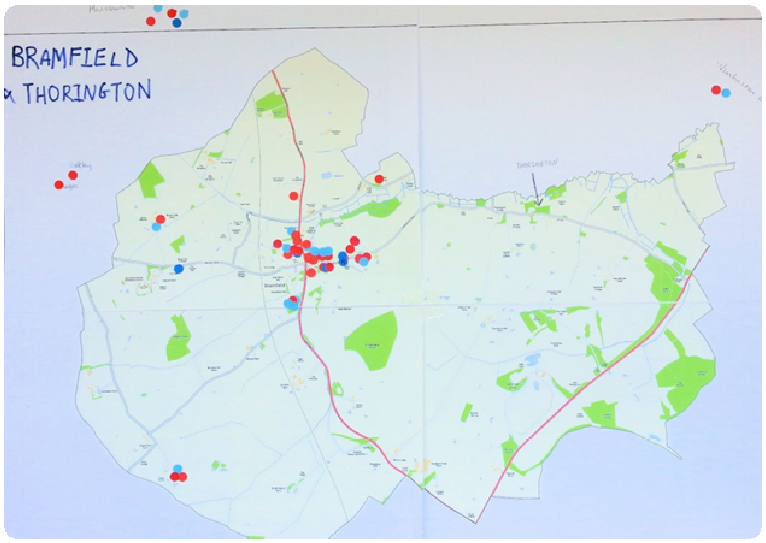
Bramfield & Thorington

Village Review



6th June 2014

At Bramfield Village Hall

(Version 1)

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Bramfield & Thorington (a brief background)

Population (approx): 485 (2011 census)

Population split by gender: Male 55%, Female 45% (2011)

Village assets: village hall, church, pub

Natural Assets:

Date held: Friday 6th June 2014

Venue: Bramfield Village Hall

Time: 2.30 – 4.30pm & 7.30 – 9.00pm

Weather: Warm & sunny

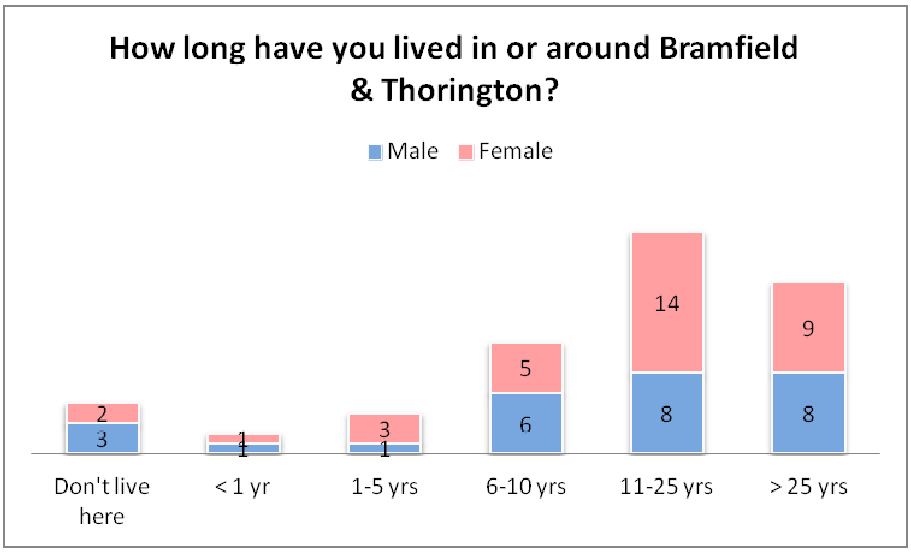
No of people attending: 61 (26 males, 35 females)

Percentage of population attending: 12% (5 people said they didn't live in the parish)

