

Ashford Carbonell



A View of the Future



How Ashford Carbonell Prepared a Parish Plan

In 2002, the Parish Council was made aware of the Vital Villages scheme that provided funding for Parish Plans, so that all parishes could have a say in their future development. Ashford Carbonell Parish Council could see that this could be of great benefit to the parish, and to the various organisations within the parish.

A small steering group was formed to act on behalf of the Parish Council. The Village Hall Committee had already perceived a need to ask the parish for their views on future improvements to the Village Hall and other groups could see the advantage of this feedback.

The steering group developed and published a survey, with input from all the groups in the parish and this was delivered to every household. A massive 96% were completed and returned; these were independently analysed, and the results collated into the document you see here.

The Parish Council and its steering group, containing representatives of all parish organisations, are confident that our Parish Plan is truly reflective of the views of the residents of Ashford Carbonell.



Contents



History	page 4
Ashford Carbonell Today	page 5
The Parish	page 5
Village Amenities	page 6
The Response	page 7
The Green Parish	page 8
Parish Church	page 9
Village Hall and Sports Facilities	page 10
Village School	page 12
Transport	page 12
The Way Forward	page 14



The History of Ashford Carbonel

The name Ashford is derived from the ford on the River Teme, over which passed an ancient trackway (possibly a Saltway) linking mid-Wales with the Severn at Bewdley. This remained an important crossing place until 1797 when the bridge over the River Teme, designed and built by Thomas Telford as part of the new turnpike system, was opened.

The name Carbonel commemorates what was probably a cadet branch of the illustrious Carbonel family, Lords of Canisy in Normandy at the time of the Conquest. They were granted the Manor of Esseford, which then comprised Ashford Carbonel and Ashford Bowdler, in about 1175 or earlier. There is no record of them in the parish after 1360.

The spelling of Carbonel varies with either one or two Ls. Documents indicate the original family had one L, while a further L was added more recently.

The parish, which has an area of approximately 1500 acres, is made up of three separate manors, as recorded in the Domesday Survey. Ashford Carbonell, or Nether Ashford, occupies a linear area along the east side of the river and along either side of the village street. Secondly, Ashford Jones, or Upper Ashford, in the north east corner is centred on Ashford Manor. Huntington, in the south east corner is centred on Big Huntington.



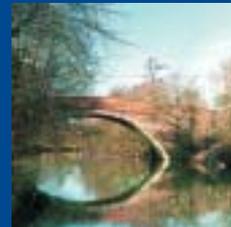
This division has led to a chequered history of land tenure, with the manors changing hands frequently. In addition, the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow, and then the Corporation of Ludlow, owned many properties in all three manors.

The parish is, and always has been, an agricultural one and, although there has been a doubling of numbers in the past 30-40 years, the population is still below 400.

In the village there are many half-timbered dwellings of the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as brick houses of the 18th and 19th centuries. The village was once self-sufficient, as can be seen from former uses of some of the dwellings such as the Old Smithy, which was once the blacksmith's, the Old Bakery and the Post Office, the latter which has moved house several times. There is also a water mill, built in about 1820, just downstream from the bridge, replacing an earlier mill, though it has not been used for grinding corn since 1953.

The primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1878, is now a private dwelling. Ashford Primary School was opened in 1872. The Church of St Mary Magdalene is mainly Norman with later work.

Originally, the main village street was part of a through road from Ludlow, via Steventon, to Little Hereford but beyond the parish boundaries, in each direction, it has been downgraded to a footpath.



Ashford Carbonell Today

The Parish of Ashford Carbonell is located some three miles below the confluence of the River Teme and River Corve.

It is one of several settlements that are located in the river valley of the Teme. Across the river is the village of Ashford Bowdler that until the early 20th century, was in the same Parish linked by a ford. The boundaries of the Parish extend to just beyond the Serpent crossroads on the Caynham road (N.E.), Tinkers Hill on the Steventon Road, to the railway crossing on Saltmore Lane and towards Little Hereford to the South.

