

HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN v1.2

February 2014

Holt Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Holt village has a history of looking at itself and working out what should change in future.

In 1998, an “Appraisal” of the village was undertaken by a small working party, who distributed a questionnaire to every household, achieving a 74% return. Then, as now, the majority valued the rural environment and the community’s spirit, and did not want the essential character of the village to change. Many of the major concerns raised then resonate with today’s issues. The report of the appraisal was widely circulated within the parish and to relevant parts of local and national government. In 2009, the idea that Holt should produce a Parish Plan, as encouraged by local government guidance, gained acceptance, and two public meetings were held to recruit volunteers who would help to produce this, and to get some idea of what villagers wanted. A Steering Group was set up and in the autumn of 2009, the people of Holt were asked to complete a preliminary questionnaire which asked what they liked most and disliked most about living in the village, and what ideas they had about the future of the village. This produced a comprehensive “wish list” of ideas which has informed the writing of this Plan. It was envisaged that a more formal questionnaire, covering in depth the topics raised in the original answers, would be devised, which would eventually result in a Village Plan for the next five to ten years. This would be used to approach Wiltshire Council and other organisations for help in the implementation of desirable developments.

However, at about that time, there was a change in the environment in which the project had started:

- there was a change of government and different ideas about how local planning should be conducted emerged;
- locally, as has been long expected, the owners of the old Tannery site decided to develop it. This had been designated as an “area of opportunity” by local authority planners some years ago, meaning that a mixed development of housing, business and commercial premises should be undertaken, and this has been endorsed by the new planning authority, Wiltshire Council in its Core Strategy.

The second of these issues has loomed large in discussions by the Parish Council, so that the overall Village Plan was moved to the back burner for some time, because of the need to contribute to the planning process for the site. This resulted in the Steering Group concentrating on the production of a questionnaire to gather villagers’ views about the detail of the redevelopment of the site, which resulted in a report published in September 2011 (See Appendix 1 and Section 1 Housing below) Planning for the site is now proceeding.

Whilst the above was taking place, other important matters became clearer. The government passed the “Localism Act” which simplifies and makes more local the whole spatial planning process, and the new Wiltshire Core Strategy reached its final draft. It is clear that the production of a “Neighbourhood Plan” within the Act and this Strategy is vital in ensuring the influence of local people on future planning decisions.

The reconstituted Steering Group decided that it would build on the previously produced “wish list” and Tannery survey (see above) as the basis for this Plan, which will be submitted to a village referendum before its acceptance as the way forward for Holt.

Geographic scope

The parish of Holt has an odd shape (see map) with a large but sparsely populated area to the southwest of the village itself, stretching towards Staverton and Bradford on Avon. (There is a proposal, not opposed by the Parish Council, that the area closest to Staverton, south of the River Avon, should be transferred to that parish). Major development is planned at Kingston Farm on the outskirts of Bradford on Avon, close to the western boundary of Holt Parish, which will certainly impinge on traffic flows. There are no other major developments (that we are aware of) planned in the other parishes contiguous with Holt.

Whether or not the Plan should cover the whole Parish, or just the built-up area, has been discussed, and the conclusion was that because of the importance placed on the rural setting of the village by the people who live here, and the flow of traffic across the Parish, the Plan should be concerned with the entire area.

The contiguous parish and town councils have been kept in touch with the Plan as it developed-

Scope of the Plan

There are several options in the localism legislation for an area which wishes to plan for its future *viz*: a neighbourhood plan, a village design statement, or a neighbourhood development order. There is no set pattern for a neighbourhood plan. A village design statement is about ensuring that developments fit in with the general ambience of an area, whilst a neighbourhood development order is about planning permission for specific initiatives.

In discussions over a long period of time with many people from the village interested in influencing what might happen, the wide-ranging scope of the issues felt to be important led to the conclusion that a comprehensive Plan was the option that should be pursued.

It was clear that development was inevitable, not least because of the large derelict factory site – the Tannery. The Parish Council does not own the village, neither is it the final arbiter in planning issues, but the Localism Act gives it the opportunity to have a statutory voice to influence development to meet the perceived needs and wants of the villagers and to ensure that any development is positive for the people, the local economy and the environment.

Holt as it is now

To be based on the 2011 census and other relevant data.

VISION OR “WHAT SHOULD HOLT BE LIKE IN TWENTY YEARS’ TIME?”

Our aim is to make Holt an even better place to live, work, and enjoy leisure, now and for future generations.

It will be a sustainable, thriving, prosperous place supporting a high quality of life for everyone who lives here.

It will not become a dormitory for people who work elsewhere.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

We want to encompass the needs and desires of the people who live or work in the village so that the following outcomes will meet their expectations:

- a) To direct the appropriate provision of new housing in order to provide suitable homes for both the growing younger and ageing population.
- b) To identify and implement measures to significantly reduce the impact of through traffic and parking on village life.
- c) To build on the thriving local economy by encouraging job creation and appropriately designed space for businesses to operate.
- d) To ensure the village benefits from the delivery of exemplar high quality standards of design for any new developments.
- e) To preserve, protect and enhance the green spaces within the village and the wider rural environment to deliver amenity and biodiversity gains.
- f) To ensure any new development supports a sustainable future by identifying and delivering the necessary infrastructure to support appropriate levels of growth in the village.
- g) To support and enhance the existing community spirit of Holt by providing more facilities for village life.
- h) To sustain Holt as an energetic and active village community.

