

# Shebbear Community Appraisal

## *Shebbear - The story so far*

Shebbear, a parish extending from Dipper Mill in the south to Binworthy Farm in the north, was an ancient settlement. The origins of the "Stone" are lost in the mists of time, indeed, a local historian has described the ritual of turning the stone each year as "the oldest folk custom in Europe!"

In 1050 Shebbear was known as Sceft Beara and in Domesday book it was known as Sepes Beria. Regrettably valuable records were destroyed during the air raids on Exeter when the public library was destroyed making research rather difficult.

During Saxon times Shebbear was sufficiently important to give its name to a "Hundred", a group of 100 villages or hamlets for administration purposes. The Shebbear Hundred included Bideford and Lundy.

Shebbear was known as a "Royal Manor", held for a time by Earl Harold, the last of the Saxons, Godwin's son. Research would show that the place names of the farms and the old family names in the parish are steeped in history.

The Norman Church, St Michael's and All Angels, like many other churches in the area had links with Torre Abbey at Torquay.

In the more recent time of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shebbear was the centre of Methodist revival in the area. Meetings at Lake Farm led to the building of "Bible Christian" chapels - both here and overseas - and the founding of Shebbear College in 1841.

So the Twentieth Century with its two world wars and all the changes that have taken place is now almost history itself and we look forward to the Millennium.

## **Introduction by the Chairman of the Parish Council John Dart**

In 1981 the Parish Council organised an Appraisal for the parish, it was Council's first experience of undertaking such a task. As a result of this Appraisal eleven plots of land were made available from land owned by Torridge District Council at an affordable cost for first time buyers residing in the Shebbear area. Some built their homes on a DIY basis to help keep costs down, others by more traditional means. At the time the project was judged to be one of the successes which came about as a result of the Appraisal pin-pointing a need within the community. The recent Appraisal undertaken again by the Parish Council, but this time with the valuable assistance of Mr Mike Knight from the Community Council of Devon, is updating the needs of the community as we approach the Millennium and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The response to the 303 questionnaires delivered resulted in a return of 233 completed forms with their various comments. This represents a return of 76.8% which was an excellent response. I would like to thank all who participated for their time, effort and community spirit. There will be a public meeting in the Village Hall on **Thursday May 7th 1998 at 7.30pm** to discuss this report of the Appraisal's findings. It is essential that YOU attend this meeting with your views and comments.

The findings of the Appraisal will also be communicated to all interested bodies such as the Torridge District Council. This will add weight to any proposals made by the Parish Council for projects that may be undertaken.

To all members of the Steering Committee I would like to record my thanks for all the work and effort which has been put into this Parish Appraisal. They have attended meetings, delivered and collected forms and contributed to the evaluations.

I am aware that over recent years many new families have come to live in the Parish of Shebbear. On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to welcome them to the Community. I hope they will be able to integrate and take part in the various activities and organisations. One subject revealed by the Appraisal is the need for a Newsletter or Village publication. This being the case, some "budding editor" or experienced writer may have the opportunity of taking part and displaying their talents!

*John Dart*

John L C Dart, Chairman of the Parish Council and Steering Committee: Jack Bale (Parish Clerk)  
Christopher Andrew, Ken Chamberlain, Sue Geary, Roy Johns, William Littlechild, Ted & Shiela Lott, Adrian Pett.

## THE PARISH SPEAKS!

Appraisal forms were distributed to households in the parish during the autumn of 1997 and these results are based on the excellent response you made to the questions that were asked. The Appraisal was divided into two parts - "Household" and "Personal" 233 households representing 611 people completed the first section with 501 individuals responding to section two.

*"We were unable to answer or comment on many of the questions as we are newcomers to Shebbear albeit very happy newcomers and we both look forward to taking a more active interest in village activities. We have found everyone friendly and helpful".*

*"Further housing growth must be phased slowly to allow integration rather than being swamped ability of local facilities to cope with extra people -particularly the Primary School"*

## HOUSEHOLD

### The facts!

228 households own 348 cars and 16 motor bikes.

9 people are in need of accommodation - and 69 will need housing in the future with the majority in need of "Starter Homes".

At the other end of the age range 12 people consider they will need "Residential care" in the next five years.

