

# Our Community Plan

2004  
-2009



The chalk escarpment above Mere © Countryside Agency/Nick Smith

## **Mere & District**

Covering the parishes of East Knoyle, Kilmington, Maiden Bradley  
& Yarnfield, Mere, Stourton with Gasper, Sedgehill & Semley,  
West Knoyle and Zeals

We  South Wiltshire

# Our Community, Our Vision

The South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance is a partnership of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in Salisbury and South Wiltshire.

Its mission is to work together to create 'a safe and caring place, where it is easy to get about and where value for money services contribute to a high quality of life and environment, with equality of opportunity for all'.

The following strategic priorities have been adopted for 2004 – 2009:

- Access to services (including rural transport)
- Affordable housing
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Alliance partners as exemplary employers (healthy workforce, green organisations, basic skills for all employees).

**South  
Wiltshire  
Strategic  
Alliance**

## South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance partners

- Churches Together
- Council for Voluntary Service
- Environment Agency
- Government Office for the South West
- Learning and Skills Council (Wiltshire & Swindon)
- Salisbury College
- Salisbury District Council
- Salisbury Health Care NHS Trust
- South Wiltshire Action against Poverty
- South Wiltshire Economic Partnership
- South Wiltshire Primary Care Trust
- The Army
- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
- Wiltshire Constabulary
- Wiltshire County Council
- Wiltshire Fire Brigade
- Wiltshire Racial Equality Council
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

[www.southwilts.com/site/swsa](http://www.southwilts.com/site/swsa)

# How this plan was put Together

**D**uring the summer of 2003, the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance distributed a Community Questionnaire to 49,000 households. 37% were returned, of which 1,025 were from Mere and District. The results from the questionnaire showed your priorities across the area were:

1. Looking after the roads
2. Protecting local facilities
3. Housing that local people can afford
4. Local schools
5. Reducing crime
6. Activities & facilities for teenagers.
7. Looking after the environment

Many people also took the time to write comments about the specific issues under those headings that were causing concern. We also have information from a panel of local residents known as 'Peoples Voice' and from a panel of young people known as 'Tomorrow's Voice'. This information has been brought together to form your Community Plan.

You will also see that various community groups and organisations have been asked for their views and opinions. The purpose of this plan is to publish the results of what local

people want to see, but also, more importantly, the plan will influence partner organisations of the Alliance to address priorities in your area.

The plan will directly impact policy making and strategic planning. It will also help community groups by showing what is being achieved and how the partner organisations can support this.

We recognise that in every parish there are many volunteers working on projects, giving up their time to make a difference in their community. Some of the projects in this plan will need to be taken forward by you, the community. This plan is not the end of the consultation process. Work will continue around specific target groups, topics and geographical areas as necessary. In particular, we recognise that we have probably not addressed the needs of less accessible groups. Work to remedy this is ongoing.

In addition to the work that has been carried out at Community Area level, Local Parish Plans are currently being developed in a number of areas. These will influence the future development of local strategies and policies. They will help us understand 'real' local community needs. By the time this plan is reviewed in five years time, we hope that many parishes will have a Local Parish Plan which will feed into the Community Area Plan.

# Progress report

**T**he first Community Plan for Mere and District was produced in 2000 after wide local consultation.

It was a well-researched and comprehensive document reflecting not only local, but also national priorities and targets.

Service providers have worked towards achieving these targets and in many cases have “made a difference”. There has been a marked

improvement in crime detection and people’s perception of crime, safety and policing – thanks in part to the efforts of the Mere and District Community Safety Partnership,

The Mere and District Link Scheme and the Community Village Shop in Maiden Bradley are further examples of successful community initiatives.