MAP OF THE PARISH OF HOLT

GOVERNANCE

Terms of Reference for the Steering Group

1. **Purpose**
The job of the Steering Group is to manage the production of a Neighbourhood Plan within the terms of the Localism Act for the parish of Holt in Wiltshire.
2. **Accountability**
The Steering Group will make regular progress reports to the Parish Council.
The draft Plan will be submitted to the Parish Council for approval before onward transmission to Wiltshire Council and subsequent official consultation.
The Steering Group will undertake consultation events with people and organisations in the village during the production of the Plan as they deem appropriate.
3. **Geographical Area**
As already agreed by Wiltshire Council, the Plan will cover the civil parish of Holt.
4. **Objectives**
To build on the Scoping Study already approved by Wiltshire Council to produce a Plan for the future of Holt, which reflects the aspirations of the residents of the parish, and accords with the policies expressed in the developing Wiltshire Core Strategy.
To engage the local community as both individuals and in groups, whether locality or interest-based, in debate about the key local economic, social and environmental issues.
To record the process and participants thereof by which the plan is produced, to ensure it is based upon sound and objective evidence.
5. **Method of Working**
The convenor will produce an agenda for each meeting of the steering group and notes recording decisions reached.
The steering group and its members will undertake consultation and discussion with individual stakeholders and groups as seems appropriate.
The steering group may set up subgroups to examine particular topics, which will report back to the group.
The group will endeavour to work by consensus. Disagreements will be referred to the Parish Council for resolution.
6. **Membership**
The group will consist of individual volunteer residents of the village and two *ex officio* parish councillors.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN AND CONSULTATION EVENTS

June 2009	The Neighbourhood Plan started life as the Parish Plan, for which an inaugural public meeting was held in June 2009, followed by two others within a month or so. It was decided to set up a group of volunteers who would survey villagers about the nature of the community they lived in and its future development.
Dec 2009	<p>A “Love it/Hate it” questionnaire was circulated to over 600 households, as well as Year 6 at the School, and the Youth Club. This asked that respondents should set out three things they liked about living in Holt, three things they didn’t like, and three actions they would like to see taken. This was intended as a preliminary survey for a more detailed questionnaire to be circulated later.</p> <p>There was a good response rate of xxx% and a consensus emerged about the major likes and dislikes, together with a long list of suggested actions. The Working Group set to work on these to produce another questionnaire and a draft plan.</p>
Nov 2010	It became known that the owners of the Tannery site, which was already designated as an “Area of Opportunity” in the Local Plan, wanted to proceed with development. The Parish Council suggested that the proposed questionnaire should concentrate on finding village opinion on the options for the scheme. This was duly devised, with some professional help. Two copies were delivered to 711 households, to be completed by 21 st March 2011, and a return rate of xxx% was achieved.
Sept 2011	The report was published – see Appendix 1 – and copies circulated to the village.
July 2012	The Steering Group continued work on a draft Plan, and meanwhile firm proposals for the Tannery development were made public. The Parish Council sponsored a well-attended public meeting in the Village Hall on 20 th July 2012 to gauge public reaction, when names of people willing to be further involved in consultation were collected.
Sept 2012	The Steering Group were asked to set up locality-based focus groups to consider the draft Plan and the Tannery proposals, which reported back by 16 th September 2012.
Jan 2013	Concurrently, information was emerging about “Neighbourhood Plans” as part of the Localism Act, and the Parish Council decided Holt should take part in this initiative. The Parish Plan Group was converted to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, reporting to the Parish Council and with contribution from Wiltshire Council. The work done so far was turned into a “Scoping Study” for a Neighbourhood Plan and widely circulated for comment, and formed part of the official consultation with our contiguous Parish and Town Councils, which resulted in permission to proceed with this Plan.
Jan 2014	1 st draft circulated to PC, Holt NH Plan Steering Group, HVLR, Geoff Winslow and section authors
6 th Feb	Deadline for initial comments back to chair of steering group
13 th Feb	Tidied-up 1 st draft incorporating these comments

Comment [h1]: Add figure

Comment [h2]: Add figures

- 17th Feb 1st draft copied to provide one per household for the whole village – 750 copies required so budget needed
- 20th – 24th Feb Copies distributed with info about consultation events, also on website, and to contiguous towns and parishes
- 27th Feb Discussed in open session of PC meeting
- Early March Whole day public consultation in Village Hall with enlarged extracts from Plan available for comment
- End March 2nd draft incorporating results of consultation

Further actions to be discussed later

SECTION 1 – HOUSING

1.1 THE CURRENT POSITION

1.1.1 Current housing stock and tenure

Holt is an expanding village with a population of 1,757 (up 14.8% from 1530 in 2001¹) with 736 households (13.2% increase from 650). The housing stock ranges from old stone terraced cottages (the oldest being c.300 years old) to new apartments and large detached houses. There is no single architectural style which dominates, though specific streets and areas have their own characters. Conservation area and listed buildings.

Comment [h3]: Add info

Types of housing:

- 850 people (48.3%) lived in detached houses
- 507 (28.8%) in semi-detached
- 316 (17.9%) in terraces
- 46 (2.6%) in flats
- the remainder in two communal establishments

This census data can be augmented by a survey conducted in March 2012 by Wiltshire Council (to assess the need for affordable housing in the village) and provides the most up-to-date and accurate picture of the current tenure situation:

- 84% of respondents are owner occupiers (significantly more than the national average)
- 8.9% rent from a social landlord
- 6.6% rent from a private landlord.

In terms of house size:

- 76.3% live in houses with three or more bedrooms
- 19.4% have two bedrooms
- 4.3% have one bedroom
- 53.6% live in detached properties.

The same survey also looked at the age distribution of the population which is an indicator for future needs.

Comment [h4]: Add info

1.1.2 Affordable housing

By which is meant homes within reach of Holt's first time buyers, and not just social housing for rent.

This survey characterised 99 of the houses within the village as affordable. This is 13.6% of the total housing stock, lower than the Wiltshire average of 19.2%. These are provided by Selwood Housing and are divided between family homes and those for older people. There is still an unmet need for affordable housing from people with connections with Holt.

Comment [h5]: Change definition

¹ ONS census data for 2011 and 2001

1.1.3 Recent new builds

Recent new housing in the village has mainly been built on brownfield sites in The Midlands: 37 units (houses and apartments) forming the Spa, on the site of an old bedding factory; and 14 houses on an old builder's yard, Lion's Orchard. There has been no single major house building development on a greenfield site for some years. The largest is the new development, Starfield, (completed in 2012) of 12 affordable houses on fields off Station Road.

