

# Village Design Statement

## Highclere and Penwood 2002



## THE HIGHCLERE AND PENWOOD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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### Aims:

Maintaining  
the rural  
ambience



Protecting  
leafy lanes and  
hedgerows

Ensuring  
appropriate  
development





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## INTRODUCTION

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This Village Design Statement was adopted as supplementary planning guidance by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 18 July 2002. This statement summary is aimed at developers, property owners, planners, local authorities or anyone who is involved with new development, changes to buildings or infrastructure. Applicants submitting plans/proposals should take the contents of this Village Design Statement into account and should note that it reflects the views of the local community.

### Why is it needed?

The rural location of Highclere Parish adjacent to the North Hampshire Downs, yet close to the economically prosperous Thames corridor, has resulted in increased development pressures. The disproportionate number of large executive style houses on relatively small plots is in danger of destroying the rural character of the Parish that attracts newcomers to it in the first place. With valued spaces under threat, now is an appropriate time to consider what development would best ensure that Highclere Parish remains vibrant, yet retains its distinctiveness.

### How was it developed

This design statement has been prepared on the initiative of the Parish Council and supported by Highclere Parish Society. A small group of residents developed a series of drafts over the period October 2000 - March 2001, based on wide input and consultation:

- *Three open workshops: Oct 2000, January 2001 involving nearly 100 local residents; two day exhibition and open days in March 2001 to comment on the draft statement*
- *Information from the Parish Appraisal 1999 (completed by 450 householders, 80% of the total) and a house height survey (March 2001)*
- *Publication of drafts and key points in local magazines and on the village website*
- *Individual consultations with residents, landowners, local schools, businesses, and wider interests*
- *Detailed discussions with planners at Basingstoke and Deane Local District Council.*
- *Draft statement forwarded to interested parties for comments. Where appropriate these comments have been used to fine tune the statement.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

This rural feeling is the main reason why people like the Parish and decide to live here. The distinctive features that residents value are woodland (73% viewed this as extremely important), trees and hedgerows (70%), paths and lanes (52%).\*

The workshops showed a high degree of consensus among residents about the key features of the Parish that they value:

- *The rural ambience – the area has a rural feeling with tree-lined approaches and natural verges.*
- *Outstanding landscape – the Parish sits almost wholly in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*
- *Stunning views – overlooking fields and open spaces*
- *Woodland, leafy lanes and hedgerows – the species-rich hedgerows complement broad areas of woodland and copses, and many fine individual trees*

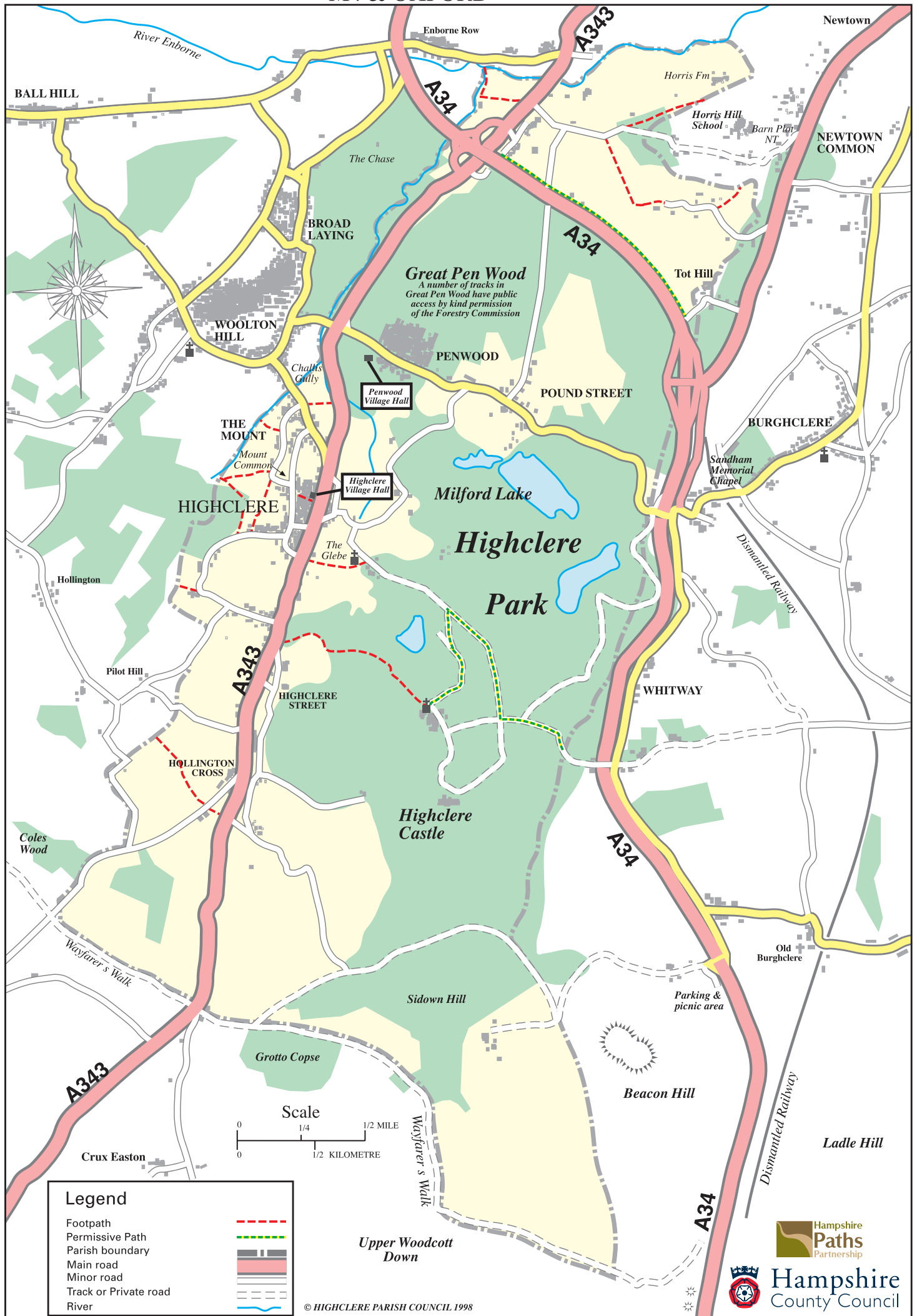
\* This and other statistics in later sections are derived from the Parish Appraisal survey held in 1999.

