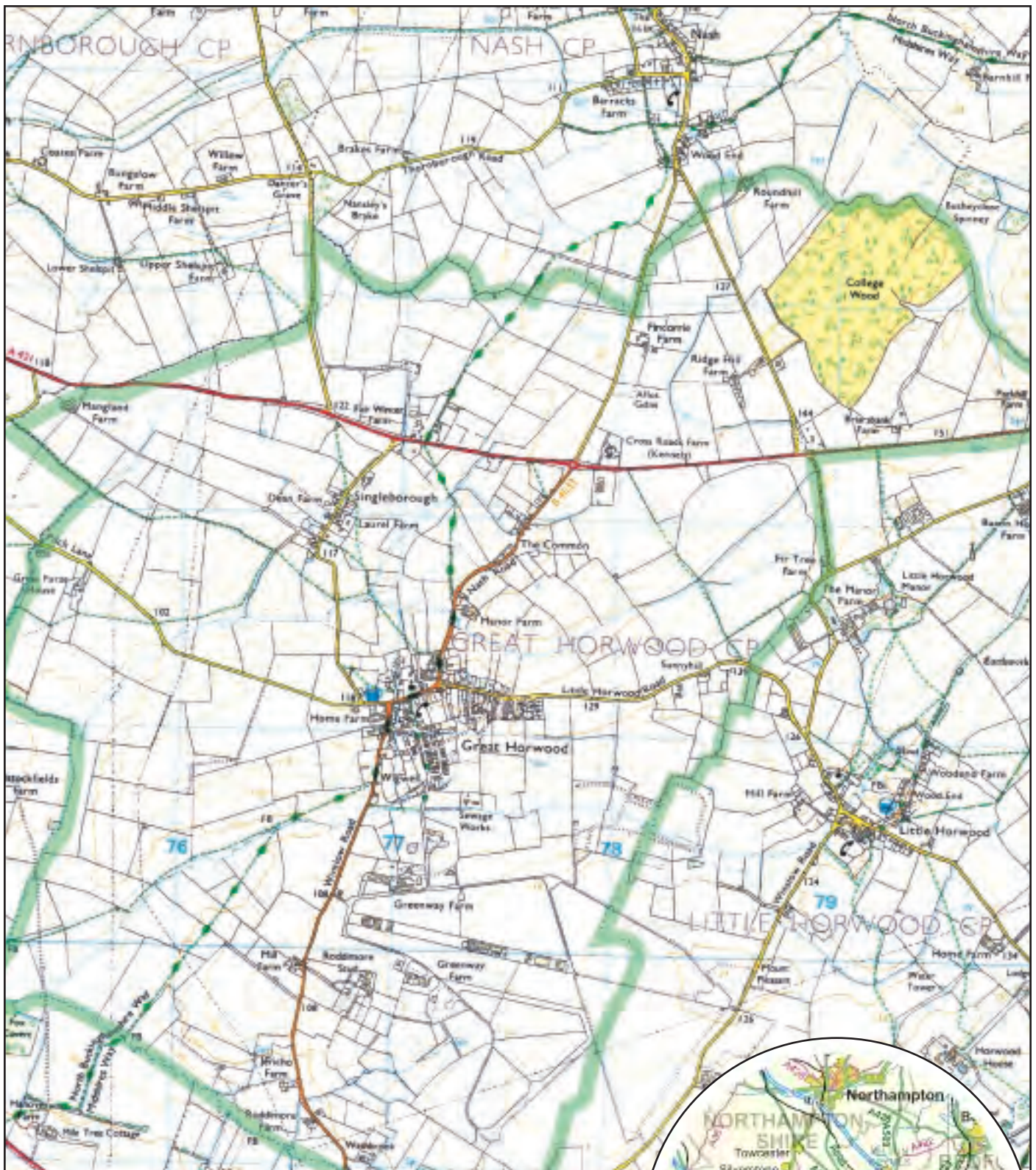


Great Horwood Parish Plan 2006





Great Horwood Civil Parish (boundary highlighted in green)

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Great Horwood and surrounding area

Contents

	List of abbreviations	ii
1	Summary	1
2	Introduction	2
2.1	The Parish of Great Horwood	2
2.2	The history of the Parish	2
2.3	Heritage and conservation	3
2.4	Community resources	4
3	Preparing and implementing the Plan	5
3.1	How we wrote the Plan	5
3.2	Putting the Plan into effect	5
4	Our vision	7
5	The Plan	8
5.1	Regional, strategic and structural planning	8
5.2	Development and planning	9
5.3	Environment and footpaths	11
5.4	Recreation	13
5.5	Village Hall	14
5.6	Public transport	14
5.7	Traffic	15
5.8	Community issues	16
6	The action plans	17
	Appendix A: The consultation process	22
	Appendix B: Parish organisations	23
	Appendix C: Thanks and acknowledgements	26

List of abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this document:

AVDC	Aylesbury Vale District Council
BCA	Buckinghamshire Community Action
BCC	Buckinghamshire County Council
BT	BT plc
CA	Conservation Area
DfT	Department for Transport
GP	General practitioner
HGV	Heavy goods vehicle
LDF	Local Development Framework
LLP	Limited liability partnership
MKSM	Milton Keynes and South Midlands
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PC	Parish Council
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RoSPA	The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
S-E Plan	South-East Plan
SID	Speed Indicating Device
VDS	Village Design Statement

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1

Summary

Great Horwood, a rural parish in North Buckinghamshire, has recognised that a substantial community effort is needed if the parish is to remain viable and attractive in the face of today's pressures.

This Parish Plan expresses the community's will, not just to survive, but to thrive.

A large group of volunteers ran a notably successful Community Consultation, and has used the resulting data plus their own soundings to prepare the Plan. The process has taken two years so far.

Great Horwood is potentially much affected by aspects of the South-East Plan and by the further development of Milton Keynes. We will endeavour to secure the best results for the residents of the parish from all such initiatives.

We will focus upon the development and enhancement of community facilities for all villagers, including young people. We will seek to make it possible for those with village roots to remain in the village. We will take measures to safeguard the built-up areas and the countryside from threats large and small. We will endeavour to enhance communications, and will work to reduce the dominance of road traffic in village life.

We will build the fabric of a new-yet-old Great Horwood to create a successful, lively and adaptable community for the 21st century; our Parish Plan, carefully implemented and frequently reviewed, will be the keystone of this endeavour.

