

HUNSDON PARISH PLAN

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HUNSDON PARISH PLAN

Introduction

(Road maps & photos to be added)

The Setting

The Parish of Hunsdon lies within the District of East Herts. To the south it borders the River Stort, marking the Herts/Essex boundary and extends to the limits of Widford in the north. The western boundary broadly follows the watershed overlooking the Ash and Lea valleys and in the east the Parish takes in much of the old RAF Hunsdon Base bordering Eastwick.

Map of Parish here

The Parish enjoys a rich heritage: the village centre is a conservation area with the High Street lined with 16th and 17th century cottages. To the south Hunsdon House, was once owned by Henry VIII and used for hunting also became a safe refuge from diseases prevalent in London for both the King and his offspring. The high ground to the east of the village was the site of an operational RAF Base from 1941 to the end of the war. Runway features and some of the base buildings are still evident around

It is a typical rural parish having primarily agricultural economic activities with the bulk being arable farming.

The A414 dual carriageway Primary Route cuts east/west across the Parish in the Stort valley linking the village via its junction with Church Lane to nearby town centres, Harlow, Hertford, Ware and the M11 and A10.

Church Lane running northwards from the A414 joins with Acorn Street at Hunsdonbury and goes on to meet the B180 (High Street) in the village centre. The B180 connects Stanstead Abbots, through Hunsdon, north to Widford where it joins the B1004 running north to the Hadhams and on to the A120 west of Bishops Stortford.

The north south route from the A414 through Hunsdon and via the B1004 provides a convenient rat-run for drivers wishing to avoid congestion in the Harlow/Bishops

Stortford corridor thus bringing pressures not only on Hunsdon village centre but also Widford and the Hadhams

The Community and Services

The population of the Parish is just over 1000 in some 400 dwellings. The populated area is centred of the village together with a cluster around Hunsdonbury and the Church and ribbon development northwards on Widford Road (B180).

Surveys show that: -

- ❑ The population under 16 years of age was 200, a similar number were over 60. The average age of the population was marginally higher than the average for the whole District or the Nation as a whole.
- ❑ The proportion of married people was 61% compared with National average of 51%
- ❑ There were no significant ethnic minority groups.
- ❑ Those stating to be in good health were 72% which was lower than in East Herts as a whole but higher than the National average.
- ❑ Of the population between 16 and 64 some 68% were in employment. The unemployment rate of 2.2% was lower than the National rate of 3.4%.
- ❑ Households in owner/occupied property were 68% - close to the National average.
- ❑ Households with 2 or more cars is double the National average but typical of many rural areas with limited public transport.

Whilst there are still some local employers, the traditional source of local employment, agriculture, is not labour intensive and consequently most residents commute to places of work.

Hunsdon is a vibrant community with a JMI School of some 100 pupils, a village stores/Post Office, garage for car repairs, servicing and fuel and two public houses. The Post office is viable and not threatened by closure. The school is the driver of many of the social activities for families in the area through fund raising events etc. Also community activities are centred on the Village Hall; these include amateur dramatics, scouts, cubs, beavers, toddlers, badminton, annual fete, summer ball, gardening club, history society, and carpet bowls.

Hunsdon achieved Village of the Year in 2004/05 and has twice been awarded Business Village of the year.

The community is served by 6 bus routes connecting the village to Hertford, Ware, Bishops Stortford, Lea Valley, Harlow and surrounding rural communities.

Rail connections are conveniently situated at Harlow and Stansted Abbots.

The Ash Meadow Much Hadham medical practice provides morning surgeries and a prescription service at the Village Hall.

The Parish Church of St Dunstan is situated adjacent to Hunsdon House, remote from the village centre, providing for regular worship and wedding and funeral services.

Issues

The challenges faced by the community and concerns raised through the *Parish Plan* consultation processes revolve around 4 main themes: -

1. Conservation and enhancement of the local environment, particularly in the light of pressures from central government to build extensive housing on Green Belt north of Harlow some within the Parish.

2. Improved safety on the road network, calming traffic within the village centre and improved public transport.
3. Providing for local housing needs to overcome the lack of affordable stock within the Parish.
4. Support for and enhancement of the services available in the village and social activities within the community. In particular, provision of recreational facilities for the village youth and strengthening of measures to reduce crime and vandalism.

