

Hawkesbury Parish Plan



Acknowledgements

The biggest thank you goes to the many volunteers from the parish who have made this plan possible.

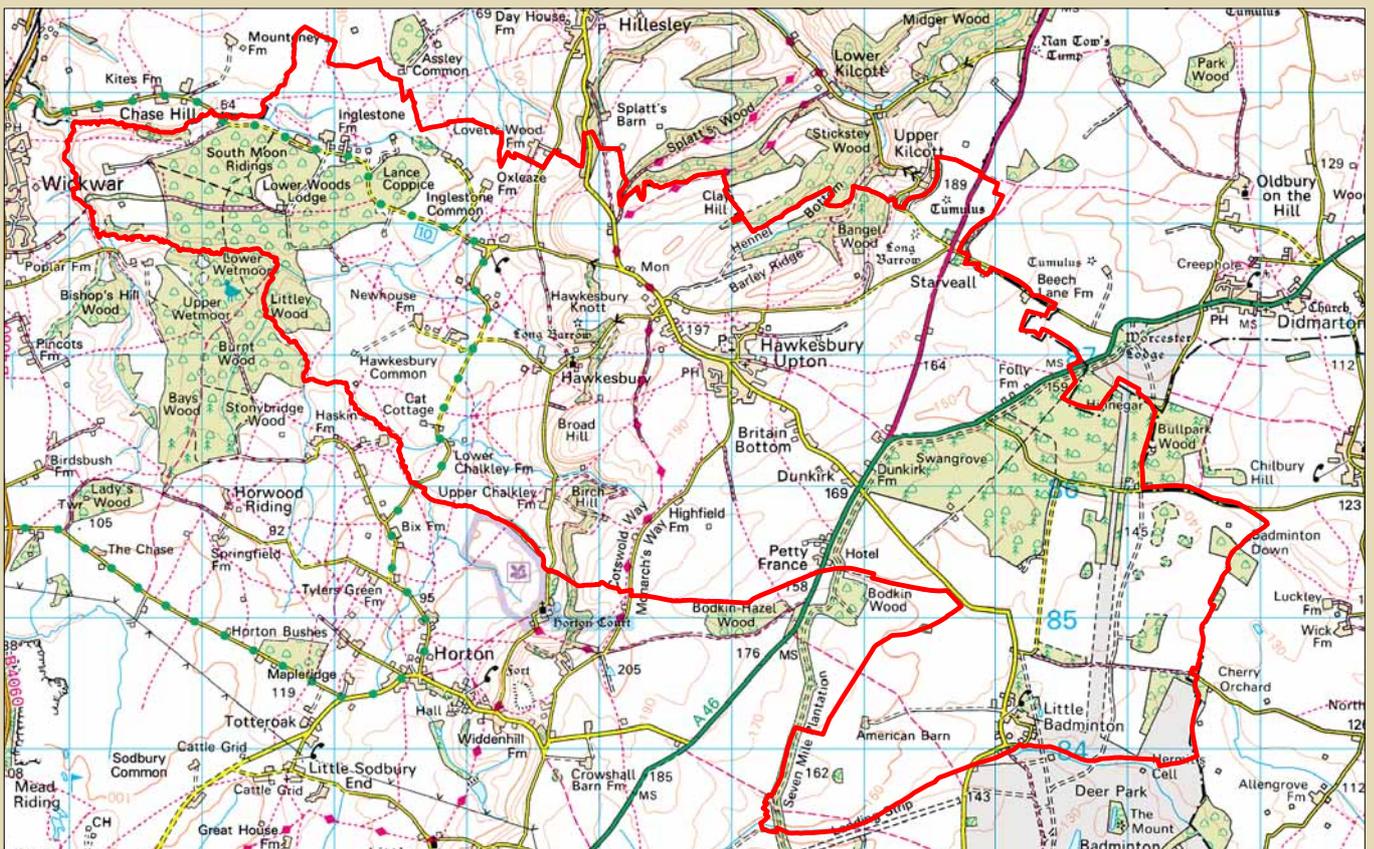
Funding for the report was made available by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs through Community Action. Additional funding was provided by Hawkesbury Parish Council and the Quartet Community Foundation. None of these organisations have had any editorial impact on the content of this report.



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Outline of Hawkesbury





Images from the Hawkesbury Vision Project



Report summary

This parish plan sets out the views of the people living in the parish of Hawkesbury about how they would like their local area to develop in the future. It has been put together by local volunteers following more than a year of information gathering, analysis and discussion within the local community through the Hawkesbury Vision Project. As a result of this plan, it is hoped that future planned changes in the parish will be informed by the opinions of the people who live here.

The majority of Hawkesbury parishioners do not object in principle to new **housing** developments to meet the needs of local people. However, there is a very strong desire to influence the size, type and intended use of any building or development.

There is significant support for maintaining the look and 'feel' of the built **environment** by restricting the use of non-traditional building materials and through other initiatives, such as laying cables underground, restoring traditional types of lighting and traditional road signs. The survey found that the natural environment is very important to people in the parish, with particular value being placed on the wildlife, the Cotswold location, the unspoilt environment and the tranquillity.

Hawkesbury is a rural parish with limited public **transport** services. Very few people in the parish use the public or community bus services and those who do use them do so mainly for shopping or social and leisure purposes. A number of people have difficulty in getting to key places such as the hospital or the doctor's surgery. Two thirds of parishioners think that speeding traffic is a problem on the roads within the parish. Almost three quarters think that there are traffic danger spots within the parish. There is considerable consistency in the identification of traffic danger-spots.

Whilst most of the parishioners surveyed think that the council-provided **services** are good or at least adequate, there is a significant number who think that some services could be improved. Over three quarters of parishioners expressed a high level of satisfaction with water and electricity services. The majority of

parishioners are interested in exploring a community-based sustainable energy scheme.

The survey found that local **commercial services**, such as the village shop, post office and pubs, are well used by parishioners on a regular basis. Parishioners are very keen to retain their local facilities, both commercial businesses and local community facilities. They are also keen to ensure that local business needs and employer opportunities are considered in planning decisions.

In general, Hawkesbury parishioners are very content with the parish and the **quality of life** that it creates. A high percentage of people were not aware of the service provided by the **community police officer** and there was also very low awareness of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme running in the parish. Parishioners believe that the **sport and social** activities that take place in the community add to the richness of parish life. There is evidence to suggest that more activities would be supported should they be available.

As an outlying part of the parish, the residents of **Little Badminton** appear to suffer poor levels of service in a number of areas. Residents are concerned about their isolation from the rest of the parish and many believe that this results in poor levels of service in comparison.

The action plan at the end of this report needs to be realised, and volunteers are needed to take forward the points it raises. It is hoped that regular reviews of the action plan will take place over the next five years or more.

