

Chalgrave Parish Plan

FINAL DRAFT PLAN

December 2005



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Chalgrave Parish Plan

Preface by Andrew Selous, Member of Parliament for South West Bedfordshire

I am delighted to welcome and support the Parish Plan put forward by Chalgrave. Chalgrave is I know a parish which within its constituent villages of Chalgrave, Tebworth and Wingfield already has a strong sense of community. The sense of community is very well documented in Chalgrave's Parish Magazine which must rank as amongst one of the best parish magazines produced throughout Bedfordshire if not considerably further afield.

For people to feel connected to the political process they have to feel that their wishes are genuinely taken into account by those they elect who have responsibility for local services and other community matters. We need to move towards a more bottom up approach to government in which decisions are made locally whenever possible. In particular funding needs to be more aligned with the wishes of local people as do decisions on local planning matters. The residents of Chalgrave will only believe that this Parish Plan has been worthwhile if those who have responsibility take note of the wishes expressed within it. I very much hope that the residents of Chalgrave are not disappointed.

ANDREW SELOUS MP

Serving the towns and villages of Leighton Buzzard, Linslade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Billington, Bidwell, Chalgrave, Eaton Bray, Eggington, Heath and Reach, Hockliffe, Kensworth, Rushmere, Sewell, Stanbridge, Studham, Tebworth, Tilsworth, Totternhoe, Well Head, Whipsnade and Winfield

A Few Words from Chalgrave Parish Council

The Parish Council is delighted with the Parish Plan. It has been a great opportunity for you, the residents of the Parish, to raise your concerns, to put forward ideas and recommendations to improve our community, to have your say about how you see the Parish now - and how you would like to see it develop in the future.

We recognise and applaud the many hours of work that have gone into the preparation of the Plan over the last eighteen months. We thank all those involved.

Of course, producing the Parish Plan does not mean we can now sit back and wait for things to happen.

You have raised a number of issues and recommendations in the Plan. Your concerns include traffic, transport, policing, community organisations particularly for young people, and the environment. The Parish Council has considered them all and will endeavour to work with local residents to take forward as many as possible. Some actions are being worked on already and others will take a lot of work. We will look for funding and co-operation from South Beds District Council, the County Council, the Police, and other organisations.

Everyone needs to be involved if we are to protect, develop and improve our community – supporting initiatives, looking for opportunities, volunteering to help and other activities. We hope you are able to attend the launch of the Plan.

The Parish Council will do all it can but we do need your input and support to make this Plan work.

Phil Parry
Chairman

Brief History of Chalgrave Parish

Formally a Medieval settlement close to the Church, the plague caused the exodus of the healthy to move West towards Tebworth.

The enclosure system saw the creation of fields and new tracks between them for the trading of farm produce. New roads were constructed, namely Toddington Road, Hockliffe Road, and Wingfield Road.

By the beginning of the 20th century farming and its associated industries had become well established and a complete sustainable community grew up. Most of the 'bread winners' worked on the land and, with the school and shops, the parish was self-contained.

During the 1939 -1945 war many men joined the fighting forces and were replaced by 'land girls' in many cases. Other families took in evacuees from London who had been bombed out of their own homes during the 'blitz'. It is believed two bombs were dropped in fields around Tebworth by German bombers, who had been attacking Vauxhall Motors and other companies manufacturing armaments for the war effort, but had still one or two bombs left to discharge.

After the war, most of the men returned to the Parish. By then engineering factories in both Luton and Dunstable were expanding rapidly, and therefore wanted labour urgently. So they paid much higher wages than could be earned by working on the land. This started the policy of large-scale farm mechanisation to help to address both the problem of food shortages and the loss of farm labour to the towns.

The 60s saw many changes in the parish. Cottages and other properties were demolished in the centre of Tebworth to widen the road and encourage more traffic to flow through the village. A need was recognised for more modern housing for the ageing population many of whom were, at the time, living in rented accommodation belonging to the farms which employed them. More council properties were therefore built, including St Mary's Close flats and bungalows, for retired people. This site had previously been occupied by one of the shops which stood on the corner of Toddington Road and Wingfield Road.

