



BRIGHTWALTON PARISH PLAN

REFRESH

2010 - 2015

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The Parish Plan at a glance

Key questionnaire findings

The Parish Plan refresh has been guided by feedback from the Brightwalton Parish Plan questionnaire.

In general, people seem very happy with life in Brightwalton. Once here, they find very many things to like about the village - the community spirit, rural setting, the "peace and quiet" and the location (within beautiful countryside but within reach of larger towns, motorways and London).

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- The two main reasons people cite for moving to the parish are the local countryside and their specific house.
 - The great majority of us (84%) feel that we are part of the parish.
 - Over two thirds plan to stay in the village for the next five years – the life of the refreshed plan.
 - Communication is good or adequate and the Brickleton News is read by nearly everyone.
 - Virtually everyone feels safe or generally safe.
 - There was generally positive feedback about new developments, Dunmore Meadow in particular, and a lot of support for the development of a Village Design Statement.
 - The growing use of the internet in all aspects of our lives is reflected in the great support for achieving faster broadband for education, leisure and work.
 - We are also very enthusiastic about investigating ways to make the village greener through renewable energy initiatives, community tree planting and country conservation projects.
 - A substantial number of us wish there was a parish "heart" (pub or shop). This is reflected in the interest in new activities, which could bring us together on an occasional basis.
 - Speeding and road maintenance, in general, remain major issues.
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"Friendly and peaceful, stunning views and beautiful walks"

"Wonderful place to bring up children"

"The effort put in by the various bodies/committees in the village to facilitate a closer community for the benefit of all"

"There is no 'heart' to the village, such as a pub or even a small shop"

Village views

What we like	What we don't like
<p>Strong community spirit & cooperation; support of friends and neighbours</p> <p>The environment: countryside, 'peace & quiet', views, walks, no street lighting in most of the parish</p> <p>Sense of safety</p> <p>Facilities for young children: good school, nursery, play area, clubs & activities, safe, countryside</p> <p>Low traffic levels in main parts of village</p> <p>No large-scale development and mostly sympathetic</p> <p>Low cost housing</p>	<p>Lack of a centre or heart to the parish (e.g. shop / pub etc.)</p> <p>Roads and verges: maintenance, speeding at certain times and on some roads e.g. B4494</p> <p>Very low levels of employment within the parish itself</p> <p>Broadband speeds</p> <p>A feeling of disconnect with West Berkshire Council (e.g. poor communication, not listening to local opinion in planning decisions, road maintenance e.g. snow clearance)</p>
Good things we can improve further	What we're concerned about for the future
<p>Find ways to engage those who only feel part of the parish 'to a certain extent' and those who would like to feel more a part of it</p> <p>Capitalise on the participation on Fete day to ensure the Fete's future and find ways to extend this participation to other events (e.g. Xmas Fayre)</p> <p>Create more occasional social / leisure activities rather than regular clubs or groups</p> <p>Make everyone aware of the services available to maximise their use and make sure we keep them</p> <p>Explore new community services eg oil syndicate, conservation activities, community fruit trees etc</p> <p>Make sure people know about events and the activities of the Parish Council and other committees</p>	<p>Currently 7/91 respondents who responded don't care about being part of the community; many didn't respond.. Others expressed concerns that the sense of community is decreasing. How do we maintain and build community spirit?</p> <p>Existing services are already limited but if they are not used these too will decline over time</p> <p>Lack of employment within the parish increases transport needs and impacts the parish economy</p> <p>We are increasingly reliant on cars</p> <p>Most of us currently feel safe but survey feedback suggests concerns for safety are increasing e.g. regarding burglaries</p> <p>Control over who has the right to a low cost house and concern that those with local connections are not given priority</p> <p>West Berkshire Council makes decisions about Brightwalton without taking into account local views</p>

Guiding Principles

The refresh process has given guidance as to what is important to us. These guiding principles should steer us in our decision-making and actions affecting Brightwalton and its surrounding countryside, for instance planning, change and development or the provision of services, activities and facilities. They should be used by official bodies, voluntary groups and individuals whose decisions impact the Brightwalton environment and community.



People like the quality of life in Brightwalton with its rural setting, views, peaceful character and community spirit. We like sympathetic improvements not wholesale development or change.

Preservation and management of the natural environment within and surrounding Brightwalton is a priority for preserving the character of the parish for future generations.

There is a sense of community in the parish which we want to strengthen. However, it is an accepted fact of modern rural life that people will travel out of the village for employment, shopping, entertainment and education after primary school. Therefore, we need to work hard to enhance communication, to bring people together and to provide mutual support to keep this sense of community.