Introduction: a parish plan for Hawkesbury

This report is the parish plan for Hawkesbury in South Gloucestershire. It sets out the views and opinions of the people living in the parish about how they would like to see their local area developing in the future.

As a result of this plan, it is hoped that future planned changes in the parish will be informed by the desire to maintain aspects of the parish which local residents feel are important and contribute to their quality of life. More importantly, however, it gives the parish a voice it has not had in the past.

Background

The project started with meetings of local groups and business people, and there was overwhelming support for the initiative from those who attended. Following on from this, a drop-in day was held at the Hawkesbury Upton village hall, which provided information to parishioners and sought volunteers to take the project forward. Over forty volunteers offered to help.

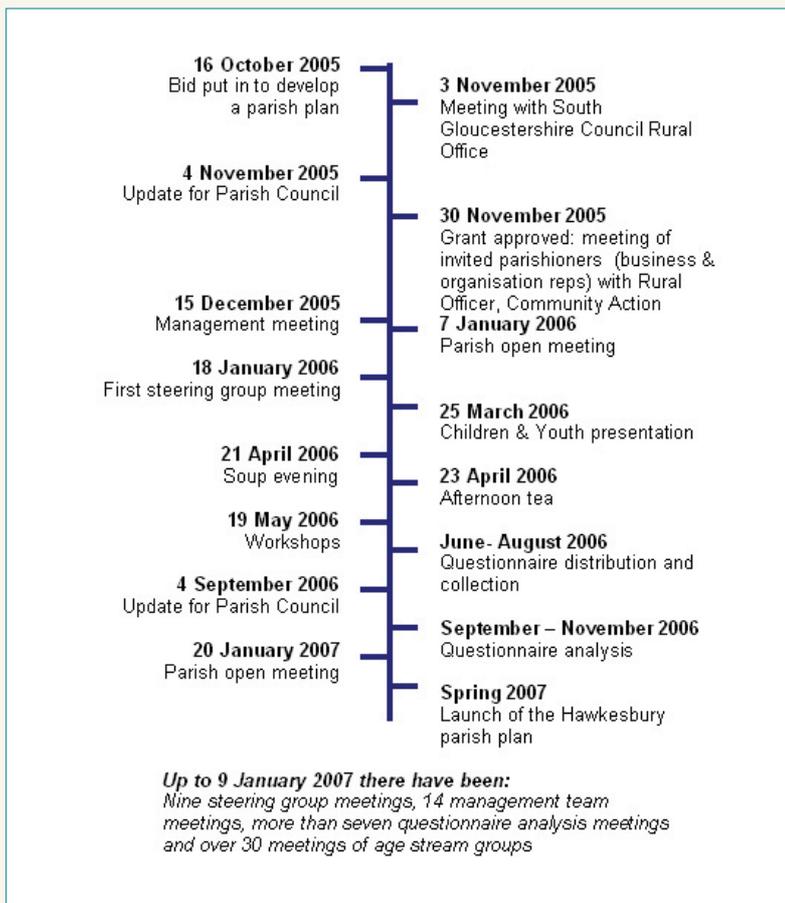
The Hawkesbury Vision Project began officially on 18 January 2006.

Since then there have been 23 management team and steering group meetings and 30 meetings of the groups working with different age groups in the parish. In all, 480 questionnaires have been delivered to households throughout the parish and 320 completed questionnaires have been collected and analysed. In total more than 2,500 hours of work have gone into producing this parish plan.

The watchword throughout the process has been 'integrity'. All of the views developed and recorded within this report are supported by carefully documented sets of evidence of community input. This parish plan is therefore a true reflection of the views of Hawkesbury parishioners.

The report itself is set out in a number of sections, each with its own set of conclusions and action points. These sections encompass all of the information collected throughout the project. The action points from each of these areas have been compiled into a brief action list at the end of the report.

This parish plan is intended to last for at least five years and is written in such a way as to preserve its relevance in the future. The action plan is designed to be carried forward as individual projects, by community volunteers, with no pre-determined timescales. The *What happens next?* section at the end of the report provides some ideas for taking these actions forward.





The process

1. The Hawkesbury Vision Project started with a number of open meetings to gauge the feelings of the community on the merits of developing a parish plan. The idea received a very positive response including many useful comments.
2. The next step was to divide the parish into three age-related streams with teams of volunteers given the task of finding out the key views and opinions of these groups. To help do this, each group hosted a number of events, for example:
 - the children's paintings, comments and photographs were exhibited at the school, reflecting their own Hawkesbury Vision Project
 - the Evergreens discussed old pictures of the parish
 - the soup-and-a-roll event on the Commons, with a variety of both homemade soups and homemade opinions
 - the facilitated workshop in the school hall with professional facilitators and a wealth of ideas and opinions.
3. The development of the questionnaire was a mammoth task in itself, and involved:
 - collating all of the information gathered from the above events
 - carefully wording questions so they were clear, unbiased and relevant
 - deciding how many questions to include
 - delivering questionnaires to every household in the parish, and then collecting them back in again.
4. The analysis was carried out in an unbiased way with an audit trail of the conclusions. The parish feedback was split into subject areas and each of these was allocated to a team to evaluate the results based on documented evidence. The results were then subject to peer-review by the rest of the team.
5. An action plan was produced from these statements. These are laid out in the action plan section of this report.
6. NEXT STEPS – the action plan needs to be realised, so the parish needs volunteers to help take these actions forward!
7. It is hoped that regular reviews of progress will take place over the next five years or more.

About Hawkesbury

The parish of Hawkesbury lies at the edge of the world-famous Cotswolds, and includes the village of Hawkesbury Upton, the hamlets of Hawkesbury and Little Badminton, and the areas known as Hawkesbury Common and Inglestone Common. The parish is partially situated in a nationally-designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and lies close to the meeting point of the three counties of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, the latter being Hawkesbury's local council authority.



Hawkesbury History Society

The parish's nearest towns are Wotton-under-Edge to the north, and Chipping Sodbury and Yate to the south. At around seven miles north of the M4 motorway (junction 18), and a similar distance from the M5 (junction 14), the parish is within easy travelling distance of the cities of Bristol (20 miles) and Bath (18 miles).

The open countryside in the parish is a mixture of arable and pastoral farmland, mixed with areas of woodland - most notably the ancient coppiced woodland of the 700-acre Lower Woods adjacent to Hawkesbury Common and extending into the neighbouring parishes of Wickwar and Horton.

Perched on top of the escarpment - at the highest point for miles around - stands Hawkesbury's most famous landmark, the Lord Robert Somerset Monument. The area is popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists who come to enjoy the scenery that the area has to offer, in particular making use of the Cotswold Way national trail.

