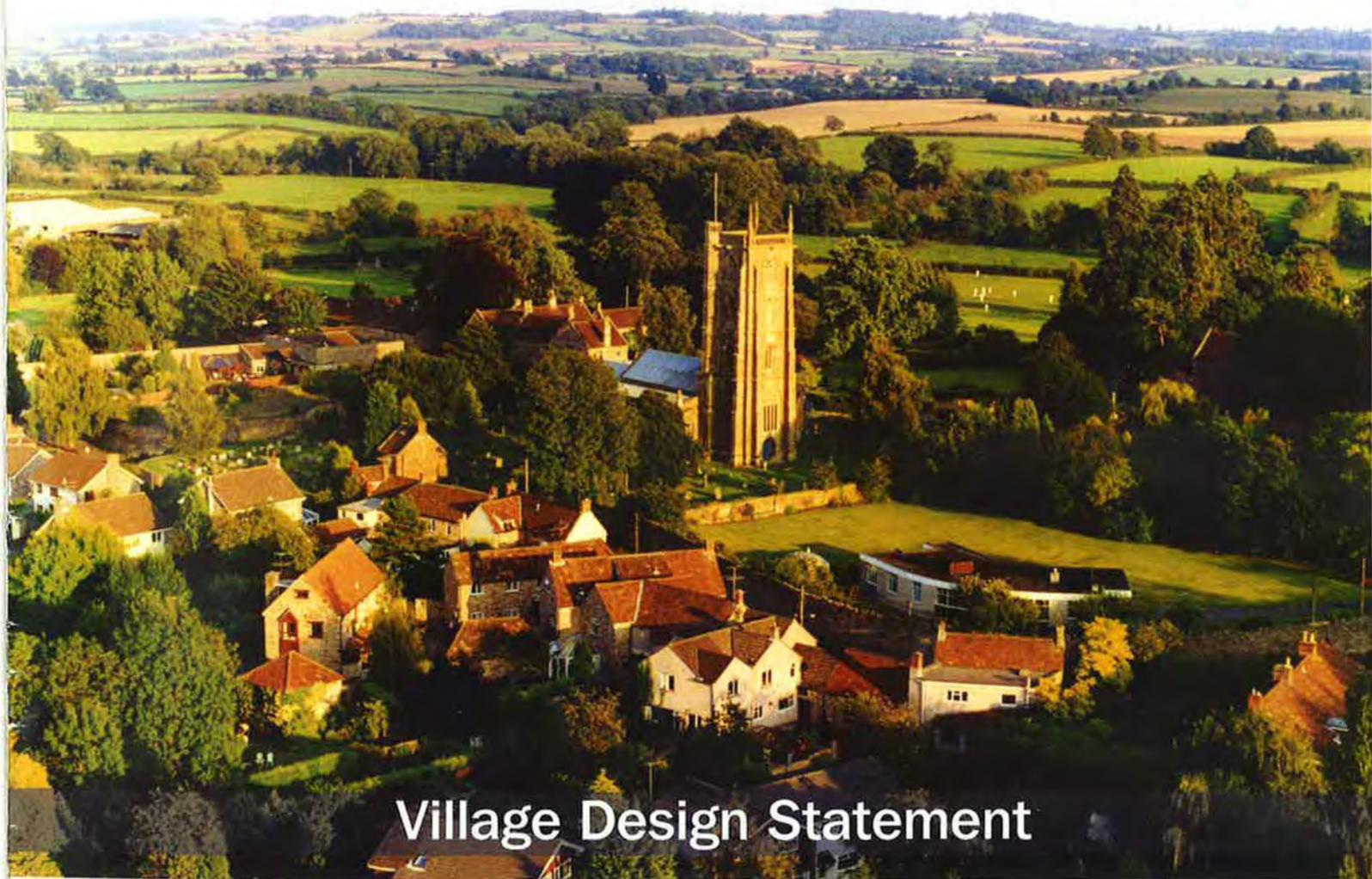


Chew  
Magna

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LEWIS HOUSE



## Village Design Statement

 The  
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## Acknowledgements

The Parish and people of Chew Magna wish to thank all those involved in the production of this document for their time and efforts including:

- All those involved with the original Parish Plan questionnaire: its drafting; circulation and analysis and all those who responded.
- All those involved in the production of this document: its drafting; and redrafting, exhibition of the penultimate draft and all those who responded to the exhibition.
- The Countryside Agency, for initiating the notion of village design statements and for their financial support.
- Bath and North East Somerset Council for support and advice.
- Previous generations of Chew Magna residents who helped make the village what it is.



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# Chew Magna



## Village Design Statement

### Introduction

The idea for a village design statement originated in a Countryside Commission document ('Village Design'), which made it apparent that planning authorities needed to improve standards. This was to be achieved by identifying the most important design criteria for future development through the involvement of local people.



### Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to offer guidance to parishioners, the Parish Council, prospective developers, architects, planning officers, public utilities and the local authority. It seeks to provide a reference for development with the aim of keeping and enhancing the character of the village, and improving the village as a whole for the future. The Statement aims to ensure that as the village grows or changes, it does so in a manner that will preserve and add to the existing character.

This statement has been produced following extensive community consultation. A paper detailing public consultation has been compiled and is available from the Parish Clerk or from Bath and North East Somerset Council Planning Services.

This statement was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Bath and North East Somerset Council in February 2006. As such, it is a material consideration in planning decisions. The statement will supplement, but not override or reinterpret the Development Plan.



## Patterns from the Past

### Settlement

The earliest record is from 1062 when Edward the Confessor granted Chew Magna to his chaplain and made him Bishop of Wells. In 1086 *Chive* was documented in the Domesday Book which records five mills for grinding corn. The building of St. Andrew's Church commenced in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was constructed in three main phases and completed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.



In 1540 John Leland wrote:

*Chute is a pretty clothing town, and hath a fair church. And at the south side of the church is a fair manor place of the Bishop of Bath.*

The village developed over the next two centuries and in 1791 John Collinson's described it as....

*A large and populous parish, very pleasantly situated....(the two rivers) make the town a sort of peninsula. In former days this was a borough, a market, a large clothing town...*

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a number of Bristol merchants built large houses in the High Street and in Harford Square. The road pattern and shape of the village was clearly established by this time. Further development occurred throughout the twentieth century, and the second half of the century saw a number of housing developments within the village, these included Tunbridge Close, Streamside, and Pine Court. There are today 1161 residents within the Parish (2001 Census).

The first Chew Magna Conservation area was designated in 1978 covering the centre of the village comprising some 18.19 hectares (44.95 acres). In December 2002 this was substantially extended to include virtually the entire village, an area of 69.58 hectares (171.95 acre).



**Land ownership and power.**

In the past the Church was a major landowner with the Bishop of Bath and Wells owning Chew Court and much of the agricultural land in the parish. Chew Court is now privately owned and most of the agricultural land comprises mainly small/medium size arable farms and some fruit and vegetable farms managed by owner-occupiers and tenant farmers.

The houses in the village are mainly privately owned with gardens of varying size. There are a few large properties including Chew Court, the Manor House and The Rookery.



**Employment.**

The village is a focus for other villages and hamlets within the wider Chew Valley area, offering shopping, commercial, professional, educational, leisure and medical services to the residents of the Chew Valley.

More than twice as many parishioners work outside Chew Valley as work within, many commuting to Bristol and Bath. There are some 60 small businesses within the parish operating in the following sectors:

Sector	%
Services (un-specified)	26
Agriculture and Horticulture	24
Finance and other	
Professional services	18
Construction	16
Retail	7
Tourism	7
Other	2

**Services and Social.**

As a local centre, the village provides a doctors' surgery, one dental practice, an optician's, a hairdresser, a veterinary practice and a garage/petrol station. There are Anglican, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches, four public houses, a range of food and other retail outlets, post office, banking, estate agencies, travel and professional services.

