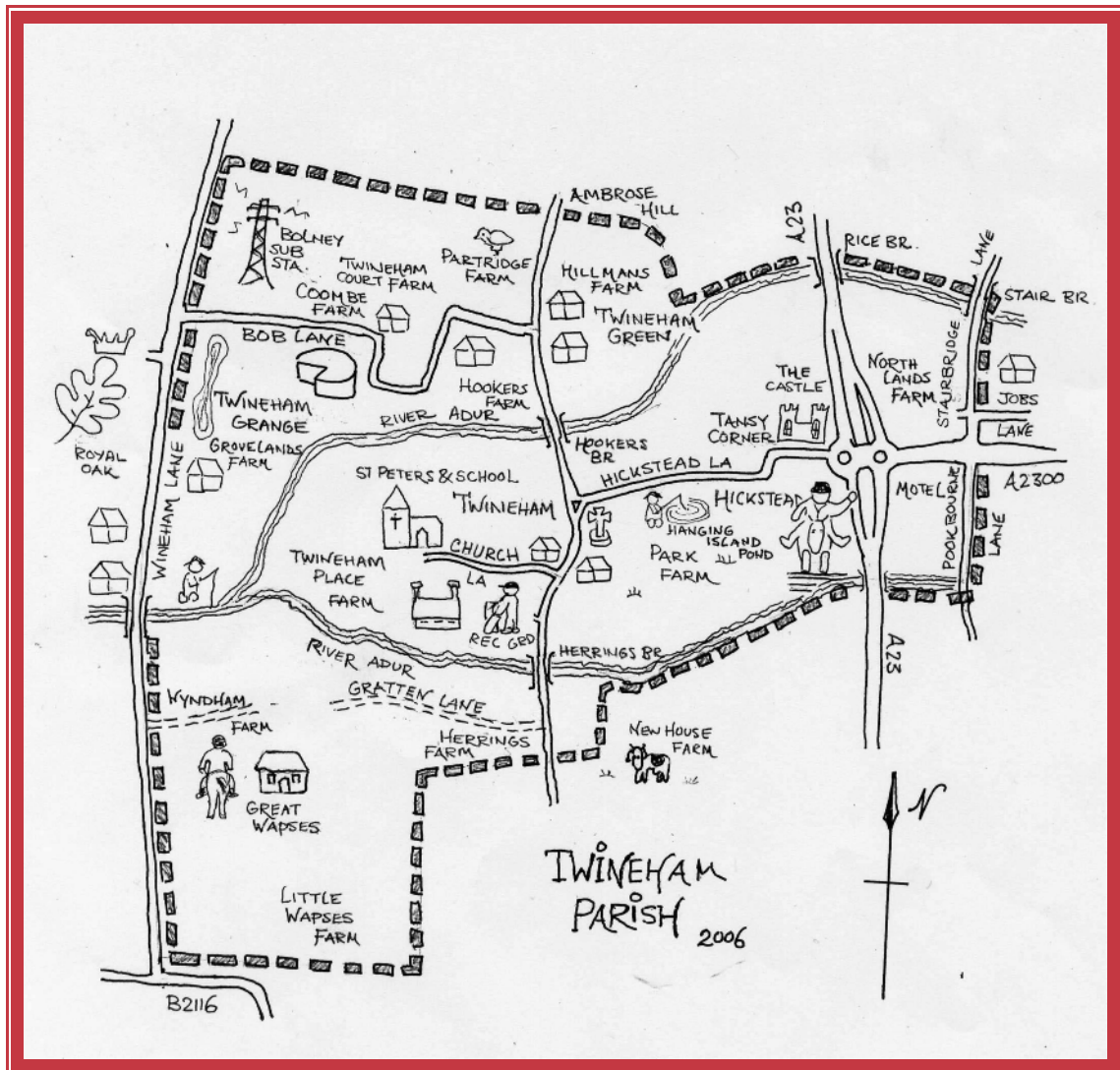


Appendix 2: Twineham Parish Plan, 2006

Twineham Parish Plan



Chris Veaney 2006

Spring 2006

Why a parish plan?