Characteristics of the Parish

Ashford Carbonell is set amid rich agricultural land used predominantly for arable farming. The town of Ludlow lies to the North, with Titterstone Clee providing a dramatic feature in the views to the Northeast. The River Teme meanders along the western edge.

The parish is generally well maintained, with little evidence of buildings needing repair, and hedges, walls and fences well kept.

Ashford Carbonell is not on a through route which, together with attractive trees and shrubs with open spaces and adjoining parkland and farms contributes to its quiet rural character.



Housing within the village is loosely grouped along the village street, with a small development at the southern end and houses grouped on the north-eastern side near the church. The farmhouses and Ashford Manor on the outer reaches of the Parish, all equally well maintained, contribute to this attractive community

The history of the village is evident in the timbered framework of some of the older listed houses and the key buildings of Ashford Court and Ashford Manor, set in their own parkland. Other buildings within the village, but not listed, are built on the local vernacular style contributing to the character of the village

There are many mature and attractive trees within the parkland belonging to Ashford Court and Ashford Manor. Mature oaks line a track leading to footpaths to Little Hereford and a line of majestic poplars run down farmland nearby. Areas of natural woodland within the village and the avenue of chestnuts, planted for the Silver Jubilee along the road entering the village, add to the rural setting

Villagers have common rights to access the River Teme at 'The Beach' via a track bordering the property known as The Forde. A very attractive and natural waterside setting on a bend in the river, it provides a pleasant, restful place to visit at any time of the year and is much enjoyed by residents.

Ashford Carbonell has a conservation area that was designated by South Shropshire District Council in February 1994. This covers a large area of the village to the river on the South West and extends above the street incorporating the housing and natural features along the length of the village.



Village Amenities

The village has a parish church, village primary school and village hall with sports field.

The parish church of St. Mary Magdalene is a cherished place of worship, overlooking the village, and sits on higher ground near the school. Several ancient yews grow in the churchyard and the church has fine features in its Norman windows and decorated glass. Parishioners support this fine building with christenings, weddings, funerals and regular worship. The school also plays a regular part in seasonal services throughout the year.



The school of Ashford Carbonell is positioned near the entrance to the village. The building is listed and stands as an example of the history found within the Parish. It is attended by primary age children from the village and places are much sought-after by parents outside the area, for its small classes and Beacon status. It is well-integrated into the village's activities throughout the year.

The Village Hall and Sports Field is situated near the centre of the village next to one of the oldest houses in the village, Candlelight Cottage. It is a well used building carefully constructed to blend with the timbered features of the cottage nearby and has its own car park, playground and sports-field, with an all weather bowling green and tennis court. A popular venue for many and varied events all the year round, it is run by a keen



committee who receive popular support from village residents. This is a venue for the Women's Institute, Bowls Group, Post Office, Parish Council, some school and church events, adult learning classes, cinema (Flicks in the Sticks), as well as outside bookings and events.

Footpaths are regularly used around the village and its environs. Popular with dog owners and visitors for the views to Clee Hill and Mortimer Forest, they are well-trodden paths which add to the pleasure of living in such an attractive setting. Landowners and walkers generally act responsibly and parishioners are encouraged to continue with this co-operation.

Other amenities include a visiting mobile shop, library and some recycling facilities.





The Response

Every household in the Parish was sent a questionnaire; the response was 96%, which was possibly one of the best results in the country. Analysis of the completed questionnaire was undertaken by an independent agent to ensure complete impartiality.



