

Blisworth Parish Council Strategic Plan 2025–2030

1. Introduction

Blisworth Parish Council is committed to serving the local community by maintaining and improving the village's rural character, environment, and facilities. This strategic plan outlines our key priorities for the next five years, ensuring that Blisworth remains a safe, thriving, and welcoming place to live and work. Decisions will be guided by the views expressed by parish residents at both the annual parish meeting and by other means of consultation.

2. Vision Statement

To preserve and enhance the unique character of Blisworth while ensuring sustainable development, community well-being, and an improved quality of life for all residents.

3. Key Priorities

3.1. Highways and Footpaths

- Work with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and Northamptonshire Police to address traffic volume and speeding concerns and improve road safety.
- Campaign for improved speed and traffic management to protect village environment and residents
- Extend access to green spaces and routes for all residents (including safe routes for cycling and equestrian uses).
- Working with WNC where appropriate, maintain and improve pavements and footpaths.
- Install additional Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).
- Establish a Community Speed Watch group to support enforcement and awareness initiatives.
- Advocate for necessary traffic mitigation measures under S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) agreements for future developments.

3.2. Planning & Development

- Working with WNC Conservation Officer to ensure that new developments respect the village's conservation area and rural character.
- Appropriately protect landscapes and green spaces within and around the village.
- Engage with developers and WNC to secure appropriate infrastructure contributions.
- Monitor planning applications and encourage community involvement in the planning process.
- Protect public access to footpaths, canal side and local amenities.

3.3. Community Engagement & Well-being

- Improve communication with residents through the parish magazine, website, and social media.
- Hold Annual Parish Meeting, open Parish Council meetings and regular Parish Council surgeries and encourage attendance by local organisations
- Support local groups and initiatives that promote community engagement and well-being.
- Encourage volunteerism and community-led initiatives.
- Engage in appropriate community forums.
- Maintain a strong link with village groups that provide support to the community (i.e. Village Hall and Playing Fields Association)
- Develop opportunities and engagement with local young people (12-17 years).

3.4. Environment & Green Spaces

- Maintain and improve public green spaces and footpaths, promoting accessibility, working with WNC where necessary.
- Support sustainability initiatives, including litter reduction and biodiversity projects.
- Work with environmental groups to promote greener practices within the parish.
- Develop the Closed Cemetery as an accessible community space.
- Continue to provide safe engaging equipment to the Eastfield Play Area for the under 12-year-old community.

3.5. Financial Responsibility & Governance

- Maintain strong and transparent financial management.
- Seek external funding and grants to support key projects.
- Maximise contribution from S106/CIL funds to support sustainable development across the parish.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making, in line with agreed criteria (see 3.6).
- Ensure value for money in all decision-making.
- Transparently communicate to residents where their precept is spent.

3.6 Investment and Grant Decisions

- Deliver projects, or support village organisations to deliver projects that support Parish Council priorities.
- Ensure transparent decisions are made, based on a clear assessment of need, risk, and feasibility.

Investment decision will be made using the following criteria:

- For proposals less than £5,000:
 - Delivers clear benefit for an identified group of Blisworth residents.
 - Maintains or enhances either voluntary services or the village environment.
 - The proposal should have a clear community benefit/outcome
- For proposals greater than £5,000, in addition to the above, priority will be given to investments that:
 - Deliver a significant and long-term enhancement to the village environment or lives of residents.
 - Maintain or improve assets which are held by the Parish Council or for which the Parish Council has clear responsibility.
 - Respond to identified, significant and evidenced resident demand.
 - Deliver a benefit to Blisworth residents who should be the majority beneficiary.
 - All decisions will require reasonable financial transparency on the part of the applicant.

4. Implementation & Review

Blisworth Parish Council will review this plan annually to assess progress and update priorities as needed. Community feedback will be sought to ensure that our actions align with residents' needs and expectations.

5. Conclusion

- This strategic plan provides a clear framework for Blisworth Parish Council's work over the next five years. By focussing on road safety, development, community engagement, environmental sustainability, and financial responsibility, we aim to create a stronger, safer, and more vibrant village for everyone.

Appendix: S106 Funding

S106 Funding (SEGRO) must be spent on:

- Carrying out physical improvement to the public realm
- Enhance nature conservation interest
- Improving the physical environment of the village within the area of the Parish

Please note all S106 funding spending must also fall within the statutory powers of the Parish Council to approve and spend.

To claim the above money, BPC will need to apply for it using WNC's process. This will require projects to be justified against the above criteria and to be advanced enough to have firm quotations for purchase or work. If the SEGRO 106 money is not granted by WNC by 26 May 2030, it must be returned to SEGRO. We therefore have 5 years to use it.

In addition to the above the Parish Council holds Reserves. Projects funded from Reserves do not need to comply with the above criteria but must be within the statutory powers of the Parish Council to approve and spend. The Parish Council's rules concerning spending approval apply.

Version	Details of any revision	Approved at	Date	Review Date
v1	Adopted new Blisworth Parish Council Strategic Plan 2025–2030	Approved at BPC Meeting 01/12/2025 Minute Point: BPC/207/2025	01/12/2025	May 2026