

**QUEEN CAMEL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2009**



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Vision for Planning & Development within Queen Camel

1. That Queen Camel retains and promotes its “village” design and ambience, with no large scale developments but recognises and supports the potential for limited growth in small low cost housing and business developments, specifically to meet local needs and to grow an all-age community and not a retirement zone; and
2. That the development of housing, business and community facilities be coordinated to achieve the best design overall.

INTRODUCTION - AN OVERVIEW

The background and more information can be found in the Queen Camel Community Plan 2005 (the Plan).

The key needs under the heading Planning & Development (P & D) were identified in the Plan as:

- To build some affordable housing for local people.
- To plan an expansion of business that specifically provides services to, and adds quality to the life of, the local community.
- To provide adequate off road public parking.
- To have a school that is in a safe situation and is able to meet the whole educational needs – physical as well as academic - of its children.
- To have a community complex that is safe and meets the needs of the community, and is also beneficial in size and facilities in order to attract outside users and thus increase income.

The top four priority needs for the whole Plan came from the P & D section and were:

1. Implementation of immediate short-term safety measures at the school and improved road safety for all.
2. A school fit for purpose in the 21st century.
3. A comprehensive development programme covering all building projects and that specifically addresses affordable housing for local people.
4. Additional public parking.

The summary under the group conclusions of the Plan included:

Unless the issues of affordable housing and small business enterprise are tackled, the young population will continue to decline. **The Parish needs a co-ordinated planning scheme that includes a re-sited new school, a re-sited community complex, and adequate public parking.**

The recommendations in respect of P & D were to form a planning and development group (PDG) with representation from the Parish Council (PC), first-time buyer, business, Hall, Playing Field, School and Church, to:

- Produce a Village Design Statement that will ensure that future developments are in character with the village and are also creative and use the latest technology to conserve energy and to be cost effective.
- Carry out a comprehensive survey to properly establish housing, business and community needs and best overall locations, with associated infrastructure and parking for vehicles and bicycles, and produce an implementation plan.

A PDG was formed in 2007

Achievements:

By PDG:

- PDG set up with representation from the sectors listed except a first-time buyer (now rectified with new member joining late 2008)
- Housing Needs Analysis done in 2007 – identified 15 households needing affordable housing.
- Meetings held with representatives from the Planning Department – land identified and prioritised by them.
- Landowners approached by representatives of PDG – some landowners ‘interested’.
- Receipt of £3,000 SCC grant April 2008 towards up-front costs (there is also now a CLT fund established to help with such costs where a CLT route is chosen).
- Presentations received from:
 - Steve Bendle for Community Land Trust (definition at Annex 1)
 - South Somerset Homes and Hastoe for Social Housing on 8th September 2008

Additionally:

- Short-term safety measures put in place in the form of a 20 mph speed limit and an extension to the safety barrier outside the school.

Actions for PDG for next six months (bold italics actions from last meeting) identified as:

1. Creation of a ‘master plan’ and a business plan, that will also include the new school and community hall; ***RHC and DN were to prepare outline draft***
2. Identification of additional experience and skills that are needed to take the project forward;
3. Meetings with the planners and other interested parties to more precisely prioritise the land and to then pursue the respective landowners (and a surveyor); ***DB/IC were to communicate with each of the landowners a second time***
4. Decision on which route will be taken by Queen Camel (CLT or Housing Association or CLT/Housing Association); ***Steve Bendle was to prepare outline***
5. Visits to developments in progress or completed (housing, schools/halls), specifically to view different designs, materials and systems (Buckland Newton being one such site), and create a requirement specification that clearly identifies the essential and desirable needs of Queen Camel;
6. Engagement of an Architect – through a tender process. ***Steve Bendle was to prepare a list for review in readiness for tender***

CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES SINCE OCTOBER 2008 MEETING

School severely flooded on 13th December 2008
(Previous flood 2000)

Verbal information received from Yeovilton that with the arrival of the Super Lynx there will be a housing need (up to 140 houses) for military families

The ‘Credit Crunch’, which may affect housing needs and funding

The flood has raised the profile of the school and the probability of moving it to a new site, and the possibility of (some) housing for the Yeovilton development could be an opportunity that would help us to meet some of our needs; it must at least be considered.

