



# Idmiston Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan

2015 – 2026

Made April 2017

**The Portway footpath as it crosses the field adjacent to the Memorial Hall**



Our Neighbourhood Plan was entirely financed by funding from  
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With the full support and backing from Idmiston Parish Council and Wiltshire Council



**Produced by Idmiston Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

**January 2017**

# FOREWORD

by John Glen MP for Salisbury

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*Too often in the past planning has been an endless system of objections, discontent and appeals. When the Conservatives entered into Government in 2010, we were determined to give planning back to local people, away from unelected regional bureaucrats, top down strategies and Whitehall diktats.*

*When we created neighbourhood planning, it was with the aspiration that communities like Idmiston would come together and take charge of their area's future.*

*Planning is about ensuring we can protect the areas that we value, but deliver the homes our rural communities need so they can thrive well into the future. Idmiston is a beautiful part of Wiltshire, and nobody wishes to see poor planning or inappropriate development undermine its unique character.*

*But equally, we want it to remain somewhere that our children and grandchildren can work, raise a family or start a business: and that means looking positively to the future and planning for it.*

*This plan is comprehensive: it covers healthcare, schooling, infrastructure and making sure that houses built in the parish are sensitively designed, high quality homes for local people.*

*I am delighted that this optimistic vision for the future of Idmiston has been completed, and I look forward to working with the community to see it realised in years to come.*

*John P. Glen*

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# What is the Plan trying to achieve

## The Vision

The aim of the Plan is to retain and enhance the traditional values of the small rural parish of Idmiston, which consists of three adjacent villages, thus ensuring that future development within the Parish reflects the community's needs and aspirations. The built environment should be compatible with local and national policies, but above all should enable all sections of the community to enjoy a sustainable way of life. It is to enable parishioners to help shape the future with regard to development, infrastructure and facilities. Our Objectives, Policies and Proposals are based upon the Village Design Statement (VDS) and surveys undertaken in the Parish.

## Key objectives

- Protect the Parish's rural feel whilst modernising its infrastructure and meeting the needs of the future, working closely with key local employers and Wiltshire Council .



- Confirm which areas of the Parish should remain as open space and which areas for development.
- Strengthen community spirit, community health and community safety.
- Improve community life with particular regard for the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, the elderly and the young.
- Ensure sufficient educational places to meet the requirements of the Parish.
- Improve and sustain core facilities.
- Enhance community and leisure facilities, particularly for youth and recreation.
- Provide housing to meet local demand for downsizing, whilst also providing affordable homes.
- New housing developments to be designed as small clusters in accordance with the Village Design Statement in conjunction with consultations undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **The Legal Position**

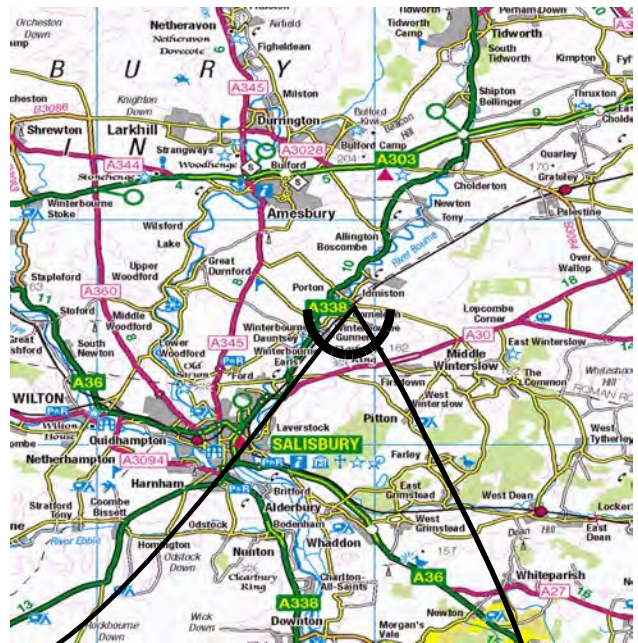
Once the Neighbourhood Plan is supported by the majority of the parishioners voting in a public referendum, the Plan will have legal status in the county's planning framework. It will:

- Ensure that the Parish's views on the future of the Parish, and in particular future housing developments, are material to planning considerations.
- Ensure that new housing is primarily built in the agreed locations and to approved design and standards.
- Form part of the strategic development plan against which planning applications will need to conform.



## What area does the Plan cover?

The Parish of Idmiston, is situated in South Wiltshire, some six miles north east of Salisbury and a similar distance south of Amesbury. Our Parish is comprised of 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 consists of a small estate of Ministry of Defence housing and office buildings is on a slightly elevated position adjacent to the research and development complex at Porton Down.



## Action Themes

In reviewing the Plan's key objectives and the ideas contributed by the parishioners and the Steering Group, the Plan identifies the following areas for action:

- The Parish's Character and Heritage
- Community facilities and services
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Industry and Employment

### Sustainability and relevance to Existing policies

In line with requirements, the policies of this Plan have been produced to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which was adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015. The Wiltshire Core Strategy has a major impact on how the villages will develop in the future. It has been a key consideration in drafting our Neighbourhood Plan. Also, in line with requirements, the Plan policies are sustainable and compliant with European Union legislation.

This plan also takes consideration of, and supports the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon VDS published and adopted by South Wiltshire in May 2013.

## How has the Plan been created

A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group consisting of Parish Councillors and volunteers, operating under the supervision and authority of the Idmiston Parish Council, has undertaken most of the work.

As the qualifying body under the Neighbourhood Planning Legislation, Idmiston Parish Council is responsible for producing the Plan, which must be approved in a public referendum of the parishioners. This vote should take place in 2017 and will be administered by Wiltshire Council.

Prior, to this referendum the Plan will have been subject to approval by Idmiston Parish Council and Wiltshire Council. The Plan has been subject to statutory public consultation and amended in light of community responses and the results of much informal consultation. These have been conducted through surveys, interviews with key personnel and through two formal consultation processes run via a Housing Workshop and a Neighbourhood Plan "Fair", where parishioners could question the Steering Group at various stands and offer opinions and prioritise key areas.

The cost of preparing the Plan has been subsidised by a government grant of £6291.00<sup>1</sup> to Idmiston Parish Council. Expenditure has been on printing information for public use, marketing, public consultation days and for technical surveys in support of the Plan. Costs have been much reduced due to the work undertaken by volunteers.

The Plan includes proposals for future action and new policies, which will be binding once the Plan has been approved by a referendum. Additionally, the Plan contains a prioritised "Wish List" from parishioners, reflecting some of the key concerns that may not be pertinent to the Plan, but are important to the community.

Details of the activities undertaken, meetings and consultations that have contributed to the Plan are contained in the attached Data Book. The Village Design Statement (VDS) was the catalyst and basis for this Neighbourhood Plan and the VDS content and policies have been adopted by the community and Parish Council. It is subsumed within this Neighbourhood Plan.

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<sup>1</sup>Data Book 1: Breakdown of Expenses

## Who has been consulted

The Idmiston Parish Neighbourhood Plan has taken over 15 months to prepare. It was initiated after consultation with Wiltshire Council<sup>2</sup>. The Steering Group (TOR<sup>3</sup>) has met on at least 20 occasions<sup>4</sup>, conducted 7 public consultation meetings<sup>5</sup> and has conducted over 15 surveys and interviews with key personnel<sup>6</sup>.

Members of the Steering Group have attempted to consult with as many people as possible and have tried to ensure that those consulted represented a broad mix of parishioners. Every household in the Parish has had a number of newsletters and questionnaires. Updates have been published on the Parish website and in local free trade magazines distributed widely in the region.

### Consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan

Part of the strategy to communicate with the public regarding the Neighbourhood Plan process was for Steering Group members to participate, in June and July 2014, in the three local summer fetes<sup>7</sup> within the Parish. Neighbourhood Plan stalls were established at each one to provide information and allow members of the public to discuss the purpose and processes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the public were invited to complete a short questionnaire to establish current attitudes and perceptions about the process. It was an essential step in canvassing opinion on the most effective way to engage parishioners.

There have been discussions with the two schools within the Parish, the medical centre, local business owners and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the major employer in the area.

In May 2014, in conjunction with the New Housing Team at Wiltshire Council, a Housing Needs Survey was conducted in the Parish. A total of 924 (households in the Parish) questionnaires were distributed and there was a good response rate with 340 replies received, constituting 36.8% of the total. As a result of this survey, it would appear that of the 81.5% of those who supported the building of some new housing in the village, 61.8% supported the development of affordable starter homes for young people, 43.8% of respondents supported the development of older persons' accommodation and 32.8% supported the development of new shared ownership homes. Twelve households were considered to be in 'housing need', that is, unable to afford accommodation on the open market. There were five other households, with local connections, on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register. Hence there was a total of 17 households deemed to be in housing need and requiring affordable homes in the Parish. Full details of all findings can be found in the Idmiston Parish Housing Needs Survey Report of May 2014.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Data Book 2: Consultation with Wiltshire County Council

<sup>3</sup> Data Book 3: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference

<sup>4</sup> Data Book 4: Record of Steering group meetings

<sup>5</sup> Data Book 5: Details of public consultation

<sup>6</sup> Data book 6:Details of surveys and interviews

<sup>7</sup> Data Book 7: Details of summer Fetes

<sup>8</sup> Data Book 8: Parish Housing Needs Survey Report of May 2014

In July, 2014, copies of a Parish Futures Questionnaire were issued to all households in the Parish. This questionnaire sought to clarify opinion on issues such as future settlement size and the nature of any new development in the three villages. Responses were received from 296 households, which is a 30% rate of return for the Parish as a whole; 190 were from Porton giving an impressive 45% return for our largest village. The results were illuminating and provide a major influence on the content and direction of our Neighbourhood Plan. Of the most clear returns on the questionnaire, 93% want Porton to remain as a large village, 85% don't want development sites of more than 10 dwellings, 89% support more housing at Porton Camp, 84% support the provision of off road parking at the schools and 68% support the retention and upgrading of Porton Recreation Ground. A full analysis of the results is in the Data Book<sup>9</sup>.

On 6 September 2014 a public meeting and workshop was held in the Memorial Hall in order to establish each parishioner's preferences for future small-scale development sites in the Parish. The Government's Planning Inspector requires additional sites for a minimum of 197 new dwellings across 5 rural parishes in the Amesbury Community Area by 2026 and if this is allocated by size of settlement, Porton would be required to find sites for a minimum of 32 new dwellings. Porton is classed as a 'large village' where housing development should predominately take the form of small sites not exceeding 10 dwellings. Following research, a total of 26 possible development sites were presented to parishioners at the meeting for consideration in the exercise. These were assembled from the sites submitted to Wiltshire Council in their 2012 call for sites, those that had been the subject of failed planning applications for housing and those which the owners had given consent for inclusion in the exercise. The meeting was well attended and of the 88 participants, 78 completed a two-page site selection form for analysis. Mostly outside the existing development boundary, a list of 10 sites has now been identified and passed by Highways as suitable for development<sup>10</sup>.

