



Planning & Future Development

ences the recommendations contained in this Section. However, issues surrounding the future of commercial and recreational facilities in the village are also addressed.

The Appraisal responses do indicate that there is some misunderstanding among villagers of the Planning process and the constraints that currently exist on development. This is not surprising because it is a complex subject and the adjacent panel features an explanation of the key terms and procedures that affect planning issues in Guiden Morden.

In local Planning terms, Guiden Morden village falls under the control of South Cambridgeshire District Council. Much of the village is protected by designation as a conservation area and there are other planning constraints on important areas of open space and individual listed buildings. Additionally, the surrounding area is formally recognised as an Area of Best Landscape.

Development in the village Conservation Area or affecting listed buildings is subject to the approval of the SDC Conservation Officer and applications are judged against the conservation policy set out in the Local Plan. Any system for development control must look at the long term and be adaptable to change. Understandably, village residents may wish to have a stronger influence on the consultation process before any adjustments are made to the controls that apply to our own village and locality. This section of our Report identifies and recommends ways in which this can be done, including the possible preparation of design guidelines for the village.

Historical context

The physical layout of our village has not substantially changed from its origins through to the mid 20th century and continued as a community dependent on farming and supporting trades until then. Indeed, the de-

cline in population from the high levels of the mid 19th century meant relatively little infill development of late Victorian and pre-war housing.

In more recent years, and particularly in the 1970s, housing developments have introduced new people to the village; in

many cases, developments have been in response to demand for houses in the region generally and not to satisfy local demand. The change from a largely self-sufficient agricultural community to one that goes elsewhere for employment and social activity has brought many changes from a slower and more parochial life-style now remembered by a declining number of residents.

With a changing population, the village community now needs to agree on the sort of facilities that are appropriate to our village in the 21st Century, and whether the existing conservation principles need to be challenged. For example, there were a number of responses to the questionnaire that suggested a desire for a more tangible village centre such as a village green — which might lead to potential conflict with the Local Plan if the community wished this to be achieved as part of a larger development.

With regard to future facilities that are required in the village, the increase in car ownership and choice of service facilities in the surrounding area has meant that village residents are increasingly willing to travel away from the village for shopping, sport and leisure purposes. This raises the question of the nature and extent of facilities that can be sustained by a small village like ours, and whether there is a need for villages to work together in providing facilities for joint use, rather than each community acting in isolation. In terms of resources, there are also existing buildings which may not now be fully

utilised, and demographic changes in our village population need to be assessed in order to more accurately align future leisure provision to actual need.

The 'Local Plan'

- ◇ *The plans that are used to identify what may or may not be built, derive from the Town and Country Planning Acts and are prepared at three different levels by the relevant government department or local planning authority.*
- ◇ *Because circumstances change over the years, plans are periodically updated. Plans at each level are issued in draft form and there is a consultation period when interested bodies and members of the public can comment and influence the outcome before they are adopted as final plans.*
- ◇ *Regional Plans are prepared by the DETR in Westminster and set out the broad direction of development in the national context. The Regional Plan for our area covers all of East Anglia.*
- ◇ *Within the East Anglia region, each county council prepares its own Structure Plan which broadly sets out the location of development to fit in with the Regional Plan. Cambridgeshire County Council have an adopted Structure Plan for the period to 2006.*
- ◇ *A draft of a new Structure Plan is due to be produced for consultation in 2003 and will particularly address the area around Cambridge and the need for housing and infrastructure to serve the Cambridge employment zone. This is unlikely to affect Guiden Morden since the priority is for housing near to Cambridge and in surrounding market towns and larger villages on public transport corridors. In any event, as borne out by the Appraisal results, Guiden Morden has a much stronger link with towns in Hertfordshire than with Cambridge. The new Structure Plan will apply until 2011.*
- ◇ *The next level is the Local Plan prepared by the District Council and it is this plan which identifies particular areas of land where certain types of development may or may not go. The first Local Plan was adopted by the District Council in 1993. A review is now well advanced, having been through a public inquiry. It is expected to be adopted later in 2003. Another review has now been started which will be the subject of consultation either later in 2003 or in 2004.*
- ◇ *Within the Local Plans are detailed Insets which cover individual towns or villages and there is such an Inset for Guiden Morden. The areas that can be built upon are enclosed by a line on the plan to delineate the "Village Framework".*
- ◇ *The Local Plan was modified in 2002 to extend the Village Framework to incorporate three further sites and also to reaffirm Town Farm Meadow (which is outside the Village Framework) as an Important Countryside Frontage.*
- ◇ *The Inset for Guiden Morden also includes a Conservation Area covering most of the High Street, Church Street, Pound Green and part of Dubbs Knoll Road. This is identified as the recognition of an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance. The open space behind the church (the Craft) is a Protected Village Amenity Area.*

