

CHEDDINGTON PARISH PLAN

2003



Cheddington, a pleasant community in which to live and to bring up families.

Prepared by Cheddington Parish Council
in association with villagers, organisations, clubs
and societies.

INDEX

2	Background to the Parish Plan and the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' scheme.
3	Consultation with villagers. 2003 Questionnaire
7	Consultation with villagers Open Day – 22 February 2003
8	Comments regarding the School
8	Comments from businesses
9	Consultation with villagers Summary of major points
10	Future plans of organisations, clubs and societies.
13	Outside influences on Cheddington
14	Planning & housing
15	Action Plans
16	Notes and acknowledgments

CHEDDINGTON PARISH PLAN

Background

Parish Plans are part of the 'Vital Villages' scheme being run by the Countryside Agency. Vital Villages offers a range of grants and advice to rural communities to help them take action on many issues. This was launched following the Government's Rural White Paper, *Our Countryside*, which was published in November 2000.

The Countryside Agency would like to help 1,000 communities produce a Parish Plan by 2004.

Cheddington Parish Council obtained a grant to assist in the production of this Plan.

What is a Parish Plan?

It is a document outlining how the community sees itself developing over the next few years. It identifies local problems and opportunities and sets out a view for the future and how it can be achieved.

The whole community with its organisations, clubs, and groups should be involved. Although the Cheddington Parish Council is playing a leading role, it is a community effort.

We've done all this before!

Cheddington Action 2000 Village Appraisal was an initiative started in 1996 and completed in 2000. It was extremely comprehensive and covered many, if not most, of the areas now being looked at again. Its report recommended a follow-up exercise at some point. The Cheddington Parish Plan does this to a large extent.

Will it have any practical value?

Firstly, it will give goals for everyone to work towards thereby keeping everyone's eyes on the ball in a co ordinated way.

Secondly, it will be a solid basis for influencing bodies whose activities cover Cheddington. For instance, Thames Valley Police, Bucks.C.C.[education, highways, social services], Aylesbury Vale District Council [planning, housing, refuse collection], utility service providers and other organisations.

Thirdly, it will give strong support to Cheddington organisations seeking grants and other aid from outside bodies [including Vital Villages]. It will highlight that individual projects are in line with the overall Parish Plan.

CONSULTATION WITH VILLAGERS

Parish Plan 2003 Questionnaire [1]

This was distributed by the Residents Association as an addendum to their December 2002 Newsletter. The closing date for responses was 4 January 2003.

Responses totalled 82, including 14 on-line via www.cheddington.org.uk. This is considerably less than the response to the previous Cheddington Action 2000 Appraisal for which volunteers had delivered and collected the forms rather than relying on respondents returning the forms themselves.

Also it reflects some 'questionnaire fatigue' as the previous few months had brought people a welter of questionnaires from a variety of other organisations.

The responses received were from a good cross section of age groups except from the under 18s, and a good mix of male and female. Only 1 response was from a person with a disability.

PRIORITY ISSUES

We asked for respondents to indicate whether they regarded issues identified by the Parish Council as priorities from the Action 2000 Village Appraisal and from current concerns to be the issues that a Parish Plan should address.

Over 50% of respondents saw the following as key issues:

- Traffic calming measures
- HGV traffic
- Traffic speeds
- Inconsiderate/dangerous parking
- Future of the rail service
- Policing
- Vandalism

Over 30% of respondents saw the following as additional issues to be tackled:

- Station Road railway bridge
- Station facilities
- Bus services and timetable information
- Footpaths from Blenheim Crossroads towards Mentmore and from High Street to Cooks Wharf
- Future use of the old allotments in High Street
- Facilities for young people
- Recreation ground facilities
- Village hall facilities
- Footpaths and bridleways

[cont.]

[cont.]

