



Wittenham Vision Action Plan

This Action Plan is the result of two years of consultation and discussion led by a group of residents in the village to produce a community-led plan for the village of Long Wittenham. The aim was to:

- Identify key changes and improvements that the community would like to see
- Identify a clear set of priorities
- Ensure a consistent and 'whole village' approach to developments
- Communicate clearly and involve the whole community

A steering group was established in January 2009 to begin the process of engaging and consulting with the community about their views on the future needs of the village.

Lots of fund raising and community events were organised to appeal to all age groups. We approached the groups and clubs in the village, many of which are very well established and already fulfil an important role in our community. This consultation culminated in the production of a questionnaire, copies of which were delivered to every household in February 2010.

We had a response from 412 people – that's a 65% response rate and included people from all parts of the village. The results were distributed as a printed booklet to every household in July 2010.

The information from the consultation led to the steering group identifying five key areas of concern to people living in the village.

An Action Plan launch event was held on 24th September 2010. Eighty people came to the meeting. We were able to establish an 'action group' to look in detail at the issues and possibilities for each of the areas of major concern. Thirty people were inspired to join the community plan process to help with the action groups in which they had a particular interest.

Perhaps the best outcome of the community-led planning process has been the way the community has worked together and neighbours have had a chance to get to know each other better. The questionnaire results showed that this was something villagers valued about living here and the last two years have allowed an even stronger sense of community to develop through the meetings and events.

The Wittenham Events email list which developed from the questionnaire has also been a great success in keeping everyone in touch with what is going on.



Bonfire night

Action group activity

The five key areas identified from the questionnaire are:

- Appearance and sustainability
- Village shop or market
- Village hall and leisure facilities
- Traffic and parking
- Footpath to Clifton Hampden



Fun Run

Appearance and sustainability

This action group has taken on the important task of organising litter picks twice a year. These have already improved the general tidiness of the village. The group hopes to do more by planting bulbs and flowers in the verges and common spaces where appropriate.

The group has disseminated information about the bulk oil buying scheme set up by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) and is investigating other ways to make the village more sustainable – solar panels can already be seen on some houses in the village. There is the exciting prospect of producing hydro electric power from the weir. The group is applying for grants to carry out a feasibility study to see if we can indeed generate electricity in this way to provide power for the school and an income for the village.

If there is a demand the action group also hopes to increase the use of the allotments in the village. A Swap Shop, bird boxes and a conservation and history survey are also being planned for the future. It is hoped some of the history and heritage can be shared through information boards for the village.



Litter pick: Belinda Wilson and Sally Duff

Village shop or market

The shop/market action group has reviewed a wide range of options for the village over the last 6 months. The group feels that a dedicated shop is probably not the appropriate route at this time due to the wide range of other local retail options. The group does however feel that there is scope for stalls/markets to be periodically run in the village to provide a range of goods along with food and drinks to create a community hub/event.

We supported the village school PTA and **they** have **now** run two market stalls at the school selling out completely at the most recent event. We would like to trial a broader market in the village, but need volunteers to help run this - let us know if you are interested.

We also intend to put together a local suppliers/producers directory that will be distributed to all houses in the village.



Market Stall: Victoria Parry and Sam Pritchard

Long Wittenham Village Action Plan					
Area	Who is responsible (lead and partners)	What has been achieved so far	Planned for next 12 months	Longer term vision	Potential barriers
Village appearance and sustainability	Lead: Wittenham Vision Partners: History Group, other village groups, ORCC	Twice yearly litter picks Information about bulk oil buying scheme distributed Recycling information distributed	Plant grass verges Increase uptake of allotments Feasibility study for hydro-electricity power from the weir Conservation and historical audit Village Swap Shop Bird boxes	If feasible install hydro-electric generator Repair cycle path to Didcot	Funding
Village hall / community facility	Lead: Wittenham Vision Partners: Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Pre-School, landowners, SODC	Identified potential sites Consulted local planners	Evaluate options including feasibility Consult village on options	Build a new, larger community facility with parking and a central location	Funding Planning
Outdoor play and sports areas	Lead: Parish Council Partners: Long Wittenham Athletic Club	Acklings field (see map) has been levelled and seeded	Install football, basketball and cricket equipment - to be opened officially in early summer	Encourage the development of team sports at Bodkins Field or Acklings Field	Volunteers to run teams and pitches
Village shop or market	Lead: Wittenham Vision Partners: Clifton shop, school, pubs	Considered a wide range of options Trialled market stall at school	Produce a directory of local suppliers and retailers Trial a broader village market	Explore other shop or market formats for the village	Commercial viability, planning and funding Volunteers to organise and run
Path to Clifton Hampden	Lead: Wittenham Vision, Partners: Environment Agency, Parish Council, landowners	Identified two options Environment Agency has agreed to open weir	Seek agreement from landowner to allow access across the island to Thames Path	Establish a more direct path following the road to Clifton Hampden	Landowners Funding
Community	Lead: Sally Duff Partners: Bonfire Committee, Wittenham Vision, individuals	Email events list Bonfire night Fun Run Parish Council news in Wittenham Ways	Established events to continue Set up a village social events committee Fundraising events as needed	Organise further events to enrich community life	
Traffic and parking	Lead : Wittenham Vision Partners : Parish Council, School, Oxfordshire County Council	Understood concerns of villagers 'Walking bus' to school Cycle Pods at School Pubs opening car parks for School	Traffic count Encourage less parking on High Street Review traffic calming	Identify and implement further actions to improve traffic and parking in the village	Funding
Ward's Field owned by the Parochial Church Council (PCC)	Lead: PCC Partners: Parish Council, Wittenham Vision, Pendon Museum, local residents, other village groups	Consulted with village on options	Evaluate options and agree best use of field	Establish a community space by the river	
St Mary's Church	Lead: PCC Partners: Wittenham Vision, parishioners		Initial restoration work on south parapet Engage more with parishioners Strengthen links with school	Install disabled-friendly toilet and install small sink Partition south chapel to be a church and community meeting room	Funding

