

Individual Decision

The attached report will be taken as
Individual Portfolio Member Decision on:

12 July 2010

Ref:	Title	Portfolio Member(s)	Page No.
ID2037	Cold Ash Parish Plan	Councillor Pamela Bale	3 -19

Individual Member Decision

Title of Report:	Cold Ash Parish Plan	
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Pamela Bale	on: 12th July 2010
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2037	

Purpose of Report: To seek adoption of the Cold Ash Parish Plan by the Council

Recommended Action: The Plan be formally adopted by the Council as an important document

Reason for decision to be taken: Formal adoption of the Parish Plan.

List of other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Cold Ash Parish Plan

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 Since December 2008 Community Led Plans (or Parish Plans) have been formally endorsed by West Berkshire Council, via the Individual Decision process.
- 1.2 The endorsement of a Parish Plan means that the Council commits to working positively with the community to realise the vision set out in the plan. This means that the Council will give approval or sanction, where it can, actions that have the support of the community and have been included in the Parish Plan Action Plan. This is subject to the draft Action Plan having been circulated to the Council and its Partners by prior agreement and the actions discussed in consultation with the Principal Policy Officer for Community Planning.

Community Planning In West Berkshire

- 1.3 West Berkshire Council, working alongside other key partners from the Local Strategic Partnership such as the Community Council for Berkshire and the local community, has promoted the development of Community Planning across the District.
- 1.4 The Council's success in pushing forward this work has been recognised nationally; firstly through the award of Beacon Status for the local authority in 2006 as part of the "Empowering Communities Improving Rural Services" theme and more recently through the successful joint local authorities bid to the national Beacon Peer mentoring fund, which the Council led, to further develop work in Community Planning.
- 1.5 Parish Plans are key documents that set out a vision for how a community wishes to develop in the future. They contain an action plan that will help to realise that vision.
- 1.6 Parish Plans are developed through a wide ranging consultation process with the local community. This helps ensure that the resulting plan reflects the needs and aspirations of local people. The Plans are therefore an important source of intelligence about the views and concerns of the community as well as highlighting specific actions that communities wish to see taken in their areas. This information plays an important part in shaping both service planning and delivery across the Council but is increasingly being used to inform Council strategy and policy development.
- 1.7 The process by which Parish Plans are developed involves extensive liaison and engagement with service providers and statutory organisations, most especially the Council. This close involvement and dialogue helps ensure that officers are aware of the direction and aspirations of the community and can help develop meaningful and realistic actions.

- 1.8 This close engagement between the Council and the community at a very practical level helps to provide an excellent platform for improving relationships and communications between the local authority and the communities it serves.
- 1.9 A further benefit emerging from Community Planning is that it has helped bring communities and organisations together to focus on developing solutions to local problems, for example; joint working on environmental issues, such as noise from the M4; allotment provision; growing food locally and development of local business groups.
- 1.10 The Cold Ash Parish Plan was originally endorsed in April 2006 and the attached document now refreshes the Parish Plan and Action Plan with new priorities.
- 1.11 The action plan is built around the 5 themes of the sustainable community strategy. This provides an ideal focus for the plan and helps develop clear links between local activities and the overall strategic vision for the district.
- 2. Recommendations**
- 2.1 It is RECOMMENDED that the Plan be formally adopted by the Council as an important document.

Appendices

Appendix: Cold Ash Parish and Action Plan

Implications

Policy:	Parish Plans are an integral part of the Council's Vibrant Villages theme within the Council Plan
Financial:	There are no specific financial implications arising from this report at this stage. Any of the actions in the Parish Plan that have financial implications for services will need to be addressed as and when those actions are moved forward. If actions require additional resources these will be brought to Members for consideration in due course.
Personnel:	There are no personnel implications at this stage
Legal:	There are no direct legal implications at this stage
Environmental:	Parish Plans often raise many local environmental issues and as such can play a very useful role in conserving and enhancing the environment at a very local level.
Equalities:	The consultation carried out in support of the Parish Plan helps ensure that all people have an opportunity to have their views and concerns heard.

