

Fritwell Parish Plan

December 2008

What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is an opportunity for the community to voice its opinions on what actions they wish to be taken in their local area in order to improve village life in the future. It is an information gathering process, whereby the views of our community are sort out through a series of events and consultations, analysed to identify priorities and finally, through consultation with interested individuals, councillors and local authorities, put together as a plan of action on which the Parish Council can base its actions, and funding.

How did it start?

The Parish Council decided that in order to best serve its community it needed to know what people's views were on "life in Fritwell". As funding was being made available through both national and local initiatives to help Parish Councils have a better understanding of the community it served, it was

decided to embark on developing a Parish Plan.

How did we get peoples' views and ideas?

After an initial application, funding was obtained, and a little over 12 months ago the Parish Plan process began. Following a wine and nibbles evening, initial areas of concern or interest were identified through a Post-It work shop, as well as the development of a working party to carry the process through. The summer brought with it a free village social event with folk music, country dancing, giant inflatable, bar and bbq. The weather was especially kind and a wonderful afternoon was had by all as well as the gathering of ideas on graffiti walls, picture Post-Its, and comments boards. With plenty of ideas now on board the working party felt it needed to quantify the information it had, so much work was put into developing, piloting and finally delivering and collecting a questionnaire.

What did we do with the information?

Once we collected the information, members of the working party set to inputting all of the ideas into a spreadsheet to help us formalise people's opinions on all the areas that had been identified through our initial events. These fell into the following categories, Housing, Traffic, Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycling, Environment, Crime Prevention. Armed with this information it now felt ready to begin creating the Parish Plan. The working party and the Parish Council then held a number of discussions at Parish Council meetings, which were attended by interested members of the community and relevant local councillors or district or county officers. The input from these meetings and the information from the questionnaire, has enabled us to formulate an action plan. These ideas have been approved by the Parish Council and now form Fritwell's Parish Plan.

The Parish

Fritwell is an inverted L-shaped village close to the M40. It probably owes its shape to the fact that there were, in Saxon times, two separate settlements both of which had their own manor house and were divided from each other by fields. The church was built in the eleventh century between the two settlements.

Fritwell today is a thriving community in spite of its proximity to the motorway and therefore easy access to both Birmingham and London. This could have led to its being a dormitory village but fortunately this is not the case.

There are two places of worship in the village - St Olave's Church, which has been much altered over the years but remains the focus for

Anglican worship and the Wesleyan Reform Methodist Chapel which recently celebrated its centenary.

There has been a Church of England Primary School in Fritwell since 1872 and today it is a thriving, successful school which recently received an excellent Ofsted report. The school has been extended a number of times and now includes new classrooms, an IT suite and an Early Years Unit. The village is also fortunate to have a post office and shop, two pubs, a Village Hall for community and private events and a playing field with a young children's play area, a multi-sports area and equipment for older children.

The Village Hall and the Playing Field are registered charitable trusts and are run by separate

Committees which take on the responsibility for these facilities. There are organisations catering for all ages and groups, ranging from a Toddlers group for the very young to Fritwell Forget Me Not Club for the senior citizens of the village. In between there are Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, a Youth Club, a Football Club and an angling club. In addition there are many and varied events organised throughout the year by the village organisations for anyone who cares to join in. Examples of these are Quiz Nights, Race Nights, Bingo, Wine Tasting and Live and Local performances. Fritwell is very fortunate to have sufficient committed individuals who are prepared to give their time for the benefit of the whole community.

Housing

Fritwell has undergone a lot of development in recent years and has increased its size significantly. Although just under a quarter of responses felt that the village had benefitted from new housing 69% felt that there should be no further housing development.

Fritwell remains a potential site for future development and if there were to be further housing in the village, 65% felt that it should not extend beyond the present village boundary and that developments should be of a small scale and be either private or county council infill.

It was also strongly felt that any future development should be in keeping with an Oxfordshire Village. 89% of responses felt that any future development should be of an agreed style in keeping with the rest of the village.



