

Walford Parish Plan

DRAFT F
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Walford Parish Plan Steering Committee

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Acknowledgements

Readers of this Plan are asked to remember the late Mr John Ward of Beggars Roost, Bulls Hill, Walford who was a committed member of the Walford Parish Plan Steering Group and an active and caring member of the Walford Parish community. John contributed a great deal to the Plan, particularly in the way of local knowledge and history. He helped to formulate the overall strategy for the Plan and was active at the two public planning events in the Parish. Sadly he died suddenly in April 2005.

The Walford Parish Plan is the result of 3 years of hard work, dedication and graft on the part of the Steering Group members. My wife Sheila, and the wives of the other Steering Group members, Nina, Paula and Jenny, deserve special thanks not least for their patience and forbearance when meetings and other events have interfered with the smooth running of family life, but also for their material contributions to the project in a variety of ways. Thanks and appreciation are also due to the Parish Clerk Mrs Jackie Perry, to the Chairman and other Walford Councillors, and those many members of the community who have contributed their time to further research and to the public planning events which took place in 2004.

It is the first time such a project has been undertaken in Walford. Besides being a factor contributing to the future status of "Quality Council" the Plan will provide the basis upon which further action plans will be created, hopefully leading to some tangible outcomes that will improve the quality of life in the Parish.

1.

INTRODUCTION

The Government's Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside, the future' (2000) proposed that all rural communities should develop 'Town, Village and Parish Plans' to identify key facilities and services, to set out the problems that need to be tackled and to demonstrate how distinctive character and features could be preserved.

To help deliver the Rural White Paper proposal, the Countryside Agency launched its 'Vital Villages' programme in 2001. The goal of the programme is to achieve socially and economically active rural communities that address their own priorities and are better equipped to shape their own futures. The Parish Plan is one of four initiatives of the Vital Villages programme.

The accolade of 'Quality Council' status improves the likelihood of attracting government funding. Such status can only be acquired by the production of a good quality Parish Plan. A constructive, favourable profile of Walford Parish Council (particularly amongst the parishioners) needs to be brought into relief by the instigation of activities that are positively noteworthy, that also involve the community and bring tangible results.

1.1

AIM

The aim of this Parish Plan is threefold:

- To launch a series of initiatives that will improve the quality and enjoyment of life in the Parish, for residents and visitors, whilst enhancing the environment and the local economy.
- To achieve 'Quality Parish Council' status, thereby improving eligibility to attract funding and thus facilitate the bringing to fruition of those initiatives highlighted in the Parish Plan.
- To enhance the public's perception of the Parish Council as a focus for action and improvement on behalf of the community.

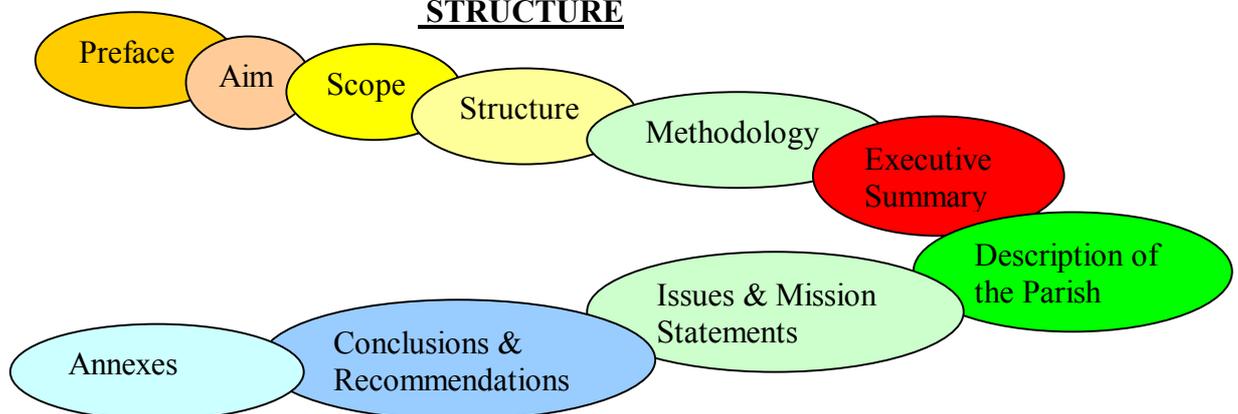
1.2

SCOPE

The plan is intended as an articulation of community concerns and issues leading to the identification of a series of mission statements, conclusions and recommendations which encompass supplementary planning guidance and associated suggested community initiatives.

1.3

STRUCTURE



Introduction and Funding

This 5 phase Parish Plan is based upon four research activities that have taken place during the last 3 years. Funding was obtained in the form of a three-stage grant from the Countryside Agency and by the contribution of time by local volunteers.

Phase 1 – The Survey

Phase 1 took the form of a survey, which was carried out by sending a set of four open questions¹ to every household in the Parish. As a result of the answers to these questions, two open planning events were organised.

Phase 2 – ‘Planning for Real’

The first open planning event (known in Unitary Council parlance as ‘Planning for Real’) was at Walford Village Hall (Robert Pashley Memorial Hall) in June 2004, and the second at the Bishopswood Village Hall in August 2004. The outcome of these events, attended by over 120 members of the community, was a list of topics that were assembled in a report². These in turn formed the basis of a series of mini-projects to assess the extent of the problems and concerns identified thus far.

Phase 3 - Mini Projects

Information gathered from the initial survey, supported by that arising from the public planning events, showed a number key practical issues emerging. These related to concerns about footpaths and bridleways, cycle ways, public transport, noise, playgrounds, footways, traffic, and recycling.

The methodology adopted for the two public events encouraged suggestions from the public about a wide range of topics. Undeniably it was easy for people to throw in their concerns and their ideas but where there was obviously a pattern emerging, it was felt necessary to investigate further to find out more about the circumstances at ground level. In this way it was hoped to be able to verify whether there really is a problem and, that being the case, to throw extra light on the subject where possible. Consequently, volunteers undertook a series of mini-projects. Their findings are included under the appropriate headings and at Annex D.

Phase 4 - Questionnaire

Following on from the mini-projects a questionnaire was put together with the help of expert guidance from officers at Herefordshire Council. The purpose of the questionnaire was two-fold. Firstly, it aimed to gather opinions, which might confirm or deny support for the initial findings of the Parish survey and the two open planning events. Secondly it would serve to quantify the views and concerns, amongst the members of the community, regarding the subjects already raised. The results now provide a catalogue, and a unique record of the community’s views.

The response to the questionnaire was outstanding. Approximately 1200 questionnaires were despatched to households in the Walford Parish and over 500 were returned. The top class of

¹ Can you suggest any new services or facilities within Walford Parish that you would make regular use of? If you could change one thing in the Parish what would it be? What do you most like about the local area? Are there any local issues that concern you?

² Stage 1 Report (Parish Survey & Planning for Real – Outcomes). See Annex C

the local Primary School were given the opportunity to complete individual questionnaires and 25 of these were returned.

The raw data resulting from the questionnaire, conducted during July 2005, is shown at Annex B, along with a list of the comments that accompanied the responses to the questionnaire.

Phase 5 – Production of the Plan

To be completed at a later date. It will include a description of formats, why, who for etc. plus how the PPSG went about identifying suitable printers, publishers, advisors etc.

The Parish

Walford Parish, in South Herefordshire, is based on the village of Walford³, which lies about 1 mile to the south of Ross on Wye, in the Wye Valley river plain. Predominantly rural, most of the Parish is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Parish is about 20 square kilometres in area. It has a population of about 1,500 with 29% of people being over 60 years of age. The percentage of the community over 45 years old is 53.6%. In terms of ethnic groups, 99.4% are classed as “white”. Tourism and food production are the main economic activities.

The Development of the Plan

The Parish Plan is the result of extensive consultation throughout the Parish of Walford over a period of 3 years. The consultation process has included individuals, voluntary organisations, principal businesses in the area, public services and utilities, as well as the adjacent parishes of Goodrich, Ruardean in Gloucestershire, and Ross Town Council.

The Plan is based upon four research activities. The first took the form of a survey, which was carried out by sending a set of four open questions to every household in the Parish. As a result of the answers to these questions, two open planning events were organised. The result of these events was a list of issues that were assembled in a report. These in turn formed the basis of a series of mini-projects to assess the extent of the problems and concerns identified thus far. Finally there followed a Parish-wide questionnaire aimed at assessing the representative levels of interest, concern and importance in the community for the issues identified earlier.

The Key Issues

Certain key issues of major concern in the Parish have been identified. Amongst these and of particular importance are the volume and speed of traffic, accessibility, playgrounds, and safety. It is not difficult to see the underlying thread linking each of these. The first is the lack of any real alternative to car travel along the B4234, which runs throughout the length of the Parish. The second is the physical separation of the two main settlements of Walford and Coughton.

The bulk of the community currently resides in the settlements of Walford and Coughton. There is also a relatively large community at Kerne Bridge. Each of these principal settlements is connected over a length of approximately 2½ miles by the B4234, the main artery for all communications throughout the Parish. At different points along the B4234 there are situated the two village halls, the primary school, two pubs, a general store, and one of two churches. All of these are the focus of most social activity in the community. At the moment there does not appear to be any coordinated plan to steer development in a direction away from a strip configuration, towards a shape that will be conducive to the promotion of a cohesive and well-balanced “total community”.

The B4234 is extremely problematical and perilous, for both drivers and pedestrians, over its whole length. The road width is inconsistent. Soil slippage onto the road surface due to steep banks is a frequent problem. The surface is noisy and irregular. Trees often overhang the

³ A History of Walford & Bishopswood, compiled and edited by Virginia Morgan and Bridget Vine, Walford Parish Residents Association with Logaston Press ISBN 1 873827 87 3.

carriageway causing constrictions and the bends are hazardous, exacerbated by the removal of cat's eyes. The road is prone to flooding near Hazelhurst nursing home and at the bottom of Bulls Hill. There is a multiplicity of confusing road signs, many of which are considered to be unnecessary. The speed restrictions change at different places to send totally confusing messages to those who drive along it. Speed limits are perceived to be largely ineffective and seldom policed. Local efforts to strengthen the rules applying to road speeds have largely come to nought. Many in the village regard the situation outside the primary school as being close to critical! Parking space is inadequate and the speed of traffic passing the school has become a major cause of anxiety, described by some as an accident waiting to happen.

Most of the topics which have come to the fore in this plan during the period of extensive consultation, for example road traffic, speed restrictions and road signs, together with footways, cycle tracks, footpaths, noise, playgrounds, public transport, village shape and shops, can all find their roots in a common factor – the separation of the settlements along the hazardous B4234. The increase in the frequency and speed of traffic has left little or no alternative to the car. It is too dangerous to cycle, ride or walk alongside the road. Until these problems are addressed community cohesion will continue to suffer.

Research has shown that many problems associated with the B4234 are impacting deeply into community life. Distances from one facility to the next, e.g. from the school to the village halls at Walford and at Kerne Bridge/Bishopswood are extreme for those without the convenience of a motor vehicle. Bus services are not considered to be sufficiently attractive to tempt people away from their cars. Safety is questionable and for mothers with young children, walking or cycling is virtually out of the question. The footways alongside the B4234 are grossly inadequate. They are neither wide enough nor sufficiently continuous to provide a credible means of communication. Consequently, the general store at Bishopswood, a valuable but underused facility in terms of the stated requirements of many, itself situated on a very hazardous stretch of the B4234^{3a}, is out of reach for community members without a car. As a result, the convergence of these factors necessitates high vehicle usage and an aggravation of the already serious problems associated with motor vehicles.

Conclusions

The process has arrived at a number of conclusions:

- The Parish is dominated by the B4234 road which runs N to S for approximately 2½ miles. It is hazardous to cycle along and dangerous to pedestrians, particularly where no footways exist.
- The absence of footways and cycleways negates any real alternative to the car. As a result there are adverse consequences for the environment, health, quality of life, social cohesion and the local economy.
- It is felt that existing measures to control speed along the B4234 are inadequate.
- There is no evidence that noise pollution is a significant problem.
- There is strong demand for a playground and/or recreational area.
- Footpaths are highly prized.
- Bridleways are considered important.
- The provision of a cycleway network would provide a healthy alternative to the car as well as enhancing recreation, tourism and community cohesion.

^{3a} A very serious accident, involving a head on collision, occurred at Bishopswood in February 2006.

- The demand from within the community for affordable housing is less than anticipated.
- Large-scale development is unwanted.
- Regarding planning; inconsistency of implementation is perceived as a particular problem.
- Litter is considered to be a high priority problem.
- The Parish is poorly served by public transport, which is matched to low demand.
- Access to the only shop in the Parish is difficult by anything other than a motor vehicle for most people.
- The existence of unspoilt countryside in the Parish is of paramount importance.
- Most people regard the retention of a green space between Ross on Wye and Walford to be highly important.
- There is doubt as to the benefits that the AONB office brings.
- There is concern over the impact of industrial food production.
- Most parishioners do not want street lamps, and the lighting pollution they bring.
- The general state of the roads is not considered satisfactory.
- There are 11 issues of concern worthy of consideration for supplementary planning guidance, these are listed in Annex A.
- There are a series of issues that warrant action beyond that of the normal duties of the Parish Council:
 - The provision of a footway (where none exists) alongside the B4234
 - Safety measures for the B4234 are required, e.g. calming, flood defence, cat's eyes, verge reinforcement.
 - The provision of a playground/recreation area(s)
 - Plans to promote the greater use of bicycles.