You may view progress on the Alliance Web site:

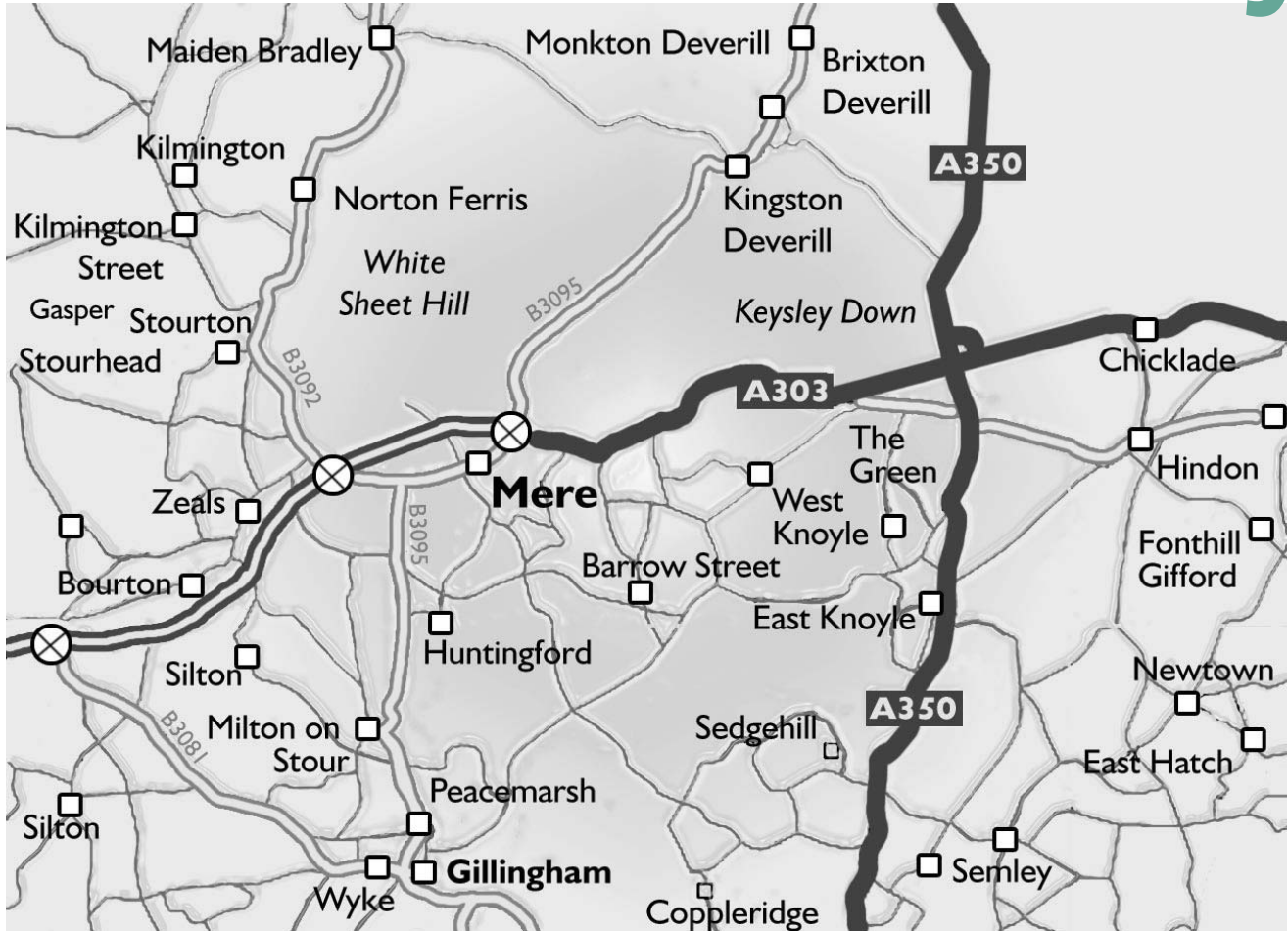
**[www.southwiltswilts.com/site/swsa](http://www.southwiltswilts.com/site/swsa)**



Mere Lynchets



# This is our community



## Mere & District

The district has a population of a little over 5,000 spread over eight parishes, each with its own character yet reliant on each other for community and on the services delivered by the Alliance. At its centre is the town of Mere close to the County boundary. 📍



Mere and its surrounding district

☞ The services of nearby towns are used for additional services, shopping, leisure and secondary schooling. Wiltshire County administrative and infrastructure links are in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Warminster. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to the east, north and west of the area.

