

SUBJECT: EXHALL AND TEMPLE GRAFTON (OPEN GATE) PARISH PLAN
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**LEAD MEMBER/
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR S THIRLWELL

SUMMARY

This report sets out the assessment of the Open Gate Parish Plan which covers the parishes of Exhall and Temple Grafton. The Parish Plan was completed in April 2007 and both Parish Councils intend to adopt it in July.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant departments of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**
 - (2) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a material consideration in processing planning applications, in accordance with Policies COM.1 and PR.1 of the Local Plan Review.**
 - (3) That the Parish Plan Steering Group, the Parish Councils, and the residents of Exhall and Temple Grafton parishes, be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and that they are encouraged to implement and review their Action Plan.**
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1 BACKGROUND/INFORMATION

- 1.1 Parish Plans are community-led projects identifying and surveying the assets, needs, opportunities, problems and solutions of a community. Through 'Capacity' and 'Consensus Building', Parish Plans provide communities with a framework to take stock of the present and to plan for the future.
 - 1.2 The momentum for Parish Plans is continually increasing with half of the communities in the District having completed or in the process of undertaking detailed Parish Plans or Appraisals with associated recommendations and Action Plans. Further background information on the process is included in Appendix B.
 - 1.3 **Background to the submitted Exhall and Temple Grafton (Open Gate) Parish Plan**
 - 1.3.1 In 2004 the Parish Councils of Exhall and Temple Grafton had discussions
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and held two public meetings before making the decision to deliver a joint Parish Plan. The rationale for the joint approach is that the boundary of the two parishes splits the village of Ardens Grafton. The initiative was funded by a Countryside Agency grant, the parish councils, and contributions in kind from many volunteers. Flyers were delivered to all residents inviting them to be involved. As a result of discussions during the process, the Open Gate News has been created, and information on the later stages of the Parish Plan has been reported in the newsletter.

- 1.3.2 The second public meeting was well attended by residents from both parishes. A number of residents were recruited, both at the meeting and afterwards, to form a Steering Group. The questionnaire was drafted with input from local groups, including the church, Village Hall Committees and a focus youth group, and agencies including the District and County Council.
- 1.3.3 The questionnaire was delivered to all 250 households in the parishes, and 226 completed questionnaires were returned. This gives an excellent response rate of 90.4% which is statistically sound. The results were analysed by Warwick Network.
- 1.3.4 Public exhibitions of the results were held in the village halls, and following these the Action Plan was developed.
- 1.3.5 The Parish Plan presents a clear picture of the needs and issues facing the community. The Parish Councils have agreed to adopt the Action Plan and take it forward with the help of volunteers. The Action Plan will be reviewed bi-annually as a regular agenda item on the Parish Council's meeting agenda.

1.4 **Exhall and Temple Grafton (Open Gate) Parish Plan findings**

- 1.4.1 The findings of the Parish Plan, which have informed the Action Plan, cover:
 - Housing issues
 - Church, community and village
 - Economy, business and local services
 - Transport and traffic
 - Environmental issues
 - Health issues
 - Education, further education and leisure
 - Young people
 - Law and order
- 1.4.2 The Parish Plan has been prepared employing a range of community participation techniques, including questionnaire surveys, community meetings and a transparent process of reporting back to the community on progress. The process has generated a range of statistical data and qualitative material that has informed the Action Plan and which provides a useful information source.
- 1.4.3 Suggested response: Endorse – that the findings of the Exhall and Temple Grafton Parish Plan be endorsed as a true representation of the topics addressed by the Parish Plan.

1.5 **Exhall and Temple Grafton (Open Gate) Parish Plan Action Plan**

- 1.5.1 Analysis and responses to the Action Plan are provided in Appendix C,

and the following analysis and comments should be read in conjunction with the Parish Plan Action Plan.