In addition, there has been a significant number of individual new houses built either on the sites of older houses which have been demolished, or by sub-dividing gardens. This piecemeal development has led to the loss of green spaces and increased density of housing.

1.2 FUTURE NEEDS

The draft Wiltshire Core Strategy indicates new housing requirements between 2006 and 2026 for the whole Bradford on Avon Community Area (see map) of 670 units. Of these, 245 had been built by 2011, and another 180 are already planned on specific sites. A further 180 are to be identified in Bradford on Avon itself, leaving a requirement of 65 for the rest of the area – i.e. Holt, Westwood, Winsley, Limpley Stoke, Monkton Farleigh, Staverton and Wingfield.

1.2.1 Sites for development

Holt Neighbourhood Plan will support the Wiltshire Core Strategy by aiming to deliver an appropriate and sustainable level of new development, based on local choice in terms of location, tenure and design. Within Holt there are specific (but limited) opportunities to contribute towards this need. Of the three types of site for development:

- **Brownfield** - There is a significant opportunity for new housing on the old Tannery site in The Midlands – see below.
- **Infill** – There is a general presumption against new infill housing as it leads to increased density, loss of amenity for neighbours and has often been aesthetically unsatisfactory. Any new applications will be considered on an individual site basis.
- **Greenfield** – There is a general presumption against new greenfield development for housing. The village wishes to retain existing green spaces as amenities, is concerned about creeping expansion beyond the current village envelope as well as the impact this would have on infrastructure.

1.2.2 Redevelopment of the Tannery Site

The Tannery site, the former J & T Beaven's leather factory situated in The Midlands in the centre of the village, is a five-acre/two-hectare site. It currently has a mix of old stone and brick buildings (some listed) plus more recent brick and corrugated constructions, some of which are semi-derelict. The traditional leather processing activity has long-ceased but some limited packaging and distribution work

still happens, plus some units have been sub-let to new businesses. The whole site has been identified as an Area of Opportunity for mixed-use commercial and residential development.

In addition to the main tannery buildings, there is a separate, smaller site, The Old Glove Factory, situated across the stream in Brook Lane. This is currently being redeveloped for commercial use and there are no plans for housing on this site.

In 2011 the current owners of the Tannery began work on more detailed plans for the main Tannery site, producing various outline proposals for mixed-use development. These have not yet progressed to detailed plans. In response, the Parish Council tasked the Holt Village Plan Steering Group (HVPSG) to consult with the village across a whole range of issues, including their views on new housing. The full report of this consultation, published in September 2011, is included as appendix 1.

The 2012 survey conducted by Wiltshire Council (see 1.1.1. above) to assess the need for affordable housing covered some of the same issues.

The results of these consultations are summarised below and provide the basis for the village's views on what should happen on this site, though the developers have undertaken to consult fully as their plans take shape.

i. Commercial/housing balance

There was a strong consensus for a mixed-use development, roughly 50:50 commercial and housing. Section 3 of the Plan considers the commercial issues; this Section focuses only on the housing.

ii. Types of housing

The HVPSG survey responses were split fairly evenly between:

- Smaller starter homes – 29%
- Family houses - 28%
- Retirement housing – 26%
- Apartments/flats were less popular - 17%

The Wiltshire Council survey produced a similar outcome. The most popular option in this survey was for starter homes for young people (27.6%), which could be characterised as affordable, with older people's accommodation being the second choice (20%). A small minority (8%) wanted no new housing.

Affordable housing – there are currently 22 names on the housing register, which leaves up to 10 people with Holt connections wanting accommodation after the new houses in Starfield have been occupied. This need should be met within the Tannery development

iii. Numbers of new houses

The HVPSG survey did not ask a specific question as it seemed premature, but this issue will need further detailed consultation.

The Wiltshire Council survey did tackle this issue, but in relation to the village overall not just the Tannery site. Their results showed: 31.5% voted for between 11-20 new houses; 24% were in favour of 21-40; with the balance wanting fewer than this. All these answers are significantly lower than

the number (c.50) currently being proposed on the Tannery site, details of which were not available at the time of the WC survey.

Given the views quoted above, the county-wide needs stated in the Core Strategy and the (limited) information available from the developers to date, it seems that new housing on the Tannery site will be sufficient to meet needs (both affordable and commercial) within Holt for the foreseeable future.

iv. Tenure

The HVPSG survey also asked about the type of ownership of new housing on the site. A clear majority (58%) wanted a mix of properties to buy and to rent; 37% would prefer only properties to buy; while only 8% wanted just property to rent. As stated above, the affordable housing need should be met with a mix of properties to buy and to rent.

v. Design issues

Other clear preferences which emerged from the comments in the HVPSG survey were:

- any new housing should be of a high standard of design
- they should be built from materials sympathetic to the local style
- they should be of a scale and size to fit with existing buildings (several responses mentioned what they consider to be the over-sized buildings in The Spa on the old bedding factory site)
- they should be well-spaced and landscaped and include gardens
- they should include adequate off-street parking.

vi. Contamination concerns

Given the long history of tanning and leather work on this site, there is concern about possible contamination. It is essential before any development work takes place that a thorough environmental survey and analysis is undertaken, and that the full results of this are made public. (see also Section 3.2.3.)

vii. Associated infrastructure development

It is essential that concomitant infrastructure development should take place alongside any new housing and be in place before the build is finished.

Specific concerns include:

- **Road access and parking** - These are both issues of major concern, see Section 2.
- **Drainage and flood control** - Many parts of the village already suffer from problems with surface water flooding which would be exacerbated if additional land is built on or tarmacked over.
- **Village facilities** – Whilst some village facilities (e.g. the shop) would benefit from new housing, others may not be able to cope with additional numbers. There is a particular concern about the village primary school. It currently has xxx pupils divided between xx **classes**. These classrooms are now at capacity and new pupils could not be accommodated without new building. Again, this provision must be completed before new housing is occupied, or village children may not be able to attend their local school.

