

Islip Village Plan

2013



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Acknowledgements

Many people have given their time to make invaluable contributions at key points as the Village Plan has developed and we are sincerely grateful for all of their efforts, without which this project would not have been possible. In particular we would like to thank Islip's residents for their support in completing the questionnaires. The Steering Group would like to thank the ORCC, the Clerk and members of Islip Parish Council, the local groups who contributed to the development of the questionnaire, and the volunteers who helped with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

We are grateful to Jeremy Colebrooke, who provided the line drawings, and to the following people who provided photographs, together with permission to reproduce them: Jonathan Payne and the Plunkett Foundation, Joanna Perry, Scot Peterson, John Sargent, Anna Stephenson, Kate Venables, and Islip Archive Group.

Finally, we thank Simon Fenwick for his cheerful expertise and brilliant design.

What is the Village Plan?

We all want the best for the village we live in, yet there has never been any collective view of what the people who live in Islip really want. That's what this Village Plan is intended to be – a living document, which summarises the views of Islip's residents and then attempts to set out some realistic actions that can be taken to improve life for villagers and to tackle some of the issues that we face.

The Plan is divided into a number of sections reflecting the main themes covered – from amenities and events to traffic and housing. Each section contains recommendations for possible next steps and actions, based on the feedback from residents that was collected during the planning process.

We intend that this plan will be used by:

- Islip Parish Council, to guide its thinking and decision-making about village initiatives, and to help it to secure funding (where necessary) by showing that we have been through a needs assessment with full community participation;
- those who form policy at county (Oxfordshire County Council), district (Cherwell District Council) and national government levels;
- organisations involved in policy-making such as the local planning authority, police and health services; and
- any members of the community who are planning new initiatives.

How was the Village Plan developed?

Because the Village Plan records the actions and priorities for the development of our village over the next few years, it has been prepared with the utmost care – a time-consuming but worthwhile process. Here are the main steps that led to the development of this Plan:

- 1** The idea of a Village Plan was first raised at the Parish Meeting in spring 2011, with the guidance of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC).
- 2** A public meeting was held in May 2011. The meeting was introduced by Aimee Evans of the ORCC and attended by approximately 40 people. Villagers made numerous suggestions about issues that they would like to see addressed in the Plan. A Steering Group of independent volunteers – the Islip Village Plan Steering Group (see box) – was set up and met for the first time in June 2011.
- 3** The Steering Group consulted representatives of the main village institutions (including the Church, School, Village Hall, Village Shop, and local businesses), of local societies and groups, as well as reaching out to residents at various village events (Bonfire Night, the Three Parishes Fair, etc.).
- 4** A questionnaire was drafted with the help of the various groups and institutions that had been contacted, and on the basis of issues and ideas put forward by villagers. The questionnaire was revised and finalised, and a printed copy was distributed to every household in autumn 2012.
- 5** The completed questionnaires were collected in October 2012. We received 233 completed questionnaires, which equates to an impressive 84% of households. The results were recorded in electronic format, checked and analysed over winter 2012–2013. A summary of the results of the questionnaire is held by the Clerk to the Parish Council and is accessible on request.
- 6** The results of the questionnaire were presented to the relevant institutions in the village, and in some cases the representatives were asked to respond to – and to propose actions to be included in – the Plan.
- 7** The Islip Village Plan was produced in summer 2013, now including the actions emerging from the consultation with village institutions and voluntary organisations.

Introduction

The village of Islip lies six miles to the north east of Oxford, and is best known as the birthplace of Edward the Confessor (around 1005) and the site of the Battle of Islip Bridge on 23 April 1645.

There has been a church in Islip since Saxon times, but the oldest part of the present church (St Nicholas) dates back to the end of the 12th century. The main village was, for many years, grouped compactly on three sides of the church because open arable fields limited expansion to the west. However, restrictions were lifted in the 1950s, allowing development along the Kidlington Road. The land immediately to the west of the church was acquired by the Parish Council and opened as the village playing field in 1953.

Islip once boasted a large number of inns, including, at one time or other, The White Swan, Red Lion, King's Head, Fox and Grapes, Hare, Wooster Arms and Plume of Feathers. There were also a number of shops, including a cobbler, a butcher, a baker, a general store, and a post office. Today there are still two public houses, The Red Lion and The Swan Inn, and a thriving volunteer-run village shop.

Islip Village Hall plays host to frequent events, and other businesses in the village include a garage (Islip Motors), three farms, and a doctor's surgery (Islip Medical Practice) which serves many other local rural communities. Islip is well connected for transport links (some might say *too* well connected), with the B4027 running through the centre of the village and easy access from there to the A34 and the M40. A bus service runs to Oxford and a train service to Oxford and Bicester, with plans for future development of a service to run through to London Marylebone.

Latest figures from the ORCC* state that 675 people live in Islip, with 425 (63%) of these being of working age, 135 (20%) children under the age of 16, and 110 (17%) over the age of 66. The number of households was given as 260 in the 2001 census, however this has now grown to approximately 275. The village population is a mixture of people whose families have lived in the area for generations and more recent arrivals. In recent years many young families have moved into Islip and this has helped to ensure the survival and growth of Dr South's (C of E) Primary School. New residents often remark on the strong sense of community in Islip and there is strong support for village events of all kinds (and in all weathers).

Islip is a thriving community with much to offer residents and many opportunities for growth and development. But it also faces a number of challenges, notably the speed and volume of traffic that passes through every day, and the now-regular flooding of lower parts of the village.

**Rural Community Profile for Islip (Parish), ORCC, January 2012*



*Islip Fire Brigade
c.1910*



Islip Band c.1900

“Islip is a thriving community with much to offer residents and many opportunities for growth and development”

Community Life



What does the Parish Council do?

The Parish Council represents the community and aims to improve local quality of life and the local environment. Parish Councils form the tier of government that is closest to the community, and as such they have a range of powers and duties, which includes a responsibility to help other local groups and societies fulfil their aims.

Islip Parish Council funds its activities by a charge on parish households – known as a precept – which is decided at the beginning of each year and is collected by Cherwell District Council as part of council tax. The precept for 2013/14 was £16,785, which works out at about £60 per household. The precept is spent on a number of regular activities, such as grass cutting, payment of the Clerk, and an annual grant to the Village Hall, as well as one-off payments for such items as the refurbishment of the churchyard steps.

Islip Parish Council is made up of seven Parish Councillors. These are volunteers who are elected every four years, and they do not receive a salary. The Councillors are supported by the Parish Clerk, who is not a Council member (and therefore cannot vote on Council decisions).

The Parish Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month in Islip Village Hall, except August and December, and residents are encouraged to raise issues of concern for the Council to consider. They can do this by notifying the Clerk; notices are posted on the village noticeboards to announce forthcoming meetings. Residents are very welcome to attend Council meetings and, for those who cannot, a summary of the minutes of all meetings is published via the Parish Newsletter. The full minutes can be found on the village website (www.islip.org.uk).

One of the areas that Islip Parish Council covers is planning, although in fact it has no executive powers in deciding the outcome of planning applications. Cherwell District Council – the planning authority – does consult the Parish Council on all applications in its area, but it can then disregard the Parish Council's view.

The full list of Parish Council powers and duties is outlined on the Cherwell District Council website: http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/k/j/Powers_and_Duties_of_Parish_and_Community_Councils.pdf

Does the Parish Council do a good job?

Of the 367 respondents to the question, 85% felt that they are well represented by the Parish Council. From the remainder (15%) who felt that there is room for improvement, most of the comments focused on communication and the need for wider engagement with residents in all parts of the village.

Action 1

To improve communication between Islip Parish Council and the community

Who Parish Council and residents.

How Making more information available via the Parish Report in the Parish Newsletter, [islip.org.uk](http://www.islip.org.uk) website, and noticeboards; emphasising successful outcomes, particularly those carried out in response to requests from villagers; encouraging more people to attend monthly PC meetings.

