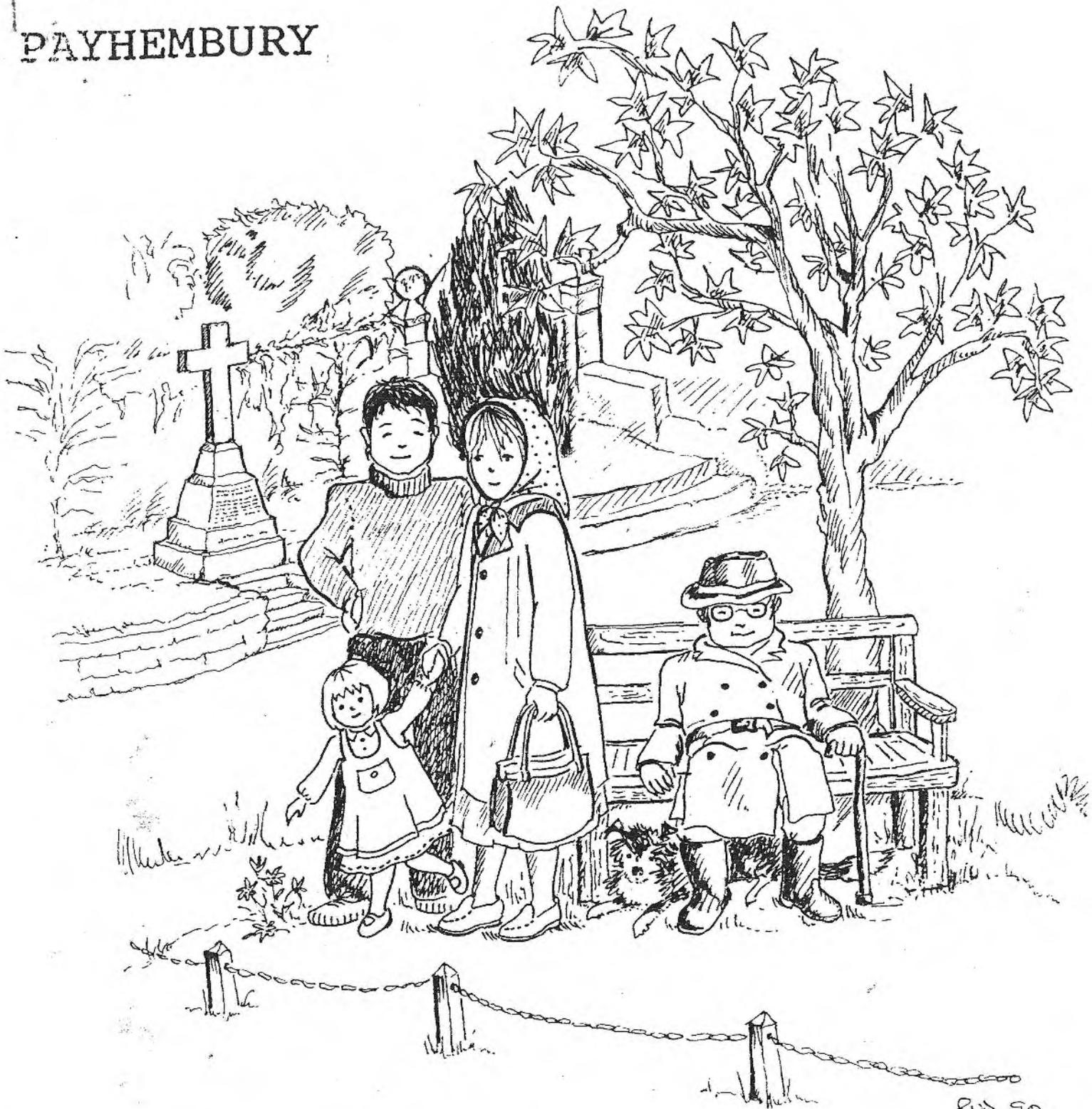


PAYHEMBURY



B.D. 90.

# APPRAISAL

1990

THIS APPRAISAL WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE PERIOD JANUARY TO APRIL 1990  
AND THIS REPORT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN MAY 1991.

THE PAYHEMBURY PARISH APPRAISAL COMMITTEE consists of Chris Smith, John and Di Somers, Barbara Soroko, Robin and Clemency Stanes and David Thair, who would like to thank all those who participated and especially the following for their invaluable help and support: Fred Cook - distribution of questionnaires, Bud Kennedy - cover design, Simon Lawrence - computer advice and support, Christine and David Thair - many hours of slaving over a computer keyboard, Alison Tipper - last section of report, the Payhembury Parish Council and Community Council of Devon for their generous financial assistance.

