

- Northleach with Eastington Town Plan
- July 2010



• Comment from Group Chair

The main purpose of compiling this Town Plan has been to establish how the residents of Northleach and Eastington see the future development of their local environment. This document will be a key tool to take forward actions ourselves, and with partners, to work toward that vision for our community. It will also provide evidence of need to support funding applications by local organisations to help with projects to address those needs.

It has, therefore, been critical, and extremely useful for the Steering Group that so many local people have been involved and thus contributed to this Report.

This is their Town Plan.

My thanks go to the members of the steering group:

Chris Hancock; Jenny Lawrence; Michael Seath; Gerald Green who have helped throughout, and Howard Jenkins; Greg Courtier; Sian James.

I would also acknowledge the support from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum, Rita Nichols-Duarte and Caroline Braidwood.

Local Community Groups

The Steering Group wishes to warmly thank all the local Groups and Organisations who have contributed so much to this project with their participation to bring issues forward in order to compile the household questionnaire and the subsequent prioritisation from the results to bring together the action plan.

If you would like to comment, offer help with a specific project or find out more, please contact the Clerk, Northleach and Eastington Council in the first instance:

Telephone/Fax: 01451 861499
e-mail: clerk@northleach.gov.uk
The Westwoods Centre
Basset Road
Northleach,
Glos. GL54 3QJ



Phil Moore (Chair)

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1.1 Foreword

This Town Plan will ensure the Town Council will be representing the views and wishes of the local people. It will help to co-ordinate actions between local groups and authorities; information will be passed from the local plan to the district and county policies, plans and strategies and evidence of need will be provided for funding applications.

In the Second Issues and Options Paper out for consultation at <http://consult.cotswold.gov.uk/portal> until 31 March 2011, mention is made of issues raised at the beginning of this Plan process.

It states “The proposed vision for Northleach is:

In 2030, Northleach will have a vibrant, safe community with local services to meet residents’ daily needs, with a number of local businesses providing employment. The settlement will be well connected with the surrounding villages.”

It continues....

“6.41 Some new housing development will be necessary, to allow the community to grow enough to help maintain local services and facilities, and to enable affordable housing to be provided. Opportunities will be sought for existing businesses to expand and stay in the area. The town should continue to offer a local day-to-day top-up and niche shopping destination.

6.42 Community facilities and services that should be retained or improved:

- Primary school
- Bus services, long stay parking provision
- GP surgery and dentist
- Multi use games area
- Further amenity green space ”

2. Profile of Northleach

Northleach with Eastington Town Council covers the market town of Northleach, situated on the junction of the A40 and A429, and the village of Eastington, approximately 1.5 miles to the south of the town centre. Northleach is the smallest market town in the District, with a population in the 2001 Census of 1855. The 2008 population estimate is 1861. The population increased 32% between 1981 and 1991.

A map of the centre of Northleach is shown at Appendix ____.



Northleach was established as a market town in the 13th Century and historically has been a centre for the wool trade and common stop on the coaching route from London to Gloucester until the mid 19th Century. The Town is described in the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001 - 2011 as lying in the heart of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as a Principal Settlement because of its role in providing some services for the surrounding rural area. The Town has developed along the valley formed by the River Leach. The Market Place will have been further improved and this, together with continued, small scale but valued, commercial development, will have led to a modest growth in the town's tourist trade. Northleach is the home of the Cotswold Conservation Board who manage the local AONB.

Changes in the layout of Northleach have occurred in phases. Since the 1980s, the town has lost its secondary school, hospital and bank. By 2001, 35% of the economically active population travelled more than 3 miles to work. Nevertheless, since the mid 1990s, commercial activity has picked up. The last major residential development took place in the early 1990's. The centre of the Northleach Town is covered by a conservation area which recognises the importance of the earlier buildings and burgage plots. A bypass was built around the town in 1984 due to road safety concerns and damage recorded to the many listed buildings within the Conservation Area.

17. Northleach Development Strategy CDC NB LDF

Northleach is designated in this Local Plan review 9.17.2 The community still needs time to come to terms with the rapid growth of the 1980s and 1990s. It also has to be recognised that, without a substantial growth in employment opportunities in the town, residential development in the town is likely only to lead to more commuting to other centres. 9.17.3 There will, therefore, be no allocations of land for housing or employment development at Northleach in the Plan period. Allowance will be made for infill development, the redevelopment of existing sites where this would be beneficial, and other development where it can be clearly shown to be essential for the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the town (eg affordable housing).

