



# Village and Community Context

## Location

Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy lie two miles to the north of Winchester, on the edge of the chalk lands of the Hampshire Downs. The river Itchen flows along the south-eastern border of the parish.

Kings Worthy is bounded by the main London-Southampton railway to the west, Lovedon Lane to the north-east and the A34 to the south (refer to map). Much of Kings Worthy stands on the sides of a north-south dry valley at Springvale. To the south of the village, the older part of the settlement lies on a south-east facing slope above the River Itchen.

Abbots Worthy is a much smaller village, lying to the east of Kings Worthy. The village is situated on a shallow south-east facing spur of chalk downland to the north of the River Itchen.

Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy became part of the same parish in the 1830s.

## History and Development

### Early History

There are traces of settlement in Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy from the Stone Age onwards, with flint and stone axes dating from the Neolithic/Bronze Age found in a number of locations in the parish. There is also evidence of Iron and Bronze Age field systems north of Abbots Worthy and an inhumation burial to the east of Mill Lane, believed to date from the Bronze Age.

There are sites of Romano-British settlements close to Kings Worthy. The Roman origins of the area are also reflected in the straight alignment of the A33 Basingstoke Road, which historically formed part of the Winchester-Silchester Road.

In Worthy Park there is an Anglo Saxon cemetery dating from the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century and also some Anglo Saxon earthworks. From this period onwards both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy established as small agricultural communities close to the River Itchen. Mill Lane, Abbots Worthy, was first referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Charter of AD961.

The name 'Worthy' is thought to derive from the Saxon word 'Wordie', referring to part of an estate or well-defined area. At the time of the Domesday Survey Kings Worthy was a Tithing of Barton Stacey, held first by King Edward and then King William, thus giving it its regal name. Abbots Worthy is also mentioned in the Domesday Book, and its

name is likely to derive from the fact that it had been granted to the Monks of St Peter's Abbey in 900AD.

### Kings Worthy

This historic core of Kings Worthy is centred near St Mary's church. The church dates from 12<sup>th</sup> century whilst adjacent properties such as the Old Post Office, (reputed to be the oldest Post Office in the country), date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Cart and Horses Inn was a coaching stop on the route to London.

The village would have developed in this area to benefit from the River Itchen and during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries sawmills used the river for power. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the village changed little and remained focussed on the church. At this time the population of Kings Worthy stood at about 185 with the majority of the population working on local farms and in service, which kept the village self-sufficient.

Improved communications during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the construction of more substantial houses in the village. However it wasn't until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the form of the village began to change substantially, with rapid expansion to the north and west. By 1950 the population of Kings Worthy had almost tripled. Numbers of more modest houses were built in the Springvale area after the Great War and this was followed by large-scale development of council housing in the 1950s and 1960s. Housing development in the Hookpit and Wesley Park areas followed in the 1970s and 80s and, since then, there has been further building on smaller scale infill sites within the parish boundaries.

