

# **The Kingsclere Village Plan**

**“The plan was not important but the planning was absolutely vital”**

General Dwight D Eisenhower in response to a question on the importance of the plan to the success of the Normandy landings

## **Executive Summary**

Welcome to the Kingsclere Village Plan.

The production process has taken rather longer than we had hoped but I feel that the wait has been worthwhile as the result is a very thorough piece of research and will have a considerable effect on the future of Kingsclere. We began in 2003 by obtaining a Countryside Agency grant and the process really only began to gather pace towards the end of 2004 when a display was staged at the 'This is Kingsclere' Exhibition and a questionnaire about what people wanted was piloted.

We have now gathered together a team of volunteers from across the community and they have worked in small groups on particular areas of the plan, researching community views and testing their ideas. What you now see is the result of a lot of hard work and hopefully will appeal to most residents.

The Parish Council has accepted this plan as the blueprint for the future and particularly welcomes the efforts made to align our views with the Borough and County policies for the future. Officers from both authorities and the Local Strategic Partnership have been regularly consulted and we hope that our efforts will contribute to a partnership in taking the plan forward.

The major survey underlying the Plan was a questionnaire distributed in Spring 2005. Rather than going to all households the Committee decided to be more direct. 250 parishioners were selected at random from the Electoral Roll and were visited by members of the team with a personal request to complete and return the form (Appendix A). Just under 200 did which gave us the views of a very broad spread of ages (from 18 to 93) and viewpoints. The analysis of the forms (Appendix B) was used to stage an exhibition in May which was aimed at recruiting people to form the teams tackling the issues. The teams' work was later tested at an exhibition in October where a large number of comments were received, mainly encouraging.

An important part of the development work was to carry out a Market Town Health Check. Kingsclere is one of the smallest market towns in Hampshire although we all like to think of it as a large village. The health check is a structured questionnaire designed to encourage a detailed evaluation of the community and contribute to the completion of the plan. We are still a market town[ship] with a good range of shops and services which also support our hinterland. Work on the health check gave us a number of insights which we would otherwise not have had access too but also gives us access to funding which otherwise would not be available.

The main themes of the plan highlight the concerns of our community. Kingsclere people greatly value the amenities of our village and feel it is about the right size to be an active and pleasant place to be in whilst being big enough to support a range of services and leisure activities. They are concerned about the lack of affordable housing which forces young people to move away from their home village and would like to see action taken on this without requiring large additional housing developments to achieve it. They are concerned to preserve our present boundaries and open spaces. People have many worries about traffic both through the village and on the A339 and are especially engaged about speeding in the centre of the village. They are also concerned about safety and security and expressed strong views about the amount and style of policing. Finally, respondents have been almost unanimous in condemning the lack of good facilities for young people over the age of twelve.

As the planning process has developed we have identified a number of actions which we felt need not wait until a formal document had been drawn up in order to start implementation. There are therefore a number of actions in the plan which have already been taken. These include the funding of the cinema at the Village Club with a team to run it, the installation of an all-weather wicket at the Holding Field for the youth cricket teams which are thriving in our community and the setting-up of the rambling club. Work with the Sentinel Housing Association is bearing fruit with proposals for a small development at Strokings Rd to enhance our housing stock and work with Hampshire Highways and the Borough has identified and achieved some traffic management and parking improvements. As part of the business plan

our retailers and licensees have formed a forum to promote Kingsclere and have produced an excellent advertising leaflet as well as negotiating the use of the Fieldgate Centre for overflow parking when space is available. They are now working on a number of other projects including brown signs to encourage passing traffic on the bypass to visit the village. Work is also progressing on enhancing the CCTV system in the centre of the village.

This has been very much a team and community activity and I would like to record my warm thanks to all who have participated, the people who took the time to complete and return the questionnaires, the many people who have visited our various public events and who have commented on our ideas and above all the team of volunteers who have given time and energy to making it all happen [they are listed in Appendix C]

Peter Woodman, Chairman, Kingsclere Parish Council

## **The Background to the Village Plan**

In 1999, the Government published the Rural White Paper (RWP). This document was not intended to lead to a single piece of legislation but is more accurately described as a discussion document about the whole spectrum of rural affairs.

A key part of the RWP was the intention to strengthen local government at parish council level and introduced the concept of the Parish Plan. The plan forms part of the requirements for a parish council to achieve quality status enabling it to achieve wider powers to benefit its community. The parish plan initiative was supported by government funding to enable parishes to implement the plan; this was distributed through the Countryside Agency.

Kingsclere has carried out a number of appraisals. The biggest was probably the Village Design Statement completed and adopted by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2002. In 2003 a document describing our community was produced in support of our successful attempt to become Calor Hampshire Village of the Year. In addition, there have been three housing surveys since 1986 and a survey of leisure needs was conducted by the Village Club in 1990. In 2003 the parish council decided to apply to the Countryside Agency for funding and to institute a Parish Plan.

In parallel with the Parish Plan Initiative, the Government introduced the Market Towns Initiative. This encouraged small market towns to carry out an appraisal of their resources and to produce a forward planning document virtually identical with the Parish Plan. Small market towns were defined as communities with populations between 2k and 20k in size which had a range of services and also served a hinterland. Kingsclere is one of 32 such communities in Hampshire and it was evident that there could be an advantage, as part of our appraisal, in carrying out a Market Towns Health Check. This could give access to market towns funding for development of new facilities and other improvements in the village. It also forced us to ask questions which we might otherwise have missed.

Our planning cannot take place in isolation and has to take account of the forward thinking of other authorities and in particular, Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. We are particularly concerned therefore to align our thinking with the Borough Local Plan and Rural Strategy. Other agencies whose planning we should take into consideration include the Local Strategic Partnership, The North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners, and the various public services whose decisions have a bearing on our decision making such as the North Hampshire Primary Care Trust and Hampshire Constabulary. We also, through our membership of the North Hampshire and West Berkshire Joint Action Group have access to cross-border planning issues. Finally, we have to be conscious of the South East Regional Plan

The quotation from General Eisenhower on the title page sums up our experience. The analytical discussions by many people and the ensuing consultation process have highlighted many issues which would not have come to light had we not gone through this complex and to some very time consuming process.

## **The Kingsclere Health Check**

These pages summarise the results of the completion of the health check questionnaires provided by the Countryside Agency and which are designed to ensure that a wide range of community aspects are considered in arriving at the Village Plan. It is a snapshot of Kingsclere and the surrounding area in 2006. It considers the surrounding communities, which come under the umbrella of the Health Centre and many of whose residents shop in Kingsclere and participate in Kingsclere life.

### **Environment**

Kingsclere is a nucleated settlement situated on the edge of the North Hampshire Downs lying about halfway between Basingstoke and Newbury. The main community lies along the banks of the Gailey Brook to the north of the point where it cuts through a chalk and clay ridge [the secondary ridge] and the modern settlement climbs the north side of the ridge on both sides of the brook. The village is defined by the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) which is mainly, but not entirely created by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the east and west, by the southern boundary of the built area and by the buffer strip on the A339 Kingsclere Bypass to the north.

The AONB covers approximately half of the parish of Kingsclere and contains the massive Clere Scarp, a steep chalk face to the North Hampshire Downs rising about 150 metres from the valley floor which separates it from the secondary ridge on which the village is situated. The parish landscape is made up of three main groups. The part lying within the North Hampshire Downs comprises a dip slope running southwards from the Clere Scarp which was heavily farmed in Celtic times although most of the traces have been eroded by modern farming. It is now mixed sheep and arable with racing gallops as a significant feature. The valley between the Scarp and the Village is middle greensand and its principal feature is the world famous Park House Racing Stables. The parish to the north of the A339 is part of the London Basin and the land is a mix of London and Reading clays and Bagshot beds. There are a number of areas with landscape or wildlife designations outside the AONB.

