



**SHAW-CUM-DONNINGTON**  
**PARISH PLAN**  
**REFRESH 2023**  
**(Addendum to 2009)**

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The Parish	Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish
The Plan	Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Plan Refresh
The Council	Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council
PC	(Action Plan) Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council
The Group	Shaw-cum-Donnington Steering Group
WBC	West Berkshire District Council
TVP	Thames Valley Police
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
SSD CF	Speen, Shaw and Donnington Community Forum
NW	Neighbourhood Watch
%	Percentages shown are rounded to whole integer
Hall	The Village Hall
VHC	Village Hall Committee
Church	St Mary's Church Shaw-cum-Donnington
Housing Development	Donnington Heights and Shaw Valley; 401 new homes being built in the Parish, north of Love Lane

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In 2009 Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council published its Parish Plan and action plan. This document was compiled over eighteen months after feedback from residents and compilation involving many people across various disciplines from within the parish. During the intervening years, the Council has worked to improve the community for the benefit of residents based on this plan.

With building due to start of the new housing development north of Love Lane at Donnington Heights and Shaw Valley, the Council realised it was time to review and update the Parish Plan - to ask residents what the current priorities are for improving the parish community we all live in, and what new facilities are needed to benefit residents for the coming years.

As a result, in May 2019, a Parish Community Questionnaire was prepared and delivered in paper copy form to every house in the Parish, some 650 in number, as well as an electronic version posted on the Parish website so that it could be completed on-line. Answers to the questions were anonymous so that respondents were not inhibited in their replies.

This document is the consolidation of all the many varied and insightful comments and feedback received to the questionnaire which **132 (19%) residents** completed and returned. Councillors were highly gratified by their response. This refresh document forms an Addendum to the original Parish Plan of 2009.

To prepare this Plan Refresh, the Council has followed the underlying requirement for communities, in accordance with the objectives set by West Berks Council, which is to consider the needs and aspirations under the following five key sustainable community strategy themes:

- **Safety**

Examples of this include reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads and planning for emergencies.

- **Health and wellbeing**

Communities have been asked to think widely about health - including such issues as fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving the health and well-being of local people - including young people, and promoting the independence of those residents who are elderly, lonely and vulnerable.

- **Prosperity**

Supporting the economy of the local area and making it a great place to live and work. Encouraging use of our facilities and areas of historic interest and encouraging people to come and enjoy these amenities.

- **The Environment**

This will include reduction of the community carbon footprint, reducing waste and increasing recycling. Making people think about what they can do to make a difference; for instance, encouraging consumption of local produce and increasing the diversity and protection of local wildlife.

- **Community**

Actions in this category should seek to include everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, providing similar life opportunities and accessible services for all.

### **Why a Parish Plan?**

The Plan represents the local vision of how local residents would like to see the area grow and develop over the next 5-10 years. This is a community-inspired document.

A Parish Plan is a document that tackles important issues that will influence the local neighbourhood in the future. The development of the plan is led by the Council but seeks to take into account the views of the whole local community; it is an opportunity for residents to express their views and to influence what happens on their doorstep.

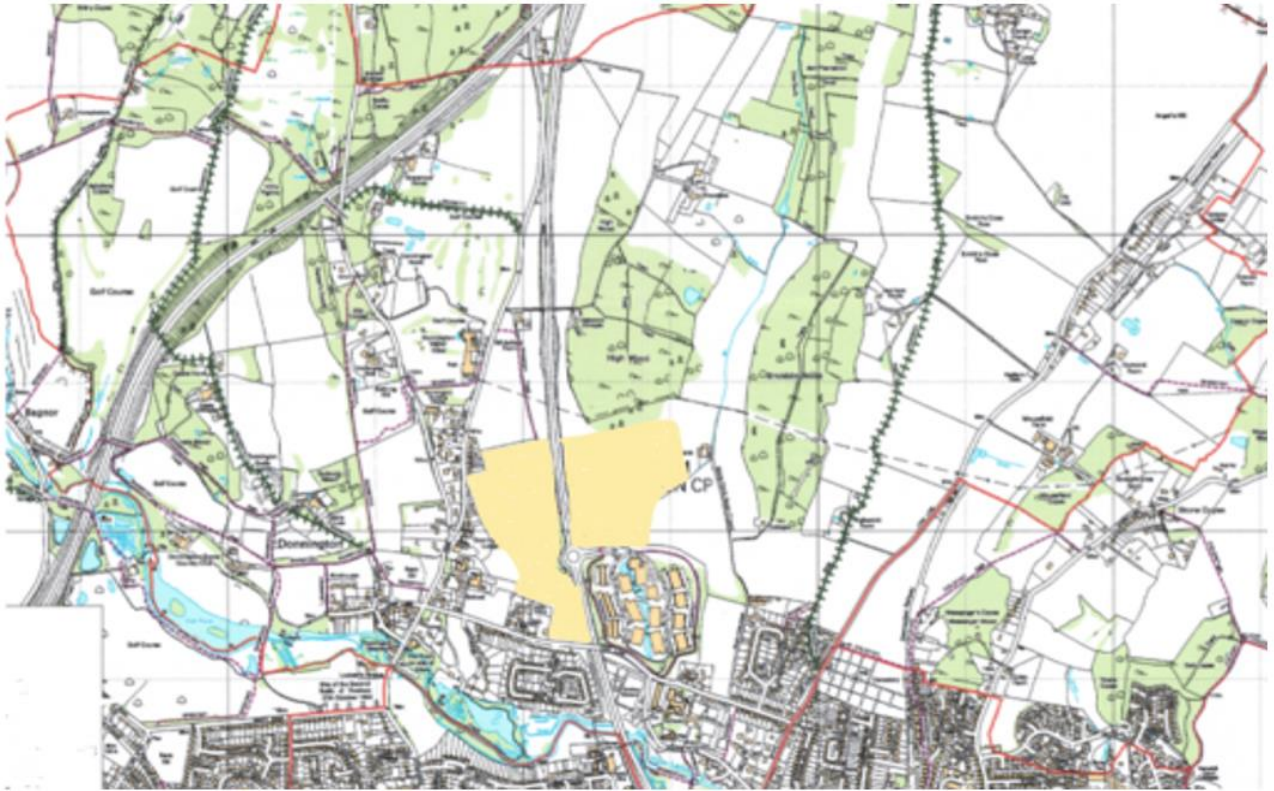
A questionnaire is an important process to enable parishioners to have their say on how they want to see their community develop in the coming years.

