

# The Wheathampstead Village Plan



# The Wheathampstead Village Plan

First Edition, Update 1: May 2009



## Contents

1. Welcome to the Wheathampstead Village Plan .....	3
2. This is Wheathampstead .....	5
3. The Village Plan project .....	11
4. The Main Priorities .....	14
5. Shops and Businesses .....	16
6. Traffic and Transport .....	20
7. Crime and Disorder .....	27
8. Youth and Leisure .....	29
9. The Environment .....	33
10. Planning .....	39
11. Village Day .....	43
12. List of Organisations owning action points .....	45
13. Acknowledgements .....	46
14. Appendices .....	46



## **1. Welcome to the Wheathampstead Village Plan**

This Plan is the culmination of the work done by Wheathampstead Parish Council and others over the past year to recognise the main interests and concerns that we have as parishioners, and to identify opportunities for promoting those interests and tackling the concerns.

The Plan begins by providing some background information about the village that, while it is general in nature, is also relevant to the issues that have been raised. The sections that follow, covering specific issues like Shops & Businesses, Traffic & Transport and Leisure, summarise the findings and set out Action Plans that specify what the community is able to do, who will do it and when.

### **1.1 WHAT THE VILLAGE PLAN IS FOR**

The aims of the Plan are to set out the priorities for what needs to be done in Wheathampstead, and to lobby local and central government for changes to our facilities and services.

We will not be operating in isolation. St Albans District Council has implemented a Sustainable Community Strategy that seeks to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, learns or works in the District, or who visits the area. We share those priorities. We want to ensure that Wheathampstead remains a healthy, active community which takes a pride in itself and in its future. We want to make sure it is a great place to be.

The Plan lists the main local issues and identifies appropriate ways of addressing them. Most of the information that we have used in recognising the main local issues comes from the answers that residents provided to the Village Plan Questionnaire issued in 2008; where other sources clearly demonstrated evidence of villagers' wishes, these were also taken into account.

Since it is based on the opinions of local people, the Plan will become a powerful tool in influencing authorities such as St Albans District Council and Hertfordshire County Council whenever they make decisions about Wheathampstead. It will also help the Parish Council to decide on priorities for the village. Reflecting the prevailing wishes

and priorities of everyone in Wheathampstead who has expressed an opinion is key to the Plan's existence and its success. It will be administered by the Parish Council, but the real owner is the local community.

The main output consists of a series of Action Plans covering each of the major issues raised in the questionnaire. Each action has an owner, such as Wheathampstead Parish Council, that will be responsible for making sure that what is proposed actually happens.

The Village Plan is a living concept. The Parish Council will be happy to receive feedback at any time on what has been done so far, and the questionnaire itself remains available for anyone to complete at any time. New versions of the questionnaire can be produced in the future, and the Plan itself will be revised and re-published as issues change or are resolved, and as new opportunities arise. For more information on how the Village Plan will work, please see section 3. The Village Plan project.

Councillor Iain Begg  
Chairman, Wheathampstead Village Plan Committee  
April 2009



## 2. This is Wheathampstead



This map has been reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
 © Crown copyright.  
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.  
 OS License No: 100018953 St Albans District Council 2009



### 2.1 GEOGRAPHY OF WHEATHAMPSTEAD

The parish of Wheathampstead occupies 2,599 hectares (10 square miles) of the western upland area of Hertfordshire. It is within the District of St Albans and it forms part of the parliamentary constituency of Harpenden and Hitchin.

The original settlement of Wheathampstead, much of which is now within a conservation area, lies in the valley of the river Lea. Most urban development has been up the steep southern side of the valley in the direction of St Albans. When looked at on a map, the modern village has an unusually square shape with clearly defined boundaries to the south – along the hilltop marking the edge of the valley, to the east – at Devil's Dyke, and to the west – along a line connecting Brewhouse Hill, Bury Green and Ash Grove. There has been less development immediately to the north, but the separate settlements of Gustard Wood and Lower Gustard Wood lie further out on the road to Kimpton (B651). The main road towards Luton (B653) runs close to the northern bank of the river and is built up for much of the way between Wheathampstead and Batford; this development includes The Folly and the Valley Estate. Also within the parish are the hamlets of Amwell and Nomansland, to the south-west of the main village, and Marshalls Heath and Sauncey Wood to the north-west. Most of the parish, however, consists of countryside; some of this is woodland but mainly it is open farmland.

Two main roads intersect at the roundabout just to the north of the river. The B653 connects Luton and Harpenden to the north-west with Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield to the south-east. The B651 leads from St Albans in the south to Hitchin and the villages of north Hertfordshire. Both these roads carry a heavy volume of traffic and feed into the motorway system that crosses Hertfordshire. (Traffic counts conducted in 2006 for Hertfordshire County Council indicate that the average weekday traffic flow between 6am and 10pm was 22,214 vehicles on the B653 – the count took place at Lemsford to the east of Wheathampstead – and 4,243 vehicles on the B651 at Gustard Wood. For comparison, the B653 figure is 30% higher than the count on the A1081 between St Albans and Harpenden, (17,146) and equivalent to half the traffic (44,609) on the A405 North Orbital Road at the Noke, Chiswell Green.) With the exception of the road to Southdown and Harpenden, all the other thoroughfares in the parish are either residential roads or country lanes.

## 2.2 POPULATION OF WHEATHAMPSTEAD

At the time of the latest census in 2001 the population of the village was 6,058. There were 2,419 households, and the average number of residents per household was therefore 2.5 (slightly higher than the Hertfordshire average of 2.3). The figures below show the proportions within different age ranges, and for comparison the equivalent figures are given for the whole of Hertfordshire.

	0 – 4	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 29	30 – 44	45 – 59	60 – 74	75 +
<b>Wheathampstead</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
All Hertfordshire	6.3%	6.6%	6.6%	5.8%	11.9%	24.1%	19.0%	12.6%	7.1%

Wheathampstead is thus close to the overall county percentages in most age groups, though it has a fewer than average number of young adults and a slightly higher proportion of adults over 45.

The 2001 census provides useful information about economic activity. The percentages of all employed people aged 16 – 74 sub-divide as follows:

	Full-time employees	Part-time employees	Self-employed
Wheathampstead	42.9%	11.9%	11.6%
All Hertfordshire	45.4%	12.0%	9.8%

The working population was engaged in the following broad occupational groups:

	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale & Retail	Hotels & Catering	Transport Storage & Communication	Financial intermediation	Real estate, Renting & business activities	Public Administration	Education	Health & Social work	Other
<b>W'stead</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
All Herts	0.9%	13.0%	7.0%	17.8%	3.7%	7.8%	5.8%	17.1%	4.6%	7.5%	8.9%	5.9%

Although a large part of the parish is rural, the proportion of people working in agriculture is tiny. The percentage of people in wholesale and retail is close to the average for Hertfordshire. Figures released by WEB, the local traders' association, indicate that around 250 separate businesses operate in Wheathampstead.

At the time of the census the vast majority of people in Wheathampstead travelled to work in their own vehicle:

Travelled to work by:							Worked at home
Car, van or motorbike (driver)	Car, van or motorbike (passenger)	Train	Foot	Bus	Bicycle	Other means	
62.9%	5.0%	10.5%	5.4%	2.7%	1.2%	0.6%	11.7%

## 2.3 HISTORY OF WHEATHAMPSTEAD

Wheathampstead has a long history dating back to the pre-Roman Iron Age. About 100 years before the birth of Christ a Belgic tribe, the Catuvellauni, travelled up the river Lea and settled on land near the site of the present village. They kept cattle and built an impressive fortified stronghold with ditches 30 feet deep at Devil's Dyke off the Marford Road. Some scholars think that this was the site of a great battle in 54 BC between Julius Caesar and the ancient British war leader, Cassivellaunus.

The village as we know it owes its site to the Saxons who arrived in the sixth and seventh centuries and established a settlement in the middle of a box made by three Roman roads and the river Lea. A late sixth- or early seventh-century bronze pot (now in the British Museum) was found near the site of the old railway station, and several Saxon burials have been discovered on the north side of St Helen's churchyard. A document dated 1060 (the earliest at the county record office) records the gift by King Edward the Confessor of manorial land at *Hwaethamstede* to his favourite foundation, the abbey of St Peter at Westminster. In 1086 William the Conqueror's Domesday Book also took note of "a church and 4 mills" at *Watamstede* (a different spelling), value £16.

In 1291 the Church of St Helen's was worth a total of £33.6s.8d in taxes to Pope Nicholas. The amount to be paid was divided between Westminster Abbey and the Rector of Wheathampstead.



### 2.3.1 Heritage and Historic buildings

The core of the village may be said to be the High Street and Station Road and the areas that are immediately adjacent. Interestingly, the cottages to the west of the High Street have little or no land at the rear as the amount of space available is limited by the presence of the sixteenth century *Old Rectory* and the churchyard.

*St Helen's Church* is the most notable building in the village, with some parts of Saxon date, the east end dating from the 1230s, the tower to 1290, and the main structure of the present building dating from the fourteenth century.

Wheathampstead's *crinkle crankle walls* are of special interest. A unique Victorian heritage feature, these structures are situated at the east and west boundaries of the Old Rectory. A door in the west *crinkle crankle wall* leads through to the *Fernery*. In 1815 a new, grander *rectory*, was built at the top of what was then the glebe field, with access from Bury Green.

Other buildings of note include the *old School* on Brewhouse Hill (a Victorian Gothic building in flint and brick), *Barton House* on Brewhouse Hill, (a building associated with the former *Hope Brewery*), the sixteenth-century *Bury Farm cottages* that back on to the river Lea, the *Bull Inn*, *Place Farm* (a timber-framed house dating from the latter half of the fifteenth century), and the *old Bakery* (a late-medieval hall house extended in the sixteenth century).





The *Mill*, a special example of an extended mill building, is an ancient site and one of the four mills in the manor of Wheathampstead mentioned in the Domesday book. Latterly it was a provender mill. Now converted into several small business premises with dwellings above, it survives astride the river Lea reminding us of its former purpose: grinding the grain that gave Wheathampstead its name.

