

SUBJECT: COMBROKE PARISH PLAN
LEAD OFFICER: KAREN JOHNSTONE
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**LEAD MEMBER/
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR STEPHEN THIRLWELL

SUMMARY

This report sets out the assessment of the Combroke Parish Plan and the incorporated Village Design Statement. Combroke Parish Council adopted the Plan on 22nd March 2007.

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 Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review.**
 - (3) That the Parish Plan steering committee, Parish Council and the residents of Combroke Parish 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 Plan 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 Combroke Parish Plan**
 - 1.3.1 The Combroke Parish Plan initiative was started by an open meeting held in the Village Hall attended by over 30 residents. Residents volunteered
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at this meeting to form steering group, and in 2006 four consultation workshops were held which were well attended by all age groups. The Parish Plan was funded by Awards for All monies granted to the Parish Council, an additional contribution from the Parish Council, and contributions in kind from many volunteers. Updates on the progress of the Parish Plan were reported in the Village Newsletter and to the Parish Council.

- 1.3.2 A questionnaire was devised based on information from the consultation workshops. It was delivered to all households in the parish, and 54 of the 61 occupied households completed and returned it. This gives an 89% response rate and is statistically sound. In addition to the questionnaire, in order to identify the local landscape and architectural features that are felt to be important to Combroke, all residents were invited to participate in discussion walks to observe and record these features.
- 1.3.3 A draft Parish Plan, including a Village Design Statement section, was presented at a review workshop for residents, and to the Parish Council for feedback. A revised draft was then presented at a further village meeting. The Parish Plan presents a clear picture of the needs and issues facing the community.
- 1.3.4 The Parish Council adopted the Plan on 22nd March 2007 and will be responsible for formally reviewing the Action Plan on an annual basis. The Parish Council will also be responsible for implementing many of the actions, including initiating action through contractors and partner organisations.

1.4 **Combroke Parish Plan findings**

- 1.4.1 The findings of the Parish Plan, which have informed the Action Plan, cover:
 - Road network
 - Natural environment
 - Community
 - Village hall
 - Footpaths
 - Utilities and services
 - Overhead power and telephone lines
 - Lighting
 - Recycling
 - Parking
- 1.4.2 The Village Design Statement covers architectural and visual analysis and makes recommendations for future development including locations and form of new development.
- 1.4.3 The Parish Plan has been prepared employing a range of community participation techniques, including questionnaire surveys, public forums 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.
- 1.4.4 Suggested response: Endorse – that the findings of the Combroke Parish Plan be endorsed as a true representation of the topics addressed by the

Parish Plan.

1.5 Combroke 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 generally supportive of the Action Plan points relating to planning, the environment and land use. The policies of the Local Plan seek to take account of community views as expressed in Parish Plans and Village Design Statements when determining planning applications. Many of the actions identified can be undertaken entirely by the village itself. The District Council can offer assistance in taking forward several of the action points by supporting funding searches for community projects.
- 1.5.3 The parish is encouraged to consider undertaking a Housing Needs Survey to address their expressed concern at the lack of affordable housing for local people. The Rural Housing Enabler and the District Council can provide help in this area.

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 this 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 Many of the actions within this Parish Plan aim to improve the local environment of the village and its surroundings, and to protect local habitats and wildlife.

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 Council and residents of Combroke 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 Combroke 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:

Combroke Parish Plan 2007
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

| Parish Plan action | SDC Proposed Response |
|--|---|
| Road network | |
| Traffic speeds: Parish Council to consider false gates or other non-invasive forms of speed control. | Support – this action point should contribute to the Community Plan's aim to reduce the number of road accidents. |
| Maintenance of grass verges and triangles: Parish Council to consider stones or sets to protect from wheel damage. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Gullies and drainage ditches: Parish Council to request Highways Agency to clear drains annually, or agree to do this on behalf of the County Council for appropriate fee. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Road signs: existing signs to be kept clean but no others needed/ wanted. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Turning space by Leys Field: ensure maintenance. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Natural Environment | |
| Trees in conservation area: advertise status of trees in Parish newsletter. Apply for Tree Preservation Order on chestnut tree by Chestnut House. | Action and support – SDC Landscape section will be able to advise on the most appropriate methods for protecting valued trees. |
| Encourage residents to maintain tree cover using native species. | Support – the Community Plan seeks to protect local natural habitats and species. |
| Orchard/ apple pressing event: Combroke to continue to celebrate. | Action and support – the Community Plan seeks to increase the consumption of locally produced food. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme. |
| Wildlife habitats including woodland, old railway, lakes, brook and hedgerow: Parish Council to raise concerns if planning applications or Hedgerow removal notices threaten habitats. | Support – the Community Plan seeks to protect local natural habitats and species. |

| Parish Plan action | SDC Proposed Response |
|---|---|
| Parochial Church Council to consider native tree species to be planted in churchyard. | Support – the Community Plan seeks to protect local natural habitats and species. |
| Increased flooding caused by additional bridges across brook: Parish Council to request removal of bridges recently built without approval of water authorities, possibly with Severn Trent support. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Land behind village hall (owned by Diocese of Coventry): Village Hall Management Committee and Parochial Church Council to consider a project to use land as a nature reserve and village amenity. | Support and action – the Community Plan aims to improve the natural environment, and encourages the management of land as a nature reserve. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme. |
| Parish Council to discourage significant or noxious bonfires. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Community | |
| Parish Council to give positive consideration to any application for change of use to a small 'corner shop' type store. | Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.2 encourages the provision of new shops and services which meet the needs of the local community, subject to locational criteria. |
| Village Hall | |
| Maintain current funding arrangements (parish precepts and fund raising) for Village Hall and seek to ensure a wide variety of events are held there. | Support and action – the Community Plan seeks to maximise the use of existing community facilities. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme. |
| Village Hall Management Committee and Parish Council to consider raising funds and grant application to build ability to buy local amenity land (such as Village Hall and the Leys) if it comes under threat. | Support and action – The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme. |