Services

Local services in the parish include a village shop, a post office, two pubs, a restaurant, farm shops, a residential home, a mechanic and a hairdressers – as well as many other services provided by local people. A key focal point of the parish is the village hall in Hawkesbury Upton which was built in 1981 replacing the old 'hospital hall'. Since then, there have been several recent extensions and improvements.

The 'Rec' in Hawkesbury Upton was left to the village in the early 1900s for use by all of the people in the parish. It features a children's play area, basketball court and football pitch, and is the site of a community composting area.

It also hosts the Hawkesbury Horticultural Show each year on the last Saturday in August. The show has run for over 120 years and features many of the characteristics of a traditional rural show such as a carnival procession, live music, fairground rides and a large produce and crafts marquee.

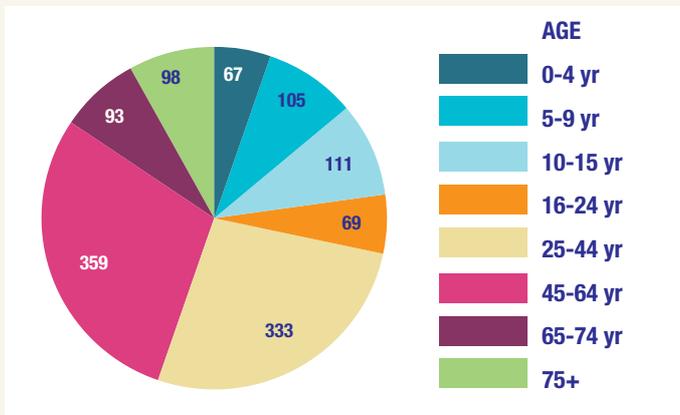
The parish is well served by an active pre-school and toddlers group, as well as the local primary school in Hawkesbury Upton which was rated as outstanding or good in each of the assessment areas in its last OFSTED inspection in 2005. There is also access to very good secondary schools in the wider area.

Community

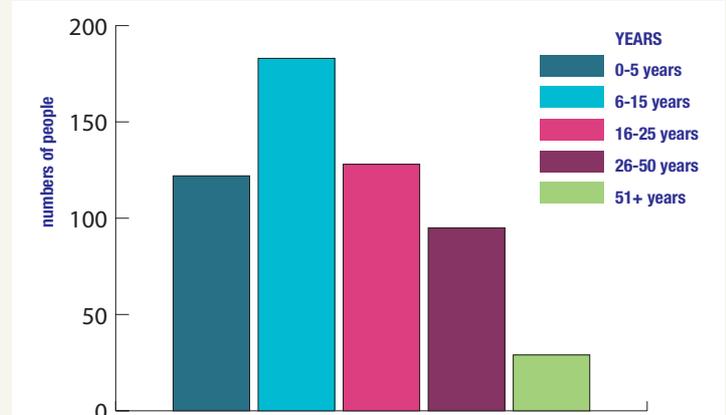
The local community is very active with a number of clubs and regular events to suit all ages and interests, ranging from choir to martial arts. The local community also has a strong interest in sport and exercise activities with very popular cricket, football and tennis clubs, as well as many successful skittles teams.

The monthly parish magazine is a source of information about forthcoming events, church services and parish news. It is also used by many local people to advertise their businesses and services.

Places of worship in the parish include the Saxon St Mary's church in Hawkesbury, Bethesda chapel, the Methodist chapel in Hawkesbury Upton and St Michael & All Saints church in Little Badminton.



Population of Hawkesbury by age - 1,235 total (2001 census)



1 in 5 respondents have lived in Hawkesbury their whole lives, the graph shows how long others have lived in Hawkesbury. (Hawkesbury Vision Project)

A (very) brief history of Hawkesbury

Evidence of early human settlement in and around Hawkesbury can be seen with the distribution of Neolithic long barrows and Bronze Age round barrows in the local area. Iron Age fortifications are still visible at the nearby 'camps' at Horton and Sodbury. Archaeological excavations in the parish have also revealed the building fabric of a number of Roman sites, with coins, pottery and brooches being found.

Documentary records for the area begin in 972 AD, with a charter confirming lands of Hawkesbury being in the possession of Pershore Abbey from around 800 AD. In around 1033, Wulfstan arrived as rector of the Saxon church at Hawkesbury before returning to Worcester Cathedral where he was later appointed bishop. Wulfstan was canonized in 1203 by Pope Innocent III. Following the Norman conquest of Britain, the church at Hawkesbury was rebuilt, leaving only a few Saxon remains.

In 1252, the Abbot of Pershore was granted the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair at the nearby hamlet of Hawkesbury Upton. This provided the opportunity to develop a town plan that can still be seen in the 'burgage plot' layouts of gardens and grounds today.

Ownership of Hawkesbury estates rested with Pershore Abbey until its dissolution in 1539 when, after briefly passing to the Crown, it was acquired by John Boteler, whose family had held the manor of Great Badminton since the mid-13th century.

In 1609, the manor of Hawkesbury was bought by Arthur Crewe. He progressively disposed of various estates until 1621 when he sold the remainder, including the manor house, to Robert Jenkinson of Walcot in Oxfordshire, in whose family it has since

remained. Following a family tragedy in 1770, the manor house at Hawkesbury was deserted and soon afterwards pulled down.

Several members of the Jenkinson family have pursued illustrious clerical and political careers, the most famous being Sir Robert Banks Jenkinson, second Earl of Liverpool, who was appointed Prime Minister after the assassination of Spencer Percival in 1812.

The estates of Great Badminton, held by the Dukes of Beaufort since 1612, include lands and property within Hawkesbury parish. In 1846 a monument was built on the site of an old bowling green to the memory of General Lord Robert Somerset, who had fought at Waterloo.

Life in the parish was mainly concerned with farming and the wool industry, and in activities such as coppicing, charcoal-burning, and hurdle-making in Lower Woods, which was once part of the ancient forest of Alveston and Horwood.

During the First World War, Hawkesbury's village hall was renamed the 'hospital hall' and housed a number of casualties returning from France and Belgium. A war memorial to the many men lost was unveiled in the 1920s on The Plain at Hawkesbury Upton.

The hospital hall was pulled down in 1981 when the new village hall was built with money raised by the village.

Over the last 30 years, the parish has adapted and grown to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. To this day it maintains a strong, busy and thriving community.

Housing

Over the last decade, the majority of houses built within the parish have been affordable homes, built to meet local needs. Just over 30 homes have been built within this period, and 19 of those are only available to those with a strong local connection. This is the result of housing needs surveys carried out by the Parish Council in 1986 and South Gloucestershire Council in 2000.

Today there remains a great deal of agreement on the approach to housing and housing developments within the local area. There was a very high percentage of responses to the questionnaire on this topic and the data gathered at the open events showed a similar trend. Therefore, these findings can be considered to be a fair reflection of the views of the community as a whole.

