

A rural landscape featuring a green field in the foreground, a wooden bench with a person fishing, and a herd of cows grazing on a hillside in the background. The scene is framed by trees and foliage.

IDMISTON, PORTON & GOMELDON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

RETAINING OUR RURAL FEEL

Our Village Design Statement was financed by



Produced by our Village Design Team

March 2013

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Cover Photo: Fingers of agricultural land spill into our villages – water meadows between The Avenue and Idmiston Road, Porton

FOREWORD

by John Glen MP for Salisbury

JOHN GLEN M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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I am delighted that the villages of Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon have become the latest parish in this constituency to turn their thoughts to the preparation of a village design statement, setting out the community's aspirations for the future.

The fantastic response rate and obvious willingness of the community to engage with the process demonstrates how much people love and value the character and amenities of their villages and how much already exists that is worth fighting to preserve and enhance.

I think the preference for small developments and a good mix of properties and the emphasis on minimising noise and light pollution from any future developments at Porton Down together form a very strong basis for future community inputs into the planning process because they demonstrate that your collective approach is founded on realism.

This statement does not seek to preserve the villages in aspic but identifies sensible and achievable ways to make sure that they remain attractive and peaceful places to live.

By working together, the three villages have both strengthened the ideas that you have in common and underlined the importance of preserving the individuality of each community by retaining the green spaces that divide them.

This is an excellent piece of work that I hope and expect will play an important part in shaping the future of Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Glen".

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

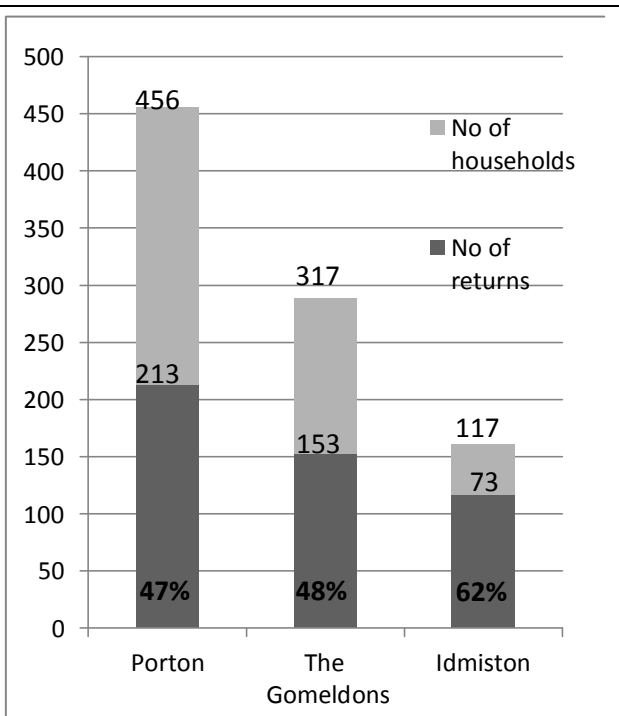
Our Village Design Statement is shaped by the opinions and aspirations of our local residents.

At the beginning of the process we distributed a questionnaire to all 890 dwellings in the Parish. Its purpose was to gauge the level of support that exists for a range of planning policies which will influence the future appearance of our villages. We also sought help in identifying the best and worst features of our villages and the scope for improving their appearance. Finally we wanted to establish the relative importance of ten of the planning objectives that were featured in our Community Plan.

Nearly half of all of our households responded. In all 439 forms were returned, which is a fantastic 49% response rate. Such a high rate of return lends credibility to our findings, as being representative of our community as a whole.

For further information go to www.idmistonpc.org.

Figure 1: Questionnaire Response Rates



WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Our Village Design Statement is a planning document, prepared by our team of local residents. Whilst it does not allocate land for development, it does aim to secure an improved design and form of development which better fits its surroundings and which is, hopefully, seen as an asset rather than an alien feature.

It attempts to secure this objective by identifying what makes each of our villages special. It describes the distinctive character of our villages and the surrounding countryside by examining the nature of the landscape, the shape and form of each settlement and the nature of the buildings and the spaces about them.

It then sets out design guidance, which is to be applied to ensure that both new development and extensions, and alterations to existing buildings, are in harmony with their setting and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of our local environment.

LOCAL PLANNING STATUS

Our Village Design Statement has been the subject of extensive local consultation and debate. It has been approved by Idmiston Parish Council and forwarded to Wiltshire Council for their endorsement. It will sit alongside the Wiltshire Core Strategy and any future Neighbourhood Plan to form part of the local planning framework for our community.

Crucially, applicants for planning permission will need to demonstrate that they have had regard to its contents, for it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications and appeals.

Its value to the planning process will be monitored by the Parish Council's Planning Committee and if necessary updated after five years of use to ensure its continuing relevance.

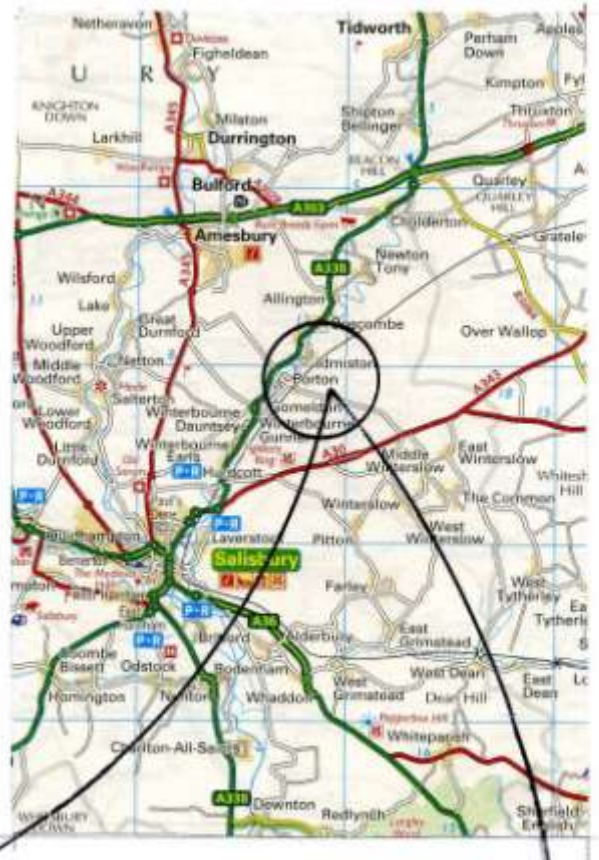
VILLAGE CONTEXT

LOCATION

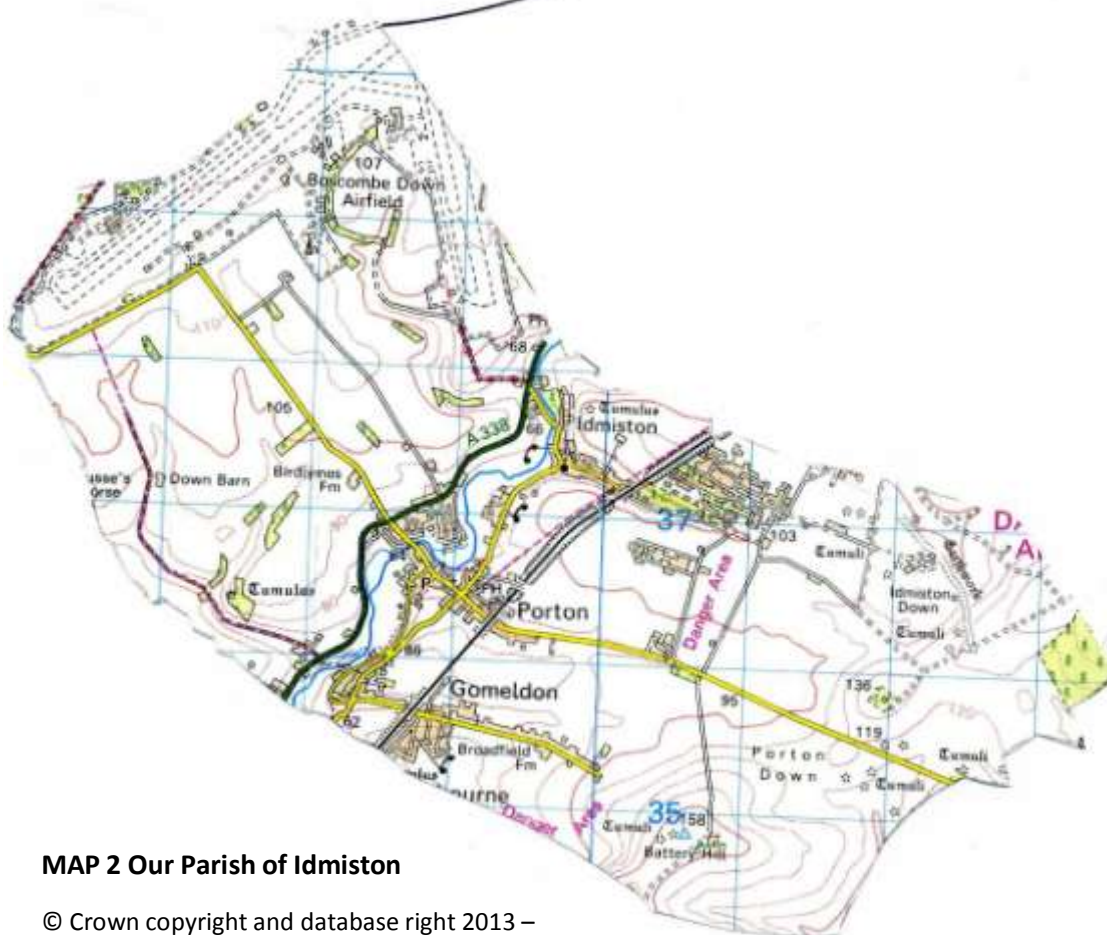
Our Parish of Idmiston is situated in South Wiltshire, some six miles north east of Salisbury and a similar distance south of Amesbury.

Our Parish comprises the six small settlements of Idmiston, Porton, Porton Camp, Gomeldon, West Gomeldon and East Gomeldon, the last three being known collectively as 'The Gomeldons'. Idmiston, Porton and West Gomeldon are strung out along the valley of the River Bourne, whilst Gomeldon and East Gomeldon share a hilltop location. Porton Camp, which comprises a small estate of Ministry of Defence housing, is also in a slightly elevated position adjacent to the research and development complex at Porton Down.

The whole is set in chalk downland, with meadows in the river valley and arable farming on the higher ground.



MAP 1 Location



MAP 2 Our Parish of Idmiston

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EVOLUTION

The earliest written evidence of our villages is provided by the Domesday Book of 1086. This records three small communities. Indeed the site of a Saxon village, just below Gomeldon, remains visible to this day.

By the late 18th century, the three small settlements of Idmestone, Porton and Gumbledon (present day West Gomeldon) were recorded and shown on a map of 1773. All three comprised hamlets of farms and cottages near to the river and its water meadows. Idmestone was the most important of the three, with its 12th century church, 15th century vicarage and manor house circa 1600.