- Partnering:** Parish Plans are an excellent example of partnering between the local community and the Council.
- Property:** No specific property implications. Any property related matters within the action plan will be addressed by the relevant service as and when the action is moved forward by the community in conjunction with the Council.
- Risk Management:** There are no direct risk management issues arising from the plan. As and when actions are moved forward any risk issues will be addressed by the relevant service area.
- Community Safety:** There are no specific or direct Community Safety implications.

Consultation**Members:****Leader of Council:** Councillor Graham Jones**Overview & Scrutiny
Commission Chairman:** Councillor Brian Bedwell**Select Committee
Chairmen:** Councillor Emma Webster (Greener)
Councillor Geoff Findlay (Healthier)
Councillor Irene Neill (Stronger)
Councillor Quentin Webb (Safer)**Ward Members:** Councillors Geoff Findlay**Opposition
Spokesperson:** Councillor Jeff Brooks**Local Stakeholders:** WBC, GCT, Safer Communities Partnership, Voluntary Sector.**Officers Consulted:** All Senior Management within WBC and West Berkshire Partnership Board**Trade Union:** N/A

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: X	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

COLD ASH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP [CACP]
(Constituted: - 3 August 2006)

Cold Ash Parish Plan Refresh – 2010

(Approved by - *Cold Ash Parish Council on 13 April 2010*)

(Adopted by – *West Berkshire Council on 12 July 2010*)

Acknowledgments

- The parishioners who completed the questionnaire and attended the public meetings giving their constructive comments and ideas.
- Cold Ash Community Partnership Committee Members.
- Cold Ash Parish Council.
- Greenham Common Trust who helped with the questionnaire through design, production, data input and analysis.
- The many volunteers who delivered the questionnaire to every home in the Parish.
- Community Council for Berkshire, especially Sarah Ward, who provided support and guidance through the whole process.
- West Berkshire Council.

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Attachments:-

- 1. Parish Action Plan – Cold Ash.**
- 2. Parish Map.**

COLD ASH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP [CACP]

(Constituted: - 3 August 2006)

A. Background

The first Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Parish Plan was produced following extensive consultation with parishioners including questionnaires and public meetings. The Plan was approved by Cold Ash Parish Council on 28th March 2006 and by the Newbury Area Forum on 25th April 2006.

In August 2006, the Cold Ash Community Partnership (CACP) was formed to realise the vision for Local Community Development described in the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Parish Plan and in particular to progress the Action Plans appended to it. The CACP constitution objectives states:-

"In order to achieve its purpose the partnership shall have the following key objectives for action: -

- ***To ensure that the CACP remains in contact with the community and responsive to it.***
- ***To seek out and work with partners to ensure the delivery of those projects and action plans.***
- ***To identify and apply for sources of funding.***
- ***To study whether changes to the Action Plans or ways of working are required.***
- ***To promote the interests of the community as identified through the Parish Plan."***

These objectives have been sustained throughout the ensuing two years and much has been achieved.

- Eight of the original nine Action Plan groups are self-sufficient and have achieved their objectives.
 - Cold Ash Society of Theatre Goers (CAST)
 - Cinema
 - Cricket
 - Environment
 - Post Office Services
 - Tennis
 - Transport & Road Safety
- In May 2008 a new Action Group – Parish Development - was added to monitor major housing development proposals as part of the West Berkshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Consultations. This group also acted in an advisory capacity to the Parish Council Planning sub committee.

The achievements of these actions groups, under various headings below, show the benefits to the village:

- **Traffic Management & Safety:** Village gateway signs, vehicle activated signs, changes to parking outside both village schools and improvements to the Rights of Ways to facilitate safer school pedestrian routes.
- **Leisure Activities:** New (theatre visits & community cinema) and assistance for the cricket & tennis clubs to obtain local grants.

COLD ASH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP [CACP]

(Constituted: - 3 August 2006)

- **Development:** Monitoring major housing development proposals outside the village settlement boundaries - which could affect the rural aspects of the community contrary to the Village Design Statement (May 2002)
- **Post Office:** Additional services established and refurbishment of facilities.
- **Communications:** Welcome packs for new residents and an e-mail communications group.
- **Crime Reduction:** Expansion of the Neighbourhood Watch.

