

LITTLE MILTON VILLAGE PLAN 2014

The Village Plan aims to list a set of outcomes we would like to achieve over the next 5-10 years, building on what we already have in the village, and outlines how these outcomes might be achieved. The success of the Plan depends very much on people in the village being willing to take forward individual parts of the Plan.

Part 1 contains the key information for the busy reader

Part 2 contains the details



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PART 1

Introduction

Why does the village need a Community Led Plan?

Community Led Plans were introduced nationally by the government as a way for towns and parishes to have more say in how their community should develop in the future. The process is supported by Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council and a lot of helpful advice is also available from the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC).

A Community Led Plan allows us the opportunity to review the current situation in the village, identify good and not so good things about our community, and decide priorities for the future. The Plan also proposes ways in which those priorities might be achieved. The process involves consulting everyone in the village and using the information gathered to put together a plan.

How the Plan has been produced

The process started in early 2012 when an information gathering event was held at the Pine Lodge. Lots of ideas came forward. Most importantly, enough people volunteered to form a Steering Group to take the process forward. Further information was gathered at village events across the summer of 2012, including the Jubilee celebrations and the Fete.

This allowed the Steering Group to identify key topics which were of concern to the village. The information was then used to compile a Village Survey questionnaire which went to every household in the village in spring 2013. The answers received were then analysed and the results used to agree priorities and to write the Village Plan. This was a time-consuming process, but the Steering Group members feel that the time spent has allowed them to consider each aspect of the Plan from all angles.

Overview

Our Village Plan is relatively modest in scope. What became clear as the Plan was developed, and we compared it with the plans of other villages, was that we had already achieved a lot before we even thought about a formal plan. So there are no Eureka moments, no grandiose schemes, but we will simply build on what is so good about our village already.

During the process, many ideas were put forward by individuals. But they were just that – one person's ideas. The Plan takes forward only those topics which were common themes throughout the process, and for which it is clear there is majority support within the village.

What You Thought Was Important

The Village Survey stage generated a lot of comments. In particular, people were asked to identify the one thing that would make the most difference to them. It is clear that the majority of the village feel that the Plan would be a success if we could address just 5 key issues:

- **Traffic: reduce the weight and speed of vehicles through the village. Achieving an HGV weight limit on the A329 stands out as the highest priority action.**
- **Maintain the excellent facilities, amenities and organisations that already exist in the village.**
- **Maintain the existing infrastructure e.g. drains, pavements, and improve it where necessary.**
- **Improve broadband speed.**
- **Introduce public transport in the evenings.**

Structure of the Plan

The Plan has been broken down as follows:

- **Traffic.** Without a doubt, traffic is the major concern in the village. This became very clear during both the information gathering phase and from the Village Survey. Many issues around traffic were identified, from general safety walking around the village to physical damage caused to properties. Traffic affects people differently, depending on where in the village they live.
- **Housing.** Although housing was not raised as a major concern amongst villagers, it is an essential part of the Plan. Some questions about housing were included in the Village Survey. Recent changes to the planning rules also mean that there are advantages to be gained in including guidance on housing within the Plan. This should be based on the District Council's Core Strategy and the views of the villagers.
- **Areas where the village would like to see improvements, but where solutions are already in hand.** In a number of areas, the villagers made it clear that they would welcome some improvements. However many of these are already well known to the responsible organisations and are being addressed.
- **Some new ideas which a majority think would be of benefit.** It was clear from the information gathering and the Village Survey that a number of new ideas have majority support eg. cycle paths.
- **An acknowledgement that some desires cannot currently be met.** A number of issues were raised but, on further examination, it became clear that progress is not currently feasible.

We already have many active organisations run by volunteers. A great deal has been achieved in the village in the past by dedicated people. To all those people the village owes a big vote of thanks. There is a lot more that we now want to achieve. But we also need now to pass the baton to the next generation and ask new people to come forward to pick up some of the ideas in this Plan.

In addition, many organisations depend on support from villagers. Quiz nights at the Pine Lodge, the village fete, the shop and post office, the church, and many other village organisations and events, can only survive if they have the continuing support of people from the village. The people of Little Milton have always been generous in their support, and long may this continue.

Summary Action List

The following summarises the list of actions and which organisations should be responsible for taking them forward. Some actions need new groups to be set up if they are to be achieved. Further detail is contained in Part 2

1. Traffic:

There are five recommendations:

- To reduce damage to properties and on safety & environmental grounds, the Parish Council should request Oxfordshire County Council impose a **weight limit** on the main road through the village.
- Volunteers should be found for a new **speedwatch group** to be set up with the assistance of the police in order to discourage speeding through the village.
- A similar **weight monitoring group** should be formed to reduce the number of HGVs breaking weight limits on roads in our village.
- If **20mph limits** come to be widely applied across the county, the Parish Council should request that village roads be included.
- The Parish Council should continue to work with Oxfordshire's Highways Department to develop more measures to **improve road safety** in the village.

2. Housing guidance is needed to help the Parish Council respond to planning applications and inform South Oxfordshire District Council's planning department:

- The Guidance is published as an Annex to the Village Plan.

3. Improvements may be needed but solutions are already in hand:

- **Sewerage and Flooding:** The Parish Council should continue to work with Thames Water to stop sewage discharges and reduce flooding from over-burdened drains in the village.
- **Faster Broadband:** The Parish Council should monitor the national/county OxOnline programme to try and ensure that Little Milton continues to be included in the upgrade programme.
- **Maintenance & Litter:** The Parish Council should improve their services where some weaknesses were highlighted by the village, namely litter collection and maintenance of the village green.
- **Village Hall:** Where they identify the need and have funds available, the Village Hall Management Committee should continue to consider improvements to the Pine Lodge, where feasible, particularly in lighting, heating & ventilation, and acoustics.
- **Village Shop & Post Office:** The shop committee should continue to keep the Shop and the Post Office open. In conjunction with the Volunteer Working Group, they should aim to recruit 10 additional volunteers and develop a plan to retain all volunteers.

4. New Ideas:

- **Bus Services:** A new Public Transport Group should be formed and facilitated by the Parish Council, firstly, to try and ensure continuation of the current 103/104 services. Also to look at ways to improve evening and weekend bus services between Oxford and the village, or ways to connect with other services (101 at Stadhampton; 280 at Wheatley).
- **Young People:** A Youth Working Group should be established to determine what facilities would be beneficial for the young people of the village and propose methods of putting those facilities in place.
- **Green Energy:** The Parish Council should support house and premises owners should they wish to install solar panels or heat pumps; however wind turbines on buildings in the village should be opposed.
- **Carbon Capture:** Carbon capture schemes, primarily tree and hedge planting around the parish, and their preservation, should be encouraged and supported.
- **Cycle Paths:** A new Cycle Path Working Group should be established in order to set up cycle paths, initially between Little Milton, Great Milton and the Haseleys, and later, if feasible, with Wheatley.
- **New Activities:** Provision of these by existing organisations; professionals; new groups; interested individuals should be encouraged where there is sufficient support.
- **Volunteers:** A Volunteer Working Group should be established to ensure there are sufficient volunteers to help run village organisations.
- **Dog Fouling:** To ensure a safe environment, particularly for children, villagers believe dog owners should pick up excrement. The Parish Council should also put in measures to try and reduce the problem.

