

Fretherne with Saul Parish Village Plan

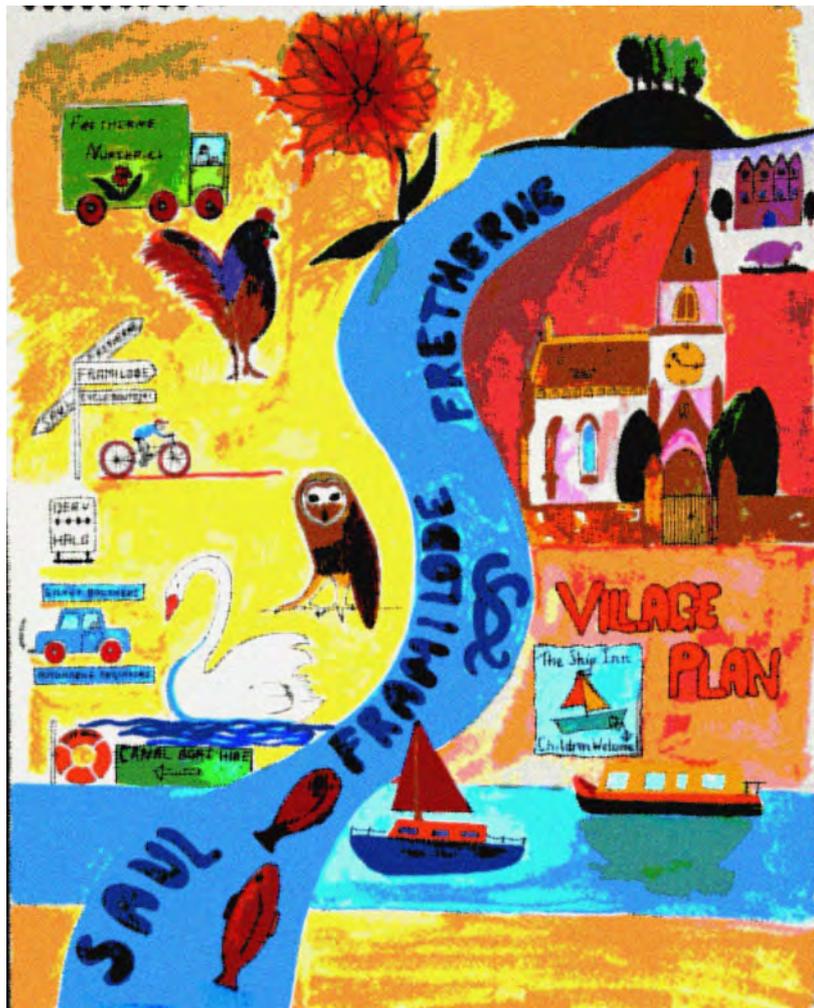


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The Village Appraisal 1991

INTRODUCTION

The 'What' and the 'Why' of a Parish Plan.

The What

The government wants to encourage rural communities to take the opportunity of involvement in the future development of their own parish. Local knowledge, views and aspirations can contribute to the growth and prosperity of a rural area whilst embracing the character of the environment and the history of surrounding countryside.

Fretherne with Saul Parish Council have endeavoured, through parishioner participation, research and consultation with appropriate and relevant organisations, to produce a document which reflects the village as it is today, details the special valuable characteristics of the village, and establish some criteria for future development to be measured against in order to allow progress without detracting from the pastoral surroundings or adversely affecting the ecological environment.

The Why

The Parish Plan will be available to:

Statutory bodies and Public Authorities
Planners, Developers, Builders and Architects
Local community groups
Householders and Businesses
The Parish Council

All sectors have influence on the future of the village. From major developments to minor modifications to individual homes, all contribute to the character of the area. The plan indicates the desires of the populace and it is hoped that it will be adopted by Stroud District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance and that the recommendations contained in the Plan will be taken in to consideration when assessing future planning applications.

Where it all begins.....

History and Setting

The Parish that we know today as Fretherne with Saul covers an area of approximately 5.2 square kilometres. It is bordered by the parish of Arlingham to the North West and is washed on two sides by the River Severn. On its southwest side, the boundary is defined by the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.

The parish did not always look quite like this. It has changed its shape many times, over many centuries, with lands once belonging to the parishes of Eastington, Moreton Valence, Wheatenhurst and Standish either being amalgamated or taken away. Early records from 1184 describe the changes and mergers of the area but it was not until 1884 that the parish of Fretherne with Saul was officially named. At that time, it comprised an area of 1,140 acres of mainly agricultural lands.

Because of the river and the canal, the area has always had strong associations with sea faring and work relating to the river such as fishing, river trade and boat building. This has rivalled the economy generated from the land through livestock and arable farming as well as hunting and gravel extraction.

The land itself is flat and low lying, rising at the western edge to only a little over 50ft above sea level. As a result, the heavy clay soil, which lies beneath, has always been liable to flooding at high tides.



The built environment within the parish and much of its heritage has largely been influenced by the development of both the Stroudwater and the Gloucester and Sharpness Canals.

In the 1700's the clothiers of Stroud demanded faster and more efficient ways of moving their stock and supplies across country, which resulted in many houses being built to accommodate the growing number of canal construction workers and their families as well as the tradesman who managed the movement of supplies being taken along the River Severn.



