



# Harvington Parish Plan and Village Design Statement 2010

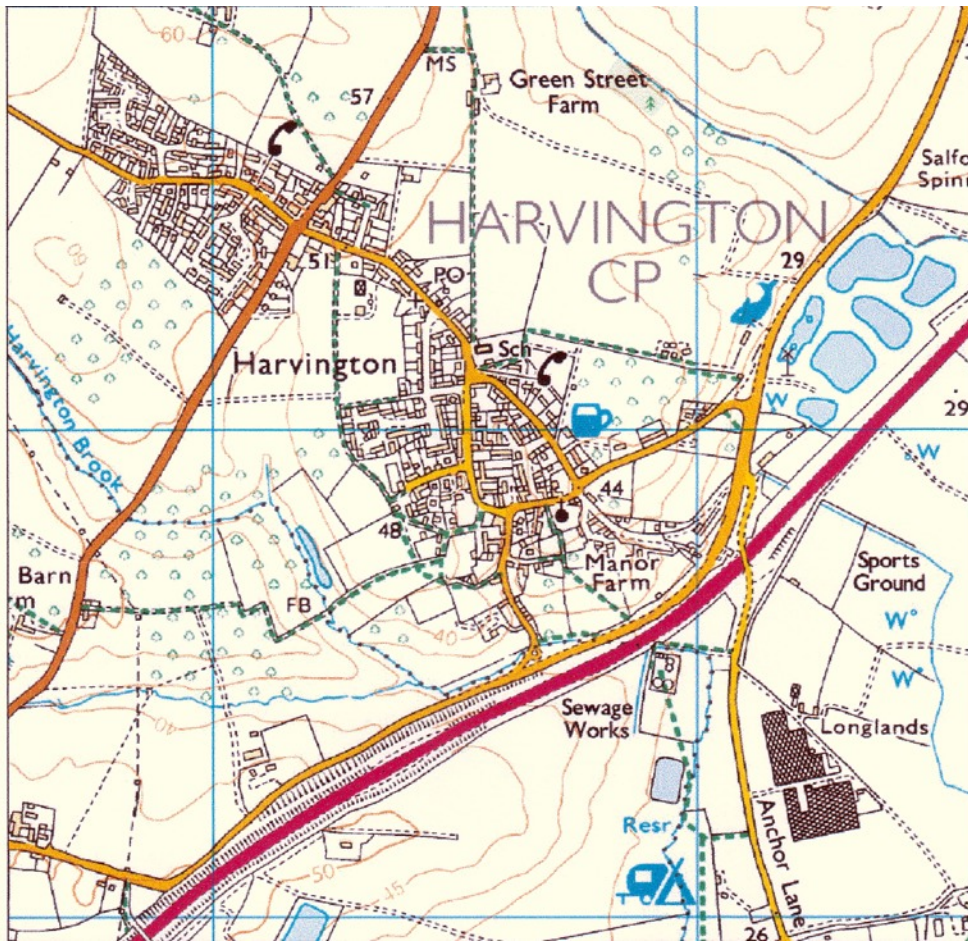


**PRODUCED BY**

- 'We think we are extremely lucky to live in such a great village. We have a lot going on here.'



**THE VILLAGERS  
OF  
HARVINGTON**



The village  
of  
Harvington

The Parish of Harvington



# The Harvington Community



**A  
lively  
village**



**A happy  
&  
agreeable  
village**

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## Village Design Statement

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## Executive Summary for the Harvington Parish Plan

The development of the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement has brought to the attention of the Parish Council the aspects of the village most appreciated by the residents and which attract people to live here. The project has also highlighted areas which could be improved or developed.

Some of these aspects for improvement or development are already being addressed:

Street lighting - the upgrading or replacing of the old lights is being investigated with a view to ensuring they are as energy efficient as possible and safe.

A speed limit of 30 mph for traffic through the village along the Evesham/Alcester Road, B 4088, has been carried out and the Parish Council has suggested some ways of further improving safety at the crossroads as part of the traffic calming measures here

Two phases of the flood relief scheme for Leys Road and the Evesham Road are in place and the final phase is under development

A new bus shelter has been erected near the Village Hall

The Village Hall refurbishment is nearing completion providing a modern facility for many village clubs and activities

### The Power of Wellbeing

The Parish Council has recently adopted the Power of Wellbeing which will enable it to have the power to instigate or support projects which benefit the community and which arise from the rolling out of the Parish Plan. To retain this Power and to ensure its proper use, the Parish Council will need to ensure councillors receive good training so that funds are raised and spent wisely and that they can comment constructively on any development plans to support the Village Design Statement and ensure the village grows as residents would like. The Parish Council will also need to publicise its work so that a good number of residents are attracted to help with the development and to stand for election in May 2011, ensuring the election criterion for Power of Wellbeing is retained.

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### Parish Council Issues

The matters which have arisen from the Plan for the attention of the Parish Council can be divided into the following areas :

#### Health

- requests for a visiting doctor or pharmacy
- exercise classes or circuit areas for all ages
- improvements to the public footpaths and recreational areas and cycle paths
- support and publicise the sports groups within the village
- support for allotments and forest schools and healthy eating
- keeping litter and dog mess cleared from the village

#### Safety

- Neighbourhood Watch and policing
- street lighting
- speed and safety of traffic especially at crossroads
- reporting and liaising with District and County Councils about roads and footways and gritting in winter

#### Environment

- Parish Councillors to be trained to review planning applications, work with District Council, especially the Housing Officer and Planners, to ensure appropriate developments within the guidance of the VDS and to provide the accommodation required by residents - e.g., possible sheltered housing
- maintenance and enhancement of the public open spaces and green areas which are seen as a vital part of the environment
- ensure flood scheme is completed and new design does not contribute to any flood risks or adversely affect the character of the village.

#### Economy

- encourage and support suitable small businesses
- encourage suitable tourism and visitors to support the village economy

## How the Parish Council will act

The Parish Council will need to ensure it maintains its links, or works to increase links, with other bodies which can help deliver any course of action decided on to address the items listed above.

These will include the District and County Councils, through being part of the various partnership schemes and especially the Opportunity Vale of Evesham project over the next three years. Also joint working on flood relief, highways matters, housing, lengthsman, footpaths and cycle tracks and tourism through Asparagus, Blossom and Plum festivals.



Working with Harvington First School for the benefit and bringing together of all parts of the community - e.g., sharing of facilities and teaching in computer suite or cooking.

Supporting the PACT scheme and the Community Officers to help reduce petty vandalism and ensure residents feel safe. Ensuring the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is well publicised and supported.

Supporting all the groups, clubs and teams within the village which provide residents with entertainment, company and support.

The village Tree Warden hopes someone will step forward soon to help him and eventually take over - this needs to be publicised and encouraged so that the maintenance and planting continues

Ensure that development in the village should take place in accordance with the wishes of the residents - e.g., possible sheltered accommodation scheme.

Consideration of how the Parish Council can act as a focal point and liaison for organisations in the village to come together when they are working for the same or similar objective.

Directing organisations to sources of grants which are available and often publicised to the Council.

The Harvington Parish Plan and Village Design Statement was adopted by the Parish Council on Wednesday 8th December 2010.



## Preparing the Parish Plan and Village Design Statement

1960  
to  
2000

In 1970 the Worcestershire County Council conducted a study of Harvington this was followed by a similar publication in 1983 produced by the Wychavon District Council. Both of these documents highlighted concerns about the A435, Evesham to Alcester Road as it was designated at that time, and concluded that there should be no further housing development along this road.

After a rapid rise in population during the sixties the statistics show a more modest growth of 1.5% in ten years. However the number of dwellings has increased by 6% due to a reduction in the size of households. This is attributable to an aging population.

Both of the studies showed the value of the first by-pass around the village which returned it to its pleasant rural charm and has enabled this to be continued to the present. The village residents hope that the new 30 mph limit on the Evesham to Alcester Road will complete the unification of the village.

