



For a village community with such a confident sense of its own identity, Ellisfield hardly shows on the maps.

To a geographer, it appears as scattered settlements totalling a hundred or so homes, in four or five main groupings, and smaller clusters, quite widely separated by open tracts of farmland.

The reality, as perceived by residents, is quite different.

The open areas, which may seem on the map to divide the village, are actually what give Ellisfield much of its defining green and spacious character

To the villagers of Ellisfield, the long green stretches of lane between the knots of houses are as much part of their village as the homes they live in.

They are the green arteries of the village. In their way, they link it together just as much as the web of family, church, club, society and friendship ties that binds the whole into one living community.



<i>A Village Design Statement for Ellisfield</i>	3
<i>Valley and Plateau - the natural setting</i>	
How Ellisfield grows out of its landscape, modern farming, natural history, village footpaths	5
<i>Favourite Views</i>	7
<i>Map showing favourite views</i>	8
<i>A brief history of Ellisfield</i>	9
The People	10
Their Settlements	11
<i>The Village Scene today</i>	15
<i>A Design Guideline Summary</i>	16
<i>Illustrated Guidelines</i>	17-20
<i>What residents value most about the village</i>	
How the guidelines were constructed	21
<i>The Facts – Ellisfield as it is today</i>	
A simple inventory survey of basic design features	25
<i>Settlement Character</i>	27
<i>Map showing settlements</i>	32
<i>Sources and Acknowledgements</i>	33
<i>About the Planning System</i>	34
<i>Ellisfield's boundaries</i>	35
<i>Ellisfield map showing footpaths</i>	36

A Village Design Statement for Ellisfield

One of the major issues facing the countryside is how it can evolve to meet the needs of those who live there, whilst retaining its scenic, ecological and historic characteristics.

Basingstoke & Deane, Landscape Assessment - June 2001

Most people who live in the countryside are reluctant to see new development change their environment. Often, they feel that recent buildings have altered the character of their surroundings for the worse. This understandable disappointment with new buildings can lead to a resistance to development in general. But the countryside must change if it is to stay alive - farmers need new buildings, villagers need affordable housing for young families, maybe they need a health centre or some buildings for local employment, people want to extend and alter their homes.

The purpose of a Village Design Statement (VDS) is to manage that change by ensuring that it represents the opinions of the majority of the inhabitants about what it is that makes the village special.

It is not an excuse to preserve the village in aspic, nor is there the ability to alter the existing planning regulations but to work within them to define the character of the village and what we wish to see preserved or repeated in relation to any new development, no matter how small scale.

A VDS had been on the Parish Council's 'wish list' for some years so, when Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council offered some funding towards the project, it set up an independent design team with a small starter grant.

SELECTING THE DESIGN TEAM

This was done on the basis that it should be as representative of as many different areas of the village as possible. Initial discussion of the project had identified several people who were interested and some others were approached to widen the scope.

The resulting small team consisted of people who had been resident for varying periods from 40 years to four years, living in very large houses and smaller ones; in nearly all the settled areas and with the genders evenly divided. Following the first survey the team was augmented by the addition of a third generation resident.

STARTING POINT AND POLICY DECISIONS

Several ways of canvassing opinion were discussed, including an initial public meeting. It was felt that this method would unduly advantage those most accustomed to speaking in public and could exclude those unable to attend, for whatever reason. To ensure that all residents had the initial chance to state their views, we decided to play to our strength as a small village and use the survey method, which is simple for us to do, since there are less than 120 dwellings.

Responses from villagers to all the surveys have been kept to form an audit trail demonstrating that the VDS is based on villagers' comments and is not just a document that a group of self interested persons have made up for their own purposes.

THE SURVEYS

The first survey explained the background and objects of the VDS and simply asked residents to state what made Ellisfield special for them. Making the survey open ended avoided the possibility that the Design Team would unconsciously influence the results.

The response to this was quite low for Ellisfield, though high by other standards, at 30%, because we did not collect the replies but relied upon them being returned. However, many points were raised, including some negative comments.

As facilitators, the team did not feel that it had the right to censor anyone's views, so the second survey consisted of these comments and opinions, listed in tabular form, for agreement or disagreement and an explanation that these were the views of villagers but not necessarily the members of the Design Team.

The response to this second survey was considerably higher at 80%, because we went back to collect the replies.

CONSTRUCTING THE DRAFT DESIGN STATEMENT

The team members made an inventory of the built areas of the village in order to have a data base of the types of houses and their settings. As with previous data, anything recorded was not identified by house name.

A member of the village footpath volunteers was asked to describe the footpaths and another village expert asked to write about the natural environment. A member of the team with access to documents prepared the history section.

Villagers' views were expressed in the form of twelve Design Guidelines, carefully cross referred to the results of the second survey.

From all this we constructed a draft Design Statement which was sent out to seven other villagers to read and comment on.

After some small revisions, the entire document, excepting pictures, was delivered to each house for ratification and the responses collected.

There were no major changes to be made from this exercise and a very satisfactory response was achieved.

With two thirds of households responding, all twelve Design Guidelines were strongly endorsed by the village.

THE FINAL STAGES

A Public Meeting was then held at which all the results were shown, questions answered and many of the pictures intended to be used were displayed in large format and colour for people to indicate their favourites.

The Draft Design Statement was presented to the Parish Council on 17th June 2002.

Parish Council members had, of course, been involved as residents and had already read the draft but the Council, as an entity, gave the final seal of approval to Ellisfield Village Design Statement.

With three written consultations and a public meeting and with seven design team members augmented by two expert contributors, seven readers and at least two photographers, we consider this document to be the Voice of Ellisfield - the green village.

The Ellisfield Village Design Statement was formally adopted by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council on 12th December 2002.

The Design Statement Team

Ellisfield, March 2003



Dick Lunn
Edna Chilton
Hilary de Ferranti
Meg Freeman
Nigel Wilson
Roy Frankham
Chairman Tim Sullivan

Valley and Plateau

The Natural Setting

Ellisfield is a village which grows naturally out of its landscape.

A description of the natural setting is the obvious place to begin. Fortunately, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has recently prepared an excellent Landscape Assessment for their area. Edited parts of the section covering Ellisfield are reproduced below with their permission.

***Note:** The landscape type, here given the village's name, extends well beyond the Parish itself. It stretches from Farleigh and Nutley in the west across to Tunworth and Herriard in the east. With Ellisfield proper at its centre, it reaches south of Moundsmere almost to Bradley.*

Landscape

Ellisfield Clay Plateau & Valleys

The landscape is scattered with small villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads or properties, linked by a winding network of narrow roads. Both settlements and roads are often located in the bottom of valleys. The landscape retains a quiet, rural quality, unspoilt by major development, and has an intimate character within the valleys.

