

CUDDINGTON, DELAMERE PARK & SANDIWAY VILLAGE PLAN

Environment Working Group

Final Report – October 2017

Actions from the Village Plan:

Action Ref: 2.1.1 - ENVIRONMENT: Resolve environmental issues identified in the survey

Actions Originally Recommended from Plan:

Develop solutions to tackle:-

- Reducing litter
- Reducing dog fouling
- Further hedge/tree trimming
- More winter gritting
- Surface water drainage

Actions taken:

Litter

- The number and location of waste bins was surveyed and is now plotted on the village website. Many bins cater for dog waste as well as general waste, although there are also dedicated dog waste bins located close to well established dog-walking routes.
- A working relationship was established with Street Scene (part of CWAC) regarding bins, location, up-keep, fly-tipping and refuse collection.
- A volunteer litter picking scheme was started and is now running with the assistance of the Sandiway Library. The library now stores equipment made available by Street Scene for litter picking (this includes litter pickers, hi-vis vests & waste bags). This equipment is available to any resident wishing to borrow it and undertake their own clean up.
- A poster was made for the Library noticeboard to encourage residents to record their concerns, report 'grot-spots' and to advertise regular community litter picking dates and times.
- A series of community litter picking dates, times and locations was established and advertised through the Round Tower to encourage groups of residents to join in.
- A litter picking scheme was proposed to Sandiway shop owners to encourage them to pick litter once/week in the area immediately around the shops. This was embraced enthusiastically by most shop owners who have implemented our suggestion, except for the Spar / Post Office which has been unresponsive, although a community-minded employee from the Spar undertakes weekly clean-ups in the area immediately outside the shop on her own initiative.
- Publicity of our litter picking scheme was also made through Northwich Guardian, the village website, the Round Tower and via social media.
- A local company was approached regarding the cost of supplying a CCTV system to monitor the area behind the Sandiway shops where fly-tipping regularly occurs. A figure of approximately £200 would be required to install such a system, however as this area is the responsibility of the Weaver Vale Housing Trust, any decision regarding a CCTV system would be for this organisation to make.
- We raised awareness of the 'Report It' online service (from CWAC) on the village website. The 'Report It' system alerts Street Scene to litter or fly-tipping on council land via reports from members of the public.

We tested the online service and found that Street Scene were generally responsive and cleared the waste within a few days.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action:

1. The group noted that very little or no road sweeping is being carried out by CWAC around the village, hence it is recommended that the Parish Council consider allocating a budget for sweeping of roads to prevent accumulation of rotted leaves and other debris which ultimately causes blocked drains.
2. The group recommends that the Parish Council is made aware of the concerns of the Environment Working Group regarding a persistent 'grot-spot' for littering and fly-tipping adjacent to the football field behind Sandiway School. This is of particular concern because the waste includes dangerous and unsavoury items such as drugs paraphernalia, condoms, alcoholic drinks containers and discarded take-away packaging in an area regularly used by families and young people.

Dog Fouling

- To identify roads that were particularly problematic for dog fouling, we reached out to the community using social media, and also carried out a survey of streets. Norley Road, Blake Lane, Grange Road, Ash Road and Mere Lane were found to be regularly fouled although the problem could occur anywhere in the village at a low level.
- CWAC Streetscene only respond on demand so action needs a member of the public to make a request.
- Contact with the council enabled us to identify the CWAC supported 'Pink Poo' campaign which was recommended to address the problem.
- A 'Pink Poo' campaign was subsequently carried out on Ash Road, although the back-up from the Council did not materialise as effectively as hoped. EWG members have continued to use biodegradable pink spray paint to highlight dog poo on our streets and to shame those who don't pick up after their dogs.
- The Hollybank Veterinary Surgery was supportive of the initiative to reduce dog fouling and installed an additional dog waste bin at the entrance to their premises on Weaverham Road.
- Dog fouling is a notoriously difficult problem to resolve completely. It is perpetrated by a minority of irresponsible dog-owners and is usually worse in winter months, but it is an ongoing low level problem. The issue periodically becomes more prominent via social media such as from posts on the community facebook page, and this typically occurs when a young child has come into contact with dog faeces and parents and other residents are rightly concerned for public health. The long term solution is via the community as a whole having a zero-tolerance approach and exerting pressure on the minority of dog-owners responsible for the problem.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action: NONE

Hedge / Tree Trimming

- The team clarified mechanisms for reporting hedge and tree growth that hinders use of pavements and blocks visibility for drivers. These are:
 - For council owned land, use of the 'Report It' route using the CWAC website or in person at council offices
 - For private land, reporting the problem to the Parish Council which will notify the landowner.
- These mechanisms were tested successfully for both council owned and privately owned land.

- Information on these mechanisms for reporting hedge and tree overgrowth problems was included in the village website.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action: NONE

Winter Gritting

- The number and location of grit bins was surveyed and is now plotted on the map in the maps area in the section of the village website headed 'The Village'.
- We used personal contacts and a reach out to the community via social media to identify any problem areas without grit bins, however none were reported.
- We contacted CWAC and established that they fill up the bins in the village. Furthermore in terms of winter gritting routes through the village, these are identified on the CWAC website and cover the A roads around the village and the main routes through it (Norley Road Cuddington Lane and Weaverham Road).

