

## HOWE HILL COMMUNITY LED PLAN – 2013/2014

Howe Hill is a settlement of 26 properties grouped in two slightly sloping sections at the lower and upper parts of the hill with the steeper wooded section in between – the settlement covers 1.5 km of the B480 Watlington to Henley/Nettlebed road. Howe Hill is one of three recognised outreach settlements of Watlington Parish

With the increased use of the B480 by commuter and business traffic during the working week and leisure traffic, including many cyclist, residents campaigned for a 40 mph speed limit with Parish Council and Police support. This Community Led Plan seeks to go further in respect of traffic and infrastructure benefits for Residents

THE CLP DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN LED BY PETER RICHARDSON WITH INPUT AND ASSISTANCE FROM RICHARD TAYLOR AND RUTH HUGHES – ALL RESIDENTS OF HOWE HILL

### Objectives of the Howe Hill CLP

- **Named Identity:** To establish a **named identity** for the whole of Howe Hill in common with Cookley Green, Park Corner, Greenfield and Christmas Common with equivalent status to the latter two and classed as outreach settlements within the Parish of Watlington. The establishment of an identity is fundamental to most of the other objectives and most desirable in view of the emerging Watlington Neighbourhood Plan
- **Local Speed:** To achieve a consistently higher level of speed awareness for traffic using Howe Hill in association with Thames Valley Police, with effective signs and enforcement action in combination with clear indications that Howe Hill is a residential area with narrow roads and hazardous bends. The road is a busy route used by all types of traffic including leisure cyclists and the occasional walking group
- **Broadband:** To secure the best possible broadband service for residents who find this essential for their families and home based businesses. If Howe Hill continued to be described as a “remote rural location in open countryside”, it would not be considered by BT Openreach and Oxfordshire County Council as viable in respect of improved broadband facilities
- **Local Transport:** To gain consideration for any future community transport initiative in providing appropriate bus transport to assist the younger and older residents, who may not wish or be able to make use of essential car transport. It is worth noting that the advertised bus stop at Howe Hill no longer exists despite the published timetable and web site information

The first objective, **a named identity**, will ultimately affect the other three objectives. Support from local authorities following that and the community consultation is the basis of the CLP.

The recommendation of the CLP identity proposal by the Watlington Parish Council Strategy Committee has been ratified by the Full Council on April 8<sup>th</sup> and has now been referred to Oxfordshire County Council for implementation

Two surveys confirmed the opinions of the vast majority of Residents in respect of the identity

**Other objectives – onward action (see also the quick reference table)**

*Speed*– Oxfordshire County Council Highways have conducted a covert traffic management survey on Howe Hill as a result of the survey results and those results combined with the established of a settlement identity should result in a regular level of enforcement with due consideration to a reduction of speed limits on the B480 in line with the B4009. Illegal use of Howe Hill by HGV vehicles constitutes a clearly identified safety risk

(Thames Valley Police are in favour of “SPEED AWARENESS COURSES” in respect of drivers who are found to be breaking the speed limit marginally. These courses are run by AA DriveTech and emphasise the importance of drivers observing signs especially in respect of roads where there are perceived hazards)

*Broadband* – South Oxfordshire District Council are obliged to consider the most efficient way to allocate additional funding and following their recognition of Howe Hill, they would want to ensure that the most properties within a locality gain the benefit of broadband infrastructure in the event of the BT Rollout programme not supporting new infrastructure. Representations are being made to SODC, OCC and BT OpenReach to secure a better broadband service for Howe Hill and are ongoing

*Transport* – Any form of bus service is more likely to gain support if the community served is clearly marked as such and it is hoped that the advertised bus stop in Howe Hill will be reinstated accordingly. Representations in respect of local or community transport will be made to the Watlington Neighbourhood Plan Core Committee to ensure that Howe Hill gains recognition as a settlement on the B480 servicing Watlington to Reading, Henley & Nettlebed

## Summary

This document has been sent to SODC, OCC, ORCC, the Chilterns Conservation Board, the Campaign for Rural England and the Henley Standard and to all the Residents of Howe Hill as part of the post consultation process

*Watlington Parish Council have formally approved this resolution:*

**“The settlement known as Howe Hill to be formally recognised and identified with signs saying “Howe Hill” and placed to include properties based at both the bottom and top of the hill, from the properties of Howe Combe and The Howe at the bottom to Seymour Green Cottages at the top” “Exact placement of gateway signs to be made following consultation with Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council Highways and ideally to coincide with the current 40 mph zone to avoid confusion and minimise the number of signs. Entrance and exit signs to be clear in content and visibility and in accordance with Department of Transport Guidelines”**

### HOWE HILL First Survey

#### Introductory notes

Copies of questionnaires were personally delivered to all the properties on Howe Hill and in the immediate adjacent area (25 properties were included) during the first part of September

Ten properties at the top of the hill, ten at the bottom, two at Seymour Green Cottages and three who are in very close proximity to Howe Hill (at the beginning of the approach to Greenfield)

22 responses were made, but two properties are either empty or about to change hands – this represents an 88% response rate

#### The following therefore represents a representative sample of opinion

The percentages quoted are based on “yes or no” answers to the questions posed – in a few cases respondents did not answer some questions on which they presumably had no views and the assumption is that the few properties that have not responded also have no firm views or are happy with Howe Hill as it is and not looking for change

