

E A S T M E O N  
The Village and its Design

# E A S T M E O N

## The Village and its Design

In 1998, the Village of East Meon embarked on a Village Design Statement, to record what the people who live here feel is special about the village, and to make recommendations for managing change in the future.

The Steering Group enlisted the help and support of the community in a variety of ways. There were generous contributions of time and skills by members of the village and of money by public and village agencies which are listed on the back cover.

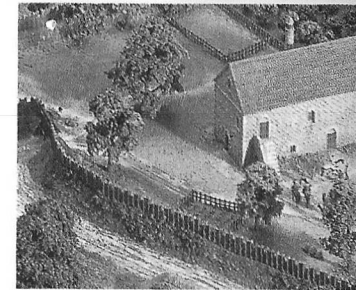
The book grew beyond the scope of a standard Village Design Statement, to the point where we decided to split the text in two. The VDS proper – our recommendations for improving the present and managing the future – is set out in the last section of the book, starting on page 53.

The rest of this book is a study of East Meon by the people who live here, an account of what we feel is special about the village and some criticisms of developments which went wrong. It is lavishly illustrated by the work of a local photographer, artist and map – maker. We hope it will provide pleasure and interest both to those who live here and those who visit East Meon in the future.

## Introduction

East Meon is located six miles to the west of Petersfield. It lies within the local authority of East Hampshire District Council; the bulk of the village is a Conservation Area and the surrounding countryside is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The parish of East Meon is the largest in Hampshire. The Design Statement includes the village itself and two other areas - Frogmore and Leydene. It does not attempt to cover the whole parish.



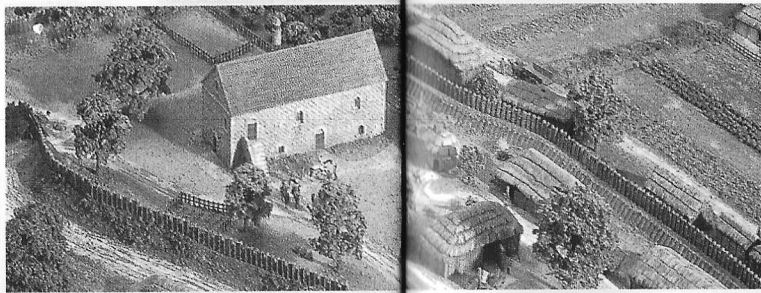
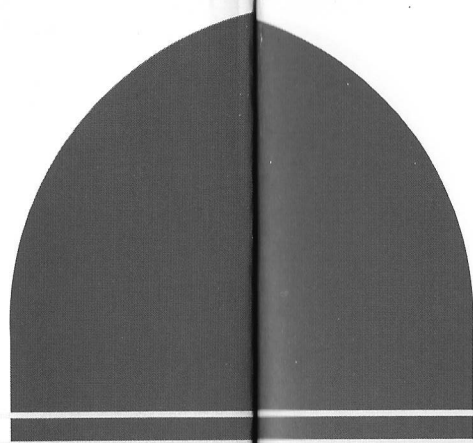
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In 1986, East Meon was designated the country's Domesday Village, not because any of its buildings are known to date back to 1086 but because the layout of the village today echoes that of Norman times. A model of the village in the 11th Century was displayed at the Great Hall in Winchester during 1986 and is now at Bayeux, next to the famous tapestry.

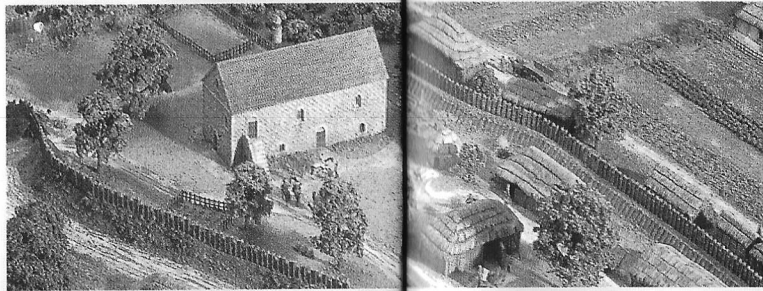
East Meon is proud of two features which any future development must observe - Diversity and Quality. Both its landscape and its buildings offer a glorious mix of history and function; no century has been allowed to destroy the character of earlier periods - although the second half of the twentieth has come closer than most. We respect the need for change, but we regret recent developments where quality has been sacrificed for economic expediency.

There is a brief description at the back of this section of the approach the Village adopted to researching and writing this Appraisal and Design Statement. The Appraisal describes the setting, qualities and blemishes of the Village as its residents see them; the Design Statement sets out our recommendations for managing change both for the present and for a better future.



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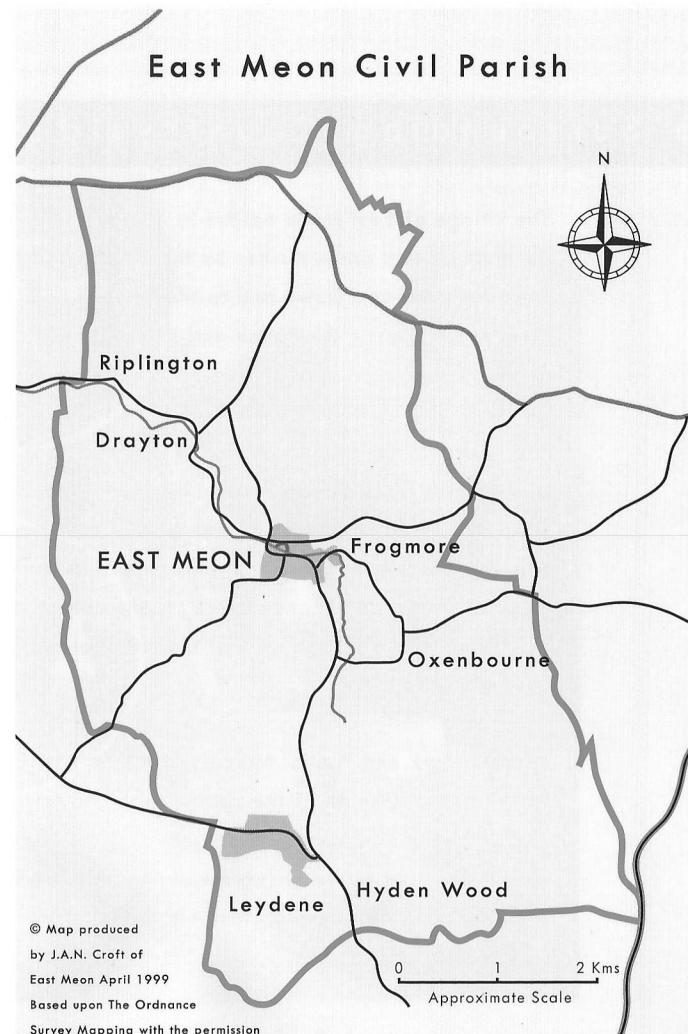


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## East Meon Civil Parish



© Map produced  
by J.A.N. Croft of

East Meon April 1999

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East Hampshire District Council LA078964 1999

## The Surrounding Countryside

The village of East Meon nestles in a wide valley bounded on its southern and eastern sides by the South Downs; to the west lies Henwood Down and to the north is Park Hill. The River Meon rises in the Parish and makes its exit to the west of the village.

The hamlet of Frogmore is included in the VDS as it is traditionally considered part of East Meon. Frogmore is a small settlement of houses spanning four centuries which grew up around Frogmore Mill and Farm and was thus an integral part of the economic life of the village. It is connected to the village by well-tended allotments and a well used footpath.

Leydene Park and H.M.S. Mercury, a Ministry of Defence site to the east and south of the village, are also included as the M.O.D. site is now surplus to its requirements and will be sold in the near future. It represents the only remaining site for significant new development within the parish.

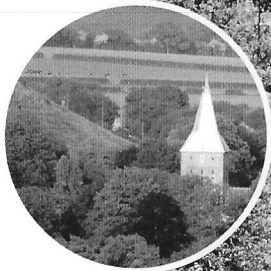
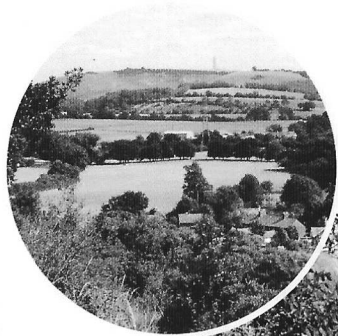


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The Cross



## The River Meon

The river gives the village its name and much of its character; it rises at springs at the foot of Hyden Hill, a mile to the south of the village, and meanders through the valley and the village. It is home to kingfishers, herons, moorhen, water voles, little egrets and possibly otters.