The area is rural, with a traditional dependence on agriculture. In recent years there has been a steady change to retirement living and second home acquisition, which has an effect on patterns of trade, transport and education.

An important part of our Community Plan is to secure a voice for this community with our partners in the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance.

People demand services that reflect the needs not only of the established population for employment, transport, housing and schooling, but also those of retired people.

Both sectors require transport, but in different ways; both need health services, but in different ways. Some need leisure, some the basic needs of bringing up a family.

Other issues are:

- The impact and training for new technology
- Response-based public transport to link the community
- Regenerating the local economy through tourism and the environment
- Health and community safety
- Affordable housing in perpetuity for local people.

These are the concerns you have been telling us about that we have tried to address in compiling this Community Plan.

A detailed socio-economic profile of the area has been prepared by Wiltshire County Council and is available on:

[www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk](http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk)





# East Knoyle

**E**ast Knoyle is a parish made up of the main village and smaller hamlets at Holloway, The Green, Underhill, Upton and Milton with an interesting history boasting Christopher Wren and Jane Seymour among its ancestors.

The parish is bordered by the A303 and A350 roads which bypass it. There is a high level of retired residents. Primary schooling is based at Hindon whilst Gillingham and Shaftesbury provide secondary education.

There is a strong sense of community with St Mary the Virgin Church, a village hall, garage, two pub/restaurants and several small businesses, often working from home. The children have a small play area.

A monthly church magazine and bi-monthly parish newsletter are published.

Doctors from Hindon and Shaftesbury hold half-day surgeries at the village hall.

A village fete is held each summer together with community events in the village hall. There are a number of successful clubs and associations including a youth club.

Minor roads are in a poor state of repair with inadequate public transport facilities.

There is a village taxi service and the proposed "Wigglybus" service is being targeted at "The Knoyles".



The old windmill at East Knoyle



# West Knoyle

**W**est Knoyle is a rural community of farmers and country people close to Mere, which provides many services.

It is led by a Parish Council and a committed local group of volunteers. There are no shops but there is a successful Village Club.

The Parish is a peaceful place with most of any crime occurring at The Willoughby Hedge

Service Area on the A 303 trunk road.

Accidents and diversions on this road divert heavy traffic through the village.

Maintenance of the rural roads and lanes is inadequate.

Special interest clubs meet regularly, Barn Buddies Youth Club and After Eight Youth Group meet weekly.

Schooling is based in Mere, Hindon and Gillingham. The Parish of St Mary the Virgin is a multi-benefice with Mere.



Photograph by Rose Cox, Mere



The clock tower in Mere town centre

# Mere

**M**ere is the largest centre of population in the Community Area with over 2,000 people.

It has an Information Point covering an award-winning Museum, Library and Mere Information Office. The Parish Council, a Chamber of Trade, Churches Together and cultural, sporting and leisure clubs look after the community.

The town has a changing industrial scene with a historic and interesting past now adapting to modern needs. There is a move to second home occupation and retirement living alongside a vibrant small shopping and business centre.

A Youth Development Centre as well as Scouts, Guides, Cub Scouts, Beavers, Brownies and Rainbows cater for youth and younger people. It is a local priority to improve indoor and outdoors sporting facilities.

Some international and nationally renowned businesses and a small industrial estate employ local people.

Public transport to adjacent towns from Mere is adequate but the rural areas need connections to Mere. Traffic flow, road safety and provision for adequate car parking associated with new, or re-development in the town centre is important

and should be taken into account in the planning procedure.

A young families peer support worker took up office in September 2004 for a 5 year period to help with family issues and social inclusion funded by the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and managed by Churches Together in Mere and District (CTM&D)\*.

Sustainable affordable housing for local people is a community priority.

