



An Action Plan for Harwell

Over the last 18 months, Harwell has been producing a Parish Plan. Many people have contributed to this; in particular everyone aged 11 and over was invited to fill in a questionnaire. We can now summarise the outcome in this short Action Plan. It shows how the results of the Parish Plan should be taken forward, by whom and on what timescales.

There are two parts to this Action Plan. The first covers policies that provide guidelines for approaching important issues. The second covers a list of specific projects that are proposed as a result of the deliberations that have led to the Parish Plan.

If you would like to see a full copy of the Report on the Parish Plan, it is available in Didcot Library. Alternatively, you can contact the Clerk to the Harwell Parish Council (see back page). The Plan has been produced by volunteers working independently of the Parish Council, but the 'ownership' of the Plan rests with the Parish Council, which has endorsed this Action Plan.

MAY 2003



POLICIES

Retaining the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish

People in Harwell Parish remain seriously concerned about the impact of any westward expansion of Didcot on the character of the village and on the density of traffic through the village. If Didcot has to expand, the north-easterly direction should have been chosen, but as it has not, the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish must be maintained by ensuring that:

- The gap between the boundary of the western edge of Didcot and the last bungalow on the west side of the A34 is at least 1 km.
- The western edge of any new development comprises green space that is in character with the surrounding countryside and maintains access to the countryside for residents of the parish.
- Where the parish boundary is within any new development it must be a clear boundary and capable of being walked as a pathway.
- The developers provide the funding for a means of relieving through traffic from the main village roads.

Housing

The parish supports existing principles governing the development of new housing, currently embodied in Policy H15 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan published in 1999. This includes the following wording:

'Within the villages listed below (which includes Harwell) new housing on sites not allocated under Policy H2 (which covers sites proposed for development, none of which are in Harwell Parish) will be limited to infilling and minor development or redevelopment, the scale, density and layout of which is compatible with the size, form and character of the village.'

Development will only be permitted where:

- a. It is in the main built-up area of the village, or*
- b. In villages outside the green belt, it forms a natural completion of the existing pattern of development on a small site which is visually contained by well established, strong physical features that clearly form an integral part of the settlement.'*

In practical terms this has meant that planning permission for new buildings in Harwell has been allowed only in the existing built-up area of the village.

There is not seen to be a need to change this general position. However, the consultations and discussions suggest that there is a need for some new smaller and more 'affordable' dwellings within Harwell Parish.

The Plan therefore proposes that the Vale of White Horse District Council policy be supplemented by a parish policy that:

- Gives priority in building new houses to small-to-medium sized homes, with some for rent/purchase under conditions that would make them affordable for first-time buyers or people who wish to rent.
- Ensures that some of this type of accommodation is especially suitable for people with disabilities living independently e.g. ground floor flats with easy access, preferably as part of a further group of sheltered housing in the Parish (to augment the facilities of Cherry Tree Court).

Shops

The shops in the main village (newsagents/general stores, butchers with Post Office, hairdressers) are the amenities regarded as the most important by the people of Harwell.

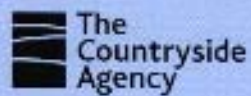
- The parish will do everything possible to optimise the maintenance and commercial viability of the shops.

PROJECTS

Project	Timetable	Responsibility
HOUSING Quantify the need for smaller homes in the 'affordable' category, including some sheltered accommodation and/or flats suitable for people with disabilities within this type of development, and then seek and discuss sites suitable for meeting the need. The parish will also explore the possibility that its requirements could be met wholly or in part within that section of the expansion of Didcot that would take place within parish land.	1 year for assessment and discussion of sites. 2-4 years for provision	Parish Council, in association with Vale of White Horse District Council and in consultation with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)
SPORTS Seek funding for a new pavilion/sports complex on the recreation ground.	3-4 years	Parish Council (through a working group)
PATHS Audit the state of pavements and kerbs in the parish, with a view to applying pressure on the County Council to make them easier to use by the elderly and by persons with disabilities.	1 year	Parish Council
Press for improvements to existing footpaths and to cycleways, especially to cycleways within the village and to Didcot.	1-2 years	Parish Council
Continue to discuss with landowners the possible creation or clarification of new or permitted footpaths and the possible use of the Countryside Stewardship and Conservation Walks Schemes to create access to areas of the surrounding countryside.	1-2 years	Parish Council, using contacts already established through discussions on the Parish Plan
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT Review the need for measures to make traffic within the village safer and less intrusive, in the light of provision of the pedestrian crossing in the High Street, noting that the next most favoured measure in the questionnaire and other consultations was a 20 mph speed limit.	2 years	Parish Council
Press the developers of Didcot West to fund a scheme for relief of through traffic, once further study has concluded what the best scheme might be. The further study should include an assessment of the effect of possible relief schemes on the village shops.	2 years to establish prospects; scheme by 2010	Parish Council, with input from the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Strategy that is currently underway
Give better publicity to the help available with transport to healthcare facilities, and seek more volunteer drivers from Harwell for existing schemes like the Didcot Volunteer Centre.	6 months	Parish Council Church and other village organisations
Press bus companies for continued improvement in the display of bus timetables.	6 months	Parish Council
DRUGS Address the concern about drug abuse by: giving better publicity to where addicts and their families can access support facilities; supporting better facilities in Didcot, especially as part of the expansion of Didcot; and supporting initiatives to educate children.	6 months for publicity, 2 years for facilities at Didcot	Parish Council Church and other village organisations School
INFORMATION Develop a parish 'world wide web' site, initially to give publicity to clubs, activities and events.	1 year	Parish Council (through a working group)
Relocate the parish noticeboard in the main village to the area by the shops, and duplicate parish notices on the Didcot Road (there is already a noticeboard at Curie Avenue on the Harwell International Business Centre site).	6 months	Parish Council
YOUTH Apply within the Oxfordshire County Council bid to the New Opportunities Fund (Lottery Grant) to set up a formally organised holiday scheme for young people (probably in the age range 8 to 14 years) in Harwell.	Scheme up and running within 2 years	Winterbrook Youth Club (but needs extra management help)
RECYCLING Explore the possibility of Harwell taking part in Oxfordshire's Community Action Project scheme for encouraging the recycling of household waste.	1 year	Parish Council



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If you would like to be involved in any of the proposed projects, please contact the Clerk to Harwell Parish Council,
Mrs Emma Hollister, on 01235 221087 (home) or 01235 820006 (work)

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REPORT ON THE

Harwell Parish Plan

Produced by the Steering Group for the Harwell Parish Plan

MAY 2003

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Written by Tony Hughes
Edited by Bill Jackson, Jane
Woolley and Carol Quarini

Photographs by Hazel Phillips
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Cox Design Partnership,
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Cover photograph:
Aerial view of the village of Harwell from the south
(courtesy of Colin Lamont)

foreword

Foreword

In August 2001 Margaret Turner (District and Parish Councillor) proposed that a Village Appraisal be carried out. A public meeting was called for 20 September of that year to gauge whether there was sufficient interest in Harwell to go ahead. Many people turned out, so a Steering Group was formed and I was appointed as its Chairman. Work has been going on continuously since then to produce the Parish Plan that you see now.

Members of the Steering Group were made leaders of teams that investigated different subject headings. Their research identified the issues that were of most interest to the public and enabled appropriate questions to be developed for the questionnaire, which was a key vehicle for consultation. Over the following 18 months we carried out a traffic survey, circulated the questionnaire to all people in the Parish over the age of 11 and another to the pupils at Harwell School. We set up a stand at the Harwell Feast, we held an exhibition and a feedback meeting in the Village Hall and we appointed a Focus Group to validate and comment on the conclusions that we drew from our consultation and the proposals that were developed from them.

The result is an authoritative statement of what the needs and aspirations of the people of Harwell Parish are and we hope that the Parish Council, the District Council and the County Council will use it as their guide when providing services for us in the years ahead. These bodies routinely carry out consultation of their own, but I am confident that the information to be found in this Parish Plan is the most reliable that can be found anywhere. This is because we consulted everybody in Harwell and because an overwhelming majority of those people (79%) responded to our questionnaire.

I would like to thank everybody who contributed to our work. Special thanks must go to Reg Waite, our Secretary, Jane Woolley, our Treasurer, and Tony Hughes, who wrote the text of this report and drafted the action plan. It is impossible to name everybody who helped, because there are so many of them; but our thanks go to all members of the Steering Group, to the 21 Focus Group members, to the 63 people who trudged round with the questionnaire and retrieved the completed copies and to the 82 people who manned the traffic survey. Our thanks also go to the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council for their advice and help and to the Countryside Agency for their financial support.

The end product is a template for the future of our Parish. Of course much more work will be needed to move forward the projects listed in the Action Plan, but work on some of them is already going ahead. One of the benefits of the work done so far has been to identify sources of funding that were not previously known to us and there is therefore reason to hope that tangible benefits will come about as the result of our work.

Colin Lamont
May 2003

introduction

Introduction: Harwell Past and Present



High Street

In 1985 Harwell celebrated 1000 years as a village. Over that period there have been many changes, but perhaps none so significant as those in the modern era. From its roots as a small village steeped in a rural tradition, the parish of Harwell is home to about 2500 people from many walks of life. Harwell cherries still make their annual succulent appearance, but locally and even around the world the name is now as much, if not more, famous for its association with 'The Atomic': the site of what was the Harwell Laboratory of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), now the Harwell International Business Centre, the home of a diverse range of scientific, technical and commercial activities. Many of the current inhabitants of the parish, however, have no connection with either of these historic claims to fame, and in many respects Harwell at the start of the 21st century is as varied a community as many similar large villages in south eastern England.

