WESTFIELD PARISH SURVEY & ACTION PLAN 2006

Working together to build a better community

Westfield Today

Westfield is a rural parish in Rother District, situated approximately 4 miles north of Hastings along the A28. We have around 1200 varied homes. The oldest is 16th century and new houses have been built throughout the years up to the current time. They vary in style from Tudor timbered and white-washed post-war to modern brick built, and vary in purpose from starter homes and flats to larger family houses and farms.

Our thriving community benefits from a **primary school** which currently has 213 pupils. Recent major building works have provided new classrooms, a new canteen and an IT area. Older children attend Claverham Community College in Battle, or Robertsbridge Community College. There is sixth form provision at Bexhill College or in Hastings. We also have an active and well attended **church.** The earliest parts of the church are Norman. This beautiful building with its old lych-gate and the well tended war memorial form the first view of the village when approaching from the south. Our **doctors' surgery** has three full-time and one part-time doctor as well as practice nurses, a dispensary and excellent support staff.



The **commercial life** of Westfield is served by six village centre shops (car sales, butchers, newsagents, hair and beauty salons, and a general store), a farm shop, a dairy shop, two public houses, a restaurant, coach operators, a vineyard, taxi services and a small business park.



Community events and **local clubs** use the varied recreational facilities. We have two good standard halls, a parish field used predominantly for football and stool ball, a cricket ground, scout HQ, recreational ground, bowling-green, tennis court and several play areas. There are well established activities for all ages and these include roller-booting, fitness and slimming classes, mother & toddler and playgroup, horticultural society, WI, dance classes, drama and art groups, church choir, table tennis, bowls, football, tennis and cricket, cubs, scouts, guides and brownies……...and many more.



The Parish Council of 11 elected members meets every month and actively seeks to further the best interests of residents. At their Community Council meetings **Westfield Community Association** brings together around 20 individuals who represent local clubs, to discuss issues of mutual concern and local importance.

The last Census was in 2001 when our population was recorded as 2566, of which 1215 were male and 1351 female. Rother District Council estimates that by 2005 this total had risen to 2678. The census also gives the following residents' age profile:

1 to 4 years	5 to 15 years	16 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65+ years
4.4%	15.3%	7.2%	21.1%	30.7%	21.2%

This snapshot gives a brief flavour of Westfield today. The vitality of our community is evidenced by the wealth and variety of activities organised by residents, the facilities they work to maintain, and the level of voluntary help given to so many organisations. There is something for everyone, and the enthusiasm of residents for getting involved augurs well for the success of our Parish Action Plan. Many hundreds have contributed in giving their opinions and formulating a way forward. Hopefully, many more will help to take these plans to completion.



What is a Parish Action Plan?

Village or Parish Action Plans are part of a government initiative to help rural communities map out their future by giving local people a chance to have their say on issues which are important to them.



How was it organised?

Following meetings in the Parish, a questionnaire was distributed to each household in March 2005. At the same time questionnaires were developed for our children and young people which they completed with the help of Claverham and Robertsbridge Community Colleges and Westfield Primary School.

There was an excellent response from the surveys which were then professionally analysed.

How were these actions chosen?

A group of volunteers met in July 2005 to consider the results and prioritise actions using the following criteria:

- A large proportion of respondents thought the action was needed
- The action will assist an important minority of residents (e.g. The elderly, the young)
- Very strong views were expressed on the matter

Our first Action Plan has been created from a community consultation. The process of planning actions derived from local opinion is an open one. More ideas and comments from any member of the community are important for our plans to grow and adapt in line with current local thinking. More volunteers to take the actions forward are especially welcome. The "How and When" these actions happen relies on involvement from local groups, organisations, businesses, interested individuals, our Parish Council and Community Association, the Police and local government agencies.

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Now read the Plan and tell us how YOU can help.



