

THE **BALDONS**2011
PARISHPLAN

the Baldons Parish Plan

welcome

Welcome to the Baldons Parish Plan!

Along with probably every resident of the Baldons, I feel very privileged to live here: a beautiful village with a great sense of history, of community and of vitality. We have been given an amazing inheritance by the past inhabitants of the Baldons, and we need to ensure we can pass on that benefit to future generations.

So the Baldons Parish Plan was created, to record some of the history of the parish, to show how it has developed into the present day, and to look at how it might evolve into the future. This document will help us to focus on the things we as residents can do to keep our corner of Oxfordshire as special as it is today and also help our local service providers to focus their spending on the areas we feel are most important.

This project has been a joint effort and could not have happened without the involvement and assistance of many people, particularly those listed on the back cover. However, this plan is not just for those of us involved in its creation: it is for all the residents of the Baldons, past, present and future.



NATASHA ELIOT, CHAIR, PARISH PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE, OCTOBER 2011

what is a parish plan?

How did we do it and what is it for? Planning the future of **the Baldons**

Parish Plans are a way for rural communities to express their views and aspirations and are already forming the basis of strategic planning at all levels of local authority. The Baldons Parish Plan will be used to influence the decisions of the Parish Council, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), as well as other local authorities providing services to local residents. In addition, it should act as a trigger for local people to undertake some tasks themselves.

how did we start? In late 2007 a group of villagers got together to kickstart the project, with a launch event in early 2008. From this has evolved the Parish Plan Steering Committee, which has been aided throughout the process by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC).

the parish plan process The Steering Committee initially consulted with as many people as possible to establish the issues that people felt strongly about. This was done using a variety of methods including approaching individuals, village groups and organisations and also inviting comment via the village newsletter and suggestion boxes in the pub and at village events. From this came the questions in the questionnaire, which was distributed to every household in the villages. All residents of 8 years and older were invited to complete a questionnaire, with the added attraction of a prize draw for meals at The Seven Stars and The Mole. A total of 282 questionnaires were completed. This was a fantastic response rate of over 80% of the population. The data was independently statistically analysed with the help of SODC and an open event was held. At this residents were invited to look at visual displays of some of the key results, give their views and ask questions. The Steering Committee, in conjunction with ORCC and representatives from OCC and SODC, then used the data to put together an Action Plan that provides a framework through which residents' wishes can be implemented.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

■ The overriding objective of the Plan is to uphold and improve the quality of life in the Baldons, by highlighting residents' priorities, as shown by the questionnaire, and prompting action by those in a position to take it.

■ Some of the actions will be undertaken by local authorities, but these organisations have limited funds and many projects will depend to a high degree on local volunteers.

■ The key final task for the Parish Plan Steering Committee will be to assist in the monitoring of actions, to ensure that progress is made.

the Baldons today... a profile of our parish

The villages of Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon and Little Baldon, collectively known as the Baldons, are situated approximately six miles to the south of Oxford. The communities are surrounded by farmland and strenuous efforts have been and continue to be made to maintain the Green Belt separating the Baldons from Oxford and thus protecting the Baldons' identity as a rural community. The majority of the Baldons are within a Conservation Area, and many buildings are listed. New development in the area is very tightly controlled. Marsh Baldon is the largest of the villages, with a population of 289 (2001 census). It is centred on the large village green (approximately 24 acres in size), with the remaining houses along various lanes and tracks leading away from the green.

Marsh Baldon has a number of amenities serving the local area:

- a primary school of 70 pupils
- a pub, The Seven Stars, which has recently become a Free House,
- a village hall
- St Peter's Church, dating from the 14th century, with 19th century additions.

Toot Baldon is known in the wider district for its restaurant, The Mole, previously a pub known as The Crown.

St Lawrence's church in Toot Baldon is very attractive and has a magnificent setting on a hill overlooking farmland, with the Chiltern Hills in the background.

Toot Baldon has 136 residents (2001 census), and maintains a distinct identity as Toot as well as being part of the Baldons.

Little Baldon is in fact a collection of cottages connected to Little Baldon Farm. It is physically quite separated from Marsh and Toot Baldon, although legally

Fantastic
response
rate of over
80%
of the
population

282
the
number of
completed
surveys

forms part of the civil parish of Marsh Baldon. All three communities are represented by one combined Parish Council. Much of the land in the villages is owned by The Queen's College, Oxford, including the village green and a number of the farms.

The Baldons also have close links with the neighbouring village of Nuneham Courtenay, with many shared community activities. The Baldons community is very active and sociable, with regular and well attended village events, from amateur dramatics to the ever-popular annual seniors' party and fireworks nights. There are also many groups, from Toddlers to book groups to Youth Club, and a thriving Church. Local services, such as shops, post offices and doctors' surgeries can be found in the surrounding villages, following the closure of the Marsh Baldon post office in the 1980s and the loss of the Nuneham Courtenay post office and shop more recently.

37% of those who completed the questionnaire have lived in the Baldons for more than 20 years, with 24% having been in the village between 11 and 20 years, 12% between 6 and 10 years, 25% between 1 and 5 years and 2% less than 1 year. This suggests that residents tend to remain in the village for a long time.