This subject opens up an important debate about the way that the village should be allowed to develop. It is an issue which affects everyone and it is the view of the Appraisal Group that important decisions should not be made either by the Parish Council or by the Planning Authority without an input from the village as a whole.

Conservation Principles applied by South Cambridgeshire District Council

Development and alterations within the Conservation Area follow certain basic principles:

- Designation does not prevent new development, but it must accord with the area's architectural and visual qualities.*
- Special attention is given to overall height, bulk, design, detailing and materials.*
- Certain satellite dishes, dormer windows, cladding and outbuildings require consent.*
- Apart from fruit trees and small trees, other trees are protected.*
- Consent is required for any demolition.*

The Parish includes one Grade 1, one Grade 2 and over 50 Grade 2 listed buildings and structures. Most buildings up to 1840 are listed, together with selected later buildings. A list of the principal officially 'Listed' structures in the actual village is reproduced at Appendix One.*

Conservation and the Local Plan

The village is afforded a measure of protection to its character by the extensive conservation area and the number of listed buildings. The broad extent of the village Conservation Area is shown on one of the Village Plans reproduced at the beginning of this report and is an important influence on planning decisions.

One possible drawback of reliance on the conservation area for protection is the very fact that those constraints do not apply to the rest of the village—a situation that cuts across the strong desire apparent from the Appraisal responses to preserve the character of the village as a whole. The Appraisal Group wonders whether there is a risk that, in the long term, there might develop a community divided between the conservation area and non-conservation areas? [See also the section in this Report on "Village Character & Image"]

The Local Plan attaches great importance to the areas of open land encroaching into the village and there is a presumption against development on The Craft, to the north of the church. Town Farm Meadow is outside the village framework, but is only partially protected by designating its northern and western perimeters an 'Important Countryside Frontage'.

Whilst the various planning designations in the Local Plan do provide protection to the character of the village, the Plan is subject to periodic review following consultation, so there can be no presumption that the current designations, and the protections that they afford, will remain unchanged in the longer term.

Future Development - Housing

At the time of the Appraisal, the population of Guiden Morden was about 935 people living in some 375 dwellings. It has not changed significantly since then.

On the Local Plan, the only site in the village currently allocated for residential use is about 0.5 hectares off Church Lane which has outline planning consent. Elsewhere, the village framework is drawn generally around existing houses and gardens, the only

significant exceptions being the "Strawberry Field" site to the south of Home Farm and the site of a group of derelict farm buildings on Trap Road—both of which sites are big enough for developments of more than one dwelling. Apart from these sites, development of further houses is effectively restricted to infilling where space exists or to conversion of existing buildings.

In accordance with the Local Plan, no house building will be allowed outside the village framework. However, as an exception to planning policies, Affordable Housing for local people may be allowed on sites outside, but adjacent to, the Village Framework. Any such proposal would be judged as a normal application in all other respects.

With regard to planning policy, Guiden Morden is designated a "Group Village"; this means that only infill development and group developments of not more than eight houses will normally be countenanced within the built up framework of the village. The Local Plan acknowledges that the Church Lane site is larger than would normally be permitted in a 'Group' village and has approved its use in principle in order to bring forward Affordable Housing. The District Council will give preference to a scheme on this site which includes a proportion of small homes.



New housing at Thompsons Meadow—but what does the future hold for the adjacent land?

The Appraisal responses indicate that most residents are opposed to any large scale development and do not want any more 'Group' development beyond the Church Lane site, although it must be recognised that the questionnaire failed to define the meaning of 'Group' in this context. Subject to this point, the data generally indicates agreement with current planning policy for the village with respect to housing. However, we note that the data identified some opposition to any further development on the Church Lane site, despite its allocation for housing, particularly among residents of Thompsons Meadow who have undoubtedly come to see the grassed area fronting their properties as a valuable amenity.