The ancient centre of the village is designated as a Conservation Area containing about 80 listed buildings. The character is defined by works undertaken in the late Georgian period when old hall houses were refaced with brick and a number of vernacular terraced cottages were built linking the older houses. The brick facings are a mixture of terracotta and 'Newbury blues' which are made from a clay/chalk mix. The brickwork mixes the two colours in a variety of styles which add to the interest of the village centre. Tiles are mainly plain terracotta with some slates. St Mary's Church in the centre of the village is a fine building with a massive central tower and dates from the 12th century; it is known locally as 'The Cathedral of the Downs' because of its size and dominance over the centre of the village. Stone-built, it was refaced with a flint facing in Victorian times, as were the Methodist Chapel and the now destroyed C of E school. A Village Design Statement was produced in 2002.

The Gailey Brook is an important natural feature of the village. Rising in the middle greensand valley between the Clere Scarp and the village it is a typical chalk downland stream and its banks form a green artery through the centre of the village. It once powered four watermills but today is suffering from excessive water extraction and silting caused by run-off from the valley due to modern arable farming methods.

The built environment is well maintained both by householders and local authorities. There are inevitable financial constraints on street maintenance but a vigilant parish council ensures that serious defects are promptly dealt with and its good relations with the highways authority ensures this. The high level of through traffic and the parking demand created by the retailers has generated a large amount of street furniture in the village.

The local plan which is in its final stages of adoption has placed strict constraints on further development with no prospect of extending the SPB. Most remaining open space within the village is protected as open space and this will inevitably affect house prices. There are about sixty listed buildings in the parish outside the SPB, a mixture of dwellings and farm buildings.

Considerable emphasis is now being made on recycling and the village has its own recycling point collecting a range of materials. Tins, plastic bottles and paper are collected from households which can also opt to join a green waste collection scheme. More sophisticated facilities are available at principal recycling sites and the remaining refuse is taken to a modern electricity generating incinerator near Basingstoke or to landfill.

Farming in the community has been in the doldrums over the last decade as dairy farmers have been forced to dispose of their herds.

### **Employment**

The population of Kingsclere remained almost static from the end of the 18th century, when the village was the third largest community in North Hampshire after Basingstoke and Andover, until well into the 20th. Throughout this period it served its community and hinterland with agricultural related industries including a rope works. After the Second World War, the decision to develop Kingsclere as a key village with a mix of private and local authority development almost doubled the number of households. Much of this development was associated with the development of the Atomic Weapons Authority [AWRE] at Aldermaston, and with the meteoric growth of Basingstoke, and changed the employment pattern of the village to a heavy emphasis on commuting. In more recent times ease of access to the motorway system and the London bound railway services has resulted in a growth in the number of longer distance commuters.

Despite this, approximately a quarter of the economically active population still works within the village with the stables being the largest employer. There is a small but thriving retail and catering group of businesses and plenty of work for the building services sector. An interesting outcome of the campaign to bring broadband to the village was the discovery of a significant group of information technology workers working wholly or partly from home and servicing the 'sunrise industries' of the M3 and M4 corridors. The demise of the dairy herds has thrown up a large number of redundant farm buildings which are gradually being converted to commercial uses but this is not straightforward. The village has two small modern business parks whilst the developing business park on the site of the former Greenham Common air base is four miles away at the county border. The second biggest employer in the village is Sandford Springs Golf Course which has good conferencing facilities as well as its 27 greens.

Unemployment is not a significant issue especially as Kingsclere lies within the Newbury travel-to-work area and on the edge of the Basingstoke one. Both areas are major centres of economic growth and have among the lowest rates of unemployment in the country.

Kingsclere has lost its part-time branch bank but retains its privately owned Post Office (not a sub post office) which provides access to many national banking services. There are branches of most national banks in Basingstoke and Newbury as well as some in Overton and Tadley. Most business support, such as Business Link and Chamber of Commerce, is provided from Basingstoke or Newbury. As part of the Healthcheck the need was identified for a local organisation and the Kingsclere Retailers Forum was formed. This brings together the retailers and caterers based in the village and they have been meeting regularly to identify ways of improving business prospects for the village. They are very active in supporting village events such as Carols in the Square and the Summer Fete.

Kingsclere has conference facilities available in the Fieldgate Centre and the Village Club. Between them they offer venues from 25 to 200 in capacity. The village has its own website and businesses are promoted in the monthly parish magazine as well as in a new commercial business newsletter. The telephone exchange is broadband enabled at 2Mbit/second and this is an important facility for a number of businesses, especially those seeking access to wider markets and improved customer contact. Training in IT and access to the Internet is available in the small computer training room at the Village Club and free public access to the Internet is also available in the Branch Library. Both Basingstoke and Newbury Colleges offer a wide range of support for businesses.

The village centre has a balanced range of retailers and many, particularly older, residents shop principally within the village with little need to go elsewhere. There are three 'lifestyle

shops which attract residents from elsewhere, an estate agent, three caterers, three pubs offering food and a florist. Apart from the lifestyle shops, Sasso's Italian restaurant, The Twist hairdressers, the Village Butcher and Kingsclere Old Books all draw customers from a wide area. The Borough policy is to retain business space and this is strongly supported by the parish council.

Outside the village, the conversion of redundant farm buildings has led to the creation of a number of small businesses both in Kingsclere and the hinterland. There are several country pubs attracting people from the local towns and two modern business parks. One has been established for about 8 years but has recently begun expansion following the enabling of broadband, the other has been open for two years. There is a shortage of hotel rooms, although there is outline planning permission for a small hotel at West Kingsclere where there is a range of small car workshops, a filling station, car sales and a roadside diner. The filling station is the only roadside service facility between Chieveley on the M4/A34 and Fleet Services on the M3. Three garden centres along the A339 are an added attraction.

The question of tourism evokes a mixed reaction in Kingsclere. Visitors are mainly for the day and are attracted by countryside activities. The parish has 23 miles of well maintained and way-marked footpaths and bridleways and is traversed by the Wayfarer's Walk regional long distance path and the Three Downs Link Ride which enables horse riders to ride the length of the Ridgeway and link through the AONB to the South Downs Way. There are also a number of cycle routes linking bridleways, 'boats' and quiet lanes. Watership Down continues to attract booklovers and White Hill above Kingsclere is a popular place for kites, dogs, model aircraft and picnics. The parish council has produced a footpath map and a village trail which highlights the conservation area but parking problems mean that publicity is relatively low key in order not to overflow available facilities.

### **Social and Community**

The population of Kingsclere is just under 3500 and there are about 2500 people in the surrounding parishes. Just over 15% of the population are of retirement age and 14% are under 16. These are close to the national average but Basingstoke and Deane currently has a population skewed towards the younger age groups.

Following a 25% growth in housing stock in the 1980s and 1990s, taking the total to 1460, there are no plans to release additional land for housing in the latest local plan and any additional growth will be limited to windfall development on land within the Settlement Policy Boundary. Housing is concentrated within the village built environment except for farm related housing, including the racing stables. These restrictions, together with the attractive situation of Kingsclere, places the village in the top decile for house prices in the area and has taken prices well beyond the reach of local people. The parish council is negotiating with the local housing association to develop small parcels of land the borough owns within the SPB to provide one and two bedroom dwellings for rent or shared ownership. Every effort is made to allocate these dwellings to local people, as the last rural housing survey identified a need for at least 70 small dwellings, but this is not guaranteed as the population is above the 3000 threshold. Roughly half the public housing stock has been lost to the 'right to buy'.

There is a good stock of housing for retired people, both privately and housing association owned. The village is attractive to older people because of the facilities provided by the health centre and has attracted families 'down-sizing' following retirement from the London region. The demand for housing in Kingsclere is such that most houses remain on the market for a very short time. There are five second homes and the overall condition of the housing stock is high.

The Health Centre was built in 1980. It is run by a partnership of three doctors providing coverage of Kingsclere and its hinterland. It houses a dental unit which is serviced by an outside dental partnership and has a Red Cross loan store and a pharmacy serving patients who live more than a mile from the centre. There is also a chemist's shop in the centre of the village. The Care Group provide transport to the centre for those without other transport but there is a shortage of parking space at the centre.

