

Chearsley 2013

A Village Plan for Chearsley

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Forward

Chearsley 2013 is a statement about Chearsley as it is now and the way we wish to see our village develop over the next 20 years.

It presents a snapshot of the village and the way of life here in 2013, identifying those things that we cherish and wish to keep as well as the things we would like to see changed or improved.

Inevitably there is a wide range of opinion on most topics. There are those that consider the village to be more or less ideal as it is with little or no need for further development. Others take the view that things can never stand still and that there will always be a need for change to ensure we remain a thriving community in a changing world.

The challenge for the village Plan has been to take the best from all points of view and to arrive at a statement that really is the best for our village. By ensuring that there has been the widest possible consultation during its preparation we hope and believe that the Plan achieves that end and truly represents a consensus view.

As well as presenting a commentary on most aspects of village life the Plan identifies a number of Village Objectives that have emerged from the work as topics on which there is a clear feeling for further work to be done.

In that sense this document is a beginning rather than an end and it includes an Action Plan that will provide a structure for taking forward the work that will be necessary to enable these Objectives to be met.

Into Chearsley

The village of Chearsley is situated on sloping land high above the course of the River Thames, four miles north of Thame. The four approach roads, from Long Crendon, Chilton, Winchendon and Aylesbury, converge at an offset crossroads north of The Green and the lanes that enter the village from here, School Lane, Church Lane and Shupps Lane, all terminate as footpaths. The village dwellings are largely strung around an intricate, looping road framework of narrow, sunken lanes bounded by embanked grass verges and enclosed by hedgerows or boundary walls of witchert, brick or stone. This road pattern and form of enclosure is quite unlike any other village in the District, with the sunken lanes, or 'holloways', being a good example of a late Saxon village. Origins probably date to the eighth and ninth centuries.

The thirteenth to fifteenth Century rubblestone parish church of St. Nicholas is situated at the south-eastern end of the village. Adjoining the churchyard are some ancient earthworks which probably mark the site of an older settlement left derelict after the Black Death in the fourteenth Century.

The four approaches to the village are all interesting. The road from Chilton is along a ridge above the village with fine long distance views to the south and west. Directly ahead, beyond the focal point of the chequered brick and tile 17th century old farmhouse, are views eastwards across the Aylesbury Vale to the Chiltern Hills. Arriving at the road junction the picture broadens to include a group of black, weather-boarded and stone barns in School Lane, a colour-washed and tiled cottage, the fine horse chestnut tree and the whitewashed (but much altered) old Smithy. The two low brick outhouses to the farmhouse and colour-washed cottage mark the entrance to School Lane.

Approaching from Winchendon the road runs along the same ridge as the road from Chilton, descending gently between inter and post war housing and allotments to the crossroads with its fine Horse Chestnut tree. This approach gives superb long distance views across the Aylesbury Vale to the Chiltern Hills. Arriving at the crossroads from this angle gives a splendid view of most of the buildings enclosing The Green. The scene is in two parts with the barns; cottage and Smithy mentioned above to one aspect and the longer view to the thatched, colour-washed seventeenth/eighteenth Century Bell Inn and more recent brick and tiled village shop with its visually important old clay roofing tiles

Approaching from Aylesbury, the first features noticed is the tower of the parish church in the distance, a cottage and the tall intricate brick chimneys and tiled roofs of the C19 Vicarage set amongst the trees. This is in essence a rural approach to the village, well clothed with trees and hedgerows. The road ascends past a small stretch of ribbon development to the cross roads, flanked by two entrance cottages to the village. At the crossroads the road bends left and the view is across The Green to Church Lane beyond which disappears between a long, whitewashed, slate roofed cottage and brick and slate agricultural building.

On the ascending approach from Long Crendon there are excellent views to the west, and to the east extensive views to the Chiltern Hills. On the right is the high witchert wall to Manor Farm, culminating in the attractive black weather-boarded and tiled barn, then the whitewashed cottage and brick agricultural building to the Green on the right with the excellent double-gable elevation of the Old Farmhouse forming a focal point.

The dominating feature of the Green is the Bell Inn, with a brick agricultural building and a pair of Victorian brick cottages set back behind the hedges.

Into the lanes there is a mix of more modern homes and old and interesting cottages. One such is the terrace of cottages in School Lane and Lower Green Lane, opposite the Victorian old school building. These form an excellent visual group comprising a mixture of timber frame with brick infilling, rubblestone and brick, many colour-washed. Roofs are mainly of clay tiles but two are thatched.

The entrance to the footpath to the Aylesbury Road at this point is intriguing being tightly enclosed by the white colour-washed and thatched witchert and wall, and red brick wall opposite. The path curves from sight around the cottage, the brick wall first containing and then closing the view.

The red brick Victorian school building, with its low, enclosing brick wall, is a fine structure forming the focal point from School Lane. There are extensive fine views easterly from both Lower Green Lane and School Lane.

At Watts Green, where the grass verge widens out at a lane junction, there is an attractive cluster of cottages, three of timber frame construction with brick infilling and three of brick and tiled. An interesting glimpse of the old Farthing Cottage with its dormer window and thatch is afforded along Hicks Path leading from Dark Lane.

Walking the narrow, winding lanes of the village the eye is delighted by a variety of cottage gables, thatch and tile, views often and fortunately retained through new developments having been set back to a building line. A subtle contribution to the overall 'townscape' of parts of the village is made by small outhouses.

The old cottages are of rubblestone, rendered witchert, timber frame with brick infilling, and brick, some colour-washed. A few are a combination of two or even three of these materials. The finest of the witchert and brick walling is to be found at Manor Farm in Church Lane. Brickwork is generally orange/red in colour, sometimes of a chequered pattern formed with dark glazed headers.

Roofs are thatch, red/brown clay tiles or slates and generally fairly steep in pitch with simple gable ends, often with exposed purlins. Any barge boards are usually narrow and fairly insignificant, the principal exceptions being one or two Victorian buildings. Eaves are often flush, or, where they overhang, are formed by exposing the rafters.

There are many important trees and tree groups in the village in addition to the trees on The Green and the hedgerows flanking the lanes. Of particular interest are the hedgerow screening the back gardens of the houses in Old Plough Close from the main Aylesbury Road and the hedgerows enclosing the western side of The Green and road junction.

(Acknowledgement is made to Ted Hooton and his book 'Chearsley - Living Through History' as the original source of most of the material in this Introduction)

Housing

Introduction

In many respects the housing in Chearsley, both in character and number, defines the village. The character of the housing has a bearing on who wishes, or is able, to live here and the number of houses impacts the number of people in the locality and hence the viability of local businesses and their impact on the village environment.

These linkages were a major consideration in the Village Plan development work and consultation.

Chearsley as a growing village

Historical data (Figure 1) reveals village growth over the period 1955 to 1987 from 87 to 180 homes or around 3 new homes per year. If that level of growth had continued we would have lived in a village of 270 homes at the present time and be looking at some 326 homes by 2032.

Growth slowed however from 180 to 220 between 1987 and 2012, an average of 1.6 new homes per year. Continuing this rate of growth for the next twenty years leads to a further 32 new homes over the period, i.e. 252 by 2032.

Doubling this growth rate to 3.2 homes per year (similar to the 1955-87 growth rate) results in 64 additional homes over the period or around 284 houses by 2032.

Halving it to 0.8 homes per year leads to 16 new homes or 236 by 2032

The higher growth rates would inevitably have a big impact on the character of the village and make it feel a very different place to live; the lower rates raise sustainability questions as discussed below.