Footway lighting
Medical facilities
Burglary
Car crime
Substance abuse

ISSUES - BY GROUPS

Issues can be grouped into those which can be tackled by the *community*, those which can be tackled by *community in partnership with external agencies* and those which can only be tackled by *external agencies*:

Community issues

Future use of the old allotments in High Street
Facilities for young people
Facilities at the recreation ground
Village Hall facilities
Footway lighting

Partnership issues

Traffic calming measures
Traffic speeds
Policing
Vandalism
Footpaths from Blenheim Crossroads towards Mentmore Park and from High Street to Cooks Wharf
Bus services and timetable information
Footpaths and bridleways
Inconsiderate/dangerous parking
Burglary
Car crime
Substance abuse
Medical facilities

External agency issues

HGV traffic
Future of the rail service
Station Road railway bridge

[cont.]

COMMENTS FROM VILLAGERS

Many respondents added comments suggesting ways of tackling the issues or explaining their concerns:

Traffic

Traffic calming – although many respondents called for traffic calming measures in High Street near the school, many others expressed the view that humps and chicanes are not acceptable, a significant number disagreed that traffic calming was needed at all.

Traffic speeds – respondents pointed to traffic speeds being an issue not only in High Street but throughout the village, especially in Station Road and Mentmore Road.

HGV traffic – concerns were expressed about increasing numbers of HGVs especially in Station Road but also along High Street/Mentmore Road and there were some calls for HGVs to be prohibited from High Street. Others were concerned not just about the number of HGVs but their speed and standard of driving.

Parking was seen as a problem both in High Street, near the school and post office, and around the village – Gooseacre and Church Lane were mentioned by several respondents.

Several respondents called for a footway/cycleway from High Street to Cooks Wharf both to facilitate people living there walking/cycling to the village but also to allow villagers to walk or cycle to the circular footpaths and canal for recreational purposes.

Transport

A concern about the future of the rail service was easily the biggest concern amongst respondents. Many expressed how essential the service is to commuters and also for the young and the elderly.

There was a call for better bus services particularly to Aylesbury and for more timetables to be provided. Again the main call was from the elderly and young people.

Recreational facilities

The biggest issue was the need for better facilities for teenagers with a skate park being mentioned as an example. Several respondents linked the lack of facilities for teenagers to vandalism and underage drinking in the village.

The second big issue was the future of the High Street allotment land with suggestions ranging from extending the recreation ground facilities, to general recreation area, nature conservation and building affordable housing.

[cont.]

The Countryside

Several respondents felt that the footpaths and bridleways around the village need more attention to prevent them becoming overgrown or impassable through mud.

Another call was for more footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, especially circular routes and routes connecting to the footpath networks around Mentmore, Marsworth and Long Marston.

Some also commented on the state of footpaths within the village particularly church path and the path connecting Lammas Road to High Street.

Elderly People's concerns

Many respondents pointed out that parking on footways and other inconsiderate parking was a problem not just for the elderly but for parents with pushchairs, people with disabilities or those with poor eyesight.

Many respondents, especially the elderly, called for footway lighting improvements. Examples of poor lighting cited were sections of Station Road, around the Green, junction of New Street and Manor Road and the footpath linking New Street to Brownlow Lane.

The other main need was a full time doctor's surgery.

Community safety

Inadequate policing is now a key concern, this is a dramatic change from the Action 2000 Village Appraisal response and several respondents referred to how little we now seem to see the police now compared to a year or two ago.

Respondents link this fall in policing activity to perceived increases in vandalism, burglary, car crime and substance abuse.

Two or three respondents called for CCTV to be installed particularly around the village hall.

Other Issues

A few respondents raised development issues particularly the future of what was Church Hill Farm and the need to consider making provision for affordable housing.

CONSULTATION WITH VILLAGERS

Parish Plan 2003 Open Day – 22 February 2003

The village hall was the venue for an open day to which village organisations, clubs and societies were invited to set up small displays and to have personnel on hand to discuss the activities and future aspirations of their groups.

About 80 people visited the hall and if they wished, they were invited to respond or comment on the priorities identified from the previous Questionnaire.

Comments:

Need for traffic calming in High Street and Station Road?