This Addendum to the Plan identifies new key aims and objectives, sets out new community needs and priorities that need to be addressed, and also shows how distinctive Parish character and features can be conserved. Its aim is to create a community spirit with groups and organisations working in partnership and includes a second action plan for the Parish, which the Council has adopted and will work towards implementation over Short (*immediate action*), Medium (*12-24 months*) or Long (*2-5 years*) timescales as necessary.

### **Bill Graham**

Chairman, Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council

## 2 GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION



The yellow area on the above map is the extent of the new housing development either side of the A339: to the West – Donnington Heights and to the East – Shaw Valley. In total 401 homes are being built, taking the number of homes in the Parish to over 1,050 - a huge increase in the population of the Parish. West Berkshire Council rejected the planning application for the estate, partly due to concerns for flooding, but the Government Inspector approved the plans on appeal. Approximately 125 of the new homes (at the time of writing) are now occupied. A major concern of the Council is ensuring the new residents are welcomed into the Parish community.

The January 2023 electoral roll shows 1,364 electors [adults eligible to vote] in the Parish - for the first time, some of these now live on the new housing development. The number of residents living in the Parish has remained static for many years at approximately 1,660; the 2021 census shows a population increase in West Berkshire of 4.9% since 2011 but, with this new housing development, we anticipate a population increase of up to 60% within the Parish.

Knowing the demography of residents is helpful in positioning communication and gives a better understanding of what potential groups may want or need. However, current information from the 2021 census is not yet available at Parish level so this document focuses on the questionnaire responses of residents.

The Parish, located just north of Newbury, is historically a combination of two villages: Shaw in the east and Donnington in the west. It is still possible to distinguish the village of Donnington to the west, situated between the River Lambourn and Donnington Castle. Part

of Shaw is outside the Civil Parish boundary to the east but, still part of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Shaw. However, St Mary's Church and Shaw House/Trinity School act as focal points that help to define the eastern end of the Parish. Additionally, on the eastern side, the Parish extends north to Fisher's Lane on Long Lane (B4009) including its small hamlet.

North of Donnington Village is the site of Donnington Castle, managed by English Heritage. From here, a number of footpaths fan out towards Snelsmore Common Country Park with the south-west section being within the Parish boundary.

The Parish is bisected through its heart by the A339 dual carriageway from Newbury north towards the M4, which separates the two villages. They are now only linked by a pedestrian underpass close to Vodafone UK's headquarters and Love Lane. Local Parish roads (Oxford Road and Wantage Road [B4494] plus Long Lane [B4009]) also run north/south and form an 'H' with Love Lane, forging the link between the western and eastern ends of the Parish, with most of the semi-rural land to its north, and the built up, residential land to its south.

The Parish is extremely diverse, from the those living in alms houses and social housing to large, detached homes, some with tennis courts and swimming pools. South and north of Love Lane are the two largest concentrations of houses, in the Dene Way and Kingsley Close estates. Both were originally built as social housing but are now largely privately owned homes. The new large housing development in the Parish, north of Love Lane, only has vehicular access from the A339, making these homes distinct from the rest of the Parish.

The Parish also has two golf courses, each with a hotel: Donnington Grove and Donnington Valley. The Council own two recreations grounds, the larger one at Donnington has a cricket and football pitch, as well as a children's playground, whilst there is a smaller green at Owen Road Field, often used for dog walking. The north of the Parish is largely farmland with scattered houses.

The chalk stream of the River Lambourn forms the southern boundary of the Parish and this is a Special Area of Conservation, as it is rare natural habitat for flora and fauna. Recent sightings include kingfishers, a heron and an egret.

### **The Parish Today**

There are no shops in the Parish, but there are three schools, Trinity School, Shaw-cum-Donnington Primary School, and Castle School for children with learning difficulties from 3-19 years of age. All three schools are on Love Lane, along with the Village Hall. Shaw Church is next to Trinity School, and Shaw House is located the other side of the church. Shaw House is owned by West Berkshire Council and hosts various educational events as well as the district's Register Office.



There is an all-weather sports pitch opposite Trinity School. St Mary's Church Hall is the venue for a number of meetings and activities every week. The Village Hall hosts a number of activities daily for both the Primary School and the Pre-School, as well as local clubs and activities.

Interior of the Village Hall on Love Lane

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, a Parish group of volunteers was formed, called "SAFE". Its focus was on the elderly, lonely and vulnerable, to ensure they were coping and to see what could be done to help them by organising the collection of food shopping and prescriptions. Emergency funding was generously provided by local donors, to cover the running costs. In these trying times we learned as a Parish that we can make a difference with acts of kindness and consideration and we must not lose this sense of community.