Summary of Consultation Processes

1. The first stage of consultation took place at the Village Fete on 28th August 2004. The work was undertaken as part of the Herts CDA “Active Parishes” project. (*Appendix A*)
2. In December 2006 the Parish Council asked a small group of Hunsdon residents to prepare a Parish Plan. The Steering Group included 7 residents representing a range of interests, male and female, and included one Parish Councillor. A grant of £1500 was given by East Herts Council to cover the costs of plan preparation.
3. The Group’s first action was to prepare a consultation leaflet, based on the results of 1 above, to seek views on the issues to be included in the Parish Plan. Two versions were produced: one entitled “Your Village Needs You” was delivered to every house. The second entitled “The Hunsdon of the Future” was designed particularly for young people and was presented to and discussed with children at the Hunsdon Village School and delivered to houses with young people. Responses were requested by 31st March 2007 and each response was entered into a draw for a £50 prize. (*Appendix B*)
4. A special contribution from Hunsdon Village School was their Travel Plan. This was one of the first to be prepared in the County and won an award that resulted in the purchase of a bike shed. (*Appendix C*)
5. A special stall was set up at the September Village Fete to further promote and consult on ideas for the Plan.
6. An analysis of responses received from 3,4 and 5 above (*Appendix D*) was the basis for an intensive exercise by the Steering Group to convert the responses into a Draft Plan. This was summarised as “Your Village Needs You – Update & Invitation” (*Appendix E*). It was delivered to each house and discussions were also held with school children. As with the previous stage a £50 prize, by draw, was offered for responses. The Draft Plan was then presented to a Village public meeting on 4th December 2007. The outcome of the meeting, attended by 200 residents, was overwhelming approval of the Draft Plan.
7. The summary was elaborated into the Parish Plan which follows. This took each proposal and defined it in detail, identified the specific actions required and allocated tasks to particular people or organisations. It was presented to and adopted by the Parish council in January 2008.

Hunsdon Parish Plan

January 2009 Update

Aims of the Plan

The aims of the Plan, as determined by public consultation, should be to:

1. **Conserve the environment of the Village and its surrounding countryside.**
2. **Improve safety in the Village, particularly in relation to traffic.**
3. **Ensure that local housing needs are met.**
4. **Support the social life and facilities of the Village.**

It is the intention to regularly monitor progress on the implementation of the Hunsdon Parish Plan and this document will be used to record the outcome of this monitoring.

The Plan will be reviewed annually and presented to the Parish Council for adoption.

January 2009 annotations to the plan are highlighted in **BLUE**. These include suggestion amendments by CDA for Herts to facilitate progression of the Travel and Transport objectives in partnership with Herts CC and Herts Highways.

Policy or Proposal	Action	Activity Owner	Priority
<u>A) General</u>			
1. Hunsdon to have an active voice	PC to establish a network of suitably qualified volunteers within the parish to read and where necessary promote a response to consultations and documents Areas identified as Education, Crime (David Kitching), Business, Recreation, Transport (Bob Toll), Health, Council Services, Green Issues (John Ashley), Housing (Sandra Fawcett) and Youth. Further individuals to be identified	Parish Clerk	1, 2.& 3 Immediate and continuing.
2. To demand higher priority for policies to support rural communities and protection of the countryside in L.D.F and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.	Representations to EHC, HCC, EERA & Government. Seek support from HAPTC, CPRE, FoE HCC, EHDC CDA have all been briefed		
3. To reject proposals to review the Green Belt to develop up to 25,000 houses north of Harlow. The community believes this to be unnecessary, unsustainable and to have been pursued by a totally undemocratic process.	Support for STOP Harlow North as follows: 1. Parishioners individually physically and financially 2. PC to continue to mandate a representative on SHN 3. PC to continue funding support of SHN	Nigel Clark	
4. To revitalise the 'Good Neighbour' Scheme for the benefit of all with a disadvantage and to reinforce community spirit.	Establish working party from community groups led by PCC	Lorraine Newman	4 & 5 Immediate
5. To develop a 'welcome pack' for all new residents and a system of welcome visits.	As 4. above + include in PC budget. Alert Parish Magazine. distributors	Lorraine Newman	