2005  
and  
2006

Harvington Parish Council decided in 2005 that the village should be studied further and a new Parish Plan for the village of Harvington was needed. Work began the following year when several organisations within the village gave their views about the issues that faced the village. Several events were also held at which residents were invited to give their views and this procedure gradually built up a picture of the village that illustrated the preferences of the villagers.

2006

A complete photographic report of the village was compiled during 2006 by Revd Fran Battin which is included in the appendices.

2007

A book was published in 2007 which portrays a vivid picture of life in the village. 'Harvington AD 2007', a year in the life of the village, compiled by Jess Fairs, is also a valuable source of information and all surveys show that the life portrayed is valued by its residents and enables them to live longer than the national average. Which is a good reason for not wanting to see any major changes in the future.

2009

A questionnaire, which reflected the concerns and values of the residents, was compiled by the Parish Plan/VDS steering group and circulated to every household in Harvington by the members of the Harvington Youth Group in 2009. The report and analysis of the results of this survey form part of the basis of this document and is included in the appendices.

2010

Work on the Village Design Statement continued in April 2010 when a day of workshops was held in the Village Hall with groups of residents viewing the parish to ascertain the best design features in the village and the poor ones. This was followed by another day of consultations in June 2010 when an exhibition of the results from the workshops was held and Harvington villagers were invited to give their views.

During 2010 the villagers of Harvington wrote the final reports hence the variety of styles. Some items are repeated by different contributors which underlines the importance of those items to the village.

As so many have contributed time, energy and ideas to the project, it would be impossible to name everyone without running the risk of overlooking someone. All contributors have earned the thanks of the Parish Council for their efforts.

- 'If I'd wanted to live in a town, I'd have moved to Evesham.'
- 'Keep Harvington a village.'

The results which were obtained during this consultation period are included as an appendix to this report.

## Introduction to the village of Harvington

There has been a settlement at Harvington since Saxon times, bounded by the River Avon to the south and the Lench Hills to the north. Situated on a low ridge, just three miles north east of the town of Evesham and close to the county boundary between Worcestershire and Warwickshire, it is largely surrounded by farmland. The village is actually an amalgamation of two smaller ones. Hard though it is to imagine these days, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Harvington Cross was a separate settlement, which only became linked with Harvington as house-building filled in the gap between them.

The current population is understood to be between 1726 and 1750 people, living in around 700 households (ref: 'Harvington AD2007'). These homes vary greatly, from ancient timber frame buildings that have been here for hundreds of years to modern bungalows and apartments. The village also supports several businesses, including a post office, a convenience store, two pubs, a farm shop, leisure facilities (including fishing lakes, a golf course and a small holiday caravan site), farms and plant nurseries. A regular bus service links the village with Evesham and Stratford upon Avon.

Although sizeable, Harvington still retains the features and the feel of a rural community. Many residents work elsewhere, but the agricultural heritage is still much in evidence – orchards, arable fields, glasshouses, nurseries and allotments still surround the village and are still actively producing a wide variety of produce.

Harvington residents benefit from other facilities, too. There are two churches – the Baptist Chapel, and the Anglican Church of St James the Great, with its unusual green copper spire – a well-known local landmark. Both churches are actively involved in village life.

The village primary school, supported by the Church of England, enjoys an admirable reputation, and children come to it from several local villages. There is also an active Youth Project run by both



churches, aimed at supporting and engaging with the young people of the village, providing various activities for them in a safe and caring environment. Many youngsters now attend one of the groups run by the project team, which meet at the Baptist Chapel.

The Village Hall has long been an important centre of village activity, and it is nearing the end of a major refurbishment to bring it up to modern standards. The work has largely been done by village volunteers, and amazingly they have managed to work without interrupting the many and varied activities that are based there – especially the Pre-School Playgroup. Close to the hall is an excellent Playing Field, equipped and maintained by a small but very enthusiastic committee.

Yet perhaps the greatest asset that Harvington possesses is the number of residents prepared to offer their time and expertise to the community. Volunteers run a wide variety of clubs and activities, including: the Women's Institute, a cricket club, an amateur dramatic society, a weekly keep fit session for seniors, a gardening club, a couple of book groups, junior football, a village choir, a cycling group, Rainbow and Brownie packs, a walking group, handbell and church bell ringing teams, a wind instrument band, CAMEO teas, the popular Summer Fete, concerts and entertainments in the Village Hall. . . the list goes on.

The BBC conducted a survey of the residents in the village in 2009 to ascertain the levels of friendliness in the village which resulted in the BBC viewing the village as a happy and agreeable community with a higher than average level of neighbourliness.

Many Harvington residents feel strongly that this village has much to commend it, and that it is important that any future changes to this active, rural community should endeavour to retain all that makes it such a pleasant place in which to live.

## History of Harvington

Harvington's history reaches far back in time, its earliest recorded name (it is believed) being Herefortun. This was in 709 AD. Since then, there have been many variations in spelling, but none so drastic as to suggest any other explanation of the meaning of the original than that which, summarised, would be: 'a group of people' (with a suggestion by some that this could be a military group), 'a river crossing' and 'a small dwelling place or area, possibly fortified'. This latter, 'ton' or 'tun', is a Saxon word-ending, and the whole would certainly have described the first known small settlement near the river which, over time, was found to be subject to flooding, prompting a move to higher ground.



The next evidence relating to our early forebears is found in an entry in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book which tell us that Herforthun was in the patronage of 'the church' (probably the abbey church which became the cathedral) in Worcester. By that time there was certainly a church in Harvington, though not the one which you see now. That was built in the late 1100s and was then, as in all villages, the focal point of community life. It saw the village grow, always relying on the surrounding fertile areas for its existence. It saw the building of the Manor House with its (now sadly dilapidated) pigeon cote bearing witness to at least one person with money, and then the rest of the timber-framed houses which are still here, but for the most part, never seeing the development of a wealthy community.

Then in the late 18th century, as was happening in the rest of the country, a major change was forced on the village by one of the Enclosure Acts which brought the King's commissioners here, charged with re-ordering the ownership of land. The poorer people, as was inevitable, suffered most; the 'common lands' on which they had previously fed their goats, pigs and geese, were now considerably reduced in number and fences and hedges were put in place to remind them. Roads were designated and orders given to keep them in good repair using the gravel which was here in abundance. The Rector lost his right to 'tithes' but was recompensed with land which he could rent out. In time, those whose level of ownership had increased were able to build the several 'grander' houses which the village boasts here and there, but usually, Harvington continued as a village of only moderate means. Arable farming was still prevalent; wages stayed low and times remained hard for most people.

### Victorian expansion

The coming of the Revd Arthur Henry Winnington-Ingram as Rector in 1850, however, brought several changes. He was well-educated, well-connected and seen as 'a gentleman'. Stern but fair, he was listened to and, as he was a firm believer in education, he was soon in negotiation for the building of a school. So Harvington (now First) school, followed not long afterwards by the building of a Reading Room where he encouraged the men of the village to go to read the newspapers he arranged to have sent here from London. Meantime he accomplished the repair and renovation of a (by now) rather dilapidated church. He was an amazing man. He died in 1887 which was about the time that negotiations were taking place to build a Mission Room in the village for use by Non-Conformists. This later became the Baptist chapel which has been a boon and blessing to everybody connected with it ever since.

A railway line and station had been put in place in the 1860s and a Post Office added in 1888. The growing of hops brought a sudden and welcome change to the village's prosperity (good news for the 3 public houses which existed by then) and this was soon added to by the gradual change from arable farming to fruit growing by the local growers. We must, also, of course pay tribute to the growing of asparagus!!

The village had already acquired a little shop; another was added together with a Police House with resident policeman, and a much-needed Village Hall in 1931 (its success as a project accredited to the energy showed by the Women's Institute of the time.) Two garages were established.

