



*WEST CHILTINGTON
VILLAGE DESIGN
STATEMENT*

'A real portion of England's green and pleasant land'

Prepared by
West Chiltington Village Design Statement Steering Group
and adopted by Horsham District Council
as Supplementary Planning Guidance



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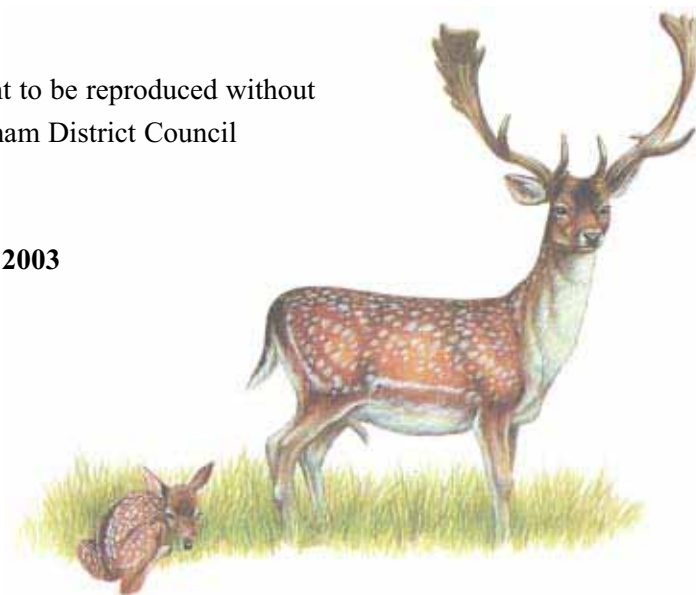
But we wish most of all to thank the residents of West Chiltington
for their support, help, advice and input.

All information, appendices and material obtained for this Statement is housed with
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July 2003





from the children, for the future

Winning entries from the Children's Questionnaire



1. Our Village Design Statement

The Village Design Statement concept was born in 1996 when the former Countryside Commission published a document entitled "Village Design - making local character count in new development." Our Statement reflects West Chiltington's views and aspirations for itself and its future. It provides guidance for developers, and for householders wishing to build extensions or alter their property. We can't stand in the way of progress; change is inevitable, and much of it will come whether there is new development or not, but we can ensure that builders take notice and reflect the history and character of the village, together with those additional qualities valued by the residents themselves. Thus it is an opportunity for us all to play a constructive part in ensuring that development is designed to enhance the local character and identity of this village in which we live. As residents we must also do our best to retain the rural aspect of our village by the sympathetic use of plants and materials, thus setting an example for any potential future development in the parish. It is imperative therefore that residents take an active interest in proposed developments at planning application stage, and make their views known, in writing, to both Horsham District Council and West Chiltington Parish Council.

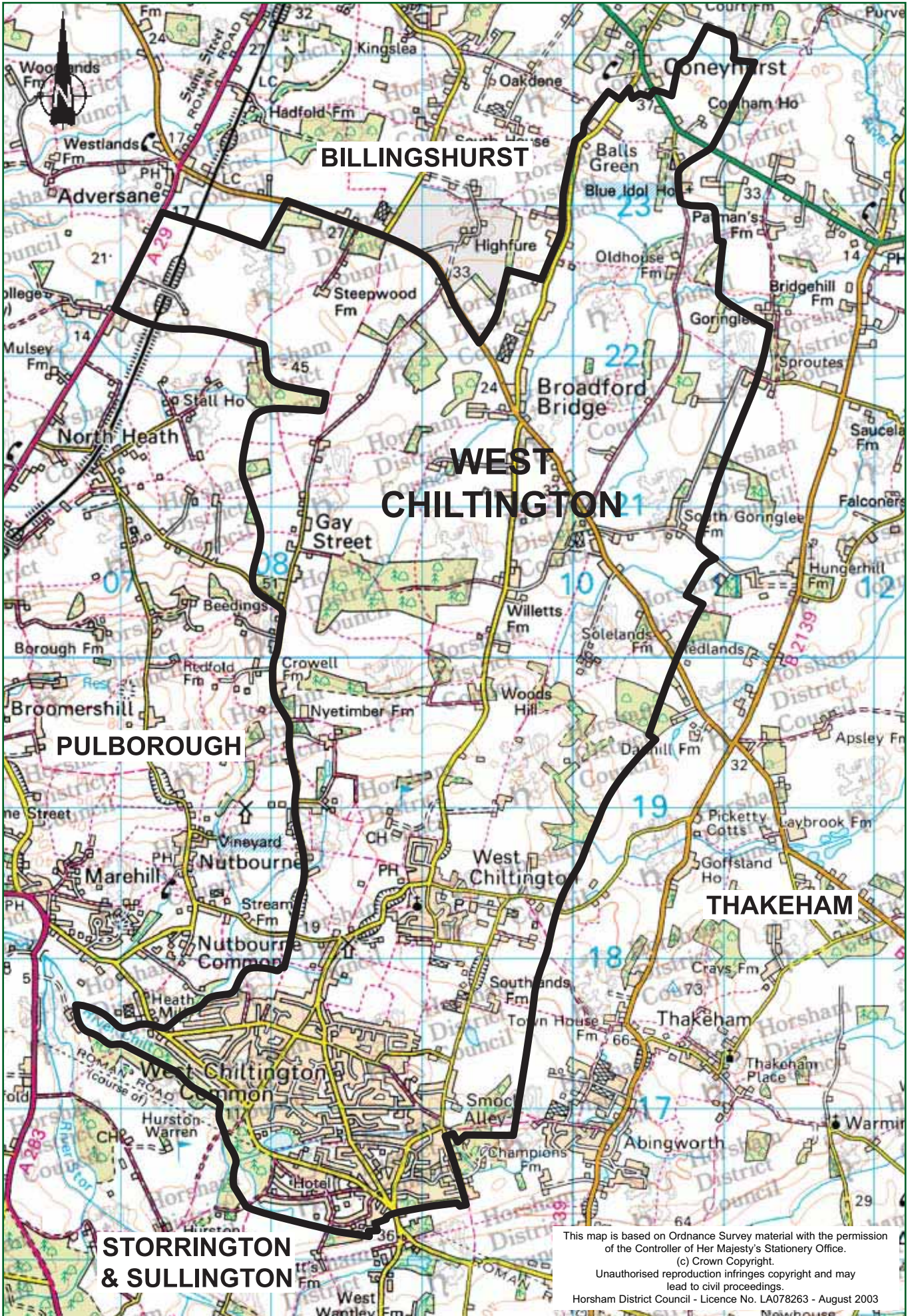
Research by the Countryside Agency has shown that the original three villages that produced a Village Design Statement have successfully influenced development in their villages. They have also had a positive influence on community life.