BUSINESS

We have a popular and successful supply store (including Post Office) that provides an excellent service to the community.

In the Plan, a butcher, tea/coffee/restaurant, hairdresser, and garden/farm shop were the top four businesses identified as needed. Additional services requested were expansion of 'deli', a dry cleaning point, an internet facility. Since the Plan we have a successful hairdresser but the other three remain a wish list. Sadly, we have also lost our remaining pub although we hope that it will be sold and reopened.

NEEDS

- A re-opened Pub
- Car parking solution for the shop, especially for delivery vehicles (as predicted, since the Chapel Court development where only 1.5 spaces were allowed per dwelling, parking on the High Street has increased)

DESIRES

- A bigger floor area within the shop
- Tea/coffee shop (to act as a community meeting place)
- Affordable garden/farm shop and a butcher's outlet
- An internet facility – and high-speed Broadband

OPPORTUNITY

- If a community hall was part of a new development complex, the possibility of the supply store and Post Office moving to the existing Memorial Hall could be considered with the owners. Such a move would provide the additional space desired and allow for an extension of services offered and be a solution to the parking problem along the High Street. There would also be an opportunity for an adjoining tea/coffee shop/restaurant.
- Small business units within a development complex or within the existing main school building could be considered.

BARRIERS/THREATS

- In respect of moving the supply store: the legal constitution of the War Memorial Hall; the feasibility and the wish for such a move by the owners, Paul & Linda Price; and achievement of an acceptable commercial arrangement with all parties.
- In respect of small businesses: a survey would need to be done to show if there was a genuine need and the feasibility of such units.

CHURCH

The church (St. Barnabas) has one large open interior with little possibility of creating or building separate rooms.

In recent years, visiting groups, e.g. clergy, choirs, have used the pub as an 'anti-room'. The Hump Club (the church's children's activity), normally meets in the Memorial Hall but sometimes needs to vacate, for instance for the Annual Parish Meeting. There is currently no youth activity at the church.

NEEDS

- To have adequate parking available

DESIRES

- To have separate rooms to extend its own activities and for use by the community

OPPORTUNITY

- The original or old school (a listed building) could become a church hall to provide the rooms for additional church activities and also for small size meetings and clubs (e.g. a replacement for the Marples Room). This would also secure adequate parking for church use.

BARRIERS/THREATS

- PCC agreement
- Church Commissioners - it is unclear who owns the listed old school building and also some doubt as to whether the church would want responsibility for a building at risk of future flooding.
- Future floods - there is an 18" void under the wooden flooring (currently being replaced following the flood of 13th December 2008). Electric pumps could be installed.
- If the current school premises, specifically the 'old' school, car park and playground behind, were transferred to a new owner (developer), the church would lose needed car parking.

HOUSING

The Plan stated that without some innovative, creative planning and development of some affordable housing, the age range of the village would continue to move up with a consequential affect on business, school, social and community events and services, and there may come a time when there is no one locally to do any of the 'service' type jobs that everyone needs, particularly as age increases.

The location repeatedly suggested for a small housing development was the West Camel Road, more precisely between the new Medical Centre and South View (*thus also linking South View into the village*). The Planners have since identified areas of land that they might consider (Appendix 2) and these have been prioritised by the PDG and the landowners of four sites approached.

A SCC grant of £3,000 was received in April 2008 towards up-front costs and at the last meeting of the PDG it was agreed the time had come to seek an Architect through a tender process.

A major decision being considered is the route to be taken in respect of housing:

- Housing Association – the PDG had presentations from South Somerset Homes and Hastoe – the easiest route but perhaps the one with least flexibility in design, construction methods, allocation, and some risk in respect of holding property in perpetuity – also generally social housing for rent whereas we wished to specifically provide intermediate market housing (see Appendix 4) ;
- CLT – the more complex route but with more flexibility all round, and aimed primarily at the market needing shared equity
- Combination of Housing Association/CLT – a scheme similar to that already proven in Cornwall was of interest, maybe teaming with Hastoe.

