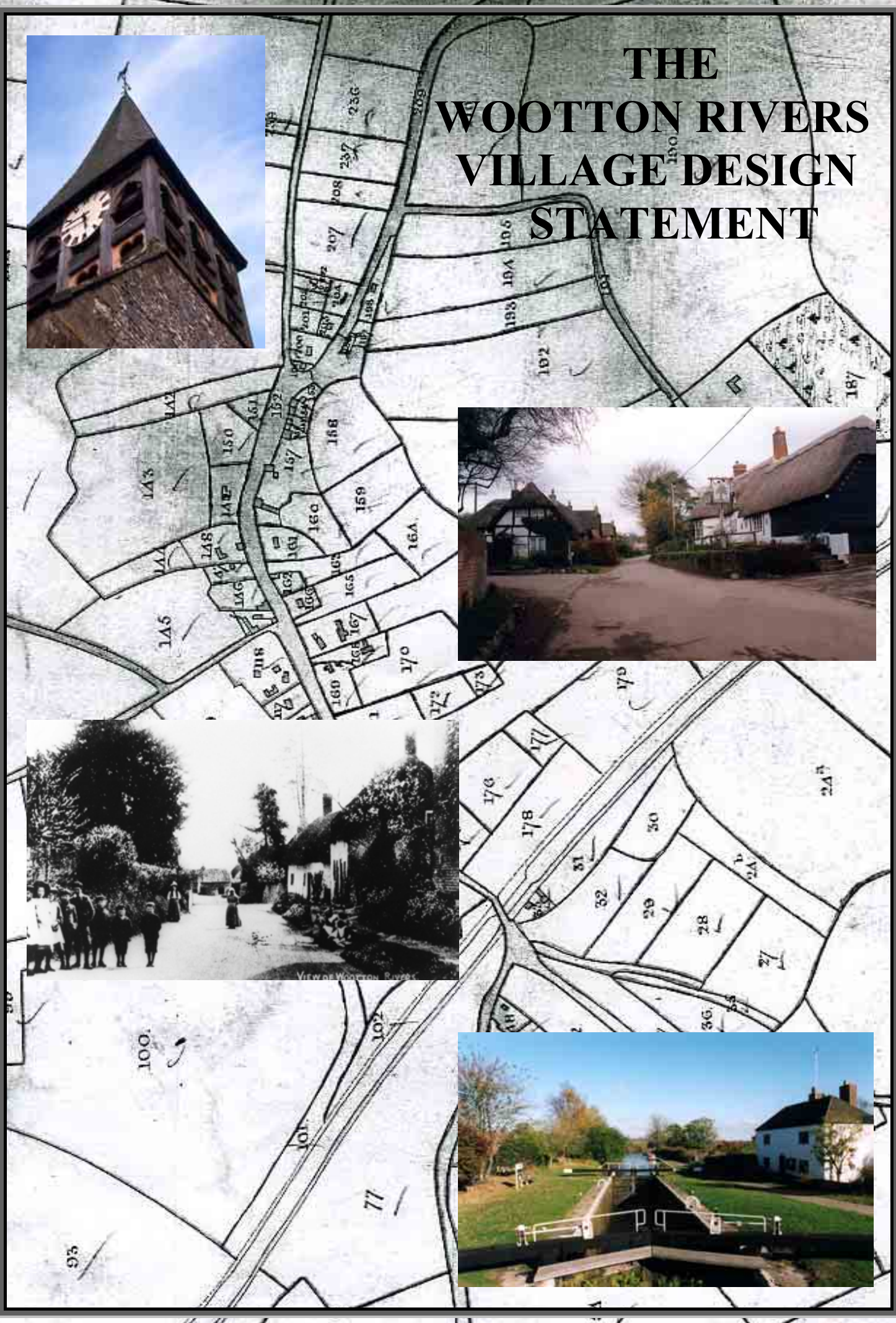


THE WOOTTON RIVERS VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main aim of the Village Design Statement (VDS) Questionnaire was to research the opinions of everyone within the parish for the purpose of compiling the Wootton Rivers Design Statement to be adopted by Kennet District Council (KDC) as a Subsidiary Planning Guidelines (SPG) document in matters which directly affect the Parish of Wootton Rivers. This work was compiled in 2004 and adds to the Conservation Area Statement already adopted by the KDC.

This document provides a succinct record encompassing:

- A summary of the history and archaeology of the parish which had its first recorded origins in Saxon times in 804AD.
- Identification and recording the special features and qualities of the village that make up its environment, appearance, architectural and historic character.
- The recorded opinions of Wootton Rivers residents concerning the above matters and other related issues concerning development and change which could have a bearing on the quality of life currently enjoyed within this outstandingly beautiful rural parish.
- The summary results of these opinions are shown in Section 7 page 14.

All residences were circulated with the questionnaire, which was supported by consultation in open fora and feedback discussions. As a result the response achieved 75% returns and the resulting Village Design Statement can be said to substantially reflect the views of the parish.

The Parish has a good cross section of socio-economic groups from young families to retired with a small number of 'week enders'. Social and recreational activity is therefore an important aspect of the life of this lively and friendly parish with the Church, the Village Hall, Royal Oak pub, and the recreation ground all actively supported.

The resulting views strongly suggest that the parish should remain as it is, particularly protecting and preserving the features, which characterise the beauty, ambiance, tranquil atmosphere and attractiveness of the area as evidenced in the conservation part of the village.

However, residents recognise the needs and concerns of those who grow up here who want to remain and for those on moderate or low income who are essential to supporting the local economy. In this respect the responses show that residents would accept controlled and modest development of some affordable housing for such categories.

In contrast the need for larger "Executive" style houses is viewed by the majority as less important with anecdotal evidence showing that existing modern designs were considered more appropriate to urban/town settings than a village.

Agricultural and commercial sites identified within the Parish and conservation area, which may fall into disrepair and/or become redundant, are a cause for concern. There is a need to ensure that the wishes expressed by the residents in the VDS apply also to these sites, for example Church Farm. The Conservation Area Statement draws attention to the importance of such sites and the VDS equally expresses views on protecting the Parish and controlling any changes or future potential development.

The Recreation Ground was singled out as being in need of significant attention and improvement, and the Parish Council has action in hand to deal with this issue. KDC has also provided some ground maintenance support to clear overgrown areas and are advising on grants.

Opinion was sought and provided on matters which would not directly contribute to planning decisions, but were nonetheless important to the overall appearance and character of the parish. Kerbs, street lighting, speed restrictions were all covered and most residents took the view that the 'status quo' should be maintained.

Following the consultations on the draft document with the Parish Council and subsequently with KDC the final version was submitted in November 2004 and has now been adopted by the council.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team wish to acknowledge the assistance they received from the following in preparing this Design Statement:-

- The Wiltshire County Archive Trowbridge, for historic & archive material.
- St Johns College Cambridge, for historic documents and archive material.
- Kennet District Council, for provision of maps and advice.
- Royal Oak, and Village Hall Committee, for facilities.
- Roger Dickens, for photographs and artwork.
- Event Exhibition & Design Ltd, for the loan of display stands.
- Businessmen of the Village, The Village Hall Committee, and the Parish Council, for financial support.
- The villagers, for their enthusiastic support.
- SOLVE for advice and in anticipation of grant support

BACKGROUND

What is a Village Design Statement?

The Village Design Statement represents the input of the people of the parish to KDC planning and design policy. When adopted by KDC it will be classified as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) providing recommendations on the interpretation and implementation of the policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan. The VDS is for the Parish as a whole and should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Statement adopted by the KDC.