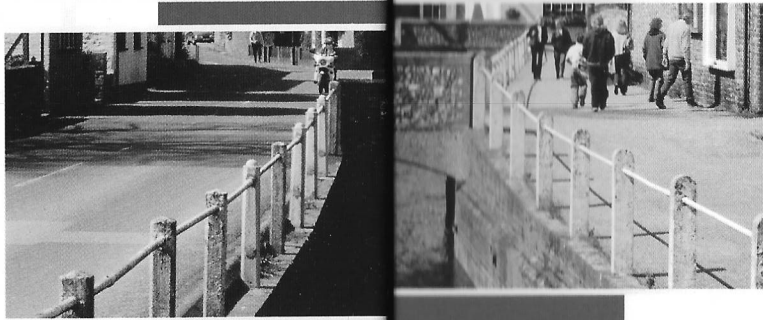
The river flows on a clay bed 40 feet above the water table and is reputed to be the highest chalk stream in England. It is thus very vulnerable to extraction. Following serious flooding in the village in 1953, the river was substantially re-engineered and partially re-routed, an issue which we address on page 15.





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There were originally two fords across the river, one at Frogmore and the second at Forge Sound - the basis of human habitation in East Meon.

Local historian Freddie Standfield wrote about the role of the Meon in village life: "The river was man's natural ally .... providing drinking water for man and beast and its secondary use of driving mills. But there were times when ... the river ceased to be a friend, overflowing and invading many a home; the resulting ill-health was quite immeasurable." We shall see later the results of engineering work in the 1950s to prevent the ravages of flooding.



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## History

There are Bronze Age burial barrows within the parish boundaries of East Meon which date back to 2,000 BC; there was an iron age fort at Old Winchester Hill constructed 500 years before the Romans invaded Britain and there is evidence of Roman occupation in and around the village.

East Meon itself started life somewhere between 400 and 600 AD; it was part of the Royal Manor belonging first to King Alfred the Great. The Domesday Survey of 1086 shows that the Manor then belonged to William the Conqueror; it records six mills and land for 64 ploughs - it must have been a substantial population.



The Forbes Al

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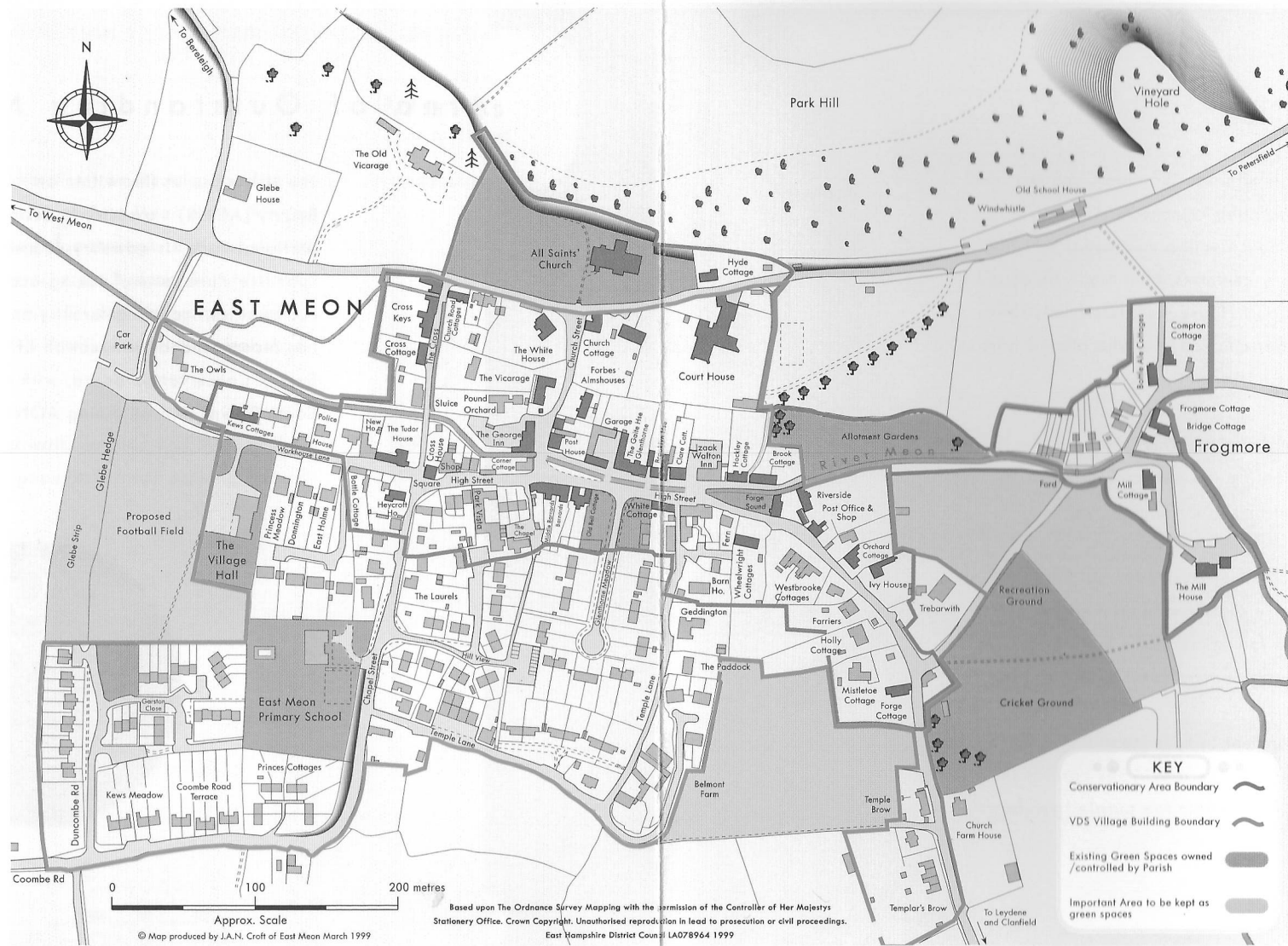
The Church of All Saints was re-built after the Norman Conquest, and dates between 1075 and 1150, resembling Winchester Cathedral in style. Near the church is the Court House with a mediaeval hall dating from 1359. At this time, and for many centuries, East Meon belonged to the Bishops of Winchester. The Court House was its administrative centre and home to a small congregation of monks who played host to the Bishop when he held his Assizes in the hall.

East Meon played its part in the English Civil War in the 1640s; the Roundheads camped in the village before the Battle of Cheriton in 1644, which turned out to be the turning point of the War.

During World War II a large contingent of Australian soldiers was encamped opposite South Farm on the outskirts of the village. Incendiary and anti-personnel mines fell in Frogmore and on the surrounding farmland; the only casualties were some sheep and pigs.

The most intensive period of development in East Meon has occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. The pre-1950s core of the village is designated a Conservation Area within the purple line shown on the Village map.





0 100 200 metres

Approx. Scale

© Map produced by J.A.N. Craft of East Meon March 1999

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**KEY**

- Conservatory Area Boundary
- VDS Village Building Boundary
- Existing Green Spaces owned / controlled by Parish
- Important Area to be kept as green spaces

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The whole parish lies within an Area of Outstanding National Beauty [AONB] - a national designation as important as a National Park. Its advisory committee is committed to "positive management" taking account of the needs of local communities, including farming and other rural enterprises; it has recommended the creation of a joint Hampshire and Sussex Conservation Board, with responsibility for the whole South Downs and adjoining AONBs.



## Natural Beauty

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## Walks

The full South Downs Way stretches from Beachy Head to Winchester; it crosses the parish of East Meon at the fringes of Butser Hill and follows the ridge through Leydene, skirting the perimeter of the HMS Mercury at Leydene, Salt Hill, the ancient Halnaker Lane, Coombe Hill and Henwood (which has associations with the Civil War), across to the Iron Age fort on Winchester Hill.

There are several designated walks around and through the village, and East Meon is a popular hub for walking parties.



## Features of the Landscape

Although some hedges have been removed to make way for open "prairie" land, many original hedges remain. There are also several sunken lanes, notably the road from Chalk Dell to the west of the village, and Gravel Lane to the east of Frogmore. Halnaker Lane is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Looking back from the village car park one can see two lines of hedges which make up the easterly boundary of the village and which now define the Glebe Strip; this is what remains of mediaeval strip fields which date back to Saxon times or earlier. The dividing line between such fields was not hedges but grass paths called 'balks' or 'baulks'. The existing Glebe hedge, therefore, has no very ancient historic significance except that it marked the eastern boundary of the more recent Glebe Strip which belonged to successive Vicars of East Meon during their incumbencies, for the convenience of keeping a cow and a few sheep. Its existence would have followed abandonment of the common field and the re-allocation of that land.





