (bad driving, poor parking, excessive revving etc.)	183	184
Other	68	20

6 The Parish Council, Police, Neighbourhood Watch and the emergency services all provide assistance to deal with nuisances and the more serious threats.

Do you want a list of contact points with the details?

Yes	No
475	108

7 Would you support the use of CCTV coverage in parts of Northiam to act as a deterrent to crime and to monitor parish troublespots?

Yes	No
419	184

TRANSPORT & ROAD SAFETY

8 Do you support the principle of introducing traffic calming measures for the main roads through the village to ensure traffic keeps within the speed limit and to improve safety?

Yes	No
444	161

9 Do you support the principle of similar measures for those minor roads that are popular with pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders etc?

Yes	No
372	222

10 Should we review the current arrangement for parking areas to determine where more parking should be allowed?

Yes	No
447	136

11 Should the restrictions on parking on verges be strictly enforced?

Yes	No
435	137

12 Should additional off-street parking be available in the centre of the village?

Yes	No
435	150

13 Should we introduce paths along the following roads to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians?

Dixter Road 218	Station Road 236	Other 37
--------------------	---------------------	-------------

14 Should we introduce a roundabout to replace the triangle at the southern end of the village (where the road splits to Hastings and Rye) to assist the traffic flow at school times?

Yes	No
289	308

15 How often would you use the following if available?

	Monthly	Weekly	2 or 3 day per week	4 or more days per week
Bus arriving in Tenterden by 9 and leaving after 5	52	36	20	15
Commuter bus service between Northiam and railway station	55	21	17	17
Bus service between Northiam and Hawkhurst	65	58	19	11
Bus service between Northiam and Battle	92	50	12	10
Evening bus between Northiam and Hastings	56	36	15	19

LOCAL ECONOMY

16 Would you use a directory of local businesses, services & skills?

Yes	No
502	81

17 Would you use such a directory online through a Northiam website?

Yes	No
316	254

18 Do you support the idea of zero rates to be paid by businesses in the parish with a turnover of less than £50,000?

Yes	No
410	138

19 Do you think we should encourage tourism in and around Northiam?

Yes	No
429	152

20 If so, which of the following should we introduce?

	(Please tick all that apply)
Display maps at car parking areas and greens of sites, shops and public paths	376
Establish a local festival to promote Northiam	192
Promote Northiam jointly with Great Dixter and the K&ESR railway	407
Invest in the purchase and maintenance of a public toilet	288

21 Should there be a local organisation to promote work in the parish (registering skills, circulating job vacancies etc.)?

Yes	No
434	104

22 Do you operate a business in Northiam?

Yes	No
66	535

23 IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, then please answer the following:

	Yes	No
Would you contribute to a local business forum to explore joint opportunities, share ideas and address concerns?	38	28
Would you use a local chamber of commerce?	19	43
Would you be interested in your business being promoted to these other areas?		
Nearby parishes	40	17
Calonne-sur-la-lys, our twin village in Northern France	14	36
Through other twinning opportunities	12	37

EDUCATION & LEISURE

24 Would you use the following facilities and activities and at what times?

	Daytime	Evening	Weekend
Women's Institute	45	23	5
Internet café	28	20	18
Extended library services	157	57	62
Adult education classes	173	184	57
Live music events	43	160	138

25 Would you use the following for your children?

	age under 5	5-11	11-18
Pre-school education	26		
After school club		28	
Facilities during the school holidays		43	
A new playground	35	44	28
An updated library for children	34	45	27
Walking bus from Village Hall to school		20	

26 A number of communities are buying their local pub and extending the activities to include, for example, a parish office, a coffee shop and other facilities. Do you want this for Northiam?

Yes	No
329	191

HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT

Rother District Council operates with five year plans to describe its policy on housing, so what we agree here will go to inform Rother on what we want to see in the future for their next plan, joining up with their own housing needs surveys. There will be more housing – the question for us is: what sort of housing do we want?

