

# **Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (CB&HNP) Sustainable Transport Topic Paper**

Version 1 – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - Dr. Amy Burnett (Development in Transition, DiNT)

Version 2 – 28 November 2020 – Stephen Gledhill

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AONB</b>	Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>CB&amp;HNP</b>	Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan
<b>CCWWD AONB</b>	Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>DinT</b>	Development in Transition
<b>LPS</b>	Cranborne Chase and Chalk Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme
<b>PC</b>	Parish Council

## Document Purpose

A Neighbourhood Plan can seek to protect or improve recreational areas, footpaths, important visual landscapes, roadside verges, allotments and biodiversity within the Parish. It should also seek opportunities to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (CB&HNP) includes a policy on sustainable transport to: encourage walking and cycling, and improve road safety; in order to lessen the adverse impacts of traffic on the community. These can be broad aspirations which are dependent on decisions and actions of local government or statutory authorities; or they may be more tangible, linked to the allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where the Local Planning Authority (Wiltshire Council) has a published CIL Schedule.

This document analyses suggestions for improved sustainable transport put forward by the community in both the Parish Plan (2012) and the Community Questionnaire (2018). It also reflects discussions between the CB&HNP Steering Group and other stakeholders including: the Cranborne Chase and Chalk Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) and the Governors of Coombe Bissett CE VA Primary School. The Steering Group has also taken into account sustainable transport opportunities and road safety issues associated with the development sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

On the basis of this analysis the Steering Group have assessed the Parish road and footpath infrastructure to identify opportunities to expand the footpath network and improve pedestrian road safety. It has also sought opportunities to enhance pedestrian connectivity with the AONB in the surrounding area.

## Transport in the Parish

As is the case in many rural parishes, travel is largely dependent on the local road network, particularly those roads which connect the villages to Salisbury and smaller centres in south Wiltshire. This is complemented by a number of footpaths, by-ways and bridleways across the Parish. As regards public transport, this is relatively limited and consists of infrequent bus services from Coombe Bissett and Homington to and from Salisbury, Shaftesbury and Blandford. The nearest railway station is in Salisbury.

As a result, despite government encouragement of alternatives, the car remains the essential mode of transport for our community. There is clear evidence of continuing dependence on the car as the primary means of transport both to work and to access the retail, leisure and other services found in the Salisbury area.

### The Road Network

The A354, which is the primary route between Salisbury, Blandford and Dorchester, passes through the centre of Coombe Bissett. In addition to local traffic it carries considerable through traffic including Heavy Goods Vehicles. The C12, which is the Ebble Valley road, passes through both Coombe Bissett and Homington. In addition to local traffic it is also the main route for vehicles (both staff and patients) travelling to Salisbury District Hospital from southwest Wiltshire and east Dorset. In addition, Homington Road connects the village of Homington with the A354 just to the south of the edge of Salisbury. Other minor roads run out of both villages onto the surrounding downs. These often follow the line of ancient drove ways or lanes connecting sheep pastures on the downs with the water meadows in the Ebble valley.

The high level of through traffic, limited public transport and the community's reliance on cars has led to the road network being busy and at times congested. There is also a significant problem with vehicles exceeding the speed limit particularly on the A354 through Coombe Bissett and the C12 through both Coombe Bissett and Homington<sup>1</sup>. In addition, many of the Parish roads are narrow and do not have pavements<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the roads feel unsafe for both pedestrians and cyclists. This has a negative impact on the environment and reduces the number of people who walk or cycle both within and between the villages.

All roads (including the A354 primary route) are the responsibility of Wiltshire Council. Therefore, any proposals to improve traffic and transport in the Parish, require their approval and support. Wiltshire Council manage local traffic issues and fund enhancements through the Community Area Transport Group (CATG). However, in most cases when road infrastructure and safety enhancements are agreed by the CATG, the Parish Council is required to pay up to 25% of the costs. This can be very challenging for a small rural parish with a limited precept.

### The Village School

There are specific traffic and road safety issues related to the Village School. This is located in Shutts Lane, a short and steep dead-end road which leads south from Homington Road in Coombe Bissett. There is very limited on-site parking and no dedicated School drop off area. There is also no pavement on the approaches to the School in the mid-section of Homington Road or on Shutts Lane. In addition, there are no footpaths providing safe pedestrian routes to the school from either village. This discourages walking to the school<sup>3</sup>.

These facts together with the high number of the School's pupils who live outside the Parish, has led to the majority of children being taken to school by car. This results in considerable congestion on Homington Road/Shutts Lane at school drop-off and collection times. Taken with the level of through traffic on the C12 this creates a considerable road safety hazard.

The School Governors are aware of the issue and have sought ways to mitigate the problem. They have produced a School Travel Plan which seeks wherever possible to reduce car usage through car sharing and similar measures<sup>4</sup>. However due to the wide geographical distribution of Pupils' homes, the effects of this are necessarily limited. The only identified comprehensive solution is the provision of an adequate drop-off/parking area close to the school and associated safe pedestrian access. This is feasible, though it may require the acquisition of additional land. However, given the current constraints on the School Budget this could only be delivered through additional investment by Wiltshire Council.

## Footpaths in the Parish

There is a network of footpaths and other Rights of Way across the Parish, many of which are of ancient origin. In total there are 9 footpaths, 7 bridleways, 4 byways and 1 restricted byway - see Figure 1 below.

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<sup>1</sup> In recent years the Parish Council has worked with Wiltshire Council as the Highways Authority and Wiltshire Police, to put in place measures to mitigate the speeding problem. These measures have included: a 20mph speed zone on Homington Road in the centre of Coombe Bissett; additional signage in both villages; a Community Speed Watch scheme; and the purchase and deployment of a Speed Indicator Device (SID). Despite these measures, significant numbers of vehicles continue to exceed the speed limit on both the A354 and C12.

<sup>2</sup> The only pavements in the Parish are on part of the A354 and parts of the C12 in Coombe Bissett. There are no pavements in Homington.

<sup>3</sup> This also means that a 'Walking Bus' is not feasible.

<sup>4</sup> Due to current Covid 19 pandemic restrictions this has had to be curtailed.