The main hospital is the North Hants in Basingstoke and some patients are referred to the Newbury Community Hospital between Newbury and Thatcham. Some buses call at the North Hants but otherwise public transport access to both hospitals is difficult. There is a hospital car service which is supplemented by the car service provided by the Care Group.

The village has its own CCTV system covering the village centre and linked to a terminal in the police beat office. There are plans to extend the coverage. The parish shares a Beat Officer with the parish of Ashford Hill with Headley. He has a dedicated Beat Office in the Village Club and is supported by a Kingsclere resident special constable who holds a regular clinic for the public on Saturday mornings. There is a fire station manned by retained fire-fighters who are specially trained to cope with accidents on the A339. Full cover cannot be maintained because of a shortage of HGV drivers in the working week. Alternative fire cover is provided from neighbouring stations which imposes a delay in responding to calls. Ambulance cover is provided from the Basingstoke station which is currently not meeting its response time targets.

Crime rates are low with fear of crime and anti-social behaviour being more significant. In a recent survey nearly all respondents rated crime in the community as an important or very important issue but the majority had no personal experience of crime.

The Parish Council has a permanent office in the Village Club and employs a Clerk for four days a week. In 2003 all councillors were elected and where replacements have been necessary they have been appointed by competitive cooption. The parish provides recreational facilities, a burial ground, allotments and some street lighting as well as the usual services provided by a parish council. The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane is based at London Rd in Basingstoke and Hampshire County Council at the Castle in Winchester. Some county council services are either co-located with the borough (highways) or have their own offices in Basingstoke (social services). The majority of residents' queries are channeled through the parish office. The Kingsclere Ward of the district council has two members who cover Kingsclere and Ashford Hill with Headley. The Silchester and Kingsclere Ward of the county council has one member covering a large geographical area.

The parish council enjoys good relationships with the higher tiers of local government. Both consult widely and take the views of parishes into account when drawing up policies. Policies which particularly affect Kingsclere are the HCC Local Transport Plan, the Housing Strategy, The Borough Local Plan, the Rural Strategy, the Youth Strategy and the Strategy for Older People. The parish council is a member of the Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils and participates in the subsidiary Basingstoke and Deane District Association

There are a wide range of leisure and sporting facilities within the village of Kingsclere and in surrounding villages. These tend to concentrate on traditional field sports but there are thriving tennis and bowls clubs with their own facilities in Kingsclere. There is an all weather hard court for a range of sports but there are no facilities for women's field sports. These are available within easy reach of the village as is access to more specialised sports such as archery and gymnastics. Swimming requires a journey out of the village even though there is a small training pool at the school. Sporting facilities are well and regularly maintained and readily accessible and affordable for residents.

Kingsclere has a number of good quality community venues providing a wide range of community and cultural activities including arts and crafts and other adult educational programmes. Dance thrives for children and young people and there is a good range of physical fitness courses. The Kingsclere Players provide opportunities for amateur theatre and the village is a regular participant in the Hog the Limelight Service which brings affordable professional theatre to the village. A Film Club has just started in response to demand. Action is now in hand to develop new youth facilities following the total loss by fire of the Youth Club which was an ancient and worn-out wooden building.

There are Citizens Advice Bureaux at Basingstoke, Newbury and Tadley and local branches of most of the national 'caring' charities such as Relate and the Samaritans in both Basingstoke and Newbury. Kingsclere Branch Library has a small but useful reference section in-

cluding Community Legal Service Direct legal advice pamphlets. Basingstoke has a very large reference library. All libraries offer free internet access.

### **Transport and Accessibility**

Kingsclere has a regular bus service to Newbury and Basingstoke until 7 pm on weekdays and Saturdays and this service is also available to residents of Headley, Hannington and Wolverton but not to other villages in the hinterland. In practice only 10% of passenger journeys on this service originate or terminate in Kingsclere and the main raison d'être of the service is to serve the suburbs of Basingstoke and Newbury. There is a weekly Dial a Ride service from Kingsclere, it is very limited in scope and in danger of closing through lack of support. The Cango village service theoretically links some villages to Kingsclere but is rarely used. This service is intended for villages such as Ecchinswell and is mainly focused on trips to Newbury. Groups occasionally make use of hired coaches including the minibuses from Basingstoke Community Transport but the main transport to and from the area is by car. Taxis are expensive as the return journey is charged except by hackney carriages.

The private car is therefore important to living successfully in Kingsclere and this is reflected in some of the problems of parking in the village. Residents of houses in the centre of the village which have no parking facility are known to park as many as three vehicles per household in the limited public car parks in the village centre. This diminishes the availability of parking for visitors and shoppers and is a source of concern to the retailers. The Health Centre has a considerable area of very inferior landscaping and lacks parking for a disabled patient close to the entrance. Converting the 'gardens' to parking would be welcomed by Health Centre staff and residents alike and with some new spot trees might enhance the location. The former Kingsclere and Whitchurch RDC offices in Swan St have been let as commercial offices by the Borough but most lets have now been terminated and the future of the building is under consideration for disposal. During its commercial period, when the car parking was reserved for tenants and visitors, a segregated car park with 12 spaces was never used. It seems that on disposal of the building up to 20 parking spaces could be reserved for the village as a new car park but this will require good liaison with the property services department of the Borough.

One factor in public travel which has arisen during the survey is the lack of awareness of alternative stations to Basingstoke and Newbury where parking is expensive and usually full by about 8 am. Overton station on the Salisbury to Waterloo line has a train an hour in each direction and a one hour journey to Waterloo. It has free parking in a large car park made available by Portals plc and is only ten minutes from Kingsclere. The overall journey time to Waterloo from Kingsclere is about the same as that via Basingstoke when the hassle of parking is included. A similar situation exists at Aldermaston which is also ten minutes from Kingsclere, has heavily underused free car parking and is only ten minutes by train to Reading from where there are frequent fast services to Paddington. It seems necessary to produce much better travel information.

### **Communications**

Throughout the process of producing the Village Plan there has been a common thread running through most aspects of life in and around Kingsclere. It could be called the 'I didn't know' syndrome. Making people aware of services, facilities or events is a major task. The parish council has experimented with a welcome pack which has gone via the selling agents to purchasers in new developments and the agents considered it to be a valuable innovation which was also greatly appreciated by our new residents. The problem is to devise a mechanism for delivery to other new residents buying existing properties in the village.

This applies equally to the Village Guide. This pamphlet gives a selective view of the village as seen by a particular part of the population. It gives telephone numbers and names for contacts in many village organisations but is by no means fully inclusive and ignores the wider area. There is a need for a Village Guide which is attractive and informative and serves as an induction guide to the new resident in the same way that good companies produce induction and orientation guides for new employees. The expression 'what does everyone know about Kingsclere?' should define the format.

In the survey, a high proportion of respondents claimed that their main source of information was the parish magazine [the Tower]. A straw poll of the residents of one new development revealed that most did not even bother to open it. Of the remainder of the community, it is clear the 'being in the Tower' is no guarantee of it registering with the reader. A similar situation exists with the parish website. There are constraints on what it may contain and a '.gov.uk' is not the most appealing of sites. Both mediums are not readily accessible to a person with reading limitations. A way needs to be found to help volunteers who are doing an excellent job to realise that the technology exists to help them do a better and more fruitful one.

Village organisations also need more help to market themselves. For many volunteer organisations this is an alien term but if an organisation has something worthwhile to offer then they have to learn to go out into the market place and persuade people that they have a need which can be satisfied in Kingsclere.

## **The Process**

A new Parish Council was elected in 2003. It inherited from its predecessor a commitment to develop a Parish Plan and to use it as part of the process of becoming a Quality Council. A grant towards the cost of developing the plan had been agreed with the Countryside Agency.

