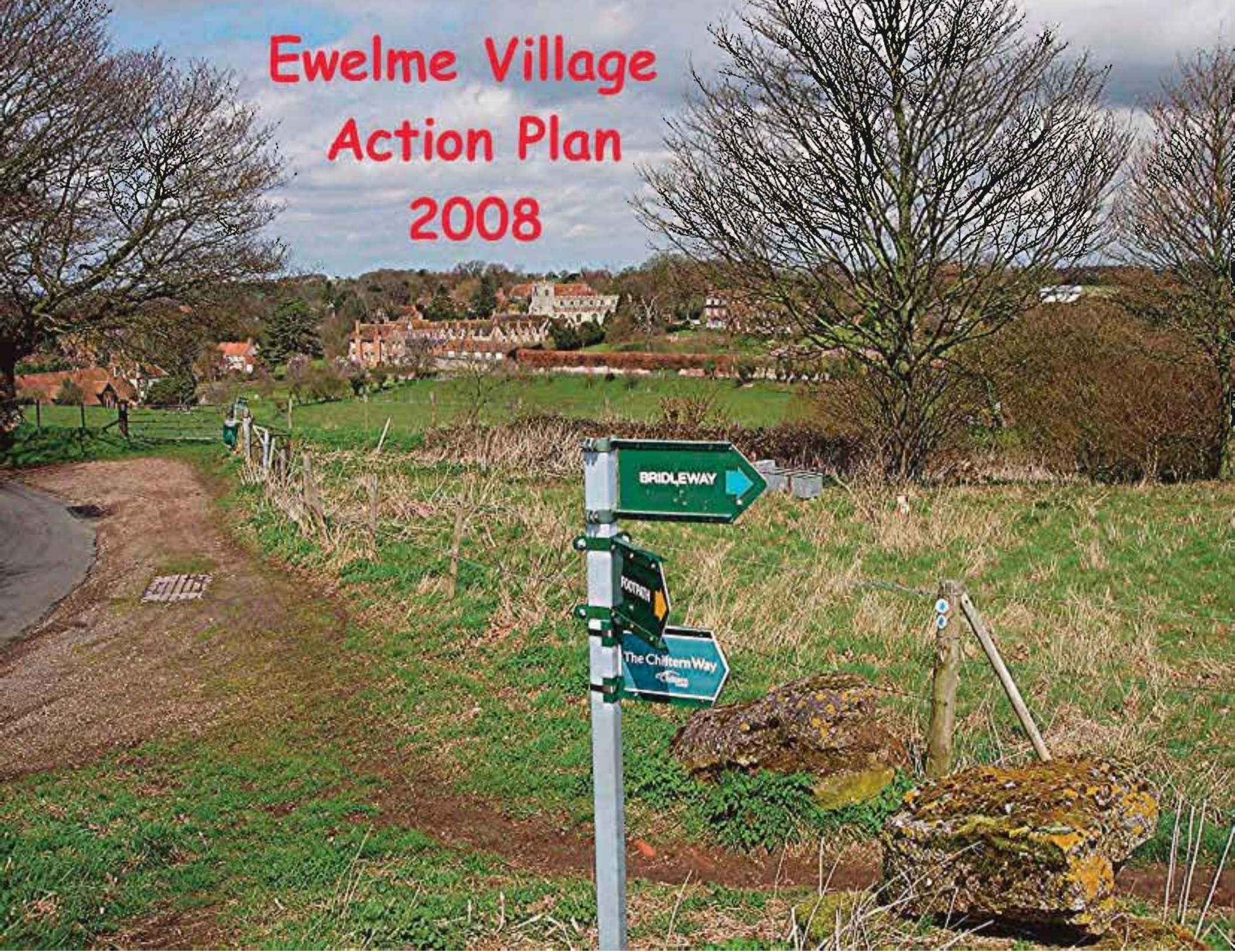


# Ewelme Village Action Plan 2008



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## 1. FOREWORD

This document represents the culmination of about a year's work which began in March 2007 following the successful application to Oxfordshire County Council for a Grant for the purpose of preparing a Village Action Plan - something that many other small rural communities were already undertaking. Ewelme Parish Council had, in 1997/98, prepared a "Village Appraisal" based upon small groups thinking about issues as they saw them, developing a questionnaire and assessing whether these were supported by the residents. This approach was reasonably successful but, 10 years later, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council was encouraging villages to develop Action Plans based on ideas collected over a period of time from as wide a representation of the residents as possible.

With ORCC's support, a small group of enthusiastic individuals prepared and presented this concept during an open meeting in April 2007 with a view to an initial identification of the residents' concerns, aspirations and ideas for the village's future. There was a good attendance at this meeting and there was a clear majority in favour of preparing an Action Plan along the lines advised by ORCC. This document is the result and we hope that the reader will find it interesting and inspirational in steering our village over the next 10 - 20 years - where this is within our control. The Plan represents **the collective voice of the people of Ewelme** as far as possible and tries to identify where support may be needed from outside the community toward achieving our goals.

The general decline in rural community life can be attributed to many 'modern' factors and Ewelme has suffered like most other villages. In recent years we have lost shops, a public house and local employment opportunities whilst there has also been some decline in interest in many social activities and organisations fostering the community spirit. Is this a trend which the residents of Ewelme would wish to combat or to stand by and watch further decline? That oft-quoted phrase "use it or lose it" has, perhaps, never been more relevant.

Whilst the Steering Committee has been the driving force behind this work, it is recognised that many others have been involved along the 'journey' and we record our appreciation of the assistance given in so many ways. Thank you.

*Brian Smailes, Chairman, Steering Committee Dec.2008*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Following the success of the April Open "Kick-Off" meeting, the first step was to formalise the Steering Committee from among the initial 'enthusiasts' and those who had expressed an interest in direct involvement. This was made up of a representative cross section of the community and consisted of eleven people in all. Two members of the Parish Council were included and others represented the School, the Church, the Ewelme Society, older residents of long standing and recent arrivals alike. A representative from RAF Benson - as our immediate neighbours - was also included.

As a result of the input received during the Kick-Off Meeting, the main 'issues' were readily identified and two Work Groups were established to further research these critical subjects, (the Village Shop and Traffic) reporting back to the Steering Committee in subsequent meetings.

The information gathering process - the "Consultation" - attempted to solicit views from as wide a section of the community as possible using techniques including "Drop-In Days", questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, etc. Regular progress reports were published using the "Ewelme News", the village website and notice boards. The opportunity was taken to carry out surveys during events such as the Annual Fete and "Like/Dislike" views gathered from the school children.

It has to be noted that there was some very minor apathy and even opposition observed during the early days. As it became clear, however, that this was a serious, structured approach to highlighting the collective view of the residents of Ewelme, this disappeared and it could probably be claimed that there was some strengthening of the community spirit. We tried to introduce some 'fun' into the exercise by using (e.g.) a "How well do you know your village?" photo competition and ensuring that open meetings usually had a bottle or two of wine available!

So why were we undertaking this work and producing a Plan?

- *To focus on those issues of concern to residents and their aspirations for the future.*
- *To identify areas where the quality of life in Ewelme might be improved.*
- *To ensure that Ewelme can retain its charm and ambiance in the face of whatever adverse threats may materialise in the foreseeable future.*
- *To ensure that, by way of this Action Plan, the views of residents are visible to Local Authorities / Service Providers and are taken into consideration within the 'bigger picture' strategies.*
- *To produce a document which identifies specific actions required and by whom and to provide a platform for monitoring progress toward the achievement of these goals for the good of the village.*

### 3. VILLAGE COMMUNITY PROFILE

Ewelme nestles in a small valley at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, just half a mile from the Icknield Way, which was a major east-west track way long before the Romans came to the locality. The ancient Ridgeway track winds its way westwards another half mile further on, atop Ewelme Downs. Situated 4 miles east of the once strategically important historic town of Wallingford, Ewelme is also 16 miles equidistant from the cities of Oxford and Reading. Modern transport links benefit from the M40 being 6 miles away, giving fast access to London to the south and the Midlands to the north. The village is set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a major portion is also designated a Conservation Area. The name Ewelme is derived from a Saxon word meaning a welling up of water and the many springs seeping up through the chalk drain down through the Ewelme Brook to the River Thames at Benson, 2 miles away. The magnificent, picturesque view of the mediaeval eastern end of the village is one of the most photographed and filmed scenes, depicting the mellow brick architecture of a bygone age.



