

LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPENDIX A

VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

May 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The village divides into four distinct areas, each of which has been assessed in detail.

Historic Core of the village, including the Conservation Area and Blenheim Lane

The Historic Core of the village, including the Conservation Area and Blenheim Lane, reflects a village which has evolved over time. There is a variety of buildings, some very old, some newer, some thatched, some tiled, some closely packed, some standing in their own grounds. But there is a distinctive character to this part of the village which, whether building within it or adjacent to it, should be conserved. This should be achieved by any development blending in with the existing buildings in terms of design, style, size, density and materials. No buildings in this part of the village are conspicuous; all sit comfortably with each other and this should continue.

Any development within or adjacent to this area of the village should continue to conserve these important aspects of the built environment.

Chiltern View

This part of the village has its own very distinctive style. All the houses are built of the same materials and the design style is common across all 43 houses. However there is variety in the types and sizes of houses – a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached and ranging from 2-bedrooms to 5 or 6. Despite extensions and alterations in the 40 or so years since the first house was built, the style has been preserved and residents have abided by restrictive covenants as to window frame colours, garage door colours, etc.

Chiltern View is reasonably densely built with only one small green space within the area. Past development has all been in the form of extensions and alterations.

Any development within or adjacent to Chiltern View should continue to blend in and complement the existing dwellings as to style, design, density and materials used.

Thame Road, Cremar Cottages, Warren View and Old Field

This brick-built area of the village is in marked contrast to the largely stone-built historic part of the villages or the houses of Chiltern View. The houses in this area are characterised by simplicity of design and style, reflecting the preponderance of social housing in this part of the village. However variety in the size and design of houses, and variation in the materials used, does avoid the uniformity and blandness which can be a characteristic of social housing development in villages. The housing density is softened by both the wide grass verges along Old Field.

Any development in or adjacent to this area does not need to match exactly the existing dwellings but should instead complement the existing built environment and reflect what is already there.

Recreation Ground

Any development on the recreation ground site should not detract from the unique character of the existing log cabin-style buildings and should be in keeping with them.

See also the Input to Planning Policies on Page 32.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this assessment follows the advice given by Historic England in their publication *Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance 2008*.

The assessment provides a detailed description of the built form within Little Milton and identifies both the positive and negative features, concluding with a list of features and design criteria to inform future development.

The assessment was carried out over the period Oct–Dec 2016 by a working group formed from the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group. Working group members were:

Barry Coward
Raymond Fergusson
Kate Daunt
Ian Dennis

all of whom have lived in the village for a number of decades and who could apply a wealth of local knowledge to the process. The detailed assessments of various areas of the village were carried out by the working group. The final assessment was endorsed by the full Steering Group in March 2017 and then published on the Neighbourhood Development Plan website for villagers to read and comment if they wished.

Photographs by B Coward and K Daunt.

A number of data resources were researched online, primarily maps, census data and *Portman – Little Milton: The Rebuilding of an Oxfordshire Village* published in 1960. The assessment also drew on previous research carried out for the Little Milton Village Plan, published by the Parish Council in 2014.

The built-up area of the village was divided into four areas for the purposes of this analysis. There are very clear boundaries between these four areas. This analysis covers all of the conservation area and the two areas of developed land to the north-east. Land beyond the village boundary is also considered, in particular the farm buildings at Ditchend Farm.

All of the areas were surveyed using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit. This looks at all the elements making a contribution to the village character, positive and negative, and assesses the value of each. This includes spaces, buildings, views, greenery and landscape features, and intangible qualities such as light and dark, noise and smell.

The significance of each area is articulated in accordance with English Heritage's Conservation Principles. The values which make up the significance are summarised at the end of each section. The conclusions give recommendations for protecting and enhancing this significance.

INTRODUCTION

The core of Little Milton is a nucleated village built around the Manor House, three historic farmhouses and their associated barns and buildings. Whilst the farmhouses, barns and buildings no longer support agriculture directly, the historic village was built almost entirely as a farming community. Before the First World War, nearly everyone in the village worked either directly or indirectly in farming or supporting trades and crafts¹.

Since the Second World War, the village has increased in size following, firstly, the building of social housing and houses for the elderly all to the north of the historic village. This was followed by a further development of 43 market houses, also to the north of the village. The west, south and east sides of the core village still sit within their historic boundaries.

The main road through the village, originally a B road, was upgraded to an A road when Junction 7 of the M40 opened in 1974. This road now carries a lot of traffic, particularly at rush hours, and is also subject to HGV traffic, for which the road is ill-suited. The only other through road in the village is Haseley Road. This road to Rofford and Chalgrove was blocked during the Second World War when Chalgrove Airfield was built and was only restored to a through route in the 1960s. It also now carries a significant amount of traffic in the rush hours.

1 1901 and 1911 census data for Little Milton

EVOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE

The evolution of the village to the shape it is today can be divided into distinct phases. Building in local stone probably started as early as the 16th century² and, over time, earlier timber buildings were replaced. By the middle of the 19th century the historic village as we know it today was largely established, comprising the Manor House, the main farm houses, outbuildings and barns, cottages for farm labourers, shops, pubs, a smithy, and a forge.

The farmhouses, farm buildings and labourers' cottages were mainly constructed on a low ridge overlooking land liable to seasonal flooding. Springs and wells provided water supplies. Only in two places were cottages built on lower-lying land, namely the cottages situated at the low point near the stream in the Haseley Road and a single cottage at Frogmore, which is somewhat detached from the rest of the village.

The Victorian era saw little, if any, house building but this was the period when the church was built (1844) with its associated vicarage, as was a Wesleyan Chapel and the village school (1871).