The early part of 2003 was devoted to participation in the Calor Village of the Year competition. This had been introduced into Hampshire after strong pressure from Kingsclere and we became Calor Hampshire Village of the Year at the first attempt in that year. The process involved looking long and hard at Kingsclere as a community rather than as a pretty village. Towards the end of 2003 we called a public meeting which attracted about thirty residents but elicited little commitment to join the project. However a small group undertook to promote the general idea and an event themed as 'A Clere View' was promoted for the Spring of 2004.

'A Clere View' involved children from the primary school giving their view on the village and two were selected to receive small prizes. The prizes were presented in the centre of the village on a Saturday morning against a background of children's ideas and attracted more public interest. There were also prizes for the best adult suggestions. Following this event a small exhibition was staged in the Village Club which featured some of the themes inviting people to join the project and to give their views. Our general experience was that people were deterred by the Market Towns Health Check Documentation which appeared to be very daunting. Work was started on the Business area with the formation of a retailer forum which has proved to be very successful.

In October 2004 an exhibition called 'This is Kingsclere' was staged. This was essentially a rerun of the Village of the Year judging event, aimed at providing a platform for all volunteer organisations in the village, which would make people aware of the huge amount of volunteer activity taking place in the village. A large display challenged people to think about the need for a village plan and a questionnaire which had been developed from previous activities was piloted with fifty volunteers participating. By this time we had a small, mixed group of volunteers including a number of parish councillors.

In Spring 2005 the revised questionnaire was circulated in the village. From previous experience it was decided to select a random 250 villagers from the electoral roll and members of the steering group delivered and collected the forms. This achieved nearly 200 responses - a better result than that achieved in previous full surveys. The electoral roll technique achieved a more balanced response across age groups although the 25 to 40 age group under-responded. Previous full surveys have tended to be heavily weighted to the older age group necessitating statistical manipulation to take responses into account.

The results of the survey were published at a further exhibition which was specifically seeking volunteers to help with producing the plan and in this we were successful.

Finally, in Nov 2005 our various teams presented their initial proposals at a weekend exhibition which was given wide publicity. Although the public response was disappointing, with

less than 150 attending those who did come took great interest in the presentation and many contributed new ideas and views.

## **Summary of Results**

There were a number of strong themes playing in all our researches, both in the outcomes of the questionnaire and in the various consultation which we undertook with our public events.

### **Business, Employment and Tourism**

People greatly value our retailers, pubs and catering establishments and see it as important that they are strongly supported. Equally, our Retailers' Forum recognises the important role it has to play in the life of the village. Employment is not seen as a significant problem mainly because Kingsclere lies on the cusp of two of the travel-to-work areas with the lowest national rates of unemployment. There is a significant element of self-employed people working from home in the IT sector. In general people welcome 'visitors' but there is some ambivalence about 'tourists'.

### **Children and Young People**

The main view was that while facilities for under 12s were good or very good, those for young people were lamentable. The plan envisages the creation of a sports and leisure facility for young people based on the Holding Field and the site of the burned out youth club. We have a problem recruiting leaders and other volunteers.

### **Character and Environment**

There is a strong view that Kingsclere should not expand beyond the present settlement policy boundary and a minority view that 'Kingsclere is full'. There are concerns that further development will be forced upon Kingsclere by dint of its presence within the 'high development' Western Corridor in the South East Regional Plan. There is support for moving the North Wessex Downs AONB boundary to the southern boundary but little awareness of the AONB.

### **Communication**

A recurrent theme across all groups was the importance of improved communications within our community. It is clear from responses to the questionnaire that many residents are unaware of the rich variety of organisations and facilities available to them; a typical request being for tennis courts when we have a thriving tennis club. We need improvements both in our communication media and in awareness of communication techniques within our organisations.

### **Health, Welfare and Housing**

The village is fortunate in having a very high quality health centre and many comments were aimed at improving a quality product. There was concern at the long-term viability of our chemist and some views were expressed on the need for more services such as a mobile optician to reduce the need to travel out of the village for treatment. In general older people are well catered for and value the services and facilities available to them. A significant proportion of our retired community is highly active in the village and many services and organisations are dependant upon them to stay viable.

There is strong support for the provision of more social and key worker housing and a need has been identified for about seventy 1 and 2 bedroomed dwellings for rent.

### **Leisure**

The village has a rich variety of leisure organisations and facilities but many residents are not aware of what is available. A number of new activities have started as a result of the planning process.

### **Safety and Security, Emergency Services**

Despite the very low level of crime statistics there is still a strong view that crime is a serious issue in the village and that antisocial behaviour is a problem. There are concerns about response times by the police and the other emergency services.

### **Sport**

The chief thrust is to concentrate sports facilities for young people at the Holding Field and to provide good storage and changing facilities. To achieve this it will be necessary to expand the Fieldgate Centre to provide new tennis courts and other facilities. This will at long last enable facilities for women's field sports to be provided.

### **Traffic Management**

There are serious concerns about road safety both within the village and along the A339. A series of public consultations specifically on this issue have identified actions to improve safety for pedestrians and for speed limits and these are under active consideration by the highway authority. Parking is a problem and more public parking in the centre of the village is needed - not easily achieved.

## **Subject Areas**

The report which follows is divided into separate subject areas, each of which was undertaken by a separate team. Each area contains an overview, proposed policies for the parish council to adopt and an action plan for that particular area:

**Business, Employment and Tourism**

**Children and Young People**

**Character and Environment**

**Communication**

**Health, Welfare and Housing**

**Leisure**

**Safety and Security, Emergency Services**

**Sport**

**Traffic Management**

**Transport**

# **Business, Employment and Tourism**

## **The Current Situation**

- We have a wide range of thriving businesses including the stables/stud farm, the Sandford Springs Golf Course, retail/hotel/catering, two business parks, horticulture, home-based working [full or part-time] and farm diversification activities.
- We have excellent road and rail communications to all parts of the south of England and especially to the Western Corridor of the South East Regional Plan and to other growth areas such as Swindon and the Solent.
- We have good access to Heathrow , the other London airports and to the rapidly expanding regional airport at Eastleigh
- Our telephone exchange is broadband enabled.
- We have a number of promotional websites
- We have good business support facilities including reprographic and meeting/conference facilities.
- We have good schools and colleges within easy access, are close to Reading University and have a campus of the University of Winchester in Basingstoke.
- The parish council takes policing and security seriously and works hard to maintain standards.
- We attract a range of visitors with our conservation area and proximity to the North Wessex Downs AONB. We particularly attract day visitors who value our footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.
- We have a thriving group of building services businesses.

## **The Issues**

- Some businesses are unaware of the opportunities afforded by developments in IT and lack the skills to implement them.
- Local businesses could support each other by trading with each other and exploiting opportunities for pooled purchasing.
- There is a shortage of visitor beds.
- The kingsclere.gov.uk web site is under-used [there is a question over whether .gov is the best for attracting browsers].
- Kingsclere does not feature in regional and county promotional material and potential customers are unaware of our community.
- Parking for long and short term is inadequate.
- Improvements in signage and interpretation boards are needed to improve the visitor experience.
- The Post Office is vulnerable to government initiatives which restrict potential customers.
- We could use more shops and must protect the existing ones from redevelopment
- The bypass loses trade.
- There are barriers to farm diversification

## **Actions Proposed**

- Form a retailers' forum and open it to other Kingsclere businesses
- Produce our own retail and other facilities promotional map.
- Campaign for Kingsclere coverage in other promotional material

- Explore opportunities for pooled purchasing
- Work with other village organisations such as the Heritage Association to create more informative signage and other visitor information facilities
- Create an overflow car park at the Fieldgate Centre and work to expand the available parking in the centre of the village.
- Run an annual hanging basket competition to add to the attraction of the village centre.
- Encourage business support for village events.
- Identify training needs for small businesses and consider ways to meet them.
- Promote active support for our Post Office
- Use all forms of media to promote Kingsclere as a place to visit.
- Work closely with the Borough on their proposed new planning guidance on farm diversification
- Create as comprehensive a list as possible covering all businesses in the parish.