- 1.5.2 The policy position of the Local Plan Review is supportive of the Action Plan points relating to planning, the environment and land use. Many of the actions identified can be undertaken entirely by the village itself. The District Council can offer advice and support in undertaking some actions, and offer help in locating funding. SDC Housing Team and Warwickshire Rural Community Council welcome the action proposing a local housing needs survey. The Rural Housing Enabler and SDC can provide help in this area.
- 1.5.3 Progress has already been made in taking forward actions, for example producing the first three editions of the community newsletter, Open Gate News, including articles addressing many of the topics and concerns raised by the questionnaire responses. Both Parish Councils have been successful in acquiring Awards for All funding to develop a website, following the Stratford District Council initiative.

2 OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 A) Adopt the Parish Plan fully: This is a good, well-prepared Parish Plan that would be a valuable local information source and material consideration.
- 2.2 B) Adopt parts of the Parish Plan: If there are any concerns with certain aspects of the Parish Plan, this option would allow the District Council to use selected aspects of the Plan in its decision making and as a local information source. No reasons have been so far identified to make this option necessary.
- 2.3 C) Not adopt the Parish Plan: The District Council would miss the opportunity to adopt a useful source of local information, and a material consideration to aid planning decision-making.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Financial

- 3.1.1 Projects developed through the Parish Plan may need funding to take them forward and the recommendations contained in this report should be contained within existing budgets. The District Council operates a Community Grants Scheme aimed at funding these types of projects, and the Community Grants team may be able to help search for appropriate funding sources. It is hoped that the Parish Council and local residents will consider and pursue funding in order to develop their identified action points.

3.2 Environmental

- 3.2.1 Several actions within the Plan could increase the environmental sustainability of life within the Parish by reducing local people's need to travel for services and leisure activities, and improving road safety and public transport provision. Some of the actions aim to improve the local environment of the village and its surroundings.

3.3 Corporate Strategy

- 3.3.1 The Parish Plan is a useful source of information about local community perception of their locality. The Community Plan and Corporate Strategy

for the District support the range of topic areas and policies in the Action Plan. The Parish Plan also complements and helps move forward the District Council's Agenda 21.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The actions recommended in this report are to commend those involved in the preparation of the Plan, adopt the Parish Plan as a local information source, and adopt it as a material consideration. There are no identified major risks associated with these actions.
- 4.2 Choosing to not adopt the Parish Plan would risk losing the chance to adopt a valuable source of local information and a useful material consideration to aid planning decision-making.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Parish Plan Steering Group, the Parish Councils and residents of the parishes of Exhall and Temple Grafton should be commended and congratulated for completing their Parish Plan, and are encouraged by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to implement and periodically review the Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Open Gate Parish Plan is a good example of how a rural community can prepare a Parish Plan that is both a good source of local information, and provides a sound basis through the Action Plan to address the needs and aspirations of the community.

PAT REID
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Background papers:

Exhall and Temple Grafton (Open Gate) Parish Plan 2006-7

Stratford District Community Plan; the future to 2015

Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan Review 2006

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Corporate Strategy 2005-8

Appendix A - Guidance for the Assessment of Parish/Town Plans

1.1 In assessing Parish Plans, the following considerations should be taken into account:

Evidence and extent of research work to justify conclusions.

Evidence and extent of analysis related to conclusions.

Public involvement and endorsement at local level.

Level of implementation available to District Council services, (e.g. the District Council Planning Authority, Leisure and Arts etc.).

Conformity with District Council's policies, (e.g. Planning policies etc.).

1.2 The above five criteria will enable the production of recommendations regarding the acceptance of each of the Parish Plan's detailed conclusions and Action Points.

1.3 A response to each of the detailed conclusions and Action Points will be one of the following:

(A) ENDORSE

The specific recommendation will be accepted and taken into account on the decision making of the District Council. (For example, "Small scale development with a 'craft' emphasis should be looked at sympathetically").

(B) ACTION

The specific recommendation will be accepted in principle and, subject to financial, procedural and legal constraints, implemented by or with the support of the District Council. (For example, "A social housing scheme of ten units on land next to the Green should be provided").