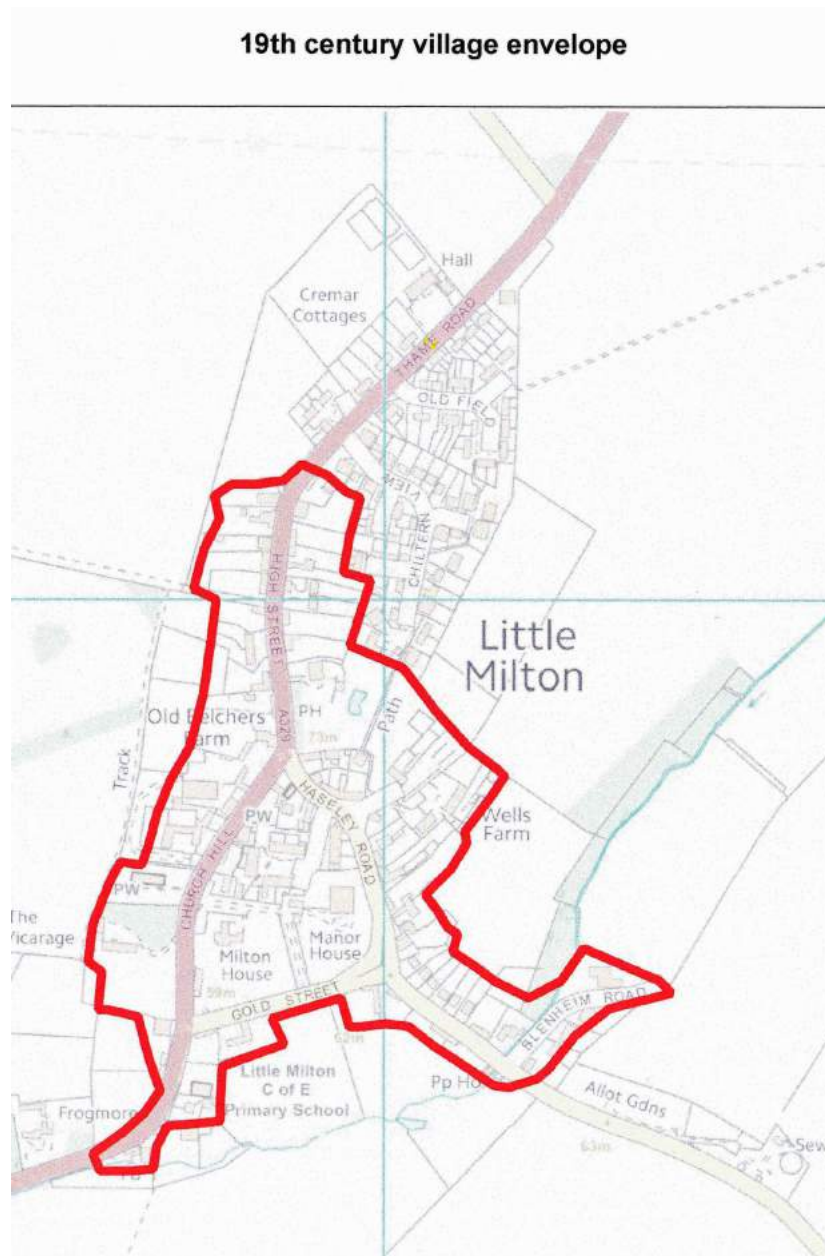


Little Milton Church from the South

2 Portman – Little Milton: The Rebuilding of an Oxfordshire Village 1960

The Historic Village

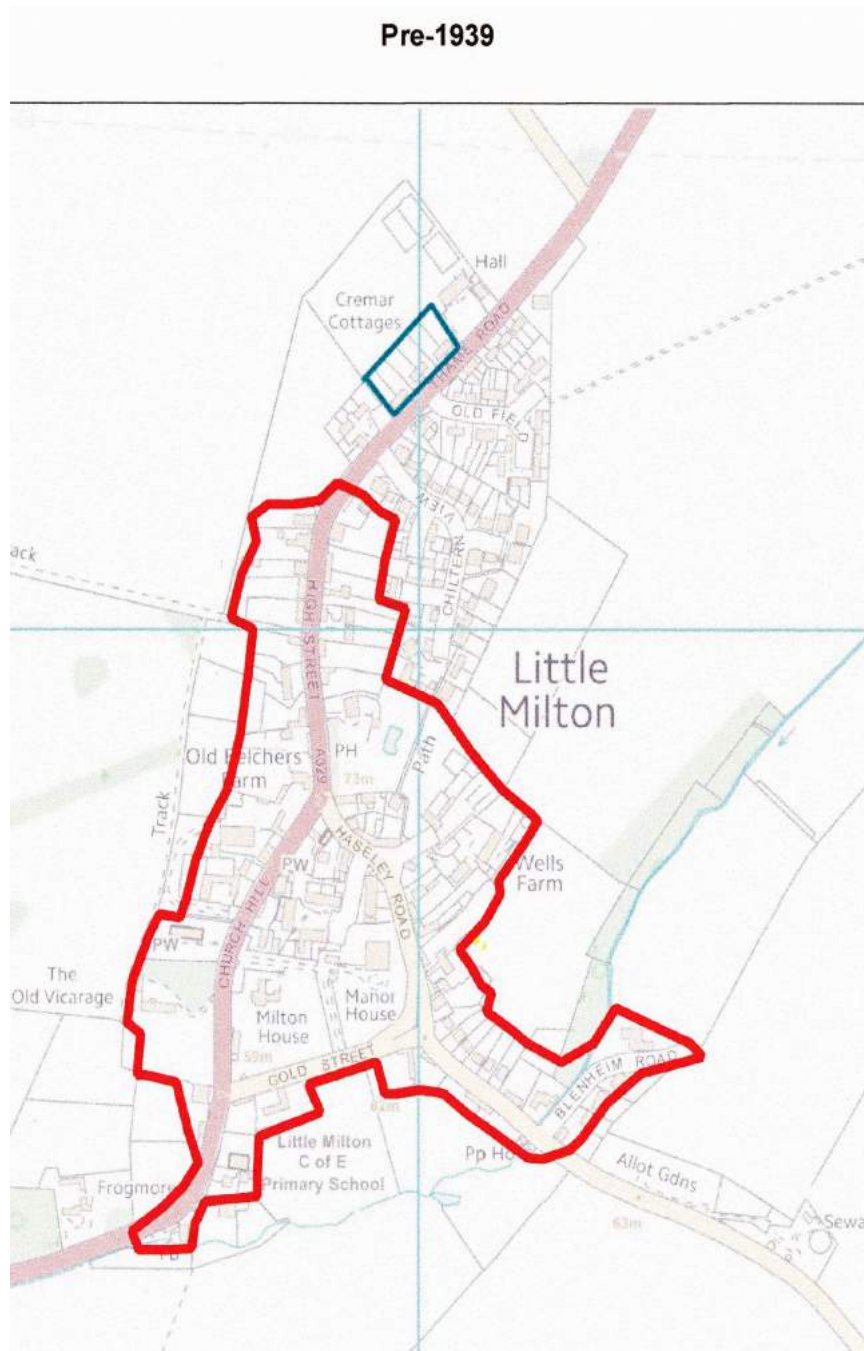
An 1881 map of the village³ allows the approximate envelope of the 19th historic village to be superimposed on today's map, as shown below in red:



³ Ordnance Survey 1881

Pre-Second World War

The only significant building in the village between 1900-1939 was to add 6 houses at Cremar Cottages in the 1920s, outlined in pale blue:



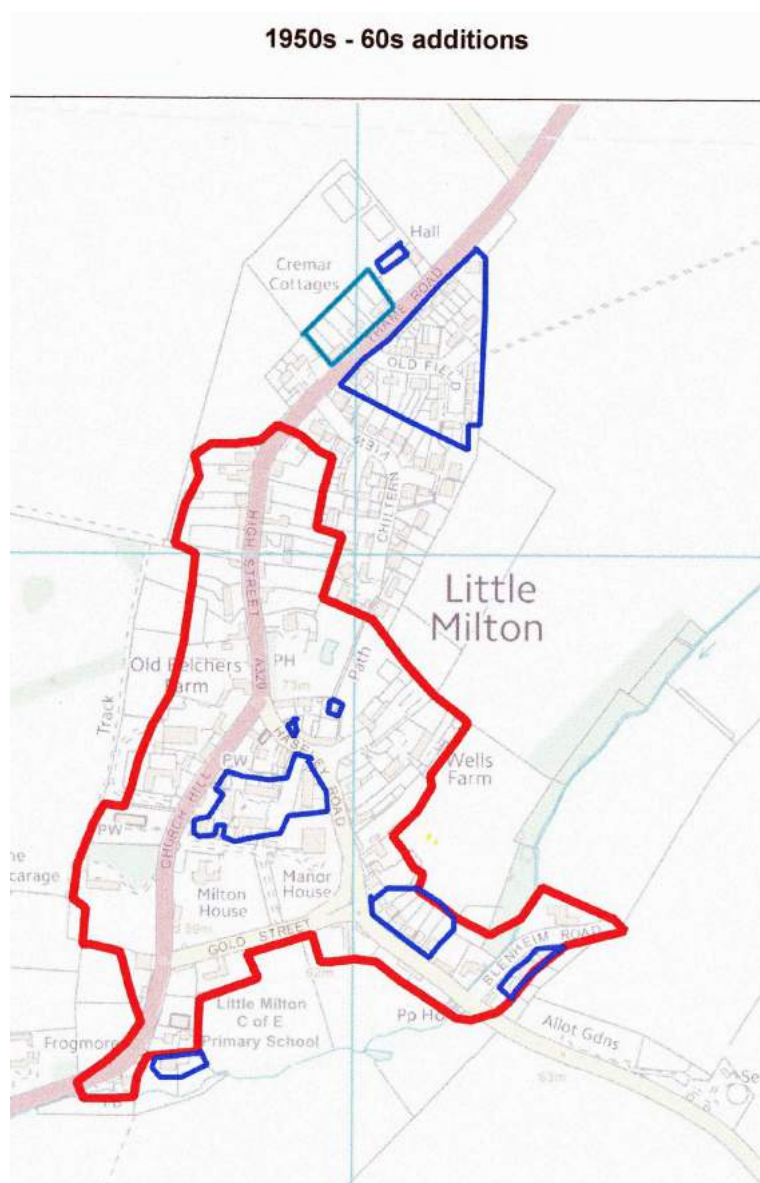
1950–60s

The period after the Second World war saw, firstly, a national programme to build a lot of social housing, then known as council houses. Little Milton was no exception and the District Council of the day (Bullington) built houses on open fields at the north end of the village along the Thame Road and in Old Field, and also old people's bungalows in Old Field, along with a warden's house.

In the same period, the farmyard at the Manor Farm, in the heart of the village, was developed with 20 houses replacing most of the old farm buildings at Milton Manor Drive. 6 houses were built on the lower Haseley Road, which also involved a small stream being covered over for part of its length. 3 bungalows were added along Blenheim Lane, and 4 other single dwellings were added to the village. All these were situated within or just on the fringe of the historic village.

