

Bucklebury Parish Plan Refresh 2011



The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin

Bucklebury's Parish Plan is the community's vision for the future. It sets out how we can improve the lives of everyone while preserving the rural environment we are so fortunate to enjoy. This leaflet provides a summary of what we hope to achieve over the next few years. Wherever you live in the parish, and whatever your age, we hope that you find something here that will make your life in Bucklebury better.

Background - the Parish Plan Refresh Process

Bucklebury was one of the first communities in West Berkshire to undertake a Parish Plan. This was published in 2006. To ensure that the Plan continues to reflect parishioners' wishes, a Refresh process was launched in June 2009. This has involved a public Parish Consultation meeting, a communication and feedback event at the Chapel Row Fayre, a Young Persons' consultation with the pupils of Bucklebury Primary School and a feedback session with older parishioners held with the St Martin's Club.

Two community questionnaires were developed, one for Adults (parishioners aged 16 years and older) and one for Children and Young People (aged from 8 to 15) with expert help provided by Greenham Common Trust. 436 Adult questionnaires and 57 Young Person's questionnaires were returned which represents 23% of the parish population. Replies came from households representing about 40% of the population of the Parish.

The Action Plan

The Parish Plan is linked to the West Berkshire Sustainable Community Strategy. Communities are asked to consider their needs and aspirations under pre-defined headings.

A full copy of the Bucklebury Parish Plan Refresh report and action plan can be found at www.buckleburyparish.org



Bucklebury's rural environment

For further information or to obtain a copy of these plans please contact Helen Pratt, the Parish Clerk, at buckleburyparishclerk@yahoo.co.uk or on 01635 863581.

A Safer Community

Speeding traffic is a concern. Parishioners want drivers to stay below speed limits throughout the parish. The Police have identified reduction of speeding from Chapel Row through Upper Bucklebury (Broad Lane) as a priority area for action.

The risk of flooding of Bucklebury village will be reduced by the flood alleviation scheme. This scheme will protect 25 homes, the village hall and the church from further flooding.

Community Action Plan

Speeding

- Concerns, locations and times of speeding to be reported to the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG).



Traffic calming in Upper Bucklebury

Emergency planning

- Bucklebury Parish Council (BPC) to continue to provide support as and when necessary to the flood alleviation scheme for Bucklebury village.
- Encourage Bucklebury villagers to elect voluntary inspectors to monitor weed growth in the River Pang and new flood alleviation channel and the condition of roadside ditches and gullies.
- Contribute to the flood water management plan. BPC to elect flood wardens to liaise between villagers, land owners and West Berkshire Council (WBC) as part of the flood warning escalation process.
- Contribute to the local plan for other emergency situations.



Flood alleviation scheme control structure



Clearing weed growth in the River Pang

A Prosperous Community

As a rural community, Bucklebury does not possess a single large employer. Increasingly, many employers offer staff the opportunity to work from home. Nearly one third of respondents work from home. Bucklebury is now a place to work as well as to live for 42% of respondents.

Parishioners commented on the need for better and faster broadband, together with improved mobile phone reception.

Community Action Plan

- Improve existing community websites to promote Bucklebury as an attractive place to live, work in or visit.
- Support the installation of better telecommunications infrastructure where it does not detract from the rural environment.
- Campaign for faster broadband services.
- Draw up, publish and maintain a list of local businesses. Make available on community website.
- Support and encourage local businesses to help retain the economic vitality of the parish.

Housing and Planning

Bucklebury Vision, the Parish Design Statement, sets out the policies and standards for house design in Bucklebury's rural setting in the North Wessex Downs AONB. Parishioners want Bucklebury to remain rural. There is a strong desire to limit both expansion and over-development within the settlement boundary of Upper Bucklebury and also in the parish at large.

Parishioners had strong but mixed views about development. 59% of respondents felt there was no need for more family homes. They were equally divided about the need for more affordable housing (196 in favour, 189 against). More people (209) were against building starter homes for young people than were for them (161). 208 respondents thought there should be more housing for older people, but 177 were against.

Community Action Plan

- Instigate a survey of parish housing needs.
- Ensure that policies and standards agreed as part of the first Parish Plan and Bucklebury Vision are adhered to.
- Develop better communication about how the parish council makes its decisions on planning applications.



Traditional houses



A Greener Community

Nearly 2 out of 3 respondents (65%) clearly believe we should reduce our carbon footprint in the parish (saving energy, promoting renewable energy and doing more recycling).

There was the most interest in setting up village energy saving groups to initiate a regular Saturday market (59.9%), a heating oil bulk purchase scheme (51.5%), Tetrapak (drinks carton) recycling (38.8%) and solar panels installation (34.5%).

For bus users, Newbury is the most popular destination and the lack of a direct route to Reading is detrimental to both work and leisure. Several respondents are looking for better connections to the railway stations (Theale, Thatcham, Midgham).

