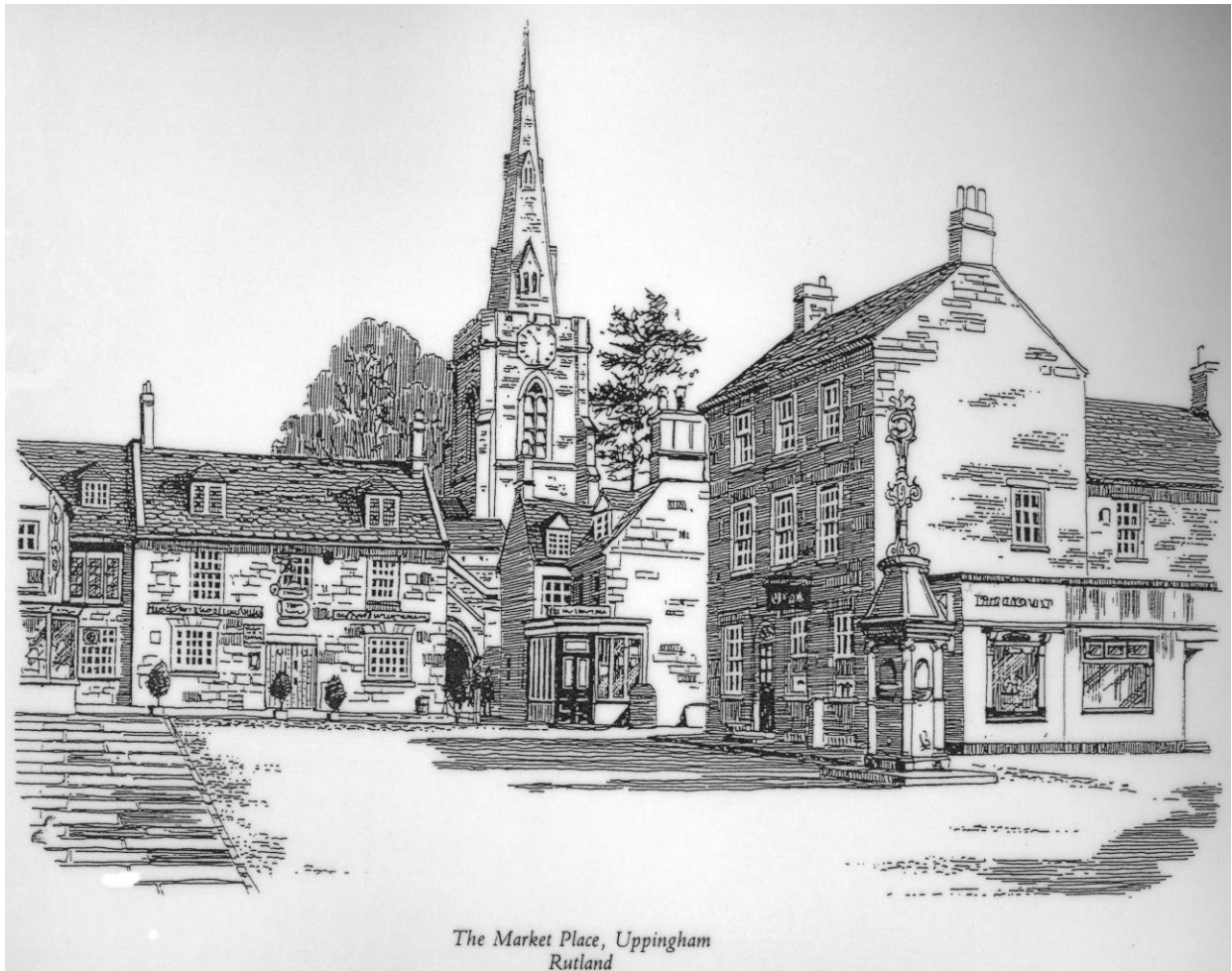


www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk

UPPINGHAM 2025

A Community Development Plan



An Uppingham First Publication
October 2009

Cover picture courtesy of Cotswold Rural Crafts Ltd



Uppingham First is the new Town Partnership for Uppingham. It incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in January 2009 and is led by a Board of Directors drawn from the business, local government and voluntary sectors of the community. Its inaugural Chairman is Robert Wills of Arnold Wills and Co.