In summary, there has been consultation with the following mix of people in the community:

- Local Employers - including Porton Down, Porton Pets and Aquatics, Korner Kuts (hairdressers), Nisa store, Porton Hotel and The Earl of Normanton (public houses)
- Community Groups and Societies - Leisure Painters, Sunshine Club, Badminton Club, Wine Circle, Flower Club, Women's Institute, Toddlers Group, Sequence Dancing, Country & Western Dance Club (CWDC), Lace making
- Farmers and Landowners
- Groups of all ages from school children (Beavers, Scouts and Brownies) and older age groups
- Education establishments - St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton and Gomeldon Primary School
- Health care services, principally St Ann's Street Surgery at Porton
- Faith groups - Church of England and Baptist Church

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<sup>9</sup> Data Book 9 Parish Futures Questionnaire and results

<sup>10</sup> Data Book 10: Details of workshop analysis and site maps

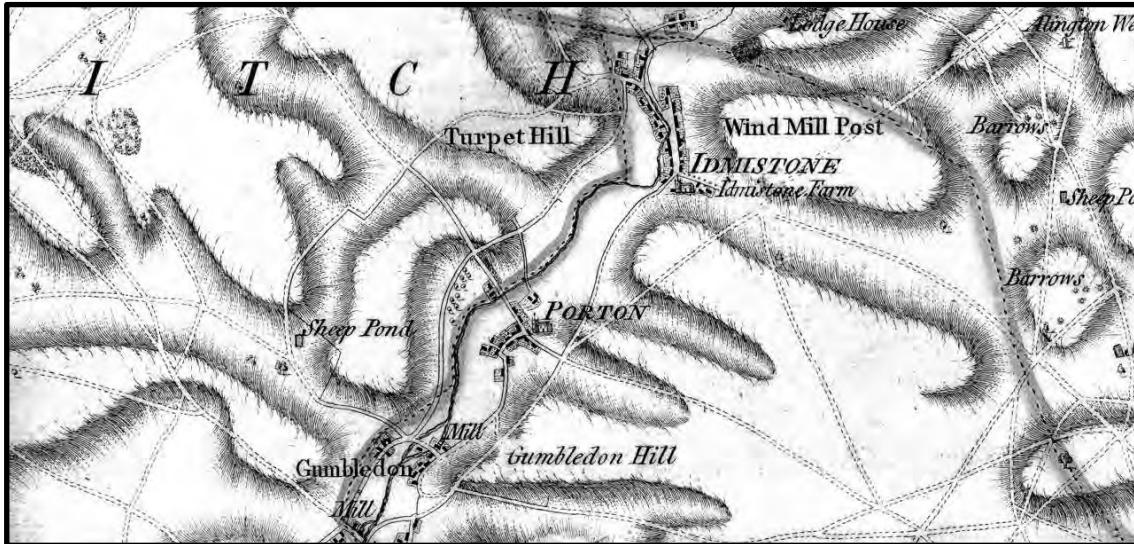
## **Activities undertaken**

- Public Meetings
- Leaflet "drops"
- Advertising in local papers and magazines
- Questionnaires
- Road shows at local events
- Workshop and group events
- Consultation with key stakeholders, including the Head Teachers of the local schools, the local Vicars and organisations such as Porton Down, including the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and Public Health England (PHE)
- Social Media and Email
- In depth interviews

## Idmiston Parish - A brief history

The Parish of Idmiston consists of three villages along the river Bourne Valley. The earliest written evidence of the villages is to be found in the Domesday Book of 1086. The site of a Saxon village, just below Gomeldon, remains visible to this day.

By the late 18th century, the three small settlements of Idmistone, Porton and Gumbledon (present day West Gomeldon) were recorded and shown on a map dated 1773.



**Idmistone, Porton & Gumbledon in 1773**

Comprised of farms and cottages near to the river and water meadows, Idmistone was the most important, 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 the Parish and its prominent bridges and embankments are a major feature in all three villages and present a significant barrier to vehicular movement today.

Gomeldon was originally Gumela's Hill with the Saxon settlement founded on the lower slopes, while Porton may derive from 'Poor' or 'Power' possibly the old name for the river Bourne. This is a typical chalkland parish with arable and meadow land in the river valley and rough grazing on the downs that rise from either side of the valley. There are odd patches of clay and also substantial numbers of large flint nodules that have been used as a building material since at least Saxon times.

There was substantial prehistoric settlement in the area with two large Neolithic flint mines at Easton Down and Martin's Clump, that were probably occupied for around 500 years. Bronze Age round barrows are a feature of the landscape while on Thorney Down there was a late Bronze Age farmhouse with eight outbuildings. There are several Bronze Age enclosures. During the Iron Age there were various small farms and these probably continued into the Romano-British period. On Roche Court Down there is a early 6th century Saxon cemetery with 17 graves with a further 18 graves of victims of a mass execution. It is most likely that settled Saxon occupation of the valley took place soon after this on the three village sites. By the early 10th century Glastonbury Abbey held 20 hides here and Saxon burials have been found at Gomeldon.

The earliest existing building in the parish is the timber-framed Old Vicarage at Idmiston that dates from the early 15th century. There was some rebuilding in the early 17th Century beginning with Idmiston Manor for Giles Rowbach in rendered flint with limestone dressings. Around 1620



the Rectory, of brick with small flint panels, was built by John Bowle, a member of the other leading local family. Several smaller houses were built in the early 17th century and these were mainly of timber framed construction. Four surviving ones are Thatch End in Idmiston and **Box Hedge Cottage** (pictured), Lane End Cottage, and Ti Trees Cottage in Porton.

By the early 18th century flint was being used as the chief building material and in the early part of the century Wisteria Cottage (Porton) and Bridge Cottage (Idmiston), both considered to be houses at that time, were built of flint. Later houses to be constructed were The Grange, flint with brick dressings in Idmiston; Rosemoor and Rose Cottage, brick and flint and Dairy Farmhouse in Porton in the mid 18th century. In the late 18th century White Cottage at Porton was built of cob and around 1790 the present Birdlyme Farmhouse, of flint and brick, was erected. Around the turn of the century a windmill of four floors was built in flint and brick at West Gomeldon.

By the early 19th century the chief crops of the Parish were wheat, barley and oats, sheep were still kept on the downs and folded on arable land. After 1854, when the railway line was built through the Parish, additional employment was provided and local men became railway labourers. A railway station was opened at Porton and a stationmaster is recorded in the 1859 Kelly's Directory of Wiltshire. In 1861 Idmiston (212 inhabitants) and Porton (176) were the largest villages, whilst 85 people lived at Gomeldon.



The early 20th century saw immense changes in this quiet Parish with the beginning of the First World War. With the emergence of the use of gas in warfare, an establishment was founded to research methods of protecting British Forces from gas and chemical weapons. 3,000 acres of land were bought by the War Department and designated the Gas Experimental Ground. The laboratories were in huts and accommodation for Porton Camp was established. A meteorological section opened in 1916, while in 1917 the decision was taken to build a 24-inch



(60cm) military light railway to serve the camp. More land was acquired in 1918, bringing the total area to 6,196 acres, some of which covered adjacent parishes, including one over the county border in Hampshire. The Headquarters building was erected in 1918 and at the end of the war Porton Camp contained 50 officers, 1,000 other ranks and 500 civilian workers. There was intensive work at the camp, by then known as the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment (the Experimental was later dropped), on further development of the defences against gas warfare and effective counter measures.

After the war the Microbiological Research Establishment was built in 1949. The Porton Light Railway continued in use for freight until 1952-3. In 1979 the Centre for Applied Microbiology and Research opened in a new red brick establishment and in 1991 the Establishment changed its name to the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment to reflect its modern role more accurately. Today it is called the Defence Science and Technology Laboratories (Dstl).



The 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. During the last quarter of the early 20th century a significant nature reserve has been established on the Porton ranges. Attempts have been

made to re-introduce the Great Bustard here. Much of the area, by virtue of its unique plants, insects and birds, is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is the subject of additional special measures to ensure their conservation and protection.

The Memorial Hall was built in 1958 to commemorate the 37 men of the Parish who fell in the two world wars. Despite an increase in civilian population the railway station closed in 1968. This was a period of substantial house building, by the mid 1970's the size of Porton had increased by 49%, Idmiston by 65% and Gomeldon by 91%. This development brought an influx of new residents, with very few families having lived here for more than a couple of generations. Recreation Grounds were opened at Porton in 1976 and in Gomeldon in 1977.

This brief history gives a picture of this historic Parish and the rural feel that has existed over all the years. It is a rural and agricultural Parish that has welcomed the MOD as the major local employer. Today the Parish continues to reflect this rural atmosphere but wishes to embrace the 21st century in a manner that will create opportunity, develop the community and sustain growth in a spirit consistent with its one thousand year legacy.

## Landscape

The Parish is set in the largest continuous tract of rolling chalk downland in Britain which provides a unique and valued landscape and wildlife habitat. It is incised by the wooded Bourne valley with its river and ancient water meadows.

Though much of our Parish is farmed, with arable farming on the higher ground, the majority of Porton Down is not. Its appearance remains much as it was in 1916, when acquired by the War Department.



*The Hidden Nature of the Villages—Idmiston from the Portway path*

The villages of Idmiston, Porton and the hamlet of 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 it. 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.



*Downland Landscape – The Gomeldons from Figsbury Ring*

The hidden nature of these villages provides sweeping rural vistas with higher ground unimpeded by built development, which is, in general, contained in folds in the landscape.

The more recent settlement 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.

Following the village workshop meeting in September 2014 where 10 sites were selected for further investigation and inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, a report was commissioned from Indigo Landscape Architects Limited to make a study of the impact of the selected sites on the landscape in the event of their development. The full report can be seen in the Data Book<sup>11</sup>.

The report provides a broad visual analysis to evaluate the extent of the estimated Visual Envelopes for the three villages to establish a baseline position. It then applies this baseline analysis to the preferred residential sites to test whether development in these locations could possibly be accommodated without impacting on the landscape and visual settings of the villages.

It was important that the principles stated (initially in the Village Design Statement and now in the Neighbourhood Plan) concerning the continuing separation of our three villages, the need to minimise the visual impact of new development and maintain our rural feel should be tested as rigorously as possible. Each of the sites has been evaluated and none failed the test. Most were rated as Neutral in terms of potential visual impact of the proposed development option on the existing village settings/edges and two of the sites were rated as Positive/Neutral.

Overall the report has drawn the following conclusions:

- The estimated Visual Envelopes for the three villages are largely separate with the exception of some minor overlap along the A338 and an identified remote view. There is no significant intervisibility between the three villages despite the relatively short distance between the settlements
- The assessment of the potential visual impact of the preferred development sites on the baseline estimated 'Visual Envelope' reveals that although there would be some adjustment to the existing 'Visual Envelope' this would be relatively minor and localised
- It is not predicted that the development of these sites would adversely affect the landscape or visual setting of the villages or cause intervisibility between any of the villages

Therefore, with the 'making' of the Neighbourhood Plan, planning applications should mirror policies for maintaining village separation and identities. The Parish Council will work with Wiltshire Council's Conservation and Landscape Officers regarding relevant planning applications to ensure the rural feel is maintained.

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<sup>11</sup>Data Book 11:Landscape Survey

### **Policy 1 - Village Separation**

For the 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.

### **Policy 2 - Avoiding Flood Risk**

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.

### **Policy 3 - Future Developments**

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

### **Policy 4 - Maintaining the Rural Feel**

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

## The Parish's character and heritage

### Rationale

This Neighbourhood Plan incorporates the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement (VDS) <sup>12</sup> adopted by South Wiltshire in 2013. It was the first Parish planning document intended to preserve the character and heritage of the Parish. The purpose of the VDS is:

***"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 the villages special. It describes the distinctive character of the 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."***

The Village Design Statement details policy and makes proposals that form an integral part of this Neighbourhood Plan. Wiltshire's Core Strategy states that ***"all future development within the Parish should comply with Wiltshire Council's conservation and heritage policies including those for listed buildings. Wherever possible, construction materials and finishes should complement the surrounding area and the character and heritage of the immediate environment. Where approved, modern replacement/new build materials should also visually complement the immediate environment..... Commercial property alterations and frontages should complement the heritage of the immediate environment with suitable wall mounted signage"***.