Most of the people whose opinions were recorded feel that the number of houses built over the last 10 years was about right, but a small percentage feel that either too many houses had been built or, conversely, that too few had been built. Approximately one third of parishioners responding to the questionnaire think that the houses that have been built over the past 10 years are too expensive.

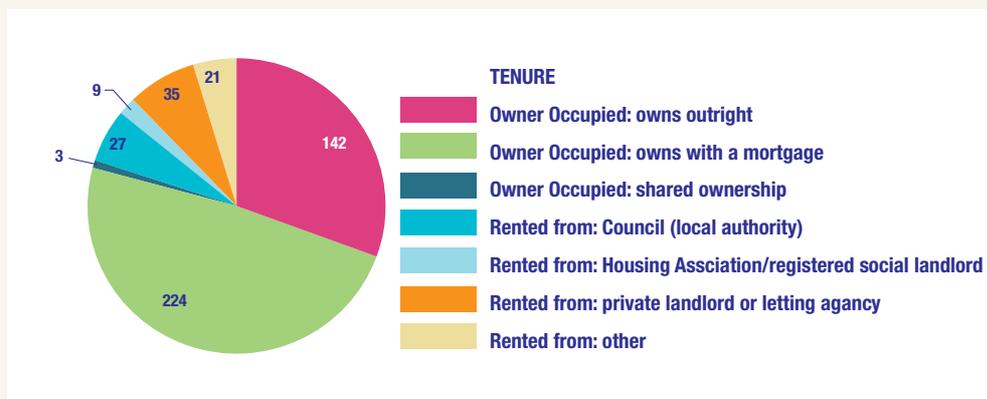


The following points are the main findings of the housing survey part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project questionnaire. They are presented in no particular order:

- The majority of Hawkesbury parishioners do not object in principle to new housing developments to meet the needs of local people. However, there is a very strong desire to influence the size, type and intended use of any building or development.
- Almost one in five of the people canvassed think that there is no need for new houses in the parish.
- The character of the parish and its surrounding area is very important to parishioners and they do not want housing developments to have an undue effect on that character. To this end, parishioners think that it is very important that guidelines are produced with the aim of conserving the character of the parish and the rural nature of the area.
- Parishioners expressed a very strong view that any new house-building or housing development must be designed to meet the needs of local people in the parish, and not just be a speculative development.
- The type of housing that is broadly supported by parishioners is, in priority order:
 1. homes for young people
 2. homes for the elderly (possibly warden assisted)
 3. small family homes.
- There was an indication that parishioners would prefer a mix of housing types rather than a single building design, and there was support amongst older residents for bungalows.
- For 'approved' developments, parishioners would prefer development to be undertaken by local builders or self-build rather than large private developers.

During the open events, the general view of parishioners was that the major threats to the character of Hawkesbury were:

- urbanisation
- too much housing development
- expansion of the village boundaries.



Tenure in Hawkesbury – 461 households total (2001 census)

Comments from children & young people:

“Hawkesbury is just the right size. It has old buildings that make it look cute.”



Action points:

- An analysis of housing needs should be conducted to refine the findings of the parish plan information gathering exercise. It is important that such an exercise should make use of the extensive information collected by the Hawkesbury Vision Project and have full representation from Hawkesbury parish. This would be achieved through working closely with the local councils.
- Guidelines should be produced with planning authorities to conserve the character of the parish by setting out the preferred type of construction materials to be used in developments. This guidance should be developed in conjunction with Hawkesbury Parish Council and South Gloucestershire Council.
- Hawkesbury Parish Council and South Gloucestershire Council should be encouraged to take into consideration the views of Hawkesbury parishioners, as documented in this parish plan, when considering all development plans within the parish.

Our environment

Hawkesbury is a rural parish largely within a nationally-designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 1999 a major part of the parish, including all of the hamlet of Hawkesbury and most of Hawkesbury Upton, was designated as a conservation area. This seeks to preserve and reinforce the historic character of the area, minimise the impact of modern development and ensure that any new development or alterations are sensitive to the historic context.

Built environment

For the most part, Hawkesbury's houses and buildings are constructed from traditional materials, with a high proportion of natural stone which parishioners believe enhances the look and 'feel' of the rural environment.

There is significant support for maintaining this aspect of the parish by restricting the use of non-traditional building materials and through other initiatives, such as laying cables underground, restoring traditional types of lighting and traditional road signs.

The following are main findings of the environment sections of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- Almost all residents would like to see the Hawkesbury monument (Somerset Monument) repaired and made accessible to local residents.
- There is strong support for tidying up Farm Pool and for restoring or repairing dry-stone walls around the parish.
- At least half of Hawkesbury's parishioners would like to see improvements in the bus shelter and more traditional street furniture, such as lights and signage. Many children in the parish commented on the need to 'tidy up' the bus shelter which is used by young people as a meeting point.
- Whilst very few parishioners (less than five per cent) use the local telephone boxes, the majority of residents would like to retain these services and in some cases restore the traditional style telephone box.
- Many parishioners believe there is a problem with litter and dog fouling within the parish, and they are in favour of a programme of education to encourage people to act responsibly.



Natural environment

The survey of parishioners found that the natural environment is very important to people in the parish, with particular value being placed on the wildlife, the Cotswolds location, the unspoilt environment and tranquillity. A number of parishioners are concerned about deterioration in certain aspects of the environment.

The following are main findings of the society and economy (natural environment) part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- There is strong support for preserving special trees and woodlands, planting of more natural flowers and maintaining hedgerows.
- The majority of parishioners are familiar with and regularly use local rights of way for walking, riding or cycling. However, a significant minority of parishioners are not aware of the rights of way.
- Over half of the respondents use the Lower Woods nature reserve, owned by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
- Access to the countryside for recreation is seen as a significant advantage of living in the parish.
- Locally to the Commons, there is recognition of the need to regularly clear the scrub on the Commons to prevent its gradual degeneration.
- A quarter of parishioners think the parish is affected by noise pollution which mainly arises from low-flying aircraft and road traffic.
- Light pollution has also been identified as a concern by a small number of parishioners.
- The children's workshops concluded that they like the open spaces, countryside and wildlife. The area is clean and they like the views.

Comments from children & young people:

“Hawkesbury is peaceful and it has lots of environment.”

Action points:

- Establish a local action group to address areas of concern in relation to cabling, street furniture, dry-stone walls, litter, dog fouling, Farm Pool etc. via, for example, BT, the council and other relevant bodies.
- Almost all parishioners would like to see the Somerset Monument repaired and reopened, and a majority agreed that they would be willing to support a campaign to achieve this. An action group should be formed to consider the options and engage with the Badminton Estate on this issue.
- There would be some advantage in providing more information on rights of way to parishioners.



