



Part One



## FOREWORD



A community is not defined by boundaries or fences. A community is defined by shared experiences and by common interests. We who live in the Parish of Otford are justly proud of our community and our village. It has a rich past, a vibrant present and - we trust - an even better future. This community-led Parish Plan aims to ensure that our future unfolds in the way that local people want, rather than happening by chance or as a result of the no doubt well-intentioned plans of outside agencies. It also aims to maintain our identity and integrity as a community.

There has never been a more appropriate and favourable time for our community to plan its future. Parish Plans have for some time been encouraged by the Government. However, the new Localism Bill will enshrine the rights that local people will have to shape the character of their communities and the environment in which they live. Parish Plans such as ours will form one of the key building blocks of this Big Society.

I should like to personally thank all those dedicated members of the community who formed the Steering Group and who worked so assiduously for two years in helping to prepare the Plan.

The hard work and the excitement that goes with success lie in the years ahead. Every one of us can help in some small way towards realising the hopes and aspirations that this Plan expresses. In the end we in this community, with our common interests in our future, will be the ones who determine how far the Plan achieves its aims.

Rod Shelton  
Chairman Parish Plan Steering Group  
January 2011

**The following residents have served at various times on the Parish Plan Steering Group:**

Donna Brown David Calcott Patty Chatterjee Ron Dullage John Edwards-Winser\* Carol Griffiths  
Bill Lattimer Jeff Lee Paul Robertson Rod Shelton (Chair) Ali Tierney Cliff Ward  
Elizabeth Ward\* Rev. Richard Worssam

*\*Otford Parish Councillors*

**Designed by Philip Clucas MSCD**

© Otford Parish Plan 2011

Photographs supplied by members of the Otford community and the PP design team

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	5
About Otford .....	6
<b>Plan sections</b>	
1 Pedestrian Safety: Highways and Walkways .....	10
2 A Caring Community .....	14
3 Future Planning, Development and Housing .....	18
4 Maintaining an Attractive Village .....	22
5 Promoting a Greener Community .....	28
6 Encouraging a Fitter Community .....	30
7 Business and Transport .....	34
8 Preparing for the Future .....	38
9 The Young People of Otford .....	42
<b>Appendices</b>	
1 What does the Otford Parish Plan consist of? .....	44
2 Who helped to create the Parish Plan? .....	44
3 How is all this work being funded? .....	45
4 Demographic information on our community .....	45
Demographic responses to main Questionnaire .....	45
Demographic responses to Older Residents' Questionnaire .....	46
Demographic responses to Younger Residents' Questionnaire .....	47
5 Numbers of responses to the Questionnaires .....	47
6 Areas of value for biodiversity, open space and recreation .....	48
7 Buildings of local architectural or historical interest .....	48





## INTRODUCTION

The Otford Parish Plan is the result of extensive consultation, including a questionnaire returned by almost half our households. It draws heavily on the questionnaire results, in terms of both statistics and written comments. The process we went through to involve local people and create the Plan is set out in more detail in the Appendices. As a community-led Plan, it has to be consistent with the Local Development Framework Core Strategy prepared by Sevenoaks District Council. This is Part One of the Plan. Part Two, the Action Plan, sets out actions, timescales and responsibilities for implementation: it is available online at [www.otford.info/parishplan/](http://www.otford.info/parishplan/) and also as a hard copy from the Parish Office.

The whole process and the creation of the Plan documents have been undertaken by groups of local people drawn from all parts of the Parish. The Parish Council has been involved throughout and has given its support to the Plan. But the implementation of this plan is not solely or even mainly down to the Parish Council alone. It will be up to us all individually and as a community to achieve the goals set out in this document.

This is a long-term plan. Our Parish cannot expect to reach all the stated objectives quickly, especially in these difficult economic times. Some may take years. This makes the objectives no less valuable. We hope the Plan will provide all of us with an aspirational roadmap to follow so that we can secure an even better future for our community.

*Below and opposite: consultation days within the village*





## ABOUT OTFORD

### A RICH PAST

Otford occupies a site rich in history, with all its pageantry, politics, and violence. As local archaeological digs have shown, Prehistoric man lived here as far back as 2200 BC. Later, four Roman farms and a settlement were established: their remains suggest a prosperous life-style. During Anglo-Saxon times two battles were fought at Otford, in 776 and 1016. From around 800 AD the Archbishops of Canterbury owned a manor house here, complete with moat, great hall and chapel. The manor was also the administrative centre to which the local people owed their labours and paid their rents. Otford residents would have become used to seeing colourful processions of church dignitaries, royalty, and foreign diplomats visiting the manor, reputed to be one of the foremost houses of medieval England. In 1515 Archbishop Warham (then Lord Chancellor) converted the manor house into an impressive palace. His successor Thomas Cranmer handed over Otford Palace to Henry VIII as part of the Reformation. Later, both Palace and village drifted into rural obscurity. Only the arrival of the railway in 1882 revived Otford by providing homes for commuters, whose successors continue to travel from here to London and elsewhere.

### A VIBRANT PRESENT

Winning the “Village of the Year Award” in 2002 for South and South-East England, Otford was said to have a greater number of clubs and societies than almost any other village in the South East. Four well-attended churches attest to an active parochial life in the community and three schools serve the increasing demands for local primary education. The arrival of a large Sainsburys store on our parish boundary spelt the demise of some much-loved food and service shops in our High Street, though some have been replaced by some excellent craft and clothing shops. The Conservation Area centres on Otford’s pond, the church of St Bartholomew and the remains of the Palace. A popular Heritage Centre provides a look into Otford’s rich history and offers information on the unique scale model of the Solar System located on the recreation ground and around the village. New residents settle in Otford each year and their input maintains a fresh and animated social scene. Meanwhile the beautiful hills of the North Downs continue to draw an ever increasing number of walkers to our village centre.

Most importantly perhaps, Otford is still a vibrant village community. It is a place where most people know and care about their neighbours, where folk stop to chat when they meet in the street, the shop or at the school gate, and where communal life flourishes.

*Upper right: the remaining north-west tower of the Tudor Palace  
Lower right: Becket’s Well, a Medieval site of pilgrimage*





## AN EVEN BETTER FUTURE

Over the next ten years, the Parish faces many challenges, as well as opportunities. There will be over 500 houses built at Dunton Green; local traffic surveys indicate a likely increase of 4.5% year-on-year; and most importantly, we have a local population that is ageing as people live longer. Otford has never stood against change, but we want to make sure that change is managed for the benefit of local people.

