

Wrabness Parish Plan

2008





Wrabness Parish Plan 2008

Contents

Introduction

What is a Parish Plan, why produce the Parish Plan, how was it done, public involvement, abbreviations

Our Village Community

Wrabness and our village aspirations.

1. Village services

Shop, Village Hall, Playing Field, Station Masters Garden, All Saints Church, information, dog litter bins, proposed Village Green & Allotments

2. Other services

Mobile library, mobile Police Office, utility services, postal services

3. Travel

Cars, trains, buses

4. Roads & Traffic

Speed reduction, lorry traffic, road, verge and ditch maintenance, parking

5. Access to the Countryside

Footpaths, shoreline and the beach

6. Environment

Rural landscape, nature conservation, village environment, litter and vandalism.

7. Tourism

Holiday accommodation, visitor activities

8. Housing

Existing housing, proposals for new dwellings, affordable housing

9. Employment & Business

Jobs, workplaces, businesses and lorries

10. What Next

Actions, policies, review, acknowledgements

Cover photo: Mural at Wrabness Station painted by Wrabness Art Club

What is a Parish Plan

The Parish Plan sets out the community vision for Wrabness and a programme of action over the next decade. It includes everything that is relevant to our community.

The Parish Plan was adopted by Wrabness Parish Council on 9th January 2008 and represents its published policy for the future of the village and for village improvements.

Why produce the Parish Plan

- It provides a community agenda for the Parish Council.
- is a way of influencing decisions by other authorities and service providers,
- provides a programme for action by and on behalf of people in the parish,
- and will help win funds for local initiatives.

How was it done

The work was commissioned by Wrabness Parish Council and was undertaken by a Steering Committee comprising local volunteers.

The programme adopted for the work followed the national guidelines for the preparation of Parish Plans published by The Countryside Agency. The key stages were:

- Survey
- Appraisal of Results
- Consideration of Issues identified by community
- The Options for the Future
- Selection of Policies and Actions.

Was there Public Involvement

The Parish Plan process created a great opportunity to bring people together, to work and socialise together and decide what the community wants.

There was public involvement at all the key stages of the Parish Plan including:

- First Public Meeting: Requested Parish Plan for Wrabness
- Survey: 85% of households participated in the village survey
- Second Public Meeting: Received results of survey and discussed findings
- Topic Meetings: members of public invited to join with Committee members to examine the identified issues and options for the future.
- Third Public Meeting: Reviewed findings and generated preferred policies and actions.

Every resident household in Wrabness received a copy of the Wrabness Village Appraisal published in 2006 and the adopted Wrabness Parish Plan published in 2008.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations appear in the text of this document:

PC	<i>Wrabness Parish Council</i>
TDC	<i>Tendring District Council</i>
ECC	<i>Essex County Council</i>
SCH	<i>Suffolk Coasts & Heaths Unit</i>
NCP	<i>National Car Parks</i>
CPR	<i>Community Rail Partnership</i>
NE	<i>National Express</i>
AONB	<i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i>

