

Widdington



Village Design Statement 2009

Acknowledgements

1. *The Village Magazine*-distributed four times a year to all households, it kept everyone aware of the progress of the Village Design Statement.
2. Uttlesford District Council, the RCCE and the Parish Council- for their help with funding the project.
3. Melanie Jones, Sarah Nicholas of the UDC, Chris Hobbs of the RCCE- for their freely given advice.
4. Adrian and Rebecca Kinkaid for the analysis and presentation of the survey responses. Michael Chitson for his generous help with printing and collation.
5. Norman and Doreen Robson- for their expertise on local wildlife.
6. Norman Robson, Donald Tyson and Jill Brookman- for supplying relevant photographs. Dick Harding for the cover photograph. (copyright) 2000.

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Design. Jeremy Tilston, www.theoakstudio.co.uk
Printed by Stephen Austin & Sons Limited.
Publication. January 2009.*

Introduction

THE Village Design Statement is a government initiative giving communities the opportunity to inject their own qualitative voice into the planning and development process. In 2006 Widdington Parish Council decided to take that opportunity by asking for volunteers to form a Design Statement steering group. Their first step was to adopt a constitution and appoint a chairman and treasurer.

Their objective was to produce a Village Design Statement based entirely on the solicited views of the people of Widdington, obtained through public meetings and a survey. It records how the residents of Widdington saw the characteristics of their village in 2007/2008.

Its overriding purpose is to influence development to take into account the infrastructure, the use of compatible materials, designs and colours and to maintain the existing rural landscape.

These consultations took the form of, first, a public exhibition covering the history of the village, its housing development, particularly from the second world war to the present day, its rich and varied rural environment and the local economy. The purpose of the exhibition was to give people a factual description of Widdington today and to encourage them to think about future development in an informed way. The exhibition was visited by people from 60 households out of the current figure of 195.

The exhibition also helped the second stage of the Village Design Statement, the development and distribution of a questionnaire to all 195 households. Its purpose was to codify and measure the strength of individual views about life in Widdington now and in the future. 135 questionnaires were returned (69%).

Third, the questionnaire results were presented at a public meeting in the village hall attended by 65 residents, followed by public comments which were recorded. The information collected from these consultations has ensured that the narrative contained in the following pages represents village opinion, checked again by a final public meeting presenting the draft document for further comment.

The Widdington Village Design Statement has been prepared within the context of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) with its overall objective of protecting the rural character of Uttlesford District. In particular, Policy Gen 2-Design states development will not be permitted unless it meets certain listed criteria and has regard to adopted Supplementary Design Guidance. The objective of the Widdington Design Statement is to provide that Guidance.

We have noted that most of the guidance points we have suggested echo those put forward in the long gone 1985 Rural Areas Local Plan - Part One. To quote "Village Development Limits have been drawn to exclude further extensions into the open countryside of Special Landscape Value; to prevent further consolidation of existing sporadic development along Cornells Lane, Newport Road and Wood End and to avoid any intensification of traffic along the Protected Lane and substandard highway known as Hollow Road". And again, "Wood End lies outside the Village Development Limits. It consists of housing generally widely spread in large plots. The District Council will seek to conserve its attractive character by refusing permission for development including infill proposals except of a minor nature". The years may have passed but fears about infilling and the loss of garden space remain.

Contents

1. WHO WE ARE
2. THE LANDSCAPE OF WIDDINGTON
3. THE HISTORY OF WIDDINGTON
4. THE HOUSING OF WIDDINGTON
5. THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE IN WIDDINGTON
6. TRANSPORT IN WIDDINGTON
7. INDUSTRY IN WIDDINGTON
8. CONCLUSION AND GUIDANCE
9. APPENDIX



VILLAGE GREEN AND HIGH STREET

1. Who we are

COULD the reader of this Village Design Statement benefit from knowing some facts about the people of Widdington? We think they could so we have summarised some of the information about us contained in the Neighbourhood Statistics 2001 from the National Census of that year. These figures are six years old but they are unlikely to have changed much. For example the number of households was 184 in 2001-it is now 195.

1. There were 463 persons, (52.5% male, 47.5% female).
2. By age there were 19% (0-15), 62% (16-64), 19% (65 and over).
3. In the age group 16-74 there were 347 persons of whom 213 were employed, 7 unemployed and 117 economically inactive.
4. Of the employed, 68% travelled to work by car/van/motorcycle, 10% by public transport and 22% by other means or worked at home.
5. 178 households had a car - 28% had one car, 46% had two cars, 21% had three or more. (The survey recorded 2.05 cars per household).
6. The average distance travelled to work was 24.5 km.
7. House distribution was 53% detached/bungalow, 47% semi/terraced. 83% were privately owned, 17% tenanted. Average occupation was 2.63 persons.
8. Of the 377 persons 16 and over, 15% had a limiting long-term illness cared for by 16%. In terms of households the long-term illness figure was 25%.

This profile provides some clues to the high level of concern shown both in the survey and the public meetings about the infrastructure around the village and the future of the rural scene. Unemployment is very low, house ownership is high, car ownership is high, work travel is the norm. Consequently road usership by residents and incoming supply traffic is high. Widdington also has a significant number of households coping with long-term illness - a figure which is likely to increase in the future.

GUIDANCE

Any future development around Widdington must consider the high level of car ownership, the consequent parking need and the ever-increasing pressure on the infrastructure.

2. Landscape

WIDDINGTON is an ancient settlement, first mentioned early in the 11th century. Today it is a small village of 195 households, lying north/south along Spring Hill, High Street and Wood End, and to the east along Cornells Lane. A large part of the village lies within the Development limits overlapping a Conservation area. Its continued existence to the present day confirms it as a satisfactory location for people and their homes, a view reflected in the answers to our questionnaire.

