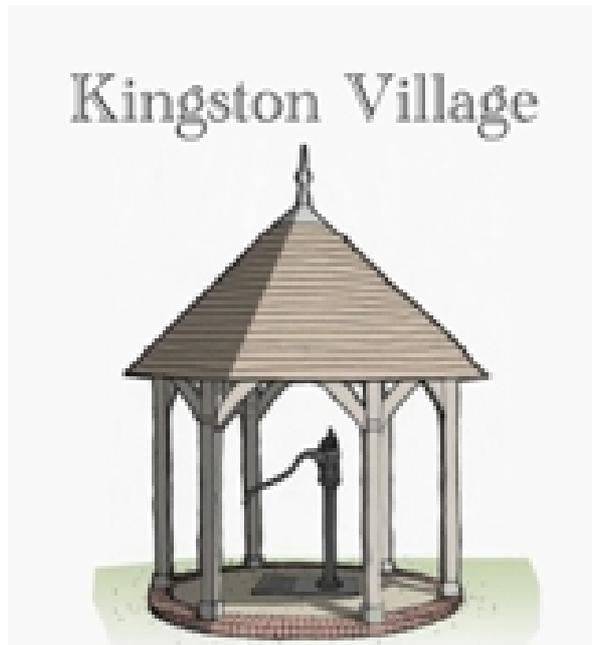


Kingston Community Led Plan



Produced October 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Kingston Community Plan Volunteer Group hopes you will benefit from this Report.

Our aim has been to involve all residents in establishing concerns, listening to comments and planning for the future.

The Plan has been prepared independently of the Parish Council but has been accepted by them and has their support.

What is a Community Led Plan?

A Community Plan is a comprehensive plan which addresses issues of concern to the Community together in one document. It has to be prepared by the community working together and based on information provided for research, survey and consultation. It must be focused on action and containing clear statements for the future.

Who was involved in producing the Plan?

A well publicised open meeting was held in October 2011 from which a steering group formed of residents keen to take part in producing the Plan. The initial steering group produced the 'love/hate' Questionnaire which was circulated and feedback obtained. The group through other commitments reduced in size and the final steering group produced a detailed Questionnaire based on the 'love/hate' Questionnaire and has produced the final Report.

Residents involved

Alison Greenwood

Annabel Diggle

Paul Wright

Paul Wheeler

Melanie Owers

Parish Councillors

Julie Conder

Tim FitzJohn

What were the objectives of the steering group?

The objective of the steering group in producing the Community Led Plan was to assess the issues and concerns raised within the Parish and see where possible improvements or changes could be made. Where appropriate, to take on specific areas of interest and to work with existing resources and associations in the Parish.

The main objective is to improve life in the Parish by establishing what is currently valued and where improvements or changes may be made.

