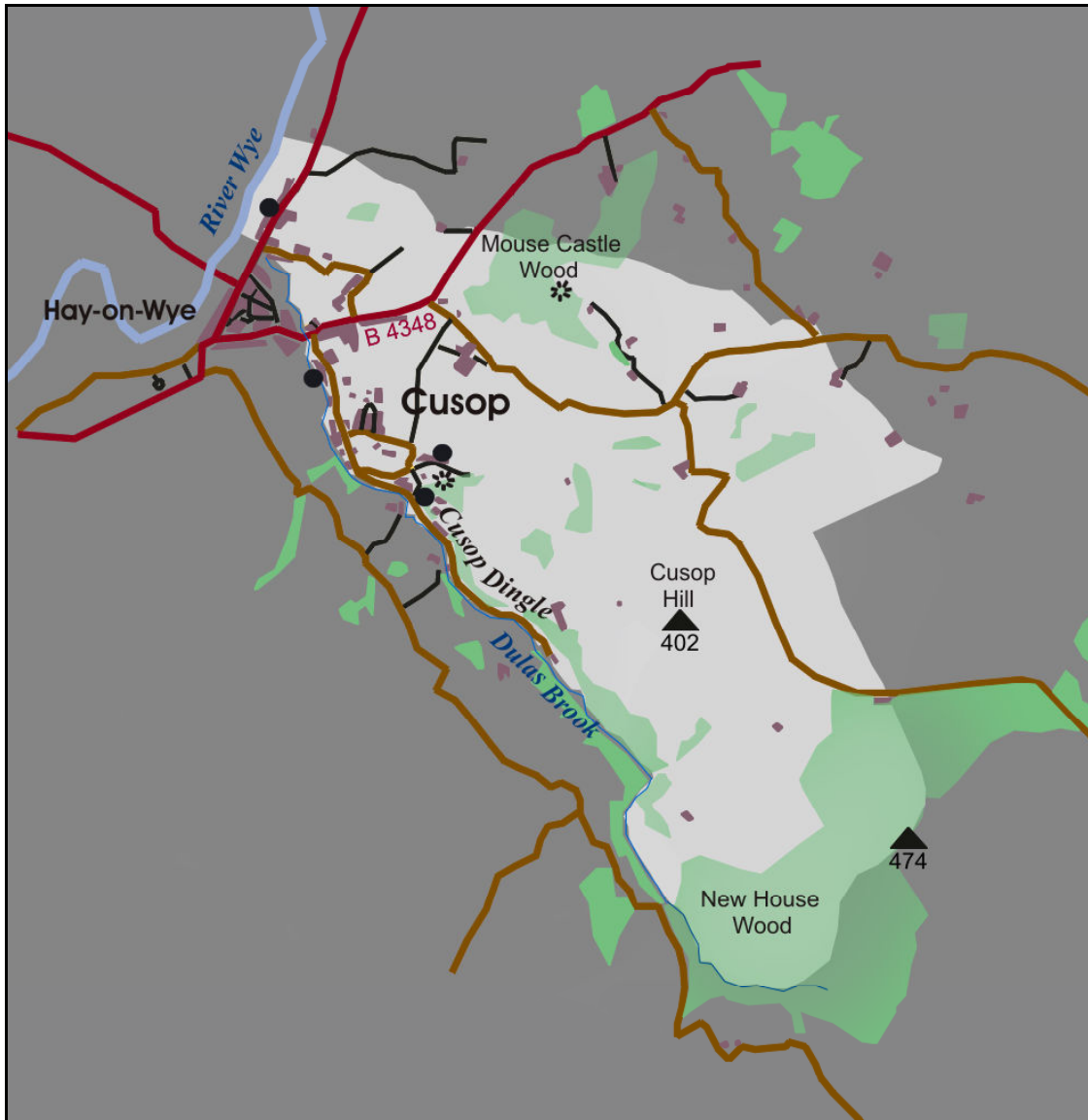


# Cusop Parish Plan 2006

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# **Introduction**

## **Map of Cusop Parish**



## **Introduction**

### **Cusop - A brief tour**

Cusop is located in the far west corner of Herefordshire some 20 miles from Hereford. It is on the edge of the small town of Hay-on-Wye, with the River Wye forming part of its north-west border. The much smaller Dulas Brook forms a long western boundary with Wales. The dwellings of Cusop merge with those of Hay-on-Wye along the connecting roads, and the proximity of the principality is reflected in numerous Welsh names of properties and natural features in the parish.

Cusop Parish is approximately 5.5 km by 2.5 km (about 3.5 miles by 1.5 miles) at its extremities, and has an area of 931 hectares. The terrain is largely pastoral, but there are retail premises at the northern fringe, a large block of forestry at the southern end, and several areas of woodland. The highest point in the parish is in New House Wood (474m). There are 2 lower but more prominent hills, these being the wooded Mouse Castle (260m) and Cusop Hill (402m).

Housing is mainly located in the north-western part of the parish.

There are several fine old houses, and an attractive 12<sup>th</sup> Century Norman church still containing a Norman font. There are 4 yew trees in the churchyard that could be as much as two thousand years old, and the sites of two castles may be seen in the parish.

There are 2 classified roads through the parish – the B4350 which runs between Hay and Whitney, and the B4348 which runs between Hay and Peterchurch. Public transport is limited to the bus service on the Brecon-Hereford route, which has six buses in each direction on weekdays, and two or three on Sundays.

The main recreational land is in New House Wood, where Tilhill Forestry **(1)** allow access, and Mouse Castle Wood owned by the Woodland Trust **(2)**. There are 19km (12 miles) of public footpaths, but no bridleways. There is a small children's play area located off the lower end of Cusop Dingle.

A section of the Wye Valley Walk recreational trail passes through Cusop, and the Offa's Dyke Path national trail passes very close to the parish boundary.

### **Cusop Past**

Cusop has changed dramatically in the past two centuries, having once been a hive of industrial activity. It had five working mills driven by the Dulas, up to eight stone quarries, and was home to a myriad of artisans. There were limekilns above the Dulas Brook (the remains are still visible) with a tramway in Cusop Dingle for moving the limestone. Bricks and tiles were also manufactured at the end of Cusop Dingle. There was a host of small farms, the ruins of which are still visible along the sides of Cusop Hill, and apple orchards abounded in the lower reaches of the parish.

From 1864 until the 1960s, Cusop had a railway service, with Hay Station actually being situated in Cusop Parish.

