



## **Ruishton and Thornfalcon NP Project Group – SWOT Analysis** **(from Project Team meeting 13/3/17)**

At the Project Team (PT) meeting of March 13<sup>th</sup> 2017 the members took part in a SWOT analysis of the Parish. They considered the Assets (Strengths), Needs (Weaknesses), Opportunities and Threats facing the Parish in the future. Each of the PT members is involved in investigating an aspect of the Parish and they were encouraged to use their knowledge and experience to inform their contributions. The issues raised by the PT are listed by category in the Appendix to this report.

The outcome of the exercise was to emphasise that the assets of Ruishton and Thornfalcon (R&T) were considered to be the sense of community and its advantageous location in relation to transport networks, urban facilities and the countryside. Particular features and locations were also identified including the churches, pubs, village hall, school, river and recreation field.

In terms of the needs, footpaths/cycle routes featured strongly as did the need for affordable housing, facilities for the elderly, more community/meeting space, and a larger village hall and recreation field. Better flood protection and traffic control also featured in this category.

The process of neighbourhood planning, establishing a vision for the Parish and the resulting CIL revenue, were seen as representing significant opportunities to provide many of the facilities previously identified as needs. The proposed improvements to the A358 were seen as offering particular opportunities to Henlade both in terms of managing traffic and building a greater sense of place. In addition, specific opportunities such as the provision of sports facilities and allotments emerged.

The threats ranged from the international such as global warming and Brexit, to local administrative matters including the statutory planning process. Participants feared large scale, uncontrolled housing development damaging the environment, causing more flooding and the potential failure to provide sufficient infrastructure. There were also concerns about the impact on the community as a result of inadequate engagement or lack of provision for young people.

In respect of the geographical spread of the responses there was a heavy emphasis on the village of Ruishton as having most assets (although this may be a reflection of the perspective of this group of individuals and the fact that it is overwhelmingly the largest centre of population in the Parish). The opportunities focused more on Henlade which may well be the focus for most change in the future. Many of the needs and threats centred on the A358 and motorway junction where the majority of problems from traffic, noise and pollution emanate as well as being the focus of most change in the immediate future.

## **Appendix - Outcome of SWOT Analysis**

### **Assets (Strengths)**

#### *General points*

Village community/Community development (Voluntary sector)/People/Community Spirit  
Accessibility to roads  
Regular bus service  
Geographic location  
Access to countryside  
Internet/high speed fibre (website etc)  
Footpaths

#### *Specific Locations*

Thornfalcon church  
Ruishton pub (x2)  
Access to A358/M5(x2)/A38  
Proximity to Blackbrook BP/Hankridge  
Playing Field (x4)  
Village Hall (x3)  
Primary School/Pre-School (x2)  
River/Open space along river  
St George's Church (x2)

### **Needs (Weaknesses)**

#### *General Points*

Footpaths accessing countryside  
Cycle paths (x2)  
Nursing centre  
Old people's Homes  
Affordable housing  
Café  
Community centre/Community hub/Meeting places/Parish centre  
Shop  
Better Flood protection  
Recreational facilities for young people/Sports facilities  
Traffic calming (especially A358)

#### *Specific Locations*

Safe route to Nags Head  
Traffic control in Lower Henlade  
Safe route out of Ruishton (pedestrian & cycle)  
Footpath from Ruishton to Taunton  
Safe footpaths (esp Ruishton& L Henlade)/Ruishton Lane  
Bigger playing field  
Larger Village Hall  
More inclusion of Henlade/Lower Henlade

Parking for Playing Field  
Bigger Park  
Cycle path to Hankridge

## **Opportunities**

### *General Points*

Develop parish cohesion  
Improve sports facilities  
Influence future planning proposals  
Community infrastructure development  
Chance to use CIL money  
Use CIL for improved community hub/additional sports field  
A good accessible community hub/community centre  
Small business/home worker meeting room  
Building safer routes (foot and bike) around parish  
Use CIL for more safe cycle/pedestrian routes to town  
More cycle paths  
More footpaths  
More houses (affordable)  
Extra affordable housing/aspirational homes  
Shape the development of the parish  
Changes present opportunity for a 'vision' (x2)  
Introduce 20mph limits through villages  
Allotments (x2)  
Reduce flooding

### *Specific Locations*

Raise awareness of what's available in Thornfalcon (paths/bridleways)  
New bypass(x2)  
Dual A358  
A358 improvements to make Henlade more of a village  
Build a bigger community in Henlade  
Make use of old canal as path  
Cycle route to Hankridge along river  
Improved cycle paths as part of junction 25 development  
Improved Motorway junction

## **Threats**

### *General Points*

Global warming  
Brexit (finance)  
SCC & TDBC bureaucracy  
Impact of garden town  
Local Plan Review  
Major housing development (related to A358 upgrade)  
Peripheral development in Taunton/Urban Sprawl  
Too much house building taking priority

Too much building of packed in houses  
Developers buying land in village  
Lack of community engagement  
Cycle routes not developed  
Too much delay with road improvements  
Increased congestion  
Uncoordinated infrastructure changes  
Lack of money/funding  
Flooding (x3)  
Old people with local knowledge dying  
Young people leaving to find housing  
People not prepared to help in the community  
Loss of countryside and impact on environment  
Lack of Vision

**Jim Claydon - April 2017**