

Whitchurch-on-Thames 2019
Village Plan



Summary

The Parish Council felt it was time to update the previous 2009 village plan and so set up an independent group which has reviewed the previous plan, conducted a survey of residents' views and gathered information on traffic and a wide range of other issues to create this updated plan.

We live in a lively and attractive village in beautiful countryside and a key message from the survey is that residents want the public areas to be maintained to a higher standard. The three biggest challenges identified are to build a new sports pavilion on the Village Green, to rejuvenate the Village Hall and implement a plan to improve road safety and traffic flows.

Summary of Action Plan:

- Impose parking restrictions to improve traffic flow
- Impose a 20mph limit and other road safety measures
- Replace the Pavilion on the Village Green
- Upgrade the Village Hall
- Develop maintenance plans for Open Spaces
- Develop and updated Conservation Area Assessment
- Implement a community emergency plan
- Complete the flooding mitigation plan begun after the 2014 floods
- Resurface pavements prioritising by use and condition

A full list of the priority actions and recommendations which have been agreed with the parish council is in Section 6.

What you can do:

- Contribute to fundraising for the Pavilion & Village Hall
- Get/stay involved in the various working groups
- Join the Community Meal
- Improve habitats (perhaps starting with your garden)
- Support church, pubs, and village societies
- Join the green team to look after our open spaces
- Let us have your views and additional ideas on this plan

Historically many people have been involved in village life and it is hoped that this plan will encourage even more people to get involved and will provide a focus for their activities. At the kick-off meeting for the village plan, the view of the volunteers was that they wanted to get on with useful activities at the same time as writing the plan. As a result some of the key actions are well underway however more support is now needed.

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1. Village History and Background

The river was the reason for early settlements here. A 2,500 year old Iron Age Hillfort strategically overlooks a bend in the Thames. Later, the river frontage was where the current village began to be developed. There are accounts of a very active quayside roughly along the line of the present Mill Drive from which agricultural produce and other goods were loaded. The few remaining cottages facing the quayside (including a former pub and laundry) are perhaps the oldest building sites of the village. By the time of the Domesday Book they had been joined by one of the largest water mills on the river and the original wooden church. The name Whitchurch comes from the Saxon Hwitcurke.

The buildings of the Royal Manor of Whitchurch, hidden behind the quayside frontage, were almost certainly a stopping point for the Royal Court progressing by river towards Oxford. Edward II appears to have been a regular visitor. After the demolition of the Royal Manor buildings, three major classical structures came to dominate the scene: Walliscote House (built in part over the footings of the Manor buildings), The Old Rectory and Thames Bank. There are 23 Grade II listed buildings along the High Street including smaller cottages dating from the 16th to the 18th century.

In 1792, a number of local landowners and gentry decided to build the toll bridge and, in 1840, the Pangbourne Station opened.

In 1858, Henry Woodyer oversaw the substantial rebuilding of the church on earlier foundations and re-using of earlier features. In the words of Richard Hughes, Rector of Whitchurch, 1979 – 2000, “The



whole has mellowed with the centuries nevertheless, so that the casual visitor will find a typical country church in which nothing, it seems, is too out of place.” In fact this observation on the church could be applied to the village as a whole.

In the Second World War, accommodation was built for Canadian servicemen training for D-Day in what is now Manor Road. They donated the building which is now the Village Hall. Polish exiles also came to the village and built a church. (See below for plans for the Village Hall and the Polish Church Memorial gardens which will include plaques explaining these events.) From the 1940s, some village families also moved into Manor Road.

During the 1960s and 1970s, big houses were divided and there was a spate of private development in the Hardwick Road area. The village continues to expand gradually, as the section below on demographics mentions.

The Conservation Area

A Conservation Area was defined in the 1970s based on the High Street but extended to include Eastfield House which is a fine red-brick neo-Victorian structure in the ‘Waterhouse’ style (oddly not listed).

It is a responsibility of South Oxfordshire District Council to write a Conservation Area Assessment but this has never been done for Whitchurch-on-Thames. It is recommended that the community now works with the District Council so as to record what it is that we value in the village. As well as non-listed building (such as Eastfield House and the two pubs), features such as the brick and flint walls, grass verges etc. give the village its pleasant rural feel; something many survey respondents have said they want to retain.

