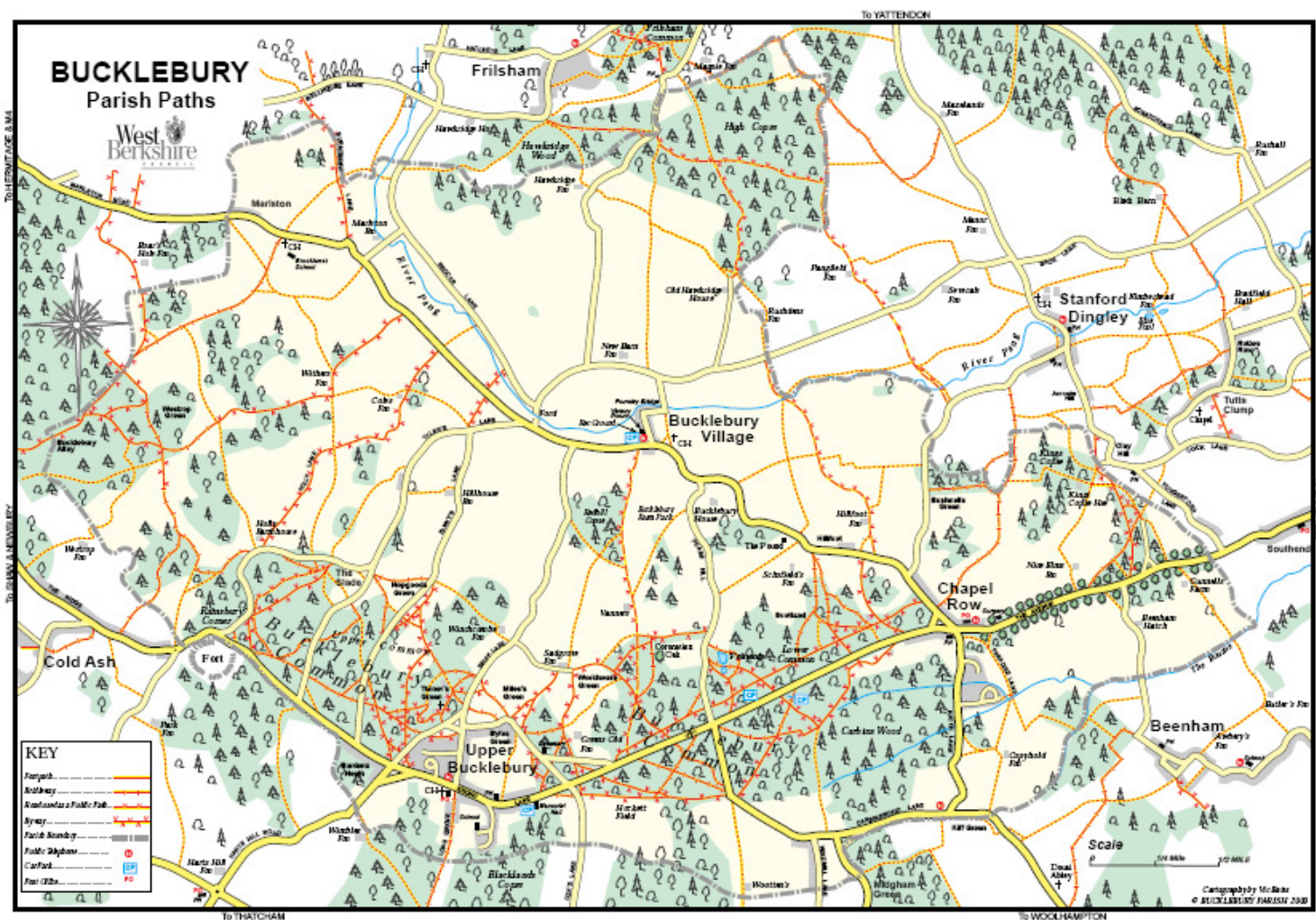




BUCKLEBURY PARISH PLAN
2006 - 2016



BUCKLEBURY PARISH PLAN
2006 – 2016
THE CHALLENGES AHEAD TO KEEP BUCKLEBURY AS WE WANT IT

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Note from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Our Parish Plan is the best way to ensure that our objectives are clear and come from the community as well as to influence the direction and content of the West Berkshire strategic plan.

