



GOOD EASTER

Village Design Statement



Planning guidance.
Approved by Chelmsford Borough Council.
June 2008.

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1.1 Purpose

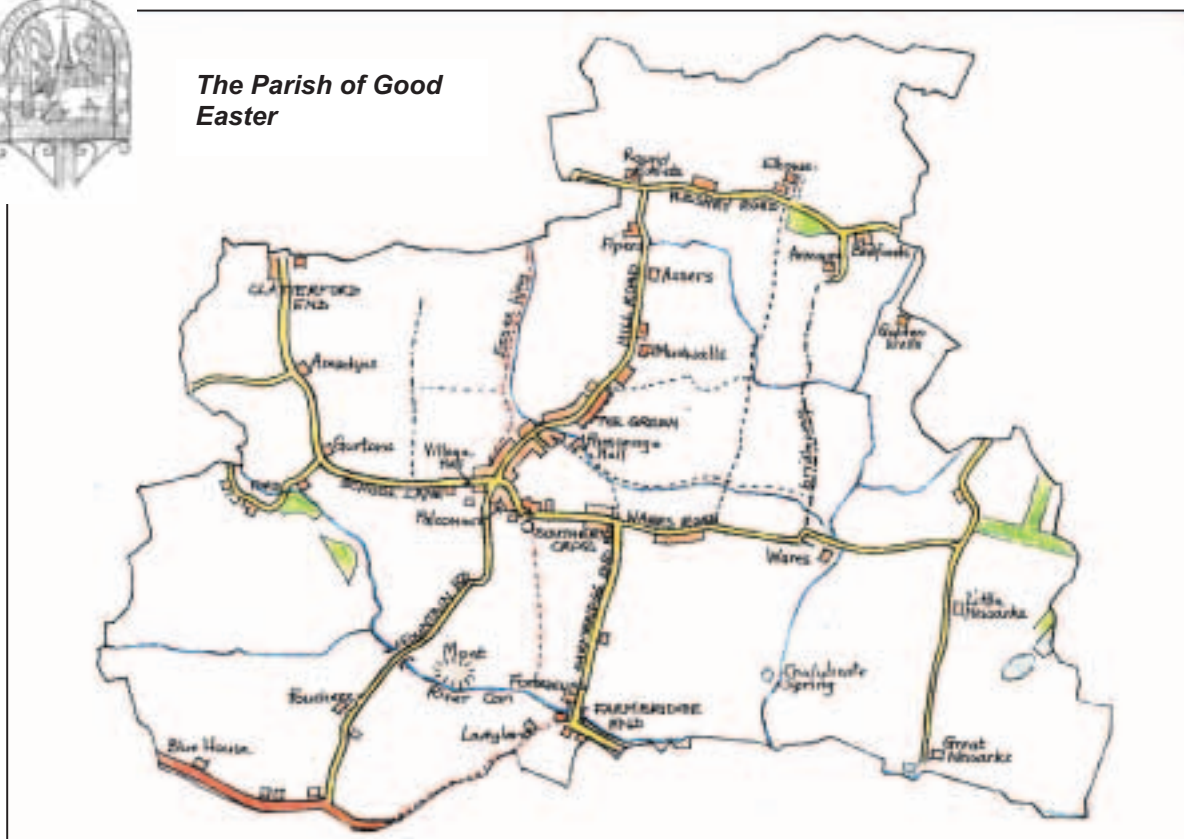
The historical background of the community;
It's setting in the countryside;
The form of the settlement as a whole;
The characteristics of the buildings and spaces within the village, and to express the views of the community on any future development of the village by:

- Giving guidance to property owners and developers in adopting designs which are acceptable to the local community.
- Promoting the use of appropriate building materials
- Ensuring that the valued physical qualities and characteristics of the village, including spaces and village surroundings are protected or enhanced.
- Assisting the local planning authority in their determination of planning applications and assisting the community when considering making any physical change to property.

Although the village is central, this VDS relates to the whole of the parish of Good Easter as shown in the map below. (See page 6 for a plan showing location of Good Easter in the wider area)



The Parish of Good Easter



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1.3

Development of the VDS.

The process was a consultative one, led by a committee comprising six villagers with a number of volunteers giving support. Events included a photographic survey of the parish by 35 parishioners, followed by an exhibition of the photos, attended by 72 people who were invited to add their own comments and contributions toward the final VDS.

Next a questionnaire was delivered to every house in Good Easter giving people another opportunity to contribute their views. 113 completed questionnaires were collected representing 75% of those distributed. A Race Night organised by the committee and attended by many local people helped toward raising the funds needed to complete the VDS.

The draft VDS was presented to the Parish Council of Good Easter for comment, and on the 5th April 2008 to residents, where they were given the opportunity to influence the final draft.

(See appendix 2 for full report on preparation and consultation process)

1.4 Planning policy context.

Planning policy affecting Good Easter is contained in the Local Development Framework (replacing the Local Plan 1997), East of England Regional Plan and Government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG and PPS). The LDF sets out policies for development and change across the Borough as well as specific policies for the Defined Settlement and Development in the Countryside.

Good Easter is identified in the Core Strategy of the LDF as a Proposed Defined Settlement. The boundary will be defined in the forthcoming Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

The Village Design Statement was approved by Chelmsford Borough Council in June 2008 as planning guidance. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and serve as a consultation document for the Parish Council.

Policies relevant to Good Easter include:

POLICY DC2—Controlling Development in the Countryside beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Good Easter is surrounded by countryside and this policy seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and enhance its characteristics, whilst achieving a balance with the need to support rural businesses and people that live and visit the countryside.

POLICY DC13—Sites of Biodiversity and Geological Value.

Good Easter has two Wildlife Sites within the parish and identified on the Proposals Map. Ch3 River Can Complex and Ch12 Chalybeate Spring Meadow. See maps on page 7

The Borough Council is committed to protecting natural habitats and endangered plant or and animal species.

Policy DC17—Conservation Areas.

Development proposals in Conservation Areas must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area. Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority and are areas of special architectural or historic interest.

Policy DC18—Listed Buildings.

The Government “lists” buildings on the basis of their special architectural or historic interest. These buildings are subject to special planning controls over their demolition, partial demolition, alteration or extension in any manner which affects their special character. Good Easter has 21 listed buildings which include the village pump and the whipping post (now housed in St. Andrews Church).

The design of development is covered by core policies CP20 and CP21 and development control policies DC42 and DC45.

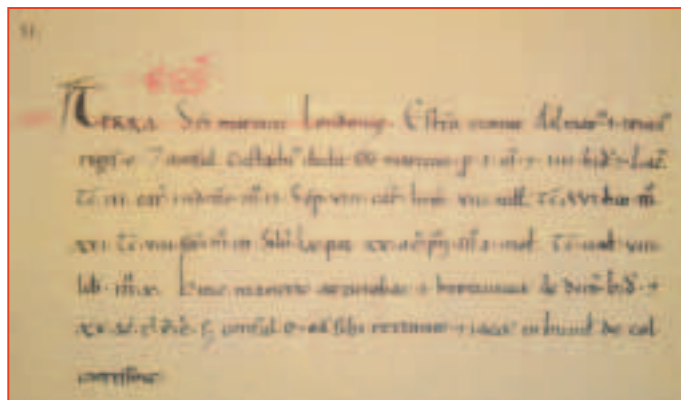
Agricultural change is covered by DC56 farm diversification and DC57 re-use of rural buildings.

