

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

July 2009



MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Introduction

Forward

The village of **Marlesford** sits by the side of the A12 between Ipswich and Lowestoft eight miles north of Woodbridge. It lies on the cusp of the sandy heath land stretching to the coast in the east and the heavy Suffolk clay to the west. We have just over **a hundred dwellings** and a **good mix of age groups**. There are more under 16's than over 65's (23% and 15% respectively) living in the village.

In 1951 the majority of the population of 308 was born into the village and worked in the surrounding fields. Now few residents have any connection with agriculture and most are incomers. We are heavily reliant on the motorcar. On the other hand, everyone living in Marlesford can walk from their house into the fields and countryside around the village and many do.

As one schoolchild wrote in her essay entitled "Where I live", "Marlesford is conveniently situated for easy access to the resources offered by the nearby towns of Woodbridge, Framlingham and Saxmundham"

The origin of the name Marlesford is unclear but could be related to either **marl** (used to condition the heavy clay lands) or the **ford** (where the A12 crossed the River Ore) as the name may be derived from Maerles meaning a **mooring rope**.

Many people have worked hard to gather and collate the information given in this report and we have had some lively meetings. Contacts have been made, **friendships** formed, **initiatives** launched and **priorities** clarified.

Our thanks are due to Suffolk ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England), who offered advice and encouragement throughout the development of the whole programme and, not least, arranged the funding to pay for meetings, hall hire, printing etc.

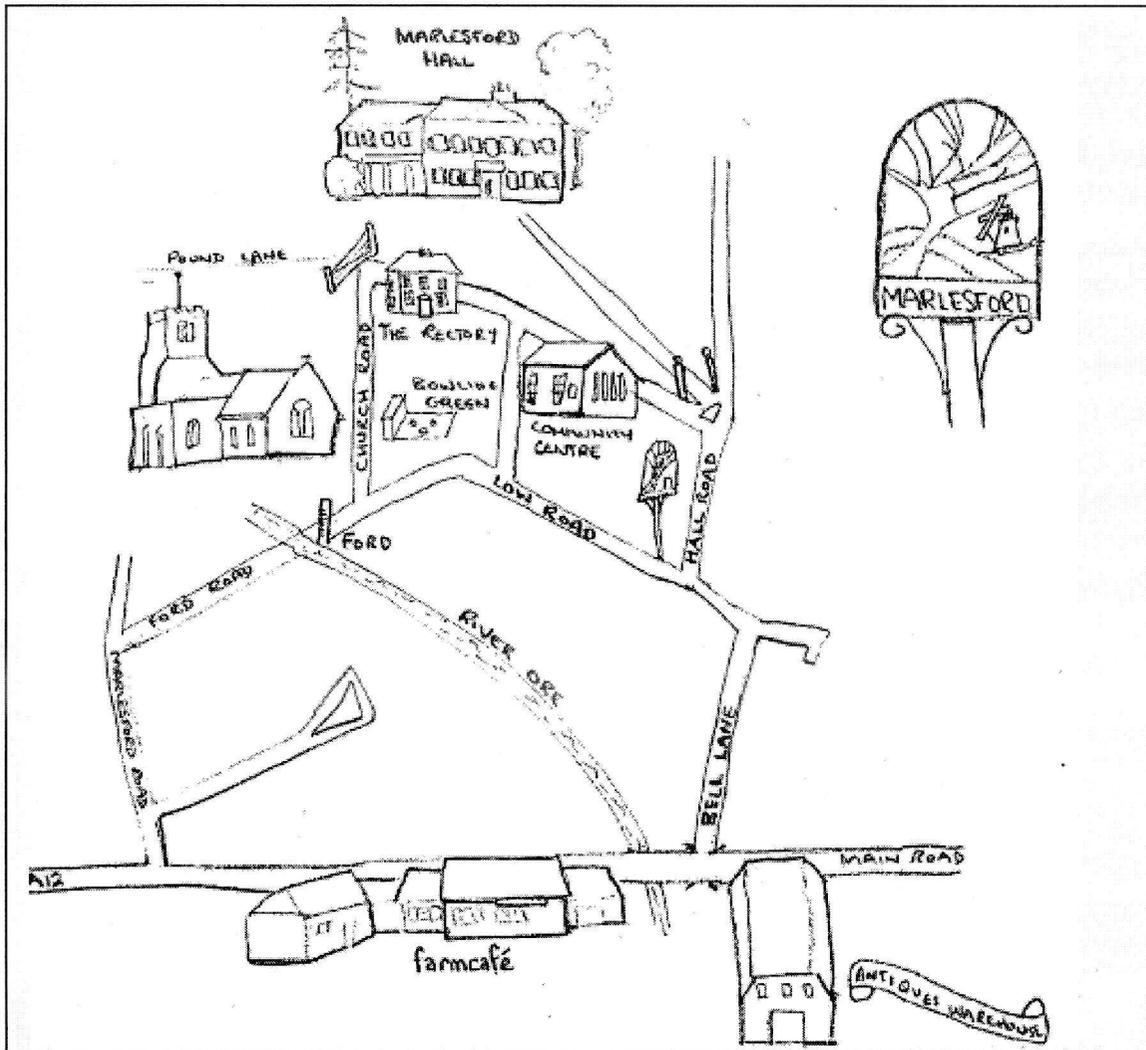
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MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Introduction