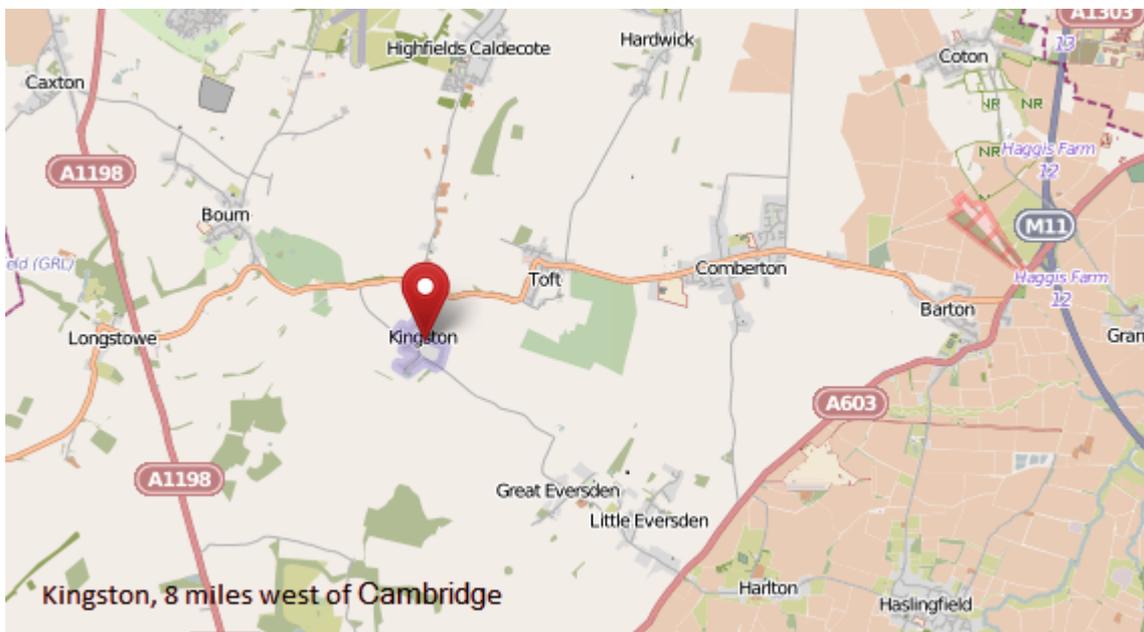
Background to the Plan

Kingston is small rural community with approximately 90 houses and an Electoral Role Register of 194 adults. There are few facilities within the village and little development has taken place over the past 20 years.

The parish lies 8 miles west of Cambridge; originally a farming community supporting a local economy, there is now little local employment. The once thriving shop, post office, primary school and public houses have closed leaving the old school building as the main community asset used as the Village Hall.

With increasing pressure in South Cambridgeshire generally for development for both housing and industrial/commercial use the Parish Council commissioned a Community Led Plan to establish the views of the local community in respect of a number of issues and areas that would be affected by possible development or change of use.

Additionally the Parish Council was interested in feedback on local issues to establish the views of residents on day to day matters.



A Community Led Plan leads to an Action plan where objectives can be determined and prioritised. The services and facilities in Kingston are extremely limited and given the small size of the Parish the financial and practical resources that the Parish can draw on are limited.

Two Questionnaires were produced. A 'love/hate' Questionnaire to consider in broad terms issues that were of interest or concern. This was followed up with a formal Questionnaire with the questions derived from the love/hate responses.

The Questionnaire was broken into sections.

- 🕒 Village Infrastructure and Aesthetics
- 🕒 Housing Development
- 🕒 Transport
- 🕒 Facilities
- 🕒 Social and Community Events
- 🕒 Young Persons

Questionnaires were delivered along with the Kingston Parish Church Magazine to every house in the Parish. The Questionnaire was also put online with Survey Monkey. There were two articles in the magazine encouraging response and completion of the Questionnaires, and reminders and links were posted on the village community Facebook page and on the website.

Response Rate

We were pleased that we had responses from the occupants of nearly 50% of the houses in Kingston along with a number of answers to the last general question 'do you want to add anything further to the questions and answers'.

Village Hall Upgrade

The main community asset within the Parish is the Village Hall. At the time of producing the Community Plan there was already a separate consultation underway led by the Village Hall Management Committee to establish the community's views on future use of the Village Hall and the necessary upgrades required to make the existing building fit for purpose or to extend further the existing premises.

Responses to the Community Plan questionnaire confirmed the importance villagers attach to upgrading the Village Hall, but we did not seek to duplicate the detailed views sought by the Village Hall Management Committee. The need to improve community facilities is recognised in the 'Facilities' section of the Community Plan.

Summary

Responses to the questionnaire and consultation show that people living in Kingston appreciate the quiet rural nature of the Parish.

However there are concerns about a number of issues that affect both daily life and the future development of the village.