Speed cameras required – no humps

No humps please

Prefer chicanes to humps

No speed humps please

Traffic calming required on High St. but no speed humps please

No speed bumps please

Speed camera [with film] is best deterrent!

Traffic calming is an absolute must – I don't mind how

Speed sign repeater signs through the village

No traffic calming please

Chicanes not speed humps

Are HGVs a problem?

Early morning HGVs travel too fast

What urgent action is required on Station Bridge?

Urgent action is crash barriers to prevent vehicles ending up on railway line. Secondary action is traffic lights or traffic flow control.

Parking on High Street – a hazard or a benefit by slowing traffic?

Controlled parking on High St. would act like a chicane

Cars parked along main road slows traffic

Train service

Why does the free travel pass not include Cheddington railway and also cheap rail cards like other counties?

Bus service

Bus service to Aylesbury need improving at weekends

Review the positioning of school bus pick up points

Need for safe walking/cycling routes to Cooks Wharf and Mentmore Park spinneys

Footpath/cycleway to canal would be great

[cont.]

Adequacy of street lighting

Light needed on alleyway between New St and Brownlow Lane

Use of old allotment land opposite the Recreation Ground

No housing on the orchard or the allotment land

Future use of the orchard land of Church Hill Farm

Don't build on the orchard.

Orchard – please don't build – how about an orchard ?

Please don't build on the orchard

No development for orchard

Would hate to see houses on the orchard site

Comments Regarding the School

Cheddington County Combined School has a long and successful history and is located on a spacious site in the original building with a modern extension. Up to date facilities include a well equipped IT room. Currently there are 198 pupils with 11 teachers and 8 classes. The school also takes pupils from Slapton and Horton. There is a remote possibility that the school may be asked to take a few pupils from the new Castlemead Estate at Pitstone but this is probably unlikely as Brookmead School in Ivinghoe is being expanded for this purpose. Over the next 3/5 years it is anticipated that pupil numbers will not exceed 210/215 and village needs will be accommodated. A strong group of Governors and the PTA ensure good support. Funding will be sought from the village and outside for specific projects as they occur.

Comments from Businesses

Although individual home working is becoming increasingly prevalent in the village, there are only a few other businesses. These include two pub/restaurants, a Post Office and store, a general store, a coach hire business, a taxi firm and a car repair garage. There are no major developments planned by any of these. Most feel that any small increase in the population could be easily accommodated without major expansions.

MAJOR POINTS FROM VILLAGERS FOLLOWING THE TWO CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES. [questionnaire and open day].

There was a good deal of agreement on what the main concerns were. The opinions as to action however were not, in many cases, clear cut. Summarising, the main topics were:

Transport

Future of the rail service from Cheddington Station
Station facilities
Bus services and timetables

Traffic calming

Policing

Traffic speeds
Parking on footways
Parking on roads
Burglary
Car crime
Under age drinking and substance abuse
Vandalism

Footpaths and bridleways

General condition
Need for footpath to Cooks Wharf
Need for footpath to Mentmore Park spinneys

Use of old allotment land

Footway lighting

Village Hall facilities

Recreation facilities

Medical facilities

FUTURE PLANS OF ORGANISATIONS, CLUBS & SOCIETIES

[For clarity 'Cheddington' has been omitted from the names]

After School Club

The after school club has temporarily shut down, mainly due to a staff shortage. The club provided after school childcare for children of primary school age. The club is hoping to re-open in late 2003.

Allotment Society

The future of allotments in Cheddington is, as elsewhere, one of slow decline. As allotments are taken out of use the Parish Council has a policy of consolidation so that the land can be grassed over for general use as an extension to Village Hall grounds.

Amateur Dramatic Society [CADS]

The society encourages the interests of the members in all things theatrical and provides live entertainment for Cheddington and the district with at least two productions each year. There has been a slight decline in membership and audiences over recent years. Both the Village Hall and the Methodist Chapel are used for rehearsals and the performances take place in the Village Hall. There is a great need for storage facilities, especially since the arson attack on the 'Allotment Hut' in February 2003. Although given some support by AVDC in the past, current income comes from subscriptions and profits on performances and no grant applications are currently being sought.

