

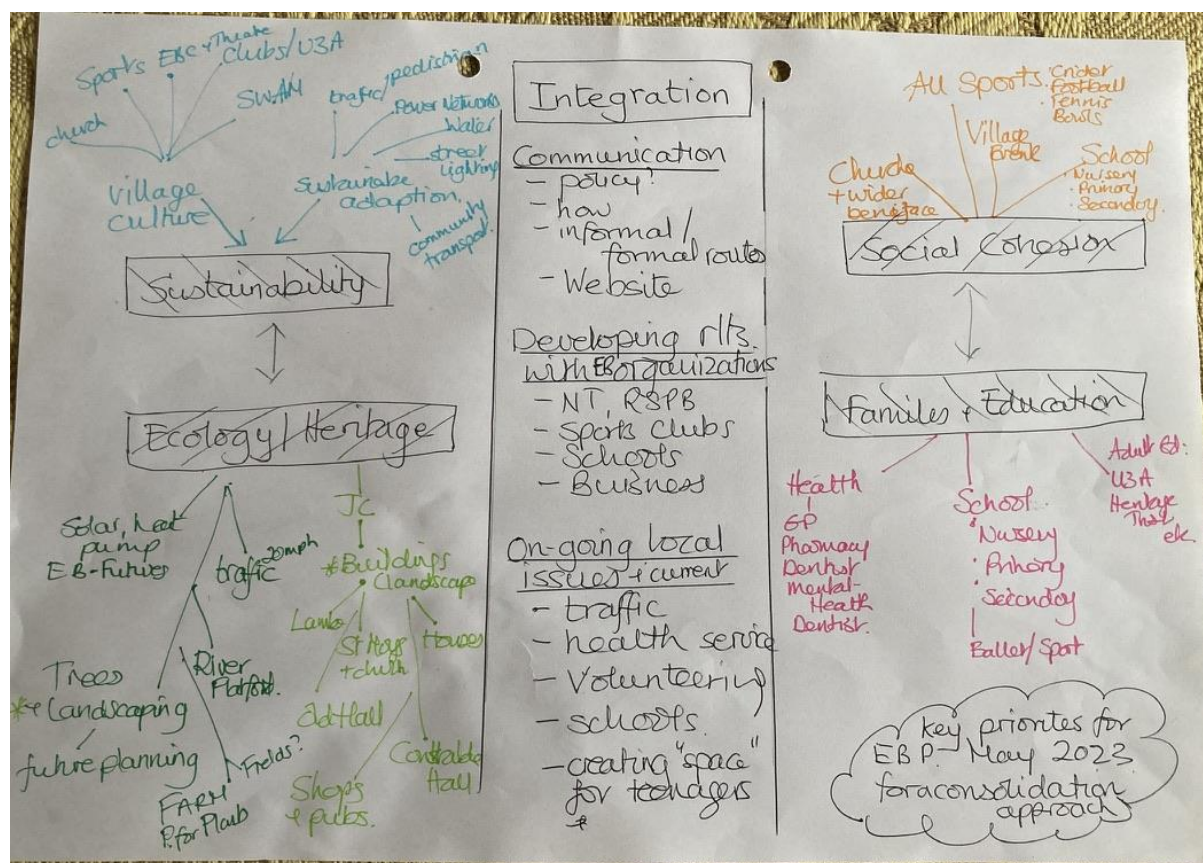
**East Bergholt Parish Council Strategy Investment Plan**  
**Parish Council meeting, 8 Feb 2024**

**Background**

EBPC has through its Neighbourhood Plan process and through ideas brought forward by individual councillors, identified a number of new services that village people have put forward. These are itemised in the next section.

This paper includes the outputs from the PC workshop in June and the recommendations from the PC Workshop in November. Notes of each of these workshops were circulated to Councillors after the workshops and are summarised below. EBPC's financial position as at Jan 24 is also included.

EBPC held a workshop on 7 June 2023 to try to group and discuss these ideas. Lyn Matthews collated the discussion into a mind map reproduced here. This was circulated to all councillors.



Councillors agreed to hold a further session on 30 November 2023 to work out plans and priorities for PC budgeting purposes.

The main sources of funding available to EBPC for investment in new services. These are:

- **CIL funding.** Because it has an established Neighbourhood Plan, EBPC receives 25% of local CIL revenues and has the ability to invest the monies received in projects that benefit the village directly. These may be capital or revenue projects. EBPC may also bid for Babergh District CIL funding but this can only be for infrastructure projects, so mainly capital investments
- **Reserves funding** EBPC holds approximately £325,000 in reserves for allocation to either revenue or capital projects. In addition EBPC holds approximately £91,200 in CIL monies.
- **Precept** EBPC requests a precept each year which is largely for revenue purposes. However projects may bid for funding which can be included in the precept proposals.
- **Government's Public Works Loan Board** EBPC, may, if it decides to do so, request a loan from the PWLB for investment in a project. This money is repayable after a set number of years (negotiated with PWLB) and will be charged a fixed rate of interest.