A more comprehensive history of commercial activity from the 1840s to the 1960s is contained in an appendix.



The station, sadly, is no longer there but Station Road is a pleasant addition to the original village lay-out with attractive houses and bungalows along its length and St James' Close a further welcome addition. The 1960s had seen the beginning of a marked development as several large estates of houses were built and these, together with other smaller additional developments have gradually reached a point where the village now has upwards of 700 dwelling-places.

Harvington has none of the old-world glamour and appeal of some of the area's tourist attractions but it has an interesting history and, usually, is pleasing to the eye, with tree-lined approaches courtesy of an exceptionally dedicated Tree Warden, and is definitely a friendly and welcoming place in which to live.

One feels that those early settlers on the flood plain along old Anchor Lane would be happy to be here now.

## The Village and its setting

To the casual visitor Harvington may appear distinctive for two main reasons. First, the parish church of St James is visible for miles around with its conspicuous copper-covered broach spire which has weathered as copper always does, to a distinctive light green coloration. Secondly, some villages have waited for decades for a new road to bypass a constricted village core - narrow high streets ill-suited to modern vehicles. Harvington has the distinction of being bypassed twice in the past 50 years, the modern dual carriageway of the A46 between Evesham and Alcester being the second such occurrence.

The River Avon has strongly influenced the development of Harvington over many centuries. It has formed a distinctive parish boundary to the east of the village, but long before human habitation in the area, the river was shaping the landscape. The river, probably once much larger than the one we are used to, would periodically flood dramatically and bring down large quantities of sedimentary material, some of which was deposited on the original flood plains. The sand and gravel deposits up and down the Vale bear witness to this. Over geological time the land has risen whilst the river has cut down to its existing bed level. The old flood plains have been left high and dry and form what we now recognise as a series of river terraces.

Harvington village, as we now see it, sits on the edge of such a terrace overlooking the existing flood plain of the river below. River floods in recent years have confirmed in the minds of all local inhabitants how awesome a mass of water moving down the valley can be. Wisely, the early builders of Harvington choose their village site well above the high water level of the River Avon.

Reference has already been made to the local road network. The road from Evesham to Stratford keeps well above the modern flood plain of the river but in essence follows its general alignment. As a consequence the 'old' main road made its way through Harvington including Church Street and Cress Hill, now sign posted Crest Hill. A railway formerly ran through Harvington, again keeping well clear of periodic river floods.

Probably the best impression of the village in its wider setting can be obtained by travelling up Leys Road toward the Lench villages. The land rises steeply near the parish boundary and provides a superb viewing point. The Vale of Evesham spreads out below, the Cotswold scarp can be clearly seen to the east and St James' green spire marks the centre of the village.

In much earlier times the river ford at the eastern end of Anchor Lane was of some economic importance and there is some evidence to suggest it was in use in Roman times. Today, Anchor Lane has been truncated by the two bypass roads and the river ford has fallen into disuse.



Besides the main physical features of the landscape what is largely seen today has been much influenced by human activity over many centuries. And this dynamic process brings changes which are still occurring at regular intervals. Forest trees are not much in evidence while planted trees in the form of plum and apple orchards are still a feature of the landscape. However, these are in decline due to changes in types of farming.

The notable number of half-timbered houses and cottages in the old village core suggest that locally hewn oak was once much more plentiful than it is today. Even now there are young oaks springing up along the line of Harvington Brook which have all the makings of splendid timber trees if left to grow to maturity. Older village residents can recall the majestic elms which once enhanced the village landscape. Their susceptibility to Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s has left the village largely devoid of big trees.

Evidence around the 'old' village suggests that hop gardens were once part of the old rural economy. This is born out by the agricultural census forms from the second half of the nineteenth century. Hop growing went into decline to be superseded by plums. Large acreages were planted from 1880 - 1930 and an examination of old Ordnance Survey Maps of the first half of the twentieth century show just how extensive these were - occupying as they did the alluvial soils of the upper river terraces and extending onto the heavier clay soils on the rising land toward the Lenches. Remnants of these old orchards can still be seen but a sharp decline in the demand for culinary plums in the second half of the twentieth century rendered plum growing uneconomic. Significant apple orchards can still be found bordering the village of Norton.

Besides orchard fruit production, the Harvington landscape has been noted for its market gardening. In the first half of the twentieth century land all around the village was intensively cultivated for salads, soft fruits and vegetables. Local traders bought this produce from the growers and shipped it largely to the Birmingham markets. Many of the market gardens operated on a modest scale and occupied plots of land of relatively few acres. By the beginning of this century, the small scale growers had all but disappeared but one or two larger operations currently exist supplying pack houses in the Evesham district. Such changes have resulted in much land now being devoted to large scale arable farming with the consequent decline of employment possibilities.



# Village Services

## Parish Council

The village is served by a parish council comprising of 9 elected councillors, who serve for a term of four years, and a parish clerk.

The members have been trained to a standard that enables them to take 'The Power of Well being.' This power enables the council to raise money to fund any project that the residents decide is beneficial for the community and the council decides is practical to undertake.

A survey of village residents revealed that 63% of the respondents felt that the Parish Council was aware of village concerns.

## Public Transport

Stagecoach runs a bus service from Stratford upon Avon to Evesham, which passes through Harvington six days per week, Monday to Saturday, at thirty minute intervals during the morning and afternoon with a less frequent service in the evening.

A bus service from Stratford upon Avon to Worcester is run every two hours on a Sunday. Other services are run during the school term time for the use of school children.

## Education

### Nursery

The Nursery is run in the school and at present has 26 children.

### Harvington C of E First School

The school is believed to have been built about 1849 and was one large room housing all the children. Today there are 162 pupils, aged between 3 and 10, 7 teachers, 8 teaching assistants and 2 administrative staff. There is a large hall, computer suite, library, practical areas in each unit and individual laptops for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school offers a variety of after school clubs. It is situated in extensive grounds which incorporates Forest School. It liaises extensively with the church, local community and pyramid schools and offers a creative curriculum.

Most children will go on to St. Egwin's Middle School, then Prince Henry's High School when they leave Harvington First School.

Residents are fortunate to have such a range of facilities in the village and they should be supported and protected in the future.

## Crime and Policing

### Rate of crime

Harvington like the large majority of rural villages can happily boast an enviably low rate of crime relative to the much reported national statistics. A keen sense of community, which Harvington also enjoys, is often linked to low levels of criminal activity. The majority of incidents reported relate to theft from motor vehicles which can occur in spates (18 reported incidents during the 12 months up to March 2010). It can be assumed this type of crime will be committed by transient criminals targeting outlying areas with low risk of detection .

### Crime prevention

Harvington has embraced a sensible approach to crime reduction. An active Neighbourhood Watch scheme is in place to monitor any criminal activity that does occur. Neighbourhood Watch works alongside the natural 'grapevine communication' to alert villagers and encourage them to protect themselves and their property.

A recently rejuvenated PACT (Partners and community together) panel now includes representatives from Neighbourhood Watch, the village school, parish council and the local police. The PACT panel meets regularly to discuss and implement ways to promote a feeling of general 'well being' in the village. PACT has recently surveyed all villagers to ask for ways improvements could be made to enhance the quality of life in Harvington.

### Policing

Harvington is well served by two officers from the West Mercia force, a PC covering Evesham rural west and a community support officer both of whom are regular visitors to the village and actively involved in village organisations including PACT.



## Retail and Public Houses

Harvington has a convenience store stocking a wide range of goods which is placed on the side of the village where there are more elderly people who have a real need for a local facility. At the heart of the village is Harvington Post Office. For over 120 years there has been a Post Office in the village and this has been situated in its present location in Village Street for nearly 20 years, having previously been sited in various properties around the village.

