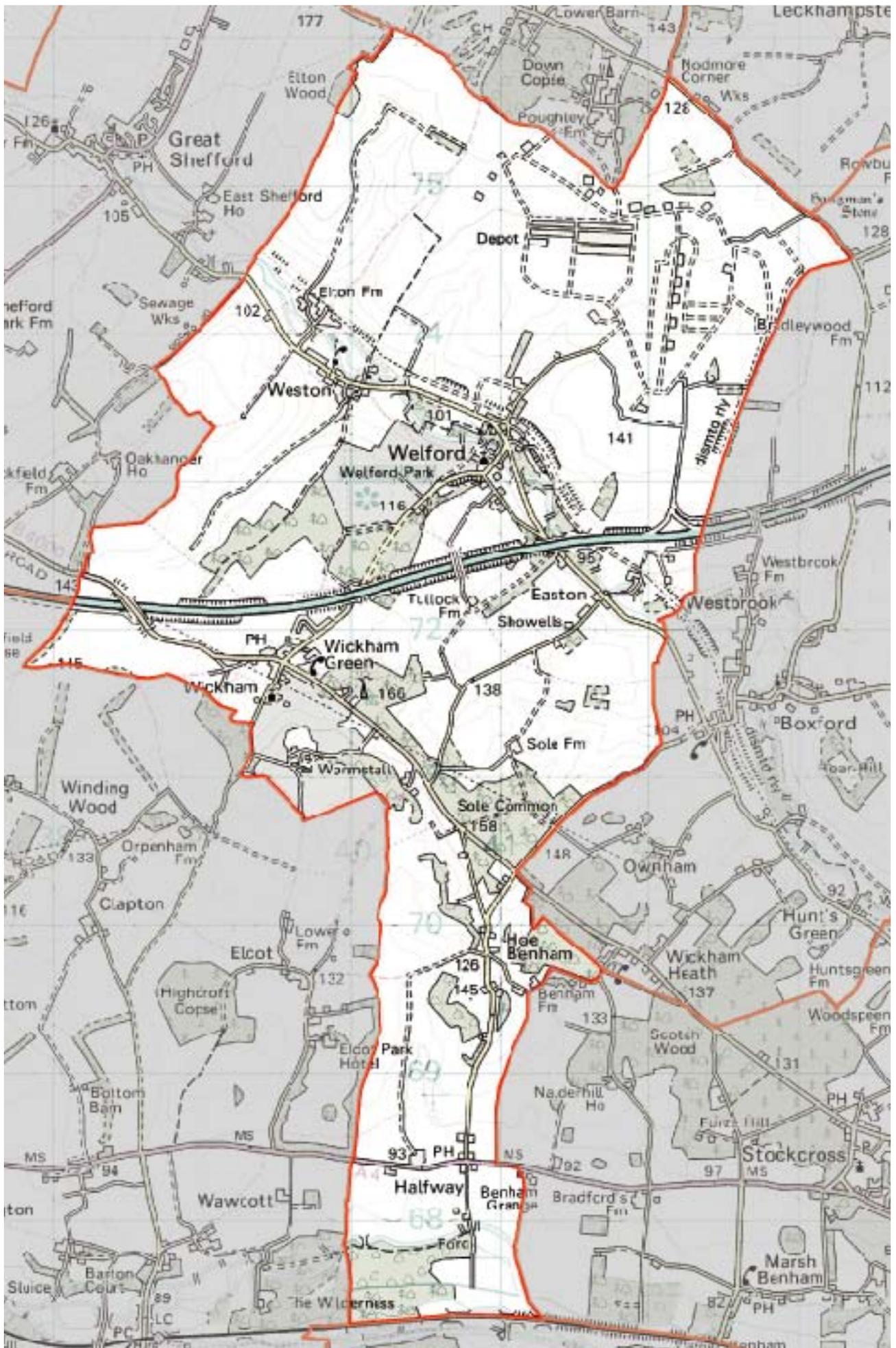
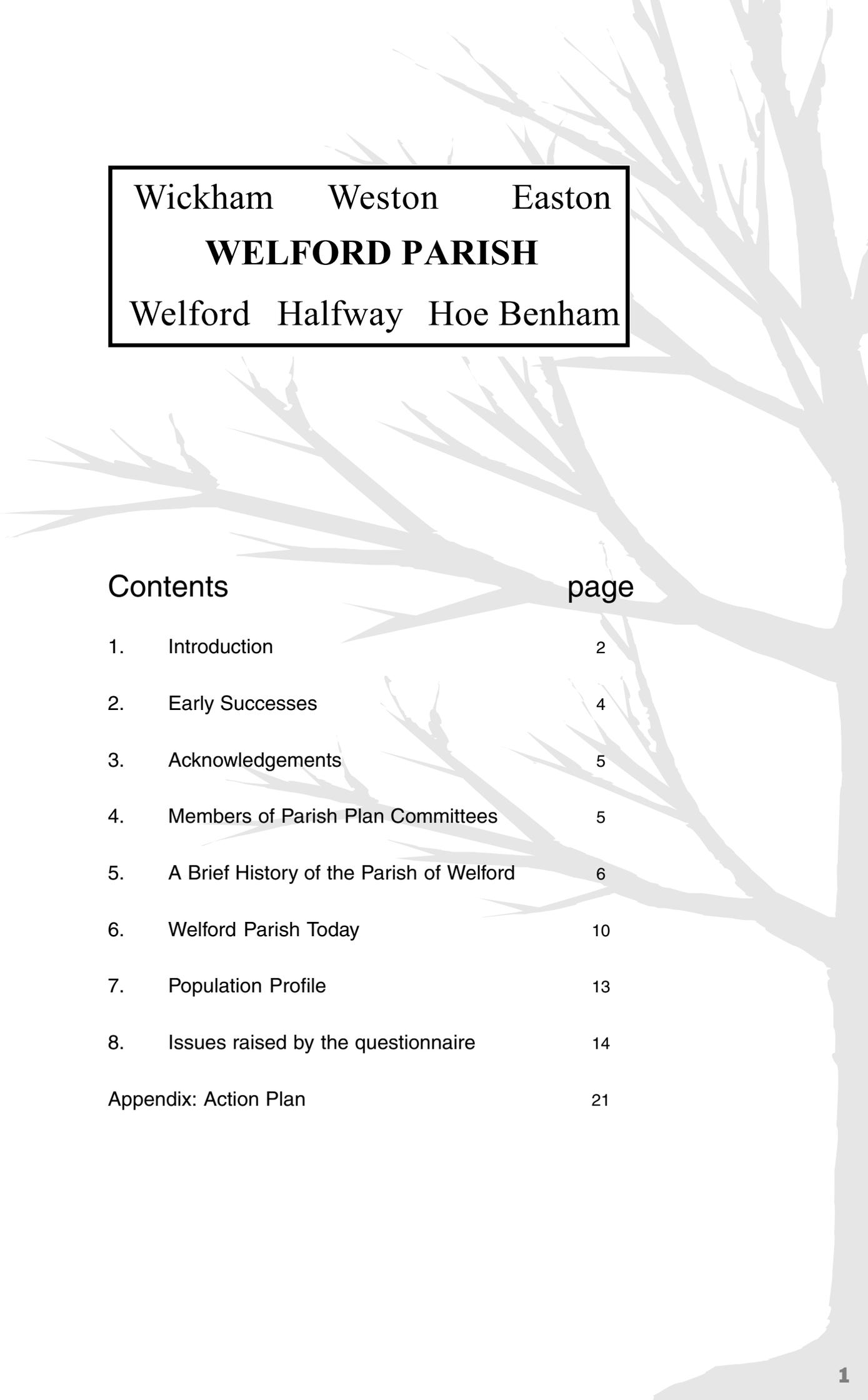