- *Quiet lanes – the lanes in Highclere are extensively used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders and are a key place for social interaction*
- *The spread-out settlements – with few exceptions, dwellings are well spaced and contribute to the rural atmosphere*
- *The diversity of building styles – although the local red brick is the dominant material, there is wide diversity of dwelling types, including traditional cottages and 2-storey houses*
- *Interesting architectural features – hung tiles, patterned brickwork, varied rooflines and details.*

The main concern of residents is “creeping suburbanisation”. This is reflected through developments which are “out of scale” with their neighbourhood, the disproportionate number of large family houses, and the destruction of hedgerows and trees during development.



Mount Road







## How to use this design statement

The statements cover four main aspects of the Parish – landscape and natural environment, settlement patterns, buildings and other characteristics, including highways, byways, and utilities. There are separate sections for each of the three main settlements – Highclere, Highclere Street, Penwood. Each section describes the distinctive characteristics and residents’ desires. Planning guidelines are given in shaded boxes, such as the first guideline below.

### General Guideline

Developers, property owners, planners, local authorities or anyone who is involved with new development, changes to buildings or that plans/proposals should take into account the guidelines contained within the Village Design Statement.

The guidelines are aimed to stimulate good design practice which complements and enhances both the environment and the community of Highclere and Penwood. Decision - makers and developers are encouraged to take a holistic view of change as this is the view taken by the members of this community. An individual proposal for a development or extension may not, in isolation, be viewed as materially damaging, however, the subtle cumulative effect may well be.

## THE PARISH IN CONTEXT

Highclere Parish lies astride the A343 Newbury to Andover road on the north slope of the North Hampshire Downs, between the Downs and the valley of the River Enborne. The Parish is 5 miles long and 1 mile wide and consists of three separate settlement areas – Highclere village, Highclere Street, Penwood – which nestle within wide tracts of farmland, fields and woodland. The Newbury Bypass has tended to isolate Wash Water and other scattered settlements along the River Enborne at the northern end from the rest of the Parish. Residents from this area have not come forward to assist and thus it has not been specifically considered, although the general comments apply.

Geologically, the Parish descends northwards from flinty chalk through Reading Beds (clay and sand), London Clay, Lower Bagshot Sand and Bracklesham Beds (sand and loam), with an area of Plateau Gravel covering most of the central part of the Highclere village. This rapid succession provides a diversity of landscape within a small area. Historically, the downland area was used for sheep and the rest was forest, gradually cleared for farming, leading down to marsh near the Enborne. A large part of the Parish is still wooded, as it includes Highclere Park and Great Pen Wood.

The population of the Parish has been relatively stable over the last ten years, and is currently approximately 1,460 inhabitants. In

contrast, the number of properties has continued to grow to around 560 dwellings as occupancy in existing dwellings has declined. The lack of many basic facilities in the Parish, coupled with only an hourly bus service that stops in the early evening, means that access to a car is essential for most villagers – for shopping, travelling to work, secondary school, doctor, gym etc. Whilst this could be considered an issue, it is not one that appears to be currently of great concern, indeed many see it as a benefit.