In 1901 the population of the parish was 12% higher than it is today, but they were crammed into half as many dwellings!

The parish once had an inn, a cider house and a school - all, sadly, long gone.

## **Introduction**

### **Cusop Present**

The UK Census of 2001<sup>(3)</sup> tells us much about “the state of Cusop”. The population according to the 2001 census was 377 people, living in 167 households. 63.1% of people aged 16–74 years were “economically active” (i.e. are in work or are students), and 19.5% of these worked mainly from home. No one used public transport to get to and from work.

Whilst the proportion of children is lower than the county and national average, the percentage of people over 65 is considerably higher than the county average and much higher than the national average. The proportion of people aged from 18 to 44 is also below the county average, possibly a reflection of job prospects in the area and housing costs.

There are few employment opportunities in Cusop itself, apart from the retail outlets at Hay and Brecon Farmers, the Co-op supermarket, and F.J.Williams builders merchants, but various opportunities exist in nearby Hay-on-Wye. Four family farms farm most of the land in the parish. There are several bed and breakfast establishments, and several people either work from home or run small businesses on their premises.

In recent years many people have moved into the parish to retire or work from home, partly triggered by the popularity of Hay as a tourist town. One effect of the latter has been to considerably push up the price of houses in the village.

There is no public house, school, community centre, or sports facility in the parish, but it does have access to good retail facilities on the Newport Road. However, most of the amenities absent from Cusop are available a short distance away in Hay-on-Wye, along with a substantial variety of shops. Many parishioners also use the medical and dental facilities in Hay. The nearest Herefordshire police station is in Peterchurch. There is a nearer station in Hay but, as a general rule, they cannot deal with matters relating to Cusop and will merely forward any enquiries to West Mercia Police.

Similarly, the nearest ambulance station is over the border at Bronllys, again nearer than that in Hereford.

**In broad terms the people of Cusop are better educated than the county and national average, and slightly healthier (even taking into account the high proportion of elderly people). There are more owner occupiers, more professional people, and less unemployed people (due in part to the high levels of home-based, small businesses in the parish). The population density is even lower than the average for Herefordshire, which is itself one of the most sparsely populated counties in England. Add to this some of the finest countryside in the UK and its proximity to one of the most famous and picturesque towns in Wales, and you have a parish that has a great deal to commend it.**

**All of these positive aspects are reflected in this plan. To some extent the Parish Plan’s approach is an acknowledgement that you don’t fix something that “ain’t broke.” The emphasis instead is directed towards making the most of what we have.**

## **Introduction**

### **What is the Cusop Parish Plan?**

The Parish Plan is a detailed document looking at the Parish as it is today and, using residents' views, looking at what improvements can be made to make it a better place to live in the future.

In identifying key facilities, services and problems and demonstrating how distinctive features and character can be preserved, the Plan should assist service providers, statutory bodies and the voluntary sector to know what is required within the Parish, and, hopefully, they will be able to include identified works within their budgets or use the information to assist with applications for grant funding.

### **Who is the Plan for?**

The Parish Plan expresses the major issues deemed of greatest concern to residents at the present time. Traffic & transport, environmental issues, leisure and recreation opportunities, housing and planning are all addressed. The plan is therefore of value to:

- Residents as an expression of their views, concerns and aspirations for the Parish.
- The Parish Council **(4)** to help guide its members in representing the views of parishioners when dealing with other external agencies and when making decisions about services and developments likely to affect the Parish and its residents.
- Developers, their architects and designers to explain what the village expects to see in new and altered buildings.
- Independent bodies, agents and agencies involved in Local Government and the provision of community services , allocation of funding etc .
- Herefordshire Council, who will adopt Parish Plans as “further planning guidance” to the Unitary Development Plan. “Further Planning Guidance” could help in the determination of planning applications.

### **Who was involved?**

In November 2003, following a Government initiative, Cusop Parish Council decided to investigate the possibility of undertaking a parish appraisal to determine how residents of the parish feel about local issues such as housing, environment, traffic, roads etc and what changes (if any) they would like to see. A public meeting was arranged to which a representative of Herefordshire Association of Local Councils **(5)** was invited to explain the concept of Parish Plans to the community. The meeting was well attended and volunteers were sought to form a Steering Group to take the idea forward.

In January/February 2004 a committee of eight members was formed: namely, Sandra Sheldon, Jane Weaver, John Wilks, Ian Jardin, John Theaker, Rod Jones, Sandy Sandaver and Chris Playford. Help was given by Ashley Gillespie-Horne who represented the youth of Cusop and assisted in compiling the Youth Survey **(6)** . Claire Milner was very helpful in taking minutes of the meetings.

A grant was obtained from the Countryside Agency **(7)** to enable the plan to be devised and printed and a contribution was also made by Cusop Parish Council.

## **Introduction**

### **How did we consult the Parish?**

#### **CPP Background.**

This plan is largely based on a parish-wide survey carried out in May 2005 (8).

However, a number of surveys were conducted prior to May 2005 which have helped to define what issues were important to parishioners and therefore what the survey of May 2005 should focus on.

Some aspects of these older surveys have been useful in putting together this report and will be referred to where appropriate.

#### **Drop-in Event – Cusop Parish Room – 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2004.**

129 parishioners attended this event over the 3 days, representing 34% of the total population. Attendance was broadly representative of gender, age and location across the parish.

Visitors were able to write comments on sheets pinned to the walls of the Room and headed by subject. Additionally comments could be endorsed or opposed by means of stickers, green or red respectively.

Every household was sent a summary of the issues raised to enable them to add further comments if desired, and to ensure that those unable to attend the event were able to have their say.

To obtain a copy of the feedback from the 3-day event see (9) on the back page.

Analysis of the feedback helped the committee to establish a clearer picture of what was important to the people of the parish and redefine some of the subject headings and content of the later survey of May 2005 (8).

#### **Cusop Parish Survey – 2005**

In May 2005 the survey was distributed by the Parish Committee to all households in Cusop.

A questionnaire was provided for each adult (16 and over) and a separate questionnaire for each younger person. Freepost return envelopes were also provided to enable the completed questionnaires to be returned to the Research Team at Herefordshire Council.

To obtain a copy of the full results of the adult survey and the younger person's survey see (8) & (6) respectively on Page 29.

Of the total of 320 adult questionnaires distributed, 169 were completed and returned. This represents a very encouraging 53% return. And of the 52 younger person's questionnaires distributed, 23 were returned, representing a commendable response rate of 44%.