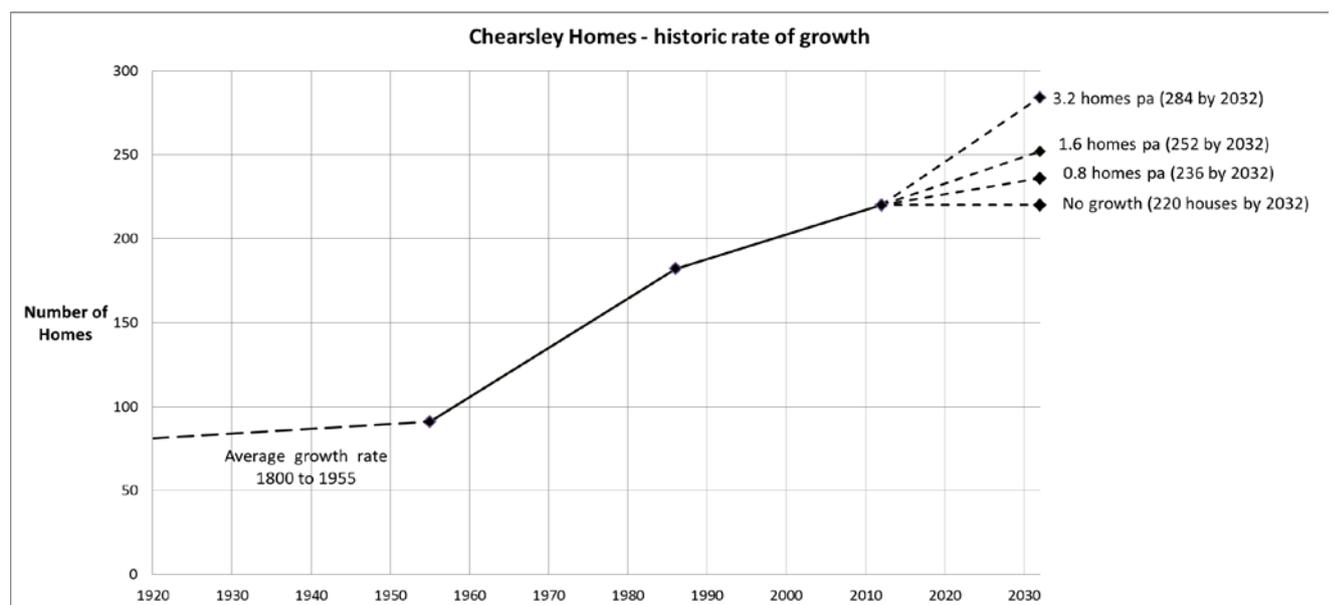


Figure 1. Homes in Chearsley – Historical Growth and Future Projections

The consultation across the village carried out in December 2011 indicated no real appetite for large-scale development. In coming to a view on the rate of housing development, it is necessary to find a balance between conflicting considerations.

Arguments for a significant increase in the housing stock include the beneficial impact of a larger population on local business and organisations and the need to enable residents to remain in the village when their housing needs change but family, work or emotional ties remain inextricably linked to Chearsley. Examples are the need to provide for growing families, for families where children “leave the nest”, for those whose lifestyle circumstances change and for those who find themselves living alone. In all these situations there should be the opportunity to downsize or upgrade within the village as required, enabling people to retain their links with Chearsley and continue the contribution their family has made to village life.

Against that is the view that the village is already of a near optimum size and significant housing development would change the essential character of the village in a major way. Clearly any material increase in the rate of housing growth relative to recent years would result in Chearsley being a much larger place in 20 years’ time.

These matters were addressed at some length in the consultation document. There was a clear majority view that, being realistic, Chearsley would grow over the next twenty years and that to advocate zero housing development was not a realistic proposition. The results showed a very clear 78% majority view that there should be a modest increase of around **22 new properties in total** over the whole 20 year period (10% of the 2012 figure), with 65% expressing a preference for staggering that development evenly over the period. This equates to an average growth of just over 1 new house per year.

However, a literal target of ‘one house per year for twenty years’, taken with the preference indicated below for development of new sites around the edge of the village in preference to infill, would probably not be economically viable developers. It should be expected therefore that the objective will be met with modest new developments of several houses at a time. It is arguable that this approach could actually be less disruptive to Chearsley residents than a yearly procession of individual house-building projects with its inevitable disruption.

Village Objective 1.

The number of homes in the village should increase at an average rate of about 1 house per year over the next 20 years

Development Constraints and Opportunities.

Another important consideration is where those new houses should be built.

The physical distribution of housing within Chearsley is divided by the main road between Long Crendon and Cuddington, and the crossroads near the War Memorial. The land towards the River Thames is low lying and prone to flooding, limiting scope for development. There are also other natural village boundaries, delineating potential areas of village development and infill.

Infill development

It is apparent that most of the potential housing sites within the village have already been developed. In particular the area of the village bounded broadly by Church Lane, School Lane and Dark Lane is now virtually full. There remains the theoretical potential for infill development through individual larger houses being demolished and larger gardens sub-divided but the listed status or Conservation Area locations of many of these buildings will almost certainly inhibit this possibility. Of much greater importance is the intense pressure created by parking and access on the essential intrinsically rural nature of the heart of Chearsley village. The consultation demonstrated a very strong feeling that this should be vigorously protected and it should be a very major consideration in assessing future development proposals.

The Consultation showed a small majority (55%) believing there should be no further infill, with the remaining 45% suggesting limited infill although without defining areas where this was possible. It is recognised that national planning regulations have a major bearing on this issue and of course individuals have a right to apply for permission to develop under planning laws. However the position of the village as a whole suggests that the pre-disposition of the Parish Council should be to oppose such development, for the reasons discussed above.

Village Objective 2.

Further infill housing should be very limited.

New Site Development

An alternative to infill development is to identify larger sites, mainly around the edge of the village that might be suitable for gradual development. A number of such sites were identified and the suitability of each was examined as part of the Consultation.

At the time of the consultation there had deliberately been no discussion with landowners but this did take place subsequently. The sites considered are shown on the map at Figure 1, and Table 1 summarises the current land owner's view on development along with reaction to each site as a development option from the consultation and an assessment on suitability and potential village benefits. Clearly, none of this commits or constrains the landowner to any particular view for the future but is offered solely in clarification of the perceived position at this time.

There should also be consideration of the benefits to the village that might result from developments at the different sites. Current arrangements across the country for housing projects of certain size require legal undertakings from developers to enhance local facilities. Chearsley should be sure not to miss out on such benefits from any agreements to housing development in our village. This is especially true as the limits we wish to see on future development also limit opportunities for accruing such benefits.

Amenities such as our Village Hall and other recreational and sports facilities could potentially be enhanced, sustained or even renewed through this approach and it is reflected in the commentary in Table 1.

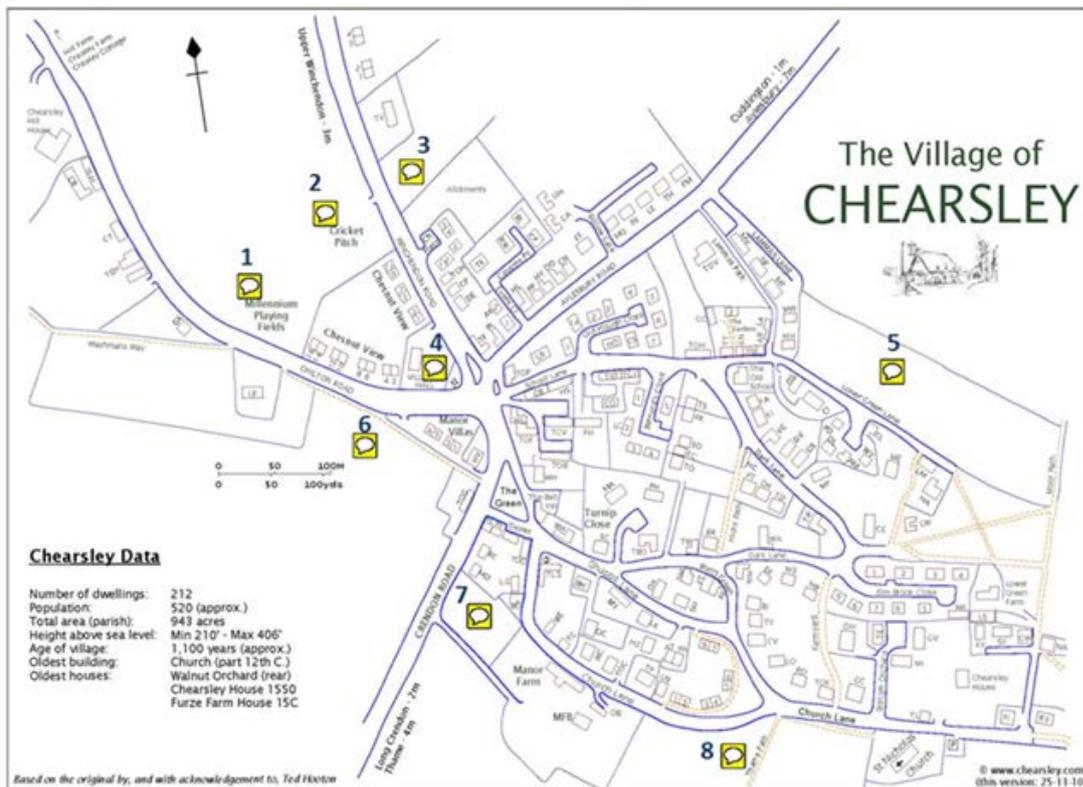


Figure 2. Potential Sites for Housing development

The consultation did not draw out any substantive feelings in support of other sites for possible development. It was also apparent from the consultation that Sites 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 would be acceptable as sites for further housing development but other sites listed generated significant points against. Thoughts on building on the Cricket field, Lower Green and Church Lane brought out many strong voices of concern about developing these sites, notably on grounds of social amenities and the impact on the nature, rural sight lines and defined boundaries of the village. For the purposes of this paper however and following discussion, it “may” be that an acceptable resolution can be negotiated that would enable development of part of the Cricket field to be supported, see Table below. As such, it is not totally rejected by the Housing Group at this stage.

