



# Freeland

## Community Plan 2014

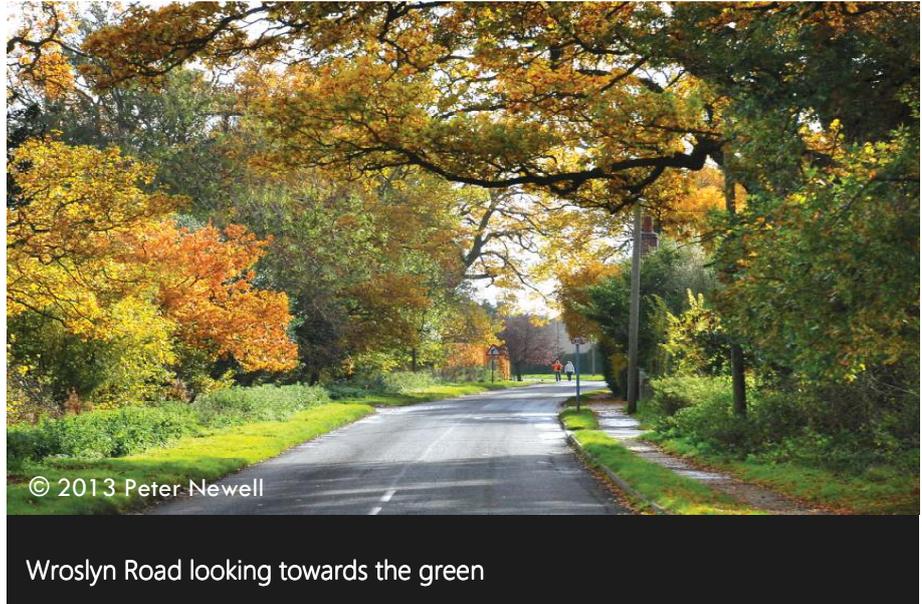
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*“A community plan devised  
through consultation with  
the residents of the village  
of Freeland”*

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# Freeland is a...

Friendly  
Peaceful  
Quiet  
Community



# Freeland could have:

A shop  
Improved parking for the school  
Improved mobile coverage  
Improved broadband





# Freeland Community Led Plan



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*"A Community Led Plan sets out a VISION of how your community wants to develop and identifies the ACTION needed for you to achieve it."*

(Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Community Led Planning Guide).

During the preparation of our plan, the whole community had the opportunity to contribute to and highlight areas of satisfaction or main issues of concern.

This Community Led Plan (CLP) is **not** a land use plan for new developments; this would be provided by a Neighbourhood Plan, which is an official planning document setting out locations for new housing, cycle ways, footpaths etc.

This is a potential next step for the village.



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Funday 2013 with the whole community

# ABOUT FREELAND

## History

Freeland developed from a medieval freehold, probably worked from the site of the present Elm Farm, near the wood called the Frith (later Thrift coppice); this was within the medieval Royal hunting forest of Wychwood, lying near its eastern boundary.

By the 16th century the ancient freehold was called Frithlands or Freelands, and Freeland was named as an address by the late 17th century. At inclosure most of the land west of the heath road was awarded to W. E. Taunton, becoming the park of Freeland Lodge (later Freeland House), built in 1807, but a few new cottages were inserted between the park and the road. The Lodge is now Freeland House Nursing Home.

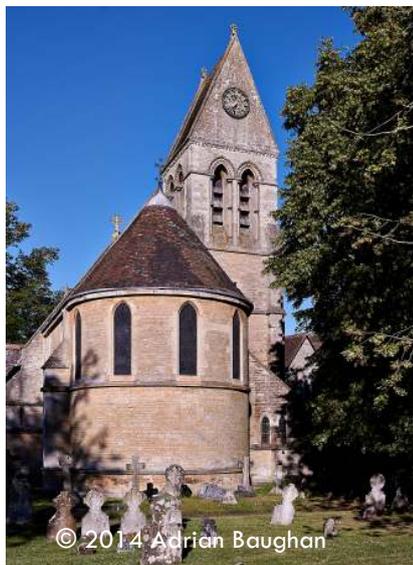
The Wesleyan chapel was also completed in 1807 and was central to the hamlet's life in the early 19th century. It is now called Freeland Methodist Church. The building is a Grade II Listed Building and is the oldest Methodist Church in the Witney and Faringdon Circuit.

(Courtesy from British History Online)



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Water pump on the village green



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Church of St. Mary the Virgin

## Amenities

Valued assets of the village  
Include:

**Freeland Hall** was opened by Rt. Hon David Cameron in September 2011, and is now in use every evening and booked up for events at weekends. The CRF has recently been completed, providing changing facilities for local sports clubs and a meeting room (The Newell Room) for smaller clubs / Interest groups.

**Oxfordshire Yeoman Pub** having been closed during the preparation of this plan, has now reopened as a free house, serving food and providing a renewed focal point in village.

**The Church of St. Mary the Virgin** was built in 1869. The church is built in the Early English Gothic style. It is a vibrant part of the community, thanks to input from the Rector, with a toddler group, Bible fun Club as well as regular Sunday services.