### The changing economic context

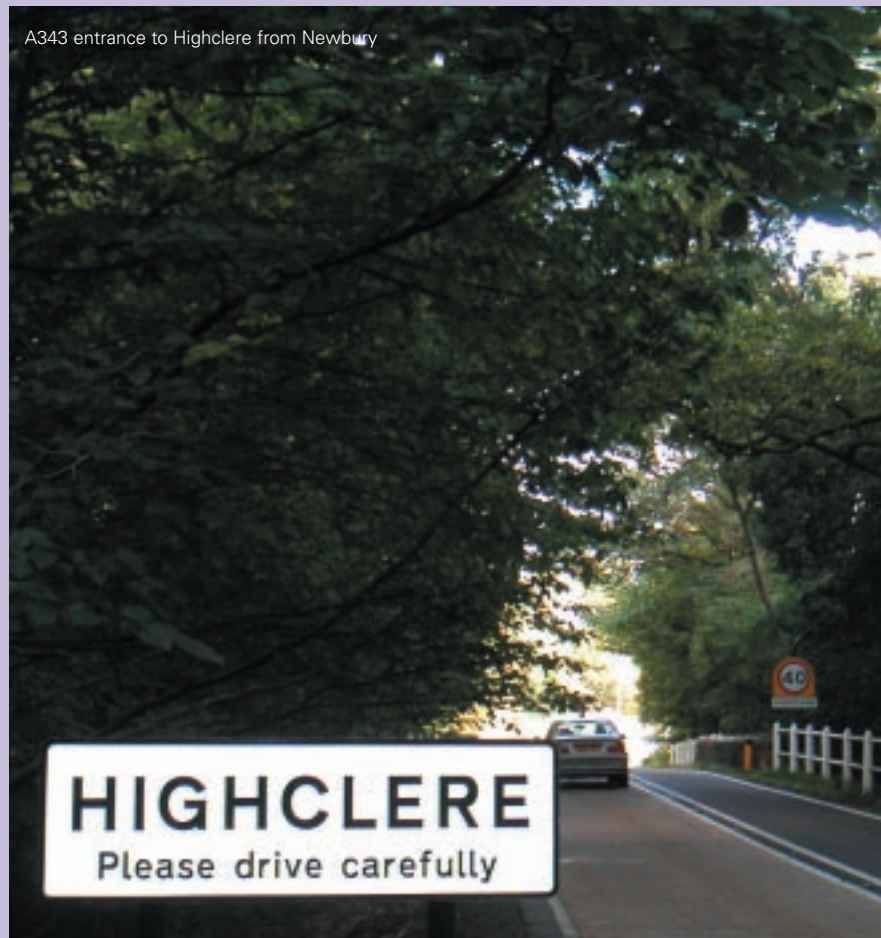
The traditional heart of Highclere Parish has been the Highclere Estate, dominated by Highclere Castle, which occupies about half the area of the Parish. It is still the major employer, although farming only constitutes a small part of its diverse activities, which include house visitors, commercial events and the Stud.

Other employers are a local school and a small distribution company. Altogether, 6% of residents are employed locally and a further 10% work from home. However, there is a strong relationship with Newbury, where 21% of residents are employed, compared with only 1% in Basingstoke or Andover. Over 90% of respondents to the Parish Appraisal indicate that Newbury is their main shopping centre.

Being close to good communications for car owners but having very poor public transport – the A34, M4 (9 miles) and the railway to London (5 miles) - has resulted in immense pressure by developers to build homes for the urban affluent who want to live “in the country” and commute. The majority of planning applications over the last few years have been for clusters of new 4- and 5-bedroom luxury homes, built in plots that formerly contained one dwelling (which is often demolished as part of the new development). Residents feel strongly about the increasing suburbanization of the village and its loss of rural character.

This rural character is the main reason why people decide to live here. The distinctive features that residents value are woodland (73% viewed this as extremely important), trees and hedgerows (70%), paths and lanes (52%).

A343 entrance to Highclere from Newbury



## LANDSCAPE

With the exception of one small corner, the whole of the Parish lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has many mature trees and areas of woodland which create a natural habitat for birds and wild animals. Many residents' gardens also contribute visually to the overall landscape. Particular characteristics of the landscape that are highly valued are:

**Approaches.** Almost every approach into the Parish is attractive e.g. the arch of trees and an interesting bridge coming into the Parish on the A343 from Newbury; the approach into Penwood from Tot Hill with views over woods and grazing land, and Highclere Street on the A343 from Andover.

**Outstanding views.** There are several places that offer outstanding views of distant hills and undulating countryside e.g. from the back of Pantings Lane towards Hollington; the Glebe;





View from Bottle Row



Westridge Lane; Hollington Lane; Bunkum; from Highclere Street towards Ashmansworth. Good views can also be obtained from many places on the footpaths that weave in and around the Parish. The setting of the church is regarded as particularly attractive.

**Trees and woodland.** One of the most important features of the village is the quantity of woodland, mixed hedgerows and single outstanding trees or groups of trees, especially

oak, beech, sycamore, many hollies and the occasional ash and redwood. Notable specimens include the sycamore on land at Blackford Farm as seen from the church; the big oak at the corner of Penwood Road and Back Lane; an oak in the field opposite the Yew Tree Inn; groups of oaks on land at Parkview House and on the corner of Mount Road and the A343; beeches on the footpath beyond Crowshott. There are willows and alders along the streams. The cedars in Highclere Park are famous, and there are scots pine, and birch in Great Pen Wood plus conifer plantations. Some of these trees are recorded as part of The Ancient Trees of Hampshire.

**Meadows and streams.** There are several streams intersecting the area running north to join the River Enborne that separate the Parish from Berkshire. The marshland around these and other streams (e.g. Sheepwash stream), along with numerous ponds and lakes create excellent habitats for wildlife.

**Wildlife and animals.** The diversity and abundance of wildlife is a vital feature of the area and greatly appreciated by residents. Birdlife is plentiful including owls, woodpeckers, long-tailed tits, goldcrests, thrushes, pheasants, buzzards and nightjars. There is the sound of hooting owls almost every night. Animals include bats, rabbits, muntjac and roe deer, foxes. In fields, there are grazing cattle, sheep and horses.

**The natural environment.** There are many wildflowers, including wild daffodils, snowdrops, orchids (spotted, pyramidal etc.) in the woods and fields and especially on the roadside verges. Of biological interest are the broad leaved-helleborine on the A343, Pen Hill Plantation and Treasure Hill Cottages to A34 bridge. Lichen on trees indicates low levels of pollution. The diverse lichen and moss flora is one of the reasons why Highclere Park is designated as a site of Special Scientific Interest.