Islip Parish Council, 2013–2014

Name	Responsible for
Paul Bell	Health and education; new Burial Ground [with Mrs Stephenson]
Michael Clarke	Roads and footpaths under Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council
Stuart Clifton	Planning [with Mrs Stephenson]
Alison Mitchell (Chair)	Environment; Village Hall trustee ex officio
Jonathan Smith	Parish Council properties
Johanna Stephenson (Vice-chair)	Village Plan; new Burial Ground [with Mr Bell]; planning [with Mr Clifton]
Richard Venables	Strategic planning and low-cost housing; Village Hall Committee
Michael Wilkinson	Clerk

Parish Council-owned land

There are several pieces of land in and around Islip that are owned and managed by the Parish Council on behalf of residents:

- Islip playing field (held in trust for the National Playing Fields Association)



• Millennium Wood



- Allotments to the west of the Wheatley Road
- The Swan Inn car park (leased to the owners of The Swan Inn)
- Village Green on Lower Street
- Field by the A34 slip road (leased to Mr Kerwood of Hampton Poyle)
- Islip Burial Ground (on Mill Lane)

Cross Tree Green is owned by the Church but maintained by the Parish Council.

Clubs and activities

Islip has a great community spirit and a variety of regular and occasional activities throughout the year. There are over 30 clubs, societies and regular activities in the village, with 160 questionnaire respondents (37%) involved in one or more of these. There are also a number of classes held in the Village Hall for both adults and children during the day and evening.

Of the specific activities mentioned by respondents to the questionnaire, three are aimed at babies and pre-school children, four at senior residents, and nine at special interest groups. In addition, six involve sport, health and fitness, and seven are associated with music, dance, arts and crafts. The list of clubs and societies can change from time to time but includes the following:

- Archive group
- Bell ringers
- Book group
- Bouncing Babies
- Church choir
- Islip peloton
- Short-mat bowls
- Needlework group
- Royal British Legion
- Toddler group
- Thursday Club
- Wildlife Conservation Group
- Youth group



Many respondents noted that they enjoy the occasional one-off and annual events, which encourage village-wide involvement, such as the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, Three Parishes' Fair, Summer Fête, Harvest Supper, Big Bike Ride, and fundraising events for the Church, School, and other good causes. These are a great opportunity to bring residents together, to have fun and, in some cases, to raise money.



Although clubs and activities are clearly a healthy and growing area for Islip, we would like to propose, as one outcome of the Village Plan, that we expand the opportunities available to include a greater variety of ages, backgrounds and interests. We would like to provide a platform for villagers to find like-minded people, to get involved, to share their views, and to play an active part in the life of the village.

A number of suggestions were made for new groups and activities. Some respondents proposed setting these up themselves; others would welcome their being set up by others. The list of people who volunteered for these (and other) projects and activities is kept by the Parish Clerk, and is available to the relevant groups and societies on request.

Action 2

To encourage and support volunteers coming together to establish interest groups/societies, clubs etc., and set up ways of communicating what's available

Who Parish Council, existing societies, volunteers.

How Newsletter, village website, noticeboards, Islip info email list.



Sports

Although only 10% of respondents said that they are actively involved with organised sports in Islip, there is widespread support for sport and physical activity of all kinds for both adults and children.

The playing field is owned by Islip Parish Council and maintained by the Sports Association (partly supported by a grant from the Parish Council). The Sports Association includes Islip Cricket Club, junior football, men's football and short-mat bowls. The Sports Association was involved in setting up the cricket nets and has also in the past discussed the possibility of setting up a boules pitch, outdoor table tennis table(s), an adult exercise area adjacent to the children's play area, and a tennis club.

A number of suggestions were made for new sports and sports coaching initiatives in Islip, including:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Five-a-side football
- Gymnastics
- Junior cricket coaching
- Running/athletics (junior & senior)
- Walking group

But the most popular suggestions by far were for tennis courts (40% of respondents), junior cricket coaching (9%) and outdoor table tennis (7%).

Tennis in Islip

At various points in recent years, the question of whether tennis courts could be built on the playing field has been considered. In 2003/4 opinions were widely canvassed across the village and preliminary plans were drawn up – including the possibility of making the courts multi-sport. However, the project failed when a drain was discovered which runs across the proposed site of the tennis courts (now partly taken up by the new play area). Any new plan for tennis courts would depend on a more suitable site being identified, and also on funding being found – which is likely to be difficult in the current economic climate.

Action 3

To encourage new sporting initiatives

Who Sports Association; volunteers; Parish Council.

How Gauge support, investigate feasibility, fundraising.

Crime

It was encouraging to find that 86% of respondents said that they have not been personally affected by crime in the village within the past five years. The remaining 14% (59 respondents) cited 40 incidents, which break down as follows:

- Car-related (theft of number-plates, hubcaps and insignia, break-ins, damage, etc.): 21 (51% of incidents)
- Burglaries/attempted break-ins: 8 (20%)
- Other theft/attempted theft: 5 (12%)
- Damage to property: 2 (5%)
- Antisocial behaviour: 4 (10%)
- Other: 1 (2%)

Islip Neighbourhood Watch scheme

The Islip Neighbourhood Watch scheme has been active for more than 30 years. It functions through a network of members who pass information from Neighbourhood Watch local headquarters in Banbury, or from the Village Coordinator (Bridget Tuffrey), to villagers in their immediate area. Such information could be a warning – that there has been a burglary in the area and reminding people to lock their doors – or a request that people be extra vigilant, for example, to be aware of a particular vehicle in the area. Information also travels in the other direction – sometimes the smallest scrap of intelligence, such as someone acting suspiciously in the village, can be vital. Villagers are encouraged to report all such information immediately to their Neighbourhood Watch contact or the Village Coordinator, or directly to the Police (<http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/reptcr/reptcr-repform.htm>). The Neighbourhood Watch scheme depends on good communication across the village, and it is important that all information is shared with the NW team (listed below).

Neighbourhood Watch contacts

Bridget Tuffrey (371174)	Church Lane, The Rise
Theresa Nicolson (376276)	Wheatley Road
Richard Giles (373376)	The Walk, Lower High Street
Janet Nash (378312)	North Street
Jessica Brock (371537)	Kidlington Road
Jo Fulcher (374183)	Conyger Close
Tony Coggins (378798)	Hilltop Gardens
Ann Reynolds (373379)	Mill Street
Judith Black (841274)	Upper High Street

Facilities

Facilities for pre-school children

There are many young families living in Islip, and the facilities for babies and younger children are well used – 19 respondents use Dr South's pre-school, 6 families have children that attend other local pre-schools, and 13 families stated that they attend the baby group in the Village Hall.

The questionnaire asked whether there are enough facilities in the village for pre-school children and, of the 153 respondents, 71% felt that there are. The very popular children's playground was mentioned a number of times, and also the new toddler group, which currently runs in the Village Hall Terrace Room from 10 to 11.30am on Mondays. It was noted that storage space for toys etc. in the Village Hall would be very welcome, to avoid organisers having to bring them from home every week, and the Village Hall Committee is considering this request. A number of people regretted the closure of Church Mice, a weekly mother and baby/toddler group that used to be held in St Nicholas' Church.

Suggestions for more activities for this age group included music sessions (with an offer to run these), a mini-gym provided by an outside company, or another pre-school playgroup in the Village Hall. There were 16 offers of help with new initiatives from volunteers on the questionnaire form.