A vast range of Post Office products and services are available through this village amenity including motor vehicle licensing, travel services (including travel money), personal banking for several High Street banks, bill payments, mobile phone top-up and postage of letters and parcels. On the shop side of the business a variety of other products are available including confectionery, ice creams, soft drinks, stationery, cards and photocopier. Many residents and visitors to the village see the Post Office as a place where they can obtain information, help and advice.



Four local Post Office closures have resulted in more people using our village post office and ensuring its continued viability. If Harvington Post Office relied on its own residents it would not survive. Due to the presence in the village of a post office houses sell quicker than in those villages without this vital facility.

Looking to the future, although in many homes more and more use is being made of computers, 80% of those who responded to the village survey indicated that they used the Post Office at least once a month. To lose its Post Office the village would lose a very necessary asset, facility, advice centre along with vital products and services.

- 'Came with a young family nearly 25 years ago and were immediately gathered into a warm community. In recent years though, developments have brought too many newcomers into the village at the same time which means they are not easily assimilated, in the way we were, and cliques have developed.'

## Farm Shop

There is a farm shop within walking distance to provide access to fresh vegetables, fruit and meat. For the continued viability of these essential services to the community new customers are needed, through additional housing, or for existing villagers to make full use of what is available since any one of them closing down would put a lot of people in a very real lack of basic necessities.

There are two Public Houses, one at either end of the main street and both serving meals at reasonable prices and providing a certain amount of social activities. A door-to-door milk delivery service is also available from a dairy located elsewhere.



## Community Activities

### Harvington Youth Project

(registered charity no:1115838)

There are around 300 young people living in Harvington, within the age range of 5-17, and the need for youth work among such a number is considerable.

In 1994 the Baptist and Anglican Churches formed a Joint Steering Group to develop the Project and this usually meets about every two months. James Nicol was appointed in the summer of 1994 as the first project Youth Worker, on the basis of two working days each week and he stayed with the Project for six years. He was joined by his fiancée Jayne, and they were married in 1995. Together, with several keen and willing volunteers, James and Jayne were able to develop the project to a point where up to 80 children and young people were involved in five separate groups during the week.

The motto of the Youth Project is John 10:10 where Jesus says, 'I have come to give life, life in all its fullness.'

James relinquished his post as Youth Worker in 2000 in order to train as a teacher. Neil Dunlop was appointed in the summer of that year followed by Emma Lucas in 2005. In August 2006 Harvington Youth Project became a registered charity.

Becky Valendar took up the role of principal Youth Worker in September 2007 and relinquished her post in August 2010.

The exciting news is that the Youth Project has been given a grant so, along with the generous financial support from both Churches in Harvington and the Parish Council, we are able to employ a Youth Worker for four days every week instead of two from the beginning of September and James Bell-Winfrow has been appointed to this post.

### Religion in the Village

St James' Church is widely recognised in the community as an important landmark and historical building. Attendance at Sunday morning services has increased in the last 10 years mainly due to more younger people and families attending. The church is filled to capacity for certain festival services, some funerals and for Harvington First School services but to our children's surprise continues to lack flexibility and basic facilities including toilets.

Although the maintenance of the building and fabric is the responsibility of the church members, the wider community and various other bodies have contributed generously to its upkeep. As a Grade 1 listed building, there are restrictions on the building materials which can be used and adaptations which can be made to suit a modern religion as well as reducing heating costs.

The Baptist Church has benefited from a recent extension which allows greater flexibility on how the building is used for worship and related activities including use by the Youth Project. Weekly Tuesday coffee morning held throughout the year between 10-12 noon which is a popular drop in point for the village. With St James there are street parties held at Blakenhurst (carol singing and summer events including tea and games.) The church is non conformist and offers a variety of different styles of worship, hold a weekly Sunday club for children attending church, regular house groups when we seek to look into God's word, and men's prayer breakfasts. Recently a lads and dads golf, fishing and shooting event was organised.

#### Baptist Church Mission Statement

To worship God in a way that pleases Him. A prayerful, loving, encouraging, outward looking and forward thinking church. Fully committed to sharing God's love with all people.

#### **The Churchyard**

The churchyards continue to be used for burials of anyone who has lived in the community and are approaching capacity. There is some scope for nearby land to become a new cemetery and given the proximity to the bypass such land would not be ideal for houses. The next generation might appreciate the same local ceremonies as past generations.





## The Village Hall

The Village Hall has long been an important centre of village activity having been built in 1931 on a small piece of land in the centre of the village donated at that time by some residents. Over the years it has served the village well being the centre of most social activity and is much loved and used. By the turn of the millennium it was looking and feeling tired and old. The management committee began to explore the possibilities of a new hall either on the same site or on an alternative and larger site for which planning permission was obtained. The project depended on funding from the village and numerous small fund providers but mainly from the Lottery. The Lottery funding unfortunately, for various reasons, was not forthcoming. However, with the funds available a total refurbishment and extension of the existing hall were proposed by John Redman involving village volunteers as much as possible. Under his guidance and project management this work is now very well advanced and amazingly has been achieved without interrupting its use – especially by the Pre-School Playgroup who meet each day. It is already providing a hall with far more and better facilities in a warm, comfortable and attractive environment and will be a facility of which Harvington can be very proud.

## Pre-School

The Pre-School Group is run in Harvington Village Hall, it is registered for 40 children and operates Monday to Thursday 9.15 to 2.45 during term time.

• 'We feel very involved in the community. There is something here for all ages and a sense of community spirit we appreciate being part of.'

## Recreation

The recently refurbished Village Hall now provides better facilities for those village groups who regularly use it and allows more people and groups to meet in the building, but it is not just a building, it is a mirror - reflecting the health, wealth and happiness of the community. It is the one place where villagers of all ages and beliefs can meet, be



entertained, informed and connected to one another.

The village playing field was opened in 1979, behind the Village Hall, and has the equipment provided and maintained by a Committee of volunteers. This also offers a ground for village events such as the fete and firework displays. Discussion is also underway, with representatives of several village groups, to work to establishing a recreational area on the west side of the village. This may take the form of a community orchard which could benefit the whole village in the learning process from design, planting, maintenance, cropping, would bring many together throughout the process and would provide an attractive entrance to the village as well as somewhere interesting along the footpath system. Other requests are for adult or outdoor gym equipment around the village and perhaps a linking of all the footpaths to encourage fitness to all levels and all age groups while maintaining the green space so valued. Cycling is also a big request from all ages and development of paths around the village and to the area should be part of the plan.

As comments were also received for football and other sports facilities, perhaps more needs to be done to promote the current facilities within the village to ensure all residents are aware of the football and cricket clubs, the netball team, the golf and the fishing. (and any others).

The allotments and the Forest School now started with the First School also bring health benefits and encourage people to work together on projects which sustain the rural aspects of village life appreciated by those surveyed.

**ACTION**  
**Open Space**  
**AP 01**

Harvington is a lively village which has many organisations catering for different ages and tastes, which is why the Village Hall, Playing Field and the Cricket Club are so important to the village.

### Harvington social groups

Women’s Institute, Harvington Horticultural Society, Art group, Reading groups, Drama Group, Walking groups, Gentle exercise group, Harvington Singers, Tower Bell Ringers, St James’ Handbell Ringers and Harvington Amateur Theatrical Society.

Pre-school, Jilly Tots, Brownies, Guides, Youth groups for various ages, Mothers and Toddlers, Drama and dance groups for children.

Cricket and Football groups for all ages, the two Inns have also several groups associated with sports and games.

## Housing in the Village

Harvington is a settled village in which a high proportion of residents have lived for more than ten years.

The village has 673 dwellings of a variety of styles and sizes with very few apartments. The attractive and versatile nature of the housing in the village provides homes for varying sized families with differing levels of income and a good social mix. 18% of the housing stock is publicly owned, which is a high proportion considering its rural location, and higher than the average for Worcestershire.



