



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Hampshire
County Council

Emsworth Town Partnership Action Plan 2008



Prepared by Sarah Snowden (Market Town Initiative Officer, Hampshire County Council) on behalf of the Emsworth Town Partnership and Hampshire County Council's Market Town Initiative.



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1. Foreward

"The Market Town Initiative [MTI] gave residents the opportunity of taking a step back and looking at life here in Emsworth. Research was supported by students from universities outside the town and was invaluable in giving some objectivity to our work.

It is not surprising that we found that Emsworth to be a stable and well knit community with fewer problems than might be found elsewhere in the Borough. People here are determined to ensure that we plan carefully for the future to ensure that many generations of residents can enjoy community life in this beautiful location at the Head of Chichester Harbour. We hope the work started by MTI will be continued and developed through the Town Partnership which will carry the aspirations of residents of the town well into the future"

Brendan Gibb-Gray
Chair, Emsworth Town Partnership

2. Emsworth's Market Town Initiative Background

For centuries our small rural towns have been the focal point for economic and social activity. However, in recent years, the traditional function of rural 'market' towns have been undermined through social, agricultural and technical change, and some towns are struggling to keep the services and facilities they need to serve those who use them.

In order to preserve and develop the viability of Hampshire's small rural towns, the Economic Development Office of Hampshire County Council (HCC), supported by the South-East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and other partners, is leading the market town project. One of the activities it promotes is the healthcheck process, which is a method of enabling and influencing communities to manage their own change and growth. Quite simply, it is an audit of how the town looks, works and feels. Carried out by the community, it brings together people from diverse backgrounds, collects available data in one place, underpins and influences local and

wider planning strategies, and provides access to funding channels. By following the process, towns are able to identify their own distinctive profile, celebrate and promote their uniqueness, and have a solid action plan for the partnership to take forward.

Emsworth was chosen to take part in the Hampshire Market Town Initiative and the project was launched in August 2005. Project Officer Sarah Snowden was recruited, funded by the Area Investment Framework, managed by Hampshire County Council and supported by Havant Borough Council. The Chair of the Emsworth Business Association (EBA) agreed to Chair the group and were an invaluable support to the research activities throughout. A group of enthusiastic local people assisted with gathering facts and figures for the healthcheck document and in spring 2007 the Emsworth Town Partnership (ETP) was formed, which represents community groups, businesses, churches, youth groups and interested parties in the town. This report is the result of the public consultations and findings of the healthcheck, which takes a holistic factually-based approach to looking at all aspects of quality of life in a market town and identifying weaknesses or gaps in service provision. It is a community-led approach and a non-political vehicle for communities to champion projects which improve the quality of life and vitality of the place in which they live. The research also was taken into local schools, with Emsworth children completing SWOTs (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) and giving their views from a younger perspective. Also involved in the research process was a small student group from the University of Chichester, who gave their perspective on tourism needs in the town and participant observations, which fed into the findings of this report and action plan.

Previous studies have included the Emsworth Village Design Statement (due for imminent verification at the time of production of this report) and also public consultation carried out during the closure of the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital (EVCH), the loss of the 'in bed' service and the forthcoming closure of all services in the longer-term. There was also the 2001 "Parish Profile of Warblington with Emsworth". Salient comments have been assimilated into the healthcheck where relevant, which accompanies this report in the form of a disk.



Stunning Emsworth

3. Timeline of Activities of Emsworth's Market Town Initiative

August 2005: Appointment of Project Officer to work with community

August 2005: Emsworth Business Association Chair agrees to champion the initiative

October 2005: Official launch to identify volunteers

November 2005: Assimilation of data begun by volunteers

February 2006: Emsworth hosts a retail seminar at The Crown Hotel

May 2006: Meeting with local groups to float proposals for a Partnership

July 2006: The Brookfield Hotel hosts 'Action for Market Towns South East Awards' event, and workshop day and is a huge success

September 2006: Meeting with Tourism South East to discuss Wodehouse connections in Emsworth

September 2006: Sharing of initial findings at Emsworth Community Centre

November 2006: Presentation of initial findings to Emsworth Community Board

April 2007: Partnership meeting and organisational representatives identified

June 2007: Steering Group begins to form and constitution drafted, discussion about moving Emsworth Town Partnership forward in the form of a Community Interest Company (CIC) is floated