- ⌚ Concerns over adequate Public Transport: we are only a few miles outside of Cambridge but relying on public transport for regular access is difficult due to the infrequency of buses which encourages use of private cars for short journeys.
- ⌚ Low Broadband speed: The use of the internet is becoming essential to modern life. The poor broadband speed means we are at a disadvantage both domestically, for entertainment and educational purposes, and it is a problem for businesses working from home.
- ⌚ Since starting the consultation process events have moved forwards with an increasing threat to the rural nature of the area with the Cambridgeshire County council possible development of a major housing development in the adjoining parishes.
- ⌚ Speeding through the village has been identified as a problem and with significantly more houses potentially in the area the traffic through the village will inevitably increase.
- ⌚ The Green Spaces and extensive footpath network are valued. The green spaces, the Village Green and Village Orchard, should be protected. The footpath network needs to be maintained to ensure access.
- ⌚ The community social life of the village mainly takes place in the Village Hall. This is an old Victorian School building which the Village Hall Committee is looking at fund-raising for a modernisation program to improve the facilities and comply with modern standards

It must be accepted that the resources of the parish are limited both financially and in people power. Many proposals require funding which may be achieved through the Community Charge or by Grants. However much can be achieved by local residents working together to start new projects or maintain existing social events.

Over the past years the residents have supported projects and with continuing support and commitment much can be achieved to maintain and improve the quality of life enjoyed in the parish

Rural nature of the village

Maintaining the rural nature of the village is very important to most people (72.1% of people said this is very important and 20.9% of people said it was quite important). Similarly 81% said the green spaces within the village are important to them.

The majority of people were happy with the level of street lighting and the maintenance of footpaths. For the majority of people, replacing signposts with old style versions is not important. However, nearly half the people surveyed (49%) wanted to see a village footpath alongside the village green.

Issue:

How can we best maintain the rural nature of the village

Objective:

Maintain rural nature of village.

Action:

Review current arrangements about informing residents about planning applications in the village.

Immediate Action by:

Parish clerk to raise awareness within the parish of planning applications.

Parish Council to consider it's response to planning applications with consideration to effect on the rural nature of the parish

Housing

When asked about how they would like to see housing develop in the future, over 1/3 said they didn't want to see any development.

Small scale development within the current boundary would be potentially supported by just over half.

Some people questioned if there are any infill sites left in the village on which to build, and others said they didn't want to see development on gardens.

When asked what kind of housing they would like in the village, 45.2% said they wanted to see private and/or low cost housing, 28.6% said they wanted to see private housing only and 28.6% said they didn't want to see development of any kind.

Issue:

It is unclear whether there are any suitable sites within the village envelope which could be used as building plots for new houses

Objective:

Determine if there are any suitable infill sites within the village on which new houses could be built.

Action:

1. Review the area within the village envelope to determine if there are any suitable infill sites.
2. Depending on the results of the review, a further survey then needs to be undertaken to see if villagers agree on the definition of suitable in-fill sites and/or suitable plots.

Action by: Parish Council to undertake a review within 12 months

Issue:

There is no definition as to what comprises low cost housing

Objective:

To determine what constitutes low cost housing and what type of new build villagers would like.

Action :

Assuming that suitable in-fill sites are identified within the village envelope, villagers need to be surveyed to determine what kind of new build they would like to see

Action by: Parish Council to organise further survey within 12 months.

Public Transport

The majority of people who use public transport are either very satisfied (7) or quite satisfied (15) out of 43 respondents.

There was majority support (34 from 43) to maintain a bus provision to the village

Those who were not satisfied with the current arrangements wanted to see:-

Nearly half said they would like buses to run more frequently in the evenings at weekends.

Opinion was equal on:-

Buses running on Sunday

Later evening buses in the week

More frequent buses during the weekday

Issue:

Maintaining and extending bus provision

Objective:

Increase the frequency of buses running in the evening and at weekends

Action:

Liaise with bus operating company and County Council

Action by: Parish Council and concerned volunteers - ongoing

Speeding

Vehicles speeding through the village were identified as a problem for 37 out of 43 respondents. .

The main street through the village is very narrow in parts with danger to pedestrians. There are three roads into the village, all from open country so vehicles enter generally at more than 30 mph.

Since the Plan Consultation the Police have monitored vehicle speeds at the south approach to the village. This has confirmed that speeding is a real problem.

