

Coleorton Parish Plan

Based on information collected from
the parishioners of Coleorton in 2007.



Contents

History of Coleorton	page 3
Introduction	page 7
Methodology	page 7
Background and timescale	page 8
Questions Asked and Answers	page 8
What happens next	page 12

History of Coleorton

Coleorton is found next to the Ashby to Loughborough road. It is now spread over a fairly wide and hilly area and boasts a long history of literature, arts and industry. Coleorton is important to the area in many historical respects. It played a major role in the Civil War and was also the seat of the Leicestershire Beaumonts for more than 500 years.

During the Civil War the Cromwellian forces had their regional headquarters at a garrison on the site of Coleorton Hall. From this position they were able to launch cannon balls towards the Royalist stronghold of Ashby Castle, two miles away. The Parliamentary forces kept up their attack on Ashby castle at Ashby for more than two years, and although the Royalists would often try to launch counter attacks these often failed. In one such surprise attack they lost between 70 and 80 horses. The position of this garrison also had a strong impact on Packington as this village lay between Coleorton and Ashby Castle. The vicar at the time was also a Royalist sympathiser and soldiers from the garrison would often go to intimidate him.

The current hall is Georgian in date and was completed by Sir George Howland Beaumont in 1807. It has far-reaching views over Charnwood Forest and towards Loughborough. The last Beaumont to live at the hall was the Viscount who founded the school. It was used as the Regional Headquarters of the National Coal Board and plans were put forward to convert it into a residential development and restore the gardens.

Coleorton has also been known as Cole Orton and Cole Overton, which itself is a corruption of Coal Overtown. There was also a Cole Nethertown, meaning Lower Coal Town but this has now disappeared from the map. The village has been known under other names, mainly variants on the above including Overton, Quatermarsh, Quatermarshe, Quatermaris and Catormars. Records also show a Overton Sawcey or Overton Sauce which may have included the area that is now known as Farm Town.

Industry:

Surface coal was first recorded as having been found and mined during the reign of King Henry VIII.

Coleorton Pit was the first in Leicestershire and was commonly referred to as the 'bread and herring' because of the poor pay the miners' received. The poor pay may have been a contributing fact

but the miners believed that if seven whistles were heard to blow then an accident would occur at the pit and none of them would risk going to work. It is more likely however that this is derived from the piece of folklore surrounding the bird known as the Seven Whistlers or Golden Plovers, whose cry it is thought heralds a death or misfortune about to occur at the pit.

Yet another version of this is that seven colliers once became intoxicated and in order to pay for more ale agreed to whistle. As they began they were swept up into the sky by a whirlwind from which they were unable to escape and from then on they returned to whistle whenever an accident was going to happen.

This belief was prominent throughout the coalfields and not just in Coleorton and it is true that if strange noises were heard during the night some men would refuse to work at the pit the next day. The mining of coal from around the village has led to subsidence and this can be seen in the uneven nature of the fields and also in some of the buildings, a few of which have been damaged beyond repair.

Until 1933 the colliery on the area now known as The Moor was in continuous production and the industry brought slight prosperity to the area. At the close of Cole Orton Colliery, nearby Newbold Lount was opened and many of the miners from the village went to work there. In 1948 it was producing an average of 36,000 tons of coal a month and nearby Snibston Colliery was producing 27,000 tons of coal a month on average for that year.

The village had several other industries to add to its prosperity including the production of a yellow-glazed pottery made in kilns in the village. Examples of the pottery can be seen in some of the county's museums. The village also produced a small amount of lace, which was sent to the markets in Nottingham but this has not been produced for about 150 years. The other industry the village was involved in was brick making. Leicestershire bricks were particularly hard and popular in London and St Pancras Railway Station was constructed from this area's brick.