Although it does not form part of the Local Plan and, therefore, does not have its legal status, the VDS may be taken into account as a material consideration in planning matters. Providing that the VDS is consistent with the Local Plan and has been prepared in the proper manner, both KDC and, where appropriate, The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to the findings of the VDS when making decisions on matters that come before them. KDC are satisfied that Wootton Rivers meets both the above criteria.

Why Produce a Village Design Statement?

Communities throughout the South of England feel two opposing pressures. On the one hand the combination of population movement, family break-up, commercial and residential property development and natural aspirations for a higher standard of living, is increasing the demand for more housing. On the other hand opposing pressure comes from the natural desire to resist change and to maintain and enhance traditional ways of life and the visual and social amenities which generations have grown up with and want to preserve.

All levels of Government share responsibility for managing the potential pressures for change and developers whose designs and buildings are installed and the professional planners who specialise in this work have a duty to the community. Local people also have a responsibility to preserve and enhance their surroundings and the right to expect that where change is accepted by due process, the infrastructure, character and environs of the parish are able to absorb such change in a manner compatible with the area and to enhance and complement, not diminish or destroy, the beauty and value of Wootton Rivers.

In February 2004 the Wootton Rivers Parish Council (WRPC) asked for volunteers from the parish to prepare a VDS and a working group of ten people was formed which comprised a representative cross-section of the community: farmer, publican, local tradesmen, retired people, young people, long-term residents, newcomers, and business people. In Spring 2004 the VDS working group prepared a questionnaire, consulting KDC in the process, and carried out a door-to-door survey of residents to solicit their views concerning the future of the parish in terms of the key features of its present character and beauty in relation to any future design and development which could impact on the village and the wider parish.

How were People's Views Obtained?

A questionnaire was designed and delivered to each household within the parish boundary of Wootton Rivers totalling 119 houses; extra copies were available for individual residents to express their personal views but this resulted in only two additional questionnaires. The questionnaire was confidential to ensure responses were not inhibited.

In May, two open fora discussions were held in which the history of the parish was exhibited with pictures, maps and archive material from St John's College Cambridge, County Museum and local residents. This was contrasted with current illustrations of the village and surrounds superimposed on the parish map. Finally, a display board summarised the key bullet points concerning the need for a VDS indicating the end users and beneficiaries.

Residents were engaged throughout the process to encourage discussion, clarify points and invite responses via the previously delivered questionnaires. The returns were collected in July and the 75% response ensured that any analysis would be very representative of Parish views. This return was only a little below the 80% return in the survey taken in 1985 showing a continued keenness to be involved in Parish issues.

At various stages throughout this assignment, the working party consulted with KDC (Mr Ed White), Community First (Ms Marion Rayner), the WRPC and other local villages who had already been through the exercise, to ensure that the process and the final document would meet the formal requirements of the Councils and ensure the views were presented to best effect. A specific and successful attempt was also made to capture the views of the younger generation. They held firm views on the retention and improvement of the recreation ground and felt they would like to live as adults in a largely unchanged though possibly expanded village.

On 30th October 2004 a feedback session was held in Wootton Rivers Village Hall to give residents the opportunity to view the analysis of their responses and to offer any final observations they might have. Prior to final printing and adoption the final draft was submitted to KDC and WRPC.

It should be noted that the VDS team were volunteers and all costs for materials, exhibition equipment, photographic prints, stationery, hire of hall, copying, artwork and printing were funded through the generosity of donations from WRPC, the Village Hall Committee, local businessmen and residents and a grant from Community First.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Viewed from the North



Wootton Rivers is approximately 5 miles due south of Marlborough and 3+ miles north-east of Pewsey. Access to the village is by minor roads, linking with Clench Common to the north, Milton Lilbourne and Easton Royal to the south, Burbage to the east and Pewsey to the west. The main roads are several miles away.

The village sits in the Vale of Pewsey and in a slight hollow at around the 130 metre contour close to the base of the scarp to the Marlborough Downs. Just to the north-west is Martinsell Hill which rises to a point of 289 metres which, with the sharp slope, provides a sense of enclosure in the wider landscape.

Viewed from the South



The Vale of Pewsey is attractive countryside with a strong agrarian character based on its good soils and sheltered position. Wootton Rivers is roughly fringed to the north and south by a belt of Lower Chalk which forms the rolling foothills of the main escarpment.

The chalk inclines gently down to the low-lying base of Upper Greensand where the village is located. Wootton Rivers lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty confirming its outstanding quality and national significance.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE



Archaeological work at St Andrews Church suggests that although the present structure was heavily restored in 1861 an earlier building may have stood on or close to the site. Several undated features have been recorded from aerial photographs and include a double ditched feature and a circular feature to the north of the village. Finds recorded in the vicinity include Iron Age coins and pottery, Romano-British coins, a lead weight, a whetstone and a mediaeval coin. The post-mediaeval deer park east of the village, known as Brimslade Park, was one of the largest parkland areas introduced by Edward Earl of Hertford in the late 16th century.

HISTORY

All developments in the landscape reflect man's influence through time governed by the geology, terrain, water sources and soils. Settlement patterns can often be traced back to Roman or Saxon times, or even earlier. Place names and documents provide evidence of Saxon activity across the Vale of Pewsey (the village was first recorded as the Saxon settlement of Wdutun in 804AD) and there are direct links between Saxon settlements and subsequent patterns of development. Over the centuries the mixed agricultural economy has changed from subsistence to market based.

The first historic mention of the village name close to its present format was in the Domesday Book, which recorded that the Bishop of Cirencester "had an interest in lands around Wotton, Easton and Milton". The Book went on to record that Queen Edith, sister of King Harold held Wotton there being 40 villagers, 17 cottagers, 12 slaves and two churches.

"Wootton" derives from the Saxon, meaning "the farm by the wood", reference presumably to Savernake Forest. Wootton Rivers Manor was held by Walter Giffard Earl of Buckingham, until his death in 1164. By 1212 the Manor had come into the hands of Walter de la Rivere from whom the village takes part of its name.



The Manor remained in the hands of the de la Rivere family until 1441 when it was sold to Sir John Seymour of Savernake. Following his death in 1464 the estate passed to a succession of Seymours and later the Dukes of Somerset until, in 1692, Sarah, Duchess of Somerset bequeathed Wootton Rivers Manor, with the manorial title, to St John's College Cambridge.

The church, rectory and manor are grouped at the southern end of the village. The present church stands back from the road on rising ground and, when built in the 14th century, replaced an earlier church which may well have stood on a lower site. The significantly and historically important timber framed and thatched Manor Farmhouse dates from the 15th century and incorporates part of a mediaeval house built of large blocks of limestone.



The main village street runs on a curve roughly north-south and was probably the Roman road from Mildenhall to Old Sarum and in the Middle Ages a main Marlborough to Salisbury road which ran across the Parish. The direct course of this road to the north would have been blocked in the 16th century when the west part of Savernake



Forest was enclosed to form Savernake Great Park. Later the main road from Marlborough to Salisbury ran further to the east.

As with similar settlements in the Pewsey Vale, Wootton Rivers was an important farming community. The open fields lay mainly north-west of the stream which flows across the southern half of the parish from north-east to south-west. In 1607 Westfield, then common pasture, was enclosed and common rights extinguished, although the land continued to be worked in small parcels.



In the early 18th century the lands of Wootton Rivers Manor were held on various leases which in 1732 became a single farm later called Manor Farm. This covered 227 acres, extended to 274 acres by 1795. Most other farms in the Parish apparently remained small and three of these were worked from farmsteads within the village street. By the 19th century Manor Farm was largely arable and in 1910 there were 6 farms based in the village.