In 2009 a Housing Needs Survey was conducted in the village to ascertain whether there would be a need during the following five years for further affordable housing including social rented property. This survey revealed only ten families who needed the assistance of the District Council and their details were submitted to the District Council. Due to the confidential nature of this information it is not known whether these families were already on the District Council’s register.

**ACTION**  
**Any further development should address specific requirements**  
**AP 02**

The facts support the view of the residents that this balance of size and types of property within the village offers a reasonable basis for a healthy community life and should be maintained in any plans, for the future development of the village.

A survey of the residents showed that they considered that future growth should be confined to individual buildings or very small developments with no significant extension of the settlement boundary. Sheltered housing or a retirement home on a small scale development would be welcomed.

## Residents

Perhaps one of the most significant facts about the residents of Harvington is that they form a well-balanced community in terms of age-range. This is due in part to the mix of housing types and patterns to be found within the village, the presence of a First School with an attached Nursery Class, and its easy access to main traffic routes, including a regular and frequent bus route between Evesham and Stratford-upon-Avon. A change in any one of these factors would be harmful to that

• 'We've only just moved into the village but chose to live here because of the quiet and the village feel.'

balance, but relative to the Parish Plan, it is the maintenance of the mixed development pattern of the village which needs particular care.

Where there are residents at differing stages of life living within all the various areas of the village, not segregated into age-specific groupings, it is more likely that networks of neighbourly relationships will develop, and be complementary to any officially-provided services.

Responses to many surveys and questionnaires during the past ten years have regularly confirmed that at the present these characteristics of friendliness and mutual support are to be found in Harvington, and that they encourage many of those who come here to remain for two or even three decades if they have the choice.

However, population trends for the area over the next 15 years (ref. Housing Needs Survey) seem to suggest that, while the overall level of population is likely to be maintained, the balance is likely to shift quite noticeably towards an older age-group. This, too, will need to be taken into account by those responsible for on-going development of the whole village, so that the needs of those with young and growing families are maintained alongside any additional provision for an ageing population.

**ACTION**

**The average age of the residents is growing**

**AP 02**

**ISSUES**

**Tourism**



One of the landmarks in the Vale of Evesham is the copper spire on Harvington's parish church of St James the Great; this stands on a ridge and can be seen for miles around. A number of people touring the area visit the church which offers a Norman window and dates mainly from the twelfth and thirteenth century. It also contains some fine later windows, particularly the east window, which is an early Preedy. The church has recently gone through a period of internal restoration and renovation and provides a warm welcome to visitors.

At this end of the village there are some fine examples of black and white half-timbered houses, from tiny cottages to more imposing original farm houses, and the visitor interested in architecture can also see some good examples of Georgian and Victorian family homes.

Food and drink can be obtained at the Coach and Horses opposite the church, and the Golden Cross serves Sunday lunches. There is a general store in Leys Road and food can also be purchased at Ellenden Farm. Ellenden who hold regular farm open days which attract a number of visitors.

Down Anchor Lane are the headquarters of Manor Farm Leisure; they provide coarse fishing in the Avon and on their pools at Windmill Lakes and Woodpool. They also have two golf courses: the 18 hole Anchor course and the nine hole Mill Course. Both courses are pay and play. There are static caravans for hire by the week. Nearer the river is another caravan site, Harvington Lock; most of the vans here belong to people who visit at weekends.

There are many public footpaths in and around the village, which provide recreational facilities for both residents and visitors.

**ACTION**

**Future Tourism**

**AP 03**

**Roads**

The Evesham to Alcester road is a concern for many residents because of the amount of heavy lorries and speed of traffic using this road. After many years of campaigning it is a 30 mph limit has been imposed on this stretch of road. However, the number of heavy lorries using it to go to a quarry in the next county still continues to be a problem. A crossing facility at the main crossroads would be welcomed by the village.

**ACTION**

**Road safety**

**AP 04**

*Continued next page*

## Roads continued

The design of any crossing should be carefully considered so that it is not detrimental to the village. For example, a zebra crossing would be preferable to a signalised pelican crossing.

Parked cars, traffic and pedestrians are a dangerous mixture around the Village Green and in Village Street.

**ACTION**

**Road safety**

**AP 04**

## Street Lighting



The Parish Council currently owns 38 lights of which most are either fixed to poles belonging to someone else and cannot be maintained any longer on health and safety grounds or are on concrete poles which are at the end of their life. The lights also currently use older style bulbs which are not green nor energy efficient. The timing system is dawn to dusk sensor which means they burn through all hours of darkness and use energy all the time to maintain the sensors. The County Council own lights on some of the newer developments in the village - these are at Hughes Close, Finch Lane, St James Close and The Rowans/Marsh Close.

In response to the Parish Plan survey just over 50% of respondents agreed that lighting needed to be improved. At the consultation on 5th June 82% responding to the display felt that lighting was not required throughout the night and those responding also supported a change to more energy efficient lighting. Residents from Orchard Place, Station Road and Village Street also appear to be in favour of more lights, while those living elsewhere in the village did not want more lighting.

Some residents consider street lighting an urban requirement unsuited to the rural environment and damaging to the views of the night skies which they appreciate. Some residents consider street lighting a pollutant in energy terms and wish to see better lighting with lower energy usage only where lighting is essential. Some residents consider street lighting vital for security and would like to see more in the village.

**ACTION**

**Street lighting**

**AP 05**

## Flooding in Harvington

Severe flooding took place in Leys Road, Village Street, Newing Court, Alcester Road, Brickyard Cottages, Evesham Road and Stratford Road, Harvington on 3rd August 2004. This event was caused by thunderstorms over the village and the resulting rain was too heavy to soak into the fields. Leys Road became a river and this torrent of water was so large that the current drainage system in the village was overwhelmed resulting in damage to property in the path of the water.

Severn Trent had upgraded part of the drainage water system earlier in the year to mitigate flooding problems in Stratford Road, but the system still could not manage the water flow.

The Parish Council met officials from the County Council, District Council and Severn Trent Water on 17th August 2004. The issues were identified and actions were approved at that meeting.

In 2004, new drainage pipes were put in place at Brickyard Cottages and a new road drainage system was installed in Village Street west of Station Road. Subsequently Station Road also received a new drainage system.

In 2005 the District Council agreed to make Harvington one of its priority flooding concerns and the Parish Council also agreed to help to fund the project.

In July 2007 work started on a flood alleviation scheme, but was interrupted by county wide thunderstorms and this resulted in the slowing of the completion of the plans for the Harvington scheme.

The Parish Council has continued to bring pressure to the authorities to complete the scheme for the benefit of the residents and in 2010 the Parish Council was notified that the District Council has received a grant from DEFRA which will enable the scheme to be completed.

**ACTION**

**Flood  
alleviation  
scheme**

**AP 06**

## Health and Welfare

Residents must visit Evesham, Alcester, Bidford, Worcester or Cheltenham to receive care for their health or welfare.

The village has a few bungalows for older people, but no housing in the village is connected with an emergency care or warden system. Some residents may have a personal alarm system.

One of the most obvious matters to emerge from the surveys for the Parish Plan and for Housing is that, as elsewhere in the country, Harvington has a large and increasing proportion of residents approaching or already in retirement.

Problems in caring will further arise with a growth of old people. However, having older residents can offer potential benefits of having people with experience and who have the time to offer their skills within the community. It has also been shown that neighbours and friends in the village are one of the most appreciated benefits of living here. This network and volunteers from the churches provides support when people are in need.

The village needs to look for longer term plans to help its residents remain as independent as possible and in their own homes

The Baptist Church holds a coffee morning each week and St James' Church holds its CAMEO Teas monthly. These provide some regular social conversations for the older population.

**ACTION**

**Health and Welfare**

**AP 07**

## Small Businesses

Several small businesses already operate in Harvington and the Parish Council should seek ways to encourage their deployment.

Encourage a network for the business community

Investigate, with the help of that community, the amount and type of support that could be provided for small businesses in the parish.

