

Parish panorama



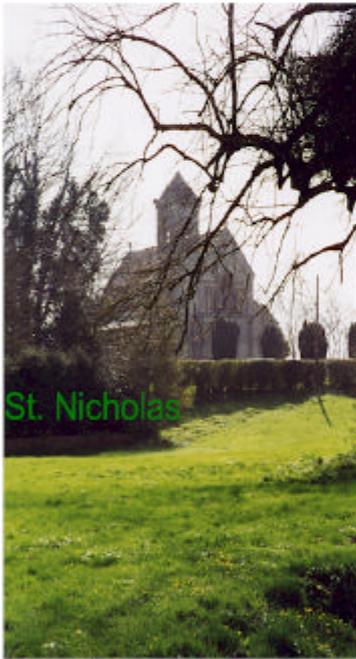
GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Grafton



Wilton



St. Nicholas



Wexcombe



Wilton windmill



Marten

—**N**—**Z**—**H**—**E**



Grafton Parish Village Design.

CO—**S**—**T**



Grafton Parish Village Design.

P—**R**—**O**—**P**—**O**—**S**—**E**



Grafton Parish Village Design.

A—**D**—**D**—**O**—**P**—**T**



Grafton Parish Village Design.

R—**E**—**V**—**I**—**E**—**W**

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

FOREWORD

- This Village Design Statement was adopted by Kennet District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 17th December 2004. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan. Although it does not form a part of the Local Plan and, therefore, does not have the status that Section 54A of the 1990 Act provides in deciding planning applications, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPG when making decisions on matters that come before him, providing that it is consistent with the Local Plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner.
- Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 – Development Plans states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. Kennet District Council considers that the consultation undertaken in the preparation of the Grafton Village Design Statement, as outlined in this publication, is consistent with Government advice and meets the obligations set out in PPG12.
- The Replacement Kennet Local Plan was adopted by Kennet District Council on 20th April 2004. This SPG provides detailed background information for the interpretation of policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policies HC24, HC26, NR6, NR& and NR8 which refer to named villages in Table H5 Marlborough Community Area. Grafton and Wilton are named in Table H5 as “villages that do not have the range of facilities where development will be restricted”. Marten and Wexcombe are considered to fall within the countryside where development will be very restricted.
- East Grafton and Wilton are Conservation areas and the Kennet Local Plan 2004 states that:

“Development in conservation areas will only be permitted where it would preserve or enhance their character or appearance. Proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a Conservation Area will not be permitted”
- Publications referenced during compilation of the Design Statement
 - Marlborough Development plan
 - Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy – Kennet Local Plan 2011 Supplementary Guidance.
 - Kennet Local Plan 2004
 - Wiltshire Wildlife Trust conservation study
 - The Countryside Agency “Vital Villages Resource Pack” section 14.
 - MAFF “A Fair deal for rural England” 2002
 - Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016.
 - North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty June 2003.
 - North Wessex Downs Management plan 2003

Grafton fete 1974



Grafton at Jubilee 2002

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Adopted as "Supplementary Planning Guidance" by Kennet

This is a reference document for all planning applications within the scope of the plan.

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Summary of findings:

- ❑ Proportionality is important for both building construction and the size of the plot on which it stands. The "cottage" feel of the area is important.
- ❑ Building materials should not be restricted except that they should compliment and blend with surrounding properties and the fabric with which they are built.
- ❑ Properties should continue to be "outward facing" rather than inward looking around central roads and pathways.
- ❑ Affordable housing should form a significant part of any building plan
- ❑ Conservation is important, traffic causes problems and the lack of amenities results in large scale private car usage.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This Village Design Statement is designed to form the basis for any development, and/or change, within the Parish of Grafton. The plan has been compiled by, and is supported by, residents of the Parish.

The Parish is within the “North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty” and has a landscape of acknowledged NATIONAL IMPORTANCE.

The rural character of the hamlets is shaped by the minor roads which wind through them. The majority of the hamlets are away from any major roads and therefore provide a safe, quiet and relaxed rural lifestyle for the residents.

There is an impression of open spaces throughout the Parish. This is achieved by the tradition of building close to roads and lanes rather than encroaching upon the open area beyond.

Residents take pride in the history and character of the hamlets and are looking for any change to compliment the established buildings and environment. A balance of property sizes, spaced appropriately, should be encouraged to attract a cross section of residents.

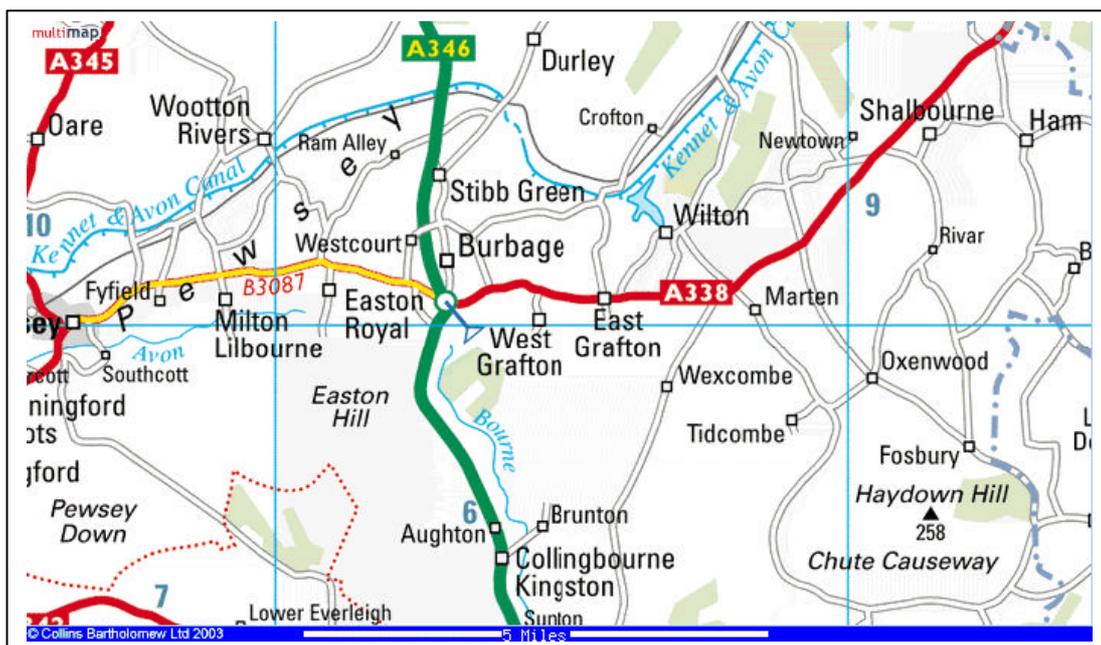
The population is not static. The majority of new residents are attracted to the hamlets because of the rural setting.

There must be a risk that, if private transport becomes more costly and public transport remains illusive, people may be forced to relocate for employment, amenities etc. This is a problem for the youth of the Parish today.

Future development, if considered, must provide a real and sustainable lifestyle in the area. Developing the Parish even further into dormitory status is seen by many to be unacceptable. Respondents to the questionnaire overwhelmingly object to expansion of the hamlets into the open countryside beyond the current boundaries and express contempt for large structures on small plots of land.

It should be noted that this document is a “village design statement” and not a “village plan”.

- The Design statement is directed towards the land available within the village and the consequences of any change in the use of that land.
- The Plan, on the other hand, is directed towards the provisions which are required by the community now and in the future, including how they would be funded and maintained.



GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Composition of the village

The Parish consists of 5 hamlets each of which has a very different character. Over the centuries the prominence of individual hamlets has changed with East Grafton being the largest hamlet in 2003.

Details of each hamlet are included within this Village Design Statement.

Locally, each separate collection of houses is known as a "village" in its own right. For the purpose of clarity, when referring to the "Village Design Statement", it has been decided to refer to each entity as a "Hamlet".