Of those who completed the questionnaire, 18% work from home, 4% within 2 miles of home, 16% in Oxford, 11% in other Oxfordshire locations, 2% in Reading, 8% in London and 8% in other locations. 41% of those surveyed did not work, suggesting that while the accessibility of the Baldons is an attractive feature, it is very far from being a "dormitory area".

the Baldons: through history

the Baldons in the past

Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon, Baldon on the Green, Little Baldon, Big Baldon, Baldon-in-between

This old rhyme is a reminder that there are a number of ancient settlements in the area known as the Baldons. Toot Baldon is probably the earliest settlement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times, although the area was inhabited in the Roman period. A Roman Road passes through the parishes and Roman pottery and coins have been found. The Anglo-Saxons liked to settle on high ground and reference can be found to "Bealda's Hill", while Toot is the Saxon word for a look-out. A good water supply and fertile soil would have encouraged this early habitation. The Domesday Book refers to Baldedone and does not differentiate between the various hamlets, which shared a common field system with strip farming. However, there were already seven different estates and there is little doubt that the four hamlets Toot Baldon, Marsh Baldon, Baldon St. Lawrence and Little Baldon named in 13th century documents were already in existence at the time of Domesday.

Looking at the old maps it is also remarkable how little the form of the old villages has actually changed over the last four hundred years.

By the mid 16th century a large part of four Domesday estates had been acquired by the Queen's College. In Tudor times fellows and students used to withdraw to the college's properties in the village when there was plague in Oxford. In 1519, for example, the whole college was in residence at Toot Baldon. The Queen's College eventually purchased Marsh Baldon village green, along with other land that had been part of the Manor, in 1921.

Marsh Baldon grew in prosperity during the 16th and 17th centuries and for 60 years from 1712 Elizabeth Lane was a highly active lady of the manor. Her most obvious legacy was Marsh Baldon School, started as a result of a

bequest by her in 1771 for the education of 6 poor boys and 6 poor girls. Other children could be educated at the expense of their parents. It was said that, owing to early employment in the fields, the children did not profit from their educational opportunities. However, by 1866 the numbers had risen to 56 and the curriculum included reading, writing and casting accounts. By 1815 Toot Baldon also had a school which by 1887 was reported to be a good school. It had been enlarged in 1886 to cater for 60 children. It survived until 1920 when the managers closed it and the children were transferred to Marsh Baldon.

The Baldons, being fair sized villages were more self supporting than some. In the 16th, 17th and 18th century mention is made of a tailor, two butchers, a slaughter house, a currier, a maltster, a sawyer, a carpenter and, more unusually, a bone-setter. In the latter half of the 19th century there was a blacksmith, a grocer, a baker, a butcher, a wheelwright and a beer-retailer. There were also three pubs, two of which remain today.

Although both churches have been altered over the centuries, Toot Baldon Church is essentially a good example of a small early 13th century church and Marsh Baldon Church is mainly 14th or early 15th century. The present north aisle at Marsh Baldon was built in 1890. At various times both the congregations and the buildings were neglected but both have had times when the energy and enthusiasm of an incumbent have restored order in the Parish.

In 1954 the benefices of Toot and Marsh Baldon were united and patronage passed to Queen's College which was already patron of Toot Baldon. The two parishes had been under the care of one clergyman since 1913.

The population in 1801 was 208 in Marsh Baldon and 223 in Toot Baldon. In 1901 the figures were 280 in Marsh Baldon and 228 in Toot Baldon. The 2001 census shows 289 in Marsh Baldon and 136 in Toot Baldon. Surprisingly there has been remarkably little overall change in two hundred years.

the Baldons: through history



Looking at the old maps it is also remarkable how little the form of the old villages has actually changed over the last four hundred years. The old open fields finally disappeared with the Enclosure Act of 1836 but the 24 acre village green, which was specifically excluded from enclosure, is still carefully preserved and is perhaps rather tidier than it was when cows, pigs, sheep and horses were grazing on it. Many interesting old buildings remain and there are plenty of historical clues to be found on a walk around the villages.

FROM 1880 TO 2011:

- **TOP:** St Peter's Church, Marsh Baldon: the north aisle was added in 1890
- **MIDDLE:** The village school has 70 pupils today
- **BOTTOM:** "Gateways": the gate is always open now but the house is the same

the Baldons: issues

the issues

Everything from the green to the school, roads and footpaths to libraries and shops...

KEY:

High Priority



Medium Priority



Low Priority



Long Term



Medium term



Short term



ongoing



complete



The Parish Plan consultation process covered all aspects of village life. The issues raised fall into a number of areas, each of which is covered on the following pages. We have provided information on each of these areas, along with the proposed actions. Each action has been given a priority and timescale rating, derived from the strength of feeling expressed in the questionnaire results.

RIGHT: St Lawrence's, Toot Baldon

MIDDLE: St Peter's, Marsh Baldon

BOTTOM: The south side of the green



Questionnaire results highlight the sense of community we have in the Baldons

social facilities & events

The Parish Plan questionnaire results highlighted the sense of community we have in the Baldons and how much this is valued by residents. It also suggested a number of areas where people would like to see improvements or changes, which are reflected in the Action Plan.