NEEDS

- Affordable housing required – 2007 Housing Needs Analysis at Appendix 3
- Design to be compatible with village style but innovative and using state of the art, sustainable materials
- Proposals to be accepted within the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- A Section106 Agreement between the Planning Department and the 'developer', e.g. Housing Association/CLT, which limits the housing to affordable use in perpetuity while allowing for the necessary financial arrangements during construction.

DESIRES

- Housing development to be on the West Camel Road as a part of a bigger community project that includes a new school and community hall.

OPPORTUNITY

- The possible need by Yeovilton for married quarters could be an opportunity in respect of:
 - Cross subsidy
 - Sharing design and development costs
 - Contributing funding for community facilities

BARRIERS/THREATS

- The landowners of the preferred sites decline to sell
- SSDC rejects the proposals as being outside the LDS
- The planners reject the preferred sites
- The village votes against any development involving housing for Yeovilton
- S106 is too restrictive to allow finance to be raised

MEMORIAL HALL

Of the 376 villagers who answered the Plan Questionnaire, 190 and 113 considered the hall was adequate for Parish and personal needs respectively; however, there were only 27 and 50 respectively who used the hall weekly or monthly. This did not indicate a large local support. Suggestions for a new location were near or on the playing fields/behind the Medical Centre or combined with a sports complex.

The Pre-School is the biggest user and for it the hall is not 'fit for its purpose' – see under Pre-School. In turn, having the pre-school at the hall places limitations on its use for other purposes.

A lot of work has been done in the hall since the Community Plan and it is now of a good standard, equal to other halls in the area. However, it is limited in seating capacity and nothing can be done about (a) additional parking and (b) a green open area leading from the hall. Therefore, other Halls will doubtless continue to be chosen rather than our own Hall, and our Hall will continue to be under used unless its location is changed.

NEEDS

- a Hall that:
 - is suitable for all activities and needs of all age groups from the village.
 - has adequate storage space
 - has adequate Parking
 - has access to a green area.

DESIRES

- a Hall that
 - is energy efficient
 - is the social centre of the community.
 - has access from the centre of the village

OPPORTUNITIES

- To re-site the Hall with the School complex and maybe incorporate a Sports Hall suitable for badminton and short mat bowling.
- To include a Social Club for hall and pavilion users.

BARRIERS/ THREATS

- Cost (but cost is a barrier to be overcome on most projects)
- The inability to determine the legal situation if hall was vacated, i.e. could it be sold or does it revert to the Mildmay Trust? We have been unable to locate the Deeds. Can we get change of use or planning consent?

From attachment to Schedule of Deeds

Sept. 1920 "...building to be used as a War Memorial for the said village and for such charitable purposes in connection therewith as may be from time to time determined."

Sept. 1934 "...conveys the property to new trustees subject to the conditions of the original conveyance, so far as they are still subsisting and capable of taking effect."

PLAYING FIELD

The Plan identified that Queen Camel had one of the best, if not the best, playing field in the area but its pavilion fell far short of a corresponding standard. It had a good children's play area but lacked any facilities for teenagers.

The following were wishes listed in the Parish Plan:

- More seating
- Toilets that are open for use by the public
- A shelter
- Better changing and shower facilities
- Facilities for teenagers – tarmac area
- Cricket nets and goal posts that are fixed
- A running circuit
- A new pavilion or club house linked with the tennis courts; or
- New facilities that are combined with a new Hall, i.e. an integral community centre

The conclusion was that Improvements were needed to bring the pavilion facilities in line with the excellent playing area but that these ought to be planned as part of an overall review of all community facilities.

The pavilion had some refurbishment in 2007 (kitchen units replaced (a free gift) and a repaint inside and outside by the Youth Council) but the general condition is still poor especially the changing and shower/toilet facilities. An additional item (tree house) has been added in the children's play area; this was a free gift and was collected and erected by a group of local volunteers.