We are one of the fortunate communities who still have considerable wealth of natural beauty and peaceful countryside around us and thus need to promote the principles that we value so much.

We are all sure that the Parish Plan will enable Bucklebury to build on the successes achieved from Bucklebury Vision [our Parish Design Statement] and accepted by West Berkshire Council as supplementary planning guidance in 2002. It will extend and define our objectives to areas not covered in Bucklebury Vision.

Jeremy Brooke, April 2006

BUCKLEBURY PARISH PLAN

2006 – 2016

Introduction

Bucklebury Parish, set in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has a long history of providing peace and tranquillity to those inhabitants who have chosen to live here. There is a pride amongst the community regarding the rural and natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. Parishioners see that it needs to be protected against the gradual invasion of urbanisation and/or the modern influence that creates pollution in its widest forms. With this overall objective in mind, the Parish Plan has been developed so that targets and actions for the immediate and medium term future will be directed towards defending and enhancing the benefits of our present status as an AONB. Every opportunity will be taken to action and/or support objectives set out in the North Wessex Downs Management Plan for the AONB.

The recent initiative from the Government, presenting local rural communities with a chance to offer additional weight to their opinions in a ten year Parish Plan, is seen as a valuable opportunity for Bucklebury to build on the success achieved from the publication in 2002 of 'Bucklebury Vision', the Parish Design Statement, and to extend the horizons into areas not covered in 'Bucklebury Vision'.

The decision to prepare a Parish Plan (PP) for Bucklebury was taken by the Parish Council in early 2004. The Parish Plan's targets and actions, derived from the expressed wishes of parishioners, aim to protect those treasured elements of Bucklebury, that have been fought for in the past and to ensure that they remain accessible to inhabitants and visitors alike in the future.



The Aims of our Parish Plan

This document sets out the expressed wishes of the community as to how and where they wish to see Bucklebury develop.

It offers an explanation as to why we see the future as described and how we hope to achieve our aims.

It provides a set of key targets and actions, an agreed timetable and the responsible party for implementation. All have been agreed and accepted by the principal authorities involved.

The Link with 'Bucklebury Vision'

A great deal of the information and conclusions are shared with 'Bucklebury Vision' and it is essential that the two documents are seen as a single entity.

The Team

The Parish Plan Committee, commissioned with the responsibility of preparing the Parish Plan, was formed in March 2004 and comprised four Parish Councillors and five parishioner members selected with a view to providing a broad spectrum of views on all aspects of the community.



Consultation

The first action was to advise the community that the Parish Plan was to be written and to seek help from those interested and willing to set aside the time and effort required to construct a meaningful document.

Communications were made in a number of ways:

- 1) In the Bucklebury Parish Newsletter 'The Oaks'.
- 2) At the Annual Parish Assembly with full displays to explain the overall concepts and purpose.
- 3) Via a questionnaire issued to each household in the parish, covering the key areas.
- 4) Questionnaires were also issued to teenage volunteer respondents and a school project was set up to elicit the children's views so that the Parish Plan incorporated as wide an age range as possible.

In total, 800 questionnaires were issued and over 50% were returned. The resulting views were analysed and the comments reviewed so that they could be introduced as additional priority concerns in the final Parish Plan.

- 5) An "Open Day" presented the findings (together with earlier suggestions for actions and priorities) and sought further comments.

The principal source for target priorities was the responses to the questionnaire.

This Parish Plan reflects the attitudes and aims of all those parishioners who responded to the consultation processes.

The Parish Plan

1) The Environment

The questionnaire very clearly established that there are four prime criteria that both bring people to and keep people in Bucklebury.

The peace and quiet, the accessibility to country walks, the lack of urban pollution and the large gardens.

Whilst the parish status of an “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” was not raised in the recent questionnaires, it is quite apparent that the vast majority of parishioners are proud of their surroundings and totally committed to doing everything in their power to maintain this national classification which to them is synonymous with the rural tranquillity they seek to defend.