The questionnaire showed that there is good support for an extension to the Village Hall. The Village Hall Committee is working on plans for this, which will be published for parish-wide consultation in due course. The villagers will then need to show their financial support by contributing to

the major fund-raising effort that will be needed.

In terms of the societies, activities and events in which residents expressed an interest, the challenge will be to find the resources needed, which might include any or all of:

■ **An enthusiastic individual or group of people to set up and run a club or society, or organise an event** ■ **Financial resources to pay for equipment, coaching etc** ■ **Site or space in which to carry out the proposed activity** ■ **Support from other bodies e.g. Parish Council, District Council or “umbrella” body for the activity** The desire for additional sports facilities that was identified is a good example of this position: to achieve this aim, a sports working party will be required to co-ordinate and lead the work.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Continue and maintain variety of village social events	Explore additional events	Combination of Village Hall Committee, Baldon Events Committee, Church and school	● ●	➡
Improve village sports facilities	Form a village sports group to address sports-related actions as listed	Parish Plan Steering Committee	● ● ●	➡
	Consider potential location for football pitch	Sports Group and existing sports groups	●	➡
	Explore use of private tennis courts for village use	Sports Group and existing sports groups	●	➡
	Working party to explore feasibility of renovation of cricket pavilion as multi-sport changing facility	Sports Group and existing sports groups	● ●	➡
	Explore possibility of village hall accommodating changing facilities and tennis wall	Sports group and Village Hall Committee	● ●	➡
Consider improvements to the village hall	Village Hall Committee to re-visit feasibility of extension in light of results	Village Hall Committee with ORCC	● ● ●	➡
	Village Hall Committee to consider projector and screen, sound system and hearing loop as part of possible renovations	Village Hall Committee with ORCC	● ●	➡

the Baldons: services

village services: libraries, shop & other services

The questionnaire looked at the use of the current facilities and what residents would like in the future

Library service Fewer than half of the respondents are members of the library service and of these the largest regular usage was the mobile library; even this was used by relatively few people. Although not reflected in the Parish Plan responses, it was felt important to highlight the school usage of the mobile library,

with pupils being encouraged to 'board' the library and borrow and return books; an important way for children to learn how to use libraries. Just over a fifth of respondents said they would use the mobile library once or twice a month if it visited in the evening or at weekends. The results of this part of the questionnaire have been passed to David Turner, our County Councillor, for action.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
County Councillor David Turner to take note of library use statistics	Library use statistics to be passed to David Turner, highlighting school use of mobile library	Parish Council with County Councillor	●●●	✓

Village shop For many years there was a village shop and post office in Nuneham Courtenay, which benefited from passing trade as well as local customers. However, despite this, once the Post Office function was withdrawn, the viability was reduced and eventually the shop was closed. This left the Baldons with no local shopping facilities and of the three options for providing these within the village, by far the most popular was a community run shop. There

are challenges associated with each of the most popular potential venues (the old shop at Nuneham, the pub and the village hall). There was a groundswell of willing volunteers to help run such a shop, and a steering group will be required to establish the most appropriate venue and business model. The results suggested that customers would like to see bakery items, newspapers, local produce and basic groceries as a minimum.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Creation of a local shop	Working party to be set up to consider the options	Parish Plan Steering Committee with ORCC	●●	➡
Scheme for internet shopping by volunteers	Establish potential users via advertisement in newsletter and word of mouth	Shop working party	●	➡
	Payment mechanisms to be investigated	Shop working party with ORCC	●	➡
	Potential shoppers to be approached	Shop working party	●	➡

the Baldons: services & transport

Other services/facilities The questionnaire showed support in principle for additional or improved local facilities to be provided by means of an increase in the precept. Any such expenditure could only be incurred following public consultation by the Parish Council.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Provision of additional / improved local facilities, paid for by the precept, to be considered	Feedback to be passed on to the Parish Council with a recommendation that further consultation is required.	Parish Council	●●	➡

transport: cycling, buses & voluntary schemes

Roads Baldon Lane connects two main roads and this means that it can be a convenient cut-through. The road is designated as "Access Only" and there is support to retain this, however it is felt this restriction is being ignored. There is support to increase enforcement through indirect measures such as clearer signage and greater police presence. The roads through the villages vary in width and contain some sharp/blind bends. Although they benefit from a 30mph limit villagers are concerned that drivers are not abiding by this or driving slowly enough where needed to reflect the nature of the road,

creating safety issues for drivers and pedestrians. There was no obvious strength of feeling regarding how to resolve this, but 20mph and speed indicator devices were shown to be the most acceptable. The Parish Council will continue to work with the County Council, who are the highway authority, to take forward measures to try and help alleviate the access and speed issues. In addition, the Parish Council will work with landowners and local authorities to improve pedestrian safety by the creation of permissive paths enabling pedestrians to avoid roads as much as possible.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Address issues of traffic speed	Coordinated action with County Council and Thames Valley Police	Parish Council, County Council and Thames Valley Police	●●	👉
	Consider 20mph speed limit	Parish Council, County Council and Thames Valley Police	●●	➡
Improve enforcement of "Access Only" designation	Improve advance signage on A4074	Parish Council & County Council	●●●	✓
	Improve signage at Toot Baldon (B480)	Parish Council & County Council	●●●	➡
	Working party to organise a traffic survey for access violations	Parish Council & Access Only survey working party	●●●	➡

