

A Guide to The 2012 Sarratt Parish Plan



Acknowledgements

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We would also like to record thanks to the many volunteers who gave time to help with the distribution of questionnaires for the survey, data inputting and the production and distribution of the complete on-line Parish Plan and this printed Guide.

Finally, the images on the back cover are a small selection of the work of pupils at Sarratt School, who were asked to illustrate aspects of the Parish in a 'words or pictures' competition. We greatly appreciate the contributions of the pupils, staff and other helpers who organised the competition.

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Introduction

The Sarratt Parish Plan (SPP) is a comprehensive document, which will be available to all. It sets out details of the action plans designed to sustain and improve the quality of life for our community. Given that the full SPP is a detailed and long document, it was decided to provide a summary of the proposed action plans in this Guide. Anyone wishing to read the complete Plan, or simply find out more about issues of special interest to them will be able to find the information on-line and download it.

The website for viewing the Sarratt Parish Plan, when it is released on-line in May 2012 will be :-

www.sarrattvillage.co.uk

The River Chess – Summer and Winter

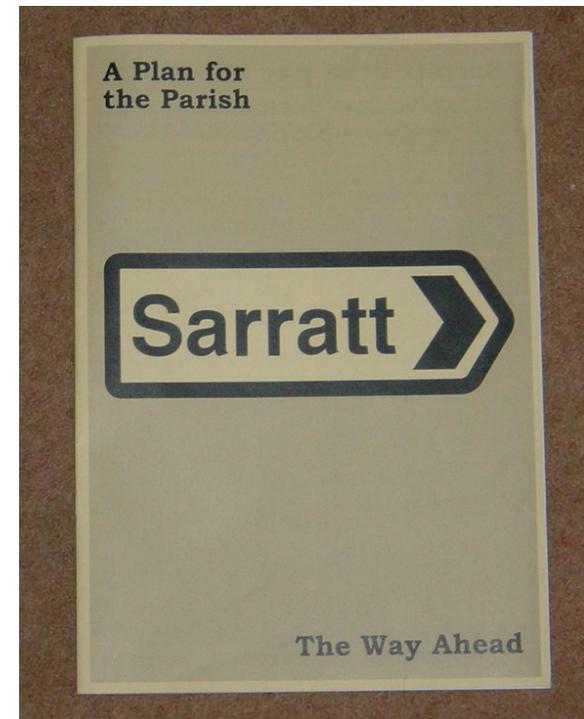


Gathering Opinions

In the Autumn of 2010 a questionnaire was prepared and became the primary means of collecting the views of residents on a wide range of subjects likely to be of concern or interest to them. Printed copies of the questionnaires were hand delivered to all 800 plus Sarratt households. However, to reduce the amount of time needed to manually key in the data, everyone with a computer and internet connection was encouraged to complete the return on-line. 418 households responded with 62% sending in paper questionnaires and the remainder using the on-line option.

To find out the opinions of the 80 or so businesses in the Parish a short questionnaire was prepared for this group and was set up for replies to be made only on-line. The 30 responses received did not raise any new issues.

The main findings and preliminary ideas for dealing with issues raised in the householder questionnaire were explained at a public meeting in March 2011. Since then, the Steering Committee has been developing action plans which prioritise and address the wide range of issues and concerns. One interest which it had been hoped to follow-up was green energy, but unfortunately there has been no-one available so far with the background to deal with this subject.



Survey Findings

The full results of the questionnaire based survey can be viewed by copying the following web address into a browser.

<http://plan.sarrattvillage.org/household-survey-results>

The action plans are proposals for dealing with the issues which emerged as priorities for many households. The plans take account of the age profile of Sarratt Parish residents, recognising the needs of young people and those of the increasing numbers of older people.

Many positive features emerged from the questionnaire. Clearly people like living in Sarratt and many have lived here for a great number of years. An enormous depth of feeling for the countryside and historic features was revealed. Preservation and maintenance of the rural environment, woodlands, footpaths, hedges and green spaces was considered very important indeed. There was confirmation of a high level of participation in clubs, societies and voluntary groups with many people saying that they loved the friendly sense of community that they felt by living in Sarratt.

Naturally a number of dissatisfactions came up but we have been careful to ensure that possible solutions will not impair the positive aspects that were mentioned. The two most common words that appeared in the text boxes were "rural" and "community" - the implications of those two words encapsulate a lot of what is precious and well worth preserving.