There are three halls supporting a wide range of community activities, and some 80 active clubs and societies.

The village was the winner of the Calor Gas Village of the Year competition in 2004 in the senior age group in the Southwest region.



## Elements Of The Physical Surroundings

The 'conservation area character appraisal' divides the conservation area into 9 parts and lists elements of visual interest for each. It is intended that these notes apply not just to the conservation area, but to the whole Parish.

Chew Magna has a character derived from physical components such as topography, but also from the people who have shaped the landscape and made the village what it is. This process continues with those who live and work here now.

It is to be hoped that Chew Magna is more than just a series of pretty facades to be blinked at on the way to Lulsgate Bottom. In order for Chew Magna to survive and prosper in the future it needs to respond to challenges which are current or foreseeable, and not define itself only in relation to the past, however fondly remembered. Chew Magna must not just look good, it must also perform well: it must be able to survive changing circumstances and to provide for all the community and to succeed in this, we must welcome innovation.

We inherit something of value from the past which derives from the circumstances of the past. Our circumstances are different, our awareness of environmental and social imperatives is changing and as a consequence, our legacy to future generations will be different.



**We must have regard to the past and ensure that something of lasting value remains for those who follow.**



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## Landscape

Chew Magna is set in agricultural land with the River Chew and Winford Brook running through it, lying between Dundry Hill to the north and the Mendip Hills to the south. Areas of woodland are sparse.

The spaces between and around buildings can have as great an effect as the buildings themselves. All developments should demonstrate consideration of the outside spaces and include proposals to enhance the public landscape. There are good examples of success in this regard.

Footpaths and lanes around the village are an important asset and those between banks and high hedges have particular landscape significance.

Views between and across public spaces are important and should be preserved. New developments may have the potential for creating new vistas or enhancing existing ones.

The high pavements and narrow sections of road at entrances to the village are particular features.

The road from Stanton Drew is diverted around the cricket pitch before reducing into the Chalks. This open space, its walls and backdrop of trees are an important component of landscape and signify arrival more eloquently than any sign. The entrance from the north over Spratts Bridge is of a different character but also has dramatic impact. As does that over the Tunbridge.

From Chew Stoke, the approach with a tall boundary wall to the left heralds only a car park where once a row of cottages stood. Approaching from Winford and the West, the road narrows passing gates leading to the Manor and arrives at the same point.

**Encourage planting of trees with all developments.**

**Development should enhance the public landscape.**



**Maintain footpaths and their settings.**

**Maintain existing and open new views. Discourage the use of gardens and open space as dumping ground and take immediate action to curtail.**

**Maintain and, where possible, improve visual effect at entrances to the village.**



Harford Square is not quite a square: its primary function is one of a road traffic junction rather than a point of arrival in the centre of the village.

Boundaries, and the way they are formed play a large part in the landscape and street scene. Chew Magna has a wealth of stone walls including some very tall retaining walls. Carved stone gate posts are found both within and around the village. The iron railings on the high pavement are a particular local feature and many private houses retain their railings.

Existing pavements finished with stone flags and edged with stone setts and stone kerbs are an important feature and should be retained and maintained. Any textured paving introduced to assist those with visual impairment, should be adapted from the materials used locally.

Road signs perform a function but are of a standard design and size and add nothing to the distinctiveness of the village. They clamour for attention and distract from the streetscape. They have the appearance of being uncoordinated and placed on an ad hoc basis. Road signs should be rationalised and, where unnecessary, removed. The old finger post signs and the few remaining stone signs must be preserved.

Current street lighting is subdued and white in colour. Any change should balance the needs of safety and avoiding urbanisation; maintain the white colour and avoid light pollution.

A quality playground has been developed to the NE of the village, though for some, its location is a disadvantage. Teenagers may be difficult to cater for but the benefits of encouraging links between and across generations should not be ignored.

