

Woodcote Parish Plan

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Introduction

This document, delivered free to every household in Woodcote, is a summary of the main findings of the Parish Plan process, and contains brief commentaries on these findings, and action plans for the future. More detailed information is available on the Woodcote village website, www.woodcote-online.co.uk, and in Woodcote Library.

Woodcote is a village of just under 2,700 people in the administrative district of South Oxfordshire. Situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the parish runs down the scarp edge of the Chiltern Hills towards the Thames Valley. Its highest point is 185 metres above sea level; the lowest at 60 metres.

The Woodcote Parish Plan sets out the views of residents on their village and its future. Woodcote has already carried out village appraisals – in 1984, 1991 and 2000 – and the Parish Plan has built on the experience of that work. However, a Parish Plan is not simply an appraisal by another name. It clearly sets out its aims for the future of the village, and must be taken into account by those concerned with making any changes to village life.

A key requirement is that the Plan should represent the views of the majority – not the wishes of a small group. Here the experience of carrying out appraisals was invaluable. Each appraisal had been carried out by means of *questionnaires* which went to every household in the parish: a Household Questionnaire for each household, a Personal Questionnaire for every resident of eighteen and over, and a Youth Questionnaire for those aged from eleven to eighteen. The same strategy was used for the Plan, and, as in the past, there was a very high rate of return, showing that the data resulting from these questionnaires really does reflect the views of villagers.

But in addition to this there was *consultation* with interest groups and individuals within the village whose expertise could inform the Plan. Eight focused Working Groups were charged with analysing the relevant data from the questionnaires and consulting with village groups and individuals. Throughout the process, the village was kept informed, and consulted, by means of public meetings and by articles in the *Woodcote Correspondent*, which is delivered free every month to each house in the village.

So we believe that what is suggested here has majority support. However, the Parish Plan process has reminded us all that within the village there are significant minorities. Not all of us are fit and well, car-owning, computer-literate, or have active and fulfilling social lives. A real community will care for all its members, and the questionnaires and consultations have reminded us of the views and needs of the less vocal members of the village. Some of the action points reflect these.

Woodcote Parish Plan Steering Group

A Brief History of Woodcote

At first glance, Woodcote looks like a modern settlement. However, people have lived here for a very long time. This was confirmed when, during 2000, a new gas pipeline was laid in the fields towards South Stoke, just below Woodcote. Accompanying archaeological investigations found a large number of pits containing pottery and animal bones dating from 1000 BC up to the end of the Roman period at the beginning of the fifth century AD. Other pits contained charred grains and hazelnuts radiocarbon-dated to two millennia earlier – 3500 BC. Handaxes and worked flints have been found in many places. A beautifully polished 5,000-year-old axe was found in The Close; an extraordinary larger-than-life carved stone head dated to 500 BC, now on display in Reading Museum, was dug up in a Wayside Green garden; and a hoard of Roman coins was found on the west side of the village.

The first written records of Woodcote date from 1109. At that time, it was part of the manor of South Stoke which was already recorded in the Domesday Book. Soon after the Norman Conquest, the manor of South Stoke passed into the ownership of Eynsham Abbey, then after the Dissolution of the Monasteries to Christ Church, Oxford, which still owns land in this area today.

Until 1952, when it became a parish in its own right, Woodcote was part of South Stoke, a typical Chilterns ‘strip parish’ (within the loop of the Thames in South Oxfordshire, there was a radiating pattern of parishes running in strips up from the river to the top of the hill, ensuring each parish had a variety of resources – river, meadow, arable, woodland and common grazing). South Stoke is a ‘closed village’ centred around its church and manor house; Woodcote is an ‘open’ village, a scattered development of habitations among the woods and around the common. This ‘open’ nature is still a characteristic of Woodcote today. Back in 1853 there were 1750 acres of common land in and around Woodcote. Very little now remains: the most important areas are the Greenmoor Ponds, and the Village Green and Allotments, which are, by law, designated as charitable land and administered by the Parish Council.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Woodcote grew slowly. The population in 1861 was just under 500 and as late as 1931 was only a little over 600. It was only after the Second World War that Woodcote began to develop. By 1961, the population had grown to almost 1,100. After the mid-sixties and the provision of mains drainage there was support for development, which it was thought would bring new shops and services. The population increased from 1,400 in 1965, 2,550 in 1991 to just under 2,700 today.

For more intriguing facts about Woodcote’s past, visit the Woodcote Library, where you will find booklets, articles and documents concerned with our local history. See especially Woodcote: Portrait of a South Chiltern Village, by Vicky Jordan.

