**Neighbourhood Plan Policies for Community Facilities and Amenities**

The presence of community facilities and amenities make a significant contribution to the wellbeing and community spirit of Swinford. They have a positive impact of the sustainability of the Parish enhancing the village providing focal points for social interaction.

For the size of Swinford there is a wide range of facilities. These include a Pub; a Primary School, a Village Hall, a Church, a Playgroup, a play area with village green and equipment and a Cricket Club/Sports Field.

However, in recent years Swinford has suffered the loss of some amenities such as a local shop and public transport. These have not been replaced, although there is the use of the Community Bus with is operated and run by a local charity. This has increased the need for car ownership but has opened up a wider range of shopping alternatives than what was available locally.

The village is popular for commuting to work because of the close access to M1, M6 and A14 but with the recent closure of the Catthorpe Interchange the Parish awaits to understand the impact this will have on village life.

**Protecting Existing Community Facilities**

**Pub**

The Chequers is the only pub in Swinford. The close access to the motorways made it a great place to people to break up their journeys but with the closure of these links the impact is yet to be known. Combined with the efforts of its current tenants and changes made to the menu it is a pub that is becoming more inviting to locals and resident visitors.

The importance of the Pub to community life is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that it scored the highest amongst villagers as being important but also The Chequers scored the highest amongst amenities that are used.

**School**

Swinford Church of England Primary provide a distinctive Christian education for children within the National Curriculum, links with the local community help shape teaching and learning at Swinford. The school welcomes children to the school whatever their background or religion. The school was established 1874 and the school building redeveloped in 2007. There is a strong community spirit in the village and the school plays a significant part in this. Approximately 60% of its pupils come from within the Parish.

The school has state-of-the-art teaching resources in light, spacious and stimulating classroom settings. There is a large hall equipped with sound and lighting systems and a sprung floor. Also, there is a well-equipped computer room, a library and areas for small group work. Outside there is a large playing field, a hard playground, a dedicated outdoor learning area and a large outdoor classroom. There is also a woodland area for children to explore and learn in and a garden where children grow plants and vegetables.
The official capacity is 105 and currently has 106 pupils on the roll. As with other schools of similar context and size, there is some unevenness in distribution across year groups so could accommodate a few more pupils in some classes.

**Village Hall**

The Village Hall is a well-used local resource which offers a main hall, a meeting area, large store cupboard, kitchen/catering facilities and toilet facilities for all abilities. It is also home to the local Playgroup who have a secure permanent set-up featuring a large room and toilets. The village hall is well used, not only does it provide a venue for the local Playgroup but it hosts annual productions by the local amateur drama society and well as a popular meeting place for other organisations in Swinford such as the WI and Swinford 2000 (local charity).

The importance of the Village Hall to community life is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that it scored the second highest amongst villagers as a facility they use.

**Church**

Swinford’s church is considered an important historic building or focal point. Regular attendance is low but the Church is kept going by voluntary donations and events organised by a circle of parishioners. The Church fills up at Easter, for Carol services on Christmas Eve, for weddings, baptisms and funerals. The Church yard is in a central location to the village and has easy access from the front and back.

**Playgroup / Swinford Seasons**

Swinford Playgroup, whilst independent of the school, have an excellent relationship. Swinford Playgroup has been established for over 25 years and is situated within the Village Hall. It provides a wide range of opportunities and activities to support children through the early year’s development offering a safe, secure, welcoming and friendly environment.

Swinford Seasons is a before and after school care Provision that operates for children who attend Swinford School.

**Village Green / Play Area**

Right at the heart of Swinford there is a very popular play area set back from the Village Green. The land is rented from the local church and leased to the Parish Council. The site is managed and maintained by a local charity called Swinford 2000 who formed in 1999 to build the play area as a millennium project for the community. The Village Green is a beautiful setting managed by volunteers in the village and is home to trees, bushes and shrubs and caters for at least two community events a year bringing all generations together in a rural setting.

**Cricket Club / Sports Field**

Rowland United Cricket Club in Swinford runs all levels of teams with the emphasis on participation and fun.

***Need more blurb***

To promote a sense of community and emotional wellbeing that is so much part of Swinford’s heritage and to maintain the appeal and viability of the Parish as a place to live it is essential that Swinford retain their facilities and amenities, enhancing where possible.
The importance of the existing facilities and amenities were highlighted during the questionnaire and open event exercises that have taken place in Swinford through the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.