Key characteristics

- flat to undulating clay plateau to the east of the area merging to a distinct ridge and valley landscape in the west
- pattern of arable farmland and well managed woodland blocks. - relatively large blocks of the latter combine with topography to create an intimate landscape with a distinct sense of place within the valleys.
- generally quiet, unspoilt rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people and traffic.
- generally large scale fields with intact boundaries, reflecting enclosure from post-medieval times to 19th century times.
- examples of valuable habitat types comprising the scattered large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Generally low intervisibility contained by the high proportion of woodland cover and strong hedgerow structure.

In fact, within this landscape area, Ellisfield proper starts at the edge of the clay plateau. It extends southwards down two chalk valleys. These are marked by Green Lane, joined by its tributary Furzen Lane valley, and College Lane. The two main north-south valleys almost meet at their southern ends where they join the east-west Ax valley on Axford Road in an area marked by gravel deposits.

Village footpaths

Ellisfield Footpath Map at end

Ellisfield has twelve rights of way, made up of all three designations, Byways Open To All Traffic (BOAT), Bridleways, and Footpaths. The nature of the paths reflects the diverse nature of the village landscape. Some paths pass through farmyards and cross open farmland, or follow grassy tracks, whilst others are leafy, sheltered and lined with trees and hedges.

Many of the paths follow the routes of ancient drovers' trails.

The paths are treasured by the villagers and form an integral part of village life. The village paths group organizes two walks each year featuring many of the rights of way and local countryside. The routes of the paths link well enabling varied circular walks.



The Three Castles long distance path, joining Windsor, Odiham and Winchester, passes through the village and attracts walkers from near and far. Some of the village bridleways are also included in long distance cycle routes.

An ancient chapel, now a hunting lodge stands at the junction of two of the paths and is a popular talking point on many walks. The Earl of Portsmouth has dedicated a nearby part of the romantic route of the, now disused, Alton to Basingstoke railway as a Permissive Path. This delightful embankment and cutting affords beautiful views of nearby countryside. Another feature, near to one of the paths, is an ancient earthwork believed to date from Saxon times

As mentioned elsewhere, the area is noted for its stunning displays of snowdrops and bluebells in the spring. The paths and local woodland provide unparalleled views of these.

Ted Dowson

Natural history



The dominant feature of Ellisfield is the broad leaved woodland, and some more recently planted mixtures of conifer and broad leaf. Oak, ash, beech, and hazel predominate.



The variety of plant species, such as bluebells and bracken, in and around the hedgerows indicates that they are probably remnants of ancient woodland. When in flower the cow parsley that grows on the roadside verges is especially spectacular.

Within the managed woodland patches of wild early purple orchids can be found, in season bluebells and snowdrops are breathtaking, and appreciated by both locals and visitors.

The woodland and fields support fallow deer, foxes, badgers, rabbits and brown hares. Hedgehogs, frogs and toads can be found in the woodland and gardens of the parish. Where permanent grassland grows field mice and voles thrive. Insects and birds flourish on the diversity of food and shelter, which is the basis of a successful ecology.



Buzzards have increased recently and are nesting successfully in the parish. Sparrow hawks and kestrels do well. At night owls seem to be everywhere around the village. Summer visiting swallows and house martins can rear perhaps two broods.



The variability of the habitats means that most native species can find a niche and thrive in the parish. The jewel in the crown would be to see nightingales return to breed.

Farming around Ellisfield

Farming within the parish is predominantly arable, with one dairy herd, which was formed by joining the two smaller herds that were at Hill Farm and Grammarsham dairy.

The crops grown are mostly winter sown wheat and barley, with some winter oats. Most arable land in the parish is on the clay plateau where the soil is sufficiently heavy to be unsuitable for spring sown cereals. Winter sown oil seed rape is frequently used in the crop rotation, and so is setaside, which has been an option as part of the Arable Area Payment Scheme. The setaside fields are sometimes sown to spring oil seed rape on industrial oil contracts, or can be left as natural regeneration. Winter or spring sown beans have been sown in some years as an alternative to oil seed rape.

The light, thin and flinty soils are on the banks of the dry valleys at the south of the parish, and also appear at the north where the plateau dips towards Basingstoke. These soils have been used for spring barley in the past.

Cover crops of maize or kale for the shoots can be found at the field and woodland edges.

Grass is grown for the cows at the dairy as grazing and silage production, within a reasonable distance of the dairy. An acreage of forage maize is also grown.

The future will probably see more parts of fields, eg field edges, sown to semi permanent ecologically beneficial grass/wild flower mixes, the changes being encouraged by funding changes within the European Community. Crop choice will remain the same for the future, although the uses of crops may develop for industrial processes, eg. Bio-diesel for vehicle fuel.

Seumas Foster

Favourite views

In Ellisfield's downland setting, the sometimes stunning, open views are regarded by many residents as an essential part of their village's character.

This list is certainly not exhaustive but it does include those most often mentioned.



Coming into the village

- a) Approaching the village from the north at Cliddesden School – the view up the green tunnel of White Hill and the panorama across the valley towards Farleigh.
- b) Coming in from Spain Lane – the view down over Red Hill, along the curves and folds of the Ax valley towards Herriard.
- c) Entering from Herriard along Bagmore Lane - the great beeches.