### **What are the major concerns and needs?**

Many respondents to this survey made it clear that they are happy to live in the parish of Cusop and do not see a need for major change. There was support for limited housing development that met local needs and was appropriate in appearance and location.

There was a range of opinions expressed about traffic and road safety, environmental issues, the upkeep and cleanliness of the parish, facilities for the young and the future of the Parish Room.

There was considerable support for initiatives already underway such as the introduction of a parish "lengthsman" to keep the verges, drainage systems and road signage in good order, and the production of a footpaths guide.

**The rest of this report focuses on the above issues and many others, and offers a plan of action to address them.**

## ***Reduce isolation by developing Cusop's transport and infrastructure***

### **SERVICES & TRANSPORT**

#### **What do we know?**

Although Hay-on-Wye is in a different Country, its proximity to the Parish enables Cusop's residents to benefit from services not readily available to more isolated communities. On the other hand the National Boundary does cause some confusion regarding access and entitlement to services; for example, which Police Station to contact for non-emergencies.

The Police service for Cusop is provided by West Mercia Police, operating from the new police station at Peterchurch. The Ambulance and Fire Services are provided by Herefordshire, who will at times ask for assistance from Powys.

Medical cover is available from Herefordshire and Powys, both with their own pharmacists and also a prescribing chemist in Hay.

Dial-a-Ride in Hay **(10)** provides essential transport for any member of the public with personal mobility difficulties or citizens who do not have access to appropriate alternative means of

#### **What are the issues?**

The majority of residents surveyed had not used the police, fire, ambulance or out-of-hours medical services, but of those who had, very few had encountered difficulties. Access to doctors and to hospitals was also considered to be good, although a small minority had problems finding a dentist.

Most residents said they rarely or never use the public telephone box but would like it kept for emergencies.

89% use the post boxes and 80% or more are happy with where they are located and the collection times although some people thought that an additional box at the Co-operative Supermarket would be very useful.

Parking is becoming an increasing problem, especially in the Lower Dingle and Victoria Terrace areas as many of the houses were built without parking facilities and the occupants therefore need to park on the road. However although 35% said they would like additional provision, only 17% said they had problems. Parking on the pavement along the Dingle was of concern to a small number and was mentioned at the Drop-in-Event, as it forced pedestrians to walk in the road.

41% of residents surveyed said that the local bus service is essential or important to them, with 33% wanting to see improvements to timetabling, especially frequency. At the drop-in event it was apparent that a bus shelter at Lower Mead for schoolchildren and other residents would be welcome.

#### **What can be done?**

1. Investigate the provision of a post box at the Co-op
2. Provide a bus shelter at Lower Mead, Hardwicke Road.
3. Improve the Bus service by establishing a User Group and carrying out a feasibility study.
4. Provide a leaflet for new residents containing telephone numbers for essential services.

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on Page 20 including the provision of a new post box, a new bus shelter, improving bus provision and an information leaflet for new residents.

## ***Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be*** **RECREATION PLAYING FIELDS & SEATING**

### **What do we know?**

The main recreational assets of Cusop are its open spaces and views, accessed via its network of public roads and footpaths. Hay-on-Wye provides access to many other recreational facilities. The Parish does, however, have its own small playing field, but it possesses little in the way of facilities.

Cusop has a fine and historic church and church grounds (See Page 11)

There are also a number of public seats in the churchyard and adjacent to roadsides and paths across the Parish.

Issues related to the current Parish Room and the proposed new Village Hall are dealt with on Pages 9 & 10.

### **What are the issues?**

The current playing field's lease is up for renewal and a large majority of survey respondents want it to be renewed.

There was also strong support for the provision of better facilities such as football and netball posts, more seats, a picnic area/green space and play equipment for under-10s. These findings are

supported by the young persons survey (**6**), with 48% of under-16s saying they currently use the playing field for cricket, football or general play. They support the adult list of requirements for the site but would also like a skateboarding area.

Over a third of residents would like to see more public seating provided in the parish, especially along Cusop Dingle.

### **What can be done?**

1. Renewal of the playing field's lease.
2. The establishment of a volunteer group to run the playing fields and organize its usage and facilities.
3. Provide more public seating.

### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 21 regarding the renewal of the playing field lease, the establishment of a playing field volunteer group, and the provision of additional public seating.



## ***Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be***

### **RECREATION: THE VILLAGE HALL**

#### **What do we know?**

The Parish Room was built in 1909 and has in recent years been treated as a community building. It is however a consecrated church building with limits placed on its use for secular purposes. Attempts were made to purchase the building for the community at a time when no site could be found for a new hall and more recently as a contingency against failure to raise sufficient funds for a new hall.

These attempts have all failed and the church has now sold the premises on the open market. Following seven years of successful fundraising the Village Hall Committee **(11)** is now a registered charity. It has purchased a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre site at the rear of Lower Mead and obtained planning permission for a new hall. Progress will depend on a successful bid for a lottery grant. If the project is not completed within the next 4 years the Moor Estate can re-purchase the land at the original selling price.

Most fundraising has been obtained by charging for car parking during the Hay Festival, (though the re-siting of the Festival last year greatly reduced this source of income) and from the recycling site at the Co-op which raises £5,000 per year.

#### **What are the issues?**

In preparation for the lottery grant application a questionnaire was distributed to households throughout the Parish in March 2004. This sought to establish what parishioners required from a new hall. The results of the 2004 Village Hall Survey **(12)** supported a wide range of activities, the most popular being films, live entertainment, hobbies/interest clubs and physical exercise. Other suggestions receiving significant support included jumble sales, training courses, amateur dramatics, a social club, groups for the elderly, luncheon clubs and whist drives. There was also support for youth group activities from the younger respondents.

Some of the issues raised under transport relate to the need for local facilities, particularly for the young, the less able and the elderly.

Along with St Mary's Church, the old Parish Room has served as the centre of the community for more than 3 generations, in spite of some restrictions on its usage. It is envisaged that the new Village Hall, with its modern facilities, access for those with disabilities, and its freedom to embrace both secular and faith requirements, will enhance and broaden the sense of community within the Parish.

#### **What can be done?**

1. Provide a new Village Hall on land already purchased at Lower Mead.
2. Continue and expand fundraising.
3. Prepare and submit Lottery Grant application.
4. Keep residents informed of progress with the new village hall.
5. Encourage local involvement in the new village hall project.

## **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on Page 21 regarding building the new village hall, fundraising, grant application, and publicity.