Village hall and leisure facilities

The village hall action group has identified a range of sites in the village that either belong to the Parish Council or have, at some time in the past 15 years been the subject of discussion as possible sites for a new village facility. The current village hall is much loved by its users but the roof needs to be replaced at some time in the near future at a predicted cost of at least £30,000. The consultation sent a clear message that people in the village would like to see a facility that is centrally located, which can provide a wider range of uses and has more parking.

The action group is actively working with the Parish Council to arrive at a viable proposal that would be workable and would satisfy the needs of the village now and in the future. The village will be consulted further at every stage to get your ideas and opinions.

Traffic and parking

The volume of traffic through the village is undoubtedly an issue of great concern to residents. This is a particular problem at certain times of the day. The first step is to work with OCC Highways to carry out a traffic count that will be recognised by the authorities and will give a baseline for traffic volumes. There is a long wish list for this group including a review of the traffic calming provision and consideration of measures to encourage less parking on the High Street.

Already the school has installed 'cycle pods' in the playground and is encouraging the children to walk or cycle to school. Both The Vine and The Plough allow parents to park in their car parks at the beginning and end of the school day; all these initiatives will help reduce the parking along the High Street.

Footpath to Clifton Hampden

The footpath action group has, after much research and discussion, identified two options. One option would follow the route of the road to Clifton Hampden and would provide a safe route for both cyclists and pedestrians. At present there is no agreement from landowners to pursue this option but discussions continue. Another option, which would be suitable for pedestrians, would provide a permanent link to the Thames Path at Clifton Hampden via the weir (see map on p.11). Discussions are continuing to see if this could become a reality.

Other actions

You will notice that some additional actions have been added to the plan that may not have come up in the consultation. The steering group felt that it was important to make sure that the most significant issues were all represented on the Action Plan – so for instance Ward's field, which was not a village issue at the beginning of the consultation, has been added. Ward's field was generously given to the PCC (Parochial Church Council) by Mercy Ward's brother, Tommy Ward, in 2010 and the PCC is keen that part of the field is kept as a community resource. The school and the church are also fully engaged with this process as they are fundamental to the fabric of village life.

There are some other issues which were not raised as of special concern during the consultation process; employment opportunities locally, issues relating to home-working such as broadband speed and the strength of the mobile phone signal, public transport provision and the building of more houses. These are not therefore part of the current Action Plan but clearly they are subjects that should be reviewed regularly for possible inclusion into the plan at a later date.

Action Plan summary table

As you have read above, many actions have already been achieved in the five key areas of concern, and these are summarised in the Action Plan in the table on the centre pages.

The table also includes the actions we hope to complete in the next 12 months, and some longer term actions, which are large and ambitious projects. It is important to remember that there are potential barriers, not least funding, that means we might not achieve everything in the plan.

However, we should celebrate the successes to date from the Wittenham Vision team, which has (in addition to all the achievements of the action groups) created two new annual events in our village calendar (the Bonfire Night and Fun Run) and set up the hugely successful village events email list, which has over 180 people who now receive regular notifications about forthcoming events. The Action Plan is a working document that will be updated and adapted over time.

