

# PETWORTH VISION



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PETWORTH





# PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATIONS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Chichester District Council  
Petworth Town Council  
Petworth & District Community Association  
Petworth Business Association  
Petworth House (National Trust)  
South Downs National Park Authority  
Local Petworth Residents  
Local Petworth Businesses

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# PETWORTH VISION







PETWORTH  
VISION



## SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PETWORTH

Building consensus, addressing  
challenges, delivering results.

Petworth Vision illuminates the views and aspirations  
of the communities of Petworth and uncovers  
a common vision for the future.

Combining the strength of local consensus with  
robust fund raising, the group is empowered  
to confidently pursue its aims.

This is an action group driven toward  
achieving results in Petworth.

# BACKGROUND

**Like many other rural market towns throughout the UK, Petworth is affected by social and economic change. Significantly it is the change in retail behaviour, new forms of retail and different consumer expectations, which reflect most on a town's character and prosperity. In addition, society is more mobile than it was fifty years ago, so today a small rural town like Petworth will be in competition with neighbouring towns instead of being able to co-exist happily as it may have done in the past. This is certainly the case with Petworth, given its proximity to Chichester, Midhurst, Pulborough and Guildford.**

An initial Petworth Vision Steering group comprising representatives from the Petworth Business Association, Petworth Town Council, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council, SDNPA, Petworth Community Association and Petworth House was set up in 2013. The group commissioned an independent consultant to produce a Petworth Town Centre Audit and CACI to produce a Petworth Market Summary.

These were followed by a consultation exercise targeting residents, businesses and visitors to gain a cross-section of opinion. Survey forms were sent to 2,234 households and the survey was also made available to complete online. There was a response rate of 34% which is considered high for this type of consultation. Additionally, over 140 businesses were consulted with a response rate of 37%. Surveys with 200 visitors were conducted through interviews and via a touchscreen kiosk.

The information gathered was formulated into a draft set of recommendations for town centre improvements and this was then discussed with the community through open meetings and working groups.

**It has been the job of the Petworth Vision Steering Group to take the ideas and formulate them into this Vision Document.**



**Survey forms  
were sent to  
2,234 households.**

# PETWORTH TOWN CENTRE VISION

**This document outlines a vision for Petworth Town Centre and details proposals to improve the town centre both in terms of how attractive it is to visitors and also how it serves the local community.**

Having consulted widely on the content of this document, we believe it accurately represents the aspirations of the local community. The Steering Group will continue to review and monitor the work within the Vision. The projects have been broken down into 3 categories which are:

- » **Creating a Sense of Place (incorporating traffic and pedestrian issues)**
- » **Supporting a Vibrant Retail Economy**
- » **Co-ordinated Management**

The Steering Group will establish three sub groups to develop and deliver the projects for each category and, although representatives from the Steering Group will sit on these, the membership will be from the wider community. The timing has been divided into short, medium and longer term goals, as from previous experience it has been difficult to put exact dates on how long some projects will take to achieve. It is proposed that when the sub-groups get to work in more detail the goals can be defined more specifically.







## CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

**Every town has a unique character. Petworth has been shaped by its trading activities over the centuries.**

Petworth is an historic market town set in the South Downs National Park, in the northeast area of Chichester District in West Sussex. It has the 17th century Petworth House at its centre with parkland designed by Capability Brown. Today the National Trust runs Petworth House, attracting over 150,000 visitors each year as well as hosting a number of annual events.

Since 1541, the town developed around the market square, which today forms part of a busy through route on the A272. But despite the obvious problems associated with a high volume of traffic, Petworth is generally well maintained and can still be described as picturesque with a mix of traditional buildings, including red brick, flint and timber framed. Some of the side streets are cobbled which adds to the overall charm and appeal of the town.

There are several notable buildings including Leconfield Hall built in 1793 as a



market building, occupying one side of the market square. Following restoration, it is today hired out for a range of events.

The road network which sees the A272, A 283 and A285 intersect, is the only transport link and so residents and visitors are reliant on the car, with Petworth House also attracting coach parties. There is a spacious car park on the southern side of the town which, as a result, forms the primary gateway. This is important to consider in terms of first impressions and the overall visitor experience.

A great opportunity exists for Petworth to use this rich heritage and its wonderful buildings to encourage visitors to enjoy the old town with a new experience. The hard part is respecting the old and yet still encouraging an attractive, modern interpretation. Getting this right will go a long way to giving Petworth a successful future.