Target 1 a) The overriding wish is for Bucklebury to continue as a <u>rural community</u> . (Endorsed by 96% of respondents).	Action 1 a) i Ensure that the objectives set out in the North Wessex Downs Management Plan for AONB are considered and implemented where relevant and possible.	Implementation by: BPC
	Action 1 a) ii Ensure that all Authorities with influence over Bucklebury are fully aware of the clear wish to remain a rural Parish.	BPC submission of Parish Plan to WBC (February 2006)
	Action 1 a) iii Ensure that issues are considered for inclusion in the District Local Development Framework (LDF) draft and final Report for adoption by November 2008.	WBC Planning & Transport Policy team (During 2006)

The Environment (cont.)



<p>Target 1 b) History has in the past established many <u>byways, bridleways and paths over the Common</u>. These are now used for access to properties and occasional recreational pleasure and exercise. The misuse of these routes by off-road vehicles and motor cycles is a nuisance and a major safety concern of many residents, rendering access more difficult, if not impossible, as well as destroying the natural habitat. Improved co-ordination of the reporting of incidents by local residents to the local authorities and increased responsiveness from the authorities based on that reporting should improve the situation but changes in the national legislation are the only real way of curbing such activities.</p>	<p>Action 1 b) i Introduce improved surveillance (CCTV) and policing on the Common.</p>	<p>Implementation by: WBC / Thames Valley Police</p>
	<p>Action 1 b) ii Agree ways to ensure reporting of incidents and response to incidents is improved.</p>	<p>BPC (June 2006)</p>
	<p>Action 1 b) iii Provide information leaflet of contacts to residents to ensure that incidents are reported in the most effective way and to the right authorities.</p>	<p>BPC / WBC Community Safety Team (December 2006)</p>

The Environment (cont.)



<p>Action 1 c) Bucklebury Common Management role to be improved.</p>	<p>Implementation by: WBC (April 2006)</p>				
<p>Co-ordinate and ensure effective monitoring and follow-up.</p>	<p>BPC</p>				
<p>Press for law changes on byway use.</p>	<p>WBC</p>				
<p>Contact WBC Environmental Services for further information and support.</p>	<p>BPC</p>				
<p>Offer support to GLEAM* in their action to restrict misuse of byways by off-roaders & motor-cyclists.</p>	<p>BPC</p>				
<p>Support pressure groups who campaign on this issue nationally – the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, British Horse Society, Ramblers Association, the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners and the local MP.</p>	<p>BPC</p>				
<p>Target 1 c) d) The Common, in the past, has been host to local cattle grazing which resulted in a swathe of heathland habitat being established over a large portion of Bucklebury Common. In the more recent past, this habitat has been totally lost from Bucklebury. The proposal to <u>re-introduce a small area of up to 80 acres of heathland, out of the total 800 acres, together with the associated cattle grids</u> on both the Upper and Lower Common alongside the Common road, has had large support (65-70%). Taking account of the few reservations of maintenance and misuse, a plan to implement such a programme could well bring greater diversity to the present spread of birch and bracken. The concept is seen as a way to clearly state our wish to remain rural. It also links with the North Wessex Downs AONB Management policy to rebuild biodiversity.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1070 895 1697 1129"> <p>Action 1 d) i) Consider implications and costs of a scheme to introduce 'Cattle grids' on the more strategic roads onto Bucklebury Common.</p> </td><td data-bbox="1697 895 2047 1129"> <p>Implementation by: BPC / WBC Highways, Environmental Services & Planning & Transport Strategy Teams (2010)</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1070 1129 1697 1386"> <p>Action 1 d) ii) Consider the practicalities for the maintenance and management of recent extension to the Common Heathlands area.</p> </td><td data-bbox="1697 1129 2047 1386"> <p>BPC to discuss and review with WBC Highways, Environmental Services, Planning & Transport Strategy teams (December 2010)</p> </td></tr> </table>	<p>Action 1 d) i) Consider implications and costs of a scheme to introduce 'Cattle grids' on the more strategic roads onto Bucklebury Common.</p>	<p>Implementation by: BPC / WBC Highways, Environmental Services & Planning & Transport Strategy Teams (2010)</p>	<p>Action 1 d) ii) Consider the practicalities for the maintenance and management of recent extension to the Common Heathlands area.</p>	<p>BPC to discuss and review with WBC Highways, Environmental Services, Planning & Transport Strategy teams (December 2010)</p>
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The Environment (cont.)