the Baldons: transport & community safety

Cycling Local authorities have explored the possibility of creating a cycle path to link South Oxfordshire villages to Oxford, and th initiative was welcomed by parishioners. The Parish Council will work with the County Council and Sustrans, the charity behind the National Cycle Network, towards this.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Encourage creation of a cycle path from the villages to Oxford (for example via Grenoble Road)	Continue to lobby County Council for path	Parish Council & County Council	● ● ●	➡
	Liaison with Sustrans	Parish Council & County Council	● ● ●	➡

Bus Services The County Council reviewed local bus services in 2010, and the results of the Parish Plan questionnaire were passed to them to demonstrate the level of support for buses serving the Baldons. Following the review, the No. 89 service was introduced, which runs between Nuneham Courtenay (Baldon Lane) and Cowley Centre via The Baldons and Kings Copse, operating on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Unfortunately the County Council felt unable to provide a service direct to Oxford and Abingdon. **Voluntary Transport Scheme** An encouraging number of questionnaire respondents expressed an interest in helping with a Voluntary Transport Scheme, which could allow a number of those without their own transport to access essential services. A local coordinator is now required to implement this scheme.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Set up a volunteer transport scheme	Use list of volunteers from questionnaire to form a working group	Parish Plan Steering Committee	● ●	➡
	Working group set up and run the scheme	Volunteer Transport working group, ORCC, County Council	● ●	➡

community safety

The questionnaire results suggested a low level of awareness of the local Community Safety bodies. Thames Valley Police Community Support Officers are based in Wheatley and provide help, advice and assistance in crime prevention. They support communities by working with neighbourhood action groups, visiting villages and individual families. Community safety concerns have not been highlighted as a major issue for villagers during the Parish Plan process, although villagers would like to see a more regular police presence in the village particularly following incidents of theft and petty vandalism. PCSO's

have attended and been very helpful when incidents have occurred. They have held a surgery in the village and are also keen for the village to re-establish a Neighbourhood Watch group. Thames Valley Police now run monthly 'Have Your Say' meetings where people can meet their local police officers and raise any community safety issues they may have. These meetings allow neighbourhood teams to quickly identify and respond to specific local priorities that need attention. To tackle these issues, they will work with other organisations such as the District and Parish Councils.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Improve awareness of local policing initiatives and increase police visibility in the Baldons	Work with the neighbourhood policing team to arrange more Have Your Say meetings in the Parish	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs	● ●	➡

the Baldons: young people & church

	Provide information on Have Your Say meetings for residents in newsletter, on noticeboards etc	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs, Parish Council	●●	➡
	Work with neighbourhood policing team to encourage residents to sign up to the police community messaging service.	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs, Parish Council	●●	➡

young people

A children's play area was proposed as part of the millennium celebrations but the proposal was abandoned as a result of objections raised and the lack of consensus on an acceptable site. Since then the number of children in the villages has increased and the questionnaire

results show strong support for a playground. Accordingly a playground working party has been assembled, who will work on the siting, design, costing and financing of a new playground. A key part of their role will be to carry out further consultation with the village on the proposals.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Provide a play area for children	Working party to identify and secure site, determine equipment requirements, source financing and oversee implementation	Playground working party	●●●	➡

church

The questionnaire responses indicated that the Church is valued as a body as well as the buildings being recognised as historical centres of the villages. The preferred choice for Services was traditional, with a family element, especially including provision for younger members.

As a result, the PCC are working on future Sunday School provision, as well as actively exploring bringing other events into the buildings. The overall aim is to ensure that the Church, through its members and its buildings, initiates and participates in other village activities.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Enhance link between the roles and services the community would like and those provided by the Church	Church group to build up Sunday School provision	PCC	●●●	➡
	PCC to actively explore bringing other events into the buildings and ensuring that the Church, through its members, initiates and participates in other village activities.	PCC	●●●	➡

the Baldons: village school

village school

Marsh Baldon School is a long-established part of the community and there are pupils at the school whose parents, grandparents, and other relatives went to the school themselves. Still today, the majority of its pupils come from within the priority catchment area of the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay. The answers to the questionnaire highlighted the value villagers place on the school in terms of its contribution to a vibrant community, helping to ensure this is a 'living village', and also emphasised its importance in attracting young families to the villages. The sight of children and young people in the village is also valued. People said they would like to see children participating in community activities and more opportunities for villagers to go into school during the day. The school has forged strong links with the day centre, children joining the seniors on a regular basis, singing at the seniors' party, and also encourages villagers to contribute by talking to the children about different professions. Villagers have been encouraged, via articles in the parish newsletter, to attend school events, for example plays and church services. The headteacher will continue to contribute to the parish newsletter, including highlighting further events to which

villagers are invited. Parking is an issue for many schools and ours is no exception; parking outside the school including wear to the edge of the green was of concern to many villagers in their responses. There is now a joint school / parish council group to address issues of parking at the school on an ongoing basis. In addition, 'all-day' parking of cars at the school has now been limited to a small area in front of the school. The school also continues to take active steps to encourage walking and cycling to school.