Village Objective 3.

Future housing development should be limited as indicated in Table 1 with priority of support given to those schemes offering benefit to the village wherever possible.

Table 1. Possible Locations for Housing Development.

Site	Location	Points/Views For	Points/Views Against	Comments from Landowner and Housing Group.
1	Millennium Field. (now returned to agricultural use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near centre of village. • Easy access from main roads. • Keeps development away from the Conservation Area of the village. • Doesn't spoil views. • A natural development site. • One time recreational field currently in agricultural use. • Could be used for a new village hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes permanent loss of one-time recreational ground. • Causes loss of parking area for cricket and village events on sports field. 	<p>The landowner may be interested in development.</p> <p>Consultation output: Strong support</p> <p>The site lends itself to development, but if implemented in isolation would cause parking issues for sports and village events, although this facility is currently solely by consent of the landowner. Building here would not add to congestion on village lanes.</p> <p>However, if coupled with a more ambitious development incorporating a re-positioning of the cricket playing area into the field to the north of the present location, it could offer an attractive proposition incorporating a new Community Hall, retention of the cricket/sports ground in the village and provide a coherent mixed housing project.</p>
2	Existing Cricket Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps development away from the Conservation Area of the village. • Helps to balance the housing areas within the village • Does not compromise other properties. • Could be packaged alongside Millennium field to provide a coherent housing development. • Potential for re-siting cricket ground on a freehold basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate loss of valued sports facility within the village. • No guarantee of alternative sports facilities currently on the table. • Loss of much valued facility for the youth of the village. • Pavilion is currently used for a variety of village uses other than sports. 	<p>The landowner may be interested in development. It is noted that the cricket field is currently on a rolling lease, up for renewal in 2015.</p> <p>Consultation output: Neutral</p> <p>This is a potential housing development, although this necessitates relocating the existing cricket ground and pavilion facilities somewhere and potentially much further out of the village. However, there may be an option to couple building on part of this with an extension of the cricket field into the adjacent field if the necessary ground works was done as a part of any proposal. (See Millennium field proposal above). Development here does not add to congestion on village lanes and offers a variety of possible road access points.</p>

3	Field area to east side of Winchendon Road between allotments and "The View"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps development away from the Conservation Area of the village. Helps to balance the housing areas within the village Does not compromise other properties. Easy road access Offers a site for small scale development No destruction of existing recreational facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently agricultural land Affects rural sight lines when approaching village. 	<p>The landowner may be interested in development.</p> <p>Consultation output: Strong support</p> <p>This potential housing development could be reasonably accessed off Winchendon Road. However, although rural sight lines from Cuddington would undoubtedly be seriously affected development would not add to congestion on village lanes.</p> <p>Although it could possibly accommodate just 4-6 houses this could be coupled with other sites to achieve the overall acceptable development figure.</p>
4	Location of existing Village Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps to balance the housing areas within the village Does not compromise other properties. Easy road access Offers a rare central village site for small scale development The current site offers little potential for improving village hall facilities, and sale of this offers funds for a new facility elsewhere in the village. Replacing the existing Village Hall with a more modern one on the same site would leave the village without any hall for a substantial period of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A replacement village hall could be built on the same site. This is a possible location for a larger Village Shop and recreation area. 	<p>Consultation output: Strong support</p> <p>The Trustees have the legal capacity to sell the land in order to part-finance a more modern, flexible and energy-efficient facility elsewhere in the village, linked to other housing developments.</p> <p>If used as a potential housing site, there is a unique opportunity to have funds to establish a new Cheersley Community Hall designed and equipped for the future needs of the village as a whole. Siting of housing here would provide additional housing stock with ready-made off-road parking, accessed from an existing road entrance.</p>

5	Field area to east side of Lower Green Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not destroy current recreational facilities. • Development of an expanded access to this site would not add to existing village lane congestion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access via Lammas Lane could be tricky and expensive. • Development would change rural sight lines of the village. • Inappropriate development of this site could seriously change the outlook of existing properties. • Potential flooding issues would need resolution. 	<p>The landowner does not appear interested in development at this time.</p> <p>Consultation output: Strong opposition</p> <p>It is clear that there are significant issues with this site and there was significant objection to it in the consultation response. Given also that the landowner does not appear interested currently, it is considered an unlikely site for development.</p>
6	Field area to north side of Crendon Road and to west of Chilton Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps development away from the Conservation Area of the village. • Helps to balance the housing areas within the village • Does not compromise other properties. • Easy road access from both Crendon and Chilton Road • Offers a site for flexible scope of development • No destruction of existing recreational facilities • Capable of a range of potential developments incorporating a new Village/Community Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently agricultural land. • Will need careful planning to avoid affecting sight lines. • Inappropriate development of this site could seriously change the outlook of existing properties. 	<p>The landowner may be interested in development.</p> <p>Consultation output: Support</p> <p>This area, incorporating a relatively small part of the field to avoid issues of ridge sight lines, has the potential to accommodate the number of properties anticipated in one single site. It could also be the site of a purpose built village Community Centre well located for village use.</p> <p>With access from Chilton Road and /or Crendon Road via existing drop kerb entrances it would not add to congestion within the village lanes. Sensitive planning design would need to address the desire for mixed housing within the village, preservation of amenity for neighbours and enhance village facilities.</p>
7	Orchard/tennis court area to south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No destruction of existing recreational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some impact on the Conservation 	<p>The landowner may be interested in development.</p>

	side of Crendon Road, bordering Manor Farm.	<p>facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access from Crendon Road when access road widened. 	<p>Area of the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlikely in itself to address need for mixed housing development. 	<p>Consultation output: Neutral</p> <p>This potential but small scale housing development area can be accessed via existing road entrance along the wichert wall down an existing but widened entrance drive to Manor Farm. It could be coupled with other sites to achieve the overall acceptable development figure.</p>
8	Field area to south side of Church Lane and west of the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not destroy current recreational facilities. • Development of an expanded access to this site would not add to existing village lane congestion if new entrance provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently agricultural land. • Will need careful planning to avoid affecting rural sight lines. • Inappropriate development of this site could seriously change the outlook of existing properties. • Has some impact on the Conservation Area of the village. • Potentially to detriment of church site line aspects. 	<p>The landowner does not appear interested in development at this time.</p> <p>Consultation output: Neutral</p> <p>This potential housing development area could be accessed via a widened entrance to Manor Farm off the Crendon Road. By extending the area of this site it could also be the site for a relocated Village Hall and children's recreation area, thus improving Church parking and linking village amenities.</p>

Types of Housing.

Another important consideration is the type of housing that should be provided.

There is currently a good variety of homes of different size and type and there was a 63% majority in the consultation for that position to be maintained, with options for favouring smaller, medium or executive style houses gaining relatively little support. The comments overwhelmingly supported a mixture of housing and also reflected a view that the current housing stock did not adequately provide for the needs of the younger families and senior residents of the village. Any future development should accommodate these sections of our community.

A related issue is the extent to which there should guidelines by which the Parish Council judges whether or not to support proposed housing extensions. At present when considering applications, Parish Council members undertake site meetings, examine plans and take note of district-wide policies. They are conscious however that they have no Chearsley-specific guidelines to work to when making recommendations to AVDC. Such guidelines could aid consistency and balance the desire to preserve and conserve the essential character of the village with respecting the rights of individual householders. Sympathetic use of materials, landscaping plans, access and garaging, issues of over-development, visual impact, etc. are further areas on which there might be guidance.

The consultation showed no clear view on this with only a small 47% to 40% majority favouring a formal Parish Council policy. The comments however indicated that respondents were mainly concerned as to who would be the arbiters of such Chearsley specific principles and that they could be subject to local interest group pressure. In the light of these concerns the majority of comments considering the current planning process as adequate. These results suggest that further work in this area by the Parish Council could be appropriate.