**ACTION**

**Promote commercial activity.**

**AP 08**

## Communication in the village

The first choice of communication of the residents is the Village News. However, the ever-increasing use of the Internet by the residents resulted in the Parish Council giving greater consideration to web based information services in the village

**ACTION**

**Communications**

**AP 09**

## Parish Council Training

It is essential that a good quality Parish Council is maintained in the future to enable the actions contained in this plan to be completed. Therefore, potential candidates for election in 2011 will need to be trained and more need to be attracted to stand. It is also necessary that they should know what they are expected to do to maintain Power of Wellbeing.

**ACTION**

**Councillors Training**

**AP 10**

## Allotments

The Parish Council recognises that allotments are beneficial for the residents of the village and will take action to ensure that a sufficient number are always available

**ACTION**

**Allotments**

**AP 11**

## Conclusions

### Encouraging future village growth

The majority of residents wanted the village to remain as a rural village with the minimum of growth. A doctor's surgery received the largest support followed by encouragement for growth in small businesses in the village.

A small majority favoured an expansion in tourism and more cycle paths in the area.

# Summary of Key Action Points

Priorities of action

Immediate action; Medium term = within five years;

Long term = within 10 years; Ongoing = Continual monitoring

Ref.	Problem	Action	Priority
AP 01	Open Space	Encouraging further use of existing and new open spaces in the village by keeping them clean and free from litter or supporting the volunteers who do the work.	Ongoing
AP 02	The needs of the residents should be reflected in future housing developments.	The Parish Council will ensure that the Village Design Statement is comprehensive.	Immediate
AP 03	The strongest support was for trails, walking and fishing. Facilities already exist for fishing, but walking trails are poor and could be developed.	In collaboration with Worcestershire County Council, the Parish Council will actively promote/encourage the construction of a footbridge across the River Avon and the end of Anchor Lane thus connecting with walks on the opposite side of the River Avon. Open a footpath between Evesham Country Park and Harvington. Operate a passenger boat on the river between Harvington and Evesham Country Park.	Long term
AP 03		Provide Village Maps at strategic points in the village showing public footpaths and village amenities	Medium
AP 03		The Harvington Trust is actively investigating a project for the north west of the village which would provide footpaths, an orchard and wetlands.	Immediate
AP 04	Road safety concerns	The Parish Council will review the safety concerns of the residents and will inform the residents about the options that can be undertaken	Medium
AP 04		The Highway Authority should be requested to monitor and enforce the new 30 mph speed limit on the Alcester/Evesham Road. New village entrance signs should be provided	Immediate
AP 05	The Parish Council street lamps are very old and some residents want improved street lighting	The Parish Council is at present reviewing the situation in order to improve the lighting and make it more efficient. Thereby cutting the cost of the consumption of energy and maintenance of the system.	Immediate
AP 06	Flash flooding	In 2010 a partnership of Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council and Harvington Parish Council were working on the final phase of a flood alleviation plan.	Immediate

Ref.	Problem	Action	Priority
AP 07	Health and Welfare	Consider a form of Parish Warden scheme. For example, a scheme in Girton, Cambridgeshire involves the community, with help from Age Concern in that particular case, contributing to the provision of a Parish Warden. Residents can ask for certain assistance from the Warden according to their needs: i.e., someone to collect prescriptions, someone to call on the phone or at the door on a daily, weekly or whatever basis just to ensure all is well, someone to be contacted in an emergency or to help for a short time during or following a stay in hospital. The individual details would need careful selection. In Girton, those requiring this assistance contribute a small fee depending on the service required - believed to be £1 per day for being on call for emergencies or for collecting prescriptions etc. The warden(s), more than one would be required if the position was to be covered around the clock, would need to be paid appropriately to qualifications and would need to be CRB checked. Such a scheme could bring peace of mind as well as practical help to residents who need contact and help in minor things.	Medium
AP 07	Health and Welfare	Establish a visiting doctor or pharmacy in partnership with the relevant health trust.	Long term
AP 07	Health and Welfare	Support and publicise the sports groups in the village Support for the allotments and healthy eating..	Ongoing
AP 08	Commercial activity	Investigate, with the help of the community, the amount and type of support that could be provided for small businesses in the parish.	Long term
AP 08	Commercial activity	Encourage a network for the business community	Medium
AP 08	Commercial activity	Investigate the possibility of creating a small business park.	Long term
AP 09	Communications	Develop the Website and Village News to get people interested and involved and volunteering because they can see results	Immediate
AP 10	Training	Training for potential candidates for the Parish Council Election in 2011 to attract more to stand. Provide knowledge of the Power of Wellbeing.	Immediate
AP11	Allotments	The Council will investigate the provision of land available for allotments in the Parish.	Immediate
AP11	Allotments	The Council in partnership with landowners will ensure that an adequate amount of land is available for use as allotments.	Ongoing

# Village Design Statement

## 1. What is a Village Design Statement ?

A Village Design Statement is a document, drawn up by local people, that describes the local character of the village and the surrounding countryside and sets out the qualities that are valued by the local residents.

The Village Design Statement is intended to stimulate interest in Harvington and to find out what is good and bad about the village. It sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of new development in the village based on the local character information.

## 2. Why do we need one ?

The purpose of the Village Design Statement is to help manage change. It will not decide whether development goes ahead (be that small scale house extensions, in-fill or larger sites) as that is for the local planning authority. However, it is an advisory document produced by the local community presenting guidelines that should be taken into consideration by developers and planning officers.

## 3. What does it cover ?

The focus of the Village Design Statement is a description of the particular character of Harvington and the surrounding countryside. We have considered the character on three levels:

- The landscape setting of Harvington
- The shape of the village
- The nature of the village buildings

Using this information we have developed design guidelines we think should be followed when any development is being considered in our village.

## 4. How the VDS was produced

The information in this document was put together by the residents of Harvington with the full support of the Parish Council. It is the result of public consultation within the whole parish at various stages including:

- Parish Council meetings, Drop-in sessions, a workshop and exhibitions
- Input from Parish Council members
- Notices in the parish magazine (Village News)
- Providing opportunities for all residents to comment
- Consultation with Wychavon District Council (WDC) planning officers

### 4.1 VDS Workshop

Although a number of Parish Plan events happened in 2006, the focus of recent work on the VDS has been during 2010. In April 2010 we held a Workshop in the Village Hall which was advertised to all residents in the Village News. Nineteen people attended the workshop and were divided into 5 groups assigned to 5 areas of the village. (To obtain as much information and

feedback as possible, the village had been divided into five areas identified on separate maps). The groups were briefed on the reasons why we were doing the VDS (see sections 1-3 above) and asked to visit their area. They were asked to identify those features which they value and those which they felt were unsatisfactory in that part of the village. Particular pointers they were asked to consider were:

- The village in context – its setting in the landscape and views into and out of the village.
- Growth of settlement and its general character.
- Highways and traffic.
- Buildings, taking special note of materials and detailing.
- Open spaces, tree-planting, walls, hedges and boundaries.
- Areas for future development of services and housing.
- Conservation areas. (A conservation area cannot be one or two houses, and in the case of Harvington only an extension of the present area would probably be considered).



Following their surveys of the various areas the groups provided feedback which is presented in Appendix 1 of this VDS.

#### 4.2 VDS Exhibition

A small exhibition was staged in the village Hall during the Village Show on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Photo boards were used to display the findings from the April workshop and to obtain further comment from residents and visitors (see Appendix 2).

#### 4.3 Key feedback

Some of the main messages that came from the village and which have been used to help steer our thinking for guidelines are:

##### **Likes**

- Harvington's rural setting.
- Wide streets with off-road parking.
- A feeling of space – our green areas, gardens, trees etc are important
- The mix of house styles adds interest, but not all types enhance the village
- The range of facilities we have available

##### **Dislikes**

- Harvington crossroads (a danger and a barrier that divides the village)
- Parking on-street that causes problems, for example, around the school and village hall area and in small cul-de sacs
- Some of our village entrances could be improved
- High density of development can look out of character
- The idea of large scale development.