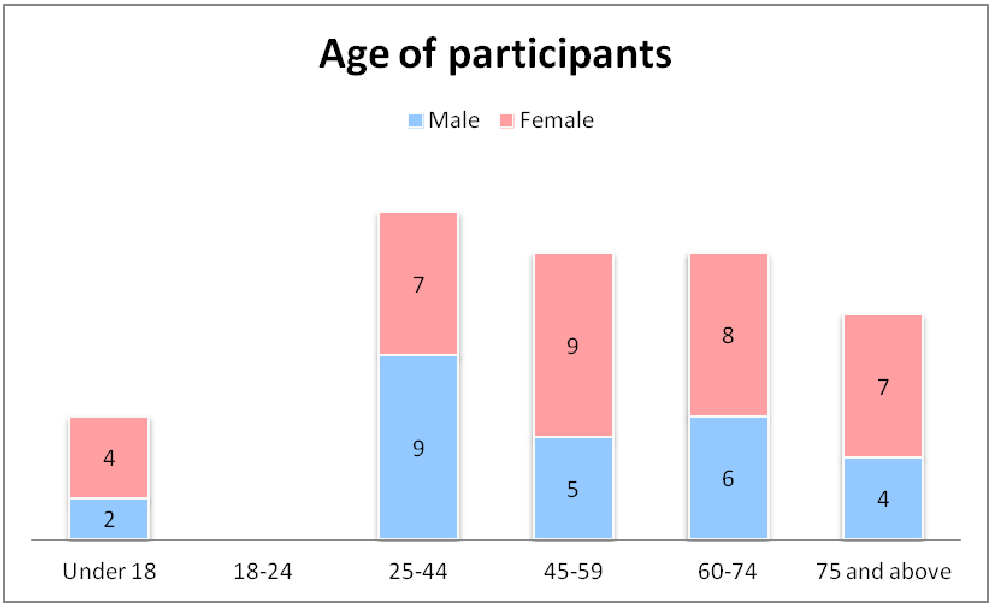
On arrival people were asked for a few basic details about themselves to give general statistics about the participants in the Consultation. This helps with identifying whether groups of people or areas were less well represented and whether other methods of consultation might be needed as a follow up to this event.

We asked for the following details:

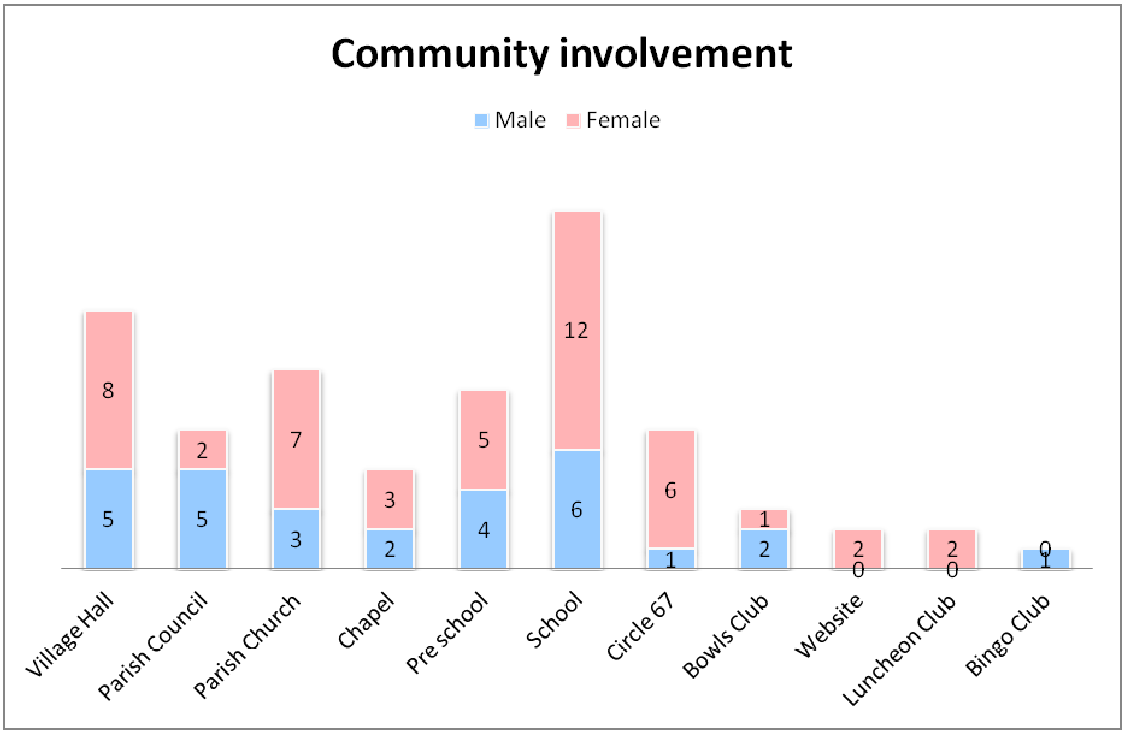
How long have you lived in and around Bramfield & Thorington?