## PERSONAL

Age and sex of respondents

		Sex			
		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%
	11-16	29	59.2%	20	40.8%
	17-21	16	51.6%	15	48.4%
	22-39	54	49.5%	55	50.5%
<b>Age</b>	40-59	80	46.5%	92	53.5%
	60-64	17	51.5%	16	48.5%
	65-74	28	50.9%	27	49.1%
	75+	23	44.2%	29	55.8%

## Housing

Most people consider a priority need for housing local people (18 8) and young people (145) though 53 people see no need for any more housing.

*"I would like to see Shebbear remain a small and friendly village ... A few more Housing Association houses such as Balleroy Close (about another 5-10) would be a good idea"*

## Transport & Highways

Car parking is sometimes a problem in the village. A majority of people feel there is a need for a car park but opinion is divided as to whether it should be near the Village Hall or in an area behind the telephone kiosk.

199 people share their car for some journeys - mainly social and leisure occasions and for shopping. 83 would be prepared to join a "share a ride" scheme. 152 commute 10 miles and 14 over 70 miles a day.

**43 people use the bus as their main means of transport.** For 29 people the bus is **essential** and for 63 important. There is clearly a need for improvements to both bus routes and time-table.

Opinion divided over taxi services.

*"There is a large piece of land (overgrown at present) at the rear of North View which, I understand, is owned by the (District) Council. It is a shame that a village with all its amenities cannot provide car parking to keep the streets clear, especially when children are around and parents park their cars in the road"*

*"Toilets could also be installed on this ground"*

*"I would use the bus daily-if there was one! "*

## Public Services

Refuse collection, street lighting, verge maintenance and kiosk considered "good to satisfactory Road maintenance, litter bins and pavements "satisfactory to poor".

*"... street lights should be switched off at midnight to conserve energy and increase the peacefulness of sleep time... "*

*"...Give talks to children on the subject of not dropping litter and sweet papers in the hedges ... and encourage older people not to throw beer cans on verges etc.... "*

## Danger Spots

341 people responded with School Corner and Smokey House at the top of the list. Other black spots mentioned by more than one person were Hay House to the Square and Pitt Hill. 230 people think "speeding" a problem - 150 think not.

*"... there should be a 20mph speed limit through village "*

*"Upgrade road from Stibb Cross to Dipper Mill"*

## Dog Mess

175 find this a nuisance with particular areas mentioned Back Lane, Playing field and Barn Close.

*"...I would like to see a "dog warden".*

## Primary School

164 people would like the school facilities to be available out of school hours with the majority willing to pay for this. There is strong support in the community for the Primary School.

*"Need for a nursery unit, supervised play area plus organised trips ( eg swimming)"*

*"...Buy a sports field"*

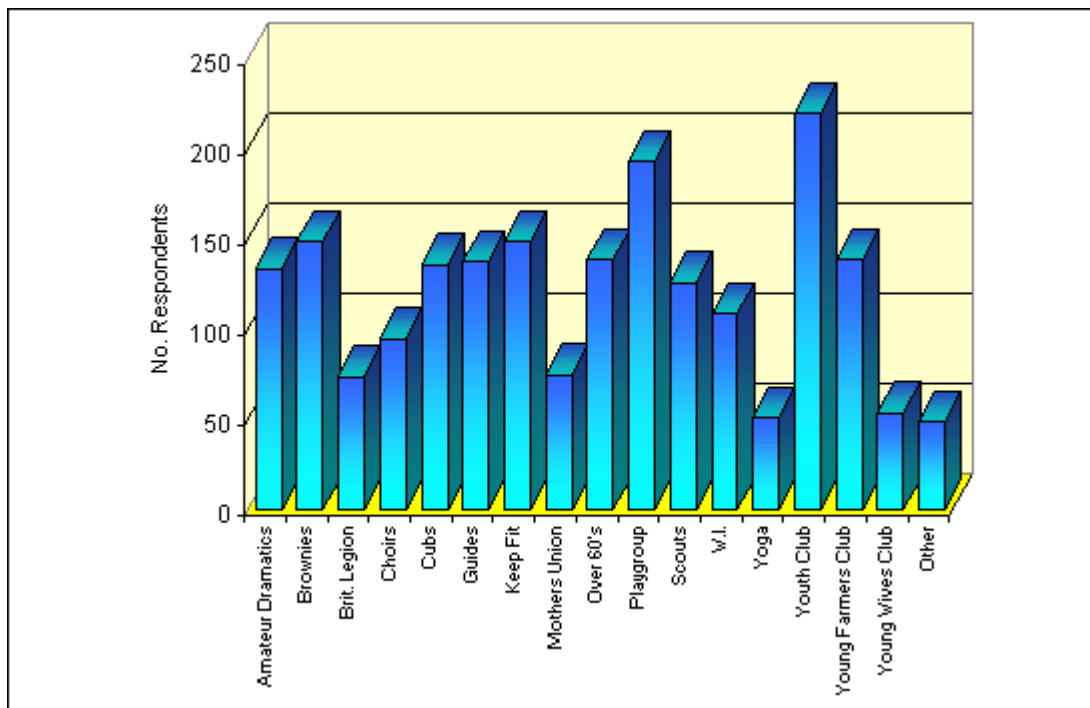
Overwhelming support (98%) for a pre-school play group.