Generalized and overall comments will refer to the "Village". The village is situated in the east of the county of Wiltshire, about 6 miles east of Pewsey, seven miles south-east of Marlborough and six miles from the County borders with both Berkshire and Hampshire.

West Grafton, a straight line hamlet, is situated along a cul de sac which turns South from the A338 and is the smallest of the hamlets in the Parish.

East Grafton, the largest of the hamlets, is divided into a number of distinct areas each reflecting growth stages in its development. It is a small attractive village. The main Pewsey to Hungerford road, the A.338, runs through the village.

Marten lies south of the A.338, it is a hamlet which has grown from a traditional farm with farm cottages.

Wexcombe is another hamlet along a small road running from the fairmile which serves houses in the hamlet alone. Houses abut lanes and pathways in a meandering layout.

The **Wilton** hamlet is associated with the 1821 working Wilton Windmill which is an historic site and attracts visitors in the Summer season. Wilton comprises many old cottages which are served by a winding road skirting the village pond. The road to Great Bedwyn, which runs through part of the village, turns North from the A338.

□ Building proportions.

The community overwhelmingly wishes the village to retain the rural aspect, to keep open spaces between the individual hamlets and to avoid over development.

The retention of the general environment where small dwellings are built along the road sides, with expanses of land providing views at the rear, is considered to be important.



Buildings showing usual aspect and view – spaces in proportion to building size

Large houses, especially on small plots of land, built for speculative development are to be avoided.



These new large buildings too close to each other are not typical in the parish

Building which is sympathetic to existing structures, in size (particularly height), style and materials is essential. Most established houses in all the hamlets are built in a cottage style and many are over 200 years old. All respondents are emphatic that this individual nature should be preserved and that groups of houses of similar design should not be built in close proximity to one another.

Listed buildings and tree preservation orders are included in the Appendix for reference.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Environment.



Open countryside views in Marten

An overwhelming number of questionnaire respondents (58%) cited “loved the area” as their main reason for moving to the Parish and many added that they would move away if aspects were spoilt by development; particularly large buildings. This endorses the “area of outstanding natural beauty” categorization of the Parish. The Marlborough Community Area Plan states the object of maximizing the local opportunities provided by the Common Agricultural Policy reform and the Government Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (complimented by the “Wiltshire Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy 2004”) with

emphasis on additional funding for farm businesses to support diversification. According to the “Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy” document (pg17) the area has suffered from the intensification of agriculture and forestry, which has led to the conversion of pasture into arable farmland and the planting of coniferous plantations. The majority of the area falls within the “conserve” category, although the more intensively farmed land in the vicinity falls into the “strengthen and repair” categories.

Residents of Grafton Parish concur with the six objectives within “Planning and Control and the landscape” within the “Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy”; namely,

- To safeguard areas of national landscape importance from damaging change
- To safeguard areas of special landscape quality from damaging change
- To guide development to the countryside in a way which does not unacceptably damage local character and which can enhance the distinctive character of land and built environment across the whole countryside.
- To protect the landscape setting and special character of settlements
- To prevent urban sprawl and coalescence of settlements
- To protect important green space resources within and on the edge of settlements.

A “very high” priority has been assigned by Kennet to the replanting, planting and maintenance of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and this is welcomed by residents who are aware of soil erosion in recent years.



Wilton and wide water

The Parish is included within the Wiltshire and Swindon structural plan and the North Wiltshire Downs Council of Partners publication June 2003 as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Spring tilled arable fields provide breeding sites for stone curlew, skylark, yellow hammer, lapwing and corn bunting.

There are no commercial services available to residents and 99% depend on their own transport, public transport is not adequate or reliable enough to serve the community on a regular basis. Employment within the village is restricted to those employed in agricultural jobs and the high proportion of self employed residents. 25% of those currently living in the Parish are retired.

□ Community.

Respondents to the questionnaire are positive about where they live, they are concerned about the lack of communal play areas for children but otherwise wish the area to remain as quiet, clean and open as it is now.

There is a thriving Pre-school and primary school facility in East Grafton which is supported by families in the hamlets and St Nicholas Church which holds regular, well attended, services.

Area 12 of the Marlborough Community Area Plan comprises Grafton Parish. The undertaking, in this section, to preserve existing schools is supported wholeheartedly by the Parish residents.



2. HAMLETS IN THE PARISH

□ **West Grafton**



Typical roadside cottage in the parish

amenities save for the phone box on the A338. The farm, at the end of the track, breeds chicken, and traffic on the lanes is very sparse indeed. Squeezed between the larger hamlet of East Grafton and the village of Burbage, this hamlet remains quiet and undisturbed.

One turning off the A338 leads to West Grafton, the disused railway and station are to the east of the hamlet, and this lane passes directly alongside the few cottages which constitute this very small collection of residences. Surviving residents of nearby hamlets speak fondly of access to the UK from the railway station which connected directly with both Salisbury and Swindon in its heyday.



The Railway station, now a residence

□ **East Grafton**

A pleasant triangular green constitutes the nucleus of the village, and around it buildings are scattered in an informal manner. The Parish Church of St. Nicholas stands to the south of the green, adjacent to the village school, built in 1844 to the design of Benjamin Ferrey and is constructed in the style of Norman Revival, with a Romanesque campanile. The village green, primary school, village hall and Parish church form the central focal points both of this hamlet and of the Parish.



In the village the older buildings are generally two-storied, mainly brick, some are colourwashed, some half timbered, under roofs of thatch. More recent buildings are of stone or brick, some with render, under roofs of slate. The open green is an important factor in the character of the village, as is the wide spacing in between individual buildings.

East Grafton is classified in the Local Plan as a small village which, by reason of its character and/or lack of facilities, will be limited to infilling of small sites within the existing settlement framework. As East Grafton falls within the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particular consideration is given to any proposal for development to ensure that it does not conflict with the traditional character of the village. A high standard is required in the design of new buildings and extensions to existing buildings, so that the colour and texture of new materials harmonize with local traditional materials.

The village comprises large farm houses and their cottages which housed agricultural workers, cottages which originally formed part of the Savernake estate and a number of smaller individual developments provided originally as council dwellings following the second world war. Small groups of bungalows, cottage style houses and social housing have been constructed in the last thirty years. Within the last ten years a number of large homes have been constructed with office space, these form inward facing closes, in contrast with the outward facing original housing stock, and integration into the village community is more difficult.

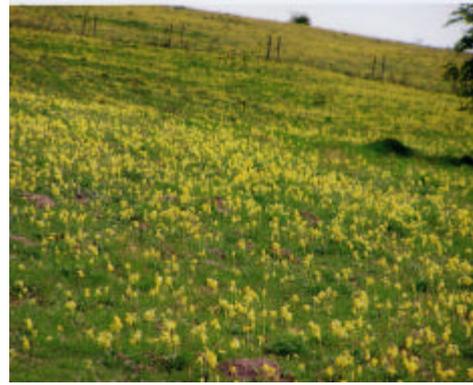


The Severalls in East Grafton

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Marten

The hamlet of Marten occupies an exceedingly pleasant and picturesque position in a corner of the Pewsey Vale formed by the curve of the downs which are the Vale's eastern boundary. It lies in a semicircle between the two heights known once as "the old Windmill Hill and Bottle Hill". This of course refers to Wexcombe Down and Botley Down.



Cowslips above Marten

The name Botley is thought to have derived from the word battle, many of which were fought in the area in the 9th century. Botley Down shelters Marten on the north east: from it's summit can be seen views of the Vale stretching far into the distance.

A Roman road passes through fields and continues along the road to Andover. In the 11th century Marten was in the Parish of Great Bedwyn in the Kinwardstone Hundred.

In 1844 Marten was joined to East Grafton Parish at the time of the building of the Church there. It is known that a medieval village existed here. In 1377 the Poll Tax at 4d per head was levied on 37 people in the hamlet. In the 1841 census 153 people lived in the village, now about 35.