Baby and Toddler Group

The group's objective is to be a friendly safe place for Mums/Dads/Carers to have a chat where it is safe for the children to play. They have no major plans for the future, although a lack of volunteers could threaten the organisational side of the group, and a lack of people willing to help with the rota. They hope to purchase some new toys and equipment, and may be looking for some assistance.

Badminton Club

The club runs a regular non competitive social evening, once a week, for 50 adult and junior members from September to April each year. The village hall provides the court and some storage. The club is self financing from subscriptions and occasional fundraisers and does not intend seeking grants.

Bowls Club

The club has its own green and clubhouse located on land leased from the Parish Council. Currently there are 86 members. The clubhouse is somewhat elderly and will be requiring an increasing amount of repairs and refurbishment funded from the club and outside sources.

Brownie Guides

A very busy and popular group with a growing waiting list. They currently have 24 girls and 3 leaders. The group's long-term aim is to move from the Methodist Hall to the Scout Hut. This would allow them more space of their own. Currently the hut is felt to be in need of some refurbishment before this can happen. The Brownie Guides would also like to purchase a new parachute.

Flower Club

A group of about 30 members who meet monthly in the Methodist Hall and fund outside speakers themselves. No expansion plans are anticipated.

Friday Open Door Club

The club was previously the Friday club and changed its name and objectives in September 2003. Currently with 20 members, the club was set up to offer respite facilities once a fortnight on a Friday for the carers of disabled people. The club meets at the Methodist Chapel and faced with decreasing numbers has amalgamated with the Open Doors club which was run by the Methodist Chapel on alternate Fridays. This was a club where anyone could drop in for a coffee and a chat. The club is now looking to increase its membership and activities.

10

History Society

The society holds monthly meetings, usually with speakers, in the Methodist Chapel hall and is content with the arrangement. There are about 30 members but quite a few others also attend particular meetings. Membership is expected to remain steady although some younger people would be welcomed. The society holds a large archive of Cheddington materials, photographs and artefacts, which it makes widely available. The society is generally self funding.

Junior Football Club

The recently reinstated club consists of 18 boys in the approx. 16 year age group. They play successfully in the Milton Keynes Youth League and it is hoped that the team will develop into a senior league side. They mark out the pitch on the recreation ground and maintain their own equipment. They share the Pavilion with other clubs which is not ideal for them and they are also concerned that the pitch does not get over used. Dog fouling remains a major problem on the pitch.

Neighbourhood Watch

Its objectives are to make Cheddington, and its residents, aware of possible criminal activity and to be more alert to susceptible areas in the home, garden and the village. It is hoped to increase membership to include all households in Cheddington and have a co-ordinator for each area (usually 20 households). Priorities are maintaining and possibly increasing street lighting, and a notice board specifically for neighbourhood watch and police notices.

Nifty Fifties

The group is sponsored by Aylesbury Vale District Council who organise the weekly sessions of fitness activities and games. Membership is about 20, half from Cheddington and half from surrounding villages. No expansion plans are envisaged.

Methodist Church

There are currently 21 regular members of the Church. The hall is let out to many village clubs and societies. There is a weekly doctors surgery held in the premises. It is hoped to renovate the kitchen to comply with H & S requirements and to make the hall more attractive for users. If grants are available, for this work, they will be sought.

Pantomime Group

Produces a show every two years at the Village Hall. These are high budget productions financed by a variety of fund raising initiatives. Storage and changing facilities are currently inadequate at the Hall.

Petanque Club

There are currently 21 members and this is expected to remain fairly constant for the next 3/5 years. The pitch is in need of some refurbishment and funds will be needed. The club makes use of the Pavilion and has some criticism of its internal state at times due to its shared nature.

