

# **Waterstock Parish Plan 2010**



## Waterstock Parish Plan 2010

It is ten years since our last village appraisal and we were encouraged by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and by the Oxfordshire Rural Community's Council (ORCC) to update our village plan to reflect any changes that may have occurred in the village over the last ten years and to set out our values, concerns and aspirations. All village plans now feed into SODC's Strategic Plan.

It is not anticipated that we should repeat the review of the history of Waterstock which was included in the millennium survey. A brief history of St. Leonard's church is included as an appendix.

We have undertaken two questionnaires: One, a demographic/household questionnaire to identify the number and age range of persons currently living in Waterstock. This was based on the 1998 and 2000 village questionnaires so as to allow comparison with the information that we already had about the village ten to twelve years ago. The second questionnaire was also based on past questionnaires, modified both to exclude those questions that did not elicit a significant response last time and excluding questions that no longer seem relevant, but supplemented by potentially useful questions used by other villages and/or relating to issues that appeared to be of interest from preliminary "face-to-face" meetings. All questions were first circulated to residents by e-mail for comment and for suggestions for improvement before being sent out and useful comments were also received from Oxford County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and from the Oxfordshire Rural Council. There was over 85% response to the first questionnaire and over 75% to the second. 50% of villagers participated in the initial 'face to face' meetings and 50% attended meetings with SODC, OXCC and ORCC to discuss the results of the questionnaires and to make an Action Plan. A final Meeting to approve the Action Plan was held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010. A follow-up meeting will be held 12 months later to review progress.

Waterstock remains a small, tranquil, Oxfordshire village within the Parliamentary constituency of Henley and the Diocese of Oxford. It comprises a church and thirty four houses including Waterstock House, The Old Rectory and Mill, an equestrian centre, old farm houses (now residences), a few small businesses operating out of converted agricultural buildings, a picturesque "high street" of older estate cottages and two thatched cottages, including one of the oldest timber-framed cottages in England.

The village is situated on the River Thames, off the main road, within the greenbelt and in a conservation area surrounded by a golf course and farmland.

The number of houses in the village has not changed much over the last eight hundred years, with an increase of only eight dwellings between 1306 and 1881 and with the number of households remaining at approximately the same level since 1881 (between twenty seven and thirty four). Only seven new dwellings have been built in the last fifty years, but none since the last village appraisal. Over 50% of villagers are of working age (the majority being in full-time or part-time employment or self-employed) with under 25% being under 25 and under 25% over 65.

Waterstock remains a rather conservative but friendly village. Villagers value their privacy but meet regularly for village events such as Harvest festival, Christmas carols and summer parties and everyone knows that they can rely on everyone else in the village whenever there is any need for help or in a crisis. There remains a strong sense of community.

Residents are mostly "content with things as they are", but there is not much for young people to do and car travel remains the main form of transport.

**1. Environment:** Villagers appreciate the relative peace and quiet, history and rural charm of Waterstock; its relative tranquillity in spite of being only a short distance from motorway access, Wheatley, Thames and Oxford, and the quality and variety of its housing stock. Most villagers accept that a village of this size would not be able to support a village shop, school, hostelry or better transport links and accept that, because of this, it would not be an appropriate site for affordable housing. There is a strong "sense of place" and a good community spirit.

**2. Services:** The new Waste Disposal Service seems to have been well received. There is much appreciation of our local postal service and of the village magazine, the 280 Bus Service and Visiting Library Service (although these two latter services are only used by a minority of residents). There has been some debate as to whether a bus shelter would be advantageous or whether it would just add to the "creeping urbanisation" of the A418. Concerns remain about slow internet speeds, overhead electricity cables, though traffic/road safety and the sustainability of the church.

**3. Planning/Development:** South Oxford District Council has recently consulted on its core strategy with climate change and reduced CO2 emissions being a key consideration. This is reflected in their wish to locate most development where amenities are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, thus reducing vehicle emissions. They support the provision of renewable energy generation, increased energy efficiency and reduced energy demand. Didcot has been identified as the area for greatest housing expansion with some expansion also in and around market towns and larger "sustainable" villages such as Wheatley (as local service centres). Because of our lack of services and dependence on private transport, Waterstock would be generally regarded as an "unsustainable" village and therefore unsuitable for housing development or "affordable" housing. Residents are broadly supportive of SODC housing strategy but would still wish to retain the present system whereby any application for housing/housing modification be considered on its merits

**4. Other issues:** Illegal tipping, environmental pollution, episodic flood risk, road safety, the condition of road surfaces and edges, maintenance of hedges/ditches, preservation of the character of the village including habitat and footpaths, local planning and governance structures and ways to reduce our energy costs/carbon footprint were all discussed.