***The villages have been described as having a rural feel. Maintaining their rural integrity is of paramount importance.***

<sup>12</sup>Data Book 12: Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement

**Policy 5 - Protect Character and Heritage**

To retain our rural vistas and preserve the integrity of the 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 the villages.

**Policy 6 - Maintaining Historical Legacy**

New developments within the historic parts of Idmiston, the Porton Conservation Area and the areas immediately adjoining, should reflect the appearance and character of the area as identified in the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement and comply with any relevant National or Local Planning Policy.

**Policy 7 - Maintaining and Enhancing Character**

All new housing developments and extensions to existing houses should be designed to be locally distinctive so that they reflect and enhance the character of the village as identified in the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement.

# Community facilities and services

## Rationale

The three villages that make up Idmiston Parish have few community facilities and services. There are 2 primary schools (largely attended by children from outside the Parish) a comprehensive NISA shop/post office, medical centre, two public houses, a hairdressers, a pet and garden centre, and a Chinese takeaway . There is a community hall (a post war Prefab in need of refurbishment) and play areas, one of which, in Porton, has a “toddler” play park and a field marked for football. Unfortunately, the play area is situated on the flood plain and is frequently unusable as it is waterlogged. There is a second play area at the far extent of East Gomeldon Road. There are no youth facilities and this is an important deficiency. There are insufficient public parking spaces and traffic flows are extremely high due to the expansion of MOD’s Dstl workforce at Porton Down. At peak hours this commute through the Parish makes the centres of Porton and Idmiston almost impassable. The nearby Cathedral City of Salisbury and market town of Andover provide a good choice of supermarkets and retail outlets, but public transport is infrequent and expensive. Close by Amesbury is expanding and provides a similar retail centre.

## Medical facilities

There are nine medical practices covering the Salisbury area, including St Ann Street Medical Practice, which also has a well established branch surgery in Porton. People who register with the Practice and live in the Bourne Valley, (including the Winterbournes, Gomeldon, Idmiston, Porton and Porton Down, Allington, Boscombe and Newton Toney) are welcome to use the Porton branch surgery which is open five mornings a week for GP consultations and on three days a week for practice nursing. A visiting physiotherapist and a podiatrist also attend the surgery. There is a full dispensary and all patients resident in the identified villages are able to use the dispensary for prescription items.

This branch surgery was started in 1999 following a Government initiative to provide a service to patients in rural areas. Originally, a surgery was held one day a week in a room in the Memorial Hall, this was a “drop in” session with no fixed appointments. Due to local support, a permanent site, at the old butchers shop in Winterslow Road, was purchased and converted in 2000. This single storey building is now recognised as the only disabled access facility for St Ann Street Medical Practice.

The Practice overall has 6,000 patients and of these approximately 2,000 live in Idmiston Parish and surrounding villages and use the branch surgery on a regular basis. The branch surgery also runs an emergency triage service from Monday to Friday. All patients with a health query can speak with a doctor and, should it be necessary, an appointment can be made with a GP in the branch of the patient’s choice.

The managers of the Practice believe that it provides an essential service for residents who are unable to travel into Salisbury to access their health care provider. Local residents appreciate the

fact that they can attend this branch surgery, and in recognition of the current age profile of residents in the Parish, the care provided may be relevant to more complex health needs. The surgery is situated across the road from the local NISA shop and many residents combine a visit to the doctors with a visit to the local shop, resulting in it becoming one of the social hubs of the village.

It is anticipated that for the foreseeable future the branch surgery will remain at its present site and will continue to provide the services currently in existence.

## **Leisure**

Whilst open space is very apparent around the parish and is truly of landscape scale and a defining characteristic in each of the villages – little of it can be described as ‘public’ open space.

Although historic usage, custom and practice would suggest there are a varied number of open spaces, in reality many are in private ownership with only permissive (or no) rights of public access. This renders their enjoyment (for anything other than visual amenity) as vulnerable and/or of limited public benefit. Similarly, the River Bourne is a key landscape feature throughout the Parish, yet no stretch is formally or easily accessible to public save for the stretch through Idmiston.

This limits the extent to which the community can influence the landscape character of the Parish other than in principle terms – hence the importance of appropriate reference within the Neighbourhood Plan – with regards what is within control of the Parish Council and local residents see Open Space Audit.<sup>13</sup>

Whilst quantity of open space may seem good, much is not useable, nor does it fulfil local demand – with there being a significant deficit in Adult, Youth and Children’s Play facilities.

In terms of other useable space, poor drainage at Porton Recreation Ground is well known and renders the site as unusable for formal sports. Similarly, East Gomeldon Recreation Ground is a valuable community asset but could clearly benefit from improvement (scoring lowest in quality assessment by Wiltshire Council) – in part due to its location and sloping profile.

For this reason, it is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan support the community interest that no existing open space (i.e. used for public recreation, whether formally in public ownership or not) should be lost to development within the settlement boundaries of the Parish, and that existing sites (identified in the plan) should be protected and enhanced for public enjoyment wherever and however possible. (This could include any of the following; registering sites as ‘Assets of Community Value’ with Wiltshire Council, seeking to designate as ‘protected’ / sites in Trust with ‘FIT’ (Fields In Trust), seeking to secure rights of access to land used with the permission of the landowner – if not already held in public ownership). For further details see Data Book 13, (Policy statements 6 and 8).

In terms of community facilities, the Parish benefits from a number of community assets of which many rural communities would be envious, and form key infrastructure to support sustainable community life.

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<sup>13</sup> Data Book 13: Open Space Audit



The importance of a village shop, Post Office (PO), doctors surgery, pub/hotel, church, takeaway and other retail offers, cannot be underestimated. When also taking into account the limited transport links to Salisbury, Amesbury and Andover, and the age profile of the three main villages, these community facilities provide essential services that would otherwise render village life 'less convenient' or possibly unsustainable for the more vulnerable independent residents.

## Shops



Serving the needs of the working community of the local schools and Porton Down in addition to the local residential community, the village shop / PO could sustain growth (in terms of floor area) if location and parking were not constraints.

## Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall was built of a Reema construction in 1956, extended in 1965 and refurbished in 1979. It was built to commemorate parishioners who made the ultimate sacrifice.



In addition to the Hall, there is a good sized car park and facilities for disabled access. It is managed by volunteers and funded through lettings and fund raising events. There is a diverse mix of regular bookings, activities, children's parties etc. (including an afterschool club, painting, badminton, wine circle, Women's Institute (WI), toddler groups, flower arranging, dance, historical society and uniform groups).



*The Memorial Hall hosts well attended regular Line Dancing and Badminton Club sessions*

The previous photographs demonstrate the significant pockets of community spirit and the voluntary and philanthropic giving that is thriving in certain areas. Ways to support and enhance the Memorial Hall ought to be the focus of a further action plan along with appropriate ways to build capacity in the voluntary sector generally.

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015, a structural survey of Idmiston Memorial Hall<sup>14</sup> was undertaken as concerns were raised regarding the longevity of the structure (which was thought to be only 50 years). Overall it was confirmed by the Surveyor that the structure is essentially sound, although no specific intrusive or specialist investigations were undertaken. The Surveyor believed that the building was in need of some essential maintenance and thermal insulation as this was considered to be poor. Therefore the upgrading of the Hall to meet this essential maintenance is of paramount importance if the Hall is to continue with its key function of providing a community hub. The costs for these improvement works, both in the short and long terms need to be met and the development of suitable community infrastructure must continue, with the Hall being an important element in this endeavour.

## **Sport**

Opportunities for sport within the parish are limited, with no purpose built facilities. Ancillary facilities (such as Memorial or school halls) are used when not previously booked.

The Recreation Ground in Porton is designated as a sports ground, but given that the site also functions as a flood plain, it is not viable for regular (league) club use. Porton Boys FC discontinued usage of this space and now train and play at Amesbury as a result.

A sustainable alternative is therefore needed longer term.

Facilities exist at Porton Down some of which can be made available to clubs and residents, and it would be greatly beneficial if this could be formalised and secured in the longer term.



***Porton Recreation Ground showing the flooding on 09th February 2014  
The facility was not able to re-open until June following this very wet winter***

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<sup>14</sup>Data Book 14: Building Survey for Idmiston Memorial Hall

## Youth survey

In July 2014, in order to try to establish what the young people really wanted in terms of leisure and sporting facilities, a questionnaire<sup>15</sup> was included in the Parish Magazine which was delivered to all households in the Parish.

It is estimated that there are currently in excess of 360 young people between the ages of 0 – 15 living in the three villages. Sadly, response to the questionnaire was poor. There were only 19 responses, representing a 5% rate of return. It may be of interest to show the main findings of this survey:

- 78.9% of respondents lived in the village of Porton.
- Of all respondents, 36.8% used the Gomeldon playing field and 84.2% used the Porton playing field.
- Of those who used the playing fields, 68.4% went there every week.
- There was a general request for more activities to be available in the Parish – suggestions included the provision of basket ball nets, a tennis court, a trampoline and benches and seating. All these suggestions were focused on the needs of older children.
- Following a suggestion from Idmiston Parish Council that one might be provided, there was no call for a shelter in either play area.
- There was a strong request for better maintenance of the playing fields especially for more frequent grass cutting in the summer and improved cleaning of the equipment.

## Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Parish Council will prioritise CIL funding it receives to those items listed in Policy 8 Community Infrastructure Levy overleaf.

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<sup>15</sup> Data Book 15: Youth Survey

## **Policy 8 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The Plan supports the following areas for CIL Expenditure (contributions from developers)

- Highway Infrastructure and parking provision
- Development of a Community Hub
- Youth and community Leisure facilities
- Acquisition and development of Community Assets
- Community Safety developments
- Enhancement of community service provision
- Cycle paths and footpaths
- School infrastructure

# Infrastructure

## Rationale

As a rural Parish, it is important to residents that the charm of that rural environment is maintained as far as possible in harmony with the growing development at Porton Down, the major local employer and majority landowner within the Parish. The three villages that make up the Parish are bordered on two sides by, effectively, two East/West bypasses that were once the main routes to London and Winchester from Salisbury. Commuting and business traffic from these major routes, destined for Porton Down, cut North and South through the Parish and cause congestion, high density and speeding traffic, specifically in the morning and evening rush hours. This is a major concern for parishioners and an issue that must be addressed with Highways, Dstl and PHE at Porton Down. Additionally, the only roadside parking available at both the medical centre and Nisa shop is limited and this factor further increases traffic congestion. School dropoff parking at both sites, in Gomeldon and Porton, is roadside, causes congestion and occasionally very dangerous conditions.

Salisbury, Andover and Amesbury provide the major retail and service hubs for the Parish. Buses run to Salisbury during daytime on weekdays, with a reduced service on Saturdays. They are also considered quite expensive. No direct services exist to Amesbury or Andover. Mobile phone coverage is relatively poor with O2 and Vodafone providing the most reliable coverage. TV reception varies. Superfast broadband is becoming available within the Parish. Speeds available depend on the technology in use, but for many areas between 10Mbps and 25Mbps is attainable.

## Education facilities

Within the Parish there are two primary schools. There are no state run or privately funded nursery or secondary schools within the Parish. There has been a school in Porton since 1818 and in Gomeldon since 1913. Both schools went through a period of expansion post the Second World War and Gomeldon Primary School also expanded to cater for an expanding population after the building of Porton Down camp. Additional classrooms have been added and both schools were modernised in 1972. However, for Gomeldon Primary School, both temporary mobile classrooms and a new building have been utilised to accommodate the growing number of attending children. These classrooms were added between 1999 and 2011.

St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton receives additional funding from the Church in contrast to Gomeldon Primary School that receives only state funding. The Head Teacher of St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton believes that this connection with Church funding brings a responsibility to ensure that the school fosters a socially responsible attitude, but the down-side to this is that some parents do not send their children to the school because of the faith led culture.