St John's Cottage and Railway Cottage (which must have been renamed), date from the 16th century but it was the 17th century which saw major expansion. Many of the cottages which still line the village street date from that time and other 17th century buildings include Somersets Farm and the Royal Oak Inn. The brick tradition continued in the 18th century including the construction of the former Rectory, now Wootton House, Upper Farm House and Noyes Farmhouse, the latter two being thatched.

19th century buildings in the village include the lock keepers cottage, the former C of E school, opened in 1864 and closed in 1979 and the former Methodist Chapel (1881-1967). All three are now private houses.



After many years of limited growth the village changed significantly in 1810 with the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal. The promoters of the canal were not particularly concerned to benefit the inhabitants of Pewsey Vale, their primary aim being to link London and Bristol by a cheaper route for goods traffic than the overland alternative. Indeed,



in 1793 the planning line for the canal was further north via Hungerford, Marlborough and Chippenham. The switch to its eventual route, following a re-survey by John Rennie, was determined by cost, time and water supply.

From Devizes to Wootton Rivers the canal runs almost 15 miles along the contours without a single lock. At the time the canal was an important waterway and provided a means of distributing coal and other necessities along the Vale and taking away agricultural produce.



It also produced easier links with Devizes and Hungerford with a passenger boat service running between Wootton Rivers and Devizes until 1851. This increased prosperity and brought about a population expansion from 313 in 1801 to 470 by 1841. Interestingly the figure for the 2001 census was 243.

Further changes came about in 1862 with the opening of the Berkshire and Hampshire Extension Railway, then operated for the owners of the Great Western Railway. This broad-gauge single-track line included Pewsey and Woodborough.



The line runs west from Hungerford alongside and just south of the canal and in 1906 became part of the main route from London to Exeter, broad-gauge having been abandoned in 1892. A passenger halt built at Wootton Rivers in 1928 was closed in 1966 as part of the Beeching Plan.

Competition from the railway had led to a decline in canal traffic resulting in its abandonment and near total loss. Following an initiative by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, the canal and locks at Wootton Rivers were restored in the 1970's and the route fully re-opened in 1990 some 180 years after its original construction.

Until the First World War, life in Wootton Rivers continued much as it had in the previous centuries but the post-war period was a time of major transformation. The introduction of new farming methods and machines and the increasing amount of vehicular transport brought changes that were to accelerate significantly after the Second World War.



The reduction in farm employment from the 1940's was accompanied by the rapid growth of individual transport, such that those living in the village no longer had to find work nearby. This change in social structure is particularly evident in relation to the late 20th century development when most of the new houses were built to serve an entirely mobile workforce or the retired. The attraction of Wootton Rivers is in its appearance, the quality of its historic buildings and its relative seclusion which made it a target for those seeking a tranquil quality of life.



In the main part of the street a village hall and some 15 dwellings were built in the post-war period. Four council houses and two bungalows were provided at South Bank in the early 1950's and at Somersets Cottages to the south, four estate cottages were built in 1961. A little later four bungalows for the elderly were constructed on the east side of Forest Road.



Further development has taken place in recent years with houses built on the west side of the street opposite the former Chapel and south of the Royal Oak behind Somersets Farm. The newer buildings have generally followed the linear form of the village but add little to its architectural quality. For the most part they are of a design and appearance common across the country and bear little visual relationship to the building tradition of the area. Recent design and planning influence has resulted in more appropriate new-build property.



Village activity has changed in recent years so that there is now only the church and public house to serve the community although increasing leisure use of the canal brings visitors and there are signs of an upturn in the use of the village hall.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

A key feature of Wootton Rivers is the significant number of thatched houses and cottages which form the core of the historic village. These buildings are set in an attractive landscape where the curved alignment of the street creates interesting views in both directions. Many of the buildings have been altered and extended but the architecture is recognisably representative of its age and location with a consistency of style and materials.

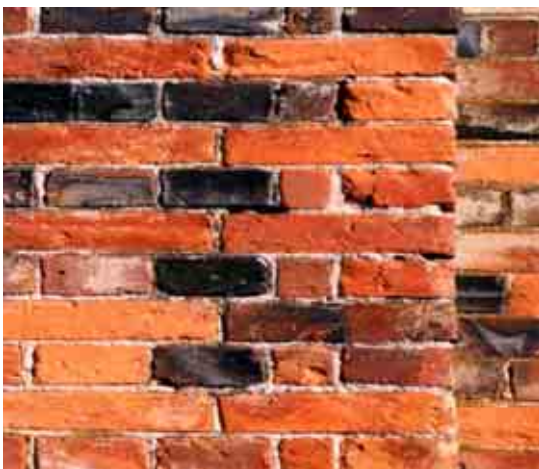


The approaches to the village from all directions emphasise its secluded location. From the north and arriving at Forest Road, the proximity of buildings to the road frontage creates a distinct sense of arrival. This is also evident from the west where the view to the road junction is framed by vegetation on the deep banks of the lane and where the Royal Oak provides focus.



The view from the south was modified in the late 19th century following the construction of the canal and railway and where the bridges form the vantage point looking north into the village. This also provides a distinctive Conservation Area boundary where there is further development to the south.

Although the main railway line is set low and has little visual effect there is an audible reminder of its presence as the high-speed trains pass the village. The surprise effect of this is in marked contrast to the overall tranquillity of Wootton Rivers although the sound of falling water at the lock is another reminder of the historic transport links to the east and west.



The architecture of Wootton Rivers is distinguished by the use of mellow red brick that visually links most of the historic buildings in the village. The extensive use of thatch and later clay tile and cedar shingle are part of this pattern. Until the advent of the canal all building materials came from local sources and this was a contributing factor in creating the degree of consistency that still exists.



The summertime view north from the railway bridge is dominated by trees, and buildings appear only as glimpses. Although once more prominent, today Manor House Farmhouse is almost completely secluded with only its drive access evident. On the eastern side of the road Wootton House, the former rectory, with its remodelled 19th century brick front, is a distinguished building with a formal architectural design. The building is only seen rising above its boundary wall but its appearance is a clear indication of its former status within the village



St Andrew's Church on the western side of the village has almost no impact on the village street scene with the hedges providing a sense of enclosure. The footpath leading to the Church opens out into the secluded churchyard, where gravestones and trees frame the views to the church. Within the churchyard are a number of listed chest tombs notable because of their architectural and historic importance.



Just north of Wootton House is the partly rebuilt Church Farmhouse. Once a single storey and attic timber frame and thatch building, it was altered in the 18th century and again in the 20th century when it was rebuilt to two storeys following a fire in 1978. Views looking along the street are formed mostly by landscape features and small ancillary buildings, some of which are tight to the road.



The farmyard and farm buildings to Church Farm are of particular interest being the only such structures to survive within the village. In other parts of the village, former farmyards have been altered and redeveloped leaving little trace of their historic form and earlier activity.

Opposite Church Farm are the village hall and the former school both set back and having little immediate impact on the street scene. Moving further northwards and just south of the junction is a group of buildings made up of Reeves Cottage, Clock House and Noyes Farm vernacular buildings from the 17th to the 19th centuries. This group illustrates the development through the centuries and the informality of the village layout.



Much of the development in this part of the village dates from the 17th century including Somersets Farm and the Royal Oak, but interspersed with 18th century buildings. The impression here is that the houses and cottages are more closely spaced and this is especially evident looking north from the road junction where the alignment of buildings and curvature of the road brings all of the buildings **on** the outside of the curve into view. This view epitomises the character of the village with thatched roofs, brick chimney stacks, gable ends, trees and hedges all prominent.



