



The Oakington and Westwick Community Plan
Foundations for Our Future

NEWS #2 (of 3) Housing & Environment

This is the second of three pull-out, Information Sheets providing baseline data for the Oakington & Westwick Community Planning questionnaire.

2 Housing

2.1 Housing and growth

The CCC 2001 Census data can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/puojkko>

It is hoped that Census 2011 data should be available before the Community Plan is completed.

2.1.1 Housing needs

Listed below are details of the number of housing applicants who have a connection to Oakington & Westwick. A review of the register for Oakington took place in March 2012.

beds	bed requirements for applicants under 60				bed requirements for applicants aged 60+			total	compared to 2011
	1	2	3	4+	1	2	3		
need	6	11	8	3	1	3	1	33	-10

This information is taken from: the **South Cambs District Council** (SCDC) HOUSING REGISTER INFORMATION (DECEMBER 2012) Leaflet, see

<https://tinyurl.com/n9j9eew>

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

<http://www.acre.org.uk/> is about to undertake an affordable homes Housing Needs survey. For a useful guide to the role of community leadership in delivering rural affordable housing, see:

<https://tinyurl.com/qhyee2>

2.1.2 Housing development

The Strategic Housing Land Availability

Assessment (SHLAA) is one of a number of evidence based supporting studies produced or commissioned by the SCDC to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. The SHLAA was first published in July 2012, and includes an assessment for **Oakington & Westwick** (O&W). For a map of the proposed sites see:

<https://tinyurl.com/pwh4hts>

All these assessments concluded that none of the proposed sites were suitable for development.

There are usually only proposals for minor, infill or extension developments going through the SCDC

planning office. There are no brownfield/greenfield sites in O&W. Nor are there any exception sites (provision for the development of sites for affordable housing outside the settlement boundary of villages).

2.2 Local Plan

A Local Plan is different from a

Community Plan. A Local Plan is Council initiated, while a Community Plan is formed by residents.

A Local Plan sets out the planning policies to guide the development and use of the land in the district up to 2031. SCDC is currently drawing up their Local Plan, see:

<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/services/local-plan>

2.3 Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is also different from a Community Plan.

The government has introduced the community right to do neighbourhood planning through the Localism Act:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide some aspects of the future of the places where they live and work. Neighbourhood planning is optional, not compulsory, but can only influence where housing development should happen. It can plan on more, but not on less than the development set out in the Local Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan is quite an ambitious enterprise and is expensive, but the Questionnaire provides an initial way of testing local interest and may therefore be useful for future discussions and planning.

For details, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

2.4 Greenbelt land

Policies are changing with regard to greenbelt.

The originally proposed greenbelt between O&W and

COMMUNITY IDEAS & ENERGY

The new playground at the recreation ground was an excellent example of teamwork between residents and the Parish Council.

Anne Christie led a team of residents to raise funds of more than £100,000 during 2010-2012 from grants and local fundraising for this significant addition to our village.

It is expected that this Community Planning process will identify other projects that residents can get behind to make O&W an even better place for us all.



Northstowe has come under threat, but O&W Parish Council has applied for a 'Local Green Space' between O&W and Northstowe.

2.5 Conservation

The conservation areas in O&W, and approximate positions of most of the O&W listed buildings are shown on the HOUSING map provided with this pullout.

- Westwick Hall
- BARN, WESTWICK HALL FARMHOUSE
- WESTWICK HALL FARMHOUSE
- CHURCH FARMHOUSE, 56, HIGH STREET
- 25 AND 27, HIGH STREET
- 68, HIGH STREET
- 69, HIGH STREET
- CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, HIGH STREET
- WHITEHALL FARMHOUSE, 13, LONGSTANTON ROAD
- Plus eight cantilevered or mushroom topped pillboxes at RAF Oakington, arranged around the east and south side of the former airfield (not shown on map) - what will happen to these with Northstowe development is unknown.

For full details, see:

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/cambridgeshire/oakington+and+westwick>

There are very few **Tree Preservation Orders** (TPOs) in O&W. Information from the Trees & Landscape Officer of SCDC is unclear and very hard to include on a map.

2.6 O&W Parish Council

Over the last two years the O&W Parish Council has been active in the area of Population, Household and Development, on these things:

- Localism Act
- Planning applications
- SCDC empty homes consultation
- SCDC housing strategy consultation

3 Environment

The total **area** of the O&W is 1862 acres (754ha) with 630 houses, roadsides and gardens, 5 farms (mostly County Council holdings), 2 nurseries on Dry Drayton Road, the Cambridge Road allotments, and grave yards around the Parish Church and next to the Sports Pavilion.