**Freeland Methodist Church** is the oldest Methodist Church in the Witney and Faringdon Circuit holding regular services.

**Freeland Primary School** is a highly thought of, well attended school that also attracts pupils from outside the village.

**Freeland Nurseries**, set within an old walled garden, specialises in bedding plants, and also sells a wide range of plants, sundries, vegetables etc.

The Taunton family transformed the village by building the Church of England Parish Church (St. Mary the Virgin) and associated parsonage in 1869 and the school and schoolhouse in 1871. The new buildings, all by J. L. Pearson in a gothic revival theme, provided a unified centre to an otherwise scattered hamlet.

St. Mary's House was built in 1875-6, as a home for retired governesses by the Taunton family. In 1952 a Church of England convent of the Community of Saint Clare moved to the house.

Freeland had several public houses by the later part of the 18th century, The Roslyn House was established in 1738 and reputed to have been a 19th-century pugilists' meeting place called the "Wrostring House". The New Inn, built in 1842, for most of the 19th century was Freeland's only public house. Since 1974 it has been called the Oxfordshire Yeoman.

The school moved to new premises in Parklands in 1964 and is now Freeland Church of England Primary School.

The village expanded from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the 1955 OS maps shows linear development along Wroslyn Road consisting of bungalows and detached houses with large elongated gardens, plus a few dwellings around the Shepherds Hall Inn on the A4095. Later Church View, Walkers Close and The Blowings were built to the east of Wroslyn Road and Parklands to the west, followed by Broadmarsh Lane to the west in the late 1970's. Smaller developments and infill have been the pattern of building since, such as Woodlands, Hurst Lane, Busby Close, Willoughby Fields, The Dawes and Oaklands Close.



© 2013 Graham Lay

Freeland Village Hall

## Geography



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Freeland can be found approximately 2 miles North of Eynsham, 5 miles East of Witney and about 9 miles North West from Oxford city centre, within the local government region of West Oxfordshire District Council. The village has a population of approximately 1,500, living in approximately 580 dwellings. The older part of the village lies around the Green and by the two Churches, with Blenheim Lane and Pigeon House Lane leading off from this area.

Freeland is a linear village nestled within tracts of mature woodland, mixed arable and pastoral fields, that is typical of the area. It lies at between 100 - 110 metres above sea level, several ponds are found within the vicinity, to the east of the village a small network of streams follow a localised valley. The village sits within a strong network of local roads, connecting it up with many other villages of similar standing.

# THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

This plan represents the culmination of over 2 years of consultation and hard work by the steering group.

The plan was launched at a well attended meeting in September 2012, following which the Steering Group was set up and a successful grant application made to Oxfordshire Rural Community Council with match funding from Parish Council to support the process.

Consultations over the next 12 months targeted young people (scouts and guides), singles and couples (evening in the pub) and informal discussion groups to obtain views of families and retired people.

A mini questionnaire was distributed to all households in May and June 2013 of which 91 were returned and collated.

In September 2013, a village fun day was held to raise awareness of the plan. Over £1200 was raised by village groups involved, including Freeland Teddy Girls, the Fettleers, Gardening Club, Freeland Allotments, the Football Club, School Society, Baby and Toddler Group, Pre-School and the District Guiding group. The costs of setting up the events were covered through serving refreshments and also by the very successful photography competition, from which village calendars were produced for sale.

The main questionnaire was delivered at the end of October 2013 to every household in the village (582). By the end of January 2014, 173 had been returned, representing approximately 1/3 of households. Although this response rate was low, the time available to the volunteers working on it meant that they were unable to revisit households to collect questionnaire responses personally.

However, the consultation process was not just about the final questionnaire and the key issues which emerged are reinforced by feedback from the whole consultation process. These have all been taken account of in this plan.

## Demographics:

The demographic information obtained from the questionnaire showed that a higher proportion of responses came from households with people aged over 65. There was a total of 133 people over the age of 65 (32% of the total) living in households who returned a questionnaire. This figure compares favourably with the 2011 census which recorded 375 people aged 65 years and over living in Freeland (24.2% of the population).

Whereas for households with children, the response rate was lower. There was a total of 66 people under the age of 18 (16% of the total) living in households who returned a questionnaire.

It was very clear that a large proportion of responses came from households who had lived in the village for a number of years. Of the 161 responses, 111 (69%) had lived in Freeland for over 10 years and 35 households have lived here for over 30 years. Conversely only 18 responses came from households who moved into the village less than 4 years ago.

It is notable that the large majority of respondent households were first generation residents of the village, with 139 (83%) of respondents being the first generation to live in Freeland. It was also interesting to note the largest proportion of respondent households (63/38%) moved into Freeland from outside of Oxfordshire.



Launch event promotion



Fun day promotion

## COMMUNITY LIFE

When asked the one thing they liked about living in Freeland, two major aspects emerged: The peaceful, rural character 64 (37%) of respondents, and the friendliness and community spirit (56).

Other positive comments on living in Freeland included its location in relation to Witney and Oxford (10), the night sky thanks to no street lights (8) and a sense of security.