In the Domesday Book of 1086 Ewelme was a fairly small manor held by Gilbert de Gand but suddenly gained prominence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of an advantageous marriage to the heiress of the manor, Thomas Chaucer, son of the famous courtier and poet acquired the lands. Their daughter Alice, born in 1404, through three materially advantageous marriages, became a wealthy and politically influential character, whose grandson was briefly heir to the Plantagenet throne. It was through her third marriage to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk in 1430, that Ewelme experienced its zenith. Alice and William enlarged and improved the 13<sup>th</sup> Century church and her parents' moated manor house. They built in red brick, a material new to the area, the complex of the Almshouses and a Grammar School designed to serve the poor men and able children of their village. Their manor house was designated a Palace when William became Duke of Suffolk in 1448. Alice died in 1475 and her magnificent alabaster tomb is visited by a steady flow of tourists to this day. After the defeat of Richard III at Bosworth in 1485 the de la Pole dynasty, with its strong, legitimate claim to the throne, was gradually obliterated, either in battle or by execution, by the victorious Tudors. By 1513 the manor was forfeited to the Crown, and Ewelme Palace became a favourite lodging of Henry VIII and then his daughter Elizabeth I. Due to Henry VIII's personal holding of the Chantry Chapel of St Mary's Church, its two beautiful tombs escaped destruction in the dissolution of 1536. By 1609 the Palace had fallen into dereliction and another Manor house was eventually built in its place.

Ewelme was on the cusp of the fighting in the Civil War, being briefly held by the King's nephew Prince Rupert of the Rhine. However, it was a Parliamentarian General named Francis Martyn, a Ewelme man, who saved the church and its treasures from desecration a second time, by forbidding his troops to sack it. Thus, having survived dissolution and destruction, the charming, magnificent mediaeval heart of Ewelme is still preserved - mainly as William and Alice constructed it.

For several hundred years from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Ewelme evolved into large agricultural estates owned by a succession of wealthy yeoman farmers. None of these families survives and the grand houses they once owned are now occupied by more well-to-do incomers. The villagers were mostly labourers on the land, living in small tied cottages where large families were reared.

Ribbon development gradually stretched the village along the The Street to the west, with a cross-section of architecture from various eras. Thus, thatched Elizabethan beamed cottages and Victorian brick villas exist side by side with modern houses. In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the first social housing was built along what is now called Green Lane with the provision of six dwellings. A further twelve Council houses were added between the Wars and sixteen more in Hampden Way during the late 1950s. These new houses were particularly appreciated by the local young married couples, giving them the opportunity to move out of their parents' cramped cottages and set up on their own.

During the early 1960s, three major private housing developments were built in the village. Eleven houses were erected along Green Lane on the former orchard of The Old Mill. In 1968 twelve houses were built on the site of The Mount, an Elizabethan manor house, and is now known as Chaucer Court. Finally, an eight house complex was built on land in Eyre's Lane. These developments attracted a major influx of new

residents from other localities who, mainly, drove to their workplaces in areas outside the village. Fortunately, this increase in population by families with young children has enabled the village school to flourish and, so far, escape the threat of closure. Furthermore, due to its peaceful, unspoilt charm and yet geographical convenience for other towns and transport links, Ewelme is also appealing to retired newcomers.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century the Watercress Beds industry was started up along the Ewelme stream, and Ewelme watercress was taken to the railhead at Watlington to be taken, via the main line at Princes Risborough, to Covent Garden. This successful industry lasted approximately 100 years, ending commercially in the late 1980s. However, the watercress work force was comparatively small and it was not until the mid-1930s that the Cowley Motor Works in Oxford enticed many of the men folk away from the land to earn higher wages in the car factories. This migration of labour coincided with the mechanisation on the land enabling local farmers to shed most of their labour force. Perhaps the greatest modern social impact on Ewelme was the building of RAF Benson, begun in 1937 and completed in 1939. The Station provided further employment for the villagers. The Rowse Honey Factory, situated in the heart of the village, also gave employment from 1952 until it was relocated to Wallingford in 1986 (its old site by the Kings Pool was used to build a number of private houses in a style and materials which blend in well with the area.) Today, Ewelme Coachworks, off the High Street, operates a high class body repair garage and Grundons, the largest waste management business in the country, is located on the southern edge of the village, giving employment to some villagers.

In modern times Ewelme has suffered the same problems as many small English country villages in the decline in the number of its shops. Although Ewelme once boasted many shops that served the needs of the community and three public houses, today there is but one public house left. The loss of the only remaining village shop and post office, 8 years ago, was a bitter blow to the villagers. Also, the pressures of increased traffic place an ever increasing burden on narrow lanes. Fortunately, in 1968 The Ewelme Society was formed to lobby for the busy B4009 road route to be diverted away from the village and to have the village designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The derelict Watercress Beds were purchased by The Chiltern Society in 2000 and the site has been renovated and is now maintained by an enthusiastic body of volunteers.

Ewelme's timeless tranquility and rich historical heritage continues to attract daily visitors to the Church and Almshouses. It is also a strong magnet to former school children who regularly return from afar. One pupil who left the school expressed a common sentiment after his last visit ... *"the magical quality is that very little has changed. On a quiet Sunday afternoon with only the school building and no cars or people to give a reference to the decade, I could easily have been ten years old again."*

The Duke and Duchess of Suffolk's benevolent legacy has continued for nearly 700 years. However, Ewelme will inevitably come under threat from the pressures of our modern world - dependent as it is on the perceived need for ever more housing and the blight of the ubiquitous motor car. It will require perceptive planning and considerate decision making to preserve that 'magical quality' for future generations.





*Church of St. Mary the Virgin*



*The School*

## 4. The Consultation Process

The serious work of "consultation" with the Ewelme village community started in April 2007 when a "Kick-Off" meeting was held in the village hall.

Just under 100 people turned up for this meeting and they heard a presentation from ORCC, short talks by representatives from two other villages ( which had completed their Action Plans previously ) and a "Briefing" presentation from the Chairman of the Steering Committee. Many questions were raised and lively discussions followed (helped along with free wine!).

The main objective was to give everyone the opportunity to identify their concerns and aspirations - the "Issues" - and good use was made of "post-it" notes on boards placed around the room. The emphasis was on informality with open discussion and no comments barred! The evening was generally judged to be a great success and there was unanimous support for proceeding with the exercise.



It was very apparent from this meeting that two issues dominated - the strong desire to have a village shop (which the community had been without for about 8 years) and the problems of traffic parking, speeding and road conditions. There were many other issues raised and more detail of these is given in Section 5. The meeting was also used to gather details of those individuals prepared to assist the Steering Committee - in whatever form - and these provided the basis for Working Groups to be established later.

The next step was to collect all the information gathered from the Kick-Off meeting, analyse the views and bring the major issues into focus. A "Drop-In Day" was also organised giving another opportunity for villagers to talk to members of the Steering committee. This attracted a steady stream of people keen to discuss their views and it was particularly gratifying to meet with a number of the younger residents during this day.



In order to take this a step further and prioritise the issues, a questionnaire was prepared and delivered to every household in the village which produced an excellent response level of 70% - thanks to the efforts of our team of enthusiastic helpers.

There were some interesting variations in what people considered to be the highest priorities reflecting age group, gender and location but the overall result clearly indicated the "Top Three" to be:

**The Shop**  
**Traffic, Parking, Speeding, etc**  
**Affordable Housing BUT New Building Limitations**

Two Work Groups were established to research the two high priority areas in greater detail - the question of Affordable Housing was an on-going activity with the background studies already completed by the Parish Council. During two days of the Bank Holiday - August 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> - members of the Steering committee supported by other helpers established a stall to display our "Work in Progress" and take another opportunity to talk to many people. A "How well do you know your Village?" photo competition proved a big draw (made more competitive due to the offer of a bottle of Champagne to the winner!). We carried out a number of one-to-one interviews with young people (parents were not allowed to be present!). The Village School also held their own "Like/Dislike" survey for the younger children in addition to a 'Logo' competition.



