



Harborough Improvement Team



2008-2009 Community Action Plan

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Introduction

I have been involved with Harborough Improvement Team (HiT) for a number of years, and remain committed to supporting the work of this community partnership.

It is quite proper that HiT should reassess and re-invent itself periodically, and to take on new tasks and challenges which the people of the town have made clear they wish to see developed.

This community action plan takes forward the excellent work of the Hands on Harborough event and is an open invitation to the community to continue to get involved in making the projects happen.

I know from experience that HiT delivers; and the town will be an even better place to live, work and 'play' in when these projects are completed



Martin Hill
Chair
Harborough Improvement Team

Our Mission, Aims & Objectives

Mission

Harborough Improvement Team is a partnership formed to improve the health and well being of Market Harborough residents, businesses and visitors. The partnership will act as a conduit to enable the aspirations of the residents to be realised through the Harborough Improvement Team Community Action Plan, and with reference to the County and District Sustainable Community Strategies, Leicester Performance Framework and the Local Area Agreement.

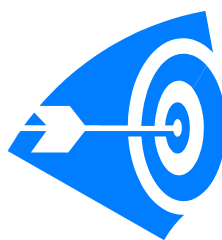
Aims & Objectives

To promote and support improvements in Market Harborough as a place to live, work, visit and do business in, with particular (but not exclusive) focus on:

Environment & Transport
Culture & Leisure
Local Economy and Marketing
Safe & Secure Communities
Education & Lifelong Learning
Health

We will promote partnership working between public and private bodies, individuals and groups involved in change or improvements in Market Harborough.


We will promote equality of opportunity in all areas of our work, with particular focus on promoting social cohesion within the community.



Why a Community Action Plan?

Harborough Improvement Team has been working in Market Harborough since 2002, at which time its first action plan was issued following a period of consultation with the local community. During the last six years some of the successful projects that HiT has delivered from that action plan have included:

Christmas TV advertising campaign Town Shopping Guide Promoted the annual 'sandpit' events St Mary's Road Regeneration Plan French Markets	Railway Station Gateway Sculpture Christmas Lights Funding Welland Town Benchmarking Harborough Bus Guide Developed Clean-up campaigns
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In 2007 it was agreed that HiT would promote an event that would review what the previous action plan had achieved, the current position of the town and what the local community thought about the town. This became the *Hands on Harborough event* at which members of the local community and local organisations came together for three highly productive days of discussion and workshops.

This 2008-2009 community action plan is based on the priorities and ideas discussed at Hands on Harborough and the report written following that event.

The action plan is HiT's calling card: it sets out what we want to achieve in the next 12 to 18 months, how we hope to achieve it and who we want to work with. It's not set in stone - we hope to be able to respond to new initiatives and challenges as they arise and the monitoring of the individual project's success and their updating will be ongoing. Sometimes projects will not happen but we should not let that deter us from tackling current and future challenges.

This action plan is not exhaustive and could easily have been over 100 pages long! But what it does do is pull together the energy and enthusiasm that people put into the Hands on Harborough event, into a document that has a range of projects that will focus and re-energise those already working with us and enthuse and connect with local people who are the potential HiT partners and volunteers of the future.

The Harborough Improvement Team 2008-2009 Community Action Plan shows not only what the local community want for Market Harborough but, importantly, can also be used to influence local partners' priorities and to attract project funding.

A copy of the Hands on Harborough final report can be obtained from the Town Development Officer - contact details are on page 6.

Getting YOU Involved

On page 21 we say, 'Our most important partners will be the local community and local community groups and organisations.'

This is what we believe because YOU showed us at the Hands on Harborough event that:

- YOU have the local knowledge
- YOU want responsibility for local action
- YOU want to see a thriving town
- YOU want a safe and attractive town
- YOU acknowledge that change is not just a threat but an opportunity

So how do YOU get involved?

- YOU can attend the Community Action Team meetings or join the Steering Group.
- YOU may be fired up by only one or two projects - that's okay, join us to work on them and make them happen.
- YOU can become a community champion and develop the themed projects.

Whatever YOU choose to do then you will be joining a diverse and committed community group and in return you will meet new people, learn new skills, and feel the sense of achievement that comes from making things happen and building the community in Market Harborough.

If the community gets involved then things will happen - it's all about YOU!