Mission Statements

From the development work performed to date 20 mission statements have evolved to aid and direct the next stages of the Parish Plan. These are listed below (note: this list is not in priority sequence):

1. Walford Parish Council recognises the issue of footway provision on the B4234 as a high priority for the community, in terms of public health, environmental sustainability, safety and community cohesion. The Parish Council will seek the inclusion of footway construction under Supplementary Planning Guidance and will support any approved action plan designed to achieve the objectives described in Annex A. It will also clarify its own position and responses on matters that evidently have the potential for aggravating the already difficult problems of walking throughout the Walford areas of the B4234
2. Walford Parish Council recognises that a potentially dangerous situation has arisen on the B4234 by Wyeside Park and Bishopswood Leigh. In order to safeguard the health and welfare of the community The Council will support any approved action plan to improve the situation by minimising the risk of accidents occurring.
3. Walford Parish Council recognises that a hazardous situation exists in an area within approximately 300 metres of Kerne Bridge and around the bottom of Leys Hill. The Council will support any approved action plan to take away any road signs considered

to be unnecessary, and to improve the effectiveness of those that remain in order to minimise the risk of accidents occurring, and to safeguard the health and welfare of the community.

4. The Walford Parish Council recognises that safety questions on the stretch of B4234 by, and on the approach to, Walford primary school, are causing great concern to many residents, especially parents of young children. The Parish Council will endeavour to press for measures to achieve higher safety standards and will support any approved action plan designed to achieve those improvements.
5. The Walford Parish Council recognises that the stretch of B4234 by the junction with Whittings Lane is a potential hazard and undertakes to closely monitor the situation.
6. The Walford Parish Council recognises that the stretch of B4234 by Coughton corner, and the C1275 through Coughton, show signs of becoming serious hazards and undertakes to closely monitor the situation with a view to minimising the potential for further aggravation.
7. Walford Parish Council takes heed of the reports of excessive speed along the B4234 by the Mill Race public house. It will continue to encourage vigilance and will support any initiatives aimed at reducing speed over this stretch of road.
8. Walford Parish Council recognises the concern about excessive noise in the Parish. It will continue to encourage vigilance, to investigate all reports of excessive noise in the future and seek ways of minimising disturbances from excessive noise.
9. Walford Parish Council recognises the urgent need for a Parish play area for children, and for an open leisure and sports ground facility. The Parish Council will continue to actively support those members of the community who wish to pursue all possibilities locally with both landowners, and with the Parks Countryside and Leisure Development Service of Herefordshire County Council.
10. Walford Parish Council recognises the issue of extending the footpath and bridleways network as a priority for the community, in terms of health, recreation, environmental sustainability, safety and cohesion. It will support any approved action plan designed to achieve the objective described in Annex A.
11. Walford Parish Council recognizes the value of a cycleway, or network of cycle-ways, through the Parish, in terms of its potential to contribute to community health, recreation, cohesion, communication and safety. Furthermore the Council attaches importance to the opportunities that a cycleway network will bring to the Parish by making the area more attractive to tourism, with the potential for financial benefits for the local economy. The Parish Council will support any approved action plan for the creation of such cycle-ways.
12. Walford Parish Council will support every effort to retain the green belt between the Ross on Wye boundary and Coughton village in order to preserve the unique identity of Walford and its surrounding settlements. The Council questions the suitability of Coughton as a “settlement” in view of its location and the absence of facilities matching the UDP criteria.

13. Walford Parish Council is mindful of the tremendous economic potential deriving from its position in the Wye Valley AONB. In order to further exploit that potential, and to enhance the attractiveness and ambience of both Coughton and Walford, the Parish Council will seek every opportunity to encourage sympathetic improvements to the design of property and shape of the village
14. Walford Parish Council will endeavour to convey a consistent and even handed approach to all planning matters that come before them. At the same time the Council will undertake to convey community's requirements, in relation to planning matters, upwards to the Planning Authority particularly during the consultation phases of the County Plan (currently the UDP).
15. Walford Parish Council recognises the adverse effect that unsightly litter has on the local environment, particularly by detracting from the natural beauty of the area, by reducing the potential of the Parish as an attractive tourist location, and by limiting the scale of potential revenue that could flow into the area. The Parish Council undertakes to be more locally proactive in its search for a permanent solution to the problem of litter, whatever form it takes.
16. Walford Parish Council recognises the desire for broadening the options for re-cycling within the Parish. The Council will support any approved action plan to provide appropriate re-cycling facilities.
17. Walford Parish Council recognises the array of problems caused to many members of the community by the absence of frequent and flexible public transport through the Parish. The Council will seek to remedy the situation by supporting imaginative and innovative proposals, which are aimed at making it more attractive to adopt alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time minimising the risk, particularly to children, inherent in moving between different points within the Parish.
18. Walford Parish Council recognises the need for a general store nearer to Walford village and will support and encourage any approved action plan aimed at establishing such a facility.
19. Walford Parish Council recognises the importance that the community attaches to the protection of the environment, the preservation of the beautiful countryside, including plants and wildlife, and the status of AONB and AGLV. The Council will be mindful of these priorities at all times and will adopt policies that support the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Parish.
20. Having regard for the safety and welfare of those in the community who need to make regular use of the roads and lanes in the Parish, particularly pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, Walford Parish Council will continue to proactively monitor the state of surfaces on those roads and take steps to promote lasting improvements.

Finally, suggestions have been made as to the subsequent steps and procedures necessary to action issues raised and to ensure that the Plan is periodically reviewed and updated.

Issues for Consideration as Supplementary Planning Guidance⁴

The Parish Council regards the issues in the following table as worthy of inclusion in Supplementary Planning Guidance (see Annex A). The Herefordshire Council are therefore asked to give serious consideration to this request.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Footways</i>	<i>18,19</i>	<i>to have continuous footway by or alongside the main B4234 through the Parish</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>
<i>Road signs</i>	<i>19-23</i>	<i>to remove any road signs considered to be unnecessary, and to improve the effectiveness of those that remain in order minimise the risk of accidents occurring, and to safeguard the health and welfare of the community</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>
<i>Children's Playground</i>	<i>25,26</i>	<i>to pursue all possibilities locally for the provision of playgrounds with both landowners, and with the Parks Countryside and Leisure Development Service of Herefordshire Council</i>	<i>Ch.10</i>
<i>Footpaths & Bridleways</i>	<i>27,28</i>	<i>To extend the footpath and bridleways network.</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>
<i>Cycleway</i>	<i>28-32</i>	<i>To establish a Parish cycleway network</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>
<i>Housing</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>To restrict future development size to fewer than 20 houses.</i>	<i>Ch.5 Para.5.4.39 & 5.4.41</i>
<i>Green belt</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>To retain the green belt between Ross boundary at the Vine Tree and Coughton</i>	<i>Ch.5.4.25</i>
<i>Village shape and design</i>	<i>34,35</i>	<i>to encourage improvements to the design of property and shape of the village</i>	<i>Ch.3</i>
<i>Implementation of Planning Policy</i>	<i>35,36</i>	<i>to provide more information at local level on the basis for decisions by the Planning Authority</i>	
<i>Transport</i>	<i>39-41</i>	<i>To make it more attractive to adopt alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time minimising the risk, particularly to children, inherent in moving between different points within the Parish.</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>
<i>Overhead cables</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>To encourage service providers and customers to adopt underground local distribution wherever possible</i>	<i>Ch.13</i>
<i>Farming practices</i>	<i>43,44</i>	<i>To adopt planning policies that seek to balance the requirements of farmers, the community generally and tourism.</i>	<i>Ch.2, Ch.4</i>
<i>Street lighting</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>To minimise the use of street lighting in the Parish</i>	<i>Ch.4</i>
<i>State of the roads</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>To proactively monitor the state of surfaces on Parish roads and take steps to promote lasting improvements.</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>

⁴ Throughout this Plan, an asterisk after a title or sub-title denotes a request for inclusion as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

3.

WALFORD PARISH PLAN

3.1 Walford Parish

Walford Parish is based on the village of Walford, which lies about 1 mile to the south of Ross on Wye, in the Wye Valley river plain. Most of the Parish is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Other towns within easy reasonable distance are Coleford, Cinderford, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Monmouth and Ledbury.

The Parish itself, which is about 20 square kilometres in area, comprises a number of settlements in the surrounding countryside. Hom Green is on the river plain towards the north, whilst Bishopswood lies on the boundary of Gloucester and Herefordshire in the south. Other communities are at Starve Beech, Howle Hill, The Dam, Forest Green, Kiln Green, Coughton and Kerne Bridge. Apart from Walford, Coughton and Hom Green, the majority of the smaller settlements are situated on the wooded steep valley sides and on the plateau at the top, about 600 feet above sea level. Access to the plateau is by a series of steep, narrow, twisting lanes.

The river Wye, and its associated gorge, is a dominant feature of the area, rich in wildlife and noteworthy for its picturesque views of the valley. The Wye meanders from north to south through the Parish between the main A40 in the west and the B4234 on the eastern bank. Kerne Bridge offers the only crossing point between Wilton and Monmouth. Serious flooding seems to occur on an average of once every 59 years and last occurred in 1963. However, the river often bursts its banks throughout the length of the Parish after heavy rains.

The name Walford is thought to derive from the name of a river crossing on the route between Gloucester and Monmouth including Goodrich Castle. It was originally part of a Saxon manor belonging to the church of Hereford. Various kinsmen leased the land during the Middle Ages. During the Tudor and Stuart period the ownership of the land changed several times. The Hereford Diocese also owned the woods at Bishopswood, access rights being jealously guarded.

Throughout its history, the chief activity of the Parish has been agriculture, mainly subsistence farming. Other industries grew alongside but in support of agriculture. Forestry and iron smelting were two of these. Iron working took place in Bishopswood, and there is also a history of lime and charcoal burning, coal mining, quarrying and brick making in the area. Other trades have included those that have sustained the local population. These include the suppliers of domestic equipment, furniture and coal.

According to statistics supplied by Herefordshire Council⁵ the age profile of the Parish is very much skewed towards the older end with 29% of people being over 60 years of age. The County figure is 25%. The percentage of the community over 45 years old is 53.6%. In terms of ethnic groups, 99.4% are classed as “white”.

Most of those residing in the Parish and still working are employed in manufacturing, the wholesale and retail trade, real estate, education, health and social work (68.3%). Agriculture, including forestry, accounts for 6% of the local working population. Of those aged between 16 and 74, 32.8% are regarded as economically inactive, including 20.4% who

⁵ Population Census 2001

are retired. Within this same age group 25.1% have no qualifications, whilst 28% have a first or higher degree or similar qualification. The County figure is just over 19%.

Today, the Walford saw mill produces and supplies wood products. There are now no longer any garages or railway stations. The number of full time agricultural workers is steadily diminishing^{5a}. Many of those living in Walford Parish work in Ross on Wye or beyond and travel to work by car.

Housing development is concentrated on Coughton and Walford, in the form of ribbon development along the B4234. There is no visibly identifiable centre to Walford village for about 2 kilometres north to south. The design of housing on the more recent developments lacks a consistent theme. It would be difficult to distinguish, in terms of design, some of the more modern houses from those found in the city suburbs of any major English conurbation. Little thought seems to have gone into preserving the character of Walford and Coughton in terms of design, shape and materials. Consequently a rather mixed bag of dwellings is steadily appearing in a disintegrated fashion, with all the adverse consequences, as evidenced in this Plan, for the community and its infrastructure. There is, at the moment, little proof of any significant effort to alter the trend.

By contrast, some of the older stone properties in the scattered communities have been renovated and remain attractive through the use of appropriate materials. In this respect Herefordshire's planning policy has doubtless had a major part to play in conserving the unique character and beauty of the area.

Walford School is now the only school in the Parish and caters for children up to the age of eleven. Schools in adjacent towns provide secondary education. The churches that remain serve the Anglican communities of St Michaels and All Angels in Walford, and All Saints at Bishopswood.

What was once a very attractive and popular rail service running from north to south of the Parish, along with two stations, has long since ceased to exist. Only the vestiges of a track remain. Public transport in the Parish relies on infrequent and haphazard bus services connecting mainly with Ross and Hereford.

The Parish boasts the existence of nearly 30 kilometres of public rights of way. Many of these rights of way, and others long since overgrown, date back to the Middle Ages and beyond. They give an indication of the directions taken between the most important centres of activity. There is a veritable labyrinth of tracks, footpaths and bridleways, which snake across the countryside through fields and woodlands. Almost the whole of the Parish can be surveyed from these rights of way. The individual lengths and configurations of the interlocking routes enable walkers and riders of various strengths and abilities to tailor their outings accordingly.