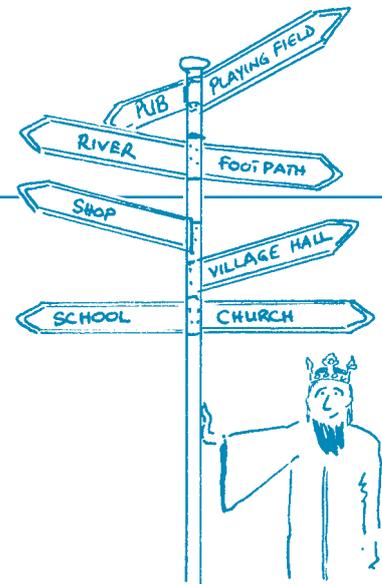


Action 4

To create opportunities for new initiatives for pre-school children

Status	Baby and toddler groups exist, but other activities would be welcomed.
Who	Parents of young children; volunteers.
How	Explore possibilities, gauge support, raise funds.





Facilities for older children, teenagers and young adults

Most respondents (71%) felt that there are not enough facilities in Islip for older children and young adults, and many people made suggestions for new initiatives. These included project groups, skills development, drama groups, choir and book clubs, regular discos, film nights and socials. There were also requests for more outdoor activities – such as a canoe club, skateboard ramp and weekly cycle club – as well as more organised sport.

Although the playground is popular with younger age groups, it is not suitable for older children. The basketball hoop is well used at certain times (summer evenings, weekends and school holidays), but more, larger facilities would be appreciated (such as a netball/basketball/tennis court). Many teenagers travel into Kidlington, Oxford or elsewhere for sports, social and other activities, although they can be restricted by the limited public transport to and from the village.

Any new initiatives will need to involve the young people themselves, to ensure that they meet their needs – and attract plenty of support. A number of new volunteers will also be needed – this age group may well prefer to take part in activities not run by their parents – and 13 new volunteers put their names down on the questionnaire.

Islip Youth Club

The Youth Club, for ages 10 to about 15, meets in the Village Hall on alternate Sunday evenings in term-time, usually from 6 to 8pm. Although organised by St Nicholas' Church, it is non-denominational – the activities have no overtly religious component, and no questions about religious affiliations are asked. The games and activities are organised by a paid trainee youth worker, who is also involved in youth work in secondary schools and at sports clubs in and around Oxford. The children attending are asked to contribute (currently £1.50) towards the cost of refreshments, but this is not obligatory.

Action 5

To investigate new initiatives for older children, teenagers and young adults

Who	Members of this age group; volunteers.
How	Discuss new initiatives, agree what is needed, gauge support, fundraise and plan.

Facilities for elderly people

The Winter Buddy Scheme

The Winter Buddy Scheme was set up in 2010 following a particularly long period of snowy weather. The aim is to pair up elderly or disabled residents who wish to use the service with a 'buddy' who will call them to offer assistance in the event of bad weather. This assistance might take the form of digging a path to their front door or fetching groceries from the Shop, and was found to be a practical way to support elderly or disabled residents who might be unable or unwilling to leave their homes in the event of bad weather.

Residents who are interested in joining the scheme or acting as a buddy should contact the Parish Council Clerk (clerkislippc@hotmail.co.uk).

There is fairly good informal support for elderly residents in Islip – via neighbours, friends, the Village Shop and the Church. However, the only formal support networks are the Winter Buddy Scheme organised by the Parish Council (see box) and the support provided by the NHS via Islip Medical Practice.

There are a number of opportunities for elderly residents to get together, such as a well-supported coffee morning (in the Terrace Room of the Village Hall on Thursday mornings), the Thursday Club (on the second Thursday afternoon of the month), and regular seniors' lunches, which are very popular. The Head Teacher of the School would be willing to consider working with a volunteer to set up a regular community tea hosted by older schoolchildren for elderly residents.

In answer to the question of whether there are enough facilities for senior residents, 67% of 226 respondents felt that there were, but 33% felt that improvements could be made. Their suggestions for improvements to existing facilities and ideas for new ones fell broadly into three areas:

- Meals: lunch club/fortnightly community meals; afternoon teas; café.
- Support: rota of volunteer visitors; volunteer car drivers for hospital appointments, shopping, etc.; help with gardening, shopping and odd jobs.
- Clubs and entertainment: art, drama, music, walking and cooking clubs; bingo; day trips; afternoon film shows.

Respondents also noted that some parts of the village are inaccessible for people using walking frames and wheelchairs – including gravelled areas, steps and narrow pavements. For those who do not drive, getting to Kidlington or Oxford using public transport can be very difficult.

We discovered during the consultation and questionnaire phases of the Village Plan that there are a number of isolated elderly and infirm residents in Islip who would appreciate a more active support network – for occasional practical help but also for regular visits. Fortunately, this was a particularly popular area among those people who offered, via the questionnaire, to help with new initiatives. To date, 25 residents have said that they would like to help, and we would welcome further volunteers.

Islip Village Shop

Islip Village Shop was founded in October 2000, following the closure of the last commercial shop in the village when Chris and Janet Busby retired. Recognising the continuing need for a shop in the village, Henrietta Leyser led a campaign to raise funds so that a small, volunteer-run shop could be set up in the Village Hall, managed by Maralynn Smith.

The Village Shop was an instant success and in 2004 the first extension was built, which doubled the space and allowed stock lines to be increased. As the Shop has continued to thrive year on year, a proportion of the annual profit is donated to good causes in the village. Now one of the main hubs of village life, the Village Shop was described by respondents to the questionnaire as, for example, 'vital to the community' and 'a priceless asset'.

In 2012 the question arose of whether another extension could be built, this time providing a separate entrance to the Shop as well as increasing shelf and storage space. The Village Shop Management Committee decided to ask villagers, via the Village Plan questionnaire, whether they would support such a development: 77% of respondents said that they would support the idea of creating a separate entrance to the Shop and 88% were in favour of creating more space.

Overall, there is huge support for the Shop facility. Just under half of respondents (44%) use the Village Shop every week, a further 22% twice a month, and 10% at least once a month. Only 5% of respondents never use the Shop. Most people said that they use the Village Shop as a top-up to their weekly supermarket shop, and that they enjoy the local products that are on offer. Several people commented on the high mark-up on prices, but many understood that the convenience has to be paid for – in the time, effort, and fuel that it takes to fetch goods from the supermarket. And actually, orders placed through the Shop for many local services – including Woodlands Butchers, the fish van and the Patisserie – are at no higher price than would be paid by going directly to these suppliers.

Whilst many residents wanted the Village Shop to be open for longer, this might be unrealistic as it would require more volunteers – and these are hard to find for the existing opening hours. The strongest support here was for a later opening, until 6.30 in the evenings, to allow residents using the train to be able to call in on their way home.

Some additional comments were made regarding the range of goods and services on offer, and these will be considered by the Village Shop Management Committee. One suggestion made by several people was that the Shop might offer daily and Sunday newspapers, perhaps at some future date (as there is currently a door-to-door delivery service provided by Mr Franklin – see box).

Action 6

To develop the elderly/infirm contact network

Who	Co-ordinator and volunteers.
How	Discuss new initiatives, agree what is needed, gauge support, fundraise and plan.



“The Village Shop is ... a priceless asset”

Newspaper delivery

A daily or weekly newspaper delivery service to Islip is provided by Mr Peter Franklin, Newsagent (01865 331378/07711 144847). All papers are delivered to Islip households by 6am. Papers can now also be downloaded onto Tablets early in the morning for under £10 per month.

Response from the Village Shop Management Committee

More volunteers are urgently needed to cope with the hours that the Shop is currently open. The Committee is in favour of extending the Shop opening hours, as suggested by some respondents to the questionnaire, but it isn't possible with the current number of volunteers. The Committee is constantly looking at new ways of attracting more volunteers, which in turn would allow longer opening hours.

Newspapers would be a lovely addition, however we believe that Mr Franklin is very keen to keep his round without any competition and, once again, if we were to stock them this would mean the Shop opening a lot earlier and the need for a volunteer to take responsibility of being Paper Manager. The Shop Committee wishes to support Mr Franklin and appreciates that he currently offers a fantastic service to the community. However, if he ever stopped the service, the Shop would look into the possibility of providing this service.

