



*PLANNING FOR THE NEXT
THREE YEARS
IN DOWNTON PARISH*

JANUARY 2016

INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of the Strategic Plan?

This Strategic Plan provides a framework for Downton Parish Council to continue to work in the best interests of all who live or work in the parish. It sets out the Parish Council's 'action plan' for the next three years.

Why do we need a Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan helps to ensure that the Parish Council can take a planned approach on:

- achieving its development priorities
- implementing the Neighbourhood Plan
- maintaining its existing facilities and services
- setting its budgets, prioritising its resources and achieving value for money

Overview of the Parish Council

Downton Parish Council is responsible for the following facilities and services in the parish:

- Playgrounds at the Memorial Gardens, the Moot Lane Recreation Ground, the Charlton All Saints Playground and the new playground at Wick Lane
- Downton Memorial Hall (which is managed by a separate Management Committee)



Figure 1: The Parish of Downton - Neighbourhood Plan Area

- Downton Cemetery in Barford Lane
- Allotments (which are managed by the Downton Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association)
- Areas of public open space such as The Borough Greens
- The minor repair and cleaning of bus shelters
- Provision and emptying of litter and dog waste bins
- Street cleaning

The Parish Council also looks after the interests of the parish where empowered to do so, bringing any other needs of the parish to the attention of the relevant authority. It responds to consultation documents and requests from a diverse range of other bodies and authorities which includes commenting to the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, on each and every planning application in the parish.

Parish Council's Development Priorities

The following priorities, which were set in 2013 in response to the Wiltshire Council requirement that 190 new homes be built in Downton during the period 2006 to 2026, will continue to apply during the timeframe of this Strategic Plan:

- To work in partnership with Wiltshire Council, the schools and local organisations to build a strong community and maintain community cohesion whilst accepting allocated new housing developments.
- To work in partnership with the Headteacher and Governors of Downton Primary School to ensure that all children of primary school age living in Downton parish are given a right of entry to Downton Primary School.
- To redevelop the 120 year old Memorial Hall into a multi-use community facility in the centre of the Downton which is fit for the 21st Century.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, which was created by a team of volunteers, evidenced through numerous community consultation exercises and endorsed by the Parish Council, was formally submitted to Wiltshire Council in November 2015. In anticipation that this document will complete its remaining review and approval stages over the coming months the Strategic Plan includes the actions required of the Parish Council to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals are implemented.

About the village

about downtown

Demography

- 3, 073 people at last Census (2011)
- Slightly more males than females (1504: 1569)
- Of which 2519 are adults
- Of these 1672 live as part of a couple
- 388 are over 75 – approx. 12%
- Approximately 1,346 households of which 961 have dependent children and only 149 don't have a car or van
- 2807 describe themselves as English
- 2,947 describe themselves of fair or better health
- 2,188 own their own homes

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

Although all part of the Parish, the area includes significantly different characteristics depending on location. The small hamlet of Standlynch includes Standlynch Farm, Trafalgar House and a small number of houses; within 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 and Charlotte Place; other areas of housing built in the second half of the last century at Greenacres and off Marie Avenue and then, along the A338 to Charlton-All-Saints where most of the housing is older style.



Facilities

- Downton has over 30 clubs and societies

There are

- three pubs
- four churches
- 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 surgery
- A dentist
- A Coop and several small shops

What has informed the Plan?

The Parish Council is here to represent the views of the Parish and to undertake local activities in the best interests of the residents of the Parish. This Strategy must therefore be based on knowledge of the views of residents. Downton Parish Council is a 'precepting authority' which means that it sets its own level of local taxation for local households which is collected as part of the Council Tax. The budget for which the Parish Council has responsibility is therefore paid by local people and accountable to local people. The way that the Parish Council spends this budget is transparent and available on the website but this Strategy helps to explain how the Parish Council makes decisions about financial and other activities.

Over the past five years there have been several surveys which give a good indication of the views of residents. The following surveys and evidence has informed this Strategy

- The Village survey which took place in 2010
- A Neighbourhood Plan survey asking for general views about what is important to residents took place in 2014
- Another Neighbourhood Plan survey asking how much various statements were supported (which was based on the responses to the 2014 survey) took place in 2015
- A Housing Needs survey took place in 2014
- The Village Design Statement

All these are available as appendices to the Neighbourhood Plan and can be viewed on the website at www.downtonfuture.org

The following pages identify what residents have expressed strong views about and what facts are known in relation to these. Each page is followed by an action plan of activities which will be undertaken or facilitated by the Parish Council. The topics cover: Housing, Buildings and Facilities, Land and Environment, Street scene, traffic and security, Employment and Retail, Education and Health and Parish Council Administration

HOUSING

What people say

- There is a lack of affordable housing
- People don't want any new housing to increase the drainage problems
- Surveys have shown overall support for the Neighbourhood Plan
- All new buildings should adopt an approach to design and use of materials which is compatible with the local environment (as laid out in the Village Design Statement which was developed in consultation with the community).