The community is well endowed with two village halls, both of which play a vital role and, as evidence shows, are greatly appreciated by the community. In Walford village there is the Robert Pashley Memorial Hall, which was opened in 1969. It has since been extended twice, the latest having just been completed with additional space and facilities to conform to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. At Bishopswood a new village hall was completed in the year 2000. Both of these buildings, managed and almost entirely funded by local people on a voluntary basis, provide the main focus for community activities. These facilities are an

^{5a} Quarterly Economic Report for November published by Herefordshire Partnership

invaluable asset in the Parish, kept going by a body of volunteers whose contribution is often understated and frequently overlooked completely.

As one would expect in a country community, the pub plays an important role. Sadly in recent years the number of pubs has rapidly diminished. The “disappeared” include The Albion and the Kerne Bridge Inn, The Crown at Howle Hill, and the New Buildings at Forest Green. It is a sad reflection on the area when one is obliged to tell enquiring hikers and cyclists, keen to sample the further delights of the area on a hot summer afternoon, that there is nowhere nearer than the Inn on the Wye at Kerne Bridge, or the Mill Race in Walford to satisfy their thirsts. Indeed, the Mill Race itself nearly disappeared in 2004. Only the willingness of a local entrepreneur, prepared to take the risk and invest in a vital community asset such as this, has saved the pub from extinction.

There are unfortunately, two facilities that are outstandingly lacking in the Parish. The first is a level sports ground, suitable for such games as football, rugby, hockey and cricket. There is no doubt that support for these games exists among people in the Parish and although there appear to be swathes of open countryside, most is farmland and otherwise unavailable. Consequently, those whose interests lie in this direction have to go elsewhere. The currently successful Howle Hill football team, for instance, now plays its matches somewhere else.

The second facility, for which there is a clear need and for which there have been numerous appeals for land, is a recreational area suitable for children. There is currently nowhere that children can get to safely and under their own steam in order to play together in a place that is central and reasonably secure under the watchful eye of adults.

As has already been pointed out, the way the village has been allowed to develop does not help in the matter of transportation for the young. There is no noticeably identifiable centre to the village and strip development has been allowed to take place in an ad hoc manner along the busy B4234. Footways along this road are less than adequate for the safety of unaccompanied children, and the absence of dedicated off road cycle ways militates against healthy outdoor exercise and the need for children to mix and play with others of their own age.

3.2 Development of the Plan

This Parish Plan is based upon four research activities that have taken place during the last 3 years. The first took the form of a survey, which was carried out by sending a set of four open questions⁶ to every household in the Parish.

As a result of the answers to these questions, two open planning events were organised. The first was at Walford Village Hall (Robert Pashley Memorial Hall) in June 2004 and the second at the Bishopswood Village Hall in August 2004. The outcome of these events, attended by over 120 members of the community, was a list of topics that were assembled in a report⁷. These in turn formed the basis of a series of mini-projects to assess the extent of the problems and concerns identified thus far. Finally there followed a Parish-wide

⁶ Can you suggest any new services or facilities within Walford Parish that you would make regular use of? If you could change one thing in the Parish what would it be? What do you most like about the local area? Are there any local issues that concern you?

⁷ Stage 1 Report (Parish Survey & Planning for Real – Outcomes)

questionnaire, which aimed at assessing the representative levels of interest, concern and importance in the community for the issues identified earlier (Annex B).

3.3 Mini Projects

Information gathered from the initial survey, supported by that arising from the public planning events, showed a number key practical issues emerging. These related to concerns about footpaths and bridleways, cycle ways, public transport, noise, playgrounds, footways, traffic matters, and recycling.

The methodology adopted for the two public events encouraged suggestions from the public about a wide range of topics. Undeniably it was easy for people to throw in their concerns and their ideas but where there was obviously a pattern emerging, it was felt necessary to investigate further to find out more about the circumstances at ground level. In this way it was hoped to be able to verify whether there really is a problem and, that being the case, to throw extra light on the subject where possible. Consequently, volunteers undertook a series of mini-projects and their findings are included under the appropriate headings (Annex D).

3.4 Questionnaire

Following on from the mini-projects a questionnaire was put together with the help of expert guidance from officers at Herefordshire Council. The purpose of the questionnaire was two-fold. Firstly, it aimed to gather opinions, which might confirm or deny support for the initial findings of the Parish survey and the two open planning events. Secondly it would serve to quantify the views and concerns, amongst the members of the community, regarding the issues already raised. The results now provide a catalogue, and a unique record of the community's views.

The response to the questionnaire was outstanding. Approximately 1200 questionnaires were despatched to households in the Walford Parish and over 500 were returned. The top class of the local Primary School was given the opportunity to complete individual questionnaires and 25 of these were returned.

The raw data resulting from the questionnaire, conducted during July 2005, is shown at Annex B, along with a list of the comments that accompanied the responses to the questionnaire.

3.5 The Issues

3.5.1 Footways on the B4234*

The Stage 1 report at Annex C (Parish Survey & Planning for Real – Outcomes) on page 10, para 2. listed the topics arising in the initial survey. In that survey there were 40 spontaneous and unsolicited references to the need for footways along the main B4234.

The public planning events confirmed that footways are an important issue in the Parish. People were concerned particularly about two significant lengths of the B4234 where there is an absence of footways. The first of these is the stretch between the Gloucestershire boundary and Kerne Bridge, and the second between Kerne Bridge and Green Colley Grove in Walford village. In question 4.2 of the questionnaire people were asked how important it is to have continuous footway by and along the main B4234 through the Parish. In answer, 74% said they considered such a footway to be either important or very important.

A survey has been carried out on these sections and it is not difficult to see why footways are so urgently required. This is a main road and vehicles travel very fast. It is narrow and contains bends and hazards, which make walking a very risky activity. For children, walking alone is out of the question. Cycling along the road is even more hazardous and unpleasant. In consequence, responsible parents are obliged to transport their children by car. In effect the southern end of the Parish is isolated from Walford for pedestrian and cyclist traffic.

Full results of the follow up mini-project, with suggested routes for a footway, maps and more precise grid references, are shown in Annex D.

In summary,

1. The verge adjacent to the B4234 between Bishopswood Leigh and Hazelhurst should be sufficiently wide to accommodate a footway.
2. A suggested route for the proposed section of footway between Hazelhurst and Kerne Bridge is behind the hedge on the southern side of the road. At Riverside House the footway could join up with the existing WA104 by the riverbank and follow it to Kerne Bridge. Alternatively, a new footway could be constructed along the northern perimeter of the public car park and Bishopswood village hall adjacent to the B4234.
3. From Kerne Bridge to Kerne Lodge, the footway could follow the old railway track on the western side of the B4234.
4. From Kerne Lodge to Green Colley Grove a suggested route is by the hedge on the eastern side of the B4234.

Herefordshire Council Environment Directorate currently estimate a figure of £100 per linear metre for the cost of providing these stretches of footway, which includes kerb laying and footway construction in type 1 stone sub base and tar macadam surface, 2 metres wide. At these prices the section measuring 2,200 metres between the Gloucestershire boundary and Kerne Bridge would cost £220,000. The section measuring 980 metres between Kerne bridge and Green Colley Grove would cost £98,000.

Another factor in the equation has to be the question of current land ownership. Some of the suggestions inevitably involve the use of some privately owned land. Any action plan would need to include a programme of sensitive and carefully planned dialogue with the aim of reaching, wherever possible, a mutually acceptable solution with landowners in return for

recognition of their generosity to the community. This dialogue may take some time to bear fruit but in the longer term the benefits would be well worth the effort.

*Mission Statement 1 Footways**

Walford Parish Council recognises the issue of footway provision on the B4234 as a high priority for the community, in terms of public health, environmental sustainability, safety and community cohesion. It will support any approved action plan designed to achieve the objectives described in Annex A. It will also seek the inclusion of continuous footway construction by or alongside the main B4234 through the Parish under supplementary planning guidance. The Parish Council will clarify its own position and responses on matters that evidently have the potential for aggravating the already difficult problems of walking throughout the Walford areas of the B4234

*

Issue for SPG	Page	Proposal	UDP
Footways		to have continuous footway by or alongside the main B4234 through the Parish	Ch.8

3.5.2 Road Signs and Speed Restrictions *

Annex C of this Plan (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes) on page 11, recorded 4 written comments at the public planning events about road signs and traffic speed.

Paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 on page 13 Annex C show the results of related questions at the public planning events. Members of the community, having been asked to attach green stars to a map to indicate if they considered that the number of road signs was inadequate, attached 14 stars.

They were also asked to place indicators on maps where they thought there was a need for speed restrictions on main roads. The result was 20 indicators.

Subsequently a mini project examined the outcomes in order to verify the results. The results of the mini project were as follows.

Road Signs by the Eastern End of Wyeside Park.

“SLOW” is painted on the westbound lane of the B4234 on the Gloucestershire side of Wyeside Park. The sign is needed because this is a fast stretch of road from Lydbrook. Because of a bend, vehicles moving to and from the garage cannot be seen by other drivers.

Two other signs close by, warning of a road junction and flooding, were not considered to be helpful for vehicles entering and exiting the garage site.

There were several references to the dangers, over this stretch of the B4234, in response to Q.5.4 of the questionnaire.

Road Signs by Bishopswood Leigh

There are already clear zigzag and SLOW signs in the road on both sides of the bend by Bishopswood Leigh.

Once again this stretch of the B4234 was the subject of several comments in response to Q5.4 of the questionnaire.

Speed Restrictions at the eastern end of Wyeside Park

There are obvious indications that the SLOW signs referred to in paragraphs above are not being observed. No vehicles reduced speed in recognition of these signs whilst observations were being taken.

Speed Restrictions by Bishopswood Leigh

There is evidence that people are disregarding the signs and driving too fast by the bend. A recent (February 2006) fatal accident near this point confirms that this is a dangerous stretch of road.

General Comments on Speed Restrictions and Road Signs in the Wyeside Park and Bishopswood Leigh areas.

It is difficult to exit the shop and garage because of the bend on the right. The observer noticed much hesitation and reversing at the exit because of the sudden appearance and approach of traffic from the right. The absence of a footway on the garage/shop side of the road aggravates the problem for pedestrians, particularly when attempting to use the nearby telephone kiosk.

Questions 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 (Annex B) addressed the issues of road signs and speed through the Parish generally. The great majority of people in the community considered that the provision of road signs was adequate, in terms of numbers. Only 9% felt that there are too few. Two thirds of respondents also felt that the speed limits set through the Parish were generally adequate. However, among 95% of respondents, there is a perception that drivers either exceed the limits (66%) or drive on the limits (29%).

Without a doubt most people believe that many drivers are ignoring the speed limits and that there is a problem of law enforcement over this stretch of the road.

Mission Statement 2

Walford Parish Council recognises that a potentially dangerous situation has arisen on the B4234 by Wyeside Park and Bishopswood Leigh. The Council will support any approved action plan to improve the situation by minimising the risk of accidents occurring in order to safeguard the health and welfare of the community.

Road Signs at the bottom of Leys Hill

The signs around this point comprise two 40 MPH limit signs at the approach to the B4234 from Leys Hill. There is also a sign on the B4234 pointing to CATS, a sign for Lumley's Hotel, a village hall sign on the southern side of the road, a 40 MPH sign on the southerly lane of the B4234, and two signs for the car park and village hall turning.

Although visible from the southerly direction, the sign to CATS is almost invisible from the Ross direction because of its height and obscuring vegetation.

There is evidence of drivers being confused by the village hall sign on the southern side of the road. Drivers are inclined to signal right immediately and attempt to turn into the space by the bus shelter, taking corrective action when they realise their mistake.

A number of comments about the safety of the B4234 around this spot were made in response to Q5.4 of the questionnaire. These chiefly related to speeding and ambiguities caused by the traffic signs.

Road Signs by the north western end of Kerne Bridge

The only signs at this point are chevrons indicating to drivers from the Goodrich direction that there is a sharp bend in the B4229. There are crash barriers on the left hand side as one approaches the bridge from Goodrich.

Speed Restrictions at the bottom of Leys Hill

From observations taken, there is ample evidence of drivers from the Lydrook direction ignoring the 40 MPH limit through the area.

From the questionnaire results it is clear that most people believe that many drivers are ignoring the speed limits and that there is a problem of law enforcement over this stretch of the B4234.

Speed Restrictions at the north western end of Kerne Bridge

This is a fast moving stretch of the B4229. However, the existing warning chevrons appear to be adequate and thus no further signs appear to be necessary.