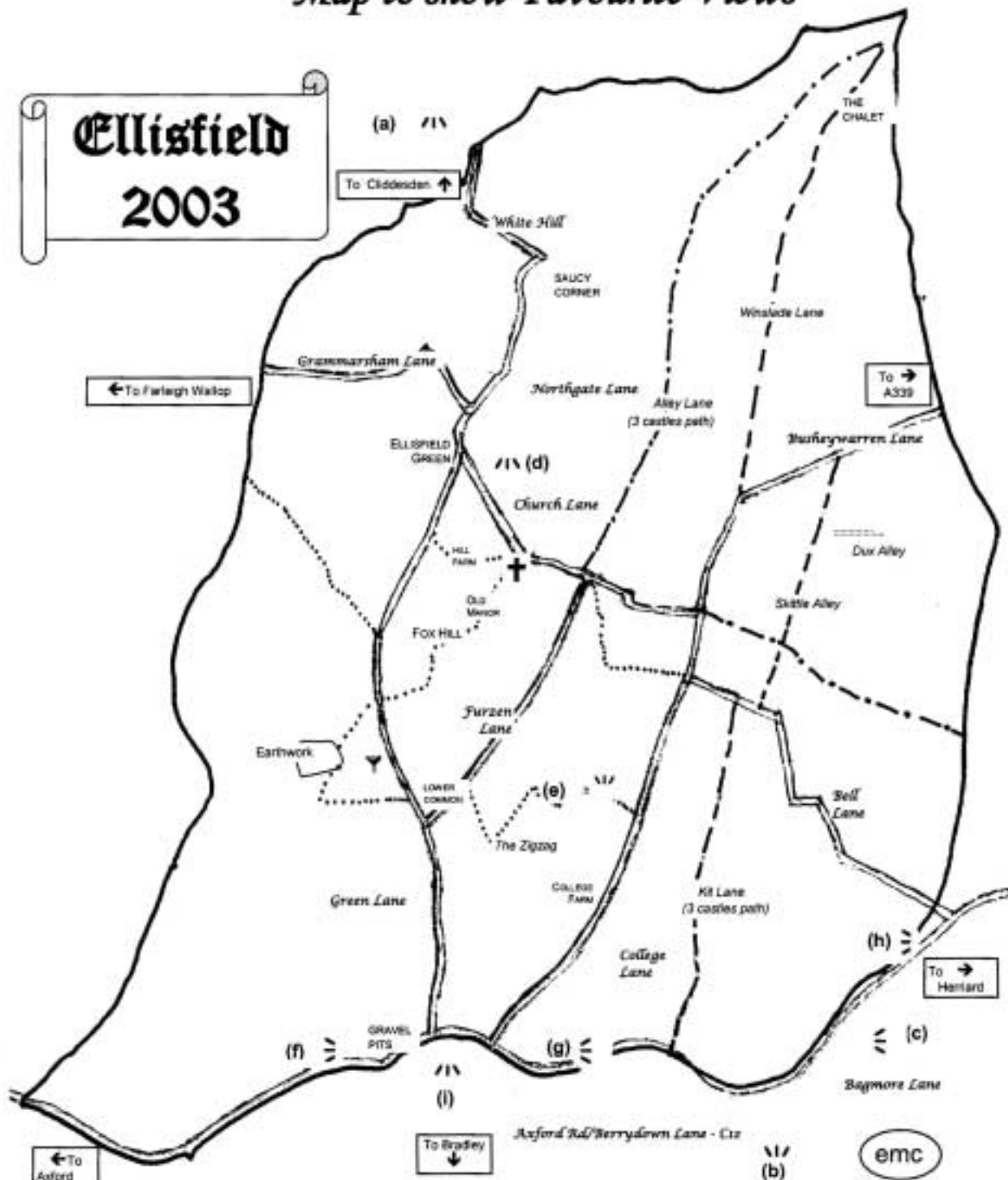
Within the village

- d) The panorama from Ellisfield Green looking south over the valleys from the edge of the plateau.
- e) The sweeping views from the top of the zigzag path across the plateau to the Church and Old Manor and down over Furzen Lane to Lower Common and the Green Lane valley.
- f) From the Gravel Pits through the gap in the trees, looking west down the Ax valley.
- g) East down the Ax valley from last house at the east end of the Ax valley settlement.
- h) From the dip at bottom of Bell Lane looking west down the valley into Ellisfield.

Looking out of the village

- i) From Axford Road looking south - Preston Oak Hills, especially at Bluebell time.

Map to show Favourite Views



Viewpoints mentioned in text shown thus:
 ≡ (a)

A Brief History of Ellisfield

It is generally accepted that Ellisfield Green and anywhere on the high ground or a well used through route such as The Harrow Way Winter Route, is the earliest settled part of Ellisfield. On the other hand it has been suggested that the field part of the name refers to a field in the Ax Valley, where old field patterns have been found. A fascinating study could be made of this but we are here concerned with the village's more modern development.



*History is a continuous narrative of events in which the inhabitants of
Ellisfield today are writing the pages for future generations
Marian Sims-Williams*

The People



The census of 1881 shows 52 dwellings with a population of 137 adults and 104 children. (4.63 per dwelling) Of the adults, only 30 were born in the village. This is probably because there were frequent changes of employer at Michaelmas with many families moving between villages. Thus the local names which have disappeared from one village often re-appear in another nearby.



There were 35 agricultural labourers, the youngest aged 14. If we include shepherds, woodmen, farmers, carters (horses) and land bailiffs, 69 people gained their living from the land. One working blacksmith was listed and since it is likely that a large proportion of his work would have been on farm horses this brings the total up to 70, or just over 1 in 2 of the adult population.

10 residents were employed in domestic work, 4 of these living in at The Rectory. (Now Brocas.) This contrasts with the present day with many, often self-employed, cooks, nannies, gardeners, etc. on a part time rather than live in basis and some from outside the village. More married women now have paid employment, which enables them to employ others. In 1881 country dwellers tended to be either rich or poor with far more of the latter and only one official wage earner, often on subsistence wages, though many women did casual seasonal labouring jobs in the fields or on the roads.

One William Franklin was listed as Parish Clerk as well as agricultural labourer. This being 5 years before Parish Councils came into being he would have been Clerk to the Vestry with a job description which included a requirement that he be able to *'read write and if possible, sing a little!'* One of his duties may have been the collection of the rate levied on landowners for poor relief.

Ellisfield today has a larger population with more houses but the occupancy rate is lower, with 236 adults and about 70 children in 118 dwellings. (2.59 per dwelling).

The residents gain their living in a wide variety of ways with many travelling to Basingstoke or London for this. Official occupational details are not available but an estimated 11 people either own or work the land or did so until retirement (1 in 21).

Among the myriad trades or professions represented are: bankers, accountants, engineers, solicitors, IT experts, chemists, builders, decorators and teachers. None of these is mentioned in the 1881 census.

With the lack of pensions few people were able to retire in 1881, whereas today we have approximately 40 such residents.



Bert Parker, Ern Frankham, 'Mitch' (Bill) Frankham.

*above right
Mrs Pattenden - Village schoolmistress*

*above left
thought to be the Parker family at the turn of the century*



Parker's Smithy

Their Settlements

Early rural development tended to be grouped around farms. Coopers and Merritts Farms in Bell Lane, Snow's Farm in Church Lane, Hill Farm and Northgate Farm in Green Lane and Bishop's (College) Farm in College Lane with Berrydown Farm on the outskirts. There are now seven houses described as *something* farm, but only three are working farms. With less dependence upon agriculture buildings began to appear on the southern slopes and in the Ax Valley where few or no buildings were before and many former farm buildings and cottages were converted for residential use. The result is a village community made up of several discrete settlements, drawn together by the green ribbons of the lanes.

Ellisfield Green and Church Lane

Three of Ellisfield's earlier working farms triangulate and join these two settlements. Northgate, Snow's and Hill. Only Hill Farm remains as a working farm. In Church Lane, Snow's Farm has for many years been known as The Old Manor with its agricultural origins almost forgotten.

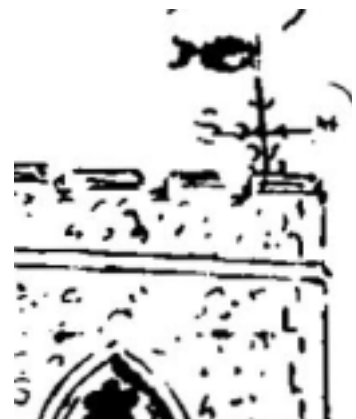
These two settlements share much of their history and are possibly the only two which can see each other - from ground level. From the window of the Rectory sitting room, some of the houses on Ellisfield Green can be glimpsed and Hill Farm buildings are visible from the field opposite the church.

