



**Shinfield Parish  
Community  
Plan**

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Community Plan  
2010-2020**

**Consultation Draft**  
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# Shinfield Parish Community Plan

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### Note:

The principal purpose of the 'Consultation Draft' of the Plan is to confer with statutory and voluntary organisations locally, particularly those which have been identified as 'lead partners' in the implementation of the Action Plan, to establish whether they support the proposed objectives and whether they would see themselves undertaking that lead role. It will also give local residents a final opportunity to comment on the Plan.

The Plan will be revised after this consultation, taking into account the outcome of the Public Examination of Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy. The final version of the Plan will be presented to the Parish Council in the autumn.

[Text in red relates to suggested illustrations]

## 1. FOREWORD

### What is a Community Plan?

A Community Plan<sup>1</sup> is intended to give local people the opportunity to set out their vision for how they want *their* community to develop over the next 10 years. It is truly the views of local people - not central government or the Borough Council or the Parish Council. However, local government is expected to take it into account when considering the future development of the area.

This Plan has been produced by groups of committed local residents and is based on a series of consultations with other residents and local businesses and community organisations. Each group worked on a different aspect of the Plan, supported by the part-time project officer and they have all been brought together by an editing group<sup>2</sup>.

To achieve this vision for the future of Shinfield Parish, the Plan proposes a series of priorities and sets out an Action Plan to achieve them.

### Why Shinfield Parish?

Shinfield Parish is made up of a number of villages and settlements, each with its own identity and local community – Shinfield Rise, Shinfield Park and parts of Lower Earley and Green Park, north of the M4; Shinfield School Green [hereafter referred to simply as School Green]; Three Mile Cross, Ryeish Green and Spencers Wood, collectively 'Our Villages'; and Grazeley with Great Lea, MereOak, Poundgreen and Hartley Court, west of the A33.

It's a very varied Parish: north of the M4, largely urbanised, at least at first sight, (in fact it contains significant areas of Ancient Woodland); south of the M4, ancient villages that have seen extensive development in the last thirty years – and which face even more development in the next twenty years - but which are still surrounded by ancient field systems and, west of the A33, small rural settlements.

Each of these communities has a separate identity and local concerns, and yet the research undertaken for this Plan has demonstrated that local people living and working in the Parish also share many issues and concerns, especially those arising from proposed future development and traffic.

These issues and concerns are set out over the following pages, starting with a more detailed **Introduction** to the Parish, covering a *Description* of the geography, the *History of Shinfield* and *Shinfield Today* and the proposed future development of the Parish. Next, in **Shinfield Tomorrow**, the concerns which local people have identified during consultations are set out starting with a series of *strategic priorities*. This is followed by a more detailed examination of issues, drawn together under four general headings: **The Environment, Education and the Economy, Social and Community Development** and finally **Transport and Access**.

Based on these findings the Plan concludes with an **Action Plan**: a series of proposals for the future development of the Parish and its local communities, proposals that reflect the concerns and priorities of local people.

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes referred to as a Parish Plan

<sup>2</sup> Many of the same group of residents have also been involved in preparing Village Character Statements which describe the physical characteristics of the Parish and set out policies to guide future development. For more information about how all these plans were developed see Appendix 1

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Description

**Illustration: time line for development of the communities; map of Parish**

Shinfield Parish lies immediately south of the town of Reading and is the western-most parish in the Borough of Wokingham. The Parish is divided by two major roads, the M4 running east-west in the north, the A33 running approximately north-south and linking Reading to Basingstoke. In addition, the A327 runs north west – south east, linking Reading to Aldershot. To the south east the boundary is formed by the River Loddon.

The Parish comprises three distinct landscape types. The western-most is an area of lowland clay, drained by numerous streams and ditches which run into the Foudry Brook, and which in turn runs into the River Kennet. It is characterised by hedge banks and sunken lanes with mature oaks that stand out above the flat landscape. This is a mixed agricultural landscape, with both arable and pasture land which in the past was extensively used for sheep grazing. Even today it is highly rural, characterised by low density, dispersed settlement of scattered farmsteads and hamlets. To the east this landscape is largely bounded by the A33 but includes an area north of the M4 west of Whitley Wood, including Green Park Business Park, which is now largely built over.

Above this lowland rises a ridge of higher land that separates the lowland clay from the Loddon River Valley. From the west the ridge still retains its wooded character. There are other relict woodland belts and copses but the ridge is predominantly covered in undulating pasture divided into a patchwork of moderate sized fields by hedgerows and mature hedgerow oaks. Consultation has shown that these 'wedges' of countryside which separate the four villages, School Green, Spencers Wood, Ryeish Green and Three Mile Cross and help to retain their separate identity, are of great significance to local people.

The Loddon River Valley which forms the third landscape type is largely undeveloped. The landscape is agricultural, a mix of larger arable fields on the better drained land and small wet meadows beside the river. The Domesday Book records 700 eels as part of the annual rent for Shinfield, confirming the long term presence of extensive wetlands in the Parish. These meadows still flood during most winters – the reason for the lack of development

### History of Shinfield

The Parish of Shinfield has a long history stretching back to the Domesday Book, almost 1000 years. The ecclesiastical parish originally stretched from south Reading (Merry Maidens) to the boundary with Hampshire at Riseley. During the late 19th century civil parishes superseded ecclesiastical parishes as the basic unit of local government and Shinfield civil parish was formed from the ecclesiastical parishes of Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Grazeley in 1894.

The town of Reading has been an important crossing point on the River Thames since Norman times, particularly for goods and people moving between the Channel Ports of Southampton and Portsmouth and the Midlands. The ridge of higher ground running from north to south through the Parish provided a dry route from Reading to Basingstoke, Winchester and the coast, between the flood plain of the River Loddon and the low ground drained by the Foudry Brook.

The area was for many centuries predominantly rural. Initially forming part of the western limit of Windsor Forest, clearance progressively changed the forest to an agricultural landscape, with fisheries and water meadow grazing along the valleys and arable and grazing on the higher land. Early settlement is believed to have been on the higher, better drained land around St. Mary's Church with much of the remainder of the area being non-nucleated settlements centred loosely around farmsteads.

This pattern of land-use and settlement probably persisted for many hundreds of years with a population unlikely to have been greater than about 500. In 1707 Richard Piggott founded the school at School Green to provide free education for twenty boys up to twelve years of age, consistent with a population, in at least the eastern part of the Parish, of only a few hundred people. The onset of the Industrial Revolution initially led to rural depopulation but by the mid 1800s the development of the railways and increased industrial prosperity began the process of expansion of villages and smaller settlements near market towns like Reading that has continued to the present day.

The development of the individual villages can be traced from old Ordnance Survey maps. Grazeley first began to be developed in the mid-nineteenth century with the building of the parish church and subsequently the school. In School Green by the 1870s and 1880s settlement was focused around St. Mary's Church, the Vicarage, Church Farm and Manor House in Church Lane and around The Green and Millworth Lane. In Three Mile Cross settlement was principally focused around the junction of the Basingstoke Road and Church Lane with a small number of buildings to the south at Spencers Wood and around Mays Farm at Ryeish Green.

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed further development in Ryeish Green, including the opening of the school, and more extensive development in Spencers Wood focused around the chapel, St Michael's Church and the library, originally a school, and extending south down Basingstoke Road to Lambs Lane School, also built at this time. Housing also began to be built along Croft Road. The population of the Parish was then about 1500.

By the outbreak of the First World War significant development was apparent in the School Green area, with housing extending from The Green to Hollow Lane and the Aborfield Road, including the start of development along what is now Fairmead Road, and development down Cutbush Lane towards Shinfield Grange had begun. A significant proportion of the current houses had been built at Ryeish Green and on the south side of Church Lane opposite Shinfield Court.

There was further development between the Wars, including Shinfield Rise and 'old' Shinfield Park. In School Green, the Oatlands Road estate to the east of Hollow Lane was advanced during the 1930s while in Spencers Wood housing was appearing along the western part of Hyde End Road.

Significant post-Second World War development took place in School Green with the construction of council housing and a new school in Chestnut Crescent and the development of housing in the Oatlands - Wheatfields Road estate to the east of Hollow Lane and south of Cutbush Lane. Immediate northward expansion was stopped in the early 1970s by the construction of the M4 Motorway. Since then development has continued with further infilling along Hyde End Road towards Spencers Wood. As the result of these expansions the population of the Parish had risen to about 3500 by the early 1970s.

## **Shinfield Today**

During the 1990s a number of plans were put forward for major development in the Parish. This finally led to the adoption by the (then) Wokingham District Council of proposals for a major development west of the A33 in Grazeley. These proposals were rejected by a Public Inquiry resulting in a revised plan to disperse the 2500 houses across the district, of which c. 1,000 were built in Shinfield Parish.

Since 2000, there has been extensive development south of the M4 and east of the A33, principally on land owned by the University of Reading: at the Manor and Churchfields sites off Church Lane (440 houses) and at the Horticultural Station and Lane End Farm site on Cutbush Lane (164 houses) in School Green and on backland behind Grazeley Road (158 houses), Three Mile Cross. In Spencers Wood development has taken place at Warren Croft, off Basingstoke Road and Beech Hill Road (121 houses). North of the M4 development has taken place at Shinfield Park (310 houses) and Beaufort Grange (75 houses).

As a result the population has continued to grow: in 1991 it was over 7,000 and at the last census, in 2001, it stood at 8136 and following further development since 2000, the total population is now (2009) estimated to be about 10,000.

Although the current recession has (temporarily) reduced the scale of housing development, permission has already been granted for a further 700 houses at three major sites in Three Mile Cross and Spencers Wood.

Wokingham Borough Council has recently submitted its Core Strategy, setting out its development plans for the period up to 2026. These include proposals for a further 1800 houses, in addition to 700 already approved or identified, with the area including School Green, Ryeish Green and Spencers Wood proposed as a Strategic Development Location (SDL). Alternative proposals would see even more extensive development centred on School Green or west of the A33.

North of the motorway, part of the Green Park Business Park lies within Shinfield Parish. Despite the recession, Green Park is expected to continue growing throughout period covered by this plan and will be one factor likely to increase traffic through the Parish. However, the Core Strategy also proposes the development of a Science Park within the Parish probably near the Black Boy roundabout. While this would provide some further highly skilled employment in the Parish, it is anticipated that most of these jobs will be sourced from outside the Parish, attracting more commuters to the area and inevitably acting as a spur for further housing development.

Finally there is the major construction work currently associated with Junction 11 of the M4 including the proposed construction of Park-and-Ride facilities at Mere oak. Reaction to the proposed Park-and-Ride has been mixed. If built, the Park-and-Ride will not only provide a 1500-1600 car-parking facility but also a major strategic, commercial transport hub and interchange for the south of England. Coach traffic and lorry parking currently at Calcot off M4 Junction 12 will be transferred to Mere oak to facilitate connections via the motorway network, Reading Station (currently being substantially upgraded) and the expanded Heathrow. While some regard this as an opportunity to improve local transport with new links to the national transport network, others are concerned that the Park-and-Ride will only attract more traffic into

the Parish with little direct benefit for local residents – especially when readily accessible Park-and-Ride facilities already exist at the Madejski Stadium.

For its size there are few local amenities in the Parish. The 1980s saw the closure of both butchers and small supermarkets in Spencers Wood and a butchers/village store in Great Lea. In 2008 the Borough Council decided to close the local secondary school despite extensive local opposition. Although there are village stores in Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood and School Green, most residents look to the local centre at Lower Earley or to Reading for shopping and most services, while in Shinfield North there is another local centre just inside the Reading border. Until 2008 there was only a part-time doctor's surgery in School Green with most residents registered with practices in Lower Earley or Swallowfield.