Parish churches were then constructed to minister to the growing number of men, women and children who worked on the canals and boatyards.

The only major estate within Fretherne (and the parish) was Fretherne Court, now the site of Fretherne Nurseries. This was once owned by the Darell family who maintained extensive parklands containing large elm and ash trees. Later deer were introduced to the estate lands.

Fretherne Court was demolished in 1926 and the lands sold off in portions. The Lodge, which still remains, is the only real clue to the grandness of the estate. Sir Darell's son moved into Saul Lodge in 1904. Externally this house has remained largely unchanged in its location close to the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. There are many other references to the Darrell family to be found across the in the parish.





Fretherne with Saul Parish Profile 2004

Data from 2001 Census

Population and Household numbers

Population: 680 (0.6% of the total Stroud District population 109,480 from the unconstrained estimates from Gloucestershire County Council database).

Number of Households: 264 (0.6% of all households in the district)

Average number of people per household: 2.6 (District: 2.4).

Population density: 131 people per square kilometre.

Unless specified otherwise, all figures come from the 2001 census and data.

In some cases, percentages quoted in this report do not add up to exactly 100% (e.g. 99% or 101%). This is because the figures have been rounded up to whole numbers in the report. The full, unrounded figures add to exactly 100%.

The statistics given in this report aim to present data in a clear and concise manner, and do not imply any judgement of the subject being described.

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Population Demographics

N.B. All the age data in this section comes from census forms and was not obtained from mid-year estimates.

