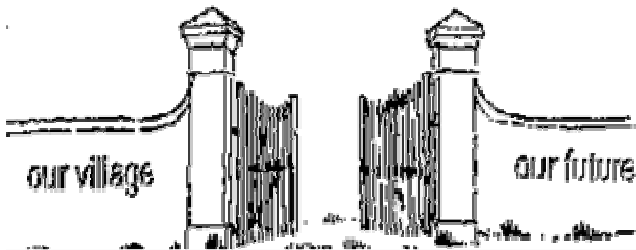


CULWORTH IN TEN YEARS

Village Plan 2003



compiled by Michelle Koster
June 2003

INTRODUCTION

What is the Culworth Village Plan?

It is precisely that. A plan for action, put together by the people of Culworth, for what they want to happen, and not happen, in Culworth, what they want to protect, and what they want to improve. This is a working and developing document, created following a village plan day, and a detailed questionnaire, in which a staggering 77.5% of households gave their views. The full database of all opinions is a valuable resource for the village. The words on this page are not set in Hornton stone, but are a jumping-off place for the future. This document was formally adopted by Culworth Parish Council on 11th June 2003.

Why is it important?

The village's view

This document says what the people of Culworth actually want, and don't want. It is therefore a powerful record of public opinion, and a vital resource for anyone who wants to do anything in the village. All of the reports and documents that have gone into this plan are available to anyone who wants to read them, on the Culworth website, www.culworth.net. In addition, there is a vast database of information gathered from the questionnaire.

The rest-of-the-world view

Culworth's Village Plan is also important outside the village, not least because we are one of six pilot villages in this area. Various government organisations have an interest:

- South Northants District Council, because it has to produce a 'Community Strategy', which promotes the 'social, environmental and economic' well-being of the community and the area;
- Northamptonshire County Council, because much of what we want to do is affected by what NCC can and should be doing for us;
- the Countryside Agency, because their 'Vital Villages' initiative is about helping to protect the best and improve the rest (and because they have given us money to produce the plan).



ENVIRONMENT

Conservation of trees/hedges

There are three strands to this particular project:

- Identifying existing trees with Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), reporting on their condition, mapping, and suggesting other trees worthy of protection. This will be done through a tree audit, survey and mapping. It is ongoing.
- Identifying important and historic local hedgerows, through the observation and recording of species distribution. This is ongoing.
- Establishing new TPOs where appropriate, through a survey and mapping. This is to take place as information is processed, and with the involvement of the South Northamptonshire Council Tree Officer.

Work from this project will feed into the village map, a Community project

Recycling

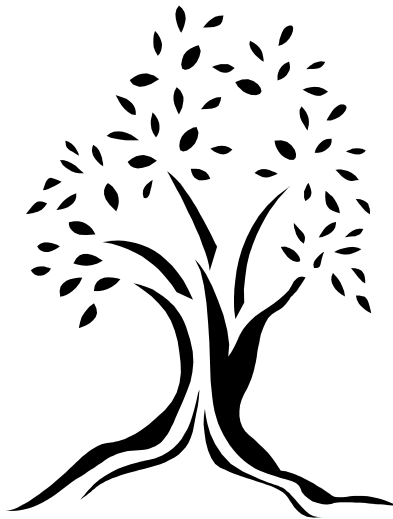
This involves establishment of a local recycling programme, with support from the Parish Council. The project hopes to introduce twin-bins and door-to-door glass and metal collections boxes in the village. This is to be achieved through continuing contact with the Waste Management Office at SNC, including notifying them of our local consultation results.