Religion:

The Parish Church of Coleorton is situated on the hill adjacent to the hall and is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. It is built in a gothic style and the oldest part is thought to be the 13th century tower. The graveyard is no longer used for burials as these now take place in the new cemetery, which was extended in 1946 and is

some distance from the church. The lych-gate at St Mary the Virgin church is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Mary who was the second wife of Canon W.B. Beaumont, who was at one time rector at the church. Inside the church there are some fine examples of Flemish Renaissance woodwork. There is also a 15th century stained (or painted) glass window as well as the Beaumont tombs and effigies.

Coleorton also has St John's Chapel near to the school and fishpond and near to the new cemetery.

The primitive Methodists in the village have a modern chapel and use their old chapel as their Sunday School building.

Points of Interest:

The stone seat, which Wordsworth placed in the Winter Gardens at Coleorton Hall was where Sir Walter Scott sat and planned the tournament scenes for his novel "Ivanhoe" and also wrote much of the book.

The kitchen at Home Farm, where Wordsworth lived in 1806-1807, was used as the setting for the painting by Sir David Wilkes entitled "The Blind Fiddler".

A Dame Margaret is said to haunt the grounds of Coleorton Hall and is supposed to rattle chains first in the house and then in the grounds every year on March 12.

The Beaumonts:

Not only is Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753 – 1827) buried in the churchyard of St Mary's in Coleorton but he also had a significant impact on the village during his lifetime. Sir George, the 7th Baronet, lived at Coleorton Hall, next to the church and occupying an enviable position at the top of the hill overlooking the village and surrounding countryside. He is renowned for being amongst the best landscape painters of his time and gave patronage and friendship to other artists including Constable, Colens, Girtin as well as being an early supporter of Landseer and Collins. His own works number around 2000 drawings and 120 oil paintings which can be seen on display at the Leicestershire Museum and Art Gallery in the city.

Sir George was also one of the founders of the National Gallery and was responsible for securing the Angerstein collection as well as donating pieces, from his own collection, as those by Claude, Poussin, Rembrandt, Rubens, Reynolds and Canaletto. He also

bequeathed Michaelangelo's 'Tondo' to the Royal Academy. Sir George Howland Beaumont renovated Coleorton Hall using the profits from the collieries he owned in the area and entertained guests at the house including Wilberforce, Byron, Southey, Coleridge and Mrs Siddons.

The poet William Wordsworth is responsible for the creation of the Winter Gardens in the grounds and also the writing of the verse etched on the cenotaph Sir George built for Reynolds, which still stands beside the house. Another notable member of the family was Francis Beaumont (1584 – 1616) who was a renowned Elizabethan dramatist. He was described by the poet, Coleridge, as one of "the first rate men of that true golden era of English poetry."

Infrastructure:

Coleorton is close to the A42 as it passes Ashby and the village can be approached from this direction on the B5234. There are also routes into the village along local roads from the direction of Newbold and Griffy Dam.

Public Houses and Inns:

For a village of its size Coleorton has a good number of hostelries, among them the New Inn and the Kings Arms. The former has become less popular as a name for a pub in recent years as can be seen from figures taken in the county in 1877 when there were 15 inns of this name and by 1974 the number had dropped to just four.

The Kings Arms name is used all over the country and is represented by various illustrations of heraldry. The George Inn is a little more ambiguous and although usually represented by St George or one of the monarchs in this case it could be George Howland Beaumont who lived at Coleorton Hall. The Angel is used throughout the country to symbolise the first coffee houses and because of the popularity of the name it is commonly coupled with other objects but Coleorton remains in the simplest form.

Writer Lawrence Poole

Introduction

Objectives

The main objective of this parish plan is to set down an action plan for the future of the village to the year 2015. In order to achieve this it has been necessary to establish where we are now and where we wish to be in the future.

Methodology

Fact -

- 450 questionnaires delivered.
 - 152 questionnaires returned.
- = 34% response rate.

To achieve our objective the village was surveyed by use of a questionnaire to all households in the village. This gave all members of the village an opportunity to contribute. Response was good with response rate of 34%. There were no hostile refusals; 298 questionnaires were not returned. Some properties were empty. New technology meant that the questions could be returned via a web site, collected questionnaires were entered by volunteers, the data analysed by Merlinco Batch Web. All questionnaires were anonymous.

