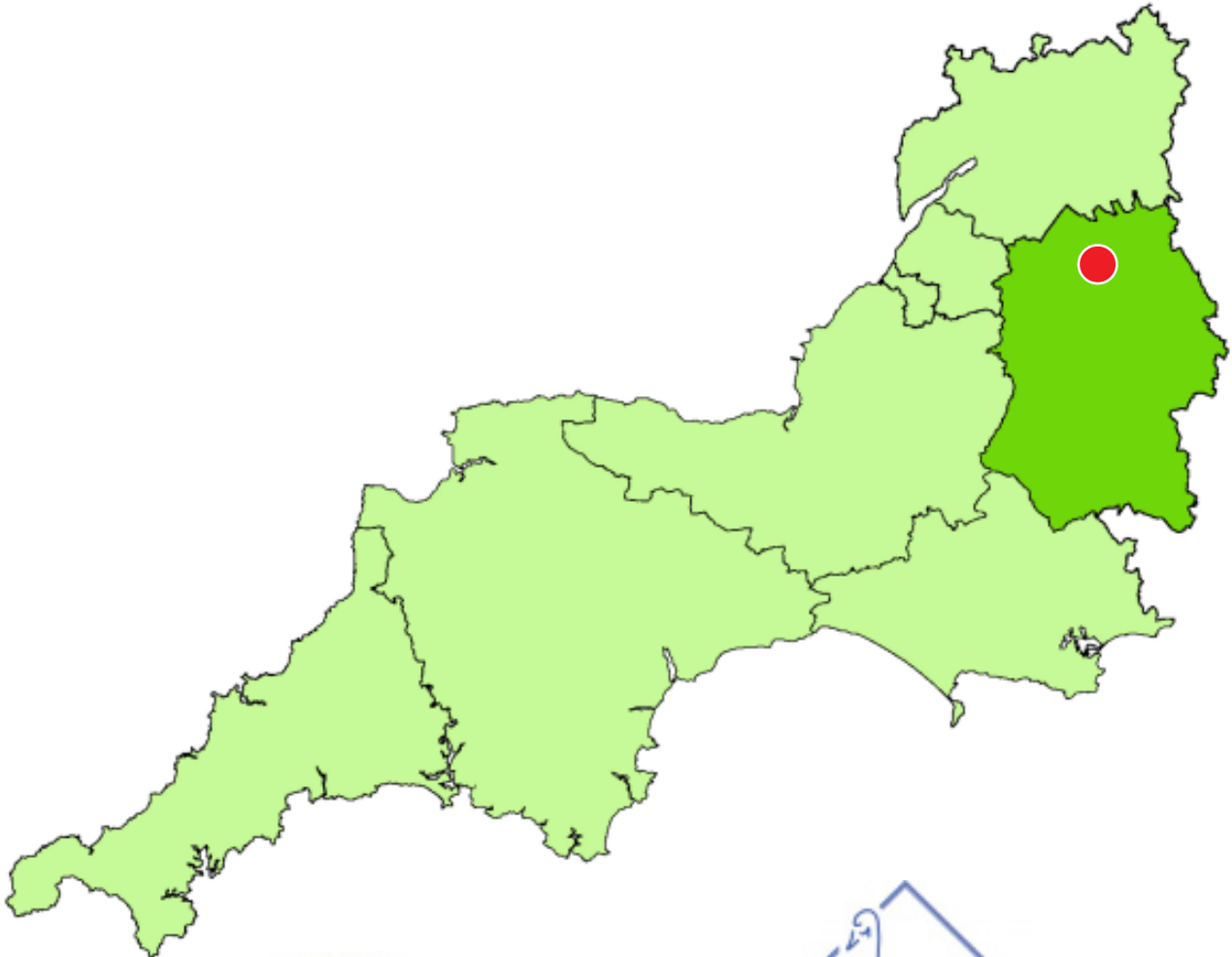


Hilmarton Parish Plan

Completion Date: 2005



**COMMUNITY
FIRST**



Compiled by Community First
In partnership with the South West Acre Network (SWAN)

Hilmarton Parish Plan Case Study

Interviewees

Parish Clerk

Most of the information below was collected as part of Community First's Parish Plan Impact Survey which was completed in 2007. This has been supplemented by up to date information supplied by the Parish Clerk.