The main concern of residents was the lack of a shop 52 (30%) of respondents. Other concerns included lack of street lights (20), traffic (17) and poor public transport / lack of safe cycle routes (16).

Freeland is perceived as a safe, crime free place to live, and people feel safe at home, even at night (168). However 19 respondents did not feel safe going out at night – this was linked to the lack of streetlights.

These broad results were confirmed by feedback from the launch meeting, consultation sessions and the short questionnaire. These events also highlighted the lack of facilities for young people and a need for support / facilities for the elderly and infirm. The long term vacant shop site was also a concern.

When asked which facilities are required to meet future needs, the following were regarded as important: a new shop (134), café (65), warden assisted housing (60) (see other section) and a youth centre (50).

Freeland is a linear village and lacks focal points to walk to, thereby meeting others informally. The loss of the shop over 15 years ago has reduced this further. A new shop and/or a café would serve as a meeting place, reduce car journeys out of the village and the café could potentially act as a social centre for young and old to gather.

Respondents also felt that the following village facilities should be improved: broadband / mobile phone signal (136/153), day services for the elderly (134). At present there is a monthly club (the Tuesday Club), but there is scope to increase the daytime use of the village hall for a more regular facility. The play area was also seen as needing improvement (115), with more equipment for older children (111) and a tennis court was suggested along with goal posts for public use. A welcome pack for newcomers is already underway by Gardening Club and this idea could be expanded.

## Community



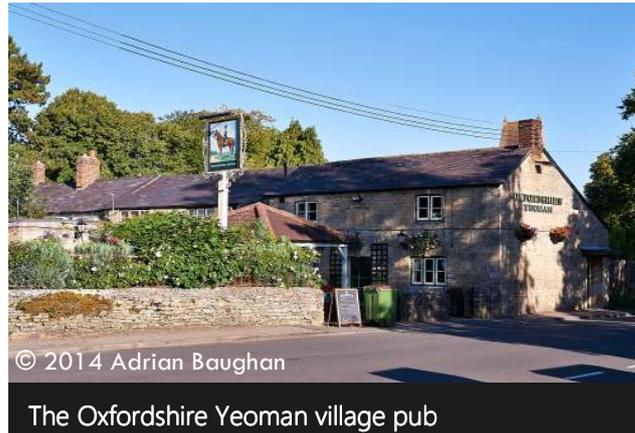
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There is a good range of clubs and activities available in the village, these are detailed on the website:

- Art Club
- Baby and Toddlers
- Bell Ringers
- Brownies
- Exercise Club
- Football Club
- Gardening Club
- Guides
- Knit and Natter
- Orchestra
- Scouts
- St Mary's Toddlers
- Tuesday Club
- Wine Club

## Communication – Website and Grapevine

The village benefits from a monthly newsletter, the Grapevine, which is circulated throughout the village by volunteers and was read by 167 of the questionnaire respondents and the comprehensive village website was regularly viewed by 127. Both are invaluable in publicising village events and news, although (largely amongst the older generation) access to computers limits use of the website.



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The Oxfordshire Yeoman village pub

There were a number of ideas put forward for **new clubs**, and some are already being established – e.g. Cinema in village hall and Women's Institute – the first meeting was 15th April 2014.

Clubs suggested by respondents: cycling, running, men's fitness, cricket, archery, hiking, table tennis and gentle exercise - e.g. Thai Chi.

Interest groups – History, University of the Third Age, debating, wildlife / nature clubs, dog training

Residents would like there to be more village wide events and 92 respondents would like the Fun Day as an annual event for the village.

## Recommendations

- Re-establish shop / café / meeting place working group
- Set up Youth Centre / Day Centre working groups – investigate use of Village Hall / CRF for lunch club / youth club
- Publicise system for support / advocates for the elderly / infirm.
- Improve play area with equipment for older children plus trim trail.
- Display a list of existing clubs on the village notice boards and circulate a list of suggested clubs for people to initiate.
- Prepare a village welcome event / pack and organize a club fair once a year.
- Set up a Community co-ordination group – to plan for future community events

# ENVIRONMENT

People value the peaceful, rural nature of Freeland, with its distinctive character of garden hedges, well tended gardens and wide verges of mown grass full of daffodil bulbs in spring. Freeland is not on a through route, and the linear pattern of the village, interspersed by open fields, allows views out and a sense of space. The majority of respondents (153) considered it was important to protect existing open spaces and woodlands in order to keep its rural character.

## Important assets to preserve:

Open spaces particularly mentioned as being valued by villagers include the playing field (the only major public open space, which is intensively used), the Green, Broadmarsh Woods and Vincents Wood, with its spring display of bluebells.

Views out towards Church Hanborough Spire, Long Hanborough, Wytham Hill, and towards Freeland House on the approach to the village from Cuckoo Lane.

The historic core of village – St Mary’s Church and associated buildings, Freeland Nurseries walled garden, the stables, Freeland House, the Methodist Church, the Oxfordshire Yeoman.