Because of the proximity of Reading and accidents of geography and communications, villages have retained their separate identities so that the Parish as a whole does not share a common identity. In the north residents are cut off by the M4 and naturally look towards Reading while to the west of the A33 residents are as likely to look further west towards Mortimer and Burghfield in West Berkshire and residents of Spencers Wood are as likely to use facilities in Swallowfield and Riseley as those in School Green.

### **3. SHINFIELD TOMORROW**

It is the rapid development of the Parish over the past twenty years and further development planned for the next seventeen years that sets the context for this Plan. The consultation undertaken in preparing the Plan has shown that most of the concerns raised by local residents relate to the impact of the development that has already taken place and the proposed new development on the communities that make up the Parish.

#### **Strategic Priorities**

##### Influencing Development

Most local residents would prefer to see no further development but in the light of Government housing policy and since approval for further development has already been given, realistically this is not achievable. It is therefore all the more important that any future development is controlled and sympathetic to the concerns of local people, if successful thriving communities are to be achieved.

Where development does take place priorities for local residents include:

- Maintaining the identity of individual communities through retaining existing gaps and wedges;
- Protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment;
- Ensuring that housing development is accompanied by improvements to infrastructure and local employment opportunities.

##### Managing Traffic

With the rapid growth of housing has come congestion, and residents fear that despite any proposed schemes to reduce traffic the situation will only deteriorate further. The existing road network is not suitable for current volumes of traffic generated by residents and commuters, nor is it easy to see how it could be adapted to take increased volumes without destroying the character of the communities. It is also feared that the proposed Park-and-Ride at Mere oak may only increase traffic-levels across the Parish.

In order to reduce traffic congestion and the reliance on the car, residents support:

- Modifying the existing network to improve traffic flow and reduce speeds;
- Improving public & community transport;
- Acting to encourage children and their parents to walk and cycle to school and
- Improving the network of cycle ways and all-weather footpaths.

##### Developing a stronger sense of community

Consultation has shown that many residents feel that the local villages lack a sense of community. This is felt by new and longer-term residents alike. The comments of long-term residents suggest that the sense of community has declined as more housing has been built, although it is worth noting that similar views were expressed in the 1997 and 1998 Community Appraisals undertaken by the Community Council for Berkshire.

Many of the actions already proposed will help to sustain and develop a sense of community: maintaining the separate identity of individual communities is obviously vital; encouraging families to walk to school will provide opportunities for relationships to develop, as will improved community

facilities and provision of community transport. Other proposals have already been implemented – open days for local groups and societies to promote themselves and their activities; a programme of village walks and the establishment of a footpath group.

There is however one Action that arose early in the deliberations of both the Environment and Social and Community working groups and which was subsequently seen as central by the other two groups once they commenced work:

- Establishing a local Community Volunteers scheme that can help to match volunteers to identified needs.

In addition there are requirements for a community building in Shinfield Rise, where land is available at Hillside, and a meeting place for adults in Spencers Wood, where there are plans for a coffee/meeting place (Caf'Active) at St Michael's Church.

### Education

By closing Ryeish Green School, Wokingham Borough Council has alienated a significant proportion of the community. As a result young people will be forced to travel further and one of the facilities that helped to bring together the local communities is in danger of being lost. There are a number of actions that can be taken that will help to contribute to a greater sense of community:

- Ensuring that there are adequate places for Early Years and primary education to meet the growing population
- Nominating the nearest WBC secondary school as the designated school for all young people of secondary age in the Parish;
- Retaining facilities at Ryeish Green for community use;
- Offering an appropriate and beneficial range of extended services opportunities, either in school or in the local community for young people;
- Encouraging the development of further lifelong learning opportunities;
- Supporting the provision of localised drop-in centres for short hobby-type courses.

### Economic and Environmental Sustainability

Finally, public consultations confirmed the aspiration that proposals and actions should be sustainable. Most residents like living in Shinfield and want to ensure that the distribution of resources and opportunities in the future is equitable and in proportion to the needs of the Parish. To this end the following principles should be applied when considering any proposals for future development in the Parish:

- Ensuring that sustainability is taken into account when new development of any kind is proposed in the Parish;
- Ensuring that any facilities provided are appropriate only for the needs either of the villages south of the M4 or to the suburban part of Shinfield to the north.

## 4 THE ENVIRONMENT

### Overview

The built and the natural environment together provide the setting for life in Shinfield. The Parish is appreciated as a pleasant place in which to live, and its physical characteristics, with policies to guide future development are discussed in the Village Character Statements. This Plan looks at four aspects of the environment across the whole Parish, bearing in mind the present stage of development and the pressures for future change. The section on *Development and Flooding* outlines the challenges and conflicts that large-scale development can bring, and highlights the propensity to flooding caused by the geology of the area. The *Street Scene* concentrates on places where people gather, for instance near schools, shops and offices, and outlines their good and poor qualities and the opportunities for improvement. The section on *Ecology and Habitats* describes the significance of the natural environment and emphasises the need for conservation and management of these habitats. Finally, *Public Rights of Way* explores how the extensive network of tracks and footpaths offer an opportunity for exercise and social interaction. They provide access to the countryside and a means of getting to know all parts of the Parish. These uses have been demonstrated by a new series of Parish Walks.

The sustainability of both the present situation and future proposals has been considered carefully with an emphasis on what is pleasant and advantageous to life in the Parish, and what may realistically be achieved in terms of input from people and taking into account physical, legal and financial practicalities. Flooding creates some problems for existing properties and for movement around the Parish. Maintenance of the local drainage systems is essential, and it is important that permeable surfaces are used in car parks, in play areas, and on driveways. Energy efficiency is being improved in houses and offices and any larger scale new developments should be expected to use local heat and power generation as far as is practicable. The use of local facilities and the need to improve the appearance and condition of the small shopping areas and places where people like to congregate are highlighted in the section on the street scene. The small-scale developments of shops, offices and other facilities are currently proportionate to the size of the communities that make up Shinfield Parish. It is feared that the large scale development proposed in the Core Strategy will not be proportionate and will overwhelm the existing communities to the detriment of the countryside. The countryside surroundings of the different communities are important to the residents, and are appreciated by them. The good quality maintenance and the enjoyment of wildlife habitats, the ecology and public rights of way are significant for everyone.

## **Street Scene**

### Background:

The villages of Shinfield Parish have developed as individual communities separated by green fields and by major roads. The characteristics of the built environments are described in the four Village Character Statements. There is a pleasant mix of mainly traditional building types and uses, with a number of historic and other interesting buildings. The street scene is typically that of low to medium density housing with some commercial buildings on a street pattern that does not allow for modern traffic. For the most part shops and office buildings are set amongst houses, sometimes grouped loosely in a central area as at School Green and Three Mile Cross, or scattered alongside roads as in Spencers Wood. There are however a number of small industrial parks on the outskirts of villages or set within farms, and the large Green Park business development in the north west corner of the Parish. Except at School Green, the provision for parking is inadequate and roadside pavements are frequently in a very poor condition, especially on the approaches to Lambs Lane Primary School. There is a lack of attractive features such as paved areas with trees, lighting and seating; and the views along main roads are blighted by old overhead wires for telephone and electricity..

### The Future:

All the villages are keen to keep their unique 'village' feeling and new development should reflect this. Several of the industrial sites have empty units making the area look neglected. These should be upgraded if necessary and occupied before new units are built. There are many opportunities to improve the quality of the local areas around small shops and commercial buildings, and any new developments should link with, and enhance, these locations.

### Aspirations:

- E 1. To reduce the visual pollution caused by road signage and overhead wires.
- E 2. To reduce light pollution, particularly poorly designed, non-directional lighting.
- E 3. To protect and enhance the setting of buildings of historic and cultural interest (churches, the Library, schools etc).
- E 4. To provide recycling facilities in all larger communities.
- E 5. To plant appropriate trees in suitable locations across the Parish taking advantage of the Borough Council's tree planting scheme and ensure that they are subsequently properly maintained.

### **Key Actions:**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Provide recycling facilities in Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross and Grazeley;
- Ensure that the green spaces are kept in between the individual villages to preserve the character of each;

- Install distinctive paved areas at key locations such as outside the parade of shops in School Green;
- Ensure that all new properties meet or exceed the latest government energy-efficiency requirements;
- Work with local residents to identify 'black spots' where overhead wiring is unsightly and press for its removal whenever an opportunity arises;
- Plant appropriate trees in each settlement across the Parish.

#### Shinfield Parish Council

- Establish Gateways into the Parish at main access points in consultation with the Borough Council;
- Provide seating for the public at bus stops, street corners and quiet places;
- Replace other worn or damaged street furniture and provide ongoing maintenance.

#### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Assist with regularly clearing of litter from roadside verge ditches.
- Support the annual litter pick organised by Wokingham Borough Council.

## **Drainage and Flood Risk**

### Background:

As described above a low ridge separates the floodplains of the River Loddon and the River Kennet/Foudry Brook system. After heavy rain, run-off from the ridge, which is composed of impermeable London Clay, makes the low lying areas naturally prone to flooding. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the hillsides south of the M4 were drained as part of agricultural improvements, relying on effective sub-surface and surface drains to remove water safely to the main rivers, thus minimising flood risks to built-up areas. However, more recent development has begun to affect the earlier drainage increasing the likelihood of flooding and in most years flooding creates problems for existing properties and for movement around the Parish.

### The Future:

The construction of a further 2500 homes as proposed by Wokingham Borough Council would significantly alter the natural drainage and the inherited agricultural drainage systems. The proposed new homes should not themselves be at a risk of flooding, nor must they increase the flood risk to existing homes, businesses and amenities. Development will need to control high rates of surface water run-off and prevent soil instability during periods of heavy rainfall through features like permeable paving, green roofs and attenuation ponds.

### Aspirations:

- E 6. To ensure that development does not increase the risk of flooding, waterlogged ground and foundation instability.
- E 7. To ensure that a co-ordinated and sustainable water control and drainage strategy is agreed, preventing any increased rate of run-off from hard surfaces and paving.
- E 8. To prevent small-scale piecemeal development overloading existing drainage systems.
- E 9. To ensure that appropriate design and construction criteria are applied to buildings and infrastructure constructed in areas prone to soil instability (shrinking /swelling soils).

### **Key Actions:**

#### Environment Agency

- Co-ordinate the maintenance and long term monitoring of old and new drainage systems and ensure that provisions are in place so that they are properly managed.

#### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Assist landowners with cutting back growth of vegetation in roadside ditches at the end of summer each year so that flow of water is not blocked;
- Monitor the state of ditches and maintain a database recording their condition and recommended action.

## **Ecology and Habitats**

### Background

Pleasant countryside of fields, trees and woodlands forms the larger part of Shinfield Parish. This landscape surrounds the scattered settlements south of the M4, and where there is more dense development north of the Motorway, there are still open spaces and important woodlands. The mix of open country with woodlands and hedgerows is a vital characteristic of the Parish and is the key visual setting for residents.

Semi-ancient woods and copses persist at road junctions, on wetland in valleys, on higher water-logged ground and on steep hillsides. The trees are mostly oak, with ash, field maple, sycamore, holly and hawthorn. Wildlife includes foxes and deer, small mammals and woodland birds. Dense hedgerows often with banks and ditches form corridors for wildlife, linking woodlands with ponds and streams. The River Loddon and other watercourses and their wetland habitats have a high nature conservation value. Ponds occur on farmland, at the sides of roads and on former brickfields. Several fields in the Parish are semi-improved, unmanaged grassland with a wealth of flowering plants that attract many insects.