Welford Parish Plan





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Wickham Weston Easton
WELFORD PARISH
Welford Halfway Hoe Benham

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1. Introduction, how the plan came about

This Parish Plan has been created in response to a Government initiative designed to give local communities more control over the future of their neighbourhood. Following extensive consultation it records the views of the people living in the parish concerning their present environment but, more importantly, identifies issues that need to be addressed for the future. The aim is to form an action plan which will address these issues over the next few years. This will provide a means of influencing decisions on planning and community strategies made both at Parish Council level and District Council level.

Welford Parish is in West Berkshire with the normal advantages and disadvantages of a rural setting. However unlike most of the neighbouring parishes it does not have one central hub but, instead, has 6 widely separated villages. Without a natural centre the parish, as such, has little cohesion and has difficulty in maintaining a community spirit already affected by social changes.

It is important that the Parish Plan reflects the views of the whole Parish Community and to that end a number of events took place to ensure that this happened.

An inaugural Public Meeting took place on 23 May 2006 at which the aims of the Parish Plan were explained. Volunteers were invited to form a Steering Committee to oversee the progress of the plan. On 27 July, at a meeting of the Steering Committee, three sub-committees were set up to cover three areas of concern:

Transport
Development and Environment
Community and Social Facilities

In order to aid the production of a questionnaire a Public Consultation Exhibition was held on 24 and 25 February 2007. This was attended by more than 100 people over the two days with representatives from all 6 villages in the parish. This enabled an appropriate questionnaire to be developed by the Steering Committee over the following months.

The first part of the questionnaire was a Household Section which aimed to set the context for more detailed questions to be answered by individual members of a household. The three main sections covered Transport Issues, Planning and Environment and, finally, Community Services. This last section of the questionnaire gave a chance for parishioners to specify which community services they would like to see available and which services they would be prepared to support.

The questionnaire was distributed to all households in the parish in July and they were individually collected. 55% of households responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to all adults aged 18 or over.

The basic information that came out of the questionnaire was communicated to parishioners on 17th January 2008 at a Parish Plan Public Meeting and Workshop.

An Action Plan has been prepared that addresses issues raised by the questionnaire. It is included at the back of this Parish Plan. For each item in the Action Plan, the agency or person responsible for carrying out the action is named together with a cost estimate and estimated completion date.

The full questionnaire results will be able to be downloaded from www.welford-parish.org during 2009.



2. Early successes

Although the overall strategy is to produce an action plan to address issues raised by the questionnaire, the discussions with parishioners at an early stage enabled some issues to be addressed during the production of this Parish Plan.

The first issue of the Parish Magazine has been published.

A community group for older people in the parish has been set up and they are now having regular lunches.

Following pressure from the Parish Council the B4000 through Wickham is soon to be resurfaced.

A Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) has been installed on the B4000 on the descent into Wickham from the Newbury direction.

Many extra people have joined the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

There is a better community awareness and there are closer links between the school and parishioners.