The sight of children and young people in the village is also valued. People said they would like to see children participating in community activities and more opportunities for villagers to go into school during the day.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Deal with parking issues at school	School parking – liaison group between school and parish council to deal with this issue	Parish Council / School Governors	● ● ●	
Maintain and enhance village school's position at the heart of the community.	School to continue to publish future events in the newsletter	School, newsletter editor	● ● ●	
	Parish Council and School Governors to continue to work in partnership	School Governors, Parish Council	● ● ●	
	Encourage school partnership events such as the recent link with the Baldon Players	School, Baldon Players, Church etc.	● ● ●	
Encourage school to continue contributing to the village	Results of the survey to be shared with the school and governors	Parish Plan Steering Committee, school and governors	● ● ●	✓
	Ask the school to include information in the Parish Plan document about the points raised.	School and governors	● ● ●	✓

housing

Provision of new housing is an ongoing issue throughout South Oxfordshire, with affordable homes and a potential new development at Grenoble Road being the key issues in the Baldons

Affordable homes

The increased cost of housing has changed the structure of the villages. The majority of smaller houses have been extended and it is almost impossible for many of the children born and brought up in the villages to afford to return and buy without help. The Parish Council supports the desire expressed in the questionnaire for some affordable housing in order to meet local need and maintain a sustainable community, and have been working with ORCC, SODC SOHA and landowners for some time. However, it has not so far been possible to identify land which is supported by planning policy and landowners. It is hoped this housing need can be met through the more flexible planning policies that are emerging in SODC's Core Strategy documents and the Localism Bill.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Provision of a small additional amount of housing, depending on need demonstrated	Feedback to be passed on to SODC, to be used in further planning of affordable housing in the context of the SODC core strategies and local plan	PCC	● ● ●	✓
	Feedback to be passed on to Parish Council, SODC, land owners and housing association to be used in further planning of affordable housing in the context of the Localism Bill and SODC Local Development Framework	PCC	● ● ●	➡
	Assessment of Housing Need to be updated		● ● ●	➡
	Further work to be carried out to identify one or more suitable potential sites ("Rural Exception Sites"), to be reviewed with SODC rural housing enabler		● ● ●	➡

Oxford Green Belt / Grenoble Road

In 2003/4 the community was shocked to learn of proposals by Oxford City to develop land south of Oxford City off Grenoble Road outside the city boundary for housing and mixed development. The plan for up to 4000 houses was vigorously opposed by the Parish Council along with others including SODC. The development would

have encroached towards Toot Baldon reducing very significantly the Oxford Green Belt. The village has welcomed the rejection of the plans in 2010. The Parish Council have consistently argued that a small number of houses in villages is a preferable strategy for SODC to pursue as is reflected in the Core strategy documents.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Continue opposition to future local developments similar to the Grenoble Road proposals	Pass results on to the Parish Council and recommend continued opposition to any future developments	Parish Council, SODC	● ● ●	➡

the Baldons: charities

charities

The Elizabeth Lane's School Foundation and The Baldons Fuel Charity

The trustees of both Elizabeth Lane's School Foundation (ELSF) and The Baldons Fuel Charity (TBFC) have considered the results of the Parish Plan and for each charity the main issue to be addressed relates to the community awareness of the charities and their respective purposes and objectives.


Object of ELSF is to apply the income towards:

■ benefits not normally provided by the local authority for Marsh Baldon School as agreed between the Trustees and School Governors; ■ the promotion of religious instruction in the doctrines of the Church of England through a Sunday School or otherwise; and ■ awarding grants, scholarships, allowances etc. to promote education to individuals who are

under the age of 25 and in need of financial assistance and resident in Marsh Baldon or have attended Marsh Baldon School for not less than two years.

The main business of The Baldons Fuel Charity is the settling of fuel allowances for elderly parishioners

and the granting of special payments for hardship cases or for educational purposes. Efforts will be made by the trustees of both charities to advertise their existence (in particular new arrivals to the villages) by extended and continuing use of the newsletter, notice boards, village website and encouraging the spread of the benefits by word of mouth. Furthermore, a summary of the financial activities of both charities will be published annually.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Local charities to improve parishioners' awareness of their aims and objectives	Charities to look at a variety of advertising activities	Elizabeth Lane School Foundation, Baldons Fuel Charity	● ● ●	

communications

The Baldons have a number of communication channels, including the newsletter, a village website and notice boards, as well as an informal e-mail distribution list. An interesting theme came through the questionnaire results: villagers would like to see information on local societies, local facilities and local transport provided through all channels.

Newsletter The newsletter was for many years produced under the auspices of the Church, and paid for by subscription, with a small amount of advertising. This was reviewed in the light of the Parish Plan questionnaire results, which expressed a desire for the newsletter to be distributed to all households, and for it to be supported by the Parish Council through the precept. The result is that the annual cost of the newsletter is now divided between the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Parish Councils and the PCC, and supported by advertising, so that the Newsletter can now be delivered free to every household in the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay. The editorial team will also be considering how best to include more of the requested information and the feasibility of some colour printing. Distribution of the newsletter by e-mail is not under

discussion in the immediate future, but the newsletter is always available on the village website for those who wish to access it in digital form.