© 2013 Julie Simmonds

Views to the church



© 2013 Graham Lay

The pond on the green

The lack of light pollution at night was a frequent comment in the initial consultations, and continuing with no street lights was considered a priority by 101 respondents to the full questionnaire. Creation of a community woodland / orchard was also important (81) and extending the allotments (66).

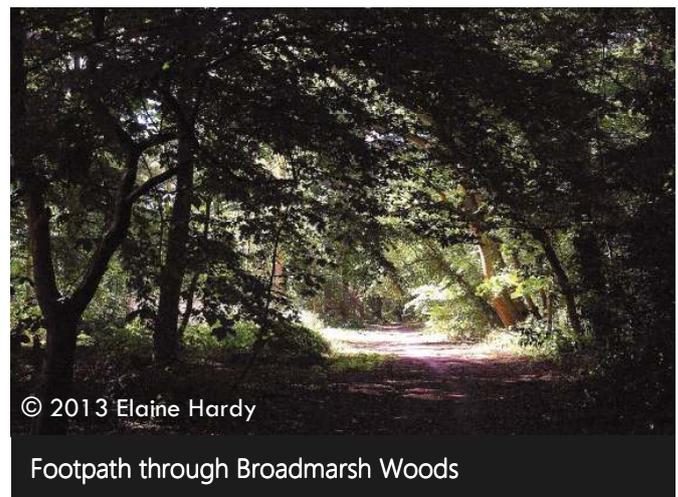
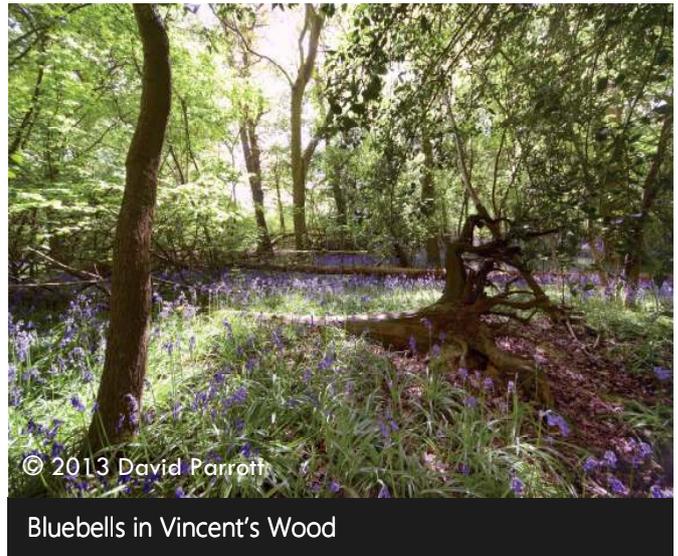
A number of respondents thought the village would benefit from more trees, shrubs and bulbs (38, 28, 44) and many would like to see areas of wildflowers (62).

Although only a small proportion of respondents to the main questionnaire considered that new footpaths were needed, feedback from consultations indicated that there was desire for more footpaths, particularly links to Long Hanborough and Eynsham. Possible additional footpaths suggested were the ride to Cuckoo Lane past the Nursing Home and a more direct access to the field behind Church View.

A large proportion of respondents 69 (40%) were willing to volunteer for an environment group and were willing to contribute towards a Conservation Fund 102 (59%).

There are some detractions to this sense of rural peace - untidy overgrown areas were mentioned, in particular the former shop site, but also the copse between Broadmarsh Lane and Wroslyn Road. There was concern over the footpaths along Wroslyn Road (see "Getting About"). Additionally there is a problem with dog mess throughout the village and overflowing waste bins – both dog and litter - 72 respondents commented on the need for more dog waste bins.

The main priorities for a more sustainable Freeland were seen as improving public transport (108) and more cycle routes (see "Getting About"). More recycling facilities (70) local energy generation (62), and access to car sharing (40) were also seen as relatively important.



## Recommendations

- Apply for Conservation Area status for historic core of village and consider other designations in the village to protect key assets and areas.
- Seek site for Community Wood / Orchard
- Create local environment volunteer group to protect wildlife and carry out habitat creation projects
- Investigate best sites for more waste bins (dog and litter)
- Investigate site for recycling centre
- Enlarge Allotments

# GETTING ABOUT

## ROADS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLES, FOOTPATHS

Although Wroslyn Road is a thoroughfare between the A40 (Witney to Oxford Road) and the A4095 (Witney to Woodstock Road), the majority of respondents did not indicate any major concerns with the volume or speed of traffic through the village, with 106 respondents stating the speed limits within the area are adequate.

## Roads and parking

Car ownership is high in the village, with 95 (55%) of respondents having 2 or more cars in the household and an equal number relying on a car to get to work for all or part of their journey. This is partly due to lack of alternative public transport options.

The main concerns expressed during consultations are due to the increasing volume of traffic and speeding through the village (Wroslyn Road runs in virtually a straight line through the village) and this is exacerbated by parking, notably near the school at the start and finish of the school day.

The conflict between parking, passing traffic and safety of children by the school is the over-riding concern to many villagers (110 respondents said parking at school not adequate, 84 said it was the main area of concern in relation to traffic in the village). Additionally parking around the village hall and church is also considered a problem with 55 people saying parking at village hall was not adequate.