5. Things that will not be taken forward

- **Council tax:** The Parish Council should note that in 2013 a narrow majority (53%) did not wish Council Tax to rise in order to fund new initiatives in this Plan.
- **Mains Gas:** Unless costs can be reduced substantially at some point in the future, a mains gas supply to the village will not be pursued as there are insufficient households in the village willing to pay for installation.
- **Bypass:** In the current financial climate, the concept of a bypass for the village will not be pursued.

PART 2



Village History (Author: Bruce Shelton)

Set on a gentle hill among the rolling fields to the west of the Chiltern Hills, Little Milton is a picturesque village situated 8 miles to the south-east of Oxford. It rises to around 220 feet above sea level at its highest point.

The village, or at least the area where it stands, has been inhabited in some form for possibly more than two millennia. Archaeological studies by the University of Cambridge discovered a Roman villa in Little Milton that dates from the third or fourth century AD. There is, however, some evidence that this villa may have been built on the site of an even earlier Ancient British settlement.

Following the Roman departure from Britain and the Saxon invasion, the village we today call Little Milton, was part of Middleton, which would later become known as Great Milton. The estate of Middleton was a Saxon estate divided into three main settlements, Great Middleton, Little Middleton and Ascot. Peasants farmed the land in peace until the arrival

of the Normans in 1066. Middleton, which features in the Domesday Book, was given by William the Conqueror to the Bishop of Lincoln. In the centuries following, ownership of the land changed hands numerous times, but the village grew.

Despite the fact that the landscape surrounding the Milton area was noticeably devoid of trees, unlike much of England at the time, most of the earlier buildings in the village were still made of timber. However, an abundance of good Portland Stone was discovered. For this reason, two quarries were started, one on either side of the village. These quarries meant an infrastructure was developed attracting quarry workers and masons. This enabled villagers to build houses from stone, unlike the timber framed houses originally built in most of the country which sadly no longer exist. The result of their stone construction means that many houses in the village date back to the 17th century, with a few, including part of the Manor, being much older. The quarries continued to produce stone for repairing the buildings of Oxford and other places until the 1930s.

The Industrial Revolution was an important time for Little Milton. In 1830 Wells' Farm was the site of a Luddite attack by labourers from the hamlets which surround the village. James Wells, the farmer, was assaulted and his new threshing machines were destroyed. In support of the Lord of the Manor, one hundred and thirty six villagers were deputised into service. These Special Constables arrested the six ringleaders and they were sentenced to seven years transportation to the colonies.

As the Industrial Revolution started to have an impact on the village way of life, the Enclosure Act forced more people off the land. In 1839, Little Milton was enclosed and two thirds of the land was given to Walter Long, Lord of the Manor. What had previously been largely open fields farmed by the common people of the village was transformed into the hedge-rowed patchwork farmland seen surrounding the village today.

Following the construction of St James' Church in 1844, Little Milton became an ecclesiastical parish and a village in its own right. This gave Little Milton its own identity, separating it from Great Milton, and allowing the community to start to develop into the village we see today.

By the middle of the 19th Century a lot of the fields around the village were devoted to farming sheep because of the markedly rich quality of the grazing land in the area and the high price of wool. In the 1860s and 1870s both Little Milton and Great Milton experienced the full brunt of the agricultural depression which caused huge unemployment. A sizeable number of villagers, who were by then living in complete poverty, were supported by the Poor Fund and left the village for new lives, mainly in Canada. Some villagers were lost to the big towns and cities in the hope of finding work in the factories.

While there have been schools in Little Milton since 1818, with the help of the church, the present school was built in 1861 to cater to the need for education especially among the poorer villagers.

Like the large towns and cities of Britain, Little Milton did not escape the effects of the First and Second World Wars, with several villagers killed in action, but the 1950s and 1960s saw new development and prosperity for the village. New houses were built in the village on the Thame Road and at Old Field and Milton Manor Drive. Chiltern View was completed at the beginning of the 1980s, and Little Milton took the shape it still has to this day.

In the new Millennium, the village continued to see growth and development. The community joined together and, with many villagers' efforts, raised the funds for the construction of the Pine Lodge Village Hall. This replaced the rather dilapidated hall which had been in existence since just after the Second World War. A couple of years later, with the same spirit, the Little Milton community managed to raise the funds to build the Community Shop and Post Office.

Little Milton has seen many changes since its first inhabitants built their houses and lived their lives. The village has grown, and in recent years experienced a change in its residents. Throughout its history, most villagers worked on farms in the surrounding fields, but the last 50 years have seen many people moving to Little Milton to commute to work in larger cities like Oxford and London. More recently, some villagers have started to work from home, choosing the charming surroundings of the village over the hustle and bustle of cities and towns.

A longer history of the village will be available on the village website in due course. Bruce Shelton would be pleased to hear from anyone who has additional information to add to his research.

Our Village Today

Little Milton sits in an ideal rural location, surrounded by open high-quality farmland. The village sits astride a main road, which gives us quick and easy travel to the M40 motorway, Thames, Oxford and beyond. Commuting to major centres of employment, including into London, is feasible.

Our village was originally a farming community, but we are now a mixed community of commuters, workers from home, young people at school, and retired people. For the most part, our primary residences are in the village.

We have a wide mix of housing. Many of the older houses are listed buildings. We also have an above-average number of affordable houses. Over the last 20 years, little new building has taken place, apart from replacing some of the affordable housing** when 6 old houses were demolished and replaced with 13 new builds.

**affordable housing is housing offered to people on the housing register at less than market rent. The construction of such housing is subsidised by the government.

Within the last 20 years we have:

- Prevented the school from being under threat of closure to now being a successful part of the community, with redevelopment plans approved and now awaiting funding;
- Developed a lively pre-school, with its own log cabin style premises;
- Seen one pub close, but the remaining pub (The Lamb) reinvigorated under new ownership;
- Demolished our old village hall and built an impressive replacement;
- Redeveloped the recreation ground with a big children's play area, floodlit multi-use games area, tennis courts, and an open space which is now kept mown and maintained;
- Campaigned successfully for build-outs to be installed at the main road entrances to the village to calm traffic, and two pelican crossings as part of the safe route to school programme;
- Re-opened our post office after its original closure, and later built a new shop to which the post office moved;
- Improved the housing stock in the village, largely through extension and modification rather than new build;
- Seen more people working from home.

