



great milton **2012** **PARISH PLAN**

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Great Milton Parish Council

the plan: **WHAT IS A PARISH PLAN AND HOW DID IT COME ABOUT**

WHAT IS IT?

A Parish Plan, also known as a Community Led Plan, sets out a VISION of how a community wants to develop and identifies the ACTION needed for the community to achieve it.

These plans are produced by communities, for communities. They are based on detailed consultation involving the whole community. A Parish Plan gives everyone the chance to say what they think about the issues affecting their community and how they would like it to develop. It celebrates the good things, highlights local needs and contains a detailed action plan to help the community meet those needs.

The Great Milton Parish Plan will be used to steer and influence the decisions made by the Parish Council, the South Oxfordshire District Council and the Oxfordshire County Council, as well as other authorities. This community led plan provides a clear mandate for the Parish Council and backs up its decisions, based on the clearly expressed needs and wants of the community.

In the future, the Parish Plan will inform the structure of the new Neighbourhood Plans that will be developed under the provisions of the Localism Act of 2011.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

The Parish Plan was first launched in January 2010, with the help of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) as a Parish Council initiative.

Following a period of consultation with residents, the Parish Plan Committee drew up a detailed questionnaire, covering the issues highlighted during the residents' consultation, which was then circulated to all 324 households within the Parish.

An impressive 241 completed questionnaires were gathered, representing 77% of the number of households, and over 30% of the total population – a high response rate in market research terms – certainly high enough to accurately reflect the views of the community, on the basis that those who did not respond are happy to go along with the opinions of those who did!

In September 2011 the Parish Plan Committee presented the results of its research to the Parish Council in order that an official Parish Plan be drawn up to accurately reflect the needs and wants of the 800-odd residents of Great Milton parish.



the parish: **SOME HISTORY AND BACKGROUND TO GREAT MILTON PARISH**

A BRIEF HISTORY

Extracts from the writings of the late Colonel d' Arcy Dalton:

The name Great Milton does not mean, as it usually does elsewhere, a Town or Settlement with a Mill. From the way it is spelt in ancient documents (the Domesday Book refers to it as Middeltone), it clearly means the 'Middle Town' of a group: though 'middle' between what is not so clear today.

We have comparatively little information about Great Milton in Anglo-Saxon times, although we know there was a Saxon settlement on the site of a Roman Villa on Castle Hill just across the River Thame; but when we reach the Middle Ages we have more and more documents to tell us how our ancestors lived.

From the River Thame, between here and Cuddesdon, at 180ft, the land slopes upwards to a protecting ridge (Views Farm), and then down to the combe or valley where nestles the remains of the earlier Great Milton Village under its guardian Church Tower. Besides a few cottages, there are here a group of four remarkable buildings - all of them contrasting in their architecture: the Manor House, the Great House, and the two Prebendal Houses formerly named 'Milton Magna' (Romeyns Court) and 'Milton Ecclesia' (The Monkery). It is believed to be unique to have two Prebendal Farms in one village.

The land in the village is mostly on the 260ft contour-line, but it rises to 338ft at the Three Pigeons, Milton Common, giving an effective break to north-easterly winds. Several springs emerge to the surface in the woodlands of The Manor, and these supply water to the small lakes there, and to the Priory's lake. There is also another spring just south of the Monkery Barn.

By the 16th century the village had spread all along this ridge and the track connecting the houses became a road, known as the 'Town Street' (now High Street).

In Norman times, the Church, with its rounded-top windows (mere slits in the chancel, though well splayed), had only a nave and a short chancel. This Church had to serve a very large parish, curiously shaped, rather like a shrunken Italy, more than 5 miles long by barely 3 miles at its widest part. In the north there were two small villages, Chilworth Valery and Chilworth Muzzard, as well as the hamlet of Combe, which had 18 inhabitants as late as 1845. The only relic of this last hamlet, a barn, was pulled down in 1947 as being unsafe.