In April 2002 a Steering Group was set up to write a Village Design Statement; input and comments were encouraged from the parish, and meetings and a forum held. A questionnaire was distributed to every household in the Parish asking residents what they thought makes our village special - 56.6% of the households responded, (the quotations in italics in this Statement are from replies to the questionnaire); analysis of these replies was undertaken, and fed into a draft Statement which was then sent to all the dwellings in the parish for their comments and subsequent discussion at a further Forum. This meeting formally approved the Draft which was then submitted to Horsham District Council for approval; and adoption; it can now be said to be truly representative of the voices of the majority of West Chiltington residents.

A questionnaire was circulated to the children at the village Community School whose answers were also taken into account, and some of whose artwork illustrates this Statement. The older youth also had their own questionnaire; the results highlighted their concern for the environment (75%), and their reliance on parental lifts (91%) because of the inadequacy of public transport; this led to their frustration and boredom.

At present there is no plan for large scale development for West Chiltington, but there is increased pressure, particularly from the government, for more intensive use of urban/developed land. Therefore the VDS should:

- i) Support Horsham District Council in resisting inappropriate development which is out of scale, out of character, and not in accordance with the relevant government and local planning policies. Residents should write to both HDC and West Chiltington Parish Council to express their views.
- ii) Ensure that any new development is designed to complement and reflect the character of our village.
- iii) Advise the local planning authority of our opposition to unsympathetic development which includes, for example, excessive security lighting, or vigorous non-native tree screening.
- iv) Ensure that development which significantly overloads the infrastructure of the village, eg, water/sewage, or compromises safety, such as excessive pressure on the road network, is resisted.
- v) This Design Statement is intended for local householders, agricultural businesses and farmers; builders, developers and planning inspectors; architects, designers and planners, at Parish and District level; and statutory bodies and the providers of public utilities and services.



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2. Planning Procedures

Local planning is the responsibility of Horsham District Council whose current Local Plan is being reviewed and extended to the year 2016; Chapter 16 (Volume 3) of the current Local Plan relates specifically to West Chiltington. The Local Plan needs to take into account proposals for the whole county set out in the West Sussex Structure Plan, which is prepared by the County Council and is in turn subject to national government planning policies; the most relevant to us being PPG1 (Planning Policy Guidance 1) which refers to general planning policy and principles, PPG3 which refers specifically to housing matters, and PPG13 which covers transport matters in relation to development.

The Government is concerned that new development should normally be confined to "'sustainable areas' - i.e. those which do not place almost total reliance on the use of private cars". Additional development in West Chiltington would not meet this definition.

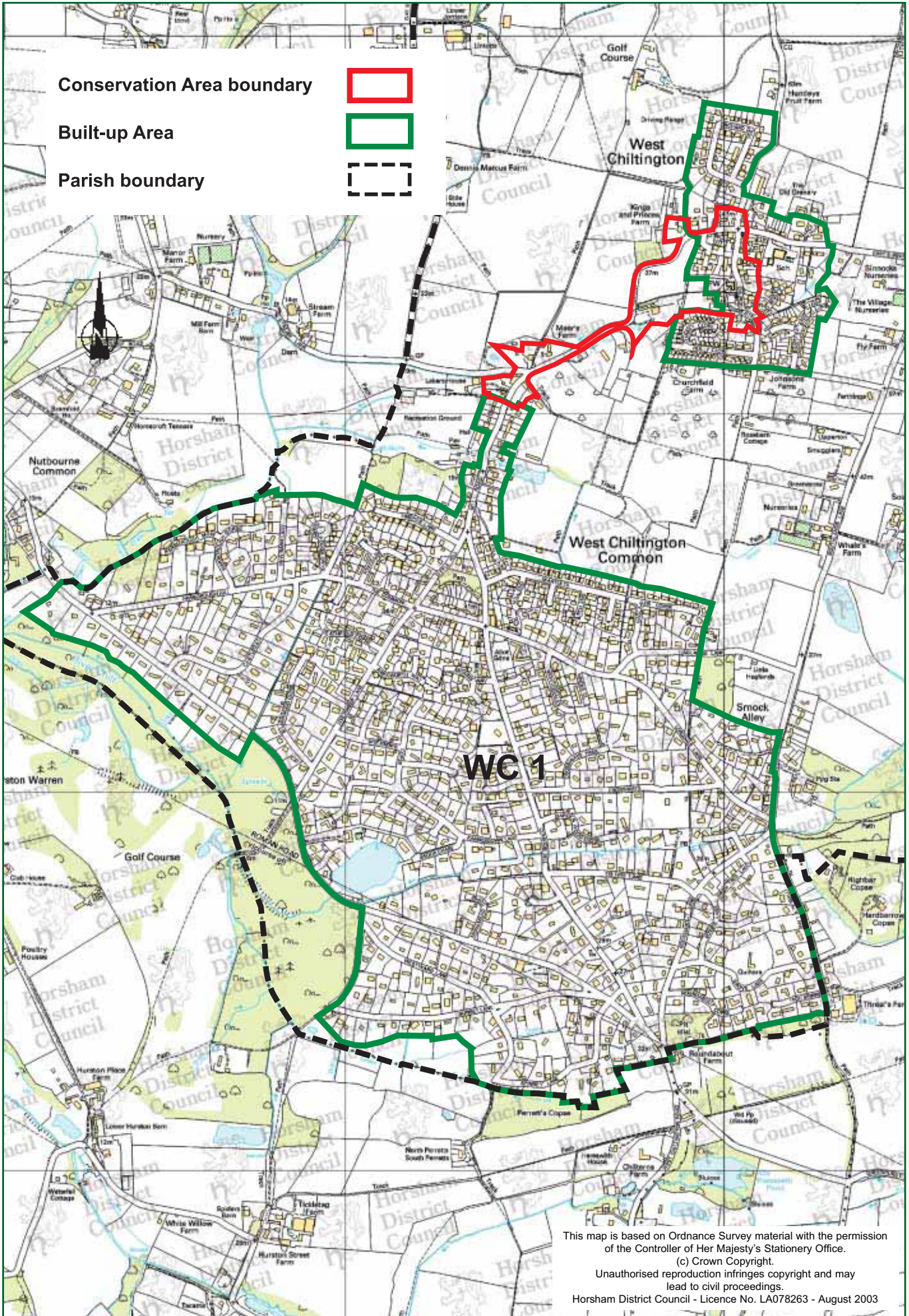
Under the current Local Plan, two 'built-up area' boundaries have been established, one for West Chiltington Village, and the other for West Chiltington Common (WC1); these are shown on the maps opposite. No new 'greenfield' development is proposed in the Local Plan in any part of the parish, because amongst other things, it would fail to pass the sustainability test. However, the effect of PPG3 is to create pressure for residential development within the built-up area through infill and redevelopment. This could cause a problem in that the cumulative effect of successive infills/redevelopments would over time, if unchecked, be equal to a major estate. PPG3 does, however, allow for the character of the area to be taken into account in assessing the merits of infill and redevelopment proposals.