Maintenance of footpaths

- Encouraging use of, and building confidence to use, local footpaths, and noting problems where local maintenance can be done. This is partly to be achieved through regular, planned walks. Two, on January 1st 2003 and March 1st 2003, have already been organised. The second was abandoned because of bad weather, and is therefore to be rescheduled. Routes are advertised via the newsletter and village website, www.culworth.net.
- There is concern at present because NCC has proposals to cut back the existing footpath budget. The group therefore plans contact with Rights of Way at Northamptonshire County Council, to find out their future programme.
- Liaison with and support of other organisations in the development of a local footpath network. Support has already been given to 'Battlefield Trust', a local 20-mile circular walk, which includes Danesmoor in our Parish, to take place on June 29th 2003.
- Organisation of teams to carry out maintenance work. It is hoped that this will improve both access and the state of local footpaths. Work is ongoing, with the first outing intended for June 2003.
- Provision of professional advice and training for volunteers, either locally, or through visits to rangers at local countryside parks. This may entail expenditure on trainers and training course. This is due to begin in August 2003.

Prepare a Village Design Statement

A draft structure, based in part on the existing statement for Culworth, and on examples from other villages, has already been completed. A draft version is due for completion by Summer 2003, to include text, photographs, sketches etc, and will be written by a number of parishioners. This draft will be issued to the Village Plan Group (CITY), and to the Parish Council for Comment. A final version is due for completion by December 2003, in consultation with the local planning department. The final intention is for the Village Design Statement to be adopted by SNC as Supplementary Planning Guidance.



COMMUNITY

There are a number of initiatives under this group heading:

- a new website, www.culworth.net, has been established, with an initial redesign due for completion by summer 2003. This is to include more information (photos etc) and a place for business use.
- use of the newsletter to inform the village. The newsletter is to be tied to Parish Council meetings, with deadline details in advance, and a special yearly Parish Council newsletter by way of annual report, the first of which went out this April. The Parish Council has agreed to fund this.
- a local information point for issues within the village has been set up in the Post Office, with racks to be provided by the Parish Council.
- a map of the village, to be compiled locally. This will include house names, trees covered by TPOs, and important hedgrows. It is due for completion by summer 2003.



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Culworth Village

Not to Scale

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Playground/Youth Shelter

The Amenities Group intends to have identified the need for a playground/youth shelter through a public meeting or questionnaire, to be publicised by poster, with a meeting planned by the end of 2003.

Information on land size, and on Health & Safety requirements is already held by the group, and ACRE has been contacted regarding funding.

Clubs

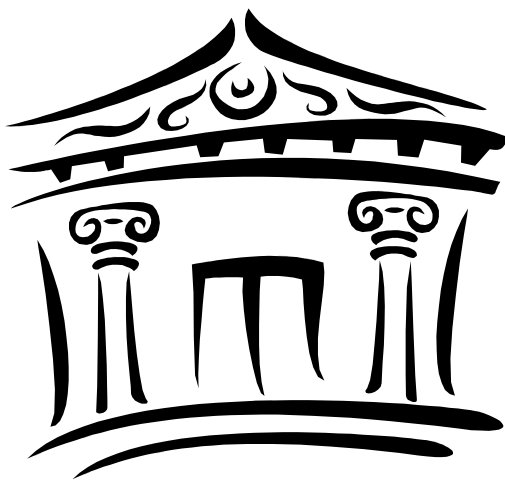
The amenities group also holds information from ACRE, and has liaised with a former Culworth Youth Club leader, regarding the possibility of setting up a youth club. Other events are being investigated, including a Christmas party, barn dance, games evening, with the hope that at least one event will take place before the end of 2003. The Amenities group is also looking at interest in various other club-based activities.

Village Hall

The existing Village Hall Committee is working on the possibility of building a new village hall.

Initially, it is looking for a suitable piece of land, which it hopes to identify by the end of 2003. No costs are available for this, but it is estimated that planning permission will cost around £500, a design around £2000, and funds of around £250,000–

300,000 will be needed to complete the project. The Committee will pursue this project in consultation with the Parish Council, and with South Northants Council, and ACRE. Possible sources of funding include the National Lottery, ACRE, and the proceeds of the sale of the existing site. Completion of the new hall is estimated at 2010.



