

## **Parish Maintenance**

**Working Group, chaired by John Bennett consisted of three members, with the following scope:**

*To identify how the cleanliness, appearance and maintenance of areas of responsibility and facilities provided by the local authorities and other service providers, can be improved.*

**Consultation undertaken:** Discussions with the Area Highways Engineer of Wiltshire Highways Partnership (WHP – an organisation controlled by Wiltshire County Council (WCC), Direct Services, Cleansing and Amenities Department of North Wiltshire District Council (NWDC), Lydiard Millicent Parish Council (LMPC) and the Environmental Campaign (ENCAMS) who run the “Keep Britain Tidy” Scheme.

### **Key Issues Identified:**

Analysis of the completed and returned questionnaires placed poor road maintenance as the third highest key issue for most parishioners; fly-tipping and litter came seventh and eighth respectively in the priority of parishioners concerns. There was less concern regarding uncut hedges and inadequate sweeping of village roads and paths which came in at eleventh and twelfth and, arguably, parishioners are reasonably content with the frequency that the WCC cuts the roadside verges and NWDC cut public grassed areas in the parish.

### **Road Maintenance**



Despite recent top-dressing of roads through the parish, there is a strongly held view that such measures are inadequate and temporary. Indeed, at some junctions the new top dressing rapidly disappeared and in other areas was poorly applied. The fact that WHP will make the contractors re-apply dressing where it was not up to standard is of little comfort to parishioners when they learn that the contractor

has up to two years to remedy the work! The volume of commuter traffic through the village in both directions to and from West Swindon takes a heavy toll on our roads. Whilst the village has the benefit of a 7.5 tonne weight limit to heavy traffic, the daily transit (four journeys each) of twenty or more school buses, plus legitimate access of

large delivery vehicles, adds to the wear and tear of the roads. Elsewhere in the parish, particularly in Greenhill, roads are crumbling. The root problem is inadequate funding of road maintenance. Whilst WCC has increased the budget for road maintenance it is patently still inadequate. The Parish Council should ensure that WCC is made aware of parishioners strongly held views and press for our roads to be re-laid as a matter of urgency. The Parish Council should also press the WHP for an annual written programme of road work in the parish, so at least parishioners would be aware of what work is planned (or yet to be scheduled!)

### **Fly-tipping – Litter – Path and Road Sweeping.**

One of the penalties that rural communities seem unfortunately to have to pay is a high incidence of fly-tipping. The NWDC is effective at cleaning up fly-tipped rubbish when it has been given accurate information regarding the location of the rubbish. However, the telephone number (01249 706351 (Fax 01249 653640)) and details of the NWDC Cleansing and Amenities staff who deal with this problem are not widely known.

It is recommended that the NWDC be invited to publicise their ability to remove fly-tipping, perhaps introducing a CLARENCE type notification system by Free phone or e-mail. A useful means of advising the NWDC of the location of rubbish is by “faxing” a map, and parishioners could be advised to ask the Parish Clerk, who has a fax machine, to pass details and a map to the NWDC.

During the research for this plan the NWDC Cleansing staff advised that they then had no staff for litter picking in villages or suitable machinery to sweep paths as well as kerbs. Since then, a request for litter picking and street sweeping in Lydiard Millicent has been actioned by the NWDC. It is therefore recommended that LMPC ask the NWDC to sweep the village streets and pick up litter on a routine basis, say every two months. This would meet the statutory requirements of the NWDC. Additionally, LMPC should continue with the annual “Spring Clean” and also ask parishioners to take pride in the village and pick up litter when they see it.

## Hedges – Verges and Public Grassed Areas.



One of the pleasures of living in the country is the views across the fields over the hedges. Unfortunately nowadays the view is often blocked by overgrown hedges, and, increasingly, the spreading hedge encroaches over roadside verges forcing pedestrians onto busy roads. Most overgrown hedges result from poor husbandry and sheer neglect, especially where there are owned by developers or long distance landowners. A common belief is that “the Council will cut the hedge”, this is not the case. WHP look to the landowners to maintain hedges - and will only

cut hedges if after requests, by firstly Parish Councils (LMPC) and then by themselves to land owners, do not achieve results; the WHP then bills the land owner!

Verges are now cut only twice per year as opposed to three times in the not too recent past. Budgetary pressures doubtless initiated the reduction; however, environmentalists support this measure as conserving roadside flora and fauna. It does hide the litter as well! Perhaps if the hedges are cut back then the verge can be cut for a full swathe permitting pedestrians to walk on the grass? Finally, the NWDC partly funded by the WHP cuts public grassed areas around the parish, not as frequently now as in the past, but sufficient not to greatly concern parishioners. The parish should be grateful to a large number of land and home owners who keep grassed areas adjacent to their property well trimmed throughout the year.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	LMPC should press the WHP for the roads through the village to be re-laid.	WHP and County Councillor	Medium
2	LMPC should press the WHP for the Greenhill road to be re-laid from the top of the hill to the end.	WHP and County Councillor	Medium
3	LMPC should seek an annual written programme of road work planned for the parish from the WHP.	WHP and County Councillor	Short
4	LMPC should encourage the NWDC to publicise the arrangements for getting fly-tipped rubbish removed, introduction of a CLARENCE type system should be considered.	NWDC and District Councillor	Short
5	LMPC should encourage parishioners to report fly-tipping to the Parish Clerk to arrange removal.	Parish Clerk	Short
6	LMPC should ask the NWDC to institute regular street and path sweeping together with a litter pick. A two month frequency is suggested.	NWDC and District Councillor	Short
7	LMPC should encourage parishioners to pick up litter and should continue to organise annual village Spring Cleans.	LMPC and parishioners.	Short
8	LMPC should encourage home and Landowners to keep their hedges trimmed, particularly to avoid overgrowing the verge.	LMPC and Home and Landowners	Short