



VILLAGE AGENTS

Providing older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to services and information

PROGRESS REPORT

Year 1
October to December 2006

VILLAGE AGENTS

Providing older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to services and information

QUARTER 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
1.0 Village Agents an Overview	1
2.0 Recruitment	3
3.0 October – December 2006	4
4.0 Evaluation and Monitoring	6
5.0 Village Agents the Demographic Picture	8

Appendix 1

Full List of Parishes included in the Village Agent Project

Appendix 2

Parish breakdown by age of population

1.0 VILLAGE AGENTS – AN OVERVIEW

The Village Agent project is a pilot scheme funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (LinkAge Plus) until June 2008. The aim is to provide older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to information and services

Who is involved?

Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with GRCC. We also have an wide range of other partnership organisations involved in training and support, including the Police and Fire Service, Affordable Warmth Partnership, Care and Repair/Anchor Staying Put, Age Concern, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, District and Borough Councils; Community and Adult Care Directorate; libraries; local churches; parish councils; The Pension Service and many more.

What it does

Village Agents will bridge the gap between the local community and those statutory and voluntary organisations able to offer help or support where required. Working in clusters of 3-5 rural communities Village Agents will act as a facilitator in the provision of high quality information, promote access to a wide range of services, carry out a series of practical checks and identify unmet need within their community. Through training and access to appropriate information resources, the Village Agents will develop their capacity to provide a service within their communities both in the short and longer-term.

Village Agents have been recruited locally, trained and supported to provide face to face information and support which enables individuals to make informed choices about their present and future needs. The service will be provided primarily to older people, but other disadvantaged and isolated people will also be able to receive Village Agent support.

In total, 30 Village Agents have been recruited in order to identify the impact their role can have both on individuals and on communities, and to test the hypothesis that rural communities prefer to access someone they know within their



community for help and advice. Now CRB checked, they will be in a position to visit older people both in their own homes and by running regular surgeries in suitable locations, i.e. village halls, doctor's surgeries etc. Equipped with a laptop and mobile phone, they will be able to access information and give immediate information to their client base. The project provides an essential local service to over 100 of the most

rurally isolated parishes in Gloucestershire. Many of our partner organisations are unable to provide an outreach service on this scale and are already seeing the benefits of being involved in this project.

Cost per year/funding

The project has received funding from Linkage Plus (part of the Department for Work and Pensions) for just under £1,000,000 for the duration of the project until June 2008. This funding is split between the County Council as lead partner and GRCC as project deliverer. Project Managers have been recruited by both GRCC and County Council to work on specific elements of this countywide initiative.

2.0 RECRUITMENT

- The Village Agent pilot project is split into three phases; Phase 1, October 2006 the recruitment of agents in Cotswold and Stroud; Phase 2, January 2007 the recruitment of agents in the Forest of Dean and Phase 3 by March 2007 the recruitment of agents in Tewkesbury.
- GRCC and GCC decided in October 2006 that in order to achieve the maximum potential, the second phase of recruitment should take place as soon as possible and therefore completed the recruitment of all 30 agents before December 2006 – 3 months ahead of schedule.
- The Forest of Dean selection day took place on 16th November in Mitcheldean with Tewkesbury taking place the following week. Before the end of December the newly recruited agents were given their induction packs and CRB check forms to fill in and submit ready to start in their roles. By Christmas all 30 Agents were employed with the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury Agents given a start date of 8th January 2007.

PHASE 1 – COTSWOLD AND STROUD DISTRICT

- From over 300 expressions of interest in the Village Agent positions over 100 application forms were received from all over the county.

- By mid October 2006 18 Village Agents for Cotswold and Stroud had been recruited. The 10 Agents for the Cotswolds were recruited over a two day period with one selection day held at Moreton Area Centre in Moreton in Marsh and the second at the Corn Hall in Cirencester. All 8 Agents for Stroud were recruited from one day held at Stroud District Council Offices.



- The recruitment process was structured, but designed to make sure that the interview panel were able to see the real people outside the traditional interview situation. The candidates were asked to speak for a few minutes on any subject. The majority of candidates spoke about themselves, their families and why they wanted the role of Village Agent. Some spoke on why they were interested in working with older people and their communities. Candidates were then asked to participate in a simple communications exercise which involved working as part of a group. Although the role of Village Agent involves working mainly alone it was interesting to see how the candidates interacted with each other within a problem solving environment. The interview panel observed each group in turn therefore gaining an overall picture of each candidate. Finally the candidates undertook a short computer exercise in order to demonstrate competency using IT equipment and a ten minute one to one interview with one of the panel. Candidates were each asked the same questions and marked accordingly.