There are plans for a parish website.



3. Acknowledgements

The production of the Parish Plan would not have been possible without the support of a number of people and agencies. The Parish Plan Steering Committee would like to thank the following:

Melissa Elliott and Teresa Newson of Greenham Common Trust

Penny Bridle of dmrkynetec

Sarah Ward, Parish Planning Development Worker for Community Action West Berkshire

Michael Smallwood for historical information and historic photographs, David Hunt for modern photographs
Welford Parish Council for a grant of £250

The National Lottery 'Awards for All' Programme who gave a grant of £2,950.

Donations were given by the Bingo Committee, Village Hall Committee, Five Bells Public House, Auscraft, The Halfway Pub, Colin Tett, David Uprichard and Jimmy Puxley

Thanks are also due to the following for support to the Steering Committee: Emma Bryant, Sarah Breadmore, Marianne Breadmore, Wendy Edwards, Karen Townsin, Sonia Coyle, Tony Astle, Gerald Chandler, Mary Chandler, Charmian Bird, Dick Bird, John Handby, Jenny Pheby (WBC), Arelene Phillips (CCB), Debbie Openshaw (DYN), Carole Ruse (WBC) and the parishioners for taking part in the events.

4. Members of Parish Plan Committees

Steering Group: Roger Edwards (Chairman), Christine Breadmore (Secretary), Colin Tett (Treasurer), Dottie Channing-Williams, David Hunt, Andrew Holland and Katrina Easterling.

Transport: David Hunt (Chairman)

Community and Social Facilities: Dottie Channing-Williams (Chairman)

Development and Environment: Colin Tett (Chairman)



5. A Brief History of the Parish of Welford

The parish of Welford extends to over 5000 acres and includes the larger villages of Welford and Wickham and the smaller villages of Weston, Easton, Hoe Benham and Halfway. The nature of the geography has always tended to fragment the parish. It extends for five and a half miles from north to south between Leckhampstead and the Great Western railway line in the south and for an average of two miles between Shefford Woodlands in the west to Boxford in the east.

The parish is further dissected by the River Lambourn which runs through Weston, Welford and Easton on its way to join the Kennet at Newbury and also by the River Kennet and the canal below Halfway. Thus it has no overall focal point.

Three major roads pass through the area. The B4000 roughly follows Ermin Street, to Baydon. Ermin Street was built by the Romans in the 1st century as the road between Silchester and Cirencester. Wickham was a day's march from Silchester and thus, an important junction. Minor roads led to the Bath Road and Littlecote. Secondly, the A4 London to Bath road - always known as the Bath Road - had an important stopping point at Halfway for coaches in the 17th and 18th centuries. The tollgate, just west of the Halfway Inn was sadly demolished in the 1960s. Lastly, in 1971 the M4 cut its way through the widest part of the parish via Easton, Welford and Wickham, on its east/west route. Trees hide the scar of the cuttings but a large part of the parish remains blighted by traffic noise and pollution.

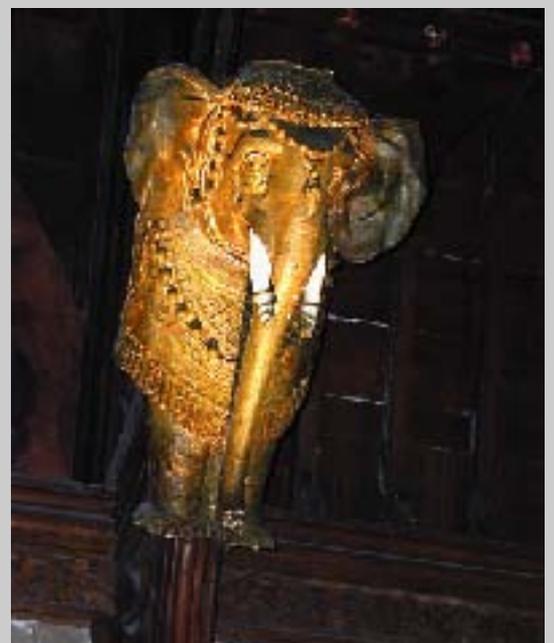
A unique feature of the parish is the two churches, or more correctly a parish church and a chapel of ease. St Gregory's church at Welford (Norman) is believed to



have been built on the foundations of an earlier Saxon church. It nestles in the valley close to Welford House. Its octagonal circular spire and tower is one of only two round towers in Berkshire. St Swithun's chapel at the top of Wickham hill is 12th century but built onto a much older Saxon watch tower. The tower is one of the best examples of Saxon workmanship in the country and is referred to in many reference books. An early example of recycling is evident by the use of Roman dressed stones and a column in the north side of the tower.

Between 1845 and 1858 both churches were demolished and rebuilt by the rector, Rev William Nicholson. The spire at Welford was carefully taken down, all the stones numbered and then rebuilt exactly as it was. In the rebuilding both churches were enlarged. The Saxon tower at Wickham escaped demolition but the Rev Nicholson could not resist adding 30 feet of Victorian flint work to the top of it. Wickham chapel is most famous for its papier mâché elephants in the roof of the north aisle. These were purchased by the rector at the Paris exhibition in 1862. There were originally three which he meant to display in the rectory (now Wickham House) but unable to find anywhere suitable to put them, he had more made and placed them in the church giving them names such as Fortitude, Docility and Strength - all good Victorian virtues! They were originally gilded and must have looked very impressive. Over time they have become somewhat tarnished - many people travel from afar to see these elephants.