Age of Participants

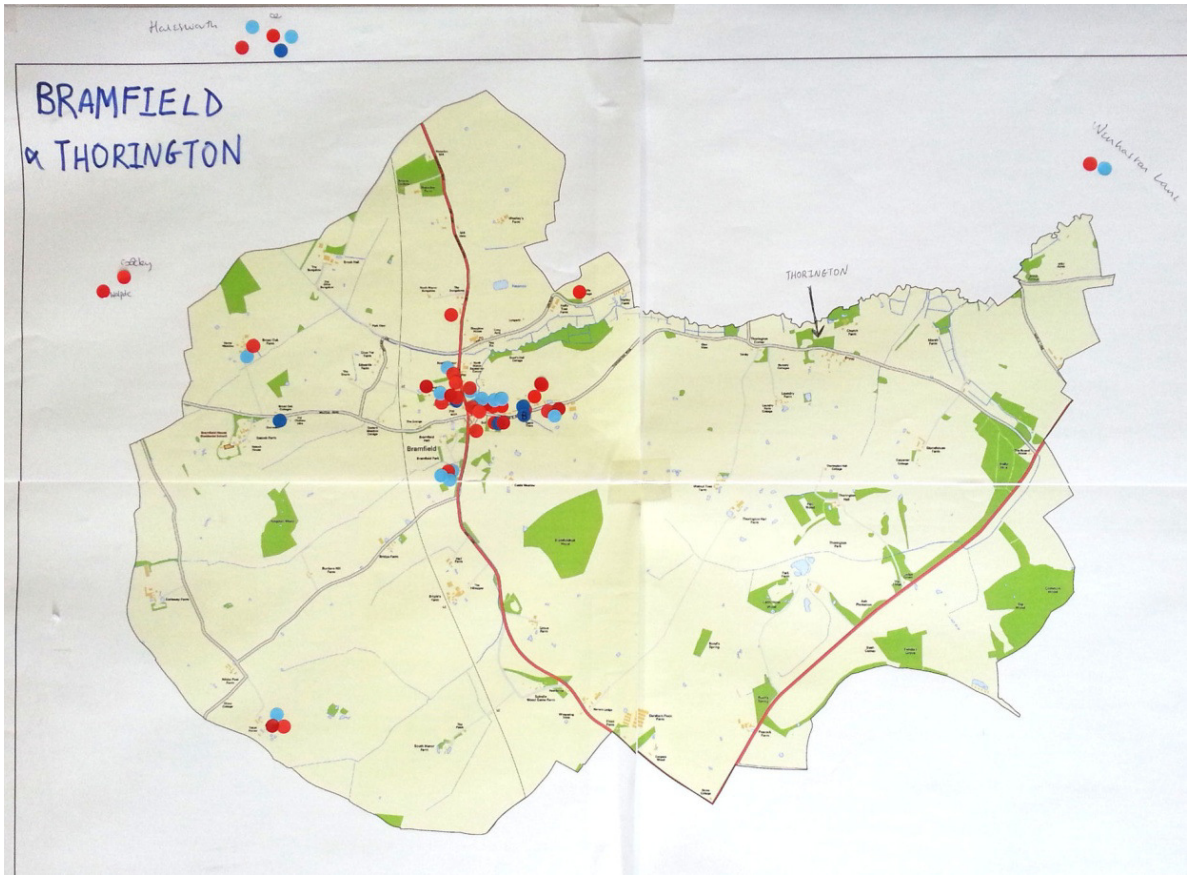


Community Involvement of those attending.



Looking at this graph the participants are involved in a wide variety of village organisations.

Map showing the geographical location of participants.



Looking at the spread of red and blue dots there was a good spread of people from most parts of the parish.

Introductory thoughts about the village.

As people arrived they could give their thoughts about what sorts of things might be an issue in 5 - 10 years, 25 years, good things they would like to have or enhance and to suggest possible ways forward.

What might be an issue in 5 - 10 years time?	Have you got any ideas on possible action that could be taken?	Are there good things you would like to have or existing things you would like to enhance?
School too small for pupil numbers (5)	Re-open Cookley & Walpole school	A community project that lots of people can be involved in. Play/green space
Village school getting too large for current site	Re-open Walpole & Cookley School to reduce overcrowding at Bramfield CEVC School	Financial support for Village Hall providing (?) for school & play scheme.
School bigger		More support for village hall (1)
Village school closure, pub closing, lack of low cost accommodation		More funds for village hall
Too many wind turbines & solar farms		Village green
The church. With attendance which has fallen to about non-sustainable levels, how is it to be maintained or adapted?		Work to keep community cohesion – more suitable housing for older people, families; keep school relatively small, maintain village hall, church, chapel etc
Increased traffic, nowhere for children to play	Play area for the local children. A larger area for the school playing field	Given the amount of children in the village now – the FUTURE of the village – a playground would be lovely
Something for the younger generation to be able to do/go this will attract families to the village again	Playing field	