The Village



Acknowledgements

Thank you to those who helped to create the Parish Plan including everyone who completed a questionnaire, attended a workshop and volunteered to adopt issues.

Thank you to the collators and questionnaire distributors Mary Allen, Lesley Bensley, Paul and Margaret Bowyer-Burgess, Frankie Fisk (100% return), Emma Hawthorne, Amanda Hillier, Natasha Hunt, Lisa Kenyon, Niall and Wendi Pasco-McGregor, Alan and Katrina Rogers, Simon and Harriet Warriner, Roger and Nan Waterfall.

The report is welcomed by the Marlesford Parish Council and it will be recorded by the Council as a definitive statement of the views of village residents.

Lord Marlesford
Chairman of the Marlesford Parish
Council July 2009

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Introduction

Village History

Marlesford appears in the **Domesday Book** but dates from the much earlier Bronze Age period. In Norman times the Lords of Framlingham held demesne over Marlesford. The manor house exists today as **Marlesford Hall**.

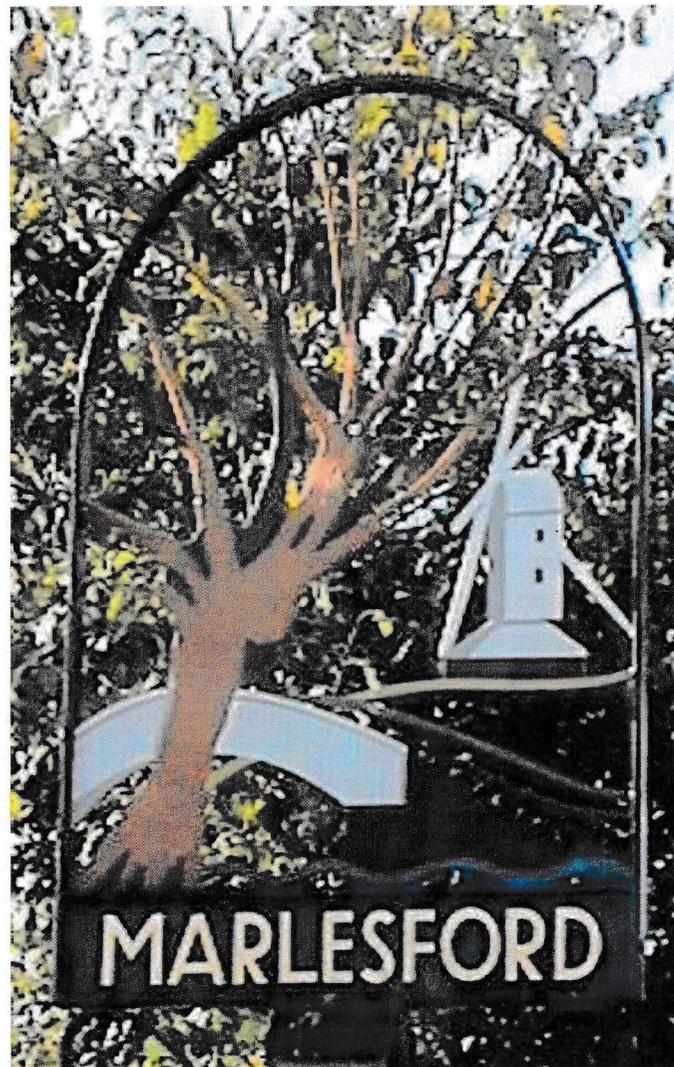
The medieval **church of St Andrew**, also mentioned in the Domesday book but with the major part of current building dating from the 14th and 15th century, stands on high ground overlooking the water meadows of the River Ore.