Harwell lies 3 miles southwest of the centre of Didcot in what is now Oxfordshire, but which until 1974 was North Berkshire (Figure 1). The Parish – part of the Vale of White Horse District of the county – extends up to the present western edge of Didcot in the east, to just beyond the Didcot–Swindon railway line in the north, to Rowstock in the west and in the south to a part of the Harwell Business Centre site, including residential areas in North Drive and South Drive. The 'village' part of the parish (Figure 2) includes a conservation area and many listed and other old buildings. The older part of the village mainly lies around and to the east of the High Street that

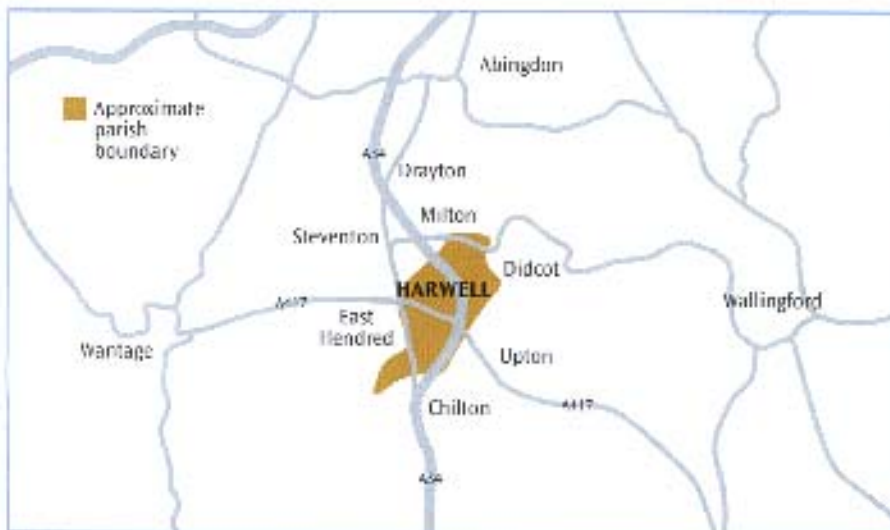


FIGURE 1: Location of Harwell Parish

runs through the village and is the B4493 joining Didcot to the A417 Reading to Wantage Road. The western side of the village owes much to more recent developments, and includes the modern primary school. The High Street itself was the scene of a disastrous fire in April 1852, which was responsible for ruining many of the original dwellings along much of its (then) length. Despite this, the oldest house in the village – now called Lime

Tree House, once the guest hall of the Bishop of Winchester – lies on the western side of the High Street. The village church – St. Matthew's – was built, in its present form, mainly during the period 1190 to 1325.

Two features probably contributed most to changing the face and environment of Harwell in the last part of its millennium. First, the building of the Great Western Railway in the 19th century led to the transformation of Didcot from the original tiny village into what is now a large and growing town. This brought nearby villages, like Harwell, into proximity with an important transport and business hub – and under threat of losing their rural character. Second, the choice of the downs above Harwell for the site of a new RAF station, opened in February 1937, led, after the Second World War, to the choice of this redundant airfield as a site for Britain's atomic energy programme. The airfield was taken over for this purpose in January 1946. Many of the people who came to live in the parish in the two decades or so from then on did so because of an association with the



FIGURE 2: Harwell Village

Harwell Laboratory or one of the other institutions on the 'site', causing the population to grow significantly. Others came because of employment in Didcot, Oxford and other nearby towns. More recently, perhaps over the last 20 or 30 years, the population of the village has become yet more diverse as changes in employment and living patterns, such as commuting from Didcot Parkway Station and travel by car further afield to work, have mingled many new people with the longer established village communities.

Harwell is indeed a 'Village for a Thousand Years' (and a few more!), but also a place that wants and needs to look to the future, surrounded as it is by many of the opportunities, and threats, characteristic of its time and environment. The production of the Parish Plan is an excellent opportunity to set out the aspirations of the community.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Parish Plan is to convey clear, constructive and achievable proposals to the Parish Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and any other body that might be in a position to support what the Parish wants to do.

The Plan should be of benefit in the following ways:

- The whole community of Harwell will be better informed about residents' wishes, needs, concerns and hopes for the future.
- New services and facilities can be planned, and any threats to existing services and facilities can be identified.
- There will be objective statistical evidence to support (or refute) many of the views of individual residents.
- The Parish Council will have a clearer idea of the views of the community of Harwell as a whole, and thus a stronger mandate for action.

In addition, the appraisal process necessary to develop the Harwell Parish Plan brings many people in the parish closer together and, in itself, may help to foster a new sense of community spirit.

How the Plan was produced

The development of the Harwell Parish Plan has been endorsed by the Harwell Parish Council, but was carried out independently of the Council by interested volunteers from within the parish, led by a Steering Group. The Steering Group has no permanent status and it will be the responsibility of the Parish Council to oversee how any actions are taken forward.

The Countryside Agency has supported the Parish Plan with a grant, which will make a major contribution to services that incur costs, such as the design and printing of questionnaires and the

1: The subtitle of the book produced in 1985 for the Harwell Millennium celebrations.

final report, and the professional analysis of data. The UKAEA has also made a grant towards these costs. All work done by the Steering Committee and others within Harwell has been voluntary.

The Parish Plan was launched through a public meeting in September 2001 and has involved a research exercise and an action plan.

- The research exercise has been designed to gather data about the community of Harwell, its people, their concerns and the way they view the future.
- The action plan that has resulted from the research exercise is designed to meet the needs and deficiencies identified in the Parish Plan, while at the same time protecting and developing the good features of the community.

This report is mainly concerned with the research exercise, leading to policies and projects that are proposed for the action plan. The action plan is a much shorter document for general circulation.

The research exercise has involved a questionnaire, offered to everyone in the parish over the age of 11 years, and many consultations through meetings, exhibitions and discussions. These have been overseen by the Steering Group, aided by Working Groups on Facilities and Activities, Transport, Environment, People Issues, and History. An exhibition was mounted at the Harwell Feast in June 2002 and public meetings were held in September 2001, May 2002 (this was combined with the Annual Parish Meeting) and November 2002. Children at the village primary school took part in sessions to discuss and answer a few of the questions in the questionnaire, and a Youth Forum was held in October 2002. In addition, the emerging conclusions were tested by consultation with a Focus Group: a group of 21 people chosen to represent a cross-section of the community, acting as a set of 'peer reviewers'. The detailed list of participants in the Steering and Working Groups is given in Annex 1, together with other statistics.

A traffic survey was conducted on 1 May 2002, involving 82 volunteers covering four observation points. These were sited at key through routes and intersections in the village.

The Steering Group was conscious that the Parish of Harwell stretches far beyond the village itself, and made every effort to make sure that the views and needs of those outside the main village area were taken into account.

Findings of the Questionnaire and other Consultations

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was generated from issues suggested by the Working Groups and the Steering Group. 1807 questionnaires were distributed to 1003 houses in June 2002, and 1434 questionnaires were collected and analysed, a response rate of 79%. The responses were analysed through a contract with Market Research Solutions Ltd, who provided a full set of data broken down in considerable detail. The findings of the questionnaire are described in Annex 2, based on the numerical results presented in Annex 3 and, where further insight was required, by inspection of the more detailed breakdowns and a reading of all of the free text comments offered by respondents.

60 pupils from Harwell School also provided their views on two of the questions in the questionnaire. Their results and how they compare with the results of the main questionnaire are presented in Annex 4.

Some issues, as well as being raised in the questionnaire and followed up through displays and discussions at events like the public meetings, have also been covered through more detailed work and debate in the Working Groups or at special meetings.

YOUNGER PEOPLE – THE YOUTH FORUM

A Youth Forum was held in October 2002, facilitated by Ms Cara Langford of the Oxfordshire County Council Childcare Development Team. It was attended by a representative sample of young people and youth leaders. Harwell has for many years had active Scout, Girls' Brigade, Youth Club and Church Youth Groups, although all of these organisations have had their ups and downs as interest varies and, perhaps especially, as volunteer leaders can be found who are willing to give of their time. There are also sports clubs and other societies in which young people are entitled to participate. Nevertheless, there is a feeling, echoed in the responses to the questionnaire, that there is not enough for young people to do in the village, or indeed within accessible travelling distance, and that more organised activities would not only give more opportunities for young people, but also help to reduce some of the problems that people perceive in the village environment.



The Freeman Hall



The Village Hall

The main proposal coming from the Youth Forum is to set up a formally organised holiday scheme for young people (probably in the age range 8–14 years) in Harwell. Holiday schemes have been run in the village before, especially the ongoing 2-week summer holiday scheme for children at the primary school, and those who have run them voluntarily know that it is very hard work. The difference with this proposal is that an application would be made for financial support through the New Opportunities Fund (Lottery Grant) Initiative supported by the government, as part of an overall bid, covering many such possible schemes, being made by Oxfordshire County Council. The holiday scheme would be run by professional youth workers and be open for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, for 1 week during the Christmas and Easter holidays and for 4 weeks during the summer holidays. The grant, if awarded, would enable some upgrades to the Freeman Hall (the building adjacent to the Village Hall used by the Youth Club) and possibly to the Village Hall itself, to ensure they fulfil the quality assurance requirements for running such a holiday scheme. The scheme would also help the viability of the halls by paying for use at normal rates during its operation.