When asked if they would like to see more traffic calming measures within the village, there was an almost equal split between those in favour of more measures (90 respondents) and those against more measures (71 respondents). However, over two thirds of the respondents (97) felt the school children would benefit from a lollypop person. Notably, nine people expressed a willingness to volunteer to act as lollypop person, which would provide an excellent pool of people to share the role.

The junctions onto the A4095 to the north of the village, and the A40 to the south are of concern to many residents – as both involve difficult right hand turns onto main roads with only a minimal protected zone between the carriageways on the A40.

Another concern mentioned in consultations was gritting of roads and pavements in winter – with the need for more grit boxes being spread through the village more frequently and clearly labelled.





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## Public Rights of Way

There are 10 Public Rights of Way in Freeland: Two of these are Bridleways (BR-1 and BR-2) - roads suitable for horse riders or walkers but not vehicles, and eight are Footpaths (FP-3 to FP-10) - suitable only for walkers.

They fan out from the Village:

**To the East:** FP-5 and FP-6, these both join up with Long Hanborough,

**To the West:** FP-7 and FP-10, these both join up with Cuckoo Lane,

**To the South:** BR-2, FP-3 and FP-4, heading towards Eynsham and Church Hanborough,

**To the Southwest:** BR-1, FP-8 and FP-9, heading in the direction of Barnard Gate.

For more detailed information on their locations refer to the Freeland website or an Ordnance Survey map.

## Public transport

Freeland has a regular bus service (the number 11 bus) to and from Witney and Oxford running hourly during the day Monday to Saturday.

The 242 runs hourly along A4095 between Witney and Woodstock, passing Hanborough station. However the timetable does not link to train times.

43 respondents use the buses regularly, and 74 occasionally, 18 use the train from Hanborough regularly and 57 occasionally, However 110 respondents stated they would use the bus services if they were extended (question 45). Of greatest importance to people would be an extension to the No.11 bus timetable to run later in the day during Monday to Saturday (105) and also a late night service on Friday and Saturday (93).

Prior to the questionnaires being produced in November 2013, the hourly 242 service which between Witney and Woodstock, passing Hanborough station, also ran through the village at certain times during the day. However, since the questionnaires were returned the 242 service has been replaced by the 233 service which runs along the A4095 and no longer through the village.

During consultations, it was suggested that the 242 service should have actually been extended to come through Freeland more frequently and link with the train times at Hanborough station. Unfortunately, it is unlikely this will return unless more people call for and use an extended service.



© 2013 Tony Langley

Bus stop at the Oxfordshire Yeoman

## Footpaths and cycle routes:

The number of footpaths in the village is largely regarded as adequate, and the village woods, walks and wildlife were high on people's lists of things they liked about the village (22 responses to the short questionnaire and commented on in consultation groups). However a frequent comment in both questionnaires and consultations was that footpaths could be better connected to create circular routes. During wet weather many footpaths are difficult underfoot for less able people. The public footpaths in Broadmarsh Woods have particular problems with drainage and accessibility.

(Note that information on footpaths including circular routes are available on the village website.)

Although only 38 respondents to the main questionnaire considered that new footpaths were needed, feedback from consultations indicated that there was desire for more footpaths, particularly links to Long Hanborough and Eynsham. Possible additional footpaths suggested were the ride to Cuckoo Lane past the Nursing Home and a more direct access to the field behind Church View.

The main concern throughout all consultations was better cycle routes, and in particular a safe route for cycling / walking to Eynsham and Long Hanborough. Footpaths to both do exist but need to be better signposted. The Travellers site creates a perceived personal safety risk to some.

53 respondents to the main questionnaire are regular cyclists, 10 of whom cycle to work. The remainder cycle for pleasure, exercise or to the shops at Hanborough. The main deterrent to cycling was lack of safe cycle routes (37)

Several people suggested in both questionnaires that the track from the Coach House Veterinary Clinic/Freeland House to Cuckoo Lane should be for informal village use, together with the adjoining fields, which are already used unofficially (with consent) by dog walkers.

Other suggestions were for more routes through Broadmarsh Woods and use of the Blowings Wood. The idea was also put forward of allowing access from Walkers Close to the footpath to avoid walking past Blenheim Cottage

Footways along the roads through the village are uneven in places, which was a concern to the older residents and those with prams / pushchairs, whilst dog mess is also a problem – both are ongoing tasks for the Parish Council.

## Recommendations

- Encourage walking to school
- Additional parking at bottom of the sports field or in Chapel Field
- Investigate improvements to junction of Wroslyn Road and A 4095
- Investigate traffic calming measures at the 2 conflict points: the school and village hall/pub
- Consider car sharing scheme
- Send a Transport Representative to OCC meetings
- Look into running shuttle bus to Eynsham and Hanborough
- Improve surfacing where possible on bridleways to Long Hanborough and Eynsham for less able.
- Re-establish cycle working group to investigate route possibilities to Eynsham
- Approach Eynsham Hall landowner about unofficial use of route from Freeland House to Cuckoo Lane as an alternative to the poor public footpath across Broadmarsh Woods.