Has the 40 mph speed limit made a difference? <b>Divided opinion</b>	52% say yes
<b>Should white marker gates and road roundels be added. Emphatic support</b>	<b>87% say yes</b>
Community run speed trap idea	76% say yes

Community run vehicle weight limit check for HGV's	50% say yes
Speed advisory signs	68% say yes
Volunteering	42% said yes
50 mph per hour restriction with 30 mph stretches	80% in favour
Signage from Watlington telling traffic the way to Howe Hill	59% in favour
Worn out roads	90% are concerned
Potholes	52% are concerned
Damaged road edges	81% are concerned
Sign maintenance	47% are concerned
<b>Overhanging branches</b>	<b>90% are concerned</b>
Verges and grass cutting	82% are concerned
Kerb clearance	90% are concerned
Awareness of the campaign group "Watlington Against HGV's" NOW WATNEXT	68% are aware
Use of a minibus facility for you or your family if available	65% support the idea

<b>A transport link to Watlington via minibus</b>	<b>53% would use</b>
Á transport link to Nettlebed via minibus	8% would use
Á transport link to Lewknor and the M40 via minibus	50% would use
Á transport link to Thame via minibus	27% would use
Á transport link to Wallingford via minibus	57% would use
<b>Á transport link to Henley via minibus</b>	<b>69% would use</b>
Á transport link to Reading via minibus	40% would use

<b>Is fast broadband important?</b>	<b>91% said yes</b>
<b>Should Howe Hill be treated as a whole for broadband?</b>	<b>91% said yes</b>
<b>Might Howe Hill miss out on fast broadband?</b>	<b>81% said yes</b>
Use of fast broadband for work	84% said yes
Use of fast broadband for education	75% said yes
Use of fast broadband used for shopping	88% said yes
Use of fast broadband used for home entertainment	77% said yes

Use of fast broadband used for accessing council, healthcare and other services	88% said yes

A clear identity for Howe Hill	95% said yes
Road signs saying Howe Hill points of entrance to the settlement	91% said yes

[Peter.richardson17@gmail.com](mailto:Peter.richardson17@gmail.com) 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013

## Second Residents Survey Results

This survey provides robust evidence in respect of resident's opinions in relation to the proposal to give a clear identity to Howe Hill with marked signs. The Parish Council have acknowledged the results of the first survey and this survey was conducted to confirm some additional points

For the purposes of this survey "Howe Hill" as stated means the complete length of the hill as shown on the accompanying map produced by OCC when allocating the 40 mph speed limit zone of 1530 metres - <b>36 individual responses received</b>
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1. Should the whole of Howe Hill be treated with one unified identity?	Yes 36	No 0

2. Are you aware of the names by which different parts of Howe Hill were known over past years? Names recognised shown by numbers accordingly from the "yes" response	Yes 18	No 18
The Hoe 3		
Watlington Hoe 4		
The Howe 15		
Howe 3		
Seymour Green 8		
3. Would you prefer another name other than "Howe Hill"?	Yes 2	No 31 - if Yes please state ... no suggestions

4. Should the new name markers cover the 1530 metres zone as the existing 40 mph signs?	Yes 34 No 0
5. Would you support the idea of two settlements? One at the top and one at the bottom If not would this be because: a. It is unnecessary 23 b. It is confusing and complicates the issue 26 c. There is no continuity for traffic 19 d. There would be more signs than necessary 24	Yes 1 No 34
6. Is it important that Howe Hill be recognised as one settlement within the Parish of Watlington in accordance with the area of the Watlington Neighbourhood Plan?	Yes 36 No 0
7. When placing new name signs on the hill, which of the following two options is the most important consideration (tick one only) Historical references to place names 2 Speed and road safety applicable to current residents and road users 33	
8. If name signs were placed ONLY at the very top section of Howe Hill, would this put houses lower down at a disadvantage? If so would this be because: a. It would be confusing to emergency services, visitors and delivery drivers 24 b. We are one settlement and should be recognised as such 30 c. Traffic speed and the continuity of the 40 mph zone 28	Yes 34 No 0

Peter Richardson 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## Quick Reference CLP Actions

Objective	Status	Action	Timescale
Named identity of settlement	Approved by residents on survey and initial consultation	Awaiting approval and implementation from Oxfordshire County Council following a request from Watlington Parish Council	Summer 2014 is the target for signs to be put in place
Broadband	Approved by Watlington Parish Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council, The Campaign for Rural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board		
	Discussions in progress with BT Open Reach and South Oxfordshire District Council	Support required from other local communities who may be outside the rollout area of the fibre broadband	Ongoing
Speed	Oxfordshire County Council have carried out a traffic management survey and concluded that the majority of traffic does not exceed the 40 mph speed limit	Pressure for more regular speed enforcement following the implementation of identity signs on Thames Valley Police Lobbying Oxfordshire County Council to adapt a 50 mph policy to the approaches to Howe Hill in common with other B roads	Ongoing
Bus Transport	Only survey opinion to date and request to reinstate a bus stop at a suitable location on Howe Hill	Further consultation with the providers of community transport and local bus service operators	Ongoing and longer term