KEY



DEVELOPMENT LIMITS



CONSERVATION AREA



PROTECTED LANE

AM

ANCIENT MONUMENT

AW

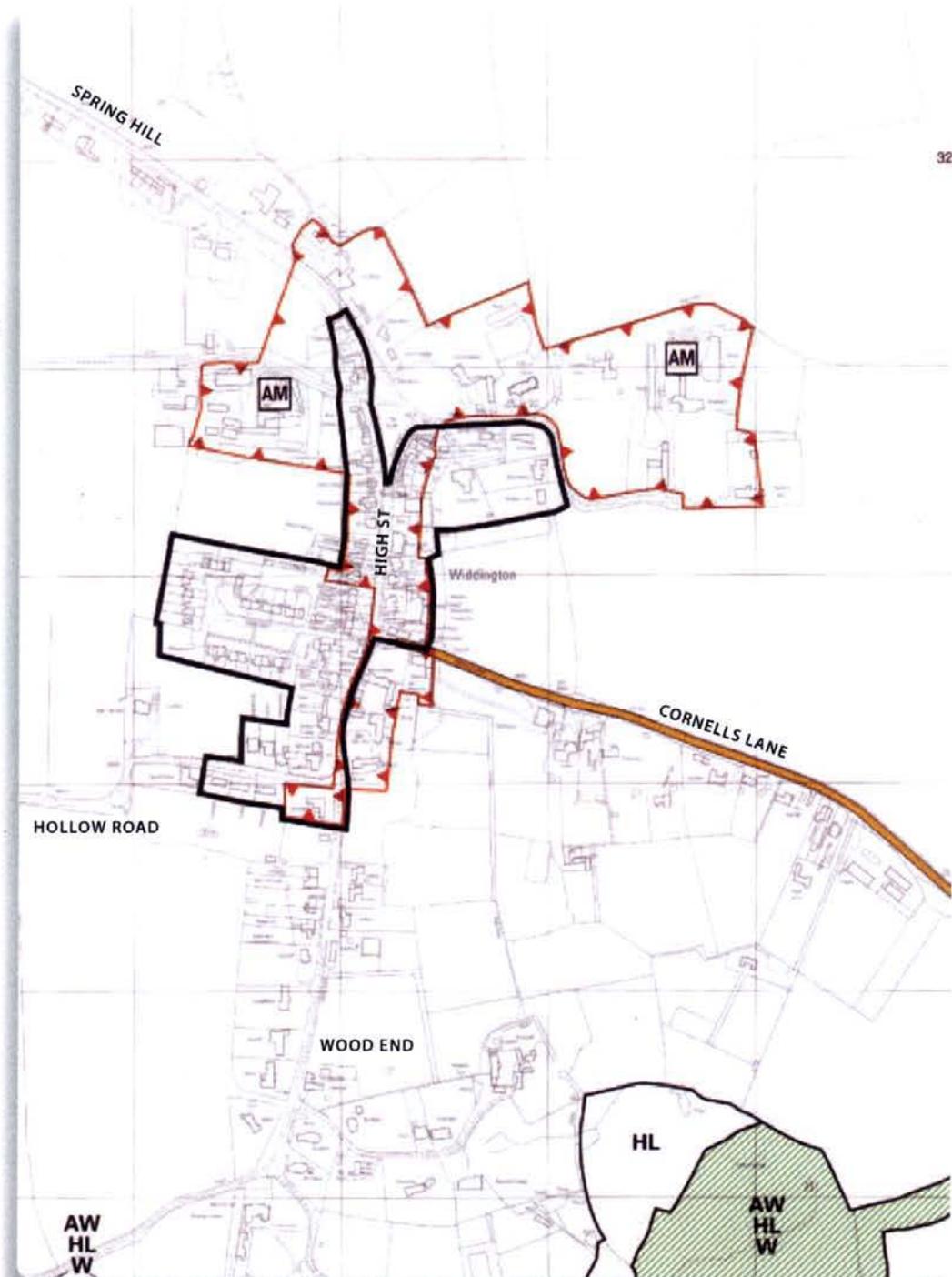
ANCIENT WOODLAND

HL

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

W

COUNTRY WILDLIFE SITE



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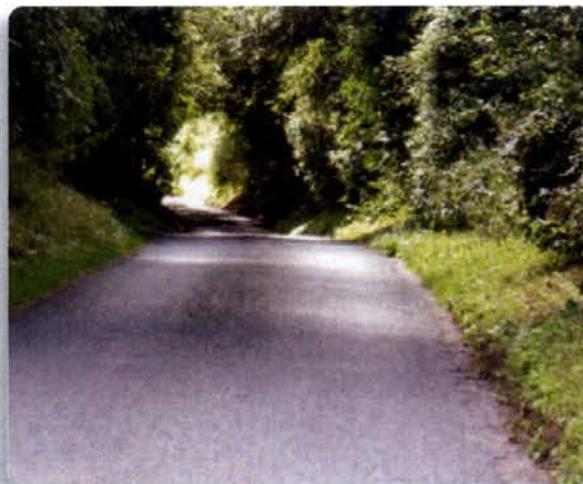
CONSERVATION / DEVELOPMENT MAP

Widdington has not had the extensive changes seen in neighbouring villages, possibly because there is not a suitable through road and because of the geography. The village is in a wooded area, 115 metres above sea level. It is on a ridge with the ground to the east sloping down to the River Cam. It lies to the immediate east of the B1383 with two ascending roads to its centre. The larger road to the north, leading from the B1383 is narrow in many places with consequent damage to the verges. The secondary road to the south, Hollow Road, is narrower still, sunken, with a weight and bridge height restriction. In effect there is no southern exit except for cars and small commercial vehicles.

The immediate countryside is undulating with a number of small woodlands, notably the designated ancient woodlands of Highwood and Priors Wood. There are five ponds, two of which are centrally located. Eight paths and bridleways extend out from the village into the surrounding countryside. Fields and lanes are lined with trees and hedgerows – in spite of intensive cultivation. The village and the surrounding countryside fall within the Cam Valley and Debden Plateau Landscape Character Areas, both of which are highly sensitive to change.