Chart 1: Population breakdown by age, 2001 census, 5-year age bands

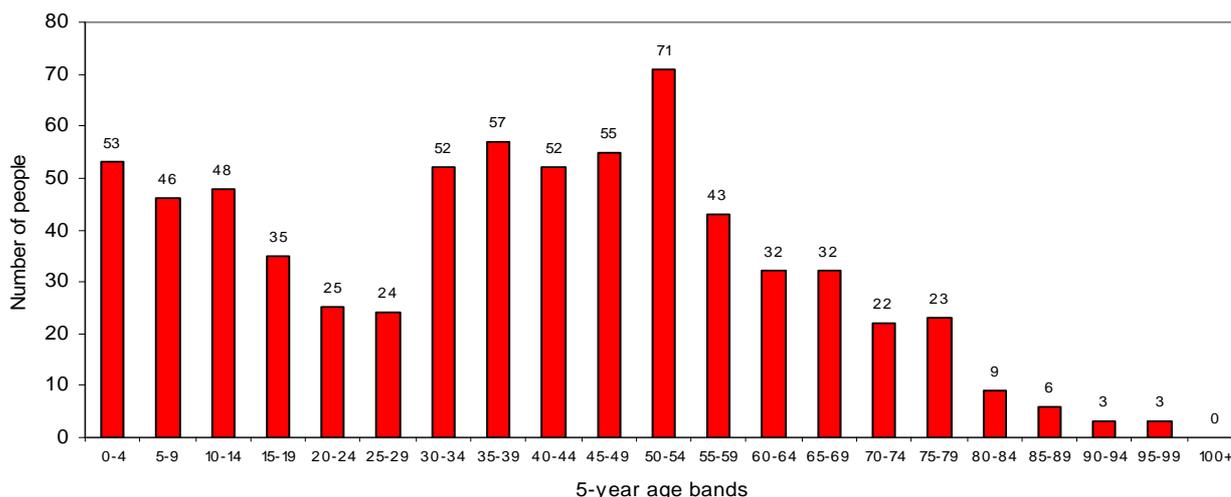


Chart 2: Population change in Fretherne with Saul between 1991 and 2001 census

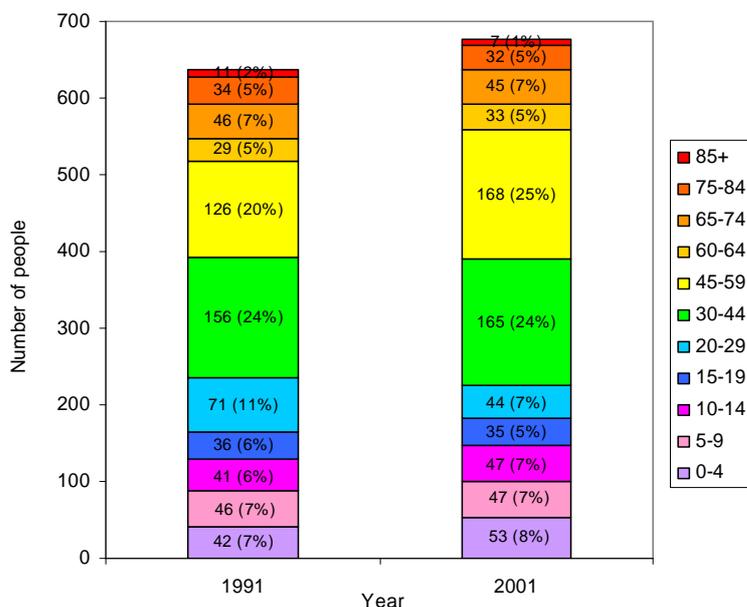
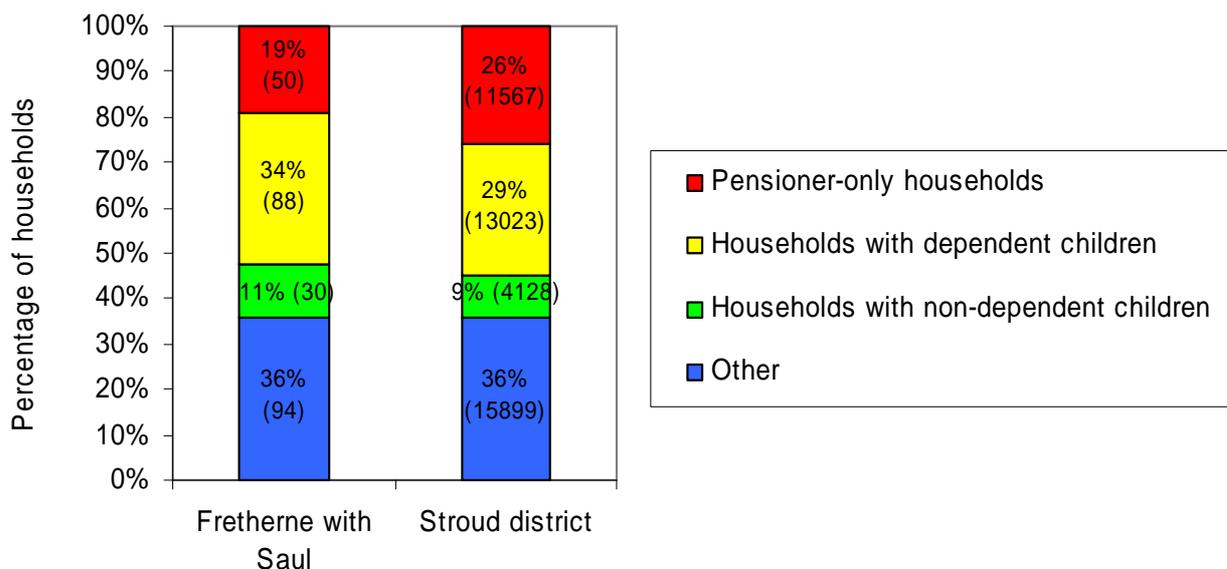


Chart 3: General Household Types

Chart 3 shows a breakdown of the households in the parish into four categories. The district figures are shown for comparison.

There are a lower proportion of households with dependent children compared with the district as a whole.

There are a higher proportion of pensioner households compared with the district.



Further details of household types:

Pensioner-only households:

- Over half of the pensioner-only households contain one person only. These are known as “lone-pensioner households”
- Fretherne with Saul ranks 31st out of 51 in the district for its proportion of lone pensioner households.

Households with dependent children:

- Lone parent households represent 9% of the households with dependent children in Fretherne with Saul, compared with 16% for the district.

Chart 4: Council Tax Bands, 2001 census

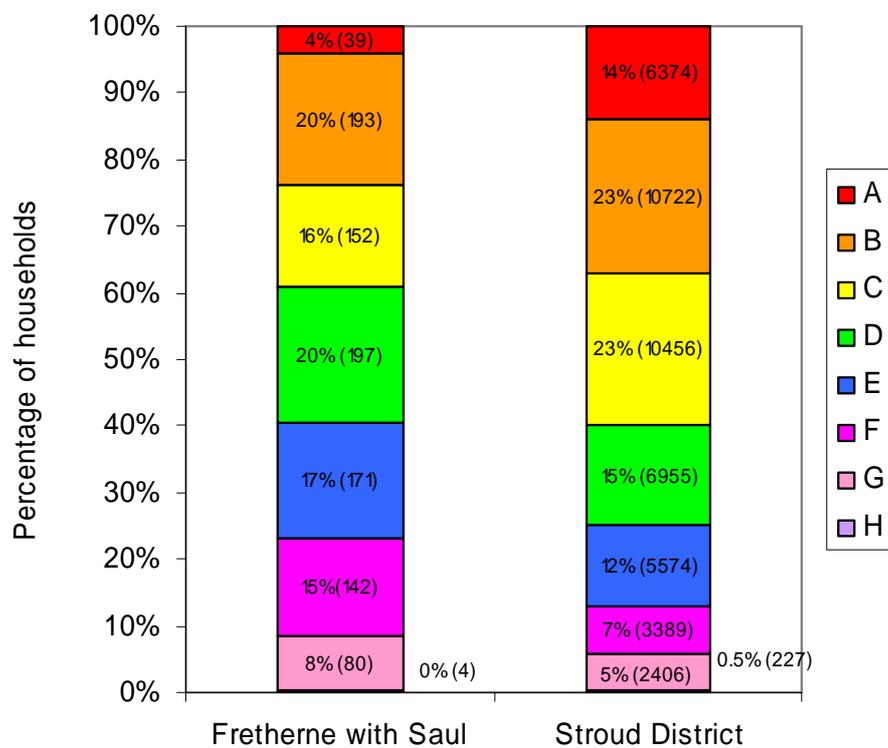
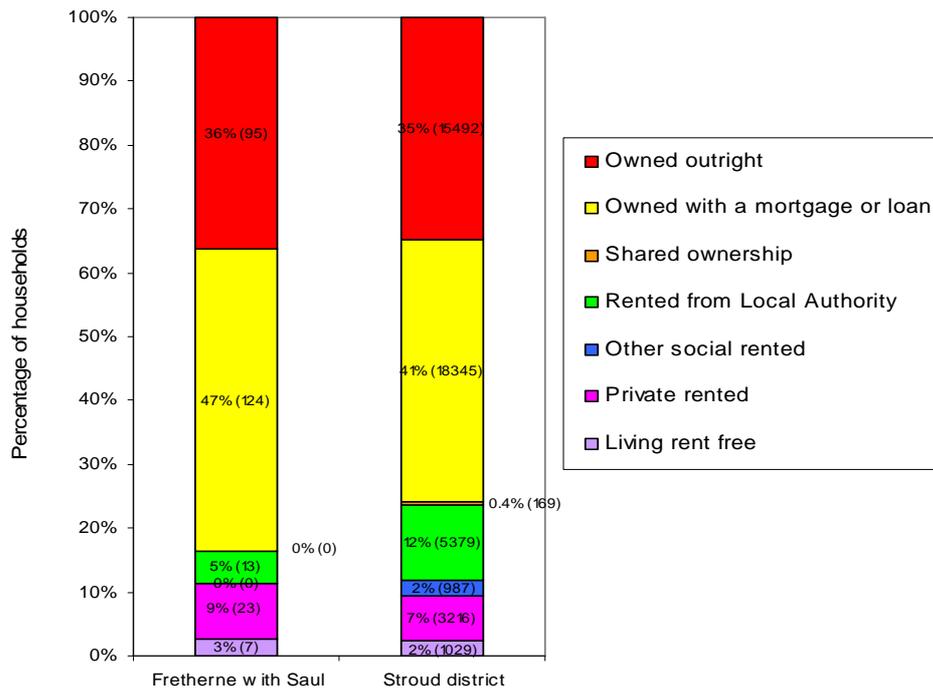