In recent years both schools have continued to expand. St Nicholas C of E Primary School has doubled its size in from 70 pupils in 1999 to 138 today. Gomeldon Primary School has also

increased in pupil numbers from 109 in 1997 to 145 children today. Gomeldon's Head teacher believes that the school is now at its maximum capacity due to the size of the site, this factor limits further expansion. Costs of expansion are the key stumbling block for St Nicholas C of E Primary School, although the area of the playground could be utilised if the opportunity arose.

The need for two schools within the Parish is supported by both Head teachers who restate Wiltshire Council's criteria of one school per 500 houses. It is a feature of our current demographic mix that, at present, a maximum of 30% of children live in households in the Parish, the remaining 70% of the children come from Salisbury, Amesbury, and the surrounding villages. A proportion of parents who send their children to the Parish schools do so as they work at Porton Down and drop their children at the school gates on their way to work. Neither Head teacher lives in the Parish although they each have lived in the surrounding area for some time. Of the staff at Gomeldon Primary School 6 of the total of 22 are local residents and St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton has only one member of the total number of 16 staff who live in the Parish. The schools local employment ratio is, therefore, low.

Gomeldon Primary School maintains links with the local Bourne Valley Nursery School in Winterbourne Dauntsey and many of their pupils move on from this school. The same situation does not arise with St Nicholas C of E Primary School as there are no other directly linked Nursery schools in the area. All children have to travel to attend secondary schools and the majority go to secondary schools in Salisbury or Amesbury with, occasionally, some children attending the Test Valley School (Hampshire). A proportion of children from both primary schools regularly move on to the local Grammar Schools. Very few children attend private schools and this factor may be due to the success in achieving Grammar School places.

The major problem for parents at both schools is the lack of parking when dropping off and picking up children before and after school times. For St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton, the lack of parking on the school site necessitates teachers having to park in Idmiston Road, limiting parking for parents. Both schools feel that this is a safety issue and St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton, has previously raised this problem with Wiltshire Council.

Of concern to the Head teacher at St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton is the low provision of affordable housing, a factor which makes it difficult for young families in the Parish to remain here in order to send their children to the local schools. Additionally, with limited public transport opportunities, young people find it more difficult to commute to work.

Both Head teachers believe strongly in maintaining links with the Parish and its community. The schools visit the local churches regularly, and representatives of all faiths are invited to attend the assemblies. Gomeldon Primary School is the only public building in Gomeldon, the Head teacher believes that it is a key building for the community and it is often utilised to host public meetings and school events. St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Porton lends its grounds to Scouting groups and events such as the Jubilee Celebration and the Parish Fete. Local groups such as the Women's Institute attend the school to teach the children in a knitting circle.

## School Travel Questionnaires

The parents at both St Nicholas C of E Primary School and Gomeldon Primary School were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding how they transported their children to and from school.<sup>16</sup> There were 46 responses from the 142 pupils at Gomeldon (32%) and 33 from the 118 pupils at St Nicholas C of E, (28%), giving an overall response rate of 30%. Within our Parish, of those who returned the questionnaire, 15 live in Porton, 10 in The Gomeldons, and 3 in Idmiston. Others live in surrounding areas such as 12 in the Winterbournes, 10 in Amesbury, 3 in Boscombe village and 2 in Newton Tony. Further afield, 7 live in villages on Salisbury Plain, 9 live in Salisbury, with a further 4 in its surrounding area of Old Sarum. This indicates that only a relatively small percentage (35%) of those who responded, live within our Parish.

The main method of transport was by car (66), with a small number of children walking (12) and one child (1) being transported by school taxi. Twenty-one parents also indicated that they took more than their own child to school and in three cases more than one other child in the car. Of those parents who transported their child to school it appears that the majority of parents (48) travel to a further destination after dropping off their child/children with a smaller number (19) returning to where they had originally travelled from. Only a small number of those parents (12) who drove their child/children to school believed that they had difficulty parking in the mornings, but this increased to twenty-one for the afternoon collection time.

On how this could be improved, for those from St Nicholas C of E Primary School, they felt a safer pedestrian crossing (11) and/or a lollipop lady (6) may help as they believe that the school is quite hidden from the road. *(It is worth noting that cars park on the school side of the road, and occupants then have to cross to the pavement on the opposite side of the road to walk to the school, and then re-cross this busy road to enter the school).* Also there is no footpath for parents going towards Idmiston village and some hedges needed to be cut back to ensure good visibility, both for cars and pedestrians. Another issue for some parents at St Nicholas C of E Primary School is the fact that a small number of people turn around once they have dropped their child/children off and this can cause traffic issues.



***St Nicholas C of E Primary School—no room to pass oncoming traffic at school times, with very poor visibility of both the school and oncoming traffic.***

<sup>16</sup>Data Book 16: School Travel Questionnaires

Parents from Gomeldon Primary School said they would like both a traffic lights system to be in use during school drop off times to slow the cars (and deter the use of Gomeldon Road as a rat run to Porton Camp), and school warning lights on the Winterbourne approach in addition to the



existing one on the Porton approach. They commented that the lollipop lady had helped children's safety and were supportive of this role. For those parents who would like to walk with their children from Porton to Gomeldon Primary School, they would like a path designated for walking.

***Gomeldon Primary School is both hidden (to the LHS) at the top of a steep hill, and adjacent to a busy road junction at "The Triangle"***

Common to both schools, parents asked for traffic calming such as speed bumps or chicanes (15), some wanted the speed limit reduced (6) and clearer or additional signage (5) identifying the presence of the schools. They are unanimous in saying that safe parking does need to be improved, although accepting that this will be difficult to achieve without considerable expense. A few responses also suggested that parents working at the Porton Down establishments, after dropping their children off at school, were inclined to speed up Church Road to enter the Idmiston gate before it closed at 9.00am. Liaison with the Establishment might be undertaken to extend this gate opening to 9.15am.



***Gomeldon Road also becomes single file at school times causing traffic queues***

Of the 79 parents who responded to the questionnaire, the large majority of 54, (68%) felt that they considered the immediate area outside the school was an UNSAFE environment to walk their child/children to the site and also to drop off children from cars.



## Traffic and Highways

The A338, the Tidworth Road, a much used primary route, runs through our Parish along the Bourne Valley. Three junctions with this major road provide direct access to Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon respectively, through our network of C classified roads. These minor roads were constructed largely before the Second World War and their physical characteristics have altered little since then. Since this time there has been a surge in car ownership. Critically these roads serve several large MOD establishments including Boscombe Down Airfield, Dstl and Public Health England at Porton Down. The site at Porton Down is a major employer with over 2,000 staff and is a large traffic generator. Almost as critical is the contribution made by the A30, another major road running to the eastern edge of the Down. Although this Highway is outside the limits of the Parish, the connecting road between the A338 and the A30 is the Winterslow Road running through the centre of Porton village. The road is used as a rat run between the two primary highways and has a major impact on traffic patterns.

There is a considerable imbalance between the infrastructure and the volumes of traffic carried. Current volumes are unacceptable and are set to increase with the growth of the Porton Down establishments and the use of the Winterslow Road as the main means of cross travel between the A338 and the A30. It is not clear how much more traffic can be accommodated and the impact any additional loading would have on safety and air quality.

In order to support these statements a total of six traffic counts<sup>17</sup> were conducted at critical locations around the Parish. The need for these, and the data generated, arises from the continuing concerns expressed by local residents on safety and environmental impacts caused by the large volumes of cars and HGVs, many speeding, through the villages.

The most recent 2011 national census data suggests that there are around 1600 vehicles linked to residents of the Parish. This number alone might present problems with capacity for the current infrastructure. Add to these the number of commuting vehicles coming through the Parish, well in excess of 3300 additional movements per working day, and we begin to describe the problem.

## 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 leading off it, 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.



<sup>17</sup> Data Book 17: Results of Traffic Count Survey

This entry to the Porton Down site is now a secondary access and is controlled by gates and traffic lights. Access to the site can only be gained on weekdays between 0630hrs and 0900hrs in



the morning and egress from 1600hrs to 1800hrs at the end of the working day (Fridays 1515hrs to 1800hrs). Whilst this limited opening has improved conditions for Idmiston residents, it has had the impact of isolating the housing at Porton Camp, which outside these hours can only be accessed via the main entrance outside Porton.

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



## Porton

Winterslow Road is the principal access road to Porton village. It runs from the A338 in an easterly direction through the centre of Porton, past the main gate of the Porton Down research facility and across the Down to the A30. It has the status of an unclassified road as it is technically a 'no through road', the section of the road between the Porton Down main gate and the A30 being owned by the MOD.

It also crosses the A338, as Porton Road, and runs westwards to the back entrance of Boscombe Down airfield and the A345, which is just outside the Parish. These two stretches of road account for 12 of the 21 recorded accidents in our Parish during the three years 2009 – 2011.

Winterslow Road is very heavily trafficked, particularly at weekday peak times, when average flow rates of nine vehicles per minute (540 cars per hour) were recorded over 15 minute periods. 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.



Apart from the issue of volume, resident's concerns are with traffic speed. On-street parking outside the shop and the recent pavement build out beyond the surgery do help to slow traffic but speeding continues to be a problem.

Three roads branch off the Winterslow Road in the village. The High Street runs off from a junction by the village shop to the Gomeldons. The High Street does not have a pavement, and parked cars make it single lane. Just by St Nicholas Church, at Chapman's Corner is the crossroads where Idmiston Road and Gomeldon Road meet the Winterslow Road. The Gomeldon Road does not have a pavement and the Idmiston Road only has a pavement running as far as St Nicholas C of E Primary School.

Effectively, at peak traffic in the morning and evening, the community is divided by the volume of traffic on the Winterslow Road. *(Please see also maps of traffic flows on page 31)*

## The Gomeldons

Gomeldon Road runs through Gomeldon village, in a northerly direction, from its junction with the A338 at Policeman's Corner at Winterbourne Gunner to its junction with Winterslow Road in Porton. It is a well-used road 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 the crossroads just before Gomeldon Primary School as does an unnamed lane which leads to West Gomeldon. 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 bottleneck at rush hours and its restricted height and width are always a problem for the occasional large commercial vehicle. (By prior arrangement, these vehicles can be permitted access via a narrow track over MOD land). The rail bridge does considerably reduce the speed of approaching traffic.

At drop off and pick up times at Gomeldon Primary School, there is considerable congestion and risk to pedestrians from high volumes of traffic together with parents parking on road. East Gomeldon Road has recorded as many as 44 parked cars related to school traffic, thus reducing the road to one lane for a considerable distance.



## Parking

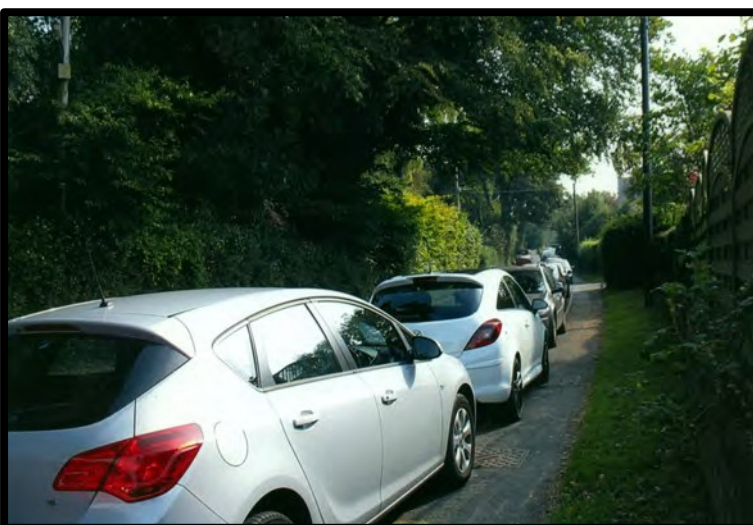


***Porton High Street -junction with Winterslow Road***

At the junction with 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 the takeaway. Since there is no pavement in the High Street, as a consequence of this activity, pedestrians have to walk in the road and this problem is compounded as vehicles try to pass those that are parked.