A few basic statistics:

- Age of Residents**
 - 65% were 50+
 - 9% were under 17
- Length of residency**
 - 40% had lived in the Parish for over 15 years
 - 29% had lived in the Parish less than 5 years
- General**
 - 83% opposed any housing development
 - 71% wanted some form of vehicle speed control
 - 90% use the Village Hall at some time each year
 - There was a strong support for improvement to the Village Hall, but 50% felt that the exterior should remain unchanged
 - 79% use St. Mary Magdalene Church at some time each year
 - 81% considered an active church important to village life
 - 21% have a child who has attended the school
 - 91% believe there should be interaction between school and village
 - 20% use the bus service
- Other Identified needs:**
 - More litter bins
 - More planted areas with flowers in the village and wild flowers on banks and footpaths
 - Provision of bird nesting boxes
 - Provision of more sports/playground facilities including a skateboarding area



For the full details of the survey, see the Ashford Carbonell website:
www.ashfordcarbonell.co.uk





The "Green" Parish

An overwhelming 83.4% of respondents are against "housing developments" in the Parish.

Development

Although 81% thought the village's public areas are well cared for, over 70% also thought that the landscape, the River Teme, Teme Green, trees and woodland should also be cared for. Opinion was evenly divided on whether there should be more garden flower planting; the chosen sites for such are near the walnut tree and near the Village Hall.

Landscape

However, 79% would like to see native wild flowers on banks and walks around the village. Provision of bird nesting boxes was also suggested.

Trees

The response in favour of more tree planting sites was only 23%. However the village already has a Tree Warden, appointed by the Parish Council and supported by the County and District Councils and Shropshire Hills A.O.B. officers. A village tree survey was conducted in 1996 covering 66% of the Parish; consequently the Millennium Wood area of Saltmoor Lane was planted and a plan for the Recreation Ground produced. It is thought that some funding exists for a "free tree" scheme.

Footpaths and Stiles

Opinion was evenly divided over improving footpath and stile access and also the need for more "countryside rules" signs. Over a third of all dog owners thought that livestock protection would be better if dog gates could be fitted to the stiles.

The majority of villagers was in favour of dog waste bins and more "clean up" notices.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- There must be no further housing development.
- Maintenance needs of the public areas of the landscape should be dealt with.



- Wild flower seed should be sown on selected banks and walk areas. Bird nesting- boxes could be located in suitable areas.
- Villagers with areas appropriate for planting should be made aware of assisted schemes.
- Landowners should be encouraged to improve stile and footpath maintenance and introduce dog gates where appropriate.
- Installation – and emptying – of dog waste bins at appropriate sites to be pursued with local authority.
- Suitably durable countryside code and dog fouling notices to be installed where appropriate.

Action Points

TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Medium term:

- Employment opportunity of landscape improvement and maintenance

TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short/medium/long term:

- Prohibitions on building developments to be fortified and continued in all future area plans

Medium term:

- Development of local countryside codes to benefit both landowners and land users.

Medium term:

- Tree planting round recreation field and other identifiable areas in the Parish to be funded and completed

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Medium term:

- Develop and monitor planting areas for wild flowers and locations for bird nest boxes.

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Short/medium/long term:

- Continue and strengthen controls against unwanted developments.

Short term:

- Define areas for planting.

Medium term:

- Obtain funding for public and individual action.



The Parish Church



The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is approximately 900 years old and in the churchyard are some yew trees which pre-date the building, suggesting Saxon worship.

The Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the upkeep of the building and its surroundings; fundraising and parishioner generosity have, for many years, maintained the stability of the church's finances. However, the anticipated financial burden of ensuring the long-term well-being of the church is a cause of growing concern.

According to the Survey findings, 15% attend the church weekly and 55% occasionally; 54% think it makes a significant contribution to village life and no less than 69% consider that maintenance of the church is a community responsibility, whilst 81% think having an active church is important to the village.

The historic nature of the church building creates limitations, but 31% think it should also be used for other activities, although 42% reject this idea – the rest, 27% "don't know".