Comment [h6]: Check facts

viii. Further consultation

While the village is, in principle, keen to see the Tannery site redeveloped and supports the broad mixed-use proposal, it is essential that detailed consultation is undertaken at every stage. The developers have, to date, indicated their willingness to do this.

ix. Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus

Given the scale of this development, it is also essential that there is some tangible benefit for the village, apart from just the increase in housing. The Parish Council and HPVSG have been consulting on this and have drawn up a long-list of possibilities, grouped under two broad categories:

- Improvements to the B3107 to minimise the impact of increased traffic on the village
- Improvements to environment and leisure facilities.

SECTION 2 - TRAFFIC, PARKING & TRANSPORT

2.1 THE CURRENT POSITION

2.1.1 Traffic

Holt is largely a ribbon development along the B3107 which carries traffic – largely commercial and commuters – from Melksham to Bradford on Avon as well as providing access to commercial enterprises in Staverton and the Canal Road area of Trowbridge. Within the village, the B3107 forms junctions with a number of other roads. All of these, apart from the one with Leigh Road at the western end of the village, only provide access to areas within the village and are not through roads. The Leigh Road junction is residential at the village end, and then continues on through farmland to Great Chalfield and Bradford Leigh.

Although the B3107 was downgraded from “A” status over a decade ago, it remains a busy road which carries about 8000 vehicles per day, (surveys conducted by the Tannery Development Group and the Parish Council in 2012). In the morning and evening peak hours, the flow is just under 100 vehicles per hour. Of these vehicles, approximately 4% (or c.400 vehicles) are HGVs. The majority of the HGVs are simply passing through the village, but some are accessing the existing industrial areas within the Midlands and other village-based businesses. The volume of HGVs has increased since some satnav systems meant for domestic use identified this road as a suitable ‘through route’.

Comment [h7]: Is the maths right?

Some traffic calming measures have been introduced at either end of the village – a central island and narrowing at the Melksham end plus a mini-roundabout at the Tollgate junction - these have slowed vehicles entering the village. On-street parking, which reduces the road to single carriageway in stretches, also keeps speeds down in places. The recently installed zebra crossing near the junction of Station Road should also slow traffic down, especially when children are going to and from school. Most of the pavements alongside the B3107 are narrow (or absent) and poorly defined by kerbs. This contributes to the strong feeling of intimidation by large vehicles and an equally strong feeling that vehicle speeds in general are too fast even though they may be travelling “within limits”.

The residential roads within the village are mainly fairly narrow and are often further restricted by on-street parking. Great and Little Parks suffer from overflow parking from the main road. Although the parking at the side of the main road has the benefit of slowing through traffic, it can also lead to queuing as vehicles wait to pass and some mount the pavement (especially by the Recreation Ground) in order to squeeze by.

2.1.2 Parking

Most of the older houses within the village have no facility for off-street parking, so many residents are forced to park on the road or convert front gardens into car parking. Even for newer houses, which do have parking provision, residents may choose to park on the road either because it’s more convenient or they have more cars per household than the parking available. There are currently no restrictions on roadside parking.

There is a car park attached to the Village Hall which has approximately 46 parking spaces, four of which are specifically reserved for users of the Village Hall. Parking for The Courts is permitted here for cars but not for coaches. No charges apply. In the summer months, when The Courts is open, there is simply not enough space for cars and there is a major problem of street parking causing obstructions to traffic and properties, and potentially hazardous situations, especially on the sharp bend at the western end of The Midlands and at the entrance to The Midlands by the Village Hall.

The parking problem becomes even worse when there are events at the Village Hall, sports matches or events on the recreation ground or Bowls Club, when the parking flows out onto both sides of the main road.

Informal overflow car parking for visitors to The Courts has been opened in the Tannery site and in a field in Manor Farm across from the Tollgate pub, but these are seriously under-used as the signage has been very poor. The parking at Manor Farm may also be too far for some people to walk to the Courts. The parking pressures have also recently been increased by the number of visitors to the newly opened Glove Factory and café site in the Midlands, as there is not enough space for both the workforce and visitors in the on-site car park. Most attempt to use either the Village Hall car park or park on the side of The Midlands. Again, overflow parking has recently been opened in the Tannery site and also on the field to the west of the Glove Factory premises, but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.

The Parish Council has an agreement in principle from WC that the kerbs on the pavement in The Midlands will be raised and double yellow lines will be painted on the most hazardous bend, but there is no date yet for these works to be done. Even when this is done, it may simply move the parking further up the street.

Almost all the main venues which require parking for visitors and events – the Village Hall, the sports grounds, the Bowls Club, The Courts, the Glove Factory – are concentrated in a relatively small part of the village (at the western end of The Midlands and the junction with the main road) which is why the problem is so acute in this area. The major re-development of the Tannery site (currently under discussion) also falls within this area.

The other area where parking has been an issue is around the school in The Gravel. This is confined to the morning and afternoon drop-off and collection times during term-times. The recently painted zig-zag lines have alleviated this for residents of The Gravel, but there is now much more episodic parking in Station Road.

2.1.3 Other Transport

Buses

Public transport services through Holt are relatively limited. There are a number of bus services but many of them only operate once a day (school buses) or on one day of the week. The only service that provides regular buses throughout the day Monday to Friday is the ZIGZAG service. There are eight

buses in each direction that link Trowbridge to Corsham via Bradford on Avon, Holt and Melksham. Occasional buses also extend from Corsham to Chippenham. There are five buses in either direction on a Saturday, and once-weekly buses to Tesco and Sainsbury's. None of these buses is accessible to wheelchair users – i.e. with a low floor. Holt Community Bus has recently started a weekly service to Chippenham available to the public.