The establishment of a tourism-led website and town-wide visitor initiative is being discussed by traders and accommodation providers. This is seen as a way of regenerating the town and developing its close links with The National Trust at Stourhead and the Longleat Estate.

Mere Carnival in September and a Literary Festival each October are community events.

Mere Parish Council is producing a Parish Plan.

\* Churches Together represents St Michael the Archangel Parish Church, St Mary's Church (Roman Catholic), United Reformed Church (URC) and the Methodist Church in Mere; as well as the churches of The Upper Stour Parish and West Knoyle.





The lake at Stourhead



# Sedgehill and Semley

**S**edgehill and Semley is a rural parish containing several hamlets. The Parish Council meets alternately in the two centres.

There are Parish Churches at St Leonards Semley, and St Catherines at Sedgehill, (both C of E) are in multi-benefice with East Knoyle. There is a pub at Semley but no shops.

The state of rural roads, lanes and sign posts are local concerns, as is public transport. Semley has a Primary School (from September 2004).

Local clubs and meetings are held in the village halls and there is a parish magazine. Summer fetes are held each year as community events, and in 2004 the first Semley Music Festival was held during August.

Local public transport is a big issue affecting older members of the community and young families.

# Stourton and Gasper

**T**hese villages encompass the Stourhead Estate (NT), several farms and White Sheet Down (NT). They are led by an active Parish Council.

Stourhead is one of the National Trust's most visited properties and contributes to the local economy by bringing tourists to the area and providing employment (some of which is voluntary).

Local people recognise tourism as part of their everyday lives.

Kilminster & Stourton Cricket Club, which is located in Stourton, supports several youth and adult teams. The church of St Peter (C of E), a pub and specialist shops are in Stourton village.

# Maiden Bradley & Yarnfield

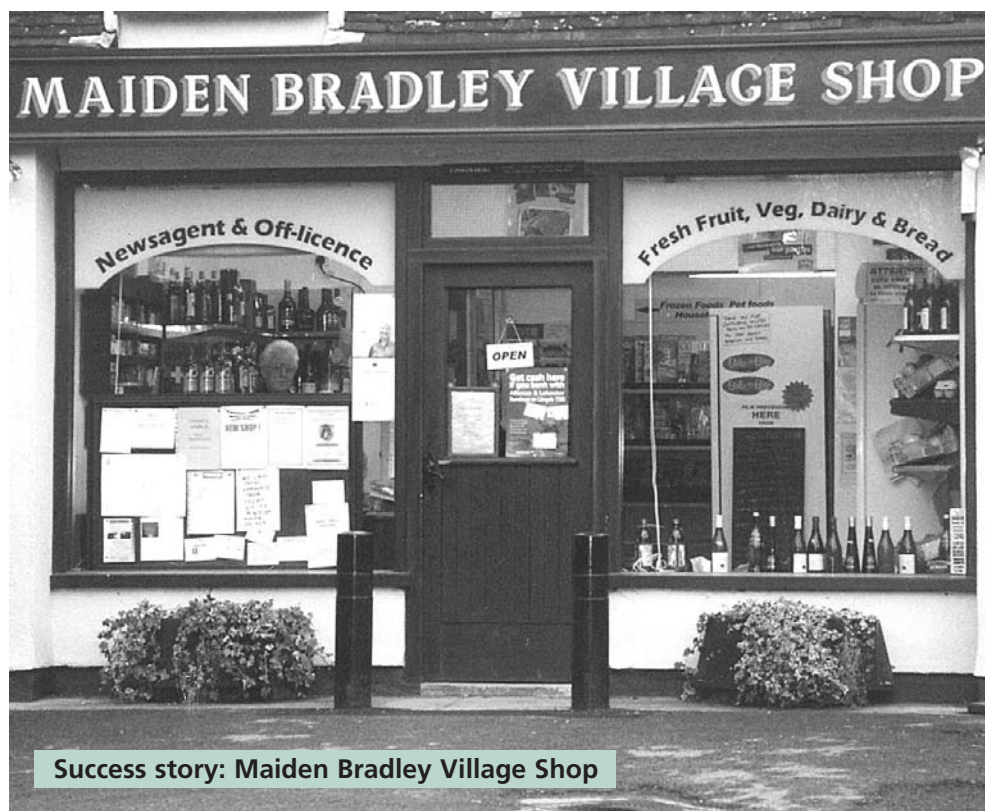
**T**his self-sufficient community manages a Village Shop and Post Office that promotes and sells local produce.

