



# Hutton Henry Parish Council Parish Plan

## Introduction

Welcome to the Hutton Henry Parish Council Parish Plan setting out the objectives of the council for the next four years - prepared and approved by your parish councillors. The plan considers the issues facing the community and our ability to respond with the resources available. It is a planning tool to assist us with the practical decisions we must take, supported by a review process that helps us, and you, look back on our performance.

## Context

This is our first parish plan, prepared at a time of austerity with an emphasis placed on value for money, efficiencies, and collaboration. Hutton Henry Parish Council, as the first tier of local government, is uniquely situated to provide the forum for understanding and supporting the needs of this community. It provides advocacy on behalf of its residents, uses linkages to other organisations to bring in services, or directly procures them itself. Liaison with Durham County Council happens at all levels. Day-to-day, the council will seek solutions for the community, looking for skills and volunteers to make improvements to our surroundings or bringing neighbourhood issues to local attention to promote a better quality of life for all. Above all your parish council is here to help, support and encourage.

The plan has 4 main objectives - to make the parish:

1. **Stronger** - fostering a sense of community between Station Town and Hutton Henry
2. **Safer** - reducing anti-social behaviour, speeding etc
3. **Healthier** - improving physical and mental health
4. **Greener** – reducing our carbon footprint, encouraging consumption of local produce, increasing wildlife etc



## **What is a Parish Council?**

A parish council is a small local authority. Its councillors are elected for four years at a time, bye-elections may be held to fill vacancies occurring between elections, or members may be co-opted onto the council if no election is called. Hutton Henry Parish Council encompasses the villages of Hutton Henry and Station Town in County Durham. Twelve councillors make up the Parish Council, which employs a Clerk to manage administration and a Groundsperson to maintain Station Town Cemetery, both of whom are employed on a part-time basis.

## **What can we do?**

### **Powers and Duties**

Parish councils have several formal powers, set out in a wide range of legislation. A duty is something that a council must do, a power is something that it may do. A parish council cannot do anything that is not permitted in law. The parish councillors know the villages and represent their views directly to other authorities. They are entitled to be consulted on planning applications, which include work to listed buildings and on proposals in conservation areas and are often consulted on such things as schools and roads. Recent moves from government toward greater 'localism' are set to increase the role of parish councils even further, especially in the field of development control and planning. There is now the power to create a Neighbourhood Plan which allows local people to get the right development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area.

### **Accountability**

Residents of Hutton Henry and Station Town elect the parish councils members every four years - the next election is in May 2025. Residents are entitled to attend the councils' meetings - to meet the councillors, listen to their business, and participate in the time especially set aside for that purpose. The councils accounts are strictly audited every year and published. You can find out more about what we do, how we do it, and our meetings on the Parish Council website at [www.huttonhenry.parish.durham.gov.uk](http://www.huttonhenry.parish.durham.gov.uk).

## **What do we do?**

The parish council provides a few direct services to the community, and acts as custodian to several assets held in the 'public name' for which the council is responsible for maintenance, repairs, and insurance. Although Durham County Council is the planning authority, the parish council is consulted on each planning application made in the parish - councillors consider planning applications at their meetings and inform Durham County Council of their views. At meetings of the council reports from various organisations are received, and councillors seek to provide support where necessary or requested in order that local groups can continue to thrive. The council can act as advocate for residents, a conduit for communicating information, and will liaise with appropriate departments of other public authorities to ensure that views, comments, and necessary actions are dealt with.

## What do we want to do next?

The Parish Council have used residents' feedback to produce our Parish Plan. The table below sets out the Action Plan adopted by the Council over the next four years:

Objective	Actions	Priority (L/M/H)	Partners	Justification
<b>1. Stronger</b>				
1.1 Parish Council name change	To change the name of the Parish Council to include Station Town	<b>H</b>	DCC	Feedback from residents, developing a stronger sense of community
1.2 Provide Social Events for the community	Family Funday/Armed Forces Day - Station Town	<b>M</b>		Previous event was very positively received, residents asked for it to become an annual event
	Queens Jubilee Event – Hutton Henry	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Milbank Methodist Church	Country wide event that residents wish to be involved in
1.3 To increase accessibility for all residents	To provide transport to events/activities	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Milbank Methodist Church, DCC	Public transport is poor, road between HH & ST is not suitable for walking - especially in the dark
1.4 To increase resident engagement with the PC	Activity packs provided during school holidays	<b>M</b>	AAP	Previously provided packs have been well received with positive feedback from residents
	To organise another Meet and Greet Day	<b>M</b>	Milbank Methodist Church, MP's, County Councillors, Local Service providers	The previous event held in Hutton Henry allowed residents to meet representatives from various agencies and the feedback was positive.
1.5 To make Station Town Cemetery accessible to all	To digitise the records	<b>H</b>		Currently all cemetery records are hard copy, and the records are in a poor state of repair