In the 1930's there were at least 20 houses but, as with the present trend, often two cottages were made into one so that at present there are 14 houses. These being 4 council houses built in 1955, 3 thatched cottages, 2 bungalows, 4 houses and the Manor. Of the 4 houses 3 replace previous old houses and the remaining one has been extended. One bungalow was built for a local farmer.

Electricity came in the 1950's and water supplied by Thames Water in the 1970's. Sewage is still by septic tank at each residence.



Typical thatched cottage in spacious grounds

There is a restaurant called the Windmill. In 1724 there was a public house built on that site beside what was a main road. This was burnt down in the early 20th century and rebuilt as a brick house. From 1724 it was called the Nags Head; the name was changed in 2001 to the Topsy Miller and then to the Windmill.

A very narrow, winding, secondary road with high banks runs through the hamlet joining the A338 at the restaurant. With no footpaths and modern through traffic walking is hazardous.

The land is farmed, mostly:- in the valley for arable farming, the downs for grazing and a small holding for grazing. Redundant farm buildings in the centre are used in part for small local industry employing people from outside the hamlet and is of no use to local employment. The residents who work do so outside the Parish and other inhabitants are retired.



GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Wexcombe

The name of this hamlet derives from possibly two derivations (Old English);

- West-cumb “westerly valley”. The village lies in a small dry valley to the West of Tidcombe.
- “Wax valley” denoting a farm whose owner kept bees employing a people from as far as Burbage.

Wexcombe is, in many respects a “forgotten village”, it has its own water supply installed a hundred years ago, there is no mains sewerage and no amenities except a milk delivery three times a week. This is a very peaceful and pretty little village.



This hamlet consists of sixteen cottages and a few larger residences; the Manor, Wexcombe House, Barn Tiles, Chapel Cottage (last used as a chapel in 1965) and Rookery Nook. The total population of Wexcombe is currently 52.

There is one remaining village pump, unused, and a “round house” on the Fairmile with a plaque “Wexcombe water works”. The little church in the upper farm yard has fallen into disrepair.

Arthur Hosier, who was called “The wizard of Wexcombe” by A. G. Street, was the inventor of the portable milking parlour at a time when the hamlet became an industrial centre with high employment. The Fairmile (built by the American army for tank transporters) passes by the hamlet which is served by small lanes which

serve the hamlet alone, there is no passing traffic to disturb the quiet of village life with views of the downs and Wilton windmill.

□ Wilton

Wilton is a very attractive hamlet of 70 houses nestling in a valley at the eastern end of the Pewsey Vale. The Vale runs for approximately 15 miles from Devizes to the west and to Wilton in the east and is one of the finest areas of outstanding natural beauty in Wiltshire. The Vale is predominately flat with greensand soil at around 400ft above sea level, and it is surrounded on both sides by chalkland ridges rising to 650-900ft on either side.

Wilton’s pretty pond is fed by natural springs and is situated at the join between the chalk and the greensand. It is the catchment for all the rainfall from the eastern end of the Pewsey Vale and the surrounding hills, and it has been responsible for the development of the habitation in this area for many centuries. The waters from the pond flow through village gardens into the eight-acre lake and reservoir called Wilton Water (or Wide Waters). Wilton Water in turn supplies water to the Kennet and Avon canal running alongside it. In the early 1800s the canal was built to provide a waterway link between Bristol and London, and in 1815 Beam Engines were built, to a design by James Watt, to pump water from Wilton Water into the canal. The Beam engines continue to pump water today.



Wilton pond



Narrow lanes through Wilton

The wildlife in the area around Wilton is extensive with many young trees being planted over the past twenty years to replace the numerous elms that were killed by Dutch Elm disease. The locality has many interesting and varied wild flower and birds, including different ducks and geese, plus kingfishers and other aquatic birds on Wilton Water.

In 1821 the well-known local landmark of Wilton Windmill was built on a hill above the village; it was to replace the watermills made redundant by the loss of their water source to the recently built canal. Flour is still milled today .

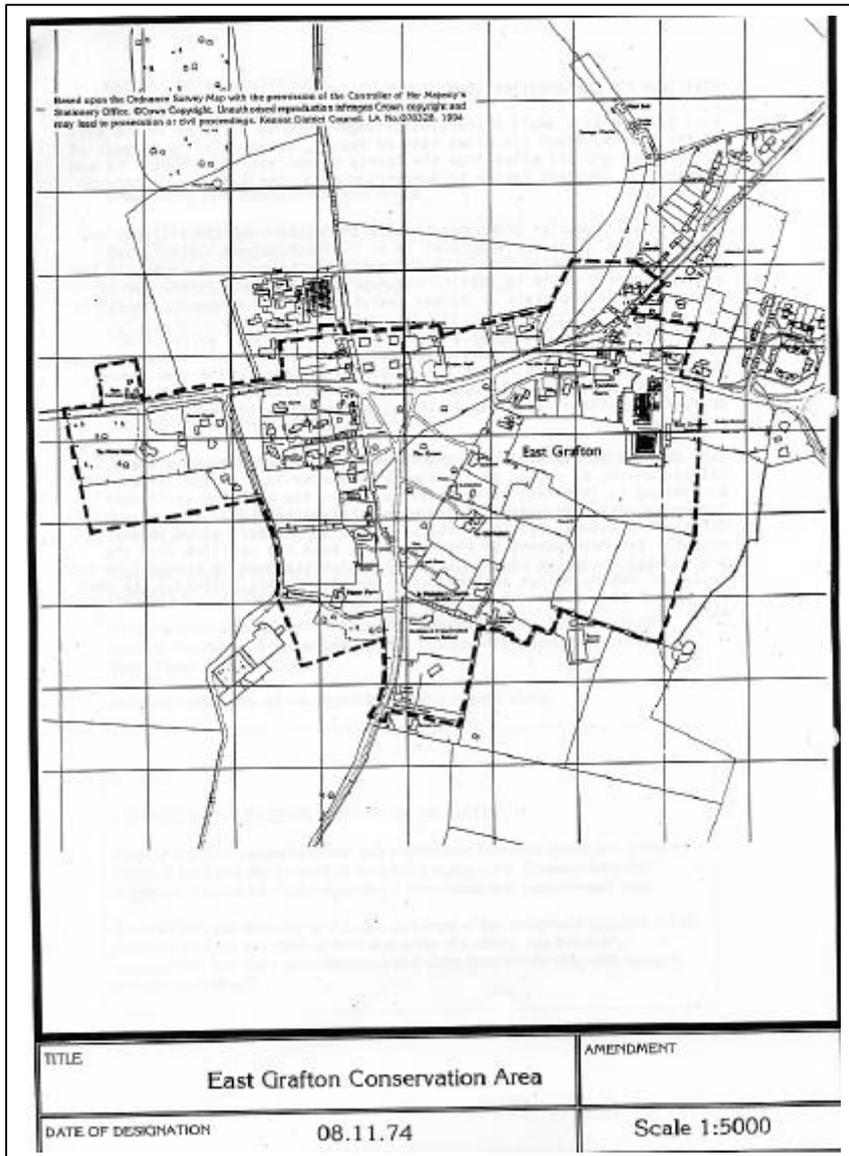
3. LANDSCAPE and CONSERVATION

□ **Land and conservation**

The statutory definition of a Conservation area is an area of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

□ **East Grafton Conservation area**

Originally designated in 1974, this map details the Conservation area boundary.



The East Grafton Conservation area statement notes the following:-

“Issues to receive special attention”

The historic relationship to Savernake Forest, and the surrounding agricultural hinterland.

The importance of verges, embankments, hedges and mature trees, and the minimal impact of roadside pavements.

The importance, and status of, the large village green, particularly recording the presence of very large lime trees.

Note the dominance of vernacular architecture and identification of traditional building materials, eg timber framing, flint, orange bricks, weatherboarding, and straw thatch.