New premises may need to be found in the next few years. Across from the shop is the village pub, The Somerset Arms.

The parish council is preparing to apply for "Quality Parish Council" status and has initiated a Parish Plan. This is aimed both to identify community views on housing and traffic, and to influence local government.

A current major concern is the traffic on the B3092 through the village centre. Discussions are underway for a 7.5 tonne vehicle limit.

There are plans to further develop business opportunities, including a conference centre at Bradley House and the conversion of unused farm buildings into small commercial units.



Progress has been made in setting up a Village Composting scheme. There are many clubs and associations for such a small community. Young people have a recreation ground and youth club; a swimming pool is run by volunteers.

All Saints Church is in joint-benefice with Mere. There is a Free Church Chapel. Historically the village is the seat of the Duke of Somerset.

# Kilmington

**K**ilmington is a small, mainly agricultural village led by its Parish Council. The Kilmington “Pink Paper” informs and engages the community.

While there are no shops, there are numerous businesses, not all associated with farming.

The First School amalgamated with Zeals School in September 2004 to become the “Whitesheet Federated C of E Primary School”.

The church of St Mary is part of the Upper Stour Parish. There is a village pub.

New recreational facilities for the local youth are being built under the initiative of the Parish Council and there are several special interest clubs.

# Zeals

**Z**eals is a larger community with a village hall, garage/shop/Post Office and several businesses.

The newly formed school (see Kilmington) from September 2004 is actively engaging with the community and trialing some innovative ideas.

The community is led by the Parish Council. There is a monthly Village Newsheet and a monthly Upper Stour Parish Magazine. The village pub has recently reopened after refurbishment. The church of St Martin’s is part of the Upper Stour Parish.

Issues aimed at regeneration of the community now bypassed by the A303 trunk road are under discussion, including the establishment of a community facility to include indoor bowling with disabled access and access to the whole community including youth.

# Housing & the built environment

## What people said:

- **1** Preserve the character of villages through thatching and use of local materials.
- **2** Services and resources (such as drainage and health) are being stretched by new housing.
- **3** Reduce dog fouling of footpaths.
- **4** More affordable housing is needed for local people.

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Parish Councils to produce and publish Village Design Statements.
- **2** Use planning gain to improve local facilities in consultation with Parish Councils.
- **3** It is now permissible to put suitably packaged dog waste in litter bins. Salisbury District Council policy is not to increase the number of dog bins in the District due to high maintenance costs. Dog fouling of footpaths and pavements is illegal, poses high health risks particularly to children and is subject to a fine if prosecution takes place.
- **4** Mere has an allocation of 25% affordable homes on new larger developments. Up to 54 affordable new houses are planned for Mere by 2011. SDC encourages communities to promote Rural Exception Housing reserved for local people.



### INFORMATION

Household waste disposal is available at Wiltshire County Council's amenity site in Bath Road, Warminster.

Mini recycling bins are in the Salisbury Street car park in Mere.