Pre-School

The Pre-School provides pre-school care for the children of the local catchment area in a safe environment conducive to fun, play and learning. The Pre-School is located in refurbished premises at Cheddington School. The Pre-School has recently started a Lunch Box club which will be monitored over the next 12-18 months. The main threats are caused by the short periods of time (1-2 years) that the chairman and the other volunteers are on the management committee for. This makes long term planning difficult, even with the support of the dedicated staff.

Residents Association

Is a long standing organisation which represents the interests of residents, fosters good public relations and encourages social activities in conjunction with other organisations. It produces the Cheddington Newsletter which is the major village communications medium. Income is from advertising and fundraising. Grants are not sought. The recruitment of new committee members is sometimes not easy.

Scouts

There is almost a full membership of all groups and no shortage of younger children keen to join. Recruiting leaders and the committee is a problem and does pose a threat to continuation. With outside help the Scouts recently acquired their hut and have made urgent repairs. More work is planned to provide access for the disabled and off-road parking to improve safety. Outside funding is needed.

St Giles Church

St Giles PCC's principal objectives are to increase contact with the community and to continue to maintain the Grade 2* listed building, which is currently undergoing chancel roof repair, stonework renovation, improvement of interior decoration and to continue the maintenance of the churchyard. It is also hoped to increase the security of the area around the Church. Contributory funding is needed.

Tennis Club

The most active sports club in the village with 117 members [including juniors]. The key expansion plan is the construction of a third court at a cost of about £30k. Grant aid is sought from a variety of sources. An increase of membership to about 130 over the next 3/5 years is expected. The club would look to the Parish Council to upgrade the Pavilion although it is aware that, if another sports clubs started to make more consistent use of the facilities, there might be conflicts of interest.

Village Hall

Although widely used, there has been some decline in bookings recently. Maintenance remains a major factor and several expensive items have recently unexpectedly emerged. A programme of major improvements is now underway which includes kitchen refurbishments, a disabled toilet and baby changing facilities and more storage space. Grants have been made and others are being applied for.

Web Site www.cheddington.org.uk

The web site currently receives about 36,000 page hits from 10,000 visitors a year. Its objective is to provide a modern effective means of communication with information to villagers and visitors, The aim is to promote the village and village organisations and businesses and provide a channel for village news. One person currently maintains the site voluntarily. The threats to the web site are the cost of hosting the site and the time taken to keep it updated. Plans for the future are to set up a steering committee and make parts of the site self-updateable for selected contributors. A young person section is also planned.

Whist Club

A long standing club who are content to carry on as they are at present using the village hall as the venue.

Women's Institute

This is a thriving branch with lots of activities. It is committed to the village with both educational and social activities. One concern is that the membership is mostly in the over 50 age bracket and younger members do not seem to be joining.

Youth Club

The Youth Club's principle objective is to continue to provide support for the young people of Cheddington and the surrounding villages for children between 8-13 years. Although membership is increasing (currently 85), adult help is decreasing. Ideally the club would like a paid Youth Worker and/or its own premises or room

Youth Drama Group

A very active group with about 30 members, ages 7 to 15, and a waiting list for membership. Expansion would be possible if more adult help were available. There are concerns about poor storage and changing facilities at the village hall. The school hall could be an alternative but the costs of opening it in the evening are currently prohibitive. Productions need to be funded externally.

PLANNING & HOUSING

Several major changes in planning legislation and procedures are in the pipeline and will come into effect over the next few years. However, on first examination there do not appear to be any measures which will significantly change the situation of Cheddington. Nevertheless planning policy is highly charged politically and it may always be radically changed by the parties in power in both national Government and locally.

The main legislative change is the Government's *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill* which, following lengthy delays, is expected to receive Royal Assent in March 2004. Under this, Regional Spatial Strategies will replace Regional Planning Guidance.

The consultation document on the *Draft Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-Regional Spatial Strategy* was circulated for comment in July 2003 and the final implementation is planned to come into effect in December 2004.