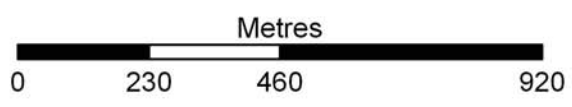
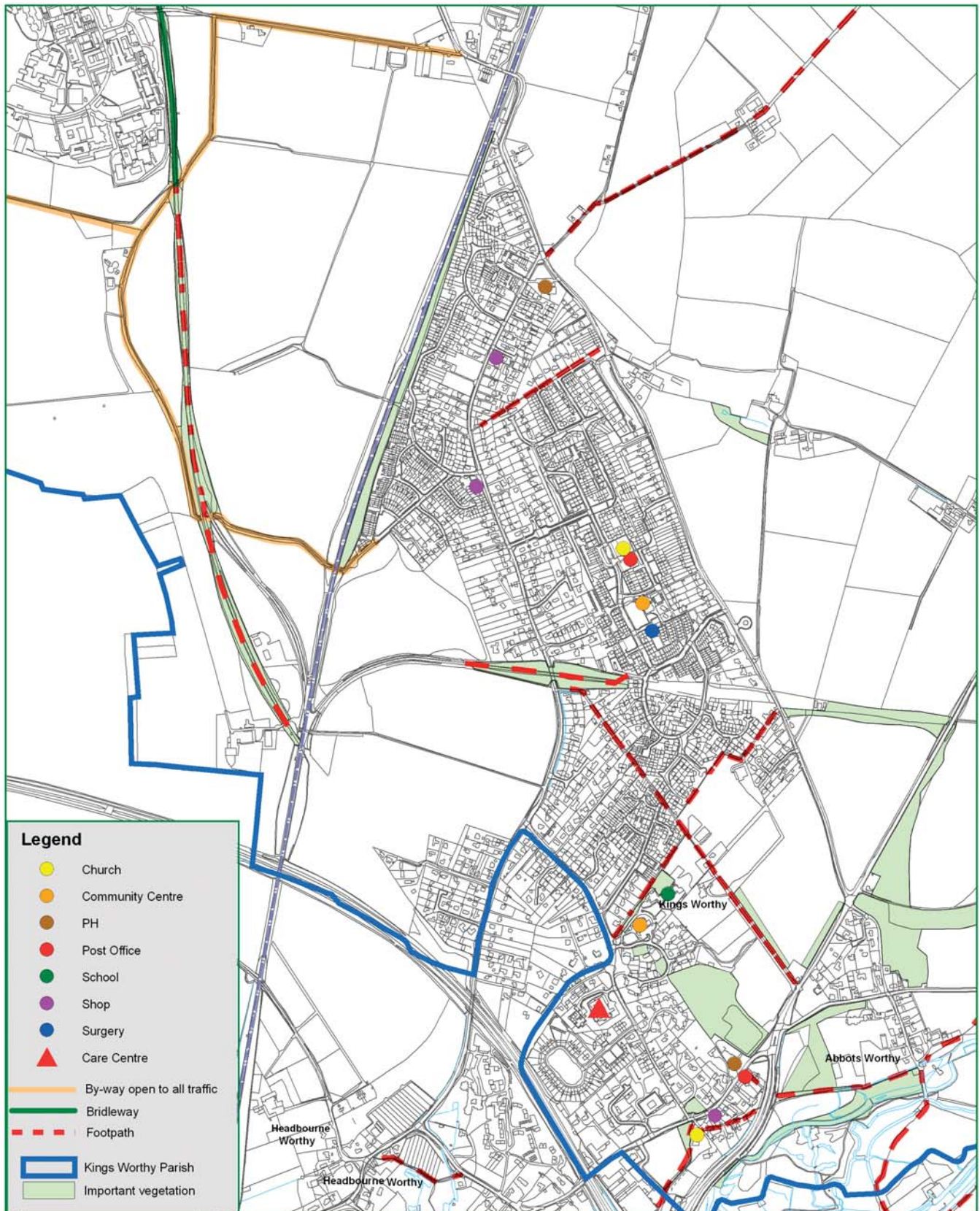
The population of Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy at the time of writing is just over 4000, living in around 1700 households. Just over 20% of the residents are under 18, and 23% are over 60.



*Kings Worthy locator map*



**Figure 1: Village Context**



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## Abbots Worthy

It is likely that the form and position of Abbots Worthy has been influenced by the existence of ancient tracks crossing the River Itchen and tracks following the valley. Abbots Worthy Mill dates from the medieval/post medieval period and there is evidence of a fulling mill just north of the existing Fulling Mill also dating from this period. Between these two mills there is evidence of the remains of a medieval village.

Following the Dissolution, Abbots Worthy was passed to both the Earl of Southampton and Lord Russell before forming part of the Bedford Estates. In 1801 it was sold to the Baring family and in 1836 Abbotsworthy House was constructed for Rev. Charles Baring. The presence of this large property with extensive gardens is likely to have



*Kings Worthy Church & Church Rooms*

restricted the development of the village to the west of Mill Lane. Worthy Park House has also influenced the development of the village as several houses to the East of Mill Lane were once Worthy Park estate cottages.

The village has changed very little since the 1840 Tithe map with the only later extensions being at the northern end of Park Lane and southern end of Mill Lane. The 1960s and 1970s saw infilling within this structure.

## Employment

Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy have a high proportion of working families, the majority finding employment in Winchester, the Solent conurbation, Basingstoke and London. The villages provide a limited number of job opportunities, although many self-employed people work from a home base. There is a commercial / light industrial area on the southern edge of the village, in Headbourne Worthy.

During weekdays Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy have a quiet feel, due to a large proportion of its population working elsewhere.