Background

Hilmarton is a small parish lying on the A3102 that runs between Calne and Wootton Bassett and Swindon. The parish is made up of the village of Hilmarton, a smaller community at Goatacre and a number of hamlets including New Zealand. Most of the parish services including a school, church and pub lie within Hilmarton although Goatacre has a village hall/Sports and Social Club. Although the A3102 provides easy access to Swindon and the transport network it also bisects Hilmarton and is a hazardous stretch of road for pedestrians.

What is a Community-Led Plan

In the foreword to the parish plan the Chair of the Steering Group wrote: This plan sets out how the Parish would develop over the next ten years or so. It provides the Parish Council with a clear set of priorities for action, and is based on the views of parishioners as identified through (consultation). The Plan gives the strongest indication as to what local people think about local issues. It will make clear to local policy makers at County and District levels what parishioners want and will make an effective tool for lobbying on the issues that matter.

The Process

The idea of a Parish Plan evolved when Councillors discussed the merits of Quality Parish Status, which would benefit from the production of a parish plan. Meetings were held with representatives from District and County Councils as well as Community First. The Parish Plan Steering Group was established in 2002 and funding secured from the Countryside Agency. Two public meetings were held in early 2003 to promote the plan and elicit views of parishioners. A number of additional meetings with village groups followed. The Steering Group commissioned a survey which was hand delivered to residents over 18. In the summer of 2003 primary school children took part in a quiz in an attempt to elicit their views. The most difficult group from which to obtain views were the young people but they were involved through a Theme Group which formed part of the Calne Community Area Partnership. Results of consultations were fed back at public meetings held in early 2004. Draft copies of the plan were collated from information gathered, and these were circulated for comment. The final plan was adopted by the Parish Council in January 2005.

What are your achievements as a community to date, as a result of the Community-Led Plan?

The biggest success is provision of the School/Community Hall and the response rate of over 90% to the questionnaire survey. The Parish Council have actioned most of the items highlighted from the plan and have consulted to find out if there is still a need for the rest.

How has the Hilmarton Parish Plan helped you to engage with your local authority about services your community needs?

- We used the plan to show support for the new hall- when planning wanted to reject the application.
- Lobbied NWDC to introduce kerbside recycling
- New street lighting installed in one area
- Working with County Rights of Way Officer to restore Right of Way
- Also looking at housing needs

What other projects have you got planned for the future?

- Pursuing possible siting of 2 new affordable homes with Community First's Rural Housing Enabler and Kennet Housing Association

Have the actions from the Plan brought any funding into the community e.g. lottery grants, trusts, Village of the Year etc.?

- A grant received from Calne Area Committee for funding towards community room in the new hall
- PC has good relationship with funders anyway so nothing to report directly linked with parish plan

How are you keeping the process alive and advising progress to the community?

Feedback is provided in the Parish Council Annual Report which is delivered to every household. The village newsletter will also be used. The PC asked people in the village if they were still interested in some of the actions that hadn't yet been achieved, but had no response to this.

How has this benefited the community?

When asked the Parish Council reported that as a result of the parish plan there are:

- New people involved in community activity- New fundraising initiatives started
- Better networking between existing groups
- Better understanding of the roles of PC, Local Authority and service providers
- Increase in community spirit
- Got people talking and communicating.

What lessons have you learned?

Next time we would:

- include more long term plans
- ensure that members of the steering group are involved to benefit the community as a whole and not just for personal reasons on certain items that affect them

How does the Action Plan link into the Parish Council's future business planning?

The plan will be revised annually. PC use the plan when looking at future projects

One piece of advice for others?

The biggest thing in our favour was we had such a good response rate to the questionnaire. Make the most of the process by hand delivering and collecting the questionnaire to get the maximum return rate. You can really ensure you have the parish behind you.

Quote

on the Community-Led Planning Process

"We were amazed at how effective the document was, if we'd known how effective it would be we'd have thought more long term with the actions. It has been a very worthwhile commitment and useful document for the Parish Council. The Parish Council have nearly completed all the actions."