



DATCHET PARISH COUNCIL

Long-Term Strategic Vision 2025–2035

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DATCHET PARISH COUNCIL

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION 2025–2035 (DRAFT)

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Datchet Parish Council (DPC) Strategic Plan sets out the council's vision, priorities and actions for 2025–2035. It is a practical, multi-year framework for decision-making and public accountability — describing what the council will maintain today and build for the future.

The council's work is expressed through two complementary roles:

1. **Supporting everyday life** — delivering core services that keep the parish safe, attractive and operational.
2. **Building a better future** — delivering long-term projects and policies that improve infrastructure, protect heritage and support sustainability.

INTRODUCTION, VISION AND VALUES

This strategy is informed by the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP), the DPC Strategic Vision and Values, and guidance from the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG). It provides strategic direction for community initiatives, asset management, planning scrutiny and budget prioritisation over the next ten years.

Vision

To foster a vibrant, thriving and sustainable village where a strong sense of community supports resident wellbeing, preserves village character, and protects our heritage for future generations.

VALUES

All DPC decisions and projects are guided by five core values:

- **Community Focus & Empowerment** — prioritise residents' needs, actively engage local people and groups in planning and delivery.
- **Heritage Guardianship** — protect and enhance Datchet's historic character; spending must at least maintain (and preferably enhance) the village's historical and cultural values; change must be respectful and in keeping with village needs.
- **Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship** — adopt environmentally responsible practices, require independent ecological evidence where needed, and follow the DPC environmental statement.



- **Transparency & Collaboration** — open processes, clear documentation, third-party validation with DPC oversight, and active collaboration with village societies and statutory partners.
- **Respectful Leadership** — act with integrity and respect; uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life. Ensure robust self-governance and that all relevant voices are heard.

STRATEGIC PILLARS (A–E)

A. Preserving and Enhancing Datchet's Heritage

Datchet's heritage assets and memorials require systematic stewardship.

Key commitments

- **Heritage & Memorials Working Group:** create the proposed group (councillors, residents, Datchet Village Society, etc.) to identify, document and monitor heritage items (including war graves and the WWI Crucifix).
- **Condition reporting & conservation:** prepare condition reports and repair estimates for significant memorials and monuments; schedule routine maintenance for assets such as the listed Milestone (cleaned annually).
- **Local heritage list & Conservation Area:** contribute to a comprehensive local heritage register for borough inclusion; ask RBWM to review and strengthen Datchet's Conservation Area Statement and management recommendations; increase public awareness of Conservation Area rules.

B. Stewarding Green Spaces & the Village Centre

Protect and enhance the village greens, the Recreation Ground, and riverside spaces that define Datchet's character.

Village Greens

- Treat The Green as the parish's primary open space and a focal point for ceremonies and events.
- Consider sensitive improvements (e.g., selective cobbling of Memorial Green and North Green edging), restore disturbed gravel, and install interpretive plaques (for example, to acknowledge the Larcombe family and the defibrillator donation).

Recreation Ground ("the Rec")

- Recognise the Rec (≈6.37 hectares) as the village's largest green space, a key leisure facility and a floodplain (Flood Zone 3).



- **Ditch management:** clear detritus and tackle fly-tipping; consider pump-out chambers/trash screens only after detailed hydrological modelling; prioritise biodiversity (documented species including Great Crested Newts) and explore Natural Flood Management (NFM) as alternatives or complements to engineered solutions.
- **Bridges:** assess structural condition of Rec bridges — notably the 70+ year-old road bridge linking the surgery and DPC yard to the village hall complex — and plan improvements/replacement in consultation with PWL, EA and RBWM, mindful of flood requirements.
- **Leisure & facilities:** support improvements to play areas, tennis courts, MUGA, the Green Gym and football pitches. Explore additions such as a Pickleball court and upgrades or a new clubhouse for Datchet Football Club, subject to grant funding and leases.