We endeavoured to cover as wide a range of topics relevant to village life as possible. Results of the questionnaires are shown on pages 7 to 10.

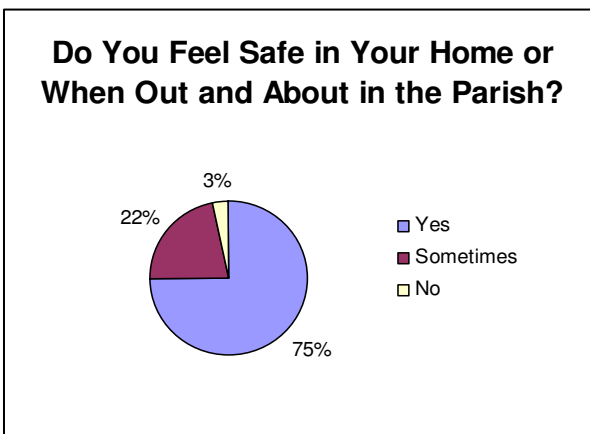
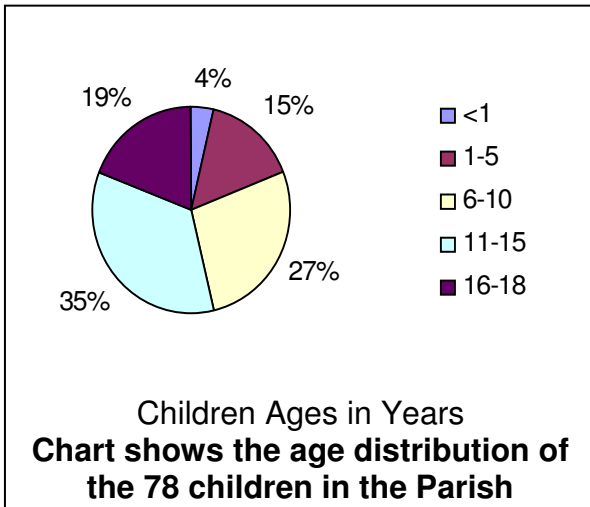
Analysis of the results has led to this draft consultative document which is the first stage of meeting our objectives.

The next stage is an action plan, which has been produced from the results of the completed questionnaires. This action plan will be used by the Parish Council as their remit, as it details the wishes of the Parish. The Parish Council will liaise with outside organisations and authorities so as to ensure that the contents of this action plan are achieved within prescribed timescales. Updates on the action plan will be given at Parish Council meetings and reported in the minutes.



Hough Mill – near Coleorton

Background and Timescale



The process was initiated by Coleorton Parish Council with funding from the Countryside Agency. A team based on volunteers and supported by the parish council commenced the exercise in 2007 with the target of producing a consultative document for the Annual Parish Meeting in 2008.

The team comprised
Steve Copeland (Chair)
Kevin Anderson
Sandra Dillon
Paula Haggart
Simon Haggart
Terry Hastlow
Christine Riley-Jordan
Peter Riley-Jordan
Michael Specht

Comments may be addressed to:
Sara Cowin, Coleorton Parish Clerk
120 Main Street, Markfield, Leicester,
LE67 9UX.
or
Steve Copeland
or
any other Parish Councillor or parish plan team member.

Questions Asked:

There were often many questions in each heading. These will be addressed in the results section.

- Low Cost/Affordable Housing.
- Lighting within the Village.
- Traffic / Local / Transport Issues.
- Beaumont Centre/ Amenities.
- Utilities Provision.
- Local Post Office.
- Community.
- About the Household.

Question 1

Would you support the Provision of 11 Low Cost Housing Units in Coleorton?

Answer:

70% answered No.
30% answered Yes.

Question 2



Are you happy with the Amount and Quality of the Lighting in your area?