Consultation identified a range of significant habitats, including important trees and groups and lines of trees, the small copses, the wide hedgerows and ponds that not only had special meaning for residents but which also contribute vitally to the ecology and wildlife corridors of the area. These elements are widespread across the Parish and are important in the landscape setting of the communities as well as for wildlife.

### The Future

Significant views, landscape and habitats require protection as housing and other development proceeds. Meanwhile it is important to recognise, investigate and record special habitats across the Parish, particularly the poorly managed ponds, small streams and ditches, and the copses and semi-natural grasslands. Management plans should be drawn up for these areas, and plans that already exist for the designated sites should be monitored and implemented. Gardens and corners of sites such as allotments and cemeteries are recognised as potential habitats for wildlife, providing links in natural corridors to be developed across the Parish.

Part of the Parish falls within the provisions of the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone. This will require that any future development is accompanied by the creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGS) to alleviate pressure on nesting sites for ground-nesting birds within the heathland itself.

### Aspirations

- E 10. To preserve the open countryside that separates the settlements and maintains their individual identities.
- E 11. To protect and enhance the diverse ecological habitats of the Parish.
- E 12. To establish wildlife corridors to improve the ecological value of the habitats.
- E 13. To minimise the impact of future developments on the natural environment and provide new equivalent habitat areas when any

significant habitats are destroyed or harmed by development.

- E 14. To ensure that any new development makes provision for space for wildlife habitats over and above any land left as SANGS, since such land is nominally intended for dog walkers, and is not appropriate for wildlife habitats.

**Key Actions:**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Investigate the potential for creating new Local Wildlife Sites or local nature reserves.

Shinfield Parish Council

- Promote and publicise Shinfield's wildlife heritage.

Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- List and publicise local environmental organisations and their particular interests.
- Participate in the management of habitats and the development of other wildlife friendly areas;
- Undertake further detailed surveys of the local ecology and record sites of wildlife interest;
- Draw up habitat management plans for sites of value to the community.

Shinfield Parish Community Partnership

- Monitor the progress of existing habitat management plans for Local Wildlife Sites.

## Public Rights of Way

### Background.

The condition and use of public rights of way in the Parish are important aspects in any local environmental assessment. There are over 40 footpaths and other types of public rights of way, of which the condition and use varies. The rights of way, as distinct from the roadside pavements, provide the Parish with a network of routes that are used primarily for recreation but also allow people to get about the area generally. A group of volunteers has been established to assess the condition of the paths, promote their use and to support actions to ensure that they are maintained and, if possible, extended in key locations.

### The Future.

The availability of accessible, well maintained public rights of way supports the general aims of the Community Plan, allowing residents and others to access and enjoy the countryside and lead healthy lifestyles. Future development should maintain and develop the existing network and introduce new routes that contribute to these aims while minimising the impact on the environment.

### Aspirations.

- E 15. To maintain the existing network of public rights of way ensuring that they are maintained in good condition and not abused.
- E 16. To identify and develop additional routes which can be used for the purpose of recreation or access.
- E 17. To encourage the use of rights of way by:
  - a. holding regular walks within or near to the Parish;
  - b. ensuring that signposting and map boards are clearly visible;
  - c. liaising with local landowners and other organisations on issues relating to use or access.

## Key Actions

Wokingham Borough Council

- Require the enhancement of existing rights of way in Rushy Mead, including the construction of a route alongside the River Loddon as a condition of planning permission for the proposed construction of wind turbines in Rushy Mead;
- Notify landowners who have a legal responsibility to maintain, re-instate or repair footpaths
- Negotiate with landowners
  - to establish a public right of way along that length of the River Loddon from the Mill House on the Basingstoke Road to the Aborfield Road (A327) crossing near Parrot Farm;
  - Extend the path on the east of Shinfield Recreation Ground (Footpath 15) to the River Loddon;

- Establish a bridleway from Shinfield to Aborfield Cross, avoiding the need to walk either in the road or on grass verges;
- Impose restrictions on use of byways to discourage their abuse by motor-cycles and quadbikes;
- Ensure that all new footpath routes are a minimum of 3 metres wide to allow for verges at each side for wildlife;
- Replace the stile with a kissing gate and improve the 'footing' at the entrance to Spencers Wood Common on the Basingstoke Road opposite Spring Gardens (Footpath 23).

#### Shinfield Parish Council

- Establish a set of footpath notice boards at strategic points in the Parish.

#### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Undertake clearance of routes to enhance access to public rights of way;
- Monitor the condition of footpaths informing Wokingham Borough Council when maintenance or repairs are required so that they can take appropriate actions with landowners.

## **EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY**

### **Overview**

Recent history has not seen dramatic changes in education or the local economy within the Parish. However, changes are underway which will impact on the Parish in both respects. These changes include the decision to close our only secondary school in 2010; the substantial growth of housing, with hundreds more in the pipeline; the development of Green Park, with other proposals for light industrial and scientific sites; and the development of the local transport infrastructure, notably the improvements to the M4 Junction 11 and Mere oak roundabouts.

Education is an essential shaper of any society and to ensure the sustainability of local communities provision should be made to meet the needs of current and new residents. The quality and relative ease of accessibility to early years, primary and secondary education should be given a high priority. Extended educational activities and services for school aged children and their families should be provided in response to local needs. The level of interest and concern regarding the unpopular decision to close Ryeish Green School is indicative of the importance the community places on their children's education and the other leisure and local service opportunities available on the site. To help to bring about a culture of lifelong learning, access to accredited training or the local provision of short non-vocational courses could be made available to adults of all ages at times convenient for them.

While there are some 200 small businesses, some medium size and a few larger employers in the Parish, the majority of residents work outside the area, facilitated by a network of road and nearby rail links. Unemployment is not markedly evident in Shinfield Parish. From consultation returns, it would appear that the small businesses in the Parish like being based here for various reasons, and are satisfied with their level of trade. The growing housing developments within and adjacent to our Parish are likely to create additional opportunities, and needs, for employment – full-time, part-time and home-based.

## Education and Childcare

### Background

The Parish is well served by nursery, pre-schools and primary phase schools for children up to age 11. Educational outcomes at the end of primary education (key stage 2) are broadly similar across the Parish.

Although Ryeish Green School was, until recently, the designated secondary school for most of the Parish, children from the Parish have traditionally attended a variety of secondary schools. The decision to close the School will soon mean that all children have to travel outside the Parish for secondary education, and to a wider range of schools. The absence of an accessible secondary school in the Parish will jeopardise the perceived need to make the present fragmented communities within the Parish more cohesive and will generate additional journeys by students travelling to schools outside the Parish.

Educational outcomes for 14 year olds (key stage 3) are broadly similar across the Parish, but performance at GCSE (age 16) varies, with lower outcomes for young people living in Shinfield North, and higher outcomes for young people in the community around Spencers Wood.

The Ryeish Green School site is a good education campus, located in the middle of the Parish, and with great potential for a variety of educational, social and community uses. It is centrally located for current housing, for already-planned development and for the proposed Strategic Development Location (SDL). It is essential that these facilities are retained for community use after the school closes.

Opportunities for learning as an adult are available both in the Parish and just outside but the range of activities could be wider and available at more varied times. The recently announced decision by the University of Reading to terminate all continuing education classes from July 2009 will leave a void, since many of these classes were attended by people from the Parish.

#### a. Early years and childcare

*Photos from providers showing happy children, buildings etc. esp. new Red Kite Centre.*

There are three early education providers in the Parish: the Nursery Classes at Shinfield Infants School and two pre-school playgroups in Spencers Wood, and two day nurseries, both in Spencers Wood<sup>3</sup> as well as a variety of other providers in surrounding villages. A new Children's Centre, the Red Kite Centre, has recently been completed at Shinfield St Mary's Junior School. It will provide advice, information and support to families with children, principally those with children under 5, in response to local needs.

Shinfield St. Mary's Junior School provides a breakfast club and both Shinfield St Mary's Junior School and Lambs Lane Primary School offer after school childcare for children up to the age of 11 or 12. Shinfield St. Mary's Junior School also currently offers a holiday club for children up to the age of 11. At the time of writing there were ten registered childminders in the Parish, with at least one in each of the significant settlements. However, childminders are

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<sup>3</sup> Meadow View, from about 2½ to 5 years of age, and Farm View for 0 to 3 year olds.

subject to frequent change and, because of their limited facilities, often have few vacancies; and their childcare offer may not be open to children of all ages or needs.

#### b. Primary Education

*Photos from schools showing happy children, buildings etc*

Currently there are four infant, junior and primary schools in the Parish<sup>4</sup>. Some of these schools have increased their rolls substantially since the 1980s and all serve the community well, although their standards and reputations vary from school to school as their OFSTED reports illustrate. However the designated schools for some children in the Parish are in neighbouring areas.<sup>5</sup> There are also two private schools in the Parish, taking pupils from both within and outside the Parish.<sup>6</sup>

#### c. Secondary Education

*Photos from schools and/or youth groups showing happy children, buildings etc*

With the imminent closure of Ryeish Green School in August 2010, the designated schools for students from the Parish are now Bulmershe in Woodley and Emmbrook in Wokingham. These are both farther away than Maiden Erlegh, in Earley. Some parents have opted to send their children to non-designated schools, including The Willink in Burghfield to the west, Yateley in Hampshire to the south, schools in Reading and privately run schools.

It is unfortunate that our young people's secondary education is split between so many schools, thus minimising the opportunities to bond and socialise as a single group around a common community school, before they move further afield to higher education, skills training or work.

#### d) Lifelong Learning<sup>7</sup>

*Photo from local history group of members at work?*

Within the Parish recreational lifelong learning opportunities are currently provided by a limited range of local clubs and associations, some of which meet during the day. There are also opportunities outside the Parish's boundaries in Reading, Burghfield, Earley and beyond. There are currently no opportunities for accredited learning in the Parish. While the need for short courses has not been overwhelmingly demonstrated, there are clear indications from consultation feedback that further local provision, more varied in time and topics, would be welcome. Study around digital photography,

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<sup>4</sup> Grazeley C.E. Aided Primary School (currently admitting 15 pupils per year), Lamb's Lane Community Primary School (30 pupils), Shinfield Infant and Nursery School (60 pupils) and Shinfield St Mary's C.E. Aided Junior School (63 pupils)

<sup>5</sup> Whiteknights Community Primary School serving the community in Shinfield Rise; Hillside Primary serving the Parish community that forms part of Lower Earley; and Farley Hill Primary, currently for some children living in Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross although this arrangement is due to cease in September 2010

<sup>6</sup> Crosfields School in Shinfield for children between the ages of 4 and 13 and The Vine Christian School, a very small independent school in Three Mile Cross, which caters for children between the ages of 5 and 13.

<sup>7</sup> Note that all consultations took place before the announcement of the closing of the University's Continuing Education Department.

computing, gardening, family safety, art and natural history would be well-received during afternoons, early evenings or at times convenient to parents with school-aged children. Day courses could be linked to a childcare facility.

### The Future

The growth in new housing has attracted younger couples and families with children of a young age and this is having an impact on places in nurseries, pre-schools and primary phase schools. There is every indication that this trend will continue.

All schools now have to provide 'extended services' - making access available to various services and opportunities to meet the wider needs of local children, their parents and the community, often outside the times of the traditional school day. These may include access to childcare; a more varied range of before-school, after-school and homework activities for children of all ages; support for parents in various ways; and providing access to specialists and professionals, for those children who need extra support. Schools are also intended to be a community resource if there is a need for their buildings or facilities to be used by the community. Based on local needs, opportunities should therefore be available to provide or facilitate services locally.

