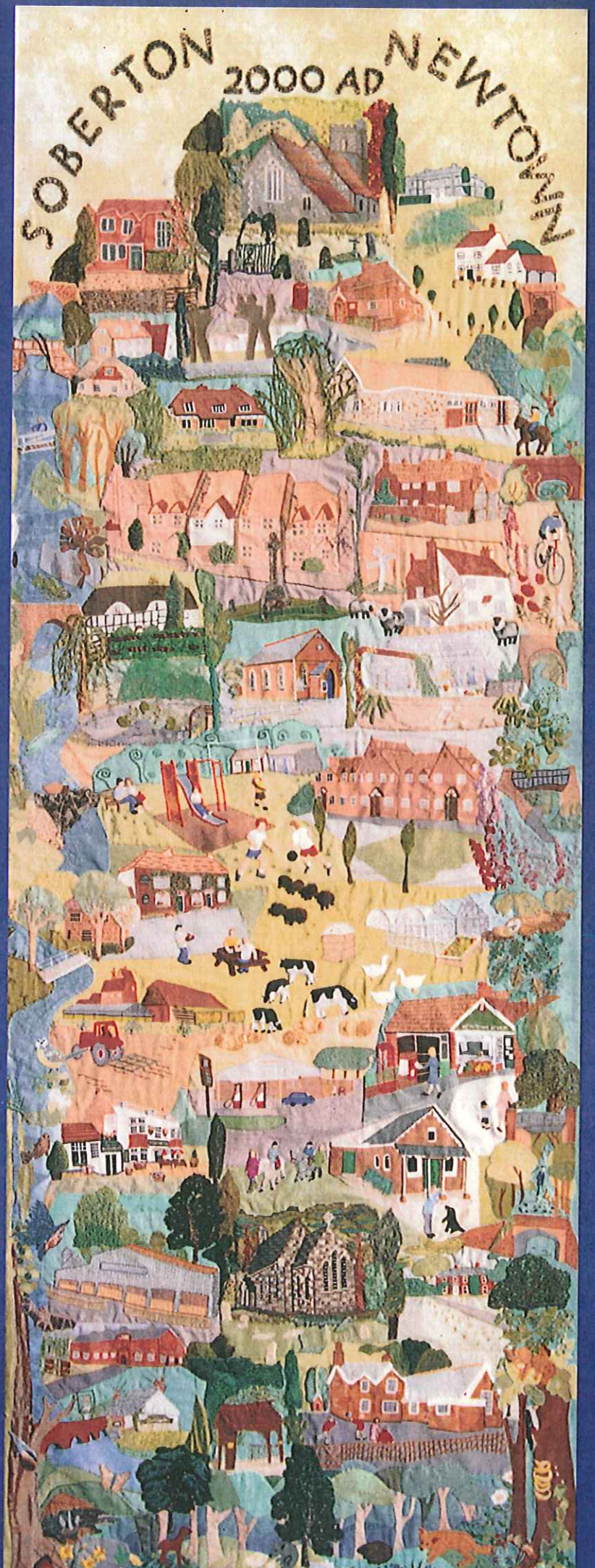


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SOBERTON AND NEWTOWN

VILLAGE  
DESIGN  
STATEMENT



# VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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## APPENDIX ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH

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### *Acknowledgements*

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- The Heritage Lottery *Awards for All* Fund.
- The Parish Council.
- HCC and Winchester City Council (contribution to printing costs).
- PiNS and personal contributions.

For their time and professional services:

- The residents of Soberton and Newtown parish who took part in workshops, responded to questionnaires and joined the VDS production team
- *Photographs*: Pond ©Denis May; Roe deer ©Roy Hardy; Brown Argus ©C. Marasay. Photograph of the Meon Valley Railway by kind permission of Mr R.J. French.
- *Maps*: David Hughes.
- *Front cover*: 'Soberton/Newtown Millennium Panel'. Original design ©Sylvia May 1999. Appliqué and embroidery worked by 31 ladies in the two villages.
- *Back cover*: Winning picture from VDS and Church Fete competition: 'Grey herons' by Rosic Hughes.

The group would also like to thank Mr Steve Opacic and Mrs Anna Budge of the Winchester City Forward Planning Group for their patience and wise advice in the production of this document.

Members of the VDS Group wish to pay tribute to their friend and colleague, Stewart Gay, who contributed so much to the project but so sadly died before he could see the final product.

Finally, the group wish to thank the team at Studio 6 in Wickham for their efforts in the design and printing of this publication.

# INTRODUCTION

*“A Village Design Statement describes the physical character of a village and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. It is written by local people, enabling local knowledge, views and ideas to be incorporated into planning guidance and to influence change. The aim is to ensure that any new developments take account of the village’s features and setting, and enhance its character, rather than detracting from it.*

*Village Design Statements are practical tools capable of influencing decisions affecting design and development in the village. As Supplementary Planning Guidance their recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications are assessed.”*

Winchester City Council website, 2000

## **Scope**

This Village Design Statement (VDS) is intended to supplement the *Winchester District Local Plan* as it relates to the electoral parish of Soberton. It describes and gives design guidance for three separate but closely connected village communities and four geographically identifiable outlying settlements. It is therefore, more accurately, a *Parish Design Statement*.

## **Applicability**

The provisions of this VDS are compatible with Proposals H2 and EN5 in the *1998 Local Plan* concerning developments in this parish. Guidance is also designed to apply to smaller physical changes that may be considered by residents without the need for Planning consent.

The VDS has therefore been written for use by:






- Statutory Bodies, Public Authorities, planners, developers, architects, planning consultants and engineers.
- Householders, local businesses and community groups.

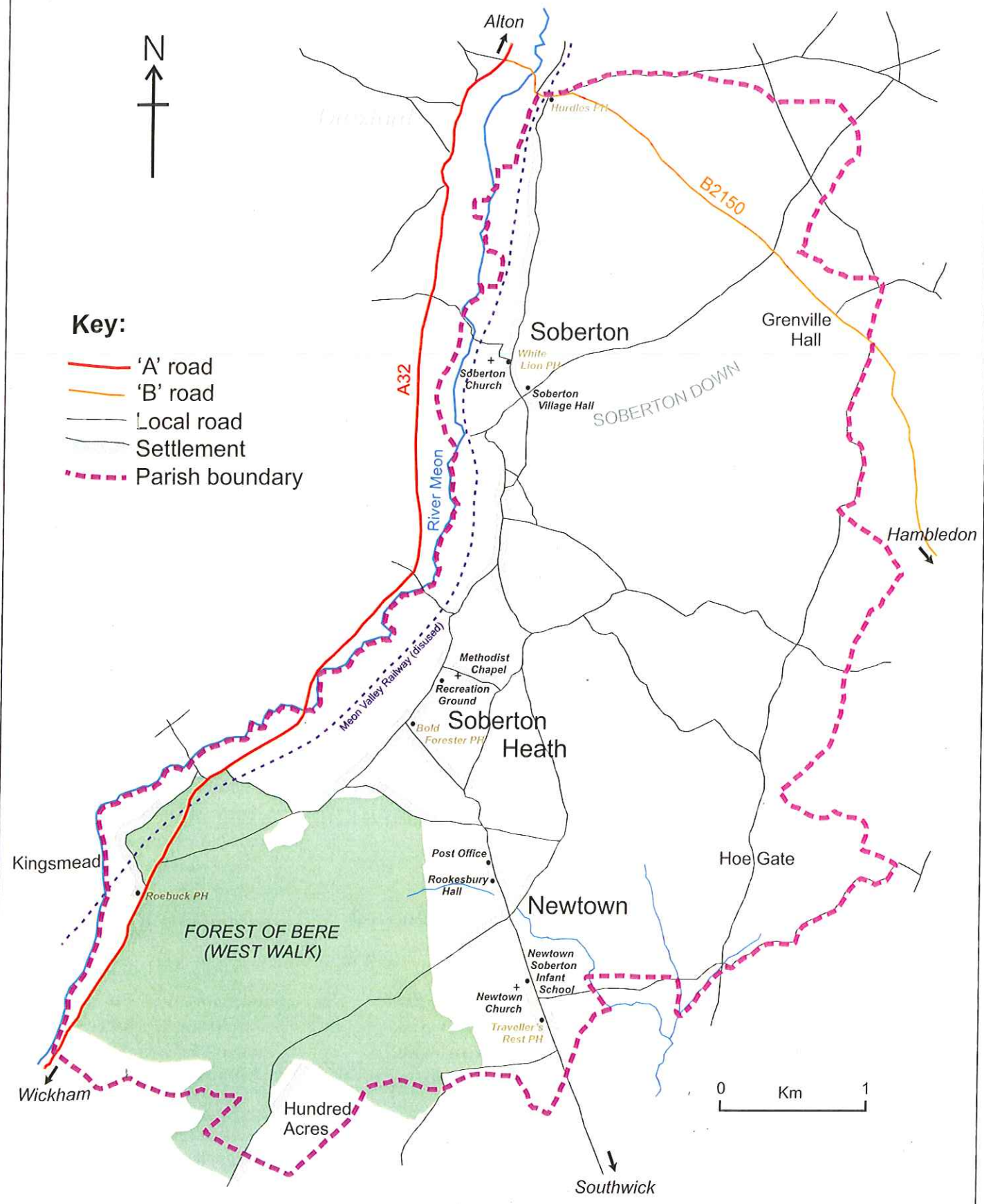
## **Background**

Twenty-five residents of the parish volunteered to form a VDS Group in September 2000. A parish-wide questionnaire and two VDS workshops were undertaken. Therefore, as many inhabitants as possible including schoolchildren, were consulted to establish their viewpoints, which are reflected in this Statement.

