

Local Economy - Issues for the Future

There is a long history of successful retail, commercial and industrial businesses operating within the parish. The aim of the Village Plan is to allow new and existing businesses to thrive whilst working in harmony with the other needs of the village.

The parish contains a very broad mix of industries, ranging from small independent retailers, hairdressers and cafes to large industrial businesses such as the Clay Pigeon Company, Long Clawson Dairy and Perfectos.

It is felt that non-retail businesses are generally well served by the Winterbeck and Longhedge Lane industrial estates and it is understood that further expansion of these estates is planned to attract further businesses to the village. We consider this to be generally a positive move provided that the transport links to these sites remain at the periphery of the village and thereby do not create further congestion and traffic flow through the centre of the village.

One issue facing such expansion though is whether Bottesford and the surrounding villages can attract prospective employees to move to the area. Feedback from the existing businesses is that they would prefer to employ local people as they are generally more reliable and flexible. However, the high house prices in the parish and the relative shortage of rental stock has meant that few young people can afford to move here, and those that grow up here are forced to move away when they leave home. This presents a problem in the medium to long term as businesses will be forced to recruit staff from further afield, meaning further pressure on our local transport infrastructure, as well as resulting in a net outflow of wealth from the village. Affordable housing is therefore a necessity if young people are to be attracted back to the area.

Another issue which was highlighted by a large number of respondents was the poor broadband speeds around the area. Given the recent activity by BT in Bottesford installing high speed lines then this may improve, although it will not benefit Normanton, Muston or Easthorpe as it appears to be confined to Bottesford at the moment.

The smaller "high street" businesses, cafes, pubs etc face a number of further issues and which can be summarised as follows:

General awareness of what businesses are here

Feedback from the public consultation indicated that some people who visit Bottesford, either en route to elsewhere or visiting, are not aware that there is anything more to the village than what is visible on the High Street. For example, several people had commented that they were not even aware of Queen Street or Albert Street and therefore any of the businesses located on there.

Suggested action plan: to install signage (in keeping with the village) to point

visitors to the various retail businesses around the village. These signs could also encompass non-business destinations, such as the church and church halls, the VC Hall, the cricket and bowls club etc.

Parking

A major issue for the cafes and convenience stores is that visitors to the village will generally only stop if they can park easily near to where they want to go. If they can not park then they will not stop, resulting in lost business.

Suggested action plan: to improve signage to existing car parks (e.g. those on Walford Close behind the co-op) and to explore other areas which could be used as parking (e.g. the expanding the VC Hall car park to use the area of grass behind the goal on the Belvoir Road end of the football pitch)

Threat of high-street chains moving in

As the population of Bottesford and the surrounding villages increases, there will come a tipping point at which large retailers will consider it large enough to sustain one of their stores. So we could see a Tesco Express for example (which has already been mooted at the old Texaco garage site). This could take more people away from the centre of the village, having a knock-on effect on the cafes, pubs and other retailers in the centre. It may also have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the village.

As well as these issues, there are a number of opportunities which should be considered when drafting the Village Plan:

Use of the library – could the library be used not only as a traditional library but perhaps as a resource for small start-up business? Eg provision of high quality internet and computer printing facilities (useful as a back-up) or perhaps even consider creating a small meeting room within the library where “home-workers” could perhaps meet potential customers etc in a private, professional setting.

Tourism – in conjunction with other local groups (eg St Mary’s, Belvoir Castle, U3A etc), perhaps create a guide to Bottesford, Muston, Easthorpe and Normanton with walking routes and places of interest.

Greater interaction between the schools and local businesses. Many of the older students may not be aware of the variety of businesses within the village – work experience placements for example can benefit both the student and the company and may provide inspiration for children to pursue a particular career path.