July 2007: Executive Summary Produced

August/September 2007: Partnership constituted, projects initially identified

October 2007: Final report drafted and project funding being sought

4. What People Said about Emsworth, Comment Figures

BEST THINGS ABOUT EMSWORTH

- Friendly people/locals/community atmosphere/not crowded/village feel (36)
- Museum (1)
- Atmosphere/ambience/peaceful/quiet/small-scale feel (15)
- Good choice of restaurants/places to eat/Sussex beer/pubs (11)
- Small independent shops/range of businesses/lack of 'chains' (24)
- Waterfront/Quay/marina area/millpond/solar boat/sailing & sailing clubs (34)
- Attractive buildings/architecture, old & new (3)
- The Square (3)
- The Food Festival (1)
- Conservation of the area/keeping its history/beauty of place (6)
- Ducks & swans/walks/crabbing (1)
- Walks (7)

WORST THINGS ABOUT EMSWORTH

- Parking/traffic management lacking/A27/traffic speed/lack of slow signs (24)
- Access issues (wheelchairs etc)/underpass/railway (5)
- Prices high/expensive house prices (3)
- Dog mess/litter/untidiness around Millpond (6)
- The loss of the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital (1)
- Drunken youths/loutish behaviour/too many pubs (7)
- Lack of cycle tracks/poor cycles lane (4)
- Public toilets often closed/ not well managed (2)
- Vandalism/graffiti in the underpasses in the town (1)
- Building on green sites/building in wrong places (2)
- The North/South divide (2)
- Nothing I dislike (11)

WISH LIST FOR EMSWORTH

- More social life for all age groups/internet café for young people/more for young people (3)
- Better parking/cheaper parking/free parking (7)
- Market in the Square using local produce (1)
- Better shops/more variety of shops/update shops (10)
- Larger library/RSPB or Lifeboat shop or similar (3)
- Safer/better cycleways (3)
- Traffic calming incentives (3)
- Public toilets in good order/not locked even though light left on (2)
- Hospital maintained/accident unit (5)
- Better bus services (2)
- More benches/seating & pedestrian crossings (3)
- More dog warden service & police on beat (3)
- More visitors (1)
- Boardwalk along seafront between South Street & King Street (1)
- Leisure facilities/pool/events (6)
- Oysters (1)

5. Emsworth's Young People

Chair Brendan Gibb-Gray conducted 2 sessions in the local school with the young children of Emsworth, asking them to draw pictures of the things they liked and disliked about living in Emsworth.

The pictures reflected overall that children appreciated the beauty of their surroundings and were drawn to the seashore, harbour, wildlife and activities such as crabbing. Their drawings reflected that they disliked things such as dog mess, litter and vandalism or graffiti.

To thank the school for their participation in the data gathering, the Chair held a tea party with the then Havant Mayor, Richard Brown, and the children came to the civic centre offices and had an enjoyable afternoon being shown around usually private council chambers and having a question and answer session about how their answers about Emsworth life forms part of the democratic process. They learned that their views are just as valuable as those of the older members of their family, and that what they feel makes a difference.



Emsworth children meet the Mayor as a thank-you for their input

6. The Next Step

Although the essence of a rural town is intangible and difficult to quantify, using the results from the healthcheck (on disk as appendix) and the results of the consultation and young people's input, plus the business survey created and collated for the healthcheck and a survey of children's leisure facilities usage, a picture forms of where some of the gaps are and the next stage is to look at feasible ways to bridge the gaps. Although many things on a list are inevitably part of the remit of a council jurisdiction, the process gives the community a voice in order to bring these identified issues to the attention of the authorities, in the case of Emsworth by presenting findings at the meeting of the Emsworth Community Board, and also having representation of the Community Board on the Emsworth Town Partnership.

Where identified needs can be addressed, then an action plan for a possible project had been formed and funding will be identified where necessary and a champion for lead the project from the Partnership.

Needs may be identified that are already being addressed by other community groups, and so the process adds to the cohesiveness of the process of community-led improvements, and creates an ethos where voluntary groups in a town work together, mutually support each other, are a conduit to each other's groups, and do not re-invent the wheel.

The Vision of the Emsworth Town Partnership is as follows:

"To maintain and build upon the vibrant and inclusive community here where all who live, work, visit are able to develop their full potential in the town and surrounding area.

In the coming years Emsworth should reach its potential as being a "gateway" town to Chichester Harbour and develop its position in regard to the soon to be created South Downs National Park. In this way people of all ages will be able to find inspiration and opportunity in the town"

Our Mission is to provide a forum for all community groups in the town in

order to:-

-Exchange ideas and information.

-Cooperate and provide mutual support.

-Optomise local skills and resources.

and

To identify and lead community projects

To obtain funding for community projects.

To improve quality of life in the town, now and in future years.