<i>Policy or Proposal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Activity Owner</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<u>B) Environment</u>			
1. To include the whole of the Parish, outside the present Village envelope, in an extended Green Belt north of Harlow. The boundary to be defined in relation to local housing needs.	1-5 PC Propose to EHC as part of Local Development Framework and Development Control process.	Parish Council currently own issues 1 to 5	Immediate
2. To support and include the whole of the Parish, east of Widford Road and Stanstead Road as part of the Gilston Great Park proposal.	Liaise with adjoining parishes to ensure consistency. Establish GGP Steering Group.		2009
3. To give special emphasis to conservation and improvement to the historic parklands and woodland landscape in the southern part of the Parish as a green back-drop to the built-up area of Harlow.	Seek support from CMS and land-owners. PC to ensure when commenting on planning applications. Establishment of a GGP Steering group awaits the decision on the development of the airfield.		
4. To seek landscape improvements to the open areas in the northern part of the Parish, in particular to increase the area of woodland in accordance with EHC policy ENV10.	1 to 5 The outcome of the legal challenge to the Regional Plan is awaited. Full support provided to the Local Development Framework Consultation		
5. To support the Conservation Area policies for the centre of the Village as adopted by the District Council.			
6. To establish a comprehensive record of all sites and features of historic, ecological or scenic value in the Parish in order to secure their protection and enhancement.	Seek funding support from Ropemakers to provide expertise - Village organisations to compile with reference to local authority and specialist organisation records.	Local History Society	2009
7. To support the establishment of a Village Museum.	VHMC / PCC The design for the proposed annex to the rear of the hall incorporates provision for a museum	Village Hall Management Committee	2008
8. To support continuation of the Litter Picking service	PC to continue to include in budget	Parish Council	Continuing
9. To improve security within the village in answer to parishioner's requests, the Parish Council should explore the potential for street lighting outside the Dell.	PC to open discussions with HCC to assess the viability of reintroducing limited street lighting outside the entrance to the Dell play area	Parish Council	Immediate

<i>Policy or Proposal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Activity Owner</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<p><u>C) Traffic and Transport</u></p> <p>1. To improve the safety of both non-road users and road users within the village HCC HH should be requested to implement a range of traffic calming measures which will result in increased safety within the village environment. . It should be noted that this could result in limited street lighting being installed in the village. To these ends a parish referendum should be held on options for street lighting</p> <p>2. To improve the uptake and use of public transport by Hunsdon villagers, the Parish Council, CDA and HCC should correlate and publish a review of current services thru the village and where appropriate lobby for the provision of an improved service.</p> <p>3. To implement a set of unique Village Signs and “Gateways” as a fitting entrance to the Village.</p>	<p>NOTE: Items 1, 2 & 3 in this section could possibly be addressed through this Plan (via a HCC, HH (HO) Travel Plan award) by using the expertise of the CDA together with the PC for recommendation to HCC, HH(HO) for a Travel Plan award to enable implementation. Items 4 & 5 to be addressed through HCC HH (Area Office – Maintenance). Item 6 to be addressed by PC and EHDC. Item 7 to be addressed by HCC HH Item 8 to be addressed by HCC ROW and HCC HH (HO)</p> <p>1. To achieve this, the PC should discuss common issues with adjacent parish councils and then lobby HCC HH to conduct an assessment of the current traffic situation and seek proposals and finance for appropriate measures to be implemented.</p> <p>2. The PC should reintroduce 6 monthly checks on vehicle speed through the village with the police speed gun.</p> <p>3. Hunsdon School could consider involving pupils in an assessment of traffic movements in the village. Hunsdon School have now created an award winning travel plan</p> <p>4. Core Group to arrange referendum.</p> <p>Parish Plan Team to establish a user group and invite CDA to help identify and collate available services to the village. This group to recommend, where appropriate, improvement to these services. PC should publish the review of services (Parish Web Site) and lobby HCC for improved services, where identified.</p> <p>PC to liaise with CDA, HCC, HH (HO)</p>	<p>Bob Toll</p> <p>Bob Toll</p> <p>Bob Toll</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>2008</p> <p>2009</p>