Transport

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Explore the possibility of Green Lanes (ie 20mph & priority for walkers/cyclists/riders) Present findings to the Action group to discuss feasibility	Our lanes are becoming increasingly busy; the safety of other road users is at risk. 54% of survey respondents (392 people) supported the idea of Green Lanes around Westfield	• Look at Green Lane website for information • Discuss with others who have achieved this & present back any success stories and testimonials • Discuss with ESCC • Contact Council for the Protection of Rural England	Sue France	By September 2006
Gather information about Public Transport and the long term strategy for the Parish Present findings to the Action Group to consider if further work is needed	24% of respondents (172 people) experienced problems with using public transport	• Discussion/meeting with ESCC • Contact with Rural Transport Group to establish current times, charges and reliability	Maxine Betti	By September 2006
Find a solution to the village parking problems 	53% (389 people) identified car parking as a problem in the village. The most commonly identified sites were The Surgery, village halls and the roads around the school, especially at school drop-off and pick-up times	• Explore the possibility/interest in Workhouse Lane becoming a one way street • Negotiate with Pub Owners to consider their car park to be used during school pickup/drop off times • Look at the feasibility of a walking bus for getting children to school	Kathryn Harrison; Parish Council; School; WCA; Those who volunteered for Walking Bus Scheme on "Getting Active Sheet"; PTA	By September 2006
Make pathways more accessible to allow people to walk into the village 	Comments were received about overgrown hedges and obstructed footways causing difficulties to pedestrians	• Lobby ESCC to maintain footways • Consider action as part of the Spring Clean project	Westfield Parish Council ESCC Volunteers	Over the next year

Transport (continued)

Consider routes for cyclists:- a)Beggars Corner to The Plough- through Fish Ponds lane to Cricket ground, down drive to A28 (possible new roundabout), Mill Lane to Cottage Lane and along to Sedlescombe b) Link with Marsh Cycle routes via Doleham Halt (good train service). Make Doleham Lane, and Lower Lidham Hill Green Lanes	322 respondents declared that dangerous roads or lack of cycle paths prevent them cycling more	• Lobby ESCC for local routes for cyclists. • Contact SUSTRANS • Cottage Lane and Mill Lane to become Green Lanes	Anne Norris Village Cyclists SUSTRANS	By spring 2007
Revisit a "Wheelies" type car service as BACT looks set to close down	To match identified travel needs of residents with those willing to help provide transport	• Discuss with the Surgery • Find out how the service will be maintained in other areas	Local Champion Age Concern Dial a Ride Services	As soon as possible



Housing

Action:	**Why:**	**How:**	**Who by:**	**When**
Ensure all new housing in the parish has a certain percentage available for Westfield families, such as the Westfield Down proposal – see under Recreation	Most comments received were about already over-stretched infra structures and not wanting any further housing. If houses must be built, consideration should be given to current residents' needs (previous developments have resulted in an influx of people from outside the immediate area putting additional strain on services)	• Discuss with Housing Associations and RDC	Parish Council	During 2006







Community Safety

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Establish wider coverage of Neighbourhood Watch	51% of respondents already belong to a neighbourhood watch scheme. Of those who do not, many expressed an interest in knowing more	• Suggest co-ordinators re-introduce themselves by issuing contact details within their assigned area. • Continue to promote NHW by email (to join contact:- hastingsandrothernhw@sussex.pnn.police.uk)	Neighbour-hood watch by email organiser NHW co-ordinators All those who expressed interest in NHW on Getting Active Sheet	Summer 2006



Environment

This is a really important issue for most people. There is a need to keep our environment clean and pleasant and this will be an area where the parishioners can work together.

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Organise a "Spring Clean" once or twice a year Set up a system whereby people regularly do their own "patch"	There was a high level of support for all suggested remedies for tidying Westfield. 264 people favoured an annual or bi-annual community clean-up	• Someone to initiate/set up • Equipment (gloves, litter pickers etc from Council) • Consider a BBQ to promote community spirit	All those who volunteered on "Getting Active Sheet" WCA Parish Council Young People, Scouts, Other interested Residents	Ongoing each year, starting in Spring 2006
Tackle the Litter problem in the parish 	The litter problem was the most frequently indicated local environment issue	• Hold a Campaign at the school • Animal shaped bins to encourage younger children • More ordinary large bins • Poster campaign • Spring Clean/Working Parties • Have a sponsored clean up	Headmaster of local school Parish Council Shop keepers & local businesses Scouts Guides and volunteers	Following on from Spring Clean project 

Environment (continued)