The detailed proposals for Aylesbury Vale contain no specific references to Cheddington. However, a total of 16,400 dwellings and associated employment allocations are scheduled for the Aylesbury area, together with infrastructure improvements over the period 2001 - 2016. The document states '*A total of 10,600 dwellings should be delivered at Aylesbury town through urban intensification and new sustainable urban extensions*'. [Additionally 2,500 are to be directly related to Milton Keynes urban area.] There is a shortfall of 3,300 which, it is stated, should be built in '*the remainder of the district*.'

Although the document stresses that urban intensification and redevelopment of redundant employment land should be pursued, in order to minimise development on greenfield sites, it is possible that sites like Church Farm and the field to the south east of Croft Meadows might be re evaluated at some stage in the future. However the sites have, for the time being, both been turned down for development, by Aylesbury Vale District Council.

The emphasis is on *sustainable communities*. There are no specific proposals in Cheddington Parish for commercial or industrial developments or transport or road improvements. The village is currently balanced finely between population and facilities/services. Further major development could upset this crucial state.

Depending on individual villagers points of view, it is possible that those against enlargement would be faced with the need to take vigorous action to oppose major developments. Nevertheless, others may feel that developments could offer Cheddington an opportunity to benefit from developer funded improvements.

Finally, accepting the ever present need for affordable housing, there is also a lack of larger homes in Cheddington. Expanding families find it difficult to relocate within the village when looking for properties with extra bedrooms. Current infill development proposals seem to offer only small houses. A better balance could be encouraged by the planning authority.

ACTION PLANS

1. To keep Cheddington as it is at present with good maintenance programmes and improvements to the existing facilities and services to be carried out by all providers, both direct and outside. This includes the Parish Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, the Utility Companies, Bus and Train Companies and the Police.
2. To support any village groups who wish to improve their particular activities and/or facilities for the benefit of villagers. Also to support funding and grant requests when appropriate. Initiatives should come from the groups themselves. See previous section: *'Future plans of village organisations, clubs & societies'*.
3. Specific topics
 - 3.1 To press for footpaths to be constructed from the village to Cooks Wharf and also to the Mentmore Park spinneys to remove the danger to pedestrians.
 - 3.2 To encourage activities for the young people in the village. This may include transport facilities to sporting events and evening entertainments. Dedicated adult helpers are required. Also to seek ways of preventing the drinking of alcohol in public areas.
 - 3.3 To ensure as secure environment as possible for the elderly and the rest of the community. This means continuing support for Neighbourhood Watch and the Police. Other initiatives should be discussed and developed.
 - 3.4 To keep pressing for a solution to speeding traffic and parking on footways.
 - 3.5 To continue lobbying the highway authority [Buckinghamshire C.C.] and Network Rail for urgent action on the station bridge to alleviate potential serious accident risks for both road and railway users.
 - 3.5 To put pressure on the few dog owners who still let their dogs foul public open spaces, especially the recreation ground. The AVDC dog warden to be involved.
 - 3.6 To plant trees to replace those which are coming to the end of their lives.
 - 3.7 To discourage people who discard litter in the streets and open places.

NOTE

This Parish Plan and Actions are to be reviewed from time to time as need dictates.