The long journeys our young people will have to travel to their secondary schools, including the need to catch specified school buses, have a definite negative impact on accessibility of the schools' extended services. These activities such as gifted and talented clubs, homework clubs, sports, arts or craft activities are normally scheduled before and after the school day. This has implications both for school transport and the possible need to make alternative provision within the Parish. One way of addressing the social needs is through youth provision - a youth club meets in Spencers Wood and consultation indicates that provision is needed in School Green and Shinfield North (see below, page 31).

### Aspirations

#### a. Early years and childcare

- EE 1. There should be sufficient, accessible and high quality provision of nursery and pre-school places available locally to meet the growing need.
- EE 2. There should be sufficient, affordable childcare conveniently available locally to meet the needs of local families.
- EE 3. The Red Kite Children's Centre should act as a focus for the effective co-ordination of children's services in the Parish, consulting with parents and community groups to ensure that services are well suited to the needs of local children and families.

#### b. Primary Education

- EE 4. There should be sufficient places in infant, junior and primary schools in the Parish to allow for parental choice and meet the needs and aspirations of families.
- EE 5. The community should support schools in their attempts to further raise standards across all aspects (and therefore reduce the pressure for children to attend schools outside the Parish).

- EE 6. The current primary schools should be enhanced and expanded before any new primary provision is built.
- EE 7. A range of extended opportunities, well suited to the needs of children, families and the community, should be available.

#### c. Secondary Education

- EE 8. There should be a secondary school within the Parish, whether or not the planned SDL goes ahead. Until this aspiration is realised, the designated school should be the closest one in Wokingham Borough, currently Maiden Erlegh.
- EE 9. Young people from all parts of the Parish should have the opportunity to choose to attend the same secondary school.
- EE 10. A range of extended opportunities, well suited to the needs of children, families and the community, should be available.
- EE 11. Youth provision should be well-suited to local needs to encourage attendance, so helping to build a sense of community in young people.

#### d. Lifelong Learning

- EE 12. The development of further lifelong learning opportunities should be encouraged.
- EE 13. The provision of localised drop-in centres for short hobby-type courses should be supported; especially in relation to the proposed Caf'Active in Spencers Wood and the Community Hall in Shinfield Rise (see below, p.29).

### **Key Actions**

#### a. Early years and childcare

##### Red Kite Children's Centre

- Work with Early Years providers to ensure that appropriate local information, advice and assistance is provided.

#### b. Primary Education

##### Parents and community groups

- Work in partnership with primary phase schools to ensure the most beneficial range of extended services are available.

#### c. Secondary Education

##### Parents, young people and community groups

- Work in partnership with secondary schools to ensure the most appropriate and beneficial range of extended services opportunities are available, either in school or in the local community.

##### Shinfield Parish Community Partnership

- Work in partnership with Wokingham BC, parents, young people and local businesses to improve secondary education provision for the Parish.

#### d. Lifelong Learning

##### Shinfield Parish Council

- Work with Wokingham BC and the local community to further investigate the need for lifelong learning opportunities, and the consequent strengthening and development of local provision.
- Work in partnership with local churches, associations and other bodies to explore the possibility of local bases for lifelong learning.
- Support, or facilitate access to support for, local clubs and associations that wish to develop their offer to local people.

##### Shinfield Parish Community Partnership

- Explore the possibility of establishing a University of the Third Age (U3A) group in the Parish;
- Liaise with local groups regarding the provision of short hobby-type courses.

##### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Compile a register of people who would be interested in participating in such courses.

## The Economy

### Background

#### *Photos of villages/roads/signs to other places*

Shinfield Parish has excellent road links with easy access to the M4 motorway, the University of Reading, the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading town centre, nearby supermarkets and southwards towards Aldershot, Fleet and Basingstoke. However, these advantages are diminished by peak-hour congestion.

There are large, medium and small employers in the Parish and some local people take advantage of the employment opportunities offered. There is some evidence that a small, but increasing, number of people work from home. Their number is not known, but anecdotally may be significant in overall terms. However many residents have, or seek, work outside the Parish in nearby towns, villages or further afield.

#### *Use photographs to illustrate some of the range of large employers, e.g. the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting and the European headquarters for Foster Wheeler at Shinfield Park*

Many of the large employers in the Parish are located in Green Park, almost 40% of which lies within the boundaries of Shinfield Parish, and which houses offices for significant international businesses such as Cisco Systems. While these businesses do employ local people, most employees come from outside the Parish. Likewise there are several large employers just outside the Parish that employ Shinfield residents.

Pulleyn Transport occupies a site of nearly 1.6 hectares near Three Mile Cross **Photo?**. There are a number of other haulage and vehicle-based businesses. The Wellington and Heron industrial estates in Spencers Wood have small, modern industrial units. There are currently a significant number of vacancies in these estates. There are a range of smaller office-based and light industrial employers throughout the Parish. As might be expected in a semi-rural area, agriculture and related land uses still dominate between the main settlements **Photo?**.

There is a variety of local services, crafts, shops, restaurants, hotels, pubs, garages and so on throughout the Parish. These provide useful local services and largely employ local people. **Photos?** However many of these businesses depend on passing trade or attracting people from outside the Parish to make them viable and thus remain available to local residents. There are three post offices in the Parish, in Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood and School Green. **Photos?** The importance of retaining these post offices is clear, and the recent expansion of the Three Mile Cross Post Office and store has been much appreciated by local residents.

Shinfield Rise and School Green are less advantaged in terms of the proportion of young people not staying on in education and training post-16 years of age (between 40 and 50%), the proportion of adults having no or low level qualifications (around 40%) and in terms of income. The areas of the Parish to the west and the parts of the Parish closest to Lower Earley are more advantaged and, on average, people living in these areas have higher incomes.

At the time of writing, the current economic downturn will be having an effect on both local employers and the opportunities they can offer, and local people may be on short-time work or suffer periods of unplanned unemployment. Jacobs Engineering, the international construction and professional services company is vacating their premises in School Green, probably in 2011, though this is not directly the result of the recession.

### The Future

In terms of recent and future development, significant numbers of new houses have been constructed and more are anticipated. Other possible developments include:

- Business uses on University land adjacent to the A327 in Shinfield;
- A Science and Innovation Park on land owned by the University between the M4 motorway and Cutbush Lane;
- Measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes along the A327 and A33 and routes to the station at Winnersh Triangle and the planned station at Green Park;
- The designation of Hyde End Farm as a Possible Mineral Preferred Area Site by the Borough Council.

If the building of 2,500 extra houses goes ahead, some more local employment will be desirable. Employment must be balanced with development. Vacant premises should be filled, and support and encouragement should be provided to local businesses. Redundant farm buildings should be utilised for commercial purposes before new builds. The proposed Science Park would provide some employment, although it is anticipated that most higher level jobs will be sourced from outside the Parish.

If the SDL is approved some new retail outlets will be needed, but there is no local demand for a large supermarket. There is also scope for the Parish Council to work with Post Offices to ensure their future sustainability possibly by broadening the range of services on offer.

### Aspirations

The following priorities are based on discussions with local residents and businesses and are also consistent with emerging priorities from the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board and Wokingham Borough Council

EE 14. The vitality and economic sustainability of the Parish should be improved while maintaining its rural character.

EE 15. Opportunities should be optimised to enable the development of the local workforce to address provision of skills to meet the future needs of local businesses.

EE 16. A partnership approach should be adopted to deliver a strong, diverse economy in Shinfield Parish. It is essential that the Parish Council forges and maintains strong links with the Borough Council, other agencies, businesses and other partners.

EE 17. Existing local shops and post offices should be retained and sufficient, accessible local shops, post offices and other services provided to meet the needs and aspirations of local people.

EE 18. Parking facilities near local shops, post offices and businesses should be improved to promote trade and therefore the sustainability of services provided.

## Key Actions

### Wokingham Borough Council

- Prioritise the new occupancy of the empty business units and the conversion of redundant farm buildings for commercial purposes before granting permission for new builds in order to achieve greater sustainability as well as a more prosperous appearance.

### Shinfield Parish Council

- Adopt as one of its stated Aims and Duties the support and development of the local economy, so that this aim is reflected in its various decisions and comments on local issues.
- Consider whether it has a role to play in leading a partnership approach to support the delivery of a strong, diverse economy in Shinfield. If so, to develop these themes and agree a more detailed action plan.
- Consider its role in understanding local skills, how skill gaps might be filled and develop an action plan<sup>8</sup> to address identified issues.
- Work with post offices to ensure future sustainability.

### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Establish contact with local small businesses and home-workers and establish whether any additional support is required.

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<sup>8</sup> This plan may describe how the Council will help address issues or might describe how the issues would be best achieved by the Parish Council's active support of Wokingham Borough Council and other partners.

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Overview

The rapid pace of development has put great pressure on the social fabric and institutions of the Parish and these pressures will continue with further development. A healthy, thriving, sustainable community is based on three interlinked foundations. Once these are fully established, then individuals have an opportunity to find personal fulfilment.

First, a community needs to have an identity of its own. Without an identity, a community is only a very loose collection of people and dwellings. Newcomers need to be able to recognise and identify an existing community and must feel able to become part of it, if they wish to do so. The first section of this chapter therefore deals with *Identity and Integration*.

Secondly, the basic needs of the people living in a community must be met. Hence the physical care of all people must be provided for, and a healthy life-style be promoted in a safe and pleasant environment. The second section of this chapter examines *Health and Secure Lifestyle*. (Other aspects of life-style such as education and employment are discussed in the other chapters of the Plan.)

Thirdly, the needs of belonging, self-esteem and motivation must also be addressed so that people can truly thrive in the environment where they live. The third section, *Community Well-Being*, considers what is required to ensure that people feel part of a caring and supportive community to which they can positively contribute and in which they can develop their own feelings of self-worth.

*suggested illustrations: Guide and Scout activities  
WI Session  
fete/Carnival/Fun Run etc etc.  
Armistice Day*

## Identity and Integration

### Background

The separate Village Character Statements for Shinfield North, School Green, Our Villages<sup>9</sup> and for the Grazeley Area illustrate the separation of Shinfield Parish's settlements. The diversity of the communities that this separation creates is a strong and valued characteristic of the Parish. The ever growing urban sprawl of Reading is seen as a threat and there is a strong will to resist becoming part of 'Greater Reading'.

Shinfield Parish has long suffered from the threats of new housing development and anticipated major change. The community has seen recent building of new houses for over 1300 people between 2005 and 2007, which is an eighteen percent increase in population. Integration and community cohesion are assisted by the generally good facilities providing informal, low-cost meeting places but the recent rapid expansion has placed new pressures on community organisations and facilities.

Information about the Parish, its services and those of local commerce, voluntary groups and clubs is provided through the Parish Notice Boards, the Parish newsletter, the recently re-launched Parish Council Website, and the *Loddon Reach* magazine (although this is not distributed throughout the Parish). However more could be done to support clubs and groups to make full use of these facilities and to promote their activities and widen their membership.

Access by public transport to local facilities across the Parish and beyond is restricted and so there is greater reliance on car journeys, and people without cars can feel trapped at home. This is discussed further in the chapter on Transport and Access.

### The Future

Further land has been released for new housing and much more is likely to follow, bringing changes and challenges through the next ten years. To preserve the identity of each settlement, careful location of the new homes and the retention of green gaps between communities is strongly urged.

There is no community building at all in Shinfield North although land is available for a new centre at Hillside. There is a strong local need here with requirements made clear by residents, and the support of the Parish Council has already been pledged. The derelict site is in the ownership of Wokingham Borough Council, which has not yet taken action on this.