Travel & transport

Hawkesbury is a rural parish with limited public transport services and therefore it is unsurprising that the majority of parishioners use a car or van as their main form of transport. Some areas of the parish are at least two miles from the nearest public transport connection.

Transport

The following are the main findings of the transport survey section of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- Parishioners' average daily commuting distance is approximately 12 miles, with around half of those travelling less than 10 miles each way.
- Very few people in the parish use the public or community bus services and those who do use them, do so mainly for shopping or social and leisure purposes. However, users of the bus services generally rate them favourably except in relation to the convenience of the timetable.
- Those parishioners who do not use the bus service have highlighted the availability of their own transport as the main reason for not using public transport. However, a significant number of parishioners also said that the inconvenience of the route and the timetable were important factors.
- Some parishioners have specific concerns about the lack of disabled access on the local buses.
- A number of people expressed difficulty in getting to key places such as the hospital or the doctor's surgery, although it is not clear whether these are people who do not have access to their own transport.
- Many parishioners are also concerned about the lack of a safe means of public transport to local leisure centres/meeting places/shops for teenagers and young adults.



Traffic and speeding

As the majority of people use a car as their primary means of transport, parking and traffic within the village of Hawkesbury Upton is an issue for many parishioners. Hawkesbury Upton is also on a through route connecting Wickwar and Wotton-under-Edge to the A46, and on to Bath and the M4.

Car parking in the High Street restricts the traffic flow and means that cars need to give way in order to pass each other. This has been a point of contention within the village for some while. Speeding in the narrow rural lanes and through Hawkesbury Upton has been a constant complaint for a considerable time.

The following are main findings of the traffic and speeding survey part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- Over half of the parishioners surveyed think that cars parked (legally) in the High Street act as a traffic calming measure and slow down the traffic. However, this is not clear-cut as a third of parishioners consider parked cars on the High Street to be a safety risk.
- During the survey, parishioners were asked whether there were traffic danger spots within the parish and where they were. Almost three quarters of those surveyed thought that there are traffic danger spots within the parish.



Comments from children & young people:

“All the cars park at the side of the school and there is only one lane and there could be a crash.”

- There is considerable consistency in the identification of danger-spots by pedestrians as well as drivers. The following areas are considered by parishioners to be the traffic danger-spots within the parish:
 - the road between Farm Pool and Hawkesbury school
 - the junction of Sandpits Lane and France Lane at The Plain
 - the A46 junction with France Lane
 - the Commons
 - Back Street
 - Starveall Lane.
- Parishioners were also asked whether speeding traffic is a problem within the parish and, if so, where speeding was a problem. Two thirds of parishioners think that speeding traffic is a problem on the roads within the parish, and again there was considerable consistency in identifying particular problem areas.

The areas where parishioners consider speeding traffic to be a problem are:

- High Street, Hawkesbury Upton
- France Lane, Hawkesbury Upton.

Conversely a quarter of parishioners think that speeding is not a problem on roads within the parish.

- A number of pedestrians are concerned about the dangers inherent in crossing the roads in the parish.
- During the children’s workshop, cars going too fast on the road and cars parked on the pavements were identified as particular problems.

Action points:

- A survey should be undertaken to identify people who have difficulty getting to key places such as the hospital or doctor’s surgery and a parish-wide solution to the problem should be considered.
- Discussions should be held with the local bus companies to ensure that there is adequate disabled access on the local buses as required by law.
- Considerations should be given to developing a local plan for a safe means of public transport to local leisure centres/meeting places/shops for teenagers and young adults.
- The parish should consider the options for traffic management with the council with a view to limiting the traffic danger on the parish roads.



Local services



The parish of Hawkesbury is situated within the catchment of South Gloucestershire Council and it has its own Parish Council. As well as a regular collection of recyclable goods, there are also local recycling facilities and a very successful community composting scheme.

Local councils

Whilst most of the parishioners surveyed think that the council-provided services are good or at least adequate, there is a significant number who think that some services could be improved.

The following are main findings of the council services survey part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- Over a quarter of parishioners think that refuse collection needs improvement.
- Many parishioners commented on the lack of facilities for the recycling of plastics within the parish.
- Many parishioners expressed concern about the problems associated with:
 - overhanging vegetation that makes it difficult for people to walk on the pavements at some places
 - the poor condition of some of the pavements
 - significant verge erosion in many areas
 - the declining standard of road surfaces within the parish
 - the poor quality and irregularity of road cleaning
 - poor management of weight restrictions on parish roads.
- Local residents need better information on how and where to report problems and dissatisfaction with council-provided services, roads and pavements.



Commercial services

Over three quarters of the parishioners surveyed expressed a high level of satisfaction with water and electricity services. However, there are some concerns about water quality, specifically the hardness of the water.

Broadband coverage was considered to be generally good, although there are some areas within the parish where broadband is not available and some outlying areas where only a limited service is available. Parishioners living in the hamlet of Hawkesbury and on the Commons identified poor broadband coverage as an issue.

Reception of digital TV, radio and mobile phone signals are thought to be unsatisfactory and in need of improvement by a significant number of residents.

Energy

The majority of parishioners are interested in exploring a community-based sustainable energy scheme and many households are already equipped with a variety of energy saving measures.

Suggested sustainable energy sources include solar power, wind power and geothermal energy. Other sustainable energy solutions are also of interest to parishioners.

Over half of households are interested in taking advantage of options for 'mains' gas supply and bulk purchase of heating oil.

Parish households are already concentrating on energy-saving measures including low wattage lights, electricity timer switches, lowering thermostats and other simple measures to reduce energy consumption.

Some parishioners are cautious of alternative energy production, in particular about the location of wind turbines.



Action points

- Set up an action group to explore joint working to improve services and establish and publicise clear communication channels.
- Further work is needed to assess the full range of potential options for sustainable energy production, likely take-up, costs and feasibility. Potential alternative energy solutions should be reviewed alongside options for bulk purchase heating oil and mains gas.
- Data obtained in this survey should be passed to the local utilities and service providers as appropriate for information and / or action.

Local economy & business



The survey found that local commercial services, such as the village shop, post office and pubs, are well used by parishioners on a regular basis. Parishioners are very keen to retain their local facilities, both commercial businesses and local community facilities, in equal measure.

These facilities are considered by parishioners to be very valuable contributors to the community, with a high proportion of people reporting that they use the village shop in order to support it. This shows that a significant number of parishioners see the local shop as a facility worth retaining.