With the exception of the pub, all Ellisfield's public buildings are and have been in this part of the village. The congregational church, for many years a well attended, thriving centre, was demolished and rebuilt as Fox Hill House in the 1960s.

All Saint's Church, in a field which now forms part of the grounds of Brocas, is forgotten, except for the name Hallowed Litton, on the map. This is the church described in the Domesday Book. St. Martin's in Church Lane, was built in the latter part of the 13th century. For some years there were two churches, until the Black Death caused the village population to fall to 9 and All Saints was closed.

St. Martin's was extensively restored in 1872 for the princely sum of £500.00. One of the church's claims to fame is the weathervane, which originated at Long Ditton Church. This is reputed to be in the shape of a louse, though a more prosaic explanation has been offered that it is a pineapple on its side. Most people prefer the former story and various versions of how it came about are told.

The Rectory, with all its comings and goings, would probably be described as a public building by its inhabitants! This was originally the house called Brocas at Ellisfield Green. In 1914, on a change of incumbents, the present house in Church Lane was built.



Next door to The Rectory, is Church Cottage, another of the older houses, which, for a long time was the post office, run in a very similar way to the one in Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

The Memorial Hall, built in 1920 to commemorate the fallen in World War 1, has seen many changes to its interior and structure over the years and remains the hub of village social life.

Most of the remaining dwellings started out as labourers' accommodation and many have

either been extended or, in the case of terraces, knocked into one modern house for private occupation. Very few remain rented or for agricultural workers.

Bell Lane had two working farms, Merritts and Coopers and a barrelmakers with the inn close by and several cottages. A hamlet in its own right. The Inn, called the Bell and Crown, closed at the turn of the century, was demolished and the present Bell House built on the site, retaining the original cellars. As the years went by, one by one the remaining working buildings were converted to housing with only a couple of barns now left in commercial use.



The old smithy in Bell Lane

Lower Common

This is the location of the Fox Inn. There has been a public house hereabouts for hundreds of years. At one time it was situated at Lower Farm, which is the oldest building in this area.



Land here was awarded to the village in the Enclosure Acts in the 1850s, partly for recreational use, (Lower Common itself) and partly for a school to be built. With the advent of Cliddesden School in 1870 this became unnecessary and after

World War Two the land was sold to the Rural District Council to build houses for rent. The development was called Cannon Close, after the late Judge Cannon. Park View had been built for just this purpose in the 1930's but had proved inadequate to meet the demand, as has the more recent provision of Farrier's Field.



Lower Common - (Fuzzy Lane runs from lower left to centre)

Most individual houses here appeared haphazardly over the past 100 years. In many cases it is difficult to work out where the first houses were, since they are simply described as 'behind the Fox Inn' or 'on the common!' It is known that a house has existed on the High Wood site since 1918 and that Mayfield and Fairholme were built in the 50's and 60's. Most of the others are either new in the past forty years or replace dwellings on the same site.

The Ax Valley complex, taking in the lower ends of Green and College Lanes, is almost entirely modern. In 1881 there were perhaps two cottages in existence. Its development is due to the arrival of the Frankham family in around 1877. Land was bought and houses built for growing family members. As time went by plots were divided and homes built for the children. Thus four generations at least of the same family have grown up in this area as well as other parts of the village. Some of the houses are still lived in by the children and grandchildren of the original developers. Most began as two or three bedroom bungalows, though few remain at that size.

Part of the Ax Valley Complex circa 1987



The small settlements

Halfway down College Lane, College Farm is still a working farm. In the past 100 years it has known several owners. Its buildings are greatly expanded and the present owners, the de Ferranti family, work all the village farmland which is not retained by Portsmouth Estates.



Opposite the farm is a pond, with duckhouse, maintained by the Piper family. In earlier days this was a magnet for farmworkers' children, causing their mothers much washing.

Crickwood and Berrydown Farm are the first houses in Ellisfield on its southern border, along Berrydown Lane or the Axford Road as it is often known. There is another house on the opposite side of the road, in Preston Candover Parish, called Berrydown House, so it is to be supposed that this complex once formed an independent farmstead.

On the north eastern boundary, Grammarsham House is the first house, just beside the border with Farleigh Wallop. This is still a farmworker's house for Portsmouth Estates.

Widmoor (Upper College Lane)

The built history of this area, for the past 100 or so years is bound up in Widmoor Place, originally a large Victorian house. Owned in the 1880's by the Botry-Pigott family, it was sold to Henry Hoare, a banker, in 1905 and renamed Ellisfield Manor.



The family lived here for 52 years, expanding the estate, including the purchase of Widmoor Farm, three cottages which are now one house called Drumbeg, and building the two cottages between Widmoor Farm and Drumbeg. A large staff was kept by the house bringing work to the village and much of its social life was centred there with regular celebrations and parties for the village folk. The pool of young male staff made a useful addition to the village football and cricket teams.



On the death of Mr Hoare in 1956, the estate was sold and the house and its remarkable garden, remained unused, a prey to vandals.

It was demolished in 1982 and the present complex built on the site. Two new houses were built and various satellite buildings such as the stables converted. All this now forms part of what is still known as Ellisfield Manor on the map. However, the last house to be so called was recently re-named Mulberry House. The remaining family link is Widmoor Farm, where Henry Hoare's grandson Tim Guinness lives with his family.

Mrs Dawson, the farm manager's wife with their children at Widmoor Farm around the turn of the last century.



Smaller dwellings in this area included three cottages (*shown left*) called Rose, Shamrock and Thistle - now one house.

Opposite the three cottages was Little London where Albert Goodall, the postman is shown with Mr I Mundy, a ploughman who lived in either Rose, Thistle or Shamrock.



The Village Scene Today

We can see how the settlements that make up our modern village grew, to begin with, from small clusters around the farms. Gradually other areas were settled and Ellisfield evolved into the village we know today – set in its landscape, alive and of the present but with its roots very clearly in the past.



Asking the questions

Villagers' views on what they most valued about Ellisfield, its environment both natural and man-made - the reasons why many had deliberately chosen to move here - were obtained through two surveys.

The answers - and the consequences

The views and ideas expressed by residents can be grouped into a few essential themes. We have summarised them, each leading to a simple design Guideline. Each Guideline is an attempt to answer one basic question: –

What should happen in the future if the special characteristics of the village most valued by residents are to be protected and enhanced?