Riverside

- Protect public access and views along the River Thames, ensuring developments do not significantly impair riverside vistas (referencing RBWM Townscape Assessment). Continue to maintain the Riverside Garden for diverse uses (sitting, picnicking, fishing, kayaking, Thames Path access).

C. Sustainable Development & Infrastructure

With 80–85% of Datchet in Flood Zones 2 & 3, sustainability and flood resilience are central to planning.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- Require Flood Risk Assessments for developments in Flood Zone 3; promote flood-resilient designs and floor levels (minimum 300mm above 1-in-100-year river flood level for new buildings in Flood Zones 2 & 3).
- Promote SuDS focused on surface and shallow solutions (avoid infiltration in high groundwater areas). Support maintenance and retention of existing bunds (Sumptermead and Southlea) ensuring they do not transfer risk elsewhere.

Strategic Flood Projects

- Continue engagement with the Environment Agency on Datchet-to-Hythe End improvements and the River Thames Scheme (RTS), while recognising partnership funding constraints.



Planning, Enforcement & Policy Tools

- Scrutinise planning applications that impact flood zones or heritage assets (e.g., monitor developments such as AL39 near London Road and address piecemeal variations).
- Work with RBWM to pursue timely enforcement against unauthorised development. Explore an Article 4 Direction to limit permitted development rights in sensitive flood areas — particularly where RTS Channel 1 is not progressing.

Highways, Movement & Parking

- Review traffic, parking management and TROs; consider LTN solutions where appropriate. Address parking pressure around level crossings, Satis House, the Parish Office, Village Hall and Doctors' car park. Act on fly-tipping concerns with RBWM and improve crossing points, active travel infrastructure and pavement/road quality.

Health Centre

- Support the Datchet Health Centre's role within the village. Explore sensible expansion of services and improved integration with DPC-owned facilities.

Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure

- Promote a minimum 10% net biodiversity gain for new developments; work with RBWM and local environmental groups on habitat enhancements, wildlife-friendly planting, mowing regime changes (e.g., reduce mown areas on the Rec, create meadows/orchards on Sabatini land), and protect Local Wildlife Sites (Datchet Common, Willowfields).

Local Businesses

- Encourage business engagement in village life and high premises standards. Address issues like inappropriate signage, waste, uncollected bins, illegal parking and customer-related anti-social behaviour collaboratively.

D. Village Hall Complex & Other DPC-Owned Properties

Manage council assets to meet community needs while improving sustainability and governance.

Village Hall Governance

- Acknowledge DPC's role as sole trustee of the Datchet Recreation Centre Charitable Trust. Maintain separate charity accounts annexed to Parish Council accounts, produce



separate minutes for charity business, and resolve outstanding land title transfers to ensure proper vesting.

Sustainability & Power

- Pursue sustainable energy and water management across DPC properties — insulation upgrades, power management, and practical renewable generation where feasible.

Property Management

- Implement internal audit recommendations: update leases (e.g., football club changing rooms), regularise utility invoicing, commission condition surveys, and produce a comprehensive map and listing of DPC-owned/leased land (including Willowfields and Mill Place) with ownership status and lease terms.

Maintenance

- Tackle priority remedial works (e.g., Village Hall heating). Determine ownership and quotes for unresolved maintenance items such as the disused ditch between Horton Road and the Holmlea Estate and tree works where necessary.

E. Fostering a Cohesive, Engaged Community

A strong sense of community is essential to Datchet's wellbeing.

Community Events

- Continue support for signature events (Christmas on The Green, VE Day, the village fete, the Ellis Journey), which build cohesion and local identity.

Communication & Engagement

- DPC has appointed a Communications Lead Councillor and regained control of some of its social media channels, improving communication with the community. Regular sessions with residents, businesses and councillors are now held to focus on village centre and High Street issues.

Public Participation

- Maintain robust Public Question Time at council meetings and ensure transparent reporting and record-keeping so the public can scrutinise decisions.