Measures to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the town centre will include:

- provision for the redevelopment of sites within or adjacent to the town centre for mixed uses, consistent with the aim of conserving the town's historic environment, including the burgage plots;

- monitoring and, if necessary, reviewing town centre parking arrangements; and
- encouraging the residential re-use of vacant upper floors of retail and other premises.

2.2 Demographics / Census information

The 2001 Census information on population in the ward breaks down by age in the following way:

Age profile	Total	Young People (0 - 19)	20 to 59	60 to 74	75+
Northleach with Eastington	1855	442	916	287	210

2009 locally derived (unconstrained) mid year estimates

Age profile	Total	0 - 19	20-59	60-74	75 & over
Northleach with Eastington CP	1801	406	867	312	216

2.3 Community facilities and services

The Town is a service centre for the residents, visitors and people of the surrounding parishes. There are three public houses of varying sizes, offering some overnight accommodation. The retail businesses on the Market Place and The Green in the centre consist of a small general stores, butcher, baker and wine merchant with a coffee shop, hairdressers, post office and pharmacy. To the west of the Town is the Coalyard Farm Enterprise Centre which has three significant business in a motor service centre, an international stamp dealer and a furniture makers. There is a substantial care home in the town. Visitors may also be interested in the mechanical music museum on the Market Place and coffee shop / restaurant in the old Cotswold House of Correction to the west of the Town.

The small, independent trades people working within the Town and its neighbouring areas provide additional building, painting and decorating and gardening services. There are other service, trades and professional workers providing an expanded range of services within the Town; including undertakers, fine arts, IT services. There are no other substantial employment opportunities within the Town.

Northleach is somewhat isolated from the larger employment centres of Cirencester ten miles in the opposite direction, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Oxford to which many in the Town commute. In summary employment in the town is mostly in services, often related to tourism.

The Market Place and The Green host the majority of small businesses and retail businesses. Most of the Town is in the Conservation Area and is characterised by numerous listed buildings and its the burgage plots. As a result of the nature of the centre of the town there is little or no scope for the establishment of additional services in the centre of the Town.

Northleach is reasonably well served by buses, with services to other centres provided by multiple private operators with the support of the County Council. There are bus services travel to Cheltenham Moreton-in-Marsh and Cirencester and Kemble. There are some bus services



to Oxford which provide linkages to London which pass through the town. The nearest train stations are at Charlbury, Kemble, Kingham and Moreton-in-Marsh, and Cheltenham. There is a minibus run by the Community Association which provides transport at low cost to residents who support the scheme by acting as volunteer drivers.

The Town is served by a well regarded primary school with a role of pupils in excess of 170 making it one of the largest in the rural part of the District. The school has a small outdoor swimming pool which is maintained by a local association for the use of the school and local residents through the summer. There is a substantial health centre which also has surgery facilities in Bourton on the Water.

There are two community centres. The Cotswold Hall on West End The Westwood Centre on the east of town which host a wide range of events

There are 2 all weather tennis courts on the George V Playing Fields for the use of members of the public and a tennis club. The Playing Fields are used by association football and cricket clubs. Both clubs field adult teams and provide training during the relevant seasons for young children resident in the Town and neighbouring villages.

The Northleach Parish Church is a landmark building and the Parish Church for the local Benefice and nationally recognised as one of the country's important wool church which attracts many visitors to the Town.

1. Background to the planning process

The Northleach with Eastington Town Council decided to initiate a town plan at its meeting of November 2007. A working party of local residents, supported by councillors and staff from the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council was established in April 2008 to discover how the people of Northleach with Eastington wished to see their community develop.



The Town Council invited businesses and organisations to present their ideas at a public meeting on 14 May 2008. This was followed up with a written survey to confirm and record those ideas. This survey included groups representing sport, heritage, business, school and community groups of all ages. This ensured that the initial feelings of likes and dislikes came from wide range of the community.