(C) INVESTIGATE

Further information to be obtained by the Parish/Town Council or other agency may be required in order that the District Council may establish if the specific recommendation can be supported. (For example, "An existing Conservation Area should be extended").

(D) SUPPORT

The specific recommendation relates to a matter which is not the responsibility of the District Council. However, the proposal is supported and will be forwarded to the appropriate authority. (For example, "Traffic calming measures are required and the County Highway Authority should prepare a scheme").

(E) NOT SUPPORTED

The specific recommendation relates to a matter which is in contrary to the policy of the District Council or is beyond the powers of the authority or that insufficient and/or unsatisfactory information has been submitted to substantiate their commendation. (For example, "No development of any kind should take place within the settlement").

Appendix B – Further Background Information

- 2.1. Communities produce Parish Plans for a number of reasons:
 - To increase the awareness of community issues, foster community spirit and encourage a sense of pride;
 - To act as a strong basis for local action (the Action Plan);
 - To collectively represent the views of residents, to positively influence others to the benefit of the community.
- 2.2. In the 1980s the concept and practice of Village Appraisals first emanated nationally from the Rural Development Commission in conjunction with the Countryside Commission.
- 2.3. Nationally, Parish Plans have a role to play within the 'modernising Local Government' agenda, for example, shaping local services, public participation, decision-making and greater democratic legitimacy.
- 2.4. One of the aims within Chapter 12 of the Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: the future – A fair deal for rural England) includes involving people living in rural areas in developing their community, safeguarding its valued features and shaping the decisions that affect them – developing a vision for the future. Parish Plans are a recognised method of achieving this aim.
- 2.5. In line with guidance from the Countryside Agency issued in August 2000 ('Planning tomorrow's countryside', advice to local planning authorities, government and developers on how the planning system should operate and evolve), Parish Plans are a recognised community planning method to help achieve key objectives. In March 2003 the Countryside Agency produced detailed guidance for parish and town councils on the preparation of Parish and Town Plans.
- 2.6. Policy RA3 in the Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011 encourages local planning authorities to use 'Appraisals' when establishing the views of local communities and when identifying local housing and industrial development need.
- 2.7. Stratford-on-Avon District Council is committed to the encouragement of Parish Plans as a means of identifying local issues and will respond to them positively. Much faith has been placed by the Government, the County Council and the District Council on local appraisals and their role in assisting the formulation of strategic policy.
- 2.8. Parish Plans can now play a broader role within the production of the statutory Community Plan for Stratford District.
- 2.9. The recommendations and Action Plans can both inform and help deliver the Rural Strategy for the Stratford-on-Avon District.
- 2.10. Policy COM.1 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review 2006 states:

"The views of the local community as expressed preferably in a Parish Plan (or equivalent) or in its absence an alternative source of reliable evidence, will be fully taken into account in the planning process. In particular they will be used:

 - To help assess the merits of schemes promoted by communities to meet needs which they have identified;

- As a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and to assist in identifying the scope and nature of associated planning obligations which might be sought; and
- To identify opportunities for environmental and other forms of enhancement.

In the case of Main Rural Centres and Local Centre Villages only, as defined in Policy STR1, small scale schemes which meet housing (particularly affordable housing) and employment needs will be encouraged in this way..."

- 2.11. Nationally, Parish Plans are broad, holistic documents addressing local issues at a local level. Whilst in this District 'appraisals' have had a close association with planning, they are no longer 'planning-led'. Parish Plans address both planning and non-planning related matters and this is reflected in their assessment at Committee.
- 2.12. Parish Plans can and do act as a tool to assist in giving many of the services provided by the District Council greater community focus. Vice versa, many of the services provided by the District Council can and do feed into the Parish Plan process creating more informed Action Plans.