The proposal had to be submitted quickly before the deadline, and there are many details that will have to be worked out, including how the scheme can best complement the existing summer holiday scheme at the school.

This is an ambitious proposal, but one where there is a window of opportunity in applying for approval and funding for the scheme, and where it could make a real difference if successful. Parents would have to pay for children to attend the scheme, but the finances would allow for some subsidy in cases of need, and experience from other schemes suggests that payment is not an obstacle when the alternative for many parents is to pay for other forms of childcare. To be viable the scheme would have to become financially self-sustaining by its fourth year. The Winterbrook Youth Club Management Committee has acted as the agent in making the application in the interests of meeting a deadline for bids, but there are inevitably uncertainties as to how the scheme could be organised within Harwell. Its chances of success would be greatly enhanced if new people could be found to help manage the scheme, and it may also be desirable to 'subcontract' some aspects of the operation of the scheme.

This bold opportunity for Harwell will only succeed if the bid is successful and if people volunteer to help make the scheme happen: the Youth Club Management Committee does not have the resources to do it alone.

OLDER PEOPLE

Half of the respondents to the questionnaire were over 50 and a quarter over 65. 30% of the respondents described themselves as retired. The answers to some of the questions and points made in other discussions show that older people experience a number of difficulties associated with living in Harwell.

Perhaps foremost among these is difficulty in getting to healthcare facilities, especially to the hospitals in Oxford. As well as help with transport from family, friends and neighbours, the Didcot

Volunteer Centre can arrange for lifts by volunteer drivers (who are able to claim a mileage charge), and other groups in the village, such as the Church Visiting Team, are able to help with transport on an informal basis. However, there was a lack of awareness of the help available, despite information on noticeboards. Given what already exists, there does not seem to be a need to set up a new Harwell-based transport scheme to address this problem. However, there is a need for better publicity and for more volunteers from Harwell to offer their services to the Didcot Volunteer Centre.

Another point is that the pavements could be made easier for people with disabilities to use. Also, some people have difficulty getting on and off buses, which means that these public transport services are not as easy for older people to use as they should be.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

For at least two decades Harwell has been concerned about the possible westward expansion of Didcot into Harwell Parish and towards the main village. Concerns in the 1980s were dispelled when it was decided to expand Didcot north of the railway line in a development known as Ladygrove. More recently, however, the County Council decided, contrary to the recommendation of an Examination in Public, that Didcot should expand westward (on high quality farmland) rather than north east beyond Ladygrove. This development would cover some 180 hectares and involve the building of 3,200 dwellings, around 500 of which would be within Harwell Parish. The questionnaire shows that the westward expansion of Didcot is the strongest single concern of people in the Parish. One of the policies in the Plan therefore sets out a stance towards retaining the distinctiveness of the village within the Parish. This policy will be followed up by the Parish Council and the Keep Harwell Rural Campaign as they strive to represent the concerns of Harwell people in discussions of the Local Plans and Planning Applications.



New building is mainly infilling

Housing needs within the Parish, and especially within the main village area, have been addressed in the questionnaire and in the other discussions. A need for limited provision of new smaller 'affordable' properties, including more sheltered accommodation, has emerged from these considerations, although it needs further quantification. If possible, the assessed need for smaller homes in the 'affordable' category should be sought within the limits of the current general policies followed by the District Council, which basically restrict building to infilling within the existing built-up area of the village. However, suitable plots for the type of accommodation envisaged may not be available within this constraint. Since the objective would be to meet an identified need rather than simply to respond to planning applications, it is believed that sites not otherwise acceptable for development could be found within or near the village under the 'exceptions' policy of the Local Plan for 'affordable' homes. It is proposed therefore that such sites be sought and discussed, with a view to making them available as options for this type of development. The Parish will also explore the possibility that its requirements could be met wholly or in part within any section of the expansion of Didcot that takes place within Parish land.



Cherry Tree Court

There has also been a call for more sheltered accommodation for older people and for accommodation suitable for people with disabilities. Bearing in mind that people are living longer (so the proportion of older people in the Parish might increase), this suggests that any new development in the Parish aimed at smaller homes should include the possibility of another group of sheltered housing, to augment that already provided by Cherry Tree Court and the Almshouses. Cherry Tree Court has no flats built to 'disabled' standards, so any new sheltered accommodation should include some such flats. Even if no new sheltered accommodation is planned, any plans for 'affordable' housing should ensure that some of it is especially suitable for people with disabilities living independently e.g. secure ground floor flats with easy access for residents.



Traffic and parked cars in the High Street

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

One of the concerns about the expansion of Didcot is the likely increase in traffic through the village. This would exacerbate a situation that has got worse in recent years, despite the vehicle size restriction that applies to the main thoroughfares. Based on the questionnaire and other discussions, the projects include actions to try to alleviate the present and likely future problems, first of all by seeking to make traffic in the village safer and less intrusive, and secondly by seeking some form of relief from through traffic.

Part of the information-gathering part of the Parish Plan has been to conduct a traffic survey, to provide a benchmark of the current situation to compare with future surveys and projections, and with the situation in other villages. A report on the Traffic Survey is given in Annex 5. The intention is to repeat these surveys at regular intervals, to detect trends over time.



Harwell Primary School

Harwell School has produced a Travel Plan to encourage safe travel to school for all pupils and staff, and particularly to encourage safe travel which has minimum environmental impact². The Parish Plan Steering Group supports the aims of this Travel Plan, which include targets for reducing car use and encouraging safer walking by establishing a trial 'walking bus' route. At present, half of the children are brought to school by car, despite the fact that 79% live within 2 km of the school. It is school policy not to allow children to travel to school by bicycle, primarily because of the safety concerns of parents, governors and staff about the

dangers of cycling on the village roads, in particular in the vicinity of the school. This illustrates concerns about traffic levels and the need to improve walking and cycling routes within the village, as represented in the projects proposed by this Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The questionnaire and the other consultation procedures confirmed that the residents of Harwell Parish are very concerned about the character of the countryside surrounding the village, and about the need for greater access to it. An active Harwell Environment Group meets in the village³ and a member participated in the Environment Working Group for the Parish Plan.

Over the past 30 years, the footpath network around the village (Figure 3) has been adversely affected by the building of the A34 to the east and north of the village, by the intermittent obstruction of two paths (Footpaths 6 and 7) and by an unauthorised diversion of Footpath 7 off Grove Road. In addition, various regularly used paths, especially between Harwell and Didcot, are not included on the definitive map of rights of way. Footpath 7 is a clear (if diverted) right of way in Harwell, but it currently stops at the Milton Parish boundary as a 'dead-end'

- 2: Harwell Primary School Travel Plan. A framework for changing travel habits on journeys to and from Harwell Primary School. (Submitted to Oxfordshire County Council).
- 3: As well as holding meetings, the Harwell Environment Group has conducted surveys within the Parish, for example the Hedgerow and Land Use Survey 1999-2000.

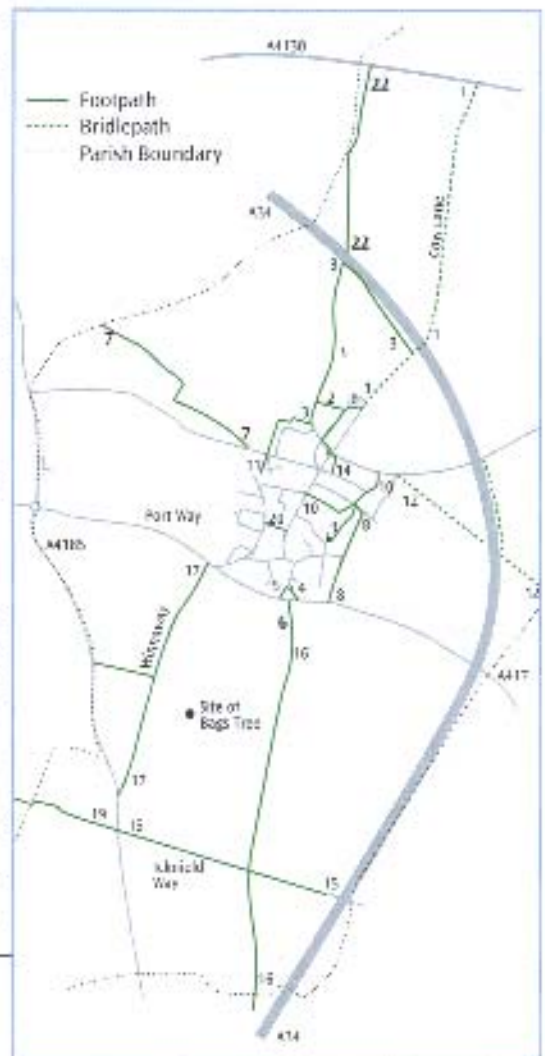


FIGURE 3: Footpaths and bridlepaths in Harwell Parish



path. Older maps show a continuation of this path to *The Packhorse* pub within Milton Parish. Footpath 22 is an 'orphan' path, being accessible only from the A4130 Didcot link road, as no linking footpath was created from Cow Lane on the north-east side of the A34.