*"Thanks for the adventure playground-but it would have been good to have somewhere for little children to play..."*

## Activities

All activities had some support, especially the Youth Club (220). There are 48 people willing to help organise activities particularly Youth Club and Brownies. **(When this appraisal is discussed - volunteers please come forward!)**

## Need for Social Activities



### Sports Field

357 (95%) think the parish needs a permanent sports field.

Except for croquet, pigeon racing and quoits all sports had their supporters.

*"There should be positive communication established between village/parish and Shebbear College over improving*

*sports facilities with the possibility of a "sports complex "for all ages"..*

### Village Hall

73% of respondents consider the village hall adequate but a room for youth activities would be an improvement.

*"A Summer Fete perhaps changing original Flower Show into a joint Village Fete to appeal to all ages ... Possibly Colleges, Churches, School, Playgroup, W.I, Skittles (and bowls) all getting together to provide more "Community Spirit"" I feel the Village is very lacking in this area, some people blame the College for splitting up the village, perhaps the College could involve itself in village things more... "*

### Further training

Resources for further education are considered to be poor. There is a demand for vocational training technology/computer/skilled crafts. The most popular centre would be Shebbear with Holsworthy as an alternative.

### Health Services

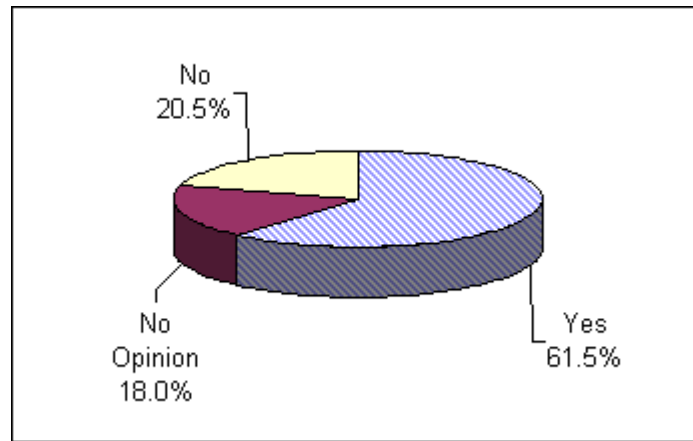
Local health services get a good report. Some people considered that the services covering mental health were less satisfactory.

47% of those giving an opinion considered hospital services to be poor.

Getting to a NHS dentist poses a big problem to a considerable number of people and, similarly, there is a problem for some in getting to the hospital, doctor, chemist and optician.

### Public Toilets

There is demand for the provision of public toilets in Shebbear - but where? Opinion is divided between "near Village Hall" (small majority) and in the area of the bus shelter or square.



### Voluntary Work

There are 78 people involved in voluntary work.