## ***Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be***

# **THE PARISH CHURCH**

### **What do we know?**

St Mary's Church dates from Norman times, but its original dedication was to St. Cewydd, a fifth century Celtic saint. Its churchyard is large and contains a fine collection of both evergreen and deciduous trees, including some splendid veteran yews. This rich resource of architectural, social and natural history is one of Cusop's main heritage assets. It is also a point of "pilgrimage" for literary devotees of Kilvert and his diaries.

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to manage the churchyard. As a result, Cusop PCC became involved with "Caring for God's Acre" (13), and a public meeting was held in April 2005. The meeting was well attended and a number of parishioners expressed interest in the project. A sub-committee of the PCC (14), have met and would like to form a group with other interested local people.

An archaeological survey and a tree survey were completed in September 2005.

### **What are the issues?**

The survey showed that 61% supported the community taking a more active part in preserving the church building.

22% were prepared to help maintain the church and church grounds with a similar percentage prepared to offer financial support.

The most popular suggestion for the future management of the churchyard was to set aside an area as a wild flower meadow.

### **What can be done?**

1. Develop a management plan, in order to make the church and churchyard a safe and attractive place for local people and visitors.
2. Consult about how to use and celebrate this heritage site in the village.
3. Establish a series of talks and visits to encourage local involvement, including archaeology, history, trees, plants and wildlife in the churchyard.
4. Set up an exhibition about the church and churchyard.
5. Institute a visitor survey to find out who visits the church and churchyard and why.

### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 22, including the establishment of a sub-committee and management plan, liaison with "God's Acre", organising talks, visits and an exhibition, and carrying out a visitor survey.

## ***Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be*** **FOOTPATHS**

### **What do we know?**

Cusop has an extensive network of footpaths that require ongoing maintenance and definition. They form an important part of the infrastructure of the parish in terms of access and recreation. There is also good evidence of high usage by visitors to the area, offering actual and potential income to the local community through walkers' accommodation and guides.

The network requires a considerable amount of upkeep in terms of access (stiles, gates, etc.) and robust signage. This has been emphasized by a recent spate of vandalism that saw the removal or damage to 13 signposts in January 2005.

Considerable work has already been done to put waymarks (discs with yellow arrows) along the line of every path to indicate its exact route. Where paths cross large open areas, however, there is a need for posts to support additional waymark discs.

### **What are the issues?**

Survey results show that the footpath network is well known, well used and appreciated by residents.

Although the majority of survey respondents were satisfied with access and upkeep, a significant minority wanted to see easier stiles or stiles replaced by kissing gates, more dog gates, clearer route markings and more frequent checks of undergrowth.

There was also very strong support for the production of a printed guide of local walks **(15)**.

### **What can be done?**

1. Enhancing footpath accessibility by improvement to stiles; e.g. adding a second step, introducing a latched top rail, installing kissing gates, etc.
2. Production of a printed guide of local walks **(15)**. Costs to be met from the Parish Paths Partnerships Grant .
3. Additional posts supporting waymarks to indicate routes across large open areas.
4. A review of the route markings on the whole network to ensure quality and accuracy of signage information.

### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 23, including improvements to stiles, production of a printed guide, additional signage, and a review of route markings.

## ***Protect and enhance Cusop's Distinctive Environment.***

### **WASTE**

#### **What do we know?**

Cusop Village Hall Management Committee (11) runs its own Waste Management outlet at the Co-op site in Newport Street through re-cycling provided by Powys County Council. The Facility includes separate waste disposal containers for textiles, cans, paper, cardboard, glass bottles, plastic and garden refuse. Revenue generated from the site is around £5000 per year which goes towards funding the new Village Hall project. Hereford Council do not run a re-cycling waste disposal service in Cusop. There have not been any cases of industrial waste problems. The sewage treatment plant for Cusop and Hay is situated in Cusop, adjacent to the River Wye, with the pumping station on the Hay side of the Dulas Brook. Residents in outlying areas have their own septic tanks.

The environmental impact of waste has become a major political concern, with the cost of landfill in the UK set to more than double in the next few years. Herefordshire Council currently has to ship all of its landfill waste out of the county.

#### **What are the issues?**

Generally "environmental issues" are a significant concern to respondents in the youth survey. Some residents would like to see a doorstep re-cycling service introduced but at the present time Herefordshire Council do not have any plans for such a service in this area. Some concerns were expressed about black bin liners being left out for collection, and the contents being spilled and blown about, with wheelie bins being suggested as a solution. There was also concern regarding fly-tipping. Although only two incidents have been reported (in Cusop Dingle and on the corner of the turning to Mousecastle), there has been a problem of people dumping items at the recycling site. Herefordshire Council will clear fly-tipping on request.

#### **What can be done?**

In the absence of a doorstep re-cycling scheme being introduced in the near future, encourage local residents to use the existing Parish re-cycling facility.

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 24 regarding recycling and management of litter.

## ***Protect and enhance Cusop's Distinctive Environment.***

### **LITTER & POLLUTION**

#### **What do we know?**

Work by the "Tidy Britain Group" suggests that litter attracts litter and so a clean environment tends to stay cleaner longer.

At present there are 8 litter bins in the Parish, all situated on the Dingle and at the church. There is a long-standing arrangement for Herefordshire Council's local refuse collectors to empty the parish's litter bins if they are seen to be full, although there is some evidence that this does not always happen.

Whilst some litter is dropped by people on foot or from cars, generally people dispose of their litter responsibly. The bigger problem is on the main road passing through Cusop into Hay, and to some extent, the road running from Clifford to Hay.

Not only is dog fouling unpleasant for walkers whether on pavements or grassed areas, it is a health hazard for humans (especially children) and for sheep and other stock.

There is currently no money available to provide bins specifically for dog litter or for its collection. Although street lighting is an asset from a safety and security perspective, some residents consider it causes light pollution.

#### **What are the issues?**

The survey (8) uncovered a number of concerns related to litter and pollution.

Selecting from a list, 58% of respondents identified bonfires as a problem, 44% light pollution, 39% aircraft noise, 36% litter/dumping, and 34% other noise pollution such as chainsaws and mowers.

There was also a significant level of concern expressed regarding dog mess in the parish, although only 31% would support a dog watch scheme. It was perceived as a general problem on pavements and footpaths, but the Dingle and Hardwicke Road received special mention.

Although litter was not seen as a major issue, many respondents thought there was a problem around the Co-op and adjacent businesses. The area around the church was also mentioned.

Although only 15% thought that street lighting could be better maintained, some concerns were expressed about its quality, efficiency and intrusiveness.