The Wider Parish

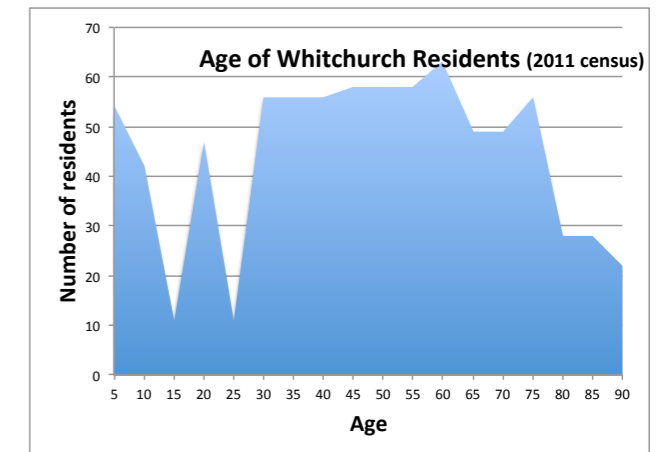
Within the wider Parish boundary there are an extra 10 or so listed buildings including Hardwick Stud, The Baulk, Pilgrim Cottages and Hardwick House. Henry James stayed at Hardwick House and it features in his novel, *The Portrait of a Lady*. Later, the enthusiasm of a new owner of the estate for racehorses, fast cars and real tennis is believed to have inspired Kenneth Grahame’s *Mr Toad in The Wind in the Willows*.

The parish is in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It contains 6 local wildlife sites and borders Hartslock Nature Reserve, one of seven internationally designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in Oxfordshire and noted for its Monkey Orchids. Other habitats include chalk grassland (supporting a specialised range of plants and fauna), woodland, river banks and meadows. In the Hardwick Haymeadows, 190 different plant species have been recorded.

The Thames Path takes a little detour through the village up to the Hartslock Bridleway and groups of walkers are often seen.

Demographics

Every 10 years, the census records the population and gives breakdowns by age, occupation, etc. For the parish of Whitchurch, the population was 824 in 2011 - up 9% from 731 in 2001. (We believe this rate of growth continues.)



From the census data, we can see the age profile (i.e. how many people there are in each age band) and this tells a story: people move in to the village in their 30s; their children may go the preschool and primary school but, after secondary school, leave for education or jobs elsewhere. The village has plenty of children but few people in the late twenties and early thirties.

This pattern perhaps emphasises how important the school is to the whole community.

The census data (www.nomisweb.co.uk) shows a very wide range of occupations and household arrangements: the population is in some ways more diverse than might be imagined: some are very well-off, others need support.

About 20% of adults have lived in the village for less than 5 years. There are a lot of long-term residents, with over 38% having lived here for over 20 years. Incidentally, the age profile in the previous 2001 census was much the same as in 2011.



Housing Needs

Most people (88% of those who expressed a view in the survey) do not want any major housing development in the village but some would like to see some affordable housing. In the Oxfordshire Local Plan the policy is to protect Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (Note: this plan is not approved at the time of writing). A group looked at creating a Neighbourhood Plan for the village but concluded that it would be very difficult to provide truly affordable houses in the parish - the Oxfordshire policy is to spend any levy generated from a new development to provide affordable homes at a cost-effective location in the county and that would not be Whitchurch with its high land prices. We see organic growth continuing but wish this to be done following SODC policy on AONBs, in keeping with the Conservation Area, flood alleviation guidelines and the other policies of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Many developments are taking place in South Oxfordshire which will greatly increase traffic (e.g. population in Benson and in Woodcote will grow). Already traffic is the number one concern of the survey respondents.

The 2009 Village Plan

Many people helped to develop and implement the last plan which was felt to have been very successful. Of the 22 proposed actions, 60% have been completed; perhaps the two most beneficial being the transfer of ownership to create the Village Green and improving the village website.

The action to study the feasibility of building a new Village Hall was completed. However the conclusion was that it would be very difficult to fund the creation of a facility large enough to replace the current Village Hall. A related action to make immediate cosmetic upgrades to the existing hall was partially completed although, for a few years while its future was being considered, no improvements were made. As is described below, this is being remedied.

Some improvement to street lighting and furniture were made, playground equipment was upgraded

and a neighbourhood watch scheme extended. Seven of the 22 original actions that were only partially completed are picked up in this new plan. Most critically, it has not been easy find the best solutions to improve traffic flow and road safety. Similarly, improving the maintenance of pavements and drains has been difficult (not least because of council funding cuts since 2009) although progress has been made: "the cut" was resurfaced and the condition of drains is being effectively monitored.

For reference, a full list of previous actions and outcomes is in Appendix 3.

One final conclusion from reviewing the plan is that the village has perhaps spent time over the last 10 years in evaluating a wide range of ideas outside the original plan. This plan will attempt to limit the number of activities and also say what should not be done.