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- actively support businesses in Kingsclere and the surrounding area
- ensure that changes in infrastructure are favourable to our business community
- promote quality rural tourism

# Character and Environment

## The Current Situation

- The North Wessex Downs AONB , a chalk downland landscape, forms more than half of the parish with features such as Watership Down, White Hill, the Clere Scarp, the Three Downs Link Ride and the Wayfarer's Walk long distance footpath.
- Much of the remainder of the parish is gently rolling clay farmland with outcrops of Bagshot beds which is rich in mature woodland
- The village has clearly defined boundaries [the Settlement Policy Boundary] confining it within the landscape.
- The centre of the village is a conservation area with a large proportion of listed buildings and most unlisted buildings forming a cohesive whole.
- The village is rich in public open spaces.
- Most buildings outside the village are either listed or of a quality appropriate to the landscape.
- The Gailey Brook which rises to the south of the village and flows north to join the River Enborne near Headley forms a green channel through the centre of the village.
- Within the parish we have twenty three miles of footpaths and bridleways, all way marked and well maintained by a volunteer group with many providing through connections to other parishes.
- The recycling centre at the Fieldgate Centre provides a range of recycling facilities to support the green bin collection service.
- Most landowners work to preserve the landscape within the constraints of modern farming.
- Sandford Springs Golf Club has invested heavily in restoring woodland on its golf course.
- The AONB still has 'dark skies' although they are increasingly intruded upon.

## The Issues

- The southern boundary of the SPB is separated from the northern boundary of the AONB by a short band of fields which are subject to development pressure and which, if breached, would create visual intrusion into the AONB
- The dilapidated chicken farm buildings at Fox's Lane are an ugly intrusion into the landscape.
- Southern Water is extracting water at its plant at Bear Hill at such a rate that the water table has fallen below the level of the ancient wells in the centre of the village.
- The run off from our surrounding fields is causing serious silting in the Gailey Brook and this is exacerbated by the low water flow.
- Disabled people have very limited access to our footpath network.
- The Borough is promoting a 'local listing' campaign for parishes to identify those buildings which should be protected even though they have not been listed in the national scheme.
- It will be necessary to revise the Village Design Statement for it to retain its status as supplementary planning guidance in support of the Local Development Framework currently being prepared by the Borough

- Some householders erect new fences within their curtilages leaving their old boundary markers in situ. These can be unsightly and sometimes even dangerous.
- Lighting of modern developments can erode the 'dark skies'
- Many people misunderstand the recycling process, contaminate the green bins with inappropriate recycling and are unaware of the Fieldgate recycling centre and the other civic disposal facilities.
- There are significant gaps in the Borough recycling service.
- Although the area is rich in historical, geological and natural features there is a limited amount of information for visitors

### **Actions Proposed**

- Negotiate the extension of the AONB at least to the southern settlement policy boundary of the village.
- Consult with the water and drainage authorities on the problems of Gailey Brook with the aim of improving water flow and reducing silting.
- Take over management of the Malt House Open Space.
- Improve the footpath from Swan St to the Lake and install wheelchair capable bridges.
- Identify other potential wheel chair accessible paths and promote improvements.
- Work with the Borough on local listing of appropriate buildings.
- Review and update the Village Design Statement.
- Identify unsightly features and persuade the owners to eliminate them.
- Plan for the future installation of low pollution lighting when street lighting is due for replacement.
- Encourage low pollution lighting in new developments.
- Actively promote the use of recycling services and campaign for the extension of recycling facilities
- Install interpretation boards at appropriate locations

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- work to protect the built environment of the village.
- cooperate with the Partners of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to protect and promote the AONB.
- campaign for revision of the boundary of the AONB
- closely monitor the extraction rate of water from the parish
- work to protect the rural areas of the parish outside the AONB
- promote the expansion of recycling services within Kingsclere
- work to reduce levels of pollution, especially from noise and light intrusion.
- enable rural recreational tourism.

# **Children and Young People**

## **The Current Situation**

- Subject to renegotiation with the Borough the land where the former Youth Club stood is available for a rebuilt hall in association with land owned by the Parish Council on the Holding Field and linking to sports activities.
- The Scout Hut is structurally sound and well used by organisations for children and young people.
- The Borough has a forward looking youth strategy
- Other leisure facilities have capacity to house activities for children and young people.
- There are a large number of organisations for children and young people.
- The Busy Bees Pre-school is an effective and well run organisation.
- The Kingsclere Primary School and the secondary schools in whose catchment areas Kingsclere lies have high standards and have good inspection and other records.
- There are good opportunities for children and young people to take part in specialised sports and activities not available within the village.
- The village is well provided with sports pitches and play areas for children and young people.
- Home Start, based at Bishops Green, provides support to new parents.

## **The Issues**

- Before action can be taken to provide a new Youth Hall a strong management committee committed to the long term future must be in place.
- The Scout Hut is in use during the working day as the Busy Bees Pre-School. This conflicts with leisure time use.
- The Busy Bees are keen to widen their service to the community in areas such as a day care nursery and out-of-school care clubs where they have identified a need.
- Organisations are closing because of a lack of adult leaders.
- There are no changing facilities for youth sport except on a limited basis at the Fieldgate Centre.
- Although the building was available until the series of fires, the Youth Club as an organisation for young people effectively ceased to exist several years ago.
- In general play areas are equipped with old, traditional play equipment.
- There is no professional youth leader.
- Efforts to work with young people to define their needs have had limited success.

## **Actions Proposed**

- Form a consortium of organisations in the village to coordinate provision for children and young people.
- Use the consortium to identify the mix of facilities needed to optimise provision within Kingsclere.
- Form a project team to develop a planning brief for the provision of a new youth hall on the Holding Field and to make proposals for the long term viability of such a facility including the need for regular support from the Parish Precept.

- Work through the consortium and the schools to involve children and young people in specifying their needs for leisure and other facilities.
- Ask the Area Youth Manager for outreach assistance to contact young people and identify their needs.
- Recruit a youth leader.
- Prepare a modernisation plan for the play areas in conjunction with the users.
- Encourage adult sports organisations to develop youth sections where a specific youth sports organisation does not exist.
- Prepare a business plan for the extension of Busy Bees Pre-school services.
- Promote volunteering.
- Ensure that the services and facilities are promoted to all households in the proposed Village Guide and possibly as a youth section to the Tower.
- Give young people their own website

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- create a safe environment for our children to grow up in.
- involve our children and young people in identifying their needs and in making provision for their leisure and other activities
- encourage volunteer support for children and youth organisations
- support the development of pre-school and after school services
- work with the county council to fund adequate provision for our young people

# **Communications**

## **The Current Situation**

- The Tower is the parish magazine and goes to every household. It carries a wide range of advertisements for local businesses and services
- Kingsclere has a number of public notice boards in the centre of the village which are well used.
- There are a number of Kingsclere Internet sites, including the parish council [www.kingsclere.gov.uk](http://www.kingsclere.gov.uk), others are run by individuals or clubs and organisations.
- There is good media coverage of village activities, including a regular village report in the Basingstoke Gazette.
- The Care Group produced a guide to village services, clubs and organisations showing a contact and telephone number.
- The Parish Council has produced a Welcome Pack for new residents in new housing developments.

## **The Issues Raised**

- The Tower is heavily dependent upon a large volunteer workforce to edit, design, print, assemble and distribute.
- The Tower is still seen by a substantial minority of recipients as a church magazine and not relevant to them.
- The Tower is not readily accessible to people with below average reading ability
- This applies equally to the Internet and local media.
- Many village clubs and organisations are poor at promoting themselves. In the survey respondents frequently requested a facility which already existed.
- 'Paid for' local newspapers probably cover one quarter of households at best and 'freebies' carry a small amount of village news usually concentrating on past and newsworthy events.
- Local radio and TV provide limited cover and usually in reaction to news releases which interest them.
- The Internet plays only a small part in Kingsclere communications. Less than 10% of respondents who had Internet access used it to find Kingsclere news.
- Public notice boards are too concentrated and there is a need for more boards in the residential areas.
- The Welcome Pack was well received by new residents but there is no mechanism to provide it to new householders in existing dwellings.
- The Village Guide is out-of-date and limited in its information.