The only inns that remain from the many that used to exist are the *Bull* and the *Swan*. The *Golden Elephant Restaurant* is in the former maltings behind Lattimores, and a survival from the seventeenth century. Former inns, their structures now surviving as private housing but valued for their architecture, include the old *Bell* in the High Street and the *Walnut Tree* in Church Street. The building now known as the *Brewhouse Gallery* was another and the premises occupied by Wheathampstead Dental Surgery yet another. Latchford House was once the Bricklayers Arms. Abbot John Mews is named after the Abbot John that stood nearby and, because of its location close to the station, was originally called the

Railway. On the Hill there was the Red Cow, now too a private house.

### 2.3.2 Farming

As Wheathampstead lies close to St Albans, it is likely that the area has been farmed extensively at least since Roman times. Into the last century there were several working farms at the heart of the village: Bury Farm, Town Farm and Place Farm, all now largely replaced by housing. What remains of the rural character of the village still owes much to its farming past; the large barn at *Place Farm*, for example, retains the shape of the former structure with its double cart-horse entrances, though now converted to flats.

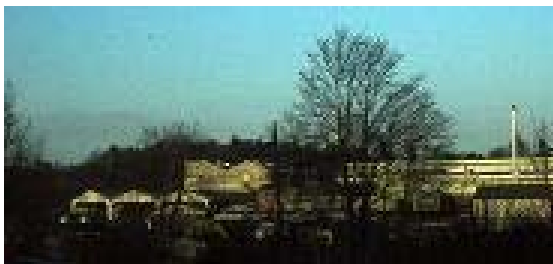
### 2.3.3 Brewing

Reminders of the local brewing industry can be seen in the long, low half-timbered maltings behind Lattimores, now occupied by the *Golden Elephant Restaurant*. The old maltings associated with the *Hope Brewery* on Brewhouse Hill have been converted into offices, but *Barton House* (occupied by *Elysian Hair & Beauty*) is now a listed building and was once the former brewery itself; it still has extensive underground storage space that today is used for parking. The building was once condemned, but the owner renovated it and it was then given a preservation order.



### 2.3.4 Local industry

In the nineteenth century Wheathampstead was largely a farming community, many of the men and boys working for local farmers and the women and children straw-plaiting for the hat industry in Luton. In the twentieth century many villagers were employed by two companies founded by local men: *Murphy Chemicals* and *Helmets*.



*Murphy Chemicals* Mr. Murphy founded an advisory service to small brewing companies at the end of the nineteenth century. In the nineteen twenties the company branched out into pesticides. Originally based at *Wheathampstead House* (now occupied by *St Albans Junior High School*), it eventually moved to *Place Farm*, with depots and warehouses for chemicals on the north side of the river Lea (now a housing estate). In its heyday the company employed some 300



employees and was engaged in formulating old-generation insecticides. In its final years the company was sold to a series of owners: it was taken over by Glaxo in 1955 before being sold first to the Australian company *Dalgety* and then to *Dow* and finally to *Fisons*.

*Helmets* Founded in 1924 this company thrived for over fifty years, employing 200 people in the manufacture of all kinds of specialist helmet – from pith helmets for those in the colonial service to firemen’s, pilots’ and police helmets. The business started on Brewhouse Hill making jettison tanks for aircraft, before in 1945 moving to a larger site, the Old Rectory land now occupied by the dwellings at King Edward Place. Its main offices were in the Old Rectory itself. The factory closed down in 2002 when the company moved to Scotland. The old rectory is now derelict awaiting refurbishment, and it was damaged by fire early in 2009.

*Nurseries* During the early part of the twentieth century there were two large horticultural nurseries in the parish, one at Gustard Wood and the other near Devil’s Dyke. Both had extensive glasshouses for growing tomatoes and cucumbers. A special fertilizer was used to enrich the soil – elephant dung from London Zoo – which was brought by the train that returned with produce for the Covent Garden markets. The cucumber glasshouses at Gustard Wood covered one and a third acres. During World War Two the demand for extra tomatoes for the war effort necessitated building higher, wider glasshouses, the remains of which can still be seen.

### 2.3.5 High Street businesses

There was a rich diversity of occupations and businesses in the village at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1901 Wheathampstead boasted four bakers, three butchers, three boot-and shoe-makers, dress-makers, milliners, a jeweller, a watch-mender, a grocer, a wine and spirit merchant, builders and carpenters, a miller and corn merchant and a chemist.

There was a coach maker and wheelwright where *Jessamine Garage* now is, a blacksmith in the building that became the *Brewhouse Gallery* and a tailor in Necton Road who could make poacher’s pockets for those wishing to avail themselves of the rabbits that proliferated.

Carpenters, plumbers, a surgeon, doctors and teachers offered their services in the village, and the spiritual needs of the parish were catered for by clergy from most of the national churches. A private girls’ school opened at *the Laurels* on the Hill.



### Transport

Wheathampstead had its own railway station on the line between Luton and Welwyn for over a hundred years. The branch line between Luton and Welwyn Junction was opened for goods and passenger use on 1 September 1860. The last passenger train ran through the village on 26 April 1965, although freight services continued for another couple of years.

More recently Wheathampstead was the scene of regular major traffic jams, as the photograph shows, although congestion was eased by the building of the Cory Wright Way by-pass.

Further information about the history of the village may be found at [www.wheathampstead.net/history.htm](http://www.wheathampstead.net/history.htm)

The photographs on pages 8 and 9 are reproduced with thanks from the Wheathampstead Historical Archive website, [www.wheathampstead.org](http://www.wheathampstead.org).

## 2.4 THE CONSERVATION AREAS

The parish of Wheathampstead contains a number of conservation areas: at Amwell, Gustard Wood, Mackerye End and Water End, as well as in the village centre. The High Street area, including the site of most of the Saxon and medieval settlement, retains its village character and was designated a conservation area in 1969. The conservation area boundary has been expanded on three occasions and it now also includes the eighteenth and nineteenth century residential development extending southwards up the Hill in addition to Wheathampstead House and Bury Farm Cottages.

St Albans District Council designates conservation areas because they are of special architectural or historic interest and should therefore be preserved or enhanced. The intention is to protect both the individual buildings within them and also the overall character that is created by the quality and special interest of the area.

Maps of the conservation areas can be viewed on the St Albans District Council website: [www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/maps](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/maps)

## 2.5 HEARTWOOD FOREST

Since residents completed the Village Plan Questionnaire in 2008, the Woodland Trust has announced their purchase of 347 hectares (858 acres) of land between Wheathampstead and Sandridge, just beyond the parish boundary, where by planting an additional 600,000 trees they will create the largest new native woodland in England.

The Trust's plans for the site will not be finalised until the necessary consultation and planning process has been completed, but in time the woodland – to be known as Heartwood Forest – will become a major leisure facility for the area and by attracting visitors it should boost the local economy.



### 3. The Village Plan project

#### 3.1 HOW THE PROJECT BEGAN

Encouraging individuals to participate in public life and, importantly, encouraging public bodies to consult the communities they represent is now Government policy. Many parish councils have responded by formulating local plans. The first major step in the creation of this Plan was to conduct a survey of public opinion. The Council held a consultation meeting at the Memorial Hall (the launch event) at which members of the public were invited to raise their main concerns about the village.

Everyone who attended was asked to write down the village issues that most concerned them, grouped under several general headings. People could name as many issues as they wished. In total 810 issues were identified, though in many instances the same issue (or one very similar) was raised by more than one person. The general areas of most concern were broadly similar to those brought out by the questionnaire although more emphasis was placed on Youth and Leisure and on Planning. The left side of the table below shows the proportions of the issues that fell under the groupings used at the launch event. On the right side the issues are allocated to the sections used elsewhere in this Plan.

<i>Grouped by the categories used at the launch event</i>		<i>Grouped according to the sections appearing in this Plan</i>	
Shops & Businesses	27.8%	Shops & Businesses	27.8%
Roads	19.0%	Traffic & Transport (incl. Roads and Public Transport)	21.7%
Sports, Leisure & Youth	12.4%	Youth & Leisure (incl. Schools and Allotments)	16.1%
Housing	10.3%	Planning (Housing)	10.3%
Footpaths & Open Areas	7.7%	Footpaths, etc.	7.7%
Others (incl. other Environment issues)	5.9%	Environment	6.8%
Signage	3.4%	Village Day	2.7%
Village Day	2.7%	Others	6.9%
Public Transport	2.7%		
Schools	2.5%		
Provision for the Elderly	2.0%		
Allotments	1.2%		
Publications & Literature	1.0%		
Health	0.9%		
Faith	0.5%		



The launch event was followed by a questionnaire which a number of residents completed in 2008. The questions were devised by a working party consisting of a combination of Parish Councillors and other local people, and each question was discussed at length before it appeared in its final form in the published questionnaire. The aim was that the questions should probe the main issues that gave rise to local concerns, and this was achieved with a mixture of:

1. questions with multiple choices or where scores could be allocated to different options, all of which could later be mathematically analysed, and
2. open-ended questions which people could answer however they wished, enabling them to raise any issues that the questions had not covered.

The questions were grouped into nine sections: Introduction, The Environment, Traffic and Transport, Crime and Disorder, Public Footpaths Cycle Paths and Bridleways, Village Day, Shops and Businesses, Young People and finally Household Questions (an optional section about the respondent's household and a means of ensuring that the Plan would represent the whole community).

All the questionnaires that were completed and returned in 2008 were then analysed in detail. The findings of the Survey were passed to a number of individuals and bodies listed below who were asked to propose action points that would tackle the issues raised and to provide other relevant comments.

#### **Wheathampstead Parish Councillors**

Councillors were asked for their views on all the sections of the questionnaire. Many Councillors chair committees that have responsibility for broad areas corresponding to some of the sections in the questionnaire.

#### **WEB and WDPS**

WEB (Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business – the local traders' association) and WDPS (Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society) were asked to contribute to the Shops & Businesses and Environment sections respectively.

#### **Other Views**

Input was also requested from the PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) for Wheathampstead and from other bodies representing interests in the village, including Neighbourhood Watch, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Countryside management Service (CMS) and Wheathampstead River Residents' Association.

### 3.2 THE PLAN

This document draws together all the comments and action plans. Like the questionnaire it is organised in several sections, and these have been arranged in order of the level of importance attached to them by respondents to the questionnaire. Many issues however touch on more than one section, and these are cross-referenced as necessary.