It is against this backdrop that the action plans have been prepared.

Action Plans

Traffic, Roads and Parking

The overwhelming response from the questionnaire showed that the state of the roads in Sarratt is a major problem. Three-quarters of the respondents were either dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the current situation. Parking is also a cause for concern, as is speeding throughout the Parish.

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Lack of enforcement of current laws on speeding (30mph).	Enforce speed limits and consider options for reduced speed limits.	Liaise with Police for speed checks and investigate a Speed Watch / speed camera scheme as an adjunct / alternative to Vehicle Activated (VA) signs. Creation of a 20mph zone in vicinity of Sarratt School.
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using unsuitable side roads.	Replace advisory signs with mandatory signs. Determine roads that need signs "Unsuitable for HGVs".	Action group to instigate survey of signage and HGV vehicle use in the Village.
Very poor state of the roads.	Better road surfaces and faster repairs.	Encourage use of on-line reporting & written reports. Local working party to survey broken / missing kerbing and verges, and advise where kerbing is needed – Sarratt Parish Council (SPC).
Inconsiderate parking – Sarratt Green, Sarratt School and Belsize.	Eliminate or control parking at specific locations eg. the School.	Survey the number of vehicles dangerously parked around the School. Present a case file over recorded days as evidence of obstruction.

Housing, Schools and Services

Housing

The householder survey indicated strong support for more affordable houses in the Parish and a desire for such properties to be available, both rented housing in some form and small 'market housing' for purchase and preferably to Sarratt Parish residents and relatives of families living in the Parish. The 2010 Parish Plan survey showed 32% against any more housing in the Parish with 60% feeling that the Parish has space, facilities and utilities to support a **limited** number of new homes. Furthermore, 69% felt that a prime need was for affordable housing. This level of support for affordable housing in Sarratt is very significant at a time when the Royal British Legion (RBL) site in Church Lane is being sold and there is interest in developing a site in Dawes Lane.

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Lack of intermediate affordable housing and smaller low cost 'market' housing in the Parish.	A Parish with homes to meet local needs.	Provide a Guide to Thrive* and bring forward sites under Three Rivers District Council's (TRDC's) Rural Exception Sites Policy. Assess demand from local estate agents.

*Thrive is TRDC's contractor responsible for the social housing in the District.