## **GUIDANCE (LANDSCAPE)**

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Any changes or new developments should:

- protect the distinctive rural approaches to the community
- take account of their impact on the views from all public rights of way in their vicinity
- maintain the visually and ecologically important trees and wooded areas
- preserve the natural environment and support the diverse wildlife habitats; to be demonstrated by a wildlife assessment
- maintain existing hedgerows and plant native hedgerows and trees to preserve the rural ambience of the Parish
- preserve or incorporate grass verges and ditches as appropriate
- include specific proposals for the protection of hedges and mature trees during the development process including verifiable procedures for reinstatement in the event of any damage occurring.

## **SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**

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The Parish is spread out over a wide area with no distinctive centre. There are three main settlement areas – Highclere, Highclere Street and Penwood. Highclere sits astride the A343 Newbury to Andover road, a former turnpike road that saw small-scale commercial developments during the 18th and 19th century. Along this road were a power-house, a car maker and numerous trades and shops. To the east is Highclere Castle and the Highclere Estate, historically the focus of the village and still the main employer.

There are a few country lanes and further south the small settlement of Highclere Street, the oldest part of the village.

The more highly settled area west of the Andover road is characterised by linear developments along long lanes and has developed by slow infill over two centuries but with more rapid infill and development of cul-de-sacs during the last three decades. Penwood comprises some old houses along the road to Burghclere, but is mostly a creation of the 1960s and 1970s with two estates set back from the main road. Most Penwood residents feel more affinity to the neighbouring village of Woolton Hill, because of its schools and doctor's surgery, than to Highclere.

Community activities take place in the two village halls (Highclere and Penwood), the Church and church rooms and Westridge, a privately-

owned studio, formerly a chapel. There are no state schools in the village; the primary and infant schools are in Woolton Hill, as is the surgery, and the comprehensive school in Burghclere. The former village school has been converted into a private dwelling, and some large houses converted for private school use. The Society of St Pius X has two boarding houses from which the children are transported by bus to Burghclere, and Thorngrove Preparatory School is built on a former piggery.



Highclere Village Hall

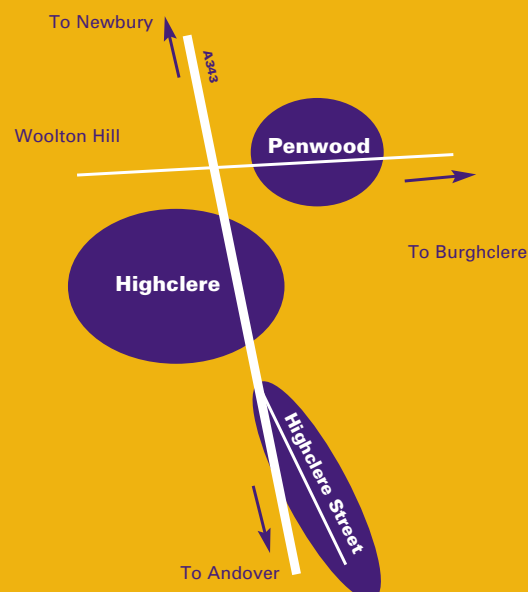


**Open areas are important.** The lack of a village centre, green or virtually any public open space means that green areas are highly valued. Particular areas that surveys show as very important to protect are Mount Common (highest in survey), the woods at Penwood, The Glebe and the surroundings of the Church, Highclere Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Challis Gully and the Chase in Woolton Hill.

**Footpaths, leafy lanes and high hedgerows are distinctive features.** The village has many footpaths and lanes, surrounded by fields and gently undulating countryside. Even in developed areas the rural characteristics are maintained by high hedgerows, and residents value the tranquility of the lanes and the ability to stroll along them and to stop and talk in safety. Cyclists and horse riders also use the lanes.

**The rural ambience is highly valued.** The distinctive characteristic of the settlements that residents value most is the feeling of rurality, with development spread out along country lanes. The random infiltration of “green windows” into the settlement areas is particularly liked.

Rural features that are particularly appreciated are road verges of ecological importance, no street lighting (hence ability to see stars at night), and an environment that is not too manicured (hence the appreciation of some apparently unmanaged open spaces). Milestones,



muddy footpaths, bogs and church bells all add to the rural ambience.

Losing this rural character under pressure from developments exclusively of houses that would be more in keeping with suburbia is the most frequently cited concern of residents.



**Suburbanisation.** In the eyes of most villagers, many developments since the 1960s have been out of character. Frequently, the density and scale of development has been too high, giving residents an impression of unwelcome suburbanisation. In the Parish Appraisal 75% of respondents felt that housing during the next 10 years should remain the same or add fewer than an additional 20 dwellings.

Traditionally, development in the Parish has been linear, along lanes that link with each other and main roads, thus helping to create a sense of



community. Many modern developments have been created in cul-de-sacs without any form of link, even a footpath. Although this creates a feeling of privacy, it tends to create isolated pockets not characteristic of the original villages.

**Commercial development.** There is little commercial activity within the Parish. Besides the Estate, there is some other agricultural activity and a few small commercial and light industrial premises, including converted farm buildings.

Commercial activity adds vitality to a village, and survey respondents put small business units, local shops, cottage and local industries high on their wish list for employment. Much commercial vibrancy has been lost e.g. shops, post office, workshops. A former garage, left abandoned for several years, is regarded by many as an ideal site for mixed (commercial / residential) development.