The village remained untouched from medieval times until traffic started to increase with the development of the road that was to become the **A12** and the **arrival of the railway**. The building of **Parham Airfield**, now disused and the arrival of the American Air force required a widening of many of the local roads. The village had **two fords** up to the 1950s, the one across Main Road has been removed from beside the A12 bridge but the one towards Hacheston remains.

Once boasting a **windmill**, mill, school, inn, station, fish and chip shop, garage, smithy and two general stores, all of these have disappeared although Main Road still retains **thriving commercial enterprises**.

Broome Hill, the Bowling Green and Quoit Meadow provided the focus of village social life and the **village hall** opened in 1965 remains to this day the hub of village events. Marlesford is administered by the Marlesford Parish Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council and is a designated conservation area.

A village sign was erected in 1977 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.



MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Introduction

The Village Now

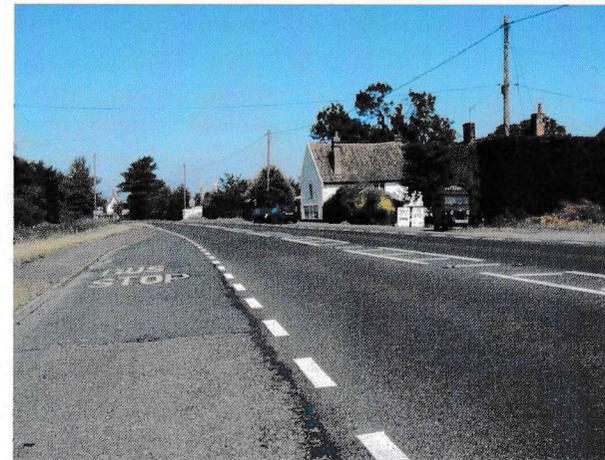
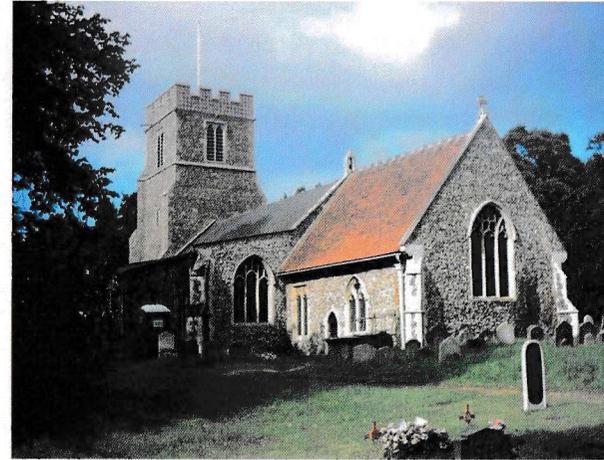
Marlesford nestles in rolling fields beside the A12, with the majority of the village hidden from sight to the casual passer-by. Its main roads describe a gentle curve with views across fields, still actively used for agriculture.