Answer:

73% answered Yes.
27% answered No.

However,
Of the 26.85% of respondents not happy with the amount and quality of lighting;
Almost 77% requested an increase in lighting in specific areas.
Over 23% requested that lighting was turned off between the hours of 11pm and 6am.
The 3 main areas identified for increased lighting were;

- The School
- The Moorlands
- Stoney Lane

Question 3

Fact –

Archbishop Halford of Canterbury, who crowned Queen Victoria in 1838, gave a chair, used in the earlier coronation of William IV in 1831, to Coleorton Church where it can still be seen.

Traffic Issues:

Issues identified:

1. Speed through village.
2. Pavements.
3. Cycling Issues.
4. Parking.
5. Noise.
6. Other means of transportation.

a. Do you perceive there to be a speed problem in Your area?

Answer:

72% answered Yes.
28% answered No.

However: Over 60% of respondents believed that speed activated signs were the best form of speed management. The locations for these signs were Indicated to be:

- The A512 (31%)
- The Moor (24%)
- Lower Moor Road (17%)



Fact –

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b. Is the Street Paving in your area well maintained and free from obstructions?

Answer:

75% answered Yes.

25% answered No.

c. Do you Regularly use a Bicycle?

Answer:

20% answered Yes

80% answered No.

d. Do you have problems with Parking on your street?

Answer:

14% answered Yes

86% answered No.

Although the majority stated that parking was not a problem in the village, a number of specific areas were identified;

- Lower Moor Road (43%).
- The Moor by the Angel Inn (29%).
- The School (21% - at school hours).

Areas also identified where traffic was seen as a nuisance were;

- The A512 (25%).
- Lower Moor Road (20%).
- The Moor (18%).

e. Do you feel the Parish is well served by Public Transport

Answer:

57% answered Yes.

43% answered No.

Of those who did not feel that the parish was well served by public transport, 64% wanted more buses serving the parish, and 36% wanted direct routes to

specific destinations without the need to change buses.

The most common direct bus services requested were:

- To Loughborough (20%)
- To Ashby (20%)

Residents in Zion Hill requested services via their area (13%).

Question 4



The Beaumont Centre

1. Location
2. Use
3. Awareness
4. Uses
5. Accessibility
6. Organising Events
7. Help
8. Other Amenities
9. Recreational Facilities

Answers:

Although 83% of residents knew the location of the Beaumont Centre, only 43% made use of it.

- Nearly 63% indicated that they were not aware of the events or facilities offered by the Beaumont Centre.
- The 3 most requested activities were;
 - Community / Social Events (26%)
 - Circuits / Keep Fit Classes (14%)
- A number of residents stated that they had difficulty using the centre because the car park was too small or they did not know where it was.

Question 5

Parish Facilities

- Over 90% of respondents used the Post Office, with 71% highly valuing the service it provides.
- 32% would like to see the Post Office selling newspapers but 25% were happy for it to



remain as it is.

- 33% of respondents wanted to see a children's play area located around the Moor.
- Over 70% of respondents in the Parish were not connected to mains gas.
- Over 64% of respondents believed that the Parish suffered from an excessive number of disruptions to the electricity supply.

Question 6



St John's Chapel

Parish Council and the Parish Website

- Over 68% of respondents thought that the Parish Council should have greater influence over local planning applications.
- Nearly 72% felt that they were not adequately informed about local issues.
- Almost 63% had never visited the village web site but thought that it should contain information on;
 - local news and local events (40%)
 - MPs, Councillors, Drs, local trades people (9%)
- The Parish's website is at www.coleorton.org.uk.

What Happens Next?



An Action Plan, detailing the actions requested by Coleorton's Parishioners, will be used by the Parish Council as their mandate for action. The Parish Council will liaise with outside organisations and authorities so as to ensure that the contents of this action plan are achieved within prescribed timescales.

If anyone wishes to send in any questions or ideas, please send them to parishplan@coleorton.org.uk.