Towards Forest Road the street becomes more open with views out to the surrounding countryside. This is especially so at Upper Farm House where the bridleway provides an outlook to the scarp of the downs and west to open countryside. Upper Farm is a prominent building, being located at the junction where Forest Road swings to the right. North-west of Upper Farm the historic quality of Wootton Rivers is once again evident with the 17th and 18th century buildings of Forge Cottage, Apshill Cottage and Primrose Cottage.



Views looking south are similar to those from the north with the same rhythm of buildings, walls, trees hedges and verges. Looking south from Forest Road is a group of late 20th century houses which are amongst the most evident of the modern housing in the village. Wide driveways do interrupt the continuity of the roadside, and the intrusion of overhead wires is particularly noticeable at this point.



Spaces between buildings provide the opportunity for tree and hedge planting and for views to the open countryside. You do not have to go far along the footpath running east of the Royal Oak to leave the village behind and it is in this and similar locations that the importance of the surrounding paddocks and fields as the setting of the village can be appreciated.

PLANNING GUIDELINES SUMMARY

Sustainable Development

Further expansion of the village is probably inevitable and on that basis 81% of residents felt that the nature of additional housing should be in sympathy with the existing character and architecture of the village.

Agricultural and commercial sites identified within the Parish and conservation area which may fall into disrepair and/or become redundant are a cause for concern. There is a need to ensure that the wishes expressed by the residents in the VDS apply also to these sites, for example Church Farm. The Conservation Area Statement draws attention to the importance of such sites and the VDS equally expresses views on protecting the Parish and controlling any changes or future potential development.

Affordable Housing

Whilst residents felt, in a ratio of over 2 to 1, that affordable housing was at least important, if not very important, more than a quarter rated the need as unimportant. This clearly shows that although such need is recognised, any future developments would need careful and sympathetic integration into the parish.

Executive Housing

58% of residents felt that more “Executive” housing was unimportant compared to 22% who considered it to be important/very important. Views were also expressed that in many cases much of the style of recent development (urban/modern town houses) had not helped to maintain the architectural heritage and character the village. Any future development should take account of these views on past mistakes and use designs suitable for the village in keeping with the character and natural surroundings in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Alterations to Existing Housing

Whilst extensions and improvements to the existing housing stock were not to be discouraged, any such development must not detract from the rural and historic appearance of Wootton Rivers.

Boundaries, Paths, Kerbs and their Maintenance

Well maintained hedges, walls, railings and picket fencing are preferred to close-board fencing and walls should be maintained in such a way that the old and the new meld. Lleylandii should be strongly discouraged and some have recently been removed from the south end of the village. Formal kerbs are not favoured, natural, well-maintained verges being preferred. Better repair and maintenance of the roads and paths of the Parish is essential and should be taken up with Wiltshire County Council through the Local Strategic Partnership.

Recreation

The ownership and continued availability of both the recreation ground and the allotments are seen as important issues and it would be a serious blow if either of these amenities were lost to the village, especially if this were just to facilitate more housing development.

Services

Ideally, wherever possible existing and certainly new services should be placed underground. Immediate consideration should be given to the possibility of relocating some very unsightly telephone and power supply poles, e.g. the one outside the Church entrance. Utility companies should be encouraged to route as many installations underground as possible (recent examples exist where this has been done).

Opinion shows that any plans to install communications systems or masts should be thoroughly reviewed by the Parish, and if approved, discreetly sited.

Street Lighting and Furniture

Street lighting is adequate in intensity but some felt it could usefully be extended to the speed restriction area, i.e. including Cuckoos Knob and at the north end of the village. Intrusive security lighting should be discouraged.

Speed Control

Residents are very supportive of reducing traffic speed and its impact on the village, but not at the expense of having unsightly signs, road markings and other street furniture. These matters are primarily for the Highways Authority (Wiltshire County Council) and any concerns will be pursued through the Local Strategic Partnership.

Parking

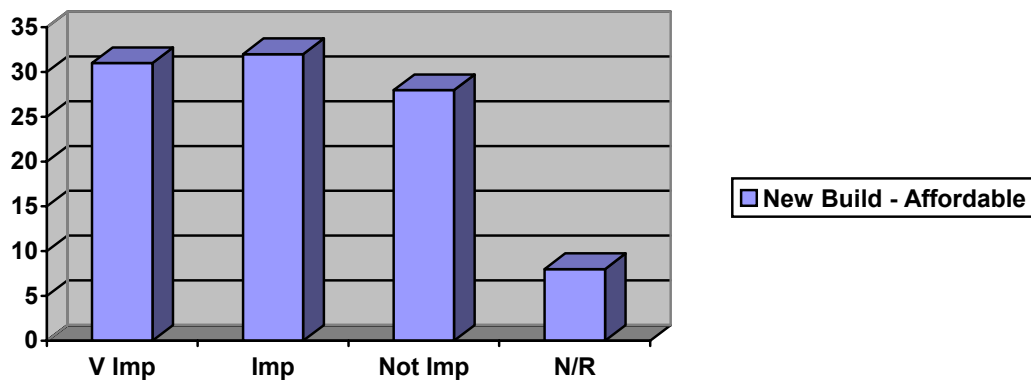
No formal additional parking facilities should be provided and parking restriction signs are not felt to be necessary.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT- OVERVIEW

The initial part of the research aimed to measure the overall consensus, attitudes and perceptions of residents to the idea of further expansion of village housing for the parish as a whole, not just the conservation area. 81% of villagers regarded the need for controlled development of the village as very important or important although in some cases this was on the basis that expansion was probably inevitable and thus control is essential. Other matters of primary concern were to sustain the peaceful and tranquil character of the parish and retain the principal features of buildings, verges, roadways, etc. (See also Planning Guidelines ref redundant land/buildings)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Figure 1



As can be seen from Figure 1 above, 31% of families consider the provision of affordable housing in the village to be very important and 32% important.

However, this topic raises strong feelings with a significant minority (28%) being against affordable housing and some respondents expressing very forthright views.



Wootton Rivers is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has naturally attracted buyers with more disposable income and, as a result, property prices have risen out of the reach of long-term residents and their descendants, including the essential local workforce, small though it is.



The majority of respondents indicated their support for the development of affordable housing and, for example, the vacant properties at Cuckoos Knob could be granted “exceptional site status” for such houses, i.e. one where all the planning regulations were not necessarily fully enforced.

This particular area has already set a precedent in the 1950’s for improving and redeveloping the houses that existed there. A further expansion could provide a small housing community that would be compatible with and sympathetic to its surroundings.

There are a number of other sites within the Parish boundary where additions to existing low-cost or co-operative rental houses could be built, for example, at the top end of South Bank, and adjacent to St Andrew’s Close. Other sites might also become available in the foreseeable future. However, small developments in balance with the main features of the village would seem to be a key factor for gaining support for such schemes.

EXECUTIVE HOUSING

Figure 2

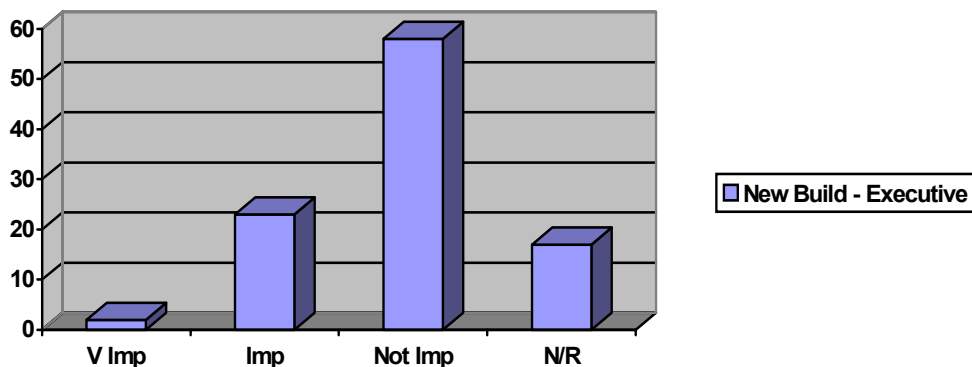


Figure 2 shows that a majority of 58% do not regard such development as important to the village.