When looking at planning applications Horsham District Council also considers other relevant Local Plan policies: EDC1 (Environment, Design and Conservation), HS10 (Housing), and WC1 (West Chiltington). The EDC Chapter has 55 policies covering, among others, size and scale of development, landscaping and parking, Public Rights of Way, Tree Preservation Orders and building within a Conservation Area.

Policy HS10 concerns infilling and redevelopment generally whilst WC1 concerns West Chiltington Common, and states that 'In order to retain the settlement's semi-rural appearance, which is characterised by large dwellings in spacious plots, residential and commercial development within the West Chiltington Common Area ... will only be permitted where new development is of a density and form which is in keeping with that of existing development nearby, and does not harm the character of the area.'

Government guidelines in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG1 revised) of February 1997 'reaffirms the role of the planning system... in protecting the natural and built environment' and 'Local planning authorities should reject poor designs (such as) those inappropriate to their context, for example those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.'

- i) Our Design Statement is in full support of the policies in the Horsham District Local Plan and shows what the residents of the parish want, in their built environment, within the constraints imposed by the Local Plan.
- ii) The VDS seeks to take account of, and incorporate the effects of, all relevant planning policies: for example PPG1 and PPG3; EDC1, HS10, WC1 in order to retain the character of the area.



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3. The Parish of West Chiltington

Although this document is called a *Village Design Statement*, we have chosen to include the entire parish as each of the three parts of the parish contributes to the whole.

The parish of West Chiltington lies in an area of the Sussex Weald about 12 miles north of Worthing on the South Coast, and about 10 miles to the south of Horsham. In it have been found prehistoric round barrows, flint hand axes of palaeolithic age, and evidence of Roman and Saxon occupation. West Chiltington is situated on the border of An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with a Site of Special Interest (SSSI) and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) within the parish. It is also on the boundary of the proposed South Downs National Park which will include a section of the River Chilt and a part of Monkmead Wood. There are many suggestions for the derivation of Chiltington. The - ing is probably derived from 'ingas' meaning *the people of*, and place name experts have interpreted Chilt as being derived from the Old English word *cil* meaning *hill*, thus Chiltington would be *The People of the Hill*.



It is long and narrow - some six miles north to south and an average of a mile from east to west. Since 1945 the population has burgeoned: figures show that there were 1,244 residents in 1921, rising to 1,718 in 1931, and to 3,400 by the year 2000.



The parish is roughly divided into three sections: towards the south is the Old Village of West Chiltington, part of which is a Conservation Area. The earliest historical evidence is contained in the 1086 Domesday Book which records a church and about 30 heads of families. The present church was erected about 1100 AD and the surrounding village contains buildings dating back to the 14th century. Many of the remaining farmhouses are of 15th or 16th century vintage and the parish contains no fewer than 69 listed buildings. The Questionnaire showed that there were also 48 other homes over 100 years old which were not listed.

Further to the south is The Common, a more recent development from the turn of the 20th century, and this area, too, has its historical buildings such as Gentle Harry's, Lilac Cottage and many interesting farmhouses. The Common has developed from the main cross roads with its shops and garage, and was originally built on Common Land. Reginald Fairfax Wells began development the 1920s and 30s with 'country cottages' inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The hallmarks were modern homes of a rustic style, local materials, relatively large gardens set in a quiet, rural environment with unmade-up tracks often with difficult access; they were largely intended as weekend retreats for the wealthy, and artistes from London. Wells' Cottages are still much sought after. Later local developers including the Carver and Slater families continued to reflect many of these characteristics.



The third area, and by far the largest, though the most sparsely populated, is the predominantly northern agricultural section (The Rural Area) which occupies about three quarters of the land. Until 1939 the whole parish was largely agricultural and mostly self-sufficient, with many scattered farms, and smaller hamlets at Broadford Bridge, Coneyhurst and Gay Street. Now agriculture in the northern part of the parish comprises three beef units (including one rare breeds), arable, two deer units, poultry, alpacas, and one mixed farm, while in the south on the sand, there are two dairy units, turf growing, and the historic Nyetimber Manor (given by William the Conqueror to Earl Roger) which now produces the prize winning sparkling wine.

Each of these three sections is on a different soil type which supports varied flora and fauna and gives a distinct character to the different areas.



Sympathetic conversion of agricultural building

4. The Old Village

The old village is described as being 'characterised by various distinct spaces linked together by narrow lengths of Church Street. The Conservation Area contains many buildings of architectural importance and includes the old village, the environs of the windmill to the south-west and the road linking the two.' (The District Local Plan 1997)

The centre of the village 'an open air museum in its own right,' is dominated by the old Norman church. There are timber-framed dwellings such as Searles, and Naldretts; and buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries which are faced for the most part in stone or brick, and show considerable variety e.g. Step House with its capped chimney, and Clarkes Cottage with its twisted chimney.



The windmill, a black smock-mill with fantail, was built on its present site about 1830 and worked, with its four original sweeps, until 1921. In 1923 it was converted into a residence. Storm damage over the years has taken its toll and she stands today with only 2 sweeps, but her owners' dedicated restoration and upkeep makes the windmill a proud part of our village heritage and vista.



The Land Settlement Association was formed to benefit the unemployed in the Depression of the 1920s/30s. One paid a stake for the land, the initial smallholding stock, and advice on husbandry, and the produce was sold through the LSA which acted like a co-operative. Many of the newcomers to The Village started in this way, on smallholdings along The Sinnocks, whereas the smallholders in Hatches Cottages in East Street were mostly local people.

The Juggs at the south east corner of the old village was completed in 1946-7 and was part of the Council Housing Scheme, and in 1994 a part rented (4 houses) and part shared equity housing (2 houses) scheme at Steele Close was opened to help the young people of the village to remain in West Chilington. The sheltered housing scheme at Wheelwrights was built in the 1980s on Slaters' old building yard.

Orchard Dell, was built on the orchard land of Palmers Lodge in 1957; Holly and Curbey Closes were added in 1975, with Church Grove the most recent estate, being finished in 1994. Properties built within these developments show a variety in type and size of accommodation although the more recent additions have tended to be larger, 4,5, or 6 bedroom properties and to lack designs sympathetic to their immediate area. A recent infill development in East Street produced the comment:

“it was a shame there was one large house on a site which could have been developed more sympathetically with semi-detached cottages, or a terrace of less-expensive houses, to continue the theme of Hatches Cottages further up the road, and benefit the village.”

Many houses have been successfully altered; owners, and builders who work for them, have used traditional techniques thereby 'saving the past for the future'. Wherever possible attempts have been made to match all detailing and materials to those existing. Unfortunately, occasionally unsympathetic but easily maintained modern uPVC windows and doors have replaced traditional wooden styles in some older properties.