The reason for the appraisal is to provide a historical account of the village as it is and to discover from residents what their hopes for the future are; this should provide the Parish Council and other organisations with information on which to act for the good of the parish in the future.

From 369 questionnaires distributed, a total of 284 forms were completed either in full or in part and returned, 131 from male parishioners and 153 from female. The ages showed a significant number to be over 60, i.e. 81. At the other end of the age range people noted a total of 117 children on their returns. Returns showed 75% of homes in the parish are owner occupied with 25% being rented.

There is an almost equal split between those who are employed (51), those who are self employed (66) and those who styled themselves as housewives (55) with a similar number (65) who described themselves as retired or semi retired. The number of unemployed at the time of the appraisal was encouragingly low at just 2 with sick/disabled numbers at 9.

THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SUMMARY BY ALISON TIPPER AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

#### TRANSPORT

230 people said that they had a car, 54 people do not.

118 people said they often or sometimes used public transport, while 150 people replied that they never use it.

207 felt that services were adequate with 77 saying they were not and over half (167) would support a local community mini bus and ALL respondents (284) felt that a bus shelter was needed.

#### VILLAGE SERVICES

90 people said that they use the phone box regularly or on occasions with 194 saying they never use it.

The village post office would appear well supported with a total of 254 people saying they use it on a regular basis and only 30 replying that they never use it.

The shop received a similar degree of support with just 40 saying they never use it and 244 claiming to use it on a regular basis.

that road sweeping and maintenance was not with 103 saying they were satisfied and 151 saying they were not.

163 people, as against just 64, were satisfied with community policing and similar numbers (172 and 153 respectively) were satisfied with both water supply and street lighting. On the negative side 78 people replied that the water service was not satisfactory with 82 not being satisfied with street lighting. [Since the survey was carried out more street lights have been erected.]

#### LEISURE:

The number of responses under this section were surprisingly low with few people saying that they belonged to a village organisation or club. 100 people said they used the playing field either often or sometimes with just over double that number (208) saying they attended village hall functions.

NB. Perhaps the poor response under this section was due to a poorly worded question not fully understood by respondents.

#### HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:

94 people said they felt that Payhembury needed to develop and expand further with 161 saying they did not want further development.

58 said they would like to see more rented accommodation with 83 saying they would like to see either starter or family homes, being built if there was to be any further development. This response was reflected in just 6 wanting expensive larger homes built with 106 people being opposed to building of this nature. 39 people recorded they saw a need for sheltered housing in the parish.

If there was to be further building 138 people felt it should be infilling only with 112 wanting to see no more than ten houses built. 119 people did not feel estate development appropriate for Payhembury.

Replies were almost equally divided on the merits of craft workshops in the Parish but the majority were opposed to the building of up to ten industrial units with even greater opposition to any larger industrial development or factory building.

#### EDUCATION:

There was a massive vote of support for the village school with 262 people thinking it was a vital part of village life and just 2 saying it was not. 48 said their children attended the school.

22 parents with pre school aged children took them to the mother and toddler group. 51 parents in this category did not attend. 32 would like to see a playgroup in the village, 30 would not.

115 said they were satisfied with state education provision at primary level (21 were not), 100 were satisfied at comprehensive level (25 were not) and 86 satisfied with further education (27 were not).

Just 14 said their children were privately educated with 95 recording they used state provision.

The following is a summary report written independently by ALLISON TIPPER BSc, Part-time Research Assistant at the Department of Geography, Exeter University.

### TRANSPORT

Parishioners' comments on transport in Payhembury fall roughly into two categories. The most salient point to come from the first category is the perceived need for an improvement to the present system of buses. A minibus service with more frequent timing would doubtless be appreciated by the non car-owning members of the parish, with attention paid to linking with British Rail at Feniton. There are also calls for better links with Honiton, Exeter, Cullompton and Ottery with services allowing for longer visits to Honiton and Exeter in particular. Financing such improvements always poses problems and comments here seem divided between those who favour a private initiative and others who feel the public sector should shoulder the responsibility. In the second category, several respondents cite the urgent need for a bus shelter with various suggestions for its location, an opinion already abundantly clear from other replies in this section. One other notable point arising here commends the advantages of a better organised system of car sharing, although this would obviously not suit everybody's purposes.

While one respondent wrote that "it would be hell to live here without a car", there is clearly some demand for certain improvements to the existing system of public transport to cater for those who do have to live without their own vehicle.

