

SUNNINGHILL & ASCOT PARISH COUNCIL PARISH PLAN 2019-2023



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Sunninghill and Ascot Parish Plan 2019-2023

1. Introduction / Foreword

We are pleased to publish the Parish Plan 2019-2023.

Our parish council has a very active role in informing the planning processes and lobbying on a broad range of issues that affect our community.

We are also custodian for numerous parish assets, maintaining Victory Field, Tom Green's Field, the parish cemetery, the Cheapside allotments, Blythewood Nature Reserve, Cheapside play park, South Ascot recreation ground and a variety of open spaces.

Biennially the parish council organizes two unique and well attended events, the Victorian Street Fayre and the Party in the Park, collectively enhancing the community spirit.

As central government continues to encourage local councils to deliver more services and to actively seek out opportunities to increase their role in the community, the publication of this plan draws on the recent community consultation, (the parish survey), as well being informed by current economic, social and environmental drivers. The plan's objective is to determine, shape, inform and realise these opportunities. The plan comprises the following headings: Its purpose, reference to the neighbourhood plan, Ascot rejuvenation, new infrastructure, parks and open spaces, the parish council's wider services, climate change and further actions. Contained within each of these headings is a sub heading with narrative on the background and the actions the council proposes adopting.

It also acknowledges the need for the parish council to engage more actively, to develop forums that will connect and share feelings of belonging and unite people within the community.

The parish plan will be amended and revised over the coming years as priorities shift and different pressures come to bear. We hope the parish plan encourages your support in our many activities, perhaps contributing or joining parish council initiatives or even providing suggestions or feedback by adding your voice to the parish council's public meetings.

2. Plan Purpose

The parish plan sets out our parish council's objectives and actions over the next 4 years. These actions respond to the community feedback from our questionnaire, which was issued to every household in the spring of 2018, and sought views on a range of topics that affect our community.

The feedback provided a valuable insight into the community views on a number of key themes, including:

- Our neighbourhood plan
- The Ascot rejuvenation
- Facilities in the community hub/arts space
- Other community services and facilities
- Our parks and open spaces
- Our parish council and borough performance
- Areas of concern and difficulty

Our parish is constantly changing and will continue to do so at a faster rate owing to the significant developments planned in and around our parish.

The community tells us that despite limited recent development our parish is generally a worse place to live than 10 years ago.

Our key challenge in the coming years is therefore to mitigate those issues (traffic and parking) that make our parish a worse place and ensure that the new development makes our parish a better and more enjoyable place to live and work.

The growth in Ascot alone includes around 750 new homes, retail, community facilities, a hotel and a hospital, all within close proximity to the High Street, and will dwarf the current development.

The Borough recognises that place making plays an important role in the planning for this growth and development, and that quality of place that people live in and use will have a powerful impact on their quality of life. They have therefore developed a strategic placemaking policy for the centre of Ascot. This seeks to create a vibrant place with an improved High Street and high quality development is integrated into Ascot and retains its green and leafy character.

Our parish council is committed to ensuring that the Borough's submission version of the Borough Local Plan and the place making Supplementary Planning Document meets our community aspirations, and that they are fully delivered.

Other actions focus on ensuring compliance with our neighbourhood plan, delivery of the infrastructure needed to mitigate the impact of the new developments, improved communications with residents, improved biodiversity of our open spaces, enhanced facilities in our parks, and resolving areas of community concern.

This plan sits alongside our adopted neighbourhood plan and the two documents are complementary.

3. Neighbourhood Plan

To work with our community to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of our neighbourhood plan in managing development in accordance with community aspirations.

Actions

- a. Raise awareness of the value of our neighbourhood plan in constraining inappropriate development.**
- b. Continue to interface proactively with the planners and developers to influence planning policies and ensure all developments deliver community aspirations, as set out in our neighbourhood plan.**
- c. Engage with our community on all significant planning applications and major developments.**
- d. Keep our community updated on all planning matters.**

Background

- Our neighbourhood plan was based on extensive community consultations, and creates a framework for delivering sustainable and caring communities for all ages and backgrounds.
- Following its adoption in 2014 its policies became a formal part of the Borough's planning regulations and therefore carry full weight when deciding planning applications.
- It has had a genuine impact on preventing inappropriate development and ensuring that the character of our parish is preserved. A measure of this is that the success rate of appeals against refusals has reduced significantly.
- Our planning committee holds regular meetings with planners and make representations on all key Borough planning documents. These include the emerging Borough Infrastructure Development Plan, Design Brief and other supplementary documents aimed at ensuring the policies in our neighbourhood plan are properly reflected in both the Borough's planning documents and their planning decisions.
- We also meet with developers, engage with their consultations, and participate in stakeholder meetings in an effort to ensure that developments meet community aspirations.
- Planning meeting minutes are published on our website.