The results of a Parish-wide questionnaire at the outset of the Neighbourhood Plan process identified the value placed on retaining existing Parish facilities by local residents. This was reinforced by the open event held in April 2016. Policy CF1 explains how the Plan will contribute towards the objective of maintaining and enhancing the existing level and range of facilities.

POLICY CF1
THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES
Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility or which detrimentally impacts on an existing community facility in such a way that it loses amenity value (including but not limited to the school, village hall, Church, Pub, Village Green/Play area and Cricket Club/Sports Field) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or
- The existing community facility is no longer economically viable; or
- The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish which complies with the other general policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.
Promoting Additional Community Facilities and Amenities

Community consultations have confirmed the value of enhancing the range of community facilities and amenities in the Parish, recognising their benefits to the local community.

The loss of the local shop and public transport in Swinford has never been forgotten and gives added importance to the need to encourage additional community services and amenities into the settlement. The combination of losing the local shop and then public transport has been significant for individuals, in particular those who have no access to transport to travel outside of the village. 85% of 168 respondents to the questionnaire identified that they would like to see a local shop in Swinford and also 85% would like to see public transport. The open event confirmed the thirst for a local shop, 13 of the 15 responses considered stated the need for a village shop to start up again in Swinford.

However, this needs to be evaluated in the context of concerns expressed amongst the community about the impact of parking and the impact of increased traffic flows on road safety.

POLICY CF2
NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities, particularly those for young people, will be supported provided that the development:
- Meets the design criteria stated in policy H??;
- Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements or other impairments to residential properties;
- Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for;
- Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle; and
- Is demonstrably sustainable financially and managerially.
Neighbourhood Plan Policies for Transport

Traffic Management

Swinford is a rural Parish and there are no major roads within it. Swinford is located next to the M1, M6 and A14 and was used as a ‘cut through’ for traffic prior to the closure of access to these roads for the M1 Junction 19 Improvement Scheme.

Volumes of traffic can be high at certain times and speeding in defence of the 30mph limit has previously been a problem. This, combined with the lack of off road parking in some areas create further problems particularly at peak times and when HGV’s decide to travel through the village.

There are two choke points in Swinford on North Street and Chapel Street due to inadequate parking around the school and no provision for off road parking. This problem is exuberated at school drop-off and pick up times and can also present difficulties for very large agricultural vehicles that use North Street.

Parking is also highlighted through questionnaire analysis and consultation as a particular problem along North Street and Chapel street and concerns were also raised regarding parking on pavements.

There is no provision for public transport in the village but there is access to a community bus which is run by a local charity called Swinford 2000. This facility is charged at cost and is not intended to make a profit. Whilst the bus does not put on regular trips to neighbouring towns following an unsuccessful trial it is regularly used by the school and a number of sports and social groups within the village.

The car provides the principal mode of transport for residents of the Plan area with have no provision for public transport. Only 7 households were identified as not having a vehicle from the 168 who responded. With the lack of public transport reducing journeys made by car would prove challenging but there are a number of actions that can be taken by individuals and by the public and private sectors that could help with this issue.

Residents are concerned by the potential for new developments to exacerbate existing parking and transport problems. The Plan therefore focuses on those areas where it can have an influence on the need to travel by car, on highway safety and on parking provision. In particular, it includes measures to prevent the loss of off-street parking and ensure that, where necessary, traffic management measures are provided in connection with new development.

This needs discussion with other groups ***Policies identified elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan support the aim of improving the transport situation in the Parish. These include protecting the existing pedestrian links to the surrounding area (Policy Env??); reducing the reliance on vehicles through the support of home working (Policy E??); supporting the promotion of high speed electronic communications, enabling businesses and individuals to communicate more effectively without travel and providing the opportunity for residents to work at home and more locally (Policy E??); and providing an appropriate level of off-street parking in any new developments (Policy H??).***
POLICY T1

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The provision of traffic management solutions to address the impacts of traffic arising from development in the Parish will be strongly supported. This includes either directly provided solutions or the use of developer contributions to provide the cost of improvements.

The priorities for residents include:

- Extending the 30mph zone near any new development;
- Traffic management solutions to restrict/discourage speeding along Kilworth Road, Rugby Road and Stanford Road;
- Traffic management solutions to reduce the use of Swinford as a route for HGV’s;
- Widening pavements near to the school;
- Introducing a passing bay along Chapel Street.