To find out more and to get involved contact:

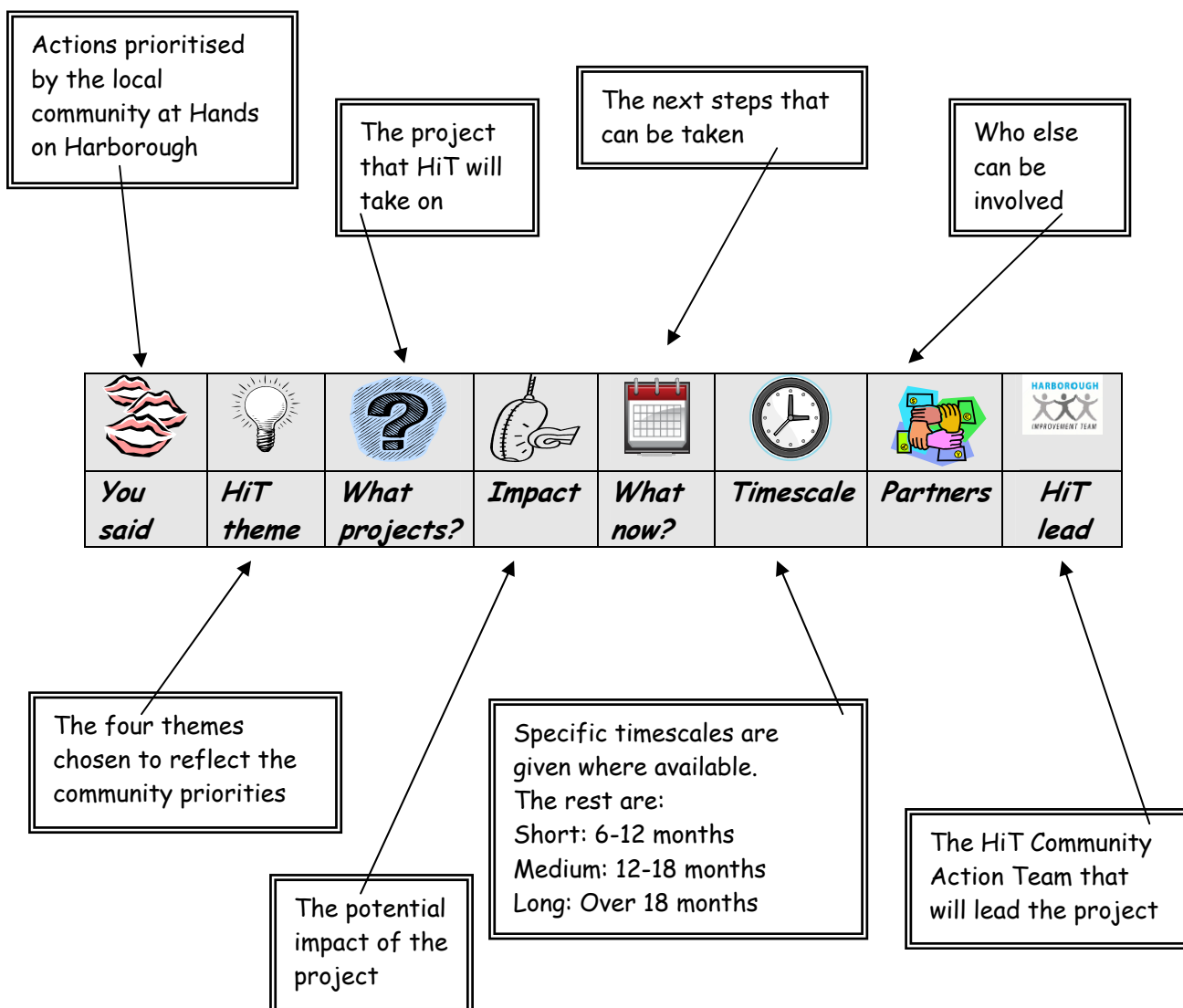
Chris Sewart
Town Development Officer
Harborough Improvement Team
First Floor, Harborough Market Hall
St, Mary's Place, Northampton Road
Market Harborough, LE16 7DR
Tel: 01858 465171
Email: c.sewart@harborough.gov.uk



Using the Community Action Plan

Each of the Community Action Plan projects have been laid out to make them straightforward to understand and use and to whet your appetite for getting further involved.

For each project there are symbols for:



The Community Action Plan Themes

The projects are grouped under four themes to reflect the community priorities that were highlighted at the Hands on Harborough event. Many of these projects overlap the different themes but they have been placed in what we consider to be the most relevant area.