It is expected that newer commercial activity will be the use of home-based businesses and small-scale units, possibly the conversion of former farm buildings.

**Community facilities.** One notable feature of Highclere is the good community atmosphere that revolves around the clubs and societies. The two village halls have served the community well. The Highclere Village Hall committee is currently upgrading the hall with grants from the Borough, the kitchen already having been completed. Apart from a play area and a children's swing in Penwood, there is little in the way of recreational or sports facilities in the Parish. Although there are many within 10 miles or so, the dearth of public transport makes them virtually unavailable to those without their own transport.

## Main Residential Areas

The Parish has two main residential areas, Highclere and Penwood, with some groups of individual dwellings such as Highclere Street as well as scattered individual dwellings in the rest of the Parish.



The Red House



Yew Tree Inn

## Highclere

The residential area of Highclere is located on the higher ground between two streams which are tributaries of the River Enborne. Travelling south through the Parish on the A343 the road crosses one of the streams at Seven Stones Bridge and then climbs a short hill. As the A343 levels out it enters the residential area of Highclere as it goes over a crossroads with two minor roads. There are then dwellings on either side of the road, with occasional important gaps on the left giving views towards the church. After the road passes the junction with Tubbs Lane it comes out into the countryside again with fields either side and



views towards Highclere Park on the left and the Downs on the right. There continue to be scattered dwellings along the road but in a context of open countryside.

To the west of the A343 the residential area is effectively defined by the dwellings along Pantings Lane and Tubbs Lane with both Lanes having important countryside elements. There are views to the west between houses on both Lanes towards the Downs. Mount Common lies between the Lanes, and at the south end of Pantings Lane before it turns east to join Tubbs Lane, there is the Common on one side of the Lane and countryside on the other. This combination is important for a number reasons, it forms a direct connection between part of Tubbs Lane and open countryside. This is important not only to residents and the many users of Tubbs Lane, but also to wildlife. The wildlife use this as part of a route through Highclere to pass from east to west across the A343 and vice versa. Also adjacent to this corner of Pantings Lane there are two footpaths one heading to the west the other to the south, both are highly valued by local residents as they provide easy access to the peace and tranquillity of the rural setting.

To the east of the A343 there appears to be a natural boundary to the residential area as the land starts to fall again towards the stream. This means that there is only a small amount of residential area to the east of the dwellings along the A343.

## Penwood

The residential area of Penwood is set in a largely wooded AONB and most also have some views of the surrounding woodland. It consists of two small modern settlements surrounded by woodland, one either side of the minor road leading from the A343 to Burghclere. The area has no natural centre. Its character, therefore, is defined as much by the leafy minor road passing between the settlements as by the settlements themselves as they are largely hidden. The Burghclere road retains the feel of passing through woodland at this point and its rural nature is reinforced by it having no street lights. Also there is only a limited amount of pavement, to provide for the safety of children going to school in the next parish. Being bounded by woodland the settlements have a natural boundary which helps to define the character of the area.



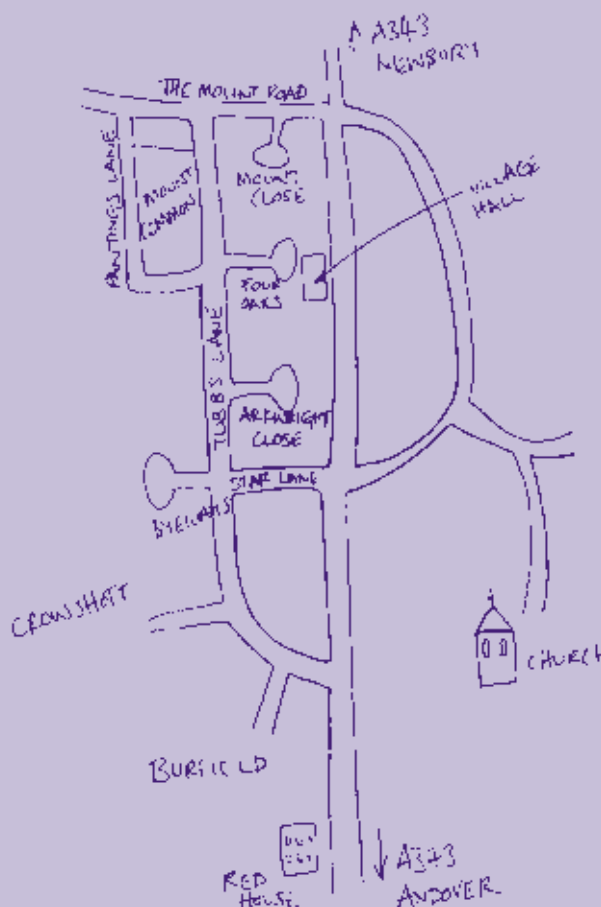


## GUIDANCE (SETTLEMENTS)

Plans or proposals should

- Ensure that those qualities or features of open spaces, which make an important contribution to the character of the Parish, are protected and maintained
- take the preservation of the quiet nature and safety of the Parish lanes as an indispensable condition for the community and include an assessment of the further impact of their proposal on the types of traffic and the vehicle movements both on the main roads and on the lanes
- ensure that the layout of any development is such that the residents feel they are part of the local community rather than being separated within it
- where they relate to community facilities or other non-residential developments, be small in scale, dispersed around the community; ideally they should be on sites with access from main roads, and take into account their likely impact on traffic and suitability of other access, and provide sufficient discreet parking facilities
- where they involve the replacement of one or more houses or the development of a number dwellings, ensure that the new buildings provide a range of types of dwellings reflecting the needs of the population of the Parish
- include a mixed mainly native hedgerow on any site boundary which is visible from a public right of way. Saplings must be of a size which have a significant impact e.g. 1 metre tall or higher. Appropriate distance between buildings must be allowed to allow the hedgerow to grow, and be maintained, to maturity.
- preserve, and if possible add to, the footpath network in the Parish.