Core Policy CP14 provides a direct link between VDS and local planning policy. The policy also sets the scene for the visual impact of all development proposals on the landscape.

A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) also exist along with CBC Residential Design Guidance and Essex Design Guide and it is important that these are taken into account during planning.

The VDS will be used by borough planning officers and councillors in their consideration of planning applications. The Village Design Statement gives guidance to developers and householders, which, if followed carefully will increase the possibility that the Parish Council will support their submissions and ensure that the physical change intended will respect village character and achieve improvement where appropriate.

2. A Brief History and Evolution



Extract from Domesday Book 1086



"Top Barn" – built in Norman times

There is any number of theories as to how Good Easter came by its name. In the Domesday Book it was written as plain Estra, perhaps derived from the Anglo Saxon Eowestre, meaning sheepfold. During the Roman occupation it was recorded as Godichestre, derived from Chestre, a word associated with a Roman camp or stronghold. It has also been known as Godicestra and Gods Estre, on account of the greater part of the land belonging to the church, and so to God. (The land belonged to the Collegiate Church of St Martin-le-Grand).

According to the Domesday Survey 1068, Estra was recorded as having a manor house, mill and a small settlement associated with these, held by Ailmer, a thegn of King Edward (The Confessor).

The original part of the parish church, St. Andrews was built in 1200. The parish then was known as the Prebend of Good Easter and the parish church a Prebendal Church.

Four prebendary farms, Paslowes, Imbers, Fawkeners (now Falconers Hall) and Bowers supported four clergy and paid great tithes to the Church of St Martin-le-Grand. The manors of Newark and Wares also belonged to the church. Paslowes is now just a nettle covered mound and a ditch that was probably the moat, next to the river Can between Fouchers and Farmbridge End. Bowers that had stood behind the Vicarage has also gone.

In 1492 Henry VIII transferred the church property of Good Easter to Westminster Abbey and in 1540 the stewardship of Good Easter was leased to Sir Richard Riche once the King's Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Commons, who had no links with the church. In 1620 the land passed into private hands. Henry VIII is reputed to have had a house, now demolished, in Heyrons Lane to the north of the parish, where he kept a mistress.

In 1623, a map known as the Walkers Map shows the few buildings that comprise the village, mostly centred round what is now the conservation area. The shape of the village is not dissimilar to what we are familiar with today, except perhaps for the crossroads at Souther Cross. In 1734 it is noted in the Freeholders Book that a mere seven residents owned their freehold. In 1769 the windmill was built by what is now the "Black Barn" on school road and the original Star Pub was first listed as an ale house.

The Chapman and Andre Map 1777 shows the small hamlet of Good Easter and scattered farms most of which survive today.

During the mid 1800's the village must have been almost self sufficient. The school was open to 25 boys and 25 girls. The 1848 directory of Good Easter records, two bakers, three shopkeepers a butcher, two ale houses – possibly the Star and the Hop Poles, blacksmiths, millers, carpenters and three shoe makers, with a population of about 500. In 1871 the new Vicarage was completed. It had its own well 53 feet deep.

The village hall, an ex army hut, sited opposite the school house, opened in 1921 and is still the centre for many village activities. Soon after the Second World War, a number of council houses were built along Souther Cross road, mostly now privately owned, and in 1960 the "new" Star public house built in front of the "old" Star, opened. The early 60's saw further development in Tye Green and the building of a small council estate of bungalows and houses in Old Croft close, also mostly now privately owned. Since then the United Reform (previously Congregational) church built around 1910 has been demolished and a house built on the land. In recent years the village has changed very little apart from the contentious building of a house within the Conservation area.

For those interested in the history of Good Easter, "Seven Miles from Everywhere on the Way to Nowhere" is recommended reading.



The **Chapman & Andre Map 1777** showing the development of the small hamlet of Good Easter and scattered farms, most of which survive today. Souther Cross was a cross roads, with a road going north west joining Mill Road at Tye Green. The bridleway from Wares farm to Bedfords was a roadway. Reproduced by kind permission of Phillimore & Co Ltd., Chichester, West Sussex.

3. The Parish Today—landscape setting and character



In a peaceful rural setting, approximately 7 miles NW of Chelmsford, Good Easter village sits on relatively high ground surrounded by farmland with many of the houses hidden by large trees and the distinctive wooden church spire being the most visible aspect from most approaches. There are a number of green lanes that meet at the crossroads in the centre of the parish together with an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. The centre of Good Easter lies on the 68m contour line and the land drops away to the south down to the River Can 1/2 mile away at 44m, to the north it rises to 75m on the parish boundary.

The village lies on the edge of well drained boulder clay and is supplied with several springs of water, one of which at Wares Farm was reputed to have “medicinal virtues”. The land, predominately arable with irregular field patterns despite rationalisation, is surrounded by deep ditches draining down to the boggy flood plain.



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Most of the fields are divided by hedgerows of blackthorn, hawthorn, hornbeam, hazel, pussy willow, a bit of elm, ash and oak. The conservation and management of hedgerows is important to this area and replanting hedgerows should be encouraged. Additional tree planting helps maintain the traditional appearance and character of this landscape.

Three of the roads into the village from the south cross bridges over the River Can. Farm Bridge with its two arches and Horse Bridge on the Fountain Road, which needs attention to the brickwork, are attractive features and should be maintained. The bridge at Motts Green, built from concrete with ugly galvanised iron pipe railings, looks very utilitarian and if an opportunity arises could be improved with brickwork.



Farm Bridge with its two arches
unseen from the road



Horse Bridge



Motts Green Bridge with ugly galvanised
railing and concrete

The narrow roads feature wide verges, deep ditches and some strong hedgerows. Some of the scattered farmsteads still show signs of their original moats. A section of the moat by Imbirds is still visible opposite St Andrews Church, and the moat which surrounded Parslowes by the river Can is a Scheduled Monument.



The parish has an open yet wooded appearance with a well defined and extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. It includes a section of the Essex Way, a well used, long distance footpath running from Epping to Harwich.

The majority of villagers surveyed felt that the footpaths were important to them and stated that they used them frequently. Many said that the condition of the paths affected their use and that maintenance was important. Most of the paths within the parish are in good condition and well maintained. The footpaths are a significant feature of the village allowing access to farm land, the surrounding countryside and wildlife sites. They are also special because of the atmosphere or ambience created, for example under the canopy, as shown in the photo of the bridle way between Wares Road and Armours opposite.



The bridleway between Wares Road and Armours

The character of the village blends well with the surrounding countryside with its open farmland, established hedgerows and small pockets of woodland. Any high density development would spoil the character of the village and its environment.

The area is still surprisingly rural given the spread of urbanisation and the increase in major roads close to a large town like Chelmsford. However there is concern over the development relating to the expansion of Stansted Airport, development of the road transport infrastructure and associated retail and commercial outlets. There is also concern over the environmental impact of the airport, particularly noise, on such a quiet and peaceful village.

There are two designated Local Wildlife Sites within the parish containing habitats and species that are essential to protect in order to maintain the current levels of wildlife in Essex.