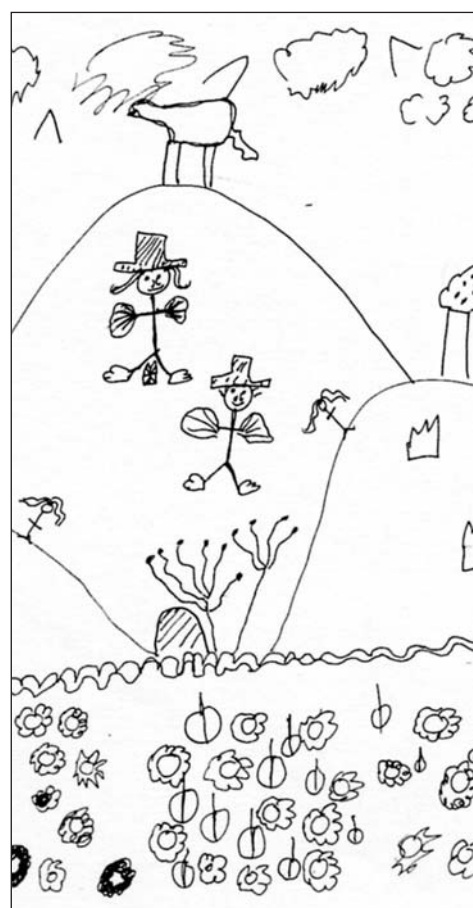
# Countryside & land based issues

## What people said:

- **1** Alternative uses to be found for farm buildings, such as leisure, offices and workshops.
- **2** Farmers to diversify into alternative crops, and tourism & leisure activities.
- **3** Identify what wildlife there is of importance in the area.
- **4** Increase kerbside recycling.

## What we can do about it:

- **1 & 2** Local plan policies allow for conversion of rural buildings for other uses within specified sustainability criteria.
- **2** Food from local producers to be promoted to schools & care homes. Work with Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team to take forward projects associated with appreciation of the countryside and tourism and leisure in rural areas.
- **3** Mere PC have a management plan for Castle Hill & Kingsmere open spaces which includes tree planting and wildlife monitoring.
- **3** Carry out one long-term wildlife project for development in the community with support from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
- **4** Emphasise waste prevention and minimisation. Encourage community groups to start composting schemes and a 'Rethink Rubbish' Directory. A community composting scheme is being developed in Maiden Bradley.



Produced by a pupil of Mere School

# Social care and health

## What people said:

- **1** The ability of healthcare facilities to keep up with new housing development is of concern.
- **2** Social care and health issues are particularly acute in the more rural areas of the community. This is the oldest population in Wiltshire with 24% over the age of 65. Over 19% of residents have a limiting long-term illness.
- **3** Fuel poverty is also an issue. Mere Ward is in the top 30% of wards nationally for households using more than a tenth of their income on heating bills. Western Ward is in the top 40% and Knoyle Ward in the top 50%.

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Use planning gain from new developments to expand healthcare facilities. In partnership with Primary Care Trust encourage better clinic facilities for men's health (only 25% seek regular advice) and NHS Dentistry. There is a smoking cessation service at Mere Surgery.
- **2 Churches Together in Mere fund a Young Families Support Worker to signpost areas of practical help.**  
**Wiltshire Fire Brigade will provide free advice and home safety checks to encourage greater fire safety awareness.**  
**Assistance is available from the Hospital Alternatives Team, District Nurses and Sunshine Healthy Living Project (SHLP). The Primary Care Trust will work with others, through the General Medical Services contract and initiation of a project, to develop services which support people with long-term conditions.**
- **3** There are national targets to eradicate fuel poverty by 2010. SHLP has an Energy Efficiency Advisor and the Citizens Advice Bureau offers advice on debt issues.

# Crime & community protection

## What people said:

- **1** There is still a fear of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- **2** Introduce a greater police presence in the area.
- **3** There is support for the Mere and District Community Safety Partnership (M&DCSP) and their efforts to bring about safety in the community.

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Work through the Mere & District Community Safety Partnership with the Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer to co-ordinate multi-agency responses to complaints of anti-social behaviour.

Salisbury Domestic Violence Forum will raise awareness of domestic violence in rural areas as an important issue and hidden crime, recognising the difficulties victims/survivors have in seeking help and receiving services.

Wiltshire Fire Brigade will encourage greater fire safety awareness by providing free advice on deliberate fire setting

- **2** Ensure that the Community Beat Officer is clearly identified and known to the local community.
- **2** Ensure police resources are targeted and focused maximising visibility and reassurance.
- **3** Encourage greater participation in the M&DCSP by all eight parishes.