Regional Winners of the Business Section of 'Village of the Year' 2008

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Introduction and Background

What should Uppingham be like in 2025? What will be the principal challenges between now and then and what can be done to meet them? What should be preserved? What could be improved? What new facilities should we strive for? Do we need better facilities for our youth? How do we tackle the issue of too many cars and not enough parking spaces? What can we do to support and sustain local business? Can we take action rather than simply talk about things? Can we work together to achieve some community aspirations? Can we agree on some things that most of us want and a plan to achieve them? If so what should the priorities be?

This document outlines proposals formulated from recent research and community consultations. The intention of Uppingham First is to persuade relevant agencies and organisations to deliver appropriate responses.

The final section of the document provides for a community response.

Related Documentation

For the interested reader a number of other community planning and research documents are relevant to this publication. They include:-

- The East Midlands Regional Plan
- The Rutland County Council Land Use Survey
- The Rutland County Council Local Development Framework
- The Sustainable Community Strategy produced by 'Rutland Together', the county's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- The 'Discover Rutland' Tourism Strategy 2007 - 2012
- The Market Towns Benchmarking Project produced by the Association of Market Towns
- The Uppingham Parish Plan
- The Uppingham Business Forum Consultation Events of 2008
- Trade and Town User Surveys 2008
- A Consultancy Study of Uppingham 'Issues and Challenges' commissioned by Uppingham First and funded by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)

Note: The provision of education and training to the Uppingham community has been excluded from this publication, but may form part of a future study.

Why Is A Plan Required?

An agreed way forward for Uppingham is important because:-

- There is no existing forward plan for Uppingham beyond the outline addressed in the County Council Local Development Framework
- Uppingham is not the 'principal' market town within Rutland and must therefore compete for scarce resources
- There is a need to follow up on the community aspirations detailed in the Uppingham Parish Plan
- Regional and County plans provide for a significant increase in population and housing without a related increase in resources
- The Uppingham community is being invited by the County Council to speak up about what changes and developments it wants
- Policy makers and business leaders share a view that the community must work together and be proactive about the town's future, rather than simply reacting to future proposals from developers offering short term financial incentives
- The town's character and heritage must not only be preserved, but enhanced, to ensure sustainability until 2025 and beyond.

Why Has it Been Produced by Uppingham First?

Uppingham First is an incorporated town partnership whose primary purpose is to promote the economic and social development of Uppingham by bringing together business, voluntary sector and elected representatives of local government. With the help of the Market Towns Association and the newly appointed Rutland Market Towns Manager, the partnership hopes to act as a focus for joint discussion and policy planning acting to attract financial and physical resources to the town. Town Partnerships are uniquely placed to maximise efforts to bid for grant aid and economic development funding. The logical starting point is to agree mutually acceptable targets and work together to achieve them. This document suggests a way forward for the community. Why 2025? Regional and national funding for major projects is committed this far ahead.

During 2008 Uppingham First held a number of consultative events and commissioned a major piece of research on the challenges facing Uppingham. This document tables proposals which emerged from that activity.

Acknowledgement of the Sensitivities

Uppingham First is aware of sensitivities in finding agreement about the way forward for Uppingham over the next 15 years. People will have different views about what is right for the future and this may reflect their spheres of influence in the town. Perhaps because of these sensitivities, statutory organisations may have been cautious about proposing change or floating particular ideas for the future. The partnership has noted the views of a number of individuals who have indicated that certain propositions should be put to the town from a neutral point of view. This document does so.