Conclusions and Recommendations

The parochial Church Council has identified the following objectives:-

- Ensure that the church continues its significant contribution to village pastoral and social life
- Continue to hold services of worship, at least weekly
- Encourage younger members of the parish to play their part in church activities



- Maintain close links with the village school
- Co-operate with other interested affinity groups
- Meet the wishes of some parishioners to use the church for other cultural activities
- To provide toilet and disabled facilities
- To have a meeting room annexe with limited catering facilities

Action Points

TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Short/medium term:

- Fabric of the church and its surroundings to be maintained
- Active appreciation and use of the church contributes to the village economy

TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short/medium/long term:

- Fabric of the church and its surroundings to be cared for

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Short/medium/long term:

- Sustain and continue weekly worship
- Sustain links with village school
- Co operate with mutually interested groups

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Short term:

- Source and allocate funding

Medium term:

- Establish and cost development plans
- Obtain funding
- Manage the improvement works



The Village Hall and Sports Facilities

The Village Hall, together with the Sports and Playing Field, has come to represent the very heart of our village and the surrounding areas. Not only is it used for a host of social activities, it is also a strong focal point. It sits near the very centre of the village and is passed by so many of the villagers going about their daily business; constant reminder of the friendship and community spirit felt in our village.

Statistically, the Village Hall is used by 89% of the community. There was a large response to the survey and a long list of suggestions was drawn up. If funding can be achieved, many of these suggestions would necessitate alterations to the existing building. It was also specifically mentioned by 50% of the respondents that they did not wish to see the outer appearance from the front of the Hall changed. However, most of the desired improvements could be achieved by extending at the back of the Hall.

A third of the parishioners use the weekly Post Office in the hall; a designated secure area is thought desirable.

A majority would like to have improved lighting in the car park when the hall is in use, but it is thought that parking is adequate.



75% of the parish use the recycling facilities in the car park and most think more could be done to increase recycling, i.e. 72% would like to recycle cardboard, 54% garden waste – including reinstatement of the District Council's mobile shredder – and 51% clothing.

The parish is enthusiastic about the playing field and sports activities and 32% think more could be done; there were offers of help in organising and developing sports clubs.

The playground is thought to be acceptable, but there were requests for skateboard/rollerblade facilities, activities influenced by youthful trends.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Ashford Carbonell Village Hall is currently a well-used facility with considerable limitations due to its size and rather archaic construction.

The Village Hall needs flexible up-to-date facilities which include -

- A larger functions area
- A small committee room
- A bar area
- Indoor games facilities
- Better acoustics
- Better car park lighting
- Better storage facilities
- Secure Post Office facilities
- On-going maintenance



- A view of the playing fields
- Better and larger kitchen facilities
- Better recycling facilities – Green Waste Recycling
- The sports field facilities to be improved for a higher standard of sport eg. Cricket, Tennis and Bowling
- Playground areas, wherever possible, should be made suitable for contemporary activities.

The residents of the village would like to be able to make even better use of the hall as a social centre enabling larger functions to be held, concerts to be given, games and club nights to take place and to encourage ALL of the villagers to use this much loved facility. It is currently used by the village school, Post Office, WI, Parish Council, various clubs, IT courses, committee meetings and various social events though out the year.

Ideally we would like to see the hall extended to the rear so that the street frontage remains intact. The use of modern materials and environmentally friendly design would ensure that Ashford Carbonell would have a structure that would serve the village well, for the foreseeable future.

The sports field is a valuable resource in the middle of the village adjoining the village hall car-park. Given the location of the village and difficulties with public transport, there is a need to encourage safe activities for the youth within the village community. The tennis court,



cricket pitch, bowling green and play area are all facilities which enhance life in Ashford Carbonell and must be continually improved and maintained.