### 3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The parish has a rich history, including the ruins of a medieval castle at Donnington, site of a Civil War siege, and the history of the Elizabethan Shaw House, where a number of Kings and Queens have visited. Much of the parish was a backdrop to the Second Battle of Newbury in 1644. More can be found on the Council website:

<https://www.shawcumdonnington.org.uk/wordpress/about-us/>

Throughout the Parish are buildings of architectural and historical interest. The Parish has 35 listed buildings, including two Grade I buildings; being the Castle, owned by English Heritage, and Shaw House, plus two Grade II\*; being Donnington Grove, a fine example of Strawberry Gothic style and now a hotel, and Donnington Hospital, founded in 1393, the oldest extant alms house in the Parish dating from 1602. Other listed buildings are Grade II, including the Primary School and Schoolmaster's House and a full list can be found on the Council website above. There are two Conservation Areas in the Parish: Donnington Village and, Shaw House & Church.



Shaw House



## 4 TIMELINE

On the 12th December 2018, the inaugural meeting took place of the Shaw-cum-Donnington Steering Group, made up of councillors, church members and parishioners to agree a timetable to work to and scope out the content of a meaningful questionnaire to be \* given to residents. Unfortunately, due to Covid the Parish Plan Refresh was delayed. \*

<b>June 2009</b>	Original Parish Plan signed off by West Berkshire Council
<b>January 2019</b>	Work begins on putting together a questionnaire to send to local residents.
<b>April 2019</b>	Questionnaire printed and delivered by hand to all 650 households along with Parish April newsletter. Electronic version of the questionnaire posted on-line. Responses returned or completed on-line.
<b>May 2019</b>	Initial top level parishioner feedback to the questionnaire presented to residents attending the Annual Parish Meeting and additional feedback obtained.
<b>June 2019 – February 2020</b>	Group collated all the questionnaire responses that were returned / completed on-line and started to compile a draft of the Plan Refresh.
<b>*March 2020 to Spring 2022</b>	Interruption of progress, due to Covid, and the retirement of the then Parish Clerk, led to a delay in finalisation and production of the new action plan.
<b>*May 2022</b>	The revised Action Plan was accepted by Council and published on the parish council website for comments.
<b>*March 2023</b>	Working with the new Parish Clerk, the Plan Refresh and new wording submitted to West Berkshire Council for approval.

\*Dates revised as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

## 5 METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were delivered to all of the 650 households in the parish in Spring 2019. Responses were received by post and electronically – 19.1% of those issued were returned, just over the 18% required for the 95% confidence level using 5 as a confidence interval. Although time consuming, all paper responses were added to the online version of the survey, and this generated a PowerPoint display with pie charts and bar charts for the full questionnaire response and feedback. Many individual responses were also gleaned and considered.

When compiling the new Action Plan, the Council decided to only pursue ideas where a majority of the public had supported them, and the percentage responses are included in the Action Plan. One very popular suggestion in the survey was deemed not to be possible for the parish to achieve: a patrol of volunteer neighbourhood wardens, as no one completing the survey offered to volunteer. All the other popular suggestions in the survey are included in the Action Plan, with a view to being completed if possible.

It was also realised that a large number of the ideas in the survey related to expanding the provision of the Village Hall, so these were brought together from the various topic headings in the survey and this helps to show the strength of feeling for an improved community centre in the Parish, offering more services for all sectors of the rapidly expanding community.

## 6 RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### 6.1 Safety in The Community

The aim of any local authority is to help provide a safe and secure environment for residents. Therefore, part of the questionnaire focused on residents' views on safety and anti-social behaviour in the Parish, as well as safety on pavements, roads and transport across the Parish and looked at measures that might be taken to address perceived problems.

#### **Results Summary**

Respondents cited issues of speeding across the local parish roads and suggested 30mph warning signs and speed cameras. Respondents also asked for greater parish investment in i) traffic calming measures (34%) and, ii) speed reduction (57%) on Parish roads.

A third of respondents were concerned about anti-social behaviour locally and asked for an increased police presence. In addition, 84% of respondents were in favour of a Neighbourhood Warden to help reduce anti-social behaviour but over two-thirds were not in favour of installing CCTV around the Parish.

Over half of respondents were not in favour of additional streetlights - although multiple comments were made highlighting poorly lit areas in the Parish and the need for action, citing safety and curbing of anti-social behaviour as reasons to improve lighting. One key area of

resident concern was St Mary's Church car park which has not had working streetlights for several years. Locations also highlighted included Oxford Road (south of Love Lane and north of Donnington Lodge), Shop Lane, Dene Way, Kingsley Close and Church Road,

63% of respondents wanted greater investment in public footpaths and bridleways, citing unlit areas with no pavement or narrow paths, with cars half parked on paths in some areas. There were a significant number of comments about overgrown vegetation and hidden streetlights resulting in poor lighting and a perceived feeling of unsafe transit, specifically Shaw Hill and Church Road. In addition: a) perceived danger in crossing Long Lane at the dropped kerb by the cemetery, b) insufficient safe path/walking space on Wantage Road, c) perceived danger in walking and crossing Oxford Road to Donnington Recreation Ground and, d) on-street parking issues in Old Donnington, Oxford Road and Love Lane.

Specifically looking at traffic safety in Love Lane: 62% of respondents were not in favour of traffic lights at its junction with Oxford Road and 63% felt the current traffic calming measures are successful.

In respect of public transport: the majority of respondents would use a bus or mini-bus for local trips - over two thirds for travel to town/shopping/work and over a third for doctor's/hospital appointments. Whilst 59% of respondents asked for increased bus services, three-quarters of respondents would not use or pay for a dedicated mini-bus service in the Parish.

Residents' safety improvement ideas suggested included:

- 20mph speed limit along Love Lane in school hours only with chicanes removed
- Speed cameras to aid traffic calming
- Improved street lighting and more lights in specific areas for safer walking
- Evening patrols around St Mary's Church car park, Shaw Park and Trinity School and underpasses to address perceived anti-social behaviour
- Joined up walking /cycle ways to connect the Parish to the town centre
- Repair of pavements for safer walking and widening for prams and buggies

It was noted that quite a few suggestions and comments, although local to the community, were for areas outside of the Parish. The Council will look at these suggestions and endeavour to progress them, as appropriate, over time.

