

COUGHTON VILLAGE PLAN



Coughton Parish Council

From the Steering Committee: How did we get here? - Background to the Village Plan

- Jun 2008 Parish councillors hold preliminary talks with Stratford District Council.
- Jul 2008 Parish Council gives formal support to a Coughton Parish Plan.
- Sep 2008 Every household is invited to the launch in the School Hall, supported by Warwickshire Rural Community Council. Residents actively identify their likes, dislikes, and concerns. Several volunteers put their names forward.
- Oct 2008 The Parish Plan Steering Committee is established.
- Nov 2008 The Committee agree the Terms of Reference.
- Dec 2008 Simon Purfield from Stratford DC assists with the Village Questionnaire, based on residents' earlier feedback.
- Jan 2009 Successful application for Community Grant submitted.
- Apr 2009 Village Questionnaires delivered to all residents.
- May 2009 Questionnaires returned by Freepost for independent analysis. Project title changed to "Village Plan" to reflect the inclusion of 23 residents living outside the parish boundary.
- Jun 2009 The Link magazine thanks all residents for the 75% response rate.
- Jun 2009 Lucy Reid from the National Trust joins the Steering Group.
- Jun 2009 Prize giving at the school for winners of a Village Plan competition.
- Sep 2009 Public meeting held for presentation of the survey results. More residents express willingness to engage, and special interest groups are established. The Parish Council website is launched.
- Jan 2010 By popular demand, a successful bid is made for additional funds to publish a higher quality document.



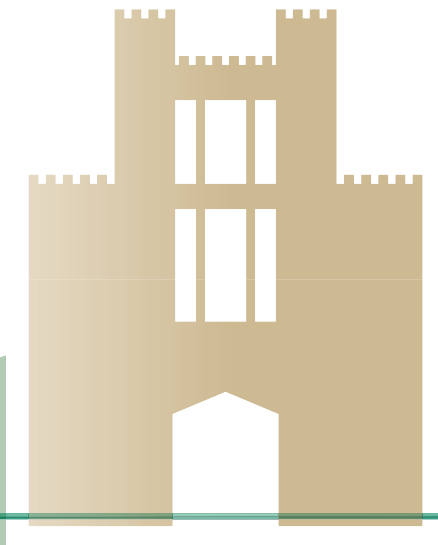
*The Village Plan Steering Committee:
Lucy Reid (Nat Trust), Karen Gazey (Secretary), Roger Prince, Ruth Willmott
John McTavish (Treasurer), John Gittins (Chair), Mike Wilkes.*

Village Plan updates were also posted on the Village Notice board, reported at every Parish Council meeting and included on the website.

This Plan is the result of an interesting and enjoyable exercise and is a record of what you have told us. Your Parish Council is made up of representatives from Coughton village and is the most immediately accessible level of Government. This village document and the Action Plan will be its guide over the next few years in their dealings with the local community, Stratford on Avon District Council, Warwickshire County Council, and all other agencies.

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1 Executive Summary

In front of you is the result of two years of dedicated work by people committed to making Coughton a better place to live. It was commissioned by the Parish Council with one main objective - to ensure we had an accurate understanding of the residents' views in order to make informed decisions that will affect the well-being of the village and the people who live here. If you are a resident then, in every sense, this document belongs to you. An early decision was taken to include a number of residents who live beyond the parish boundary. Their views and involvement are just as relevant.

The success of this document is mainly attributed to the efforts of the steering committee, set up by the Parish Council in September 2008; immediately after the first residents meeting. The steering committee, with support from officers at Stratford District Council, acquired the funding, ensured that the questionnaire asked the right questions, and were based around the topics that residents had flagged up in the September 2008 meeting. They spoke personally to as many local people as possible, encouraging and supporting them to tell us exactly how they felt. Not only was there a high response (75%), but the suggestions on what could be done and the ideas for tackling the range of issues were excellent. If some of the aspirations are beyond the scope or budget of the Parish Council or the other local authorities, they were still valued. The Summary report on the findings is included in this document.

The action plan is based on the findings, clearly setting out the wishes of the village, and identifying the local priorities, and the partners who need to be involved (such as the County and District Councils). For these reasons, the parish council had no hesitation in formally adopting the Village Plan at its meeting on November 13th 2009. Another part of this document is the Village Design Statement, for which we must thank Chris Lambert of the National Trust for his valuable contribution. This section, together with the Action Plan will significantly inform the parish council's decision making. "Coughton Today" is a snapshot of where we are now, and the "History of Coughton" goes some way to showing how we arrived here.

The Village Plan would not have started without the funding from "Awards for All", and additional support from the Parish Council. The high quality of this document was made possible with top-up funding from Stratford District Council through the Parish Plan scheme. We are also grateful for the opportunities given by the funding bodies and the valuable support from officers at Stratford DC,



and Warwickshire Rural Community Council. In addition, the National Trust has been a very active supporter of the steering group and has established a closer and welcome involvement with both the village and the parish council.

So, what did we find? Probably the same as many other small villages in a similar situation as ourselves, i.e.:

- Traffic-related congestion and speed limits
- Lack of social amenities
- Flooding problems, and
- Anti social behaviour at a popular beauty spot

But the survey also revealed that people enjoy living in Coughton, and more importantly they offered suggestions for putting things right and demonstrating a willingness to become involved. This is excellent, because the parish council cannot do everything alone.

The questionnaire report has already been used for local benefit. The responses over the local traffic conditions helped to support the village speed review and to progress the introduction of tighter speed limits in the area. The survey also demonstrated a need for better communication with residents. For this reason, and because 82% of residents have access to the internet, our plans to develop a parish council website were implemented immediately and www.coughtonpc.plus.com went live shortly afterwards. The enthusiasm shown at the public meeting in September 2009 was again evident at the meeting of the various volunteer groups one week later.

The parish council will keep the Action Plan as a live document and under regular review. For this reason, it is held as a loose-leaf addition. Any amendments to the Plan will be based on future needs, identified through a similar consultation.

On behalf of Coughton Parish Council, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed in any way and trust you will enjoy reading this document.

John Gittins
Chair, Coughton Parish Council

2 Coughton Village Survey 2009 - Final Report

1.0 Introduction

This section contains the findings from the Coughton Village Survey 2009.

Following a launch meeting in September 2008 the Village Plan Steering Group, with support from Stratford-on-Avon District Council, developed a village questionnaire which included all the points raised by residents.

Coughton Parish Council requested that everyone in each household aged 17 years or over completed the questions where it asked for the views of everyone in the household.

A Village Plan is a blueprint for the future of the community which will reflect the needs and views of residents. It gives the village an advantage in the following:

- when bidding for funds;
- when making representations to local authorities (on highways, planning, flooding, etc.), and improving communication between various organisations (with an interest in areas such as leisure, social amenities, business, and education);
- assisting the Parish Council in making decisions that represent the community;
- a useful information tool for newcomers to the village.



2.0 Methodology

The survey was conducted via self-completion questionnaires hand delivered to every household within Coughton Village.

132 people from 68 households completed the questionnaire distributed in April 2009. With 90 households given a questionnaire this represents a response rate of 75.6%.

The report follows the order of the questionnaire. Charts and tables are used throughout the report to assist the interpretation of the results. In some cases, anomalies appear due to “rounding”.