Note the contribution of the church and school to local vitality.

“Enhancement possibilities to be evaluated”

Parts of the green are well-mown and maintained, whereas others are unkempt.

Some of the trees are in need of remedial surgery work. Consider whether suggestions should be made regarding a comprehensive management plan.

Some of the new development on the periphery of the settlement appears out of harmony with the established form and scale of building.

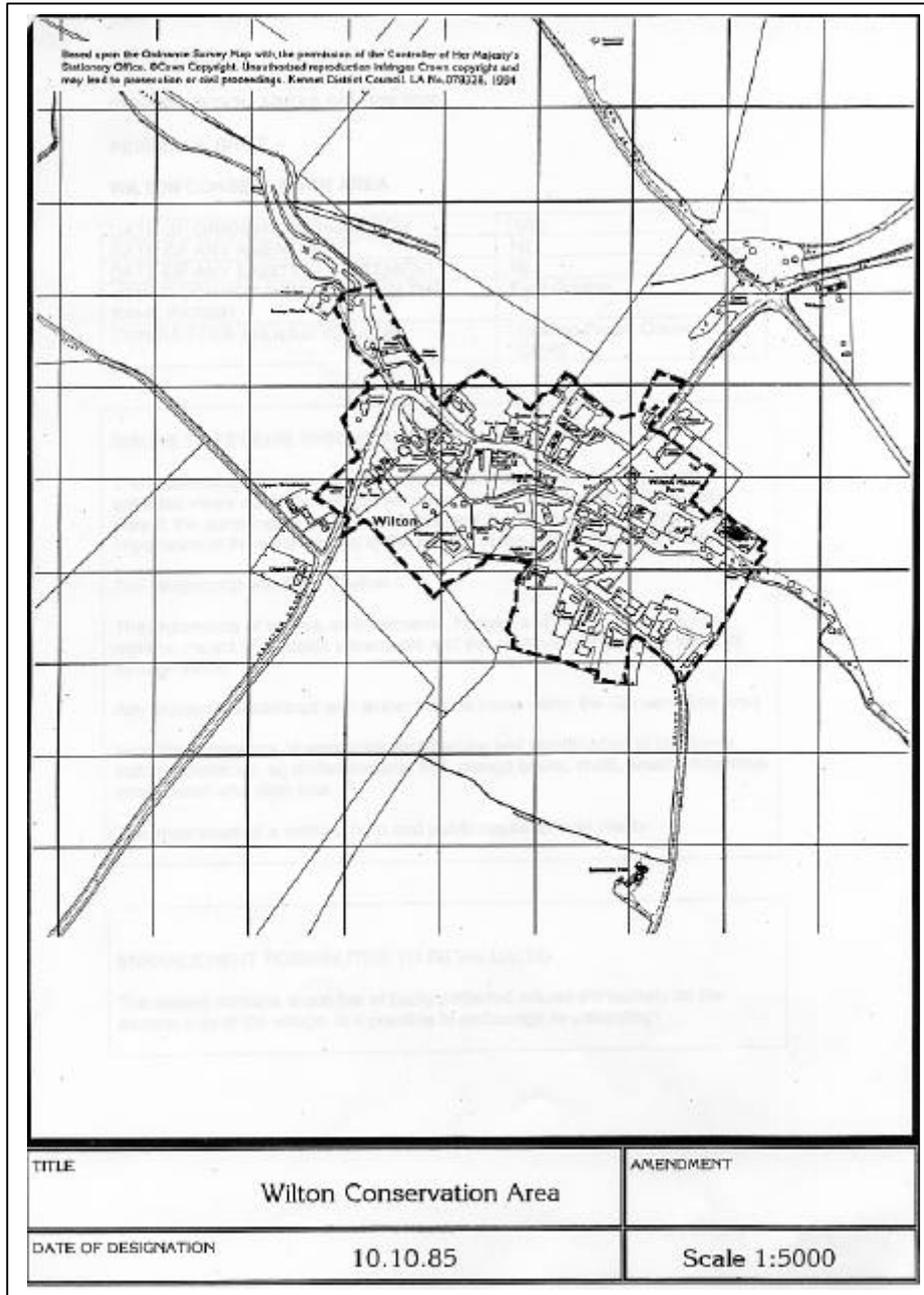
Are there any opportunities to soften open frontages and close boarded fencing with hedging and other planting?

Respondents to the questionnaire also expressed concern regarding the state of the Village green and the need for the Parish Council to provide a plan to monitor the upkeep and condition of the land and the paths which cross it.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Wilton Conservation area

Originally designated in 1985, this map details the Conservation area boundary.



The Wilton Conservation area statement notes the following:-

“Issues to receive special attention”
The relationship of settlement to the stream and steep sided valley which encloses views out of the village. Also, the historic relationship to Savernake Forest, the surrounding agricultural hinterland, and in more recent times the importance of the water supply to the summit of the Kennet and Avon canal.

The importance of verges, embankments, hedges and mature trees, and the minimal impact of roadside pavements and the absence of significant amounts of through traffic.

Any problems associated with timber framed barns within the conservation area. Note the dominance of vernacular architecture and identification of traditional building materials, eg timber framing, flint, orange bricks, chalk, weatherboarding, straw thatch and plain tiles.

The importance of a working farm and public house to local vitality.

“Enhancement possibilities to be valued”

The stream contains a number of badly pollarded willows particularly on the eastern edge of the village. Regular pollarding should be encouraged.

Extract from “Kennet District Council Planning Services explanatory leaflet”

The “Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act” states that every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

To one degree or another all Conservation Areas require the co-operation of landowners, occupiers, statutory undertakers, etc to maintain their character.

Statements of conservation status are adopted by the Council's Planning & Development Committee as guidance for planning applications and issues.

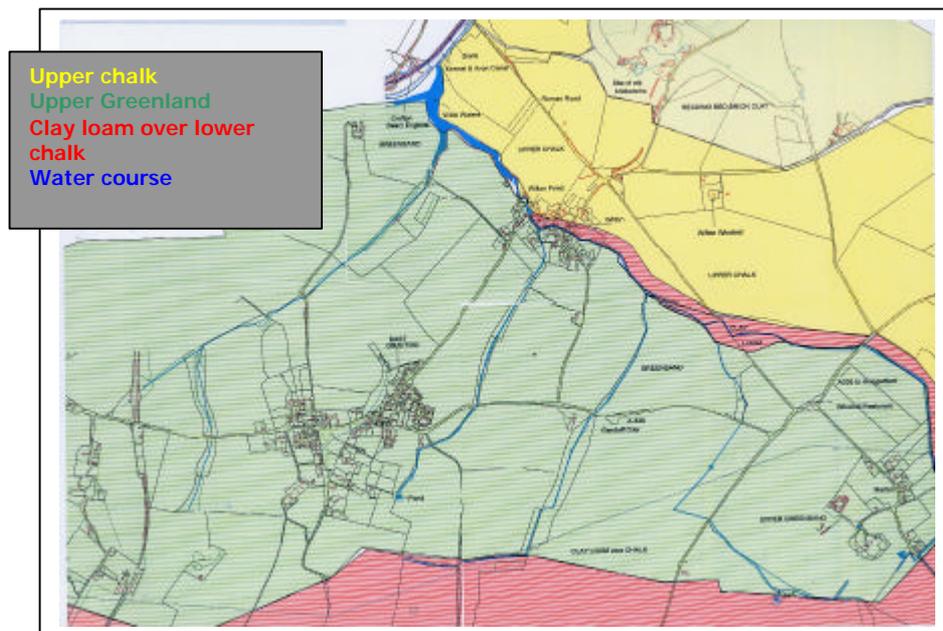
GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Land geology and use

The Parish is situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at the eastern end of the Pewsey Vale which finishes in the villages of Wilton and Marten.