ELLISFIELD



A DESIGN GUIDELINE SUMMARY

- (1) Development should remain related to the existing settlements, which are not visible one from another, and have long stretches of natural hedging on the lanes between them.
- (2) To retain its present sympathy with the landscape of plateau and valleys, development should remain linear along the lanes rather than in closes or on backland.
- (3) Development should normally be on one side of the lane only, and building behind existing houses should continue to be discouraged, so that village lanes retain their characteristic open rural appearance.
- (4) Development including extensions or re-development should sit within the landscape and should not dominate. Properties should be well spaced from their neighbours and well set back from the lane.
- (5) Hedges in front of existing properties should be preserved and, in the case of new development, preferred over walls or fencing as the main boundary marker. Where front fencing is used it should preferably be low picket or post-and-rail, appropriate to a rural area, rather than panel or close-board type.
- (6) To maintain a variety of period styles and architectural design, extension of an existing home should conform to the style and character of the original.
- (7) New development or full redevelopment of an existing property should conform both to the character of the village and to that of the individual settlement.
- (8) Within each settlement a balance of small and larger properties should be maintained.
- (9) Individual developments and extensions should always be on a modest scale to blend into existing settlements.
- (10) The rural character of the lane network should be preserved. Within the reasonable requirements of road and community safety, creeping urbanisation through road signs, street lighting, pavements, use of standard town-style street furniture etc. should be discouraged.
- (11) Ellisfield's few publicly accessible open spaces should be preserved and maintained in their present form.
- (12) The natural flora of the lanes and village generally should be protected and encouraged wherever possible and any planning or highway policies which might discourage them or reduce their extent should be avoided.





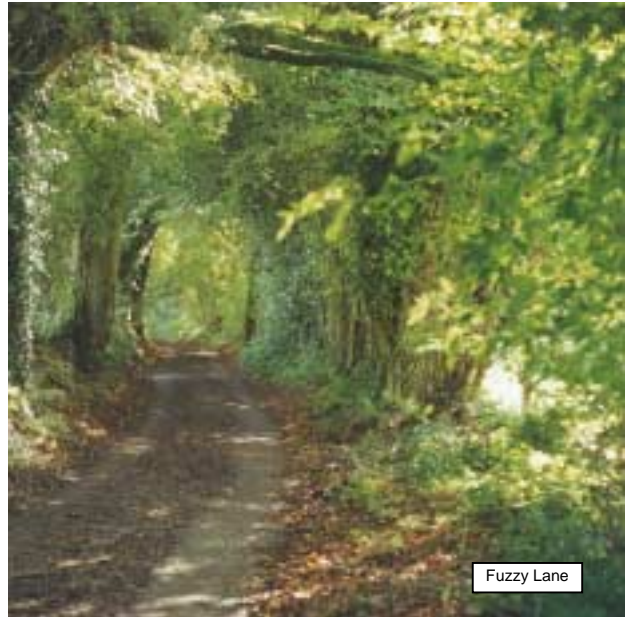
Hedges in front of existing properties should be preserved and in the case of new development, preferred over walls or fencing as the main boundary marker.



Where front fencing is used it should preferably be low picket or post and rail, appropriate to a rural area, rather than panel or close-board type.



The rural character of the lane network should be preserved



Within the reasonable requirements of road and community safety, creeping urbanisation through road signs, street lighting, pavements, use of standard town-style street furniture etc. should be discouraged.



Ellisfield's few publicly accessible open spaces should be preserved and maintained in their present form.



The natural flora of the lanes and village generally should be protected and encouraged wherever possible and any planning or highway policies which might discourage them or reduce their extent should be avoided.



Snowdrops in the churchyard



Bluebells



*Cow Parsley
(Queen Anne's Lace)*



What residents value most about the village

Spacious and green

“Spread out”, “spacious”, “green” – these are typical of the views expressed in the first survey and strongly supported by villagers in the second. A striking characteristic of the village is that each main settlement or small cluster of houses is simply not visible from any other. The natural lanes and open countryside between the groups of houses were clearly seen as a much valued feature of the village by the majority of residents.

(1)

Development should remain related to the existing settlements, which are not visible one from another, and have long stretches of natural hedging on the lanes between them.

“individual settlements with space between them”	79%
“scattered design of village”	78%,
“green-ness”, “beautiful/open views”, “spaciousness”, “hedgerows”, “open fields”, “peace”	87-98%

Housing follows the valleys

As Ellisfield has established itself over the years, development has closely followed the downland landscape. The lanes have naturally followed the valleys. Gradually homes have been established along the lanes, mostly in the more sheltered valley bottoms. There is little or no backland or close development. (Note: The only exception is Farrier’s Field. This was built in close form because of the nature of the site, which was the only one then available to the housing association.)

(2)

To retain its present sympathy with the landscape of plateau and valleys, development should remain linear along the lanes rather than in closes or on backland.

“housing along lanes not in closes”	85%
“houses sit well within the landscape”	83%

Open views

A striking feature of the village is that almost all of the development is on one side of the lane only. There are some places where this is not the case but, even here, the rear views are mainly of undeveloped countryside or gardens. As there is no significant building behind other housing, the great majority of homes have an open outlook both ways.

(3)

Development should normally be on one side of the lane only, and building behind existing houses should continue to be discouraged, so that village lanes retain their characteristic open rural appearance.

“buildings on one side of lane”	80%
“open fields”	92%
“development behind existing houses should be avoided”	60%

Houses sit well back from the lanes

A feeling of spaciousness and calm within the village is enhanced within each area of development by the layout of the buildings within the landscape. Houses for the most part are well spaced from each other and very well set back from the highway.

(4)

Development, including extensions or re-development, should sit within the landscape and should not dominate.

Properties should be well spaced from their neighbours and well set back from the lane.

“set back from roads”	85%
“reasonable width between houses”	89%
“reasonable sized plots”	84%

Hedges – the green village

Even passing from the open areas to the knots of development, Ellisfield's lanes often remain “green” both sides. Properties are in most cases fronted on the lane by mature hedges. Shrub and low wall combinations and a few open plan frontages add variety, but hedges are most characteristic. In the hedges, native species – beech and hawthorn – predominate. There is a notable stretch of beech hedging in the Ax Valley settlement.

(5)

Hedges in front of existing properties should be preserved and, in the case of new development, preferred over walls or fencing as the main boundary marker. Where front fencing is used it should preferably be low picket or post-and-rail, appropriate to a rural area, rather than panel or close-board type.

“boundaries predominantly hedges”	78%
“beech hedges in Lower Ellisfield”	90%
“boundaries defined with walls and hedges”	78%
“more hedges [a good idea]”	57%
“country style fencing”	72%
“timber panel front fences should be avoided”	55%

Variety of period styles

The diversity of architectural style, reflecting the gradual growth of Ellisfield over the last century, is a valued part of the village's special character. It would, however, be eroded if existing older properties were regularly redeveloped in the current, usually suburban, style of the day.

(6)

To maintain a variety of period styles and architectural design, extension of an existing home should conform to the style and character of the original.