The partnership also notes that:-

- Views at Town and County level often differ about what is right for Uppingham
- A significant part of the town centre is designated as a conservation area
- Ownership of a significant proportion of the town's land and property is in the hands of a relatively small number of individuals and organisations
- Some decision makers hold the view that little or no change is required to meet the challenges of the future
- There is general agreement that the character of the town must be preserved
- Oakham and Uppingham have a very different construct and heritage and require different strategies to ensure sustainability

Uppingham 2025 Proposals

This document makes proposals on five aspects of Uppingham for 2025. They are:-

- The future shape, character and size of Uppingham
- The future image of the town for promotional/tourism purposes
- Proposals of particular relevance to those who work or own a business in the town
- Proposals of particular relevance to those who live here
- Proposals of particular relevance to those who visit

It is accepted that those who live here will have an interest in all the proposals. All have emerged from the research and consultations documented earlier. Proposals are not prioritised but are numbered to facilitate discussion and feedback. Some are listed without supporting information, being self explanatory. Others have summary comment with more information available if requested.

A. Proposals on the Shape, Character and Size of Uppingham

- 1. Population:** Target to be no more than 6000. It is believed that any figure above this will significantly change the character of Uppingham.
- 2. To the West:** A development boundary line formed by the proposed new North/South bypass. Building priority in this direction to be affordable housing. The junction of the new bypass with the A47 to be the site of a new garage/petrol station and an emergency services station. An illuminated sign on this junction to indicate range of services and businesses in the town. A designated coach parking facility, perhaps close to the new community development at Uppingham School.
- 3. To the East:** A proposed retail garden centre currently under development to be enhanced to include the planned tourism project detailed below in proposal 19. Access and appropriate signage to be from the A47. This site to be linked to the town centre via a heritage trail.
- 4. To the North:** Uppingham Gate development to be completed with the area designated as a science/technology park. The A47 roundabout to be adopted and beautified via commercial sponsorship. A new cycle path to be constructed from the A47 to the town centre.
- 5. To the South:** A small roundabout at the southern entrance to the town to slow traffic and assist the safe movement of pupils at Uppingham Community College and Uppingham School.
- 6. Town Centre:** Present character to be protected and enhanced with street furniture to reflect the town's 'heritage' image and the Market Square resurfaced in character. Additional parking and services to be provided as proposed below. Youth and transport developments at Tods Piece as detailed below. Land to be purchased to create new access to Station Road Industrial Estate.

B. A Proposal on the Town's Image

What do we want the town to be known for apart from the outstanding Uppingham School? The town's image or profile is important not only to the potential visitor but also to those of us who live and/or work here. It can affect inward investment, property prices, the sustainability of local businesses and the opinions formed by those who promote tourism destinations.

The Partnership's preliminary consultations produced differing opinions about this issue. Some respondents felt the town could be promoted as simply an 'excellent place to live', particularly later in life. Others felt the town's strengths lay in the unique shopping and visitor experience we offer including our bookshops, galleries and traditional High Street businesses. Because of our schools, community groups and galleries, the Uppingham community has access to outstanding excellence in music, art, theatre, sport and adult education. Is this something that we could and should promote for visitor and resident alike? What of the town's heritage and architecture? Should this take the lead for promotional purposes? A recent University study supported by the Market Town's Association categorised Uppingham as a 'manufacturing' community as well as a rural urban centre! Should this figure in our international image?

What ever one's views about the above, those responsible for promoting the town and ensuring its sustainability need to use one or two short descriptive phrases in their promotional material. On balance, the Partnership favours a generic statement that it believes will be acceptable to residents and attract visitors. It therefore proposes:-

7. *Uppingham – A Unique Experience!*

C. Proposals For Those Who Work Here?

8. Reserved Parking for Local Business

A new designated daytime parking area for local businesses Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. Area to be hollow blocks with grass growing through so as to preserve appearance of open green space for residents in the evening and at weekends. Blocks to be located down one edge of Tods Piece.

9. Responsive Street Cleaning in the Town Centre

A new service to deal with 'one off' incidents, perhaps available via the Town Hall upon request?

