

1 Executive Summary

A Parish Plan is a unique opportunity for residents within a Parish to appraise the environment in which they live and, more importantly, voice their thoughts about how they would like to see it in the future.

The civil Parish of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote is situated on the south-eastern boundary of the county of Gloucestershire at the heart of the Western section of the Cotswold Water Park and is surrounded by gravel workings and lakes formed by the gravel extraction. There are 170 permanent homes as well as approximately 250* holiday homes, located in the Lower Mill Estate to the south of Somerford Keynes. There are two principal authorities in the area: Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

Previously, two appraisals were carried out in the Parish: in 1991 and 2001 and provided a great insight into the Parish: its demographics, its likes and dislikes and its aspirations. The current Parish Plan takes the appraisal one step further with the production of an action plan, evidence from which can be used to make a case on behalf of the Parish to other authorities (such as Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire Highways etc) or to obtain funding for projects within the Parish. It is also in line with DCLG guidance for the frequency of such plans.

Every community needs to know where it intends to go and what it hopes to achieve in the next few years. The Parish of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote has a permanent population of approximately 420 people plus numerous holiday makers and second home owners. It needs a Parish Plan to map out its future.

The Parish Plan was developed by a group of volunteer residents, independent from (but fully supported by) the Parish Council. This group consulted residents in the Parish through interviews, a coffee morning and open Parish Plan meetings, as well as developing, distributing and analysing a questionnaire that was delivered to ALL homes, both permanent and holiday, in the Parish. 67% of the questionnaires from the permanent homes were completed and returned, and 20% from the holiday homes were completed. This document details the responses and views of the permanent residents in the Parish (including the Four Acres settlement). There is also a separate overview of the opinions of the Lower Mill Estate second home owners.

The Parish Plan Group was delighted with the overwhelmingly positive response and the input that came from so many residents. The Group would like to express its thanks to Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, who provided continuous advice on the process and time-saving logistical support.

After the analysis of the input provided by the residents in the Parish, and consultation with the key organisations within the Parish (the Parish Council, the Village Hall Management Committee and the Parochial Church Council) the action plan was drawn up. Naturally, to achieve some of the projects requested in the response will be beyond the ability of your Parish Council but it believes that the majority of those included can come to fruition if we work hard enough together as a community.

It is essential that the Parish Plan is a working document and that the actions are adopted by the appropriate bodies within the Parish. A Parish Plan working group should be established to monitor and push for the completion of actions.

*The Lower Mill Estate has outline permission for 550 holiday homes; so another 300 are likely to be built during the life of this plan