Source: Great Milton & District Local History Society



the parish: **WHY GREAT MILTON IS SUCH A GREAT PLACE**

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE VILLAGE

by Dr Malcolm Airs (Former Conservation Officer for South Oxfordshire District Council and a former resident of Great Milton):

The main reason why Great Milton is such an attractive village, seeming to grow out of the landscape, is surely that until well into the 19th century all its buildings were constructed from local materials. This is as true of the larger country seats which were built round the Church as it is of the cottages which housed the majority of the villagers. Building materials have always been heavy and difficult to transport, and until the coming of the railways, builders had to use the materials that were available locally, unless they were to transport them expensively by wagon from a distance.

The village is fortunate in being situated on an outcrop of the Upper Portland Beds, which has been quarried for building stone since the Middle Ages. This distinctive limestone was used for most of the older buildings in the village - from the earliest parts of the Manor House to the later cottages at the other end of the village. The contribution which this local material makes to the architectural charm of Great Milton contrasts markedly with, for instance, the much yellower North Oxfordshire stone used in the 1908 additions to the Manor House.

The nature of the stone quarried in Great Milton also dictated the way it was used - small pieces were laid as random rubble-stones, while square dressed blocks appear only at the corners of buildings or around the door and window openings. The traditional roofing materials were clay tiles for the larger houses, thatch for the cottages.

When the railway came to Thame in 1864, the appearance of Great Milton began gradually to change. With cheaper transport, building bricks from the Midlands and blue roofing slates from North Wales became fashionable throughout the country, and for the first time the Great Milton builders were able to turn to areas far beyond the village for their materials. Red brick houses began to appear, and thatch to disappear: yellower stone came from the Cotswolds the other side of Oxford, and also, sadly, reconstituted stone blocks - all these contrasting with the earlier traditional local materials.

But fortunately the basic architecture of Great Milton has been strong enough to absorb the impact of these changes, and so it has remained one of the most attractive of Oxfordshire's villages.

Most of the village of Great Milton (apart from the eastern area along Thame Road) has been designated a 'Conservation Area' (i.e. 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance') under the Town & Country Planning Act 1971. Also many individual buildings are 'Listed' by the Minister for the Environment as of Special Interest.

Source: Great Milton & District Local History Society

the parish: **THEN AND NOW**



The Bull and The Green



The Bull and the Old Stores



Church Road from the Green



Priory Bank Cottages

the parish: **THEN AND NOW**



St Mary's Church – 1875 and 2012



Lower End



Sunnybank



The Priory 1901 and 2012

the parish: **THEN AND NOW**



Tallis House and the King's Head



The Old Red Lion – 1960 and 2009



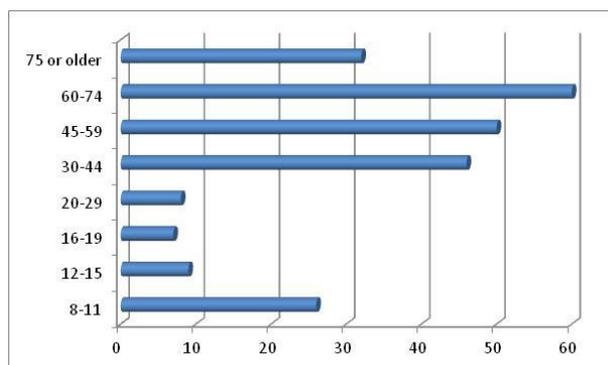
Neighbours' Hall – 1950 and 2012

These photographs are included here to emphasise how little has changed in the village over the years, and how necessary it is to conserve this.

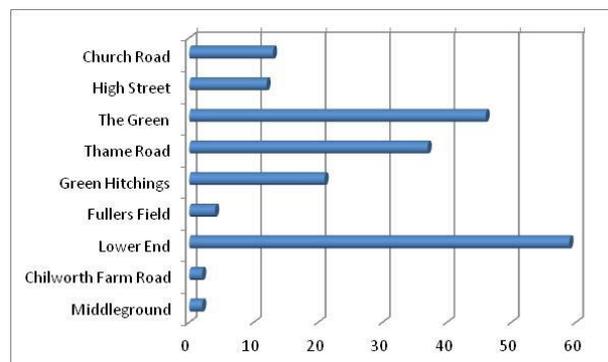


All age groups were represented in the survey, ranging from 26 respondents in the 8-11 year old group, to 92 in the over 60 category. Almost two-thirds of the replies came from people in the 30-64 year old bracket.