During the drafting stage the text was submitted to the Soberton Parish Council and the Winchester District Planning Department for comment and approval. It was adopted for use as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 27th February, 2002.



- Key:**
-  'A' road
  -  'B' road
  -  Local road
  -  Settlement
  -  Parish boundary



**The Parish of Soberton and Newtown**

# A PORTRAIT OF THE PARISH

*"Obsession with an ideal village can be overstated - we are not at all a Constable dream village but a parish to live in and to work in.... We are a 'rural' place, not a model village!"*

A parish resident, June 2001

## Location

The parish lies about 8 miles north of Fareham in southern Hampshire. It is a widespread rural community completely surrounded by nine other rural parishes of the Winchester District and has largely been insulated from urban overspill. The cities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Winchester are roughly equidistant at about 15 miles. The western parish boundary is almost entirely formed by the River Meon.



Grenville Hall



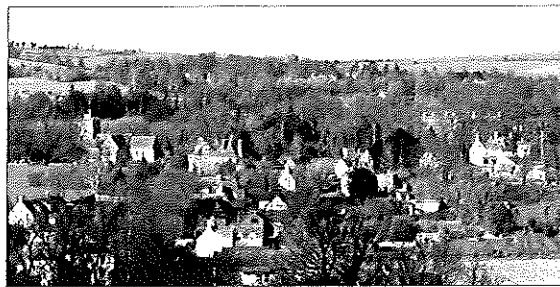
Hoe Gate



Hundred Acres



Kingsmead



Soberton



Soberton Heath



Newtown

## Size and Shape

The parish covers about 2400 hectares (9 square miles) of attractive countryside containing a mixture of agricultural land, downland, forest and water meadows. The three main villages, Soberton, Soberton Heath and Newtown, together with the smaller settlements of Grenville Hall, Hoe Gate, Hundred Acres and Kingsmead, do not follow the traditional village form with single focal points. Instead, they mostly lie in a dispersed linear pattern stretching north to south along the Meon Valley for about 5 miles. The total population is approaching 1600.

The northern part of the parish, including Soberton, comes within the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Soberton and the Bere Forest are currently expected to come within the South Downs National Park but a small extension to its projected boundaries would standardise future Planning arrangements for the whole parish\*.

*\*See Suggestions for Further Consideration on page 20.*



*Old Post Office and Forge, High Street, Soberton*



*Soberton High Street looking north, showing Reading Room*



*Old Post Office, Church Road, Newtown*



*Old School, School Hill, Soberton*



*'New Soberton', Station Road, Soberton*

## *History*

There is ample evidence of a Roman presence in the parish nearly two thousand years ago. It is likely that this was followed by an early Anglo-Saxon settlement. Later still, the Domesday Book tells of royal estates and farms around Soberton. The population of the area was then about 45 families. Soberton church was built on its present site during Norman times but it has been altered many times since then. Other remaining old buildings in the parish date from the 16th and 17th centuries.



*School Hill, Soberton*

Newtown and its present church came into existence in the mid-19th century. This was followed by considerable expansion of housing throughout the parish in the late Victorian era. Construction of the 22¼ mile Meon Valley Railway from Alton to Knowle near Fareham started in 1897. The work took 6 years and included the building of housing for managers and workers at the railway's halfway point in Soberton. The line closed for public trains in 1955 and the rails were gradually removed to enable the track to become a bridle-way.



*Meon Valley Railway*

## *Landscape Setting and Usage*

The landscape of downland to the north and east of the parish, the beautiful river valley to the west, and woodland to the south provide scenic backdrops to all the residential areas. The buildings, albeit in many styles, blend well together and appear in harmony with the surrounding countryside.

Attractive views across the parish from high ground extend to Old Winchester Hill and Beacon Hill in the north to the Isle of Wight in the south. They are much enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

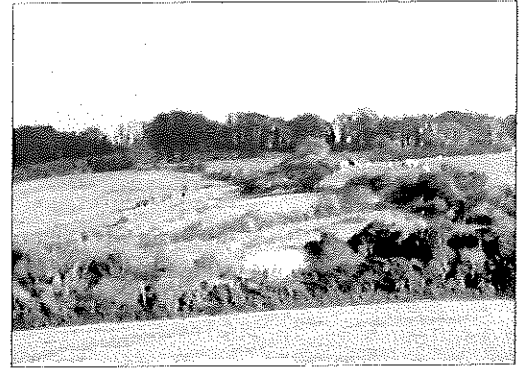
For many centuries the downland was predominantly chalk grassland used for sheep grazing. William Cobbett rode across Soberton Down over 200 years ago and wrote that he saw no fewer than 1,000 sheep feeding on the Down. It is now open land, professionally farmed, producing cereals and other arable crops along with some livestock.

The River Meon water meadows are generally unchanged and continue to support livestock farming, mostly sheep and traditionally-reared cattle. The land in the lower-lying areas to the south-east of the parish becomes clay-rich and supported local brick and tile making industries until the early part of the 20th century. Fields used for mixed farming tend to become smaller in this area and now include numerous horse paddocks, some of which are used commercially. The whole area is broken up by woodland and copse.

To the south-west is the largest surviving fragment of the once extensive Forest of Bere, the enclosed West Walk. It covers about 300 hectares of the parish. West Walk is administered by *Forest Enterprise*, which uses it for commercial forestry but also maintains a network of walking, riding and cycling trails for public recreation.

Throughout the parish the enclosures are largely traditional hedgerows and hedges on banks above sunken lanes. Many of the hedges, which are invaluable to wildlife, are well established; others have been and are being reinstated by local farmers under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme\*. Flint walls are also typical of the region, due to the ready availability of flints in chalk downland. They are an attractive, long lasting feature of the locality.

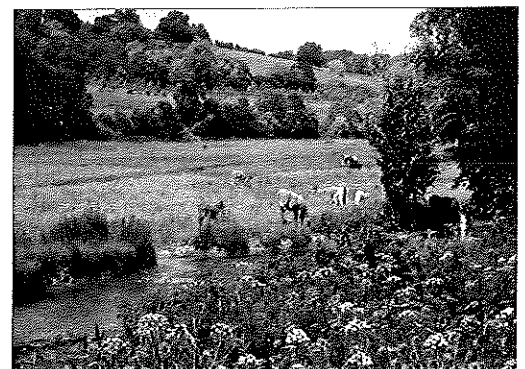
*\*See Suggestions for Further Consideration on page 20.*



*Soberton Down*



*River Meon*



*Water Meadows*



*Flint Walls, Soberton*



*West Walk, Forest of Bere*

## Green Gaps



A Church Meadow



B Horns Hill



C Looking west from Taplin's Corner

## Views



3 Heath Road, looking west



1 Portsdown from Maybush Lane



2 Long Road from Soberton Down

*Green gaps between settlements should be preserved for outlook and communal identity reasons.*

*New developments should not degrade views into or out from the parish.*



D Newtown, looking east

Distinct green gaps with open views remain on the country roads between each settlement although they have been somewhat eroded by residential and agricultural building in the last half century. These gaps are valued because they reinforce the sense of a small community and the individuality of each settlement. The most appreciated views from vantage points unobstructed by buildings, and 'glimpses' between buildings from the residential areas of the parish, preserve the feel of the rural environment. The green gaps, views and 'glimpses' are identified on the map opposite.