What is known about the Parish's housing.

- The Core Strategy allocates 190 extra homes to Downton and only 15 more need to be approved to reach this number.
- A quarter of respondents to the housing needs survey live in houses with four or more bedrooms and over 85% live in owner occupied homes
- Over 70% of those responding to the housing needs survey felt that the most important type of new housing is affordable starter homes
- In October 2013, there were 175 households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in Downton parish
- Developers are only required to make 30% of the development available as affordable housing in this area

Housing related action plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget allocation
Review and revise the NP	PC/ NHDC	2017/18	Local influence on housing development	A revised Plan will be in existence	£1,500
Support the implementation of the NP referendum	PC/Steering group	16/17	To ratify the Neighbourhood Plan	The NP will have a statutory status	£500
Work with Salisbury to maximise housing allocations for local people	NHDC	Ongoing - 18/19	To achieve local priority	The number of people on the waiting list for homes in Downton will drop	
Develop a Section 106 with developers once applications are approved	NHDC	16/17 April 17	To hold developers and others to account	There will be clarity about how community funding is used	£3,000
Monitoring that building is being constructed according to planning applications for drainage systems in new build homes	NHDC	Ongoing – 18/19	To ensure drainage constructed safely with no additional negative impact	Drainage in new build homes will be compliant with planning permission	
Monitor the enforcement of the development construction traffic	NHDC	Until development completed	To ensure that heavy construction lorries do not impact on the village	No lorries above 7.5 tons will use the Borough/Lode Hill.	
Planning a welcome event for new housing residents		Summer 2017			Lotteries 'Celebrate' funding?

Routine ongoing actions include:

Review all planning applications and make comment to Planning authority

Building and Facilities

What people say

- The quality and availability of premises for the community should be improved
- The High Street Post Office should re-open
- Community building should be supported and improved
- The Public toilets should be kept open



What is known about the Parish's building and facilities

- There is a current planning application for development of the Memorial Hall
- The Memorial Hall roof is in poor repair
- The Post Office state that they will not support another Post Office within specified distance of the Headlands PO
- Wiltshire Council will not fund the public toilets beyond April 2016

Buildings and Facilities Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
Implementing planning application for Memorial hall	Working group of NHDC	May 2018	To enable planning to achieve increased facilities	Approval of plans to extend the Memorial hall	£20,000
Working with the post office to implement a new post office or post box in the High Street	Amenities	Ongoing	To reduce the impact of a lack of postal facilities in the East end of the village	A new post box will be in place/ a further post office will open/clarity will exist if neither is achievable	
Enable the setting up of a working group to assess the Community Right to Buy opportunities for Downton – not necessarily a Councillor group but supporting residents with report to PC	PC	May 2018	To give opportunities to the community to have control over changing facilities or those where there is potential to lose community facilities	Wiltshire Council will register a list of assets if it is the decision of the working group to progress this	
Implement outcome re public toilets		April 17	To maintain welcoming and adequate facilities for tourists and local people	The toilets will remain open at the wish of residents	£10,000
Revise the lease with the intention of reducing the responsibility of the PC for maintenance of the Memorial hall following building completion	Memorial Hall committee	April 17	Maximise the use of the Memorial Hall facilities by the community, increasing income to support ongoing maintenance	The community will see the Memorial Hall as a positive meeting place and the maintenance will be the responsibility of the MH committee	£3,000
Refresh and maintain the Memorial Hall roof	PC/ Memorial Hall committee	May 2018	To maintain a safe and future proofed roof	The roof will be refreshed	£35,000
A maintenance programme for all fencing will be in place					

Land and Environment

What people say

- Sites of special scientific interest should be protected
- Facilities in the Moot Lane recreational ground should be improved
- The use of natural energy is supported as long as it does not damage the character of the area
- There are not enough safe places to cycle – new footpaths and cycle ways should be developed
- Additional recycling facilities should be provided for items not collected through kerb side collections



What is known about the Parish's land and environment

- The Parish has responsibility for the cemetery and areas of open space including the Moot Lane recreation ground. However the Pavilion is in a poor state of repair and costs more than has been allocated for its maintenance – it is rarely used.
- Moot Lane recreation ground is subject to conditions of a covenant which prevents certain uses
- The community funding element of the planned development can provide some funding for community facilities
- Wiltshire Council say they plan to increase the type of recyclable materials that can be put into kerb side collections in the new tender in 2017