This community's vision is for Otford to be a place where we can foresee a future which has adapted to our needs; where we care for each other but also warmly welcome outsiders. We would like to help our local businesses to flourish and provide local employment. We want the natural beauty of our village to be enhanced through careful conservation of all our public spaces, including our rather neglected historical sites. We would like to see safer roads so that pedestrians and cyclists are not at the mercy of fast-moving traffic. We would like facilities for all our young people which meet their needs. We especially want to make sure that as our residents get older, they are well cared for. And everyone, young and old, will benefit from living in a community which is healthier and greener. These themes are reflected in the following pages, which set out our objectives in response to the issues raised by you, the community of Otford.

## PLANNING AHEAD

This document has been researched and written to reflect, as accurately as possible, the views expressed by the Otford community. It is the result of a two-year consultation and research period running from February 2009 to November 2010. Primary funding was received from DEFRA, supported by generous local funding from many village organizations. The process began with a questionnaire, prepared and checked by the Steering Group with the help of Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK), and delivered to all 1,450 households in the Parish. 619 responses were received. The sections of the questionnaire were reflected in the sections of the Plan itself.

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to establish through statistics the nature and extent of residents' concerns. The many written comments were helpful in identifying other concerns. A forum for fresh ideas and constructive suggestions was thus provided. A number of drop-in events and open meetings offered the community the opportunity to discuss and add follow-up comments. There was a parish meeting at which the key elements of the Parish Plan were presented to the community and approval secured. On all these occasions there was the opportunity for everyone to discuss any aspect of the propositions. This then is the Otford Parish Plan.





## 1 Pedestrian Safety HIGHWAYS AND WALKWAYS

### FACT FILE

- The village is traversed by two through roads (A225 and the High Street/Pilgrims Way axis) carrying substantial traffic into and through the central Conservation Area (commuter, transport, and leisure use).
- As at January 2011, possible major development schemes for the area include the Thames Gateway, Dunton Green Cold Store (“Ryewood Meadows”) and Fort Halstead.
- Traffic regularly exceeds speed limits, sometimes by substantial margins, as recorded by Kent Highways, traffic cameras (VAS) and police teams.
- There have been fatalities and Kent Highways are seeking to improve conditions based on 10-year statistics.
- Wide vehicles are barred from the High Street and Pilgrims Way West but sometimes enter it to access premises.
- There are two primary schools (with nurseries) in the village near where excessive speeds have been recorded.
- There is only one pedestrian crossing in the village.
- Walkers and cyclists cannot easily avoid main roads.
- Footways along main roads vary in width and surface quality and are absent altogether from some stretches.
- There are three locations where there is some lighting.
- Footpaths away from main roads are popular but unlit and sometimes overgrown.
- The main free car park is full at some times. Station parking is seen as expensive and commuter parking in side roads creates difficulties for residents and restricts access for emergency and service vehicles.

### A STRONG FOUNDATION

Residents generally take care when moving around the village. Some drivers are aware of the problems and respect pedestrians at locations such as the pond area. Parish and District councillors are active in seeking improvements. Other residents are working hard to find solutions at different levels through the Otford Society and other groups. There is support for local home-grown speed control measures including Speedwatch. An increasing awareness of green issues may lead to a desire to minimise car use especially for short journeys. Police and authorities are increasingly



Signage overkill

aware of traffic and safety problems and looking to help to underline safety messages and tackle specific problems/locations. There is much guidance and support available from national and regional bodies which could help to reduce traffic impact and generate respect for the village and its residents and character.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITISED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS REQUIRING ATTENTION

(a) The danger to pedestrians caused by:

- the speed of traffic on main roads.
- wide vehicles in the High Street.
- unsuitable and/or poorly maintained walkways in the parish and the closeness to passing traffic.

(b) Parking in residential roads.

### THE PARISH COUNCIL ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- To secure compliance with traffic speed limits and reduce the risk of crashes and of injuries and fatalities.
- To enhance the residential and heritage characteristics of the village.
- To make it easier and safer for residents to walk about the village, especially for the benefit of vulnerable and disabled residents.
- To review car parking provision.



## THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*“Speeding is a problem not because the limit is too high but because it’s ignored by some drivers and is not enforced....”*

### 1.1 ACTION

- To explore ways of ensuring that all drivers are made very aware of the speed limits and are persuaded and required to observe them.
- To enhance the residential character of village roads with the introduction of village ‘gateways’ and similar means to enable safer access/exit from driveways onto main roads.
- To seek constant support from the police and engage with speed control programmes such as Speedwatch.
- To urge and enable local drivers to set good driving standards and keep to speed limits as a traffic-calming strategy.

*“Wide vehicles along the High Street are a great concern when walking to school with my children... too much heavy traffic in the High Street, not delivering...”*

### 1.2 ACTION

- To engage the help of Kent Highways in a review of traffic and road conditions along Pilgrims Way E and W and the High Street.
- To seek enforcement of vehicle width restrictions.

*“Pedestrian crossings needed, especially by Bubblestone Parade, Station approach, Rye Lane on Pilgrim’s Way West”*

### 1.3 ACTION

- To find the best location(s) for crossings and link these with traffic-calming measures.
- To consider changing the crossing by the main car park to a pedestrian-controlled type (pelican).

*“Pavement surfaces are in an appalling condition... potentially dangerous for the elderly, partially-sighted and disabled... pavements near the school are so dangerously narrow... replace village centre pavements to beautify the village...”*

### 1.4 ACTION

- To push for review and better maintenance of footway provision throughout the village.
- To explore the possibility of installing footways where absent and needed.
- To explore the option of low-level lighting or high-visibility footway features at key risk points.

*“Local roads used as car parks on weekdays... problems for service/emergency vehicles and access... use of village and station car parks needs review... Tudors are like an all-day car park...”*

### 1.5 ACTION

- To get SDC to resolve parking problems in worst-affected roads.
- To review fresh options for parking in the village centre and surrounding area.

## IN ADDITION

Residents mentioned specific locations, in particular Shoreham Road, Pilgrims Way West and Station Road, as being specially dangerous. There is concern over the extent to which traffic and signage dominates the village and erodes its fabric and character. School drop-off is a major irritant. Investigations should be made into traffic-calming measures of different types should be investigated: a roundabout at Bubblestone Road, rumble strips, vehicle-activated signs etc.

## OUR RESPONSE

The Steering Group, working with Otford Parish Council, will engage with all the relevant agencies - Kent Highways, police and design/environment groups such as Civic Voice and the West Kent AONB Unit - to develop a balanced strategic response to Otford’s problems as well as finding quick wins at key points. Residents too will need to take an active role in this work, whether as individuals or through bodies such as the Otford Society, school PTAs and neighbourhood groups.

