

10.5 Environment

The village has preserved its environment. History shows that there was a comprehensive network of footpaths and tracks. Many of the village ponds are now in private gardens, except the one in the centre of the village.

Some footpaths/tracks have been lost over the years. Perhaps the most controversial one was the track from the Herringfield Drift to the Church. This was eventually closed following a public enquiry.

Comberton has always had a love of the environment and flora and fauna. One house on Green End was referred to as The Rosary because of its' beautiful Rose Gardens. At one stage in the early 1900's there were 5 large plots of 'Allotment Gardens'.

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While Comberton can't boast of a wood or a forest of any significance within the village, there is the belt of trees, called Comberton Plantation that was established in the 19th Century, running along the eastern edge of Long Road. It is evident that the village once was well 'wooded', with the Harbour Avenue area being mainly fruit trees.



The 'Spinney' on the Recreation ground, has remained.

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Watts Wood to the east of Herringfield drift, previously land belonging to the church, sold in 1957 and 1965 for a pumping Station. At present the land is owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council and managed by Comberton Parish Council tree group. The village has often planted new trees, but in 1957 there was a controversy that stirred up the village and made

headlines in the local newspaper. There were some trees on the recreation ground that were 'condemned' and needed to be felled.

¹ Aerial view of the recreation ground

² The Spinney north of the recreation ground

In 1972, there were a flock of 100 ducks and moorhens on the village pond, at the last count this had decreased to 13

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10.5.1 Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

10.5.1.1 Footpaths

The following public rights of way exist around the village. These may be referred to on the attached map by their public footpath (FP), byway (BW) and bridleway (B) numbers.

Green End to Hardwick (FP4). This joins Hardwick's Millennium Footpath.

Long Road to Common Farm (FP1) and Starve Goose Plantation (B2).

Long Road to Coton (B3).

Swaynes Lane to Barton Road (FP5).

Swaynes Lane to The Drift (FP6).

The Herringfield Drift to Fox's Bridge (BW7 and BW10).

The Drift east to Lords Bridge (BW10 VFP11).

The Causeway to Comberton Church (FP8).

End of Church Lane (FP12).

Church Farm Cottages west to Toft (FP9).



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³ Comberton pond in Spring

⁴ Comberton pond in Winter

⁵ The Causeway in Winter

** Insert map

There are two public footpaths owned and managed by the Parish Council:

- From Green End to the north side of the Recreation ground.
- From the Recreation ground to the Harbour Avenue Estate around the Meridian school playing field.

Footpath from Green End to the north side of the Recreation ground. This can become overgrown in summer and is muddy in winter.

Footpath from the Recreation ground to Janes Estate around the Meridian school playing field. The path is narrow, runs close to the drainage ditches and becomes muddy in winter.



10.5.1.2 Cycle Paths

There are cycle paths out of either end of the village; one goes east to Barton and then on the cycle path into Cambridge and the other West as far as Toft. These are dedicated cycle/pedestrian paths, although many cyclists prefer to use the road.

The cycle path towards Barton is due to be upgraded shortly when the traffic calming at the junction of Barton and Long Road is constructed.

There are no cycle paths through the village. Only 9 – 10 % of respondents in the survey currently use a bicycle to travel to work, school and for other journeys.

⁶ Recreation ground play area

10.5.1.3 Woodland, Nature areas and Gardens

Watts Wood is an informal nature reserve that lies to the East of Herringfield Drift. It is preserved as a wild area that supports local plants, birds and insects.

It is an area of about 2 ha on the site of the old sewage works south east of the village. It comprises planted woodland (mainly ash, oak, field maple and cherry) bisected by a drainage ditch flowing diagonally south west to north east. Old hedges occur on the west and north, though the boundary is open to the south and east. A network of paths provides public access around the perimeter with small tracks into the centre.

Five zones can be identified. These are woodland, open glade, stream banks, pathways and boundary. Parts of the planted woodland are rather too dense and the glades and stream bank show vigorous growth of both perennial and herbaceous species, which threaten the stability of this habitat.



Watts Wood is in the ownership of South Cambridgeshire District Council, although the Parish Council is looking at ways of purchasing it.

The village pond provides a good habitat for ducks and moorhens.

The area in front of United News has been landscaped and planted.

The corner of Harbour Avenue and Barton Road has been planted.

The recreation ground has some fine oak trees but is otherwise rather bleak.

The copse between the Bowls Club and the Meridian School playing field: although this attracts children who



⁷ Watts Wood open glade

⁸ Watts Wood boundary path on south east edge

⁹ Watts Wood stream bank and path

¹⁰ Recreation ground

come off the Recreation Ground to play at making dens.