Website The questionnaire results showed that the vast majority of villagers have internet access – well over 90% of those aged 20-59 years, with 100% of those aged 8-19 years having internet access. Even in the group with the lowest level of internet access – those aged 60 and above – 63% of respondents have internet access. In light of this information, a village website presents a huge opportunity to store and share information about the Baldons. A new website was developed in 2010 – www.baldons.org.uk – which includes a wide variety of information, and will be developed over time to include even more. Village groups, societies and clubs have their own pages which they are able to update themselves. The questionnaire suggested that the facility to book facilities and events via the website would be desirable and this facility can be included on the appropriate page. Many people also supported the idea of including information for new residents on the website. Such an information sheet has been prepared and will be available on the website.

the Baldons: communications

Noticeboards Although the noticeboards are fairly well used, there was support for these to provide more information from local groups and societies, as well as on local facilities. However, the most enthusiastic support was for a new board providing a village map and some historical information, and moves are underway to provide this new landmark for the village.

E-mail The questionnaire also highlighted support for a village e-mail distribution list, perhaps to be held by the Parish Council. The

Parish Council will consider the possibility and implications of holding and using this information.

New Residents' Information Sheet Through the results of the questionnaire, it was clear that there would also be value in creating a summary information sheet that could be given to new residents, covering areas such as Doctors' Surgeries, Parish, District and County Council contacts, the school, the church, clubs and groups, village hall etc.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Newsletter to respond to the views expressed on desired changes	Review funding, local facilities information and extended delivery.	Newsletter editorial committee, Parish Councils of the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay, PCC	● ● ●	
	Consult on desirability and feasibility of distribution by e-mail, with the possibility of an email opt-out	Newsletter editorial committee, website editors	● ● ●	
Website to respond to views expressed on desired changes	Ensure that website editor is aware of the feedback on the website from the survey	Parish Plan Steering Committee, website editor	● ● ●	
Noticeboard content owners to respond to views expressed on desired changes	Feedback to be passed onto the content owners	Parish Plan Steering Committee, noticeboard owners	● ●	
Provide historical information boards and village maps	Parish Council to look into the possibility of using suitable fund money (Millennium Fund?) to facilitate the production of the map	Parish Council	● ●	
	Board and map to be produced	Local Artist	● ●	
Consideration to be given to creation of a more formal list of village e-mail addresses, to improve communication within the villages.	Parish Council to consider whether they are prepared to hold such a list	Parish Council	● ●	
Publicise rules of green	Information to be available on the web	Website editor	● ● ●	
Create a "new residents" information sheet"	Find co-ordinator to collate and maintain a pack of useful information for new residents	Parish Plan Steering Committee	● ● ●	
	Pack to be produced in paper and web-based form	Co-ordinator, Website editors	● ● ●	

local environment

Footpaths The Parish Council has responsibility for overseeing the maintenance of footpaths, and continues to respond to residents' comments on this. Another key issue raised is the need to walk on the road in many locations, with the associated concerns about pedestrian safety. As mentioned above, following the support

expressed in the questionnaire to address this concern, in particular in the area through the bends at the Croft, an alternative off road route will be sought. The intention would be to create a permissive footpath, if agreement can be reached between local authorities and landowners.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Improve pedestrian safety	Explore possibility of additional permissive footpaths, particularly avoiding the bottleneck at the bottom of the Croft	Parish Council, volunteers, landowners and OCC	● ● ●	➡
	Arrange a footpath event to publicise local footpaths	Parish Council and volunteers	● ●	➡
Condition of footpaths / bridleways to be maintained / improved as appropriate	Parish Council to respond to specific concerns expressed.	Parish Council	● ●	➡



The view across the green from The Seven Stars: the elm trees were lost to Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s



the Baldons: local environment

The Green The green is valued by many people as a unique asset to the village and people use it at different times for a variety of activities. The green is most valued for its historic meadow appearance and open-ness and as a place for walking and playing, although its role as a meeting point for villagers and its ecological value are much appreciated too.

The Parish Council will be reviewing the desirability and feasibility of providing additional facilities on the green in the light of the questionnaire results. For example, dog waste bins were well supported in the questionnaire, but initial investigations suggest that there may be a high cost involved for a suitable contract for hygienic disposal of the contents.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Review the possibility of additional facilities on the Green	Parish Council to continue to review the need / desirability / feasibility of providing extra facilities	Parish Council	● ●	➡

Low Carbon Group There is feeling that we should be doing something locally to help reduce the impact of climate change and help reduce emissions. The creation of a low carbon group or similar will enable like minded people to come together to and push forward this agenda.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Local carbon capture scheme to be considered	Low carbon group to be established	Parish Plan Steering Committee, volunteers, ORCC, Community Action Group, County Council Travel Behaviour Team	● ●	➡

Conservation Area The Conservation Areas covering Marsh and Toot Baldon are designated for their special architectural and historic interest. There is strong support for the Conservation Areas within the villages and most felt that the size and location should

remain as at present. There was some support for an increase in size but few support a decrease. The Parish Council will work with the District Council during any review of the conservation area which takes place to ensure that these views are taken into account.