Internal Governance & Staffing

- Strengthen governance through updated HR policies (Pension Discretions, Compassionate Leave, TOIL, Emergency Dependants Leave, Annual Leave amendment) and act on internal audit recommendations.



Community Partnerships

- Deepen links with local schools (St Mary's C of E Primary Academy, Churchmead C of E School), churches (e.g., St Mary's spire landmark), and community groups (Datchet Village Society, Wild About Datchet). Collaborate on safe routes to school, heritage projects, biodiversity work, and DNP consultations.

BUDGET PRINCIPLES, TYPES OF EXPENDITURE & PLANNING PROCESS

Datchet Parish Council Guiding Principles for Budget Planning

All budget items must reflect DPC's core values: community focus, heritage guardianship, sustainability, transparency and respectful leadership. Budgets must comply with legal and regulatory standards and be supported by clear documentation and third-party validation when required.

Types of Expenditure

1. Maintenance / Operational (Recurring)

- Utilities (Village Hall, office, changing rooms).
- Grounds maintenance and annual contracts.
- Staff salaries and pensions.
- Annual events (Christmas on the Green, safety inspections, floral displays).

2. Projects / Capital (One-off or Multi-year)

- Major repairs/installs (Village Hall heating repair, cemetery paths, welcome signs).
- Heritage conservation (WWI Crucifix repair, expert condition reports).
- Infrastructure improvements (cobbling Memorial Green edges, Rec bridges and paths).
- Flood mitigation measures (pump-out chambers, trash screens — subject to assessment).
- New facilities (clubhouse, playground equipment, Pickleball court).
- Biodiversity / NFM initiatives and habitat creation.

Strategic Budget Planning Process (10-year horizon)

- **Leads** prepare 10-year plans for their areas aligned to the strategic vision.



- Plans should: identify strategic projects, propose indicative timelines, provide high-level cost estimates, and justify need (including environmental impact assessments and cost-benefit where appropriate).
- Plans must demonstrate benefits to village culture and heritage and allow for public scrutiny via consultations, drop-ins and presentations.
- The council will proactively collaborate with authorities (Environment Agency, RBWM, Natural England) and village groups to leverage expertise and funding.

Annual Budgeting

- Annual budgets must flow from the 10-year plan and provide detailed costings and timelines for the coming financial year. All proposals are subject to DPC approval and comprehensive documentation.

GOVERNANCE, STAFF, ASSETS & FINANCIALS

Council Composition & Meetings

- **15 councillors**, elected every four years (next election: **May 2027**). *Contact details for councillors can be found by [clicking here](#).*
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected annually at the May Annual Parish Council Meeting.
- Full Council meets monthly on the **second Monday** of the month. Meetings are open to the public and include Public Question Time.
- Agendas are published on village noticeboards and the Parish Council website.
Meeting dates can be found by [clicking here](#).

Committees

There are Two permanent committees:

Finance - The Committee monitors the Council's finances and resources in partnership with the RFO, and recommends the annual budget and precept in line with Financial Regulations. It ensures that effective internal controls are in place, reviews income, expenditure and budget performance, and advises the Council on the financial implications of its policies and projects. The Committee also monitors reserve levels and recommends appropriate general and earmarked reserves. It considers any additional finance or governance matters referred to it by the Full Council.

Staffing Committee - The Committee's primary purpose is to ensure the Council complies with the requirements of employment laws and follows best practice in



providing good working conditions for employees of the Parish Council including recruitment and welfare

Lead and Deputy Members

Datchet Parish Council appoints Lead Members to oversee key service areas including Grounds, Planning, Events, Flooding, Highways, Cemetery, Properties, and Communications. Each Lead Member acts as the council's main point of contact for their portfolio, guiding policy, monitoring delivery, and reporting back to the council. Deputies are appointed to provide continuity, share workload, and ensure resilience when the Lead is unavailable. This structure helps the council maintain clear accountability, strengthens collaboration, and ensures residents always know which councillor to approach on specific issues