7. Emsworth Action Plan-The Town

One thing of note was that Emsworth is a relatively 'healthy' place to live, with no serious weaknesses that impact on life in the town. The ETP has identified that, of course, while improvements can be always be made in certain areas, on the whole Emsworth's community are happy with where they live and the quality of life, and that relatively small projects are needed to enhance life in the town.

Emsworth is a picturesque small market town on the border between Hampshire and West Sussex and is situated on the upper reaches of Chichester Harbour and the surrounding Area of Outstanding natural Beauty. In 1239 Emsworth was granted the right to hold a market, and in the Middle Ages was a small but busy port.

The town has a long history mainly associated with the sea, fishing, oyster dredging and traditional boat building and give the town a unique nautical flavour. The only surviving traditional wooden boat builder left in the area can be found in Dolphin Quay.

The town boasts two sailing clubs and naturalists flock to the area to watch the abundance of birds [including many migrants] that visit the harbour at all times of the year. Old and beautiful Mill Ponds border the town and these provide quiet enjoyment to residents and visitors alike. Its attractive and generally quiet streets are lined with a mixture of architectural styles that include many Georgian buildings of

note. Whilst Emsworth is busy and vibrant, a walk around the town gives a genuine feel for the past. Emsworth has a railway station which gives good access to all parts of southern England, and a strategic bus service that runs along the coast from Portsmouth in the west to Brighton in the east.

The friendly shopping area radiates from the square, with pubs and restaurants it can rightly claim to be the "Gateway to Chichester Harbour" The annual food festival take place in the town every September and bring many visitors to enjoy food and the carnival atmosphere."



8. Supporting a vibrant town and community

Emsworth's community is rich with many active groups and voluntary organisations, but this does mean that volunteers often tend to be involved with a range of activities, and therefore their time is limited. However, the Market Town Initiative process and the subsequently-formed Emsworth Town Partnership (ETP) has had success in bringing together a range of groups under one umbrella, sharing its findings with the Emsworth Community Board (now active members of the ETP, and offering opportunities for all local groups to have greater cohesion and mutual activities awareness by coming together under one partnership umbrella, with support from public sector officers.

- Emsworth has a rich vein of local culture and heritage and section S6 of the healthcheck consultation showed that while it was felt there was strength in members of the community being actively engaged in the area's culture and heritage, there was a weakness in the promotion of these (S6). Distinctive and famous links were under-promoted, meaning many opportunities for niche market, sustainable tourism exist. Havant Museum is considered a cultural centre and a valuable asset to the town, and is noted as an attraction in Havant Borough Council's "Tourism & Leisure Plan" (Action 3 & 4)
- The SWOTs at public consultation (S4 & S7) indicated some feeling that the community was not encouraged or actively involved in decision-making/

development issues, and that local issues were not fully considered in local strategies and community planning. The closure of the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital may have exacerbated this feeling locally, and these findings were fed back to the Emsworth Community Board, who since have become active members of the ETP. Furthermore, the research showed that Emsworth's General Election figures are a little above the national average, with District/Borough election figures substantially higher than other areas of the borough as a whole (Action 3)

- Affordable housing and community space is an issue in Emsworth (S2), with the research showing not any 2/3 bedroom semis in the central area for less than £200k. However, with much of the area being part of a large conservation area and the town being compact with no derelict or unused areas, then the ETP has ascertained that “there is little scope for development in the centre, as it is largely built up with little community space or available buildings”
- There are a number of community venues and halls available for public let, and the communities are well-served by these meeting spaces, but the facilities are variable and the current venues can only serve relatively small numbers of people (Action 3)
- There are issues with public paths and foreshore paths that were flagged up during public consultation and healthcheck research (Action 1)
- Families were surveyed in the 2006 summer holidays by volunteers, and findings showed there is a general lack of things to do safely in the area, possibly due to not providing the right sort of facilities for younger children. Older children also seem to be poorly catered for, and not enough is seen to be made of the shore-line or mill pond, and a lack of cycling paths and no provision south of the A259 (S5, EN3 & Warblington With Emsworth Parish Plan 2001). Developments need to be done sensitively, however (Action 2)

WHAT	HOW	WHO
1. Improve footpaths to give better access for local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lost Paths Initiative ▪ Improve foreshore paths and Fisherman's Walk 	Emsworth Town Partnership Emsworth Community Board Lost Paths Initiative?
2. Improve youth provision both in terms of provision and information of what youth activities already exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce youth leaflet ▪ Support local youth workers/projects ▪ Possible education aspect in South Street Centre ▪ Support for youth provision offered by churches 	Churches Emsworth Town Partnership Local youth workers?
3. Provide a multi-use community venue to enhance existing facilities and maximise space available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise use of Emsworth Centre, currently under-used in prime location ▪ Multi-use centre, with local information available on all local issues ▪ Meeting place for Heritage Trail ▪ Education/interpretation 	Emsworth Town Partnership Emsworth Business Association Havant Council of Community Service Emsworth Baptist Church Havant Borough Council Emsworth Museum

	centre	
4. Maximising heritage links and supporting the existing Heritage Trail project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wodehouse connections and historical aspects promoted ▪ Emsworth Centre as a Visitor Information Point 	Emsworth Museum Emsworth Town Partnership Tourism South East liaising Havant Borough Council