Finally, opportunities were taken to talk informally to many people during other meetings, progress reports were issued regularly and posted on village notice boards, on the village web site and in the "Ewelme News" giving further ways for individuals to comment and add their views.

The collected views were analysed and compiled to form the basis of this Action Plan document which was presented, in Draft form, to the village residents in July. Most regrettably, the attendance at this presentation was poor - particularly in view of the excellent response and support given by the community at the 'Kick Off' meeting over a year ago. However, notwithstanding this apparent lack of interest and not having received any adverse criticism, the Steering Committee agreed to press ahead to finalise the Plan for publication. Comments made by OCC, ORCC and SODC have been incorporated where applicable.

## 5. The Issues

As already mentioned, there were differing views as to the importance of some identified issues and, in some cases, the issues were conflicting: the majority were anxious to see the return of a **village shop** - probably run as a community venture selling local produce - and this was the case for all age groups other than the "over 65s" who considered traffic problems to be of greater concern. The female preference was for the shop whilst the male concern was in relation to the **traffic problems**. There was some suggestion that there should be more incentive for **small business** and more **opportunities for youth employment**. However, there was a general resistance to any development likely to impact on the attractiveness of the village or add to the already congested High Street. There was recognition of the need to have some - few in number - **affordable houses** available to the younger village residents BUT **strong resistance** to any significant new housing or "in-fill" building. As the last affordable housing needs survey was completed some years ago, this has been recently updated. There are proposed plans being submitted to SODC for the garages in Hampden Way to be demolished to make way for three new affordable home units.

There were some favourable comments regarding the improvements, made by the Chiltern Society, to the **water cress beds** and nature reserve BUT there was a marked concern regarding over-commercialisation leading to increased numbers of visitors and further traffic congestion / inconsiderate parking particularly (and understandably) from those residents living close by.

The problems involving **traffic, parking and speeding** were an emotive and much discussed area of concern. Speeding was more of a perceived problem and generally not borne out by the "Speed Indicator Device" surveys that had been done earlier. There were, however, particular problems related to Green Lane, Rabbit Hill and the junction at Beggarsbush Hill and Clacks Lane. Surveys carried out to monitor parking along High Street confirmed that there could be particular congestion difficulties in the areas near the School drop off points, outside the Village Hall and in the area of the Watercress Beds. All of these problems were associated with, either, particular times of day (the School and Pre-School drop-off / collect times) or specific events (Nature Reserve / Watercress Beds visitors days and events taking place in the Village Hall). In fact, Ewelme must be one of only a few villages in the County where there are **no parking facilities associated with a Village Hall**. It should be noted that the new Village Store may result in further parking problems in this vicinity. With regard to the Watercress Beds, this is a particularly narrow stretch of the High Street already congested by residents' parking. The School area - being on a road junction - is potentially dangerous but steps have already been taken as a result of the Headmaster's initiative and a "Traffic Plan" issued which should ease this problem.



*Parking outside the Village Hall – note that the “Keep Clear” area is often abused!*



*Typical parking congestion outside the Watercress Centre (work days, etc.)*

It is noted that the Parish Council is proposing to extend the car park at the east end of the village (Cow Common) but consideration needs to be given to making a (small) area available for parking at the **western** end of the village and also, ideally, **in the vicinity of the village hall**.

Some - but not all - residents expressed the view that not enough is done to **attract visitors** to our historic village nor are there facilities to enhance visitors enjoyment (tea shop, access to village archive, display boards for footpaths, sale of books and CDs, etc.). There were some comments regarding the **appearance** of the village and how this might be improved (removal of excess road “furniture”, overhead cables, improvements to the Kings Pool area, additional tree planting, etc.). There were concerns regarding the “abandonment” of the **Manor House** but this has been addressed recently and the area much improved by the Ewelme Trust.

On the **social issues**, it was noted that there was much support for the "Big Events" such as the Horticultural Show, Pig Roast, Fun Runs, Annual Village Quiz, etc. but many felt that more could be done to integrate all sections of the village. There were some feelings expressed by residents to the north of the village (Martyn's Way and Hampden Way) that they felt on the "periphery" of the village and were not being fully included in village activities. More social activities appealing to a wider range of residents were wanted such as the Skittle Evenings and Race Nights - though there were no new positive suggestions!

The surveys carried out seeking the views of the **young residents** produced some interesting comments. Many cited the natural beauty of the village and its surroundings, the friendliness, the school, the peacefulness, etc. The principal dislikes included the number of cars (4WDs) and speeding, the narrowness of roads and the dangers arising from lack of footpaths, no shop, "no snow" and the pub !

As far as sports activities and clubs were concerned, the younger children were quite happy with facilities in - or associated with - the School. On the other hand, most of the older teenagers used the facilities available in the surrounding towns and felt that, for them, the village had little to offer. There was some enthusiasm for the introduction of a Youth Forum and more use of the village hall specifically for the teenagers. A number of young people expressed the hope that there could be a swimming pool in the village .....it was a particularly hot day during these interviews !!

The lack of **Broadband** access to a number of villagers continues to be a burning issue and poor cell phone communication was mentioned in one area.

Finally, many residents were clearly concerned as to the impact of any future significant changes in operations at **RAF Benson** and the possibility of closure - though recent reports in the media indicate that, if anything, further additions to the helicopter squadrons are to be made. The expansion of helicopter activity and additional personnel can be anticipated to have both positive and negative impacts on Ewelme and the area (the latter probably being more likely! ).

Similarly, the impact of any developments of **Grundon's** activities and the effects of heavy lorry movements on local roads were frequently mentioned.

Other serious concerns / threats have been noted more recently which were not apparent during the Consultation process and these are also addressed in the Action Plan .

These included:

- ❖ **The Church** - since the untimely death of Revd Martin Garner, it was feared that the Church might not continue to provide the spiritual needs of the community and that the fabric of this beautiful and historically important building could be at risk. However, a new 'house-for-duty' post has been announced and the Revd Jonathan Meyer will be starting in January 2009. He will work with the parishes of the Ewelme Benefice; Brightwell Baldwin and Cuxham with Easington. His duties will include the needs of the Almshouses and School in Ewelme.
- ❖ **The Manor House** - the poor condition of the buildings and the vandalism which had taken place during the long period of no occupancy was a concern. However, the Ewelme Trust have now completed refurbishment and a new tenant will be taking up residence in the New Year.
- ❖ **The School** - there had been rumours suggesting that, in spite of excellent OFSTED reports, the school may come under pressure to be amalgamated with another. However, a statement by Oxfordshire County Council states that "*Ewelme will be covered when our School support Services hold the Locality Review for Thame / Watlington and - assuming that we receive approval for our primary capital strategy ..... There is a presumption against closure of small primary schools but we will look at new models of leadership and federations where appropriate* "

All of the above mentioned issues reflect the inputs we have gathered from the residents during the course of the Consultation process and more recently. A number of the items raised are already being addressed by the Parish Council in one form or another but the interpretation and development of these comments into specific targeted Actions are covered in the following section. It is particularly gratifying to note the development of the Shop Working Group into the newly formed Community Shop Management Company with shares being taken up by residents and funding well on the way to the required target for start-up. Building works have recently commenced with the anticipated opening of our new Village Community Store early in 2009.



## 6. The Action Plan

## SUMMARY

The consolidated list of actions in this Section is based primarily on the actual issues as documented during the first phase of the Action Plan work. Each one is reproduced verbatim so that we can see the origin of the concern.

The "action" has been interpreted as the *essence* of the issue. It tries to embrace any duplicated concerns. Actions ideally are separated into three groups - those which should be tackled by the **community**, those which are dependent on some **service provider** (contractor or local authority) and those which are **strategic** - "big" long term ones normally to be included in any District, County or Region "Structure Plan". Some of the actions are a mixture of all three and we have not tried to disentangle them just to fit the model. In each case, we have tried to identify broadly how it might be tackled, without being too prescriptive. That's the job of whoever seems to be the best "owner" of the task. This document will encourage people to think hard about who is going to take each action forward.

