



September 2016

Chignall Parish Plan

1 | Our Ambitions

At the Village Hall event that kick started our Parish Plan in March 2015 we asked everyone to share their feelings about what is special about The Chignals. A strong community spirit and a distinct rural identity but close to the amenities of Chelmsford came out high on the list. Some of the problems people identified in the Parish also stem from this proximity, such as fly-tipping, littering, anti-social behaviour and damage to our lanes and grass verges by heavy goods vehicles. Managing this rural/urban interface so that residents can conserve and improve what they value about living in The Chignals whilst finding ways of welcoming businesses and visitors to enjoy our community life and countryside is challenging. Our community is rising to this challenge and will argue strongly to retain an open farmland buffer to separate the Parish from the existing urban boundaries of Chelmsford. Ambitious plans have been suggested for improving life in The Chignals, from achieving better Broadband, to getting people walking our footpaths and making the most of our new Village Hall. Ultimately, most of the actions will only happen if local people get together to do it themselves. We are optimistic that many volunteers will come forward as many people in the community share the same values of consideration, co-operation and communication.

Chairman Chignal Parish Council

IFC	1 Our Ambitions	Pg 07	6 Priorities.
	Chairman Chignal Parish Council		
Pg 01	2 Our Vision for The Chignals	Pg 08	7 Objectives and Key Tasks
	Chairman Parish Plan Committee		
Pg 02	3 Profile of The Chignals	Pg 22	8 Delivering the Vision
Pg 04	4 Local Context	Pg 23	9 Monitoring and Review
Pg 06	5 Challenges and Opportunities	Pg 24	Appendices



2 | Our Vision for The Chignals

“ A community which values its distinct rural identity, which is cohesive and supports its residents to access services and leisure facilities”.

The Chignal Parish Plan is an evidence led document which identifies the positive aspects of the community together with issues and problems. It creates a framework showing how the residents would like The Chignals to develop and change for the better. Crucially it provides valuable evidence to influence decisions which impact on The Chignals, made by Chelmsford City Council. All residents including children were invited through workshops, an exhibition and a detailed questionnaire to make their views and wishes known. The questionnaires which were delivered to every house were returned from an impressive 95% of all properties with 75% of people living in the Parish completing the survey. The results produced 25 objectives which are detailed in this document together with 43 detailed action points which are published separately to allow for regular updating.

Many thanks go out to the team of volunteers who spent many hours working on the Plan over a period of 12 months.

Chairman Parish Plan Committee

“ The active community has a strong identity and is proud of its rural heritage ”

2011 Census of Population for Chignal Parish
 Total Population: 311
 Total Households: 125
 Average Household Size: 2.49
 Area: 747 hectares (3 sq miles)
 Average Population Density: 0.42 people/hectare (104 people/sq mile)
 The Tudor brick church of St Nicholas, Chignal Smealey CS30
 Three Elms pub, Chignal St James
 Urban rural boundary



3 | Profile of The Chignals

Chignal Parish in the present

The Chignals comprise Chignal Smealey and Chignal St James, two small villages immediately to the west of Chelmsford. Until the last century, The Chignals had always been small farming communities and are well documented as such, in the Great Survey of 1086. Today, life is considerably different in The Chignals, as most of the houses are now occupied by people who work outside the Parish or are retired. Since the 2011 Census, further properties have been occupied in the Parish: in 2016 there were 133 dwellings registered as paying Council Tax. The active community has a strong identity, is proud of its rural heritage and has a variety of clubs and groups, a Community Orchard, Village Green, 2 Churches, 2 Red Phone Boxes, 2 Pubs, a Village Hall, Playing Field and Cricket Pitch.

The Chignals are situated in the open farmland plateau landscape to the west of Chelmsford. This landscape has pre-18th century field boundaries, ancient woodland and meadow pasture and is highly productive, attractive for walkers and riders and remarkably still tranquil and undisturbed by development. There has been extensive gravel extraction and subsequent waste landfill in Chignal St James since the 1960s in the upper Can valley. Thankfully, these activities ceased at the end of 2015. The affected land has been restored and landscaped and a new bridleway has been created around part of the site.

Over the last 40 years the urban area of Chelmsford has extended westwards into Chignal Parish to include the Newlands Spring estate and more recently, Little Hollows. This urban extension from Chelmsford into the Parish has been limited so far to land east of Chignal Road and residents have argued strenuously to retain a clear separation between the current urban boundary and the open countryside of Chignal Parish.



Chignal Parish in the past

Chignal soil is fertile, being clay with loam subsoil and there is evidence of habitation going back to the Palaeolithic era, 25 – 20000 years ago, and of farming in the Bronze and Iron ages. Most of the farmland in the Parish is “very good quality” Grade 2 agricultural land.

The existence of Roman occupation has been known for over a century and further evidence was found by aerial photography in 1974 of a large courtyard Villa and outbuildings located nearly a mile to the north-west of the church of St James. During the excavations, many artefacts were found while the remains of the Villa itself are safely underground. The Chignals and neighbouring Mashbury must have been quite secure places and considerable centres, for in addition to the Villa, with one or more to be discovered, there must have been huts for the farmworkers, barns and storehouses.

The withdrawal of the Roman legions was a disaster for the civilised communities of Essex as due to our location, we would have been amongst the first to be sacked by marauding tribes. When the Normans arrived they simply took over existing estates running them themselves or renting them. At the time of King William 1 in 1086 the national survey, The Domesday Survey, listed evidence of farmworkers and their ploughs in Chignal.

Originally The Chignals were made up of St James, Smealey and St Marys, the last having ceased as a separate entity in the 14th century. The populations have always been small, the dwellings consisting of a few manors and farmhouses with numbers of cottages for the farmworkers. Most of the farms and houses have names that are very old and 1 in 10 houses are now listed which is the highest proportion in mid-Essex.

The roads in The Chignals are those formed on original country lanes. As our history shows, these lanes were needed principally for transport by the farming community. They have provided a unique layout with farmland and houses on both sides.