Appendix C

Summary of key action points

Abbreviations

SDC= Stratford District Council

WCC=Warwickshire County Council

WRCC= Warwickshire Rural Community Council

Parish Plan Action	SDC Proposed Response
Residents' issues	
Parish Councils to include, and communicate more effectively, with Ardens Grafton residents.	Support – this action point can be supported.
Publish an Open Gate Newsletter. The first three editions have already been distributed and include articles addressing many issues raised by the Parish Plan.	Support and Action – SDC Planning officers have been able to contribute to the newsletter in the form of an article answering queries about the planning system.
Raise possible options for a summer holiday play scheme with WCC (ongoing negotiations)	Support – this action could help to achieve the Community Plan target to increase the number of young people participating in leisure and recreational activities.
Housing Communicate views on future housing development to the District Council and seek advice on options for addressing them. Propose that the Parish Councils instigate a Housing Needs Survey	Action and Endorse – Under current local plan policy, new housing would only be acceptable in the parish if it was a small-scale scheme of affordable housing designed to meet identified local need in perpetuity, in accordance with Policy CTY.5. The Rural Housing Enabler and District Council offer to work with the Parish Council to undertake a housing needs survey.
Church, community and village matters	
Encourage more involvement of vicar with community. Encourage use of church for other activities e.g. shows and exhibitions.	Support – the Community Plan hopes to maximise the use of existing facilities for community use.
Promote Mobile Library Service on noticeboards and information sheet	Support – this action point can be supported.
Better communicate Parish Council activities through newsletter and a new website	Support and action – the parishes have been successful in gaining Awards for All funding following the SDC initiative which aims to support parishes in developing their websites.

Raise concerns about planning system, development in area, and publicity of applications with Planning Service. Request item in newsletter.	Support and Action – SDC planning officers have so far responded with an article answering planning queries to the Open Gate newsletter.
Parish Council to work with development when considering small rural businesses and shops to serve the local community.	Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.3 supports the provision of new shops and services which meet the needs of local communities, subject to some locational criteria.
Provide more information on local businesses to residents through newsletter and website.	Support – this action point can be supported.
Local Services	
Ask residents to report problems with power, water and telephone services to Parish Council. Parish Council to raise issues with service providers. This action has been completed.	Support – this action point can be supported.
Request review of drainage system in Exhall which is prone to flooding. A review has been completed and careful monitoring of risk points continues.	Support – this action point can be supported.
Provide advice to residents about refuse collection service. Action completed.	Support - this action point can be supported.
Request SDC to extend roadside recycling scheme to include plastic, cardboard and separate boxes for different materials.	Action – SDC are looking to introduce door-to-door plastic collection in 2008. The Corporate Strategy seeks to recycle or compost 40% of household waste collected by 2008.
Transport and Traffic	
Publicise options for those needing transport – CVS car share, taxirider, Community Links, Back and 4 th .	Action – SDC is a partner of the Community Links, Back and 4 th , and Volunteer Centre's Medical Journeys scheme which could help meet this need. The Community Plan aims to support individuals by increasing the number of people using tailored transport schemes.
Survey and research measures to address speeding with WCC Highways and Police.	Support – the Community Plan aims to reduce road and traffic accidents.
Pass on residents' concerns to WCC Highways about poor quality road conditions	Support – this action point can be supported.

Liaise with police about parking problems outside school and explore possibility of a walking bus.	Support – WCC offer support for walking bus projects under their Safer Routes to School scheme. Telephone 01926 412252 for more information or see www.warwickshire.gov.uk .
Environmental Issues	
Volunteers to survey footpaths and report problems to WCC. Some new gates already installed.	Support – this action point should contribute to the Community Plan aim to encourage access to the countryside.
Ensure existing historic buildings are preserved. Research and consider producing a Village Design Statement.	Endorse – WRCC would like to offer their support if the community decides to produce a Village Design Statement. The views of the community as expressed in a village design statement will be taken into account when determining planning applications in accordance with Policy PR.1 of the Local Plan Review.
Use newsletter to give information on hedgerows, tree planting and nuisance lighting.	Support – these action points can be supported.
Reduce dog fouling, liaising with SDC Dog Warden.	Action – The SDC Dog Warden (01789 260837) delivers a service to promote responsible dog ownership and enforce existing legislation.
Parish Council to survey road signage and report problems to WCC	Support – this action point can be supported.
Health Issues	
Advise relevant authorities of demand for NHS dentist and Saturday surgery opening.	Support – the community plan aims to improve access to health care.
Raise with SDC request that the re-sited Health Centre at Bidford has adequate parking space.	Action - the Health Centre planning permission was granted with a high level of parking provision.
Undertake access audit for village hall and seek information from local residents about their access concerns.	Support and Action – the Community Plan aims to increase the number of people involved in local clubs and activities. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if these projects may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.
Education, further education and leisure	