Panorama of the centre of the village as seen from the church tower. *Photo Brian Shatwell.*





2

Introduction

2.1 The Parish of Great Horwood

The Civil Parish of Great Horwood is a large parish (5 square miles, 13 square kilometres) in North Buckinghamshire containing two settlements – a medium-sized village (Great Horwood) and a small but separate hamlet (Singleborough). The parish lies midway between Buckingham to the west and Milton Keynes to the east, and some 14 miles north of Aylesbury, the county town. The total population is approximately 1100 distributed among 400 houses. The local authorities are Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC).

Great Horwood is an independent community with a distinctively mixed and lively character in a charming rural setting.

As with many rural communities, Great Horwood is not free of problems. On a wider scale, the proximity of Milton Keynes is raising issues connected with the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Sub-regional Strategy and the Milton Keynes Long-term Sustainable Growth Plan; simultaneously, developers are seeking to exploit a World War II airfield site that is partly in the parish. On a local scale, there is very little employment in the village; the last shop in the village closed in 2001; public transport is rudimentary; facilities and amenities are restricted (e.g. no gas) or limited (e.g. dated and cramped village hall); road traffic is too dominant; little or no affordable housing is available for villagers.

Yet Great Horwood remains popular and community spirit is still strong. This Parish Plan shows the village community's positive determination to build upon its strengths and tackle its problems.

2.2 The history of the Parish

The history of the parish goes back to Roman times; traces of Roman settlers were found in the 19th century at a site at the north end of the village. The name Horwood derives from old English words meaning “filthy” or “muddy” wood, while Singleborough means “gravel hill”. Thankfully, Great Horwood cannot now be described as “filthy” or “muddy”, and the only wood worth the name is in the far north-east of the parish – a remnant of the old Whaddon Chase.

William Wareham, incumbent of St James' Great Horwood from 1487 to 1494, later became Archbishop of Canterbury

The first direct mention of Great Horwood (Horwode Magna) appears in the Domesday Book of 1086, stating that the manor belonged to Walter Giffard, Earl of Buckingham, and was taxed at 10 hides. During the following centuries, the manor passed to the Cluniac Priory of Newton



High Street, late C19th



Spring Lane, late C19th before Dutch Elm disease

High Street today *Photo John Whitehead*Spring Lane today *Photo John Whitehead*

Longville (1150), then to John, Duke of Bedford (brother of Henry V) in 1415 before reverting to the Crown on his death and then being granted in 1441 to the wardens and scholars of New College, Oxford. A market on Wednesdays and an annual three-day fair on the Feast of St James were granted to the college in 1447. The fair continues to this day, but it is known that the Wednesday market had ceased by 1806.

2.3 Heritage and conservation

Both Great Horwood and Singleborough have a valuable architectural heritage. Each contains a Conservation Area. In total the parish has 46 Listed Buildings.

Following rebuilding after a major fire on 28 May 1781 that destroyed sixteen farm houses, four malt houses and forty cottages, much of the centre of Great Horwood is made up of Georgian brick houses. Around the periphery of the 1781 fire area are the original thatched farmhouses and cottages, many with the remains of the characteristic large rear gardens that were an integral part of the medieval open field farming system.

The Parish Church of St James, which escaped the fire, has a 13th century doorway and contains many fine internal features. It underwent a complete restoration in 1873-74 under the direction of Sir George Gilbert Scott.

The built environment of Great Horwood is a living record of the organic development of the village over many years, and is an asset that should be preserved for future generations. In the Community Consultation (see



Roman silver spoon, made about 350 - 425 AD; part of a hoard of Roman silver spoons with a brooch, pin and ring, ploughed up in a field between Great Horwood and Winslow.

© Buckinghamshire County Museum
(for more information go to <http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/museum/m2e/modesearch.htm>)



Great Horwood was the last township in North Buckinghamshire to be enclosed under the Enclosure Acts, this taking place as late as 1842.

(www.greathorwoodplan.org.uk for details) a large majority of residents stated that they value the Great Horwood Conservation Area and wished to retain or even enlarge it. We will prepare a Village Design Statement to help ensure this environment is retained.

The ridge-and-furrow field markings are ancient, and part of the field pattern is a relic of the former Great Field of medieval times. The survival of both is highly unusual and results from Great Horwood's special history. We will encourage the preservation of this environment wherever possible, and will discourage the rooting-out of hedgerows linked to the medieval field pattern.

2.4 Community resources

The parish can call upon a variety of community resources, both public and private:

- A Village Hall, built in 1923, managed by a Management Committee. The principal users include the Pre-School and After School Groups.
- The Parish Church of St James. Very little community use other than for services.
- Great Horwood Church of England Combined School. Apart from the Church Fete, community use is confined to school-related activities such as Parent-Teacher Association events.
- A Scout Hut (in the school grounds). Some community use.
- A Recreation Ground (Cricket Field) with pavilion. Although owned by the Parish Council as a Recreation Ground, the field's sole use is for cricket. The pavilion is let for some community functions, but is some way from the centre of the village.
- A Football Ground, with two pitches, also some way from the village.
- A disused childrens' playground, currently under consideration for renovation.
- Two Public Houses, the Crown and the Swan Inn.
- Two allotment fields, one of which is well outside the village.

We will endeavour to enhance the facilities under community control and work to improve their availability for the village as a whole.

The parish has a number of voluntary organisations. These are listed, with additional details, at Appendix B.



3

Preparing and implementing the Plan

3.1 How we wrote the plan

Beginning with a Public Meeting in January 2004, we have followed a demanding but rewarding process that has involved a large number of Great Horwood and Singleborough people. More details are set out at Appendix A.

This Parish Plan has been prepared by a substantial group of volunteers, under the auspices of but largely independent from the Parish Council. They comprised:

The **Steering Committee**, whose numbers varied from 5 to 9, chaired by a Parish Councillor. The Committee's tasks were to

- Monitor and manage the overall progress of the Parish Plan project
- Provide guidance for Work Groups and balance their inputs
- Liaise with external bodies and the Parish Council
- Report regularly to the village
- Write and publish the Parish Plan
- Obtain and account for funding for printing and other unavoidable costs
- Plan for implementation.

Six **Work Groups**, each headed by a Co-ordinator and made up of 2 to 7 members. Each Group had a specific focus: Development and Planning; Environment and Footpaths; Recreation; Village Hall; Public Transport; Traffic. The Work Groups' tasks were to

- Prepare draft questions for the Community Consultation
- Draft Action Plans for inclusion in the Plan
- Plan for implementation.