An example of a sympathetic extension to a cottage on The Common where the join between the original and the new work is imperceptible

The Old Village is also characterised by sunken lanes such as The Hollow (commonly known as The Hollows) and East Street. These former drove roads are narrow with high walls of sandstone at the edges of the road and together with overhanging vegetation are established features in the distinctive character of the village. Hedgerows and mature trees and shrubs are important features found along the hollow ways. The aspect of approaching the Conservation Area through wooded lanes adds to the character of the village.

- i) Much of the Old Village is within the Conservation Area and building within this protected area must be strictly regulated in terms of size, scale, detail and materials sympathetic to adjacent properties and the character of the area.
- ii) The Hollows, included in the Conservation Area, are an important feature and it is considered vital that the road should not be altered simply to accommodate the extra traffic generated by new development.
- iii) The narrow lanes and particular character of the Village means that development here must be extremely carefully controlled.

5. The Common



The built-up area now known as West Chilton Common was originally a farming area of heath, bracken and gorse. The historic buildings were all agricultural (for example Mawkins, Daux and Haglands Farms) but now the farm houses have given up their land and are homes whose outbuildings have been converted or pulled down. The Common is centred on the cross roads, has its own shops, garage and post office, and was the main area for residential development.



In the 1920s there was a shortage of accommodation which resulted in many local families living in caravans or converted railway carriages. To alleviate this situation The Birches was built by the then Rural District Council from 1926-36, but many of the houses have now been sold off, reducing the available stock of houses for rent. In 1962 Kensington Close, a block of one and two bedroom flats was built. By accommodating older people from The Birches in these flats, their houses became available for rent by younger couples with children.



From 1945 onwards the increasing use of the car resulted in West Chiltington becoming a favourable place for private development; quite substantial estates were built. Latterly because of limitations written into the current Local Plan, all building on the Common must be within the built up area so comes in the form of 'infilling' (development in existing gardens) or redevelopment. One of the dangers is that, with little local employment, and the cost of the properties being high, the area has the prospect of turning into a dormitory for commuters and a haven for the retired.



“You should see West Chiltington from 12,000 feet altitude; it's literally a huge housing estate possibly the biggest in West Sussex. It may be well disguised by foliage, but it's still huge.”

Because of planning restrictions in the Old Village and the Rural Area the vast majority of proposals for future building will be in The Common. Such proposals must be carefully controlled in order to retain the character of the area, as articulated in the Local Plan Policy WC1. However, where appropriate opportunities arise or can be identified, it should be considered whether development could meet the needs of the local people. There does now exist a need for a further small, quality 'courtyard type' development in a reasonably central location to enable older people to vacate their family homes and move into smaller properties which are easier to manage. Also, having identified a local need, development in appropriate locations could include a limited number of smaller less-expensive homes sympathetic to the area. This would have the advantage of enabling the young adults of the village to compete in the housing market, and it could offer housing for such key workers as teachers, nurses and service providers. Additionally there should be encouragement for people to work from home in the hope that this will help to reduce local traffic flows, and contribute to the life of the village.

With the present emphasis on greater housing density, gardens are being developed, and sometimes an existing house in a large plot is demolished to build more houses thereon; many consider the original home on the plot should be retained, particularly if it contributes to the existing character of the area. Any new dwelling constructed should not prejudice the local ambience but be of appropriate sympathetic character.



The southern part of The Common is now known as Roundabout. In the 1920s and 30s Reginald Fairfax Wells bought two parcels of land and developed them, and the area between, which together became known as Roundabout, after the local farm. There was no infrastructure: no roads, shops or central recreational area; it was devised simply as collections of cottages: one centred on Sunset, Spinney, Heather and Westward Lanes, and the other on Grove, Bower, Threals, Fir, and Birch Tree Lanes.



Wells' idea was to build rural retreats for the retired, the bohemians and the artistes of London, for individuals, and for many ex-colonials who retired to Roundabout. Most of the cottages had garages, and, unusual for the period, many of these garages were built in sympathy with the houses. Some even had outbuildings to be used as studios. His factory at the end of Spinney Lane produced or procured materials locally.



The Roundabout Estates are of local, and national, historical interest; there are still articles about the cottages in the broadsheet papers, and Wells' various talents are recognised internationally. His many and varied activities characterise a fascinating entrepreneur who moved, in 1930, to Spinney Lane, and house building. This is truly a cameo of post-Edwardian/Art Deco society; Wells' legacy is such that we need to safeguard this area because of its contribution to the character of the village.

Many of the houses have been up-dated and extended over the years, but the overall density has remained low. This density looks luxurious in comparison with modern urban development, but it is important that it is retained because it adds a unique character to the parish, and enhances the rural feel which we would wish to maintain.

The gardens of the original properties were sufficiently large to allow some infilling without detriment to the environment, however any further infilling would seriously detract from the character of the area and produce traffic movements which the narrow, unmade lanes are not able to sustain, without jeopardising safety and creating serious inconvenience to existing pedestrians. Some recent appeals against refusals by Horsham District Council for additional building in Sunset, Spinney and Threals Lanes have been rejected by the Planning Inspectors who agreed that the increased traffic caused would be unsustainable. The original plot sizes in The Grove Lane/Bower Lane/Birch Tree Lane area have been largely untouched except for the sale of a tract of land in the 1960s, and would probably still be recognised by Wells were he alive today.

By 1935 William Carver had decided to start his own building company and employed a number of Wells' ex-employees, to build such estates as Castlegate and Finches Lane. Another local building firm, P Slater and Sons Ltd has built over a hundred individual houses in the parish in the last century, and a third local company, the Williams Group has also contributed to the housing stock by building such estates as Crossways Park and Nyetimber Copse.



- i) The overall semi-rural character of the area should be respected by retaining the low density housing. The large gardens are a haven for wildlife.
- ii) Whilst retaining the rural character, and having identified a need, developments in appropriate locations should include some smaller homes, which average or below-average wage-earners, key workers and the elderly could afford. This must only be achieved without detracting from the overall character of the area. Approval of small sympathetic affordable housing schemes principally for local people should be encouraged where appropriate. There also exists a need for a small, quality 'courtyard type' development.
- iii) Existing houses should be retained on development sites where possible, so as to produce continuity of design.
- iv) To retain the street scene emphasis must be placed on sympathetic design and large areas of unsuitable brickwork, hard landscaping, and heavy materials should be avoided in order to reduce the impact of any building. Urban manifestations such as pavements or street lighting, should be avoided.
- v) Further development in the Roundabout area which causes an increase in traffic would not be safe, sustainable or environmentally desirable. Widening of the tracks with lay-bys, felling of trees, or destruction of the existing environment, which would change the unique character of a very special, locally interesting part of the village should be avoided.
- vi) Any future house extensions should be in keeping with the original building style with particular reference to existing materials and detailing, e.g. roofs, doors, windows, chimneys, bricks.