Kate Venables, May 2013

Islip Village Hall

Originally built in the 1950s, the Village Hall was extensively refurbished in 2000. In 2004 it became a limited company and it is now run by the Village Hall Management Committee, chaired by Richard Venables, which meets on the third Tuesday of every month. There are four Trustees, who supervise the work of the Management Committee. The Village Hall includes three bookable spaces – the Main Hall, Terrace Room and Parish Room – and can be rented with or without the kitchen and bar (see box).

Replies to the questionnaire revealed that the Village Hall is used regularly (once a month or more) by 36% of respondents, but less than once a month by 50% and never by a further 15% of residents. Comments were made about hire charges – and the effect of these on small groups wishing to use the Hall regularly – and about improvements to facilities, and extra services that could be offered. All responses, including a number of suggestions for increasing the use of the Hall, have been passed to the Village Hall Committee for consideration.

Action 7

Village Hall Management Committee to review the condition of the facilities and put in place an action plan for the improvement and refurbishment of the Village Hall facilities

Who Village Hall Management Committee.

How Village Hall Management Committee to review existing funds and investigate grant monies.

Village Hall facilities

- Main Hall: stage, large-screen projection, sound system, bar and seating for up to 150 people
- Terrace Room: with outside patio, bar and seating for up to 50 people
- Parish Room: with boardroom table and seating for up to 12 people
- Kitchen facilities and bar: by arrangement

Up-to-date rates are published on the Islip website (www.islip.org.uk)

To confirm bookings or for further information please contact Raffaella Zero (07979 492261/isliphallbookings@hotmail.com)

Response from the Village Hall Committee

The Village Hall Committee has already taken on board many of the comments:

- The entrance hall and WCs have been redecorated.
- The Terrace Room has been refurbished and new furniture installed.
- The bar is also being refurbished and a new bar manager (Anthony Dandridge) is running this facility.
- We continue to assess ongoing maintenance needs and are planning a refurbishment of the kitchen and are liaising with ORCC regarding grant availability.
- We are liaising with the Village Shop and looking at the potential to extend into the old beer store.
- We are reviewing booking rates for frequent hirers.
- We are funding the opening of the Terrace Room on Sunday afternoons in the summer, with drinks and teas and coffees being offered by the bar, to provide a new amenity for the village.

Richard Venables, May 2013



St Nicholas' Church

St Nicholas' Church is a key feature of Islip, with its tower visible from many points within – as well as on the approaches to – the village. The oldest part of the building is 12th century; it was largely rebuilt in the 14th century and a tower was added in the 15th century. The building was badly damaged in the Battle of Islip Bridge during the Civil War. The interior has undergone phases of change and refurbishment over the years – including that initiated by Dr Robert South, Rector of Islip, in the 17th century. The latest updating, completed in 2011, included installing central heating, a kitchen and a WC, and has enabled the Church to continue its roles: for worship and as a place for wider community use.

Times of services are displayed in the porch. Sunday services include Family Communion at 10.30am (with Sunday Club for under-11s), occasional Evensong and 8am Holy Communion. There is a shortened Family Service on the fourth Sunday of the month, which particularly encourages active participation by children. There is a weekday service at 9.30am on Tuesdays.

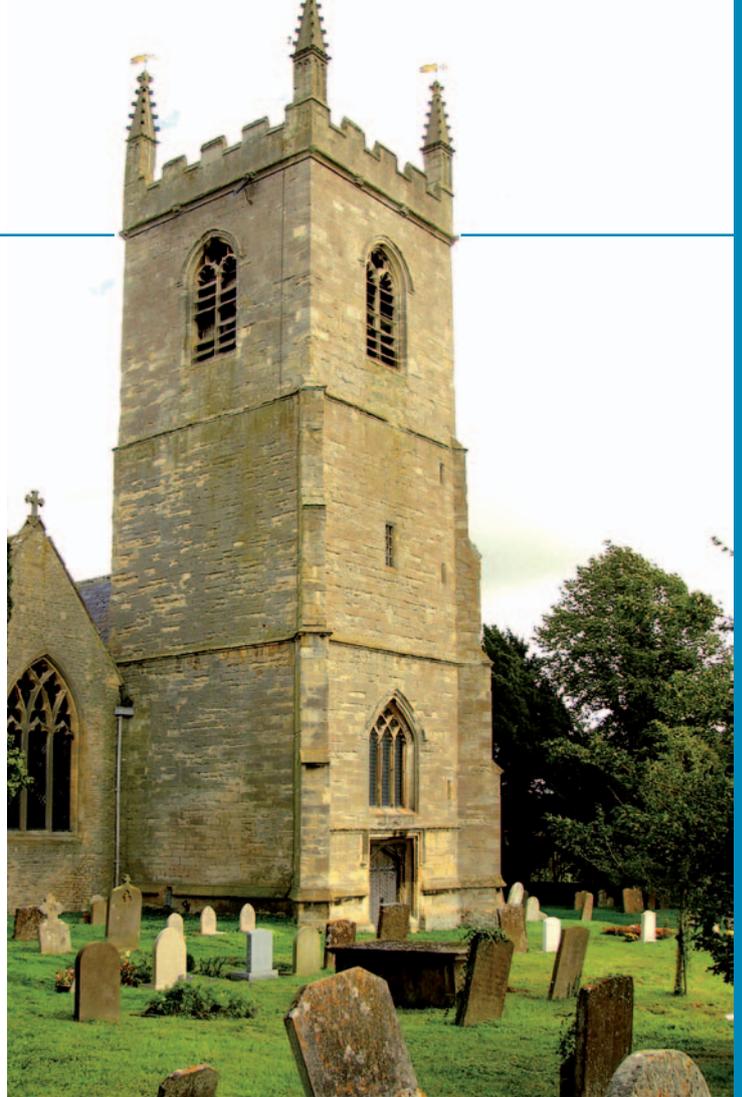
The Church is the venue for a number of public and village events, including Remembrance Sunday and Harvest Thanksgiving, as well as for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Dr South's School has close ties with the Church, and annually holds services for Harvest Festival, Christmas, Easter, and at the end of the final term. These are usually very well supported by parents and other villagers.

The Church supports the Bicester Food Bank, which helps those in need in Bicester and surrounding villages, and it also donates 5% of its unrestricted income to charity.

Islip is one of eight churches in the Ray Valley Benefice, which extends across Otmoor as far as Ambrosden, on the edge of Bicester. The Rector, Reverend Charles Masheder (01869 247813), lives in Ambrosden; the priest resident in Islip is Reverend David Wippell (849497).



Crowds at the War Memorial for the first Remembrance Day service, November 1919



The Church Commissioners

Based in London, the Church Commissioners is a financial body that manages the historic assets of the Church of England – property, land and share portfolio. Most of the land around Islip is owned by the Church Commissioners and leased to local farmers. The Commissioners are not responsible for the financial management of individual churches and they do not contribute to their running costs.

Members of the Parochial Church Council

Name	Position
Reverend Charles Masheder	Chair
Reverend David Wippell	
David Hughes	Church Warden, Lay Vice-chair
Tony Esau	Church Warden; PCC representative Governor of Dr South's School; Deanery Synod Representative
Christopher Lowe	Treasurer
Scot Peterson	Secretary
Teresa Carter	
Keith Chapple	
Caroline Chipperfield	
Jane Currie	
Peter Davis	
Johanna Stephenson	Electoral Roll Officer



The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the governing body of the Church, responsible for its financial affairs, the care and maintenance of the building and its contents, and for supporting the work of the Church within the parish. The PCC is also a charity. The current PCC members are listed in the box on p.9.

The questionnaire revealed that around 60% of respondents use the Church, either for regular (32%) or occasional (48%) services, or for concerts (29%). 38% of respondents said that they do not use the Church at all.