In Spencers Wood a shortage of a meeting place for adults has been recognised, and there are plans for a meeting place (Caf'Active) at St Michael's Church. It is intended that in addition to providing for people attending services, this would be open for elderly people, young mothers and their children and wider community use. It might provide internet access, basic computer training, after-school clubs, careers counselling, help with redundancy (NextStep) and other needs. Also in Spencers Wood a potential exists for expanding the use of the Pavilion, particularly if the Chapel Lane Playgroup, which meets there, is relocated to the Lambs Lane School site as proposed at present.

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<sup>9</sup> Spencers Wood, Ryeish Green and Three Mile Cross

The balance of housing types is not meeting requirements in Shinfield North. Within Shinfield Rise many family dwellings in public ownership are occupied by elderly people who would prefer single accommodation or bungalow style properties but do not wish to leave the estate. The provision of additional single dwellings here would release much needed three and four bedroom homes.

### Aspirations

- SC 1. Ensure that each community has an identity which people can recognise and value, and into which they can integrate as they wish.
- SC 2. Provide appropriate transport so that key services and amenities can be reached by everyone.
- SC 3. Extend distribution of *Loddon Reach* to cover Shinfield North
- SC 4. Revise the Parish's 'Welcome Pack' for new residents with up-to-date information about services and activities throughout the area.
- SC 5. Ensure that when any new development takes place adequate infrastructure and amenities are provided in that development, or that neighbouring infrastructure and amenities are enhanced.
- SC 6. Ensure that new developments continue to have a mix of social and private housing, which is well integrated to promote social cohesion and tolerance.

### **Key Actions**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Provide a new community hall at Hillside in Shinfield Rise;
- Provide suitable accommodation for elderly residents in Shinfield Rise.

Diocese of Oxford

- Facilitate the construction of the café/meeting place in St Michael's Church, Spencers Wood;
- Extend distribution of *Loddon Reach* to cover the whole of the Parish.

Shinfield Parish Council

- Maximise the use of existing community buildings providing support as required to ensure their future;
- Further improve communications with residents including promoting awareness of bus routes and timetables, facilities, events and the activities of local groups and clubs.

## **Healthy and Secure Lifestyle**

### Background

The residents of the Parish generally enjoy a good level of health which reflects in part the mostly good housing and employment prospects, and reasonable life-styles. Historically the Parish has been served by the medical practice in the adjacent Parish of Swallowfield, with its outlier consulting room in School Green. The increase in population has led to the establishment of a new medical practice at School Green which includes a pharmacy and a dental service. Mothers with young children and elderly people in particular have requested some more accessible medical provision in Three Mile Cross, with a linked pharmacy service.

Services to support health, diet and well-being, for example chiropody or exercise classes, are available locally. There are numerous opportunities within the Parish and nearby for keeping fit by following indoor and outdoor sport, leisure and recreational activities. Other ways in which people keep active include participating in the parish walks, joining sports clubs and by having allotments.

The range of shops and other services spread throughout the Parish means that most people can walk to a post office or general store. However the focus of facilities along the main roads means that people living west of the A33 and in parts of Shinfield North do not have local shops or pubs.

In addition to a branch library in Spencers Wood, leisure facilities centre on clubs and groups such as the scout and guide groups, the Women's Institute, the British Legion and sports clubs. Venues for society and club meetings, and for indoor leisure and recreation are available in village and church halls in the separate communities as well as the Parish Hall at School Green. A youth club meets in the Pavilion at Spencers Wood but there is a need for more youth clubs in School Green and Shinfield North. The success of such ventures relies heavily on the commitment of adults to oversee activities for young people and there is a constant demand for volunteers.

The recreation grounds in the Parish are limited in their facilities and there are few places outdoors that are particularly appealing for adults to sit and converse. There are several small playgrounds for young children, some of which are being upgraded. Play spaces and equipment for older children and adults are much needed. Fishing rights along some lengths of banks of the River Loddon could perhaps be assigned for public fishing after negotiations with landowners, provided that this was properly managed and did not allow the vegetation and structure of the banks to be degraded.

### The Future

Although the Parish is well-provided with primary schools, which are well-placed to provide or facilitate locally needed services, Wokingham Borough Council has not announced what it intends to do with the former school buildings or the site following the closure of Ryeish Green School. There are no other community facilities in the village and the buildings could have an extended use not only for village residents but for the Parish as a whole and the leisure centre and the playing fields should be made available to make up the deficit in community recreation facilities.

The two Anglican and the other churches already play a significant role in the villages and recognise that there is an opportunity to do more to reach out to

the community as a whole to promote community well-being (see below). For example they could assist in setting up some of the volunteer groups to complement other existing activities by volunteers. One such effort could be supporting the 'Adopt a Garden' scheme whereby people on the allotments waiting list use part, or all of, the garden of another resident who does not want to garden themselves.

With more development likely in the future, it is imperative that the necessary infrastructure of amenities and green space are well-thought out and form part of the permitted plans. Developers should be held accountable to provide them at a very early stage of the site works. Strong planning and accountability should be able to bring about community benefits from future developments.

### Aspirations

- SC 7. Enable all Parish residents to grow up in a safe and healthy environment, with a choice of safe and healthy activities for their spare time.
- SC 8. Provide elderly and disabled residents with access to the services they require and assist them to lead full and happy lives.
- SC 9. Retain and enhance community facilities on the site of the current Ryeish Green School as a focal point for the communities south of the M4, with particular provision for youth.
- SC 10. Provide more playgrounds with better provision for older children, 'activity' items and all-weather areas for ball games and so on.
- SC 11. Develop, or ensure provision in new developments of, small Parish parks or green spaces with a pleasant outlook and well-designed seating areas.
- SC 12. Provide sufficient allotments to continue to meet demand as communities grow.

### **Key Actions**

#### Wokingham Borough Council

- Retain and enhance community facilities on the site of the current Ryeish Green School to use for the benefit of the community;
- Provide more indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities including places for young people to meet;
- Create new pleasant green areas for people to sit and converse;
- Plan for additional allotments associated with all major housing developments.

#### Shinfield Parish Council

- Support the recruitment and training of volunteers to further assist the running of activities such as scout and guide meetings and youth clubs.

#### Berkshire West PCT

- Provide outreach medical services in Three Mile Cross.

#### Shinfield Parish Community Partnership

- Negotiate with landowners to provide public fishing spaces on the banks of the River Loddon.

## **Community Well-being**

### Background

The well-being of the community is best achieved if all members – whatever their age, race, gender or creed – have the opportunity for personal fulfilment and creativity. A community that acts together, grows together. It is for these reasons that people's mental, emotional and cultural well-being should be nurtured so that everyone can feel part of a caring and supportive community to which they can contribute. Extending and encouraging the growth of existing groups, societies, clubs and voluntary organisations and making the best use of existing buildings will ensure sustainability and limit costs.

People have the opportunity to become involved with organisations such as amateur theatre, church and school choirs, and the carnivals and fetes held each year in School Green and in Spencers Wood. These events deserve greater promotion, support and participation.

### The Future

Volunteers can have a major role in developing community spirit. Most initiatives gain momentum quickly if just one person can be energised to get started and keep a programme up and running. One outcome of community involvement in producing this Plan has been the decision to establish a local Community Volunteers scheme that can help match volunteers to identified needs. Finding these people, and giving them the encouragement and support that they need and recognising their achievement is one way the Parish Council can assist the community.

### Aspirations

- SC 13. Establish a cultural and artistic festival across the Parish to promote and celebrate the cultural life of the community and the contribution of local clubs, groups, societies, associations.
- SC 14. Encourage social interaction among local residents particularly those with restricted transport or income (i.e. elderly, disabled, young mothers, young people).
- SC 15. Promote a sense of community and social responsibility among children and young people
- SC 16. Establish a culture of volunteering and celebrate the contribution that volunteers make to the Community.

## **Key Actions**

### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Form a 'Friends' group of volunteers to visit and befriend people in need;
- Organise an annual festival and associated activities to promote and celebrate the cultural life of the community and promote local clubs, groups, societies and associations.

### Shinfield Parish Council

- Support local clubs, groups and associations to develop and promote their services and activities.

#### Shinfield Parish Community Partnership

- Support the youth club to encourage young people to participate in challenging and enjoyable educational and cultural activities;
- Contact groups and organisers to discover what help they need to grow and widen their membership.

## TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

### Overview

Consultation demonstrated that transport – and especially traffic and parking – are major concerns for local residents in all parts of the Parish. The effects are felt on the quality of life, on the ability to access different facilities around the Parish and on community cohesion.

Levels of car ownership are amongst the highest in the country and the two major through-routes and the A327 offer good communications for drivers but are subject to congestion during peak periods. Public transport varies greatly across the Parish. Those living north of the M4 benefit from good bus services. East of the A33 levels of service have very recently been reduced and improvements are required if increased use of public transport is to be encouraged. Services to communities west of the A33 are very restricted. A network of footpaths and a limited number of cycle routes provide alternative means of transport and access both within and through the Parish.

The responses to consultations emphasised the need to reduce traffic congestion and to improve pedestrian access. The section on *Highways and Parking* focuses on the amount of congestion on the main routes, which has implications for air quality, noise, and pedestrian safety, and the impact of parking, often seen as an impediment to the full use of village facilities and activities. The rest of the sections in this chapter *Public and Community Transport*, *Cycle Routes* and *Footways* have a dual focus on reducing congestion and improving community cohesion and healthy life-style and there is special consideration of *Routes to School*.

Proposed future development within the Parish will require careful consideration of Transport and Access to ensure that development is sustainable - that it has sufficient capacity while minimizing environmental impact. It should ensure that alternatives to private vehicles are encouraged through improvement to public transport, cycle and footpaths. However, it should also acknowledge the reliance of many residents on private transport and therefore a continued need for appropriate highway and parking infrastructure.

## Highways and Public Transport

### Background:

The M4 motorway cuts through the northern part of the Parish, and junction 11 on the boundary with Reading Borough is the major traffic hub in the area. In addition to the A33, there are three main through routes, the A327 which, like the A33, runs north-south and the B3270 and B3349 which run east-west across the Parish. These roads act as feeders to the villages of the Parish, but the M4 and the parallel B3270 effectively separate Shinfield North from the rest of the Parish, and similarly the A33 dual carriageway separates Grazeley and Great Lea from the major part of the Parish to the east.

The principal issues relate to congestion especially at peak periods. This is mainly caused by through traffic but is also affected by local traffic within the Parish, especially that associated with school transport (see below). Contributing factors are the existing road network, particularly the B3349 and A327 which are inadequate for current levels of traffic, and the high levels of car ownership and inadequacies of public transport (see below). Some narrow lanes are used as rat-runs at peak times and the current trial of one-way working along Hyde End Lane and Ryeish Lane to the north of Hyde End Road is succeeding in reducing the number of vehicles using this route. Outside peak periods speed of traffic is an issue, especially on the rural roads through the communities west of the A33.

A consequence of congestion is air and noise pollution. Away from the main roads the air quality south of the M4 seems satisfactory. However recordings on the A327 and on Whitley Wood Lane both in Shinfield North show levels of pollution well above targets set by the Borough Council. There are no available figures for Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross or beside the motorway junction. Small aircraft performing aerobatics are another cause of noise pollution.

The second concern is parking. Four main issues were identified:

- Parking for local shops and amenities;
- Match-day parking for the Madejski Stadium;
- Parking provision in estates; and
- Parking on pavements and its effects on pedestrians and drivers of disabled vehicles.