“many individual designs with a wide range of styles and periods”	76%
“brick and flint cottages and walls”	84%

Settlement character

Within the overall character of the village, each part of Ellisfield has its own distinctive atmosphere. This is very much determined both by variations in the landscape and the history of development over the years. At the north of the village, at Ellisfield Green and in the Upper Ellisfield settlements, there are open panoramic views across the clay plateau. Houses are older, usually dating from the 40's or earlier, and mostly two storey. Further south, views are still natural but of valley sides, often wooded. Particularly around Lower Common, much of the building is from the 50's or later. The proportion of bungalows and chalet-bungalows increases going south, forming two thirds of the Ax Valley settlement.

(7)

New development or full redevelopment of an existing property should conform both to the character of the village and to that of the individual settlement.

"each area has individual character"

76%

Balance of small and large properties

From its beginnings, Ellisfield has always had a mixture of both large and more numerous smaller properties. The character, age range and diversity of the community inevitably reflects the types of housing available to families in the village.

(8)

Within each settlement a balance of small and larger properties should be maintained.

"wide range of property sizes"

84%

"existence of Farrier's Field [Housing Association development] as housing for young people"

86% *

"more low cost housing especially 2 & 3 bed [a good idea]"

62% *

** These comments also relate to "Small scale" below.*

Small scale

"Large" or "medium scale" development within the village was clearly seen as a "bad idea" – 85% & 79%. So too, on the other hand, was a complete ban on development - 78%. "Small scale developments" of new properties and "modest extensions" to existing houses were generally seen as desirable. (Note: Existing planning policy is essentially "replacement dwellings only". Additional new development would be unlikely to obtain planning consent except, possibly, under a "Section 106" agreement as affordable housing restricted to occupation by village families.)

(9)

Individual developments and extensions should always be on a modest scale to blend into existing settlements.

"small scale developments [a good idea]"

63%

"discreet and modest extensions"

80%

"existence of Farrier's Field [Housing Association development] as housing for young people"

86% *

"more low cost housing especially 2 & 3 bed [a good idea]"

62% *

Quiet bendy lanes

A desire to preserve the rural character of Ellisfield's lanes came out strongly from the survey responses. They were seen as an important part of the character of the village. (Note: The County Council as Highway Authority does already have a standard regarding the preservation of rural lanes. It may be important to ensure that this, at least, is adhered to.)

(10)

The rural character of the lane network should be preserved. Within the reasonable requirements of road and community safety, creeping urbanisation through road signs, street lighting, pavements, use of standard town-style street furniture etc. should be discouraged.

"no street lights"	87%
"absence of pavements"	86%
"existing design notice boards, post boxes, bus shelters"	84%
"present traditional sign posts and few road signs"	82%
"narrow bendy quiet lanes"	80%
"unmade road edges, open ditches and deep banks"	80%

Lower Common....the Gravel Pits

Whilst there is plenty of open space in the village, most of it is working farmland. Unlike our neighbouring villages, Ellisfield is fortunate that it does have some pieces of Parish owned land. These relatively few freely accessible public open spaces are valued.

(11)

Ellisfield's publicly accessible open spaces should be preserved and maintained in their present form.

"Lower Common as it is with natural materials used for swings etc."	77%
"wild life and flora on Lower Common"	87%
"Gravel Pits restoration"	72%

snowdrops.....

Few people speak of Ellisfield without mentioning the wild flowers – snowdrops, primroses, bluebells and the "Queen Anne's Lace" or cow parsley – that border the lanes and carpet the woodlands in spring and early summer. It is important that they should be preserved.

(12)

The natural flora of the lanes and village generally should be protected and encouraged wherever possible and any planning or highway policies which might discourage them or reduce their extent should be avoided.

"bluebells, snowdrops, primroses, cow parsley etc."	92%
---	-----

NB At the end of each section we list the relevant points made spontaneously by villagers who chose to respond to the first survey.

The percentages show the level of agreement when the same points were put to the whole village in the second collected response survey.

The Facts



Ellisfield As It Is

Villagers' views about their own village, gathered together in a Design Statement, stand in their own right. Nevertheless, an up-to-date "Ellisfield inventory", whilst by no means essential, can provide an interesting factual backdrop to residents' opinions.

Bearing in mind that the Design Statement is a step towards preserving and enhancing the most valued features of the village as it is, a very simple survey was conducted.

The results confirm that the characteristics residents say they treasure most about their village are not just wishful thinking or a hidden desire to make changes. They truly are features of Ellisfield as it actually is in the first years of the new millennium.

Homes in Ellisfield

The method used was a simple walk-past count of the most basic design features visible from the lanes.

Most characteristics are clear and obvious. For example, is a house built of brick or some other material; is the roof tiled or thatched; has it two storeys or is it a bungalow?

Fortunately, for the purposes of a design survey, appearance really is what counts. Factors such as the approximate period of construction, if not actually known (although they were quite often remembered) were estimated to arrive at an overall pattern for the village.

Results

From the lane

Distance from the highway

Not surprisingly, over 90% of homes front directly onto the lanes. Nearly 80% were estimated as being more than twenty feet from the highway, whilst nearly 60% were "well set back" by an estimated forty feet and often much more.

Drives

93% of properties have some form of drive-way. Among these, gravel is the material of choice at 65%. Tarmac is next at 20%, with concrete making up 12% and paving 3%.

Frontages

70% of lane frontages are hedges. If very low walls with hedges or shrubs behind them and mature trees are added, the "green" frontage rises to 78%. Walls and open plan fronts each account for 6%. Post and rail, picket fences etc. make up the remainder.

Hedge types

Ellisfielders of the past seem to have been a canny lot, making their hedges of what grew naturally all around. Beech and hawthorn predominate, occurring frequently in the most often recorded category, "mixed native species", at 45%.

Beech as a single species hedge provides 26% across the village as a whole. Notably, this rises to 93% in the "Ax Valley" settlement. Hawthorn on its own accounts for only 5% in total.

Privet and Leylandii as imported species each account for 11%.

The houses

How big

Where the actual sizes were not known to the counter, estimates were made based on the general appearance of the properties. Whilst the result cannot be exact, the broad picture across the village is probably not far out.

Leaving aside the few very large properties such as The Old Manor, the village comprises: smaller houses of up to two bedrooms, approx. 22%; medium sized properties of up to four bedrooms, approx. 55%; larger homes of five bedrooms and upwards, approx. 23%.

Type of Dwelling

No great ambiguity here. Two storey houses, 60%; bungalows, 29%; chalet-bungalows, 11%.

There is a marked difference between the north and south of the village, however. Across the Ellisfield Green/Church Lane and North College Lane/Bell Lane settlement areas, bungalows are only 9% of the stock. South, in the Lower Common and Ax Valley areas, the figure is 44%.

Detached/ semi-detached

80% of properties are detached, 20% semi-detached. There are no terraces.