<p>Target 1 e) f)</p> <p>The Common is used by many visitors, and possibly by local residents, as a general dumping area for rubbish. Disposal of garden waste on the Common is a danger to the natural habitat introducing alien species to the environment. Whatever educational methods may bring, they are never likely to eradicate dumping completely.</p> <p>Residents see the rubbish as an eyesore and wish for <u>regular clearance arrangements</u> to be put in place in order to preserve what both locals and outsiders see as an attractive place to visit.</p>	<p>Action 1 e)</p> <p>Consider quarterly placement/collection of skips consult with parishioners and introduce regular rubbish clearance throughout the year at selected sites.</p>	<p>Implementation by:</p> <p>BPC / WBC Environmental and Waste Services (December 2006)</p>
	<p>Action 1 f)</p> <p>Introduce methods of control and education to stop/reduce fly-tipping and general dumping of rubbish</p>	<p>BPC: Promote the Council's STREETCARE call centre number which provides a prompt response to reports of fly-tipping.</p> <p>WBC: Placement of mobile CCTV in strategic places.</p> <p>WBC: Provide advice and information for the above and seek to increase education at school level.</p>



2) Planning & Housing

‘Bucklebury Vision’ laid down the foundation standards for house design on quality, character, style and space, set out to complement the rural setting in the AONB. Extending the criteria to establish plans for the future, there is a strong desire to limit expansion. Any new housing, or extensions to present housing, must reflect the scale of established densities and remain compatible with the AONB status.



Nuttage Gate Cottages

<p>Target 2 a) 96% of returned questionnaires and comments throughout our consultation support the fundamental statement that <u>Bucklebury should remain RURAL</u>. Policies in the plan must respect and reinforce this desire.</p>	<p>Action 2 a) Policies in the Parish Plan and recommendations in ‘Bucklebury Vision’ (which has the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance – SPG) must be carried forward into the Local Development Framework (LDF). Ensure our issues are considered and included as appropriate in the LDF.</p>	<p>Implementation by: BPC / WBC Planning & Transport Policy team.</p>
<p>Target 2 b) Upper Bucklebury has recently seen the approval of an application for a further 40 houses, now under construction. This itself represents a 14% increment in housing stock. This may well take the village size beyond the maximum where a community thrives as a single unit. <u>The removal of the WBC “Settlement Boundary”</u> would be an important step to stop over development of Upper Bucklebury. The benefit would be to ease the development pressure on Upper Bucklebury and simultaneously eliminate the classification of ‘back gardens’ as brownfield sites.</p>	<p>Action 2 b) Press for the Settlement Boundary containing Upper Bucklebury to be removed, so as to leave the village in the AONB. Ensure our issues are considered in the LDF.</p>	<p>Implementation by: BPC / WBC Planning & Transport Policy team.</p>

Planning & Housing (cont.)

<p>Target 2 c)</p> <p>Applications for the extension of properties runs at between 5 – 10% of the present housing stock per annum. There is support for the <u>Parish to have a greater say in the acceptability of such extensions</u> which are frequently seen as creating unsympathetically large buildings obscuring views of the rural backdrop and at the same time reducing the number of properties available to the younger members of the community due to the increased valuation. The tighter control of planning would ensure policies of 'Bucklebury Vision' (SPG) are enforced, particularly in respect of site over-development – space between houses, roof height, styles and materials. The benefit will be a more rural and sympathetic design for the area and the retention of smaller properties.</p>	<p>Action 2 c)</p> <p>Seek greater influence in local planning applications and seek discussions with WBC's Head of Planning and Transport.</p>	<p>Implementation by:</p> <p>BPC (June 2006)</p>
<p>Target 2 d)</p> <p>The recent changes in government thinking regarding development in urban areas in the South of England and the <u>classification of back gardens as "brown field sites"</u> has prompted a number of applications within Bucklebury. It is accepted in WBC planning terms that rural situations should not be included in such a categorisation. Action is in hand from WBC to cover this with "Supplementary Planning Guidance" to reduce scale and ensure development in keeping with the area and AONB which could reduce the problem.</p>	<p>Action 2 d)</p> <p>Ensure WBC SPG is established to protect rural 'Back Development'.</p> <p>Ensure issues are considered in the LDF draft and final report.</p>	<p>Implementation by:</p> <p>BPC / WBC Planning & Transport Policy team (Adoption November 2008)</p>

