



DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL'S

3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

(NOVEMBER 2024 – OCTOBER 2027)

This 3-year Strategic Plan sets out an overarching vision, underpinned by a set of principles, which guide the work of Downton Parish Council.

In this Strategic Plan, fully costed projects and targets inform the annual budget and Precept for each financial year during the term of the Plan.

This Plan was approved at a meeting of full council held on 12th August 2024.

This Plan was updated to reflect changes and progress on targets, as reported at a meeting of full council held on 14 July 2025 and 08 September 2025.

VISION STATEMENT

Downton Parish Council (the Council) offer leadership with the aim of developing Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch into a vibrant community; a place where people want to live, visit, and do business in.

We, the Council, will achieve this by: -

- Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents
- Working with local groups to enhance the local environment:
 - street scene
 - public green spaces
 - footpaths
 - climate
 - rivers
 - overall image of Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch
 - road safety
- Respecting and preserving our heritage
- Working with local businesses and groups to encourage commercial prosperity



ABOUT DOWNTON, CHARLTON ALL SAINTS, AND STANDLYNCH

Demography

- 3,300 people at last Census (2021) (an increase from 3,073 in 2011)
- Of which 2,632 are registered on the electoral role
- 813 are over 65 – with 626 being over 70
- There are approximately 600 children
- Slightly fewer males than females
- 2,770 were born in the UK and 2,877 describe themselves as 'white'.
- 1,176 state that they have 'no religion'

Landscape

- River Avon running North/South which created the wide flat valley within which the Parish is situated
- Includes the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Cranborne Chase
- Mostly fields and small woodlands outside the small built-up areas
- Part of the floodplain is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Surrounded by downland – best views are from Barford Lane, the Avon Valley footpath and Wick Lane
- Central area of Downton designated as a Conservation Area in 1973, containing over 85 listed buildings

Description

The area includes significantly different characteristics depending on location.

Standlynch: The small hamlet includes Standlynch Farm, Trafalgar House, and a small number of houses.

Downton Village: there is a traveller site at Lode Hill, Moot Lane, and several small side roads of housing built in the second half of the last century including a complex for older people. The Borough and parts of the A338 with several thatched cottages and older buildings, relatively new housing at West Wick, Charlotte Place, and the Charles Church development, other areas of housing built in the second half of the last century at Greenacres and off Marie Avenue.

Charlton-All-Saints: along the A338 where most of the housing is older style.

Facilities

- over 30 clubs and societies
- three pubs
- three churches
- a nursery, a preschool, a primary school and a secondary school
- a Business Park (although most of the employees live outside the Parish)
- a public library
- a GP surgery
- a dentist
- a Coop and several small shops
- a Leisure Centre and Sports Club

POWERS TO PROVIDE AND FUND SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Council has the discretion to exercise a range of statutory powers for the provision and support of certain services and facilities which benefit residents, as driven by the wishes of residents.

The Council sets its budget to fund the provision and support of these services for the following financial year in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations adopted on 14 July 2025.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide (JPAG) (March 2025 edition) advises:

"5.31 As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (general and earmarked) to finance both their day-to-day operations and future plans."

In this respect, the Council has adopted a General and Earmarked Reserves Policy.

Consideration of the annual budget plus adequacy of reserves inform the Precept (a levy on residents incorporated into Wiltshire Council's tax bill) for the following financial year. Referendum principles do not apply for a local precepting authority.

The Council is subject to The Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice 2015.

PRINCIPLES ON HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR VISION

1. Provide value for money in the delivery of Council services and facilities whilst supporting the local economy and local organisations.

