

Southam Town Plan 2006



1. Foreword

I am delighted to write this preface to the Southam Town Plan. Just over two years ago Southam Town Council received confirmation from the Countryside Agency that they were prepared to make us a grant to help fund a parish plan and in the autumn of 2003 the public consultation started. Over the following 12 months individuals and groups from throughout the community were invited to make their views known about what was important to them about our town. So much information was received that it has taken some time to pull it together into a single document but here it is.

The Town Plan will regularly be consulted by the Town Council who will follow up the issues that have been raised. Copies will be submitted to other authorities and it is hoped that Stratford District Council will adopt it as supplementary planning guidance.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have put a lot of time and effort into producing the Town Plan and to all those individuals who helped to shape the plan by letting us know their views.

Bill Pease
Southam Town Mayor
January 2006

2. The background to the Town Plan

The population of Southam are quite used to surveys. Our first appraisal was in 1995 followed up by a second in 1998. Then in 2000 Southam produced the "Millennium Design Statement", and in 2004 Vision 4 Southam published the Healthcheck & Action Plan. All reports were accepted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and were useful in setting Town Council priorities as well as supporting planning decisions. With the prospect of achieving "Quality Parish Status", the Town Council decided to embark on the production of a Town Plan. It was hoped that the Plan would give an up to date snapshot of the main aspirations of Southam people. While some items from the Action Plan would fall into the category of "quick gains", others may fall outside the influence of the Town Council or not be achievable and this must be made clear.

3. Introduction



Southam and its "Halliwell" (now The Holy Well, pictured above) were first mentioned in 998 when it was granted to the Priory of Coventry by King Ethelred, but there were probably Anglo-Saxon and Roman settlements even earlier. Mentioned as 'Suham' in the Domesday Book, Southam was granted a charter in the 13th Century when St. James' church was built. In 1227 the Prior obtained a statute allowing Southam a weekly market. The water from the Holy Well was said to cure eye ailments.

Southam developed on ground rising from the Stowe Valley and prospered due to its location on the east-west drovers' road and the north-south Coventry to Oxford road, and its ownership by the Priory. For many centuries Southam boasted an unusual number of inns and hostelries. Apart from hosting the local market, it was also a stopping place on the drovers' road from Wales to the markets of the Midlands and London. The Welsh farmers drove thousands of sheep, cattle and geese along what is still known as the Welsh Road. In later years Southam became an important stop on the main coaching routes across the Midlands and to London.

Important sites

- The Old Mint Inn is a stone building dating from the 14th Century and is so named because Charles I is said to have minted coins here for his troops after the nearby battle of Edgehill in 1642.



- The Lilley-Smith Memorial marks the site of the country's first free Provident Dispensary, established in 1818 by local surgeon Henry Lilley-Smith.



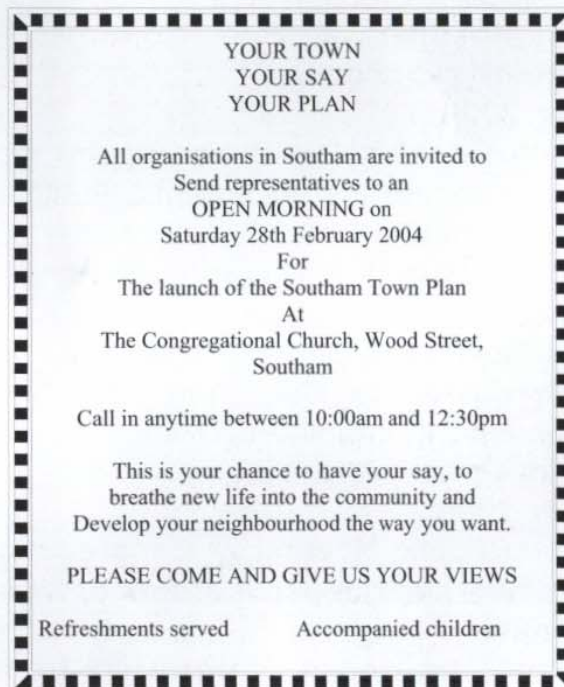
- St James Church was founded in 1294. In addition to St James Church, an independent chapel was built in Pendicke Street and a Congregational Church in Wood Street. The Roman Catholic church was built in 1925.

Much of Southam was destroyed in four fires in the 1740's when 30 houses were burnt. These were replaced and Southam now has many interesting historic buildings. Southam's first gas supply was introduced in 1853 with electricity following in 1924. The Holy Well and other springs were used for water supply until mains were connected in the 1920's.

The population of Southam in the 2001 census was 6509 people and the town continues to grow today.