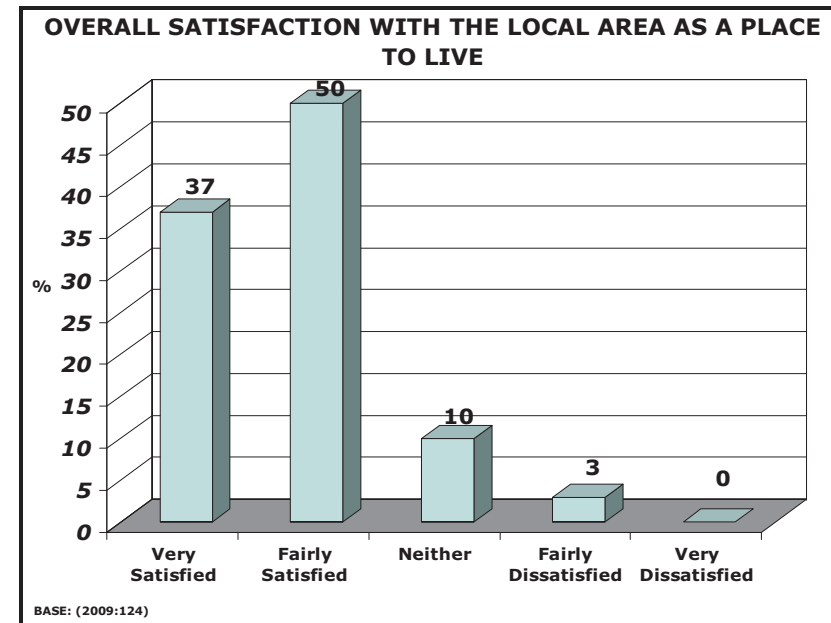
The term “base” in the tables and charts refer to the number of responses to a particular question.

The comparison results by age, gender, current activity and disability are only included if they are statistically significant. If a comment on a particular result has not been made, it can be assumed that there is no strong relationship between the two questions. The significance is calculated by comparing the mean of a category with the overall mean using a “z-test”. This is a test to establish the level of significance between the two results. For this report, only results showing a significant relationship between the two have been included.

3.0 Summary of Results

3.1 About the Respondents’ Local Area

- Residents were asked to say, when thinking generally, what were the five most important things in making somewhere a good place to live. The top five were the level of crime (62%); the level of traffic congestion (53%); access to health services (43%); road and pavement repairs (37%); and clean streets (34%).
- Residents were asked to think about Coughton and indicate up to five things that most need improving. The top five improvements were the level of traffic congestion (66%); road and pavement repairs (54%); the level of crime (30%); community activities (27%); and public transport (23%).
- Overall, 87% of those surveyed are satisfied with the local area as a place to live.



3.2 Flooding

- Almost one third (32%) of respondents have been affected by flooding, 68% stated they had not.
- Over half (54%) of those surveyed believed sufficient action had been taken since July 2008, 43% claimed this was not the case and 2% did not know.
- Residents were asked to comment on as to what extent they have flooding problems with surface water and storm drainage. Over a fifth (21%) experienced many problems with both, over a half (53%) stated they had no problems with surface water

and 56% stated they had no problems with storm drainage. Over a quarter (26%) experienced few problems with surface water and 23% experienced few problems with storm drainage.

3.3 Green / Renewable Energy

- When asked whether they felt there was scope for green / renewable energy provision in the village, over half (51%) said no.

3.4 Roads, Paths, Bridleways and the Ford Area

Residents were asked if they knew where the local public footpaths / bridleways were in Coughton: eight out of ten confirmed they did.

- Frequency of use of the local public footpaths varied considerably. Four in ten respondents stated less than once per month, 22% said every day, 21% stated every week and 17% commented every month.
- When asked if they were aware that the ford area in Coughton Fields Lane is in a designated conservation area, six out of ten respondents answered yes.
- Residents' opinions of the condition of the ford area differed. The majority, 62%, felt that it was very poor and a further 19% stated it was fairly poor. Nobody claimed that it was very good, 3% felt it was fairly good, 13% thought it was OK and 4% had no opinion on the matter.
- When requested to comment on the speed limit on the A435, a third of those surveyed felt it was too high, almost two thirds (65%) stated it was about right and just 2% thought it was too low. So far as surrounding lanes were concerned, 65% felt the speed limit on them was too high, three in ten about right and 5% too low.
- The survey then went on to ask residents if they felt there were accident traffic "hotspots" on the A435 and the surrounding roads: over three quarters (77%) answered yes.
- When asked if they felt there should be a review of road signage for Coughton, six out of ten respondents said yes versus four in ten who said no.

3.5 Street Scene

- Residents were then asked to rate as either acceptable or unacceptable a range of aspects: almost three quarters (73%) of those surveyed believed the household waste collection was acceptable, unlike seven in ten residents who felt the state of the roads / lanes surfaces was unacceptable. Opinion on the state of the verges was split almost equally with 52% rating them acceptable and 48% unacceptable.

3.6 Parking and Transport

- When questioned whether vehicles parking on the road adversely affected residents, 43% said yes.
- Respondents were asked to indicate which, from a list of different modes of transport, they normally used: 94% stated own vehicle and over a quarter (26%) stated walking.
- When asked whether they had used the bus service in the last two years, over four fifths (83%) said no.
- From their knowledge / understanding of the bus service, residents were asked to suggest improvements needed to encourage greater use. Over half (55%) stated frequency / timing and 41% quoted timetable / route information.
- 15% of residents have a concessionary bus pass.

3.7 Community

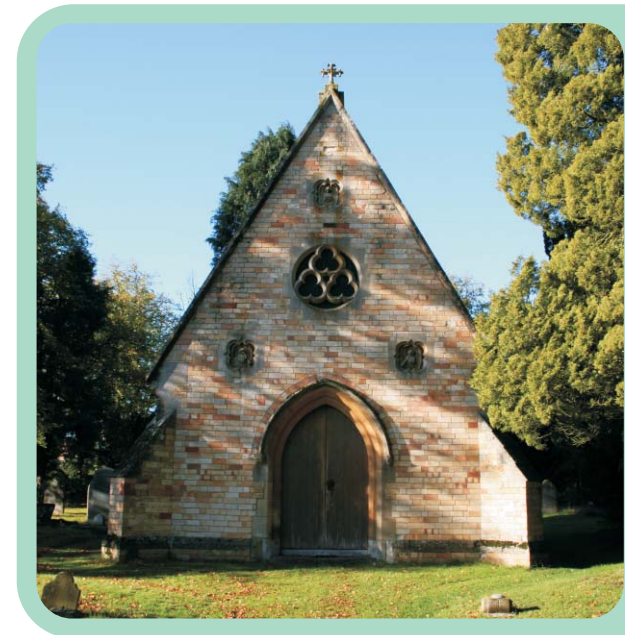
When asked whether they would be interested in joining a Community group, two thirds of respondents said no as opposed to a third who responded yes.

3.8 Coughton Parish Council

79% of those surveyed said they knew where the Parish Council notice board is situated.

Respondents were questioned as to whether they knew the names of their five Parish Councillors. 57% said some of them, 28% said none of them and 15% stated all of them.

- Residents were asked if they were satisfied that the Parish Council represented their views. Six in ten stated that they did not know, almost a third (32%) said yes and one in ten respondents said no.
- Six out of ten respondents thought the Parish Council could improve its communication with the local residents.
- 82% of those surveyed confirmed that they do have access to the internet, compared with 18% who did not.
- 51% of respondents felt there was a need for a community based website.



3.9 Children

- Respondents were asked if they felt there was a need for a children's play area within Coughton: 44% said not, in contrast to 29% who said yes and 27% who stated that they did not know.
- Residents of children educated in Studley or Alcester, were asked how they got to school. 67% said own transport, 17% said school bus and a further 17% walk. No other methods of transport were given.

3.10 Community Safety

- Over three quarters (78%) of residents said they felt safe outside after dark.
- When asked whether they felt safe when outside in their local area during the day, 96% confirmed yes they did, unlike 4% who said they did not.
- Respondents were asked, which if any, from a list of topics, they themselves or their family had experienced or witnessed within the village in the last twelve months.
90% stated dangerous driving /speeding;
29% commented on burglary; and 29% stated trespassing.
- Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents felt a village wide Neighbourhood Watch scheme was needed, over half (53%) cited more police patrols and almost half (49%) stated stronger links between Police and local people.