Many other helpers were also involved, especially in consultation and fund-raising activities. Details and names are at Appendix C.

3.2 Putting the Plan into effect

We are very much aware that any plan is only valid on the day it was written. Events and conditions change and the unexpected always occurs; constant updating is required. We are also very conscious that any plan, this one being no exception, will only be successful if



The Parish Plan will only be successful if it is implemented well and reviewed frequently.

it is implemented satisfactorily. Accordingly, we have devoted much attention to what should happen after this Parish Plan is published.

Although the overall responsibility for the Parish Plan will rest with Great Horwood Parish Council, we propose that this responsibility should be shared with Advisory Groups based on the present Steering Committee and Work Groups – probably reconstituted, and with some changes of membership. All of this should be formalised in the interests of good governance.

Implementing the Action Plans (see page 21) will involve a variety of people and agencies. Volunteers outside the present Work Groups and Steering Committee may well be strongly motivated, but it will be appropriate for the relevant Advisory Group to monitor their activities, ensure timeliness and report as necessary. Actions to be undertaken by the new Advisory Groups themselves will of course be monitored and reported on directly. Actions to be undertaken by bodies such as BCC and AVDC will of necessity be initiated from within the parish, and will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Advisory Groups. The new Advisory Group based on the present Steering Committee will monitor and co-ordinate overall and act as the liaison with the Parish Council.

We intend that there should be a quarterly formal review of the Plan and of progress against Action Points. These reviews will supplement but not replace day-to-day monitoring and control, and will be the appropriate time at which to add new Action Points as required by changing circumstances or to retire those no longer needed.

In summary –

- The Parish Plan will be reviewed frequently, and will be updated as necessary
- As Advisory Groups, the present Steering Committee and Work Groups will have continuing roles in implementing the Plan
- The Parish Council will continue to have overall responsibility for the Plan and its implementation.



4

Our vision

Great Horwood and Singleborough will seek to remain an independent, distinctive rural community, conserving and enhancing its rich architectural and environmental heritage for the benefit of current villagers and for future generations.

We will seek to sustain and reinforce our open social structure and mixed community, and will foster activities and facilities that enhance them. These will include the development of resources appropriate to young people and the provision of affordable housing.

We will encourage beneficial change but not change for its own sake nor change that does not benefit our residents. We will carefully monitor future development in or near the parish and resist any which is unsympathetic to the village setting. At the same time we will seek to ensure a constructive outcome for the former Little Horwood Airfield, half of which is within the parish, and to maintain appropriate relationships with the nearby new city of Milton Keynes.

We will work to lessen the adverse impact of road traffic on the village and will endeavour to enhance transport and other links to neighbouring communities.

Overall, our aim is that Great Horwood and Singleborough residents will want to continue to live in the parish, and that others will wish they could.

Young villagers shared their vision of the village with us at the Junior Consultation. *Photo Rod Moulding*





5

The Plan

This Chapter describes the major initiatives that are proposed as part of this Parish Plan. The impetus for some has come from the Parish Council, for others from village voluntary organisations, and for still others from private individuals. The Parish Plan Work Groups have brought these together and set them out as a detailed Action Plan, shown in the next Chapter.

In this Chapter “we” refers to the community as a whole. The Action Plan (Chapter 6) provides details of responsibilities.

5.1 Regional, strategic and structural planning

5.1.1 The South-East Plan

Because of its geographic location Great Horwood is affected by a number of different plans for regional and local growth over the next 20 years.

The Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Sub-regional Strategy identifies broad locations for significant growth in Milton Keynes and in Aylesbury Vale.

Options for development in Milton Keynes were published in November 2005 as part of the Milton Keynes Long-term Sustainable Growth Plan. Six options have been described of which four would mean that the western / south-western boundary of Milton Keynes would move significantly towards Great Horwood. The MKSM proposals are being taken forward by the South-East Plan. Consultation on the South-East Plan, which includes the allocation of housing numbers in district council areas, took place during September and October 2005.

For Aylesbury Vale, an average of 1,060 houses is proposed to be built each year from 2006 to 2026, four-fifths of which would be centred on Aylesbury itself. Around two-fifths of the thousand-odd houses should be affordable homes.

At the time of writing (January 2006) it is not possible to be more precise about MKSM and South-East Plan proposals. However -

- We will monitor MKSM and other structural and strategic proposals and initiatives, and publicise these to the community
- We will provide comments to all consultation processes in the interests of the residents of Great Horwood and Singleborough.



5.1.2 Greenway

A further threat to Great Horwood, and also to Little Horwood and Winslow, has recently re-emerged. This takes the form of proposals for large-scale development of the Little Horwood Airfield site. This Second World War airfield, built in 1943 and in use only until 1946, straddles Great Horwood and Little Horwood parishes and is now farmland. Much of the airfield site was acquired in 2001 by a property company with the intention of promoting the site as a potential new town. At present, Greenway Land LLP (“Greenway”) either owns or has options on around 500 acres of land centred on the old airfield. Greenway appears to be seeking allocation of the site through the emerging AVDC Local Development Framework.

A public meeting was held in Great Horwood in October 2005 to consider the Greenway issue, seeking the widest possible range of views from villagers. The meeting was attended by approximately 70 residents, and passed a resolution opposing any large-scale development on Little Horwood Airfield. Subsequently, the Parish Council wrote to Greenway informing them of the outcome of the public meeting.

We believe strongly that this area cannot support a new settlement of any size without major deleterious effects on surrounding communities in terms of infrastructure, traffic movements and community facilities, especially in view of the proximity of the extensive new developments of Milton Keynes. In the absence of detailed proposals from Greenway at the time of writing, no specific comments can be made. However -

- We will monitor all proposals and initiatives in connection with the site and ensure that residents are fully informed of them
- We will lobby for rejection of allocation by AVDC of the Little Horwood Airfield site
- We will work closely with other communities, particularly Little Horwood and Winslow, to ensure the interests of Great Horwood are fully represented.

5.2 Development and planning

There is much concern that villagers cannot afford to live in the village. This is not a problem unique to Great Horwood, and is exceptionally ironic in view of the large amounts of speculative housing being proposed for Milton Keynes and Greenway (see above). We feel strongly that affordable housing for rent and for shared purchase should be available so that those with roots in the village can continue to live in it. We propose measures to allow such housing to be constructed, and



believe that it will be necessary to set up a local charitable trust to retain control of the housing.