The Appraisal Questionnaire invited respondents to identify up to four priorities for future development in the village. By no means all respondents suggested four. From the panel on the next page, it will be seen that the most popular option was for low-cost starter homes, followed by 3-bedroom houses and sheltered housing for the elderly. However, there was also evidence of strong opinion against any more new housing at all. 11 respondents specifically mentioned a need for more rented accommodation (either private or Council) and for there to be some 3-bed Council homes. It is clear from the data that there is a strong desire for 'affordable' homes for younger people and low-income families.

Here's how you rated the priorities for any new housing in Guilden Morden village:

- Low-cost starter homes - 126
- 3 Bedroom houses - 90
- No more new housing - 80
- Sheltered housing - 58
- Bungalows - 46
- Conversion of industrial / farm buildings - 41
- Houses with 4 bedrooms or more - 23
- Specially adapted homes - 19
- Flats / Maisonettes - 16

- Don't know or No views - 23

The provision of low-cost housing is supported by the District Council through the planning system, usually based upon agreements with developers to provide a proportion of "affordable housing" as a condition of consent for the submitted scheme. The current District Council Housing Strategy defines a person who is eligible for affordable housing, a definition that is influenced by local considerations. The guidelines for Guilden Morden are as set out below.

Allocation of affordable housing

Guilden Morden Parish Council now has a more direct role in the allocation of affordable housing within the village and uses a 'points' system as a means of determining priority. This is a system generally used by Local Authorities and is applied to applications both for new housing and for transfers to alternative accommodation.

The application of points covers a large range of categories that embrace the applicant's present housing conditions, including general condition, overcrowding and security of tenure. Points are also applied to reflect personal circumstances in terms of the size of home that is needed and local connections.

A new feature is that a significant proportion of points is allocated to reflect local connections, including the number of years living in Guilden Morden - so there is now a presumption in favour of village people in the allocation of affordable homes.

Despite the responses to the Appraisal Questionnaire, it is important to consider whether the types of houses prioritised by villagers in their responses fit in with today's commercial realities of housing development. Without some form of intervention, the commercial developer will always try to respond to the Market, which may well not reflect local priorities. For example, the relatively limited support in the Appraisal responses for more four bedroom houses contrasts with the apparent demand for this type of house demonstrated by the successful development of a number of larger houses in the village in the past two decades — albeit that this demand for larger homes is probably from outside the village.

On the question of starter homes, it is important to identify clearly whether enough young people on relatively low incomes would choose to buy or rent in a village with a high dependency on private transport and a lack of amenities and local employment, compared to nearby towns such as Baldock or Royston. The Appraisal questionnaire did not establish a level of demand for Affordable Housing because of the way the question was worded, but the results do indicate a significant number. Of the 299 households that responded, the needs for housing were stated to be:

- Local authority/housing association homes - 15
- Accommodation to buy - 12
- Suitable sheltered housing - 3
- Private rented accommodation - 1
- Some other reason - 2

In the opinion of the Appraisal Group, the current market value of even a one or two bedroom home in Guilden Morden would be much too high for a single individual on average salary to buy on a mortgage, and even a couple would probably find it a struggle unless they were already both on substantial salaries well above the National Minimum Wage. For this reason, it must be accepted that the demand for Affordable Housing to buy cannot be met in our village. The demand therefore must be met with properties to rent and/or through a partial purchase scheme, most likely from a Housing Association.

The Appraisal Group is aware that, in the village, there is the Worboys Court Fund. This is a charity originally set up to manage a sum of money set aside by the late Albert Frederick Worboys to provide low-cost homes for his former employees or, in default, persons with a substantial connection with the village. The charity currently owns four properties in the village and is purchasing a fifth.

On the question of whether further affordable housing would be beneficial, factors need to be considered such as the desirability of having a full age range in the village with sufficient numbers to support village facilities like a shop or new village hall and also the fact that there is spare capacity in the school.