Unfortunately, the lanes have been damaged and widened excessively by heavy goods traffic; grass verges have disappeared and many villagers consider them to be unsafe, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

*Extracts have been taken from
 “A History of the Chignals and Mashbury”
 by resident A.J. Wilkins with his kind permission.*



An artist's impression of the Roman villa in Chignal St James



Wheat straw which was ploughed back into the ground is now harvested into giant 650Kg bales and used as a bio fuel



18th century listed clap boarded cottages on the Village Green Chignal St James
 Little Hollows development 2016
 Traditional period farm buildings in Chignal

4 | Local Context

Chelmsford Local Plan

In 2015 Chelmsford City Council began the process of producing a new Chelmsford Local Plan. Substantial new residential development has already been permitted in Chignal Parish, on land to the north of Copperfield Road, off Hollow Lane. This comprises “Little Hollows”, which is under construction and an adjoining larger housing site which has been granted outline planning permission. Looking ahead to the period 2021 – 2036 the City Council produced ‘Chelmsford Local Plan: Issues and Options’ for public consultation at the end of 2015. Each of the 3 Development Options includes a potential Western Relief Road, linking Little Waltham to the A414 at Writtle with connections to Broomfield Hospital. These Options also envisage 2 new neighbourhoods, totalling some 4,500 houses, within or closely adjacent to the south-east of Chignal Parish.

Chignal Parish Council, in conjunction with some neighbouring Parishes, rejected all three development options as they all envisaged substantial growth to the west and north-west of the City. Arguments were made for locating some of the housing growth to the east of Chelmsford where there would be less damage to sensitive rural landscape, less take of very good agricultural land and where there are existing and planned accessible public transport services, road infrastructure and employment opportunities.

The City Council received a total of 10,445 separate comments on the “Issues and Options” Consultation Document from 1,135 different respondents. The majority of respondents opposed the growth options proposed to the north and west of Chelmsford and rejected a potential Western Relief Road. There was a clear message that supporting infrastructure, including schools, health facilities, roads and public transport will need improving before new development can occur. All of these comments are being considered by the City Council in the drafting of a “Preferred Option” and associated development management policies. The public consultation on the “Preferred Option” is planned to run from February to April 2017 and the evidence base collected during the production of the Chignal Parish Plan will be used to inform the Parish Council’s response.



The Chignal Villages Design Statement (VDS)

The Village Design Statement (VDS) was approved as planning guidance by Chelmsford Borough Council in September 2009 and is taken into account when determining planning applications. It can also influence decisions by members of the community when making changes that do not need planning permission.

The current Chelmsford Local Development Framework includes Development Control Policies that are applied to development proposals in villages and the open countryside and there are specific policies to protect special features. The Chignals have an exceptionally large number of listed buildings and structures (17 in total), a Scheduled Monument, and woodland, group and individual tree preservation orders.

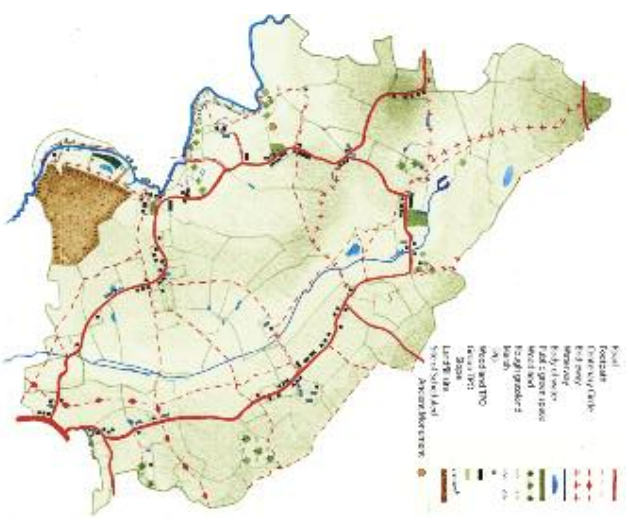
The main findings of the residents’ survey undertaken to provide evidence for the VDS are remarkably similar to those resulting from the more recent Parish Plan questionnaire: the rural character with narrow winding country lanes should be preserved with no further development from Chelmsford to encroach on The Chignals. It was also agreed that there is a strong community spirit that could be damaged by substantial development. Any development should be done with sensitivity and in keeping with local characteristics; the absence of street lighting is welcomed; and, the existing public rights of way network is very important to the local community.



The VDS is still considered to be relevant seven years on and will continue to be used as guidance in considering changes that could affect the distinctive rural and historic character of The Chignals.

Neighbouring Parishes

There are many historic, social and economic links between The Chignals and the neighbouring community of Mashbury. Their residents enjoy the benefits of using the Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall and the community orchard in Chignal St James and each household in Mashbury receives a copy of “Chignal News” every two



Chignal Parish covers an area of three square miles

months. Together the two areas form the Parish of the Church of St Nicholas in Chignal Smealey. Several Mashbury residents are active supporters of local community groups, such as the Village Hall Committee, Bowls Club, Chignals & Mashbury Gardening Club, Wine Discovery Group, and Women’s Institute which all meet in the Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall in Chignal St James. They also participate in events such as the monthly coffee mornings held in the Village Hall and in the Chignal Chapel, and help to organise events such as the Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall Fête, held in the Hall and Playing Field in Chignal St James.

Community links were forged with Roxwell, Good Easter and High Easter Parishes during the Inter-Village Games that were organised to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and the hosting of the Olympics in Great Britain. More recently, a close working partnership has developed with Broomfield, Writtle, Great Waltham and Little Waltham Parish Councils and the Newlands Spring Residents Association with regard to agreeing a common approach to the emerging Chelmsford Local Plan and other development issues.

“ Ambitious plans have been suggested for improving life in the Chignals ”

“ Many people in the community share the same values of consideration, co-operation and communication ”

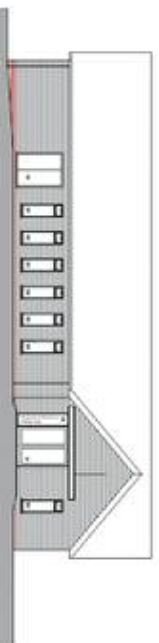
5 | Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

Growth of Chelmsford; cuts in public services; potential Western Relief Road; urban fringe pressures; modern farming practices; ageing population.

Opportunities:

Additional money for the Parish from Community Infrastructure Levy; new residents with different skills and interests; restoration of the Brittons Hall Farm Landfill site; fruition of the community orchard project; new Village Hall buildings; strong community spirit; high proportion of retired residents able to get involved in the community.