### Employment

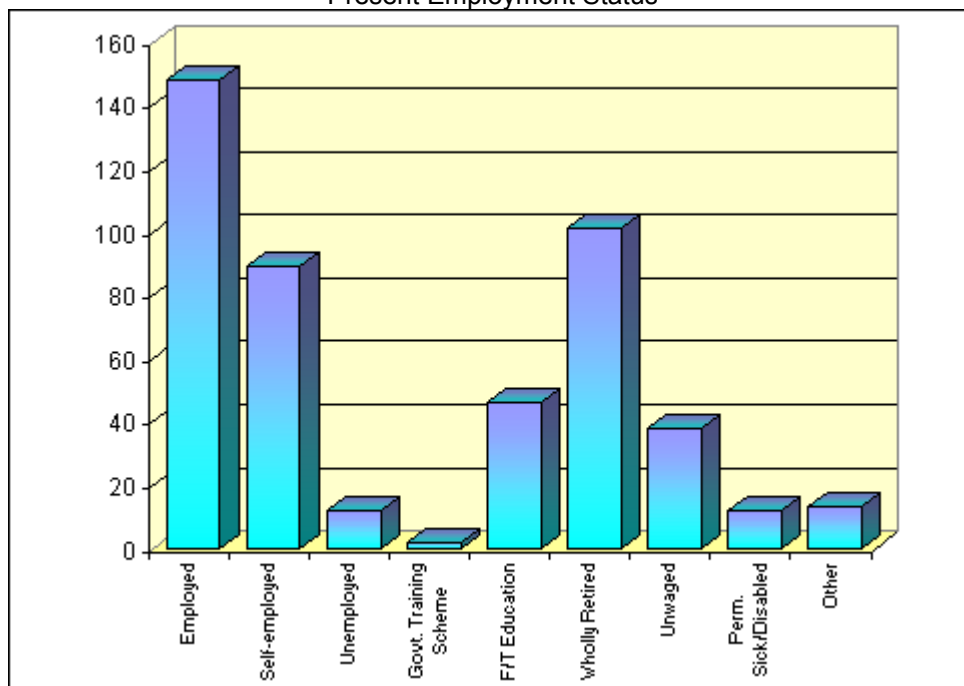
At the date of the Appraisal 37 respondents were seeking paid work. There is a need in the Parish for more information on vacancies and training.

*"...Need a good Village Notice Board.. the Parish Notice Board is too high to read with bi-focals..."*

Work opportunities are restricted for a variety of reasons including lack of child care facilities. Family commitments and lack of transport are further limitations.

291 people would like to see more jobs available in the Parish. 165 respondents work within the Parish, 45 within 10 miles, 58 work 11-30 miles away and 18 travel over 30 miles to work

Present Employment Status



99 people run their own businesses employing 86 others. 50% of these are in agriculture with the remainder professional, retailers and repairers. 8 people intend to become self employed, the biggest restriction being finance.

(There were no specific comments on this section).

## Parish Newsletter

258 (78%) support the idea of a Parish Newsletter/Magazine and there were plenty of volunteers to help. When you attend

the Parish Meeting to discuss this Appraisal - **reveal yourselves!**

*"A correspondent for local papers would be better"*

*"A newsletter would mean.. more publicity for Shebbear events (eg. Stone turning)*

*".. It would advertise all events in the Village area. I don't always know of events as I live two miles away, but I like to support and take part sometimes..."*

## The Millennium

The year 2000 is not far away. No-one suggested a "Shebbear Dome" - but among the more popular suggestions marking this event were: -

A Party - "street" or New Year with a beacon or fireworks and even, perhaps, a carnival as well. A Church Service with bell ringing was also a popular choice.

Other Suggestions:-

"A Capital Project" - Sportsfield or school  
Community Garden or beautifying the village  
Exhibition - "Shebbear Past, Present & Future"

*"I would like to see the establishment of a small recreational area i.e. a few trees and shrubs and a couple of seats... "*

But lets not forget the few who described Millennium Celebrations as "a waste of money!".

## "The Parish Speaks"

The committee would like to thank you all for your help and co-operation in completing the forms with your comments, many of which are included in the report. The report presents quite a long "shopping list" of the requirements of our rural community as we approach the millennium. As is usually the case, the problem will be funding our requirements, but the appraisal will be a great help in pin-pointing the areas of greatest concern. For our "aims" to become "achievements" we will need the whole-hearted support of the whole community. Perhaps our appraisal should be placed in a "time capsule" in order that future generations can judge how we fared. In the meantime - don't forget the appraisal meeting:

**Thursday May 7th. 1998 at 7:30 p.m. in the Shebbear Village Hall!**

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