With a small population of 220, we are a close-knit community, and benefit from a village hall and Grade One listed **church** notable for its architecture as well as its spiritual side. We also benefit from our own award winning **farmcafé** and **foodmarket**. We are in close proximity to Wickham Market which provides good quality shopping facilities, as well as a range of other services, including a doctors' surgery, library and post office.

Taking a stroll down one of the footpaths that crisscross the land surrounding the village there is plenty of evidence of the former railway line that would once have whisked a traveller towards one of our surrounding villages. Nowadays we have a regular **train service** that leaves from Campsea Ashe (or Wickham Market if you work for the railway company !) with trains to Lowestoft, Ipswich and London. The A12 is both a blessing and a curse to the village, offering fast, **easy access** to the locality but also splitting one portion of the village from the other.

Marlesford retains much of its original character, with little infill or other new buildings detracting from the **picturesque** view. Following a project several years ago all cables in the centre of the village were buried, helping to retain a unique atmosphere and feel rarely found in modern life. Mains gas and sewage lines have yet to reach the village

The **Parish Plan** is a snapshot of our village, capturing a moment in time. It fulfils its function as a distillation of the village's plans and thoughts for the coming years.



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Development of the Parish Plan

Late in 2006, **Marlesford Parish Council** asked Suffolk ACRE about initiating a Parish Plan. Almost a year later, the first public meeting was held in the Village Hall.

Developing a parish plan enables the **whole local community** to have their say and become participants in local democracy. The Plan will demonstrate the community's needs for access to services and other facilities. Overall, the Plan should help shape the future of our village. Feedback from the Plan will help our Marlesford Parish Councillors better represent the views of our community and can be used by them as leverage to improve village facilities and services. In addition, features of local distinctiveness and character can be identified and preserved.

On a wider scale, the Plan will elucidate local priorities to our district and county council and hopefully influence their policy and spending. Outcome from the Plan can identify **areas that should be developed** and require support thereby providing evidence to be presented to potential funding agencies.

With assistance from Suffolk ACRE, to gather the information about Marlesford, four questionnaires were developed.

1. **Household** questionnaire distributed to each of the 107 dwellings in the village
2. **Individual** questionnaire, one for every resident in the village over the age of 17
3. **Youth** questionnaire given to each young person aged 10 to 17 years
4. **Business** questionnaire sent to all known business addresses, large and small

Once the questionnaires were collected, residents were invited to two workshops to discuss results and identify actions. Over fifty villagers attended the workshops and lively discussions resulted in many fruitful outcomes.

The issues raised and actions proposed in the Plan represent the views abstracted from the questionnaires returned and notes garnered at the consultation meetings. The majority of households contributed to the plan hence taking up the opportunity to shape the future of the village.

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Traffic and Transport

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

The A12 is a major source of concern

The **Bell Lane exit** to the A12 causes problems to both walkers and drivers based on a combination of poor visibility and speed of oncoming traffic. Whilst more than 50% of respondents would like a bypass, this maybe unrealistic in the short term. 37% would like a fixed **speed camera** and 30% are interested in **flashing speed signs**. There is also interest in a bridge.

Carry out traffic survey and send results to SCC

Investigate installing fixed speed cameras

Margaret Carswell
Brenda Lavender
farmcafé
Marlesford Parish Council
Suffolk County Council
SCDC
Suffolk Police

Buses are difficult to catch

Whilst 92.4% of respondents use their car as the main mode of transport there is substantial interest in **bus routes**. This is hampered by a lack of detailed **timetable** information and poor bus timings. Respondents would like better **synergy between buses and trains**, perhaps with a change of route via Wickham Market station.

Feedback concerns to the local bus companies

Request better display of timetable information

Car share to Wickham Market station

NXEA
First buses
Far East buses
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Marlesford Webmaster

Lack of teenage focused transport

The youth questionnaire has thrown up substantial amounts of data for better access to buses with a range of **suggestions for routes**.

