

WEST HAGBOURNE PARISH PLAN

ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2011



A VISION FOR WEST HAGBOURNE

*TO MEET THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE
21ST CENTURY WHILST REMAINING A SMALL, PLEASANT AND
TRANQUIL VILLAGE IN THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE*



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This Parish Plan is an historic document in the life of West Hagbourne, setting out the views and aspirations of the villagers at the start of the 21st Century. The Parish Council endorses its findings and will nurture it as it evolves to meet the changing needs of present and future villagers

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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Conservation and Design Team, SODC, for the Conservation Area
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Marion Judd who analysed the results of the questionnaire
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Residents of West Hagbourne
The Village Association
The Village History Group
The Village Volunteers
West Hagbourne Parish Council

Steering Group

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INTRODUCTION

This is the Parish Plan for West Hagbourne for the years 2006 – 2011. It represents the views and aspirations of the whole village. It has been produced by a small volunteer steering group, independent of the Parish Council but with its backing. The planning process has been largely funded by grants from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

A chronological history of West Hagbourne was published by the History Group in 2000. More recently, a Character Study was produced by SODC. The steering group has drawn heavily on both these studies to place the plan in an historical context and to define the special character of West Hagbourne's conservation area.

This plan is the result of three years of discussions with villagers to identify what they value about their village and what changes they would like to see. Following a launch meeting in November 2003, there have been three main consultations: two displays at local village halls and one in-depth questionnaire delivered to every household. A nine-point action plan has been drawn up to address the six areas of most concern to residents, including young people.

The consultations show that people choose to live here because the village offers an attractive rural environment where there is a sense of community. The plan is timely, as people fear that the threatened expansion of Didcot is likely to worsen current traffic problems and diminish their enjoyment of village life.

We hope that this plan will inspire everyone to get involved in carrying out these action plans to ensure that the community continues to thrive. Our thanks go to the community of West Hagbourne without whom this Parish Plan would not be possible.

The Steering Group

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VILLAGE PROFILE

A rural parish in the process of change

West Hagbourne is a small rural village of about 100 houses at the foot of the Berkshire Downs. Part of Berkshire until 1974, the parish is now served by the South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and its own Parish Council. The town of Didcot, with fast rail links to London and Oxford, is less than two miles to the north. The village is close to the A417 Reading to Wantage road and two miles from the A34.

West Hagbourne has its own entry in the Domesday Book. The village once had two manors, its own mill and a chapel. In the 1840s it was a thriving community of six farms, twenty orchards, two public houses, a malt house, a bakery and several houses and cottages serving as shops. The last village shop and sub post office closed in 1970. One pub, the Horse and Harrow, has survived but the parish church, primary school and Hagbourne village hall are all situated two miles away in East Hagbourne.

In 2006, SODC extended the existing conservation area, bringing the east and west extremities of the village within the conservation boundary. At the heart of the conservation area is The Square, dominated by a mature horse chestnut tree and a seat. The bus shelter was built there in 1954 to serve as a war memorial. Several of the village's historic, listed houses and the last remaining cob and thatch wall line the road between The Square and the village pond. The grass verges, the simple post and rail fences, five-bar gates and the mixed hedgerows all help to give the streetscapes a distinctively country feel.

Although there are still four working farms in the village, modern farming methods and diversification have meant that fewer local people are employed on the land. The largely agricultural community of previous generations has changed to one of commuters working outside the parish. The population has aged as young people have moved away in search of jobs and affordable homes.

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VILLAGE PROFILE

West Hagbourne has a strong sense of community and residents are proud and protective of their beautiful, historic village. There is an active village association which organises events and a history group which has published the history of West Hagbourne. The village recently launched its own website whilst the Parish Council publishes a regular newsletter. Local farmers take an active interest in the conservation of the countryside.

However, all this is now under threat as Didcot develops inexorably towards the village. The parish lost land to the north many years ago. Now Didcot's Great Western Park housing development will encroach even further. There are also plans afoot to build at least another 3,000 houses as part of the South East Plan for 2026. One of the proposed sites would virtually swallow West Hagbourne parish.

The biggest challenge for the village will be to maintain its rural environment in the face of an ever expanding town less than two miles away. This Action Plan explains the strategies that the village community has proposed to ensure that West Hagbourne continues to be an enjoyable place in which to live for present and future generations.