The soil is heavy where the Gault or Kimmeridge clay outcrops, or light and sandy where the Lower Greensand outcrops. These deposits, eroded over millennia, were first laid down in the Cretaceous period, about 115 million years ago. The landscape is largely flat, the land is around 8-15 metres above sea level with a water table that is surprisingly close to the soil surface in winter.

The farming is largely arable and where they have heavy soil, local farmers choose winter-sown crops, mainly wheat and oil seed rape. In the spring of 2012 a large area of potatoes was planted under contract and this encouraged birds like lapwing, which were possibly attracted by the gaps in the crops for feeding or even egg laying, opportunities usually denied to them by the dense growth of winter crops. There is a

significant area of pasture, providing grass for sheep (Mansell's Farm).

The air quality is reasonable and clearly better than the middle of Cambridge. The main dangers are the traffic passing through the village and on the A14. Exhaust emissions from the A14 reach the village given the main wind direction is from the south west. Traffic flow, as and when Northstowe develops, is likely to cause some extra concerns. Light pollution includes lights at the guided bus stop, the recreation ground and the street lights, although these are being replaced with less polluting white lights this autumn.



Verges in our parish are the responsibility of **Cambridge City Council** (CCC) or SCDC. The Parish Council pays for the cutting of grass at the recreation ground and Stocks Green.

3.1 Allotments

O&W currently has allotments on Cambridge Road. These are on private ground and have been there for many years.

Because there has been a waiting list for several years, the Parish Council has been battling with Shire Hall to secure more allotments. Unfortunately land allocated for allotments at the back of Church View has been found to be contaminated from wartime airfield use. A new site nearby is currently under investigation.

3.2 Village green

After several years of bureaucratic battling, the Parish Council has had the small patch of ground at the junction of High St with Water Lane which houses the village sign designated as a (very) nominal Village Green.

Oakington, like many Cambridgeshire villages has a very long and narrow layout, whose built form has evolved over centuries. The Anglican church is typically located at the northern extreme of the village, due to re-location of residents after the Black Death in the 14th century. But sadly, along the way, our community never got itself a nice central village green with a cricket pitch and pub.

There have been suggestions about digging a lake to create a park and meeting place with attractive environmental and landscape features. Fish stocking, floating islands for bird nesting, hides and a nature centre could be considered. Such a lake could also provide a balancing pond for flood reduction.

3.3 Public spaces

O&W is blessed with several green spaces including a large recreation ground, which now includes the Sports Pavilion, **Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)**, childrens' play area, community orchard, dog walking area and tennis courts.



There are other green gaps in our built-up area including the two PVAAs (see below), the large field between the school and the recreation ground and the village school enjoys large grounds.

There are no **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)** or national or local nature reserves in the village but there are some important wildlife habitats and species on the local farmland and rough grass, some covered by Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan, e. g. skylark.

The graveyards can provide important habitats for wildlife and perhaps they can be managed even more sensitively for people and wild plants and animals.

Archaeological digs near the Pavilion unearthed a Saxon Burial ground. The dig will continue for another two years. Some people would like a heritage centre where specimens could be housed and displayed.

Mansell Wood, planted about 20 years ago, breaks up the landscape and provides valuable wildlife habitat.

Nearby **Centenary Wood** between Oakington and Girton was planted to celebrate 100 years of the County Farms Estate, with about 8,000 trees and shrubs. Both woods were planted by local people as community woodlands and both woods include footpaths for public access.

Next to the guided bus stop in Westwick is a wild flower meadow, with a fine display of ox-eye daisies. These may give way over time to other wildflower species as the nutrient status changes.

3.4 Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA)

Oakington has two PVAAs: part of the field near the Crossroads and the horse exercising field between High St and Water Lane.

The criteria used for assessing PVAA sites are as follows:

- The green area must be demonstrably special to a local community;
- The green space must hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including

as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;

- The green space must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The green area must be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land;
- Most green areas or open space will not be appropriate. Must be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.

Quite how the SCDC decided on our two PVAAs is hard to find out, but we have them. It would be interesting though to consider how our community might improve these PVAA sites in Oakington to more closely meet the above criteria.

The SCDC web site has further information on PVAAs at: <https://tinyurl.com/pdfey8c>

3.5 Areas prone to flooding

There are three water courses, no wider than a few metres, which bring water north from Girton and Histon and east from Bar Hill. They come together near Mansell Wood, to become the Beck Brook, called a river by the **Environment Agency (EA)**. The water unfortunately runs through tunnels under bridges in Dry Drayton Road, Cambridge Road and Cottenham Road in Westwick, towards Rampton, before entering the Great Ouse near Smithy Fen. The management of these water courses is the responsibility of the EA, although land owners either side of them are required to keep the banks clear to specified distances. These water courses are part of an agricultural drainage system that carries water from the field drains which are largely maintained by farmers. Unlike many parishes in the fens, there is no Drainage Board covering this area. The concreting and tarmacking of Bar Hill added significantly to the flow through O&W. The building of Northstowe is seen as an additional flooding risk but the extent of this is not yet clear. And likewise, the University development west of Cambridge threatens more flow through Girton and into Westwick.