Traffic! Speed and volume	Need “Speedwatch” team	
Traffic in the Street and Bridge Street, amount & speed	Speed bumps down Thorington Road from top of the hill to the junction with A144	
Even more traffic and speeding on A144 and Thorington Road	Traffic calming on main road	
Increased traffic on A144, especially if Sizewell C constructed. Also more houses bought as second/holiday homes, non affordable to locals	Higher Council Tax for holiday homes	
Traffic on main road and congestion along Bridge Street		
Traffic – especially if Sizewell C goes ahead! Thorington Road/Bridge Street enough of a rat run already!		
Speeding – some cars completely ignore the speeding signs – lots of potholes roughly 2 - 3 ins deep, large traffic using Bridge Street	Sleeping policemen in main road	
Traffic increasing		
More over 65 bungalows so that those who have lived in the village all their lives need not move out of village + some starter homes for young families	Use the former play area (now unused) at the top of Pitmans Grove to build 2/3 bungalows to ease the housing situation	
Probably increased need for social housing e.g. elderly and young families	Extend village envelope for housing	

Need for affordable housing for the elderly		
Housing – need some	Village envelope to be enlarged. Need more housing. Outside village envelope but planning permissive on field adjacent to A144 going up the hill. Would also produce footpath up the hill	
Footpath along Bridge Street		
Crossing on the main road A144. Paths in village along Bridge Street and along main road		
What sort of access to A144 would be envisaged on a hill with blind spots at top and bottom?	Field next toA144 (at junction with Low Road) could be used to make a footpath (for residents living higher up the hill) and some affordable housing, plus a joined up village envelope	

*Numbers in brackets are the number of people who agreed with the statement

Concerns and thoughts about issues/assets.