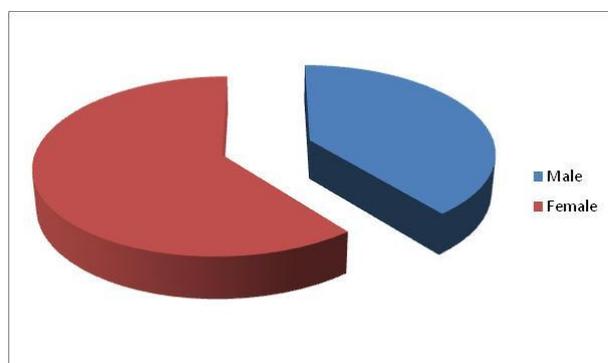
Most of the youngsters in the 8-11 year old group came from Lower End and Green Hitchings. The majority of teenage respondents live in Thame Road and The Green.



About 60% of those who replied lived either in Lower End, The Green or Thame Road.



The responses were split about 60:40 between women and men.



The detailed results and comments have been shared with the relevant individuals, groups and businesses in the village to help them develop their services to meet local needs.

the issue: **THE ENVIRONMENT**

We all agree that we live in a beautiful spot but the challenge is to keep it that way without it becoming stuck in aspic.

A key element of achieving this is to maintain the natural environment that surrounds us, such as by picking up litter, maintaining the public spaces like the village greens and common land, looking after our own properties and their frontages, as well as recycling not just waste but unwanted possessions, and addressing sources of renewable energy. Visually, our surroundings could be improved by having overhead electricity cable buried underground.

Analysing the results, we see strong support for keeping certain areas in the parish uncut to support wildlife, particularly the banks of the Rec and parts of the churchyard; verges should be left as they are, without posts; access driveways should not be uniform.

Path maintenance, and general weeding and pruning are clearly seen as the responsibility of the Parish Council, though there are many volunteers for litter-picking and most people are happy to look after their own property frontage.

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Leave uncut green areas	Banks of Rec and part of Churchyard to be left uncut	Parish Clerk via contractors	Already underway	On-going
Overhead cables	Electricity cable burial to be investigated	Parish Council with Hamish Ogston	Medium	Autumn
Litter control	Annual litter-pick to have greater support and SODC to be encouraged to carry out more frequent picks	Parish Council plus volunteers	Medium	March/ April
Sustainable energy sources	Investigate installation of solar panels on public buildings	School, Neighbours Hall, Church	Low	Winter
Reduce waste	Unwanted item swap day to be instigated	Clare Blakeway-Philips	Already underway	On-going
Winter preparedness	Salt supply, bins and spreader to be sited	Parish Council	Already underway	On-going

the issue: **HOUSING**

The District Council's Core Strategy includes a provision for housing development in rural communities, including Small Villages such as ours, allowing infill on sites up to 0.2 hectares, as well as rural exception sites where the need can be demonstrated. All development must respect designations such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the character of the area and local distinctiveness.

Our survey reveals that almost two-thirds of residents do not believe there is a need for more housing in the Parish. However, over one third do think there is a need – that is 74 people.

Of these 74, more than half are aged 45 or older. Interestingly, 45 of these people suggested development should occur in Thame Road, but only 3 of these 45 live in Thame Road – most of them live on the Green or Lower End – hinting at an element of NIMBY-ism!

The greatest number of respondents (22%) suggested new development should be on infill sites, a view supported by the District Council. Chilworth Lane and Milton Common were also popular selections.

A total of 39 respondents think they or members of their family may be in need of affordable housing.

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Identify housing need	Request information from those who see a need for affordable housing via survey responses and The Bulletin	Parish Council	Medium	Summer
Support housing needs	Provide assistance where needed for families requiring affordable housing	Parish Council	Medium	On-going
Oppose major housing developments	Use the results of the survey as proof of a lack of need for any significant housing development	Parish Council	High	On-going

the issue:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND GROUPS

This village is unusual in that it has two village halls, the Neighbours Hall and the Pavilion. Residents were asked if both these halls should be retained and the overwhelming response (80%) was in favour of doing so.