## WORKING LIFE

Freeland is a thriving community with little unemployment and many small businesses run from home. The majority of villagers travel out of the village to work, most by car. (See Getting About). The nearest secondary school is Bartholomew in Eynsham and is attended by the majority of young people in the village, using the free school buses provided. A few use public transport to schools elsewhere.

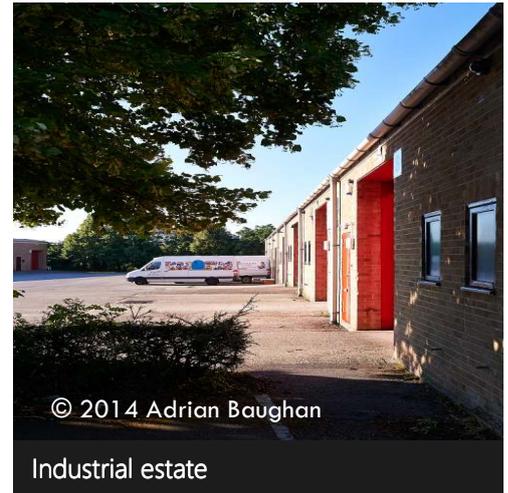
Employment opportunities within the village are relatively limited. There is a small industrial estate established in the 1970's on the site of a former concrete block works. The large, unattractive units in this estate are under let (at any one time less than half are in use.) Some of the occupied units have inappropriate usage and are causing problems of noise and air quality to houses close by.

Other employers in the village are the primary school, Freeland Nurseries, Freeland House nursing home and the pub. The village shop and post office closed over 15 years ago and despite planning permission for a new smaller shop with housing, the site remains vacant and for many, an eyesore in the centre of the village. This was a major concern raised at consultation meetings.

The number of people listed as unemployed on the questionnaire (61) appears high, but all these were over 65, reflecting the demographic of respondents. Therefore it would appear there is minimal unemployment in the village.

25 respondents worked from home and their primary concern was communications – i.e. the lack of mobile phone signal and slow broadband. At the point of writing up this plan, fibre optic broadband has arrived in the village so this is no longer an issue.

A meeting place for home workers such as a café was a frequent issue raised during consultations (see Community Life).



Industrial estate



Freeland Nurseries



Freeland House

## Recommendations

- Look into possible sites for a mobile phone mast that could bring revenue to the village.
- Re-establish shop / café / meeting place working group

# HOUSING AND PLANNING CONTROL

West Oxfordshire is one of the most expensive places to live in Oxfordshire. In order to sustain a well balanced community in Freeland it is important to assess our local housing need and plan accordingly. Any development must be balanced against the need to protect the local environment and what people enjoy most about Freeland, namely, the peaceful, rural nature of the village.



The results of the questionnaire showed that:

- 61 (38%) of respondents think Freeland needs more housing
- 48 (28%) are not sure
- 57 (34%) do not think Freeland needs more housing

In terms of housing, almost half of the respondents thought that 15 houses or less should be built over the next 15 years. This is significantly lower than the 41 houses built in the village between 2001 and 2011. 40 (29%) of the respondents considered 16-30 houses and 19 (14%) considered 31-50 houses should be built. Only 12% of respondents considered more than 50 houses should be built over the next 15 years.

Any development should take account of the aging population of the village as well as the need for affordable housing to enable families to stay in the village. The aim of any housing development must be to maintain and bolster community life and enhance the character and appearance of the village. High quality development, both in terms of design and use of local materials should be supported. Respondents felt a variety of housing types should be built, the priorities were:

- Low cost private market housing
- Housing association shared ownership homes
- Sheltered housing
- Retirement homes

89 (60%) of respondents felt that the village should financially benefit from new housing. This can be via Section 106 payments directly to the Parish Council, through physical infrastructure, improvements to the primary school or via ring fencing a proportion of the New Homes Bonus.

To do this the village needs to take a proactive stance to help steer development to areas that it favours and seek to defend areas where it does not. The Parish Council must take the lead in this and has recently changed the date of its monthly meeting to align better with the West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Committee meetings. Better communication and coordination is required given the often tight timescales to respond to proposals that come forward.

It is recommended that a "wish" list for improved services and facilities is set up and maintained by the Parish Council and that this is made known to any developments coming forward.

131 (87%) of the respondents to the questionnaire think developers should consult the Parish Council before making an application. This is important, and it is recommended that the Parish Council should organise a Parish Meeting for any major developments. Developers of schemes of 5 or more houses should be encouraged to undertake a public consultation exhibition so that local residents can find out and ask questions about any development proposals. The community is encouraged to take an active role in responding to both the District and Parish Councils in relation to any development proposals.

## Wider Planning Issues

Unfortunately, many development decisions are outside the control of the local community. Central Government is currently actively supporting housing growth. Freeland needs to be aware of this wider picture and changing planning rules. The Parish Council must keep up to date on the fast changing rules in order to help advise the parishioners on key matters.