The following are main findings of the local services part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project survey. They are presented in no particular order:

- The feedback from parishioners on the use of local services including the local businesses, the village hall, the village playground and the recreation ground is very encouraging. Almost all of the local facilities are well used by parishioners. This is shown by the figures below:
 - three quarters of those people surveyed use the village shop at least once a week
 - three quarters use the post office at least once a month
 - almost half said they use the village hall at least once a month
 - over half visit one of the village pubs at least once a month
 - the recreation ground is used by three quarters of 13 to 17 year olds at least once a week
- However, in contrast the mobile library is used by a small number of parishioners, with only eight per cent of parishioners using it regularly.
- Many people have expressed the opinion that improvements need to be made to the village hall. In particular, parishioners want to see changes made to the fabric of the building and they are also keen to see improvements in the facilities offered.
- In the children and youth surveys, the playground and the recreation ground featured strongly and many had good ideas on how they could be improved.





Comments from children & young people:

“We love the shop and post office. They have toys and sweets.”

Employment

The parish of Hawkesbury is a small rural area with only one village and no major focus of local employment. However, the parish supports a significant amount of local enterprise and small business ventures.

Most parishioners have said they would welcome an increase in employment in the parish and there is considerable support for small business development. However, there is some opposition to developing tourism or similar attractions within the parish.

The following are the main findings of the local business and jobs part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- More than 100 parishioners run a business or work from home, demonstrating the level of local enterprise that there is within the parish.
- The lack of local employment is seen as a weakness within the community and many people travel away from the area to work. At least two thirds of parishioners would like to see more employment opportunities within the parish.
- Most parishioners believe that there is a need to support the local business community.
- Parishioners are also keen that local planning decisions should take into account economic needs and employment opportunities within the parish.
- Almost a third of parishioners are interested in, or are in favour of, a local business network. However, no definition has been provided and a local business network could mean different things to people.
- Approximately half of the parishioners surveyed have reservations about, or are against, small industrial workshops and developing tourism within the parish.

Since the completion of the questionnaire the threat to rural post offices has become very real and could affect Hawkesbury. Given the stated importance of the post office to the local community, we will need to take positive action to retain this local facility.

Action points:

- Parishioners’ comments on improvements to the village hall should be brought to the attention of the village hall committee. The comments and the level of support it receives, as indicated in this survey, may help to secure grant aid to complete some of the improvements.
- The business community within the parish should consider a collective approach to networking, mutual support and the exchange of ideas to support existing businesses and the development of new business ideas.
- Planning policies should be developed to encourage consideration of the community’s wishes to have more local employment.
- Local representatives should be encouraged to consider ways to support local businesses and innovation within the parish when making policy decisions.

Quality of life & community

Rural situations like the parish of Hawkesbury have both advantages and disadvantages when it comes to the quality of life enjoyed by parishioners. The peaceful quietude of the countryside can be a benefit to some, but entrench a feeling of isolation in others.

Quality of life

The definition of quality of life was not explored in any detail in the Hawkesbury Vision Project and parishioners were left to rely upon their own concepts of what quality of life means to them. This does not detract from the results of the survey, but does allow for some deviation in individual expectations.

In general, Hawkesbury parishioners are very content with the parish and the quality of life that it creates. The following are main findings of the quality of life survey part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- The majority of parishioners agree that their own quality of life is enhanced by the positive aspects of living in Hawkesbury, such as the:
 - situation/location in which they live
 - sense of community
 - pleasant living environment
- The majority of those who have lived in the parish for the past 10 years or more believe that Hawkesbury has remained the same or improved during that time. However, a small percentage of those people do not agree with this view.
- For many parishioners, the availability of local facilities within the parish or surrounding area is very important to quality of life. The facilities that parishioners find to be particularly important include:
 - education, in particular the local schools
 - playgroups within the parish
 - sports and social activities
 - local pubs
- Most of the parishioners who contributed to the survey said that they do not feel at all isolated in the parish. However, a significant minority of the people who were questioned admitted to feeling isolated sometimes and a few said they regularly felt isolated. Some of this may be a result of the outlying nature of some areas of the parish, a view that is supported by almost three quarters of those living in Little Badminton saying they sometimes feel isolated.



- The most significant finding within this area is that over half of those in the 13-24 age range who responded, sometimes or always felt isolated.
- A high percentage of the people who were surveyed were not aware of the service provided by the community police officer or felt that it could be improved. Many do not know who the community police officer is. There is also very low awareness of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme running in the parish.

Community

The significant number of activities that take place within the parish is a testament to the social welfare and community spirit of the parish.

The following are main findings from the part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project which looked at the social aspects of the local society and economy. They are presented in no particular order:

- Two thirds of parishioners, and a significant cross-section of all ages, are in favour of a small café or meeting place within the parish. This was seen as being especially important by the 18-24 age range.
- Opinions were divided about whether a 'drop-in' centre would be a benefit to the community, with a very high number of people not expressing an opinion. Since there is no definitive description of what a drop-in centre would provide to the community, the high number of residents with 'no opinion' may indicate that people don't know what it would mean for the parish.
- Parishioners are broadly happy with the way they find out about events and things happening in the parish, mainly through the parish magazine, word of mouth and posters in the parish. Potential uses of a parish website include local events, news, clubs and attractions.

- There was very little interest in developing communal internet facilities.
- The Hawkesbury Show is overwhelmingly supported by the parish, with three quarters of parishioners saying that it is a good event. However, a quarter of residents think that it could be improved and suggestions for improvement covered areas such as reducing the impact of the fairground rides and the introduction of more traditional stalls and events.
- Although few parishioners attend regular services, the parish's places of worship, in particular St Mary's Church in Hawkesbury, remain important centres for the local community.
- There is a degree of interest in twinning the parish with another parish or village overseas, but the majority of parishioners either had no opinion or objected.



Comments from children & young people:

“We like living in the village – especially the countryside and open spaces.”

Action points:

- Action is needed to identify why people in the parish feel isolated and to develop plans to tackle this problem.
- The profile of the community police officer is low in the parish and action should be taken to make parishioners aware of community policing and who their local community police officer is.
- The profile of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme needs to be raised in conjunction with the above action point.
- A clear definition of what a 'drop-in centre' is, and the benefits it would bring to the parish, should be determined so that further consultation can take place.
- Consideration should be given to how the desire for a small café or meeting place can be met.
- Data obtained in this survey relating to the Hawkesbury Show should be passed to the Hawkesbury horticultural committee for action.
- Set up a group to develop and manage a website for the parish.

Sport & social



The parish of Hawkesbury is very active socially and in the area of sport and leisure. There is a large number of clubs, societies, organisations and activities, with social and sporting activities most evenings of the week and at weekends.

Parishioners believe that these activities add to the richness of village life and there is evidence to suggest that more activities would be supported should they be available.

