

Garford Parish Plan 2009

Produced by Local Residents



Peaceful Village Green - Kalina Vishnina age 6

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Garford Parish Plan Steering Group and



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My Favourite Things in Garford - Tervel Atanasov age 11

Foreword

During general discussions at the Garford Annual Parish Meeting in May 2007, Councillor Iain Brown of Oxford County Council encouraged the Meeting to consider producing a Parish Plan. He related the experience of several local villages that had either produced Parish Plans or updated earlier Plans and had found such to be very useful in the overall planning process. The formulation of such Plans also provided a mechanism for communities to have a greater say in the future development of their villages. Councillor Brown also suggested that a grant might be available to assist in this exercise.

This suggestion was taken on board as it was considered that this could help to shape a policy for the repair and future management of the Village Hall – our most immediate problem. It was also felt that a Parish Plan would assist in developing an agreed strategy for other medium to longer-term issues that would benefit or potentially cause harm to the village.

Residents were thus invited to attend an informal meeting at the Village Hall in June 2007 to discuss whether there was an appetite for such a plan and, if so, the best way to take this forward. The meeting was well attended and resulted in the formation of a Steering Group to take the project forward.

Details of the process that was then followed are given in a later section of this Parish Plan but it is my hope that this document will assist our community to achieve our aspirations and visions for the future.

In conclusion, I would wish to thank all who have given their time and energy to this project. In particular, I should mention all the members of the Steering Group, Mr. Clive Organ who prepared the initial draft, and Mr. John Docherty who finalized the preparation of this document.

Tony Carter

Chairman, Garford Parish Meeting





Garford Parish Plan - Executive Summary

The purpose of this Parish Plan was for the people of Garford to indicate how they would wish to see their village develop over the next ten to fifteen years. The process proper started in June 2007 with the formation of a Steering Group whose first task was to design and then distribute a questionnaire to every household in the village. This questionnaire sought to elicit what residents thought was good and bad about the village; issues which caused concern or unhappiness and, generally, how they wished to see the village develop over the planning period.

A good response was received and the matters raised formed the basis for identifying the major issues. Following discussions at regular meetings of the Steering Group, the numerous individual items were distilled into the following four generic headings

- (a) Roads, Traffic and Infrastructure
- (b) Conservation and Development
- (c) Village Assets and
- (d) Social

As mentioned in the body of this Plan, to test that we were correctly reflecting the views of the community, all villagers were invited to give further feedback at a social gathering on the Village Green in June 2008. Consequently, the four individual generic areas were adopted and further developed by four sub-committees made up of Steering Group members and other stakeholders. These deliberations are manifested in the major conclusions and action points in this Parish Plan. I would wish to especially thank Mr. Clive Organ for his help in pulling this sector together.

Guidance Notes issued by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) were used extensively in formulating this Parish Plan. We would also wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by Anton Nath of ORCC, especially in successfully guiding us through the grant application process. Other individuals and organisations, including the Vale of the White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, also provided help.

This Parish Plan is not all encompassing. It is a living document and naturally may be subject to change and further development as we go forward. It summarises our residents' visions for the future and lists actions to be taken to realise these aspirations. Some of these actions have already been started while some are dependent on others and may take some time to move forward. The existence of the Plan does however give us guidelines for the future of our village.

I would wish to thank all those who have contributed to this important project.

Robert Treadgold,
Chairman, Parish Plan Steering Group

Acknowledgements

This Parish Plan could only be produced through the considerable efforts of the residents of the parish who volunteered to join the Steering Group and its sub-groups. Many other residents contributed in a multitude of diverse ways from distribution of questionnaires and leaflets to preparing the Village Green, sourcing provisions, cooking and organizing children's games at the June village event. To all, we offer our sincerest thanks.

Name	Representing/Officer	Sub-Group
Rob Treadgold	Chairman Steering Group	Roads, Traffic, Infrastructure
Tony Carter	Steering Group	Conservation and Development
John Docherty	Steering Group	Village Assets
Mark Charter	Steering Group	Village assets
Angela Nairne	Steering Group	Roads, Traffic, Infrastructure
Trisha Gordon	Steering Group	Conservation and Development
Neil Walker	Steering Group	Conservation and Development
Clive Organ	Individual	Initial Draft
Chris Webb	Individual	Initial Questionnaire

The Steering Group would also wish to thank others who have contributed to this project, and in particular Councillor Iain Brown, Oxford County Council, Councillor Terry Cox, Vale of the White Horse District Council, Anton Nath, ORCC, Toby Warren, VWHDC and Richard Zair, Vicar of St Luke's.