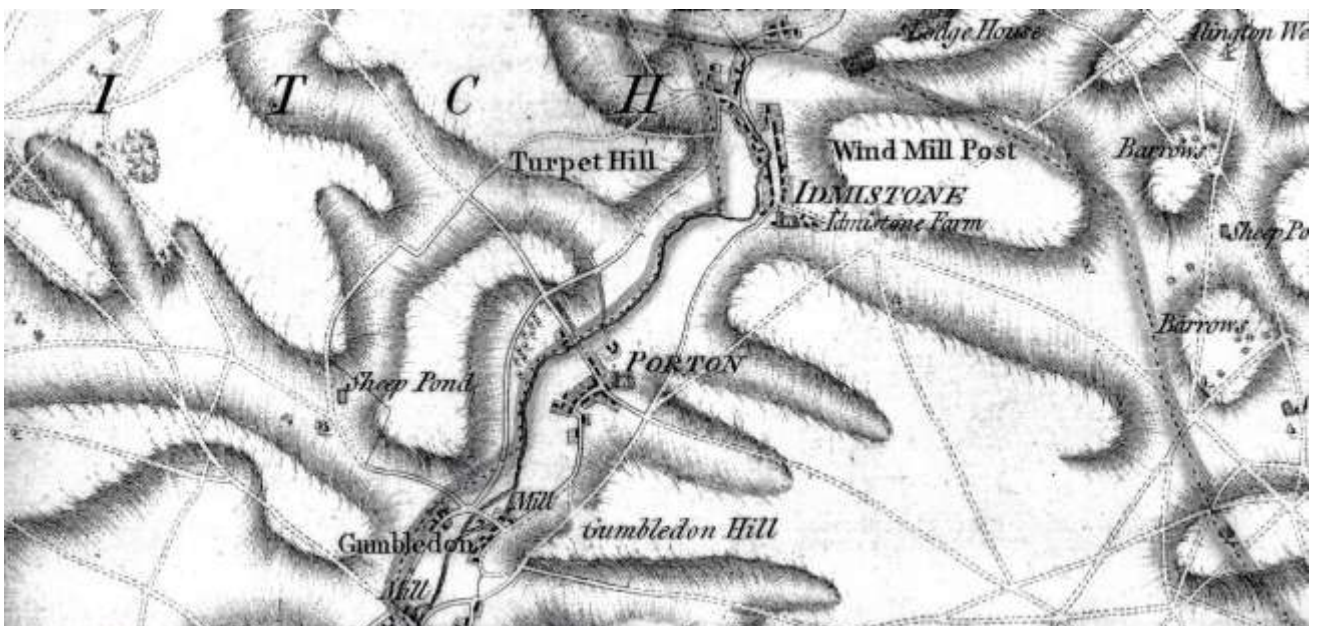
The railway, built in 1854, cuts a swathe through the middle of our Parish. Its prominent bridges and embankments are a major feature in Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon and present a significant barrier to vehicular movement today.

Later large scale maps of 1877 and 1901 again show the three settlements of Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon (today's West Gomeldon). It was not until 1925 that today's Gomeldon and East Gomeldon first appeared on the map, together with the ribbon development beyond the rail bridge in Porton.

Perhaps the most significant development in the area was the opening of the Porton Down chemical research facility, during the 1914-18 war, involving the acquisition of 2,750 hectares (6,795 acres) of downland by the War Department. Housing on the site, i.e. Porton Camp, dates from the inter-war period and was originally built to house military personnel.

Today's site is the home of two of Wiltshire's major employers, undertaking defence and health-related scientific research. The estate, which extends over roughly one third of our Parish and beyond, is not open to public access and remains largely undeveloped. Much of this, by reason of its unique plants, insects and birds, is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is the subject of additional special measures which ensure their conservation and protection.

1917 saw the opening of the Boscombe Down airfield, much of which is on land in the north of our Parish. The site, which is owned by the Ministry of Defence, is also a major source of employment, and is now run and managed by QinetiQ, who evaluate aviation research.



MAP 3 Idmestone, Porton & Gumbledon in 1773

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Whilst our villages remain rural in nature, they do tend to have a dormitory function and are also home to a significant number of retired people. Working residents commute to Salisbury, Andover and the surrounding defence establishments and even to London. It is thought unlikely that these commuting patterns will change in the foreseeable future.

The Porton Down complex directly employs some 2,000 people and is continuing to expand, with the relocation of other allied Government research to the site and the development of the Porton Science Park. There are also known to be long-term ambitions for a science-based university

The anticipated expansion has three important implications for our Parish. Firstly, there will be an increased demand for housing, which is likely to be a South Wiltshire/A303 corridor-wide issue. In this regard it should be noted that there are only 38 dwellings remaining on the site at Porton Camp and there are no plans to provide any more. Secondly, there will be an added load on our local road network, particularly at peak hours, which our residents will inevitably view with concern. Finally, the proposed development will have implications for our rural environment.

At this juncture it should be said that:

Our villages have been described as having a rural feel. Maintaining their rural integrity is of paramount importance to us.

Meeting this objective whilst accommodating essential development is a major challenge and we believe our Design Statement together with Wiltshire's Core Strategy can help us achieve the right balance.

CURRENT PLANNING CONTEXT

The South Wiltshire Core Strategy, which was adopted by Wiltshire Council in February 2012, will have a major impact on how our villages develop in the future. It has been a key consideration in drafting our Design Statement and will be replaced by the Wiltshire Core Strategy in 2013.

Its approach is to plan as far as possible for self-contained settlements. This means focusing growth around settlements with a range of facilities, where local housing, service and employment needs can be met in a sustainable manner.

A hierarchy of settlements has been identified, based on their size and function, with growth primarily focussed on the first three tiers. Our villages do not feature in these as they are too small and have too few facilities.

Porton has been identified in the Core Strategy as a large village, which performs a less significant, but important, complementary role to higher tier centres. In our case these are the Market towns, which have a wider range of facilities and services. Importantly, levels of growth proportionate to the size, character and environment of the village will be supported.

Gomeldon, which we take to include East Gomeldon, has been identified as a small village. Such settlements are seen as having limited services and being functionally reliant on the Market towns. As such they do not represent the most sustainable locations for new growth in rural areas and development will be restricted to only infill and exception development.

Idmiston has been identified as a village with no facilities and one which is completely reliant on a Market town for day to day needs. In that context it is considered to be an unsustainable location for new growth.

LANDSCAPE SETTING

THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE

Our Parish is set in rolling chalk downland, incised by the wooded Bourne valley, with its river and ancient water meadows.

Though much of our Parish is farmed, the majority of Porton Down is not. Its appearance remains much as it was in 1916, when acquired by the War Department. Undamaged by modern agriculture, it forms the largest continuous tract of chalk downland in Britain and presents a unique and valued landscape and wildlife habitat.



Photo 1: The Hidden Nature of Our Villages – Idmiston from the Portway

Our villages of Idmiston, Porton and West Gomeldon are located on the valley floor and are largely hidden from view, due to the wooded and sloping nature of the terrain which encloses them. This is particularly true of Idmiston, which is barely visible from outside the village. Here the rail embankment is significant in screening from view both the small housing estate at Porton Camp and the Porton Down research complex.

The hidden nature of these villages, in many places, affords sweeping rural vistas from the higher ground mostly unimpeded by built development, which is generally contained by folds in the landscape.

The more recent settlements of Gomeldon, which runs along a hilltop towards the railway, and East Gomeldon, which lies beyond the railway, are more exposed and in places enjoy extensive views. Though here, too, areas of woodland reduce the visual impact of the ribbons of housing and, again, the rail embankment screens much of East Gomeldon.

DESIGN POLICY 1

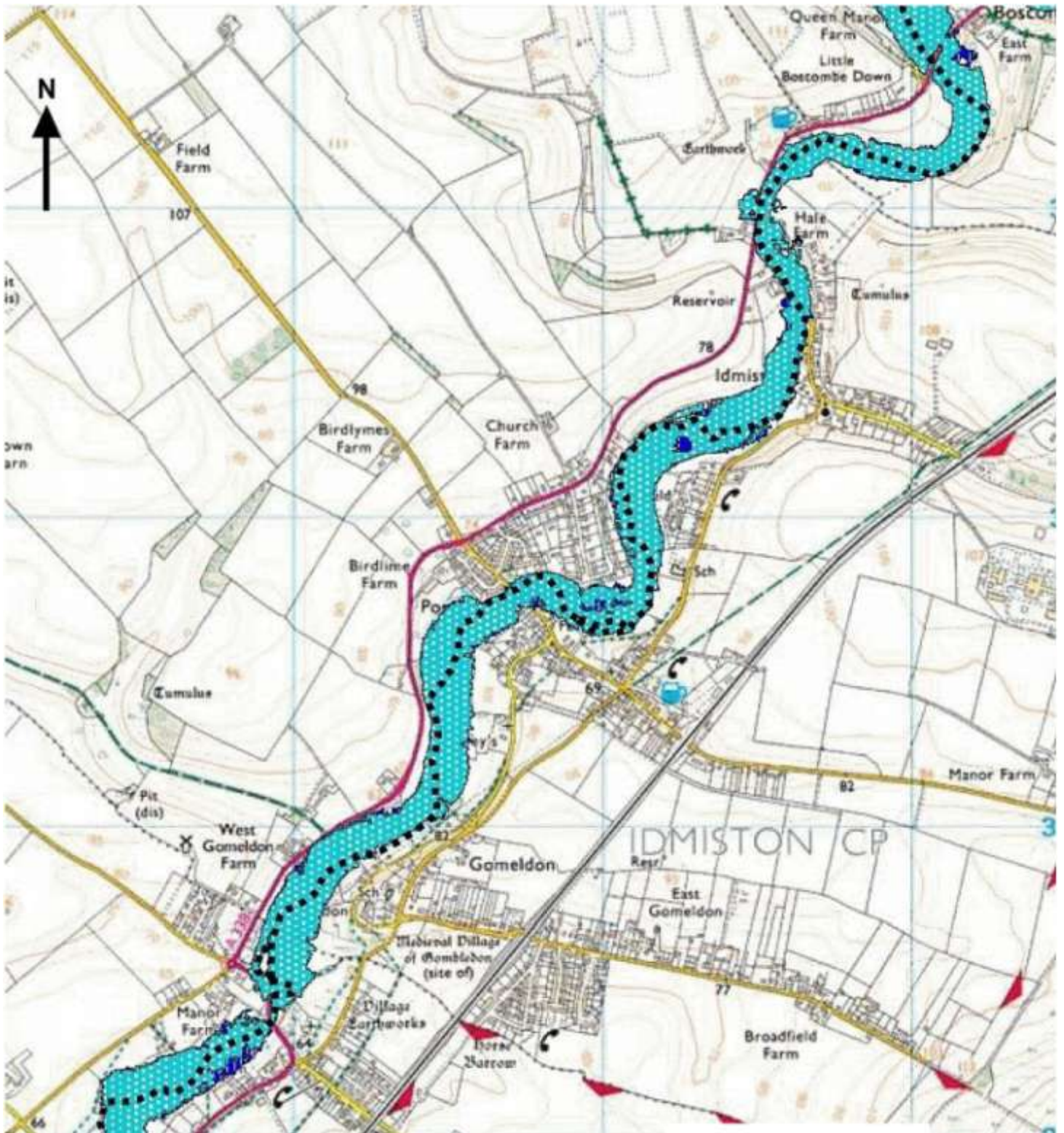
To retain our rural vistas and preserve the integrity of our villages as largely hidden rural settlements, any future development of potential sites should be located and designed in a way that precludes building on the skyline, when seen from within our villages.



Photo 2: Downland Landscape – The Gomeldons from Figsbury Ring

MAP4

Flood Plain of the River Bourne



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Legend

Watercourse centreline

Functional floodplain
(Zone 3b) with climate
change

THE RIVER

The River Bourne, with its two fords and its water meadows is an important component in the landscape and a particularly significant feature in three of our villages.

In Idmiston, it runs to the rear of properties on the main street for about half the length of the village and is a major visual element in its approaches. In Porton, which is more built up, it cuts through the village, forms a major green corridor and provides an important wildlife habitat. Running through West Gomeldon it becomes less accessible, but in some ways more prominent, particularly when seen from Gomeldon Hill. In both Porton and West Gomeldon the fords are used as informal amenity areas.

Sadly, in drought conditions, the river suffers a much reduced flow particularly in Idmiston where it occasionally dries out altogether. Wessex Water are aware of this and they have agreed to reduce abstraction from local aquifers by 2018. They are also trialling stream support in Porton. This involves the dechlorination of mains water which is discharged to the water course.

However, water shortages tend to be a summer phenomenon and many residents will be aware of the risk of flooding in adverse weather conditions. Whilst there has been some past



Photo 3: Water meadows from Idmiston Road – part of the flood plain of the River Bourne

building on low-lying land next to the river, it makes little sense to develop such land and, particularly, former water meadows, where there is a high probability of flooding. Land inappropriate for further development can be identified by referring to the Environment Agency's Flood Zones.

THE WATER MEADOWS

The water meadows, which date from the 17th century, are an important historic landscape feature. They were fed from the river by a system of irrigation channels, controlled by sluices, and provided early grazing. Whilst the system has mostly fallen out of use, where channels are in water they form an attractive visual feature and an important resource for wildlife. In this regard, one landowner in West Gomeldon has embarked on a commendable programme of restoration of their part of the river and its water meadows, which it is hoped others will follow.