## 5. The landscape setting of Harvington

The parish of Harvington lies on the eastern boundary of the county of Worcestershire. It is divided from Warwickshire by a tributary of the River Avon, forming the greater part of the eastern and northern boundaries of the parish. The Avon itself bounds it on the south and east, while another of its tributaries, Harvington Brook, flowing south-east, forms the western boundary. The main settlement is situated on a low ridge above the river plain, and to the north the land rises again to the Lench Hills. These changes in height mark the position of ancient river terraces and show the enormous effect of the river on the landscape long before its human habitation.



The village nowadays is surrounded by farmland (see 6.2 for changes in land use), with some small areas of woodland surviving from earlier times when the countryside would have been thickly forested, predominantly with oak trees. It is good to be able to record that there are still young oaks growing along the Harvington Brook, and that in recent years there has been a deliberate planting of oak trees along the Evesham road. This and many other tree-planting schemes have been a particular contribution to the enhancement of the village by our Tree Warden, and has gone some way towards making good the devastating effect of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s, when so many of the large old trees in the village were lost. The grubbing up of many old orchards, especially in the direction of the Lenches, has also made the surroundings of the village less attractive and diverse, although there are some signs that this may be beginning to be reversed.

Probably the best impression of the village in its wider setting can be obtained from a viewpoint on the road to the Lenches, where the land rises steeply just beyond the parish boundary. The Vale of Evesham spreads out below, the Cotswold scarp can be clearly seen to the east, and St James' copper-covered green spire marks the centre of the village.

It could be argued that, were it not for that spire, Harvington would be almost invisible in the landscape from whichever direction it is approached. Its visual charm, therefore, depends heavily on three things; the sense of arrival created by the actual road approaches to the village (not all of which rise to this challenge), the small changes in relationships between buildings and the spaces around them as people move through the village, and the modest views of the surrounding countryside which can be seen from all areas of the village. All of these elements need to be considered and respected by those who intend to build, extend or develop properties in the village, and the illustrations below may provide helpful examples for their consideration.



## 6. Influences on the growth and shape of the village.

### 6.1 Development of roads, trackways and footpaths.

By the time people first settled in Harvington, the impressive network of roads left by the Romans had begun to deteriorate, whilst the creation of turnpike (or toll) roads did not start until the beginning of the 18th century. However, there was almost certainly a well-defined route from Alcester (an important Roman junction) to Evesham through Harvington from a very early date. In addition, at least two other well-used trackways also served the village; one which followed the edge of the Avon flood-plain from Evesham to Bidford, where the Roman road crossed the river, and another which probably originated as an offshoot from one of the many 'saltways' along which

packhorses carried their loads from the mines in Droitwich, and eventually wound its way down through the Lench villages and on to the river crossing by the 'Fish and Anchor' inn. These three routes have provided the framework for the development of Harvington ever since. It is only in the past 50 years that Harvington has been by-passed (twice) – a great blessing in terms of traffic reduction, but also something that calls for considerable re-thinking of the village's interaction with modern modes of transport and also its relationship to the river (see Guidelines).

## 6.2 Changing economic activity.

For about a thousand years, from the time when the first settlers in the area decided to re-locate to one of the river terraces safely above the flood-plain, until the complete upheaval of land use and land ownership which was caused by the passing of the Enclosure Acts in the late 18th century, Harvington was a largely self-sustaining agricultural community which provided a modest living for the majority of its inhabitants. Its oldest dwellings can still be found mainly in the area around the church, along Stratford Road and up Village Street, and expansion from this centre only happened extremely slowly. Whilst on the one hand the new laws led to the accumulation of land in fewer hands, and changes in farming methods meant that more cash crops were grown, bringing more wealth into the community, these changes also meant hardship and the loss of an independent livelihood for some. Overall the village never became particularly prosperous, although a number of more substantial properties (the Manor House, The Laurels, Lansdowne, the Grange) were built over the centuries by the larger landowners. The local economy continued to be almost entirely dependent on various agricultural activities throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century, and the size of the settlement grew very little, although there must obviously have been a continuous process of renewal of the existing building stock going on. Throughout this period, Harvington Cross was a separate very small hamlet around the significant crossroads on the Evesham to Alcester road.



The building of the railway line along the river valley in the 1860s, coupled with the further development of large-scale crop growing in the area, firstly of hops, and then of orchard fruit, especially plums, led to some modest building activity along Anchor Lane and down Crest (or Cress) Hill. The commercial growing of vegetables and especially salad crops also became a speciality of the whole Vale of Evesham area. However, it was not until after the Second World War that the number of households in Harvington began to increase noticeably, firstly with the roadside developments along Station Road and Village Street, the latter making Harvington and Harvington Cross into a continuous settlement for the first time. At the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s larger estates were built, in the first instance on the Lenches side of the Evesham to Alcester Road (Blakenhurst, Brookedale, and Orchard Place), in response to several factors such as population movements from Birmingham and from the north of England in search of both employment and retirement homes, and a national building boom which made the sale of land for development very profitable at a time when farmers and growers were struggling to compete with imported food from all over the world. It was at this time that the links between where people lived and where they worked began to be less important, and this tendency has continued right up to the present time, and has been reflected in two further large estate developments (Hughes Close and St James Close) in the centre of the village as well as the infilling of several smaller areas as they have become available.



This doubling of the village population and its dispersal along a 1½ km. length of road from northeast to southwest has yet to be fully understood and managed positively in all aspects of village life, including plans for any further development (see Guidelines).

During the 20th century, a very few non-agricultural/horticultural commercial businesses have been established in the village, of which the most significant was the large car dealership and coach hire business at Harvington Cross. There was also a small engineering company on the opposite corner of the crossroads, a petrol station on the Alcester Road and a car repair garage in Leys Road, none of which are still trading.

### 6.3 Open spaces - public and private.

After the passing of the Enclosure Acts (see 6.2) the open areas which had been used by the villagers for grazing were fenced in and became privately owned, and no new official public open spaces were created until 1978 when land behind the Village Hall and adjacent to the school was bought by the Parish Council to provide a playing field, mainly for younger children, which has gradually been developed by a series of voluntary committees. Much earlier, a field had been made available down Anchor Lane where football and cricket could be played, and a club formed which still manages this facility on behalf of its members. However, the fact that nearly all the dwelling houses in the village had plots of land available to them, or were able to rent allotments, on which they grew fruit and vegetables for their own consumption, and this pattern continued even in the early post-war developments, led to a general feeling of openness even in the centre of the village.



This feeling was maintained by the provision of broad grass verges and open areas with some tree-planting in the first public housing developments in the village (Ragley Road, Glebe Cottages), but has become less and less of a feature in more recent developments (Hughes Close, Groves Close).

The cultivation of privately-owned open space has always made an important contribution to the character and appearance of the village and this is perhaps more so than ever nowadays because, as mentioned above, modern developments are built to much higher densities, whilst the selling off for development of gardens, orchards and

outbuildings attached to larger village properties is likely to reduce

still further the numbers of trees of all kinds and the diversity of planting which still enhances many parts of our village (see Guidelines).

### 6.4 Personal mobility.

It would be difficult to overestimate the enormous difficulties faced by rural villages throughout the country during the past hundred years as settlements whose framework was established in a time when transport was either on horseback, or horse-drawn, have had to come to terms with all forms of machine-driven vehicles, working on the fields as well as travelling on local roads and lanes. As public expectations of being independently mobile have risen, so has the pressure on local councils and developers to provide for this. There has been a noticeable increase in this problem in Harvington, especially over the past 5 to 10 years, mainly in respect of obstructions of the highway by parked vehicles, both in residential areas and at certain points like the Village School, the Village Hall and the Post Office where people congregate in larger numbers. This will be a major concern for any future development plans (see Guidelines).