9. Caring for Emsworth and beyond into the 21st century

First impressions and quality of life are important, and it has been acknowledged that the Market Town Initiative healthcheck is just as valuable a tool in recording what is precious and should be preserved and protected, just as much as it can identify weaknesses and be the vehicle for improvements and changes. The public consultation showed building in the strategic gaps was seen as a real threat by local people attending the consultation (EN2 & S5), but this is counteracted by the fact that the SWOT showed local people felt that community involvement in the management and conservation of the countryside was both a strength and an opportunity on the whole.

- Opportunity and strength seen in improvements to cycleways and footpaths(EN1 & S5), with neglected paths seen as needing improvements (Action 5)
- An opportunity was seen to make use of open spaces, routes and facilities for informal recreation that enhance the quality of life for local people (Action 1 & 3)
- People consider Emsworth to be a place where locals will promote and support environmentally sustainable initiatives (EN3) and saw it as a strength and an opportunity (Action 7)

- The town has undisputed character and distinctiveness (EN1 and public consultation feedback), that is seen as a fact, strength and opportunity more than a weakness. (Action 7)
- Public toilets in South Street identified (public consultation and EN healthcheck section) as in need of improvement or replacement (Action 6)
- Underpasses in Emsworth suffer from vandalism and graffiti and are in need of improvement to make them more inviting to locals wishing to use them to gain access on foot/cycle around the town (Action 5)
- Havant Borough's main Tourist Information Centre closed due to funding cuts by Havant Borough Council in 2005 (Action 3)
- Improvements needed to pavements and street furniture (Action 5)
- It was felt that more could be done to promote sustainability locally and encourage sourcing of local produce etc (Action 3)
- Suggestion from locals of a wildlife/ecology centre locally to make the most of Emsworth's natural environment for visitors and locals alike (Action 3 & 7)



Emsworth Millpond

WHAT	HOW	WHO
5. Improve access in the town to enhance quality of life for local people and improve access for visitors to the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for Town Action Plan 	Emsworth Community Board
6. Improve South Street Toilet provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve existing toilet block in South Street ▪ Introduce 'where you can go' list of local places offering their toilet facilities 	Emsworth Town Partnership Emsworth Business Association Havant Borough Council
7. Protect character of Emsworth and support local conservation of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Village Design Statement ▪ Market Town Healthcheck 	Emsworth Town Partnership Emsworth Residents Association Havant Borough Council



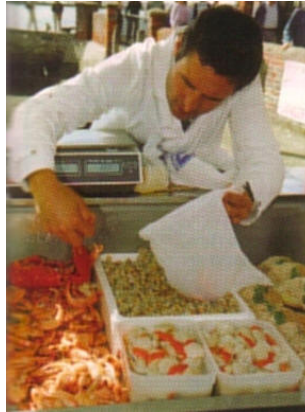
Emsworth view at dusk

10. Towards a dynamic and sustainable economy

A balanced economy is the key to future prosperity for the community. Emsworth has a reputation for a successful local economy, in no small part due to the very successful and pro-active Emsworth Business Association (www.eba.org.uk) which produces a pocket directory annually to promote local Emsworth businesses and gets involved in supporting community events and initiatives, including the hugely successful Emsworth Food Festival. A survey was undertaken of all the EBA members to ascertain information for the healthcheck. 294 companies were surveyed and 41 responded, representing 14% of all companies in Emsworth

- 35% employees are employed in the Hospitality industry (EC7)
- Over 50% of all jobs in Emsworth rely on visitors (Actions 3,4,5 & 6)
- 27% of employees live in Emsworth, therefore about $\frac{3}{4}$ commute in (Action 5)
- The number of part-time jobs is increasing
- 20 years is the average number of years in business
- Every company but one sees the town centre as important or essential to their business (Action 5)
- Almost 2000 people are employed by Emsworth businesses, and about 1500 commute into Emsworth for their work (Action 5)
- 94% of businesses reported they used email and 60% have a website and purchase or sell via the internet. 50% gain access to key business resources via the internet and feel training is good
- It was felt in some responses that there may not be enough small retail units available (no premises remain vacant for long in Emsworth)