On the question of increasing the Church's income, the most popular suggestions were joint events (48%) and appeals (37%). 28% of respondents would support the creation of a 'Friends' organisation involving more people. Only 14% of respondents believe that funding the Church is the congregation's problem. The feedback from the questionnaire has been communicated to the PCC for information and action.

Dr South's School

Dr South's CE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School was founded by the Rector of Islip, Dr Robert South, in 1710. The original building still stands, but is now used as a private dwelling (The Old House, on High Street). The current school roll stands at just under 100, with pupils aged 3–11 coming from Islip, Woodeaton, and further afield. The present Head Teacher, Huw Morgan, was appointed in 2011. Mr Morgan is very supportive of involvement from the village in the School, and vice versa – 'If we are a community, we all have a part to play'.

The current School was built in 1966, with a Foundation Stage Unit added in 2005. The School boasts a large, well-designed playground and garden (including a kitchen garden and chicken run). The Foundation Stage Unit is on the same site but has a separate outdoor play area. Of the 38 respondents who said that they are currently using pre-school facilities, half said that they use Dr South's pre-school.

Dr South's partnership secondary school is Gosford Hill School in Kidlington, to which the majority of Year 6 leavers transfer. Other leavers go to The Marlborough School in Woodstock and to the independent sector.

The lively involvement of parents in the School is a valuable asset, whether as learning mentors, parent volunteers, governors, or as members of the Friends of Dr South's parents' association. The Friends organise social events and raise funds for the School in the form of the Sparkle Fund ('helping our children to shine'). The Friends as a group feel that the single biggest issue facing their children in the village is that of road safety/traffic.

Dr South's School contacts

Head Teacher: Huw Morgan

Governing body: The governing body of Dr South's School is made up of parents, staff and Church representatives, the Head Teacher and representatives of the local community. Any concerns that parents have should always be addressed to the relevant member of staff, then to the Head Teacher and then to a governor. The chairman of the School governors is currently Paul Baker.



Islip Medical Practice

Islip Medical Practice looks after around 6,000 people in 18 villages. The Practice has six GPs, a large and busy team of practice nurses, healthcare assistants and district nurses, as well as a large dispensary. The Practice website (www.islipsurgery.org.uk) is regularly updated with news and information, and includes an online patient feedback group. Of all respondents to the questionnaire, 384 (88%) use the Practice at least once a year.

According to the Practice, the main need for improvement for Islip residents concerns transport issues: in the wake of NHS cuts to ambulance services, many elderly people now find it difficult to get transport to hospitals, dentists, chiropodists, etc.

The District Nurses should be contacted (on 842615) for other issues concerning elderly people. For issues concerning young children, the Health Visitors should be contacted on 841976.

Islip pubs

The Red Lion

<http://www.redlionislipoxford.com>

Built in the mid-17th century, the Red Lion was originally a coaching inn offering stabling and overnight accommodation to travellers on the main London to Worcester road. As well as a dining room with an extensive menu, the Red Lion today offers pool, darts, an indoor skittle alley – home of the Islip Aunt Sally and Islip Football teams – and regular musical evenings and other events.

The bottle bank in the car park is for general village use, by kind permission of the Red Lion.



The Swan Inn

<http://www.swan-islip.com>

The Swan dates from the early 1700s. During the Civil War the publican, Mr Beckley, also ran a boat-building yard (now the pub car park). From here he ferried the parliamentary army into Oxford when the city was captured from Royalist forces. The Swan is now run as a Chinese restaurant and take-away, as well as a pub.



Other facilities and amenities

Of all respondents to the questionnaire, over 200 use the playing field, children's playground, Millennium Wood and Confessor's Walk at least once a year. 65 respondents said that they use the library bus, but several people expressed regret that they are unable to do so because it visits during working hours.

A number of other facilities that respondents listed as being particularly appreciated are: the pubs, the public footpaths, Islip Motors, Rico's take-away pizza van (Fridays, 5–9.30 by the Bletchingdon Road school entrance), the free monthly film club in the Village Hall, the railway, and the recycling facilities (in the Red Lion car park).

A number of suggestions were made for new initiatives; these are included on p.21 of this Plan.



The library bus

The mobile library is in the Village Hall car park at 10.10–11.10am on Thursdays. Operated by Oxfordshire County Council, mobile libraries are free to library members and have easy access for those who find steps difficult.

Riverside boat launch

Islip Parish Council rents a piece of land adjacent to Islip bridge, at the top of Collice Street (site of the pumping station). This can be used for residents requiring access to the River Ray for the purpose of launching rowing boats and canoes/kayaks. A note of caution, however: canoeing/boating on rivers requires the permission of the owners of the adjacent dry land.

Traffic and Road Safety

Transport, traffic and road safety make up one of the most significant issues covered by the Islip Village Plan – matters relating to it came up many times during consultation and in the questionnaire responses. There is widespread concern about the volume and speed of cars passing through the village, as well as related concerns about parking, pedestrian access and safety.

Islip's position on the B4027 connecting the A34 and the A40/M40 means that there is a heavy stream of traffic 'rat-running' through the village. The Transport Monitoring Officer of Oxfordshire County Council did a traffic survey on the B4027 Wheatley Road during the week 10–16 January 2012. According to the survey, 38,200 vehicles crossed Islip bridge in this week alone, and 700 vehicles per hour were passing through the village during the peak periods.

Respondents to the questionnaire made many different and creative suggestions for ways in which we might tackle Islip's traffic problems. Some of these are already being implemented by the Parish Council, which has had much frustration – but also some success! – with its efforts in this area. Recent developments include securing funding for and installation of gates by the sides of the road at the Wheatley Road entrance, reporting and repair of potholes throughout the village, and distributing salt bins around the village.

Of the 413 respondents to the road traffic questions in the questionnaire, 83% believe that traffic is a problem in Islip. In answer to specific questions, 366 respondents (84%) support measures to reduce the speed of vehicles, and 368 (85%) would like to see the weight restrictions on vehicles in the village reinforced.

Traffic weight restrictions

Residents are able – and encouraged – to report oversized vehicles (i.e. over 7.5 tons) passing through Islip by logging on to the Oxfordshire County Council website at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/about-reporting-street-and-road-problems-online> or by emailing Liz.Challinor@Oxfordshire.gov.uk and stating the date and time that the vehicle passed through the village, its direction of travel, the vehicle's registration number, and, if possible, the name of the operator.



Islip bridge

Traffic on the bridge is a real concern for residents – 333 respondents (81%) said that they are worried about it. For those people who live on the south side of the bridge this is a particular problem, with 100% of the respondents from this area stating traffic on the bridge as a concern. A total of 139 comments were made, with some villagers expressing extreme anxiety for the safety of pedestrians on the bridge, particularly during busy times of day. The main problems mentioned were the speed of traffic and inconsiderate drivers.

Respondents made various suggestions to improve safety on the bridge, including the installation of traffic lights, street lighting, a raised pedestrian path, and guardrails. There were 67 comments in support of a new pedestrian bridge, however this is unlikely to become a reality with estimated costs in the region of £500,000.

Action 8

Feasibility study to identify and cost possible improvements to Islip bridge

How Action group to examine problem and potential solutions, research cost and possible funding.

Who Volunteers and representative of the Parish Council.



Traffic management

A number of useful suggestions and possible solutions to some of the traffic problems were made by respondents to the questionnaire, such as:

- Speed humps, especially in North, Middle and Lower Streets (20)
- Improvements to road crossing at Dr South's School (12)
- Speed cameras (9)
- Mirror to assist pedestrians crossing at Church Lane/Kidlington Road junction (7)
- Proper policing of HGV vehicles (7)
- Control of traffic in Church Lane (one-way or residents only) (7)
- Improvements to signage throughout the village (7)
- Professional, independent traffic survey (7)
- Improved signage and/or traffic lights at 'Fox Corner' pinch-point (6)

As a next step we need to consider these ideas – and the implications of them – thoroughly, and pull together a constructive plan of action. It's likely that, in some cases, a solution that appears feasible might not in fact be possible. To maximise the chances of success, and to minimise wasted time and effort, early consultation with the relevant bodies (such as Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Authority, etc.) will be essential. In this way we can establish what actions might be possible.