Chart 5: Tenure



- 83% of the households in Fretherne with Saul are owner-occupied compared with 76% for the district.
- The proportion of people that rent from the local authority is smaller in Fretherne with Saul than the rest of the district.

Chart 6: Affordable and social housing – Social housing stock

Data source: *Application for Social Housing in Stroud district.*

Chart 6 shows figures for the social housing stock in Fretherne with Saul.

- There are 12 general purpose and no sheltered homes in Fretherne with Saul.

No. Bedrooms	Property type	General purpose	Sheltered	Total
Bed-sit	Flat			
	Bungalow			
	House			
	Total bed-sit			
1-bed	Flat			
	Bungalow	2		
	House	3		
	Total 1-bed			
2-bed	Flat			
	Bungalow			
	House			
	Total 2-bed			
3-bed	Flat			
	Bungalow			
	House	7		
	Total 3-bed			
4-bed	Flat			
	Bungalow			
	House			
	Total 4-bed			
Total		12	0	12
Housing Ass'n		0	0	0

Employment

Employment status

Chart 7 shows the employment status of 16-74† year olds in the parish. The district figures are given for comparison.

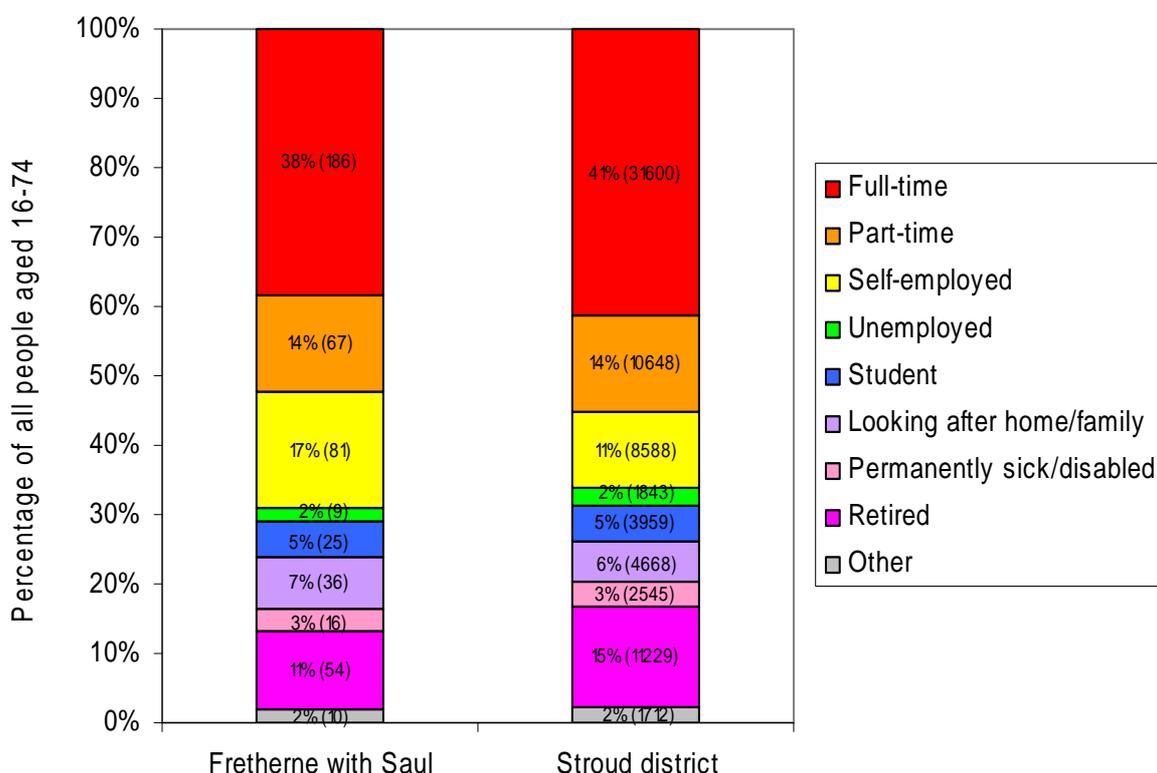
In the parish...