CH3 River Can Complex follows the south west side of the River Can and comprises grassland, woodland and scrub. The woodland south of the ford occupies an area of very wet ground. A number of species of uncommon flora are to be found in the area.

CH12 Chalybeate Spring Meadow is an area of grass swamp, scrub and fen vegetation and a valuable site for wildlife.

The majority of Good Easter respondents to the village survey made it clear that the views across arable land, to and from the village; the mature trees (some mentioned specifically), hedgerows and open spaces (including the sports field and Tye Green) were the most important and distinctive features of Good Easter. The character of the village is defined by these features and every effort should be made to protect them.



Designated Wildlife Sites within the parish

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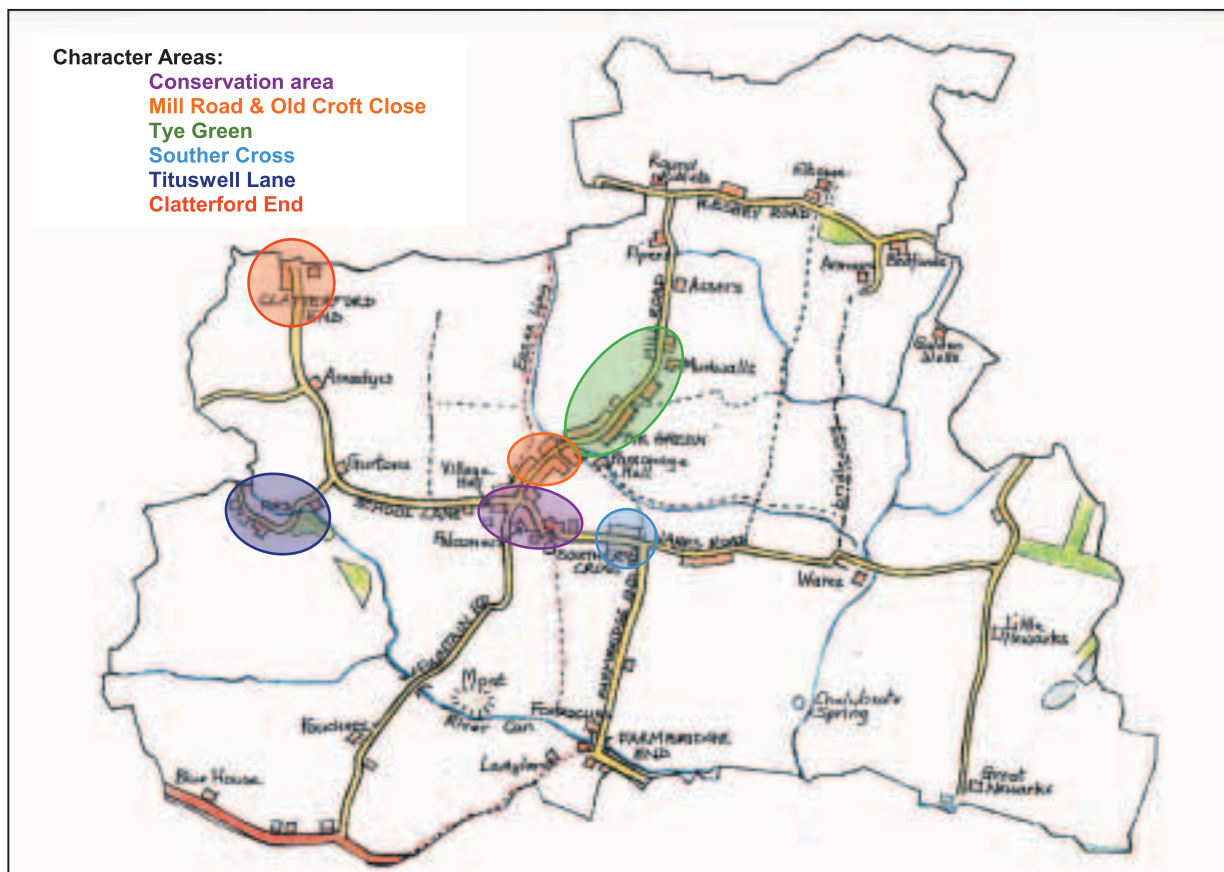
Guidelines:

- The conservation and management of hedgerows by local land owners is important to the parish and replanting of hedgerows should be encouraged.
- Additional tree planting helps maintain the visual appearance of the village.
- Farm Bridge and Horse Bridge are special features and should be maintained to preserve their character by Essex County Council.
- When an opportunity arises, the Parish Council might approach ECC Bridges Dept. to discuss whether Motts Bridge could be improved by replacing galvanised railings with brickwork.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that the village retains its quiet and peaceful atmosphere.
- Footpaths and bridleways should be maintained and their character preserved.
- Any new building will need to take into account the context of the location and respect the open aspect of the village – proposals for high density development are likely to be considered inappropriate.
- Development on arable land should be avoided
- Protection of ponds, copses, trees, greens and other landscape features are of great importance.
- New agricultural buildings should ideally be sited so as to minimise impact on the wider landscape by careful location or tree screening. Traditional designs and materials reflecting local character are to be preferred to more modern utilitarian prefabricated buildings which detract from the rural landscape.

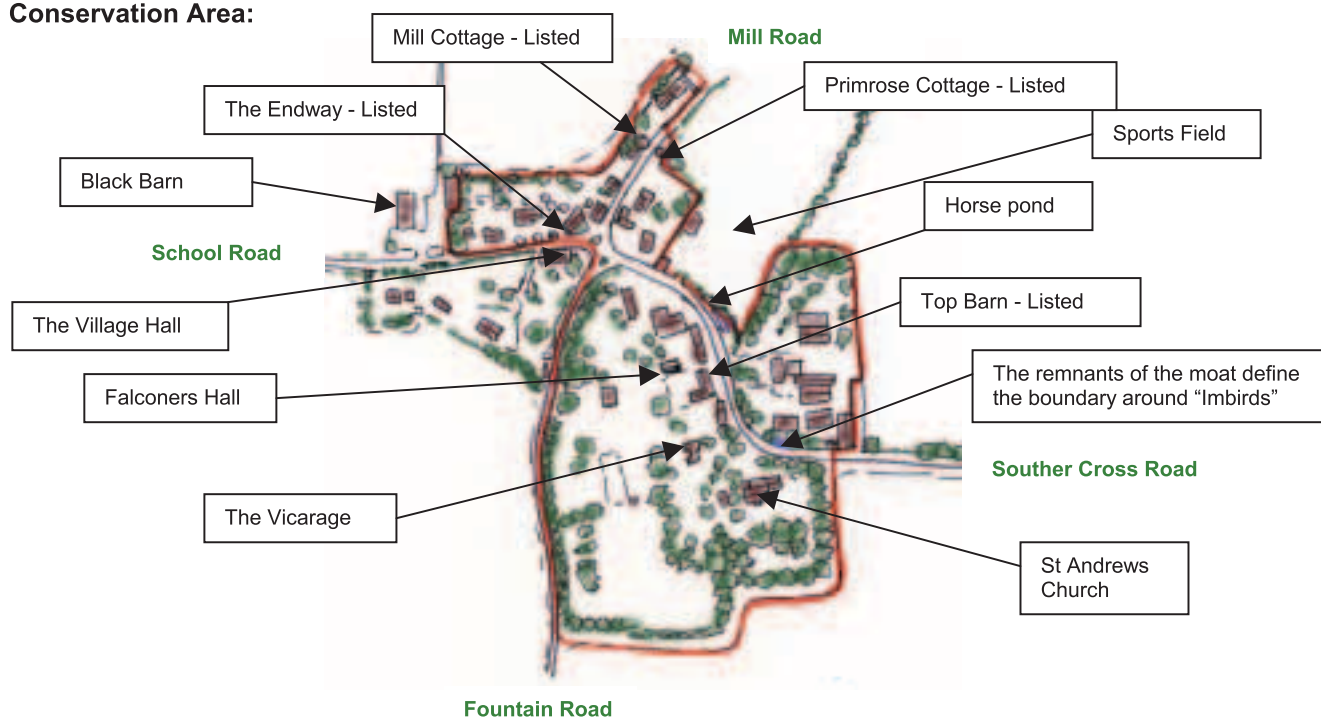
4. Character Areas and Settlement Pattern.