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Parishioners' views on Conservation Areas to be taken into account	Recommend to the Parish Council that the conservation area should remain the same size or be increased but not decreased	Parish Council, SODC	● ● ●	➡

A footpath to avoid the bottleneck at the bottom end of the Croft is a high priority, to improve pedestrian safety and provide a link between the houses on the Croft, the village hall and the green

the Baldons: action plan





action plan: summary of all actions

Using the results of the questionnaire, we have listed in the first section the actions that you felt were the highest priority for the villages to tackle. Other actions leading directly from the questionnaire are listed in the second section.

Highest Priority Actions


The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Improve pedestrian safety	Explore possibility of additional permissive footpaths, particularly avoiding the bottleneck at the bottom of the Croft	Parish Council, volunteers, landowners and OCC	● ● ●	➡
Provide a play area for children	Working party to identify and secure site, determine equipment requirements, source financing and oversee implementation	Playground working party	● ● ●	➡
Improve enforcement of "Access Only" designation	Improve advance signage on A4074	Parish Council and County Council	● ● ●	✓
	Improve advance signage at Toot Baldon (B480)	Parish Council and County Council	● ● ●	➡
	Working party to organise a traffic survey for access violations	Parish Council and Access Only survey working party	● ● ●	➡
Consider improvements to the village hall	Village Hall committee to re-visit feasibility of extension in light of results	Village Hall Committee with ORCC	● ● ●	👉
Improve village sports facilities	Form a village sports group to address sports-related actions as listed	Parish Plan Steering Committee	● ● ●	➡
Encourage school to continue contributing to the village	Results of the survey to be shared with the school and governors	Parish Plan Steering Committee, school and governors	● ● ●	✓
	Ask school to include information in the Parish Plan about the points raised	School and governors	● ● ●	✓
Deal with parking issues at school	School Parking – liaison group between school & parish council to deal with issue	Parish Council / School Governors	● ● ●	👉

the Baldons: action plan








The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Maintain and enhance village school's position at the heart of the community	School to continue to publish future events in the newsletter	School, newsletter editor	● ● ●	
	Parish Council and School Governors to continue to work in partnership	School Governors, Parish Council	● ● ●	
	Encourage school partnership events such as the recent link with the Baldon Players	School, Baldon Players, Church etc	● ● ●	
Continue opposition to any future local developments similar to the Grenoble Road proposals	Pass results on to the Parish Council and recommend continued opposition to any future developments	Parish Council, SODC	● ● ●	

Other Actions






EVENTS & FACILITIES

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Continue and maintain variety of village social events	Explore additional events	Combination of Village Hall Committee, Baldon Events Committee, Church and school	● ●	
Improve Sports Facilities	Consider potential location for football pitch	Sports Group and existing sports groups	●	
	Explore use of private tennis courts for village use	Sports Group and existing sports groups	●	
	Working party to explore feasibility of renovation of cricket pavilion as multi-sport changing facility	Sports Group and existing sports groups	● ●	
	Explore possibility of village hall accommodating changing facilities and tennis wall	Sports group and Village Hall Committee	● ●	

the Baldons: action plan

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Improve Village Hall Facilities	Village Hall Committee to consider projector and screen, sound system and hearing loop as part of possible renovations	Village Hall Committee with ORCC	● ●	
County Councillor David Turner to take note of library use statistics	Library use statistics to be passed to David Turner, highlighting school use of mobile library	Parish Council with County Council	● ● ●	
Creation of a local shop	Working party to be set up to consider the options	Parish Plan Steering Committee with ORCC	● ●	
Creation of a scheme for internet shopping by volunteers	Establish potential users via advertisement in newsletter and word of mouth	Shop working party	●	
	Mechanisms of payment to be investigated	Shop working party with ORCC	●	
	Potential shoppers to be approached	Shop working party	●	
Provision of additional / improved local facilities, paid for by the precept, to be considered.	Feedback to be passed on to the Parish Council with a recommendation that further consultation is required.	Parish Council	● ●	

TRANSPORT

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Address issues of traffic speed	Coordinated action with County Council and Thames Valley Police	Parish Council, County Council and Thames Valley Police	● ●	
	Consider 20mph speed limit	Parish Council, County Council and Thames Valley Police	● ●	
Encourage creation of a cycle path from the villages to Oxford (for example via Grenoble Road)	Continue to lobby County Council for path	Parish Council and County Council	● ● ●	
	Liaison with Sustrans	Parish Council and County Council	● ● ●	
Set up a volunteer transport scheme	Use list of volunteers from questionnaire to form a working group	Parish Plan Steering Committee	● ●	

the Baldons: action plan

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
	Working group to set up and run the scheme	Volunteer Transport working group, ORCC, County Council	● ●	➡
Improve awareness of local policing initiatives and increase police visibility in the Baldons	Work with the neighbourhood policing team to arrange more Have Your Say meetings in the Parish	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs	● ●	➡
	Provide information on Have Your Say meetings for residents in newsletter, on noticeboards etc	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs, Parish Council	● ●	➡
	Work with neighbourhood policing team to encourage residents to sign up to the police community messaging service	Thames Valley Police, PCSOs, Parish Council	● ●	➡