PRIORS WOOD



HOLLOW ROAD



LANDSCAPE VIEW TO THE EAST

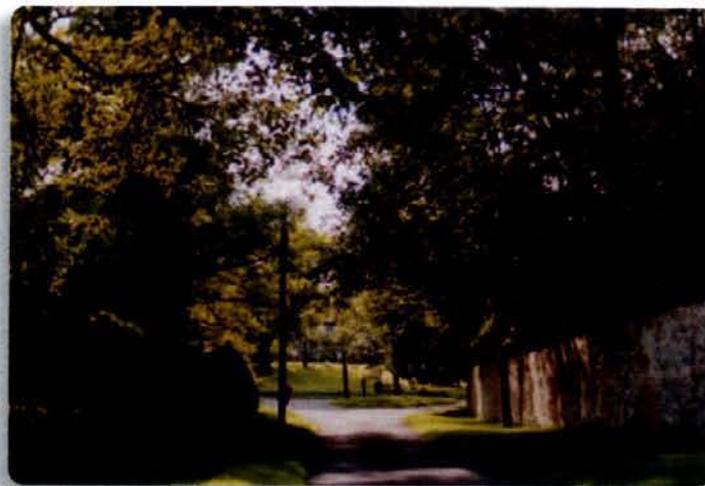


VILLAGE GREEN LOOKING NORTH



ENTRANCE TO CORNELLS LANE FROM HIGH ST

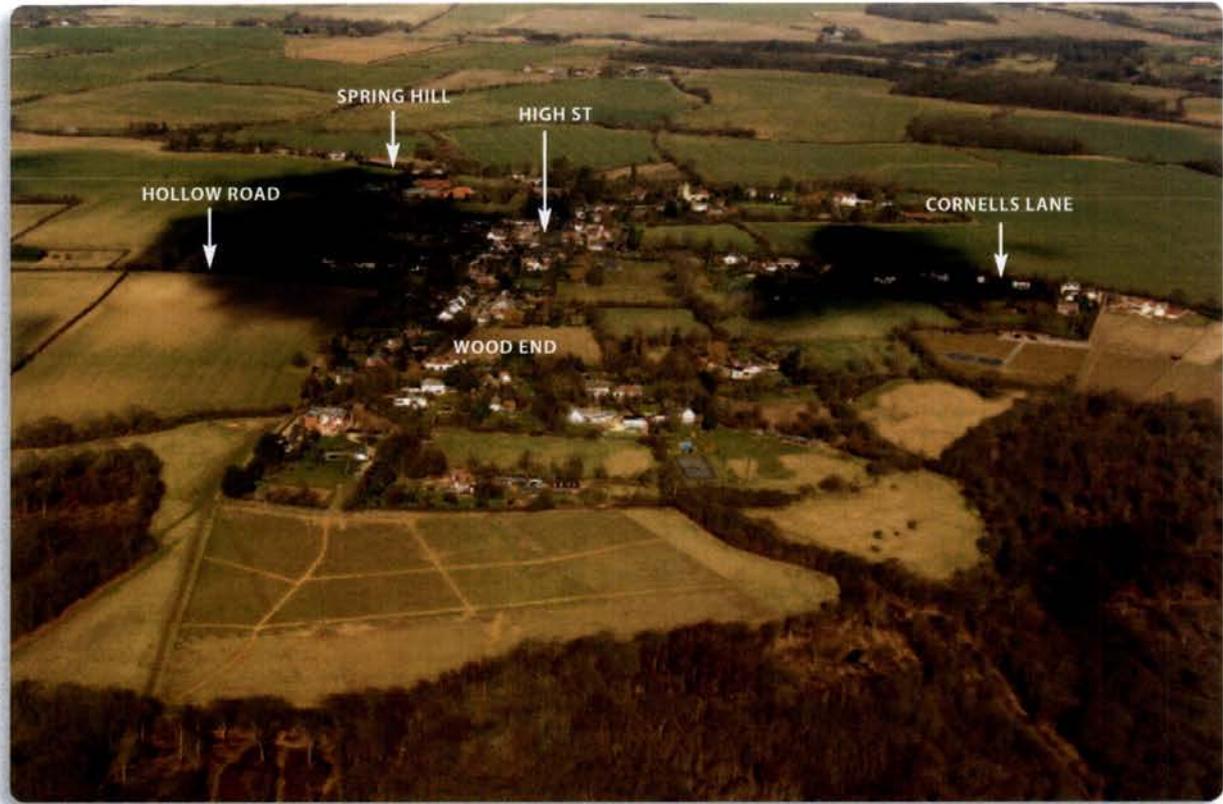
The historic core of Widdington is located around the village green and church. It is widely recognised as an area of architectural and historical importance. It immediately conveys the essential character of Widdington- spacious with houses and buildings of different styles, materials and sizes spanning the centuries, interspersed with trees and hedgerows. Of particular note are the six Halls, two of which are within the conservation area, with the remainder on the outskirts of the village, the oldest of which dates from the 13th century. The quality of this village landscape was recognised by its designation in 1976 as a conservation area. Consequently within the conservation area the village landscape of houses, trees and village green has remained undisturbed and much appreciated by residents and visitors alike, particularly as there is no other open space in the village apart from a small playground and the much used Fleur de Lys garden. Such features need to be protected by Policy ENV3. Outside the conservation and development limits there have been some developments which if repeated would change the village landscape significantly.



CHURCH LANE LEADING TO THE GREEN



WIDDINGTON LOOKING EAST



LOOKING NORTH

The countryside beyond the development limits is protected for its own sake and development will only be permitted if it needs to take place there or is appropriate to a rural area (Policy S7). Examples of suitable developments are farm diversification (Policy E4) and reuse of rural buildings (Policy E5). The responses to the survey questionnaire make it clear that Widdington would like this situation to continue. Policy ENV 8 is specifically directed at maximizing protection of ten landscape elements. These include hedgerows, linear tree belts, green lanes, special verges, ancient woodlands and ponds. The Local Plan points out that most of Uttlesford, including smaller settlements like Widdington, lies outside Development Limits and is both sensitive and vulnerable to possible development.