The action plans list:

1. *Issue and Proposed Action*: the underlying issues and the steps that it is proposed to take to resolve them;
2. *Owner*: the owner(s) of the action who will be responsible for driving the measure through and making sure that it is implemented;
3. *Dependencies/Third party involvement*: any other organisations that will have a major role in the process and any other factors on which the work is dependent;
4. *Budget*: the best estimate of the cost involved and, if appropriate, how the funding can be obtained;
5. *Priority*: whether the action is seen as a high, medium or low priority, determined by how feasible it is to implement, how many people are in favour of it and how great an impact it would have on the community – many low priorities have been excluded from the Plan for the time being;
6. *Start Date and Completion Date*: the best estimate of when work can begin and of how long it will take.

### 3.3 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The owners of each action will be responsible for ensuring that the necessary work is carried out.

The Parish Council will regularly review the Plan, update residents each year at the Annual Parish Meeting, issue progress reports and seek local people's views on current issues. If appropriate a new, shorter questionnaire will be issued and the findings analysed. The review will be an opportunity for residents to highlight new issues and pass judgment on how successfully previous action plans have been implemented.

The Plan will then be revised to take account of all the changes.

- Actions that have been successfully completed will be taken out of the Plan.
- The priority of all outstanding actions will be reviewed. Greater importance may for example be attached to some issues currently seen as a low priority.
- New issues that have been identified will be added, together with an appropriate action plan.

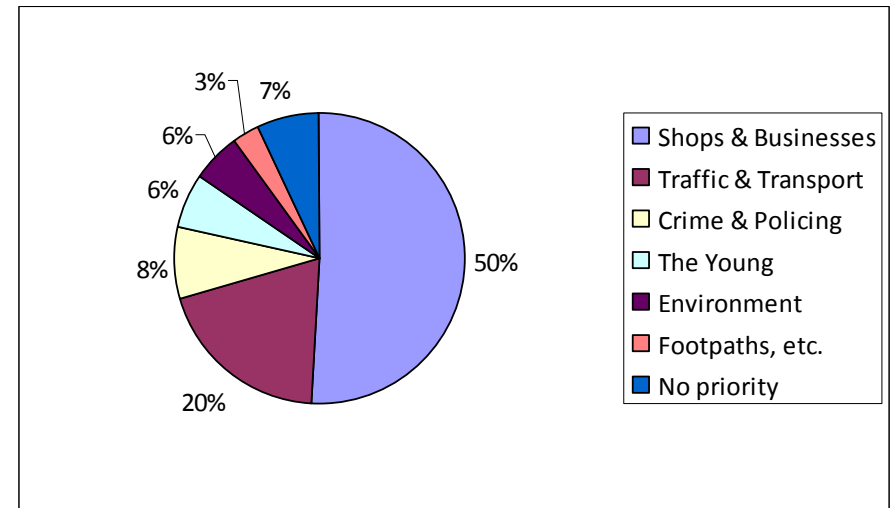
In the meantime all feedback on the Plan will be gratefully received and should be addressed to the Parish Office, Memorial Hall, Marford Road, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AY. It is also still possible to complete a questionnaire. A blank form can be downloaded from the Parish Council page of the Wheathampstead website – [www.wheathampstead.net](http://www.wheathampstead.net) – and the completed form should be sent to the Parish Office address above.

## 4. The Main Priorities

The purpose of the Introduction section of the questionnaire was to ask people to identify their priorities before they became embroiled in the detail of the later sections. The first question asked which of the broad issues covered by subsequent sections was the respondent's main priority. As the chart on the right shows, the response was overwhelmingly that shops and businesses should be treated as the greatest priority.

The sections that follow in the Plan are in order of the priority attached to them.

Residents were also asked what, if they could change one thing about Wheathampstead, it would be. Grouping the responses according to which section of the questionnaire they most relate to, the answers reflect those of the previous question, but with more emphasis on Traffic & Transport. 40% of the answers related to Shops & Businesses and 30% to Traffic & Transport. The Environment was a distant third, with a little over 7%. Issues relating to education and the availability of schools represented nearly 6% of answers.



### 4.1 WHO COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Household Questions section, which was optional, asked for certain pieces of personal information with the intention of making sure that the people who completed the questionnaire were typical of the whole community. 290 questionnaires were completed and returned representing 12% of households. This can be regarded as a sufficiently representative sample of the village as a whole for a number of reasons.



- The survey collected some demographical data and the statistical analysis took this into account when possible. For example, when analysing traffic in a particular road where local opinion might skew the result, the responses from that road were excluded from the analysis.
- There was evidence that the surveys returned were from a wide geographical area and, though there was some clustering, this did not appear to be severe.
- The statistical analysis itself takes into account the relative sample size when looking for “significant” results. If a result is recorded as showing a significant difference, it is 95% certain the same result would occur if the entire population of the village was surveyed. (This effect can be seen at elections. Companies such as Gallup are able to predict the outcome of general elections where tens of millions of people will vote from the results of just a few hundred or few thousand individuals.)
- The survey results have been distributed to other focused village groups such as WEB and WDPS. These groups have also been able to provide input to both the plan and the interpretation of the survey results.
- Many of the findings were similar to the information contained in the 2001 census; for example, the answers indicated that:
  - on average 2.6 people live in each household, with 62% of households having two occupants or fewer;
  - there are 1.8 cars per household, with 66% of households having two or more cars, and 60% of people use their cars for at least part of their journey to work;
  - over 50% of respondents had lived in the village for 15 years or more, supporting the evidence in the census that Wheathampstead has a slightly higher than average proportion of adults over 45, while 33% had lived here for between one and ten years.

An interesting finding was that an average of one person per two households works from home. 25% of households contain one person who works from home and 10% contain two or more. These proportions are higher than the figure in the 2001 census, which indicated that 11.7% of the population of Wheathampstead worked from home, and it appears that the proportion increased between 2001 and 2008.

## 5. Shops and Businesses

People who completed the questionnaire considered this the most important area for improvement, marking it significantly higher than any other topic covered by the Survey.

Asked how often they use the shops and services in the centre of Wheathampstead, 40% said two or three times a week. The average spend was £10.02. However, when asked whether they thought the shopping facilities are adequate for a village with nearly 3,000 homes, 92% said they did not. Not surprisingly, therefore, a high number of respondents regularly shopped outside the village: 69% had done so either that day or the previous day. They spent a great deal more when they shopped outside Wheathampstead; the average spend was £61.98. The main reasons why people chose to shop elsewhere were variety and price.

The main factors that would encourage people to shop more in Wheathampstead were variety of shops, value for money and the presence of a good supermarket. (The provision of an improved supermarket is currently being addressed by the conversion of the One Stop shop to a Tesco Express.) There was however little agreement about the types of additional shop that are needed, although some suggestions have since been catered for by the re-opening of the florist and the conversion of One Stop.

Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business (WEB) arranged several meetings with members of the local business community to create an action plan based on the findings. The five priority areas were seen as:

1. the level of rates and rent that businesses are charged in the village;
2. ways of helping promote local businesses (of which there are around 250), especially to residents;
3. ways of promoting the village to outside businesses;
4. promoting the heritage of the village;
5. improving signage.

Points (4) and (5) are covered under the Environment section of the Plan.

This section of the Survey also asked questions about the library and the post office. 53% of the respondents used the library, and in the case of those who did not, the most usual reasons were that opening times are inconvenient, they buy their own books and they “do not use libraries”. Asked how severely the loss of the local post office would affect their households, 68% of respondents said they would be affected severely or very severely. The main reasons were convenience and the range of services that the Post Office provides.





People who completed the questionnaire considered this the most important area for improvement, marking it significantly higher than any other topic covered by the Survey.

Asked how often they use the shops and services in the centre of Wheathampstead, 40% said two or three times a week. The average spend was £10.02. However, when asked whether they thought the shopping facilities are adequate for a village with nearly 3,000 homes, 92% said they did not. Not surprisingly, therefore, a high number of respondents regularly shopped outside the village: 69% had done so either that day or the previous day. They spent a great deal more when they shopped outside Wheathampstead; the average spend was £61.98. The main reasons why people chose to shop elsewhere were variety and price.

The main factors that would encourage people to shop more in Wheathampstead were variety of shops, value for money and the presence of a good supermarket. (The provision of an improved supermarket is currently being addressed by the conversion of the One Stop shop to a Tesco Express.) There was however little agreement about the types of additional shop that are needed, although some suggestions have since been catered for by the re-opening of the florist and the conversion of One Stop.

Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business (WEB) arranged several meetings with members of the local business community to create an action plan based on the findings. The five priority areas were seen as:

6. the level of rates and rent that businesses are charged in the village;
7. ways of helping promote local businesses (of which there are around 250), especially to residents;
8. ways of promoting the village to outside businesses;
9. promoting the heritage of the village;
10. improving signage.

Points (4) and (5) are covered under the Environment section of the Plan.

This section of the Survey also asked questions about the library and the post office. 53% of the respondents used the library, and in the case of those who did not, the most usual reasons were that opening times are inconvenient, they buy their own books and they “do not use libraries”. Asked how severely the loss of the local post office would affect their households, 68% of respondents said they would be affected severely or very severely. The main reasons were convenience and the range of services that the Post Office provides.

## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref</i>
High business rates are undermining business profitability	Gain understanding of rating model and communicate to local businesses.	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB; District Valuer	Negligible	High	April 2009; June '09	S1
	Inform businesses of the options for getting advice on rate reductions	WEB	Rating Consultants	Negligible	High	April 2009; July '09	S2
	Facilitate communication between businesses through traders' association	WEB	–	Negligible	High	Ongoing	S3
	Form lobby group to support campaigns by the Local Government Association and to lobby MPs and councillors	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Local Government Association; MP for Harpenden & Hitchin; Federation of Small Businesses; Business Link	Negligible	Medium	April 2009; ongoing	S4
	Communicate with other similar local parishes and identify common actions	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB	Negligible	Medium	April 2009; ongoing	S5
	Consult with the Federation of Small Businesses and get their recommendations	WEB	Federation of Small Businesses	Negligible	High	April 2009	S6
Need to ensure that in the long-term an equitable level of business rents applies in the village	Involve landlords and agents in stimulating business activities in the village	WEB	–	Negligible	Medium	July 2009; ongoing	S7
	Consult with the Federation of Small Businesses on mechanisms for fair rents	WEB	Federation of Small Businesses	Negligible	High	April 2009	S8
Help is required in the marketing of local businesses	Organise business fair for all businesses in the Memorial Hall	WEB	–	£500	High	May 2009; Sept 2009	S9
	Encourage certain businesses to have open days	WEB	–		Medium	April 2009; ongoing	S10
	Organise travelling village promotion for other venues	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	£500	Medium	August 2009; ongoing	S11
	Publish local directory with businesses and village information for distribution	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB	£750 net p.a.	High	April 2009; October 2009	S12
	On-going promotion of Wheathampstead web sites & business database	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB	Negligible	Medium	April 2009; ongoing	S13
	Form events working party to organise additional village events. E.g. enhance Christmas "lights-up", resurrect pancake race, etc.	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB; Harpenden Rotary Club, Round Table, etc.	££750 p.a.	High	April 2009; ongoing	S14
	Encourage local businesses to promote their business through interesting articles in the village Pump	WEB	–	Negligible	Medium	Ongoing	S15

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref</i>
Help is required in the marketing of the village to outside businesses	Prepare a village marketing package for external promotion to target incoming businesses	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WEB	Negligible	High	Autumn 2009; Spring 2010	S16
	Use marketing package to promote business-to-business activity	WEB	–	Negligible	Medium	December 2009; Spring '200	S17
	Invite letting agents, Business Link, Stanta, and other business parties to local business events.	WEB	–	Negligible	Medium	Ongoing	S18
	Target specific businesses to come to the village	WEB	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Negligible	Medium	Ongoing	S19
	Promote the village, including its heritage, through advertising and editorials in local media	WEB	–	Negligible	Medium	Ongoing	S20
Wheathampstead should be a sustainable community, with the powers to determine policy and budgets devolved to a local level wherever practicable	Urge Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans District Council to use the new Sustainable Communities Act 2007 process by submitting proposals to government by 31 July 2009 (i.e. to “opt in” to the new “bottom-up” powers that are available under the Act)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council; St Albans District Council	Negligible	High	April 2009	S21



## 6. Traffic and Transport



### TRAFFIC

Since “road safety” is, quite literally, a matter of life or death, it is not surprising that it was given prominence in the public response. The areas of most concern were Broomhouse Hill, Marford Road, The Hill, Lower Luton Road and the centre of the village. The general condition of our roads was also a major concern and this is an issue that requires more investment, primarily by the Government and Hertfordshire County Council.

In order to make the best use of the funds available to the Parish Council, a high priority has been given to pedestrian crossings and to speed reduction. The greatest demand for a crossing is on Marford Road to the west of Necton Road: the case for installing a crossing here has been supported by two large petitions.

Speed is an issue on all major approaches to the village, but Marford Road was specifically mentioned by many. There were various calls for enforcement by the police, both of speed (especially on Marford Road, Lower Luton Road and The Hill) and parking regulations. There is however little support anywhere in the parish for traffic lights (other than for Pelican crossings or road works) or for speed cameras.

The 20 mph zone in the village centre works well and is popular with pedestrians and shoppers generally, although many people would like to see further reductions in traffic volume and speed. There is also growing pressure to extend the 20 mph zone.

A ban on lorries (except those here for access) was introduced in St Albans District more than twenty years ago. Such a large area proved impossible to police: any lorry driver suspected of breaching the ban had to be followed by a marked police car to check whether the suspicions were founded. The driver had only to stop to buy something, or to ask directions, and then no breach had occurred. During the recent widening of the M1, the ban was suspended altogether. The Survey showed strong support for a ban, or at least for a reduction in the number of HGVs passing through the village. Since the original ban was unenforceable, the Hertfordshire Highways planners have been asked to suggest a workable alternative.

### SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS

The entrance to King Edward Place needs to be more clearly marked as several pedestrians have been frightened or even hit by vehicles. The flow of traffic in and out of East Lane is also a problem for both pedestrians and vehicles, and drivers find it difficult to see other traffic as they exit into the High Street. More and more vehicles are using East Lane. It may be necessary to reconsider an old scheme to make the road “one way” (eastward) between the High Street and the first entrance to The Bull car park; this would mean removing the barrier at the end of East Lane so that vehicles can exit the area via Bocket View.

Leasey Bridge Road is marked as “narrow road with passing places” and “not suitable for large vehicles”, but neither of these signs deters strangers (often guided by “SatNav”) from using the road. When local traffic is also taken into account, this leads to frequent blockages and collisions. When vehicles emerge on to Lower Luton Road, visibility is severely restricted towards the village. Crossing Lower Luton Road at this point is also difficult for pedestrians and horse-riders because of the continuous heavy flow of traffic, and these factors taken together mean there is an urgent need for a suitable pedestrian crossing at this point.

Wheathampstead House, now occupied by the Junior House of St Albans High School for Girls, is attended each day by almost 400 staff and pupils. The school has intimated that the Governors would be willing to assist with the cost of a pedestrian crossing outside the school. This would encourage parents to use the East Lane car park instead of waiting for their children outside the school. It would also ease the problems currently caused because many cars from the school wish to turn right against the flow of traffic. A long-term solution, which would also ease the flow of traffic from the direction of Codicote and reduce blockages at the Station Road junction, would be to create a new roundabout where Cory-Wright Way joins Codicote Road; an exit-only spur from the grounds of Wheathampstead House would lead directly on to the roundabout. The school Governors have given their backing to the scheme.

Although the Police record for accidents is low at the Necton Road junctions with Marford Road, there have been many “near misses”. It is particularly difficult for drivers emerging from Necton Road to see traffic approaching along Marford Road.



### **PARKING**

It is generally accepted that drivers should be allowed to park for a limited time in the High Street and Station Road, although there have been requests for both shorter and longer time limits. But roadside parking in general is an issue, and some residents have called for more yellow lines. Parked cars do however tend to slow traffic down on major roads, and for this reason parking at the kerb-side is not currently prevented on The Hill and Brewhouse Hill.

The car park in East Lane, although normally adequate, is sometimes full which may lead to a loss of trade for local businesses. The opening of Tesco and the increasing numbers of parents driving their children to school at Wheathampstead House mean that extra spaces will shortly be needed in the car park.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Although less than fifteen per cent of the responses to the Survey were from bus users, they appear to include many who have no alternative (e.g. teenagers, the elderly and those going to school).

The majority of public comments related to additional bus links to Harpenden (especially to the station) and to several other places, but the decisions in each case are made by the bus operators who wish to ensure that the route is profitable. The same profitability test will be applied to requests for more services or more frequent services.

There were some calls for more bus shelters. These are provided by the Parish Council and are now installed at most points where people gather to board a bus in reasonable numbers. Wherever a case can be made for a new bus shelter, the case is examined. As part of a wider initiative, electronic indicators providing information about the next bus are likely to be installed at major stops such as the High Street.



## **OTHER ISSUES**

A number of people commented on the Christmas lights, the flower beds and the hanging baskets in the village centre. There was a general feeling that what is currently provided is at about the right level, although there was some support for more floral displays. The Christmas lights were enjoyed by most people, with comments applauding the “restraint” of using mostly white lighting. The road-side spring bulbs were commented on by some people, always with approval.

The village centre would be more attractive to visitors if suitable “finger posts” could be placed to highlight and direct people to major points of interest such as St Helens Church and Mill Walk. A “history board” was also suggested for the village centre. Most of the salt/grit bins are in an extremely poor state; they should be replaced, and two new bins are needed.

## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
There is concern at the volume of traffic on Marford Road	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T1
There is concern at the volume of traffic on Brewhouse Hill	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T2
There is concern at the volume of traffic on The Hill	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T3
There is concern at the volume of traffic on Lower Luton Road	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T4
A suitable replacement is needed for the old "Lorry Ban Zone"	Press Herts Highways	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T5
The HGV traffic on Marford Road should be reduced	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T6
The HGV traffic on Lower Luton Road should be reduced	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T7
The HGV traffic on The Hill should be reduced	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T8
A pedestrian crossing is needed on Marford Road (near "police houses")	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council or Section 106 or other source of funding	High		T9
A pedestrian crossing is needed on Brewhouse Hill (near St Helens School)	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T10
A pedestrian crossing is needed on The Hill (near St Helens School)	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T11

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
A pedestrian crossing is needed on Codicote Road (near Wheathampstead House School)	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council or School Governors	High		T12
A "Pegasus" Crossing is needed on Lower Luton Road (near Cherry Tree Lane)	Press Herts Highways for suitable traffic calming	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T13
The 20 mph zone in the village centre should be extended to include Church Street and parts of The Hill, Brewhouse Hill and Marford Road	Press Herts Highways and other agencies	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T14
The 20 mph zone in the village centre should be extended to include Station Road roundabout and its approaches with part of Codicote Road	Press Herts Highways and other agencies	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council and School Governors (possible joint funding with St Albans High School for Girls)	High		T15
A new 20 mph zone is needed to cover the proposed residential estate off Butterfield Road	Ensure that this requirement is made a planning condition by St Albans plans committee	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans plans committee	The Developer	High		T16
A new roundabout is needed at the junction of Codicote Road with Cory-Wright Way	Press Herts Highways and other agencies	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council and School Governors (joint funding with St Albans High School for Girls)	High		T17
"Pot-holes" should be eliminated on all village roads	Press Herts Highways for both emergency work and for more permanent improvement in carriageway standards	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	High		T18



<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
“Nuisance” parking at roadsides should be controlled	Press St Albans City & District Council to ensure appropriate “yellow lines” and enforcement of those we have	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans City & District Council	St Albans City & District Council	Medium		T19
An extension to East Lane Car Park is urgently needed	Press St Albans (owners of the land and planning authority)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans City & District Council	St Albans or WPC or Tesco	High	As soon as Tesco opens	T20
Improved safety is needed at the King Edward Place entrance from High Street	Press Herts Highways and other agencies	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways (possible Police TMU or St Albans plans involvement)	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T21
The traffic flow in East Lane should be improved (by removing the barrier in Brocket View and making East Lane one-way eastward from High Street to the entrance to The Bull car park)	Press Herts Highways and St Albans plans committee	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways, St Albans plans committee and police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T22
There is a sight line problem at the north end of Cherry Tree Lane	Press Herts Highways and other agencies to improve sight lines towards the village	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T23
There is concern at the volume of traffic on Leasey Bridge Lane (including HGV traffic)	Press Herts Highways and possibly the suppliers of satnav maps to remove this road from possible routes	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T24
There is a sight line problem at the junctions with Necton Road and Marford Road	Press Herts Highways to change road-side parking arrangements near the junctions with Marford Road	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways; Police Traffic Management Unit	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T25
A cycle track is wanted alongside the Lemsford Road towards WGC and Hatfield	Press Herts Highways to provide this (by upgrading the footway where possible)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T26