Given the complexity of the problem, and the wide range of possible solutions, any group convened to tackle this issue should ideally include representatives from all areas of the village. A first step could be to commission a professional road safety/traffic management survey, funded by the Parish Council.



Action 9

To consider road safety and traffic control problems and possible solutions

How	Traffic action group to examine problems, cost and develop list of priorities to be taken up and driven forward by the Parish Council.
Who	Volunteers and representative of Parish Council.

Cyclists crossing Islip bridge c.1902



Parking and access

Most of the parking in Islip is on the street, as relatively few properties have private driveways. The survey asked whether people consider such roadside parking to be a problem and, of the 402 replies, there was a roughly 50/50 split – while some people feel that parking in some places causes bottlenecks at busy times, others said that anything that might slow down traffic is a good thing. The four main areas of concern are High Street (28%), Middle Street (23%), Church Lane (15%), and Church Square (14%). Residents understandably focused on problems in their own area.

Parking on pavements is a particular problem in some parts of the village, especially along Kidlington Road and outside the School. Here, cars blocking pavements and walkways make life very difficult for wheelchair users and for pedestrians with buggies and walking frames. The School often reminds parents to park considerately and has in the past asked the Community Police to monitor parking, but the problem persists.

Access for disabled residents and pedestrians

Of the respondents to the questionnaire, 13 identified themselves as having a disability and/or difficulty getting around the village. Four particular problems were identified:

- Uneven surfaces
- Need for safe crossing points, especially on High Street
- Safe route across Islip bridge
- Sloping, narrow pavement at 'Fox Corner' pinch-point

Related to the issue of getting around the village was a question about pedestrian access. 349 people responded, of whom 72% said that they would like to see improved pedestrian access. A number of 'black-spots' were highlighted, the most commonly mentioned being:

- Roadside route to the new Burial Ground
- Islip bridge
- Fox Corner
- Crossing opposite the Red Lion
- Middle Street
- Narrow, uneven and unmaintained walkways

Taking the village as a whole, walkways tend to be narrow, uneven and unconnected, and it is impossible to walk round the village without crossing the roads many times. (This becomes all the more dangerous in light of the traffic problems.) A comprehensive pedestrian plan – incorporating the whole village, rather than individual points in isolation – would be a major step towards solving this significant problem. Such a plan would need to be costed, and would inevitably require a potentially large amount of funding, but this is clearly another area that many residents feel strongly about.

Action 10

To develop a pedestrian plan connecting up all roads in the village

How Advisory group to examine problems, cost and propose solutions; these to be passed to the Parish Council for driving through.

Who Advisory group of residents and representative of Parish Council.

Transport

The questionnaire asked villagers to think about how often they use the public transport that serves Islip. From a total of 435 respondents, 15 (3%) stated that they use the buses daily, a further 3% weekly, 114 (26%) occasionally and 279 people (64%) never use them. The responses indicated that the trains to and from Islip are slightly better used, with 20 people (5% of the total of 435 respondents) using them daily, 57 (13%) weekly, 282 (65%) occasionally, and only 64 people (15%) stating that they never use the train service.

Most of the respondents (64%) feel that the proposed Chiltern Railways services, which will run directly from Islip into London, are a positive development. However, a quarter of respondents stated that the new services will be a negative development for them. Respondents were also asked to comment on the East-West route to Milton Keynes and Reading, with 51% of respondents stating that this service will be beneficial for them and 37% stating that it will not.

In answer to questions about train times – and whether the frequency of trains would affect their use of the service – exactly half of the respondents said that they would use the service if more frequent trains stopped in Islip during the evening. At least one respondent said that they would be reluctant to take the train into Oxford and then risk being stranded. One third of respondents would use daytime trains if they were more frequent, and 20% said they would support trains running more frequently earlier in the morning.

“A cycle path into Oxford [would] ... be the single most desirable improvement to life in Islip”



Moving to another form of transport, cycling, there was some very strong support for the possible development of a cycle path into Oxford. One respondent said that they believed this to be the single most desirable improvement to life in Islip. A large number of respondents (240) said that they would use such a cycle path – 34 of them daily, 78 weekly, 119 at least once a month (and 9 people did not specify). 171 respondents said they would not use a cycle path.

Residents also suggested other places that they would like to see connected to Islip by a cycle path, including Kidlington, Summertown/North Oxford, Bicester, Water Eaton, Headington, neighbouring villages, and the canal system.

Action 11

To explore the potential for cycle paths out of Islip

How Volunteers interested in setting these up to explore possibilities and report back to Parish Council.

Who Volunteers.

Forthcoming railway development

Two railway development projects are both funded and scheduled: Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 Phase Two, and the East-West Railway (EWR). These are to be merged, managed by Network Rail, and preparatory work has begun. As a result of this combined project, the line will be returned to twin-track status, electrified, and will carry passengers and freight between Oxford, London Marylebone, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, and a number of other new destinations such as High Wycombe. Trains will run at 95mph and may number as many as 20 or more an hour by 2019. The service to High Wycombe and Marylebone (via Bicester Town) will commence when the line reopens from a new station at Water Eaton in May 2015. Destinations north beyond Bicester will be served from May 2017.

Unfortunately, the line will close for at least two years, and when it reopens the Oxford and Bicester service at Islip will reduce to just 7 or 8 trains per day, down from the 11 we have now. However, the EWR franchise allows for Islip service, and the Oxford-Bicester Rail Action Group (<http://www.obrag.org.uk/>), founded in Islip in 2005 to fend off permanent closure, will do its best to negotiate enough trains to support commuting along that route.

At the time of writing, it remains unclear exactly when the line will close or when it will reopen. Reopening of service beyond Water Eaton and into Oxford may be delayed, or subject to serious disruption, by yet another project – ‘Oxford Area Remodelling’ – which sees the rebuilding of track and signalling north of Oxford station and the construction of new platforms and facilities.

Ian East, May 2013



Islip Environment

Islip is surrounded by Green Belt land, most of it owned by the Church Commissioners and farmed by families at Manor Farm and Hillside Farm in Islip, and Peg Top Farm in Woodeaton. To judge from the questionnaire responses, many people in Islip are very concerned about environmental issues.



Flooding

Another environmental issue – which is of great concern to some residents – is flooding. Of the 26 respondents living in Lower Street, 80% are concerned about or affected by flooding, and 47% of the 49 respondents in Mill Street are also concerned and/or affected. The Parish Council is in communication with the Environment Agency about the management of the River Ray and surrounding land, and the Environment Agency is currently preparing its Water Framework Directive Plan. The Parish Council will notify villagers when this plan, which will include the River Ray, is available on the Environment Agency web site (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>).



Street lighting

One of the issues tackled by the questionnaire was the question of whether residents would like to see the street lights turned off after midnight. The Parish Council has in the past supported the use of street lighting, taking the view that this deters crime. Two thirds of respondents said that they would not like the street lighting to be turned off after midnight, suggesting that there is popular support for the Parish Council's earlier decision that the street lights should remain on.

Footpaths

On the question of footpaths (outside the village, as opposed to walkways within the village, dealt with on p.14), there was considerable interest from respondents in creating more circular public footpaths and improving the maintenance and signage of the existing ones.



Action 12

To explore the potential for improving and extending footpaths around Islip

How Volunteers interested in setting these up to explore possibilities with local farmers and landowner (Church Commissioners).

Who Volunteers.