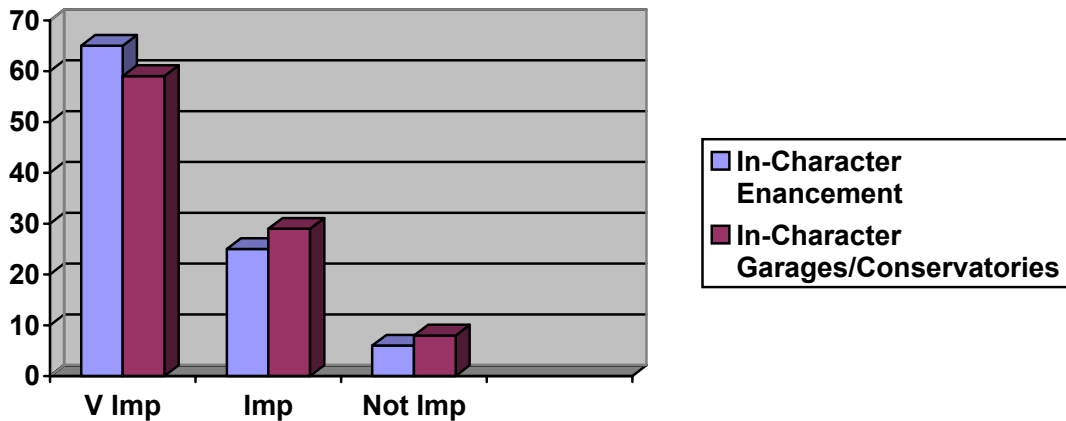
Additionally, it appears that a number of executive houses were built in styles and designs which are inappropriate to the character of the village, i.e. they are typical of the urban designs seen across the country and do not blend with the architectural style of the village either in design or choice of materials.



Using the current case of the Priest Croft site, the Developer, the Parish Council, and the Planning Authority, should be in consultation to ensure that the resultant houses will conform to the standards reflected in the VDS and the Conservation Area Statement. This would be an example of the best practice approach to achieve the wishes of the community for the benefit of the Parish.

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING HOUSING

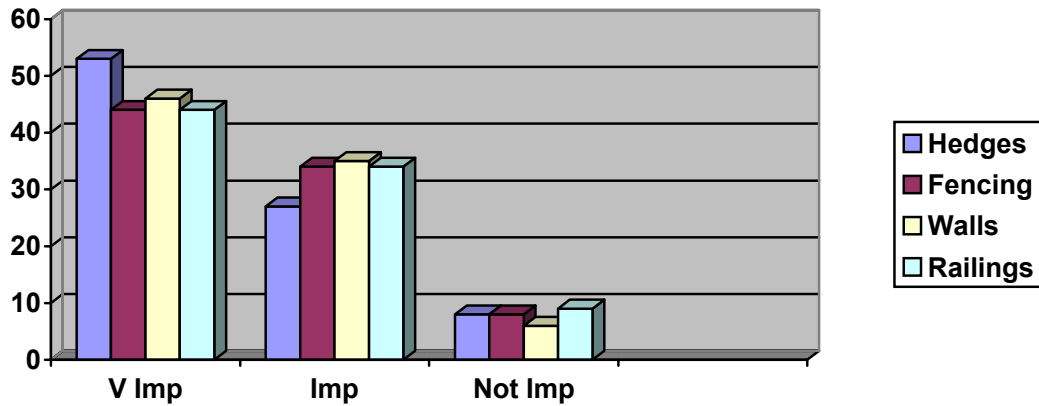
Figure 3



A total of 90% of respondents agree that in order to preserve and enhance the character of the village, alterations and extensions should be complementary to the existing building and that the design should be in harmony with its surroundings.

TREES, BOUNDARIES, PATHS, KERBS AND THEIR MAINTENANCE

Figure 4



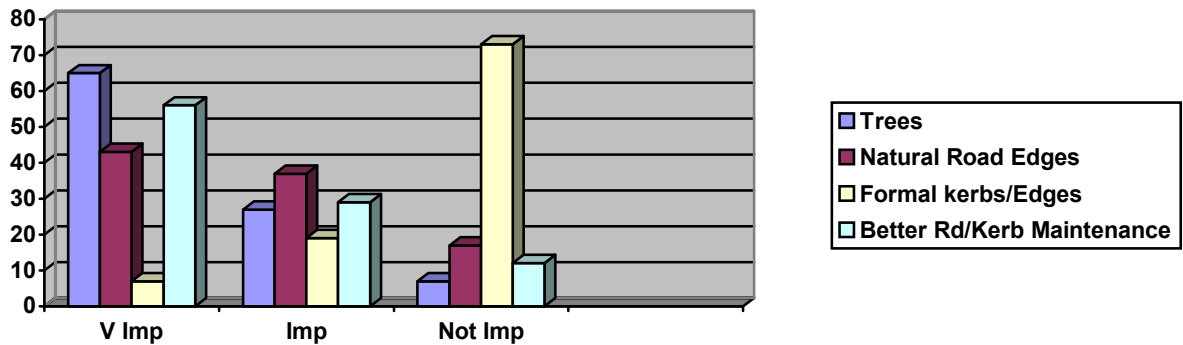
Boundaries and their maintenance are seen as an essential part of the village atmosphere of Wootton Rivers the treatment of which is an important aspect of the village especially on the street frontages. A minimum 87% and a maximum 92% of respondents viewed the appearance and maintenance of hedges, fencing, walls, railings and trees as important or very important although no-one felt there was a need for more boundaries.

There are a number of boundary types in the village: hedges of beech, yew, hawthorn, blackthorn, box, privet, lleylandii and laurel; fencing of picket (painted and natural), lapboard and close-board; ornamental iron railings; walls of old and new brick, some low, some at 2 metres.



Most are kept in good repair and most help to give the village its rural character. Old hedges found favour as did old walls and the steep banking of our lanes despite the inconvenience this sometimes caused. The only cautionary note was that hedges and trees should be kept in good order to preserve sight lines for drivers and pedestrians.

Figure 5



Trees:

Whilst giving the semblance of being well-wooded, particularly when viewed north from the bridges, there are relatively few trees of individual importance in the village. Most trees are plantings in private gardens, and many are comparatively recent. This highlights the need for the care and protection of those that do exist. Comment was made that felled trees, particularly “skyline trees”, should be replaced although Ileylandii were generally unpopular.



Kerbs:

The retention of natural kerbs was strongly supported with 73% not wanting formal kerbs and 80% feeling that the natural approach was important or very important. Anecdotal feedback and additional comments made during distribution and collection of questionnaires and at the May VDS exhibitions in the village, show that there is no support for the provision of more kerbs. The majority feel that much of the character, design and rural feel of the village street and parish roads and lanes is sustained by the softer countryside appearance of natural verges which contribute to the overall countryside feel.