## HIGHCLERE AT A GLANCE



### A. Eastern Area

*[Church & E of Andover Rd]*

Individual dwellings generally in large plots. An area of expansive country views, which are rightfully prized, and little changed in recent years.

### B. Burfield

A private low-density development (1995) of large houses in similar styles.

### C. Tubbs Lane South & Andover Road West

A compact area that contains many single dwellings on fair sized plots, but where much recent infilling has taken place, including two cul-de-sacs (Four Oaks, Arkwright Close) and several 'garden' developments e.g. Woodside. An area under pressure, where it is vital to retain a rural feel and protect from unsuitable suburban-style development.

### D. Tubbs Lane North

A rural lane defined by the continuance of the

hedgerow of Mount Common on the west side and low density single dwellings to the east.

### **E. Mount Road**

A varied mix of distinctive older buildings and modern cottages with pretty gardens. A thoroughfare to Woolton Hill.

### **F. Mount Close**

A 1996 development in a consistent style with some elegant landscaping and of relatively low density.

### **G. Crowshott and Pantings Lane.**

A cohesive area with large individual, attractive

properties in a variety of styles. A pleasant area to walk with glorious country vistas to the edge of the settlement boundary made possible by gaps between houses.

### **H. Mount Common**

This is a large privately owned open space within the west side of the Highclere residential area. It is highly valued by the local residents as it provides a linkage between Tubbs Lane and the countryside. It also brings a rural ambience into a residential area reminding people using Tubbs Lane that they are in the countryside and making Pantings Lane into a country lane.





## HIGHCLERE STREET AT A GLANCE

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Highclere Street is mainly a linear lane of the same name. It is one of the oldest settlements in the Parish and comprises less than twenty dwellings and two farms spread along its length. It is essentially a quiet country lane which commands some outstanding views over to Ashmansworth and also the Highclere estate and castle. These are views that must be preserved at all cost.



Farthings Cottage



View from Highclere Street



Top of Highclere Street

- *The buildings are well spaced out, often with several fields between adjacent buildings. In several places there is a cluster of 2-3 buildings, and in one case four in a terrace (the 'Swedish' houses).*
- *Although the A343 runs roughly parallel to Highclere Street and is less than 200 metres away, its lower altitude and screening from high hedges means that it is unobtrusive.*
- *Most buildings are on large individual plots. The overall feeling is one of tranquillity and space. The large gaps between individual buildings are a distinctive part of its character, which together with gaps in hedgerows and gates afford outstanding views. Well-kept gardens and attractive roadside shrubs add to the overall attractiveness and generally rural perspective of the lane.*
- *There are many distinctive buildings, many very old (17th century and earlier). As well as dwellings - both cottages and houses - there is one of the two Parish inns (The Yew Tree), several farmhouses and barns and The Old Forge. Several of the buildings are listed buildings –e.g. Farthings Cottage*
- *In general, all buildings are made from traditional brick, some with attractive patterns. Many have hung tiles. One terrace of houses has white timbered walls. This is perhaps out of character with the rest of the buildings but is not viewed by most villagers as unattractive. Different types of boundary and gate - white fences, hedges, and wrought iron gates - all add to the diversity. Unlike some other parts of the Parish, most buildings are visible from the lane, being fairly close to the road and with good gaps in the hedges. Other common features of this area are chimneypots and rooms in the eaves.*

## PENWOOD AT A GLANCE

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Great Pen Wood is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Penwood housing is a mix of the old and traditional, and more modern suburban styles. It has attractive approaches – wooded from the main road with housing developments set back from the main road so that passing through visitors are unaware of its

existence until in the immediate vicinity. Villagers are concerned about traffic speeds along this road and also along the neighbouring A343. The recent development of the Newbury By-pass and the Tot Hill service station has led to some light pollution at the eastern edge of the village.







- **Penwood Heights.** An estate built in the early 1970s, with a wide variety of detached houses (mostly 4-bedroomed) in a suburban-like setting of front gardens open to the road.
- **Woods.** A large area that offers many local walks. A primary concern of residents is to preserve the open spaces that lead to a variety of wildlife habitats.
- **Beer House area, between Treasure Hill and Penwood Heights.** Includes several interesting cottages, including the thatched Beer House. The lane towards Washwater includes a nursery, some attractive cottages and rhododendron hedges along the sides.
- **Penwood Road Houses (opposite Penwood Heights).** Older houses along the main road.
- **Woodlands and Heathlands.** Developed as a council estate in the late 1960s, mostly with 3-bedroom semi-detached houses, but also some maisonettes. It has the Parish's only shop.
- **Pound Street and Treasure Hill.** The oldest part of Penwood with a variety of house styles. The lane leading to Highclere Estate has a distinctive and attractive lodge and another charming thatched cottage (White Cottage).