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

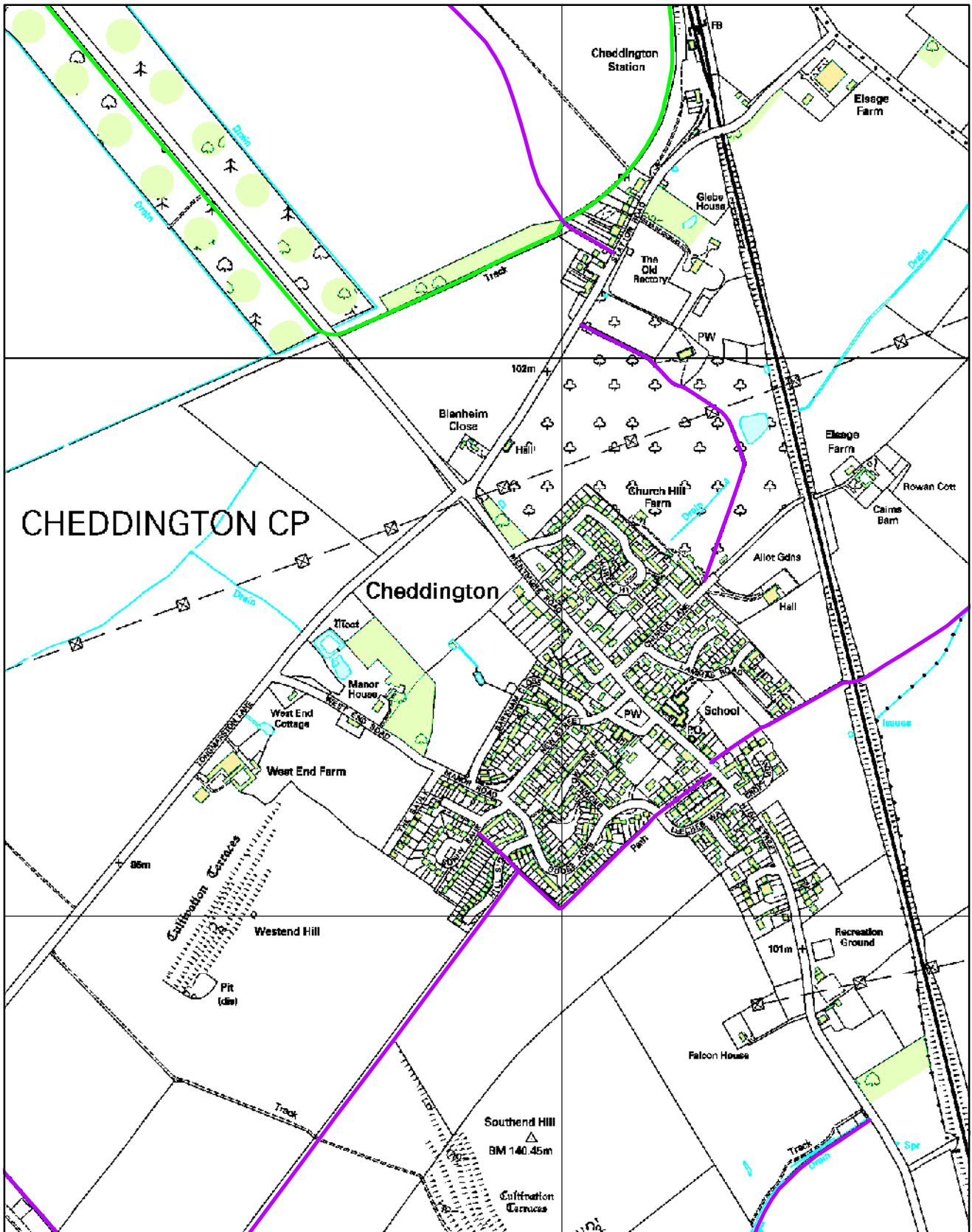
Front Cover The Green has always been and is still today, the focal point of Cheddington. As such it is important to retain the character of both the Green itself and its surroundings. It is much used by children and young people and it requires close management by the Parish Council to ensure that its facilities can continue to be enjoyed by all.

Back Cover The map has been kindly provided by the Buckinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Group.
The Ordnance Survey mapping included within this publication is provided by Buckinghamshire County Council under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to assist Cheddington Parish Council in publishing its Parish Plan. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey for mapping for their own use.

Cheddington Parish Plan has been produced by a Working Group of Cheddington Parish Council with the help and assistance of many individuals, organisations, clubs, societies and outside bodies. Funding assistance was provided by the Countryside Agency under the Vital Villages programme.

Clerk to the Council
Trevor Chrich
Arran House, 13 New Street, Cheddington, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 0RL
01296 668531 tacrich@globalnet.co.uk

Cheddington 2003



1:10,000

- Footpath
- Bridleway

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings Buckinghamshire County Council Licence No. 076481 2003.