Phases of growth

There is a spread of development across the decades. There is a definite development “bulge” in the 50’s and 60’s, a clear slowing down in the next two decades, followed by some acceleration more recently.

Pre Nineteen twenties, 22% Twenties to Forties, 22% Fifties to Sixties, 28%
Seventies to Eighties, 14% Nineties onwards, 14%

Walls

Red brick, 70%; White/yellow brick, 15%; Render/painted brick, 12%; Pebble dash, 3%

Upper wall cladding

Relatively rare – Tile hung, 3%; Timber etc., 2%

Roofs

Tiles, 86%; Slate, 11%; Thatch, 3%

Windows

Small pane, 55%; Large pane, 41%; Picture, 4%

Front views

Natural outlooks are confirmed as a feature of Ellisfield homes.

80% have a natural view to the front: (Open fields, 57%; Woods/hedges, 23%).
4% look out on barns, the church etc.

In the few places where development is on both sides of the road, 16% face other houses.

Rear views

98% have a natural view. (Open fields, 91%; Woods/hedges, 7%)

Because of the general absence of “backland” development, only 2% of properties see other houses from their back windows.



Settlement Character

It became very clear from the views expressed by villagers that, within the overall character of Ellisfield, each of the settlements makes its own distinctive contribution to the whole. Each enjoys a different situation on the plateau or in the valleys. Each has a different history which has formed its present character. (see *A Short History of Ellisfield - Their Settlements, above*). The simple walk-past inventory of Ellisfield demonstrated this very clearly.

The following notes identify the most outstanding characteristics in ages and types of houses etc. for each settlement. We show the characteristics by which each settlement differs significantly from the village average.

For example:

One of the things counted in the survey was the proportion of two storey houses as opposed to bungalows and chalet bungalows.

Across the village as a whole the split was almost exactly 60% houses to 40% bungalows/chalet bungalows. However, among the Ax Valley dwellings the proportion of bungalows/chalet bungalows is very much higher at 71% to only 29% houses.

In the Ax Valley for instance, this is shown as follows with the whole village percentages in brackets for comparison

Type: Two storey – 29% [60%], Bungalow/chalet bungalow – 71% [40%]”

Ellisfield Green and Church Lane Area 1

Here the houses reflect their origins in settlement, which grew up along the edge of the plateau, around the first working farms and the church. This was the old core of the village. Dwellings are still noticeably older than in most of the rest of Ellisfield and are mostly two storey houses rather than bungalows. Building here is generally set closer to the lane than is normal lower down the valleys.

Period:	Pre-20's – 41% [22%], 20's-40's – 22% [22%], 50's on – 37% [56%]
Type:	Two storey – 82% [60%], Bungalow/chalet bungalow – 18% [40%]
Size:	Small – 44% [21%], Medium – 8% [53%], Large/V.large – 48% [26%]
Frontage:	Close to lane – 52% [22%], Medium/well set back – 48% [78%]



Lower Common Area 3

Lower Common and the whole central section of Green Lane is a mid-point both geographically and in other ways. It is close to the village average in many respects.

It differs significantly only in the relative continuity of development. There were a few dwellings here right from the earliest days when the village centred around Ellisfield Green. The greatest growth occurred in the 50's and 60's but, unlike the other areas, the settlement has seen significant development through into the 90's.

Period:	Pre-20's – 5% [22%], 20's-40's – 20% [22%], 50's-60's – 40% [28%] 70's-80's – 8% [14%], 90's on – 28% [14%]
Type:	Two storey - 53% [60%], Bungalow/chalet bungalow - 47% [40%]
Size:	Small - 23% [21%], Medium - 60% [53%], Large/V.large - 17% [26%]
Frontage:	Close to lane - 25% [22%], Medium/well set back - 75% [78%].



Lower Common central area. The Fox Inn (below) is just out of the picture on the right.



The Ax Valley Area 5

Here a later core of development from the 20's - 40's was extended by the wave of development in the 50's and 60's. The typical dwelling is a detached 3-4 bedroom bungalow, well set back from the road. Medium size predominates.

Period: 20's-40's – 29% [22%], 50's/60's – 46% [28%], 70's on – 25% [28%]

Type: Two storey – 29% [60%], Bungalow/chalet bungalow – 71% [40%]

Size: Small – 17% [21%], Medium – 75% [53%], Large/V.large – 8% [26%]

Frontage: Close to lane/medium – nil [22%], Well set back – 100% [78%]

Although the use of hedges as front boundaries is typical for Ellisfield, the long runs of purely beech hedging are striking.

Boundary: Hedge – 75% [70%]

Hedge type: Beech – 78% [26%]

From the north



From the south



From the west

Widmoor (Upper College Lane) & Bell Lane Areas 4 and 2

An older settlement which has grown from cottages around earlier working farms and Widmoor Place, the former Victorian “big house”, the settlement has similarities to the Ellisfield Green/Church Lane area. It too has a high proportion of pre-20’s houses compared to the village average. There are some bungalows but, unlike the other older settlement, all of the dwellings are in the medium to very large range and few are set close to the lanes.

Period: Pre-20’s – 46% [22%], 20’s-40’s – 19% [22%], 50’s on – 35% [56%]

Type: Two storey – 81% [60%], Bungalow/chalet bungalow – 19% [40%]

Size: Small – nil [21%], Medium – 65% [53%], Large/V.large – 35% [26%]

Frontage: Close to lane – 4% [22%], Medium/well set back – 96% [78%]