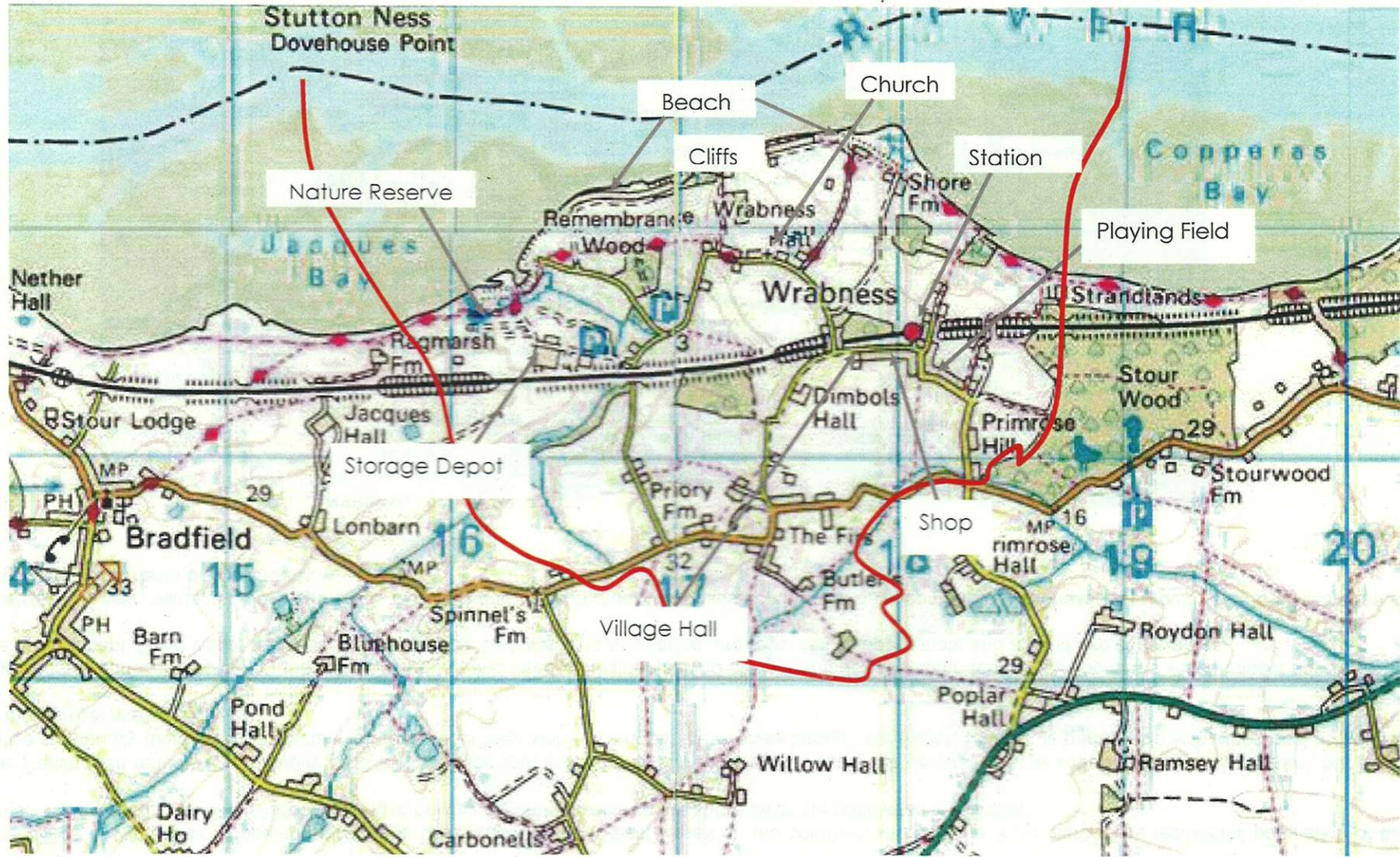
The village of Wrabness is located in Tendring District in rural north-east Essex on the southern shore of the River Stour. The residential population of the parish is estimated to be 410. Visitors staying in holiday accommodation on the shore swell the population in summer.

The Parish Plan reflects a community generally at peace with itself and its surroundings. Villagers are generally happy with the village environment, but as an active community have identified certain improvements they wish to carry out themselves through the Parish Council, in partnership with other local authorities or through service agencies.

The coastal landscape setting of the village is valued and used by residents, who are not enthusiastic about tourist developments which impact adversely on the environment. Quiet visitor activities, such as walking, bird watching and sailing, are regarded as appropriate and a good use of the area.

Restraint on new residential development is favoured and the community opposes commercial development in Wrabness that would lead to an increase of large lorry movements on local roads.





— Wrabness Parish Boundary

The Present Situation

Wrabness benefits from a range of local services and activities. **The Village General Stores & Post Office** is the most popular local service. Residents use it for the convenience, to use the post office services and for the social contact it offers. Despite a vigorous local campaign the post office was compulsorily closed in early 2008 as part of a nationwide closure of 2500 rural post offices.