DESIGN POLICY 2

To secure the conservation of our important riverside landscape and reduce exposure to flooding, further built development, unrelated to agriculture, on the water meadows and woodland adjoining the River Bourne should be avoided.



Photo 4: Water meadows from below the Idmiston Road

THE VILLAGE EDGES

Away from the river, our villages are surrounded by fields of arable and pasture which, in places, spill into the villages themselves. The approaches to Idmiston, Porton, West Gomeldon and parts of Gomeldon are mostly wooded with field-side hedgerows framing, and often partly obscuring, village edges. These village approaches and village edges mostly retain their rural integrity, which is important to retaining the rural feel of our villages.

DESIGN POLICY 3

Any future development on, or close to, the periphery of our villages should have regard for the need to minimise the visual impact of new building on the village edges, should retain field-edge hedgerows and trees and, where necessary, incorporate screen planting to soften the built form.



Photo 5: The edge of Porton – from the High Street

BUILDINGS IN THE LANDSCAPE

The landscape setting of our villages has been shaped by agricultural activities. Farms are much in evidence both within, and on the edges of, our villages and are an important part of our community.

New agricultural buildings can be exempt from planning controls. Such buildings are often metal-clad and can be on an industrial scale. For the most part, in our Parish, they are well sited

but those in exposed positions can have an adverse visual impact on the landscape.

DESIGN POLICY 4

To minimise their impact on the surrounding countryside, where possible, new agricultural buildings should:

- *Avoid elevated and exposed locations.*
- *Be sited in close proximity to those of a similar construction to form a coherent group*
- *If freestanding, utilise the land form, screen planting and an appropriate colour finish to help reduce their visual impact*



Photo 6: A Barn on the skyline above Idmiston with prominent block planting of conifers



Photo 7: A field edge barn on Porton Down screened by adjoining copse

THE PORTON DOWN CAMPUS

The defence and health related scientific research complex at Porton Down is a major development in our Parish and arguably the largest built feature in our landscape.

It is mostly some distance away and set apart from our villages. Although close to Idmiston, its presence is not visually apparent in the village owing to a high, wooded rail embankment and on-site screen planting.

Whilst it has the appearance of a military establishment, more recent developments are more akin to those of a business park and it is anticipated that it will continue to develop in this way. It is visible in the middle distance from the MoD-owned Pheasant Road that traverses the Down, and from the more elevated housing in East Gomeldon. Illumination levels, though, are such that it has had a prominent night-time appearance to some residents, who are keen that measures are taken to minimise the impact of any new development on the night sky.

Its continuing development is provided for in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Porton Down Master Plan. Neither of these deals with the potential visual impact of the size and siting of new buildings on the landscape and on the setting of our villages. The Porton Science Park, though, is subject to a commendable design code which it is hoped will be influential in shaping developments elsewhere on the campus.



Photo 8: Porton Down Campus from the Pheasant Road

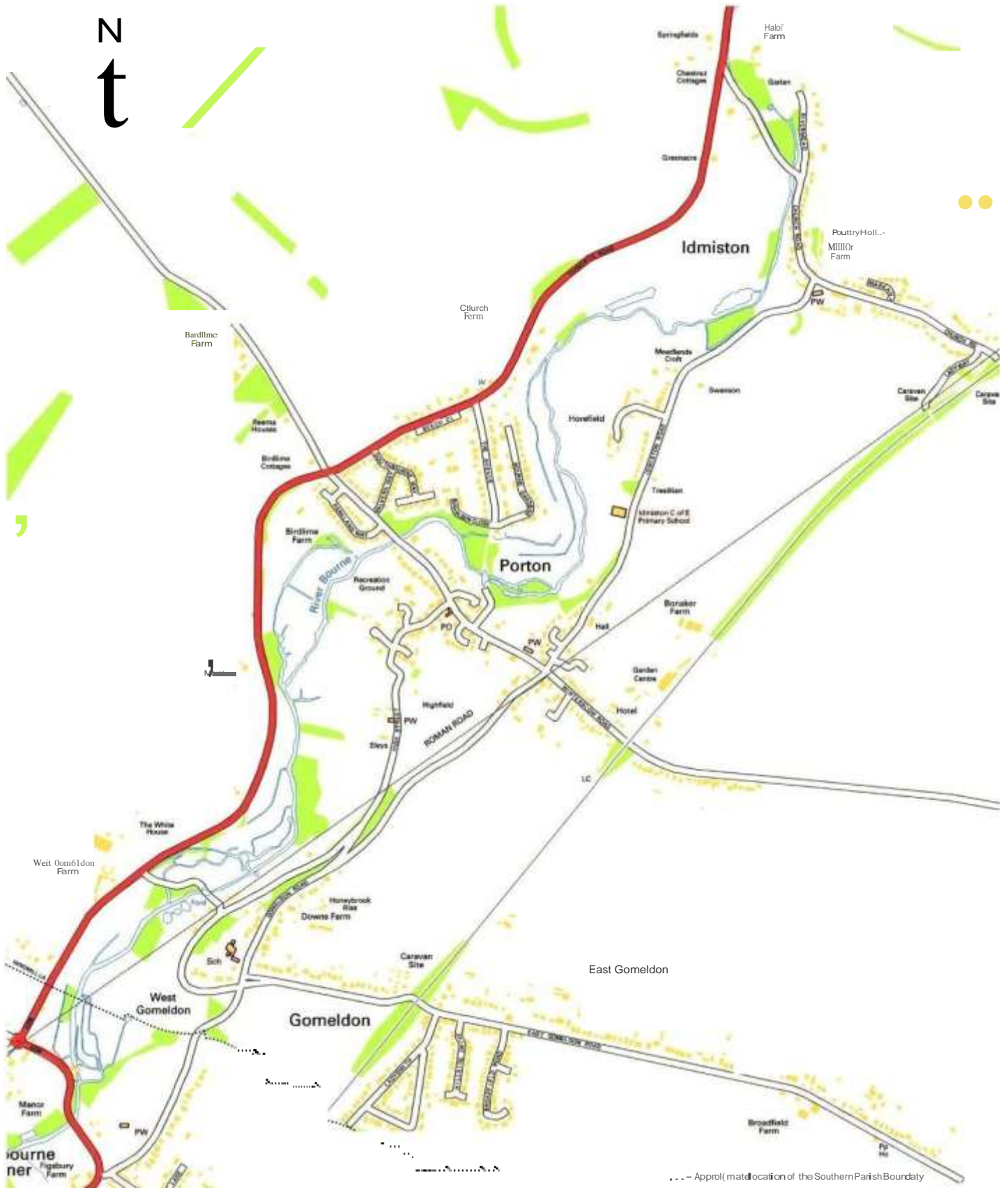
To retain the rural setting and rural vistas of our villages, any new development, particularly on land allocated for the research establishments and associated companies, including the Porton Science Park, should avoid exceeding a height that would render it visible from Idmiston village. Consequently any proposed high rise development should have regard to DESIGN POLICY 1.

Whilst it is anticipated that most of the new development planned for the site will take place on land allocated for that purpose, on occasions, operational reasons require new buildings to be sited away from those areas. Examples have included munitions storage and waste incineration. As with new agricultural buildings, such developments can have an industrial scale and appearance and similar design considerations apply.

DESIGN POLICY 5

To reduce their impact on the landscape, stand-alone developments related to the scientific research establishments and their associated companies at Porton Down should where possible:

- *Avoid elevated and exposed locations*
- *Utilise the land form, screen planting, colour finishes and, where necessary, undertake appropriate earthworks to soften their appearance*
- *Ensure any associated external lighting is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the night sky*



SETTLEMENT PATTERN

VILLAGE BREAKS

Our Parish has largely avoided the urban sprawl that characterises some of the settlements in the locality. Our villages remain distinct and separate with their own identities, but in some places only just!

West Gomeldon hardly qualifies as a village. It comprises a thin scattering of farms and dwellings along the Tidworth Road and on the Gomeldon side of the ford. It remains wholly rural.

Gomeldon and East Gomeldon are more developed, with ribbons of inter-war and post-war dwellings along the Gomeldon and East Gomeldon Roads. Apart from three small estates of bungalows adjoining the railway in East Gomeldon, most properties have views over open countryside.



Photo 9: Only two fields lie between Gomeldon & Winterbourne Gunner – from East Gomeldon Road

The two villages are physically and visually separated by a high rail bridge and embankment. However, Gomeldon is only two fields removed from Winterbourne Gunner in the neighbouring parish and these must remain free of development if the merging of the two settlements is to be avoided.

Porton and Gomeldon are likewise visually separate due to the land form and the presence of field-side hedges. Though, again, they are only two fields apart and these will need to be protected from development if the settlements are to remain separate.

Porton, with its surgery, post office, general store, church and meeting-hall is the focus of our community. It is also the most developed of our five villages. It has ribbons of housing along the roads into the village and a number of small estates, mainly of bungalows and mostly on land north of the river, running up to the Tidworth Road. Apart from the estate of affordable housing, which is out on a limb on the Idmiston Road, the current pattern of development does have a degree of coherence.

Idmiston is a small linear village, with ribbons of dwellings running south along the river and east to the rail embankment. It does have an historic core, centred on a 12th century church, and enough older buildings to give it a distinct identity. It remains separate from Porton, possibly as a result of the steepness of the terrain and the waterlogged nature of land adjoining the river just outside the village on the Idmiston Road.

The small estate of housing at Porton Camp, whilst close to Idmiston village, is very much a separate entity due to a combination of topography and woodland, as well as the barrier formed by the railway.

DESIGN POLICY 6

For our villages to remain as recognisably separate places, with their own identities, it is critical that these physical and visual breaks between our settlements are retained.

Consequently any development which prejudices the continued separation of our existing villages from each other, and from those in neighbouring parishes, will not be supported.

As indicated earlier, where it passes through West Gomeldon the Tidworth Road is characterised by a scatter of farms and dwellings. A similar pattern of development reoccurs on the northern edge of Idmiston and continues towards Boscombe in the adjoining parish. Most of this pre-dates planning controls, although some has taken place since 1947.

DESIGN POLICY 7

To avoid any further consolidation of the thin scatter of buildings outside the limits of Porton, Idmiston and Gomeldon, and particularly along the Tidworth Road, further development, unrelated to agricultural activities, will not be supported.

