The views, opinions, and quotes contained within this Parish Plan are representative of individuals living in the village of Ashurst and Colbury - taken from the questionnaires returned, and not of the Ashurst & Colbury Community Plan Group, or the Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council.

Ashurst & Colbury Parish Plan

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It seems a very long time ago that I was persuaded into being involved in the Community Plan for Ashurst & Colbury. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since our first meeting.

The purpose of the Community Plan is for each resident to have a say on how they would like to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working within our village.

The work involved in creating this Plan has proved without doubt that there still remains a very strong sense of Community spirit within our village – not only the 12-strong committee members (plus members who have left the committee since it’s formation), but also the 77% of the village who completed their Questionnaire and gave endless information on how they would like their village improved, along with the many helpers who gave up their time to deliver and collect the completed Questionnaire.

Without exception, each and every member of the Community Plan Group has worked tirelessly in producing this Plan, but this is just the beginning as the real work starts now. As we head forward in implementing the proposals, we will need the help of residents and the Parish Council, along with other ‘bodies’ to bring this Plan into life for us – to improve the village we live in.

May I conclude that it has been a great pleasure working with such an enthusiastic team and hopefully you will stay on board to see this Plan through. I am sure you will agree with me – that Ashurst and Colbury is already an excellent place to live and hopefully this extra input will make it even better.

Bryan Pass
Chairman,
Ashurst & Colbury Community Plan Group.
The Village Profile

The Parish of Ashurst and Colbury with its population of 2116 lies in the northeast corner of the New Forest between Totton and Lyndhurst. The village is the gateway to the New Forest National Park. It consists of the residential area of Ashurst and the series of farms, houses and small holdings of Colbury.

The village has good transport connections. It is well served by buses to Southampton, Totton and various destinations in the New Forest National Park. In addition there is easy access to the national transport network, including the M3 and M27/A31 motorways and two international airports at Southampton and Bournemouth.

The Ashurst New Forest railway station at the south western edge of the village, provides a regular train service on the Weymouth to London line. Ashurst to London takes 1 hour 35 minutes by this route.

Ashurst and Colbury is a leafy village characterised by mature oak trees, especially along the A35, Woodlands Road and Whartons Lane, with woodland pockets scattered throughout the area. Hedges also form an important part of the parish’s environmental character with field hedges forming some roadside boundaries on the A35, Knellers Lane and Foxhills.

The housing character in Ashurst and Colbury is diverse with mature detached houses on the perimeters such as the main A35, Whartons Lane and Woodlands Road area as well as the large 1950’s Bratcher Bungalow estate found between the main road and the railway. Other areas include a 1980’s small estate known as the Heron estate (Chestnut Drive) which nests between St Josephs and the recreation ground. Foxhills, bordering the railway and schools, has an assortment of bungalows and two storey houses. Close to the village shops are a group of roads named after some of our most popular trees such as Ash, Holly, Beech and Fir. Colbury has a rural ‘estate’ feel to its cottages, some dating back to the 1840s.

1Figure from New Forest District Parish Profile 2001 census, provided Nov. 2007
There are a number of listed buildings in the parish, they are:

- Christ Church, Colbury - 1870
- The Lychgate at Christ Church, Colbury - 1865-75
- 1, 2 & 3 Colbury Cottages in Deerleap Lane -1860-69
- Flint House (formerly the Vicarage) at Colbury – Circa 1890
- The School and School House in Pound Lane -1865-1990

The village lies on a mixture of sands, clays and gravels on the edge of the Bartley Water valley which flows into the Test at Eling Creek. The flora and fauna of the area reflects this. Fletchwood Copse has a range of deciduous and conifer trees in a private estate owned by Winchester College. Adjacent to the Copse is Fletchwood Meadows which has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) administered by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. There are a number of rare species including reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and plants. Most of the remaining rural land in Ashurst & Colbury is owned by the Barker-Mill family.

2 One of 114 in Hampshire – reference : http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/ssi/
There are a large number of enthusiastic community groups, clubs, and societies, listed below, which provide for all age groups. They meet mainly in the two halls – Colbury Memorial Hall and Colbury Church Rooms.

There is a cricket ground - Langley Manor, in Knellers Lane and a recreation ground in Whartons Lane with a well equipped children’s play area, an open space for ball games and a dog walking area. In days gone by there was a lake here, fed by a natural spring. Additional leisure activities are available in neighbouring areas.

Clubs, Groups, & Societies which meet in Ashurst & Colbury
At Colbury Memorial Hall, Colbury Church Rooms, or elsewhere within the village.

- Ashurst and Colbury Bridge Club
- The Ashurst Neighbourhood Group
- C.A.T.S. (Colbury and Ashurst Theatrical Society) Adults & Youth sections.
- 1st Colbury Guides
- 1st Ashurst Guides
- Ashurst WI
- Beaulieu/Colbury WI
- Colbury Wednesday Club
- Thursday Afternoon Badminton Group
- Colbury Church Youth Club
- Colbury Church Explorers
- Colbury Indoor Bowling Club
- Ashurst and District Probus Club
- Ladies’ Probus Club of Ashurst and District
- Colbury Mothers’ Union
- Totton Running Club- runs around the Ashurst area.