The questionnaire and other consultations revealed a strong wish for the footpath network to be improved, and for new country footpaths to be created if possible. Allied to this was a need for a safe and pleasant walking and cycling route to Didcot, and for additional safe footpaths and cycleways to be provided within the village – especially at the village end of Grove Road. The general state of repair of roads, pavements and kerbs within the village is poor, and action is required by the relevant authorities to make them safe – especially for the elderly and disabled.



Harwell's remaining cherry orchard

Thirty years ago the countryside around Harwell was predominantly orchards, and until recently pigs were reared on one farm and in some fields on the downs. Little orchard now remains, and the pigs have gone. In their place is arable farmland, together with some grazing by sheep. Many people in the village became used to walking regularly in the orchards to the west of the village, and for some years until around 1990 such access was permitted by the then landowners. With the exception of the village recreation ground there is now no open access land within walking distance of Harwell.

Members of the Environmental Working Group have met with the major landowners in the area to explore greater open access and the use of the Countryside Stewardship and Conservation Walks Schemes. At present the prospects are not encouraging, but these options will be kept open for the future. It is hoped that one or more waymarked walks around the village can be created, supported by descriptive leaflets.



The questionnaire and other discussions have also covered adverse effects on the environment from litter and pollution, and issues concerned with the collection of rubbish. Continued vigilance is needed in these areas, and it is proposed that Harwell explores the possibility of taking part in Oxfordshire's Community Action Project scheme for encouraging the recycling of household waste. This scheme did not appear to be well known.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

The shops and Post Office are regarded as the most important of the existing facilities in the village. Many comments in the responses to the questionnaire and in other discussions have confirmed that everything possible should be done to ensure that the shops remain viable as local amenities.



The sports pavilion

The questionnaire did not raise a strong call for new facilities, but other discussions have highlighted the unsatisfactory state of the sports pavilion on the recreation ground, the need for renovation and ultimately possibly replacement of the Freeman Hall, and renovations to the Village Hall. Of these, the sports pavilion is the poorest facility, and it is therefore proposed to make the provision of a new facility a project in the Plan. This would need a considerable effort in terms of fundraising, but is something that the village cannot do without in the longer term.

The proposal for a new sports changing complex on the recreation ground has been based on an assessed need of the sporting groups who use the various facilities. It would include a facility for the Bowls Club to enable them to play short mat bowls throughout the year.

Preliminary costs are based on quotations for a complete build from start to finish including all ground work and internal fittings and decoration. This cost, for changing rooms, showers, first aid and meeting rooms is likely to be £450,000–£500,000.

There is some call for a swimming pool in the village. There is already an outdoor pool at the school, but this is in need of refurbishment. One item needed is a cover for the pool, which is estimated to cost £10,000. The school and the School Association are already addressing the refurbishment. This is an opportunity to develop the school pool as a community resource as well as providing an improved facility for the schoolchildren.

The needs of the Village and Freeman Halls will continue to be addressed by the Village Hall Management Committee.

The questionnaire indicated that a significant number of people would be interested in attending evening classes if these were arranged in the village, giving a wide range of subjects of interest. Following further discussions, the Steering Group did not feel that there is a strong case for proposing that new classes should be set up within the village, given the availability of courses in Oxford, Didcot, Wantage, and Abingdon. It should be noted, however, that Harwell School's computer facilities are being used for some 'taster' adult evening classes and for classes for parents.

OTHER ISSUES



Methods of communication within the parish are generally felt to be good. However, projects are included for developing a Harwell 'world wide web' site, and for improving the positioning of the Parish Council noticeboards.

There are some concerns – perhaps especially from older people – about drug abuse in Harwell, presumed to be mainly among younger people. Clearer publicity about support facilities is felt to be needed, and support for moves to improve the availability of treatment facilities in Didcot. Harwell School has a drugs education policy and implements this through teaching and information.

The Focus Group

21 people, representing a cross-section of the community, were invited to serve on a Focus Group. They were asked whether they supported the emerging policies and proposed actions, and were asked to prioritise the projects covered by the actions. In parallel, the members of the Steering Group were asked to prioritise the projects.

The replies of members of the Focus Group showed that there was strong majority support for the proposed policies and actions. With the exception of one proposed action (see below), to which there was some opposition, the views about priorities were broadly common between the Focus Group and the Steering Groups, but both had some difficulties with prioritisation because of the very different nature of most of the projects. Some involve long-term action and need considerable effort and fund-raising, while others involve modest short-term action that could be taken at little or no cost. For this reason the Steering Group decided not to adopt an explicit priority order for the projects.

The 'controversial' action proposed seeking a 20 mph speed limit in the main village. The opposition to this proposal, albeit from a minority of the Focus and Steering Groups, was based on the conviction that this would be ineffective at calming traffic. As it happens, a signalled pedestrian crossing for the High Street has been approved and is expected shortly, so the action has been rephrased to recognise that there would need to be some experience with the operation of the pedestrian crossing before any other specific measure could be proposed.

items

Items for the Action Plan

POLICIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN

This section covers some general policies and principles that emerged from the consultation processes. Where they lead to specific proposals these are covered by the following section on Projects.

Retaining the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish

People in Harwell Parish remain seriously concerned about the impact of any westward expansion of Didcot on the character of the village and on the density of traffic through the village. If Didcot has to expand, the north-easterly direction should have been chosen, but as it has not, the distinctiveness of the village within Harwell Parish must be maintained by ensuring that:

- The gap between the boundary of the western edge of Didcot and the last bungalow on the west side of the A34 is at least 1 km.
- The western edge of any new development comprises green space that is in character with the surrounding countryside and maintains access to the countryside for residents of the parish.
- Where the parish boundary is within any new development it must be a clear boundary and capable of being walked as a pathway.
- The developers provide the funding for a means of relieving through traffic from the main village roads.



Housing

The parish supports existing principles governing the development of new housing, currently embodied in Policy H15 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan published in 1999. This includes the following wording:

'Within the villages listed below (which include Harwell) new housing on sites not allocated under Policy H12 (which covers sites proposed for development, none of which are in Harwell Parish) will be limited to infilling and minor development or redevelopment, the scale, density and layout of which is compatible with the size, form and character of the village.'



Development will only be permitted where

- It is in the main built-up area of the village, or*
- In villages outside the green belt, it forms a natural completion of the existing pattern of development on a small site which is visually contained by well established, strong physical features that clearly form an integral part of the settlement.'*



In practical terms, this has meant that planning permission for new buildings in Harwell has been allowed only within the existing built-up area of the village.

There is not seen to be a need to change this general position in responding to particular planning applications. However, the consultations and discussions do lead to a conclusion that there is a need for some new smaller and more 'affordable' dwellings within the parish of Harwell. The Plan therefore proposes that the Vale of White Horse District Council policy be supplemented by a Parish policy that:

- a. Gives priority in building new houses to small-to-medium sized homes, with some for rent/purchase under conditions that would make them affordable for first-time buyers or people who wish to rent.
- b. Ensures that some of this type of accommodation is especially suitable for people with disabilities living independently e.g. ground floor flats with easy access, preferably as part of a further group of sheltered housing in the Parish (to augment the facilities of Cherry Tree Court).

Shops



The shops in the main village (newsagents/general stores, butchers with Post Office, hairdressers) are the amenities regarded as the most important by the people of Harwell.

The Parish will do everything possible to optimise the maintenance and commercial viability of the shops.

PROJECTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN

These are listed below. They are not in any particular order of priority, since they differ significantly in the scale of the action required and in the timescales over which they can realistically be pursued.

- a. Quantify the need for smaller homes in the 'affordable' category, including some sheltered accommodation and/or flats suitable for people with disabilities within this type of development, and then seek and discuss sites suitable for meeting the need. The parish will also explore the possibility that its requirements could be met wholly or in part within that section of the expansion of Didcot that would take place within Parish land.
- b. Seek funding for a new pavilion/sports complex on the recreation ground.
- c. Audit the state of pavements and kerbs in the Parish, with a view to applying pressure on the County Council to make them easier to use by the elderly and by persons with disabilities.
- d. Press for improvements to existing footpaths and to cycleways, especially to cycleways within the village and to Didcot.
- e. Continue to discuss with landowners the possible creation or clarification of new or permitted footpaths and the possible use of the Countryside Stewardship and Conservation Walks Schemes to create access to areas of the surrounding countryside.
- f. Review the need for measures to make traffic within the village safer and less intrusive, in the light of provision of the pedestrian crossing in the High Street, noting that the next most favoured measure in the questionnaire and other consultations was a 20 mph speed limit.
- g. Press the developers of Didcot West to fund a scheme for relief from through traffic, once further study has concluded what the best scheme might be. The further study should include an assessment of the effect of possible relief schemes on the village shops.
- h. Give better publicity of what is available to help people with transport to healthcare facilities, and seek more volunteer drivers from Harwell for existing schemes like the Didcot Volunteer Centre.
- i. Press bus companies for continued improvement in the display of bus timetables.
- j. Address the concern about drug abuse by: giving better publicity to where addicts and their families can access support facilities; supporting better facilities in Didcot, especially as part of the expansion of Didcot; and supporting initiatives to educate children.