Repairing lorry damage

Walkers not wanted?







## 2 A Caring COMMUNITY

### FACT FILE

- 43% of Otford residents are aged between 46-64 yrs.
- 27% of the community are already over 65 years old.
- 11% of residents have mobility problems and 8% are holders of blue badges.
- 22% of our community live on their own.
- 53% of Otford residents have lived here over 20 years.

### A STRONG FOUNDATION

No one would suggest that Otford is not already a caring community. There are more clubs and societies in Otford than in almost any other parish in the South East. The churches are very active and do a lot of practical community work. There is considerable organised voluntary help for the elderly. We also have a well-run village Memorial Hall which is fully utilised.

However, there is always more that can be done and the Parish Plan questionnaire has pointed to one or two areas which have, as it were, slipped through the caring net. The needs of Otford residents are changing. Planning for our future today means we have to address the needs of the increasingly older community which we are becoming.

### THE PARISH COUNCIL ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- Promoting a caring community.
- Supporting a response to a sense of isolation and insecurity amongst the elderly.
- Helping in the collection and distribution of information to older residents.
- Supporting a review on the need for and provision of accommodation for elderly residents of Otford.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITISED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS REQUIRING ATTENTION

- The need for housing designed for older residents.
- Better provision for the disabled around our streets.
- Improving Hale Lane Recreation Ground for the benefit of the local community.
- Providing a support network for the elderly.





## THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*“Sheltered housing is so important to many of us who do not want to have to move to Sevenoaks or Orpington and away from our friends.”*

### 2.1 ACTION

- To establish, with the assistance of our Parish Council, the options for locating and providing specially designed housing for the older residents of Otford.

*“Making the village more accessible to the disabled will also help families with young children and buggies.”*

### 2.2 ACTION

- In co-ordination with the Pedestrian Safety group and with the support of our Parish Council, to identify and pursue ways to enhance those public areas which create a problem to the disabled and young families.

*“The Hale Lane recreation ground is the only place at this end of the village where young children can run around. It could be made so much more attractive - with more play equipment for the children and maybe a seat or two for mums.”*

*“Could we get a grant for a community room for West Otford? We badly need somewhere to meet, so do our young people... younger mums would love to have a crèche here.”*

### 2.3 ACTION

- To work with the Parish Council in proposing, developing and broadening the facilities of Hale Lane Recreation Ground so that they better meet the needs of all sections of the local community.

*“Knowing that there’s someone there to listen or help, really matters. A local person is always more friendly than professional people.”*

### 2.4 ACTION

- A: To discuss with Otford groups and associations, ways in which a local network of care might be established.
- B: To find ways to co-ordinate information for older residents and make it more easily accessible.

*“People with poor eyesight find reading forms and local information very difficult. Can you help?”*

### 2.5 ACTION

- To make sure that locally produced written material is available in large type and/or on-line whenever possible.

*“A welcome pack would have been a great way to introduce us to the area and tell us about the clubs, services and activities available.”*

### 2.6 ACTION

- In co-ordination with the Otford Society and the Parish Council, to help produce an Otford Welcome Pack for all new residents.

## IN ADDITION

Many residents raised a number of concerns which the Steering Committee felt do not come under the remit of the Parish Plan. The committee is however, responding wherever possible.

MANY OF YOU HAVE SAID *“For many single, yet able, older residents a sense of isolation develops through the awkwardness of re-building social networks as a single person.”*

## OUR RESPONSE

- The Steering Group will contact all parish clubs and societies to encourage them to do more to welcome single members. We will do our best to promote a singles association/coffee club within the community.

MANY OF YOU HAVE SAID *“Why can’t Otford pubs be stopped from having loud music after 10 pm at night?”*

## OUR RESPONSE

- If you are concerned about persistent intrusive noise, you can telephone 01732 227000 at any time and talk to the Environmental Health Officer.





### 3 Future Planning, DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

#### FACT FILE

- There are currently 1,450 independent homes in the parish.
- Of these, there are 110 homes maintained as Social Housing, 7 of which have been purchased privately.
- In January 2008 the Otford Village Design Statement was adopted by Sevenoaks District Council as supplementary planning guidance.
- In 2010 there were 11 applications to build new homes in Otford, three of them as two-for-one developments.
- During that period six of those applications were refused.
- In 2010, the Parish Council dealt with 64 planning applications of which only 4 recommendations were at variance with the SDC decisions.

#### A STRONG FOUNDATION

The Village Design Statement (2008) was written to ensure that all future development and design within the parish reflect the wishes of the residents. It was a community document and took two years in the compilation. It still represents the clear and authoritative voice of Otford residents. It has been used on numerous occasions to support planning arguments by the Parish Council and by Sevenoaks District Council. Its recommendations are supported and upheld by the local community. As such it comprises part of the Otford Parish Plan.

#### THE PARISH COUNCIL ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING

All the Design Principles expressed in the Otford Village Design Statement and the Conservation Area Management Plan, because they relate to:

- The Landscape and Open Spaces.
- Building Design within the Village Envelope.
- The Conservation Area.
- Housing Developments.
- Extensions and Alterations.
- Walking and Vehicle movement within the village envelope.
- Boundaries and Street furniture.

*The constant fight to maintain  
our rural character*



- Footpaths and Bridleways.
- The Trading Estate and surrounding area.
- Agricultural Development.

#### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES:

- Garden development and two-for-one developments which obscure/reduce the community's view of the local countryside and/or create the sense of an increase in density.
- Designs which are out of character with local homes.
- The need to make better use of our existing housing stock.
- The need to provide housing opportunities for long-term older residents looking to downsize, so they do not need to leave the parish and more single-occupier private homes can be released on to the market.
- The need to protect our green areas and avoid intruding into the Green Belt.
- To resist any new housing project being tagged onto the village envelope.



#### EFFECTING A CHANGE IN PLANNING REGULATIONS AS THEY AFFECT OUR COMMUNITY

One aspect of planning law still stands at variance with the democratic rights of our community. At present a prospective developer has a right of appeal if an application for planning permission is refused, whereas the community/Parish Council currently has no such similar right of appeal against a planning decision which is at variance with the wishes of the community. Our parish council and others within our community have been aware, and concerned, that those aggrieved by a grant of planning permission do not have such a right of appeal, despite their best efforts to highlight this issue and press for reviews of decisions in the past.