3.0 OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2006

Following the selection days, Village Agents for Cotswold and Stroud undertook the first phase of training as one group. Two days were held in Gloucester with training from The Fire Service, Police/Neighbourhood Watch, Care and Repair, The Pensions Service, Age Concern, Gloucestershire PCT and Warm and Well. This training from was held at Community House. Time was also spent at Shire Hall gathering information about the Adult Help Desk and Social Care. The training of the Village Agents will be ongoing throughout the life of the project with a trainer/service provider introduced each month. Each Agent is also responsible for building up a robust knowledge of their own area to provide essential baseline data and to contribute this information to a gateway website which will be available to service providers and members of the public in the near future.

26th October 2006 saw the official launch of the Village Agent scheme in Gloucestershire. In view of the project targeting the most rurally isolated communities it was felt that the launch should represent this.



A coach was hired to tour the area beginning at North Nibley in the Stroud District and finishing in Oddington in the North Cotswolds with Cotswold Country Fayre in Chedworth the ideal place to greet people for lunch. The day was extremely successful with each venue and community approaching the day in differing ways. Each Village Agent was instrumental in organising local people from their parishes to come along and enjoy either the whole day or just for an hour or two.

Throughout October and November the 18 Agents for Cotswold and Stroud District have become equipped to undertake their roles of Village Agent effectively. Each Agent has been supplied with a mobile phone and a laptop computer (plus GRCC email address) and has begun to engage with their communities in which they will be working. CRB check forms were submitted but in the meantime the majority of Agents have publicised themselves through parish magazines and newsletters and in some cases village websites. Posters on village notice boards and leaflet drops have also been effective.

Parish research and engaging with existing groups (Parish Councils, WI's, luncheon clubs, older peoples groups) has also taken up the bulk of time in the first few months whilst Agents were unable to conduct home visits. Into December Agents began to arrange coffee mornings and 'surgeries' within the communities inviting people to come along and meet them and learn more about the project. Success was varied with the number of people attending depending on the area, to a degree the time of year should be taken into account with the weather cold and Christmas pending. Through word of mouth and publicity this should improve into the New Year.

Some examples of the types of publicity printed in parish magazines, newsletters and local press are shown below:

Your Village Agent

Mrs Pauline Thompson is here to help YOU

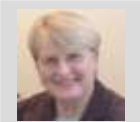
- If you need information on local travel, aids for your home, clubs you could join
- If you are housebound, elderly, feel isolated, have little contact with people
- If you would like to meet with others in a similar position, and also need transport to get there

Contact Pauline on XXXXXXXXXX or if you or your family have email write to her at XXXXXXXXXX

She is planning two 'get-togethers' with coffee, tea and cakes to outline what she can do for you and the support available at

Daglingworth Village Hall, February XXXXXX, at 11am
Winstone Village Hall, March XXXXXX, at 11am

Village Agents is a pilot project funded by LinkAge Plus and delivered by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council. Its purpose is to provide older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to services and information.



Village Agents.

Your village agents Christine Lingard (Moreton Valence), Lou Kemp (Haresfield) and Sue Colquhoun (Frocester) would like to wish you all a Very Happy New Year. Do please remember we are here to give you any support or information you may need. Please contact Christine on 07810 630179
 Lou on 07776 245767 or Sue on 07810 630145.

Village Agent – Richard Lee

I am delighted to introduce myself to you as Village Agent for Stoke Orchard Parish. Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council has secured funding for this pilot project, which will cover about 109 parishes in some of the most isolated areas of the county. Within Tewkesbury Borough, 21 parishes have been assigned a Village Agent and my cluster includes Elmstone Hardwick, Uckington and Leigh.

The aim of a Village Agent is primarily to provide older people (50 and over!) with easier access to information and services. Many of us have come across situations where we wonder who to contact, or if in fact any help exists for a particular problem. My aim is to be accessible to you and to do my best to find out exactly who will be able to help. Such help could cover a whole range of diverse issues e.g. any necessary alterations that would make your home a safer environment or perhaps the minefield of statutory payments is something that worries you.

I will be making arrangements to meet as many of you as possible – maybe a coffee morning in the village hall – where I can explain more about my role. In the meantime I am available on **07810 630201** or via the Adult help desk run by GCC on **01452 426868**

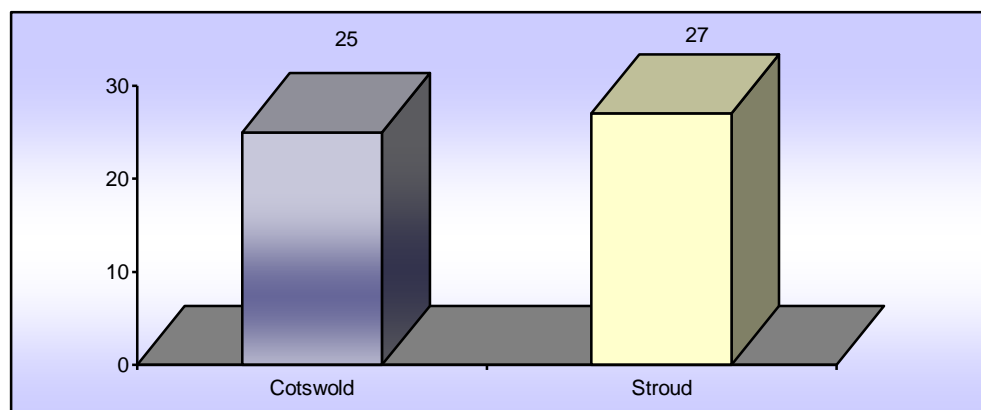
4.0 EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring the project from the beginning is vital to sustainability and how the scheme progresses into the future. It is also important to assess the needs of the people in the communities in which the Village Agents are working. Throughout December the Village Agents were involved in the first phase of the evaluation process. Each Agent was asked to complete 32 customer service satisfaction surveys with members of their communities. These were designed to gauge the opinions of older people on various subjects including quality of life – it was important to capture the full picture of life for older people in rural Gloucestershire at the beginning of the project in order to assess the impact that the scheme will have into the future. Subsequently focus groups have been held in approximately 8 of the clusters taking part in the pilot with older people of the communities, asking a variety of questions on quality of life, health and other important issues apparent at this point in time. The remaining clusters will take part in this exercise in the New Year. This will be repeated mid way through the project and at the end also.

The success of the first evaluation phase has been mixed with a number of Village Agents encountering certain difficulties, in a number of cases the Agents do not live within their cluster area and therefore found it hard in some parishes to find candidates eligible to answer the survey questions at such an early stage of the project. As time has gone on however the trust has built and CRB checks have been processed and it is easier to access the people needed.

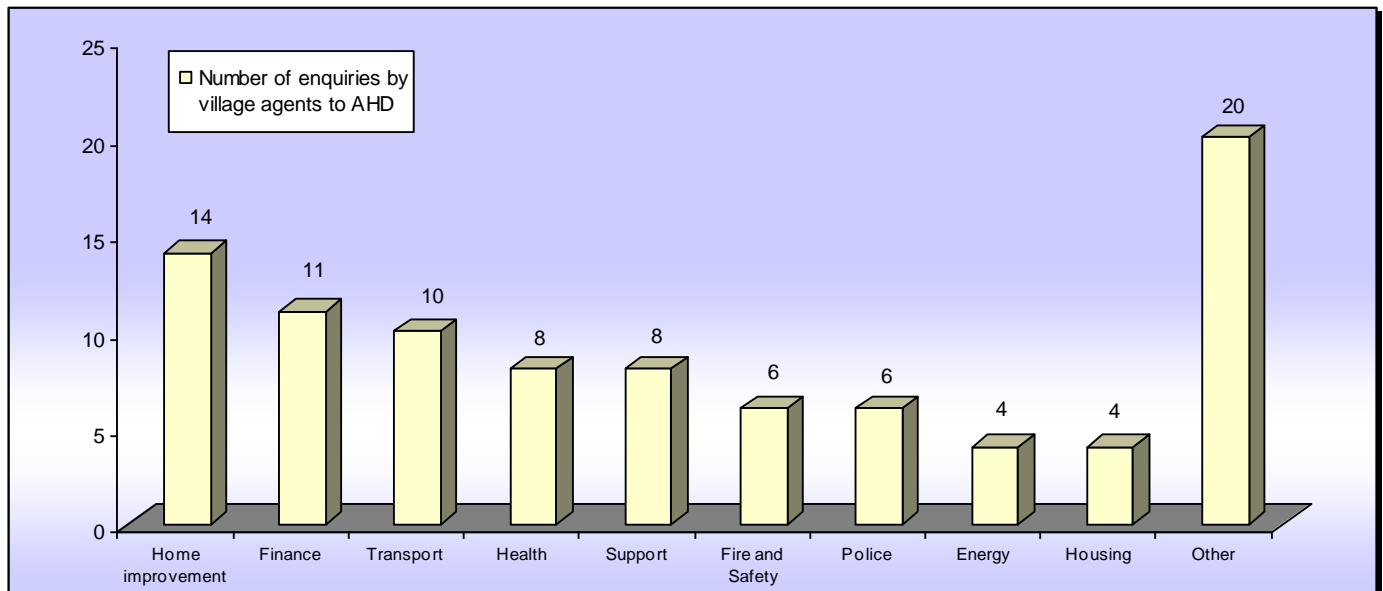
After each visit a Village Agent makes, they are required to fill in a referral, 'gateway' form. The form collects demographic data, the nature of the problem and other information relevant to any follow up visit. The gateway form is then emailed to the required agency by the Village Agent for the query to be addressed. The chart below shows the number of referrals made to agencies in Gloucestershire in December 2006 and January 2007. A total of 52 referrals were made by 18 Agents in just a few weeks. (*N.B. There is no data for the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury because these agents did not become 'live' until 8th January 2007.*)