BRIDLEPATH TO LONDON JOCK WOOD



WOOD END LOOKING WEST

GUIDANCE

- *Do not allow development to diminish the countryside surrounding the village and the features which form the rural character of the landscape.*
- *Through the Parish Council and the District Council explore the possibility of extending the Conservation Area to include Wood End, Cornells Lane, Hollow Road and Spring Hill.*
- *Do not allow development to reduce the open spaces of the playground and the Fleur de Lys Garden.*

3. Village History

THE first known reference to Widdington was during the reign of Edward the Confessor, when there were two manors on the sites of houses now known as Priors Hall and Widdington Hall. Both were owned by Saxons but subsequently in the Domesday survey, it was recorded that Widdington Hall had been granted to Robert Gernon and Priors Hall to the Monastery of Saint Valery in Picardy. The Gernon ownership continued for another 450 years. Priors Hall remained in the hands of the Monks until 1327 when it was seized by Edward 111

Little is known of the early settlement of Widdington. The earliest recorded local finds of pottery were from Amberden Hall, and, being Iron Age, would date between 550 BC and 40 AD. We can only conjecture as to the significance of the hoard of Roman silver denarii discovered in Widdington in 1827, and the subsequent discoveries of other coins in Widdington, including the silver Celtic unit of Cunobelin, King of the Trinovantes, which would have been minted sometime after Cunobelin had taken power c.AD10.

Research by English Heritage suggests that Priors Hall was originally the Saxon Parish church for Widdington. Later it was used as a private chapel by the monks of St. Valery of Picardy in the 12th century when they acquired the Hall, after which they combined with the owner of Widdington Hall to build a new church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. The first village priest took up his duties in 1220 starting an unbroken line of Parish Priests to this day.



PRIORS HALL



WIDDINGTON HALL



ORIGINAL FLEUR DE LYS ALE HOUSE



THISTLEY HALL

By the 15th century, much woodland was cleared in Widdington, and small moated farms were established. Some remaining woodland was enclosed for manorial hunting parks which were a feature of this period. Priors Wood and Littlely Wood remain as examples of these times, and although much of the pasture and hunting parks has gone, the village landscape still remains recognizable six centuries on, thanks in no small part to the absence of a major road through the village.

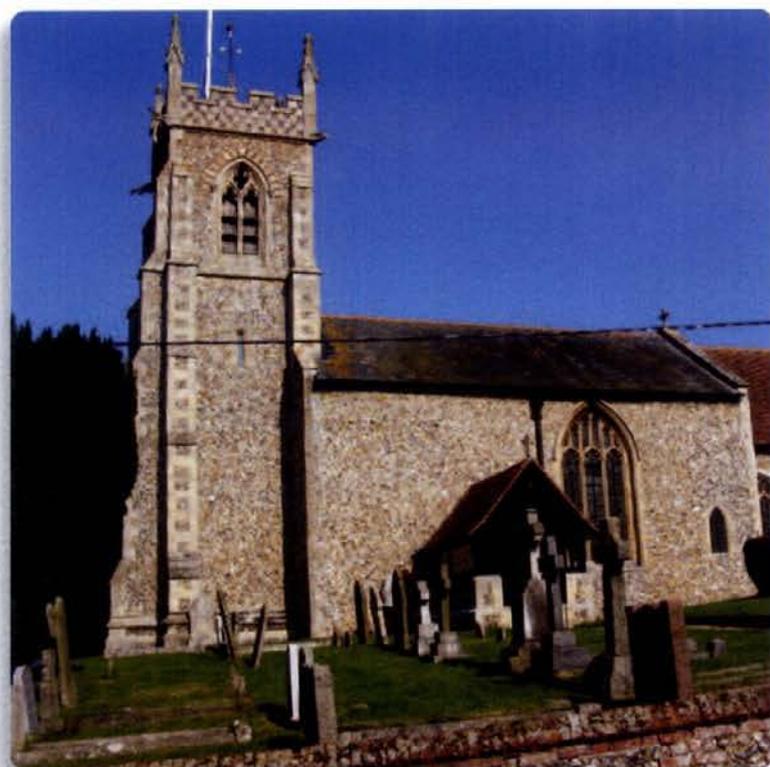
Priors Hall Barn, which is maintained by English Heritage, was built around the mid-15th century. This fine surviving example of a medieval barn has an eight-bayed aisled interior, crown post roof, and took around 400 oak trees to build.

Further development around the 16th and 17th century saw the building of Swaynes Hall, Thistley Hall, Newlands Farm House, Shepherd Wright's Cottage, Bishops Cottage, Old Forge, Rumbolds, Pages and the earlier Fleur-de-Lys ale house by South Green.

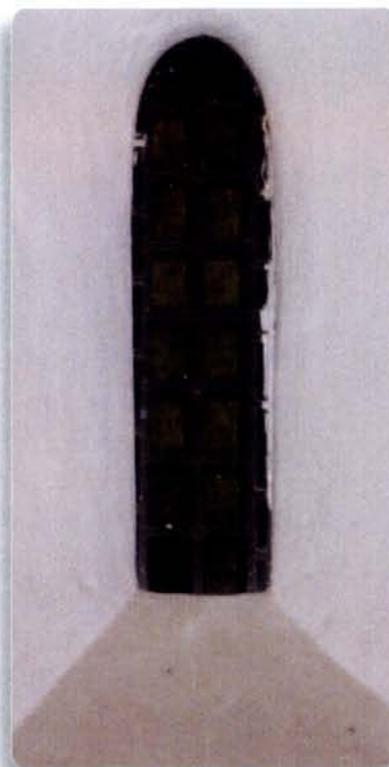


PRIORS HALL BARN

Commonly held and commonly worked land around and within the village was gradually enclosed, a process completed by the Enclosure Act of 1834, when land was designated as belonging to particular people. After 1845 Widdington experienced another nationwide development, the coming of the railways, when the Great Eastern Railway constructed a railway line to the west of the village connecting Cambridge with London, enabling easy travel from neighbouring Newport, and expanding market opportunities for Widdington farm produce.



ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH



THE LANCET WINDOW

The original church of St Mary the Virgin had decayed over the centuries, and in 1771 the whole of the church steeple and ten feet of adjoining walls fell down, burying the bells. Interim repairs culminated in the major rebuilding project of 1868. The present church retains the original small lancet window in the north wall of the chancel from the original 12th century building, a piscina and the chancel arch. From the 14th century is the east window of the chancel and from the 15th century are the two western windows in the chancel, the doorway and large windows of the nave and the porch and vestry. The first rector of the church is recorded as Thomas, c.1220. Widdington Chapel was built in 1858 next to the present Village Hall and was latterly used by the United Reformed Church prior to its demolition when the current house was built on the site.



WIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Sir George Clausen, the renowned artist, lived in Widdington between 1891 and 1905. He presented his wooden studio to the village which was re-erected as a reading room on the site now occupied by the new Village Hall. This was built with funds raised by village activities and from the lottery. Its facilities are modern and comfortable but its design and the traditional materials used are totally in keeping with the historic span of Widdington's buildings.



MOLE HALL



BROAD LEYS — CORNELLS LANE



AMBERDEN HALL

Widdington has evolved into a community village comprising 195 residences, of which six are country mansions or halls, dating from as early as the 13th century. Of the remaining dwellings, 28 date from between the 15th and 18th century. The decline of agricultural employment within the village has accelerated dramatically within the last century. Sometimes known as the “largest cul de sac in Essex”, Widdington has undoubtedly benefited from the lack of a through road, and has not seen the more extensive changes in nearby villages of Elsenham, Clavering, Rickling, and Stansted.

Despite the demise during the 20th century, of the village school, the two village shops, the dairy, the Post Office, the William the Conqueror pub, a petrol pump and garage, a taxi service and bakeries, Widdington residents are aware that they, and the people of Uttlesford, have the benefit of a remarkable historical and architectural legacy. Policies ENV 4 and 9 are seen as vital protection of that legacy.

GUIDANCE

- *Do not allow any development in and around the village that would impact on the considerable number of historic and listed buildings in terms of their structure or their appearance.*

4. Housing



OLD FORGE — WOOD END

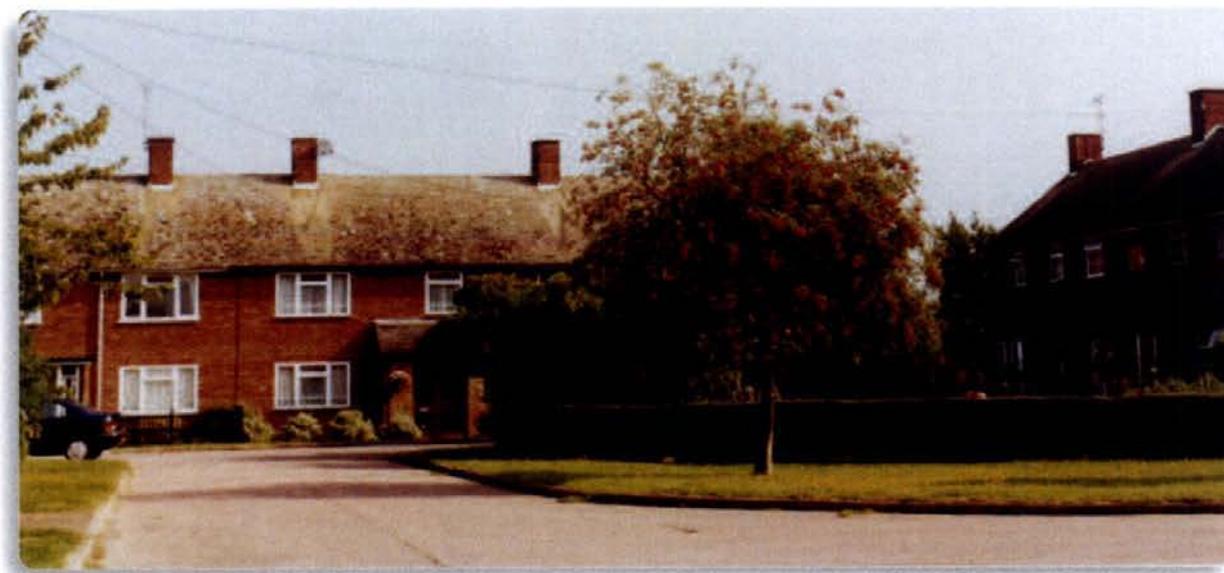


VICTORIAN COTTAGE — HIGH STREET

THE dominating characteristic of Widdington is its age as a settlement. This is reflected in its current housing stock containing as it does buildings covering 800 years. This span has produced a remarkable mixture of colour, shape, size and material. Walls are wooden, lath and plaster, old brick, rendered, dashed, pargetted and painted. Roofs are thatched, variously tiled or slated. This variety of appearance is spread across all 195 residences within the parish boundary. There are six country mansions or halls, two of which are in the main part of the village. There are a further 28 dwellings dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries. By 1901 91 houses and 23 tenements were recorded housing a population of 367.



RESTORED 17th CENTURY COTTAGES — SOUTH GREEN



HAMEL WAY

These numbers showed little change before 1945. From then on growth in housing was quite dramatic for a small village. In the following 60 years Widdington has been no stranger to development, extension, improvement and restoration. 53 houses have been erected on new sites, mostly in the current council tax G band, along with 26 council houses in Hamel Way and 5 affordable houses along Spring Hill. Both the council houses and the affordable homes were on new sites outside the development limits where compatibility of design was not a priority. As aerial photographs show development was both infill and new site.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING — SPRING HILL



CORNER COTTAGE — CORNELLS LANE

The result was to fill up the older part of the village (as some of the survey respondents put it) as well as extending the village. Nonetheless Widdington has remained an area of low density housing with houses irrespective of age, enjoying surrounding space and an open aspect. It is not surprising that residents would like that situation to continue should any new development be considered. There is particular concern about the use of garden space for infilling or over sized extensions and the conversion of agricultural land to garden which would then qualify as brownfield suitable for development. The Village Survey showed that the majority of residents felt there should be either no further development in Widdington or restricted to 10 houses. There was very little support for more than that number. This view was reflected in the views about possible siting of new houses. The survey recorded little support for a separate self contained development outside the village, preferring infill or extending the existing village. Residents also felt that the first consideration of any development should be its compatibility with the existing village appearance. For example in this day and age it is not difficult to produce a computer model of the effect of a proposed development. (Policy Gen 2& H3)



POND MEAD COTTAGE — SPRING HILL

There is little scope for development except by extending the village outwards in the south beyond Wood End, in the east along Cornells Lane, in the north beyond Spring Hill and in the west along Hollow Road towards the Carr and Bircher pit development. Given the existing parking and traffic problems in the High Street and the narrowness of the above roads, Widdington residents believe there should be no further development without substantial improvements to the infrastructure.(Policy Gen1)



BARN CONVERSION — HIGH STREET



DETACHED HOUSE — POST WAR. WOOD END



CORNELLS LANE — NEW HOUSE



RESTORED COTTAGE — THE GREEN

Both the public meeting and the survey revealed concern about the size and style of development, both for houses and extensions. The use of traditional materials should be enforced where practically possible. (Policy Gen2&H8) Some recent developments were criticised in this regard. In particular many residents opposed the recent Fleur de Lys development application because of its design. Residents felt the design was not compatible either with the appearance of surrounding houses or the Fleur de Lys itself. (Policy H3) Although the development was rejected by the Council it was approved on appeal causing concern to Widdington residents about the interpretation of planning policies.