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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

|| *important to preserve small village identity* ||

Most people find the village a pleasant and attractive place to live and value its rural aspect above all else.

- ◆ The majority agree that a relief road is the best measure for dealing with the increase in traffic which will result from the development of Didcot.
- ◆ Concern about traffic passing through the village is the major single issue for villagers.
- ◆ Respondents are worried about both the amount and speed of traffic and the danger this causes to pedestrians, as well as damage to footpaths and pavements.

Many respondents would like a village hall or meeting place but recognise the difficulties in maintaining and running one.

- ◆ The timetable of the new local bus service is still inconvenient.
- ◆ There is a wish for an integrated public transport system directly linking the village and Didcot.
- ◆ Any housing development should be sympathetic and in keeping with existing properties so as not to spoil the rural feel of the village.
- ◆ Respondents believe that locals should have priority for any new affordable housing.
- ◆ Young people would like a playing field and a children's play area. There is also a lot of support for a play area from people without young children.

|| *West Hagbourne is a beautiful, unassuming little village* ||

|| *A village hall would be super but it would have to be maintained and I do not think the village is large enough to do that* ||

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KEY ISSUES

VILLAGE FACILITIES

The survey identified six key issues:

Village Facilities, Roads and Traffic, Village Environment, Transport, Development and Activities for Young People.

84 (79%) households responded. 162 adults

(75% of the adult population) and 28 young people completed the questionnaire.

Village Facilities

The most wanted facilities for families with children are:

- ◆ A children's play area – 74% of the families who responded
- ◆ A youth club at the pub – 47%
- ◆ A baby sitting circle – 37%

Other views included:

- ◆ People at home during the day would enjoy coffee mornings (53% of responses to this question) and a lunch club – 32%
- ◆ A number of residents would be willing to offer some kind of help to others (27 people) or join a working party to assist with small jobs around the village (33 people)
- ◆ More sporting activities: tennis (25 people) and bowls (9 people) being the most popular
- ◆ Interest was shown in participating in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme with 26 households prepared to attend meetings annually and 23 preferring to attend every 6 months
- ◆ Events organised by the Village Association are popular, particularly open days, open gardens and village suppers. More family-oriented events were requested.

|| *The outstanding improvement for this village is to provide a playground for children* ||

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KEY ISSUES

Village communication

- ◆ Many households (82%) think that a village information pack is a good idea, particularly for newcomers.
- ◆ There were many suggestions for items to be included in the Newsletter and a handful of offers to contribute to it.
- ◆ A village website had been inaugurated by the time the questionnaire was circulated so it is reassuring to find that 79% of households are in favour whilst only 14% do not think a website is a good thing. Lots of suggestions for content were put forward.

Summary of opinions

A CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR FAMILIES.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO JOIN A YOUTH CLUB BUT SOME PARENTS HAVE RESERVATIONS BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE TO MEET AT THE HORSE AND HARROW PUB.

WHILST MANY ADDITIONAL FACILITIES ARE DESIRABLE, MOST RESPONDENTS QUALIFIED THEIR 'WISH LIST' FOR SUCH ITEMS AS A VILLAGE HALL, POST OFFICE OR SHOP BY INDICATING THAT THESE ARE REALISTICALLY UNSUSTAINABLE. SOME KIND OF MEETING ROOM WAS A SUGGESTED COMPROMISE.

VILLAGE FACILITIES



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KEY ISSUES

Roads

Several aspects of the state of the roads are of concern to residents:

- ◆ Potholes (86%) and poor road surfaces (63%) are the two most unsatisfactory aspects whilst flooding also causes problems for 61% of respondents
- ◆ The poor surface of pavements concerns residents – 22%
- ◆ The biggest problem for pedestrians is being splashed by traffic after heavy rain, owing to the poor state of the drainage system throughout the village – 42%.

|| *speed humps or priority traffic is the only option* ||

|| *definitely no humps* ||

Footpaths and pavements

- ◆ Concern expressed by respondents about the narrowness or absence of footpaths in certain parts of the village - 25%. This causes particular difficulties for wheelchair users and prams
- ◆ Overhanging trees and bushes are felt to contribute to the difficulties in walking along the pavements - 35%
- ◆ The amount and speed of traffic through the village are both felt to contribute to the damage to pavements - 52%, as well as causing danger to pedestrians - 72%.

|| *there should be a continuous pavement round the village* ||

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Summary of opinions

THE QUALITY OF ROAD MAINTENANCE IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE POOR THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE.

