

improving our village



executive summary

Executive Summary

This Parish Plan is a snapshot in time recording what matters most to people who live and work in Warlingham. It summarises how, by respecting the things we value most, the future of Warlingham can – and should – look and feel.

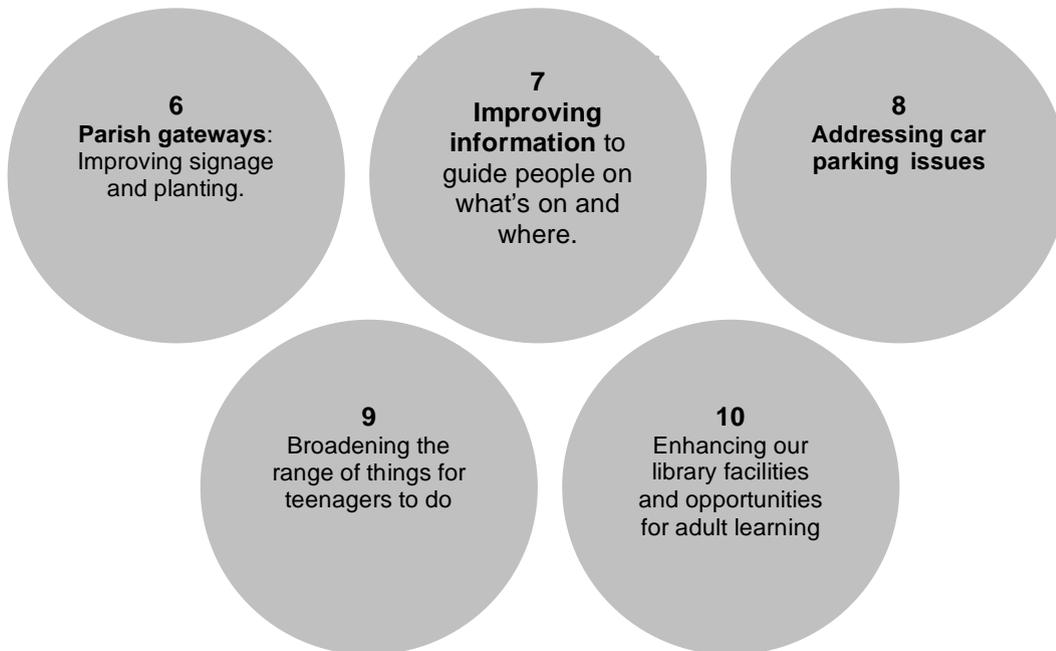
It's guided by an all-household and business survey, public meetings, workshops and special interest groups. These processes identified that we love living here and value three features as being most critical to Warlingham's atmosphere and appearance, the quality of life it offers and its sense of place:

- The **rural feel** that distinguishes Warlingham from the neighbouring suburban and urban areas and, in particular, the beauty of our Green Belt and variety of open spaces within and around Warlingham
- Warlingham's village atmosphere with its traditions and range and nature of activity centred around **the Green**,
- The friendliness of people and **sense of community**

The Plan sets out **ten priorities** for action, weighted by order of preference, shown below.

Priorities





Landscape and open spaces

Our vision is for Warlingham to....

- retain its rural character, and
- have a reputation for being clean and attractive.

Key findings

Around 60% of Warlingham lies in the Green Belt and much of its rural feel comes from the beauty of the open spaces around and within built-up area – which mainly follows the main ridgeline of Limpsfield Road and centred on the Green.

Most of the parish lies at around 200 metres above sea level with very steep slopes to negotiate to reach our larger neighbouring settlements in Caterham and Oxted. Excessive rainwater can contribute to flooding of the river Bourne in the valley below us.

We have a common, a whole network of footpaths, bridleways and twittens inter-connecting the parish as well as informal open spaces, grazing grounds, such as Vicarage Field, wildlife areas such as Blanchman's Farm and two ponds at Slines Oak and Willy Pit.

Warlingham boasts several successful sports clubs and playing fields all on the level, high ground off Limpsfield Road. The Green is well-used for community activities, but School Common remains unusable for half the year because of poor drainage.

Many of our smaller green areas, verges and "mini greens" aren't recognised for the valuable contribution they can make to Warlingham's attractiveness and often have to compete with car parking.

More people felt Warlingham offered a clean environment than were concerned about litter, but hotspots exist; for example around Sainsbury's.