Action:	**Why:**	**How:**	**Who by:**	**When**
Make sure the grass edges are not cut where it is safe to do so, to preserve orchids and wildlife	To preserve endangered flowers	• Residents to brief Parish Council to known orchid sites • Council to brief contractors	Residents Parish Council	2006 -In time for next years cutting programme
Set up an additional more permanent recycling centre on a site to be identified to include tins/can recycling, garden waste composting and cardboard collection.	79% of respondents already use recycling facilities, but many commented on the limited range available within the Parish	• Negotiate with Rother District Council and the GP Surgery and the Down Project • Sell can crushers locally • Provide green bins for garden waste	Rother District Council Parish Council Local Residents	Within the next two years
Investigate more frequent bottle bank emptying or permanent bank as above 	See comments above	• Negotiate with RDC	Parish Council	ACHIEVED (A glass and plastic bottle bank now permanently sited at Churchfield)
Reduce local disturbance	8 potential causes of disturbance were listed in the survey. Of these, vandalism (61%), abandoned cars (33%) and traffic noise (25%) caused the most discomfort	• Publish environmental health dept contact numbers • Publish advice on who to contact for abandoned cars • Education for local youths on motorcycles • Discussion with Youth Development Service on their involvement	Parish Council via Community Newsletter and website Someone to talk to local youths Youth club CPSO's	During 2006 Once someone is identified to talk to local youths
Explore changes needed to the way we deal with Dog Fouling 	60% of respondents expressed concern about dog fouling and 49% would like more dog waste bins	• Article in Newsletter and on website about ways of disposing of dog mess • Regular check on current dog bins and frequency of emptying • Consider if more bins are needed – are people willing to pay more or can we get sponsorship	Someone to write article for newsletter and website Parish Council Local Residents	Ongoing (8 dog waste bins now situated around the village. 2 more under consideration. SWA and RDC advice on disposal of own dog waste reported in newsletter.)

Environment (continued)

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Tackle the vandalism and Graffiti problems in the Parish  New Moorsite	61% of respondents to the adult survey expressed concern about vandalism. 53% of primary school children identified this as the problem most in need of solutions	• Graffiti removal Kit now available – contact Barbara - 751580 • Encourage good reporting of vandalism to Parish Council and Police • Discuss other possible solutions with the YDS on approaches to Young People	Barbara Balkham Parish Council CPSO's Youth Development Service (YDS)	Partly achieved Graffiti Kit used on 10 occasions CPSO's patrolling early evening


Churchfield

Young People and Children

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Develop the play facilities in the Parish (Could include cycle track, basket ball and half sized football pitch for youngsters to play on and new play equipment for all ages)	63% of respondents (460 people) want improved play facilities. 76 of our primary school children put this as their highest priority	• Explore grants available for children's play equipment. • Seek advice from ROSPA • and Action in Rural Sussex	Parish Council ROSPA Action in Rural Sussex School Residents WCA	Timing depends on new development at the Down
Develop a Youth Club	75% of adult respondents (550 people) support the development of a youth club. 18% of the young people, in the 11 to 16 age group, wanted a youth club	• Hold a meeting to discuss the plans with the village young people, interested parents and adults. • Invite youth workers from Action in Rural Sussex and YDS to facilitate and advise.	Young People Ruth Carter Parents with a vested interest Classroom assistants Action in Rural Sussex Youth Workers Interested Adults	In 2006


The cricket field


Whiteland wood


The Parish hall



Communication

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Set up a Parish Website to complement the Parish newsletter	62% of respondents have access to the internet and 52% supported the idea of setting up a Parish website	• Website editor identified • Content & layout to be further developed • www.westfieldparish.co.uk	James Woodhead Parish Council Volunteers	Website now established Further development by May 2006



Recreation

The Westfield Down proposal is a major initiative in our parish. It combines the requirement for us to have more housing, the need for the football club to have a new pitch and pavilion so that they can remain in the second division (and possibly move up), a new pavilion for the cricket club, a new base for scouts, cubs and beavers, and an area for developing a children's playground.

Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Support the development of the Westfield Down proposal Form a partnership with the Steering group	80% (586 people) Support the development of new sports facilities at Westfield down	• Make sure the relevant comments from the survey about the Down proposal are fed back to the steering committee, WCA and Parish Council • Involve the volunteers from the "Getting Active Sheet"	Westfield Action Plan Group Sports Association Steering Group Steering Group; Volunteers WCA	ACHIEVED – relevant comments fed back to steering group Once the feasibility study is complete and the project gets the green light
Explore the possibility of a Drop In Centre	56% (408 people) Would like to see a Drop-in centre for the community	• Hold a well publicised meeting for interested residents to investigate the possible location, purpose and frequency of opening	Those who volunteered on the "Getting Active Sheet"; Action Plan Group; Age Concern	By November 2006
Consider what is available in the Parish for the elderly and if further groups etc are needed Identify a lead to take this forward	To utilise volunteers who have an interest in provision for the elderly and to plan for a growing older population	• Hold a meeting for those who volunteered to help with projects for the elderly • Include Age Concern and leaders of established groups	Volunteers Age Concern Current leaders Someone to co-ordinate the meeting	Depends on a co-ordinator



General Issues

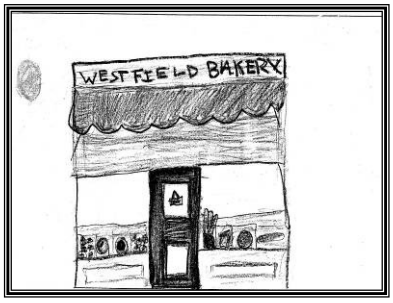
Action:	Why:	How:	Who by:	When
Maintain a database for all volunteers from the survey and future volunteers	To promote a self-help community and make best use of volunteered manpower.	• On a computer with paper copies as necessary • Comply with data protection Act	Action Plan Group	Ongoing
Contact all who volunteered on the "Getting Active Sheet" with either a specific invitation or to say they will be contacted as needed	See above	• Use computer database and funding from Parish Council for letters etc	Sue France Other members of Action Group	Following publication of Action Plan

What happens now?

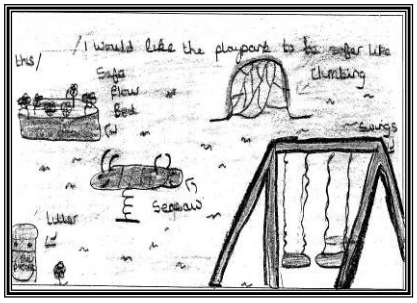
The plan will be delivered to all households in the parish at the end of February 2006. A full copy will also be sent to Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council. The first review of the plan will be in May 2006 and thereafter every four months.



Some ideas from our primary school children,







The Way forward

All Residents within the Parish are extremely welcome to join the Action Group and help bring Westfield's achievements to life! Whether you wish to get involved, volunteer for supporting a particular project or generally just wishing to know more about a specific subject raised – please come along.
Contact Barbara Balkham 751580 or Sue France 751029

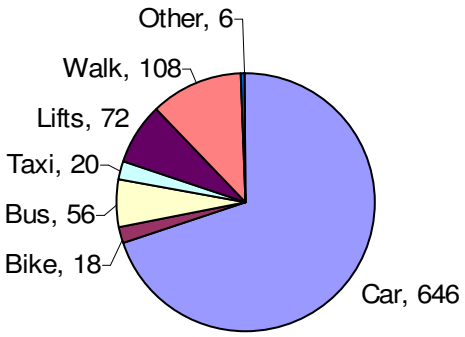
Results from the Questionnaire

The survey was very successful and the response very encouraging. Of the 1200 distributed 416 were completed and 731 residents participated either as individuals or as members of a family group.
A further 182 responses were received from the children at Westfield School and 40 from the teenagers.

Transport

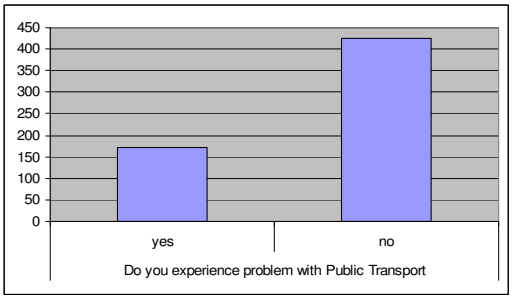
1.

You mostly travel by:

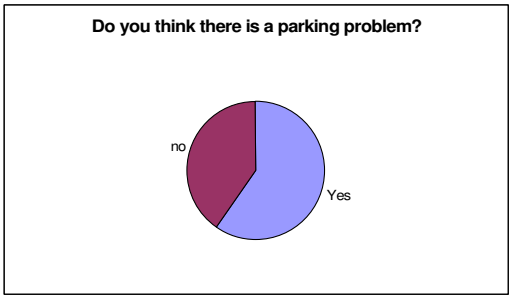


2. Would you like to see changes regarding roads and vehicles in any of the following ways?
Reduced speed limit **485** Enforced speed limit **418** Safer crossings **349** Road conditions **192** More parking **207**

3.



