

PARHAM

*Millennium
Parish Scan*

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INTRODUCTION

The Parham Parish Scan is a detailed record of the Village as it is today, with a browse through its history and a tentative look into its future. The Scan was the option chosen by the Village as its contribution to the millennium celebration. It has been prepared by village people, for village people and is a comprehensive record of the life in our Village. This publication is the result of many hours of dedicated research by parishioners. We hope that it may be a testament to life in Parham today as well as a fitting tribute with which to mark the millennium.

Parham Parish Council 2000



The Pound
Parham

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*This document is composed from articles contributed by individual parishioners and as such do not necessarily reflect the views of Parham Parish Council.

FOREWORD

Local government planning exists to solve community problems, but it was only in 1969 that central government, recommended setting up machinery for the public to participate in planning. From this time it became urgent to find methods to involve people actively, from grass roots, in the problems, issues and challenges of managing local change. In the 1980s attempts were made to formalise 'village appraisals'.

The aim was to encourage communities to map their neighbourhood; its character, history and social needs. However, the original flexibility of approaches and methods was quickly lost when the system was hijacked by organisations requiring specific information from communities to direct their funding. 'Form-filling' turns most people off, particularly when the subject matter does not act as a conduit for their particular local passion.

'Community Scan' was a reaction to official form-driven environmental appraisal. It was actually invented, in 1995, by Welsh teachers to bring children into the appraisal system, and create social links with community served by the school to boost information gathering and databasing. Its advantage to the school is that the neighbourhood where a child actually lives becomes its outdoor classroom. For the community, the school becomes an information technology centre for long-term recording, and citizen networking.

SCAN is therefore a flexible holistic system. It can begin, either in a school, or in one of its communities, with the aim of eventually uniting both bodies to make, and manage, environmental improvements.

People need to bother with environmental appraisal because any inadequacies of community life will only be overcome by the community itself. There is no doubt that any community has the skills to do this, by recognising that things can be changed for the better, and that each individual contribution brings satisfaction to the individual, as well as benefit to the community.

Parham is the first example of Parish SCAN, an adult Community SCAN. Like all villages, most of Parham's parishioners commute to earn a living. With no shop or school Parham has to cope with the common problems of rural placelessness. It is significant that SCAN was adopted after the village had carried out an appraisal and was awarded Suffolk's Village of the Year. The aim is to sustain the momentum and tap the wider community. Although not a tourist centre, Parham has plenty for its inhabitants to become passionate about.

Set in a classic glacial landscape, it has a rich social heritage; a centre of Saxon local government; a power base for Tudor politics; a front-line airfield during the Second World War. A store of wildlife is embedded in its woodlands, ponds and field boundaries. However, this publication shows what any community can do to develop social roots, and the organisation required to bring such a project to fruition.

Hopefully, the Parham story will continue to be developed by its parishioners throughout the next Millennium as their contribution to the local Agenda 21 Citizen's Environmental Network, incorporating year-on-year checks to measure change, and ensure things change for the better. I recommend it as a first rate exemplar for other communities to follow.

July 1999

by Denis Bellamy

SCAN National Co-ordinator

Professor Emeritus of The University of Wales

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WHY A PARISH SCAN?

In 1995 Parham took part in a Village Appraisal. Officers from Suffolk Rural Development Area and Suffolk ACRE (*Action with Communities in Rural England*) attended the Annual Parish Meeting to help us consider aspects of our village life. The Appraisal encouraged us to think about our environment; housing, transport, wildlife, and many other factors. The seeds for the Scan had been sown!

Later, the Parish Council became interested in an article in the 'Shire Magazine', a publication produced by SALC (*Suffolk Association of Local Councils*). The article was written on behalf of Professor Denis Bellamy of the National Museum of Wales who had instigated 'Community Scan' amongst primary schools and was wishing to develop his work on community records within smaller communities. The Scan idea coincided with interest in several other ideas under consideration by the Parish Council as possible millennium projects.

In order for the Parish Council to carry out the wishes of the parishioners in respect of a millennium project, every household was given the opportunity to suggest, and later vote on, a number of ideas. These were as follows:

1. Refurbishing School Canteen for extended use as an alternative community centre for clubs such as Mothers and Toddlers, Ladies Circle, Gardening Club, Youth Club etc.
2. Millennium Bell – the tower presently houses 3 'dead' bells although it is believed the frame could house a 4th 'dead' bell.
3. Tourist Information Board to include circular walk and places of interest.
4. Environmental Improvements - including clearing out pond adjacent to Elm Tree Farm, North Green, and improving the public footpaths and circular walk.
5. Aiding the Restoration of the Dakota DC3 Aircraft at Parham Air Museum.
6. Car Park at Village Hall - tarmacing part of grassed area.
7. Parish Scan - producing a detailed record of life in Parham today, recording the past and expressing our hopes for the future.
8. Village Map – showing physical and environmental features of the village.
9. Seat – suggested siting in the Churchyard.
10. Niche on the Church Tower - investigate repairing niche - to re- instate missing emblem.
11. Flood Lighting St. Mary's Church - flood lighting for use on special occasions.

The Parish Scan was the chosen option.

Consequently the Parish Council invited Professor Denis Bellamy, Ruth Downing (Prof. Bellamy's Local Assistant) and Trevor Gibson (Suffolk Coastal District Council's representative) to an open meeting held on 3rd February 1998 to explain the principles of producing a Parish Scan. We hoped that as many people as possible in the village would be able to contribute information for the project. A specially formed 'Millennium Committee' would be responsible for the organising, formatting and publication of material. It was to be a pioneering exercise as we were the first village nationally to undertake such a project.