## **i** INFORMATION

**Mere Police Station,**  
White Road, Mere.

Tel: 01747 860268.

Opening times vary.

**Tisbury Police Station.**

Tel: 01747 870203.

Open Mon-Fri 9am-1pm.

**Wiltshire Fire Brigade**

Tel: 01722 439300

**Always dial 999  
in an emergency**

Produced by  
a pupil of  
Mere School







# Transport

## What people said:

- **1** Timetables for public transport need to be more user-friendly.
- **2** Parking restrictions in Mere are disliked.
- **3** Lorries and cars should be diverted away from town and village centres when delivering to factories and farms.
- **4** Make the A303 trunk road safer. Slip roads are too short and three-lane sections need to be dualled

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Produce clearer integrated timetables for public transport and discuss timetabling with local bus companies through the Shaftesbury & Gillingham Area Transport Forum. Support the newly introduced 'Wigglybus' to improve inter-village connections
- **2** Endeavour to achieve a balance between safe traffic movement and access to shops and businesses to suit all users and those with disabilities in Mere.
- **3** Highways Agency to put up 'preferred route' signs on A303 to assist in deliveries to essential local businesses.
- **4** Improve safety on the A303 road and ensure that when dualled (2008-09), it enhances local needs and does not disadvantage the community through severance, access, lack of suitable crossings and overspill of traffic.



## INFORMATION

**Bus & rail timetables available at Mere Information Point.**

**Rail services are at Gillingham (South West Trains), Warminster (Wessex Trains) and Castle Cary (First Great Western and Wessex Trains)**

# Better access to services

## What people said:

- **1** Improve facilities and usage of village hall facilities in West Knoyle and other parishes.
- **2** Knoyle ward is fourth worst in access to services in Wiltshire and 155th out of 8,414 worst nationally. Since the production of these figures the Post Office has closed and the future of the garage is uncertain.
- **3** Carrying rubbish to convenient collection points is difficult for older residents.
- **4** We need to realise the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance's vision of equality of opportunity for all.

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Encourage Salisbury District Council's 'Access the Arts' programme and other cultural initiatives to put on productions in village halls.
- **2** The county and district 'one-stop shop' facilities such as Mere Information Point (MIP) should be extended into rural communities.
- **3** Local consultations on future plans for waste and transport are being held in in 2004-05.
- **4** South Wiltshire Action Against Poverty (SWAAP) to identify social exclusion and poverty in our community and put in place measures to address them.



### INFORMATION

Local information and library services (including access to IT) at the Mere Information Point. Tel: 01747 860546.

# Local economy

## What people said:

- 1 Trade and business in the town of Mere and in the villages need support to aid sustainability.
- 2 Assist young people to access skills training and means of getting to and from training courses and employment.
- 3 Improve public transport to and from the community area to encourage local employment.

## What we can do about it:

- 1 Salisbury District Council provides up to 100% relief on business rates to general stores, Post Offices, pubs and petrol filling stations in rural settlements where the population is less than 3,000 and certain criteria are met. In 2005-06 the District Council will investigate means to strengthen its planning policy to address the continuing decline of shops and services in rural centres.

Reprint an updated Mere guide in partnership with Salisbury Tourism Partnership.

Establish a Mere & District website through partnership with local users, tourist office, traders, hoteliers, bed & breakfast proprietors, restaurateurs and local interests with the aim of attracting more visitors to the town of Mere and surrounding area.

- 1 East Knoyle Parish Council is setting up a community shop and Post Office run by volunteers and managed by an industrial providend society.
- 1& 2 Encourage broadband usage to aid home-based workers and establish access to facilities in Mere Library, Mere School, Whitesheet Federated Primary School, East Knoyle Community Shop.
- 3 Access to shops in rural areas will be improved by the 'Wigglybus'.

# Culture

## What people said:

- **1** There are not enough facilities for young people.
- **2** Sports facilities in the area are inadequate.
- **3** Closure of the swimming pool in Gillingham would severely affect swimmer users.
- **4** Improved venues for the performing arts are needed.