The Village Hall is in use for public events, club activities, including indoor sports and private functions. It is host to seven different village clubs. **The Village Playing Field** off Rectory Road provides the sole formal outdoor play and recreational facility for the village. Through community initiative the attractive **Station Masters Garden** has been created on neglected railway land adjacent to the Station. **All Saints Church** is the oldest building in village, it is open for worship, used for concerts and the graveyard provides our parish burial place.

Most rural areas are experiencing a decline in local services and Wrabness is no exception. The village primary school closed in 1976 and children now have to travel to Wix. Local service closures since that time include two pubs, a part time doctors surgery, a farm shop, the village recycling site and our post office. Whilst Wrabness has retained its railway station, it is now an unmanned halt.

The Parish Survey confirmed support in the community for locally provided services and for the annual grants made by Parish Council. A Village Newsletter and a Service Directory are published periodically to keep residents and visitors in touch with local news and events.

The Village Hall and Playing Field need upgrading. This will require fundraising. The survey also revealed a shortfall of recreational open space provision in the village and the wish to create a Village Green and allotments to supplement existing open space.

The Issues

- ❑ The future of the shop following the post office closure
- ❑ Supporting village services
- ❑ Inadequate open space provision
- ❑ Improvements to facilities



1. Village Services continued...

Actions	Stakeholders	Time Scale
Publish Village Services Directory	PC	Annually
Publish Village Newsletter to promote local services & activities	PC	On-going
Provide welcome pack to new residents	PC	On-going
Support ECC initiative to reintroduce post office services to rural communities	PC, ECC	On-going
Maintain the 'protected open space' designation for the Playing Field in formal planning & leisure documents	PC, TDC	On-going
Support the village hall & playing field improvement programme & external grant applications	PC, TDC	Annually
Extend dog litter bin scheme	PC, TDC	Short term
Create Village Green & Allotments:	PC, TDC, ECC	
√ Investigate feasibility & explore site options with landowners		Short term
√ Consult the community on any options identified		Short term
√ Determine which option should be pursued within plan period		Short term
√ Prepare project programme, fund raise		Medium term
√ Seek planning permission for open space		Medium term
√ Acquire & provide.		Long term



Policy Statement

- The Parish will seek to promote the village shop.
- The Parish will support the running costs of village hall, playing field and garden with annual parish grant.
- The Parish will support the maintenance of the churchyard as a public burial place.
- The Parish will make better use of Parish Notice Boards to publicise events.

2. Other Services

The Present Situation

Wrabness benefits from other local services provided by a range of public and private external providers. The Mobile Library visits the village on a fortnightly basis has a small but loyal local customer base. The Mobile Police Office visits the village twice a month and is accessible to residents with concerns about crime, safety or neighbourhood watch.

Residents were asked to give a rating to the various utility services provided to the village. Whilst each service attracted a spread of results, the overall ratings suggest a good or reasonable level of satisfaction with most services, other than road, verge and ditch maintenance.

Since the survey postal services have declined - a post box has been permanently removed, Sunday collections have been terminated and the Wrabness Post Office branch has been closed.

Good	Reasonable	Poor
Ambulance	Police	Road maintenance
Sewerage	Telephone	Verge & ditch maintenance
Refuse collection	Litter clearance	
Green Waste collection		
Electricity		
Water Supply		
Postal Service		

The Issues

- Roads & pavements in poor condition
- Verges and ditches poorly maintained
- Decline in postal services



Policy Statement

- The Parish will liaise with local service providers and draw attention to any shortcomings in services.

The Present Situation

The majority of households in Wrabness own at least one car, however 18% of adult residents do not have access to a car for independent travel and 23% of adult residents report they experience travel problems.

Young people have to travel by bus or train to schools out of the village and many experience transport difficulties with other journeys.

Wrabness benefits from an hourly train service. Many residents travel by train from Wrabness Station, although most are not frequent travellers. There are some regular commuters including some from the wider rural area. As an unmanned halt there are serious problems with vandalism and complaints about station maintenance, facilities and information. Since parking charges were first introduced at the station in 2007, commuters cars have been parking on adjacent roads instead of the car park causing traffic and safety issues in the village.

The Harwich – Colchester bus service is routed along the Main Road. Since the bus route by-passes the centre of the village, there are few frequent users. There are no Sunday bus services.