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action: NONE

Surface Water Drainage

- The team clarified the mechanisms for reporting surface water due to blocked drains. These are via use of the 'Report It' function of the CWAC website or by visiting in person at the council offices.
- These mechanisms were tested successfully for reporting a problem at junction of Ash Road and A49.
- Information on these mechanisms for reporting surface water drainage problems was included in the village website.

Action Ref: 2.1.2 - ENVIRONMENT: Environmental improvements

Actions Originally Recommended from Plan:

Plant more trees, flowers and bulbs on public areas around the village.-

Actions taken:

- A survey of the village identified areas for potential planting. These included around the rebuilt Round Tower, at the entrances to Chiltern Close and Mere Lane, around the Library, at the junction of Weaverham Road and Norley Road by Sandiway School, in front of the Church, in planters at entrance points to the village and near the Shell garage.
- Permission was requested from CWAC to carry out planting on council owned land, however the council have been unresponsive and after some delay the team decided to proceed with non-controversial areas.
- An overgrown flower bed on Fir Lane was identified as an area to plant immediately and Rae York and her family undertook this work resulting in a lovely display over the Summer.
- The potential to use the surplus stone from the Round Tower reconstruction was explored with the idea to make village entrance wall and planting features, however the stone was deemed unsuitable as building material and there were concerns about suitable locations regarding road safety but nevertheless these plans are still being pursued.
- A budget of £548 was secured for planting materials from the Parish Council.

- Bulbs were purchased and community planting completed during the weekends of 7th / 8th October and 14th / 15th October on Mere Lane, Chiltern Close, on the crossroads near Sandiway School, Ivy Lane and Trickett Lane.
- A meeting was held with Karl Siteine of CWAC in order to develop a plan to create village entrance planters, and he has agreed to work with a team in the community to assist and advise us with this objective.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action:

1. An informal group has agreed to continue to work together on the creation of attractive village 'gateway' planters. It is recommended that the Parish Council communicates with and provides support to this group as their work continues.
2. Whilst an initial round of bulb planting has been carried out by the EWG, it is recommended that the Parish Council considers providing funds for a top-up and augmentation of the displays via further annual autumn bulb planting.

Action Ref: 2.2 - PLANNING: Progress a Neighbourhood Plan

Actions Originally Recommended from Plan:

Include in the plan issues raised in the survey:

- Protection of green spaces / conservation areas by resisting development in Green Belt and countryside areas
- The potential need for retirement properties and affordable housing through a Housing Needs Survey
- Views expressed on further housing development

Actions taken:

The Neighbourhood Plan group was formed in the village to progress a neighbourhood plan and therefore this activity was agreed to be outside of the scope of Environment Working Group.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action: NONE.

Action Ref: 2.3 - SUSTAINABILITY: Develop energy saving ideas

Actions Originally Recommended from Plan:

Progress energy and cost saving ideas as raised in the survey e.g. bulk purchasing of energy

Actions taken:

- Community buying energy schemes were publicised and linked to the village website.
- The working group explored the feasibility of a community energy scheme but concluded that it was not economically viable subsequent to changes in government policy.
- The Community Energy Conference in October 2016 was attended by a member of the team and ideas for community energy activities carried out by other communities were gathered.

- A reach out to volunteers for an Energy Saving group in the community has been made, and if this garners sufficient support, an informal group will be formed to progress this activity in the village.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action:

1. If an informal Energy Saving group is established, it is recommended that the Parish Council communicates with and provides support to this group as their work develops.

Action Ref: 2.4 - SUSTAINABILITY: Develop green ideas

Actions Originally Recommended from Plan:

Progress green ideas as raised in the survey e.g. allotments, communal composting, and domestic recycling

Actions taken:

- The team focused on the undertaking by Taylor Wimpey to build allotments for the village on the Eden Grange development.
- The group engaged with Taylor Wimpey to clarify the plan for the allotments.
- A waiting list of those residents wishing to have an allotment was obtained, and those on the list were contacted and invited to initial meetings to inform them of the Eden Grange allotment plans.
- Those on the waiting list were invited to complete application forms for an allotment plot to form a priority list, and a mechanism established to capture further interest and build the waiting list whilst it becomes clear whether the planned plots are sufficient for initial demand.
- A steering group was formed from prospective allotment holders and is now meeting as necessary. The steering group is addressing the appropriate governance structure and body that should be put in place, and the task of discussing the development of the allotment plots with Taylor Wimpey.
- The steering group is liaising with the Parish Council, CWAC and the developer to work for a satisfactory outcome for the provision of village allotments.
- The recycling of waste in the village was investigated. The performance of CWAC is amongst the best in the country in terms of % of waste recycled by local authorities. We were unable to collect data on recycling rates for the village as this information is not available – data is not collected at a more granular level than overall authority level. Without such data it is not possible to test various campaigns or interventions and to determine if these improve recycling rates locally.
- Up to date information regarding recycling information from Keir and CWAC was made available on the village website.

Status of Working Group Activities: COMPLETE.

Recommendations for further action: NONE.

Acknowledgements

As Chair of the Environment Working Group, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who committed their time and energy to the EWG and worked hard to deliver the activities and progress documented in this report. Over the past two years, the following people contributed to our work: David Ruchat, John Faulkner, Sarah Shepherd, Rae York, Joel York, John Clee, Mike Holmes, Fred Jones, Harold Fielding, Val Fielding, David Grime. Many thanks to all of you!

Heather Thompson, Chair of EWG.