CHURCH

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Enhance link between the roles and services the community would like and those provided by the Church	Church group to build up Sunday School provision	PCC	● ● ●	➡
	PCC to actively explore bringing other events into the buildings and ensuring that the Church, through its members, initiates and participates in other village activities.	PCC	● ● ●	➡

HOUSING

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Provision of a small additional amount of housing, depending on need demonstrated	Feedback to be passed on to SODC, to be used in further planning of affordable housing in the context of the SODC core strategies and local plan	Parish Council, SODC	● ● ●	✓
	Feedback to be passed on to Parish Council, SODC, land owners and housing association to be used in further planning of affordable housing...	Parish Council, SODC, land owners, housing associations	● ● ●	➡



the Baldons: action plan

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
	in the context of the Localism Bill and SODC Local Development Framework			
	Assessment of Housing Need to be updated	Parish Council, ORCC, land owners, housing associations		
	Further work to be carried out to identify one or more suitable potential sites ("Rural Exception Sites"), to be reviewed with SODC rural housing enabler	Parish Council, ORCC, land owners, housing associations		

CHARITIES

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Local charities to improve parishioners' awareness of their aims and objectives	Charities to look at a variety of advertising activities	Elizabeth Lane School Foundation, Baldons Fuel Charity		

COMMUNICATIONS

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Newsletter to respond to the views expressed on desired changes	Review funding, local facilities information and extended delivery	Newsletter editorial committee, Parish Councils of the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay, PCC		
	Consult on desirability and feasibility of distribution by e-mail, with the possibility of an email opt-out	Newsletter editorial committee, website editors		
Website to respond to views expressed on desired changes	Ensure that website editor is aware of the feedback on the website from the survey	Parish Plan Steering Committee, website editor		
Noticeboard content owners to respond to views expressed on desired changes	Feedback to be passed onto the content owners	Parish Plan Steering Committee, noticeboard owners		
Provide historical information boards and village maps	Parish Council to look into the possibility of using suitable fund money (Millennium Fund?) to facilitate the production of the map	Parish Council		

the Baldons: action plan

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
	Board and map to be produced	Local artist	●●	➡
Consideration to be given to creation of a more formal list of village e-mail addresses, to improve communication within the villages	Parish Council to consider whether they are prepared to hold such a list	Parish Council	●●	➡
Publicise the rules of the village green	Information to be available on the website	Website editor	●●●	➡
Create a "new residents" information sheet"	Find co-ordinator to collate and maintain a pack of useful information for new residents	Parish Plan Steering Committee	●●●	✓
	Pack to be produced in paper and web-based form	Co-ordinator, Website editors	●●●	👉

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

The Action	How will it be tackled	By whom	Priority	Timescale
Publicise local footpaths	Arrange a footpath event to publicise local footpaths	Parish Council and volunteers	●●	➡
Condition of footpaths / bridleways to be maintained / improved as appropriate	Parish Council to respond to specific concerns expressed.	Parish Council	●●	➡
Review the possibility of additional facilities on the green	Parish Council to continue to review the need / desirability / feasibility of providing extra facilities	Parish Council	●●	➡
Local carbon capture scheme to be considered	Low carbon group to be established	Parish Plan Steering Committee, volunteers, ORCC, Community Action Group, County Council Travel Behaviour Team	●●	➡
Parishioners' views on Conservation Areas to be taken into account	Recommend to the Parish Council that the conservation area should remain the same size or be increased but not decreased	Parish Council, SODC	●●●	➡



School house pond

THE **BALDONS**2011 PARISH PLAN

PRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS The Baldons Parish Plan was produced by the Steering Committee, who are:

■ **Natasha Eliot (Chair)** ■ **Fran Butler** ■ **Paul Ferner** ■ **Elizabeth Gillespie** ■ **Ian Gillespie** ■ **Graham Hobbins** ■ **Zephany Slaney** ■ **Mark Tidmarsh** ■ **Dorothy Tonge**

The Parish Plan Steering Committee would like to thank the following for their help and support in the Parish Plan process, from initial consultation through to final plan production:

■ **Baldons Parish Council** ■ **Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**, particularly **Anton Nath** ■ **South Oxfordshire District Council**: **Emma Morris** and **Jane Boucher** ■ **Oxfordshire County Council**: **Kat Luddecke** ■ **The Seven Stars** ■ **The Mole Inn** ■ **Izzi Barne** ■ **Debbie Dance** ■ **Bruce Don** ■ **Monica Downton** ■ **Revd. Ros Latham** ■ **John Maskell** ■ **Veronica Sandilands** ■ **Ralph Slaney**

PHOTOGRAPHY Thank you to **James Eliot** and **Peter Burke** for the 2011 photographs in the plan. The 1880 photographs come from a book given by the village to the Thomson family when they left Baldon House, and which was kindly returned to the village in the 1980s by the late **Sir John Thomson**. Thank you to **Lisa Duke** and for all her help with design and printing.