- 69% are in paid employment
- 11% are retired
- 20% belong to other categories

Comparing with the district...

- A lower proportion in the district work, (66%).
- A higher proportion are retired (15%)

Chart 7: Employment status, 2001 census



†N.B. In this report, many figures are reported for the 16-74 age group as a whole. There is a simple explanation for this: this is the age group by which much of the census data is reported. It is therefore not possible for us to break the figures down by smaller or different age groups.

Farms

Data source: June 2001 census

- There are 52* farms in Fretherne with Saul.
- 5 are classed as horticulture, 13 dairy, 13 cattle and sheep, 4 mixed and 17 other.
- 40 are categorised as being in the three smallest (of five) size bands and 12 are categorized as being in the largest two. (Size bands are a measure of the economic size of holdings in terms of the value they add to variable inputs and thus differ from physical measures, such as area, which take no account of the intensity or quality of production).

**The figure may be slightly more than this since some data has been suppressed at source “to prevent disclosure of information about individual holdings”.*

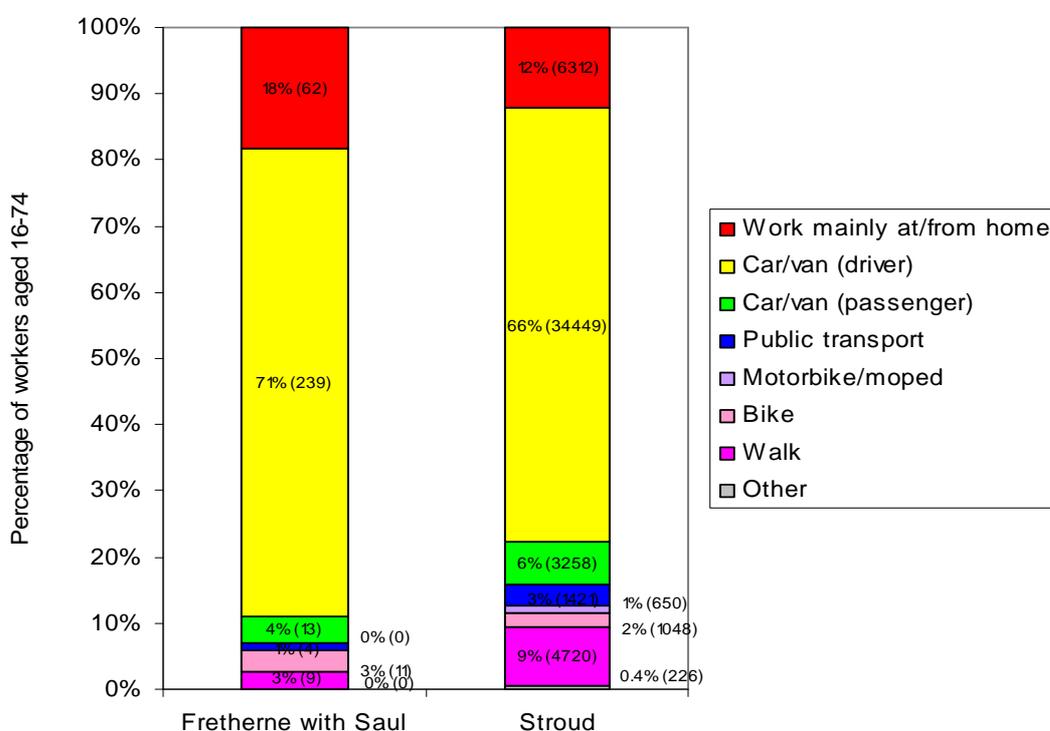
Traffic and Travel

Travel to work

Chart 8 shows how 16-74 year olds in the parish travel to work. The district figures are also shown for comparison.

- Three quarters of people travel by car to work.
- 18% work from home.

Chart 8: Mode of travel to work by 16-74 year olds in employment, 2001 census



Households with car

- 91% of the households in Fretherne with Saul have a car compared with 84% in the district.
- The 91% can be further split into 32% who have one car and 59% who have two or more cars.
- 9% of households in Fretherne with Saul do not own a car, compared to 16% in the district as a whole.

Road traffic accidents

Data source: MAIDeN. Figures for the period 1999-2001 inclusive.

- Fretherne with Saul has the same rate of accidents as a proportion of total population compared to the district.
- Fretherne with Saul comes 24th best out of the 51 parishes.