Although the Action Plan is to be adopted by the Parish Council it is not implied that all actions are its responsibility. The continuing role of the Steering Committee will be to support the PCC, to act as the agency for motivating, monitoring / reporting progress and facilitating where applicable. It is anticipated that, during this implementation phase, the SCC will meet every three months. Ideally, it is suggested that a "champion" or co-ordinator - with the support of a Work Group - should be established to progress the listed actions under the headings of "*Economic/Commercial*", "*Social*", "*Environment*" and "*Traffic*".

The costs related to the various actions identified range from just volunteers, through some needing a little "pump priming", to major tasks which will demand a proper business plan.

## CONSOLIDATED ACTION LIST

### ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL

The village survey feedback clearly shows the desire for a village shop to sell essential items and local, fresh produce. Equally it is seen as a vital meeting place to provide a daily sense of community and support to a small population of otherwise potentially isolated, rural residents. The need for affordable housing is a high priority, together with things for our young people to do. Lack of transport makes village life very restrictive for those unable to drive. The thread of companionship, support and kindness for all ages is implicit.

#	Recorded issue	The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescales	Responsibility Lead & partners	Resource implications	Monitoring responsibility	
COMMUNITY	C.1	Re-instate the village shop – community store, local produce etc	Set up a village shop	Create Working Group to gather the information and requirements  Set up Management Committee to develop the plan in detail	High	Apr 09	Village Store Association Management Committee  Working Group	Significant working capital	Parish Council  SODC
	C.2	Affordable housing	Implement affordable housing draft plan	Update previous draft plan Secure SODC commitment to implementation Make it happen	High	Dec 08  2011	Parish Council + SODC	TBD	Steering Committee  SODC
	C.3	Tea shop during summer months and all year coffee shop	Create viable daytime social centre for residents and visitors	Optimise with shop and watercress beds plans  Train, employ youngsters	medium	Jun 09	Working Group  Village Store Association	£100 working capital	Steering Committee  + Store Management Committee

C.4	Encourage small, local businesses and create youth employment	Develop local work opportunities	Promote Ewelme directory Stimulate outlets for local product Train youngsters	medium	Apr 09	Working Group	£200	Steering Committee +SODC Economic Development
C.5	Re-introduce what Ewelme is famous for – watercress sales	Promote and use our natural resource	Research problems with determination to solve them Develop small scale sales Develop labour force	medium	Apr 09	Working Group SODC Economic Development; Public Health;	TBD	Parish Council + Steering Committee
C.6	Links to “sustainable Wallingford”	Encourage local environmental responsibility	Publicise more Provide volunteer transport to help people visit	low	Dec 08	Working Group	nil	Steering Committee
C.7	Use local farm produce	Create outlets	Promote with directory Work with Store Management Committee to develop outlet	medium	Dec 08	Working Group + Store Management Committee	£200	Steering Committee  SODC

## Comments

**C.4** The district council will be tackling these issues at a district level and although it will not be delivering projects specific to individual villages it will be providing a business support service to new and growing businesses, which Ewelme will be able to benefit from. Although the Council isn't directly involved in providing training it provides a signposting service training providers and agencies which support training and so can help Ewelme to identify training options.

**SOCIAL**

The issues which surfaced are concerned with helping everyone feel part of the village (all ages, all backgrounds) ... things for young people (without transport) to do ... concern for the long term future of the fabric of the church and school (the visible heart and legacy of the village). Events which bring together the whole village are seen as a way to build the rapport between all and sundry. The actions are primarily self-help led by the Community Group

	#	Recorded issue	The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescales	Responsibility Lead & partners	Resource implications	Monitoring responsibility
COMMUNITY	S.1	More say by the youth	Young people feel disenfranchised - actively engage them	Give them a voice Create a Youth Council Find a leader	High	Dec 08	Community Group  Local evangelical volunteer; young people themselves + SODC	£500 and volunteers	Parish Council  + Steering Committee
	S.2	Increase activities for teenagers	Create and sustain some opportunities. There is nothing to do in the village unless you can drive	Get the Youth Council Forum going to consult with them	Medium	Dec 08	Youth Council	minimal	Community Group +Steering Committee
	S.3	Promote use of RAF Benson, neighbouring towns sports facilities	This really an action supporting S.2	See S.2 Identify what's available	Medium	Dec 08	Youth Council + RAF Community Officer	minimal	Community Group +Steering Committee
	S.4	Fun runs for kids	Create menu and more things for youngsters to do	Consult with school	Medium	annual	Youth Council + School	£250	Community Group +Steering Committee

S.5	Health walks for different age groups	Get age groups enjoying things together	Develop with Green Gym	Medium	Oct 09	Community Group, Local Doctors: Parish Council	£150	District Council +Steering Committee
S.6	More use of Village Hall	Make Village Hall a more used social centre	Encourage ALL village organisations to use it.  Implement broadband service to Village Hall with WiFi hotspot. Opens new opportunities for younger people	High	Dec 08	Village Hall Management  Parish Council	minimal	Parish Council +Steering Committee
S.7	More support for existing organisations	Assist with skills and support. Some existing organisations are finding it hard to survive financially	Each to write up a short self-assessment. The solutions have to be theirs.  Stage "join us" open meetings to promote	Low	Jun 09	Organisations	NIL	Community Group + Steering Committee
S.8	More inclusive groups involving all residents	Identify where people may be feeling left out. People may feel excluded	See S.9; S.10					
S.9	Directory of existing groups and activities	Highlight more "what's on". People don't necessarily know what's available when.	Find a coordinator  Create a concise promotional directory with entries created by each enterprise.  Put on website and print for notice-boards  Add a "rogues gallery" of who does what	Medium	Apr 08	Community Group  Coordinator volunteer; all organisations	£200	Parish Council +Steering Committee

	S.10	More "big events"	Create more of a village esprit-de-corps with open events to encourage inclusivity	Appoint an annual coordinator from all organisations  Organisations to commit to an annual calendar where each does one "get together"  Publish the event calendar	Medium	Oct 09	Parish Council;  +Ewelme Society to seed the programme	Parish Council £200 initial S137 grant; Village Plan event funded by ORCC grant	Coordinator reporting to annual Parish meeting
STRATEGIC	S.11	School is central to social life of village	Do not lose sight of the ongoing risk that the school may be rationalised.	Prepare compelling draft case against closure, even if currently unlikely.	High	Oct 08	Governors	NIL	Parish Council
	S.12	Concern for future of St Mary's Church and the historical legacy for which we are stewards	Produce continuous clear publicity. The spiritual and architectural heart of the village is at risk	Continue publicity and more openness. Residents assume all's well and don't realise the gravity  Distinguish between pastoral and secular maintenance to encourage support by all persuasions. Publish a PCC newsletter	High	Nov 08	PCC	NIL	Parish Council
	S.13	Re-establish Neighbourhood Watch	Fear of crime needs obvious reassurance mechanism	Police to be conspicuously working with village  Put Neighbourhood Watch up front again	High	Mar 09	Parish Council; District Council; Police	NIL	Parish Council

## Comments

**S.1** The Wallingford Neighbourhood Action Group will be doing some consultation work with young people (probably September/October time this year). For more information please contact Alison Smith, NAG Coordinator at [Alison.smith@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.smith@southoxon.gov.uk) or 01491 823054

**S.2** The Council has been involved in setting up mountain biking sessions in Ewelme over the summer, led by a private instructor. The instructor is Rachel Davey, [Rachel@getagripmountainbiking.co.uk](mailto:Rachel@getagripmountainbiking.co.uk). She has provided copies of certificates/CRB/first aid etc

**S.5** The district council's sports development officer can assist with training and support for health walks. To get underway people need to volunteer to be walk leaders for insurance purposes, so contact Cath Dale 01491 823128

**S.13** The regional Coordinator for neighbourhood watch in our area will be able to offer help and support in this. Her email address is [Carol.Rudd@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Carol.Rudd@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

## ENVIRONMENT

The issues raised about the environment were mainly to do with the long term look and feel of the village. It was recognised that some large-scale matters such as the future of RAF Benson needed active monitoring well ahead of any developing issues or opportunities. Some matters highlighted broader questions of facilities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On a number of the actions it was felt that the preparation of a set of simple, clear village policies to be followed in future would be a useful way forward.