However, nothing stands still – the village has changed and will continue to evolve . This Plan gives us the opportunity to influence the direction of change.

Good Things about the Village

It was obvious when villagers were consulted that we already have much to celebrate in our village. The following is what people said they liked most about the village:

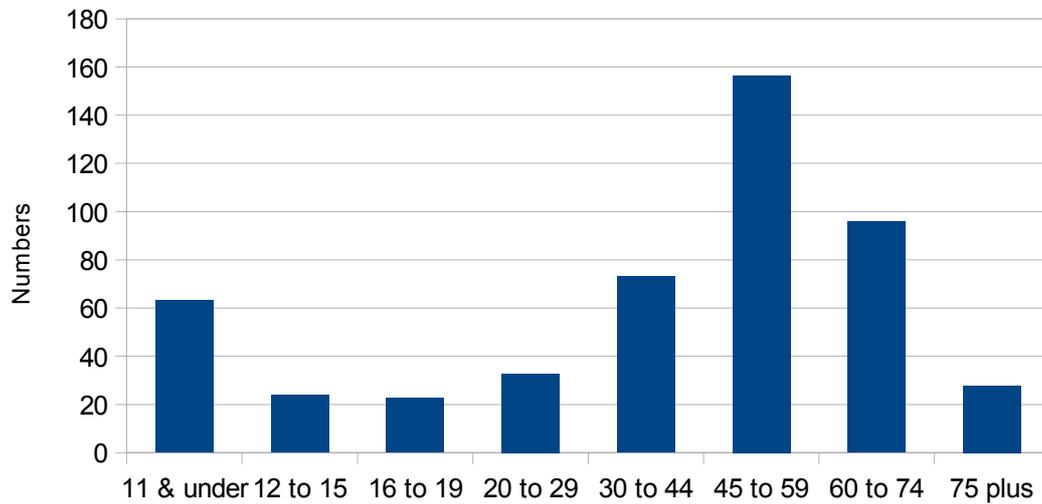
- A place where people like to live and choose to stay a long time;
- A rural location, with good local footpaths and a nature reserve right next door;
- Picturesque houses and historic buildings, with much of the village being in a Conservation Area;
- Excellent facilities and amenities within the village, including the school, pre-school, pub, village hall, shop, post office, church, games area and play area;
- A strong sense of community;
- Enough volunteers (just) to run things.

Demographics

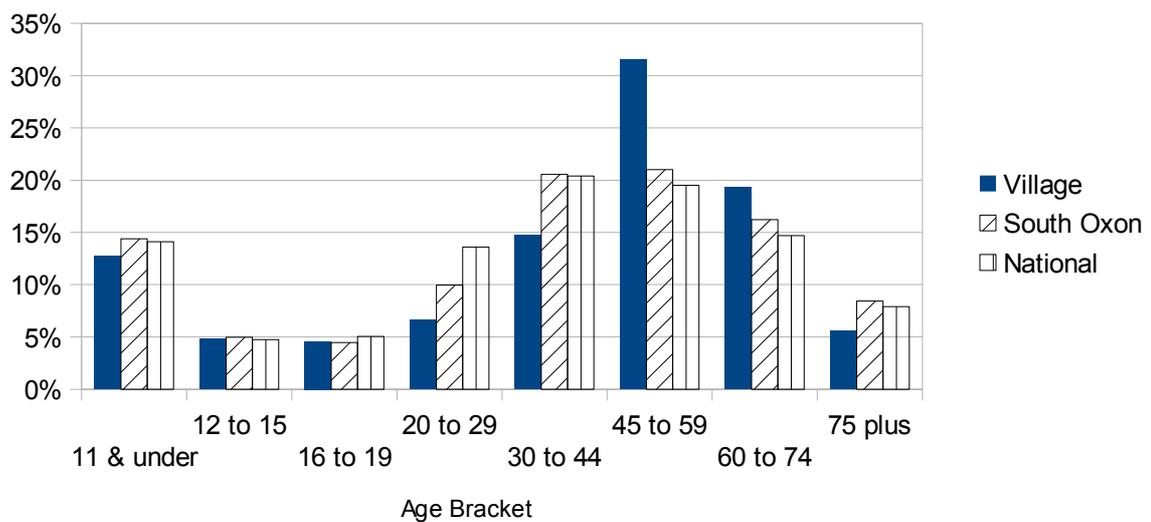
The following information was derived from the 2013 village survey results.

The village has an estimated population of about 500. The age profile is:

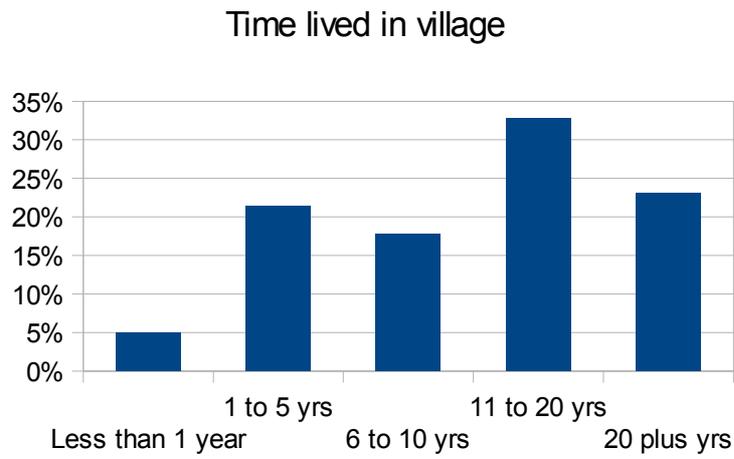
Extrapolated village population



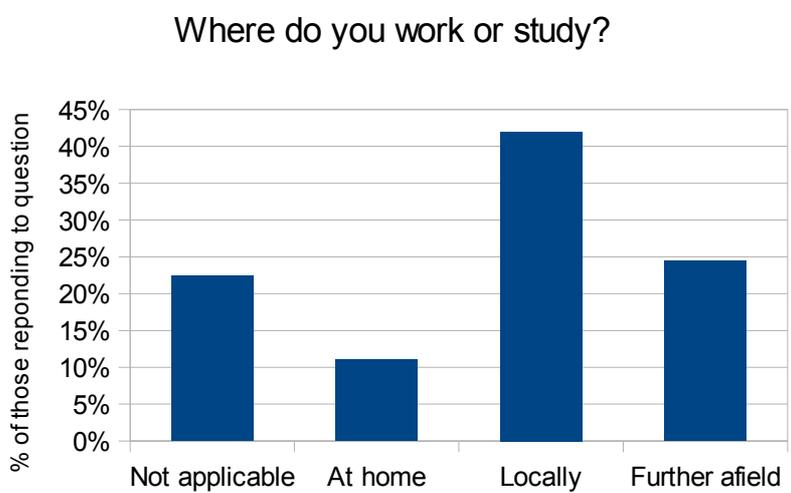
Village Age Profile compared with South Oxon and National data



