



### 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. Parish & Community-Led Plans are produced by and for communities, based on a detailed survey and consultation process which involves the whole community, prompts action and influences others.

Good Parish & Community-Led Plans use the Parish & Community-Led Planning Toolkit framework, are supported by external facilitators and can demonstrate a robust evaluation process that ensures their quality.

### Introduction

Meysey Hampton is a very small parish in the South Cotswolds area, located approximately 6 miles from Cirencester and 2 miles from Fairford. At the time of publishing their parish plan, in 2004, it was estimated that the parish had a population of around 600 individuals, spread across a wide area as the village is made up of a central settlement along a 'High Street' and an out of village 'Home Park' development called Greenacres which has a high proportion of retired residents.



The history of the village dates back to medieval times and the Manor of Hantone from which the village developed is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). The name of the parish derives from "Ham" meaning homestead and "Tun" an enclosure. Taken together, the 2 parts mean an independent settlement.

The village has a pub, school, village hall and church which are well used and supported and until recently (around 2 years ago) there was also a fairly well supported shop. The community is, a resilient one with a progressive parish council who to engage with residents and work in partnership with agencies and authorities to address issues.

### The Process

David Phillips the Parish Council Chairman and having heard of other parishes completing parish plans, he instigated the Meysey Hampton parish plan that was published in 2004. The community, which had already completed a Village Appraisal (a 'snap shot' document) and a Village Design Statement (a document which focuses on character and design guide for any future development,) was asked to get involved.

Once a steering group of interested residents had been established an application was made to the former Countryside Agency for a grant to carry out a local consultation which would lead to an action plan. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council were invited to present at a

public meeting at which the plan consultation period was launched, and they provided continued support through the development of a questionnaire and the subsequent analysis.

The questionnaire, which was delivered to and collected from every household in the parish, led to a high level of interest in the plan and produced good statistical evidence to back up the action plan developed. The steering group recognised the importance of compiling strong statistics to support an action plan as it enhanced the plan's robustness and provided required evidence to obtain funding or outside support.



## Our achievements

### Community benefit

At the time when the parish plan was published, communication within the parish was limited. However since the parish plan, this has changed dramatically. A new email database enables the parish council to send information and meeting minutes out to around two thirds of the community. There is still room for further improvements, such as the desired installation of a parish council notice board. The council is hopeful that, with increased communication within the parish, encouraging future community involvement in projects should be easier.

- Neighbourhood Watch Scheme: The whole village is covered by the scheme and there is good communications established with the local authority and police. A representative from the parish council attends the District Council led Cotswolds Safer and Stronger Communities meetings to pass on information.
- A well established and run toddlers group was set up to address an increasing demand in the community. Members of the community now run the group from the village hall and have very good links with the school to help children in the transition to school.
- The maintenance of the village pond appeared as a priority in the parish plan. The pond has since been cleaned and dredged with a JCB digger. However it has since become infested with a dominating pond weed. The parish is now working with in partnership with the Water Parks to address this problem.
- A 'Welcome Pack' for new residents has been developed as a result of the parish plan. The pack provides details of local organisations, relevant local websites and information about other local services.
- A 'flashing' speed sign has been installed on the South side of the village that alerts drivers if they are speeding as they enter the village.
- To ensure safer parking around the school entrance, parking patrols have been established by the headteacher, police and other local residents. This has led to much improved parking in the area.



*The Village Pond, located next to the parish church, needs professional treatment to rid it of a dominating weed. The parish council and Water Parks are working in partnership to address this problem.*

- Following the publication of the parish plan, the parish council successfully campaigned to have a weight limit installed for the village roads. An 18 tonne limit has reduced the number of vehicles that can pass through the village. The parish council also achieved a desired 50 mph speed limit on the A417 that runs along the boundary of the village.
- The Village Hall management committee is currently working on a large scale project which, it is hoped, will lead to a brand new building that will better meet the needs of the community for the foreseeable future. The hall is a vital facility for the community and especially the local school. Unfortunately it exists on a small footprint so major redevelopment is not possible however new innovative designs are being explored and large scale funding sought.
- A committee was set up to work on the 'Best Kept Village' competition applications, however as this competition no longer runs this group has now been disbanded.
- 2 well attended village 'Keep Fit' classes have been set up following the launch of the plan.



**Meysey Hampton Village Hall**

**“The parish plan was an interesting community led exercise to undertake that has produced useful results and project successes and a lot of actions are still ongoing”**

Angie Wright, Steering Group Member and Parish Councillor

## Working with partners

The parish council is in regular communications with agencies such as Gloucestershire Highways to ensure the success of community projects. The new speed and weight limits in the parish are an example of this successful partnership working. The District Council and local District Councillor have been involved in progressing other projects since the publication of the parish plan such as the investigation of a community owned car parking facility.

Due to the location of the village the parish council also has proactive and effective links with its neighbouring parishes.

### Key advice for other parishes

“Once completed, do not put the plan away – keep it accessible so that anyone in the community can access it when they need to”

“If, in the future, you can see new projects arising that will require specific information, such as evidence of need and support, ensure that the consultations you carry out best meet the requirements of the upcoming project”



*With thanks to Roger Case, Meysey Parish Council Chairman and Angie Wright, Parish Councillor and member of the parish plan steering group for their contributions to this case study*

*The results of a recently completed village survey, a specific consultation for the village hall project, are displayed, in the photograph above, on one of the village notice boards.*

*Another consultation technique used solely for the village hall project was a ballot on designs and whether villagers wished to pay for changes using the parish precept. The ballot produced a staggering 91% response rate. The new parish email database, letters through each door and commitment of residents were credited for such a high response rate.*

### Future projects

- Continued support for the development of a new village hall. Large scale fundraising activity is underway in order to update/replace the current village hall, which is an ageing post war structure, in danger of falling into disrepair.
- Continue to monitor and review the need for an ‘older children’s’ meeting place. At present this is not a high priority for the community.

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. If you would like further information please contact  
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