	#	Recorded issue	The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescales	Responsibility Lead & partners	Resource implications	Monitoring responsibility
COMMUNITY	E.1	Watercress beds are a village amenity owned by the Chiltern Society but ambitions and consequences must not be disproportionate to the setting	Improve Chiltern Society 's unduly dominant plans	Review and report on bigger picture activities and planned developments  Maintain regular liaison with owner  Obtain ruling on environmental health for local sales of watercress (via shop)	high	Apr 09	Environment Working Group  + Friends of the Watercress Beds	NIL	Ewelme Society + Parish Council
	E.2	Litter in hedgerows, roadside, gardens etc	Discourage random litter and fly-tipping	regular monitoring, promote a clean-up weekend,  Publicity in Ewelme News to maintain awareness and village pride	medium	ongoing	Ewelme Society	Volunteers	Parish Council
	E.3	Clean up King's Pool, improve appearance	Make sure Pond and stream don't become unsightly	Charter the Environment Group broadly to oversee all "nature-watch" village tasks  Environment Group to review, report and oversee King's Pool management plan	medium	April 09 and then annually	Environment Group  + Ewelme Society  + Friends of Watercress Beds	Volunteers	Parish Council
	E.4	Clearance and replacement of dead trees throughout parish	Improve unsightly and dangerous trees	See E. 3  Environment Group to record and recommend actions	low	April 09 and then annually	Environment Group  + Parish Council	TBD	Parish Council



	E.5	Pig farming, spraying, mud on roads close to housing	Check major environmental nuisances	See E. 3 Environment Group to record and recommend actions	low	April 09 and then annually	Environment Group	minimal	Parish Council
	E.6	Exploit village history, position in AONB etc	Ensure historical records of the village are not lost	Publish annual summary report on archive content and gaps. Fund / support archival work and safe storage. Work with PCC and Ewelme Trust to develop a pro-active programme to fill known gaps	Medium	Apr 09	Ewelme Society + Parish Council	TBD	Parish Council
SERVICE PROVIDERS	E.7	Excessive road furniture, overhead cables	Seek removal of unsightly signage, power and phone lines	Identify all unnecessary items, prioritise, represent need for change to appropriate authorities	low	Apr 10	Ewelme Society	Volunteers	Parish Council
	E.8	Increase waste recycling	Environmental responsibility	promote sensible habits; good, realistic publicity	High	Ongoing	District Council; Parish Council	unknown	Ewelme Society Parish Council
	E.9	Central information source for visitors – maps, paths, points of interest	Provide better information for visitors	Develop a balanced plan to accommodate visitor needs but only to the extent necessary	Low	Apr 10	Parish Council	TBD	Ewelme Society
STRATEGIC	E.10	Street lighting – resist calls for more ambient light (= wasted power)	Implement environmental responsibility for light pollution and energy saving	Document the policy	Low	Apr 09	Ewelme Society	Volunteers	Parish Council

E.11	Set example on green behaviour by use of heat pumps, wind turbines, hydro power generation, solar energy etc	Encourage environmental responsibility.	Publicise any examples in Ewelme News	low	Apr 10	Ewelme Society	Volunteers	Parish Council
E.12	Concerns about RAF Benson, Grundon, Chiltern Society, Ewelme Trust, gravel extraction, etc future plans	Big strategic issues need to be anticipated such as the future of RAF Benson.	Document the threats and opportunities. Prepare outline plans for each dominant risk eventuality and submit to SODC, OCC. Maintain current – update annually	medium	Apr 09	Environment Working Group + Parish Council & Ewelme Society	MINIMAL A few good minds to monitor the Local Plan and prepare clear, concise views on the dominant issues	Parish Council + Ewelme Society
E.13	Keep Common as it is	Plan and anticipate future of Common and oversee	Assign Management Plan update task to Environment Group	Medium	Apr 09	Environment Group +Parish Council	MINIMAL	Ewelme Society
E.14	Basic broadband services for all residences and Village Hall	Pursue full access to basic broadband. Rural residents are discriminated against.	1. Decide on a policy and implementation approach 2. Take to highest levels 3. Pursue assiduously	High	Nov 08	Volunteer champion Parish Council; District Council	MINIMAL	Parish Council co-opted professional
E.15	Limit new building (except affordable housing), restrict infill and suburban sprawl	Preserve and balance village infrastructure – it cannot support more housing	Decide on a policy and approach Document policy	Medium	Feb 09	Parish Council; District Council	MINIMAL	Parish Council
E.16	Public toilets needed in 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Improve public hygiene facilities	Decide on a policy and implementation approach	Low	Jun 09	Parish Council; District Council	MINIMAL For report	Parish Council

E.17	Paths: better access for all	Plan easy access to public spaces and paths	Decide on a policy and approach. Stile-free walks	Low	Jun 09	Parish Council; District Council	MINIMAL For report	Parish Council
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## Comments

**E.2** The Council's environmental services team can provide litter picking equipment for community litter picks. Please contact Matthew Beesley at [matthew.beesley@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.beesley@southoxon.gov.uk) or 01491 823459

**E.15** This needs to take into account and linked to the local plan/core strategy. The first stage of consultation on the core strategy has recently finished and the consultation document and a summary of responses are on the SODC website. The next stage of consultation takes place later this year. The planning policy team has advised that Ewelme would be suitable for infill but that we wouldn't be looking for any large expansion there. The SOHA initiative at the top of Hampden Way is probably sufficient affordable housing.

**E.16** Following a review of management of local public conveniences, the Council took a decision that it would not manage such facilities as parish councils were better placed to do this. The Council can however offer building and design advice to the parish council should it decide to proceed

**E. supplementary 1:** Encourage Thames Water to upgrade the key sectors of old water mains to Ewelme to minimise outages which seriously affect the older generation.

**E. supplementary 2:** Ensure emergency water supplies (carboys) are available when any prolonged outage is encountered.

**E. supplementary 3:** Review if any mechanism exists to protect the as-built visual heritage of the central area of the village from inappropriate new structures.

**TRAFFIC**

The areas of Traffic, Speeding, Parking and Roads, and their general condition are all issues which we have been unable to group under one all-encompassing name, but which have a similar theme and which we have therefore categorised together.

In addition to the concerns raised over these subjects, we have added public transport and cycle-ways as they follow a similar theme.

#	Recorded issue	The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescales	Responsibility Lead & partners	Resource implications	Monitoring responsibility
<b>PARKING</b>								
T.1	Reduce congestion in key areas of High Street e.g. village hall, watercress beds, school area	Parked cars on streets impede traffic and create dangerous situations	Ensure adequate signage to existing car park	Low	Jun 09	OCC	£1000	Parish Council
			Increase capacity of existing car park	Medium	Mar 09	Parish Council	£5000	Parish Council
			Investigate further parking off-road at other points within village. e.g. small part of Manor grounds if still feasible: PC land by Common: negotiate to optimise glebe lands adjacent: Areas at West end of village	High	Dec 08	Ewelme Trust +Ewelme Society + PCC +Parish Council	TBD	Parish Council
			Complete school action plan to reduce number of vehicle movements	High	Complete & ongoing	Head Teacher	minimal	Governors; Steering committee
			Eliminate illegal and dangerous parking	High	ongoing	Parish Council/ SODC Community Safety Officer	minimal	Parish Council;
<b>ROADS / PUBLIC TRANSPORT / CYCLEWAYS</b>								
T.2	Footpath down Cat Lane, Post Box at top	Pedestrian safety down Cat Lane is not	Get OCC to level verges and roll in hardcore	High	Apr 09	OCC; Parish Council	Low budget solution required	Parish Council

		acceptable	Resist high-cost, top specification excuses				(apply GRUNDON £650K?)	
T.3	Improve road safety at narrow dip, Rabbit Hill	Reduce the too many injury or minor accidents at known black spots See T 5	Review levels of accidents with adjacent land owner/ police; collate history and former recommendations; report to Parish Council Review with OCC	High	Oct 08	Work Group + Parish Council OCC/SODC	none	Parish Council  SODC
T.4	Improve condition of road at Clacks Lane	Try to get Clacks Lane upgraded. It is unsuitable for purpose. Too narrow and edges regularly damaged	Review current status of funding from Grundons to ensure best use of funds made available. Investigate use of £650,000 paid over to OCC for upgrade	High	Sep 08	Parish Council  + GRUNDON Liaison Committee	TBD	Parish Council
T.5	Improve road safety at junction London Road / Clacks Lane/ Rabbit Hill	Reduce the many incidents and near misses at Wineglass Corner. Speeding is contributory.	Encourage feedback of accident statistics via Village News in absence of any other monitoring system Review 60 mph speed limit at junction. See T.8	High	Dec 08	Parish Council Work Group draft/ SODC Community Safety Officer	TBD	Parish Council
T.6	Improve public transport links	People need help to understand timetabling opportunities	Increase public awareness of existing bus routes/times to ensure services are used and remain viable. Timetables should be complemented by a "Ewelme-centric" travel poster	High	ongoing	Designated volunteer  Via transport work group	£100 p.a.	Parish Council
T.7	Improve & complete safe cycling routes	Raise profile of proposed cycle route to link London Road at RAF Benson with Crowmarsh	Champion safe cycle routes and submit an area cycleway strategy to add to OCC's portfolio for implementation	High	Dec 08	Working group;  SODC,  SUSTRANS	nil	Parish Council