Business

Independent Businesses

With Chearsley being essentially a rural residential village, there is little business here save for the village shop and The Bell public house, vitally important as these are. Opportunities for further business development and employment opportunities are extremely limited given the size of the village population and proximity of other facilities in the larger villages of Haddenham, Long Crendon and Cuddington

Commercial viability is an issue for small businesses everywhere and the challenges facing The Bell and village shop are clear examples of that. Over the years, we have lost our school and Post Office. These were important village facilities, amenities and meeting places. Once lost they are very difficult to restore

It is conventional wisdom that a village without a shop and pub is a less attractive place to live. Such outlets act as a focus of community activity and evidence points to house prices being boosted by the presence of a vibrant village shop and village pub.

Despite that however, shops and pubs in village communities across the country are struggling; their existence being threatened by changing social habits and lifestyles, increasing customer expectations and competition.

The Chearsley Shop

The shop is located by the Green. It is fairly small and has limited parking but its convenient location affords it valuable passing trade. It is run with generous opening hours and provides a valuable local service to the community.

The trading position of the Shop reflects national trends with its future having been under threat twice during the last twelve years. On the first occasion in 2000 the village rallied around and formed a committee to fight a proposal to sell the property and convert it to domestic use. This resulted in the Shop continuing in business until about 2006 when it finally closed due the lease expiring. It remained closed for some twelve months which during which time the Post Office was lost. The property was sold in 2007 to a new owner who opened the Shop with a Tea Room but this was a short lived, though well received, venture and the Tea Room closed in 2009 and the Shop in early 2010. The shop remained closed until 2011 when it re-opened with a new tenant on a two year lease.

The Shop is reported as 'sustainable' as a business. The current tenant is seeking to build revenue through installing a lottery machine and providing limited postal services.

The main current threats to the shop are the short term lease, due for renewal this year, and the perennial difficulty of attracting adequate trade. The experience in Chearsley has been one of loud and vocal support when there is a threat to the shop's existence but an inability of the village as a whole to provide the long term, day in and day out, month in and month out, support that will ensure long term success. Failure of the village to support its shop will result inevitably in the loss of this major asset and significant contributor to the character of the village.

The Bell

The Bell is located on the lower side of the Green. It maintains the character of a traditional country pub and provides lunchtime and evening opening with dining. It has a family friendly garden with play equipment and a car park which contains recycling facilities.

It provides a much valued meeting place for socialising in the village, particularly in the evenings. Like the shop, it is an essential element that defines the quality and character of life in the village. The importance of supporting it as a business which serves the interest of the community in a fundamental way cannot be overstated.

The Bell is on a rolling lease until 2015. It is described by the landlord as 'sustainable', but it relies on its food sales and events to make it so. The beer garden with its children's playground is a big attraction when the weather is fine.

Recent initiatives to enhance business include employment of a dedicated chef, food promotional events such as Pie Tuesday or Fish and Chips with a bottle of wine, lunch time set menus and fun days

One area suggested for Consultation as part of the village plan was on the idea of a Boules pitch. The Garden at The Bell is large enough to accommodate such a facility but the Landlords could not justify the investment and any request for assistance from the brewery would simply ratchet up the monthly rental. It was suggested that this might be a potential village project if there were enough support for the idea but the consultation indicated that this would not be the case, with only around 30% of respondents indicating they would support such an initiative.

A recent difficulty for the Bell was a perceived competitive threat from the Cricket Club resulting from social activities being promoted within their pavilion. Gladly, discussion on this sensitive issue between parties established a desire for collaboration rather than competition and intent cooperate to generate the revenues that both organisations need.

Other Businesses in the Village

Other than these ventures there appears to be little business activity in the village. Homeworking is a rapidly developing way of working nationally which was tested in the consultation with questions asking "Are you are a business person in the area" and "Are you a homeworker". Surprisingly these elicited 70% and 60% 'No' responses respectively.

It is apparent however that more and more people will work from home in the future. Travel is not only getting more arduous with increased traffic but also almost prohibitively expensive with the average person working in London having to pay a sizeable part of their salary in order to get to work.

Technology is making it significantly easier to carry out many jobs from home and whilst many people won't necessarily work every day at home, increasing numbers may well work several days a week.

This focusses increasingly on the need for better electronic communications with the outside world as discussed in the section on Broadband. Indeed, 'improved Broadband' was the main response to the consultation question: "is there anything that you feel

could be in the Village Plan that would help you run your business more effectively". The need for a Post Office or availability of common Post Office services was also mentioned by many.

With home/Internet shopping becoming increasingly popular and there are a number of people in the village who are looking at building businesses using this medium. Anyone who buys and sells on the internet is dependent on a delivery mechanism to dispatch or receive goods. A central point in the village for the delivery or collection of parcels would simplify this considerably – especially for the people who are out of the house all day.

Similarly, as more people do start to base themselves from home there may be a requirement for shared secretarial services. These could include photo copying, short run printing, telephone message taking (not everyone wants to give out their mobile number to the general public) and meeting offices for short term use, presentation rooms. These ideas came forward in the consultation comments, along with suggestions such as breakfast networking meetings to talk about business matters (participants paying a month subscription perhaps to the pub), and a published list of professionals within the village who are willing to share skills to encourage working with local people as much as possible. A semi-retired farmer suggested better outlets for local produce to encourage consumption of more local fare in the village.

Traffic, Roads and Lanes

In common with many other villages, Chearsley constantly grapples with problems caused by road traffic and the question of how to reconcile the need to accommodate traffic within the village with the difficulties, inconveniences and damage that it causes.

As at the time of the 1987 Chearsley Village Appraisal, the questions of speeding, mainly on the through route through the village, roadside parking, road maintenance, ease of vehicle access and damage caused by heavy vehicles in the sunken lanes exercises the minds of villagers in casual conversation and everyday experiences. This stimulates a range of responses expressed as keenly now as twenty-five years ago.

However the main difference in 2013 is the number of vehicles using the lanes, enhanced by the advent of “home delivery” and “Internet shopping” which did not exist to the same extent in 1987 and which both significantly exacerbate these issues. Street lighting, light pollution and speed limits within the village lanes are also issues of great interest to many.

These issues were all investigated in the consultation.

On speeding, there is a strong desire to achieve a much higher degree of compliance with the 30mph limit through the village, but also a view that this must be achieved “by whatever means are deemed to be most effective yet in keeping with a rural environment”. 86% of respondents supported this view. This might for instance be achieved with differently coloured road surfaces at the entrances to the village but would rule out use of urban techniques such as humps, strips, ramps, chicanes, etc. The Parish Council is also currently actively considering placing speed indicator signs at the village entrances, a device that has achieved success in some other villages. 80% of respondents also supported a move to a 20mph limit in the lanes.

Village Objective 4.

To achieve better adherence to the 30mph limit through the village, though with a ‘flat’ approach (no with humps, chicanes, etc.) and to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the lanes

A specific aspect of road safety investigated was a perceived hazard at the junction of the road in front of the shop with Crendon Road. The consultation showed 51% seeing ‘a bit of a problem’, a further 30% a ‘serious safety issue’ and 19% ‘not a problem’.

Following the consultation an in-depth traffic survey around the Green was undertaken, the detailed results of which can be found on the Chearsley website.

Key conclusions were:

- 1) Although the traffic flow around the village green is undoubtedly a safety issue, one-way systems proposed by some villagers would not necessarily resolve the issues and would undoubtedly cause new safety considerations, including that of child safety around the bus stop, access to the shop, and making local “in-village” journeys more convoluted.

- 2) The main concern was vehicle speed, both on the main road and within the village, notably at the village junction between Shupps Lane and Church Lane.
- 3) This was made more of a daily danger to pedestrians and road users by the lack of clear road markings denoting the “Give Way” and “Stop” nature of the junctions in the Chearsley lanes.
- 4) 20mph is the very limit of safe speed within the village lanes and everything possible should be done to put this on a legal footing for the protection of all.

The issue of roadside kerbing is one on which there are varied opinions. Whilst some favour it as a means to maintain the banks and verges of the sunken lanes, others are concerned that it removes some of the informal rural nature of our village. Recent housing developments and the increase in home deliveries using large vans exacerbate the problem. The Parish Council determined some time back that partial kerbing is inevitable and a programme prioritising the areas where the banks are in danger of erosion and damage from vehicles and the ravages of nature was developed. This policy is supported here but noting the need to prioritise areas selectively where kerbing acts as a defence against bank and verge-side erosion and with the caveat that this should be done to blend in with the natural contour of the land.