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A single tree on the ridge of Wether Down is a favourite landmark. However the most famous feature of the village is the spire of the Church of All Saints, which can be seen from miles around; it is framed by Park Hill to the north - or viewed from it. It is one of the few churches in England where thistles reach higher than the weather vane!

The complex at H.M.S. Mercury (see page 29) stands out as an example of Ministry of Defence development which did not need to observe planning regulations - a huddle of PWD buildings and, at night, brash security lighting unmatched for the rest of the length of the South Downs Way (which passes alongside the site).



## Diversity

Most of the views of the village and its surroundings are harmonious - a pleasing balance between the Downs, fields, hedges, woods and isolated trees, the course of the River Meon, the farms and then the buildings and open spaces which make up the village itself. This balance must not be disturbed.

There are, however, some features of the surrounding countryside which spoil the harmony. The communications masts on Butser and Salt Hill (providing transmission for the police and radio telephones) intrude on the skyline of the Downs. A line of electricity pylons across the upper valley and over the ridge is equally obtrusive. The green plastic sheds currently used by one of the village farms for lambing are a further example of intrusive materials - although the agricultural necessity for lambing sheds must be recognised.



Corner Cottage



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## Issue 1 : The River Meon

Because its clay bed is "perched" above the watertable, the River Meon has its own idiosyncracies, including a tendency to dry up at source during extended dry periods. The changes made by man over the centuries have not always been sympathetic. The "fall" of the river from east to west of the village is dramatic and the river is liable to flood when rainfall is heavy. To paraphrase the nursery rhyme, when it is dry it is very, very dry and when it is wet it floods.

Drinking water for East Meon and the surrounding area is drawn direct from the aquifers at the river's source; water runs off from the fields directly into the river. Over the years, extraction has increased with the growth of population.

In 1953, East Meon suffered its worst flood for forty years. A study conducted forty years later (John Sweet-Escott, *River Management*) described the engineers' response as "technology can fix it". The river was shortened and straightened, widened and deepened, with brick banks on both sides; the bed was lowered by six inches and concreted. An overflow channel was dug at the west end of the village with pre-cast concrete slabs forming the banks.

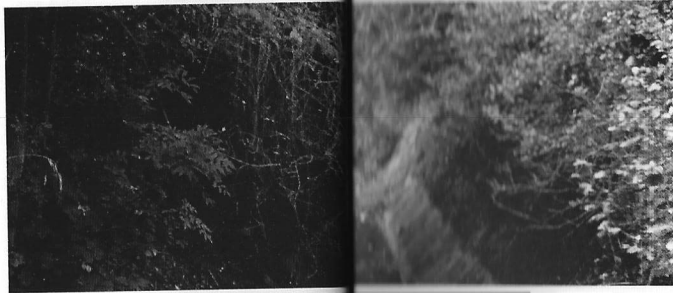


## Meon

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The effects of this treatment compound the effects of increased extraction from the aquifers. For much of the year, the flow is sluggish and choked by vegetation and garbage; natural plant and wildlife habitats have been destroyed; the visual effect is harsh, particularly "the rectangular cross-section of the concrete trough". The Geography Faculty of the University of Southampton comes on field trips to observe how not to manage rivers!

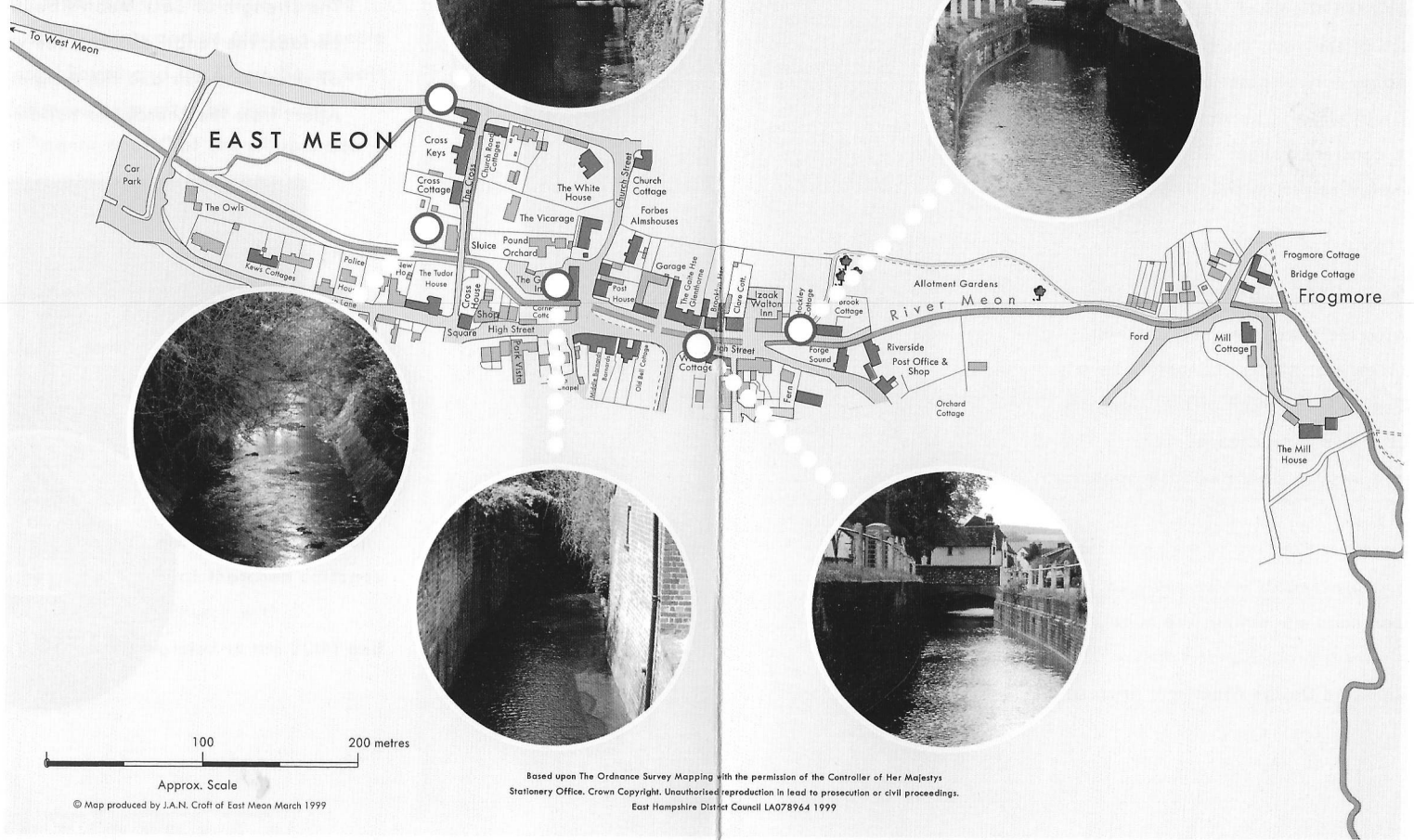
The river had not been completely "natural" before 1953; there were two mill ponds upstream of the village; there were six small arched bridges in the village itself and the river was partly channelled by a vertical brick wall on one bank. However, this stretch of the river still possessed the natural characteristics of low flow channel size, appropriate substrates, meander wave lengths, pool and riffle spacing.

Whilst it is still vitally important to prevent flooding in the populated areas of the village, there are many improvements which could be made to make this stretch of the Meon more appealing. We hope that such improvements might be the basis for a project undertaken with the relevant agencies as a result of the Village Design Statement process.





# The River Meon



100 200 metres

Approx. Scale

© Map produced by J.A.N. Croft of East Meon March 1999

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## Buildings

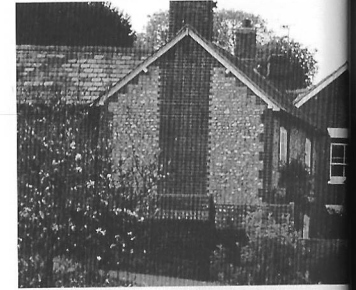
The strength of East Meon's buildings lies in the diversity of periods, the range of sizes, the wealth of details, the mixture of street patterns and the mingling of built and open spaces. Apart from the church, no building dominates the village.