Lafarge - Tarmac Limited Landfill Communities Fund grants have supported the replacement Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall and the creation of the Jubilee Community Orchard

6 | Priorities

1. Rural Identity

We need to retain and develop the distinct rural identity of The Chignals.

2. Community Life

We need to support efforts by residents to make the local community more inclusive and welcoming to newcomers and visitors.

3. Community Services

We need to promote and improve access to services in The Chignals and in Chelmsford.

4. Environment and Countryside Management

We need to support efforts to manage the countryside to retain important landscape features, keep it litter free and accessible.

5. Community Safety

We need to improve communication in the community about criminal activity and provide information about what to do in emergency situations.

6. Leisure Time

We need to provide local opportunities for residents to enjoy their leisure time.

7. Housing and Economic Development

We need to support small scale organic housing and economic development taking account of guidance in the Chignal Villages Design Statement.

8. Roads and Traffic

We need to retain the character of our rural lanes and ensure that they are used appropriately and maintained in a safe condition.



Clockwise: Lodge's Coaches provide a vital link to Chelmsford City centre for many residents throughout the Chignals. Rural traditions are kept alive by the 'Blackmore Morris', seen here performing at the Three Elms pub. The community take great pride in maintaining the Parish surroundings and organise events such as the St Nicholas church yard tidy up. Home made cakes and produce are a feature of the popular Chignals and Mashbury Village Hall Fête.



A field being prepared for a crop of potatoes. Farmland in the Chignals is mostly arable, the main crops grown are wheat, oil seed rape and potatoes.

7 | Objectives and Key Tasks

Priority 1: Rural Identity

Evidence Base/Issues

Parish Questionnaire December 2015: nearly 100% of respondents valued the open farmland between urban Chelmsford and the Chignal villages and the rural views etc. were also highly treasured. (Of the 21 options available in Q8 – ‘Importance to you’ – the most valued 3 were: views & landscapes, rural but not remote location and local footpaths.)

The Chelmsford Local Plan “Issues & Options” document November 2015: proposed that “a series of Green Buffers will be designated on land at the edge of some villages where it is particularly vulnerable to development pressures, and which if developed would lead to a loss of identity for those villages through coalescence with other settlements or the loss of important areas of natural environment that contribute to the setting and character of those villages”. In addition, the City Council intends to review the detailed boundaries of the “Green Wedges”: “where appropriate these will be extended to provide further protection to the river valleys that form such an important part of Chelmsford’s landscape and natural environment”. Currently, the River Can Green Wedge does not extend upstream of Writtle along the southern border of Chignal Parish.

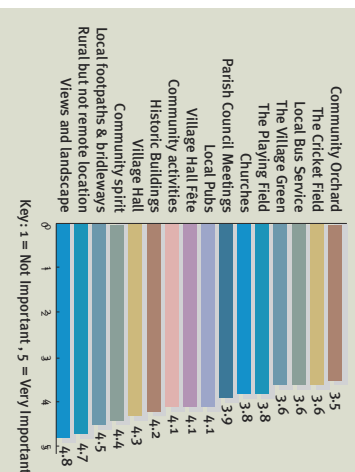
The Landscape Character Assessment, September 2006:

The Chignals are included in the ‘Pleshey Farmland Plateau’ landscape character area in the Landscape Character Assessment produced for Chelmsford City Council and neighbouring Districts. “There is an overall sense of tranquility throughout these character areas with several quiet, rural lanes winding through the landscape. Ensure any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles”. The City Council intends to undertake an additional landscape study at the more local scale to inform the next stage of the new Local Plan (Preferred Options).

The Chignal countryside looking towards Chelmsford



How important are the following



The changing seasons in The Chignals

Objective 1

To promote the creation of a “Green Buffer” to separate The Chignals from the urban boundary of Chelmsford.

Objective 2

To promote the extension of the River Can “Green Wedge” to include the upper Can valley as this is an important corridor for wildlife and walkers and should be protected.

Objective 3

To ensure that the landscape character of The Chignals is conserved and the visual impact of any new farm buildings is minimised.

Objective 4

To ensure that any new development is small-scale, responds to the historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Key Tasks

Challenge any development that could diminish the rural aspect and identity of The Chignals and make the case for retaining a “Green Buffer” between Chignal Road and Mashbury Road.

New residential development should be small scale and in sympathy with the local historic built environment and landscape as set out in the Chignal Villages Design Statement.





Residents of The Chignals support a wide range of community organised events and activities

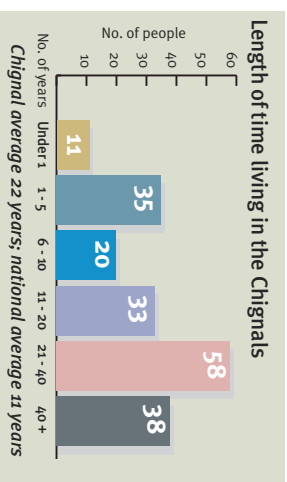
Priority 2: Community Life

Evidence Base/Issues

The local community is very stable: the average length of time resident in the two villages is 22 years, compared with the national average of 11 years. 37% of respondents are aged over 65 years. 79% of respondents felt part of the community. Only 2% were not interested in playing a part in local life; 27% only know their immediate neighbours and 10% feel more part of Chelmsford. Community spirit and community activities were rated as very important and there were suggestions for helping one another with DIY and gardening and producing a “Welcome Pack” for new residents.

There were comments about needing up to date information on events, Parish Council meetings, clubs, planning issues, road works, crime. This could be achieved through community email alerts and promoting greater use of an improved Parish website.

For a small Parish, a surprising number of clubs and groups are active: 13 in all. Only around 30% of survey respondents use the website and there were requests that it should provide more up to date information on events and Parish matters and be interactive. Some new residents find it difficult to know how to find out what is going on locally.



The local clubs and groups are well supported by local residents with many attracting members from outside the Parish as well: over 30 residents attend the monthly coffee mornings and between 20 and 40 people belong to each of the croquet, gardening, orchard friends and wine discovery groups. Suggestions for new groups included writing, creative activities, music, perhaps a folk club and regular community social evenings that are not specific to only one group.