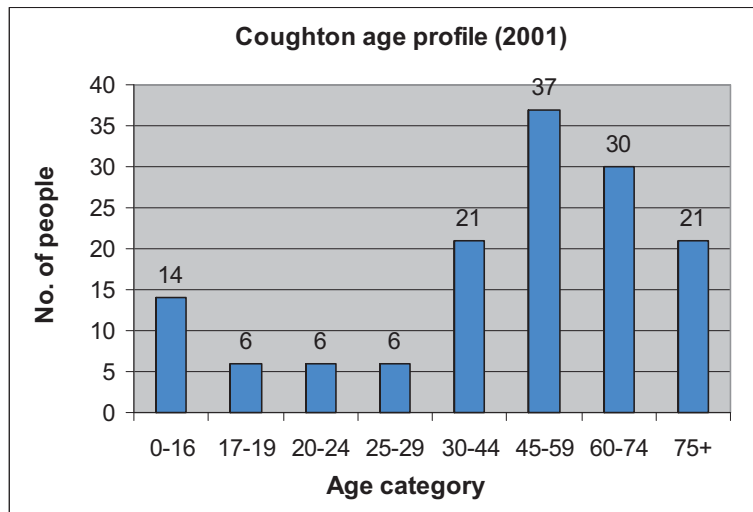
3.11 Profile Information

- There was an exact 50/50 split of male versus female.
- 8% of those surveyed were aged up to 29, with just over a third in the 30 to 49 age bracket and three in ten were over 65.
- Three in ten surveyed were in full time work as employees and a quarter were wholly retired from work.

3 Coughton Today

The village of Coughton lies two miles due south of Studley where the busy A435 slopes down to the plain of the River Arrow. The nearest town, Alcester, is two miles further south. The central feature is Coughton Court, set back from the main road in extensive grounds with the river running behind. Most of the population is centred in and around the two lanes that run to the west from the centre of the village, which is generally considered to be Coughton Cross, opposite the Old Post Office. The land immediately around Coughton Court, and the triangle of land between Coughton Lane and Sambourne Lane fall within a designated conservation area.

The parish of Coughton also includes Coughton Park to the west, Windmill Hill to the east behind Coughton Court, and to the south through several miles of farmland towards Great Alne and the Arden Vale industrial estate at Alcester. Although Cain Brook forms a parish boundary, the village also extends northwards to include 24 properties in Coughton Hill and Haydon Way.



Population

At the last census (2001) the population of the parish stood at 141; far lower than in 1911 when it was 206. The age profile in 2001 shows a predominant age group of 45-59.

Despite a low number of resident children, Coughton supports a village school that is popular with parents in areas as far as Alcester, Studley and Redditch. The number of pupils is currently 140 and the school building in Coughton Lane, was extended in 2006 to incorporate an IT suite and larger hall. As a result, during the working week the village supports a far more vibrant population within the school.



The former Post Office and shop that was converted into four houses in 2001

Coughton School

Most pupils are taken to and from the school in Coughton Lane by car, which has a consequent impact on local traffic congestion. Safety considerations have been partially addressed by the introduction of a drop off facility, supported by many parents, and the introduction of yellow line parking restrictions at the junctions with the A435.

The Old School building in Sambourne Lane was converted in 2003 for use as a pre school support and recreation facility, and in 2010 it is being upgraded further and developed as a privately run nursery.

Since 2009, the school has strengthened its links with the village, and is keen to host joint ventures with the resident community. In 2009 a small competition was held that demonstrated how much the school environment and the village contributes towards their personal development.



Route 5 of the National Cycle Network (between Reading and Holyhead) runs along Coughton Fields Lane, across the A435, and continues along Sambourne Lane.

Local Traffic conditions

The A435 which runs through the centre of the village is the principle route between Stratford and Redditch and also takes considerable traffic between the Vale of Evesham and Birmingham. Consequently the village is affected by high levels of commercial vehicles and commuter traffic throughout the week. The feasibility of a Studley (and Coughton) bypass is now unlikely following the outcome of a government review in 2008.

A 40 mph speed limit on the A435 has been enforced since 2001 by safety cameras at each end of the village, and a speed limit review in 2009 advised 30 mph speed restrictions in the adjoining lanes.

A regular bus service between Redditch and Alcester (and beyond) operates through the village along the A435.



The first joint venture. In Feb 2010 a Bring and Buy sale at the school raised £1200 for victims of the Haiti earthquake

The River Arrow

This significant feature of Coughton provides a habitat for wildlife, recreation for fishing, and is the main outflow for the large surface water catchment area. Changes in weather patterns and domestic landscaping have contributed to a higher risk of flooding from both the river Arrow, and the Cain Brook (its tributary from the west). After the 2007 flood, valuable work in cleaning the field ditches emphasised the importance of keeping all culverts, road gullies and ditches in good order. Local flooding will generally strike first at the ford in Coughton Fields Lane, where even the footbridge can become impassable. The area around the ford lies within the Conservation Area and has been a popular picnic spot for many years. Its remote location and accessibility for off road vehicles has led to much deterioration in recent years, but there is considerable support to restore the area to its former oasis of tranquillity.



Drivers who ignore the warnings signs do so at their peril



The Stables, Coughton Lane

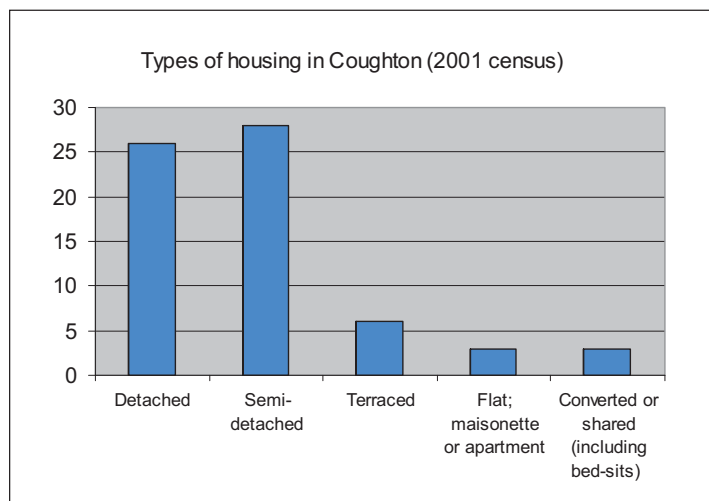
Recreation and Social activities

Although the lack of a social centre restricts many local activities, the village itself attracts many visitors from outside. The area is surrounded by bridleways and footpaths. There is an active fishing club, a bell ringing group, and Coughton Court continues to attract an increasing number of visitors each year. There are regular attendances at the adjoining Anglican Church and the Catholic Church.

The Throckmorton Arms is the local village pub and a popular restaurant to the north of the village on Coughton Hill. Over the last two years, the parish council and the National Trust have worked on several joint projects to mutual benefit (e.g. anti-flood measures, and restoration of the ford area). A further consequence has been the bridging of an artificial divide between Coughton Court and much of the village. The National Trust, an active member of the Village Plan Steering Group has provided free access to the Court for local residents and has offered to host future village events in the grounds.

Housing

According to the 2001 census approx 60% of the properties in Coughton are owner occupied, with the village having a range of dwelling types as shown:



Many houses in the centre of the village are listed buildings and fall within the conservation area. Ten properties were developed in Coughton Lane by Stratford District Council and a further two donated by the Swedish Government after World War 2. The most recent homes were built in Sambourne Lane after 1970.

Most of the remaining homes were built, and are still used, for farming. A number of barns and the former station buildings in Sambourne Lane have been converted for residential use. The station was in use from 1868 until 1952.