Feedback concerns to the local bus companies

As above

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Local Services and Facilities - 1

THE ISSUES

There is an acknowledged lack of **recreational facilities** for **young people**

BACKGROUND

The village has a **hall** with one large room (12.5mx5.5m), a yard in poor repair and a small grassy area. The Kenbuchai martial arts club is the only regular user of the hall.

There is also a **bowling green**, with a hut. This area is only used occasionally e.g. for Summer Fete.

There is no **playing field** in Marlesford.. The Hall Road / Church Road corner, bowling green, Quoit Meadow and the field opposite the Slades were suggested as desirable community sites.

Returns from the *Youth Questionnaire* show strong enthusiasm for a **Youth Club** in Marlesford. Outdoor activities such as football and rounders are popular and pool would be a favourite indoor facility.

The majority of *Individual* returns thought that Marlesford should have a **children's play area**. The nearest is in Hacheston 1.5 miles away

ACTIONS

Set up Youth Club

Set up and run Mother and Toddler group

Run disco

Investigate village recreation areas

Outdoor play area at village hall to be investigated

PARTNERS

Clive Bridgeman

Ellain Rosher and
Natasha Hunt

Fran and Mike Smith

Teenage fundraisers

Marlesford Parish
Council

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Local Services and Facilities - 2

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

Provision of regular leisure facilities for adults is very limited

Some village activities such as **Sports Day 2007** and **Rounders Match 2008** have been well supported. Others such as the after-Christmas family party 2008 have not. **Publicity** can be a weak link in promoting these activities.

The popularity of a community **pub** or **cinema** evenings is unknown but run in neighbouring parishes.

There was a high response to the questions on new events and voluntary groups .

Set up Gardening Club

Improve publicity

Investigate further activities

Wendi Pasco-McGregor

Nan Waterfall

Lesley Bensley

Village Webmaster

Village Hall Committee

Maintenance of public footpaths is not to a good standard

Both *Individual* and *Youth* questionnaires placed a high value on the footpaths giving access to the countryside around Marlesford. However, lack of maintenance e.g. paths at side of A12 with overgrown hedgerows, made some difficult to use. Interest was expressed in a map of local footpaths.

Request complete path to Wickham Market without the need to cross A12

Request footpath between Hall Road and the Lodge

Commission map of local footpaths

Working party to tidy footpaths

Suffolk County Council

Marlesford Parish Council

Youth Club

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Local Services and Facilities - 3

THE ISSUES

The Village Hall is in a poor state of repair with very limited facilities.

A Good Neighbour scheme has been requested

BACKGROUND

The village hall has changed little in the last 50 years and, currently, it is **not an attractive venue** for potential users. 75% of respondents used the hall rarely ie once or twice a year. 20% stated they never came to the hall.

However, there was **strong support** for maintaining and improving the hall, with offers of practical help and financial assistance.

The Village Hall grounds featured strongly as an unsightly area that could be utilised more productively as a public space.

Marlesford has a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Responses indicated a **requirement for other support groups** such as Good Neighbour/Nominate a Neighbour and help with transport.

ACTIONS

Refurbish toilet block with disabled access and baby-changing facilities

Hall cleaning rota

Provide wheel-chair and buggy access

Build new road entrance between hall and shed .

Provide covered access to toilet block

Improve thermal insulation and heating system

Look after Village Hall grounds

Set up Good Neighbour or Nominate a Neighbour scheme

PARTNERS

Village Hall Committee

Marlesford Parish Council

Funding bodies e.g. 'Awards for All'
Suffolk ACRE
EEDA,
SCDC,
Suffolk Foundation

Marlesford Parish Council
SCDC

Parochial Church Council

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Environment - 1

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

Looking after the roadside

Marlesford has many **roadside** verges that are not kerbed, many damaged by cars and hence unsightly. 58% of respondents think regular cutting of the verge for wildlife is a good idea. 33% think there should be **ways to stop vehicles damaging the verges**.

Marlesford does not want street lighting.