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
A cycle track is wanted alongside the Harpenden Road	Press Herts Highways to provide this	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T27
A cycle track is wanted towards Sandridge and St Albans	Press Herts Highways and others to provide a cycleway including across Nomansland and through the planned new forest	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Herts Highways and the new forest planners	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium		T28
A bus route should be provided to Harpenden Station	Ask for such a route to be created	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Bus operators	None	Low		T29
Bus-shelters should be provided at "boarding" stops	Monitor passenger flows to keep abreast of demand changes	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council (who own the verge and footway)	£2,800 approx. each	High		T30
A bus shelter should be provided on Hillydyke Road	Replace the damaged bus shelter	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	£2,800 approx.	High	2010 - 2011	T31
Most salt/grit bins are in poor repair and need to be replaced	Replace those salt/grit bins that are in poor repair	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Medium	2009	T32
New salt/grit bins are needed where "black ice" has proved to be a problem	Provide new salt/grit bins where "black ice" has proved to be a problem (e.g. cross roads by the Elephant & Castle)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Hertfordshire County Council	High	2009	T33
More hanging baskets should be provided in the village centre	Increase the number of colourful baskets in both summer and winter	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Budgeted	High	2009	T34
More road-side bulbs should be provided	Plant more daffodils and other naturalised bulbs on approaches to the village	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WDPS (who provide the volunteer labour) and Hertfordshire County Council (who own the verges, roundabouts etc)	Budgeted	High	2009	T35

**See also:**

Action E22 – Provide new cycling routes and improve existing routes (under section 9. Environment)

## 7. Crime and Disorder

In order of importance, the main priorities for policing were seen as:

1. Anti-social behaviour (predominantly by the young);
2. Vandalism;
3. Traffic issues (see the Traffic and Transport section);
4. Theft;
5. Drugs.

People were asked where they believed different forms of anti-social behaviour were a particular problem, and where if anywhere they felt unsafe (e.g. in the evening). Only a limited number of people named specific parts of the village. The table below shows – for each question – the total number of responses and the areas that were named by 10% or more of the respondents.



	<i>Total number of responses</i>	Outside One Stop	High Street generally	St Helen's Churchyard	Mill Walk	Beech Hyde / Hillydyke Estate	Marford Road playing fields	Cricket Club at Nomansland
Areas where you think anti-social behaviour is a problem	97	28%	28%	15%			11%	
Areas where you think drug taking or under-age drinking is a problem	44	11%	14%	20%		20%	20%	
Areas where you think vandalism is a problem	57		14%	26%			23%	12%
Areas where you feel unsafe	39		21%	10%	10%	28%		

The Survey then asked how people would like these problems to be solved. The three most frequent answers were more youth activities, more Police and more PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers).

The table above shows that relatively few people feel unsafe in any part of Wheathampstead. This message was reinforced by the answers given to another question which asked whether Wheathampstead is a safe place to live. Rating the village from 1 (not at all safe) to 6 (very safe), 66% of answers scored 5 or 6 and only 13% scored 3 or less.

The experience of Neighbourhood Watch in Wheathampstead is that incidents of anti-social behaviour are often not reported. This may lead to a feeling that not enough is being done in response.

Since the time of the Survey, two important developments have taken place.

- According to statistics provided by the Home Office, the level of crime in Wheathampstead has fallen by 20% over the past year. This represents a very significant improvement since Spring 2008 when the Survey was conducted. The local police attribute the improvement to their policy of neighbourhood policing: maintaining a visible presence, getting to know people in the village and targeting certain individuals. They also take the view, however, that there is now no chance of having more Police or more PCSOs in Wheathampstead.
- A planning application has been granted to convert the One Stop shop into a branch of Tesco. This will involve some alterations to the front of the shop and will remove the existing covered passage in which young people tend to congregate.

## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
1. There is a need to combat anti-social behaviour 2. More young people need to become aware of the youth activities that are available	(a) Provide sports and other activities for young people such as Artskool and Hip-hop (subsidised by Wheathampstead Parish Council) (b) Publicise these activities and provide supporting information	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire Constabulary	Police grant sought.	High	May 2009 (to begin looking for grant); ongoing	C1
Young people need somewhere in Wheathampstead where they can 'hang out' safely	Investigate the options for providing such a facility, looking at: 1. the type of structure needed (which may be very simple) 2. a suitable location 3. any additional amenities needed (e.g. bins)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire Constabulary	Cost of a simple structure is unlikely to exceed £5,000 Funding sought	High	July 2009 (to begin investigation); July 2010	C2
There is a perception that not enough is done about anti-social behaviour, and residents should report all incidents of this type of behaviour (to the non-urgent police number) so that the Police can follow the matter up as appropriate	Launch a campaign to encourage residents: 1. to report all incidents of anti-social behaviour and other crimes 2. to join Neighbourhood Watch	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire Constabulary; Neighbourhood Watch	Minimal cost	Medium	Summer 2009; ongoing	C3
	Provide regular feedback to residents (e.g. in the <i>Pump</i> ) about action that has been taken to 1. combat anti-social behaviour and 2. follow up specific incidents	Wheathampstead Parish Council;	Hertfordshire Constabulary	Minimal cost	Medium	Spring 2009; ongoing	C4

Many of the actions under the **Youth & Leisure** section are aimed at providing activities for young people and in turn should also help combat anti-social behaviour.

## 8. Youth and Leisure

The issues addressed by this part of the Plan are mainly those highlighted in responses to the Young People section of the Survey. That section was answered only by people of 18 or under, or by their parent or guardian.

A surprisingly high number (38%) were unaware of the youth activities currently provided in Wheathampstead. Only 28% had actually attended any, suggesting that many may travel outside the village to take part in youth activities.

The Survey asked what additional facilities and activities should be provided and how facilities and equipment should be improved. There was widespread support for an all-weather surface for football and other games; 60% favoured siting this at the Marford Road playing fields while 32% preferred Butterfield Road. The youth activities that respondents

would most like to see in Wheathampstead were:

1. a youth club/cinema, attracting 51% of votes (a youth club already exists in the village but operates only one evening a week);
2. a sports club, with 28% of the vote.



The equipment that most people (42%) wanted to see improved was that designed for teenagers. 22% wanted more play areas and 14% wanted better equipment for the under 5s.

Some of the issues below arose from other parts of the Survey. Responses to the Crime and Disorder section indicated wide concern about anti-social behaviour, especially among the young; this was viewed as the most important priority for policing, closely followed by vandalism. Answers given under the Public Footpaths, Cycle Paths & Bridleways section indicated a strong demand for improved cycle paths. And the Environment section highlighted a need to improve signs in the village, such as those giving directions to walks and other leisure facilities.



## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
There is no all-weather games facility	Provide a MUGA (multi-use games area) for year-round football, hockey, etc.	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Grant or sponsorship to cover 50% or more of the cost	Match-funding sought: Parish Council: £35,000 (max) Grant/Sponsor: £35,000 (min)	High	April 2009 (to begin looking for funds); 2010	L1
The Youth Club is operating at over-capacity, and the facilities need to be expanded	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operate the Youth Club one evening a week at the Memorial Hall (In addition to the existing one night a week at the Hilldyke Centre)</li> <li>2. Take advantage of the facilities at the Memorial Hall to provide additional activities (e.g. drama, cooking, music, films, table tennis, darts, video games)</li> <li>3. Provide away trips for Youth Club members (e.g. ice skating, theatre trips)</li> </ol>	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Youth Connexions (Hertfordshire County Council)	£5,000 pa (to cover actions 1, 2 & 3)	High	June 2009; Ongoing	L2
Existing play areas are aging and possibly unsafe	(a) Update play areas owned by the Parish Council						
	1. Maltings Drive	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Completion of housing development at Butterfield Road	On completion of housing development, use Section 106 money	High	Will begin on completion of housing development	L3
	2. Folly Fields	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Folly Fields Residents Association; Comma	Match-funding: Parish Council: £4,500 Grant from Comma: £7,500	High	May 2009; June 2009	L4
	3. Marford Playing Fields; Marshalls Heath; Rectory Meadow	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Grant or sponsorship to cover 50% or more of the cost	Match-funding sought Total cost in range £12,000 - £50,000 per site	High	July 2009 (to begin looking for funds); 2011	L5
	(b) Support and encourage St Albans District Council to update the play areas they own in Wheathampstead, i.e. Caesars Road, Hilldyke Road, Davy's Close	St Albans District Council	–	Negligible	High	September 2009; ongoing	L6
	(c) Support and encourage Hertfordshire County Council to update the play areas they own in	Hertfordshire County Council	Persimmon Homes (developers of the	Negligible	High	Will begin on completion of	L7

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
	Wheathampstead, i.e. Butterfield Road		adjoining housing development)			housing development	
There is concern about schooling choice and in particular the provision of local secondary education	Arrange for the District Council to make a formal complaint to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator	District Councillor	–	Negligible	High	May 2009; September 2009	L8
There are insufficient signs indicating where walks and leisure facilities are	Improve the signposting of walks and other leisure facilities	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans District Council; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team	£2,500 Funding sought: SADC Visible Street Scene Project Funding	High	April 2009 (to begin looking for funding); 2010	L9
More facilities are needed for young people during school holidays	(a) Expand the existing “Ignition” holiday scheme provided by Youth Connexions from one week to two	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Youth Connexions (Hertfordshire County Council)	£2,500 p.a. (in addition to current expenditure)	High	July 2009; Ongoing	L10
	(b) Provide support for the Play Ranger to provide facilities such as mobile skateboard park, climbing wall and field sports (e.g. rounders)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Play Ranger (St Albans District Council)	St Albans District Council	Medium	April 2009; Ongoing	L11
Sports coaching is needed for non-club members	Provide the following facilities for young people: (a) free tennis at Wheathampstead Tennis Club (b) subsidised golf at local golf course(s)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Tennis Club; Golf course(s)	Negligible	Medium	June 2009; Ongoing	L12
There is a lack of leisure facilities for adults	(a) Investigate the types of leisure activity for which there is a demand and which could largely be catered for at the Memorial Hall (e.g. film shows, tea dances, ballroom dancing, line dancing) (b) Provide those activities for which there is a demand	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	A small cost would be incurred in subsidising some or all of the activities. This cannot be determined until the investigation is complete	Medium	October 2009 (to begin investigation); ongoing	L13
There is a lack of facilities for youth and for leisure generally at East Meads and Melissa Fields	Maintain and improve the playing fields and adjoining open spaces by providing facilities such as the following:						
	(a) East Meads: outdoor classroom, circular walking route, fishing platform, adventure trail	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Countryside Management Service (CMS); Grant or sponsorship to cover 50% or more of the cost	Match-funding sought Total cost in range £12,000 - £50,000	Medium	August 2009 (to begin looking for funds); 2011	L14