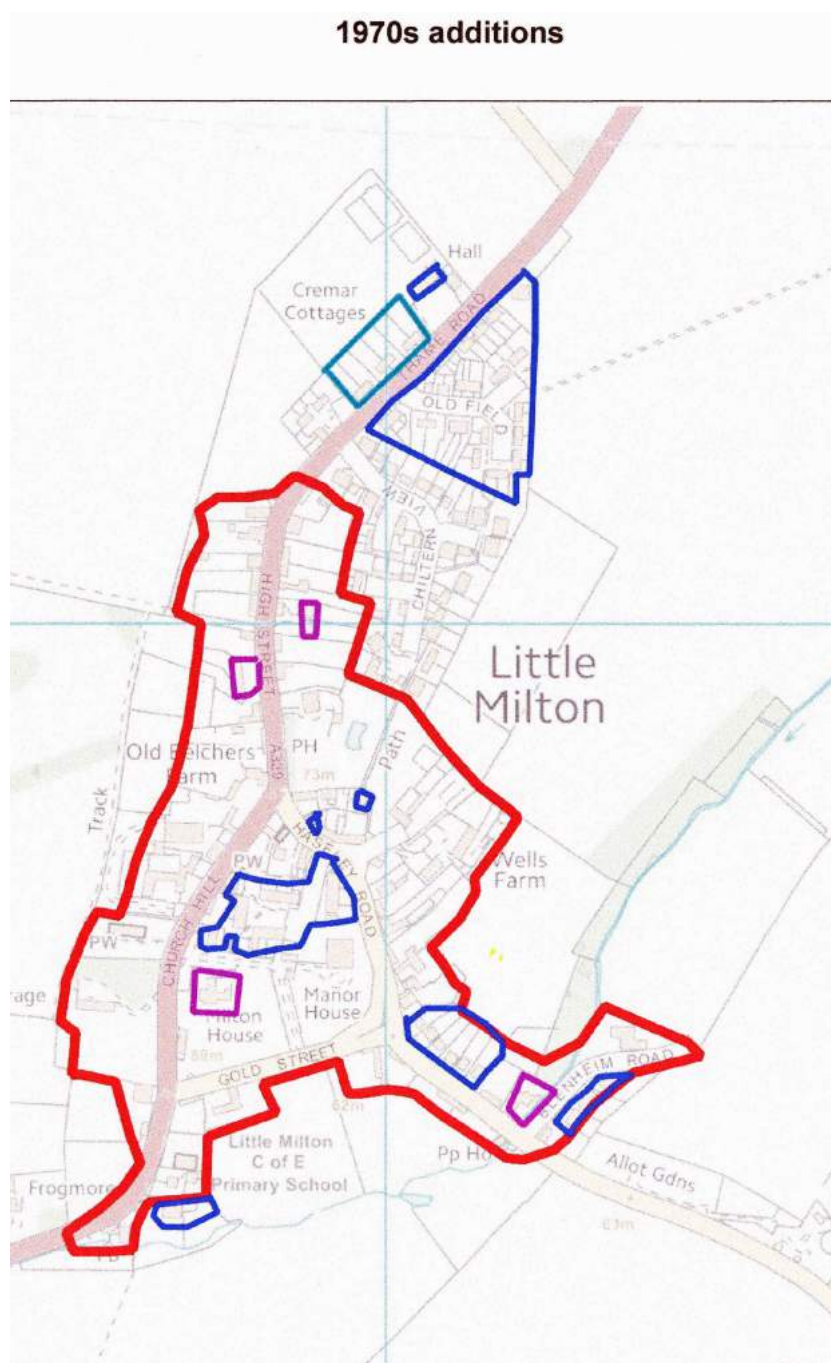
A village hall was also added adjacent to Cremar Cottages.

All these developments are shown outlined in dark blue on the following map:



1970s

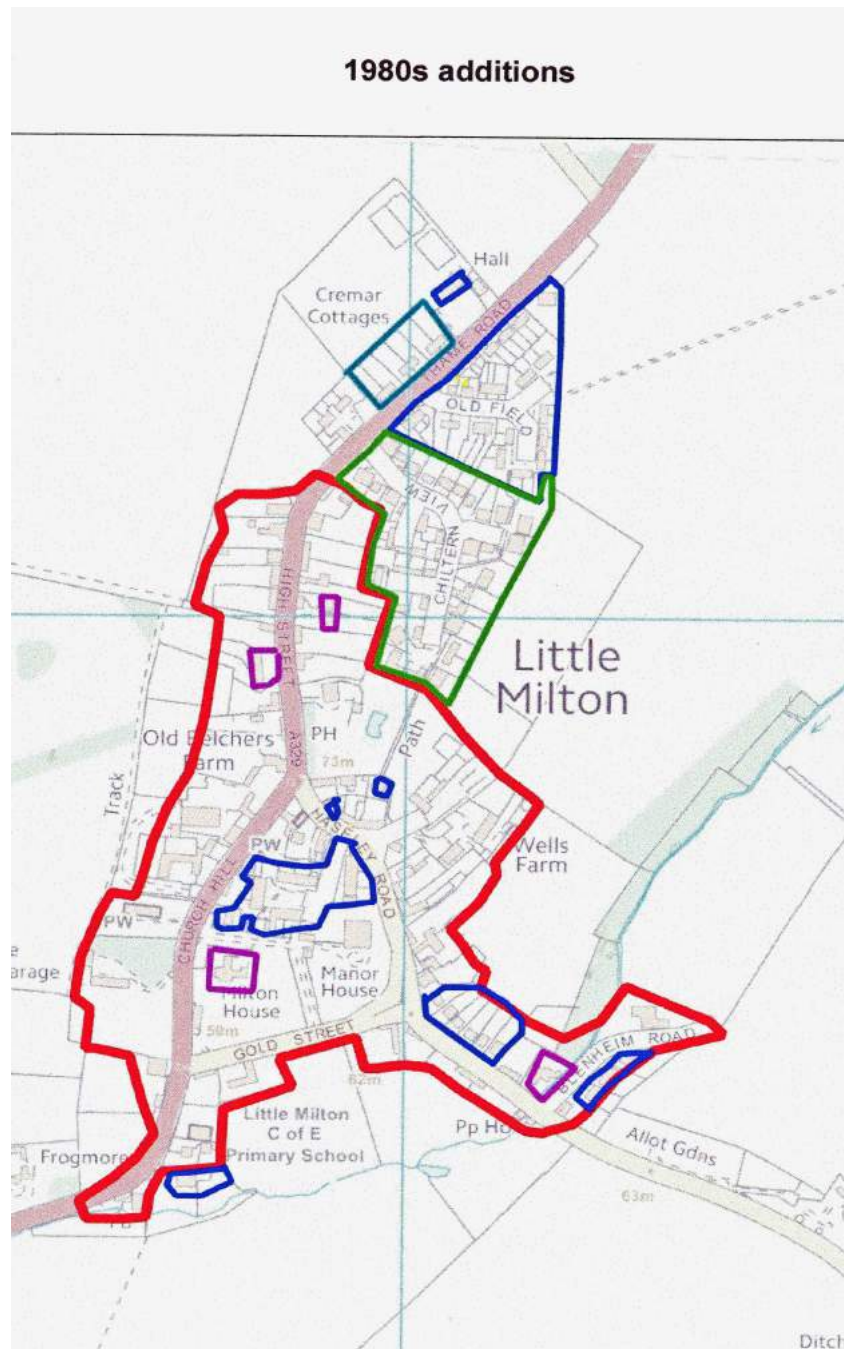
The 1970s saw 6 houses built, all within the historic village envelope as shown in purple:



What did happen from the 1970s onwards and continues to this day was that many of the older houses and cottages were refurbished, altered and extended. Most importantly, many smaller cottages have been knocked together and made into larger homes. In addition, a small number of barns have been converted to residential use. It is difficult to track these significant change in great detail but the net effect has been that the number of households living in pre-1900 buildings has decreased, although the number of actual buildings has remained much the same.