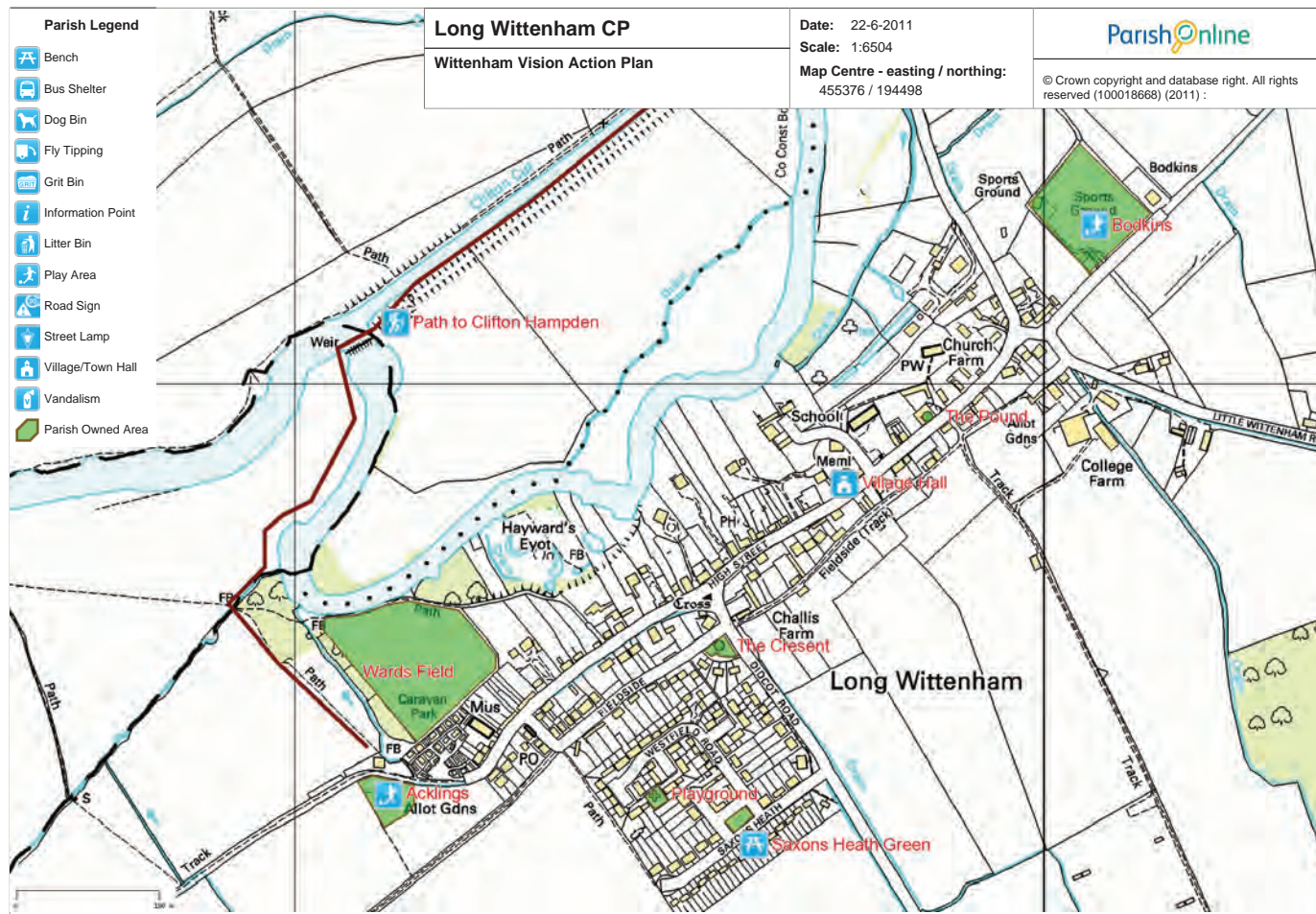
Conclusion

Now we have carried out this process in conjunction with ORCC and in consultation with SODC, we can confidently move forward with the Action Plan knowing that it is the result of robust community-wide consultation.

A great big thank you to **everyone** who has taken the time and trouble to contribute at any stage of this process. Particular thanks go to Anton Nath from ORCC, Emma Morris from SODC and Celia Collett our District Councillor all of whom have been so supportive from the beginning.

We work closely with the Parish Council to share information and where possible update the whole village. Regular updates are communicated to the village via The Bridge and Wittenham Ways.

This has been a very positive process which has engaged many people from the village. There is still much work to do and we really need more people to help – if you would like to get involved you would be very welcome. Ideas and suggestions are much appreciated.



Contacts

To receive regular notification of upcoming events :

welcome@wittenhamvision.com

To post an event: info@wittenhamvision.com

To find out more about Wittenham Vision or to contribute to the work of the action groups contact: cath.n@btinternet.com or telephone 407987

To contact Long Wittenham Parish Council: longwittpc@googlemail.com

Village website: www.longwittenham.com