As in the last plan, it is recommended that the Parish Council allocates members to oversee specific areas and help the volunteers get the practical actions completed.



Village Plan 2019 Survey – Summary of Results

The Village Plan Committee thanks the 143 people who completed the survey in the summer of 2018. Although this is fewer than answered the last survey in 2008, it seems to be representative (the mix of ages and locations of the respondents matches both the last survey and the latest census data).

The full results are the [Whitchurch-on-Thames web-site](#), but in summary:

- **Traffic** - particularly parking and pedestrian safety - is of increasing concern. Respondents would support both a 20mph speed limit (90% approve) and also parking restrictions to stop commuters parking all day on the high street.
- The Parish Council wants to **replace the Cricket Pavilion and also improve the Village Hall**. 75% of people thought some improvements to the Village Hall were needed. 9 respondents suggested that, rather than improving the hall, we use the proceeds from selling it to build a new facility elsewhere. This was considered based on a recommendation in to 2009 Plan and it was considered not feasible.
- People are very happy with the **Village Green and Maze** and appreciate the opportunities both for Cricket and Football, for unstructured play, dog walking and for enjoying being outdoors.
 - * 90% of people would like the Maze area to remain an area for picnics and for wildlife.
 - * 79% did not want to see further development of the Village Green.
 - * Of the 21% who did want some development, many suggested facilities for teenagers, however fewer than 3% of respondents wanted big facilities with permanent hard finishes such as those required for a BMX track or skate park.
- There is a desire for better **maintenance of the village environment**.
 - * 60% are concerned about flash flooding and nearly all want a plan to maintain drainage better so as to reduce the risk.
 - * Support for hanging baskets was limited (22% with some comments strongly against) but people want to see verges repaired and more wildflowers and trees planted.
 - * Amongst other things, people suggested having a group that would regularly maintain open spaces and footpaths.
- Improved **access to the river** was supported, if this can be arranged. Several ideas have been suggested including setting up a canoeing club.
- People would like to see **improvements to pavements** and the highest priority was somehow to make the area outside the Ferryboat safer for pedestrians.
- Additional **community activities**. Suggestions, such as a monthly community meal and various fitness activities will be followed up. Improving awareness of existing activities is also important.

We believe these items are covered in the recommendations of this plan.



2. Traffic and Parking

Whitchurch-on-Thames has a few issues we need to address.

A certain times there is a **severe congestion problem** in the High Street, principally during the morning and evening rush hours. The problem is sometimes exacerbated by the Toll Bridge and the railway bridge in Pangbourne.

Parking is an issue for a number of reasons - parked cars can slow down the traffic but with irregular gaps to allow cars to pass, traffic is unable to flow at peak times. Whilst it may be perceived that we have plenty of parking in the village; it is not always available to residents when they need it and is poorly disciplined.

Villagers feel that **vehicles are travelling too fast** through the village and have concerns for safety. Whilst not all cars are speeding, (over the current limit of 30mph) it still feels too fast and pedestrians feel unsafe.

In addition, the survey identified **pedestrian safety concerns** in two areas:

- * The southern side of the Toll Bridge where the pavement is not very wide and
- * In the narrows by The Ferryboat, where there is no kerb.