Some people in the village are more dependent on local services, such as those without transport or with greater needs (e.g. the elderly). The parish should work to ensure that these groups enjoy the same quality of life as those who are more mobile.

The parish needs to be vigilant about maintaining and enhancing our strong sense of security, including road safety, road maintenance and crime.

Why have a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan looks ahead for 20 years to identify the needs of the parish and to create and implement an action plan that enhances life in the village.

West Berkshire Council encourages communities to develop and maintain a Parish Plan. Applications for funding typically have more success if we can show they meet a need identified in our Plan.

Brightwalton Parish Plan refresh timeline

2004 Brightwalton Parish Plan published.

West Berkshire Council encourages parishes to refresh and update their plans to reflect progress and changes in the community.

Sept 2009 - Spring 2010 Brightwalton volunteers canvassed opinion.

Summer 2010 Parish-wide questionnaire distributed. Responses directly informed the development of the Parish Plan refresh.

December 2010 Refreshed Plan published covering years 2010 – 2015.

This Parish Plan Refresh should be read in conjunction with the 2004 Brightwalton Parish Plan.

It contains both high level principles to guide actions and policy decisions together with initial actions to launch development.

The Parish Plan in detail

What's happened since the 2004 plan?

As a result of the 2004 Parish Plan the parish has gained grants worth over £10,000 (excluding funding for affordable housing). This has enabled the parish to address seven specific areas for action that parishioners identified as most important in 2004. These and other changes are noted below:

Action	Achievements
The need for affordable housing at each stage of life	Affordable family housing built at Dunmore Meadow, complementing the starter homes at Butts Furlong.
The lack of public transport, the impact of traffic and bad road conditions and road safety	Introduction of speed limits: 30mph in the village; 50mph on the B4494 at The Holt. Bus shelter at the village hall for school children.
The need to safeguard the parish heritage and manage its environment	Clearing and maintenance of Dunmore Pond Adoption and repainting of the BT phone box in Ash Close Restoration of the war memorial
The need for parish-based sports and games facilities for all	New equipment, seating and fencing in the play area A new hard surface cricket strip Sports equipment including children's rugby kit, basketball hoop, table tennis table and football goal
Enhancing the parish centre, making it more suitable for leisure and sporting activities	Additional facilities and storage for local groups e.g. shed for the pre-school Reinstatement of shower facilities in the village hall Activities for young people e.g. SPLAT and street dancing
The lack of parish services	Parish Council funding of laptops for the school
Assisting the parish economy	Introduction of broadband New Parish Council notice board at the village hall Village website

During the life of the last plan some parish services have declined or stopped e.g. Mr Batt's mobile meat and vegetable delivery.

The Action Plan 2010 - 2015

Our outline action plan is set out below. This is agreed with West Berkshire Council who will support its implementation. Our priority is to recruit volunteers where appropriate to help in this process. Some actions have already started, indeed a few are already finished! Most, however, are on-going and need support and backing from the community.

A more detailed action plan is available on the Brightwalton website at www.brightwalton.org.uk

West Berkshire has developed a template that it requires communities to use in describing their parish action plans. This asks communities to consider their needs and aspirations under the five headings aside.

- *A Stronger Community*
- *A Greener Community*
- *A Safer Community*
- *A Healthy Community*
- *A Prosperous Community*

How you can help

A large number of people volunteered via the survey to help with various projects.

A key action is to channel this volunteer energy into groups of interested parties who can evaluate the proposed actions and turn projects into reality.

If you would like to make a difference to life in Brightwalton, please contact any member of the Parish Council or check the website at www.brightwalton.org.uk to find existing lead volunteers.



1. A Stronger Community

i) Communication

75% say communication is good or adequate

We generally feel that communication within the parish is good or adequate (about 75%), particularly from the Parish Council (about 70%). The same cannot be said for West Berkshire Council, which scored 51% in these categories.

The Brickleton News is singled out as the most read communication, by 80% regularly and 13% occasionally.

Few people express any specific expectations of the Parochial Church Council. A few more, but still low numbers, have expectations of the Parish Council, mainly as a voice for the parish, enhancing community spirit and discussing planning issues.

Actions to improve communication

- **Strengthen the Brickleton News and the village website to ensure parish activities and events are widely publicised.**
- **Use e-mail to communicate to those parishioners who are online – but make sure those who are not do not miss out on information.**
- **The Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council need to make the parish more aware of their roles.**
- **Find ways to improve communication with West Berkshire Council so that our needs are met and our views are taken into account.**

Successful outcomes

- Parishioners feel that communication within the parish is good, using the most suitable means of communication for each individual.
- Parishioners understand the role of the Parish Council and Parochial Church Council, and how these councils benefit the parish.
- The Parish has more influence over the actions of West Berkshire Council.



ii) Services

From the survey results, people are generally aware of the services available in the parish, even if they don't use them. Some were unaware of the paper delivery, the milkman, the coal delivery and the prescription service. Few people use the mobile library and there is also low usage of the mobile school library.