Forge Cottage



Heycroft House



The High Street

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## Historic

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Heycroft House



The High Street

The village has a scattering of important old buildings, starting with the 11th Century Church of All Saints and its glorious steeple added in the 13th Century; Forge Sound and the Court House both date from the 14th Century, followed soon after by the Tudor House, reputedly the southern "manor house" of the village, and Heycroft House.

The High Street begins by the Forge at the junction with Frogmore Lane; it is dissected by the river (crossed here by a line of four bridges) and bordered by houses of every period and material, notably the William and Mary frontage of Glenthorne House. It ends at Workhouse Lane and Chapel Street in what used to be the village square.

The Cross is a delightful combination of old buildings, one of which was the old Angel Inn; Workhouse Lane has a combination of substantial mediaeval houses and terraces of thatched cottages. Church Street frames the famous view of the church with a collection of 19th Century Almshouses (completed in the 20th) and the Queen Anne Church Cottage.



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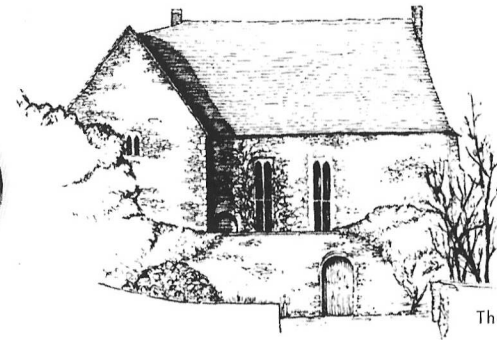
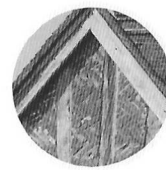
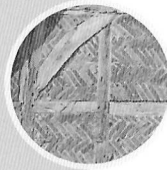
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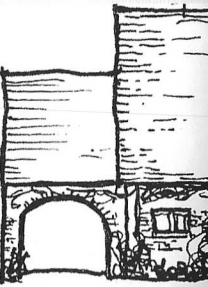


## Materials

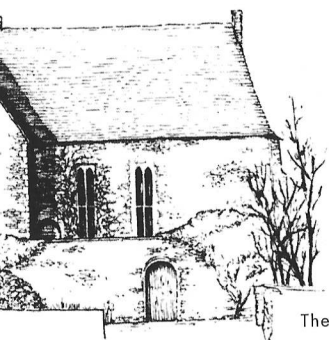
But it isn't only the picture-book buildings which define East Meon. Throughout, there is a wealth of diversity of building materials and details, notably flint walling, hand made bricks, clay tiles, Welsh slates and thatch. The stone of the Great Hall of the Court House was followed by brick, timber beams and some flint. Then come the timbers of the many Tudor buildings, notably Heycroft, the Tudor House and Forge Cottage, followed by the brick of Church Cottage, Cross Keys and Glenthorne. Flint walls are a feature of all periods - of which the most notable example is the Victorian almshouses. Some old buildings and many modern houses have boarded exteriors.



The Court House



book buildings which define East Meon. The village has a wealth of diversity of building styles, including hand made flint walling, hand made tiles and thatch. The stone of the village was followed by brick, timber and stone. To come the timbers of the many buildings, the Tudor House and the brick of Church Cottage, and the stone of the Court House. Flint walls are a feature of all buildings. A notable example is the Victorian buildings and many modern houses



The Court House



The Tudor House

The village has a number of brick terraces built in the 19th Century, excellent examples of Victorian social housing, and the tradition is maintained in the 1990's affordable housing in Duncombe Road.

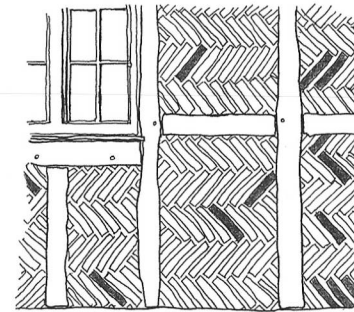
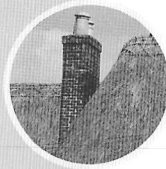
New flats for senior citizens have been built on the site of the old village hall and library and an old rifle range.

Villagers were asked in the VDS questionnaire which parts of the village are "Special" or "Typical" of East Meon; a break-out group at the first workshop addressed the same question. The answers show that villagers appreciate above all the diversity of architecture. While the Church and the Court House were mentioned more frequently than other buildings, there was a very wide spread of replies including "the old buildings", "the whole village" (Special) and "different buildings help to build the character" (Typical).

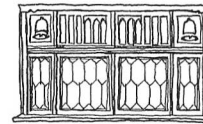


## Details

Individual properties have their own unique features such as ornate window frames chimney stacks, stone work, herring-bone brickwork and timber framing. There is a further variety of finishes including painted brick and flint walls.



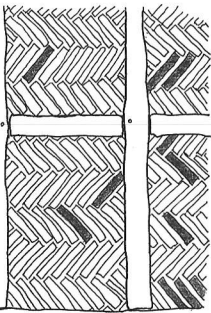
Brickwork at Heycroft



Window of Bell Cottage



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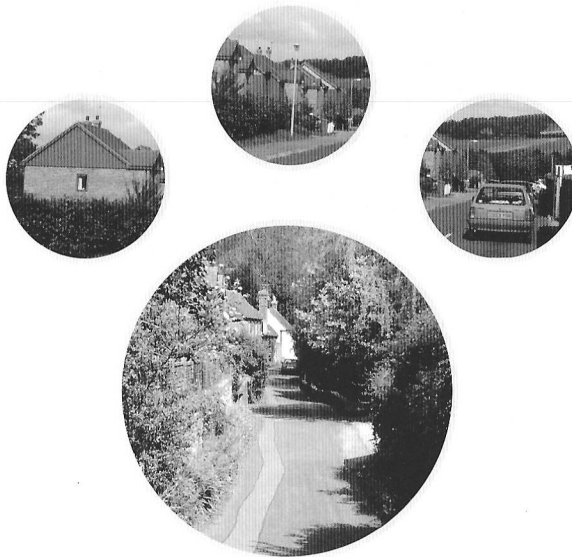


...of Bell Cottage



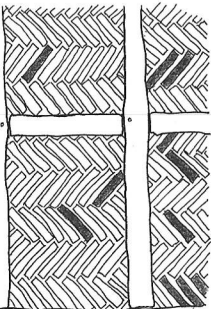
Forge Cottage

Although the basic street plan of the village is a formal grid,  
the highways twist and curve sympathetically following the  
contours of natural slopes and the course of the River Meon;  
there are tiny lanes like The Cross and sweeping main streets  
with flint walls and no pavements.

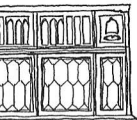


# Layout

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... work at Heycroft



... of Bell Cottage



Forge Cottage

Although the basic street plan of the village is a formal grid,  
the highways twist and curve sympathetically following the  
contours of natural slopes and the course of the River Meon;  
there are tiny lanes like The Cross and sweeping main streets  
with flint walls and no pavements.



## The 20th Century

Development since the 1950s has often been out of character with the remainder of the village. The Square was once a hub of shops and traders; it has become the busy intersection of the High Street, Workhouse Lane, Chapel Street and The Cross. Only one shop still operates here - a general store whose design owes little to the architecture of its predecessors.

The Village Hall was built in the 1970s at the western end of Workhouse Lane; the primary school on Coombe Road follows the flat-roofed design of many school buildings of that period. Architecture in East Meon, as in many parts of Britain, suffered a slump in standards in the 1960s and '70s.

Moving to the Eastern end of the High Street, it is stated in the "Character of the Conservation Area" that most buildings in this stretch are detached but set so closely together that they seem to provide a continuous frontage. One new house in particular breaks all these rules. It is set back from the building line away from the original flint farm building which is set on the road side.





has often been out of character with the Square was once a hub of shops at the busy intersection of the High Street, The Cross and The Cross. Only one shop still remains whose design owes little to the 1970s.

In the 1970s at the western end of the school on Coombe Road follows the school buildings of that period. In many parts of Britain, suffered a boom in the 1960s and '70s.

On the High Street, it is stated in the "Conservation Area" that most buildings in this area are so closely together that they seem to form a continuous line. One new house in particular breaks away from the building line away from the road which is set on the road side.



Duncombe Rd

The proportions of the roof line together with the style of building are completely out of character with the neighbouring houses.

Another feature of recent development has been in-filling within the conservation area; attractive gardens and trees have made way for modern buildings many of which fall below the high standards expected in a conservation area. Criticism has been levelled at the recent rash of conservatories, bolted onto houses with little consideration of the original architecture and often in very prominent positions. Another feature of modern development has been the use of materials which simply don't blend - notably the use of light mortar to bind the dark red bricks favoured by today's builders.

