

East Hagbourne Parish Plan

April 2011

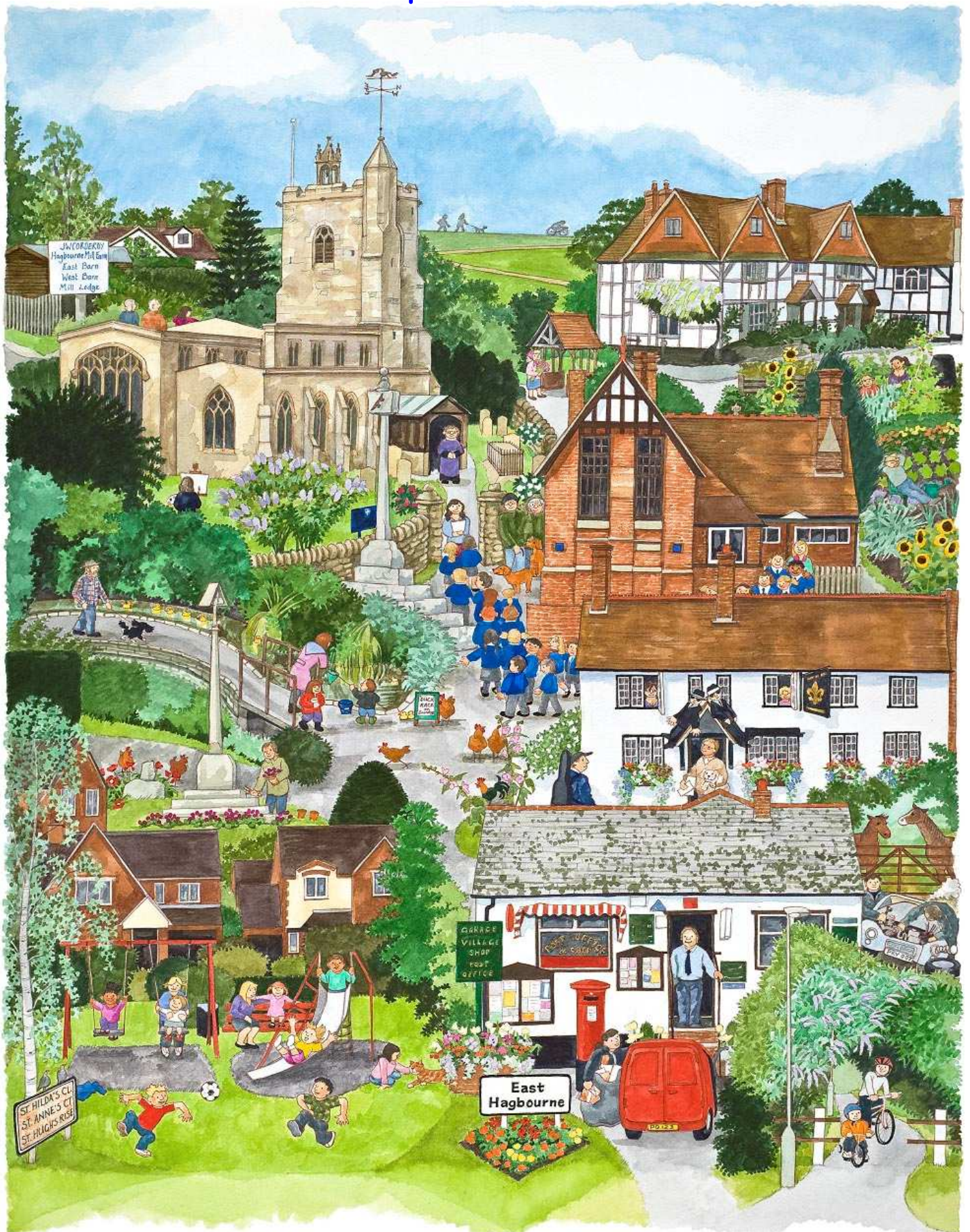


Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Objectives and Background to the Parish Plan	4
2. East Hagbourne in Context.....	5
3. Consultation.....	6
4. Key Issues	7
4.1 Urban Growth.....	7
4.2 Communications	9
4.3 Road Safety and Traffic.....	12
4.4 Footpaths and Pavements	15
4.5 Anti-Social Behaviour	21
4.6 Dog Fouling.....	23
4.7 Sustainability and Environment	26
4.8 Education and Young People	32
4.9 Church and Community.....	35
4.10 Sports Activities.....	38
4.11 Shops and Services	42
5. Action Plan	45
Acknowledgements.....	54

Executive Summary

This Parish Plan for East Hagbourne is the result of consultation and input from many people within the parish, and the culmination of several years work. Following a public meeting to identify areas of concern, a questionnaire was circulated to all households in the parish. The responses, together with input on other developing issues, formed the material from which this plan was developed.

East Hagbourne is a village community in Oxfordshire close both to open country and to the neighbouring town of Didcot. While the proximity to Didcot confers benefits, the rapid growth of the town presents challenges, and continued attention to the planning process will be needed to ensure that East Hagbourne's integrity is maintained. It is partly because of these developments that many people expressed concerns about communications within the parish, particularly on activities at District and County level. Road traffic and safety also figure prominently, and here also the growth of Didcot will generate more pressure on an infrastructure that is already showing strain.

The country environment of East Hagbourne draws people from within and outside the parish for country walks, so it is not surprising that the condition of the footpath network raised many comments, both about conditions on the paths and interactions between different users. Anti-social behaviour is not a big problem in East Hagbourne, but one area that still generates complaints is dog fouling. In spite of poster campaigns and provision of dog bins, and the fact that most dog owners now behave responsibly, many of our paths and even pavements are still fouled.

Concern for the environment and sustainable development has grown steadily over recent years, and although the way forward is not immediately obvious, these topics fully merit their place in our action plan. East Hagbourne has a wide range of educational, church and social activities. Preserving and enhancing these activities and facilities forms an important part of the plan.

This report describes the background, analysis and action plans for all these topics. The Parish Council will provide leadership in implementing the plan and adapting it to future needs, but as in the preparation of the plan, the engagement and enthusiasm of people through the parish will be important in achieving our goals.

1. Objectives and Background to the Parish Plan

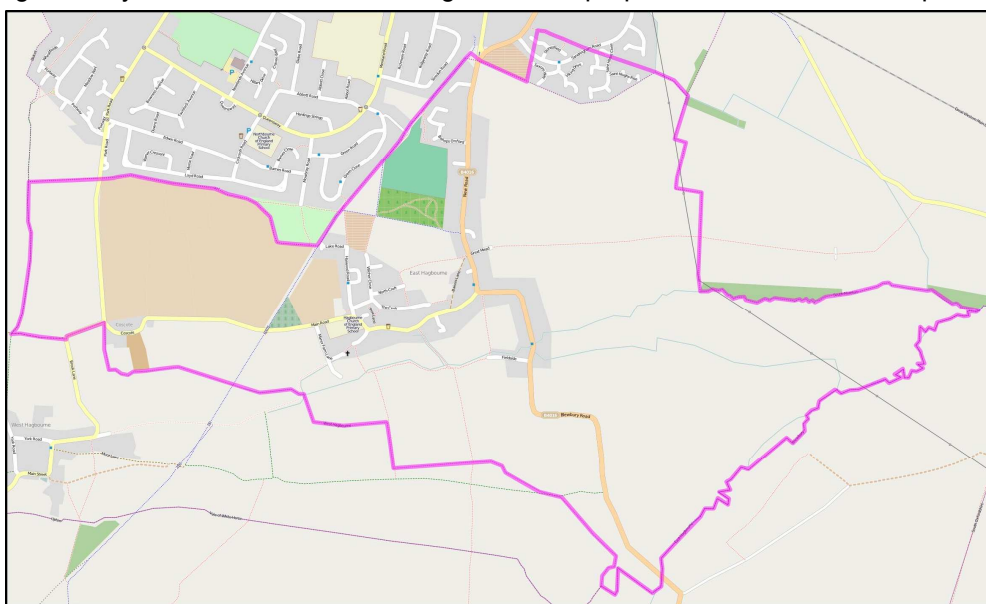
This report presents a Parish Plan for East Hagbourne, Oxfordshire. The Civil Parish of East Hagbourne contains around 850 households and 1850 inhabitants, spread between Millbrook on the edge of Didcot, via New Road and its surroundings, to the main village itself, and on to Coscote and Hagbourne Mill, as shown in Map 1 below.

The purpose of a Parish Plan is to set out a vision of what is important to our community, and a strategy for preserving valued community features while strengthening them in the future. The value of a Parish Plan to East Hagbourne is to provide a framework within which initiatives to improve facilities and activities within the Parish can be prioritized and progressed. Furthermore, such a structured approach is more and more expected when we approach outside funding bodies to support our projects.

Discussion on the Parish Plan started in 2003, culminating in 2007 in the formation of a committee and a public meeting to review and publicise activities currently available in the Parish. The Committee then developed a list of topics and concerns expressed by residents and organised these into a questionnaire to solicit more formal input. The survey report has been available for public comment since the beginning of 2010¹.

The Parish Council then shaped this feedback, in consultation with the community, and together with any other important topics that may not have been formally included in the questionnaire, into a draft plan. The draft report was made available for public comment between December 2010 and April 2011. After including the few comments received, the final report was presented to the Annual Parish Meeting where it was formally adopted. Although this report represents the agreed Parish Plan, it is still a living document, and we expect that updates may be carried out periodically as new developments arise and progress is made in addressing the Action Plan.

Following this introduction, Section 2 gives a snapshot of East Hagbourne and how it fits into the wider community. Section 3 outlines the consultation process used in the development of the report, and Section 4 presents the core of the study - the areas of activity, and ideas for the future, grouped into 11 topics. In any exercise of this kind there is a natural tendency to concentrate on problem areas. In fact, East Hagbourne is blessed with many positive features, in terms of its environment, facilities and activities and sense of community spirit. We want this study to celebrate the existing features and achievements of life in East Hagbourne, as well as considering how to respond to a changing future. To this end, each section includes an overview of the current situation, positive and negative, as well as addressing the areas where change is needed - much of our society is very healthy and does not need 'fixing'. Finally, Section 5 collates and organises the proposed actions for each topic.



Map 1. Boundary of East Hagbourne Civil Parish

¹ The survey report is available at http://www.easthagbourne.net/village/docs/Parish_Survey_report_to_EHPC_091229.pdf

2. East Hagbourne in Context

East Hagbourne is an attractive village lying to the south of Didcot and surrounded on three sides by open farmland. The Parish itself extends to the small hamlet of Coscote to the west, and to Hagbourne Mill on the road to Blewbury. To the north, the village continues along New Road towards Didcot, and the newer areas of Bishop's Orchard and part of Millbrook lie within the Parish providing a diversity of accommodation and environment. The Parish in all has around 850 households and 1850 inhabitants. The 2000 Village Appraisal reported that 21% of people had lived in East Hagbourne for more than 15 years and 53% for 5 years or less. The average time of residence was shorter in the newer areas of New Road and Millbrook. 69% of adults were employed, and 21% retired. 15% of these worked in East Hagbourne and a further 49% within 12 miles. Most people worked in professional services or the service industry, with only 2% in agriculture. 21% worked in manufacturing and commerce. At this time, just over a quarter of people were engaged in voluntary work of some kind.

East Hagbourne takes its name from Hacca, a chief of one of the West Saxon tribes who settled in Britain following the departure of the Romans. He settled in this area beside a stream that still bears his name Hacca's Brook. The stream is mentioned in a 9th Century charter as Hacceburna, which later became Hagburne/Hagbourne. The village centre itself is compact and the winding road through the village passes many attractive historical houses, the church and the Upper and Lower Crosses. This scene has drawn painters and photographers for many years.



Our local town of Didcot is only 2-3 miles away, convenient for services and transport links to Oxford, Reading and further afield. An hourly bus service operates from East Hagbourne, and also provides links to neighbouring villages. The growth of the town has brought much improved facilities, but also constantly increasing traffic which is a cause of concern to residents.

The numerous footpaths giving access both within the village and to the wider countryside make this a good place to explore on foot, and the easy access from south Didcot means that many people from the town are also able to enjoy the green environment. The open fields give fine views to the downs and close to the village itself there are paddocks, allotments and areas dedicated to nature.

What makes East Hagbourne special, though, is the sense of community. There are many groups, formal and informal, covering activities from gardening (including newly reformed allotments), book clubs, and the community shop is run by volunteers. The Fleur-de-Lys pub retains a country atmosphere and is a popular meeting place. The village has for several years been successful in the Best Kept Village and Britain in Bloom competitions. There are active bowls and football clubs, tradition is kept alive through active folk music sessions and the Mummers Play. Many events that draw people together punctuate the year, centred on the Fun Run, Church Fete and Produce Show. The Village Hall acts as a centre for many activities, from the local pre-school, to scouts and brownies, as well as musical concerts, plays and private functions.

St Andrew's church has a fascinating history, with many note-worthy features to interest the visitor. It is attractively light and spacious, and considered unspoilt by the modern restorations. The pulpit and font both date from the medieval period. The village primary school is affiliated to the church and sets a high standard as a leading Eco School and International School.

3. Consultation

Parish Plans can have a range of appearances, varying from a simple summary of the results of a questionnaire, to a 10 year plan. In East Hagbourne, discussion started in 2003, culminating in 2007 in the formation of a Committee and a public meeting to review and publicise activities currently available in the Parish. Based on the views expressed in the open meeting, the Committee developed a list of topics and concerns expressed by residents and organised these into a questionnaire to solicit more formal input.

The questionnaire was circulated by an extended team of volunteers to each household in the Parish. Many completed forms were returned to the village shop and many more by personal contacts with individual households. There were 300 returned and completed questionnaires, covering 652 people. This represents 35% of the households in the Parish.

In both the questionnaire development and data analysis we were assisted by a local market research company. The data were analysed and formulated into a report by members of the Committee and Parish Council, and the survey report, after acceptance by the Parish Council, was made available for public comment from the beginning of 2010.

The Parish Council then took responsibility for shaping this feedback, together with any other important topics that may not have been formally included in the questionnaire, into a draft plan. For each section, the advice, input and comment of knowledgeable members of the community was sought and their ideas incorporated into the draft. While the Parish Council is leading and facilitating the process, it recognised as important that the final product should reflect all aspects of our community, and feedback and comment on this draft was welcomed and encouraged.

The draft report was made available for public comment from December 2010 until April 2011, when it was presented to the Annual Parish Meeting with a proposal that it be formally adopted as our community plan. This final report is the end result.

Many diverse topics are included in the plan, and some of them are inevitably easier to tackle than others. Where specific actions could be identified and easily implemented, action has already begun. Other problems are less tractable, and will require various degrees of effort before a clear and specific actions can be formulated. We therefore expect that the Action Plan will be a living document, and evolve as we go forward.

4. Key Issues

The key issues for our community are considered in this section. They have been grouped into 11 Sections and are based on the interests and concerns raised in the community surveys and on other topics that becoming important in the wider world and have the potential to impact on East Hagbourne. Each Section starts with an overview of the current situation, highlighting achievements as well as problem areas. They should be read in conjunction with the appropriate entry in Section 5, which contains an action list.

As emphasized in Section 3, this report represents a draft which is open for further consultation. To this extent the discussion, proposals and actions are provisional, and comments are welcomed and encouraged.

4.1 Urban Growth

Where do our concerns come from?

Our Parish Survey only addressed issues within the Parish of East Hagbourne. Hence, little can be drawn from it directly about local opinion and concerns on issues arising from development in the wider area. However, such development has gained in importance since Didcot became the focus for major growth within South Oxfordshire and it is already clear that it could have a dominant influence on the future of our Parish. This is recognised by the planning authorities and we are regularly invited to give our opinion on these issues as well as being able to participate in some of the formal planning stages. We need to be able to take advantage of these opportunities and speak with a clear and well-informed voice to represent the interests of the East Hagbourne. Hence, it is appropriate that this is included as part of the Parish Plan.

What's been happening in the past?

Already in 2005, the town of Didcot was designated South East Plan as a location for major expansion, with levels of new housing that would effectively double the size of the town. Later, the focus on Didcot increased with the government accepting it as part of their New Growth Initiative.