There is a public car park on the edge of the Green at School Green and off-road parking along the Basingstoke Road in Spencers Wood. Elsewhere busy through roads and narrow lanes mean that parking on pavements and grass verges can be a major problem, especially around local shops and other amenities. This is even more pronounced when there are special occasions in the villages and on match days at the Madejski Stadium, when cars are parked along the roadsides in Three Mile Cross and Great Lea. Even in new housing developments high levels of car ownership mean that parking provision (which is laid down by the Borough Council in accordance with planning guidance) is inadequate and parked cars encroach on open spaces and can dominate the appearance of the area. Where cars park on pavements it is often difficult for pedestrians with pushchairs, people in wheelchairs or with sight impairment, and drivers of disabled vehicles to get past forcing them to walk in the road.

## The Future

The present re-configuration of Junction 11 of the M4 is necessary because of current levels of traffic and anticipated future growth, but is likely to result in even heavier traffic on the approach roads through the Parish. Other major schemes that will affect roads and traffic that are currently proposed in, and adjacent to, the Parish include:

- a. The major Park-and-Ride facility on the A33 at MereOak;
- b. An improved shopping centre immediately north of the Parish on the A327, which should result in a decrease in through traffic on the A327 north of the Black Boy roundabout;
- c. A by-pass to be constructed to the east of School Green if major development goes ahead in Arborfield.

If constructed, the by-pass would ease traffic on the current A327 but would be likely to increase congestion at the Black Boy Roundabout where it is proposed that it would rejoin the existing route.

Much of Shinfield Parish is characterised by small settlements in rural settings, with busy through roads and narrow lanes. These need to be retained to sustain the individual character and identities of the villages. With a few modifications it should be possible to achieve this by segregating most through traffic from local traffic. To achieve this it will also be necessary to improve the management of parking. It is important that any new development should include, as part of the integral planning process, provision for good and imaginative off-road parking schemes. There is concern about the extant planning permission for a fifty per cent expansion of the Madejski Stadium with no additional parking provision.

## **Aspirations**

- TA 1. To reduce excessive speeding and 'rat-running'.
- TA 2. To ensure that new main roads have a minimum number of stopping points in order to reduce noise and air pollution.
- TA 3. To improve the flow of traffic through the villages with junctions and pedestrian crossing lights and lay-bys at bus stops.
- TA 4. To use 'silent' road surfaces in residential areas.
- TA 5. To allow for increased off-road parking in all future developments.
- TA 6. To make provision for adequate parking at local shops, churches and other amenities.
- TA 7. To improve safety by restricting parking at junctions and pedestrian crossings.

## **Key Actions**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Monitor the progress of existing developments to ensure that they are completed in accordance with the planning conditions;
- Ensure that the plans for proposed projects include appropriate enhancement and other features of benefit to the community;
- Reduce speed limits throughout the Parish in line with new Government

guidance;

- Retain the one-way system north of Hyde End Road after the end of the current trial period;
- Provide frequent public transport from all parts of the Parish to the proposed MereOak Park-and-Ride facility, if it goes ahead, and mitigate the effects of any increased journeys through the Parish to the facility;
- Curtail parking around the road junction at School Green;
- Provide additional car parking for local shops throughout the Parish;
- Create a bus lay-by parking area on Basingstoke Road opposite Warings Bakery;
- Improve parking facilities at Millworth Lane for Shinfield Recreation Ground;
- Provide clearly defined parking places for St Mary's Church, Shinfield;
- Promote (with Reading Borough Council) the provision of adequate parking places for the proposed improved shopping centre at Shinfield Rise.

#### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Organise a campaign to discourage parking on pavements in conjunction with Thames Valley Police.

## Public and Community Transport

### Background

There is no rail service within the Parish. There is a station on the Basingstoke-Reading branch line in Mortimer which is well-used by commuters. A new station is planned on the same line north of the M4 beyond the Parish boundary, serving the Green Park Business Park and the Madejski Football Stadium complex.

Bus services are tabulated below. Services west of the A33 are very restricted, otherwise the main services are generally reasonable but some routes could be improved by extending the times at which they operate.

Bus	Route	Desirable improvements
6	Reading to 'old' Shinfield Park	
9	Reading to Shinfield Rise, Shinfield Park	Large double-decker buses not well suited to some roads in new estates
20, 21	Reading to Lower Earley	
72	Reading to Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood (then) Swallowfield and Aldershot Improved service to be introduced from July 13th	Run Sunday service
111	Reading to Spencers Wood (a small number of services continue to Riseley) To be withdrawn from July 13 apart from evening and Sunday services	Run early bus on Saturday mornings for those working; run buses later into the evening Mon-Weds & Sundays
112	Reading to Spencers Wood via School Green and Shinfield North To be withdrawn from July13	Re-instate service and provide services in afternoons and evenings
144	Reading to Wokingham via Shinfield and Arborfield	
154	Reading to Loddon Court Farm via Beech Hill and Grazeley (Thursdays and Saturdays only)	Increase frequency

The lack of services west of the A33 means that residents of Grazeley, Poundgreen and Hartley Court are almost entirely dependent on private transport (or taxis). The limited service between Spencers Wood and School Green further affects access to local facilities within the Parish. The limitations of bus services outside school and working hours affects those without cars or those unable to drive, especially disabled and young people wanting to take part in leisure activities at any distance or to travel to Reading and beyond. They are generally forced to rely on parents and friends to use cars, or to take taxis, which increases congestion and carbon output.

Some services are provided for people who find it difficult to get out and about, both by volunteers and by official bodies. Volunteers for example take elderly people to and from Spring Gardens old persons' home for lunch and other special occasions and Swallowfield Medical Practice organizes transport to hospital. The Library Service runs the mobile library and the Home Library service that relies on volunteers to help people to get the books of their choice.

'Readibus' provides a limited service for people who cannot travel on ordinary buses and it will take people by prior arrangement to and from Reading or to local centres, such as a surgery or the Asda shopping complex. A similar service is operated by 'Keep Mobile', a Wokingham-based charity.

### The Future

It is essential that improved public transport should be an integral part of any further housing development, especially if the SDL is approved, if there is not to be a significant increase in congestion.

The proposed Mere oak Park-and-Ride and the new station at Green Park have the potential to significantly improve the public transport network. Its success will however depend on good public transport links to both facilities from all parts of the Parish. This should include provision for those using class 3 road vehicles (i.e. mobility scooters) and provision of other mobility aids for those that need them.

Community cohesion could be improved by an affordable shuttle bus service linking communities and providing access to facilities. The service could perhaps be staffed by volunteers.

### Aspirations

TA 8. To provide a more comprehensive bus service by extending the operating times of some services.

TA 9. To provide an affordable shuttle bus service linking communities and providing access to facilities.

TA 10. To integrate bus services with rail services and the proposed Mere oak Park-and-Ride, if this goes ahead.

TA 11. To ensure that safety, security and access (camber, ramps, dropped kerbs, path width) for wheelchairs etc is fully considered in existing and future development schemes.

## **Key Actions**

### Wokingham Borough Council

- Impose improvements to public transport provision as a planning condition for proposed developments and ensure these are enforced.

### Shinfield Parish Council

- Negotiate extension of operating times with bus operating companies.

### Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Establish an affordable shuttle bus service staffed by volunteers or a volunteer driver scheme linking communities and providing access to facilities;
- Maintain a list of people who would use the above scheme.

## **Cycle Routes**

### Background

The encouragement of cycling – for leisure and as a means of transport to and from school and work - is seen as an important contribution to reducing traffic and improving health and lifestyles. However, provision for cyclists is currently poor. National Cycle Route 23, between Reading and Basingstoke passes through Green Park and Grazeley while a short section of the 'round Berkshire' cycle route passes through the south of Spencers Wood. There is only one route linking the communities within the Parish, a shared footpath/cycleway linking Ryeish Green to School Green and Shinfield Park, and no routes linking to the national cycle network or to existing routes into Reading, which in a number of cases start at the Parish boundary.

The Wokingham Borough Cycling Strategy 2007 is currently under review and so far there has been little or no investment in the Parish. With the mix of main routes and minor narrow roads and lanes used by an ever-increasing number of motor vehicles there are serious safety issues which deter cyclists and potential cyclists.

At present a further disincentive for cyclists is the lack of provision for cycles to be left securely at shops, leisure facilities, etc.

### The Future

The Borough Council's Core Strategy and the proposals of individual developers all include increased provision for cyclists on proposed new estates. However, by itself this is insufficient. Cycle routes throughout the Parish need to be improved and there needs to be more encouragement for people to use cycles and leave cars at home especially as the population and traffic congestion increase.

For this to happen, it is necessary to have more than just cycle tracks alongside existing roads. The tracks must be separated from road traffic, and be attractive, welcoming and, above all, safe. They need to meet the needs of different groups of cycle-users - commuters and school pupils as well as leisure cyclists and casual riders.

### Aspirations

TA 12. To provide a network of safe and attractive cycle routes that encourage leisure use.

TA 13. To provide quick and more direct routes for commuters and other users.

TA 14. To provide safe cycle routes to schools and safe-cycle training to encourage children to cycle to school.

TA 15. To ensure provision for new cycle routes and connections to existing routes as part of the planning conditions for residential and commercial development.

TA 16. To link existing and new cycle routes not just within the Parish and Wokingham Borough but also to surrounding authorities and the national cycle network.

## **Key Actions**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Implement the cycle routes proposed in the Wokingham Cycling Strategy 2007 fully and urgently;
- Widen shared paths for improved safety of cyclists and pedestrians;
- Link cycle routes with those beyond the Borough;
- Improve the footbridge over the M4 and B3270 to make it more 'cycle-friendly'.

Wokingham Borough Council, Shinfield Parish Council, Schools, Employers

- Provide places for cycles to be left securely.

Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Organise a campaign to encourage cycling to include:
  - Establishing a local cycling club, possibly in association with local cycle shop;
  - Organising a programme of Sunday cycle rides;
  - Encouraging employers to provide showers/changing facilities and to join the 'Tax-free bike for work' campaign;
  - Offering basic cycle maintenance classes etc., possibly in association with a local cycle shop;
  - Encouraging schools to offer cycle proficiency training for pupils (and parents).

## **Footways**

### Note

The term 'footways' is used here to define pedestrian paths. These may be (i) at the side of roads ('pavements'), (ii) tarmac paths away from roads and (iii) paths or tracks, including public rights of way, that may at present not be surfaced but which perform a significant role in daily access from home to schools, work, shops etc.

### Background

During consultations a number of difficulties have been identified which discourage use of footways in most parts of the Parish, including:

- Footways that would be more-heavily used but which are considered unsafe due to inadequate lighting, overhanging vegetation or just being too narrow;
- Use of pavements by cyclists due to inadequate provision of cycle routes;
- Insufficient pedestrian crossings especially on routes to schools and at shopping areas.

Parking on pavements and double parking around schools, especially Whiteknights School, are particular problems.

### The Future

CP6 of the Borough Council's Core Strategy recognizes the need to enhance facilities for pedestrians as part of improvements to the existing infrastructure network. As with provision for cyclists, restricting improvements to new developments will not of itself encourage people to walk more. A holistic view needs to be adopted requiring developers to improve existing facilities in order to have a major impact on people's habits. The network should be planned on the 'wish routes' principle: the route that people would take if they could.

### Aspirations

TA 17. To improve the condition of pavements and ensure that footways are maintained in good condition.

TA 18. To surface footpaths (public rights of way) which are not currently surfaced but which perform a significant role in daily access from home to school, work and shops etc with scalping or similar.

TA 19. To separate footways from road traffic to make them attractive, welcoming and safe.

TA 20. To ensure that the network of footways is reviewed with regard to access to shops, schools and other facilities.