1. Background

Why the Parish Plan has been written

What prompted the initiative?

The Government has been encouraging communities to have more control and influence over local issues. The “ Rural White Paper “ published in 2000 proposed Parish Plans as a means of giving local communities the opportunity to make themselves heard. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Vale of the White Horse District Council (VWHDC) and the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) have positively encouraged the preparation of Parish Plans and made grants available to assist in this process.

Our local planning authority (VWHDC) has declared that it takes account of Parish Plans when making its decisions. Other organisations also use such plans to identify local needs when formulating their policies. It is therefore timely to finally have such a document in place for Garford. It should perhaps be mentioned here that Garford is considered too small to have a separate Parish Council but in its place has a Garford Parish Meeting. Our activities are overseen by the Vale of the White Horse District Council, which, in turn, has a reporting line to Oxfordshire County Council.

What the Plan hopes to achieve

Mission Statement

A Parish Plan is a statement of how the local community would wish to see its environment developing over the next ten or so years. It should

- Reflect the views of all sections of the community
- Identify which features and local characteristics people value
- Identify local problems and opportunities
- Clearly define how residents want the community to develop in future
- Prepare a plan of action to achieve this vision



The Garford Parish Plan Mission Statement and the purpose of the Steering Group were considered to be

“ To help and encourage the residents of Garford to produce a plan showing how they would like their village to develop over the next ten to fifteen years, addressing the implications of change and development in the village.”

What bodies the Parish Plan hopes to influence

The Parish Plan is an expression of the hopes and fears of the residents of Garford. It is our hope that the Vale of the White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Rural Community Council will refer to this Parish Plan when considering future plans and policies that will affect our village. It is recognized that this Plan must be interpreted in the context of other wider plans. We thus have had regard to the South East Plan (South East Regional Assembly), the Minerals and Waste Plan (Oxfordshire County Council) and the Local Development Framework (Vale of the White Horse District Council). It was our aim that the Parish Plan should be consistent with such wider ranging policies.

Information in this Plan could usefully influence the policies of many organisations and authorities serving our area. This could include such bodies as Thames Water, the Highways Authority, transport providers, Health Care Trusts, Thames Valley Police and our Member of Parliament.

2. Introduction to Garford

Geographical

Garford is a small village and civil parish situated south of the River Ock in Oxfordshire. The village, surrounded by arable farm land, is set on the eastern side of the Vale of the White Horse District, with far reaching views of The Downs to the south. From the East, vehicular access is gained from A338 turn-off near the Old School. Access from the West is via a minor country road, known locally as Clay Lane, which links Garford with other villages including Charney Bassett and The Hanneys. The historic market town of Abingdon is some five and a half miles away whilst the City of Oxford with its Dreaming Spires is just over eleven miles distant.

Garford has a mixture of historic and modern housing – mostly owner occupied but with a sizeable percentage of rental dwellings. It also has a parish church, a village hall, a village green and playing fields as well as two working farms – Millets Farm and Manor Farm. Whilst some villagers continue to work on the local farms, Garford has gradually become more of a dormitory settlement with its inhabitants commuting daily to work in other locations. Although no longer having its own

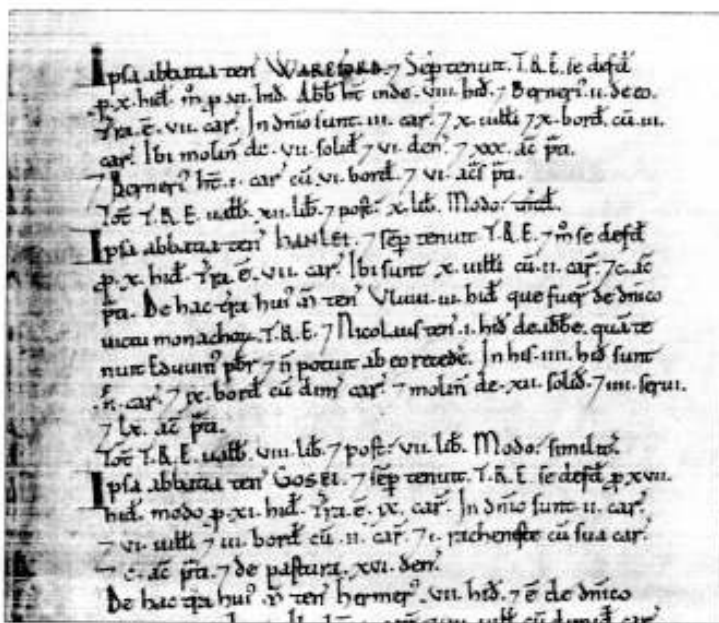


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village shop, residents are well served by the presence nearby of the well-known Millets Farm Shop and Garden Centre and also by a retail outlet at a local petrol station. Other day-to-day needs can be purchased in local shops in the neighbouring villages of Southmoor and Kingston Bagpuize, where there is also a Post Office. Frilford Heath Golf Club, with its three championship courses, is also close by.