The young persons' questionnaire responses suggest that a number of young people, or their parents, feel that a meeting place/time/activity aimed specifically at younger members of the community might be appreciated. Responses were received from, or on behalf of, 26 11-17 year olds and 10 under 11 year olds.

Objective 5

To improve information circulation and contact between residents in The Chignals by promoting and improving the Parish website and considering other electronic means of communication.

Objective 6

To improve the content of the Parish newsletter “Chignal News” with timely information on events and articles by local residents.

Objective 7

To promote and increase the membership of existing local groups and clubs and support the development of new ones, particularly those geared to the needs of younger residents.

Objective 8

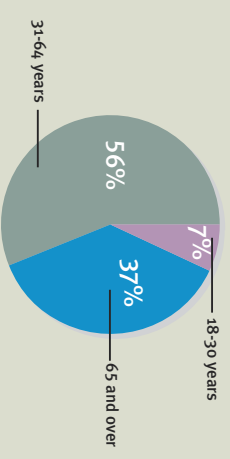
To provide information and introductions to new residents about local community life and events.

Key Tasks

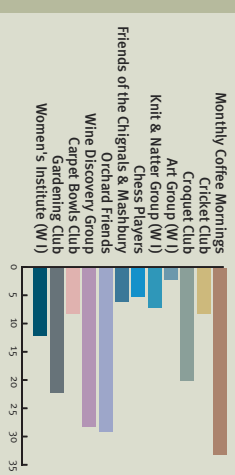
Publish a comprehensive and up to date profile of The Chignals on the Parish website and produce a “Welcome Pack” for new residents with details of facilities, services and events.

Provide a means for residents, including social media, to be able to register for email alerts and updates on local issues, such as neighbourhood watch, planning applications, road closures etc.

Age Groups of adult respondents



Club and Society membership



A local farmer provides transport across the fields during road closures for the Tour de France July 2014

Priority 3: Community Services

Evidence Base/Issues

The questionnaire survey found that over 100 people use the local buses but there are complaints that it only runs twice a week through Chignal St James. The bus is seen as useful for visiting Chelmsford for shopping and other town centre services but not for getting to school or work. Nearly 60 people would use a bus to a local supermarket. There is also empirical evidence that a number of residents have regular supermarket internet deliveries and this trend may continue to grow. Daily milk deliveries appeared to be important to those who already used the service. Following distribution of the questionnaire survey, some residents have requested information on local daily newspaper deliveries.

The number of residents who work or run their own businesses from home is fairly significant at 29 people whilst only 8 work elsewhere in the Chignals. 40 work in Chelmsford and 51 outside Chelmsford. 67 people neither travel for work nor education.

26 people already cycle or walk to Chelmsford but over 70 more people would cycle or walk locally if there were safer routes, dedicated cycle paths or better footpaths. Those under 18 years who responded to the young persons' questionnaire awarded higher ratings to the importance of cycling and footpaths. They had additional interest in safe cycle storage in Chelmsford.

90% of respondents with Broadband access and 100% of the under 18 year olds attached a very high degree of importance to the service. Broadband gained a 100% importance response from those who completed the young persons' questionnaire. Around 15 households do not have access to Broadband. Nearly all users of Broadband were unhappy with the speed of delivery.

Getting Around

	Always	Mostly	Occasionally	Total
Car/Van/ Truck	127	59	3	189
Motorcycle	0	1	0	1
Bus	7	3	30	40
Taxi/ School Bus	4	3	35	42
Cycle	4	10	45	59
Walk	14	16	79	109
Horse	2	3	3	8

Updates from the Essex Superfast Broadband on the roll-out of a fibre service to all parts of the Parish are contradictory.

Objective 9

To ensure that local bus services are retained and improved by promoting existing bus services and by engaging with the County Council to influence future bus provision.

Objective 10

To improve access to Chelmsford for walkers and cyclists by identifying connections to local paths and routes and communicating these suggestions to the Essex County Council as Highways Authority.

Objective 11

To improve access for those in The Chignals who are unable to use a private car or public transport by promoting the Community Transport Service and local community support networks.

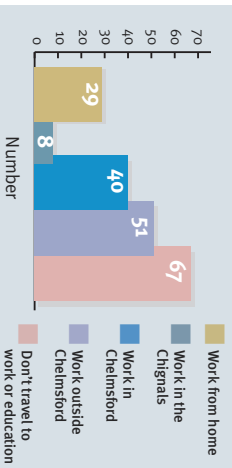
Objective 12

To ensure that The Chignals benefit from the roll out of new Broadband technologies by engaging with the County Council and Broadband suppliers and communicating these options to local residents.

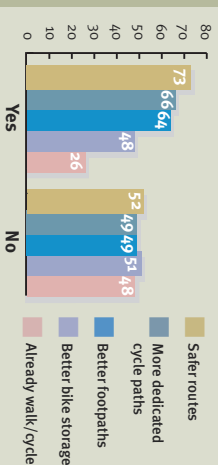
Key Tasks

Appoint a Broadband Champion to liaise with Essex County Council and Superfast Broadband to ensure that all areas of The Chignals have access to fast and reliable Broadband services and to communicate updates to residents.

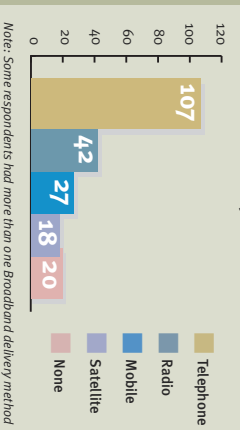
Travel to Work or Education



Would you walk or cycle to Chelmsford if any of the following were provided



Broadband – Delivery Method



Note: Some respondents had more than one Broadband delivery method

“ Residents consider that a reliable Broadband service is extremely important. The majority are dissatisfied with the current provision ”

Are you satisfied with your Broadband service?

Service Delivery Method	Yes	No	% Not Satisfied
Telephone	21	87	84%
Radio	23	19	44%
Mobile	10	16	62%
Satellite	5	13	72%

Residents value the local bus service, daily postman, library van and milkman





Priority 4: Environment and Countryside Management

Evidence Base/Issues

The Parish questionnaire responses raised a number of issues about management of the local environment. There needs to be more clarity about who is responsible for cutting greens and maintaining hedges, ditches and verges. Footpaths are reported to be overgrown with nettles and brambles and there are ruts in bridleways caused by farm vehicles. There is concern about the cutting down of mature trees in hedgerows and considerable damage to verges by lorries and parked cars. Fly-tipping and litter are also mentioned as significant problems.