4. The Process

In March 2003 the Town Council received confirmation of a grant towards the Town Plan from the Countryside Agency. A launch was held in September 2003 in the Library grounds using a "long list" of issues drawn from previous appraisals, with help from the Rural Community Council. 120 people took the trouble to fill in a consultation form and from this we arrived at a "short list" of 7 issues. In November 2003 a Town Plan Day was decided on. A consultant/facilitator was engaged and in February 2004 a well-publicised public meeting was held at the Congregational Church where 200 residents spent time with members of the Town Council discussing the issues and all opinions were carefully noted. New issues emerged.



From here the consultant recommended a Focus Group morning at the Graham Adams Centre as well as agreeing further consultation with "hard to reach" groups, such as, mothers and toddlers, primary school children, teenagers and the elderly. The final consultants report was received in July

2004. The steering group of Town Councillors produced a questionnaire which was distributed and collected by councillors themselves in September. 1,000 surveys were distributed with a response rate of 27%. Warwickshire County Council analysed these responses and an Action Plan was formed, which then went to the Town Council for approval in January 2005. At the same time the Town Council took the opportunity to undertake a Housing Needs Survey in conjunction with Warwickshire Rural Community Council.

A timeline

- March 2003
 - Confirmation of grant towards Town Plan from Countryside Agency.
- Summer 2003
 - Long list of issues drawn up for public consultation using supporting documents. Public launch planned.
- September 2003
 - Public launch in library grounds. 120 preliminary questionnaires completed.
- October/November/December 2003
 - Analysis of findings. Short list of 7 issues drawn up. Consultant appointed. Meetings with consultant to plan Open Public Meeting.
- February 2004
 - Open Public Meeting at Congregational Church. 200 members of the public respond. New issues emerge.
- March 2004
 - Consultant's analysis of results from Public Meeting. Focus Group Meeting planned around results. "Hard to reach" groups identified.
- April 2004
 - Focus Groups meet with Town Council facilitators at Graham Adams Centre. Consultant attends and gathers results.

- May 2004
 - Further consultation with “hard to reach” groups: mother and toddler group, primary school children, teenagers and elderly.
- July 2004
 - Consultant’s final report.
- September 2004
 - Final consultation on Action Plan via questionnaire distributed and collected by Town Councillors.
- October/November 2004
 - Warwickshire County Council provide detailed analysis of final consultation by age group.
- December 2004
 - Draft Action Plan produced by Town Council working party.
- January 2005
 - Approved by Town Council.

Throughout the process Southam Town Council used its own newsletter and website, posters and the local press to publicise events and progress made.

5. Summary

The objective of the town plan process is to identify the current concerns and expectations of the local community and prepare guidance for Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council, setting out the actions required to meet these expectations. It is also to provide ideas that the Town Council and various voluntary groups can take a lead in promoting and carrying out where possible.

The most important needs of the community can be clearly expressed within three groups: -

1. Preserving and enhancing the environment of the town we live in.

- The long-term protection and enhancement of the "identity, soul and character" of the Town and to put right some of the mistakes of the past.
- The provision of a safe and pleasant environment, with improved police presence, improved car parking, safe walking and cycle routes, traffic calming, better road and footpath maintenance.
- Safeguarding a green space in the town centre and the provision of library, museum and art display facilities in any development plans that may emerge in future. Improving access to countryside walks like the Holy Well.

2. Preserving and enhancing the level and quality of shops and services provided.

- The maintenance of existing shops and services. The provision of better retail food shops, such as a better super market offering a wider and higher quality range of products.

- An NHS Dentist.
- Enhancement of leisure and educational facilities in the town to provide better access to and a wider range of leisure and sporting activities, particularly for the young.

3. Ensuring that there is adequate housing of the right type to meet the needs of future generations.

- To ensure that the planning authorities understand the needs of our town clearly identified in the recent Southam Affordable Housing Survey.

Southam Town Councils aims are:-

- To improve the service it provides whilst ensuring best value.
- To work with others to improve safety, the environment and quality of life in the town, paying particular attention to the needs of the vulnerable members of our community.
- To regularly and effectively consult the community.
- To promote the local economy.

Used wisely and implemented with enthusiasm by the Town Council and the other organisations, this Town Plan will meet all those aspirations.

6. The Next Steps

Now that the research has been completed and the action plan compiled, Southam Town Council are committed to ensuring that all areas of concern are actively pursued. This action plan has been distributed to all Southam residents and it is hoped that Stratford on Avon District Council will adopt it as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Regular review dates will be set by the Town Council with each subject being discussed at full Council meetings, which members of the public are welcome to attend. This will ensure that efficient monitoring of the issues is maintained and no concern is allowed to fall by the wayside.

7. Acknowledgements

Southam Town Council would like to thank the following for their help with preparing this Town Plan:

- ContinYou
- Graham Adams Centre
- Kyles Ltd
- Southam & Bishops Itchington Congregational Church
- Stratford on Avon District Council
- The Countryside Agency
- Warwickshire County Council
- Warwickshire Rural Community Council

but mostly the people of the town who have contributed to the Town Plan.