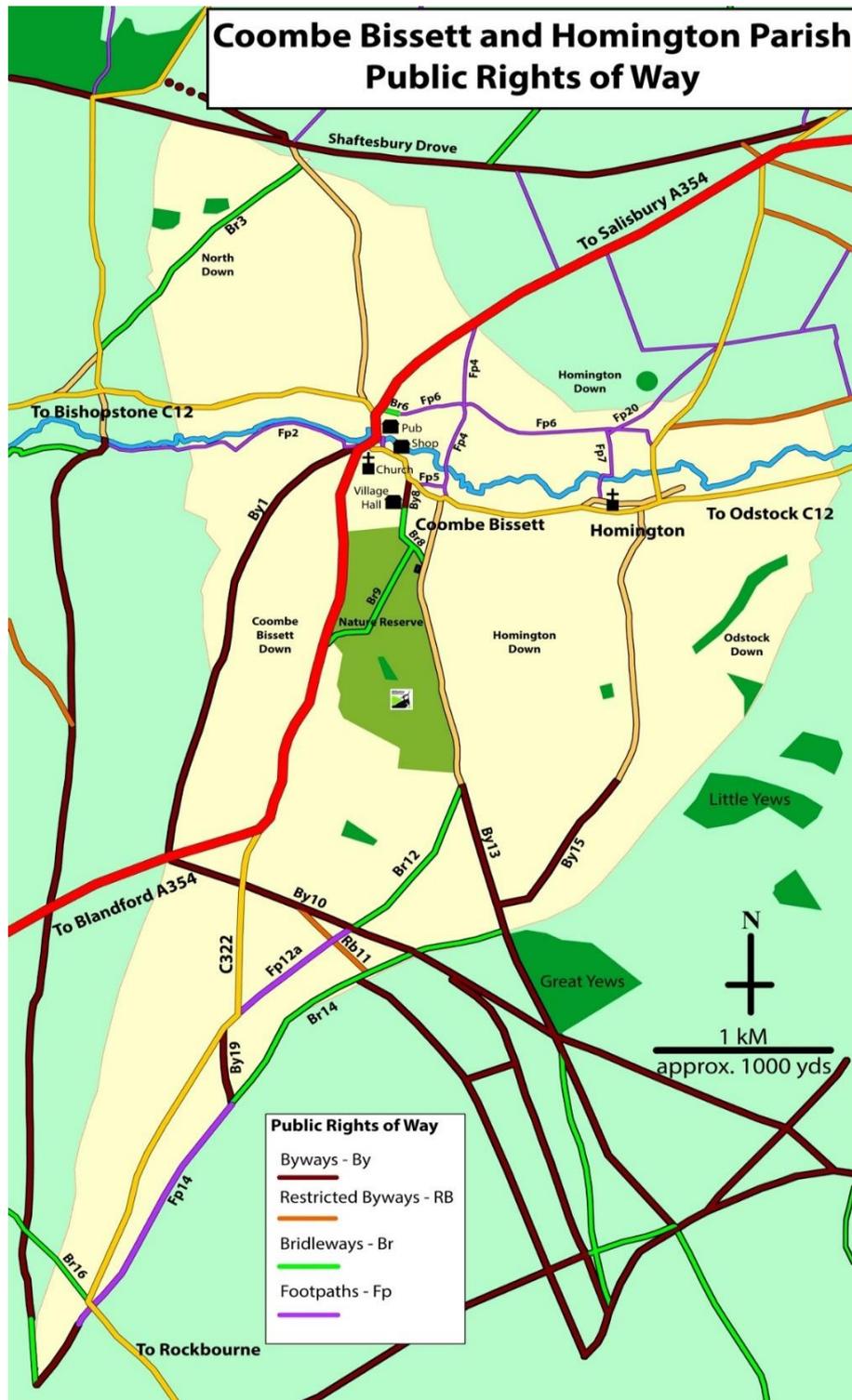


Figure 1 – Coombe Bissett and Homington Rights of Way

The various Rights of Way provide an excellent recreational walking facility throughout the Parish. However, many of them were originally developed to support agricultural activity, particularly sheep farming on the surrounding downs (i.e. Drovers). As a result, they do not provide a comprehensive network which encourages a 'walkable village'. In particular in a number of areas, there are no footpaths which provide safe pedestrian routes between parts of the villages and the main social and commercial facilities (e.g. village shop, school, village hall, churches, Fox and Goose Pub) in the centre of Coombe Bissett.

## Community Views on Sustainable Transport

The community was asked for their views on sustainable transport, road safety and footpaths in the 2018 Community Questionnaire. Local transport had also been a key aspect of the 2012 Parish Plan.

### Community Questionnaire

Question 17 considered preferences to reduce car dependence. Improved Rights of Way, increased bus services, greater local services and more affordable electric vehicles were supported as ways to encourage more sustainable transport. Interestingly, vehicle sharing schemes were not widely supported, presumably because of the dispersed nature of the Parish. Other options that were not supported included the idea of a 'walking bus' to assist children to travel to school<sup>5</sup> and more local employment opportunities. For further details see Appendix 1 - Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) Questions 17.

Question 18 sought to establish the level of interest in the idea of a 'walkable village'. The responses demonstrated that there was substantial support (62%) for such a concept. For further details see Appendix 2 - Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) Questions 18.

Question 19 enabled respondents to identify road safety measures and enhanced pedestrian facilities (footpaths and pavements)<sup>6</sup> which would enable a 'walkable village'. For further details see Appendix 3 - Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) Questions 19

### The Parish Plan

The 2012 Parish Plan also included a number of recommendations to enhance road safety and develop the footpath network across the Parish. The majority of these have not been completed and the recommendations remain valid. Further details are at Appendix 4.

## Input from Other Stakeholders

The AONB represented by the Cranborne Chase and Chalk Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) was also consulted. Discussions focussed on local footpath enhancement and expansion<sup>7</sup> with the aim of identifying additional circular walks and rides, together with improving access to the AONB's wider footpath network.

## Development Sites and Sustainable Transport

The Neighbourhood Plan has identified two sites which are suitable for a modest number of additional houses. Their location has implications for development of sustainable transport in the Parish and the policy of a 'walkable village'.

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<sup>5</sup> A walking bus is when school children, supervised by at least one adult, walk in tandem to school for safety reasons.