SEMI-DETACHED COTTAGE CONVERSION — WOOD END



ROSE COTTAGE — HIGH STREET



FLEUR DE LYS AND GARDEN



THE OLD POST OFFICE, HIGH STREET



MODERN HOUSE — HIGH ST



RESTORED COTTAGE — CHURCH LANE

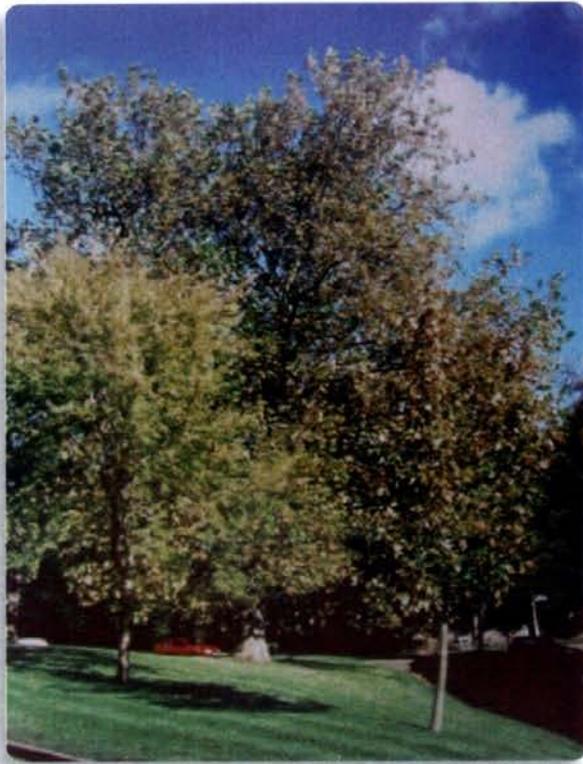
GUIDANCE

- *There is no development space within the existing conservation and development limits. Future development should be confined to suitable infill beyond the limits or village extension rather than creating separate estate development outside the village boundary.*
- *Ensure extension size is proportionate to house size and surrounding houses.*
- *Minimise the loss of garden space through infill or extension.*
- *Recommend the Parish Council to work with the District Council to investigate the use of computer modeling to ensure visual compatibility of any development or extension with its surrounds.*
- *In the consideration of any development take into account the limited infrastructure.*
- *Ensure that the building materials and colours used in any development are compatible with the range of materials and colours seen throughout the village.*
- *Continue to maintain the low density character of Widdington and restrict development to ten houses or less.*

5. The Environment

THE rural nature of the area in and around Widdington has remained little changed over the years. Two ancient woodlands, Priors Wood and High Wood border the south end of the village. The village is surrounded by Grade 2 agricultural land. Many preserved trees and groups of trees within hedgerows are interspersed among the houses of the village. There are many footpaths and byways, most of which lead directly from the village to the open country.

Widdington is set within a landscape character area described as the Debden Farmland Plateau. This character area is highly sensitive to change and the countryside beyond the village development limits is protected by a number of policies in the Uttlesford Local Plan. 61% of survey respondents considered the environment and its rural nature to be the most distinctive feature of Widdington which they would want preserved.



VILLAGE GREEN



VILLAGE POND



CRESTED NEWT



FOOTPATH ON HOLLOW ROAD



ROADSIDE CONSERVATION

The importance to residents of maintaining the rural environment when considering any development was underlined again in the survey when residents were asked to list the most important factors planners should consider. Taken together, trees, hedges and woods, open spaces and country access came out top.

Residents are well aware that protecting and maintaining the environment is a priority with our local authority. (Policies ENV 1,4,5,6,7,8,9.) On the outskirts of the north side of the village towards Debden along Beadle Lane there are two stretches of verge designated as Special Roadside Verges. Although this one time rural lane is now subject to considerable verge damage from heavy lorries and commuting cars avoiding Newport, nevertheless both verges carry a flourishing mixture of chalk flora of sulphur clover, greater and common knapweed and a large colony of cowslips.