When asked about what action people would like to see to reduce the problem there was no clear consensus. We asked about such measures as:-

20 mph speed restriction

Speed bumps

Rumble strips

Illuminated 30 mph signs.

Issue:

Vehicles speeding through the village

Objective:

Stop or reduce the number of vehicles speeding through the village

Action:

Parish Council to review with Cambridgeshire County Council what action is feasible and costs involved.

Immediate.

Facilities

When asked about what facilities they would like to see provided or improved in Kingston, the following were identified as the most important:

More transport (10)

Village Hall upgraded (18)

More control of conservation area (9)

Cycle way to Toft (20). Kingston is just outside the area where transport is provided to Comberton Village College. Children cycle to school but have to use the dangerous B1046 for approximately 1 mile to Toft before linking up with the cycleway to Comberton.

Improved Broadband speeds (37)

Issue: Respond to the main issues arising from the 'Facilities' response

Action:

More Public Transport Already covered

Village Hall Village Hall Committee already acting on plan to modernise the Village Hall

More Control of Conservation areas

Parish Council to ensure that the conservation and village green areas are protected from encroachment and maintained. Immediate.

Cycle Way to Toft Parish Council to consider viability with Cambridgeshire County Council and landowners. Revue with 12 months

Improved Broadband Parish Council to press for faster internet speeds for the village. To liaise with the County Council to ensure that Kingston is included in the rollout of fast rural broadband currently planned for 90% of the county.

Action by: Parish Council. Immediate action point within the BT roll out program for high speed broadband

Young People

We considered the needs of young people and asked for responses over issues that are important to them.

Their responses mirrored in many ways the general responses with a number of their concerns already covered.

Public Transport

Clubs and Activities

Broadband speed

Improved Recreation Ground

The recreation ground is the responsibility of the Parish Council. A Volunteer Group recently obtained a substantial grant to modernise the facilities. Any further development and equipment would have to be sourced via Grants as the PC has confirmed at this time there would be no further funds available.

Issue: Consider further development of the Recreation Ground

Action: Volunteers Any fundraising would be through volunteers.

Action by: Parish council

If proposals are put forward by volunteers/action group the Parish Council to consider the impact on neighbouring properties of any proposed additional equipment at the Recreation Ground

Social Events

Currently a small number of social events and community activities are held throughout the year. These are organised by volunteers or the Parish Council.

Regular activities include:-

Monthly 'Pub' night held in the village hall

Summer Garden Party in the Orchard

BBQ

Autumn event in the village hall such as the 'International evening'

Annual Quiz and/Fish and chip supper

We asked people how they valued these.

Clearly there is support with over 50% of people valuing the pub nights, quiz night and general social events

Issue:

To maintain and increase social events

Objective:

To involve more people in becoming involved with ideas and organising events

Action by:

It is hoped that an upgraded and improved Village Hall will encourage wider use and additional activities by both local residents and attract use as a venue for outside clubs and organisations to hold meetings and events.

Miscellaneous Responses

We were pleased that a number of people provided additional comment in addition to the questionnaire. A number of these that expand the commentary in the report are listed below and also show the difficulties of meeting as many aspirations as possible.

Footpaths Pushchair access along the Green to the Village Hall

No footpaths, rural nature of the village

Footpath to other villages, we are isolated

Rural Nature

Would like to see the Village Green managed as a meadow

Already our lanes are being destroyed by large vehicles and the once beautiful verges are no more

No to splitting gardens, the charm of Kingston is the open landscape

Development

Yes, to development for small business working from home

More housing should mean more youngsters and provisions/facilities ought to be available to them (therefore avoiding antisocial behaviour)

More local amenities like a shop are welcome but realistically would require a larger population to support. Demands for more housing must be balanced by an increase in facilities.

Events and Facilities

Clubs and activities in the village hall .Continuation of people pro-actively organising events on a voluntary basis

Christmas Party

Youth Club

More 'stuff' at the playground, especially for older children.