B. The Parish Plan Refresh Process

Due to the very successful results achieved within 2 years, by the majority of the initial Action Groups, the CACP realised that the Parish Plan needed to be updated as soon as possible and not wait until 2011 (the WBC suggested five year time frame) to refresh the Parish Plan.

Consequently, in September 2008 - with the approval of the Parish Council - a joint Parish Council / CACP questionnaire was delivered to over 1250 households. The questionnaire had two purposes:

- (i) To seek views regarding WBC LDF proposals.
- (ii) To seek views regarding future services/facilities within the Parish.

Over 42% (538) of questionnaires were returned and demonstrated that residents were largely satisfied with the character of the villages and the sense of community. As before, the highest number of replies came from the villages of Cold Ash and Ashmore Green, residents of Manor Park and Florence's Way relating more to Newbury and Thatcham respectively.

The initial set of questions dealt with the need to preserve the open gaps between the various settlements, with 85% (457) supporting the maintenance of the Thatcham/Newbury gap and 94% (506) that between Thatcham/Cold Ash. There was an extremely strong desire to maintain the rural character of the Parish (94% - 506) and against any large scale development (95% - 511).

Flooding was an important issue with 82 respondents having been flooded in 2007 and/or 2008. Flood preventative action is a continuing fact of life with 59 properties still sandbagged in September 2008. 93% (501) of respondents were opposed to building on land either subject to flooding or which contributes to flooding.

Car dependency is prevalent throughout the Parish with 75% (404) of residents relying on their car for both travel to work and also for shopping, with 56% (301) using the car for travel to school. The use of the car was independent of proximity of the residents to Thatcham where 29% (156) of responders went for their principal weekly shop. The Cold Ash Post Office & Shop was used by 63% (339) of responders at least weekly, indicating the importance of the Shop.

The responses to Q10 – clubs and associations – showed that there is still a lack of knowledge of the facilities already available in the village, specifically clubs for dancing, golf, theatre visits, and book clubs all of which were requested by residents. In addition interest was expressed in an art & craft club, drama and photography, and in badminton, fitness, running and cycling.

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A public meeting was held on 6 March 2009 [50 attendees] to update parishioners on the findings of the September 2008 questionnaire and seek further opinions. As a result two additional activities [business and greening] were identified.

On 6 June 2009 a successful Village Showcase was held to enable the 40 + organisations which operate in the Parish to demonstrate their activities and facilities, including those set up by the Partnership arising out of the original Parish Plan. Over 200 residents attended - whose views were solicited and as a result six activity groups, with interested individuals, were identified.

C. The Action Plan

The process of parish planning has developed considerably since Cold Ash undertook its first plan in 2006. Building on good ideas from many communities, West Berkshire developed – in 2009 - a template that it requires communities to use in describing their parish plans. This asks communities to consider their needs and aspirations under five headings which match the 5 key themes of the West Berkshire Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy:

- **A Strong 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.
- **A Safe Community** - Examples of this include reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning.
- **A Healthy Community** - Communities are asked to think widely about health, including such things as fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people.
- **A Prosperous Community** - Communities may, for example, seek to support the economy of villages, encourage Tourism, or support employment in rural areas.
- **A Green Community** - This can include reducing carbon footprint in the community; reducing waste and increasing recycling; encourage consumption of local produce; increasing diversity of local wildlife.

The following paragraphs using the above headings show the aspirations of the parishioners of Cold Ash with the resultant objectives and actions. This is followed by the consolidated Action Plan – ***see Attachment 1***

COLD ASH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP [CACP]

(Constituted: - 3 August 2006)

D. A Strong Community

Questionnaire/Public meetings - Results and commentary

The returned questionnaires demonstrated that residents were largely satisfied with the character of the Parish and the sense of community that already existed. The Post Office and shop was well used and an asset to the parishioners.

The enhanced e-mail information service together with the village web site, parish (church) magazine and parish council bulletin assisted with the dissemination of information to all. Additionally, the welcome pack for all new residents proved popular.

The annual August Bank Holiday Fete and the many activities held in the Acland Memorial Hall [AMH] were well supported by parishioners. As a result the AMH management committee will be seeking ways to increase the facilities to meet the demand.