The parish consists of several “character areas” each with its own distinctive features. The **Conservation Area** is the centre of the village comprising the Churchyard, the central farm buildings and the junction of Mill Road, School Road, and Souther Cross Road.

To the north of the Conservation Area, the village has developed along **Mill Road** in a linear fashion, leading to the character areas of **Old Croft Close** and **Tye Green**. To the east of the Conservation Area lies another linear development, **Souther Cross**. Two small groups of houses – **Clatterford End** and **Tituswell Lane** lie in the countryside surrounding the village along with a number of outlying farm houses and cottages.



4.1 Conservation Area:



The Churchyard:



This area forms a distinct boundary on the southern and eastern sides of the built up area of the village. The most obvious edge is created by the historic barn (not listed) which has a side elevation fronting on to Souther Cross Road. A planning application has been submitted to develop Imbirds yard for livery stables and the thatched barn into a domestic property. An ideal solution for the location which will ensure the building doesn't eventually become derelict.



Imbirds and remnant of the original moat

The wooded area around the churchyard and the Vicarage, act as the southern boundary. This boundary is just as important and distinctive as the elevation of the barn because of the contrast between open fields and the relatively dense area of mature trees around the church and the Vicarage. The sharp bend in the road emphasises the visual enclosure of the village at this point. The moat on the inside of the bend adds to the distinctive quality of the village. Glimpsed views of the Vicarage which is a three storey Victorian building, add to the interest of this part of the Conservation Area.

Farm Buildings in the Conservation Area:

This area of the village may be regarded as the most distinctive, because of the "rural informality" of the buildings and the spaces created between the buildings. The only protected barn is the southern most building, known as "Top Barn" which was originally built in Norman times and is now listed. The other barns and farm buildings are equally important in visual terms, creating interesting spaces and glimpsed views of Falconers Hall. The farm buildings of Imbirds on the opposite side of the road combine with those around Falconers Hall to emphasise the agricultural significance of the village.



Top Barn



The horse pond with its road side railings is also a feature of this area also an important landscape feature.

The sports field is an important open area and amenity for the village, which would attract more people to use it if both the pavilion and the children's play area were refurbished and updated. The area also provides an opportunity for the Sports Field Committee to develop more sporting facilities, for example a tennis court. The view from the sports field toward the farm buildings and the trees surrounding the church is particularly attractive. The telephone exchange at the south west corner of the sports field with its rather urban close board fencing detracts from the area and needs improvement. Planting would screen the fence from view.

The junction of Mill Road, Fountain Road, School Road and Souther Cross Road:

The third area, around the road junction, is made distinctive by the partial enclosure created by the buildings including the village hall, with the village sign acting as a focal point. Interesting views are created for the eye to follow, down Mill Road, and School Road. Interesting angles are created by the different roof pitches of Old School House, which contrasts sharply with the half-hipped roof line of Endway cottage, a listed building on the north west corner of the cross roads. The sign post might perhaps be more appropriately placed in the centre grass triangle.

Northwards from the junction past the recently built Holly House, the view unfolds along Mill Road past the diminutive Primrose Cottage which was built in the 18th Century. The open piece of land opposite Primrose Cottage affords views across fields to the north of the village. The Essex Way leaves the road here and runs along the back of the houses, all of which have lovely views across to the Hockey Oak and beyond. The pathway is several metres wide and almost creates a rural street scene with the gardens and garden gates backing on to the wide path.



Primrose Cottage

Along the southern route out of the village (Fountain Road), there is a sudden opening just past Falconers Hall. This gives one of the best views from the conservation area of open countryside sloping away to the river Can in the south.

The cross roads is the centre of the village and has the potential to become more of a village square in appearance and be a space villagers could be proud of. In the past it was the scene of Morris dancing, fancy dress parades, men's races and used more as a public space. Today, although generally not busy, there are occasions when traffic, particularly through traffic passes through at speed.

Consideration should be given to recreating a village square and regaining what would once again be a key public space that can be enjoyed by people, over and above simply accommodating cars travelling through.

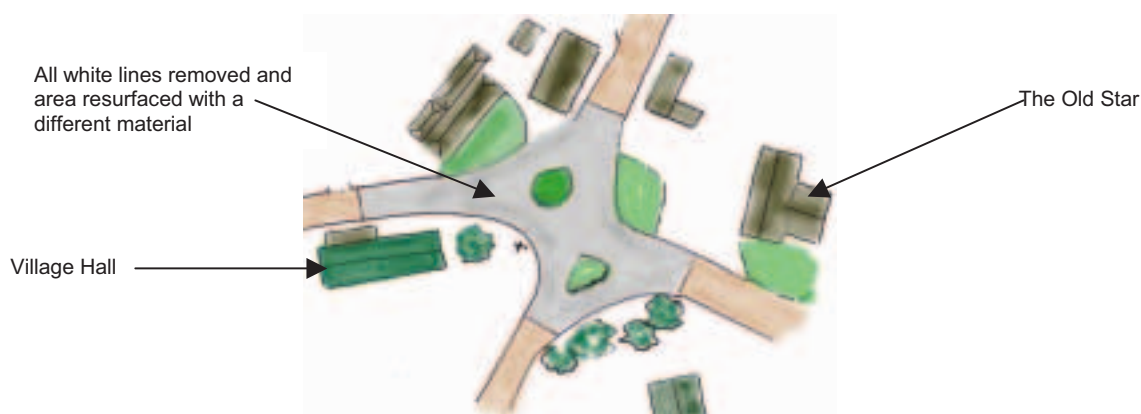
The concept of shared space is not new. Design changes, such as subtle alteration to the road layout, resurfacing treatments and removal of white lines forcing drivers to read their surroundings and drive more safely, has been applied successfully in a number of places. As an example the two photographs below show a junction in Norton St Phillip and a proposal by Hamilton Baillie Associates to the Parish Council for a new layout.