VILLAGE FORM

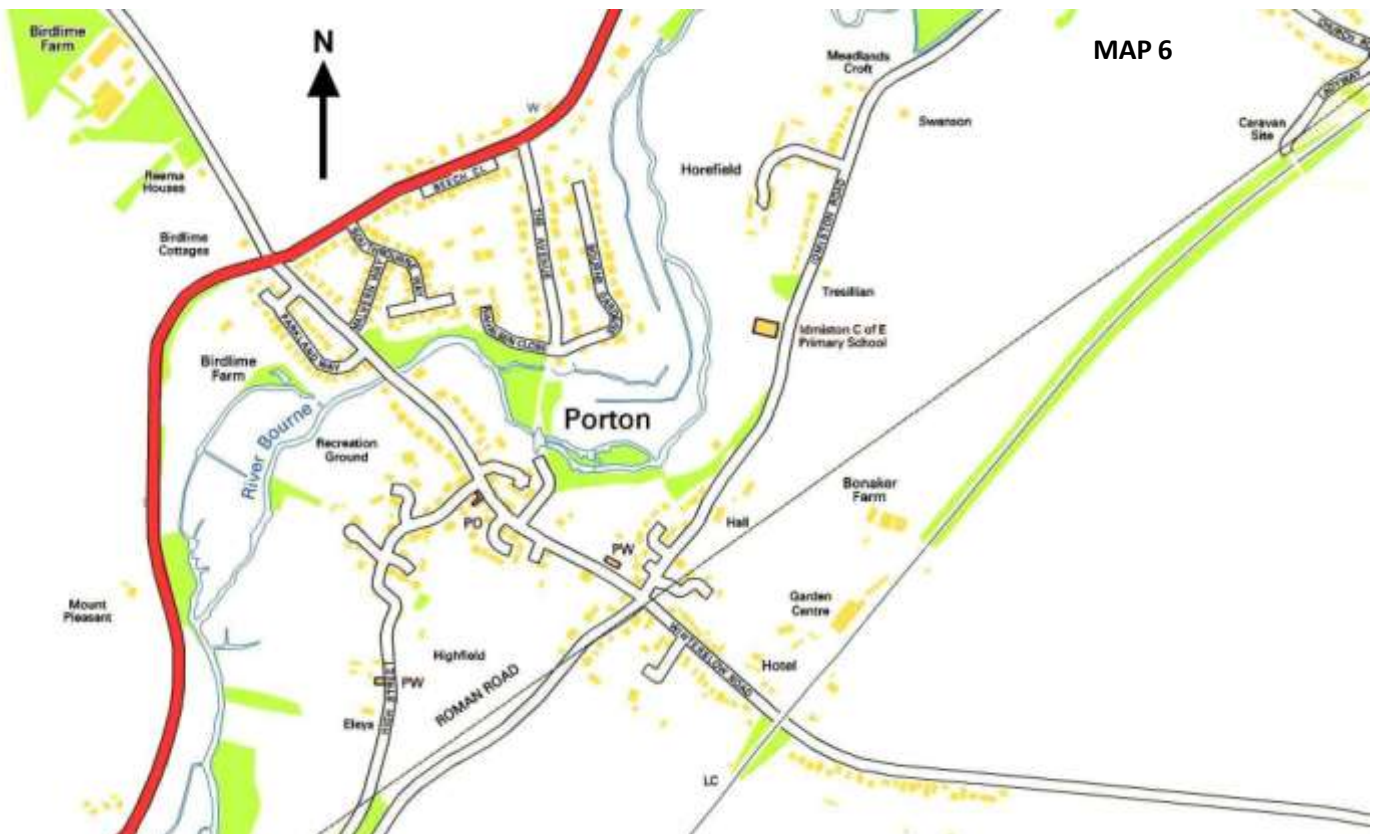
PORTON

Porton initially comprised a cluster of farms and cottages on the High Street and Winterslow Road running in a south easterly direction past the church. This forms the older part of the village and broadly coincides with the current Conservation Area. (See Map 10)

The subsequent expansion of the village led to ribbons of development along the Winterslow Road. South east from the High Street, towards the rail bridge, these ribbons are interspersed with the occasional small cul-de-sac development. The largest of these are Bonaker Close and the recent Byford Gardens development, which are both sited on former farmyards. Other modest cul-de-sacs of housing are located at the bottom of Idmiston Road.

Much of the ribbon development, where it does occur, is characterised by dwellings on deep plots running back from the road, with few examples of backland or tandem development.

Whilst there are a number of bungalows in this part of Porton, two-storey dwellings predominate. The housing is quite varied in style and there is an abundance of trees, hedgerows and gardens, which soften the appearance of the buildings and are significant in shaping the rural feel of the village.



Of particular note in this regard are the gardens and woodland of Cuckoo Pen, which front onto Winterslow Road, from the church to Byford House, and back onto the River Bourne. Together with the gardens and paddocks of Chalk House, on the other side of Winterslow Road opposite the church, they form an almost uninterrupted green corridor from the river to Gomeldon Hill, and are an important visual component in the Porton Conservation Area.

As two of the few remaining relatively flat sites in the centre of the village, at some point in the future these gardens and paddocks are likely to be of interest to developers.

It has to be said that the majority of local residents are opposed to the loss of large gardens to development, particularly if the product is a cramped urban housing scheme ill-suited to a village environment.

Given the continuing decline in bird populations due to changes to farming practices, large gardens are increasingly recognised as an important wildlife habitat. They support a diversity of insects, birds, small mammals and reptiles, e.g. slow worms and grass snakes are known to be present in the grounds of Cuckoo Pen.



Photo 10: Gardens & Woodland of Cuckoo Pen, Porton

DESIGN POLICY 8

Any new development utilising the gardens/grounds of older properties in the villages will need to:

- ***Avoid compromising the setting of the existing dwelling-house and the contribution of both house and garden to the character and appearance of the villages***
- ***Conserve the green aspect of the area by the retention of as many viable trees and hedgerows as is practicable, including any original cob and brick and/or flint boundary walls***
- ***Demonstrate how the proposed scheme will positively enhance the appearance and character of the villages and their Conservation Areas, where these exist***

Beyond the High Street, north of the river towards and including the Tidworth Road, bungalows predominate, with loops of modest, post-war developments formed by Parkland Way, Southbourne Way, Southbourne Close, Malvern Way, The Avenue and Bourne Gardens.

Although the perception of Porton gained by those passing along the Tidworth Road is that the village is one of bungalows, this is a misplaced generalisation. Indeed, in some parts of the



Photo 11: Cuckoo Pen, Porton – a house in the Arts & Crafts style

village, the mixed form of development, coupled with level changes, has contributed to a visually interesting environment.



Photo 12: Gomeldon Road from the Memorial Hall, Porton

At this point mention should be made of the post-war Horefield housing estate and a small cluster of adjoining bungalows, which are located in a somewhat isolated and exposed position on the Idmiston Road, on land next to St Nicholas School. The development lies halfway between Porton and Idmiston and is unrelated to either of our two villages.

The absence of opportunities within the current village envelope is likely to lead to speculative proposals involving sites on the periphery of Porton. Developers may also be encouraged by the identification of Porton as a village where levels of growth proportionate to its size, character and environment will be supported. However, the Wiltshire Core Strategy clearly states that the existing settlement boundaries in Porton will be retained and that development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries. Small housing sites are defined as sites involving less than ten dwellings.

Development outside the settlement boundary will be strictly controlled. Any new development will be subject to:

DESIGN POLICY 9

Any new developments in Porton will need to meet all of the following criteria:

- **Be well related to the existing village envelope**
- **Be of modest scale and not generally exceed ten dwellings, in order to protect the rural nature of the village**
- **Reflect the character and variety of the existing pattern of development in the village**
- **Follow the lines of the contours on sloping sites to ensure a better fit with the existing land form**

In addition to its housing stock, Porton does provide a number of basic services which are of benefit to our community.

A doctors' surgery, a post office and food store and a hot food takeaway are clustered around the Winterslow Road/High Street junction. Just past St Nicholas Church, a ladies' hairdresser is located at the next crossroads. Beyond this on the Idmiston Road is the villages' Memorial Hall and, further on, St Nicholas Primary School. A road opposite the hairdressers runs uphill to the Porton Hotel and the Porton Aquatics and Garden Centre, the latter occupying the site of the former railway station. Below these, on the Winterslow Road, is a car sales and repair business.

Finally, a small industrial estate is located just outside the village on the road leading to Boscombe Down airfield.

For existing settlement boundaries in Porton refer to Map 12 Appendix I.



THE GOMELDONS

Today's Gomeldon comprises a ribbon mostly of bungalows running along both sides of Gomeldon Road, where the terrain permits, roughly from its junction with the High Street to its junction with East Gomeldon Road, opposite Gomeldon Primary School. The ribbon, again principally of bungalows, then continues along the north side of East Gomeldon Road as far as the railway bridge and embankment, and terminates in a site of mobile homes which adjoins the railway.

Much of the settlement occupies an elevated position on Gomeldon Hill. Those dwellings on East Gomeldon Road benefit from open views across farmland to Winterbourne Gunner and its 12th century church. Properties on the west side of Gomeldon Road occupy a more precipitous site and enjoy extensive views over woodland and the dispersed scatter of farms and dwellings that comprise West Gomeldon.

East Gomeldon commences immediately east of the railway arch. It comprises a cluster of three small estates of bungalows on the south side of East Gomeldon Road, near to the railway, and a ribbon, mostly of bungalows, on the north side of the road running uphill along its entire length to the MoD's Porton Down perimeter fence.

Apart from the three estates, a farm and a former chapel circa 1900, the land south of the road remains undeveloped, with many properties on the north side of the road enjoying extensive views over grasslands front and rear, tree cover being sparser here than in our other villages.

This pattern of development was established in the period between the wars, when there were no planning controls and ribbon development was much in favour, though the small estate nearest the railway also dates from that time. Since then, there has been significant infilling and consolidation, leaving little scope for further growth without building on greenfield land which would be opposed by the majority of local residents and would not accord with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.



Photo 13: East Gomeldon Road ribbon development

The current planning strategy for the area identifies Gomeldon as a small village, which is regarded as not the most sustainable of locations for new growth and one where development will be restricted to only infill and exception development. The latter will only be considered if substantiated by evidence of proven need.

Gomeldon and East Gomeldon clearly fall into this category, but as indicated earlier, buildings in West Gomeldon are very dispersed and it barely qualifies as a village.

To maintain its rural character and to avoid any consolidation, DESIGN POLICY 7 will apply to West Gomeldon in its entirety.

In regard to Gomeldon and East Gomeldon, what limited scope remains for development will be subject to:

DESIGN POLICY 10

To ensure new development in Gomeldon and East Gomeldon is compatible with the existing settlements' mostly linear form:

- ***Infill development should follow the line of Gomeldon and East Gomeldon Roads and their buildings***
- ***Tandem or backland development should be avoided***

IDMISTON

Idmiston has developed as a small linear village. It comprises ribbons of mainly detached dwellings running along Church Road, in both directions from All Saints Church, in the historic core of the village.

To the east these are mostly pre-war and post-war bungalows with some housing, which terminate at the rail bridge and embankment, beyond which lies the Porton Down research facility and the inter-war housing of Porton Camp. The latter comprises 38 dwellings arranged in terraces on a wooded site. A small site of mobile homes adjoins the railway to the south, whilst a small estate of bungalows

(Markan Road) lies off Church Road, about one third of the way along from the church.

The road and adjoining gardens provide a tree-lined environment, which partially screens many of the buildings along this part of Church Road.

Beyond the church to the north, ribbons of houses, bungalows and cottages run almost to the river bridge and continue on one side of a track, known as Rivermead, for about 250 metres or more. Again the prevalence of garden trees, shrubs and hedgerows helps soften the built form, whilst a linear tree belt along the river screens the properties on Rivermead from the northern approach.

Apart from Markan Road, which is the only estate in the village, the more recent developments are of one to six dwellings at a time. These are on former orchards and gardens or have involved the refurbishment of redundant farm buildings.



Very few infill sites are now left, and the scope for further development is limited by the river and its water meadows and the often steep gradients of the farmland immediately adjoining the village. Future development is also curtailed by the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which identifies Idmiston as an unsustainable location for future growth.

The roads in Idmiston lack pavements and are of variable width. This, coupled with the River Bourne, which runs alongside Church Road on its approach to the village from the north, together with its associated trees and water meadows, as well as the presence of working farms, gives the village a distinctly rural feel.

Furthermore, whilst many buildings date from the inter-war period to the present day, enough older buildings remain to give it an historic ambiance. These historic buildings, together with its rural environment, define Idmiston's character.

DESIGN POLICY 11

Any new development should respect both the linear form of Idmiston village and its historic character:

- ***Any infill should follow the line of Church Road and its buildings***
- ***Any form of tandem or backland development should be avoided***
- ***Any new development must take place within the existing village limits, which are defined by the church and the Old Rectory on Porton Road and the Church Road river crossing and the end of Rivermead***

VILLAGE APPROACHES

IDMISTON

Aside from the northern approach, Idmiston is pretty much unique in having an approach, from the direction of Porton, that has changed little in 200 years. Idmiston Road runs along the edge of the water meadows which, in part, constitute the

grounds of the Old Rectory and arrives directly at All Saints Church in the historic core of the village. At its arrival point on the edge of the village it has unimpeded views of the river, church and the Old Rectory, which collectively have a considerable visual impact and provide a very favourable first impression of the village.

This important historic approach to Idmiston's Church from the direction of Porton is safeguarded by DESIGN POLICIES 2 & 7, and is not an area for development in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.