To sum up this short potted history of Chalgrave Parish over the past 100 years, it had gone from a thriving sustainable community with local employment, shops, school, two pubs and a church to a residential area for people to 'chill out' in after a hard days work in London, Milton Keynes, or one of the towns around, and enjoy the hospitality of our two pubs, and then to praise the Lord on a Sunday.

However, a number of movers and shakers in the community have brought new ideas to the parish including social events, annual games, drama, sports and many other activities which are keeping the Memorial Hall almost fully booked. Together with the quarterly Chalgrave News all these make for a very forward-looking community which many other parishes envy. It is hoped that the Parish Plan will, therefore, build on the excellent work being done by all those people helping in the above and, in turn, attract others to become involved in the many projects being put forward in the Plan.

An Introduction to the Chalgrave Parish Plan

In November 2000 the Government's Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside - The Future' launched the concept of Town and Parish Plans. The paper stated that 'plans should identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved'. In the autumn of 2003 Chalgrave Parish Council decided that the time was right to develop a Parish Plan, the purpose being to identify the issues that were important to residents and, subsequently, to construct an Action Plan to address those issues.

The first step involved delivering a leaflet to every household, organisation and business within the parish explaining what a Parish Plan was and how it might benefit the community. Local residents were also asked to volunteer to be on the Steering Committee and by December 2003 five had come forward.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held in February 2004. Zoë Ashby from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity was asked to help with the initial stages of developing the Plan and she has continued her invaluable support at every stage.

The next meeting in March 2004 saw Roger Mence being elected as chairman of the committee. There then followed a rush to make an application for a grant as the Countryside Agency had decided to withdraw its funding for Parish Plans. Again Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity came to the rescue in helping to fill in a rather large form and it was sent off shortly before the June 30th 2004 deadline.

We did not have long to wait before hearing that the Countryside Agency had awarded a grant of £894 to develop the Parish Plan. Now work began in earnest.

In November 2004 the distinctive 'Orange Fliers' were delivered to all households. It was decided to keep them very simple by asking people their likes and dislikes about Chalgrave Parish. The Plough and the Queen's Head kindly kept copies near the bar - some interesting comments arose from those locations! They also acted as two of the various collection points around the parish for returned forms.

Now it was time to hold an Open Public Meeting. The Committee wanted an informal social gathering which would give people the opportunity to see the results of the 'Orange Survey' and to make more comments if they wished. On the evening of June 21st, 2005 residents came to the Memorial Hall, enjoyed snacks and a drink or two, stuck their suggestion flags in the big map of Chalgrave and chatted to the members of the Steering Committee.

Following an analysis of the flags and the orange fliers the committee was ready to put together a draft Parish Plan which was completed in December 2005. This draft plan is being delivered to all households in the parish and residents are being asked if there is anything that should be added and, inevitably, if they are willing to volunteer for ongoing projects.

A meeting to launch the Plan is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, 24th January, 8 pm at Chalgrave Memorial Hall. If you are interested in helping with implementing the Plan but are unable to make that meeting please contact:

Lesley 01525 874716

Roger 01525 874516

e-mail chalgraveparishplan@hotmail.com

Summary of Survey Results

The results of the surveys explained in the introduction are now listed, in no particular order, on the enclosed action plan. The plan is divided into two areas of action. First the low cost or no cost local actions and secondly the strategic actions to be taken by local councils.

You will notice the final column shows the progress already taken on actions being put forward. Some of these were already in hand before the plan was researched especially in the strategic section. Nevertheless these items are being included because they have been raised by the community during our research.

The breakdown of those attending the open meeting held in June 2005 was as follows:

The total number present was approximately 30. Of those:

Age range (yrs)	Total	Female	Male
Under 18	7%	100%	0%
18-24	0%	0%	0%
25-44	19%	60%	40%
45-59	33%	33%	67%
60-74	38%	40%	60%
75+	3%	0%	100%

The answer to the question "How long have you lived in Chalgrave?"