**Where opportunity arises improve visual cohesion of Harford Square.**

**Retain stone boundary walls with their copings, stone gate posts and iron railings. Retain hedges. Promote the planting of new hedges of indigenous species. Avoid ranch style fencing.**

**Hard surfaces in areas open to the public should be paved with natural materials wherever possible.**

**The proliferation of street signs should be avoided.**

**Historic signs must be retained.**

**Where possible, re route overhead services.**



**Encourage younger members of the community to be involved in its development.**

## Development

Chew Magna developed from the mills sited on the two waterways but has since grown along the lines of roads and lanes leading from the original centres of economic activity. There will be pressure for its boundaries to stretch, as with those of neighbouring villages.

The needs of the outlying hamlets of North Wick, Littleton and Newtown must be considered in the same vein as outlined here for Chew Magna itself.

## Houses

Developments of the last 50 years of groups of houses have tended to be treated as separate from the village and do not respond to the weave developed in previous generations.

Rises in house prices have resulted in children of local people not being able to afford local housing.

The best use must be made of any remaining development opportunities to satisfy local need.

## Density

The density of more recent housing development contrasts with the traditional village pattern. Whereas, in the past, there were two distinct densities: one of compact terraces for working people and another of a small number of grand houses behind walls within open grounds for the well-to-do merchants from Bristol. Development of groups of houses in the C20th has followed neither precedent and resulted in a suburban pattern.

Occupancy rates and household sizes have reduced and in some cases, several small cottages have been combined to form a house for one family: a greater volume of building is needed for the same population.

**Maintain distinction between neighbouring villages: manage any expansion to avoid settlements encroaching and conjoining. Give consideration to the needs of the outlying hamlets as described here.**



**Any future development should be considered in small parcels in order to maintain the fabric of the settlement and avoid the suburbanisation.**

**Any development should have regard to local housing needs.**



**The historic fabric of the village should be maintained in future developments.**

## Design

Traditional village housing of the past was built without regulation, to a minimal standard, with no services, using materials that were to hand and techniques that were understood by everybody. This situation no longer obtains and the results cannot be expected to be the same. However, individual houses in the past have been statements of individuality. They are sometimes referred to as 'traditional' but their inspiration came from the Continent and the style was new and the height of fashion at the time. Today, innovation is needed, not in terms of style, but in terms of sustainability: buildings should be rooted in the place and also relevant to the time.

More recent development has seen more consistency in parallel with restrictions placed upon development of buildings and roads.

## Form

Older housing follows a variety of forms from the 2-storey terraced cottages to the grand merchant's houses of 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> or 3 storeys set in their own grounds. More recent developments tend to be of one or two storey houses but also include 2 storey flats. Terraces comprise repeated plans and are legible from the streetscape.

While traditional roof materials should sit on roofs of a traditional pitch, there may be other considerations, and the need to maintain a view, for example, may be deemed more important.

The application of rules of development to new housing in the last 50 years has eroded what was distinct in the village character and created pockets of suburbia.

**There is no reason why individual houses, consistent with the other recommendations set out here, should not also be statements of individuality and innovation.**



**Standardised designs are to be avoided. Attempts at disguising these by adding superficial embellishments are not acceptable.**



**No rules should be followed without being justified in the particular instance.**

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## Non-Housing

Chew Magna has a degree of self-sufficiency which should be supported to avoid it becoming just a dormitory village.

It is necessary to accommodate growth in employment in order to promote the village as a local centre of economic and social activity.

The village is well served by shops, financial and other services, and a variety of business as noted above.

Vacant commercial premises need to be brought back to use to maintain the economic life of the village.

If an employment use were proposed for Tunbridge Mill this should be considered favourably.

Shop fronts are mostly of a C19th pattern although several date from the C20th. The use of plastic in recent times is to be regretted and should not be repeated. Some of the traders make creative use of their displays which adds topical interest. The largest establishment, the Co-op, has only blind windows. Shop signs are generally restrained and in scale with the shop fronts. Back-lit, flashing or neon signs should be avoided.