Our Parish Plan therefore seeks to do everything possible to bring about a change in planning law through amendments being sought in the Localism Bill. The parish intends actively to lobby for and bring about changes in the planning laws through the medium of the Localism Bill in order to obtain a third party right of appeal in planning matters. The third party can be a parish council or a local voluntary organisation. Only in this way will the views of our local community become respected in future planning outcomes.

*Warm colouration of tile and locally made brick contribute to the attraction of the village.*



## 4 Maintaining an ATTRACTIVE VILLAGE

### FACT FILE

- Otford is the only village in England with a listed village pond.
- There are 41 listed structures in the parish.
- We won the prestigious national Village of the Year award in 2002 for South and South East England
- Our village has remains of one of the largest palaces in England.
- In 1520 Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon stayed here with a retinue of 5,000, en route to the Field of Cloth of Gold
- The Otford Heritage Centre welcomed over 1,000 visitors last year.
- There are two recreation grounds and four public open spaces.
- The Pilgrims Way, the Darent Valley Path and the North Downs Way, which is an international route, pass through the village.

### A STRONG FOUNDATION

'Village of the Year' no idle boast, but maintaining such a claim requires effort and dedication by the whole community. With very few exceptions there is little litter on our streets although dog droppings remain a constant problem in one or two areas. Otford receives a constant stream of visitors throughout the year and is one of the main hubs for walkers and ramblers in the upper Darent valley. Visitors to our village will increase in number significantly in the coming years with the development of The Thames Gateway project. The Sevenoaks District Council's *Conservation Area Management Plan* contributes to our aim of maintaining Otford as an attractive village. We wish to follow through on its recommendations, in particular for improving the quality of footways, replacement of cluttered and inappropriate signage, reduction of traffic speed and the re-introduction of finger-posts etc.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING TASKS AS PRIORITIES

- Make the village centre more attractive.
- Provide effective ways of showing Otford's history to visitors.
- Develop Palace Field and the palace tower as a historical asset.
- Make Bubblestone Parade more attractive and safer for pedestrians.
- Increase the number of dog mess bins.



## THE PARISH COUNCIL ENDORSED THE NEED TO PURSUE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

- To hold regular reviews of ways in which the village might be made more attractive.
- To support a programme of enhancing and promoting the historic past of the village.
- To support/ review ways of showing Otford's history to visitors.
- To mark the Conservation Area of the village with appropriate signage.

## THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*"A great shame that the village centre looks so un-cared for. Other villages like ours seem to make more of an effort."*

### 4.1 ACTION

- With the support of our retailers and parish associations, to draw up a list of 'improvements' which would benefit the look of the village centre and to gather support to carry them out. The Pedestrian Safety team have already prepared a report on unsuitable signage for KCC Highways Dept.

*"Unless you live here, you would know nothing about Otford's history or the origins of its buildings. Can't we find a way to tell people the stories of our buildings?"*

### 4.2 ACTION

- With the support of High Street retailers and residents, to consider a number of ways in which the stories of our past might be illustrated for visitors and to identify those houses of historical note within the village.

*"Restore the Palace Tower and put it to good use - don't let it crumble until it is beyond economic repair. The Palace field is long overdue for being sympathetically developed as a conservation site. Can we raise the funding and do something?"*

### 4.3 ACTION

- In co-ordination with English Heritage, and Sevenoaks District Council, and with support from our Parish Council, seek improvements to the Palace Tower and Gatehouse in order to prevent further erosion and decay. Through use of tasteful explanatory signage and organised visits, to 'promote' the Palace site as a valuable historical asset of the village.

*Below left: a community priority is to develop Palace Field and the remaining Tudor tower as historical assets to the village.*



A planter of spring flowers outside Otford Pharmacy brightens-up a dull March day..



*“Bubblestone Parade looks very depressing and down-market. It needs to be made more in keeping with the village character. Signage, trees, hanging baskets... Pedestrian safety is continually compromised by people who park beside the shops.”*

#### 4.4 ACTION

- With the cooperation and agreement of Bubblestone Parade residents and retailers, to propose ways in which the parade might be made more attractive and become safer for pedestrians. This objective would be in co-ordination with the Pedestrian Safety Team.

#### IN ADDITION

MANY OF YOU HAVE SAID *“There are insufficient doggie bins in some particular Hot spots, namely Pickmoss Lane, Palace Field and Hale Lane Recreation Ground.”*

#### OUR RESPONSE

- The Steering group have already made contact with possible benefactors to resolve this problem and have already received some commitments of practical help.

MANY OF YOU HAVE SAID *“With more visitors to Otford, and a busy car park, where are visitors going to park in future?”*

#### OUR RESPONSE

- The steering group concentrating on Pedestrian Safety are considering a wide range of options to discuss with the Parish Council. It is hoped that the outcome of their discussions will be put to the community in due course.



Room for improvement?...Above: Bubblestone parade....

....Below: the crumbling palace tower, and a scruffy traffic island.





## 5 Promoting a GREENER COMMUNITY

### FACT FILE

- Otford currently produces an estimated 10,000 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> per annum from the use of gas and electricity in our homes. That's enough CO<sup>2</sup> to fill the Albert Hall 6 times over each year.
- There are many homes in Otford which could benefit from better home insulation (source: SDC survey).
- 74% of people in the UK are looking for ways to reduce their energy bills (source: Energy Savings Trust).
- There are also many other ways to reduce our carbon footprint and create a greener community.



### CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

It's easy to feel helpless in the face of global pressures on our climate. What can we do here in Otford? If people in every community were to take their future into their own hands, we could start to make a difference. There are thousands of local communities in the UK who are starting to take action on climate change; and the same is true in other countries.

### IN DISCUSSIONS, THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES

- To develop a base of support for becoming more green as a community.
- To hold events to promote the advantages of a greener lifestyle.
- To work with the local primary schools.
- To investigate the potential for generating low-carbon heating in public/community buildings.
- To establish the exact size of the parish carbon footprint and set targets for its reduction.
- To set a long-term schedule.

### THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE ENDORSED

- To generate involvement by the whole community in action to reduce Otford's carbon footprint.

### THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

#### 5.1 ACTION

- To form a new organisation of local residents called 'Otford Green Team'. Its objective is to generate involvement from the whole community in reducing Otford's carbon footprint.

#### 5.2 ACTION

- To develop support and hold events to promote a greener lifestyle. (For example in November 2010 we organised a family learning day on Green Issues at Otford Library).