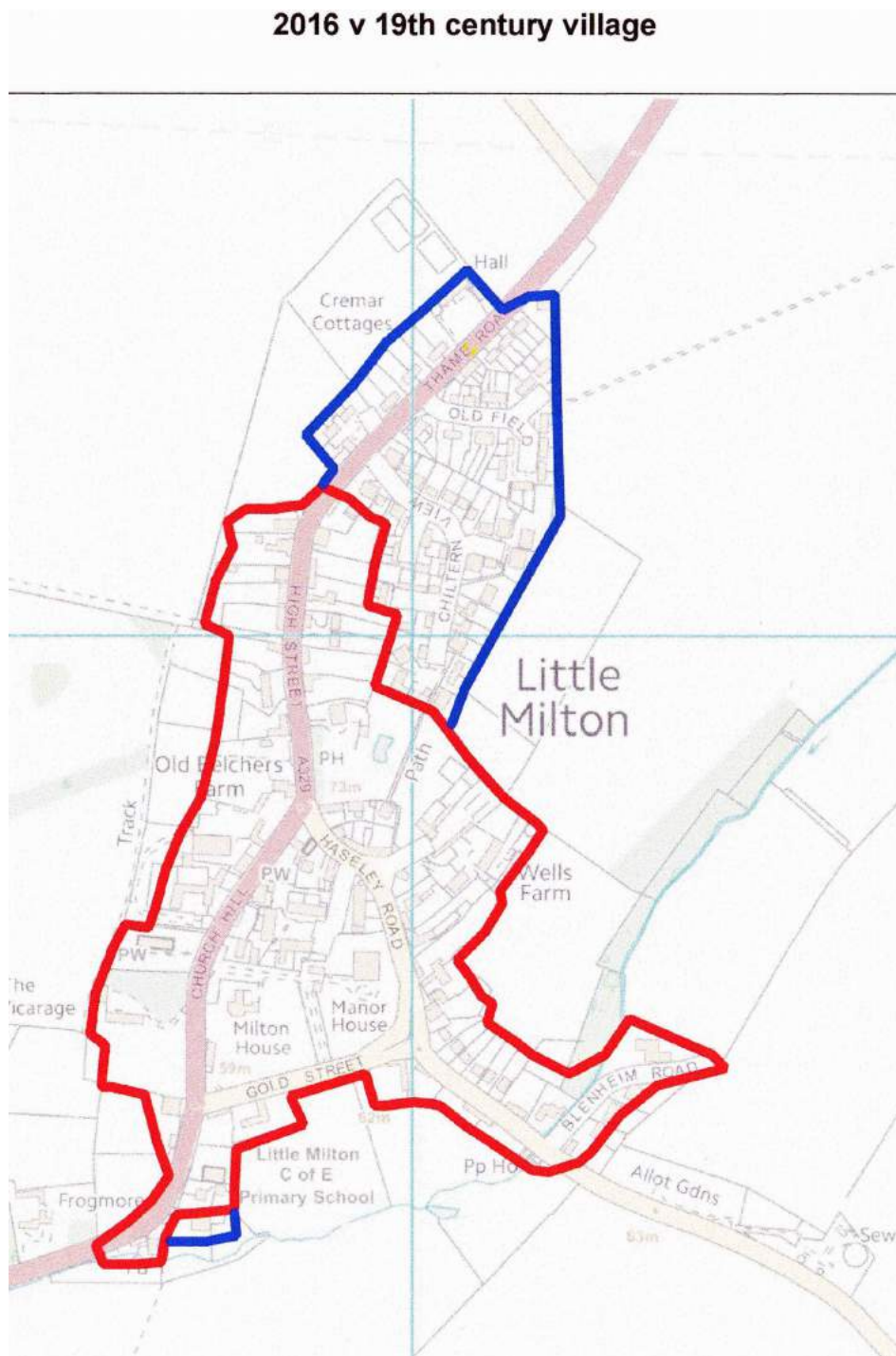
1980s

This decade saw the building of 43 houses in Chiltern View, outlined in green:

**1990-2016**

This period has been relatively quiet, with just the building of 6 social houses at Warren View and the redevelopment of 6 of the original council houses which were demolished and 13 new social houses built in their place, utilising the same area of land.

Thus the village has emerged as it is today. Development has not extended beyond the historic envelope of the village to any extent except to the north east: The following map shows the historic village envelope in red and the current envelope in blue.



What is remarkable about this map is how the village has largely remained within its 19th century envelope.

THE VILLAGE TODAY

Size of the village

The village has increased significantly in size since the Second World War. It is now 2.5 times its pre-war size in terms of the number of households in the village, although the land area occupied by the village has only increased to about 1.35 times its original envelope.

The following table shows the approximate evolution of the village since 1900.

	Households in Historic Village		Households outside Historic Village	Total
	Built pre-1900	Built post-1900		
1901 census	78	0	0	78
1939 Register	77	0	6	83
1970	~70	33	41	~144
1980	~65	39	41	~145
1990	~60	39	84	~190
2016	59	39	97	195
2016 %	30%	20%	50%	100%

The 2016 more detailed breakdown is as follows:

	Households in Historic Village		Chiltern View	Old Field, Thame Road, Warren View
	Built pre-1900	Built post-1900	Built post-1900	Built post-1900
Totals	59	39	43	54
Of which, Listed Buildings	23	0	0	0
Of which, Buildings of Historic Interest	16	0	0	0

The population in 1901⁴ was 307 with an average household size of 3.9. In 2011⁵ the population was 486, giving an average household size of 2.5.

⁴ 1901 census

⁵ 2011 census

The Shift from an Agricultural to a Residential Village

The 1901 census shows a village based almost entirely on agriculture, along with tradespeople and artisans to support a rural economy. 100 years later, the surrounding landscape is still farmed intensively but the village farmhouses are now purely residential, the barns are largely used for non-farming purposes and a handful of the population now works on the land. This has changed the nature of the village from being primarily a farming centre to a much wider role. The labourer's cottages are now lived in by professional people with much higher disposable incomes. The socio-economic structure of the population has changed considerably.