Community Action Plan

- Greening Bucklebury campaign to be progressed by the Greening Bucklebury working group.
- Share experiences and collaborate with the Greening groups in neighbouring parishes.
- Encourage individuals willing to car share.
- Collaborate with Bucklebury Primary School to make the school travel plan greener.
- Set up a Saturday market.
- Investigate if it is possible set up a facility to recycle Tetrapak drinks cartons.
- Investigate setting up a heating oil bulk purchase scheme.
- Arrange a public information forum on solar panels, home heat loss surveys and insulation.
- Pass questionnaire results and comments to Newbury Buses and Newbury & District bus company.



Public transport



Solar panels

Conservation

Bucklebury Parish lies wholly within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Conservation of Bucklebury's environment is important to the majority (60%) of parishioners. The Parish's rural heritage and distinctive character should be maintained.



The Common

Restoring The Common to heathland



Boardwalk built by volunteers

Community Action Plan

- Ensure all relevant authorities are aware of the parishioners' strong wishes for Bucklebury to remain a 'Rural Parish' and that this is reflected in the Local Development Framework.
- Review, support and implement the relevant objectives of the North Wessex Downs AONB Action Plan.
- Ensure that the environment of The Common is protected by continuing to organize Common Clearance Days and continued surveillance of illegal activities.
- Consider further restoration of The Common to heathland.
- Review whether restoration of the old mill in Bucklebury village is feasible.
- Maintain biodiversity and off-road rights of way by continued support for voluntary bodies.

A Healthy Community

There is support for more outdoor activities such as netball and a BMX trail. The parish already has a walking group and a variety of sports clubs, including tennis, cricket, football and badminton.

80% of respondents thought Bucklebury's 150 off-road rights of way were easily accessible and well maintained. 141 people were interested in having more guided walks with 259 backing a book or leaflet of recreational walks in the parish.

During the consultation process, a cycle users' group was formed to improve recreational and utility cycling by enabling people to access secondary schools, railway stations and local towns in a greener and safer way. 43% of adult respondents would like safer, gravelled, cycling routes in the parish. 54% would like a map of cycle routes in the parish.

Community Action Plan

The following actions will be carried out by members of the Bucklebury Walkers and the cycle users group, Better Bicycling in Bucklebury.

- More organised/guided walks including walks at weekends.
- A book of Bucklebury walks with local history included.
- A map of cycling routes in the parish using byways, bridleways, Quiet Lanes and roads.
- Improve off road cycle ways where roads are dangerous, starting with investigating the feasibility of improving the surface of the byway from Upper Bucklebury to Chapel Row to the north of the Common Straight.
- Consult with other parishes and groups in order to connect up longer cycle routes.



Walking on The Common



Cycling in Bucklebury

Children and Young People

Many young people enjoy the peace and quiet of the rural location but are concerned by speeding traffic and the difficulty of travelling to Thatcham and Reading. Transport issues and the lack of an indoor or covered meeting place, especially for teenagers, were noted. 88% of young respondents cycled.

Young people are involved in a wide variety of activities, within and outside the parish as well as at school. 70% wanted more opportunities such as a BMX track and a skate park.

There is a noticeable lack of facilities and meeting places for independent teenagers. Upper Bucklebury, the largest population centre, does not have an accessible playing field.

Community Action Plan

- Review existing events and investigate whether any can be adapted to accommodate families and young people.
- Consider the practicality and location of a covered meeting place.
- Support the creation of a skateboard park and/or a BMX track (already achieved).
- Support the development of an all-weather pitch at the Memorial Hall.
- Consider whether any use can be made of the Hockett Field.

Memorial Play Park



New BMX track



Children's playground



A Stronger Community

The community would like more activities and events that bring people together. The Tea in the Park for the Royal Wedding was an overwhelming success. New activities are planned for adults starting with a Women's Group. More adult learning opportunities will be investigated.

Effective communication with parishioners is seen as essential if we are to build a Stronger Community. The Oaks parish magazine is read by 93% of adult questionnaire respondents. 274 respondents (63%) would like to see advertisements in The Oaks. There is a need for a "rapid response" mechanism to communicate with residents and an emailing list is being compiled. There should be greater coordination between the two parish websites.



Community Action Plan

Consultation in practice



Tea in the Park 2011

- Set up a Bucklebury Parish Partnership group to act as an umbrella organization for coordinating and facilitating resources to other working groups in Bucklebury.
- Form a new activities and events committee to set up and plan events for the whole parish (already achieved).
- New activities to be planned starting with a Women's Group.
- Adult learning opportunities, book club, film club and theatre group will be investigated.
- Improved advertising of events and activities will be investigated.
- Email system to be set up for "rapid response" communication.
- Review content of The Oaks to give wider coverage and guide readers to sources of further information.
- Form a working group to upgrade and maintain the parish websites' design and content.