*Footprints of houses should not be so enlarged that identified glimpses of open countryside are obscured.*



13

## Glimpses



4



7



14



5



8








15



# Green gaps, Views and Glimpses from the main settlements in Soberton and Newtown

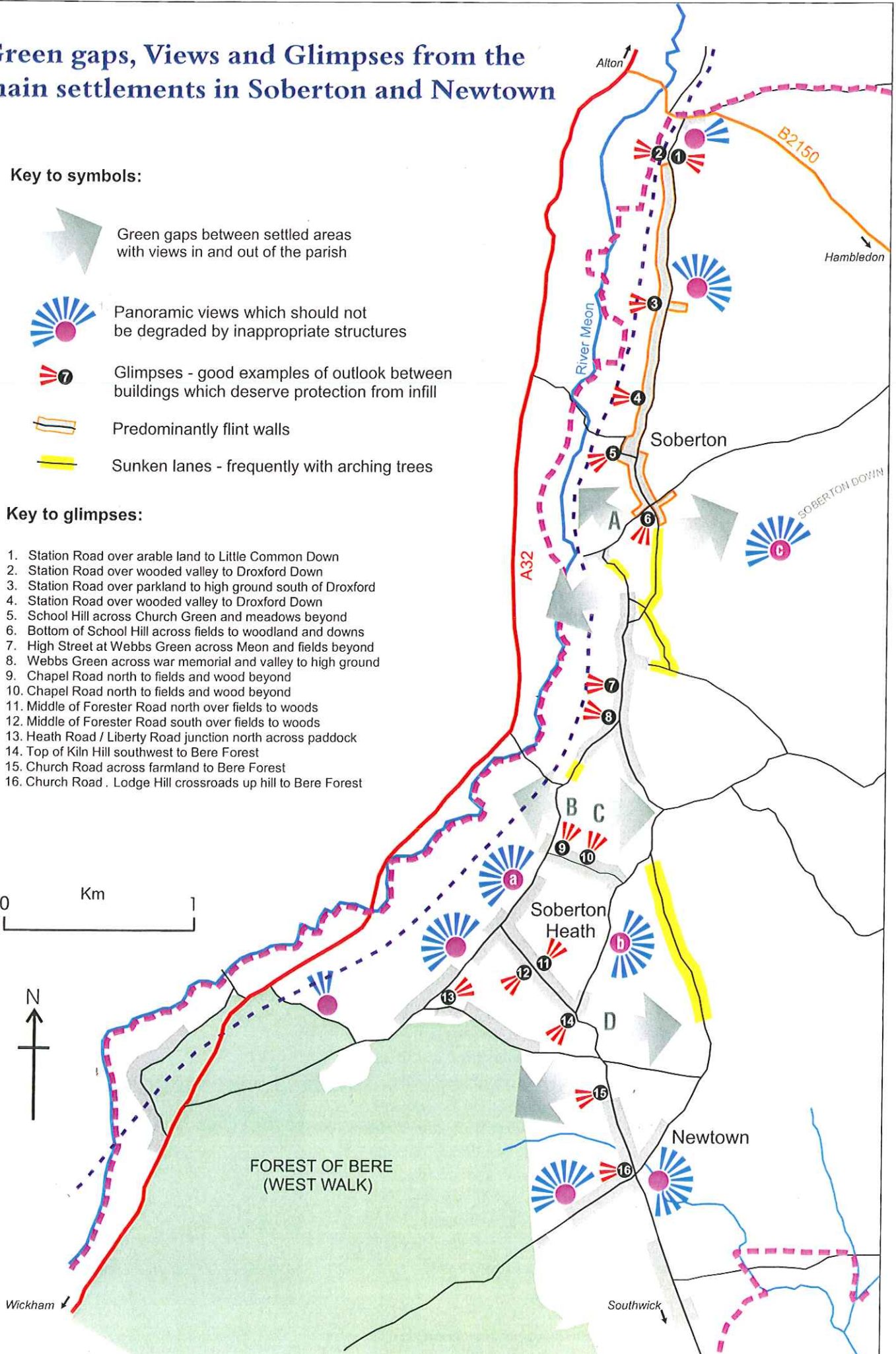
## Key to symbols:

-  Green gaps between settled areas with views in and out of the parish
-  Panoramic views which should not be degraded by inappropriate structures
-  Glimpses - good examples of outlook between buildings which deserve protection from infill
-  Predominantly flint walls
-  Sunken lanes - frequently with arching trees

## Key to glimpses:

1. Station Road over arable land to Little Common Down
2. Station Road over wooded valley to Droxford Down
3. Station Road over parkland to high ground south of Droxford
4. Station Road over wooded valley to Droxford Down
5. School Hill across Church Green and meadows beyond
6. Bottom of School Hill across fields to woodland and downs
7. High Street at Webbs Green across Meon and fields beyond
8. Webbs Green across war memorial and valley to high ground
9. Chapel Road north to fields and wood beyond
10. Chapel Road north to fields and wood beyond
11. Middle of Forester Road north over fields to woods
12. Middle of Forester Road south over fields to woods
13. Heath Road / Liberty Road junction north across paddock
14. Top of Kiln Hill southwest to Bere Forest
15. Church Road across farmland to Bere Forest
16. Church Road / Lodge Hill crossroads up hill to Bere Forest

0 Km 1



## Wildlife

The rich diversity of habitats in the parish, including the River Meon and local ponds, acts as host to an equally rich diversity of wildlife. None of these habitats could be recreated easily and it is important to protect them and to continue to manage them for their wildlife interests. To safeguard sites for the future, Hampshire County Council (HCC) has identified and recorded a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the parish. These are shown on the accompanying map. They include unimproved grassland and fen, ancient woodlands, commons, and copses where coppicing has increased light for enriching ground flora. Each of these sites has important, and sometimes rare, species of flora and fauna that, as long as they are sympathetically managed, should continue to thrive.



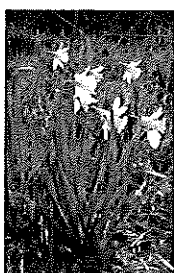
Heron



Kingfisher



Little Egret



Native wild daffodils

*Designated SINCs, like the downs and the Meon water meadows and other recognised areas of nature conservation, should be protected from harmful development.*

The Meon is one of Hampshire's famous chalk streams fed from aquifers that provide a stable water temperature. The river is therefore of great interest to fishermen and nature lovers although maintenance of the parish's five mile stretch of the river and its banks is, in places, far from adequate\*. Herons, kingfishers and even little egrets can be seen on the banks; banded demoiselles breed in the river and, at dusk, Daubenton bats hunt near the surface.

The surrounding water meadows, drained and controlled by innovative 18th and 19th century agricultural engineering to promote the sheep/corn system, are now rich in wild flowers, rushes and sedges. The sluices are unfortunately in disrepair. The pond on Soberton Heath has, by contrast, received greater local care and interest. Alien vegetation and fish, which have seriously reduced the pond's once large toad population, need continuing attention if indigenous species are to survive.

Five hectares of Soberton Down owned by HCC have never been chemically fertilised and have some very uncommon plants and insects like butterflies that depend on the wild flowers and grasses that survive there. West Walk, one of the most important Hampshire woodlands outside the New Forest, is a rich mosaic of deciduous broadleaf and coniferous trees. It supports a diverse wildlife including the rare summer visitor, the nightjar, uncommon ferns (especially the lemon-scented fern) and native wild daffodils and bluebells.