10. Heritage Appearance of Town Centre

Over time install appropriate heritage street furniture. Restore surface of the Market Square to heritage appearance accommodating the needs of the Market, the Fatstock Show and other town centre events. Renew the historic informal agreement on business signage with particular regard for the disabled and disadvantaged. Install a discreet wireless town centre business and public information system linked to Tods Piece. Mount heritage trail information plaques at appropriate locations.

11. New Access to Station Road Industrial Estate

This is urgently needed to address major health and safety issues created by heavy traffic accessing the Estate via the Station Road/London Road junction. A new entrance would also assist in preserving the church wall which is within the central conservation area!

12. Access for all to High Speed Broadband

Currently available in the High Street area due to innovative work by Rutland Telecomm supported by local business! Uppingham First has prepared a proposal to make high speed WiFi available throughout the town, including the newer estates.

13. Shop Local Incentive/Reward Scheme

It is proposed to mount occasional campaigns to encourage the use of local shops and support for local businesses.

D. Proposals For Those Who Live Here?

14. A Cycle Path from the A47 to the Town Centre

Would assist with parking problems, improve road safety, address county council environment targets and contribute to local sport and public health.

15. Electric Car Recharging Points

To be located in the town centre for the next generation of commuter cars. Would benefit visitors and local commuters within Rutland.

16. A Purpose Built Youth and Community Centre

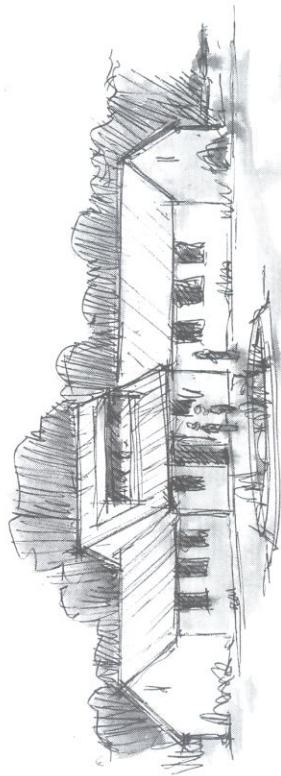
Could be at the rear of Tods Piece with a viewing gallery overlooking the sports field, have water and electricity facilities at the rear for the allotments and an external power supply and sound system to support major events and activities. Part sunken design would be suitable to produce low environmental profile and contain internal noise. An update of the Skate Ramp and Cub/Scout facilities could be included. Grant aid would be sought for this project.

17. Landscape the Perimeter of Tods Piece

This could make area more attractive and help blend in other developments.