East Hagbourne is the closest parish to Didcot and the development of the town raises many issues that could have a direct or indirect effect on our Parish. Relevant issues are not only where the new houses are built, but also the changes on the demands on local infrastructure. Examples are the impact on roads, schools and leisure facilities, as well addressing less obvious issues such as any possible impact on flooding in the Parish, as well as positive effects such as the much improved town centre.

Since 2005, South Oxfordshire District Council has been developing a Core Strategy to replace the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. At each stage of the preparation of the core strategy, consultation has been opened up to local parish councils and to individuals through exhibitions and questionnaires. We have needed to respond to these and also raise particular issues more widely in the local papers, such as our reaction to the suggestion for a road to the south of Didcot feeding into New Road. In many instances, it has also been very useful to share information and views with adjacent parish councils.

The regional planning framework continues to evolve, with Local Development Frameworks replacing regional plans, and under Localism neighbourhood plans will be introduced, though just how these will operate remains unclear at present. We will need to monitor these developments and be prepared to respond appropriately.

The situation today

Building work for Great Western Park to the west of Didcot has now started, being the first phase to provide 3,200 new houses over the next few years spread across the boundary between South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts. South Oxfordshire District Council has been working



on the overall planning for 2,030 houses in a green neighbourhood to the north east of Didcot. In addition, consultation and planning work for developments in infrastructure have been taking place, such as for the Didcot Parkway Station and enlargement of the Orchard Shopping Centre. Although the schedule for all this development is unclear at the moment, all the signs indicate that it will take place eventually and the current process of consultation will continue. We need to be aware of these opportunities, be able to study the proposals to assess any impacts on the parish, both positive and negative, and represent these in any consultation.

Looking to the future

In the South East Plan, some general principles were set out for protecting the character and setting of historical villages, as well as underlining the importance of urban fringes. Both of these apply to East Hagbourne. These have been taken forward by the district and county planners into the subsequent planning stages and we must play our part in supporting them and to help prevent these principles being eroded by competing short-term interests, especially since the SE Plan will cease to be formally recognised. Hence, we should examine the planning and proposals for urban growth and determine their likely impact on the Parish, including attention to the following specific aspects:

- The open land between East Hagbourne and the southern fringe of Didcot is an important urban fringe forming a bridge to the country, particularly as a threshold to the open land leading to the Chilterns.
 - It includes productive landscape, open green areas for recreation and an array of natural habitats.
- The open land provides a strategic gap for the landscape setting of the historical village of East Hagbourne.
- Traffic density and congestion within the Parish.
 - Urban growth should include a suitable investment in road infrastructure and traffic management so that it has a neutral (at least) effect on the traffic within the Parish.
 - The availability and use of public transport, cycle ways and walkways can help to reduce traffic congestion. Public transport can also be a lifeline to elderly residents to maintain their independence.
- Provision of general infrastructure and facilities such as schools, medical practices, youth centres, community halls, sporting and fitness facilities should keep pace with the increase in population.
 - In addition, there is a historical deficit of infrastructure in Didcot and investment needs to continue to address this.

Proposed Actions:

- *The Parish Council is actively engaged in monitoring and commenting on plans as they develop, to protect the interests of East Hagbourne, and to mitigate as far as possible the adverse effects of Didcot expansion.*
- *This activity needs to continue as a high priority, with the Parish Council taking the lead, and drawing on the expertise of others in the Parish.*
- *The general community needs to be kept informed of significant developments as they arise.*

4.2 Communications

The main channel of communication in East Hagbourne has for many years been the Parish Magazine, which contains news and reports on community events as well as church activities. This is currently delivered on a subscription of £5 per year to about half of the households in the Parish. More recently, the village web-site, <http://www.easthagbourne.net> has provided a further source of information, including events, contacts and, since March 2009, Parish Council reports and minutes, and links to other web sites of local interest. There are also several notice boards around the Parish for Council and other communications, and Parish Council meetings themselves are open to the public as observers. The Annual Parish Meeting, held in April, provides a forum for residents to express their own views and steward the activities of the Parish Council.

Hagbourne CE Primary School has its own lively web-site and also uses an email newsletter to communicate regularly with parents, a practice that has recently been adopted also by the Fleur-de-Lys pub to publicise their events. St Andrew's Church is part of the Hub Benefice which also maintains its own web site. Links to these sites, along with others such as the Bowls Club, are on the village web-site.

In the 2008 survey, 41% of respondents felt they did not receive enough information about village events and activities, although the figure was only 22% for those involved in a group, club or society in East Hagbourne. A stronger need was expressed for information on local government plans (such as roads and housing) that affect the village; 53% of respondents felt they did not get sufficient information. Of the people who responded to the survey, the Parish Magazine reached more than half or those 35 or over (80% in the case of those 65 or over), but only 44% of those in the 16-34 age range. There were also strong differences across the Parish, with only 23% of respondents in Millbrook currently subscribing to the magazine compared with 75% in the main village. However, 70% or more of respondents said they would like to receive the magazine if it were free of charge at the point of delivery. More than 85% of people aged 35 or over said they would welcome it if it were free, but there was a lower level of interest from younger people.

The second major means of communication in the village is the web site. At the time of the 2008 survey, this had not been updated for some time, so it is perhaps not surprising that only 9% said they look at the village web site at least once a month, and almost half never look at it. These figures may have improved now that the web site has been updated and is actively maintained. In spite of this, large numbers of people said they would read a web newsletter, but again with a lower interest from those under 35. Overall, more people said they would read a free magazine than a web newsletter.

The Parish Magazine

St Andrew's Parish Magazine is a successful and lively magazine that covers both church and village events. Currently, there are on average around 19 pages of information, including 7 each for church activities and village events, reports and notices, and 2 pages for school, pre-school and toddlers information. The balance is made up of 1.15 pages from East Hagbourne Parish Council, charity notices (1 page) and smaller contributions from West Hagbourne Parish Council and special articles. The whole is supported by 8 pages of local advertising which covers the basic costs. The magazine is produced in the village by a small group of dedicated volunteers and distributed by hand, again by volunteers. The editors are willing to provide more local news coverage, but point out that someone has to provide them with information first!



The content and format of the magazine compares favourably with magazines from other communities, each edition being full of information and providing timely notification of upcoming events. There is some unevenness in the amount of space dedicated to different activities, with some events having one or even two pages spreads, while others are covered more briefly, so there are probably opportunities to include more information even without increasing the number of pages.

Subscribers currently pay £5 per year to receive 11 copies of the magazine. The personal contact involved in hand delivery and annual collection of subscriptions is seen by some as a valuable feature which in a small way helps cement relations between individuals and the community. Against this must be weighed the fact that only half the households in the Parish currently receive the magazine.

A number of factors may influence decisions for or against subscribing.

Some people may feel that it is a church magazine rather than a community publication. Many communities issue separate publications for church and secular topics, however to do so in East Hagbourne would risk diluting the richness of the current content. In the survey, people responded strongly in favour of a magazine free at the point of issue. To do this to every household would require double the current number of copies which, while not impossible, would severely stretch the current production capabilities. The increased costs would need to be covered by the Parish Council from their allocation of Council Tax. In addition, a wider group of volunteers would be needed to circulate the magazine. Finally, some members of the Parish, notably those living in Millbrook or in the 16-34 age range may simply be less interested in local activities.

St Andrew's Parish Magazine is a vibrant and successful publication that is part of the fabric of East Hagbourne's community. It is a valuable source of information on church and village events, although there is scope to make its content even more effective. The biggest drawback is that it currently reaches only about half the households in the Parish.

Role of the Parish Council

The topics of this chapter, including the Parish Magazine and the web-site belong to the whole community. However, as for the general implementation of the Parish Plan, the Parish Council has an important role to play in providing co-ordination and leadership, as well as perhaps supporting some initiatives through funding from the Parish Precept.

The 2008 survey showed that residents want better communication on village activities. The Parish Council must help put in place the means by which this communication can take place, so that all local individuals and organisations can be informed and express their own views. In the case of the Parish Magazine this involves working in partnership with the current publication team. For the village web-site the Council has already accepted the role of improving the site and making it more accessible. However, the site belongs to the whole community and the content depends on input from many people. There is no reason why the management of the site should be entirely by the Council, and assistance from others should be welcomed.

The survey also showed that people were less sanguine about the information they received when it related to wider government activities. Much of this disquiet may be related to the rapid expansion of Didcot. South Oxfordshire District Council's 'Outlook' Magazine and Oxfordshire County Council's 'OxonNews'² provide a good overview of news and activities in the area, but do not provide in-depth coverage. The Parish Council will need to communicate more effectively on its own activities, and in explaining and commenting on plans at District, County or National level that could impact on our community.

Currently, a one page summary of Parish Council business is published each month in the Parish Magazine, and the same information also appears on the web site. Parish Council minutes are also posted on the web, increasingly supported by more detailed supporting documents.

The Parish Council must encourage and facilitate better communications media, making best use of paper and web communications, and encourage everyone in the community to take full advantage of these.

The Parish Council must also strengthen its efforts to explain clearly its own objectives, activities and achievements, and to help residents better understand wider governmental activities that affect the community.

Consider an expanded monthly Parish Council report on the web site, plus an email circulation list for PC news. While PC minutes must wait until approved before being posted, reports presented to the PC could be posted immediately.

Involving the whole community

Residents in the Millbrook part of the Parish clearly feel less engaged with the community and less well informed than those living along New Road and in the main village area. This may simply reflect that the environment in Millbrook is more town oriented, as well as being geographically somewhat separate from New Road and the village. It may also reflect a perception that the parish is preoccupied with activities in the central village. There may also be some feeling of exclusion because Millbrook is excluded from the catchment areas for the village school³ and pre-school.

² This publication has now been discontinued

³ Millbrook is included in the Willowcroft Primary School catchment area

Whatever the reasons, residents in Millbrook (and perhaps in other areas like Bishop's Orchard) do not seem to benefit from community activities to the same extent as those elsewhere in the Parish.

Those in the age group 16 to 34 appear to be less engaged with parish activities than other age group, as reflected by less interest in Parish communications. This may simply reflect a busy period of life where people are occupied with their private lives, but could also signal whether current activities are attractive for this age group.

Both the above groups expressed the willingness to receive information about activities either through a free parish magazine or a web newsletter, so it may be that better communication methods in themselves could bring some benefits.

Beyond specific groups, there is a very wide network of people who participate in community activities in some way - in fact, it is this that makes East Hagbourne such a special place with so many activities. Equally, the response to the Parish Survey in 2008 was gratifying in that half the households in the parish took the time to complete rather detailed questionnaires. On the other hand, very few responses have been received to the report on the survey results, published at the end of 2009. Perhaps this is because people are generally happy that 'someone is getting on with it', but clearly there is a need to engage the whole community as the plan itself takes shape

It should be our aspiration that everyone in the Parish has the same opportunities for information, participation and enjoyment of activities, and that these activities are designed to include those who currently do not participate as fully.

Engage and consult with the whole community as the action plan takes shape.

What do we want to communicate

From the 2008 survey responses, there is clearly a need to communicate more effectively on local government plans that affect East Hagbourne. Here the Parish Council has a clear role as the representative of the community in these wider discussions. Clearly, more needs to be done to explain these activities, what the Parish Council is doing in response, and what positions are being taken. This is also an opportunity to encourage input and participation from the wider community.

Explain more fully and clearly how government plans will affect our community and the actions and positions the Parish Council is taking in discussions.

Effective use of the web site

The village web site <http://www.easthagbourne.net> has been active for a number of years, but has suffered from lack of maintenance over part of this period. More recently, a small group under the leadership of the Parish Council has assumed responsibility for keeping the information up to date and extending the content.

As with the Parish Magazine, what is posted largely depends on what people are prepared to submit. It does, however, also take some effort to put received information on the web site, and alternative web-site designs that would make this process easier are being investigated.

The section "Our Village" includes information on Parish Council activities, projects such as the new playground opened in 2009, the shop and Post Office, Village Hall and a village directory. While this seems fairly comprehensive, input from residents on what else they would like to see would be valuable.

The "what's on" section includes regular events such as folk evenings at the Fleur, concerts, Parish Council Meeting dates, Ramblers walks etc, but again depends on people submitting information. It is noticeable that many items appearing in the Parish Magazine do not appear on the web site.

The web site could be a useful facilitator to encourage two-way communication. There is already a facility to email the web co-ordinator or the Parish Clerk through the web site and some residents and also people outside the parish have made use of this facility. We should explore whether extending this concept to a discussion group has merit.

A further option, particularly for Parish Council communications is an email newsletter that could be sent to anyone in the Parish prepared to give their address.

Raise awareness of the web site and solicit input from residents on what they would like to see on the site.

Link the web to the Parish mag so that they form an integrated whole. Information appearing in the Parish Magazine should also appear on the web site. Consider an email newsletter

4.3 Road Safety and Traffic

Concerns about traffic and road safety are not new. In the 1998 Village Appraisal, 74% of respondents expressed concern about road dangers. Lower Cross was the main area of concern, followed by New Road, Main Road and the area around the School. Speed was considered an important aspect, with bends and narrow roads contributing factors. At about this time, the speed limit on New Road was reduced from 40mph to its current 30mph. Following the appraisal, a number of proposals were evaluated to improve the situation, and after discussions with OCC, improved road markings were applied in New Road and Blewbury Road, and temporary '30 not 40' signs installed along New Road. In 2001, speed cushions and a pedestrian crossing were installed at the School.

Concerns about road traffic continued to be expressed in the 2008 Parish Plan Survey, even though this did not expressly address the additional pressures from the large expansion of Didcot that is now planned. This is to be expected since traffic is seen as a problem in almost every part of the country and, with the increasing number of cars on the road in recent years, always seems to be getting worse.

The Survey Questionnaire

Overall, 35% of respondents to the survey saw speeding as always or often a problem, while 33% that it was occasionally a problem and 28% never a problem (6% expressed no view). However, the response to this question depended on where people live, for example, with 58% of those in the more secluded environment of Millbrook saying this was never a problem whereas the level of concern was much higher in the New Road and other areas of the Parish.

The narrow road through the centre of the village (Main Road) needs particular care to negotiate. Respondents were asked whether they would support a 20mph speed limit through this part of the village. Overall, 66% of respondents wanted a 20 mph limit on Main Road, while 15% were against the proposal and 18% expressed no opinion. Support was strongest for people living in the village area.

The section of New Road outside the Post Office / Shop is also access to the Garage, Bakers Lane and to the Recreation Ground in Great Mead and is a critical point for traffic for a number of reasons. 66% of the respondents supported a pedestrian crossing at this point, 13% expressed no opinion, 12% supported traffic calming and only 7% were not in favour of either measure.

The questionnaire asked for views about the sharp bend at the Lower Cross Memorial, where New Road becomes Blewbury Road. Respondents were asked to comment on one possible solution, namely changing the priorities so that traffic coming south down New Road and into Main Road would have the right of way and therefore traffic coming north from Blewbury would have to give way. 63% of respondents supported this idea. However, there was opposition from 24% of those living in the village area, perhaps because this would risk Main Road being perceived as the main through-route.



In addition to the responses to the questions on specific issues shown above, there were a large number of further suggestions and comments, Speeding generated the most comments. There was strong support for enforcing the existing speed limits more strictly, but also for lower speed limits, particularly through Main Road, where a 20mph limit was proposed, outside the Post Office, and at Coscote, where the national speed limit currently applies.

Many comments supported traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, but also mentioned chicanes, road narrowing and flashing warning signs. Since support for traffic calming along Main Road was not directly solicited in the questionnaire, it is not possible to estimate the level of support for such measures in the different areas of the village. However, as mentioned above, traffic calming was not strongly supported for New Road. Many concerns about parking were also raised. For pedestrian safety, extensions of pavements were requested at various places, particularly where the pavement changes from one side of the road to the other, for example between the School and Upper Cross.



Some points related to issues arising from outside the parish, such as the clarity of the road sign to East Hagbourne at the Marsh roundabout and traffic weight restrictions.

The areas of concern remain much as they were in the 1998 Appraisal, although the measures taken around the school seem to have been effective since less concern was raised in this area. The areas of New Road (particularly around the Shop/PO), Lower Cross and Main Road remain problem areas. The specific solutions proposed in the questionnaire may not prove themselves to be the best ones, but the responses nevertheless show that there is a high level of concern about these areas and about the speed of vehicles through the village. The more secluded environment of Millbrook seems to produce fewer problems in this area.