*\*See Suggestions for Further Consideration on page 20.*



Roe Deer



Bluebells



Pond at Soberton Heath

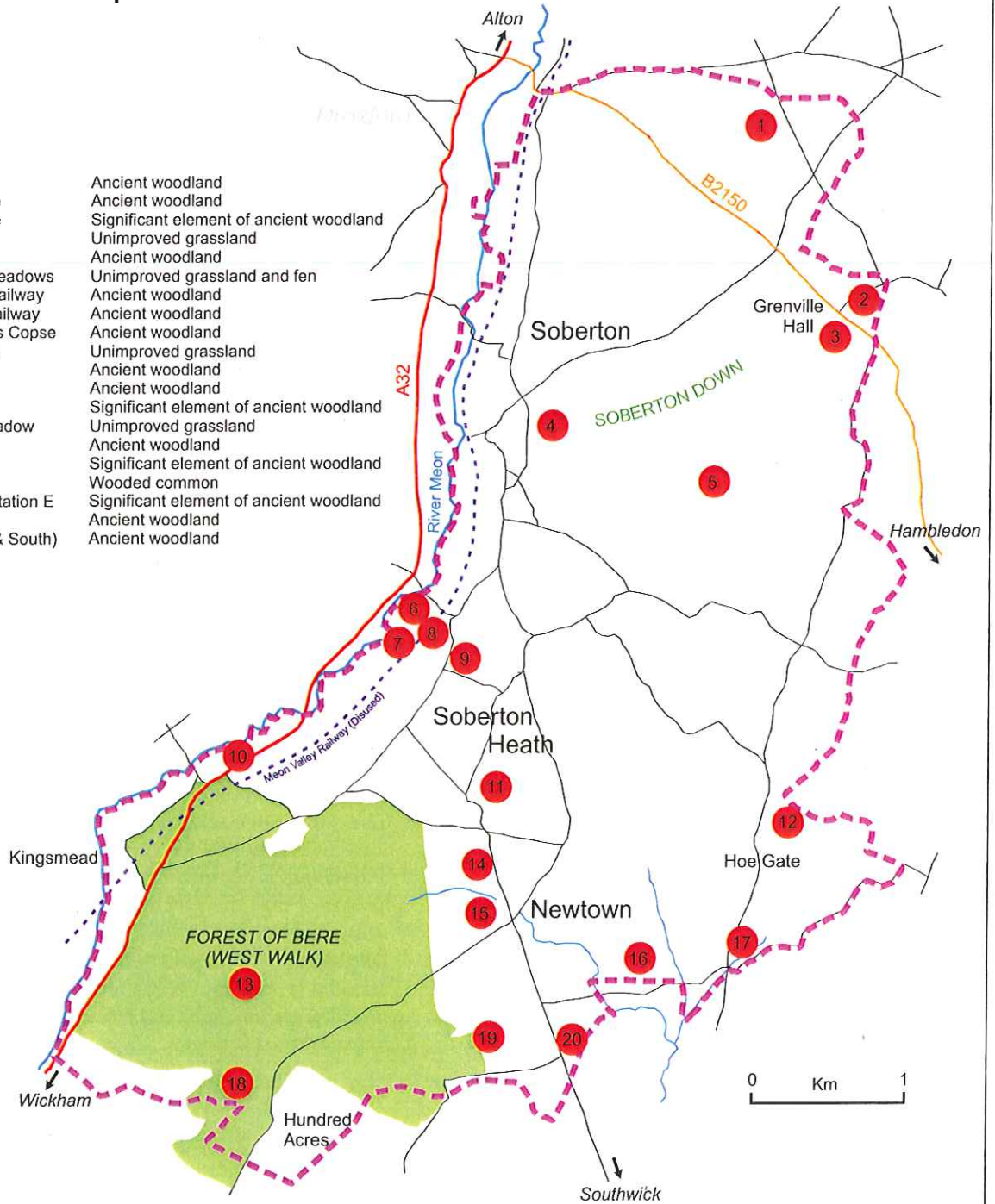


Brown Argus



**Key:**

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Bushydown Copse               | Ancient woodland                        |
| 2 Upper Grenville Copse         | Ancient woodland                        |
| 3 Lower Grenville Copse         | Significant element of ancient woodland |
| 4 Soberton Down                 | Unimproved grassland                    |
| 5 Shere Copse                   | Ancient woodland                        |
| 6 Soberton Mill Water Meadows   | Unimproved grassland and fen            |
| 7 Bere Copse West of Railway    | Ancient woodland                        |
| 8 Bere Copse East of Railway    | Ancient woodland                        |
| 9 Deans Row & Cocker's Copse    | Ancient woodland                        |
| 10 Timber Yard Meadows          | Unimproved grassland                    |
| 11 Dradfield Copse              | Ancient woodland                        |
| 12 The Paddocks                 | Ancient woodland                        |
| 13 West Walk                    | Significant element of ancient woodland |
| 14 Forest Farm Pond/Meadow      | Unimproved grassland                    |
| 15 Kiln Copse                   | Ancient woodland                        |
| 16 Huntbourn Woods              | Significant element of ancient woodland |
| 17 Hoegate Common               | Wooded common                           |
| 18 Rookesbury Park Plantation E | Significant element of ancient woodland |
| 19 Clamp Kiln Row               | Ancient woodland                        |
| 20 Charles Wood (North & South) | Ancient woodland                        |



**Sites of Importance for  
Nature Conservation in Soberton and Newtown**

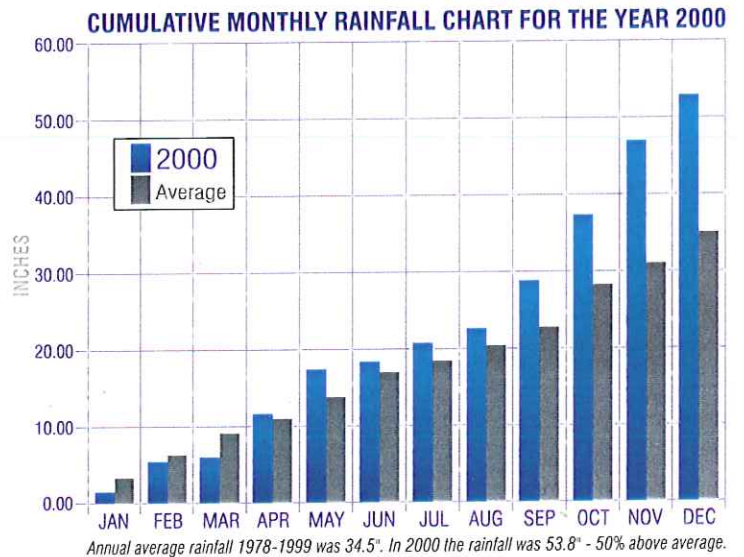
## Flooding and Drainage

During investigation of the floods of 2000/2001, it became clear that many former drains and ditches are now filled in or blocked. The surfacing for roads and driveways, which has covered over ditches in many places, has contributed significantly to this situation.

Good maintenance of the existing drainage channels is therefore vital in an area without mains drainage. Otherwise the potential for pollution by overflow from cesspits and septic tanks in some areas, and future disruptions from floodwater generally, will remain unchecked. This is made clear whenever a heavy rainstorm occurs and detritus from run-off water is carried down roads, blocking surface drains and causing floods. Drainage improvements are also required and the Parish Council's investigation of a small scaled public sewerage system limited to two areas is mostly welcomed\*. Any more building on marshy ground and impermeable clay, which in places could be designated as flood plains, should be subject to close scrutiny.



Flooding in Soberton



## Roads and Traffic

The parish has only two classified roads: the A32, which runs for about 1½ miles across the south-west corner, and about 1½ miles of the B2150 along the northern boundary. The remaining roads are minor country lanes originally intended for horses and carts. Modern agricultural machinery and school buses, invariably on roads at busy times, are larger and faster than their predecessors. Many lorries and buses using the lanes are entirely inappropriate for rural use and can take up more than half a road's width forcing approaching cars and cyclists into verges and ditches\*. The recently installed granite kerbs and corners have not prevented damage to road fringes.

Speeding vehicles are anti-social, noisy and dangerous, particularly on 'straights' like Newtown's Church Road (which passes the school and the shop) and at choke points, bridges, and narrow hills like Selworth Lane and Kiln Hill. The speed limits imposed in 1999 are rarely enforced, and are ineffective - but other traffic calming measures would not necessarily improve the situation. More rigorous speed control, some limitation on vehicle size and better maintenance of white road markings and signs would improve road safety\*.

Country lanes are a valued characteristic of the parish but infilling has increased the number of access points onto traffic-sensitive roads. Development should in future be arranged to minimise access points and to preserve existing hedgerows and trees.

\*See *Suggestions for Further Consideration* on page 20.



Heath Road congestion during football match



Newtown School at peak hours

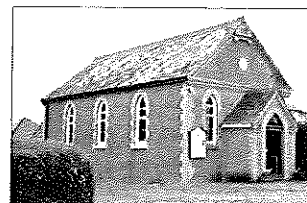
## Facilities



*St Peter's Church, Soberton*



*Holy Trinity Church, Newtown*



*Soberton Heath Methodist Chapel*

*It is important to ensure the continuance of the remaining facilities in the parish, as a vital support to the community.*

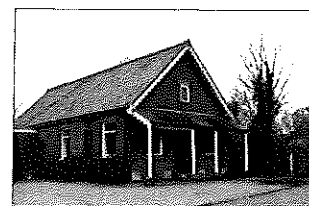
The essentially rural, rather than semi-rural, character of the parish has been preserved over the years. Many public amenities and services have closed down but the parish has retained: two Anglican churches, a Methodist chapel, two village halls, five 'country' pubs and, in Newtown, a village shop with sub-post office and an infants' school. Urban development has also been avoided by not having, nor wanting, mains gas, mains drainage, streetlighting and pavements (except near the school).