Cycling

There are no formal cycle routes or facilities within the village, although Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge and Melksham are all within a 5 kilometre cycling distance, which means cycling could be an alternative to the car for reaching these towns. However, the existing carriageway widths on some parts of these routes (especially the direct route to Trowbridge via the Tollgate turning and the road to Bradford) are not 'cycle friendly' because of the narrowness of the roads, traffic volumes and speeds.

Trains

The station in Holt was closed back in the 1960s, although the line is still open with a fairly limited service between Melksham and Trowbridge. The nearest stations are at Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge or Melksham.

2.2 FUTURE NEEDS TRAFFIC

2.2.1 To define, agree and action improvements to the B3107 which will contribute to a better balance between the needs of motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in Holt

- i. Improve the safety of the stretch of road alongside the Recreation Ground for pedestrians by relocating the northern pavement inside the Recreation Ground.
- ii. To redesign the junction between the B3107 and western end of The Midlands to accommodate increased traffic flows resulting from the redevelopment of the Glove Factory and Tannery; this to be part of the Tannery planning approval and funded by the developer; any residents' or Superstore parking affected to be fully re-provided in an agreed way.
- iii. To create an informal pedestrian crossing between the village hall car park and The Courts.
- iv. Either to improve the junction between the B3107, the eastern end of The Midlands and Station Road to enable it to carry traffic related to the construction or occupation of the Tannery safely; or restrict this access to The Midlands to motor cars only; this improvement to be part of the Tannery planning application as above.
- v. To improve the safety of the zebra crossing by reducing the speed limit to 20 mph on the section of the B3107 between the junction with the eastern end of The Midlands and the junction with The Gravel; to introduce the same limit on Station Road which should be the preferred drop-off zone for children going to the primary school.
- vi. To reduce the speed of traffic leaving Holt by reducing the road to a consistent width at the junction of Little Parks; thus providing additional resident's parking on the northern side of the B3107, possibly with the addition of trees.
- vii. To create a new protected parking area on one side of Melksham Road sheltered by build-outs so that it will slow the traffic flow even when vehicles are not parked there.

2.2.2 To improve road markings and signage within the village

- i. Improve the signage of the mini roundabout at The Tollgate to slow traffic approaching the village gateway from the west.
- ii. To renew and maintain all white-painted road markings within the village.
- iii. To implement the agreed addition of double-yellow lines in The Midlands.
- iv. To introduce single white lines to discourage parking in places where this is particularly undesirable, such as outside the URC entrance, along Station Road by the B3107 junction, in the mouth of the Little Parks junction, around the exit of Beckerley Lane and the junction of the B3107 and Leigh Road.
- v. To agree a general re-design and simplification of signage alongside the B3107 and in the centre of the village, involving commercial businesses and the National Trust.

2.2.3 To bring about an overall reduction in traffic volumes of HGVs

- i. To campaign for a ban on HGVs over 18 tonnes MGW passing through Holt once the Hilperton Gap Relief Road (HGRR) is completed.

2.2.4 To consider the longer-term option of a bypass around the village

2.3 FUTURE NEEDS – PARKING

2.3.1 To work with the National Trust to provide effective provision for their visitor parking

Current parking provision is inadequate for visitor numbers which have increased to c45,000 per annum. New solutions must be found in advance of any new initiatives to increase visitor numbers. These could include:

- i. negotiating shared parking space within the Glove Factory or Tannery redevelopments
- ii. finding space within the NT's own property
- iii. acquiring new space in an adjacent field
- iv. any solution should also include good walking access from the car park to the entrance and provision for disabled parking.

2.3.2 To ensure that any new commercial or housing development is completely self-sufficient in parking

- i. It is essential that any new development does not add to existing pressure on roadside parking or assume that existing parking (e.g. in the Village Hall car park) can be utilised.
- ii. Any planning permission must include realistic (not legal minimum) provision for on-site parking.
- iii. The same condition to apply to any existing business which intends to expand its operations.

2.4 FUTURE NEEDS - OTHER TRANSPORT

2.4.1 To campaign for improved bus services

- i. The present bus services are substandard for both work and leisure purposes – a more intelligent assessment of need and provision is required e.g. better public bus services and services which link more usefully into other services such as trains at Bradford.

- ii. The Holt Community Bus could also be used to provide more services for villagers.

2.4.2 To define an overall vision for safe cycling routes within Holt, to link to other communities and to the National Cycle network

- i. Within the village to identify safe places for children to cycle, including safe cycling routes to Holt School; and to identify safe routes for access within Holt and spanning the full length of the village.
- ii. Identify safe routes out of the village to connect to neighbouring communities.
- iii. Identify safe access to the National Cycle Network i.e. the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath.
- iv. Improve safety on current roads by introducing cycle lanes and “Think Cyclist” signs in both directions on the B3107, B3106 and the unclassified road from Oxen Leaze to Broughton Gifford.

2.4.3 To explore whether there is any possibility of re-opening Holt railway station

SECTION 3 - COMMERCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 THE CURRENT POSITION

Holt has always been a working as well as a residential community. Although two of the largest and most visible employers based in the village – Beaven’s Tannery and the Norian Beds factory – have either scaled-back or closed completely, there is still a considerable amount of business and commercial activity within the village. Much is still concentrated in The Midlands, and includes:

- The Midlands Light Industrial Estate – with 20 units, currently housing 10 businesses, including the recently arrived Box Steam Brewery.
- The Glove Factory – a newly renovated site which offers office and studio space to about 45 individuals, companies and organisations, mainly involved in the high-tech or creative industries, together with an ancillary café; a major expansion of this resource has already been agreed and is scheduled to start building in 2014.
- The Tannery site – which includes the remaining Beaven’s business plus small units let out to other enterprises including a stonemason, a joiner, a furniture store and garage; additional refurbished office/studio units have recently been created here.