Grant applications

- Predefined grant projects
- Active travel grants
- BWSCA aid grant development
- Historic England
- Wiltshire Towns visitor economy
- Area Board grants
- Sports bodies
- Men's shed grant

Public Facilities management

- Review of all assets
- Maintenance programme
- Cemetery development
- Toilets development

2. Working with local groups to enhance the local environment

Street scene, public green spaces, footpaths, climate, rivers, road safety, and overall image of Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch

- Regular cleaning and maintenance
- Make Downton 'blooming great' again
- New grounds maintenance contracts
- New signage
- SID enforcement
- 20 is plenty

Environmental/Ecological

- SSSI/biodiversity
- Develop a strategy
- Climate action/audit
- Ecological development
- Water/river pollution

Partnership working

- Working methodology
- Open to opportunities
- Building a volunteer network
- Working with local schools
- Facilitate intergenerational projects
- Local groups such as Downton Society, Green Network

3. Working with local businesses and groups to encourage commercial prosperity

Wiltshire Towns Programme

Collaboration with business

- Working together to financially benefit people and businesses
- Sponsorship opportunities

4. Respecting and preserving our heritage

Neighbourhood Plan

Planning and Infrastructure

- Build better relationships with housing companies
- Optimise our S106 monies
- Retaining the historical integrity
- Situated in a Conservation Area

5. Encourage participation in local matters

Communication

- The Council's 'brand voice' i.e. the tone, style, and messaging to nurture connection with target audience – professional, sincere, friendly, approachable, authoritative, innovative.
- Wider communication channels
- New website
- QR codes

A Council that listens

- Public engagement and consultation on the next Council project (shortlist of three with fully funded plan selected by the Council)

6. Delivery through our people

Our Members: Councils need active, interested, and committed people to become Councillors and get involved in their work.

Our employed Officers and Staff: need the right skills, experience, and behaviours aligned to the Council's brand voice to make for a highly effective workforce.

Our Volunteers: will offer specialist knowledge, local knowledge, enthusiasm, and expertise.

TARGETS

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|---|---|--------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide value for money 2. Working with local groups 3. Working with local businesses 4. Respecting and preserving our heritage 5. Encourage participation 6. Delivery through our people | } | Principles summary |
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SHORT-TERM (6 MONTHS)

TARGET	PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED	OWNER	DELIVERY DATE <i>Shaded grey when target completed</i>	BUDGET
Hold an early evening open meeting (with refreshments) to engage a volunteer force (possible with BWSCA).	1, 6,	PC/ Admin Officer (AO)	Dec 2024 Repeat Q1 2026?	Identify in mid-year review
Hold a partners meeting to identify the priorities of our partners and how these could work together (DS, Green Network, Schools, businesses) <i>Status:</i> Engagement with different parties happening in varying degrees.	2, 3, 6,	PC	Ongoing	Identify in ongoing budgeting process
Complete stage 2 of cemetery refurb project	4	MR/GW	Dec 2024	Allocated budget
Launch redesigned website	5	Clerk/DM/AN	Dec 2024	Allocated budget

Identify a 'brand' statement for use with our logo on all comms, including the development of Instagram and FB accounts	5	PC/Strategy Planning Grp	Sept 2024	N/A
Engage with Persimmon (and others) to negotiate housing options and additional community funds. Target removed	4	PC	Dec 2024 <i>Target removed</i>	N/A
Agree on lease approach for BWSCA (current lease runs until 2032) <u>Status:</u> Independent Visual Buildings Survey Report carried out. Awaiting BWSCA consideration and comment.	5, 6	BWSCA WGroup / PC	Oct 2024 See Status	Identify in ongoing budgeting process
Undertake an asset review and agree priorities for maintenance actions where required <u>Status</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Asset Register</u>: updated and cross checked against insurance cover. F2F meeting with broker 27 Aug to review pre insurance renewal 01 Oct 2025 - <u>Buildings</u>: Survey Report awaited for BWSCA site and Memorial Centre - <u>Public Toilets</u>: CCTV drains survey completed. Qte to clear to be considered. Refurb to be discussed under use of S106 monies - <u>Cemetery</u>: Phases of refurb underway. Idverde will cut hedges and level graves Sept/Oct 2025. Improvements seen in delivery of grounds maintenance contract Idverde. Adherence to Burial Regulations being monitored. Qtes for further improvements. - <u>Defibs</u>: Assessed. 2x replacements to be discussed 2025/26 budget review - <u>SID</u>: Additional device to be discussed 2025/26 budget review - <u>Play Parks</u>: Installations completed. DPC visual safety checks and Vita Play RoSPA checks carried out. - <u>Benches</u>: Condition to be assessed. Likely Q4/Q1 due to priorities - <u>Audio Visual Equipment Memorial Centre</u>: to be discussed 2026/27 budget 	6	AO / PC	Ongoing	Identify in ongoing budgeting process