The Housing needs survey

The Parish Council and the Village Plan Steering Group agreed to work with Warwickshire Rural Community Council to conduct a housing needs survey. This was carried out in May 2009 and the report received in June 2009. A response rate of 30% was achieved, which is considered to be good for a survey of this type as people generally respond for one of three reasons:

- To express a housing need.
- To offer support in principle to the idea of a small housing scheme to meet local needs.
- To state opposition to the idea of a housing scheme.

Summary of the results

There were 18 responses, representing a total of 41 people. Although 11 people would like to see some form of affordable or special needs accommodation in the area, only one individual specifically requested alternative housing.

The recommendation from the Warwickshire Rural Community Council is that regrettably a scheme to develop just a single affordable property would not be financially viable.

To ensure that Housing Needs Surveys remain up to date and changes in local housing needs are identified, Stratford District Council recommends that they are reviewed every 3 years, and it is the Parish Council's intention to undertake a Housing Needs Survey in conjunction with Warwickshire Rural Community Council accordingly.

Local Government

Coughton Parish Council exists to support the environmental, social, and economic well being of the local community. It deals with issues that are brought to its attention either from residents or from outside of the village. These include all planning applications, liaison with the County and District councils, and various other external agencies. Residents are welcomed at all Parish Council Meetings, which are held in the school every two months. Agendas and minutes are posted on the notice board outside the school, and on the Parish Council website: www.coughtonpc.plus.com

The five members are elected for a period of four years. The last election was held in May 2010. If insufficient councillors are elected, a maximum of two councillors may be co-opted by the Parish Council.

Stratford District Council is responsible for local planning, environmental health, leisure, housing, and refuse collection. Further details are shown on their website at: www.stratford.gov.uk

Warwickshire County Council is responsible for Education, Social Care and Highways and Travel. Their website www.warwickshire.gov.uk holds full details of the services provided, including contact details, and facilities for reporting specific problems and complaints.

The Parish Council encourages residents to raise any individual problems, first of all, with the appropriate local authority. Should the quality of any service be unacceptable, the parish council will take this up, either with the department concerned or with the respective District/County councillor.

Elected representatives from both District and County Councils are invited to attend the Parish Council meetings.

4 A Brief History of Coughton

For over 600 years, the village of Coughton has been historically linked with the Throckmortons, one of the great Catholic families of England. Originally belonging to the family of de Cocton, from where the name originates, the estate - including what is now Coughton village - passed by marriage to the de Spineys, and then again by marriage to the Throckmortons (of Throckmorton in Worcestershire) in 1409. The estate also included the hamlet of Wyke, which lay to the west of the present day Coughton. Nothing remains of this except the moat of what was probably Wyke Manor (on the approach to Coughton Lodge Farm) and "Wyke Lane" the name for this road when approached from Sambourne. In 1946 the estate was given to the National Trust, with a 300-year lease in place, for the family to continue living at Coughton Court. The house and gardens are now opened to the public by the National Trust, working in partnership with the Throckmorton family.

Most of the houses and cottages were sold from the Throckmorton estate during the 20th century to boost the Coughton Court endowment (which funds the conservation and maintenance of the Court buildings and collections). Coughton is unusual in that a substantial piece of land at its heart has remained undeveloped. It is an area of some 4 acres lying between Coughton Lane and Sambourne Lane.



Rounding up the cattle on horseback. 1900s

Coughton Court

Coughton Court, the home of the Throckmorton family, is most famous for its 'Priest Holes', the ingenious secret hiding places used in challenging times for the Catholic faith, and for its connections with the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The Court's Tudor tower gate house is particularly impressive and is one of the most architecturally ambitious structures to survive in England from the early 16th century. The house had a moat until the 18th century, with bridge access to the separate Tudor kitchen range which was later incorporated as one arm of the Georgian stable block. The Court was once framed by a magnificent elm avenue, which was lost to Dutch Elm Disease, and has now been replaced with limes.

Coughton Fields Lane (formerly Mill Lane and Coughton Street) runs along the south side of the grounds following the route of an old packhorse road and became known as Warwick Lane as it crossed the ford through the

Arrow, and over Windmill Hill towards Stratford. The remains of a brick weir, upstream of the ford, are all that is left of Coughton Mill, and just down stream of the ford, alongside the lane was a row of cottages and known as Derby Green.

Several old farmhouses lie further along the Lane including Millford Farm opposite the footbridge that crosses the River Arrow further down stream of the ford. One mile further on was a thatched cottage with large garden, owned by the Throckmorton family, but sold to the Crown Estate in the 1930s. The cottage was demolished and replaced in 1936 with a pair of houses known as Crown Cottages.

Coughton Lane

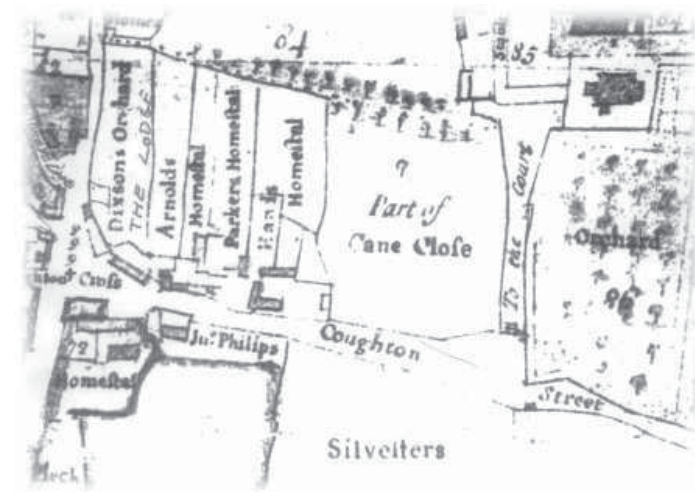
The 17th century timber-framing at the back of the old post office is characteristic of the first part of the northern side of the lane, which has former estate cottages on both sides, dating from the mid 19th century, again with brick walls and plain tiled roofs. The pair of houses next to the former almshouses is particularly striking with its armorial enrichment showing the coat of arms of the Throckmorton family. Nearby, largely concealed from view, is tucked the village school, a modern structure with an exceptionally busy roofline of low slopes. Opposite are two period thatched cottages (Listed). Further along the lane on the north side are former council houses built in the 1920s, and early 1950s, and then before the old railway bridge, is a pair of dark-stained timber clad dwellings that was originally a post war gift from Sweden.

The Main Road (A435) divides the historic village down the middle, with the houses to the west and the Anglican and Catholic churches and Coughton Court to the east. The village centre is considered to be the cross roads next to the medieval stone cross. According to local tradition, travellers entering or having successfully emerged from the wilds of Feckenham Forest offered prayers or thanksgiving for safe passage. 18,000 vehicles per day use this road with safety considerations now being in the form of speed cameras, introduced in 2001.

Opposite the Cross are the former almshouses, the old post office and Coughton Cross Farm, the fourth side of this quadrant having lost its dwellings by the end of the 18th century when a small ornamental park was made west of Coughton Court.

In earlier centuries there were more dwellings between the crossroads and the parish church of St Peter's, which is now visually isolated in its quiet setting adjoining Coughton Court. The buildings by the crossroads mostly show Georgian brickwork and plain tiled roofs. The old post office, of two-and-a half generous storeys has an 18th century front, but 17 century timber-framing at the back.

The most substantial houses in Coughton front this old highway. Most prominent is the classical villa with sash windows and painted stucco, which is not quite axial with the great avenue centred on Coughton Court across the road.



Shielded from the road is a big-boned 16th century, timber-framed house, and further north is the former Throckmorton Estate Office, of late timber-framing with brick infill panels. Once derelict, it was restored as a private house, then offered B&B, extended as a care home and until recently was a private hotel. Further to the rear is an old sawmill that backs onto Cain Brook.