## **7. Buildings in the village and their immediate surroundings.**

### 7.1 Building materials used in the village.

The oldest properties in the village are of timber-framed construction, built almost certainly from locally grown oak. Some of these date back to the 14th century, and their range of size and style can be seen by standing at the entrance to the Manor House (situated behind the Church) and comparing it with the tiny 'Candle Cottage' to the right hand side. Buildings of that type were probably the norm until late in the 17th century,



although there would be a gradual changeover to brick construction as the benefits of a stronger and more fire-resistant material began to be appreciated and commercially-produced bricks became more available, at least to the better-off. It may be that small quantities of bricks were made locally, using clay from the several 'marl-pits' which are still



identifiable around the village, especially on Crest Hill and Station Bank, and they may also have provided the 'daub', or plaster, for the panels of woven twigs and small branches which in-filled the walls of the earliest timber-framed buildings. In later examples, the panels were filled with brick 'noggins', which were then sometimes painted with whitewash, presumably to make them look older or to be more weather proof. Timber-framed buildings tend to have fairly steeply-pitched roofs, with over-hanging eaves, small windows and low doorways. They are

likely to have been thatched originally, but some have been re-roofed with stone slates, or with clay tiles, the most common roofing material in Harvington.

Once the change to brick was established, it became the defining building material for the whole village, used almost exclusively for both large and small buildings alike, and it remains so to-day. Although the simplest plan shape for a brick building is still a rectangle (easiest to roof) much more flexibility is possible with regard to the overall height, the number of floors and the arrangement and size of door and window openings, and all these things give character to the individual properties. Two older brick houses in Harvington which illustrate this difference of style and scale are Langston House in Village Street and Green Cottage on the corner of Village Street and the Green. The latter is also an example of buildings in the village in which the brickwork (or more recently block-work) has been painted, sometimes after first applying a coat of rendering. The inter-war/immediately post-war Ragley Road, Leys Road and Evesham Road developments were in this style, and a mixture of brickwork and painted/rendered wall finishes has also been used in more recent building schemes at St James Close and around Harvington Cross.

There are very few stone buildings in the village, apart from the Parish Church, although some of the timber framed buildings sit on stone plinths. There are, however, a number of very well-built stone walls around some of the larger properties, and also around the churchyard and adjacent burial ground. Where stone is used it is likely to be a rather inferior limestone, which on the whole does not weather very well.

## 7.2 The importance of respecting scale, density, and style of neighbouring properties.

As suggested earlier (5.), Harvington is a largely unobtrusive village, and if this characteristic is to be maintained, any new building needs to be aware of and respect both the qualities of its immediate neighbours and its location in the village. This does not necessarily mean copying them, but it does call for a sympathetic approach to the use of materials and the particular details which are natural to them, and to such matters as overall height, the detailing of boundaries and planting, and landscaping both on and off the site. Judgement is also needed as to whether the scheme is likely to enhance its surroundings or raise issues such as have been commented upon earlier (6.3) in connection with greatly increased building densities, especially in larger developments. There



are already a number of examples of developments in the village where these matters have been successfully resolved e.g., Malthouse Cottages, and at the end of St James Close opposite the Parish Church; opinions are somewhat divided about the recent residential developments around Harvington Cross, further up the Alcester Road and especially in Leys Road.

### 7.3 The significance of private residents input to their immediate surroundings

Local authorities and developers are not the only people who can make a real difference to the appearance of Harvington. Cultivating the land has been the core activity of the village throughout its history and although it may not now be so economically, there seems to be plenty of evidence that most residents take pride in and on the whole enjoy their gardens and allotments. If it were possible to link this enthusiasm with some input (maybe through the good offices of the Garden Club or the Harvington Trust?) as to ways in which personal preferences in gardening styles, and thoughtful choices as to boundary fences and hedges and the planting of trees where this is appropriate, can all contribute to the maintenance of a pleasant and diverse village setting, much could be achieved. Whilst the need for more tree-planting is important, it is quite difficult to resolve, especially in the built-up area to west of the Evesham to Alcester Road.



## **8 The Conservation Area**

The conservation area in the village of Harvington is under review by the Wychavon District Council. When the details have been finalised these will be added to this document



## 9 Suggested guidelines for developers

### 9.1 Roads and traffic

- 9.1.a Proposals for new development should provide for sufficient parking so that the need for on-street parking is minimal.
- 9.1.b Extensions to existing dwellings that remove off-street parking should be avoided.
- 9.1.c The use of permeable materials for off-street parking is encouraged (e.g. grasscrete, gravel etc.) as these provide rainwater attenuation (reducing flood risk) and provide a softer appearance.
- 9.1.d The character and appearance of all village entrances should be protected and where possible enhanced.



### 9.2 Economic activity

- 9.2.a Proposals for new business and/or commercial development should have regard to the location proposed and avoid adverse impacts on adjoining landowners and/or dwellings.
- 9.2.b It is unlikely that any sites within the village settlement boundary would be suitable for commercial development, but edge of village locations, for example within farm boundaries, may be suitable for small-scale development, subject to the above.

### 9.3 Open space

- 9.3.a Open spaces and views (both within and towards the village) should be maintained and enhanced. Exceptions to this should only be considered where there is a demonstrable benefit to the village and any loss of resources should be re-provided elsewhere. (For example, the use of the allotment area to provide off-street parking for the village hall was raised during the VDS consultation).
- 9.3.b The village playing fields are held in trust and will not be developed (unless the proposals are directly related to the recreational use).
- 9.3.c Development should not adversely affect the use of public footpaths or other Public Rights of Way or the views they provide.
- 9.3.d Additional tree planting to the west of Harvington (particularly along Leys Road) is encouraged.
- 9.3.e Homeowners are encouraged to maintain mature trees within their garden boundaries, and if trees are removed, to re-plant with an appropriate species.
- 9.3.f The village Tree Warden will continue to monitor and maintain existing trees and to re-plant/plant new trees in and around the village.



## **9.4 Buildings**

- 9.4.a Extensions to dwellings (and conservatories) should reflect and enhance the form and individual characteristics of the original dwelling, i.e., its scale, design and materials. (See also the guideline on parking). The potential impact on neighbouring dwellings such as overshadowing, loss of sunlight, etc. should also be considered and minimised.
- 9.4.b Extensions to existing dwellings that remove garages and/or off-street parking should be avoided unless adequate off-street parking can be maintained.
- 9.4.c The height and scale of any proposed new building should be appropriate to the area in which it would be built. Development more than two storeys in height are unlikely to be appropriate in most of the village and would require adequate justification.
- 9.4.d Small-scale (less than 10 dwellings) infill or redevelopment proposals should knit into the surrounding village fabric. For example, properties would typically front onto the street, with garage/garden areas to the rear. The density of development should also be in keeping with surrounding density.
- 9.4.e Materials should reflect those within the village, which whilst varied in some locations, are generally considered to contribute positively to the overall character of Harvington.

## **10 Conservation area**

- 10.1 Large-scale (greater than 10 dwellings) development would generally not be encouraged, particularly as there are no sites within the settlement boundary that could accommodate such proposals.
- 10.2 Security lighting on dwellings/buildings should be muted and not cause annoyance or intrusion to neighbouring properties.
- 10.3 Television and/or satellite aerials should be sited unobtrusively.



# Parish Plan and VDS Appendices

## **These appendices are on the attached DVD.**

- A study of Harvington 1970
- Village Plan 1983
- Parish Plan Questionnaire 2009
- Housing Needs Survey 2009
- Summary of Surveys 2010
- VDS Workshop Report 2010
- Harvington AD2007
- Commercial History of Harvington
- Images of Harvington
- Census Report
- Harvington Parish Plan & VDS

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