## Shopping

Kings Worthy supports a small number of local shops: a convenience store in Springvale

Road; a convenience store / post office at Springvale, and a post office / newsagents in London Road. There are also two hairdressers and a fireplace shop on Springvale Road. London Road also has a specialist fishing / country wear shop and a repair garage. A grocery shop and hardware store have both closed in recent years, which may indicate that there is little scope for additional general grocery premises.

Abbots Worthy has no shops.

Winchester, with its wide range of shops, is easily accessible by car, and there is also a regular bus service. There is a large supermarket two miles away at Winnall.



*Kings Worthy Centre*

## Educational Facilities

Kings Worthy has a large primary school with just over 300 children, predominantly drawn from the village. It is near capacity, and any future large-scale development in the area would require extra facilities at the school if required by the Local Education Authority. There is also a community-run playgroup in one of the village halls, and a commercial nursery school in Abbots Worthy, taking pre-school children from Winchester and beyond.



*Cart & Horses PH*

## Community Facilities

There is a doctors surgery near the Kings Worthy Community Centre and there is a strong need for basic surgery facilities to be maintained, perhaps shared between the three Winchester practices. The villages do not support a pharmacy, although the surgery offers a prescriptions service. A village questionnaire revealed that a chemist's shop would be the single most popular new amenity.

Hampshire County Council operates a day centre and a residential home for elderly people and a centre and residential home for young people with learning disabilities. These facilities serve the whole of central Hampshire, including Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy.

Warden-controlled sheltered housing is available at Harwood Place in Springvale, and social housing for the elderly can be found at Churchill Close and Mountbatten Close in Kings Worthy.



*King Charles PH*



# Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy Village Design Statement



Eversley Park

Meeting space is amply provided for, with three village halls as well as rooms for hire at the church and the school. The Kings Worthy Community Centre including the Tubbs Hall (known locally as the Kings Worthy Centre) was renovated in 2004 and now also houses the Parish Council offices. St Mary's

Hall in Springvale also doubles as a chapel, though most services are held at the medieval church of St Mary's.

The villages support many groups, including the W.I., an amateur dramatic society, a dance and drama school, and a local history group; all of them use one or other of the village halls. There are also Guide and Scout Groups, the latter with its own clubhouse.

The Mobile Library visits the villages every two weeks and there are two Public Houses in Kings Worthy, the King Charles on the northernmost edge and the Cart and Horses on the London road to the south.

itches. The Worthies Sports and Social Clubhouse is situated at the edge of Eversley Park.

The other main open space is the Village Green at Springvale, where there is a children's play area. Broadview and Hinton Park are additional green areas, although these are not large enough to accommodate much in the way of formal leisure activities.

At the time of writing, Winchester City Council's Open Space Strategy for 2005-6 identifies a shortfall of recreational space in Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy. The shortage is especially acute in the northern part of the Kings Worthy and the Parish Council is looking at ways to acquire additional recreation land in this area.

## Millennium Mosaics



Mosaic at Broad View



Peeks Field

## Sports and Leisure Facilities

The largest open space providing leisure facilities is at Eversley Park at the south-east edge of Kings Worthy. This facility is owned and maintained by Kings Worthy Parish Council and is named after Lord Eversley, a cabinet minister who lived at Abbotsworthy House. Facilities here include four football pitches, an all weather basketball / five a side pitch, and a children's play area. Several Kings Worthy football teams, mostly juniors, use the

Kings Worthy celebrated the Millennium with the design and construction of a series of mosaics throughout the village. Some of these are in buildings with restricted access such as the school, the day centre, the Kings Worthy Centre and Jubilee Hall. Others however, can be found in the public realm, at Broad View and St Mary's Church.



Mosaic at St Mary's Church

### Design Guidelines

D1 Opportunities should be provided for art works in the public realm wherever possible (DP.9)

### Additional goals

- G1 Open space / play area provision should be increased, especially to the north-west of Kings Worthy. Kings Worthy Parish Council is planning to provide a range of recreational facilities when the Top Field site is made available (see Figure 1)
- G2 Retain local shops within existing retail areas such as Springvale village green
- G3 Conserve the existing mosaics in the public realm
- G4 Encourage opportunities for a pharmacy to open within Kings Worthy, possibly linked to Surgery