*Soberton Village Hall*



Rudimentary public and community bus services connect with Droxford, Wickham and Fareham where fuller facilities like surgeries, pharmacies, police, shops and transport links are to be found. Therefore, for normal access to those important amenities, residents have become used to relying upon their own vehicles. This regular traffic, together with twice daily large school buses and frequent delivery vehicles, travels on narrow country roads also much used by walkers, riders and children. While a reduction in local traffic would be welcome, a comprehensive public transport system would, realistically, not be cost effective.



*Rookesbury Hall, Newtown*



## The Community



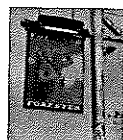
*Pantomime*



*Newtown Church Fete*



*Newtown School*



The main business of the parish remains, as ever, related to the land. Farming, horticulture and country crafts do not, however, employ nearly as many residents as they did even fifty years ago; nor do other small local businesses.

The social structure of the villages and smaller settlements remains essentially diverse with a good mix of age groups and backgrounds. Although the majority of working residents and schoolchildren commute outside the parish, the 150 year old Newtown and Soberton Infant School has recently been extended with updated facilities. The community balance means that interest groups and social activities flourish for most ages, except perhaps for teenagers, and good use is made of the village halls, churches and recreation ground. Nevertheless, the development of appropriate small-scale rural enterprises strictly controlled under Government regulations, see *Local Plan E1 (i)-(iii)* and *PPG 13 (Transport)*, could assist in preventing the parish becoming, increasingly, a commuter dormitory.



*Meon Valley Nurseries*

*Planning permission for future development of rural industry should be in accordance with Government guidelines; buildings should be suitably sited and sympathetic to the local environment.*



*Newtown Stores*



Peace and quiet, closeness to nature, darkness at night and good fellowship are valued in this small community. Conservation of wildlife and traditional physical features of the countryside, like old barns, pubs and fingerposts, is also important.

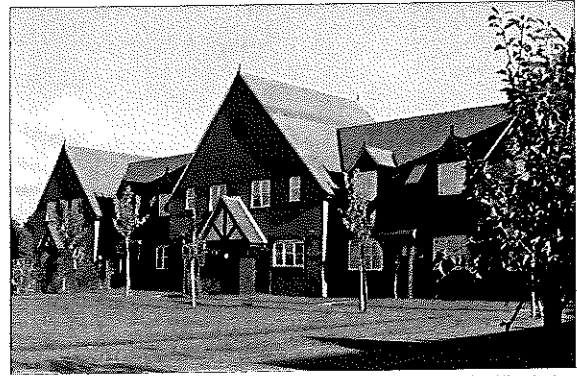


*Manor Farm*



## Maintaining a Balanced Community

Planning permissions in this parish in the last ten years appear to have favoured the construction of expensive 'executive' housing. Smaller, 'more affordable' housing developments have rarely been forthcoming except for one successful Housing Association building, 'The Liberties'.



*'The Liberties'*

*Priority should be given to restoring the community balance by fostering a sensible mix of small as well as large houses in the parish.*

Winchester SPG on *Housing Mix* highlights the shortage of small, one and two bedroom dwellings in this area. More affordable housing is certainly required in the parish to sustain the community with a local workforce and protect the interests of the old who wish to stay here after retirement and the young who grow up here and wish to remain.

## Recreation

*Additional recreation facilities are urgently required in different parts of the parish and all opportunities to acquire them should be looked at.*

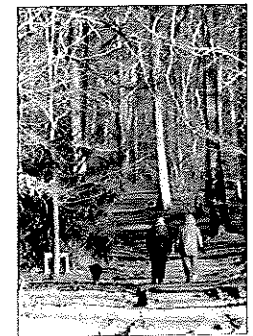
The public recreation ground in the parish is sited in Soberton Heath. It covers 1.5 hectares but is too far for convenient pedestrian access by the residents of the other settlements. It contains a children's play area, a football pitch, a pavilion and a 'Guide Hut' which acts almost as a third village hall. The Winchester *Open Space Strategy 2000/2001*, complementing the *Local Plan*, recognises that the parish needs another 1.5 hectares of public facilities, which must be more accessible to other residential areas. Improved amenities are important and should include provision for additional activities, such as tennis courts and an all-purpose surface area, to cater for wider recreational interests.

*No development proposal should threaten the integrity of a public right of way.*

Apart from use of the recreation ground, the most evident outdoor activities are horse riding, walking and cycling. Numerous footpaths and bridle-ways thread the area and provide off-road riding or rambling. These include the West Walk, the old Meon Valley Railway line, Wayfarers' Walk and the Millennium Walk.



*Pony riding*



*West Walk*



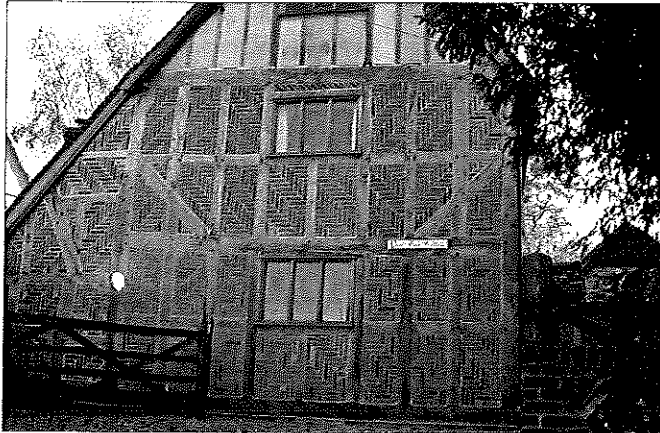
*Old railway line path*



*Recreation Ground*

## *Buildings*

It cannot be said that the buildings of the parish have a particular local character; nor do they exhibit a consistent pattern of scale, design, plot ratio or finish. The use of local materials is apparent in many of the older dwellings and farm buildings, but later construction reflects widespread use of contemporary materials and components.



*Yew Tree Cottage in West Street*



*Cottage in Kingsmead*



*Bungalow in Liberty Road*

There are 22 Grade II Listed structures in the parish including houses, farmhouses, barns and a gateway. The majority of these are centred around Soberton church and the church meadow with its fine avenue of lime trees, which once led up to the now lost Soberton Manor. The other residential areas have a mixed architectural heritage of occasional old buildings, Victorian and Edwardian villas and 1920s and 30s houses and bungalows, interspersed with modern housing.



*New houses in Chapel Road*



*House in Ingoldfield Lane*

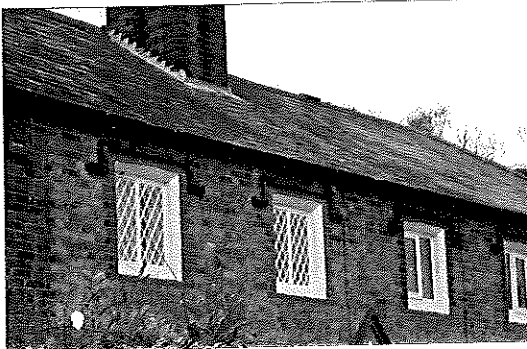


*The Towers*

# DESIGN

*"New technology should enable architects, planners and developers to design for the future with respect for the influence of the past."*

Countryside Commission Advisory Booklet, 1996



*Windows at Hundred Acres*

*Materials should be chosen to reflect existing traditional and local materials in colour, texture and proportion. (See Appendix)*

*The linear form of the villages should be maintained; expansion outside the current development frontage should be strictly controlled.*

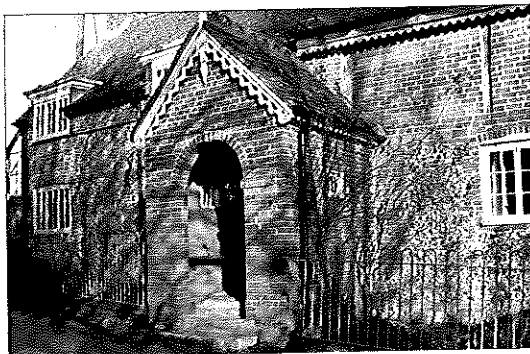
## *General Observations*

From the second world war to around the mid 1980s, domestic building design in Britain was characterised by cheap and often shoddy techniques driven mainly by cost in preference to style and quality. That trend was, unsurprisingly, no different for designs in this parish. Building control during that period also imposed several onerous constraints on designers, such as a minimum storey height of 2.3m, which made it almost impossible to alter or add to most rural buildings without permanently and adversely changing their character. Building regulations have now changed and removed many of the more ambiguous rules.