#### 5.3 ACTION

- To work with the local primary schools so that children and their parents are aware of ways that they can reduce energy use.

#### 5.4 ACTION

- To investigate the provision of low-carbon heating in public/community buildings, eg those buildings in the centre of the village.

#### 5.5 ACTION

- To establish the parish carbon footprint and set targets for its reduction and provide a long-term plan.





## 6 Encouraging a FITTER COMMUNITY

### FACT FILE

- Otford forms the hub of numerous walks into the North Downs and along the Darent Valley.
- Sports opportunities for a wide age group are available including cricket, football, tennis, pétanque, table tennis and short-mat bowls.
- There are many club opportunities to keep fit including aerobics, yoga and many styles of dance.
- There are no facilities for designated cycle lanes or paths within the parish.
- Over 70% of Otford's residents are aged over 45, and 30% are aged over 65.

### AN OVERVIEW

Most villages would be envious of the many opportunities in Otford for keeping fit. There are however, some activities, like cycling or badminton, that are not supported. Because things evolve with time, information on many fitness/sporting clubs is not readily available. The Parish Plan questionnaire has now pointed up a number of opportunities which can allow us to respond to people's observations and concerns.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITISED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS REQUIRING ATTENTION

- An absence of safe cycle routes.
- A number of footpaths get overgrown or uncared for.
- There are no clear public information boards showing footpath routes.
- It is difficult to find out what sports and keep-fit opportunities are available.
- There is no equipment to help the over 45s keep fit.
- There is a lack of toddlers/junior playground equipment on Hale Lane recreation ground.

### THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE ENDORSED

- To regularly review and enhance opportunities for attaining a healthier lifestyle for all residents, particularly for the increasing number of adult persons within the parish.

### THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*"Cycle lanes and cycle paths are badly needed in Otford. Cycling on all local roads is dangerous. - Shared use of the footpaths would be to everyone's benefit."*

#### 6.1 ACTION

- To actively review opportunities for safe cycle routes within the Parish and, with the support of the Parish council, to lobby for their introduction. We recognise that with economic restraints, new dedicated paths can only be included in long-term planning.

*"Why can't we use our country footpaths for cycling? There are lots of opportunities off-road."*

#### 6.2 ACTION

- Cycling on footpaths is dangerous to pedestrians and illegal. Use of bridle paths is permissible, although conditions can on occasion be difficult. Pedestrians (and horses) always have priority. The Steering Group will review whether improvements might be made to some of our bridle paths to make conditions more suitable for cycling (and jogging).
- The Thames Gateway development organisation intend that a cycle path (the *Darent Valley path*) will be developed in future years linking Otford with the confluence of the Darent and the Thames. The northern section of this path has already been completed. The steering group will monitor progress and advise.



*“The Mount upper footpath is getting washed away. Pickmoss Lane gets overgrown with nettles - you can’t take a pushchair down there. The Church-to-Station footpath gets dangerous with overhanging brambles and nettles.”*

### 6.3 ACTION

- Maintenance of our village footpaths is the responsibility of Kent County Council, and the Parish Council regularly asks them to take action. Footpaths outside the village are maintained by a number of agencies. The Steering Group, as part of their review of footpaths, will identify specific problem areas and, with the Parish Council, will seek to have them rectified. During the year, groups of village volunteers may be asked to assist in rectifying persistent problems.

*“Unless you have a ramblers map, you would have no idea where the footpaths are in Otford. Why don’t we have proper display boards for visitors in the car park and on the Green?”*

### 6.4 ACTION

- To design, estimate and install an attractive pictorial ramblers’ map of the footpaths in the area for use by visitors departing from the car park and the railway station.
- To link this with wooden finger posts pointing to departure points.

*“Why is there nowhere to find out details about the sports clubs and keep-fit classes?”*

### 6.5 ACTION

- The Steering Group will perform an audit of the many sports clubs and activities that currently exist. This will be published on the [www.otford.info](http://www.otford.info) website. Hard copies will be available in the Parish Office.

*“Could we look at introducing the modern fitness equipment that is so popular elsewhere in parks for older keep-fitters?”*

### 6.6 ACTION

- The steering group will review the types and opportunities for introducing out-doors modern, vandal-proof, fitness equipment for use by adult residents. We will need to establish a clear indication of want by the community, as well as support by the parish council before funding can be sought.

*“Hale Lane recreation ground really needs a proper toddlers playground. Many of us have kiddies and the two swings are not enough.”*

### 6.7 ACTION

- If funds become available as hoped, the Steering Group and Parish Council will be discussing with local parents ideas for suitable equipment and its location.

### IN ADDITION

- To support and help promote the ‘communal walks’ organised by Sevenoaks District Council which depart from Otford.
- In conjunction with local ramblers associations and with the agreement of local land-owners to introduce occasional information boards on local flora and fauna.
- Subject to the agreement of school authorities, parents/guardians and the relevant authorities, to support the re-establishment of ‘walking buses’ to and from schools on the condition that they can be achieved with safety.
- The community have made it clear that the village recreation ground is primarily for the use of all villagers of all ages, and not simply the prerogative of sports people.



## 7 BUSINESSES *and* TRANSPORT

### FACT FILE

- There are approximately 855 people employed locally within the Parish boundaries.
- In Otford village there are 29 shops and 8 (non retail) businesses. These employ approximately 140 people.
- On the Vestry Trading Estate there are 20 businesses which employ approximately 550 people.
- In Riverside Retail Park (within the Otford boundary) there are 3 major retailers and a petrol station. These employ a further 120 people.
- Otford benefits from a medical centre, dentist, pharmacy, post office and library.
- There are 3 food-pubs, two cafés and two restaurants in the village. There is also a fast-food outlet on the Vestry trading estate.
- A significant number of residents have independent businesses which they operate from home.
- There are 3 primary schools, of which 2 are independent.
- An efficient train service operates between London/Maidstone and connects with Sevenoaks.
- There is an intermittent bus service which has limited operational times.
- There is a well-run Otford website and email address, which is operated privately.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITISED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS REQUIRING ATTENTION

- Government plans for cuts in the public sector may, at some point, put some of our crucial services (notably the bus service, the library and post office) at risk.
- With the majority of residents doing their weekly shopping outside the parish, our two local food retailers and other service retailers need as much local support as possible.
- The poorly-used bus service does not operate in the evenings or on Sundays or Bank holidays, restricting travel to Sevenoaks for anyone without a car.
- Parking for visitors to the village is restricted by the number of long-term parkers using the village car park. The cost of parking at the station is pushing many commuters to park on local residential streets.
- A form of directory of local businesses and services can help promote the use of local trade and provide a source of data for those seeking local employment.