NEEDS

- Upgraded changing and toilet facilities
- Facilities for teenagers including a shelter (a SCC grant of £10,000 was secured in April 2008 towards a MUGA)

OPPORTUNITY

- A new hall as part of a new school complex could include the needed changing and toilet facilities
- A new school and community complex could provide the opportunity for incorporating some teenage facilities, thus providing a base for the government requirement for 'wrap around care' ; and/or
- The playground of the existing school premises could be considered as a site for a youth shelter and hard standing for youth activities.

BARRIERS/THREATS

- The PFC (Playing Field Committee) does not support the need for a MUGA. It is also opposed to a youth shelter on the Playing Field.

PARKING

The parking congestion on the High Street has increased since the development of Chapel Court was completed (predicted because the planning allowed only 1.5 cars per household in that development). The parking congestion remains outside the school during arrival and departure times.

NEEDS

- A solution to the parking congestion in the High Street and outside the school

OPPORTUNITY

- Moving the school would resolve the parking issue outside the existing school
- Transferring the shop to the existing Hall would resolve much of the High Street parking problem; alternatively if the shop did not move and the Hall was demolished, the whole area could be made into a car park – with a War Memorial and a shelter.

SCHOOLS

Countess Gytha County Primary

At the time of the Community Plan, the safety of children arriving at and departing from the school was the priority and is still the priority even though the short-term safety measures of putting in a 20 mph speed limit along the stretch of road approaching and outside the school and extending the safety barrier outside the school gate have been done.

Flooding was an issue but following the major flood on 13th December 2008, which caused in excess of £250,000 and rising of damage and a major disruption to the life of the school, and has now become a comparable priority reason for moving the school to a new site.

NEEDS

- A school fit for purpose in the 21st century.
- A school that is safe in terms of its children
- A school that is safe in terms of its buildings and contents (e.g. without risk of flood)
- A school that is able to provide sports facilities
- A Letter of Intent from Somerset County Council (SCC) that it will build a new school in Queen Camel

DESIRES

- A school that is energy efficient
- A school complex that is at the heart of the community and serves adults as well as children.

OPPORTUNITY

To build a new school that meets the needs and the desires, the preferred site being land adjacent to the Medical Centre.

BARRIERS/THREATS

- Getting Government/LEA approval – Countess Gytha is currently a 5-class school and SCC aim for new build is a minimum of 7-classes, however, combining with a pre-school complex and providing additional adult learning, could achieve the necessary minimum.
- Getting the Landlord of the preferred site to agree to sell for community purposes.

SCHOOLS

Pre-School

Queen Camel Pre-School is a committee run charity that uses the Memorial Hall. It has 26 children per session aged from 2½ until school entry. It started as a play group with no government regulations and progressed to a pre-school that must now meet the growing requirements of government.

NEEDS

- To meet government regulations including 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS), OFSTED, and 'Safe Guarding Children' (was Child Protection) as a minimum
- To ensure safety of children outside – free access in accordance with EYFS
- To be 'sole user' of premises (safety of children) in accordance with EYFS
- To retain own identity – in accordance with the terms of the charity
- To have self-contained toilets and kitchen facilities

DESIRES

- To have no restriction on time and use of facilities, therefore to have own facilities including storage
- To be able to display material, including photographs that show the children (which is prohibited in a public building), without the need to remove at the end of each session
- To have free access to outside green play area
- To expand - and could do so with purpose built own facilities (children come from a wide geographic area)

OPPORTUNITY

- To have a purpose built pre-school within a new school complex, which would provide a good transfer into the main school (note also barrier below)
- To offer longer (all day) care
- To provide an enhanced all-round service

BARRIERS/THREATS

- To meet government and insurance requirements, the facilities must be self-contained within any larger complex
- Currently a 'committee run charity' that does not own its equipment – could be reviewed
- Funding/legal ownership of facilities
- Not all children transfer to Countess Gytha County Primary (not seen as a significant barrier)

Contacts

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CONCLUSIONS

Each of the organisations featured in this paper provide services to the community and each has needs and/or desires that are not able to be met in isolation or without significant funding and coordinated planning. There are various barriers and threats but each is a challenge to be overcome.