10.5.1.4 Dog and Litter Bins

The last year has seen the installation of many smart new litter bins through the centre of the village, thanks to an anonymous donor. Some of the old bins thus replaced have been relocated to the recreation ground.

There is a multitude of dog bins placed all around the village, again thanks to the anonymous donor and to the Parish Council.

South Cambridgeshire District Council empty all the roadside litter and dog bins every Thursday. They are also contracted by the Parish Council to empty all the bins on the Recreation Ground.



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10.5.1.5 Recycling

The District Council fortnightly collection of paper/tins/bottles in the green boxes raises £5 per tonne collected for the parish council.

Aluminium and Steel Cans	
Food, drink and pet food cans and empty aerosols	
Newspaper and Magazines	
Including junk mail and white telephone directories	
Glass Bottles and Jars	
Please place in container next to the box	
Textiles	No plastics or cardboard can be collected
Clean and Dry, Usable Clothes	

¹¹ Dog bin

¹² Rustic litter bin in West Street

There is a recycling point on the road to Toft.

There is a community composting service run by the Greening Our Villages scheme.

10.5.2 Known Plans for the Future

10.5.2.1 Footpaths

Comberton is a member of The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) and the Open Spaces Society. As a member of the Parish Paths Partnership the Parish Council liaise with the County Council who have ultimate responsibility for the network of footpaths, bridleways and byways in the village. Each year, a report and an application for grants are submitted by the Parish Paths Co-ordinator to cover improvements to existing footpaths.

This year an application has been made for funding for a new 'kissing-gate' on the footpath between Swaynes Lane and Barton Road and also to improve drainage on the Drift.

Two new routes are proposed by the Parish Council and are under discussion with the County Council. These can be seen on the map on page 3 of this section. They are:

- West Street to the end of path No. FP4 (the path to Hardwick) parallel to Green End running behind Manor Farm.
- From The Drift to join up with the end of The Causeway going north around the farmland that lies east of the church.

The Herringland Drift is used by youths for trail biking. A Restricted Traffic Order (RTO) could be discussed with the County Council to control access and address the problem by making trail biking illegal on this stretch of highway.

There is a plan to produce a guide to the village's footpaths.

The Causeway is currently being restored to a cobbled path. Work on this is due to be completed by spring 2003.

10.5.2.2 Cycle Paths

No plans at present

10.5.2.3 Woodland, Nature areas and Gardens

The Jubilee Sensory Garden on Harbour Avenue Green has funding and following consultation is now under construction.

¹³



There are plans to return Watts Wood fully to Parish Council ownership.

10.5.2.4 Recycling

In the latest South Cambridgeshire News it was announced that from December all kerbside collections of the green box will be carried out on the same day of the week as normal refuse collection.

The District Council has plans currently under consideration to extend kerbside collections to include all 'green', biodegradable waste including kitchen and garden waste and possibly cardboard and Yellow Pages. This would increase the percentage recycled in the district from 18 % to 33% to comply with UK and EU agreed recycling targets.

The proposal is to have a two-bin system, one for the 'green' waste and another for everything else, this to be in addition to the green box currently in use for glass, cans and paper. Plastic sacks would no longer be used. This scheme should come into operation in the next 12-18 months.

10.5.3 Information from Village Appraisal and Meeting

At the village meeting there was concern at the inadequacy of litter and dog bins around the village but this has been largely addressed in the last year.

¹³ The Jubilee Sensory Garden

There was a desire for more woodland, trees and gardens and more local walks.

There was a need for more cycle paths, especially up Long Road and more footpaths around the village.

There were perceived road safety problems by both schools and at the crossroads (preferred solutions to these mostly lie with the Transport group).

There are some problems with

- traffic noise,
- low flying aircraft,
- motorcycle scrambling,
- farm smells
- bonfires

The key figures that emerged from the appraisal exercise pertaining to the environment were as follows:

- 68.9 % of respondents saw a problem with litter
- 24.5 % had a problem with bonfire smells
- 21.9 % had a problem with farm smells
- 20.2 % had a problem with motorbike scrambling
- 67.9 % would like to see more nature reserves
- 63.7 % would like more woodland
- 58 % would like more cycle paths, with 48.7 % of those wanting one up Long Road
- 71.3 % would like more local footpaths

In addition the following figures were recorded for issues pertaining to the transport group but impacting on the environment:

- 26% had a problem with traffic noise
- 60.1 % said that a big danger spot on the roads was at the Meridian school, 31.2 % at the village college and 46.4 % at the crossroads. 34.4 % supported the use of pelican crossings at these points.