There is a small overgrown 'village' pond next to Crossways Garage. Another pond is shown on Ordnance Survey maps, opposite this pond in Longstanton Road, but has not been seen in living memory. There is also a one acre lake on private land on the west extremity of the village which acts as a local balancing pond, and another balancing pond at the Tomato Farm. On the Airfield a lake, called Sapper Lake, was dug as part of a military training course, and attracts many wild geese. Although there are several garden ponds, there are no other areas of open water in the village.

The Environment Agency (EA) flood map:

<https://tinyurl.com/pluaukg>

indicates areas of risk of flooding in O&W, 1 in a 100 years and 1 in a 1,000 years.

The 100-year flood level is 9.15 m over sea level.

One idea for reducing the likelihood of flooding in O&W is to dig a balancing pond, which would store a large volume of water temporarily, water which would otherwise flood homes.

3.6 Sustainability

It is clearly up to all residents to ensure the minimum waste of resources (energy, especially fossil fuels and water), reducing pollution and wasted food, encouraging biodiversity and encouraging a more



vibrant and helpful community.

Currently the three bins for each household seem to work well. Blue bins for recycling and green bins for garden and green waste are collected fortnightly. Black bins for the rest of the rubbish are collected fortnightly in the intervening week. Bigger items, clothing, cardboard, soil and hard core can be taken to the local recycling centre which is about 5km. away between Impington and Milton. SCDC will collect bulky household items by arrangement. There is a charge of £30.00 for the first three items and £5.00 per extra item booked at the same time.

O&W has a small litter problem which gets a lot worse when bags and paper from the car boot sale on Saturdays, blow towards the village. There are litter bins at bus shelters opposite Midfield Lodge and at Saxon Way, a bin on Stocks Green, at the recreation ground and outside the shop. There are dog litter bins on the public footpath at Mill Road/Water Lane, at the recreation ground, and by the Baptist Church in the High Street.

There are recycling bins for clothes and DVDs etc at the car park near the recreation ground and emptied by the SCDC.

Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP) is a membership club for parishes within SCDC. Its purpose is to help parishes and communities of South Cambridgeshire to reduce energy bills, tackle climate change and build a more sustainable future. Oakington joined this year.

The idea is that by working together communities can explore ways to become more sustainable. A dedicated officer is able to offer advice and support to the members. There are a number of highly successful projects including a local Green Deal project, Gamlingay Community Energy Project and energy assessment initiatives.

For more information, see:

<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/sustainable-parish-energy-partnership-spep>

3.7 Parish precept

Each year all residents receive a 'council tax' demand from SCDC. Included in the bill is the precept from your Parish Council which pays for the running and administration of this parish; costs such as maintenance of parish-owned land and property and insurance. The current precept is £34,438, covered by approx. 600 households.

It also pays for the salary of our Parish Clerk who carries out a great deal of work in public and behind the scenes to keep our wheels running smoothly.

3.8 O&W Parish Council

Over the last two years the O&W Parish Council has been active in the area of Natural Environment, on these things:

- airfield - hedge
- allotments
- archeological dig test pits
- Cambridgeshire Strategy for Flood Risk Management consultation
- Church footpath – clearing ivy and tree roots
- Coles Lane - protruding manhole cover
- Coles Lane/Water lane - tree roots in footpath
- Cottenham Road - potholes
- Crossroads - pond clearance
- Crossroads - blocked drains
- dogs on recreation ground
- Longstanton Road - overgrown footway
- Mansell Wood – new bridge
- Martyrs graves - weeding
- Mill Road - hedge cutting
- Mill Road - potholes
- notice boards
- open spaces study
- Pinney Church View - hedge cutting
- recreation ground - dog fencing
- recreation ground - enhanced grass cutting
- recreation ground - ivy removal
- recreation ground – fencing & grass cutting
- Station Road - ditch clearing
- Station Road - drainage issue
- Station Road - ground vegetation alongside ditch
- Stocks Green - plane tree
- Tomato Farm - trees obscuring traffic view
- Water Lane - overhanging bushes
- Water Lane - removal of eucalyptus and oak
- Westwick - Ash tree

Young People's Photo Project

During the spring a group of teenagers used cameras to capture aspects of things they like in O&W and things that could be improved. Some of these photographs are used in these Information pullouts and on the front pages of the O&W Journals. This photo project was funded by a grant from the Big Lottery fund obtained by Ten Sing, the YMCA performing arts youth group.