## Waterstock Village Plan: Process

**Step 1** Proposal to undertake a village plan agreed at a parish meeting on 23 April 2009. The Oxfordshire Rural Community Council approached re funding and support. Letter circulated to all households to inform them of the project and to seek their participation.

**Step 2** Village plan facilitator invited all residents to meet him “one to one” to identify issues of interest or concern. 50% of villagers participated.

**Step 3** Strategy, budget and plan developed with villagers and other stakeholders including Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC), Oxfordshire County Council (OXCC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to identify issues and to design questionnaires.

Suggestions then taken back to an open Parish meeting to agree and finalise the questionnaires.

**Step 4** Household and personal questionnaires delivered to all households.

85% response to household questionnaire and 76% response to personal questionnaire.

**Step 5** Results analysed and tabulated and shared with local community and ORCC, OXCC and SODC at 2 open Parish meetings in July 2010.

An action plan was developed in respect of the local community, service providers and local strategies, with links to the Sustainable Community and Local Development Framework Strategies.

**Step 6** The action plan was finalised and approved at a final open Parish meeting in October 2010 with local project teams established for local footpaths, the environment and habitat, St. Leonard’s church, internet speeds, litter and environmental pollution, highway issues, parish meeting/planning process.

**Step 7** Meeting planned in 12 to 18 months to update plan and review progress.

## Waterstock Village Plan: Personal Questionnaire

### Question 1.

Male	24	Female	31
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### Question 2. What age-range do you belong to?

Under 11yrs old	0
11-16yrs	0
16-25yrs	6
25-45yrs	7
45-60yrs	19
60-65yrs	11
65-75yrs	8
75-85yrs	2
Over 85yrs old	2

### Question 3. How long have you lived in Waterstock?

Less than 1 year	2
1-5 yrs	11
5-15yrs	15
15-25yrs	14
25-50yrs	8
Over 50yrs	5

### Question 4. How did you come to live in Waterstock?

Born here	5
Local employment	9
Relatives nearby	3
Love of village/country life	23
Retired here	4
Marriage/Setting up home	12
Specific wish to live in Waterstock	7
Found the right house	27

### Question 5. Are you a permanent resident in Waterstock? (i.e. average 4 nights/week)

Yes	46	No	6
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**Question6.** What is important to you about Waterstock?

Sense of place	33
Sense of History	33
Rural location in Green Belt	40
Attractive village	46
Sense of community	42
Other (please specify)	5

River/wild life, small size of village, outdoor pursuits/riding, good place to raise children, golf, family/location

**Question7.** How is the quality of life compared with when you first came here?

Better	12
Worse	14
The same	28

**Question 8a).** Do you run a business in Waterstock or from your home?

Yes	6	No	25
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**Question 8b).** If you do, how many people do you employ? (tick as appropriate)

None (i.e. self employed)	6
1-5	0
More than 5	0

**Question 9.** Should any of the following be encouraged within the Parish of Waterstock?

Tourist development					
Yes	0	No	43	only on an exceptional basis	8
Small business development					
Yes	8	No	25	only on an exceptional basis	19
Housing					
Yes	3	No	29	only on an exceptional basis	21
Affordable housing					
Yes	4	No	43	only on an exceptional basis	5

**Question 10.** Do you experience difficulty in getting in and out of Waterstock?

Often 3      sometimes 39      never 11

a) Is this because of difficulty in accessing public transport?

Yes 6      No 25

b) Is this because of difficulty in getting onto the main road?

Yes 41      No 1

If yes, is this

at golf course / Milton Common junction? 39

at Ickford Road / Tiddington junction? 10

**Question 11 a).** If responsible for a vehicle, where do you usually park it?

In a garage 16

Off road 30

On the road 8

**Question 11b).** Is “on street” parking a problem in Waterstock?

Yes 23      No 20      no opinion 6

**Question 12.** What do you use your vehicle for?

Work/business 31

Leisure 50

Shopping 46

School runs 2

Access to amenities and services. 46

Other 5

**Question 13.** How frequently do you use the following

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Never
Own vehicle	39	10	1	1	0	0
Shared vehicle	3	7	9	0	7	3
Bus	2	0	0	2	15	18
Train	0	0	0	4	13	12
Taxi	0	0	0	1	10	8