The table overleaf indicates which actions are recommended and how we suggest

they are progressed; the time frame is indicated in terms of short, medium and long term and for some actions reflects the project initiation. For these purposes, short term is 6-12 months, medium term is 1-2 years and long term is 2-6 years.



“ **It is important to consider first impressions and the overall visitor experience, the southern side of the town forms the primary gateway.** ”

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Create welcoming entrances/gateways to the town taking account of both motorist and pedestrian access.</b></p>	<p>Specifically establish an effective 'gateway' from the main car park to encourage visitors to explore the town by improving the visual impact of the 'Old Bakery' and establishing a co-ordinated approach to all visual messages at this location.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p>
	<p>Establish the feasibility of an "architectural statement" between the car park and the 'Old Bakery' as a way to demark the way into the town.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p>
	<p>Ensure consistency across any mechanisms for welcoming and signposting visitors.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p>
	<p>Encourage the owner(s) of the courtyard between the Old Bakery and Golden Square to improve the surface and to work with neighbouring businesses to enhance the area.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p>
	<p>Liaise with CDC Parking Services to consider potential new layout of spaces to enable closer disabled and short stay parking to off-set any loss of short stay parking in Market Square (see below).</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p>
	<p>Establish appropriate areas for cycle racks within the area between the car park and the 'Old Bakery'.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p>

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Reclaim the public realm in Market Square and Golden Square whilst accepting the through traffic.</b></p>	<p>Establish a project group to develop options for Market Square and Golden Square which address the need to alter the ratio of pedestrians to car space in both squares. It is recognised that any changes would need to run alongside improved signage to and from the car park.</p>	<p><b>Set up group in 2014 and group will then set out the project details.</b></p>
<p><b>Maintain centre of town as effective major A roads junction, but put in measures to make it more 'pedestrian friendly'.</b></p>	<p>Introduce signs on the approach roads outlining the need for care and speed reduction due to narrow streets.</p> <p>Seek proposals to overcome the significant issue of narrow and dangerous pavements, e.g. Speed limit reduction, 20's Plenty campaign, rumble strips, bottle necks and white lining.</p> <p>Investigate options to make deliveries and loading easier for businesses.</p> <p>Reduce number of HGV's through the centre of town via effective protocol agreed between business and delivery companies. Also lobby for more effective enforcement of the weight limit ban.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Long term</b></p> <p><b>Short to medium term</b></p> <p><b>Medium to long term</b></p>

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Make Petworth easier to navigate for both motorist and pedestrian and avoid confusion caused by plethora of signs.</b></p>	<p>Conduct a signage audit</p> <p>Coordinate clear, logical signage for vehicles and pedestrians including clear and obvious signage showing route to Car Park.</p> <p>Improve and supervise notice boards.</p> <p>Work with the PBA to introduce 'You are here' map and advertising space.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p>
<p><b>Make Petworth an attractive place through which to drive, cycle and walk around.</b></p>	<p>Agree and implement a programme of refurbishment of bollards and street furniture.</p> <p>Agree acceptable locations for cycle racks and implement a programme to install.</p> <p>Agree with Town Council and PBA an acceptable and sustainable programme for increasing planting around the town, including plant pots/hanging baskets.</p> <p>Approach owner of former HSBC building about maintaining the area at the front of their building.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p>





# SUPPORTING A VIBRANT RETAIL ECONOMY

**A main theme emerging from the CACI report and from the Town Centre Audit is that Petworth Town Centre has many attractive, specialist retailers and a particularly strong antiques sector with an extremely affluent shopper profile. However, the shopper profile is polarised, with a significant number falling into the category of striving families accounting for 14% of households which is above the regional average.**

In terms of retailing, the town has a mix of independent shops. The business community are well organised and active, so the majority of shops are well presented and interesting, with a leaning towards the decorative arts and in particular antiques. With more than 24 antique shops, this cluster attracts collectors from throughout the UK, Europe and further afield. What could be described as general retail is therefore less well served.

The retail offer is dominated by non-essential retail which does not necessarily meet the needs of local residents. The perceived lack of affordable shopping has been raised in the residents' surveys.

This all presents a challenge; it is clear that Petworth Town Centre is attractive to visitors and whilst it has a strong reputation for antiques, this is not the only sector to target.

Petworth House & Park draws in hundreds of thousands of visitors, many of whom are potential visitors to the town.