Some solutions

- To protect wildlife through volunteers monitoring habitats across the parish and making sure development that takes place here respects our environment.
- To restore the extensive footpath network and wildlife areas, where these that have become neglected and promote them more widely.
- To create a “wow” factor at the “gateways” into the village and around the Green through attractive signage and planting, showing the pride we have in Warlingham's special identity.
- To raise the profile of the importance of our verges and “mini-greens” by involving local residents in decisions about their future use and management.
- To increase the biodiversity of our gardens and show other people we care through, for example “best front garden” competitions.
- To check whether we have enough litter and dog waste bins and encourage a greater civic pride in not allowing litter to be dropped.

Design and development

Our vision is for Warlingham to have...

- Retained its rural character
- Improved Shopping facilities around The Green with no increase in non-retail uses
- A reputation for being clean and attractive
- New developments that respect our heritage, open spaces and wildlife, are well-designed, attractive with sensitive attention to massing, surrounding densities, materials, details and landscaping
- Infrastructure and local services to match the scale of the development, through more effective and consistent planning decisions and requirement of developers' payments for our community's benefit.

Key findings

The 2001 census recorded Warlingham's population to be 7,490 living in 3,308 households and 3,352 dwellings. 53% of us are between 25 and 64 years old. 28% of our households have dependent children (10% having children under five years old). 31% of Warlingham's residents are pensioners living alone.

85% of us live in our own properties with only 9% living in socially-rented housing and just under another 5% living in other rented accommodation. Under 20% of us live in flats.

Highest on residents' priorities for action was the issue of managing pressures on our open space and rural feel as we enter a period forecast for great housing growth. In

2007 alone, consent was granted for a net additional 76 housing units against a government target of 125 each year for the whole of Tandridge. People feel Warlingham is bearing a disproportionate share of the District's development targets without the infrastructure to cope and having little or not impact on increasing the supply of housing affordable by our younger "nest builders".

Warlingham's existing housing density overall is around 17 houses per hectare over the built up area, i.e. excluding the Green Belt. Government policies (reinforced in Tandridge's proposals for areas it defines as "urban"), are to allow densities of up to 55 houses per hectare. Residents have a strong view of Warlingham as quasi-rural; not urban and are extremely concerned about where building takes place, the size, pace and density of development and the effect on our wildlife, open spaces and infrastructure.

We aren't a "dormitory settlement" as around half of us are likely to be here during the day – either because we work from home or are retired. Shopping may be at a turning point with a move away from "goods" that we can buy more cheaply elsewhere, towards more distinctive, higher quality goods and "services". People said they'd be more likely to use the shops if parking were easier.

We have over 100 local businesses here adding to the overall balance of village life. The nature of businesses will change over time and some existing premises may require re-investment, but it is important that we maintain enough land for future local employment activity.

Some solutions

- To agree a coherent approach to change and development that respects our heritage and open space through guidelines, setting out where development should – or should not – take place, and ensuring the vitality of the Green and space for future businesses. This is the number one priority.
- To improve the environmental quality of the Green which is critical to maintain its vitality as the heart of Warlingham. Impact can be made in the short-term by investment in signage, street furniture and planting and tree maintenance.
- To resolve tensions between traffic, pedestrians and car parking, so the Green can continue as the focal point for village life and provide an attractive place to shop. Planting could have an immediate effect, but in the medium to long term, it deserves a complete makeover.
- To monitor and give greater publicity to planning applications and processes to ensure local people can participate in decisions affecting our lives.

Traffic, transport and parking

Our vision is for Warlingham to be a place where people can...

- be safe from cars travelling too fast and be able to
- walk along pavements and cross the roads safely at more key points
- use the shops and local facilities more easily through better- managed parking
- be free of the nuisance of heavy lorries on our B roads
- catch a direct bus to where and when people need to go (especially East Surrey Hospital, and other facilities in Caterham and Oxted)
- park at a reasonable price to use the trains without having to park in neighbouring streets
- live peaceably without the nuisance of people parking irresponsibly on pavements, verges and by the sports clubs
- drive without conflicting and poor quality signage and restrictions

Key findings

Most people have cars (although a substantial proportion of younger and older people don't). Warlingham has no "A" roads but a lot of our traffic is generated by Junction 6 of the M25 being around five miles away, and delivery lorries. Traffic volumes are increasing with the new housing developments and heavy goods vehicles flout the recommended routes – often using roads such as Succomb's Hill and even Bug Hill which are entirely unsuitable.

Improving pedestrian safety and reducing traffic speeds was the third priority for improvement. Everyone agreed on the hotspots: Limpsfield Road – particularly between Sainsbury's and The Green and towards Hamsey Green, at the junction of Hillbury and Westhall Road around the letter box, Leas Road and Farleigh Road.