4.



5. Would you like the lanes around Westfield Parish to be GREEN lanes? ie 20mph and priority for Walkers/ cyclists/ horse riders Yes **392** No **193**

6. If you have a bike but rarely use it, why is this? Dangerous roads **170** Lack of cycle paths **152** Cars speeding **161** Steep hills **42** Weather **35** Other **72**

7. Would you be willing to be a volunteer driver? Yes **9** No **625**

Housing

8. Are you looking for accommodation in the Parish? Yes **24** No **670**

9. Type of accommodation
First time buyer **6** smaller house **18**

10. Are members of your close family wanting to move back into the parish?
Yes **28** No **670**

11. Type of accommodation needed
Affordable rented **6** Other rented **2** First time buyer **10** Sheltered **3** Smaller housing **16** Larger housing **6**

12. Comments on building

- Already reached saturation.
- Protect AONB's and SSSI's.
- Do not make it part of Hastings.
- No more industrial development.
- Services already stretched:
- Lack of police.
- GP full up.
- School under pressure.
- Sewage system.
- Volume of traffic.
- Protect affordable housing for the young.
- Protect our village.

Community Safety

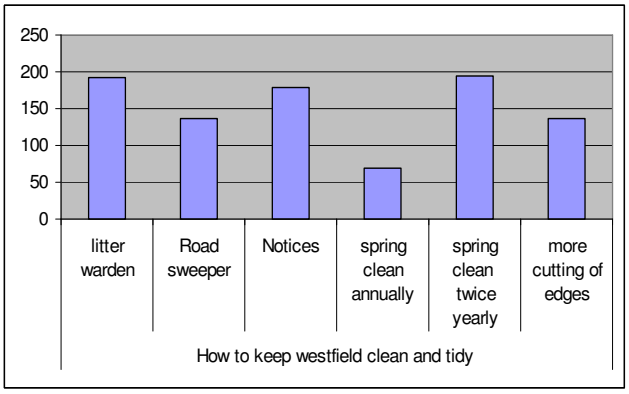
13. Do you belong to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?
Yes **373** No **258**

14. Would you like to see street lighting in Westfield?
Yes **262** No **414**

15. If there was a "walking bus" scheme, to get children to school, would your family use it?
Yes **42** No **76** NA **596**

Environment

16.



17. Do you use recycling centres?
Yes **580** No **128**

18 Which type?
Bottle bank **540** Can bank **280** Paper & cardboard **470** Clothing **262** Plastic **300** Garden waste **136**

19 comments on recycling

- Information on location needed.
- Where do you take cardboard?
- Not cost effective.
- Make it part of weekly collection for the elderly.
- Use doorstep boxes as for newspaper.
- Sites in village – Pub car parks.
- Permanent bottle bank as mobile soon filled.
- Local facilities needed.

20 Does Westfield suffer from any of the following disturbance?
Traffic noise **180** Noise pollution **94** light pollution **66** Vandalism **446** Abandoned vehicles **240** Fireworks **156** Motorbikes **168** Helicopters **22**

21 Are you concerned about dog fouling in the Parish?
Yes **416** No **286**

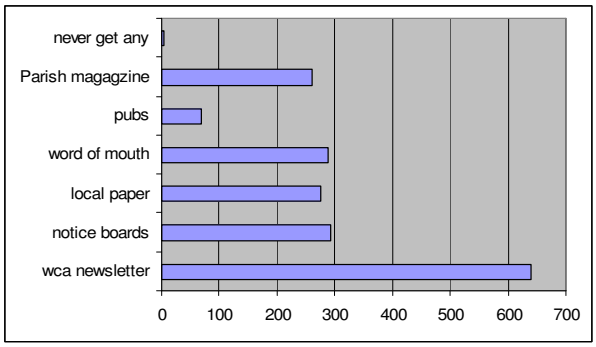
22 Do you think we need more dog bins?
Yes **358** No **272**

23 What do you think should be done to help protect and enhance the local environment of Westfield?

- Better public transport.
- Control parking.
- Stop fly tipping.
- More litter and dog bins.
- Public toilets.
- Post Office.
- Enforce speed limits.
- Enforce parking restrictions.
- Protect green fields.
- No more new building.
- Doctor's list full.
- Village Policeman.
- No tolerance for bad behaviour and vandalism.
- Keep pavements and footpaths clear.
- Use enforcement notices.
- The shop is an eye sore – broken windows and blinds.
- Street lighting for A28.
- Develop a Village Green.
- More village events.
- More road crossings.
- Bring back the Post Office.
- Build the by-pass.
- We need a Police patrol and parental control.