The main features of the area valued by residents are the open spaces, yet the closeness of wooded areas giving opportunities for forest walks: "you are never far from the countryside, whichever direction you walk". The area is rich in

wildlife. A wide range of interesting trees is found, including holly, beech and several stands of white poplars. The old oak tree at the junction of the road to Highclere at Treasure Hill, is a notable landmark. Judicious planting and placement of such broad-leaved species around the village will ensure similar landmarks are available to future generations.

While residents recognise that the two main estates are 'somewhat suburban', a certain mellowing and maturing has taken place over time, and their harshness is mitigated by their wooded surroundings. However, such estates are reminiscent of their time (1960s-70s) and should not be repeated in future. One eyesore of the current age is that of the mobile telephone mast in the woods described by local residents as "a blot on the landscape".





Old Holly's



Jasmine Cottage



Byeways

## BUILDINGS

The buildings in Highclere are very varied in design and size ranging from a few small cottages to a number of substantially larger houses still surrounded by sizeable gardens e.g. Westridge House, Westridge Studio (formerly a chapel), Crowshott, The Old Rectory, Blackford House, St. Michael's House and Pykes House. Other notable buildings are The Old School, Pitt House and Old Holly's. Most of the original farms have been converted to houses and the surrounding land sold.

There were very few, if any, large houses in the village before the beginning of the 19th century, and then they were built along the A343, but set back from it as traffic gradually increased along the road.

Development that has taken place since the 1950s has been detached houses mostly built in groups of similar designs in cul-de-sacs e.g. Four Oaks (1976), Arkwright Close (1972-6), Flexford Close (1965), Byeways (1999), Burfield (1995) and Mount Close (1996). A disproportionate number of large executive-style family homes have been erected in the last 10 years, often creating grave problems of scale when grouping them among smaller, older buildings. However, some new buildings have been built in the traditional cottage style and blend in well with their surroundings e.g. April Cottage, September Cottage, Jasmine Cottage, Old Brick Cottage. There have also been tasteful conversions meeting the needs for clusters of diverse smaller homes, such as at Flexford Court.

In the Parish Appraisal, 28% of survey respondents felt that the amount of new housing in the last 10 years was about right while 22% felt it was too much. More significantly, only 6% feel that new development was in keeping with the village, while 29% say that it is not. Typical comments are: "too suburban in style in relationship to each other" and that "only three new houses in the last ten years have been built in the village style." There is a desire to maintain a sensible balance of styles and sizes, rather than the current trend of building only large 4- and 5-bedroom houses.



**Scale and density.** In most lanes the space between houses - despite infilling in some lanes - means that the village does not seem cramped or hemmed in. Over recent times, development has been one of gradual infilling, but now residents express concerns of having gone too far in terms of density and large detached houses in small plots. There is also a feeling that the many bungalows in The Mount and Tubbs Lane area are becoming overshadowed by the proximity of larger houses which are often built with space in the roof for a third storey which tends to make them "roof-heavy". A recent house height survey showed that newer houses are on average 1.2 metres higher than the established buildings (8.6m compared to 7.4 m). Residents would like to maintain a diversity of types of home and ensure that a suitable proportion of new development provides affordable and suitable housing for local and young people, the elderly and families on low income.

**Plot and plot boundaries.** Many houses are set back from the road with interesting front gardens that are glimpsed at through gaps in high hedges. There is a variety of boundaries, ranging from brick walls to wrought iron railings, although hedges are popular and in keeping with the village character. Some recently -built houses

blend in harmoniously with their immediate surroundings, showing that with a bit of care and attention, the village character can be retained. Attractive gardens are a distinctive feature.

#### **Diversity of building types and styles.**

There are many attractive cottages and houses, farms and barns, and a few highly appreciated thatched buildings. A typical Highclere cottage was semi-detached, tile-hung, with straight gables and a lean-to at each end, originally thatched and with very small windows, but they have almost all been converted into single houses with larger windows and tiled roofs.

The architectural style is one of diversity, with many sizes and shapes of buildings and some interesting variations on the more usual brick and tile materials (e.g. slate roofs, white-painted bricks). Residents would like to see more variation in the size and individuality of design of new buildings.

In Highclere Parish, variations in ground levels can have a significant impact than might otherwise be the case. When planning applications are submitted, sufficient informaton must be included eg sections to show differences in ground levels, to enable the full impact to be assessed.



Gate House, Highclere Castle



Crowshott Cottages

**Local materials.** The church (1870) and the cemetery chapel (1855) are built of flint, and there are some houses and walls with flint work. Between 1784 and 1850 bricks were taxed, so many houses were tile-hung for cheapness, some in quite elaborate patterns. Many of the earlier dwellings were built in the later part of the 19th Century using bricks and tiles made here in Highclere and at Hollington, especially paving bricks inscribed "Pykes of Hollington". Many modern buildings retain the tradition, using Michelmersh 'multi-red' bricks and tile hanging.

**Varied rooflines.** A distinctive feature of older buildings is the variation of rooflines, with abutments and single storey extensions. Houses with hipped roofs or roofs made of brown pantiles do not fit well with the vernacular architecture. Another common feature is dormer windows in the eaves line of a single story building. Several cottages have interesting chimney designs that add visual interest to the roofline.