<sup>6</sup> NB: some suggestions have been re-categorised since the Summary report was shared on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>7</sup> A 'subset' of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- The Old Vicarage site is located on the Homington Road (C12) in Coombe Bissett, next to its junction with Water Lane. There is an already existing pavement on Homington Road between the Water Lane junction and the village amenities of the shop, church and pub. Pedestrian egress will need to be provided from the site to the pavement. There is also a need to improve pedestrian road safety from the Homington Road/Water Lane junction to the Homington Road/Shutts Lane junction to enable safe pedestrian access to the Village Hall and School.
- The Kenora Paddock site is located on Drove Lane, approximately 650m north of the centre of Coombe Bissett. Drove Lane is a 'dead end' road with comparatively little traffic. As such it is usually suitable for pedestrian use. However, to provide for safe walking access to the facilities in Coombe Bissett village centre, there is a need for the following:
  - Enhanced pedestrian safety measures from the Drove Lane/Stratford Tony Road junction to the Drove Lane/Salisbury Road A354 junction.
  - An enhanced pedestrian crossing area of the A345 in the vicinity of its junctions with Drove Lane and Marsh Lane.

These enhancements would also provide part of a new safe walking route connecting the houses to the west of the Salisbury road with the village centre.

## A Sustainable Transport Policy

Delivering sustainable transport within the Parish will require the following actions as an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Development which takes place must ensure that traffic impacts are sufficiently mitigated to preserve the essential rural character of the Coombe Bissett and Homington neighbourhood area and the wider AONB.
- Improvements to pedestrian road safety at a number of 'high risk' areas on both the A354 and the C12.
- Key additions to the footpath network across the Parish to provide safe pedestrian routes from outlying areas to the centre of Coombe Bissett.
- New development should provide infrastructure to support sustainable transport including: charging points for electric motor vehicles (including mobility scooters); secure and weatherproof bicycle racks, and wherever possible address the needs of those with mobility issues.

Taken together these measures should encourage residents to walk (and to use bicycles), thus reducing intra-parish use of motor vehicles. It will also help to deliver sustainable transport in the Parish and enable a 'walkable village'.

## Footpath and Road Safety Enhancements

Footpath and road safety enhancements have been identified based on a detailed analysis of: the current transport and pedestrian infrastructure; the transport findings in the 2018 Community Questionnaire and recommendations in the 2012 Parish Plan; engagement with stakeholders; and the implications for sustainable transport arising from the two allocated development sites (the Old Vicarage and Kenora Paddock).

Details of the required footpath and pedestrian road safety enhancements are as follows:

1. Enhanced pedestrian safety measures on the Homington Road in Coombe Bissett between its junctions with Water Lane and Shutts Lane.

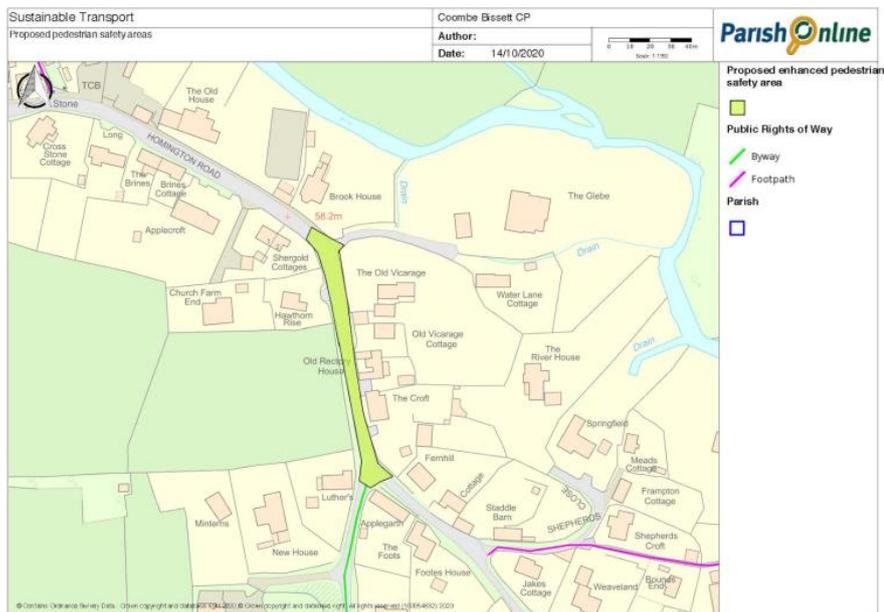


Figure 2 – Homington Road Pedestrian Road Safety Measures Zone

2. A new footpath to link the Stratford Tony Road with the existing CB1S2 (FP2), as part of a safe pedestrian route from the Stratford Tony Road to the village centre (this new footpath will need to include a foot bridge over the River Ebble).

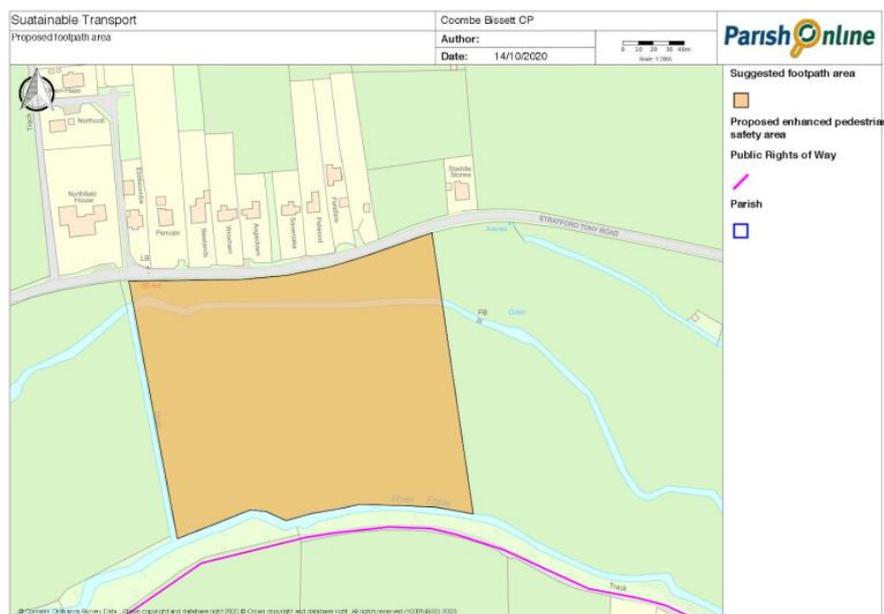


Figure 3 – Area of new Stratford Tony Road to FP2 Footpath

3. An enhanced pedestrian crossing area of the A354 in the vicinity of its junction with the Old Blandford Road, as part of safe pedestrian routes between the village centre and properties on the Blandford Road and Stratford Tony Road.