THE ISSUE

The majority of responses indicated that villagers oppose further housing being built, with 69% wishing to see no further development If more housing were to be developed, then the preferences were:

65% did not wish to extend the village boundary

46% preferred development on County Council Land

42% preferred private infill land

Action

- To monitor closely development of Cherwell District Council Local Development Framework through attendance at workshops for parishes ☐
- To pursue Village Green Application to prevent possible building on the central field ☐
- To inform landowners/potential developers of results of survey ☐

Who

- Parish Council
- Fritwell Open Spaces Action Group

Status

- Chair of Parish Council and Clerk have attended several parish workshops on LDF to promote Fritwell's stance on development
- Sept 2008 'Options for Growth' consultation completed.
- June 2008 objection to Village Green Registration received.
- Inquiry week beginning 11 May 2009 in village hall

Timescale

- Ongoing

THE ISSUE

If further housing were to be developed in Fritwell then 89% of villagers preferred that they should be built to an agreed style in keeping with an Oxfordshire Village.

Action

- To develop a Design Statement based on the recommendations in the Conservation Area Appraisal ☐
- To formalise this document by getting agreement from Cherwell District Council so that it becomes part of the planning criteria ☐

Who

- Parish Council
- Any interested parties wishing to form a working party
- Cherwell District Council Planning Officers

Status

- Chair and Clerk of Parish Council attended workshop on design in villages, May 2008

Timescale

- Initial discussions begin September 2008
- Completed Design Statement by March 2009

Environment

The purpose of this section of the questionnaire was to find out what were our feelings regarding how well we cared for the physical environment of Fritwell and if there were any aspects of this that could be improved upon. The data for this analysis is based upon the return of 120 Questionnaires that were collected in April 2007.

Most people felt that the overall appearance of the village is good and seemed happy with the level of maintenance regarding the verges and the village green. Others commented positively on the recent improvements to the village pond. There were some areas however, where people felt improvements could be made.

59% of Villagers thought that Fritwell has a dog mess problem and suggested that dog bins be provided along Church Lane, at the Top of Forge Place and North Street by the Pond to help combat this problem.

In response to the amount of street furniture available, 71% of villagers felt that the street furniture was adequate and well maintained. Some commented on some of the signage being a little shabby or in need of a coat of paint, with 31% commenting on the poor state of the bus stops in particular.

Although overall the feeling was that the village was quite tidy, 44% felt there should be more litter bins and requested the bins to be provided at the Shop, along North Street and at the top of Forge Place. There were also comments that the bins need to be emptied more regularly.

With regard to footpaths, the

majority of responses indicated that they were well signposted but only just over half felt that they had good access. 54% felt that they were not well maintained and the majority of comments cited the need for improvements to

Church Lane in particular. Although the majority of those who responded felt that there wasn't a need for cycle paths throughout the village, 63% said that they would use a cycle path between Fritwell and Ardley.

THE ISSUE

59% of Villagers think that Fritwell has a dog mess problem

The preferred locations for dog bins are: Church Lane, Top of Forge Place and North Street by the Pond

Action	■ To provide more dog bins in the suggested locations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	■ Ask local dog warden to provide signage displaying fines for fouling <input type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council
Status	■ Dog bins have been provided by the pond in North Street and there are plans to place a second bin at the top of Church Lane.
Timescale	■ December 2008

THE ISSUE

71% of villagers felt that the street furniture was adequate and well maintained. 31% felt that the bus stops could be improved with seating and signage. 44% felt that there should be more litter bins-outside shop, North Street, Forge Place

Action	■ To improve bus shelter on East Street and provide benching <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	■ To provide bus stop sign at the top of Forge Place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	■ To provide more litter bins throughout village <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council
Status	■ The bus shelter on East Street has had the roof repaired and been painted. It also has a new bench, and contains the village mosaic celebrating 1000 years of Oxfordshire (funding from Parish Council and Cherwell Arts grant)
	■ Timetables have been placed on all existing bus stops
	■ The bus stop sign in North Street has been moved to the top of Mays Close near to the bench
	■ A new bus stop sign in the same style as the existing bus stops will be in Forge Place
	■ The original bus stop sign in East Street will be painted
	■ Litter bins have been placed half way down Church Lane and the top of Mays Close
Timescale	■ October 2008



Traffic and Transport

The questionnaire asked people to rank in order of importance, how they felt about public transport, the need for traffic calming, and the issue of parking. Looking at the number of responses who ranked the issues as very important and important, public transport ranked the highest with 74 counts, traffic calming received 68 counts and parking received 56 counts.