Roads:

Maintenance of parish roads is a clear concern for the majority with 56% seeing this as a very important issue and 29% as an important one. Individual representation at WRPC meetings and anecdotal feedback with the questionnaires show that residents are very unimpressed by the patchwork of poor quality road repairs recently undertaken throughout the parish which, by their nature, is likely to rapidly deteriorate as a result of normal usage by agricultural and commercial vehicles as well as cars to say nothing of the vagaries of winter weather.

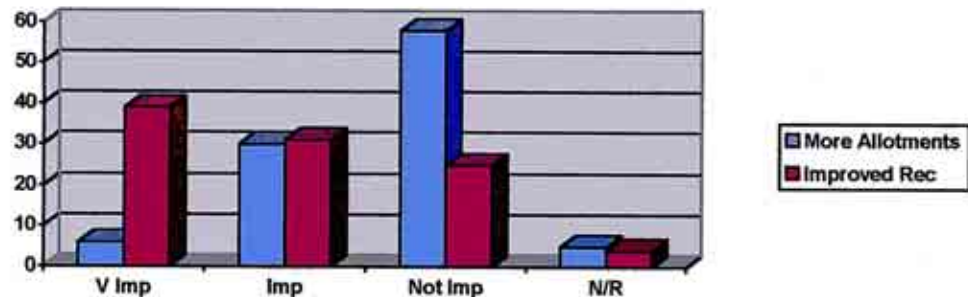
Overtopping with tar and gravel has been done, but the suspicion is that this will not last for the seven years until the next scheduled work is undertaken by the County compared with 20 plus years life of the previous work.

Planning Guidelines:

Well-maintained hedges, walls, railings and picket fencing are preferred to close-board fencing. Walls should be maintained in such a way that the old and the new meld. Lleylandii should be strongly discouraged. Some have recently been removed from the south end of the village. Formal kerbs are not favoured, natural, well-maintained verges being strongly preferred. Better repair and maintenance for the roads and paths of the Parish is essential and should be taken up with Wiltshire County Council through the Local Strategic Partnership.

RECREATION

Figure 6



The recreation ground is owned by St Johns College, Cambridge and rented to WRPC. There are probably more children in the village now than for a number of years and reasonably good use is made of the somewhat run-down facilities. 70% of villagers feel that the facilities should be improved and clearly would not want to lose the amenity which falls just outside the Conservation Area. WRPC has set up a task force to improve the state of the recreation ground and invest in renewing and/or refurbishing the facilities.



There are also 7 allotments, owned by the College, and nearly 60% of villagers feel that provision of more is not a high priority although the number of allotments has recently been reduced by one which has been partially incorporated into the proposed development of 35/36 Cuckoos Knob. The allotments that remain are well tended and fully used by villagers who would clearly regret their loss.

Planning Guidelines



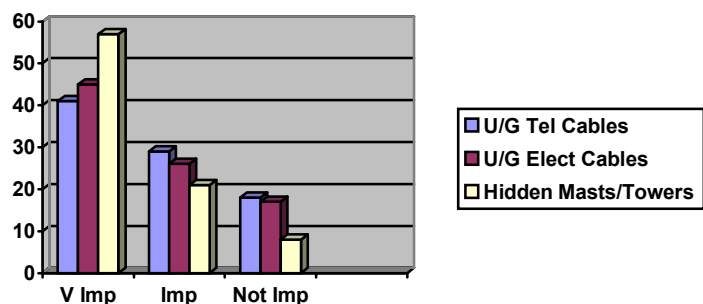
The ownership and continued availability of both the recreation ground and allotments are seen as important issues and it would be a serious blow if either of these amenities were lost to the village especially if this was just to facilitate more house development.

SERVICES

Whilst Kennet District Council Planning Department cannot instruct the infrastructure and communications providers to modify existing facilities, they can give influence and support to the views of villagers. It may also be possible to indicate the views of the village to BT, electricity and mobile companies so that planned changes in upgrading and new installation will take account of such views. There are already examples of where electricity supply has been routed underground.



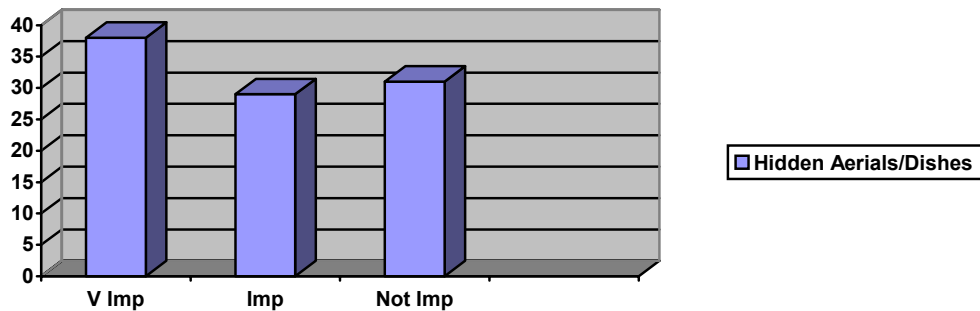
Figure 7



From the responses provided, 79% regard as very important or important the routing of telephone services and 80% hold the same view in the case of main electricity supply. An even higher proportion, 64% very important and 24% important, believe that telecom towers and masts, if they are essential to improving network coverage, must be positioned 'out of sight' and without detrimental physical or aesthetic effect on the village or the surrounding countryside which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some residents have responded robustly with remarks that no telecom masts or towers should be built at all.

There is one public telephone in the village near the lock but only 60% of villagers place any importance, probably because of the widespread provision of home telephones and mobile phones. It is probably used by boaters on the canal and its continued provision is probably justified in case of any accident on the railway or the canal. A number of respondents regretted the loss of the old red kiosk.

Figure 8



Not surprisingly, opinion is more evenly divided between very important through not important insofar as television aerials and dishes are concerned. Anecdotal opinions indicate that there is tolerance of aerials and dishes although discrete and sensitive fitting to minimise their visual impact is felt to be essential. Generally, those placed out of sight of the road are more acceptable.

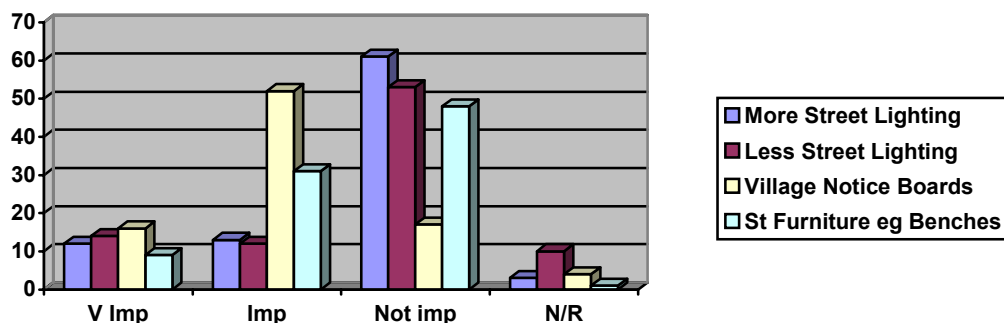
Planning Guidelines

Ideally, wherever possible existing and certainly new services should be placed underground. Immediate consideration should be given to the possibility of relocating some very unsightly telephone and power supply poles, e.g. the one outside the Church entrance. Utility companies should be encouraged to route as many installations underground as possible (recent examples exist where this has been done).

Any plans to install communications systems or masts should be thoroughly reviewed by the Parish and, if approved, discreetly sited.