Water Courses

The land lying close to the south and eastern edges of the village is liable to seasonal flooding. The water course which runs closest to the village is the Gainsbridge Brook. Some houses are located very close to this stream but, fortunately, this water course normally stays within its banks at the critical points. The lower fields south of Gold Street bordering the water course are marshy and prone to minor flooding in winter. It is the water course which runs along the southern boundary of the parish, the Haseley Brook, which floods regularly in winter, as does the River Thames on the western edge of the parish.

Springs and Wells

The village is characterised by a number of springs which rise above the level of the water courses at about the 60m contour. These springs are mainly seasonal and, within the village, emerge most commonly in the lower Haseley Road and Gold Street. Many houses above this contour have, or had, wells. Spring and Well Cottage lies on the 60m contour on Haseley Road and marks the site of a permanent spring. Other springs rise in the surrounding fields on about the same contour.

Roads and Parking

The layout of the principal roads in the village has not changed in 150 years. This means that today's traffic, including HGVs, is negotiating roads which originally carried cart traffic. The centre section of the High Street is relatively wide, but the southern entrance to the High Street from Church Hill runs between historic buildings and high walls which are very close to the road. Here the road is not wide enough for two HGVs to pass. The northern entrance to the High Street is a blind corner round another historic building, where HGVs have to swing wide to negotiate the bend. Thus the High Street has two pinch points which make it unsuitable for large vehicles, but nevertheless there is currently no weight restriction on this road.

These pinch points are unusual compared with other local villages where houses and walls are generally set back further from the main village street.

Pavements have been added along the main road through the village, although in places they are narrow and positively dangerous to walk. The Haseley Road does not have pavements except at its northern end in the centre of the village. There are no pavements along Gold Street.

Haseley Road and Gold Street still retain their relatively quiet rural character and, having no pavements, are shared by both road traffic and pedestrians. School children walk both roads as a safer route to and from school rather than attempting the main road through the village. Currently, the volume and speed of traffic are such that caution is required by pedestrians and drivers alike to remain reasonably safe. But any significant increase in traffic along the Haseley Road could jeopardise this.

Gold Street is used extensively twice per day for car parking for dropping off and picking up children from school. This parking is currently just about containable but any increase in the volume of parking would be problematical.

The older house and cottages and the social housing in the village were not built with car ownership in mind. Solutions have developed over time eg. the use of Wells Farm Yard for residents' parking, a parking bay along Thame Road, and fortunately Chiltern View was built with generous parking provision. Nevertheless, there are areas of the village where parking can be a problem eg, at the top of Haseley Road and in Milton Manor Drive. 50% of households in the village own 2 cars; 18.3% own 3 or more⁶. With the demise of the bus service in 2016, living comfortably in Little Milton requires the use of a car or cars. It is vital that any future development recognises this reality and makes adequate provision for car parking.

There is just one street light in the historic part of the village and that is located at a modern traffic-light controlled crossing near the school. A second crossing is also lit at the more modern north end of the village. There is one street light in Old Field. There has never been a desire in the village for any more street lighting.

Trees

The historic part of the village has many large mature trees within it and, when viewed from the east, south or west, the village can only really be picked out from a few rooftops showing amongst the trees. The more modern northern end of the village is, however, largely devoid of large mature trees.

Utilities

In common with the rest of the country, mains power and telephone came to the historic village in the 20th century, sadly along cables strung from poles rather than underground. Mains water also arrived.

A sewage treatment plant was added in the early 1960s.

Access to Open Green Spaces

Little Milton is fortunate in being surrounded by open land which crossed by a network of footpaths. In addition, the BBOWT Nature Reserve adjoins the village on its eastern side. The Nature Reserve has a number of permissive paths and nature trails. The ready availability of access to open land is a very important characteristic of the village.

⁶ Census 2011 (table KS404EW)



Fletcher's Farm seen from the BBOWT Nature Reserve

THE VILLAGE CHARACTER

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUES

Following the Historic England methodology, heritage values areas are attached to areas of the village under the following headings:

- Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
- Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.



Lower Haseley Road

The modern village divides readily into 4 distinct areas:



- Red = Historic Core of the Village
- Blue = Conservation Area (where varying from Red boundary)
- Green = Chiltern View
- Orange = Cremar Cottages, Old Field, Thame Road, Warren View
- Grey = Recreation Ground

HISTORIC CORE OF THE VILLAGE AND CONSERVATION AREA

Shown on the previous map is the Conservation Area, the boundary of which closely follows that of the 19th century village envelope described earlier. It contains 29 listed buildings, 23 of which are houses, plus another 16 houses of historic interest. As noted earlier, many of the historic houses date from the 17th century, some earlier, and are characterised by stone construction with either thatched or tiled roofs.



Little Milton Conservation Area

The conservation area was designated in 1984. As noted earlier, a number of more modern houses had been built in the period 1950-80 adjacent to some of the historic buildings. Hence the reason why the conservation area excludes certain houses, particularly on the High Street and Haseley Road. However, Milton Manor Drive forms part of the Conservation Area, although much more modern than most of the other Conservation Area houses.



Milton Manor Drive

There are only 3 old buildings in the village which do not lie within the Conservation Area and these are the three cottages at the north end of Blenheim Lane (marked Blenheim Road on the map but always known locally as Blenheim Lane).

Despite the fact that 40% of the housing in the historic village dates from the 1950s onward, the key characteristic of this part of the village is its largely unspoilt character. Despite the new houses having been built before the conservation area was designated in 1984, with just one or two exceptions, they blend with the old. Again, with minor exceptions, there are no abrupt changes of style and no obvious eyesores. The houses of Milton Manor Drive are distinctive but, despite being right in the heart of the village, are largely hidden from view by surrounding older buildings. All the buildings of the historic village complement each other in terms of size. The Manor House is the largest and tallest building but it lies behind trees and does not impose itself on the village.

Many historic houses have no or a minimal front garden and front doors open directly onto the street. That said, a number of houses that front the High Street that originally had front doors opening onto the street have now repositioned their front doors to the side or rear. Some houses on the Haseley Road still open directly onto the road.

There are no ruined buildings in the historic village; there are no derelict sites. The housing stock in the historic village is generally in a good state of repair.