Land and Environment Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
To design and upgrade playgrounds and create an implementation plan using section 106 monies	Amenities group	October 2016	Sufficient play areas to meet the needs of the expanding young population	An implementation plan will be in existence, approved by the PC and open to public scrutiny	
Removal/repair of Moot Lane pavilion	Amenities group	April 2017	Reduce budget outgoings and/or improve Moot Lane recreational ground facilities	The Moot Lane pavilion will be removed or will be a facility that is actively used by the community	£5,000
Request and follow through a report from the Downton Green Group to establish actions and opportunities to reduce carbon footprint of Downton Parish	Amenities group	June 2016	A more sustainable community	The community will be aware of actions they can take to reduce waste and maintain the environment for the future	
Request and follow through feedback from rights of way group re footpath and river bridge and cycle ways	Amenities group	May 2016	To increase the footpath and cycle routes available to the community	Clarity about the potential for a footbridge over the river and additional cycle ways will exist	£2,000
Create and implement a snow plan together with a community emergency volunteer team	Parish Council	October 2016	To increase community resilience	Volunteers and funded grit bins will support the community in times of laying snow	£1,000
Enhance the Downton Flood Plan together with a	Parish Council	October 2016	To increase community resilience	Volunteers will support the community in times of flood	

community emergency volunteer team					
Replacement of the grass matting in the Moot Lane and Memorial Garden playgrounds					
Replacement of litter bins and eastern fence in Moot Lane Recreation Ground					
Implement a programme of graffiti removal					

Routine ongoing actions include: Consideration of increase in cemetery charges; Continue to maintain land owned by the PC; Weekly inspections of the play areas

Street Scene, transport and security

What people say

- There is too much congestion on the A338
- Parking is a problem in the village – additional parking should be available in the High Street and the Borough
- There are too many lorries coming through the village – people want the HGV ban enforced
- There should be better public transport



What is known about the Parish's street scene, transport and security

- There is little monitoring of parking violations even if yellow lines are put in
- The majority of children are brought to school in a car even when they live within one mile of the primary school and most of those cars return home again after dropping off (i.e. are not on their way to work)
- The land behind the coop and the White Horse pub is privately owned
- Bus companies have previously stated that more frequent bus services are not financially viable
- Public notice boards and local magazines are the main means of communication between residents

Street Scene and security Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
Consideration of the cost of cleaning and maintaining the pathways, pavements and riverside working with Walking group, Downton Society and Rights of way group	Amenities	December 2016	Clarity about the financial cost of maintaining pathways, pavements and riverside	A decision will exist about the future responsibility of the PC to fund/undertake the cleaning of these facilities	£1,000
Refurbishment of Charlton-All-Saints notice board	Amenities group	April 2017	A respectable method of public communication	A new or refurbished notice board will exist in Charlton-All-Saints	£300
Consider opportunities to review parking for school drop off and collection	Parish Council	Ongoing to 2018	An understanding of if we can influence safe school drop off facilities	Clarity of opportunities to achieve the purpose will exist	
Request and follow through a report from the Downton Society re monitoring HGV restrictions and establish plan to work together	Parish Council	June 2016	Less congestion and safer passage along the Borough	HGV restriction will be adhered to fully	
Liaise with local bus companies to lobby for maximum public transport for Downton	Amenities	October 2016	Increased bus times or routes	Clarity about whether bus routes will be increased and by when	
Work with Highways to review ongoing congestion from increased development	NHDC	June 2018	To reduce the congestion on the A338	Clarity about opportunities to reduce congestion and how/if this can be achieved	
Investigate opportunities for increased parking in the Borough with the Coop and White Horse	Parish Council	June 2017	To increase parking spaces and reduce unsafe parking	Clarity about whether land currently privately owned can be used for additional parking	

Routine ongoing actions include: Continuing to work with Highways to review rural roads and village centre; Liaising with local police to maintain diligence over anti-social behaviour; The regular inspection and maintenance of 11 bus shelters

Employment and Retail

What people say

- The expansion of the Business Park is supported
- There is support for businesses and commercial expansion to maintain a thriving economy
- The High Street shops are missed
- Superfast broadband is still not available in all areas of the Parish



What is known about the Parish's employment and retail outlets

- Any expansion of the Business Park area would need to be to the North on land which is owned by the Longford Estate which does not support expansion
- There are vacancies in the Business Park
- The public subsidy of the Leisure Centre could be subject to reduction in funding in the current climate.
- The High Street grocery shop has had several attempts at viability but has recently closed again.

