

Chalfont St Peter



Village Appraisal



Managing Change



Market Town Healthcheck

This document represents a further step towards accreditation of our Village through what is known as a Market Town Healthcheck and builds on the Action Plan published in 2006.

Since Village Appraisal's inception in 2003, our 7 groups in Chalfont St Peter have achieved some outstanding successes:

- The vibrant community run Youth Club,
- The creation of our Village Older Persons Action Group (VOPAG)
- The River Misbourne enhancement
- The crossing over the A413 near to the Community Centre
- The creation of a heritage group (The Celfunde Inheritance) and its exhibition in the Parish Council's offices
- The formation of many new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes



We are grateful to local residents, in particular Steve Church and Barbara Quilley, for the photography in this document.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication of the members of these groups and the help of our local Councils who have come forward with help, advice and funding.

Our groups have also sought outside funding for various projects most notably our Lottery Breathing Spaces grant of £10,000 awarded to the Environment Group for work on the Misbourne and Mill Meadow.

The Action Plan which is included in this document reflects not only the work and projects which the groups already have in hand but the views expressed in response to the consultation document in 2008.

Please feel free to tell us what you think about the current, achievable, ambitious and pipe dream projects as they have been described by our groups.

A Market Town Healthcheck is paramount to the success of finding funding from outside sources which is more important than ever when local Councils are having to make cuts.

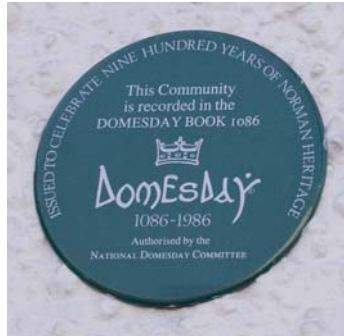
The challenge of making change sit side by side with history is one which has not always been achieved with success in the past.

The need to manage change and preserve our heritage has never been greater than now.



About Chalfont St Peter

Chalfont St Peter is an ancient and historic village first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter in 949 AD and in the Domesday Book of 1086. Our origins go back even further, however, as evidenced by Roman and Iron Age settlements. It is uniquely built upon the River Misbourne and contains a collection of listed buildings dating back to the 16th Century, including two coaching inns.



Set in the Chiltern Hills

Chalfont St Peter is located on the southern slopes of the Chilterns and is defined by its open spaces – Austenwood, Gold Hill and Chalfont Commons, and Chalfont Park, which runs into the Colne Valley Park.

The Grange, which was for nearly 350 years the medieval manor and court of Missenden Abbey, is at the centre of the village.

Community growth

With the coming of the railway in the early 1900s a portion of Chalfont St Peter Parish was taken to form Gerrards Cross. The village then developed rapidly from a small village of 1753 people in 1901 to approximately 13000 today.

An ancient and historical part of the village centre, Barrack Yard, was demolished in the 1930s and major changes were made in the 1960s when the St Peter's Court shopping precinct and the bypass were developed.

According to the 2001 census our population at that time stood at 12937 living in 4836 dwellings, 82% of which were owner occupied. 70% of our residents travelled to work by car or van with 90% owning at least one car and 10% travelled to work by train. 66% are economically active.

Let's keep it green

At the edge of the Chilterns closest to London and its environs, Chalfont St. Peter enjoys the benefits of being surrounded by countryside, much of which is designated Green Belt. This Green Belt is therefore extremely important as it is specifically to protect our area from the urban sprawl of metropolitan London.



The village is divided into four areas – Chalfont Common, Chalfont Central, Gold Hill and Austenwood, all distinctly different in character.

It has excellent transport links – the M40, M25, A40 road network, Chiltern Railways from Gerrards Cross and the Metropolitan Line from Amersham into London and easy access to all the main airports of Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton.

Leisure pursuits are well catered for with numerous clubs and societies for all ages, together with pubs and restaurants providing a variety of food.

Churches for many different denominations and good schools are a further feature of our village.

Chalfont St Peter is a very desirable place to live placing property values well above the national average. There is a strong sense of community.

Transport and Traffic

Concerns of residents are the state of the roads and pavements, speeding, the street light switch off on the A413, parking around schools and the lack of buses.