Actions So Far

Since the survey, a small group from the Parish Council has assessed the responses and collated information on road signing, road layout in the problem areas, possible traffic calming measures and footpath/pavement improvements, including measures we might be able to take ourselves such as ensuring hedges are cut back to improve visibility on bends. A very informative visit was made to the OCC Highways Department at Drayton to discuss these issues. The discussion covered the situation as it exists today, but also the likely effects of Didcot expansion, where the SCOTS⁴ report has highlighted the need for longer term measures to protect the village. The Highways Department requires any requests for changes in road layout or signage to be supported by evidence of need. As part of this, they agreed to conduct a traffic survey in the Parish to gather data using their radar systems at three places in the Village. The measurements were made continuously for one week, 24 hours per day, during the period 19-25 July 2010, and covers traffic in both directions at each site. This now provides a broad base of evidence on the traffic and should help to quantify the severity of some of the problems. The data are still being analysed, but some main findings from the survey are included below.

For data taken outside the graveyard, which is in a 60mph zone:

- Mean average speed over the week was close to 30 mph with 5% exceeding 40 mph.

For data taken in New Road which is a 30 mph zone:

- Mean average speed over the week was close to 29 mph with 50% exceeding 30 mph, 15% at or exceeding 35 mph and 5% exceeding 40 mph.

Survey data monitored in Main Road which is a 30 mph zone:

- Mean average speed over the week was close to 23 mph with 5% at or exceeding 30 mph.

While these survey data are valuable, they unfortunately fell in the first week of the School holidays, so we need to interpret them carefully, and also to be aware that traffic will increase as Didcot grows. Nevertheless, they form a good basis for further discussions with OCC to develop an action plan.

⁴ Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS), available on <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

The proposal to change the road layout at Lower Cross was discussed with the Highways Department who said they would not support it since it was not their practice to take priority from a classified road (the B4016 New Road / Blewbury Road) in favour of an unclassified road. They were equally sceptical about proposals for a 20mph speed limit in Main Road, although national opinion seems to be shifting in favour of such measures. Proposals for improved pavements and footpaths may help alleviate some concerns. While detailed plans have not been prepared at this stage, reference should also be made to Section 4.4, Footpaths.

Enforcement is a second dimension to any future plan. The local Police have carried out a number of spot speed checks in East Hagbourne over the past year, issuing warning letters to those travelling at excessive speed. They have also developed procedures to address people who use their vehicle in an anti-social manner.

A major learning from this process is that finding the right solution is not straightforward, so much more thought and discussion, involving OCC Highways and others, is needed.

The Way Forward

There are no perfect solutions to road safety and traffic problems, particularly with places that have historical character. Most solutions end up being a balance between conflicting interests. For example, the need to inform drivers with clear signs versus the need to avoid damaging the visual character of the village with extra signs. In addition, the problems largely involve influencing the behaviour and number of people from outside the parish who are passing through. It is clear that any increase in traffic volume only makes matters worse and we must continue to monitor closely the traffic implications from the expansion of Didcot (see Section 4.1, Urban Growth).

The Highways Department is central to agreeing any changes to road layout and signing, and it is certainly important to continue discussion with them to review the evidence and learn from their experience in trying to solve similar problems at other places. Equally, we will need to maintain our liaison with the Police to ensure that enforcement is carried out where necessary.

The long-standing nature of the concerns raised in the survey highlights that finding effective solutions will take careful thought and sustained effort.

It is proposed to form a small working group of interested people to take this forward, building on the information already gathered, representing the different areas of the Parish and reporting to the Parish Council.

The overall steps would be

- *Review the existing information, develop proposals, categorising them into those we can do ourselves, those requiring OCC help and those which are longer term.*
- *If more or different data are needed, arrange this*
- *Present a plan to the full Parish Council for approval.*
- *Arrange consultation with the whole community on the conclusions and suggested priorities.*
- *Approach the relevant authorities to implement changes, and schedule any expenditure that falls on the Parish*

4.4 Footpaths and Pavements

East Hagbourne is well served by a network of public footpaths and roadside pavements. In the 2008 survey, 46% of respondents said they use the footpath network more than once a week. 18% use it once a week, showing that the footpath network is a valuable resource for the village. For those who are involved with local clubs and societies, the percentage using the footpaths more than once a week rises to 65%. Footpaths were also used more by those living in the village itself, which suggests that journeys within the village play a significant role, as well as walks into the surrounding countryside.

Many comments and suggestions were received on improving the footpath network, again emphasizing its importance to residents. The major comments could be grouped under four headings:

Footpath condition: A large number of people (58) reported that footpaths are often muddy, waterlogged, and/or overgrown, and asked if they could be better paved and maintained. It was noted that footpaths can be particularly difficult for children and pram pushers. There were also a number of requests for extension of the footpath network, and 7 people asked for additional lighting on some footpaths.

Safety: 14 people expressed concern about cars, bicycles, motorcycles and horses on areas used by pedestrians. Also, in the questionnaire section on road safety, there were requests for additional pavements at the side of key roads.

Interactions between path users: Some paths, including bridleways and the Sustrans route, may be used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. On the whole, the different users seem to get along well, but there were some comments and concerns raised.

Information: Several people requested more detailed maps of the footpath network, both on information boards, and available as paper copies.

To gather information on the first two items, Paul Chambers (East Hagbourne's footpath officer) and John Jones (leader of the monthly Village Rambles) carried out detailed surveys of the footpaths and pavements within the Parish, highlighting areas where improved maintenance or upgrading may be warranted.

Footpath Survey



Public footpaths are registered with and administered by Oxfordshire County Council who keep a register of designated public footpaths, each of which has a characteristic number. These numbers are referenced on the map (Map 2, page 20), where the Public footpaths and Bridleways are shown in green. East Hagbourne has an extensive network of footpaths, but only two bridleways, both of which extend to the east of the village. 'BOAT' means 'by-way open to all traffic' and the only one near us is Moor Lane, which lies mostly in West Hagbourne Parish. There is also a short section to the west of Coscote, again leading into West Hagbourne Parish.

There are some other paths open to the public, including the Sustrans cycle route along the old railway line (also open to pedestrians and horses) which is a Permissive Route. Permissive access for horses and cycles follows part of FP4 and FP5, where there is a Public Right of Way on foot

In addition, there are two short paths, one at the rear of the Village Hall, the other linking Blewbury Road and Fieldside.

In assessing the appropriate standards, we have categorized footpaths as follows:

- Within village: routes that are used to travel to locations within the village, for example the school, Village Hall, Church. We would expect these paths to be easily passable in every-day clothing and footwear.
- Country Paths: routes used by dog walkers (e.g. around the edges of the village) and by walkers into the wider countryside. Here we would expect that people wear suitable walking clothing and be prepared to encounter some muddy or rough conditions, depending on the weather.

Based on the survey by Paul Chambers, the priorities are considered to be:

1. The southern end of FP4 where it crosses Butt's Piece from the Millennium Wood to Wilcher Close. This footpath is often muddy, and it is likely to be used more frequently with the current development of Butt's Piece to provide allotments, play and wildlife areas. On the other hand, a paved dry route already exists (using FP2 and FP5 into Harwood Road) to reach the school and Village Hall.

Proposal: to improve FP4 where it crosses Butt's Piece by laying gravel or bark chips, to provide a better surface for pedestrian traffic.

2. FP8 stretches from Baker's Lane past the Bowls Club and along the Croft, and provides a valuable low-traffic route to the centre of the village. The Croft itself is paved and provides good walking, whereas the short gravelled stretch from Baker's lane to the Bowls Club is an attractive hollow way, running alongside fields. The vegetation is maintained by local residents, but the surface, being in a hollow, can be muddy at times. Previous problems of manure entering the path from adjacent fields have been resolved.

Proposal: since this is a valuable inter-village route, the surface should be improved by laying more gravel.

3. FP12, Fieldside, from the end of the paved road to Parsonage Lane and on to the Church is in some ways intermediate between a village and country route. The eastern section to Parsonage Lane, in particular, provides a low-traffic way from Tadley to the centre of the village. The path is regularly mowed by a local resident, but can become muddy in winter. However the footpath lies on farmland, so hard surfacing may not be appropriate.

Proposal: maintain the path in its current state, but monitor its condition

4. FP16, the north-south footpath linking the two bridleways to the east of Blewbury Road is an overgrown farm track which is a Public Right of Way for pedestrians. In winter, sections can be muddy and narrow because of vegetation growth.

Proposal: include in annual maintenance plan to ensure that bushes to the side of the path are cut to allow a reasonable width. Consider if simple measures could mitigate the worst of the mud

Pavement survey

East Hagbourne is crossed by three main roads – Main Road, New Road and Blewbury Road. There are some pavements beside each of these and it is to these that we turn the bulk of our attention. There are numerous side roads without pavements but this is not seen as a problem as they are not generally through routes and so and carry only local traffic. The main pavements are shown in the Map 3, Page 21..

Some of the problem areas involve difficulties not just for pedestrians, but for motorised traffic also. Where appropriate, actions in these cases will be covered under Chapter 7 on Road Safety.

Virtually all of the pavements are narrow making side-by-side walking either dangerous or impossible. There have also been instances of vehicle parked badly and blocking pavements.

Proposal: Reinforce current practice where owners are encouraged to cut back their hedges in a timely manner and motorists warned not to obstruct the pavements. As a guideline, sufficient space should be left for a pushchair to pass easily.

The main priorities are listed in order of geography rather than importance:

1. Main Road (West), to give access to the Graveyard and disused railway (The Embankment). The pavement on the south side of main road from the school ends at Manor Farm Lane and although another footpath picks up at the school crossing on the north side, it does not extend to the graveyard and it is not a public footpath, being reserved by OCC for school use.

The south side pavement could usefully be extended to the disused railway, now a bicycle route and much-used location for strollers. There appears to be sufficient space along the grass verge to accommodate a footpath, subject to repositioning one road sign and discussion with the land owner.

Proposal: Evaluate the possibility to extend the footpath on the south side of Main Road along the grass bank to join the Sustrans route at the railway embankment. Make provision for pedestrians to cross the road at the Cemetery. Discuss with land owner and liaise with OCC to determine the best way to achieve this, and with Sustrans to revise the ramp and steps at the embankment, so that pedestrians exit to the footpath and not directly onto the road as at present.

2. Main Road between School and Upper Cross. There is currently no pavement in this area, so pedestrians, including school children, have to walk in the main carriageway for a few yards before reaching the pavement along the front of the Tudor House allotments. Although the sharp bend and parked cars in the area provide some natural traffic calming, the situation is not ideal, particularly with the growth of traffic and some drivers not being familiar with the road layout. However, there is insufficient room for installation of pavements unless the road were narrowed to a single lane which does not seem practical. As an alternative, a means of slowing traffic to a crawl seems to be required.

Proposal: Explore ways of highlighting this area as one where pedestrians cross, and/or measures to slow traffic in this area.

3. Access to the Church via Church Close. The cobble pavement along the north side of the road makes walking difficult and wheelchair access is not practical. However, this is a “no through road” and the cobbles are an attractive feature. The use of the road for pedestrians seems acceptable, and no action is proposed.
4. Lower Cross. A pavement exists for pedestrians from New Road going into Main Road, however those coming from the south side of Blewbury Road have to pass some area where there is no pavement, or cross the road close to the blind bend if using the north side footpath on Blewbury Road. The blind bend also creates difficulties for motorised traffic turning into Main Road. Although several suggestions for improved road layout have been proposed, the layout does not lend itself easily to modification. Possible options include
 - Cutting back hedges to improve the sight line
 - Extending the pavements (on the east side of New Road or perhaps on S side of Blewbury Road) to allow crossing at safer locations.
 - Improve road signing

Proposal: Road Safety Working Group to review options and make recommendations

5. New Road at Great Mead junction. This is a busy area, home to the garage, shop and Post Office, and also the entry to Great Mead Recreation Ground. Pedestrian traffic has to cross at this point where visibility is not good, and there is often traffic turning into the shop/garage parking areas. A pedestrian crossing has been suggested as a solution, but there is currently no pavement on the east side of New Road to provide a destination. There have also been concerns about speeding traffic in this area.

Proposal: This issue should also be considered by the team working on road safety.

Interactions Between Track Users

Comments were received about the safety aspect of cars, bikes, motorcycles and horses using footpaths. Illegal use of cars or motor-cycles on footpaths is clearly an enforcement issue and should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as they arise. The comments do, however, highlight the care needed where cycles, horses, pedestrians and dogs all use byways, bridleways or particularly the Sustrans Route, where usage is high. Comments were also received about anti-social behaviour by youths on some footpaths, cyclists travelling too fast or uncaring about walkers, and loose dogs creating a hazard for cyclists. In total, 19 comments were received in this area.

Particularly on the Sustrans Route and its feeder tracks, there is a need for all users to be alert and considerate of the needs of other track users. This is usually the case, and from experience, most meetings between cyclist/pedestrian are considerate and amicable. There are occasions though, when conflicts occur:

- Cyclists need to use their bell well in advance to warn pedestrians of their approach
- Pedestrians need to respond and not be resentful – cyclists have a right to be there too!
- Dogs loose on the track are liable to run under cycle wheels: it is the responsibility of owners to keep them under proper control – other track users may not view their pet as a welcome friend, particularly if it causes a hazard.
- Special care is needed when horses are present. Some sections of the Sustrans Route are frankly too narrow to accommodate horses, and care is needed on bridle ways too where horses may meet other path users.

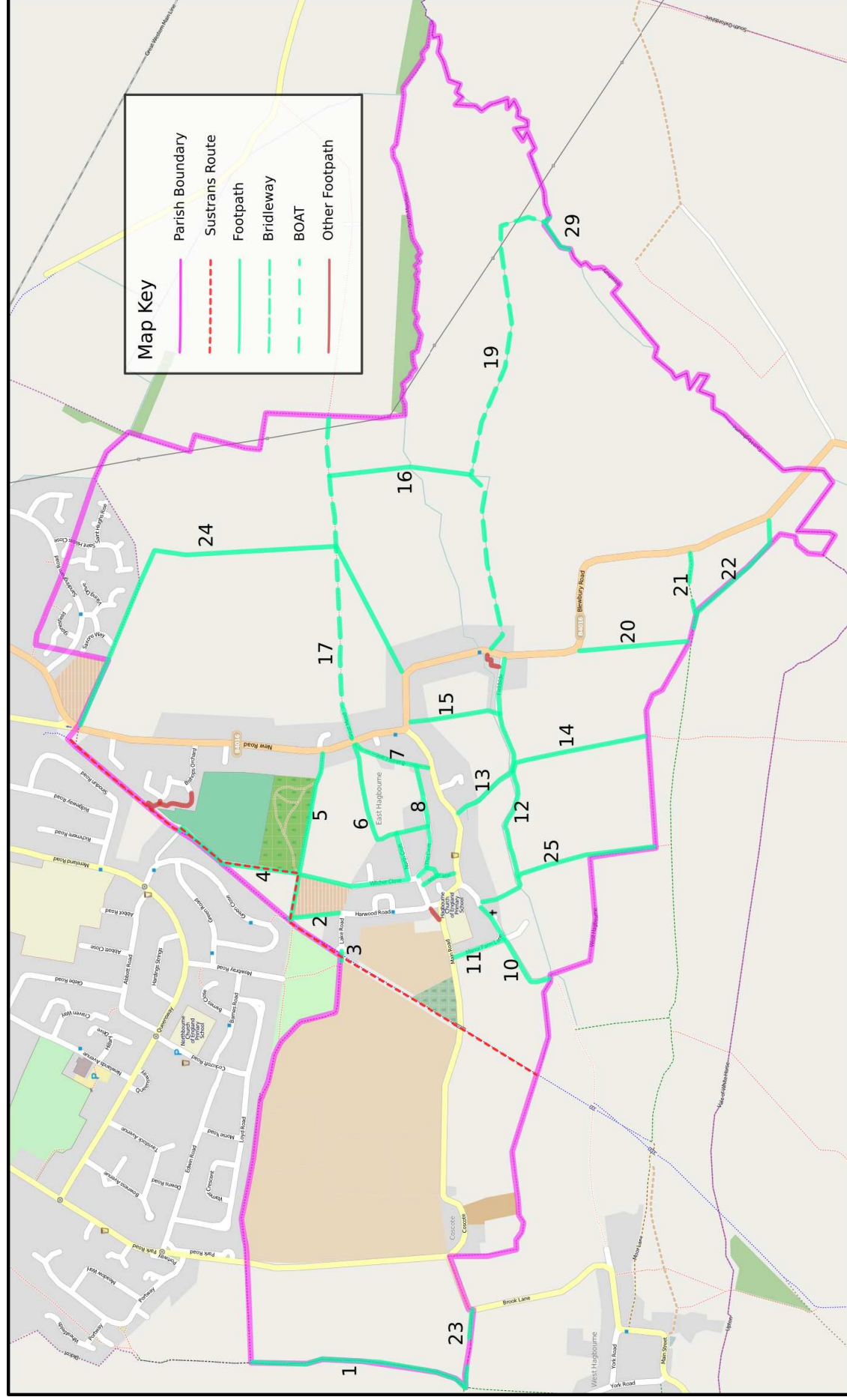
Proposal: Clarify what traffic is allowed on Sustrans Route/bridleways. Encourage tolerance and respect for others by all track users. Consider a code of conduct