The parking on Winterslow Road immediately outside the shop and the surgery at peak traffic, obstructs one of the narrowest points in the road, partially on a bend. The consequent delays to traffic can be severe. When this is combined with the passage of heavy goods vehicles a great deal of manoeuvring can be required involving frustration and delay. There is need to liaise with the Highways Authority to investigate the provision of more off-road parking to ease congestion in the centre of Porton village outside the village shop.

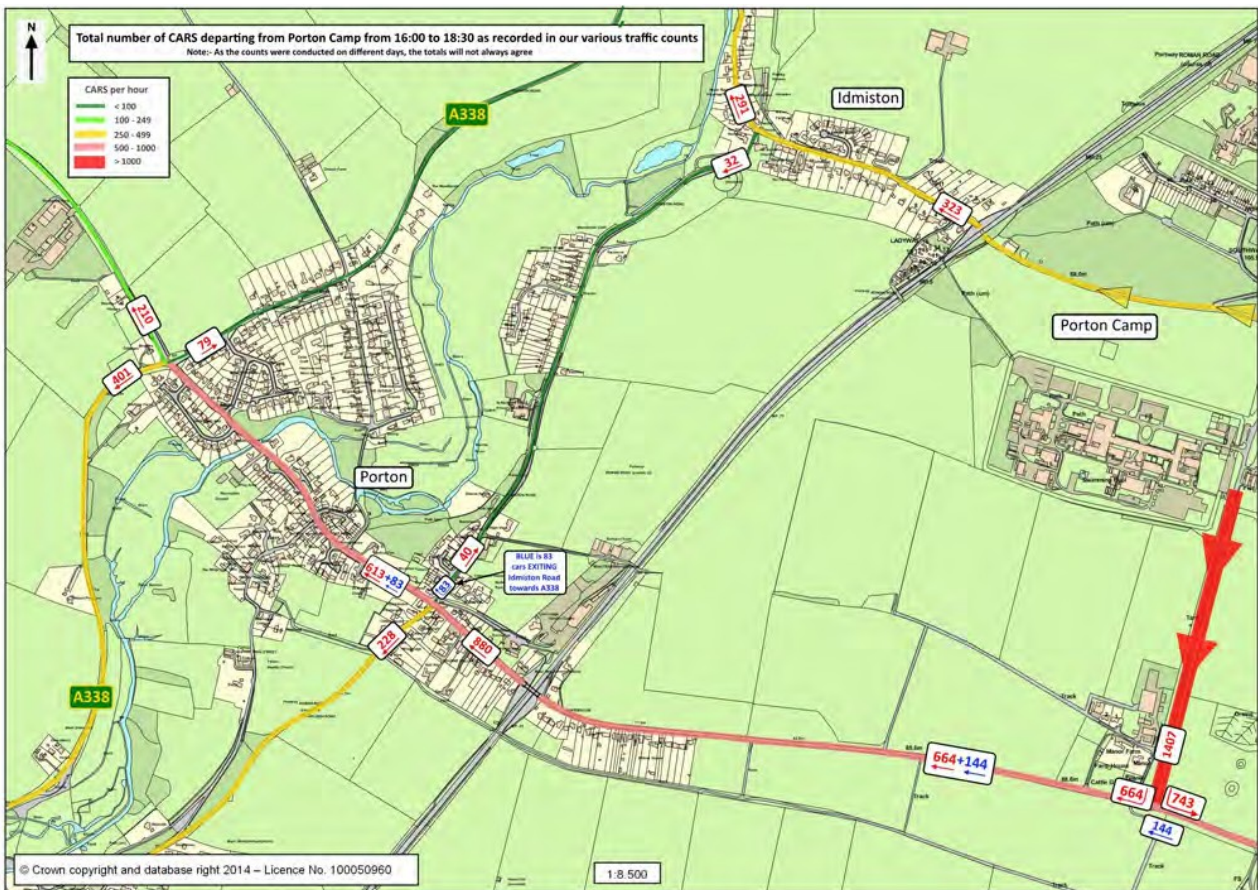
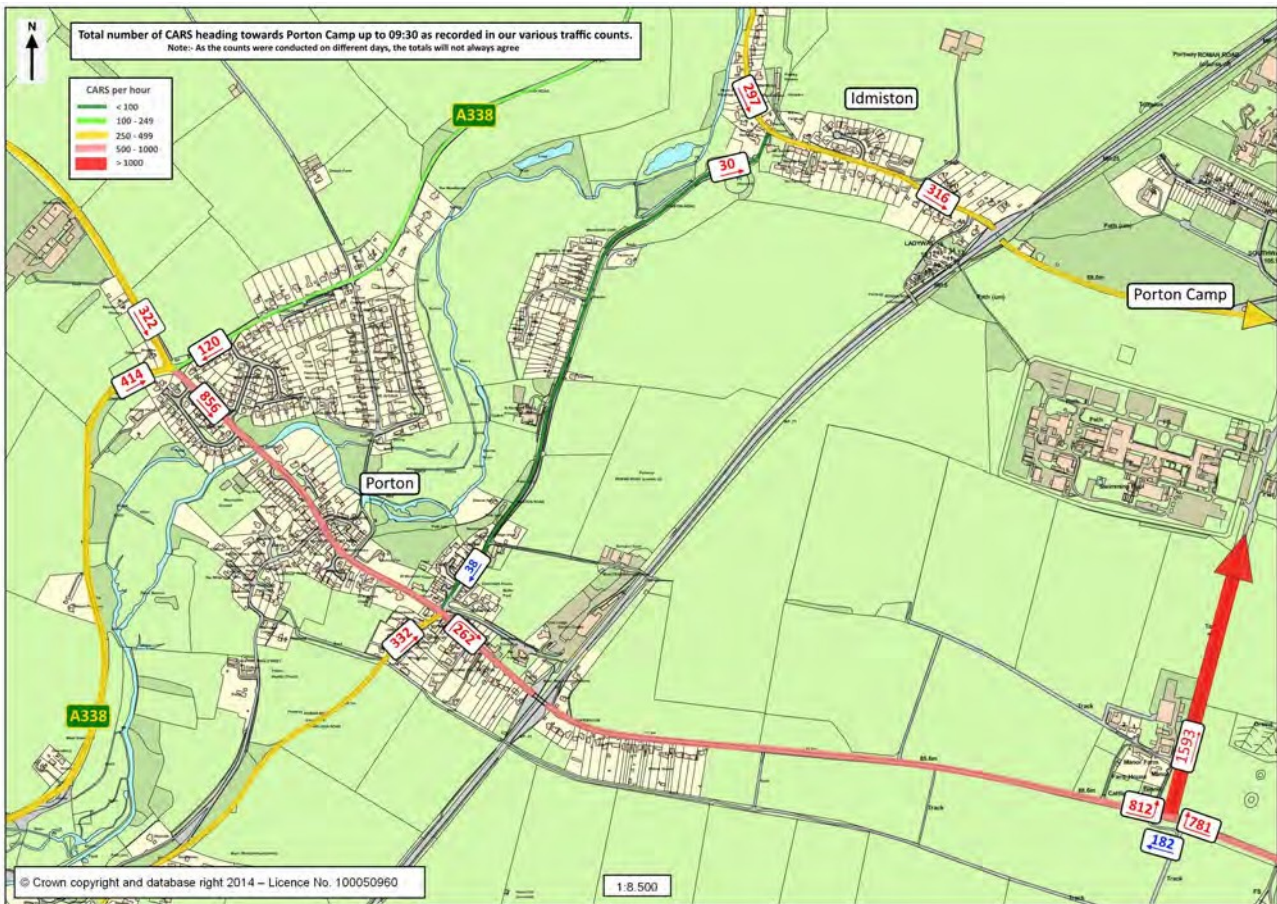
Apart from the Horefield housing estate, which was built with inadequate car parking, domestic car parking requirements have mostly been accommodated within the footprint of the individual dwellings. It is recognised that the majority of our residents would wish to achieve this for convenience and security.



***Parking on Winterslow Road pavement associated with a funeral service at St Nicholas Church***

Finally, there is the need to address the issue of parking opposite St Nicholas Church on the Winterslow Road. With the granting of permission for the development of 20 houses on the land behind Chalk House, this issue becomes more pressing, with the need to provide a safe access to this site thus reducing the amount of parking available on the road opposite the church.

# Maps showing the traffic flows at peak time in the Parish



## Drainage and Sewerage

In order to assist the Neighbourhood Planning team to assess this, often very topical subject, a report was commissioned from Southwest Environmental Limited<sup>18</sup>. The full report can be accessed in the Data Book.

The primary aim of the report is to define flood risk within the Parish, its sources, impacted areas and outline possible solutions to reduce risk. The secondary aim is to assess the suitability of the ten selected sites for future development and inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan and to identify any additional flood risk from these sites should they be built on.

Geology has a strong influence on the behaviour of flood water and the Parish is situated predominantly on chalk; the valley bottoms are filled with relatively recent deposits of silts and clay. The nature of chalk gives rise to highly variable levels of achievable soak-away drainage and accounts for the high levels of storm water runoff we experience; a heavy downpour will result in most of the rain water running along the ground surface.

The flood plain has remained largely undeveloped but some encroachment has occurred in Porton adjacent to the recreation ground and indeed recent flooding saw the properties fronting on to Winterslow Road flooded. More recently, residential properties have been flooded in proximity to the River Bourne. It is important to note that no modelled flood depths have been generated for this stretch of the River Bourne. It is believed that flooding incidents at present are under reported owing to fear from occupiers that they may lose their insurance cover. It is recommended that all new planning applications within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment. None of the 10 potential development sites fall within these flood risk zones but it is recommended that the surface water run off potential should be analysed in depth at the planning stage.

Surface water flooding has been identified in both Porton and Idmiston. In both cases the main source of flood water is from the valleys that run east-west situated to the East of the settlements. In both cases rain water run-off from farm land is funnelled down the valleys into the settlements, the water is typically heavily loaded with sediments and causes rapid siltation of soak away drainage situated along the roadside to the east of Porton and Idmiston. Surface water run-off typically has high velocity and can be particularly dangerous to pedestrians. Since the initial site visit, the outfall believed to carry water from the centre of Porton to the River Bourne has been cleared by Wiltshire Highways. They have also engaged a contractor to carry out a detailed survey of the surface water drains.

Sewer plans for the Parish were provided by Wessex Water and show that main sewers flow into Hurdcott Pumping Station. It is thought that the main sewer has not been upgraded since its installation, probably some time before 1960.

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<sup>18</sup>Data Book 18 Flood Risk and Sewers Survey

The diameter of the main foul water sewer is marked as 300mm on provided plans, based solely on the diameter of the sewer and the number of properties that discharge into it, it would be strongly advisable not to discharge surface water into the foul sewer. Pumping stations that serve Newton Tony and Idmiston were originally designed to operate for 3 to 4 hours per day and they are currently running for 24 hours per day. Any aged sewers are likely to be constructed of brittle pipe work, either salt glaze or concrete, which is susceptible to the action of tree roots. It is likely that most of the drains are in excess of 40 years of age and may have been degraded by tree root actions, subsidence or siltation. Tree roots often grow within sewer pipes which can reduce levels of supported flow and accelerate siltation.

