**Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Plan : Planning Brief 10/2/2013**

***First draft :rev A***

**1 Village Centre/Hub**

The Village centre is to create a focal point within the village at approximately the geographic heart. It should create as many opportunities for the community to meet as possible. Containing a general/food store/s, Post office, Possible Community Space, Café, and a Point for community and general information. Some parking, Very good pedestrian links to all parts of the village. Retail is to provide good quality and value produce, investigate links to local Farms. Area to serve both locals and passing trade. This does not need to be contained in one building. Good external soft and hard landscape with spaces to stop and talk.

**2 Improve Pedestrian movement**

We are to investigate the existing footpath network. Ensure that links are available to all appropriate locations within the Village. Especially focused on the Primary School, Sports and play areas, places of worship, Community buildings and Village Centre.

The existing and new footpaths are to provide an attractive well designed network of public spaces, secure and overlooked to enable their use by all of the community by day or night.

**3 Integrate new housing**

It recognised that upgraded and new housing stock will be necessary within the Village to meet the needs of the current and future populations. The Parish plan sets a maximum of 100 new homes.

Though the consensus was that we need a mixture of housing types, Executive, family, retired, starter homes. It is also recognised that we need different type of tenure. However we need to base the requirements of the brief on the actual not perceived need. The group also recognises that the type of housing and amenities provided has a major impact on the character of a village so the precise type, design and tenure will be carefully assessed.

Several sites for new housing were examined and these are shown in the appendix.

There are opportunities to build new housing by redesigning some existing poorer quality housing areas. This was agreed in principal.

We have the opportunity to correct the planning mistakes of the past. The location of new housing within the Village settlement should also provide more balance to the village layout, have good pedestrian access, and properly managed traffic and parking.

**4 Road Transport**

The road network is to be examined to identify the specific problems listed in Parish Plan and proposals made to address these issues. However it is recognised that we have an opportunity to make movement within the village safer, healthier and more pleasurable. We can also improve the character of places and provide better designed spaces.

The road traffic plan is to ensure that it enhances all of design brief objectives and doesn’t form barriers to pedestrian movement.

We need to make the network ‘**accessible’** to everyone in the community.

Public transport is currently seen as good. However we need to be aware of any developments which may threaten this and advise the community and adapt our plans to provide solutions. When examining the road network the impact on the public transport system should be carefully assess and opportunities taken to improve access.

Other road users are also to be carefully considered cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooters.

**5 Wider Cycle and footpath network**

We wish to improve the footpath connections into Witton, making them more accessible. Provide better signage with information on the history, heritage, wildlife and places of interest. Encouraging people to visit and providing the Locals with an attractive cycle and pedestrian links and a recreational space.

**6 Cultural Links**

The proposal to have cultural links with the wider community to have Witton host part/ or all of an event such as The Book festival, or Jazz-beer-dance-sports festival. We have venues such as Cooper Hall, St Michaels Church, School, Chapel and the Pubs.

Discuss with Leisure Group. Review condition and size of potential venues.

**7 Preserve and Enhance Parish Heritage**

We need to establish a complete list of the important historical elements within the Parish and prepare proposals to improve access and their general condition, where necessary.

**8** **Provide new and improve Leisure and Sport facilities**

***(****To encourage more and wider participation)*

**8.1** A 4G pitch is proposed on the school site. Working with the Leisure Group, we should ensure that the combined **School / Cooper Hall** site is properly planned to maximise the use of both facilities and provides good supervision, better pedestrian and road access and encourages take up across all sections of the community and is a sustainable development. The proposal also includes the possibility of providing additional facilities in an extended Cooper hall i.e. changing rooms, Gym. Review the Business plan.

**8.2** Facilities for youth. Group is to examine options to provide the Parish with spaces, buildings, activities which will engage the younger members of the Parish. Ensuring they are properly supervised, maintained and are sustainable.

**8.3** Roads & footpaths. All roads and footpath changes or improvements should ensure that they take due regard of the need to encourage the Residents to enjoy an active life style. The design layout, lighting and speed restrictions should take into account walking, running, cycling, horse riding, to ensure that the village and surrounding country side can be enjoyed by young and old.

**8.4** Review all existing leisure and sport facilities and activities to ascertain their use and condition.

**9 Sustainability, Environment and the Parish**

**9.1** The main task of encouraging environmentally friendly developments will be led by the Natural Environment Group. However the planning documents should look at the implications of alternative energy production and energy conservation strategies for their visual and social impact.

**9.2** The plan could look at the following topics

District heating systems (biomass or anaerobic digester: *gas*)

Public buildings:- Wind/photovoltaic power generation

Air or ground source heating

Thermal insulation techniques

More efficient lighting

Street lighting energy efficient lighting

Reduce light pollution

Village grass areas Review different planting strategies to reduce need for frequent grass cutting.

Flooding Review locations prone to flooding. Look at mitigating measures ie permeable ground surfaces to new developments; create areas which can retain rainwater, ponds, and woodland

Extreme weather Is there anything that can help the parish cope with extremes of rain, snow, heat and cold. Elderly are most vulnerable.

**10 Village Identity**

**10.1** Define settlement boundary.

**10.2** Protect the green space between Witton Village and Sacriston. Signal the entrances to the village in a distinctive way which will help define the character of Witton Gilbert.

**11** **Green Space**

**11.1** Identify important green space.

**11.2** Propose new public green space.

**11.3** Landscape design to encourage wider use of green spaces.

**11.4** Agricultural open space.

**12 Parish Visual Character**

**12.1** Investigate methods to protect the visual character of the village and Parish.( Design Guide)

**12.2** How can we enhance the character?

Remove visual clutter in streetscapes

Preserve building lines to important streets.

Improve hard & soft landscaping in the public realm.

Improve how we handle cark parking

Improve building & street lighting

Improve signage and visitor information