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Around the time that the green light was given for the expansion of Woodcote, the area in which the village lies was designated the ‘Chilterns Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty' (AONB). One of the main aims of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The AONB has national importance, with the Chilterns countryside being recognised as amongst the finest in the country, on a par with National Parks. The beauty of the natural surroundings is a very important feature of people's enjoyment of living in Woodcote – a finding that is consistent though all the appraisals and again now in the Parish Plan.

Woodcote Today

People like living in Woodcote and value the natural surroundings very highly. Residents tend to stay, and even when they move, often do so within the village. As a consequence, Woodcote's age profile is steadily rising. There is a high level of employment, but the percentage of retired people is increasing. What will this mean for health care and housing in the next two or three decades? Woodcote once had a sheltered housing complex for the elderly, but this no longer has a resident warden.

The current population is now around 2,700 as infill development has taken place over the years, but the vision of more facilities and services has not been wholly fulfilled. There are now fewer shops in the village than back in the 1960s or even the 1990s. High car ownership and the increase in internet shopping, especially after the advent of Broadband to Woodcote in 2004, have meant that for many people this is not a major problem. However, the needs of those without cars or computers must not be forgotten, and of course those shops that do remain are under increasing pressure from competition outside the village.

So what happens next?

This document will help inform the decisions reached by Oxfordshire County Council, which is responsible for education, social services, libraries, highways and public transport; South Oxfordshire District Council, which is responsible for planning, housing, sports facilities and waste recycling; the Parish Council, which is responsible for village maintenance; and other statutory bodies. But we do not need to leave everything that happens here in Woodcote to others. There are many things that we can do for ourselves. Many developments that come about today are funded by grants, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Grant-awarding bodies require evidence of community need and support, evidence which may well exist in our data bank. Other initiatives need no more than time and commitment.

So it is now up to us to build on what we have discovered, and help shape

Our Village, Our Future.

The Natural Environment

- 99% of questionnaire respondents want to protect the countryside around Woodcote and the natural features in the village.
- 77% use the footpaths and bridleways in the countryside around the village.
- 197 respondents said that they cycle to the shops.
- Litter and dog-fouling are major concerns.

Woodcote is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) a designation which requires that policies and decisions affecting the area should focus on conservation and enhancement of our local landscape. In addition, there are no fewer than six officially-designated County Wildlife Sites in the parish, with a further thirteen in the immediate surroundings. The questionnaire results provide a picture of a community that is extremely appreciative of the village's rural setting, and is concerned to preserve and protect it. This accords with the views expressed over the years in previous village appraisals, where protection of the natural environment has repeatedly come out as a number-one priority. Woodcote villagers not only enjoy the surrounding countryside, but also the natural features inside the village. Moreover, nearly all houses in Woodcote have their own gardens, with 56% of responding householders saying they actively encourage wildlife in their gardens, and 23% saying that they have a garden pond.

Many people, however, felt that there are significant problems relating to the natural environment. There is a sense that the rural character of the village and its surroundings has already been harmed and is under further threat. The possibility of inappropriate development (addressed elsewhere in this Plan) is an overarching worry, and there are numerous concerns about traffic in the village. The lack of facilities for cyclists, such as bicycle racks and safe routes, is repeatedly mentioned, and several young people regretted that it was not safe or easy for them to cycle to school. Litter and dog-fouling are also perceived as problems that spoil people's enjoyment of the village and its surroundings.

Looking at the responses on people's way of life more broadly, it is striking that less than a third of the 719 households with gardens actually compost or recycle their garden waste, and, though over 90% of houses in the village have some loft insulation and double-glazing, fewer than 9% of householders have made use of government grants to insulate their houses. Only nine households said they have solar heating panels, and none generated power from photo-voltaics or had a wind-power installation. These are all areas where provision of easily-accessible advice and information about what is available (using, for instance, the Library, the Coffee Shop, or notice-boards) could help make modern Woodcote a more 'environmentally-friendly' village, in keeping not only with the clear wishes of its inhabitants, but also with the AONB status of our surrounding countryside.

AIMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Assess the environmental assets and natural habitats in Woodcote	Conduct Village Environmental Audit (database of text, image, and sound)	Woodcote Conservation Group local schools local, county, and national environmental and natural history organisations Chilterns AONB office	2009, with subsequent updates	Medium	High
Create a cleaner and more environmentally-friendly Woodcote	Emphasise the issues and publicise sources of support; village litter-clearing days; more dog bins and notices – not just in village centre	Parish Council local schools local vets SODC	2008	Low	High
	Present a workshop on 'The Environmentally-friendly Garden'	Woodcote Conservation Group	2008	Low	High
	Publicise sources of information and support on energy-saving in the home	Parish Council local schools SODC	2008	Low	High
Encourage cycling in village	Create more cycle racks and establish safe cycle routes	Cyclists' Touring Club Parish Council local schools shops Medical Practice	2008-9	Medium	High
Maintain and encourage use of local footpaths	Produce local footpath map and walks guide; monitor and maintain paths	Woodcote Conservation Group local Ramblers' Association, Parish and County Councils <i>Woodcote Correspondent</i>	2008-9	Low	Medium

The Built Environment

- 67% of respondents did not wish for any further development in Woodcote.
- 40% of Woodcote houses have four or more bedrooms.
- Three quarters of the 18% of respondents who supported additional housing wished to see it for young people.

This section describes the current built environment and outlines the residents' wishes for the future development of their surroundings over the next twenty years. We need to address the balance between different types of housing; the balance between housing and employment in our parish; and that between social and privately owned housing.

Over the past forty years Woodcote has developed at unevenly and the balance of housing has changed. The built environment can be reviewed along three distinct lines:

1. People to housing – The requirements of the community from housing types (rented or privately owned) through housing needs (for instance size, rooms) to price.
2. Housing to employment – The need for housing to meet the employment already available in the area, or possibly additional employment for people living locally.
3. Housing to services – Sustainable services needed within the village such as healthcare, shops, schooling and transport.

Woodcote has a high proportion of large houses – 40% with four or more bedrooms. This has developed over time and is clearly affecting the average house price in the village. In addition the stock of one- and two-bedroom housing is low (21%). Thus there is a limited stock of entry or low-cost housing.

One area that was very clear is that there is a majority objection (67%) to further housing development that would expand the village or change its environment, and most residents wish to defend our environment against unnecessary building. There was support for the creation of a Conservation Area in the village. Living in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is valuable to Woodcote residents and 99% of respondents said that the countryside around Woodcote was important and worth protecting.

There is a need for entry priced housing for young people, with three quarters of the 18% of respondents who saw a need for additional housing requesting this. Of those who wanted additional housing, 56% preferred it to be infill. 55% specified low-cost housing but it is unclear if this is for purchase or rental.

There have been many recorded facts about the village but we feel that there is little record of the environment or indeed the character of the village. In response to this we conduct an audit of the village recording the village as we see it today. This will enable us to be able to demonstrate the nature of our environment within the village.

In addition to the audit it would be a good idea to document the design and density of the built environment within the village. The street scene within Woodcote is full of open spaces and housing is primarily set back from the road with green areas surrounding property. This document would help us show our commitment to the AONB and make suggestions to the planning officers.

We have noted that there appears to be a small housing need within the village. However this need is minimal, with 85% of questionnaire respondents not viewing obtaining housing for local needs as a problem. Thus we should be able to guide the development agencies with our own Woodcote Housing Development Report.

Following the SODC's request for possible land for development within the area there has been much objection to development within the village. However many villagers have little knowledge of key areas within the village beyond the main roads. It is thus proposed that we invest time to get to know our village, and understand its character and individuality, including a campaign to encourage residents to explore the village further, and to discover what it is that makes our natural and built environment worth preserving.

AIMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Document the built environment within the village	Audit buildings of interest – identify, document, photograph buildings of interest in the village (listed and otherwise)	Parish Council Built Environment Group	Summer 2008	Low	High
	Document the design and density of Woodcote's present built character within the AONB	Parish Council Built Environment Group	Summer 2008	Low	Medium
Village housing needs assessment	Create a village Housing Development Report	Parish Council Built Environment Group	Summer 2008	Low	High
Create awareness of the village and proposed development within the parish	Know Your Village Campaign	Parish Council Built Environment Group	Summer 2008	Low / Medium	Medium
Establish one or more Conservation Area(s) in the village	Use the Correspondent and other village media to initiate discussion on suitable locations and follow through proposals arising	Parish and District Councils Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England	2008	Low	Medium

Business and Employment

- 62% of adults are employed or self-employed.
- Respondents supported the development for services such as house repairs and maintenance.
- 50% of Woodcote businesses rely on customers from within the village.

As a relatively large village Woodcote provides substantial employment in the education sector. Additionally it has a number of independent businesses. Employment rates within Woodcote continue to be high at 62%: a reduction from 70% in 2000. This may be a consequence of the ageing population.

76% of adults are now over 40, compared with 69% in 2000 and 60% in 1991. Of those in employment, 22% are self-employed. Approximately two-thirds of them work full-time, and one-third part-time.

Out of 290 responses from eleven- to eighteen-year-olds, eight are in full-time employment and thirty-one in part-time employment. One person is an apprentice. Opportunities for part-time work in the village for young people still in education include newspaper rounds and working in retail outlets.

There has been little change since the appraisal in 2000 in the number of businesses located in Woodcote (thirty-six in business premises) and The Oratory School is still the major employer. However, the closure of the Chiltern Queens Bus Depot in Long Toll since 2000 has meant that fifty jobs have been lost.

The statistics for all businesses which took part in the consultation show that 46% of employees are from Woodcote, down from 56% in 2000.

Woodcote has retained a reasonable range of shops and services, but these are under increasing pressure from large supermarkets and the advent of internet shopping services. Despite this, local shops are highly valued for day-to-day purchases. We need to continue to support these businesses to ensure their survival.

Of the businesses we consulted, 50% stated that their business relied on custom from local people. The other 50% said their market was further afield or even national.

We asked people which new businesses they would support being developed in the village. The responses were as follows:

Bed & Breakfast	367	Financial	135
Plumbing	300	Tourism	131
Electrical	286	Legal	128
Carpentry	284	Building	109

A number of requests were made for commodities or services that are already available within the village. Requests were also made for take-aways and a stand-alone pharmacy, but with the realisation that demand for these could well be insufficient.

Woodcote is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore also has potential for businesses associated with the leisure and tourism industry.

AIMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Increase awareness of existing services	Inform local businesses of the requests for goods and services. Inform them of the Woodcote Village Welcome Pack	Diane Jones St Leonards Church Welcome Pack committee	Spring 2008	Low	High

Communications

- 97% of adults and 73% of young people responding read the *Woodcote Correspondent* and 96% of those readers find it useful.
- Only 5% of respondents use the Woodcote village website to inform themselves of village activities.
- 24% make use of the Village Directory published by the Parish Council.

Village information is disseminated by various means:

Free monthly village newsletter (*Woodcote Correspondent*), delivered to every household in the village

Two main Woodcote Village Websites: one based on Village Hall and Pre-School information, one general (www.woodcote.org, www.woodcote-online.co.uk)

Village noticeboards

Annual Village Directory

Local newspapers

Posters and flyers

Word of mouth

The *Woodcote Correspondent* is still the main source of information in the village. The high readership level shows that the *Correspondent* makes a valuable contribution to village life. There were some suggestions for improvements which will be submitted to the editor.

Despite the arrival of Broadband in Woodcote since the 2000 appraisal, only 5% of respondents say they use the village websites to obtain information. There are a number of local websites, not all of which link together. This may lead to confusion. In addition, they are not regularly updated. Perhaps, either the village community do not know about the websites, or they are not providing the right information. This is particularly significant in the case of the webpage detailing forthcoming events. Closer co-operation between the *Woodcote Correspondent* and the websites might be a way forward and groups should be encouraged to contact the Webmaster regularly themselves.

Only 24% of adults said they made use of the Village Directory published by the Parish Council. Therefore a potentially useful source of information appears to be under-rated. Various suggestions for improvement were proposed, including changing the format: for example, extracting a list of essential contact details and publishing it in postcard size, so it could be kept by the telephone. This would be a helpful addition to the main body of information.

Although many people now have mobile phones, 5% of adult respondents used the two public telephones in the village, the one at Beech Lane/Goring Road being more popular than the one at Whitehouse Road/The Close. It is clear, therefore, that there is a need for these, and efforts should be made to keep them in place, making sure that any faults or damage are reported promptly.

Other methods of communication showed much the same levels of usage as reported in the last Appraisal published in 2000 - village notice boards 38% (39% in 2000), Henley Standard 40% (39% in 2000), and word of mouth 57% (52% in 2000).

AIMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Maintain or improve the readership of the <i>Woodcote Correspondent</i>	Review the comments made in the questionnaire and pass to the editorial team	<i>Correspondent</i> editorial group	Summer 2008	Nil/low	Medium
	Suggest a closer co-operation between the <i>Woodcote Correspondent</i> and the village websites	<i>Correspondent</i> editorial group Website webmasters	Summer 2008	Low	High
Improve the usefulness of the Village website	Ensure one on-line communication for the village through a single portal	Parish Council Website webmasters	Summer 2008	Low / medium	High
	Ensure information is updated monthly	Parish Council All other contributors	Summer 2008	Low	High
	Encourage development of website to include more relevant content such as the Village Directory and contents of the <i>Woodcote Correspondent</i>	Parish Council <i>Correspondent</i> Editorial group. Webmaster	Summer 2008	Medium	High
Reformat Village Directory	Consider supplementing the Village Directory by production of essential data on postcards	Parish Council	Spring 2008	Low	Medium / high

Health

- 14% of respondents said they had a health problem that affected their ordinary life.
- 78% rated Goring and Woodcote Medical Practice as good although 100 people were dissatisfied with the appointments system.
- 60% chose the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading for hospital treatment but faced serious problems with travel and parking.

Our own health is vital to us; and so are the services that help us maintain it. Our first contact with health professionals is likely to be at a local Health Centre and so it is not surprising that over 90% of Woodcote households use the Goring and Woodcote Medical Practice. 77% of those completing the personal questionnaire rated our doctors' medical care good and 70% rated dispensing, nurses' treatments and clinics good. There was an overall rating of good from 78% of NHS patients.

Only getting an appointment had a lower rating, with 52% calling it good and 9% calling it bad. This means that over 100 people were dissatisfied. There was a clear desire of patients to be treated at all times by the doctor who knew their medical history. The young people's survey indicates another problem: 20% said they had to miss a lot of the school day to attend an appointment and over 30% thought having different hours would help. The issue of extending surgery hours has also been raised by the Government and it is one that the new Patients Group will discuss with the Practice. This Patients Group, set up by the Practice over the last year, seeks to improve communications and develop co-operation between patients and the medical staff. Responses to the Parish Plan and on the Consultation Day have provided useful evidence.

If more specialist help is needed Woodcote residents have a choice of locations for medical care. About 60% said they visit the Royal Berkshire Hospital, 18% named Oxford hospitals and about 15% cited the community hospitals at Wallingford and Henley (Townlands). Whilst few people worried about getting to the Woodcote surgery or to Wallingford Hospital, 40% of households stated they had difficulty accessing the others. Many people bemoaned the problems of getting across Reading or Oxford, trying to find a parking place and paying for the car park. We should encourage the current health policy of moving more clinics and treatments to the community hospitals and ensure that we are referred to them whenever possible. Improvements to bus routes would help access to Henley and the Oxford hospitals for visitors and patients.

Whilst there is consensus that our medical practice serves us well, there is a very different view of dental services. Approximately 37% said they have an NHS dentist, 48% visit a dentist privately and 15% (226 adults) have no dentist. The most common health issue in the open answers was the absence of a dentist in Woodcote, let alone an NHS one. Improved access to dentistry is important for many Woodcote residents.

Finally, all villagers should be aware that 14% of adults and 10% of young people have a health problem that affects their everyday life. Diabetes, asthma, allergies,

deafness, arthritis and other physical difficulties are increasingly common. This must be borne in mind when decisions on village life are made. As a village community everyone can help by being thoughtful and considerate to the needs of all residents.

AIMS	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Improve access to NHS dentistry for Woodcote residents	Consult with local dentists on the viability of a Woodcote dentist	Health Action Group PCT Local Dentists	Starting spring 2008	Low	High
Maximise the impact of the Practice Patients Group	Raise the profile of the PPG in the village Work to develop a good relationship with the Practice	Patient Group Practice Manager Doctors & Staff.	Starting spring 2008	Low	High
Maximise the use of the community hospitals	Ensure villagers know the services available at community hospitals	Patient Group Practice Manager Doctors and Staff	Starting spring 2008	Low	High
Improve awareness of the practical needs of villagers with health issues	Use the <i>Woodcote Correspondent</i> and other media to highlight health needs and experiences of villagers	Health Action Group	Starting spring 2008	Low	Medium

Services & Utilities

- Most residents are satisfied with village utilities and services
- Nearly three quarters are unhappy with policing
- 82% of household respondents regularly use a green recycling box, while 58% often use the bottle bank
- 35% of household respondents would like to see a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in their area

Overall, people in Woodcote are happy with the provision and maintenance of household utilities and the services provided by Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Woodcote Parish Council.

The exception concerns policing: when asked if they were satisfied with the level of policing in Woodcote, 71% of respondents said they were not. However, only 10% of households belonged to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Over a period of two years, thirty-one people reported having their car stolen and ninety-six had their car vandalised. For a time in 2007, two Community Police Support Officers were assigned to Woodcote, but at the moment this service is not available. In 2008, a Community Police Office to serve the local area will be set up in the Community Centre.

The Citizens Advice Bureau operates fortnightly in the Community Centre, both by appointment and on a drop-in basis. 71% of recent clients found it useful.

The free green box doorstep collection has been a success in Woodcote, with a huge majority of respondents saying they use it. Only 6% never do. The bottle bank is also popular, with 90% of respondents using it. Only 30% of respondents have a brown bin for garden waste, possibly because there is a separate charge involved.

Since the Chiltern Queens bus service was taken over by Thames Travel buses have become more frequent and regular between Woodcote and both Oxford and Reading. The service starts very early in the morning and runs every hour until the small hours of the night. There is an express bus, the X39, which runs on the half hour between the standard hourly Woodcote service. It uses the A4074 Reading to Wallingford main road and the District Councillor is lobbying for this service to call in at Woodcote for one stop.

When asked if they were satisfied with the existing bus services 76% said that they were. Of bus users 51% used the bus weekly to do shopping and 47% used the bus daily to go to work.

Respondents were consulted about the current state of the roads within the village and 18% of them felt they were in poor condition. 16% also complained that the condition of the off-road footpaths was poor. Most people were satisfied with the amount of street lighting. However, 71% of adults and 43% of young people were concerned about road safety. The Goring Road and the Memorial crossroads were mentioned as being particularly hazardous.

The Parish Council is made up of local residents elected by Woodcote villagers to represent their interests. 72% of questionnaire respondents said they knew how to contact the Parish Council. Only 16% felt that its meetings and decisions should be better publicised

Aim	Action	Key Contact	Time Scale	Cost	Priority
To improve the level of policing	Lobby for permanent Community Police Support Officers	Thames Valley Police Authority Oxfordshire County Council Parish Council	2008	High	High
To maintain and improve the level of recycling	Retain the bottle bank Request the resumption of bulky garden waste collection Request kerbside collection of glass	Parish Council South Oxfordshire District Council	2008	Medium	High
To reduce crime, and the fear of crime	Support areas to set up Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	Thames Valley Police Authority Parish Council	2008	Low	Medium
To reduce levels of drug and alcohol abuse	Support Youth Worker and improve links with Langtree School	Thames Valley Police Authority Parish Council Langtree School Youth worker District Councillor	2008	Medium	High

Social Activities and Sports

- More than forty clubs and societies operate within the village but many people are not aware of the range of activities available.
- 75% of residents valued the presence of the churches in the village.
- More than three-quarters of Woodcote people use the Village Hall and/or the Community Centre.

Woodcote is very well blessed with over forty clubs and societies, which provide opportunities for people of all ages. The wide range of facilities, including those at Langtree school, mean that Woodcote is a focal point in the area for groups to meet. More than three-quarters of Woodcote residents use the Village Hall and/or Community Centre.

Some societies have been in existence for over a hundred years (Cricket Club founded in 1880), while others are very new (Under-10s Football Club founded in October 2007). There is a long tradition of voluntary community service. There is a wide variety of activities for all ages and many interests, but it is clear that there are some villagers who are still not aware of what is available.

The Village Hall Management Committee is in the process of seeking funding in order to improve and enlarge the hall facilities. All regular users have been fully consulted about their needs as part of the planning process and all villagers were given the opportunity, at the Village Hall Open Day, to view some possible plans. Regrettably, the bid for lottery funding was unsuccessful, but the commitment to major refurbishment remains and future lottery bid is under consideration.

The Village Green is a wonderful amenity and gives Woodcote its distinctive character. The new children's playground, constructed in 2006, with its state-of-the-art equipment is hugely popular and very well used. This was provided after fund raising from local residents. Many sports groups are regularly active on the Village Green.

Langtree School has plans for a floodlit Astroturf pitch for school and community use. This would be welcomed by sports clubs; however there are some misgivings within the village about the environmental impact of this project. Langtree sports hall is in the process of modernisation and will be available for school and community use. The school has recently been awarded Performing Arts status and it wishes to welcome adults in the community to use updated facilities in the evenings. 33% of respondents said they would be interested in doing this.

The Oratory School currently allows local people to use its swimming pool, sports centre, golf course and sports pitches and they intend to continue doing this for the benefit of the local community.

22% of the respondents said they belonged to a club, society or group within the village. There are many which are not sports based, for instance the very well-

supported Woodcote Amateur Dramatic Society, which presents plays, revues and an annual sell-out pantomime; the Women's Institute, which is a branch of the national society; the Laurels for over-fifties, which meets weekly in the Village Hall; the Woodcote Conservation Group, which is the largest village organisation of its kind in the county; Langtree Sinfonia, which is a thriving orchestra meeting weekly and which gives high quality concerts, to name a selection.

A Coffee Shop is now run in the Community Centre fifty weeks a year on Saturday mornings. It provides a convivial place to meet and raises money for local groups and charities. 37% of respondents say they already use it.

Many local villages are regrettably no longer able to sustain an annual whole-village event. In Woodcote we can celebrate the fact that the Veteran Transport Rally is in its forty-fifth year and continues to grow, drawing visitors from all over the country. In 2007 a world record was set at the Rally with eighteen Burrell Gold Medal tractors in attendance, coming from as far afield as Aberdeen and Holland. Year by year village societies benefit financially from the Rally. thanks to donations from the Woodcote Charitable Association, its parent body. In 2007 £10,000 was given to local causes and since 1964 donations have totalled £307,100.

AIMS	ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	TIME SCALE	COST	PRIORITY
Improve social facilities in the village	Consult on enlargement and modernisation of Village Hall facilities	Village Hall Committee Woodcote Parish Council Heritage Lottery Funding	2008-9	High	High
Improve sports facilities in the village	Consult on the Langtree school proposal for a floodlit Astroturf pitch Increase awareness of other local sporting facilities	Langtree School The Oratory School Football Foundation Oxfordshire County Council Woodcote Parish Council Village Green committee Woodcote sports clubs Langtree feeder primary schools	2008-9	Medium	High

Youth and Education

- Only one-third of primary school age children walk to school
- 96% of eleven- to eighteen-year-olds use the internet at home
- 88% of eleven- to eighteen-year-olds feel that the natural features within the village and the countryside around it should be protected.

Woodcote is fortunate to have two pre-school groups, a state primary school for children up to the age of 11, a state secondary school for eleven- to sixteen-year olds, and the Oratory School, an independent day and boarding Catholic school. Most young people who have attended Langtree School in Woodcote then go on to the Tertiary College in Henley for their post-sixteen education. Adult and community education courses were supported by Oxfordshire County Council and organised here until 2005. Subsequently the number attending courses has shrunk to 4%, though 74% of respondents thought that Community Education should have an important role in village life.

A new Youth Centre was created in part of the Village Hall as Woodcote's Millennium Project and consists of an office for a professional Youth Worker, a dedicated upstairs room and a dual-use function room on the ground floor shared with other users at designated times.

Parents of pre-schoolers are generally happy with what is on offer: 70% of respondents said they were content. The Cabin Pre-School is always fully subscribed. Staff are planning to create a nature garden for exploration and education.

51% of respondents send their under-elevens to Woodcote Primary School but only 34% of these actually walk to school. Outside school hours primary-aged children enjoyed a range of activities both inside and outside the village and 66% felt their needs were met locally. However, 4% wanted a football club for people of this age and this was started up in October 2007 after the questionnaires were distributed.

The Youth Questionnaire was answered by 168 young people aged eleven to eighteen. Of these, 158 were in full-time education and eight in full time employment.

Fewer (27%) attended clubs and organised activities than not (73%) and 67% had never used the Youth Centre. On the other hand, when asked if young people should help to run the Youth Centre, 76% of them thought this would be a good idea and 62% supported the appointment of a permanent professional Youth Worker in Woodcote. The idea of setting up a Youth Forum, which is something the Youth Development Group have been working towards, was appreciated by 57% of young respondents.

Parents supported the idea of school holiday activities for five- to eighteen-year-olds but 77% of them stated they did not want to help run them. The young people, in their own responses, admitted that only 15% of them had actually attended a holiday group or activity in the last two years.

Most activities enjoyed by under-eighteens were sports-based, although 94% of young people used the internet at home. 29% attended a place of worship in Woodcote regularly or occasionally. Protection of the environment is very important to young people. 88% felt that both the countryside around the village and the natural features within it should be protected.

51% of sixteen- to eighteen-year-old respondents said they had their own transport. 44% of bicycle owners wanted cycle racks outside Somerfield and 45% wanted them outside the Village Hall. The young people stated that 30% never used the bus service for getting to leisure pursuits and 26% never used it for shopping.

60% of young people and 57% of adults use the Woodcote Library. This library, in joint use by Langtree School and the public, was created in response to community wishes as expressed in the 1983 appraisal.

Proposals

AIM	PROPOSED ACTIONS	KEY CONTACTS	COST	TIMESCALE	PRIORITY
To create a nature garden for under-fives	Use a space near the Cabin Pre-School building	Cabin Pre-School Woodcote Primary School Woodcote Conservation Group	Low	By summer 2008	High
Encourage children to walk or cycle to school	Consult parents and staff for workable ideas	Oxfordshire County Council Woodcote Primary School Langtree School Parish Council SODC Parents and grandparents	Medium	By autumn 2008	High
Provide beneficial and appropriate activities and opportunities for young people	Employ professional Youth Workers for evening and day sessions at the Youth Centre	Oxfordshire County Council Parish Council Woodcote Youth Development Group	High, but funding already in place	By end 2007	High
Offer quality adult courses, day and evening	Employ tutors for various learning activities for adults and publicise the programme effectively	Oxfordshire County Council Langtree School Woodcote Primary School Community Centre Association Woodcote Village Hall Committee Library	Medium	By autumn 2008	High

St Leonard's Parish Church

My vision is of a future where, thanks to realistic financial support by a wider cross-section of the community, the future of the church building and its churchyard is secured. A church building, moreover, which is fit for purpose in the twenty-first century, open and welcoming at all times, and meeting a whole range of local and charitable needs alongside its worship.

And then, arising out of that, my hope is that more and more people would discover within our growing congregation a place where they can find spiritual resources for a life of both loving service and personal pilgrimage.

The Reverend Nelva Moss, vicar.

Christ the King Roman Catholic Church

Woodcote has a strong, supportive Catholic community of which the parishioners care for those with various needs of all ages. The Catholic church will for the foreseeable future continue in this role, and is always willing to be part of the village community, with its changing population and new challenges.

Father Tom Williams, parish priest for Goring-on Thames and Woodcote

The Woodcote Parish Plan Process.

October 2005	Initial exploratory meeting.
January 2006	Steering Group established.
March 2006	Defra grant awarded. Publicity and consultation at Village Hall Open Morning. <i>Henley Standard</i> report.
June 2006	Village Circus Tuck Shop. Publicity.
August 2006	Village Fun Day: Bowling Alley stall and publicity.
September 2006	Information and training session for questionnaire volunteers.
October/November 2006	Distribution and collection of questionnaires.
January – July 2007	Data input and analysis.
March 2007	Party for questionnaire volunteers.
April 2007	Small Businesses Open Morning in Village Hall: Publicity and consultation.
May 2007	Village Coffee Shop: Fundraising and publicity.
June 2007	Hanging of Woodcote Parish Plan commemorative quilt in Woodcote Library. <i>Henley Standard</i> report.
October 2007	Consultation Day. Exhibition and presentation of main findings of questionnaires and consultation to village for further comment.

Spring 2008

Publication of the Woodcote Parish Plan. Copies sent to every household in the parish, Woodcote Parish council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council.
Publication of 2,000 word commentaries from Working Groups made available on village website.
Archiving of supporting documentation.

Throughout the process, there have been frequent articles in the free monthly *Woodcote Correspondent* informing villagers of progress and inviting comment and support.

Woodcote Parish Plan Steering Group

Chair	Jerry Green
Vice chair	Jo Lilleywhite
Parish Council representatives	Robin Peirce
	Fiona Preston

Mark Buckley
Frances Cork
Diane Jones
Jenny Horsup
Sam Peates
Sue Sandford
John Sandford
Richard Sims
Pat Solomons
Brian Turner

Working Groups

Natural Environment

John Sandford (Chair)
Ian Bernard
Phil Lea
Frank Nowell
John Steel
Helen Walkington

Built Environment

Mark Buckley (Chair)
Frances Cork
Suzi Iyadurai
Robin Peirce
Lucy Wiltshire

Services and Utilities

Robin Peirce

Sports and Leisure

Sam Peates

Communications

Brian Turner

Turner

Business and Employment

Diane Jones (Chair)

Jerry Green

Health

Pat Solomons (Chair)

June Green

Diana Hadaway

Audrey Hawthorne

Youth and Education

Jenny Horsup (Chair)

Karen Woolley

Grateful thanks also to:

- The over fifty volunteers who helped distribute and collect the questionnaires.
- Those who contributed time and ideas to the Working Groups.
- Jan Clegg who designed and made the Woodcote Parish Plan commemorative quilt.
- Those who also worked on the Steering Group at times during the project: Jan Baldwin, Richard Farmer, Carol Grainger, Matthew Heath, Tom Jones, Carol McDougall, Valerie Nowell, Judith Peachey Jill Turner and Dot Tyler.
- The dedicated people who spent long hours on data input from the questionnaires: Linda Burton, Jerry Green, Diana Hadaway, Diane Jones, Jo Lilleywhite, Christine Lyndon, Carol McDougall, Frank Nowell, Fiona Preston, James Preston, John Sandford, Sue Sandford, Richard Sims, Brian Turner.

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Halarose Ltd

Langtree School

Windmill Sales

Woodcote Charitable Association (Woodcote Rally)

Woodcote Parish Council

Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council

All those people of Woodcote who took time to contribute their ideas to the future of the village by completing questionnaires and joining in the consultation process.