T.8	Improve pedestrian safety	Leave pavements for pedestrians; avoid blocking visibility	Encourage no parking on pavements by education through publications such as Ewelme News. Run a photo campaign on village notice boards.  Random enforcement visits where necessary now parking decriminalised	High	ongoing	Parish council via Ewelme News + SODC Community Safety Officer + Police	nil	Parish Council
<b>SPEEDING</b>								
T.9	Reduce average speed of vehicles through village	Perception is that speeding is widely prevalent. But incidence confined to 2/3 hotspots. Consider changing speed limits	Request review of current speed limits within village and on outskirts at London Road Beggarsbush Hill junctions  Consider more random surveys. Review traffic calming measures  Enforce speed limits	High	Dec 08	Parish Council; OCC     Police	OCC manpower; signage changes TBD	Parish Council  + SODC Community Safety Officer

**Comments**

**T. supplementary 1:** Consider one way traffic section just from Common to Green House access before Rectory

**T. supplementary 2:** Ban large vehicles from Rabbits Hill; ban right-hand turn at bottom of Rabbits Hill for long vehicles.

## 7. The Future Vision

## 7. THE FUTURE VISION

What of the longer term future for the village of Ewelme - in, say, fifty years time? We can look backwards to see the changes which have taken place since 1950 and there remain some individuals still living in the village who can recall those days when there were shops, many farm buildings, a forge, fewer 'new' houses and certainly fewer cars parked on our streets or passing through during commuter periods. There were more rural activities related to the farming community and even opportunities for some employment within the village. Operations by RAF Benson were quite different when compared with the helicopter sorties we see today and many will remember the Queen's Flight aircraft.

It's a brave person who will try and predict what changes may take place during the next fifty years but there are some broader issues which are worth mentioning - if only to recognise the influences which we may face in the future - both positive / enhancing and negative / detrimental!

- ❖ Will RAF Benson continue to operate and, if so, in what form? If it does, will it grow and put unacceptable pressures on the area infrastructure with more noise pollution, more traffic, more housing needs, etc.? On the other hand, if the base is no longer active what will happen to the airfield land - more houses, revert to farmland or other commercial developments? Either way, there could be significant impact on the local environment and the way of life in our delightful village.
- ❖ Will the ever-growing national population require more housing to be built on current green land around us and could we be faced with simply becoming annexed to Benson village? Will we lose valuable footpaths and bridleways under expanding concrete and seriously curtail many leisure facilities our residents of today enjoy? What about landfill and gravel extraction?
- ❖ Will the impact of Global Warming become increasingly apparent in our way of life? Will we be able to adopt 'green' issues to a greater extent to the benefits of all or will there be extreme requirements which would damage our beautiful surroundings (how about a wind farm to the north of Cow Common?).



- ❖ Will the declining World oil availability and further cost increases mean that the car will no longer be a viable means of mobility for the majority of people? Natural gas / nuclear fuel may well become the power sources in most common use and likely (but not for a while yet!) developments may mean we can plug in our smaller electric vehicles on every street corner. We may, at least, have fewer traffic / parking problems in fifty years time! We can also expect a significant increase in 'working from home' with even better communication technology available to us such that commuting becomes almost history!
  
- ❖ Medical advances seem likely to enable us all to live longer and this could mean more pressures on providing facilities for the elderly, and how will this influence the youth of our communities?
  
- ❖ What of the future for the Church and the School? Recent data suggest continuing decline in congregations throughout the UK and - assuming this cannot be reversed - then many churches will become redundant or, at best, be opened to more secular activities. We in Ewelme have the benefit of a valuable historic heritage which should ensure a future for the buildings at least. Our school thrives and, in spite of 'outside' pressures, the historic value should also go some way to ensuring survival. However, faced with an ageing population, will younger families become fewer and result in difficulties in maintaining viable numbers?

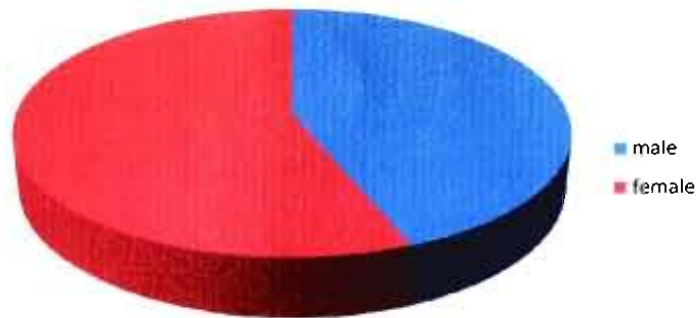
It is certain that you can think of many other issues – these are just some which may be for the longer term but, perhaps, we need to develop strategies and actions **NOW** in order to be best equipped to react to whatever comes our way.