Until the end of the 2nd world war the majority of people were employed on the land. From the census they are described as 'agricultural labourers'. Also from the census it is obvious that each village was virtually self-sufficient. Almost all had many craftsmen such as bakers, tailors, leatherworkers, wheelwrights, bricklayers, blacksmiths and carpenters.





Most of the farms within the Welford estate were tenanted. The glebe (church) land of over 270 acres in Wickham south of the B4000 was incorporated in Rectory Farm and was farmed on behalf of the rector by an appointed agent. The Old Rectory was sold in the 1930s and the land in the 1950s. Only a small field remains behind the current rectory.



In 1821 the population was 1058, in 1911 it was 722, in 1931 it had gone down to 631 and in 2008 it is 450. This is reflected in the results of the survey conducted for the Parish Plan where 28% of homes are currently occupied by one person. With the changes in agricultural practice since the Second World War and their acceleration in the second half of the 20th century, the number of people working on the land has been drastically reduced. During this time a number of the farm workers' cottages became redundant. Some were demolished and some sold and modernised. Most were thatched and expensive to maintain.



The village school was built in 1857 on land granted by Charles Eyre Esq of Welford House, and paid for by him and Rev William Nicholson. It was built for 190 pupils and in the late 19th century the average attendance was 120 children. The school is still flourishing having been considerably extended and altered since those days, and is at present attended by 60 children, nearly 50% of whom live in the parish.



Welford House (now Welford Park) was built on the site of a minor monastery, one of the many that came under the control of the abbot and monks of Abingdon Abbey. It was a favourite place for the abbots to stay with a plentiful supply of fish from the large hand-dug fishponds, and game from the forests. On the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 Henry VIII kept Welford as a personal hunting lodge and estate. In 1546 it was



leased to Sir Thomas Parry. His son, another Sir Thomas sold the property to Sir Francis Jones, Lord Mayor of London. In 1680 Mary Jones, the great granddaughter of Sir Francis and sole heiress, married John Archer. The present house was built in 1702 and the estate of about 3000 acres has passed down through the family to the present owners, Mr and Mrs James Puxley, through male and female lines and with a few name changes. For 50 years the grounds have been opened for snowdrop days. Takings from the four Sundays in February are generously donated to local charities.

During the 2nd world war, 600 acres was commandeered to form Welford airbase and occupied by the American 101st Airborne Division. The base was visited by Winston Churchill and General Eisenhower to witness a practice parachute drop prior to the Normandy invasion. On the night of March 31st 1944 the 8 man crew of Lancaster Bomber DV290 were on their way back from a raid on the German town of Nuremberg. At some point the crew saw the lights of Welford and, probably not having a operational radio, decided to land unannounced. As the aircraft lined up on the runway the lights were extinguished believing the un-announced aircraft to be German. The result was that the aircraft struck the runway and the fuel tanks exploded destroying the aircraft and killing all the crew. In 2000 permission was given to raise a memorial in the station memorial garden to the crew. This was dedicated and many of the families of the crew were present.

The base is now used jointly by British and US forces. Underground silos on the base have been used for the storage of conventional arms.

The parish remains an exceptionally pleasant place to live in, amid beautiful countryside and with ease of access to the rest of the country.



6. Welford Parish Today

Much of the recent history of life in the parish can be traced to economic and social changes. Whereas, in the past, a large percentage of the parish population was involved in local agriculture this is no longer the case. There are many households where both couples go to work outside the parish and this has an impact on life in the parish both during the day and in the evening. The six villages in the parish (Wickham, Welford, Easton, Weston, Hoe Benham and Halfway) are widely separated and it has often proved difficult to maintain community cohesion.

Wickham Village Hall provides a venue for many local activities. It is run by a Hall Committee. Events include whist drives, weekly bingo, Parish Council meetings, exhibitions and a lively Women's Institute programme every month. The hall is hired out to people outside the parish. The Wickham Handbell Ringers are an active group which benefited from a grant from the National Lottery 'Awards for All' scheme enabling them to buy a set of new handbells.

Welford and Wickham C.E. Primary School is a flourishing school with a high reputation based on teaching excellence. It attracts many pupils from outside the catchment area. The current pupil population is 60. Two major extensions have been made to the school; an infant classroom and more recently an upper-floor classroom with a computer suite attached. This has greatly improved the school's capabilities and made life very pleasant for all in the school. The Friends of Welford and Wickham School are active in raising money to support the school.

There are two public houses in the parish; the Five Bells in Wickham and the Halfway Inn at Halfway. Whereas, in the past the pubs catered for mostly local trade, increasingly they have catered for people outside the area, attracted by good food and the rural settings. Like most rural pubs they are no longer the centres for local community activities that they used to be.

The two churches in the parish, St Swithun's in Wickham and St Gregory's in Welford continue to be available for worship. Diminishing congregations, mirrored in the country as a whole, have made it difficult to maintain the fabric of the churches and necessitated the rector having to cover 6 different churches.

Wickham is by far the largest of the villages in the parish having the school, a pub and church. However, economic considerations have led to the closing of the local shop and post-office. The postal service in the parish has declined over recent years, again due to economic realities, with only one collection and one late morning delivery each day.