Many people have lived in the village for a long time. About 60% have lived in the village over 10 years:



Over 60% of the people in the village travel outside the village to work or study:



Past achievements and learning from prior successes

Past achievements give us lessons for what we now want to achieve as part of the Village Plan:

- The ability to raise funds is vital, through either successful grant applications, loans from the parish council, or good old-fashioned fund raising.
- The village can be very generous when raising funds, but can only support one major project at a time
- A strong management team is required to see a project through but it does not have to be large. That group, having 'done its bit', may then hand over to others to run the new facility when it is completed.
- It is easy to forget, in the enthusiasm of achieving something new, that downstream there may be on-going maintenance and repair costs, which will all have to be paid for out of income.

Keeping going what we have already

The excellent facilities, amenities and organisations which we enjoy in this village are kept going by willing volunteers, who work extremely hard to keep the show on the road. They share an ongoing concern that they do not yet see the next generation coming forward, ready to take over in due course. Without enough volunteers, we may not be able to sustain what we have, let alone take on new things. Not everyone can offer their services as volunteers but the continuing support of events is equally important. Without support, these village events will fade and die.

Promoting our village

The population of the village is not large enough to sustain the school, pre-school, pub, village hall, shop, etc. Therefore we must attract people from outside the village and welcome them using (and paying for) our facilities. There are inevitably some disadvantages, such as car parking, noise, etc.

Funding

Funding will be a major consideration in implementing many aspects of the Plan. Nowadays local authorities are having to manage the essential services within much reduced budgets, and the effects can be seen in areas such as road maintenance.

In addition, in the 21013 Village Survey a narrow majority (53.7%) of households in the village did not wish the Parish Council to raise the precept in order to fund proposals forming part of the Village Plan.

Therefore, in taking any of the following proposals forward, it may first be necessary to raise the required funds. This could be achieved through:

- Parish Council, if within existing budget
- Local authorities, if within existing budgets
- Grants, if there are any suitable sources of grant funding covering the desired proposal (OCC, SODC, ORCC can advise)
- Fund-raising
- Donations

Little Milton has always been generous in its support of fund-raising for village projects, the new village hall and the shop being recent successful examples. Experience has shown that a village of our size can only really support one major fund raising venture at a time. Therefore priorities may have to be decided when taking forward some of the ideas developed in this Plan.

Village Survey

As part of the process which led to the development of this Plan, a comprehensive Village Survey was carried out in 2013. The full results of the survey are on the village website at:

<http://www.littlemilton.org.uk/sites/default/files/VillageSurveyResults.pdf>

The questionnaire used is available to view at:

<http://www.littlemilton.org.uk/sites/default/files/CLPQuestionnaireV3.7.pdf>

A summary of the results, which was previously published in the village newsletter, is included as Annex B of this Plan.

The detailed results of the survey will help to develop solutions to the various plan objectives.

The responses to the survey also served to reassure existing organisations that what they are doing already is much appreciated e.g. the village newsletter is widely read, the majority of people think that the village hall is fine as it is, most people are happy with the services provided by the shop, etc.

Responsible Organisations, Volunteers and Working Groups

Much of what is achieved already in the village depends on volunteers. We are fortunate to have so many people who give so much of their time to run the various facets of our community.

Each proposal in the Plan that follows requires an organisation to be responsible for taking that proposal forward. In many cases, those organisations already exist within the village.

However in a number of cases, if the proposal is to be implemented, new working groups will be necessary to develop the proposal further, determine its feasibility, raise any necessary funds, and see that aspect of the Plan through to fruition.

Thus an important part of the Plan itself consists of asking people to step forward to assist in new areas which interest them. This commitment may only be for a limited duration; however, in some cases, a working group may develop into a more permanent organisation within the village.

It is particularly desirable that young people have an input to areas which affect them, such as youth activities and public transport. Also many of the proposals have been under active discussion by the Village Plan Steering Group for nearly two years, and the inclusion of a link person from the Steering Group in any new working group would be beneficial.

Also many of our objectives can only be achieved through working closely with either the District or County Councils and liaising closely with the appropriate officers within those organisations.

THE PLAN



Traffic

Traffic Management	Parish Council
<p><u>Reducing HGV traffic was the highest priority action item from all consultations in the village and would, if achieved, have a major impact on the quality of life of not only those who live on or near the A329, but also the whole village. Large HGVs cause damage to property, make houses shake, create noise, dust & pollution, and disturb sleep. Frequent minor collisions occur at the top of Church Hill; often HGVs have to mount the pavement to pass each other at this point.</u></p> <p>Dave Clack – the Highways Area Steward for South Oxfordshire – indicated in Feb 2014 that he happy to meet with members of the Parish Council to discuss traffic measures further.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Reduction in damage to properties near the road. Reduction in the collisions and near misses at the top of Church Hill. Less noise, dust & pollution. Safer roads through the village. Improved quality of life in the village.</p>	
<p>Action T1: Oxfordshire County Council should be requested to impose a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the A329 between J7 M40 and Stadhampton.</p>	
<p>Time scale: The initial submission was made to Oxfordshire County Council in Dec 2013</p>	

Traffic Management	Parish Council/Speedwatch Group
<p>Villagers see traffic speeding through the village as a major problem and a hazard to villagers. There was strong support for setting up a Speedwatch Group within the village.</p> <p>Volunteers have already come forward, interested in forming such a group, and Julia Harrison at Brookside Cottage, Haseley Road (jsharrison58@gmail.com) has taken the lead. She is in contact with our local PCSO who will assist in training the group and carrying out speed monitoring. Anyone wishing to volunteer to assist can contact Julia direct.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Reduction in the speed and discouragement of speeding on the roads through the village.</p>	
<p>Action T2: Under the auspices of the Parish Council, and with the assistance of Community Police Support Officers, a Community Speedwatch Group should be established with the purpose of monitoring the speed of traffic through the village and warning offenders</p>	
<p>Time scale: By 30 Apr 2014 (subject to PCSOs being suitably trained)</p>	