The council worked with children from the local primary school within the town to identify sites the children were proud of and sites they were concerned about. Awareness was raised by a series of events which took place between November 2007 and Summer 2008 at the Westwoods Centre, the Cotswold Hall and "Summer Funtastic". In total over 300 individuals attended, from all age ranges and contributed to discussions at these events.

Results of initial consultation conducted by the town council between autumn 2007 and the Charter Fair in 2008 were collated and assessed to give the working group a guide to the most pressing issues.

A steering group was set up in summer 2008 to draft a questionnaire for households and young people within the Council's area and to distribute and analyse the questionnaire in order to compile a Town Plan. The steering group drew up a questionnaire in an attempt to reach all residents and an additional questionnaire to young people under age 18. These were distributed to all households. 45% of the household questionnaires were returned together with 38 youth questionnaires representing 79 young people aged 11 to 18 years old.

The questionnaires drawn up by the Town Council working group was distributed to all dwellings within the Northleach with Eastington Town Council boundaries. The two questionnaires were split to be completed by adult residents, one per household and young people between the ages of 11 and 18. The youth questionnaire was designed and distributed to be completed on a one per young person basis as opposed to the general questionnaire which was distributed on a one per household basis. The questionnaire was distributed by hand on to households during autumn 2008 with a return date at identified drop boxes. The return rate of the household questionnaire was 45%, this represents 333 completed questionnaires. The data on the returned questionnaires indicate that the households returning completed questionnaires accommodated 767 residents. The 2001 census showed a population of just over 1800. With an allowance for some upward drift of population numbers since the last census the returned questionnaires represent households containing between 30% and 40% of residents.



After the questionnaires were returned and analysed the working group set up and advertised a presentation event at the Cotswold Hall in Northleach. On 29 January 2009 Three members of the working group presented findings to a small group of residents. At this meeting priorities were proposed and discussed. There was a low turnout of residents at this event and so the working party used the analysis of the returned questionnaires in addition to views expressed at this event in order to list priorities. From this Action Points were raised.

The response rate to the questionnaire was proportionate by demographic breakdown. With a similar proportion of responses from each of the main age groups represented, from young people to respondents of retirement age.

Whilst the plan was progressing a number of projects were developed from it that could be enacted immediately. For example new bus shelters were commissioned and have now been installed. The locally published book of walks round the town was revised and reissued. Links were made with the AONB Voluntary Wardens who started work on footpaths.

Feedback on the progress of the plan was given to the Town Council by its representatives on the steering group, news was posted on the council website and circulated in the parish magazine.

The working group advertised and held an open event on 29 January 2009 to explain progress and agree prioritisation with local residents. Tree wardens were co-opted at this stage to investigate suggestions for additional trees around the Parish and contact with local landowners was established.

3 Findings

Traffic and parking

Speeding is seen as a problem in Northleach by 62% of respondents. They would like to see designated passing places on East and West End (53%) and additional car parking (61%).

However, the majority of people wished to maintain access by vehicles into Market Place (62%) but they favoured a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Doctor's Lane (65%).

Town appearance



The main improvements recommended were to increase the number of trees around the town (59%) and the displays of hanging baskets were so appreciated, people want more.

Waste and recycling

Residents are very aware, and approx 90% use the recycling facilities::cans, glass, paper, and cardboard. The gardening collections were used by 62%, food by 74%. Plastic bottle recycling provision was requested by 59%.

Dog fouling was seen as a significant issue with 61% seeing enforcement as the best way forward.

Footpaths

There was a register of interest in better signage for the local footpaths (61%) and many people said they would use a new way between the King George V field and the GP surgery at Westwoods (60%)

Community Safety

Residents felt the need for more visible, regular policing (69%) yet only 27% thought there was a problem with vandalism or disorder, 28% thought there was a drug misuse and 38% felt there was a problem with underage drinking. 47% thought Neighbourhood Watch schemes should be more active, and 22% said they would be interested in participating.

Business and economy

Residents liked their local shops, which they said provide adequately for people's needs (59%). They felt the area was suitable for more small businesses (68%): this was split evenly between office, workshop, light industrial development. Almost 20% of people work or run a business from home.

Noting the importance of visitors to Northleach, 84% were in favour of erecting a designated Tourist Information Point in Market Place.