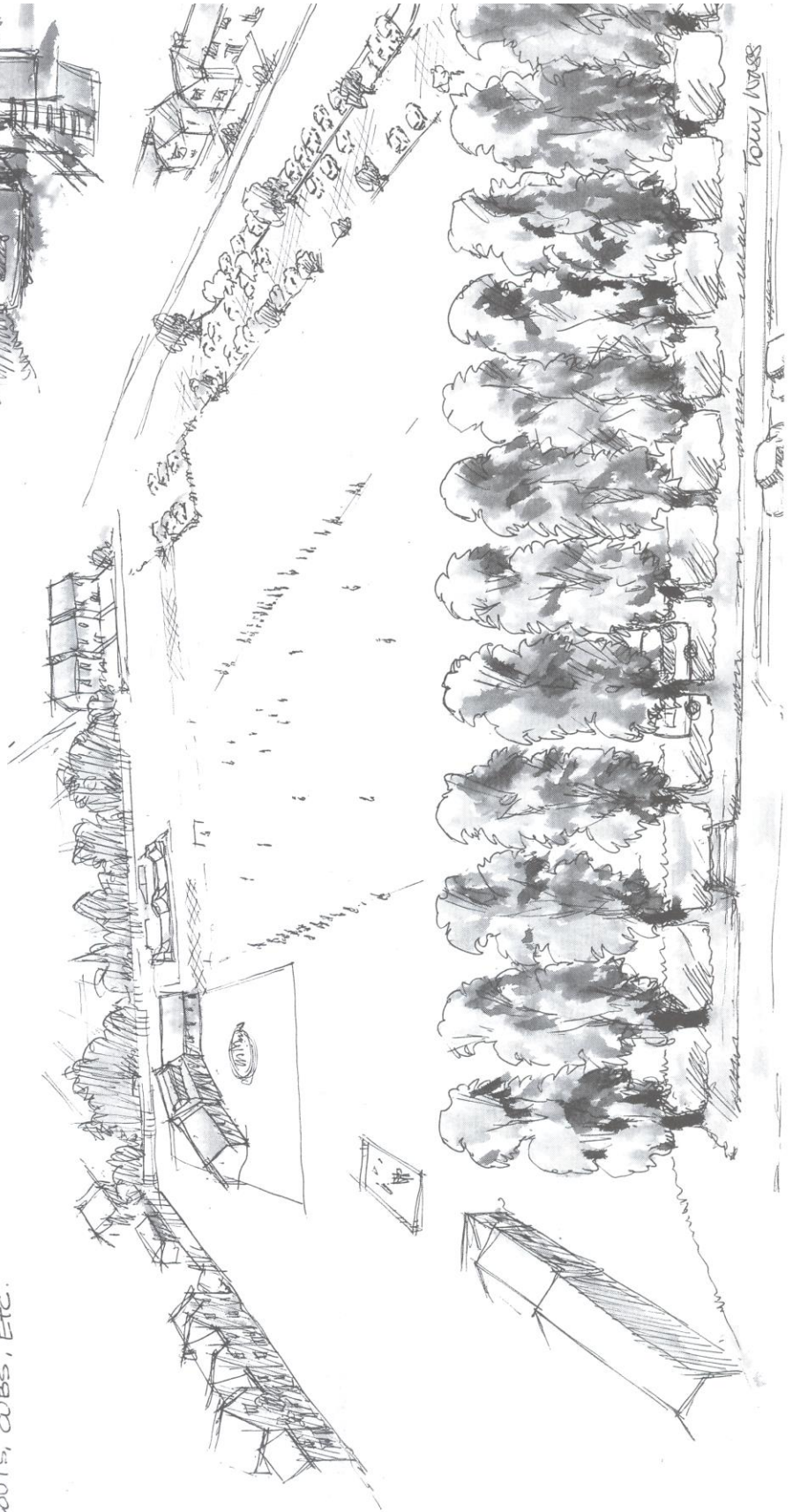
18. Off Road Bus Terminus

New bus terminus, inset into Tods Piece, constructed with appropriate rural materials. Proposal would require the slight relocation of the present play area and the possible loss of one tree. Cycle parking could be integrated into this development.



YOUTH CENTRE - INCORPORATING
SCOUTS, QUBS, ETC.

BUS STOP
(EAST BOUND)



Tony Wass

19. Retail Garden Centre

Welland Vale Nurseries Ltd have a successful wholesale business and propose a retail plant centre, subject to planning, offering an extensive range of products for the gardening enthusiast and plant lovers, showcasing the work of local craftsmen and landscapers. The Partnership proposes to support the further development of this site to facilitate the construction of a tourism project to be known as 'First Impressions' which will be a 'Museum of the Printed Word'. The project will include a new meeting facility for community groups, a traditional print work shop producing Uppingham branded products, a small exhibition gallery, car parking and a coach drop-off point. Grant aid will be sought for this project.



Artist's impression of the Museum of the Printed Word – Alan Oliver 2008

20. A Campaign to Attract Key Businesses and Shops

The Partnership proposes to work proactively to attract appropriate businesses to complement those already in the town. An example would be a campaign to attract a replacement haberdashery shop, said by many to be sorely missed. A further example would be to urge the County Council to promote the town as a suitable location for high tech businesses now it has a high speed broadband capability. By 2025 it will be important to have attracted and/or retained a comprehensive mixture of shops and businesses.