Action Points

TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- Ongoing maintenance and improvement works provide employment
- Appreciation and usage of the facilities is a stimulus to village life
- Recycling of waste creates employment

TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short term:

- Improved recycling facilities – approach the SSDC to be included in the Green Bag Scheme or to provide a garden waste recycling skip; also recycling of cardboard, plastics and clothing

Medium term:

- Better car park lighting
- Better acoustics and sound control
- Efficient use of energy and environmentally friendly materials in the design of improvements to the Village Hall

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Medium term:

- Improved facilities will attract additional educational pursuits
- Encourage clubs for youths and adults in the village
- Theatre/concert facilities ○ Arts and crafts facilities

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Short term:

- Determine availability of improvement funds
- Define allocation of funds for the improvements to the Village Hall and sports field as stated in the recommendations above

Medium term:

- Manage the improvement works to ensure that the Village Hall is a suitable multi-purpose venue as the focal point of the village



The Village School

79% of the parishioners do not have any children who have attended the school; currently, 98% do not have any children who will need a school place; 1.4% have children requiring a school place in the next two years. Nevertheless, 91% of the parishioners think the school should be involved in the community and vice versa.

As the school is mainly used by children who are transported in from other areas, this gave rise to by far the largest number of individual comments throughout the whole survey, about the (sometimes) dangerous problems caused by school traffic and parking. The school management considers that relocating the school is not an option at present.

A majority of respondents, 57%, do not wish to see the school used for other out-of-hours activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The school needs better parking arrangements for staff and safer unloading/loading facilities for pupils and parents.

Action Points

TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- All aspects of the school's operation provide local employment

TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short term:

- Continue to investigate parking improvement

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Short/medium/long term:

- Encourage best use of facilities

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Short term:

- Continue liaison with County authorities to improve school transport
- Emphasise to parents the need for sensible parking

Medium term:

- Encourage closer links between school and community
- Establish plans with all concerned to improve parking arrangements

Long term:

- Obtain funding and implement plans

Transport

Analysis of the statistics leads to certain inevitable conclusions: *Bus services for adults are infrequent, badly timed and use unsuitable vehicles.*

The under 16s, just 9%, have subsidised school transport. (See photograph below right).

Public transport for the most vulnerable sections of society creates feelings of inclusion, assurance and security. The small number of, mainly, elderly, who used the only suitable bus service – Saturday only – was insufficient to justify its high subsidy, so it was discontinued. It operated between Tenbury and Ludlow.

To create the reassurance and security needed by the vulnerable, we recommend co-operation with our neighbouring parishes i.e. Brimfield, Wyson, Woofferton, Ashford Bowdler, possibly Caynham, and The Sheet, in approaching the authorities to initiate a low-floor minibus service to and from Ludlow *twice daily*, Monday to Saturday. The precedents for this are the successful 49Link connecting Craven Arms with its outlying villages and the recent North Shropshire Link connecting Ellesmere, Wem and Market Drayton with their villages. Our survey, and simple observation, reveals we cannot justify demand for a bus service to Tenbury – or even direct to Leominster – at present; the overwhelming responses related to transport needs to and from Ludlow.

The parish age profile should provide a continuing demand for this type of service.

The appropriate type of bus is available, giving wheelchair access and low-step loading.

The alternative of the volunteer run Community Car Service must be sustained and continued for other destinations and occasions.

Park and Ride

The economics of a "South Shropshire Link" minibus service could be adversely affected if its clientele were enticed into using a P&R scheme instead.



Parish Traffic

Complaints about speeding through the village have continued for many years. Imposition of a speed limit has two distinct drawbacks – it introduces more street “furniture”, signs, etc, but it cannot be policed.

Practical steps can be taken such as improving signage, which welcome and give an advisory speed limit; the existing “slow” signs along the village street should be improved by the addition of red backing.

Speed humps are only effective when placed every 50yds or so, but they create substantial traffic noise so are inappropriate for our environment.

Certainly our existing road signs are “tired” and need modernisation and some relocation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We need a bus service in collaboration with neighbouring villages and an enterprising operator. A small low floor bus is essential. Constant publicity and subsidy will be needed.