The Pewsey Vale soil is greensand and its surrounding hills are chalk land. Greensand soils are basically acidic and are underlain by an impervious sandstone rock. These soils require land drains to take the water off the fields so that they can be used for agriculture and this was first done around 1840 by placing ash tree branches in trenches dug across the fields. Horseshoe shaped land drains are evidence of 1880 agriculture in the area.

Chalkland soils are alkaline and free draining; they have the ability to act as a sponge holding very large quantities of water which fill the fissures of underground rivers.



Chalkland water cannot drain through the greensand rock and therefore comes up as springs in Wilton Pond and Wide Waters.

Brick clay was found in 1800s at Dodsdown and was made into rust brown bricks commonly seen in houses built by the Aylesbury family in this area. The majority of this acid soil is covered by the Brail woods to the north of Wilton although some areas were cleared for production during the second world war.

Agriculture in the Parish was dominated by the dairy cow until the early 1960s. Encouragement from Government to make fields bigger and become more efficient in the 1960s has evolved more recently into encouragement to become stewards of the land, rather than producers of food.

The face of agriculture in the Parish is changing, and more and more land is being taken out of agriculture and put into environmental schemes, or just being left to nature's own devices. The long term effect of this could be very damaging to the natural beauty of the area.

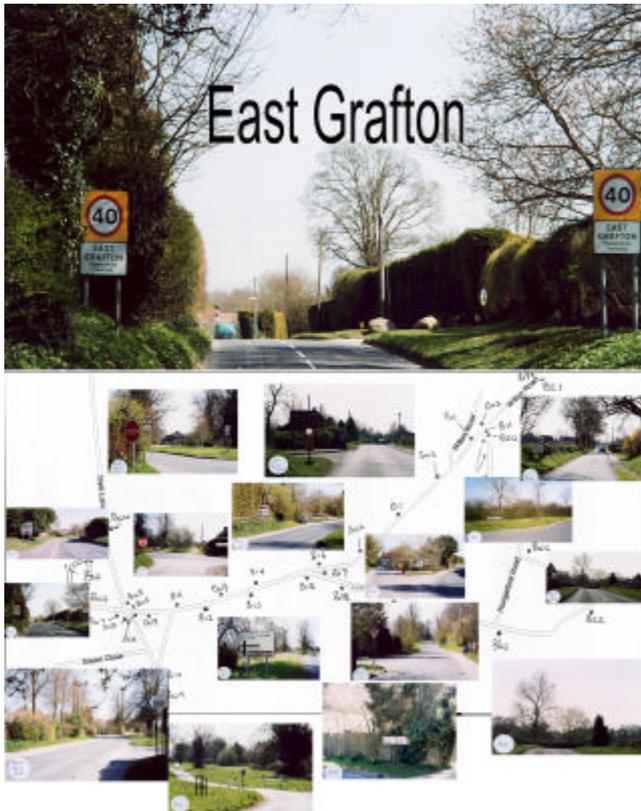
Over the past 20 years many hedges and copses have been planted and more recently grass margins have been introduced around the edges of arable fields. They are providing natural nesting areas and plenty of food for wild life. The indigenous trees of the area are Oak and Ash with hedgerows full of many species of thorn elder and cherry. The millennium survey carried out by residents of Wilton gives the complete list of all birds, animals, flowers, trees, shrubs and insects seen on a walk around the village in June 1999.

Wide Waters is a natural wild life sanctuary for about 15 different species of water birds as well as geese, herons and kingfishers. Otters and Barn owls have also been encouraged to the area when a holt and an owl box were constructed in and near the water. The small coppice woodland and wild flower mix planted in the field adjacent to Wide Water will encourage a diverse habitat and large numbers of birds and other species to the area. This area is used regularly by visitors walking between the Crofton Pumping Station and the Windmill.

4. ROAD SYSTEM AND TRANSPORT

□ Within the Parish

A338 is the only major road in the Parish, it carries heavy traffic from Hungerford to Burbage and is used as a main route between connecting Salisbury/Tidworth and surrounding areas with the M4 at Hungerford.



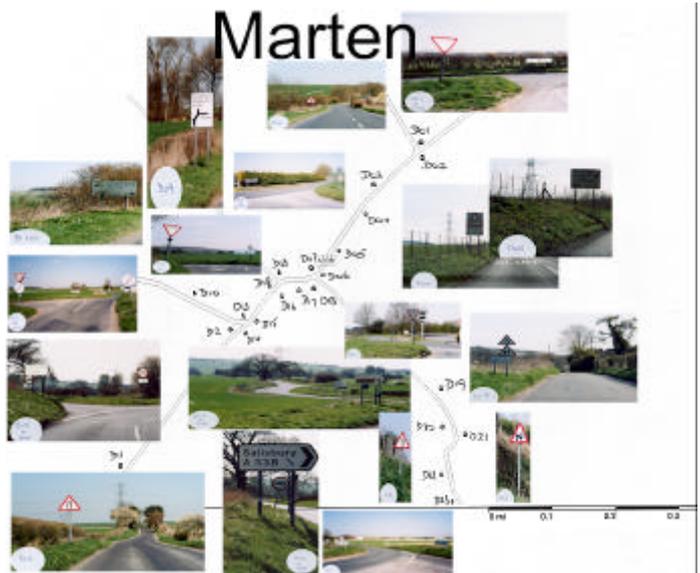
West Grafton, Wexcombe, Wilton and Marten experience a low volume of traffic. These hamlets are not on a direct trunk route.

There are few continuous footpaths within the Parish, most involve crossing major and minor roads frequently. Walking between hamlets can only be achieved along the roadside. Roads are rarely wide enough for pushchairs, dogs or children as well as normal traffic.

Each hamlet has speed restrictions, 30mph in all except East Grafton where the limit is 40mph. Respondents to the questionnaire overwhelmingly supported a campaign for lower speed limits, 30mph in Grafton and even lower in Wilton.

The village school is situated on the opposite side of the A338 from the majority of house and from the only footpath along this road. The requirement for a lower speed limit adjacent to the pavement to the school is a recurring subject for lobbying.

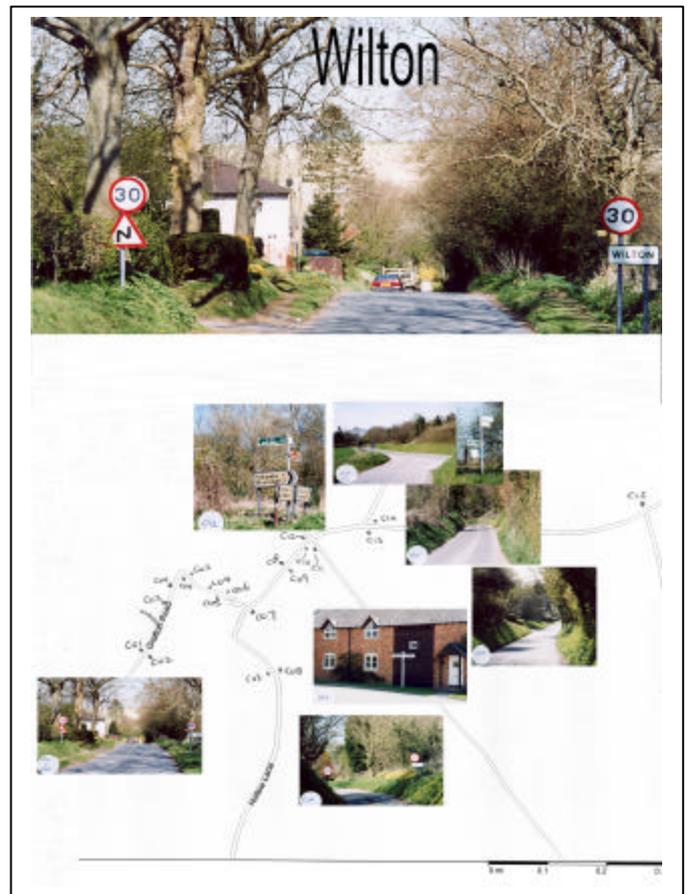
Most residents are able to park their vehicles off the highway except in Wilton where the narrow and winding road, together with the volume of cars parked at the edge are a cause for concern. Buses regularly pass through Wilton in a situation where the width available is barely adequate.



GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Residents are conscious of the problems encountered by "on road" parking and the dangers of dense development, especially in Grafton where the A338 is a through route for heavy traffic. The narrow lanes in Wilton are restricted currently by parked cars along a route regularly used by buses. Consequential increases in traffic must be considered in the context of development within the Village; most households currently use more than one individual car.



□ Surrounding road network

Traffic has been restricted along the Fairmile (adjacent to Wexcombe hamlet) following heavy duty use. This has increased the volume on the A338 through East Grafton.

The standard of road gritting on the road leading from East Grafton to Great Bedwyn causes considerable concern for early morning traffic to the station and school. Visibility of road signs is good.

□ Street furniture and signs

Illustrations of existing street furniture and signs are shown.

It can be seen that the general area surround each hamlet gives an impression of open space and well kept verges. These pictures were taken, unannounced, during Spring 2003.

5. BUILDINGS AND SPACES WITHIN HAMLETS



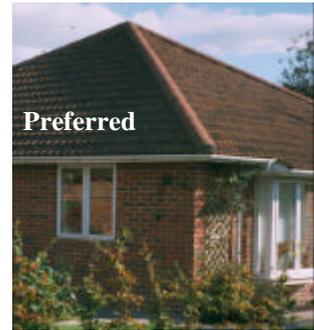
Preferred

Traditional thatch in 1/3 - 1/4 acre grounds.



Preferred

Traditional manor farm house in 1/2 to 1+ acre grounds



Preferred

Bungalow 1980 in 1/3 to 1/2 acre grounds



Preferred

Built in 1980s, low roofed cottages in 1/3 acre plots

Affordable housing
Housing Association rented stock as a proportion of total housing stock by Parish – published by Housing Services, Kennet District Council 2002

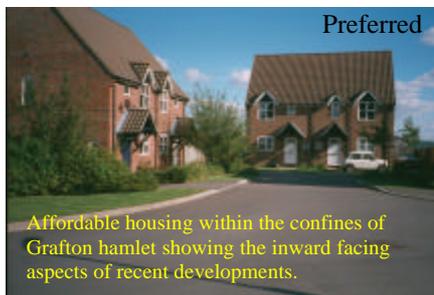


Out of proportion to houses in the Parish and on unusually small plots

Built in 1990s, 2/3 story houses, 1/4 acre plots



House and ground of complimentary size



Preferred

Affordable housing within the confines of Grafton hamlet showing the inward facing aspects of recent developments.

Grafton Parish total housing stock = 271 properties, of which 39 are Housing Association rented. (14.4% of the total). In 2002 there was a 7.7% turnover of the HA stock (below the Wiltshire average)



Grafton Drier site prior to development



Granary close, circular development

There are a large number of pictures throughout this publication which illustrate the nature and size of buildings in the Parish. The chapter on recommendations includes the views of the Parish with regard to buildings and spaces within hamlets. The community becomes more separated with each additional group of houses. Numbers of families arrive together and are less able to easily assimilate into the established population. Hence each new development tends to result in another separate entity within each hamlet.

6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES AND EMPLOYMENT

□ **Grafton Church of England controlled Primary School**

Grafton Primary school was founded in 1845 as a Church of England Foundation School. It is an outstanding small school which enjoys a great deal of support from parents and the community.

It is situated on the edge of East Grafton village green next to St. Nicholas church. The buildings are small, but well maintained, and there are extensive playing fields. A small carpark was recently constructed to avoid congestion along the narrow village road. A small extension to the school has been constructed recently to accommodate pre-school children in an effort to attract more pupils for the future.

The school has been under review for closure three times in the last 13 years, the last in 1999. This has had an unsettling effect of staff, governors and parents but, as with all small rural school the numbers fluctuate with the changes within our community.

A significant number of families walk to school with their children, others use private transport, there is no suitable public transport within the Parish to serve the school.

Links between school and church are strong, the school encourages community involvement with fundraising and social events.

Educational standards at the school are high and the school has had two very successful OFSTED inspections in 1997 and 2002. "The school provides a very good education for all pupils and has a positive caring ethos". Provision for children with special needs benefits from the small classes and the individual attention.

The school has two well equipped classrooms, KS1 and KS2. There are two permanent, plus one part-time, teachers together with support and administrative staff. The 10 governors represent various organisations within the community.

The school is funded, primarily, by the LEA. Total on roll at the end of 2002 was 27 children most of whom reside within the Parish boundary.

Children attending Grafton primary school normally move on to Pewsey Comprehensive secondary school or Marlborough St. John's community college at the age of 11 years. School transport is available for both secondary schools from all hamlets within the Parish.

Area 12 of the Marlborough Community Area Plan comprises Grafton Parish. The undertaking, in this section, to preserve existing schools is supported wholeheartedly by the Parish residents.



GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ St Nicholas Church

This is a Victorian Romanesque church situated at the southerly end of East Grafton village green. Congregation members from any of the hamlets are dependent upon private transport if they wish to attend services.

The team structure for Grafton Parish church starts with the Vicar who resides in Great Bedwyn and shares his time with a number of other Parishes. The Vicar is a member of the Savernake Team and reports to the Team Rector. This team, in turn reports to the Pewsey Deanery and thereafter to the Salisbury Diocese.



There is a lively Parochial Church Council which ensures that the Church is well maintained, there is a quinquennial inspection by a qualified architect to ensure that the fabric remains solid. Gift Aid schemes and fund-raising events provide the majority of income and contribute to the community involvement with the church.

There is a large and well cared-for church yard, open for burials to anyone who lived in the Parish, with 40 spaces currently available. Parking is a problem for well attended services, where the congregation averages 100, and for weddings and funerals. The lanes are narrow and the verges

around are steep and dangerous in bad weather.

- Cremations take place in Swindon and Salisbury crematoriums (25 miles each)
- Funeral directors operate from Pewsey, Marlborough and Hungerford.
- Stone masons operate from Pewsey, Hungerford, Marlborough and Great Bedwyn.

□ Village Hall

The Coronation Hall is situated beside the village green to the South of the A338. The Hall serves the community as a functional meeting place for societies, village organizations and community events. The Hall is available for hire to residents and non-residents.



Disabled access is provided and the hall has a functioning kitchen and both ladies and gents toilets. Tables, chairs, cutlery and crockery are available for rental by organizations within the Parish.

A Committee of Trustees manage the Hall and it is maintained by a Caretaker who is responsible for bookings. The Hall is a registered Charity number 305519. Capacity maximums are 100 standing and 80 seated.

The Hall is non profit making and its use, in conjunction with Church weddings, Christenings and funerals, is offered free to residents of the Parish.

The land and building were handed to the village by local benefactors in 1935 for the use of the Parish. The hall has been maintained in good order since that date.

Regular meetings/events are held in the hall and the facilities provide an excellent anchor for outside events which are held from time to time on the village green.



Wexcombe pump

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ The windmill at Wilton



The Windmill was built in 1821 to give local farmers a means to grind their corn once the local water mills were no longer in use. The water was taken and pumped into the canal, so the South West of England's only surviving working windmill was built on the hill above Wilton. It had an immediate impact on the local area when it was built as it still does today. Today people who live in the local Parishes in the area look after the Windmill, which is owned by the County Council, and guide visitors around it on Sundays during the summer. The responses from the questionnaire show that the Friends of the Windmill Society is the organization which attracts support from the largest number of people in the Parish. The circular walk between the Windmill and Crofton via the

roman road and Wide Waters gives so much pleasure to local residents of the Parish as well as to our many welcome visitors.