- k. Develop a Parish 'world wide web' site, initially to give publicity to clubs, activities and events.
- l. Relocate the Parish noticeboard in the main village to the area by the shops, and duplicate Parish notices on the Didcot Road (there is already a noticeboard at Curie Avenue on the Harwell International Business Centre site).
- m. Apply within the Oxfordshire County Council bid to the New Opportunities Fund (Lottery Grant) to set up a formally organised holiday scheme for young people (probably in the age range 8–14 years) in Harwell.
- n. Explore the possibility of Harwell taking part in Oxfordshire's Community Action Project scheme for encouraging the recycling of household waste.

Resourcing the Action Plan

All the projects will require the effort of people in the Parish, and in some cases substantial amounts of money will have to be raised. Although many of the actions fall within the responsibility of the Parish Council, the Council members alone cannot be expected to do everything and will need others to help.

The Countryside Agency has drawn attention to a number of opportunities for obtaining help with funding or with actions that could enhance the impact of the Plan. For example:

- The Countryside Agency can provide guidance in the production of a Village Design Statement, which is a means of laying down local policies, such as on the distinctiveness of the village and on development within the village, in a form which might succeed in being adopted by the local authority as supplementary planning guidance.
- Community Services Grants can offer funding to key local services in rural communities. This could possibly help with the development of a website, and the scheme has been used to help village shops, healthcare schemes etc.
- There is a grant scheme to assist Parish Councils with small scale local transport projects, which might be relevant to improving cycleways and footpaths. This might also be relevant to actions such as the improvement to bus timetable information.

The Steering Group has also researched funding schemes and obtained a CD ROM from the *Directory of Social Change*, which is a 'fund-finder' for following up actions that would need to raise funds from multiple sources of support, such as the building of a new sports pavilion. The CD ROM will be passed to the Parish Council so that it is available for future use.

annex 1

Annex 1

PARTICIPANTS IN GROUPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Steering Group:

Cllr Colin Lamont, Chairman
 Reg Waite, Hon Secretary
 Jane Woolley, Hon Treasurer
 Cllr Mrs Margaret Turner, Liaison Officer
 Patricia Cooke
[Also Working Party Leader for Environment]
 Graham Cox
 John Fisher
[Also Working Party Leader for Facilities and Activities]
 Sid Gale
 Don Hayter
[Also Working Party Leader (1) for Transport]
 Tony Hughes
[Also Working Party Leader for People]
 Bill Jackson
[Also drafted the questionnaire]
 Gwyneth Lee
 Norman Staples *[joined October 2002]*
[Also Working Party Leader (2) for Transport]
 Rob Thomas
 Alan Walker
 Ruth Wilkinson
 Bill Woollen
[Also Working Party Leader for History]

Environment Working Group:

Patricia Cooke, Leader
 Ann Couldrick
 Bill Jackson
 Stephen Kill
 Barrie Turner

Facilities & Activities Working Group:

John Fisher, Leader
 Debbie Ansell
 Cyril Balderstone
 Ken Chapman
 Peter Cansell
 Jane Cummings
 John Delfosse
 Tom Fisher
 Ray Howse
 Bob Humphries
 John McGovern
 Bob Paton
 Martin Ricketts

History Working Group:

Bill Woollen, Leader
 Kath Lay
 Betty Pyke

People Working Group:

Tony Hughes, Leader
 Gwyneth Lee
 Bill Couldrick
 Ann Fisher
 Sid Gale
 Sue Greatbanks
 Ted Ireson
 Sharon Orr
 Chris Stoll
 Ruth Wilkinson
 Jo Roberts

Transport Working Group:

Don Hayter, Leader, who was later followed by Norman Staples as Leader
 John Farren
 David Levey

Other Statistics

- 21 people were invited to serve on the Focus Group.
 - 82 people were involved in the Traffic Survey.
 - 63 people were involved in the distribution and collection of the Questionnaires.
 - 1434 people completed Questionnaires.
 - 88 people attended the public meeting in September 2001.
 - Approximately 150 people visited the displays in the tent at the Harwell Feast in June 2002.
 - 153 people attended the Exhibition in November 2002. Visitors rated the value of the various events on a scale of 1 to 10 as follows (average ratings):
- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Public meeting in September 2001 | 7.08 |
| Displays at the Harwell Feast | 7.21 |
| The Questionnaire | 8.95 |
| The Exhibition in November 2002 | 8.29 |

annex 2

Annex 2

WHAT DO HARWELL PEOPLE THINK AND WANT? A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The full results of the questionnaire are lodged with the Parish Council, where they are available for inspection. This annex summarises the general findings of the exercise, often quoting the numerical 'top level' results that are listed in Annex 3. Where necessary it also makes reference to the more detailed numerical analysis and to other comments made by respondents.

Some of the questions asked people to make a rating on a scale of 0 to 10. Annex 3 quotes the average rating in such cases, but this often hides the fact that, in making their answers, people tended either to be decisive, using the '0' or '10' boxes, or relatively non-committal and marking boxes close to '5'. So the distribution of ratings often peaks up at the ends and the middle, and the average is then determined mainly by the balance between the two ends. In turn this may reflect the number of people who feel strongly about an issue (or alternatively are not concerned about an issue or affected by it) rather than reflecting any feeling of consensus. So the average ratings have to be treated with some caution, and the use of 11 boxes may provide more apparent precision than is warranted.

What do people like or dislike about Harwell?

80% of respondents to the questionnaire said that they like Harwell mainly because it has a pleasant environment. About half of the respondents also thought Harwell to be conveniently located, to be fairly safe, and to have good transport links. A quarter to a third of respondents gave their main attraction as local facilities, schools or employment opportunities, and about the same proportion cited 'a caring community' as their main reason. 1% of the respondents said that Harwell had no attractions for them: one written comment said "it's got nothing going for it". There were not many really negative written comments, but some refer to the absence of things for young people to do, and this extends in one or two cases to adults and old people. There are however balancing comments pointing to the availability of Scouts, Girls' Brigade, Youth Club, pubs, Women's Institute, and the British Legion. Many of the written comments refer positively to the 'village' atmosphere and the community activities including the church, but there are clearly some people who feel that others are not as welcoming as they should be, and that village life has some unsavoury corners. On balance the average 'image' of Harwell is that it is a nice convenient place, fairly well served by amenities, but with some underlying problems and with room for improvement.

What are people worried about?

On the whole people seem to get more concerned about problems in the village as they get older. On a scale of 0 to 10 covering 'not at all concerned' to 'extremely concerned', the westward expansion of Didcot merited an average rating of nearly 8, with many references in the written comments. This is closely followed by the volume of traffic and changes in the surrounding countryside, so all this reinforces the view that people in Harwell want to preserve the village character of the parish and nearly all remain strongly opposed to the westward expansion of Didcot (there are one or two written comments referring to benefits of being nearer to the facilities of Didcot).

The next group of items, average rating around 6, are thefts and vandalism, surfacing of roads and pavements, the lack of a police presence, fouling by dogs, drug abuse, facilities for young people and litter. These items are also often raised in the written comments. The average ratings of all the other listed problems are below 5.

The responses to this question do not show a very strong concern about facilities and about activities for young people. In question 2 people did not rate village facilities very highly as reasons to be attracted to Harwell, which might have suggested that there would have been more concern about the available facilities and activities. The explanation for the absence of a strong concern might be twofold. First, for its size and by comparison with other nearby villages, Harwell is reasonably well served with Scouts, Girls' Brigade, church groups and the Youth Club, as well as with sports and other clubs. It also has three halls: the Village Hall, the Freeman Hall and the Church Hall, as well as a meeting room in the British Legion. It is also close to facilities in Didcot and other towns, perhaps especially Abingdon. Secondly, it is precisely the 'non-urban' environment that many people find the most attractive aspect of living in Harwell. This is not to say that facilities cannot be improved.

A point that comes up in the written comments is that the general state of roads, footpaths and kerbs makes life especially difficult for disabled persons.

Travel and Traffic

Nearly half of the respondents said that they would walk and cycle more if there were safer routes in and around Harwell. Most of this extra walking and cycling would be within Harwell or to Didcot, with much less being to other destinations. The 'Other' category generated a wide variety of suggested improved routes to meet the respondents' own predilections. Most of these are fairly local, with the nearby villages being the most cited destinations and with no single route standing out as needing priority attention.

About a third of respondents called for more frequent or reliable bus services, but the main support (43%) is for better information about existing services and for more direct and faster services to existing destinations such as Oxford (40%). 8% of respondents asked for buses to destinations not currently served; of those that are realistic, Reading crops up most frequently. 6% of respondents cited other improvements. Their comments are varied, but include some complaints about the difficulties faced in boarding buses by people with disabilities. However, more people (13%) thought that no improvements would make any difference to them.

Measures to reduce the impact of traffic on the main roads of the village would be welcomed by a significant majority of respondents, households with young children, older people and people living in the main part of the village all being more likely to be in favour. A pedestrian crossing in the High Street would be the most welcomed measure, favoured by 53% of respondents (this is now being provided). More people supported a 20 mph speed limit (32%) than 'humps' (21%) or narrowing points (21%). Among the 'Other' suggestions, speed cameras and banning parking along the main streets (especially High Street and Burr Street) get many mentions.