In response to the question on traffic calming, 80% of those who responded to the questionnaire felt that there should be measures taken to address the issue of speeding. It was also apparent from the analysis of the crime data that some residents *most feared crime*, is being hit by a speeding car. With regard to how we address this issue, 81% feel those measures taken at the entry points of the village would be beneficial whereas only 54% felt they wished to see measures introduced on the roads around the village.

When looking at the issue of public transport 90% of the returns felt that there was a need for better transport links to the local towns. The links to Bicester are the preferred option with 64 responses compared to 44 responses requesting better links to Banbury. The preferences show that 37% would like to see more buses during rush hour, 38% would prefer a better shopping service and 25% would like to see an evening service.

Parking was also a concern, 68% of those who responded felt that there should be more off road parking available, but only 31% of responses indicated that they would be prepared to park away from their property. Those people who made suggestions for areas in which more parking should be made available suggested: in East Street; in Forge Place; near the school; use the Village Hall and Playing Field; make more lay-bys in verges; and encourage those with driveways to use them.

THE ISSUE – SPEEDING

80% of villagers were concerned about speeding cars and felt that measures should be taken to address this. 10% of villagers cited being hit by a speeding car as their most feared crime. 81% wanted traffic calming measures at village entry points. 54% wished traffic calming to be introduced throughout the village

Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To implement traffic calming measures at the entry points of the village <input type="checkbox"/>■ To be involved with the revision of the school travel plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ County Council Highways Department■ Parish Council
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Public meeting has already been held with invited guest Ralph Grant from County Highways to discuss best options for Fritwell■ Parish Council has already joined Cherwell initiative to install three points where flashing speed signs can be fixed to. Signs on a rotation basis from Cherwell District Council■ Parish Councillor member of Neighbourhood Action Group where priority concern is traffic calming■ Precept raised to cover cost of measures
Timescale	■ 2010

THE ISSUE – TRANSPORT

90% of villagers felt there needed to be better public transport links to the local towns. Better links to Bicester was the preferred option. 37% wanted more buses during rush hour 38% wanted a better shopping service. 25% wanted and evening service

Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Contact local bus services to discuss possibility of extra services <input type="checkbox"/>■ Work with other villages to provide extra services <input type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council
Status	■ Parish council involved in Public Transport Reviews
Timescale	■ Ongoing

THE ISSUE – PAVEMENTS

69% felt there should be more pavement provision in the village The preference for more pavements was in North Street rather than East Street

Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Contact County Highways about provision of pavements in North Street <input type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council
Status	■ In negotiation with County Council.
Timescale	■ 2012

THE ISSUE – FOOTPATHS

The majority felt that the footpaths were well signposted. 54% felt that they were not well maintained, and 48% felt that they were not easily accessible. The majority of comments were regarding the poor condition of Church Lane

- Action**
- To access condition of all footpaths with regards to accessibility and good repair and develop timetable for improvements ☒
 - To apply for grants where possible to improve access ☒
 - To improve Church Lane ☒
 - Map of village footpaths to be made available on Parish Website. ☐
- Who**
- Parish Council
- Status**
- Church Lane has been levelled and resurfaced. The majority of the cost was funded by a grant, with the Parish Council funding the remainder
 - The bridge crossing the stream in the central field has been replaced by Cherwell District Council
 - The stile on footpath to the motorway was replaced by a gate
 - Troy Farm path cleared
 - Volunteer help group set up to monitor the condition of footpaths and report to Parish Council.
- Timescale** ■ Ongoing

THE ISSUE – CYCLING

The majority of villagers felt there wasn't a need for cycle paths throughout the village. However 63%, said that they would use a cycle path between Fritwell and Ardley

- Action**
- To contact County Highways about possibility of providing a cycle path to Ardley. ☒
 - To contact Ardley Parish Council to see if we could work together on this. ☒
 - Investigate possible grants from TOE. ☒
 - To work with Fritwell Primary school to see if cycle path could be included in revised school travel plan. ☐
- Who**
- Parish Council
 - Action Group
- Status**
- The idea has been included in Cherwell's draft recreation plan
 - Ardley PC has been contacted, along with Affect/Entrust
 - TOE Trust for Oxfordshire Environment have agreed it would be a project that they could help fund.
 - Oxfordshire County Council have indicated that they would not support this project as there is not enough demand for its use.
- Timescale** ■ 2012



Crime and Community Safety

The Questionnaire highlighted that in a given period of 12 months, 76% of people who responded had not suffered any crime, compared with 18% of villagers who had. The actual crime figures for the same period were 35 reported crimes, 13 more than highlighted by our data. However, out of these, 6 were related to a domestic situation at one dwelling.