GETTING AROUND

Traffic behaviour

Three areas are being investigated under this heading:

- school traffic – the group is looking into alternatives to the number of cars delivering children to the school, with the Parish Council, School Governors, and other volunteers, by the end of 2003.
- on-road parking – by petitioning the affected householders for suggested solutions to the problem, by the end of 2005.
- speeding – to investigate whether widely held opinions about the high levels of speeding through Culworth are supported by the evidence. The group intends to hire a speed gun by the end of 2003, and to work with the police and parish council.

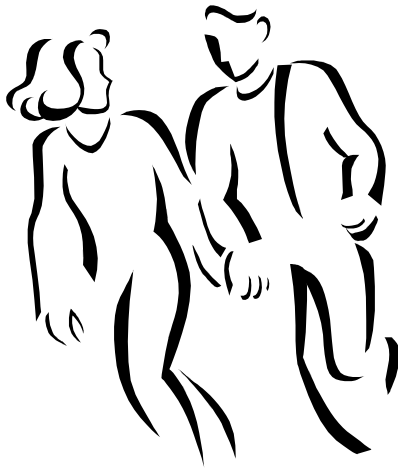
Walks around the parish

Walks have already been arranged, so far on January 1st 2003 and March 1st 2003. Routes are advertised via the newsletter and village website, www.culworth.net.

It is intending to compile a list of favourite walks from villagers, and to identify them on an OS sheet, grade them according to length, difficulty and points

of interest, and compile a series of ‘Village Walks’ leaflets for distribution round the village. This may involve a local cartographer.

The group is also intending to contact the Ramblers Association to check on their policies and responsibilities, and to keep abreast of NCC policy changes and consequences relating to footpaths, on an ongoing basis.



HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Provide more affordable housing within the village

- *Housing Trust* -The initial village questionnaire indicated that 51% of villagers felt that housing is needed for young people, but that 40% felt no further development was necessary. The Housing and Employment group has interpreted this as an indication that further development is required, but that it must be in a controlled manner, and sympathetic to the existing styles and qualities of Culworth. The group therefore hopes to identify a suitable housing trust, and work with them to create a framework for new development in Culworth.
- *Housing Survey* - the group has conducted a survey, and has received a report from the selected Housing Trust. The identified needs should be incorporated into the Village Design Statement, being prepared by the Environment Group.
- In conjunction with the Parish Council, the NRHA and the selected Housing Trust, the proposal is to identify suitable sites for development by September 2003, with a view to further houses being built by June 2005.

Planning Process

The village questionnaire also revealed that 45% of villagers were unhappy with the level of publicity for planning decisions (and only 36% of respondents had ever attended a Parish Council meeting). The group therefore intends to find ways of improving public awareness of the planning process, working with the SNC Planning department and the Parish Council, through use of the new village website, www.culworth.net

Adult Education

The village questionnaire suggested that 45% of respondents wanted some kind of adult education class, although precise subject matter was not indicated at the time. Two open village meetings have been held, and the group has is researching adult education providers on an ongoing basis.

Possible classes include:

- yoga classes,
- a First Aid course,
- IT course
- a Culworth Skills Exchange/Time Bank.

Culworth Village Plan has been produced with the help, support and contribution from:

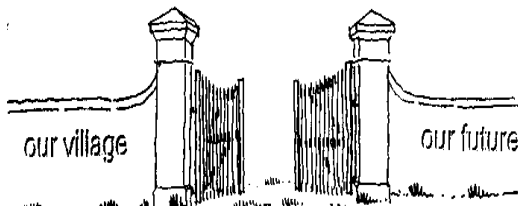
Many individual villagers
CITY Village Plan Steering Group
Culworth Parish Council
South Northamptonshire Council
Countryside Agency
Northamptonshire ACRE
Northamptonshire County Council

The plan is just the start; If you would like to be involved in any of the projects and have resources, ideas or some time to spare, or maybe just want to find out more please contact:

Val Webster on 01295 760 394

or email: culworth.plan@culworth.net

Website: www.culworth.net



published by:

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