Community Actions

- The Cold Ash website should be revised to reflect the need for improved communications within the Parish.
- The AMH should provide additional facilities.
- CACP should assist new activities to become established.

E. A Safe Community

Questionnaire/Public meetings - Results and commentary

The questionnaire identified that the most serious concern was speeding vehicles through the villages. Safety outside both schools during term time was also mentioned. Additionally, the condition of the ditches, drains and hedges throughout the parish also caused concern.

Since the questionnaire was issued [Sep 2008] - village gateway signs, vehicle activated signs, changes to parking outside both village schools and improvements to the Rights of Ways to facilitate safer school pedestrian routes have been implemented.

Community Actions

- The Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) is monitoring speeding in the village.
- The Parish Council, in conjunction with WBC, is monitoring the condition of the ditches, drains and hedgerows.
- The Parish Council, in conjunction with WBC, is producing a plan to deal with emergencies.
- The CACP (Parish Development Group) will continue to participate in the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Thatcham.

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F. A Healthy Community

Questionnaire/Public meetings - Results and commentary

The Parish is fortunate in having available a wide range of sporting and recreational activities. (Sports clubs include - Tennis (for both adults and children), with membership restricted due to an inadequate number of courts – Cricket – Golf – Soccer. Other clubs include – Preschool, Toddlers, Path-users (a regular walking club) - Dancing - Brownies, Guides & Rangers, Beavers, Cubs, & Scouts). Additionally, play areas for children are available at Southend and the recreation ground in Cold Ash.

Responses to the Parish Plan Refresh and Youth questionnaire and proposals from parishioners at the Village Showcase indicated a wish for the following clubs:

- Badminton.
- Bridge.
- Crafts.
- Youth drama
- Youth film making.
- Youth orienteering.

Additionally, residents indicated that the need to preserve the open gaps between the various settlements, to maintain the rural character of the Parish and prevent any large scale developments were of paramount importance.

Community Actions

- Two clubs (Bridge and Crafts) have been launched successfully.
- The CACP has obtained funding for the setting up of the Youth Film Making Club.
- The CACP should establish a Badminton Club when premises become available.
- The CACP will seek 'champions' to establish Youth Drama and Orienteering groups.
- The CACP (Parish Development Group) will continue to monitor major housing developments and any proposed variations to the Village Settlement boundaries in order to maintain the requirements for a healthy community, as identified in the Village Design Statement.

G. A Prosperous Community

Questionnaire/Public meetings - Results and commentary

The only commercial activity, other than those serving the residents, is contained with the Red Shute Hill Industrial Estate. 18% of those responding work from home, of which 36 indicated that they would be interested in joining a Business Group if one were to be set up.

59% of persons responding were retired, and with 1.8 motor vehicles per household, the car was the favoured means of transport. The restricted availability of accommodation limits the range of additional organisations which can be established in the community, although this situation will change when the rebuilding of St Finian's School take place. Other options will continue to be investigated.

Community Actions

- The CACP should progress the setting up of a Business Group.

CACP - Cold Ash Parish Plan Refresh 2010

COLD ASH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP [CACP]

(Constituted: - 3 August 2006)

H. A Green Community

Public meetings - Results and commentary

The two public meetings confirmed that residents felt that the village should be more proactive in reducing their carbon footprint through saving energy, promoting renewable energy and further action on recycling. As a result 'Greening Cold Ash Parish' – linked with the National Greening Campaign for guidance and support - was formed in June 2009.

The National Greening Campaign Phase 1 (Engaging the Community) of 4 was completed on 13 March 2010. The results show that parishioners were committed to energy efficient measures, which would save money and reduce carbon emissions. It was agreed the Parish should continue to work together with The Greening Campaign and move forward to Phase 2 (Community Projects). Projects proposed for Phase 2 could include:-

- Energy reduction (insulation).
- Local food (grow own: allotments: share & sell).
- Waste management.
- Energy saving devices (loan for short term trial)
- Bulk buying (light bulbs – heating oil – insulation materials).
- Education (involve families).

Community Actions

- CACP continues to support Greening Cold Ash Parish during Phase 2 of The Greening Campaign.