4. Ascot Rejuvenation / Growth area

To make Ascot a special place which retains its character, while becoming a vibrant and healthy community where people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy living, working and visiting.

Actions

- a. Continue to engage with the planners and developers to deliver the Ascot rejuvenation to the highest standard and in general accordance with the Prince's Foundation Report, our neighbourhood plan and the feedback to our parish plan questionnaire.**
- b. Engage with the planners in their place making exercise covering the Ascot growth area and seek to ensure that the resulting supplementary planning document delivers excellence in the built and natural environment, re-invigorates the High Street and provides a focus for our community.**
- c. Prepare a masterplan for the community centre and public square, and consult on the proposals with the community.**

Background

- The emerging Borough Local Plan will result in over 750 new homes in the centre of Ascot (including Heatherwood). Our parish council sees it as our key priority to ensure that this development strikes the right balance between the need for new retail and employment and building a place where people want to live and work.
- Our parish council was represented on the Ascot rejuvenation stakeholder group, which has ensured that the development brief for the development is broadly in line with community aspirations. There are aspects we remain unhappy with, and we will continue to press for further changes.
- The Borough Local Plan is currently at examination. During examination the borough has realised that the emphasis of their borough plan is too much on housing numbers, and not about creating places where people want to live, work and visit. They have therefore embarked on a placemaking exercise for Ascot, and have undertaken to work with our parish council on its preparation. The results will be embodied in changes to the emerging Borough Local Plan and a Supplementary Planning Document which will support the
- The development plan includes a community centre and public square. The parish plan questionnaire asked what residents wanted in the centre, and their feedback will inform the development of a masterplan for the facility, which we will start preparing shortly.

5. New Infrastructure

We will work closely with the Borough to maintain and enhance our infrastructure to resolve current problems and ensure it is able to absorb the significant new developments in and adjacent to our parish.

Actions

- a. Continue to press the Borough to conduct a traffic and parking survey to provide an understanding of the severity of the traffic and parking problems in Sunninghill.**
- b. Work with the Borough and borough councillors to identify ways to mitigate both the current and projected traffic, congestion and parking issues in and around our high streets (and Sunninghill in particular).**
- c. Agree a list of infrastructure enhancements in our parish that will mitigate both the above impacts.**
- d. Deliver those projects we are able to fund, and press the Borough to deliver those which fall within their responsibility.**
- e. Work with the Borough and borough councillors to keep our roads and footpaths in a safe condition and reduce obstructions to pavements.**

Background

- In question 13 we invited respondents to rate the importance of a list of possible infrastructure enhancements. The responses will help us contribute to the Borough's evolving Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and to decide which projects we and the Borough can deliver, separately or together.
- The questionnaire responses showed significant concern at the current high traffic levels, congestion and parking shortfall in our villages and the new development will add to these concerns.
- We have been addressing these issues for some time and have put forward some proposals for Sunninghill, but progress is slow. We will continue to press for a traffic and parking study for Sunninghill, which is needed if progress is to be made.
- The Ascot rejuvenation and placemaking exercise should address these issues in Ascot.
- A construction infrastructure levy is paid by developers, and a proportion of this income comes to our parish council. This may be used to deliver infrastructure projects in our parish. We will be drawing a list of projects aimed at mitigating the issues of concern to our community and enhancing our parish.
- The responses to our questionnaire identified the need for enhanced GP service. The proposals for enhanced primary care services in Heatherwood and by the Lynwood Care Home (subject to planning) will more than deliver these.

6. Parks and Open Spaces

We are committed to enhancing the environmental sustainability of our parks and open spaces, while also providing new facilities where this doesn't damage their sensitive ecology or neighbour amenity.

Actions

- a. **Continue with the environmental and biodiversity enhancements at Blythewood and Tom Green's Field.**
- b. **Continue the wildlife surveys and commission enhancements as required.**
- c. **Ongoing management of Victory Field, the South Ascot recreation ground and the Cheapside play park.**
- d. **Explore the viability of a kiosk at Victory Field and other proposed improvements.**

Background

- The questionnaire feedback shows strong community support for improving our parks and open spaces. Also, for more facilities for younger people.
- We have an ongoing programme of environmental enhancements at Blythewood and Tom Green's Field, and these will continue.
- We are also working with Imperial College and Wildlife in Ascot to survey our wildlife corridors. We propose to follow this up with enhancements where found necessary.
- We have recently refurbished the pavilion on Victory Field and made other improvements. The toilets are now open during daylight hours, and the community room is being used by local clubs.
- Each year we agree a rolling programme of enhancements to our parks and open spaces for inclusion in our annual budget. These are funded through the precept and delivered by the parish clerk.
- We will explore ways we can increase the footfall in Victory Field and the South Ascot recreation ground through new equipment, more use of the pavilion community room, a kiosk and more events. We will remain mindful of the need to preserve the character of these parks and avoid nuisance to neighbours, while delivering improved facilities and events for all sections of our community.