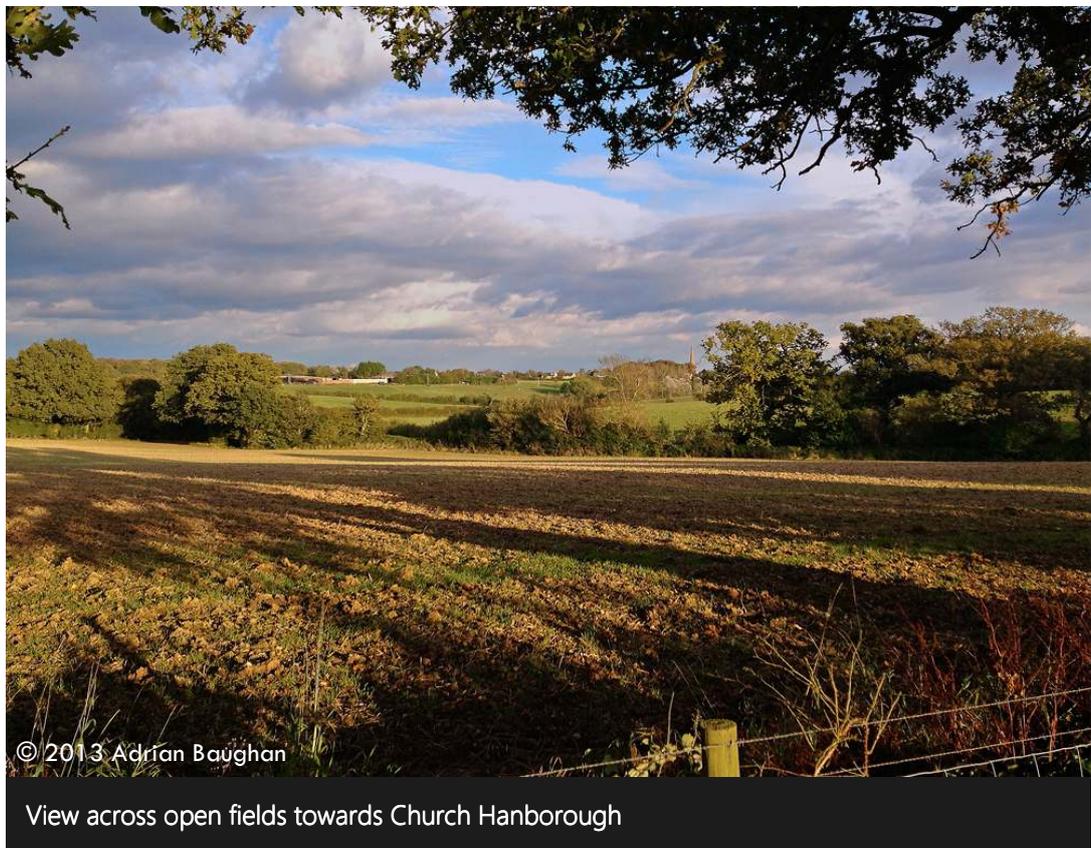
At a District level, Freeland is classified by West Oxfordshire District Council as a "larger village". This allows infill and rounding off development within the existing built up area of the village. This policy has resulted in 41 houses built in the ten years between 2001 and 2011. However, given the small scale nature of the developments (i.e. less than 10 dwellings each) the village has not benefited financially or in kind despite adding to the requirement for local services and facilities.



The Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment, published in April 2014 assessed the likely housing need in the county over the next 20 years. The conclusion of the research was that circa 100,000 houses was needed. The implication of this report for West Oxfordshire District Council is a doubling of its annual housing target. WODC is required to identify sites for these houses in the District and it is updating its Local Plan to reflect increased housing need.

Being a larger village Freeland may have to accommodate a proportion of this housing need over the next 20 years, in addition to the windfall sites (back gardens and redevelopment sites) that historically have come forward as houses and land is sold. The Parish Council and local residents should actively engage in the emerging Local Plan and submit comments when needed to help shape planning policies for the next 20 years.

WODC is also required to maintain a rolling five year supply of housing land plus a buffer of 5%. If it is unable to do so it is required to “grant planning permission for applications unless the impacts of doing so significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits” [National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 14]. Given the increase in housing numbers WODC is currently unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply and speculative planning applications are being submitted to take advantage of this shortfall. Long Hanborough is facing pressure from at least two competing sites for development in the order of 220 houses.



The Parish Council is also being proactive in open a debate about future development. Given the results of the questionnaire, this should not be seen as opening the doors to development, but it is clear that communities that have been proactive in the past have a significantly greater chance of defending developments that it does not support and helping shape and benefit developments that it does if it has taken a positive stance rather than being reactive.

Preference should be given to redevelopment of previously developed land over use of greenfield land.

# Quality Design and Materials

Any development that does take place in the village (be it extensions or larger scale growth) must be of a high standard in terms of both design and use of materials. The aim should be to enhance the character and appearance of the village. The Parish Council assesses all planning applications and it is recommended that it draws up a list of general design requirements for all new development in the village against which to assess each application.

Consideration should also be given to designating certain areas/items in the village to control development, for example, conservation areas, assets of community value, tree preservation orders etc.