- We will ask the Parish Council to administer a Housing Needs Survey in the parish and will work with the Council to accomplish this
- If the need is validated by the Housing Needs Survey, we will ask the Parish Council to identify an area where a small mixed development of up to ten houses for affordable rent could be built
- We will look into setting up a village charitable trust to administer the rentable housing in order to ensure the village retains control
- We will investigate the construction of shared-ownership dwellings for sale to those with village connections, with legally-acceptable provisions to ensure the houses remain affordable and locally-controlled.

The built environments in Great Horwood and Singleborough are fragile, man-made constructs that could easily be degraded; in particular, our 46 listed buildings will always be vulnerable. To conserve our heritage for future generations and in view of the strong opinions in favour of retention or extension of the Great Horwood Conservation Area expressed by residents, we shall recommend through specific proposals to AVDC that the area should be somewhat enlarged in order to protect the overall environment, chiefly by rounding out the present irregular outline. We shall also work to ensure the Singleborough Conservation Area is retained or enlarged. There is no Village Design Statement for the parish; preparation of a VDS would provide an opportunity to develop policies and to ensure consistent resident-friendly treatment of planning applications.

- We will recommend to AVDC that the Great Horwood Conservation Area be enlarged in order to protect better the village's heritage
- We will recommend to AVDC that the Singleborough Conservation Area should be similarly protected
- We will develop a Village Design Statement for submission to AVDC in accordance with AVDC's published guidelines and those of National Planning Policy Statement 12.

The last shop in Great Horwood closed in 2001, and is much missed. A travelling Sub-Post Office visits the Village Hall weekly; a mobile fish-and-



chip van visits the village twice a week; a smallholder has started to retail his local vegetables. The vast majority of residents would like to have a shop in the village, but there is a clear understanding of the problems inherent in running such a shop in a village of this size and position.

Nevertheless

- We will continue to work with Buckinghamshire Community Action (BCA) and other funding and advisory bodies to explore possibilities for establishing and running retail outlets in the community
- We will support entrepreneurs willing to create and operate retail ventures in the village
- We will explore the possibilities of Farmers' Markets and village co-operatives
- We will continue to support the weekly visiting Sub-Post Office, with customer facilities such as refreshments, in the Village Hall.

There is no mains gas in the parish. Since more than ten years has elapsed since the provision of mains gas was last investigated it is time to obtain a fresh quotation from Transco.

- We will request Transco to investigate and cost out the provision of mains gas to Great Horwood.

5.3 Environment and footpaths

The natural environment of Great Horwood is unspectacular but unspoilt. The parish contains two County Wildlife Sites (College Wood, and part of Little Horwood Airfield) and two Biological Notification Sites (three fields off Spring Lane, and part of a meadow between Great Horwood and Singleborough). Pilch Fields Site of Special Scientific Interest is just outside the western boundary of the parish. The Little Horwood Airfield site is under threat from development proposals, and includes a row of the nationally-rare Native Black Poplar.

The built environment is, in architectural terms, handsome and well-documented. However, many minor aspects of the village environment are not fully in keeping such as street furniture, street lighting and signage. Too many pavements are uneven or poorly maintained; maintenance of verges has been a recurring problem; episodes of fly-tipping affect rural verges. We propose measures to tackle all these. We are not proposing dog mess bins as we believe they would be ineffective in our environment.

At the Church Fete 2004. Photo Rod Moulding





A worthwhile by-product of the Parish Plan initiative was the preparation and submission to BCC of a full footpath study for BCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Footpaths in the parish are mostly in good condition and generally accessible, thanks largely to responsible landowners. However, mainly for historical reasons, there are rather few field paths. Rights of way or permitted accesses do not exist where today's population wishes to walk, and the layout of Great Horwood in particular means that without such footpaths facilities are effectively further apart than they need be; this in turn encourages the use of cars.

Notably, it is not possible to walk or cycle between the village and most of the neighbouring communities without using roads. Walking or cycling on the B4033 is not for the fainthearted; attempting either on the A421 is positively suicidal.

Pilch Lane is a much-favoured walking route, especially for dog owners. Yet pedestrians often have to jump sharply on to verges as cars can pass at some speed.

- We will monitor the rural environment, including the County Wildlife Sites and Biological Notification Sites, for abuse and illegal practices in conjunction with BCC
- We will foster co-operation with landowners of sensitive sites to promote biological diversity
- We will encourage local pride through good signage, village signs, entry "gates", flower planting, etc
- We will set and press for enforcement of higher standards for verge and gutter maintenance
- We will carry out a full lighting survey and plan for necessary improvements
- We will inspect all footways (pavements) and press for repair of those that are dangerous or in poor condition
- We will revive the previously-successful volunteer litter picks
- We will publicise AVDC's Litter Enforcement Officer service
- We will encourage the use of present footpaths by improving ease of access and by publicising them through a parish footpaths leaflet
- We will prepare and agree a policy for field footpath development and maintenance in the parish, and work to help landowners and BCC to continue to achieve high standards
- We will endeavour to enlist the co-operation of landowners and local authorities to establish a Great Horwood Circular Walk, a footpath from Weston Road or Little Horwood Road to Spring



Lane, and a footpath and cycle path to Winslow

- We shall press for designation by BCC of Pilch Lane as a Quiet Lane (as defined by the Transport Act 2000) to improve its attractiveness for walkers, cyclists and riders.

5.4 Recreation

Great Horwood villagers have been trying for 30 years to provide better recreation facilities for the parish, both for young people and for adults. The layout of the village means that there are few obvious centrally-situated open spaces which could become recreation areas; several opportunities have been missed during earlier development phases.

The Football Club rents its field from Castlefields, a local charity whose trustees are drawn from the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council. The Parish owns the Recreation Ground, otherwise known as the Cricket Field, but this is well out of the village. It also owns a smaller site in Willow Road which was originally a 1977 Jubilee childrens' playground but is now disused and in poor repair. It is surrounded by housing and has poor access.

The Community Consultation showed that a large majority of the people in the parish believe that facilities for young people are needed.

A piece of land off Spring Lane has been gifted to the Parish with a view to its becoming a new recreation area, although planning issues are not yet resolved. A significant proportion of the parish would be prepared to support facilities in this new area by paying a higher local precept.

- We will continue to work to provide appropriate recreation facilities for the parish, focusing this effort through the former Parish Plan Work Group which will operate as a sub-committee of the Parish Council
- We will endeavour to secure planning permission from AVDC for the new Spring Lane recreation area
- We will plan and procure necessary installations for any new recreation area
- We will seek to improve access and security in this area
- We will investigate the possibility of restoring and reviving the disused childrens' playground off Willow Road
- We will seek all available public and private funding, and work to supplement such funding locally.