### MAKING A POSITIVE RESPONSE

- As residents, we can all do something positive to help prevent losing our crucial shops and services. The rule of thumb is that if we don't use it, we will lose it. That is what will happen. The choice is ours.
- It is essential that we strive to keep the facilities we currently have available, by continually making use of them and encouraging other residents to shop locally whenever possible.
- Many of our retail shops, restaurants and pubs rely heavily upon visitor trade. Making the visitor experience as enjoyable as possible will be an important factor in supporting this significant part of our local retail economy.
- Businesses on the Vestry Estate struggle with rising rents and rising rates and many have closed in the past year. Their sites have not been re-occupied. It is the hope of the Parish Plan to investigate ways in which Vestry Estate businesses might be promoted to the benefit of the local economy.

### THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE ENDORSED

- To support and help promote all businesses and shops within the parish.
- To help promote Otford as an attractive venue for visitors to shop.
- To help protect vulnerable services.
- To pursue improvement to public transport for the village.

### THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*"We need to attract a greater diversity of shops to the village, not just antique and bric-a-brac shops. We are becoming like another Brasted."*

### 7.1 ACTION

- Residents to be encouraged to shop locally wherever possible, since supply and demand will decide which shops and services thrive in our village.



*“Can we have a Farmers Market on the Green? It could regularly supply villagers with their necessary shopping and look very attractive.”*

### 7.2 ACTION

- The Steering Group responded to the many proposals for a farmers’ market by visiting the majority of local markets in the region. There are a number of insurmountable obstacles, not least that market retailers are already over-stretched by too many local farmers’ markets. However, the Steering Group are building a database of local mobile retail providers including butchers, greengrocers and fishmongers who can call on Otford residents on a regular basis. This information will be passed to residents in due course through the parish newsletter, parish office and online at [otford/info.com](http://otford/info.com).

*“Could local small businesses be promoted in a local directory? - no mention is made of Vestry Estate employment opportunities.”*

### 7.3 ACTION

- The Steering Group will contact local businesses to prepare a local business directory and publish this on-line. (Working with the Caring Communities team, information on local service providers, may also be able to be promoted in the Welcome Pack.)

- It is also their intention to collate information on Otford businesses which may help provide information to local job seekers.
- In discussion with businesses on the Vestry Estate, to examine ways in which their trade might be promoted.

*“Our bus service is intermittent and stops far too early to allow evening visits to Sevenoaks.”*

### 7.4 ACTION

- With the support of the Parish Council, to maintain contact with the bus service provider and continually lobby for improvement of the service.

*“How can we get more visitors to our shops if there is nowhere to park?”*

### 7.5 ACTION

- Improvements in the parking facilities in the village are already a high priority. It is hoped that with the support of the Parish Council these improvements may come about. The work of the *Attractive Village* team will also provide additional incentives to encourage visitors.





## 8 Preparing for THE FUTURE

### FACT FILE

- The development of the former Dunton Green Cold Store site (to be known as Ryewood Meadows) is proceeding. It will provide homes for at least 500 new families at the Southern end of Rye Lane.
- In Dartford, 5,500 new homes are being built over the next 5 years. Dartford is 10 miles north of Otford.
- Sainsbury's new glass frontage is being installed with its decked car park and lighting masts, just beyond our parish boundary.
- The Darent Valley has been designated one of the two 'Recreation Areas' for thousands of new families within the Thames Gateway (North Kent) region.
- The volume of cars using Sevenoaks roads is predicted to increase by 4.5% year-on-year.

### PREDICTING THE FUTURE

No prediction of the future can be totally accurate. There are just too many variables. We can however get an indication of some of the forces likely to affect our village in the next ten years. For example, there will be a significant increase in both private and commercial traffic along the A225: people will, because of the economic downturn, have less money to spend in our local shops, restaurants and public houses; and there may well be a significant increase in the number of visitors to Otford.

The purpose of this section of the Parish Plan is to help us face what the future brings and to benefit rather than suffer from its inevitable consequences.

### THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITISED THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS REQUIRING ATTENTION

- To prevent any increase in the use of Rye Lane as a through route and work against any plans for widening and straightening this ancient cart-way.
- To consider the impact on Otford of a significant increase in visitor numbers and prepare contingency plan.
- To work for the sustainability of our local economy and services.
- To liaise and co-ordinate with the other communities of the Upper Darent Valley regarding outside influences upon the parishes of the valley.





**THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE ENDORSED THE NEED:**

- To continually review and respond to outside influences which may affect our community and to seek ways to minimise that effect.

**THE PARISH PLAN HAS RESPONDED TO WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED**

Comments are all randomly selected from the many received on the questionnaire returns.

*“Rye Lane will be unable to support the extra traffic. It will become unsustainable. Do something soon before it is too late. It will make it seriously dangerous to everyone.”*

**8.1 ACTION**

- The Pedestrian Safety action team will press for action to protect Rye Lane as plans for Ryewood Meadows go forward. Through the Parish Council, they will lobby and seek support for concerted action by Kent Highways Services and other relevant agencies.

*“If we get an even greater amount of traffic through the village and many more visitors stopping, will we be able to cope? What can we do about it?”*

**8.2 ACTION**

- An independent task team drawn from parishioners and parish councillors will review the likely consequences of a significant increase in visitor numbers to the village and prioritise the actions which may be required in order to reduce their effect upon the community. Actions can be prepared and discussed with our District Council as part of the Local Design Framework.

*For the past, the present and the future*

*Neglect will rob future generations of its heritage*



*“Otford may lose its identity as a rural village. We will be like those places you pass through whose name you can’t recall with just one local shop.”*

**8.3 ACTION**

- The objective is that the visible profile of the village will be radically enhanced in future by many of the proposals recommended in the Parish Plan. The enhancement of Palace Field, the suggestions for stimulating the historical interest of visitors, a newly designed Heritage Centre and the availability of spare parking space, even, one day we hope, a cycle route to Sevenoaks, will all have a positive effect upon our future visitors. It is the hope of this community that Otford will become a natural hub for families wishing to explore the valley and its many attractions. Such an effect can put Otford firmly on the map for visitors to the area and help support a sustainable future for our shops, pubs and restaurants.

**IN ADDITION**

A number of other concerns have been raised which the Steering Committee feel do not to come under the remit of the longer-term objectives of the Parish Plan. They are, however, responding wherever possible.