## **Key Actions**

Wokingham Borough Council

- Improve pavements on all approaches to Lambs Lane School;
- Install all-weather surfacing on public rights of way serving as routes to school, work and shops;

- Provide crossings on Hollow Lane and School Green;
- Establish a walking and cycling route to Grazeley School, including a footbridge over the A33 linking with the proposed Park-and-Ride facility, if constructed;
- Ensure that new developments include adequate provision for pedestrian routes and that these are enforced;
- Surface Footpath 11 from School Green to Church Lane to enhance its use for residents in the new housing to the north of School Green as previously agreed.

## **Routes to School**

### Background

The Parish suffers from a great deal of through traffic, including traffic using Junction 11 of the M4 motorway. The amount of traffic is greatly increased by cars carrying children to-and-from school in the mornings and afternoons during term times. This increases air pollution and the parking causes nuisance to both residents and other vehicle-users. Reducing school traffic is seen as an important objective and has the added benefit of encouraging healthier lifestyles and promoting community engagement.

There are seven schools in the area (plus Ryeish Green School due to close in 2010) as well as nursery/play groups, and approximately fifty per cent of the children are transported by car. Some children travel considerable distances, but many live near enough to their schools to walk.

### In Future

Increased population as a result of development is likely to increase school traffic. This situation will be further exacerbated by the additional journeys generated by students travelling to secondary schools outside the Parish.

One of the main aims of the Plan is to encourage walking and cycling to school, both of which would benefit healthy living as well as reducing congestion and pollution. Many children of the Parish could walk or cycle to Ryeish Green School, but are very unlikely to do so if their designated school is Emmbrook or Bulmershe.

### Aspirations

TA 21. Parents should be encouraged to walk or cycle with their children to school where feasible and to share car journeys where not.

TA 22. All schools should have defined 'drop off' and 'collect' points within their premises, i.e. off the public roads.

TA 23. The number of local authority school bus services for secondary school children in the Parish should be increased with special provision to allow them to participate in before and after-school activities.

## **Key Actions**

### Schools

- Regularly revise School Travel Plans to take account of development.
- Draw up detailed policies to encourage parents and pupils to travel to schools by walking, or to share lifts when travelling by car, or to use dedicated bus services.

### Wokingham Borough Council

- Define and provide safe and secure walking routes to schools;
- Provide improved bus services for schools, including services that allow secondary age students to attend before-school and after-school activities;
- Construct 'off-road' drop-off points for parents' cars.

## Shinfield Parish Volunteers

- Organise a campaign to encourage parents and children to walk or cycle to school.

## ACTION PLAN

The various actions identified in the previous four chapters have been brought together in a single list, highlighting the organisation designated to lead their implementation and identifying other key partners. A target date for each action has already been, or will be, identified to try to ensure that progress is made towards achieving targets within a reasonable timescale. A second list arranged by the lead partner will be drawn up for ease of reference.

To co-ordinate and oversee the implementation of the Action Plan, a Community Partnership is to be established, comprising representatives of all the 'lead' organisations as well as other key local organisations and employers. It is anticipated that the Community Partnership will meet three or four times a year to monitor progress and to agree further action if required. It may also act as the Lead Partner on certain actions.

Colour coding:

Green Environment

Blue Education and the Economy

Lavender Social and Community

Yellow Transport and Access

## The Environment

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
1. Provide recycling facilities in Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross and Grazeley	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
2. Ensure that the green spaces are kept in between the individual villages to preserve the character of each	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
3. Install distinctive paved areas at key locations such as outside the parade of shops in School Green	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
4. Ensure that all new properties meet or exceed the latest government energy-efficiency requirements	Wokingham Borough Council	Developers	

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
5. Identify 'black spots' where overhead wiring is unsightly and press for its removal whenever an opportunity arises	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
6. Plant appropriate trees in each settlement across the Parish	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council, Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
7. Establish Gateways into the Parish at main access points	Shinfield Parish Council	Wokingham Borough Council	
8. Provide seating for the public at bus stops, street corners and quiet places	Shinfield Parish Council		
9. Replace worn/damaged street furniture, such as the bus stop at School Green, and provide ongoing maintenance	Shinfield Parish Council		
10. Assist with regularly clearing of litter from roadside verge ditches	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Shinfield Parish Council	
11. Support the litter pick organised by Wokingham Borough Council.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council	Annual
12. Co-ordinate the maintenance and long term monitoring of old and new drainage systems and ensure that provisions are in place so that they are properly managed	Environment Agency	Landowners, Wokingham Borough Council	
13. Monitor the state of ditches and maintain a database recording their condition and recommended action	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council	
14. Assist landowners with cutting back growth of vegetation in roadside verge ditches so that flow of water is not blocked	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Landowners	Annually at the end of summer

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
15. Investigate the potential for creating new Local Wildlife Sites or local nature reserves	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers, Shinfield Parish Council	
16. Promote and publicise Shinfield's wildlife heritage	Shinfield Parish Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
17. List and publicise local environmental organisations and their particular interests.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Shinfield Parish Council	
18. Participate in the management of habitats and the development of other wildlife friendly areas, e.g. :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o leave corner allotments for wildlife;</li> <li>o establish recognised wildlife corridors.</li> </ul>	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council; Shinfield Parish Council; Allotment holders organisations	
19. Undertake further detailed surveys of the local ecology and record sites of wildlife interest	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council	
20. Draw up habitat management plans for sites of value to the community	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council	
21. Monitor the progress of existing habitat management plans for Local Wildlife Sites	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Wokingham Borough Council	
22. Require the enhancement of existing rights of way in Rushy Mead, including the construction of a route alongside the River Loddon as a condition of Planning permission for the proposed construction of wind turbines in Rushy Mead	Wokingham Borough Council	Landowners, Developers	

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
23. Negotiate with landowners to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish a public right of way along that length of the River Loddon from the Mill House on the Basingstoke Road to the Aborfield Road (A327) crossing near Parrot Farm;</li> <li>○ Extend the path on the east of Shinfield Recreation Ground (Footpath 15) to the River Loddon;</li> <li>○ Establish a bridleway from Shinfield to Aborfield Cross</li> </ul>	Wokingham Borough Council	Landowners	
24. Impose restrictions on the use of byways to discourage their abuse by motor-cycles and quadbikes	Wokingham Borough Council		
25. Ensure that all new footpath routes are a minimum of 3 metres wide to allow for verges at each side for wildlife	Wokingham Borough Council		
26. Replace the stile with a kissing gate and improve 'footing' at the entrance to Spencers Wood Common on the Basingstoke Road opposite Spring Gardens (Footpath 23)	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
27. Notify landowners who have a legal responsibility to maintain, reinstate or repair footpaths	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
28. Establish a set of footpath notice boards at strategic points in the Parish	Shinfield Parish Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
29. Undertake clearance of routes to enhance access to public rights of way	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council; Landowners	
30. Monitor the condition of footpaths informing Wokingham Borough Council when maintenance or repairs are required so that they can take appropriate actions with landowners.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Wokingham Borough Council	

## Education and the Economy

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
31.Ensure that appropriate local information, advice and assistance is provided to families	Red Kite Children's Centre	Early Years Providers, Children's Information Service	Ongoing
32.Ensure the most beneficial range of extended services are available	Parents and community groups	Primary Schools, Red Kite Children's Centre	Ongoing
33.Ensure the most appropriate and beneficial range of extended services opportunities are available, either in school or in the local community	Parents, young people and community groups	Secondary Schools, Red Kite Children's Centre	Ongoing
34.Improve secondary education provision for the Parish	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Wokingham BC, parents, young people and local businesses	Ongoing
35.Further investigate the need for lifelong learning opportunities, and the consequent strengthening and development of local provision	Shinfield Parish Council	Wokingham BC and the local community	August 2010
36.Explore the possibility of local bases for lifelong learning.	Shinfield Parish Council	Local churches, associations and other bodies	August 2010
37.Support, or facilitate access to support for, local clubs and associations which wish to develop their offer to local people.	Shinfield Parish Council	Local clubs and associations	On-going

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
38.Explore the possibility of establishing a University of the Third Age (U3A) group in the Parish	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	December 2009
39.Liaise with local groups regarding the provision of short hobby-type courses.	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
40.Compile a register of people who would be interested in participating in such courses.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	
41.Prioritise the new occupancy of the empty business units and the conversion of redundant farm buildings for commercial purposes before granting permission for new builds in order to achieve greater sustainability as well as a more prosperous appearance.	Wokingham Borough Council	Developers, Landowners	Ongoing
42.Adopt as one of its stated Aims and Duties the support and development of the local economy, so that this aim is reflected in its various decisions and comments on local issues.	Shinfield Parish Council		March 2010
43.Consider whether it has a role to play in leading a partnership approach to support the delivery of a strong, diverse economy in Shinfield; if so, to develop these themes and agree a more detailed action plan.	Shinfield Parish Council	Wokingham Borough Council, other agencies and businesses	March 2010
44.Consider by its role in understanding local skills, how skill gaps might be filled and develop an action plan to address identified issues.	Shinfield Parish Council		March 2010
45.Work with Post Offices to ensure future sustainability.	Shinfield Parish Council	Post Office/ owners	ongoing
46.Establish contact with local small businesses and home-workers and establish whether any additional support is required.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers		

## Social and Community Development

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
47. Provide a new community hall at Hillside in Shinfield Rise	Wokingham Borough Council		
48. Provide suitable accommodation for elderly residents in Shinfield Rise	Wokingham Borough Council		
49. Facilitate the construction of the café/meeting place in St Michael's Church, Spencers Wood	Diocese of Oxford		
50. Extend the distribution of Loddon Reach to cover the whole Parish	Diocese of Oxford	Shinfield Parish Council	
51. Maximise the use of existing community buildings providing support as required to ensure their future	Shinfield Parish Council	Management Groups, Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
52. Further improve communications with residents including promoting awareness of bus routes and timetables and local groups & clubs	Shinfield Parish Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
53. Retain and enhance community facilities on the site of the current Ryeish Green School to use for the benefit of the community	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
54. Provide more indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities including places for young and old people to meet	Wokingham Borough Council	Sport England, Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
55. Create new pleasant green areas for people to sit and converse	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council, Shinfield Parish Community Partnership, Shinfield Parish Volunteers	

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
56. Plan for additional allotments associated with all major housing developments	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
57. Support the recruitment and training of volunteers to further assist the running of activities such as scout and guide groups and youth clubs	Shinfield Parish Council	Youth Organisations	
58. Provide outreach medical services in Three Mile Cross	Berkshire West PCT		
59. Negotiate access to public fishing spaces on the banks of the River Loddon	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Land Owners	
60. Form a 'Friends' group of volunteers to visit and befriend people in need	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Shinfield Parish Council, local Churches	
61. Organise an annual festival and associated activities and events to promote and celebrate the cultural life of the community and promote local clubs, groups, societies and associations	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	local clubs, groups, societies and associations; Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	
62. Support local clubs, groups and associations to develop and promote their services and activities	Shinfield Parish Council	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	
63. Support the youth club to encourage young people to participate in challenging and enjoyable educational and cultural activities	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership		
64. Contact groups and organisers to discover what help they need to grow and widen their membership.	Shinfield Parish Community Partnership	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	