The ideas put forward to improve services are quite popular - nearly half like the ideas of an oil syndicate and countryside conservation, and about a third like the suggestions of of an outdoor classroom, orchard and removal of excess green waste.

Actions to improve services

- **Improve people's awareness (particularly those new to the village) and use of existing services by running publicity campaigns or encouraging others to do so e.g. West Berkshire Council to promote the mobile library.**
- **Set up a volunteer group to investigate the possibility of an oil syndicate.**
- **Identify what services are needed by those who are more dependent on village services and work to make these available.**
- **For community fruit trees and countryside conservation see A Greener Community below.**

Successful outcomes

- Increase in use of available services
- New services identified, implemented and used



Current village services include

Prescription collection point (suspended at time of publication)

Mobile library

Deliveries of:

Milk & provisions

Newspapers

Coal

People like the idea of:

An oil syndicate

Countryside conservation

Outdoor classroom

Community fruit trees

Removal of excess green waste

iii) Development

A "living parish" which acknowledges change but in a way sympathetic to the character of the village.

Nearly 20% like the new houses at Dunmore Meadow. 10% of parishioners think that there has been no negative development in the parish in the last five years and another 10% think development has been "sensitive" or actually improved the parish.

Comment was made by several people that the new houses were not being allocated to those with strong connections to the parish.

65% support the development of a Village Design Statement, another 18% want to know more and there are also offers of help to develop it. There were 30 different suggestions as to what to include in the Design Statement! 10% suggest looking at sustainable issues, while other areas include trees and planting, rights of way, open spaces and playing areas.

Actions to improve development decisions

- **Develop a Village Design Statement to include sustainable issues.**
- **Follow up issue of allocation of new affordable housing with West Berkshire Council.**



Successful outcomes

- Village Design Statement completed and exerting influence on planning decisions.
- Affordable housing allocated only to those with village connections.

iv) Leisure and social facilities

The annual Fete, the Xmas Fayre and, to a lesser extent, the Welcome to the Village Party, are events in the Brightwalton social calendar that we value.

In terms of new activities, most of us would prefer occasional events rather than regular clubs or activities. Such social events would be one way of tackling the “no pub” issue.

For children (aged 1 – 10), the play park is by far the most popular activity. There is interest in all the future activities proposed, excluding a film club. These include: cookery, crafts, dance and drama, music, nature exploration and wildlife survey. Other suggestions were: cycling, clubs such as Brownies and Scouts, after school clubs.

Amongst the 7 responses from young people between the ages of 11 and 17, there is some enthusiasm for a film club and a Youth Cafe, plus suggestions for a multi-sports court and activity park.

Most of us enjoy coming to the fete – it really brings everyone together.

But, we need more people to volunteer and take ownership or we risk losing it.

50% like the idea of occasional quiz nights, film clubs & Friday night events.

30% like the idea of race nights and organised walks.

New activities suggested:
Family games, cookery lessons, a book club, painting, summer BBO with jazz, sports eg badminton, cycling, tennis, archery, climbing, volleyball, yoga, tai-chi.

Actions to improve leisure and social facilities

- **Focus on the Fete as the key annual parish event by extending the organising committee to a wider group to implement new ideas.**
- **Create, and circulate regularly, a more comprehensive social calendar, including occasional activities.**
- **Bring together the people who expressed an interest in organising and running proposed new social events.**
- **Bring together the people who expressed an interest in organising and running proposed new children’s activities.**
- **Bring together sufficient volunteers to make the Xmas Fayre an annual event.**
- **Investigate the feasibility of holding Open Garden events.**
- **Involve young people in village decisions and seek regular feedback.**

Successful outcomes

- A sustainable Fete committee to ensure the continued success of the Fete.
- Regular, well attended activities and events.
- An increase in active organisers.
- Parishioners are aware of all village activities through regular communication.

2. A Greener Community

Well over half of us support the idea of parish-wide renewable energy initiatives or are interested in knowing more. Many people volunteered to be part of this.

Brightwalton is in an officially designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As such, all authorities down to Parish Council level are required, when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the area to "have regard to" conserving and enhancing the AONB. There is considerable interest in countryside conservation and planting community fruit trees.