| Parish Plan action | SDC Proposed Response |
|--|--|
| Footpaths | |
| Parish Council to investigate availability of grants or regular user funding for maintenance of foot and bridle paths. Investigate WCC Parish Paths Partnership scheme. | Support – the Community Plan seeks to increase access to and enjoyment of the countryside. |
| Limited village facilities: seek associated community/recreation space and play area provision if any future development proposed in village. | Endorse/ investigate – This would need to be discussed on a scheme specific basis. There are nationally-set criteria governing the situations where developer contributions may be required, and the District Council also has local policies setting out levels of contributions. For example, actual or financial contributions towards public open space are required for developments of 5 or above dwellings. As discussed in the last section of this appendix, the types and scales of new development which could be acceptable in the village is, in any case, very limited. |
| Utilities, services, and lighting | |
| Mobile phone coverage: encourage mast sharing and consider location of additional masts very carefully. | Endorse - the Parish are advised that any Planning Application for a telecom mast will be judged against the policies of the Local Plan Review, including Policy DEV.12. The appearance of the mast and its effect on the character of the area would be considered, particularly within the Conservation Area. |
| Overhead power and telephone lines: Parish Council to write to Central Networks and British Telecom to request burial of lines where possible. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Discourage introduction of street lights into village and encourage sensitive use of security and garden lighting. | Support – this action point can be supported. |
| Parish Council to carefully consider any applications with potential to cause light pollution, and contact Warwickshire Museum ecologists for advice if concerns about harm to wildlife. | Support - the Community Plan seeks to protect local natural habitats and species. |
| Recycling: Write to Stratford District Council requesting a doorstep collection of plastic and cardboard. | Action and support - the District Council's Corporate Strategy sets a target to recycle 40% of household |

| Parish Plan action | SDC Proposed Response |
|---|---|
| | waste collected by April 2008 and actions are being taken to achieve this. SDC are looking to introduce door-to-door plastic collection in 2008. |
| Parking: Parish Council to request that any new plans take account of provision for appropriate car parking spaces. | Endorse – the Local Plan Policy DEV.5 seeks to ensure the provision of adequate parking space while also complying with maximum car parking standards. SDC Planning Service will continue to consult the Parish Council on all planning applications within the parish. |
| Village Design Statement | |
| <p>Parish Council will encourage development to take account of the advice in the Village Design Statement. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respecting the contained form of the village within the valley ▪ Taking account of plot location within the village, with higher density towards the centre. ▪ Avoiding private shared roads which are not characteristic of the village. ▪ Requesting tree planting and enclosed boundary treatments. ▪ Avoiding groups of identical detached houses; varied design or a small terrace would be more appropriate. ▪ Using locally traditional design and materials (as analysed in the VDS). | Endorse - The Parish Plan & VDS and the community views expressed within them will be used by SDC as a material consideration when determining planning applications, as laid out in Policies COM.1 and PR.1 of the Local Plan Review. SDC Planning Service will continue to consult the Parish Council on all planning applications within the parish, and it is considered a very helpful approach for the Parish Council to base their views on these community prepared documents. |
| <p>The Village Design Statement sets out the community's views on new development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is significant support for small rural businesses or craft workshops. ▪ There is concern over the affordability of homes for local people. Smaller properties should be retained, and replacement dwellings should not be a significantly larger size. | Endorse - New housing development would not normally be acceptable in Combrook. However, Policy CTY.5 of the Local Plan allows for the provision of local-occupancy affordable housing on a basis of identified need in settlements such as Combroke village. This must be a community-led, small scale scheme. If the community feels there is a local need, they should consider undertaking a Housing Needs Survey. |

| Parish Plan action | SDC Proposed Response |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="268 264 807 331">▪ A majority of residents do not want any more buildings. <li data-bbox="268 342 807 472">▪ The Leys, Combrook House Orchard, the area by the lake and the Village Hall Grounds should be protected from development. | <p data-bbox="836 264 1362 360">The re-use of an existing building for employment uses could be acceptable subject to scale and locational criteria.</p> |

REPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and submit to Committee Services with draft report

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|---|---|---|
| COMMITTEE/DATE | DASSETT AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 26 TH JUNE 07 | |
| ITEM No/TITLE OF REPORT | COMBROKE PARISH PLAN | |
| CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN | | |
| CONSULTEE | ✓ | DETAILS / DATE OF CONSULTATION / COMMENTS RECEIVED |
| WARD MEMBERS | ✓ | CLLR CHRISTOPHER MILLS/24 TH MAY 07 CLLR SUSAN WIXEY/24 TH MAY 07 |
| COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN/ PORTFOLIOHOLDER * <i>*Required</i> | ✓ | CLLR JOHN APPLETON/24 TH MAY 07 CLLR STUART BEESE/ 24 TH MAY 07 |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i> | ✓ | RICHARD BURRELL/ 24 TH MAY 07/ NO FURTHER COMMENTS |
| LEGAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i> | ✓ | LEENAMARIE AANTAA-COLLIER/24 TH MAY 07 |
| OTHER SERVICES | ✓ | HOUSING/ 14 TH MAY 07 POLICY AND PR/ 14 TH MAY 07 COMMUNITY SERVICES/ 14 TH MAY 07 |
| OTHER ORGANISATIONS | ✓ | COMBROKE PARISH COUNCIL/ 24 TH MAY 07 WARWICKSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL/ 14 TH MAY 07 WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/ 14 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> |