Transport

Whilst generally a high proportion of residents (43%) would not use bus links, 22% would use buses more frequently if morning and afternoon services were improved, particularly to Cheltenham, Cirencester and Oxford. They would like the bus shelters to be improved (38%) and the stop in Market Place repositioned (59%).

Housing

Most people did not want more housing development (55%) although those in favour would like to see this being affordable(30%) mainly within the existing built up area (41%).

Leisure activities

Residents were interested in additional sports and leisure facilities (48%) and the younger people even more so (55%). Keep fit and aerobics were the main activities which people would like.

Computer courses were most popular in terms of non-sport classes requested (20%)



Finally there was a vote from the younger people for either a Youth Town Council or forum (58%) and 26% said they would be interested in taking part.

Priorities

The top 10 priorities identified were :

1. A designated Tourist Information Point in Northleach	84%
2. Appearance of the town could be improved	70%
3. A more regular and visible uniformed police presence	69%
4. Additional small businesses	68%
5. A pedestrian crossing from Doctors Lane to the Market Place	65%
6. Reduction of Speeding traffic in Northleach	62%
7. Additional car parking in designated car parks is needed	61%
8. More communal recycling facilities in Northleach	61%
9. Dog fouling is a problem in Northleach	61%
10. Would like the walks and surrounding fields to be more clearly signed	61%

Deleted:

Acknowledgements

People in steering group – contacts to be included i.e. Phil or Town Clerk or MTS

GRCC support in acknowledgements

GMTF support?

Why we did the plan

4. Action Plan



4.1 Introduction to the Action Plan

The purpose of the community plan is to try to achieve what the residents want for Northleach and Eastington.

Objective/Action	Status of objective/action	Lead Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Commentary
Set up tourism information point	RED - no progress	Town Council		Problem of location
Town information on website, links to book of walks and Discovery Centre from town website	AMBER - in progress	Town Council	AONB	
Development of Town Guide	GREEN - complete	The Lions		
Republish book of walks	GREEN - complete	Author		
Increase tree planting	AMBER - in progress	Tree Warden and Town Council	Landowners	After discussions with Tree Warden and Town Council, Trust will be planting trees along the Avenue in autumn 2011
Increase number of hanging baskets	GREEN - complete	Northleach in Bloom	Parish plan group	
Increase membership of neighbourhood watch	RED - no progress	Town Council	Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator	Advertisements were sent out to ask for more members with no response
Encourage additional small businesses	RED - no progress	Town Council		
Pedestrian crossing (vicinity of Doctor's Lane)	RED - no progress	Town Council	Glos Highways	Meetings with Highways and Council could not resolve this

Speed control sign in West End	RED - no progress	Town Council	Glos Highways, neighbouring parish councils	No money available for this action from Highways
Designated passing places (East and West End)	RED - no progress	Town Council	Glos Highways	
Car sharing entered on town website	GREEN - complete	Town Council		
Improved bus services	RED - no progress	Town Council	Bus Companies	
Reposition bus stops	AMBER - in progress	Town Council	Bus companies	Bus company will reposition stop signs and timetables soon
New bus shelters	GREEN - complete	Town Council	Bus companies	
Provision of car parks	RED - no progress	Town Council	Glos Highways	
More community recycling through community composting	RED - no progress	Town Council		
Publicise plastic bottle bank	GREEN - complete	Town Council		
Decrease dog fouling problem	AMBER - in progress	CDC Environmental Wardens	Town Council	
Work in partnership with AONB Volunteer Wardens to upgrade footpaths	AMBER - in progress	Town Council	AONB	
Provide allotment space	GREEN - complete	Town Council		
Put in place Community Emergency Plan	GREEN - complete	Town Council		
Set up Youth Town Council/Youth Forum	AMBER - in progress	Town Council	School	
Increase sporting facilities	AMBER - in progress	Town Council	Youth Support Service/Young Glos/CSPAN	Multi-gym area in process

Publicise timings of keep fit and gym activities	AMBER - in progress	Town Council		
Increase provision of IT courses	GREEN - complete	Town Council	GRCC, Aded	

In response to some suggestions made by respondents to the questionnaires the Town Council offered to participate in a Youth Town Council and Youth Forum. These proposals did not proceed as there was no take up in the local community when offered.