In order to address these issues, the Group recommends that a more detailed survey of housing needs in the village is required, structured in such a way that the results will reflect real current and anticipated need rather than speculative aspiration. Despite the responses to the questionnaire and a housing needs survey recently carried out by SCDC, it is important to avoid the potential problem of being unable to allocate people to the houses for whom they were intended.



Town Farm Meadow, with its protected roadside frontage and rapidly growing "screen"

A large number of respondents to the Appraisal wanted no more development. This option could give rise to an increasingly ageing population including residents who remain in the same home after their family have left to live elsewhere, thus reducing available homes for young families. This could result in a further change in the character of the village, replicating a trend in many rural communities with restriction on development.

In response to the question whether groups of new houses should be allowed anywhere else in addition to the Church Lane site, 159 households said 'No', 41 suggested other sites and 75 expressed no view. Since the Appraisal Group is aware of only two other sites in the village where Group development would be feasible within the existing Local Plan, the issue is at present largely academic. However there were a significant number of respondents who did not express a view — and of the 41 site suggestions, 21 were in favour of development on Town Farm Meadow although most qualified this as 'limited' development.

Shortly before this Report went to press, a planning application was submitted by Cambridgeshire County Council for housing on the redundant land in Trap Road in the ownership of the Council which is within the Village Framework and currently occupied by dilapidated farm buildings. The application is for a group of five detached houses and three starter homes. In this case, the County Council, as landowner, will gain advantage from an increase in value of the land from agricultural value to residential development value, and this raises the issue of whether the village community should be able to benefit in some way from this. The Appraisal Group considers that the village, through the Parish Council, should actively pursue the possibility of formal planning agreements or conditions of consent which would directly benefit the village. These could, perhaps, support improvements to facilities in the village which would benefit not only those new residents who occupy the homes built on the site, but also the village community as a whole. This is the type of situation that could also be addressed in a Parish Plan.

In a wider context, it is likely in future years that local land owners will seek amendments to the Local Plan during the normal consultation process, in an effort to get more agricultural land zoned for development. Against this probability, the Group considers that there needs to be a more effective procedure for the views of all residents to be communicated, whether in favour of, or against, any changes in the Local Plan. It may be appropriate to extend this enhanced procedure to individual applications for new development consent.

It is apparent that the current system of objection to proposals is not widely understood and the early communication of information to residents would make the position clearer for the benefit of the village community. Recommendations to address this concern can be incorporated in the proposals for a Parish Plan, as set out later in this Section.

Shop/Post Office

In response to the freeform Appraisal question asking what would make the village a more attractive place to live, the provision of a shop was the specific item most frequently mentioned. The loss of the shop in 1998 was symptomatic of the decline in village shops nationally and is seen as the loss of an important meeting place and source of communication as well as its basic purpose.

Planning Consent has been granted to extend The Edward VII pub to provide a shop and construction is now under way.

Apart from this application, there have been no other costed proposals to resolve this situation, although there is some support for a Community Shop. Whilst this is a commercial issue rather than a planning and development issue, it is essential that the community positively investigate opportunities to encourage much needed facilities. This could include linking with other buildings such as the village hall or discussion with the major retailers.

The new Shop at the Edward VII is welcomed and, depending on the service to be provided, the Appraisal Group would like to see a dialogue to include the Parish Council and representatives of appropriate buildings in the village to explore re-establishing a Post Office in the village.

The Shop/Post Office conundrum is seen by the Appraisal Group as crucial to the future of our village and an issue that could benefit from the setting up of a Parish Plan, as described below.

Future Development - Leisure

Buildings used for leisure activities include the village hall, the school, the Church, the Chapel and both pubs.

A great deal of work has been carried out by the Village Hall Committee to raise money for a new village hall which would provide a much greater range of functions than existing. This initiative was generally well supported in the Appraisal data, but the venture is dependent on the availability of Lottery funding and will, of course, require full utilisation if it is to be sustainable.

Sadly, the matter of the New Village Hall is currently 'on hold' because, on the one hand, Sport England is not accepting any new applications for funding and, on the other hand, the Community Fund is understood to be unlikely to make any award towards the project.

Looking at other possible alternatives, the village school does not have a hall of sufficient size for sport activities or drama productions and the use of the school for social functions is restricted by the rooms and furniture, this being identified in the Appraisal data by the low numbers who use the school as an adult meeting place. The desire for increased accommodation has been addressed by the staff and governors over a number of years and the Local Education Authority has also identified the need. However, the cost of construction means that it would not be able to be built without funding from the County Council, so it is uncertain when such a facility might become available.