#### **What can be done?**

1. Herefordshire Council to be reminded of their responsibility for emptying litter bins.
2. Parish Council to seek advice from Herefordshire Council's lighting engineer on possible modifications to street lighting to reduce light pollution.

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 24, including the emptying of litter bins, doorstep recycling, the promotion of the Parish recycling facility at the Co-op. site, and consulting on the reduction of light pollution.

## ***Protect and enhance Cusop's Distinctive Environment.***

### **ROADS, VERGES, HEDGES & DITCHES**

#### **What do we know?**

Cusop has 9 miles of minor roads, the maintenance of which is the responsibility of the County Council. But the road itself is only part of the story. Fences, hedges, verges, ditches, bridges, culverts and drains alongside the road also require a great deal of upkeep. It is clear that where Parish ditches and drains have become blocked the road surface quickly deteriorates. Most of this maintenance work has been centralised and mechanised over the past 50 years but there is now a move to devolve some of the work back to locally employed contractors, traditionally known as lengthsman. Their job is to keep the verges and drainage systems in good order, removal of storm debris and litter, winter maintenance of salting, and the cleaning of non-illuminated traffic signs.

Many roadside hedgerows in the Parish have developed gaps and become bare at the base. These require better management if we are to restore and improve the quantity and diversity of flowers, insects, birds and animals. This equally applies to agricultural hedgerows away from the highway.

Some of the roads and tracks in the Parish may qualify for "Quiet Lane" or "Greenway" status (16), which can attract grants. "Quiet lanes" are minor roads with low car usage suitable for walkers, cyclists and horse traffic. "Greenways" are broadly defined as tracks free of cars which link to other networks such as footpaths.

#### **What are the issues?**

Verge damage is considered to be the biggest environmental problem in Cusop, followed closely by litter.

Surface water drains and ditches/drainage were highlighted amongst the top four items requiring better maintenance, road surfaces and pavements being the top two.

Of the respondents who answered the question "Would you like to see a lengthsman employed in Cusop, nearly 53% said "Yes".

#### **What can be done?**

- 1) Employment of a part-time lengthsman to keep the verges, drainage systems and road signage in good order.
- 2) The lengthsman will also submit an annual report to the Parish Council on the state of road surfaces.
- 3) Parish Council to encourage good hedgerow & verge management by adopting a code of practice.
- 4) The Parish Council to investigate whether any of the Parish's roads and tracks qualify for the Quiet Lane or Greenways initiative (16).

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 25. This includes details of the Parish Council's successful bid for funding from Herefordshire Council to employ a part-time lengthsman. It also includes plans to develop a code of practice for the management of hedges and verges, and for the pursuit of Quiet Lane and Greenway status for some of our quieter byways.

## ***Make Cusop a safer place.***

### **SAFETY & SECURITY**

#### **What do we know?**

It is generally accepted that Cusop is a very safe place to live with extremely low levels of crime. This is confirmed by the West Mercia police who advise that in 2004 there were less than 10 crimes reported.

From the survey (8) it is evident that speeding traffic is the major cause for concern with 76% of respondents indicating that they feel traffic travels too fast in virtually all parts of the Parish. However, the incidence of accidents related to speeding is so low that it is unlikely that requests for major traffic calming would be successful.

#### **What are the issues?**

There appears to be some confusion amongst residents as to who is responsible for policing Cusop. Because of Cusop's proximity to Hay some residents seek assistance from Powys Police rather than West Mercia.

Although Hay police station will accept an enquiry they will then pass it on to West Mercia.

Emergency calls (999) are routed directly to West Mercia Police.

Although the majority of people surveyed said they were not concerned about local crime or anti-social behaviour, a significant 25% said that they were. The main immediate worries are associated with joy riding, especially in the vicinity of Cusop Church, and with speeding traffic.

Joy riding is a concern shared by 35% of respondents to the Youth Survey. Some feedback suggests that the problem is at least in part being exported from Hay, but the Youth Survey also lists "boredom" and "having nothing to do" as the biggest problem for this age group.

In spite of low concern about crime in general, 57% of residents surveyed said they would like to see a Neighbourhood Watch scheme introduced, although only 37% said they would be prepared to be involved.

#### **What can be done?**

1. Investigate measures to reduce speeding in the parish.
2. Discourage joy-riding.
3. Neighbourhood watch scheme to be further investigated by the Parish Council.

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 26, covering liaison with the police on speeding and joy-riding issues, and the feasibility of a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme.



## ***Meet Cusop's accommodation needs***

### **FUTURE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT**

Cusop is a thinly populated rural parish, typical of the Marches. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the population fell but it is now almost back to its Edwardian peak at 377 in 2001 and is still growing. Based on the 2001 census information (3), the percentage of children is slightly lower (17.2%) than the County average (19.5%), and the proportion of retired people (21.3%) is higher than the average (16.1%) for what is already perceived to be a "retirement county". Over 71.2% of households are owner occupied, just below the average for Herefordshire at 71.6%.

Although the level of rented accommodation is on a par with Herefordshire, homes available for social rent are half the level of the county, the balance being made up by private landlord and tied accommodation. Private houses in the parish are generally good sized, detached properties and therefore command a high price. Smaller, cheaper property is hard to find. Housing development is, at present, controlled by the South Herefordshire District Plan. This is soon to be replaced by the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (17). The UDP will be operative as part of the Local Development Framework for a 3 year period from the date of adoption.

### **What are the issues?**

New houses are probably the most sensitive issue facing the Parish. Individual sites will always be controversial for some, but there is also a general concern that new housing could destroy the distinctive tranquil character of the parish. 43% of the respondents to the plan questionnaire (8) were opposed to any new houses at all, but a limited amount of new housing was favoured by 52% if it addressed local needs and was appropriate in location and appearance.

Cusop already has a high proportion of large private houses that sell at high prices on the open market, and only 15% of respondents favoured building more of these.

The majority of respondents wanted a mix of affordable and small open market homes to enable local people on lower incomes to stay in the area. There was also significant support for small and/or sheltered housing that can house the growing number of elderly residents and release more houses for families.

The Herefordshire Housing Needs Study 2001 identified a requirement within the parish for about 10 new affordable homes. Results from the Parish Plan questionnaire indicated that community opinions on local housing have not changed significantly since the study was undertaken. If new homes are to be built, Herefordshire Council's UDP proposals for developing the greenfield site near the Co-op and for infill housing within the village boundary (UDP Policies H4 and H5) are favoured by the great majority of the community. Even so, not every plot may be suitable for development: consideration should be given to impact on neighbours, village-scape, parking and traffic in accordance with UDP Policy DR1.