*THINK ABOUT IT*

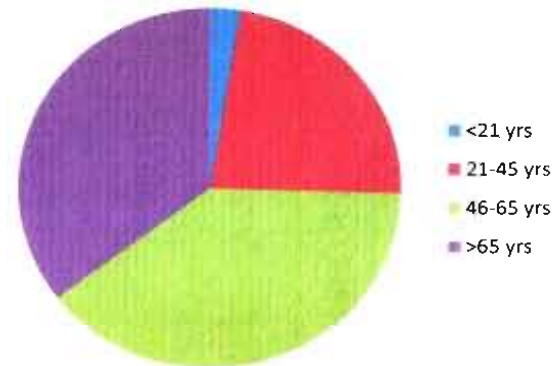


*Graphics etc.*

Analysis of responses to "Priorities"  
Questionnaire by Gender and Age  
Group



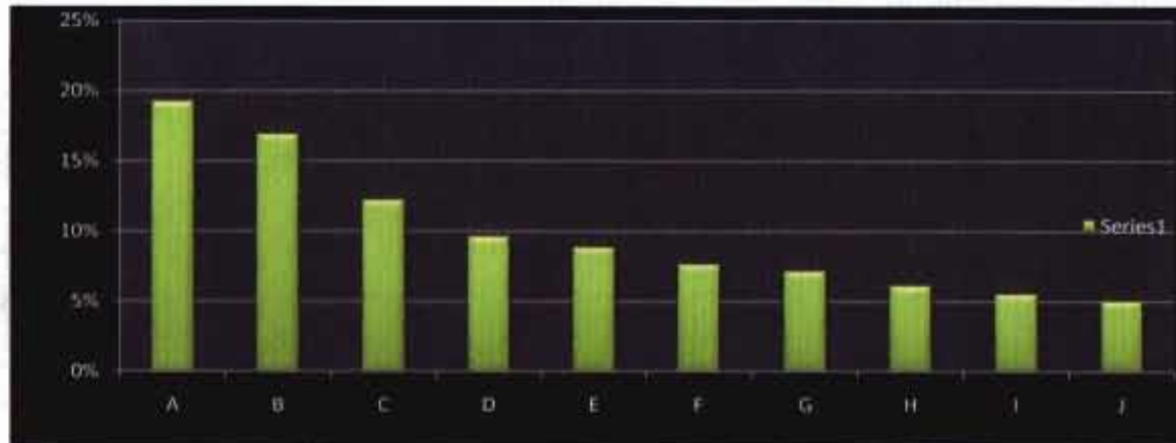
male	44%
female	56%



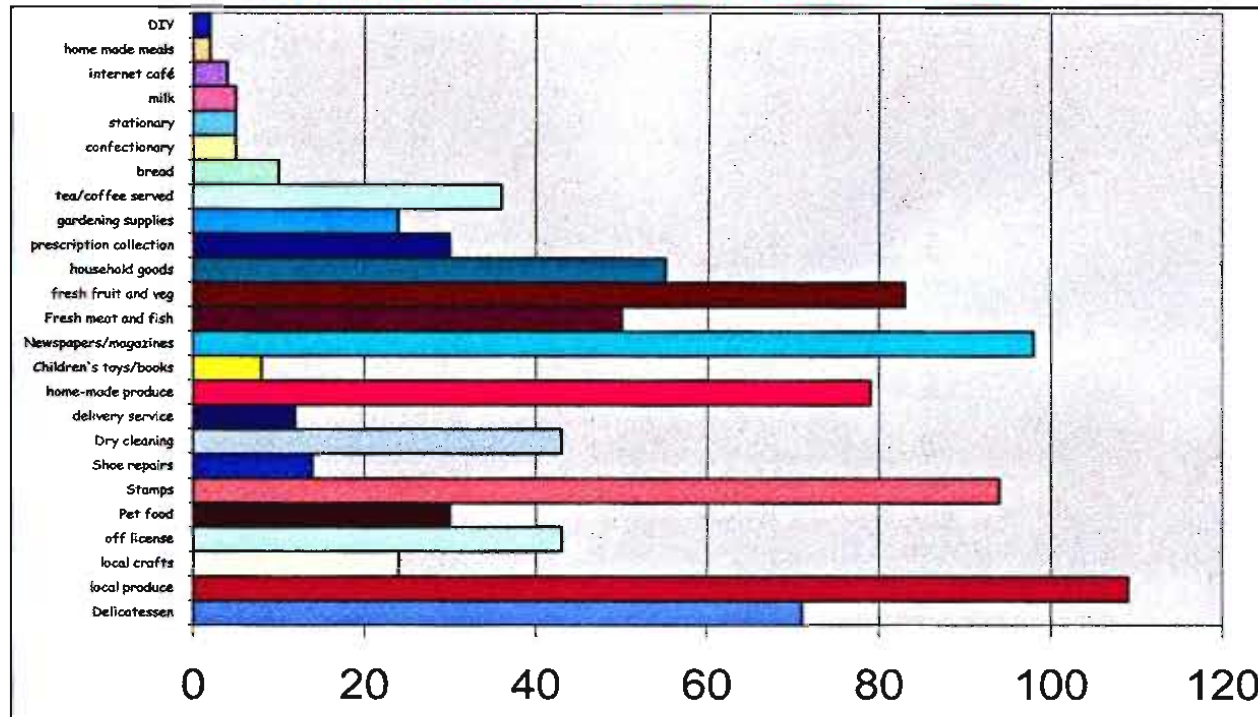
<21 yrs	2.60%
21-45 yr	22.80%
46-65 yr	39.20%
>65 yrs	35.40%

### Results of "Priorities" Questionnaire Analysis

A	19%	Village Shop
B	17%	Traffic Congestion, Speeding, etc.
C	12%	Affordable Housing, New Build Limitation
D	10%	Broad Band and Communications
E	9%	Social Activities, Youth, etc.
F	8%	Eco-Friendly Developments, etc.
G	7%	Future Impacts - RAF Benson, Grundons
H	6%	Village Appearance - Litter, Tree planting, etc.
I	6%	Future of Manor House
J	5%	Watercress Beds Management
K	2%	Exploit Village to Tourists - History, Walks, etc.



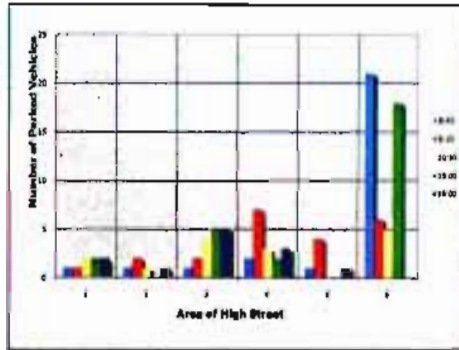
**VILLAGE SHOP - PREFERENCE ANALYSIS**



**Ewelme High Street Parking**

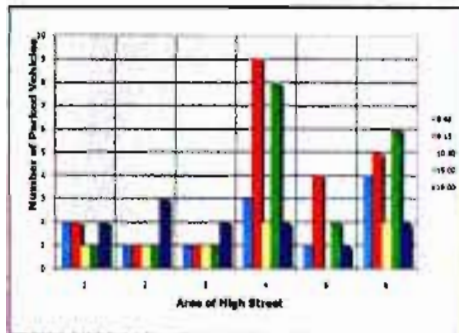
Date: 12.01.08

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2	1	2	1	0	1
3	1	2	4	5	5
4	2	7	3	2	3
5	1	4	0	0	1
6	21	6	5	18	0
Total	27	22	15	27	12



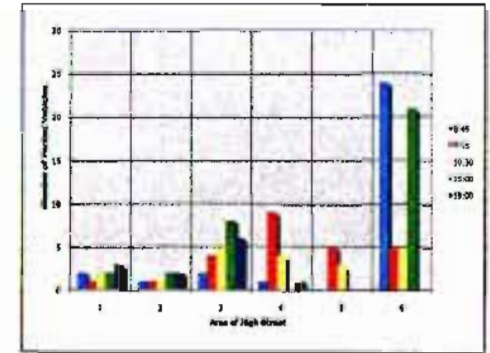
Date: 18.01.08

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3	1	1	1	1	2
4	3	9	2	8	2
5	1	4	0	2	1
6	4	5	2	6	2
Total	12	22	7	19	12



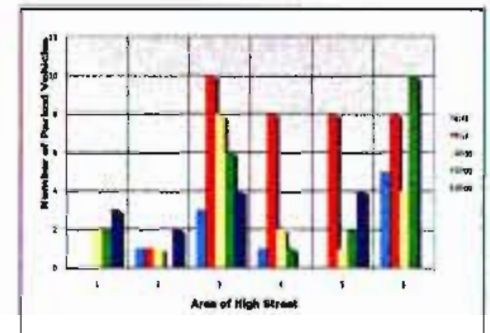
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5	0	5	3	0	0
6	24	5	5	21	0
Total	50	25	20	33	12