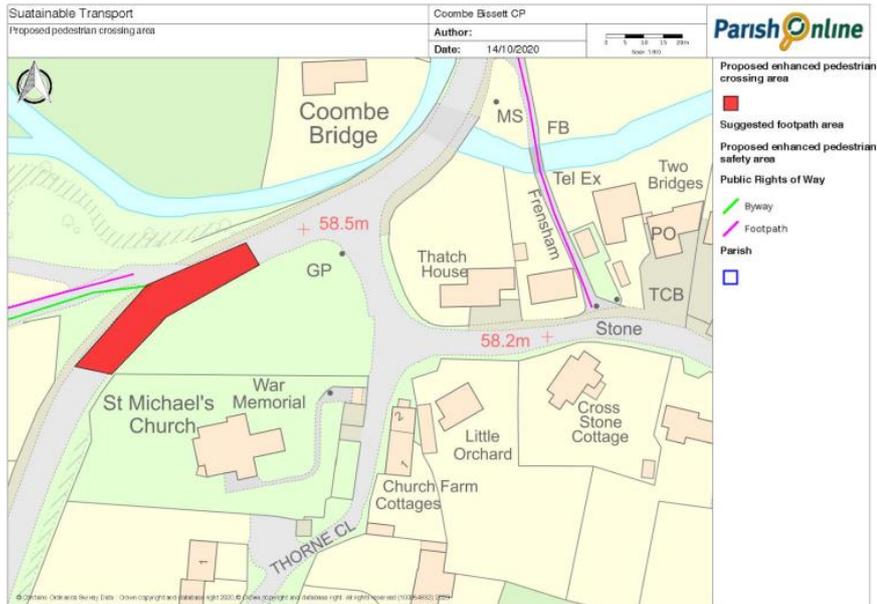


Figure 4 – Pedestrian crossing area A354/Old Blandford Road

4. A new footpath to link properties on the Salisbury Road to Drove Lane, as part of a safe pedestrian route from the Salisbury Road to the village centre.

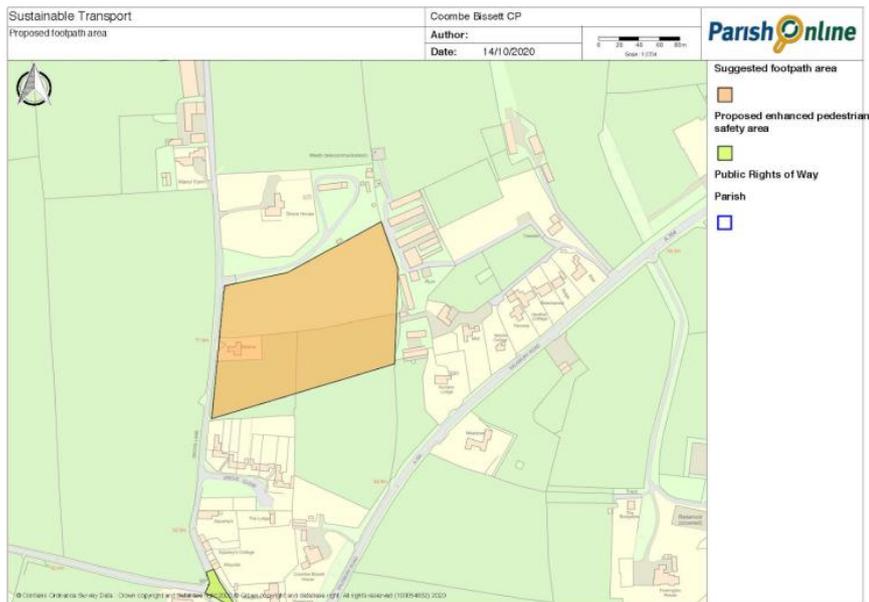


Figure 5 – Area of new Drove Lane to Salisbury Road Footpath

5. Enhanced pedestrian safety measures from the junction of Drove Lane and the Stratford Tony Road, to the junction of Drove Lane with the A354, as part of a safe pedestrian route between the village centre and properties on the Salisbury Road and Drove Lane (including the Kenora Paddock allocated site).

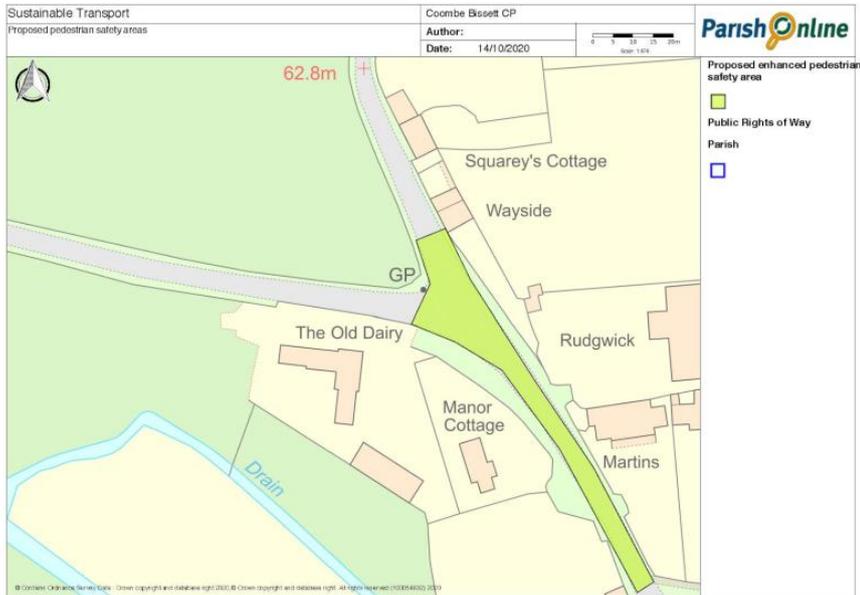


Figure 6 – Drove Lane to A354 Pedestrian Road Safety Measures Zone

6. An enhanced pedestrian crossing area of the A354 in the vicinity of its junction with the Stratford Tony Road/Drove Lane, as part of a safe pedestrian route between the village centre and properties on the Salisbury Road and Drove Lane (including the Kenora Paddock allocated site).