STREET LIGHTING AND FURNITURE

Figure 9



Most villagers are happy with the existing street lighting (69% felt that more street lighting was not important and 60% felt the same about less lighting). If more were to be added it should be limited to the speed restriction area and not matching existing lighting (in keeping with the natural setting of the village). Some felt that residential security lights could be intrusive and that they should be installed in a manner that does not affect passers-by.



Whilst nearly 76% felt that a Village Notice Board was important, with 3 already in the village this is not really an issue. Views were about evenly balanced concerning the importance of benches, but if more were to be provided, they should be near the canal.

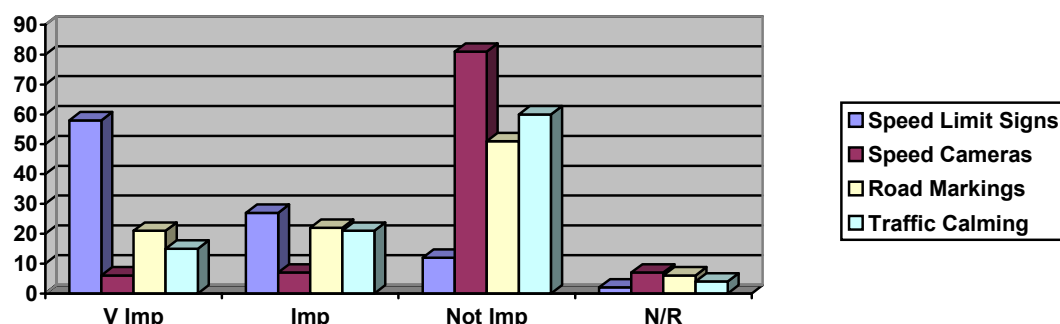
More litter bins should be provided with advisory notices but the yellow grit bin by the railway bridge was thought to be too "urban". Any additional benches should be provided adjacent to the canal.

Planning Guidelines

Street lighting is adequate in intensity but some felt it could be extended to the speed restriction area to the South West and North of the Village. Intrusive security lighting should be discouraged.

SPEED CONTROL

Figure 10



58% of residents consider the speed signs, which were only recently introduced to the village, to be very important and the current signs are considered to be discreet and appropriate. However, it was felt that the speed restriction zone should be extended beyond the housing at Cuckoos Knob.

81% considered speed cameras to be unimportant; they are felt to be unsightly and unnecessary in a village such as ours. Speed checks carried out in early 2004 indicated that speeding cars were not really a problem.

Traffic calming was considered as unimportant by 60% of residents and it was again the unsightly nature of the warning signs and road markings which people consider inappropriate for the village. However traffic calming by a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph was raised by a number of people.

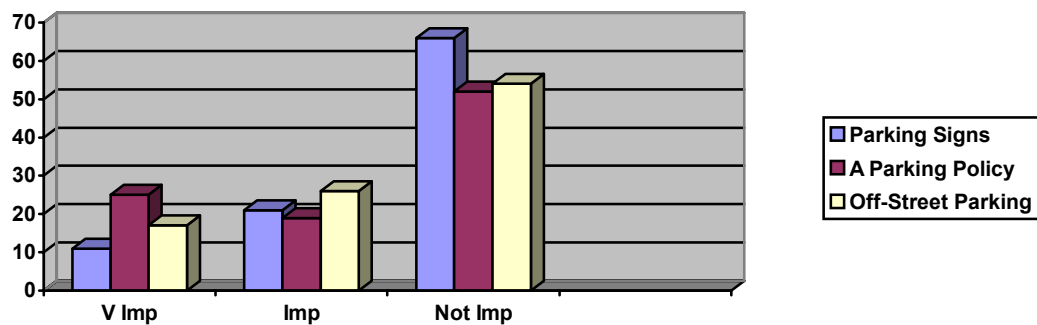
Road markings were considered to be unimportant by 51% of villagers and drew no further comments, although the appearance of a "SLOW" sign on the roadway south of Cuckoos Knob is welcomed, as are the warning lines at road junctions.

Planning Guidelines

In summary, from the questionnaire responses and comments raised, it would appear that people are very supportive of reducing traffic speed and impact on the village, but not at the expense of having unsightly signs, markings and other street furniture. These matters are for the County Council and any concerns will be pursued through the Local Strategic Partnership.

PARKING

Figure 11



66% of respondents did not consider parking signs to be at all important and from comments received this seems to arise from not wanting any more street signs and furniture.

Whilst current street parking was mentioned as a hazard caused perhaps by ignorance of the access needs of others (particularly the free movement of farm machinery, public transport and emergency services through the village), it was also commented that the current ad-hoc parking is a traffic calming measure in itself and an easy passage of traffic through the village would encourage both speed and volume of traffic.



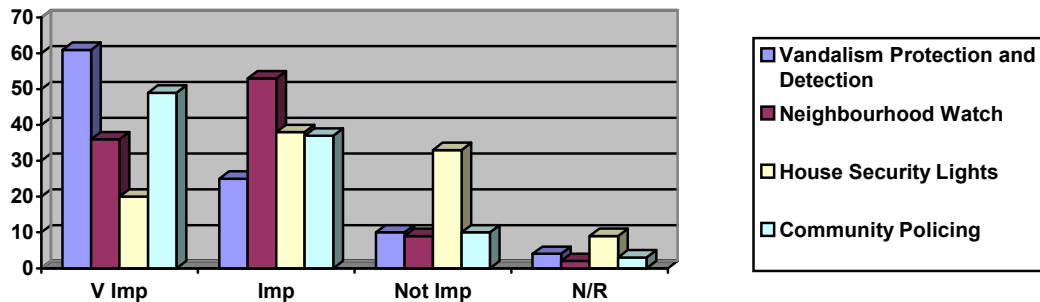
In summary, parking was not a major concern for residents, which would lead us to conclude that the current situation is tolerable for the majority of residents.

Planning Guidelines

No formal additional parking facilities should be provided, and parking restriction signs are not felt to be necessary.

LAW AND ORDER

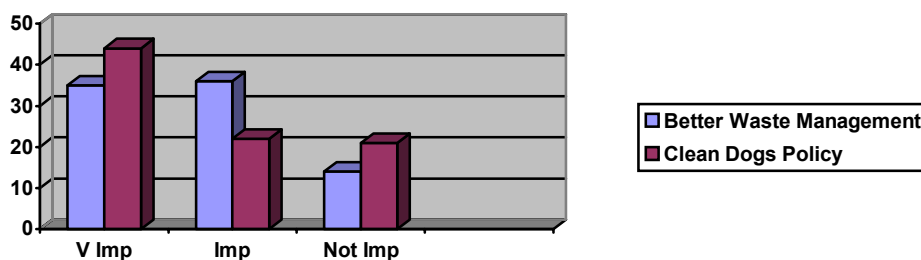
Figure 12



Whilst 86% of villagers regard vandalism as an important issue it does not loom large in the village, possibly because 89% see the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme as also being important and prevention and protection are high priorities in most villages. Nearly two thirds of villagers felt that house security lights were important although some commented that they could be too bright and should be directed so as not to dazzle passers-by. Only 10% felt that community policing and support were not important, and call out rate is relatively low.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Figure 13



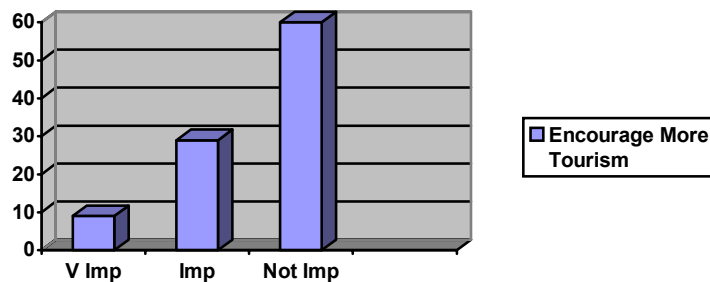
Whilst recycling facilities are available for bottles, paper and cans the twice-yearly waste skip facility has been withdrawn to the regret of some residents. As a result the WRPC has raised the issue with KDC, so far without success. A general recycling site is available at Everleigh some 7 miles away. Nearly 80% villagers still feel that better facilities are needed. On a particular issue three quarters of villagers felt strongly about a more



effective “clean dogs” policy and the provision of dedicated bin by the Inland Waterways Authority at the lock was welcomed. There was however some doubt as to how a stricter policy could be policed.