*SOME OF YOU HAVE SAID “Plan now for a grid-locked future. A by-pass for Otford? We should at least plan for one.”*

**OUR RESPONSE**

- Although this is a much-vaunted proposal, it is unlikely to be feasible in anything approaching the immediate future much as we might see the advantages of it. Our best approach for now is to press for changes in traffic flows to reduce the volume of through-traffic in future.

*SOME OF YOU HAVE SAID “What will happen when Fort Halstead gets developed?”*

**OUR RESPONSE**

- The proposed development of Fort Halsted is not progressing in its present form. However, any fresh proposals for use of the site will be closely monitored for their potential effect upon Otford parish.

*SOME OF YOU HAVE SAID “How can we know what goes on elsewhere? Better to just respond when things happen.”*

**OUR RESPONSE**

- We do not agree. It is better to be alert and prepared. Members of the Steering Group and Parish Council maintain contact with our District Planning office, Thames Gateway development authorities, Dartford District Council as well as regular meetings with all the other parishes within the upper Darent Valley. This provides a channel for information on external developments which could have affect Otford.



## 9 The YOUNG PEOPLE of Otford

### FACT FILE

- Young people between 11 and 17 represent 8.7% of all Otford's residents.
- Within this age group, over 60% are aged between 11 and 16.
- Otford's young people appear almost equally divided between boys and girls.
- Of the respondents to the youth questionnaire, 23% attend school in Otford, 19% in Sevenoaks, and 61% elsewhere.
- 26% are members of clubs or associations (church clubs, scouts, Guides, Brownies, etc.).
- 77% are not members of any club or association.

### THE PRESENT STATUS

A youth Forum/Council made up from young people from all parts of the parish is being actively supported by the Parish Council. Both St. Bartholomew's and the Methodist Church run popular youth clubs primarily for younger teenagers. The Otford Scouts and Guides groups are particularly popular with a steady number of pre- and early teenagers.

Until recently Playspace (an independent youth support group) have run a mid- to late-teen club in the previously unused changing rooms on Hale Lane Recreation Ground. Numbers have dwindled recently as many members have found employment, and this facility may reduce its role until such time as a new wave of siblings wishes to join.

An enthusiastic team of outreach youth workers operating on behalf of KCC meets regularly with the young people of the parish, making contacts and giving guidance. Our local Community Liaison Officer, supported by our PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) are continuously working to build contacts with young people.

Less than half of all young people in the parish responded to the Young Persons' questionnaire. This has not provided enough statistical information on which to base firm recommendations on the needs of young residents. The Steering Group will wish to discuss the response with professional youth organisations and experienced youth workers from the District Council before making any recommendations for future action. Our Parish Council agrees with this decision.

Nonetheless the outcomes of the Young Person's questionnaire need to be reflected in the Plan.

On the basis of the responses received, the following interests and wishes were clearly identified:

#### Youth Centre

- 88% of respondents indicated they would like a Youth Centre open to all young people in Otford.
- 72% would like the Centre located in the village centre, not in an outlying area of the parish.
- 81% indicated they would prefer it available to mixed age groups at different times.
- 93% support separate rooms for different activities and 95% a kitchen.

*In written comments, the respondents also said they would like to:*

- Be able to socialise with people of their own age-group.
- Have an experienced youth worker on site at all times.
- Have opportunities to put on special fund-raising events organised by themselves.

#### Learning new skills

- 39% indicated a wish to have the opportunity to learn new skills, particularly for creative work.

#### Advice on life-skills

- 67% indicated an interest in getting advice on matters such as interview techniques, getting part-time work, managing your own finance, first-aid skills etc.

#### A voice in the community

- 60% expressed a clear wish to have a role in the community, especially to have a voice on the Parish Council. The Parish Council is already in the process of forming a Youth Forum and financing its activities.

#### Happy in Otford?

- To the question "Are you happy living in Otford" 66% said they enjoyed living here.

#### THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVE ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING

- To set up and maintain contact with professional youth organizations;
- To maintain the Parish Council Youth Forum as a means of communication with young people;
- To support the maintenance of a youth club near Hale Lane Recreation Ground;
- To pursue opportunities to provide a centre /drop-in facility for young people in the village.

#### RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STEERING GROUP

Working closely with members of the Parish Council, we should set up discussions with the Sevenoaks District Council Youth Team, our local youth outreach workers and qualified youth supervisors who are familiar with our area. We hope that, given the data we have already collected and the plans and ideas already coming into shape through the Parish Plan, an appropriate response can be found to the benefit of all Otford's young people.



# APPENDICES

## 1 WHAT DOES THE OTFORD PARISH PLAN CONSIST OF?

This, Part One of the document, is the Parish Plan proper. It sets out the main areas of concern and development under headings which reflect those of the original questionnaire. It includes the main objectives for the various areas which have been endorsed by Otford Parish Council as key to the future of the village. It also contains ideas for specific actions, things to be done which will bring about the improvements we all seek.

There is also a second document, Part Two. This is an Action Plan, available online at [www.otford.info/parishplan/](http://www.otford.info/parishplan/) or from the Parish Office. This sets out in more detail ideas for actions to be undertaken, how and when these may be achieved and who will (initially) plan and lead the community to their achievement. Many of the proposed actions will include outside bodies or agencies or support groups who may act as partners in a project. The Action Plan will change over time as actions are carried out and ideas added, changed or rejected.

The Parish Council has been fully involved in the preparation of the Plan and has indicated its support for the actions which are proposed. The experience and active support of Parish councillors in the coming years will be essential to turn the Plan into reality.

Things will change. They always do. But the objectives of the plan should hold good for many years to come.

## 2 WHO HELPED TO CREATE THE PARISH PLAN?

Over the two years it has taken to formulate our Parish Plan, the Steering Group has met on over thirty occasions to ensure the Plan moved forward in a constructive manner. The Steering Group consists of a number of volunteer residents drawn from every part of the parish. It was considered important that different views were heard and that the Steering Group should be truly representative of the whole community. For names of Steering group members, please see inside the front cover.

Two parish councillors are members of the Steering Group. Their experience and advice has provided invaluable support. The Steering Group is entirely independent of the Parish Council but has kept them informed through regular and detailed minutes. A web page was added to [www.otford.net](http://www.otford.net) so that updates could be posted for the community. Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) has provided continuous advice and guidance and their support has been invaluable. Officers from Sevenoaks District Council, involved in both District and community planning and youth support, have also been available at all times to provide advice and help. District councillor Michelle Lowe and County councillor Nick Chard have also made themselves

available throughout the work of preparing the Plan. And, of course, there was the whole community of Otford. Without their involvement, suggestions and ideas, the Plan would not be the credible reflection of community views and effort which we would all wish it to be.