Photo 14: The northern approach to Idmiston



Photo 15: Porton Road approach to Idmiston



Photo 16: The High Street approach to Porton from West Gomeldon

PORTON

Unlike Idmiston, Porton’s few remaining historic buildings are less prominent. The only area where they are much in evidence is on the High Street, which is in effect the historic core of the village. Of particular value here is the approach from Gomeldon, past the Baptist Church towards Boxhedge Cottage, where the original edge of the village can be seen beyond the meadows adjoining the river. From this viewpoint, the setting of Rosemoor, Rosemary Cottage, and Lane End Cottage remains much as it was in the 18th century. Indeed, in recognition of its historic importance, the Porton Conservation Area covers the adjoining meadow-land as well as the buildings.

The High Street approach comprises a lightly trafficked, narrow lane, running through an attractive woodland corridor. Apart from a farmhouse, it is free of development between West Gomeldon and the Porton Baptist Church and epitomises the rural nature of the area.

The historic approach, along the High Street, to Porton village is similarly safeguarded from development by DESIGN POLICIES 2 & 7, which preclude any future built development on the woodland and meadows adjoining the High Street, between West Gomeldon and village edge of Porton, as defined by Boxhedge Cottage and Rosemoor.

OPEN SPACES

IDMISTON

Visually the most valuable open spaces are in the village core. These comprise the burial ground of All Saints Church and the grassed area opposite. The latter is privately owned and visually important to the setting of the church. Past applications for its development have been refused by reason of the adverse impact on this important 12th century building.

To safeguard the historic setting of Idmiston’s All Saints Church, in accordance with current planning policy, development of the grassed area opposite, which adjoins Manor Farm, will only be acceptable if it can be demonstrated that the proposed development can positively contribute to the setting of the church.

Apart from the churchyard the only other site which is readily accessible to the public is a short section of river bank, immediately downstream of the bridge. It is too small to be used for games so young people play in the street, which outside of peak hours is lightly trafficked.

The relative absence of public open space in the village does not appear to be an issue, possibly because of its modest size and rural aspect. It is surrounded by farmland which, at intervals, spills into the village and there are footpaths across the fields to Porton, and Boscombe and Newton Tony in neighbouring Parishes.



Photo 17: The grassed area opposite All Saints Church, Idmiston



Photo 18: Porton Recreation Ground under water

PORTON

The River Bourne, the adjoining low-lying pasture and its associated woodland are a major visual feature and have been a key influence on the pattern of development in Porton. It forms a significant green corridor running in a sort of S-shaped belt through the village and is a major contributor to its rural feel. For the most part it remains free of development, most likely due to its liability to flood and its designation as an area of high ecological value.

Although it is viewed by local residents as a valuable asset, there are few areas where the river is accessible to the public. Where this does occur, at the ford and the weir, it is well used, as is the woodland walk which runs from the Baptist burial ground on Winterslow Road to the ford and across land to the rear of Cuckoo Pen, past Downholme to Idmiston Road. It should be noted that the bulk of this land is in private ownership and the public are only entitled to use the footpaths, though in practice the use of unfenced land is well established.

Importantly, the ford, the weir and the adjoining land, including the woodland corridor running along much of the river, which forms part of our historic landscape, are protected from development under DESIGN POLICY 2.

The popularity of the above areas and the heavily used field behind Bonaker Close, is explained by the relative lack of useable public open space and, specifically, areas where dogs can be exercised without conflicting with wildlife. The Porton recreational ground, which adjoins the south bank of the river just west of the Winterslow Road, is the only public open space in the village which provides for childrens' play. However its playing fields are little used due to their waterlogged nature.

Other open spaces of note are St Nicholas Churchyard, which is a place for quiet contemplation and the Baptist burial ground. The latter is regarded by some as a forgotten part of Porton, which together with the adjoining Jubilee Walk is somewhat degraded.

The 17th century Baptist burial ground is an important historic site in our village. An element of the community infrastructure levy arising from new housing, together with Lottery funding, will be sought to assist in its reinstatement and reuse, together with the refurbishment of Jubilee Walk.

Similar sources of funding will also be sought to help secure the reclamation and landscaping of the existing waterlogged playing fields to provide a useable public open space, together with the refurbishment of the childrens' play facilities.



Photo 19: The former Baptist Burial Ground, Porton

THE GOMELDONS

Whilst East Gomeldon does have the benefit of a recreation ground, it is in a somewhat isolated position, right at the end of East Gomeldon Road, and is not best situated to meet local needs.

Again, this is the only formal public open space available for the Gomeldons. However, a small, privately owned, area of conifers, just above the site of the Saxon village on Gomeldon Hill, appears to have been brought into use by the local teenagers as an informal adventure playground.

Immediately opposite, at the intersection of the Gomeldon and East Gomeldon Roads, is a grassed triangle which has the appearance of a village green. Although little used it is a visually important space at the start of the village, as is the small copse at the foot of Gomeldon Hill.



Photo 20: West Gomeldon Ford

Perhaps the most attractive feature in the Gomeldons is the ford and former mill-race in West Gomeldon, which serves as an area of informal open space.

To address the deficit in both useable playing fields and suitable open space, e.g. for exercising dogs and for activities for teenagers, a proportion of the community infrastructure levy on all new housing and other funding will be

sought. This could facilitate the purchase of land for such uses in our Parish, together with appropriate equipment.

TREE COVER

As mentioned earlier trees, and particularly native species, are an important visual component in our villages. They make a significant contribution to the rural feel of the Parish, are important in softening the appearance of the more built-up elements and give interest and variety to the street scene. In this respect street trees, which are few in number, and trees in private gardens are crucial to the leafy nature of many parts of our villages. Of particular importance are the specimen trees often associated with the larger, older properties.

Sadly, a number of the older, mature trees are at risk, through age and disease, and from pressures for development. There are various examples where felling has taken place without replacement planting, for example the Winterslow Road frontage to the Porton Hotel, which has significantly changed the setting of the building. Of particular concern, though, is the likely impact of ash die-back on the appearance of our villages and the need for a concerted effort to secure replacement planting.



Photo 21: Specimen Trees at Byford House, Porton

To encourage replacement planting, it is anticipated that an element of the community infrastructure levy imposed on new housing development will be used to facilitate replacement planting with suitable native species on both public and, possibly, privately owned sites.

DESIGN POLICY 12

To slow the depletion rate of the tree stock, it is advocated that, where appropriate, wider use is made of Tree Preservation Orders in our villages by the Local Planning Authority to ensure that consent is sought for works to trees, and that a requirement for replacement planting is imposed, in any new development, where felling has proved necessary.

The majority of the post-war housing developments that have taken place in our villages are characterised by an absence of street trees. What tree cover exists is almost entirely the result of planting within private gardens. Whilst it may be argued that development densities have precluded any form of landscaping, even where areas of amenity space have been provided, as on the Horefield Estate in Porton, there is an absence of planting.

DESIGN POLICY 13

To secure the greening of our environment, all new development proposals will be required to incorporate a landscaping scheme, which provides for the planting of indigenous species of trees and shrubs, both as a boundary treatment and as an integral design component in the layout of the site.

It is also important that any development proposals should take adequate measures to protect any existing healthy trees on the site. Although this is a requirement of Wiltshire Council's existing tree protection policies, in a recent housing development, measures to ensure retained trees were not damaged during construction were not sufficiently robust. This has resulted in a subsequent loss.

Developers are reminded of their obligations to ensure that tree protection measures and procedures, agreed with the Local Planning Authority, are adhered to, both before and during construction and that any breaches will be reported.

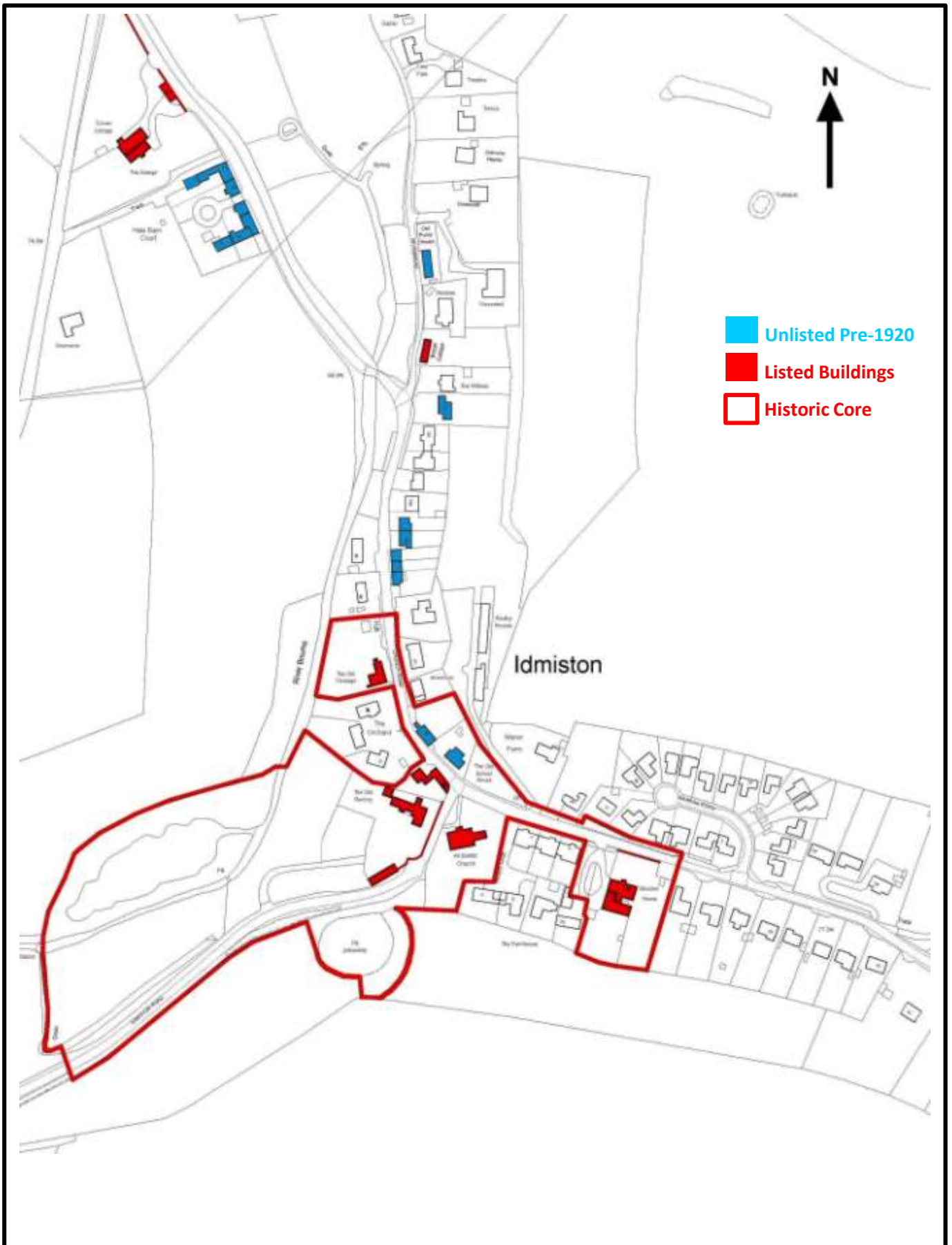


Photo 22: Horefield Estate, Porton – without trees it has a bare appearance



Photo 23: Idmiston Road tree planting provides a green buffer between cul-de-sacs of housing

Idmiston – Historic Core



BUILDINGS AND MATERIALS

VILLAGE ARCHITECTURE

IDMISTON

The perception of Idmiston as an ancient village is a product of its remaining older buildings. These are mostly clustered around the church, which forms the focal point of the village. It is here that traditional materials predominate. These comprise plain tiled and slate roofs, stone and flint, and brick and flint walls, and colour-washed, lime-rendered cob.

Idmiston contains 16 separately listed buildings and structures spanning the period between the 12th and 18th centuries. These include the imposing landmark buildings of All Saints Church, Idmiston Manor, Idmiston House, The Old Rectory and The Grange. Apart from the church, these are all of two floors, with a third in the roof space. Of equal significance are the smaller scale Old Vicarage, Thatch End and Bridge Cottage, the last two being thatched cottages built of chalk cob, which was once a commonly used, locally sourced material.