Views both outward from the historic village and inwards from outside the village are largely unchanged from 150 years ago. Certain iconic local views have been assessed in detail in *Appendix C - Views Management Framework*. In addition, linear views along the triangle of roads (High Street/Church Hill, Gold Street, Haseley Road) which form the core of the Conservation Area should be conserved. In this context, changes to the views which are in character with the surrounding environment are acceptable; changes which are markedly out of character are not acceptable.

The only detractions in this part of the village are the clutter of road signs associated with the main road and the power and telephone lines strung from poles across the streets.

In 1960, Portman⁷ noted that *Little Milton remains an excellent example of a nucleated farm village with the farmhouses, their barns and outbuildings clustered about them, lining the streets to this day*. Despite the advances since this was written, this still remains true of the village today.

Summary of Significance

Evidential Value – despite some evidence of a Domesday settlement and the site of a Roman villa 0.5km to the east, the evidential value of the historic village depends largely on its layout as an excellent example of a nucleated village clustered round its historic farm houses – **medium evidential value**

Historical Value – the historical value lies in the rich selection of listed buildings and buildings of historic interest which form a coherent pattern throughout the village, with commonality of materials and styles. Also this area is a classic example of a nucleated village – **high historical value**

Aesthetic Value – despite the presence of traffic on the main road, the historic village still has a certain atmosphere which makes it an attractive place to view, to walk around and, most particularly, in which to live – **high aesthetic value**

Communal Value – this area is the heart of the village, centred on the church and the pub. It is essential to the village – **high communal value**

Development in the area

The Historic Core of the village, including the Conservation Area, reflects a village which has evolved over time. There is a variety of buildings, some very old, some newer, some thatched, some tiled, some closely packed, some standing in their own grounds. But there is a distinctive character to this part of the village which, whether building within it or adjacent to it, should be conserved. This should be achieved by any development blending in with the existing buildings in terms of design, style, size, density and materials. No buildings in this part of the village are conspicuous; all sit comfortably with each other and this should continue.

Any development within or adjacent to this area of the village should continue to conserve these important aspects of the neighbourhood.

7 Portman – Little Milton: The Rebuilding of an Oxfordshire Village 1960

CHILTERN VIEW

Chiltern View is an early 1980s development of 43 mixed houses, varying between 2-bedroom terraced homes up to 5-bedroom detached houses. This development was built entirely in Bradstone, a proprietary product which has an outward light-coloured stone appearance. Restrictive covenants ensure uniformity across the development, for example, of the colour of doors and windows (brown). Although houses have been altered and extended, the overall appearance has been maintained.

Although a relatively modern development, Chiltern View has its own atmosphere. It is a quiet location close up against the village conservation area on one side and backing onto open fields on the other. The houses are attractive and shrubs and small trees have softened the area since it was built. This is a far more attractive development than many of its era.

Chiltern View was an important development for the village at the time in that it brought in a lot of young families with children. Over time, the population of Chiltern View has grown older and the demographic has changed.

Summary of Significance

Evidential Value – there is no evidence of past human activity – **low evidential value**

Historical Value – there is little historical value in this area of the village - **low historical value**

Aesthetic Value – despite being a relative modern development, Chiltern View does have its own atmosphere which makes it an attractive place to view, to walk around and, most particularly, in which to live – **medium aesthetic value**

Communal Value – this area is important to those who live there and also to the community as a whole – **medium communal value**

Development in the area

This part of the village has its own very distinctive style. All the houses are built of the same materials and the design style is common across all 43 houses. However there is variety in the types and sizes of houses – a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached and ranging from 2-bedrooms to 5 or 6. Despite extensions and alterations in the 40 or so years since the first house was built, the style has been preserved and residents have abided by restrictive covenants as to window frame colours, garage door colours, etc.

Chiltern View is reasonably densely built with with only one small green space within the area. Past development has all been in the form of extensions and alterations.

Any development within or adjacent to Chiltern View should continue to blend in and complement the existing dwellings as to style, design, density and materials used.

THAME ROAD, CREMAR COTTAGES, WARREN VIEW AND OLD FIELD

The area which comprises Thame Road, Cremar Cottages, Warren View and Old Field contains a mix of houses built almost exclusively in brick. The 6 houses comprising Cremar Cottages were a 1920s development, standing on the main road well outside the village as it then existed.

All the other houses in this area of the village are all post-war developments. As outlined earlier, they were built by Bullingdon District Council and some of the houses were originally so-called 'Airey' houses built of pre-fabricated concrete sections. Whilst a practical solution to the needs of the day, they were hardly pleasing to the eye. However these houses were all replaced in the early 2000s with modern brick-built dwellings.

This area of the village is very different from the historic village just down the road. Some of the houses are now privately owned but the majority still serve their original purpose of providing affordable social housing.



Old Field bungalow



Old Field housing

Summary of Significance

Evidential Value – there is no evidence of past human activity – **low evidential value**

Historical Value – there is little historical value in this area of the village - **low historical value**

Aesthetic Value – **low aesthetic value**

Communal Value – this area is important to those who live there and to the community as a whole – **medium communal value**

Development in the area

This brick-built area of the village is in marked contrast to the largely stone-built historic part of the villages or the houses of Chiltern View. The houses in this area are characterised by simplicity of design and style, reflecting the preponderance of social housing in this part of the village. However variety in the size and design of houses, and variation in the materials used, does avoid the uniformity and blandness which can be a characteristic of social housing development in villages. The housing density is softened by both the wide grass verges along Old Field.

Any development in or adjacent to this area does not need to match exactly the existing dwellings but should instead complement the existing built environment and reflect what is already there.

RECREATION GROUND



Recreation Ground (outlined in red)



The Pine Lodge (Village Hall)

Three buildings on the Recreation Ground site – The Orchard Pre-school, the Pine Lodge (Village Hall) and the Village Shop form their own unique area of the village in terms of building style and design. They are all wooden buildings, based on a log cabin style of construction. These three buildings have all been constructed since 2000, The Orchard being the first and leading the way. Whilst completely different from the rest of the buildings in the village, these buildings are well-loved by the community and have been admired by many outsiders. They create an atmosphere and an aesthetic of their own.

Any development on the recreation ground site should not detract from the unique character of these buildings and should be in keeping with them.