The Transport and Traffic Group regularly update the County Council on roads and pavements which are in need of repair and the County and the bus operators with regard to bus services.

Speeding particularly along Chesham Lane/Denham Lane and the high volume of traffic using these lanes as an alternative to the A413 is a problem for residents, along with school parking, which becomes a problem for residents around schools.

We are poorly served by buses which means there is little alternative other than to use a car to get to stations, hospitals, neighbouring villages and the larger shopping areas and little choice for residents without cars. The Dial-a-Ride service for the elderly and disabled does not operate at night or at weekends.

We have regained our first hour of free parking in Church Lane car park courtesy of the Parish Council but many all day parkers still use surrounding streets rather than pay to park. Action against cars and vans which continue to park on double yellow lines is seen to be too infrequent.



Economy

We have a huge range of businesses in the village and a diverse shopping centre. It is difficult to think of any item, which is not readily available. This makes for a vibrant village centre where the shops are complemented by a number of restaurants, which add to the life of the village. We must resist the introduction of too many restaurants at the expense of the variety of shops available.

The vibrancy and health of the village centre has been helped by the reinstatement of the 1-hour free parking. There is also limited free parking in Market Place, at Budgens and in St Peter's Court.

The Village Association in Market Place does an excellent job providing the flower baskets, flags for all occasions and Christmas lights, all of which are distinctive to Chalfont St Peter and much appreciated.

We are fortunate in having a very active Chamber of Commerce who organise a number of annual events, including the Christmas Fun Night. They also represent business on many local committees and groups. They lobby on behalf of local business and help promote them via their website www.cspchamber.org.uk and their regular newsletters.

Environment

The environment of Chiltern District is rated by residents as the most important quality of the area. In Chalfont St Peter we have green belt, open spaces, woodland and our river. Improvement of the river and its banks was voted a high priority by our residents.



The Environment Group has highlighted the need for the historic character of the village to be recognised and conservation areas created to support the listed buildings we already have.

The Heritage Group (Celfunde Inheritance) has ambitious plans to make the history of the community accessible to residents and visitors.



A Village Design Statement will look at the character of the village and new build developed to fit in, maintain and enhance what we cherish. Hopefully this would stop such developments as our precinct which many residents feel effectively removed the heart of the village when

old and medieval buildings were demolished and replaced with a less than sympathetic development.

Residents are concerned about excessive development and the quantity of houses expected to be built in the village over the next 20 years and their call upon an already low source of water in the Chilterns.



Is the scarcity of water and resulting drought in the Misbourne and inadequate drainage resulting in flooding the result of poor infrastructure? Our environment is important and change needs to be managed.

Social and Community

Culture and sport for all ages are well catered for in our village with many clubs and societies run by volunteers. We have;

- an excellent Leisure Centre
- a vibrant well run Youth Club
- good schools
- active churches
- a library
- and, a well used Community Centre.

The Community Centre is the hub of the village but is in constant need of repair due to its age and wooden construction, and will need replacing sometime in the future. Developing the Grange site for community use is a suggestion which has received positive response from residents.

Village events are well supported and residents would like to see more. A new group has recently been formed to develop our annual Feast Day.

The number of elderly people is set to increase over the next 20 years and our Older Persons Action Group has highlighted the need for more warden assisted housing.

Our population is generally healthy but our village has been identified nationally as having the highest population of "indulgents" who eat out regularly and have a style of life which could be storing up medical problems in the future.



Our hospital is in need of repair and the PCT are currently looking at a re-build. We must ensure that we continue to have the outpatient facilities we currently have together with a return of the beds which at present have been moved to Amersham. Additional facilities to avoid the need to travel to other hospitals would also be welcome. Transport to surrounding hospitals is a problem for many residents. An NHS dentist has also been identified as a much needed facility.

Community safety is a high priority for the village. The Community Safety Group and the Neighbourhood Action Group work together with the Police on issues such as Neighbourhood Watch, vandalism and traffic speed.

A brief History

by permission of
Councillor Pam Bacon

The Norman invasion

The name Chalfont derived from Ceadeles funta. The Manor was held by Leofwin in the 11th century for his brother King Harold who was killed by William the Conqueror at the battle of Hastings in 1066.