Footpath Map

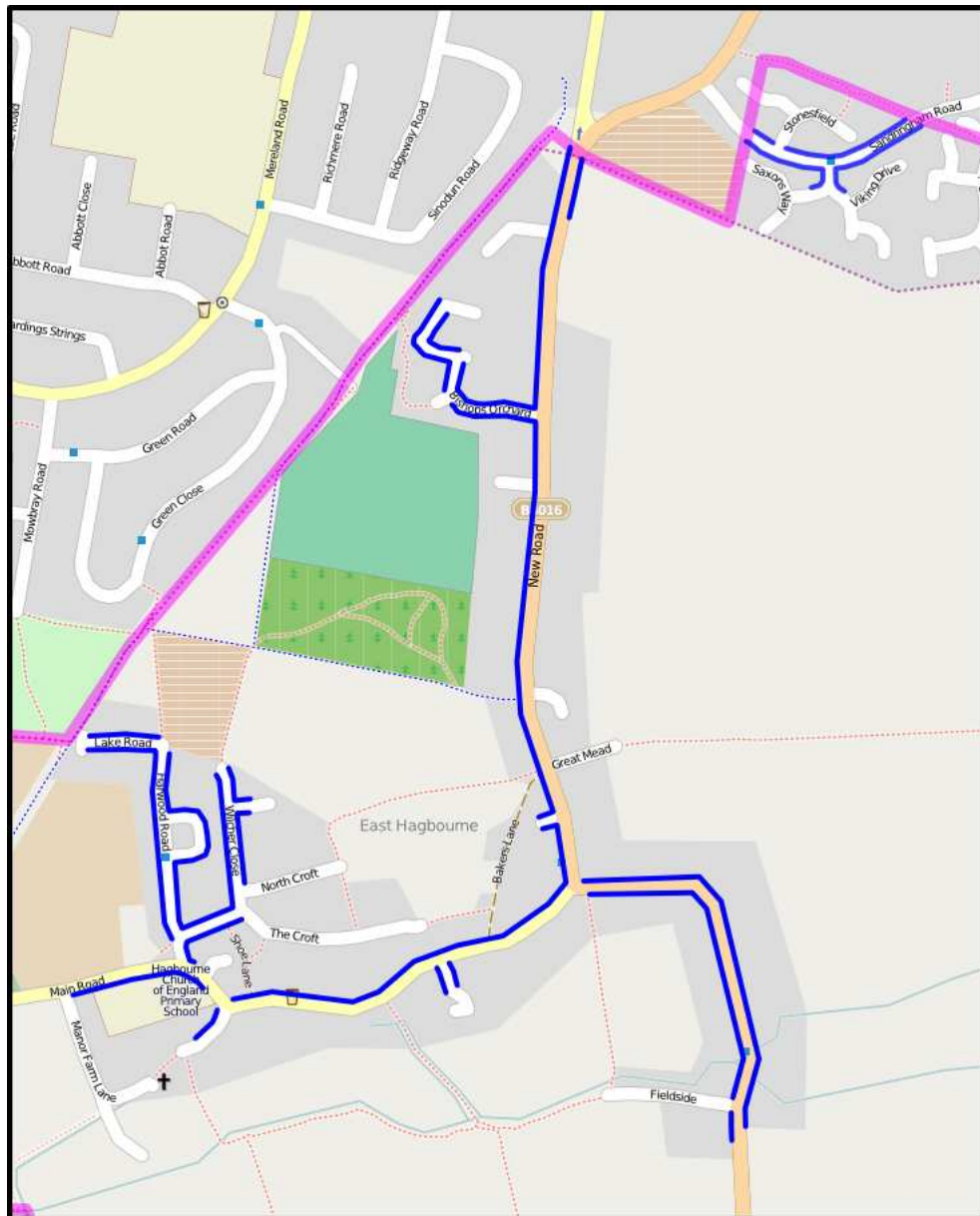
Several people asked that a good map showing all the footpaths be made available.

Proposal: Examine what maps already exist, and work on a new map that would be comprehensive and attractive, and could be made available at reasonable price through the Village Shop. Aspects to consider are

- *While a comprehensive recording of footpaths within East Hagbourne Parish is essential, it may be valuable to extend the boundaries further afield to show the main links to adjacent villages and Didcot.*
- *Consider whether those pavements that constitute main transit routes should also be highlighted.*
- *Include key access points e.g. at Bishops Orchard and in Millbrook*



Map 2. Footpaths in East Hagbourne



Map 3. Pavement map of East Hagbourne

4.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

In the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to comment on what social problems they find to be a problem, with specific questions on vandalism, litter, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour. Dog fouling was mentioned the most times, being cited as a problem by 50% of respondents, and for this reason is discussed in its own separate chapter. 33% of respondents gave no response, so must be assumed to perceive no problems.

Litter

An earlier Village Survey suggested that there was not a litter problem, but in the latest survey 31% of respondents felt that there is a problem. The response was fairly uniform across age range and area of the Parish. The survey responses did not suggest any solutions.

There are a number of litter bins around the Parish which are emptied regularly by SODC, and these seem to be well used. An annual Litter Pick is held each year in April when people from around the Village do a more thorough clean of the roadsides and footpaths, and it is particularly pleasing to see a number of children participating each year. Many residents take great pride in the area around their house, and keep pavements and gutters clear of weeds. Some pick litter regularly, either from around their own houses, or while walking further afield. From general experience the areas that most need watching are

- The Recreation Ground. Most users of the children's' playground are tidy, but there is some general littering and the area is frequently used by young people in the evenings, who often leave litter. An additional waste bin has been installed by the Parish Council inside the playground area which may help.
- New Road/Blewbury Road. There is a recurring problem of cans and other food containers apparently thrown from passing cars, particularly onto the grass verges of New Road and on Blewbury Road just outside the village limits.
- The Car Park at the Village Hall. This is another gathering point for young people and school parents. There is often excessive litter and the bins are not always used. 'Joy Riders' were cited as a problem by one respondent.

One problem source has been removed by the introduction of closed recycling bins by SODC: with the old green boxes, material could be blown around in high winds and lodge in the hedgerows. Similar wind-blown material can be a problem from some houses themselves, for example when building work is being carried out.

Proposals: Encourage all residents to take a pride in their immediate surroundings, including clearing weeds and removing litter (even if it's annoying when someone else has dropped it!).

Maintain the annual Litter Pick and consider whether we need more regular events.

Anti-social behaviour

Although the number of people reporting concerns about vandalism and anti-social behaviour are relatively low, the level of concern is over 15% for families with young children, and people over 55 reported less concern than younger people. There was a marked difference between the different areas of the Parish. The Millbrook area had the lowest level of concern (6-7%), whereas the New Road area recorded 17% for vandalism and 22% for anti-social behaviour. Figures for the main village were 11% and 8%.

These figures seem to reinforce the problem areas identified above for litter. Although there is little specific information in the questionnaire responses, problems seem to be related to

- Vehicles driven inconsiderately, including those who drive too fast? There is some joy-riding by young people who tour around the country roads in the evenings. These vehicles do always drive fast, but usually have noisy exhausts and are sometimes driven in a 'racy' way which makes them conspicuous.
- Young people occasionally congregating, again mainly in the evenings at the Recreation Ground and Village Car park. There have also been reports of noisy groups walking through the village, and in past years some of the scarecrows have been vandalised. In addition to litter, there has been some damage to playground equipment apparently caused by over-vigorous use by youths.

The school and pre-school both do so much to encourage responsible behaviour and deserve our support and encouragement.

Proposals:

Recognise the needs of young people to congregate somewhere and try to steer their energies in a positive direction

Involve young people in decisions wherever possible, following the example of the playground where school children were involved in the choice of equipment.

Maintain a close watch on the Recreation Ground and other trouble spots to deter abusive behaviour

Resources available to help include the local police PCSOs and the Area youth Worker for Didcot. However we would need a local young people's champion to be effective.

Local Police Support & Neighbourhood Watch

The increased availability of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) has been beneficial for the village by allowing local issues to be more easily raised to the attention of the Police. Regular informal 'have your say' meetings are held in the Car Park where residents can meet the officers and raise any concerns or comments they may have. The Police have shown themselves willing to help in local issues through measures such as traffic speed checks, support on dog fouling and resolving problems of barking dogs.

A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NHW) has been running successfully in East Hagbourne for many years but only in parts of the village. The revival during 2010 with new volunteer coordinators has meant that most of the Parish is now covered, including Coscote, but there are still some areas where coverage is uncertain. There are currently 24 coordinators who forward information received from Thames Valley Police to the members in their area, via e-mail or on paper.

Levels of crime seem to be fairly low in the Parish, but there have been spates of break-ins to houses and outbuildings, and a theft of valuable builders' equipment from the Village Hall site during construction work. There are also instances of damage by vehicles, particularly where large vehicles are using our narrow roads and streets.

East Hagbourne is part of the Cholsey and Moulsoford Neighbourhood Team, and is supported by two Police Community Support Officers. Residents with any concern about actual or potential incidents are encouraged to contact either of the PCSOs who will record the information, advise on any measures considered necessary and forward to the Ringmaster message system if necessary (see contact details in the footnote)⁵.

Proposals:

Support and extend the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to cover as many residents as possible. Confirm that all areas are covered by our own or neighbouring schemes.

Highlight concerns on littering and anti-social behaviour to the local police officers and ask them to be alert to incidents

Encourage all residents to be alert and react if they suspect a crime is being committed, and ensure they know who/how to contact

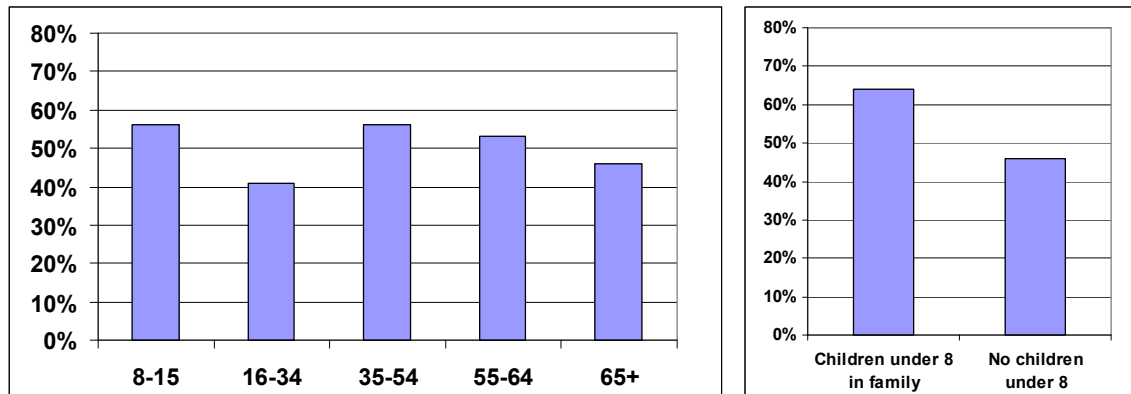
⁵ The Local Police Officers can be contacted for non-urgent matters at Cholsey&MoulsofordNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk or by telephoning 08458 505 505. If you need immediate help, dial 999. More information can be found on the Thames Valley Police web site.

4.6 Dog Fouling

In the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to comment on what social matters they find to be a problem, with specific questions on vandalism, litter, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour. Of these, dog fouling attracted by far the most responses with 50% of respondents saying that they considered dog fouling to be a problem. This view was reinforced by the written comments on footpaths, where 29 of the 37 comments on cleanliness related to dog fouling. These results echo the earlier village survey, suggesting that measures taken in the last 10 years have had little effect.

Concern about dog fouling was fairly consistent across the age range, but with slightly less concern from those in the 16-34 year age ranges. However, as for anti-social behaviour, concern was higher for those with children under the age of 8 in the family.

Because the concern on this topic is so high, this special chapter has been dedicated to it.



Percentage of people concerned about dog fouling

Dog droppings are smelly, dirty and unpleasant, but even more importantly, they are a health hazard (see box). Given the facts, it is astonishing that some people allow their dogs to foul on pavements where excrement can be picked up on shoes, and some people are even surprised to be admonished for taking their dogs into a children's' play area. Having said that, the news is not all bad: there are several dog bins around the Parish and they are well used. Many dog owners are responsible and pick up after their pets – the problem lies with those who don't.

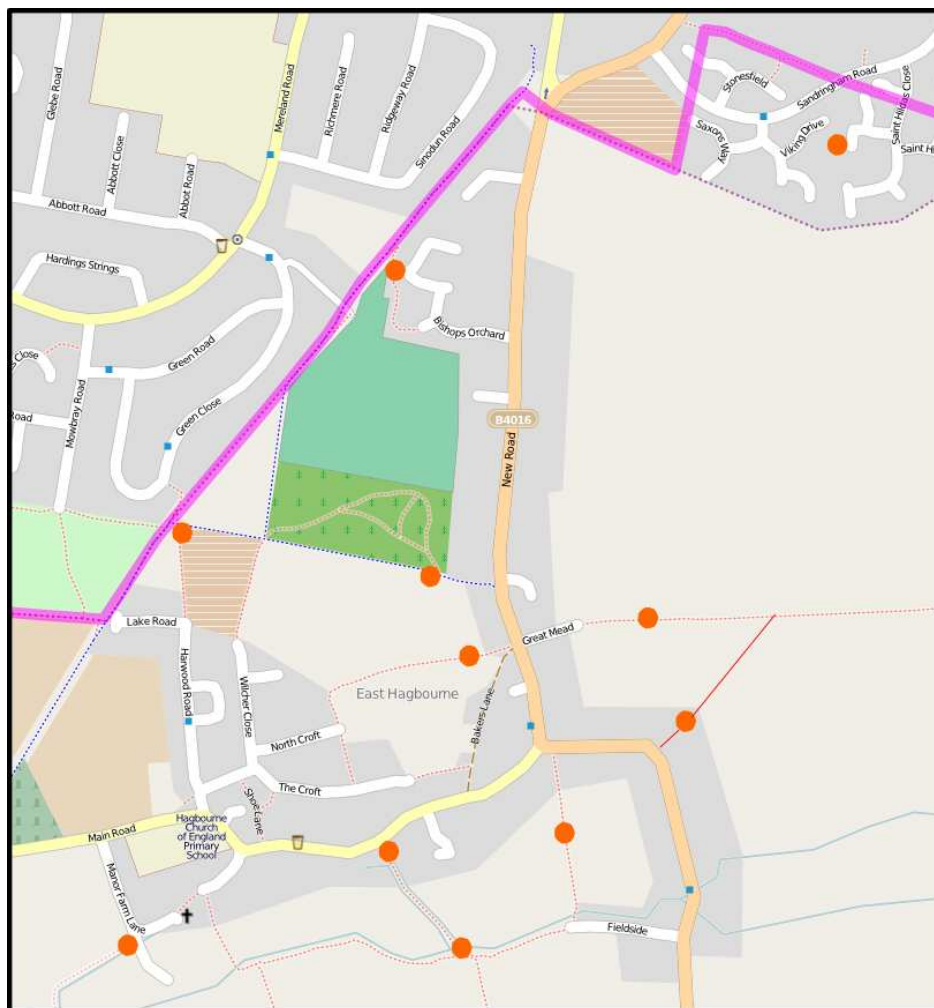
Dog fouling is not only unpleasant it is dangerous. The biggest threat to public health from dog excrement is toxocariasis, which is an infection of the roundworm *toxocara canis*. The eggs of the parasite can be found in soil or sand contaminated with faeces and if swallowed, result in infection that lasts between six and 24 months. Symptoms include eye disorders, vague ache, dizziness, nausea, asthma and epileptic fits. Often the eggs are ingested when passed to the mouth by the hands, but this can also occur through contact with dogs or other inanimate objects including the wheels of toys and the soles of shoes. Infected soil samples are often found in play areas and as a result, Toxocariasis most commonly affects children between 18 months and five years.