C) Traffic and Transport (cont)			
4. To improve the ease and safe use of pavements within the village, the Parish Council and HCC HH (Area Office - Maintenance) should arrange for hedges and obstructions which currently limit the width of pavements to be cutback and/or removed.	PC to survey the pavements and where the pavement abuts private properties, require the property owner to affect a remedy. If this is not successful, to request HCC HH (Area Office - Maintenance) to affect a remedy. This is regularly addressed by the Parish Council	Parish Council	Immediate
5. To improve the safety of parishioners walking to the village church and to encourage non-vehicular journeys by church goers, HCC HH (Area Office – Maintenance) should be requested to implement a footway from Copthall to St Dunstan’s Church.	PC to: - a) re-open the previously successful discussions with local land owners to reconfirm the availability of the necessary land and b) to approach HCC HH (Area Office – Maintenance) to cost and implement construction	Bob Toll	2008-11 Budgets
6. To improve car parking within the parish, the Parish Council should investigate the potential location of new car parks near the centre of the village.	PC and EHC should make enquires with interested parties to investigate the potential release of land to support parking options.	Bob Toll	Medium term
7. To request design improvements at the junction of Eastwick Road and A414 to ensure that drivers use it in the correct manner.	PC to make representations to HCC HH (HO)	Bob Toll	Immediate
8. To improve cycle access to Harlow and Stanstead Abbots the use of existing rights of way should be considered.	PC to pursue with HCC ROW and HCC (HO)	Bob Toll	Immediate

<i>Policy or Proposal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Activity Owner</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<u>D) Housing Policies</u>			
1. Establish local view on scale, location, mix, type of tenure, restrictions on allocation (e.g. age, length of tenure in locality) of housing development in village	Core group to (1) brainstorm possible development sites and min / max no. of houses each could accommodate (2) seek advice on any legal minimum proportion of affordable housing within each site (3) seek advice on types of tenure, and consequent means of ensuring that the affordable homes are allocated to local people (4) present options to the community and establish preferences. The means of implementation needs to be reviewed in the light of the severely changed financial climate.	Derek Clark	2009
2. Establish, insofar as possible, the implication of Hunsdon's inclusion as a Category 1 settlement in the Local Plan	Core group Engage with EHC. The Parish Council have responded to EHC Core Strategy consultation.		Ongoing
3. Engage with landowners of candidates development sites (Trundles, St Alban's Diocese, Quinto) to facilitate any consequent allocation	Identify and engage with (on behalf of PC) landowners. When considering any such development should consult with the Rural Housing Trust		As required
4. Develop a parish council policy on response to Applications for development of existing housing Stock.	The Parish Council should consider if there is a need for such a policy.	Parish Council	
5. Consider establishment of 'Village Properties for Sale' register.	Core group		

Policy or Proposal	Action	Activity Owner	Priority
<p>E) Services</p> <p>1. To support the existing services and facilities within the Village through use and publicity and through objections to proposed changes including the shop, pubs and garages.</p>	<p>The creation of a yearly local business directory for each household Advertisement of local enterprise on Hunsdon.org Continued advertisement of local services in the Village News</p> <p>To be ready to take action if the Village Post Office is threatened with closure in any further round of Post Office proposed changes as follows: In the event of a proposed School Closure in the future residents would be ready to work with, and support, Hunsdon JMI School in a similar campaign.</p> <p>Community support and promotion in Village web-site.</p>	<p>To be determined</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>I</p> <p>If a further treat arises.</p>
<p>2. To support the further development of Village Hall facilities including a Village Medical Centre.</p>	<p>Medical facilities incorporated in the hall annex design.</p>	<p>VHMC/Doctors</p>	<p>If the need arises</p> <p>Now happening</p>
<p>3. To provide a forum for airing local issues on web-site including publication on planning applications received by PC</p>		<p>Mike Newman</p>	
<p>4. To seek improved re-cycling facilities and collections and to aim to be a 'sustainable' village. To publicise grants available.</p>	<p>Lobby EHDC for a more comprehensive collection of recyclables.</p> <p>Parish plan group to form a working party to set criteria for solar panels and windmills and to investigate ways of reducing Hunsdon's carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Deb Clark</p> <p>Parish Council</p>	<p>2009</p>
<p>5. To widen support for 'neighbourhood watch' in order to reduce vandalism.</p>	<p>Meetings for small neighbourhood groups to share ideas and information proposed. E-mail alert system now implemented.</p>	<p>David Kitching</p>	<p>Continuing</p>