The low road from Newbury to Great Shefford contains the next 3 largest villages, Easton, Welford and Weston which are all similar sizes. Although connected by the road they all have their separate identities. Hoe Benham and Halfway are to the south of the parish and are connected by Hoe Benham Lane. Being close to the A4 they tend to be more focused on Kintbury, Marsh Benham and Newbury.

The construction of the M4 and the upgrading of the road through Wickham (now the B4000) have had a significant effect on the quality of life of the parish. What was a quiet part of the countryside has become a noisy environment for many. It is significant that many issues raised in the questionnaire were concerned with traffic.

B4000

In 1969 this previously quiet country road was widened and straightened to allow vehicles involved in the construction of the M4 to pass more easily. From this time there was a progressive increase of traffic along the road exacerbated by the opening of the Newbury Bypass (A34) in November 1998. Traffic now uses the B4000 as a short cut from Newbury to junction 14 of the M4. In 1999 a traffic survey by local residents showed that over 5,000 vehicles used the road every day, 600 of them Heavy Goods Vehicles. Following a two year campaign in which a 400 signature petition was presented to West Berkshire Council, an Environmental Weight Limit of 7.5 tonnes between Speen and Shefford Woodlands was instigated in February 2003. The high volume of traffic on the B4000 coupled with reckless speeding has made it dangerous to cross the road and effectively divides Wickham into two parts.





M4

The construction of this artery between London and South Wales caused controversy as it passed through large areas of beautiful countryside, including our parish. The road from junction 13 to junction 14 was opened in December 1971 and brought with it noise to large sections of the community. Some houses in Wickham are only 80 metres from the motorway.



A4

The A4 passes through the south end of the parish at Halfway. The M4 has taken much of the traffic away from the road but the general increase in traffic still makes this a busy road.

Community Events

The turn of the century provided the catalyst for a Millennium Celebration in the parish. A Barn Dance was held in a barn at Welford Farm attended by over 200 people. Similarly, the Royal Jubilee was celebrated with a Garden Party in the grounds of Welford Park and a street party in Mant Close where the children were given a commemorative mug and medal.



Bonfire nights, dances, school fetes, village suppers and events run by the W.I. are amongst the activities which have provided the opportunity for local people to get together, maintaining the community spirit that is an essential part of rural life.



7. Population profile

It is not intended to publish here the full data from the questionnaire - this will be available on the website. The number of the households returning the questionnaire was 120 which was 55% of those issued. (The 2001 Census showed a total of 209 households in the parish.) Because of this there needs to be some caution in interpreting the responses. However, some statistics give an important background to the nature of the parish and the issues that have been raised.

- 28% of the households have only one person living in them.
- 30% of people living in the parish are over 60. 18% are under the age of 21
- 56% of households gave Wickham as their nearest village.
- 65 were in owner occupied houses with 50 being rented and 5 provided as part of employment.
- 11 households did not own a car. 53 households had one car and 42 households had 2 cars. Of the 99 vehicles parked on the property only 39 were in a garage and the rest were parked outside on the property.

In the individual section of the questionnaire (open to all household members aged 18 or over) we received 225 responses. (The 2001 census shows 433 aged 17 or over.)

- 33% of those replying had lived in the parish for over 26 years with 13% having lived in the parish for over 51 years.
- 34% are retired people. 14 % are self-employed.



8. Issues raised by the questionnaire

The answers provided by the questionnaire have been analysed and some clear issues have emerged.

Speeding

The B4000 through Wickham was by far the most significant issue of speeding in the parish with 81 people listing it as a major problem. Speeding on Welford Road past the school was the second most important speeding issue. It was these two issues that figured in the answers to the question on speed control measures. 116 people said that there was a strong or medium need to lower the speed limit on the B4000 through Wickham from 40 m.p.h. to 30 m.p.h. Similarly, 119 people wanted the speed limit past the school to be lowered from 40 m.p.h. to 20 m.p.h.

Vehicle activated signs (VAS) were considered to be valuable means of speed control. Since the questionnaire was issued a VAS has been installed on the B4000 on entering Wickham from the Newbury direction. 100 people considered that there was a need for better enforcement of existing speed limits. Following a speed survey paid for by the Parish Council, Wickham has been declared an Area of Special Concern. This means that mobile police speed cameras will be in operation on a regular basis. The use of 'pinch-points' (i.e. road narrowing) was considered to be the most effective calming measure in villages.

Traffic Noise

The reason most people gave for living in the parish was the rural setting. It is sad, therefore, that much of the parish is now blighted by traffic noise. Noise from the M4 was a problem for 145 people who replied, with noise from the B4000 effecting 84 people. There has been discussion about means of reducing the noise from the M4. These include constructing a bund along the local stretch of the M4, shuttering at the Welford road bridge and pressuring the Highways Agency to resurface the M4 with 'quiet' tarmac. Welford is one of the parishes in the M4 Parish Noise Reduction group.



Other Transport/Road Issues

The quality of the road surface on most of the roads in the parish was cause for concern, with the B4000 through Wickham and Welford Road receiving the most complaints. Parking in Wickham has been an issue for many years. In particular, parking outside the school and parking in Mant Close were listed as problems for many people. The school and Parish Council are investigating options to alleviate the school parking problem which is at its height during school opening and closing times. In order of concern the following remaining transport issues were listed: maintenance of hedges and grass verges, lorries using side roads, the position of the speed sign on Wickham Hill, inadequate drainage and inadequate pavements.