We then conducted a "needs analysis" using 5 large topic sheets on which everyone was encouraged to leave comments about subjects that were good or that concerned them and which people felt needed some sort of action. If there was a comment on there already that they agreed with they didn't need to write it again they could put a tick against it.

Due to there being 2 sessions we didn't have any discussion groups because not everyone would be able to contribute if they wanted to so the Action Plan will be drawn up at a later date.

Comments on the 5 Topic Sheets

1. Parish/Town Council effectiveness & Utilities

Comment	People who agreed
Good Points	
Council members work very hard and deserve credit	
Appreciative of work done by council members which can often seem somewhat thankless at times	
Parish council very capable. Thanks for all your hard work!	
Good team cllr 's – comms is an issue	
Excellent Parish Council	
Issues	
Parish Council	
An open meeting to follow up this exercise would be good	
I would like to know the outcome of this activity. Will there be a meeting?	
The parish council would be really pleased to see more people coming to meetings and taking an interest – and we do have vacancies!	
"Priority list" for the PC? • Advertise minutes • And meeting dates better? (Answer: Approved minutes are on the website)	
PC minutes available online? (Please)	
Emergency plans are needed in the village in case of a long power cut!! Someone to contact??	
Monthly village newsletter would be nice. Those interested in reading it could pay a small amount each month and could publish news from parish meetings	
Utilities	
Some street lights turned off after midnight	
We have regular power cuts	
Frequent power cuts	
More wires underground	
Would love to have mains gas	
More green energy	
Better broadband speed	
Better broadband speed/fibre optics	
Faster broadband and digital radio would be nice!!!	

2. Community services, social interaction, communication & village hall

Comment	People who agreed
Good Points	
Very nice that activities in the village keep going, probably thanks to the same few people	
Quite a lot of varied social activities in village hall etc for such a small village. Some very energetic and commendable volunteers make sure things happen	
Very good village hall that supports local community well!	
Very good village hall – ensure it keeps that way by encouraging committee membership. Newcomers!	
Village hall well used. Perhaps a survey/questionnaire in the village to find out if people might like e.g. a film night/other social events etc	
Excellent hall committee. Plenty of opportunity but needs more management/co-ordination. A few people do a bit & a great job	
10/10 to Pat & Mary for the lunch club	
Issues	
Communication	
Can we have a village notice board put up in street opposite garage so that posters/village events could be put on for all to see instead of trying to nail posters on bus shelter	
Website and/or newsletter needs reviving or "beefing up" (Answer: Why don't you offer to run it?!!) – yes. Even this event wasn't up on the Parish Council website (Answer: IT WAS!!)	
Key is to involve everyone even if they only do a small amount. Pay for website/newsletter	
Village Hall & other facilities	
(village hall) floor needs attention	
Need more & younger people on BVH committee (nothing wrong with the oldies though)	
Can we put a shop in the hall for older people in Pitmans?	
I would be happy to help with a community shop.	
I would like to take part in leisure classes at village hall – arts, environmental, wellbeing.	
How about film nights? (Answer: NB there is a weekly film at The Cut Arts Centre in Halesworth (Wednesdays 7.30pm)	
Village hall car entrance to be improved	1
Car park for village hall gets bottlenecked at drop off & pick up times	
Youth club village hall?	

Football pitch park	3
Football pitch, playground, public swimming pool with huge slides	
Leisure centre/swimming pool needed in Halesworth	
Compulsory purchase of the field next to the school to be used as car park, sports field and village playground. (Comment: This land is due for my grandchildren. The family will produce its own scheme)	
The Bramfield School site is already inadequate in size and needs at least part of the adjoining field to be incorporated as a play area if necessary by compulsory purchase if an early purchase cannot be negotiated	
Improve infrastructure (& access) to nearby clubs etc. Do not re-invent the wheel.	
Community Services	
Should we have a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? If so how will it work?	
Neighbourhood Watch would be great	
Still a good social & support network here, but if older people are forced out because of lack of suitable housing both they and the community will suffer	