<i>Policy or Proposal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Activity Owner</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<u>F) Leisure and Recreation</u>			
1. To improve recreational facilities for teenagers including provision of cycle / skate board facility in The Dell.	PC budget provision. BMX facilities in the Dell being discussed.	Bob Toll /Parish Council	2009
2. To develop a 'trim trail' on a site well related to the Village core as part of Gilston Great Park scheme.	Establishment of a GGP Steering group awaits the decision on the development of the airfield.	GGP Steering Group	2009
3. To investigate the feasibility of building a swimming pool possibly associated with the School.	A view from the school governors to be obtained	Derek Clerk /School Governors	tba
4. Proposals from GGP: develop RAF museum, establish picnic / camp site, honey-pot adjoining River Stort Navigation and at Hunsdon Meads.	See 2 above.	GGP Steering Group	

Policy or Proposal	Action	Activity Owner	Priority
<p>G) Places of Worship To provide for the future needs of Hunsdon's worshipping community providing a place of worship which is fit for all users (the elderly, those with disabilities, parents with very young children, children's groups, teenagers)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the on going needs of the worshipping community. Rev. M Dunstan to report to PCC To formulate and pursue a plan for the future needs of the worshipping community and wider village. ... , Considering restrictions imposed by our need to maintain the Historical nature of our parish Church for future generations whilst providing for the on going needs of the worshipping community. To continue to campaign for a footpath from the village to the Parish Church to provide a safer access for walkers. PCC - HCC 	Lorraine Newman/PCC	<p>May 2008</p> <p>PCC September 2008</p> <p>ongoing</p>
<p>St Dunstan's Church To maintain our parish Church and churchyard As a facility for the wider village community and generations to come e.g. To continue to provide a worshipful venue for weddings in the parish church where the historical and picturesque nature of the building is desirable to many of the couples. Similarly to continue to provide a worshipful venue for funerals for locals and those with associations with Hunsdon and to maintain the lower churchyard as a fitting memorial to those buried there.</p>	<p>A quinquennial inspection of the church building by the Rural Dean with L Jones (church architect) and Churchwardens with a subsequent report to the PCC of work needing to be carried out. Interim inspections carried out yearly by rural Dean and Churchwardens. Churchyard maintenance will be carried out (as long as affordable) by contract ground maintenance company during the growing season. PCC Community churchyard clear up days in march and October</p>	Lorraine Newman/PCC	<p>Next quinquennial due 2010</p> <p>April – September 2009</p> <p>March & October yearly</p>
<p>St Francis Chapel To Assess current condition and decide the future of St Francis Chapel in Acorn Street.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A survey of the existing chapel building by Mr L Jones (church architect) with recommendations for the future of the building Discussion by PCC of architects' findings. 	Lorraine Newman/PCC	<p>February 2008</p> <p>April 2008</p>

<p>G) Places of Worship</p> <p>To consider the repair and possible extension of St Francis Chapel (if viable) or the development of the site to provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of the present and future worshipping community and to serve the greater village community</p> <p>To support development of the Chapel site to provide adequate accommodation for the needs of the worshipping community and facilities for hospitality and service to the wider community</p>	<p>PCC discussion and consultation with L Jones (church architect)</p> <p>Feasibility consultation with EHDC</p> <p>PCC / PC</p>	<p>Lorraine Newman/PCC</p>	<p>July 2008</p> <p>October 2008</p> <p>2009</p>
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Abbreviations:

EHC – East Herts Council. **PC** – Parish Council. **HCC** – Herts County Council. **HH** – Hertfordshire Highways. **HO** – Head Office
CDA – Community Development Agency for Herts. **PCC** – Parochial Church Council. **EERA** – East of England Regional Assembly.
HAPTC - Herts Ass. Town & Parish Councils. **CPRE** – Council for Protection Rural England. **FoE** – Friends of the Earth.
GGP – Gilston Great Park. **CMS** – Countryside Management Service. **VHMC** – Village Hall Management Committee. **SHN** – Stop Harlow North