Traffic Management	Parish Council/Weight Monitoring Group
<p>There was strong support for a vehicle weight monitoring group within the village. Villagers see HGVs taking weight-limited routes through the village as a major problem and a hazard to villagers.</p> <p>Volunteers have already come forward, interested in forming such a group, and Kate Daunt of Pear Tree Cottage, Haseley Road (katedaunt@live.com) has taken the lead and has established contact with Trading Standards. She can advise volunteers of the procedures to be used. Anyone wishing to volunteer to assist can contact Kate direct.</p>	
<p>Objectives: A reduction in the number of HGVs illegally using weight-limited roads, thereby reducing damage to property. Also reduction in noise, dust & pollution. Improved safety on roads in the village.</p>	
<p>Action T3: Under the auspices of the Parish Council, and with the assistance of Trading Standards, a Weight Monitoring Group should be established with the purpose of monitoring and reporting HGVs which appear to be exceeding weight limits within the village.</p>	
<p>Time scale: By 31 March 2014</p>	

Traffic Management	Parish Council
<p>There was strong support for a lower speed limit in the village.</p> <p>76% of people want speed limited to 20mph, at least in the vicinity of the school and pre-school. A smaller number support a blanket 20mph limit throughout the village.</p>	
<p>Objectives: A reduction in the speed of traffic through the village and a consequent improvement in road safety.</p>	
<p>Action T4: If Oxfordshire County Council ultimately decides that 20mph speed limits will be implemented more widely in the county, the Parish Council should seek to have such a limit placed on all roads in the village.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Unknown (awaiting a decision on County policy)</p>	

Traffic Management	Parish Council plus co-opted volunteers
<p>The following additional measures had majority support within the village:</p> <p>A329</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved HGV signage for alternative routes; • repairing holes and bumps in road; • closure of the lay-by at the south end of the village; • improvements to pavements. <p>Haseley Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notwithstanding existing weight limit, also install 'Unsuitable for HGVs' signs. <p>Other suitable and practicable measures should also be considered. Weight limits and speed limits under T1-T4 are the major priorities.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Further reduction in the impact of HGVs and further improvements in road safety through the village.</p>	
<p>ActionT5: The Parish Council should, in consultation with the Highways Department, develop a further package of traffic management proposals, in addition to T1 – T4, in order to improve road safety.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Autumn 2014, but not before the outcome of T1 is known</p>	

Housing

Housing Guidance	Parish Council
<p>Interpretation of South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy as it applies to Little Milton is an important part of the overall plan for the village. Whilst the Parish Council can only make recommendations with regard to planning matters, and it is SODC who make the decisions, the formulation of a housing guidance document as part of the Village Plan can be helpful in influencing planning decisions.</p> <p>The Village Plan, which was produced through the Community Led Plan process, represents the aspirations of the community, and as such, can be a material consideration in the planning application process.</p> <p>However, the Village Plan is not a statutory planning document and does not carry the same material weight as an adopted Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. It will be taken into consideration by the planning authority (South Oxfordshire District Council) along with all other material considerations and relevant policies in arriving at any decision. The Guidance was formulated with the assistance and advice of the planning policy team at South Oxfordshire District Council..</p>	
<p>Objective: An agreed housing guidance document which the Parish Council can use as a basis for responding to planning applications and which can inform the Planning Authority (SODC).</p>	
<p>Action H1: The Housing Guidance recently developed by the Parish Council should be published as part of the Village Plan. (See Annex A)</p>	
<p>Time scale: Guidance adopted by Parish Council Feb 2014</p>	

Areas where the village would like to see improvements but where solutions are already in hand



Drains and Sewers	Parish Council/Land Owners
<p>The wet winter of 2012/13 resulted in several instances of raw sewage being discharged, primarily outside the school. Localised flooding occurred in the same area and also in the low point of the Haseley Road.</p> <p>The arrangement of drains in the village is complex, relying on two pumping stations (by the school and by the Haseley Road bridge). Our sewage farm also serves Great & Little Haseley through a main drain which runs across the fields between the villages. A majority of the village think that Thames Water should provide a better service.</p> <p>The Parish Council has already (summer 2013) established good working relationships with officers from Thames Water, OCC, SODC and the Environment Agency. Some improvements have already been achieved, primarily in preventing sewage discharge outside the school. This liaison needs to continue. Any future house building in the village</p>	

or the Haseleys needs to take into account the fact that the current drainage system is working close to maximum capacity in heavy rainfall.

Land owners should be encouraged to maintain their watercourses and ditches in order to reduce the risk of flooding in the lower parts of the village.

Objectives: No instances of raw sewage being discharged, and fewer instances of flooding from over-burdened drains around the village.

Action S1: The Parish Council should continue to work with the local authorities and Thames Water with a view to preventing any discharge of raw sewage and localised flooding due to over-burdened drains within the village.

Time scale: Ongoing

Broadband	Parish Council
<p>The Village Survey indicated that very few houses in the village have broadband speeds above 4Mb/s; many hover in the 1-2 Mb/s range. Faster broadband is now seen as essential for rural communities and many households place faster broadband as a high priority.</p> <p>The award of the OxOnline contract to BT was announced in mid 2013, and it is anticipated that broadband services to Little Milton will be upgraded as part of this programme, hopefully to deliver up to 24Mb/s at the premises by the end of 2015. The coverage map published in Aug 2013 showed Little Milton village within the upgrade area, although the outlying dwellings within the parish may not be included.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council advised in early 2014 that the village is well served by the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme. The following link http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk will provide information of use to the community. OCC has estimated that around 200 premises will be provided with the means of buying broadband services at >24Mb/s.</p> <p>The roll-out for this area is scheduled for phase 4 (out of 6 phases due for completion by Dec 2015). More precise information will become available when the detailed ground surveys are conducted later in 2014, but interested parties are encouraged to visit the broadband website.</p>	
<p>Objective: Faster broadband.</p>	
<p>Action S2: The Parish Council should monitor the national/county OxOnline programme to try and ensure that Little Milton continues to be included in the upgrade programme.</p>	
<p>Time scale: End of 2015</p>	

Parish Council	Parish Council
<p>Whereas most people in the Village Survey thought the Parish Council does a good job, litter collection and maintenance of the village green were highlighted, albeit by a minority, as areas where the Parish Council could do better. More frequent litter blitzes were advocated.</p> <p>The Parish Council already has it in mind to carry out twice-yearly litter blitzes, but success depends upon having enough volunteers to assist. Currently a very small number of people (less than 10) carry out the annual litter blitz.</p> <p>Action has already been taken to improve the appearance and maintenance of the village green.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Less litter around the village. Improved maintenance of the village green.</p>	
<p>Action S3: The Parish Council should improve their services where some weaknesses were highlighted by the village, namely litter collection and maintenance of the village green.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Ongoing</p>	



Village Hall (Pine Lodge)

Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC)

The main areas of concern in the village hall are currently lighting, heating & ventilation, and acoustics. Other minor suggestions for items such as a stage, a patio, etc. were also received from the Village Survey.

