

HUNSDON, EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH PLAN

The Parish Plan is currently on hold whilst the Hunston, Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Planning Group, work on your behalf by devoting itself to monitoring, reacting to and - above all - seeking to influence the emerging District Plan in ways that would be to the greatest benefit and/or least detriment of current residents of Eastwick, Gilston and the surrounding villages.

For the latest information on what is happening go to www.hegnp.org.uk

IT'S ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Council has established a group to work on preparing a Parish Plan. We have consulted everyone on this and done a survey of residents, held a seminar and taken 'roadshows' to various places within the parish of our ideas and proposals. We have now written our final report and it is available below.

We hope that you will enjoy reading it and will engage with us on the 'Action Plan' that we have come up with. We have sent copies of the 'full' plan to the key stakeholders.

The Action Plan is very specific about the challenges and opportunities for residents and other stakeholders in the parish. So, if you enjoy the countryside in which we live we welcome and want to hear your view and get your contribution, it is after all about the immediate area in which you live!

With the proposals for Harlow North very much 'live' and being promoted I have been asked why should we bother with this? Even if the this scheme eventually gets the consents your views about how that scheme might be implemented are important indeed its promoters have expressed a wish to hear the views of residents – this way of getting your views about what is important before them. It will matter to us all as, if this scheme goes ahead, it will directly affect everyone, whether you decide to move or not. There will be opportunities to shape how our environment is managed and how the potentially disruptive building activities take place etc.

Anthony Bickmore, Chair Parish Plan Steering Group.

THE ACTION PLAN

We have had many ideas from you and our working group of what we might do, these are all listed in the plan at annexe 3. From these have focussed our attention on 7 actions under themes: -

Transport

1. To better position our community to champion for traffic calming of both the C161, through PYE Corner, and the A414 dual carriage way. Both roads are poorly designed and managed so represent dangers for the travelling public and so especially for you as residents as daily users of them. In the event that Harlow North continues to be promoted then such information and views will support the highways case and identify needs for improvements as a precondition for any new development, to be paid for but the developers.

2. Develop ideas about how to improve the pedestrian and cycle links from Eastwick and Pye Corner to Harlow and its station.

Environment

3. Champion the opportunities to make the river Stort Valley a better recreational asset. The survey clearly showed that residents place high importance on our local environment – it is the reason we live here. Over many years the Stort Valley has been identified as a unique asset worthy of enhancement, an area for landscape development and part of a much wider strategic green grid connecting Epping Forest to Hatfield Forest. A substantial parcel of land is in the ownership of the Homes and Community Agency who have confirmed to us that it is incapable of development. As a Parish we neighbour this important area and so should champion how it is managed and ensure the

existing groups who have responsibilities for it know of our interest in it. (There is already considerable work going on with a number of parties including the Local Wildlife Trust so there really are many interesting things happening or about to happen on our doorstep).

4. The survey results demonstrated the importance residents place on their local environment. Gilston Park, while noted as a historic park 'of interest' by English Heritage and our District Council, it is accorded a fairly low status reflecting the many years of decline and neglect in its management. The redevelopment of Gilston Park about 10 years ago, while producing admirable landscape assessments and survey work failed to put in place a long term plan for this historic landscape in the heart of our village. The area has escaped intensive farming, contains some very ancient trees, was remodelled in the 19th century when the mansion house was built, is a biodiversity reserve an enjoyed by residents, and walkers from further a field, who take advantage of the rights of way network through it. HCC's Countryside Management Service may have resources available to help define ideas and bring them into being.

Community

5. A theme from the survey was an aspiration for more community events. Those who have organised events in the parish a cynicism over the level of support but this should not stifle further attempts, even if these start from a low key basis. There is a need to provide information on the many local activities that already take place and we have discovered through the survey as well as considering new 'pilot' opportunities, even modest ones. Having a parish website will be important to achieving this, although funding constraints hamper the delivery of such a piece of community infrastructure. Ideas could be as simple as getting the local Wildlife Trust to run some guided tours of the Stort Valley for the Parish explaining the work and fascinating biodiversity projects they are planning through to quiz nights to raise funds for local projects.

6. Litter pick within the Parish, a small task but one which the Steering Committee felt could be an 'easy win'. The objective would be for residents, on a volunteer basis, to undertake an annual litter pick within the 'public places'.

Housing

7. Win East Hertfordshire's support for and undertaking of a 'housing needs survey'. The survey work identified that a possible need for housing for 'local needs', like providing affordable homes for offspring or elderly residents of the parish, but not the massive Harlow North development, is needed now and merited. The first step is to undertake a more detailed assessment of demand and then consider the options from analysis of the survey outcomes; EHDC regularly conduct such surveys.

The Next Steps are....

Contact me if you have a wish to get involved or Mark Orson on any of the Parish Plan proposals. Do you enjoy the countryside and have knowledge and skills which would be helpful? We need and would benefit from hearing from you. We will try to keep meetings short and focussed as well as exchange ideas through the new parish web site.

So how can you join in to help improve our community

The Parish Plan group very much would like to hear from you with your views and more specifically welcome you joining one of our steering groups to take forward the above ideas – please contact us either

- Via the web site
- Or attend a Parish Council meeting and hear first hand of the progress
- Or send me an email to:- anthonybickmore@btinternet.com

Your thoughts and contributions are wanted.

To view Eastwick and Gilston's Parish Plan look under Document Archive.