In addition, there are many smaller hubs of economic activity spread throughout the village, providing both employment opportunities and goods and services to the village. They cover a range of sectors and activities, including:

- Hospitality and tourism – two pubs, two cafes, bed & breakfasts, holiday accommodation, the National Trust Courts Gardens;
- Retail – village shop, post office, gift shops, furniture shop; flooring outlet;
- Motoring – garage selling cars, garages providing servicing, driving lessons;
- Building services – joiners, builders, stonemasons, plumbers, roofers, electrical contractors, flooring, fireplaces, painters and decorators;
- Domestic and gardening services – domestic cleaners, window cleaners, gardeners, tree surgeon, pet services, soft furnishings;
- IT & financial services – website design and development, IT maintenance, financial advice;
- Creatives – designers, artists, printmakers, potters, marketing & communication specialists;
- Education – the village school, pre-school, Tiny Tots and Sing & Sign;
- Personal care and services – nursing home for the elderly, sheltered accommodation for learning disabled adults, therapists, hairdressers.

Plus there are a number of other individual and quirky businesses. Indeed, the 2011 Holt Village Guide identified over 60 businesses within the village and this doesn’t include those who are simply self-employed, working full or part of the time from home offices or workshops within the village. In the survey conducted last year (on the redevelopment of the Tannery site), 11.6% of respondents identified themselves as working or studying within the village. This is a trend which seems to be increasing and is slightly higher than the national figures (9.2% according to the 2001 Census).

3.2 FUTURE NEEDS

The economic life of the village needs to be developed so that people with a range of skills and employment needs can both live and work within the village to create an economically sustainable community which isn't wholly dependent on commuting. We would like to see opportunities for school leavers, unskilled, semi-skilled as well as skilled jobs, apprenticeships, holiday and weekend jobs, part-time work (especially for young mothers), as well as full-time jobs. There is a need for businesses offering employment opportunities plus additional premises for those either self-employed or already running a small business and looking to expand. There are three established commercial sites within the village which should be retained and developed.

3.2.1 The Midlands Light Industrial Site

This must be retained as a commercial site, especially as it offers premises for a wider range of businesses than the Glove Factory or Tannery sites. It is designated a B1 commercial site and offers opportunities for more manufacturing-based businesses and factory/warehouse space, which provides a range of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled employment. This is essential to retain a balanced commercial and employment base within the village. The recent addition of the Box Steam Brewery has created several new jobs, some of which have been filled by Holt residents. It has also made considerable efforts to integrate into the village, hosting and/or sponsoring various events. Any new business on this site must, however, remain sensitive to their close residential neighbours in terms of traffic, noise, smells, litter/refuse, and working hours.

3.2.2 The Glove Factory

This has been a very successful redevelopment of old industrial premises into new workshop/ office space for small businesses, mainly in creative/IT fields, plus a café which is open to the wider community. There is also one retail space. It has already been granted planning permission to expand, more than doubling the space available which will provide both new opportunities and space for existing companies to expand into. Development work is scheduled to start in 2014. The key issues here are:

- Provision of adequate parking and management of traffic on what is already a busy and narrow road (see Section 2);
- Alleviation of the flooding problems which have affected both this site, neighbouring properties, the access road and paths;
- Retention of facilities which can be used by villagers, such as the café.

3.2.3 The Tannery Site

The planned redevelopment of this site, designated an Area of Opportunity, provides a major opportunity for creating new commercial premises – for an outline of the background, see Section 1. As plans for this began to take shape, the Holt Village Plan Steering Group (HVPSG) undertook a consultation with the village across a whole range of issues, including their views on commercial development.

The results of these consultations are summarised below and provide the basis for the village's views on what should happen on this site, though the developers have undertaken to consult fully as their plans take shape.

1. Commercial/housing balance

There was a strong consensus for a mixed-use development, roughly 50:50 commercial and housing. Section 1 of the Plan considers the housing issues; this Section focuses only on the commercial side.

2. Types of businesses

From the responses, the preferred options for commercial development were:

- Creative/studio space – 64.3%
- Retail - 62.2%
- Offices – 61.6%
- Light industrial – 52.5% (B1 only, with adequate ventilation and soundproofing)

3. Retention of existing businesses

There should be guaranteed space in the new Tannery development for the existing businesses which will be displaced, including those across the road which, although not part of the site, will be affected. It was also thought desirable that some priority should be offered (subject to negotiation) to any existing Holt-based business wanting to relocate to new premises.

4. Associated infrastructure development

Alongside this desirable commercial development, it is essential that the infrastructure such as internet connectivity, mobile phone coverage, surface water drainage, sewage, etc should be installed or upgraded simultaneously with any development. The perennial issues of ensuring adequate parking and safe access for transport are also crucial, see Section 2.

Additional improvements which would also contribute to the wider on-going commercial health of the village (including those self-employed and small businesses operating informally) would include:

- Improved broadband and mobile phone signals;
- Better transport links to enable people to travel into and out of the village for work using either public transport or low-impact transport such as bikes;
- Ensuring any new commercial premises are affordable, to enable existing businesses within the village to expand or relocate without leaving Holt.

5. Contamination concerns

Given the long history of tanning and leather work on this site, there is concern about possible contamination. It is essential before any development work takes place that a thorough environmental survey and analysis is undertaken, and that the full results of this are made public.

6. Further consultation

While the village is, in principle, keen to see the Tannery site redeveloped and supports the broad mixed-use proposal, it is essential that detailed consultation is undertaken at every stage. The developers have, to date, indicated their willingness to do this.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy

Given the scale of this development, it is also essential that there is some tangible benefit for the village, apart from just the increase in commercial premises. The Parish Council and HPVSG have

been consulting together on this and have drawn up a long-list of possibilities, grouped under two broad categories:

- Improvements to the B3107 to minimise the impact of increased traffic on the village
- Improvements to environment and leisure facilities.

3.2.4 The Holt Station site

Situated at the far end of Station Road, this is used to a limited extent as a commercial site with a coal and buildings materials yard. Further development here would have the advantage of not increasing the pressure on The Midlands, which has to handle the traffic from the other three commercial sites plus new housing developments, but access via Station Road is limited and awkward which reduces its potential.