The VHMC was already well aware of many of these issues, but welcomed the feedback from the village.

A lot of research has already been done by the VHMC into possible solutions. The problems are being addressed as and when feasible and, most particularly, when funding is available.

Objectives: To carry out those improvements to the Pine Lodge which are necessary, feasible and cost-effective in the medium term. The funds need to be available before the work starts.

Action S4: The Village Hall Management Committee should continue to consider improvements to the Pine Lodge, where feasible, particularly in lighting, heating & ventilation, and acoustics

Time scale: Ongoing

Village Shop and Post Office	Shop Management Committee plus The Whole Village
<p>The Shop and Post Office are considered important by over 80% of the village. A minority of people would like to see the hours extended and suggestions were also made to broaden some of the services provided. Many of these have been considered by the shop committee already and their response was published in the survey results. The hours that the shop can open are critically dependent upon the number of volunteers; <u>so far there have never been enough.</u></p>	
<p>Keeping the shop open seems a modest aim, but it runs on a knife-edge for much of the time. Only if enough people offer their services, even just for a few hours each week, will we keep the Shop open.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Keep the Shop and the Post Office open. In-conjunction with the Volunteer working group, recruit 10 additional volunteers and develop a plan to retain all volunteers.</p>	
<p>S5: The Shop and Post Office should continue to provide a service in the village.</p>	
<p>Time scale: On-going</p>	

New ideas which a majority think would be of benefit

Dog Fouling	Dog owners. Parish Council
<p>65% of villagers think that dog fouling is a problem in parts of the village. Some of the narrower paths seem to be particularly affected and the recreation ground was also highlighted as a problem area, particularly as it is used by the school..</p> <p>About a quarter of households in the village own dogs. Education of owners to pick up was seen as the primary need.</p> <p>The provision of more dog bins at key locations and consideration of banning dogs on the playing fields are measures also supported by the village.</p> <p>Objectives: Less dog fouling around the village. A safer environment, particularly for children.</p> <p>Action N1: Dog owners should pick up. The Parish Council should also put in place measures to try and reduce the amount of dog fouling around the village.</p>	
Time scale: By 31 Dec 2014	

Public Transport	Public Transport Group facilitated by Parish Council
<p>Public transport, in the form of the 103/104 bus services to Oxford, only runs Mon-Sat during the day. There are currently no evening services, but the village survey gave an indication of the demand for such services. For a small number of village residents, the bus service is vital. An evening service would also be helpful and, in particular, reduce the need for parents to transport children to and fro.</p> <p>Two recent local initiatives – the GoRide 101 service from Watlington through Chalgrove, and GoRide 125 service between Thame, Little Milton, Watlington & Wallingford – are examples of what can be done. The 101 service is subsidised by the relevant parish councils.</p> <p>The Parish Council is consulted by the relevant bodies on bus services and has lobbied to maintain the current services. The Council would welcome a new group which could determine the feasibility of providing evening services, consulting organisations such as GoRide.</p>	

Objectives: Continuance of the current 103/104 services. An evening bus service to and from the village, either direct to Oxford, or connecting with other services to Oxford

Action N2: A newly-formed Public Transport Group should look at ways of improving evening and weekend bus services between Oxford and the village, or ways to connect with other services (101 at Stadhampton; 280 at Wheatley)

Time scale: 31/12/14

Youth Facilities & Activities	Youth Working Group
<p>Both young people and adults would like to see more facilities for young people in the village. However it is far from clear what those facilities should be. Is it better transport? Is it better broadband? Is it a skateboard park? Thus the first step in the process is to consult the young people of the village and find out what they want. A new group needs to consider how this might be achieved.</p> <p>Advice is available from the Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action group (OCVA). OCVA could firstly help set up a group. OCVA could also explore funding options with the group as part of the process and help identify what, if any, additional facilities are needed for young people in the village. More information can be found at http://www.ocva.org.uk/funding and the contact at OCVA is david.bates@ocva.org.uk 01865 258912.</p> <p>SODC also have a Young People's Co-ordinator, currently Karen Tolley, who can help with youth facilities and provide general advice and guidance. karen.tolley@southandvale.gov.uk 01491 823041.</p> <p>SODC's Participation Team can support setting up activities for young people. The contact is Nicola Meurer at nicola.meurer@southandvale.gov.uk 01491 823431.</p>	
Objective: Better facilities in the village for young people.	
Action N3 - A newly-formed working group should be established to determine what facilities would be beneficial for the young people of the village and propose methods of putting them in place.	
Time scale: 31/12/15	

Renewable Energy	House & Public Building Owners; Parish Council
<p>The village is evenly divided on the matter of solar panels. 53% support solar panels on public buildings; 49% support solar panels (or heat pumps) on residential buildings.</p> <p>It is purely up to the owner to decide if an installation is cost-effective. Solar panels do not need planning permission, except on listed buildings or, in some circumstances, in a conservation area.</p>	
<p>Objectives: Acceptance of solar panel installations or heat pumps on public and private buildings.</p>	
<p>Action N4: House and premises owners should be encouraged should they wish to install solar panels or heat pumps.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Ongoing</p>	

Carbon Capture	Landowners
<p>90% of the village is in favour of carbon capture schemes. The only practicable schemes within the parish are hedge and tree planting, and it is mainly up to individual land owners if they wish to go ahead. Grants may be available. Any land owner that does wish to plant will have the support of the village. There is no publicly-owned land suitable for mass tree planting. However the Parish Council is in the process of planting additional hedging at the recreation ground. BBOWT has also been active in hedge planting in recent years. Any other initiatives to plant trees or hedges would be welcome.</p> <p>At a time of changing climate, trees also provide shade, capture rain water, provide a habitat for wildlife and act as wind breaks.</p>	
<p>Objective: More tree and hedge planting around the parish.</p>	
<p>Action N5: Carbon capture schemes, primarily hedge and tree planting and preservation, should be supported.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Ongoing</p>	

Cycle Paths	Cycle Path Working Group
<p>Of all the amenities we could share with neighbouring villages, cycle paths had the most support, with 185 people voting in favour. There are very few safe cycle routes around the village and many people would welcome the opportunity to cycle across country in safety to our neighbouring villages.</p> <p>However to achieve this is a significant undertaking and will not be done overnight. A new Working Group is needed who are willing to consider the feasibility, talk to landowners, explore sources of funding, seek the necessary permissions and get the job done.</p> <p>The Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Plan, which was published for consultation in early 2014, is relevant to the work of this group https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/draft_CAMP/consultationHome</p>	
<p>Objectives: Cycle paths joining Little Milton with Great Milton, the Haseleys and, eventually, Wheatley</p>	
<p>Action N6 – A newly-formed Cycle Path Working Group should be established in order to set up cycle paths, initially between Little Milton, Great Milton and the Haseleys, and later, if feasible, with Wheatley</p>	
<p>Time scale: 5 years</p>	