General Comments on Speed Restrictions and Road Signs in the Kerne Bridge and Leys Hill Area

The area within 300 metres of Kerne Bridge is considered to be hazardous for motor traffic. The proliferation of road signs, about 40 of them, takes the driver's attention from the road. Some signs are obstructed by oncoming, high-sided vehicles travelling northwards, and others may actually impede the primary objective of achieving road safety. There is clear evidence that many drivers are ignoring the 40 MPH limit signs. Questions 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 (Annex B) addressed the issues of road signs and speed through the Parish generally. The great majority of people in the community considered that the provision of road signs was adequate, in terms of numbers. Only 9% felt that there were too few. Two thirds of respondents also felt that the speed limits set through the Parish were generally adequate. However, among 95% of respondents, there is a perception that drivers either exceed the limits (66%) or drive on the limits (29%).

There are no footways on either side of the road within this busy area. Consequently, walking along this stretch of road presents the most extreme risk for pedestrians. Indeed, for children, walking, cycling or horse riding is out of the question. The only safe way to travel on foot between the bottom of Leys Hill and Kerne Bridge is by using the section of designated public footpath by Bishopswood village hall. However, this path is unpaved and unlit and is not, in its present state, considered to be a suitable alternative, which adds additional weight to the argument (in paragraph 3.5.1) that the path should be upgraded to a public footway.

*Mission Statement 3 Road Signs**

Walford Parish Council recognises that a hazardous situation exists in an area within approximately 300 metres of Kerne Bridge and around the bottom of Leys Hill. The Council will support any approved action plan to take away any road signs considered to be unnecessary, and to improve the effectiveness of those that remain in order to minimise the risk of accidents occurring, and to safeguard the health and welfare of the community.

Road Signs on the B4234 by the Old Vicarage

On the northerly side of the B4234 in the vicinity of the Old Vicarage and Walford Primary school there is a SLOW sign and a SCHOOL sign. There are also SLOW markings on the

carriageway. In the opposite direction there is a SCHOOL sign by Norland Place and a SLOW sign on the carriageway. The whole stretch of B4234 around this area is designated as a 40 MPH zone.

General Comments on Road Signs on the B4234 by the Old Vicarage

The number of road signs on this stretch of the B4234 is considered to be adequate. However, observations have shown that drivers regularly ignore the current speed limits and there is widespread belief within the community that a lower speed limit of 30 MPH should be imposed in the vicinity of, and approach to, Walford Primary School. Indeed, judging by the sheer volume of comments made in answer to question 5.4 of the questionnaire, there is a general feeling that the traffic problems along this stretch of the road are presenting difficulties that are fast becoming intolerable for those, particularly children, having to move about within this area. Traffic is the biggest killer of under 15 year old children in this country⁸.

Mission Statement 4

The Walford Parish Council recognises that safety on the stretch of B4234 by, and on the approach to, Walford primary school, is causing great concern to many residents, especially parents of young children. The Parish Council will endeavour to press for measures to achieve higher safety standards and will support any approved action plan designed to achieve those improvements.

Speed Restrictions by the junction of B4234 and Whitings Lane.

This section of the B4234 is designated as a 40 MPH limit zone. There is a NO FOOTWAY sign on the southerly side of the B4234 between Green Colley Grove and Whitings Lane. On the northerly side there is a 40 MPH sign before Mill House.

General Comments on Speed Restrictions by the junction of B4234 and Whitings Lane.

Observations suggest that the signs along this stretch of road are adequate if drivers observe the rules. Opposite Whitings Lane the road narrows slightly and there is a rather awkward bend in the road where visibility is restricted. Periodically the trees adjacent to the carriageway need to be cut back in order to preserve the width, particularly for large vehicles.

Mission Statement 5

The Walford Parish Council recognises that the stretch of B4234 by the junction with Whitings Lane is a potential hazard and undertakes to closely monitor the situation.

Road Signs at the junction of the B4234 and C1275 at Coughton

Approaching Coughton from Ross, the signs comprise two for RIGHT HAND BEND and JUNCTION, a SLOW sign on the carriageway, a 40 MPH sign, and a COUGHTON hamlet sign. There is a direction sign to HOWLE HILL and HOPE MANSELL on the opposite side of the junction.

In the opposite direction, from Walford village, signs comprise a LEFT HAND BEND and RIGHT HAND JUNCTION, a 40 MPH limit sign, and a sign indicating COLEFORD and ROSS. There is another direction sign to HOWLE HILL and HOPE MANSELL on the opposite side of the junction.

⁸ RoSPA Child Accident Statistics UK 2000/1
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Approaching the junction from Hope Mansell on the C1275, there are two GIVE WAY signs and a 40 MPH sign on the left hand side.

General Comments on Road Signs at the junction of the B4234 and C1275 at Coughton.
 Observations suggest that the existing signs should be adequate. In fact the number of signs that exist in the vicinity of this junction is probably too many for drivers to comprehend. In this context, the sign ROAD LIABLE TO FLOODING, to the west of the junction, is considered to be largely superfluous.

Accidents have occurred at this point in the past but excessive speed has without doubt been the main contributory factor. The large number of comments made, in response to Q5.4 of the questionnaire, indicated substantial concern over a number of traffic related issues in and around Coughton. These include the speed and frequency of both heavy and light vehicles, the potential dangers to pedestrian seasonal farm workers, damage to the road surfaces, and mud caused by farm tractors. There is now some evidence also that drivers are using the C1275 on a regular basis as a by-pass around Ross on Wye to get towards the A40.

Mission Statement 6
The Walford Parish Council recognises that the stretch of B4234 by Coughton corner, and the C1275 through Coughton, show signs of becoming serious hazards and undertakes to closely monitor the situation with a view to minimising the potential for further aggravation.

Speed Restrictions by the Mill Race on the B4234

A 40MPH zone exists throughout the whole length of the B4234 from the southern end of Walford village to the north of Coughton junction. By the church of St Michaels and All Angels the speed restriction reduces to 25MPH.

There are two other signs adjacent to the southerly lane. These comprise a SLOW sign as the driver approaches the church, and a NO FOOTWAY sign between Green Colley Grove and Whitings Lane.

General Comments on Speed Restrictions by the Mill Race on the B4234

Comments on the questionnaire indicate that this stretch of road suffers the same problems as those over the rest of the B4234 through Walford. There is generally a perception that vehicles begin to speed up as they approach the end of the restricted zone and fail to slow down as they enter from the south. The removal of cat’s eyes has made the road more dangerous at night. Observations suggest that the speed restriction signs are clear. If drivers were to obey the signs there would be fewer problems.

Mission Statement 7
Walford Parish Council takes heed of the reports of excessive speed along the B4234 by the Mill Race public house. It will continue to encourage vigilance and will support any initiatives aimed at reducing speed over this stretch of road.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
Road signs		to remove any road signs considered to be unnecessary, and to improve the effectiveness of those that remain in order minimise the risk of accidents occurring, and to safeguard the health and welfare of the community	Ch.8

3.5.3 Noise Pollution

Under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, environmental health personnel are able to measure noise and, if found to be above a certain limit, can take action against the persons responsible.

Pages 3 and 4 of the Stage 1 report at Annex C (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes) highlighted the issue of noise as a problem for some members of the community. The results of the initial survey produced 4 comments on noise, 2 of which related to noise from jet aircraft. However, at the public planning events there were 4 written comments about noise from the Walford Timber Ltd site and 3 comments about noise from speeding vehicles.

With regard to traffic noise, observations confirm there is obviously some noise from the roads in the Parish. This is exacerbated by acceleration and excessive speed. It would appear that people living close to the B4234 are most likely to suffer and others may have noticed increased noise in certain spots, such as the top of Sharman's pitch where many drivers change down through gears.

Seven silver stars appeared on the map at the public planning event, to indicate a problem of traffic noise by Bishopswood Leigh. There do not appear to be any other specific areas where heavy lorries or other types of vehicular traffic present a major noise problem.

An estimate of the distances over which excessive traffic noise can be heard is 150 metres. Residents mostly affected are obviously those who live adjacent to the B4234. Whether or not noise is intrusive is very subjective. If it becomes evident that a serious problem exists, one logical approach would be to accept noise from vehicles using the road in a legal manner and try to address other causes, e.g. speeding. Another solution might be to press for an alternative road surface. Some types of modern road surfacing are quite unmistakably better than others as regards their noise suppressing characteristics.

It is estimated that noise from Walford Timber Ltd can be heard over a radial distance of 300 metres. Noise from this source affects mainly those living in Green Colley Grove, the Whittings Lane area, and those dwellings situated on the escarpment above the B4234 between Kerne Bridge and Walford village. With only 4 comments relating to this location, it is questionable as to whether the problem can be regarded as significant. Should it emerge in due course that a more significant problem does exist, the Parish Council might wish to follow up the matter of an appropriate solution with local management at the firm.

Question 2.7 of the questionnaire addressed the issue of general noise. Out of the 453 respondents to this question, opinions were generally divided as to whether noise was a problem. The biggest number of respondents indicated they were not concerned about noise. Out of the few comments on the subject, most related to traffic noise.

Mission Statement 8

Walford Parish Council recognises the concern about excessive noise in the Parish. It will continue to encourage vigilance, to investigate all reports of excessive noise in the future and seek ways of minimising disturbances from excessive noise.

3.5.4 Children's Playgrounds *

The initial Survey results shown on page 10 of the Stage 1 report, (Annex C) showed 70 spontaneous responses about the need for a children's playground and play areas. Additionally, there were 31 concerns expressed about the lack of leisure activities and sports facilities.

Paragraph 2.10 on page 16 of the Stage 1 report at Annex C (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes) dealt with children's playgrounds. At the open Planning events in June and August 2004 at the village halls, visitors were invited to indicate their preferences for a play area for children by attaching a red star to a large map at the point where they would like to see a playground. A number of sites were suggested but the most frequently stated site was in a field adjacent to and north of St Michael and All Angels Church. Other frequently mentioned locations included an area attached to the primary school at its southern end, an area north of the Robert Pashley Memorial Hall, and an area by the northern end of Bishopswood village hall.

Subsequently a volunteer, with the aim of exploring the suggested options, undertook a mini project. The findings are shown in the table below with a full list of suggested sites.

"Potential suitability" is defined as merely a suitable site from a practical point of view. Needless to say that the goodwill and social magnanimity of the land owner would need to be fully explored before any land could be committed to the use of the children and young people of the community.

TABLE 1 POTENTIAL PLAYGROUND LOCATIONS

No	Grid reference SO	Location	Potentially suitable ?
1	5827,2250	Hom Green	Yes
2	5791,2212	in a field opposite Hom Lodge on the western side of the road C1274	Yes
3	5938,2118	in a field to the south of, and adjacent to, Priory Lea estate	Yes
4	5945,2115	in a field between Norrland Place and Fowbridge gardens	Yes
5	5910,2085	in a field opposite Old Vicarage on the north-western side of the B4234	No
6	5930,2085	in an area attached to the primary school at its southern end	Yes
7	5867,2050	in a field adjacent to and north of St. Michael and All Angels church.	Yes
8	5880, 2025	in an area north of the Robert Pashley Memorial hall (Walford village hall).	Yes
9	5881,2040	in a field by Brook Farm	Yes
10	5871,2015	behind the Mill Race public house	No longer possible
11	5881, 2005	to the east of Green Colley Close	No access obvious
12	5801,1890	by Bishopswood village hall	Yes
13	5960,1835	at the eastern end, and adjacent to, Wyeside caravan park.	Yes

During the mini project several other questions were considered. The first of these was, "Are there any other places that would be suitable as playground sites?" The conclusion was that

there are many sites in the Parish that have potential for suitability. However, those listed in the table above have the advantage of being fairly central to the more populous areas.

The second question was, “Would the choice of any of these sites be likely to cause disturbance to, or complaints from neighbouring property owners or residents?”

The view was that, those locations numbered 4, 5, 10 and 13 might give rise to some concerns from the neighbours. Residents of Green Colley Close may have difficulty with suggestion 11. The actual levels of disturbance are difficult to assess. Of course, sensible use is unlikely to give rise to any problems but some less disciplined sectors of the community might!

The third question was, “Would the choice of any of these sites require major changes to the layout of the land, or buildings or necessitate fencing etc.?” Many of the areas would need significant work to give sufficient access. Those with least problems seem to be 4, 6, 7, 8 and 12, although 4 would not have any obvious parking amenities to enable those parishioners who are not within walking distance to make use of the facilities. It would also be worth noting that a good playground, well sited, could also be an attraction to those tourists visiting the area. Hence 13 has a distinct advantage in that respect

The final question was, “Can you give an estimate of the level of demand there is for a children’s playground?” The view was that judging from experience, the locality, and from other local playgrounds, a maximum of 10 people at anyone time would use it, with a fairly constant use dependent on weather.

The questionnaire addressed the wider issues of not only a young children’s playground, but also that of a small open play area and an open space facility with a garden and benches. Of the respondents to the questions in 8.1, those who felt these issues were either important or very important, were 73%, 73% and 60% respectively for a formal playground, an open play area and an open space facility.