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
	(b) Melissa Fields: picnic tables/benches, fishing platform	Wheathampstead Parish Council;	Folly Fields Residents Association; Grant or sponsorship to cover 50% or more of the cost	Match-funding sought Total cost £2,000	Medium	August 2009 (to begin looking for funds); 2010	L15
The changing facilities are inadequate at Marford Pavilion and Butterfield Road	Update the changing facilities and undertake all necessary repairs at:						
	(a) Marford Pavilion – temporary repairs	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Voluntary repairs by footballers	£2,000	Medium	June 2009; August 2009	L16
	(b) Marford Pavilion – long-term repairs to roof	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Budget to be decided	Medium	January 2010; January 2011	L17
	(c) Butterfield Road	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council; Wheathampstead Wanderers FC	Grant, sponsorship or donation sought Budget to be decided	Medium	November 2009 (to begin looking for funds); 2011	L18
Local communities should be involved in the creation of Heartwood Forest	Seek involvement in the creation of Heartwood Forest	Wheathampstead Parish Council	The Woodland Trust; Sandridge Parish Council	Negligible	Medium	April 2009; ongoing	L19
There is a lack of indoor facilities for sports and fitness	Provide a sports hall with: (a) such facilities as gym, badminton, squash, netball, judo and weights (b) changing rooms and a meeting place for outdoor activities such as cycling and running	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Sponsor	Grant, sponsorship or donation sought. Cost to be determined accordingly	Low	2011; 2013	L20



**See also:**

Action C1 – Provide and purchase sports and other activities for the young (under section 7. Crime & Disorder)

Action E22 – Provide new cycling routes and improve existing routes (under section 9. Environment)

Action V2 – Involve local senior schools in Village Day (under section 10. Village Day)



## 9. The Environment

This part of the Plan corresponds to two sections in the survey: (a) the Environment and (b) Public Footpaths, Cycle Paths & Bridleways. The Parish Council committee for footpaths etc. has recently become responsible for broader environmental issues, and the two sections have been combined.

### GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The survey established that the most pressing environmental concerns are traffic issues – see the Traffic & Transport section. The next most pressing issue had to do with refuse, cleaning and recycling, and in particular the problem of litter. Other issues concerned:

1. the character and appearance of the village (e.g. such as floral displays, signs, street furniture and the maintenance and upkeep of buildings);
2. aircraft noise;
3. the river;
4. business regeneration – see the Shops & Businesses section;
5. building development – see the Planning section.

### PUBLIC FOOTPATHS, CYCLE PATHS & BRIDLEWAYS

The main priorities for public access were improved footpaths, improved cycle paths (particularly to Harpenden, St Albans and, to a lesser extent, Luton) and publicity for walks. Certain footpaths were mentioned which require maintenance.

There were three other significant issues.

- Of those who responded to a question on where new public toilets should be placed, over a third suggested the Memorial Hall / Marford Road playing fields.
- The most favoured means of publicising countryside walks were signs, notice boards and tourist information displays.
- The bridge over the river at East Meads should be wider, more attractive and better maintained and should have better access.



## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
The village should make a greater effort to display its history and heritage	(a) Conduct a consultation exercise to seek residents' views on what should appear on an information sign in the centre of the village	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council; Consultation with residents	Negligible	High	April 2009; June 2009	E1
	(b) Instigate a Heritage Trail ( a self-guided walk that allows people to discover the heritage of the village)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Wheathampstead History Group; St Albans Museum Service; Countryside Management Service (CMS); WEB; consultation with owners and occupiers of buildings included in the Trail	£3,000 Funding sought from Bedford & Luton Community Foundation	High	May 2009; February 2010	E2
	(c) Lead a consultation exercise on what should be included in the Heritage Trail and on extending the content of the information sign so that it forms part of a Heritage Trail	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council; Consultation with residents	Negligible	High	May 2009; July 2009	E3
	(d) Commission a replica of the late sixth- or early seventh-century bronze pot (now in the British Museum) that was found in Wheathampstead and arrange for it to be prominently displayed (e.g. in the window of an unoccupied shop)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Wheathampstead History Group; British Museum	£2,000	Medium	January 2010; December 2010	E4
	(e) Review and enhance the heritage information available on local websites	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WDPS and www.wheathampstead.Net as regards their respective websites	Negligible	Low	March 2010; May 2010	E5
Footpaths in Wheathampstead need to be adequately maintained and, where necessary, they need to be improved	(a) Monitor the condition of public footpaths and bridleways	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Volunteer reports in Adopt-a-Path Scheme; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team	Negligible	High	May 2009; Ongoing	E6

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
	(b) Improve existing footpaths and provide new and all-weather paths, with parking access as appropriate	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Countryside Management Service (CMS); Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team; Contractors	To be decided	High	Summer 2009; Ongoing	E7
Trees and bushes need to be appropriately managed	Arrange for tree management and safety work to be undertaken	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans District Council (Trees & Woods); Countryside Management Service (CMS; )Contractors	£4,500 ongoing	High	Spring 2009; Ongoing	E8
There is too much litter and refuse, especially in parks, commons and open spaces	(a) Provide litter and dog bins, and arrange for collection and disposal (b) Offer suitable support and assistance to the Litter Blitz campaign	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Contractor; Litter Blitzers Voluntary Group; Suppliers of bins; Dog bins serviced by St Albans District Council	Wheathampstead Parish Council central costs	High	Ongoing	E9
Signs in Wheathampstead need to be improved, and redundant signs should be removed	(a) Agree the design of two main village signs at the junctions of 1. Station Road and Codicote Road, and 2. The Hill and Butterfield Road and have them erected.	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Already budgeted	High	Completion: June 2009	E10
	(b) Provide smaller entry signs at the five other main entrance points to the village	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WDPS	£2,500 plus installation costs Funding of £1,500 available from St Albans District Council Street Scene	High	April 2009; January 2010	E11
	(c) Design and installation of a finger post at the junction of High Street and King Edward Place	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WDPS	£3,000, split £1,500 from St Albans District Council and £1,500 from Parish Council	High	April 2009; December 2009	E12
	Conduct a survey of redundant signs in Wheathampstead and recommend which should be removed	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Negligible	Medium	May 2009; September 2009	E13

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
	(d) Devise a Design Statement for signage in Wheathampstead	WDPS	–	Negligible	Medium	October 2009; September 2010	E14
	(e) Investigate the possibility of persuading public bodies to change their non-statutory signs if necessary so that they conform with the design statement for signs	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Negligible	Low	Autumn 2010; Autumn 2011	E15
	(f) Establish whether there is a demand for, and whether funding is available for, street name signs that better reflect the character of the village (and in particular the conservation area)	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Negligible	Low	January 2010; December 2010	E16
The appearance of Mill Walk should be improved. In particular, the lighting should be improved (so that people feel safer walking there at night) , and full use should be made of existing lights	(a) Leave the existing tree lights on during the hours of darkness throughout the year	Wheathampstead Parish Council	MacIntyre Trust (owners of the trees and providers of electricity to the lights)	£500 (to cover additional electricity costs)	High	April 2009; June 2009	E17
	(b) Investigate the possibility of setting lights into the wall / railings next to the water	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans District Council; Hertfordshire County Council; Environment Agency	Cost to be determined following the investigation Funding sought	Medium	July 2009; March 2010	E18
	(c) Investigate the possibility of providing an attractive arch at one or both ends of Mill Walk, promoting the walk and the shops	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council	Cost to be determined following the investigation Funding sought	Medium	January 2010; December 2010	E19
Levels of aircraft noise and pollution are unacceptably high	(a) Remind residents of the process for making complaints about aircraft and helicopter noise	Wheathampstead Parish Council	WDPS; District Councillor	Negligible	High	Ongoing	E20
	(b) Represent the views of the parish to London Luton Airport Consultative Committee (LLACC)	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Negligible	Medium	Ongoing	E21
	(c) Monitor the results of the NATS consultation exercise and respond appropriately	WDPS	District Councillor; Wheathampstead Parish Council	Negligible	High	Ongoing	E22
Litter is a major concern among residents	Offer suitable support and assistance to the Litter Blitz campaign	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Litter Blitzers	Cost will depend on what assistance is required, but is likely to be minimal	High	Ongoing	E23

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
There is a lack of safe cycling routes in the Wheathampstead area (to link Wheathampstead with Kimpton, Harpenden, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Heartwood Forest)	Determine where suitable cycling routes should be sited and provide the routes	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Sustrans; Kimpton Parish Council; Sandridge Parish Council; Harpenden Town Council; St Albans District Council; Welwyn Hatfield District Council; Hertfordshire County Council; The Woodland Trust; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team; Grant or sponsorship to cover 50% or more of the cost	Cost of providing the routes to be determined in the light of: (a) decision on proposed site of routes (b) availability of grant, sponsorship or donation	High	April 2009 (to begin looking for grant); 2011	E24
Cycle paths need to be improved	Improve the quality of existing cycle paths	Wheathampstead Parish Council	St Albans District Council; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way team;; Lea Valley proposal 199 – incomplete; Hertfordshire County Council strategic action required; No suitable rights of way available	Cost to be met by Hertfordshire County Council	Medium	2010; 2012	E25
The river is an under-valued resource	(a) Organise another day event to tidy the river near the Mill Bridge, removing litter and, if practicable, pruning vegetation	WDPS	Countryside Management Service (CMS)	Negligible	Medium	May 2009; August 2009	E26

