

Foreword

In November 2000 a Rural White Paper issued by the Government launched the concept of a Parish Plan. The White Paper stated that the Plan 'should identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved'. The Government asked the Countryside Agency to take forward the concept and funding was made available to help Parish Councils prepare their Plan. Hanley Castle Parish Council was keen to participate and early in 2002 a group of volunteers met to decide how best to proceed. A working party was formed and a grant applied for from the Countryside Agency. Once this had been agreed work began. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to and collected from every household in the parish. Five hundred were delivered and 347 were returned representing a sample of nearly 70% of all households. This was an excellent response and the working party thank all residents for their enthusiastic and valuable support. In addition a Business Questionnaire was personally discussed with around 80 businesses which operate within the parish. The teachers and pupils of the two schools in the parish were invited to comment, as were a sample group of teenagers. Two presentations were staged in the village hall. The first was to launch the plan, the second to reveal the results. Both presentations involved visual display material and the chance to comment and discuss. The working party was much encouraged in its efforts by the number of visitors and their enthusiastic participation. This is the finished work. The first section of the Plan is the main report presenting the conclusions and policy statements. These were drawn from the detailed results as set out in the second section of the Plan on the green pages at the back. The Parish Council and the Working Party hope you will find it stimulating reading and that the Action Plan will assure you of continued monitoring of the issues raised. All the action plans require facilitators and partners. In many cases this will be the Parish Council but there remains a great deal that can be undertaken by you the residents. Please consider how valuable your contribution could be in ensuring Hanley Castle Parish continues to be the place where 99% of respondents said they were happy to live.

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The parish of Hanley Castle lies some 10 miles from the County Town of Worcester and is bordered to the Northwest by Malvern and the Southeast by Upton-upon-Severn. The River Severn forms the Eastern boundary of the parish which is surrounded by farmland. There are three settlements, the largest being Hanley Swan which has a primary school, two churches, a village stores and post office, a butchers, a bakers and a public house. It also has a traditional village green and village pond. Hanley Swan has a well-used village hall run by a management committee and situated behind the hall is a playing field and play area which is administered by the Parish Council. Hanley Castle is smaller and has a church, a village stores and post office, a public house and a high school. The third settlement is Gilberts End which consists solely of a lane with houses and farms. There are almost 100 businesses in the parish but the larger of these are situated on a small estate away from the settlement areas. The population of the parish in 2003 numbers 1250.