The village has, however, been fortunate in escaping any large and multi-storied blocks of flats and the fact that the tallest building is only three storeys tall is most unusual. The affordable/social housing built on the Duncombe Road estate in the 1990s combines economy with a surprisingly high standard of materials and architectural detail - notably in its variations of roof line and surfaces. The conversion of Garston Farm dairy and stables into market housing has made excellent use of wood, brick and flint.



## Diversity gone wrong

At the first Workshop, one villager took us on a tour along a stretch of the street in which he lives - Temple Lane - where it flanks the southern edge of the housing of East Meon. It demonstrates how latter-day developments crammed along the fringe of a village can produce unattractive results.

There are some mature buildings, notably the 16th Century thatched cottage at the western end, improbably named "Sebastopol", the bungalows opposite, built for workers on the Leydene Estate in the 1910s and later extended, and Belmont farm to the west.



1960s terrace housing



1950s council

ong

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1960s terrace housing



1950s council h

This stretch of Temple Lane today comprises a hodge-podge  
of 1950s council houses - solidly built in brick with well-  
tended gardens - a 1960s terrace, whose materials already  
look worn and frail, and the latest contribution to village  
diversity, six unsightly new houses, their height out of propor-  
tion to the adjacent properties and built on the "squiggly  
worm" layout beloved of '90s developers.



Anvil Close



## Issue 2 : Housing

In the pre-Workshop survey, there was an interesting conflict in answers to the question "Do we need more housing?" People who live in market housing rejected the proposition (27% for, 64% against) whilst those who live in social housing agreed (65% for, 31% against).

In discussion at the Workshop, it emerged that most people agree there may be a need for more affordable housing, whilst it is accepted that any new "executive" houses would distort still further the socio-economic mix of the village. The development at Leydene of former officers' quarters into prosperous houses has further biased the equation (see page 29).

The provision of new housing will, however, be influenced both by market forces and by what is laid down in the District Plan. So far as the village is concerned, much will depend on where the Policy Boundary is drawn by the District Council since development is normally only permitted within such a boundary (see "Open Spaces" p39).

There is a strong view that affordable housing is needed, to provide homes for young people starting careers and families who can at present not easily find anywhere to live in East Meon owing to the very high prices which are usually fetched for small houses in the village.



Forge Sou

there was an interesting conflict in answers to "more housing?" People who live in market housing (27% for, 64% against) whilst those who live in council housing (65% for, 31% against).

Overall, it emerged that most people agree there is a need for affordable housing, whilst it is accepted that any increase in council housing would distort still further the socio-economic mix of the village. The conversion of the former officers' quarters into council housing has further biased the equation (see page 29).

The Local Plan will, however, be influenced both by market conditions and the need to come down in the District Plan. So far as the village is concerned, the decision is based on where the Policy Boundary is drawn by the Local Plan. Development is normally only permitted within such a boundary (see "Policy Boundary" p39).

If more affordable housing is needed, to provide homes for young people, careers and families who can at present not afford to live in East Meon owing to the very high prices of housing, then more small houses in the village.



Forge Sound

One farmer pointed out that of the three men who worked on his farm, only one had a home in East Meon - the others couldn't afford to live here.

In fact, East Meon has the highest proportion of social housing (26%) of any town or village in the district. It is accepted that future housing surveys may show a proven need for a small number of Affordable Houses for local people, which may legally be built on exception sites outside the Policy Boundary.

The Local Plan, Second Review, is only in its preliminary stages but is expected to show the need to build additional housing in the smaller villages and East Meon may not be exempt from this requirement. We hope that market-priced housing will be kept to an absolute minimum and that it should be kept to the bottom end of the scale, providing one- or two-bedroomed units at low cost. Any new development of executive housing should be confined to Leydene (see next page)

Heavy traffic on the rural roads and lanes leading to and from East Meon militates against any big increase in the size of the settlement; the road from Clanfield as it approaches the village is particularly dangerous and any further access to this road should be strictly curtailed.

There are also sewage problems in the village, which cause distasteful overflows in periods of heavy rain, and these would need to be addressed before further development is contemplated.



## Issue 3 : Leydene

The area of Leydene, Coombe Wood and Hyden Wood lies two miles to the south east of the main village. What had been the Leydene Estate was requisitioned by the Navy in 1941 and became a Navy Signals School under the name of HMS Mercury. An assortment of permanent and temporary buildings typical of service bases were subsequently built there, resulting in what one resident describes as "an architectural eyesore unique throughout the length of the South Downs Way".

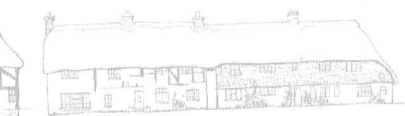
Following a re-organisation of naval training in the 1990s, the Ministry of Defence sold the HMS Mercury site south of the Droxford Road and west of Clanfield Road, the areas now known as Leydene Park, Mercury Park and Hyden Wood. The EHDC set restrictions on the use which could be made of these areas, recognising that they are of critical importance from landscape and environmental points of view - it stipulated that they should be used by other branches of the armed services, or for "educational, research, hospital or recreational purposes". The Council specifically stated that "residential and employment uses are not considered appropriate".



Leydene

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Leydene House

However, no developers came forward who were willing to invest in any of the uses specified by the EHDC, and in the end Leydene Park and Hyden Wood were developed as executive housing estates, while Mercury Park was handed to the EarthWorks Trust which has developed a Sustainability Centre dedicated to providing environmentally friendly management of the woods and open spaces on the Park, and to re-cycling the buildings. It plans to run residential and day courses on Sustainability for a variety of visiting students and others.

The EarthWorks Trust has not found it easy to raise the finances necessary to achieve its ambitions and there are concerns that it may not be able rapidly to complete the restoration of buildings which are currently in disrepair.



## Leydene

The final segment of HMS Mercury is due to be sold in the near future; this represents approximately 15 acres of largely unattractive Naval buildings, mostly solidly built with, it is believed, deep foundations and underground facilities which it will not be easy to remove. The Ministry of Defence is committed to raising as much money as it can; previous experience shows that, when commercial pressures come into force, the planning authorities may not be able to force the MoD to take account of the environmental and community needs of the residents or of the Parish of East Meon.

Leydene has no shops or facilities of its own, and no bus service to East Meon; its inhabitants are largely well-off and own cars. They tend to do their main shopping in Petersfield, and many work outside the area, but the pubs, post office and shops of East Meon benefit from the trade generated by Leydene.



Leydene Park





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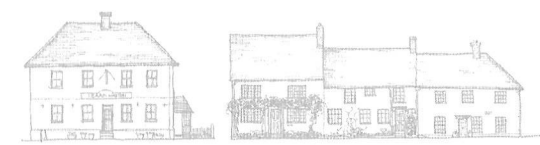
Leydene Park



We watch these developments with concern. The VDS steering group organised a meeting of the residents of Leydene Park, Hyden Wood, and surrounding areas, also attended by a director of the Sustainability Centre. The residents would, naturally, prefer to see the naval buildings removed and the area returned to its Downland state.

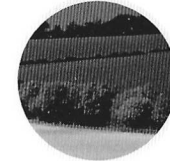
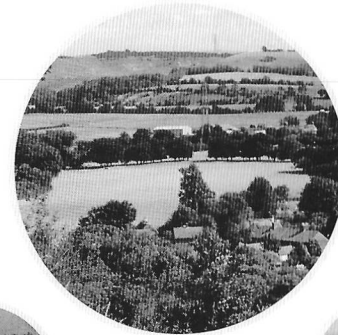
Of the economically feasible alternatives, the residents would prefer to see more executive housing set in gardens. There is no demand for shops or pubs - they are well supplied by East Meon and Clanfield and it would further damage the existing shops in East Meon if there were competition up the hill.

There was some support for mixed rather than solidly executive housing, although Leydene would not qualify for Affordable Housing as such. The use of naval ground and existing covered spaces for recreation such as tennis, badminton and a swimming pool was thought attractive, although distance from East Meon would necessitate transport.



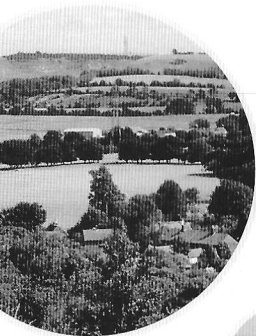
## Open Spaces

The village has relatively few open spaces and no central green or square. Those remaining must be jealously protected. The conditions of our open spaces range from manicured (the graveyard receives regular attention from the parishioners) to unkempt, like the hedges and grass of the Glebe Strip.