3.2.5 Creating employment opportunities for Holt residents

Whilst it is unrealistic that Holt-based businesses will only employ Holt residents, it is clearly desirable to maximise residents being employed within the village to maintain a sustainable and economically vibrant community. It is also a priority to minimise commuting both into and out of the village to alleviate traffic and pollution problems. To encourage this we will consider initiatives such as:

- Encouraging local recruitment via a jobs page on the village website and the notice board outside the Village Hall which job seekers could also use;
- Supporting business networking events, such as those started by The Glove Factory.

SECTION 4 - ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & GREEN SPACES

4.1 THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1.1 Environment

Holt is a thriving village with a population of 1,757 with 736 households and covers an area of c. xxxx hectares. It is surrounded by agricultural land with some pedestrian access and is close to the river Avon and the Kennet and Avon Canal. There is access to the river but no riverside walk. A proportion of the Village is in a conservation area (see map on pxx) and quite a few individual houses are listed.

The traffic issues caused by the busy B3107 road and the car parking problems in the village have been noted in Section 2 above. Both these impact negatively on the overall environment of the village

The village is close to the Wiltshire cycle network but there are no bespoke cycle ways that avoid busy roads.

Within the village, the large brownfield site that is the old Beaven's Tannery, is currently under active redevelopment – see Sections 1 and 3. Given its industrial past, there is concern about contamination within the Tannery site and beyond; in an area known as the Pits; situated at the end of The Midlands, behind Hawcroft. These old lagoons have been used for disposal of the waste products from the tanning process (which has latterly focussed on the production of chamois leather), and contain a range of animal, organic and non-organic substances. Concerns about the potential environmental issues were raised by many respondents to the survey on the redevelopment which was carried out by HVPSC in 2011.

Specific sites within the village have also been affected by localised flooding, caused by a variety of factors, such as blocked or inadequate drainage, overflowing brooks, unfavourable gradients for surface water and (in 2012, 2013 and 2014) the sheer volume of rain water. Some flood amelioration work is being undertaken by the owner of the Glove Factory, which should help the situation here, but there are other areas of the Village which remain vulnerable.

4.1.2 Energy

The draft Wiltshire Core Strategy states that any new development should contribute towards sustainable construction and stand-alone renewable energy installations will be encouraged.

It is noticeable that increasing numbers of houses are installing PV panels on roofs. There are, as yet, no larger scale renewable energy systems within Holt. A planning application for a solar panel farm in the fields between the village and Great Chalfield was submitted but has currently been withdrawn.

The 2011 survey also asked people about the sustainable energy measures they would like to see in any new development. Energy efficient housing came top with an 89.7% positive response, followed by solar panels with 76.4%. There was considerably less support for measures such as a combined heat and power plant (34.2%) and wind turbines (27.3%), which may not in any case be economic or practicable. Better facilities for recycling (which indirectly support energy efficiency) were also strongly supported.

4.1.3 Green Spaces

Within Holt there are a number of valued green spaces whose continuity in perpetuity needs to be assured – see map for details. Key areas are:

- the village green and the little green;
- the playing fields, bowling green, sports courts and children’s play area, including the community orchard which has recently been planted with commemorative fruit trees at the western edge of the recreation ground;
- the fields behind St Katharine’s church and the Courts, enclosed by Station Road, Gaston and The Star;
- the green space at the southern end of Little Parks;
- Dawes Pond, situated in The Midlands, which is currently being improved to maintain its water levels;
- National Trust gardens at The Courts, to which villagers have free access.

There is a network of footpaths from Holt into the surrounding fields, including pleasant walks to Chalfield Manor to the north of the village. The alteration to and the fencing off of some of these rural footpaths together with the restriction of access to farmland to which villagers have previously enjoyed free access were issues raised by a significant number of residents attending a public meeting to address these concerns. A proposal to register new rights of way has been lodged by the Parish Council and is now subject to appeal with a public hearing scheduled in 2014.

As noted above in Section 1, there have been a significant number of new houses built either on the sites of older houses which have been demolished, or by sub-dividing gardens. This piecemeal development has led to the loss of green spaces and increased density of housing and is another cause of some concern.

4.2 FUTURE NEEDS

4.2.1 Work with Tannery & Glove Factory developers to maximise positive outcomes of development for the environment

The Holt PC Development Working Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will work in conjunction with the Developers and Wiltshire Council Planning Dept to:

- i. Create open green spaces and play areas within the developments.
- ii. Create open green frontage onto the Midlands.
- iii. Plant trees on all green spaces and play areas.
- iv. Create allotments.
- v. Create pedestrian friendly development.
- vi. Create adequate off-street parking for all properties.
- vii. Use potential “planning gain” monies to: secure/ maintain/improve the open green spaces in and around the village - particularly planting more trees; improve wildlife habitats, especially Dawes Pond; improve the village ‘gateways’.

4.2.2 To eliminate/reduce potential harmful impact of development on land which may be contaminated at the rear of the Tannery site

The Holt PC Development Working Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will work in conjunction with the Tannery Site Developers, Wiltshire Council Planning Team and the Environment Agency to:

- i. Conduct a full environmental assessment to establish the nature and extent of any possible contamination.
- ii. Determine if there is any risk to residents during removal of/or construction on that land.
- iii. Prepare guidelines of acceptable practice and process for remediation where appropriate.
- iv. Inform residents and hold a full public consultation on the results the assessment and the proposed remediation.
- v. Monitor outcomes.

4.2.3 Protection of rural footpaths and improved access to farmland and rural walks

Holt PC and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will work in conjunction with landowners and Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Team to develop measures and/or agreements that will:

- i. Ensure unhindered access across existing public rights of way.
- ii. Encourage landowners to remove unnecessary/illegal barbed wire fencing from public rights of way or enforce current by-laws/legislation where appropriate.
- iii. Encourage landowners to re-instate the unhindered public access to farmland that for generations has been permitted by previous landowners.
- iv. Continue the campaign to establish new rights of way.
- v. Establish a recognised and accessible riverside walk alongside the river Avon.
- vi. Research the possibility of providing more safe walking routes out of the village to neighbouring communities.
- vii. Research the possibility of providing more bridleways.