This document forms the Twineham Parish Plan the purpose of which is, in consultation with the residents, to prepare a community statement on how the Village should progress over the coming years. Its basis is a detailed Survey carried out in the summer of 2005 involving all households in the parish, for which we achieved an excellent 60% response. Details of these results were sent to every household in the community in December 2005. Quotations used in this document are also drawn from the survey

“A parish plan is a continuous process and should not therefore be a snapshot of parish views in 2005. Hopefully it will be reviewed and updated every few years”

“A planned approach to the continued evolution of the parish based on the needs of the community and not individuals”

A Parish Plan is a document designed by the community for the community. There are influences outside our control but if we are to maintain, preserve and enhance the environment of our parish, we need to have active management with a vision and targets of our own. It is hoped that such a broadly based community-led document will enable



Twineham Church

the Parish Council and higher levels of authority, as well as all others concerned, to plan pro-actively for the future and enhance the life of our village as they do so.

We would like to thank all those who completed the questionnaires and gave us feedback as well as the Parish Council and Action in Rural Sussex who have provided support and financial backing. We are particularly very grateful for the help of a number of residents who formed the Parish Plan Steering Group* and gave of their time for the production of the plan, all on an entirely voluntary basis.

* Parish Plan Steering Group - a group of volunteer Twineham residents who have worked on the Parish Plan including Anne Blacoe, Linda Bowyer, Helen Eastham, Jozek Fiedosiuk, Fanny Jones, Jane Kimble, Simon Le-Galloudec, Jane Scroggins, Kay Simon, Jan Sutcliffe-Smith, Jane Veaney, Sarah Winckless, Charles Worsley

Setting the scene

It would be a great introduction to say that Twineham was mentioned in the Domesday book. It wasn't, but documents in the County archives do record the Manors of both Twineham and Hickstead as early as the 13th century.

Luckily, Twineham is blessed with many fine old buildings and the present brick church, St Peter's, built in the sixteenth century, replaced an earlier wooden building. Hickstead Place, Twineham Place Farm, Slipe Quinces at Hickstead and Mercers in Wineham are just some of the earliest dwellings, all at least four hundred years old. More recent additions to Twineham's housing stock include the four wooden houses in Church Lane, which were a gift from the Swedish government after the Second World War. However, the parish has lost several other old buildings ranging from a ten room Regency mansion in Bob Lane (Twineham Court), to Hookers Mill on the river opposite Hookers Farm. The Mill being powered by water, then sails or sweeps, and finally steam. There was also a row of small

timber framed cottages at Twineham Green. Twineham School open in 1864 when the rector, William Molyneux, donated his barn and a small piece of glebe land to the church for the education of the "poorer classes". The school continues to flourish and currently has seventy-five children on its register, only nine of whom live in the parish.

Twineham has always been first and foremost a farming community and a hundred or so years ago nearly all the residents would have worked on the land. The population was larger than now, not surprising when parish records show that in 1856 Slipe and Slipe Cottage had tenants with twenty-one children living there. Most people would have been largely self sufficient and at this time Twineham boasted a Post Office, General Shop, Butchers, Dairy, Shoemenders, Blacksmith and Wheelwright. It made use of the Shermanbury Workhouse, which stood just along from the Royal Oak. Records seem to show that piped water was supplied by the Burgess Hill Water Company in 1911, the roads being surfaced in 1928 and electricity provided in 1936.



Whilst Hickstead boasted a coaching inn, Twineham has never enjoyed the luxury of its own pub but entertainment was provided in the Village Hall (demolished in 1996) and opposite in the Working Men's Club - Strictly Temperance!

In common with many other rural communities, there have been profound changes in agricultural practices that have affected the parish. In the 1970s, there were six farms in the parish, all with dairy cows, and it was a common occurrence for cars to come to a full stop whilst the cows were crossing the road to the milking parlour! The farms employed local people who mostly lived in, what were then, tied cottages. Today, there is just one dairy farm and the majority of farms are managed by farming contractors on behalf of their owners.

Twineham today

Today, the parish is one of the smallest communities in Mid Sussex with approximately three hundred residents living in a hundred dwellings pleasantly scattered in a haphazard fashion throughout the parish. Twineham lies in the gently undulating countryside of the Low Weald in the valley of the Adur, ten miles north of the South Downs. Much of the parish is only thirty or forty feet above sea level. The parish includes the hamlets of Hickstead and Twineham Green,

extending to Pookbourne Lane in the east and Wineham Lane in the west.