People seem fairly evenly divided on wanting a by-pass, it being more popular among people in the main village than those living on the Reading Road and towards Rowstock. Some of the written comments are strongly in favour, but some question the use of more countryside for roads, and some express the view that the traffic problem in the village is not so bad as to warrant such measures. Some people are clearly sceptical of whether any form of by-pass will ever be a realistic proposition. Many of the comments express concern or doubt about the possible impact on trade for the village shops. This could be researched further to see if the shopkeepers have any information about the fraction of their trade that comes from through travellers as distinct from people in the village'. The possibility of easing through traffic by building more slip roads onto and off the A34 was not mentioned in the questionnaire, but is mentioned in many of the written comments. This is in fact the first proposal from the transport consultants who looked at the problems around Didcot).

4: Preliminary enquiries with the shopkeepers suggest that about 5% of the custom of the newsagents, relatively little of the hairdressers, but 25% of the butchers, is from through traffic. The butchers cite a large increase in trade at morning and evening peaks. A loss of this trade could be serious for the butchers, which also houses the Post Office. A more detailed assessment should be done to provide firmer evidence.

5: This study is being taken forward through the on-going production of the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Strategy.

Housing

29% of respondents do not think that any extra housing is needed in Harwell. Of those that think some is needed, the largest call is for affordable 'starter' houses or flats (34%) and the least (6%) for larger houses with four or more bedrooms. The people (5%) who said that they were looking for new accommodation in Harwell have mainly had problems with availability of suitable properties and with high prices.

14% of respondents suggested extra housing for disabled people and 13% for extra sheltered housing. Cherry Tree Court (sheltered flats with live-in manager) and the Almshouses already exist in the village. The length of the waiting list for Cherry Tree Court suggests that if there were extra sheltered accommodation in the parish it would be readily taken up.

Healthcare

Most people say that they do not have difficulty getting to healthcare facilities, but 19% (277 people) have had difficulty. The proportion is 30% among the over 65s, corresponding to 105 people. The greatest difficulty in this group is with travel to hospitals in Oxford (although with other age groups Didcot and Oxford are equally cited). 16% of respondents – 233 people – say that they would make use of help with travel if it were organised from the village; 118 of these are over 65s (33% of all the respondents in that age group). A further 67 (19%) of the over 65s are 'not sure', so that just over half of the over 65s taking part in the survey either answered 'yes' or 'not sure'.

44% of respondents did not express any view about new healthcare facilities in the village. 35% said a Health Visitor Clinic would be helpful, with chiropody and physiotherapy clinics getting the support of 23% and 19%, respectively. 5% said 'Other', which from the written comments covers calls for a well woman clinic, an osteopath, a baby clinic, a massage parlour, a family planning clinic, an alternative therapy clinic, a pharmacy, as well as quite a few calls for the stated unrealistic prospects of a part-time doctors' or dentists' surgery.

Some of these facilities are already available and advertised in Harwell, albeit in the case of chiropody and physiotherapy on a private (i.e. not free) basis. A Health Visitor already visits the Fun Club on the last Tuesday of the month, which covers some of the perceived demand. As well as the Health Visitor there is a Mothers Support Network which has a leaflet covering a number of contacts and support opportunities for new mothers.

This question raised some imaginative proposals, but there is not overwhelming demand for facilities that are not already available in some form. The comments, however, suggest that there is a need for better awareness of what already exists.

Importance of Existing Facilities

All the existing facilities are regarded as important, with those in the village having a slight edge on those that are 'near' (e.g. Rowstock); though this may just reflect the larger number of people who live in the main village. The Drayton waste and recycling centre is judged very important by many people.

The shops and Post Office in the village stand out as especially important, along with the recreation ground and footpaths. There are a few calls for the Post Office to be able to issue road tax discs. It is unlikely that the recreation ground, footpaths (or some of the other similar important facilities such as the school, village hall and the church) will be threatened with disappearance. However, the shops are more vulnerable, and the Plan is an excellent vehicle to draw special attention to their importance in the life of the village.

Interestingly there is no very strong call for extra facilities in the responses to the questionnaire, unlike the conclusion of other discussions. No item had an average rating of 7 or over; the highest

rating was for new countryside footpaths and open access to the countryside, with some of the other 'nature' possibilities also getting reasonable support. A permanent village map and a cash point machine are the only 'hardware' facilities that stand out. More sports facilities average just over 6, but there is not much evidence of demand for public computer facilities (perhaps because of home ownership or the option of the school's facilities), public toilets, more post boxes or, notably, in view of the amount of on street parking, public car parks. Nearly all the written comments are on the pros and cons of the possible extra facilities listed, but there are suggestions for refurbishing the sports pavilion (or a related complex), a few proposals that a skate park would be a good acquisition for teenagers, and some calls for playground facilities more suited to toddlers.

Educational and Leisure Activities

Although the majority of respondents would not sign up for Adult Education classes, 22% (320 people) say they would sign up for computer classes, 17% (248 people) for language classes, 8% (109 people) for business classes and 12% (178 people) for something else. About 150 people submitted written comments saying which subjects they would be interested in.

A similar diversity exists in the response to the question about leisure facilities. 59% do not identify any new leisure facilities or activities that the village should have, but 20% (286 people) do, and offered a variety of written suggestions, 260 in all. There are some overlaps with the comments under Facilities above, with a few more mentions of the sports pavilion and calls for a skate park. Nearly 40 people want a (preferably indoor) swimming pool. (There is an outdoor pool at Harwell School, which is in need of refurbishment.) Some of the comments call for an increase in availability of activities that already exist in Harwell, but which struggle to find enough help to survive, giving the impression that many people do not fully appreciate what it involves to maintain an amenity.

Rubbish and Recycling

Most people do not like the idea of having rubbish collected only once a fortnight, and say that it would give them problems. Almost half the respondents do not mind whether the green re-cycling box is collected on a different day from the dustbins, as at present, or on the same day, but of those who say they do mind two-thirds would rather it be on the same day. It is doubtful if the Vale of White Horse District Council would regard this outcome as a strong case for change, unless it makes little difference to their contractors whether they do both collections on the same day or not.

The written comments include some calls for the collection of garden rubbish, for 'whoolie' bins, and some suggestions that there be a village skip provided somewhere. There are a lot of references to problems with rats to back up a horror of only having fortnightly rubbish collection.

Communications

91% of respondents are happy with the current methods of communication, but 46% would welcome the development of a village website.

The degree of satisfaction with the village communications media is high throughout all parts of the parish, even the lowest figure (for Rowstock) being 85%. However, written comments suggest that the official Parish Council noticeboard might have more impact if it was by the shops rather than by the bus stop, and some people on the fringes of the village do feel less well served. There is already a duplicate parish noticeboard near North Drive (in Curie Avenue), but there might be a case for having another duplicate on the Didcot Road (accepting that this is more work for the Parish Clerk!). This would particularly make inclusive the part of Harwell Parish that extends to the edge of Didcot.

Other Features

Around half of the respondents are employed and 30% are retired. A large majority of those who are employed work outside the village. As a sign of the times, only 7% said that they were unpaid parents/partners or carers. 70% of people expect to be living in Harwell in 5 years time. The 7% who do not have provided a wide range of reasons, mostly to do with change of job and other 'natural' processes. However, there are some bitter comments, which contrast with the comfortable impression created by the answers to the early question on the attractions of living in Harwell. There are only a few of these (they refer to people being 'superior' or 'stuck up', to cliques and to harassment), and are probably only to be expected among a large sample, but they show that we should not be complacent about the image of Harwell.

Most respondents do not feel much involved in village life, do not want to be more involved and moreover do not have any suggestions for how the village could encourage more people to become involved. However, this hides the fact that 18% (251 people) said that they would like to be more involved, suggesting that there are actually a lot of people who could offer something new to village life. Also the 12% who did have some suggestions made a lot of written comments. A recurring theme is support or request for village events, although not much consensus on what these should actually be, except for the May Bank Holiday Harwell Feast, which generally gets a good press.

152 respondents offered some 'other comments' at the end of the questionnaire. Some of these repeat comments made under other sections and there are no significant new proposals. There are more comments of appreciation about the opportunity presented by filling out the questionnaire than the relatively few comments from people who think that the exercise was a waste of time or done in the wrong way.

Overall Impression

The questionnaire provided a very useful picture of substantiated opinion that could not have been obtained in any other way. It provided useful pointers to policies or proposals that could be part of the Plan, for example the importance of the shops and the concerns about traffic, and a very useful base of ideas and opinion to take forward into other discussions.

annex 3

Annex 3

SUMMARY OF THE NUMERICAL RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

[Percentages are of 1434 respondents; the figures are rounded and totals will therefore have rounding errors]

LIVING IN HARWELL

1 How long have you lived in Harwell?

(If you left Harwell and later returned, please include the total number of years.

If 'always', please tick the number of years as well)

Less than 1 year	6%
1–5 years	18%
6–15 years	29%
16–25 years	17%
26–50 years	21%
Over 50 years	7%
[Always	7% [†]]
No answer given	3%

[†]Entered as 0% in the master tables, which classified results by the timeframe code only.