TOURISM

Figure 14

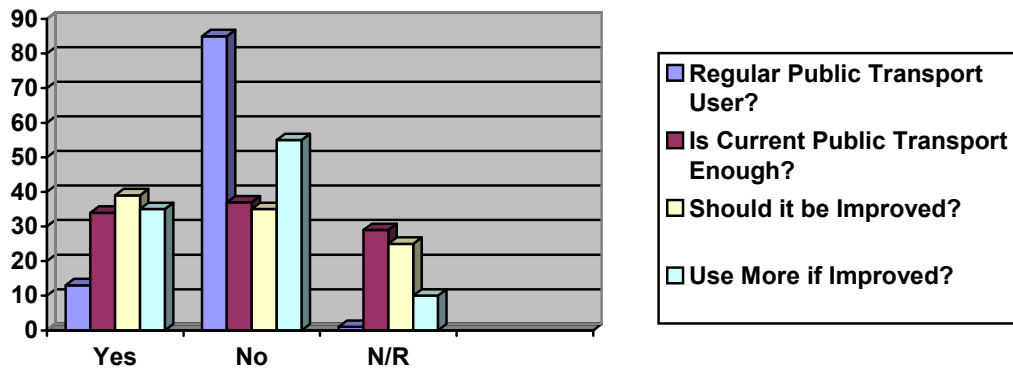


Three out of five of the villagers did not consider encouraging more tourism to be at all important and less than one in ten thought it very important. The village certainly attracts its share of visitors particularly to The Royal Oak and the Canal. During the summer there is a regular flow of boaters and every Easter the Devizes to Westminster canoe race draws large crowds and the attendant cars. Generally however the village copes with the influx.

The WRPC feels that the issue of ‘creeping’ temporary accommodation could become a concern particularly on the canal within the Parish. Whilst British Waterways licenses and manages tourism and permanent moorings, residential barges appear to be taking unfair advantage of the area, and planning controls should take account of unauthorized residency.

TRANSPORT

Figure 15



85% of residents do not use public transport regularly and, interestingly, over a quarter declined to express an opinion on whether provision was sufficient or should be improved. Of those who did answer these two questions, opinion was evenly divided. However, even if provision were improved, 55% of residents would make no greater use of the services, indicating that a large number are content to depend on their own transport.

Comments suggest that not everyone in the village knows or understands the transport arrangements, this being particularly true of the Wigglybus service. If people were made more aware of the situation, perhaps the available public transport would be used more regularly.

The issue of trains from Pewsey was also raised, it being suggested that earlier and more frequent trains would be welcomed.

Planning Guidelines

The above four items fall outside the strict purview of a Village Design Statement but are included here as they formed part of the questionnaire.

ANNEX A

- 1. The Questionnaire**
- 2. VDS Team Members**
- 3. Photograph Index.**

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

In preparation for the Wootton Rivers Village Design Statement, we would be grateful if you could help by completing the following questionnaire. We would like your views on some key features of your village and your idea of how important these points are to you. Your name or address IS NOT REQUIRED and the information provided is strictly confidential. Your Village Design Statement team member who will be delivering and collecting your questionnaire is:-

..... Tel.....

This is your opportunity to say how you want your village to develop. Kennett District Council may be persuaded to include our Village Design Statement as an addendum to their planning guidelines. So your views are important.

As a starter – how do you want Wootton Rivers to develop?

- (i) Do you want your village to stay as it is with no change?

YES/NO delete as appropriate

- (ii) Would you prefer to see it develop in a controlled and sympathetic way?

YES/NO delete as appropriate

See over.....

QUESTIONNAIRE

In terms of its impact on the village design statement, what order of importance do you attach to these issues?

a = very important, b = important, c = not important
PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

	(a)	(b)	(c)
1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT			
How important do you consider the need for controlled, sustainable development of the village and its environs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>New builds</u>			
On the issue of further expansion and development for the village, what importance do you give to:-			
Affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Alterations to existing housing</u>			
How important is the in-character enhancement of existing village houses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How important is the in-character extension of existing houses to provide conservatories, garages and the like?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES			
Services to the village are essential – however how important is it to you to improve the appearance to our village by influencing service providers to install:-			
Telephone cables - (underground)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telecomms masts and towers – (out of sight)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electricity cables – (underground)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV aerials, satellite dishes – (concealed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What importance would you place on the better maintenance of roads, paths and kerbs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. BOUNDARIES			
How important is it to you that the following boundaries within the village and environs are installed and maintained sympathetically?			
Hedges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Railings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. LANDSCAPING (a) (b) (c)

The landscape setting of our village is of great significance in defining our conservation area.

How important are the following to you?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Provision of more street lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provision of less street lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Village notice boards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Natural edges to roads/lanes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Formal kerbs and pavements | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 'Street furniture' eg benches | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are there any areas not mentioned above you would like to be considered for the future?

5. SPEED CONTROL

The speed and frequency of traffic through the village concerns us all.

How important do you consider the following traffic control devices?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Speed limit signs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Speed cameras | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Road markings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Traffic calming measures | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. PARKING

How important are the following?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Parking/No parking signs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A street parking policy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provision of more off-street parking | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(a) (b) (c)

7. SPECIAL ISSUES

Please can you indicate how important these issues are to the village, both now and for the future.

Encourage more tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vandalism – prevention/protection measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbourhood Watch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
House security lights control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community policing and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better 'waste management'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Clean dogs' policy and provision of disposal bins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of more allotments for residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved recreation ground and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. TRANSPORT

As you are aware, we have a 'Wigglybus' and other services by schedule or on call out.

Are you a regular user?

Are the current public transport services sufficient?

Should they be improved?

If bus services were improved, would you use them more?

8. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Finally, if you have any views on matters not covered above, please use the space below.

A member of our VDS team will collect this form from you. It would be much appreciated therefore if you would complete it as soon as convenient and have it ready when we call. Thank you.

VDS TEAM MEMBERS

Tony McGarry	Team Leader	Businessman
David Tame		Retired
Sara Wardlaw		Home Worker
John Jones		Publican
Bruce Gauntlet		Farmer
Vonnie Dickens		Retired
Roger Dickens		Carpenter
Angela Campbell		Home Worker
Freddie Maxwell-Hart		Student
Ann Swift		Architect

**Wootton Rivers
Village Design Statement
2004**

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Front Cover: Back Ground..... The Wootton Rivers Parish 1842 map.
 St Andrews Bell/Clock Tower raised in 1861.
 Street view to North..... From Royal Oak showing thatched roofs.
 Street view to South..... Black + white archive material circa 1800's
 The Kennet & Avon Canal.... Lock & Lock House Viewed Eastward.

Back Cover: Landscapes from Martinsell Hill.

Inside Cover: Conservation Area Map @ Crown copyright. All rights reserved Kennet District Council LA078328 2002.



View East from Martinsell Hill

Bee Orchid



Cowslip



View South East from Martinsell Hill