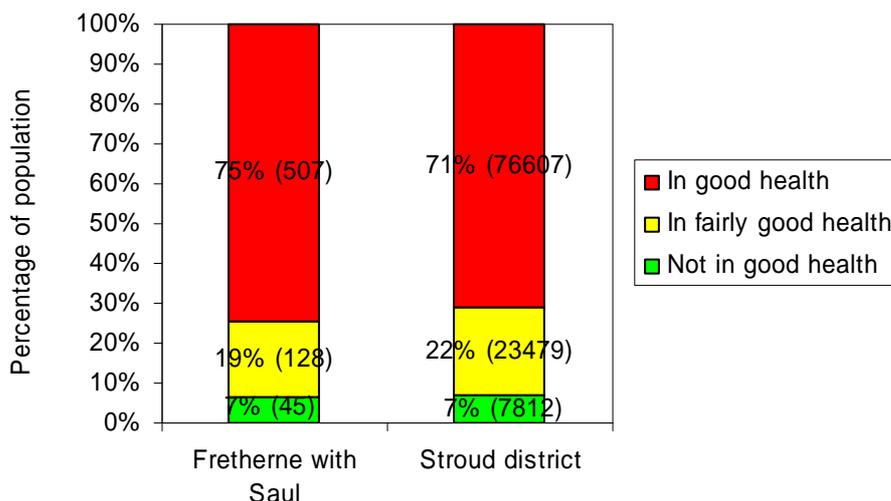
Health

General state of health

Chart 9 shows the general health (self-classified) of residents in the parish, with the district figures for comparison.

- 75% of Fretherne with Saul's residents class themselves as being in "good health", compared to only 71% in the district.

Chart 9: General state of health: self-classification, 2001 census



Long term limiting illness

- 14% of the parish population class themselves as having a long term limiting illness. This is lower than the district as a whole (17%).
- 7% of people who are of working age class themselves as having a long term limiting illness, which is slightly higher than the district.

Unpaid care

- 9% of Fretherne with Saul's population provide unpaid care (to family, friends or neighbours, due to ill health, disability or old age) compared with 11% in the district.
- In both the parish and the district, most of the individuals involved provide 1-19 hours of unpaid care per week.

Crime

All figures refer to the calendar year 2000 (Young Offenders 2001). Ward data (new boundaries).

Violent crime

The number of violent crimes per head of the population was 40% less in Severn ward than in the district as a whole and less than half that in the county as a whole. It ranks 16th best out of the 31 wards in the district.

N.b. Most violent crime is concentrated in a relatively small number of parishes where the pubs & clubs are.

Burglary of dwellings

The proportion of burglary of dwellings was roughly 50% less than the district and county. Severn ward ranks 7th best in the district.

Theft of a vehicle

The proportion of vehicle thefts is a third less than the district and county. Severn ward ranks 12th best in the district.

Theft from a vehicle

The proportion of thefts from a vehicle was almost three quarters less than in the district. Severn ward has the 10th best ranking out of the 31 wards in the district.

Young offenders (10-18 years old)

There were no reported young offenders in Severn ward in 2001. Severn ward ranks 6th best out of the 31 wards in the district.

Getting started toward a Village Plan

The Village Appraisal

Section 1 - A plan for the future of Saul, Fretherne and Framilode

In 1991, one of the first “village appraisals” in Gloucestershire was undertaken in the Parish of Fretherne, Saul and Upper and Lower Framilode. This survey provided a snapshot of the facilities available in 1991, and people’s views on how they could be improved.

This led to some successful outcomes:

- Recycling collection points were established
- River defences being strengthened
- Speed limits signed and enforced
- Keep fit classes made available

In April 2002, the Parish Council held an open meeting to discuss building on the achievements of this earlier work and make a positive plan for the future of the community. The suggestion was made that the Parish take part in the government’s Vital Villages programme. This aims to help communities to take stock of their village, to identify what they need to revitalise it, to ensure local people have a voice in their future, to provide support to enable each village to make its own decisions and to make a plan to implement some of the improvements needed locally.

The initial meeting was very well attended and from this, a small group of volunteers from Saul, Fretherne and Framilode agreed to form a village plan subcommittee to take this work forward.

The first part of this programme was to carry out a survey called a “village appraisal” to understand the community’s needs and views.

Well over 1500 communities in England and Wales have completed village appraisals to take stock of the facts and opinions about their village. Some examples of issues from other appraisals are:

- Housing, identifying the gaps are in local provision
- Transport for work, health, shopping and leisure
- Police and other emergency services
- Local environment, including air and river pollution
- Leisure Facilities for different age groups
- Religion and it’s role in the community
- Community facilities including public toilets, telephones, pavements, local shops, library etc
- Health and social services
- Education provision for all ages

Over the summer of 2002, the steering group conducted some initial consultations with key individuals and local groups in the community in order to understand local priorities and construct a questionnaire.

This enabled the steering group to gain some initial understanding about the important issues and to begin to engage the community in the process. This has continued with a series of newsletters updating the community on progress with the project.

Software was purchased from the Countryside Agency, which provided a number of reformed questions. These were tailored to produce the questions we wanted to ask particularly addressing the issues that the community had already voiced as important in the initial consultations.

The questionnaire was designed so that as many people as possible were able give their views. Up to six adults could contribute their individual views to each questionnaire.

The finished questionnaire was distributed to every household in Saul, Fretherne and Framilode in November 2002.

