

## **Parish Plan or Business Plan?**

The Parish Plan is an excellent tool to assist Parish Councils in budget planning. Each Parish Plan will normally include an Action Plan of projects for delivery by the Parish Council, or by the Parish Council in partnership with others. If this Action Plan is costed, by identifying the estimated cost to the Parish of delivering the various elements, over a 5-10 year period say, it will form the basis of the Parish Council's budget projections. Adjustments may need to be made according to changing priorities and funding streams, and it is useful to have one or two simple projects on the shelf ready to be brought forward as others slip. Delivery of a project early in the life of the Parish Plan can boost interest in the whole Parish Plan process too.

Consultation with the community during the development of the Parish Plan and regular information bulletins ensure that your community's taxpayers are aware of the cost of their needs and aspirations and enables them to make value for money judgements as the projects materialise. This transparency reduces confrontation and is the basis of **proper precepting**. In addition, your Council will be seen to be business-like, particularly if it plans ahead NOW by budgeting for specific reserves which may be used for pump-priming partnership projects or delivering small projects.

In summary, we say, it is not a case of one or the other: **your Parish Plan is your Business Plan!**