**Interesting design details.** One of the main features of the older houses is elaborate tilework, sometimes using a mixture of plain and "fishscale" tiles. Brickwork is often coloured or



patterned, e.g. diamond patterns. Many houses have details, such as circular windows and decorative porches. The "porte-cochere" at Pitt House is worthy of notice.



**Windows and doors.** Throughout the village, specific and sometime unusual designs of windows recur, especially those found on cottages on the estate. Small Georgian type windows predominate in older cottages and first floor windows close to the eaves are very typical.

**Building Work.** Concern has been expressed among residents of the disturbance and damage to hedgerows, verges and other interesting village features whilst building or redevelopment work takes place.

**Other Buildings.** Conversion of large houses and farm buildings, and redevelopment of brownfield sites (e.g. the former Fawcett's garage site), is likely to be needed to encourage modest local economic development and to avoid unused and unsightly buildings.



Brook House



## Guidelines for Buildings

New and replacement buildings and extensions should:

- take full account of the visual impact in relation to the size, height and positioning of the plot and the neighbouring buildings. Big buildings in small plots are particularly obtrusive and should be avoided
- include in their plans scale elevations and drawings showing the relationship of the dwelling to its neighbours and the setting
- be designed so that roof ridges do not generally exceed the average in the village. Where proposals exceed this height, clear design justification should be provided to show that this will not detract from the character of the surrounding area.
- maintain a visual separation between individual properties
- be designed in such a way that they do not stimulate parking on the lanes
- respect the local use of warm red brick and plain tile. Where possible, extensions should be built in materials closely resembling those of the original building
- have windows, including replacement windows, appropriate to the dwelling and taking account of traditional style within the village
- bear in mind the variations in style consistent with the location. Patterned tile-hanging and brickwork are typical of the area and should be encouraged
- aim at varied roof lines. Single-pitched, heavy-looking roof lines should be avoided. Homeowners should consider setting extensions slightly backwards or forwards from the original building. Garages should be detached or incorporate a different roof line.
- Any new commercial or agricultural building should be carefully sited and designed to reduce its apparent mass and minimise visual intrusion upon the wider landscape.





## HIGHWAYS, BYWAYS AND OTHER FEATURES

The main thoroughfare through the Parish is the A343 Newbury – Andover road. As it is one of the only straight pieces of road between Newbury and Andover vehicles tend to exceed the 40 mph limit. Another main route is the road through Penwood to Burghclere. At the edge of the Parish runs the A34 trunk road. Any problem on this road tends to divert traffic through Highclere. Apart from that, and with the exception of school runs and heavy goods vehicles on the lanes the village is regarded as comparatively quiet and therefore allows use of the highways and byways by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

**Footpaths, byways and bridle paths.** There are some good footpaths in the Parish and they are much used by dog walkers. Several people in the Parish keep horses, which are regarded as one of the things people like about the Parish, but the riders complain of the lack of bridleways and tracks, and the danger and difficulty of crossing the A343. There is no direct path between the two settlement areas of Highclere and Penwood, thus reinforcing the sense of distinct communities. There is a view by some to open up more pedestrian and cycle routes between



settlement areas and also for everyday travel around them, but without destroying the rural ambience created by natural verges, hedgerows and generally low densities of vehicular traffic.

**Street furniture.** It is recognised that road signs, especially those urging speed restraint or caution on the approaches to schools, are a necessary part of the local scenery, but there is a serious danger of causing an unreadable clutter of signs. Traditional finger posts and milestones add visual interest. Additionally, there are recognized needs for more centrally situated post boxes (capable of taking A4 packages) and other village amenities such as benches.



### Overhead cables and radio masts.

Overhead telephone lines are a feature of the area. While not necessarily liked, they are practical and low cost, and with suitable materials blend well into their surroundings. On the other hand, metal mobile phone masts and electricity

pylons do not generally blend in so well.

**Light pollution.** The ability to see stars on a clear night is one of the features that residents find attractive.



## OTHER GUIDELINES

- The relevant highway and other authorities are urged to encourage awareness of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, when planning any road improvements, and to find ways of ensuring that motor vehicles are restrained in their speed throughout the village lanes. Intelligent traffic calming or other speed and noise reduction measures on the main thoroughfares are welcomed.
- Opportunities for new footpaths, bridleways and possibly bike trails, should be considered
- Avoid introducing pavements, kerbs and street lighting unless specifically required for safety by the Highway Authority
- Street furniture should be designed to blend in well with surroundings. New signs should be kept to a minimum, be well sighted, informative and not distracting
- The use of overhead cables should be restrained to current levels. If new supporting structures are needed, the poles should be of wood rather than metal. Mobile phone masts should not be visually intrusive on the main settlement areas nor on the byways and footpaths. These masts should be in the least visually damaging locations where available and technically viable.
- Private security lights should be muted and carefully sited to avoid light pollution and minimize hazards to road users.

## CONCLUSION

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There will be changes in Highclere and Penwood over the coming years. However, most residents would prefer as little change as possible and would wish to avoid development on green field sites.

Most accept that infill housing on garden sites within the settlement boundaries will continue. They wish such developments to be of mixed housing respecting the diversity of the village as described in this statement.

## REFERENCE

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Highclere Parish Appraisal 1999  
Highclere History Society  
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council  
Hampshire County Council re SINCS  
The Ancient Trees of Hampshire Survey

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Design Statement.



St. Michael & All Angels, Highclere Church