

# Our Vision for Wheathampstead in 2030

## 1 PREAMBLE

---

This document is a description of how the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Committee see the development of Wheathampstead over the next 15 years to 2031. It creates a basis for producing our Neighbourhood Plan and helps to identify what needs to happen in order to make the vision a reality.

We are presenting an idealised vision for the parish that may or may not be achievable in the intervening years. However the Neighbourhood Plan is being developed with these goals in mind though ultimately there are many influences that will affect the outcome.

What follows is a description of the parish as viewed from the year 2030.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

---

The district of St Albans has a mix of settlements ranging in size and demography from St Albans city centre through to hamlets and scattered dwellings. The civil parish of Wheathampstead is located in and around the Lea Valley and occupies some 26 square kilometres with Wheathampstead village as the main settlement. The village is classed as a “large village” and in 2015 had a population of approximately 6,400. Although a large village, Wheathampstead benefits from the look and feel of a smaller community which is reflected in its community spirit. Some of the more remote settlements probably associate themselves more with Harpenden, our nearest large town, because the parish boundary partially encircles it and includes part of the urban area. Some residents to the north may also feel an association with Kimpton.

In 2031 Wheathampstead has retained its identity as a rural parish with the village as the centre for social, commercial and service activity. Although there has been a relatively small increase in population the village has retained its description as a “village” and residents feel part of a small, close-knit community. We have maintained the village High Street as the commercial hub and the area around the Memorial Hall as the services hub.

The outlying communities of The Lea Valley Estate, The Folly and Gustard Wood have established their own identity within the parish overall but remain connected to the village hub. They are represented on all appropriate parish council committees and working groups, and in other community organisations.

## 3 SERVICES

---

As in 2015 our services hub contains the Parish Council office, Library, Fire Station, Police Office, Doctors Surgery and sporting facilities roughly co-located within a 150m radius. These services are the main focus for community activities primarily facilitated by the Parish Council which continues to support local groups and works to improve the local environment and wellbeing of residents.

New amenities have been developed. These include a renovated Memorial Hall with state of the art facilities and the availability of new activities such as a cinema, gym, dance and fitness studio, swimming and social space. There is also an area where small businesses can share facilities for hot desking, photocopying, etc.

High speed broadband is available to even the most remote dwellings while telephone and TV reception has been enhanced in areas where it once was poor.

## 4 COMMERCE

---

The commercial hub in the High Street contains a selection of shops and restaurants that complement each other but provide sufficient goods and services, including a Post Office, for the day-to-day needs of the residents and businesses. Shops and other business premises have been protected from change of use from commercial to residential to ensure the High Street remains a thriving retail area. Adjacent to the High Street there is a flourishing and protected business area with a range of small and medium-sized, office-based businesses supporting employment, the High Street and community projects.

Businesses have been boosted by an increase in tourism to the area and the availability of visitor accommodation. Our public houses within the parish have been protected as valued community assets.

The street scene is in keeping with the historic nature of the village with well thought out street furniture, signage and seating.

## 5 TRANSPORT

---

To help integrate the more remote parts of the community, to promote a healthier lifestyle, to connect our adjacent towns and to reduce pollution, we have a network of on and off road cycle ways and footpaths. Road traffic has been contained and reduced where possible with particular attention having been paid to deterring heavy vehicles using unsuitable roads, traffic passing through the village centre and speeding. Public transport is more frequent, reliable and inexpensive with “park and ride” facilities for those wishing to commute or shop in adjacent towns.

## 6 HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

---

There is sufficient housing to meet the needs of first time buyers (including affordable housing), elderly residents wishing to downsize and families who wish to retain their historic link with Wheathampstead.

Some social housing built in the 1960s and of poor quality has been replaced with modern, energy efficient accommodation with improved access for the elderly and disabled. The Hilldyke estate has been re-landscaped and leisure facilities improved.

New buildings (including extensions and rebuilds) within the parish, whether residential or commercial, are appropriate to their surroundings both in size and design, and those which are in or close to conservation areas are in-keeping with the historic nature of Wheathampstead. Developments have been small scale with minimal impact on the Green Belt. Beyond the village few new buildings have been constructed in open Green Belt. No buildings or extensions have resulted in over development of their site.

New buildings are energy efficient and use the latest technologies to keep CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to a minimum.

There is sufficient accommodation for elderly residents to downsize including for those who need additional care.

## 7 SCHOOLS

---

There are sufficient nursery, primary and secondary places of good quality and within easy reach of the main pockets of population. Where publically funded transportation is not available there are safe routes for walking and cycling.

## 8 YOUTH AND THE ELDERLY

---

Both young and elderly residents benefit from a wide range of facilities. Young people are able to congregate in a purpose built youth club and are able to develop their interests in topics such as music, fashion and dance. Groups for the increasing number of elderly residents are able to meet in a variety of venues around the parish including the Mead Hall and Memorial Hall.

Outdoor facilities include football, netball, tennis, cricket, archery, running and a gym.

## 9 HERITAGE

---

Wheathampstead is known for its rich history and attracts visitors to the area. There is a heritage centre, interpretation boards at strategic spots, walking maps and leaflets available to visitors.

Those of our buildings which are in-keeping with the historic nature of the parish, and particularly those in the conservation area, have been conserved and not threatened by unsuitable development, advertising signage and decoration.

## 10 OPEN SPACES AND PLAY AREAS

---

Our open spaces have been treasured and maintained to balance the needs of wildlife, promoting biodiversity, public access and visual appeal.

Until its closure in the 1970s, the Blackbridge tip was a landfill site for London located close to the village. It has now been returned to productive use as an amenity for residents.

There are sufficient play areas for younger residents with modern, safe equipment close to the centres of population.

## 11 CONCLUSION

---

In 2030 there is an excitement around living in the parish, a pride in its history, facilities for all ages and income, while at the same time the parish continues to evolve and take advantage of new technologies and business opportunities.

Wheathampstead continues to be thriving and socially cohesive, with a mixed age population and ethnic and religious groups living in harmony.