The other specific road-related issue investigated was that of street lighting and light pollution from household external lights. There was an overwhelming 95% majority in favour of maintaining a policy of no street lighting, and a 60% majority view that household external lighting should be minimised with the Parish Council supporting that where possible when assessing planning applications.

Village Objective 5.

Light pollution should be minimised through an on-going policy of no street lighting in the village and all households should be encouraged to minimise external lighting.

Public Services and Utilities.

The outcomes of the December 2011 village-wide consultation identified that most respondents are satisfied with the level of services such as health surgeries, health visitors etc. Perhaps the biggest disappointment in recent times has been the loss of our Post Office facilities. This was investigated in the consultation which showed 91% wanting to see the return of a Post Office, preferably in the shop, and the proprietor of Cheersley Store has expressed interest in offering some services if the demand is there and the authority can be secured. The Mobile Library and Bus Services provoked little response either way, giving little steer in terms of residents' satisfaction. Another facility investigated was a cash point in the village but this drew little support with only 32% saying there is a need. Those that did support the idea linked it to the shop.

The visual impact of overhead utility cables has also been examined. Underground utility ducting on School lane, not without its problems, has nevertheless transformed the visual environment in that part of the village by the removal of street poles. There is considerable interest (79% support in the consultation) for extending this elsewhere by removal of utility poles, possibly incorporating other utilities and services, improving reliability and enhancing the appearance of the village landscape. Preliminary investigations suggest that such an initiative is possible and there is a clear route to potentially achieve this over time.

Village Objective 6.

With particular focus on the Conservation Area, Utility poles and overhead wires should be removed wherever possible and replaced by underground services.

With an eye to the future there is also some interest in the development of village-wide alternative technologies and sources of renewable energy. 58% of respondents to the consultation supported further investigation into the use of renewable energy in the village. At this point, switching to alternative sources of energy seems most realistic on a house by house basis. However, the need to move towards greater sustainability within the village overall is recognised. To this end, sustainable building development, the use of renewable energy and a reduction in the carbon output of the village are all to be encouraged and promoted during the period of the village plan. In particular, efforts will be made to assist and educate village residents in reducing their energy consumption for example in obtaining grants to better insulate their homes.

Although there are those who lament the loss of the Village School, there seems to be a recognition that Cheersley is simply not big enough to establish a case for its reinstatement. However, the provision of nursery care is a thriving element of the Village Hall diary.

Broadband and 4G Mobile in Chearsley

Broadband is key to Britain's economic future, and is accepted as a vital service as water and electricity. The value of housing is also being influenced by the availability of good Broadband.

For Chearsley to thrive economically and in the digital social future, good Broadband is critical. It will influence how public services are delivered (government services, health care at home, etc.), home working, small business viability and education as well as entertainment. It is predicted that the majority of entertainment services will be delivered via Broadband by 2015 rather than free-view, cable or satellite. The need for good Broadband in the future is indisputable.

At present broadband speeds in Chearsley are limited to around 5 Mbyte per second; that is not enough to support the digital future. Chearsley, like every rural village in the country, is in danger of becoming 'second class' with regard to the service provision.

The level of satisfaction with current broadband services was investigated in the consultation and showed mixed results however, with 65% considering it 'useable but would benefit from improvement' and only 24% finding it 'completely unsatisfactory'. Most respondents (48%) said they had not yet registered an interest in faster broadband with either BT or Bucks CC, but were willing to do so.

When it comes to willingness to pay for a faster service, 66% said they would pay little or nothing, and 24% only up to 50% more.

Satisfaction with the mobile telephone service in the village was much less with 71% saying we should investigate ways of improving service, although it was noted that 'unsightly masts' would not be desirable.

Village Objective 7.

Means of improving both Broadband speeds and mobile phone reception in the village should be investigated.

Strategic outlook for Superfast Broadband in Chearsley

Introduction

The UK government and BT have committed to deliver 'Superfast' Broadband (24 Mbyte per second or more) to 67% of UK homes by 2015, focussing on the most financially viable locations such as cities and dense urban areas. The final third are not covered under the standard provision. The Government has set aside a further £580m to address the 'final third' but this is seen as insufficient to make a real difference to the whole of rural England.

BT is working with Councils to identify which locations will be targeted by this funding, and therefore which ones will receive Superfast Broadband. Places like Chearsley are currently not on the plans for upgrade, so we will miss it on the first 67%, and quite possibly the final third rollout too, if we are not proactive. The other alternative is to engage in a bespoke deployment, either led by village, or in conjunction with an alternative service provider.

Engagement in current rollout

Our exchange is based in Long Crendon and is not upgraded to the latest technology necessary for fast broadband. To achieve this we need to lobby BT, perhaps along with residents in Long Crendon and other areas served by that exchange, to demonstrate the overall interest in faster Broadband. Ideally this would be through joint Parish Council initiatives or similar, linked with other PCs. Residents should also register their interest on the BT and Council websites.

Longer term, AVDC is responsible for allocation of certain funds to provide Superfast Broadband to the final third. In order to be considered for this funding we need to lobby the correct Council departments to ensure we are evaluated as part of the plan. This activity is happening now so it is imperative we get going. Joining forces with other villages along our route (Cuddington, Nether Winchendon, Long Crendon etc.) will also help. Additionally, the Council has a mandate to provide Broadband to the school in Cuddington so this could be a driving factor.

Bespoke

The alternative is to provide a bespoke solution for the village. There are a number of technologies and providers that could deliver reasonable speeds but most of these will have only a medium term life span.

Alternatively, BT has said that if landowners are willing to provide way-leaves and trenching, they will provide fibre to villages but this would depend of course on the cooperation of local land owners. A possible combination of this and lobbying the Council may produce a favourable outcome as it means the Council can stretch their budget further to equip more homes with high speed broadband, thus hitting targets more easily.

Mobile 4G

4G is emerging as the next generation from mobile technology providing much higher speeds for connected devices. However it is early days yet and not obvious how this technology will provide the variety of services likely to be demanded in the home and mobile environments. Pricing structures are unclear at present but likely to be quite high to enable suppliers to recoup the cost of the huge mobile investment required.

Way Forward

In conclusion, it is evident that if Chearsley wants to be part of the digital revolution a sustained resident's led campaign will be required, linked to the Parish and local Councils and probably coordinated with nearby villages and landowners. Coordination with BT or other service providers will be required, along with local Councils as controllers of available funding.

Conservation

The Conservation Area

The Chearsley Conservation Area was designated in October 1991 and the AVDC document, published in 2008, that provides full details can be found at <http://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/environment/conservation-listed-buildings/conservation-areas-in-the-district/g-conservation-area-summaries-chackmore-chearsley/>. It highlights the attractions and character of the area and is well worth reading in full. A map outlining this area is reproduced here at Figure 3.

Our Conservation Area has long been seen as an invaluable resource in protecting the character of Chearsley and the consultation confirmed that this remains the view of the majority with 90% agreeing that the Conservation Area is “significantly beneficial to the village, both for the present and future”. The concept and purpose of the Conservation Area is to protect old buildings, hollow ways, important trees and hedgerows, important walls and landscapes and is a part of the definition of the village limits.

It currently extends to most of the areas bounded by School Lane, Lower Green Lane and Lammas Lane to the east, and Shupps Lane, Church Lane and Dark Lane to the south and west. It’s somewhat complex and convoluted boundaries can however result in confusion as to the exact extent of the designated area. This is important as Conservation Areas carry particular restrictions on any development or alterations that can be made by individual householders or by the local Council and these are well documented. The consultation showed 64% agreeing that it is too complex and favouring an investigation to simplify and update it.

Village Objective 8.

The Conservation Area should be re-examined with a view to simplifying and updating it.

Village Environment and Listed Buildings

The AVDC Conservation Area document also refers to the importance of the footpaths, significant trees and hedgerows which characterise this defining area of the village.

The appearance and character of Chearsley also benefits from the existence of several Listed Buildings, the vast majority of which are in a good state of repair and maintenance. Within the village there are also a number of witchert walls and boundaries of historical and cultural significance. Unfortunately there are occasions where this puts individuals or the Council in conflict when exterior changes are viewed as desirable by individuals but not by others or where residents are simply unaware of the implications of living within a Conservation Area or in a Listed Building.