Existing layout of junction in Norton St Phillip



Proposed new layout



One possible suggestion for the Good Easter Cross Roads

Guidelines:

- The use of redundant farm buildings for light commercial use, appropriate to a rural village, is to be encouraged.
- The open areas and horse pond within the conservation area make an important contribution to the village scene and should, therefore, be protected from future development or infilling.
- It is preferable that older buildings be renovated rather than demolished.
- The design of new building or extensions within the conservation area should be of the highest quality.
- The trees, particularly round the churchyard, make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and anyone proposing to cut down or lop a tree, whether or not it is covered by a tree preservation order, has to give notice to Chelmsford Borough Council.
- Street furniture should be designed to reflect the historic character of the conservation area.
- Consideration should be given for Good Easter Parish Council working together with ECC Highways to create a village square at the crossroads by making subtle changes to the road layout and removing road markings.
- The Sports Field Committee is encouraged to refurbish or replace the Pavilion; to ensure the children's play area is fully functional and regularly maintained; and to develop more sporting facilities.
- The appearance of the rather urban close board fencing outside the telephone exchange would be improved by planting a laurel screen.

4.2 Mill Road and Old Croft Close:



Victorian farm cottages – Mill Road

From the conservation area, Mill Road curves to the right. Development on the south eastern side is relatively compact with, for the most part, dwellings of modest size on equally modest plots. On the north western side, development is more sporadic, with two storey houses, a detached house and three pairs of semi detached Victorian farm cottages on good size plots. Two of the Victorian Cottages are currently having extensions built, both set back from the original building line and neither extension dominating the original building. Although the land is generally about a metre above street level, the wide gaps between dwellings create an open aspect, offering views towards open countryside beyond. These gaps play a significant part in defining the character of this area.



Garden space between cottages

An outline application, with all matters reserved for future approval, was made in 2005 for two houses on the land between 2 Ivy Cottages and 1 Mill Road. The proposal went to appeal and was dismissed by the inspector. As Good Easter is a Proposed Defined Settlement Area there could be potential for infilling, but this would have to work within the context of the immediate location, reflecting the scale and layout of the farm cottages on neighbouring plots without compromising the open aspect of the existing street frontage, or be to the detriment of the rural character of the area.



Entrance to Old Croft Close

Opposite, on the south eastern side of Mill Road the road leads into Old Croft Close. Properties here are predominately two storeys, semi detached houses and several semi detached bungalows. Originally council houses built in the 1960's, most are now individually owned. They are of brick construction with part rendered elevations under concrete tiled roofs. The well maintained houses have small front gardens with a mixture of boundaries consisting of hedging, fencing and low brick walls.

The roadside is paved and has sodium street lighting both of which are inappropriate for a rural village and give the area a more suburban appearance. The Old Croft Close development could be improved by making the road entrance pedestrian priority and changing the lighting to more traditional cast iron lamp posts. The lack of integral parking spaces and garages within the property boundaries has led to a significant number of vehicles being parked on the roadway.

The parking and garage area at the back of Old Croft Close (owned by Chelmer Housing Partnership Ltd) has an air of dereliction and is an opportunity for improvement. Lighting, landscaping and planting would make the area more attractive and encourage more car owners to park there.



Garages and parking at rear of Old Croft Close



Small green in Old Croft Close

Within this small development and at the northern end, there is a tiny enclosed, triangular green, which is crossed by a footpath. This is bordered one side by small modern terraced houses facing on to the green with wild hedgerows on the opposite edge. The absence of vehicle access and the maintenance carried out by residents makes this an attractive and quiet area.

Guidelines:

- Pending the alignment of the Proposed Defined Settlement boundary, there could be potential for infilling along Mill Road. Any development would have to work with the context of the immediate location reflecting scale and layout.
- Consideration should be given to improving the entrance to Old Croft Close. Old Croft Close was built to urban highway standards which are inappropriate for a rural setting. Carriageway radii at the junction with Mill Road could be reduced and the roadway reduced in width. A curve could then be introduced to the reduced width carriageway. Green verges could replace footpaths and the entrance made pedestrian priority.
- The parking and garaging area could be improved with lighting, landscaping and planting to encourage more car owners to park there. Painting the garage doors would also be an improvement. The Parish Council is encouraged to discuss improvements with Chelmer Housing Partnership Ltd.
- Concrete lamp posts with sodium lighting within Old Croft close and along Mill Road are inappropriate and not in keeping with the rural environment could be replaced with more traditional lamps.
- As well as ensuring building design is appropriate to local context, urbanising features are not considered appropriate for Good Easter. This includes footways, concrete kerbs, street lighting, too much signage, modern walls and close board fencing.

4.3 Tye Green:

The section of Mill Road which runs through Tye Green has the general appearance of a rural lane. It is narrow and winding with some of the properties set well back from the road on good size plots with open frontages.



Mill Road – a rural lane



The houses are varied in age and style and are mostly set well apart. A mixture of old and relatively modern houses surround the small green.

Tye Green begins on the north side of Mill Road immediately after a gap into the fields where the road starts to curve to the left, with two fairly modern detached brick houses set back from the road. Then a pair of two storey, detached, listed buildings, “Cobblers” (Listed building) with a single storey weather boarded annexe that was once a cobblers hut, recently rebuilt and set right on the road side, it’s original site; “Tye Green Cottage” (Listed building) set closer to the road and partially hidden by a tall hedge; Willow Tree Cottage, with its side elevation to the road and recently completed extension, also hidden to some degree behind a tall hedge, completes this small group of old houses.



Willow Tree Cottage

The next group of four two storey detached houses were built during the early 1960’s on what was agricultural land and chicken huts. The development is fairly compact, follows the line of the road, filling in what was a large gap between the much older properties and to some extent blocking the views towards the open countryside behind.

The last house on the north eastern side of Tye Green is “Chestnuts” built in the late 18th Century with white rendered walls and slate roof, was once a village shop.

“Chestnuts” oak heritage style car port and recently added porch with oak supports enhances the property. The road side boundary is beech hedging, but the most dominating feature is the chestnut tree which has a preservation order, and is estimated to be 250 years old. The tree stands fairly close to the road and has a partner on the other side of the road in the garden of “Jasmin Cottage”, which is estimated to be some 50 years younger. The two trees add considerably to the character of the area. All of the houses on the north eastern side of the road enjoy unobstructed views over open countryside from their rear gardens.

From the end of Chestnuts property there are no further houses on the north eastern side of the road in Tye Green and the lane from here on is bordered by a ditch and wild hedgerows with occasional gaps giving access for farm equipment.



The Village Pump



The village pump on Tye Green

On the south eastern side of the road, the green, which is triangular in shape, plays a significant part in defining the character of this area. On its southern edge, the green is enclosed by wild hedgerows and on the eastern edge by a narrow water course and trees. A distinctive feature is the village pump (a listed structure).

The green has been improved by cutting the boundary of nettles right back, exposing the water course to view and also partially enlarging the green. The green is an important visual space. Although the roadside edge of the green suffers from damage by heavy vehicles, bollards or any type of fencing would spoil the rural character of the area.

Behind the green is Parsonage Hall, set well back and almost invisible through the trees from the road. On the south eastern side of the road there is a mixture of old and relatively modern houses and bungalows. Although less compact, views of open countryside between them are few because the land that some of them are built upon is between one to two metres above the level of the road.