Just within the village envelope, is the Throckmorton Arms, painted render with stained wood joinery, and a large extension to the south and west. Immediately behind here lie the extensive farm buildings that once formed Pool Farm, now tastefully converted into several dwellings.

Sambourne Lane is marked by the former Village Forge (c 1500) at the acute junction with the A435. The Forge retains its prominent horseshoe-shaped doorway, a Victorian amendment of a much earlier building, all recently carefully repaired. Continuing along the north side of Sambourne Lane, discreetly hidden are a bungalow and two houses built in the late 1970's, and then the Pleck, a dark-stained timber house with white-painted windows. It was built for Sir Robert Throckmorton's sister, Baroness von Twickel, whose husband's family was connected with the plot in 1944 to eliminate Hitler.

On the southern side of the lane, close to the main road, are semi-derelict farmstead buildings. Further west is the former Village School, converted in 2001 but managing to retain some of the original Victorian features. Next is the delightful Victorian chapel standing in the centre of the small graveyard. With plenty of trees here and good walls and gateways, this is a fascinating if rather neglected part of the village.

About half a mile further along the lane beyond the double bend (once a railway bridge), is the former Station House (1920's), and the Waiting Room, built to serve the Evesham and Redditch line that opened in 1866. This was closed for passenger use in 1962 and closed completely on 6th July 1964.

Archaeology

The village lies on the Birmingham- Alcester road, which follows the line of the Roman Icknield Way. There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the Coughton Estate, including an ancient village in the front park - much of which is covered with pronounced earthwork traces of medieval and early post-medieval settlement, with house platforms, former boundaries, holloways and ridge and furrow.

Nature

Part of the village lies within a Conservation Area. A 2006 biosurvey showed the presence of several threatened species that are also rare in Warwickshire. At the back of Coughton Court and to the east of the River Arrow is a remnant portion of historic wood pasture, once part of the ancient Forest of Arden. Coughton is located in the shallow valley of the River Arrow and its tributary, Cain Brook. The River Arrow



Coughton Station, 1952

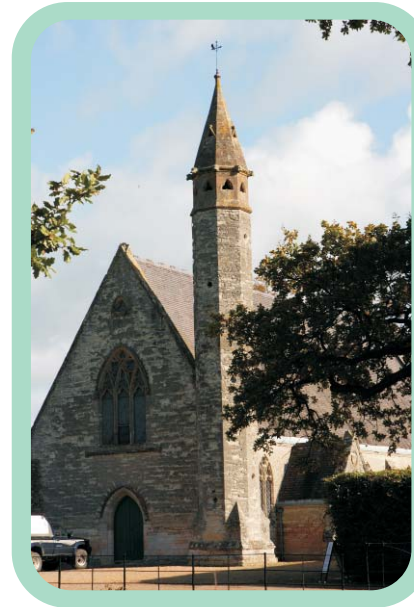
later joins the River Avon at Salford Priors. The topography is relatively flat and altitude ranges from 50m - 70m above sea level. Records show that since medieval times the area has been "watery and prone to flooding".

Geology

The underlying rocks belong to the Mercia Mudstone Group of Triassic age. However most are covered by either alluvium or river terrace deposits of Quaternary age. Several soil types have been mapped by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983). These include the Compton Association bordering the River Arrow, grading into the Arrow Association on the wider floodplain. Soils to the east of the river floodplain are of the Whirnple 3 Association, with soils of the Salop Association to the west of the floodplain.

Churches

Coughton has two churches, both situated on the Coughton estate and both of which were built by the Throckmorton family. St Peter's (Church of England) was built in the 15th and early 16th century and was the Throckmorton family's place of worship prior to the Reformation, The Catholic Church of St Peter St Paul & St Elizabeth was designed by Charles Hansom and completed in 1855 (following the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829) - it was built and is still owned by the Throckmorton Family. Both churches are still in use.



5 Village Design Statement

Planning policy framework

Coughton lies within the West Midlands greenbelt. The village is “washed over” by the greenbelt designation without any village development envelope being defined. As a result, national, regional and local greenbelt policies oppose almost all new build development.

Coughton has a large conservation area that covers the core of the village, Coughton Court and its grounds. The statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area is reflected in national, regional and local planning policies. Conservation area status brings additional control over demolition and provides some protection to trees.



The Conservation area that lies behind the centre of the village

There are numerous listed buildings in the village, notably at Coughton Court and along and near Birmingham Road. The statutory duty to have special regard to preserving the special architectural or historic interest of these buildings and to preserve their settings is reflected in national, regional and local planning policies. Listed building consent is required for any alteration to or demolition of a listed building, or a building in its curtilage, that affects its special architectural or historic interest.

Much of the grounds of Coughton Court are a Scheduled Ancient Monument, designated for the below ground remains of a medieval village. National policy has a presumption in favour of the preservation of ancient monuments and their settings.

Coughton Court and its grounds have been in the National Trust's protective ownership since 1946. The Trust owns protective covenants over much of the village.

Summary of the village

Coughton is a small, attractive village with notable conservation interest. It is marred by the A435 and the traffic that uses it. The village is home to Coughton Court; a manor house that has been a dominant influence on the village's past development and which to this day makes a significant contribution to its appearance.

There are marked contrasts in the character of the village and a diversity of styles and periods of architecture. Perhaps surprisingly, there is no distinctive over-riding estate style to the buildings. The main building style is Warwickshire vernacular in brick and plain tile. Although there have been additions to the village over time, these have not overwhelmed its historic character.



Historic development

The buildings of Medieval Coughton extended onto the area that is now the parkland between Birmingham Road and Coughton Court. This was cleared between 1695 and 1745. Although the Cross, the Forge and Coughton House significantly pre-date the clearance of the park, many of the buildings on and near Birmingham Road have 17th century origins and may be related to it.

Following the establishment of the park, the main part of the village has gradually grown westwards along Sambourne Lane and Coughton Lane. The Old School and cemetery were the chief additions in the 19th century; the 20th brought more houses on both lanes as well as the new primary school.

Historically, outlying dwellings have long been a feature of Coughton. Several new houses were built in scattered locations near the main village in the 19th and 20th centuries. Since the introduction of planning control in 1948, and the subsequent designation of the greenbelt, any new housing in such locations has been the result of the replacement or reuse of existing buildings.

Spatial analysis

The most significant open space in the village is the front park to Coughton Court. Other than the Lodge, this open land occupies the whole of the east side of Birmingham Road between Cain Brook and Coughton Fields Lane. The parkland style of planting and the use of a dwarf wall with railings offer significant views of Coughton Court. A double avenue of limes (planted to replace Elms lost to Dutch elm disease) is the single most obvious landscape design feature within the park.

Surrounding hedgerow, trees and woodlands, coupled with gently rising land, largely screen the village from the surrounding countryside and close off longer views from the village. There are some views in from the higher land to the west. The tower of Coughton Court is a significant and popular viewpoint.



Character analysis

On the heavily engineered Birmingham Road there is a contrast between the 17th century cottages that front straight onto the road and the large houses in spacious grounds that look across the park. This is the Coughton seen by users of the main road.



Moving away from Birmingham Road, Coughton Lane and Sambourne Lane both exhibit a rapid change to a distinctly rural feel: narrow lanes largely without kerbs or footways; buildings generally set within front, side and rear gardens; hedges and garden trees featuring strongly in the street scene. Sambourne Lane includes the Old School and the Victorian cemetery with its chapel of rest, as well as a few individually designed detached 20th century houses in large gardens. Coughton Lane contains a small estate of 20th century former Council houses.

Scattered cottages and farmsteads look to the village and form an important part of it. There is a small concentration of homes at Mill Ford, partly arising from the conversion of farm buildings at Millford House, and a similar development at Pool House just beyond the parish boundary, but still within the village.