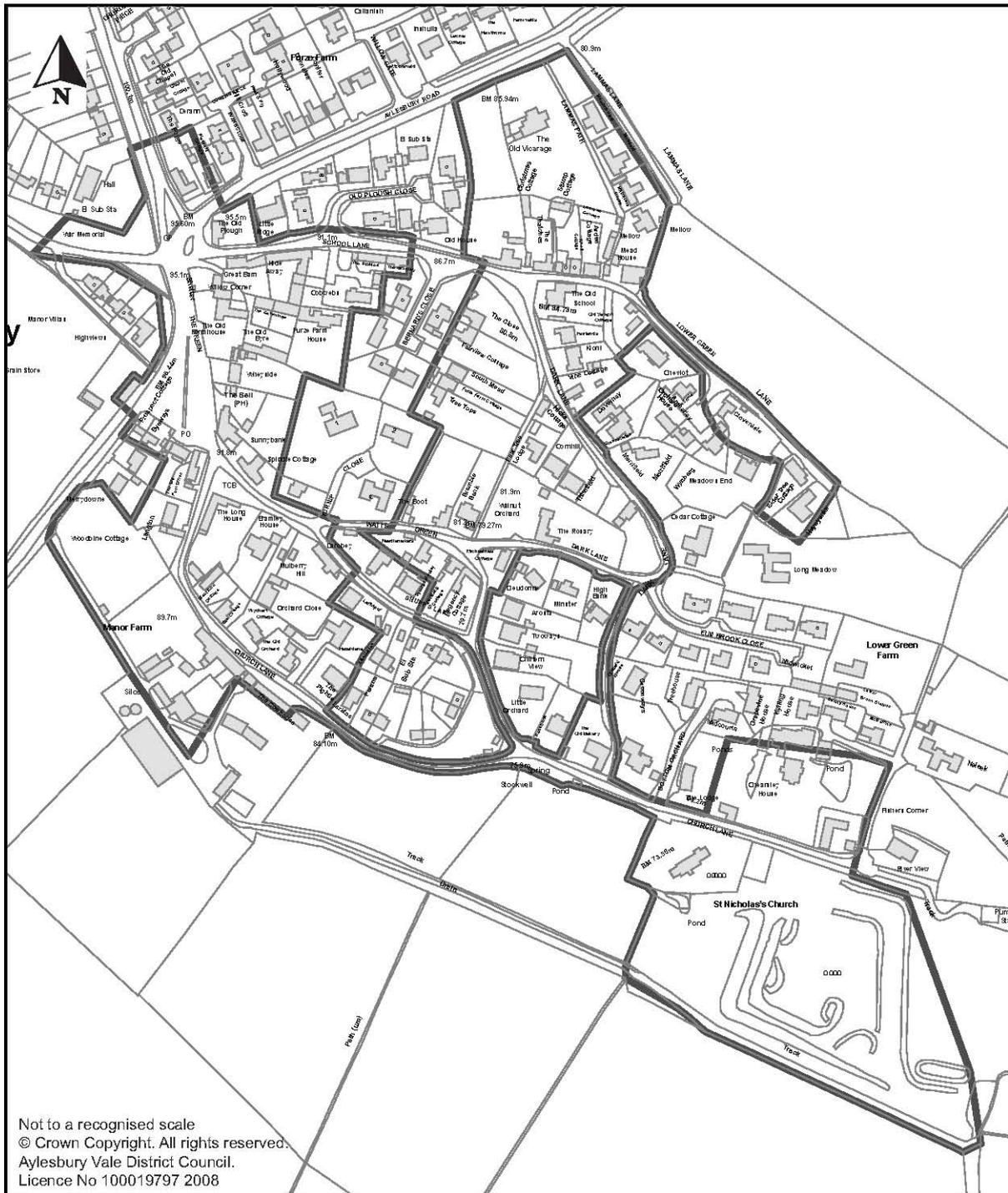


Figure 3. Chearsley Conservation Area

Environment

Footpaths, Hedgerows and Countryside Access

Chearsley is latticed with public footpaths which are used to a varying extent by most people in the village. They can become overgrown seasonally and some access points periodically drop into disrepair. 74% of respondents to the consultation considered footpaths currently to be in 'average' condition, and 57% thought there are 'some access issues'. There are also occasional problems with the dumping of green waste or dog fouling. Footpath routes in the Long Meadow field area are somewhat unnecessary complex and there appears to be a case for simplification of the present situation.

There is some considerable enthusiasm for extensions to the current pathways, bridleways and cycle-ways in the area. 69% agreed that potential new cycle/bridleway paths in the area should be investigated with a view to improving access and leisure, school-run and commuting routes. There is particular enthusiasm for exploring a possible route between the village and Haddenham and Thame Parkway Station although initial investigations with Network Rail and landowners suggest that the possibility of achieving this is low. There is also keen interest in better linkages between existing pathways to create more "circular walks" between the villages embracing our scenic countryside in a well-managed way and in keeping with land usage by the farming communities. This is believed to have a much better chance of success although landowners will need to be approached sympathetically and sensitively, recognising the needs of active rural farmland usage.

Village Objective 9.

To review the routes of current footpath provision in the light of development in Chearsley in recent years and to seek to create accessible circular footpaths and cycle ways.

Verges

The grass verges throughout the village and the "informal" nature of our roadways is much appreciated although some concern has been expressed at the way AVDC maintains the verges. There is a view that they might be looked after more sympathetically if there was more local input to the way maintenance work it is carried out. 80% agreed that there should be more direct input from the village, and 89% supported Chearsley taking direct control of this works programme, employing its own contractors to do the work under local direction. There are however potential legal and financial implications for such a move and these need to be considered carefully before any policy decision is made.

Village Objective 10.

Subject to financial and legal considerations, Chearsley should take more local control of maintenance of our roadside verges. The Parish Council should consider employing a contractor to do the work.

There is also a clear desire for further development of wild flower areas to enhance the verges and 73% of respondents agreed they would like to be consulted on development of further wild flower areas around the village.

However, striking a balance between this and allowing a neglected overgrown wilderness, with English wild flowers strangled by aggressive invasive common weeds or cut down by over-aggressive strimming, offers a challenge for effective stewardship and maintenance, prompting questions about the current AVDC maintenance programme and the role of those living on the borders of Public Right of Ways.

Village Objective 11.

We should actively consider creating more wild flower areas around the village.

Leisure

Chearsley is currently served by a number of community facilities including a village hall, church, pub, shop, small play area, Cricket club, allotments (including a community orchard), and the Village Green. These facilities create the social cohesion which supports the character of Chearsley. Apart from the church, these facilities are centred on the Village Green near the top of the village which creates the concept of a village “centre” or hub.

Village Hall

The Village Hall is situated near to the Village Green on a plot of land bordered by Chilton Road and Winchendon Road. This land was left in trust to the village for the purpose of a Village Hall. The current hall was constructed after the Second World War and whilst there have been efforts to maintain the structure over the years, the original construction materials mean that the fabric of the building is not in great shape. It has a small stage area, kitchen and toilet facilities. Outside, there is a small car park, an outdoor play/BBQ area, some playground equipment for younger children and a grass play area.

The hall is used regularly by a number of groups including CHUFF and the WI during the day and various exercise classes and the Youth Club in the evenings with occasional use for functions and meetings. The extensive use by CHUFF is unfortunately a source of some discontent as it tends to limit hall availability for other purposes.

This situation is one indicator of a need for enhanced village hall facilities and supports a view that consideration must be given to whether the current Village Hall, in both size and facilities, can continue to provide the amenity that Chearsley requires to meet the social, recreational and educational needs of users. 72% of respondents to the consultation said it needs improvement, with more than half of all comments suggesting that the current facilities were inadequate and in need of improvement. Other comments expressed concerns over possible relocation, recommended relocation and commented on the possible impact of any development on CHUFF.

It is noted in the Housing section that opportunities for improving the Village Hall could be linked to Housing development in the village.

Village Objective 12.

We should pursue a major uplift of the facilities at the village hall, probably involving a replacement building.

The Cricket Ground

The current Cricket Ground is located a short distance from the Green on Winchendon Road and is easily accessible from the village on foot. In addition to the cricket pitch it boasts a modern purpose built club house which includes a function room, bar, kitchen as well as toilet and changing facilities. The club house is available for use by the community. The use of the cricket ground is currently restricted to the cricket season. The long term future of this facility is however uncertain as the land is currently provided on a short term lease. Some respondents to the consultation suggested that the Village Hall could be moved to and combined with the Cricket Club pavilion.