2 What do you think are the main attractions of living in Harwell?

(Please tick as few or as many boxes as you wish)

Pleasant environment	80%
Convenient geographical location	59%
Safe in the daytime	49%
Good transport links	46%
Facilities in nearby towns	36%
Safe at night	36%
The village primary school	33%
A caring community	32%
Facilities in the village	25%
Local secondary schools	22%
Local employment opportunities	21%
Welcoming to newcomers	19%
Plenty to do here	7%
Other (please write in below)	5%

There are no attractions for me in Harwell 1%

(Respondents were asked to explain why this is in the box on the form.)

3 How concerned are you personally about each of these possible problems in Harwell?

The first number is the average rating on a scale from 0–10 where 0 = 'not at all concerned' and 10 = 'extremely concerned'. The second number is the rank order of these average ratings.

Crime (theft/burglary/vandalism)	6.50 [4]
Crime (violent)	4.42 [13]
Drug abuse	5.91 [8]
No obvious police presence	6.25 [6]
Availability of good primary schools	3.46 [17]
Availability of good secondary schools	3.77 [16]
Facilities / activities for young people	5.79 [9]
Volume of traffic in village	6.76 [2]
Traffic noise from A34 or village roads	4.50 [12]
Other noise	3.32 [18]
Air pollution (traffic, bonfires, etc.)	4.27 [14]
State of surfacing of roads and/or pavements	6.32 [5]
Overhanging trees and hedges	4.75 [11]
Fouling of footpaths and verges by dogs	6.05 [7]
Litter and/or 'fly-tipping'	5.62 [10]
Flooding / inadequacy of local drainage	4.24 [15]
Changes in use and/or appearance of surrounding countryside	6.68 [3]
Planned westward expansion of Didcot	7.95 [1]
Others (Respondents were asked to write their suggestions on the form.)	

TRAVEL AND TRAFFIC

4 Some places have routes within or from the village which are made safe from traffic for walkers and cyclists. Would you really walk or cycle more if there were more safe routes in and around Harwell?

(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

Yes – safe walking route	48%
Yes – safe cycle route	43%
No – please skip to question 6	25%
Not sure – please skip to question 6	8%
No answer given	6%

5 If you answered 'yes' to question 4, where you would walk or cycle to?

(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

Within Harwell	77%
Didcot	63%
Harwell International Business Centre / Rutherford Appleton Laboratory / Chilton	25%
Ardington / Wanlage	28%
Milton Hill	16%
Milton Park	17%
Other (Respondents were asked to provide their destination of choice.)	11%
No answer given	3%

6 What improvements, if any, to the existing bus services to and from Harwell would make a real difference to you?

(Please tick as few or as many boxes as you wish)

Better information about existing services	43%
More frequent services	28%
More reliable services	26%
Cleaner or more comfortable buses	11%
Cheaper fares	37%
More direct or faster services to existing destinations (e.g. Oxford)	40%
Direct services to destinations not currently served	8%

(Respondents were asked to provide their destinations of choice.)

Other improvements	6%
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(Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)

No improvements would make any difference	13%
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No answer given	11%
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7 Would you welcome measures to reduce the impact of traffic on the main roads of the village?

(Please tick more than one box if necessary; question 8 deals separately with a possible by-pass road)

No	11%
Not sure	8%
Yes – humps in the road	21%
Yes – a 20 mph speed limit	32%
Yes – deliberate narrowing and 'give way' points	21%
Yes – a pedestrian crossing in the High Street	53%
Yes – other	14%

(Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)

No answer given	3%
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8 A Harwell by-pass alongside the A34 from Didcot Road to Reading Road has been proposed, which would reduce traffic through the centre of the village and on Grove Road. However, it might lead to increased traffic on part of Reading Road and also to decreased trade for the local shops. Would you support such a by-pass if it were planned?

Yes – a lot	30%
Yes – a little	17%
No	24%
Not sure	26%
No answer given	4%

HOUSING

9 What extra housing does Harwell need over the next 10 years?

(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

No extra housing is needed	29%
Affordable 'starter' houses or flats	34%
Medium-sized houses (2–3 bedrooms)	19%
Larger houses (4+ bedrooms)	6%
Sheltered housing	13%
Housing for low-income families	15%
Housing for disabled people	14%
No opinion	16%
Other	4%

(Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)

No answer given	2%
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10 Are you looking for alternative accommodation in Harwell separately from other members of your household?

Yes	5%
No – please skip to question 12	91%
No answer given	4%

11 If your answer to the last question was 'yes' have you had any of the following problems?
(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

High price of available property	61%
Lack of suitable property to buy	48%
Lack of suitable property to rent	28%
Still on Vale Housing Association Waiting List	11%
Other problems	16%

(Respondents were asked to write their answers.)

No answer given	7%
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HEALTHCARE

12 Have you ever had difficulty getting to healthcare facilities (doctor's surgery, dentist, etc.)?
(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

No	79%
Yes (in Didcot)	11%
Yes (to hospitals in Oxford)	13%
Yes (to other places)	2%

(Respondents were asked to provide their destinations of choice.)

All 'Yes'	19%
No answer given	2%

13 Would you make use of help with travel to healthcare facilities if this were organised from the village? Please answer on the basis of your present needs.

No	64%
Yes	16%
Not sure	16%
No answer given	3%

14 Which (if any) of these healthcare facilities do you think it would be helpful to have in the village on a regular basis (e.g. one visit per month)? Note that there is no realistic prospect of having a doctor's or dentist's surgery in Harwell.

(Please tick as few or as many boxes as you wish)

Health Visitor clinic	35%
Physiotherapy clinic	19%
Chiropractic clinic	23%
Other	5%

(Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)

No answer given	44%
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FACILITIES

15 How important do you think it is for the village to continue to have the existing facilities listed below? You may feel they are important because you use them personally or because you feel they are important to village life generally.

The first number is the average rating on a scale from 0–10 where 0 = 'not at all important' and 10 = 'extremely important'. The second number is the rank order of these average ratings.

In the Village

Post Office	9.30 [1]
Newsagent/stationers, etc.	9.16 [2]
General grocery store	8.96 [5]
Butcher	8.32 [9]
Hairdresser	6.26 [21]
Photocopying and fax facility	5.86 [23]
Public telephone	7.72 [14]
Garage	6.15 [22]
Primary school	8.80 [6]
Little Pippins Pre-School	8.13 [11]
Cherry Tree Court	7.61 [15]
Church	8.29 [10]
Village Hall	8.75 [8]
Freeman Hall	7.27 [17]
Church Hall	7.54 [16]
British Legion Clubhouse	6.73 [20]
Pubs	7.84 [13]
Guest houses/B & Bs/Hotel	6.74 [19]
Mobile library	7.14 [18]
Sports facilities	8.09 [12]
Children's play area	8.79 [7]
Recreation ground	9.07 [3]
Footpaths	9.04 [4]
<i>Others (Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)</i>	

Near the Village

Petrol station, garage and general store (Rowstock)	7.88 [2]
Local farm shops	7.56 [3]
Post Office (Curie Avenue)	6.66 [4]
Other shops (Curie Avenue)	6.29 [7]
Bank (Curie Avenue)	6.39 [6]
Shops on Western edge of Didcot	6.53 [5]
Drayton waste and recycling centre	8.63 [1]
<i>Others (Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)</i>	

16 People have suggested that the village would benefit from extra public facilities. Some would be easier to create than others, but please assume that all are possible and indicate how strongly you would like each of these.

The first number is the average rating on a scale from 0–10 where 0 = 'I don't want it at all' and 10 = 'I want it very much'. The second number is the rank order of these average ratings.

Public toilets	3.85 [15]
Public car park(s)	4.28 [14]
Public computer facilities or an internet café	3.26 [16]
A cash machine	6.40 [4]
More shops	5.56 [9]
More post-boxes	4.56 [13]
More benches/public seating	5.54 [10]
More sports facilities	6.16 [7]
New footpath(s) within the village	6.26 [5]
New countryside footpaths	6.89 [–1]
Open access to areas of surrounding countryside	6.89 [=1]
Nature conservation area(s)	6.70 [3]
A village wood	5.97 [8]
A village pond	5.51 [11]
A public historical archive	5.46 [12]
A permanent, fixed village map	6.23 [6]
Other suggestions (<i>Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.</i>)	

EDUCATIONAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

17 Would you be likely to sign up for Adult Education Classes if they were available in the village? If so, which subjects would be of interest to you?

(Please tick more than one box if necessary)

No	53%
Yes – Computer courses	22%
Yes – Languages	17%
Yes – Business studies	8%
Yes – Other (<i>Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.</i>)	12%
No answer given	6%

18 Are there any other leisure facilities or activities that you think the village should offer that it doesn't presently have?

No	59%
Yes (<i>Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.</i>)	20%
No answer given	21%

RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

19 Would you prefer your dustbin and Green Box to be emptied:

On different days once per week (as at present)?	19%
Both on the same day once per week?	35%
No preference	44%
No answer given	2%

20 If each type of waste were only collected once a fortnight would this be a problem for you?

Yes	76%
No	20%
No answer given	4%

COMMUNICATIONS

21 Are you happy with the currently available methods of communication within the village (The Harwell News, parish noticeboard, annual village meeting, etc.)?

Yes	91%
No (Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.)	6%
No answer given	4%

22 Would you welcome the development of a Harwell Village website, as a source of local information and an additional means of communication within the village?