The themes and projects are not listed in order of priority.



A Thriving Town

Under this theme we want to develop projects that support and develop the local economy and sustain Market Harborough as a thriving and key market town.



A Town Worth Visiting

Under this theme we want to develop projects that encourage visitors to the town.



Greening the town

Under this theme we want to develop projects that support and encourage an awareness of the local environment and make the area greener and more attractive.



Town Resources

Under this theme we want to develop projects that encourage the development of shared community facility for local organisations.

Other themes that are not specifically mentioned include Health and Children and Young People. HiT recognises that currently there are many agencies in the town working on these themes and projects, for example the new Children's Centre. We will support these initiatives and with our partners explore and develop new and future projects that continue to meet HiT's aims and objectives.

	<i>'Supporting independent and local businesses is important'</i>
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	A Thriving Town
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Project

	Support and carry out the annual Welland town centre benchmarking project.
	Provide an annual snapshot of retail health in the town centre. This will compare information against other Welland towns. Use benchmarking report to identify initiatives and access funding for projects that will support the local economy.
	Confirm date of next benchmark exercise. Increase business and community involvement in 2009 benchmarking.
	Next benchmark due - Autumn 2008. Increase involvement - Summer 2009.
	Local Businesses. Chamber of Trade. Welland Partnership. Leicestershire County Council - Better Places Team. Harborough District Enterprise. Harborough District Council - Economic Dept.
	Economy Group.

Key

<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>

 *'Supporting independent and local businesses is important'*

 **A Thriving Town**

Project

	Develop a pilot drop-in crèche for shoppers.
	Provide increased footfall in town centre on 'slow' days. Promote town centre as a place to bring young children shopping. Improve access to town centres for all families with young children and particularly those in the local priority neighbourhood.
	Assess current need. Talk to businesses about the best day to pilot the scheme. Engage with partners to develop and promote the scheme.
	Short-Medium.
	Local Businesses. Chamber of Trade. Welland Partnership. Leicestershire County Council - Better Places. Harborough District Enterprise. Harborough District Council - Economic Dept & Children & Young Persons Service.
	Economy Group.

Key

							
<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>

	<i>'More work experience and opportunities for young people'</i>
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	A Thriving Town
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Project

	Work with existing projects to develop a pilot work experience and careers awareness week.
	Increase the work experience of local young people. Employers can identify new staff through the scheme. Encourage young people to have a career locally and contribute to the local economy. Create additional training opportunities in priority neighbourhoods.
	Find and talk to organisers of existing schemes. Identify a suitable date. Agree aims of week with local employers, schools & colleges.
	Long.
	Harborough Young Persons' forum. The Cube. Local Schools and Colleges. Local Businesses. Chamber of Trade. Leicestershire County Council - Education & Extended Schools. Harborough District Enterprise. Harborough District Council - Economic Dept. and Children & Young Persons Service
	Economy Group.







Key

<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>









	<i>'Help business to be more secure'</i>
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	A Thriving Town
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Project

	Support and develop the Business Against Crime (BAC) scheme.
	Reduce crime for businesses on outlying business parks and industrial estates. Develop an effective business partnership and networking scheme against crime.
	Get involved in BAC steering group. Actively contribute to BAC group and develop a business against crime roadshow event.
	BAC launched - December 2007. BAC roadshow - spring 2009.
	Local Businesses Harborough Local Policing Unit Neighbourhood Watch Association Chamber of Trade Harborough District Enterprise Harborough Against Retail Theft (HART) Harborough District Council - Community Safety Partnership
	Safe & Secure Communities Group

Key

							
<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>


 *'We should promote more activities in the town'*

 **A Town Worth Visiting**

Project

	<p>Staged the 2008 town centre 'Sandpit' event. Coordinate the Christmas Lights. Support and develop other events that promote the town and its attractions.</p>
	<p>Encourage more local people and visitors into the town. Promote a 'feel good' factor and positive image of the town. Support events that bring the community together.</p>
	<p>Work on ideas that would attract interest and involvement. Form an events group that can respond quickly to any opportunities. Develop sponsorship opportunities.</p>
	<p>Sandpits event - August 2008. Christmas lights responsibilities - December 2008. Develop new events - Ongoing. Events Group formed - June 2008.</p>
	<p>Late Night Shopping. Chamber of Trade. Harborough District Council - Community Services & Public Spaces. Town Twinning Association.</p>
	<p>Events Group.</p>