A recent spate of anti-social behaviour has also highlighted the need for a dedicated youth worker to organise events for the young people of the parish, supported by 70% of respondents. Funding such a role presents a dilemma though as only 60% were willing to have this paid for out of council tax revenues, though there are many people prepared to volunteer for this position.

Although almost 80% of responses felt that a Good Neighbour Scheme was unnecessary, there are still 46 people who know of others who they think could benefit from such a scheme and at least 30 people have indicated a willingness to be involved in this.

Parish church services could be developed by adding services for children (61%), Sunday School (49%) or a Christingle Service (39%).

Pews should not be removed from St Mary's church though nearly 70% of residents would like to see an investment in toilets in the church, to cater for other events as well as normal services. This is likely to be prohibitively expensive though.

Suggested possible improvements to Neighbours Hall include a cinema club (60%) and a garden/play area (59%).

Two thirds of respondents saw a need to replace the temporary classrooms at the school and a total of 21 people indicated a willingness to help raise funds for this.

On other matters, it is quite clear from the 75% response that the village should remain unlit. Almost 60% of people think the allotments could be expanded onto adjacent ground.

Finally, a majority of residents would support an outdoor concert in the Rec or a street party, with many also supportive of barn dances, picnics, family sports days, quizzes and other activities.

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Youth services	Provide a youth service in the village, either as a youth club or using nearby services.	Parish Council, Jane Wilks, OAYP, Church	High	April
Good Neighbour Scheme	Institute a formalised Good Neighbour Scheme in the parish	Neighbours Hall, Church	Medium	End of summer
Children's Service	Initiate a regular children's service at church, Sunday School and install toilets.	Church	Already underway	On-going
Neighbours Hall	Start a cinema club and look into a play area	Neighbours Hall	Medium	End of summer
Temporary classrooms	Raise funds to replace the temporary classrooms at the school	School, Parish Council	High	End of 2012
Allotments	Expand onto adjacent rented ground	Andy Noble	Low	Autumn
Parish events	Organise Jubilee barn dance and street party plus other later events	Rec Committee, Neighbours Hall	Medium	End of May

the issue:

TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC, & OTHER MATTERS

Transport: Fortunately the existing 103/104 bus service is set to continue operating as normal, despite recent cuts, in line with the 90% of residents who did not want to see it reduced, and in addition two-thirds of users find the service satisfactory.

Traffic: Problems with traffic are a major issue for many residents, including both speeding and parking. Suggested parking solutions favour the use of part of the Rec or the cutting back of part of the greens to widen the roads, contrary to a desire to retain the greens.

Speeding should be dealt with by installing speed-activated 'SLOW' signs at the entrances to the village on Thame Road and Lower End, according to 60% of residents. A mobile speed camera is opposed by more than two thirds of respondents.

Website: Less than half of residents have looked at the village website, with 60% of these people in the 30-59 year old bracket.

Most people would like to see more

information about local events on the site but few are able to offer their services to keep it updated.

Broadband is used by 82% of residents for personal use, 35% for business and not used by 15%. Half of users think it is fast enough for their needs, but half don't.

Communication: The Bulletin is read by 86% of residents regularly, 90% of whom are 30 or older. Many suggestions have been received regarding additional content and passed to the editorial team.

Footpaths: The footpaths in and around the village are used extensively and additional paths to Wheatley and Milton Common are supported by 90% and 54% of respondents respectively. Cycle paths between Great Milton and its neighbours would also be popular amongst a majority of residents.

Adult Learning gets the support of just over half the residents and should be held at the school.

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Speed reduction programme	Speed-activated signs for Lower End and Thame Road to be investigated	Parish Council	Low	Autumn
Parking solution needed	Possible car park sites to be investigated	Parish Council	High	End of summer
No parking on the greens	Flyers to be posted on offending vehicles followed up by letters of intended prosecution	Ward councillors and Parish Clerk	Medium	On-going
Website	Add Live News feature	Parish Council	Already underway	Summer
Broadband improvement	Continue to support the County Council initiatives to improve rural broadband	Parish Council	Low	On-going
Footpath expansion	Encourage landowners to create footpaths, especially to Wheatley	Parish Council	Low	Autumn
Adult learning	School to investigate and initiate	School	Low	Autumn