The loss of local kilns and the demise of regional building types have serious implications on this parish. Any serious attempt to recreate the local red brick structures of the 19th century is fraught with resourcing hazards. The beautifully contrived purpose-made windows, which are so important to the character of areas such as Hundred Acres, are being lost almost daily. Plastic double-glazed replacements and dark stained timber frames with brick do not reflect traditional characteristics.

Developer-led demand has dictated the size and style of new buildings and extensions to existing buildings. Urban estate house types, half-timbered mini mansions or applied 'ancient Greek' details do not stimulate adherence to local trends and influences.

The overall impression of the narrow linear settlements of the parish is one of openness within the surrounding downs, fields and woodland. This openness and an interesting mix of buildings create the visual character of the parish.



*Porch House, said to be the oldest building in the parish*

## *Design Statement*

The aim of this Design Statement is not to be prescriptive or to stifle innovation. Rather, it sets out to offer guidance and, perhaps, some stimulation towards a better understanding of how new development or improvement could contribute to the overall charm and traditional character of the area. To assist that aim, the Appendix gives a broad architectural description of the larger settlements of the parish starting from the northern end.



## ***Buildings - Form and Function***

*Buildings should generally have not more than two storeys and should reflect the scale of surrounding buildings.*

Most buildings have either one or two storeys and are predominantly domestic. This pattern is seldom varied. Many older buildings are of timber-framed construction and tend to be lower, often one and a half storeys high. Most properties are either detached or semi-detached; terraces are comparatively rare. Many of the earlier buildings would have been thatched but there are now only a few surviving examples.



*South View Cottages*

## ***Siting of Buildings***

*The principal elevation should face the road frontage.*

A common theme throughout the parish is the juxtaposition of the property in relation to road frontage. In most older buildings, the positioning is close to the road and the principal elevation faces the road frontage. Newer buildings tend to sit further back on their plots. Hedgerows, boundary walls and trees are also important when determining the siting of a new building or extension. Existing trees should be retained wherever possible.



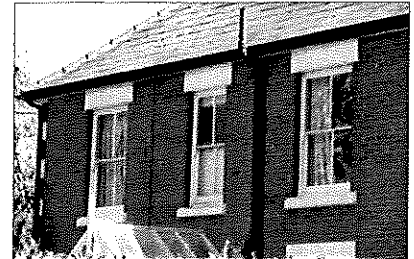
*Five Trees*

*Siting on the plot should take account of natural, built and landscape features, such as views, glimpses, neighbouring properties, trees, existing boundary walls and hedgerows.*

## ***Windows***

*Traditional window framing materials should be retained or replaced where possible.*

Window types range in variety but commonly are of the timber casement type, some with leaded lights. The Victorian and Edwardian houses tend to have sliding sashes, which usually have a vertical emphasis. One particular type that may be unique to this area is the timber casement with mullions that appear only on the inside. Careful thought should be given before replacing timber window frames in old buildings with uncharacteristic materials.



*Sliding sash windows*

*Existing proportions, styles and aspect ratios for features like windows, doors, roofs and dormers should be reflected.*



*Timber casement with mullions*



*Flat mono-pitch dormer*

## ***Roofs***



*Straight gable*

Roof details tend to be simple with gables and fully hipped examples among the older buildings. Coverings are usually of handmade clay tiles or slate. Rooflines are often punctuated at eaves level by dormers. There is a variety of dormer types ranging from flat leaded roofs, mono-pitched with tiles, eyebrows, and full hips with bonnet tiles. They are usually small-scale with a maximum of two casements. Ridge heights on older buildings are generally quite low - a reflection of the constraints inflicted by the maximum lengths of available construction timber which limited the maximum span.



*Roofs*

*New or extended roofs should respect the scale and style of surrounding buildings.*

*Where roofs have to be replaced, active encouragement should be given to using traditional materials of clay or slate. A good tenet is to replace like with like.*



*Flat leaded hip*



*Hip dormer*



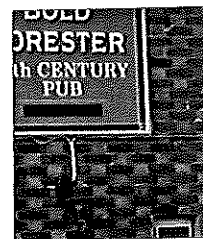
*Full hip with bonnet tiles*

## Walls

*Encouragement should be given to retention of existing boundary walls and hedges.*

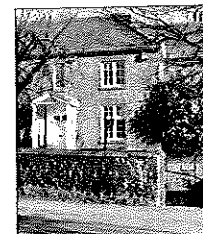
*Important flint walls are shown on the map on page 7.*

Flint was regularly used for building in the 17th and 18th centuries in the north of the parish, but the common material throughout, especially in higher status buildings, has been brick. Much of the brickwork is of high quality and the use of Flemish bond with burnt headers is represented by a few noteworthy examples.



*Flemish bond*

Some brick and flint buildings have been painted. This is unfortunate because not only does this cover up attractive colour textures but, when decorated with modern PVA based paints, the process is practically irreversible and can lead to moisture entrapment within the wall.



*Boundary wall*

Boundary walls typically have brick details and cappings but some of the earliest examples are plain coursed flintwork. They are mainly confined to the front boundary with the road and add definition.

## Hedgerows

*New boundaries should reflect existing features such as flint or brick walls or natural mixed hedgerows and trees, rather than wooden close boarded fences.*

Hedgerows with a mix of indigenous species are common to all settlements, however, the use of single-species planting, such as cupressus leylandii, can often introduce an urban feel. Similarly, high close-boarded fencing can introduce harsh interruption to softer and more subtle planting and landscapes.



*Hedgerows*

## Agricultural Buildings

*New agricultural buildings should be designed and sited in order to minimise any adverse effect on the landscape and be screened with indigenous species where necessary.*

The economic plight of farming and the need for low cost utility buildings to accommodate modern machinery is well recognised. Many of these buildings can be quite ugly, so it is essential that siting and scale should be a prime consideration. New buildings should be sited so that they do not impact adversely on the wider landscape. It may also be necessary to provide discreet screening to minimise their effect.

## Converted Rural Buildings

*Converted rural buildings should retain their original characteristics and form.*

*Avoid the application of too many domestic features.*

Throughout the parish there are a number of redundant rural buildings which, whilst no longer having a viable farming function, are attractive. Many are of historical interest. If the building is appropriately located, a wide variety of new uses can often be found within the current Planning structure to rescue it from loss. The principal concern is that, in the process of conversion, it is easy to destroy the features that give the building its character. Large unbroken roof slopes and interesting roof structures are details that should be retained. Several successful conversions, already carried out, retain these characteristics. Domestic details such as brick chimneys, dormer windows, additional doors and windows, and alterations to the basic structure can often desecrate these buildings. Conversions need to be sensitively undertaken.



*Farm buildings*



*Meon Barn*

## *Alterations and Extensions to Existing Buildings*

*Alterations and extensions should recognise the scale and character of the existing building and be subservient to the main dwelling.*

*Buildings should not be built or so extended as to overwhelm the plot frontage, i.e. fill the width of the plot, stand too close to the road, or sideways to the entrance.*

As dwellings become altered over time they can often be overshadowed by inferior works to such an extent that the original building can no longer be readily recognised.

Extensions can take on a dominant character unless the scale and form of the existing building is retained. The original building should normally be recognisable in its original format. This can be achieved by making the new extension subservient to the original building. Ingenuity in design is usually required for many older buildings and careful thought should be given to the way a new extension is integrated. Original features should not normally be obliterated.



*A sensitive extension, 1 Glencoe Cottages*

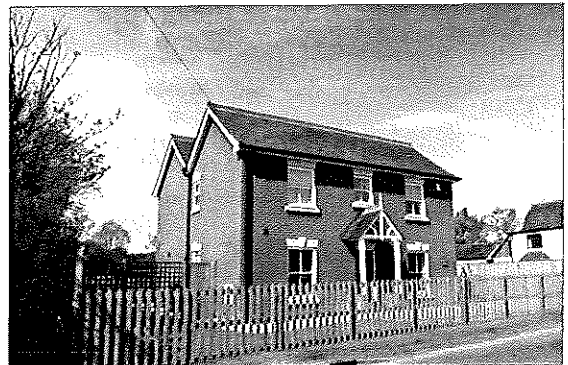
Structures need visual 'breathing room'. No building should be so extended as to occupy all the available width on the site. Spatial positioning is particularly important where plots are narrow.