The cricket club has a thriving junior section. *Photo John Whitehead*

Young people themselves think there is little to do and few places to meet. They would like places to meet up, preferably with separate locations for teenagers and young children.



The Football Club's First XI, 2003. *Photo Club website*



5.5 Village Hall

The Village Hall was constructed, probably as a Memorial Hall, with the aid of brick-by-brick donations from villagers; it was opened in 1923. Now, the Hall's facilities are dated and limited, and do not meet all the needs of the parish. For example, there is no outdoor play area for Pre-School; the Hall has a small kitchen and poor toilets; the stage is very cramped; there is no adequate meeting room; storage facilities are limited; there is no car park. Further, a recent survey has shown that the fabric requires significant repairs.

While a new Hall is desirable, we recognise that finding a site, funding purchase and construction and disposing of the present building would all be major undertakings. Some villagers feel the Hall was erected to serve the parish and should be improved but not moved.

Consequently, the Hall is now not attractive to many potential private hirers; however, it has not been systematically marketed. The business base of the Hall is now largely limited to a small number of regular hirers including the Silver Band, Jokers Wild (amateur dramatic group), the WI, and organisations for children. Changes in education regulations threaten the continued use of the Hall by pre- and post-school organisations, thus jeopardising major revenue streams.

Steps to promote the existing Hall and to rationalise its business plan will help to enhance facilities for all users.

- We will work with all stakeholders to prepare a Village Hall business plan
- We will review requirements for repairs in the light of proposals for renovation or relocation and proceed appropriately
- We will continue to seek a site for a new Hall acceptable to the community at large
- We will involve all stakeholders in the preparation of plans for renovation or new construction
- We will review funding possibilities for improvements or for new construction, and seek out all possible public and private sources.

5.6 Public transport

Not all members of the community wish to or are able to travel by car. Bus services are infrequent and serve a limited number of destinations; they are neither fast enough nor suitably timed to attract new users to switch from car travel. Such services as there are are not well publicised.

There is room for more innovative transport provision, and for better links with neighbouring communities. The needs of the elderly and the sick merit attention as well as those of recreational travellers. The transfer of some hospital services from Buckingham to Stoke Mandeville



Passenger rail services from Winslow to Oxford (for the South and West), to Bletchley and Milton Keynes (for London and the North) and possibly to Aylesbury would much increase the attractiveness of the area including Great Horwood and consequently its long-term prosperity.

and others from Stoke Mandeville to High Wycombe is likely to make attendance by patients and visitors more difficult and costlier.

Repeated efforts have been made by pressure groups to re-establish services on the disused Oxford to Cambridge railway line which abuts the south of the parish; several official studies have seemed on the point of recommending reinstatement but nothing has so far happened. The track bed is largely intact but new track would of course be required – this is relatively inexpensive. A new station at Winslow would be necessary.

- We will endeavour to assure a good-quality, frequent, reliable bus service to appropriate destinations by working with the bus companies
- We will press for additional evening bus services to meet the needs of young people from the parish
- We will lobby for a request stop for long-distance express buses close to the A421 / B4033 roundabout
- We will set up a hospital car service run by volunteers
- We will look to set up a GP Health Centre Appointments transport scheme for Winslow and Buckingham surgeries
- We will support efforts to reinstate passenger services, together with a new station at Winslow, on the disused Oxford to Cambridge railway line.

5.7 Traffic

Great Horwood is a rural parish, although close to the large new urban area of Milton Keynes. It is divided by the busy A421 trunk road linking Milton Keynes and the M1 to the east and Buckingham, Oxford and the M40 to the west. Almost all parish residents live south of the A421. The B4033 runs south from the A421 through Great Horwood towards Winslow. It has two sharp bends within the present 30 mph speed limit zone. All other roads are unclassified. The amount and speed of traffic, with accompanying hazards and pollution by noise and fumes, are of concern to many residents.

As a by-product of the Parish Plan initiative, funding was secured for the construction of a new pedestrian footway along the length of Nash Road south of the A421, creating a much-improved link between Great Horwood village centre, the Common, and the Recreation Ground (the cricket field). Additionally, local pressure has contributed to BCC's plans to impose a 40mph speed limit on this stretch of the B4033.



- We will investigate, with BCC, the possibility of further extending speed limits on the B4033 and elsewhere
- We will investigate, with BCC, the possibility of imposing vehicle weight restrictions on the B4033 or of declassifying the road
- We will press for the installation of a pedestrian crossing in Great Horwood High Street and perhaps elsewhere
- We will support measures to discourage the inappropriate use of rural roads by through traffic
- We will investigate, with BCC and AVDC, measures to improve car parking facilities to achieve better access and less congestion for both motorists and pedestrians
- We will encourage the appointment of a volunteer traffic co-ordinator to liaise with BCC, the Parish Council and the community.

5.8 Community issues

Many of those who work from home depend on the internet as an important tool in their work. Broadband services are significantly slower than those available in urban environments. This clearly puts Great Horwood teleworkers at a disadvantage.

- We will press BT to upgrade the facilities of Winslow telephone exchange and the line between the village and Winslow.

Coherent community development is fostered by good intra-community communication. The parish has an excellent magazine, *Focus*, which appears ten times a year and is read by most villagers. However, the parish lacks modern communication media.

- We will create a village website to improve communication within the village, and of the village to others
- We will review the provision of other communication media e.g. improved noticeboards.

Although personal crime levels are negligible, a number of property-related criminal incidents have occurred. Many positive crime-fighting steps can be taken by householders, but the parish can and should assist.

- We will continue to foster the work of Neighbourhood Watch in acting as community sentinels
- We will liaise closely with Thames Valley Police through Neighbourhood Watch on additional measures that the community could take to minimise crime.



6

The action plans

In this Chapter we set out details of the specific proposals for action in or affecting Great Horwood over the next ten years.

Action: Describes the proposed initiative. Most of these result from the activities of the Work Groups.

Priority: Specifies how important we believe this issue is to the community:

- 1 Critically important to the current and future well-being of the parish
- 2 Highly important
- 3 Important but not essential.

Responsibility: Describes who will be responsible for initiating this aspect of the Plan and who will be responsible for carrying out the action, if different.

Restrictions or collaborations: Describes factors that may limit or delay the achievement of the goal, and bodies or authorities whose action or co-operation will be necessary.