**Southam Town Council
2006 Town Plan ~ Action Plan**

The Issue	Priority		Action Method	Partners
	High	Low Not Important		
PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE TOWN WE LIVE IN				
Keep a library in the town centre	86%	10%	There is overwhelming support for the library to remain in the town centre and WCC should be made aware of this	Warwickshire County Council
Police not visible enough	84%	11%	The Town Council welcomes the recent appointment of Community Support Officers and plans to continue the existing close liaison that exists with the local police officers. It is suggested that photographs of the Southam officers be published to improve recognition by the public	Police
The installation of additional CCTV cameras	55%	31%	The Town Council already supports CCTV provision financially. The relocation of one of the three car park cameras to the town centre is being investigated	Stratford on Avon District Council
Maintaining the market town character of Southam	73%	23%	A development brief must be undertaken for any new town centre redevelopment and this should take account of the Millennium Design Statement and previous appraisals. There should also be full public consultation	Stratford on Avon District Council, Southam Town Council, Residents
Safer walking routes to school	58%	35%	The Town Council initiated the development of Safer Routes to Schools some years ago and the first of these is likely to come to fruition in the near future. The Town Council will continue to support this strongly.	Warwickshire County Council
Improvement of the Town Centre	56%	34%	The Town Council will continue to positively contribute as a stakeholder in the Town Centre redevelopment whenever the opportunity arises.	Stratford on Avon District Council
Safer cycling routes	54%	35%	Continue to press for cycle routes to be incorporated in any new developments. Consult with WCC officers and local cyclists to investigate ways of improving cycling safety. Possibly instigate survey to establish where cycle routes are needed.	Warwickshire County Council
Improvements in current parking system	42%	42%	Request WCC to review on street parking provision in town centre, to increase number of spaces and to introduce limited waiting. Ask SDC to enforce restrictions by providing traffic wardens at least weekly but on an ad hoc basis. Review the effectiveness of these measures. Request SDC carries out a study of the Wood Street Car Park in an effort to increase the number of spaces, e.g. echelon parking.	Warwickshire County Council, Stratford on Avon District Council

The Issue	Priority		Action Method	Partners	
	34%	19%			
Improve the level and quality of tourist information and for local people regarding local attractions and events.	47%	19%	Continue to support schemes that promote tourism, e.g. Blue Lias Rings, Holywell project, web site. Investigate the Church's Hidden Britain Project (via the Arthur Rank Centre)	Blue Lias Rings, Vision 4 Southam	
Pedestrianisation of some areas in the town centre.	38%	30%	There are few areas that would lend themselves to this but a survey was undertaken by Vision 4 Southam Civic Pride group early in December 04 on the possibility of the pedestrianisation of part of Wood Street	Vision 4 Southam, Warwickshire County Council	
PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE LEVEL AND QUALITY OF SHOPS AND SERVICES PROVIDED					
NHS dentist	79%	8%	Restart campaign for NHS dental care in the town. Negotiations required with the Primary Care Trust.	Primary Care Trust	
Further youth activities and facilities	27%	6%	Continue support of Youth Club at the Graham Adams Centre. Investigate inclusion of youth shelter &/or drop in/advice centre in any future town centre development	Stratford on Avon District Council	
Job Opportunities	28%	8%	Continue to respond positively to developments that create local jobs.	Local businesses	
Need for broader range of consumer goods in Southam	37%	10%	Draw the attention of the Vision 4 Southam Business Club to this demand	Vision 4 Southam Business Club	
Aim to have retail facilities to allow a weekly shop in Southam	30%	16%	If opportunity arises press for facilities that will enable families to do their weekly shop in Southam	Local businesses	
More evening entertainment required for all age groups.	40%	11%	Continue to support Grange Hall in their endeavours. Note that other venues including pubs, the Sports & Social Club stage regular events and voluntary organisations also do so on an ad hoc basis	Grange Hall, Southam Sports & Social Club	
Stockton tip not meeting current needs	45%	15%	Again ask WCC to extend opening hours, possibly on summer weekday evenings and request increased recycling facilities, particularly plastic	Warwickshire County Council	
Need for a community development worker	44%	30%	This is going ahead as part of The Building Bridges Project at the Graham Adams Centre which the Town Council has supported financially	Graham Adams Centre	
Tennis court	39%	44%	Not sufficient demand		
Cinema	34%	52%	Not sufficient demand		
ENSURING THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE HOUSING OF THE RIGHT TYPE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF FUTURE GENER.					
Housing for lower income/starter homes	59%	28%	13%	A Housing Needs Survey is currently being undertaken in conjunction with Warwickshire Rural Community Council. Once the results are known the Town Council must be proactive in trying to satisfy needs e.g. by identifying potential sites	Warwickshire Rural Community Council, Stratford on Avon District Council