- It was concluded that future investments should be used to help stimulate the hospitality/tourism sector (EC7) and encourage visitors to Emsworth through sustainable niche market approaches (Action 3 & 8)



WHAT	HOW	WHO
8. Maintain healthy local economy/ encourage sustainable tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome to Emsworth scheme ▪ Improved access for railway ▪ Sustainable visitor information 	Emsworth Town Partnership Emsworth Business Association Emsworth Museum Havant Borough Council

	area/interpretation centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Heritage Trail ▪ Encourage quality training for staff ▪ Emsworth brand? 	
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11. Getting around- safe and sound

The things that make Emsworth characteristic and quaint are sometimes also at the root of its problems

- Railway station has access issues and needs improvement (Action 9)
- Emsworth is seen as the gateway to Chichester Harbour (Action 9 & 3)
- Public transport services are not seen to meet local needs, with long journeys to access services such as hospitals etc (S3, EN2, T1 & T2), exacerbated by the closure of the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital in 2005 to bed patients, with full closure planned in the near future (Action 9)
- The railway provides a close and swift link to London, giving rise to opportunities for visitors coming from overseas and from the UK (Action 9 & 3)
- Traffic and parking issues came high on list of comments when carrying out public consultation in Emsworth (Action 9 & 3)
- Access issues and improvements to streets and pavements identified (Action 9)
- Cycleway improvements was a re-occurring theme in the consultations (Action 9)



WHAT	HOW	WHO
9. Improve access in the town and surrounds for local people and to enhance visitor numbers when appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town Action Plan undertaken by Emsworth Community Board 	Emsworth Community Board Emsworth Town Partnership

12. The way ahead

This report and action plan will be implemented and supported by ETP and its supporting organisations and partners. Representatives of various bodies and individuals have all worked tirelessly over the last 2 years to gather information which led to the production of this document. At the time of production of this report, the Emsworth Town Partnership is being constituted and registered officially and have decided to constitute as a Community Interest Company. Current groups represented on the Emsworth Town Partnership are:

- Emsworth Community Board
- Emsworth Museum
- The Red Cross
- Emsworth Residents Association
- Market Town Initiative volunteers
- Emsworth Churches (Baptist church and St James')
- Emsworth Food Festival
- Emsworth Business Association
- Local residents
- Local Conservation Groups & Tree Warden
- Havant Council of Community Service
- Emsworth Design Statement
- Youth workers
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Emsworth Artists & Heritage Trail
- The Brookfield Hotel
- Havant Councillors

The cohesion and transparency between the projects and aspirations of the Emsworth Town Partnership and the Emsworth Community Board are vital. Close links to the Havant Community Partnership via the Community Board members are providing a valuable conduit between the community-led projects and the elected local representatives of the Community Board. A mutually supportive and constructive relationship has already been formed, and it is hoped that many projects to improve the quality of life and service provision will be carried out over the short, medium and long term. Close working together is in line with the Havant Community Strategy, and plans are intended to feed into other local county strategies and plans, which also enhance the possibilities for funding projects in the future. The action grids are living documents, and projects will change and focus will shift according to external factors and changes of focus within the community over time. It should be remembered that what cannot be achieved today or even next week, could be worked towards with a vision for undertaking it next year or later. No aspiration is too great or too small, and changes in the grid and projects are inevitable as the Emsworth Town Partnership moves forward and evolves.

To everyone who agreed to assist with the completion of the healthcheck, completed questionnaires, attended meetings and public consultations, and assisted in any way towards the production of this report, Emsworth Town Partnership, Hampshire County Council and Havant Borough Council would like to extend its sincere thanks

It has been made possible by assistance from the Emsworth Business Association, Residents Association, Emsworth Community Board, Emsworth Museum, Emsworth conservation groups, Emsworth Churches, The Crown Hotel for hosting meetings, The Brookfield Hotel, University of Chichester's Tourism Department, Tourism South East, local businesses and organisations and the Area Investment Framework and of course any local resident or business who has given their time or opinions and support.

This plan is very much a work in progress. Some of the proposals are becoming a reality, others will take time and co-operation and some are still to be developed. The plan is thus a living document, subject to ongoing review.

**** All actions are proposed, and efforts will be made to influence the service plans of the partners mentioned, but everything must be subject to the availability of the necessary resources**

13. Get Involved!!!

If you would like to get involved in the Emsworth Town Partnership then please contact the Emsworth Town Partnership Chair, Brendan Gibb-Gray:

brendan.gibbgray@btinternet.com Tel: 01243 377355

And help to make Emsworth and even better place for the future!!