Parking too was an issue – particularly around The Green and, at weekends and summer evenings; the sports clubs along the Limpsfield Road.

Pavements often don't exist or stop abruptly, forcing pedestrians into the road and discouraging walking. Cycle routes are poorly maintained.

Most of us live over a mile to the nearest train station – down very steep hills. Although train services are very good, parking is inadequate for both cars and cycles. Bus services need to be improved significantly. Take up of alternatives to a regular bus service, such as Dial a ride and Buses4U, is low.

Some solutions

- To tackle parking problems. Better layout and enforcement are two approaches but improving pavements, cycle lanes and bus services also offer potential solutions to the increased volume of traffic.
- To improve the quality of The Green as a pleasant shopping destination; balancing competing pressures of shoppers and through traffic. Planting in tubs could help to reduce nuisance parking on the shop forecourts and would have an immediate effect. But a long-term solution to re-prioritise pedestrians and providing shoppers with adequate parking is critical to its future vitality.
- To increase the safety of pedestrians. More crossings, lower speed limit areas in key locations such as outside the doctors' surgeries, volunteer schemes for monitoring speeds and vehicle activated speed controls are all potential solutions in the traffic hotspots. More imaginative solutions such as placing greater responsibility for safety with drivers through re-landscaping could also be considered.
- To create safer conditions for cyclists by reviewing parking restrictions in cycle lanes and improving maintenance regimes of bushes and trees that overhang them.
- To get local people into the habit of using buses through drastic improvement to existing services and facilities. Direct, regular services extending into the evenings to key destinations such as East Surrey Hospital and Caterham and Oxted would enable people to access a much wider range of services and health facilities. Bus stops need to offer a safe and covered place to wait and real time information.

Community and leisure activities

Our vision is for Warlingham to be a place where....

- the village feel and community atmosphere is maintained.
- People know where to look to see what's going on
- Warlingham has the correct level of public provision (for all age groups) relative to its size
- People have access to things going on in Caterham and Oxted at times to suit them.
- Voluntary activities and volunteering are encouraged to continue and grow.

Key findings

Warlingham's friendliness and community atmosphere was one of the most valued aspects of life here with a variety of events centred on The Green each year as well as having over 50 voluntary and social clubs to choose from. Information about "what's on and where" was a recurrent concern.

We have a strong tradition of volunteering which enable our many events to happen. These include the Warlingham Fair, the flower and produce shows run by the Horticultural Society, weekly lunch club run by the WRVS and whole programme of

activities led by our very active church communities and groups such as the Women's Institute. The Parish Planning process itself has identified more volunteers willing to help in various activities but more are needed.

We are blessed with a lot of meeting halls of various shapes and sizes, but demand can still be so great that it is sometimes difficult to book a space. Developing a place for teenagers to meet was appreciated by residents and was identified as the fifth priority for action.

Warlingham's publicly-funded buildings such as the police station and library and the loos, were built in the 1950s and are important to retain but don't really serve the needs of the modern parish anymore. We're a sociable bunch and like to meet each other rather than simply communicating by the internet (which a substantial proportion of people don't have anyway.). The library is popular and identified as having much greater potential to be developed as a higher profile centre for community information and learning.

There are lots of opportunities for playing sport or to exercise, but much less provision likely to attract women and girls. Facilities exist at Oxted and Caterham but people without a car – including many older and younger people – aren't able to get to them easily by bus (or, in the case of Oxted, at all.).

The under 10s appear to have insufficient supervised play areas (with just one playground at Mint Walk and another at Verdayne Gardens) and generally few activities for the under 5s. The skateboard ramp – also in Mint Walk – is popular amongst young people although, regrettably, concerns about behaviour arise. Warlingham's long-established scout and guide groups have their own meeting places but the guide barn on Vicarage Field needs to be re-built to function safely into the future.

Some solutions

- To secure much-needed investment in Warlingham. We need to get smarter at accessing grants available for particular community activities. We also need Tandridge to use the powers it has more effectively to secure payments from developers to fund some of the improvements in community facilities.
- To test the feasibility of refreshing the library into the sort of modern facility we need, could be done as an independent exercise or as part of an overall plan to restore vitality into the centre. There could be scope to combine these buildings into a single, dynamic shared-use facility with maybe even a café as part of a programme to improve the vitality of the centre.
- To develop and implement a sports and exercise strategy for Warlingham, encouraging us all to become fitter and healthier – men and women, young and old.
- To work with schools and youth leaders, developing things for teenagers to do – especially those least likely to get involved in “mainstream”, organised activities.
- To establish better links between organisations and the community – including our schools – will increase the number of volunteers and secure the future of our community activities.