Tye Cottage built in the 60's on the north eastern edge of the green adds interest by lying at an angle to the road rather than following the line of the road. Next to it, Lucas Garden Cottage, is a three storey house that has recently had a double integral garage with a room above added, which considerably enhances the property. From here the development of houses on the south side of Tye Green is very varied. Two modern houses with dormer windows, one built on the site of the demolished Victorian United Reform Chapel, the other replacing a two bedroom bungalow that had a corrugated iron roof. Then "Jasmin Cottage" that was four small terraced houses at one time with the side elevation facing the road and a large extension forming an L shape; followed by two small bungalows probably built in the 60's, set fairly close to the road on small plots. Up to this point the road feels enclosed by the chestnut trees and properties on either side, and also by the properties built a metre or so above road level.

The large garden of "Gages" running parallel with the lane creates a long gap between the few remaining houses and provides a sense of leaving the village. The bungalow built just after the Second World War, with its side elevation to the road, is sheathed with oak panels and has classic views across fields to the south. Beyond Gages another large gap allowing entrance for farm machinery also affords open views to the south towards Chelmsford.

Leaving the village, the last group of houses includes Mud Wall Farm with its distinctive Pargetting, featuring an oak tree complete with owl on the side wall and a fox by the front porch. The detached house is set well back from the road with simple stock fencing. Next door "The Kennels" a pair of semi detached farm cottages appear to have been built around the turn of the century, but in fact the one on the right disguises a house probably built during the 16th Century and later skimmed with bricks. Both set back from the road on good sized plots.

Guidelines:

- Any new building should reflect its context in terms of design, siting and materials.
- Reasonable spaces between properties should be maintained
- Cutting the boundary of nettles right back and exposing the water course to view has enhanced the visual aspect of the green and should be maintained.
- Consideration should be given to providing a bench seat on the green.
- Parking should be discouraged on the green as it visually spoils what is a communal space. Bollards or fencing should be avoided as it would spoil the rural character of the green.
- White lines and carriageway markings should be removed to enhance the rural appearance.
- The views across open countryside enjoyed by residents from their rear gardens should be respected.
- The rural lane appearance should be preserved and wide informal verges maintained.

4.4 Souther Cross:

Souther Cross is located to the east of the village and stands apart from the central part of the village. The houses within the area were originally built as council houses, the majority of which have been sold to the occupiers under the government's right to buy scheme and the remainder are owned by Chelmer Housing Association.

The development is separated from the village by fields either side of Souther Cross Road for approximately a third of a mile. On the north side, the road is bordered by blackthorn and hazel hedging, and on the south side there are attractive views across open farm land. The view from Souther Cross toward St Andrews Church and the mature chestnut trees surrounding the church, are also an important characteristic of this area. The views and sense of space along this section of the road are in complete contrast to the sense of enclosure passing through Souther Cross.



Souther Cross Road

The small development begins with the four one bedroom, terraced bungalows on the west side of Farmbridge End Road, which leads into the village from the A1060 and just before the junction with Souther Cross Road. The bungalows built in 1960 are of conventional design and set back from the road. The plots are small with hedgerow front boundaries, which provide a degree of screening and wide grass verges. All have fine country views across the road in front of the bungalows. The junction of Farmbridge Road, Souther Cross Road and Wares Road to the east, has an open rural feel, with views to the north across open countryside and east along the wooded hedgerows of Wares Road. A magnificent oak tree stands just a few yards away.

A small green area on the south west corner of the junction adds to the sense of spaciousness, which is lost when used for parking vehicles. Parking on this green should be discouraged.



Pebble Dash Cottage built 1938

From the junction, the remainder of the houses are on both sides of Souther Cross Road which runs from east to west into the village. Turning west into Souther Cross Road and on the north side of the road are a two pairs of red brick and pebble dash semi detached three bedroom cottages with a pair of semi detached pebble dash bungalows between them. All were built in 1938, and were the first houses to be built in Souther Cross. A ditch separates them from the road and they are hidden to some extent by mature hedges and coniferous trees. Behind these houses there is a small parking area with a single garage that could be used to park more cars.



Airey Homes – Souther Cross

The next two pairs of semi detached houses on the north side are "Airey Homes" prefabricated houses named after Sir Edwin Airey, who originally developed the design. The houses built in 1947 were constructed from pre-cast concrete panels when resources were in short supply after the Second World War.

Three of the houses have been modified to meet current building regulations and now have brick exteriors.

On the south side of Souther Cross Road there are two rows of three terraced houses and then two pairs of semi detached houses, all built in 1955. The properties are set well back from the road with long, south facing rear gardens backing on to agricultural land. All have good views over open countryside sloping down to the River Can. Although the houses are rather plain in design, a few have been improved by alterations, extensions and garden design.



Parking in Souther Cross

Parking is a problem in Souther Cross Road, resulting in erosion of verges and the edges of the roadway when large vehicles find it difficult to get past parked vehicles.

A ditch runs along the front of the properties which some residents have bridged in order to park their cars off the narrow road. A solution might be to encourage some residents and Chelmer Housing to enlarge the foot bridges across the ditch to allow access for cars to be parked off road. It is important not to lose the ditch or the verge as this contributes to the character of this area. A number of the existing bridges have rather unsightly, utilitarian galvanised railings as a safety feature. These would look more attractive if they were uniformly painted or replaced by wooden rails.

The parking area behind the north side of Souther Cross Road (owned by Chelmer Housing) is used by very few car owners. In the past there has been damage to cars and cars broken into. Perhaps clearing the area and effective lighting would encourage more residents to park here rather than on the Souther Cross Road



Parking area behind Souther Cross Road

Guidelines:

- Green spaces are an important asset to the amenity of the immediate area and vehicle parking on the green space on the south west corner at the junction of Farmbridge End Road and Souther Cross road is discouraged.
- Consideration should be given to enlarging foot bridges across the ditch to allow access for cars on this narrow road to be parked off road.
- Verges and the ditch should be retained.
- Safety railings could be improved in appearance if they were uniformly painted or replaced with wooden railings.
- More car owners could be encouraged to use the parking space at the rear of the north side of Souther Cross Road if the area was cleared and effective lighting provided. The Parish Council is encouraged to discuss improvements with Chelmer Housing Partnership Ltd.
- The open space between the houses of Souther Cross and the Church should be maintained to enhance the open aspect of the village.
- Current linear building lines should be maintained.

4.5 Outlying areas:

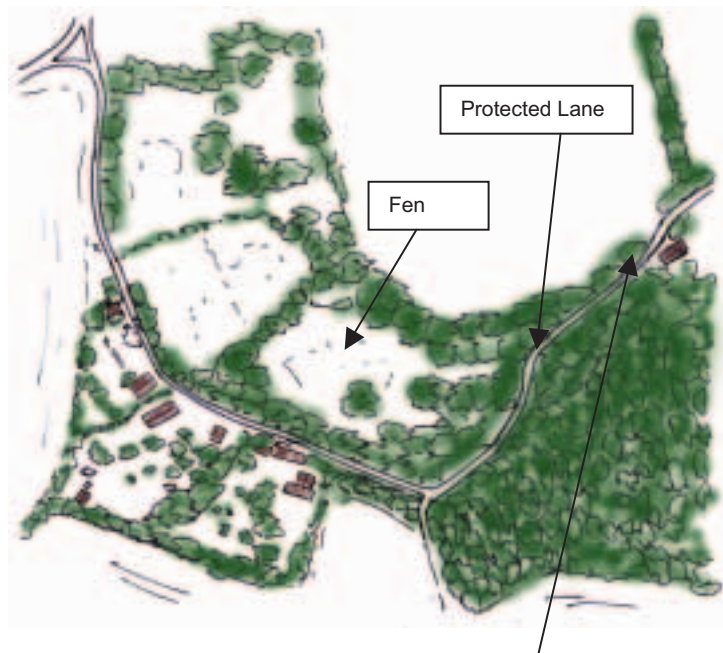
Outside of the village area and around the edge of the Parish there are a couple of small communities with five or fewer houses and numerous individual houses separated by farmland.