The Council has already addressed the issue of streetlights by upgrading its existing lights to cost-effective LED lights, where possible, and will continue to monitor new requirements. Other action already taken by the Council includes raising anti-social behaviour and vandalism in certain areas with TVP at the SSD CF meetings and getting the St Mary's Church car park lights repaired, as well as direct action to remove overgrown foliage from some paths. In addition, a new speed awareness/speed indicator device has now been purchased for deployment across the Parish.

Medium to longer term Council action will include: reviewing how to improve walking conditions, especially where narrow or no pavements exist, for safe passage along Parish

roads and footpaths, and investigating options for improving public transport links, both for the existing local community and the new housing developments of Donnington Heights and Shaw Valley.

Respondents asked for greater Parish investment in traffic calming and speed reduction measures across the Parish and, indicated that investment priorities, should include care of the elderly with regular visits and improved transport services.

## 6.2 A Healthier Community

The questionnaire looked at aspects of both how the parish nature amenities are used and what amenities are needed in the community, in order to improve the health and well-being of local people, including young people, and to promote the independence of those residents who are elderly, lonely and vulnerable.

### **Results Summary**

The Parish's setting in a rural location provides many opportunities for outdoor pursuits, such as walking, running, cycling or horse riding along the local footpaths and bridleways and 87% of respondents do make regular use of these areas for outdoor activities (e.g. walking, cycling, exercise). Three-quarters of respondents felt the Parish footpaths are well maintained but respondents wanted safe access for walkers and cyclists to the local countryside and town to discourage the use of cars. However, this must be balanced against overuse by cyclists at the expense of the safety of pedestrians, e.g. extending the footpath from the Donnington Valley Hotel to the Fox & Hounds pub would link the cycle way to Chieveley; widening some narrow paths would enable people (and those with prams etc.) not to have to walk on the road.

In addition, half of the respondents were interested in organised local walking groups around the Parish, such as Walk4Life. 50 respondents asked for improved signage and wayfinding posts to improve navigation and usage of paths around the Parish.

Feedback from respondents indicated that a priority for PC investment was to make better use of countryside and parks.

When asked what improvements would make residents use the local footpaths more for outside activities, feedback from respondents was varied including:

- More dog waste bins
- Better signage, leaflets of Parish walks and phone apps
- Improved lighting
- Tree and hedge trimming, undergrowth regularly cleared
- Safer access to paths across fields (animals) and field paths to be accessible
- Regular maintenance of paths with gravel etc. put down to cover very muddy areas

77% of respondents supported the expansion and upgrade of the playground in Donnington Recreation Ground, which has now been completed by the Council.

The Council is keen to understand what type of community events residents would like to see take place. 93% of respondents thought events for people affected by isolation and loneliness, both young and old, to meet and get involved within the community would be beneficial.

Feedback for types of events was wide-ranging with multiple themes including:

- Community garden shed, bike repairs, craft and maker club
- Coffee sessions with interesting talks, knitting crochet and crafts
- Computer skills classes and computer club
- Youth club, children's library, running club for children
- Exercise classes, 50+ classes, yoga, dance, children's' dance classes
- Groups and events for young children and parents/carers
- Residents' day – use of recreation ground for picnics and family events when all ages can mix

When asked for one improvement in the community to help us all have a healthier life, respondents' ideas included:

- A second/larger village hall
- A quiet garden for people to relax in
- An annual health and wellbeing fair with information on volunteer organisations and help
- General social club, community café, food festivals
- Expansion of Donnington Recreation Ground for multi-sports with jogging track
- Donnington walking group
- Improved public transport and cycle ways
- Braille on road crossings, safer crossings, more pedestrian crossings
- Group of volunteers for path upkeep and litter clearance

72% of respondents would like a local community café. Feedback from respondents indicated that priorities for PC investment were for direct spend on village facilities for the community: linking residents together both the young and the elderly, reducing isolation and creating a community centre for all ages.

With limited community space/facilities currently available in the Parish, immediate action for new local facilities and activities is limited but a small community cafe started prior to COVID-19, and since the 'Cost of Living' crisis, a 'Warm Space' has been opened once a week at the Church Hall. The Council will continue with its annual summer tea party for all parishioners held at the Donnington Recreation Ground. In the attached Action Plan, many of these points have been combined with the plans for a community hub, in an improved and expanded village hall, in the next section.

The Council intends to investigate how existing facilities can be advertised more clearly to provide better information for the community (such as existing walking/rambling groups and exercise groups etc.). Additionally, the Council has already added two new pieces of play equipment to Donnington Recreation Ground playground. The Council will work with West Berkshire Council to improve safe access to cycle routes and dedicated footpaths across the Parish, with improved signage for routes.

### 6.3 A Prosperous Community

The questionnaire also addressed the local area economy and making the Parish a great place to live and work. The Council wants to encourage use of local facilities and areas of historic interest for people to enjoy. 93% of respondents have visited Donnington Castle and 70% currently visit Shaw House.

#### **Results Summary**

Combining the desire for a closer-knit community with more amenities, and as an aid to combat isolation and loneliness, the Council wanted to know residents' views on its idea of a future community hub or hall.