4.2.4 Retention, improvement and extension of green spaces with more tree planting

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Holt PC will work in conjunction with landowners and Wiltshire Council to:

- i. Survey and document all existing green spaces with public access within the Plan area.
- ii. Identify new areas suitable for adoption/designation as green space.
- iii. Identify open spaces suitable for new/additional tree planting.
- iv. Develop costed design and planting proposals for existing and potential sites where necessary, particularly to include the Dawes Pond area.
- v. Consult with residents to identify priorities.
- vi. Obtain necessary permissions/funding/sponsorship.
- vii. Define the village boundaries and ensure that the green belt beyond these is protected.

4.2.5 Encourage the development of allotments

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Holt PC will work in conjunction with landowners and Wiltshire Council to:

- i. Identify the scale of support and number of residents who would use allotments.
- ii. Consult other Parish Councils who have been successful in creating new allotments.
- iii. Identify suitable land for allotments and engage/negotiate with landowners.
- iv. Obtain necessary permissions/funding/sponsorship.
- v. Establish an Allotment Users Association to develop and run the allotments.

4.2.6 Improved facilities for waste recycling

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Holt PC will work in conjunction with the Tannery Site Developers and Wiltshire Council to:

- i. Replace the existing facility within the Village Hall car park and establish a larger secure area within the Tannery development to cater for an extended range of household recyclable materials.

4.2.7 Encourage appropriate renewable energy installations

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Holt PC will work in conjunction with Wiltshire Council to:

- i. Encourage appropriate renewable energy installations, but not at the expense of green belt land or to the detriment of the built environment within the village.

4.2.8 Prevention of future localised flooding

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Holt PC will work in conjunction with Wiltshire Council, landowners and the Environment Agency to:

- i. Identify and publish the responsibilities of landowners and public bodies to maintain drainage and watercourses.
- ii. To agree and monitor routine maintenance regimes to minimise the risk of damage to property or disruption of the public highway in future flooding events in areas within the floodplain.

SECTION 5 – COMMUNITY AMENITIES

5.1 THE CURRENT POSITION

5.1.1 Physical amenities

It is very clear from the surveys that have been undertaken, and from the experience of living in the village, that one of the key aspects of village life that is most valued is the strong sense of community that Holt provides. In the survey conducted in 2011 60% of respondents said they did not want the village atmosphere to change. Much of what creates this positive atmosphere may be intangible, but there are many identifiable physical facilities and resources that contribute to this. These include:

- Four community venues – the Village Hall, the United Reformed Church Hall, Church House and the Bowls Club
- Two churches - St Katharine’s Church and the United Reformed Church
- Educational facilities - Holt Primary School, Holt Pre-School & Holt Tiny Tots
- Shopping facilities - Holt Superstore, Holt Post Office, (which are about to be combined) , the National Trust shop
- Public houses and cafés – the Old Ham Tree, the Tollgate Inn, the Glove Factory café, the Courts café
- Sports and recreation facilities – the recreation ground with pavilion, football pitch, tennis & netball courts, children’s playground & Bowls Club
- Sheltered, retirement and care homes – Firlawn Nursing Home, The Elms, Phoenix House and Maulton Close.
- Gardens and green spaces – the National Trust Courts Garden (to which villagers get free entrance), the countryside and footpaths in and around the village.

5.1.2 Community Clubs, Societies & Activities

It is easy to gauge the importance of these physical facilities by looking at a snapshot of the social activities they support.

- Community venues – two luncheon clubs, WI, bridge club, flower club, dramatic society, community choir, Moviola screenings, yoga, karate & Tai Chi, ballroom dancing.
- Churches – bellringers, coffee mornings, fellowship meetings, outreach events
- Sports – football & netball clubs, tennis coaching and tournaments, Bowls Club
- Youth groups – youth club, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers, junior church and Sky 1, BMX Warriors
- Three book groups
- Two pub quiz teams
- Plus many other activities and social groups that are not linked with a specific venue such as the Holt Morris, the British Legion, Holt Walkers, Holt Community Bus.
- And, of course, Holt Magazine.

The Holt Village Guide published in 2011 listed around 30 village clubs and voluntary organisations, an updated edition of which will be published ca. May 2014.

5.2 FUTURE NEEDS

5.2.1 Physical Amenities

Although, in comparison with many other similar villages, Holt is already well-provided with community amenities, there could be a better geographical balance – there is very little at the eastern end. Recent surveys did highlight some additional facilities or improvements that would contribute to village life. The most commonly cited were (figures are from the 2011 survey):

- a) Additional facilities for young people, such as a meeting place or skate park - nearly 70% would like to see these, although only 10% would actually use them.
- b) Fitness centre/gym/recreation space/swimming pool - 60% would like to see this and over 45% would use it.
- c) Additional car parking – over 60% would like this but only 15% would use it (so this seems to be to meet the needs of visitors to the village and reflects on-going concerns on this issue).
- d) Café/restaurant - over 50% would like and 45% would use (this was before the cafes at the Tollgate [since closed] and the Glove Factory opened).
- e) Community centre – over 40% would like and 35% would use.
- f) Take-away - over 30% would like and use.
- g) Museum – over 30% would like and 28% would use.
- h) Garaging – 30% would like but only 7% would use (see comments above on parking).
- i) Allotments - nearly 25% would use.
- j) Other frequently mentioned facilities include - doctor's surgery/clinic (which there used to be in the Village Hall); additional retail outlets including a butcher and baker.
- k) There is a current campaign to improve and update the sports pavilion.
- l) Small meeting rooms.
- m) Open space for a market.
- n) The future of the Village Hall should be considered, given its limited facilities and position.

APPENDIX 1 – RESULTS OF THE HVPSG 2011 TANNERY SURVEY

Comment [h8]: To be added