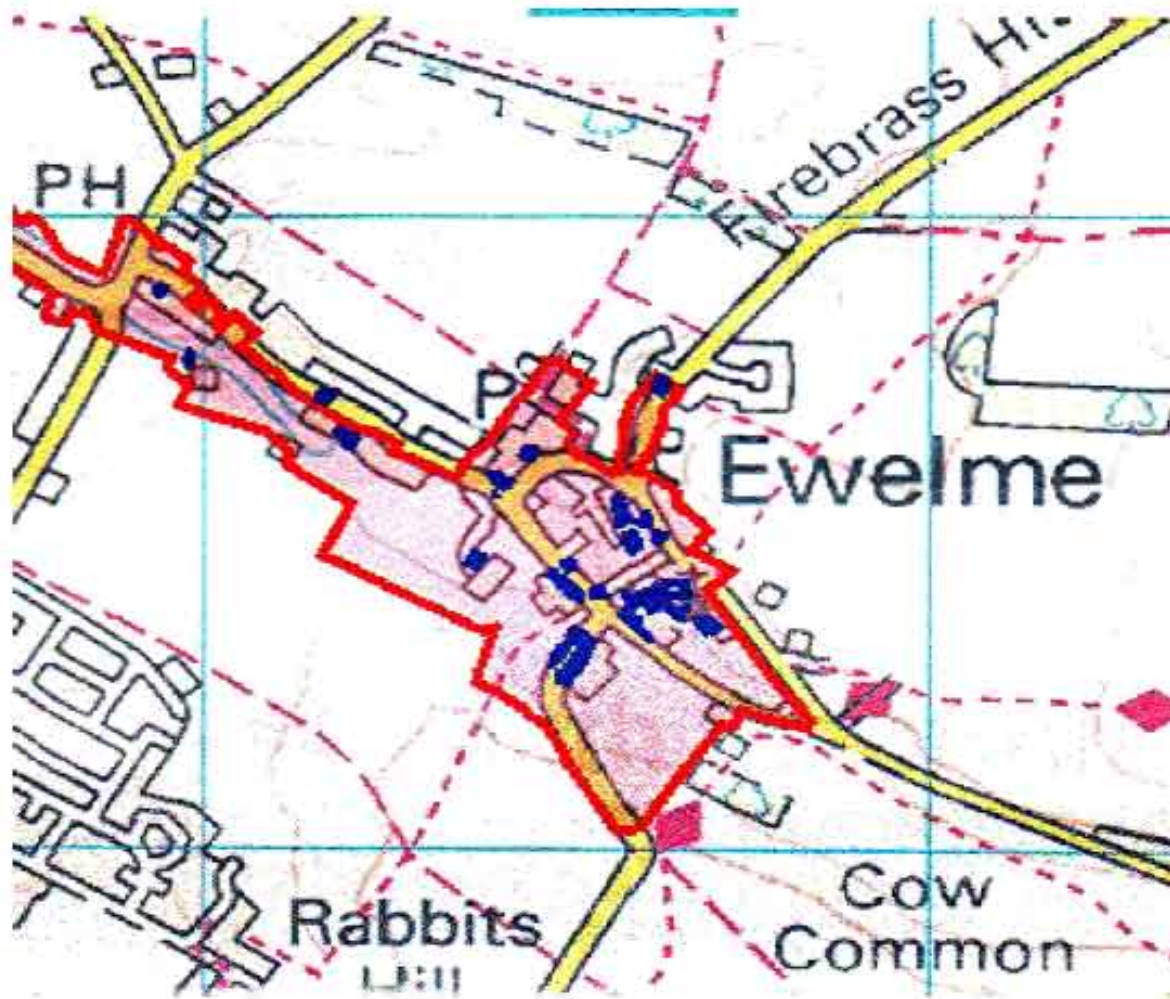
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4	1	8	2	1	0
5	0	8	1	2	4
6	5	8	4	10	0
Total	10	35	18	21	13



**GRAPHICS KEY**

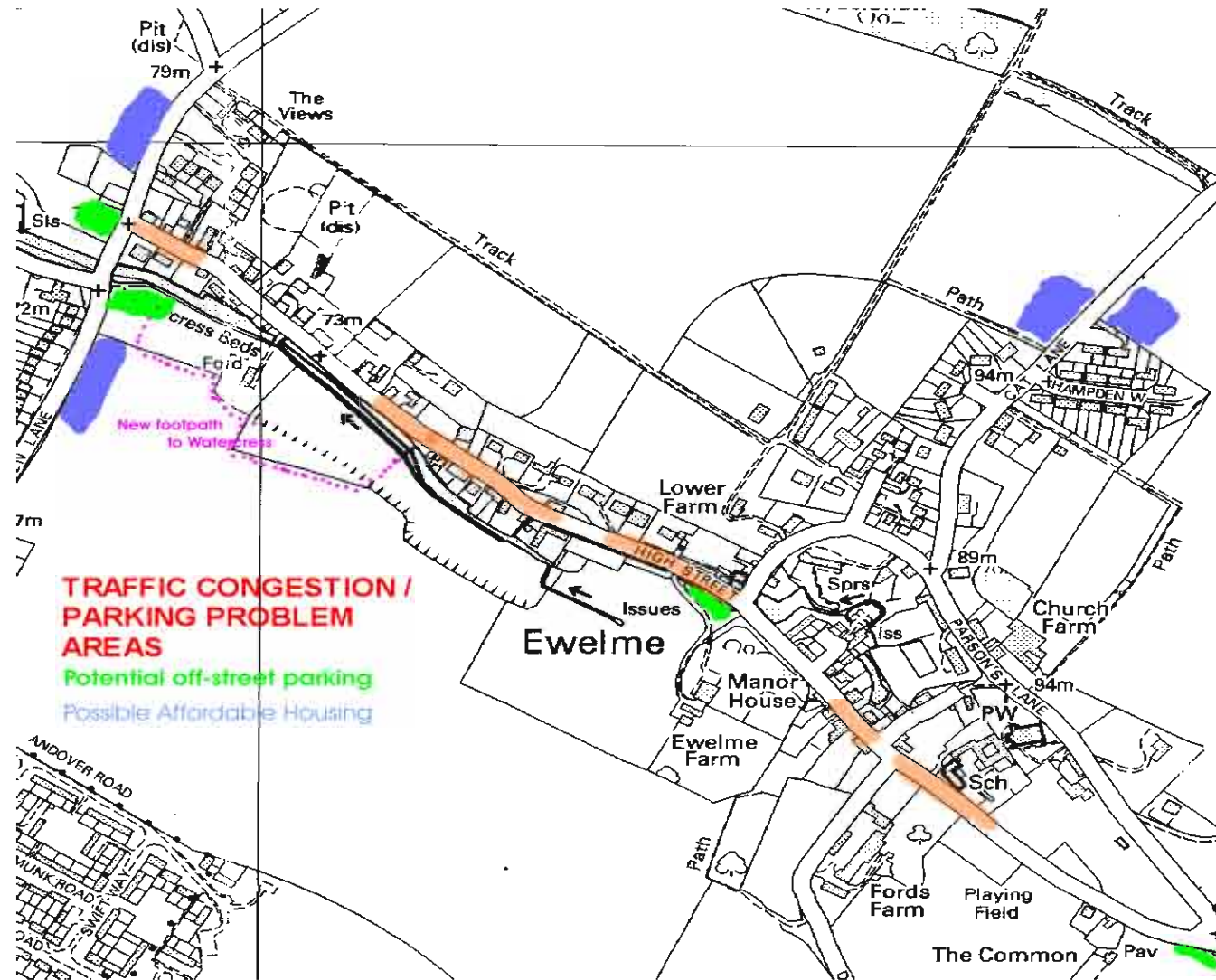
- AREA 1. Shepherds Hut to Bend
- AREA 2. Bend to Coachworks
- AREA 3. Coachworks to Firethorn Cottage
- AREA 4. Firethorn Cottage to Parsons Lane
- AREA 5. Parsons Lane to Burrows Hill
- AREA 6. Burrows Hill to School Playing Field



**VILLAGE PLAN SHOWING LISTED BUILDINGS AND  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**



The diagram indicates main areas of traffic / parking congestion and suggests POTENTIAL areas for new parking to be considered. The proposed sites for Affordable Housing are also shown.



## Acknowledgements

We wish to record the assistance given by the following during the course of our 'journey' through the consultation process and the preparation of this Plan:

*Theresa Redgewell, Neil Blake\*, Margaret Blake, George Cannon, Gwyneth Clark, Gemma Clive, Harriet Coleridge, Brian Connolly, Sue Cooper\*, David Cooper, Suzanne Clough, Marie Darkins\*, Mal Dickens, Hugh Fallon\*\*, Claire Francis, Martin Garner\*, Sue Hill, Lisa Holmes, Paul Humphrey\*, Peter Lemaire\*, Chloe Maine, Sarah Maine\*\*, Sara Malek, Andrew Markham\*, Alex Nichols, Dee Rosier, Carol Sawbridge\*, Mike Sawbridge, Clare Scott-Bowden, Trisha Scott, Brian Smailes\*, Angela Smailes, Brian Thompson\*, Ann Truesdale, Meg Wicket\*, Abi Winfield*

*\*Original Steering Committee member.*

*\*\*Work Group Leader*

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Oxfordshire Rural Community Council: *Jane Barker, Lynne Nevin, Anton Nath*

South Oxfordshire District Council: *Helen Croft, Andrew Down, Emma Morris, Nick Quail*

Grundons: *Toni Robinson*

**In Memory of the Revd Martin Garner**

# a small selection of village photographs

## A Small Selection of Village 'Photos