Changing patterns of agriculture have rendered many farm buildings redundant and introduced several industrial sheds into the landscape without any apparent planning control.

The nature of industry in the area will also continue to change.

Chew Magna has benefited from the presence of the GP surgery in Madam's Paddock but it is planned that this will move to Chew Stoke.

**Changes in use from employment to residential should be resisted unless benefits outweigh the loss.**



**Shops and businesses in the village should be maintained. Vacant commercial premises should be brought back into an appropriate employment use.**



**Design and other impacts of agricultural and industrial development must be included for consideration.**

**Failing an alternative commercial use, redundant farm buildings of substance and character should be considered for conversion.**

**An appropriate use for the existing GP site may need to be identified.**

The village is well served in terms of numbers of public halls of different sizes although the largest, St Andrew's, now lags behind the Millennium Hall and Old School Room in terms of amenity. As the proposed new theatre at the secondary school is no longer an option, improvements to the church hall are needed to better provide for theatrical and musical presentations and other events.

### Materials

Briefly, the older buildings we see now use stone and rendered walls, pitched roofs with clay tile or slate and painted softwood windows. More recent developments also include brick, imitation stone and concrete tiles.

As a matter of course, through repairs and maintenance, old materials and components are replaced with new. Thatched cottages have been re-roofed with clay tiles; clay replaced with concrete.

When a newer building is extended, the use of the same materials will provide a consistent appearance and may be more satisfactory.

Some materials are no longer readily available. Chew stone, a very significant walling material locally, is no longer quarried and any future use of this material will have to be sourced from demolition.

Some natural materials are no longer available locally but may be from some distance. For example, roofing slate is available from China. When considering such materials we must weigh up the perceived benefit to our locality against the undoubted harm done to the wider environment through transportation.

Pointing has a strong impact on the appearance of a masonry wall. Certain forms of pointing can detract from the overall appearance and the preferred dominance of the stone



**The use of natural and local materials in any development is to be welcomed.**



**The replacement of natural materials with manufactured ones is to be resisted.**

**The merits of using manufactured materials must be judged for each case and in relation to its context.**

**Choice of material must be consistent with the aims of sustainability.**



Rendering is a common facing material. In some cases the finish is a colour wash. A variety of colours within a constrained palette contributes positively to the street scene. Where two or more properties form a coherent group their appearance should be considered as a whole.



### Resources

The materials from which the village was built, sources of energy that fuelled it and other natural resources such as water are less plentiful than hitherto.

The use of raw materials and energy common in the past (and even now) is known to be unsustainable and we shall have to re-examine our use of resources and employ different

The adoption of sustainable sources of energy (for example, solar), is likely to have an impact on the appearance of buildings. Where these relate to listed buildings or other historic sites they will need to be dealt with sympathetically. In other cases, there may be an opportunity for celebration, just as the wheel of a water mill declares its use and its source of power.

The parish council and members of the community are seeking ways of promoting responsible use of resources with a 'zero waste' target. B&NES has a good record on promoting recycling but there are financial disincentives for the schools and businesses which make disposal more likely.

Our greatest resource is the people of the village and it is in their interest that planning decisions should be taken.

**All developments shall demonstrate a strategy for sustainability.**

**Promote development that makes best use of earth's resources: reduce, reuse, recycle**

**It is likely that any development of value left for the future will be different to that which we have inherited.**



**The charging structure which forces schools and businesses to dispose rather than recycle should be re-examined.**



## Transport.

The car is the main means of transport for over 86% of parishioners (source 2004 questionnaire for Parish Plan). Traffic congestion is a concern to over 70% with freight and airport related traffic clogging the busy B3130 which passes through the village. The airport is some 4.5 miles to the west of the village and parts of the parish are within the flight path.

Buses are used for occasional shopping trips but the number of regular services is very limited.

Speeding traffic was cited by 68% of correspondents to be a problem that requires attention.