3) The Economy

Bucklebury's reliance on agriculture for employment has diminished substantially with many parishioners travelling to work in the capital and regional centres of London, Reading and Newbury. The Parish is home to a number of established businesses which have been supplemented in recent years by self-employed or sole traders, operating both in traditional crafts and home-offices.

A number of people are also taking advantage of employers' flexible working practices by working at home part of the time and this is a trend that is likely to continue. Home working has the advantage of reducing community traffic in and out of the village, retaining spending power in the area and allowing those people to participate in local events during the week, such as school sports days and even walking children to school.

We seek to balance the need for a thriving community for all age groups with the desire to remain a tranquil area for leisure enjoyment.

There is a general acceptance that small businesses should be encouraged (73%); that rural/farming is the most acceptable (61%) and that the shops, pubs and small locally-based businesses are the limit of any commerce/industry wanted.

As to where new opportunities are best sited, there is a strong wish for businesses to utilise converted farm buildings rather than new structures.

It is appreciated that Bucklebury cannot be self-sufficient in job opportunities and will, in the main, be a residential area providing for the neighbouring industrial and commercial centres.



Target 3 To encourage small businesses associated with the rural/farming sectors.	Action 3 Support small, local, home based, service related and/or farming diversification schemes and assist with redundant farm building conversion applications for premises.	Implementation by: BPC Ongoing policy
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4. Roads

Bucklebury's roads were originally constructed to take lightweight local vehicle traffic in and around the villages. The roads are all unclassified and as such are often misused by both:

- a) **Speeding** motorists
- b) **Large Goods Vehicles**

Road conditions are strongly criticised for inadequate maintenance. There is a strong resentment of passing motorists and transport vehicles causing serious road surface damage and from speeding within the villages and hamlets thereby creating dangerous conditions for local pedestrians, particularly in Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row.



Target 4 a) Improve road safety throughout the parish.	Action 4 a) Press for greater enforcement of existing speed restrictions in Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row.	Implementation by: BPC / Thames Valley Police traffic police & local community policing team (December 2008)
	Agree traffic calming measures with WBC Highways Department.	BPC / WBC (December 2006)
	Agree road safety issues with WBC Road Safety Manager.	BPC / WBC (December 2008)
Target 4 b) Restrict access to the parish roads to essential LGV and local traffic only.	Action 4 b) Agree issues and options with WBC and seek the imposition of Local Traffic Orders to limit LGV to access only.	Implementation by: BPC / WBC (December 2006)
	Seek support for a national campaign to control LGV use of non classified roads.	BPC / WBC / MP / Government. To raise at Government levels once LDF established (December 2008)
Target 4 c) Improve road maintenance.	Action 4 c) Establish a 3 year programme for resurfacing and maintenance.	Implementation by: BPC to agree a programme of works with WBC (2007)

Roads (cont.)