□ The Swan Inn, Wilton

The Swan Inn is situated in the middle of Wilton village, it is a traditional public house which serves excellent lunches, snacks and dinners. There is a garden which provides an ideal social atmosphere for weekend family relaxation. The Swan is within walking distance (approximately 15 minutes) for the fit residents of East Grafton. Otherwise private transport is necessary.



□ The Windmill Restaurant



The Windmill Restaurant provides meals for visitors with transport. This facility is not within walking distance and attracts visitors principally from outside the Parish.

□ Shopping facilities

- Burbage – 2 miles West has a general store, a petrol station with a basic range of groceries and newspapers, a vehicle repair garage, a post office which also offers greeting cards and local produce, an electrical retailer and two builders merchants. There are two public houses in Burbage.
- Great Bedwyn – 2 miles North has a general store, post office with newspapers, pet food and other commodities, a bakery, a repair garage and two public houses.
- Pewsey (5 miles) , Hungerford (9 miles) and Marlborough (9 miles) provide a wider range of retail outlets.
- Major shopping centers (19 miles) include Swindon, Newbury and Salisbury.
- Delivery facilities and vans sales visits are available from major supermarkets although the Parish is outside of the “free delivery” area for the majority of these. Ice cream and fish and chip vans tour the hamlets once a week. A greengrocer and bakers van regularly visit some of the hamlets. A fish van occasionally calls. Newspapers can be delivered from either Burbage or Andover. Milk may be delivered on alternate days. Window cleaners and chimney sweeps operate on a regular basis.
- A mobile library calls once a week. Bus services are considered by respondents to the questionnaire to be unreliable and unsuitable for travel to and from work, being principally geared to the school timetables.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

□ Gas and electricity

There is no mains gas supply within the area and no immediate plans to make such provision. 30% of respondents to the Parish questionnaire expressed a need for piped gas. The area is very close to the national electricity grid and there are substations within the locality. There would appear to be no difficulty in supplies to the area.



Marten, looking to East Grafton

□ Water and sewage

Water supplies to the area have always been considered adequate, although there are major concerns over abstraction from watercourses in the area. This abstraction has markedly reduced the water flow from the springs in Wilton pond and Wide Water and is causing concern for the environmental and safety aspects of this ANOB within the Parish. (This is a strange situation, as nationally we are all aware of the limitations of the water supply system, but locally the suppliers do not seem unduly concerned about any additional needs). Similarly sewage disposal is not known to be a problem.

□ Refuse disposal

- Collection – weekly by Kennet District Council. Special collection arrangements can be organised with Kennett for large items, these are subject to arranged collection times and may incur additional costs.
- Skips are arranged, and funded, by the Parish Council on rotation throughout the hamlets. These are full within hours of arrival and frequently overflow.
- Community waste disposal sites are available: Small, in car parks – Burbage village hall (2 miles), Co-op Pewsey (7 miles) and Marlborough carpark (12 miles)
Large, drive-in – Everleigh recycling centre (14 miles), Swindon recycling centre (25 miles)

The necessary services seem to be in place and scope for expansion is present, albeit any major development in the area would require particular investigation.

Respondents to the questionnaire overwhelmingly supported separated refuse collection and the provision of a recycling centre within the Parish.

□ Employment opportunities

There would appear to be limited employment opportunities within the Parish. There are no obvious industrial, commercial or retail operations, with the exception of the Public Houses in Wilton (The Swan) and Marten (The Windmill). The school in East Grafton may have occasional educational vacancies. It is to be expected that employment opportunities in the Parish would therefore be limited to farming and domestic work. It may be useful to note that, from the analysis of April 4th 2003 there were no jobs advertised within the Parish, just two in Pewsey, 4 in Hungerford and 9 in Marlborough. Thus the bulk of employment would involve significant travel for anyone living in the Parish.

It could be expected that occasional retail vacancies may occur in the nearby villages of Burbage, Bedwyn and Pewsey and there is a small amount of light industry, which could be a useful source on occasions.

The majority of employment would be on offer in the towns within relatively easy commuting distance, such as Hungerford, Newbury, Marlborough and Swindon. Both Hungerford and Marlborough feature a majority of retail establishments, with a good spread of other small businesses. However Newbury and Swindon would be the primary areas for a good cross-section of employment.

An analysis of job adverts in local newspapers was conducted in April 2003 and there were no jobs in the Parish, 2 in Pewsey, 4 in Hungerford and 9 in Marlborough. Thus the bulk of employment would involve significant travel for anyone living in the Parish.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE PARISH

The Parish is keen to encourage “life” to the hamlets and, with a high percentage of people moving to the location expressing the “beauty of the area” as their main motivation for living here, preservation of the “village feel” is paramount. To this end the open aspects must be preserved, the density of houses built in the future should be less than of recent times to compliment the older stock and smaller properties should be encouraged. This last would better accommodate the younger influx of residents with the result that the demographic balance of the Parish may be addressed; currently over half of residents are either retired or nearing retirement age. A balance of youth and the elderly is essential to support local amenities and to provide vibrancy in the Parish.

Residents are mindful of the conflict between maximizing returns on developments and providing properties which the community believes are essential to preserve all that they regard as precious; nevertheless development within the Parish should be more sympathetic to encouraging a wide variety of residents in situations where integration into the community is better encouraged.

This is a conservation area and residents are keen to conserve the open feel of the Parish, minimizing “in fills” where open aspects are lost. New properties should be built where they blend in with existing houses rather than as enclosed groups of inward facing houses.

- The “Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy” states that sensitively designed residential developments must be located within and bordering existing settlements. It is essential that, in particular, the spring-line villages do not coalesce and therefore strong landscape buffers, using indigenous woodland species in combination open space and shrub and hedge planting, will be required where development on the periphery of a settlement is deemed acceptable. This will ensure that the integrity of the individual settlements is retained, at the same time as integrating new development into the landscape and softening the hard edges of the built environment

Polls of residents following the construction of recent developments within the Parish indicate disaffection with the density and size of properties built within the past 4-5 years. Respondents to the questionnaire overwhelmingly express firm views that new properties have dwarfed original housing stock and the dense layouts, in cul-de-sac closes, are at variance with the “cottage” feel of the older houses.

Parking is an issue in all hamlets because of the narrow roads (lanes), mainly without pavements, which serve them. The recent construction of “work from home” residencies results in even larger properties, more traffic and isolated groups of houses which do not encourage village integration. Indeed incoming families to these developments take longer to become involved in aspects of Parish life.

Where development does take place it should be of good quality and well planned. This means minimizing land take, fully utilizing existing buildings and previously developed land where possible; locating new building as far as possible where it will reduce rather than increase the need for transport; and respecting local character and environment. (This objective agrees with the MAFF policy of “safeguarding the open countryside against inappropriate development, protecting our best landscapes and conserving our wildlife”).

□ Village Design Statement Review policy

This design statement has been produced digitally and the Grafton Parish Council retains the master copy. It is envisaged that this “master village design statement” should be reviewed by Parish Councillors as often as the Council should deem necessary. Applications to Kennet for adoption of updated statements will be made as required.

Updates and opportunities for comment from residents will be published on the Parish web site.

This logo was constructed by the Committee for this statement only ►►



8. CONSULTATION PROCESS

Grafton Parish Council voted unanimously to invite residents of the parish to join a small working party to be charged with the task of consulting, reporting and discussing a Village Design for the parish at the meeting held on 7th January 2003. A grant of £475 was received from Kennet, following application for the production of this document.



On 27th March 2003 the first meeting was held in the Coronation Hall following extensive poster advertising in all hamlets. 9 volunteers attended this meeting where officers were elected and tasks allocated to those willing to contribute. A further meeting was held on 15th May 2003 and at this gathering the work which had to be undertaken was discussed, small groups were assembled to work on the questionnaire and data gathering for the Design statement. Thereafter informal meetings were held and the questionnaire was completed and presented to the Parish Council for approval – this was obtained at the Parish Council meeting on 1st July 2003. Printing was organized and Parish Councillors, together with volunteers on the Committee, were given sections of the parish to distribute and collect questionnaires. At this time the small Committee was disbanded and the Parish Council took over the final collating of views and compilation of the Design Statement itself.