<http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/KeyIssues/DogFouling/>

The law states that it is the responsibility of the dog owner or the person in charge of the dog to clear up any dog foul left by their dog. If you fail to clean up after your dog you can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (currently £80 in South Oxfordshire), or if the case goes to court a fine of up to £1000. Being unaware that the dog has fouled, or not having a suitable means of removing the faeces is not a reasonable excuse for failing to clean up after your dog

East Hagbourne is by no means alone in having a problem of dog fouling, nor is the problem exclusively from dog owners in the Parish: many people come from further afield to walk the streets and footpaths of our village. The Parish Council has worked over many years to control the problem, but has intensified efforts over the past two years

- Understanding the legal situation: Discussions with the Community Police Officers confirmed that allowing a dog to foul land open to the public is an offence, which is subject to a fixed penalty notice of £80. Ignorance of the law or not carrying a bag to pick up is not a valid reason for not complying. Penalty notices can be issued by officers designated by SODC, who are at present our two Police Community Support Officers. While it may be difficult for the PCSOs to actually witness an offence, they are willing to follow up adequately detailed reports from members of the public and talk to the offenders.
- Education. A number of brief articles have been included in the Parish Magazine highlighting concerns, publicising the Parish Council's actions, and encouraging people to act responsibly. Children at Hagbourne School supported our efforts by creating their posters which were displayed at strategic points around the village. Members of the Parish Council have also talked to some dog owners – often receiving support, sometimes abuse. It seems that many dog owners are understanding of their obligations, but that some are resistant to change.
- Helping people clean-up: Small plastic bags are available free of charge at the Village Shop (we ask for a small donation), and the Parish Council has increased the number of dog bins to make it as easy as possible for dog owners to dispose of their waste. We are aware that the dog bins sometimes became overfull and have followed-up with the contractor to ensure that they do their job thoroughly. During 2010 a further 3 dog bins were commissioned to fill gaps in the existing network. Locations of dog bins are shown on Map 4, below. Note that additional bins may be available outside the Parish boundary.



Map 4. Location of Dog Bins in East Hagbourne

What needs to be done next?

Just as in the past smoking was considered normal and acceptable in public and work places, attitudes to problems of dog fouling are changing. Most dog owners now accept their duty to clean up and protect others from the unpleasantness of dog mess, but some people seem resistant to change. Changing behaviour takes time, and the mix of educational and enforcement approaches taken over recent years will need to be continued.

Proposed Actions:

Review the legal situation in greater detail and ensure we have all necessary controls in place

– explain clearly the areas that have to be kept clean (link to footpath 'zoning')

Encourage people to report dog fouling offences in sufficient detail for effective follow-up.

Involve local dog owners in the process

Ensure that we have dog bins in all the places they are needed including Bishops Orchard and Millbrook

Follow up the successful poster campaign with the School and make it a periodic event (with their agreement)

Consider liaison with Didcot TC, Sustrans

4.7 Sustainability and Environment

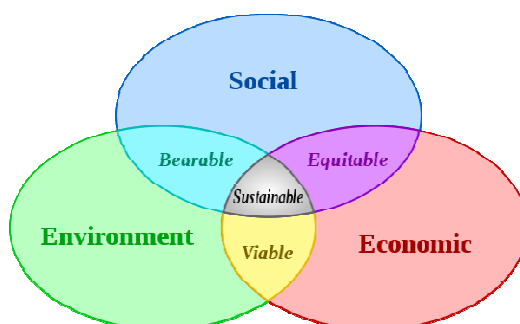
Sustainable Development is a topic that is much discussed, but is wide ranging and rarely clearly defined. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that

*Sustainable Development meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs*⁶.

This broad definition encompasses the concern that our way of life is placing an increasing environmental burden on the planet through⁷

- the consequences of already unavoidable climate change
- increasing stress on resources and environmental systems from the way we produce, consume and waste resources
- increasing loss of biodiversity
- global inequality and poverty

The concept of sustainability also implies that we must maintain viability in economic as well as social and environmental terms, as illustrated (perhaps not very clearly!) in the figure below⁸.



General awareness of the problems that may be posed by limited energy and water resources, and by the effects of climate change has developed increasingly over the past few years, and perhaps for this reason did not figure in the concerns put forward for our Parish Survey. Nevertheless, they deserve some reasoned response.

South Oxfordshire is a centre of excellence for many of the technologies that will be needed to develop new energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and it is true that technical solutions will need to be developed on a national or even global level. Nevertheless, we can all contribute 'small everyday actions which add up to make a big difference'.⁹

Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Energy costs form a significant proportion of most household budgets, especially at times of high energy prices. At present we are fortunate in having access to abundant energy supplies, but ultimately fossil fuels are limited and a full transition to new energy sources will take a long time. For both these reasons, it makes sense to use energy as efficiently as possible, and this is something where we can all make a contribution.

Building Regulations require new homes to be built to a very high standard of insulation. These measures will have a valuable impact into the future, but we also need to think about our existing homes. Buildings can be improved by fitting roof or wall insulation, double glazed windows or more efficient gas boilers. These options can be costly, although grants are sometimes available, and the decision to invest is one that each household must make individually.

In terms of using energy wisely, there are many small actions which together can make a difference, from turning off electrical equipment and lights and heating the house only as much as needed to

⁶ Brundtland 1987, cited at <http://www.ecifm.rdg.ac.uk/definitions.htm>

⁷ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/>

⁸ Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, 29–31 January 2006, cited by Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability>

⁹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/advice/community/index.htm>

boiling only the amount of water needed for that cup of tea. Many people are already energy conscious, other perhaps less so. Heightening awareness of energy use and encouraging energy conservation could be useful community activities.

Transport is another area which uses large amounts of energy. Our choice of car obviously affects fuel consumption, but another simple way of saving energy is to leave the car in the drive. This is not as frivolous a suggestion as it may sound. By planning our journeys we may be able to combine several tasks in one trip and save miles. Equally, the more we can make use of walking, cycling or public transport the less fuel we will burn. East Hagbourne has a reliable hourly bus connection to Didcot with its wider network of train and bus connections; per passenger-mile travelled using the bus or train uses less fuel than travel by car.

Greenhouse gas emissions are closely linked to energy use. In simple terms more energy used means more greenhouse gas emissions, so energy efficiency is the surest way for individuals to reduce emissions. In addition, we sometimes have the choice of different energy types. In choosing a car, we can buy a petrol model or one with a more efficient diesel engine. Many electricity companies also offer different tariffs, including electricity produced from renewable resources, but whether these schemes really increase the amount of renewable energy produced, or simply switch the higher carbon electricity to other customers is not clear. Hagbourne School has installed small wind and solar generators (picture). Installing such devices in the home requires thought, since the capital cost can be high and the longer term reliability difficult to assess. Whether to invest in any of these measures is a personal choice. Government schemes to encourage such investments may be available to ease the financial burden to the consumer.



Uncaptured methane from landfill sites are also greenhouse gas emissions. Supporting the District and County programmes to segregate food waste and to recycle are also ways to reduce emissions.

Clearly this is a complex area where the transition to a more sustainable future will take much effort and time. Big changes will be needed at national level, but there are still small actions we can all take, individually or as a community, which cumulatively will make a difference.

Vision:

A community where everyone is committed to using energy wisely and is well informed about how to do so.

Possible Actions:

*Ensure accurate and unbiased information is available to help individuals make informed choices.
Provide help in interpreting the information.*

*Consider a 'fair' in the VH to discuss conservation and sustainability topics, generate enthusiasm
Guest speakers at e.g. PC meetings or APM*

Opportunities for a new group to take forward ideas within the Parish?

Consider how we can encourage more people to use the bus service/make it more useful to people

Aim for both Individual actions and things we can do at a community level

Consider a local Freecycle scheme

Water Use

Water is becoming more precious than ever, with the impacts of climate change and rising demand. On average, each person uses 160 litres of water each day¹⁰. With the advent of water meters, we are all more aware of how much we use, and reducing our needs can save us money. Simple measures like turning taps off when not needed, using a shower instead of a bath, and taking care

¹⁰ <http://www.thameswater.co.uk/cps/rde/xchg/corp/hs.xsl/3784.htm>

with garden watering can all help. Installing a water butt for garden water means less mains water is needed, and even more sophisticated 'rainwater harvesting' systems can be installed to make maximum use of rainfall.

Accurate information is again key

Waste and Recycling

For many years our household waste was simply collected and deposited in landfill sites. This is clearly no longer appropriate and European and National regulations are now structured to encourage more sustainable behaviour. South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council are leading the way to reduce landfill, recycle useful materials, and compost food wastes to avoid greenhouse gas emissions, making a useful compost in the process. In the first year since we have been separating waste and using the new bins, the amount going to landfill has reduced by a massive 60%, and over 70% of all household waste is now recycled. This is a great success, achieved through the efforts of individual households.

Education for the future

We are all becoming more aware of the need to value our environment, preserve biodiversity, recycle and use precious energy resources with care. Our behaviour as a society has already started to change and this will continue into future decades. Preparing future generations for the challenges and opportunities this will bring is clearly important, and Hagbourne School is already strongly engaged.

The Walking Bus saves thousands of car journeys each year, and once at school pupils actively work to monitor and reduce energy use and recycle. They grow their own vegetables which they sell to the school kitchen and compost the waste. The wild environment is not forgotten, and the school boasts a sensory garden and a pond. The school has been flying the Green Eco flag for the past 12 years, one of only 40 schools in UK to do so.

. Younger children are not forgotten, and the Pre-School participates in the Forest School which gives children opportunities to develop their confidence through hands-on learning in a woodland environment.

On a practical level, children from the Parish make a big contribution to the village's annual Litter Blitz in April.

Involve all young peoples' groups in sustainability and other initiatives.

Biodiversity and Wildlife

The fields around East Hagbourne are mainly farmed for arable crops, principally cereals and rapeseed. The Hakka's Brook enters the parish from West Hagbourne and is joined by a short tributary from Shovel Spring on the 'parish path' joining East and West Hagbourne. The brook provides an attractive feature through many gardens in the village before crossing the fields to the east of Blewbury road to join the Mill Brook from Blewbury. Perhaps the most attractive feature is Parsonage Lane, where the raised path runs down the centre of the stream for some distance.

The open arable nature of the land provides some fine views, southwards to the downs and (for those who appreciate it!) to the sculptured cooling towers of Didcot Power Station. There are some long established hedges, and the Hagbourne Environment Group was active some years ago to plant additional mixed species hedges, some of which are now ready to be layered. Nearer to the village, some fields, often showing the remnants of ridge and furrow, are used as horse paddocks, while towards Coscote cows, sheep and lambs can be seen grazing on pastures which attract winter migrant birds. Looking back towards the village, the squat tower of the church provides a comforting reference point. Deer and pheasants can sometime be seen and red kites are becoming more and more numerous after their successful reintroduction into the Chilterns. In the autumn, blackberries and sloes can be found in the hedgerows, providing an additional incentive for a country walk.

The former railway line from Didcot to Upton crosses the parish on its embankment, which in addition to providing walking and cycling opportunities has a rich and varied chalk flora attractive to butterflies and other insects. The gently undulating nature of the country means that fields are often edged with minor ditches and drainage channels, and some fine trees, particularly poplar and field maple, can be found along these. The scrubland and hedges bounding fields and stream provide homes for many birds. The long gardens and backlands behind Main Road provide a buffer zone between houses and

field, and many people encourage birds to their gardens by feeding. The stream provides a home for mallard, water hen and kingfisher, and along some stretches hops twine in the trees, a reminder of the 19th Century when they were grown commercially. Water life has sometimes been compromised in the past by contamination from sewage, but this is hopefully now overcome, and as management to control the flooding risk progresses, the water quality should become more stable and healthy for wildlife.

As well as planting new hedges and trees, Hagbourne Environment Group has established an attractive wild flower meadow at the Cemetery. Now that it is established, the main maintenance is the annual hay cutting, which is achieved with the help of a local farmer, after which volunteers rake and gather the hay by hand. It is usually then burned, since at present no better use can be found. The main cemetery itself is well tended and surrounded by trees and scrub providing homes for birds. Just across the boundary to Didcot, villagers have also been active in creating a flower meadow in the open area known as Mowbray Fields, and in establishing a Local Nature Reserve in the flood control pond which boasts fine displays of orchids in the spring, while warblers and other birds sing from the willow scrub. Didcot's Millennium Wood also lies within East Hagbourne Parish, providing an attractive setting as the trees grow towards maturity

The area known as Butt's piece is owned the Parish Charities and was formerly used as allotments, but these fell into disuse some years ago. With renewed interest in this activity, the Parish Council has leased the land and reopened part of it as allotments again, and a committee is being formed to manage them. The northern area has become overgrown with scrub and is a haven for wildlife, but is in need of management. The central area is intended to be a grassy area for informal play. A management plan has been developed which will develop the wild area to maximise its benefit both for people and wildlife. It is hoped that the revitalisation of the Hagbourne Environment Group will be a stimulus for more people to volunteer and become involved in these activities.

The built environment also provides a valuable contribution to wildlife. Gardens and trees are a haven for many wild animals, birds, insects and plants, as well as contributing to human enjoyment of the area¹¹. Locally grown produce, as well as tasting good saves transport miles and helps reduce energy use.

Potential Actions:

Implement management plan for Butt's Piece involving local people as volunteers

Develop a conservation statement outlining the assets of the Parish and our plans to preserve and develop them

Find a better use for the wildflower meadow hay

Promote better links between groups e.g. Produce Show, Butt's Piece Allotments, Gardening Club, Shop (could these be the champions for local produce?)

A 'local food' initiative

Flooding

The land around East Hagbourne is relatively flat and gently undulating. The fall on the Hakka's Brook and Mill Brook before they reach the Thames near Wallingford is modest, so good stream flow cannot be taken for granted. Significant flooding of the Hakka's Brook has occurred periodically in the past, the most recent events being in 1990, and again in 2007/2008, with the main areas affected being Tadley (Blewbury Road and surroundings) and Main Road, particularly near Parsonage Lane. In both events, several houses suffered flooding. Although both these events were triggered by heavy rainfall, it is now acknowledged that lack of maintenance of the stream was a major contributing factor. In 1990, a fallen tree blocked flow downstream of Blewbury Road, while by 2007 the stream was badly blocked by vegetation. All of this occurred in spite of concerted and expert representations by the Parish Council to the regulating authorities over many years.

Responsibilities for stream maintenance are complex. The main channel is the responsibility of the Environment Agency, who however have few resources to maintain minor waterways. The lower relief channel downstream of Blewbury Road is the responsibility of SODC through their contractor,

¹¹ In 2000, SODC published 'East Hagbourne Conservation Area: A Character Study' which contains much useful information.

Monson, while all landowners bounding the stream have a duty of maintenance and to prevent the flow from being impeded or diverted where it crosses their property. Road drains are the responsibility of OCC.

Following the 2007 flooding, new efforts were made to better understand the causes of the flooding and the possible remedies. Stream levels were recorded and analysed by villagers, and in discussion with the authorities it became clear that both the stream and the road drains needed attention. Over the past 2 years, Monson (for SODC) have carried out a major clearance of both the lower and upper channels downstream of Blewbury Road, and OCC have carried out work on the Highway surface water drains. Local farmers have carried out their own work further downstream. The cleared stream coped well with the winter rains of 2009/10 and both authorities are carrying out further work within the village.

Over the spring of 2010 we have been facing the challenge of maintaining the stream in its clean state. Vegetation growth has been very rapid and risked undoing the clearance work of last year. Under the leadership of the Parish Council, a group of stream dwellers around Tadley has been formed to raise awareness and encourage everyone to help keep the stream clear. In addition, work parties have been successful in keeping the main channel clear through the houses and downstream. Contacts have been made with stream dwellers through the village to raise awareness, and with their help, a start has been made on controlling the invasive himalayan balsam. Volunteers have again worked on some of the more public areas.