The following are the main findings of the society and economy (sports facilities and clubs) part of the Hawkesbury Vision Project. They are presented in no particular order:

- Over a third of all parishioners are involved in local leisure organisations and societies.
 - Almost a third of parishioners take part in sports and activities locally, many in areas that are not organised by local clubs and societies. All age ranges and areas of the parish, except Little Badminton, are represented in the activities.
 - There is a significant level of support for youth activities in the parish with a higher than average level of participation across all age ranges. There is a slight bias towards female participation in these activities but it is not significant.
- There is a particular interest in new sporting activities for which there is not yet a parish club or society, such as:
 - walking
 - horse riding
 - bowls
 - cycling
 - yoga
 - There is also significant interest in new artistic and social activities for which there is not yet a parish club or society, such as:
 - cinema/ film
 - music / concerts
 - gardening
 - craftwork
 - One of the more controversial issues within the parish is the provision of an adventure playground, skateboard park or BMX bike track in the parish. The results of the survey show that:
 - 40 per cent of respondents are in favour of a skateboard park and/or a bmx bike track, whilst approximately 30 per cent are against, and 30 per cent have no opinion.



Action points:

- Publicise levels of interest in additional arts and sports clubs / societies that are not currently being addressed within the parish and ask for volunteers to take forward.
- Draw up a feasibility study, that includes further consultation, to meet the needs of young people in the parish in relation to: a) an adventure playground, b) a skateboard park and c) a BMX bike track.

Comments from children & young people:

“The cricket pavilion is a good facility. You can sit and watch tennis.”

Little Badminton

Little Badminton is a small community within a loop of the parish boundary some distance (three miles) from the centre of the village of Hawkesbury Upton. Little Badminton is in the heart of the Duke of Beaufort's estate of Badminton Park.

As an outlying part of the parish the residents of Little Badminton appear to suffer poor levels of service in a number of areas. Residents are concerned about their isolation from the rest of the parish and many believe that this results in poor levels of service in comparison to the rest of the local area.

Particular issues raised by Little Badminton residents are:

- Little Badminton's remoteness from the rest of the parish means that residents feel that they are often overlooked.
- The majority of residents are concerned about the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- The standard of the road surfaces in and around the community of Little Badminton and the erosion of the grass verges is a worry for a significant number of residents.
- The local roads within Little Badminton are rural and relatively narrow, the road through the community is often busy with through traffic. The speed of traffic on the local roads causes concern for residents and they think the speed limits should be re-assessed.
- Residents also have concerns about the size of the traffic using Little Badminton as a through route and would like the weight restrictions on local roads to be re-assessed.
- Many of the Little Badminton parishioners believe that the standard of road cleaning could be improved.



Action points:

- Ways should be considered to reduce the feelings of isolation and remoteness from the rest of the parish felt by many residents of Little Badminton.
- Discuss the road traffic issues and road conditions in Little Badminton with South Gloucestershire Council highways, and consider ways to alleviate the problems.

What happens next?

Despite taking over a year to come into being, this parish plan represents what is really only the first step in helping shape the parish for the future. On the following pages, there is a summary of the action points highlighted through the survey and other activities associated with the Hawkesbury Vision Project.

The action plan is a working, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated. Timescales and priorities have not been set for these actions, as it was felt that this is something that should be left to the parish community, as a whole, to decide. However, some of the points raised in the questionnaire, such as plastic recycling and some of the changes in the village hall, have already been addressed.

Alongside each of these action points is information on the likely partners who could be associated with each of the proposed activities. As you will realise, many of these issues will need the active support of the local community if they are to happen....which is where you step in.

Anything that you have read in this report that you feel is important for the future of the area you live in needs your help to make it happen. But you needn't feel alone.

The whole point of the Hawkesbury Vision Project, and this report, is to show the strength of feeling of the whole parish on issues that are important to us all.

This means that if one of the points raised in this report happens to be something that you feel passionate about - there are many other people in your local area who feel passionate about it too.

So, please take this opportunity to get in touch with like-minded people and help bring about the things you would like to see in the parish. You can volunteer as much or as little as you want - safe in the knowledge that you are helping make an important difference for the future.



The action plan

The actions laid out over the following pages refer to those points highlighted in the previous sections. They have been grouped into areas identified under the Local Area Agreement to help the groups that get involved in taking forward the actions to gain further support from the council and other government organisations. Where appropriate, certain actions have been placed in more than one group. For more information on the points raised, please refer to the relevant section on the page number highlighted.

Safer and stronger communities

Page	Issue	Action	Potential partners	Aims & outcomes
8	Housing needs survey	Conduct an analysis of housing needs in order to establish the nature and size of any further housing development requirements.	Parish Council, South Gloucestershire Council (SGC)	Clearly defined housing requirements including numbers, types and completion time frame
8	Building guidelines	Engage with SGC and the Parish Council to draw up specific guidelines for developers and planners with regard to construction materials.	Parish Council, SGC	Guidelines adopted by planning authority leading to supplementary planning guidance
10	Look and feel of the parish	Establish a local action group to address areas of concern in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cabling - street furniture - dry-stone walls - dog fouling - Farm Pool - bus shelter - phone boxes - noise - light and litter pollution 	Parish Council, SGC, electricity companies, BT, local landowners	A noticeable improvement in each of the individual areas

<p>10 Restoration of the monument</p>	<p>Engage with the Badminton Estate to consider the options for repairing the Somerset Monument; one of which would be to conduct a campaign to carry out repairs to the monument.</p>	<p>SGC, English Heritage, Parish Council, Badminton Estate</p>	<p>Access for parishioners achieved</p>
<p>12 Traffic management</p>	<p>Engage with SGC and the Parish Council to review the questionnaire results; conduct further analysis of traffic movements and hazards and consider possible solutions to identified risks.</p>	<p>SGC, Parish Council</p>	<p>Traffic hazards minimised, safer for pedestrians</p>
<p>14 Service improvement</p>	<p>Set up an action group to explore joint working to improve the following services: - rubbish collection - recycling - pavements and roads. Establish and publicise clear communication routes for reporting problems.</p>	<p>Parish Council, SGC, SITA</p>	<p>A noticeable improvement in each of the individual areas</p>
<p>14 Local utilities</p>	<p>Pass questionnaire data to local utilities and service providers as appropriate for information and / or action covering: - water supply - electricity - TV / radio reception - broadband coverage and mobile phone reception.</p>	<p>Local utility & service providers, Member of Parliament</p>	<p>A noticeable improvement in each of the individual areas</p>
<p>16 Village hall improvements</p>	<p>Pass data from questionnaire to village hall management committee.</p>	<p>Village hall management committee</p>	<p>Village hall management committee to produce an action plan to address the issues raised</p>
<p>18 Tackling isolation in the parish</p>	<p>Liaise with appropriate groups to identify reasons for isolation and possible solutions.</p>	<p>Parish Council, Community Action, Age Concern, schools, churches, parish community groups (e.g. youth group)</p>	<p>Reduced isolation</p>
<p>18 Drop-in centre</p>	<p>Draw up and publish a definition of a drop-in centre; consult with parishioners for their consideration of a drop-in centre to be located in the parish.</p>	<p>Parish Council, SGC</p>	<p>A decision made as to the appropriateness of a drop-in centre for the parish</p>
<p>18 Community police officer & Neighbourhood Watch</p>	<p>Raise the profile of the community police officer and Neighbourhood Watch and improve accessibility.</p>	<p>Avon & North Somerset Police; local Neighbourhood Watch scheme</p>	<p>Increased awareness of Neighbourhood Watch scheme and increased visibility of community police officer</p>

18 Development of a parish website

Set up a group to develop and manage a website for the parish.