Whilst the successful campaign to reduce lorries along the B4000 has worked there are still lorries using the unrestricted side roads such as Hoe Benham Lane. This results in significant damage to the verges and banks as well as breaking up the road surface.

Public Transport

There is an irregular bus service along the Newbury Road through Welford and along the A4 stopping at Halfway. However, there is no bus service through Wickham where roughly half the parish lives. 42 people who do not have a regular bus service said that they have a need for one. A quarter of respondents took taxis and of those people who expressed an opinion 80% said that taxis were too expensive. A trip to or from Newbury town centre can cost between £15 and £30 depending on the time of the day and this is prohibitive for most activities; particularly anybody without a car in Wickham has problems as there are no alternative means of transport. This either restricts people's activities and work options or generates more car journeys, for instance the average teenager could not get a Saturday job relying on taxis as the two way fare is roughly equal to their day's pay. The Welford Parish Plan encourages WBC to attempt to find a way to reduce taxi fares or develop better alternative transport options.



Accessing Services

The low availability of public transport creates a problem for households without a car. In addition to making it difficult to carry out regular shopping for food and other essentials there are other services that are necessary to access. These include visits to the post office, the surgery and the bank. At least 14 people in the parish have this problem. However, because most households have cars, transport companies have found that rural bus services are not economical to run. Potential solutions are the 'Dial-a-Bus' service, subsidy of public transport by the District Council and local car share schemes.

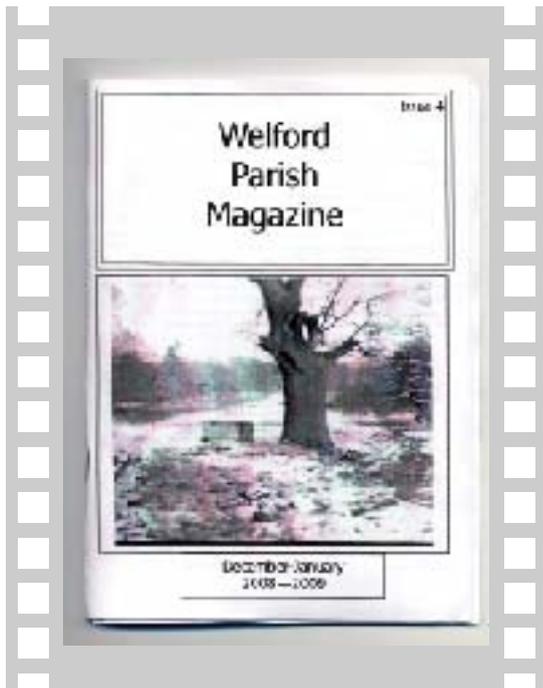
Housing Development

8 families said they had a need for more housing in the parish. Very few local properties come on the market and, more relevantly, even fewer that are affordable by first-time buyers. There is a mixed message on support for a small-scale housing development (less than 10 houses) in the parish with 95 people approving and 113 against. The new development at Teekay Farm is a particular concern with comments that it is disproportionate and contravenes many AONB requirements. The derelict Swedish houses on Easton Hill were considered to be a blight on the landscape and were affecting local house prices.

Village Green

The idea of having a village green on the site of Wickham Green Farm has been considered for several years. It was originally proposed when West Berkshire Council, as part of the District Plan, wanted 40 houses to be built in Wickham. In order to minimise the visual intrusion of this number of houses it was proposed to maintain a green area in the centre of the village with houses round the periphery. After negotiation the number of houses was reduced to 20 and subsequently, on adjudication, to no houses at all. The village green concept has remained, however, and various schemes have been tabled. The idea has not met with universal approval, however, the parish-wide questionnaire showed that 83 people are in favour of a village green and 72 people against. If a village green were created the most sought after features would be a playground area and a pond. 37 people said that they would like houses to be built on the edge of the green.





Parish Newsletter and Magazine

Early on in the parish planning process during the first exhibition the need for a parish newsletter was identified. This basic need was met by the Parish Council issuing a single sheet pamphlet with parish council news, parish notices and contact details for useful services. The questionnaire asked whether people wanted an expanded version with more stories, local news, services and adverts. 74% of respondents were favourable to this suggestion and encouraged by the parish plan a group has started work on an expanded parish newsletter. The first Parish Magazine with articles and adverts has now been published.

Computers

Computer use is above the national average with 67% of responding households having a computer. Broadband access was also high with 91% of households having a computer also having broadband access. Whilst access to broadband does not appear to be a problem in the parish the local exchange can only support 2Mb/s with actual rates often significantly less and this needs to be addressed. An 8Mb/s exchange should be provided in line with other regions of the country, this would be beneficial to the rural economy driving both home working as well as the establishment of local companies.

Recycling Waste

83% of homes recycle waste, although only about half of these recycled plastics, cardboard and green waste. When the questionnaire was issued, only paper, glass and cans were collected at the kerbside by the District Council. For other waste a lengthy trip to the tip at Pinchington Lane was the only solution. However, WBC has let a new household waste contract over the summer of 2008 whereby cardboard, green waste and some plastics will be collected. This is making a significant improvement to a situation that many found unacceptable. These new arrangements may make it un-necessary to create other local centres.

Tidiness

Although the state of the churches and footpaths in the parish were considered by most to be satisfactory there was a clear desire to maintain the tidiness of the parish. To that end 49 people volunteered to help with litter clearing and 28 people volunteered to help with church upkeep and maintenance. By far the greatest response, however, was for help in maintaining the tidiness of the Village Hall with 156 people volunteering. Overgrown hedges are an issue, not just visually but they also impair mobility buggies and can be dangerous to walkers, especially in the dark.