Number of referrals 01/12/06 – 08/01/07



Village Agents have dealt with a variety of issues as are shown in the chart below. The most common issue is home improvement, including Care and Repair/Anchor Staying Put repairs (installation of grab rails, home safety checks etc) Lifeline and gardening.

Finance and Pensions advice, transport and health have also been major issues raised so far.



Others include carers support, learning, libraries, volunteering, counselling etc.

The Adult Help Desk

The Adult Help Desk based at Shire Hall has been used as a source of advice and referrals by the Village Agents in their first few months of employment and will continue to be a vital point of contact throughout the life of the scheme.

Calls made by village agents are logged and the nature of the enquiry noted.

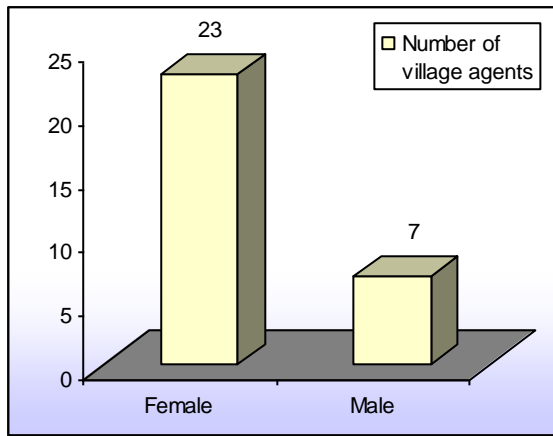
Village agents may ring the help desk in reference to a particular issue or simply for background information.

The Adult Help Desk number is printed on publicity materials distributed by Village Agents in the event that a member of the public cannot contact a Village Agent or they do not feel comfortable calling a mobile phone number. In this eventuality the Customer Service Officer will pass on the query to the relevant Village Agent in order that a home visit can be arranged.

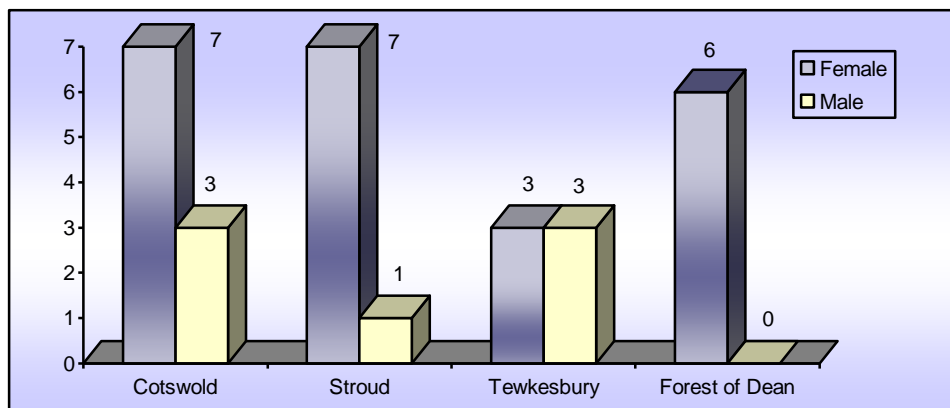
5.0 VILLAGE AGENTS – THE DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE

Village agent profiles

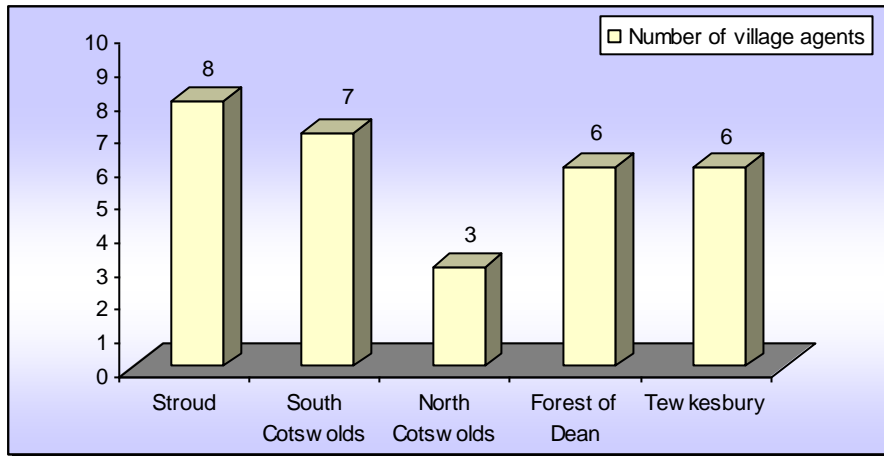
The village agents come from a variety of backgrounds and range in age from 40 to 70. Approximately three quarters are female and a quarter male.



As the charts show, 77% of the Village Agents across the county are female. In the Cotswolds and Stroud a large proportion are female whilst in Forest of Dean all clusters have female Village Agents. Tewkesbury Borough has an equal ratio male to female agents.

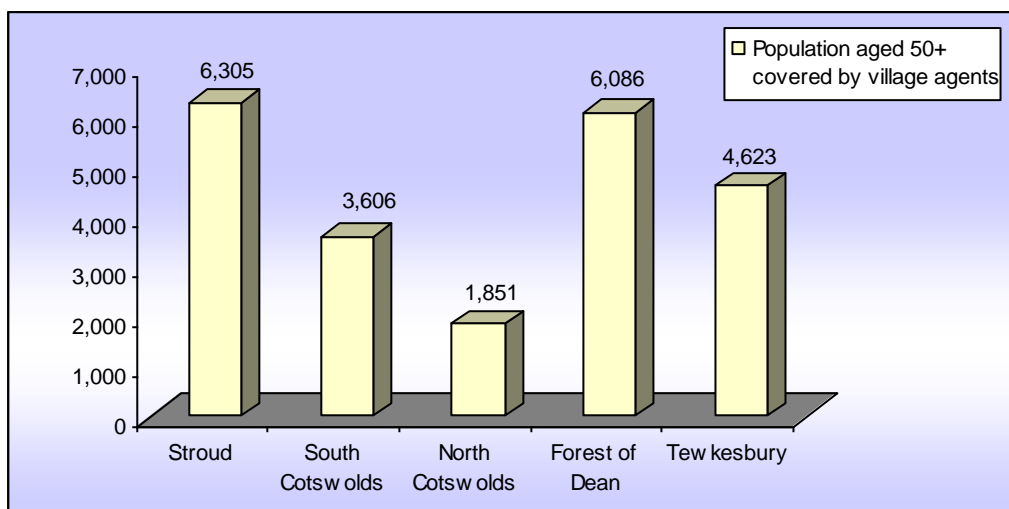
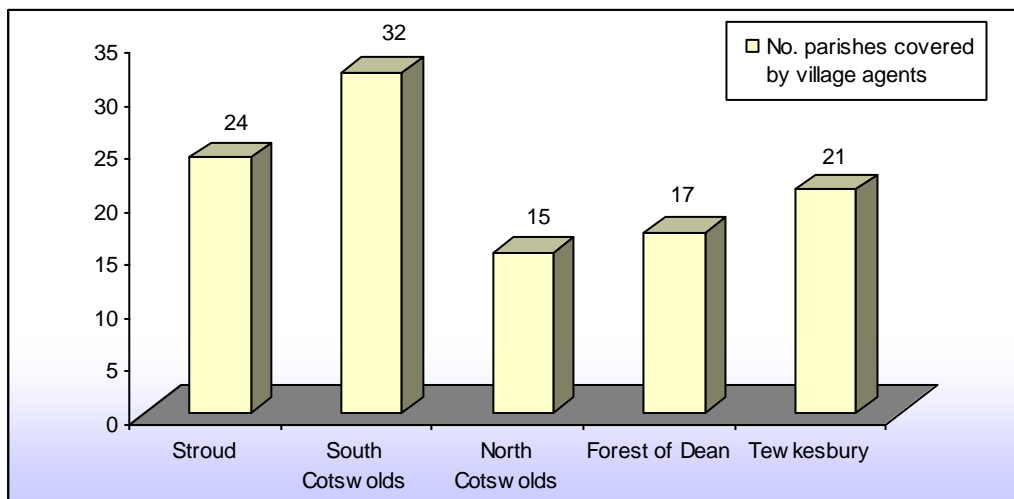