5. Appendices

5.1 Questionnaire

Blank copy of questionnaires in here.



5.2 Consultation **statistics/ events**

Town Plan Summary of initial comments/issues/ideas received

Reading through the comments from the Open days and the completed forms in general people enjoy living in the Town and wished it to retain its identity. A few people went as far as proffering possible solutions detailed below

	Issues/comments	Possible solutions proposed
Transport	Position of bus stop at back of house on Westwoods estate – causes damage to wall as people sit on it, litter and noise	
	Better public transport on Sundays and in the evenings	
	Car sharing	
	Improved public transport	
Sport and Leisure	Play facilities for teenagers	Skate boarding facility
	Play park in Ward Road area for older children	
Traffic/parking	Speeding between Mill End and All Alone	
	Speeding	Speed humps in West and East End; flashing signs at both ends of town
	Parking on High Street	Car Park somewhere
	Poor visibility when crossing road from Market Square	Zebra crossing
	Safe crossing between Market Place and Doctors Lane	
	Mirror opposite Farmington Road dangerous	Flatter shape required
	Parking around Mill End	Clearer signs and one way system
	Too many entrances and exits into Market Square	Block off road beside Sherborne Arms
	Ditto	One way system
	Parking along sides of streets restricts flow of traffic through the town; Restrict parking	Limit to one side of the road; double yellow lines; encourage residents to use car parks
	Resident parking permits and a tourist car park	Purchase Glebe Filed from Diocese and put car park opposite school; car park adjacent to cemetery and



		Church Farm accessed via Bettison Drive
	Restrict entry of large commercial vehicles	
	Parking in The Green	Rearrange to create more spaces
Environment	Market Square	
	- old Christmas decorations	Take down
	-too many 'A' boards particularly by Blades and Cotswold Store	
	Retain village atmosphere	
	Unmade road beside church creates silt and mud which runs off road into Mill End and Market Square in wet weather	
	Flooding	Better maintenance of drains
	Waste/refuse collections – are 4 lorries required alternate weeks?	
	Dog faeces	Name and shame owners
	Litter	More bins
	Tidying up Severn Springs	
	Good school and local amenities	
	Height of school hall and colour	Change colour
	Public access by GP surgery	Remove wall
	Allotments	Provide
	Market	People to use
	More trees	
	Avenue of trees	
	Observe strict planning re historical features	
	Buggy friendly walks around town and surrounding fields	
	The Church	
	Restrict use of Tar Mac- use gravel and surface pavements with pea gravel	Visit other towns that have done this
Policing and safety	More police presence particularly in East End	
	Small issue re drugs and alcohol and young people	Nip it in the bud
	Need policemen in town	
	Vandalism and under age drinking	Tackle
	Neighbourhood Watch schemes	
Sport and leisure	Facility at Westwoods for children to ride bikes, football	Enclosed outdoor play area
	Spend money on Cotswold Hall	



	not that 'thing' at Westwoods being proposed	
	Tennis hut- too high and fenced in like a 'gaol'	
	No consultation re Meadow Court	Remove facility to other side of the courts
	No more facilities for leisure – those we have not used	
	Tell young people to amuse themselves	
	Back local groups	No big projects
	King George playing field-good facility	
	Stream at Westwoods	Fence in or provide safe area for young children to play outside
Business	Work and training opportunities not concern of Town Council	
	Work and training opportunities and jobs for local people	
	Encourage local industries	
	Good shops	Support
	Extension of Coalyard Farm	
	More shops/restaurants	
Tourism	Parking for visitors	
	Retain limited appeal to tourists- no B-on W	
Housing	Affordable housing to keep town active and growing	Housing needs survey
	No affordable housing – where is evidence it is required	
	Affordable housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – could create a poverty trap – Today's affordable housing tomorrows slum 	Subsidised housing
	Affordable housing for those in work	Build on land between Westwoods and A40
	Limit development of 'green belt'	
	No second homes	
	No building on flood plain	
	2 car parking spaces for all new build housing	
	Assisted purchase schemes	

Children from the school commented in the main on smoking, traffic, more swings/play equipment required, more trees, litter, and dog faeces.



Jenny Lawrence
July 2008