COWSLIPS



BLUEBELLS



COMMON SPOTTED ORCHID

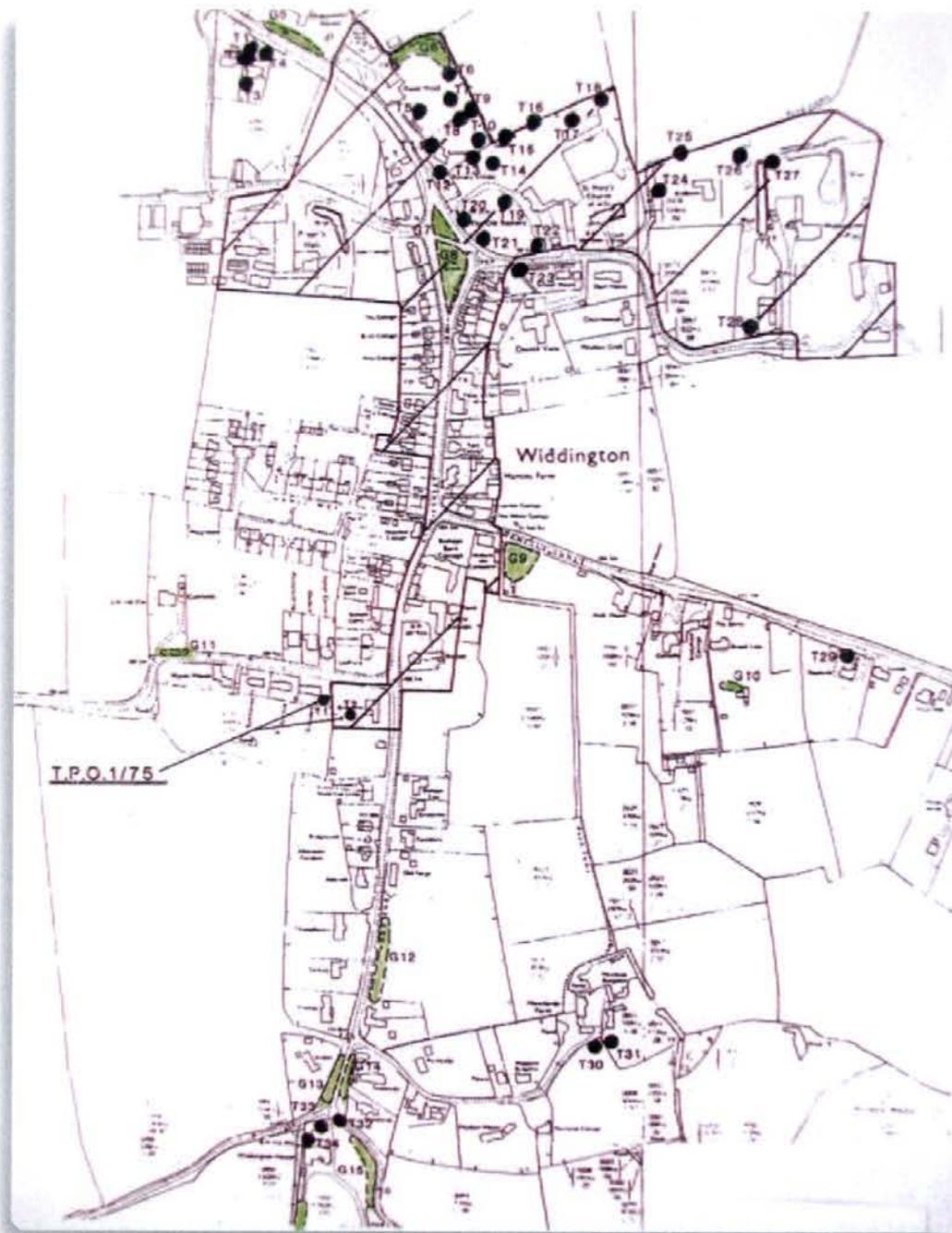
There are two main ponds in the village itself and several other ponds on the outskirts and in local gardens. Volunteers have maintained the main ponds with the help of specialist advice. They are seen as important in helping to maintain the biodiversity of the area, supporting the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan in providing a habitat for small reptiles and amphibians and drinking places for small mammals and birds. Garden ponds are also important providing wildlife pathways throughout the village. Some of the creatures found in and around Widdington are at least part protected by law such as badgers, bats, snakes, great crested newts, lizards, fieldfares, kingfishers, redwings, and all nesting birds.



POND — NEWLANDS FARM



WOODLAND EDGE — PRIORS WOOD



CONSERVATION AREA AND PROTECTED TREES

GUIDANCE

- *Do not allow development that would diminish the open landscape and landscape views surrounding Widdington*
- *Do not allow development to affect or remove village or garden ponds.*
- *Maintain the ancient woodland status of Priors Wood and High Wood south of Widdington.*
- *Protect the rural nature of Cornells Lane and Hollow Road by working with the District Council or requesting a survey of the verges to determine they are of value to designate as Special Roadside Verges.*
- *Protect the existing network of footpaths, byways and bridleways both in and around the village.*

6. Transport



A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE — VILLAGE GREEN



EROSION OF GREEN

As there is no through road in Widdington and therefore no through or passing traffic it could be assumed that the existing roads are adequate for the current level of domestic and commercial traffic. The evidence is to the contrary. First there is the gradual erosion of the verges and the village green along with recurring surface damage. Both the principal roads and the minor roads are wider than their original width through encroachment and require repetitive repair. Second, three of those roads are really single track only. Third, both the number and the size of commercial vehicles increases year by year. Fourth, pedestrian space is minimal. Only the High St and a small part of Springhill have pavement. And last although there are around 400 vehicles based within the village there is a much appreciated hourly bus service to Saffron Walden and Bishops Stortford used by 9% of people travelling to work and to shop.

The 2001 census revealed that two thirds of households had two or more cars and that two thirds of the employed population travelled to work by car. The survey shows that figure has now risen to 73% and 70% respectively. The 2007 traffic census carried out by the police on Spring Hill and the High St reported traffic volumes as follows.

WEDNESDAY 21 ST MARCH	VEHICLES	WEDNESDAY 28 TH MARCH	VEHICLES
Springhill North		High St North	
7.00-19.00	501	7.00-19.00	412
Springhill South		High St South	
7.00-19.00	508	7.00-19.00	417

The peak figure was registered at around 60 vehicles an hour.

It is not surprising that 39% of respondents, when asked “What do you dislike most about living in Widdington?” gave answers related to roads and transport.



SPRINGHILL PARKING — SINGLE LANE ONLY



BRIDGE RESTRICTION — HOLLOW ROAD



HIGH STREET — SINGLE LANE ONLY



NARROW BRIDGE TOWARDS B1383

In the past three years the village has also experienced and is experiencing in Cornells Lane, Wood End and Newlands Lane the type of traffic disruption that can accompany a development reminding everyone of the limitations of the Widdington roads. Cornells Lane, Wood End, Newlands Lane and Church Lane are both narrow and dead ends, resulting in considerable verge and surface damage especially from commercial traffic.

The Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) recognises the problems described above. The Council's Transport Strategy (2001) highlighted the above average levels of car ownership in the District and the effect of the intrusive nature of lorry traffic on country lanes.

In response to these issues and others the Local Plan development strategy and policies aim to locate and design new sites for development that encourage modes of transport other than the car. Policy GEN1 specifically requires the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users to be taken into account. Local safe cycling ways should be encouraged.