The questionnaire was collected in early 2003 and the quantitative and qualitative information analysed.

70% of all households in the Parish (163 out of approximately 250) returned a completed questionnaire. The results of this survey were then summarised and reproduced in a small information leaflet and circulated to all households.

Summary of Appraisal Findings

In November 2002, the Village Plan Team carried out a parish survey in order to understand the community's views and look at the key issues that needed consideration and action.

A summary brochure was produced of the most important findings and this was distributed to every household to show people what had been done and what comments had been made.

Who completed the questionnaire?

The response to the survey was very good. The feedback came from 163 households in the parish, which meant that 70% of all households replied to the questionnaire survey.

The views expressed in the survey were largely made by a middle-aged population, the majority of who have lived in the parish for more than 10 years.

36% gave their age as being between 25 and 44 years with the 45 to 59 years age group and the 60+ age group each accounting for 27%. Those under the age of 11 years were not included in the survey.

Nearly one third of residents (28%) had lived in the parish between 6 – 15 years while another third (36%) had lived here for over 16 years and 20% for over 25 years.

What are our strengths?

Those who completed the survey were particularly appreciative of the rural nature of the parish. The comments showed a positive and forward-looking approach to the future. They felt that a key strength of the parish was its location; with easy access to the motorway network, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Bristol. The Severn Vale countryside, Severn Estuary

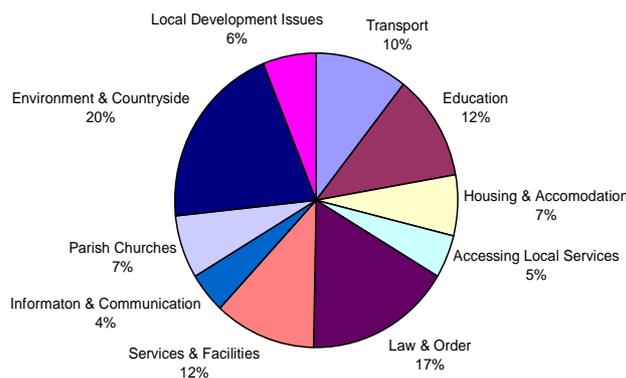
and the Cotswolds were also sited as being accessible to the parish, and therefore an advantage.

Our weaknesses?

Residents felt that the key weaknesses of the parish were that there were few public services left in the area, no shops, no post office or a school. Public transport was very limited and facilities for young people were poor, especially in the evenings. Most people wanted to see more community facilities and an increase in community activities involving all ages. However, people felt that any future changes needed to be balanced against a clear desire not to lose the essential rural identity of the parish.

People considered that the most important priorities were:

- Environment and Countryside (20%)
- Law and Order (17%)
- Transport (14%)
- Education (12%)
- Services, Facilities (12%)



Our Environment and Countryside

Most respondents indicated that this area was their highest priority. Rural features such as small woods, ridge and furrow, fields and meadows, traditional farm buildings, and public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways, were considered important. They felt that hedges, ponds, streams and trees need to be protected.



Respondents were very clear that you did not want any developments that might have a negative impact on the environment.

The effects of a marina development in the area produced mixed opinions, some in favour and others against. The increase in bridge openings that might result from increased canal use was considered detrimental to residents.



“The worst thing that could happen would be the disappearance of green fields...the gradual erosion of village life by large scale housing and industrial estates”



“The surrounding area is a great place to live because of its rural atmosphere and small villages – it must be protected at all costs”

“Keep it country!”

Community Safety

The second most important concern was law and order.

Speeding cars were seen as the greatest problem. This received more than 202 comments, which was the greatest number for any one issue. The survey revealed:

- Several danger spots were identified for speeding traffic
- Walking and cycling were seen as dangerous especially for children, because of lack pathways and cycle tracks
- Various other social problems have been identified including drugs, theft and vandalism
- A better awareness of neighborhood watch schemes was necessary
- A greater police presence in the community was wanted and better consultation between the police and local people.

“Speeding traffic from Fretherne Bridge to Arlingham especially past Fretherne church – speeds of around 70 mph!”

“No-one seems to obey 30mph limits. Cycling & walking in the lanes after dark is highly dangerous.”



Services and Leisure Facilities

Many people came forward with ideas for developing new clubs or leisure activities with ‘keep fit’ and ‘yoga’ being the most popular. Tennis and badminton sessions were suggested as well as art and gardening clubs. A ‘Village Society’ was also put forward as a way of way of increasing people’s leisure opportunities and a number of people even volunteered to set up or run these new clubs.

People also wanted to see improvements in leisure facilities, seating, children’s play areas and more facilities for young people in the parish.

“A well supervised youth club in the village hall for the children would be good”

“Make more effort with the memorial hall, such a good position and facility.”

Health Facilities

Residents broadly felt these services were satisfactory and added:

- The majority of people who visited the doctors’ surgery in the last year considered the service to be good.
- The district nurse, health visitors and maternity care also had favourable ratings
- Services such as home help, ambulance, chiropody, loan of medical equipment, meals on wheels and counselling services were only used occasionally.

Education Facilities

People felt that there was a need for a primary school in the parish and for ‘after school’ clubs, holiday play schemes, adult education evening and day classes to be developed.