in summary: **HIGH PRIORITY**

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Youth services	Provide a youth service in the village, either as a youth club or using nearby services.	Parish Council, Jane Wilks, OAYP, Church	High	April
Temporary classroom replacement	Raise funds to replace the temporary classrooms at the school	School, Parish Council	High	End of 2012
Parking solution needed	Possible car park sites to be investigated	Parish Council	High	End of summer
Oppose major housing developments	Use the results of the survey as proof of a lack of need for any significant housing development	Parish Council	High	On-going

in summary: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Overhead cables	Electricity cable burial to be investigated	Parish Council with Hamish Ogston	Medium	Autumn
Litter control	Annual litter-pick to have greater support and SODC to be encouraged to carry out more frequent picks	Parish Council plus volunteers	Medium	March/ April
Identify housing need	Request information from those who see a need for affordable housing via survey responses and The Bulletin	Parish Council	Medium	Summer
Support housing needs	Provide assistance where needed for families requiring affordable housing	Parish Council	Medium	On-going
Good Neighbour Scheme	Institute a formalised Good Neighbour Scheme in the parish	Neighbours Hall, Church	Medium	End of summer
Neighbours Hall	Start a cinema club and look into a play area	Neighbours Hall	Medium	End of summer
Parish events	Organise Jubilee barn dance and street party plus other later events	Rec Committee, Neighbours Hall	Medium	End of May

No parking on the greens	Flyers to be posted on offending vehicles followed up by letters of intended prosecution	Ward councillors and Parish Clerk	Medium	On-going
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in summary: **LOW PRIORITY**

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Speed reduction programme	Speed-activated signs for Lower End and Thame Road to be investigated	Parish Council	Low	Autumn
Broadband improvement	Continue to support the County Council initiatives to improve rural broadband	Parish Council	Low	On-going
Footpath expansion	Encourage landowners to create footpaths, especially to Wheatley	Parish Council	Low	Autumn
Sustainable energy sources	Investigate installation of solar panels on public buildings	School, Neighbours Hall, Church	Low	Winter
Allotments	Expand onto adjacent rented ground	Andy Noble	Low	Autumn
Adult learning	School to investigate and initiate	School	Low	Autumn

in summary: **ALREADY UNDERWAY**

What needs doing?	How exactly?	Who's doing it?	Priority	Timing
Leave uncut green areas	Banks of Rec and part of Churchyard to be left uncut	Parish Clerk via contractors	Already underway	On-going
Reduce waste	Unwanted item swap day to be instigated	Clare Blakeway-Philips	Already underway	On-going
Website	Add Live News feature	Parish Council	Already underway	Summer
Children's Service	Initiate a regular children's service at church, Sunday School and install toilets.	Church	Already underway	On-going
Winter preparedness	Salt supply, bins and spreader to be sited	Parish Council	Already underway	On-going

acknowledgments

This has been a comprehensive exercise which would not have been possible without the help of many people. In particular it is necessary to thank Anton Nath of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council for his help and guidance in seeing this through. Also, sincere thanks must go to the Steering Committee who made all the leg work happen, from conducting all the workshops and consultations, to drawing up the questionnaire, distributing and collecting the completed forms and presenting the results to the Parish Council. Thanks as well to SODC, especially Toby Warren, and OCC, particularly Kat Luddecke, for their assistance in the data capture and reporting which made the results meaningful, and to Nick Herbert for many of the pictures of old Great Milton.

The Steering Committee consisted of:

Alex Kirkman	Morgan Lloyd
Andrew Meynell	Nick Belcher
Anthony Reeve	Pat Cox
Clare Blakeway-Phillips	Sally Lasson
Ian Bradley	Simon Alden
Karen Brimacombe	

Unfortunately, due to other commitments, a few members had to step down over the course of events but we were left with a sturdy hard core who managed the remainder of the process.

Thanks also to my fellow councillors for their support of the whole exercise and we as the Parish Council look forward to implementing the Plan over the coming months and years, together with various interested parties in the Parish.

Thanks to anyone else who has contributed to the finished Plan but has not been mentioned specifically here.



Stephen Harrod
Chairman Great Milton Parish Council
January 2012

great milton **2012**
PARISH PLAN