MORE EROSION — SOUTH GREEN



HEAVY LORRY DIVERSION TO SAFFRON WALDEN

GUIDANCE

- *Any future development should include provision for adequate off road parking based on two cars per household in accordance with Policy Env 8- Vehicle Parking Standards.*
- *Any future development could increase traffic movement substantially. Work with Essex County Council to:*
 - a) Consider replacing the existing 30mph limit with a 20mph limit.*
 - b) Consider increasing the number of passing places between the access from the B1343 through to the village and along Cornell's Lane and Hollow road.*
 - c) Consider extending the Hollow Road commercial traffic restriction to Wood End, Newlands Lane and Church Lane.*
 - d) Consider the provision of a cycleway between Widdington and Newport using the existing bridleway and paths.*

7. Local industry

In addition to the surrounding farms and the Fleur de Lys public house, there are two principal employers in Widdington: Carr & Bircher recycling and extraction pit, and the industrial units at Prior Hall.

Carr & Bircher is a waste management, skip hire and recycling business located in a pit at the bottom of Hollow Road to the south west of the village. The main access to the pit is from the B1383 under the railway bridge. Most vehicles are too large to pass under the bridge so a skip transfer system is operated. The access to the pit from the east down Hollow Road has a weight restriction and is only used by Carr & Bircher when installing heavy equipment. When this happens the village is advised in advance to remove parked cars from Springhill and the High St, another indication of the inadequacy of the local roads for anything other than cars and light vans.

The company employs 30 people and does its best to minimise damage and litter. Once the capacity of the pit is exhausted the site will be covered and planted with trees. The intention is to restore the environment to that in keeping with the key characteristics of the area. Carr & Bircher also provide a green waste skip free of charge to the residents of Widdington.



PIT AND RECYCLING CENTRE — HOLLOW ROAD

The light industrial units at Priors Hall house a number of businesses. The principal tenant is Hunter Scientific who manufacture micro tools for in vitro fertilisation and other micro manipulation techniques. They also provide a laboratory design service. There are three other small commercial enterprises utilising agricultural buildings situated at Shipton Bridge Farm and at the eastern end of Cornells Lane.

In the village survey residents were asked "Should more local businesses be encouraged?" There was a 2:1 ratio in favour. There was no anti local business feeling expressed in any of the answers to like/dislike questions or at the two public meetings.



PRIORS HALL — LIGHT INDUSTRIAL UNITS

GUIDANCE

- *Continue to encourage the development of light industry utilising existing disused agricultural buildings. (Policy E5)*

8. Conclusion and Guidance

It is clear from the public meetings and the survey questionnaire that the people of Widdington are aware of the pressure for new housing in Uttlesford. They also have a realistic view of how many houses might be built in Widdington, what type and where.

There is an awareness that future development involving more than a few houses could only be accommodated by extending the village further along roads that are already inadequate for existing traffic. There is also concern that the established rural scene would begin to deteriorate. The footpaths, byways, hedges, trees and wildlife could gradually disappear to be replaced by characterless ribbon development.

The Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) states that development both within and outside villages must satisfy detailed criteria. Widdington residents look to these criteria to address their concerns about possible future development in and around their village. This Design Statement has set out to describe those concerns and possible guidance points as to how they might be addressed in the context of any future development. In summary those guidance points are as follows.

LANDSCAPE

- *Do not allow development to diminish the countryside surrounding the village and the features which form the rural character of the landscape.*
- *Explore the possibility of extending the Conservation Area to include Wood End, Cornells Lane, Hollow Road and Spring Hill with the Parish Council and the District Council.*
- *Do not allow development to reduce the open spaces of the playground and the Fleur de Lys Garden.*

VILLAGE HISTORY

- *Do not allow any development in and around Widdington that would impact on the considerable number of historic and listed buildings in terms of their structure, appearance and surrounds.*

HOUSING

- *There is no development space within the existing conservation and development limits. Future development should be confined to suitable infill beyond development limits or village extension rather than creating separate estate development outside the village boundary.*
- *Ensure extension size is proportionate to house size and surrounding houses.*
- *Minimise the loss of garden space through infill or extension.*
- *Continue to maintain the low density character of Widdington and restrict development to no more than ten houses.*

- *Encourage applicants through the Parish Council and District Council to use computer modelling to ensure visual compatibility of any development or extension with its surrounds.*
- *In the consideration of any development take into account the limited infrastructure.*
- *Ensure that the building materials and colours used in any development are compatible with the range of materials and colours that predominate in the village.*

ENVIRONMENT

- *Do not allow development to diminish the open landscape and views surrounding Widdington.*
- *Do not allow development to affect or remove village and garden ponds.*
- *Maintain the ancient woodland status of Priors Wood and High Wood east of the village.*
- *Protect the rural nature of Cornells Lane and Hollow Road by requesting the District Council to survey the verges to determine whether they are of value to designate as Special Roadside Verges.*
- *Protect the existing network footpaths, byways and bridlepaths.*

TRANSPORT

- *Any future development should include provision for adequate off road parking based on a minimum of two cars per household in accordance with Policy Env 8-Vehicle Parking Standards.*
- *Any future development will increase traffic density. Work with Essex County Council to:*
 - Consider replacing the existing 30mph limit with a 20mph limit*
 - Consider increasing the number of passing places between the B 1383 and the village and along Cornells Lane and Hollow Road.*
 - Consider extending the Hollow Road commercial traffic restriction to Wood End, Newlands Lane and Church Lane.*
 - Consider the provision of a cycleway between Widdington and Newport using the existing bridleway and paths.*

LOCAL INDUSTRY

- *Continue to encourage the development of local light business utilising disused agricultural buildings. (Policy E5)*

Appendix

This Widdington Design Statement has been prepared within the context of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005). Throughout this Statement there are references to development policies contained in the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005). In summary the policy name and its subject are listed below.

1. Policy Gen1. Access to main road network.
2. Policy Gen 2. Design criteria.
3. Policy E4. Farm diversification.
4. Policy E5. Re-use of rural buildings.
5. Policy Env3. Open spaces and trees.
6. Policy Env4. Ancient monuments.
7. Policy Env5. Protection of agricultural land.
8. Policy Env6. Change of use- agricultural land to garden.
9. Policy Env7. Protection of natural environment-designated sites.
10. Policy Env8. Landscape.
11. Policy Env9. Historic landscapes.
12. Policy H3. New houses.
13. Policy H8. Home extensions.
14. Policy S7. Countryside.