We are clearly still learning how to keep our houses safe from the flood risk as far as possible, but it is clear that the responsibility has to be shared between local people and the authorities. We need the help of experts to handle big maintenance jobs, but local efforts are the best and perhaps only way to keep the stream clear on a routine basis, and the eyes of local people can help identify problems before they become serious. Local volunteer groups are becoming an established part of flood control throughout the country, and we need to maintain our efforts in this area.

Vision:

The stream is maintained so that it can handle storm flows and avoid flooding of local houses

How:

*Local stream dwellers take responsibility for their own property and help manage the wider areas.
We maintain the help and cooperation of SODC (Monson), OCC and the Environment Agency.*

The Human and Social Environment

East Hagbourne lies in an area of agricultural farming and provides an attractive country environment, while being close to the facilities offered by the town of Didcot. The extensive network of footpaths provides recreational opportunities for both village and town dwellers, as well as providing pleasant walking routes for journeys within the village. An hourly bus service provides a link with Didcot, its shops and wider transport connections.

In spite of its proximity to the town, East Hagbourne has a distinct identity, with many community events centred on the village, including the Fun Run, Scarecrow week, the Church Fete and the Produce Show. There is a wide range of clubs and other activities, such as the football and bowls clubs, a gardening club, book reading groups and folk dancing, which together provide a lively and distinct atmosphere to the village. St Andrew's Church, at the west end of the village, is the centre for religious worship and the Church community is also extensively involved in other activities including charity fund raising. The Church has a fine peal of bells, regularly played by a dedicated and expert group.

The centre of East Hagbourne is a Conservation Area (see Map 5, Page 32) with many historic buildings dating from the 17th Century or even earlier, while the surrounds provide more modern buildings in a range of styles from flats to larger bungalows and houses. The newer developments in Bishop's Orchard and Millbrook provide attractive modern housing in a secluded environment.

East Hagbourne has been fortunate in retaining its village Post Office, which is located next to the garage in New Road. The village shop shares the same premises and within its rather small facilities stocks a wide range of goods, including local produce, at very reasonable prices. The shop was established in its present form in 2001 and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers. Another focal point for people to meet is the Village Hall, which provides a venue for both public and private events, many of which are organised and performed by local people, including a newly formed dramatic society, the HAMS. The village pub, the Fleur-de Lys, as well as providing food and drink in

an attractive atmosphere, hosts a variety of special events and is the home for regular music sessions and the newly formed Aunt Sally team.

Education provides another focus for community involvement. Hagbourne C of E Primary School is extremely successful and a leader in many areas, including having 'Green flag' Eco status. The 2008 OFSTED report, which awarded very high ratings, commented on the good behaviour and cooperation of the pupils. There is an active governing body and PTA which involve parents in fund raising and other activities. The school swimming pool, covered and with solar heating, is a great asset for the children, and also available to the wider community. Hagbourne Pre-School meets in the Village Hall, and has also established a strong and consistent reputation. Parents are again strongly involved. The youngest children are accommodated through the Mother and Toddler group which meets once a week at the school.

All of this highlights that East Hagbourne is a place with a strong sense of community with many ways for people to get involved and meet people. The annual Best Kept Village and Britain in Bloom competitions have for many years formed a focal point for village pride, and East Hagbourne has been very successful in these competitions over the years, through both the efforts of householders in keeping their gardens and verges beautiful and the strong leadership of Monica Lawson, who sadly is no longer with us. The attractive, leafy environment means that hedges need to be kept in good order to avoid blocking pavements and footpaths. Much of this is the responsibility of the adjoining householders, with the Parish Council providing support for the less accessible areas.

East Hagbourne Parish Council meets each month, normally in the Village Hall. The Council owns and manages the Recreation Ground which is the home to Hagbourne United Football Club as well as an excellent children's' playground, opened in 2009. The Council also installed and maintains the children's' playground at St Anne's Court in the Millbrook development. More recently, the Council has leased Butt's Piece from the Hagbourne Charities and has reopened part of it to provide allotments for local people. The remaining parts of the site will provide a grassy play area and a wooded area for wildlife and relaxation. Local produce will be enhanced both through the output from the allotments, and coppice poles and firewood from the wild area.

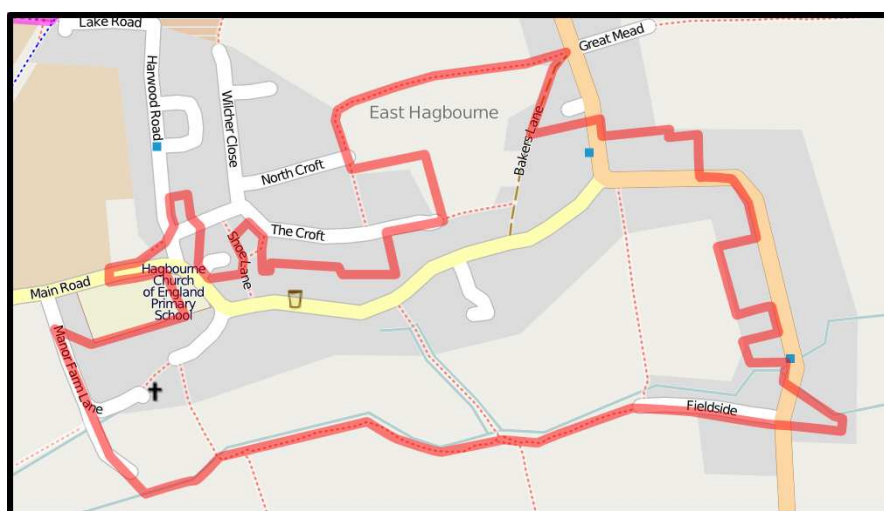
Potential Actions:

There are already many activities that draw people together and provide focal points for social interaction. New activities are developing constantly e.g. Butt's Piece, HAMS, Aunt Sally, . . .

Ensure that the whole community is aware of and able to participate in these activities.

Preserve and enhance East Hagbourne's archives.

Develop a conservation statement outlining the assets of the Parish and our plans to preserve and develop them



Map 5. East Hagbourne Conservation Area¹²

¹² The official Conservation Area map, together with listed buildings can be found at <http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/conservation/showmap.asp?action=locate>

4.8 Education and Young People

Responses to the questionnaire were received from people of 8 years and upwards, with 10% of replies being from children aged 8-15, and a further 14% from people in the 16-34 age range. There was a great deal in common in the responses to the questions across the age range, but some areas where young people had different priorities or views on topics that are addressed elsewhere in the Plan.

- Children 8-15 showed a strong interest in active sports, with interest declining in the higher age groups.
- Although the number of people reporting concerns about vandalism and anti-social behaviour were fairly low, the level of concern was over 15% for families with young children.
- There was a lower level of interest from young people in receiving the Parish magazine, even if it were free.

These differences are sufficient to suggest that the needs of young people should be specifically considered in deciding on Plan actions

Hagbourne School

Hagbourne Church of England Primary School serves the villages of East and West Hagbourne as well as drawing some pupils from the surrounding areas of Didcot. The intake is about 30 pupils per year and a measure of the school's success is that it is typically oversubscribed by 300%¹³. This unfortunately means that some children who would like to attend are not able to do so, including some from the Millbrook part of East Hagbourne Parish that is not in the LEA catchment area.

The school's popularity is founded on a strong tradition of academic achievement - Ofsted describe the school as "outstanding" - but also on a caring community where staff and pupils work well together. There is a 'family atmosphere' within the school, and close links with the community and the local parish church. The school is acknowledged to be one of the leading sustainable primary schools in the UK. There is an active emphasis on education for the future, with students becoming familiar with computers and actively engaged in understanding today's environmental challenges. There is a sensory garden, children grow vegetables in the school garden, work actively on recycling and composting and monitor the school's own solar and wind power generators. In fact, the school has permanent Green Flag status as a leading Eco School, and is one of 17 schools in the country to have the International Schools Award for the work done during the last 12 years in UK and abroad, working with schools in France, Greece, Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, Germany, USA, Uganda and Australia.

The school was built in 1873 and has been progressively extended and improved over the years so that it now fits quite snugly into its site. A new sports field was created some years ago across the road which means there is still room for outdoor activities. Richard Jones, head teacher now for 20 years, believes the school is the right size and should not expand further, but that improvements should be continued as needed. The school is fortunate in having its own heated and covered swimming pool which is also used to train lifesavers and is leased out for more general community use. The next large project is to improve the changing facilities. In this and other projects the staff are supported by a strong body of Governors, and by a PTA which provides social interactions for parents and children as well as fund raising.

Clubs and societies are held throughout the year and usually take place after school. They range from football, netball, rounders, athletics and chess to craft, swimming, recorders, keyboards, environmental, cricket and computer club. Parental involvement with these is always welcome.

Pre-School

Hagbourne Pre-School is a registered charity providing a fun, caring and stimulating environment for pre-school children aged 2½-5 after which they transfer to Primary School. It is not linked to the school, but operates a clearly defined admission policy based on the same catchment area. Pre-school is held every week day morning during term time in Hagbourne Village Hall. In addition, on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday sessions are extended to 2:30pm. Parents are required to participate

¹³ Oxfordshire County Council comment that this figure includes second and third preferences. For September 2010, Hagbourne School received 31 1st preference applications for 30 places, of which 13 were from within the catchment area. The comparable figures for September 2009 are 40 1st preferences, 10 of which were in catchment.

as volunteers at least once every half term. 32 children can be accommodated in each session and it is not necessary to attend all five days of the week - typically the total roll might be 42 families/children, although only 32 can be there on any one day. The improvements to the village hall completed during summer 2010 will allow the number per day to rise to 40.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which might be craft, modelling, messy play or reading in the book corner. Alternatively, in the larger hall, role play, dressing up and obstacle courses are all set up. Children are encouraged to play in the outside enclosed play area whenever possible and a range of activities are made available including bikes and ride-ons, gardening and water play. There is also regular access to the adjacent Hagbourne School playing fields where the pre-school's Sports Day is held each summer. Children also learn about recycling of items like paper or apple cores and participation in the Forest school initiative enables children to learn about the care of natural wooded areas. Staff make the most of their village location to extend children's learning about their environment. Regular walks and visits from helpers in the community such as the ambulance and fire services, aid the children's understanding of the world. Older children benefit from afternoon sessions where there is a little more emphasis on focused activities to aid their concentration.

The pre-school is financed with a combination of the Nursery Education Funding received for children of three years and over and fees charged for non-funded sessions. However, pre-school cannot run on this funding alone so an active fundraising programme is in place and support from parents and the community at large is vital to this effort. Fundraising is essential to cover the costs of equipment, craft materials, books, toys and outings to provide an enhanced environment for the children.

The experience of the staff and a continuity of operation over 30 years, always changing with the times, are the key to the pre-school's success.

- *The main challenge is that demand exceeds capacity - there is a waiting list, and the pre-school formerly held at Fleet meadow has now closed.*
- *Also, the number of parents who can help is decreasing because more people are working.*
- *The pre-school is ably run by a management committee, which because it is comprised mainly of parents, changes frequently as children progress to primary school. One or two non-parent helpers currently help to provide some continuity in the committee.*
- *The possibility of employing a part time administrator to help both Committee and Staff is being explored..*
- *Links with Toddlers and the School are continually being strengthened.*

Babies & Toddlers Group

The Babies & Toddlers Group meets in Hagbourne school hall from 9:45-11:45 on Fridays during term time. It welcomes babies and toddlers from newborn to 5 years accompanied by a parent, grandparent or carer. There is an activity table, baby area, outside play area and plenty of toys to go around. They have a refreshment break and finish with a sing-song. The charge is £1 per family per morning, and there is no need to book - just turn up on the day.

Village Facilities

Younger children are well catered for in the well equipped playground at Great Mead, which was completely refurbished in 2009 with a range of equipment for children up to 12 years. Those in Millbrook will find a smaller, but still attractive, play area set in a grassy area near St Anne's Court. The recreation ground at Great Mead is also the location of the football pitch, home of Hagbourne United Football Club, but also a fine space for informal play when more organised activities are not in progress.

Smaller areas for kicking a ball around can be found at Butt's Piece (at the end of Harwood Road), or just across



the Didcot boundary at the nearby Mowbray Fields. Both Hagbourne Primary School and St Birinus School have their own dedicated playing fields within the Parish, however these are not accessible by the general public. The extensive network of footpaths and bridle-ways provide opportunities to burn off energy in the countryside.

Cub, Scout and Brownie meetings take place regularly in Hagbourne Village Hall and there are also ballet classes, with other activities in the wider Didcot area. The Barn Dance Club welcomes families. The Church, as well as welcoming young people into the choir and music group, operates a Youth Group, but since the benefice covers several churches, activities usually take place in Blewbury.

Education facilities in the Parish are of a high standard, the main debit being that not everyone has the chance to attend because of high demand.

Apart from the specific question of sporting activities, which is covered in Section 4.10, the survey did not provide much information on the needs and wishes of young people

Proposed Action: Establish a dialogue with young people and parents to understand what activities they would like to see in the future.

4.9 Church and Community

East Hagbourne owes its attractiveness as much to the many local activities and community spirit as to its heritage and country location. The church and the school are focal points for their own special communities as well as the stimulus for activities, such as the Church Fete, that draw together people from the whole parish and wider afield. The Village Hall provides a meeting place for many events, from the regular Pre-School sessions to clubs, meetings and private parties. Numerous groups exist, some formally organised, others less formal, providing a wide range of activities to meet all tastes, whether the objective is mental stimulation or relaxation and friendly company. This chapter gives an overview of the existing activities and considers whether new initiatives could further build a sense of community and inclusiveness in the parish.

St Andrew's Church



St Andrew's Parish Church is the oldest part of the East Hagbourne community, and has been a major influence on our heritage and sense of community. Responses to the survey questionnaire indicated that a quarter of those responding valued the church a place of worship, and 38% cited baptisms weddings and funerals as important to them. In addition, 40% valued the church for its historic significance and around a quarter cited the role of the church in providing help for people both locally and in the wider world. Support for the church was strongest in the Village and New Road areas, with less interest from Millbrook. Clearly, support and appreciation of the church extends beyond those who consider themselves committed Christians, and this sense of inclusion is shared by the church itself. In his Parish magazine comments for June 2010, Father Jason welcomed use of the church as a building for the community, perhaps to hold concerts or plays, as well as providing a quiet place to pray, think or relax.

Worship and community activity of course remains central to the church's activities and the regular services, Sunday school and pram services are supported by volunteers ensuring that flowers and coffee are available, and that the church is cleaned, while the choir provides vocal support. The church itself has some fine features, notably the Sanctus bell, one of the finest church organs in Oxfordshire, and a fine peal of bells which can be heard most Sundays as well as on Tuesday, which is practice night. Hagbourne Action Group, centred on the church, raises funds for good causes, often by organising events that benefit the whole community. As examples, a 'Sheppard's Pi' jazz evening and Lent collection raised funds for The Gap in Oxford, an organisation providing daytime services for homeless young people in Oxfordshire. The annual scarecrow competition and a promises evening raised funds for St. Anne's Hospital, Liuli, Tanzania with which the Church has had contacts for many years.

The Village Hall

The Hagbourne Village Hall is a resource available to East and West Hagbourne and to all nearby residents. There are a number of regular users which include Hagbourne Pre-school, Girl and Boy

Scout Groups, The Downland Dance ballet school, two art groups and the Garden Club. It is also available for hire for meetings, private parties, dances and family celebrations. Some of the best "village events" take place at the Hall. Following the improvements made during summer 2010, the Hall now has three separate meeting/function rooms to cater for events with various requirements. There is a recently refurbished kitchen and a newly enhanced stage in the larger room. The Hall can be booked for private events, but is also the venue for many public concerts, plays, societies and other activities.

The Fleur-de-Lys

The Fleur-de-Lys is the only remaining pub in the village, changing times having seen the closure of two others over the past 30 years. There are themed food evenings each month, and as well as providing food and fine beers the 'Fleur' is the venue for the monthly folk music sessions - free and open to all, and to a recently started 'non-folk' evening. There are carols at Christmas when the Mummers play is also performed. The pub runs a darts team, and the recently formed Aunt Sally team is performing very well in the local league as well as helping preserve this local game which is specific to the Oxfordshire region. As a place to meet and socialise, the pub remains a valuable asset to the Parish.

Community Activities

The May Bank Holiday is the occasion for the annual Fun Run and Walk which draws entrants from the village and further afield for a 6km event through West Hagbourne, Upton and Blewbury. In addition to the over 200 entrants, scores of volunteers help steward the runners and walkers, and prepare teas and refreshments in the Village Hall - a real social event and chance to welcome the spring. In the lead up to summer, the scarecrow competition is becoming an established event and this year 34 scarecrows brought delight to the many visitors from Didcot and neighbouring villages who were able to vote for their favourite.