Social Activities

123 people considered that there was a need for more activities for young people in the parish.

There were volunteers for help in pre-school/after-school clubs or a youth club. There was significant support for occasions to play whist, bingo, bridge and to see films, a view supported by the already successful Village Hall bingo and whist clubs.

Activities for senior citizens were requested by 71 people. It was noted there are at least twenty elderly ladies living on their own. Some of them go out very infrequently and therefore have little contact with other people in the parish. To give these ladies an opportunity to socialise, a Lunch Club has been started that meets on the second Monday in every month. Up to 16 people are currently enjoying the benefits of the group.

One outcome has been that the club is turning into a self-help group as well as being a social activity and it is bringing to light problems that can be addressed by the group itself. Events are being run to raise money for a Christmas Party for all the over-60s in the parish. Details will be published in the Parish Magazine.

There was not a lot of response to the subject of youth issues however the need to identify what was important to under-18s in the parish was noted in workshops and the questionnaire. The Parish Plan aims to set up a youth questionnaire to discover what is of concern to youngsters themselves and what they would like to improve in the parish.



Emergency Response

The heavy rain on 20 July 2007 resulted in the flooding of many properties in the parish including Welford & Wickham School and St Gregory's Church. There is continuing debate about what pro-active measures might be taken to alleviate such incidents (e.g. a store of sand-bags). However, it is clear that parishioners would like to know who to contact in case of local emergencies, like loss of electricity or water. There is also a need for information on who to contact in connection with dustbin/recycling collections and who to inform when fly-tipping is seen. This sort of information will be provided in the Parish Magazine.

Neighbourhood Watch

There is a partial Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in operation in the parish. Co-ordinators receive information by e-mail from the police and this is passed on to other parishioners by e-mail; however, the scheme would benefit from being enhanced. During the consultation process of producing the Parish Plan many extra people joined the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

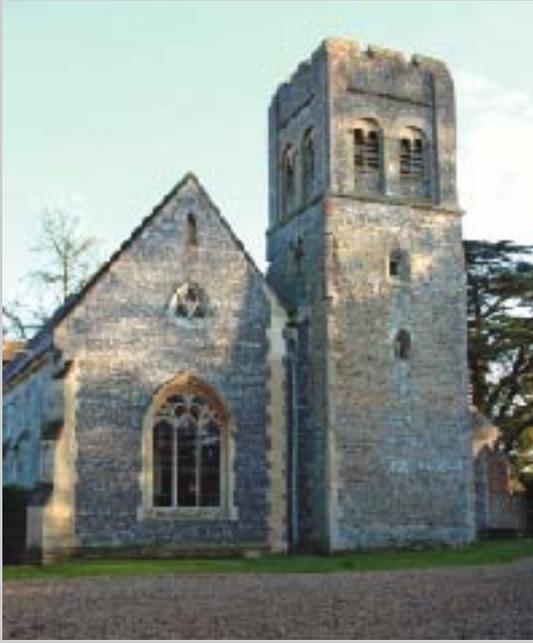
Local Information

Local information is obtained from a variety of sources. The Newbury Weekly News and associated publications together with notice boards are the most used. The new Parish Council Newsletter and church service leaflets were other important means of learning about events in the parish. However it is evident that there is a real need for a Parish Magazine which would include local advertisements and general local information. 11 people said they would help with the production of such a magazine.

Village Hall

There was general contentment with the facilities provided by Wickham Village Hall. Better kitchen facilities including a cooker or microwave oven were the most requested items. A number of cinema clubs have been started in West Berkshire and the questionnaire response indicated that there would be support for one in the Village Hall. Other suggestions included quiz nights, keep fit classes and yoga. Help in running some of these was forthcoming.





The Royal Berkshire Ambulance NHS Trust

The Trust has introduced a 'Volunteer to Save Lives' scheme for local communities using 'Community Responders' to help someone while an ambulance is on its way. 128 people thought that this would be useful in the parish and 8 people were interested in training to become a Community Responder.

Welford and Wickham Primary School

The school puts on a number of activities/concerts during the year. Although primarily intended for the children and parents, many non-parents would like to be invited to more school activities. The restricted space in the school has sometimes made this difficult to achieve. In future, for major productions, it is proposed to use the Arlington Art Centre at the Mary Hare School, Snelsmore Common, which will enable a much larger audience to attend.



Living in the Parish

The overwhelming reason people gave for their reason for living in the parish was the rural setting. The village community/community spirit and nearness to relatives were secondary considerations. In spite of the issues raised by the questionnaire, virtually all parishioners were happy living in the Parish of Welford.



Appendix: Action Plan

This is the list of initial action which the Steering Committee thinks is achievable with the resources and people available. It has been designed to be small with targets that can be met in a sensible time and with a high chance of success. The items on the list can be justified from the research we have done and appear to the committee to be the ones that give the widest benefit to the parish. It is not a complete list of things that we would like to do, for that you need to read the complete plan above, and therefore it is not final.

The list can be added to as things change or as people offer to take on a particular challenge and will be reviewed regularly, at least every 5 years. The Parish Plan Steering Committee will undertake the task of monitoring the plan, keeping it current and managing the projects. The Steering Committee will work with the projects to help them happen and will also act as a conduit for funding allocated to parish planning.