“A school within walking distance would have been nice – but seems unlikely now.”

What Other Facilities?

- Residents wanted more facilities but only a small number of people supported a community shop. Others suggested the possibility of combining a shop with some other types of facilities
- People felt that more use could be made of the allotments that were felt to be an asset though currently under used.
- It was suggested more public seating facilities were needed

“A little shop in Saul would be fantastic”

“Improved and extended village facilities to bring a focus back to the parish and enhance community spirit.”

Transport

The “Village Link” bus service attracted 67 comments, which was the second greatest quantity from the survey. Although a number of people said they were not aware of the service or had not used it, many comments reflected high levels of concern within the parish about public transport:

- The routes and reliability were questioned
- The booking system seemed inflexible and people disliked booking by telephone

“I would like a normal time table bus operation to Gloucester”

“I would use it if it were more frequent”

“Bus times are difficult to co-ordinate with appointments”

Our Housing and Planning

Residents were asked: *“What’s the worst thing that could happen in the development of the parish?”* The response to this question was very clear with 144 separate comments made under the theme *“Housing development and Urbanisation”*.

People were concerned about the possibility of large-scale housing developments that did not take into account the needs of the community. Specifically:

- They wanted a small increase in the supply of affordable housing for local young people and sheltered housing for the elderly but no further large housing developments
- They were aware of the need for improved access for people with disabilities

“Sheltered or warden controlled housing to allow older people to remain in the village.”

Information and Communication

Most residents agreed that the spread of information from the District Council and Parish Council needed to be improved.

Many were not aware of the activities of the Parish Council and wanted to see an information point/notice board in all the villages within the parish.

“A notice board that is vandal proof would be nice”

Our Parish Churches

A small number of people who responded to the question regarding the importance they placed upon the church, actually attended for worship. The most frequent reason was for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The churches were considered a focal point for the community and as unique historic buildings.

Only a small number of people were in favour of using the churches for concerts, meetings or other non-religious uses.



“The churches should be a focal point for the community”

Local Development Issues

Residents were concerned about 'nothing happening' to develop the parish, such as the old site being left derelict or used for housing and the village plan having no impact.

Many people suggested that the old school site should be developed as a multi purpose centre that could possibly incorporate education, heritage and internet access.

“The worst thing would be if the Saul school site is lost to housing and community use”

“Use old school site to make a small play area and place to bring a mobile library and mobile shops on different days of the week.”



Our Heritage

The survey asked, “How do we encourage an interest in the heritage of the parish?” Of the 73 people who responded to this question, the majority (78%) were in favour of recording local memories and knowledge, collecting old photographs and memorabilia and recording and protecting listed buildings. They also suggested that a local history society could be formed to undertake this type of work or interested residents could undertake a local heritage audit to capture what exists in the parish now.

Summary of the survey findings

Overall, there was an excellent response to the survey. Residents within the parish showed that they valued the countryside and the environment most highly. They were very clear that they did not want to lose the rural identity of the parish through development that might urbanise the area.

People particularly wanted improvements in law and order especially in dealing with speeding cars.

They wanted to see more community activity involving everyone and which fostered community spirit.

They wanted improvements in services, including public transport, local education and more facilities and activities for young people. Specifically you were concerned about the Saul school site being left derelict, although 71% of you said that you did not want the site developed for housing.

People were concerned about anything happening which would lead to further erosion of the sense of community but did not want the Parish to ‘stand still’.

.....And you wanted the village plan to make a difference!

“We want....more community spirit; involve others, including new residents.”

Based on this response a public meeting was subsequently held in May 2004 to discuss the findings in more detail and to begin to create specific action plans for the community. Those action plans are outlined in the next section of this document.

And now to create a Village Plan

The Next Step

A public meeting held May 2004 agreed that the information gathered from the Appraisal would form the basis for the Village Plan and sub-committees were appointed to further investigate the various headings as follows:

The Environment and Countryside
Community and Safety
Services & Leisure Group
Local Development

An action plan was constructed from information taken from the survey document, and from groups and committees already in place. The action plan will be adopted by the Parish Council who with the support of community will take the plan forward. It is an iterative document that can be updated over time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee

Margaret Boakes

Iris Capps

Karen Carter

Tina Finchett

* Linda Griffiths

* Patrick Hill

Cindy Hinde

Neville Lusmore

Sonia Maule

* Chris Meredith

Lucy Smithies

Stone Smithies

John Swann

Gloria Swann

* Robin Woodsend

* *Denotes Current
Committee at going to
press*

The committee would like to thank the following people for their support

Gloucestershire Rural
Community Council

*with special thanks to Angela Burlow,
whose continued support was
invaluable*

The Countryside Agency
(now Natural England)

for funding part of the project

Parish Plan Forum

Fretherne with Saul Parish
Council

*for having the foresight to start this
project and their continued support
in taking the "Action Plan" forward*

Saul Memorial Hall

for providing a meeting place

R A Meredith & Son

*for use of their premises for some of
our meetings*

Cathie Pike

*for her work in collating the
information*

The Residents in the Parish
of Fretherne with Saul

*for providing us with their vision for
the future of Fretherne, Framilode
and Saul*

Finally, to the **committee members**, both past and present, who voluntarily gave their time and effort and enthusiasm to complete this project