Key

							
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	<i>'We need to sell Market Harborough better'</i>
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	A Town Worth Visiting
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Project

	Erect 3 noticeboards in central locations around the town.
	Will provide space (where there's currently little) for local community groups to promote themselves. Tourism and what's on information can be displayed.
	Confirm funding in place - August 2008. Agree design. Confirm responsibility for board content. Arrange erection.
	Short.
	Harborough Theatre. Harborough Arts Groups. Voluntary Action South Leicestershire. Harborough District Council - Community Services & Public Spaces. Leicestershire County Council Better Places Team.
	Culture Group.

Key

<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>

	<i>'Encourage more cycling in the town'</i>
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	Greening the Town
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Project

	<p>Hold event to promote cycling within the town to coincide with National Cycle week.</p> <p>Provide additional facilities, such as secure cycle storage, to promote the use of cycles.</p> <p>Support a 'No Car Day' in the town.</p>
	<p>Promote the health benefits of cycling.</p> <p>Encourage the use of alternative transport that helps cut down on harmful carbon emissions.</p>
	<p>Confirm dates of two planned events and develop partnerships to plan events.</p> <p>Work with partners to identify suitable secure cycle park in town centre.</p>
	<p>Cycle event - June 2009</p> <p>No car day - September 2009</p> <p>Secure cycle storage - Medium</p>
	<p>Local Cycling Clubs/Groups & Cycle Retailers.</p> <p>Harborough District Council - Community Services & Public Spaces.</p> <p>Harborough District Sports Alliance.</p> <p>Transitions Towns Market Harborough.</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council.</p>
	Environment Group







Key

<i>You said</i>	<i>HiT theme</i>	<i>What projects?</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>What now?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>HiT lead</i>

 *'Let's plant more trees and look after them'*

 **Greening the Town**

Project

	Support the development and access to the green-space and wildlife area on Northampton Road. Develop a community project to plant more fruit trees. Promote increase in community allotments and home vegetable gardening.
	Protect green spaces in the town centre. Improve unique appearance of our town. Encourage people to grow their own food and plants. Promote local food produce.
	Work with partners to secure long-term site access. Identify and engage with partners involved in tree planting. Support 'Healthy Gardening' workshops.
	Northampton Road - ongoing from May 2008. Tree Planting - Short. Workshops - Medium.
	Community Housing and Residents Associations/Groups. Local Environment Volunteer groups. Harborough in Bloom. Voluntary Action South Leicestershire. Harborough District Council - Community Services & Public Spaces.
	Environment Group.

Key

							
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	<i>'We don't want to use plastic bags'</i>
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	Greening the Town
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Project

	<p>Hold a plastic bag awareness event.</p> <p>Work with local traders to develop and support a 'local' reusable bag.</p> <p>Develop a 'Bag in a Box' scheme to encourage employees from trading estates to use local shops and reusable bags.</p>
	<p>Promote the alternatives to using plastic bags.</p> <p>Support local businesses.</p>
	<p>Identify local community partners for local bag initiative.</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities.</p>
	<p>Awareness event held - May 2008.</p> <p>Local reusable bag - Short.</p> <p>Bag in a Box - Short.</p>
	<p>Independent & National retailers.</p> <p>Chamber of Trade.</p> <p>Harborough District Council - Waste & Recycling.</p> <p>Transitions Towns Market Harborough.</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council - Waste & Recycling.</p>
	<p>Environment Group.</p>







Key

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	<i>'Litter is a year round issue'</i>
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	Greening the Town
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Project

	Continue to support the annual 'Spring Clean' campaign. Develop and support community clean-up action for individual streets and areas. Tackle litter in River Welland.
	Increase cleanliness of streets. Encourage pride and responsibility for local neighbourhoods. Make the town more attractive for residents and visitors.
	Identify and support local community groups. Increase community participation.
	Short to Medium.
	Community Housing and Residents Associations/Group. Local Environment Volunteer Groups. Harborough in Bloom. Voluntary Action South Leicestershire. Harborough District Council - Community Services & Public Spaces.
	Environment Group.