Tituswell Lane

The cluster of buildings in the lane comprises four dwellings, three of which are 17th – 18th century timber framed and plastered cottages with thatched and part thatched roofs. The remaining house is of 20th century construction, having been converted from a bungalow to a house in the 1990's, and has rendered elevations. The lane is bordered by wild flowers and flanked by fen meadows and woodland, much of which has been identified as a "Site of Importance for Nature Conservation". Tituswell Lane has been designated a Protected Lane by Essex County Council, and has considerable historic and landscape value. These originate from pre-historic track ways through forest, and later lanes used during Saxon and Medieval periods. Their character should be preserved by protecting their features both within and beyond the highway boundary. The local authority will control the volume, weight and speed of vehicular traffic using these lanes to avoid damage to their amenity and historic character. At the east end of the lane it crosses the River Can where the ford is usually two to three feet deep making it unsuitable for through traffic. A raised footbridge allows pedestrians to cross.

Clatterford End

Clatterford End is a small community of houses situated on the western edge of the parish on the road between Good Easter and High Easter. The hamlet of five houses is a mixture of properties, one of which is a thatched cottage and another displays the date 1660.



The ford – Tituswell Lane



Guidelines:

- It is important that the openness, character and appearance of the rural countryside within the parish are protected from inappropriate development.
- The green spaces between communities should be maintained.
- Agricultural or other essential rural development must be of a scale that is sympathetic to the rural landscape character and the impact reduced by careful tree screening.
- It is important that the fen meadows and woodland along Tituswell Lane are protected as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Tituswell Lane is a designated Protected Lane having considerable historic and landscape value. The character should be preserved by protecting the features both within and beyond the highway boundary.

5. Housing and Development (General design guidance):

5.1 Character and mix of buildings:

Good Easter has developed very slowly over the centuries and now there are only 153 houses within the parish. They are very diverse both in age, architectural style, and construction. No single type dominates. Buildings are timber framed with roofs that are thatch, tile or slate, while exteriors are brick, render, plaster or weather-board.

Many of the properties are set back from the road either with open fronted gardens, hedges or low timber fencing.

Apart from the small developments in Souther Cross, Old Croft Close and Tye Green, most new developments have been extensions or rebuilding on existing sites, replacing existing properties.

5.2 New Buildings:

New buildings within the parish would appear to be inevitable and would need to be well managed. If development must take place it should reflect the variation of styles that characterise the village. If existing context allows, front gardens are desired, thus avoiding the urban appearance created when properties front directly on to the highway.

It would not be in keeping with the character of the village to have a development of many buildings on one site. Any new development should reflect the rural nature of the village, ensuring that it blends together with the present mix of old and modern buildings.

It is preferable to keep any new development within the parish to infill sites, and extensions to existing properties, as opposed to a large development, on one site. Open spaces between properties that provide views that contribute to the character of the village should be respected.

Guidelines:

- Alterations or new buildings should blend with existing and nearby buildings.
- Rooflines should be no higher than surrounding buildings.
- Buildings should generally front the street and be set back from the road providing it is in context.
- Reasonable spaces should be maintained between properties to maintain the rural ambience.
- Traditional materials and colours should be used for new buildings, extensions or refurbishment.
- A more rural appearance is gained by treating garages that are not integral with the main property as separate agricultural buildings and not necessarily copying the original building.
- Landscaping and boundaries should be consistent with the rural location.

5.3 Extensions and roof extensions:

Recent development has generally blended well with the village street scene with traditional pitched tile roofs, wall finishes and features. With care and good design, extensions can enhance the appearance of a property and not affect the street scene adversely. Choice of materials for walls and roofs are important.

Careful consideration should be given to the type, size and location of dormer windows. Used increasingly in loft conversions they should conform to the guidelines with regard to scale and materials.



An attached garage built to reflect the original house design – Mill Road



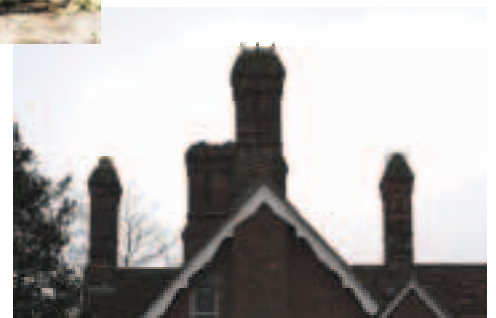
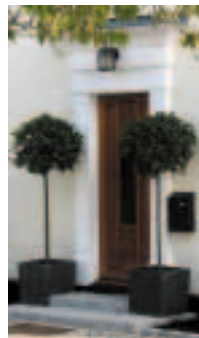
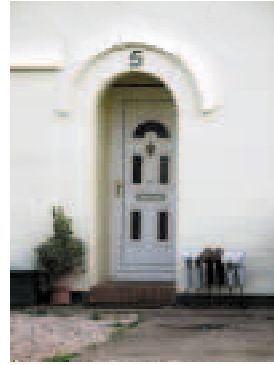
A matching extension – School Road

Well proportioned dormers with pitched roofs reflecting the overall scale and character of a building enhance the appearance, but if not treated sympathetically, dormer extensions can cause problems for immediate neighbours and the street scene viewed as a whole. Velux type roof windows should not be encouraged on front elevations as they may have a detrimental effect on the buildings character. Windows and doors should be designed to complement the age and style of the original building. The design of doors and windows can have a considerable impact on the appearance of a building. Householders and applicants are encouraged to make use of the Design Guidance issued by Chelmsford Borough Council.

Guidelines:

- Careful consideration should be given to any extension, including the relationship with neighbouring properties and boundaries in respect of privacy from overlooking and daylight requirements.
- Extensions should be in proportion to the original building and not dominate. External materials and design including windows and doors should complement the original building and respect the character of neighbouring properties.
- The visual impact of dormer windows on the street scene is important and the type, size and location of dormer windows should be considered carefully. Traditional pitched roof designs are more attractive than flat roofs and more in character with the rural environment of Good Easter. Dormers should not dominate roof slopes and be located away from front or prominent roof slopes.

6. Design Features: These are some of the design features of buildings and structures that contribute to the character of Good Easter, and should be preserved and where appropriate replicated in new build.



7. Local Industry:

Industry within the parish of Good Easter is predominately agriculture, although mechanisation means there is little opportunity for providing employment. Farming within the parish is mostly mixed arable with little diversification, and a pig farm.

There is some light industry to be found around the village and with the growth of personal computers and access to broadband an increasing number of people working from home.