	To implement the recommendations of the Accessibility Audit	<b>H</b>		Audit flagged several issues with the building which need to be implemented to make the Parish Hall accessible to all who use it.
<b>2. Safer</b>				
2.1 Improve traffic management and safety for road users	Improve road safety signage	<b>M</b>	DCC, Durham Constabulary	Residents have complained about the speed of vehicles travelling along back roads where children play and the chicane in ST
	Investigate possible speed reduction schemes	<b>M</b>	DCC, Durham Constabulary	Residents regularly complain about speeding vehicles in both villages
	To continue encouraging residents to report incidents of speeding	<b>H</b>	DCC, Durham Constabulary, Residents	DCC and the Police need evidence of speeding to implement speed reduction schemes
	Improve road maintenance	<b>L</b>	DCC	Several unadopted roads are in a very poor state
2.2 Improve safety for road users and pedestrians	Provide grit bins	<b>M</b>	DCC	There have been several requests for grit bins in the villages after residents have come into difficulties during bad weather.
2.3 To reduce anti-social behaviour	To build a Pump Track for young people in Station Town	<b>H</b>	DCC,	Feedback from residents, research identifies pump tracks as means of reducing anti-social behaviour
	To promote attendance at PACT meetings	<b>M</b>	Durham Constabulary	Talking directly to the local policing team is shown to have an impact
	To continue encouraging residents to report incidents of ASB	<b>H</b>	Durham Constabulary, DCC	Evidence is needed to ensure the police act.
	To investigate methods of protecting green spaces from off road vehicles	<b>M</b>	Durham Constabulary, DCC	The vast majority of ASB is related to off road vehicles damaging green spaces.

	Promote the local neighbourhood watch scheme	<b>L</b>		Neighbourhood watch schemes are thought to decrease crime and create a sense of community
2.4 To reduce dog fouling	To install extra dog bins	<b>L</b>	DCC	Residents have requested more dog bins in the area
	To continue advertising the free dog bags which the PC have available	<b>L</b>	Gills Fish Shop, ST Plough Inn, HH	Not all residents are aware that the PC offer free dog bags
2.5 To reduce litter	Organising litter picks	<b>M</b>	Residents, AFST	Previous litter picks have made the area much improved
	To continue encouraging residents to report incidents of Fly Tipping	<b>H</b>	DCC, Durham Constabulary	Evidence is needed to ensure DCC can act
<b>3. Healthier</b>				
3.1 To reduce loneliness	Regular organised events for retired people	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Wingate PC Milbank Methodist Church	The Covid19 pandemic has seen a reduction in services for older people and increased loneliness
	Advertise activities held at Milbank Methodist Church, St Francis Village Hall & Wingate Community Centre	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Wingate PC Milbank Methodist Church	Feedback from poorly attended events noted that some people were unaware of the events taking place. Too much emphasis on social media.
3.2 To encourage healthy eating	To create a community allotment	<b>M</b>	Hutton Henry Primary School	Feedback from older residents noted that a full allotment is too much to look after but residents would still like to be involved. Teaches young people about growing their own food etc
3.3 To engage young people in a range of activities	Advertise activities held at various locations in the area	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Wingate PC Milbank Methodist Church, Wellfield School	Boredom is often blamed for ASB. Encouraging young people to have healthy lifestyles.
	To reintroduce "Play Rangers" to the Villages	<b>L</b>	Play Rangers	To have more structured activities in the villages

3.4 To increase physical activity	To promote the various local walking & cycling routes	<b>M</b>		There are many walking & cycling routes on the doorstep – the PC want to encourage people to have healthy habits and its free!
<b>4. Greener</b>				
4.1 Improving opportunities for wildlife	Planting of wildflowers and trees	<b>M</b>	DCC, AAP	Improve the area and increase wildlife habitats
	To seek advice from DCC regarding claiming the common land in Station Town, East of the Business Centre.	<b>L</b>	DCC	This land is currently unused, and the PC believe it would be better used as a recreational area
	To change the plants in the flower planters according to the season	<b>L</b>		The flower planters improve the appearance of both villages
4.2 Reduce carbon footprint in the community	To declare a climate emergency	<b>H</b>		Climate change is a global emergency that requires action
	To investigate schemes to reduce carbon emissions e.g. LED lightbulbs,	<b>M</b>		These schemes will help to reduce the PC's carbon footprint
	To reduce the amount of paper used by the Council	<b>L</b>		Steps have made to reduce the amount of paper used by the Council but further reductions are possible
	To switch utilities onto greener tariffs	<b>L</b>		Energy companies have tariffs which look to reduce their carbon footprint – the council should look to switch to a green tariff
4.3 To reduce waste	To create “community libraries”	<b>M</b>	HHCA, Milbank Methodist Church	Reduce waste whilst creating a community project
4.4 To encourage buying local produce	To liaise with local vendors and advertise their products	<b>M</b>		Shopping local supports local businesses and helps to reduce carbon emissions.