Communication

24 Where do you get details of Parish events?



25. Do you have access to the internet?
Yes **452** No **230**

26 Do you think Westfield should have a web site?
Yes **380** No **236**

27. If the school made their computer suite available in the evenings would you use it?
Yes **54** No **601**

Young People and Children

28. Please give details of any concerns that you have for young people in Westfield and what action you feel can be taken to reduce these concerns

- Nowhere to go in the evening.
- Bring back parish field for young to meet.
- We need better bus links.
- Parents must participate in youth activities.
- They drive too fast.
- There is an element of young people that do not appreciate the village or community.
- Some evening policing is essential.
- No decent play area for mountain bikes or skateboards.
- Street warden.
- We need communication between pensioners and youth.
- Provision of more facilities will not cure bad behaviour.

- Don't blame all teenagers as badly behaved.
- Playground with shelter, skateboarding, basketball and big wall needed.
- "There is nothing to do" is not an excuse for bad behaviour.
- Youth club with plenty of helpers and funding.
- There is a drug problem in Westfield, the dealers should be prosecuted.
- Youngsters need help and things to do, clubs, sports, leisure.

29. Would you like to see improved facilities and safety in the children's play areas?
Yes **460** No **58**

30. Would you like to see one good quality site for new play equipment?
Yes **418** No **86**
Where do you suggest it is sited?
- Improved play areas.
- Needs to be visible to deter vandalism.
- Needs to be properly secured with fence.
- Should include a picnic table.
- Move to middle of Parish field.
- Play area in corner of sports field too isolated.
- Re-site football and reclaim field for all.
- Suggested sites: bowling green, surgery, swings, school, tennis courts, opposite church and top of Heathlands.

31. Would you be in favour of a skate boarding facility in the Village?
Yes **282** No **294**

32. Do you support the creation of a Youth Club in the Village?
Yes **550** No **46**

Recreation

33. Do you support the proposed development of some of the field next to the surgery for a new Sports Pavilion and football ground, and linked to the cricket ground?
Yes **586** No **72**

34. Are you in favour of combining all the sporting activities into one overall sports association?
Yes **484** No **92**

35. Would you like to see the development of a Drop-In centre somewhere in the village for tea or coffee?
Yes **408** No **202**

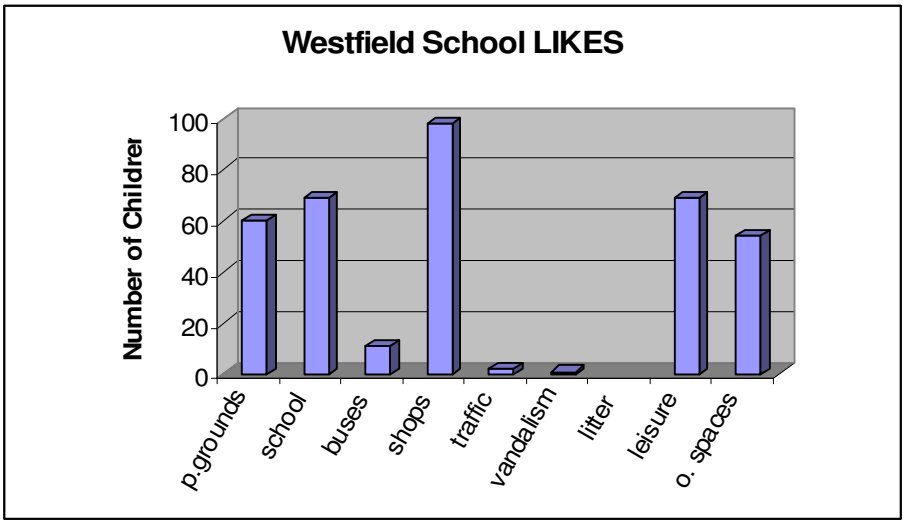
36. Are there any other suggestions you would like to make to improve the leisure and recreational activities in the village?
- Where is the money coming from?
- New pavilion should be for sports, leisure and youth.
- The church could do more and be more friendly.
- Other ideas; more church concerts, cinema club, dial-a-ride as in Rye.
- All activities will need better bus links.