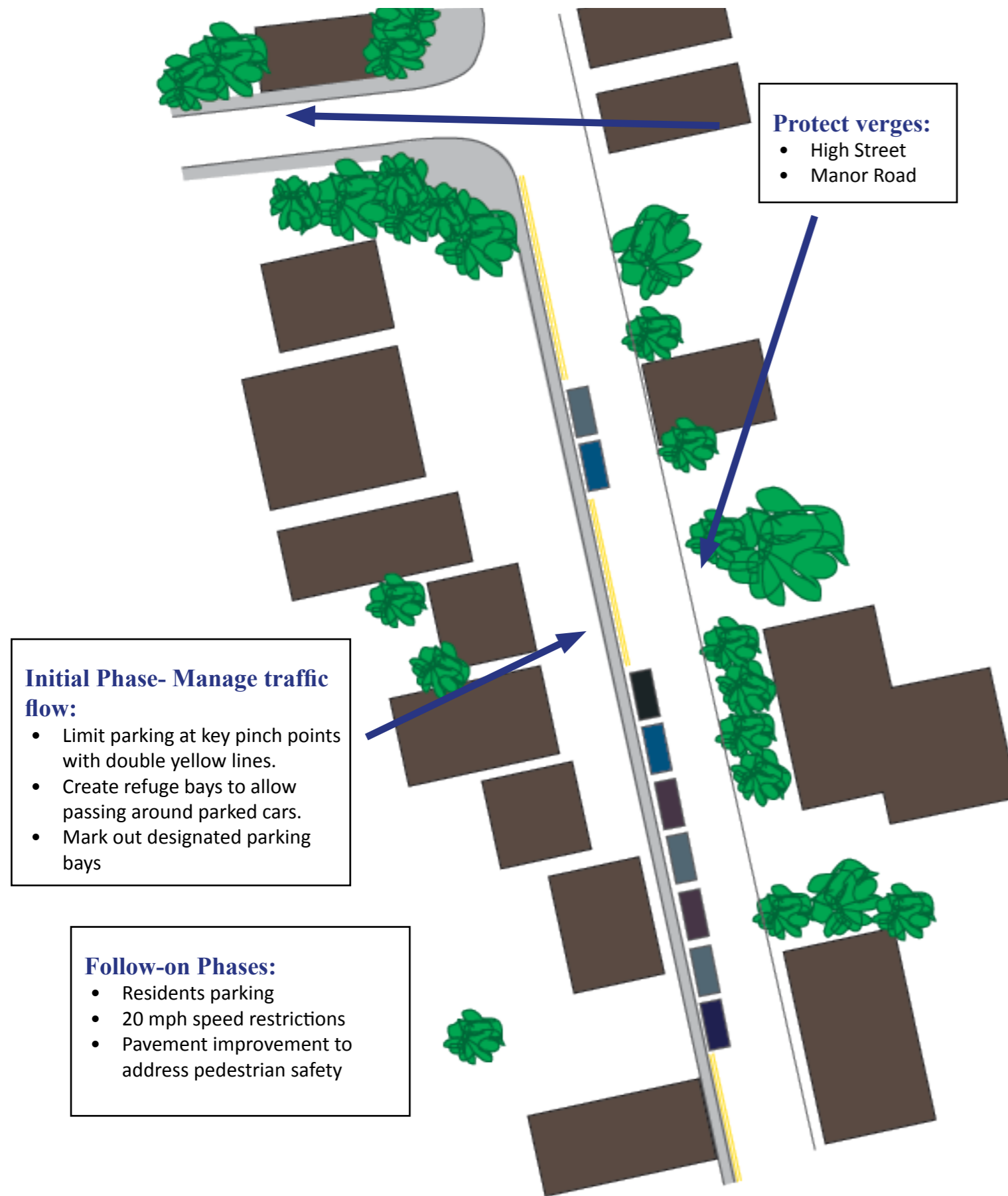
Proposed Changes

As part of the previous village plan a transport group, TAPAG, was created. TAPAG has recently been repopulated and re-energised. They have done a traffic study and developed an outline plan, then instructed MODE, a traffic consultant, to assess the options. The key actions they are evaluating are summarised below:

Concern	Action	Benefits
Traffic Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use double yellow lines and designated parking bays to better manage flow of traffic on High Street • Clear “no parking” sections of consistent lengths in key pinch points (e.g. entrance to narrows and by junctions like Eastfield Lane). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved traffic flow and driver behaviour once regular visitors learn the improved organisation of the parking. • Better visibility, so safer for crossing the road.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined parking bays with restrictions (e.g. Residents only at certain times of the day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better parking discipline and stops commuter parking. • Reduced need for parking on kerb. • Reduces pollution
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20mph speed limit on the High street, aided by the parking bays creating chicanes. • 20mph speed limit on Hardwick Road and Eastfield lane to address safety of children and parents at school drop off. • Consider raised kerb at Ferry Boat or at least repaint faded white lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic moves more slowly and predictably. • Improved pedestrian safety.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstate the verges on the east side of the High Street and Manor Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the look of the village and protects root of ancient yew trees.



Traffic and Parking Recommendations - Indicative Diagram



Next Steps:

TAPAG and the traffic consultant reviewed a traffic management plan for the High Street with OCC Highways Department in October 2019.

- This plan would add yellow lines to the High Street, reducing parking at key congestion points.
- A reduced number of parking spaces would be controlled by parking in designated, marked, parking bays
- Designated refuge bays for passing, marked by yellow lines, would allow better flow along the High Street
- OCC has agreed that the proposed changes will achieve our key objective of keeping traffic moving and reducing pollution from gridlocked vehicles. The predominant issue for OCC is not parking places but traffic flow on their road network and they acknowledge there is a problem in our village.
- The Parish Council should hold an informal public viewing on the scheme to gauge resident support (or any negative views).
- A public consultation, including local press notifications would still have to be undertaken once the Parish Council formally submits the scheme to OCC.
- The Parish Council has already budgeted funds to support the anticipated costs of public consultation and road lining works.