Historical

Garford, although now in Oxfordshire, is mentioned in the Domesday Book under its former name of Wareford in its then county of Berkshire. Like neighbouring Lyford, it most likely owes its existence to the fact that it was a place where the River Ock could safely be crossed by ford. Historic research indicates that Garford was originally a chapelry contained in the Parish of Marcham. The passing of the first Poor Relief Act in 1597 led to many chapelries being upgraded to Civil Parishes and most likely this was also the case with Garford. Although there is



The abbey itself holds GARFORD, and always held it. TRE it was assessed at 10 hides; now at 6 hides. Of these the abbot has 8 hides, and Berner [holds] 2 of him. There is land for 7 ploughs. In demesne are 3 ploughs; and 10 villans and 10 bordars with 3 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 766d, and 30 acres of meadow, and Berner has 1 plough with 6 bordars, and 6 acres of meadow. The whole was worth TRE 12l; and afterwards 10l; now as much. The abbey itself holds EAST HANNEY, and always held it. TRE, as now, it was assessed at 10 hides. There is land for 7 ploughs. There are 10 villans with 2 ploughs, and 100 acres of meadow. Of this land of this manor Wulfwig holds 3 hides which were [part] of the demesne for the sustenance of the monks TRE, and Nicholas holds 1 hide of the abbot which Edwin the priest held and could not withdraw from him. On these 4 hides are 2 ploughs, and 9 bordars with...

THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE
DOMESDAY BOOK FOR
GARFORD, BERKSHIRE
FORMERLY KNOWN AS
WAREFORD

little to be seen now, excavation has revealed that the village was inhabited in iron-age-times. The earliest structures detected were timber-built round huts with pits for grain storage. Much evidence also exists of Saxon settlements in the general area. Just outside the village near what used to be the Noah's Ark public house are the remains of a Roman village (and Iron Age predecessor), which has been subject to extensive and selective excavation for the past sixty years.

The Parish Church of St Luke's in Garford consists of a chancel with north chapel, nave with north aisle, south porch and west bell-turret. The church was re-built in 1880 but portions of the old structure remain. The east window consists of a pair of 13th century lancets whilst on the south of the chancel is a large

square-headed window of three plain lights, portions of which date from the 16th or 17th centuries. The nave has a modern arcade of four bays with stone and marble columns. In the south wall is a two-light square-headed window of the 14th century.

Preserved in the nave is an oil painting of the old church, which was aisle less and had a timber porch.



Garford Village Hall is a handsome, timber clad Victorian building that was paid for and erected by the village on a site donated a century ago by local landowner, Lord Wantage. The Trustees have undertaken considerable updating and restoration in recent years with the support of many fund raising activities by village residents.

Demographics

The population of Garford at the 2001 Census (the latest figures available) was 142, as shown in the next table. Interestingly, the December 2008 Electoral Role revealed an increase of around 38 people of voting age (or 34%) and also the addition of an extra 15 households in the intervening seven years.

	Number	Percentage
All People	142	
Males	68	48%
Females	74	52%
Households	53	
People Aged 0 - 4	7	5%
People Aged 5 - 15	24	17%
People Aged 16 - 24	9	6%
People Aged 25 - 44	47	33%
People Aged 45 - 64	45	32%
People Aged 65 - 74	9	6%
People Aged 75 and over	0	0%



1761 map of Garford

Social

Notwithstanding the absence of any local school, shops, public houses or post Offices, Garford is a pleasant place to live, surrounded as it is by attractive farmland. Its proximity to Abingdon, Oxford and also neighbouring villages compensates to a degree for the lack of such facilities locally.

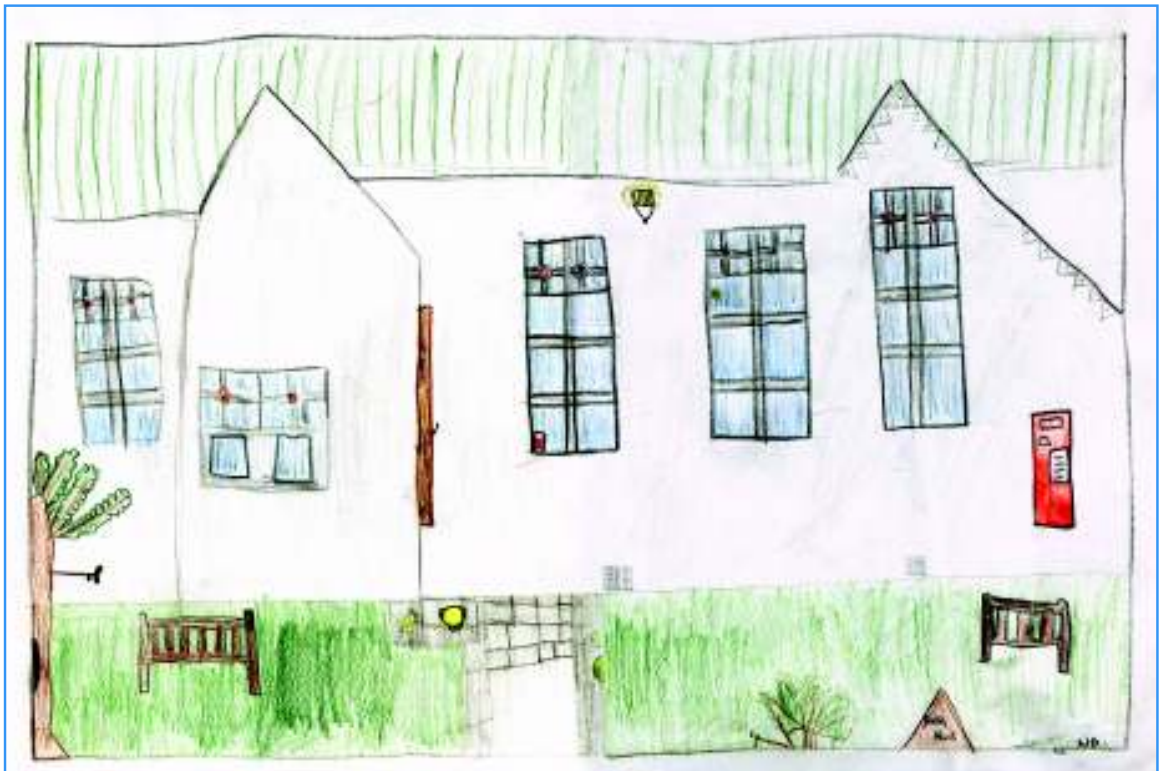
Although our two farms, and other light industrial units nearby employ some residents, the majority consist of professionals who commute to employment outside the village. Given this, and the fact that the nearest bus stop lies outside the village at the A338 junction, Garford is very much a multi-vehicle owning society. The road running through Garford is fairly narrow with wide grass verges. A number of properties do not have off-road parking and all of the above can lead to occasional minor traffic problems. Didcot, with its fast Intercity service to London, is a 20-minute drive away. There is also an hourly bus service from the Garford A338 junction to Wantage and Oxford.



The Village Hall and the Village Green are used quite regularly for social events in the village, including village suppers, meetings, summer barbecues and the likes. The Village Green also has a play area for toddlers. An apparent change has been taking place in Garford's demographics with a much larger number of younger children now being evident.

Regular services are held at St Luke's Church on the first Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. as well as at Easter, Harvest Thanksgiving (St Luke's Day) and Christmas, the last named including a popular and well-attended candlelit carol service.

Much concern has been expressed over the proposal by Thames Water to build a new and massive reservoir in nearby Steventon. Recently, however, there has been an indication that this is likely to be scaled back and delayed for some years.



Garford Village Hall - William Brotherton

3. The Process

The possibility of producing a Parish Plan was first raised at the Annual Parish Meeting held in May 2007. The following month residents were invited to an informal meeting to gauge whether there was an appetite to undertake what was considered a fairly onerous task. The general reaction was positive and a Steering Group was formed under the chairmanship of Rob Treadgold.

This Group decided the first task was to develop a questionnaire and distribute this to all village households. The purpose of this was three-fold:

- To seek assurance that the project had general support;
- To gain some initial views on what were the major village issues;
- To acquire additional volunteers.

Responses were received from over 60% of village households almost all of which were positive to the idea. Many issues were raised and at subsequent Steering Group meetings these were distilled into four major headings.

All households were given details of the issues under these four major headings and invited to an Afternoon Tea with children's games village on the Village Green in June 2008. Stations, manned by Steering Group members, were established for the four identified headings. Using flip charts, the issues raised up to that time were outlined and additional views and concerns were invited. This well attended event elicited further useful discussion and input. It also served to further engender a spirit of village involvement. Further Steering Group meetings were then held to arrive at the first draft of this Parish Plan.

Help and Advice

The Steering Group received assistance in this project from ORCC, Vale of the White Horse District Council and Oxford County Council Highways Authority. We also benefited from advice and

guidance was from Anton Nath of ORCC and Dr John Sharp, who had been very involved in production of the East Hendred Parish Plan.

The Committee also applied for and received a modest grant under the Oxfordshire Parish Plan Grant scheme.

4. Results from the Questionnaire

The answers given by residents of the Parish to the questionnaire, and their subsequent input at the Village Event, represented the major sources for the Plan. These are now given under the four agreed general headings of

- Roads, Traffic and Infrastructure
- Conservation and Development
- Village Assets
- Social



4.1 Roads, Traffic and Infrastructure

Current Situation

Garford is predominantly a single through road village with a high proportion of its dwellings within a few metres of the highway.

From the East, vehicular access to the village is gained from the A338 turnings near the Old School. Access from the West is via the minor road, known locally as Clay Lane, which links Garford with other Vale villages including Charney Bassett and The Hanneys. This unclassified road is narrow with occasional passing places.

Garford has no allocated public parking and a number of properties have insufficient off-road parking to accommodate the multi-vehicle culture of modern society. The route through the village is therefore regularly used for private vehicle parking, especially overnight and at weekends.

Alternatives to private car usage are limited. The nearest bus service linking Garford to Oxford, Abingdon and Wantage has bus stops half a mile outside the village on the A338 at the Garford turn.

The village through road services both residential and agricultural facilities within Garford as well as the agricultural and light commercial units at Chadwick's Farm. Commuter traffic passing through Garford and its associated problems of increased volumes, speed and verge erosion have increased in recent years. Heavy Goods Vehicle movements to both Garford and other nearby commercial facilities, including Lyford, have risen presenting traffic problems in both the village core and on the narrow roads in the Vale.

Issues Raised

Traffic

- **Speed and Safety:** Residents are concerned about vehicles speeding through the village, especially commuter cars. Some have expressed a wish for the speed limit to be reduced to 20 MPH through the village. Other options voiced included coloured asphalt speed indicators, speed bumps and flashing speed indicators
- Improved warnings/safety measures on the A338 at the Old School junction and at the approach to the road bridge over the River Ock were suggested. The main concern was the need to improve sight lines to allow safer access/egress onto and off the A338. Increasing the frequency of summer verge trimming would assist in this regard. Cyclists frequently use this

junction and for them too safety issues are apparent. The residents at the Old School houses would not support a one-way system using the two exits and entries to the A338.

- Lorries: concern was expressed at the apparent increase in average lorry size and the number of movements through the village notwithstanding road signs on both the A338 and Clay Lane junctions advising that the road is not suitable for HGV movements. Concerns include increasing damage to verges and parked vehicles, vibration to properties adjacent to the roadway, pollution and disruption to vehicular passage. There was a belief that the situation was influenced by the increased use by HGVs of Satellite Navigation Systems. It was therefore proposed that investigations be made as to the possibility of changing the Post Code for Chadwick's Farm in the hope that this might alleviate the situation.



Infrastructure

- Roads: increased vehicle flow combined with vehicles having to pass on narrow carriageways has resulted in an ever increasing number of potholes and deteriorating road verges both within the village and on the Parish roads leading thereto. Poor roadside drainage has also contributed to road surface deterioration between Garford and the A338.
- Residents were almost unanimous in having no desire for street lighting.
- Drainage: Concern over surface water run-off has increased since the floods of July 2007, especially at the western end of the village. Some residents raised watercourse and ditch maintenance as an issue.
- There was general support for the proposed installation by Thames Water of Mains Drainage.
- Public Transport: It was felt that bus/cycle usage would be encouraged by the provision of a bus shelter with cycle rack at the A338 bus stop.
- Mention was made of the absence of any name signage at the entrances to the village.

Future Action

Traffic

- Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority to be approached with proposal to introduce a 20 mph speed limit in the village with suitable signage painted on the roads
- Investigate means available to protect village verges from vehicle erosion
- Approach involved stakeholders to investigate a possible post code change for Chadwick's Farm
- In longer term, discuss with landowners and the local authority the feasibility of an alternate access from the A338 direct to Chadwick's Farm

Roads

- Work more closely with the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority to report potholes and poor road surfaces and to ensure that the verge at the Old School is kept well mown
- Write to the OCC to request a bus shelter and cycle stand on the A338 at the Garford Turn

Drainage

- Consult with the Environment Agency to improve watercourse and ditch maintenance
- Continue consultation with Thames Water to establish mains drainage for Garford

4.2 Conservation and Development

Current Situation

Garford is a small linear village with wide grass verges either side of its village street. It has a mix of historic and modern housing, a Parish Church, Village Hall, a Village Green and Village Playing Fields as well as two working farms, Millets Farm and Manor Farm. The village is set on the eastern side of the Vale of the White Horse with far reaching views of The Downs to the South. In many ways Garford has gradually become a dormitory settlement with its inhabitants



travelling daily to work in other localities. A minority of villagers continue to work on local farms. Some agricultural buildings have lost their economic viability and have moved to a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial usage.

Issues Raised

Conservation

- **Verges:** villagers felt that parking on the village verges visually detracted from the landscape quality of Garford village and should be discouraged. Vehicles mounting them to pass are increasingly eroding verges. Given the historic dimensions of the village road, it is not always possible for two vehicles to pass, especially if there is also street parking. Villagers were adamant that the verges were an integral part of Garford's landscape and should in no way be narrowed to facilitate carriageway widening. Verges outside the village envelope sometimes suffer from litter thrown from passing cars and occasionally from fly tipping.
- **Village Green and Playing Field:** Villagers appreciate the public access facility of both the Green and the Playing Field. The regular grass-mowing regime must continue and the hedgerow margins managed to support wild life.
- **Overhead Cables:** those parts of the village that enjoy buried mains electricity and telecoms cables have a better landscape value than those with overhead provision. It was appreciated, however, that burying such cables would be a costly exercise, which many householders would probably not wish to bear.
- **Provision for Nature:** villagers appreciated that Garford's economy was primarily agricultural and, from economic necessity, subject to many modern machines and processes. It was also believed that this need not be at the expense of long-term sustainability of its wild life. There was thus support for Garford village and its environs being managed in a sustainable way with a sympathetic approach towards both flora and fauna running alongside modern farming practice.
- **Footpaths and Rights of Way:** a good proportion of residents use the footpaths in the Parish. Concern was expressed at the increased level of dog fouling, the poor level of way marking and the dangerous state of the footbridge over the River Ock.

Development

- **Housing:** Garford's housing is very varied in age, style and size. Most are owner occupied but there are a sizeable percentage of rental dwellings. The majority of villagers would appear to wish that Garford remains essentially a "small" village. They do appreciate that most of the present housing stock would not be in the affordable category thus preventing younger residents remaining in the village when they wish to buy their own homes. The village would thus be receptive to the building of some smaller and more affordable housing should suitable sites become available.
- **Agricultural and Post Agricultural Land Use:** Garford's farms continue to play an important role in maintaining the economic core of the village. As some agricultural buildings lose their economic viability a change of use may well be justified, especially if such a change enhances village life and landscape.
- **Proposed Reservoir:** Thames Water has proposed building a huge reservoir covering about seven square kilometres between Steventon and Hanney. The outer margins of the projected site stretch north as far as Garford Parish and Field Barn Farm. If the project comes to fruition in its present format, there will be many years of construction, noise and, in the end, a very great change to our landscape. Recent indications suggest that this project may well be scaled back and delayed.



Future Action

Conservation

- Discourage regular parking on village verges
- Report fly tipping to relevant authorities
- Encourage litter clearing events recognising health, safety and insurance issues
- For both the Village Green and the Playing Field, work with the relevant bodies to help ensure regular and sympathetic maintenance of trees, hedging and habitats as well as grass mowing
- Support village farmers in their continued participation in schemes benefitting wildlife and habitat provision
- Investigate possibility of initiating a village wildlife area maintained by volunteers

Development Issues

- Support the general concept that Garford retains its core character as a small, rural village whilst accepting that some residential development may occur with the passage of time and within the guideline criteria set by the relevant authorities
- Consider with care any proposed building and mineral extraction developments and endeavour to protect and enhance Garford's identity
- Avoid building on sites which provide villagers with amenities, such as the Village Green and the Playing Field
- The village would generally be sympathetic to the provision of some affordable / smaller houses should suitable sites become available
- The village will monitor development proposals for the new reservoir and aim to keep villagers informed



4.3 Village Assets

Current Situation

The Steering Group took the view that “Village Assets” should encompass the Village Hall, the Village Green and the Playing Field, all of which are held in trust for the residents of Garford. The historic Parish Church of St Luke’s was also included as it continues to be an important focal point in the life of the village for a number of parishioners. Additionally, it was decided to include the Village War Memorial as it records an important part of Garford’s history.

Garford Village Hall is a historic Victorian timber framed building paid for and erected by the village on a site given to the community by Lord Wantage. Today it is administered as a registered charity and managed by a Board of Trustees drawn from the local community. In recent years, the village has raised money through the precept, grant aid and regular fund raising events to assist in the maintenance of the building. Being such a small village, limited community use means that income generation has not always been sufficient to enable an on-going building programme to match the needs of such an historic building. However, maintenance work in 2003 and 2008 has enabled the building to reach a reasonable state of repair.

The Garford Common Good Trust is a separate village charity responsible for the management of both the Village Green and the Playing Field. Their remit includes grass and ground maintenance and the upkeep of playground equipment. This has to be accomplished with a limited capital fund.

The Parish Church of St Luke’s is located to the rear of Manor Farm. This historic, sizeable and well-constructed building has a limited congregation. This leads to a challenge in generating income at a level sufficient to cover on-going running and maintenance costs.

The village wayside War Memorial records villagers who served in the 1914-1918 conflict and also two villagers who lost their lives serving in the 1939-1945 War. This memorial is now in need of restoration.



Issues Raised

Village Hall



- The majority of villagers support the continued existence of the Village Hall. Whilst many are willing to contribute to restoration initiatives, the difficulties the Trustees face in endeavouring to deliver sufficient finance for such a task is recognised.
- With certain exceptions, support for activities in the Hall has been patchy thus limiting income.
- Potential income generation from within the village would probably not easily match the long-term needs of the facility. There is also a limit to the amount that can reasonably be raised as part of the village precept element of the council tax.
- Garford’s small size, the confined location of the hall with the absence of parking, all combine to add to the difficulty of designing and implementing a robust business plan for the Village Hall. This, coupled with quality competition offered by other village halls in neighbouring communities, making sourcing grant aid all the more difficult.
- There was a view that perhaps too much emphasis was given to fund raising for the Village Hall to the detriment of the needs of the Village Green and Playing Field.



Village Green and Playing Field

- Some villagers were of the view that these facilities do not fulfil their potential as assets for Garford residents.
- The Green would benefit from playground equipment better suited to older children.
- Questions were raised on the ban on ball games on the Village Green.
- It was also considered that use of the Playing Field would increase if a set of football goal posts were provided.

St Luke's Church

- A major issue raised was poor access to the church in winter, and also the inadequate heating within the church during that period.
- It was also felt that the grounds surrounding the church did not always do justice to its setting on its historic site above the flood plain of the River Ock.

Garford War Memorial

- As a mark of respect, this historic feature of the village should be in a better state of repair.

Future Action

Garford Village Hall

- Make every effort to ensure that the Village Hall stands in a good state of repair, is well equipped and meets the necessary Health and Safety standards
- Endeavour to increase the utilisation rate of the Hall with the objective of generating sufficient income to be largely self-funding
- Encourage St Luke's to consider using the Village Hall for their community projects



Garford Village Green and the Playing Field

- Keep both assets in a good state of repair
- Provide more equipment to increase usage
- Investigate future funding and management methods

St Luke's Church

- Work with the Church authorities and land-owners in an endeavour to provide a more user friendly and more pleasant access to the church

Garford War Memorial

- Investigate possible funding and initiate a programme of renovation

4.4 Social

Current Situation

- Garford is predominantly a small, quiet village of around 150 residents living in a mix of owner occupied and rental dwellings. Regular village social events are held which, in recent years, have included summer barbecues, a cream tea club, Easter egg hunts, spring and harvest suppers, carol singing, quiz nights and a Christmas meal. Those attending have judged these events popular but there remains considerable scope to expand the number of participating households. Garford is fortunate in having a core group of residents who are willing and able to develop the social dimension of village life.

Issues Raised

- With an increase in the number of children living in the village, there is scope for more events and organised games for the younger residents.
- A need for regular effective communication throughout the village to promote social events was expressed
- Some residents thought there might be scope to develop small scale but sustainable interest clubs / groupings within the village
- It was a matter for regret that, in common with other Vale villages, the fortnightly mobile library visit was in daytime when the bulk of the residents were at work or at school and, as such, was poorly supported.