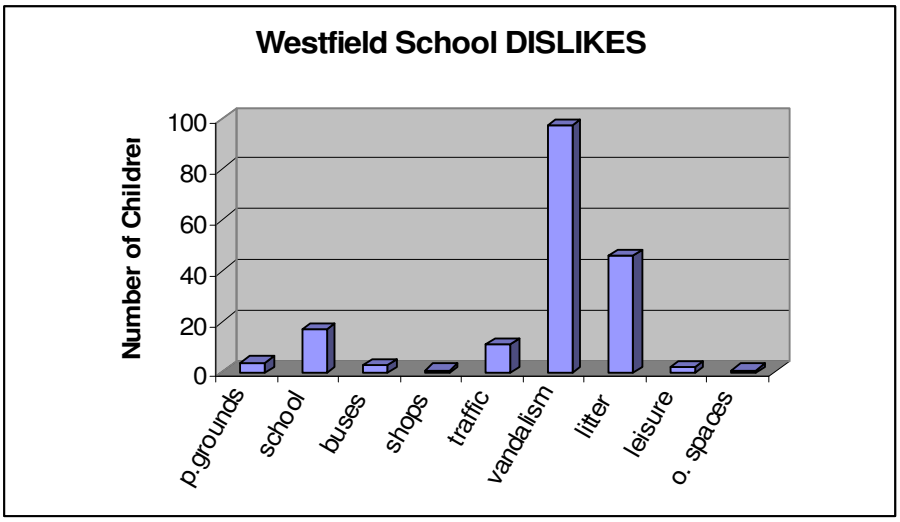
37. And Finally. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, ideas about future developments in Westfield?
- Any future development must be for the good of all residents, not just greedy developers.
- NO more new building.
- Bring back the post office, even part-time.
- Not too sterile.
- We need a local police presence.
- Must look after wild plants and animals – we share the planet.
- More cycle tracks / footpaths.
- Keep forty foot lorries and coaches out of lanes e.g. Moat Lane.
- Don't forget the elderly.
- Youth work top priority, skills clubs needed such as: Cooking – make products for sale; Art; Mechanics – motorbikes; Gardening; Judo; Drums etc.
- Toilets in the village.
- Village Green.
- Car Park.

Westfield School Questionnaire

In our primary school, 6 out of 7 classes took part in the survey, a total of 182 children. They were asked to choose two things they really liked, and one thing they disliked from a list of nine photographs depicting aspects of living in Westfield. They also had a free choice section where they were encouraged to tell us about anything they really liked about Westfield that wasn't shown in the photographs, and/or to tell us about one change they would make, or to give their reasons for their choices. Depending on the ages of the children concerned, this free choice section varied in presentation.

The results overleaf give an idea of the responses in each section.





Westfield Youth Survey

40 surveys were completed by Claverham Community College and Robertsbridge School students during April 2005. Their responses were as follows,

1. **What do you like about living in Westfield?**
Quiet/Countryside **17** The people **4** The park **5** The football pitch**3**

2. **What don't you like about living in Westfield?**
No youth club **1** No sport **3** Nothing to do **9** Not enough shops **2** Litter **3** speeding **2** vandalism **4** No street lighting **3**

3. If you could make a change to the bus service what would it be?
More regular **4** More frequent **6** Tidier **4** Free for kids **4** More destinations **4**

4. When you leave home/get married/have a family would you like to live in Westfield?
Yes **14** No **6** Don't know **2** If it's changed **3** Maybe **2**

5. What new facilities/clubs/activities would you like to see in Westfield?
Youth club **6** Sports club **3** More shops **4** Better play equipment **10** Cycle routes **4** 5 a side pitch **4** Basketball court **1** Badminton **1** Drama club **1**

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who have helped with the Action Plan process so far:- the original steering group, AIRS, all who completed the questionnaires, Claverham, Robertsbridge and Westfield Schools- their children and staff, the survey analyst (Professional Marketing Services), the groups of volunteers who helped with collating and choosing actions, the Parish Council for the funding, the WCA for providing a forum for information exchange, and the Newsletter team for doorstep delivery of the survey and this plan.