New Village Activities	Existing organisations; professionals; new groups; interested individuals
<p>A number of new village activities were suggested in the Village Survey. Those with 20+ votes were: choir, book club, village picnic, charity jumble sale/Freecycle, bingo, village family sports day, outdoor concert and barn dance.</p> <p>Residents very much appreciate what is being done already to run village activities.</p> <p>All such events need organisers and supporters. Without sufficient support, a lot of hard work setting up a new event may be for naught.</p> <p>The Village Hall Management Committee has reviewed the list and has commented that some suggestions e.g. barn dance, have been tried in the past, with mixed success. Other ideas have been taken on board by the committee as possibilities for the future.</p> <p>Such events could be run either by an existing village organisation, or professionally e.g. fitness classes, etc. However there is nothing to stop new people or groups coming forward to run new activities and these are to be encouraged.</p> <p>Some events may only be viable if they attract people from outside the village to attend.</p>	
<p>Objectives: New village activities where there will be enough support.</p>	

Action N7: New village activities should be encouraged where there is sufficient support.

Time scale: Ongoing

Volunteers

Volunteer Working Group

Many facilities and amenities only keep running through the hard work and dedication of groups of volunteers. There are 18 such organisations in the village. Up until now, each organisation has sought its own helpers. As part of the village survey, people were asked to put their names forward to assist an organisation, or organisations, of their choice. 10% of the village put their names forward.

There are many obstacles which prevent people becoming volunteer helpers – work or family pressures being the main ones. Some commitments may be once a year e.g. helping with the fete; some may be much more frequent – helping in the shop for instance. Involvement needs to be encouraged, even if someone can only spare a short time each week. Volunteering is an ideal way to be part of the village, meet new people and contribute to the community.

Ways and means need to be investigated to help and encourage more people to step forward.

Advice is available from the Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action group (OCVA). Val Ireland from OCVA's Volunteer centre is available to talk with the Volunteer Working Group to assist them in the identified priority of finding more volunteers to help run village organisations. OCVA also have a range of information sheets on their site to help groups in attracting, managing and retaining volunteers. See also the helpful advice available at <http://www.ocva.org.uk/need-volunteers>

Help is also available from david.bates@ocva.org.uk 01865 258912.

Objective: More volunteers.

Action N8 – More volunteers are needed to help run village organisations.

Time scale: Ongoing

Topics not currently being taken forward

A number of other ideas were considered and the views of the village sought. After due consideration, the conclusion was that some topics would not be taken forward.

Council Tax	Parish Council
<p>One potential source of funding for new initiatives identified in the plan is the Parish Council. The Parish Council has a budget of about £20k per annum, of which just over half comes from the Parish Precept. The Precept forms part of the total Council Tax bill for each household.</p> <p>In the 2013 Village Survey, a narrow majority of households (53%) indicated that they did <u>not</u> wish to see Council Tax rise in order to fund new initiatives.</p>	
<p>Objective: Respond to the wishes of the village when considering how new initiatives in this Plan might be financed.</p>	
<p>Action: Z1 – The Parish Council should note that in 2013 a narrow majority (53%) did not wish Council Tax to rise in order to fund new initiatives in this Plan.</p>	
<p>Time scale: Ongoing</p>	

Gas Supply	Nil
<p>Many houses would like mains gas, but British Gas have advised that to bring a gas supply to the village would be expensive, and would therefore require a significant number of houses in the village willing to pay several thousand pounds each for such a supply, plus individual connection charges, costs of changing boilers, etc.</p> <p>The Village Survey showed that not enough households in the village were willing to finance the project.</p>	
<p>Objective: Unless costs can be reduced substantially at some point in the future, a mains gas supply to the village will not be pursued.</p>	
<p>Action Z2 – There are insufficient houses in the village willing to pay for a mains gas installation.</p>	
<p>Time scale:</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Bypass	Parish Council
Views as to whether a bypass would be a solution for the village's traffic problems were finely divided (48% support the concept: 52% against). The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030 makes no provision for bypasses anywhere in the county and no funding is currently available. Fund-raising for a bypass would be beyond the capacity of the village.	
Action Z3 – In the current financial climate, the concept of a bypass for the village will not be pursued.	
Time scale: Not applicable	

The Future

Many changes which we cannot currently predict will affect our village in the future. The population of the village has changed over time, and will change again. Over the time scale of this Plan, it is likely that the village will continue to have an above average number of people aged 45-59 and below average 20-44.

Next Steps

The Steering Group has done its work. It seems to have taken rather a long time (about 2 years), but when the work is being done by a group of volunteers, just getting a reasonable number of people together for a meeting has been a challenge.

Existing organisations in the village will take forward many aspects of the Plan and the Parish Council also has an important role to play.

However some of the new proposals in the Plan require new groups to be formed to take them forward.

The Plan should not sit and gather dust. It should be a living document. Progress by the various groups and organisations should be reported from time to time in the village newsletter and on the village website. The Parish Council will wish to review progress on a regular basis. Indeed, their role is important as the Council is the one organisation in the village which can maintain an overview. In addition, it is suggested that the Annual Parish Meeting be used as an opportunity to review progress against the Plan in a more formal way.

As time passes, it may become apparent that this first edition of the Village Plan needs updating. Things will change, both locally and nationally. This Plan may hold good for only 5 years; it may last 10. But at some point it will be appropriate to revisit the Plan, seek the view of the villagers once again, and update our aspirations for the future.

Additional Information

Steering Group Members

Jeremy Quested (Chairman)
Barry Coward (Secretary)
Paul Jeffery (Treasurer)
Kate Daunt
Neil Fisher
Paul Harrison
Bruce Shelton

Other organisations consulted

Little Milton Parish Council
Village Hall Management Committee
Shop Committee
The Villagers of Little Milton
South Oxfordshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Methods of distribution of the Village Plan

A printed copy of the Plan have gone to every household in the village.