## Key Projects

The key projects identified so far are:

### ***Congregational Church Community hub***

The aim of this project is to take over the charity managing the Congregational church and to create from the church a community hub and PC centre. As a later stage a project to create a set of sheltered units for older people of the village will be considered. (Project outline summarised in paper to an earlier EBPC meeting).

### ***Affordable Housing***

EBCLT has asked us to consider support and investment for affordable houses in the village to be kept in perpetuity for the benefit of local people.

### ***Road Safety***

EBNP surveys have identified increased traffic, speeding and poor parking as a major village concern and identified several projects to improve safety in the village. Village feedback identifies in the early phasing 20 mph speed limits; improvements to B1070 particularly past the High School and footpaths from B1070 to Foxhall Fields; improvements to Hadleigh Rd past the primary school; parking in the village centre are priorities from all the proposals put forward.

### ***Footpath extensions***

The Star project connecting East Bergholt with accessible footpaths to surrounding villages and to Manningtree. The project has already achieved improvements to the footpath to Stratford St Mary with work undertaken by SCC. A proposal has been identified to create a footpath and cycle route above the flood plain level across from Flatford to Manningtree Station following the route of an old right of way which was deleted in the late 1990s. This project, managed through the RFF Committee, will need to work with neighbouring parish councils and form a partnership with higher levels of local government.

### ***Playing field extension***

The current playing field at Gandish Road was established in the early 1950s through compulsory purchase of half the field and renting from Constable Hall the other half of the field. The playing fields were planned to support the then village population. The village had an expansion of 400 new houses in the 1960s and is about to receive another 240 houses in the next 4 years. This will double the size of the village of the 1950s. The playing field is already stretched to provide space for the clubs already existing and as these expand their teams with the new population the current field will not be sufficient.

NB: the 23/24 wet winter and the flooding on the Gandish Rd playing field has put it out of action for the past 3 months, this may not be an acceptable solution for football if this trend continues.

### **New Children's services**

The new EBPC (May 2023) achieved competent council status and has voted to explore opportunities to provide more services (other than sport) for young people. The working group researching this opportunity have established significant numbers of village children interested and a formal Committee of the PC was appointed in Jan 2024. This Committee will put forward proposals to establish longer term developments.

### ***Refresh Website***

There is a project already approved and underway to create a more modern website. It will be easier to manage and will provide new content. The website is our main communications tool but needs to be better designed to be more effective in presenting news and information for our residents so that they visit it as a first choice when looking for PC information.

### **Welcoming Newcomers to the Village**

When the new estates are complete the village residents will increase by perhaps 500-800 on top of the current 2750 population. That is about a 20% increase in residents, and in cars.

EBPC has talked about how we may best welcome and integrate these new residents into village life. Ideas collated from residents include:

- Avoiding blaming newcomers as "destroyers of the village"
- Information to help new comers learn quickly about village culture and history
- The need to provide sufficient parish infrastructure (car parking, sporting, halls, etc) to avoid our facilities being over full.
- The need to encourage school and medical services to plan more broadly for the service growth they will experience.

To this end we have received a proposal that EBPC set up a "Welcoming Committee" to include village organisations and societies. The Welcoming Committee would be expected to propose a plan which might include:

- a welcoming leaflet of information about the village
- A "welcome" event or series of events which would cover the village history, the way of life, an explanation of the Neighbourhood Plan and an event to introduce new residents to the many clubs and societies in the village.

## **PC Workshop Meeting 30/11/23**

During the workshop councillors considered each of the large proposals in turn. Councillors recommended that for these larger projects:

- each should have a nominated Councillor lead
- to track funding and progress we reinstate a Parish Council “Projects Budget” line heading for the accounts.

At this stage all projects were prioritised as Councillors felt they were all important. Progress will depend on the feasibility and progress of each project. The PC’s funding sources are as outlined above, but many of the projects could apply for additional sources of funding from other bodies.

