



Henfield Parish Plan

Actions to enhance the Village

December 2004



The Community of Henfield

Henfield is regarded as a thriving and supportive community that appeals to both residents and visitors. Since no community can remain static our vision is to manage the inevitable changes in ways that ensure Henfield's uniqueness is preserved and wherever possible enhanced for the benefit of all. At the annual parish meeting in March 2003, it was agreed to produce a village action plan that would identify wants and needs, ensuring local people have a voice in the future of where they live.

A group of local volunteers was formed to produce such a plan with support from Action in rural Sussex and the Countryside Agency. Its production has drawn upon the village appraisal carried out in October 2001, and is a result of extensive consultation during 2004 with residents and various organisations. This document summarises 15 months' work and focuses on the key actions. The Appendices containing detailed supporting evidence are available as a separate document.

Key areas for action

The 19 key actions in this plan are set out under the following headings

Looking after the environment

Improving village life

Facilities for young people

A better life for older people

Village development

Transport links

Getting around the village

Local business and economy

Appendices

(available on request from the Parish Office)

- October 2001 Village Appraisal.
- Organisations consulted and timetable of discussions.
- Notes of discussions with young people, older people and others.
- Input from primary school.
- Questionnaire and analysis of returns.
- Consultation feedback on draft plan.
- Action plan members.

Abbreviations used

AirS	Action in rural Sussex
HDC	Horsham District Council
HPC	Henfield Parish Council
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SWT	Sussex Wildlife Trust
WG	Working Group
WSCC	West Sussex County Council

The rural village of Henfield covers 1970 hectares and has some 5,200 inhabitants (projected to reach 5,400 by 2006). It is situated at roughly equal distances from the large centres of Horsham to the north, Brighton and Hove to the south-east and Worthing to the south-west. Its completely rural setting and compactness has created an intimate and friendly atmosphere in the village that has resulted in an unusually strong community spirit. There is a thriving shopping centre, a variety of small busi-

nesses and many active clubs and societies.

The centre of the village has many listed buildings and, with its old streets and twittens, is an important conservation area. As well as the beautiful countryside bordering the village, there is plenty of open space within it – from the three commons on its edge and the playing fields, to the ancient Tanyard field near the church; these areas are important for recreation and nature study.

Key findings of the 2001 Village appraisal (based on responses from over 1500 residents)

- only 4.3% of the population are between the ages of 18 and 24 years.
- 31% of the population are over 65 years of age.
- 74% of households have only 1 or 2 residents.
- 68% of waged respondents worked 10 miles or more from Henfield.
- 72% travel to work or education by car.
- 78% use their car for shopping.
- 68% stated that the environment was the most important aspect about Henfield.
- 87% said that the quality of countryside was very important.
- 80% thought that Henfield could not accommodate new housing and that it would spoil the environment.
- 67% wanted Henfield to stay as it is.

This appraisal identified that Henfield has issues with isolation particularly affecting the young and old, having no rail and limited bus services. There is increased demand for local amenities following the rapid expansion of housing to the north of the village. Car parking and congestion are perennial problems in the village centre. The appraisal showed the importance of the natural environment to the village and the need to protect the surrounding countryside and open spaces.

During 2004 extensive consultation has

taken place. Initially, residents were invited to submit their concerns and ideas; all clubs and societies were approached; discussions were held with a variety of organisations; and the local primary school provided input. The top issues then formed the basis of further consultation using a questionnaire, the analysis of which led to a draft plan being issued for comment to residents, the Parish Council and Countryside Agency. **The actions that follow were all supported by a majority of those responding, with those receiving greatest support asterisked.***

Looking after the environment



- Henfield is fortunate in being surrounded by lovely countryside. Residents' favourite spots include Henfield Common, the river area, the Lydds and Downslink. Large numbers of people would be interested in leaflets providing details of guided walks and areas of interest (*action 1*).
- The Tanyard Field is a protected environ-

ment in the heart of the village which many people feel should be used to greater nature/educational benefit (*action 2*).