DITCHES AND GULLIES ARE NOT KEPT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR AND AS A RESULT THERE IS REGULAR FLOODING, PARTICULARLY IN THE DIRECTION OF DIDCOT.

THERE WERE SOME DIFFERING VIEWS EXPRESSED ON THE EFFICACY OF SPEED HUMPS, GATED ENTRANCES AND RUMBLE STRIPS.

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KEY ISSUES

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Residential parking

Respondents pin-pointed various parking issues on residential streets:

- ◆ Inconsiderate parking on York Road, especially at the T-junction
- ◆ Obstructive parking at entrance to Foxglove Lane
- ◆ Parking outside Scotlands Ash Garage is causing concern for those entering and exiting the driveway of children's nursery next door
- ◆ However, some respondents felt this helped to slow traffic down
- ◆ Exiting from drives into Main Street is a problem for some residents.

Traffic

The two major concerns expressed about traffic through the village are:

- ◆ The speed of traffic – 78%
- ◆ The amount of traffic – 74%
- ◆ Many respondents said that traffic often exceeds the 30mph speed limit, especially on the section of road at the Horse and Harrow
- ◆ Speed at bends concerns people – 64%
- ◆ Respondents strongly object to the excessively large lorries passing through the village – 63%
- ◆ There is widespread apprehension about the resulting increase in traffic from the Great Western Park development to the north of the village. A huge majority believe a relief road is the best answer to this concern – 98%.

|| *the development of Didcot will involve an increase [in traffic]... a bypass is therefore essential...* ||

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KEY ISSUES

Summary of opinions

This section provoked a wide range of possible solutions to the traffic problems. Those that have the widest support are:

A RELIEF ROAD FROM THE WEST OF THE DIDCOT DEVELOPMENT TO THE A417 RUNNING ADJACENT TO THE A34.

A PRIORITY SCHEME ON MAIN STREET AT ITS NARROWEST POINT BETWEEN THE POND AND YORK ROAD.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC



|| continue concentrated opposition to the development of Didcot at every opportunity ||

4

KEY ISSUES

Environmental improvements

- ◆ Regular cutting back of overgrown foliage - 67%
- ◆ Planting of more flowers around the village - 61%
- ◆ A community woodland - 56%
- ◆ Tree planting to screen the village in anticipation of the Great Western Park development (76% of responses to this question)
- ◆ Clearer signposting for footpaths and bridleways - 45%
- ◆ Many residents are emphatically against street lighting (72% of those who answered this question)
- ◆ More working parties to tidy the village - 27%.

|| *Please, no street lighting* ||

VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

Recycling

The survey shows that the majority of residents recycle both general and green waste. There is some demand for a glass collection service (34 households).

There is no majority view on whether litter-bins should be placed around the parish footpaths.

Disturbances

The main causes of noise disturbance are dogs (56 people affected) and traffic (39 people affected).

Inconsiderate use of lawnmowers, strimmers and bonfires, especially on Sundays, concerns some residents.

Summary of opinions

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE PARISH IS PARAMOUNT FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS.

THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT IS WHAT PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN WEST HAGBOURNE..

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KEY ISSUES

|| impossible to live here without access to a car ||

TRANSPORT

- ◆ In 52 households at least one person uses a bicycle, whilst 20 other households said that they would definitely use a bicycle if they felt safer on the roads. Another 21 said they might.
- ◆ Respondents indicated several routes that they would like to see introduced or improved for both cycling and walking. The most popular is the provision of a good route from York Road to join Park Road at the outskirts of Didcot - 23% of responses to this question.
- ◆ A significant number are against some of the proposals, particularly the widening of the path to East Hagbourne – 14% of responses to this question.
- ◆ The surveys of journeys to work, school, leisure and services such as doctors and shopping, all revealed that, apart from the school bus, most journeys involve the use of a car.
- ◆ Only 7 people said they were definitely interested in the provision of a dial-a ride scheme. However, 20 more said they would possibly be interested, particularly for journeys to and from Didcot and the station.

|| would use train more if parking was free or there was a decent bus connection ||

Summary of opinions

LOCAL BUS SERVICE DOES NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF USERS ON A DAILY BASIS.

MORE PEOPLE WOULD USE A LOCAL BUS SERVICE IF THE TIMETABLE WAS MORE SUITED TO THEIR NEEDS.