10.5.4 Problems with Existing Environment

- A litter problem, which is not just one of not enough bins, but of attitudes amongst young people.
- Dog mess – again, a problem of attitude amongst dog owners.

- A shortage of good circular leisure walks in the Comberton area.
- A shortage of footpaths that might contribute to safer routes to school and around the village.
- A shortage of cycle routes, particularly through the centre of the village.
- The road out of Comberton to Toft is bleak and needs trees, as does the walk along the Drift.
- Recycling needs to be extended to other materials (plastics, cardboard, packaging, electrical goods) and use of the current kerbside collection needs to be encouraged around the village.
- The recreation ground environment has been neglected and does not provide an amenity for all sections of the community.
- There are problems with bonfire smells and farm smells and traffic noise.

10.5.5 Suggested Developments

Suggested developments are divided into those for the recreation ground and those for the village generally and into quick fixes (3-month timescale), short-term projects (1 year) and long term projects (5 years).

10.5.5.1 Quick Fix Projects

10.5.5.1.1 Recreation Ground

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
Two further litter bins to be added to the recreation ground	within 3 months	£50	Parish Council or by relocation of old bins if available.

10.5.5.1.2 General Village

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
An Anti-Litter campaign to be initiated	within 3 months	£0	Voluntary basis with help from the schools and community. Possible grant from CCC

Anti-dog fouling initiatives	Within 3 months	£150	Parish Council
Bonfire advice	Within 3 months	£0	
Publicising of the kerbside collection of bottles, cans and paper	Within 3 months		

10.5.5.2.1 Short Term Projects

10.5.5.2.1.1 Recreation Ground

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
Improve the Children's Playground	1 year	£8000	Parish Council, possibly using funds from Leach Home S106 Agreement, Grants from SCDC/National Playing Fields Association
Seating and shelter	1 year	£5,000 for youth shelter and ground works £3000e	Parish Council, Grants from SCDC, Safer Village Initiative and other sources
Landscaping of the above area to give more of a 'park' feel to the area	1 year	£500	Parish Council, CCC - free trees and hedging scheme
A low hedge or fence around the play area and its seating	1 year	£1,000	CCC free hedges and tree scheme
Some public art.	1 year	£5000	Grant from SCDC and possible other sources such as Awards for All
Tree planting within the playground and around the seating area to give shade.	1 year	Volunteer plantings supported by the Tree Group	CCC Countryside grant – free tree and hedge pack scheme

Planting of a new hedge on the South side of the recreation ground	2-3 years review	£0 - £1,000	Parish Council, CCC Countryside grant – tree and hedge pack scheme
A foot/cycle path across the South side of the recreation ground from Hines Lane to the Meridian School.	1 year First consultation of the safer routes	£0	Safer Routes to School (CCC)
Develop potential sites for planting small groups of trees throughout the village	1 year onwards	£250	CCC – free trees scheme. Sponsor trees
Hedges to be trimmed every two years to improve their value to wildlife	1 year		

See Section 10.3 Sport, Recreation and Community for further details.

10.5.5.2.1.2. General Village

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
A sustainable village initiative	1 year		SCDC, Cambridgeshire ACRE, Green Heat Ltd, Rural Action for the Environment, Greening our Villages
Support South Cambs District Council in two-bin system	1 year		
Acquire Watts Wood	1 year	£0 - £1,000	Parish Council

Investigate the track from Toft Road to join byway 9	1 year		Parish Paths Partnership Co-operation from local landowners + County Council
Improve appearances on path edges	1 year (then bi-annually)		
Restrict trail biking on The Herringland Drift	1 year	£300	Parish Council

10.5.5.3 Long Term Projects

10.5.5.3.1 Recreation Ground

The following projects may proceed if the land to the North of the recreation ground is acquired by the Parish Council.

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
Part of the new land to be given over as an area of woodland with a pond	5 years	included in Recreation and Leisure section	
Upgrade the footpath around the back of the Meridian School playing field to Janes Estate to a foot/cycle path	5 years		

10.5.5.3.2 General Village

Project	Timescale	Resources	Funding
New cycle path to Hardwick/ and or linking in with the new cycle path at the top of Long Road	5 years	£0	Parish Paths Partnership with co-operation from the landowner and the County Council.
Upgrade of the Drift and FP6 to Swaynes Lane to a cycle path	5 years		Waste materials from neighbouring development site and from road improvements where possible. P3 funding in place
Tree planting on the Drift from Watts Wood to proposed new byway	5 years		
Investigate New Byway to Church Farm and along the Road to Toft on the North Side	5 years		