



### What is a Parish and Community-Led plan?

A Parish & Community-Led Plan is a document which sets out a vision for a community's future based on sound local research, looking at social, environmental and economic life.

It celebrates positive features and activities, highlights community needs and contains a detailed action plan to help the community meet those needs. A Parish & Community-Led Plan is produced by and for the community, based on a detailed survey and consultation process which involves the whole community. It prompts action and influences others.

A robust Parish & Community-Led Plans is inclusive and can demonstrate a robust process that ensures its quality. It is steered by a group of people from within the community, including representation from the parish or town council and follows good practice and advice from a neutral independent body. In Gloucestershire, GRCC is the lead provider of advice and support for parish and community led planning.

### A memorial to a previous vicar of Down Hatherley



### Introduction

Down Hatherley lies in the Green Belt between Cheltenham and Gloucester in the South West of England. It has evolved as an area of farming, small holdings, orchards and nurseries, and these are still very much in evidence in the locality.

The area enjoys long open views across open farmland and some attractive walks across arable and pastoral farmland along the Brickhampton Golf Course. The Cotswold Hills are prominent to the east, the Malvern Hills are in view to the north west, May Hill frames the view to the west, and Gloucester Cathedral is a key landmark to the south west.

Evidence of human habitation in Down Hatherley goes back to Roman times. Six-Acre Field, immediately to the east of the A38 and north of Down Hatherley Lane contains a Romano-British site. It has never been formally excavated but field working in the 1990s by members of the Gloucester and District Archaeological Research Group (GADARG) revealed part of a floor, Romano-British pottery, wall plaster, Roman coins and a Roman brooch. It is estimated that the site was occupied between the 2nd and late 4th century. A Saxon burial site was discovered in the same field.

As well as its 165 households, Down Hatherley includes St Mary and Corpus Christi Church, a village hall, the Hatherley Manor Hotel, a cricket club, a garden centre, three plant nurseries, horse stables and four farms. The services in the village include a mobile police van, mobile library, a community mini bus, and a milk and newspaper delivery service. Although there are few services and no shops in the parish, a shop did exist in Down Hatherley until the early 1970s, when it was converted to a residence.



Down Hatherley Manor

### The Process

In 2004, encouraged by another parish who we (Down Hatherley Parish Council) were watching as they went through the process, we decided at a Parish Council meeting to try to raise awareness through the parish newsletter. From the newsletter we had enough of a response to hold an interactive open event, which was divided into theme groups doing a SWOT analysis on each topic.

After many meetings with the steering group and the community, a questionnaire was put together, delivered door to door and collected by a team of volunteers. The data analysis was done partly by GRCC and partly by a community member.

Open events and meetings took place over a period of months to feed back the information to the community and to prioritise the issues and projects.

The results were published in a document, endorsed by the Parish Council, distributed in 2005 to all households within the community.

## Down Hatherley's achievements

### Community benefits

We feel this process has fostered great spirit within the community and made us realise that we need to work together to get things done.

We keep the plan alive by reviewing it at every Parish Council meeting in part, and then reviewing it in full annually. Progress and updates to the community are dispersed through the parish council newsletter and meetings.

It is nice to feel that the work the Parish Council does is reflected by the information coming from the Community Plan

### Roads and Traffic management

- Improved road direction and hedges (at a cost of £100,000)
- Road calming
- Hedges replanted to the newly redirected road
- Local bus service re-routed to be more beneficial to the community
- Funding secured for a hand-held speed camera (shared with neighbouring parishes)

### Airport

- The Parish Council now have representation on the Airport Consultative Committee

### Community, Leisure and Activity

- The Parish Council have changed the format of the parish council meeting so the community can speak and have more of a say on what happens within their parish.
- A local resident is now a member of the Police Community Partnership
- Increased membership on the village hall committee
- An increased number of social events held at the cricket club since it has been licensed
- An increase in the number of people from outside the parish wanting to use the church since it has been put on the village website

### Community information

- A new website has been developed, with links to the church and cricket club website and information about the history group. The website is updated by a member of the community.

- The “Down Hatherley Happening” newsletter is put together and published annually by member of the community.
- There are four notice boards within the village so all the residents can be kept updated.

### Walking Group Activities

- Up to 30 community members (and dogs) attend the 3-4 walks held in the summer months.
- Community New Year's Day walk.

### History Talks

- A History group is now in place which has carried out research and given talks to the community – a library of old photos from the community has been gathered to add to an archive.

### Village Fun Day

- Steering group in place assisting with fund raising for the annual Village Fun Day.

### Neighbourhood Watch

- All areas are now covered by a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

### Litter, Fly Tipping and Community Litter Picks

- 6 monthly litter clean up (there is never a shortage of members)
- Fly tipping has been noticeably reduced



“There has been an increase in the number of people from outside the parish wanting to use the church since the church has been put on the village website”

## Key advice for others

*“Learn from others who have been through the process and involve as many of the community as possible by consulting, consulting and consulting again”*

## Working with partners

Down Hatherley Parish Plan has helped with partnership working including the Highways, Police, bus company and Planning at Tewkesbury Borough Council which has had an impact on a new development.

Since the floods in July 2007 it has enabled us to not only work with other agencies but also with neighbouring parishes.



Hatherley Cricket Club

*“Village members are more aware of the concerns of others and generally more involved with village life”*

*“This Parish Plan has provided an opportunity for the people of Down Hatherley to participate in framing the future of their community and village”*

## Lessons learnt and future projects

We have learnt to be more focused on the concerns of the village, giving the village a chance to raise their issues, recognising early in the process the importance of community consultation.

We plan to improve ditch drainage to aid any future flooding prevention. We also plan to enable further partnership working to address the problem of the aircraft noise and we will focus on traffic management and calming.

*With thanks to Down Hatherley Parish Council members and clerk for their contributions to this case study*

GRCC is the lead provider of support for **parish and community-led plans** in Gloucestershire and can offer support to communities dependent on the location of the parish. For further information please contact  
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