The start of summer sees the annual Fete which supports church funds, but draws people throughout the parish and beyond to help with the stalls, or simply to come along and enjoy the day. The Fete starts with a fancy dress parade, serenaded by a local jazz band, and children from the school continue the theme with country dancing. September sees the Village Show which in addition to the traditional exhibition and sale of garden produce includes arts and crafts created by local people.

Beyond these major events which punctuate the year, there are numerous clubs and activities catering for a wide range of interests.

East Hagbourne has been successful in maintaining its village Post Office which is located next to the garage in New Road. The same location houses the Community Shop, run entirely by volunteers since the commercial shop closed ten years ago. Within the small confines of the premises the shop sells a wide range of food and household goods at competitive prices. The shop is naturally a focus for people to meet and those wishing to become more involved can volunteer to take one of the 2 hour sessions in charge.

There are many clubs, societies and informal groups where people can get together for a range of interests. For those in energetic mood, the Barn Dance Club and Gardening Club both meet in the

Village Hall. The Ramblers meet once a month for a Sunday walk around and beyond the Parish boundaries, while for those less energetic there are book review groups, and a mobile library visits twice per month. A senior citizens' lunch is available each Friday at the School during term time. There are groups for painters including lectures and demonstrations as well as hands on experience, and groups for ballet, dress making, and brownies, beavers and cubs for younger people. Details of most of these activities can be found in the Parish Magazine and on the village web site

In the village survey, the questionnaire included a lot of questions on sporting and leisure activities. The most popular activities people said they would like to take part in were theatre and cinema trips, amateur dramatics, photography, bridge and chess. Some people said they would be able to help organise such events, although there was no-one able to support photography on a regular basis. A new amateur dramatic society, The HAMS, was formed in 2009 and performed a very successful production of Under Milk Wood in February 2010. Although there are informal bridge groups in the village, there is no 'public' club.

Although there is no formal group dedicated to village history, a large and interesting collection of documents, maps and photos exists, which could form the basis for such an activity if the interest exists.

Various musical activities take place throughout the year. In addition to the regular folk evenings and barn dance club, there are concerts in the Church or Village Hall. The East Hagbourne singers welcome new members. They are a group of 12-16 people who meet fortnightly in the Church and perform a variety of music from madrigals to folk songs.

Overall, the picture is of a vibrant community with many social activities. The Church, Village Hall, pub and shop provide the essential pillars around which these activities can develop. New activities continue to emerge, and the results of the 2008 survey provide some ideas for further initiatives. The long discussions and efforts to build a new sports pavilion unfortunately did not succeed, and an alternative approach will be needed. The general community benefits of any new facility must be a key input to these discussions.

Potential Actions:

- *Build community aspects into discussions of improved sports facilities*
- *Follow up interests identified by the 2008 survey*
 - o *Consider arranging theatre/cinema trips open to everyone*
 - o *Consider interest in a photography club*
 - o *Consider more open bridge groups (or facilitate groups to set up their own activities)*
 - o *Sound out interest in a chess club?*
 - o *Interest in a 'Golden Age' Club?*
- *Consider how the Village Archives should develop*

4.10 Sports Activities

The Situation Today

There are a number of existing sporting activities in East Hagbourne:

- Hagbourne Bowling Club, situated in The Croft, meets regularly to play lawn bowls and enters men's and ladies teams into the local leagues. The Bowls Club are always happy to see visitors or anyone wanting to try their hand. Open Days are held at various times during the season and social events are also being developed.
- Hagbourne United Football Club plays at the Recreation Ground field in Great Mead, fielding teams in the North Berkshire League
- In addition to the swimming facilities at the nearby Didcot Wave, the village school has a fine heated and covered pool which is available for general community bookings outside school hours.
- East Hagbourne Tennis Club was founded in 2001 and membership rose as far as 70 members. Membership has dwindled recently with the protracted efforts to establish courts within the village.
- The footpaths and bridleways around East Hagbourne offer many opportunities for joggers, and the Annual Fun Run and walk, held in May, attracts over 200 runners. Regular Rambles, starting from the village, take place on a Sunday every month and are open to all.
- There are currently no organised indoor exercise classes such as aerobics or Pilates within East Hagbourne, although they can be found in Didcot.

The Recreation Ground at Great Mead, off New Road, is the main outdoor playing area. It is home to the recently modernised children's' playground and to Hagbourne United Football Club, who rent the existing pavilion from the Parish Council who own the site. There is a smaller playground and open grassy area at St Anne's Court in Millbrook, again suitable for informal play.

Butt's Piece, at the end of Harwood Road has recently been leased by the Parish Council from the Hagbourne Charities. Its development includes a flat, open grassed area suitable for informal ball games. Nearby and just over the boundary into Didcot, Mowbray Fields provides another open and more undulating area, again suitable for informal play.

As Hagbourne School has expanded part of the playing field adjacent to the school has been developed for other needs, and a separate field has been leased on the opposite side of the road, next to the cemetery. This provides the School with an excellent venue for athletics, football and other ball games, but is unfortunately not available for general community use.

The Village Hall provides two larger rooms potentially suitable for indoor activities such as aerobics and table tennis. Although the Hall is well used for pre-school and general community activities, ballet and yoga are the only current activities that have a direct sporting/fitness element. Just outside the Parish Boundary, and convenient for those living in the Millbrook and New Road areas, Fleet Meadow Community Hall in Sandringham Road has two medium size rooms and hosts a number of activities including martial arts.

East Hagbourne lies close to Didcot and so residents are able to take advantage of the sports facilities provided by the Didcot Wave (swimming and a gym) and Didcot Leisure Centre, which offers a large hall, dance studio and squash courts, and courses including trampolining, gymnastics, basketball and football. Both locations have activities especially for children. There are also a number of fitness clubs and other activities around Didcot. Results from the surveys show that many people make use of these and travel even farther afield for sporting activities.

Survey Results

1998 East Hagbourne Appraisal: Development of the sporting activities in the Parish has been a topic of discussion for several years, and figured strongly in the 1998 Village Appraisal, a dedicated sports and leisure survey in 2003, as well as in the Parish Plan survey of 2008.

The 1998 East Hagbourne Appraisal received responses from 69% of residents. The largest actual participations in sport within the Parish were bowls, where 19 played in East Hagbourne and 9 elsewhere, and aerobics, with 13 participating in classes in East Hagbourne and 36 elsewhere. 13 people played cricket, mostly outside the Parish, and for football, 4 played in East Hagbourne, 8 elsewhere. Including all locations, 60 people participated in swimming, 27 in golf, 25 in a gym or health club, 20 played tennis and 18 played squash. Tennis topped the list of activities that people

would like to see in East Hagbourne, with 14 responses. Significant numbers of people said they would like to participate, but did not currently do so - for example 47 people for aerobics, 14 for bowls. The reasons for non-participation are not explained, but clearly provision of a sport does not mean that all those who want to participate will be able to do so. Among younger people, the strongest needs were for informal play opportunities, including a playground for younger children.

2003 Sports & Leisure Survey. By 2003, a Tennis Club had been formed, albeit without courts in the village, and plans had been laid to replace the dilapidated pavilion at Great Mead. Taking into account the results of the Appraisal, the plans envisaged a new and larger pavilion that would include a sports hall to allow a wider range of activities. In the context of these proposals, another survey was carried out, this time dedicated to sports and leisure topics. This survey was intended to clarify priorities to guide facility development, and to assess the degree to which the facility would be used. Some sports, such as swimming, therefore do not figure in this survey.

The level of interest in sporting activities was markedly stronger than that shown in the 1998 Appraisal. This may be partly due to the attention given to sports in the intervening years and a general societal effort to encourage participation, but the context of the questionnaire with the assumption that new facilities would be built soon probably also had an impact. Provision of new facilities, convenient for residents, would in itself stimulate more participation. As an example, a total of 258 people expressed an interest in football. Many people would be happy to play a sport in an informal way, however this response is very different from the 39 who were already members of a club, even if this is much increased from the 12 recorded in 1998. It is apparent that very few people were then involved in clubs corresponding to their interests and this is true even for the most popular sports. Even so, a total of 174 people (21%) were members of a club for the top 20 sporting activities. The impact of the Tennis Club can be seen, with 47 people saying they were a member of a Tennis Club.

However, if the absolute numbers of potential participants must be interpreted carefully, the results do give a clear indication of the most popular sporting activities. Tennis, table tennis, football and exercises such as yoga, aerobics and Pilates topped the list, but there was also strong support for many other activities, including cricket skateboarding, athletics, netball and the martial arts. Overall, 46% of people said they would definitely use new facilities in the village, with 40% saying 'maybe'. Two thirds of those already a member of a club said they should definitely use the facility. Support was strong over the age range, but with less definite users in the over 50 age range. The picture is one of strong interest in sport if it could be made available in a convenient and pleasant location, but with a wide diversity of interests between different sports. Not surprisingly, most people said they would use the facility at evenings and during weekends, with less potential to use it during the day.

2008/9 Parish Plan Survey. At the time of the 2008 survey, funding applications for the new pavilion were beginning to stall and updated survey data were needed to demonstrate public needs and interest. This lessening of optimism probably explains the lower absolute numbers of votes for each sport, but the relative rankings remain similar to the 2003 survey.

The top indoor and outdoor activities identified are shown in the table below.

Outdoor	All	W+F	Indoor	All	W+F
Tennis	140	56	Pilates	95	60
Running	71	34	Badminton	122	58
Football	61	29	Yoga	88	51
Clay Shooting	78	21	Aerobics	74	45
Basketball	49	18	Dancing	82	45
Cricket	52	17	Table tennis	79	31
Netball	45	17	Indoor Bowls	66	23
Athletics	46	15	Ballet	35	12
Hockey	30	11	Boxing	32	11
Skateboard	33	11	Karate	28	10
Mini-rugby	29	11	Judo	23	7
Softball	29	2			

The total of all responses - weekly, fortnightly, monthly or occasionally is shown in the column 'All', while 'W+F' is the number of people who said they would play weekly or fortnightly¹⁴. The latter figures are probably the best indication of whether sufficient interest exists for formation of a club or

¹⁴ The figures are slightly different from those reported in the Survey Report of 29 December 2009, following detailed checking of the data.

regular activity. In addition, some activities (such as aerobics) are more amenable to participation across the age range, while others, such as football, are generally played in teams selected according to age and gender¹⁵.

History of the Sports Pavilion Project

During the period 1998-2010 a large amount of effort was put into developing proposals for a new sports pavilion, taking into account the wishes expressed by residents in the various surveys. Although the project was in the end not able to achieve the level of funding needed to go ahead, some understanding of its history is essential before new plans can be laid for the future.

The existing sport pavilion at the Recreation Ground is old and dilapidated. In December 1996, HUFC brought a proposal to the Parish Council to replace it with a new building, keeping the old one for storage. The Council reviewed the plans and considered the potential to include a wider range of activities, but since the project appeared to be a large one, a decision was deferred pending the results of the Appraisal. By 2000, a decision had been made to replace the pavilion with a new brick building, and there was a proposal to create a Tennis Club with facilities at the Recreation Ground, and plans were drawn up by March 2001. Following planning applications, work started on funding. During 2002, HUFC approached the Football Association to clarify what they could contribute. Later that year, the plans were modified to include eco-friendly features, MUGAs (Multi-User Games Areas) and disabled facilities. The cost at this stage was approaching £350k and by a narrow vote the precept was increased to create a reserve fund. By 2003, grant applications were looking promising, and a Sport & Leisure Association was formed to draw up a management plan. Attempts to find a professional business manager for the project were unsuccessful. The second of two public meetings on the project was held at the end of the year; concerns were raised about the scale/cost of the project. By 2004, SODC had offered a grant, but Sport England and the FA had still not agreed. The latter asked for floodlighting, which involved more cost and another planning application. Parking requirements by SODC further increased costs. By 2006, grant applications had been made to WREN and TOE, but by FA was requiring a more robust development plan from HUFC before considering the application. By now total costs were approaching £700-800k, and by the end of 2008 the FA had rejected the grant application. Further attempts were made with the help of SODC to find funders, but with the failure of an application to Sport England, whose attention was turning more to national scale projects, it became clear that the necessary funds could not be found.

The proposals for a new and larger pavilion were criticised by some as too costly and out of proportion with the needs of the Parish. Nevertheless there was a logic behind the proposals that is still valid if the wishes expressed in the surveys are to be addressed. The project in its final form included several elements:

- A new and improved club house, primarily for football, but also to serve other sports. This would need changing facilities meeting FA requirements to be eligible for funding from them. It would include a lounge/bar area which could potentially be a focal point for community meeting during the day
- Two Multi-User Games Areas, which would be home for the Tennis Club, but also serve for netball, 5-a-side football and practice etc. The surface material inevitably requires some prioritisation. Macadam was chosen, because it is best for tennis, however synthetic turf is best for football
- A practice wall for tennis, football etc practice
- Floodlighting, to provide all-year capability - required for FA funding
- A Sports Hall, essential if new indoor activities identified in the surveys are to be introduced such as aerobics/pilates/yoga, badminton, as well as more social activities such as dance. There is a concept too that the whole complex could be a community centre as well as a sports facility.
- Planning requirements would mean a larger and dedicated parking area to serve the pavilion. The cost could be considerable, although SODC have shown willingness to accept lower cost approaches.

Deletion of any of these elements would mean that some areas of activity could not be supported, so there is a coherence in the proposals as pursued.

¹⁵ See the Survey Report <http://www.easthagbourne.net/village/parishplan.shtml> for more information

Options for the Future

Some opportunities may exist for additional sporting activities using the existing facilities. These need to be reviewed and fully exploited. However, and significant increase in sports provision depends on new or improved facilities.

The chances of a large project such as the proposed pavilion can be funded in the near future seem remote, so an alternative way forward needs to be found. Alternative developments such as a dedicated building for the Pre-School to free space in the existing Village Hall, a new location for the village post office and shop, or a major extension to the Hall have been considered, but each of these would be major projects, requiring more land or an extended village car park, so they would require investment similar to the pavilion project. In the absence of a major project, we need to consider what can be done on a smaller scale.

Some of the activities desired by residents need special facilities that do not currently exist in the Parish, for example, tennis and netball. Others, such as aerobics, could potentially be provided in the Village Hall or Fleet Meadow Community Centre, and already exist not far away in Didcot. Any project for East Hagbourne should take account of the wider developments embodied in SODC's plans for leisure facilities¹⁶. However, the concept of the pavilion was not just functional, but also to provide a focus for community activities.

An initial objective should be to review the available and potential sports and leisure activities in the Parish and develop a strategy for what is appropriate locally, and what can be provided by SODC and others in the wider community. In doing this, we should take into account the activities already provided and consider how they could be extended.

In terms of facilities, the Village Hall has just undergone a small extension which will improve its functionality, and the School is continuing improvements to the swimming pool area and making it more available for public use. The area where major work is essential is the existing football pavilion at Great Mead, which is very dilapidated and in need of improvement. A careful survey is needed, but repairing the existing building is probably only a short term option, and some sort of replacement will eventually be needed. The current state of the changing rooms in particular is poor and a disincentive to greater use of the facility. Rebuilding on the current footprint would save costs, particularly if a cheaper modular building were selected, but not everyone is convinced that this will provide a quality appearance. Whatever solution is chosen, even this smaller project would be costly, and not easy to fund. The new pavilion should be designed in such a way that it can integrate with a larger sports hall if the ambition remains to build one at a future date.

- *Review the available sports and leisure activities inside and outside the Parish and compare with the wishes expressed by residents in the surveys*
- *Develop a strategy that meshes with SODC's wider plans and identify the target activities within the Parish*
- *Action those activities that can be achieved with existing facilities*
- *Survey the existing pavilion at Great Mead and develop an affordable plan to renovate or replace the existing pavilion, taking into account the available funding resources.*

¹⁶ Leisure Facilities Strategy Consultation, October 2010.
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning/policy/evidence-core-strategy/leisure-facilities-strategy.en>

4.11 Shops and Services

The Village Shop and Post Office

Like many communities, East Hagbourne has seen the number of shops and services dwindle over the years, and by 2001 the last commercial shop closed its doors, leaving the local Post office without a home. However, all was not lost, and an enthusiastic group of villagers got together to rent a room which now houses a surprising range of products in a rather small area. We have food, sweets, ice cream, stationary, greeting cards, a laundry service and of course the Post Office, which survived the recent cuts.