If land was identified and assembled to meet these needs and an approach was made to the planning authority for a small departure from, and/or exception to, the Local Plan to enable this range of provision to be permitted, there would be the opportunity to use an S106 agreement to require that all the elements necessary for the revitalization of Queen Camel are included. The land value would then be determined on the basis of viability, taking all the elements into account. Appendix 5 provides an outline sketch for how this might work including 12 affordable homes and 40 homes for sale (potentially for sale to MOD Yeovilton). This is not intended to advocate a development of this size but just to provide an illustration of how a combined scheme might be made to work. There would be other options: for example there is the possibility of seeking grant for the affordable housing which would enable the number of homes for sale to be reduced.

The PDG has discussed the formation of a Community Land Trust (CLT) to act on behalf of the community to take these proposals forward. CLTs aim to hold land and property in perpetuity to meet the needs of the community that sets them up (see examples at www.comunitylandtrusts.org.uk). In consultation and with the necessary support of the whole community, a Queen Camel CLT could:

1. act to acquire land and contract for the construction of the facilities set out in this plan with the financial and technical support of a housing association such as Hastoe; and, when work is complete, manage the housing, shops and community facilities for the benefit of the community into the future, including deciding who should be given priority for housing;
or
2. put together a development plan; arrange for it to be implemented, possibly by Hastoe Housing, and take back ownership on completion of those elements it wishes to retain under its control;
or
3. appoint Hastoe to develop and manage the scheme to the CLT's brief with the CLT acting as client on behalf of the community to ensure the scheme provides what is needed, possibly by buying the land and leasing it on to Hastoe but alternatively by agreement.

With coordinated planning and financial solutions, and a lot of goodwill/voluntary work, all the identified needs can be met with a resulting fantastic legacy for the village for generations to come.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(see Appendix 6)

- 1 In view of its potential impact on the overall development, a village meeting should be held to assess the acceptance or otherwise of a housing development, say similar to The Glebe in size, for Yeovilton. (Before such a meeting additional information should be gathered in preparation for the anticipated questions including what such a development would bring to the village.)
2. In view of the different requirements and the opportunities presented within this document, a comprehensive and detailed development plan should be prepared with the help of a technical assistant, a firm of Architects and a housing association (Hastoe being recommended as the preferred choice). This detailed plan will need to include:
 - 2.1 The development of a mixed use complex on land to be acquired off the West Camel Road, to comprise:
 - A 8-12 (total number and number for rent/shared equity to be revisited) affordable homes, using a combination of CLT/Housing Association
 - B A school complex that provides full extended services including pre-school, primary and adult learning
 - C A Hall for use by the school and the community, and to include changing facilities
 - 2.2.1 The Memorial Hall to be considered as a site for the Supply Store/Post Office and a tea/coffee shop, obviously in conjunction with and full participation of Paul & Linda Price (Supply Store owners), or
 - 2.2.2 The Memorial Hall to be demolished and the space made into a car park with a War Memorial and a shelter.
 - 2.3 The 'old' school (listed building) to be offered to the church for it and the community to use
 - 2.4.1 Youth facilities to be considered adjacent to the new school complex, thus allowing the school to use the MUGA as well, with 'wrap around care' to be provided from the community hall; and/or
 - 2.4.2 The existing school playground and the area covered by the existing school hall to be converted for use by youth, including the existing playground shelter (repositioned).
3. A Queen Camel CLT should be established with representation from the Parish Council and other potential partners as well as broad representation from the community at large, to co-ordinate the implementation of this plan with a greater or lesser degree of direct involvement and ownership as discussed in the conclusions to be determined through consultation and as the proposals progress.
4. A study should be done to establish the need for and feasibility of including a few business units within the development complex or on the site of the existing main school building.
5. The CLT Development Fund provides loans to employ a professional team to investigate community asset projects of this kind with the loan repaid if the scheme proceeds plus 25% or written off if the scheme falls through. It is recommended that a bid is made for a loan of £50,000 from this Fund and that Somerset County Council is asked to bring forward its own funding for the work related to the design of a new school to enable a joint commission with the community.

Next Step

Present this document to the Parish Council for endorsement and then issue to each of the decision makers.