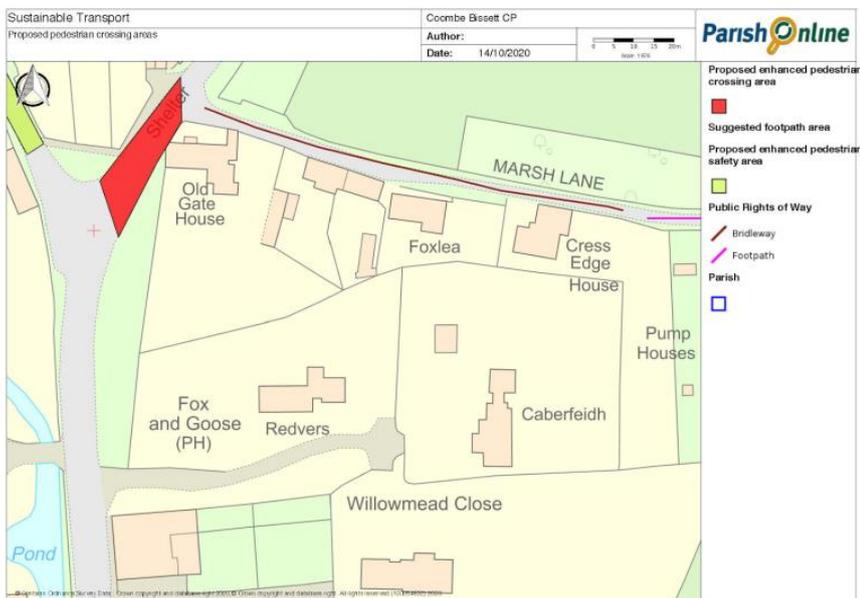


Figure 7 – Pedestrian crossing area A354/Drove Lane

7. A new footpath to link the Blandford Road and Recreation Ground providing enhanced pedestrian access to and from the Village Hall and School.

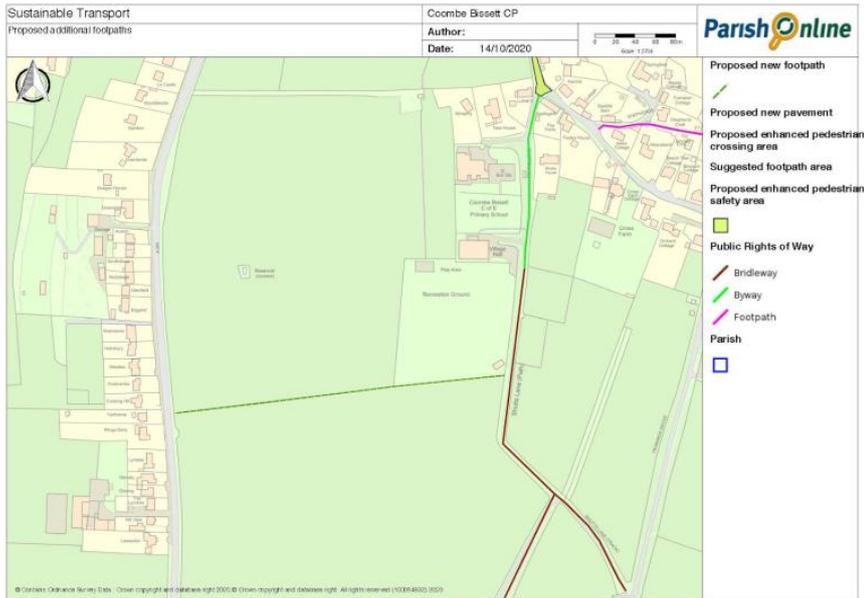


Figure 8 – New Blandford Road to Recreation Ground Footpath

The addition of these enhanced pedestrian road safety measures and footpaths to the existing road and rights of way infrastructure, will both meet the established needs of the community and enable the adoption of a sustainable transport policy based on a ‘walkable village’. This is demonstrated in Figure 9 below which shows both the current network and the additional measures.

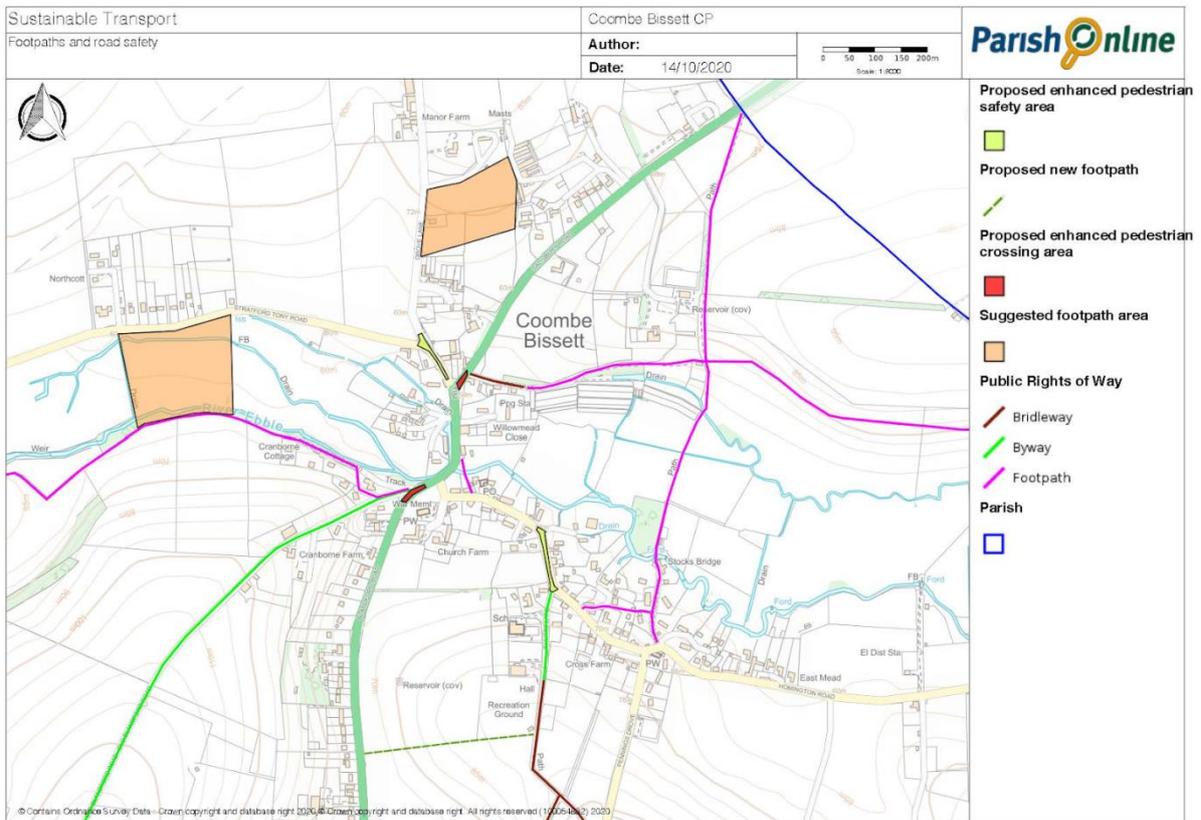


Figure 9 – Current and additional sustainable transport infrastructure.