Monitor the use of the village as a short cut for lorries and contact local bodies

Revisit the hedge and verge cutting policy to maximise biodiversity and conservation

Marlesford Parish Council

Suffolk Coastal District Council

Marlesford Estate

Amanda Hillier

Promote energy saving

The majority of the village use oil or electricity as their main energy source. Energy saving is considered down to individual households but there is interest in a **bulk buying group**. Interest was expressed in every house having a wind turbine and/or solar panels and moving more electricity and telephone **cables underground**.

Set up bulk buying group

Investigate moving cables underground

See advice on energy saving

Marlesford Parish Council

SCDC

Energy Savings Trust

Litter is an eternal problem

42% believe **litter removal** would help improve the village environment.

Run quarterly litter-pick days combined with village event

Marlesford PC
Amanda Hillier

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Environment - 2

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

Environmental projects

There are already some **environmental projects** such as a Conservation Area in the churchyard which are important to the character of the village. Projects suggested by respondents are allotments (27%), community orchard (28%), composting scheme (19%) and recording wildlife (19%).

The interest shown warrants further investigation.

Establish a village allotment

Investigate feasibility of community projects such as a community orchard and composting scheme

Suffolk Coastal District Council

Marlesford Parish Council

Marlesford Gardening Club

Parochial Church Council

Promoting recycling

Marlesford has a bottle and can **recycling facility** at the Village Hall which generates funds for the village and is well used, with a fortnightly collection of biodegradable items and garden waste by Suffolk Coastal District. 39% of the respondents said recycling should be promoted more.

More domestic refuse bins are required.

Recycling rests with domestic household and individual responsibilities. Individuals can contact the district council for more refuse bins and information on recycling.

Suffolk Coastal District Council

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Communications

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

What is the best way to share information to make it accessible to all, including younger village members?

The choices for sharing information among adults are the **Parish Magazine** (read by 80% of villagers), the **village website** (73% have **Internet access**) and **flyers**. Other methods chosen are village notice boards, poles, emails and the local paper.

Information to include how to contact local bodies, village events and who has specialist expertise.

Website development
 Village directory / newsletter
 Notice Board on the A12
 Make Parish Magazine free to all
 Email distribution list

Storacall Technology
 Village Hall Committee
 Marlesford Webmaster
 farmcafé
 Parochial Church Council

The role of Marlesford Parish Council is not known

On the role of the **Marlesford Parish Council** the biggest group answered 'Don't know'. 67% have never attended a Parish Council meeting. Only 15% of youths know how to contact a Parish Councillor.

Publicise minutes, contact details, responsibilities and dates of meetings (see above)

Marlesford Parish Council
 Marlesford Webmaster

Variable mobile and broadband coverage

30% of businesses found **mobile** services and **20%** found **broadband** unsatisfactory.

O2 coverage is very poor.

Request O2 mast at farmcafé
 Extend wi-fi hub from Framlingham

farmcafé
 O2
 Storacall Technology
 Frambroadband

MARLESFORD PARISH PLAN

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

THE ISSUES

BACKGROUND

ACTIONS

PARTNERS

Vandalism has been an issue

For a period **vandalism** became an issue in the village. This has now largely been resolved.

A recent police presentation confirmed their lack of presence is due to lack of issues

Marlesford Parish Council
Suffolk Constabulary
Neighbourhood Watch

Dog fouling

Many residents of Marlesford have dogs, but there is little facility made for them to dispose of **dog waste**. This has led to verges outside houses being used and several residents have needed to make signs asking people to clear up after their dogs. Dog fouling is the second highest concern after vandalism in the village at 43%.

Review dog waste bins
Increase 'Do not poo here' signage

Marlesford Parish Council
Fran Smith
Suffolk Coastal District Council

Speeding in the village

Many respondents feel that cars drive **too fast** through the village, particularly on the road to Parham.

Narrow lanes that double as **footpaths** are dangerous for walkers, cyclists and other drivers.

Lower speed limit on Parham Road
Remove 30 mph sign on Low Road
Investigate traffic calming measures

Marlesford Parish Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Niall Pasco-Mcgregor
Suffolk County Council