Working towards solutions to the other issues listed earlier could happen once the traffic flow scheme is in place:

- Concerns of verge erosion, both in the High Street and Manor Road will be the next focus of attention. This have already been raised separately to another department within OCC.
- Designated 'Residents Only' parking can only be enforced once the responsibility for policing parking is delegated to local authorities. This delegation has already happened in other parts of the country and is in consultation now in SODC. Other local villages have expressed interested in potentially sharing the costs of an officer to do this once in place.
- Efforts to implement a 20mph speed limit should wait until we can evaluate the impact on speeding from the initial traffic flow work. Slowing down traffic to this level on Hardwick Road and other areas could still require additional traffic calming measures. The Toll Bridge Company have recently introduced a 20 mph speed limit up to the toll booth, which is he first part of this village to have a 20mph speed limit.

3. Community Buildings

Background & Objectives

The two buildings owned by the Parish Council are both in need of repair or replacement. Over the last few years, little work has been done on the Village Hall which is showing its age. It is recognised that the Pavilion is beyond economic repair. Note: a third community building, the Old Stables, is maintained by the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

One idea considered was to demolish the Village Hall, develop that land and use the proceeds to build a large combined facility to meet the all requirements, with changing rooms, a large function room (for events like the Art & Crafts Exhibition, classes, etc.), and a suitable kitchen (for events like the Harvest Supper). It turned out that it was not going to be feasible to fund this.

A solution that does meet all the varied requirements and which it is believed can be funded is to keep the buildings separate, designing each to meet its own specific need. The table below summarises the existing buildings, their uses and the recommended actions. (The Old Stables is included for completeness).

Building	Capacity	Uses	Plan
Refurbished Village Hall	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Meetings Arts & Crafts Exhibitions Classes, Camera Club, Parties, Music & Theatrical (Stage) Parish Council Meetings Polling Station 	A 3-year refurbishment programme has started (see below)
New Pavilion	2 teams plus supporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport: Cricket Club and Football. Potentially Netball. Community events, e.g Village Fete, Royal Wedding, Hire for village clubs and private events making use of surrounding outdoor spaces. This would be subject to agreed constraints, e.g. priority to Cricket matches and subject to noise and curfew limits. 	
Old Stables	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church meetings Art Cafes Private hire for small groups 	The PCC continue to maintain

It is also recommended that:

- Competition for funds is avoided by being clear on what the overall plan is with fundraising bodies so they do not feel they are being approached twice for the same objective.
- A joint online facility booking system is set up which can be used for all three facilities
- The PC set up clear responsibilities for the ongoing maintenance of their two buildings as recommended below.

Volunteers are doing a significant amount of work in this area and, although no one is individually named in this plan, their contribution is nonetheless very highly valued.

Pavilion Plan

The existing Pavilion and ancillary buildings are substandard and beyond economical repair. Therefore their replacement with more contemporary facilities within a single building is being promoted. The vision is to provide better facilities for existing users, but also to broaden the use to include additional sports and community uses. Effort will be made to encourage local residents to participate, including youth teams and girls' teams at age ranges that are not well catered for now.

The new facility has been designed with input from the cricket and football clubs and several recently built pavilions have been visited to understand what facilities are needed, the likely costs and how to secure funding.



The proposed Sports Pavilion has been carefully designed so that it does not detract from the existing natural beauty of the Village Green. It is to be positioned in the south east corner to avoid damaging in any way the existing large trees. The design includes a wooden weather boarded exterior, a pitched roof and a clock face to the front elevation. Facilities will include a reasonable sized general purpose room (5m x 6m), two separate changing rooms with toilets and showers and a small kitchen. The building will meet current Accessibility Act requirements.

Planning permission was granted in January 2019. A cost estimate by a Quantity Surveyor indicates that this design could cost up to £300,000 to be fully implemented. At the time of writing, a major fund raising exercise is being initiated to target relevant grants and private donations. The Parish Council has agreed to pay for initial pre contract costs, including architects fees.

Although, in the survey well over 50% did support an increase in parish rates (currently £500 pa), it is recommended not to increase the rate and instead encourage village residents to contribute voluntarily. The cricket club itself has committed to raise significant funds but this project will still be the biggest financial challenge for the village for a very long time.