There have been surface water ponding issues in the centre of Porton village, particularly adjacent to the village shop and the medical centre. This can pose a risk to the safety of residents since flooded road and walk ways hide trip hazards or potentially dislodged drain covers which increases the risk to pedestrians who may rely on these routes for access to local facilities, especially the medical centre. Idmiston has a similar problem in that surface water is produced in the location of the Dstl site which is largely covered in buildings and impermeable surfaces such as concrete and tarmac. The water runs down Church Road towards the railway arch and onwards along the narrow road to the foot of the hill posing a risk to road users and adjacent residents.

Wiltshire Highways have been active over the past months in clearing the soakaways and drainage systems. A damaged part of the system situated close to the junction of the Winterslow Road and the High Street is scheduled for repair in the near future.

Secondary information has been gathered from discussions held between Parish Council representatives and those involved in highway maintenance. A picture is painted of an ageing system which is likely undersized, and in need of repair in this one confirmed location. Any further loading of the system will need to be carefully considered on a quantitative basis. In the absence of any formal data or maps it raises the question of how stakeholders are to make an informed decision with regards to the provisioning of drainage for new development.



***River Bourne overflowing on to the main A338 Trunk Road North of Hairpin Bend at Idmiston***



***Surface runoff water forcing its way OUT of telecoms ducting at Idmiston***

## Census Report

The information provided in this section has been drawn from the Wiltshire Census 2011<sup>19</sup>, Idmiston Mosaic (household)<sup>20</sup> breakdown and the Idmiston Parish Census data over the past decades from 1931<sup>21</sup>.

Since 1961 there has been a rapid increase in house building in Idmiston Parish. The number of dwellings has risen from 442 (in 1961) to 909 (in 2011) an increase of 106%.

Since 1971 (the first date for which figures are available) the total number of vehicles in the Parish has risen from 734 to 1559 in 2011, an increase of 112%. The average number of cars per household has risen from 0.98 in 1971 to 1.76 cars per household in 2011.

The population has increased from a total of 1394 in 1961 to 2130 in 2011, an increase of 53%. Interestingly, there has been a rebalancing of the gender components. In 1961 there were 728 males living in the Parish, by 2011 there were 1043 an increase of 43%. In 1961 there were 666 females and by 2011 there were 1087, an increase of 63%.

There has also been a shift in age profile. In 1971 there were 446 children aged between 0-9 years, by 2011 there were only 191 children, a reduction of 57%. In 1971 there were 645 residents aged between 45-74 years, by 2011 there were 1010, an increase of 56%.

In the Idmiston Mosaic household breakdown, a total of 78.8% of households is comprised of a mixture of better off empty nesters, higher income older champions of village communities, well off commuters, older people living in larger houses, empty nesters owner occupiers, higher income families and retirees. This figure is far higher than the total of these categories for Wiltshire which is 38.4%. Further supporting these figures is the percentage of houses in the Parish which are detached (68.2%) compared for the figure for Wiltshire (35.1%).

One of the more striking statistics is the reduction in the number of children aged from 0-9 years matched against the percentage rise for older inhabitants. One of the reasons for this shift may be the lack of suitable and affordable accommodation for young families and older residents to downsize. The provision of affordable housing to enable young families to live in the village must be an important consideration when new development is considered.

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<sup>19</sup>Data Book 19: Wiltshire Census 2011 Selected Statistics Profile Tool

<sup>20</sup>Data Book 20: Idmiston Mosaic type breakdown (household)

<sup>21</sup>Data Book 21: Census data over recent decades



## Porton Down

Porton Down refers to the grouping of the major employers within the Parish. These are Dstl, PHE and the future Science Park, all of which are situated at Porton Down. Preliminary meetings with Dstl reflect a mutual desire to consider strategic steps to improve the facilities and infrastructure within the Parish and to minimise the impact of commuter traffic to these work places. It is planned that a Porton Down Community Working Group should be established consisting of representatives from the Parish Council, parishioners and the Porton Down employers. It is envisaged that this Working Group will seek to resolve common issues and work together with the County, Highways and Science Park project managers to develop acceptable strategic plans to enhance infrastructure, facilities and traffic congestion.



*Porton Down entrance from Winterslow Road*

## General observations

We are a rural community served by a network of mainly unclassified roads. The architecture at the centre of the village of Porton, which restricts the passage of the traffic, together with the absence of footpaths between Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon, leading to and from the primary schools at Gomeldon and St Nicholas on the Idmiston Road renders the current infrastructure quite unsuitable to cope with the levels of traffic being experienced at peak hours.

On the next page are some recommendations:

### **Policy 9 - Traffic and Transport**

The village centre infrastructure is no longer capable of managing the current levels of parking, traffic volume and increasing demand for leisure and support facilities. All new development proposals should provide information, appropriate to the scale of development, in the form of a Transport Statement and where necessary a Travel Plan, which demonstrates how any additional traffic generated by the proposal will be managed in terms of congestion, parking and highway safety. It should also include where possible details of improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Policy 10 - Infrastructure Community Safety**

Proposals which address identified problems associated with increased traffic flow, speeding, congestion, parking and safety issues will be strongly supported.

### **Policy 11 - Traffic Management and Calming**

Proposals to install traffic control measures (gateway treatments and vehicle activated speed signs) in the interests of greater safety, to moderate the flow of traffic at peak times from the A338 onto the Winterslow Road and traffic calming measures to be installed on the Winterslow Road between the eastern boundary of the village and the Main Gate at Porton Down will be strongly supported.

### **Policy 12 - School Parking**

Proposals for the provision of off-road parking to be made at both the Primary Schools; St Nicholas C of E Primary School in Porton and Gomeldon Primary School along with the provision of a new footway from Idmiston village towards St Nicholas C of E Primary School will be strongly supported. The introduction of a 20mph speed limited in the vicinity of the two primary schools will also be strongly supported.

### **Policy 13 - Porton Centre Parking**

Proposals to provide space for a dedicated area for Church Parking on Winterslow Road will be strongly supported.

### **Policy 14 - Idmiston Halt**

Any proposals to reopen the former railway station at Idmiston Halt on the London to Salisbury route as a dedicated request stop for the use of Porton Down employees to reduce traffic congestion and encourage commuting by train to Porton Down will be strongly supported.

# Housing

## Rationale

The Wiltshire Core Strategy, which was adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015, provides a current up-to-date Development Plan for our area. This has a significant bearing on how the villages will develop in the future.

Importantly, Porton is identified as a large village where residential development should predominately take the form of small housing sites within the defined limits of development. The Gomeldons are collectively identified as a small village where development will be limited to infill within the existing built up areas. Idmiston is not identified in the settlement strategy and consequently there is a general presumption against development there.

The Core Strategy has to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet future housing requirements up to 2026. Our Parish is located in the rural part of the Amesbury Community Area where there is a requirement to identify sites, in five named large villages, to accommodate a minimum of 197 new dwellings. Porton is one of these five large villages and will need to provide land for a minimum of 32 new dwellings if the requirement is to be allocated in proportion to the size of each of these villages. Recent permission to build 20 houses (including six affordable dwellings) on the site behind Chalk House will significantly reduce this figure.

## Housing needs survey

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

In order to identify the level of housing need in our Parish, Wiltshire Council undertook a survey on our behalf in May 2014. This generated 340 responses, which gave a 37% rate of return. This found:

- 12 households, unable to afford accommodation on the open market.
- 5 other households, with local connections, on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register.
- Hence 17 households in total, in housing need and requiring affordable homes in our Parish.
- There are 32 existing social homes in our Parish but with vacancies rarely arising.

Currently on sites of 5 or more dwellings, house builders are required to ensure 30% of the totals built are affordable. Were we to rely entirely on developers to provide the 17 affordable homes needed sites would have to be identified for 60 dwellings. This figure assumes that all new housing will be on sites of five or more dwellings. However, it is proposed that the Government will raise the threshold to ten dwellings which may make it more difficult for villages like Porton to achieve appropriate levels of provision of affordable housing without accepting larger developments.

An alternative may be to consider identifying sites that would not normally be granted planning permission, except for affordable housing and secure the interest of a social housing provider.

## **Affordable housing options - Outside the percentage required in private development**

We have two options available for consideration for the provision of Affordable Housing within the Parish without having to rely on large-scale commercial development within the Parish footprint.

1. A Community Land Trust (CLT)
2. Partnership with a Housing Association

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a not-for-profit organisation created to benefit the community by owning and sometimes developing land and property. There are two approaches to providing affordable homes through a CLT. Firstly the locally formed CLT takes on all the fundraising, risks and responsibilities and receives all the income from the properties. Secondly the CLT works in partnership with a housing association (HA). Wiltshire has a Community Land Trust already in existence (Wiltshire CLT) who are looking to enlist the support from communities in south west Wiltshire.

Probably the better alternative, because the Community will not have to raise the initial capital, is to work with a Housing Association, a not-for-profit organisation, which owns, lets and manages rental housing, the revenue acquired through rent is ploughed back into the acquisition and maintenance of the property.

One option is Wiltshire Rural Housing Association (WRHA) as they are keen to get involved in a partnership projects. The great advantage of WRHA is that it only houses people with local connections and needs.

However, both options require the provision of land at low cost. The only two sites in Parish ownership, the Porton Recreation Ground and the former Baptist Burial Ground are ill suited to built development by reason of flooding or restricted size. Consequently, if affordable housing provision is to be secured without private developer involvement, it will require the co-operation of landowners in the disposal of low cost exception sites.

Clearly there are issues around scale, location and mix of housing required and a questionnaire<sup>22</sup> was sent to all households in our Parish to establish their views.

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<sup>22</sup> Data Book 8: Parish Housing Needs Survey Report of May 2014

## Parish Futures Questionnaire Survey findings

We received responses from 296 households, which is a 30% rate of return for the Parish as a whole. 190 were from Porton, which gives an impressive 45% return for our largest village. The results were most illuminating and will be a major influence on the content and direction of our Neighbourhood Plan. The key points to have emerged are as follows:

- 94% want Porton to remain as a large village
- 78% want some new dwellings in Gomeldon (rising to 94% of the Porton returns)
- 85% don't want development sites of more than 10 dwellings
- 58% want small sites of 5 dwellings or less
- 56% wanted sites of 5 dwellings or more to maximise affordable housing provision
- 50% want allocated land limited to 32 dwellings with the remaining affordable on exception sites (i.e. those that would not normally get planning consent except for affordable housing)
- 90% support more housing at Porton Camp
- 48% support release of some Greenfield sites (41% were against)
- 50% support an embargo on building on flood prone land

### Site selection

A subsequent public meeting and workshop was held in September 2014 to establish which areas of land might be allocated for future housing development.

Details of 26 possible development sites, together with supporting information, were made available and those present were asked to identify those sites they felt were the 'least worst' if they were to be developed for housing and those they would not wish to see developed. These sites were identified as having either been identified in Wiltshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) exercises, or had been the subject of previous planning applications. Members of the steering group then declared any interests that they had in any of these sites<sup>23</sup>.