- Protecting Henfield's rural character is important to residents. There is a need to influence HDC's forward planning policies for open spaces (*action 3*).

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
* 1) Encourage greater use and appreciation of the local countryside.	Produce walks' leaflets. Provide guided walks. Organise family events.	Local walking group. WSCC Rangers.	Within 12 months.
* 2) Preservation of the Tanyard as a nature reserve with educational facilities.	Recruit volunteers to Henfield Conservation Group. Seek recognition of the Tanyard as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Maintain Tanyard Management Plan. Investigate and pursue designation as a local nature reserve.	Henfield Conservation Group. Joint Commons Committee. English Nature. SWT.	Within 2 years.
* 3) Recognition and protection of green open spaces.	Identify and seek formal recognition of green open spaces needed and valued for community use.	Local volunteers in conjunction with SWT.	Within 2 years.

Improving village life

- Some respondents experience access problems in the village. By October 2004, all public services should have become readily accessible to everyone, whatever their disability – wherever possible. An independent disability audit (arranged with the help of AirS) to assess local problems and advise on suitable measures, should be carried out (*action 4*).
- Many people supported the introduction of a regular free broadsheet with information on available services, bus times, the Health Centre and local events in addition to the parish magazine. From February 2005 a quarterly broadsheet covering mainly parish council matters and funded from advertising will be delivered to every household. This could provide a basis to help fill the communication gap (*action 5*).
- Initial work by the action plan team identified the potential of a Farmers' Market.

A Farmers' Market organiser subsequently approached HDC and was granted a licence for a twelve-month trial period from September 2004. The extent to which this will meet villagers' needs should be reviewed (*action 6*).



WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
4) Improve ease of access to all public services in the village and increase awareness of rights/obligations.	Seek independent advice on measures needed.	Local WG (including disability representative) with help from AirS.	Within 12 months.
5) Provide every household with a regular free information sheet.	Produce for HPC list of information to include.	Action Plan Team.	Immediate.
* 6) Encourage a regular Farmers' Market in Henfield that meets the needs of the Village.	Review response to trial and impact on village life.	HPC, HDC and local volunteers.	Over next 12 months.

Facilities for young people

- There is a shortage of suitable places around the village for youngsters to 'hang out' – the building of a new youth club and the use of HDC's mobile café may help but further meeting places may be required (*action 7*).
- The need for a special area for skate-

boarding/BMX bikes has been raised by both the young and many older residents; a number of young people are currently involved in investigating a permanent facility (*action 8*).

- For younger aged children local film shows are proposed (*action 9*).



A better life for older people

- Older people have expressed concern about transport, lack of information on what is available for them, help in the home, and companionship. With the ratio

of older people in the village expected to rise, these issues will become increasingly important (*action 10*).

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
* 10) Provide information on available services for older people.	Undertake a study and produce a report, with the aid of a small grant from AirS, which will include an inventory of available services, data on the age profile of the population and take up of existing services and benefits, and identification of any gaps.	Local volunteers, a postgraduate student, Professor Peter Lloyd (Sussex University), with help from AirS.	Within 3 months for report. 1 to 2 years for action to fill some of the gaps.

Village development

- The ways in which Henfield develops in the future is of fundamental importance to residents. A Village Design Statement would establish how the village would like to evolve by describing its distinctive character and surrounding countryside and would be helpful in influencing future planning policies (*action 11*).



WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
* 7) Provide meeting places for young teenagers.	Review the use of the new youth club building. Make further use of HDC's mobile café. Investigate the feasibility of a permanent drop-in café.	HDC. Youth club worker. Youth working group with help of AirS.	Within 12 months.
8) Provide skateboard/BMX facilities.	Carry out feasibility study, to include funding sources and potential sites.	HPC. HDC/WSCC. Youth working group. Community reps.	Within 12 months for study. Medium term for facilities.
9) Provide cinema showings for younger people.	Extend the existing mobile cinema for adults to show films at primary school.	Mobile Cinema in liaison with school PTA.	Within 12 months.