VILLAGERS APPEAR RESIGNED TO THE POOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICE AND ACCEPT THAT A CAR IS ESSENTIAL TO LIVE IN WEST HAGBOURNE..

4

KEY ISSUES

Future housing development

Views were evenly spread amongst respondents:

- ◆ None at all – 33%
- ◆ Minimal development (up to 10 homes) – 33%
- ◆ Moderate development (11-25 homes) – 35%
- ◆ More than 25 homes – 0.

if affordable housing was provided would expect/hope local people be given priority

Where?

- ◆ Houses should be built on infill sites within the village boundary – 54%
- ◆ Edge of village development – 42%.

uncontrolled growth in the village would affect the nature and attractiveness of the village

DEVELOPMENT

Summary of opinions

THOSE WHO FAVOUR NO DEVELOPMENT FEEL THAT MORE HOUSES WOULD SPOIL THE RURAL CHARACTER AND INCREASE THE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC THROUGH THE VILLAGE.

THOSE WHO AGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME GROWTH WANT THE NEW HOUSING TO GO TO LOCAL PEOPLE AND BE AFFORDABLE.

THERE IS STRONG CONCERN THAT A BOUNDARY BETWEEN DIDCOT AND WEST HAGBOURNE SHOULD BE RETAINED AT ALL COSTS.

new buildings to be in keeping with village

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KEY ISSUES

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Ten boys and 18 girls between the ages of 5 and 18 years responded to this section of the questionnaire.

- ◆ The two most popular requests were for a netball or basketball court (20) and a play area (18)
- ◆ Interest was expressed in joining with East Hagbourne for some activities, particularly the tennis club (14) and youth club (13)
- ◆ The proposal for a youth club based at the Horse and Harrow for 14 year olds and over was widely rejected by young people, with only 3 positive responses.

Summary of opinions

MANY OF THE CONCERNS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE ADULTS, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING TRAFFIC. THEIR MAIN REQUESTS ARE FOR MORE PLACES TO MEET THEIR FRIENDS, PLAY AREAS, SPORTS CLUBS AND MORE THINGS TO DO.

THERE IS ENTHUSIASM FOR JOINING A YOUTH CLUB IN EAST HAGBOURNE BUT OVERWHELMING REJECTION OF SETTING UP A YOUTH CLUB AT THE HORSE AND HARROW PUB.



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ACTION PLAN

VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

Protect and preserve the rural character of West Hagbourne

**ACTION
1**

HOW

- ◆ Strongly resist further expansion of Didcot towards the village
- ◆ Lobby for a buffer zone between West Hagbourne and Didcot
- ◆ Lobby for a relief road as part of Didcot development programme

WHO

- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council
- ◆ Village action groups

WHEN

- ◆ 2006 - 2008

Improve pedestrian safety and access

**ACTION
2**

HOW

- ◆ Improve accessibility of local footpaths
- ◆ Replace styles with kissing gates on footpath to Upton
- ◆ Improvements to Church Path by clearing the mud and debris from the Foxglove Lane end and looking into the possibility of raising the level at the western end

WHO

- ◆ Village Appearance Group
- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council

WHEN

- ◆ Introduce kissing gates 2007
- ◆ Clear mud from Church Path 2007
- ◆ Investigate costs of improving Church Path 2007 - 2008

5

ACTION PLAN

VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

Improve the parish environment

**ACTION
3**

HOW

- ◆ Establish a village appearance group
- ◆ Plant more trees
- ◆ Identify site for a memorial grove
- ◆ Instigate more regular village clean-ups
- ◆ Encourage more recycling through use of green boxes, brown bins, composting and occasional garage sales

WHO

- ◆ Parish Plan Steering Group
- ◆ Village Appearance Group
- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council
- ◆ Village volunteers

WHEN

- ◆ Establish Village Appearance Group 2006
- ◆ Tree planting from 2006
- ◆ Memorial Grove 2007 - 2009
- ◆ Minimum of two clean-ups per year

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ACTION PLAN

Seek solutions to the increase in volume and the speed of traffic through the village

**ACTION
4**

HOW

- ◆ Establish a traffic group
- ◆ Develop speed management plan
- ◆ Coordinate campaign for reduction of volume of traffic
- ◆ Lobby for a relief road
- ◆ Investigate ways to enforce weight limit regulations