DITCHEND FARM

Ditchend Farm lies about 0.5km outside the village to the south east. There are 5 brick-built houses adjacent to the farm yard, built originally for farm workers.

The farm yard itself has expanded considerably since it was the site of a single barn in the 19th century and now covers about 2.8 hectares. The farm is still active but it is something of a jumble of buildings and discarded machinery. Currently (2017) a number of the buildings are not used and are in a poor state of repair.



Farm buildings at Ditchend Farm



Ditchend Farm as seen approaching the village from the east

The farm guards the eastern gateway into the village and the prospect as one approaches is hardly pleasing to the eye. It is the one and only area in the parish which is something of an eyesore, although the view from inside the village out towards the farm buildings is largely screened by mature trees.

The site of a Roman villa has been identified adjacent to the farmyard.

Summary of Significance

Evidential Value – there is evidence of past human activity in the form of a Roman villa– ***medium evidential value***

Historical Value – there is historical value in the Roman villa site - ***medium historical value***

Aesthetic Value – ***low aesthetic value***

Communal Value – ***low communal value***

REMAINDER OF THE PARISH

The remainder of the parish includes:

1. **Warren Barn Farm**, a small development of light industrial units which were converted from farm buildings. Some buildings are retained for agricultural use. This development lies in a dip in the land, is shielded by trees and is largely unseen from the village. There is a relatively new farm house adjacent to the industrial units. This whole development lies within the Green Belt.



Warren Barn Farm in winter, seen from the eastern fringe of the village

2. **Orchard House**. This is a single house sitting on a hill top north west of the village on the site of a windmill. The windmill is long gone. The house has been extended over the years but sits comfortably within its site. This house lies within the Green Belt.
3. **Views Farm Cottages**. Two cottages associated with Views Farm lie within the parish of Little Milton, although the farm itself and its associated buildings lie with the adjacent parish of Great Milton. These two cottages lie within the Green Belt.

Summary of Significance

No specific significance is attached to these three sites.

COMMON THEMES

Notwithstanding the differences in the four main areas of the village, there are common themes across all areas as well:

- Apart from the Church and the Manor House which is three storeys in height, no other building in the village exceeds two storeys in height, although some houses include attic bedrooms within the pitch of the roof
- Walls (where painted), doors and windows are conservative in colour
- Obtrusive security furniture and/or obtrusive lighting has been avoided
- The village is essentially dark at night, with a minimum of street lighting and few glaring security lights
- Boundaries at the front of properties are more aesthetically pleasing if they are either soft (hedges, trees, planting) or low (<1m) stone or brick walls. The few properties where the front boundary is a high wall are not pleasing to the eye.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The over-riding theme which emerges from this assessment is that the historic core of the village still firmly retains its essential character despite the inroads of some post-war housing development and the amount of traffic now using the main road. Many features which would have been familiar to our Victorian ancestors have been retained. It is still a classic example of a nucleated village sitting at the centre of an intensively farmed landscape. The heritage values assessed above show that this area of the village is of high significance and is valued by those who live there. It is important that this heritage be conserved

The village as a whole is well-maintained and the historic houses have been kept in a good state of repair. It is a good place to live and the villagers have strongly expressed a wish that it remains so⁸. Conservation of the character of the village is seen as a high priority objective. Thus any development which takes place within the historic core of the village, which would necessarily be infill, should conform in density, character, style and materials. Similarly any development immediately adjacent to but adding on to that historic core should meet similar criteria. The policies affecting development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area will assist in meeting this aim, as will the policies governing development close to listed buildings.

On the other hand, development situated away from the historic core should not represent an abrupt change in style or density, or clash of style and materials, compared with housing already in situ. Thatched cottages within the historic core would be entirely in keeping; thatched cottages alongside Old Field would not.

IMBALANCES IN THE VILLAGE

After the Second World War, the imperative to build new houses means that today a lot of villages have a development or developments of social housing added to an historic village. In Little Milton, this has led to there being an area of housing to the north of the village which is of a very different character to the older part of the village.

The school, when built in the 1870s, was situated on a relatively small main road site on the fringe of the village as it then stood. Today that site is far from ideal, being tightly constrained and immediately adjacent to a busy main road. The fact that many of the children come from outside the village creates a twice-daily parking problem in Gold Street and a safety concern as children

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walk the short distance along the main road pavement to the school gate. Should the opportunity every arise to re-locate the school to a more favourable site, this would be welcomed.

INPUT TO PLANNING POLICIES

Following the above assessment of the character of the village, the features set out below have been identified as those that contribute positively to the character of Little Milton and to good design in keeping with the nature of the village and should therefore form planning policies to guide new development in the village:

- Retention of the character of village overall and conservation of the historic core of the village.
- Retention of the character of the individual areas of the villages with no abrupt changes of style or density and no clashes of style or materials.
- Within, or adjacent to, the historic core of the village,
 - the materials used should complement the traditional materials used in the village and respect traditional building plots, scale, form and materials including techniques and detailing,
 - the variety of styles, design, materials and layout characteristic of the area should be maintained,
 - Buildings should not stand out amongst others and should not be conspicuous,
 - Colour schemes should be subdued and in keeping with surrounding properties,
 - Housing density should be varied and new build should not press against established buildings.
- The form and scale of the buildings should reflect the neighbouring properties. Buildings should be a maximum of 2 storey in height.
- Visual interest should be created by setting buildings back from the street and varying both the positioning of buildings and the building line.
- Boundary at the front of properties should be either soft (hedges, trees, planting) or low (<1m) stone or brick walls.
- Access to new development should not create a significant increase in traffic on village back roads.
- Informal road layouts off the main roads and no street lights are required so as to be in keeping with other village roads: maintenance of the back roads of the village as rural quiet roads with no burden of significant additional traffic due to development.
- Provision of adequate parking; sufficient resident parking should be provided on-plot and should not add any on-street parking burden
- Adequate storage space should be provided for bins and the design of the storage should not detract from the street scene.
- Retention of views within the village as well as out of and into village

In addition, whilst not engendering specific policies::

- Should an opportunity arise to relocate the school to a more favourable site, this should be supported.
- At Ditchend Farm specifically: improvement in the appearance of the site and its aesthetic value should be supported.