Future Action

- Endeavour to increase the number of households that support and attend village functions
- Expand the range of social activities available to residents
- Explore with St Luke's the possibility that they may lead additional activities especially, perhaps, for the increasing number of young families in the village.

5. Next Steps

This Parish Plan incorporates many ideas for action. Some objectives have already been successfully achieved, such as the village name signs and the replacement of the pedestrian bridge over the River Ock. Real progress is also being made in our endeavours to obtain bus stop shelters, possibly with cycle racks, but much remains to be done.

As mentioned earlier, Garford does not have its own Parish Council but an annual Parish Meeting with three elected volunteer officials. Volunteers also serve as trustees of the various village assets whilst others serve on Planning and Social sub groupings. Moreover, our social events could not take place without the large number of villagers who offer their help. This Parish Plan itself only came to fruition through the combined efforts of the Parish Plan Steering Group. This Steering Group, having completed its brief to oversee the compilation of the Parish Plan, will now stand down. It is however essential that the Parish Meeting offers the Parish Plan to the village for adoption, ensuring that sufficient implementation resources are made available.

It is therefore suggested that there would be merit in establishing a Parish Plan Implementation Group who could undertake this work under report to the residents at the Annual Parish Meeting. This is perhaps something that can be deliberated upon at the next Annual Meeting.

In the meantime, an Action Plan has been established and is outlined in the following section.

Action	Partners	Time Scale	Current Status
a) Traffic			
Investigate possible 20MPH limit in Village	OCC Highways Area Office Peter Ronald 0845 310 11 11 southern.area@oxfordshire.gov.uk	2009/2010	OCC undertaking proposals for Oxford – other locations may follow later if successful
Investigate means of protecting verges	OCC Highways Area Office – Martin Turner	Immediate then on-going	

Investigate change of Post Code for	Chadwicks and Postal Authorities Chadwick's Farm	On-going	
Alternative access to Chadwick's Farm	Landowners and VoWHDC Planning	Medium to Longer term	
b) Roads			
Report potholes to authority	Residents and Highways 0845 310 11 11	On-going	Many pot holes recently filled
Procure Garford Road Signage	OCC Highways	Done	Completed
Ensure A338 verge in good order	OCC Highways Area Office - Martin Turner	On-going	
Request bus shelter	OCC Public Transport Development Team / Bus company	12/24 months subject budget availability	Under Active Correspondence
c) Drainage			
Consult with Environment Agency to improve water course and ditch maintenance	Environment Agency	On-going	
Consult with Thames Water to establish mains drainage	Thames Water	On-going	
d) Conservation			
Discourage parking on village verges	Residents	On-going	
Report fly tipping	Residents	On-going	
Seek replacement of bridge over Ock	OCC Countryside Service – Field Officer	Done	Completed
Encourage litter clearing events	Social Committee	On-going	
Investigate possibility of village wildlife area	Residents; Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (www.tverc.org or 01993 8141100; Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum	Medium Term	
Improve Way Markings for Footpaths	OCC Countryside Service Field Officer	On-going	
e) Development			
Closely monitor planning applications	Planning Committee	On-going	
Monitor proposed reservoir situation	Residents	On-going	

f) Village Hall			
Keep in good state of repair	Trustees	On-going	
Increase utilisation	Social Committee	On-going	
g) Green & Playing Field			
Keep in good repair	Trustees	On-going	
Provide more equipment	Trustees	Medium Term	
Investigate future funding	Trustees:	2009/2010	
h) St Luke's Church			
Provide easier access	Stakeholders	2009	
i) War Memorial			
Renovate Charity/Clerk	War Memorial	2009 - 2010	
j) Social			
Increase households attending functions	Residents and Social Events Committee	On-going	
Expand range of events	Social Events Committee and residents	On-going	

Contacts

For further information on the Parish Plan please contact:

Name	Position
Mr Robert Treadgold	Chairman, Steering Group
Mr Tony Carter	Chairman, Garford Parish Meeting
Mrs Sophie Charter	Treasurer, Garford Parish Meeting
Mr John Docherty	Clerk, Garford Parish Meeting
Ms Trisha Gordon	Member, Steering Group
Dr Angela Nairne	Member, Steering Group
Mr Neil Walker	Member, Steering Group
Mr Mark Charter	Member, Steering Group

Glossary

OCC – Oxfordshire County Council

VoWHDC – Vale of the White Horse District Council

ORCC – Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

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Downs View - Lucy Brotherton age 8