Timescale: Specifies the urgency and likely duration of any activity. For each activity, detailed plans will support these outline indications.

Short-term: Now to 2 years

Medium-term: 2 to 5 years

Long-term: 5 to 20 years

Ongoing: Started or continuous



	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Restrictions or collaborations	Timescale
REGIONAL, STRATEGIC & STRUCTURAL PLANNING					
1	Milton Keynes expansion: Monitor proposals and publicise within the parish	1	PC		Ongoing
2	South-East Plan etc: Respond to all consultation opportunities	1	PC		Ongoing
3	Greenway: Monitor proposals and publicise within the parish	1	PC		Ongoing
4	AVDC LDF: Lobby AVDC against allocation of Little Horwood airfield site	1	PC		Ongoing
5	Neighbouring parishes: Co-ordinate with neighbouring parishes in connection with MKSM, S-E Plan and Greenway	1	PC		Ongoing
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING					
6	Housing Needs Survey: Perform consultation on local housing requirements	1	PC, Development & Planning Advisory Group	AVDC, BCA	Short-term
7	Affordable housing to rent: Identify an area where a small mixed development could be built	1	PC	Landowners, AVDC planning policy	Short-term
8	Affordable housing for sale: Investigate and initiate building of shared ownership housing where a proportion of each property remains village-controlled and hence available to those with local connections	1	PC, volunteer group e.g. Development & Planning Advisory Group	Landowners, AVDC planning policy, legal issues	Short-term
9	Charitable Trust: Investigate setting up a Charitable Trust or other legal framework to ensure the affordable housing remains in village control	1	PC, volunteers	Charities law	Medium-term
10	Farmers' Market: Set up a monthly Farmers' Market on The Green	1	Development & Planning Advisory Group	PC	Short-term
11	Other Retail Outlets: Continue to explore ways of financing and managing retail outlets	2	Volunteers, Development & Planning Advisory Group	PC, BCA	Medium-term
12	Conservation Area: Request AVDC to extend the Great Horwood CA and maintain the Singleborough CA	2	Development & Planning Advisory Group	AVDC policy	Medium-term
13	Village Design Statement: Prepare a Village Design Statement in line with AVDC guidelines as part of the Community Planning process	3	Volunteers		Medium-term
14	Gas provision: Request Transco to investigate the provision of a mains gas supply	2	Development & Planning Advisory Group		Medium-term
ENVIRONMENT & FOOTPATHS					
15	Wildlife and Environment: Monitor County Wildlife Sites and Biological Notification Sites, promote biological diversity	1	Volunteers	BCC, landowners	Ongoing



	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Restrictions or collaborations	Timescale
ENVIRONMENT & FOOTPATHS (continued)					
16	Village entry signs: Explore possibility and cost of improving village name signs with “gates”, wild flower planting, or similar; investigate the cost of upkeep	2	Volunteers, PC	BCC	Short-term
17	Street furniture: Review all street furniture with a view to creating a formal specification in keeping with a rural and conservation area	3	Volunteers, PC	Cost of insurance, BCC	Medium-term
18	Village maintenance: Maintain standards for hedge cutting, grass mowing, etc	2	PC	AVDC	Ongoing
19	Pavements: Review condition of pavements to formulate action and maintenance plan, and repeat the review annually	1	Volunteers, PC	BCC	Short-term
20	Lighting survey: Carry out a survey and analysis of all street lighting to verify need for improvements or otherwise	1	Volunteers	BCC, light pollution, PC	Ongoing
21	Litter: Encourage and support annual litter-pick and utilise AVDC facilities	1	Volunteers, PC	AVDC	Ongoing
22	Dog mess: Publicise this problem	1	Volunteers, PC, <i>Focus</i>		Ongoing
23	Footpaths: Encourage the use of footpaths by working to improve ease of access and by publicity via a parish footpaths leaflet	2	Volunteers, PC	BCC, AVDC	Medium-term
24	Footpaths, bridleways, etc: prepare and agree a policy for field footpath development and maintenance	2	Volunteers, PC	Liaison with other Parishes, BCC	Medium-term
25	New footpaths: try to establish a Great Horwood Circular Walk, a footpath from Weston Road or Little Horwood Road to Spring Lane, and a footpath and cycleway to Winslow	1	Volunteers, PC	Landowners, BCC	Long-term
26	Pilch Lane: Press for designation as a Quiet Lane	2	Volunteers, PC	BCC	Medium-term
27	The Green: Review the village green and ascertain whether greater environmental and recreational use can be gained through re-design or other facilities	3	Volunteers, PC	PC, householders	Medium-term
28	Notice boards: Improve the notice board facility and utilise recent donation, and monitor its use Analyse suitability of existing locations of notices	3	PC		Ongoing
29	Sponsorship: Investigate sponsorship options for maintenance and improvement of the environment, such as benches, the A421 roundabout, The Green	2	Volunteers, PC	BCC, DfT	Medium-term
30	Village pride: Encourage this through participation in regional competitions, such as Best-Kept Village, etc	3		Participation by community	Medium-term
31	Continuity: Set up Environment and Footpaths sub-committee of PC to monitor all above	2	PC	Volunteers	Short-term
32	Monitoring: Appoint volunteer environment co-ordinator and volunteer footpaths co-ordinator	2	PC, volunteers		Short-term