Spread of Village Agents by District



109 of Gloucestershire's 258 rural parishes are covered by one of the thirty village agents (42%). These parishes contain a total of 21,477 people aged 50+ (source: Gloucestershire County Council mid-2005 estimates, published November 2006).

Coverage by Parish and Population



APPENDIX 1: Parishes included in the Village Agent Scheme to date January 2007

Cotswold & Stroud Districts

Maugersbury
Oddington
Evenlode
Adlestrop
Jenny Simpson



Didmarton
Boxwell with Leighterton
Ozleworth
Westonbirt with Lasborough
Kingscote
Sandra Childress



Willersey
Saintbury
Weston Subedge
Aston Subedge
Ann Cox



Ampney St Mary
Ampney Crucis
Preston
Jenny Cunningham



Temple Guiting
Cutsdean
Swell
Naunton
Notgrove
Cold Aston
Condicote
George Hill



Baunton
Bagendon
Daglingworth
Duntisbourne Rouse
Duntisbourne Abbots
Winstone
Pauline Thompson



Hampnett
Yanworth
Chedworth
Coln St Dennis
Winson
Cynthia Laird



Elkstone
Brimpsfield
Cowley
Coberley
Syde
Mike Bone



Windrush
Aldsworth
Coln St Aldwyn
Hatherop
Quenington
Sue Black



Dowdeswell
Withington
Compton Abdale
Nick Bailey

Stroud

Hillesley and Tresham
Alderley
Kingswood
Marion Brown



North Nibley
Stinchcombe
Richard Belliss



Alkington
Ham and Stone
Mair Forder



Hamfallow
Slimbridge
Hinton
Penny Smurthwaite



Frocester
Nympsfield
Horlsey
Sue Colquhoun



Fretherne
Moreton Valence
Longney
Elmore
Arlingham
Christine Lingard



Randwick
Whiteshill
Pam Thorne



Haresfield
Brookthorpe with Whaddon
Harescombe
Pitchcombe
Lou Kemp



Tewkesbury Borough

Longford
Sandhurst
Norton

Maisemore
Hasfield
Tirley
Chaceley

Down Hatherley
Staverton
Boddington

Leigh
Elmstone Hardwicke
Uckington
Stoke Orchard

Oxenton
Teddington
Alderton

Stanway
Stanton
Buckland
Snowhill

Forest of Dean District

Hewelsfield & Brockweir
St Briavels
Tidenham

Staunton Coleford
English Bicknor
Ruardean

Littledean
Blaisdon

Churcham
Taynton
Tibberton

Rudford
Upleadon
Pauntley

Kempley
Oxenhall
Gorsley & Kilcot

APPENDIX 2 POPULATION OF PARISHES BY AGE GROUPS

COTSWOLD PARISHES		AGE GROUPS									
PARISH	DISTRICT	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	TOTAL 50+
Didmarton	Cotswold	31	47	43	21	11	10	3	5	0	170
Boxwell With Leighterton	Cotswold	16	20	15	15	5	6	4	1	1	84
Ozleworth	Cotswold	6	6	6	3	1	5	1	0	0	28
Westonbirt With Lasborough	Cotswold	15	18	17	6	4	2	2	3	1	66
Kingscote	Cotswold	27	30	27	23	8	5	5	4	1	130
Ampney Crucis	Cotswold	58	43	40	38	34	31	12	15	4	275
Ampney St Mary	Cotswold	10	12	3	0	11	7	3	1	1	50
Preston	Cotswold	26	28	22	18	13	17	27	22	33	207
Baunton	Cotswold	27	33	14	27	19	9	5	0	1	137
Bagendon	Cotswold	26	30	19	22	19	10	6	5	2	139
Daglingworth	Cotswold	25	25	18	11	10	12	8	0	2	113
Duntisbourne Abbots	Cotswold	26	17	13	14	14	7	16	2	0	109
Duntisbourne Rouse	Cotswold	6	6	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	23
Winstone	Cotswold	18	23	10	16	6	10	11	5	0	97
Syde	Cotswold	3	5	7	2	1	0	3	0	0	21
Elkstone	Cotswold	20	28	7	12	8	13	3	0	1	91
Brimpsfield	Cotswold	26	18	15	10	14	21	11	1	0	118
Cowley	Cotswold	34	22	18	22	9	14	7	6	0	131
Coberley	Cotswold	16	22	23	15	15	12	5	0	3	112
Dowdeswell	Cotswold	15	16	13	9	6	9	3	0	0	72

Withington	Cotswold	49	54	26	21	26	25	9	9	1	222
Compton Abdale	Cotswold	14	6	12	11	5	6	5	1	1	60
Hampnett	Cotswold	1	6	9	2	2	2	0	1	1	25
Yanworth	Cotswold	8	14	7	3	2	4	2	1	1	43
Chedworth	Cotswold	66	75	61	43	48	25	14	8	2	341
Coln St Dennis	Cotswold	25	15	14	11	6	3	7	1	1	84
Winson	Cotswold	12	7	3	2	1	3	1	0	0	29
Windrush	Cotswold	4	13	5	4	7	6	6	2	0	47
Aldsworth	Cotswold	16	19	20	13	15	6	4	2	7	101
Coln St Aldwyns	Cotswold	27	25	13	20	12	10	3	1	2	113
Hatherop	Cotswold	10	13	9	15	12	5	2	0	4	70
Quenington	Cotswold	51	55	42	22	19	17	15	8	2	230
Maugersbury	Cotswold	9	12	16	13	12	7	3	3	1	76
Oddington	Cotswold	20	41	35	23	30	14	16	13	2	195
Evenlode	Cotswold	4	15	15	21	9	8	11	5	0	89
Adlestrop	Cotswold	12	16	8	4	3	3	4	0	1	51
Willersey	Cotswold	52	45	72	46	52	65	52	16	15	414
Saintbury	Cotswold	6	7	6	6	5	6	4	0	0	41
Weston Subedge	Cotswold	32	27	27	28	28	17	20	7	4	188
Aston Subedge	Cotswold	5	7	5	7	1	3	6	0	1	36
Temple Guiting	Cotswold	34	31	28	18	18	15	7	8	5	165
Cutsdean	Cotswold	6	5	6	2	2	1	0	2	0	24
Notgrove	Cotswold	7	9	4	2	4	2	4	0	1	33
Naunton	Cotswold	32	41	36	24	16	9	12	4	1	174
Cold Aston	Cotswold	14	27	13	12	14	12	11	5	2	111

Condicote	Cotswold	10	14	9	5	8	11	7	2	0	67
Swell	Cotswold	35	45	37	20	22	18	10	4	4	196

STROUD PARISHES
AGE GROUPS

PARISH	DISTRICT	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	TOTAL 50+
Hillesley And Tresham	Stroud	50	44	37	25	15	7	7	6	7	200
Alderley	Stroud	5	9	3	7	1	1	1	0	1	27
Kingswood	Stroud	93	110	88	58	42	56	56	27	26	558
North Nibley	Stroud	77	87	56	48	45	30	30	9	4	385
Stinchcombe	Stroud	31	36	31	23	17	10	16	15	13	190
Alkington	Stroud	51	68	64	37	31	17	16	2	1	287
Ham And Stone	Stroud	51	70	52	31	46	21	16	6	4	297
Hamfallow	Stroud	92	81	98	75	77	56	40	21	20	560
Slimbridge	Stroud	73	100	96	70	50	43	23	14	7	476
Hinton	Stroud	93	80	49	53	42	32	23	18	7	395
Frocester	Stroud	18	27	14	9	4	5	3	1	2	82
Nymphsfield	Stroud	25	23	22	15	21	23	13	9	4	156
Horsley	Stroud	88	83	48	31	31	18	11	3	1	313
Fretherne With Saul	Stroud	59	62	40	24	25	17	13	6	4	250
Moreton Valence	Stroud	19	11	5	6	12	2	4	1	0	59
Longney	Stroud	31	30	20	9	8	7	9	2	2	120
Elmore	Stroud	24	19	18	10	15	6	3	0	2	96
Arlingham	Stroud	24	40	32	15	20	14	11	5	1	162
Randwick	Stroud	102	111	89	92	90	56	39	23	18	620

Whiteshill And Ruscombe	Stroud	98	116	91	65	46	43	30	9	8	505
Haresfield	Stroud	32	37	25	22	15	8	8	5	4	154
Brookthorpe-With-Whaddon	Stroud	34	31	20	20	10	9	16	9	10	158
Harescombe	Stroud	21	30	17	9	9	10	6	5	1	108
Pitchcombe	Stroud	16	29	32	16	5	14	17	9	21	161

FOREST OF DEAN PARISHES
AGE GROUPS

PARISH	DISTRICT	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	TOTAL 50+
Hewelsfield And Brockweir	Forest of Dean	55	65	38	28	33	27	6	5	3	261
St Briavels	Forest of Dean	109	145	101	76	69	48	38	20	9	614
Tiddenham	Forest of Dean	323	391	315	289	223	177	175	89	64	2,046
Staunton Coleford	Forest of Dean	19	21	22	20	19	22	13	4	8	148
English Bicknor	Forest of Dean	44	43	47	21	22	16	12	7	0	211
Ruardean	Forest of Dean	100	120	104	78	85	56	41	15	7	605
Littledean	Forest of Dean	80	119	99	68	54	57	38	18	7	539
Blaisdon	Forest of Dean	15	11	17	14	10	5	4	2	2	80
Churcham	Forest of Dean	46	43	56	46	35	27	14	9	2	278
Taynton	Forest of Dean	40	52	37	26	24	20	19	6	3	226
Tibberton	Forest of Dean	77	79	43	34	25	23	15	6	5	306
Rudford And Highleadon	Forest of Dean	30	29	22	12	6	2	4	4	1	109

Upleadon	Forest of Dean	20	18	24	20	11	9	3	3	1	108
Pauntley	Forest of Dean	37	37	27	16	15	12	7	2	1	154
Kempley	Forest of Dean	28	35	19	11	15	9	16	4	0	138
Oxenhall	Forest of Dean	14	15	14	11	4	2	2	1	0	63
Gorsley And Kilcot	Forest of Dean	27	28	17	21	13	8	8	1	7	130

TEWKESBURY PARISHES AGE GROUPS

PARISH	DISTRICT	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	TOTAL 50+
Longford	Tewkesbury	75	63	61	61	33	43	29	20	13	398
Sandhurst	Tewkesbury	32	49	41	42	23	13	11	8	3	221
Norton	Tewkesbury	36	40	15	18	35	11	3	3	1	162
Maisemore	Tewkesbury	45	51	39	36	22	16	18	17	17	261
Hasfield	Tewkesbury	9	15	11	12	4	2	1	3	1	59
Tirley	Tewkesbury	40	42	38	33	16	18	9	2	1	198
Chaceley	Tewkesbury	8	12	9	6	4	3	4	2	0	49
Down Hatherley	Tewkesbury	32	43	35	22	29	15	16	6	2	202
Staverton	Tewkesbury	43	55	65	60	51	20	17	10	6	327
Boddington	Tewkesbury	16	22	16	14	16	9	5	1	2	101
Leigh	Tewkesbury	27	38	27	12	10	11	15	14	7	162
Elmstone Hardwicke	Tewkesbury	25	16	17	25	7	3	8	3	0	104
Uckington	Tewkesbury	52	35	24	24	18	16	8	1	0	179
Stoke Orchard	Tewkesbury	27	29	21	27	21	10	5	2	1	141
Oxenton	Tewkesbury	8	21	17	23	14	4	3	1	0	91
Teddington	Tewkesbury	38	42	24	20	17	17	12	9	4	182
Alderton	Tewkesbury	51	56	54	43	42	29	20	7	8	310
Stanway	Tewkesbury	27	35	29	22	9	4	9	6	1	141
Stanton	Tewkesbury	11	19	20	15	6	7	10	8	5	102
Buckland	Tewkesbury	14	20	27	26	14	17	7	2	1	129
Snowhill	Tewkesbury	8	13	19	14	8	8	1	4	3	77