3. Traffic, Transport and Highways

Comment	People who agreed
Issues	
Transport	
More frequent buses for non drivers	
Car sharing is a good idea	
A flight of fancy: Close the railway and convert to a road and then run an express bus service between Lowestoft and Ipswich. Much cheaper and more customer orientated (Comment: NO! The railway is vital! More trains fewer road vehicles, please!)	
General traffic	
Too big lorries & farm equipment on "Low & High Road"	
Ban HGV's from using Low Road	1
By N Manor Farm lorries coming from Halesworth are in the middle of the road	
Tractors using some small roads are too big – they are ruining roads & verges	
The road from Clerk's Butchers towards Wenhaston is very dangerous. There are bends and as it is a single lane – it is really bad there	
Traffic mirror on corner of main road at School lane to see on-coming traffic from School Lane	
Take out cats eyes up the hill as very noisy and cause vibration as traffic bounces over them	
Road signs with street names would be helpful.	
Traffic speed, lack of footpaths, large/heavy vehicles taking short cuts along narrow lanes. Uncooperative Highways Dept (SCC)	
Effective traffic management system in the village	
Traffic safety concerns • The Street • Bridge Street Narrow pinch points, speed, HGV's, exiting out of the Street	
The culvert alongside Pitmans close (Grove?) is in a state of collapse – road will fall into ditch	
The A144. There have been no improvements carried out other than those classed as cosmetic, for the last 40 years despite a many fold increase in traffic. No plans to cope with the increased traffic which will result if Sizewell C is ever commenced	
Increasing traffic sometimes very large vehicles which can't pass each other in Bridge Street/Pitmans Grove/Thorington Road, partly due to increasing school numbers. No footpath for pedestrians	

Some way of widening the road up to the school?	
Too many cars at nursery & school	
Please could we have a street sign labelling Bridge Street? Pitman's Grove has one but the first part of Thorington Road doesn't!	
Pitman Grove is the cul-de-sac. Bridge Street and Thorington Road is the through road. Pitman sign is wrongly placed.	
Parking	
Too many cars parked on verges makes it v dangerous for pedestrians/children crossing the road	
Lack of parking is a problem. Too much housing with no parking available	
An overflow car park in Pitmans Grove would be better use of the field there.	
Too many cars parked on the main road	
More off road parking required particularly near school	
Cars parked on main road are a hazard.	
Stop parking on main road, particularly opposite Church Hill Road (opposite old Clarke's butcher shop). It's just a matter of time before there's a serious accident due to parking.	
Parking in area of Pitman's Grove is always a problem and will get worse as 17 year olds get cars and more cars per house.	
Bad parking at council bungalows make bad use of space. Inconsiderate tenants hog space	
Parking on the Street either side of Bramfield Garage is a problem	
Main road A144 bend at Street Farm with entrance should be no parking 10/15 feet each side. Park on the straight will improve vision on bend	
Speeding & Limits	
30 limit to be moved further down towards the gatehouse from the village down from the Wheelwrights Cottage	
Whole village should be 20mph 300-600m from centre. Not much else you can do	
I would be willing to join in a speed watch scheme (name given to parish Council)	
I would volunteer to help with a speed watch scheme (name given to Parish Council)	
Traffic far too fast Pitman's Grove and by the school	
Speed is always a problem in village & roads out of village regardless of limits, perhaps speed bumps (Comment: NO)	
Bramfield & Thorington Road. Repairs to potholes, speed, a lot of heavy traffic	
Speed throughout village – 20mph Pitman's Grove	