Although a rural community, the working population is now an eclectic mix of professional, skilled and semi-skilled, most of whom travel to work by car. However, the parish does support an interesting mix of businesses adjoining the A23 and boasts the prize winning Twineham Grange Cheese. Although the world famous Hickstead Showground is in the adjoining parish of Hurstpierpoint, Hickstead Place is in the parish. The parish does not have any shops or post office but there is a pub with a Chinese Restaurant, The Castle Inn, at Hickstead. There is a bus service at Hickstead with a half-hourly service that runs between Gatwick and Brighton as well as an hourly Burgess Hill to Pulborough service.

The school and church now serve as the only remaining meeting places for the community. The Recreation Ground, used for the Golden Jubilee celebrations, also hosts one of the few remaining village organizations, Twineham & Wineham Cricket Club, founded in 1893 and still going strong.



Paintings from Twineham School

Overview of the survey

The Survey revealed a longevity about Twineham – many residents, the majority are now in their middle years, have lived in the village for more than fifteen years, giving a sense of commitment to their lifestyle in the village. Other, more recent arrivals with younger families are looking to make the family home in Twineham for many years to come.

“Fine as it is”

The Parish Plan Steering Group is conscious of the fact that many aspects of life in Twineham are broadly satisfactory to the residents, who appear to enjoy the comparative solitude of life in the village, unmindful of the lack of pub, post office or local bus service. Indeed, many residents are keen to see things remain unchanged and are concerned to preserve most, if not all, of the aspects of its particular character. For these Twineham residents the most important objective is *“keeping Twineham the same as it is and peaceful with good neighbourliness.”* By far the biggest perceived threat to maintaining this idyll is the introduction of more housing. The single issue most important to help protect and enhance the local environment *“... has to be housing. Inappropriate development would destroy the sense of us still being in a rural community”.*

However, there are aspects of Twineham life that residents would like to see improved. Priorities cover:

- The social and community spirit within the parish
- Traffic
- Local environment
- Communication by our representatives
- Crime prevention

The Community

“Community spirit”

The challenge for Twineham in endeavoring to maintain or even enhancing a sense of a community, is its physical location. It is a small and somewhat dispersed community and away from the Church and School, there is little opportunity for residents to meet and socialise.

“The scattered nature of our community does make problems with creating a feeling of belonging and might be helped by having a centre but very few people appear to have the idea of community as a belief, not helped by people working away (as they must) from the area and the school kept going by many children attending from outside the village”

“The problem with the village as far as social events is concerned we, being a very scattered community, have no focal point - Village Hall”

The lack of a social venue such as a village hall, an adequate cricket pavilion or social clubs is clearly a disadvantage. There has been some support in the survey for building a new social venue.

However, the Parish Plan Steering Group has taken the view at this time, that the cost of providing and maintaining such facilities would be prohibitively expensive and beyond the financial resources of the parish. The Steering Group has tended to favour a more pragmatic and practical approach, setting achievable goals in order to make any progress. But Twineham folk are nothing if not resilient and resourceful. Despite the handicap of a lack of venue, there is strong desire coming through the Survey to foster community spirit within the parish. This sense comes through in many different ways – through shared concerns about issues such as housing and the local environment (see below), and also people’s willingness to support social events in the parish.

The parish already works very closely with the governors and head of the local school in order to make the school available to the community. This provides a very good alternative venue and a happy compromise solution. Although there are obvious restrictions as to what uses school buildings can be put, the Steering Group feel this is an area to be developed further.

The community has also begun planning and actioning a variety of social events – from post Christmas drinks and a local history evening, to a Casino evening. The survey has generated a large number of suggestions that the Steering Group will be happy to take forward with the help of volunteers.

There is some support for improving facilities such as pavements for pedestrians but generally improvements in facilities were not seen as a priority. Perhaps surprisingly an overwhelmingly majority indicated no opinion

on better play and youth facilities – this may point to the overall age profile (between 45 and 64) of the community. The survey also revealed that there was limited interest for a bus service and local taxi service.

Housing

Of the 129 residents who completed the survey only 33 (25%) expressed the belief that Twineham can accommodate some additional housing. Within this group the clear preference was for small family homes for local people.