Photo 24: Thatch End, Church Road, Idmiston – colour-washed cob and brick under thatch

Other surviving older buildings include The White House and Nos. 45, 47 and 49 Church Road, which are finished in a white painted render, and The Old School House, opposite the church, which is of brick and flint. All are arranged over



Photo 25: All Saints Church, Idmiston - constructed of flint with limestone dressings

two floors and of a similar height to the listed cottages.

Sadly, most post-war development in the village has been of nondescript design and appearance and involved the use of concrete and plastic products. Although much of this is hidden by hedgerows and trees, where it is exposed to view it does not fit well with the older buildings.

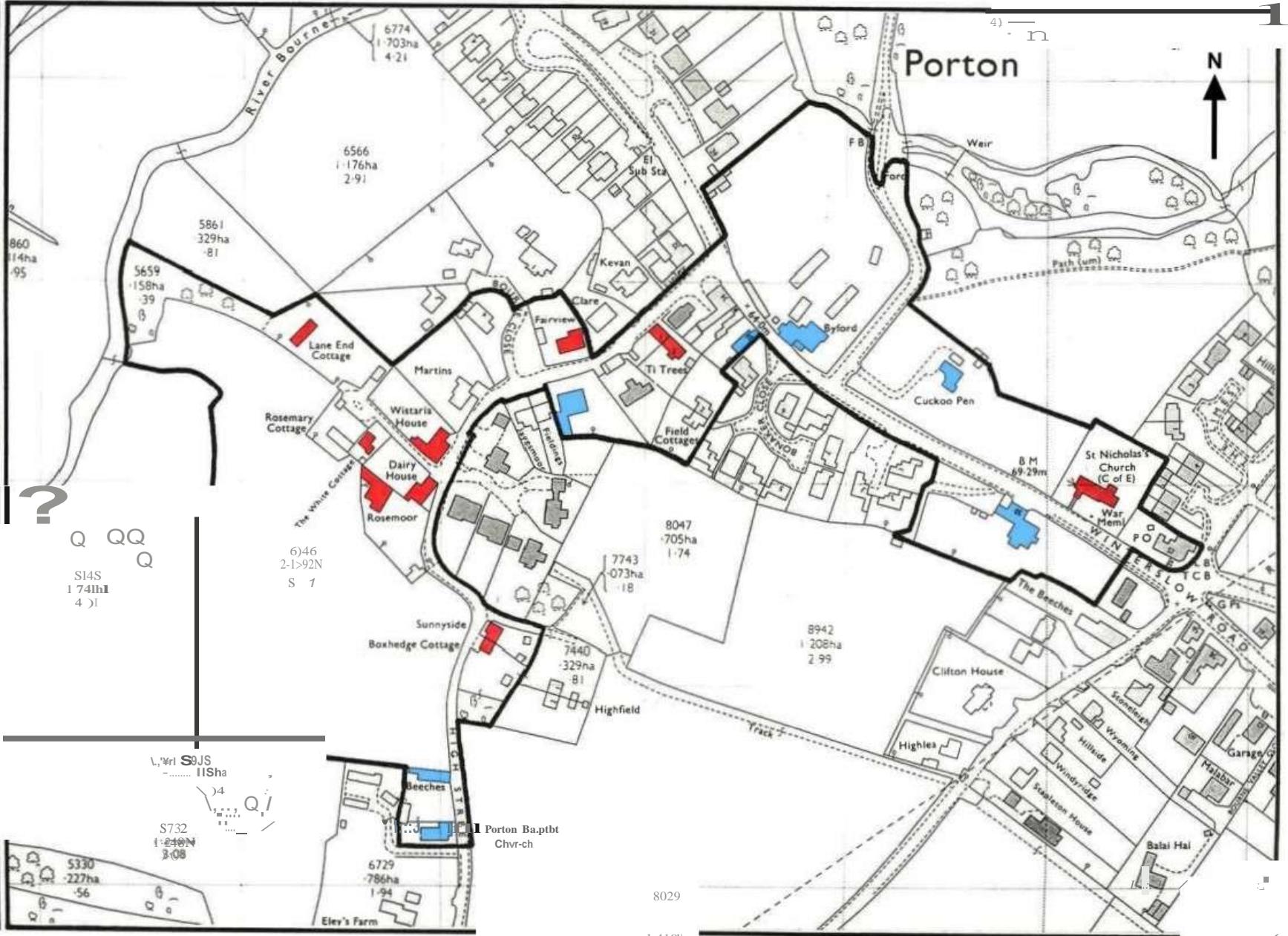
Local residents are aware of this and are overwhelmingly in favour of the older parts of Idmiston being designated as a Conservation Area, to secure stricter control over development and added protection for those non listed older properties.

DESIGN POLICY 14

Conservation Area status for the historic parts of Idmiston will be explored. Notwithstanding this initiative, within the historic core, any new building or extension or works to an existing building will be required to enhance and positively contribute to the appearance of this area.

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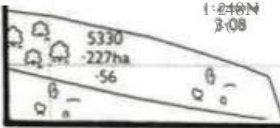
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Photo 26: Chalk House, Porton – a landmark building of colour-washed cob under a slate roof

PORTON

Whilst Porton is attractive in places, the presence of older buildings is less apparent than in Idmiston. This is because they are mostly clustered on the High Street, which is the historic core of the village but no longer on the main approach.



Photo 27: The Dairy House, High Street, Porton - built of brick & flint and roofed in plain tiles

The village has ten listed buildings dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Eight of these are on the High Street. These comprise a group of three houses, Rosemoor, The Dairy House and Wisteria House, and five thatched cottages, Boxhedge Cottage, The White Cottage, Lane End Cottage, Rose Cottage and Ti Trees. Rosemoor is the largest and most imposing, being of two floors, with a third in the roof space.

As in Idmiston, other than thatch, the roofs of the older buildings are of plain tiles or slate and the walls are of flint and brick or rendered and colour-washed or, indeed, timber-framed, with brick or rendered infill.

Outside of the High Street, the 19th century church of St Nicholas is located on Winterslow Road near to its intersection with the Idmiston and Gomeldon Roads. This is built of stone and flint, with a plain tiled roof. Also of note is the historic Birdlyme Farmhouse, which is of brick and flint under a tiled roof, which is located off the Tidworth Road on the fringe of the village.



Photo 28: Ti Tree Cottage, High St, Porton - timber framed cottage extended in flint/cob under thatch

Other non-listed but, nevertheless, buildings of some merit are the Porton Baptist Church and Oakwood Cottage, on the High Street on the edge of the village, and The Old Vicarage opposite Rose Cottage, again on the High Street. Also of note on Winterslow Road are No.38, Byford House, Cuckoo Pen and Chalk House. Most of these are 19th century buildings.

Other than No.38, which is of brick and flint construction, the rest are rendered and colour-washed and mostly slated. Cuckoo Pen is of particular interest, being an inter-war building in the arts and crafts style. The Old Vicarage, Byford House and Chalk House are similar in height and mass to Rosemoor.

All of the buildings referred to above, except Birdlyme Farmhouse, are located in the Porton Conservation Area. This, although somewhat visually devalued by post-war developments, has acquired a degree of coherence with the addition of the recent Byford Gardens development.

This has used a range of traditional materials similar to those in the older buildings, including timber casement windows. It comprises a variety of house types, from detached to terraced properties, and incorporates some affordable housing.

Notable components of this housing scheme are the cottage type terraces on the Winterslow Road access. These are finished in white painted render with roofs of thatch and are of similar appearance to some of the older dwellings on the High Street.

Byford Gardens is regarded by many residents as better reflecting the character of the village than any of the post-war housing schemes. Indeed it could be seen as a benchmark for future developments, both within and adjoining the Porton Conservation Area.



Photo 29 above and Photo 30 below: Byford Gardens, Porton – a recent development using traditional materials & designs that reference our older buildings



DESIGN POLICY 15

To ensure new development, within the historic parts of Idmiston, the Porton Conservation Area and the areas immediately adjoining, reflects the appearance and character of our legacy of historic properties, all new buildings should:

- ***Be constructed using traditional materials and/or quality replica materials which are similar to those used in the historic buildings in the locality***
- ***Be similar in height and scale and reference the proportions and simplicity of design of the historic buildings***

Outside of these areas enhanced design standards will be sought in new built development generally, as outlined in Wiltshire Council's 'Creating Places'.



Photo 31 and Photo 32: Period details in the villages

Our residents are aware that the national requirement for all new housing to achieve a minimum specified density has been removed. This reduces the threat of overdevelopment and of developments with an inappropriate, cramped, urban appearance being imposed on our villages, which mostly comprise relatively low density housing. Buildings over two storeys would generally look out of place in our villages, where most buildings are of one or two storeys. Given this restriction, high densities are more likely to be achieved at the expense of reduced plot sizes and with minimum private open space, car parking and soft landscaping, which would not be acceptable in a village environment.

It should be noted that the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems in developments of more than one house will possibly be mandatory from 2014. This involves on-site measures to ensure that heavy rainfall is discharged gradually into local drainage systems to safeguard against flooding. This is likely to be more easily achieved in lower density housing.



Photo 33: High density housing ill-suited to a village environment

DESIGN POLICY 16

To ensure new housing both reflects and enhances the character of our villages:

- *Buildings should generally be of one or two storeys to harmonise with the rest of the village, unless a robust case can be made for a taller structure, e.g. a new landmark building*
- *The density of new development should not exceed that of the surrounding housing and plot sizes should be appropriate to the size of the dwelling proposed*
- *Building lines should be adhered to, particularly on infill sites, unless it can be demonstrated that a variable building line, e.g. in terraced housing, is necessary to provide visual interest*
- *Roofs should complement the roofscape of existing buildings, in respect of ridge alignment, eaves levels, pitch and use of gables. Flat and hipped roofs should be avoided. Roof coverings should be of slate, plain tiles or thatch*
- *Building design should involve visually balanced proportions and should complement any well-defined design features or themes in our historic buildings or in those of merit in the locality, such as brick patterns, vertical windows, small pitched roof dormers, porches, etc.*
- *Building materials should be used that complement existing buildings in both colour and texture. The use of concrete products and applied artificial stone or plastic cladding will not be supported*
- *Joinery products should be of traditional design. The use of uPVC windows and doors on elevations exposed to public view should be avoided*



Figure 2: Examples of measures required by a Sustainable Drainage System

Given the limited opportunities for new development, most building activity in our villages relates to the extension and improvement of existing properties, not all of which requires planning permission. Those that do will be subject to:

DESIGN POLICY 17

To ensure that extensions blend visually with existing buildings and do not detract from the street scene:

- ***Proposed extensions should be subordinate in scale and set back from the front elevation of the host building***
- ***Facing and roofing materials should match those of the existing building and proposed windows and doors should be of a similar scale and proportion to the existing***
- ***Side extensions should include pitched roofs to match those of the original house, with a lowered roof line to emphasise the reduced scale of the extension***
- ***Dormer extensions should again be subordinate to the host building. Where sited on the front elevation, they should complement the scale and appearance of the existing windows, especially the vertical line, style and proportions***



Photo 34: Extension to cottage in Bonaker Close, Porton - subordinate in scale & set back from the main elevation

(It is important to note that DESIGN POLICIES 15, 16 & 17 are about protecting our villages from unsympathetic, poorly designed development. They are not intended to exclude schemes that involve innovative contemporary design. Any such schemes will be considered on their merits.)

THE GOMELDON

Today's Gomeldon and East Gomeldon are 20th century settlements and are significantly different to Idmiston, Porton and West Gomeldon. There are no listed buildings and only one building of any historic significance. Many properties originated as bungalows or utility-type dwellings and are built of brick and/or rendered blockwork, under a concrete tile, plain tile or slate roof.

There have been a considerable number of extensions and improvements made to the original dwelling stock, which has gathered pace, possibly since the 1960's. Overall this has improved their appearance by providing a diversity of style and size that was never intended by the original occupants.

However, some changes have given some residents cause for concern, particularly where small plots are involved. There are examples where bungalows have been incrementally extended over the years, often involving the loss of garaging, with displaced car parking being accommodated in the front garden or spilling onto the street. This results in overdevelopment and a significant loss of useable private amenity space. In this regard it is desirable that a minimum length of six metres for a rear garden should be retained to provide adequate space for children's play, drying washing, outside seating and cultivating plants.