## *Infilling*

*Development should not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining properties.*

*When infilling with small units, access points on to road should be minimised.*

An important design factor for infilling developments is the maintenance of a building-to-plot size ratio in keeping with that of neighbouring properties. If the width, height or scale is out of proportion, the new building could overwhelm its plot frontage and the adjoining properties.



*Newtown infill*

This is important in a parish where many of the older houses stand in sizeable gardens. Recent buildings and extensions tend to have larger footprints on smaller plots creating an uncharacteristic visual impact. Replacement of small by large, a lack of architectural diversity and too many houses in too little space all create an 'urban' look. Infill should maintain a rural prospect and not mimic tightly packed town housing developments.

# SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

*"I hope the guidance and recommendations in this VDS will be used as a checklist for developers, planners and those wishing to extend their properties, so that their own ideas are tested against the views of the people who live here."*

Chairman Soberton Parish Council, November 2001

## *Guidelines for New Buildings*

### **DO...**

- Choose materials that reflect existing locally used colours, textures and proportions.
- Take full account of the nature of local land and adequacy of drainage on and around the plot.
- Make the main elevation face the road.
- Site any buildings with respect for surrounding features, views, neighbours, trees, boundary walls and hedges.
- Ensure new or extended roofs respect sizes and scale of surrounding buildings.
- Use brick or flint boundary walling or native mixed hedges.
- Design and site new agricultural buildings for minimum impact on the landscape; screen with indigenous planting where necessary.

### **DON'T...**

- Plan more than two storeys.
- Build out of scale with surrounding buildings.
- Overwhelm the plot frontage.
- Impact detrimentally on amenities of adjoining properties.
- Impact detrimentally on the landscape.
- Destroy boundary walls and existing hedgerows or use close-boarded wooden fences.

## *Guidelines for Alterations to Existing Buildings*

### **DO...**

- Reflect existing proportions, styles and aspect ratios for features such as windows, doors, roofs and dormers.
- Ensure the original building is still recognisable in its original format.
- Ensure alterations and extensions are subservient to the original building and reflect its existing features and characteristics.
- Ensure any conversion of redundant agricultural buildings retains the original character and form, avoiding too many extra domestic features.
- Use traditional materials when replacing roofs, i.e. replace like with like.

### **DON'T...**

- Use uncharacteristic materials and poorly detailed windows when altering old buildings.
- Extend so as to overwhelm the plot frontage or be out of character with adjacent properties.

# SUMMARY OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

*"Villages will only be suitable locations for accommodating significant additional housing where the development can be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village using such techniques as VDSs."*

PPG3 paragraph 70 (Village Expansion and Infill), March 2000.

- Green gaps between settlements should be preserved for outlook and communal identity reasons.
- Footprints of houses should not be so enlarged that identified glimpses of open countryside are obscured.
- New developments should not degrade views into or out from the parish.
- Designated SINCS and other recognised areas of nature conservation should be protected from harmful development.
- It is important to ensure the continuance of the remaining facilities in the parish.
- Planning permission for future development of rural industry should be in accordance with Government guidelines; buildings should be suitably sited and sympathetic to the local environment.
- Priority should be given to restoring the community balance by fostering a sensible mix of small as well as large houses in the parish.
- Additional recreation facilities are urgently required in different parts of the parish and all opportunities to acquire them should be looked at.
- No development proposal should threaten the integrity of a public right of way.
- The linear form of the parish should be maintained; expansion outside the current development frontage should be strictly controlled.
- When infilling with small units, access points onto roads should be minimised.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The following suggestions concerning the parish are offered for further consideration by the appropriate authorities:

### *Policy*

- A small extension to the projected boundaries of the South Downs National Park would standardise future Planning arrangements for the whole parish.
- The Countryside Stewardship Scheme should be encouraged in support of the reinstatement of hedgerows and trees.
- The Parish Council's initiative in considering a limited public sewerage system should be pursued provided that there is no scope for enlarged capacity.

### *Environment*

- Owners of the river and fishing rights, or a local conservation group, should make an urgent effort to preserve the river, its banks and sluices.
- Rights of way must be protected and maintained in good order. Signs and stiles should be improved to enhance the recreational value of the area to both residents and visitors.
- Proper maintenance and improvement of ditches and waterways are essential, especially near known flood spots.
- Development should take the nature of local land into account and ensure that drainage on and around properties is fully adequate.

### *Roads and Traffic*

- Care should be taken with future planning or development to ensure minimal increase in the number of private cars and PSVs using the narrow winding lanes.
- Better control of vehicle speed is needed if accidents are to be avoided and young children are to be safe, notably near their school.
- Serious consideration must be given to ways of limiting the size of vehicles allowed on unclassified roads, possibly by HGV restrictions and the use of smaller school buses.
- With road safety in mind, the quality of road maintenance and sign visibility must improve.

## APPENDIX: ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH

### STATION ROAD

The predominant influence along Station Road is 20th century and its origins have run in tandem with that of the railway. The scale and style of the earlier buildings is undoubtedly suburban, mostly semi-detached and the development probably speculative. The pattern of building is highly ornamental with curvilinear patterned bargeboards and ornate ridge tile details. This building style utilises the local red brick with slate roofs and some with pseudo-Tudor half-timbered and rendered upper elevations. Timber supported front verandahs are also popular. Development is confined mainly to the western side of the road with one or two individual sites to the east, allowing the landscape to dominate. From Crookhorn Lane southward the pattern is more piecemeal with individual sites developed mostly in the styles of the late 20th century, but with some interesting earlier bungalows from around the 1920s and 30s. A number of gaps exist within this linear pattern which help to reinforce a rural character. Flint retaining walls become a feature from Crookhorn Lane. *The Towers* makes bold use of this material. A good visual link with the older part of the village at School Hill is forged by the long and low retaining wall that continues south through the tunnel of trees up to the high garden walls of *Soberton House*.

### CHURCH GREEN & SCHOOL HILL

This is the oldest and most architecturally homogeneous part of the parish. The dominant building form in School Hill is a low eaves line with first floor windows punctuating this line or with full dormers, giving a one and a half storey height. The average ridge height is around 6m above ground level and the ground contour is reflected by the scale of each building along the frontage in relation to the neighbouring property. The buildings are generally built adjacent or near to the roadside, *Old School House* being the only exception. Many of the older buildings are timber-framed but vernacular repairs over time have degraded and replaced much of this structure with brick or flint. Flint boundary walls, generally in fair condition, define the area's character. Those associated with *Soberton House* and *Manor Farm* are up to 3m high with simple brick capping. These examples date from the 18th century. More recent walls, dating from the 19th century and onwards, are usually finished with heavier details, including brick quoins and capping of either semi-circular or triangular shape. There are eleven Grade II Listed buildings within this section.

### WEST STREET & COLE HILL

A varied selection of building types range in date from around the 15th century to the late 19th/early 20th century. This group lies at the heart of the old village and contains no fewer

than four Listed buildings. All of these are timber framed with brick infills. The earliest is *Maypole Cottage*, a former open hall house which is attributed to the 15th century. Others in this group include *Five Trees* (17th century, thatched), *Yew Tree Cottage* (16th/17th century) and *Maypoles* (17th century, originally thatched). All these buildings are timber framed with later brick claddings. Recent works to *Yew Tree Cottage* have included the refurbishment of the north wall and the reinstatement of the timber frame in green oak, with herringbone patterned brick infills. Other buildings in the group display a wide variety of vernacular building styles and features. The new water pumping station is the only building on the north side of West Street and features reconstituted flint panels under a machine-made clay tiled roof.

### HIGH STREET

High Street is classic rural linear development characterised by a variety of building types of the last three centuries. Building intensity is highest in the cluster around the area of the raised bank that provides a focus. Many of the 19th century buildings were originally business premises now converted to residential use. Soft hedgerow planting of indigenous species is common in High Street and combines well with the flint and brick boundary walls, maintaining a rural quality in an otherwise fairly intensively developed area. High Street is rich with special details such as ridge tiles, handmade chimney pots, decorative bargeboards and cast iron guttering, which could be lost by re-roofing work. The terrace at Webb's Green is a good example of a successful modern development in tune with its surroundings. The terrace is in step with the ground contour and turns the corner into Selworth Lane, giving good visual harmony. The original flint wall is retained and building materials match texture and colour of 18th century *Meon Place* opposite.