## Additional Footpath Enhancements

Encouraging residents and visitors to use pedestrian routes in order to deliver a ‘walkable village’ policy, is not just restricted to the provision of additional footpaths and improved pedestrian road safety.

The existing network of footpaths, byways and bridleways must be maintained and made accessible to as many people as possible. In most cases the responsibility for maintenance of Rights of Way rests with the landowner, with Wiltshire Council being responsible for enforcement. In addition, the Parish Council is well placed to identify problem areas and through continued liaison with Landowners, Wiltshire Council, the AONB and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, ensure that Rights of Way are properly maintained. In particular to improve access<sup>8</sup> to footpaths it should continue wherever possible to have stiles replaced with pedestrian gates.

Improving footpath signage, and greater publicity of the local Rights of Way network and local walking groups will encourage more people to make use of footpaths and help to deliver a ‘walkable village’.

The Parish Council can also apply to Wiltshire Council for grant funding to address specific Rights of Way maintenance issues. In addition, the AONB has a community grants programme which could be used towards the costs of fencing, planting hedgerows and surfacing or resurfacing.

## Delivering Footpath and Road Safety Enhancements

Delivering the enhancements to local footpaths and improvements to pedestrian road safety which are required to deliver a ‘walkable village’ will require the Parish Council, Wiltshire Council and other stakeholders, including landowners to work closely together. Priority actions should be as follows:

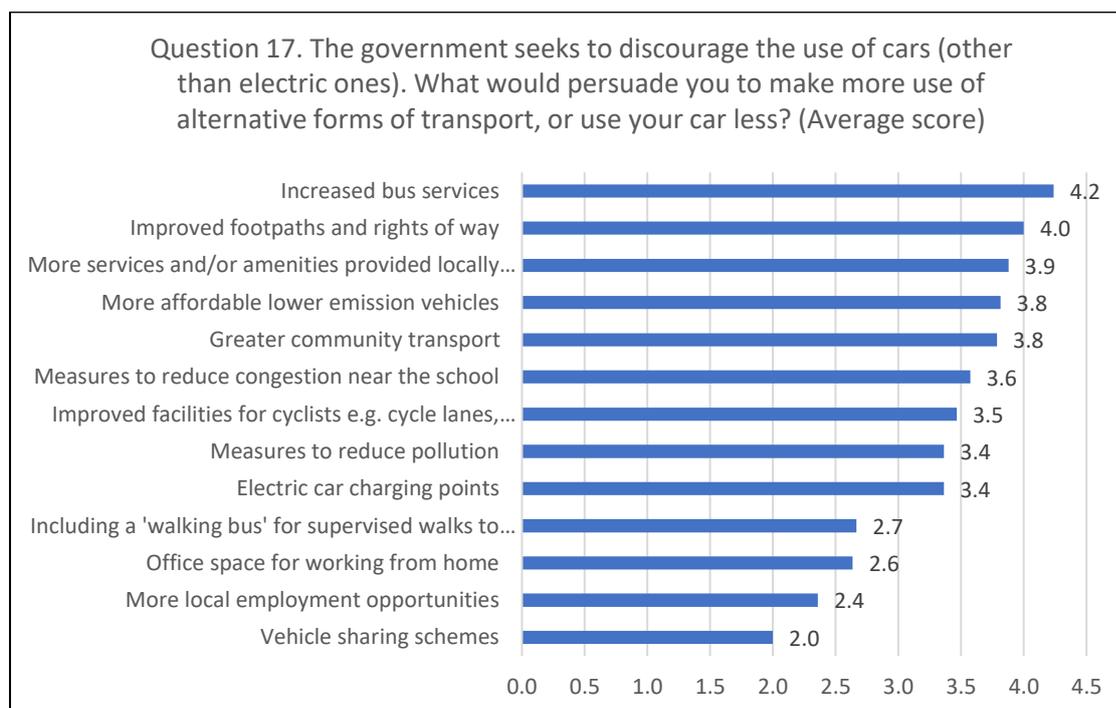
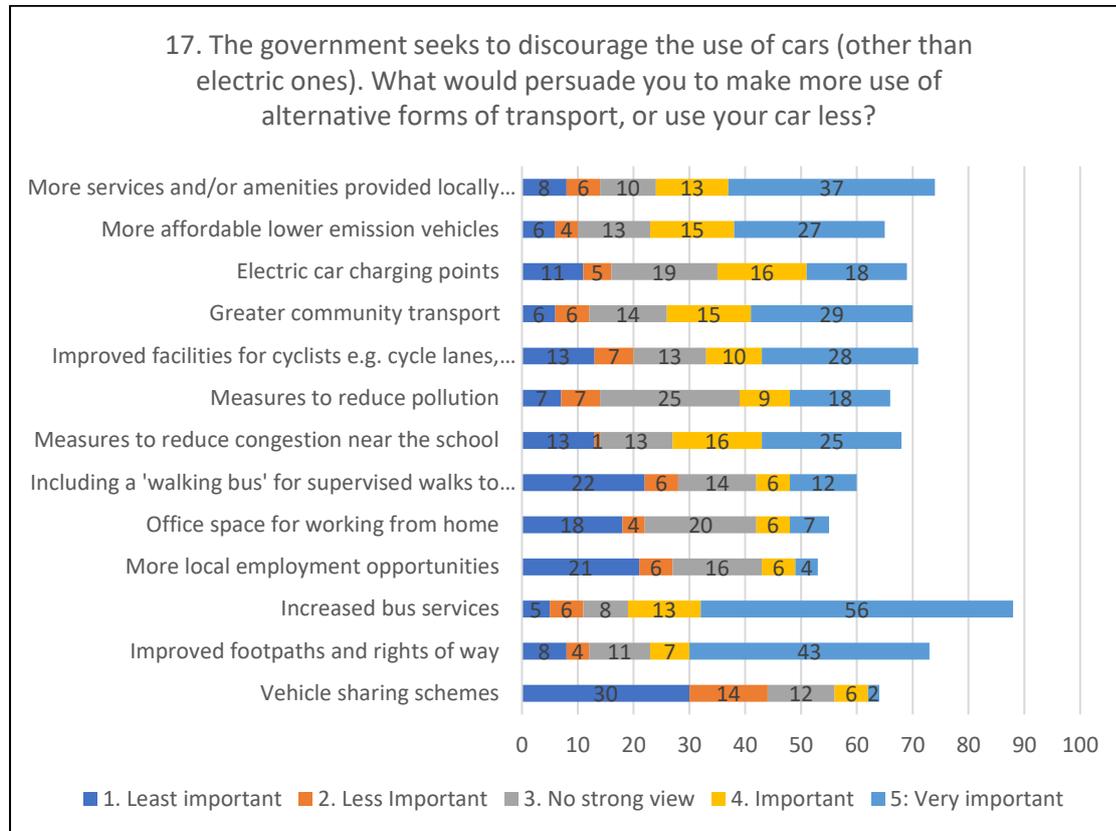
- Engage with Wiltshire Council (Highways) to agree the type and exact location of the two required pedestrian crossing areas on the A354.
- Engage with Wiltshire Council (Highways) to agree the enhanced pedestrian safety measures that are required on part of the Homington Road in Coombe Bissett and on the Drove Lane approach to the A354.
- Engage with the appropriate Landowners to discuss the possibility of extending the footpath network in the three identified areas to improve pedestrian access to Coombe Bissett centre.

