

Your Parish Plan – it's about 'our' 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 on the Parish Council's web site.

www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/parishplan. 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 views 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 is a 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.

Please get involved, it is in your interest to do so!

Anthony Bickmore, Chair Parish Plan Steering Group

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A message from Mark Orson, Chair, Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council

As the work on the action plan progresses the Parish Plan will provide a statement of the Parish's needs and views on issues such as Transport, Environment, Community and Housing including local level projects and is a source of reference for the Local Development Framework. It is therefore one of the most important opportunities that parishioners have to contribute to the thinking of how our community should evolve.

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 annex 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 by the developers.

ACTION led by Parish Council; responsibility resting with HCC.

SUGGESTED TIMING – 12 months.

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

ACTION led by Parish Plan group to produce ideas and working plan for consultation via parish Council.

SUGGESTED TIMING – 12 months.

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 that 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) **ACTION** Parish Plan group to produce ideas and working plan for stakeholder consultation via parish Council.

SUGGESTED TIMING – 12 months.

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 and enjoyed by residents, and walkers from further afield, 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. **ACTION** Parish Plan group to produce ideas and working plan for stakeholder consultation via Parish Council. **SUGGESTED TIMING** – 12 months.

Community

5 A theme from the survey was an aspiration for more community events. Those who have organised events in the parish have 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. **ACTION** Parish Plan group to produce ideas and working plan for stakeholder consultation via parish

Council. **SUGGESTED TIMING** – 12 months.

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'. **ACTION** Parish Council. **SUGGESTED TIMING** – 12 months.

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. **ACTION** Parish Council; via EHDC. **SUGGESTED TIMING** – 18 months.

The Next Steps are.....

Contact me if you have a wish to get involved or Mark Orson in 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 new www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk

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

A word from Deborah Clark our District Councillor

A lot of work has been put in to preparing this Parish Plan – well done! There are some really good projects here and I look forward to seeing the ideas develop

What's more, the priorities you have identified will help the Council to understand what is important to this community. I will ask officers to refer to the Parish Plan whenever decisions are being made that concern Eastwick and Gilston

A word from Roger Beeching our Hertfordshire County Councillor

“This Parish Plan is a most thorough , well researched and considered document. I whole heartedly endorse it's contents and look forward to it's incorporation in the Local Development Framework.