Parish Council Staff/Contractors

- **Three staff members:**
 - The Clerk (Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer — CiLCA-qualified).
 - Admin Assistant
 - Cemetery Warden.
- **Contractors that support the Parish Council:**
 - Finance Officer
 - Groundmen

Responsibilities & Services (overview) *More information can be found on the website by [clicking here](#)*

DPC responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Public spaces & parks:** [Recreation Ground](#), [Willowfields](#), [Land at Mill Place](#), [Village Greens](#), [Sabatini land](#), [Datchet Riverside](#).
- **Play & recreation facilities:** [Spar](#) and [Typodra](#) play areas, [Tennis court](#), [MUGA](#), [Green Gym](#).
- **Community events & amenities:** Christmas on the Green, Santa's Sleigh Ride, village tree, festive lighting and village flowers.
- **Public amenities & property:** [Parish Office](#), Parish Yard, [Datchet Cemetery](#), Cemetery Chapel, Chapel Lodge, [The Bridge Café](#).
- **Safety & emergency:** Defibrillators and community CCTV.



- **Supporting local groups:** [Datchet United Charities](#), Datchet Football Club, 2nd Datchet Scouts, The Bridge Café, Datchet Health Centre, [Datchet Library](#), [Police Point](#).
- **Health, cleanliness & flood mitigation:** ditch clearance, drainage management, dog bins, litter picking.

Charities & Trustee Roles

- DPC serves as Custodian and Managing Trustee for three local charities: Datchet Recreation Centre Charitable Trust, Datchet Hall Endowment Fund, and Recreation Ground Charity. The Council will continue to fulfil its trustee responsibilities, ensuring proper accounting, governance, and compliance with statutory obligations.

General Power of Competence (GPC)

- Under the Localism Act 2011, eligible councils may adopt the General Power of Competence. Requirements: a CiLCA-qualified Clerk and at least two-thirds of councillors must be elected (not co-opted). DPC's Clerk is CiLCA-qualified; once 10 of 15 councillors are elected, the Council can resolve to adopt GPC.

Financial Overview (2025/26)

- Precept agreed for 2025/26: £264,787, equating to £116.37 per Band D property for the financial year.
- Additional income comes from cemetery sales/interments, land, rentals and leases.
- The council maintains general and earmarked reserves for emergencies and specific projects.
- Strong financial governance is maintained through regular internal and external audit: internal audit reviews controls and procedures; external audit provides independent assurance of accounts' accuracy and compliance.

Key Planning & Policy References

- **Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP):** The primary local strategic planning framework.
- **Datchet Design Guide:** Guidance on design principles and standards for development.
- **Conservation Area Policies:** Management and protection guidelines, to be strengthened in collaboration with RBWM.
- **Local Plan:** The wider statutory planning context governing development within the parish.



FINAL NOTE

This comprehensive strategy is intended to guide Datchet Parish Council's decisions, budgets and community engagement over the next decade while preserving the village's heritage, enhancing its green spaces, improving resilience to flooding, and strengthening community cohesion.

The Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) is responsible for guiding the development and delivery of the Strategic Plan. It identifies achievable actions, proposes realistic timescales, and outlines budget requirements for recommendation to Full Council. As a living document, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to reflect emerging priorities and community needs.

The Working Group and actions will be monitored by full council and the Plan will be monitored annually and readopted by full council. A copy of the plan will be available on the parish council website.