Objective 13

To improve communication with local landowners and public service providers to ensure that land is managed in a way that respects its tranquil rural landscape character and wildlife value.

Objective 14

To reduce the impact of litter and fly-tipping in The Chignalls by working with the City Council to promote initiatives to prevent illegal littering and rubbish dumping and by organising regular litter picks.

Objective 15

To encourage greater use of the existing network of public rights of way in The Chignalls by working with public authorities and local volunteers to improve surfaces and signage and promoting organised walks.

Objective 16

To clarify responsibilities for managing open spaces, rights of way, verges, ditches and hedgerows in the Parish and review maintenance requirements on a regular basis.

Key Tasks

The state of the roads, verges, ditches and culverts needs to be monitored on a regular basis and the responsible landowners and authorities contacted to resolve any problems that would impact on local residents and other road users.



Clockwise: The Chelmsford City Mobile Customer Information Service attends the monthly coffee mornings. The Friends of Chignall & Mashbury meet informally to listen to residents concerns and give support within the community. The monthly coffee mornings provide a friendly and informal meeting point. The loss of a regular Community Police presence is of concern to residents.

Priority 5: Community Safety.

Evidence Base/Issues

The questionnaire survey showed that there was a high overall rating for The Chignalls being a safe place to live but this does not sit easily with the large number of offences that appear to have been noted. Fly-tipping, litter, road incidents and thefts are the most often reported crimes. 150 respondents would support the reintroduction of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and encouragingly 22 people expressed an interest in becoming a co-ordinator. Only a small number of residents currently subscribe to the Essex Police Community Messaging Service so there may be scope to promote this email alert service. 151 people would support the production of a local emergency plan.



As nearly 70 people were unaware of the Friends of the Chignalls & Mashbury service which provides a valuable support service to residents who may wish to have a lift to a doctor or hospital appointment or need temporary help with housework, shopping and gardening, there is scope to further promote this service.

Objective 17

To ensure that residents are well informed about their own security by promoting better communication of crime prevention and reporting methods and emergency planning procedures.

Objective 18

To reduce social isolation by promoting community support initiatives such as the Friends of The Chignalls & Mashbury and the monthly Coffee Mornings.

Key Tasks

Facilitate public debate on whether to resurrect The Chignalls Neighbourhood Watch and encourage volunteers to manage the service for local residents.

Fly-tipping is a constant problem throughout the Parish verges

The Parish litter pick volunteers prepare to clean up the verges

Ensuring public spaces such as the area around the K6 telephone box on the Village Green are maintained

Mashbury Road underwater and impassable for cars after heavy overnight rain in June 2016



Priority 6: Leisure time.

Evidence Base/Issues

A range of new facilities received support in the questionnaire survey, such as children's play equipment, croquet pitches, tennis courts, cricket nets and toddlers group but there was nothing approaching unanimity. The single most popular 'new' facility suggested, after children's play equipment, was for a tennis court. 'Keep fit' also got a number of mentions. Those who responded to the young persons' questionnaire favoured a range of facilities with the most popular being a tennis court and a swimming pool.

One area requiring no obvious spend was the suggestion of starting a 'walking' group. Such a group is likely to include several of those who volunteered to help improve the local footpaths and its creation would almost certainly promote real interest in the condition of local routes.

Several adults and children suggested showing films and live sporting events in the Village Hall. It would

seem most appropriate to defer any review and/or spend on equipment until the outcome of a young persons' meeting to explore the possibility of a different age range using the Village Hall.

Objective 19

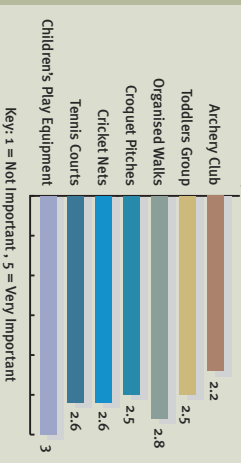
To provide and manage local opportunities for all residents of all age groups to enjoy their leisure time in the Chignals that have demonstrable support and are sustainable.

Key Tasks

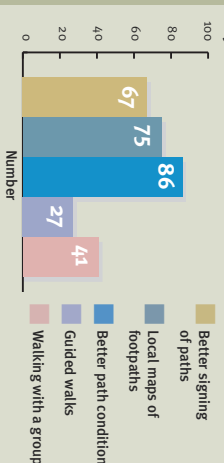
Maximise opportunities offered by the new Village Hall to provide leisure opportunities such as showing films and activities for young people.



What importance do you place on the following which are currently not available?



What would encourage you to walk more in your local area?



“ Local people value and enjoy getting together to organise, enjoy and support community life ”

Residents take part in a wide range of activities and volunteering including maintaining the Community Orchard, entering local produce competitions, garden visits, croquet, equestrian activities, tending their gardens, carpet bowls, book club and gamesmakers at the London Olympics



The urban edge of Chelmsford City is extending into the east of the Parish

Priority 7: Housing and Economic Development.

Evidence Base/Issues

Not surprisingly there was negligible support for major housing development within the Parish and concerns at the prospect of significant housing allocations to the west of Chelmsford and the lack of infrastructure to deal with it. However some residents recognised that modest development i.e. conversion of barns and individual infill was probably inevitable but needed to be proportionate and preferably in keeping with the current community. Affordable housing completely divided the respondents.

A clear mandate was provided by the residents to seek conditions to be attached to any new business in the Parish to cover access by HGVs, adverse noise etc., parking and weekend working.

There was some support for a Farm Shop/Craft workshop/Community Shop but even small and/or purpose built business/industrial developments found no favour.



Objective 20

To support opportunities for local residents to improve their homes or to move to other properties in the Parish as a result of down-sizing, setting up new households or requiring additional care in line with the Chignal Villages Design Statement.

Objective 21

To improve communications to residents about forthcoming development proposals that could impact on The Chignals and with the City and County Councils to ensure that they are made aware of any local concerns.

Objective 22

To continue to promote the importance of the Chignal Villages Design Statement in the consideration of planning applications and in the preparation of Local Plans and Transport Strategies.