77% of respondents agreed that a community hub with additional rooms and flexible spaces should be made available for social events. Respondents highlighted how they would most like to use a community centre, if available:

- Private hire (parties etc.)
- Socialising (coffee mornings etc.)
- Public/group meetings
- Access to local information
- Additional clubs

Whilst some respondents felt the current village hall was adequate and that there should be no new building, and that school halls could be utilised for more space, over three-quarters of respondents were in favour of this and other suggested facilities which included:

- Hire for group and health meetings (e.g. Parkinson's), evening classes
- Classes for toddler groups and fitness (Pilates, Yoga, boot camp)
- Café for socialising and lunches
- Community shop, community promotion events
- Writing club, social club and Wi-Fi access
- Community growing and wildlife activities

However, 60% of respondents didn't think space should be allocated in this amenity for shared storage space for community groups. In addition, pre-Covid, 76% of respondents who worked at home were not in favour of flexible shared workspace or for networking. Councillors believe that post-Covid this response may be somewhat different.

75% of respondents were in favour of accepting an increase in the Parish council tax precept to fund local improvements.

High percentages of respondents have visited local sites of historical interest and 65% thought these sites should be promoted more.

As highlighted, there is limited community space currently available in the Parish and, as an immediate response to the clear need to address loneliness and isolation and the request for social events and coffee mornings, a monthly community café in the Village Hall was

introduced on a trial basis. In the meantime, the Council is investigating other options to expand community space.

## 6.4 A Greener Community

Here, the Council is looking at what people think they can do to make a difference; for instance, encouraging consumption of local produce and increasing the diversity and protection of local wildlife. This will include a reduction of the community carbon footprint, reducing waste and increasing recycling.

### **Results Summary**

The questionnaire asked which areas residents would like to see the Council invest in further to help our local community to **become greener**; nearly three-quarters of respondents asked for more Parish investment for **increased litter picking** around the Parish to keep the area clean and **almost two-thirds** asked for improved **maintenance of footpaths and bridle paths**. **Feedback included a request for more litter bins.**

In addition, a high percentage of respondents also asked for investment to protect the local wildlife areas and 39% of respondents were in favour of **more signposts and wayfinding signs for local footpaths and bridle paths** to make it easier to navigate around the Parish on foot or cycle.

Although general maintenance of our local area is the responsibility of WBC, over 70 respondents were **in favour of further investment from the Council for improved maintenance of grass verges, especially cutting back vegetation from footpaths in the Parish, as well as maintenance of recreation grounds. Nearly 40 respondents asked for hedge trimming to be increased.** Feedback comments highlighted that, although this is needed by both the Council and local farmers, we need to keep the area green and that cutting back needs to be tempered and not be at the expense of wildlife, and at the right time of year

62% of respondents wanted Parish investment in local schemes to aid local wildlife protection; suggestions included a Parish link-up for setting aside strips for nature with gardens and farmers and led by schools and the Parish, putting up nesting boxes with wildlife activities with BBOWT.

Feedback from respondents included suggestions for **nature projects for the schools** for science classes, e.g. monitoring local air quality and feeding results to a central project or a nature project around a local venue.

The introduction of volunteer environmental wardens was supported by 61% of respondents and feedback ideas for a greener community were varied including:

- Encouraging youngsters to keep the area clear of rubbish
- Cleaning up the River Lambourn – keeping it clear of debris, especially at times of heavy rain
- Planting around the Parish
- Extending car parks / review car parking facilities on housing estates
- Create a footpath north on Wantage Road from its junction with Oxford Road

- Emptying dog waste bins more frequently
- Campaigning to reduce single use plastics and involving the schools
- Providing a recycling hub for non-kerbside items
- Urging WBC and local businesses to widen plastic recycling options

23 respondents asked for more allotments - and new allotments will be needed for the new housing development now being built; feedback suggestions included a community garden, ground for community planting plus a disabled access Parish allotment.

Short term actions by the Council include more regular litter picking events and a focus on local maintenance to improve local footpaths and access to linked cycle routes/dedicated footpaths across the Parish with improved signage for routes, thus encouraging residents to leave cars at home.

Long term action to support local wildlife, the river and the environment will require a joint initiative with other stakeholders which the Council will initiate. This will also include investigating options for additional allotments, parks and green spaces for current and future residents.

## 6.5 A Stronger Community

Our Parish community should seek to include everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, providing similar life opportunities and accessible services for all. Communication and information exchange is a key part of this and was included in the questionnaire to enable the Council to understand how to communicate better with its residents and how Parish information, about things such as local events, can be distributed.

### **Results Summary**

Everyone, 100% of respondents, were in favour of the Parish newsletters continuing with a third of respondents asking for paper copies to continue to be available. 65% of respondents asked for a regular newsletter via email.

Not everyone has access to or uses the Internet, which is borne out by respondents' answers to how they found out about Parish community events; 61% found information in the Parish newsletters, others by word of mouth or posters and noticeboards and only 11% found information via the Parish website or Facebook pages.

Feedback from respondents asked for details advertising Parish events and promoting St Mary's Church activities – not a lot of information or notice of events is received and emailing a list was suggested. Respondents also asked for a community directory of local trades in the Parish.

The Council has held several community events; nearly half of respondents have taken part in a litter picking event and three-quarters of respondents have attended one or more of the annual Parish tea parties at Donnington Recreation Ground.



Respondents suggested many types of free community events they thought the Council could hold, including:

- BBQ and picnics
- May Day or Summer fêtes
- Events for national celebrations (e.g. bonfire night, royal weddings or Children In Need)
- More frequent litter picking events

The Council will need help from Parish residents to implement improvements and it was inspiring that so many respondents were willing to help with future projects. Although only one person registered their name and contact details for volunteering, the Council hopes to build a database of residents' contact details to be able to advertise these volunteer projects. Respondents highlighted their willingness to help and support activities, including litter picking, becoming a school governor, and community hub and book exchange activities.

Nearly 50% of respondents said they would be willing to volunteer in the community with most people offering to help with: litter picking, the Great British Spring Clean, road signage cleaning and public right of way clearance. Feedback included suggestions for regular volunteer action groups on litter, gardening, cleaning, mending/repair and helping out within the Parish.

Amenities in the local community include the Village Hall and St Mary's Church and hall; 68% of respondents have used the Village Hall and 21% visit St Mary's Church.

A small majority of respondents were not in favour of additional facilities being available at the Village Hall. The 44% of respondents who were in favour of the hall amenities being expanded provided a variety of ideas they would like to see:

- Community focal point, social gathering place, Internet access and better promoting of events
- Sale of goods/exhibitions events
- Exhibitions and film club
- Exercise classes
- Coffee mornings, toddler groups, café with children's toys

The Parish Council maintains two recreation areas in the community: Donnington Recreation Ground and Owen Road Field - and part of Snelsmore Common Country Park is also within the Parish. We asked how residents make use of these green spaces. The highest percentage of respondents replied that they used these areas for walking/rambling, exercise or dog walking.

WBC provides library services including the mobile library and home service, and 85% of respondents were in favour of the Council continuing its annual donation to WBC to support these services for the Parish. Feedback from a non-supporter highlighted that use of libraries was being replaced by the availability of electronic literature on-line although, for our Parish, other feedback has shown that many residents do not use the Internet.

Many of the future improvements for the community will require funding and when asked, three-quarters of respondents were willing to pay for this with a small increase in their Council Tax bill.

The main priorities highlighted (by both those willing to pay and those not) for funded improvements included:

- Community cleaning, tidying of environment, dog warden
- Better bus services and transport for the disabled
- Community hub/centre, improved parish facilities and uniting lonely and isolated residents
- Traffic calming (vehicles and speeding cyclists)
- Home libraries
- Parks and playground equipment, better use of the countryside
- Repair of pavements and roads
- Policing and safety in the community

When asked in the questionnaire, how residents contacted the Council, the majority confirmed this is either in person, by telephone or, at meetings, and 25% rely on the newsletter. 36% also used email and 17% of respondents used the Council website or Facebook pages. Feedback from respondents asked: who the Parish Council members are and what the functions and powers of the PC are.

The last item on the questionnaire asked for any topics residents wanted to raise with the Council; suggestions and comments included:

- Increase Parish infrastructure prior to the building of the new housing estate
- Better transport services needed locally to improve our environment
- Manage traffic speeding on local roads and off-street parking areas for residents.
- Improve street lighting in certain areas e.g. Dene Way and Shaw Hill.
- Extend the footpath from Donnington Valley Hotel to the Fox & Hounds pub to join up with the Chieveley cycle track.
- Fence off the playground area in Donnington Recreation Ground and have a designated dog walking area for child safety.
- Invest in activities for local teenagers.
- We live in a lovely area and the questionnaire suggests that it is unsafe, which it isn't.
- Village Agents to support isolated and vulnerable people and Council to visit people to chat and discuss concerns on doorsteps.
- Who are the Parish Councillors and what does the Parish Council do?

The Council will continue with Parish newsletters and intends to upgrade and progress to a quarterly community newsletter during this year; although this will be published on-line, it is recognised that not everyone in the Parish has access to or uses the Internet, and hard copies will be made available.

To aid this, parishioners are asked to provide the Council with their contact details and how they would like to receive Parish updates – for instance regarding local activities and events.

As mentioned above, there are existing activities around the Parish that would be of interest to residents, for instance, pensioner lunches, flower-arranging classes and art classes at St Mary's Church and various dance classes/exercise classes at the Village Hall.

Over the longer term, the Council intends to liaise with local stakeholders for a united approach to promoting such events and community activities and local business information.

'Ask the Council' responses raised interesting topics for the Council to review and it will investigate options for the future.

Should you want to view a breakdown of the questionnaire in pictorial format, please [click on this link](#) to view the survey responses in PowerPoint. Click on [this link](#) to see the live version of the 2023 action plan which summarises all the actions captured.

## 7 THANK YOU

To all the people who volunteered to help with this major project. Firstly, to the residents of the Parish who were motivated to fill in the questionnaire and return to us for collation. 132 out of 750 questionnaires posted or positioned around the Parish were returned. 19% is a good level of response for this type of survey.

Thank you to the Parish Plan core team, which consisted of:

Bill Graham  
Barbara Bradfield  
Paul Bryant  
Mary Carter  
Sean Doherty  
Gill Durrant  
Malcom Edwards  
Gill Lutterworth  
Elizabeth Nonweiler  
Glyn Thomas  
David Willetts  
Marion Wood

We would also like to thank several local residents who attended meetings, tested early survey examples and added their knowledge and experience to the mix: Sally Breach from St Mary's Church who helped us with rooms to meet in and also proof reading and John Austin, our previous Parish Clerk who also organised the postal recovery system that managed the survey.