The shop provides a valuable village amenity, providing products of convenience, quality and value, and is entirely self-supporting. All this is thanks to the volunteers who run the shop as a service to, and meeting place for, our community and those that surround us.



Postmaster Terry Clarke at the Village Post Office and Shop

The survey questionnaire asked 'What suggestions do you have to improve the service provided by the Post Office and Village Shop?' The responses show that there is great support for the village shop and Post Office.

61 comments asked for a greater range of goods and services in the shop and Post Office.

- 17 comments asked for newspapers and magazines to be available, while a similar number called for more fresh food and bread to be available.
- Some asked for cigarettes and alcohol to be available. 8 respondents would also like the Post Office to offer a wider range of services including car tax renewal.

The second category of 26 comments related to opening times, with 20 people requesting earlier/late opening, even on a few nights a week. 10 people said that reversing out onto the road is dangerous.

The location of the current shop is clearly a limiting factor because of its size. On the other hand, its central location does make it convenient, and there are few locations in the village where better parking arrangements could be provided. In spite of the limitations, the shop does provide remarkable value – often competitive with local supermarkets, and carries a surprisingly wide range of products. As well as the usual grocery supplies, items of local interest are available including postcards and prints of local scenes and local eggs, honey and summer garden produce are sold.

An even wider range of products would clearly be a benefit, however the size of the premises and the turnover currently prevent major changes; fresh produce needs some assurance that it will be sold, since margins are deliberately kept low to provide good value to the community, and a wide range of magazines would need to be stocked to attract meaningful sales. The decision not to stock tobacco or alcohol is based both on practical reasons of space, and the fact that this would be an additional responsibility for the volunteer staff. There needs to be a balance between what can be stocked in a

small shop and what is better handled by the larger Didcot shops – for now, the balance seems about right.

In terms of encouraging more use, 6 people suggested more publicity for the shop, also that increased facilities, such as the ability to pick up the Parish Magazine (this service is already offered) could increase footfall. The shop certainly seems to be appreciated by out-of-village people passing by, and more publicity is certainly merited. While the aim of the shop is to provide good value for customers, it also provides opportunities to contribute, through serving in the shop, donating books or produce for resale, or just being a regular customer. With the right sharing attitude there is no reason why the shop should not continue to be a success far into the future.

The Post Office also enjoys good support, and at times can be very busy: some customers for the shop are primarily motivated by a visit to the Post Office facilities first. It is not unusual for customers to arrive in the afternoon, unaware that the Post Office is open only on Monday and Thursday afternoons as well as each morning Monday-Saturday. Fortunately, shop volunteers are able to advise on postage rates and sell stamps, which answers many customers' needs.

The Post Office, like many public services, is undergoing great change, and the range of services that can be offered is changing. Use of the internet for tasks such as car tax renewal is increasing, and the ability of the post office to offer certain services may be restricted. Having said that, the Post Office is constantly looking at new ways of serving its customers, and can supply foreign currency, award winning holiday insurance, home phone services and numerous investment opportunities.

Potential Actions:

- *Consider opportunities to move to larger premises should they arise*

Other Actions are covered by the routine operations of the shop

- *Consider where new products or services can be added within the current space and volunteer capabilities*
- *Encourage more volunteers*
- *Encourage local people to use the shop; better publicity, explain the role of the shop as a community service where everyone can contribute in some way.*

The Garage

Situated in New Road on the same site as the Village Shop, the garage no longer sells petrol, but offers servicing on all makes of cars, MOT's, diagnostic equipment, tyres and exhausts, vehicle recovery, as well as a small number of vehicles for sale. The garage also offers a local free collection and delivery service and courtesy cars are available.

The Fleur-de-Lys Public House

At one time East Hagbourne boasted six public houses, but today the Fleur de Lys is the only one still open. The pub originates from the 17th century when it was rebuilt following the great fire of Hagbourne. The restaurant can cater for parties of up to 40 people, and there is also a comfortable bar area, a quiet bar garden and ample car parking. The pub offers traditional pub food at lunchtime and in the evenings and a snack menu at lunchtime, and can cater for business functions etc. The pub serves both village and outside clients, being the nearest 'country-style' pub for those walking out from Didcot. Special events are organised periodically, and it is also the home for two monthly music nights, as well as Aunt Sally and darts teams.

Bus Service

A bus service operates at approximately hourly intervals between East Hagbourne, via Sandringham Road, to the Orchard Centre and Didcot Parkway rail station. The service also provides a direct (if sometime circuitous) link with the villages of Blewbury, Upton, West Hagbourne, Aston Tirrold and the Moretons. Didcot itself provides bus connections to many local destinations, while there are excellent train connections further afield.

A survey of bus user needs was carried out in 2007 and completed by 156 individuals. The survey highlighted the main issues as timing and reliability, and connections with other buses and trains. Village representatives participated in the discussions on renewal of the contract in 2008, and the new service, with smart modern buses, has proved to be reliable and keep good time. Frequency, at about

one per hour, is probably optimal given the number of passengers. Connections with ongoing services remains an issue in some cases, but the large number of connections possible makes a perfect solution difficult to find. Passengers can be assured though, that the services are now almost always on time.

- *Encourage more people to use the bus so we do not lose it!*

Other Services

A number of smaller businesses operate in East Hagbourne and the surrounding areas. A glance at any issue of the Parish magazine will show over 40 small advertisements offering services from bed and breakfast to musical tuition.

5. Action Plan

This summary action plan follows the format recommended by ORCC, and categorises topics under headings according to whether they can be addressed by the community, need to involvement of local service providers (such as SODC, OCC), or whether they are strategic or planning issues. Within each topic, items are sub-divided into social, environment, transport and economic issues. This categorisation helps district and regional authorities to collate information in the same format from many communities¹⁷.

Progress of the plan depends on the enthusiasm and willingness of people to participate.

4.1 Urban Development

Category: Strategic/Environment

Monitoring: Parish Council to take lead and review progress at monthly Parish Council meetings. Communicate with community on a regular basis, with progress update at Annual Parish Meeting.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Input to regional plans to protect the interests of East Hagbourne	Parish Council take the lead, with input from community	High	Immediate and ongoing	Parish Council, expert community members. Partner with SODC, OCC including our elected representative	High in terms of people time and knowledge required
2. Keep community informed of developments	Web site, Parish Magazine, PC minutes, APM	Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council	Moderate. Requires issues to be condensed to the right level of detail.

¹⁷ An impact/sustainability assessment is also recommended - example not too clear - talk to ORCC first.

4.2 Communications

Category: Community/Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with working groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Encourage more people to subscribe to the Parish Magazine	(a) Free promotional issue	High	Jan 2011	Parish Council with St Andrews publication team	Additional costs to be borne by Parish Council Volunteers needed for production and distribution.
2. Continue improving the web-site, in terms of accessibility and content	(a) Improved web 'engine' to facilitate information upload (b) Ensure information on village activities is more complete	Medium Medium	1 year/ ongoing	Web Management Group with specialist supplier Web Management Group with input from community	Modest management fee per annum expected. Additional work to upload information regularly
3. Improve information on Parish Council projects and strategies, and on regional developments affecting East Hagbourne	(a) prepare brief statements of key projects Parish Council strategies (b) Prepare summaries of key regional developments that will impact East Hagbourne (c) Publicise this information through the web site, email circulation and parish magazine as appropriate	Medium High High	1 year	Parish Council Parish Council with help from local authorities Parish Council and Web Management Team	Additional work load for existing volunteers.
4. Community involvement	Publicise these activities through an open meeting. Get feedback from residents on what they want to see/receive. Try to involve all the community	High	next APM	Parish Council leads, but we need expert help and perhaps a community communications group to reach those who do not participate at present.	Needs additional manpower beyond the current team

4.3 Road Safety

Category: Strategic/Transport

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with steering groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Note: Safety concerns related to footpaths and road pavements are addressed in Section 4.4, Footpaths

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Prepare a plan to address concerns raised on traffic including: – Main Road – New Road especially near the shop/PO – Lower Cross junction	Form a small Working Group on Road Safety of Parish Council and other members to further develop workable plans	High	1 month	Parish Council lead, liaison with OCC and Police	-
2. Develop a plan and present to the full Parish Council for approval	– Review existing information, and generate more or different data as needed – develop proposals, categorising into those we can do ourselves, those requiring OCC help and those which are longer term	High	6 months	Working group, liaison with OCC and Police	Mainly people power, but some further data gathering may be needed
3. Arrange consultation with the whole community on the conclusions and suggested priorities.	Written/electronic communication to the whole community. Open meeting to solicit comment and agreement for the plans	High	3 months	Parish Council, include partners as appropriate	Moderate
4. Approach the relevant authorities to agree plans, and schedule any expenditure	Refine plan on the basis of public consultation, set up meeting with partners, agree practicalities and schedule implementation	High	6 months	Parish Council lead, OCC, involve District/county Councillors as needed	Moderate
5. Implement plans	Identify what PC can do alone, what needs support, schedule accordingly.	High	Varies	Parish Council, OCC and other partners	Significant

4.4 Footpaths

Category: Community/Service Providers: Environment

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with steering groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Note: Where concerns are related to safety, they will be handled by the Working Group on Road Safety (see Section 4.3)

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Improve surface of FP4 (Butts Piece) and FP8 (Baker's Lane to The Croft)	Use gravel or bark to prevent surface becoming muddy in winter	Medium	6 months	Parish Council, liaison with OCC	Moderate
2. Monitor and maintain existing footpath network	Feedback from residents on path conditions. Ensure landowners cut back hedges	Low	Ongoing	Parish Council, Landowners	Low. Some expenditure may be needed where surfaces need improvement
3. Ensure roadside pavements are kept clear	Ensure hedges are cut back effectively and regularly. Tackle inconsiderate parking	Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council, local residents	Low
4. Evaluate and implement a new footpath along south side of Main Road from the school to the Sustrans route	Project looks feasible in principle. More detailed study is needed to define methods, cost and funding sources.	High	18 months	Parish Council, landowner, OCC, Sustrans	Medium. Capital cost could be significant. Seek contributions from OCC, Parish Council
5. Improve safety of road crossing from school to Upper Cross	Explore effective ways of alerting motorists to the likely presence of pedestrians and slowing traffic	High	1 year	Parish Council WG on Road Safety, OCC	Moderate. Likely solutions to involve road marking or signing
6. Improve safety for pedestrians at Lower Cross and Great Mead/New Road	Discussion with OCC on effective measures, neighbours on hedge cutting and with Police on enforcement if needed.	High	2 years	Parish Council WG on Road Safety, OCC, Police, neighbours	Unclear, could be significant if road changes or pedestrian crossing recommended
7. Promote safe and considerate use of rights of way by all users	Clarify rights of way on Sustrans track. Develop a code of conduct. Promote with item 8	Medium	2 years	Parish Council, Footpaths Officer, form an advice group of all ROW users	Low
8. Prepare a new map of footpaths and Rights of Way for the Parish and surroundings	Ensure knowledge base is complete. Commission a new and attractive map/explanation.	Medium	2 years	Set up Working Group of local residents	Moderate expenses to be met by the Parish Council, with outside support if available.

4.5 Anti-social Behaviour

Category: Community/Service Providers: Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with steering groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Maintain and strengthen efforts to keep the parish neat and reduce litter	Encourage everyone to play their part. Maintain the annual Litter Pick	Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council and whole community	Low
2. Build better links with young people to discourage anti-social behaviour	More focus on the needs of young people in village planning. Maintain links with local schools. Through Police to reach those driving through the parish.	Medium	1 year	Parish Council. Support /advice from SODC, OCC, Police. Consider appointing a young people's champion for the Parish	Low
3. Maintain crime and anti-social behaviour at a low level through awareness and enforcement	Maintain, support and strengthen local Neighbourhood Watch activities and links with the local Police. Encourage everyone to be alert and report problems.	Medium	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Watch Group. Support from Parish Council, Police and community	Low

4.6 Dog Fouling

Category: Community: Environment

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with steering groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Continue education and monitoring activities	Form a team including local dog owners to advise what is needed, encourage good behaviour and report abuse	Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council: Dog Team to be drawn fro the general community	Low
2. Keep abreast of related activities elsewhere	Newspapers, web sites, Police liaison	Medium	Ongoing	Dog Team	Low
3. Develop lively education/communication themes	New posters, personal contacts, new ideas	Medium	Ongoing	Dog Team	Low
4. Maintain links with local schools and encourage their support	Ask the children for their ideas	Medium	Ongoing	Dog Team	Low

4.7 Sustainability and Environment

Category: Community/Environment

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting, and in conjunction with working groups at monthly Parish Council meetings.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Stimulate interest in sustainability and environmental issues, and gauge interest for community activities	Small task force to disseminate information, hold open day/workshop to discuss all aspects of sustainability	High	1 year	Small group to champion the cause, support from PC, information from ORCC and others, invite specialist speakers.	Moderate, costs of open day/workshop from PC funds.
2. Involve young people in the activities	Make this an objective of the workshop, liaise with school			Group of Champions	Low
3. Reactivate Hagbourne Environment Group as a focus for biodiversity	Use Butt's Piece wildlife area as a stimulus to draw in volunteers	High	1 year	Hagbourne Environment Group	Moderate. Mostly volunteer work, but PC has committed funds to cover foreseen expenditure.
4. Promote local food	Leverage existing activities such as the Produce Show, Allotments, Village Shop, local food producers and sellers.	Medium	2 years	Group of Champions	Low, mainly co-ordination and awareness raising
5. Prepare a conservation statement and plan for the Parish, to identify what we value and how we want to improve	Identify those aspects of the Parish that we value for their natural, wildlife or human values, and what we need to do to protect them	High	2 years	Parish Council champion and support, input from Champions and other knowledgeable people	Moderate, but mainly people effort.
6. Ensure that waterways and drains are properly maintained to minimise the risk of future flooding	Develop and grow the local Flood Action Group. Maintain liaison with authorities press for ongoing improvements.	High	1 year + ongoing	Parish Council holds end responsibility. Set up Flood Group to report to PC. Work with SODC, OCC, EA	High. Major works should be funded by SODC/OCC with support from EA. Local efforts by volunteers.
7. Ensure whole community is aware of and can participate in social activities	Through actions in 4.2 for current activities and 4.10 for new ones	See Sections 4.2 and 4.10			

4.8 Education and Young People

Category: Community/Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Build a dialogue with young people to understand their needs and wishes for future activities	Create an informal Task Force, to solicit input and formulate plans	Medium	1 year	Task Force of interested people drawn from Church, School, general community	Low

4.9 Church and Community

Category: Community/Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Preserve and enhance East Hagbourne's archives	Form small group of history enthusiasts to make recommendations	Medium	Ongoing	Support informal meetings being led by West Hagbourne Village history Group	Low/moderate
2. Follow-up interests expressed in the 2008 Survey	Solicit interest in theatre/cinema trips, photography, bridge, chess, 'Golden Age' club etc	Medium	ongoing	Encourage local groups/individuals to set up activities. Perhaps needs a community champion. PC to support	Low
3. Ensure community aspects are fully included in sports discussions	See Section 4.10				

4.10 Sports Facilities

Category: Community/Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Review and identify sports and social activities that can be accomplished with the existing facilities	Through discussion with interested members of the community, including representatives of all current and potential future sports clubs and community groups, service providers and potential funders.	High	6 months	Parish Council responsible for overall co-ordination. Partners include Village Hall, sports clubs, members of community. Consultation should include schools, church. Advice of service providers and potential funders to be sought: SODC, WREN, FA and others	Low
2. Define priorities for new or refurbished facilities within East Hagbourne		High	9 months		Low
3. Ensure that general community activities and the desire for a 'focal point' are included in this review		High	ongoing		Low
4. Develop a plan that is proportionate and affordable		High	18 months		Moderate, may involve more detailed plans
5. Source funding and implement plan		Medium	3-5 years		Very High

4.11 Shops and Services

Category: Community/Social

Monitoring: Parish Council to review progress each year through the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timing	Responsibility (Lead and partners)	Resource implications
1. Review the possibility of larger premises for the shop and Post Office	Consider this aspect as development of sports facilities is progressed	See Section 4.10			

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