## **Actions Proposed**

- To concentrate communication into those areas which are controlled by the village.
- To develop a short course in PR and promotion for clubs and organisations and encourage them to make use of Kingsclere Communications to inform, encourage and promote. This should include giving access to people with reading difficulties
- To consider whether adoption of new technology could enable the Tower to be produced more cost effectively and with a smaller workforce.
- To seek advice on reprographic techniques to draw readers into the Tower and to make information more available to the less able reader.

- To provide more notice boards
- To redevelop the Village Guide, possibly with sponsorship, providing information about organisations as well as contact details
- To establish the Welcome Pack on a permanent basis
- To form a consortium of Kingsclere internet sites to ensure that the most effective use is made of the medium.
- Investigate the provision of a VolunteeringEngland information point

# Health, Welfare and Housing

## The Current Situation

- We have a modern, well-staffed and well-equipped health centre located in the village and serving the hinterland.
- We have a good retail chemist's shop in the village which offers home delivery to the housebound and a pharmacy service based in the health centre.
- The health centre has its own dental surgery; alternative dental services are only available by traveling to a neighbouring town.
- The North Hampshire Hospital, Basingstoke and the Newbury Community Hospital are both located about nine miles from Kingsclere.
- There is a wide range of support and self-help groups in the area.
- The Kingsclere Care Group runs a hospital car scheme and an information service.
- The village is visited periodically by a hearing service van.
- Hampshire is introducing a telecare service.
- Social and key worker housing is provided by the Sentinel Housing Association

## The Issues

- There is a shortage of car parking at the health centre.
- Access for disabled people needs improving with preserved parking by the front door and automatic doors to assist people in wheel chairs.
- There are complaints about the appointments system which largely stem from misunderstanding of the system.
- People who work outside the centre must take time off work in order to attend the health centre.
- There is a high level of wasted appointments.
- There is no wellness programme as such although some individual services are offered to women.
- There are few support services such as chiropody/nail cutting and physiotherapy.
- People have to travel to Basingstoke or Newbury to visit an optician.
- The Chemist cannot stock a full range of medication and is dependant upon a next day delivery service. This can mean a double trip to the village to obtain a prescription.
- The Chemist is dependant upon selling a wide range of other products to stay financially viable.
- There is no continuity at the dental surgery. Patients see different dentists at successive appointments.
- There are concerns about the cost of dentistry whether offered under the NHS or privately.
- There are problems over car parking at the North Hampshire Hospital and there is only a direct bus service every two hours.
- The Newbury Community Hospital is located on the Thatcham side of Newbury and requires a change of buses to reach it.
- The Care Group car service is dependant on the availability of volunteers.
- There is a lack of information in the village on the availability of alternative therapy and support and self-help services.
- The Blood Donor Service operates in a vacuum.
- There is a need for better elderly/mental health support

- The Ambulance Service is based eight miles away in the North Hampshire Hospital.
- The right to buy has eroded the social housing stock in the village
- There is a need to provide additional social and key worker housing especially for rent.

### **Actions Proposed**

- Work with the Traffic and Business teams on expanding the health centre car park.
- Improve access for disabled people at the health centre.
- Investigate providing a range of additional services such as optician, chiropodist, physiotherapist and nail cutting either in the health centre or elsewhere in the village.
- Produce a regular newsletter on health issues, either independently or as a page in the Tower.
- Start a patients' forum to discuss current issues.
- Investigate ways of speeding the prescription service such as direct computer-to-computer transmission of prescriptions.
- Meet with the head of the dental practice to discuss ways of improving the service.
- Provide a wide range of information on health related matters in the village media.
- Work with the Sentinel Housing Association and the Borough to provide additional social and key worker housing as identified by the Rural Housing Enabler.

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- actively support the development of the Health Centre to improve and extend the range of services
- promote the availability of quasi medical services such as opticians
- actively support the village chemist
- provide information on health related matters
- work for better access to hospital
- work closely with the Borough and the Sentinel Housing Association to release Borough land in Kingsclere for social housing for Kingsclere connected people
- closely scrutinise any proposed private development to ensure that it provides a broad housing mix that will satisfy the particular needs of Kingsclere residents.

## **Leisure**

### **The Current Situation**

- There is a good range of public leisure venues in the village: Fieldgate Community Centre, Village Club, Scout Hall, School Hall, St Mary's Church and the Kingsmill Room, the Methodist Church Schoolroom. Fielden Court, Clere Court and Rose Hodson Court are residential facilities which occasionally house public events. The Youth Club was burnt down in 2006 and is under review [see Children and Young People]. Rooms vary in size from a 200 seat hall and theatre to a small committee room.
- There is also a choice of halls in the surrounding villages.
- There are over forty clubs and organisations in the village providing a wide range of cultural and sporting opportunities. More specialised needs are met by others in Basingstoke and Newbury.
- Adult education courses are available in various physical fitness disciplines, arts and crafts, languages and computing.
- The village has excellent and varied sports facilities, recreation and play areas and leisure allotments.
- Village organisations provide a varied range of social and leisure events, especially as part of their fund-raising activities.
- The county and borough councils provide funding for leisure facilities.
- The village lies in beautiful countryside with 23 miles of footpaths and bridleways which are well maintained by volunteers.
- There is a well run and stocked branch library.
- There are multi-screen cinemas in Basingstoke and a choice of theatres and music venues in Basingstoke and Newbury.

### **The Issues**

- Many residents are reluctant to make the journey to Basingstoke and Newbury, especially on winter evenings.
- The main hall of the Village Club is too small to accommodate viably the small to medium cultural event which would be swamped in the larger halls.
- Many people are unaware of the full range of opportunities which are available to them.
- Organisations appear to be unwilling to use a village diary to eliminate clashes of dates.
- There is a shortage of volunteers to run some activities.
- The allotments now have a waiting list.
- Financial support for education activities is dwindling

### **Actions Proposed**

- Enlarge the hall at the Village Club and provide new toilets and storage to give a 30% increase in capacity.
- Equip and run a film club to give residents access to films without having to travel to Basingstoke.
- To develop a short course in PR and promotion for clubs and organisations and encourage them to make use of Kingsclere Communications to inform, encourage and promote.
- Give organisations the opportunity to promote themselves in a new Village Guide which gives more than basic contact information.
- Encourage organisations to work within a diary framework to minimise clashing events

## **Policy Statement**

We will:

- identify and create new facilities in response to the village plan questionnaire
- encourage and support new organisations and activities in response to the village plan questionnaire
- pay particular care with provision for younger and older residents

# **Safety and Security, Emergency Services**

## **The Current Situation**

- Kingsclere has a designated Beat Officer with his own office located in the Village Club
- A resident of the village is an experienced Special Constable and Divisional Officer for the Basingstoke and Deane special constables; he provides considerable local support and runs the Saturday Police Clinic at the Beat Office
- Kingsclere has its own CCTV system covering the immediate centre of the village
- Kingsclere has a proactive Parish Council keen to work closely with the Police and Emergency Services to ensure community safety and security.
- Public areas of the village have been approved as an Alcohol Designation Zone.
- Kingsclere has its own fire station manned by retained fire crew who are specially trained in road accidents
- The Health Centre provides BASICS emergency cover during working hours
- The nearest ambulance station is at Rooksdown, eight miles away.