### VILLAGE SERVICES

The variety of views expressed here reflects the differing subjects to which they relate. Several themes can be extracted however. Suggestions for improvements to the local pub include the provision of more parking spaces and a proper childrens' room, both of which might help to make it more of a focal point in the community. Still on the subject of children, some parishioners feel that church services should be aimed more at the family, with others advocating a more traditional slant. Several church goers would also like to see a resident vicar, who would perhaps be in better tune with the needs of the parish. There is also a perceived need for some improvements to the Parish Paper with suggestions including better coverage of public information on local services/transport/events; less anonymity from contributors and the feeling that the paper could be more of a forum for local opinion with a letters page. Finally, the village shop would appear, in the views of one or two people, not to stock an extensive range of goods but this is a universal problem faced by small shops and one that is not easily solved.

### HEALTH AND WELFARE

The overwhelming call from respondents in this section of the survey is to instigate some form of village surgery. Although a permanent surgery may not be viable in a small village, there is undoubtedly a need for a once or twice weekly surgery to be held for those residents without transport - particularly the elderly and mothers with young children. The only alternatives would appear to be to improve dramatically public transport to existing facilities or for some sort of formalised voluntary help from local car drivers. There also appears to be dissatisfaction in obtaining home visits from doctors and in

collection of prescriptions, again both related to the rural location of the village.

## ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC SERVICES

### i) Environmental Problems

It will come as no surprise that the concern of the vast majority of respondents who commented under this section relates to farming practices carried out in the parish. No fewer than 160 people stated that there are unpleasant smells associated with the piggery and/or slurry spreading in the fields. Some said the smells are intermittent or worse at certain times of year while others complain bitterly that it is difficult to enjoy the outdoors due to lack of 'fresh' air, that drying washing outside is hazardous and that it is often necessary to keep windows closed. Associated problems include suspected pollution of water courses by slurry spreading, dirt and muck on roads and concern about the large scale removal of trees and hedgerows.

Another important environmental problem is the noise and irritation caused by low flying aircraft over the parish. Other complaints included the dislike of electricity pylons in the locality and some criticism of heavy lorries and farm machinery using narrow lanes.

### (ii) Protection of Features

In the light of some of the comments above, it follows that parishioners are rather keen to protect certain aspects of both the natural and man-made heritage of Payhembury. Concern about natural features includes numerous requests to protect as many trees as possible, particularly the oaks at Cokesputt. There is also a strong call to protect remaining hedgerows from destruction and to safeguard small open spaces and fields as well as other rural features including traditional Devon banks and narrow lanes. Other man-made features warranting preservation in the opinions of significant numbers of respondents include the church and other historic buildings in the village, the green, playing field, footpaths and Hembury Fort.

### (iii) Eyesores

The main focus of discontent with the appearance of Payhembury Parish is centred on the mill building in the village itself, with various suggestions to either demolish it, alter its obtrusive structure, change its colour or landscape/screen it somehow. Clearly it poses a visual problem and there are also complaints about the surrounding agricultural buildings (barns, silos and pig units) with advice for improvement coming mainly in the form of screening by trees. The cow unit at Spence Cross is also singled out for improvement in this manner. The dirty state of roads, gutters and river banks would seem to indicate insufficient attention and maintenance. An additional eyesore mentioned by several respondents is the accumulation of rusty old cars at Willow Lodge, the removal of which would alleviate the problem. Finally, the grass island at Hillside appears to have been damaged by car parking which some people would like to see stopped.

### (iv) Location of Footpaths

Summarising suggestions here is rather difficult due to the multitude of ideas put forward. Most respondents in this section would like to see the following in general: re-opening of old footpaths blocked or closed; creation of more bridleways for riding; greater overall access to fields by footpath and more pavements in Payhembury itself, particularly near the school. As for specific suggestions about locations, the most popular would appear to be from the Parish

Hall to Blue Ball; along the River Tale; between Cokesputt and Colestocks; from Upton to Hembury Fort avoiding the A373; and to and from Mousehole and Upton, with emphasis being placed on the safety of such paths especially for children.

#### (v) Dangerous Places

Parishioners' concerns here are largely connected with the roads in the around Payhembury, particularly certain locations, dangerous bends, some road junctions and the state of the lanes. The most hazardous spot is judged to be around the school entrance with congestion and associated problems in the mornings and afternoons. Other danger spots are noted at the corner by Alan's Motors, the road by the village green and the fact that there are insufficient pavements in the village itself. The condition of some of the lanes is also criticised with excessive mud and dirt and potholes in places. Speeding traffic does not help. Certain road junctions are described as perilous, especially those onto the A373 (including Sweethayes & Hembury Fort X); Blue Ball X and Haskin's corner. Other minor hazards are variously listed as the playing field, the mill and slurry pits, all of which are seen by some as potentially dangerous to unsupervised children.