A Pavilion development group has been set up, but once the building is complete, it is recommended responsibility for maintenance is transferred to the existing Village Green working group. This group includes representatives from the cricket & football clubs, as well as the wider village and the parish council. The Parish Council will own the Pavilion and let it out to the Cricket Club and others.

Village Hall Plan

The Village Hall has been looking tired and potential users are driving to more attractive locations outside the village. Both declining revenue and uncertainty over future plans has meant that there was no investment for several years. Work started in 2018 to turn this around and encourage more use by residents and non-resident.

The Village Hall should be the community centre for the village where groups such as the Bridge Club meet and larger-scale activities like Pilates classes can be held. As well as providing a better environment for them, an upgraded hall could support other activities. It is hoped that volunteers can be found to organise:

- A monthly community lunch.
- Junior and/ or adult amateur drama groups
- Music events

A detailed, costed, three-year upgrade plan has been prepared which will make the hall much more attractive. Already the windows have been replaced, the hall painted (thanks to a team from Grant Thornton) and a 100-piece crockery set has been donated. Further planned improvements include:

- Cleaning and repair of the roof, the electrics, sanitary facilities and partition wall.
- Upgrade of kitchen (this is the most costly item, but will enable the hall to be used for a much wider range of activities)
- New flooring
- Install phone & Wi-Fi
- Cosmetic improvement including new stage curtains if funds permit
- Check the central heating system and potentially install a new boiler
- Resurface car park and provide better dustbin storage
- New notice boards and meeting material such as flip charts
- Make a board showing the history of the hall from its initial use by the Canadian Air Force.

At the time of writing, fundraising for the next stage has begun and some grants have already been obtained. Again, volunteer and financial support from the village residents will be critical to deliver this plan.

It is hoped that enough additional revenue will be generated to cover running costs. The Village Hall Management Committee should try to ensure some coordination between the three community buildings.



4. Open Spaces & Environment

The plan aims to encourage more use of our open spaces and to maintain them better including improving habitats for wildlife - both flora and fauna. To achieve this, the PC, village groups and others are:

- Creating a **Schedule of Open Spaces** (see link here) and for each agreeing who is responsible for planning work on each area. The plans will be based on a template used for the Village Green and will include planned improvements as well as the regular maintenance schedule. The PC has agreed to review this annually.
- Applying the **Open Spaces & Habitats Guidelines** shown in Appendix 2 (Do consider these for your own garden!)
- Creating a **Green Team**. It is proposed to have an informal group of volunteers helping Whitchurch-on-Thames look its best and maintaining its character as a rural village. This group would combine with MOWS and coordinate with WoTHABS and the Parish Council. The participants would benefit from exercise in the open air and make new friends. Younger volunteers gain could gain valuable experience of working in teams.



Summary of Plan for Open Spaces

- Village Green
 - In the last few years, maintenance guidelines have been agreed (e.g. on grass cutting), trees and hedges planted, the beech hedge cut back.
 - The new Pavilion is discussed earlier and sport is discussed generally in the community section below. It is not recommended to install other sport equipment such as a basketball hoop. This is following the wishes of 79% of residents who wish to enjoy this beautiful area as it is.
- Maze – We also propose keeping the maze as it is. Thanks to some volunteers, new bricks have recently been added and damaged bricks replaced. There is a clear maintenance plan, although some way of funding brick replacement and adding new bricks for people new to the village is still needed.
- Polish Church Memorial Garden – The purpose of this area should be a quiet place for relaxation and remembrance of the church and those who worshipped there. It should also be a place for wildlife. The area should be kept as grass, and allowed to grow and flower with paths mown short (similar to the approach for the maze). A base/outline for the church should be created, with seating and a plaque commemorating the church, with a picture of maypole dancing (which took place outside) and mentioning the two helpful residents: Eddie Kaiser and Les Miles.
- Manor Road Play Area – needs cleaning (fences, sign, equipment) and some repairs. Regular grass cutting and cutting back of vegetation is being done by the council's contractor but it is recommended to have an ongoing plan yet using volunteers for cleaning, etc.
- Churchyard: Well maintained by the Friends of St Mary's and St John's.

Paths

- Muddy Lane – sweep in autumn and fill puddles with shingle/scalplings
- Eastfield Lane – verges were tidied to make it easier to walk to school safely. This should be maintained.
- Hardwick Verges – Complete the planned verge restoration and improve the path.
- The Cut - was repaved recently and currently needs only minor maintenance.