30 mph further outside village zone. Very dangerous when walking to church	1
Extend 30mph speed limit in Low Road	
As a very high percentage of the traffic on the A144 seems to regard the 30mph limit as a minimum rather than the maximum speed it is suggested that lights as each end of the village are introduced which flash when 30mph is exceeded	
Driving speed is too much. How can you do it. It is up to the driver	
Speeding traffic is an issue on every road in the village	
Speed restrictions need to be enforced	
Traffic slowing beacons	
Pavements, footpaths, crossings	
Zebra crossings x2	
Pathway up the A144 hill	
Pavement on High St – get overgrown & when hedge cut not cleared	
Pathway to main road from Pitman's Grove so school children can walk to school and catch bus safely	
Pavement required between school/village hall and the main road	
Put stripes on road part of pub for children crossing	
Crossing main road through village. Paths marked along Bridge Street for school children –becoming dangerous	

4. Health, Education, Childcare, Young and Old People

Comment	People who agreed
Good points	
Health services are very good	
Access to excellent health services in Halesworth	
Health service – Good range and access	
Health service is good	
Great school & good links to Halesworth & transport	
Excellent pre-school & primary school, good to have in the village	
Bramfield nursery is wonderful	2
Good school and pre-school serving village and surrounding area	1
Great school & pre-school	1
Pre-school & primary school excellent	1
Excellent primary school – too successful for village (?!)	
Issues	
Older & younger people	
Old people – A very bad situation if old people who have lived all	

their life in the village have no appropriate social housing to be relocated to.	
At the moment older people need to move to Halesworth for suitable housing	
Transport for young people inadequate – cycle path to Halesworth?	
No one asked my advice over Street Farm meadow – it could provide games pitch/green area & trees! Also homes for the elderly & young. See me (name given to parish Council)	
Young people access to local facilities restricted due to transport infrastructure (Do not recreate it here – use Wenhaston & Halesworth)	
More for the children in the village • Youth club • Sports events • Park/meeting place	
We need sport for younger children in village	
Sports and youth club	
School & leisure facilities	
Would like more fitness clubs. How about some dance classes?	
Sports club x2	
There is a playing field – how about a work party to make it useable	
It would be nice to have a village green and somewhere for children to play. A green like Westleton would be good.	
A small green in the village would be nice to hold fete etc on and somewhere to sit.	
Playing field or village green for village activities	
Need more flat open space for school & village children's play/village green	
Does reasonably well for site of village. School, should interact more	
Vibrant primary school needs playing field – help buy adjacent field amenity area	
The school is outgrowing its site. There is no adequate outdoor sports area	
Larger area needed for expanding school	
The school is great but since education went "two-tier" the playing field is not big enough	
I am happy to help with setting up Woodcraft Folk Group for young people	
Reopen Walpole & Cookley school – craziness that children are bussed in from there to a crowded Bramfield School. C & W has a large play/sports area	
School playing field inadequate. Unable to train for team sports –	

despite reaching county final	
Additional playing field for school and area for children in the village – could be multi-use area	2
School needs additional playing field – reallocate flood zone land to facilitate provision	
Large playing field for the school	

5. Environment – Housing, Business Development and Natural Environment

Comment	**People who agreed**
Good Points	
Still many good walks & farmers/others who protect and cherish the environment	1
Access to castle meadow is valued. Thanks!	2
Access to Castle Meadow is fantastic	3
• Rural unspoilt character • Not over-enlarged • Good community spirit • Excellent garage • Good pub • Build 10 houses on arable field at top of hill on Wenhaston Road & use profit share to buy 10 acres for village green	
We have a bulk buying group for oil managed by Dave Pring (see web link in resources section). It would be helpful if all the villagers took part in this	
Oil buying. We have a good group, it works well.	1
Oil buying consortium functioning well	
Issues	
Traffic & walking	
Heavy traffic – Bridge Street/Pitman's Grove at start & end nursery/school day makes walking dangerous & parking problems	
Heavy lorries, farm vehicles harsh impact on Bridge Street, Pitman's & High Road & Low Road & environment	
Police vehicles to respect the village street & the animals & young people & keep their noise & speed DOWN	
Excellent that some local landowners make their land available for local people to walk. Much appreciated!	
Housing	
Housing needed for 1st time buyers only. Not big houses!	
There is a severe lack of social housing (i.e. reasonable rents)	