DESIGN POLICY 18

To ensure sufficient private amenity space remains available, proposals that involve increasing the footprint of a dwelling should have regard to the adequacy of the size of the plot and the general character of the area. On estates of bungalows a reduction in rear garden length below six metres should be avoided.

Many bungalows, both in the Gomeldons and elsewhere in our Parish, have been extended upwards into the roof space to provide additional bedrooms for growing families. This has sometimes required the roof itself to be raised, which has mostly been achieved with little change to the appearance of the street. There are, however, estates of bungalows where changes of this kind can look out of place.

DESIGN POLICY 19

To ensure alterations to existing buildings do not result in an incongruous form of development in areas of purpose built bungalows, proposals that involve raising the ridge height and altering the pitch of the roof to a degree that it is clearly different from that of the surrounding low rise properties should be avoided.



Photo 35: Ladysmith, East Gomeldon – over-large/over high dwellings

In the Gomeldons there has also been significant piecemeal infilling. This has added to the variety of styles and provided some interesting designs.

However, possibly due to a lack of available sites, more recently some small plots have been cleared of bungalows and redeveloped with dwellings, which are perceived by some residents as being overlarge and over high.

In Ladysmith in East Gomeldon, for example, the replacement of bungalows with more spacious dwellings, with a larger footprint, has resulted in front gardens being hard surfaced to meet an increased requirement for car parking.

Such buildings can appear out of place in an estate of bungalows of modest size and result in a more urban, car-dominated environment.

DESIGN POLICY 20

To reduce the visual impact of private parking on the street scene, all new residential developments and extensions to existing dwellings will be required to demonstrate that adequate parking provision can be achieved to meet the needs of occupants and their visitors, whilst retaining a sufficient area in front of the building line to accommodate a viable area of soft landscaping.

Proposals involving the removal and replacement of an existing dwelling will be subject to DESIGN POLICIES 18, 19 & 20 above.

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

Field-edge hedgerows are a common feature on the approach roads to our villages, the village edges and in places where fingers of agricultural land spill into our villages. These, together with the few historic cob or brick and flint garden and boundary walls that remain, are features which are important to the rural feel of the Parish and which, where possible, should be retained.

It is unfortunate that some of the post-war developments have had little regard for the appearance of those boundaries that are exposed to public view. This particularly relates to properties that back onto the main traffic routes through our villages, for example the Winterslow Road, where a multiplicity of wooden fencing materials have been used to preserve the privacy of rear gardens.

DESIGN POLICY 21

To ensure that boundary treatments complement and enhance the appearance of village streets:

- ***New developments would be expected to retain and incorporate any historic cob, brick or brick and flint walls or hedgerows present on the site***
- ***New developments with rear gardens potentially exposed to public view should be avoided. Where this is not possible, a comprehensive appropriate screen walling and/or screen planting scheme will be required***
- ***Developments within the Porton Conservation Area and the older parts of Idmiston should incorporate boundary treatments that reference the traditional materials of those in the locality, e.g. brick, brick and flint or colour-washed rendered walls or yew or box hedging or replica cast iron railings, in those areas exposed to public view***
- ***Elsewhere in our villages the use of hedging and/or an appropriate soft landscaping front boundary treatment will be encouraged as an alternative to brick or rendered block work. Ranch fencing should be avoided***



Photo 36: A retained cob wall in Byford Gardens, Porton



Photo 37: A recently built brick & flint wall mirrors traditional walls in Idmiston



Photo 38: Hedging used as a boundary in Idmiston



Photo 39: Inappropriate boundary treatment using concrete blocks in East Gomeldon

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

The A338, which is a well used primary route, traverses our Parish along the Bourne Valley. It runs past a number of dwellings on the northern edge of Porton and through a scatter of properties in West Gomeldon and on the fringe of Idmiston.

Three junctions with the A338 provide direct access to Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon respectively, through our network of C classified roads. Importantly these also serve the Defence and Health Research establishments at Porton Down, which is a major employer with over 2,000 staff and a large traffic generator.

LOCAL ROADS AND TRAFFIC

IDMISTON

Idmiston consists, primarily, of the one road from the A338 running south and east through the village. Known as Church Road, it has a branch off, at the church, leading to Porton. Otherwise it continues east to the original entrance of the Porton Down research facility where it has the feel and appearance of a country lane.

This entry, which is now a secondary access, is controlled by gates and traffic lights. Access to the site can only be gained on weekdays between 0630 hrs and 0900 hrs in the morning and egress from 1600 hrs to 1800 hrs at the end of the working day. Whilst this has improved conditions for Idmiston residents, it has somewhat further isolated the housing at Porton Camp, which outside these hours can only be accessed via the main entrance outside of Porton.

Traffic flow through Idmiston is generally light and mostly within the 30mph restriction. The irregular width and winding nature of the road, and the occasional parked vehicle, help to reduce speeds, as do the MoD police. Traffic volumes do increase considerably during the period that the gates are open for access to Porton Down and

this remains a matter of concern for local residents.

The recent imposition of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction has dramatically reduced the number of large vehicles erroneously trying to access Porton Down or the Porton Garden Centre by using Church Road.



Photo 40: Oddly sited signing to exclude heavy vehicles from Idmiston

Although there are no pavements in the village, it is a relatively safe environment with no reported traffic accidents during the three years 2009 to 2011. However, residents remain concerned for the safety of their children. Those who walk or cycle to the primary schools in Porton and Gomeldon have to do so in the roadway.

Due to the restricted width of Church Road, there is little opportunity to provide a footway and, indeed, to do so would change the character of the place. However, the width of the roadside verges on Porton Road between Idmiston and St Nicholas School, would permit the construction of a footpath.

In order to provide for a footway from Idmiston to St Nicholas School, it is anticipated that a proportion of the community infrastructure levy on all new house building will be used to help finance its construction.

Map 11 Idmiston Parish three year accident data 01/01/2009 – 31/12/2011

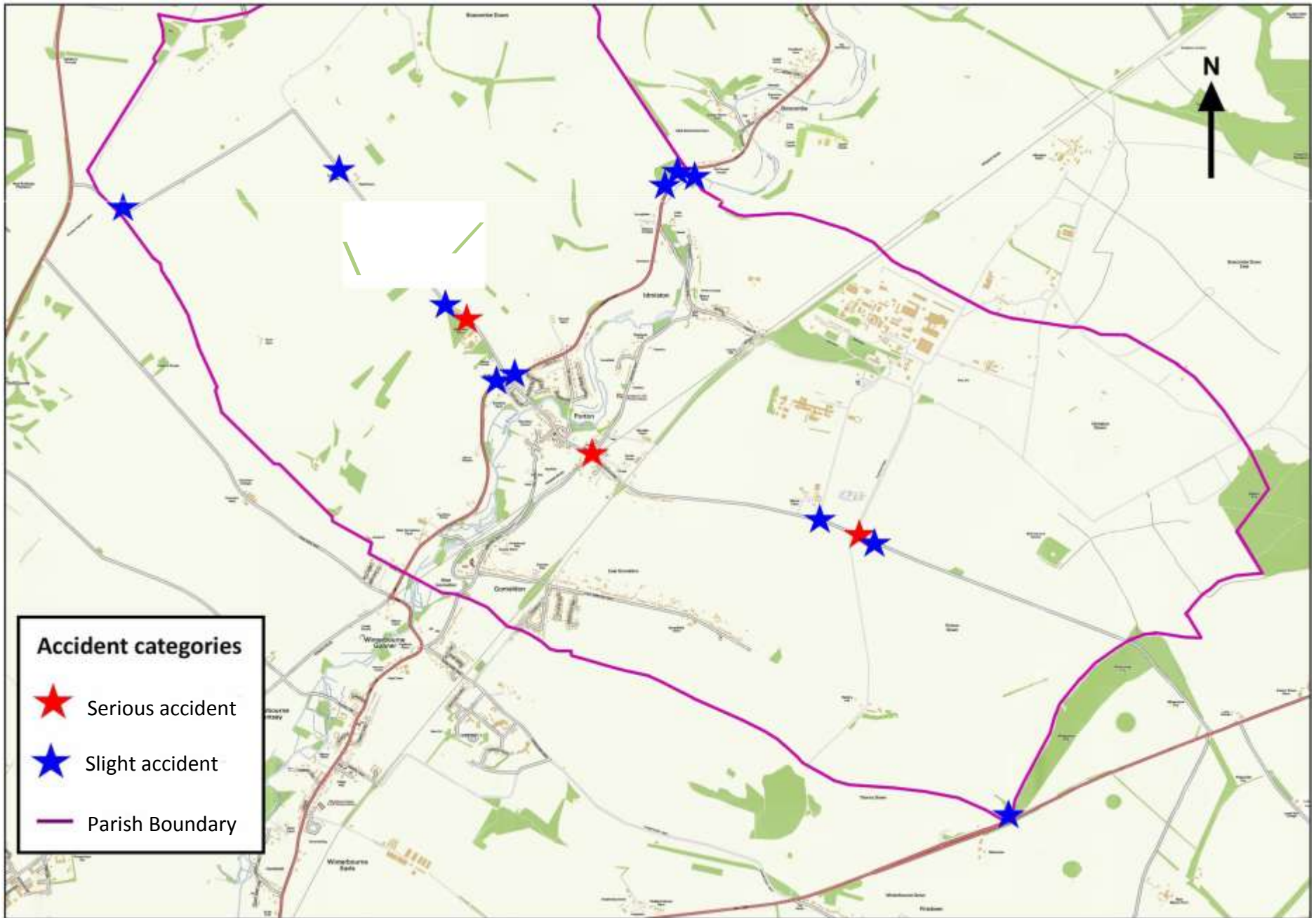




Photo 41: Idmiston Road – example of verges between footpath and carriageway

DESIGN POLICY 22

To reduce the impact of the introduction of another urban element into our rural environment, the use of roadside kerbs in footway construction should be avoided, with the grass verge being retained, wherever practicable, between the proposed footway and the road.

PORTON

Winterslow Road is the principal access road to Porton village. This runs from the A338 in an easterly direction through the centre of Porton, past the main gate of the Porton Down research facility. It continues across the Down, by way of a newly rebuilt section of MoD owned highway, to the A30. It also crosses the A338, as Porton Road, and runs westwards to the back entrance to Boscombe Down Airfield and the A345, which is just outside our Parish.



Photo 42: A 40 tonne delivery vehicle on Winterslow, Road, Porton

These two stretches of road account for 11 of the 14 recorded traffic accidents in our Parish during the three years 2009 to 2011.

Winterslow Road is heavily trafficked, particularly at weekday peak times, when the inbound flow can account for nine vehicles a minute, every minute, over just one hour of the morning rush. In fact, the equivalent of all of the traffic passing through Idmiston over a 24-hour period passes inbound along the Winterslow Road in that same one hour period!

Porton Down’s employers are aware of the impact of this volume of traffic on our environment and are actively promoting car sharing, cycling and the use of public transport by their staff, as a means of reducing single- occupant car journeys.



Photo 43: Damaged verges – Bonacker Close, Porton

Significant numbers of heavy commercial vehicles pass along the Winterslow Road to access both the Porton Down site and the A30. Many of these are supersized 44-tonne vehicles and can only pass each other by mounting the pavement. A 40 tonne vehicle, which now services the shop, experiences difficulty in manoeuvring in a village environment and is damaging verges when reversing.

Aside from the issues of traffic volume and traffic mix, residents' concerns are with traffic speeds. On-street parking outside the shop and the recent pavement build out beyond the surgery, do help slow traffic but speeding continues to be a problem.



Photo 44: Winterslow Road pavement build out

The Highway Authority has resurfaced Winterslow Road but has not reinstated the centre line, in the expectation that the variable width of the road and its less formal appearance will encourage most drivers to reduce their speed. This is welcomed as a more appropriate measure than, for example, the removal of hedgerows and the improvement of visibility splays, which tend to result in higher speeds and further urbanises the look of our villages. It is hoped that the further measures to discourage speeding, including road narrowing and gateway features, can be introduced in the future.



Photo 45: Gateway feature on A338 south of Salisbury

DESIGN POLICY 23

To secure a reduction in vehicle speeds in our villages, the assistance of the Highway Authority will be sought to identify and implement appropriate traffic calming measures which are in character with the rural appearance of our villages.