The Issues

- Transport for school children
- Maintenance of Wrabness Station
- Vandalism at Wrabness Station
- Poor facilities at Wrabness Station
- Poor bus information
- Commuter parking in village



Actions

Stakeholders

Time Scale

Tackle vandalism & crime at the Station	PC, CRP, NE	On-going
Better maintenance at the Station	PC, CRP, NE	Short term
Review charges introduced at Station car park	PC, NE, NCP	Short term
Upgrade the Station facilities for users.	PC, CRP, NE	Medium term
Publicise bus timetable & availability of concessionary fares	PC, ECC, First	On-going

Policy Statement

- ❑ The Parish supports the provision of local public transport services and free school transport for village children to nearest schools.
- ❑ The Parish supports the provision of CCTV at Wrabness Station, the provision of a usable shelter on Platform 1 and real time train information.

The Present Situation

Wrabness is linked by rural lanes to the primary road network via the B 1352 and A120 Trunk roads. Residents access the A120 mainly via Primrose Lane to the south of the village and have safety concerns about this junction. The rural environment is adversely affected by speeding traffic on rural roads. There are major concerns about the volume of lorry traffic using Main Road and Wheatsheaf Lane, including the lorries generated by the Wrabness Storage Depot .

There is a wish to see better maintenance of roads, verges and ditches and additional seasonal cutting of verges to maintain safe visibility at bends and junctions. There is no locality in the village where the majority of residents wish to see street lamps or pavements introduced.

Since parking charges were first introduced at Wrabness Station in 2007, commuters cars have been parking in village instead of the car park causing traffic and safety issues.

The Issues

- A120 / Primrose Lane junction safety
- Speeding traffic on rural roads
- Lorry traffic
- Condition of roads, verges & ditches
- Overgrown verges
- On street commuter car parking in village

Actions

Stakeholders

Time Scale

Review current speed reduction measures in parish	PC, ECC	Short term
Notify & carry out routine road, verge and ditch repairs	PC, ECC	Ongoing
Review lorry weight limit controls north of A120 and routing to Wrabness Storage Depot	PC, ECC	Short / Medium term
Review commuter street parking issues	PC, ECC	Short term

Policy Statement

- ❑ The Parish requires additional seasonal cutting of verges at junctions and bends to maintain safe visibility.
- ❑ The Parish wants special maintenance arrangements for Wheatsheaf Lane in view of lorry damage.



5. Access to the Countryside

The Present Situation

Wrabness benefits from the informal recreational opportunities offered by its rural setting and the coastline. Residents make good use of the network of footpaths. One route forms part of the Essex Way long distance footpath and is well used by walkers the year round. There is just one bridleway in the Parish.

Most residents consider the network of footpaths is adequate and usually easy to follow. However way marking could be improved for visitors. Seasonal maintenance is provided by Essex County Council but footpaths can quickly become overgrown unless cutting back is timely in the growing season.

The shoreline along the Stour Estuary can be accessed on foot via public rights of way. The sandy beach at Wrabness is a natural focus for residents and visitors for informal leisure and recreation including walking, swimming, boating and fishing.

Due to coastal erosion one footpath route down the cliffs has been formally closed by ECC. An unofficial coastal path linking Wall Lane with The Coign has been obstructed by the owner and representations made about its status to ECC.

The Issues

- Maintenance of existing footpaths
- Way marking of public footpaths
- Status & restoration of part of coastal route



Actions

Stakeholders

Time Scale

Monitor state of paths	PC, ECC	On-going
Upgrade way marking of paths	PC, ECC, SCH	Short term
Display rights of way map	PC, ECC, SCH	Medium term

Policy Statement

- The Parish supports the retention and enhancement of the public rights of way network at Wrabness
- The Parish will participate in the ECC Review of the definitive Public Rights of Way Map
- The Parish will liaise with landowners on foreshore issues

The Present Situation

Wrabness village is set in very attractive coastal landscape, much of which has acknowledged importance for nature conservation. There are proposals to extend the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to include the river and the southern shore. The local environment matters to residents. The river, the shoreline and the woods are regarded as key natural features, together with local features that contribute to the character of Wrabness including hedgerows, sites for viewing the estuary, the cliffs and old buildings.