Key Tasks

Support local residents to improve their homes and stay in the Parish.

Housing Development

Conversion of barns/other buildings to houses	4.4
Individual limited infill of single properties	3.9
Affordable housing infill of up to 5 properties	3.0
Full cost housing infill of up to 5 properties	2.7
Mixed development of up to 100 properties	1.5
Mixed development of over 100 properties	1.3
Mixed development of over 1000 properties	1.1
Warden assisted housing up to 10 units	2.7
Warden assisted housing over 10 units	1.7
Important to keep the open farmland between the built up area of Chelmsford and The Chignals	4.8

Key: 1 = Object, 5 = Support

Economy, Employment & Industrial Development

Community Shop	4.4
Farm Shop	4.4
Small Craft Workshop	3.9
Wedding / Function Venue	2.7
Encourage Businesses up to 6 Staff	3.3
Encourage Businesses 7 – 20 Staff	2.1
Encourage Businesses over 20 Staff	1.6
New purpose built Industrial or Commercial Buildings	1.4
Industrialisation and commercialism of the countryside	1.2

Key: 1 = Object, 5 = Support

What conditions should be met when considering the conversions of agricultural buildings to business use?

Limitations on HGVs using roads in the Parish	4.8
No adverse impact from noise, smell, air or light pollution	4.8
Restrictions on evening or weekend working	4.5
Parking associated with the business to be on-site	4.9

Key: 1 = Disagree, 5 = Agree



Harvesting in the Chignals using a modern combine harvester

“ A clear mandate was provided by the residents to seek conditions to be attached to any new business in the Parish ”

Clockwise: A historic barn with permission for conversion to residential use

New houses nearing completion within the Parish

The Pig and Whistle, one of the two pubs in the Parish

Redundant farm buildings now being used for commercial storage

The old school converted into two houses

A well attended Parish Council planning meeting

Priority 8: Roads and Traffic

Evidence Base/Issues

Verge damage and the quality of the local roads were the most reported concerns in the questionnaire survey with at least 12 additional comments detailing particular problems. Speeding was also a concern with comments made about imposing 30 mph speed restrictions.

Damage to the road surface and verges caused by delivery lorries and parked cars associated with Gardening Express are mentioned by many residents with several detailed comments on particular incidents involving lorries obstructing the road, turning in the narrow lane by The Green and at Chignal Hall Lane and HGV's colliding with cars or running them off the road. Flooding and mud on the road in the vicinity of Pieces Cottage and the creation of large flooded potholes at the sides of the carriageway are reported as safety hazards to vehicle drivers, cyclists and walkers.

The proposal in the Chelmsford Local Plan Issues & Options document to build a western relief road was opposed by several respondents.

Litter on road verges was considered to be a problem and the annual Parish litter pick is finding increasing amounts of discarded food and drink packaging and building materials dumped throughout the Parish.

Groups of cyclists were also reported to be a problem, especially as our local lanes are used by several charity rides each year. There appear to be several issues: consideration of other road users, prior notification of cycling events and litter, such as plastic drink bottles and food wrappers deposited on verges.

Objective 23

To ensure that the lanes in The Chignals retain their rural character and are in a safe condition by regular reporting of road and verge damage, overgrown hedges and

Traffic & Roads

Lack of maintenance, White lines, Potholes	4.3
Damage to Verges - Cutting	3.6
Damage to Verges - Lorries, Parked Cars	4.3
Junction of Mashbury & Chignal Road	2.5
Inadequate Passing Places	3.7
Junction of Breeds & Chignal Road	2.7
Junction of Chignal & Copperfield Road	2.3
Heavy Vehicles	4.5
Groups of Cyclists	3.7
Litter	3.7
Speed	4.2

Key: 1 = No problem, 5 = Major problem

defective drainage (drains, ditches, culverts etc) to the responsible authorities.

Objective 24

To ensure that local road users (vehicle drivers, walkers, cyclists and horse riders) can all travel safely on local lanes by working with the County Highways Authority, local businesses and stakeholders to monitor traffic speeds, damage by heavy goods vehicles and effective management of cycling events.

Objective 25

To manage the impact of converting farm buildings for alternative employment purposes by engaging with the City Council to reduce the potential detrimental effects of such development on local residents, road safety and the environment.

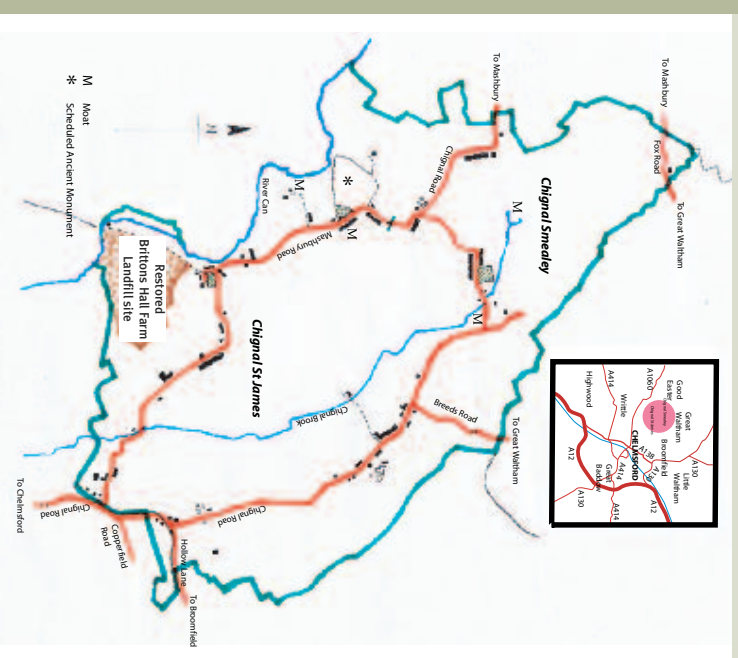
Key Tasks

Provide clear guidance to residents on who to contact for reporting concerns about highways and public rights of way issues.