Expanded use of the cricket ground

In consultation with the Cricket Club, it may be feasible to expand the use of the cricket ground and neighbouring Millennium Field area to provide a facility for our young people (although the Millennium Field has now been returned to the landowner). Currently the cricket pitch itself is extensively used for cricket and is in use in the summer season every Saturday for league fixtures for the two village teams and often on Sunday for friendlies. During the week the Club holds practices and training and provides coaching and match fixtures twice a week throughout the summer that cater for up to 60 boys (and some girls) from the village and surrounding area. The Club is keen to promote Cricket in the village, working closely with other village organisations, focussing on enrolling local members and developing its role in coaching youngsters of the village.

The Club also organise an “Aunt Sally” team of villagers which meets regularly and is based adjacent to the pavilion; they have recently constructed a canopy for this purpose. There have been suggestions that the periphery of the outfield or parts of the Millennium Field could perhaps be used for other sporting activity so long as it was compatible with the ground’s primary role as a good cricket pitch which is well respected in the area. 60% of respondents thought this would be a good idea. Other sports which could be considered are 5-a-side football, basketball and tennis. Such use would both foster year round use of the space and provide a ‘hub’ of activity that would be preferable to creating a new sports field in a new location.

Village Objective 13.

Find ways of utilising the cricket field for a wider range of sporting activities.

The Green

Chearsley Green is located at the top of the village, just off the main Cuddington to Long Crendon Road. The open nature of the Green and its proximity to the roads limits its use to some extent although occasional use is made for village functions such as the fete. It provides an attractive area which enhances the character of the village and provides a concept of a “centre” surrounded the pub, shop, Village Hall, bus stop, post box and war memorial. It contains several trees, including a recently planted Oak tree and a couple of benches.

Other amenity spaces

The idea of developing a community park or open space in the village has been discussed for some years and the previous village plan included the provision of a playing field in the village. Over half the comments received at a consultation at the Jubilee celebrations in 2012 were about improving the outdoor leisure facilities within the village. About a third of those replying were young people and their most popular request was for a dirt track for bike riding. The significant increase in the number of families with children would also suggest an interest in the establishment of a play and sports area.

Some residents have suggested establishing an informal amenity space between the church and the river (subject to land owner approval) that enables us to take advantage of the riverside nature of the village.

This land is unsuitable for development as it is a flood plain. It contains interesting ancient earthworks which must be left in situ, so precludes the ploughing or levelling of the land. The topography, the location of two ponds and the river frontage of this land provide great interest from a leisure point of view. Possible uses of this land could include fishing, paddling, a site for picnics, benches overlooking the river, dirt track cycling, playground, use by junior church, etc. The location next to the church means the existing car park could possibly be used and there are already footpaths crossing this land. The location of this amenity at the bottom of the village away from the busy roads by the Green would also be an advantage.

These ideas were investigated in the consultation but with mixed results. 38% said they would like the use of such a space but 32% said no and 29% expressed no view. Many of those that commented were families concerned at the lack of open space. The inconclusive response is consistent with the experience of the Millennium Field that was established in 2000 along Chilton Road as a recreational area but proved of little interest. A number of comments to the consultation suggested that the Millennium Field was a better place for recreation.

Allotments

There are allotments located on Church owned land a short distance from the Green up Winchendon Road. Whilst continuing to provide a valuable facility to a village in which there is limited garden space, the allotments have recently been enhanced by the provision of a Community Orchard.

Community

Chearsley has an active community and groups within the village include the church, the cricket club, CHUFs, WI, fitness groups, youth club, and other users of the Village Hall. They thrive despite the relatively small size of the village that limits their potential for members and finance.

Youth in Chearsley

Whilst there is some provision of a playground by the Village Hall for young children, there is little being provided for older children. The shift in demographics within Chearsley towards younger families means that there will be approximately 50 teenagers in Chearsley in 5 years' time. The lack of facilities for this age group is a subject that many feel should be investigated and emerged as one of the concerns in the consultation.

Seniors in Chearsley

The needs of Chearsley senior citizens is also a subject of discussion amongst some. The loss of facilities like the post office and a place to meet and socialise like the Tea Shop have affected this sector of the community disproportionately. We wish to see facilities remain within the village and hope that they can improve over the time covered in the plan such as the provision of some postal services, cash point, and a daytime social venue.

The need to improve provisions for both the Youth and Seniors of the village was investigated in the consultation but there was no strong evidence that there is a problem. 47% thought these groups were not well catered for, against 25% who thought not and 28% who expressed no view.

One suggestion put forward in the consultation was assistance with transport outside the village although there is already an informal Car Group that aims to provide such transport for those in need but it has proved very difficult to find enough volunteers to keep it running. Other ideas put forward in the consultation to improve matters included opening the cricket club in the evenings and tea/coffee mornings at the village hall and/or pub.

St Nicholas Church

Parts of the Church of England parish church of St Nicholas date back to the 10th Century, but the building's present external appearance has looked much the same since the thirteen hundreds. It is situated at the bottom of the village on Church Lane. There is a small pond beyond the churchyard and the site is surrounded by farmland. As with all buildings of this age, many alterations, mainly internal, have been carried out over the years and recently the church has had a kitchen, lavatory and a sound system installed. There is a plan to increase the number of bells in the tower from three to six and an active fund-raising campaign is underway. The church is warm and comfortable and benefits from a small car park.

The village vicar looked after the parishes of Chearsley and Nether Winchendon until 1977 when both joined Long Crendon and became part of a three parish Benefice. Chearsley's vicarage became a private house and the present vicar lives in Long Crendon. He is assisted by local lay ministers (LLMs) and retired priests who live in the area.

For a small village, the church is vibrant. It holds at least one service every Sunday and baptisms and weddings are conducted regularly. It is supported by an enthusiastic group of bell-ringers. The well-kept churchyard is the village graveyard and is still in use for burials and the scattering of ashes.

A variety of services are offered. Sunday congregations vary in size from around 20-30 for Eucharistic Services to 30-50 for Family Services. These numbers increase dramatically for church festivals and the normal pew capacity of 80 can be exceeded at these times (and also for some weddings and funerals). A small number gather for Evensong once a month. The church also attracts a small number of visitors, many of whom are walkers.

Although the Church of England generally is considered to be in a state of decline with falling numbers of those who attend services, Chearsley's church would, at least for the moment, seem to buck the trend. An influx of families with children to the village over recent years and a desire to meet their needs, has led to increased attendance over the last twenty years.

Maintenance of the Grade 2* listed building is costly and generally met by the congregation (with help from charities), but there is an acceptance in the village that the community has a responsibility towards its upkeep. For instance, a proportion of the proceeds generated by the Village Fete are thus allocated and residents have willingly made donations to specific projects in the past.

It contains a small kitchen area and toilet facilities, and wider use of the church, for instance for social gatherings (e.g. coffee mornings), are possible should a demand be identified, but its position at the extremity of the village down a relatively steep hill probably make it unattractive. However, concerts are held every so often and are very well attended. The church also attracts a small number of visitors as a tourist attraction, many of whom are happy to leave complimentary comments in the visitor's book.

The church provides allotments on the Winchendon Road for the benefit of the community and also owns the field behind them, which is at present rented as farmland for grazing.

The village church community welcomes everyone and would love to see a full congregation every week. That said, the church is reasonably well-attended by an enthusiastic regular congregation, supports the wider village when required and does not face any identifiable threats to its existence in the immediate future.

Chearsley Women's Institute

There has been a Women's Institute in Chearsley for over sixty five years. The original idea that women of all ages might like to join a group for topical debate, listen to interesting speakers on a wide range of subjects, join in outings and take opportunities to try new sports and activities as well as making new friends, has grown stronger over the years. It has become a more adventurous and outward looking organisation until it has reached a position today where it is considered an important part of British heritage, often controversial and not without influence.

Chearsley WI, as a group and as part of the Buckinghamshire Federation of Women's Institutes, offers all these opportunities. It is a thriving, forward looking WI that plays a large part in village life. One of its most notable achievements in recent times was having their resolution selected for debate at the National AGM. The resolution was presented by the President of Chearsley WI to an audience of 5,000 delegates in Liverpool.

The group is always pleased to welcome new members as well as anyone who would just like to come and see what they do. Monthly meetings are advertised on the village notice board.

The Village Show

Chearsley village show is held at the village hall in September and is an opportunity for gardeners, flower arrangers, home bakers and those with craft skills to display their goods in friendly competition. The show is open to residents of Chearsley and there are classes for children and adults. All the judges are well qualified in their subject. There are money prizes and silver cups to be won in the children's section and certificates, cups and plaques for adult winners. The classes range from sweet peas in a vase to the best misshapen vegetable and from lemon drizzle cake to a garden on a plate.