The village retains its primary school and there is some employment at Coughton Court (heritage and tourism), Coughton Lodge (visitor accommodation), Coughton House, as well as an active farm within the centre of the village. It no longer has a shop. The pub is just outside the parish boundary, but within the village.

There are numerous listed buildings in Coughton. These are concentrated at Coughton Court and on and around Birmingham Road. Those on and near Birmingham Road are predominantly 17th century and now of a primarily domestic character and contain buildings of non-residential origin such as the shop, forge and estate office. A table of the listed buildings is included as an annex.

The Old Vicarage is a notable unlisted building. The light-painted render on its front makes it particularly conspicuous and is almost exactly aligned with the avenue from Coughton Court. The distinctive sash windows and shallow, hipped slate roof display a 19th century villa styling which is not continued on the sides of the building.



Other notable unlisted buildings include:
The Victorian Old School, Sambourne Lane
The Chapel, Sambourne Lane
Coughton Court Lodge
The stables, Coughton Lane

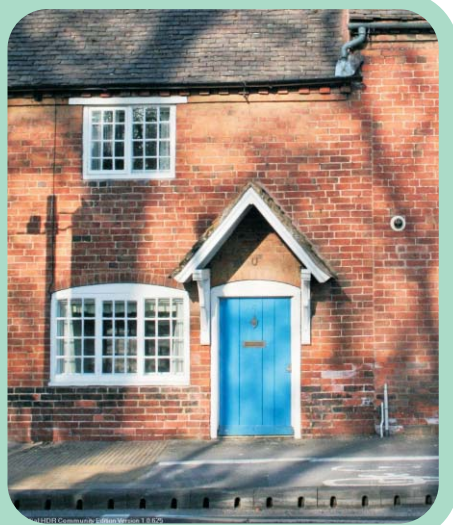


Local details

The village shows a diversity of styles and periods of architecture, with the main building style being 17th century Warwickshire vernacular in brick and plain tile, with two 17th century timber-framed, thatched cottages in Coughton Lane.

The 17th century cottages tend to be of relatively shallow plan depth, with steeply pitched plain tile gable roofs. They are generally positioned parallel to the road. A muted red brick is commonly used. Windows are generally timber casements, painted white and with timber mullions. Frequently there is low brick arch with a timber fillet. Those with visible timber-

framing infilled by brick generally have slightly projecting eaves but with rafter feet hidden; those without generally have dentil coursing at eaves level. Verges are generally simple, without parapets or large bargeboards. Dormers are relatively common, almost always flush with main wall and fully above eaves level. These tend to be gabled except those on Coughton Cross Cottages which are hipped.



More variety in style and materials is seen in the later buildings, which tend to be a reflection of their time but which still generally blend in well with the character of the village. Brick is still predominant but varies more in colour. Natural slate is used for some roofs.

Dwarf or low brick walls are relatively common as boundary features. These tend to use brick copings - either the simple brick on edge of the boundary wall to Coughton Court or shaped bricks such as the half-round blue bricks or matching saddlebacks on Sambourne Lane. Taller enclosures are provided by hedges or fences. The clipped yew hedges to Coughton House are attractive features that complement the building. The various hedges along the lanes add greatly to their rural character.

Condition

Almost all of the buildings are well-looked after, occupied and in good condition. The Old School is currently vacant.

Pressure for change

The greatest pressures are for alterations to buildings, either by extension or by replacing components such as windows, doors and roof covering. Many of the buildings in the village show changes over time that have become part of their character - such as the 19th century extensions to Coughton House.



Other extensions and alterations have tended to try to preserve the existing character and appearance, with varying degrees of success. Recent extensions to the former council houses and to Crown Cottages show how this can be done. The 19th century extension to the Old School shows the virtual impossibility of getting an exact match between bricks even when considerable care is taken.

Some also show less sympathetic changes - such as the replacement windows and rooflights in the Old School.

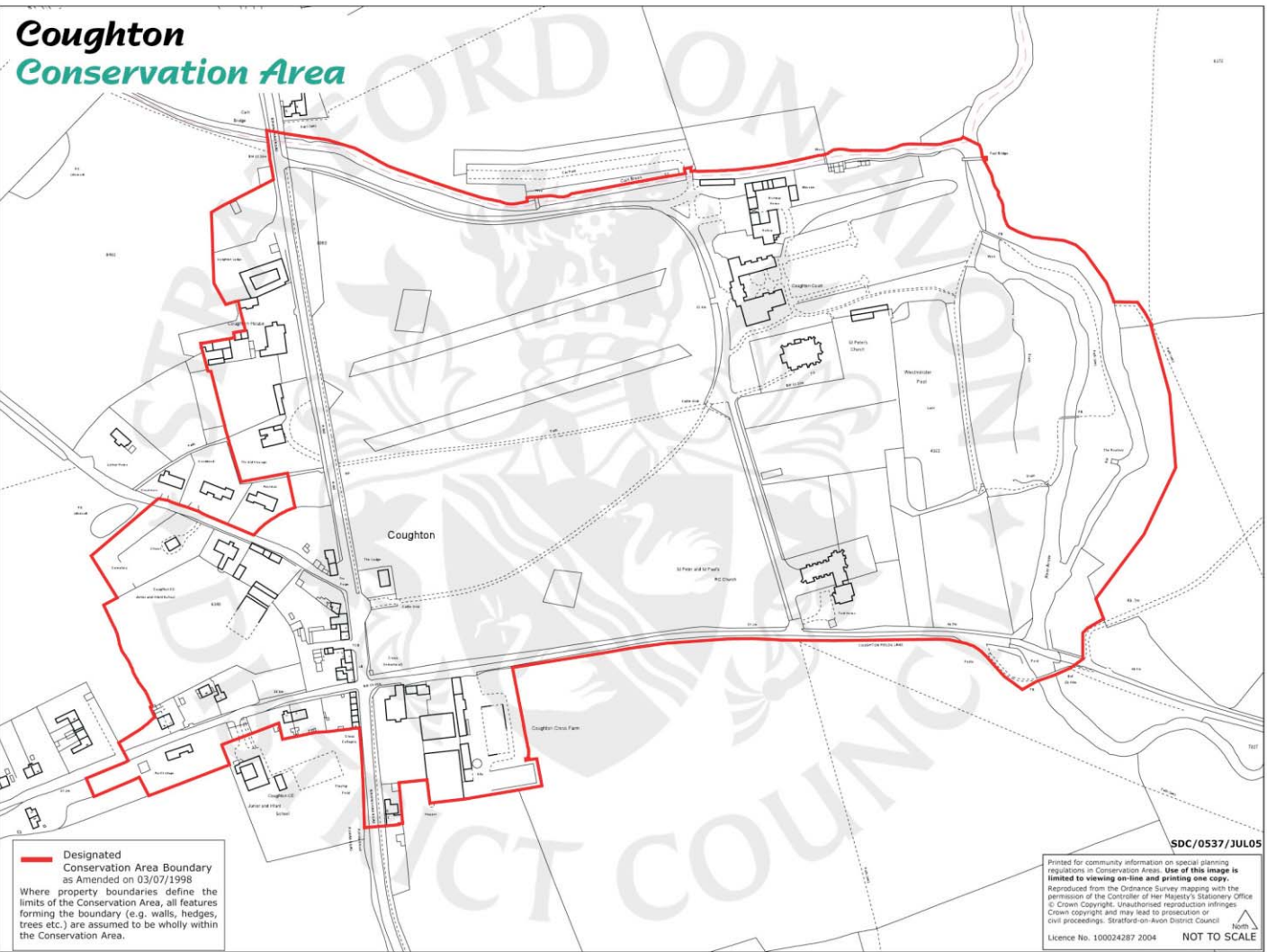


Local generic guidance

Good extension principles:

- 30% rule
- subservient to main building
- preserving its character and that of its surroundings
- matching materials and detailing
- way in which windows and doors relate to overall building - ratio, position, pattern
- step back at join
- avoiding potential terracing effects of building too close to the side boundary (could be particularly an issue on Coughton Lane)
- retaining trees and hedges
- appearance of new boundary enclosures also important





LISTED BUILDINGS IN COUGHTON

Title	Date
2, Coughton Lane,	C17
8, Coughton Lane,	C17
10, Coughton Lane,	C17
April Cottage 15, Coughton Lane,	C17
The Old Estate Office, Birmingham Road,	C17
Coughton House, Birmingham Road,	C16/17 + C19
The Forge, Birmingham Road,	Cottage c.1500, forge C16 or 17
Stable Approximately 5 Metres to Rear Of The Old Forge, Sambourne Road	C18
Coughton Cross Cottages 1-3, Birmingham Road,	C17, front rebuilt C19
2, Birmingham Road,	C17
3-6, Birmingham Road,	late C18 - C19
Milestone Approximately 300 Metres S/West Of Coughton Court, Birmingham Rd,	early C19
K6 Telephone Kiosk O/s Post Office, Birmingham Road,	C20
Coughton Cross And Attached Railings, Birmingham Road,	medieval stone - C18/early with C19 railings
Coughton Cross Farmhouse, Birmingham Road,	early-mid C19
Mill Ford House,	early C19
Coughton fields Farmhouse,	C17 + C18/19

6 Acknowledgements:

The Village Plan Steering Committee

Karen Gazey (Secretary)
John Gittins (Chair / Parish Council representative)
John McTavish (Treasurer)
Roger Prince
Lucy Reid (National Trust)
Mike Wilkes
Ruth Willmott
Chris Lambart

The National Trust

Warwickshire Rural Community Council
Rural Housing Enabler,

Phil Ward / Charles Barlow

Stratford District Council

Karen Johnstone / Fiona Blundell

Stratford District Council

Simon Purfield

Warwickshire Rural Community Council

Linda Ridgley

Head, Coughton CoE school

Ben Crump

Voluntary Action, Stratford on Avon District

David Morgan

Space Graphic Solutions

... and all of the residents of Coughton

Photographs taken by Chris Lambart, Derek Lippett, Ruth Willmott and John Gittins.
The following archive photographs by permission of Warwickshire County Records Office:
“Rounding up cattle” (PH350/432), “Throckmorton Arms” (PH352/64/2), Coughton Railway Station (PH352/64/30)



ABBREVIATIONS					
WRCC	Warwickshire Rural Community Council	EA	Environment Agency	VTG	Volunteer Traffic Group.
WCC	Warwickshire County Council	VEG	Volunteer Events Group	FoFG	Friends of Ford Group.
VFPG	Volunteer Flood Prevention Group	NT	National Trust	EnvG	Environment Group
PC	Coughton Parish Council			SDC	Stratford District Council

<i>Comments</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time scale</i>	<i>completed</i>
COMMUNITY					
Provide a Village Welcome Pack for future residents moving into the village	ξ Identify appropriate content and arrange production of a village welcome pack	PC	Medium	Medium	Jun 2010
Develop Parish Council publicity and improve the understanding of its responsibilities to residents.	ξ Identify means of communicating to residents the areas of involvement by PC.(Refer to appendices 14,15 and 20 of village survey responses for residents comments)	PC	High	Short	Jun 2010
	ξ Include biographical details of Parish Council Members in the Village Plan booklet and Village Welcome Pack.				Jun 2010
	ξ Consider methods for on-going communication to residents and set up procedure for handling updates (refer to Appendix 16 of Village Survey Responses for residents comments.				Jun 2010
	ξ Identify suitable content for PC website (refer to appendix 17 of Village Survey Responses for residents comments				Sep 2009

<i>Comments</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time scale</i>	<i>completed</i>
Encourage greater community spirit within the Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ξ Investigate viability and likely support for community events as per residents' suggestions in Appendices 12 and 20 of Village Survey Responses. ξ Consider likely venues, resource requirements and estimated costs (refer to Appendix 13 of Village Survey Responses for residents comments). Also seek advice and Guidance from authorities re Health and Safety, Licensing etc. ξ Co ordinate village events and publicise details of existing clubs, societies and community facilities ξ Encourage closer links with other community groups (School, Churches, National Trust) by identifying volunteer opportunities and publicising events 	PC, VEG, NT, Local Businesses, Resource Providers, Emergency Services, Local Authority	Medium	Medium	Jun 2009 Feb 2010
Children's Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ξ Consider requirement for Children's Play Area or specific children's events <p>(Refer to Appendices 18 and 20 of Village Survey Responses for residents comments)</p>	PC, VEG, NT, School.	Medium	Medium	
Crime Prevention Enhance feeling of safety within the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ξ Resurrect Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the Village. ξ Explore the possibility of providing closer liaison between residents and the Police Service including increased Police / PCSO presence. 	PC, Warks. Police, Residents.	Medium	Medium	

<i>Comments</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time scale</i>	<i>completed</i>
FLOODING					
Reduction of Flood Risk within the Village	ξ Review action taken so far and identify outstanding problems. (Refer to Appendix 2 of Village Survey responses for residents comments). Lobby appropriate Agencies to effect remedial action.	PC, VFPG, SDC, WCC, NT, EA	High	Ongoing	Apr 2010
	ξ Set up Program for regular preventative action.				
	ξ Identify and circulate information on “flood prevention” kits and Environment Agency advice for home owners.				Jul 2010
	ξ Contact other village flood groups.				
	ξ Set up Flood warning communication tree				
FORD AREA					
Restoration of Ford Area	ξ Create local volunteer group “Friends of the Ford”	NT, PC, FoFG, WCC, Landowners, SDC, EA.	High	Ongoing	Sep 2009
	ξ Review details of work undertaken or in hand and seek best course of action to prevent ongoing damage.				Dec 2009
	ξ Continue to liaise with partners. (Refer to Appendices 4 and 20 of Village Survey Responses for Residents comments).				

Comments	Proposed actions	Partners	Priority	Time scale	completed
TRAFFIC / TRANSPORT					
Reduce the impact of through traffic on the village <i>Speed limits, Road Signage and Parking</i>	ξ Pursue provision of speed limit plans as per agreement at previous Public Meeting	PC,VTG,WC C, SDC	High	Short	May 2010
	ξ When limits are applied, identify method of monitoring on going performance and arrange with Agencies involved				
	ξ Consider any possible further changes to speed limits and signage with reference to Appendix 6 (accident hotspots) and Appendices 5, 7 and 20 of Village Survey Responses.	PC, VTG, WCC, SDC, Warks. Police.	Medium	Ongoing	Jan 2010
	ξ Analyse suggestions for improving Parking within the village as per Appendices 9 and 20 of Village Survey Responses.	PC, VTG, SDC, HA, Warks. Police, School.	Medium	Medium	
	ξ Make contact with local Village(s) experiencing similar problems for resolution suggestions				
	ξ Consider options to create an attractive gateway feature at the village approach on A435.	PC, VTG, Reps from other Villages	Medium	Medium	
Public Transport Residents feel there is room for improvement in the Public Transport Service through the Village	ξ Review comments made by residents as per Appendices 10 and 20 of Village Survey Responses. Make contact with Service Providers to ascertain feasibility	PC, VTG, Transport providers	Low	Long	
	ξ Identify and advertise existing public transport options and any available Community Link transportation.				