Length of time	Total	Female	Male
<1yr	4%	0%	100%
1-5 yrs	16%	75%	25%
6-10 yrs	28%	57%	43%
11-25yrs	28%	29%	71%
>25yrs	24%	50%	50%

An analysis of the flags pinned to the map of Chalgrave was as follows:

1. Traffic and Transport 35%
2. Community Policing 15%

3. Community organisations and Facilities 13%
4. Environment 10%
5. Miscellaneous 9%
6. Leisure 8%
7. Housing 7%
8. Work and training 3%

The answers to the question “What do you like about Chalgrave?” were as follows:

Friendly villagers

The pubs

Open spaces and footpaths

Good access to national road network

Good access to other amenities in nearby towns and villages (Toddington in particular) ie doctors, local shops, supermarkets leisure centres etc.

Community functions such as Chalgrave Games, shows put on in the Memorial Hall, sports clubs and community groups

Church

Good Schools in Toddington and Harlington. (The catchment area)

Nice modern Parish Hall

Nice mix of architecture

Good local commuter links to London and the North

Easy access to Milton Keynes for larger national shopping facilities and Theatre

Good community spirit and neighbours

Parish magazine

Bus service (although poor service to and from Harlington Station)

School bus link with all three schools

After this Action Plan has been approved by the community, the Parish Council and the Government Agency supplying the grant, the final approved plan will be launched in January 2006 at an open meeting called for the purpose.

At this meeting, a working group will be established to oversee the progress being made on the actions listed. This group will be made up of anyone in the parish interested in seeing the action points through including any members of the existing steering committee.

In the meantime, if any community members or groups are keen to get cracking with organising activities listed in the Action Plan, please let the steering group know your intentions so that the 'progress' column can be updated.

You can get in touch by either leaving a note in the post box at the Memorial Hall, or by contacting a member of the steering group, or by e-mail to chalgraveparishplan@hotmail.com or by phone to our secretary, Lesley Smith, on 01525 874716.

THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
LOW COST/NO COST LOCAL ACTIONS					
1. Produce a village welcome pack including a good days out and travel guides	Ask for relevant information to be sent to a central point and for a volunteer to collate information. Agree how distribution and updates are to be done	Volunteer residents	Pack to be produced by June 2006 Printing and pack costs	High	
2. Produce a monthly news sheet in addition to the Chalgrave News	One sheet of news to publicise what is happening in the parish and future events. Need volunteer to produce and also need to establish distribution mechanism (to include posting on parish website)	Volunteer residents	March 2006 Costs of printing on paper	High	
3. More planting to encourage wildlife	Talk to North Chilterns Trust and Bedfordshire County Council for help in identifying potential areas for planting	Parish Council North Chilterns Trust Bedfordshire County Council Flora locale	Contact made by January 2006	Medium	

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
4. Grass cutting to include Wingfield Road opposite old school	Contact appropriate council for them to instruct contractors	Parish Council in liaison with district/county council	May 2006		Area in question has already been added to existing contract for grass cutting when resumed next year
5. Provide litter bin adjacent to St Mary's Road bus stop and at the bottom of the Lane	Parish Council to contact South Beds District Council (SBDC) re: supplying and emptying	Parish Council to liaise with district council	asap	High	District Council has been contacted about this
6. Lay on additional community activities eg coffee mornings	Investigate if there is an interest in coffee mornings, senior citizens meetings, indoor bowls, parish outings etc. Begin to assess interest at the launch of the Parish Plan meeting	Volunteer residents Parish Plan Committee	March 2006	Medium	
7. Investigate mobile community shop	Talk to existing community shops in Moggerhanger, Cardington and Stevington to share their experiences	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to liaise with Memorial Hall Committee	Meeting with BRCC and existing shops to be held by June 2006	Medium	Mobile library will call at St. Mary's Close at 4.40 pm-4.55 pm fortnightly from Wednesday, January 4 th , 2006