7. Parish Council Services

We are committed to providing a high quality service to our community and giving it a voice on all matters of importance to our parish.

Actions

- e. Improve the delivery of our services.**
- f. Enhance our website to provide more information about our services and activities and allow us to consult our community on local topics.**
- g. Engage more closely with all parts of our local community (including through social media) and be responsive to their concerns and aspirations.**

Background

- Although the responses to Q23 show that we are generally providing a satisfactory level of service they show there is room for improvement, particularly in the way we communicate and deal with residents' concerns.
- To address these concerns, we will prepare and implement a communications and service delivery strategy. This will include the use of social media.
- Our website isn't widely accessed so we are exploring ways to ensure it provides more information on the parish council's role, activities, local events and other matters of interest to the community and provides a platform for consulting with our community on matters of importance.

8. Climate Change

We will work with the Borough and our community to mitigate the impact of climate change in our parish in line with the borough target of zero emissions by 2050.

Actions

- a. Continue to deliver the planned biodiversity enhancements at Blythewood and Tom Green's Field.
- b. Complete the wildlife corridor surveys and prepare / implement a programme of enhancements where found necessary.
- c. Review the Borough Local Plan (Submission Version) policies on climate change mitigation and make representations where we consider these to be too weak to deliver the Borough's environmental target of zero emissions by 2050.
- d. Continue to lobby the Borough to declare the Ascot growth area a zero emissions zone.
- e. Consult our community on what further actions we should sensibly take to reduce the carbon emissions in areas within our control or influence.
- f. Continue to object to developments that impact negatively on the biodiversity of our parish.

Background

Since our questionnaire was issued there has been a huge shift in public opinion towards the view that we all need to take urgent action towards achieving zero emissions. It is right that our parish council responds to this challenge and sets out its actions towards this target. As explained above, we are already taking steps to mitigate climate change, including the following, but will review what further actions we can take:

- We have an ongoing programme to enhance the biodiversity of Blythewood and Tom Green's Field.
- Our Neighbourhood Plan identified a network of wildlife corridors and put protection measures in place. We are working with Imperial College and Wildlife in Ascot to survey these corridors.
- We have successfully negotiated with the Borough to get tree preservation orders on many more trees. When a tree is felled, we have a policy of replacing it with two trees.
- When reviewing planning applications, we identify and object to any features we consider to be damaging to the environment.
- We have proposed to the Borough that the Ascot growth area is declared a zero emissions zone.
- The Borough has proposed new environmental policies within their Borough Local Plan (Submission Version). We will review these and make representations where we don't consider them sufficiently robust.

9. Further Actions

We will continue to respond to changing circumstances and ongoing community feedback and refocus our objectives and actions where appropriate.

Background

As presented above we are committed to improving communications with our community.

Over time new issues and concerns will inevitably arise and new ideas for improvements to our service, new community events, etc. will come forward.

As and when our parish council becomes aware of anything of importance to our parish, we will advise our community and seek feedback where appropriate.

Similarly, if you have any concerns, suggestions, etc., please pass them to our Parish Clerk.

10. Results of Plan Questionnaire

There were a number of recurring themes, of which the most frequent were:

- Highway maintenance
- Traffic congestion, management
- Parking
- Natural environment
- Community facilities
- Connectivity
- Parks
- Child play

Q2: Almost 400 people replied, of whom 47% were male and 52% female.

Q3: The range of age groups was:

- | | |
|----------------|-----|
| • 20 and under | 2% |
| • 21-35 | 6% |
| • 36-50 | 21% |
| • 51-65 | 33% |
| • Over 65 | 39% |

Q4 Asked where respondents lived.

- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| • Ascot | 42% |
| • Sunninghill | 35% |
| • South Ascot | 19% |
| • Cheapside | 3% |
| • Woodside | 1% |

Q5 explored how many people were aware of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan.

- 76% confirmed they were.

Q6 Asked whether it has been effective in reducing inappropriate development.

- 35% said no, 26% said yes and 40% didn't know.

Q8 asked respondents to rate how important they considered a number of aspects of the rejuvenation of Ascot to be.