Employment and Retail Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
Continue to work with BT to maximise the implementation of superfast broad band for homeworking	Parish Council	June 2018	Superfast broadband availability throughout the Parish's residential areas	Clarity of BT's intentions and how the PC can influence this will be understood	
Enabling the setting up of a group to work with the Business Centre, schools and retail/business outlets to maximise communication with the Parish Council and increase employment and leisure potential opportunities – not necessarily a Councillor group but supporting residents with report to PC	Parish Council working with interested residents	May 2016	Good communication opportunities with all businesses and the schools of the area to maximise potential for a strong local economy and apprenticeships	The working group meeting will be regularly well attended and businesses will see this as a key way of communicating	£1,000

Education and Health

What people say

- People want there to be enough spaces in the primary school for all children in the village to attend
- People want to be able to make an appointment quickly with a doctor – any future plans to increase the surgery services or premises should be supported
- People agree that there should be support for public funding for the retention and improvement of the Leisure Centre



What is known about the Parish's education and health

- The Leisure Centre would need to be returned to its previous state (i.e. removal of the solar panels) if it were to close. This is likely to cost in excess of £70,000
- The surgery has stated that they would be willing to increase the number of GPs but that, currently, they have in excess of the required number for the population.
- The Primary school has an admissions policy that prioritises local children but currently almost one third of the children attending live outside of the Parish.

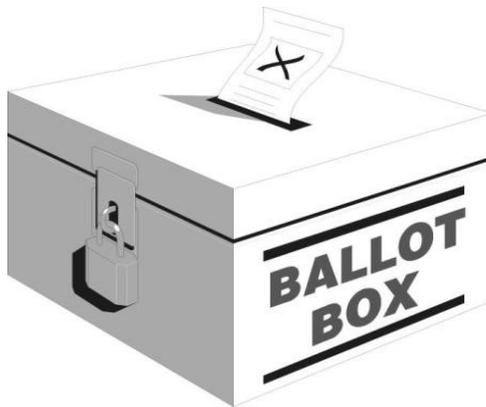
Education and Health Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
Create, agree and monitor the lease of the Memorial ground to the school	NHDC	Ongoing achieved by April 2019	Sufficient ground to implement the approved primary school planning application	The primary school will be extended and the community will have some security over the future of the ground and use of the car park	
Work with the school to ensure planning application for changes to the Bunney	NHDC	June 2017	A more acceptable solution than the current proposed bridge approved in the primary school plans	There will not be a bridge into the new area and an acceptable solution will exist	
Work with the primary school to address the admissions policy for Downton civil parish children/ implement the conditions of the lease in this respect	NHDC	ongoing	The opportunity for all children of the civil Parish to attend the primary school	No child whose parents wish them to attend the primary school in the village will be refused admission	
Work with the surgery to ensure sufficient provision for new housing	NHDC	17/18 end	Sufficient GP and other health provision to meet the needs of the increased population	No one will wait more than 2 days for an appointment unless they choose to.	
Work with Leisure centre and WC to ensure its continued operation for residents of the Parish – under power of miscellaneous provisions Act	Parish Council/ Leisure Centre committee	November 2016	The ongoing viability of the Centre and reduced potential for reversion of the building to its prior state	The Centre will have a clear plan of how to increase use of the centre and obtain independent funding	
Install outdoor fitness equipment	Amenities	May 2017	To fulfil the initiative suggested in the Wiltshire Health and wellbeing plan	Fitness opportunities will exist throughout areas of the Parish	£10,000 through Lottery Awards for All grant

Maintaining the Administration

What people say

- People want an accountable Parish Council
- Many people do not know what the Parish Council does



What is known about the Parish's administration

- There are 15 Councillors, all are volunteers and none is paid.
- Not all councillors have had life experience that gives them the knowledge to perform the role and so need training
- The Parish clerk works 30 hours per week to administer the business of the Parish
- New legislation is coming in for October 2016 requiring employers to make contributions to employee's pension. The Parish Council is the employer of the clerk.
- Elections have to be held every **four** years if there are more volunteers than required for the councillor roles

Maintaining the Administration Action Plan

Action	By whom	By when	To achieve what?	How will we know the difference?	Budget implication
Managing the implementation of legislation regarding employer's responsibility for pension contributions	Parish Council staffing group	October 2016 and ongoing	Full statutory compliance	There will be a decision about the level of contribution to be made by the Parish	£1,000
Election of Parish Councillors	Parish Council	May 2017	Full statutory compliance	There will continue to be full, fair and open election of local Parish Councillors and there is the potential for a new composition of the Council	

Routine ongoing actions include:

- Employment of a part-time Clerk to administer council meetings and undertake a wide variety of actions on behalf of the Parish Council
- Appropriate support and training for Clerk and Councillors

Monitoring the Strategy and being answerable to the residents of the Parish

Frequency of reviews

This strategy will be reviewed at least every six months and will be updated annually according to priorities and circumstances

Publication of results

The annual review will be available at the annual Parish Meeting; a copy will be made available in the library and it will also be posted on the Parish Council website

How residents can comment

Residents can comment at any of the public sessions of the Parish Council meetings (held during the first 15 minutes of all meetings) and at any time to the Parish Clerk at clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk or in writing to West View, Slab Lane, Downton, Salisbury Wiltshire SP5 3PS