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
	(b) Investigate ways in which the river could be better utilised / accessed so that it becomes a greater asset to Wheathampstead, and present the findings to the Parish Council	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Environment Agency; Wheathampstead River Residents' Association	Negligible	Medium	January 2010; December 2010	E27
	(c) Refer to the research already conducted on river flooding in Wheathampstead, undertake further investigations if necessary and arrange for suitable remedial action to be taken	Wheathampstead River Residents' Association	Wheathampstead Parish Council; WDPS; Countryside Management Service (CMS); Environment Agency	Cost to be determined depending on the investigation	High	Ongoing since 2001; 2011 – 2013	E28
Walks should be publicised using signs, notice boards and/or tourist information displays	Provide improved signage to publicise walks	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council (Rights of Way); Countryside Management Service (CMS)	Cost to be evaluated	Medium	2009; 2011	E29
Access to the River Lea should be improved at East Meads, and a wider, more attractive bridge should be provided	Purchase and erect a second East Meads bridge over the Lea	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Countryside Management Service (CMS); Contractors	£25,000	Medium	2010; 2011	E30
Lighting needs to be improved along the path between Wheathampstead and Nomansland Common	Improve the lighting along the footpath: Butterfield Road to Nomansland	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council (Highways)	Cost to be met by Hertfordshire County Council	Medium	2010; 2011	E31

**See also:**

Action V3 – Dealing with rubbish on Village Day, and promoting re-cycling (under section 10. Village Day)

Action S20 – Promoting the village and its heritage in the local media (under section 5. Shops & Businesses)

## 10. Planning

At the launch event, planning issues were the fourth most common type raised. They accounted for over 10% of all the issues that were brought up, exceeded only by shops and businesses, roads, and youth and leisure. Although the subject of planning was not specifically included in the questionnaire, a number of people raised planning issues in answer to the question which asked what, if one thing could be changed about Wheathampstead, it should be.

Urban Practitioners are currently working with St Albans District Council to identify and address planning issues throughout the District. Wheathampstead Parish Council and other interested parties from the village will take part in the work that is done on behalf of Wheathampstead, recognising that the needs of a village are very important and likely to be different from those of the more urbanised aspect of St Albans. This will be done in accordance with the timescales that have been agreed by Urban Practitioners and the District Council, and the proposed action points will be detailed and refined in a later edition of the Village Plan.

In the meantime:

1. actions P1 – P5, although provisional, give an indication of the kind of approach that may be adopted;
2. the list that follows summarises the issues that need to be covered.



## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner (to be agreed)</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
There is a need to improve and preserve the character of the village	(a) Conduct a feasibility study into producing a Design Statement for the village (incorporating existing guidelines where appropriate) that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sets out guidelines defining acceptable standards of external design for buildings and all external features of buildings (including shop frontages, signs and advertising and similar displays)</li> <li>2. has the backing of Wheathampstead Parish Council and would be referred to by them when considering whether to recommend acceptance or rejection of an application</li> <li>3. has the purpose of influencing St Albans District Council in its decisions on planning applications within Wheathampstead</li> </ol>	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Urban Practitioners; St Albans District Council; WDPS	Negligible	Medium	Autumn 2009; Spring 2010	P1
	(b) Write the Design Statement	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Urban Practitioners; St Albans District Council; WDPS; dependent on the outcome of the feasibility study	To be determined in the light of the feasibility study	Medium	Spring 2010; Autumn 2011	P2
	(c) Investigate whether funding is available to help businesses comply with the statement	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Urban Practitioners; St Albans District Council; WDPS	Amounts involved cannot be established until the Design Statement is complete. Funding sought	Medium	Autumn 2011; Autumn 2012	P3
	(d) Conduct a survey of the High Street area to see what does not conform to the statement, identify areas for improvement and work with stakeholders to determine what can reasonably be altered	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Urban Practitioners; St Albans District Council; WDPS	Negligible	Medium	Autumn 2011; Autumn 2012	P4
	(e) Lead a consultation exercise on where residents would like to see improvements to the appearance and upkeep of buildings in the village	WDPS	Wheathampstead Parish Council; Urban Practitioners; St Albans District Council	Negligible	Medium	April 2009; Autumn 2009	P5
	(f) Take part in the English Heritage 'Conservation Areas At Risk' campaign as regards the conservation areas within the parish	Wheathampstead Parish Council	English Heritage	Negligible	High	June 2009; ongoing	P6

**See also:** Action E14 – Devise a Design Statement for signage in Wheathampstead (under section 9. Environment)



## LIST OF PLANNING ISSUES

### 1. Green Belt

The whole of the parish lies in the Metropolitan Green Belt, as defined in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994), except for the large village of Wheathampstead which is classified as a Specified Settlement excluded from the Green Belt. Within the Green Belt area, the following smaller villages are classified as Green Belt settlements, where development is not normally permitted except in certain specified circumstances: Gustard Wood, Folly Fields, Lea Valley Estate. The Green Belt in the parish performs many of the functions listed in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, in particular: checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up areas; preventing the scattered settlements from merging with each other or with the neighbouring town of Harpenden; and safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment. It is important to maintain this separation between the settlements in order to retain their identity and unique characteristics. A particular example is Lea Valley Estate which is separated from the Batford area of Harpenden by only two fields, which themselves are under pressure from a land banking scheme covering part of the fields and an unauthorised minor residential development.

The Specified Settlement of Wheathampstead has clearly defined, defensible boundaries which are largely set by existing main roads such as Lower Luton Road, Marford Road and Harpenden Road/Brewhouse Hill, and by natural features such as the River Lea flood plain. The north eastern bypass of the village (Cory-Wright Way) encloses a large area of river meadows, allotments and agricultural land in the Green Belt which provides important social, leisure and recreational facilities for the local population and for visitors to Wheathampstead. Development in this area would restrict these facilities and would seriously damage the rural setting of the village. The Green Belt boundary along the southern edge of the village generally follows the high point contour, and development should not be allowed to 'spill over' the brow of the hill towards Nomansland any further than has already occurred.

### 2. Landscape

Most of the parish (with the main exception of the built-up area of Wheathampstead) is designated a Landscape Conservation Area in the St Albans District Local Plan. This reflects the high landscape quality of the Upper Lea Valley, in which Wheathampstead is set, and the higher plateaux to the north and south. The whole area is characterised by wide, open views and gently rolling hills, wooded in parts. It is important to retain these long-distance views and the rural setting of Wheathampstead and the River Lea.



### 3. Conservation Areas

Five Conservation Areas have been designated within the parish: Wheathampstead, Amwell, Gustard Wood, Mackerye End and Water End. The St Albans District Local Plan contains policies aimed at preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of these areas of architectural and historic interest. The District Council has produced Character Statements for the Wheathampstead Conservation Area (April 2000) and some of the others. The central Conservation Area in particular contains a large number of statutorily listed buildings and features and a similar number of locally listed buildings identified by the District Council as deserving special attention.

The Wheathampstead Conservation Area, with the High Street at its core, is dominated by St Helen's Church (a Grade 1 listed building) and the churchyard, which is raised above the level of the High Street and contains several fine monuments. Other listed buildings of note in this area are The Bull Inn, the former Corn Mill and the Old School in Church Street. Unfortunately, the High Street has suffered a gradual deterioration over the past 25 years or so, due partly to the closure of a number of retail and service businesses which has left premises vacant for significant periods. As a result, the visual street scene has generally not been maintained to a standard worthy of a conservation area, although a Village Regeneration Scheme carried out about 10 years ago under the auspices of Hertfordshire County Council helped offset some of the worst effects.

It is crucial for the future sustainability of Wheathampstead that the vitality and viability of the central shopping area is maintained. The area was designated a Neighbourhood Centre in the St Albans District Local Plan, and the District Council has consistently applied planning policies aimed at maintaining its integrity as a shopping centre. Until such time as more businesses can be attracted to and retained in the High Street/lower Station Road area, it is important that the visual amenity of the area is improved by encouraging high standards of maintenance of buildings and street furniture and the removal of inappropriate signage and advertisements. Consideration of how this can best be achieved, and measures to implement it, are being taken forward under the action plan in this Village Plan.



#### **4. Green spaces**

There are some important green spaces whose integrity and value should be maintained. These are both within Wheathampstead itself, such as Rectory Field, and in or adjoining other settlements in the parish, e.g. Melissa Field, the river meadows. The existing green chains along the river and the former railway line should be clearly identified and enhanced. Wheathampstead Parish Council owns many of the green spaces and in order to protect them from future development they were placed in a Charitable Trust a few years ago.

#### **5. Housing development**

Wheathampstead has grown significantly since the Second World War with extensive new housing development on both green-field sites (e.g. Hilldyke estate, Bury Green) and on previously-developed land (e.g. the former Murphy's Chemicals site, King Edward Place, the Butterfield Road school site). There is little scope for further green-field development without impinging on the Green Belt or on important green spaces within the built-up areas.

#### **6. Design and layout of development**

Existing housing development in the parish is generally at a low density, although there are some pockets of higher density, for example historic groups of cottages in the various settlements and blocks of flats on the post-War Hilldyke estate. In accordance with the design principles set out in Planning Policy Statement 3, any new development in the parish should respect the setting and the character of the surrounding area. It should be well integrated with, and complement, the neighbouring buildings and the local area generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access. Roads should be pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly, and there should be good access to green community and recreational space, as well as private outdoor space such as gardens, patios and balconies.

## 11. Village Day

Village Day, held each year in July, is a popular institution in Wheathampstead. 95% of those who took part in the Survey were aware of it, 60% attend regularly and a further 25% attend sometimes. Those who do not come were asked to say why, and the most common reason (in 48% of cases) was that they had other commitments such as being at work or on holiday. 8% of those who do not attend felt that Village Day was mainly for children and families.

Village Day is currently held on a Sunday, and there was overwhelming support (89%) for this. Only 11% were in favour of moving the date to a Saturday.

The Survey asked what kind of additional attractions should be provided on Village Day. The most frequent responses were:

1. family sports events;
2. hog roast – already provided (Village Day 2008);
3. art exhibition – already provided (Village Day 2008);
4. “It’s a Knockout”-style games;
5. beer tent or caravan;
6. ethnic foods;
7. Fun fair.

These attractions are listed in order of popularity, although only a few votes separated the most popular from the least.

The majority of the events on Village Day are held at the Marford Road playing fields. Responses to the Environment section of the Survey highlighted the general problem of litter (the third most frequent environmental concern after traffic and the quality of roads), and the amount of rubbish at the playing fields was specifically mentioned. It appears that much of this is caused when items are dropped from the nearby recycling skips.