A local nature reserve has been established on the site of the old RN Mine Depot. This has now become a valued landscape feature and conservation asset which been transferred to the Essex Wildlife Trust.

In contrast residents have identified several untidy sites and eyesore buildings in the parish as well as litter black spots at the Station and the Nature Reserve which detract from the environment. Periodic fly tipping problems occur at the end of Wall Lane and the Main Road. Whilst Wrabness generally offers a safe environment, the Railway Station has been a focus for vandalism and the Green Graveyard car park for theft from cars.

The Issues

- AONB status for the River Stour & south shore
- Initiatives to enhance the landscape
- Litter & fly tipping
- Untidy sites & eyesore buildings
- Vandalism



Actions

<i>Actions</i>	<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Time Scale</u>
Monitor & respond to rural management initiatives	PC, SCH	On-going
Organise local litter picks	PC, TDC	Ongoing
Tackle fly tipping & dumped vehicles	PC, TDC, EA	On-going
Review untidy sites & buildings & encourage action by owners	PC, TDC	Short term

Policy Statement

- ❑ The Parish supports the conservation & enhancement of the coastal landscape
- ❑ The Parish supports the proposed AONB status for the southern side of the Stour.
- ❑ The Parish will make an annual Environment Award for local endeavour
- ❑ The Parish will promote Neighbourhood Watch initiatives

The Present Situation

Wrabness beach, the woods and the coastal Essex Way footpath offer opportunities to access the countryside and the tidal river offers recreational opportunities. There is a static caravan site close to the shore and beach huts fronting Wrabness beach in use as holiday accommodation between Easter and 31 October each year.

Due to the acknowledged landscape and nature conservation value of the rural locality there are constraints on development of tourism. The majority of residents oppose further built tourist development or more tourist attractions in and around the parish such as more holiday huts or static caravans. Residents consider the parish is suited to quieter visitor activities that do not impact adversely on the rural environment such as bird watching, walking, rambling and sailing.

The Issues

- Trend for larger holiday huts
- Proposals for new tourist facilities
- Summer parking pressures



Actions

Stakeholders

Time Scale

Monitor & comment on planning applications

PC, TDC

On-going

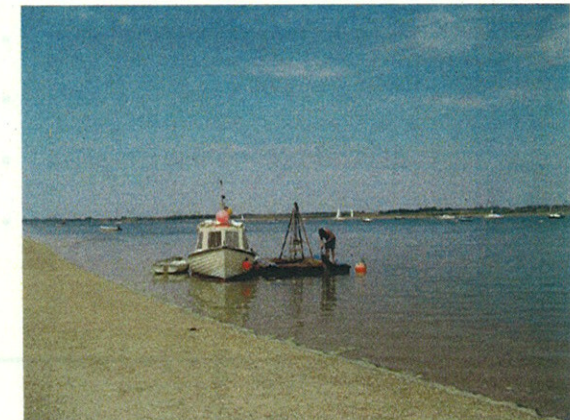
Comment on new planning policies in Local Planning Framework

PC, TDC

Short / Medium term

Policy Statement

- The Parish opposes built holiday development such as additional chalets on the shore or more static caravan sites
- The Parish supports modest bed and breakfast proposals in existing buildings.
- The Parish supports quiet visitor activities which do not impact adversely on the rural environment and discourages noisy or intrusive activities.



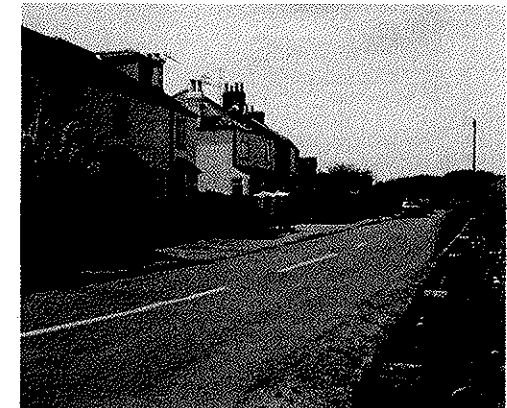
The Present Situation

There are an estimated 159 dwellings in permanent occupation in Wrabness. The vast majority of homes in Wrabness are owner occupied, only 2% being rented. The Parish Plan survey explored residents housing needs. No one expressed a personal need for sheltered housing and very limited local need was expressed for alternative or additional housing accommodation for the family or a family member.