Wildlife conservation

There was support for all of the wildlife projects proposed by the Islip Wildlife Conservation Group, as follows:

- New hedgerows: 185 people
- Community orchard: 197 people
- Community woodland: 201 people
- More swift boxes: 144 people
- More bird boxes: 166 people
- River improvements: 277 people

Most of these projects are being taken forward, and the Wildlife Conservation Group would welcome increased support for these initiatives. Other suggestions for new wildlife projects included bat boxes, a virtual wildlife survey, planting apricot trees (Islip and Kidlington were, in the past, major apricot-growing centres), support for local food producers, and wild flowers in the Millennium Wood.

Allotments

There are two sets of allotments in Islip – on either side of the Wheatley Road on the south side of the bridge – which become available for rent from time to time. The Parish Allotments, to the west, are Parish Council property and co-ordinated on the Council's behalf by Bridget Tuffrey (371174). The Glebe Allotments, to the east, are owned and run by the Glebe Allotments Association (Chairman: Roy Newman, 376497).

Response from Islip Wildlife Conservation Group

The village Swift Project, supported by Cherwell District Council, has created huge interest and there are over 45 swift boxes erected on buildings in the village. A small number of boxes are being used by swifts in 2013 which will help to increase numbers in our locally important swift population. We will be extending the project to other bird species, as well as bats, and will provide advice on where to site boxes via workshops and talks during winter in readiness for the spring season.

We have established a Virtual Orchard via a Virtual Orchard Working Group, with 30 households signed up. This aims to unite apple trees and their owners in the village, to make juice and chutney, and to provide pruning and identification advice. There are no plans to create a village orchard or community woodland until land can be secured privately or from the Church Commissioners.

A new 70-metre hedgerow was planted in October 2011 and it has flourished with the help of weeding work parties. In autumn 2013 we plan to increase the length of this hedgerow by about 10 metres and to plant a disease-resistant elm – donated via the Great British Elm Project – along the same field boundary. The Islip Wildlife Conservation Group (IWCG) has planted up the gaps on the new Burial Ground boundary hedgerow and provided weeding work parties. We have provided advice on the grassland mowing regime for a wildlife-friendly Churchyard and Burial Ground.

Once the River Ray catchment management plan has been made public (Water Framework Directive via the Environment Agency), it will be possible to assess if the IWCG can be involved in river enhancement or survey work. The IWCG is always willing to collaborate in other village projects where wildlife enhancements can be made, so please do get in touch with the group if you have any project ideas.

Jocelyne Bangham, May 2013



Village Communications



Islip.org.uk website

Islip boasts its own village website (www.islip.org.uk), which 207 respondents said that they have used (198 people have not). A number of suggestions were made for additions to the website, which were communicated to the website administrator, Mike Coleman.

Response from the website administrator

Thank you for all your comments, especially the nice ones, and suggestions. The complaints (mainly about delays in updating) are all, I'm afraid, justified. Unfortunately, work commitments mean that at times I don't get to the website for a couple of weeks or more. Because of the same time constraints, I am not able to implement many of the suggestions, excellent though they are, for developing the site and, again for the same reason, I do rely on people sending material to me rather than me having to go out and look for it. However, I am very interested if anyone wants to help compile the website, or redesign it, or trawl the various pubs, clubs and societies in Islip for details of upcoming events. Please email me at mikecoleman4@btinternet.com if you would like to join the webitorial team!

Mike Coleman, July 2013

Parish Newsletter

The Parish Newsletter is delivered to households in Islip for an annual subscription of £6. The Newsletter is financed by the Parochial Church Council, with an annual donation from the Parish Council as a contribution towards the costs of printing and distribution of the Parish Report (which is contained within the Parish Newsletter). Some 381 people – or 87% of respondents to the questionnaire – said that they read the Newsletter, making it the most popular means of communication in the village.

Most respondents shared admiration and support for the work of the editor, Michelle Ashworth. Some suggestions were made on questions of content and delivery, which were communicated to the editor.

Response from the Newsletter editor

Thank you to all respondents to the Village Plan who made helpful suggestions and comments on the Parish Newsletter of Islip, Noke and Woodeaton – your feedback is very much appreciated. Several of your suggestions are now being actioned:

- details of the Islip Village website will be included in future issues;
- Neighbourhood Watch reports will be included, as and when available;
- a monthly list of events will be included from the August issue onwards.

We would like to action several other suggestions made by the respondents, such as the inclusion of:

- readers' letters;
- restaurant/book reviews;
- a noticeboard for villagers to advertise services offered/required.

However, we are relying on villagers to submit this content for inclusion. We would like to remind villagers that all submissions to the Newsletter are welcome. If you have an article that may be of interest or you would like to submit a letter, a review or other material, please send it to islipnewsletter@hotmail.co.uk. We particularly like to include photographs wherever possible, so if you have any of local events, please do send them through.

If you have other suggestions for how the Parish Newsletter could be improved, we would welcome your feedback.

Michelle Ashworth, July 2013

Broadband

Just over half of the respondents to the questionnaire felt that the current broadband service is inadequate, with one resident stating that they have no access at all. Some years ago, Islip Parish Council identified broadband as an area that required attention and, since that time, a number of surveys have been carried out. In the last one (March 2012), 93% of the 106 respondents felt that a good broadband service is essential to the future of Islip.

Based on information from this survey, and from a subsequent village meeting in October 2012, the Parish Council led a consultation process that resulted in the successful negotiation of a contract for BT Openreach to supply fibre

broadband to Islip. The cost of the work was £11,300, to be funded entirely by private donations from residents (because no contribution was allowed from public funds). At the time of going to press (July 2013) the work had just been completed and we are expecting that even residents on the periphery of the village will now be able to enjoy download speeds of 25–50 Mbps, an increase in speed of between 1,000% and 2,000%. In order to benefit from these improvements, all that residents need to do is to contact their existing broadband service provider and convert to a higher-speed package, which the technology is now able to support. This is likely to be slightly – but not significantly – more expensive.

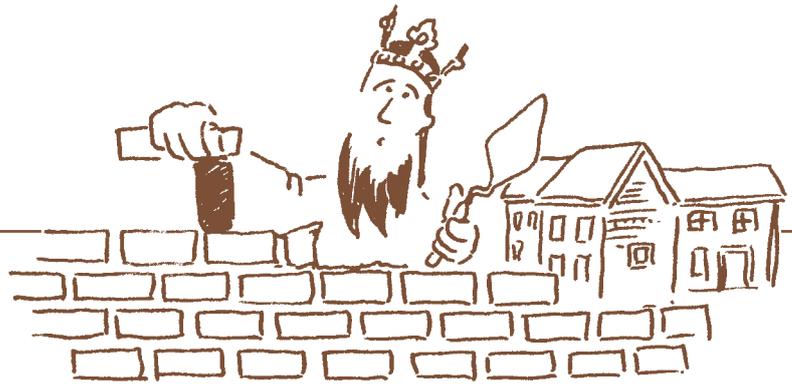
Directory of services

Islip has a Village Directory, which is produced periodically by the Parish Council and distributed to all households in the village. Within the questionnaire we asked whether it would be useful to include within the Directory a list of local service providers. Although two thirds of respondents said that it would be useful for such a list to be included, a further 24% said that it would not because the Kidlington Advertiser (which is also delivered to all households) already provides this service. There is also CDC's small repairs service (<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3917>).

As a result of this feedback, a decision has been made not to include the list of services in the Directory, however information can be posted on the islip.org.uk website. This will also have the advantage of ensuring that the information is kept up to date.

An updated Village Directory is currently in production and will be distributed to all residents in summer 2013, and then to all new Islip residents as and when they move into the village.

Housing



In early 2010 a housing needs survey was carried out by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC), Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership (ORHP) and Islip Parish Council. A questionnaire was delivered to every house in Islip, of which 30% were returned. The results indicated that 69.5% of respondents would support some affordable housing in Islip, if there was a proven local need (see box).