The Plan is also available on the village website at <http://www.littlemilton.org.uk/>

Supporting Organisations

The costs of researching and producing the Village Survey and the Village Plan were generously supported through an Active Communities Grant of £1500 made by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Steering Group wish to thank:

- Oxfordshire County Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

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Illustrations

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Front inside cover map courtesy of South Oxfordshire District Council

ANNEX A

Summary of the Parish Council's Housing Guidance

LITTLE MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

LITTLE MILTON HOUSING GUIDANCE 2013 TO 2027

INTRODUCTION

The following summarises the Parish Council's Housing Guidance which forms part of the Little Milton Village Plan (published on the village website at www.littlemilton.org.uk). The following is, as the title suggests, for guidance only and cannot cover all eventualities. The Parish Council will continue to consider any planning applications on their individual merits.

Little Milton is a community of some 195 houses and 490 people. The village has a relatively large number of older houses, mostly dating from its origins as an agricultural community, and many of which are of substantial size and/or are located on large plots. Some are listed as of historic interest. A number of post-war developments have substantially increased the size of the village, as well as altering the mix of development types.

The core of the village is a Conservation Area. In addition, all land to the west of the main road through the village is Green Belt. Much of the land to the east of the village is a nature reserve owned by BBOWT.

The village community benefits from a church, primary school, pre-school, village hall, recreation ground, village shop/post office, and an estate agent. There are a small number of light industrial units on Warren Barn Farm, an art gallery and offices on Old Belcher's Farm, and in addition a number of residents have home offices or work from home.

The Parish Council desires that Little Milton continues to thrive as a successful community and that it maintains or increases the amenities from which villagers benefit. In considering planning applications, the Parish Council will need to give consideration to any impact on the character and appearance of the village, to the conservation area, to the green belt, to existing village amenities to any additional amenity value brought by the proposed development.

The Village Plan, which was produced through the Community Led Plan process, represents the aspirations of the community, and as such, can be a material consideration in the planning application process. However, it is not a statutory planning document and does not carry the same material weight as an adopted Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. It will be taken into consideration by the planning authority (South Oxfordshire District Council) along with all other material considerations and relevant policies in arriving at any

decision, and this Guidance was formulated with the assistance and advice of the planning policy team at South Oxfordshire District Council..

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY FOR LITTLE MILTON

In summary, **Policy CSR1** within the District Council's Core Strategy states:

1	No specific allocation of houses to Little Milton
2	Infill allowed – 5-6 houses on sites up to 0.2ha (approx 45m x 45m)
3	Affordable housing may be built on small rural exception sites, but only for those people with a local connection and if a need is identified

Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

The Parish Council will seek to preserve the Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.

Green Belt

The Parish Council has noted that in the 2013 Village Survey 63% of villagers expressed a wish that there should be no development within the Green Belt. The Parish Council has also noted that the national planning rules for development in the Green Belt nevertheless allow limited infill development and exception sites for affordable housing within the Green Belt.

Allocation of Housing

The Parish Council supports the Core Strategy in that there should be no allocation of housing within the time frame of that Strategy. The Parish Council is not seeking any new development of market housing within or adjacent to the village.

Infill

Infill development is defined in the District Council's Core Strategy as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. Such sites are defined as not exceeding 0.2 Ha. Infill is allowed within the village on Green Belt land.

The Parish Council is not actively seeking any infill sites for development within the village.

The Parish Council will respond to any future planning applications for infill sites, but would anticipate that any such proposals must firstly meet the criteria within the definition of infill, should be for sites not exceeding 0.2 ha, and must meet the housing density criteria, defined in the Core Strategy as 25 dwellings per hectare.

Affordable Housing

The Parish Council will keep under review the need for affordable housing, and whether feasible solutions are available to meet any such identified need. This can be achieved in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council through a Housing Needs Survey.

Extensions

The Parish Council will continue to support the extension and alteration of existing properties where such proposals are proportionate, well-designed, and, where appropriate, compatible with either listed building status, the preservation of the conservation area or preserving the character of the Green Belt.

Solar Panels

The majority of solar panel installations on residential buildings do not require planning permission. However the Parish Council will not support applications for listed buildings or installations in the conservation area which are not proportionate or compatible with either listed building status, the preservation of the conservation area, or the Green Belt.

Infrastructure

The Parish Council is of the view that any proposal for new building in the village should also address the impact of the development on the sewerage and drainage systems, and would expect any application to demonstrate that it will be either have no impact or a positive impact on the existing infrastructure.

Flexibility

No guidance document can cover all eventualities and take into account every single factor, and individual planning proposals or applications will still need to be considered on their merits.

ANNEX B

Summary of Village Survey Results

- The overall response rate from households was 83.5%, which is a very good response rate
- The village population is estimated at 496. We have an above-average number aged 45-59 and below average 20-44. We have an average number of children
- Over half the village population have lived here 10 years or more
- Traffic was the major concern with strong support for the following:
 - Weight limit on A329 (70% support)
 - Enforcing existing speed limit (volunteer Speedwatch scheme) and introducing a 20mph limit through village
 - Enforcing existing weight limits (Haseley Road)
- Dog fouling is perceived as a problem around the village (65%)
- Most households supported solar panels on buildings, but not wind turbines
- Carbon capture schemes have strong support (89%)
- The village newsletter is read, at least in part, by 88% of villagers
- The shop and post office are important to villagers (85%) and only 5% of villagers do not use the shop and post office at all
- 49% of young people under 19 think there should be more activities for young people
- 78% of villagers think the church is important for various reasons
- About 15 children currently living in the village will be starting at the village school in the next 5 years
- 66% of villagers read the parish council notes in the newsletter
- 19% of villagers think the parish council should do more to collect litter in the village; 15% think the village green should be better maintained
- 67% of villagers think Trading Standards should do more to enforce HGV weight limits; 51% think Thames Water's service needs improving
- 53% do not want any more houses in the village; 40% would accept infill up to about 10 houses; 7% would accept more than 10 houses
- 63% do not want houses built on the Green Belt
- For 90% of villagers, car is the main means of transport out of the village; for 5% the bus service is vital
- If bus services were improved in the evenings and at weekends, a small number of people would use them
- 35% of broadband users do not know the speed of their connection; only 7% of households report a service faster than 4Mbps
- 70% think the broadband service is not good enough
- Over half the houses in the village use BT as their Internet Service Provider
- 57% of households are willing to wait for the national/county programme to deliver faster broadband (it has since been announced that Little Milton will be included in the upgrade programme over the next 2 years)
- 100 households (50% of village) would like mains gas; however, only 13 are prepared to pay the current costs to obtain such a service
- Mobile phone coverage in houses is patchy, with only 33% reporting an OK or good service

- No one mobile phone network stands out as giving better coverage in the village than any other
- 53% of households do not want Council Tax to rise to fund any improvements mentioned in the survey questionnaire
- Many people (110) are interested in volunteering to help run village organisations and activities, but feel they have too many family or work commitments
- 52 volunteers came forward as a result of the survey