## **The Issues**

- The Beat Officer is frequently diverted to other duties
- The Special Constable is nearing retirement age and there is no guarantee that the cover he provides can be maintained
- Although levels of crime are generally low compared with other parts of the Borough, drug dealing is a problem and there are some problems of antisocial behaviour, vandalism, intimidation and petty crime by children and young people
- The CCTV system has been losing important information due to a lack of clarity on management of the system
- CCTV and the Designation Zone are dispersing antisocial activity to other parts of the village
- There is a need to expand the CCTV system to cover other vulnerable areas
- There is a real fear of crime, particularly among the elderly residents
- People are reluctant to report crime for fear of reprisals
- People do not understand how to use the 101 non-emergency reporting line to report minor incidents and bad experiences of this service have led to lack of confidence in it.
- The Housing Association appears to be reluctant to act on security and safety issues affecting its tenants
- There are no firm plans to extend the coverage of Police Community Support Officers or Community Wardens to Kingsclere
- The Neighbourhood and Pub Watch schemes have lapsed
- Children have a low awareness of safety and security issues
- Some parents are either unaware of or refuse to accept their children's bad behaviour.
- There are concerns about street lighting levels in parts of the village.
- The fire station is not always able to provide cover, principally due to a lack of HGV drivers during working hours.
- There have been incidents where delays occurred due to a lack of detailed knowledge of the village by ambulance crews

## **Actions Proposed**

- Work with our beat officer to make a regular report in the Tower and advertise the Saturday Clinic

- Work with neighbouring parishes for a regular joint meeting with the Rural Inspector and his team.
- Campaign for a Police Community Support Officer to be allocated to support the North Hampshire beat officers
- Explore ways a Community Warden might be able to contribute to safety and security and request provision.
- Support the recruitment campaign for special constables.
- Expand the CCTV network and agree a management protocol with the Police.
- Meet with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service to discuss improved availability of the Fire Station.
- Meet with Hampshire Ambulance Service to discuss ways to improve response times to Kingsclere
- In association with the county council's modernisation programme review the need for additional street-lighting to improve security
- Review the working of the Alcohol Designation Zone and consider extending it into other parts of the village.

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- continue to work with the police to ensure the parish receives the best cover within the resources available.
- actively promote the use of the non-urgent 101 reporting line and the Saturday Clinic
- continue to provide CCTV coverage of vulnerable parts of the village.
- actively promote crime prevention measures such as neighbourhood watch and pub watch
- ensure the retention of the fire station
- work with the Basingstoke ambulance station to improve response times to Kingsclere

# **Sport**

## **The Current Situation**

- We have excellent, modern, purpose built sports facilities at the Fieldgate Centre.
- We have a modern all weather multi-sport court at the Fieldgate Centre.
- We have tennis courts and a bowling club at the Holding Field.
- We have youth football pitches at the Holding Field and the School and a training pitch on the Dell Recreation Ground.
- Sandford Springs Golf Club provides excellent golfing opportunities on our doorstep and welcomes local members.
- We have successful representative adult teams in bowls, cricket, football, rugby and tennis.
- We have a thriving youth football club fielding boys and girls teams and thriving junior cricket teams.
- The Fieldgate Centre provides facilities for indoor badminton, petanque and short mat bowling.
- Within a ten mile radius of Kingsclere there is ready access to the more specialist sports such as archery and gymnastics.
- The school has a small outdoor swimming pool.
- There is good access to rural sporting pursuits.
- Young people attending the Clere School are introduced to a wide range of sports and the school has a good sporting reputation.

## **The Issues**

- There is limited provision for sport for women and girls.
- The tennis courts need considerable investment to bring them back to a modern standard.
- There are no changing facilities at the Holding Field.
- The school swimming pool is only available for use during the school day for children attending the school.
- Parking is limited at the Holding Field.
- There is very limited access to sport for young people other than in football and cricket.
- Access to specialised sport in Basingstoke and Newbury is difficult via public transport.

## **Actions Proposed**

- Commission a feasibility study into the extending of the Fieldgate Centre onto adjacent farmland to provide a new access, tennis courts, squash court and additional changing facilities including accommodation for women's field sports teams.
- Support the rebuilding of the Youth Hall at the Holding Field site with specific emphasis on changing and other facilities for youth sports teams.
- Construct an all weather cricket wicket at the Holding Field for use as an informal facility.
- Carry out restoration work on the tennis courts to sustain their use for tennis pending completion of new courts at the Fieldgate Centre
- Downstream from the development of the Fieldgate Centre adapt the Holding Field tennis courts as an all weather multi sports facility Negotiate controlled access to the school swimming pool outside school hours.
- Encourage all sports clubs to promote youth participation.

- Provide a comprehensive sport section to the proposed village guide.
- Encourage clubs to adopt a marketing approach to the community

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- develop the Holding Field as a sporting centre for young people
- provide enhanced sports facilities at the Fieldgate Centre
- identify and create new facilities in response to the village plan questionnaire
- encourage and support new organisations and activities in response to the village plan questionnaire
- pay particular care with provision for younger and older residents.

## **Traffic**

### **The Current Situation**

- The A339 has been de-trunked but remains a heavily used primary route [particularly by HGVs] between the Midlands distribution centres and the south.
- The A339 is heavily loaded at peak hours and the SEERA Transport Plan predicts heavy peak hour congestion on the Greenham Common stretch by 2010.
- Traffic levels on the B3051 are growing and the road is increasingly used by commuters and other traffic as a link between the A34/A30/A303 and the A4/M4.
- There is some off-street parking at Anchor Yard and limited on-street parking in the remainder of the village.
- Formerly quiet lanes are becoming commuter routes and are also increasingly used by HGVs for access to delivery and collection points.

### **The Issues**

- The A339 through the parish has been subject to a significant level of fatal and serious accidents.
- The crossing of the A339 by the B3051 is increasingly dangerous.
- Speeding into the village is a problem; even 30 mph is too high in many traffic situations
- We are beginning to suffer from 'satellititis' - HGVs using Satnav systems which take no account of the exact nature of roads such as Swan St.
- There are a number of places in the village where the needs of pedestrians are in conflict with other road users.
- Off-street parking is taken up by residents with no parking space within their own curtilages.
- There are frequent congestion problems in the centre of the village which are exacerbated by parking on double yellow lines.
- Having decriminalised parking offences, the Borough is unable to enforce its own regulations..
- Dial a Ride is poorly promoted, offers a very limited service and is underused.
- All-day parking by countryside visitors reduces the availability of short stay parking.
- Pubs and restaurants attracting visitors to the village have only limited on-site parking
- There is no safe route to school.

### **Actions Proposed**

- Implement the safety measures agreed with Hampshire Highways at the A339/B3051 crossing including the road through Knowl Hill.
- Press for 40 mph speed limits through Knowl Hill and on the A339 from west of the Star Inn to the bypass.
- Implement the vulnerable road users safety measures agreed with Hampshire Highways
- Move the parking spaces at the entrance to Anchor Yard which currently cause problems with access and egress.
- Identify unused garaging which could be taken up by residents who do not have their own parking.
- Campaign for a 20 mph limit through the centre of the village.
- Form a Community Speed Watch Team.
- Consider the provision of a footbridge at Pound Green/Bear Hill.

- Campaign for pedestrian safety measures in Fox's Lane and in Echinswell Rd from Fox's Lane to the Burial Ground.
- Work with Property Services for land at 24 Swan St to be dedicated by the Borough as public car parking.
- Enable Mon to Fri long stay parking for visitors at the Fieldgate Centre

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- campaign for additional parking
- work for additional road safety measures
- campaign for new speed limits.

# **Transport**

## **The Current Situation**

- Kingsclere still has a public bus service on weekdays and Saturdays only. There is no evening service.
- Buses from Kingsclere interconnect with other services at both Basingstoke and Newbury bus stations.
- There are good rail connections from Basingstoke and Newbury railway stations but parking close to the stations quickly runs out.
- There is alternative access to rail services at smaller stations on both main lines and these are closer to Kingsclere, have easier access and ready parking.
- Older people receive travel tokens or a bus pass from the Borough giving free travel within Hampshire and to limited destinations in Berkshire, and these may be used flexibly.
- There is a Cango bus point in the Square but it doesn't seem to serve any purpose.
- We are able to use the Basingstoke Community Transport minibuses
- There is a Dial-a-Ride service for disabled people on Mondays only
- A number of taxi firms serve the village.
- The Care Group runs a hospital car service using volunteer drivers with their own cars.