The comments made to Q8.1 were mixed on these issues. Many people obviously feel there is a need for such an open play area but there is an absence of consensus over the form it should take, the age group for whom it should cater, or its overall purpose. Coupled closely with these uncertainties are factors such as traffic volumes, speed along the B4234, narrow and in places totally absent footways on the B4234, the distances along an area of ribbon development, and a suitable location. All these are aspects that weigh against community cohesion in Walford. For growing children who need fresh air and exercise, freedom and independence from close supervision, safety, and the ability to mix freely with children of their own age, the situation is particularly worrying.

It goes without saying that the Parish and County Councils can only do so much towards resolving this problem. The initiative for researching all possibilities, for examining opportunities and for negotiating with those who hold the keys, has to come from members of the local community. The disparate nature of the Parish points to a requirement for more than one site or a good network of alternative cycleways and footpaths to one site.

*Mission Statement 9 Children’s Playground**

Walford Parish Council recognises the urgent need for a Parish play area for children, and for an open leisure and sports ground facility. The Parish Council will continue to actively support and encourage those members of the community who wish to pursue all possibilities locally with both landowners, and with the Parks Countryside and Leisure Development Service of Herefordshire Council.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Children's Playground</i>		<i>to pursue all possibilities locally for the provision of playgrounds with both landowners, and with the Parks Countryside and Leisure Development Service of Herefordshire Council</i>	<i>Ch.10</i>

3.5.5 Footpaths and Bridleways*

On page 10, para. 2 of the Stage1 report at Annex C, (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes), there were 29 unsolicited statements relating to public footpaths. Visitors to the public planning events were asked to mark a map with a series of black dashes where they would like to see bridleways, and to draw blue lines on a map where they would like to see additional public footpaths.

Following on these suggestions a mini project was undertaken to assess the practicability for both new bridleways and additional footpaths. The full results, with maps and more precise grid references, are shown in Annex D.

In summary, bridleways were suggested as follows.

1. Along the riverside from the Parish boundary in the south to the Ross boundary in the north.
2. Around Bishopswood Grange, following a figure eight.
3. Following footpaths WA32 and WA30 from Sharman's pitch to Rock Leys.

Footpaths were suggested at the following locations.

1. At Forest green by Doctor's Place.
2. By Mark's Well, joining the footpath WA74 with footpath WA70 at the southern side of Mark's Well cottage.
3. From Beggars Roost on Bulls Hill to footpath WA70
4. A link between WA70 and WA75 behind Roger's Well.
5. A link between WA95 from Suff Lodge and the track to Vine Tree Cottage from the direction of the Dam.
6. A link between footpath WA95, westwards to the road U70417 by Bishopswood House.
7. From Bishopswood church graveyard, southeast to The Robins.
8. A link from footpath WA93 by Dunderhole Farm to footpath WA90 by Chadwyns Farm at Forest Green.
9. A link from footpath WA91 by Chadwyns Farm to Pear Tree House at Forest Green.
10. From the B4234 by Wyeside Park to the river embankment and footpath WA104.
11. A link from the south side of Wyeside Park to the river embankment and footpath WA104.
12. A public footpath from the Gloucester boundary, along the north bank of the river Wye, throughout its whole length, to Ross on Wye.
13. A link from the old railway track by Walford Sawmill to the B4234 by Whitings Lane.
14. From the bottom of Whitings Lane to meet the footpath WA45A north of Leys Hill Farm.
15. From the proposed path in 14 above to join with footpath WA39.
16. A link from a point on the B4234 opposite Kerne Bridge to the footpath WA40.
17. A link between footpaths WA29A, between Brook Farm and Daycroft, and WA28.

18. A link from footpath WA1 by Cubberley Lodge to the lane designated C1274 by Ayles Marsh.
19. From Goodrich village to the lane designated C1274 by Warryfield Farm.

Obviously, the proposed routes suggested in 1 to 19 above may cause a good deal of alarm and opposition in some quarters, especially from those householders and landowners affected. For this reason any action plan will need to be designed in such a way as to include a programme of sensitive and carefully planned dialogue with the aim of reaching, wherever possible, a mutually acceptable solution with landowners in return for the recognition of their generosity to the community. This dialogue may take some time to bear fruit but in the longer term the benefits would be well worth the effort.

Questions 3.1, 3.2, 3.4 , 3.5 and 3.7 of the questionnaire dealt with these issues. Nearly 90% of respondents felt that to have a network of public footpaths was either important or very important. Over 80% of respondents indicated that they often used these public footpaths. Approximately 50% said they used them very often.

The response to the question on the importance of bridleways was not quite so unequivocal. Nevertheless 67% of respondents felt they were either important or very important. The fact that 83% of respondents replied that they never ride on horseback raises a question mark over the possible contradictions between these two responses. With only 8% of respondents saying that they ride either very often or sometimes, more research is obviously required. There is evidence that there is a wider desire for bridleways in the community and perhaps opportunities for tourism.

*Mission Statement 10 Footpaths & Bridleways**
Walford Parish Council recognises the issue of extending the footpath and bridleways network as a priority for the community, in terms of health, recreation, environmental sustainability, safety and cohesion. It will support any approved action plan designed to achieve the objectives described in paragraphs 3.5.5 above.

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Issue for SPG	Page	Proposal	UDP
<i>Footpaths & Bridleways</i>		<i>To extend the footpath and bridleways network.</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>

3.5.6 Cycle-ways *

Visitors to the two open planning events were informed that there is currently no known existing dedicated cycle-way in the Parish. People were asked to mark on Map 3 with a green marker pen, where they would like to see cycle-ways. They were also invited to review and comment on the National Cycleway/SUSTRANS plans for the area and asked to tick the box on a chart if they would like to see these plans come to fruition. There were subsequently 17 ticks in the box on the chart.

Detailed responses are shown in the Stage 1 report at Annex C (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes) on pages 10 to 14, paras 2.1 to 2.7.

As a result of the responses at the open planning events a mini project was undertaken to research the subject in greater depth. The first subject to be examined was the role of Sustrans.

Sustrans

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. It sponsors the National Cycle Network and nearly half of the UK's population live within a mile of it. According to the Sustrans Information Booklet 2005, over 33% of children would like to cycle to school, yet only 2% do so.

The network carries over 201 million journeys each year, taking children to school, workers to work, dogs on walks, shoppers to shops as well as assisting the Royal Mail to deliver the post. In the past decade, in partnership with other organisations, the first 10,000 miles has been completed.

Sustrans has an Active Travel team, whose function is to persuade government to promote walking and cycling as a way of combating obesity, heart disease and cancer. The organisation is also responsible for Safe Routes to Schools and Bike it – schemes working with young people and schools to make cycling and walking to school both safe and fun. Sustrans are also building hundreds of Links to Schools from the National Cycle Network.

Sustrans conducted a detailed feasibility study in 2001 for a cycleway along the Wye Valley. The AONB Joint Advisory Committee did not support it. They decided that they would not support a cycle route along the length of the Wye Valley but would instead encourage local initiatives for community links. The relevant section of the study has been supplied to the Parish Plan Steering Group. Despite the AONB's lack of support it was evident from the views expressed at the two Planning for Real (PFR) events held in 2004 by the Walford Parish Plan Steering Group that support was strong for the scheme and the many potential offshoots it could spawn. This support is confirmed by the responses to the subsequent questionnaire.

Cycling and School

Safe Routes to Schools schemes are strictly 'rationed' between the 100+ schools in the county. Due to lack of enthusiasm and local support, mainly at an official level, Walford Primary School is not in the current scheme, nor the next tranche.

Other Cycle Route Initiatives and Neighbouring Schemes

LEADER+

LEADER+ is a European funded grant that is available in Herefordshire, along rivers. The Wye, Arrow, Lugg and Frome are eligible. Through Herefordshire Council, the Parish can bid for anything that benefits the community but must demonstrate that the community has been involved and is behind the proposal. A Parish Plan is an ideal method of proving community involvement. Herefordshire Council are trying to obtain funding for cycle-ways and footpaths that will eventually link up Monmouth to Ross and beyond. There is also a Herefordshire Council aspiration to achieve a cycle-way link between Rotherwas and Holme Lacey, a review of the possibility of cycle routes from Hereford to Tarrington and Hereford to Hay. Herefordshire Council are keen to discover the level of enthusiasm in the parishes for these projects.

LEADER+ has to show some of the following:

- Environmental benefits
- Cultural benefits
- People participating in local cultural and recreational events or festivals
- Countryside management activities
- Land demonstrating improved environmental management
- Environmental enhancements on historic and cultural features

Neighbouring Schemes

Planning permission has been granted for the Monmouth to Symonds Yat section of the National Cycle Route and it is known that a neighbouring parish, Whitchurch, is keen to maintain the impetus and continue the cycleway. It should be noted that the Monmouth to Symonds Yat section of the National Cycle Route has its objectors⁹, with much of the unease concerned with parking problems.

Questions and Answers regarding the suggestions for cycleways resulting from the Planning for Real (PFR) process.

1. Which houses may be affected by the suggestions on new cycle routes?

Answer. Details of proposed routes with grid references are given in paragraph 2.7 on pages 13 and 14 of the Stage 1 report at Annex C (Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes).

2. How will the residents be affected?

Answer. Undoubtedly such a proposal is likely to have an impact on some residents. The implementation of any scheme to provide cycle-ways will have to be managed very carefully and sensitively to take account of all the relevant factors and opinions, so as to minimise any adverse consequences.

3. Do any of the cycle routes, or parts of them, pass over private land?

A. All the suggested cycle routes use private land for the most part. Sustrans has already consulted owners of the dis-used railway land as part of its own planning process.

4. Do any of the suggested cycle routes follow disused tracks or former cycle routes?

A. No track that forms part of a suggested route is disused. There are no designated cycle routes in the Parish.

5. Do any of the suggested cycle routes, or parts of them, follow currently used bridleways even though these are not regarded as defined cycle-routes or bridleways?

A. Early investigations suggest the routes do not follow currently used bridleways.

6. In your opinion, would the creation of a new cycle route pose a danger to children from road traffic?

A. The aim of any cycle route would be to create the opposite effect. It would provide a safer alternative than using highways open to motor vehicles. Any crossing points would need to be suitably designed and signed.

7. Have you spoken to any of the residents likely to be affected by the suggested routes?

A. The implications of such a proposal have already been discussed with several residents. Paragraph 2 above refers. Further consultation is anticipated.

⁹ Monmouthshire Beacon: “Mixed feelings as cycleway gets the go-ahead” dated Thurs 14th July 05
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8. Which agencies need to be consulted over the provision of new cycle routes?

A. Some of the agencies involved are Sustrans, Herefordshire Highways department and other relevant departments, and the AONB Office. Relevant landowners, County Councillors and our MP would also be expected to provide an input.

9. Give an estimated timescale for completion.

A. The provision of a cycle route through the Walford Parish would be a long-term project lasting many years.

Cycling and cycle-ways were addressed also by the questionnaire (Annex A). Questions 3.3 and 3.6 asked how important it is to have a network of dedicated cycle-ways, and how often people cycled within the Parish.

Nearly 60% of respondents felt it was either very important, or important, to have a cycle-ways network. However, 70% of respondents said they rarely or never cycled within the Parish. It is worth noting that the responses from children under 16 years of age showed that, once again, 60% felt it was important to have dedicated cycle-ways, but 60% of them cycled often or very often. Without a doubt the responses, in this case, might have been skewed by the age profile. According to statistics published by Herefordshire Council approximately 70% of the population of Walford is older than 30 years of age, and 25% are over 60 years old.

Comments against the questions refer to preferences for a combined cycle-way/footpath, cycle-ways by the B4234 or along the old railway track, and the reluctance of some to risk riding on the main roads.

Comments on Cycle-ways

The Parish Plan consultation process has indicated that there is substantial support for the concept from within the Parish.

The problems of mobility and safe passage through the Parish, particularly on the B4234 through Walford village have already been highlighted in this Plan. There can be little doubt that the provision of a well planned cycle-way would help to alleviate problems caused by busy traffic and speeding vehicles. Children in particular would benefit from having greater freedom and opportunities for physical exercise. Some might say that enthusiasm for cycling does not exist because not many people in the parish use bicycles. The real reason, as suggested by the questionnaire results, might be more a function of the roads being too dangerous, combined with a lack of dedicated cycle-ways, rather than any lack of the desire to cycle.

A cycle-way spine through the length of the Parish would also provide an attractive addition to the infrastructure and help enhance community cohesion. As a tourist attraction it would exploit the natural beauty of the area, be an additional source of potential revenue and supply a stimulant for new services.

For those in the community who have understandable concerns about such a scheme it is essential that, from the outset, planning must be conducted sensitively and inclusively. With the proper processes in place to ensure openness and transparency there should be plenty of scope for reaching a satisfactory outcome. The feasibility of such an ambitious and socially attractive scheme deserves to be followed up.