Conversely, a clear majority (over 60%) of people believe that the Parish cannot support any more development. This goes to the heart of the issue of sustainability, the lack of essential facilities in the Parish, and residents concerns over the impact that any more housing might have on the Parish. Road traffic and parking being fairly obvious examples.

“Because of the lack of shop, surgery, bus, etc this area is not suitable for small cheap housing where residents might not drive or have use of a car”



The Weir



River Adur

“No further housing development without substantial improvement to many other parts of the infrastructure”

“No requirement for new housing as existing infrastructure already to maximum for small village.”

Any proposal for further development will, of course, have to be judged against relevant planning policies and, in particular, related to creating a sustainable residential environment. There are no shops and no public transport in Twineham and therefore any development in the village would potentially be contrary to planning guidelines and policies which promote development linked to public transport in order to reduce the need for travel by car.

The environment

Twineham is a sleepy, and some ways idyllic, community set away from the bustle of its larger neighbouring villages and towns. However, the two main routes into the village, Twineham Lane and Hickstead Lane are a convenient cut-through for access to the A23, and the cause of many of the environmental concerns for Twineham residents.

Traffic

Concerns over speeding cars and lorries registered the second highest response in the Survey, with 72% of respondents wanting to see action taken to reduce the speed of vehicles travelling through the village. The strength of feeling on this issue was also reflected by the

large number of additional comments submitted by residents. Safety is at the heart of village concern. All the roads in the village wind and bend, restricting visibility to vehicles, horses, cyclists and pedestrians alike. The lack of pavements in the village makes the roads particularly dangerous for pedestrians.

“Slow down speeding traffic.”

“Traffic speed to be controlled, making it safer to walk or cycle down rural roads.”

Parking of cars on roads also raises concerns. For example, *“parked cars are making it very unsafe to turn into or out of Bob Lane by residents opposite Bob Lane entrance on*

Bolney Chapel Lane! Sooner or later there will be a nasty accident."

Church Lane, a narrow road providing access to both St. Peter's Church and the school also suffers parking congestion at peak times, with its associated dangers.

The Parish Plan Steering Group aims to respond to these concerns by actively lobbying the Parish and County Councils to place speeding restrictions through the village and investigate erecting village gateways. The latter had a sizeable support from residents (63%) and are intended to help reduce speeding and warn traffic that they are entering a residential area.

Other Concerns

Within the broader picture, issues such as litter and fly tipping problems, poor road maintenance, abandoned vehicles or damage to soft verges by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), poorly maintained footpaths and bridle paths, noise and light pollution, and flooding emerge as factors that matter a great deal to residents, who regard them as important, on a day to day basis, to their quality of life.

For Twineham residents, the most widely recognised problem for the local environment is litter and fly-tipping. The Services area on the A23 comes in for particular criticism and is perceived as the sources of much (though not all) of Twineham's litter problems. Indeed, a casual walk through the surrounds of the Shell garage, Little Chef and Jobs & Stairbridge Lane leave much to be desired. The 'centre' of

the village around Church Lane is also impacted.

Fly tipping is another blight on the Twineham landscape. The following comment is typical of responses in the survey: *"Fly tipping at bend on Bob Lane and in field entrance blocked by a log on Bolney Chapel Road and on bend in Hickstead Lane. Litter from Services (Burger King) on Hickstead Lane."*

Flooding is another perennial problem. The flatness of the landscape (30 or 40 feet about sea level) merely exacerbates the problems caused by poorly maintained ditches and culverts. The maintenance of ditches is the responsibility of the landowner, the County Council being responsible for highway culverts.

"There is a culvert at the corner of Twineham Lane which in very wet weather - combined with the drain - always causes flooding on & round the corner. It is never cleaned adequately and neither are the ditches on either side of the lane".

Recognising the strength of Parish feeling on these issues, the Steering Group has proposed to address them through the Action Plan. The clear view is that ultimately the County Council needs to rise to its responsibilities, but in the meantime, the village has taken a self help approach, at least in part while the Parish Council presses the County Council to take action. Working parties of volunteers have already been out to help clear litter, culverts, and footpaths. The approach has not been unanimously supported by residents but there have been sufficient positive responses to make



The Millennium Photograph

this a viable solution in the short term, at least. Indirectly, it also helps to build community spirit through participation in common causes.

The Survey did canvass opinion on whether residents would be prepared to pay higher council tax to improve service discuss. Not surprisingly the response was a resounding no. The typical view is that the current levels of services represent poor value for money.