WHO

- ◆ Parish Plan Steering Group
- ◆ Village Traffic Group
- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council

WHEN

- ◆ Establish Traffic Group 2006
- ◆ Traffic campaigns 2007-2009

VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

5

ACTION PLAN

VILLAGE FACILITIES

Develop village facilities

ACTION 5

HOW

- ◆ Investigate the establishment of a village meeting place, including a suitable site and funding opportunities
- ◆ Investigate projected use of meeting place
- ◆ Create a register of volunteers willing to offer their skills for village projects
- ◆ Update volunteer register annually
- ◆ Produce a welcome information pack for new villagers
- ◆ Identify more contributors to the West Hagbourne Newsletter
- ◆ Encourage local people to support Village Association's events
- ◆ Hold coffee mornings for those at home during the day
- ◆ Promote activities, clubs and groups on the village website
- ◆ Encourage local people to propose new interest groups

WHO

- ◆ Parish Council
- ◆ Identified volunteers
- ◆ Village Association
- ◆ Webmaster

WHEN

- ◆ Village meeting place 2007 - 2010
- ◆ Volunteer register from 2007
- ◆ Update register annually
- ◆ Welcome pack 2007, to be reviewed regularly
- ◆ Coffee mornings from 2006

5

ACTION PLAN

TRANSPORT

Improve transport links
between West Hagbourne,
local schools and Didcot



HOW

- ◆ Lobby for more direct bus routes between Didcot and West Hagbourne
- ◆ Discuss bus timetabling issues with Oxfordshire County Council
- ◆ Lobby for better timing of bus services to integrate with arrival and departure of commuter trains at Didcot station

WHO

- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council
- ◆ Local action groups

WHEN

- ◆ 2007 - 2010

Improve cycle routes
between West Hagbourne,
Didcot and local schools



HOW

- ◆ Form a cycling group
- ◆ Lobby for improved cycling routes to Didcot and Didcot Girls' School

WHO

- ◆ Parish Plan Steering Group
- ◆ Village Cycling Group

WHEN

- ◆ Form a cycling group 2007
- ◆ Lobby for improvements 2007 - 2008

5

ACTION PLAN

DEVELOPMENT

◆

YOUNG PEOPLE

Ensure that any future development meets the needs of local people

**ACTION
8**

HOW

- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of affordable housing in the village
- ◆ Identify a location for up to four affordable houses
- ◆ Ensure that any development is sympathetic with existing buildings and does not spoil the rural feel of the village

WHO

- ◆ Parish Plan Steering Group
- ◆ West Hagbourne Parish Council

WHEN

- ◆ 2007 - 2010

Develop activities for young people

**ACTION
9**

HOW

- ◆ Recruit youth facilitator from village community
- ◆ Organise a social event to explore what activities are wanted
- ◆ Establish priorities of village youth
- ◆ Create pages especially for young people on the website

WHO

- ◆ Parish Plan Steering Group
- ◆ Youth facilitator to be identified
- ◆ Webmaster

WHEN

- ◆ Recruit facilitator 2007
- ◆ Youth social event 2007
- ◆ Develop web pages 2007 - 2008

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NEXT STEPS

Implementation of the Plan

As a result of the lengthy consultation process, several projects have already started. A Village Appearance Group has been formed and successfully applied for a grant towards footpath improvements. The Traffic Group has convened and a French Conversation Group has had several convivial meetings. Various events have been arranged, including a few coffee mornings, whilst a very successful garage sale has taken place as part of the recycling campaign.

This Parish Plan will be made available for everyone in the village to read, and will also be published on the website. A public meeting will then take place inviting all residents to give their views and adopt the plan early in 2007. Once adopted, it will provide a basis for action.

Monitoring the Plan

The Parish Council will be asked to take ownership of the Action Plan and monitor its implementation. The Action Plan will become a standing item on the Parish Council agenda and one councillor will be given special responsibility for it. Progress will be reported to the community at the Annual Parish Meeting when the plan will be discussed and may be revised. Updates and revisions will be posted on the website and will also appear in the newsletter. The plan will be actively promoted to local authorities, councils, service providers and other local parishes.

Getting involved

In many ways this Action Plan is only the beginning. It is hoped it will inspire others in the community to become involved and make it happen!

If you would like to take part in any of the Action Plans or join one of the groups, please contact Sue Totterdell on 01235 850080.