Although we don't have a real problem with anti-social behaviour, there is an issue with vandalism within the village as this is the most reported crime type. The most feared crime however is that of burglary or theft with 42% of the responses. 10% of those who responded were concerned about being hit by speeding cars, 4% were worried about vandalism and 23% had no fear of crime in the village.

THE ISSUE – CRIME PREVENTION

The perception of crime in Fritwell was quite high, yet only 18% had suffered from some crime. The most feared crime was burglary or theft at 42%

Action	■ Constant liaison with local police representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	■ To have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in place by the end of 2008	<input type="checkbox"/>
	■ Inform/warn residents via newsletter and website of crime prevention measures and local crimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council	
	■ Police	
	■ Neighbourhood Action group?	
Status	■ Parish Council has invited PC Caroline Brown to attend several PC meetings, where she stressed the importance of the community reporting crime or unusual behaviour.	
	■ PC Caroline Brown will be attending village events to try and encourage people to sign up to a neighbourhood watch scheme.	
	■ PC Caroline Brown contributes to newsletter	
	■ Jayne Gibson Harris has agreed to liaise with Mrs Tonks the Crime Prevention person to try and get the scheme started	
Timescale	■ Ongoing	

THE ISSUE – POOR LIGHTING

The majority of villagers feel safe in our community, 67% of us are not afraid to go out after dark. Of the 34% who were concerned, only a third of these said it was because of intimidation, the majority were concerned about poor lighting and uneven pathways.

Action	■ To investigate the possibility of more lighting, particularly in Forge Place, where there was most concern-door to door need assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	■ To inform County Highways immediately of any broken street lights	<input type="checkbox"/>
	■ To review the condition of footpaths and pavements throughout the village	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	■ Contact local landowners re keeping footpaths clear and easily identifiable	<input type="checkbox"/>
	■ Encourage home owners to maintain hedges bordering pavements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who	■ Parish Council	
	■ Highways	
	■ Local landowners and home owners	
Status	■ Improvements have already been made to Church Lane Footpath	
	■ Improvements to pavements in Forge Place have been carried out.	
Timescale	■ 2010	

THE ISSUE – BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

The biggest crime type in Fritwell is vandalism

11% of our community feel intimidated by young people

Action

- To develop facilities at the Playing Field and support the Youth Club to provide young people with something to do. ☒
- Create opportunities for age groups to mix- ask the school, youth club, Scouts to organise events for older members of the community to e.g. Concert etc. ☐
- To have regular community days that try to appeal to all ages ☐

Who

- Parish Council
- All Village organisations

Status

- The Playing Field has obtained just over £50,000 in grant money to install the Youth Area at the Playing Field
- The Playing Field has just obtained £36,000 to make improvements to the small children's play area and car park
- The Playing Field and the Football Club are working together to try and develop Youth Football.
- The Playing Field has secured extra land to develop sports pitches.
- The Parish Council has provided the Youth Club with a small grant to help cover their running costs

Timescale

- Ongoing

Although the majority of us feel safe, there are some members of our community who felt intimidated by some of the youths in the village. 67 % of villagers were not afraid to go out anywhere in the village after dark and of the 34% who said they wouldn't go to certain areas after dark, only a third of these responses expressed that they felt unsafe or intimidated. The rest were concerned by poor lighting or uneven pathways.

Most of us didn't know who our community police person was and 79% of us felt that we needed more police presence in the village.



What You Think of Our Village

"Friendly community atmosphere"

"Threat of future development"

"We have a post office, butcher, pub, shop and school, we are lucky to have these"

"Motorway noise!"

"Speeding traffic"

"Well kept"

"Lack of cohesion between organisations - politics!"

"Fritwell is special and we all have a responsibility to manage our village and its legacy with care – the future is what we make it"



Fritwell Parish Council would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Parish Plan and will endeavour to carry out the wishes of our community.



The Parish Plan is available at www.fritwell.org

