

Wantage Town Council - Community Action Plan

A programme of work has been commissioned by Wantage Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan working group as part of a national pilot to:

- consider how the community can take greater control over the local area;
- raise awareness and understanding of community rights, in particular, the Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value);
- consider how the community could maximise the potential to secure resources and assets to deliver community priorities and;
- involve more people in taking part in shaping the future of their community.

Over the last four weeks, a small group of individuals have taken part in discussing and creating this twelve month action plan for Wantage.

The action plan for the town has a number of key programmes. These include:

- Maintaining and expanding the vibrancy of the Town
- Protecting green spaces
- Protecting historic environment and local distinctiveness
- Building community ownership of assets

This plan is the work of the community and reflects the issues in Wantage.

Wantage today: Strengths

Real community spirit and civic participation. Strong civic voice!
Work underway on Wantage Neighbourhood Plan.
Excellent access to green space. The town is within walking distance to open countryside.
Historic market town. Strong sense of local character and distinctiveness.
Good cultural facilities; Vale and Downland Museum, Sack Museum etc...
Lovely place to live for families and older people.

Wantage today: Weaknesses

Pressure for new housing development in Wantage and Grove. Concern that new development will encroach into green corridors.
Infrastructure provision is not keeping pace with new development. Additional pressure on local facilities and services.
Concern that the Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council may sell off land/buildings in the future.
Some inappropriate development has occurred in the town centre. Loss of heritage assets.

The following is the action plan to give the Wantage Community greater control over the place in which they live:

1. Organise a Stakeholder Meeting			
What	When	Invite	Objectives
Review the Community Right to Bid and the ability to create Assets of Community Value (ACVs)	By 30 April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local MP, mayor & town councillors • Chairs of Neighbourhood Plan and Community Assets Working Group • Relevant officers at Vale of White Horse District Council • Relevant community stakeholders 	Review draft list of possible community assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Criteria • Benefit • Nominations and nomination form • When and where to submit
2. Consultation on Nominations			
What	When	Who (will lead)	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile nomination suggestions from community stakeholders • Prepare display material for public consultation) • Arrange Public Consultation 	By 30 June 2015	Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend public awareness of ACVs in general and in relation to this project • Address public concerns • Gain public support and feedback on nominations • Encourage further nominations from the public
3. Submission of Nominations			
What	When	Who (will lead)	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all nominations (from stakeholders and public) against ACV criteria • Decide whether to support nominations • Address and resolve outstanding queries • Submission of Nominations 	By 30 August 2015	Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Group & Wantage Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit nominations to VWHDC
4. Publication of Community Assets List			
What	When	Who (will lead)	Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset listed by VWHDC and owner notified. Inform the Community of Listings via email, website, posters, press and other social media. 	When approval granted by VWHDC	Wantage Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Community Awareness of Community Assets and encourage on-going interest.
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Possible list of Community Assets

What	Why
Vale and Downland Museum	The recent Neighbourhood Plan Survey showed strong support for protection of the museum as an ACV. The museum was the most popular building suggested by the community.
Leisure Centre	An important location of significant value to the community
The Beacon / Civic Centre	An important Community building owned by the VWHDC, which should be protected for the use of the community
King Alfred's Head Pub	A key location and useful rooms used regularly for community meetings
Victoria Cross Gallery	A covered shopping centre, important for linkage of car park to market square and a key heritage asset for the town
Arbery Arcade	A covered shopping centre, important for linkage of car park to market square and a key heritage asset for the town
Blue Boar	A key location with significant space.
Letcombe Brook Wildlife Corridor	Rare chalk stream, not yet SSSI, some parts privately owned
Wantage Memorial Park	An important Community green space owned by the VWHDC, which should be protected for the use of the community
Mably Way Playing Fields	An important Community green space owned by the VWHDC, which should be protected for the use of the community
Wantage Allotments	Five important Community green spaces which should be protected for the use of the community
Willow Walk Nature Reserve	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community
King Alfred's Centre Site Playing Fields	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community
King Alfred's East Site Playing Fields	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community
The Humber Ditch and green environs	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community
Fenced green recreational space in Charlton	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community

Harcourt Green	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community		
Humber Ditch	One of only nine open green spaces of more than 2 hectares in Wantage		
Charlton Cricket Pitch	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community		
Area west of the Health Centre	One of only nine open green spaces of more than 2 hectares in Wantage		
Alfred's Well	Important geological, ecological and historic site		
Open space in Stockham Park	An important Community green space, which should be protected for the use of the community		
St Mary's Convent	An area of more than 2 hectares with biodiversity and historical interest		
Toms' field, Charlton	Important green space crossed by public footpath, creating a small green gap between Charlton and Crab Hill		
Wilts and Berks Canal	An important asset which goes through a corner of the Town.		
5. Undertake further research into the potential of the following buildings and green spaces as Assets of Community Value:			
<u>Buildings – Possible Candidates</u>			
Almshouses (x3, owned by Trusts)			
Sack House (owned by Canal Trust, but Barratts Homes have right to portion of sale value)			
Bear Hotel (may be exempt if dwelling is "main use")			
Old Town Hall (HSBC Bank – not the only town bank, but in community use)			
Post Office Vaults (mixed use – shops, pub, residential)			
Convent (private, but restricted community use of hall and possibly Infirmary)			
<u>Green Spaces – Possible Candidates</u>			
The Platt (owned by Trust, no need if already legal right of way)			
The Wharf and cycle way (parts may be privately owned, so not in community use)			
Baptist Cemetery, Garston Lane (protected?)			
6. Consider the following green spaces for allocation as Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan.			
What	When	Who (will lead)	Why
To be added			
7. Consider buildings and structures to nominate for the Local Heritage Assets List?			
What	When	Who (will lead)	Why
Compile a list of potential Local Heritage Assets?			

Contact the Conservation Officer to discuss potential nominations?			
Submit buildings and structures to Vale of White Horse District Council for consideration as Local Heritage Assets.			