Schools

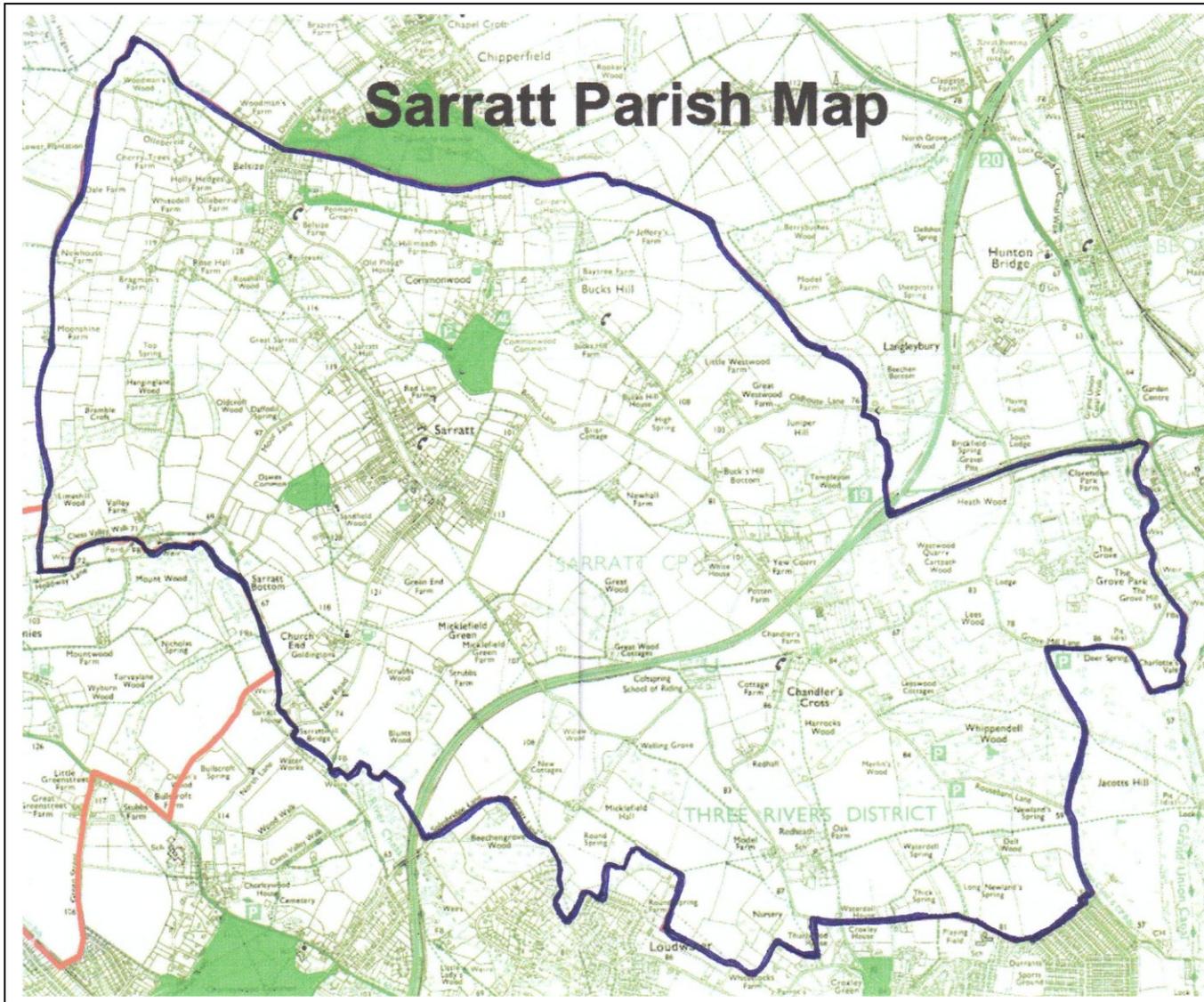
Sarratt has a successful and well supported junior school. However, problems can arise when pupils move on because of a shortage of secondary school options. A new secondary school is planned in the District, but the final location and timescale are not yet confirmed. The survey returns showed a high level of support (over 35% of all households) for a new secondary school.

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Secondary schools – choice and locations.	Sarratt pupils having access to places in a secondary school at an easily accessible location with a good school bus service.	Monitoring progress with the new secondary school proposal and lobbying County and District councillors.

Activities for Young People

Whilst the younger age ranges are well catered for in terms of activities offered in the Parish, older teenagers are less well served. To some extent the problem, especially for the 14 - 16 and 17 plus groups, may be a result of transport difficulties which restrict their ability to visit activity and entertainment centres outside the Parish. Some 30% of the respondents answered 'no' to the survey question *'Do young people in your household feel they have enough involvement in the shaping of services for them?'*

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Limited 'in parish' recreational facilities for older teenagers.	Transport available for teenagers to access recreational centres outside the Parish, or provision of local facilities.	Assess demand and possible solutions.



Sarratt Parish Statistics

Area 6 sq miles

Households 800 +

Population 1,600

Roads

Minor – 17 miles

M25 – 2 miles

Footpaths - 35 miles



The Sarratt Parish Boundary includes part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – the land inside the red line on this map.

**Sarratt (The Green) and
Sarratt (Church End)
Conservation Areas**



Planning, Policing, Fly-tipping and Landscape Preservation

From the questionnaire responses it was clear that many people in the Parish are worried about the internal and external pressures on our rural environment and want it protected. Because of its proximity to London, other major towns, the motorway network and airports, this Parish is in an especially vulnerable location. Many concerns can be described loosely as creeping urbanisation. This is illustrated by the trend to replace garden hedges with walls and close boarded fences and the use of heavy ornamental or courtyard security gates in place of traditional rural styles. The effect of all this is to alter the character of the Parish, by slowly turning lanes into suburban roads.

Building Design

90% of respondents to the Housing Section in the Survey supported the proposal to have a Building Design Statement for Sarratt Parish. Given this outcome there is a clear mandate for producing such a guide in which it will be important to take account of the Government's Localism legislation.