The projects will not happen by themselves and the steering committee does not have the resources by itself to achieve all of these good things. For this to happen the community must work to make these visions come to completion.



Objective	Actions	Priority	Start Date	Finish Date	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification
Safer (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)							
Flooding protection	Investigate river, gullies and ditch clearing, etc	High	Aug-08	Aug-09	Steering Committee, sub group	WBC, Parish Council, Environment Agency	Local concern by residents near rivers, school flooding. Data from workshop sessions. Recent flooding at Welford and the school.
M4 noise	Work with Action group to re-surface. Look at local bund, etc.	High	Jan-08	Jan-11	Parish Council	WBC, M4 Parish Noise Reduction group, Steering Committee	Data from questionnaire and exhibition, previous work by Parish Council. 72% of questionnaire respondents had traffic noise problems.
Speeding	Establish which roads and pressure for lower limits/enforcement	High	Oct-08	Mar-10	Jeremy Smedle	B4000 action group, parish Council, WBC, Police, Steering Committee	Data from questionnaire and exhibition, previous work by Parish Council. 85% of questionnaire respondents had traffic noise problems.
Lorry use along Hoe Benham Lane, and other affected roads	Prevent lorries destroying verges and road surfaces and speeding, Hoe Benham is worst but problem effects all side roads to B4000.	High	Oct-08	Oct-09	Katrina Easterling	WBC, Parish Council, Steering Committee	Local concern by residents on B4000 side roads, source questionnaire (36% of respondents), exhibition and workshop.

Prosperous (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)

Housing needs of local residents	Housing needs survey as a pre-cursor to understanding housing pressure on local development	Medium	Nov-08	Nov-09	Steering Committee, sub group. Organiser Christine Breadmore	CCB Rural Housing Enabler, WBC, parish council, parishioners	Some need highlighted by questionnaire and exhibition, various proposals for more housing in parish. 7% of responding households had a need for local housing.
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Healthy (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)

Youth activities	Youth questionnaire, aim to find what is needed. Organise local activities such as rural arts, etc. Look at transport issues for youth	Medium	Nov-08	Nov-09	Steering Committee, sub group	Downlands Youth Network, CAWB, Welford and Wickham CoE Primary School	Questionnaire and exhibition. 2001 census under-17s: 89, questionnaire under-18s: 45, 16% of population. 123 questionnaire responses wanted more youth activities.
Family fun day	Organise a family gathering for the parish, fun activities, food, etc. Summer time	Medium	Mar-09	Aug-09	Steering Committee, sub group	Parish Council	Workshop comments.
Retired and home based parishioners' self help group	Helping them to help themselves, mutual support, discover what is really required and organise it, e.g. social, prescriptions, emergency contact, transport, etc. Widows' lunch grouped already formed.	High	May-08	May-10	Dottie Channing-Williams	Nigel Owen (WBC), CAWB. Chaddleworth group, Handi-bus, Steering Committee	Highlighted by questionnaire, workshop and exhibition. Safety concerns with distraction burglaries. 2001 census over-64: 83, questionnaire over-60: 87, 32% of population. 81 respondents requested senior citizen activities.
Parish website	Create a website for community information and discussion	High	May-08	May-09	Leigh Rolls and friends	CAWB, Parish Council, Steering Committee	Questionnaire and exhibition.
Walks	Community action, local walks for social and recreation	Low	Oct-08	Mar-10	Steering Committee, sub group	WBC Walking for Health, Berkshire RIGS	Workshop comments, questionnaire and exhibition highlighted need to build a better community.
Parish Magazine	Community organised magazine, with a wide range of articles, news and information backed by adverts	High	Mar-08	Jun-08	Christine Breadmore	Editorial group, delivery group, parishioners, Steering Committee	Questionnaire (60% of respondents) and exhibition.

Objective	Actions	Priority	Start Date	Finish Date	Project Manager / Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification
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Greener (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).

Litter Clearing	Community action to bring people together and keep the parish clean. Could also be footpath clearance, bulb planting, etc.	Medium	Sep-08	Sep-09	Steering Committee, sub group	Parish Council	Workshop comments, questionnaire and exhibition highlighted need to build a better community. 50 people in the questionnaire said they would help.
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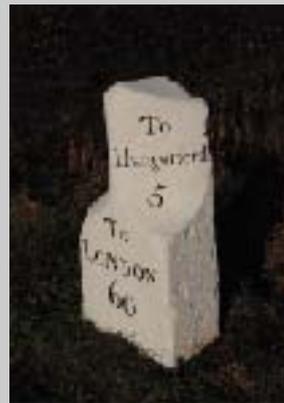
Accessible (e.g. improving accessibility in the rural areas, using innovative ways for services to be accessed by local people).

Retired and home based parishioners' self help group	As above, this is also an accessibility project as there are many problems due to a lack of local transport	High	May-08	May-10	Dottie Channing-Williams	Nigel Owen (WBC), CAWB. Chaddleworth group, Handi-bus, Rural Access to Services Programme (CAWB), Steering Committee	Highlighted by questionnaire, workshop and exhibition. Safety concerns with distraction burglaries. 12% of questionnaire respondents requested help with access to services.
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Wickham Weston Easton

WELFORD PARISH

Welford Halfway Hoe Benham





Welford Parish Plan has been supported by the following organisations:

