



An Action Plan for Harwell

Over the last 18 months, Harwell has been producing a Parish Plan. Many people have contributed to this; in particular everyone aged 11 and over was invited to fill in a questionnaire. We can now summarise the outcome in this short Action Plan. It shows how the results of the Parish Plan should be taken forward, by whom and on what timescales.

There are two parts to this Action Plan. The first covers policies that provide guidelines for approaching important issues. The second covers a list of specific projects that are proposed as a result of the deliberations that have led to the Parish Plan.

If you would like to see a full copy of the Report on the Parish Plan, it is available in Didcot Library. Alternatively, you can contact the Clerk to the Harwell Parish Council (see back page). The Plan has been produced by volunteers working independently of the Parish Council, but the 'ownership' of the Plan rests with the Parish Council, which has endorsed this Action Plan.

MAY 2003



POLICIES

Retaining the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish

People in Harwell Parish remain seriously concerned about the impact of any westward expansion of Didcot on the character of the village and on the density of traffic through the village. If Didcot has to expand, the north-easterly direction should have been chosen, but as it has not, the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish must be maintained by ensuring that:

- The gap between the boundary of the western edge of Didcot and the last bungalow on the west side of the A34 is at least 1 km.
- The western edge of any new development comprises green space that is in character with the surrounding countryside and maintains access to the countryside for residents of the parish.
- Where the parish boundary is within any new development it must be a clear boundary and capable of being walked as a pathway.
- The developers provide the funding for a means of relieving through traffic from the main village roads.

Housing

The parish supports existing principles governing the development of new housing, currently embodied in Policy H5 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan published in 1999. This includes the following wording:

'Within the villages listed below (which includes Harwell) new housing on sites not allocated under Policy H2 (which covers sites proposed for development, none of which are in Harwell Parish) will be limited to infilling and minor development or redevelopment, the scale, density and layout of which is compatible with the size, form and character of the village.'

Development will only be permitted where:

- a. It is in the main built-up area of the village, or*
- b. In villages outside the green belt, it forms a natural completion of the existing pattern of development on a small site which is visually contained by well established, strong physical features that clearly form an integral part of the settlement.'*

In practical terms this has meant that planning permission for new buildings in Harwell has been allowed only in the existing built-up area of the village.

There is not seen to be a need to change this general position. However, the consultations and discussions suggest that there is a need for some new smaller and more 'affordable' dwellings within Harwell Parish.

The Plan therefore proposes that the Vale of White Horse District Council policy be supplemented by a parish policy that:

- Gives priority in building new houses to small-to-medium sized homes, with some for rent/purchase under conditions that would make them affordable for first-time buyers or people who wish to rent.
- Ensures that some of this type of accommodation is especially suitable for people with disabilities living independently e.g. ground floor flats with easy access, preferably as part of a further group of sheltered housing in the Parish (to augment the facilities of Cherry Tree Court).

Shops

The shops in the main village (newsagents/general stores, butchers with Post Office, hairdressers) are the amenities regarded as the most important by the people of Harwell.

- The parish will do everything possible to optimise the maintenance and commercial viability of the shops.

PROJECTS

Project	Timetable	Responsibility
HOUSING Quantify the need for smaller homes in the 'affordable' category, including some sheltered accommodation and/or flats suitable for people with disabilities within this type of development, and then seek and discuss sites suitable for meeting the need. The parish will also explore the possibility that its requirements could be met wholly or in part within that section of the expansion of Didcot that would take place within parish land.	1 year for assessment and discussion of sites. 2–4 years for provision	Parish Council, in association with Vale of White Horse District Council and in consultation with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)
SPORTS Seek funding for a new pavilion/sports complex on the recreation ground.	3–4 years	Parish Council (through a working group)
PATHS Audit the state of pavements and kerbs in the parish, with a view to applying pressure on the County Council to make them easier to use by the elderly and by persons with disabilities.	1 year	Parish Council
Press for improvements to existing footpaths and to cycleways, especially to cycleways within the village and to Didcot.	1–2 years	Parish Council
Continue to discuss with landowners the possible creation or clarification of new or permitted footpaths and the possible use of the Countryside Stewardship and Conservation Walks Schemes to create access to areas of the surrounding countryside.	1–2 years	Parish Council, using contacts already established through discussions on the Parish Plan
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT Review the need for measures to make traffic within the village safer and less intrusive, in the light of provision of the pedestrian crossing in the High Street, noting that the next most favoured measure in the questionnaire and other consultations was a 20 mph speed limit.	2 years	Parish Council
Press the developers of Didcot West to fund a scheme for relief of through traffic, once further study has concluded what the best scheme might be. The further study should include an assessment of the effect of possible relief schemes on the village shops.	2 years to establish prospects; scheme by 2010	Parish Council, with input from the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Strategy that is currently underway
Give better publicity to the help available with transport to healthcare facilities, and seek more volunteer drivers from Harwell for existing schemes like the Didcot Volunteer Centre.	6 months	Parish Council Church and other village organisations
Press bus companies for continued improvement in the display of bus timetables.	6 months	Parish Council
DRUGS Address the concern about drug abuse by: giving better publicity to where addicts and their families can access support facilities; supporting better facilities in Didcot, especially as part of the expansion of Didcot; and supporting initiatives to educate children.	6 months for publicity; 2 years for facilities at Didcot	Parish Council Church and other village organisations School
INFORMATION Develop a parish 'world wide web' site, initially to give publicity to clubs, activities and events.	1 year	Parish Council (through a working group)
Relocate the parish noticeboard in the main village to the area by the shops, and duplicate parish notices on the Didcot Road (there is already a noticeboard at Curie Avenue on the Harwell International Business Centre site).	6 months	Parish Council
YOUTH Apply within the Oxfordshire County Council bid to the New Opportunities Fund (Lottery Grant) to set up a formally organised holiday scheme for young people (probably in the age range 8 to 14 years) in Harwell.	Scheme up and running within 2 years	Winterbrook Youth Club (but needs extra management help)
RECYCLING Explore the possibility of Harwell taking part in Oxfordshire's Community Action Project scheme for encouraging the recycling of household waste.	1 year	Parish Council



Published by the Steering Group for the Harwell Parish Plan, Harwell, Oxfordshire,
with financial support from The Countryside Agency and a grant from the UKAEA



If you would like to be involved in any of the proposed projects, please contact the Clerk to Harwell Parish Council,
Mrs Emma Hollister, on 01235 221087 (home) or 01235 820006 (work)

© 2003, Steering Group for the Harwell Parish Plan

Photocopying or other reproduction of the contents of this publication are freely permitted if
such reproduction is intended to further the aims of the Harwell Parish Plan