There is potential for new development in the Parish to contribute to sustainable transport infrastructure improvements, such as pavements, signage and traffic calming measures through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or site-specific Section 106 agreements that set out additional investment or conditions to make the development more amenable to the community.

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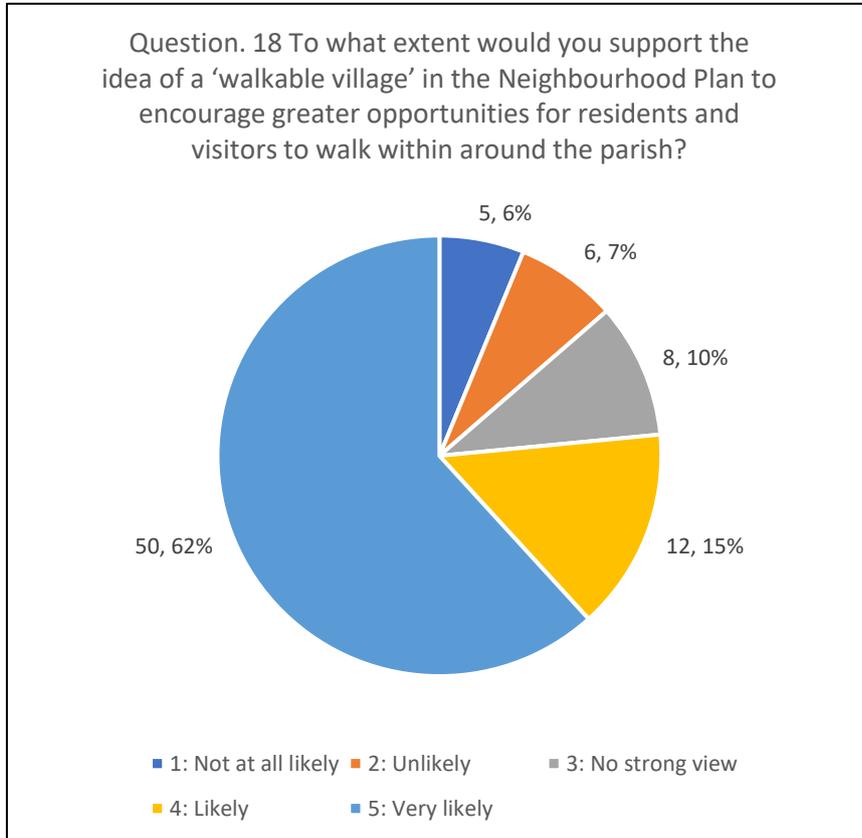
<sup>8</sup> The population of the Parish is older than the national and Wiltshire average.

## Appendix 1 – Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) – Question 17.



Additional responses – Other (Qu. 17)	Number
Traffic calming; speed restrictions and enforcement	8
Local parking	1
Community electric car club, bike hire	1
Communal and shared amenity arrangements	2

## Appendix 2 – Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) – Question 18.



There was substantial support for a 'walkable village' with a number of footpaths suggested to be enhanced or new paths created with 50 (62%) supporting it with a ranking of 5. Notably, Stratford Tony Road, Homington Road and Salisbury Road – similar results to the Parish Plan.

## Appendix 3 – Results from the Community Questionnaire (Sustainable Transport) – Question 19.

Footpath suggestion – cycle ways highlighted in bold	Count of Footpath suggestion	How can it be enhanced or why is it needed?
A354 Blandford Road (north side)	1	To allow CB residents to walk to the village centre (R74).
A354 Blandford Road to Cricket Pavilion	1	Formalise as a footpath and mark on OS maps (R35).
A354 Salisbury Road (crossing)	1	To connect the west of the village with its amenities (R24).
A354 Salisbury Road to Coombe Bissett	10	By constructing new footpath on adjoining fields (R72). Reduce the need to drive and improve the environment (R78). Walking would improve community spirit/sociability (R78). Busy road. Safety and amenity, less car use (R14, R37, R49). To be able to walk to houses along Salisbury Road (R69).
A354 Salisbury Road to Drove	1	Would be good if this continued into town or crossed road to join Drove (R58).
Barbers Lane (Homington) to water meadows	1	Restore old path across meadows from Barbers Lane, Homington (R30).
Coombe Bissett (Stratford Tony Road) and Bishopstone to Broadchalke <sup>9</sup>	1	Need a footpath or cycle path to encourage travel without cars, improve fitness and support village amenities (R73).
Coombe Bissett Church to A354 Salisbury Road (north)	2	Install footpath and/or extend as cycle way to Salisbury (R79). To enable access on foot to Salisbury <sup>10</sup> (R99).
Coombe Bissett Church to A354, Blandford Road (south)	1	Improve surface and width. Very dangerous especially at night; fast moving vehicles (R79).