Definition of a Community Land Trust

A corporate body that is established:

- 1) for the express purpose of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of a local community by acquiring and managing land and other assets in order to
 - provide a benefit to the local community
 - ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust's members think benefits the local community
- 2) under arrangements which are expressly designed to ensure that:
 - any profits from its activities will be used to benefit the local community (otherwise than by being paid directly to members)
 - individuals who live or work in the specified area have the opportunity to become members of the trust (whether or not others can also become members)
 - the members of a trust control it

Plan of land identified by Planners for Affordable Housing

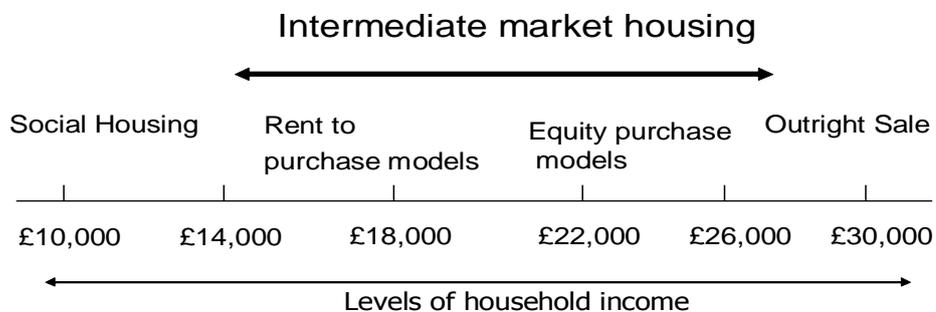
*A copy of the plan on which the Planners marked site numbers is available
and was inserted into the printed copies of this document.*

2007 Housing Need Analysis Result

A copy of the summarised results were are available and were inserted into the printed copies of this document.

Intermediate Market Housing

Affordable housing is to fill the 'intermediate market' gap as shown in the diagram below



Purchasers on incomes between around £14,000 and £30,000 need access to intermediate housing options.
Average working household incomes around £25,000.

Appendix 5

Illustrative feasibility outline showing how total income and total costs might be brought together

		Each m2	Total m2	Equity sold £	£ Income
Part-equity homes	3 2-bed4p	77	231	80,000	240,000
	2 3-bed 5p	94	188	85,000	170,000
	1 4-bed 7p	105	105	90,000	90,000
Rented homes	3 2-bed4p	77	231	60,000	180,000
	2 3-bed 5p	94	188	67,500	135,000
	1 4-bed 7p	105	105	75,000	75,000
Housing for sale	15 2-bed4p	77	1,155	180,000	2,700,000
	20 3-bed 5p	94	1,880	220,000	4,400,000
	5 4-bed 7p	105	525	240,000	1,200,000
Grants					150,000
SCC funding for school					1,770,000
TOTAL					11,110,000

Costs

Land				1,500,000
		m2	Cost/m2	
Housing construction		4,083	1,100	4,491,300
		m2	Cost/m2	
Community hall		250	2,100	525,000
New school				1,500,000
Parking provision				40,000
Road safety improvements				120,000
Memorial hall conversion to post office/café				135,000
Shop and business units	120	1000		120,000
Toilets and changing facilities				70,000
Youth shelter/hardstanding				60,000
MUGA				75,000
Externals, service etc				650,000
On-cost			18%	1,419,534
Contingency				404,166
				11,110,000
Surplus/deficit				0

Blue Print

Memorial Hall
To be considered for used as:
Shop with Post Office, plus butcher, farm shop, internet etc. and
Separate tea/coffee shop
OR
To be demolished and space turned into car park with War Memorial/shelter

Existing Supply Store
Privately owned – owners’ decision
Maybe develop for housing

Pre-School
To be encompassed within new school complex

New Development
New school complex:
Pre-school
Junior
Adult learning
Community/School Hall
Sports facilities and changing rooms
Affordable Housing
Rented/shared equity

Pavilion
To be upgraded for adult teams – or opened up as pavilion?

Housing for Yeovilton

‘Old’ School
To be considered for transfer to church

Main school
To be demolished for housing (above flood level)
OR
Used for small business units

Playground and site of portakabin school hall
To become a youth area