Chew Magna suffers as do many villages, with trying to adapt to the ever-growing demands on our roads. The main road passing through Chew Magna frequently becomes clogged when the volume of traffic is at its highest. The houses lining the High Street have very little off-road parking, leading to lines of cars impairing the traffic flow and effectively reducing speed. There is some support for a 20mph speed limit and a weight limit within the village and for giving priority to vehicles leaving the village via the narrower sections of road.

Silver Street is a small side road leading to the primary school and has heavy traffic flows with parents dropping off their children. Village roads were not designed to facilitate the ever-increasing traffic. Without additional road capacity, constraints will be inevitable. Some short journeys within the village could reasonably be made by foot.

Within the parish boundaries there are a number of small lanes which add to the charm of the village, these have no pavements but should be kept as natural as possible.



**Manage traffic in the village and influence speed through width constraints and surface treatment.**

**Discourage airport traffic.**



## **Parking**

With more people using cars for even short journeys, there is a great deal of pressure on parking space within the village. Lack of car parking in the village centre is a major concern to the retailers and their customers, and some two thirds of parishioners who replied to the questionnaire thought an additional car park should be provided off Tunbridge Road on a green field site. This would be intended to serve the needs of long-stay parking leaving the existing car park for shoppers and other short stay parking.

Parking restrictions have been introduced along the main High Street area to help keep the retail business alive and ease congestion. Double and single yellow lines and time-limited parking has made noticeable improvements. Further restrictions need to be set against the need to avoid over-urbanisation.

**When planning permission for future development is sought, be it commercial or private, the parking and traffic impact should be assessed as satisfactory before arriving at a positive decision.**

**A balance needs to be struck between providing convenient access to the village facilities and the tendency for cars rather than people to dominate. Monitor effects of parking restrictions and demand for parking.**



**Depending on outcomes, work towards a decision on need for additional car park. The surfacing and landscaping of any new car park will need to be carefully and sympathetically considered.**



**Consider further incentives to ease parking problems.**

### **Treatment of roads**

Highway safety has been an issue identified through conflicts between people in cars and those outside them. This has resulted in greater separation, more warnings, restrictions and signs indicating and informing. Greater standardisation of highway treatment: kerbs, radii, visibility splays, road widths, surface finishes has been a part of this trend and leads to an erosion of distinctive character.

Tarmac is relatively cheap and when new a smooth and quiet surface but is ubiquitous and, for its own sake, is not attractive.

### **Pedestrians**

Walking is recognised as useful exercise as well as helping to alleviate parking and traffic problems and should be promoted.

Footpaths in and around the village should be looked after; the surfaces, signs and stiles maintained. A guide and map promoting routes might be appreciated. The path from Harford Square to Spratts Bridge is dangerous and should be remade.

Chew Magna has provided so well for its elderly population that it was awarded Best Village 2004 for the elderly. This despite it being very difficult for elderly, infirm or disabled to move about the centre of the village.

**Developments should be encouraged which propose alternatives to tarmac or which vary road and pavement surfacing.**



**Maintain footpaths: their surfaces where paved; stiles; signs; enhance their settings; promote maps and guides.**



**Review footways in the centre of the village, road crossing and access to shops**



## Conclusion

It may be easier to set out a set of rules giving dos and don'ts but that would be pro- and prescriptive: rather, we intend that all development be carried out thoughtfully and having regard to a whole host of issues.

It is possible to break all the rules and still produce an imaginative satisfactory and even inspiring result. Whatever else we achieve, it must be sustainable and inclusive.



## REFERENCES

### Planning Guidance

ODPM Planning Policy Statements:

PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Bath and North East Somerset: Chew Magna

Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Bath and North East Somerset: Streetscape Manual.