Pavements

- Rough cost estimates have been obtained for refurbishing pavements. Estimates for Manor Road, Hardwick Road and a raised pavement in front of the the Ferryboat are in the range of £30 - £35,000. Replacement of Swanston Fields pavement appears to be excessive to the size, although the PC has asked OCC for lower cost options to improve it.
- While pavements was considered a high priority in the Village Plan survey feedback, it is recommended that the Parish Council develop a gradual, phased plan prioritised according to the state of the pavement. It is also recommended that the PC investigate grant and other OCC support.
- Encourage walking (The school is working on a plan).



Habitats

We know that many habitats are being lost. For instance, the parish has important grassland habitats but, across Oxfordshire, grassland butterfly numbers have fallen by 30% since 1990. Non-native species (such as the Oak Processionary Moth outbreak in Pangbourne), climate change and increasing road traffic add to pressure. Other than the above-mentioned guidelines, this plan contains no specific recommendations for habitat preservation. However, the Hardwick Estate is managed with a well-informed emphasis on conservation from which there is much to learn. We have two active societies - PAWs and WoTHabs - also keen to raise awareness.

Emergency Plan

Oxfordshire County Council encourage parishes to develop a Community Emergency Plan and a subgroup was formed, some of whom attended OCC training. The plan describes risks and responses and provides contact numbers, etc. to help utilities and emergency services coordinate the response. There are still

actions to complete before we register the plan with the OCC however the draft plan is on the [Village Plan web-site](#).

Also available is a helpful list of what you can do to prepare for an emergency (such as keeping insurance contact details on your phone).

Remaining actions include:

- Encouraging more volunteers to learn to use the defibrillator in the phone box by the entrance to Manor Road.
- Setting up the Village Hall as a place of refuge.
- Encouraging people who might need help if it snows heavily or there is a power cut to register with Scottish and Southern electricity (please contact John Bradon who can provide a form to register with them).

Flood Risk Mitigation

Two actions are recommended:

- Ensure drains are inspected and issues reported on Fix My Street. Some progress has been made with this but it needs continuing coordination of volunteers by the PC. (Note: Flash flooding is a bigger concern for most people than the river flooding.)
- Complete the flood action list begun with the excellent analysis of the causes of the 2004 flooding of the Greyhound pub and some nearby houses to ensure that the mitigations are completed and continue to be monitored.



5. Community

Village Societies

Whitchurch has a strong community spirit, which is often given as the reason why residents have moved here and stayed here. The Village Groups section of the website lists the wide and increasing range of societies in the village. The Art Café has been a great success. It is hoped that people will continue to support the existing groups but also that more volunteers may come forward and some possibilities are mentioned below.

Community Support

The Church & School are key institutions at the heart of village life. Although the Village Plan has not identified any new recommendations specific to either institution, they remain critical to the community. Some thought has been given as to how to provide more contact and support for people who need it. Already, the Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre provides Whitchurch residents with help with transport. As part of its wide-ranging pastoral support, the church organises the weekly coffee mornings on Tuesdays at the Old Stables to which everyone is welcome.

Afternoon Tea and Cakes are served on the second Thursday of each month in the Village Hall to encourage people to meet for a chat and to raise funds for the Village Hall improvements. When the plans to improve the kitchens are realised, it is proposed to set up a monthly Community Meal there.

Sport

The Village website lists the range of sports available in the village including the cricket club, with men's and juniors teams, and the junior football club. These are important to the village and the Village Plan seeks to support them by replacing the Pavilion.

Once the Pavilion is upgraded, we would have excellent facilities for a Netball team and a small ad-hoc group is investigating whether this could be set up.

The survey showed support for tennis but in a small village it would be very hard to get enough people to keep a tennis club going. It is a short walk to the Pangbourne tennis club who themselves are in need of more members. Also, just over the bridge are the Pangbourne Bowls Club and, for canoeing, the Dolphin Centre. For rowing, the Goring Gap boat club have just moved from Sheepwash Lane in the parish to a new facility near Lower Basildon and there is also now the Thames Scullers, a juniors club.

In the Village Hall, pilates, tap dancing and fitness classes are available. Village Walks are organised by the Whitchurch Society twice a year and the Henley and Goring Ramblers is one of many local walking groups. There are also running groups and informal cycling groups.

River Access

The survey showed a desire for more access to the Thames on the Whitchurch side. Some options were explored with various riparian landowners but with no success. There is already very good access via:

- The slipway by the surgery on the Pangbourne side
- The slipway next to the toll house and the public steps further along Mill Drive. A number of minor improvements have been identified for implementation by the Parish Council. As with other open spaces in the village, this needs an owner and maintenance plan.
- The public area at Sheepwash Lane. Although it is not possible to park here without interfering with the

boat clubs based at that end of the lane, it is possible to park for a few hours at the other end near the Hardwick gates at Lin's Veg Shed and transport a canoe.