HOW 'PLANNING' WORKS

- Planning Consent is needed for any building apart from very minor extensions, etc., to non-listed properties.*
- Consent is dependent upon whether the development is in accordance with the current Local Plan and is usually subject to approval of details, including the appearance and siting of buildings and materials to be used.*
- The Planning Officer will consult with interested bodies such as the highways department, statutory service providers, the parish council and adjoining owners to take their comments into account before recommending an approval. It should be noted that the Parish Council have no direct influence on planning decisions, but do have to be consulted. Guilden Morden Parish Council has no formal agreed policy on planning issues affecting the village.*
- In the case of listed buildings or buildings in the village Conservation Area, the recommendation of the Conservation Officer is required.*
- Both the Planning Officer and the Conservation Officer are professional civil servants, not politicians.*
- Approval is granted or refused by the Planning Committee of the South Cambridgeshire District Council and there is an appeal procedure. Guilden Morden is represented on SCDC by a District Councillor whose ward also includes Abingdon Piggots, Shingay cum Wendy, Steeple Morden and Odsey.*

In addition to normal services, St. Mary's Church is used for occasional concerts and fund raising activities and there have been discussions in past years about extending this to other uses, possibly replacing pews with loose seats, etc. The church building is subject to an ongoing restoration and repair programme funded by donations and social functions organised by the Restoration Committee. The data confirmed the importance of the church, not only for worship but as an historic building and as a focal point for the village.

Other accommodation is available in the Chapel 'schoolroom' - and this has recently been much enhanced by improved catering amenities, but use of this accommodation remains limited. Neither of the pubs in the village have separate function facilities and are limited in available floor area.

A further demand has been expressed for a restaurant or other facility in the village and the group very much welcomes the fact that proposals may be considered for improved eating facilities at the Three Tuns PH.

In view of the desire for leisure facilities and the challenges that have to be faced by the groups of people who manage these various buildings, there may be opportunities to look at all of these and identify what facilities would benefit the village well into the future. In addition to the capital costs of providing and improving facilities, there are increasing management costs, particularly since many issues such as Health and Safety and financial control now require outside assistance where, in the past, they have been managed by volunteers.

The Appraisal Group recognises the considerable effort by various groups of people to provide and maintain leisure facilities and has concluded that there is a need to make best use of the buildings and sport facilities that exist and to promote further links with other communities that have complementary facilities that are, in some cases, presently under-utilised.

As a whole, public buildings in the village (apart from the village hall) are under-utilised and there may be opportunities for greater sharing of the buildings themselves and the cost of running them. Could the village have a Facilities Manager to promote the more cost-effective utilising of existing accommodation, whose services were then shared between the Hall, the churches, the school, etc?

The recommendation of the Group is that these ideas are addressed by representatives of all of the various buildings involved as part of the process of creating a Parish Plan.

Future Development - Business

The Appraisal questionnaire gave limited options for respondents to choose what non-housing development might be encouraged in the village, but the data does indicate a much stronger preference for facilities for small businesses compared to workshops or offices. This is significant when compared to the large number of residents in Guildden Morden who work from home and suggests that there may be demand for facilities such as serviced office accommodation which could include meeting rooms, secretarial services, IT support, photocopying, etc. Whilst such a provision is probably best operated as a normal commercial enterprise, there may be the possibility of it being linked to the other buildings mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. The Group recommends further research to establish the demand for new business facilities in the village.

Design and Land Use

In practice, the local community often has little involvement in planning issues affecting the village despite relevant documents being made public and the existence of statutory procedures to ensure that proposed changes are communicated.

All proposals are published at draft stage and anyone can raise objections during a public consultation period. Similarly, all planning applications are available for inspection by anyone and objections can be raised.

However, the reality is that only people with a direct interest in specific proposals are likely to be consulted or take the trouble to obtain documents in the public domain. Planning Applications and changes to the Structure Plan and Local Plan are advertised in the local newspaper, but most people do not regularly scan the public notices. This means that development can take place without the local community fully considering the long term implications for the village as a whole. Although the Parish Council is consulted, there is no village policy on planning issues, so it is difficult for them to make representations on behalf of the community that can be shown to represent village opinion, without reference back to the community through special meetings or other forms of communication.