Actively promote fare concession schemes:

- Funding should be assured for the Community Car Service
- Funding should be introduced for a Taxi Voucher scheme
- Funding must be provided continuously to promote all the above

OTHER

- Bus shelters are not appropriate in the Parish.



- A transport information frame could be useful at the Huntingdon end
- Press for integration of bus and train connections at Ludlow
- Remind the CC that road signage needs modernising, in the light of our tax contributions
- Inform SSDC that we do not support a full time P&R scheme for Ludlow
- Monitor Car Club developments

Action Points

TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Short term:

- Transport is a County responsibility. There is a perceived and statistically proven emphasis of expenditure on Shrewsbury. The standards applied there should rapidly be applied here; the Ludlow area is of equal importance as a tourist centre

- Improved village bus service

Medium term:

- Co-ordination of bus and train services at Ludlow; there is a history of lack of co-operation between the modal operators; there should be an obligation on the new train service franchisee

TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short term:

- Sustained funding needed to establish a viable all-day minibus service in collaboration with neighbouring parishes

- Village traffic signs to be updated

Medium/long term:

- Park and Ride would NOT reduce parish traffic volumes and could negate minibus service

Medium term:

- Locate another transport information frame, e.g. in Huntingdon area

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

No comments appropriate to this section

PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Short/medium/long term:

- Initiating, marketing and sustaining a local bus service using the 49Link as a suitable model

- Sustain the Community Car Service

Medium term:

- Introduce a Taxi Voucher scheme

Long term:

- Monitor developments in Car Club schemes



The Way Forward

The Ashford Carbonell Vital Villages survey has been a triumph for the village and all committed parishioners. We can be confident that, with a 96% response rate, then all views have been considered in the compiling of this document. Indeed, it is something the village as a whole should be proud of.

Such results are not unusual in this corner of Shropshire as the survey used to source information for the Millennium book 'Ashford Carbonell 2000 AD' had a response from every house in the Parish.

The village community has recognised within this plan some very definite ideas and strategies for this its short, medium and long term objectives, with the proviso that actions preserve its attractiveness, character and history.

Immediate concerns are focused around the village school and the associated parking problems. Although the school is very much perceived as an asset to the village, the greatest number of individual comments was concerned with parking during term times; this was especially relevant as 79% of parishioners are not directly involved with the school. It is felt that, unless a substantial alternative is implemented soon, then an accident will occur.



The village hall facility has been the focus of individual attention for some years within the parish. What has been proven as a result of the survey is that although people see the need for changes to the internal structure of the hall, the existing character should be preserved. Some immediate cosmetic changes, such as lighting and improved acoustics would be well received. The medium term objective of investigating potential development of the building is required and recognised.



St Mary Magdalene church is one of the oldest buildings in the parish and well-recognised within the community. Main concerns are centred on maintaining the fabric of the church and improving regular attendance. Funding is required to install toilet and disabled facilities.

Village transport considerations commanded a substantial response. Although a bus service is provided, very little use is made of this facility, possibly because of a lack of integration with other bus and rail facilities. Disabled access is also cited as a problem. A park-and-ride scheme for Ludlow is not the choice of the community. However, a community car service or a taxi voucher scheme would be appropriate. It is recognised that the large majority of villagers have access to private transport.





83.4% of parishioners are against further housing developments in the village. In a pretty village such as Ashford Carbonell, 79% of parishioners would like to see wild flowers planted on verge-sides. This parish is very lucky to have a tree warden and as a result trees are planted and cared for. Dogs fouling footpaths created a substantial response in the questionnaire, and more notices and dog waste bins are an immediate requirement for the village.

To sum up, the parishioners of Ashford Carbonell are extremely happy with their environment. Small, but significant, changes should be made to enhance what is already a pleasant and friendly village to live in.

Further information and reference can be made to the book 'Ashford Carbonell 2000 AD'



Photography courtesy of Jeremy Hall



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