Winterslow Road does have a footpath, mostly on one side of the road, along its length from the A338 to the eastern limit of the village and can appear quite urban in the more built up stretches.

Three roads branch off the Winterslow Road. The High Street runs off from a junction by the village shop to the Gomeldons, and Gomeldon Road and Idmiston Road from the crossroads just past St Nicholas Church. Idmiston Road has a footpath, which runs as far as St Nicholas School, but both the High Street and Gomeldon Road are without pavements. Once past the edge of Porton, all three become country lanes.

Outside the confines of the village, the High Street is relatively lightly trafficked and relatively safe for pedestrians. It is popular as a walking route to West Gomeldon and the Gomeldon Primary School.

THE GOMELDONS

Gomeldon Road runs through Gomeldon village, in a northerly direction, from its junction with the A338 at Winterbourne Gunner to its junction with Winterslow Road in Porton. Although no count is available, it is known to be well used at peak hours as part of a route to the Porton Down main gate.

Three roads branch off the Gomeldon Road. East Gomeldon Road runs from a crossroads just before Gomeldon Primary School as does an unnamed lane which leads to West Gomeldon, whilst the High Street runs off to Porton on the northern fringe of Gomeldon.

East Gomeldon Road gives access to the southern edge of Gomeldon and, beyond the rail bridge, to East Gomeldon, terminating in a dead end at the perimeter of the Down. Consequently it is a quiet residential road with little traffic. However, the narrow access under the railway is a bit of a bottle-neck in the morning rush and its restricted height and width are always a problem for the occasional large commercial vehicle. On the upside, the bridge does considerably reduce the speed of approaching traffic.



Photo 46: Gomeldon Rail Bridge – a bottleneck in the morning rush hour

The “road with no name” runs along the part of West Gomeldon which lies on the eastern bank of the River Bourne, to join the High Street in its descent from Gomeldon. Although access can be gained to the rest of West Gomeldon and the A338 via the ford, in practice this is only used by agricultural vehicles and 4x4s.

Footpaths are present on Gomeldon Road from Winterbourne Gunner to Gomeldon Primary School and on East Gomeldon Road along its entire length, though both the High Street and the road to West Gomeldon are without.

It should be noted that there have been no reported traffic accidents in the Gomeldons during the three years 2009 to 2011.

PARKING

There is no public parking at either of the two primary schools in the Parish, other than on-street. This is more of a problem in Gomeldon,

particularly in the morning, when the road is busy with traffic inbound to the research complex at Porton Down. At this time crossing Gomeldon Road is hazardous due to restricted visibility caused by the parked vehicles, though the congestion they cause does have the advantage of slowing passing traffic. Aside from the issue of road safety, the grass triangle at the entrance to the village is being eroded by parking associated with the school.

On balance, it would be better if on-street parking could be reduced outside of Gomeldon Primary School through the provision of an off-street facility.

In the interest of road safety, the support of the Highway Authority will be sought to secure a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of both schools, together with appropriate traffic calming measures and, in the case of Gomeldon Primary School, the provision of off street car parking.



Photo 47: Parking outside St Nicholas School, Porton

At its junction with the Winterslow Road, the High Street is often congested with parked vehicles from the shop, surgery and takeaway. Although this is only for a short stretch of the street, it does interfere with the servicing of the village shop and pedestrians have to walk in the road, which can be hazardous for the elderly and people with young children.

Residents in the area do wish to see this issue resolved, and it may be that the use of an area of hard standing in the recreation ground for off-street car parking could help, though it may be viewed by motorists as being too far from where they wish to park.

To provide an alternative to parking on the High Street, the support of the Highway Authority will be sought for a trial period of signing and promotion of the use of the hard standing in the Porton recreation ground, as a free off-street car park during business hours.

Apart from the Horefield housing estate, which was built with inadequate car parking, domestic car-parking requirements have mostly been accommodated within the curtilage of the individual dwellings. It is recognised that the majority of our residents would wish to achieve this, for both convenience and security.

Occasionally, communal parking areas and garage courts have been introduced by reason of topography, as in the case of Markan Road in Idmiston, or for reasons of economy in affordable housing schemes. However, they are seldom satisfactory and often become unsightly as a consequence of vandalism and neglect.

The provision of communal parking areas and garage courts should not be seen as an alternative means of achieving an adequate level of on-site domestic parking, as required by DESIGN POLICY 20.

DESIGN POLICY 24

In the interests of convenience, security and amenity, the provision of communal parking areas and garage courts in new housing developments in our villages should be avoided.



Photo 48: Indiscriminate parking on the High Street, Porton



Photo 49: Markan Road garage court, Idmiston – at entrance to cul-de-sac



Photo 50: Communal parking in Byford Gardens, Porton

CONCLUSION

Our Village Design Statement has been prepared at a time of profound change. Central Government has developed its localism agenda and has dramatically simplified National Planning Guidance. The first is about empowering communities and enabling them to have a greater say in the planning of their areas. The second is about streamlining the planning system and providing greater clarity by encouraging Local Planning Authorities to ensure they have up to date Plans in place.

Wiltshire Council have recently adopted the South Wiltshire Core Strategy, which provides us with an up to date broad planning policy context for an area of which our Parish is a part. They are now keen to encourage Parish and Town Councils to produce more detailed Planning Statements for their areas and it is in response to this that our team of volunteers have produced our Village Design Statement.

There is an expectation that some Parish and Town Councils may wish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, this involves the provision of professional support by Wiltshire Council and some significant costs in preparation, since it has to go through a statutory process and can be the subject of challenge.

Our Village Design Statement is possibly more policy orientated than most and does contain statements of policy that one might expect to find in a Neighbourhood Plan. However, as indicated in the introduction, it does not allocate land for development because that is not within its remit.

It does, however, identify possible projects that could improve the appearance of our Parish, and refers to the recently announced community infrastructure levy as a possible funding source.

As yet it remains uncertain whether or not the Parish will choose to support the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

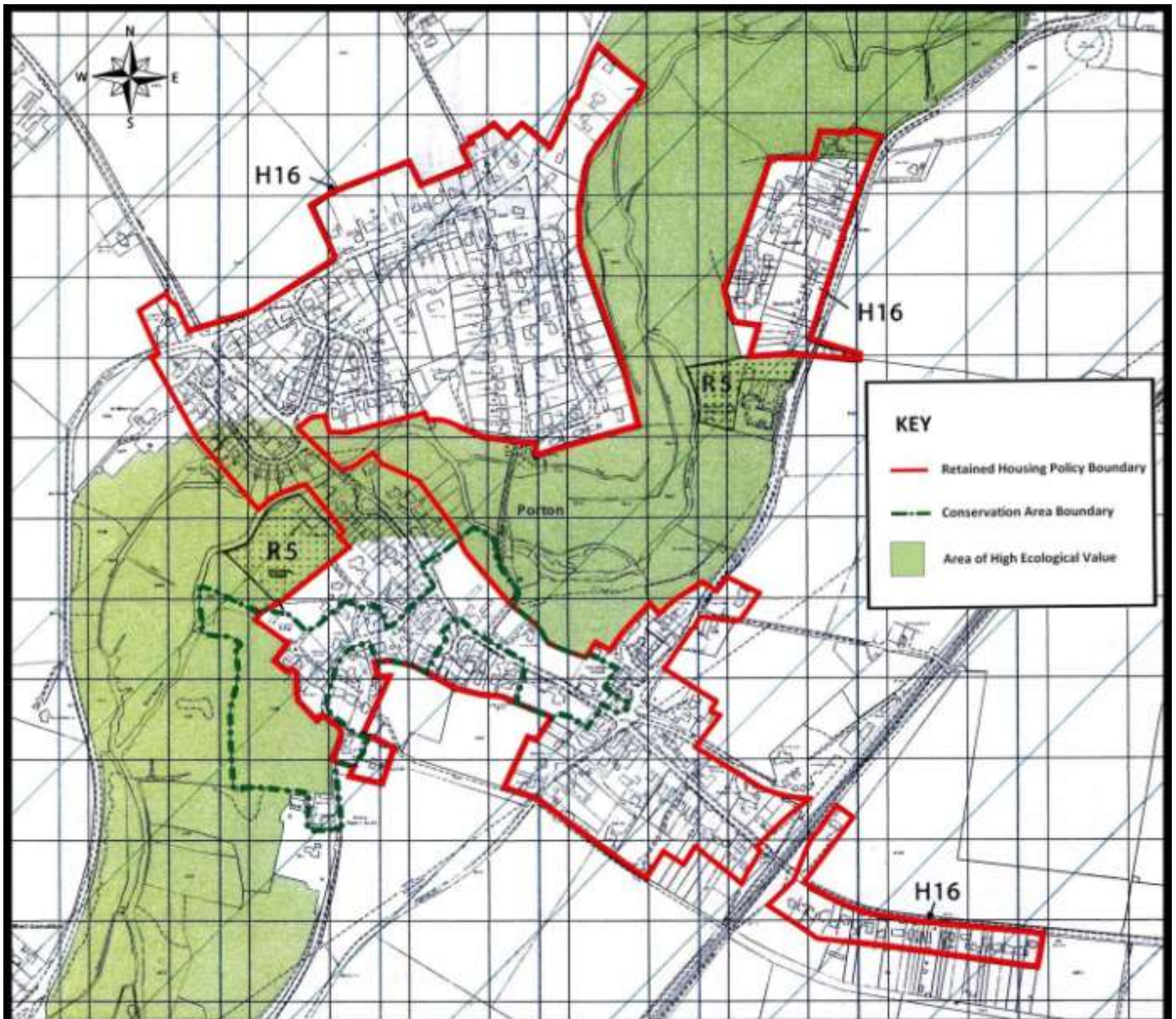
We have done our best to ensure that our Design Statement reflects the opinions and comment gathered during both our questionnaire survey and our consultation process and we are confident that it truly reflects the wishes of our community.

Our thanks go out to the residents of our Parish and to the many volunteers who have been involved in the process, without whom it would not have been possible to produce our report.

APPENDIX I

Map 12

Porton Settlement Boundary



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Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan, June 2003

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80.Porton

1:5000

Porton is classified as a large village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. As such the Housing Policy Boundaries and Policy H16 as set out in the Salisbury district Local Plan are retained as saved policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Housing Policy Boundaries constitute the settlement boundaries referred to on page 14 of our Village Design Statement to which saved Policy H16 applies. Under Policy H16 infilling, small development and redevelopment will be

permitted within the Housing Policy Boundaries in Porton subject to the following criteria:

- i) the proposal will not constitute tandem or inappropriate backland development;
- ii) the proposal will not result in the loss of an open area which makes a positive contribution towards the character of the settlement; and
- iii) the proposal will not conflict with the Design Policies of the Plan.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AQUIFERS - a deposit of rock containing water that can be used to supply wells.

BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT – building on land to the rear of existing properties.

BUILT DEVELOPMENT – a single building or an accumulation of buildings.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY – a one off mandatory payment imposed on all new buildings by the Local Planning Authority, as a contribution towards the costs of the provision of infrastructure and/or services in the locality.

CONSERVATION AREA - an area designated by a Local Planning Authority as possessing special architectural or historic interest. The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

CURTILAGE – the enclosed area of land adjacent to a dwelling-house.

DESIGN POLICY – a statement of intent relating to the form and appearance of development.

DORMITORY FUNCTION – relating to an area from which most of the residents commute to work.

HIPPED ROOFS – a roof having both sloping ends and sides.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS – buildings distinguished by age and notable for the period they represent.

INFILL – building in gaps between existing properties.

LINEAR FORM – a layout made up of lines of buildings.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – a land use plan relating to a distinct and discrete area, e.g. village(s), or part of a town/city, prepared by the local community outlining how they envisage their area developing in the future.

RIBBON DEVELOPMENT – building of houses in a continuous row along a main road, common in England in the inter-war period.

TANDEM DEVELOPMENT – building to the rear of, and in parallel with, existing properties.

TOPOGRAPHY – the land form or surface configuration

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY – a planning document which provides a vision for the future development of the County and sets out a planning framework for its delivery.

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