## Transport and Access

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
<p>65. Monitor the progress of existing developments to ensure that they are completed in accordance with the planning conditions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New Shinfield Park roadworks at the entrances;</li> <li>○ Beaufort Grange bus stop locations and other works;</li> <li>○ Halls Lane completion of junctions of roads and pathways;</li> <li>○ School Green pedestrian crossing;</li> <li>○ Brookers Hill junction signal loops.</li> </ul>	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
<p>66. Ensure that the plans for the following proposed projects include appropriate enhancement and other features of benefit to the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ M4 - Sound Barriers;</li> <li>○ Whitley Wood Lane - signalised T-junction;</li> <li>○ Church Lane - roundabout and lane closure at the Six Bells P.H.;</li> <li>○ School Green and Hollow Lane – foot ways;</li> <li>○ The Manor development - footpath exits to the bus stop on Hollow Lane;</li> <li>○ Green Park railway station - access routes.</li> </ul>	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council	
<p>67. Reduce speed limits throughout the Parish in line with new Government guidance</p>	Wokingham Borough Council		
<p>68. Retain the one-way system north of Hyde End Road after the end of the current trial period</p>	Wokingham Borough Council		
<p>69. Provide frequent public transport from all parts of the Parish to the proposed MereOak Park-and-Ride facility, if it goes ahead, and mitigate the effects of any increased journeys through the Parish to the facility</p>	Wokingham Borough Council		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
70.Curtail parking around the road junction at School Green	Wokingham Borough Council		
71.Provide additional car parking for local shops throughout the Parish	Wokingham Borough Council		
72.Create a bus lay-by parking area on Basingstoke Road opposite Warings Bakery	Wokingham Borough Council		
73.Improve parking facilities at Millworth Lane for Shinfield Recreation Ground	Wokingham Borough Council		
74.Provide clearly defined parking places for St Mary's Church, Shinfield	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
75.Promote the provision of adequate parking places for the proposed improved shopping centre at Shinfield Rise	Wokingham Borough Council	Reading Borough Council	
76.Organise a campaign to discourage parking on pavements	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	NAG, Thames Valley Police	
77.Impose improvements to public transport provision as a planning condition for proposed developments	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Council, developers	
78.Negotiate extension of operating times with bus operating companies	Shinfield Parish Council	Wokingham Borough Council, Bus Companies	
79.Establish an affordable shuttle bus service staffed by volunteers or a volunteer driver scheme linking communities and providing access to facilities	Shinfield Parish Volunteers		

Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners	Target date
80.Maintain a list of people who would use the above scheme	Shinfield Parish Volunteers		
81.Implement fully the cycle routes proposed in the Wokingham Cycling Strategy 2007	Wokingham Borough Council		March 2010
82.Widen shared paths for improved safety of cyclists and pedestrians	Wokingham Borough Council		
83.Link cycle routes with those beyond the Borough	Wokingham Borough Council		
84.Improve the footbridge over the M4 and B3270 to make it more 'cycle friendly'	Wokingham Borough Council		
85.Provide places for cycles to be left securely	Shinfield Parish Council	Wokingham Borough Council, Schools, Employers	
86.Organise a campaign to encourage cycling to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establishing a local cycling club, possibly in association with local cycle shop;</li> <li>○ Organising a programme of Sunday cycle rides;</li> <li>○ Encouraging employers to provide showers/changing facilities and to join the 'Tax-free bike for work' campaign;</li> <li>○ Offer basic cycle maintenance classes etc., possibly in association with a local cycle shop;</li> <li>○ Encouraging schools to offer cycle proficiency training for pupils</li> </ul>	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Local cycle shop, Schools	

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
87.Improve pavements on all approaches to Lambs Lane School	Wokingham Borough Council		
88.Install all-weather surfacing on public rights of way serving as routes to school, work and shops	Wokingham Borough Council	Shinfield Parish Volunteers, Shinfield Parish Council	
89.Provide crossings on Hollow Lane and School Green;	Wokingham Borough Council		
90.Establish a walking and cycling route to Grazeley School, including a footbridge over the A33 linking with the proposed Park-and-Ride facility, if constructed;	Wokingham Borough Council		
91.Ensure that new developments include adequate provision for pedestrian routes and that these are enforced	Wokingham Borough Council		
92.Surface Footpath 11 from School Green to Church Lane to enhance its use for residents in the new housing to the north of School Green as previously agreed.	Wokingham Borough Council		
93.Revise School Travel Plans to take account of development	Schools	Wokingham Borough Council	Annually
94.Draw up detailed policies to encourage parents and pupils to travel to schools by walking, or share lifts when travelling by car or to use dedicated bus services.	Schools	Parent Teacher Organisations, Shinfield Parish Volunteers	
95.Define and provide safe and secure walking routes to schools.	Wokingham Borough Council	Schools	

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>Target date</b>
96. Provide improved bus services for schools, including services that allow secondary age students to attend before-school and after-school activities.	Wokingham Borough Council	Schools	
97. Construct 'off-road' drop-off points for parents' cars.	Wokingham Borough Council	Schools	
98. Organise a campaign to encourage parents and children to walk or cycle to school.	Shinfield Parish Volunteers	Schools, Parent Teacher Organisations	

### HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

It is Government Policy that local communities should have more control over their own lives. Parish, or Community, Plans are seen as one way in which this can be achieved and Parish Councils are encouraged to facilitate the process as part of the scheme for Quality Parish Councils, which is intended to improve both the effectiveness of Parish Councils and the quality of life of local residents.

The Government Department responsible for the initiative is DEFRA<sup>10</sup> but responsibility for providing advice and support is delegated to the Rural Community Action Network; in Berkshire this is the Community Council for Berkshire (CCB). Shinfield Parish Council is keen to achieve Quality Council Status and therefore decided to support the parish planning process locally.

In December 2005 a Steering Group was set up to co-ordinate the work. Although sponsored by the Parish Council, and including some members of the Council, the Steering Group was, from the beginning, independent of the Parish Council with an independent chairperson and membership drawn from interested individuals and organisations in the Parish as well as a representative from the Community Council for Berkshire.

At its first meeting, faced with the pressures for further development the Steering Group decided that the first priority was the production of Village Character Statements, a form of planning guidance for developers and local authorities, setting out the views of local people on the type of development that they wish to see. So far, Village Character Statements have been produced for School Green and for Spencers Wood, Ryeish Green and Three Mile Cross (collectively 'Our Villages' after the book by Mary Mitford) and the Grazeley Area. It is anticipated that a final VCS for Shinfield North will be published later in 2009.

Having completed the first two Village Character Statements, the Steering Group turned to the task of producing the Community Plan itself. As this had always been the intention, consultation undertaken when working on the Village Character Statements had also gathered information for the Community Plan and much evidence was already available. Based on this evidence, four working groups were established to focus on the four key areas of community concern: the **Environment, Education and the Economy, Social and Community** and **Transport and Access**.

The groups were set up during the spring and autumn of 2008 from people who had already expressed an interest in these subjects during the consultation. The work became more intense so that those groups established in the autumn only had three or four months in which to carry out their work before the first drafts of their reports were produced. At the same time work began on some of the recommendations that had emerged from the groups set up in the spring. This included the establishment of a group of 'Footpath Volunteers' and the start of bi-monthly 'parish walks'. This process will continue with the establishment of the Shinfield Parish Volunteers during the final consultation phase during spring and early summer 2009.

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<sup>10</sup> The Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs

Throughout this period consultations have taken place with local communities – sometimes at events specially organised by the Steering Group and at other times as part of other events such as village fetes and carnivals. Every month there has been a report on progress in the parish magazines and more information has been made available through our website. They all brought in more comments and suggestions from local residents – and new volunteers. A full list of consultations undertaken is included below.

Another important part of the Parish Planning process has been the completion of the Market Towns Healthcheck. Although there is no way in which Shinfield could be described as a market town, the population of the Parish is larger than towns like Hungerford and as a result, the Parish is eligible to apply for project funding which could be used to part fund one of the major projects in the Action Plan, such as the provision of community facilities in Shinfield North or at St. Michael's in Spencers Wood. With this incentive the Steering Group decided to complete the Healthcheck which has subsequently proved useful in giving shape to our plan.

Throughout this process Shinfield Parish Council has given generous support including funding the post of a part time project officer. Grants have also been received from Wokingham Borough Council for the publication of the Village Character Statements and from the Community Council for Berkshire.

Finally I would like to thank the many colleagues who have worked so hard on the Community Plan - and the Village Character Statements - and especially the chairs of the four working groups and other members of the Steering Group and most of all Elaine Butler, the part time project officer, who has put in far more time than she was ever paid for and without whose diligence and enthusiasm none of this would have been possible.

Jeremy Saunders, Chair of the Steering Group

#### Public Consultations

Date	Place/Event
March 2006 - Sept 2009	Consultations for Our Villages, Shinfield School Green and the Grazeley Area VCSs (detailed in VCSs)
9 <sup>th</sup> June 2007	Special public launch event at St Barnabas Hall (for Shinfield North)
26 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Display, questionnaires, competitions and consultation at Swallowfield Show
15 <sup>th</sup> September 2007	Display and consultation at Spencers Wood Carnival
17 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	Display and consultation at Shinfield Infant School parents evening
October & November 2007	Questionnaire/competition – delivery to houses in Shinfield North
1 <sup>st</sup> December 2007	Display, questionnaire, competition and consultation at Whiteknights School Christmas Fare
18 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	Prize draw for competition
29 <sup>th</sup> March 2008	Display and consultation at Spencers Wood Easter Parade

12 <sup>th</sup> April 2008	Environment Day – six walks around the Parish followed by lunch and displays and consultations in the Parish Hall
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2008	Display and short report at Annual Parish Meeting
5 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	Display and consultation at May Day Fare and Fun Run, School Green
24 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> August 2008	Display and consultation at Swallowfield Show, Spencers Wood
13 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	Display and consultation at Spencers Wood Carnival
13 <sup>th</sup> –14 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Display and consultation at Shinfield Winter Carnival, School Green
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Final feedback display and consultation in the Parish Hall, School Green
28 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Final feedback display and consultation at Three Mile Cross
9 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Final feedback display and consultation at Shinfield Rise Residents Association meeting
23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2009	Display and short report at Annual Parish Meeting

In addition presentations were made to and consultations held with the following groups:

Chapel Lane Pre-School  
 Cricket Club  
 Guides & Brownies  
 Jacobs  
 Nortons  
 Pound Green Women's Institute  
 Ryeish Green School  
 Scouts & Cubs  
 Senior Citizens Club  
 Shinfield Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association  
 Shinfield and District Local History Society  
 Shinfield Association  
 Shinfield Rangers Football Club  
 Shinfield Rise Residents Association  
 Shinfield Tennis Club  
 Spencers Wood Allotment Group  
 Spencers Wood Baby and Toddler Group  
 Spencers Wood Badminton Club  
 Spencers Wood Football Club  
 Spencers Wood Local History Group  
 Spencers Wood Youth Club  
 Spring Gardens Home  
 St Mary's Mothers Union  
 St Michael and All Angels Church, Spencer Wood  
 Swallowfield Womens Institute  
 various local shops and businesses

## **Appendix Two**

### **THE EVIDENCE BASE**

During its preparation a great deal of evidence has been gathered which it has not been possible to include in full in this Plan. However, it is important that this information is available both to justify and support the proposals contained in the Plan and to provide more detailed information when it comes to implementing the actions contained in the Action Plan.

This evidence takes a variety of forms including photographs and drawings by children who participated through their schools, completed questionnaires and notes of consultation meetings. There are also minutes of the meetings of the working groups and papers and reports prepared by members of working groups. In addition there are the four Village Character Statements as well as the Rural Towns Health Check, all prepared as part of the Parish Planning process. Finally there are a number of other documents and papers produced by organisations like Wokingham Borough Council and the Community Council for Berkshire which provided valuable evidence in compiling the Plan.

These documents may be found on the Shinfield Parish Council website or on other official websites where the information is owned by other parties.