<p>Target 4 d)</p> <p>The Countryside initiative to create 'Quiet Lanes' has an appeal to a number of parishioners. The suggested scheme on offer, where cars, cyclists, horses and pedestrians, have equal rights and traffic speeds are restricted to allow for the enjoyment of the surrounding countryside, is popular. Thus the initial response to 'Quiet Lanes' was positive. However, quotes from early examples of trials have sometimes been heavily critical and negative in their assessment of achieving the perceived aim of rural tranquillity.</p>	<p>Action 4 d)</p> <p>Review full assessment of 'Quiet Lane' trial sites. Then assess value in Bucklebury and introduce if found appropriate and effective.</p>	<p>Implementation by:</p> <p>BPC / WBC (December 2006)</p>
<p>Target 4 e)</p> <p>Whilst there is an ongoing demand for greater <u>control of traffic speed</u>, there are clear indications that speed restrictions below 30 mph would not be welcome. Both speed bumps and excessive signage are unpopular as it is considered that they would detract from the rural nature of the area. However 'gates' and 'road narrowing' are acceptable and the preferred options.</p>	<p>Action 4 e)</p> <p>a) Review key signage.</p>	<p>Implementation by:</p> <p>BPC / WBC (June 2006)</p>
	<p>b) Introduce effective proposals and eliminate unnecessary signs.</p>	<p>BPC / WBC (December 2006)</p>
	<p>c) Produce a long term plan to introduce traffic calming on principal routes throughout the Parish.</p>	<p>BPC / WBC (December 2009)</p>



5. Transport

Target 5 a) The present <u>public transport</u> , offering one return journey to and from Thatcham/Newbury in a day is inadequate and few residents make use of it. A significant number (40% of respondents) would change their habits if the service routes and frequency improved.	Action 5 a) Review alternative services for targeted groups and ensure widest understanding of facilities available. Distribute information to residents on all available information on public and other community transport services.	Implementation by: BPC / WBC Planning and Transport team / Rural Transport Manager at Community Council for Berkshire (July 2007)
Target 5 b) There was an over 50% agreement that the <u>increased provision of school buses</u> is worthwhile.	Action 5 b) Support and action relevant sections of Bucklebury Primary School's "Travel Plan" now accepted by WBC.	Implementation by: BPC / School Governors (2006)

6. Utilities

Gas

Even though Upper Bucklebury has only a limited gas supply , there is no strong demand to introduce wider access to this resource.	No action is planned.
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Water

Target 6 a) Over 40% of respondents declared the <u>water supply</u> unreliable and inadequate, indicating an urgent need to improve the network. Half of the complaints emanated from Upper Bucklebury, thus the focus for action is on this mains supply.	Action 6 a) Seek confirmation from Thames Water that the mains water pipe on Harts Hill road will be replaced in the immediate future.	Implementation by: BPC / Thames Water (June 2006)
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Recycling

Target 6 b) There is a strong demand for <u>the recycling of additional materials to include plastics and card</u> with 85% of the community agreeing with its introduction for doorstep collection.	Action 6 b) Press for extended recycling services from WBC.	Implementation by: BPC / WBC Environmental Services (December 2008)
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7. Schools & Youth

Whilst specific areas within this sector received positive responses to the need for improvement, consultations failed to generate significant concerns on the general facilities currently available for our younger generations. It appeared that for those with no immediate connections, respondents preferred to offer “no opinion”. In some instances this was up to 80%.



<p>Target 7 a) For those involved with toddlers, pre-school and the primary school, it appears that the present balance of places and facilities is satisfactory. There were individual comments from a few parishioners alluding to the inadequate number of places for Bucklebury children, the storage and facilities for the Toddler Group and for the Pre-school to be sited in the school grounds with its own building. These latter issues have already been addressed and the <u>extension to the Memorial Hall</u> should provide adequate resources to meet most concerns.</p>	<p>Action 7 a) Ensure the design for the Memorial Hall extension will provide improved facilities for both Toddler Group and Pre-school.</p>	<p>Implementation by: BPC (December 2009)</p>
	<p>Support the Memorial Hall Extension Committee in implementation of completion of project.</p>	<p>BPC (December 2011)</p>
<p>Target 7 b) The response to the Youth Club was positive with 61% agreeing that a club was needed. The previous Youth Club, run by the Church, has stopped meeting due to limited facilities and insufficient volunteer support.</p>	<p>Action 7 b) Support the Memorial Hall extension to cater for Youth Club activities for all young people and to generate the voluntary support required for supervision.</p>	<p>Implementation by: BPC</p>
	<p>Develop an action plan.</p>	<p>BPC / WBC Culture & Youth Services and Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People (December 2012)</p>

8. Welfare

The Questionnaire response, where 80% of the answers were “No Opinion” to any of the issues outside the police, implies there is limited awareness of **services needed for the under privileged, the aged and those in need.**

Whilst the community has established many positive aspects to the support of others, there are still some areas where greater understanding may create an even stronger community.