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
8. Create a community partnership or Residents Association	Assess interest for this at launch of parish plan meeting	Parish Plan Committee/Parish Council	January 2006	Medium	
9. Provide some support and transport for those in need without cars	Continue work on Village Care Scheme/transport needs scheme	Parish Plan Committee BRCC	asap	High	Some grant already provided. However a general lack of interest may lead to both schemes being abandoned
10. Investigate establishing a mums and tots group in Chalgrave	Assess interest for this at launch of parish plan meeting	Volunteer residents	January 2006	High	
11. Provide community with computer access	Firstly investigate possible siting to see if viable. [Information sheet in meantime could list nearest access points eg Toddington library]	Volunteer Residents	June 2006		
12. Improve dog mess situation on footways (pavements)	Need for more dog bins and siting of them to be investigated	Parish Council	June 2006	High	

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
13. Establish a Women's Institute	Assess interest for this at launch of parish plan meeting	Female residents		Medium	
14. Make village pond centrepiece of Tebworth	Assess interest for this at launch of parish plan meeting. If sufficient volunteers come forward they can establish a working group and investigate possibilities for improvement	Parish Council Resident volunteers North Chiltern's Trust	January 2006		
15. Provide more activities for young people	Assess interest and ideas for finding out the views of local young people at launch of parish plan meeting	Resident volunteers	January 2006		
16. Provide more security advice and improve community safety	Obtain more information from local police and investigate further development of Neighbourhood Watch	Parish Council via regular liaison with rural beat officer	Ongoing		

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY LOCAL COUNCILS					
17. Continue to look to provide interactive speed signs	Parish Council to negotiate with County Council for grant and supply	Parish Council Traffic Calming Committee County Council	asap Grant from County Council	High	Types of signs are being researched by BCC for use in Chalgrave and other parishes
18. Continue to negotiate with Highways to improve road surfaces	Parish Council to keep pressing County Council for continued action	Parish Council Traffic Calming Committee County Council	Ongoing Highways budget	High	Road repairs ongoing
19. Investigate if there is a need for additional housing in the parish e.g. starter homes	Parish Council to liaise with South Bedfordshire District Council	Parish Council	Medium		
20. Improve police presence and community safety	Parish Council to ask police to report on roll out of neighbourhood policing in this area and provision of community support officers	Parish Council to talk to local police	asap	High	

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
21. All bus routes need gritting	Via County Council	County Council Parish Council	This coming winter Budget to be provided by County Council	High	Parish Council is in contact with BCC. Wingfield Road/Tebworth Road are scheduled to be gritted this winter
22. Investigate need for new/improved bus services	Transport needs survey has already shown up lack of transport to and from train station at peak times and possible need for transport to/from hospital	Parish Council County Council District Council	Being discussed at present Grant for some transport	High	
23. Create a crossing point near Buttercup Farm ie extend footway round the bend from Wingfield Road	Parish Council to contact County Council Highways	Parish Council Traffic Calming Committee County Council	June 2006	Medium	

ACTION	HOW IT WILL BE TACKLED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED FIRST) & PARTNERS	TIMESCALE & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY	PROGRESS
24. Reduce speeding traffic through Tebworth and Wingfield by introducing physical traffic calming measures and lowering the speed limit	Investigate which measures would be suitable. Possible sites along Toddington Road, Hockliffe Road, Wingfield Road and Tebworth Road	Parish Council County Council Highways Agency Traffic Calming Committee Bedfordshire & Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership	Investigate by June 2006	High	
25. Stop vehicles parking on pavements	Enforcement action by District Council	Parish Council District Council	Ongoing	High	A report in the Chalgrave News has been published. Parish Council is monitoring the situation
26. Investigate new car parking area in the vicinity of The Lane	Parish Council will speak to owner of BRCC car park in first instance	Parish Council	January 2006	High	