Parish Council, SGC

Informative website set up and maintained, regularly accessed by parishioners

20 Clubs & societies

Publicise levels of interest in additional arts and sports clubs / societies that are not currently being addressed within the parish and ask for volunteers to take forward.

S.Glos sport & leisure groups,
S.Glos rural arts touring scheme (Razzle), schools

Additional clubs / societies set up and well-supported

Environmental sustainability**14 Sustainable energy production**

Undertake a study to assess the full range of potential options for local sustainable energy production, likely take-up, costs and feasibility.

Costed feasibility report, capable of being implemented

SGC, environmental groups

Healthier communities and older people**10 Rights of way**

Provide more information on rights of way in the parish.

Parish Council, SGC,
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

More parishioners know and use rights of way

18 Hawkesbury Show improvements

Pass data from questionnaire to Hawkesbury horticultural society committee.

Hawkesbury horticultural society committee

Hawkesbury horticultural society committee produce an action plan to address the issues raise

18 Tackling isolation in the parish

Liaise with appropriate groups to identify reasons for isolation and possible solutions.

Parish Council, Community Action, Age Concern, schools, churches, parish community groups (e.g. youth group)

Reduced isolation

18 Café / meeting place

Further explore the setting up of a café /meeting place in the parish and how this can be achieved.

Parish Council, Community Action, Age Concern, village hall committee, local businesses

Café/ meeting place organized and well used

Healthier communities and older people

Page Issue

Action

Potential partners

Aims & outcomes

20 Clubs & societies

Publicise levels of interest in additional arts and sports clubs / societies that are not currently being addressed within the parish and ask for volunteers to take forward.

S.Glos sport & leisure groups, S.Glos rural arts touring scheme (Razzle), schools

Additional clubs / societies set up and well-supported

18 Little Badminton

Work with parishioners in Little Badminton to reduce the feelings of isolation and remoteness from the rest of the parish.

Parish Council, Little Badminton residents

Parishioners in Little Badminton feel less isolated and remote from the rest of the parish

Children and young people

Page Issue

Action

Potential partners

Aims & outcomes

12 Teenage transport

Develop a local plan for a safe and accessible means of public transport to local leisure centres/meeting places/shops for teenagers and young adults.

Bus operators, community transport operators, local taxi firms, local groups with available transport, parents

Increased mobility and improved safety for teenagers and young adults

18 Café / meeting place

Further explore the setting up of a café /meeting place in the parish and how this can be achieved.

Parish Council, Community Action, Age Concern, village hall committee, local businesses

Café/ meeting place organised and well used

18 Tackling isolation in the parish

Liaise with appropriate groups to identify reasons for isolation and possible solutions.

Parish Council, Community Action, Age Concern, schools, churches, parish community groups (e.g. youth group)

Reduced isolation

20 Clubs & societies

Publicise levels of interest in additional arts and sports clubs / societies that are not currently being addressed within the parish and ask for volunteers to take forward.

S.Glos sport & leisure groups, S.Glos rural arts touring scheme (Razzle), schools

Additional clubs / societies set up and well-supported

20 Adventure playground, skateboard park, BMX bike track

Explore the feasibility of meeting the needs of young people in the parish in relation to:
a) an adventure playground, b) a skateboard park and c) a BMX bike track.

Parish Council, SGC, youth group, schools, village hall committee, young people

Feasibility study and consultation indicate which, if any, of the suggested activities is viable

Access and transport

Page Issue

Action

Potential partners

Aims & outcomes

12 Discussion with bus companies

Engage with the local bus companies to ensure that there is adequate disabled access on the local buses as required by law.

Bus operators, SGC

Access to bus services for all

12 Transport survey

Undertake further detailed survey to identify people who have difficulty getting to key places such as the hospital or doctor's surgery and the underlying causes; identify possible parish-wide solutions.

Community transport operators, bus operators, SGC

Access to key services made easier for all in the parish

12 Teenage transport

Develop a local plan for a safe and accessible means of public transport to local leisure centres/meeting places/shops for teenagers and young adults.

Bus operators, community transport operators, local taxi firms, local groups with available transport, parents

Increased mobility and improved safety for teenagers and young adults

Economic development & enterprise

Page Issue

Action

Potential partners

Aims & outcomes

16 Local business network

Establish a local business network for commercial benefit, mutual support and the exchange of ideas.

Business West, South West of England Regional Development Agency

Vibrant and connected local business community

16 Local employment and local business planning

Engage with planning authorities to develop policies that ensure local business needs and employment opportunities are considered in planning decisions.

SGC

A balanced community with increased local employment and accommodation for local businesses

Useful information & contacts

To register your interest in helping with any of the actions in this report, please contact:

Alan Shewry
01454 238 788
alan_shewry@msn.com

Additional Information Sources

The Hawkesbury parish website is at:
www.hawkesburyupton.com

Hawkesbury Parish Council
Parish Clerk: David Carey 01454 238 400

South Gloucestershire Council
01454 868009
www.southglos.gov.uk

Copies of the **parish magazine**, which includes details of local news, clubs and societies, are available from the village shop or by calling Vicky Rispin on 01454 232 910.

Official documents

Hawkesbury Parish Council Survey
Sue Hope, 01454 238673

Hawkesbury Housing Needs Survey (2000)
SGC, 01454 865619

Hawkesbury Conservation area leaflet
SGC, 01454 863579

Sites of Special Scientific interest
Natural England info.southwest@naturalengland.org.uk
01242 521381/01179102900

Parish Social Needs Survey
Available from Mary Beresford, church warden at St. Mary's on 01454 238 508

Local nature reserves
SGC, 01454 863467

History

A monument to Hawkesbury (1994)
(£3.50 from the Beaufort Bureau community co-operative email: beaubureau@aol.com)

Hawkesbury History
<http://www.hawkesburyhistory.co.uk/>

Hawkesbury Historical Society
<http://www.hawkesburylocalhistorysociety.co.uk/>