**Petworth Town Centre has many, specialist retailers and a strong antiques sector with an affluent shopper profile.**



To ensure a sustainable and vibrant economy, the town's businesses need to be careful not to alienate residents and, at the same time, not to compromise on its strengths as having a strong independent sector and a centre with an extremely low vacancy rate.

The table overleaf indicates which actions are recommended and how we suggest they are progressed; the time frame is indicated in terms of short, medium and long term. For these purposes, short term is 6-12 months, medium term is 1-2 years and long term is 2-6 years.

“ **Petworth House & Park draws in hundreds of thousands of visitors, many of whom are potential visitors to the town.** ”

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Establish what is really missing in regards of the retail offer and how to balance the needs of residents and the appeal to visitors.</b></p>	<p>Establish sub-group to complete further analysis of CACI report and Town Centre Audit required and recommend realistic options.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p>
<p><b>Encourage a choice of affordable goods in town.</b></p>	<p>Establish what product categories are not currently available in the current retail mix that would potentially serve the residents of Petworth better. Investigate the feasibility of addressing these gaps.</p> <p>Communicate more effectively about what is available in the town which can meet residents' needs.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p>
<p><b>Identify what the best in-town supermarket location would be.</b></p>	<p>Initiate a dialogue between SDNPA, CDC, WSCC and Petworth Town Council with all relevant landowners to discuss the viability of a supermarket situated next to the car park.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p>



WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Improve employment opportunities for Petworth's young people</b></p>	<p>Investigate setting up a hub where courses could be run to give the skills required to gain employment.</p> <p>Lobby for changes to public transport which would enable people to get to and from work.</p> <p>Investigate whether the 'Selsey Works' model could be adapted to meet Petworth's needs.</p>	<p><b>Short to medium term</b></p> <p><b>Short to long term</b></p> <p><b>Medium term</b></p>
<p><b>Capitalise on the visitor numbers to Petworth House</b></p>	<p>Continue to work with Petworth House linking House events with Town initiatives – such as special offers and late night opening.</p> <p>Explore with PBA the extent to which Sunday opening in town can be encouraged to capitalise on visitor numbers at Petworth House on this day.</p>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p>
<p><b>Link Petworth with other major venues</b></p>	<p>Consider creative ways of linking with Goodwood Revival and Festival of Speed</p> <p>Develop "Gateway to South Downs National Park" concept</p> <p>Maximise opportunities from being in SDNP, e.g. website links and awareness of SDNPA initiatives</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Medium term</b></p> <p><b>Short term</b></p>

# CO-ORDINATED MANAGEMENT

The administration of any town like Petworth is complex, with a Town, District and County Council each having their own roles and responsibilities. We also have the South Downs National Park Authority with responsibility for planning. There are also partnerships such as Petworth Community Association and Petworth Business Association.

All want Petworth to be a safe, prosperous town and a good place to live and work. But in any complex structure, good communication and open co-operation is essential.

One of the most pressing outcomes of this Vision will be to establish clear and effective lines of communication and an agreed action plan. Beyond that, it will then be down to establishing a series of tactical and strategic measures to move the town forward.



“ **Good communication and open co-operation is essential.** ”

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
<p><b>Manage the Vision process</b></p>	<p>Establish a Petworth Vision Steering Group.</p>	<p><b>2014</b></p>
	<p>Establish sub groups to deliver the projects.</p>	<p><b>2014</b></p>
	<p>Produce and monitor the Petworth Vision.</p>	<p><b>2014</b></p>
	<p>Develop community contacts to further feed into the Petworth Vision.</p>	<p><b>2014 and on-going</b></p>
	<p>Work closely with local partnerships.</p>	<p><b>2014 and on-going</b></p>
<p><b>Improve the management of the town</b></p>	<p>Engage a coordinator for Petworth Vision implementation.</p>	<p><b>2014</b></p>
	<p>Work with landlords and agents to improve the retail mix.</p>	<p><b>2015 and on-going</b></p>
	<p>Improve the co-operation between County, District and Town Councils, SDNPA and other partnerships and groups within the town. Specifically identify the correct officer at WSCC to join the Petworth Vision Group and relevant sub-groups.</p>	<p><b>2014 and on-going</b></p>



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Commissioned and produced by:  
Economic Development Service  
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Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1TY  
01243 534669



Funding contribution from: **South Downs**  
National Park