6. The Rural Area

Historically the Wealden Clay soils north of the village provided minerals: Winklestone, Pulborough Stone and Lower Greensand stone; these last 2 sandstones were largely used for building up to 20th century - the church walls are built of stone rubble using 3 local building stones. It also provided quality oak for building.

Patterns of land-use have changed over the past century, and due to the relatively poor soils in the north there has been a considerable reduction in arable land, which has generally been converted to grazing and set aside. Traditional farming has been replaced by many activities: a stud, livery, a farrier and saddle-maker; alpaca farming; viticulture and small scale soft fruit and tomato growing; nurseries for bedding plants; aquatics; and a garden centre, and the wood-based occupations of hurdle maker/hedge-layer, cabinetmaker, chair maker, oak building restorer, and log seller, have all increased the diversity of the rural economy. There is a small-scale car repair workshop and Southern Water has a pumping station.



Brinsbury College, part of whose land falls within the parish, concentrates on diversified rural activities, because over the years it, too, has moved away from its agricultural past.



For leisure, just north of the Old Village is West Chilmington Golf Club, built in 1987 with an 18-hole course, 9-hole pitch and putt, and driving range. The Club House restaurant is open to non members.

The older houses are often of timber frame construction, infilled with brick or stone, sometimes rendered and painted. In the last century there was limited building, usually associated with agriculture, ranging from detached houses to bungalows. Over the past twenty years a significant number of redundant barns have been converted into houses, which has the benefit of preserving attractive buildings for the future, and providing housing in a style entirely sympathetic with the countryside.



With the decline in the number of active farms, and farm employees, the quality of husbandry of hedges and trees has dramatically declined. Many hedges have ceased to be regularly trimmed, and have grown out. The result of this is the large number of mature and semi-mature trees in the parish probably to the benefit of the local fauna; this lack of husbandry has the disadvantage that many of the already narrow lanes have become even narrower. However:

“We like the fact that the roads are narrow and we have little commercial traffic.”

“Do not ‘improve’ the roads; we like them as they are.”

The roads in the northern part (on clay) continually suffer from subsidence and destruction of their edges as a result of vehicles passing and eroding them. These roads are almost continuously bounded by ditches, and frequently by grass verges and hedges. The B2133 is a much larger road, maintained by West Sussex County Council to a much higher standard than Broadford Bridge Road/West Chiltington Lane. In contrast to the roads on the clay, those in the south are characterised by sunken lanes such as The Hollows, East Street, Southlands Lane and the southern slope of Woods Hill. These relatively narrow roads with high walls of solid sandstone tight to the edge of the road, and overhanging vegetation, are key features in the distinctive character of this part of the parish.



- i) Under the Local Plan new building outside the built-up area is strictly limited. Any requests for Change of Use to Business Use should have an agricultural connection and/or have no material adverse effect on the environment or amenity. See Policies CS14, 15 and 19 of the Local Plan. Any development in the countryside should be sympathetic to the character of the area - Policy CS11 of the Local Plan.
- ii) The sunken lanes of The Hollows, East Street, Southlands Lane, Gay Street and the southern slope of Woods Hill are key features in the distinctive character of the parish and must be retained as they are at all costs.
- iii) Any development must maintain the rural feel of the parish with retention or introduction of hedges and trees, encouragement to any developer to put service cables underground, and considerate use of security or outside lights, and skylight windows which, by illuminating upwards, increase the urban feel.

7. The Natural Environment



Bog Asphodel

We are fortunate to have a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the parish; this is an area notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of 'special interest for nature conservation.' On our southwest boundary is an SSSI, Hurston Warren, an area of heathland on lower greensand which contains a range of habitats including woodland, wet and dry heath, open water and bog. The quaking bog which has developed over an old lake is one of the best examples of its type in the south east and contains several locally rare plants including sundew, bog asphodel and mosses.

A Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) is a non-statutory designation for sites that are of local conservation importance and often recognised as such in Local Authority development plans. One such is Monkmead Woods, adjacent to Hurston Warren, part of which is also in our parish.

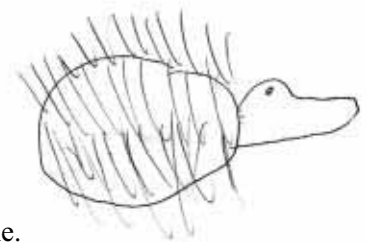


Bell Heather

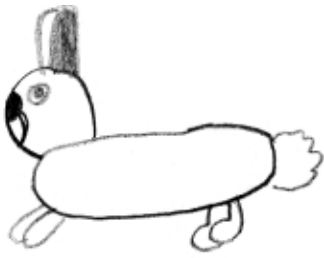
Cattlestone Farm on Harbolets Road is another SNCI having been traditionally managed by the same family for over a century so it supports a wide variety of native species.



The differing soils in the parish grow a variety of plants which support a diversity of wildlife. Because the rare and exotic are noticed it is often the native flora and fauna that are overlooked, and it is these that are liable to decline.



Such ordinary birds as sparrows and thrushes are less likely to be seen in our gardens now than they used to be, so it is important to retain much of the parish's tradition of houses on sizeable plots to keep the habitat for these birds, and other mammals and insects, many of which rely on what are called 'weeds'. Weeds grow in the larger gardens where tidiness is of less importance; these plots also allow space for fallen logs, piles of leaves and compost boxes which provide habitat for native species. Although residents have seen golden oriole, sparrow hawks, wryneck, hoopoe, stag beetles, star fungus and natterer bats in their gardens it is the owls and house martins, the frogs and toads, pipistrelles, slow worms, grass snakes, adders and the native flowers and weeds that we need to provide for.



There is an RSPB Day Survey of moths in the parish, and there are known to be badger setts here, as well as fox dens. Questionnaire replies showed that 92.6% appreciated the birds, except that there were “*too many pigeons*”; rabbits were also said to be a problem, but most enjoyed the wildlife around their properties and the adjacent land.



“The tree lined lanes, the quiet and the rural pace of life are what I like most about West Chiltington.”

“We have only lived here four months but we chose it because of the countryside around, the wildlife, the relative quiet and the good garden size.”

In order to retain our village status within the rural setting we must keep the existing clear separation between West Chiltington and neighbouring villages; this is not going to be easy in this Statement as our built-up areas are on the very boundaries of the parish, and we will have to rely on the co-operation of adjacent villages to respect our individual identities, see Policy CS6 of the Local Plan. We must also protect the green spaces within the parish, particularly the ones between the Old Village and The Common. It is important, too, that when new properties are built, they should retain, reinstate or create a green boundary of hedge and tree. Hard walls and urban fencing are not appropriate as they fail to provide any wildlife habitat and are not in keeping with the rural environment.