Actions to create a greener environment

- **Support and help develop Rural Renewal Energy initiatives (e.g. wood fuel boiler for the Church, School and Village Hall). Bring together volunteers to do this.**
- **Bring together people interested in community fruit trees to action this.**
- **Work with the North Wessex Downs AONB, where appropriate, and bring together people interested in countryside conservation to identify and implement specific actions.**
- **Create a new working party for Dunmore Pond.**

Successful outcomes

- Community buildings adopt commercially viable green energy.
- Enhanced conservation of local countryside and village environment, particularly tree planting and care and upkeep of Dunmore Pond.



3. A Safer Community

Almost 100% of us feel safe or generally safe in the parish – and we need to protect this.

But over 80% have major or minor concerns about roads – speeding, maintenance, gritting and flooding.



Actions to create a safer community

- **Parish Council to make West Berkshire Council aware of our dissatisfaction with road maintenance and speeding issues and to lobby them or other relevant authorities to address these concerns.**
- **Brightwalton School to be engaged to resolve the issue of speeding at school drop off and pick up times.**
- **Working group to be set up to look at issue of safety in the parish in the next five years including liaison with appropriate organisations e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Police**

Successful outcomes

- Road maintenance improved, with fewer complaints.
- Reduced level of speeding.
- High level of sense of safety and security in the parish to be maintained.



4. A Healthy Community

There is significant interest in self-guided walks or occasional organised walks to take advantage of our surrounding countryside but there is little interest in sports clubs or other activities.

Actions to create a healthier community

- **Create and distribute a “Three Walks around Brightwalton” brochure with support from the North Wessex AONB.**
- **Repeat the Walking the Bounds walk of 2000, which was very popular.**



Successful outcomes

- Brightwalton Walks brochure produced.
- Possibility of Walking the Bounds investigated.

5. A Prosperous Community

The number of businesses in Brightwalton is very low but homeworking has increased with this trend likely to continue. The use of broadband is very high (over 90%) and most of us feel it is essential to increase the speed of access for education, leisure and work.

Actions to create a prosperous community

- **Inform parishioners about what actions they can take to increase the speed of their broadband.**
- **Ensure that decisions and actions taken support those who are more dependent on local services to have a good standard of living.**

Successful outcomes

- Parishioners achieve highest possible broadband speed.
- Brightwalton supports people with greater needs to stay in the village.

Appendix

The Refresh process

A working party of 8 volunteers from the parish was set up to review the existing plan, with support from the Community Council for Berkshire. Pupils at Brightwalton School were enlisted to create a model of the parish and give their views on living in Brightwalton. At the 2009 Christmas Fayre, this model was used to encourage parishioners to give their opinions on life in the parish. Individual interviews using video were also held with older people. This information was used to create a questionnaire which was distributed around the parish in the summer of 2010.

A total of 91 questionnaires were completed by those aged 18 and upwards, which represents nearly 37% of the 247 people on the electoral roll: there was no apparent bias in responses from any particular group. Those who responded represented a fairly even spread by age and by length of residence. Questionnaires were also circulated to residents of Catmore and Lilley for whom Brightwalton is their nearest community centre. Four questionnaires were returned.

A separate questionnaire was distributed to those aged 11 – 17 and 7 responses were received. Speak Out events were organised by the Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People (BACYP) to gauge the views of young people in the parish.

Acknowledgements

In putting together this Parish Plan refresh, the following people are thanked for their hard work and effort:

- The Parish Plan Refresh Team: Jackie Boxall (Chair), Anna Britnor Guest, John Hall-Craggs, Andrew Racher, Fiona Racher, Sue Sayers and David Williams.
- Distributors and collectors of the questionnaire, including the Parish Plan team, Parish Councillors and David Gardiner who represented Catmore and Lilley.
- Sarah Ward of the Community Council for Berkshire who provided support and guidance throughout the process.
- Greenham Common Trust, especially Melissa Elliot, who helped with the questionnaire design, production, data input and analysis.
- BACYP, particularly Tanya Honor, who led the Speak Out sessions.
- All those who took the time to complete the questionnaire.
- All volunteers now involved in implementing the actions from the plan.
- Brightwalton School and pupils who helped with creating a model of the village and providing suggestions for activities.

Want to volunteer or get more information?

If you'd like more information about anything in this Plan please either:

- Contact any member of the Parish Council.
- Go to the Brightwalton website at www.brightwalton.org.uk to find the latest action plans and volunteer groups.



**This Plan was produced by a team of volunteers on behalf
of Brightwalton Parish Council**

For more information visit

www.brightwalton.org.uk