A Parish Plan

In order to address the issues raised by the Appraisal questionnaire, it is possible to put in hand the preparation of a Parish Plan as outlined in the Rural White Paper published in November 2000. This was one measure brought in by the present Government to help create "a vibrant countryside" for the future. It is envisaged that Parish Plans will "help rural communities ... to indicate how they would like their town or village to develop, to identify key facilities and services, to set out the problems that need to be tackled and to demonstrate how its distinctive character and features can be preserved".

A Parish Plan would address all issues of concern — social, economic and environmental — and would cover most of the subject areas contained in this Report. A Parish Plan is prepared under the aegis of the Parish Council and is developed by and with the whole community, not by just one group of people exclusively. This means that it requires a clear commitment from a number of people. It is based on information gathered through survey, research and consultation. In effect, this Report and its recommendations could form a strong basis for progressing most issues, were a Parish Plan considered for our village.

The intention of the White Paper is that Parish Plans should address design and land use issues that may then be adopted as 'Supplementary Guidance' (i.e. additional rules) by the local Planning Authority. In reality, the debate is still continuing, and South Cambridgeshire District Council have advised that they are still at an early stage in agreeing the status of Parish Plans. However, it is considered that parts of a Parish Plan could be adopted where they conform to the Local Plan. This would enable the community to have a stronger role in the development of the Local Plan, which is the basis for considering applications for planning consent and for determining the future development strategy for our village.

A Parish Plan can include a Village Design Statement, which addresses more detailed matters affecting the visual environment, such as the appearance of buildings, etc. The VDS is described in more detail in the following paragraphs, and many of the guidance points relating to the production of a VDS are the same as those applying to a Parish Plan.

Village Design Statement

Because there is a strong desire for the character of the village to be retained, it may be desirable for design and conservation issues affecting the village to be addressed more specifically. This would cover such aspects as build-

WHAT VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS DO

1. Describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside;
2. Show how character can be identified at three levels:
 - The landscape setting of the village;
 - The shape and layout of the settlement;
 - The aspect of the buildings themselves;
3. Draw up design principles based on distinctive local character;
4. Provide design guidelines for future development within the village.
5. Establish a partnership with the local planning authority in the context of existing local planning policy, and influence future policies.

ings, street furniture, paths, trees, gardens and other factors which affect the village environment. A possible vehicle for achieving this objective is the Village Design Statement (VDS).

Government envisages that such a Statement could address design and land use issues at a much more local level and establish agreed principles that can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Local Authorities. In other words, this is an opportunity for village residents to influence the operation of the statutory planning system. It also offers the potential to set design parameters for future building and development within the village.

Village Design Statements are not about whether development should or should not take place. They are about how approved development should be carried out, so that it is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the local environment.

Before considering the production of a Village Design Statement, it must be established that it has the support of the community as a whole. It must not aim to be too proscriptive and impinge unnecessarily on the rights of individuals and the flair of designers. On the other hand, it must not be so wide ranging that it does not add anything to existing controls. The production of a Village Design Statement is a fairly major task which is likely to involve the whole community for at least a year from the decision to go ahead.

The area to be covered by a VDS needs detailed consideration; Guiden Morden parish covers a long narrow expanse extending as far south as Odsey House, and for this reason it may be sensible to limit the Statement only to the main part of the village as included in the Planning Authority's Inset Plan — although many respondents identify the open countryside and rural views surrounding the village as among the key 'plus-points' of living in Guiden Morden. This suggests that a VDS may need to include surrounding farmland where this is integral to village character and provides important views from the village, although the Group recognises that this is a potentially contentious course owing to the impact on individual farmers/landowners and a possible conflict between farming practice and landscape conservation. The Appraisal Group is, however, firm in its opinion that any VDS for Guiden Morden should encompass the whole village and not merely the Conservation Area, since the desire to retain the character of the village is relevant to all parts of the village and has a strong cross-section of support throughout the village.

In considering the benefits that could flow to the village from preparing a VDS, it is important to balance the benefits with the concern that restrictions on individual choice may be viewed as undesirable interference in a village which already has a diversity of building types and finishes.