available for residents in the village who need a home in the village (e.g. if their current circumstances change) – especially older people who have lived in this village all their lives (80+ years!)	
A current situation has highlighted the shortage of social housing and cheaper smaller properties available for residents in the village (e.g. elderly people, young families) who need to continue to live here for family and community support, schools etc Council properties have been sold and smaller houses are often sold to be holiday lets, all reducing the very small pool of appropriate housing.	
Housing – not enough affordable & available 1& 2 bed bungalows especially for older people. Too many holiday lets, standing empty in the winter & pushing up prices	
More affordable housing needed to replace holiday homes. Bungalows for older residents to move into.	
Need for housing. There is space for more houses behind Pitman's Grove but due to BAD PLANNING when the current houses were built, there is not suitable access to the space.	
Seven /eight new housing. Sites a problem but the purchase of access to the council-owned plot at the top/rear of the "council" houses would be a possible site needing the purchase of a better access or if necessary the compulsory purchase of same, due to the short sightedness of the council in not retaining *access across when dispensing land(?sorry can't quite read it)*	
There is a lot of very unsatisfactory housing in Bramfield • No parking • No garden • Right on the road • Poorly built So become holiday homes	
Housing needs for village people • Suitable design • Layout • Costs etc **Need serious discussion**	
Affordable housing & bungalows	
Question the definition of affordable/social housing within Bramfield – needs analysis and debate. Needed – but must be clear on **specific need**	
Business	
Business development – Already a number of small businesses. Poss enough?	
General environment	
I like the street light	

Street lights – Too many for a rural village (Comment: agree)	1
Good to see churchyard left long in the autumn. Lovely flora	2
The ditch/river that runs under A144 near Stone Cottage to be kept clean of debris	2
I think a community wood or green space would be a good project for the village. Do we have a tree warden?	2
Natural environment – need to ensure that this is maintained & no inappropriate development. Traffic is a problem – heavy vehicles mounting & damaging verges & property. Inappropriate along narrow lanes	
Clear culvert alongside Pitman's grove – to prevent flooding	
When hedges hacked out around Holly tree Farm can the cuttings be cleared out of the ditch to prevent flooding. Also culverts need cleaning as this road is prone to flooding	
Thrashing of hedges with mechanical flail reducing wildlife value	1
Overuse of agricultural chemicals and in unsuitable weather conditions. Causing deterioration of environment for biodiversity. (Comment: HERE, HERE)	2

Due to the event being held in two sessions covering the afternoon and a separate session in the evening there were no group discussions. Instead the Parish Council will look at all the issues and look at how they might proceed next.

Resources for your next steps

General help:

County Councillor:

Michael Gower – 01502 478267 michael.gower@suffolk.gov.uk

District Councillor:

Michael Gower – 07874 203782 michael.gower@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Our Place Officer:

Dawn Richardson - 01473 260728 dawn.richardson@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Coastal Community Development Officer:

Gillian Benjamin – 01394 444321 gillian.benjamin@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council Liaison:

Alison Wheatland – 01473 264403 alison.wheatland@suffolk.gov.uk

Community Action Suffolk:

Community Field Officer:

Claire Taylor-Crisp – 01502 558350 c.taylor-crisp@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Development Officer – Community Planning

Gillian Benjamin – 01473 345327 gillian.benjamin@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Development Officer - Rural Affordable Housing

Sunila Osborne – 01473 345344 sunila.osborne@scommunityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Oil buying syndicate in Bramfield:

http://bramfieldthorington.onesuffolk.net/useful-places-and-information/bramfield-oil-consumers-syndicate/

Bramfield 6th June 2014					
What is the issue?	**Action to be taken**	**Priority**	**Lead organisation & Partners**	**Resources required**	**Update/progress report due by when?**