## What we can do about it:

- **1&2** Newly acquired sports facilities at Duchy Manor will be for community use and Mere Parish Council has an ongoing programme of development to include an all-weather pitch and outdoor bowling green (tennis courts improved in 2004).
- **1&2** Explore options for an indoor sports facility at Zeals for use by all.
- **2** Mere PC to build a new Sports Pavilion on Duchy Manor Playing Fields, Mere for use by the community.
- **3** Access to Tisbury Sports Centre swimming pool should be helped by the 'Wigglybus'.
- **4** SDC to consider whether 'Access the Arts' programme and other cultural initiatives could put on productions in village halls.



# Education & lifelong learning

## What people said:

- **1** Improve further educational facilities for school leavers, job seekers and those needing to learn additional skills in this community area to avoid car travel.
- **2** Provide Lifelong Learning facilities to include IT training and craft skills.

## What we can do about it:

- **1** Encourage greater use of Mere Youth Centre through a free advice centre and IT facilities. Centre to be open for at least three sessions per week by January 2005.
- **1&2** Encourage outreach from local Colleges into redundant buildings at Duchy Manor School to provide courses aimed at skills improvement for young workers, craft skill courses and IT familiarisation courses for 'silver surfers'.
- **2** Liaise with local Primary Schools (from September 2004) to examine use by the community under the Extended Schools Programme. (Refer to Wiltshire CC Extended Schools Policy)

# Targets for some of your priorities

What we want	How we can do it	Who can help	When
Resurface Burton to Mere footpath and have regular maintenance	Show the need to connect a small community to services	Wiltshire County Council Highways Dept. & Local Transport Plan	2011
Reduce heavy lorries through Maiden Bradley village	7.5 tonne GVW weight restriction on B3092 road	Maiden Bradley & Yarnfield PC with Somerset and Wiltshire CC Highway authorities	2006
Improve direction signs on rural roads	More regular maintenance	Wiltshire County Council & partners	2007
Better public transport linking rural communities to essential services	Produce clearer integrated timetables for public transport. Promote use of the Wigglybus from Sept 2004	The Wigglybus team. The local Transport Forum, and ourselves	Now

# Targets for some of your priorities

What we want	How we can do it	Who can help	When
More trade, commercial activity and employment in the Community Area	Encourage visitors by a new website linked to tourist hotspots. Update the Mere Guide	Local businesses working as a Community Partnership. Salisbury District Tourism Partnership	2005
Retention of shop and Post Office facilities in East Knoyle with ITC provision and sales of locally produced food	Establish a community shop	East Knoyle Parish Council with funding partners.	2005
Affordable housing in perpetuity for local people	Ensure that suitable housing types and shared equity schemes with equity retention are available	Salisbury District Council Forward Planning Dept. and local Housing Associations	2007
A nature walk and wildlife conservation area on Castle Hill in Mere	Map wildlife and establish a safe walkway and descriptive signs	Mere Parish Council in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	2005

# Mere Information Point

Your  
community  
one-stop shop

- Library for books video & audio tapes
- Reference library
- County and District service access point
- IT and Broadband access
- Mere Museum
- Tourist Information Point (TIC):

**BARTON LANE,  
MERE, WARMINSTER  
BA12 6LS  
Telephone: 01747 860546  
Email: [meretic@salisbury.gov.uk](mailto:meretic@salisbury.gov.uk)**

## contacts

Partnership Manager, SWSA, c/o The Council House, Bourne Hill. Salisbury SP1 3UZ.  
**Tel: 01722 434641      E-mail: [swsa@salisbury.gov.uk](mailto:swsa@salisbury.gov.uk)**

Mere & District Community Planner – **John Howard.**  
**Tel: 07743 504346      E-mail: [jpennhoward@btopenworld.com](mailto:jpennhoward@btopenworld.com)**

Local contact can be made at **The Mere Information Point.**  
**Tel: 01747 860546      [www.southwiltswilts.com/site/swsa](http://www.southwiltswilts.com/site/swsa)**