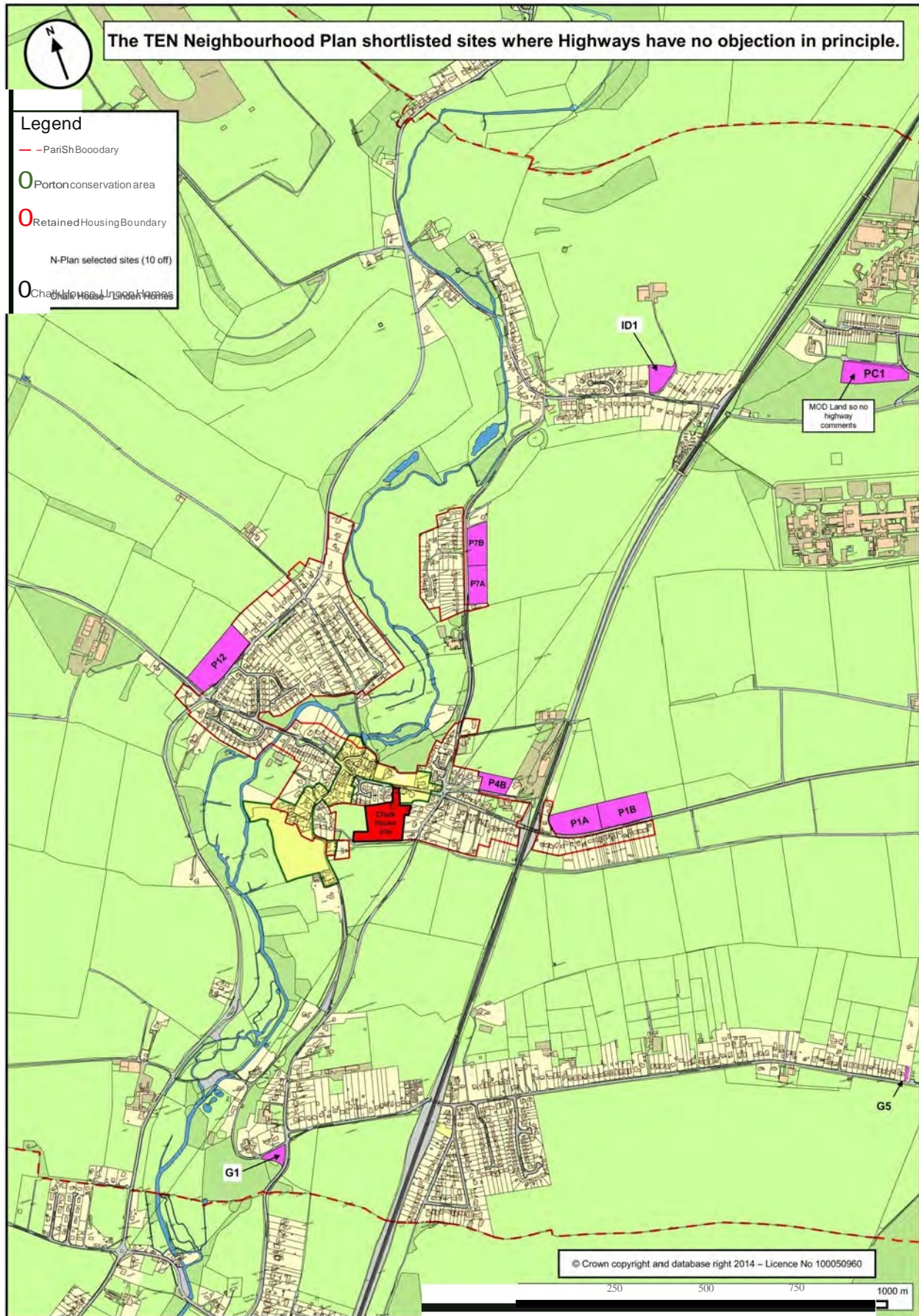
In all 78 individual returns<sup>24</sup> were received and analysed. This enabled a shortlist of 12 sites to be produced, all of which had been endorsed by more than 50% of the returns.

*(A map showing the locations of the chosen sites appears on the next page)*

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<sup>23</sup> Data Book 22: Declarations of Interest

<sup>24</sup> Data Book 23: Development site preference details



<b>Site Reference</b>		<b>Capacity</b>
<b>G1</b>	Land off Gomeldon Road, West Gomeldon.	1 dwelling
<b>G5</b>	Land at St Judes, East Gomeldon Rd, East Gomeldon	1 dwelling
<b>ID1</b>	Land off Church Road, Idmiston.	2 dwellings
<b>P1A</b>	Land on north side of Winterslow Rd, east of rail bridge, Porton.	10 dwellings
<b>P1B</b>	Land on north side of Winterslow Rd, adjoining P1A to the east.	10 dwellings
<b>P4B</b>	Land off Buller Park, opposite Porton Hotel, Porton.	5 dwellings
<b>P7A</b>	Land opposite Horefield Estate, Idmiston Road, Porton.	10 dwellings
<b>P7B</b>	Land adjoining P7A, Idmiston Rd, Porton.	10 dwellings
<b>P12</b>	Land between Porton Road & Beech End, Tidworth Road, Porton.	10 dwellings
* <b>P13A</b>	Church Farm, Tidworth Road, Porton.	5 dwellings
* <b>P15</b>	Land off Porton Road, Porton	4 dwellings
<b>PC1</b>	Southway, Porton Camp.	15 dwellings
* <i>Indicates sites that are not supported by Highways - see below</i>		
NB Sites are listed in no particular order other than by location alphabetically and numerical sequence		

**Figure 1: Table of Preferred Sites**

The shortlisted sites<sup>25</sup> in the table above, have been considered by Wiltshire’s Highways Department and neither P13A nor P15 are supported as their development would be detrimental to Highway Safety. Consequently, TEN sites are now shortlisted with a combined capacity of approximately 74 dwellings. In addition, at “Cuckoo Pen” on the Winterslow Road, there is a privately owned site within the development boundary and in the centre of the village. This may or may not be offered for development at some time in the future.

We have no control over site PC1 as it is on MOD land. Given the demand for affordable housing this would be a highly desirable position for development.

The capacity of the sites is based on the numbers of dwellings on similar sized areas of housing in the immediate vicinity and should only be taken as an approximate number. The majority of the larger sites are outside of the built limits of our settlements and are not allocated for development and have no planning status.

It is possible that Central Government may increase the number of dwellings on any site to ten, rather than five, as the minimum number where there is requirement to make provision for affordable housing. If this alteration should come into force, then we have six sites in the list above, with more than ten dwellings, giving a total possible development reserve of 65 dwellings.

On 25 September 2014, contrary to policy and against the decisions of Idmiston Parish Council, Wiltshire Council approved the granting of planning permission of the development of 20 houses on a green field site on a prominent hillside outside the settlement boundary of Porton (14/02043/FUL). The development as proposed comprises 20 dwellings of which six are affordable units. Consequently our requirement for affordable dwellings is reduced to 11 units. This implies a remaining development requirement of a minimum of 37 dwellings if the affordable units are to be provided by a private house builder.

<sup>25</sup>Data book 24: Development sites short list details



### **Policy 15 - Housing Needs**

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that sufficient Affordable Housing is available to meet the needs of those who live in the Parish or the locality of Idmiston. Core Policy 44 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy allows the development of 'rural exception' sites and Core Policy 46 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports the provision of housing for older people as an exception. Small schemes for affordable and elderly persons accommodation which come forward in compliance with this policy will be supported, subject to other policies within the plan. All other proposals for residential development will be expected to comply with Core Policy 43 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **Policy 16 - New Builds on Old Plots**

Any development using the gardens and 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

### **Policy 17 - Development Criteria**

Any developments in villages 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

### **Policy 18 - Preventing Overcrowding**

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.

## **Policy 19 - New Development Sites**

The Neighbourhood Plan will facilitate the delivery of approximately 32 homes across the Plan period. The delivery of new homes will be monitored, in the event that the development of new homes through existing commitments or proposals will not achieve the figure of approximately 32 dwellings, consideration will then be given for the development of the sites shown in Figure 1 of the plan. Subject to other policies in this Plan new residential development proposals will be supported to achieve the housing requirement where they deliver infill development or at the large village of Porton small scale development of no more than 11 homes within and immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Porton, as established in the Core Strategy. Residential development elsewhere in the Plan area will be resisted.

# Industry and Employment

## Rationale

Idmiston Parish is predominantly a rural farming community, however the MOD is the major employer on two major (Dstl Porton Down, Boscombe Down) sites. Activity is augmented by various small businesses that both support local requirements (shop, hairdressers, garden centre, hotel/pubs) and also provide a base for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's) such as builders and artisan services. This combination should provide for a mixed community and sustainable growth.

In order to support the Neighbourhood Plan, anonymised surveys to establish demand for future land requirements and facilities for businesses have been conducted. These investigations focus on the requirements from new and expanding local businesses.

A local business questionnaire formed the basis of the survey results<sup>26</sup>. In summary, 25 completed questionnaires were returned, representing businesses in Porton (14), Gomeldon (8) and Idmiston (2). It is not possible to establish accurately what percentage of local business this represents since several sole traders also operate from domestic premises within the Parish.

Businesses represented a good mix, consistent with a rural environment.

Agriculture related – 8

Retail/Hospitality – 7

Building construction – 5

Artisan – 2

Garage/repairs/sales – 2

Doctor's surgery – 1

The majority of businesses were freehold (14), a smaller proportion were leasehold (6) and the remainder fell into other categories. The majority (21) responded that their premises were adequate for current and future requirements, with only one business requiring additional space. No business saw a need to relocate within the next 5 years, only one identified a potential move in 5-10 years. The majority (24) saw no requirement to move, or that relocation was not applicable.

There was little requirement for new land. If relocation was to occur, the preference was for freehold, rather than leasehold, with approximately 50% of those who responded (9) to the relevant questions preferring to relocate within the Parish.

There was overwhelming opinion (16 out of 23) that business was improving. Asked to comment on barriers to business expansion, lack of suitable land was one factor of 13 cited. The survey results are a snapshot of local business requirements. The results indicate that business growth and development is not hindered through lack of available building land and that current facilities provided sufficient opportunity for growth and development.

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<sup>26</sup>Data Book 25: Local Business Survey results

## Agriculture

Idmiston Parish, formerly made up of small hamlets, was primarily downland, grazed by sheep and divided into small blocks of land owned by individuals and rented from larger landlords.

During the First World War, a large area of the Parish was enclosed by the Government for experimental work and is now known as Porton Down. The remaining areas of the Parish were stocked with dairy cows and arable crops producing milk and cereals on a small scale.

After World War Two, a number of smallholdings were combined, fewer cattle were farmed and the land was used for arable farming. These trends continue and the last milk producer ceased production in 2012. Only eight farming units remain, only three with any livestock and over the total, only ten people are now employed in agriculture. These figures compare with a number in excess of 100 agricultural employees some 100 years ago.

Looking forward, this trend seems set to continue with further consolidation of holdings, more mechanisation and less agricultural employment.

## Porton Down Establishments

The Porton Down establishments, consisting of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratories (Dstl), Public Health England (PHE) and the new Science Park are the largest employers and landowners in the Parish. The future of the site will have a major impact on local employment and traffic. It is important to know of any future developments which will impact and affect the balance of both.

There is considerable reorganisation of government research currently underway and some elements will move into the area and others may move away. At present there are some 2000 employees at the Dstl site. Future planned adjustments are detailed below.

- **Dstl** is the main occupant of the site. Some 550 posts from Fort Halstead in Kent will be relocated to Porton Down in 2018/19. In the same period, the organisation is to downsize by some 200-250 posts. This is part of a restructuring for new capability and a streamlining of the operation as a whole.
- **Public Health England** currently has 900 employees on site, the majority may move off-site to another location, leaving only approximately 300 employees on site.
- **The Science Park**, a new undertaking, is a Wiltshire Council responsibility and will be constructed in the area near the Main gate, a factor which may restrict the future size of the development. This venture will be limited to the development of bio-technology and there will be no commercial developments.
- **Explosives Magazine.** The development of this storage facility has probably had the most impact on our landscape. The facility is not yet completed. There will be further construction of a number of buildings, the impact of these will be limited as they will be partially buried. It is hoped, as time goes by, that the renewal of vegetation on this large, newly constructed and excavated site will mitigate some of the impact.