- i) It is the open spaces between West Chiltington and neighbouring villages, and the intra-parish green spaces, whether private or public, which give the village part of its unique character; it is imperative that appropriate separation is retained and protected. See Policy CS6 of the Local Plan.
- ii) People move into West Chiltington for the rural/semi-rural feel, the tranquillity and the resultant wildlife. Any development plans should take this into consideration; hard walls and fences should be rejected, and hedges and trees be planted, retained or reinstated wherever possible.
- iii) This does not mean that one plot can only sustain one big house; the need for less expensive housing must be considered, for a row of cottages can provide just as much wildlife habitat as one big house.
- iv) Developers should be dissuaded from using the vigorous Leylandii as boundary screening, and encouraged to use native species instead.



8. The Infrastructure

First impressions of any village are gained from the approaches to it; sunken lanes, overhanging trees and hedges and meandering alignments add weight to the rural character of West Chiltonington.

The parish is isolated, having no A-class roads and only a short-length of B-class road. Within the village itself local access roads dominate; these roads serve to distribute the local traffic from the largely residential village core to the principal road network at Storrington, Coolham, Billingshurst and Pulborough. As access and local distributor roads they perform their function adequately but are ill-equipped to serve concentrated developments or act as through routes, but "improving" the roads would destroy the essential characteristics of the Village and the rural landscape. Preserving their character whilst improving safety and amenity for all road users must be the aim; any additional traffic generated by the construction of new houses will overload and accelerate the decay of the network. The presence of standing and running water and inadequate road drainage which create hazardous driving conditions over considerable stretches, together with increasing vehicle flows already have had their effect. Developers may offer to improve the road network but questionnaire replies showed that people like the village the way it is, including the rural-type roads. The physical characteristics reinforce the need for appropriate speed limits, particularly a 30 mph limit within the main built-up areas.



A much used and appreciated facility whose design was determined by scarce financial resources

A major concern for planners in determining the location of new dwelling is sustainability, and minimisation of the use of cars. There are virtually no jobs in West Chiltonington, and over 90% of all shopping is done in the surrounding towns, up to 12 miles away. Leisure facilities are predominantly outside the village which again means local residents have to travel by car for their needs. This means that any new dwelling in the village will necessitate the frequent use of the car. Public transport is infrequent during the daytime and in the evening there is no service; few residents therefore are willing or able to use public service transport. However, there is clearly a balance to be struck, particularly where housing to meet local needs is involved, and all new development cannot be ruled out on this basis.



Before 1945 the parish was mostly self-sufficient with shops, farms and businesses, now there is little local employment, so much of the working population works outside the parish; most travel northwards, to London, the M25, and nearer destinations such as Horsham, Crawley or Guildford; many use the narrow and tortuous East Street or Broadford Bridge Road. 72% of questionnaire replies showed people drove more than 11 miles to work.



West Chiltington is fortunate to have an extensive network of bridleways and footpaths connecting it to nearby villages and towns, and provides access between various parts of the village, including a number of residential lanes which are privately owned with rights of access. It is essential that these networks are preserved, properly maintained, and added to, if any reduction in vehicle use is to be realised. There is a high level of support (79%) for their improvement. One example of an enhancement that would provide safer access, is to maintain and improve public footpaths to the school, thereby reducing the number of cars taking and collecting children.



The question of street lighting was also raised and while many were concerned about safety on the roads, only a few wanted even limited street lighting.



It was repeated that the sunken lanes are a special feature of our landscape and must be preserved as they are.

“This is still considered a quiet village in its semi-rural location, close to nearby facilities for shopping, doctor, and so on.”



When large estates are built, the developers can be prevailed upon to commit monies to beneficial projects such as improvements in the infrastructure, but with small scale infilling, these monies are often unavailable. Therefore, the entire infrastructure, for example: water, sewerage, roads, schools and village hall, is put under increasing and unrelieved strain. Who can say which would be the last house to cause the system finally to fail?

Overhead cables detract from the view

The obtrusive sight of overhead cables detracts from the environmental amenity; these should be put underground wherever possible. Another increasing problem is that of light pollution caused by outside security lights and skylights which glare upwards into the sky. The glare can disrupt wildlife behaviour patterns, and destroys the very rural aspect that new residents came here to find.