## 3 HOW IS ALL THIS WORK BEING FUNDED?

There are always costs in preparing a community document as extensive as ours. Without the generosity of organisations, local associations, clubs and individuals, the funding would not have been forthcoming.

Particular thanks are owed to DEFRA and Action with Communities in Rural Kent; Otford Parish Council; Otford's County Councillor; the Otford Society; the Otford Historical Society; the Otford Fete Committee and Otford.net.

As the Plan came into being, action teams led by Steering Group members worked closely with ACRK "Funding Buddies" who have continued to provide essential advice and support, along with county funding advisors "Kent Can", in order to raise funding for the various community projects.

## 4 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON OUR COMMUNITY

As part of the questionnaire process, we asked respondents to provide certain information that could be of help when making future recommendations. Given the number of responses received (619) and the proportion of the Otford population that this figure represents, all responses to the questionnaire can be judged as statistically accurate to within +/- 3.2 %.

Information about our community (the Demographic responses) are shown in the following three tables.

### DEMOGRAPHIC RESPONSES TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

<b>How many people live in your household?</b>	<b>1</b> 120 22%	<b>2</b> 273 50%	<b>3</b> 72 13%	<b>4</b> 69 12%	<b>5</b> 15 3%	<b>more</b> 3
<b>What age are they?</b>	<b>1-10 yrs</b> 103	<b>11-18 yrs</b> 88	<b>19-25 yrs</b> 64 8%	<b>26-45 yrs</b> 183 22%	<b>46-64 yrs</b> 348 43%	<b>65+ yrs</b> 223 27%
<b>How many years have you lived in Otford?</b>	<b>1-5 yrs</b> 98 18%	<b>6-10 yrs</b> 67 12%	<b>11-20 yrs</b> 94 17%	<b>20+ yrs</b> 294 53%	<i>Continued</i> ▶	





How many cars do you park at home?	1 253 47%	2 211 39%	3 42 8%	4 7 1%
How many motorcycles do you own?	1 19	2 2		
How many vans do you park at home?	1 25	2 1		
Where do you park your vehicle?	Property 473 90%	Road 38 7%	Elsewhere 15 3%	
Do you have a health problem with....?	Mobility 64 11%	Visual 22 4%	Disability 36 6%	Blue Badge 47 8%

#### DEMOGRAPHIC RESPONSES TO OLDER RESIDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

How old are you?	65-75 yrs 146 50%	76-85 yrs 109 38%	86+ yrs 35 23%	
Are you Male or Female? <i>(figures include couples)</i>	Male 164 43%	Female 222 57%		
How many years have you lived in Otford?	1-5 yrs 22 8%	6-15 yrs 33 12%	16-34 yrs 76 27%	35+ yrs 150 53%
Do you live with...?	Spouse 166 58%	Relative 12 4%	Alone 100 38%	Carer 1

Continued ►

Are you able to walk unaided?	Yes 241 84%	No 19 7%	a little 30 9%	
Do you need Social Services help in the home?	Yes 4	No 279	Do you need any other help? Yes 36 13%	No 244 87%

#### DEMOGRAPHIC RESPONSES TO YOUNGER RESIDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

What age are you?	9-10 yrs 21	11-13 yrs 35	14-16 yrs 31	17-18 yrs 16
Are you a boy or girl?	Boy 53	Girl 50		
Where do you attend school?	In Otford 23	In Sevenoaks 19	Elsewhere 61	
Are you a member of a uniformed group?	Scouts 13	Guides 4	Other 9	None 77
Do you go to a youth club or centre?	Yes 24	No 79		
Which one?	Methodist High Voltage 4 St Bart's YPF/Frogs 7 Baptist Zest (BG) 2	Croydon 1 Cadets 1 Cubs 1	Unknown 8	

#### 5: NUMBERS OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES

1,415 questionnaires were delivered to homes throughout the Parish. 619 responses were received to the Main Questionnaire. This represented a response rate of 43.9% which is a statistically meaningful figure on which to base recommendations. 272 responses to the Older Person's Questionnaire and 103 responses to the Younger Person's Questionnaire were also received.

All results were recorded and logged by members of the Steering Group, and full statistics for the Parish Plan questionnaire can be found at [www.otford.info/parishplan/](http://www.otford.info/parishplan/).



## 6: AREAS OF VALUE FOR BIODIVERSITY, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The following areas are considered important open spaces within Otford Parish which merit continued protection:

- Otford recreation ground.
- Hale Lane recreation Ground.
- The Chalkpit.
- The Village Green.
- The Village Pond.
- Palace Field.
- Oxenhill Meadow and Shaw.
- Telston Park.
- All designated agricultural land within the Parish.
- All the undeveloped area of the North Downs.

## 7: BUILDINGS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST

The following buildings and monuments are of architectural or historical interest and should be protected as essential parts of our parish heritage (more detail on all these properties is available at Otford Heritage Centre):

- The Old Parsonage (a medieval hall-house, with c18 brick and tile-hung exterior)
- The Horns Public House (c16-17 timber-framed, once three cottages)
- Pickmoss (part medieval hall-house)
- The Old Parsonage (timbered Jacobean)
- Bridge Cottage (c17 tile-hung yeoman's cottages)
- The Grange (c17 house and site of tannery)
- Broughton Manor (owned by Thomas Polley - later Polhill - in 1554)
- Church Hall (built in early c20 to the design of Sir Edward Lutyens)
- The School House (offices of Parish Council)
- The old village school building (built 1872)
- The Sun Dial (mounted at 22 High Street)
- The Village Mosaic (by Oliver Budd, 2000)
- Otford palace (built by Archbishop Warham in 1515)
- Chantry Cottage (once a pair of c16-17 timber-framed cottages)
- The Chantry (c14 court house, adapted)
- St Bartholomew's Church (late c10)
- Pond House and Holmesdale (early c18)
- Bubblestone Farm (c16-17 framed cottage)
- Colets Well (1790 with c19 alterations)
- Nos 20,22,24 High Street (in 1790 the Parish Workhouse)
- The Pond (now a listed building)
- Forge Restaurant (three c17 cottages)
- The Bull (the early Tudor home to the master mason of Otford palace)
- Corner House (c17 farmhouse)
- Castle Farm (early c16 farm to the palace)
- The model of the Solar System (centred on Otford Recreation Ground, 2000)