**Question 14a).** Does vehicle traffic through Waterstock pose a problem?

Yes	11	No	8	Sometimes	38
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**Question 14b).** If so, is this because of

Inappropriate speed?	43
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Dangerous junctions?-	18
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Ickford Road	8,	Tiddington	1,	Milton Common	9
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Parked cars?	23
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Large vehicles?	21
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Dangerous bends in the road?	27
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Narrowness of lane?	31
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Lack of signage?	6
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Other? (Please specify)	3
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Comments: Mill end corner, Pot holes especially on church side and at Mill end (3), Cars being misled by SatNav trying to reach Waterperry (2), Poor road surface by Stockwell road bottom causes noise and vibration, Parked cars cause obstruction for emergency vehicles.

**Question 14c).** Would this be helped by?

A 20mph limit through village	Yes	34	No	11
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Road narrowing measures?	Yes	4	No	32
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Warning signs at dangerous bends?	Yes	14	No	22
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“Caution Horses” signs?	Yes	2	No	8
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A convex mirror at Ickford junction?	Yes	27	No	10
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Installing speed humps?	Yes	4	No	42
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“No vehicular access to Waterperry” signs?	Yes	37	No	7
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Vehicle-activated speed signs?	Yes	8	No	23
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Waterstock village only signs	Yes	36	No	5
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Comments; High and unkempt hedges.

**Question 15.** Would you like a village name sign at each end of village?

Yes 24 No 22

**Question 16.** Do you attend Parish meetings in Waterstock?

Regularly 13

Occasionally 25

Never 16

If not, would you say why not?

Renting, Leave it to my parents, Not always sure of dates, Feel that generally kept informed and agree with current members decisions.

Comments; Chairman should stand down after 4 years, Do not wish to get involved in village politics, Not that interested, ?Relevant, Would attend more regularly if less politics, more inclusive and less divisive, Meetings too long, not inclusive and some underlying hidden agendas, Would attend if not on a Wednesday, Chairman should be impartial and this one is not, I don't want to sit there and be told how to vote, Important but other commitments, Too busy.

**Question 17.** What type of housing development (subject to Parish and SODC approval) would be acceptable in Waterstock?

Modest extensions/conservatories in keeping with environment.

Yes 41 No 1 possibly 8

Sensitive conversion of existing conservation-grade buildings.

Yes 34 No 5 possibly 15

Conversion of other existing agricultural buildings.

Yes 13 No 19 possibly 21

Single build at site of existing building

Yes 10 No 15 possibly 25

Small development of 3-4 affordable housing units.

Yes 3 No 36 possibly 8

Small development of 1- 3 cottages at site of existing buildings.

Yes 7 No 28 possibly 16

Small development of up to 3 houses.

Yes 6 No 39 possibly 7

New building(s) on Greenfield sites.

a) Up to 3 Yes 1 No 44 possibly 6

b) More than 3

Yes 1 No 49 possibly 1

**Question 18** Are you supportive of SODC's Housing Strategy?

Yes 48 No 5

**Question 19.** Are you happy with the way that Parish planning decisions are currently made?

Yes 46 No 4

Comments; Chair to be changed after set number of years (3), Your description does not describe role of planning committee, More people should become involved, In principle the process is good but we shouldn't be told how to vote, Info circulated with plans proposed is often biased, contains opinion and not purely factual, Info passed to SODC should be completely factual, registering decisions made by village and not slanted to suit or refer to other matters., Should not be SODC matters (2), Guards against wholesale development but should not exclude smaller projects,

**Question 20.** What is your opinion of the way planning decisions are currently made?

Totally satisfied	19
Quite satisfied	17
Quite dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	2
No opinion	4

**Question 21.** What are your views on supply, quality and reliability of services?

Mains water pressure	Good	41	Fair	12	Poor	2
Quality of mains water	Good	33	Fair	16	Poor	3
Electricity	Good	44	Fair	9	Poor	1
Refuse collection	Good	44	Fair	8	Poor	0
Condition of roads	Good	1	Fair	22	Poor	31
Broadband/ Internet	Good	9	Fair	23	Poor	14
TVand/or radio reception	Good	23	Fair	22	Poor	5

**Question 22..** Is St Leonard's church important to you?

Yes	45	No	1
As a historic building/part of village heritage	54		
As a place for worship	33		
For baptisms, weddings, funerals/internments	46		
For meetings, concerts	37		