<i>Comments</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time scale</i>	<i>completed</i>
ENVIRONMENT					
Street Scene Services Provided by SDC	ξ Investigate comments made by Residents in Appendices 8 and 20 with regard to improvement in Services and report back to PC with findings for dissemination via PCs chosen communication network	PC, SDC, EnvG	Medium	Medium	
Alternative Energy	ξ Provide information for residents on alternative energy sources, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to obtain permission with consideration given to Covenants, Listed Buildings and the Village Design statement. ○ Types of Renewable Energy available ○ Estimate of likely costs ○ Availability of grants Refer to Appendix 3 of Village Survey Responses for residents comments	EnvG, Other Agencies and Suppliers	Medium	Long	
HOUSING					
Identify housing needs	ξ Carry out a Housing Needs Survey every 3 years	WRCC, PC	High	Long	

Welcome Pack

This is not expected to be an exhaustive list of every local organisation, but it is a first stab at what we believe covers the majority of what new residents to the Coughton may find useful. We must also thank Dennis Hackett and his group for co-ordinating this information.

A

Alcester Library	01789 762430
Arrow Advertiser for local events	01789 269465
Anti-Social Behaviour (call Local Police)	01789 762207

B

Buses - First Midland Ltd	01527 68971
- Warwickshire CC (public transport)	01926 412987
see timetable at bus stop on A435 between the toucan crossing and the crossroads	

C

Coughton Court (National Trust)	
Villagers can apply for a pass which entitles access to the house and grounds. Call for an application form	01789 400777
Churches	
Church of St Peter Rev. David Capron, or Churchwarden David Laband website: www.alcesterminster.org.uk	01789 764261 01789 764736
Roman Catholic Church of St Peter, Paul & Elizabeth. Father Richard Jones	01789 762573
Coughton School opens daily (except school holidays) 09.00 to 15.30. The school operates a drop off system in the morning.	01789 762444
Citizens' Advice Bureau	01789 216966

D

Doctors' Surgeries:	
Arrow Lodge Surgery (Alcester)	01789 763293
The Ridgeway Surgery (Crabbs Cross)	01527 892418
Alcester Health Centre	01789 763060
Pool Medical Centre (Studley)	01527 853671

Dentist Tel NHS Direct 24 hour Healthcare	0845 4647
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E

Emergencies:	
Gas	0800 111999
Electricity	08000 568090
Water	0800 7834444
BT	08008 00151
Emergency Services	999
Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk	0800 807060

F

Flowers - Alcester Flower Club. Marion Buchanan (Chair)	01789 400868
Flooding (see Flood Plan enclosed)	
Footpaths - Warwickshire County Council. The local library has printed walks	01926 410410
Funeral directors Edward Jarvis (Kings Coughton) A Dyer (Studley)	01789 764661 01527 852113

G

Grit Bins are sited at various locations in the village. Responsibility for filling these lies with Warwickshire County Council

H

Highways - Warwickshire County Council	01926 412515
Hospitals	Redditch (Alexandra) 01527 503030 Warwick 01926 495321 Stratford 01789 205831

I

J

K

L		
Library Alcester		01789 762430
Studley		01527 852929
Stratford		01789 292209
Link magazine (delivered monthly in Coughton and Sambourne) - David Shaw		01527 893816
Local trades and services - see Link magazine		
M		
N		
NHS Direct		0845 4647
NHS Warwickshire		01926 493491
Neighbourhood Watch		
O		
P		
Parish clerk (Karen Parnell)		01789 292968
Or email:	karen.parnell@homecall.co.uk	
Website: www.coughtonpc.plus.com		
Police Alcester		01789 762207
HQ		01926 415000
Pest control		01789 267575
R		
Refuse and Recycling Helpline		
Coughton is in zone one. Collections are on Monday and they alternate one week recycling (green and blue lid bins) the next week grey bins.		01789 260925
S		

Stratford District Council	(main switchboard)	01789 267575
	Marriages	01789 293711
	Births & Deaths	01789 293397
Severn Trent		0800 7834444
Samaritans		0845 7909090
T		
Taxis		01527 853333
Trains	all rail enquiries	08457 484950
http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/		
V		
Voluntary and Community Organisations		
VASA	www.vasa.org.uk	01789 262886
Veterinary surgeries	Acorn (Studley)	01527 853304
	Arden Forest (Alcester)	(01789) 764455
	McGettigan (Astd. Bank)	01527 893016
W		
W.I.	Sambourne and Coughton (local contact, Jean Carter)	01789 400185
Warwickshire C.C.		01926 410410
Warwickshire Anti-Terrorist Hotline		0800 789321
X		
Y		
Z		

We would appreciate details of any omissions, errors, or ideas for improvement. Please contact the parish clerk (Karen Parnell) tel: (01789) 292968



Emergency/Flood Plan

In the absence of the emergency services, the Parish Council or Parish Council’s Emergency Committee will lead the community response and act as central point for information and communication for the community, emergency services, County and District Councils.

Should the need arise, Coughton C of E School, Coughton Lane, will become the local rest centre.

When the emergency services have arrived at the scene, the local authority link for the Parish Council switches to the District Council. They will deal with the day-to-day issues affecting the local community during the emergency, whilst letting County deal with the bigger picture and give support to the District Council. The recovery phase is also very much district-led.

The information in this document acts as a check list for residents who may be affected by flooding. It has been put together by the Flood Group in response to the Village Questionnaire.

Further information can be obtained from:

National Flood Forum 01299 403055 (www.floodforum.org.uk)

Environment Agency Flood Line 0845 988 1188 www.environment-agency.gov.uk

The Agency provide booklets entitled “Preparing for a flood”, “During a flood” and “After a flood”

In the event of an emergency the first call must always be to the Emergency Services: **999**

1 Preparing for an Emergency or Flood

- 1 Check your Insurance cover
- 2 Know how to turn off your gas, electric and water supplies
- 3 Prepare a kit of essential items, which should include:

Insurance documents	First aid kit and any regularly prescribed medication
Torch with spare batteries (or wind-up type) candles and matches	Baby food and baby care items
Battery radio with spare batteries (or wind-up type)	Toiletries and sanitary supplies
Warm, waterproof clothing and blankets	List of useful phone numbers i.e. Doctors, close relatives, and neighbours
Bottled water and non-perishable foods	
- 4 Have to hand: Mobile phone Money/credit cards Home and car keys
- 5 Think now about what you would move to safety

Pets	Cars	Furniture	Electrical equipment
Anything else?		
- 6 Flood Protection Equipment, such as sandbags and airbrick seals, is available, (Contact the National Flood Forum for a full list of items available)

2 During a Flood

Focus on the safety of you and your family
Stay alert to localised flooding
Gather essential items and go to a high place
Fill jugs and saucepans with clean water
Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if it is safe to do so
Keep listening to local radio for updates

Call 999 if you are in danger
Avoid walking or driving through floodwater
Keep children and vulnerable people in a safe place
Put plugs in sinks and baths and hold down with heavy objects

3 If you are requested to leave your home by the emergency services

Gather your emergency/flood kit
Go to the emergency centre
Look out for vulnerable neighbours
Lock doors and windows

Contact relatives
If using your car take bottled water, blankets and tune in to your local radio station

4 After a Flood

Check if it is safe to return to your property
Contact your insurance company
When cleaning up always wear waterproof or protective clothing including a facemask
Get qualified engineers to restore Gas, electric and water services

You can clean using ordinary household products
Leave doors and windows open (when safe to do so) to help natural drying
Make a record of the damage (take photographs)

June 2010

The Flood Group co-ordinator is Dennis Hackett

Tel: 01789 762530

Email: dennis.hackett@tiscali.co.uk

Len Carter
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2 Birmingham Road
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Gerald Sheen
26 Coughton Lane
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John Gittins (Chair)
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Cherie King
40 Coughton Lane
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cherie@coughton.plus.com

Maureen McTavish (Vice-Chair)
"Knockmore"
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Parish clerk: Karen Parnell
109 St Mary's Road
Stratford, CV37 6TL

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Coughton Parish Council