	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Restrictions or collaborations	Timescale
RECREATION					
33	Planning permission: Apply for outline planning permission to change the Spring Lane site from agricultural to recreational use	1	Recreation sub-committee of PC	AVDC planning policies	Short-term
34	Funding: Investigate and initiate mechanisms to raise funds for playground and recreation facilities in the village	1	Recreation sub-committee of PC; volunteers	BCA; AVDC Leisure Services; Thames Valley Police	Short-term
35	Nature of facilities: Prepare plans for providing a mix of facilities to meet the needs of children, teenagers and adults	2	Recreation sub-committee of PC; volunteers	BCA; AVDC Leisure Services; Thames Valley Police	Short-term
36	Supervision and maintenance: Prepare plans for the supervision of facilities, for security, and for the long-term maintenance of the site(s)	3	Recreation sub-committee of PC; volunteers	BCA; AVDC Leisure Services; Thames Valley Police	Medium-term
VILLAGE HALL					
37	Current hall: Evaluate survey report on current hall and set priorities for repairs and renovations	1	Village Hall Management Committee	Funding; statutory requirements including Health & Safety	Short-term
38	Facilities: Prioritise facilities needed if a new hall is to be obtained e.g. bigger hall, bigger kitchen, better toilets, car parking, separate bar area, outside play area, space for sport, meeting rooms	1	Village Hall Management Committee; stakeholders		Medium-term
39	Location: Continue to seek a site for a new hall	2	Village Hall Management Committee	Availability of land; AVDC planning	Ongoing
40	Funding: Investigate possible sources of funding for renovation of existing hall or for new hall	2	Village Hall Management Committee		Ongoing
41	Business plan: With stakeholders, establish long-term business plan for village hall, determining a range of possible solutions to current problems	1	Village Hall Management Committee		Short-term
42	Management: Take advantage of BCA facilities to provide training in business skills for the Village Hall Management Committee.	3	Village Hall Management Committee	BCA	2006
PUBLIC TRANSPORT					
43	Hospital car service: Set up a hospital car service	1	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Number of volunteer drivers; insurance cover	Short-term
44	Health transport: Investigate setting up a GP Health Centre Appointments transport facility (for Winslow and Buckingham surgeries)	1	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Number of volunteer drivers; insurance cover	Medium-term
45	Bus timetables: Ask Bus Companies to provide clear information at all bus stops on the time of the next service	1	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Co-operation of Bus Companies	Short-term



	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Restrictions or collaborations	Timescale
PUBLIC TRANSPORT (continued)					
46	Additional destinations: Contact Bus Companies and BCC local liaison bodies to investigate feasibility of additional services to other destinations	2	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Co-operation of Bus Companies	Short-term
47	Evening bus services: Contact Bus Companies and BCC local liaison bodies to investigate increasing evening bus services to and from Winslow, Milton Keynes, Buckingham and Aylesbury	2	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Co-operation of Bus Companies	Short-term
48	Bus stops: Ask Bus Companies for an additional Request Stop adjacent to the roundabout on the A421, enabled by the new Nash Road footpath	2	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Co-operation of Bus Companies	Medium-term
49	Rail links: Support, in any consultation process, the provision of an E-W rail link with a station at Winslow	3	Volunteers with the support of the PC	Greenway proposals	Ongoing
TRAFFIC					
50	Traffic speeds: Carry out survey of traffic speeds using Speed Indication Device (SID)	1	Traffic Advisory Group; volunteers	BCC; SID availability; volunteers; siting	Short-term
51	Pedestrian crossings: Prepare proposals for the provision of pedestrian crossings: opposite the church gate on High Street, at the end of the 30mph speed restriction in Nash Road, and where the footpath changes side in Nash Road	1	Traffic Advisory Group	BCC policy; Thames Valley Police; RoSPA	Short-term
52	Declassification of B4033: Prepare proposal for declassification of B4033 (Winslow Road, Nash Road) in view of known hazards	3	Traffic Advisory Group	BCC & Department for Transport policy	Medium-term
53	Parking: Carry out a study of parking hazards to pedestrians and motorists in the village, and initiate improvements	2	Traffic Advisory Group; volunteers	BCC, AVDC	Short-term
54	Traffic restrictions: Develop long-term plans to restrict access to through traffic and HGVs, and to reduce traffic speeds in the Village and on surrounding roads.	3	Traffic Advisory Group	BCC, AVDC, DfT	Medium-term
55	Traffic liaison: Encourage the appointment of a volunteer traffic co-ordinator to liaise with BCC, the PC and the community	2	Volunteer	BCC, Thames Valley Police, PC	Short-term
COMMUNITY ISSUES					
56	Telephone line speeds: Press BT to upgrade the facilities of Winslow telephone exchange and the line between the village and Winslow	2	Volunteers		Ongoing
57	Website: Set up village website	1	Volunteers	PC	Short-term
58	Noticeboards: Review noticeboard provision and siting	3			Ongoing
59	Neighbourhood Watch: Support volunteers in providing this community service	1			Ongoing



Appendix A: The consultation process

A.1 The Open Parish Meeting

The Parish Council initiated the idea of a Parish Plan with an open meeting in the Village Hall in January 2004. Residents were encouraged to write their likes, dislikes and needs on topic boards that covered aspects of living in Great Horwood and Singleborough. Residents were also asked to indicate if they would be willing to help on a work group.

A.2 Setting up the Work Groups

From the list of people who volunteered at the first meeting a Steering Committee was formed together with six Work Groups (one per key area) to look at what were determined as the issues of most concern: Development and Planning, Environment and Footpaths, Recreation, the Village Hall, Public Transport, and Traffic.

A.3 The Community Consultation

The Work Groups were asked to formulate questions, specific to their area of interest, which were included in the Community Consultation questionnaire along with demographic questions. The questionnaire was delivered to every household in the Parish in March 2005 and collected by a small army of volunteers to ensure a good return. The responses from the Consultation were collated, graphed and then sent back to the Work Groups for their comment and further analysed. From this, each Work Group produced a set of Action Points including target outcomes and dates. Some of the Work Groups are organising themselves to continue to pursue their aims.

A.4 The results of the consultation

The response to the questionnaire was remarkably high at 76%. To reflect this, a summary of the data gathered was distributed to each household in the parish. The full results were made available in electronic format for anyone who asked, and will be available via www.greathorwoodplan.org.uk shortly.

A.5 The Junior Consultation

A dedicated consultation session for young people was run in September 2005. A valuable perspective on young residents' point of view resulted, and much useful data was collected. As a spin-off from this session, a group of young people shot a short video capturing aspects of how the village appears to them.

A.6 Voluntary organisations

All voluntary organisations in the parish were asked for their views. Details are shown at Appendix B below.

A.7 External organisations

Many organisations outside but linked to the village were also contacted, including Central Networks (for electricity transmission), Anglian Water, BT and Thames Valley Police.



B

Appendix B: Parish organisations

We consulted with all voluntary organisations in the Parish and asked them

- What will help you to continue and thrive?
- Have your membership numbers been affected by a lack of facilities or support?
- Would your organisation like to expand or do you feel that you have reached a stable size?

We received responses from the following organisations:

The Parish Church of St James is at present in the midst of a major restoration scheme. Phase 1, the internal and external restoration of the structure of the building is complete. Phase 2 is under way. This will change the internal fittings to make different uses of the space easier.

In addition to regular Sunday worship, the Church also provides a number of facilities for families, including Sunbeams (the Sunday school), a monthly service for toddlers, a 3-day Summer play scheme attracting between 80 and 90 children each day, childrens' activity workshops, and the annual Church Fête.