Sympathetic character and design of Village Hall



New build infill in Freeland

## Recommendations

- Set up a development options group to investigate areas of the village where development could be supported and areas where it should not.
- Parish Council to draw up a “wish” list for improvements to services and facilities.
- To consider designations in the village to protect key assets and areas.
- To take a proactive stance to protect the village, whilst encouraging high quality development should it come forward.
- Prepare a village design guide: a set of design criteria and list of local materials that developments should be expected to use.
- To encourage the whole community to take an active role in the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan to help shape planning policies in the area for the next 20 years.
- Parish Council to keep up to date with changing planning rules and regulations.
- Any developments should be discussed with the Parish Council and if considered to be important to arrange a public meeting to discuss the proposals.
- Developers of any larger scale scheme (5 or more) must hold a public exhibition prior to submission of any planning application and be available to answer questions about the proposals.
- Improve procedures for improving communication and responding to development proposals, given the often tight timescales set by the District Council.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## High Priority

- Re-establish **shop / café / meeting place** working group
- Set up **Youth Centre / Day Centre** working groups - investigate use of Village Hall / CRF for lunch club / youth club
- Investigate **improvements to junction of Wroslyn Road and A 4095**
- Investigate **traffic calming measures** at the 2 conflict points: the school and village hall/pub
- Look into possible sites for a **mobile phone mast** that could bring revenue to the village.
- Take a **proactive stance to protect the village**, whilst encouraging high quality development should it come forward.
- Set up a **development options group** to investigate areas of the village where development could be supported and areas where it should not.
- Parish Council to draw up a "**wish**" list for **improvements** to services and facilities.
- To encourage the whole community to take an active role in the **emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan** to help shape planning policies in the area for the next 20 years.
- Any developments should be discussed with the Parish Council and if considered to be important to **arrange a public meeting** to discuss the proposals.
- Developers of any **larger scale scheme** (5 or more) must hold a public exhibition prior to submission of any planning application and be available to answer questions about the proposals.

## Quick fixes

- Publicise **system for support** / advocates for the elderly / infirm.
- Improve **play area** with equipment for older children plus trim trail.
- Encourage **walking to school**.

- **Additional parking** at bottom of the sports field or in Chapel Field
- Display a list of **existing clubs** on the village notice boards and circulate a list of **suggested clubs** for people to initiate.
- Prepare a **village welcome event / pack** and organize a club fair once a year.
- Send a **Transport Representative** to OCC meetings
- Parish Council to keep up to date with **changing planning rules and regulations**.
- Improve **procedures for improving communication** and responding to development proposals, given the often tight time-scales set by the District Council.

## Longer term improvements

- Apply for **Conservation Area status** for historic core of village and consider other designations in the village to protect key assets and areas.
- Prepare a **village design guide**: a set of design criteria and list of local materials that developments should be expected to use.
- Set up a **Community co-ordination group** - to plan for future community events
- Seek site for **Community Wood / Orchard**
- Create **local environment volunteer group** to protect wildlife and carry out habitat creation projects
- Re-establish **cycle working group** to investigate route possibilities to Eynsham.
- Approach Eynsham Hall landowner about unofficial use of **route from Freeland House to Cuckoo Lane** as an alternative to the poor public footpath across Broadmarsh Woods.
- Investigate best sites for more **waste bins** (dog and litter).
- Investigate site for **recycling centre**
- Enlarge **Allotments**
- Consider **car sharing** scheme
- Look into running **shuttle bus** to Eynsham and Hanborough



# Freeland Community Led Plan



## The Community Led Plan Steering Group :

Adrian Baughan, Catherine Bean, Dawn Mills, Lyndsay Brailsford, Mary Ann Canning, Nicola Hills, Richard Beardsley, Rob Linnell, Steve Liddell and Tony Langley would like to thank the many people who contributed to the development of this plan, including:

- The villagers who volunteered to help deliver flyers and questionnaires
- The village groups and individuals who gave up time to take up and organise the Freeland Fun Day
- Residents who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire
- Oxfordshire Rural Community Council for funding the planning process
- Freeland Parish Council and WODC for its ongoing support towards community development
- All the volunteers who helped with any aspect of the planning process and everyone who bought a calendar

## Individuals, businesses and community groups contributing raffle prizes at the Fun Day:

- Bridewell Organic Gardens, Canis Dog Grooming, Ian Paxton (Chillies 2U), Jane Druce and Paul Barrow-Starkey (Phoenix Card Traders), Kaitburin Thaiboxing, Le-Anne Bustin (A Touch of Beauty, Freeland), Louise Edwards (Avon products), Mandy Nichols (Purerelaxation UK), Off the Hook Fish & Chips, Oxford Sailing Club

## The following sponsors of the calendar:

- Country Landscaping, Freeland House Nursing Home, Freeland Nurseries, JG Artwork & Designs, Kardos Recovery Services, Mike Tinson Local Milkman - Dairycrest, Oxford Memorial Benches, Oxford Welding Supplies Ltd, Russ Canning & Company Ltd.