This statement was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Bath and North East Somerset Council in February 2006. As such, it is a material consideration in planning decisions. The statement will supplement, but not override or reinterpret the Development Plan, principally the following policies:

- Joint Replacement Structure Plan (September 2002): Policies 1,2 & 19.
- Wansdyke Local Plan deposit draft 1995 as amended September 2000: Policies LNC6, IMPI
- The Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft 2003: Policies, principally:
  - Design DI, 2, 4
  - Employment ET4 (Offices/ business) ET6; 7; 8; 9 (agriculture) ET11 (Tourism)
  - Community Space and facilities CF1; 2
  - Shopping S1
  - Energy etc ES2; 7
  - Housing HG2; 6; 7; 12; 15.
  - Green Belt GBI GB2
  - Natural Environment NE1; 4; 12; 15; 16.
  - Built and Historic Environment BH2; 5; 6; 8; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21.
  - Access and Transport T1 T4 T3 T5 T15 T16 T20; T26.
- Community Strategy as referred to in the Local Plan paragraph A2.5A



## Summary of recommendations

The following are recommendations and aspirations which supplement, but do not override the existing Development Plan policies.

### General

- We must have regard to the past but ensure that something of lasting value remains for those who follow.
- The results of future development should be a more sustainable and inclusive village.

### Landscape

- Encourage planting of trees with all developments.
- Development should enhance the public landscape.
- Maintain footpaths and their settings.
- Maintain existing and open new views. Discourage the use of gardens and open space as dumping ground and take immediate action to curtail.
- Maintain and, where possible, improve visual effect at entrances to the village.
- Where opportunity arises improve visual cohesion of Harford Square.
- Retain stone boundary walls with their copings, stone gate posts and iron railings. Retain hedges. Promote the planting of new hedges of indigenous species. Avoid ranch style fencing.
- Hard surfaces in areas open to the public should be paved with natural materials. (But see below).
- The proliferation of street signs should be avoided.
- Historic signs must be retained.
- Where opportunities present, remove and re route overhead services.
- Encourage younger members of the community to be involved in its development.

### Development

- Maintain distinction between neighbouring villages: manage any expansion to avoid encroachment and becoming conjoined.
- Any development should have regard to local housing needs.
- Any future development should be considered in small parcels in order to maintain the fabric of the settlement and avoid the suburbanisation
- The historic fabric of the village should be maintained in future developments.
- There is no reason why individual houses consistent with the other recommendations set out here, should not also be statements of individuality
- Standardised designs are to be avoided. Attempts at disguising these by adding superficial embellishments are not acceptable.
- No rules should be followed without being justified in the particular instance.
- Changes in use from employment to residential should be resisted.
- Shops and businesses in the village should be maintained. Vacant commercial premises should be brought back into an appropriate employment use.
- Design aspects of agricultural development should be open for consideration

- Failing a successful alternative commercial use, redundant farm buildings of substance and character should be considered for conversion.
- An appropriate use for the existing GP site may need to be identified.
- The use of natural and local materials in any development is to be welcomed.
- The replacement of natural materials with manufactured ones is to be resisted.
- The merits of using manufactured materials must be judged for each case and in relation to its context.
- Choice of material must be consistent with the aims of sustainability.
- All developments shall demonstrate a strategy for sustainability.
- Promote development that makes best use of earth's resources: reduce, reuse, recycle
- It is likely that any development of value left for the future will be different to that which we have inherited,
- The charging structure which forces schools and businesses to dispose rather than recycle should be re-examined.

### Transport

- Manage traffic through village and influence speed through width constraints and surface treatment. Discourage airport traffic.
- When planning permission for future development is sought, be it commercial or private, the parking and traffic impact should be assessed as satisfactory before arriving at a positive decision.
- A balance needs to be struck between providing convenient access to the village facilities and averting the tendency for cars rather than people to dominate.
- Monitor effects of parking restrictions and demand for parking. Depending on outcomes, work towards a decision on need for additional car park. The surfacing and landscaping of any new car park will need to be carefully and sympathetically considered.
- Developments should be encouraged which propose alternatives to tarmac or which vary road and pavement surfacing.
- Maintain footpaths: their surfaces where paved; stiles; signs; enhance their settings; promote maps and guides.
- Review footways in the centre of the village, road crossing and access to shops





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