**Question 23a).** Church funding options

Allow the church to close?	Yes	6	No	40
Seek reduction in Diocesan costs?	Yes	42	No	8
Attend more services?	Yes	18	No	33
Set up a covenant?	Yes	23	No	21
Set up a restricted covenant?	Yes	23	No	21
Leave a bequest in your will?	Yes	14	No	28

**Question 23b),** Would you support fund raising activities to

Replenish church funds	Yes	41	No	7
To create a church building fund	Yes	48	No	3

**Question 24.** Are you happy living in Waterstock?

Yes	50	No	0
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List 3 **best** things about living in Waterstock

**Rural tranquillity, peace and quiet 57**

The location/environment, beautiful, open green spaces, “remoteness”, closeness to countryside, little traffic, quiet at night, un-commercialised, no shops or pub, outdoor pursuits (riding, walking and golf), the sky at night, absence of street lights, the river, wild life and countryside.

**The people, sense of community/community spirit 45**

Nice neighbours, a close-knit community, “chatting in the street”, people helping each other and pulling together in a crisis, people willing to go the extra mile, open discussion of issues, a “real village”, “just the right size”, people getting together to enjoy themselves.

**Closeness of Oxford, Thame and M40 16**

“accessible but remote”

**A “real village 15**

Pretty, aesthetic with preservation of historical identity and with very little housing development, Good quality and mix of buildings, small, “just the right size”, with a sense of place and identity, an “estate” village with an equestrian tradition.

**“Feels like home” 6**

“My house”, “my home”, sense of security, proximity to family

## List 3 **worst** things about living in Waterstock

### **Traffic noise 16**

Especially from M40, traffic through village from A418

### **Noise, light and environmental pollution 18**

from mulchers, chainsaws, strimmers, mowers, dogs barking and Waterstock training Centre (5), from aircraft and helicopters (4) and environmental pollution from illegal tipping and litter (4), bonfires (3), and light pollution from golf course (2).

### **Problems associated with cars and through traffic 26**

Excess speed (9), increased traffic (5), on road parking (3), commercial traffic/white van man (3), horse boxes (1), large vehicles (1), damage to grass verges (1), Art in Action week (1), inconsiderate drivers (1)

### **Poor condition of road 13**

Especially pot holes between Mill corner and church and road surface between Stockwell Lane and Pippin Cottage, hedges and ditches not being kept in good order, risk of flooding associated with poor maintenance of ditches and run off from golf club. Isolation in winter (snow)

### **Lack of local amenities 18**

No village shop, pub, meeting place, and associated difficulty /expense and car use involved in accessing shops and services, not many things to do, poor public transport (6), distance to bus stop, no bus shelter (1).

### **Parish politics 8**

Divisive, conflict, internal bickering associated with chairman/planning committee.

### **Ongoing developmental threats/pressure of unwanted development 4**

“development from financial greed not necessity”

### **Other**

Limited services e.g. broadband (4), no gas, few young families, population getting older, owners of surrounding land do not live in village, The Park being screened off by trees and hedges, Golf Club-uncertainty over future developments, light pollution, flooding of road, failure of SODC to enforce conditions, other than dumping of waste (2), occasional burglaries, Council tax.

**Question 25.** What do you perceive as the 3 greatest threats to Waterstock over the next 10 years?

### **Erosion of green belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 38**

Urban expansion, especially around Wheatley and Motorway service station, A418, golf course, new roads including A418 dual carriageway proposal at Tiddington, increased traffic and “creeping urbanisation”, loss of identity with suburban encroachment.

### **Housing and Commercial/business development 25**

Inappropriate, ill thought out, poor quality, “showing lack of respect to the village”.

### **General concerns 15**

Worsening traffic problems/through traffic (5), increase in large horse vans, aircraft noise/general noise pollution (2), light pollution (2), development at golf club and /or unsympathetic conversion of agricultural land, risk of wind farms, flooding (2), holocaust (1).

**Risk of becoming a holiday/commuter/rental village 8**

Or an “exclusive” community with less community involvement because of house prices (6) and an ageing population (2).

**Risk of development 7**

at Park Farm and stables (3), agricultural buildings around village (2), unwanted development via change of use (2)

**Concerns over the future of the church 3**

**Question 26.** Should we undertake or commission an environmental survey to help to improve and protect our natural habitat? (river, woods/trees, plants, birds)

Yes	36	No	14
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**Question 27.** Which type of “green” energy generation would you support?