The Georg

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The George Inn

## Sport

It is vital to have sufficient space available for recreational use. At present, there is a well-appointed cricket ground at the eastern end of the main village, complete with pavilion, net and sight screen: and the village team plays an important part in village life. The grounds of the Village Hall in Workhouse Lane are a designated recreational area.

There is a temporary soccer pitch at the western end of the village, loaned by the Bereleigh Estate. It has no dedicated pavilion, inadequate car parking and no security of tenure.

There are no facilities in the village for non-team sports such as tennis or swimming. Some indoor sports, such as badminton, are played in the Village Hall.



## Recreation

The grounds of the Village Hall, and the fields to the west of it, are important recreation spaces. Inside the grounds is a playground for young children. There is parking for those using the Hall which itself plays host to numerous functions, from harvest suppers and meetings of village societies to playgroups and keep fit classes.

For five years, East Meon staged a Country Fair in the grounds and in the large field to the West, with car parking in two adjacent fields. Each event attracted over three thousand visitors and has raised many thousands of pounds for the maintenance of the Village Hall.



## Gardening

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East Meon has a thriving Gardening Club some of whose  
members open their gardens to the public twice a year;  
hundreds of people come and their entry fees contribute to  
the village's Good Causes fund.

The Parish Council owns allotments on the north side of the  
River Meon behind Brook Cottages. These are an essential  
part of the green spaces separating Frogmore from East  
Meon.

### Functional space

The All Saints graveyard is a beautiful feature much admired  
by visitors to the church and by walkers on their way to Park  
Hill. A car park was created in 1997 at the curve in  
Workhouse Lane, on land leased from the Bereleigh Estate,  
and glass recycling skips were placed there in 1998.



## Green spaces

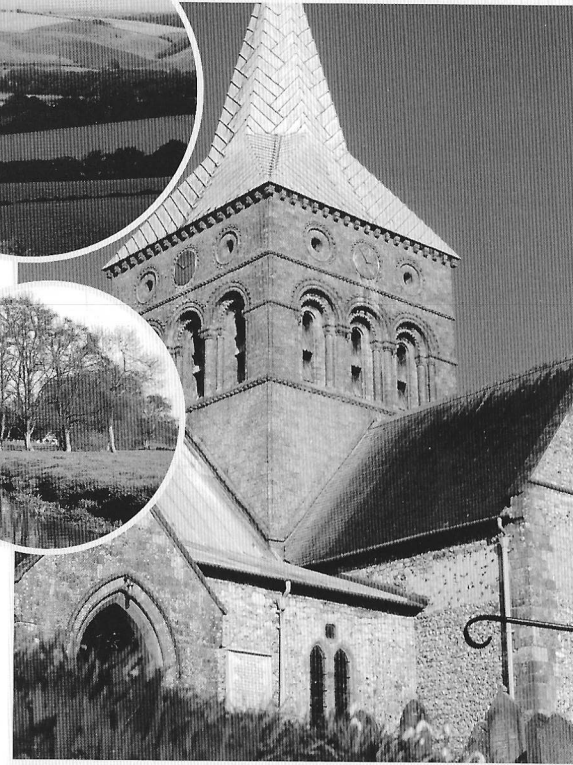
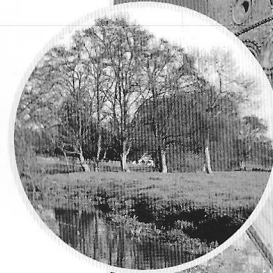
When council houses were built on the green land opposite Glenthorne after the War, the village lost the last green space in its centre. Planners over the years have allowed in-fill in important green areas, including The Cross and Workhouse Lane. The heart of the village is now surprisingly short of open spaces. It is thus particularly important to retain the remaining open space at the northern end of Glenthorne Meadow.

There are still some green areas at the perimeter of the village, notably the sports fields at either end and the fields adjacent to the Village Hall. These are very precious to the visual aspect as well as the recreational life of East Meon, especially when the village is viewed from Park Hill or from the South Downs.



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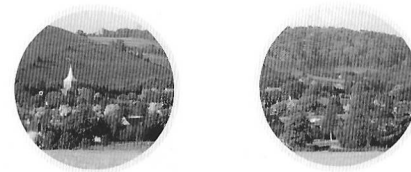
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## Policy Boundaries

The allotments, the recreation ground and cricket pitch between the village itself and Frogmore and the two small fields on either side of Frogmore Lane make up the remaining green space available to the village. These fields are used for agriculture and are only accessible through Frogmore Lane, which is itself narrow, sunken and prone to severe flooding.

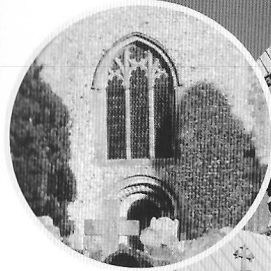
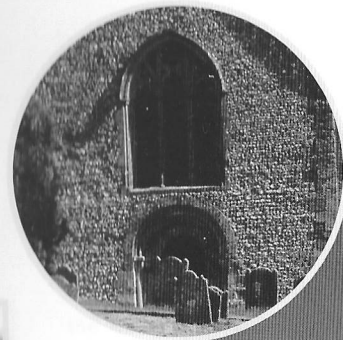
This map on page 8 shows in red the boundaries which the village believes are the natural perimeter of East Meon and Frogmore. We strongly recommend that these be adopted for planning purposes, so that important open spaces, particularly those dividing East Meon and Frogmore, are preserved in perpetuity.





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## Methods of enclosure

The village spaces are enclosed by a variety of methods - hedges, walls, ranch and wire fencing, railings and trees.

It is important to the general appearance of the village that these curtilages are regularly maintained. Volunteers presently attend to the saplings and shrubs bordering the cricket pitch. The railings guarding the river in the middle of the village are in an advanced state of disrepair and are both unsafe and unsightly. Likewise the planting of Leylandii along the bank of the River Meon in The Cross has resulted in ungainly sprouting of large conifers.

Some enclosure material looks out of place in the village, and clashes with the built environment. The wire fencing around the school is an example - it is understood that cost and security were the over-riding considerations here, but a more sympathetic solution should be found.

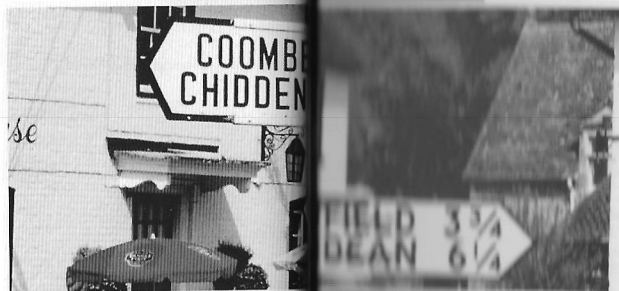


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The signage in the village ranges from brash to illegible. Signs are proliferating all the time; the signage by the church detracts from the view of the church on entering the village from the north east. The traditional black-on-white finger signs were once accepted; we strongly support the efforts of the Parish Council to reduce and harmonise the signage in the village, preferably in the traditional style.



## Signs

## Issues 4 : Soccer pitch

There is a discrepancy between the relatively comfortable facilities available to cricket players and the hand-to-mouth existence of the two soccer teams (East Meon and the Essentials).

Suggestions have been made that the cricket and soccer teams share the same field and pavilion; however, the cricket and soccer seasons now overlap by several weeks at each end. The field to the east of the cricket pitch, bordering Frogmore, is too small to accommodate a full-sized pitch.

If the soccer pitch remains on the western fringe of the village, it can either stay where it is, or be moved closer to the Village Hall.



The prop  
football



# pitch

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The proposed  
football pitch



- Its present location is not ideal for a number of reasons:
- it depends on the good will of the Bereleigh Estate which makes the land available to the teams
  - there is no access for cars
  - the dog owners of the village tend to exercise their animals along the field, leading to unhygienic conditions

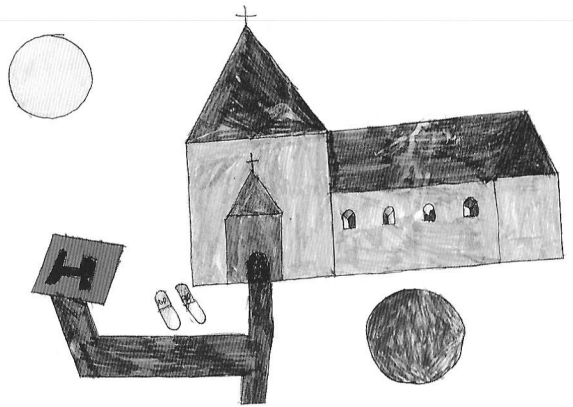
There is a proposal to move the pitch to a permanent site adjacent to the Village Hall. This land is currently designated as recreational and, if the current owners agree, this will overcome the shortcomings of the present arrangements.