Building elsewhere by selecting other greenfield sites or stretching the village boundary are not considered appropriate.

The visual character of Cusop - which it shares with Hay - is dominated by traditional designs predominantly in the local grey sandstone.

Residents are anxious that this character should be maintained by adopting traditional forms and detailing in any new construction, in accordance with UDP Policy DR1/1. Stone should generally be used, although other traditional materials such as brick or render may be acceptable if it suits certain sites.

The importance of eco-friendly design is recognized but will need to meet UDP principles for new build with regard to type of development and location.

Only a tiny percentage of people saw any need for large commercial or storage facilities in the Parish. However 20% felt a need for small office space and 35% felt that the provision of small workshops was appropriate where a clear need can be demonstrated.

The Cusop landscape is not an appropriate location for commercial wind farms: Cusop Hill and the neighbouring ridges are visible for many miles around and form the visual setting for the town

of Hay which is a very important tourist destination. The economic as well as landscape damage of a windfarm would be unacceptable and would be contrary to UDP Policy LA2. The most prominent unlisted building in the parish is the old Parish Room and the majority of residents responding to the questionnaire would like it to be retained in accordance with UDP policy HBA8 even if its use changes.

### **What can be done?**

Ensure that Herefordshire Council is aware of and takes into account the views of Cusop residents with regard to the accommodation needs and building requirements as expressed in the Parish Plan Survey.

In particular that:-

1. A limited amount of new housing should be permitted provided that it addresses local needs and respects the character of the parish.
2. Affordable housing should form a substantial element of any new housing.
3. New housing should be restricted to the green-field site near the Co-op and to infill housing within the current village boundary, and individual proposals should be acceptable in terms of impact on neighbours, on village-scape and on traffic and parking.
4. New housing should concentrate on smaller family and "starter" homes, whether detached, semi-detached or possibly terraced, and also on sheltered housing and bungalows for the elderly.
5. New construction should adopt traditional forms, detailing and materials, in particular the use of local grey sandstone. Exceptions may be made for other traditional materials such as brick or render if it suits certain sites and for other approaches if they are unobtrusive and justified by ecological principles.
6. Some small-scale business accommodation, whether new-build or conversion, may be permitted if there is a clear local need, but Cusop is not an appropriate location for large office or industrial developments or for storage units.
7. Cusop is not an appropriate location for commercial wind farms, although individual wind turbines may be acceptable where there is a local need and the location is unobtrusive.
8. The most valued unlisted building in the parish is the old Parish Room which should be retained even if its use changes.

### **What's the plan?**

The Parish Council will advise Herefordshire Council to adopt the above recommendations in its planning policies and to follow those policies in determining individual applications for development within the parish. This has been added to the action plan to be found on page 27.

## ***Encourage Cusopians to shape the future of Cusop.***

### **COMMUNITY & COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **What do we know?**

Support for and response to the Parish Plan survey (8) was very high, an indication of a strong sense of community within the Parish.

The influence of Hay-on-Wye on community cohesion can be seen as both a strength and a weakness. Parishioners of all ages are able to meet and take advantage of Hay's sports and social facilities in a way that more isolated parishes cannot. It is probable, however, that these alternative attractions diminish the amount of community activity generated within the Parish.

The Cusop Parish Room which was the location of religious, social and fund raising activities has been sold by the Parochial Church Council and the financing and building of the new Village Hall is still some way off. (See Pages 9 & 10).

There is, therefore, no secular community facility currently available in Cusop. As a result maintaining and enhancing a sense of community in the Parish has become even more challenging. The absence of a village hall for the foreseeable future makes it even more important to focus on the ways and means of communicating within the Parish.

Currently Cusop has 3 noticeboards which are updated by the Parish Council.

The Church produces the "Link" magazine, which also contains valuable information about the Parish. The Parish Council produces a quarterly newsletter and a Parish website is currently being developed.

#### **What are the issues?**

With regard to communication, the Parish Plan survey indicated that a large proportion of respondents knew some or all of their parish councillors, knew where at least one noticeboard was situated and read the information placed there.

The Link magazine produced by the Church was well subscribed to and widely read.

More than half the respondents have internet access but opinion was divided on whether a parish website was needed or would be used.

It was also clear that residents would like to see more consultation between Cusop Parish Council and Hay Town Council.

The Youth Survey (6) showed that respondents were concerned at the lack of facilities and activities in the Parish and saw the proposed new village hall as one of the main solutions to the problem.

#### **What can be done?**

1. Continue to produce quarterly newsletters
2. Develop a website along with local volunteers over the next 2 years.
3. Provide a "Welcome" letter and details of local organizations for all new residents
4. Develop a closer association with Hay-on-Wye as an on-going policy.

#### **What's the plan?**

A full action plan can be found on page 28, including details of involving local organisations and residents in communications initiatives, the development of a parish website, and a welcome pack for newcomers.

Reduce isolation by developing Cusop's transport and infrastructure

<b>SERVICES &amp; TRANSPORT</b>	(See page 7)
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Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Provide additional postbox.	Investigate the provision of a post box at the Co-op	Within 6 months.	Parish Council. Post Office. Co-op.	PC.	None	Postbox conveniently sited for local shoppers.
Provide bus shelter.	Herefordshire Council to be approached regarding the provision of a bus shelter at Lower Mead, Hardwicke Road.	Within 12 months.	PC. Hereford Council. Bus Company. Local residents who may be affected.	PC.	Possible cost of £2-3,000	Shelter available for schoolchildren and other residents.
Improve bus service.	Feasibility study to be carried out by user group (made up of local residents) to ascertain times and frequencies required, prior to approaching relevant bodies regarding possible changes.	Within 12 months.	PC. Volunteers. Local Transport Planning Officer at Hereford Council. Bus company	PC	None	A bus service more suited to residents needs. Reduce reliance on private motor vehicles
Produce a leaflet for new residents containing telephone numbers for essential services	Cusop Parish Council have already done this - see third action point on page 28.	Done	PC	PC	None	Clarify which services are applicable to Cusop

*Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be.*

<b>RECREATION Playing Fields, Seating &amp; the Village Hall</b>						(See pages 8,9 & 10)
<b>Action</b>	<b>How it will be tackled</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Renew playing field lease and develop the area to provide facilities for young people and a pleasant green area for the use of all residents	Lease in process of being renewed at a peppercorn rent from Hereford Council. Funds will be sought with the help and support of the Herefordshire Regeneration Coordinator. A Volunteer group has been formed to manage the project.	2 years	PC. Herefordshire Regeneration Coordinator. Volunteer Group.	Volunteer Group	Possible £30000 needed for new playground equipment.	A pleasant, landscaped and well equipped area for the enjoyment of young people and other residents.
Provide more public seating	New seat recently donated and situated near to Trewern on Church Lane. Further seating to be considered on an annual basis. PC to promote sponsorship.	Ongoing	Parish Council	PC	£250 to £1000 per seat	More places for residents and visitors to rest and enjoy the beauty of the area.
Provide a new village hall on land already purchased at Lower Mead	This project is already well established. It now remains to identify sources of funding and make the necessary applications.	4 years	Village Hall Management Committee. Local community.	VHMC	Funding of approx. £350,000 required.	A modern, attractive hall with good facilities and parking which will be a centre for local activities and provide a focal point for the community.
Keep residents informed of progress of new village hall.	Parish Council newsletter will report progress every quarter	Ongoing	VHMC PC	VHMC		Residents will be aware of progress at every stage and be able to volunteer.
Encourage involvement of local people in new village hall project.	Various events to be organised in 2006 for social and fundraising purposes.	12 months	VHMC. Residents	VHMC		Generate a feeling of ownership and involvement in this ambitious project..

*Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be.*

## THE PARISH CHURCH

(See page 11)

Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Develop a management plan.	A new group to be formed (comprising sub-committee of Cusop Parochial Church Committee and any interested local people) to meet with representatives from "God's Acre".	Early 2006	Cusop PCC. Local volunteers. God's Acre.	Cusop PCC sub-committee.	To be assessed.	Make the church and churchyard a safe and attractive place for local people and visitors.
Consult on how to use and celebrate the church and churchyard.	New group to meet with representatives of God's Acre to develop and promote the heritage site.	Early 2006	New Group God's Acre.	New Group.	To be assessed.	Improve use and appreciation of church and churchyard by local people and visitors.
Establish a series of talks and visits.	New group to arrange a series of talks on archaeology, history, trees, plants and wildlife in the churchyard, using a range of interesting speakers and specialists.	2006 onwards.	New Group. Appropriate organisations and individuals.	New Group.	To be assessed.	Encourage local involvement and interest in the church and churchyard.
An exhibition about the church and churchyard.	The new group, in conjunction with specialist and local people who have shown an interest in the talks and visits, to help with setting up the exhibition.	Late 2006/early 2007	New Group. Local interested parties and specialists.	New Group.	To be assessed.	Encourage local involvement and interest in the church and churchyard.
Set up a visitor's survey.	Devise a visitor's survey to find out who visits and why.	2006	New Group.	New Group.	To be assessed.	Results of survey to be incorporated into the management plan.

*Develop Cusop as an active and enjoyable place to be.*

## **FOOTPATHS**

(See page 12)

<b>Action</b>	<b>How it will be tackled</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Improve stiles	Difficult -to-use stiles to be identified and appropriate action recommended.	12 months	Cusop Footpaths Officer. Hereford Rights of Way Officer.	CFO	Minimal	Easier to access footpaths with more user friendly stiles.
Provide a written guide to Cusop walks	Already produced and available from local outlets and Tourist Office in Hay-on-Wye. Price £3.50.	Done	CFO Parish clerk.	CFO	Small grant obtained to enable the guides to be published.	Ten different walks described in detail promoting the area to tourists and providing useful information for locals.
Install additional posts supporting waymarks to indicate route over open areas	With the agreement of landowners additional posts are now in place in New House Wood, above Ty-Coch and on Cusop Hill.	Done	CFO	CFO	Minimal	Easier to follow routes.
Review route markings on the whole network	All footpaths to be reviewed and route markings checked.	12 months	CFO	CFO	None	Easier to follow routes with clear signage

Protect and enhance Cusop's distinctive environment.

<b>WASTE, LITTER &amp; POLLUTION</b>				(See pages 13 & 14)		
Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Doorstep re-cycling.	Although many people would like to see this introduced is it not presently being considered by Hereford Council due to cost constraints.	Not known.	Hereford Council.	HC	Very costly to implement and manage.	A re-cycling facility is available at the Co-op and residents should use this whenever possible. Profits from re-cycling are being used towards the cost of the new village hall.
Stop dog fouling on pavements and verges	Although this appears to be a problem in some parts of the parish there is no enthusiasm for a dog watch scheme. Dog mess litter bins are not available due to the cost of emptying. Owners should be encouraged to clean up after their dogs.	Ongoing	Dog owners	Dog owners.	Nil	Clearing up by owners would make walking on the pavements a more pleasant experience for pedestrians, and play areas safer for children.
Reduce light pollution.	Parish Council to consult with Hereford lighting engineer to ascertain what can be accomplished in terms of light modification for existing street lamps and request that any replacement lamps use directional luminaires to direct light downwards.	6 months.	PC. Hereford Council Lighting Dept.	PC.	Cost to be determined.	Street lamps to direct light downwards, thereby reducing glare.
Litter.	Whilst litter is not a major problem it is evident that some litter bins are not emptied every week. Parish council to remind Hereford Council of their responsibility to empty all bins.	Immediate.	PC. Hereford Council.	PC.	None.	No overflow of litter onto pavements and verges, keeping the local environment clean & tidy



Protect and enhance Cusop's distinctive environment.

## ROADS, VERGES, HEDGES & DITCHES

(See page 15)

Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Employ Lengthsman to help keep Cusop attractive and tidy.	Cusop Parish Council have been successful in obtaining funding for the post of lengthsman to commence 1/1/2006	Jan. 2006	Cusop PC. Hereford Council.	Cusop PC.	Funding obtained from Hereford Council.	Verges, hedgerows and ditches will be kept in good order. The state of road surfaces will be reported to the Parish Council on an annual basis.
Develop, publish and distribute a code of practice for the maintenance of verges and hedges.	Parish Council to apply for funding from the Local Heritage initiative in association with the Countryside Agency.	12 months.	PC. Countryside Agency. Herefordshire Regeneration Officer. Local volunteers.	PC	Possible cost £2000	Increase in growth of wild flowers. Protection of wildlife. New hedges planted. Farmers and landowners supported to encourage good management of existing hedges. Quality of landscape maintained
Investigate whether Cusop qualifies for Quiet Lane or Greenways initiative	Parish Council to make contact with the Countryside Agency to determine feasibility. If successful apply for grant in association with local community from Local Heritage initiative.	12-18 months	PC. Countryside Agency. Herefordshire Council Re-generation Co-ordinator. Local volunteers.	PC	Possible cost - £5000	Heritage and history associated with Cusop roads and greenways can be explained by booklet and heritage signing on routes.