Power generation from river	Yes	45	No	7
Domestic photo-electric panels	Yes	39	No	12
Small domestic wind turbines	Yes	19	No	30
Ground heat sources	Yes	47	No	6
Commercial wind farms	Yes	3	No	47

**Question 28.** How troublesome to you are the following causes of environmental pollution?

	Very	Moderate	Little	None
Traffic noise	9	33	11	2
Aircraft noise	9	22	18	7
Light pollution	9	12	19	14
Illegal tipping	19	22	9	2
Litter	17	23	11	4
Bonfires	5	10	9	26

**Question 29.** Local public rights of way including footpaths and bridleways

Are these important to you?	Yes	52	No	3
Are they well enough sign posted?	Yes	33	No	19
Can you use them without difficulty?	Yes	24	No	25

**Question 30.** What are the main problems associated with using them?

Lack of knowledge of where they are or where they go?	22
Difficulty getting over stiles?	16
Crops across footpaths?	15
Inaccessibility for dogs?	15
Mud/water?	10
Locked gates?	8
Unfriendly or too friendly animals?	9
Barbed wire?	11
Nettles/brambles/overgrown herbage?	18

**Question 31a).** Is the mobile library important to you?

Yes	9	No	43
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**b).** Do you use library services at Waterstock, Wheatley or Thame?

Yes	15	No	35
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Waterstock	3	Wheatley	6	Thame	1
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**Question 32.** Has the process of developing this village plan and associated questionnaires been satisfactory up to this point in time?

Yes	51	No	1
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**Suggestions**

Install CCTV cameras at each end of the village (2)

Change from committee to Parish meetings (1)

Village sign to incorporate “Please drive slowly; children and horses”

Bridleway sign at Mill corner to say “No vehicular access to Waterperry”

**Comments**

Excessive questions on housing development and church ?sub-agenda (1)

Not all stiles accessible on horse or with dogs (4)

Waterstock is a wonderful place and we are lucky to live here

## **Waterstock village plan : Action plan**

This action plan is the result of 3 village meetings, held in July and October 2010 and attended by over 50% of households, where the results of the village questionnaires were discussed and an action plan was developed and agreed.

### **Projects**

#### **Footpaths** (Mike Haffey, Ashby family and Sini Haines)

To provide all households with a laminated map and direction of local foot paths.

To organise some “walk our local footpaths” days.

To consider ways in which accessibility and ease of use of local footpaths might be improved.

#### **Environment and habitat** (Bob and Jenny Berrill, Sam and Ollie Ashby, Henry Manisty, Mike Tyce)

To undertake a village nature and wildlife survey with help from The Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum.

It was agreed that £150 might be used from our village fund to engage a professional environmentalist to help.

It is anticipated that this will take 12 months, starting in the spring.

#### **St Leonard’s Church** (John and Stephanie Wilkinson and Jane Harper)

To seek to stabilise church funds through new and enhanced covenants, legacies etc.

To establish a separate church “building/heritage” fund.

To petition the church authorities about reducing Deanery/Diocesan costs.

To try and increase usage/footfall.

#### **To facilitate improved internet speed** (Rob Arthur)

Questionnaire sent to all those on village network

**Energy Saving and improving our carbon footprint** (Robin Pickett, Katie Douet, Jane Harper)

To provide, on request, a thermal imaging survey to individual householders during this winter.

Questionnaire/audit of household insulation.

**Litter and Environmental pollution** (Rosalind Portman, Lorna Arthur)

Liaison with Motorway Service Station management and stores about expanding their area of “cleanup” and the Highways agencies re lay-bys on the A418.

Liaison with councils re provision of more/larger and more frequent emptying of bins at lay-bys on A418 by the cafe and travellers’ encampment.

To continue to organise periodic village “cleanups”.

**Highway Issues** (Mike Tyce and John Wilkinson)

To request repair of potholes and eroded road margins.

“Waterstock only” sign at A418 turning.

Road safety issues discussed with Oxfordshire County Council Traffic officer.

Not possible or advisable to have a 20mph limit

Not recommended to have a mirror at Ickford junction

Possible to request more frequent cutting of verges at Ickford junction

In general, he advised against any additional physical measures to reduce speed other than existing features.

**Parish meeting/process** (John Wilkinson and Mike Tyce)

To encourage membership of the committee more widely throughout the Parish.

Continue annual election of chair and committee.

Those submitting planning proposals invited to discuss them with the committee, if a meeting is held prior to a Parish meeting. Ideally the applications should be presented to the Parish in advance ,or at the same time as to the District, to allow full benefit of this process.