The Show has been a part of Chearsley's calendar since 1991 with a break a year in 1998 but remerged the following year with a new committee and renewed enthusiasm. It has continued to expand and there is always a good response from villagers, not least because the Show is kept light-hearted and perfect specimens are not expected. Just come and show what you have grown or made this year!

2013 has seen a new look to the Show. The programme style and image has been completely changed with new classes and a fresh approach. The committee look forward to building on this and hope to have enough entries in the future to further expand and use the area outside the hall for exhibits and stalls

Chearsley Village Show is funded by entry fees, raffles and teas on the day and a grant from The Village Trust when available

The Village Fete

A summer Fete has been held in the village for many years – longest memories go back to the 1950s but it's hard to say for sure when they started.

The event originated as an annual Church Fete, held in the grounds of Chearsley Hill House. Towards the end of the 1990s it migrated to a wider village event and moved to the village Green. For a period it was elevated to a Village Carnival, held every two years and with themes such as Pirates, Mediaeval Fayre and The Seaside, involving elaborate structures appearing on the Green. At the same time the benefactors were extended to include the Village Hall and the Village Trust in addition to the Church. This two yearly cycle has continued although it was slipped in 2012 with a more village focussed event being held to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A large Crown on the Green marked this occasion.

The 2013 Fete was held in the last week of June. It was another splendid sunny day with a large crowd turning out to enjoy the many traditional attractions and stalls along with a bouncy castle, huge inflated slide and, for contrast, a sheep shearing demonstration. All based on a 'Best of British' theme.

Action Plan

This Action Plan has been established as a guide to follow up work that will be required to ensure that the Village Objectives set out in this Plan are achieved. It will be necessary to establish either individuals or groups to take the lead role in each case before target dates can be realistically determined. This will be essential follow-up work after the Plan is published.

Ref.	Action Description	Who will lead	Planned Start date	Target Completion Date	Constraints, conditions, etc.
1	Ensure that the village ambition for housing development is reflected in the Vale Of Aylesbury Plan (Objectives 1 ,2 and 3)				
2	Improve adherence to the 30 mph speed limit through the village (Objective 4)				
3	Secure a 20mph speed limit in the lanes (Objective 4)				
4	Investigate feasibility of removing overhead utility cables with the relevant authorities (Objective 6)				
5	Investigate options for bringing high-speed broadband to the village (Objective 7)				
6	Investigate options for improving mobile phone coverage in the village (Objective 7)				

7	Review the Conservation area boundaries with a view to simplification (Objective 8)				
8	Investigate how circular walks can be created in the area (Objective 9)				
9	Investigate provision of a cycle track from the village to Haddenham and Thame station (Objective 9)				
10	Parish Council to take control of local verges maintenance through letting a support contract (Objective 10)				
11	Investigate creation of more wild flower areas in the village (Objective 11)				
12	Pursue a major uplift of facilities at the Village Hall, by means of a replacement building if necessary (Objective 12)				
13	Investigate how the cricket field might be used for a wider range of activities, but compatible with its status as a quality local cricket field (Objective 13)				

Annex 1 – How this document was developed

The Consultation Process

Production of a Village Plan that has the support of the whole community requires wide and thorough consultation and this approach was used in Chearsley to develop this plan in a manner that truly reflects the view of the community as a whole.

Main Activities in preparing the Plan.

- An initial Open Meeting in November 2011 at which there was agreement to proceed with developing a Plan
- A survey of the Village carried out on behalf of AVDC in December 2011 to provide information that was to inform production of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan
- Further Open Meetings on 6 February, 29 February, 20 March and 30 April. These sessions formally established the Open Meeting, or 'Planning Forum', as the decision making body for the Village Plan, set up a number of Topic Groups to work on various aspects of the Plan, and agreed to the establishment of a Steering Group to oversee and guide the work
- A great deal of work over the summer months of 2012 by the Topic Groups
- A manned display on the Village Green on the day of the village Jubilee Celebrations in June 2012, with invitations for verbal or written suggestions
- A further Open Meeting on 17 October 2012 to report back on progress to date
- Production of a Discussion Document and Questionnaires distributed to every house in the village in December 2012. Replies were accepted until mid-January 2013.
- Publication in February 2013 of the results of the Consultation exercise
- Much more work by the Topic Groups in the Spring of 2013
- Publication of the Final Draft Plan in July 13, presented at an Open Meeting on 17 July 2013

Throughout all this activity, progress reports were posted on the village web-site and a mailing list was maintained for email and postal updates to be provided

As a result of this approach a very large number of people contributed to the consultation. Some aspects of this resulting plan are contentious but that is inevitable because it addresses issues that are real and have to be tackled if we really are to have an impact on how Chearsley develops.

Remaining steps are expected to comprise:

- A formal vote on adoption of the Plan by the village. This will be based on a voting form that will invite residents to separately accept a number of village Objectives and the Plan as a whole.

- Publication of the approved Village Plan in the Autumn of 2013. This will include an Action Plan identifying the work that will be done over the following 2 and 5 years to move us towards the vision we have for the village. It will be used by all the organisations in the village, by the Parish Council and, legislation permitting, by AVDC and Bucks County Council, as a basis for any development that takes place here.

The Topic Groups

The material presented here has been developed by five 'Topic Groups' that were at the heart of the development of the Chearsley Village Plan. To ensure that as wide a range of thoughts and ideas as possible were captured, it was important to have plenty of volunteers willing to contribute to the work. All of the Groups made every effort to maximise their membership and anyone willing to contribute was welcome.

Steering Group

The Steering Group met regularly to direct and coordinate the work of the Topic Groups, to ensure consultation and liaison with the wider village was maintained as required and to organise document distribution.

The members of the Steering Group were John Lewis (Chairman), Gerry Wiles (Secretary), Peter Crook, Ted Frankland, Derek Allen, Sandra Towell, Larry Greenfield, Catherine Greenfield, Laura Skinner, Adam Lazaruk, Clare Clark and Margaret Morbey

Context Group

The Context Group gathered general information about the village and how it appears today. An entire book could be written on just this subject and the challenge is to decide how much of the material to include here.

The section "Into Chearsley" was the result, introducing the Plan with a view of how the visitor will first experience the village.

The members of the Context Group were: Clare Clark, Adam Lazaruk, Justine Yorke, Sandra Towell and Alan Mitchener

Housing Group

The Housing Group tackled the difficult and sensitive issue of housing development in the village. Group meetings were well attended and group members committed in their researches and genuine interest in the topics under discussion. The group recognised from the outset that this subject area was probably uniquely emotive, sensitive and of commercial interest to some villagers. As such, the group made every effort to be dispassionate and even-handed in researching and presenting what was believed to be in the best interests of the village as a whole for the future. Membership of the Group was not closed and anyone wishing to join or express views by e-mail or letter was welcome.

The members of the Housing Group were: Ted Frankland, Peter Crook, Laura Skinner, Sandra Towell, Larry Greenfield, Sarah Jakeman, Sue Gray and John Lewis

Business Group

The Business Group was concerned to ensure that the interests of all businesses operating in the village, including both independent and corporate home-workers, were taken into account. They also looked at 'Not-for-Profit' organisations such as CHUFF, the Cricket Club and Youth Club. Of particular concern was the need to attract high-speed Broadband to the village and a summary of the national Broadband Strategy and commentary on 4G mobile services has been included in this Plan.

The members of the Business Group were Derek Allen, Larry Greenfield, Sarah Jakeman and Ian Houseman

Community & Leisure Group

The Community & Leisure Group looked at the wide range of facilities and organisations in the village that are at the heart of the community here. This included the Church, the Village Hall, Cricket Club, and other organisations around the village. They also considered the issue of open spaces available for recreation.

The members of the Community and Leisure Group were Catherine Greenfield, Adam Lazaruk, Ruth Holland, John Howard, Andy Yorke, Geoff Hogbin and Joy Payne

The 'RESCU' Group.

The RESCU group carried out a wide range of work. It was formed from the amalgamation of the original Environment & Conservation group and Public Services, Roads, Transport & Utilities group because the two groups found much overlap in their areas of interest.

The outcomes of the December 2011 village-wide consultation identified that most respondents were satisfied with the level of services such as health surgeries, health visitors, library etc. but issues such as Broadband, footpaths, traffic and public utilities were seen as much more important. The future of the Chearsley Conservation Area was also a significant subject.

The members of the RESCUS Group were Peter Crook, Rose Dale, Andy Yorke, Paul Bown, Elaine Bown, Fenella Tillier, Phil Holland, Ruth Holland, Sharon Sampson, Paul Persson, Joy Payne and Steve Lock