*Mission Statement 11 Cycle-ways**

Walford Parish Council recognizes the value of a cycleway, or network of cycle-ways, through the Parish, in terms of its potential to contribute to community health, recreation, cohesion, communication and safety. Furthermore the Council attaches importance to the opportunities that a cycleway network will bring to the Parish by making the area more attractive to tourism, with the potential for financial benefits for the local economy. The Parish Council will support any approved action plan for the creation of such cycle-ways.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Cycleway</i>		<i>To establish a Parish cycleway network</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>

3.5.7 Affordable Housing

In the initial survey the results showed a small number of spontaneous responses addressing the need for low cost housing. This issue was subsequently followed up at the open planning events in June and August of 2004. At the open planning event people were invited to make comments on a number of housing issues. Forty seven per cent (47%) of people raised the matter of the need for affordable homes for young people.

The situation concerning affordable housing in Herefordshire is serious. It has been estimated that, over the next 5 years, the County will need between 2,800 and 5,300 new affordable homes to meet local needs.

The situation is exacerbated because average house prices in the County are high compared with the national average. In the period April to June 2004, the Land Registry recorded that the average price of a property in Herefordshire was £187,542. Over the same period, the average property price for England and Wales was £175,774. This represented an annual percentage rise in house prices to the end of June 2004 in Herefordshire of 23%, compared to 17.5% for England and Wales. Set against this, the median average gross annual earnings for Herefordshire during 2004 was only £18,521, compared with £22,187 for England and Wales. Based on these figures, a single earner household in Herefordshire can only afford to buy a dwelling of £68,235. A dual earner household (first time buyer) could afford to buy a dwelling of £73,110, and a dual earner household (moving up to a 3 bed house) could afford to buy a dwelling of £77,170.

The County Council says that it wishes to do all that it can to ensure that there is a proper supply of affordable housing and has introduced supplementary planning guidance and planning policies to assist it.

The County Council has made providing affordable and accessible accommodation a key aim in its current 3 year corporate plan. It has made provision in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP - see the revised Deposit Draft made 2004) for affordable housing to be provided on all residential development above a certain threshold. Additionally, the County Council will consider exceptional sites for affordable housing and a number have been identified in the Plan.

The County Council's preferred route for ensuring that successive as well as initial occupiers will enjoy the benefits of affordable housing is by the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord. There are a number of housing associations active in the county who provide this type of housing. Their continuing interest in a property will ensure control over subsequent changes of occupation. For this reason, the County Council does seek the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord in the provision of any element of affordable housing, except where the housing is low cost market or discounted low cost for sale. In these cases, they do include occupancy criteria as part of the conditions or planning obligations that govern that permission. These tend to give priority to local people.

There are a number of useful documents produced by the Council which deal with this issue. These are as follows. Most of these are also on the County Council website.

- Herefordshire Draft Housing Strategy 2005/08
- Executive Summary of the Herefordshire Housing Needs Summary 2005 (Draft)
- Provision of Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2001, Updated November 2004
- Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan Revised Deposit Draft May 2004
- Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008

The Walford Parish Plan questionnaire dealt directly with the issue of affordable housing in question 6.2. The question asked, "What kind of accommodation/housing do you think is now needed in the Parish?" Of the respondents, 41% said that affordable homes for young people were needed. Of the remainder 30% said none of these (the presented options) were needed. 13% wanted small family homes.

Also relevant to this issue is the response to question 6.7. This asked, "Is any individual in your home in need of alternative accommodation within the Parish?" 94% answered with a "no". This suggests that housing need is not currently perceived as a problem in the Walford Parish

In the many comments (111 of them) attached to question 6.2 (Annex B), opinions were divided. A lot of people gave the view that there is already sufficient and adequate housing in the Parish, and eschewed any further developments. Others stated a preference for other kinds of housing, including "council houses". It is clear from opinions expressed in these comment that there is a general feeling that the prices of houses on the open market are beyond the resources of some who would like to live in the Parish. However, there is far from common agreement as to how this problem should be remedied.

3.5.8 Housing in General *

Several questions (Annex B) addressed the wider issue of housing and development in the Parish. Three quarters of all respondents felt that the issue of housing and other building development in the Parish was important to them.

The responses to question 6.3 showed the great majority (94%) to be against permitting more large-scale (more than 20 houses) developments in the Parish. Having said this, three quarters of all the respondents indicated that small developments (less than 20 houses) of new homes at affordable prices for local people in the Parish should be permitted. As to the location of these small developments, 75% of respondents preferred to see them located in Walford village. This is perhaps more sensible considering the location of Coughton (UDP H4 refers)

and the absence of any facilities there which match UDP criteria 5.4.39.

It is worth noting that, out of the 310 people who responded to this question, only a quarter were prepared to have the small developments near to their own property.

- **One issue that 93% of the community was agreed upon was the principle of retaining a green belt on the land between Ross on Wye and Coughton. This view applied particularly to the land adjacent to the B4234 between the boundary of Ross by the Vine Tree pub, where the latest “Vineyard” development is currently taking place, and Coughton corner.**

Mission Statement 12

Walford Parish Council will support every effort to retain the green belt between the Ross on Wye boundary and Coughton village in order to preserve the unique identity of Walford and its surrounding settlements. The Council questions the suitability of Coughton as a “settlement” in view of its location and the absence of facilities matching the UDP criteria.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Housing</i>		<i>To restrict future development size to fewer than 20 houses.</i>	<i>Ch.5 Para.5.4.39 & 5.4.41</i>
<i>Green belt</i>		<i>To retain the green belt between Ross boundary at the Vine Tree and Coughton</i>	<i>Ch.5.4.25</i>

3.5.9 Planning Issues

It was evident from the open planning events in June and August 2004 that there was a certain amount of underlying dissatisfaction with planning matters. On such an emotive issue this is to be expected but it was nevertheless decided to address it in the Parish Plan questionnaire.

In answer to Q7.1, 43% of respondents said that they had contacted Herefordshire County Planning Authority within the past two years or so. Of these, 58% said they were satisfied with the service they received and 29% said the opposite. The proportion that declined to give a view was 12%. One may conclude therefore that the parishioners of Walford are not particularly unhappy with the way the planning authority deals with them.

3.5.10 Village Shape and Housing Design *

On the question of the shape and quality of design of recent developments in Walford village, two thirds of respondents said they were satisfied. The many comments on these two topics were nevertheless varied. One theme that came through quite strongly was dissatisfaction with the fact that Walford village itself is too linear. Comments such as “sprawling”, “needs a heart”, “a thin long strip”, “fragmented”, seem to sum up the feelings of many. There cannot be any doubt that the linear way Walford has developed is now presenting serious problems for the community, not least of these being those associated with communication, mobility, safety and community cohesion.

In terms of design of houses, comments indicate that the design of new houses leaves a lot to be desired. There was much criticism of the use of red brick. As one respondent put it, “does

not sit well with the rural environment”. Words like “unsympathetic”, “out of character”, “garish”, and “unimaginative – cheap and cheerful”, litter the comments that people made.

Although many people indicated general satisfaction with these issues, there is undoubtedly concern in many quarters over a number of specific matters relating to the shape of Walford and the design of its houses. Walford sits in one of the most beautiful parts of the AONB and there is, without doubt, a great deal more potential for further exploiting this location with regard to tourism. The benefits will be felt by the community through increased business opportunities, more local employment and less dependence on commuting to work and a more congenial environment in which to live. Unless the issues of overall shape and design are properly addressed soon, Walford and Coughton villages will continue to grow as a ribbon of development along the B4234, worsening those problems already identified.

Mission Statement 13
Walford Parish Council is mindful of the tremendous economic potential deriving from its position in the Wye Valley AONB. In order to further exploit that potential, and to enhance the attractiveness and ambience of both Coughton and Walford, the Parish Council will seek every opportunity to encourage sympathetic improvements to the design of property and shape of the village

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Village shape and design</i>		<i>To encourage improvements to the design of property and shape of the village</i>	<i>Ch.3</i>

3.5.11 Implementation of Planning Policy *

Because of the perceived underlying dissatisfaction with planning matters a further two questions were included in the questionnaire. Q7.3 asked, “Are you generally satisfied with the County’s planning policies as laid down by the Herefordshire Local Plan?” Q.7.4 asked, “Are you generally satisfied with the way planning rules are implemented?”

Answers to both these questions indicated that respondents were largely less than satisfied. The high numbers responding “no opinion” is, perhaps, indicative of the low level of understanding of these topics.

The comments against Q.7.3 indicated a high level of concern over planning policy in relation to the use of polytunnels. Reference was made on more than one occasion to the recent decision to allow caravans on a farm in the Parish to house migrant workers in the long term.

On implementation of planning policy, 44% of respondents were not satisfied and 29% had no opinion. Clearly, from the comments supplied, many people feel that inconsistency of implementation is perceived as a particular problem. Some feel that influence has weight and others that farmers are given unfair concessions. The list of comments is peppered with words such as, “vested interests”, “who you know”, and “unfairness”.

Mission Statement 14

Walford Parish Council will endeavour to convey a consistent and even handed approach to all planning matters that come before them. At the same time the Council will undertake to convey the community's requirements, in relation to planning matters, upwards to the Planning Authority particularly during the consultation phases of the County Plan (currently the UDP).

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Implementation of Planning Policy</i>		<i>To provide more information at local level on the basis for decisions by the Planning Authority</i>	

3.5.12 Litter

It was quite evident, as a result of the spontaneous responses to the initial survey, that there is a clear need for more litter receptacles in the Parish. To some extent it became clearer later during the open planning event, why people felt concerned about this issue and there were many written comments about litter and tipping.

It is evident also that the collection and clearance of litter, particularly by Bishopswood village hall, does not measure up to the standards required. Members of the community report that street litter bins at bus-stops etc., are not emptied often enough. It is considered that emptying once each week for a small bin is not enough and, as they are often missed, the problem becomes worse. Obviously, bigger bins may be needed or bins should be emptied more often. At the Bishopswood / Kerne bridge picnic sites tipping occurs as a matter of course.

One of the less agreeable and unnecessary manifestations along many of our country lanes is the presence of litter, often in the form of empty beer cans or fast food containers and wrappers. These items can frequently be seen littering the hedge rows and ditches. In today's modern society litter of this kind is a common problem. Until people take upon themselves the individual responsibility for taking their litter home it will be an ever-present challenge.

Another common problem universally evident within the Parish is the dumping of old vehicles. One does not have to travel very far on any of the many delightful footpaths in the Parish, before one sees the remnants of old cars, trailers, caravans, or farm machinery. Some of these vehicles have littered our countryside for several years and there is no doubt that they will continue to pollute the countryside for many more, unless landowners take the necessary steps to remove them. Once again, the Parish Council could adopt measures to identify the offending sites and encourage landowners, perhaps with the involvement of Herefordshire Council, to remove the eyesores.

Question 2.7 of the questionnaire dealt with the problem of litter. In answer to the question, "How concerned are you about the following issues in the Parish?" 80% of respondents replied that they were either concerned or very concerned about the problem. Of all the topics listed, including flooding, noise, agricultural sprays, polytunnels and light pollution, the level of concern with litter was the greatest!

There is much that can be done locally to minimise unsightly litter. The problem of litter and its solution is very much within the scope of the local community. With leadership, the Parish Council could institute a survey to determine the main locations of litter pollution. It could organise litter collection parties to assemble and undertake litter clearing exercises in particular localities. It takes only a few people, on a regular basis to attend to a short length of roadway, equipped with rubber gloves and a plastic bag, and within an hour, the problem of litter is eliminated for several weeks. The Parish Council might also use the occasion for a barbeque or other social occasion to highlight the success of these accomplishments.

The disposal of household waste and casual litter is plainly an important issue within the community, particularly at sites where people tend to congregate. The presence of litter, in whatever form, does not sit comfortably with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. If the Parish is to establish itself as an attractive tourist location, and achieve the benefits resulting from that status in terms of employment and consequential revenue, it must be locally proactive in seeking a permanent solution to the problem of litter.

Mission Statement 15

Walford Parish Council recognises the adverse effect that unsightly litter has on the local environment, particularly by detracting from the natural beauty of the area, by reducing the potential of the Parish as an attractive tourist location, and by limiting the scale of potential revenue that could flow into the area. The Parish Council undertakes to be more locally proactive in its search for a permanent solution to the problem of litter, whatever form it takes.

3.5.13 Recycling Points

The initial survey results highlighted 17 spontaneous responses about the need for recycling points. The subsequent planning events invited comments on recycling.

On the subject of recycling points, at the open planning events the question was posed, "Would you like a recycling point (or points) within the Parish?" People were then asked to indicate the location on a large map in the centre of the room. Yellow stars were attached to the map at the places where recycling points were thought to be needed. Three sites were considered appropriate for the location of recycling points. These were;

1. At Kerne Bridge by Bishopswood village hall,
2. In an area adjacent to the Robert Pashley Memorial Hall (Walford Village Hall),
3. Off Sharman's pitch (U 70416) at its junction with U 70415.

A mini-project was carried out and its first consideration was space for containers and for cars to load and unload. It was considered that there was plenty of room for cars and lorries to do a circuit at location 1.