Illustrations showing the lack of road, verge and hedge maintenance and problems caused by the increasing amount of traffic, especially large HGV's throughout the Parish. Some progress has been achieved by installing passing places in Chignal Smealey

Road map of the Chignals



“ Damage to the road surface and verges caused by delivery lorries and parked cars associated with Gardening Express are mentioned by many residents ”





Exhibition of the results from the Parish Plan questionnaires at North Melbourne Library, April 2016

8 | Delivering the Vision

The delivery of the Vision and Objectives, set out in section 7, will be achieved through the implementation of a series of tasks that have been brought together in a separate Action Plan. This Action Plan will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council and the community to monitor progress on its implementation and if required, revised on an annual basis to ensure that it stays on track to deliver the Parish Plan's objectives.

Successful delivery of the Vision will be achieved through sustained commitment to collective action by a range of organisations and individuals: the detailed Action Plan indicates those organisations and community members who would be required to contribute their time, expertise and/or financial resources to make it happen.

The Parish Council will assume overall responsibility for managing the delivery of the Action Plan but it is proposed to set up a "Community Committee" which will operate independently of the Parish Council to inspire and galvanise local volunteers to work together on projects such as producing a "Residents' Welcome Pack", establishing a Neighbourhood Watch service and improving, and encouraging greater use of, the Parish footpaths and bridleways. It is important that this community initiative and energy should be nurtured and given a free rein to generate ideas and turn them into action on the ground.

Certain risks have been identified that might affect the delivery of the proposed action plan and mitigating measures will be considered to reduce the impact of any adverse conditions. For example:

1. A lack of engagement by responsible public authorities and by members of the local community could prevent the ambitions of the Action Plan being delivered.
2. A lack of resources available to fund the delivery of the key tasks due to reductions in Government funding for public services.
3. A decision by Chelmsford City Council to allocate land in or near the Parish for substantial housing development or a western relief road.

In delivering the Action Plan, the Parish Council will ensure that services or facilities will be accessible for everyone in The Chignals. In addition, efforts will be made to ensure that the Action Plan is sustainable and that it contributes to, and does not compromise, the biodiversity of the Parish and that where possible the carbon footprint will have been reduced.



The Parish Council organises walks with local residents to check the condition of the public rights of way

9 | Monitoring and Review

Having completed the Parish Plan, the Committee tasked with consulting the wider community to produce it will be wound up. Individual members of the Parish Plan Committee have indicated that they will join local groups to take actions forward and several of the actions will be implemented by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has responsibility for monitoring progress and success, and reviewing the Parish Plan on at least an annual basis. The separate Action Plan sets out resources, timescale, delivery partners, performance measures and expected outcomes and reports will be made on progress towards achieving these actions at each bi-monthly Parish Council meeting. It will be important to review the actions and modify or introduce new ones in order to achieve the objectives set out in Section 7 of the Parish Plan.

The focus must always be on achieving the outcomes that will make a difference to local people's quality of life and on providing regular feedback to the community, through 'Chignal News' and the Parish website, on completed actions and objectives achieved and those actions which have not worked effectively and may need future re-thinking.



Members of the Gardening Club identifying and recording the wildlife

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

The Parish Plan process was carried out over a period of 18 months. The methodology used to produce this Parish Plan comprised the following:

- initial community workshop in March 2015 to set priorities and sign-up volunteers;
- engaging with Chelmsford City Council planners and local City Council and County Councilors in April;
- formation of a steering group in May to produce the plan, (later formalised as a Parish Council Parish Plan committee);
- analysis of workshop outputs to feed into a residents' questionnaire survey;
- collecting information, opinions and aspirations through a questionnaire survey delivered to every Parishioner at the end of 2015, (75% response rate);
- responding to the Chelmsford Local Plan "Issues & Options" consultation document using initial findings from the questionnaire in January 2016;
- analysis of the questionnaire responses in February;
- drafting group set up in March to start writing the plan, defining a vision, identifying priorities, objectives and potential actions;
- consulting on the results of the questionnaire survey at an exhibition in North Melbourne Library in April;
- action planning workshop in April for local residents to comment on the vision and draft actions, agree key tasks and volunteer to deliver them through local groups;
- drafting final Parish Plan and separate action plan for sign-off by the Parish Council in July;
- printing the plan and distributing to each household in The Chignals and to external authorities, such as the City Council, County Council, neighbouring Parish Councils and other agencies by September 2016;
- setting up a "Community Committee" independent of the Parish Council to inspire and co-ordinate volunteers to deliver actions such as producing a Residents' Welcome Pack, establishing a Neighbourhood Watch service, carrying out regular Litter Picks and improving and encouraging residents to use the local Public Rights of Way network;
- monitoring and reviewing the action plan and reporting performance against objectives to the local community at Parish Council meetings.

Appendix 2: Parish Plan Evidence Base

Chignal Parish Profile

A profile for Chignal Parish has been extracted from the 2011 population census (Section 3).

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/parish-profiles

History of The Chignals

Historical information was compiled by Chignal Smealey resident and author of "A History of The Chignals and Mashbury" A.J. Wilkins and is published with his kind permission.

Chelmsford Local Plan

References have been made in Section 4 to policies contained in the current Chelmsford City Council Local Development Framework and to planning issues and development options proposed in the first stage of the Chelmsford Plan 2011 – 2036. www.chelmsford.gov.uk/new-local-plan

Chignal Villages Design Statement

Reference is also made in Section 4 and in other parts of the plan to the Chignal Villages Design Statement which was approved in September 2009. The design advice in this document was reviewed in the definition of the Parish Plan objectives and in generating potential actions. It is still considered to be a valuable and relevant guide as to how the special identity and features of the Parish should be protected in considering all new developments. www.essexinfo.net/thechignals

Parish Plan Community Workshop – 14th March 2015

Those attending the workshop were asked what is special about living in The Chignals, whether there were any problems and what could be improved. In addition, attendees were invited to rank issues in order of priority: the top priorities are summarised below with numbers of votes indicated:

- 30 Issues with Gardening Express
- 24 Tackle industrial use in the countryside
- 21 Highway and verge maintenance
- 17 Heavy vehicles / delivery vehicles
- 14 Affordable Housing
- 13 Improved Broadband

Residents' Questionnaire Survey – December 2015

The detailed comments made by workshop attendees were used to generate a series of questions to collect information and opinions on a range of topics. Questions were asked to build up a picture of the age and interests of residents, to discover what they value about living in the Parish, to

identify concerns they may have and to find out what could be done to make their local community a safer and a more enjoyable place in which to live.