Key

							
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	'Let's have a building that will have facilities for community groups in the town'
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	Town Resources
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Project

	Support the development of a town cinema. Determine current need and support for developing a community building that provides a one-stop facility for voluntary and charity organisations.
	Provide a commercially viable multi-use community facility in a central location. Potentially act as a catalyst for economic development in the town centre.
	Continue to support the <i>Harborough Cinema Group</i> . Reactivate and promote the community building report published in 2006.
	Long.
	<i>Harborough Cinema Group</i> . <i>Local Voluntary & Community Groups</i> . <i>Voluntary Action South Leicestershire</i> . <i>Harborough District Council - Community Services</i> .
	<i>Culture Group</i> .

Key

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Project Funding

All of the community action plan projects will need funding to enable them to be completed; whether that's a relatively small amount - for the development of the plastic bag awareness project, or a large amount - for the community building project.

We have deliberately left the potential funding available out of each project sheet. As the range of funding is often time limited and is constantly changing and developing, and will have to be regularly reviewed.

It will be HiT's responsibility to secure funding to ensure the projects can be completed and what HiT will do is work to develop each project by identifying and sourcing potential funding. But, at the same time, not let the availability of funding dictate the development of the project away from its initial priorities.

Some potential sources of local and national funding currently available include:

Welland Challenge Fund

Welland Transport & Accessibility Fund

Harborough District Council - through a range of funds and grants

Local charities and grant holders

Welland Community Pot

Big Lottery - a large range of differing grants available including Awards for All
Leicestershire County Council - Shire Grants



This is only a few of the grants and funds available and we will make use of existing local funding knowledge and advice available to ensure that we keep up to date with current funding developments. The individual project sheets will enable HiT to prioritise its funding options, and specifically target new funding as it is made available.

In addition to grants, sponsorship is another area HiT will want to develop to generate funds to, for example, stage events in the town centre.

Connections

While HiT will continue to be an independent organisation, the key to successful project completion will be connecting and working in partnership with the many different organisations operating in the town. The projects we have highlighted will only achieve success if we are working and consulting with these partners and also understanding, reflecting and influencing their aims and objectives.

With no town council in Market Harborough then the relationship with the town councillors and officers of Harborough District Council is a crucial one that will be developed with partnership work on relevant projects.

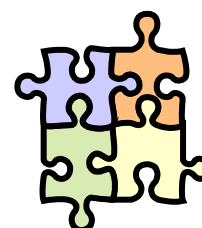
The Leicestershire Local Area Agreement and the Harborough District Local Strategic Partnership have many aims and objectives similar to our own. We will particularly want to continue to develop and encourage a close relationship with Harborough District Local Strategic Partnership, who have recently consulted on their draft Sustainable Community Strategy that recognises the value of the work of HiT and connects it into the strategy. One example of this is that HiT is involved in developing an approach to the Local Area Agreement's priority neighbourhood project in the town.

With Harborough District Council's current involvement in the 3 improvement teams in the district (in Market Harborough, Lutterworth & Broughton Astley) then a commitment to sharing of information and best practice between the teams will only strengthen and develop all the teams' sustainability.

In a wider context the Welland Market Towns' project has increasing relevance to the work that HiT undertakes, as will the continuing market town support through the Leicestershire County Council Better Places team.

All these relationships will strengthen, develop and validate HiT's work as we carry out the projects.

But our most important partner will be the local community and local community groups and organisations. By encouraging and promoting opportunities for local people to get involved in, and take responsibility for, the projects, HiT will start to become an effective sustainable community group. One that will work to make Market Harborough a flourishing town where everyone can get involved and that everyone can enjoy.



Partnerships

Below is a current list of some of our key and developing partnerships - it is not exhaustive!

Welland Market Towns' Project	Harborough Churches Together
Harborough District Council	Action for Market Towns
Transitions Towns Market Harborough	Leicestershire County Council
Harborough District Enterprise Group	Harborough Cinema Group
Sainsburys	Robert Smyth School
Lutterworth Improvement Partnership	Broughton Astley Improvement Team
Voluntary Action South Leicestershire	Welland SSP
Harborough District Local Strategic Partnership	Market Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Thanks

To all the many people and organisations who have been involved with the Harborough Improvement Team over the last six years.

Special thanks to the people who attended and organised the Hands on Harborough event, and to those who have contributed their time, effort, knowledge and experience in producing this community action plan.



This action plan can be seen and downloaded online at:
www.harboroughonline.co.uk
www.harborough.gov.uk
www.vasl.org.uk

This plan can be made available in a larger format. To make a request please contact us at the address shown on page 6.