Attachments:-

- 1. Parish Action Plan – Cold Ash.**
- 2. Parish Map.**

PARISH ACTION PLAN**COLD ASH**

Approved by Parish Council - 13 April 2010

PLAN ADOPTED BY WBC – 12 JULY 2010

Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Project Manager/ Lead Partner	Other Partners	Possible Funding Sources	Justification
STRONG (e.g including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities – including accessible services for all)							
Improve the Parish web site.	Devise new procedures for operating/accessing.	M	Mar 10	CAPC	CACP		Information dissemination for village organisations to users.
Expand the Parish E-mail data base.	Seek participation from Parishioners.	M	Jun 09	CACP			Information dissemination – well used during recent bad weather for issuing public notices from WBC / CAPC.
Provide additional facilities in the Acland Hall.	Seek views from users & parishioners with a questionnaire.	H	Mar 10	AHMC	GCT		Need for additional facilities for meetings and storage.
	Seek funding for any facilities identified.	M	May 10	AHMC	CACP CAPC WBC		

SAFE (e.g reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)							
Reduce speeding	Monitor initiatives by Cold Ash & Hermitage NAG.	M	Jun 09	NAG TVP	CAPC CACP WBC		Concerns raised by many (70%) parishioners.
Improve flood protection	Ensure ditches and drains in the Parish are cleared regularly.	H		CAPC	WBC		To minimise the risk of further flooding of domestic properties.
	Monitor progress and implementation of the actions from the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) .	M		CACP (PDG)	CAPC WBC EA		
Emergency planning	Develop a plan to deal with emergencies.	H	Apr 08	CAPC	CAPC WBC EA		Provide guidance, relief and support to parishioners in the event of any emergency.
	Identify sources of assistance.		Jan 10	CAPC			
	Identify volunteers.		May 10	CAPC			

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)							
Establish the following clubs/activities:	Form groups and identify support.						Identified as requirements from (51%) parishioners.
a. Bridge	Launched.		Nov 09	CACP		WBC	[Capital Grant obtained].
b. Crafts	Launched.		Jul 09	CACP		CACP	[Room hire costs].
c. Youth - Film Making	Funded.		Mar 10	CACP		WBC	[Capital Grant obtained].
d. Badminton	Seeking facilities.	L	2011	CACP			
e. Youth – Drama	Seeking 'champion'.	M	2010	CACP	WBC (YS)		
f. Youth - orienteering	Seeking 'champion'.	M	2010	CACP	WBC (YS)		
Monitor major housing developments which could affect the Village Settlement boundaries	Work with Parish Council to ensure potential major developments meet the requirements of the VDS.	M		CACP (PDG)	CAPC WBC		Identified as a major concern from (95%) parishioners.
PROSPEROUS (e.g Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)							
Establish a Business Group.	Form group and identify support.	M	2010	CACP			Identified as requirement from 36 parishioners.

GREEN (e.g reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encouraging consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).							
Establish a Greening Group.	Form group and identify support.		Jun 09	CACP	WBC		Identified as requirement from (25%) parishioners.
	Greening Campaign Phase 1 –		Jul 09	CACP (GG)	CACP	CACP	[Room hire/insurance].
	Create public awareness and involvement to reduce carbon footprint.						(Completed Mar 10)
	Greening Campaign Phase 2 –						
	Community activities could include:	M	Apr 10	CACP (GG)	CACP CAPC		Identified as requirement from (45%) parishioners.
	Energy reduction (insulation).						
	Local food (grow own: allotments: share & sell).						
	Waste management.						
	Energy saving devices (loan for short term trial).						
	Bulk buying (light bulbs – heating oil – insulation materials).						
	Education (involve families).						

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: -

AHMC	Acland Hall Management Committee
CACP	Cold Ash Community Partnership
CACP (GG)	Cold Ash Community Partnership (Greening Group)
CACP (PDG)	Cold Ash Community Partnership (Parish Development Group)
CAPC	Cold Ash Parish Council
EA	Environment Agency
GCT	Greenham Common Trust
NAG	Neighbourhood Action Group
TVP	Thames Valley Police
WBC	West Berkshire Council
WBC (YS)	West Berkshire Council (Youth Service)