Drawing largely upon the advice given by the Countryside Commission and the experience of other village communities that have followed this route, it is the recommendation of the Group that village residents are asked if they wish to support the production of a Village Design Statement. If the response is positive, the project should be taken forward under the aegis of the Parish Council and with the advice of the Conservation Officers at the District Council.

An effective Village Design Statement.....

- Is developed, researched, written and edited by local people;*
- Is representative of the views of the village as a whole;*
- Has involved a wide section of the village community in its production;*
- Describes the visual character of the village;*
- Demonstrates how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development;*
- Is compatible with the statutory planning system and the local planning context;*
- Is suitable for approval as supplementary planning guidance;*
- Is applicable to all forms and scale of development, and*
- Is about managing change in the village, not preventing it.*



One of the last remaining "green fingers" of open farmland abutting the High Street.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Appraisal Group believes that clear procedures should exist to enable the views of residents to be communicated when the Local Plan is reviewed or when planning applications are made for new development. The procedure should ensure that those views are representative of the village as a whole. It should also include the provision of information to ensure that the planning system and relevant legislation are understood.

We also believe that more up to date and carefully targeted information is needed to accurately assess the demand for affordable housing from people within the village.

The provision of a village shop is very important to the future of the village and, subject to progress with other proposals by private individuals at the time of this Report, the Parish Council should actively pursue proposals and potential opportunities, possibly utilising public buildings.

In view of the fact that many of the public buildings in the village are under utilised, the Appraisal Group would like to see a dialogue take place between representatives of those buildings in order to explore further ways in which buildings might be shared, and possibly extend the discussion to the sharing of the costs of facility management or improvements.

There is a large number of people working from home in the village and this fact, together with responses to the Appraisal questionnaire, suggests that there may be a demand for some form of serviced accommodation or sharing of business support facilities.

The Appraisal Group is of the opinion that the process of developing a Parish Plan has a lot to offer our village. It is our view that the Parish Council should arrange a Public Meeting to put to the village community the proposal to prepare such a Plan, in accordance with the Rural White Paper of November 2000. This

would be preceded by an explanatory letter to all residents in order to encourage the widest participation possible so that the meeting can identify if there is enough commitment to proceed. The Parish Plan would address the desire for the views of the community to be communicated in relation to planning matters. The procedure would also form the catalyst to progress many of the recommendations contained in this Report.

We are also of the opinion that the possibility of preparing a Village Design Statement should be put to the village community in order to establish if there is a desire for such a document, but only following on from the preparation and adoption of a Parish Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **We recommend that clear procedures are put in place to enable the views of residents to be communicated when the Local Plan is reviewed or when planning applications are made for new development. The procedures should ensure that those views are representative of the village as a whole. They should also include the provision of information to ensure that the planning system and relevant legislation are understood.**
- **We believe that more up to date and carefully targeted information is needed to accurately assess the demand for affordable housing from people within the village and we recommend that a specific Housing Needs Survey for Guiden Morden is prepared.**
- **We see the provision of a village shop as very important to the future of the village and, subject to progress by other commercially-based initiatives by private individuals, we recommend that the Parish Council actively pursue proposals and potential opportunities, possibly utilising public buildings.**
- **We recommend that a dialogue take place between representatives of 'public' buildings within the village designed to explore ways in which such buildings might be shared, and possibly also the concept of shared costs of facility management or improvements.**
- **The large number of people working from home in the village suggests that there may be a demand for some form of serviced accommodation or sharing of business support facilities. We recommend that a specific survey of households is carried out to identify if such a demand exists.**
- **We recommend that the Parish Council arrange a Public Meeting to put to the village community the proposal to prepare a Parish Plan in accordance with the Rural White Paper of November 2000. This would be preceded by an explanatory letter to all residents in order to encourage the widest participation possible so that the meeting can identify if there is enough commitment to proceed. The Parish Plan would address the desire for the views of the community to be communicated in relation to planning matters. The procedure would also form the catalyst to progress the other recommendations contained in this Report.**
- **We recommend that the preparation of a Village Design Statement should be put to the village community in order to establish if there is a desire for such a document, but only following on from the preparation and adoption of a Parish Plan.**