Recently, the Thames Scullers, a Juniors Rowing Club, began operating from Sheepwash Lane. They are looking for new members and, for 11-18 year olds, hold regular learn-to-row courses.

Other Activities

There are regular arts related-activities including the Art Café, the Art & Crafts Exhibition. There have been excellent concerts and many in the village are involved in informal music-making groups. Amateur dramatics used to be a particular strength of the village (including the Young Riparians for children) but this greatly depends on having the right volunteers to lead it.

For Young People

As mentioned above, there is a reasonable provision of sports up to age 12 with cricket and football. WoTHabs have organised outdoor activities including an annual Explorers Day and the recent Bio-Blitz. It is hoped that this can continue.

For young people at secondary school age, most activities (sporting and otherwise) take place outside the village (e.g. Scouts & Guides, Secondary Schools sports teams). It is wished that more activities can be found in the village, especially for teenagers. If suitable volunteers can be found, particularly activities would be:

- Sport for teenage girls (seen as a hard to reach group by Sport England).
- Music, Art and Drama – as state schools now allocate less time to these activities.
- Social activities – e.g. a youth club.

Communications

It is felt that the means of community information in the village is good. The website was a key recommendation of the last village plan and has been extremely successful due to the active management of a hard-working team of residents. Also there is the quarterly Bulletin and the Church Magazine. A Facebook group, "Wonderful Whitchurch", is another source of information.



6. Action Plan

Top Priority Actions:

Action	Priority	Cost	By whom	Page No.
Traffic and Parking				
1. Manage parking better to improve traffic flow, without making parking more difficult for residents (yellow lines, parking bays, residents parking)	High	High	TAPAG/PC/OCC	8-10
2. Improve Road Safety (20 mph speed restriction, better pavements at Ferryboat)	High	Medium	TAPAG/PC/OCC	8-10
3. Improve use and protection of High Street and Manor Road verges	Medium	Medium	TAPAG/PC/OCC	8-10
Community Buildings				
4. Replace Sports Pavilion	High	High	Village Hall Committee/ PC	13
5. Upgrade Village Hall	High	Medium	New Pavilion WG/PC	14
Open Spaces				
6. Develop maintenance plans for Open Spaces. Add no new facilities. Apply the good practice guidelines	High	Low	Green Team/PC/ other space owners	15
7. Complete and implement the Community Emergency Plan and Flood Avoidance Plan	Medium	Low	New Emergency Management Team/ PC	16-17
8. Resurface Pavements when funds and grants allow	Medium	High	PC/OCC	16
Conservation Area				
9. Help fund and complete the Conservation Area Assessment	Medium	Medium	Whitchurch Society/ PC	5

Parish Council should organise and prioritise funds to get these tasks done. Specifically:

- Fund a traffic consultant to complete and agree the detailed design of parking and other measures.
- Agree and maintain the plan for the PC financial contribution.
- The Parish Council to allocate members to support and liaise on specific areas.
- Limit the number of activities and agree what should not be done.
- Competition for funds to be avoided by being clear on what the overall plan is with fundraising bodies so they are not feel they are being approached twice for the same objective.
- A joint online facility booking system to be set up which can be used for all three community buildings
- Create a Green Team with one or two people to manage its activities.

Minor Improvements:

Action	By whom	Page No.
Open Spaces		
1. Support Polish Church Memorial Garden Plan	Green Team/PC	15
2. Clean and repair the Manor Road play area	Green Team/PC	15
3. Ensure drains are inspected and issue reported on Fix My Street. Find a volunteer to manage.	Drains Czar/PC/OCC	17
4. Complete Flood Action list begun with the excellent analysis of the causes of the 2013 flooding	Volunteer team/ PC	17
5. Improve slipway by the Toll House	PC	18
6. Improve Hardwick Road verges and implement footpath to Hardwick Estate	WOTHabs/PC	16
Community		
7. Set up a Community Meal in the refurbished Village Hall	Volunteers from the Village/ Village Hall Committee	18
8. Encourage hard-to-reach group to participate in Sporting activities	Volunteers from the Village	18
9. Investigate the feasibility of setting up a netball team	Volunteers from the Village	18
10. Publicise the Thames Scullers for 11-18 year olds	Website team	19
11. Set up Music, Art and Drama Youth Clubs	Volunteers from the Village	19

Appendix 1 shows an indicative assessment and costing that the Parish Council have developed indicating what is likely to be achieved over the next 3 years.

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