Complete the NP review (current NP expires 2026) <u>Status:</u> in discussion with Wiltshire Council regarding approach.	4	PC	Target date updated: June 2026	Budget allocation 2026/27
Complete tree planting project together with bulb and wildflower planting working with relevant community involvement	6	AO	Nov 2024	Grant allocation
Develop a 'serenity' space in the Memorial Gardens working with local organisations (DS etc)	2,4,5,6	Chair/AO	March 2025	Funds from local groups
Work with Paul Leo to maximise the benefits of the Wilts Town Programme. <u>Status</u> - Website Discover Downton: built and live - Project Planning underway - Brown Tourist signs Policy being reviewed through WC	1,3,4	WGroup / PC	End of programme Project Planning underway	WC Towns Programme Grants Received £20K
Investigate river sustainability and flood resilience by maximising gully clearing, working with EA, and riparian owners. <u>Status</u> - Working closely with Highways for regular gully clearance - EA: The Bunney is cleared every Nov. - Flood Wardens attend Highways Flood Meetings	4, 6	Flood Committee / AO	Ongoing	External funding
Formalise a Strategy oversight group.	6.	PC	Oct 2024	N/A

MID-TERM (1 YEAR)

TARGET	PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED	OWNER	DELIVERY DATE <i>Shaded grey when target completed</i>	BUDGET
Hold a public consultation to register interest and prioritisation of strategy projects <u>Status</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial engagement with Cllr recruitment regarding use of S106 - Shortlist of fully costed projects to be produced before any public consultation can take place 	5	PC / AO	Target date updated: March 2026 See Status	S106 + Identify in ongoing budgeting process
Identify whether there is interest in greater sports development, identifying relevant facilities, and potential funding available.	2, 5	Amenities Committee	Target date updated: March 2026	N/A
Commission a sustainability audit of Council assets <u>Status</u> : Free Energy Efficiency Survey requested for Downton Memorial Centre. Potential to roll-out pending results.	4	PC	April 2025 See Status	Identify in ongoing budgeting process
Disaggregate grounds maintenance contracts and commission new providers where possible	1	PC/Clerk	April 2025	Budget allocation or identify in 25/26 budget
Complete BWSCA lease <u>Status</u> : Awaiting Buildings Survey Report before reviewing this action and target date	2, 6	PC via BWSCA WGroup	Target date updated: March 2026 See Status	Budget allocation

Identify interest in a 'Man Shed' project to support volunteer workforce <u>Status:</u> Not started. Target date to be reviewed- <i>Target removed</i>	6	Amenities Committee	Sept 2025 See Status <i>Target removed</i>	Grant funding
Maintain a watching brief over Wessex Water's £10m project and influence where appropriate and possible. <u>Status:</u> Identify steps to progress	1,3,4	PC	Oct 2025 See Status	N/A
Work on behalf of residents to ask for a patient liaison meeting to hear and understand the problems residents are experiencing. <u>Status:</u> Jane to update on requests made.	3, 5	Chair/AO	Target date updated: Nov 2025 See Status	N/A

LONGER-TERM (2-3 YEARS) (2026-2027)

TARGET	PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED	OWNER	DELIVERY DATE <i>Shaded grey when target completed</i>	BUDGET
Public toilets refurb if S106 funds become available <u>Status:</u> likely this target will be brought forward to Q4 2025/Q1 2026	6	PC	Oct 2027	Developer funding
Leisure centre refurb if development funds available/or identify viability plan <u>Status:</u> Awaiting Buildings Survey Report	2,3,5,6	PC/BWSCA	Oct 2027	Developer funding
Implement sports team facilities if interest exists and grant funding has been obtained. <u>Status:</u> Awaiting Buildings Survey Report	2,5	Amenities Committee/local sports teams	Oct 2027	Grant and locally raised funds
If development funding available, push for increased surgery facilities <u>Status:</u> Not started	3	PC	As available	Developer funding

PLAN REVIEW

Review frequency: six-monthly

By whom: Strategy Planning Group (who operate under a Terms of Reference).

Reporting mechanism back to full council: from Strategy Planning Group through Agenda six-monthly