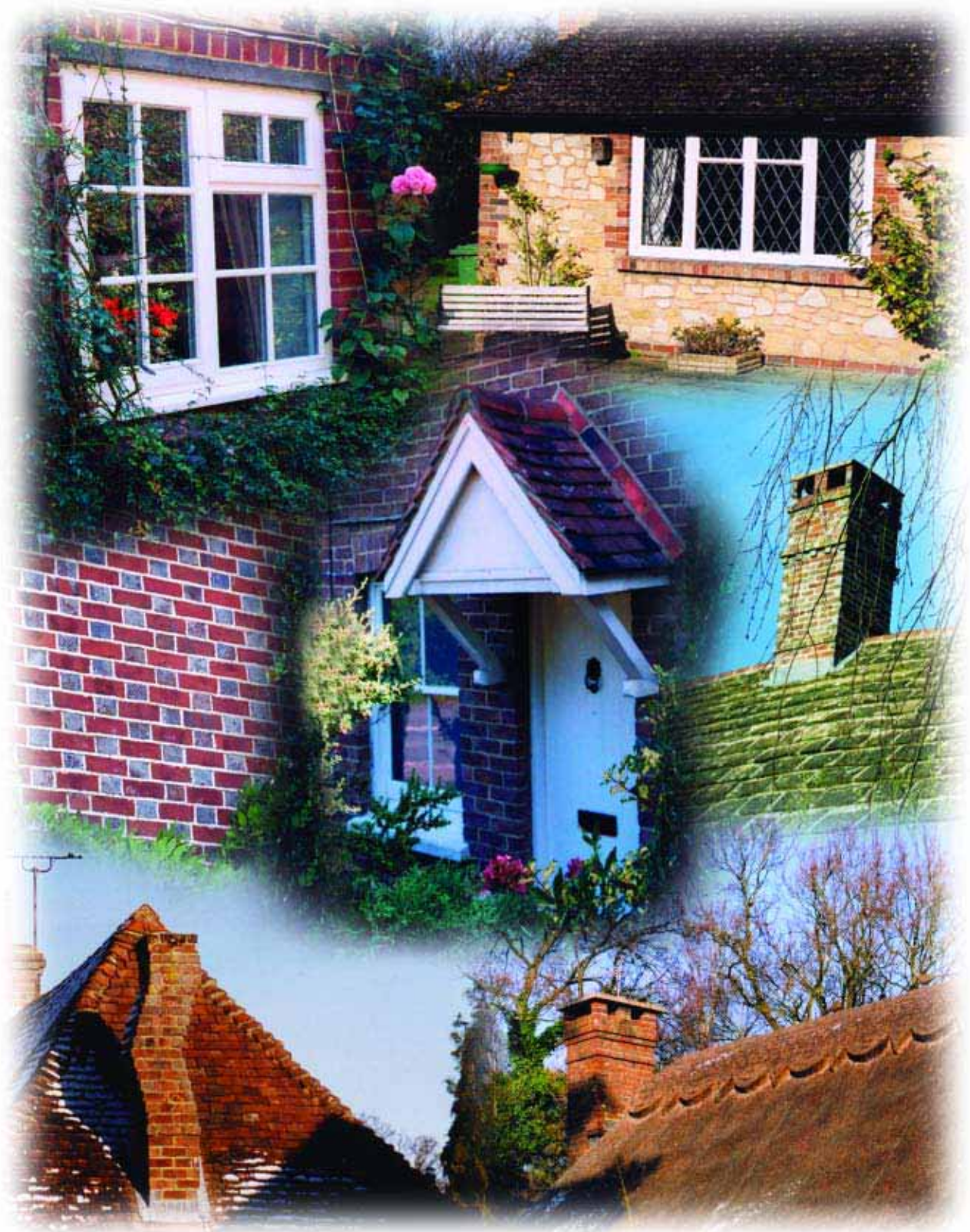


“If you light the streets, you'll lose the stars.”

- i) The sunken lanes are a special feature of our landscape and must be preserved as they are; they should not be 'improved' to accommodate extra traffic generated from new development.
- ii) To protect the environment and enhance the amenity we would like to encourage the County Council to up-grade and maintain the extensive footpath network by improvements to bridleways and public footpaths, thus encouraging people to leave their cars behind and reducing road traffic. Similarly the County Council should be prevailed upon to ensure adequate verge maintenance and road surface repair.
- iii) Significant new building which would create unreasonable demands on an already over-stretched infrastructure, for example: water, sewerage, roads, school and village hall, should be resisted.
- iv) Any new cabling should be sited underground; sympathetic siting of mobile telephone masts should be encouraged; all public services should re-route existing wires and pipes underground wherever possible.
- v) External lighting should be limited to the minimum required for security, and the installation of unshaded skylights discouraged, thus minimising pollution from glow and spillage.

“A cultural haven where human values and individuals are respected.”

9. Architectural Detailing



*Clockwise from top left:
Unobtrusive double glazing in sympathy with the house; Traditional materials in a modern house;
Horsham Stone roof and chimney; Good traditional thatch; Twisted chimney necessary
to make the fire draw; Style of brickwork in use since Tudor times; Porch detail.*

10. In Conclusion

Initially it was hard to define what 'A West Chiltington Look' is, but it follows from our questionnaires that we are a conservative, rural parish, which values the farms, trees and fields that help to define it. Smaller buildings of stone or lime-wash are acceptable, whilst the colour of brickwork should blend more sympathetically with the overall character of the area. A current sizeable development in Monkmead Lane, having large houses on comparatively small plots with the loss of trees and shrubs, was one of many sites thought by local residents to be quite out of sympathy with its environment, proving how concerned this village is at its prospects for the future.

The gables break up the roofline which, combined with leadwork under windows and the tile hanging, reduce the bulk of the building



A well designed building in the Conservation Area

This appreciation of the rural nature of the parish was demonstrated at the first Open Forum when visitors were invited to comment on a selection of photographs showing various aspects of the village. The typical characteristics that most people wished to be retained were those embodied by St Mary's Church, the footpaths and finger posts, and the fields. The whole of the Conservation Area of the Village was viewed favourably, with one or two exceptions which some felt did not blend in with the adjacent properties. This point was made repeatedly: some recent developments, although they play a vital role in village life, have a design unsympathetic to the general style of the village. This is what the Village Design Statement is all about - ensuring that buildings blend in with their location.



The modern building in the foreground is not in sympathy with the rest of the street scene

“Whatever future development occurs, the retention of the village's peaceful rural character must be paramount.”



This is West Chilton as we the residents see it, and wish it to continue. This Statement represents our aspirations for our parish, and, by trying to adhere to these we expect that any planner or developer will help us to preserve our unique and rural atmosphere.

“An oasis in a hostile world.”

Summary of Planning Guidance Recommendations

Introduction

1. This Design Statement is intended for everyone in the parish; builders, developers and planning inspectors; architects, designers and planners, at Parish and District level; and statutory bodies and the providers of public utilities and services. This Statement is also intended for the residents; we must do our best to retain the rural aspect of our village by the sympathetic use of plants and materials, thus setting an example for any potential future development in the parish.
2. Our Design Statement is in full support of the policies in the Horsham District Local Plan and shows what the residents of the parish want, in their built environment, within the constraints imposed by the Local Plan and the application of Government guidance (PPG3). It is imperative therefore that residents take an active interest in proposed development at planning application stage, and make their views known, in writing, to both HDC and West Chiltington Parish Council.

West Chiltington's Distinctive Local Character

Location

3. Part of West Chiltington overlaps the suggested new boundary of the proposed South Downs National Park. It already includes within its border a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and a Site of Natural Conservation Interest (SNCI), and is also close to the border of a large Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Old Village Conservation Area

4. Much of the Old Village is within the Conservation Area and building within this protected space must be strictly regulated in terms of size, scale, detail and materials sympathetic to adjacent properties, and the character of the area.

West Chiltington Common

5. West Chiltington Common contains a number of historic buildings. Its development began in the 1920s with Reginald Wells' country cottages inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The hallmarks were modern homes of a rustic style, from local materials, relatively large gardens set in a quiet rural environment with un-made-up tracks often with difficult access. They were largely intended as weekend retreats for the wealthy, and artistes from London. This is the character that attracts residents to the village and which they wish to protect. Later local developers including the Carver and Slater families continued to reflect these characteristics.
6. Many of the lanes and tracks, typically such as Crossways, Lordings Lane and the end of Haglands Lane, are of a poor quality and give such poor access that they cannot safely sustain any further traffic increase, so only very limited development in these locations, if any, should be allowed.

The Rural Area

7. Under the Local Plan new building outside the built-up area is strictly limited and any requests for Change of Use to Business Use should have an agricultural connection and/or have no material adverse effect on the environment or amenity. Policies CS11, 14, 15 and 19 of the Local Plan apply.
8. Any conversion of redundant agricultural buildings in the Rural Area should be in keeping with the local character.

Environmental Considerations

9. Ensure that any new development is designed to complement the immediate surroundings and rural characteristics of our village in terms of design, materials and scale. Policy WC1 of the Local Plan applies.
10. People move into West Chiltington for the rural/semi-rural ambience, the tranquillity and the resultant wildlife. Any development should take this into consideration: obtrusive walls and fences should be avoided wherever possible; and hedges, ditches and trees should be retained, created, reinstated and protected. The use of vigorous leylandii conifers as boundary screening should be discouraged, and native species planted instead.

Development Considerations

Housing

11. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance, note 3 (paras 69-71) states that only a limited amount of housing can be accommodated in villages which will only be suitable locations for significant additional housing where:
 - (i) local services could become unviable without modest growth
 - (ii) houses, such as affordable housing, are required to meet local needs,
 - (iii) development can be in keeping with the character of the village using such techniques as Village Design Statements.