195 adults and 36 children completed the Parish Plan questionnaires; these numbers represent 75% and 72% of the Parish population respectively. A presentation of the results of the questionnaire survey can be found on the Parish website: www.essex-info.net/thechignals. A summary of the main results are as follows:

- the average length of time adults have lived in The Chignals is over 22 years;
- views and the landscape together with the fact that The Chignals are rural but not remote are the most important aspects of living in the Parish;
- there is a widespread dissatisfaction in the Broadband service currently on offer;
- nearly all of respondents read and value the newsletter but would like to see more articles written by local people;
- most people are concerned about heavy traffic, the lack of road maintenance and speed of traffic on our lanes;
- almost everyone considered it important to keep the open farmland between the built-up area of Chelmsford and the Chignals;
- there was almost unanimous opposition to large scale housing development.

Parish Plan Action Planning Workshop – 16 April 2016

Responses from the questionnaire survey and the outputs from the first Community Workshop were analysed and used to formulate a first draft of the Parish Plan, including a Vision, 8 Priorities, 25 specific Objectives and a series of individual Actions designed to deliver them. Attendees at the Action Planning Workshop were asked to comment on the Vision and on the appropriateness and deliverability of the proposed actions to achieve meaningful outcomes for local people. Lastly, people were invited to identify the actions that should be given priority. These 'Key Tasks' are highlighted under each Priority in Section 7 of this plan and in the separate Action Plan.

Appendix 3: Community and Stakeholder Engagement Process

Community Engagement

The high level of community engagement in producing the Parish Plan has been impressive, particularly in relation to the questionnaire survey results and participation in the workshops. Perhaps the most important

factor in making it happen has been the energy and commitment shown by those who have given their time and expertise to serve on the Parish Plan Committee and its working groups.

Articles on the intention to produce a Parish Plan, invitations to get involved and reports on its progress towards completion were printed in the Parish newsletter "Chignal News" - which is distributed free to every household in The Chignals & Mashbury - in March, May and September 2015 and in March and May 2016.

Chignal Parish Council has debated the Parish Plan in public at each of its full council meetings since January 2015 and the minutes are printed in full in the bi-monthly "Chignal News" and can be viewed on the Parish website.

Progress on producing the Parish Plan was discussed with residents at the monthly coffee mornings held in the Village Hall, Chignal St James and in the United Reform Church, Chignal Smealey.

A personal invitation to participate in the first Parish Plan workshop was delivered to every house in The Chignals. Over 50 local residents attended the priority setting workshop, facilitated by the Rural Community Council of Essex, and 18 of them signed-up to join a steering group to produce the plan.

The steering group was formalised into a Parish Plan Committee comprising 16 local residents, including 5 Parish Councilors. This committee has met on a monthly basis to progress and develop the plan and its minutes were reported at Parish Council meetings and published on the Parish website. In addition, 2 small working groups were formed to draft the plan, questionnaire and to draft the plan.

Copies of the questionnaire were delivered to every house in The Chignals and produced an impressive 95% household response rate. A separate questionnaire was produced for young people with an equally significant return rate.

The results of the questionnaire were displayed at North Melbourne Library for 2 days, manned by members of the Parish Plan committee. This was visited by residents from The Chignals and the adjoining Newlands Spring estate in Chelmsford.

The second Action Planning workshop was attended by 20 residents; several of whom volunteered to take some of the actions forward, such as the production of a



"Welcome Pack" for new residents, acting as a Broadband Champion and re-activating a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Stakeholder engagement

Both the County and City Councilors covering Chignal Parish have given support and guidance and engaged in our Parish Plan. City Council planners were informed of the intention to produce a plan and its initial findings have been reflected in the Parish Council's comments on the first stage of the new Chelmsford Local Plan.

The Rural Community Council of Essex have been very supportive to the Parish Council in facilitating the first workshop, in setting up a steering group and refining the survey questionnaire.

Local businesses, such as farmers and the operator of the landfill site were consulted separately on the plan and their views have been taken into account, particularly on the desirability of small scale organic growth.

Clearly, as we move into the delivery stage, other stakeholders such as the County Council Highways and Rights of Way Teams, Superfast Broadband and Essex Police will need to be engaged.



Clockwise: The produce from the Community Orchard is distributed at the annual fruit celebration to coincide with the Harvest Festival. An oak tree being planted on the Village Green celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee 2012. The Wine Discovery Group enjoying their Christmas dinner at the Village Hall.

“Respecting our Past, Embracing our Future: A Strategy for Rural Essex”

www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk

In July 2016, the Essex Rural Partnership launched a new Rural Essex Strategy 2016-2020 which will influence and support the delivery of this Parish Plan. The Partnership brings together organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex. Chignal Parish Council participated in a workshop in July 2015 to flag up local concerns for rural communities which formed the basis of a questionnaire of people living and working in rural Essex. Over 1,600 people, (including some Chignal residents), responded to the questionnaire, around 70% of them living in rural communities.

The main messages emerging from this county-wide survey echo those expressed by many Chignal residents during the preparation of this Parish Plan; better Broadband is important for rural businesses and service access; our rural landscapes and communities are what is most special about rural Essex; new housing provision

to be developed sensitively, providing some affordable housing that is appropriate to rural communities, avoids over development and is supported by transport and other services; access to services is not a problem for people with their own transport, and voluntary services can often be accessed locally, but older people and people with disabilities can become isolated and lonely; and, people generally feel safe in rural communities, but are concerned about traffic, road safety and litter.

Acknowledgements:

The Chignal Parish Plan was produced by: Lynn Ballard, Sandra Bailey, Alan Garman, Colin Beeton, Julia Emberton, Linda Nelson, Malcolm Felwell, Steve Middleditch, Sue Fincham, Nigel Bewitt-Smith, Chris Anstey, Gill Thomas and the Chignal Community with practical and financial support from the Rural Community Council of Essex.

Design and photography by Steve Middleditch with additional photography from Andy Scheidegger, Ann Salmon, Linda Nelson and Chris Anstey. Map illustrations by Kate Middleditch

Further copies can be obtained from Chignal Parish Council The Parish Clerk. Email: chignalpcc@gmail.com Download pdf: www.essexinfo.net/health/signals/parish-council/parish-documents/parish-plan/