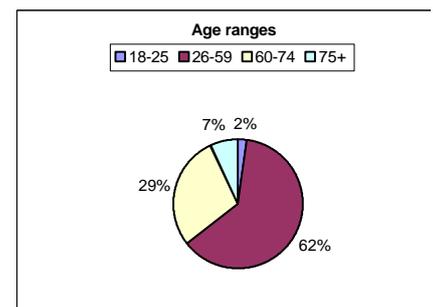
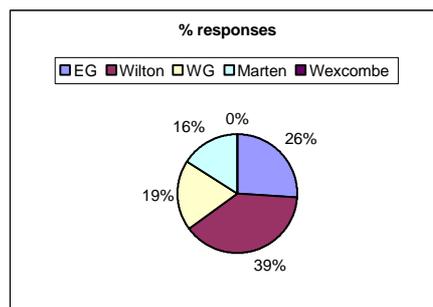
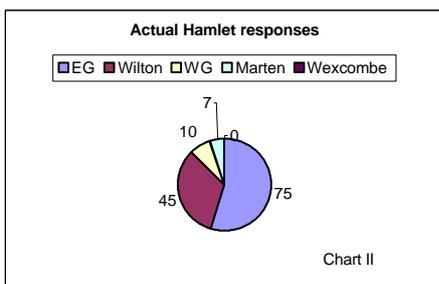
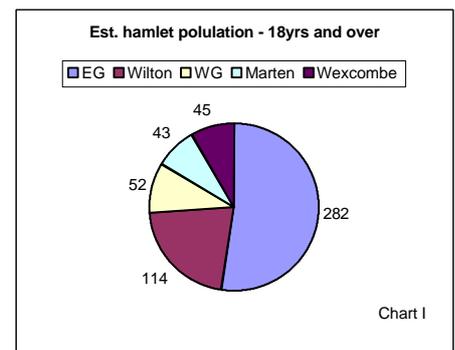
On September 7th a Parish Council meeting was held with an open session to discuss the Village Design Statement. Contributions were incorporated in the this final document.

□ The questionnaire.

A six page, A5 questionnaire was delivered to all residents of the Parish, as identified by the number of adults on the electoral roll for each address (see chart I).

A number of requests from respondents to improve both Parish Council involvement and information were addressed.

139 (26% of the population) Returned questionnaires which were numbered, to facilitate verification of data. No other identification has been used (anonymity is preserved). Chart II



Those who returned questionnaires responded positively to the questions asked and some interesting observations were made; similar observations were made by respondents from the various hamlets. Some information was specific to a particular hamlet and was addressed where appropriate.

Wherever possible, the Parish Council has addressed the concerns of respondents and feed back has been positive. It is the opinion of all those who have examined this statement that the contents correctly reflect the views expressed in the questionnaires, those expressed during informal conversations with interested parties and issues raised by the Parish Council planning Sub Committee whose detailed knowledge is recognised in this context.

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Kennet Local Plan 2004

Policy HC24

VILLAGES WITH LIMITED FACILITIES

Within the villages in the countryside listed in Table H.5, which do not have defined Limits of Development, new housing development will be restricted to infilling, the replacement of existing dwellings or the re-use of existing buildings or the redevelopment of existing buildings provided that the development:

- a) is within the existing built up area of the village;
- b) does not consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development; and
- c) the development is in harmony with the village in terms of its scale and character.

All new housing proposals should conform with other policies of the Plan, including those that seek to protect local services (ED28), amenity (PD1) and employment or tourism uses (ED11, ED12) and promote affordable housing (HC32).

Policy HC26

HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Outside of the existing built up area of the villages listed in Table H.5, new residential development will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- a) To provide accommodation for the essential needs of agriculture or forestry or other employment essential to the countryside as established in Policy HC27;
- b) To provide holiday accommodation from the conversion of an existing building; *or*
- c) Where the conversion of a listed building to residential use is the only economic means of retaining the historic structure.

Provided that the development does not affect the character of the local landscape.

Policy NR6

SUSTAINABILITY AND PROTECTION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

In the interests of promoting sustainable development and the protection of the countryside, development will be restricted to locations within the Limits of Development defined for the towns and villages as identified on the Proposals and Inset Maps unless

- a) the development is demonstrated to be of benefit either to the rural economy in the locality or to the social well-being of the rural community in the locality. (Any such development must comply with other relevant Policies including PD1 and NR7); or
- b) the development is permitted by other Policies of the Local Plan.

Policy NR7

PROTECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

Where development is acceptable in principle, through other policies of the Plan, outside the Limits of Development, the Council will seek to protect and enhance the character and quality of the environment and will not permit development which is likely to have a significant adverse effect upon the landscape. In particular, development proposals will be considered against their potential effects upon:-

- a) landscape character, quality and distinctive features; and
- b) views and visual amenity.

Policy NR8

AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

When considering applications for development within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as indicated on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps, particular regard will be given to the national recognition of the landscape quality of the area. Priority will be given to the conservation of the character and scenic quality of the landscape, generally restricting development to that essential to the rural economy or social well-being of the rural area or desirable for the enjoyment of its amenities, subject to the provisions of Policy NR7. Other proposals will not be permitted unless proven to be in the national interest and incapable of being accommodated outside the AONB, or in accordance with other policies of this Plan.

Extract from PPG12

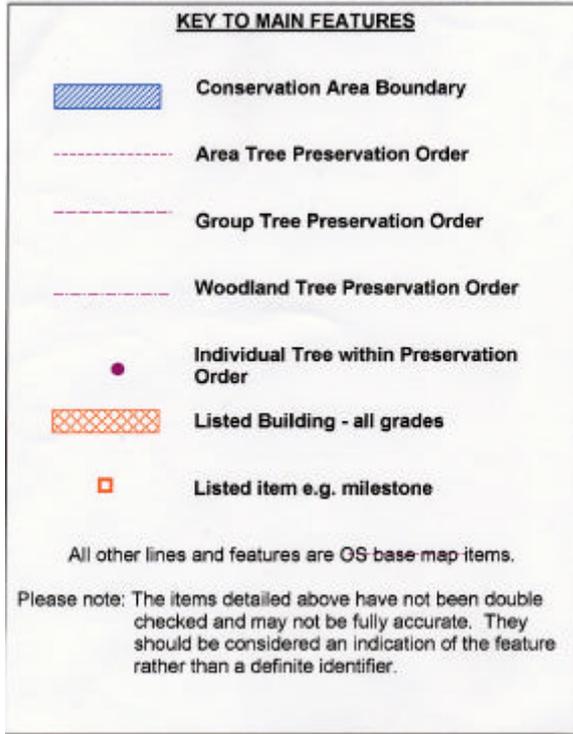
PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 12: DEVELOPMENT PLANS (SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE)

3.16 While only the policies in the development plan can have the status that Section 54A of the 1990 Act provides in deciding planning applications, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight in making decisions on matters that come before him to SPG which derives out of and is consistent with the development plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner. SPG should be prepared in consultation with the general public, businesses, and other interested parties and their views should be taken into account before it is finalized. It should then be the subject of a council resolution to adopt it as supplementary guidance. On adoption, a statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the local authorities response to those representations should be made available with each copy of the SPG (either in an annex or in a separate document).

GRAFTON PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Preservation order maps with key showing main features

There are 54 listed buildings (Ref 033/001-033/055) and 24 tree preservation orders (Ref TPO15, 97, 346, 367) active within the Parish. Preserving what exists at present and ensuring that any development is “in keeping” with precious aspects of the parish was stated as very important by residents of the parish. It is understood that trees covered by tree preservation orders and trees which are mature specimens within the conservation area are subject to inspection before they are pruned or felled.



Grafton preservation map



Wilton preservation map