William then granted the Manor to his half brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. In the Domesday Book of 1086 Ceadeles had changed to Celfunde. The land was held for Odo by Roger d'Anquetil, an ancestor of the Turville family who held many lands in Chalfont and who built the church dedicated to St Peter.

In 1196 Richard de Turville gave it to the Abbey of Missenden and the first vicar of Chalfunde Sancti Petri was installed in 1224. The dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII in 1540 saw the land sold or granted to lay owners.

In 1229 Henry III granted the Manor to his Treasurer Ranulf Brito who was responsible for establishing a weekly market in the village and an annual fair to mark the Feast Day of St Peter and St. Paul – a custom still honoured to this day.

Moving with the times

The Greyhound Inn was rapidly becoming important as a hostelry for the coach travellers between London, Aylesbury, Bicester and the Midlands. Traffic so increased in the 17th century that the overflow of travellers slept in the George or other inns which sprang up all over the village.

Behind the present day St Peter's Court was a square of 17th century cottages known as Barrack Yard said to be where James II stationed his troops.

The Grange

The most important estate within the village was The Grange originally where Missenden Abbey held its ecclesiastical court. Subsequent owners include Edmund Brudenell, the Drury Family and Isaac Penington, Lord Mayor of London. The Peningtons were evicted in Charles II's reign and the house passed to an uncle of Judge Jeffreys. The Judge stayed there whilst Bustrade House was being renovated after a fire. In 1929 the Grange was sold to an order of Catholic teaching nuns and became the Holy Cross Convent for Girls.

Chalfont Park

The estate of Chalfont Park was known as the Manor of Brudenells and was owned in the 1700s by the Churchills, Maria Churchill being Sir Robert Walpole's daughter. The estate was then bought by Thomas Hibbert in 1794 whose descendents were responsible for many charitable bequests in the village.

In the mid 19th century John Hibbert bought land on Gold Hill Lane (now Market Place) as allotments for the villagers, endowed two almshouses, an infants school and set up a cottage hospital of 6 beds on the present site. In 1921 land at Chalfont Park was set aside as a golf course. Chalfont Park became a hotel, a convalescent home for servicemen during the World War II and the headquarters of British Aluminium, later Alcan.



Faith

The parish church was built in 1196. The first independent chapel was built on Gold Hill Common in 1792 and had its first Baptist Minister in 1800.

In 1913 the Community of Carmelite Friars came to live in a house on Austenwood Common calling it "The Priory". Within two years they had completed the first part of a Gothic style church in the grounds dedicated to St. Joseph. By the 1960s they had enlarged the church, built a social club and two new schools on Priory Road.



Chalfont St Peter Bypass

The biggest change to Chalfont St Peter came in the 1960s with the demolition of the centre of the village opposite the Greyhound to replace it with St Peter's Court and the construction of the bypass and roundabout in 1968 which sadly brought about the demolition of medieval cottages, inns and the forge.

Preservation

Preservation orders and a heightened awareness of our history now ensure that many of our old buildings have been saved making the village a living, vibrant area but still owing much to its past.



“ Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ”

Margaret Mead

How can I get involved?

**Do you agree with this action plan?
Are there any issues we have overlooked**

Please contact:

Cllr Linda Smith, Chairman of the Steering Appraisal Committee

tel: 01494 874 065
email: lsmith@chiltern.gov.uk

Useful Websites

www.chalfontstpeter-pc.gov.uk/
www.chalfontstpeter.com/
www.chiltern.gov.uk
www.buckscc.gov.uk

Many residents, young and old, are already actively involved in the appraisal groups, or attend public meetings and consultations which explain what is happening. There is always room for more however little time you may have.

If you would like to join a group or perhaps help raise funds for any of our initiatives, please contact us – we look forward to hearing from you.

There are many local volunteers involved in this process because they care for the Village and its future. Please give them your support, help and encouragement.



Gold Hill Baptist Church • Chalfont St Peter Youth Centre
Chiltern & South Bucks Primary Care Trust • Rotary Club
Budgens • National Society for Epilepsy.