## **The Issues**

- The public bus service only goes to Basingstoke Hospital every two hours and access to Newbury Community Hospital by bus is time-consuming.
- Young people find the cost of buses onerous, particularly when they are going to the Leisure Park in Basingstoke.
- The bus service survives because of its use as a Basingstoke and Newbury suburban service rather than from the loading from rural stops, it is vulnerable to further economies.
- The use of Overton and Aldermaston stations is not marketed; both stations have good parking facilities and connections although it may be necessary to change trains.
- We are short of qualified and experienced volunteer drivers for BCT buses.
- Cango appears to be focussed on providing a link between Burghclere area and Newbury.
- Taxis are expensive because of the need to pay for the return journey, except for hackney carriages.
- Cycling is hazardous, especially on the A339

## **Actions Proposed**

- Promote Overton and Aldermaston as safe and convenient alternatives to Basingstoke and Newbury
- Provide better community information on timetables, access points, parking.
- Negotiate transfer ticketing for young people travelling to the Leisure Park.
- Negotiate a hospital bus tickets which is valid for both direct and transfer services.
- Work with Hampshire County Council on possible uses of the Cango service.

- Promote a Quiet Lanes link route from Basingstoke to Newbury via Kingsclere possibly in partnership with Sustrans.
- Promote Safe Routes to School in partnership with Kingsclere Primary School.
- Develop a pool of BCT drivers.
- Investigate Wheels to Work/learning

### **Policy Statement**

We will:

- support public transport services
- support voluntary transport services
- improve travel information.

## **Actions Already Implemented**

Over the time in which we have been developing the plan a number of actions were identified which could be implemented in advance of final approval.

### **Business, Employment and Tourism**

**Retailers' Forum** We have formed a forum of local businesses effectively as a mini chamber of commerce. Most centre businesses belong and a small committee explores initiatives.

**Promotional Map** A promotional map showing the centre of the village and the businesses and other organisations [such as the library] in the centre of the village has been designed and piloted. A slightly revised version in a large print run is now at the printers.

**Overflow Car Park** Agreement has been reached with the Community Association to use the Fieldgate car park as an overflow during the week and signs have been erected.

**Hanging Basket Competition** This is now in its second year and is adding considerably to the attraction of the centre of the village.

**Support for Village Events** Events such as Carols in the Square and the Summer Fete help to create a community spirit and are strongly supported by the Business Forum.

### **Character and Environment**

**Malt House Open Space** Heads of agreement have been reached and a legal agreement is being drawn up for the Parish Council to assume responsibility for the maintenance of this area in the centre of the village. Maintenance is already in hand.

**Footpath to Lake** The work on regrading the path to wheelchair standards has been completed and the replacement bridges identified. Funding for new bridges is being sought from a landfill trust.

**Recycling** The parish council has started a publicity campaign [Recyclere] and publishes regular articles on recycling in the Tower.

**Interpretation Boards** A bid is being prepared to the Borough Conservation Officer for funding under a new programme promoting the Borough's Heritage. New boards will be located at the White Hill car park which is our main visitor point.

### **Children and Young People**

**Consortium of Youth Groups** Meetings of youth group leaders have been held and a management team identified to work on the specification for the new youth club.

**Outreach** An outreach worker has been assigned by the Area Youth Manager to work informally with young people and to feed back ideas.

**Busy Bees** The Busy Bees Pre-school Group is preparing its business plan to expand its services.

### **Communication**

**Notice Boards** Three additional notice boards have been erected to expand village coverage.

**Village Guide** Work is advanced on collating the content of the guide with the aim of an Autumn publication.

### **Health and Housing**

**Housing** Agreement has been reached with the Sentinel Housing Association to construct nine one and two bedroomed dwellings in the Strokens Rd area. This still awaits detailed planning determination and the allocation of funding.

## **Leisure**

**Village Club** With Regional Enterprise Strategy funding from DEFRA, a feasibility study has been completed for extending the main hall and providing new facilities. Planning and listed building consent has been obtained and development funding is now being sought.

**Film Club** A digital cinema has been installed in the Village Club and a Film Club is in full operation although support is still a bit mixed.

## **Safety and Security**

**Beat Officer's Report** The Tower now carries a regular item from our Beat Officer giving advice on crime prevention and other issues.

**Parish Meeting** The new Rural Police Inspector has agreed to occasional meetings with North Hampshire parishes and the first has already been held.

**CCTV** A protocol has been agreed between the parish council and the police over access to the system and maintenance of the files.

## **Sport**

**Fieldgate Centre** The parish council has provided funding for a feasibility study into expanding the sports area and this work is being undertaken by a local architect.

**All Weather Wicket** This has been installed at the Holding Field.

## **Traffic**

**A339** A range of agreed safety measures have been installed on the A339 and the B3051 at Knowl Hill. Associated new speed limits have been agreed and await approval for installation.

**Vulnerable Road Users** A number of measures to improve pedestrian safety have been agreed with Hampshire Highways.

**Parking** Minor changes to parking arrangements to improve traffic management have been agreed with the Borough.

## **What Happens Now?**

### **Adoption**

The Village Plan has been adopted in full by Kingsclere Parish Council. In consultation with Forward Planning at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and with the the Basingstoke and Deane Local Strategic Partnership the plan has been aligned with local higher level strategies. It has been submitted to the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners and to the Market Town Coordinator of Hampshire County Council. Every effort has been made to conform with the County Council and Borough Council strategies and with the South East Regional Plan. Our neighbouring parishes in North Hampshire have also been consulted.

### **Implementation**

The actions proposed in this plan break down into three main groups:

- Actions which require full management teams who will take control and carry out implementation eg: the Village Club extension, the replacement Youth Hall.
- Short term smaller actions which can be incorporated into the budgeted plans of the Parish Council or other village organisations for completion by the end of 2007.
- Other smaller actions which cannot be implemented in the short term and which can be transferred to the Parish Council Rolling List to ensure that they are regularly reviewed.

We hope that members of the original working groups will wish to see their actions through and stay with the programme until it is completed but this should not exclude others coming forward to take on specific actions and of course the full management teams will include members of the local plan teams and others drawn from the appropriate projects.

### **Funding**

Funding will have to be identified and sought within the overall umbrella of the individual projects although the Parish Council will endeavour to identify available sources of funding and assist with funding applications.

Within the framework of the Market Towns Health Check there is the opportunity to bid for SEEDA funding for one specific project. This has been identified as the Busy Bees Pre-school development which will be submitted for consideration.

### **Monitoring**

The Parish Council will review actions on a six monthly timetable

## **Who Were Involved?**

A venture of this size has not been possible without the involvement of a lot of people. This list covers those who worked on developing the ideas and themes which form the Village Plan but of course many others gave their ideas and reactions in our questionnaire and at the various consultations which have taken place. In no particular order of merit, here are the team;

### **Overview and coordination**

Peter Woodman  
Len Potts  
Sheila Thompson

### **Business, Employment and Tourism**

Andy Bates  
Brian Green  
Mike Harnetty  
Maria Macrea  
Alistair McLaren  
Phillip Rudin

### **Character and Environment**

Mark Prater  
Martin Feeney  
Sarah Ball  
Trevor Pitman  
Diana Tait  
Rod Eldred

### **Health and Housing**

Janet Bond  
Janet Jones  
Frankie Young  
Sue Woodman  
Wyn Harfield  
Brenda Sharp  
Jim Gibb  
Tim Cooksey

### **Leisure**

Peter Goff  
Josie Norton

### **Safety, Security, Emergency Services**

Alan Denness  
Jasper Dalgliesh  
Stuart Packham  
Kyle Luke

### **Sport**

David Giles  
Len Potts

### **Traffic and Transport**

Barry Side  
Elizabeth Kay  
Jennifer Bowles  
Mark Newby  
Chris Lee