Great Horwood Silver Band on Club Day, 1914. *Photo Band archive*

There is a small but effective choir. Bell ringing is currently not prospering, mainly for lack of leadership. The bell tower has a peal of six bells and is in good condition, but today is mostly used by visitors.

The **Womens' Institute** is a small group with about 20 members and as a result sees itself as being towards the lower limit for viability.

The Wednesday Group (formerly the Mothers' Club) has been in existence since the 1950s. It has 25 members and meets in members' homes, typically with an attendance of 10 to 12. It is entirely self-funded and is seen as successful. They would welcome new members but it is not an issue for them.



Great Horwood Silver Band with new uniforms and instruments provided with assistance of the National Lottery, 1998. *Photo Band archive*

Great Horwood Silver Band was started in 1888 and is a much-loved village institution. A highly-regarded and successful group, the Band performs locally and across the South of England and East Anglia, even playing three tours in Germany. The current membership is 35 although usually about 24 turn out for events. There is a junior section, with instruments provided, but the Band finds that as young people leave the village for higher education there is a lack of recruits. They feel that the village has always given them good support. The Village Hall is generally adequate for rehearsals and performances, although sometimes events are fully booked. Band members mention problems with street lighting, finding it difficult to read their music when they tour the village on Christmas Eve, delighting residents with festive tunes as a prelude to their Christmas morning round.

Jokers Wild is the village's amateur dramatics group and is fairly successful. They stage productions in the Village Hall in spite of its limitations, and would like any new



or refurbished hall to have better facilities for their activities. They find it particularly difficult to retain young peoples' interest as they grow older and eventually move away. Jokers Wild would like to expand, especially from within the village as residents provide only half their membership.

Great Horwood Football Club uses a field to the north of the A421. It receives some financial support from the Parish which it would like to see continue, and is a successful, growing organisation meeting the needs of a wide range of age groups within the village.

Great Horwood Cricket Club in its present form is about 40 years old. Using the Parish Recreation Ground pitch in Nash Road, the Club built a new pavilion in 1988. This was extended in 1994 and again in 2004/5 to provide bigger changing rooms/showers, storage and a disabled toilet, thanks mainly to the hard work of members and grants from AVDC.

The Club has noticed a continuing trend towards a lower proportion of membership from within the village over recent years. The new pedestrian footway in Nash Road should encourage more villagers to become involved in the club.

Scout and Guide Groups include Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows and Brownies. There is considerable demand for Scouting and Guiding activities from the children in the village but the organisations suffer because of a lack of volunteers to run the sections. Consequently there is no Guide section at present and numbers are limited for other sections, to the extent that there are waiting lists. The Scout headquarters (in the grounds of the School) is a valuable asset but cannot be fully exploited without more adult helpers.

The **Parent-Teacher Association** for Great Horwood Combined School is successful but finds itself restricted by the limited size of the meeting rooms available in the village. It sees that closer links to other parish organisations would improve its own success, measured in terms of contributions to the school, and allow wider involvement of the whole parish in events.

Tiny Tigers is a weekly club for mothers and toddlers, operating for two hours in the Village Hall. As at January 2006 it is suspended.

Great Horwood Pre-School provides pre-school activities for young children four mornings a week in the Village Hall. The number of children from the village fluctuates, but over recent years, places have been filled by youngsters from surrounding villages and Milton Keynes. Pre-School is run by a supervisor and three assistants and has a strong committee of parents who manage Pre-School and raise funds.

Pre-School finds serious inadequacies in hiring the Village Hall. There is too little storage available, the kitchen is small and outdated, and the toilets unsuitable. More importantly, there is no outside area for the children's play. Since OFSTED now require this, Pre-School are currently looking for other premises, preferably their own purpose-built building.



The **Ridgeway After School Club** opened in April 2005. It is an After School Club which supports working parents and carers and offers stimulating social activities for children aged 4 – 11 years in partnership with Great Horwood Combined School.

The Club uses the Village Hall five afternoons a week, and finds the facilities inadequate. In particular, the toilet facilities and lack of outside space for the children have prompted comment from OFSTED. The Ridgeway Club is looking for new premises in the village.

Great Horwood C of E Combined School is not itself a voluntary organisation, and therefore did not respond as such to the consultation.

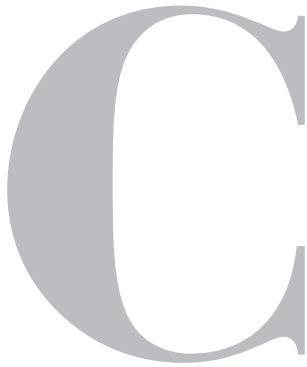
The School serves the whole parish, together with those parishes served by feeder primary schools in Thornborough and Whaddon. Altogether, there are about 170 pupils on the roll.

Great Horwood School is a major asset to the community, both in its own right as a centre for the village children and their parents and also as a focus for other organisations such as the PTA (above).

An artist's impression of the benefits of burying electricity and telephone cables. The top picture shows the Green with the utilities' clutter. The bottom picture shows how it would look without it.

Photos Brian Shatwell





Appendix C: Thanks and acknowledgements

C.1 Donations

Our sincere thanks for facilitating the preparation and publication of the Great Horwood Parish Plan 2006 go to the following generous donors:

- Alpha Plant
- County Cllr David Rowlands (through his local needs fund)
- Buckinghamshire Community Action
- Great Horwood Parish Council.

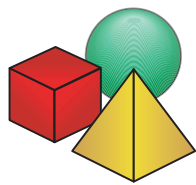
C.2 Thanks

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions in time and effort of the following; many have served in more than one capacity, but for simplicity are only listed once:

- **The Parish Plan Steering Committee:** John Gilbey, Mike Hobday, Rod Moulding, Liz Nicholls*, David Saunders, John Whitehead*.
- **The Work Groups:** David Bolton, Lesley Brocklehurst, Michael Brocklehurst, Pauline Brown, Cathy Holland, Monica Jones, Jeannie Marshall, Elizabeth Metheringham, Steve Metheringham, Jane Moulding, John Nicholls, Richard Ramsdale, Martyn Robinson, Patricia Rudkin, Sarah Samways, Jeremy West, Julie Whitehead, Gilly Wood, Mark Yates.
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- And any other helpers we may have omitted to mention! Our apologies to anyone we've missed out.

* *Parish Councillor*

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Great Horwood Parish Plan

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For further information on the plan see

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Cover illustration: Houses on The Green *Photo Amy
Whitehead*