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
11) Develop a Design Statement for the village.	Explain to residents the content of a design statement. Draw up design principles based on the local distinctive character and publish.	Local Working Group in consultation with HPC and HDC.	Next annual parish meeting for explanation. Medium term for publication.

Transport links

- Some public transport services are very good and used by significant numbers of respondents, mainly for shopping and social outings. Usage could be further improved by increasing public awareness of service details – the proposed broadsheet should help in this respect (*action 12*).
- Frequent references were made to inadequacies; in particular, a lack of evening

services (which means, for example, that the young cannot easily reach facilities outside of Henfield), an infrequent daytime service to some towns and none at all to others, and no link up for rail commuters (*action 13*).

- Many respondents would support a community minibus with disabled access for both individual and group use (*action 14*).



WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
* 12) Increase awareness of existing public transport routes serving Henfield and other transport options.	By improved advertising of all services already provided (see action 5).	Local WG in conjunction with HPC.	Within 12 months.
* 13) Investigate the provision of more transport services.	Investigate demand-responsive buses and extension to South Horsham dial-a-ride. Discuss with bus companies and other providers scope for extra services.	Local group to be set up in conjunction with HPC, HDC. Bus companies.	Within 12 months.
14) Provide use of a minibus for the community.	Make use of an existing minibus owned by WSCC. Seek volunteers willing to obtain required driving permit. Assess whether sufficient demand exists for provision of a full-time minibus.	WSCC. Local volunteers.	Within 12 months.

Getting around the village

- Very many respondents expressed concerns about parking. Adequate, free, and accessible car park spaces within the village are considered vital as are wardens to oversee street parking. Consultation has revealed the need for further study to identify appropriate improvements (*action 15*).
- Concerns are frequently expressed about the speed/volume of traffic through the village and the size of lorries

manoeuvring to deliver. Traffic and congestion arising from the primary school run is also an issue (*action 16*).

- Pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders experience problems getting around the village. All weather surfaces and better lighting would improve the twittens; extensions to both cycleway and bridleway networks would be welcomed by many (*action 17*).

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
15) Improve parking facilities within the village.	Consider alternatives for short/long term parking (including disc parking, occasional warden time, improved car park layouts and alternative long stay site/s). Examine circumstances in which public transport might be an acceptable alternative.	Local volunteers. HPC. HDC. WSCC.	Within 12 months.
16) Investigate further traffic calming measures.	Submit residents' concerns relating to through traffic and congestion around the school to WSCC.	Action Plan team.	Immediate.
* 17) Improve routes for footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.	Identify where improvements needed. Establish implementation programme.	Local volunteers with WSCC, in consultation within Henfield and with neighbouring villages.	Within 6 months for identification, 1-2 years for implementation.



Local business and economy

- In the SEEDA "Small Rural Town Programme", Henfield is indicated as being eligible to bid for grants to help support local economies subject to having completed a successful business Healthcheck. Some further work will be needed to supplement information already obtained so as to complete the Healthcheck (*action 18*).
- Henfield has a significant number of people working from home, who provide a positive contribution to the local economy and environment. The extent to which they need support is unclear. The responses to the consultations will be given to Henfield Enterprise to decide if further action is needed (*action 19*).

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
18) Find out what makes Henfield a successful economy and the actions necessary to maintain this success.	Carry out complete Healthcheck of village.	New volunteer group in conjunction with AirS.	Within 1 year.
19) Find out the needs of self employed/home based businesses.	Submit consultation responses to Henfield Enterprise for further action.	Action Plan Team.	Immediate.



What Next? The information in this plan is very much work in progress. Some proposals are becoming a reality; some are in various stages of planning/implementation; and some are still to be developed. The plan is thus a living document, subject to ongoing review. Behind each action, project sheets have been created to help assist with subsequent implementation.

You can help. A Partnership of relevant interests in the Parish needs to be set up to take this plan forward, access available funds and review progress. This is being taken forward in discussion with HPC. To progress the actions, volunteers are needed; if you are interested, please contact the volunteer co-ordinator via the Parish Office.

Acknowledgements

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