<u>High priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Prevention of inappropriate developments in our Green Belt rural Parish.	Produce a Building Design Statement for the Parish.	Sarratt Parish Council (SPC) assisted by professionals with appropriate expertise and guided by TRDC's planning policy specialists.

Other Areas of Concern

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Enforcement of Planning Law	More effective enforcement action under the planning law.	Have available a simple guide to enforcement on the SPC website. Maintain a list of problem locations.
Preservation of Hedges (and other important landscape features)	Have a 'hedge directory' for the Parish and a best practice guide for hedge maintenance and preservation.	Survey and list important hedges and identify ownership.
Fly Tipping and litter	Reduction in the amount of materials dumped by rogue traders and improved clearance of general litter.	Obtain historic data from TRDC, monitor the 'hot spots' and investigate ways of identifying regular offenders.
Improved Police Liaison	More effective liaison between the local community and the police Neighbourhood Watch (NW) and Rural Watch (RW) Teams and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).	Work with NW and RW teams to help set priorities for the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Communications and Public Transport

Communications

Despite the fact that Sarratt Parish straddles the M25 motorway and is a mere 20 miles from central London, many parts of the Parish are very poorly served by the communications industry. Mobile phone coverage is at best patchy and in many places non-existent. Fixed line broadband speeds average 1Mb and in many parts of the Parish are much less. Mobile broadband connectivity is rarely possible. The main centre of population in Sarratt Village is no better served than the rest of the Parish.

All of this was recognised before the survey was carried out, but the returns have highlighted the importance of finding ways to improve these increasingly vital services. The survey showed that over 80% of households had one or more computers which are used regularly to access the internet for a range of services using a broadband connection.

The action plan to address the mobile phone coverage deficiencies will need to take account of technical coverage problems, especially in and around Sarratt Village and Belsize, as well as planning issues when suitable mast sites are identified.

The plan for fixed line broadband improvements will need to be driven by an intensive lobbying campaign.

Communications (Cont.)

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Unacceptable mobile phone coverage throughout the Parish.	Achieve satisfactory mobile phone coverage throughout the Parish without dead spots in the inhabited areas.	Approach the service providers to :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify optimum positions of masts in the Parish • Match to suitable sites • Understand Return on Investment (ROI) & other requirements e.g. user volumes.
Very unsatisfactory Broadband Services.	Enable a minimum speed of 2Mbs throughout the Parish (the Minimum National Standard).	Prevent BT Infinity roll-out slipping further (originally March 2012 and currently Dec. 2012 for the Kings Langley Exchange to be enabled)

Public Transport

Improvements to the bus services surfaced from the survey replies as a general request. One option considered by the Steering Committee is the introduction of a more frequent, reliable and cost effective shuttle bus into Chorleywood; tailored for commuters and shoppers. A workable model could be a subscription based service.

<u>Priority issues</u>	<u>Where we aim to be</u>	<u>How we plan to get there</u>
Lack of a bus service to Chorleywood at appropriate times.	To provide regular and reliable transport from Sarratt to Chorleywood.	Assess demand and if confirmed develop a robust business plan for a service.
Buses to Watford and Hemel Hempstead.	To maintain at least the present level of service to Watford (8 per day) and Hemel Hempstead (6 per day).	Find out the plans of existing service providers.

Making it Happen

The publication of the Sarratt Parish Plan is the starting point for the work ahead. It is the time when the Parish Plan can be adopted by the Parish Council; the organisation in the community best placed to monitor, co-ordinate and report regularly on progress.

Some of the work outlined in the action plans is already underway, but there is much more to do. For some action plans it is suggested who is best placed to deliver the desired outcome. For plans currently without assigned ownerships, success will depend on members of our community being prepared to help. Anyone who wishes to offer feedback on the Parish Plan, or who is prepared to volunteer and feels able to lead, or simply help drive forward a particular action plan is encouraged to make contact by:-

Emailing to sarratt_parish@btconnect.com

or

Calling **01923 - 262025**

At this stage the prime objective must be to maintain momentum in turning the action plans into real benefits for our community.

THE COCK INN, SARRATT

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What Sarratt children see and say - - - -



*Sarratt is my home,
A good place to live,
Running down the dell,
Riding my bike with my dad,
Always a friend around,
To enjoy my life with,
Together we share Sarratt.*

By Edward Barrington (Year 3)