## 8 ACTION PLAN

Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
<b>Safety in the Community</b>							
Upgrade obsolete streetlights to improve footpath and car parking safety	Upgrade all streetlights in the Parish to LED	High	Short (<12 months)	Parish Council		Concerns of poorly lit areas	Upgrade of existing street light bulbs to LED completed 2019.
	Liaise with WBC for repair of St Marys Church car park streetlights	High	Short	Parish Council	WBC	Church car park has not had working streetlights for several years	Lights activated January 2021.
Reduce vehicle speeding within the Parish	Look for ways to aid traffic calming a) speed awareness education for drivers and, b) install meaningful speeding deterrents	High	Medium (12-24 months)	Parish Council	WBC	Significant and ongoing issues of speeding on local roads. Respondents asked for greater parish investment in traffic calming measures (34%) and speed reduction (57%)	Mobile speed monitoring performed; data analysis resulted in PC buying a Speed Indication Device [SID] May 2021, pursuing a WBC licence to operate it plus permanent posts installed by WBC March 2022, enabling PC to commence (a) and collect data to facilitate (b)
Provides safe passage for pedestrians along Love Lane & at its junction with Oxford Road	Approach WBC to improve the safety of pedestrians when crossing Oxford Road	High	Medium	Parish Council	WBC	Residents' concerns for walking along Love Lane regarding a perceived danger in crossing Oxford Rd to Donnington Recreation Ground.	A new pavement inset for safer crossing at the chicane west of Northern Ave completed Spring 2022. PC asked WBC for a crossing on Oxford Road by the recreation ground / Castle pub; WBC feedback: no action taken after investigation; no safe place to install a crossing there and insufficient demand at that location.
Review and improve Parish footpaths	Shaw Hill - improve lighting by cutting back overgrown trees	High	Medium	Parish Council	WBC	Hidden streetlights and overgrown vegetation resulting in poor lighting and a perceived feeling of unsafe transit, specifically Shaw Hill and Church Road	Parish streetlights upgraded to LED 2019 & Church car park lights repaired 2021. Lamp Acres/ Love Lane western pavement repaired by WBC 2020. Overgrown foliage on Shaw Hill largely cutback Spring 2022 by WBC
	Consider extra streetlights	High	Medium	Parish Council			
	Ask WBC to improve the footpath on Oxford Road	High	Long (2-5 years)	Parish Council	WBC	Unlit areas with no pavement or narrow paths and on-street parking issues in Oxford Road	

Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
	between The Castle pub & Donnington Valley Hotel						
	Review all pavements to ascertain the issues and campaign with WBC for improvements	High	Medium	Parish Council	WBC	63% of respondents wanted greater investment in pavements, footpaths and bridleways, citing unlit areas with no pavements or cars half parked on narrow paths	
Consider a visible Parish presence to deter vandalism/ anti-social behaviour and provide support to the community	Review options for implementing voluntary Neighbourhood Warden, campaign for Community Police to provide extra patrols	Med	Long	Parish Council		84% of respondents in favour of a uniformed neighbourhood warden for a visible presence to deter anti-social behaviour: two part-time people would be needed.	None of those questionnaire respondents who offered to volunteer came forward with names or contact details. If the Parish receives future reports of anti-social behaviour, it will liaise with TVP.
Improve public transport links for local residents	Push for provision of new bus services for the Parish and new houses	Med	Long	Parish Council	WBC/bus providers	59% of respondents wanted more bus services; respondents' priorities for PC investment included transport services and improved bus services	This is a long-term issue; opportunity with the new development to investigate new routes and discuss with WBC and other providers. PC will liaise with WBC now the new development is progressing
<b>A Healthy Community</b>							
Expansion of Donnington Recreation Ground playground	Provide additional play equipment when funds permit	High	Medium	Parish Council		77% of respondents supported improvements to the playground & 46% of wanted this to cater for a range of ages and multiple sports.	Completed. In 2019 a small addition to the playground was installed using donated money. In August 2021 a major expansion took place when the PC installed a large wooden climbing castle.
Improve facilities available at the Cricket Pavilion in Donnington Recreation Ground	Review options for enhancements when funds permit	Med	Long	Parish Council			
Improve access for cyclists and pedestrians to the local countryside and town; move	Review current routes in the Parish for requests to WBC, e.g. extending footpath from Donnington	Med	Long	Parish Council	WBC	87% of respondents regularly use parish footpaths and bridlepaths. Safe access for walkers and cyclists to the local countryside	WBC is planning improved cycling and walking route from Love Lane to Newbury Town Centre as part of the new housing development and a cycling path is also being considered to link the Parish with Hermitage

Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
towards a linked system of walkways across the Parish	Valley Hotel to Fox & Hounds pub					and town required to discourage use of cars	
	Review signage for cycle paths and pedestrian routes	Med	Short			50 respondents asked for better wayfinding posts & signage for navigation of footpaths	To be partly covered by the new WBC routes into Newbury from Love Lane
Reduce Isolation and loneliness; improve social cohesion in the Parish	Introduce trial community café sessions	High	Short	Parish Council	Village Hall Church	72% of respondents would like a local community café.	For eight months before Covid, a community café was run monthly on Thursdays in the Hall which proved popular. Recently, the Church has opened a weekly 'Warm Space' called The Myrtle Café which attracts regular visitors.
	Expand the community use of the Village Hall		Long	Parish Council	Village Hall	93% of respondents said local facilities & social events should be available for various ages & social groups to address loneliness and encourage socialising within the community. Respondents' PC investment priorities were for direct spend on village facilities to link residents together & reduce isolation, care of the elderly and create a community centre for all.	Greater use of the hall space is very limited until the Primary School moves to its new building, planned for the academic year of 2025-2026 (see Prosperous below). In the interim we will work to maximise the Parish assets we have for the community. The Council is helping to publicise the Village Hall events and classes with entries on its Parish webpage.
	To investigate existing local walking clubs and publish information	Med	Med	Parish Council		87% of respondents regularly use the local paths and bridleways and 55 respondents wanted to join a local walking group.	
<b>A Prosperous Area</b>							
Look into the possible expansion of the Village Hall to enable it to increase the social facilities	Work with the Village Hall Committee to arrange a structural survey of the Village Hall, to ensure it is fit for the future	High	Long	Parish Council	Village Hall	44% were in favour of provision of more facilities at the Hall, plus upgrade for Wi-Fi. 75% of respondents in favour of a Parish Council tax increase to fund local improvements.	A recent structural survey in July 2022, showed the pre-1912 building is structurally sound. Building energy efficiency upgrade in progress Spring 2023.

Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
available to the community	Look at possible acquisition of land to enable the hall to be expanded	High	Long	Parish Council	Hall, WBC, Diocese, local business & charities	No ground space to expand the building to provide additional services	PC is part of a Community Steering Group to explore the possibility of expanding the Village Hall when the Primary School moves to its new building. This is a long-term project in discussion with other parties
	Support Village Hall Committee in the future hall expansion/upgrade	High	Long	Parish Council			
Promoting Heritage sites within the parish	Work with English Heritage (for Donnington Castle) & WBC (for Shaw House) to encourage greater awareness & use of events & activities by the local community	Med	Long	Parish Council English Heritage and WBC		93% of respondents have visited Donnington Castle and 70% currently visit Shaw House	PC discussing with English Heritage to set up a 'Friends of Donnington Castle' group. A beacon lighting event for Queen's Jubilee Event was held at Donnington Castle in June 2022. PC interested in working with WBC /Shaw House for volunteers to restore the gardens but pending new WBC officer
<b>A Greener Community</b>							
Improve the appearance of local area & support the environment; reduce litter strewn around.	To hold more frequent litter picks & raise awareness of these events & consider providing more rubbish bins in known trouble spots	High	Short	Parish Council		72% of respondents want more Parish investment for Parish litter picks and encouraging youngsters to keep a clean environment. Feedback included requests for more litter bins.	Annual litter picks now restarted & a new bin put into Castle Pub carpark. Increased regular litter picker hours for pub car park and recreation ground. To review more regular litter picks
To protect and enhance local environment and wildlife areas in the Parish	Work with Renewal Project to enhance River Lambourn for wildlife	Med	Medium	Parish council	Renewal Project	62% of respondents wanted Parish investment in local schemes to aid local wildlife protection e.g. putting up nesting boxes with BBOWT & wildlife activities	Contact the Renewal Project Organiser & work with them to enhance wildlife on the river Lambourn
	Work with BBOWT to encourage wildlife e.g. putting up nesting boxes.	Med	Medium	Parish Council	BBOWT		Contact BBOWT to find out how we can work with them to improve wildlife habitat in the Parish
	Wild meadow planting	Med	Medium	Parish Council	Public		Following consultation with local residents a wildlife meadow on Owen Road Field site was



Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
							planned for Autumn 2022, but implementation postponed due to a lack of local interest
	Work with local schools on nature projects	Med	Medium	Parish Council	Local Schools	Respondents' suggestions for nature projects for schools e.g.: monitoring local air or, a nature project at a local venue	To invite local schools to take part working with us on these projects
Parish local maintenance	Maintain appearance of the parish, in particular overgrown hedges	Med	Long	Parish Council		70+ respondents asked for the cutting back of vegetation over public footpaths and approx. 40 respondents asked for hedge trimming to be increased	When the PC receives complaints from the public, landowners will be contacted and asked that they cut back their hedge. Work to be done at the appropriate time of the year
To provide greater access to allotments in the Parish, for the new housing & for people with small or no gardens	Work with developers, liaise with the Church regarding allotment space	Med	Medium	Parish Council	Church, Developers	A strong demand for extra allotments and other community garden/planting space	For the benefit of the new homes five new allotments are expected to be included within Donnington Heights
	Review available space for new future Parish allotments	Med	Medium	Parish Council			The PC has an ongoing project to look at areas of land it can acquire for additional Parish allotments
Environmental wardens	Introduce volunteer environmental wardens	Med	Medium	Parish Council	Public	61% of respondents wanted volunteer environmental wardens across the Parish	Several respondents stated their interest in volunteering, but nobody provided any contact details not progressed.
<b>A Stronger Community</b>							
Create a community & Parish newsletter	Expand & update current newsletter to include local information & circulate more frequently.	High	Medium	Parish Council	St Mary's Church	100% of respondents want Parish newsletters to continue; 35% want to receive a paper copy and 65% asked for a regular newsletter via email	Letters distributed to residents 3 times a year at present. PC now has an editor for a new style of Parish newsletter to begin, liaising with the Church to involve the wider local community
	Create an email list to send the newsletter electronically	High	Medium	Parish Council			Newsletters will ask for email addresses to collate an email list for electronic newsletters.
Communication of community & Parish events	Expand use of the Parish website & social media pages, to grow their	Med	Medium	Parish Council		The Parish newsletter, word of mouth or posters are very effective methods of communication in the Parish; only	The PC has already started to post details of events on other local Facebook pages

Objective	Action	Priority (HML)	Timeline (SML)	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification	Progress /Completed
	following & to publicise events					10% of respondents currently use the Parish website or Facebook	
Parish Council contact and information	Promote the PC to improve awareness of the Council to parishioners using local noticeboards and its website.	Med	Short	Parish Council		Respondents request for information about Councillors; only 17% use the Parish website or Facebook for contact	Details will be posted on the Parish website after the 2023 May elections
Community volunteer action group	Make more use and involve Parish volunteers for litter picking & community activities	Med	Medium	Parish Council		Approx. 50% of respondents willing to volunteer for Parish community events, including volunteer action groups on litter, gardening, cleaning, mending/repair and helping out within the Parish	Refer to 'Green Community' above re a wildflower meadow at Owen Road Field. During Covid lockdowns a volunteer group, 'SAFE', was formed to focus on prescriptions & shopping collection for local vulnerable & elderly people. Also made NHS scrubs, headbands & bags
To liaise with the Church in promoting its activities across the Parish	Work with the Church to publicise their events in PC newsletters, noticeboards, website & social media	Med	Medium	Parish Council	St Mary's Church	79% of respondents did not use the Church facilities. Opportunity to broaden awareness of activities to current and new residents.	Church events are regularly advertised on the PC social media & noticeboards. PC joint delivery of newsletters ongoing - especially at Christmas.
Support the Library Service provided by WBC	To continue to support the service through the precept	Med	Medium	Parish Council	WBC	85% of respondents agreed with PC making annual donations to WBC to support provision of local & mobile library services	The PC has made the recommended contribution to the WBC library service for a number of years.