27 What kind of development does your household need in Northiam over the next ten years and what would be your preferred method of payment?	Social renting, through a housing association	Private renting	Shared ownership (part rent, part buy)	Private purchase
Single person studio	20	14	15	24
1 or 2 bedroom flats/apartments	34	29	40	55
Single level living (e.g. bungalow)	33	16	23	69
Small family houses	30	32	56	99
Large family houses (more than three bedrooms)	5	3	9	39
Assisted, maintained or sheltered housing	43	16	12	44

28 Should we introduce a standard for road signs, bollards etc. that fits in better with the rural character of the parish?

Yes	No
420	131

29 Should we use the skills and expertise of Great Dixter to make the verges more attractive and appropriate by introducing patches of wild flowers etc. rather than only grass?

Yes	No
472	111

30 Do you want Northiam to enter the Best Kept Village competition?

Yes	No
424	120

31 Would you support a range of projects in Northiam for energy saving, water saving and recycling projects, e.g. communal composting, where green waste is kept at a local site and the resultant compost sold locally?

Yes	No
550	51

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

32 Would you use a Farmer's Market in Northiam, where local producers can sell their produce?

Yes	No
554	44

33 Which day(s) of the week would be suitable for your household?

Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Any
119	44	21	11	52	54	110	142

34 Would you use local shops to buy locally-produced food, if available?

Yes	No
568	26

35 Do you have difficulty in getting access to affordable fresh food?

91	481
----	-----

36 If so, is this because of:

Please tick all that apply

Physical disability	18
Lack of local choice	83
Lack of transport	31
Budgetary constraints	35

37 Would you use local classes on cooking and nutrition?

Yes	No
100	463

38 Should all events in the parish be non-smoking?

495	96
-----	----

39 Which of the following ways to help keep us fit are of interest to you?

Please tick all that apply

Organised walks for families with children	109	
Beginner's keep fit classes	128	
Keep fit classes for people with limited mobility	89	
Organised trips to local swimming pools in Rye / Tenterden	Rye 53	Tenterden 52
Organised trips to local tennis courts	37	

ABOUT YOU

All information collected is confidential. The following questions enable us to build a profile of the parish and to identify needs of particular groups.

40 How long have you lived in Northiam?

Under 2 years	2-5 years	6-20 years	more than 20 years
65	97	256	145

41 How old are the people in your house? (please enter a number for each category)

Under 11	11-18	19-28	29-55	56 and over
71	72	49	238	474

42 Which categories best describe the adult occupants of your household?

(please enter a number for each category)

Employed	Part-time worker	Self-employed	Unemployed	Student	Retired
197	83	100	15	41	380

43 How long do you spend getting to and from your place of work on a weekly basis?

(please tick for each person commuting)

Employed within parish	Under 5 hours	5-10 hours	10-20 hours	more than 20 hours
68	153	76	33	23

We would like to thank:

Karen Ayling, Terry Ayling, Emma Barker, Anthony Breed, Michael Clark, Sue Clark, Neil Clement, Ian Coleman, Krysia Cooper, Jack Daniels, John & Joan Davis, Gordon Day, Judy Deal, Ben Dillon, Marie Edwards, Jeremy Exley, Rosemary Froggatt, Trevor Gilbert, Sue Grant, Phil Harrison, Sue Keighley, Londis, Patricia Marston, Luke Mehdi, Joan Munn, Amy Nolan, Johanna Partridge, Joan Pearson, Roy & Angela Pepper, Carolyn Pierce, Lynn Pomfret, Leonie-May Roffe, George Searle, Thelma Searle, Terri Simpson, Spar, John Taylor, Tedham's, Esme Thornton, Michael Thornton, Sue Williams, Janette Wren, all the people of Northiam who attended meetings, completed questionnaires and gave us their support, and we acknowledge the generous funding of Awards for All, without whom none of this would be possible.