#### (vi) Areas for Improvement

Many of the comments and suggestions under this section are already covered by the summaries above with one or two exceptions. There appears to be a strong desire by many people to see a concerted effort to plant more trees and protect remaining hedgerows. The state of the roads is also regarded as poor with respect to both maintenance and cleanliness - here too there is scope for improvement. Provision of public seats and litter bins in certain areas is also considered a good idea, as is an extension to the present system of street lighting (although this latter proposal is not universally endorsed). Water quality and colour are sometimes unsatisfactory and there is some dissatisfaction with the present refuse clearing arrangements. Some respondents suggest the introduction of small scale recycling facilities and a skip for bulky items. The level of community policing is also the cause of some concern. Finally, there are mixed views on the effectiveness of the Parish Council with one comment aptly summarising these: "the Parish Council do as good a job as as is in their power to do".

#### LEISURE

There were few comments about leisure facilities in the parish, but those that did respond stated that both the village hall and the playing field are under-used, the former possibly due to high rent and limited variety of activities/functions, the latter perhaps in the light of inadequate safe facilities for toddlers. The success of any voluntary activity depends entirely on the enthusiasm and interest of those involved; apathy is not a problem unique to Payhembury!

#### HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Views on future development within Payhembury reflect the wider problems of the conflict between change and decay. While there are those who call for a total embargo on development in the parish, there is a certain inevitability about future changes affecting rural areas in general. The maintenance and development of rural infrastructure is necessary if the community is to remain viable and 'alive' and most respondents recognise this fact, urging caution on the decision makers. The idea of using redundant farm and industrial buildings as craft workshops would appear to be more popular than building new units;

equally, the provision of low cost starter homes for local people wins more support than the erection of large expensive dwellings. With roads and services unsuitable for large scale development, the message from parishioners here is to progress carefully and sympathetically, in tune with the needs of the village and environment.

#### EDUCATION

The village school at Payhembury is generally recognised by respondents as an asset although it appears to suffer from difficulties faced by state schools generally, i.e. it would doubtless benefit from new buildings and better equipment. Such a situation is hard to resolve locally for obvious reasons. Teaching methods are also the subject of some dissent, but again this is a broader issue. A problem more specific to Payhembury school are the hazards arising from its very location, with the aforementioned inconvenience of congestion at peak times and the need for a safer road crossing. Finally, one respondent suggested that the establishment of a play-group in the village would fill the current gap in pre-school education in Payhembury, while at the same time assisting those without cars who wish to use this facility locally.

#### LIKES AND DISLIKES

Most people like Payhembury because it is a friendly parish in which to live, with a strong neighbourly and community spirit and a good cross-section of people from different walks of life. The impression gained is that it is a coherent and caring community centred on a small traditional working village with a shop, school, pub and church, also enjoying other attributes such as its rural setting and tranquility.

Complaints on the other hand are largely connected with, to quote one response, "the dominant and negative influence one farmer has exerted on the landscape". Farming policy in the parish, with its creation of large tree-less fields, use of unsightly buildings, emission of smells from slurry spreading and deposition of dirt and muck on the roads are all singled out for criticism here and elsewhere in the survey. Other less significant dislikes are insufficient access to open countryside and the resentment of speculative building and infilling in general. Several respondents complained rightly or wrongly that newcomers to the village are often townspeople who sometimes fail to understand some of the problems associated with rural living and ultimately attempt to alter the character of the community in their efforts to solve them. However, this is a minority view and more than 20 respondents stated there was nothing at all they disliked about Payhembury.

#### AND FINALLY

Many of the comments written under this final section have been covered in the summaries above.

By way of conclusion therefore, it can be stated that Payhembury is a working village with the benefits and drawbacks that entails. On the positive side it engenders a good community spirit through local cohesion (a quality often absent in commuter settlements) and on the negative side, a working village cannot always expect to be a picture-postcard village as it has to live and contend with problems associated with its industry - in this case agriculture. The future development of the parish should therefore try to accommodate and heed both sides of the argument, weighing up the personal needs and aspirations of

the residents against what is environmentally and economically suitable. One thing is certain however - you can never please all the people all the time!

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I certify that I have written this report entirely from comments and suggestions arising from the Parish Appraisal Survey. I have never visited Payhembury and do not personally know anyone living there: Alison Tipper BSc.

