

The story of the Ruscombe Village Design Statement (VDS)

2006

With full encouragement and support from Ruscombe Parish Council, the Ruscombe VDS Steering Group was formed in 2006. This followed a very useful Open Forum presentation by Jane Ireland of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on the reasons and benefits of creating a VDS, unique to the needs of Ruscombe.

The first task for the VDS Steering Group was to understand the likes and dislikes about the Parish from those who live and/or work here. To achieve this, a VDS questionnaire was created and hand delivered in late 2006 to each home. This provided the first opportunity for everyone to stop and think for a moment about their Parish and how they would like to see it grow.

2007

The level of response was higher than one might have expected from such a questionnaire. Once analysed, this showed there was a genuine interest in the future, coupled with a desire to protect the distinctive character and features of the village. From this, the VDS Steering Group was able to focus on those issues of particular interest and concern to the residents.

2007 ~ 2008

Much valuable time was spent by the VDS Steering Group in drafting a framework for the VDS and, from this, producing the early versions of a draft text. A public display of thinking to date was presented at the Ruscombe Annual Parish Meeting in Spring 2007 which was well attended. From this, some valuable comments and guidelines were obtained. Further draft texts were created and reviewed by the VDS Steering Group over the following months.

2008 ~ 2009

This saw a temporary halt in further work on the VDS, pending more information on the overarching VDS Document being developed by WBC. However, the VDS Steering Group reconvened in mid 2009 to plan a second display of both text and optional photographs for resident consultation. This meeting in Loddon Hall was held in December 2009 and more useful public comments were noted..

2010

With confidence that the VDS Steering Group had the support of the residents, the latest completed version of the Ruscombe VDS was submitted to those in the wider business/commercial world, who worked in or provided services to Ruscombe Parish.

Resulting from the results of wider consultations, Ruscombe Parish Council launched the final draft version of the Ruscombe VDS Document at their Annual Parish Meeting in May 2010.

Acknowledgements

Ruscombe Parish Council wishes to express its sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the creation of a focused and informative VDS. In particular, we wish to highlight:

- ~ *the hard working members of the Ruscombe VDS Steering Group*
- ~ *Ms Jane Ireland, WBC Principal Planner, Land Use and Transport Policy & Partnerships*
- ~ *the Residents and Business/Commercial communities of Ruscombe*