During the past 10 years the village has seen limited new development, with six new dwellings built on small infill sites. The majority of residents consider this scale of new housing development in Wrabness to have been about right. Residents were asked about the future of the village and for their views about additional housing development at Wrabness. The replies confirm the overwhelming community desire is for the village and parish to stay largely as it is with either no new housing development or limited development over the next decade.

The Issues

- Most older houses have been improved
- Most homes are owner occupied
- Limited demand for affordable housing
- No large scale new housing wanted



Actions

	<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Time Scale</u>
Monitor & respond to planning proposals for new housing	PC, TDC	On-going
Consider proposals for the change of use of existing buildings into residential use on their merits	PC, TDC	On-going

Policy Statement

- ❑ The Parish does not support major new housing development at Wrabness
- ❑ The Parish proposes a maximum of 10 new homes should be planned for the next decade
- ❑ The Parish will support periodic survey of local need for affordable housing



9. Employment & Business

The Present Situation

At the time of the survey 59% of village residents over the age of 18 were in full or part time work, with unemployment in the village virtually eliminated. Residents have a wide employment profile with an emphasis on the service sector; very few are now employed in agriculture.

Compared with the previous 1993 Village Appraisal the trend is for fewer work places within the parish and for Wrabness residents to commute further afield to work. 10% of residents work from home or for small businesses within the parish. The majority of residents have to travel out of Wrabness to their work. Most work places are within a 10-30 mile radius.

Whilst much of the land in the parish is in arable use, with changes in agriculture some farm buildings are used for other uses. The Wrabness Storage Depot on part of the former RN Mine Depot is a controversial use due to the extraordinary impact of large lorries accessing the site on the local road network, for road users, residents and on the local environment.

Respondents take a guarded view about development of new business sites in the parish, favouring the opportunity for residents to work from home and the conversion of redundant buildings for appropriate business uses. There is strong opposition to any business development at Wrabness that would generate additional heavy goods vehicle movements, as local roads are unsuited to such traffic.

The Issues

- New uses for former farm buildings
- Lorry traffic for Wrabness Storage Depot causes serious local problems.
- New business uses which would generate lorry traffic in village unwelcome



Actions

Monitor & respond to planning proposals for business use and development

Stakeholders

PC, TDC

Time Scale

On-going

Consider proposals for the change of use of existing buildings for employment use on their merits

PC, TDC

On-going

Policy Statement

- The Parish does not support major new business/industrial development at Wrabness
- The Parish opposes the principle of further development of the Wrabness Storage Depot
- The Parish opposes commercial development in Wrabness that would generate additional lorry movements on local roads

Actions

The Parish Council will progress the Actions identified in the Parish Plan with the relevant stakeholders. The timescale for this is identified in the plan as:

- Annually = every year
- Short term = 1 - 2 years
- Medium term = 3 - 5 years
- Long term = 5+ years
- On-going = as and when required.

The Parish Council wishes to work in partnership with village organisations and invites the support of residents to help progress the agenda for Action.

Policies

The Policies listed in the Plan have been adopted by the Parish Council and will inform decision making including consultation responses to the strategies and service plans issued by other organisations.

The Parish Plan and its policies provide an important context for the Parish Council when responding to planning applications for proposed development or the change of use of land at Wrabness.

Review

The Parish Plan will be subject to yearly review by the Parish Council to check progress in the implementation of the Plan and help plan the annual programme of Action.

Acknowledgements

The Parish Council acknowledge the Parish Plan was produced with the help of many people and organisations and wish to thank:

The members of the Parish Plan Steering Committee: Brian Bartley, Richard Colley, Harry Jones, Rosemary London and David Pells for their hard work.

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Finally the Parish Council wishes to thank the

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