

**The Malpas Plan
Environmental Issues
Focus Group Meeting
14th September 2005**

Present:

Steering Group Members:

Eric Barker (EB)
Margaret Barker (MB)
Anna Patten (AP)
Mike Patten (MP)
Sally Sharp (SS)
Peter Howell (PH)
Laurie Crump (LC)

Community

(DS) David Storer - Malpas Recreation Trust
(JP) J. B. Probin
(PR) P.H. Ravenhill
(KG) K.A. Gibbons
(CN) Constance Newall
(DL) Doreen Leek

EB opened the discussion with a brief overview of what the Parish Plan is - an opportunity for the people of Malpas to say how they want the community to develop over the next 10-15 years. The finished plan will be presented to the Parish Council, Chester City Council and Cheshire County Council to be formally adopted. The Malpas Plan will then have to be consulted by planners when making decisions. It is essential for the plan to represent the views of the people of Malpas. The Steering Group must demonstrate that they have tried to get the views of a large number of people, through meetings such as this and through a household questionnaire, which is currently being compiled. He then mentioned the earlier focus group meetings which had already taken place which had looked at economic issues and social issues. Now the focus is on environmental issues of importance to Malpas. A list of possible topics might include the historic environment, conservation, the natural environment, drainage and flooding issues, matters relating to refuse such as recycling, landfill, incineration, the public toilets, traffic - speeding, volume, congestion, parking, car parks, yellow lines and other traffic restrictions and enforcement, as well as land and building re-use in Malpas.

As with earlier focus group sessions, participants were asked to consider a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)

LC - One weakness is employment. Not enough people work locally. Need to make Hampton Industrial Estate bigger and attract in more employers

Retirement homes - lack of homes for elderly people to downsize to. People have to move out of village to find somewhere suitable to live or continue to live in larger houses which are no longer appropriate for their needs.

PR - Malpas is a compact market town. People can walk around it for all their needs, everything is within walking distance. People should be encouraged to walk or cycle rather than to drive

DS - The drainage situation holds back development, this is a positive thing as far as some people are concerned because it delays development.

CN - At a previous meeting, a couple of years ago, the issue of retirement homes was raised, but nothing has come of it.

LC - People want homes for the elderly

MB - The old egg packing station would be a good site for that sort of housing

SS - It would need to be central in the village

The egg packing station was rejected previously for housing because of access problems

There is very little here for retired people - there's Craddock Court but nothing for people who want to own their own homes.

KG - Residents parking in Tilston Road, Well Street and the lower park of Church Street is a problem. Residents have no option but to park on the street

EB - How can we solve that?

There is unoccupied land which could be used for parking.

Need to take the bank away, along side the Recreation Ground, to allow cars to be parked off the carriageway.

EB - How many people who work in Malpas park outside their place of work and leave the car there all day?

Have the yellow lines improved the parking situation?

There's still congestion, mainly at school times

PR - Compared to a lot of places Malpas isn't bad at all

Sometimes the yellow lines are ignored - especially near the junction of Chester Road and the High Street

And, of course, you shouldn't park close to a junction anyway.

What about a ring road around Malpas - Greenway Lane, Whitchurch Road, Wrexham Road?

If we had one development would almost certainly take place within the ring road.

On sites which are presently fields.

It would change the whole nature of the community.

It would keep the trucks and large agricultural vehicles out of Malpas.

The frozen food place was going to leave at one time, but they never have

They don't employ anyone local

Can you make them go?

No

Corbetts are still here too

The bus service - mostly good, but can't go to Tesco in Whitchurch. Other buses go there but they refuse to allow it, say they are at capacity.

AP - The service is due to be reviewed in November, but I understand that passenger numbers etc have exceeded expectations

What about the toilets - could be upgraded at a comparatively low cost

DS - The conservation area. There are rules and regulations about what can happen there but they are not necessarily evenly applied. Too many rules by too many bodies - county, city and parish

CN - The trees were cut down at the Heber when they re-did the parking area

AP - A number of replacements have been planted, but it was a shame to see the loss of trees which were coming into maturity. Particularly as many of them were planted by a public benefactor

JP - Drainage - the problems of Leech Lane and Mercer Close, particularly as a result of the water coming off the fire station when they do drills/cadet practice

Mobile phone masts, are they near schools. The church would seem to be a suitable location (and a source of revenue for them)