### SOBERTON HEATH

The original settlement is ranged along Heath Road with its focal point around the Grade II Listed *Bald Forester* public house dated 1709. A few cottages of similar age remain in that area. Traditional roofing materials for this area are plain clay peg tiles with hogs back ridge details. Some hips are treated with bonnet tiles and others with ridge tiles. Both of these are 19th/20th century inventions and probably replace hand cut details. The brickwork to the front elevation of the *Bald Forester* is of very high quality work with blue headers and red stretchers laid in Flemish bond (i.e. header/stretcher, header/stretcher, etc.). The south elevation fronting Forester Road has been painted and this brickwork detail lost. Similarly, the flint outbuilding at the rear has been re-tiled in interlocking concrete tiles,

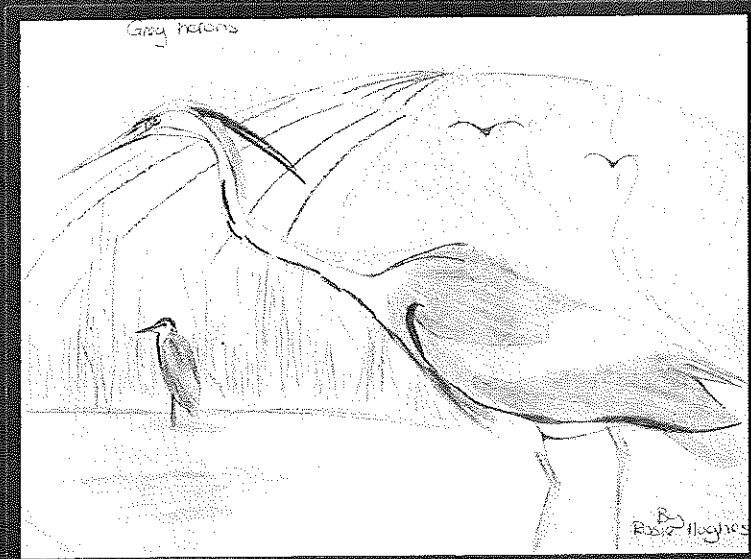
which are incompatible with vernacular materials. *Bere Farmhouse* dates from a similar period. The house is fairly unusual in that the upper elevations are tile hung. Heath Road was built up mainly in the late 19th century with pairs of semi-detached and detached workers' houses. Most were replaced in the late 20th century with individual detached houses. Another building type common to the area is the bungalow. There are some excellent examples in Soberton Heath, probably developed from humble building types from the early 19th century or perhaps earlier. These buildings lend a very distinctive character to the street scene and their importance should be recognised. Enclosed fields between the road system and the forest to the south enable the settlement to retain an obvious rural character.

### NEWTOWN

The centre of the village, between the shop and the village hall, still has a number of original house types. These are predominantly 19th century brick buildings with clay tiled roofs. A typical house in Newtown is of two full storey height, double-fronted with central front door and with full gabled ends under a clay tiled or sometimes slate roof. Most have a rear wing at right angles to the frontage and with a continuous eaves line to the main building. Windows usually have a vertical emphasis with stone or pre-cast concrete lintels. The original windows are of typical late 19th/early 20th century sliding sash type and, although some really good examples remain, many have been replaced. Trimmed mixed hedgerows define most road frontage boundaries, but are taller between plots. A number of small brick outhouses survive in the centre as a reminder of Newtown's recent working past. Further south, larger executive houses have been built with detached double garages. Here, perhaps, an opportunity was lost to create a parallel slip road to maintain the hedgerow and reduce access points onto a busy country road. Lodge Hill has a couple of excellent 19th century brick buildings with very fine mortar joints characteristic of high quality work.

### HUNDRED ACRES

This unique 'model village', borne out of the mid-19th century Inclosures Act, was built to house workers of the nearby Rookesbury Park estate on former common land. The original cottages are absolute gems with highly individual and distinctive features, but many have been extended in the past thirty years to accommodate modern living. Elevations have a mixture of red and blue brick with random dispersal laid on Flemish bond. Sadly, few of the superb original cast iron windows with diamond patterned lights remain. Chimney detailing is exceptional.



SOBERTON AND NEWTOWN

# VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Produced by  
Soberton and Newtown VDS Group,  
supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund *Awards for All*

**STUDIO 6**  
DESIGN & PRINT

The Square, Wickham, Hampshire · Tel: 01329-832933 · [www.studio-6.co.uk](http://www.studio-6.co.uk)



## ADDENDUM TO THE SOBERTON AND NEWTOWN VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT (VDS)

*"The VDS should refer to the consultation process to demonstrate the strength of local support. It should also make clear the status given to it by the local planning authority."* [Village Design' Part 1 chapter 5]

**Introduction.** This addendum amplifies page 1, column 3 of the VDS - 'Background'. It explains more fully the public consultations which accompanied the production of the VDS and the parallel discussions with local authorities, notably Soberton Parish Council and the Winchester City Council's Forward Planning Team.

**Initiation of the VDS Project.** Volunteers were called for to undertake the project on behalf of the Parish Council at the Annual Parish Meeting (AGM) for Soberton, Soberton Heath and Newton in March 2000, and afterwards in the Parish Magazine. The aim was to have a VDS adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the City Council in accordance with its WCC website 2000. Two open meetings, conducted by the Parish Council Chairman, were then held in July and September 2000 to discuss the project and form a 'VDS Group'.

**The VDS Group.** At the second open meeting a Group chairman, secretary and treasurer were 'elected', together with four sub-Group leaders. The remaining eighteen volunteers, of different age groups and from all parts of the parish, were divided amongst the sub-Groups according to their choice. Sub-Groups undertook to consider topics for inclusion in the VDS relevant to their brief titles, i.e. Wildlife & Geology, Building Design, Landscape, and Social Aspects & Economy.

**Guidance.** Copies of the Countryside Commission's 1996 Advisory Booklet 'Village Design' were obtained and given to sub-Group leaders as working guidance for the project. Advice was also received in person, from the Forward Planning Team Manager who addressed the whole Group. The Group thoroughly understood the following extract from 'Village Design' Part 1 chapter 4: *"During the VDS preparation, there must be an open invitation for people to contribute ideas, information or specific expertise"*, and acted upon it.

**Consultation - First Workshop.** In February 2001, the Group advertised and held the first VDS workshop in Soberton Village Hall. Its purpose was to gauge public interest and ascertain the issues of primary concern to residents. 150 people, including Parish Councillors and a member of WCC Forward Planning Team, attended during the day. This level of local support enabled the Group to seek and gain a £3000 Lottery 'Awards for All' grant and, subsequently, £1000 each from the Parish Council, Winchester, and Hampshire County Council.

**Questionnaires.** A VDS questionnaire was formulated directly from the topics raised at the workshop. It was delivered in April to all 650 local households, enclosed with the Parish Magazine. 254 responses were returned by 'freemail'. A respondent rate of 39.1% of households was considered statistically significant and enabled the answers to the questionnaire to be analysed confidently for salience of local opinion. The main concerns were: flooding; roads and excessively large vehicles; recent planning consents for large infill/rebuilt/extended houses with very few small dwellings; development boundaries; and the need to maintain decreasing local amenities. Shortly afterwards a separate questionnaire was delivered to all businesses in the parish with minimal response.

**Consultation - Second Workshop.** A second VDS workshop was advertised and held in Newton's Rookesbury Hall in June. An analysis of responses to the questionnaire was displayed together with written conclusions derived by VDS sub-Groups from residents' answers and comments. The conclusions were formulated as 'bullet points' with proposed sections of text relevant to them. Feedback on those conclusions was invited and received from the Forward Planning Team Manager and many of the 125 residents who attended. A number of pertinent suggestions and written modifications to the Group's text, particularly concerning design and planning guidance, were incorporated after the workshop. Drafts were repeatedly tested for compliance with the 1998 Local Plan throughout the VDS compilation process.

**Submission.** A last preliminary draft, considered by the Group in August, was issued for comment to the Parish Council and Forward Planning Team in September. Their proposed changes were then discussed at a meeting between a representative of that Team and the VDS Group leaders. An edited final draft was re-issued in January 2002. After slight further amendment at Parish Council request the VDS text was submitted to the Planning and Transportation Committee and was adopted by Winchester City Council for use as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 27th February 2002. The illustrated VDS was 'launched' in May 2002 and was distributed free to all parish households in June 2002.