Administration – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Ensure effective internal governance	Full Council	Policy review, council minutes, internal audit	Ongoing	Supports transparency and statutory compliance
Strengthen HR management and staff support	Staffing Committee, HR advisors, staff	Staff appraisals, training, policy updates	Ongoing	Align with new HR policies
Maintain statutory compliance	Full Council	Financial regs, data protection, transparency requirements	Ongoing	Regular review to meet legal obligations

Cemetery – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Maintain cemetery grounds and facilities	Cemetery Lead /Clerk	Grass cutting, tree maintenance, litter clearance	Ongoing	Regular inspections required
Ensure compliance with statutory and safety requirements	Clerk/RFO, contractors	Safety inspections, signage, record keeping	Annual	Legal compliance and risk management
Improve accessibility and visitor experience	Residents, contractors	Pathway improvements, seating, memorial upkeep	2025–2030	Promote respectful visitor access

Communication – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Strengthen resident engagement	Communications Lead, Residents, community groups	Public meetings, newsletters, surveys	Ongoing	Focus on inclusivity
Develop social media presence	Admin staff	Reclaim/manage DPC channels, regular content updates	2025	Work in progress
Improve information sharing with local groups	Schools, churches, societies	Regular updates, liaison meetings, community briefings	Ongoing	Supports Strategic Plan awareness

Events – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Deliver key village events	Volunteers, local organisations	Christmas on the Green, VE Day celebrations, village fete, Ellis Journey	Annual	Ensure proper insurance and permissions
Encourage community participation	Residents, schools, groups	Volunteer coordination, publicity, event planning	Annual	Promote inclusivity and engagement
Ensure safety and compliance at events	Contractors, emergency services	Risk assessments, traffic management, safety inspections	Per event	Adherence to legal requirements

Flooding – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Mitigate flood risk in the parish	RBWM, Environment Agency	Maintain bunds, ditches, and drainage; assess NFM techniques	Ongoing	Critical for Flood Zones 2 & 3
Engage with external partners	Environment Agency, Natural England	Collaboration on flood alleviation projects	2025–2035	Includes River Thames Scheme & Datchet-Hythe End improvements
Promote community resilience	Residents, schools	Awareness campaigns, emergency planning, volunteer coordination	Ongoing	Supports parish-wide preparedness

Grounds – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Maintain Recreation Ground and Village Greens	Local volunteers, contractors	Grass cutting, hedge trimming, litter picking, inspections, gravel restoration	Ongoing / seasonal	Maintain Conservation Area standards
Enhance biodiversity in public green spaces	Wild About Datchet, RBWM, residents	Wildlife-friendly planting, meadow areas, pollinator habitats, ditch biodiversity management	2025–2035	Coordinate with flood management efforts
Maintain and monitor footpaths and public access	Residents, contractors	Path repairs, signage, accessibility improvements	Annual review	Safety and accessibility compliance

Highways – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Reduce traffic congestion	RBWM, residents	Traffic reviews, TROs, LTN feasibility studies	2025–2035	Focus on village centre and Level Crossing
Improve pedestrian and cycling safety	Schools, residents, RBWM	Crossing upgrades, pavement repairs, cycle lanes	2025–2030	Includes safe school routes
Manage parking issues	Residents, enforcement officers	Enforcement liaison, signage, consultation	Ongoing	Monitor problem areas near High Street

Planning – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Monitor planning applications	Residents, RBWM	Review applications, provide comments, advise Full Council	Ongoing	Focus on flood zones and heritage assets
Protect heritage and Conservation Areas	Datchet Village Society, RBWM	Assess proposals, consult, monitor compliance	Ongoing	Strengthen Conservation Area protections
Support sustainable development	RBWM, environmental groups	Promote flood-resilient designs, biodiversity measures	Ongoing	Align with Strategic Plan values

Properties – Objectives				
Objective	Parties Involved	Activities	Timescale	Notes
Maintain Village Hall Complex and other DPC properties	Contractors, Users	Repairs, cleaning, inspections, heating upgrades	Ongoing	Include sustainability checks
Improve sustainability of DPC buildings	Energy consultants	Solar panels, insulation, rainwater harvesting, energy monitoring	2025–2030	Align with environmental policy
Ensure proper property management and lease compliance	Legal advisors, tenants	Review leases, agreements, audits, compliance checks	Annual	Clarify ownership/title issues