As an annual event that needs the participation of many local people, Village Day could also be a way of involving young people in activities that are of benefit to the community. The need for more activities for the young was underlined in responses to the Young People section of the Survey.



## ACTION PLAN

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Dependencies/Third party involvement</i>	<i>Estimated Budget required</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Start Date; Completion Date</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
There is a need to cater for adults without children. In particular, a beer tent or caravan should be provided	Invite a suitable operator to operate a beer caravan on Village Day	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Negligible	High	April 2009; In time for Village Day 2009	V1
In the case of young people, there is a need: (a) to engage them more in the life of the community (b) to provide suitable day activities	Involve local senior schools in the running of Village Day	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Local senior schools	Negligible	High	April 2009; In time for Village Day 2009	V2
Rubbish is a problem at the Marford Road playing fields, partly because of the careless use of the recycling skips	(a) Tackle the issue of additional rubbish produced on Village Day by the careful use of recycling bins on the day. (b) Promote careful recycling practices by inviting a recycling stall to Village Day.	Wheathampstead Parish Council	Litter Blitzers	Negligible	High	April 2009; In time for Village Day 2009	V3
There is a need for a stall selling ethnic foods	Invite a suitable retailer of ethnic foods to run a stall	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	Negligible	Medium	Summer 2009; at least In time for Village Day 2010	V4
"It's a Knockout"-style games should be held on Village Day	Identify the kind of "It's a Knockout"-style games that would be suitable for Village Day (taking into account the equipment required and Health & Safety considerations), and if appropriate invite suitable individuals or organisations to organise them	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	A cost could be incurred in acquiring suitable equipment , but this cannot be determined until the types of game have been decided upon.	Medium	Summer 2009; at least In time for Village Day 2010	V5
Traditional "sports-day" events for the whole family should be held on Village Day	Identify the kind of family sports events that would be suitable for Village Day (taking into account the facilities required and Health & Safety considerations), and if appropriate invite suitable individuals or organisations to organise them	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	A cost could be incurred in making available suitable facilities, but this cannot be determined until the types of sports have been decided upon.	Medium	Summer 2009; at least In time for Village Day 2010	V6

## 12. List of Organisations owning action points

### **Wheathampstead Parish Council**

Parish Office, Memorial Hall, Marford Road,  
Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, AL4 8AY  
01582 832541  
*Email:* whampsteadpc@btconnect.com

### **Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society (WDPS)**

*Website:* [www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk](http://www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)  
*Email:* wdps2@lycos.com

### **Wheathampstead for Enterprising Business (WEB)**

01582 833360  
*Website:* [www.wheathampstead.org.uk](http://www.wheathampstead.org.uk)  
*Email:* chair@wheathampstead.org.uk

### **Wheathampstead River Residents' Association (WRRRA)**

01582 832461

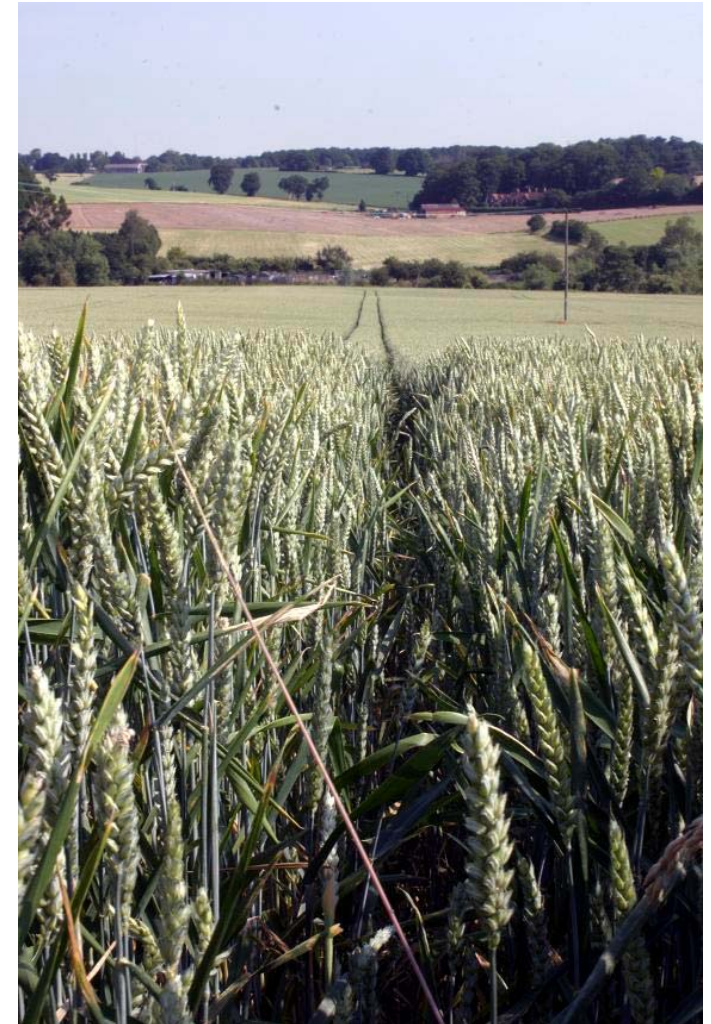
### **St Albans District Council**

Council Offices, Civic Centre, St Peters Street, St Albans,  
Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE  
01727 866100  
*Website:* [www.stalbans.gov.uk](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk)

### **Hertfordshire County Council**

County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford Hertfordshire, SG13  
8DQ 01438 737555  
*Website:* [www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org)

If you would like to help in implementing any of the action points in this Plan, please contact the owner of the action who will be delighted to hear from you.





## 13. Acknowledgements

The Village Plan Committee of Wheathampstead Parish Council would like to thank:

1. everyone who helped produce the Plan by analysing the data, prioritising issues, suggesting solutions and drawing up action plans;
2. all those residents of Wheathampstead who attended the launch event and completed the questionnaires.

## 14. Appendices

The following appendices can be viewed in the online version of the Plan:

- Appendix 1: Issues raised at the launch event
- Appendix 2: Statistical Analysis of Wheathampstead Parish Survey
- Appendix 3: Issues raised as free-form answers in the questionnaires

## Update History

**Edition 1**

Approved and presented at Annual Parish Meeting

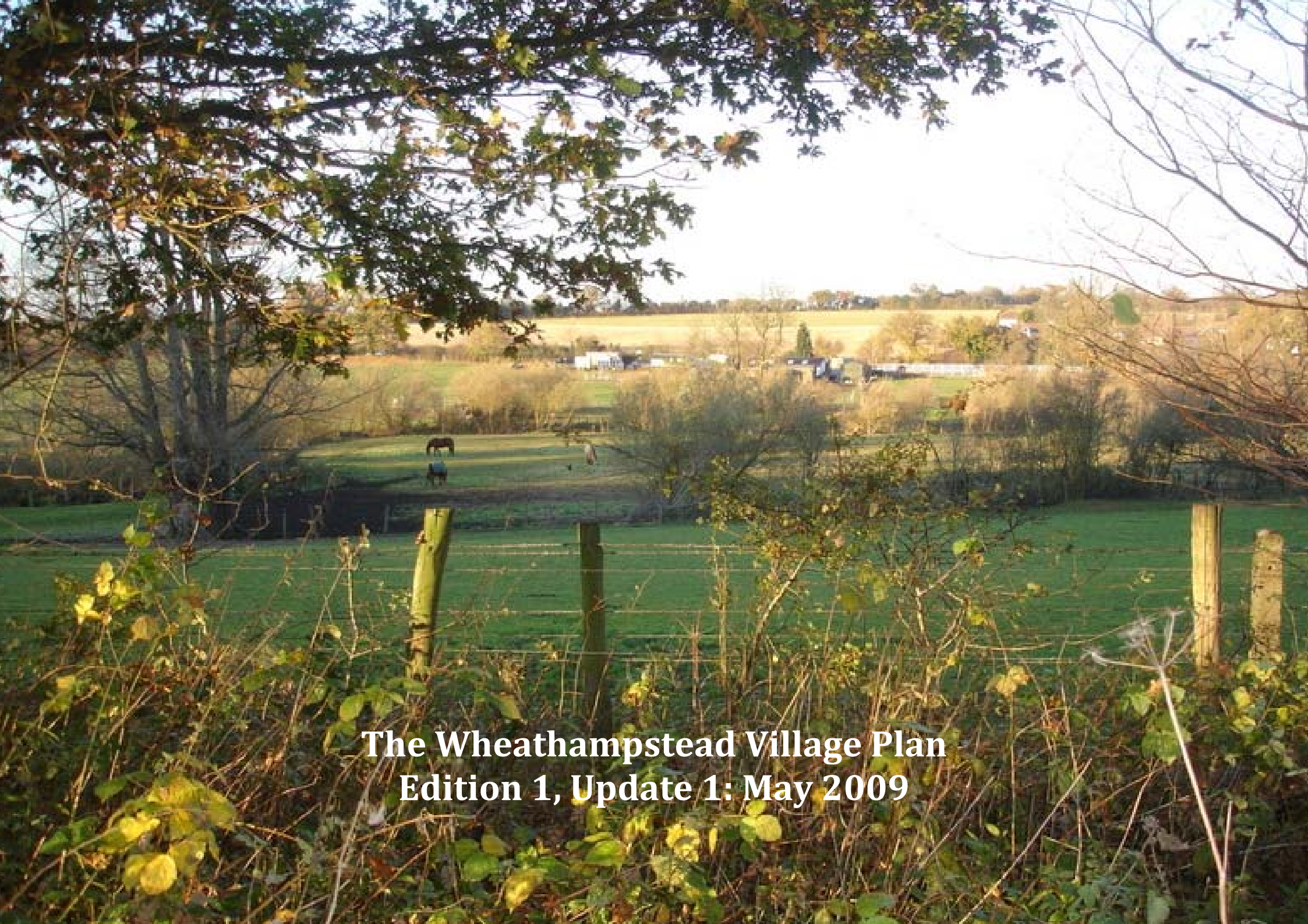
22 April 2009

**Edition 1, Update 1**

English Heritage Survey (new action), Schooling (amended action), OS Map (revised map) plus corrections to forest acreage and typos

22 May 2009





**The Wheathampstead Village Plan  
Edition 1, Update 1: May 2009**