Councillors proposed that:

### **1. Congregational Church Community hub – Joan Miller leads**

*The aim of this project is to take over the charity managing the Congregational church and to create from the church a community hub and PC centre. As a later stage a project to assess the feasibility of creating a set of sheltered units for older people of the village will be established.*

The Parish Council agreed the resolution in the Emergency PC meeting immediately preceding the workshop on 30/11/23, that is, it determined in principle (subject to due diligence process) to accept the gift of the Congregational Church and land from the current owners. The PC is still waiting for full survey results and valuation. EBPC representatives and our solicitor met with the Church Deacons and their solicitor on 17 Jan 24 to finalise negotiations of the transfer. The Church Deacons have decided to transfer the complete assets of the charity, that is the buildings, grounds and all other assets to a charity managed by the Parish Council. Legal work has commenced between our solicitor and the Church solicitor on transferring the charity to EBPC. The Church Deacons would like the building to retain the name “Congregational Hall” if that is possible to retain the connection with the Hall’s history in the village. The project’s step 1 plan is to set up the church building as a temporary community hub to test out various activities and, building on the village feedback , draw up plans for the creation of a permanent Community Hub.

Estimate of due diligence process legal and technical support:

**£20,000** was approved

Outline estimate of costs of refurbishment to standard required for step 1 and 2 to create a Community Hub.

**£150,000** outline estimate of works

### **2. Affordable Housing – CLT lead (Simon Rothwell, Councillor representative on the CLT)**

*EB CLT has asked us to consider support and investment for affordable houses in the village to be kept in perpetuity for the benefit of local people.*

EBCLT are aware that they can apply for funding from other sources as well as from the PC  
Outline estimate of grant request from PC:

**£300,000** anticipated estimate of grant request to PC

### **3. Road Safety – Nigel Roberts leads**

EBNP has identified several projects to improve safety in the village. A village meeting to consider the recommendation of our consultants, PJA identified in the early phasing of the improvements 20 mph speed limits; zebra crossing and improvements to B1070 and to footpaths from B1070 to Foxhall Fields; improvements to the Street/Hadleigh Rd junction and past the primary school.

Priorities for immediate work are:

- 20 mph speed zones for EB centre. PJA (our consultants) are working with EBPC to submit an application with an area designated and business case drafted. Next step is to submit the application to SCC who then write and assessment of the request, consult with PC and then submitted to SCC cabinet panel for decision. This project has been prioritised because of residents views in surveys show speed is the key priority that residents identify as important for the village.
- Traffic calming measures along B1070 at Gaston End, High School. The SCC senior Highways officer approves the project in principle. This has been prioritised because of residents views expressed both in surveys and in letters to the PC, and because traffic along B1070 is predicted to increase by 57% over the next 5 years.
- Traffic calming measures along Hadleigh Road junction with The Street and Primary School. SCC senior officer approves project in principle. This project prioritised because of resident's feedback at village meeting.

**£8,000-10,000** PJA time spent on 20 mph zone design in 23/24. Funded from EBPC NP budget.

**For 24/25**

**£37,000 -70,000** PJA time spent on working with SCC, design works and safety audit.

For 25/26

**£43,000 – 80,000** PJA time spent on working with SCC, design works and safety audit.

Build cost estimates:

**£100,000** 20mph zone build

**£80,000 -100, 000** Gaston End

**£ 50,000 – 100,000** High School

**£30,000 – 60,000** Hadleigh Road

**plus 20% contingency** on building works.

### **4. Footpath extensions - John Price leads**

The Star project connecting East Bergholt with accessible footpaths to surrounding villages and to Manningtree. The project has already achieved improvements to the footpath to Stratford St Mary with work undertaken by SCC.

A cycle/footway from the village to Manningtree is prioritised in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan

JP has identified an old right of way across from Flatford, south to Manningtree Station. The right of way sits above the flood line. This right of way was revoked in 1990s but the Babergh

and SCC footpath officers are reconsidering this link as it fits with their priorities. Our District Councillor, Sallie Davies, is working with Babergh footway officers to work out what we need to do to reinstate the path. The path also includes Essex CC and Colchester Council. Expect Babergh to provide funding to build the path but EBPC could assist process with Hydrographic and ecological surveys.

**£20,000** for hydrographic and ecological surveys.

#### **5. Hopper Bus – Babergh DC leads (Joan Miller contact at EBPC)**

Proposal by Babergh to recreate the Hopper bus service from Manningtree (station) to Hadleigh with the aim of providing public transport for commuters and visitors and to promote car-less tourism. This project was not successful in the 23/24 bidding round, but may be resubmitted in future years.

**£2,750 pa** for subsidies to support bus service

#### **6. Playing field extension – Graeme Woodcock leads**

The current Playfields are inadequate for the current scale of sporting activity that uses them. In addition the car parking is inadequate. This situation will get worse as the village increases in size. The current site at Gandish Road has also had unprecedented flooding in the winter 23/24 meaning football clubs have had to rent pitches in Ipswich which both costs money and reduces the Football Club's and the Sports Council's income at the Sports Pavilion. The current playing field at Gandish Road needs attention but the big need is for new playing field space. In addition the cost of electricity has become critical since the old contract expired and more sustainable means of producing electricity will be examined. The use of the primary school for junior team football has reduced parking and playing congestion at Gandish Road.