Explore possibility of pre-school provision within Temple Grafton School	Support – this action point can be supported.
Raise awareness of local evening classes, existing leisure & WI activities, and facilities at Binton Club through newsletter and other promotions.	Support - the Community Plan aims to increase the number of people involved in local clubs and activities.
Encourage volunteers to set up new activities based on demand shown, and publicise hiring of village halls.	Support and Action – the Community Plan aims to increase the number of people involved in local clubs and activities. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if these projects may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.
Young people Publicise "wheels to work" scheme to help young people access employment	Support – this action could contribute to the Community Plan aim to help people access activities, services and facilities. WCC suggest that the parishes contact CSWP Connexions who will advise on scheme details and provide promotional material. Contact Sandra Daniel on 02476 707619 or Filippa Pykett on 02476 707691
Law and Order Work with police to increase police presence and on installing speed cameras and managing school parking.	Support – these actions should contribute to the Community Plan aim to reduce fear of crime and number of road accidents.
Encourage better sharing of information on crime in the area, including through email and Neighbourhood Watch.	Support – this action should contribute the to Community Plan aim to reduce fear of crime in the district.

REPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and submit to Committee Services with draft report

COMMITTEE/DATE	AVON AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 21 ST JUNE 2007	
ITEM No/TITLE OF REPORT	EXHALL AND TEMPLE GRAFTON (OPEN GATE) PARISH PLAN	
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS / DATE OF CONSULTATION / COMMENTS RECEIVED
WARD MEMBERS	✓	CLLR VALERIE HOBBS/23 RD MAY 07
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN/ PORTFOLIOHOLDER * <i>*Required</i>	✓	CLLR VINCE SEAMAN/ 23 RD MAY 07 CLLR STUART BEESE/ 23 RD MAY 07
FINANCIAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>	✓	RICHARD BURRELL/ 23 RD MAY 07/ NO FURTHER COMMENTS
LEGAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>	✓	LEENAMARI AANTAA-COLLIER/23 RD MAY 07
OTHER SERVICES	✓	HOUSING/ 16 TH MAY 07 POLICY AND PR/ 16 TH MAY 07/ RECOMMEND CONTACTING WCC FOR HELP WITH TRANSPORT ACTIONS COMMUNITY SERVICES/ 16 TH MAY 07
OTHER ORGANISATIONS	✓	EXHALL PARISH COUNCIL/ 23 RD MAY 07 TEMPLE GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL/ WARWICKSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL/ 16 TH MAY 07/SUPPORTIVE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/ 16 TH MAY 07
FINAL DECISION BY THIS COMMITTEE OR RECOMMENDATION TO ANOTHER COMMITTEE/COUNCIL ?		FINAL DECISION RECOMMENDATION TO : EXECUTIVE / COUNCIL COMMITTEE <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
DOES THIS REPORT CONTAIN EXEMPT INFORMATION? IF SO, UNDER WHICH PARAGRAPH(S) ?		No YES, PARAGRAPHS : <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
DOES THIS REPORT RELATE TO A KEY DECISION (REFERRED TO IN THE EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN)		No YES, FORWARD PLAN ITEM – SCHEDULED FOR (date) <i>Delete as appropriate</i>