21. New Library with High Speed Access to the Internet

Some time ago the County Council offered to discuss the need for a new library in the town. At that time the offer was declined. In planning for 2025 this proposition should be revisited.

22. New Community Facilities at Uppingham School

Given its excellent support for the Uppingham community to-date, it is proposed that reductions in fees for the over 60s of the town should be sought when these facilities are in operation.

23. High Street Road Closures

To minimise the disturbance to residents of the High Street it is proposed to seek a voluntary agreement on the permitted number of High Street road closures for special events.

E. Proposals For Those Who Visit?

24. Long Stay Car Park on the Current Fire Station Site

Relocation of the fire station to the proposed emergency services station on the proposed A47/Bypass junction would improve the emergency response facility and address a fundamental need for more parking spaces in the town.

25. A Town Ranger

Could be full time or seasonal, and a volunteer or employee. Post holder would be knowledgeable about the town's heritage, businesses and geography. In some towns these positions assist visitors, deal with parking issues on an informal basis, assist local businesses, act as guides and assist the police with town centre communications and CCTV issues.

26. Town Trails with Supporting Literature

A number of organisations have already done some work in this area. The profile of this work should be further raised and captured in an agreed heritage/tourism action plan for the town.

27. Policing 'Access Point' in the Town Centre

Visitors have to go to some trouble to discover the location of the current 'police office' in Uppingham. It is argued there should be a modern central access point in the Market Square with a phone linked to police headquarters as is currently provided at Oakham Police Station.

28. Improved Public Toilets

Uppingham should seek support from the County Council to match the current building initiative in Oakham where an attractive new facility in stone has been constructed.

29. Improved Town Web Sites

Visitors have reported difficulties in securing information about Uppingham on the Internet. Uppingham First is addressing this issue in collaboration with the County Council's 'Discover Rutland' initiative. Local business

Uppingham on Line is also currently developing a local community site. It is proposed to give further consideration to the town's future needs.

30. Accessible Programme for Major Events in the Town

It is proposed to make this available on the Uppingham First web site and via the Discover Rutland web site. New event notice boards are also planned for the town.

31. Covered Stage Capability in the Market Square

It is proposed to explore the possibility of a covered facility in the Market Square for music and other major events.

32. More Outdoor Seating in the Market Square for Events

It is proposed that the capability to mount events in the Market Square could be improved by the installation of additional temporary seating in designated areas.

33. Occasional Concerts in the Market Square

Perhaps subject to the previous two proposals! Would add to Uppingham's tourism profile and complement existing indoor concerts.

34. New Short Stay Parking on Present Garage Site

Linked to proposal 2 and could be part of a new commercial development on the site. The current proprietors have indicated they are willing to discuss any development opportunities that become available in the area and would consider any proposals put forward. Given the importance of the garage to the town, the Partnership would wish to delay action on this proposal until any alternative garage site is agreed.

Summary

Uppingham First has put a great deal of work into collecting and publishing the above proposals. Some of them could be achieved relatively quickly. Others would take many years. A number of the proposals require careful thought and regard for majority opinion in the town. For example, views differ on the potential benefits of a bypass!

Thank you for taking the time to read Uppingham 2025. It is vital that the future of Uppingham is planned and does not simply evolve. It is time to agree what the priorities for action should be.

If you are a resident or business proprietor of Uppingham and wish to comment on the proposals, your views would be welcomed in writing by e-mail or post. Contact details are as follows:-

E-mail: secretary@uppinghamfirst.co.uk

Post: Address correspondence to:-
Uppingham 2025
PO Box 9264
OAKHAM
LE15 0EN

Should you be a representative of a community group that would like to receive a private presentation on the proposals, please contact the Secretary of Uppingham First at secretary@uppinghamfirst.co.uk or telephone 01572 823465.

A public presentation on the proposals is to be made to a meeting of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum in November 2009. Representatives of interested community groups are invited to attend this event. Further details are available from the Forum Co-ordinator at:-

enquiries@uppinghamneighbourhoodforum.org.uk

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