

# Ryton-on-Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan

## Young People's consultation report

**In order to engage younger people in the Ryton-on-Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan, it was decided to hold two events – one for children from the local school and another for older young people.**

### **Primary school children**

The work with children at the local school involved two afternoon sessions with the full year-five class. There was an initial discussion about beauty and the elements that make a place good to be in. The class then divided into five groups of five or six children.

In the first session, the children created a map of Ryton, centred on the 3 main roads in the Parish, which form a triangle. They then drew and cut out houses to live in, shops, the church, the pubs and other existing features of the Parish, placing them on the map.

Following this, each table was invited to imagine and create additional features and facilities that they wished to see in their Parish – for example they chose a cinema, a cafe, additional shops, fun house/amusement arcade and an equestrian centre.

For the second session each element was given a cost value – for example a house was £5, a shop £10 and a cinema £40. The children were given a budget of £150 and so set about selecting the elements that they wished to see in the Parish, whilst remaining within budget.

Part way through the session an announcement was made that there had been budgetary cuts and each group now had a budget of only £120. This caused general consternation but the children quickly set about negotiating reduction in facilities. Those who had favorite elements, such as a funhouse and a café, were particularly aggrieved when discussion led to the loss of these facilities.

Further concern followed a second announcement that the budget was now reduced to £100. But, once again the children successfully negotiated a revised set of facilities based on the new budget.

Towards the end of the session the children were invited to glue down their remaining elements onto the map and to present them to the class. These maps appear below. They were featured at a subsequent community consultation.

The children showed a remarkable aptitude for successful negotiation and their selection of facilities and features for Ryton were overwhelmingly based on sound logic - for example the parish has two pubs so some children decided that just one was required; another group proposed an amusement arcade merged into a room

within the pub; it was decided that a block of flats was too large and inappropriate for the village setting; it was also decided that certain specialist shops were not necessary for such a small community which is within short distance of larger shopping centres.

### **Year five activity comments**

- 'We need more nature!'
- 'Beauty..... pleasing ..... trees ..... birdsong'
- There were strong feelings about the importance of countryside – 'pleasing surroundings'
- Decided against the stadium 'because of noise pollution'
- 'Very difficult to please everyone'
- 'You can't have everything you want'
- 'Need to discuss and compromise'
- 'Older people who can't drive need to have shops'
- 'Looking for places for having fun – gym, swimming pool, cinema'
- Some found final discussions easier than others – others worked out solutions to help keep everyone happy
- One group sacrificed the post office! Another sacrificed one pub!
- Happy to have more houses as long as they 'don't eat up the green spaces'
- Didn't mind the village growing as long as it didn't 'spoil the surrounding countryside.'

## **Young People**

A Focus Group of young people aged between 12 and 17 was held at a house within the Parish. Pizza was provided and a welcoming relaxed atmosphere created.

The discussion was facilitated and structured by a small number of questions starting with a conversation about features that make for an ideal community.

As with the children's group, the young people's group was asked to explore the concept of beauty and its place within the assessment and creation of the physical environment.

Group members demonstrated an extremely detailed knowledge of the Parish and were able to select and evaluate elements that are important to them.

Crossing the A445 is a significant problem of the young people who feel that a pedestrian crossing is essential. They were able to identify precisely where the ideal spot for this crossing would be.

Subway: this is considered to be very important for community cohesion and movement within the Parish. Very positive memories exist of the time that the subway was painted by members of the community.

The primary school is fondly remembered and the group felt that it gave an excellent

social grounding to them in preparation for moving on to the secondary school. But, they did feel that such a small school did not provide them with the range of learning experiences received by children from larger communities. However, there was no sense that their secondary education was impaired in anyway by their primary education within Ryton.

The young people felt strongly that they are "rural people "and differ in their environmental preferences from those brought up in urban areas. They predict that this will be a feature of their adult life and anticipate either being drawn back to Ryton following their further education or to another rural community.

A number of key historical features are valued such as the church and other old buildings. However, there was some support for modern housing with its energy efficiency and greater suitability for the needs of modern living.

The young people felt that the co-op is "a lifesaver" as it provides a ready source of produce to meet daily and indeed emergency needs. It also provides a social hub for the village where people informally meet and chat to other residents.

The young people felt that, growing up, they knew most of the people within Ryton and that to a small extent this is changing as the community grows and new housing is built. This in turn brings in people for whom village life is not necessarily so important and so perhaps remain resident within the Parish for shorter periods of time.

#### *What features make for good place to live?*

- A good community, places to go and be with friends, parks, fields - big basket swing as at Ryton Pools
- Park for little kids
- Shop "without the shop we'd have died!"
- Pubs
- Walking
- Routes for bike riding

#### *This raised concerns about road safety:*

- Hate crossing Oxford Road and A445 especially
- Main roads – need clear site lines
- Big lorries are dangerous

#### *Village School*

- Advantage of small village school - taught us social skills
- Disadvantage: limited range of staff specialist subjects e.g. science

#### *Living in a village*

- Ryton feels safe and small - like it - knowing people/everyone
- "I probably would like to live here to bring up my children"
- All very clear they would choose to live in a village when they have their own homes
- "We are well positioned near to towns"

### *New houses*

- Smaller houses – affordable housing
- Houses to fit in with current bricks etc. Range of houses
- Need to control how Ryton develops – small developments
- Space out increase in housing – Not one large development - a few a year – yes, good idea
- Maybe in Lamb's Field or British Legion?
- Don't cram too tight
- Need Footpaths through to link
- Space between

### *Climate change*

- Need solar panels
- Wind turbines - for each house perhaps

### *What constitutes 'Beauty'*

- Freshly cut grass: tidy, good impression
- Jubilee Pools – scenery – gorgeous – nature – nothing man made – overgrown
- Rec
- Green open space
- Old houses give character - new houses too clean
- Dan prefers straight lines

### *Population - will it rise?*

- Would rather it didn't but overall think it will

### *Have young people got a voice?*

- Think they have but you have to be more actively involved

### *Division of village by A45?*

- Feel it works - subway - we helped paint it - we go to see friends in Church Rd

### *Would like:*

- More park equipment - e.g. outdoor gym
- More spaces to go – to meet as groups
- Village hall – move onto rec?
- More bins
- Youth club - would like it to start again

### *What is the future for Ryton?*

- Positive outlook - looking good