The same conclusion was reached regarding location 2. At location 3 some additional work and landscaping would be needed before the site was acceptable.

On the question of safety, particularly children's safety, it was concluded that location 1 was the safest option of the three. The reason given for this was that although the main road was busy, the drive in and out facilities were adequate. At location 2 the conclusion was that more children were around but there was a clearer line of sight along the road from the exit and

entrance. Regarding location 3, which is a rural location with narrow roads and lanes with high hedges, there might be a risk to safety.

On the question of access by lorries to the site, location 1 was considered to be acceptable. Similarly location 2 was also considered to be acceptable. Location 3 was considered not be adequate at the moment.

The mini project then considered the ownership of the sites proposed. Location 1, Bishopswood village hall, is thought to be owned by Herefordshire Council. Location 2, Walford village hall is also thought to be owned by Herefordshire Council. The third location at the top of Sharman's pitch is owned by a local farmer.

The next consideration was how many houses are situated within one hundred metres of the site. All of the locations were in close proximity to adjacent houses ranging from 9, by Sharman's Pitch to 20 on the eastern side of the B4234 near Bishopswood village hall. To the question of whether the suggested site could be seen easily by passing motorists, site 1 and site 2 were answered in the affirmative. Site 3 was considered incapable of being seen clearly by passing motorists.

An attempt was made to solicit comments and opinions from people close to the locations. At location 1 it was concluded that opposition to the position was unlikely. At location 2, mothers at play group thought it was a good place for a recycling point. No comments were available on location 3.

The presence of other facilities near the suggested site was considered. Facilities close to location 1 are the village hall, public footpaths, a pub, a guesthouse, a canoe launch point, a picnic area, and Wye Pursuits. Facilities close to location 2 are a village hall, public footpaths, and a pub. Location 3 was near a public footpath and a bridleway.

It was discovered that there are no minimum requirements for recycling points and common sense often dictates. Signs pointing to recycling points are not generally required but can be provided by the highways authority.

The questionnaire (Annex B) addressed the subject of re-cycling in question 2.8. The question asked how important it is to have re-cycling points at various places within the Parish. Ninety eight percent of all the respondents answered this question and 85% of these regarded the matter as being either important or very important. Nevertheless, some of the comments associated with this question raised some interesting points, which suggested that there are reservations in some quarters about the locations of recycling points, and the need to duplicate facilities that already exist in Ross on Wye. Chief among these concerns was the attraction of litter, the position, and the added traffic associated with such sites.

Plainly, if there are to be re-cycling facilities at various positions within the community, a good deal more thought will have to be exercised on the subject. Ross on Wye is home to an excellently managed re-cycling centre. The questions that now need to be examined are those relating to such matters as location, traffic, nuisance to nearby householders, convenience for those without vehicles, size of the facility and its appropriateness to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. An action group may wish to consider other options, such as specific re-cycling collections by the County Council.

Mission Statement 16

Walford Parish Council recognises the desire for broadening the options for re-cycling within in the Parish. The Council will support any approved action plan to provide appropriate re-cycling facilities.

3.5.14 Public Transport *

Over the past several years the demand for an improved public transport system to serve the community of Walford Parish has been fairly vocal. In particular, the demographic characteristics of the Parish have highlighted the absence of suitable public transport for certain groups within the population. Concern about the lack of public transport was raised in the initial survey and subsequently at the open planning events at the two village halls (see Stage 1 report at Annex C, Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes on page 17, para 3. and 3.1)

In order to research the subject in more detail a mini project was carried out to examine the current availability of public transport and the apparent use being made of it.

Walford Parish is not served by rail transport. Indeed the nearest rail terminal is at Ledbury, about 10 miles to the north. Gloucester and Hereford to the north also provide rail facilities.

Walford is reliant on bus services and taxis as its only means of public transport. At present two bus companies provide a service along the route from Kerne Bridge to Ross on Wye using the B4234, passing through Walford village and Coughton. Other destinations are served along parts of the B4234 through the Parish, via Coughton and Howle Hill, and via Bishopswood. On all routes waiting passengers are able to flag down the driver at stopping places. In rural areas drivers will generally stop on request if it is safe to do so.

Bus companies that supply services include Dukes Travel, Stagecoach in Wye and Dean, H&H Coaches and K.W.Beard. Routes that cover the Parish are numbers 30, 34, 35, 50, 51, and 745.

Concessionary travel is available to certain groups through the Herefordshire Council Concessionary Bus pass. To qualify, these people must be permanent residents in Herefordshire. Characteristics of the various routes are summarised in the following tables.

TABLE 2

ROUTE No.	LOCATIONS SERVED	COMPANY
30	Ross, Coughton, Sharmans, Howle Hill, Kiln Green, Forest Green (Ruardean, Lydbrook & Coleford).	Dukes Travel
34	Ross, Archenfield, Palmerston Road, Tudorville, Coughton, Walford, Kerne Bridge (Goodrich& Monmouth)	Stagecoach
35	Ross, Archenfield, Palmerston Road, Tudorville, Coughton, Walford, Kerne Bridge, Bishopswood (Ruardean, Lydbrook & Coleford)	Dukes Travel
745	Ross, Archenfield, Palmerston Road, Tudorville, Coughton, Sharmans, Howle Hill, (Ruardean, Lydbrook & Coleford).	Dukes Travel
50	Kerne Bridge (Cinderford to/from Hereford)	K.W. Beard
51	Kerne Bridge (Hereford to/from Coleford)	K.W. Beard

TABLE 3

ROUTE No.	FIRST BUS OUT	LAST BUS RETURN	FREQUENCY	COMPANY
30	09:00 Thurs. (from Coleford)	12:25 Thurs. (From Ross)	One service per week	Dukes Travel
34	07:05 (from Ross)	18:43 (at Kerne Bridge for Ross)	Generally every 2 hours. First bus on Sat. at 09:35	Stagecoach
35	10:22 (Ross)	13:50 (at Kerne Bridge for Ross)	4 buses each day. Generally 2 hours between each. Buses run till about 6pm on Saturdays.	Dukes Travel
745	12:22 from Ross	09:50 (at Howle Hill for Ross)	This is a Saturday only service that runs once in either direction.	Dukes Travel
50	09:37 for Hereford	15:27 for Coleford	2 services per month on 2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays	K.W.Beard
51	09:37 for Hereford	15:27 for Coleford	2 services per month on 2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays	K.W.Beard

These tables do not provide precise details and should not be relied upon for travelling. The latest official timetable should be referred to for a full listing with times.

As can be seen from the tables above, there is no way in which the services through the Parish could be described as comprehensive.

The questionnaire dealt with the issue of public transport in questions 10.1 to 10.6. The results showed that 87% of the respondents rarely or never use a bus service. Only 5% indicated that they use a bus service very often. Most of the respondents (46%) would only want to travel to and from Ross on Wye.

A rather surprising and disappointing outcome was that, given a frequent, punctual, comfortable and reasonably priced public transport service, along the main road through the Parish, the majority of people expressed doubt about whether they would use it. Even if the bus service were to pass along all the substantial lanes and roads nearby, the figures remain the same.

Most respondents (72%), when asked to choose from a list of service criteria that they would want to see, chose a frequent and punctual bus service. In terms of frequency of passing pick up and drop off points, most people wanted buses to pass hourly but at least twice a day. The other criteria, for instance cleanliness, ease of entry and exit, politeness of the crew and fares were relatively low on the list of priorities.

Among the comments that emerged on the subject, the lack of frequency, flexibility and ease of use seemed to be the most common factors responsible for the lack of widespread use of public transport.

When compared with the responses on the availability of cars in (Annex B) questions 1.6 and 1.7, the use of cars in Walford Parish appears to be firmly entrenched. Eighty seven percent of the respondents drive a car regularly, and 91% drive their own car, implying that most adults have their own vehicles. This is not surprising in a dispersed rural area where it is essential to have security and independence of travel and where public transport remains patchy to say the least. For those who are able to drive the car remains the most reliable, safe and comfortable means of travel, both within and outside the local area. Moreover, the ability of most people in the Parish to afford cars evidently keeps demand for buses low. A great leap of the imagination and innovation will obviously be needed to persuade people to change.

For those who can't drive, such as the elderly, the disabled and the young, the public transport situation in Walford can only be described as dire. For them, walking, cycling or riding along the B4234 to get to the village hall, the PO and shop at Bishopswood, the school, the pub, and to Ross is fraught with risk, brought about by inconsiderate drivers (many of whom park across footways) speeding traffic, strip development and the narrowness or absence of footways.

Mission Statement 17
Walford Parish Council recognises the array of problems caused to many members of the community by the absence of frequent and flexible public transport through the Parish. The Council will seek to remedy the situation by supporting imaginative and innovative proposals, which are aimed at making it more attractive to adopt alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time minimising the risk, particularly to children, inherent in moving between different points within the Parish.

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Issue for SPG	Page	Proposal	UDP
Public Transport		To make it more attractive to adopt alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time minimising the risk, particularly to children, inherent in moving between different points within the Parish.	Ch.8

3.5.15 Shops

There is only one shop within the Parish. This is the shop and Post Office at Bishopswood, which lies at the extreme southern end. Because of the absence of footways and the speed of traffic along the adjacent and dangerous stretch of B4234, to reach the shop without a vehicle is most difficult at all times of day. Consequently, it is deemed essential by most people to drive to the shop. In recent years, as the growth in vehicular traffic has progressed relentlessly, these factors have unquestionably handicapped what is potentially a very valuable community asset.

The initial survey and the subsequent open planning events at the two village halls, elicited 74 references to the need for shops. On the map, provided for the purpose at the open planning events, clusters of stars were placed at Coughton and Walford. (see Stage 1 report at Annex C, Parish Survey & Planning for Real - Outcomes on page 23, para 3.4 indicating desirable locations)

Naturally, it was decided to address the issue of shops in the questionnaire. Questions 9.1 and 9.2 (Annex B) asked respectively the questions, “How important is it for you to be able to do your shopping within the Parish?” and “If you think it’s important to have a shop or shops, what kind of shop would you like to have within the Parish?”

The responses to these questions showed that the respondents were divided on the issue of the importance of shopping within the Parish. On the type of shop required, over 50% were of the opinion that a newsagent’s shop would be the most desirable.

In the many comments associated with Q9.2 there was a good deal of support for a general store and newsagents. Notwithstanding that there is already such a store in the Parish, at Bishopswood, it is evident that many people would also like to have a “multi functional” “one stop” general store and newsagent’s in Walford village and/or Coughton. The comments actually included comparisons with the shop at Bishopswood and Jolly’s at Goodrich. It was generally the view that any other type of shop would have difficulty with viability.

Mission Statement 18

Walford Parish Council recognises the need for a general store nearer to Walford village and will support and encourage any approved action plan aimed at establishing such a facility.

3.6 Other Issues arising from the Questionnaire

A number of other issues, identified by the initial survey were also included in the questionnaire.

3.6.1 Environment *

The AONB/AGLV *

Most of the Parish lies within the Wye Valley AONB. Only a relatively small proportion to the east of the Parish lies outside the AONB boundary and even this is classed as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)

Questions 2.1 to 2.8 of the questionnaire dealt with the environment. The great majority of people in Walford Parish attach a lot of importance to AONB status. 89% indicated that they valued AONB status very much. Of those answering, 98% considered having beautiful unspoilt countryside around where they live as either very important or important. The same proportion considered it important to look after the natural habitat for wildlife and plants.

Respondents were asked if they thought AONB status conferred enough protection on the natural environment. Opinion on this issue was divided, with 55% of respondents very satisfied or satisfied, and 45% saying they were dissatisfied or held no opinion on the issue. Obviously there is some doubt among a lot of people about the benefits AONB status brings. One comment drew attention to the establishment of the new Herefordshire Wye Valley AONB Society (HWVAS) to protect the environment.

Mission Statement 19

Walford Parish Council recognises the importance that the community attaches to the protection of the environment, the preservation of the beautiful countryside, including plants and wildlife, and the status of AONB and AGLV. The Council will be mindful of these priorities at all times and will adopt policies that support the objectives of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Parish.

Overhead cables *

Despite the fact that Walford is blessed by a beautiful landscape, one does not have to look far, or for too long, to see the disfigurement caused by large overhead cables, be they for electricity or telephones. Walford Parish seems to have more than its fair share and in some areas, for example Coughton valley, the extent of the problem is very apparent when considered against the background of the high-sided valley. Not surprisingly, 76% of respondents to Q2.5 of the questionnaire considered it to be important that telephone and electricity cables are gradually replaced by buried cables. Of those answering this question (77%), 70% indicated that they would be prepared to pay an extra amount on their electricity/telephone bill to cover the cost.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Overhead Cables</i>		<i>To encourage service providers and customers to adopt underground local distribution wherever possible</i>	<i>Ch.13</i>

Flooding, Agricultural Sprays & Polytunnels *

Continuing with environmental matters, the questionnaire also addressed the issues of flooding, agricultural sprays, and polytunnels. Half of those responding said that they were either concerned or very concerned about flooding. Of those who were very concerned, 45% live in Walford village. The figure is rather higher than one would expect considering the proportion of the community that lives in Walford (30%).