The responses, in order of importance were:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Road improvements to reduce congestion | 94% |
| • Making Ascot a more pleasant place to work and shop | 90% |
| • Improved parking | 88% |
| • More independent retailers | 79% |
| • A wide range of retail stores | 70% |
| • Affordable homes | 66% |
| • Small outlets for startup retailers and craft stores | 57% |

Q 9 asked what other issues should be considered. There were 117 responses, but no clear themes emerged.

Q10 asked what facilities people would like in the community / arts centre [from a list].

The responses were:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| • Facilities for local clubs | 75% |
| • Library | 56% |
| • Flexible arts and performance space | 55% |
| • Display and exhibition space | 51% |
| • Café / bar | 47% |
| • Parish office | 35% |

Q11 asked what new or extra facilities the community would like. There was no clear consensus, but the following were proposed:

- Full time cinema [11/98]
- Youth Centre [10/98]
- Adult education facilities [5/98]
- Additional GP surgeries [7/98]
- Child soft play / mothers' meeting room [6/98]

Q12 asked for details of clubs or associations that might consider using the facility, but there were no suggestions.

Q13 asked respondents to rate how important they consider certain issues to be.

The results, in order of importance, are:

- Highway maintenance [92%]
- Traffic congestion, management [91%]
- Schools and education [88%]
- Parking [82%]
- Natural environment [81%]
- Community facilities [72%]
- Connectivity [71%]
- Parks [66%]
- Child Play [61%]

Note: the percentages combine the important and most important responses.

Q14 asked whether there were any comments on the list presented in Q13.

There were 73 responses, but no clear themes emerged. Traffic management mentioned 10 times, parking 10 times and need for more GP surgeries 4 times.

Q15 – 18 are about Victory Field.

Q15: 44% of those who responded visit Victory Field.

Q16 asked what the pavilion room should be used for.

- 71% said groups and clubs in association with the playing field.
- 56% said groups and clubs independent of the playing field.

Q17 asked when the toilets should be open.

- 87% wanted them open during daylight hours.

Q18 asked what other facilities people would like at Victory Field.

Of the 68 responses:

- 17 supported a café/ kiosk
- 10 wanted a warden / park manager
- 8 wanted better, safer access
- 5 wanted better security

Q19 South Ascot recreation ground.

- 35% of the respondents use this recreation ground.

Q20 asked what other facilities people would like at South Ascot recreation ground.

Of the 61 respondents:

- 19 want the toilets open all day
- 7 wanted better security
- 6 supported a cafe / kiosk

However, 26 of the respondents would prefer it to stay as it is.

Q 21 asked whether residents would be willing to pay a slightly higher precept to allow us to deliver the services and enhancements identified in this questionnaire.

- 57% said yes
- 23% said no
- 19% had no opinion

Q22 asked whether there any other services and projects respondents would like to support.

Of the 91 responses:

- 25 wanted more traffic management
- 10 wanted improved parking
- 10 supported the community centre

Q23 shows general satisfaction with the services provided by our parish council.

There was a high level of satisfaction with our recreation and

playground sites (66% vs 8%). Although more people were satisfied than dissatisfied with the help provided by our office, planning and the way we deal with concerns the message is that we can improve.

Q 24: Of the free form responses to Q24 14 out of 52 had no knowledge or little contact with our parish council.

Q25 asked how satisfied people were with the Borough's services.

There was a high level of satisfaction with the library/community hub, education, waste collections/recycling and environmental services but the level of satisfaction with the highway, parking and planning services was poor.

Q26 asked if people encountered difficulties with any of the matters listed.

The responses were:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| • Uneven pavements | 68% |
| • Vehicles parked on pavements | 65% |
| • Obstructions on pavements | 30% |
| • Disabled access | 21% |
| • Lack of dropped kerbs | 21% |
| • Access to recreation areas | 11% |

Q27 asked for further comments on Q25 & 26.

Of the 63 respondents:

- 16 concerned by illegal parking
- 10 concerned about the condition of our pavements
- 7 concerned about poor enforcement of highway and traffic laws
- 5 concerned about trees and branches overhanging pavements

Q28 asked where respondents usually get information about local events.

The responses were:

- Free newspapers 56%
- Church magazine 50%
- Friends and neighbours 48%
- Local newspapers 34%
- Social media 33%
- Shop windows 27%
- Parish and other local websites 22%
- Library 18%
- Village hall and notice boards 15%

Q29 asked whether the parish is a better or worse place to live compared with 10 years ago.

The responses were:

- Better 12%
- Worse 43%
- The same 27%
- No opinion / don't know 18%

Q30 asked what was better and what worse.

Very little was considered better, but the following were considered worse

- Traffic (100 of 168)
- Parking (41 of 168)
- Over development (49 of 169)
- Overcrowding (21 of 168)