But, given the growth in sports and parking, a new playing field is required for:

- Football teams
- Car parking
- Natural areas of open space, conservation area
- Solar panels will be considered to reduce the electricity bills

**£35,000-50,000** quote for clearing land under the pylon on current field.

**£300,000** estimate for procurement and build of facilities and new playing fields

#### **7. New Children and Families services – Lyn Matthews leads**

Using the new powers available now EBPC has qualified as a "competent council" (more than 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s elected councillors and a fully qualified Clerk) the children's working group has been researching need from Aug 2023 and reported back to EBPC on 12 Dec 23 that a great deal of village interest and support has been identified. EBPC determined in Jan 24 that a new Committee for younger residents would be established and the first meeting to set the Terms of Reference and a look forward to the strategic workplan will be held in Feb 2024. Early priorities identified by the research are:

- A youth club is needed urgently with the first priority for secondary school ages
- A hub is needed for young people to meet.

In order to achieve a sustainable service the report will propose procurement of a youth worker service 1 day per week for 2 years.

**24/25 £20,000** outline estimate for services plus equipment

**25/26 £20,000** outline estimate for services plus equipment

#### **8. Refresh Website – Rob Wombwell lead**

A project already approved and underway to create a more modern website, more easy to manage and to provide more helpful and more easily found information. The website is our main communications tool but needs to be better designed to be more effective in presenting news and information for our residents so that they visit it as a first choice when looking for PC information.

Funding already approved and in EBPC budget 23/24

#### **9. Welcoming Newcomers to the Village**

When the new estates are complete the village residents will increase by perhaps 500-800 on top of the current 2750 population. That is about a 20% increase in residents, and in cars.

Councillors welcomed the approach described above and identified the potential need for:

- a rolling programme of events as people moved in to the new houses
- presence at village fetes, etc
- a information pack to drop through doors
- the need to work closely with other village organisations. The PC can co-ordinate this.

## Summary of outline costs:

2025/26

Build 20 mph zone £100K

<b>Project</b>	<b>New One off £</b>	<b>Annual £/ in precept 24/25</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Congregational church	<b>20,000</b>		Legal and technical fees for the transfer of the charity
Congregational church	<b>150,000</b>		Refurbishment for step 2, experimental community hub
Affordable homes	<b>300,000</b>		Est Grant request EBCLT
Road Safety		<b>8,000-10,000</b>	PJA time spent on 20 mph zone. <b>Funding from EBPC NP 23/24 budget underspend.</b>
Road Safety	<b>£37,000 -70,000 +20% contingency</b>		PJA time spent on working with SCC, design works and safety audit. For 25/26
Road Safety design	<b>43,000 – 80,000</b>		PJA time spent on working with SCC, design works and safety audit.
Build 20mph zone	<b>£100,000</b>		
Road Safety build Gaston End	<b>80,000 -100,000</b>		+ 20% contingency = SCC
Road Safety build High School	<b>50,000 – 100,000</b>		+ 20% contingency = SCC
Road Safety build Hadleigh Rd/The Street	<b>30,000 – 60,000</b>		+ 20% contingency = SCC
Footpath right of way to Manningtree St	<b>20,000</b>		hydrographic and ecological surveys.
Hopper Bus			<b>Subsidy pa for 2 years</b> – ie would go in precept.
Playing fields	<b>35,000-50,000</b>		quote for clearing land under the pylon on current field.
Playing fields	<b>300,000</b>		estimate for procurement and build of facilities and new playing fields



Children & Families		<b>20,000</b>	outline estimate for youth services plus equipment 24/25 with a further £20,000 expected in 25/26
<b>TOTAL estimate low</b>	<b>1,165,000</b>	<b>28,000</b>	
<b>TOTAL estimate high</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	

### Recommendations to the Parish Council

The recommendations from the two EBPC workshops are:

1. that feasibility of the proposed activities itemised above should be commenced
2. that note be taken of the outline costs of each activity
3. that the lead councillor for each item should be:
  - Congregational Church, Joan Miller
  - Affordable Housing, Simon Rothwell
  - Road Safety, Nigel Roberts
  - Footpaths extension, John Price for RFF Committee
  - Hopper Bus, Babergh DC (PC contact Joan Miller)
  - PlayingFields, Graeme Woodcock for Playingfields Committee
  - Children & families, Lyn Matthews for Young People Committee
  - Refresh Website, Rob Wombwell
  - Welcoming Newcomers ?
4. that the activities will report back before the end of Sept 2024 to provide an indication of the viability of each activity and the requirement for investment.

Joan Miller, 31/1/24