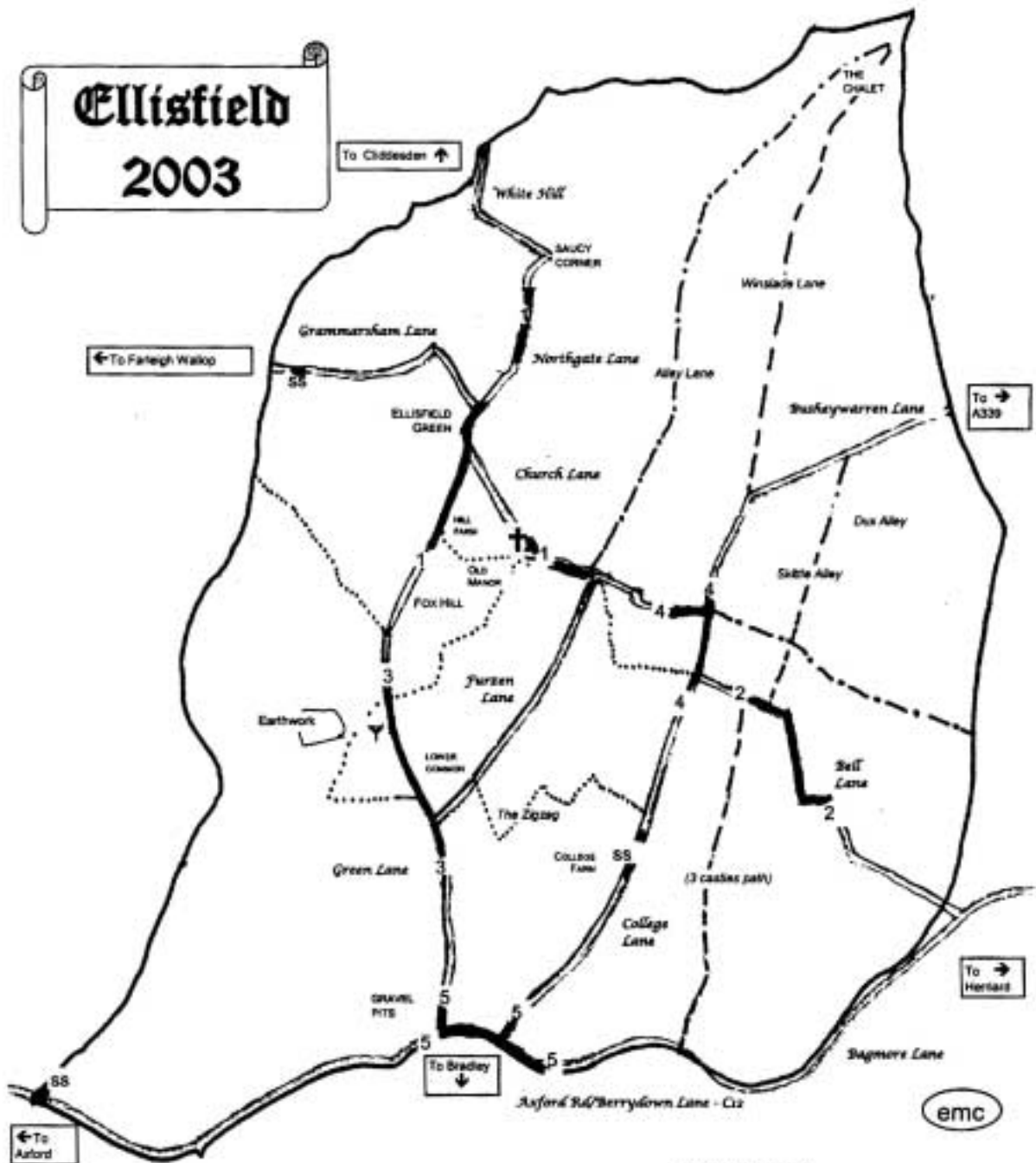


Bell Lane



Widmoor

Map to show settled areas



Symbols

- Lane
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Parish Boundary
- The Fox Inn
- Church, Rectory and Memorial Hall

Settled areas

- 1 Ellisfield Green & Church Lane
 - 2 Bell Lane
 - 3 Lower Common
 - 4 Widmoor (Upper College Lane)
 - 5 Ax Valley
 - ss small settlement
- (points on the road separated by different numbers or having no numbers at all, have no settlements e.g. Green Lane 3 - 5)

Sources

Aele's Field, by Tom Kime

A History of Ellisfield, by Marian and Hugh Sims-Williams

An Introduction to Aspects of the Planning System, by Elisabeth Skinner and Laurie Howes
Gloucester University

A Ramble of Recollections, by Peter Huett, published in Hill & Dale 1988

A Walk Around Ellisfield and Old Farleigh Wallop, by Bea Hawkes

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Landscape Assessment

Census Returns 1881 - transcribed by Dick & Joyce Holt

Parish Council and Church Registers, and other records

There'll always be an Ellisfield - by Sally Adams

Various sources in Hampshire Records Office

but most of all:

The views of the residents of Ellisfield as expressed in response to surveys and questionnaires.

Note: The *Brief History of Ellisfield* is just that - much has been left out and it does not pretend to be a comprehensive history of the village - this has yet to be written. Any inaccuracies are entirely the fault of Edna Chilton for 'taking other people's word for it' or 'believing everything she reads.' On the other hand what I have read or heard comes from the residents, many of them of long standing. If you know better...we will be pleased to alter any second edition.

Acknowledgements

The Design Team would like to thank:

- ☺ the large proportion of residents who contributed so much to the work by responding to what was described by one person as:
'the never ending stream of green questionnaires.'
- ☺ the 'guinea pig' readers of the first draft
- ☺ Ellisfield Parish Council for its support
- ☺ Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council for the grant and officer advice on planning technicalities.

Pictures taken specially for this book by:
Peter Chilton, Tim Sullivan, Nigel Wilson

Additional pictures loaned by:
Roy & Pam Frankham, Ling & Peter Hopwood, Tim & Beverley Guinness, Chris Nicholou

Cover designed by:
Gill & Jan Kalinowski

Printed in Great Britain by Wyeth Print Group, Unit 5 - 6a, Old Ayelsfield Buildings, Alton, Hants, GY34 4BY

The copyright of any photograph remains with the owner who gave permission for its use and of articles with those who wrote them.

About the Planning System



The laws governing planning are very complex and Planning Consent is required before most forms of development can legally be undertaken.

Development is defined in The Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 as:

“the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.”

Planning Laws are made by Central Government but administered by Local Authorities, who are obliged to work within these laws. They have no ability to vary the rules to suit either themselves or a particular applicant. That is not to say it never happens but it is not legal and often the resultant prosecutions tend to make headlines.

Village Design Statements (VDS) fit into the system as an adjunct to the Local Plan, which is prepared by the District (in our case Borough) Council. The VDS is meant to clarify the plan as *it applies to a particular village* and is known as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It cannot change the Local Plan but it can make it clearer what is meant, within that village, by a particular clause in the plan.

Town and Parish Councils are Local Councils and are not Planning Authorities, though many of the larger ones would like to be. They are not even Statutory Referees for planning applications, they merely have the right to be consulted on their opinion and have no power either to grant or refuse consent. Their opinions are expected to be based on what are called material considerations, ie they must refer to planning matters and not to personal matters relating to the applicant. If someone asks for consent for a large building to house a new business, the fact that the person concerned has a bad reputation as an employer is irrelevant but the fact that the building is too large; will generate heavy traffic, or generally does not fit in with the Local Plan are material considerations.

Local Councils receive a copy of the plans for proposed development within a few days of the application being made and can make them available for inspection by villagers.

Advice and useful booklets on the subject can be obtained from:

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council,
Planning & Transportation Department,
Civic Offices,
London Road,
Basingstoke, RG21 4AH.

The Borough Council switchboard number is 01256 844844 but a personal visit to the offices, which are open to the public, is advisable as it is easy for misunderstandings to arise over the phone.

Boundaries

Ellisfield's shape is roughly rectangular with its perimeter largely following field boundaries.



This frame contains the village of Ellisfield, 2349.48 acres of varied complex landform and about 300 equally varied and complex inhabitants.