*Make Cusop a safer place.*


<b>SAFETY &amp; SECURITY</b>	(See page 16)
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Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Reduce speeding traffic.	30mph speed limit now in place on Hardwicke Road but there are no resources available to monitor compliance. Parish Council to liaise with Hereford Council and constabulary to discuss other measures to reduce speeds.	12-18 months	PC. HC. Police.	PC.	Not known.	A safer environment for all road users.
Discourage joy riding.	After intervention by police this appears to have ceased. Residents should report any future incidents to the police.	Ongoing	Residents. Police.	Residents	None	Safer roads.
Set up an active Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.	Full details to be obtained by Parish Clerk and a meeting of interested residents to be held early in 2006.	12 months	Parish Council. Residents. Police.	Residents	None	Discourage possible criminal elements and keep the crime rate at its present low levels.

Meet Cusop's accommodation needs.

## FUTURE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

(See pages 17 & 18)

Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
<b>The Parish Council will ask Herefordshire Council to adopt the following recommendations as 'Further Planning Guidance' and to take them into account as material considerations in development control decisions within the parish.</b>	<p>The following recommendations to be submitted for adoption:-</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	2006 and ongoing	PC. HC.	HC	None	The views of local residents are taken into account when all building changes and developments within the parish are being considered.
A limited amount of new housing should be permitted provided that it addresses local needs and respects the character of the parish.						
<b>Affordable housing should form a substantial element of any new housing.</b>						
New housing should be restricted to the green-field site near the Co-op and to infill housing within the current village boundary, and individual proposals should be acceptable in terms of impact on neighbours, on village-scape and on traffic and parking.						
<b>New housing should concentrate on smaller family and "starter" homes, whether detached, semi-detached or possibly terraced, and also on sheltered housing and bungalows for the elderly.</b>						
New construction should adopt traditional forms, detailing and materials, in particular the use of local grey sandstone. Exceptions may be made for other traditional materials such as brick or render if it suits certain sites and for other approaches if they are unobtrusive and justified by ecological principles.						
<b>Some small-scale business accommodation, whether new-build or conversion, may be permitted if there is a clear local need, but Cusop is not an appropriate location for large office or industrial developments or for storage units.</b>						
<b>Cusop is not an appropriate location for commercial wind farms, although individual wind turbines may be acceptable where there is a local need and the location is unobtrusive.</b>						
The most valued unlisted building in the parish is the old Parish Room which should be retained even if its use changes.						

Encourage Cusopians to shape the future of Cusop

## COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY

(See page 19)

Action	How it will be tackled	Timescale	Partners	Lead	Cost	Outcome
Produce quarterly newsletter	Parish Council have initiated, and begun production & distribution of a newsletter to all households containing up to date information on parish matters	Done	PC	PC	Minimal	Residents will be better informed on matters relating to the parish and able to contribute to the newsletter if they wish.
Develop a parish website with the help of volunteer(s)	A web-site has been established and is in the early stages of development. It can be found at <a href="http://www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/cusop">www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/cusop</a> Volunteer now needed to help develop and maintain the site.	Ongoing	PC Parish Clerk IT literate volunteers	Volunteers Parish clerk	Minimal	Residents who prefer to obtain information via the internet will be able to do so.
Organise a Welcome letter for newcomers.	The Parish Council has produced a welcome letter listing local organisations, useful telephone numbers etc to be delivered to new residents when they move into Cusop.	Done	PC Parish Clerk	Parish clerk	Minimal	Newcomers made to feel welcome and part of the community.
Encourage close association with Hay-on-Wye	Parish Council Chairman to keep in close contact with the Chairman of Hay Town Council	Ongoing	PC	PC	None	Residents made aware of matters relating to Hay which also affect Cusop.

## Footnotes

- (1) **Tilhill Forestry.** Tel: 1786 435000 Email: info@upm-tilhill.com  
Website: <http://www.upm-tilhill.com/>
- (2) **Woodland Trust.** Website: <http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/>
- (3) **Extract from UK Census 2001. See Additional Information below.**
- (4) *The Parish Council.* **Contact the Parish Clerk, John Wilkes - 01497 821401**
- (5) **Herefordshire Association of Local Councils** Tel: 01432 353492  
E-mail: [halchereford@btconnect.com](mailto:halchereford@btconnect.com).
- (6) **Cusop Youth Survey 2005 See Additional Information below.**
- (7) **Countryside Agency.** West Midlands Region Tel: 0121 233 9399  
E-mail: [info.westmids@countryside.gov.uk](mailto:info.westmids@countryside.gov.uk)
- (8) **Parish-wide survey carried out in May 2005. For full results see Additional Information below.**
- (9) *Feedback from the 3-day event.* See additional Information below.
- (10) **Dial-a-Ride in Hay.** Tel: 01497 8 21616
- (11) *Village Hall Committee* **Contact John Wilkes - 01497 821401**
- (12) *Results of Village Hall Survey 2004* See additional Information below.
- (13) *"Caring for God's Acre".* **Contact Sue Cooper Tel: 01568 611154**  
E-mail: [cfgauk@hotmail.com](mailto:cfgauk@hotmail.com)
- (14) **Sub-committee of the PCC** to look at use of the church and churchyard.  
Contact Mrs. Celia Cundale - 01497 820396
- (15) Printed guide of **local walks.** Copies from the Tourist Information Centre or  
Pemberton's Bookshop in Hay-on-Wye.
- (16) **Quite Lane or Greenways initiative** Details from John Theaker - 01497 821972
- (17) **Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**  
Copies from Siobhan O'Dwyer 01432 260142

## Additional Information

*The information and results from all the surveys used in this Parish Plan are available as an Additional Information Pack.  
Packs can be borrowed from the libraries at Hay-on-Wye and Hereford or from the Parish Clerk (John Wilkes- 01497 821401).*

### Other useful contacts:

Parish Footpath Officer - Mr Chris Playford - 01497 820074  
Parish Tree Warden - Mr Philip Ferguson - 01497 821180  
Lengthsman Scheme - Councillor Tommy Williams - 01497 821251  
Green Lanes/Quiet Roads - Councillor John Theaker - 01497 821972  
"Caring for God's Acre" - Mrs Celia Cundale 01497 820396