West Chiltington has already more than made its contribution to new housing in recent years, evident from the fact that the village population has increased from 1,900 in 1945 to 3,400 in 2000 with its built-up area increasing tenfold in the same period. For West Chiltington condition (i) does not currently apply; the limited local services are viable. As regards condition (ii) this Design Statement identifies a limited need by local people for affordable homes particularly for key workers and for a small courtyard development for the elderly, if appropriate location (s) in keeping with the character of the area can be identified.

Density

12. The special character of West Chiltington depends on its rural, quiet and environmentally-friendly nature, marked by its verdant gardens and lanes. The main planning threat is the destruction of this by inappropriate infilling. Increasing density through infilling would be especially incongruous on the border of the proposed new National Park, AONB and SSSI. Similarly significant changes to the character of the area through over intensive infill must be avoided on sites such as Crossways and Lordings Lane, and in the Roundabout area with its special character and inadequate and unmade lanes. Residents consider that, with the exception of affordable housing where this would be appropriate to its context, densities on redeveloped plots should not normally be more than about 50% greater, providing that the resulting individual plot sizes are consistent with those of surrounding properties. Special attention should also be paid to the natural greening of developments.
13. Whilst wishing where possible to retain the existing low density housing with large gardens which are a haven for wildlife, a balance is required between different sizes of buildings. Proposals must demonstrate that the building is appropriate for the plot size, the setting and context.

General

14. In order to avoid damage to the environment, all new dwellings need to be considered carefully to assess their impact on the local infrastructure (roads, mains water and sewerage), the school, and such leisure facilities as the village hall, youth club, the public footpath and bridleway network and the recreation ground which are considered to be at or near their capacity.

15. Consideration and careful attention should be given to our opposition to such aspects as security lighting; hard, urban landscaping; large areas of unsuitable brickwork; developers should be encouraged to use soft landscaping. Policy EDC2
16. In order to preserve the architectural heritage of the village, there are some cases where retention of an existing property on a redevelopment site will be desirable.
17. Extensions, conversions, conservatories and garages should be modest and in sympathy with the character of the main building, should use sympathetic materials, and incorporate pitched roofs where possible.
18. Before any development is allowed, the proposals must show, with detailed dimensions, how the building will sit relative to its neighbours, in order to assess fully the impact on those properties, including the effect on their light or privacy.
19. Any development should support the rural feel of the parish with retention or introduction of hedges, ditches and trees; encouragement to any developer to put service cables underground; and controlled use of security or outside lights and skylight windows which, without blinds, will illuminate upwards increasing the urban feel by causing light pollution.

Clear Separations

20. Our village setting is dependent upon the clear separation between West Chiltington and Thakeham, Billingshurst, Storrington and Pulborough. It is also characterised by the intra-parish green spaces; it is these open spaces, whether private or public, which give the village part of its unique character and it is essential to ensure that this separation is retained and protected.

Transport

21. The Government's PPG3 states that development plans should 'maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport'. In West Chiltington residents are concerned about danger to pedestrians and cyclists from the increased and speeding traffic in narrow lanes. At the same time they do not want the widening of roads and lanes, or their urbanisation, for example through street lighting. Steps must be taken to upgrade and maintain the extensive footpath network and make improvements to bridleways and footpaths, thus encouraging people to leave their cars and reduce road traffic. It is also recommended that West Sussex County Council advises the village on appropriate safety measures to be implemented over time, including reduced speed limits.
22. In order to ensure protection of the rural character of the area the introduction of pavements, kerbs, street lighting, or any urban manifestations which would not be in keeping, should be resisted.
23. The sunken lanes through the greensand ridges, such as The Hollows, East Street, Gay Street, Southlands Lane, and the southern slope of Woods Hill are key features in the distinctive character of the parish and must be retained as they are at all costs. New development should be restricted to avoid the pressure and need to 'improve' them.
24. All other rural roads in the parish add to the mix and character of the area and similarly should not be 'improved'
25. Serious consideration must be given to the problems of roadside verge, ditch and hedge maintenance, and road surface repair.

Conclusion

26. Developers will be expected to provide a clear and detailed statement of how they meet these Guidance Recommendations in our Village Design Statement.

Appendices and References

To be found in West Chiltington Parish Office

1. Central Government Documents

- * Planning Policy Guidance 1 - General Principles
- * Planning Policy Guidance 3 - Housing Matters
- * Planning Policy Guidance 13 - Transport Matters
- * These documents plus the other Guidance notes can be obtained from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, or on the website www.planning.odpm.gov.uk

2. Local Government Documents

- * Horsham District Local Plan November 1997 - Volumes 1 and 3
 - Significant extracts have been taken from the above including reference to, in Volume 1:
 - * Built-up area boundaries
 - * General Policies
 - G1 - Damage to Character of Area
 - G2 - Sustainability
 - G3 - Infrastructure
 - * Local Gaps
 - * Countryside Policies
 - CS6 - Local Gaps
 - CS9 - Trees and Woodlands
 - CS11 - Agricultural Dwellings
 - CS14 - Conversion of Agricultural etc Buildings
 - CS19 - House Extensions in the Countryside
 - * Environmental Policies
 - * Housing Policies
 - HS7 - New Housing
 - HS8 - Density and Layout
 - HS10 - Infilling
 - * Transport and Infrastructure Policies
 - TU1 - Constraint on use of Private Cars
 - Extracts taken from Volume 3:
 - * West Chiltington - Policies WC1 and WC2

3. Open Forum

- * Questionnaire for photos
- * Analysis of above
- * Analysis of above with photographic illustrations

4. Village Design Statement Survey

- * The Questionnaire
- * Analysis of above
- * Précis of Analysis
- * Children's Questionnaire
- * Analysis of above
- * Youth Questionnaire
- * Analysis of above

5. Wildlife

- * Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Report 15.10.2002
- * English Nature - Focus on Bats
- * List of Birds at Cattlestone Farm
- * Sussex Ornithological Society - West Chiltington Bird Records disk
- * Sylvia Simkin - Billingshurst - Flowers of Sussex

6. Written Contributions from Steering Group

- * The Village
- * The Common
- * Infrastructure
- * The Rural Area
- * History

7. Minutes of all Steering Group Meetings

8. Resolution of Horsham District Council's Cabinet on 17th July 2003, regarding adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

9. Bibliography

- * The Perfect Village by Capt P A Barron - November 1927
- * Sussex by Esther Meynell - 1947
- * Sussex by Arthur Mee - 1964
- * West Chiltington in Sussex by Sylvia Saunders-Jacobs - 1975
- * Voices of the Village - 1999



WEST CHILTINGTON

2000

A VILLAGE WITH A PAST
AND A FUTURE