Safety

Our aim is that Warlingham will be a place where.....

- Residents of all ages and business people will feel safe to go about their daily lives – including through a greater police presence and use of new technologies.
- Access to the police to report incidents is simple, well-publicised and effective and responses are timely and of a high quality.
- The whole of Warlingham is covered by a well-organised “neighbourhood watch” scheme

Key findings

Warlingham is a safe place to live compared with other parts of England, with low general levels of crime. But we can't be complacent. The trend for most crimes is upward and people feel the Police don't really take speeding traffic and anti-social parking seriously.

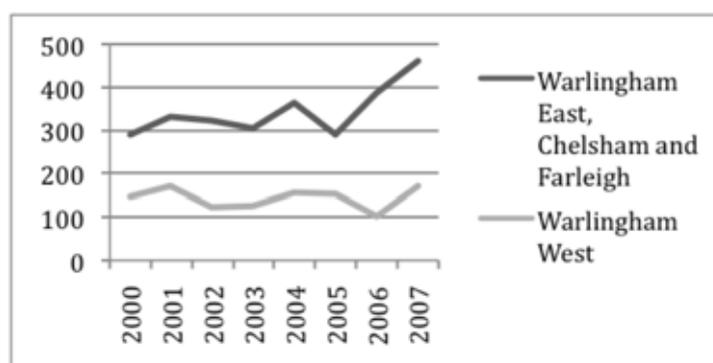
Warlingham West has only around 40% of the total notifiable incidents in Warlingham East (which includes the parish of Chelsham and Farleigh.). On average over the period 2000-2007, Warlingham West has 143 incidents but there are 343 in Warlingham East.

There is considerable goodwill towards the local police officers but a strong perception that they aren't to be seen enough on the streets and that the time taken to respond to reported incidents is too long.

There are particular hotspots identified by residents, including the streets immediately surrounding The Green. Motorbike scrambling on the common and open land towards the Harrow and Great Park was another concern.

Warlingham still has a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and is keen to revive it.

A lot of crime is “low level” such as vandalism and anti-social behaviour, often associated with alcohol abuse. But burglaries – including of our shops – remains an issue and violent crimes also occur.



Total notifiable offences, 2001-07, Source: Surrey Police

Some solutions

- To build on the good relationship with local police officers and make it easier to contact them to report non-emergency incidents and to agree acceptable response times for emergency and non-emergency incidents.
- To use this same goodwill towards our police to encourage more people to become involved in our Neighbourhood Watch scheme and extend this to Police initiatives such as Pub Watch. Volunteers might even be able to offer a presence at the Police House in Shelton Avenue.
- To develop a place for teenagers to meet and broadening the things available for them to do was also identified as an alternative solution to some of the anti-social behaviour issues.

Conclusion

We love living in Warlingham but know that we need to take action now to safeguard the features we value most and that give it its village atmosphere.

From the initial questionnaires, public meetings, workshops and further survey, people have identified the top ten priorities that need to be acted upon:

1. Agreeing guidelines for what housing development should take place within Warlingham and to maintain the vitality of commercial activity in the centre
2. Protecting and promoting our open spaces and wildlife
3. Reducing traffic speeds and prioritising pedestrian safety
4. Improving the appearance and vitality of The Green
5. Creating a meeting place for teenagers to call their own
6. Giving Warlingham a “wow factor” at its gateways, through signage and planting
7. Improving information to guide people on “what’s on in Warlingham”,
8. Addressing car parking issues
9. Broadening the range of things for teenagers to do, and
10. Enhancing our library facilities and opportunities for adult learning.

Specific priorities for the Police to focus on were:

1. Reinvigorating our Neighbourhood Watch
2. Improving our ability to contact the police, and
3. Shortening police response times.

Many of the actions need the Parish Council to lead and coordinate, working with the District and County Council, Police and Warlingham’s voluntary organisations and residents. Funding will come from a variety of sources, including business sponsorship, grants and local fund-raising.

Some improvements have already started. Others will take several years to achieve, but *are* achievable if we want them enough. Therefore the future of Warlingham is up to us.

If you’d like to volunteer to be part of that future, please contact the Secretary,

Gap House, 7, Redvers Road, Warlingham CR6 9HN or via the Parish Plan website www.warlinghamparishplan.org.uk which will give news updates on how we are improving our village.