This would necessitate the removal of part of the Glebe Hedge, which has some importance as a boundary feature to the settlement, and as a sanctuary for birds. However, there was consensus at the Workshops that its removal is acceptable. There are two parallel hedges making up this boundary and when part of the Glebe Hedge is removed a new hedge should be planted with a variety of native plant species, leaving room between the two hedges for a footpath linking Workhouse Lane to Duncombe Road.

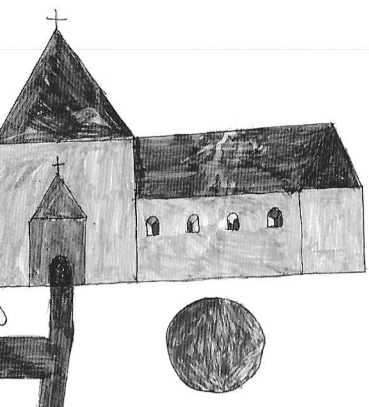


# Village Life

Design is meaningless if it doesn't reflect and reinforce the social and economic life of the community. In this section we describe issues such as population and employment which underpin the architecture and planning of East Meon.



if it doesn't reflect and reinforce the life of the community. In this section we discuss population and employment which are important for the future and planning of East Meon.



## Population

Figures provided by the Planning Policy department of East Hants District Council show that the population of East Meon has declined between the census held in 1981 (1,445) and the estimated figure for 1998 (1373). However, the number of households grew between the 1981 census (329) and the 1991 census (375) - a 14% increase. The distribution of housing is 74% market/private and 26% social (assisted, subsidised or Housing Association).



## Employment

Farming dominates the employment scene (though not all those who work on East Meon farms live here). The nine family-owned farms in the parish provide over fifty jobs (including sporting activities such as shoots and livery stables).

Local businesses include a forge and a farrier, independent gardeners, a mixture of wood-working, building and decorating trades, secretarial and book-keeping services, a wine merchant, cooks, a well known herbalist and a glass engraver. Around forty people find employment in these occupations.

Local services include two shops (one of them a sub post office), two pubs, the local primary school, a policeman, milkman and a vicar. There are several bed-and-breakfast houses which encourage visitors to spend money in the village. Altogether, about thirty jobs, plus a dozen or so householders providing B&B; transportation (taxi and handicapped services) adds another three.

As far as we can determine, up to ten individuals work from their homes, including four PR consultants, an inventor, an Avon lady and writers.





employment scene (though not all those who live here). The nine family-owned farms in the village (including sporting activities such as tennis and golf).

There is a forge and a farrier, independent gardeners, a plumber, painting, building and decorating trades, secretarial services, a wine merchant, cooks, a well known organist and a grave digger. Around forty people find employment in the village.

There are two shops (one of them a sub post office), two primary schools, a policeman, milkman and a vicar. There are several breakfast houses which encourage visitors to spend the day together, about thirty jobs, plus a dozen or so B&B; transportation (taxi and handicapped) and a few more.

In addition, up to ten individuals work from their homes, including accountants, consultants, an inventor, an Avon lady and writers.



Washers trial

In all, there are at least 130 jobs of "local relevance" and the village retains most of the services required by a thriving community. Improvements in telecommunications and a subsequent increase in remote working will see this number rise.

Most other working people find their employment outside the village, either in nearby towns and cities or in London. The vast majority of London workers commute on a daily basis; where one partner stays in London during the week, the other usually stays in the village which therefore does not suffer a "weekend cottage" effect. East Meon has always been a popular home for Navy personnel, but many have now left the Navy and are working in other jobs while remaining in the village.

In answers to the questionnaire, 78% of the people who live in social housing said there is a need for more job opportunities in the village, whilst only 43% of the market housing dwellers agreed (still an overall majority over those who said that no jobs are needed). Suggestions for extra employment included light industrial units, crafts, teleworking and a range of manual and domestic work.

Finally, East Meon is a flourishing centre for voluntary activities, including the management of the Village Hall, the Church, a Luncheon Club, sports activities, a re-invigorated Youth Club and Scouts/Cubs/Beavers, a Play Group, the British Legion, the Care Group, the village magazine (Meon Matters), the WRVS and the Garden Club.



## Shops

Until the early '80s the village supported a handful of village shops including a florist/greengrocer; in recent years, the attraction of supermarkets in Petersfield and along the South Coast has sucked trade out of the village. East Meon has two shops. At the western end of the village is the Village Store, which sells newspapers and is open long hours including weekends. At the eastern end is the Post Office which also operates a general store.

Because of competition from supermarkets, the two shops at either end of the village appear to struggle for survival. Dissatisfaction was also voiced that there is no Lottery outlet. In answers to the questionnaire, 20% said that the village needs better shops (although it was admitted that the present shops would flourish if villagers used them more).



The Post O



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The Post Off



## Occupation for the young

As in many villages, the young feel deprived of the facilities available in cities and large towns - cafes, cinemas, night clubs, discos, shopping centres ect. Although the bus service has recently improved, restricted public transport during evenings means that it is impossible for those who don't own a car to get out of the village and back at night. A quarter of those surveyed stressed the need for more buses and for buses to and from Clanfield and the South Coast.

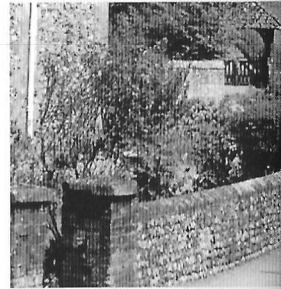
In responses to the questionnaire, 71% said there is also a need for better amenities within the village. "Clubs" were top of the list, followed by the need for a permanent football pitch. Bowls, a cash point and the need for a swimming pool open to the public were also listed.



## Issue 5 : Traffic

The traffic situation in the village prompted the strongest views both in the questionnaire and at the Workshop. Over the years the flow of traffic through the village has increased to the point where it is intrusive and hazardous. Villagers themselves own more vehicles and add both to danger on the roads and to unsightly parking throughout the village.

The size of commercial vehicles has also increased, including the tractors and lorries which service local farms and shops. Verges are trampled and pot holes appear along the sides the streets. As a result, the visual appearance of the village and its approaches, including the sunken lanes, is deteriorating year on year.



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Two natural "rat-runs" add to the traffic hazards. One passes over  
the Downs from Clanfield through the village and onto the A272,  
up Chalk Dell. The other connects the A272 to the A32 from  
Langrish to West Meon. As rat-runners become familiar with the  
route, they drive faster making three stretches in particular highly  
hazardous for pedestrians:

- The High Street past Washers Triangle has no pavement
- The road past the church has no pavement and is bounded by  
high walls yet it has no 30mph speed limit
- Workhouse Lane is narrow, heavily used by pedestrians and  
crowded with parked cars

The problem is exacerbated by the lack of comprehensive public  
transport which forces people to use their cars. It is frustrating that  
the buses which do pass the village are too large for the country  
lanes yet carry only a handful of passengers.



## Design Statement

### Guidelines for action

This section contains our recommendations both to improve current blemishes which spoil the Village and to maintain the diversity and quality of which we are proud.

As the Village Appraisal has shown, extensive consultation with the Village community has demonstrated that there is concern about Managing Change both in the present and into the future. In summary, our recommendations are:

### Managing change for a better present

- Prepare a policy to protect and enhance the River Meon where it flows through the Village
- Implement traffic calming within the Village
- Progress actively the provision of a football pitch
- Ensure co-operation with the farming community to manage the character of the surrounding countryside and farm traffic



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- Develop and implement a policy for coherent and high quality signs around the Village

We recommend that the Parish Council should take action to implement these recommendations as soon as possible, in association with relevant authorities.

The Parish Council should report to its Annual Parish Meeting on these and the other specific recommendations in this Village Design Statement.

#### Managing change for a better future

- The Policy Boundaries proposed in the Appraisal should be accepted
- The open ground separating East Meon from Frogmore should be protected
- Any new development must be resisted in East Meon or Leydene which would significantly increase traffic to and through the Village, especially H.G.Vs.



- Any new settlement must contain only a small number of units.
- The design of any new building or modification to old buildings must be of contemporary design but in sympathy with the past and proportionate in size
- New buildings must use high quality materials which blend sympathetically with present structures

We ask both Parish and District Councils to adopt these recommendations, which are listed in more detail on following pages.