The issue of affordable housing was raised again in the Village Plan questionnaire, where 71% of respondents stated that they believe units of affordable housing should be made available to those with close ties to the village. Residents were also asked whether they are concerned about the impact of affordable housing on the village. A small majority (54%) of respondents stated that they are concerned, with a further 16% of respondents opposed to new housing of any kind. The remainder of the respondents said that they are not concerned.

While there was no overriding concern, those issues mentioned most often were the risk of changing the character of the village and the effects on traffic. Respondents were slightly less concerned about infilling (building new houses between existing properties) and extending the village boundary.

When considering the possibility of developing new houses in the village, responses to the questionnaire showed widespread support for 'green' construction (in fact, 100% of respondents are in favour). Despite the concerns expressed above, the responses also showed support for the development of affordable housing in the village, with a high percentage of respondents (71%) feeling that some units of affordable housing should be made available for those with close ties to the village. The responses indicated that there is minimal support for new five-bedroom houses or private social rented homes, however 44% of respondents supported new one- and two-bedroom houses and 36% supported new three- and four-bedroom houses. 32% of respondents supported the development of retirement housing.

Action 13

To explore potential sites and arrangements for affordable housing

How Explore possibilities with local farmers and landowner (Church Commissioners) and the planning authority (Cherwell District Council); consult further with residents.

Who Islip Parish Council.

Housing needs survey

The findings of the ORCC/ORHP/Parish Council survey were published in March 2010. An affordable housing need was identified from 11 respondents, all of whom had a connection to Islip. Their requirements varied – from one-bedroom flats to three-bedroom houses – depending on their circumstances.

Following initial discussion with Cherwell District Council, a provisional but indicative mix of possible properties to develop was proposed. This was:

- 2 × 1-bedroom flats
- 1 × 2-bedroom bungalow
- 4 × 2-bedroom houses (two for shared ownership)
- 1 × 3-bedroom house

Experience has shown that once a need has been identified, it will remain more or less stable with the passing of time – even if the needs of individuals themselves have changed. However, there is also recognition that the average age of villagers has increased, and that this could change the demand for amenities.

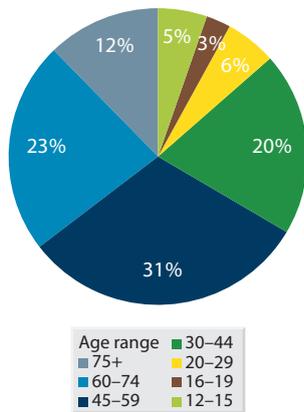
Household Data

The questionnaire asked respondents for personal details, which allowed a degree of analysis. Of the 435 respondents, 53% were female and 47% were male. The age range of respondents is shown in the pie chart below.

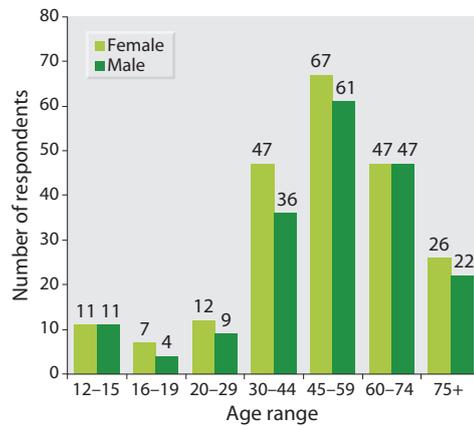
A total of only 13% of respondents to the questionnaire are aged between 12 and 30, leaving 19% aged 30–44, 30% aged 45–59, 22% aged 60–74, and 12% aged 75+. Combining information about the age and sex of respondents, we found that, in the 16–45 age range, respondents were split 4:3 female to male.

Looking at the question of the length of time spent in Islip by residents, as might be expected there is a correlation between age and length of residence: most residents over the age of 30 have lived in the village for 1–5 years; most 12–20-year-olds have been here for between 10 and 20 years; and the number of residents who have spent 30 years or more in the village is, naturally, the older section of the population.

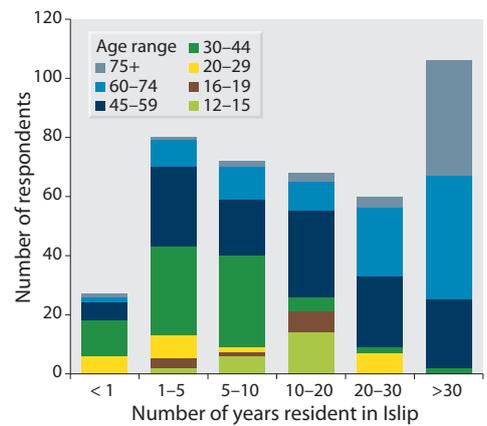
Respondents by age range



Questionnaire respondents by age and sex



Length of time resident in Islip by age range



Getting Involved

The Village Plan Steering Group has been delighted with the number of responses from villagers, and the honest – and often passionate – comments. It's clear that people take pride in the village and that many residents are already involved in many ways in making Islip a great place to live. One easy and flexible way to do this is by volunteering – the Shop is successful because it builds community, as do various other forms of volunteering. The various clubs and groups, and village events all need willing volunteers to thrive.

While many villagers already volunteer, it was exciting to see that more than 100 new volunteers have now come forward via the Village Plan questionnaire, whether offering to help with specific projects, and amenities or at occasional village events. This list of names is in the care of the Parish Council Clerk. Villagers wishing to join or lead any of the actions identified by the Village Plan are encouraged to contact the Clerk for details of others who have indicated a willingness to help.



New activities in Islip

Many respondents submitted creative ideas for initiatives that could further enhance village life, such as:

Community help

- Register of people willing to help elderly or disabled villagers/network of visitors
- Bringing food to those who struggle to get out
- Spending time with people who may need a visit
- Buddying up between Thursday Club and Youth Group
- Intranet to enable villagers to access help from each other
- Skill store: giving an hour of skills in return for services

Sport & leisure

- Swimming pool/splash pool
- Cycling club
- Running club
- Table tennis club
- Circuit training club
- More exercise classes

Clubs & group activities

- Creative writing
- Home management skills
- Children's music
- Card/games club
- Community choir
- Play-reading club
- Musical theatre
- Photographic club
- Dancing (ballroom/Latin)

Environment

- Communal effort to make homes greener
- More sourcing of local food; swap/exchange for home-made/grown produce
- Efforts to discourage use of cars

Events

- Community quiz nights

It is hoped that those villagers who made these and other suggestions will now be willing to set them up – and that others will volunteer their help. The Parish Council will provide support and advice where possible: the Parish Council contacts for matters concerning the Village Plan (including details of volunteers) are Johanna Stephenson (848331) and Michael Wilkinson (Parish Clerk; 378831). Alternatively, members of the Village Plan Steering Group listed on the inside front cover of this booklet may be able to provide further information gathered during the preparation of the Islip Village Plan.

Time to take action!

The Village Plan has been a considerable community effort, and through it we have identified many ways in which we can enhance life in Islip. Together we have been able to discover levels of support for various initiatives, a list of priorities – what concerns people most and what needs to be addressed first – and have begun to see how some of these issues might be tackled. It is now up to us all to take action: we hope that this Plan will encourage villagers to lead and participate in all sorts of initiatives to make life in Islip even better!

Thank you

Thank you for reading to the end of the Islip Village Plan. We hope you have found it an informative and thought-provoking document that will stimulate you to get involved in ensuring that Islip continues to be a thriving community and a great place to live.

Keep in touch...

We will keep everyone updated via the Parish Newsletter, Islip village website (www.islip.org.uk) and the village email list (islipinfo@btinternet.com) as new initiatives are set up. We would also love to hear from you – so please keep an eye out for news and information, and keep in touch!



**“If we are a community,
we all have a part to play”**