Yes	46%
No	18%
Not sure	30%
No answer given	6%

FINALLY – SOME HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

23 Please tick your age group

11–18	9%
19–29	8%
30–39	15%
40–49	17%
50–64	25%
65–80	20%
Over 80	4%
No answer given	2%

24 Are you

Female?	51%
Male?	46%
No answer given	3%

25 Are you

(Please tick more than one box if appropriate)

Single?	22%
Married/living with partner?	66%
Divorced/separated?	5%
Widowed	2%
No answer given	6%

(Note: the option 'Living with parent(s)' was ignored during the analysis since it was felt that it was covered by these other categories.)

In a household including members under the age of 12? *	17%
In a household including members between the ages of 12 and 18? *	14%
In a household including members over the age of 65? *	12%
Others	62%

(tick these even if you are the only household member in the age range)*

26 Which of the following best describes you?*(Please tick more than one box if appropriate.)*

Student at secondary school	6%
Student in further or higher education	5%
Employed and working from home	2%
Employed elsewhere in the village	4%
Employed outside the village	36%
Self-employed (or own business) at home	5%
Self-employed (or own business) elsewhere in the village	1%
Self-employed (or own business) outside the village	5%
Retired	30%
Unpaid parent/partner/carer	7%
Other (includes unemployed, those in a government training scheme, voluntary workers, etc. – you may give more details here if you wish)	4%
No answer given	2%

27 Do you hope to be living in Harwell in five years' time?

Yes	69%
Not sure	23%
No (<i>Respondents were asked to explain why not.</i>)	7%
No answer given	1%

28 Where do you currently live in Harwell?

Towards Didcot, across the A34 from the main village	2%
Rowstock	3%
North Drive or South Drive	5%
<i>(figure slightly low due to miscoding of some residents)</i>	
Anywhere else within or near the main village	89%

29 How involved do you feel in village life in Harwell?*Answers on the scale of 0–10 as in some previous questions.*

Average rating 3.70 (2.67 for 19–29 age range, 4.31 for over 65s)

30 Would you like to be more involved in village life in Harwell?

No – I don't mind not being involved	45%
No – I'm already involved enough	33%
Yes	18%
No answer given	4%

31 Do you have any suggestions for how the village could encourage people (including those from outlying parts of the parish) to become more involved in village life in Harwell?

No	74%
Yes (<i>Respondents were asked to write their suggestions.</i>)	12%
No answer given	13%

annex 4

Annex 4

THE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

60 children in years 4, 5 and 6 at Harwell Primary School filled out Questions 3 and 16 of the questionnaire. Their mean ratings are presented below and compared with the ratings from the 'adult' questionnaire. Some comments on this exercise can be made in the light of the results.

1. Young children fear violence much more than adults do.
2. Confirmation that the children understood the questions and answered them sensibly can be inferred from the fact that they rated the nuisance value of overhanging trees and shrubs much lower than adults. This is consistent with the commonsense perception that their lower stature and greater agility allow them to avoid these obstacles more easily.
3. The children were decisive. They used the 0 and 10 boxes much more frequently than any others. The third most popular box was 5. The same effect was seen in the adults' responses.
4. Under some headings (e.g. flooding) there is polarisation of opinion at the extremes. This suggests that the problem only affects some people, but is serious for them. Reliance on mean values disguises this.

Q. 3 How concerned are you personally about each of these possible problems in Harwell?

The first number is the average rating on a scale from 0–10 where 0 = 'not at all concerned' and 10 = 'extremely concerned'. The second number is the rank order of these average ratings.

	Over 11s	Primary School
Crime (theft/burglary/vandalism)	6.50 [4]	6.33 [7]
Crime (violent)	4.42 [13]	7.88 [1]
Drug abuse	5.91 [8]	7.48 [3]
No obvious police presence	6.25 [6]	7.39 [4]
Availability of good primary schools	3.46 [17]	2.81 [18]
Availability of good secondary schools	3.77 [16]	4.04 [15]
Facilities / activities for young people	5.79 [9]	6.32 [8]
Volume of traffic in village	6.76 [2]	5.91 [9]
Traffic noise from A34 or village roads	4.50 [12]	5.17 [12]
Other noise	3.32 [18]	3.47 [16]
Air pollution (traffic, bonfires, etc)	4.27 [14]	5.59 [10]
State of surfacing of roads and/or pavements	6.32 [5]	5.38 [11]
Overhanging trees and hedges	4.75 [11]	2.98 [17]
Fouling of footpaths and verges by dogs	6.05 [7]	7.73 [2]
Litter and/or 'fly-tipping'	5.62 [10]	7.22 [5]
Flooding / inadequacy of local drainage	4.24 [15]	4.36 [14]
Changes in use and/or appearance of surrounding countryside	6.68 [3]	5.03 [13]
Planned westward expansion of Didcot	7.95 [1]	7.05 [6]
Others (see below)		

Other problems written down: Speeding (4), Bullying outside school (3), Graffiti, Loss of trees, Dust in the Winnaway, Expansion of Harwell, Slow gutter repairs (1 each).

Q.16 People have suggested that the village would benefit from extra public facilities. Some would be easier to create than others, but please assume that all are possible and indicate how strongly you would like each of these.

The first number is the average rating on a scale from 0–10 where 0 = 'I don't want it at all' and 10 = 'I want it very much'. The second number is the rank order of these average ratings.

	Over 11s	Primary School
Public toilets	3.85 [15]	4.60 [14]
Public car park(s)	4.28 [14]	3.65 [16]
Public computer facilities or an internet café	3.26 [16]	6.54 [8]
A cash machine	6.40 [4]	5.43 [11]
More shops	5.56 [9]	5.60 [10]
More post-boxes	4.56 [13]	4.75 [13]
More benches / public seating	5.54 [10]	7.48 [3]
More sports facilities	6.16 [7]	6.61 [7]
New footpath(s) within the village	6.26 [5]	5.17 [12]
New countryside footpaths	6.89 [=1]	6.20 [9]
Open access to areas of surrounding countryside	6.89 [=1]	7.33 [5]
Nature conservation area(s)	6.70 [3]	7.64 [2]
A village wood	5.97 [8]	7.42 [4]
A village pond	5.51 [11]	8.37 [1]
A public historical archive	5.46 [12]	4.54 [15]
A permanent, fixed village map	6.23 [6]	7.31 [6]
Other suggestions (see below)		

Other facilities requested: Indoor swimming pool (7), Toy shop (7), More flowers (3), Electronic games shop (2), More riding facilities (2), More dog bins (2), A new park (2), BMX track in the Recreation Ground (2), More rubbish bins, A path from Reading Road, Cycle lanes, Speed limits, A café, More trees, More school equipment, More play equipment, More bus shelters, Resurface the basketball pitch, Railings along the pavement, A skateboard park, A bowling alley, A pedestrian crossing, More holidays (1 each).

annex 5

Annex 5

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE TRAFFIC SURVEY ON 1 MAY 2002

Harwell is a residential area, but the principal routes through the village are heavily used by through traffic and the normal enjoyment of life is threatened. The Traffic Survey was undertaken to provide an up-to-date base which, when linked with other data, can help to decide what should be done to meet the needs of the village in the face of continuous traffic growth and the likely jump in that growth arising from 3,200 additional dwellings on its doorstep – the Didcot West development.

The results of the traffic survey are summarised below (Table 1). All traffic, including cycles and motorcycles, was counted, though these two modes account for only about 1% of the totals. Data by type of vehicle and movement direction has been lodged with the Parish Council.

Table 1: Total traffic per hour (both directions) at the four monitoring points

Time	Locations			
	Reading Road at the Winnaway	High Street at the Village Hall	Grove Road at Manor Green	Didcot Road at the A34 Bridge
6–7 am	177	97	52	134
7–8 am	660	416	191	453
8–9 am	1071	579	230	693
9–10 am	481	285	109	340
10–11 am	434	280	112	318
11–12 noon	418	265	110	325
12–1 pm	502	328	127	363
1–2 pm	477	347	136	397
2–3 pm	524	290	117	354
3–4 pm	566	338	158	412
4–5 pm	694	453	184	549
5–6 pm	897	590	215	664
6–7 pm	648	388	189	492
7–8 pm	415	266	112	371
Totals	7964	4922	2042	5865

82 volunteers manned the four survey points. The findings are consistent with those of the Monitoring Unit of the County Council's Environment Department. Their latest published report, Oxfordshire Traffic Flows 2000 includes data for two counting points (CPs) that tie up with ours – CP 109 east of Harwell which corresponds to our Didcot Road and CP 199 corresponding to our Reading Road/Winnaway data. Thus we have available contextual data across several years.

In addition the Monitoring Unit activated five of their counters around the village (including those just mentioned) for a period of 3 weeks the day after our own study. These counters do not include cycles, and there are some technical issues relating to how automatic counters classify traffic. But the main conclusions are that our own data can reasonably be linked with these sources and provide a basis for future projections.

Further studies would be necessary to separate Harwell's own traffic from the rest and to measure the likely effect of any bypass on the viability of the village shops and public houses. In any event it would be worth repeating the traffic survey at regular intervals to record trends over time.



The Steering Group for the Harwell Parish Plan is grateful for the financial support of The Countryside Agency