#### **Countryside recommendations**

The very attractive countryside surrounding East Meon has evolved through the stewardship of generations of landowners and farmers. This has not been a static process and has necessarily reflected the economics of a vibrant, living countryside. This is as true today as ever. The following recommendations are made within that context.

- The many woods and copses within the parish must be retained
- The removal of hedgerows must be strongly resisted and new planti-





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#### Recommendations

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nd copses within the parish must be retained

edges must be strongly resisted and new planti-



ng encouraged using native species.

- New farm buildings must be considered very carefully for their impact both in the short and longer terms.
- The fragile nature of the River Meon along the valley must be recognised.
- The compact development pattern of East Meon must be maintained and the current boundaries strictly observed.
- Should any new construction be sanctioned it must not harm the delicate balance of open and built-up spaces, particularly on the perimeter of the Village.

#### Recommendations for protection of the River Meon:

The importance of the river as one of the defining features of East Meon Village must be asserted and protected. In consultation with the local residents, the Parish Council and appropriate agencies, a policy should be prepared to enhance and maintain the river whilst observing the need to control flooding; these recommendations to be made to the Environment Agency. For example:



1. The dangers of flooding should be re-assessed and more subtle systems of flood- prevention investigated
2. The sluggish flow during dry weather should be increased and natural flows encouraged.
3. Consideration should be given to returning the bed to a more natural state wherever possible.
4. The edges should be softened, with the re-introduction of grass verges and plantings wherever possible.
5. East of Forge Sound, up to 100 yards east of The Cross, concrete materials should be removed
6. Wherever possible, natural habitats should be re-introduced for wildlife



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#### Buildings recommendations:

##### Diversity

- New development should not always attempt to mirror what already exists – diversity should reflect the current period, not ape the past.

- However, it is important that the design and construction of new buildings should match the quality and diversity of the past; architects and designers should be encouraged consistently to use natural and where possible local materials and to continue the tradition of interesting detail to relieve architectural blandness.

##### Scale

- New buildings should reflect both the size and scale of existing buildings and their position within the building plot.

- Height to eaves should not normally exceed 5metres, roof pitch should be a minimum of 35 degrees and a maximum of 50 degrees; the overall height of a two-storey house should not normally exceed 8 metres, excluding chimney stacks.

- No building over three storeys in height should be permitted.



### Design

- Any new building, extension or conversion must observe the highest standards of design and materials, which should reflect the vernacular of its surroundings. Due regard should be paid to fencing or hedges (see Open Spaces), streetscape, roof line and siting on the plot

- New buildings and alterations should avoid elevations which are unrelieved by variations in design and plane; where there is more than one building, roof-lines should be similarly varied. Flat roofs should be avoided.

- All buildings should from first concept incorporate design details as part of the structure, not simply tack them as an afterthought.

- Recommended design details are:

Curved lintels, brick or wooden window sills, tile hangings, dormer windows where they match the period of the building, small windows.

- Details to be avoided except where there is a strong argument in their favour are:

Large picture windows, prefabricated conservatories in prominent positions which do not complement the style of the buildings to which they are attached.



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alterations should avoid elevations which are inconsistent in design and plane; where there is more than one elevation, these should be similarly varied. Flat roofs should

be avoided. From first concept incorporate design details as an integral part, not simply tack them as an afterthought.

Design details are:

• Timber or wooden window sills, tile hangings, dormer windows, small windows.

• Avoided except where there is a strong argument in

• Avoided, prefabricated conservatories in prominent positions, which do not complement the style of the buildings to which they



### Materials

• New buildings and extensions or modifications should be designed with close attention to using local materials and details so that they integrate with the present pattern of the Village.

Recommended materials are:

• For walls

Knapped flints, quality stock bricks with complementary mortar, wood cladding and render panels, chalk block.

For roofs

• Slate, thatch and clay tiles

Other elements

• Timber and PVCU windows, painted or stained appropriately, timber framing with brick in-fill

Materials to be avoided except where there is a strong argument in their favour:

Concrete tiles, aluminium windows, PVCU boarding, mortar which clashes with the colour of the bricks, large expanses of anodised aluminium, stone cladding.



#### Layout

- Street layouts should conform to the existing patterns and should not put stress on the existing lanes and main street. It is important that any new development reflect the grid and cluster layout which match the settlement pattern of the Village as it grew along the banks of the River Meon.

#### New housing

- The Village accepts that more affordable housing may need to be provided, were local need to justify this. There would appear to be very little space for new market housing. If new housing were required, starter homes of one or two bedrooms would be the most suitable.
- The new housing development at Reeds Meadow in Langrish has impressed us, as has the building in Duncombe Road; in the event of further social housing being built in East Meon it is strongly recommended that the design, construction and management be undertaken by a local Housing Association.
- Any new development should contain only a small number of units so as not to destroy the present pattern of the Village.



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#### Leydene recommendations

- \* That the Cross Dykes be maintained and protected
- \* That the District Council and HCC encourage the bus operators to introduce a service travelling to and from East Meon, past Leydene, from and to Clanfield and beyond.
- \* Any proposal to re-use or redevelop the SCU Leydene site must be in keeping with the Local Plan.
- \* That, if the site must be developed for commercial use, its use be restricted to craft or thoughtware companies and that any operation requiring heavy transport be strictly forbidden.
- \* That facilities be made available for indoor and outdoor sports (tennis, badminton &c) for the whole parish.

#### Open spaces recommendations:

- \* That Policy Boundaries be established as defined in the map we have provided.
- \* That the remaining green spaces within the boundaries of the



Village be preserved and their ownership passed to the Parish Council.

- If new development takes place, particular care be taken to ensure that the rural character of the lanes is not damaged.
- That the soccer pitch be located close to the Village Hall. Better facilities should be provided for the teams.
- If possible, new sports facilities should be introduced, such as tennis courts.
- Determine the ownership of railings, fences, hedges &c and encourage their owners to maintain them adequately.
- That a single style of signage be designed, approved, and applied throughout the Village; additional signs should be resisted.
- That a survey be commissioned of disabled access in the public areas of the Village and serious consideration paid to any alterations which are suggested.





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agement to maintain them adequately.

Design of signage be designed, approved, and applied  
uniformly; additional signs should be resisted.

Commissioning of disabled access in the public  
buildings and serious consideration paid to any alterations  
required.



### Village life recommendations:

- Encourage close co-operation between farmers and the rest of the community.
- Improve football ground and support facilities, moving the playing field closer to the Village Hall and making showers and changing facilities available.
- Encourage small business units and home working.
- Improve public transport, encouraging smaller, more frequent bus services extending into the evening and north/south routes to and from Clanfield and the South Coast.
- Introduce measures to slow traffic through the Village which are compatible with the rural nature of the lanes and the streetscape.



## Approach

It was decided in July 1998 that East Meon should prepare a Village Design Statement. Grants were secured from the District Council, from the AONB, from the East Meon Good Causes Fund and from Community Action Hampshire.

A Steering Group was set up, comprising a chairman, treasurer and secretary, the chairs of four Working Parties and two people responsible for promoting the VDS in the village. Within those numbers, two Parish Councillors were members of the Steering Group.

Three workshops have been held. The first was on October 10th 1998 at which the Working Parties set out their preliminary findings and recommendations - this event was attended by eighty people in all. The second was held on January 16th 1999 at which the first draft of the VDS was distributed and discussed - fifty people attended. The third was held at the Sustainability Centre at Leydene on March 4th, at which the section and recommendations applying to Leydene, Hyden Wood and Mercury were discussed; this meeting was attended by 80% of the residents of the two estates.





# E A S T M E O N

## The Village and its Design

This study of East Meon is the result of twelve months' intensive work by a small steering group and a number of talented

individuals in the Village of East Meon. It has involved an unprecedented number of members of the community. A questionnaire was distributed to every household, the Primary School was involved in special projects and three workshops were held, attended by over a hundred members of the community.

Funds were made available by the East Hants District Council, Community Action, the Parish Council of East Meon, AONB and the East Meon Good Causes Fund.

### Steering Group:

Promotions Anella Parker-Martin, Rosemary Ryder, Working Party

Chairs: Keith Rockett, (Landscape) Phil Hart (Buildings) Dominic

Carney (Open Spaces), Graham Davenport (Village Life);

Chairman Michael Blakstad; Treasurer: Graham Davenport,

Secretary Pam Thorne Design: Ben Rasmussen; Photography

Glynn Williams CBE; Maps John Croft; Drawings Tricia Blakstad;

Written by Michael Blakstad