“No, we wouldn't be prepared to pay more council tax as we do not make use of the facilities for which we pay the same as the towns, i.e. street lighting, more policing, footpaths, main drainage”

Communications and representation

There were some interesting findings in the Survey on the topics of local government communication and representation. Quite a few people were unaware as to who their representatives were on the Parish (23%) and District Councils (39%). Many residents would like to know more about what is going on in the village and people would like to be better informed about how Parish and District Councillors represent their concerns. There is a desire to be better informed about planning applications which affect the parish.

Clearly, more needs to be done to raise the awareness about our local government representatives and how they represent the Parish. The Steering Group has been able to recommend measures designed to improve

different aspects of information and communication. Central to this is recognition of the need to improve the low level of awareness of the deliberations of local bodies and to encourage residents to participate in Parish Council affairs in order to ensure that residents' concerns are fully understood by councillors. Some action has already been taken with a coffee morning arranged by Sue Seward (District Councillor) in response to the survey results. The morning gave residents the opportunity to meet other local government representatives and our MP, Nick Herbert.

The Parish Plan will play an important part in documenting the views of the community and ensuring that elected Parish Council and District Council representatives, as well as public officials, understand the views and concerns of the community.

Acknowledging the wide availability of the internet, (76% of respondents now have internet access), the Parish Plan Action List includes initiatives to develop the village website, etc., to facilitate greater communication on key issues impacting the parish, especially planning applications.

Policing & neighbourhood watch

“Protect - would like to see Neighbourhood Watch introduced”.

There is deep concern about the level of crime in the Village. Many people believe that the police coverage is inadequate (60% regard police coverage as poor), and the local knowledge of the emergency services is poor.

An overwhelming majority would like and support a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Recognising residents' concerns, the Steering Group are able to put forward action plans to address these.

Several volunteers have already come forward to form a Neighbourhood Watch Group. We now need a nominated person to act as co-ordinator. It is not onerous as most communication is done by email, but this role is essential to ensure the scheme's success.

The Steering Group also considered what effective measures might be taken to improve interaction with the emergency services. The Group is keen to explore how this could work at various level; either by establishing a conduit in to the organizations to raise awareness, building closer ties with the community policeman, or providing up to date information and improving local knowledge to each emergency service. An additional useful feature would be to provide every household with important telephone numbers to ring in the event of an emergency, or when needing to contact other essential services.



Parish Plan Open Morning

The action plan

◆ THE COMMUNITY

Action 1	What	Who	When	Cost
Community Events	Family Fun Day/Picnic, Social Evening, Wine/Book Club, Roving Meal, Local History Group	Residents	Now & ongoing	Low

Action 2	What	Who	When	Cost
Neighbourhood Watch	Form Neighbourhood Watch Group	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator & Residents	Now	Low

◆ HOUSING

Action 3	What	Who	When	Cost
Housing	Ensure Planning Authority are informed of survey results	Parish Council & District Council	Now	Low

◆ LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Action 4	What	Who	When	Cost
Litter Clearance	Organise village litter picks & lobby District Council for action	Parish Council, District Council & residents	Now	Low

◆ ROADS & TRAFFIC

Action 5	What	Who	When	Cost
Speed Limits	Lobby the County Council to place speed restrictions through Twineham	Parish Council & County Council	2006/7	High

Action 6	What	Who	When	Cost
Village Gateways	Look at location and costs of erecting village gateways	Parish Council County Council	2006/07	High

Action 7	What	Who	When	Cost
Improving ditch maintenance	Ask local landowners to clear ditches, press County Council for action, consider work parties to clear culverts	Landowners, Parish Council, County Council & Residents	Now	Medium

◆ **COMMUNICATIONS & REPRESENTATION**

Action 8	What	Who	When	Cost
Better information for residents on local government issues	Look at improving Parish Council website or setting up a new community website	Parish Council and Residents	Now & ongoing	Low

Action 9	What	Who	When	Cost
Improve awareness of who to contact for assistance	Provide card for every household with important phone numbers	Parish Plan Group	Now	Medium

Action 10	What	Who	When	Cost
Improve local knowledge of emergency services	Ensure emergency services have up to date information	Police, Fire Service, Ambulance	Now	Low