Budgeted Projects 2026–2027

Admin Projects (Legal & Professional)					
Project	Budget 2026–27	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
LAMP Legal Fees	£27,020	£9,980	Until resolved	LAMP Committee /Clerk	Project approved by Council
DRCCT Legal Fees	£2,000	–	Until resolved	Clerk/Chairman	Project approved
TOTAL	£29,020	–			–

Cemetery Projects 2026–27					
Project	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
Cemetery Path Construction	£0	£0	2027/28	Lead Member Cemetery /Clerk	Approved by Council (EMR)
Mortuary Store Refurb	£10,000	£0	May-26	Lead Member Cemetery /Clerk	Project approved
CCTV Phase 2	£1,000	£0		Lead Member Cemetery /Clerk	Approved (EMR)
Remembrance Garden	£1,000	£0		Lead Member Cemetery /Clerk	Approved, subject to updated quotes (EMR)
TOTAL	£12,000	–			–

Events 2026–27					
Event	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
Christmas on the Green	£3,000		Dec 2026	Lead Member Events /Clerk	Annual event
Ellis Journey	£2,000		June 2026	Lead Member Events /Clerk	Returning 2026–27

Events General Promotion	£1,000		2026/27	Lead Member Events /Clerk	–
Datchet Fete	£250		June 2026	Lead Member Events /Clerk	Annual event
TOTAL	£6,250				–

Flooding 2026–27					
Project	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
Flooding Advisory Documents	£400			Deputy of Flooding/Clerk	–
Cont. Rail Tunnel Blocking PRJ	£500			Lead Member of Flooding/Clerk	–
Hire Flood Mobile Display	£2,000			Deputy of Flooding/Clerk	–
TOTAL	£2,900				–

Grounds Projects 2026–27					
Project	Budget 26–27	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
Riverside Refurb	£0	£6,000			Previously approved
Typodra Enhancements	£0	£5,760			Playground Renewal EMR
Rec Ditch Phase 1 (Ditch Pump Out)	£0	£11,150			EMR
Rec Ditch Phase 2 (Ditch Culvert)	£0	£56,450			EMR
Christmas Lights Expansion	£0	£3,000			Expand to other areas
Recreation Ground Path	£5,000	£10,000			Renewal (EMR)
Parish Yard Toilet	£7,000	£0			Must-do, H&S requirement
LAMP Clean Up	£2,000	£0			Required work
Play & Tennis Fencing Repair	£3,000	£0			Required safety work
Tree Planting & Renaturing Rec	£5,000	£0			Approved

Biodiversity/Eco Survey	£2,500	£0			Needs approval once quotes received
Rec Gate Engineering	£2,000	£0			Access & security
Cob Close Fencing	£3,200	£0			Needs approval
Hydrologist / Ditch & Water Expert	£3,000	£0			Needs approval
TOTAL	£32,700	–			–

Highways 2026–27					
Project	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
Public Consultation Jan 2026	£200		Jan 2026	Lead and Deputy Highways /Clerk	–
Public Consultation Mar 2026	£200		Mar 2026	Lead and Deputy Highways /Clerk	–
Traffic Survey	£2,000			Lead and Deputy Highways /Clerk	–
Low Traffic Solution	£4,000			Lead and Deputy Highways /Clerk	–
TOTAL	£6,400				–

Planning 2026–27					
Project	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
AL39 Legal & Technical Fees	£5,000			Lead Member of Planning /Clerk	For expert and legal advice
TOTAL	£5,000				–

Properties Projects 2026–27					
Project	Budget	C/F or EMR	Timescale	Responsible Member	Notes
24 The Green Refurb	£20,000	£0		Lead member of Properties/ Clerk	Must-do project; requires Council approval after quotes
Register unregistered land/buildings	£1,000	£0		Clerk	Required admin; EMR allocated
Properties Maintenance Fund	£1,000	£0		Lead member of Properties/ Clerk	Long-term preservation fund (EMR)
TOTAL	£22,000	–			–