A significant proportion of the community expressed concern about agricultural sprays. 40% said they were very concerned and 36% said they were concerned, a total of 76% of respondents. This questionnaire result, incidentally, came long before a report on the adverse consequences of crop sprays announced in the media on 22nd September 2005¹⁰.

A similarly high proportion of the community expressed concern over polytunnels. Under Q7.3, which asked about the level of satisfaction with the County's planning policies, many comments referred directly to the problem of polytunnels. Amongst these were many expressions of concern about the appropriateness of planning policies with regard to farming practices, caravans for migrant workers and about polytunnels in particular and their impact on the landscape. The recent decision to allow caravans to remain on a farm in the Parish, in order to house migrant workers, appears to have raised questions about fairness, even handedness and objectivity when interpreting planning policies.

To a large extent, concern about both agricultural sprays and polytunnels result from changes in farming practices brought about by financial and market pressures being introduced at

¹⁰ BBC Breakfast 22nd September 2005 – report on conclusions of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.

government and EU levels. Farmers will argue that they need to diversify in order to continue to remain profitable. Other members of the community are questioning the price they have to pay in terms of their own quality of life and the environment. With the increasing numbers of residential dwellings encroaching on the countryside, the reducing reliance upon farming as a source of employment¹¹ for local people, and the dangers perceived to be associated with crop sprays and soil degradation, it is clear from the questionnaire results that the community expects these matters to receive greater attention in line with growing concerns.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Farming practices</i>		<i>To adopt planning policies that seek to balance the requirements of farmers, the community generally, and tourism.</i>	<i>Ch.2 Ch.4</i>

Street Lighting *

In the past Walford Parish Council has generally opposed the installation of street lighting. The questionnaire results showed that a majority of the community largely supports this policy. The proportion of people who were concerned or very concerned about light pollution was 65%. In Q. 4.3 those who considered street lighting to be unimportant amounted to 45%. Those in favour came to 37% whilst 24% actually objected to street lighting.

To minimise the use of street lighting in the Parish

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>Street lighting</i>		<i>To minimise the use of street lighting in the Parish</i>	<i>Ch.4</i>

State of the Roads *

Question 4.1 asked about general satisfaction with repairs to the surfaces of the roads and lanes in the Parish. Question 4.6 invited respondents to comment about the state of a particular road.

Many people expressed concerned over the state of the roads in the Parish. All but four of the total respondents answered this question, which is perhaps indicative of the seriousness of the issue. Of these, only 3% were very satisfied with the state of road surfaces in general. 54% of people said they were not satisfied.

Bulls Hill was the target of much criticism. Respondents mentioned potholes, drainage problems, hidden ditches, uneven edges and poor maintenance. Coughton Place was named as having a particular problem with the poor state of the surface. Reference was also made to the mud left on roads and the damage being caused by tractors and farm vehicles on roads in the Hom Green area and by Coughton.

The state of the roads is unquestionably a major issue for many in the Parish. It is obvious that many of the lanes were not designed to carry either the amount or the weight of traffic that is characteristic of the present day. The dangers consistent with poor or damaged surfaces are magnified by blind bends, narrowness, varying width and the removal of cat's

¹¹ Quarterly Economic Report for November published by Herefordshire Partnership
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eyes. Speeds are often out of all proportion to what can sensibly be regarded as safe to pedestrians and other drivers. Many drivers it would seem, especially those driving commercial vehicles, need to be reminded that there are no footways and therefore pedestrians have as much right to be on the road as vehicles. The answers to Question 2.8 indicates that most respondents (86%) feel that walkers, cyclists and horse riders on these lanes are not being given the degree of respect and priority that is due to them. The advent of satellite navigation systems, and the accompanying increase in traffic that will result on narrow lanes when drivers seek alternative routes to avoid congestion, bodes ill for the future, for the road surfaces, and for those who have to use these lanes whilst going about their daily business in the Parish.

Mission Statement 20
Having regard for the safety and welfare of those in the community who need to make regular use of the roads and lanes in the Parish, particularly pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, Walford Parish Council will continue to proactively monitor the state of surfaces on those roads and take steps to promote lasting improvements.

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<i>Issue for SPG</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>UDP</i>
<i>State of the roads</i>		<i>To proactively monitor the state of surfaces on Parish roads and take steps to promote lasting improvements.</i>	<i>Ch.8</i>

CONCLUSIONS

- The Parish is dominated by the B4234 road which runs N to S for approximately 2½ miles. It is hazardous to cycle along and dangerous to pedestrians, particularly where no footways exist.
- The absence of footways and cycleways negates any real alternative to the car. As a result there are adverse consequences for the environment, health, quality of life, social cohesion and the local economy.
- It is felt that existing measures to control speed along the B4234 are inadequate.
- There is no evidence that noise pollution is a significant problem.
- There is strong demand for a playground and/or recreational area.
- Footpaths are highly prized.
- Bridleways are considered important.
- The provision of a cycleway network would provide a healthy alternative to the car as well as enhancing recreation, tourism and community cohesion.
- The demand from within the community for affordable housing is less than anticipated.
- Large-scale development is unwanted.
- Regarding planning; inconsistency of implementation is perceived as a particular problem.
- Litter is considered to be a high priority problem.
- The Parish is poorly served by public transport, which is matched to low demand.
- Access to the only shop in the Parish is difficult by anything other than a motor vehicle for most people.
- The existence of unspoilt countryside in the Parish is of paramount importance.
- Most people regard the retention of a green space between Ross on Wye and Walford to be highly important.
- There is doubt as to the benefits that the AONB office brings.
- There is concern over the impact of industrial food production.
- Street lamps, and the lighting pollution they bring, are not wanted by most parishioners.
- The general state of the roads is not considered satisfactory.
- There are 11 issues of concern worthy of consideration for supplementary planning guidance.
- There are a series of issues that warrant action beyond that of the normal duties of the Parish Council:
 - The provision of a footway (where none exists) alongside the B4234
 - Safety measures for the B4234 are required, e.g. calming, flood defence, cat's eyes, verge reinforcement.
 - The provision of a playground/recreation area(s)
 - Plans to promote the greater use of bicycles.

5. Implementing the Plan - recommendations

It should be emphasised that the responsibility and success of implementing this Plan does not, and should not, rest solely on the shoulders of the 13 councillors who comprise Walford Parish Council, or the Parish Plan Steering Group. That would indeed be an onerous task. There is absolutely no reason why groups of people should not, on their own account, address any or all the problems and requirements that have been identified in the Plan.

It is recommended that, for each issue that requires action, above and beyond that which is normally the domain of the Parish Council, a working group be formed in order to bring the community aspirations to fruition. A typical way forward might be as follows.

- Gather together a group of like-minded people.
- Discuss the issue in question to find out the degree of commitment and support, the information currently available, possible approaches to solving problems, the individual skills available, knowledge and experience.
- Choose a suitable Chairman/leader.
- Organise a brain storming session to identify actions.
- Agree on a strategy for identifying opportunities and solving the problems.
- Create a project plan with timescales.
- Obtain the support and approval of the Walford Parish Council.
- Delegate responsibilities to individuals.
- Monitor progress.

5.1 Walford Parish Plan – Action Planning for Individual Projects

Subject area	Questions for consideration	Examples
Project definition	What is the topic that we need to focus on?	To create a footway between Kerne Bridge and the Mill Race.
Where are we now?	It will be useful to have a look at what exists at the moment, to map it out, see what it offers and whether it has any value in terms of what we want to achieve.	Does a part of footway exist at the moment and will it go some way to serving the purpose?
What are we aiming to achieve?	A more detailed statement of precise aims will help to ensure that the project group isn't diverted or driven off course. Perhaps the community needs to be consulted further.	What overall width will the footway need to be? Is safety a major consideration? What are the limits of what we want to do?
Who will lead the project group?	What qualities are we looking for in the project leader? Who would make a good chairperson and overall manager of the team?	Somebody who is able to take a broad view, with good inter-personal skills, might be the person needed.

Who do we need to be part of the project group and why?	What qualities and skills are available locally that would make each team member a valuable contributor to the project?	Good team players with knowledge of the area and individual skills.
When do we aim to get what we want?	What will be the timescale for the project? Is there a time limit?	
What are the benefits that we want to achieve for the community?	A statement of the benefits might help to re-define what the project is all about and focus activities.	
What information do we have about the objectives, at the moment?	An information collecting exercise will be valuable. Who else will need to be involved, how does the LA fit in? Are we dependent on government funding? With more information the decision making process is improved and the case can be argued much more effectively.	Has there been a public footway along the route, or part of it, before and how long ago? What was the reason for its disappearance? What are the laws and regulations governing the construction of footways? What are the typical costs of providing footways?
What additional information do we need to have?	This will become evident when the extent of present knowledge is known.	Other parishes must have had similar problems and succeeded. What did they do – how and when?
Where will we get the additional information from?		Sources include the internet, local authorities, legal people, newspaper records, minutes of meetings etc.
Do we have the skills in the project group?	Some of the activities referred to above will require particular skills.	These might be report writing, summarising, keeping accounts, computer skills, negotiating.
If we don't have the skills we need to carry out the project, where do we get them?	This is never an easy task. It may result from a bit of brainstorming.	For instance, do we have anyone in the parish who has knowledge of the planning process who could temporarily help out?
Will our activities cost money? How much?	If cash is involved, someone is going to have to keep records and ensure the money is handled properly.	Knowledge of similar projects and their costs will provide some ideas.

How will we raise money to fund our activities?	There are lots of solutions to this problem. Village halls and their committees have a lot of expertise.	A project team member with an eye for publicity can help.
Who will keep track of actions, timescales, deadlines, achievements etc.?	These activities demand particular skills and are essential to any lengthy project.	
Who else needs to be involved besides the project group?	Help and advice will be needed from a number of sources.	The parish council, the unitary authority (Herefordshire), the police, the community, public utilities.

Some objectives might be considered as capable of being resolved in the short term. On the other hand a much longer period might be necessary in the case of outcomes that are beyond the immediate control of the local community. In these cases action may take the form of establishing an overall policy against which future plans and actions involving the community can be formulated, e.g. planning criteria. Other objectives however, will require a good deal more thought and perhaps visionary zeal. Some tasks will be better tackled in phases with opportunities to make progress being seized at the appropriate time. Whichever approach is adopted, the way is now open for individual members of the community, with the support of the Parish Council, to take a lead in establishing projects and action plans that will make use of the information that is now available in this Plan.

By mobilising teams of like minded people, conducting further research, by collecting evidence in the form of statistics and measurements, by negotiating with service providers, identifying sources of funds and gaining the support of other groups, a great deal can be achieved towards improving the community's quality of life and eliminating the problems which at present are the cause of anxiety and dissatisfaction.

Finally, the Parish Council will establish a procedure for regularly reviewing and updating this Plan every 4 years, or at least once within the term of each elected Council, in order to ensure that it continues to reflect the community's needs and aspirations. Among the topics for further research and inclusion in the next review will be the Parish Council's support and encouragement for sustainable employment within the Parish, and for sustainable energy initiatives within AONB guidelines.

END

Annex A

Issues for Consideration as Supplementary Planning Guidance

Issue	Page	Proposal	UDP
Footways	18,19	To have continuous footway by or alongside the main B4234 through the Parish	Ch.8
Road signs	19-23	to remove any road signs considered to be unnecessary, and to improve the effectiveness of those that remain in order minimise the risk of accidents occurring, and to safeguard the health and welfare of the community	Ch.8
Children's Playground	25,26	To pursue all possibilities locally for the provision of playgrounds with both landowners, and with the Parks Countryside and Leisure Development Service of Herefordshire Council	Ch.10
Footpaths & Bridleways	27,28	To extend the footpath and bridleways network.	Ch.8
Cycleway	28-32	To establish a Parish cycleway network.	Ch.8
Housing	32	To restrict future development size to less than 20 houses.	Ch.5 Para.5.4.39 & 5.4.41
Green belt	34	To retain the green belt between Ross boundary at the Vine Tree and Coughton	Ch.5.4.25
Village shape and design	34,35	To encourage improvements to the design of property and shape of the village	Ch.3
Implementation of Planning Policy	35,36	To provide more information at local level on the basis for decisions by the Planning Authority	
Transport	39-41	To make it more attractive to adopt alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time minimising the risk, particularly to children, inherent in moving between different points within the Parish.	Ch.8
Overhead cables	43	To encourage service providers and customers to adopt underground local distribution wherever possible	Ch.13
Farming practices	43,44	To adopt planning policies that seek to balance the requirements of farmers, the community generally and tourism.	Ch.2, Ch.4
Street lighting	44	To minimise the use of street lighting in the Parish	Ch.4
State of the roads	44	To proactively monitor the state of surfaces on Parish roads and take steps to promote lasting improvements.	Ch.8