Target 8 a) Areas seen as targets for attention are the encouragement of security through “Neighbourhood Watch” schemes; facilities to encourage a healthier population; general awareness of the wider welfare services available to parishioners.	Action 8 a) Establish a review team to study the status of welfare support in the Parish and ways to improve the awareness of services.	Implementation by: BPC (December 2007)
	Agree an action Plan	BPC / WBC Community Care and Housing Directorate (December 2010)
The availability of information to newcomers on local facilities and services.	Introduction of a “Welcome to Bucklebury” booklet for newcomers.	BPC (December 2007)

Welfare (cont.)

With regard to **policing issues**, the highest rated concern was burglary, with vandalism and community policing sharing a close second place.

The rating of traffic control as only a 'medium' concern appears contrary to the general responses to major issues in and around the parish, where the most frequent comments are related to the speed and volume of vehicles through the villages.

There is no doubt that our real need is for a higher police presence (COMMUNITY POLICING), improved response to call-out assistance and a far greater willingness of the police to curb antisocial activities, vandalism and petty crime.



Target 8 b) Greater police presence. Reduction in vandalism, antisocial behaviour and petty crime.	Action 8 b) Develop an action plan to introduce an increased police presence (COMMUNITY POLICING).	Implementation by: BPC / WBC Community Safety Team / Thames Valley Police (December 2007)
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9. Sports & Leisure

Indoor Facilities

The results from the questionnaire and separate/earlier studies, supports the establishment of improved facilities, centred on the Memorial Hall, which allow parishioners to participate in the more popular sports and leisure pastimes.

Indoor activities were the subject of a separate questionnaire regarding the **extension to the Memorial Hall**. There was solid support for the need for additional indoor sporting facilities to cover the requested opportunities for bowls, badminton, aerobics and keep fit; additional space for the present pre-school activities; and the storage space, desperately needed for most current users.

The planning application for the extension plans, which addresses the needs highlighted in "Schools & Youth" and "Sports & Leisure" has now been approved and the project moves to fundraising, for the required capital. Once satisfactory funding has been achieved construction will be put in hand. However, whatever the plans are for buildings and facilities the need for volunteers to organise and run the new clubs and activities will still remain.

Target 9 a) Improved facilities for indoor, education, recreation and sports.	Action 9 a) Review the costs (both capital and running) and funding for the Memorial Hall Extension before final commitment to construction.	Implementation by: BPC (December 2006)
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Outdoor Facilities

Parishioners already enjoy the benefits of the Common and support the extension of less formal outdoor rural pastimes. Mentioned improvements are:

- (i) The more frequently used **footpaths should be improved** and at the same time protected from unwanted vehicular access.
- (ii) **Cycle ways** are required to cater for both leisure usage and as a substitute for using the car for local travel.



Target 9 b) Footpaths.	Action 9 b) Continue the ongoing bi-annual programme of review of the condition of Footpaths around the Parish and assess progress of maintenance by WBC.	Implementation by: BPC / WBC (Every two years)
Cycle ways.	Review the current status for options to introduce Cycle ways on and around the Common and Parish.	BPC / WBC / Land Owner (December 2010)

Abbreviations used throughout the text:

BPC	Bucklebury Parish Council
WBC	West Berkshire District Council
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
PP	Parish Plan
LDF	Local Development Framework
GLEAM	Green Lane Environmental Action Movement
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
LGV	Large Goods Vehicles
MH	Bucklebury Memorial Hall
CAWB	Community Action West Berkshire

Acknowledgements:

WBC and CAWB for guidance and assistance.

Peter Weedon, Chris James, and Neil Rendall for the photography.



Heathland - Lower Common



Bucklebury Farm Park

Authorisation

The Bucklebury Parish Plan
was
formally approved by the
Kennet and Pang Valley Area
Forum on
Thursday 16th February 2006.



Upper Common



Burden's Heath and Upper Bucklebury