The issue having most impact on the villages is that of Porton Down generated traffic. The Porton Down establishments are making positive efforts to encourage car sharing and are exploring options to make greater use of public transport. The possibility of re-opening the Idmiston Halt has been discussed with Network Rail, but has been discounted by them due to timetabling issues. In view of the overwhelming increase in commuter traffic within the parish villages, we believe that this option should be pursued further. It is accepted that with such a large number of employees travelling to work from so many varied destinations, that car sharing will prove problematic; however, for the immediate future this may be the best possible solution for the majority of employees.

New initiatives are under way to provide channels of communication to enable us to explore community benefit with the employers at Porton Down. This may take the form of access to some shared leisure facilities, such as sports pitches, tennis courts etc. Such links are essential to the wellbeing and future development of our community in harmony with those having the greatest impact on it.

### **Policy 20 - Minimising Impact on Surrounding Countryside**

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 and screen planting
- An appropriate colour finish to help reduce their visual impact

### **Policy 21 - Porton Down Developments**

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 and screen planting
- Use colour finishes and, where necessary, undertake appropriate earthworks to soften their appearance
- Minimise environmental impact

## **A word about Development Orders**

The 2011 Localism Act empowers the Parish Council to require Wiltshire Council to support it in the establishment of Neighbourhood Development Orders. A Neighbourhood Development Order is an order which grants planning permission in relation to a particular Neighbourhood Area.

A Neighbourhood Development Order can enable the community to grant planning permission for new buildings they want to see go ahead and allow new homes and offices to be built without developers having to apply for separate planning permission.

These orders are subject to a community vote just like the Neighbourhood Plan ensuring that the local residents, rather than the County Council, determine whether a particular proposal goes ahead.

Idmiston Parish Council intends to explore the potential contribution that such Development Orders might make to the implementation of this plan.

## Parishioners' Wish List

On Saturday, 14th March 2015 a Public Meeting was held in the Memorial Hall to undertake a final consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Attendance was good, and parishioners were invited to take a final look at the document and comment on its contents and the priorities that we had distilled as being of greatest importance to the community (based upon the outcomes of previous public meetings and questionnaires).

All were invited to complete a final questionnaire to confirm the issues which were of the highest importance to them. In addition, those that were unable to attend were still able to view the draft using the Parish website, and then e-mail their comments to the Parish Clerk.

The issues identified are listed below, in order of priority:

- The deficit in Social and Community Facilities particularly facilities for Sport and the Young (26)
- The problem of parking for the Church, Schools and the shop and Surgery (21)
- Speed along the Winterslow Road and possibility of traffic calming (20)
- The issue of development control (18)
- The hope that traffic for Porton Down could be re-routed away from the villages (18)
- Building and repairing footpaths in the interests of pedestrian safety (13)
- Flood and sewerage concerns in Porton (8)
- The condition and underuse of the Porton Recreation Ground (5)
- Dog fouling (2)
- Footpaths to both primary schools from local housing (2)
- HGV weight limits for vehicles passing through the villages (2)
- Clean up and replant the area around the Porton Ford (2)
- Re-opening of Porton railway station (2)
- Affordable housing (1)
- The issue of the lack of space in the current graveyard (1)
- The maintenance of the Memorial Hall (1)
- The introduction of a nature Trim Trail (1)
- The creation of a footpath/cycle way to the Porton Down establishment (1)
- The creation of play areas in new developments of housing (1)
- The problem of a lack of retirement accommodation (1)
- Installation of traffic light controls at the railway bridge in East Gomeldon (1)

The quantity of responses received from each of the villages is as follows:

Porton 26

Gomeldon 9

Idmiston 4

## **Community Aspirations and Projects**

The text below sets out the Community Aspirations and projects that the Parish aspire to deliver in accordance with the Policies. For clarity the community aspirations do not comprise policy requirements.

### **Landscape and Heritage**

(See section entitled 'The Parish's Character and Heritage' and policies 5 to 7)

#### **Community Aspiration 1 - New Conservation Areas**

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

#### **Community Aspiration 2- Protect Historical Buildings**

Review buildings within the villages that should be maintained/protected as part of our cultural/historical heritage.

Note: Idmiston Historical Society has documented all buildings within this category

### **Porton Down Establishments**

(See section entitled 'Community facilities and services', 'Infrastructure' and 'Industry and Employment' and Policy 21)

#### **Community Aspiration 3 - Actively Engage with Porton Down Management**

The Parish Council should actively engage with Porton Down (Dstl, PHE and Science Park) to achieve a mutually acceptable plan to manage the impact of increased numbers of employees on Idmiston Parish infrastructure. This should include managing commuter traffic, resolving community safety with respect to traffic speeding, congestion, parking and safety issues and assistance with local infrastructure facilities. This could be structured in a partnering relationship.

#### **Community Aspiration 4 - Porton Down Sports Facilities**

Increase use of and access to Porton Down sports facilities.

#### **Community Aspiration 5 - New Access Road to Porton Down**

To continue discussions and maintain pressure for a new access road into the Porton Down Establishment from the A338 at Boscombe with Dstl, Porton Down



## **Community facilities and services**

(See section entitled 'Community facilities and services')

### **Community Aspiration 6 - Provision of Diverse Open Space**

Seek to preserve and enhance the local environment (Public Open Space) and 'open feel' of the villages by seeking to maximize green and open space (as part of new developments) on-site whenever possible.

### **Community Aspiration 7 - Improve the Porton Recreation Ground**

Revisit the feasibility of improving the drainage and quality of the Porton recreation ground to provide a better long term sport and recreational facility.

### **Community Aspiration 8 - Use of Open Space**

Seek to secure public use of 'non-public' open space wherever appropriate and however possible.

## **Infrastructure**

(See section on 'Infrastructure' under sub-heading 'Parking')

### **Community Aspiration 9 – Off-Road Parking**

The Parish Council will liaise with the Highways Authority to investigate the provision of more off-road parking to ease congestion in the centre of Porton village outside the village shop.

## **Housing and Development**

(See section entitled 'Housing' and Policy 19)

### **Community Aspiration 10 - Developments**

A commitment to consider partnering the Community Land Trust (CLT) and Partnership with a Housing Association as an alternative to relying entirely on commercial developers.

### **Community Aspiration 11 - Liaison with Ministry of Defence**

Development site PC1, a Brownfield site, would be an ideal site for affordable housing for employees at Porton Down.

- That the Parish Council should actively encourage the development of this site through the relevant authorities.

### **Community Aspiration 12 - Liaison with County Planners**

To establish a consistent and regular relationship and liaison with County Planners, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan, with other planning policies, form the basis for future decisions.

### **Community Aspiration 13 - Engaging with Developers**

That the Parish Council is pro-active in engaging developers at an early stage of the planning process to ensure consistency with the Neighbourhood Plan policies and to maximise benefit from the relationship.

### **Industry and Employment**

(See section entitled 'Industry and Employment')

### **Community Aspiration 14 - Support to Local Businesses**

To encourage local businesses within the Parish.

## Consultation and Organisation

With the support of Idmiston Parish Council the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group organised the first public meeting to launch the project in January 2014. During the following 15 months each phase of research, consultation and plan development was presented to parishioners at subsequent public meetings. This enabled them to review progress, make recommendations and comment on the draft plan at each stage. This process included a Parishioners Planning Meeting in April 2014, a site selection workshop in September 2014 and a final consultation meeting on 14 March 2015. In addition, during the summer of 2014 the Steering Group attended all three village and school fetes, handed out information and questionnaires to parishioners as well as giving informal briefings and answering questions about the Plan.

The Steering Group supported Wiltshire Council in conducting a Housing Needs Survey to establish the requirement for affordable and social housing in the Parish. A Parish Futures Questionnaire exercise was undertaken to determine parishioners' priorities for the future which delivered a 30% rate of return from the Parish as a whole (45% for the village of Porton). We conducted a total of six traffic counts during the summer of 2014 at critical points in the three villages, with the help of a large group of volunteers. The Steering Group commissioned two separate firms of Consultants to undertake comprehensive studies of infrastructure and the landscape implications of any new development sites.

To support all of these activities a grant was received from central government through the auspices of Locality. All findings and activities are recorded in the Data Book associated with this report.

A copy of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan was posted on the IPC website on 3 March 2015 to enable feedback and preparation for our final Public Consultation meeting in the Memorial Hall on 14 March 2015. Invitations to this meeting were delivered to all households in the Parish. We received responses, comments and observations by email and via a questionnaire from parishioners in person at the meeting plus also some delivered via a collection box in the Nisa shop. Many residents and businesses have contributed their ideas through a wide range of consultative workshops, meetings, discussions and questionnaires.



*Public Meeting on 14th March in the Memorial Hall*

This version of the document will be posted on the IPC website in early May 2015 with all supporting documents. Wiltshire Council has agreed to receive the Plan in mid May. Whilst this will not (and nor is it designed to) prevent rural development, it is hoped that it will provide a framework for controlled and strategically managed development to sustain and ensure the continued vibrancy of the Parish and reduce the threat of ill-conceived, opportunistic or irrelevant development.

## Summary

The key findings from the document which has developed over the last 18 months have resulted in the following outcomes.

The issues identified have evolved and emerged over the period of this consultation.

The Idmiston Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has linked the parishioners' wish list with the relevant policies contained in the plan.

- Provide additional facilities such as open and green spaces and sports and youth facilities. In this context to improve liaison with the Porton Down management.

[Policy 8, Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\)](#)

- Address the need to regulate the volume of vehicles using the village roads at peak times together with the problem of a distinct lack of parking provision and the issue of speeding vehicles. Provision of off-road parking at the two primary schools.

[Policy 9, Traffic and Transport](#)

[Policy 10, Infrastructure Community Safety](#)

[Policy 12, School Parking](#)

[Policy 13, Porton Centre Parking](#)

- Only the sites identified by parishioners should be permitted for housing development. This would include site PC1, a Brownfield site on MOD land.

[Policy 17, Development Criteria](#)

[Policy 19, New Development Sites](#)

- Ensure the maintenance of village separation and identities and the rural feel of the Parish.

[Policy 4, Maintain Rural Feel](#)

[Policy 5, Protect Character and Heritage](#)

[Policy 15, Housing Needs](#)

[Policy 18, Preventing Overcrowding](#)

- Protect historical buildings in the Parish and pursue conservation status for Idmiston village.

[Policy 6, Maintaining Historical Legacy](#)

## Thanks

We should like to give our sincere thanks to the core members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for all their commitment, energy, good humour and determination over the past 18 months in bringing the Neighbourhood Plan to completion. Without them, it would not have been possible:

David Adams  
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Carole Morris  
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David Tasker  
Richard Taylor

Our thanks too must go to all the Parishioners who have given their time to count traffic, deliver flyers and questionnaire, help organise our meetings and, most importantly, for responding to our surveys and questionnaires.

## Data Book Contents

Data Book 1	Breakdown of Expenses
Data Book 2	Consultation with Wiltshire Council
Data Book 3	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference
Data Book 4	Record of Steering Group meetings
Data Book 5	Details of public consultation
Data Book 6	Details of surveys and interviews
Data Book 7	Details of summer fetes
Data Book 8	Parish Housing Needs Survey Report of May 2014
Data Book 9	Parish Futures Questionnaire and results
Data Book 10	Details of workshop analysis and site maps
Data Book 11	Landscape Survey
Data Book 12	Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement
Data Book 13	Open Space Audit
Data Book 14	Building Survey for Idmiston Memorial Hall
Data Book 15	Youth Survey
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Data Book 21	Census data over recent decades
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