<sup>9</sup> NB: would require liaison with neighbouring parishes.

<sup>10</sup> Access into Salisbury would require engagement with neighbouring parishes and Salisbury City Council e.g. Britford and Highways.

Coombe Bissett Church to school	1	Children currently have to walk on the road. If there was village parking by the church, then some of the school run traffic and the children visiting the church could use the new path. Flooding? (R71).
Coombe Bissett Down to east and west (circular walks)	1	Would allow shortish circular walks (R58).
Coombe Bissett to Nunton <sup>11</sup>	1	Footpaths are disjointed - it should be simple to follow from one village to another. Join and signpost paths; keep them maintained (R29).
Coombe Bissett to Racecourse <sup>12</sup>	1	Walk to Salisbury (R43).
Drove Lane (east from Manor Farm)	1	Footpath lacking Drove Lane, going east from Manor Farm (and cycle path). This would reduce from village to Homington by 20 minutes (R98).
Drove Lane to A354 Salisbury Road triangle	1	To reduce reliance on cars for local shopping etc (R24).
Drove Lane to Coombe Bissett	1	Village is not safely accessible on foot via A354 (R62).
Droeway	1	Improve access so that this could be cycling path to Salisbury linked to proposed new footpaths at Drove Lane/Marsh Lanes (R98).
Homington Road	13	Suggestions: on wider sections, Pavements required all along the road (R33) and all through village (R26).  Will increase walking within the village (R8), reduce the need to drive (R78), improve the environment (R78), improve access to amenities (R18).  Walking would improve community spirit/sociability (R8, R78).  Will improve pedestrian safety (R8, R46, R82).
Homington Road to Tottens Farm	1	Maybe school side of Homington Road (R47).
Hopkins Way to Marsh Lane	1	It's risky but would be difficult to achieve (R54).
Marsh Lane along watercress beds	1	Access along bottom through watercress beds would allow walkers with less mobility to access the downs (R58).
Marsh Lane to A354 Salisbury Road	2	Needed to link these two and avoid dangerous part of main road. Danger area (R5, R24).

<sup>11</sup> Would require engagement with neighbouring parish council Odstock).

<sup>12</sup> NB: would require liaison with neighbouring parishes.

		Traffic calming, e.g. chicane & crossing to north side required (R5).
Marsh Lane to Coombe Bissett	2	Because it is dangerous walking along the road to the shop (R57). Very difficult but need a safe way of getting to Marsh Lane from the village (R98).
Marsh Lane to Homington House	2	Widen (R50). Resurface (R50, R89).
No new footpaths required in countryside	1	[None given]
None	1	[None given]
Old Blandford Road to Stratford Tony Road	1	It is very poorly maintained by farmer and impossible most of the year (R29).
Pavements within the village (general)	3	Dangerous for pedestrians (R61) New footpaths could have a strip of grass along the edge (as in Odstock/Nunton) to make it more rural (R18).
Pennings Farm to Caravan Park	1	Some hard surface applied - currently mud and wood chips v. badly distributed by horses (R91).
Riverside footpath	3	It gets very muddy in places (R41).
Shepherds Close to Stocksbridge Lane	3	Widen (R85). Widened at East end - Hedge restricts width.
Shop to School	1	Because it is not safe to walk in the road (R15).
Shutts Lane to School	1	Will increase walking within the village and therefore better community spirit. Will improve pedestrian safety (R8).
Stocksbridge Lane to Water Meadows	1	Stone chips to be laid on surface - usually very muddy (R84).
Stratford Tony Road	18	Houses there front directly onto the road - not for walking (R5). Safety to walk into the village (R31, R 37, R40, R54, R59, R67, R74, R84, R99). Reduce dependence on car use e.g. to school (R40). Convert verge to path (R59). By constructing new footpath on adjoining fields (R72). Safety and amenity, less car use (R14).

		Needed to enable residents to walk to CB (and for development) (R96). It's dangerous (R54).
Stratford Tony Road to the Hatches	1	Need new path across Water Meadows and footbridge to link with Footpath CB1S2.
Unspecified	1	Maintenance is being achieved through Parish Council and Wiltshire Wildlife programmes.
Water Lane to Shepherds Close (traffic calming)	1	No pavement (R24).
Widen footpaths for cyclists	1	Maybe wider ones to also accommodate cyclist to get them off the highway (R70).
Grand Total	88	

## Appendix 4 – Parish Plan (2012) Extract

<b>Road Safety and Footpath improvements</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
A354 (Blandford Road) Crossing	<p>There is no dedicated safe way for pedestrians to cross the A354 in the vicinity of Coombe Bissett Church. This affects residents on the west side of Blandford Road who are deterred from walking to the facilities in the centre of the village. It also affects walkers using Byway 1 and Footpath 2. The Parish Plan suggested that an island (pedestrian refuge) should be installed on the A354 close to its junction with Old Blandford Road, as a significant aid to pedestrian safety.</p> <p>It also noted that an Island may assist in reducing the number of motorists who break the speed limit on this stretch of the A254.</p>
Fox & Goose to Marsh Lane	<p>Ideally a fully separate pedestrian route would connect to Marsh Lane but in fact the lack of space within the trunk road adjacent to the Old Gate House appears to be an insuperable constraint.</p>
Homington Road (C12), Water Lane to Shepherds Close and adjacent to The Chapel	<p>There is no pavement on the narrow winding section of the Homington Road in Coombe Bissett between Water Lane and Stocks Bridge Lane. This is dangerous for pedestrians. There is insufficient road width for a separate pavement, but other measures including white lining a pedestrian area or width restrictions should be put in place to improve safety and encourage increased pedestrian usage.</p>
Stratford Tony Road	<p>Residents on the Stratford Tony Road have no safe pedestrian route to the centre of Coombe Bissett. The provision of a pavement along the Stratford Tony Road would require the purchase private land. Alternatively, a new footpath could be designated, across the water meadows linking the road to FP2.</p>
Salisbury Road	<p>The A354 Salisbury Road carries a heavy volume of through traffic. There is no pavement along the Road and it is not safe for pedestrians. Local residents have no alternative but to use cars to travel to village facilities, despite the short distance involved. There is no reasonable prospect that a pavement could be constructed along the carriageway. A potential solution would be a new footpath linking the rear of the Salisbury Road properties to Drove Lane.</p>