- The Scout Hut in the grounds of Colbury Hall is “home” to various Beavers, Cubs and Scout Groups.
- Colbury Rainbows, Colbury Brownies, and 1st Colbury Guides – also meet in the Scout Hut
- Ocean Harmony Men’s Barbershop Chorus
- New Forest Camera Club
- Fitness Classes
- Colbury Church Choir
- Colbury Junior Choir
- Mobile Cinema
- Colbury Rifle & Pistol Club
- Jazz sessions
- Langley Manor Cricket Club
- Colbury Karate Club
- Forest Green Badminton Club – evenings
- Monthly Dance Evenings
- National Women’s Register

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The Parish Council meets monthly (except in August) – in Colbury Church Rooms, at 7.30pm, on the third Tuesday. A free monthly Parish Newsletter is delivered by volunteers to all households. It is read by most of the village and is the main source of information about village events, clubs & societies. The Parish website (http://www.ashurstandcolbury-pc.gov.uk) and two notice boards provide further local information.

Although there is no police station in the village, there is a police presence with our community beat officer. Since the area was highlighted as a ‘Safer Neighbourhoods priority’ criminal damage incidents have been reduced substantially. Residents are alert to the local problems and the Neighbourhood Watch are active within the village.

There are three schools all on one campus at Foxhills – a Pre-school, Infants School, and Junior School. All have excellent facilities, which draw pupils from a catchment area well outside the parish boundary.

The Ashurst Pre-school has been at this site since 2003 and includes special needs facilities, an outdoor play area with safety surface and a permanent climbing frame. Children can start here at 2 years 9 months, and it is registered to take 26 children per session, supported by an active Parent Committee. The outcome of the last Ofsted inspection was ‘Good’ with an ‘Outstanding’ for ‘helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do’.

The Infants School (with approximately 250 pupils), and Junior School (with 420 approx.) are equally well-placed. Children can enjoy a large sports field, a 6-acre nature reserve with a pond and a ‘dipping gallery’ amongst the opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Both schools have active Parent-Teacher Associations which arrange fund-raising and social events for pupils, parents and the local community.

The Junior School has its own website which shows the enthusiasm for learning (http://www.foxhills-jun.hants.sch.uk/) and the Infants are expecting to have one soon.

Reference from – http://www.hampshire.police.uk/Internet/localpolicing
Secondary schools, Colleges, & Higher Education facilities are located nearby. Within the village there is also a small residential provision for young people with autistic spectrum disorders, learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviours.

There are a small number of Nursing and Residential homes in the village; a Child & Family Guidance Centre, and a Birthing Centre planned at Ashurst Hospital.

The location of Ashurst and Colbury on the edge of the New Forest attracts an increasing number of tourists enjoying the village facilities including the nearby Ashurst Campsite, Longdown Activity Farm, The New Forest Otter, Owl and Wildlife Park, and popular walks throughout the Forest and village. There are many refreshment facilities within the village serving the visitors, the community and the passing trade.

The shops and businesses in Ashurst and Colbury currently include:

- A Convenience store
- A Newsagent
- A Post Office
- Car sales, Car repairs, and a Car Wash centre
- A Veterinary surgery
- Take-aways, restaurants, and pubs
- Two hairdressers
- An Upholstery / sewing service

The Hampshire Mobile Library calls on alternate Mondays, stopping at various locations (Internet link http://www3.hants.gov.uk/library/mobile-libraries/rll1-route-7.htm). The Parish has an area of allotments - 8 are allocated for Ashurst and Colbury residents and there is currently a waiting list for these.
The Parish Church of Christ Church Colbury, built in 1870, can be found in Deerleap Lane. It has an historical Lychgate, commemorating the villagers who lost their lives in World War I.

- There have been 10 Parish Priests here - over 137 years.
- In the Church there is a memorial plaque to the 18 parishioners who gave their lives in the First World War. (The Memorial Hall has details of those lost in the Second World War.)
- 45 Couples have been married in the Church in the past 5 years.

There are currently three services each Sunday (8a.m., 10a.m., & 6.30p.m.) and the Church is sought by many for weddings and baptisms. There are many groups linked to the Church which play an important role in community life. A caring Pastoral team visit the elderly and infirm and provide transport to those who could not otherwise get to church.

During most Sunday morning services there is a facility for children aged 3-8 years to meet in the Church Rooms - they are called Explorers. There is also a Youth Club meeting once a week during term time.

The Church Rooms are well used by many groups in the village and for numerous social occasions and fund-raising events. (More details can be found on the parish website: http://www.ashurstandcolbury-pc.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1925)

St Joseph’s (Roman Catholic community) is in Ashurst, on Lyndhurst Road - “The Dene” was acquired by the Montfort Fathers in 1942. Besides the Religious Community (members of the Montfort Missionaries, or Company of Mary) which lives here, there are many people who work within this community to make St Joseph’s a place of spiritual resources for the surrounding parishes and neighbourhood.

At St Joseph’s there are regular religious services, to which all are welcome. The Eucharist is celebrated on Sundays throughout the year at 9.00a.m. in the large chapel, on weekdays at 8.30a.m. in the small chapel, (preceded by Morning Prayer of the Church at 8.15a.m.) and on also Saturdays at 9.00a.m. Mass is also on Monday evenings, before meetings of the Prayer group. St. Joseph’s is available for ‘Retreats’ at a small cost – with a small amount of overnight accommodation. (More details can be found on their website: http://www.montfort.org.uk/Ashurst/index.htm)