The Black Barn- used for drying and storing grain

The questionnaire survey established that the majority of people thought that the existing level of industry contributes to the character of the village and only 30% would like to see more light industry encouraged into the village, but with guidelines.

Home working and the use of farm buildings were acceptable; noisy machinery would spoil the peace and tranquillity of the village and concerns were expressed that there would be an increase in traffic, particularly HGV's



Imbirds Farm

The recent application to Chelmsford Borough Council to convert the White Barn and pig breeding units at Imbirds Farm for use as a livery stable for up to fourteen horses, is an excellent example of a proposal that is appropriate for a small village such as this. Livery meets the planner's preference for commercial use of redundant farm buildings and has the advantage of being more rural in nature. It is unlikely to generate much traffic and will provide some part time employment for local young people. The conversion of the thatched white barn to residential use for a resident caretaker/manager, will prevent the buildings from becoming derelict and will enhance the appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Guidelines:

- Disused agricultural buildings are usually the only acceptable locations for industrial use in this rural area.
- Where agricultural buildings become redundant, those buildings of historic or landscape value should be retained and re-used. Where an agricultural building is demonstrably redundant and structurally capable of conversion, residential use should only be allowed where other employment or community use options have been exhausted and conversion can be carried out without adversely affecting the buildings historic structure, character, appearance and setting.
- Small scale retail and hospitality would be very beneficial and add character to the village.

8. Summary of Findings and Future considerations:

This **Village Design Statement** set out to **reflect the views of the residents of Good Easter** and to provide guidance when designing new buildings, altering existing buildings or working in green spaces. It **provides design guidance** which is intended to **protect and enhance the unique character of the parish**.

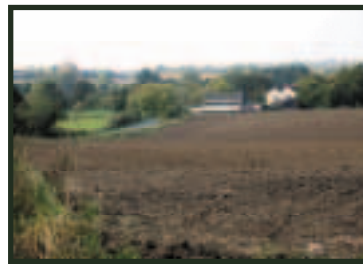
People like living in Good Easter. It is a place where people want to live, largely because of its tranquillity, sense of community and very little crime.

Most residents made it clear in the village survey that the **views across open country** to and from the village; the mature trees; hedgerows and open spaces, were the **most important and distinctive features of Good Easter**. The character of this rural village is defined by these features and every effort should be made to protect them.

Favourite views include:-



Looking north from
Wares Road



From near the top of
School Lane looking
west towards Gurtons



Looking north from the
rear of houses in Tye
Green



From just past Falconers
Hall looking south towards
the river Can and the
A1060

The questionnaire survey determined that approximately half the people living in Good Easter thought that **a small development of new houses was acceptable**. However because the village is in such a rural location with low density housing, and with an open character, it is important that **any development should not impact existing residents**.

As Good Easter is a Proposed Defined Settlement it is considered that there may be potential for infilling along Mill Road, but this would have to work within the context of the immediate location reflecting the scale and layout of buildings on neighbouring plots and not compromise the open aspect of the existing street frontage or be detrimental to the rural character of the area.

There would be more **support for development of this nature** rather than larger scale development on one site.

The Defined Settlement boundary will be defined in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document which is unlikely to be adopted until next year (2009).

With the demand for millions of homes to be built over the next 20 years, and much of the demand apparently in the south east, there is **a growing concern about creeping urbanisation**. There is a strong desire to **protect the rural environment, the local community and lifestyles**.

Good Easter lies on the edge of the “intolerant zone” around Stansted Airport causing concern about the **environmental impact of expansion of the airport**, particularly noise on such a quiet and peaceful village.

Concern has also been expressed about the current **poor infrastructure and lack of amenities**. Over the past few years the Village shop and the post office have closed and the Star Public House allowed to close. The nearest bus stop is approximately one mile from the village on the A1060 and, although a private bus service run by a local company is provided through the village, it is very limited. There are still a number of houses not connected to the sewerage system that rely upon septic tanks. There is no gas supply to the village and the limited (11,000 volt) electricity supply is accessed by ugly overhead cables which are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions and overloading problems..

Any future development would have to take these issues into account.



Sports Pavilion in need of renovation

The sports field with its play area is an attractive open space and **an important community amenity**. It offers opportunities for a higher level of use particularly for the young people in the village, and would benefit from regular maintenance and more volunteers. The sports pavilion would also benefit from renovation or replacement.

Village **gateway signs** are common at the entrance to villages to ensure that drivers are aware of the fact that they are entering a residential area and that they are expected to reduce their speed, but they can be **designed to give a unique sense of place**. Consideration might be given to replacing the standard signs marking the entrance to Good Easter with gateways that are designed not to detract from the rural character of our village. Consideration should be given to replacing existing street furniture eventually, for signs **designed to enhance the visual identity of the village**



Standard village entrance signs



Repairs to Horse Bridge

Recent repair work carried out on Horse Bridge (included concrete posts and galvanised metal railings) detract from the character and appearance of this lovely old bridge over the River Can. It is understood that the railings are there for safety reasons and in mitigation they have been painted white. **Essex County Council** and in this case the County Bridges Department must be **encouraged to consult with Good Easter Parish Council** before any work (even minor work) is carried out in the parish.

Rural lanes are an **important characteristic of the parish** and care should be taken to protect them and the green verges from the urbanising effects of pavements and kerbing. Pleshey Road (Bedford's Hill) and Tituswell Lane are both **Protected Lanes** and should be preserved by protecting their features both within and beyond the highway boundary

It is important that the number of **road signs** is **kept to a minimum** within the village and consideration should also be given to the **removal of white lines**. Similar schemes have shown that if you create uncertainty in the mind of the driver, (uncertainty as to where the road edges are, and uncertainty as to who has right of way) they will slow down, look around and proceed more slowly.



Good Easter Cross Roads

The cross roads could possibly be redesigned to resemble **a village square** and used far more as a public space, perhaps with pedestrian priority. There is considerable support for developing this idea further.



Morris dancers at the cross roads 2002

Appendix 1 – Listed Buildings



Primrose Cottage



Mill Cottage



Cobblers



Tye Green cottage



Pipers



Bedfords Farm House



The Endway



Timothy Cottage



Titus



Blue House Farm



Fouchers



Top Barn



St Andrews



Pritchards House



Cumbers



Great Newarks



Assers



Parsonage Hall



Little Pipers

Appendix 2 - The Consultation Process

10.1. Events:

May 2004	VDS Presentation by Michelle Gardiner - Rural Community Council of Essex at the Parish Council meeting. Project to be discussed at next meeting.
July 2004	Documents regarding the VDS circulated to all Parish Councillors and agreement to publish an article in the village news letter.
Sept 2004	Decision taken by Parish Council to invite Michelle Gardiner RCCE to give a further presentation at a public meeting in the village hall.
Jan 2005	Presentation by Michelle Gardiner RCCE and Jamie Cole - Chelmsford Borough Council. Attended by 41 parishioners of whom 8 people put their names down to be on the committee and 12 volunteered to be supporters.
Mar 2005	The <u>first VDS meeting</u> held, chaired by Michelle Gardiner. A Constitution was agreed, arrangements for a bank account set up and three working groups to design the Photo Survey, a Questionnaire Survey and the final Report.
May 2005	The Inaugural Meeting- . The Chairman asked for a vote of acceptance and it was unanimously accepted by all 29 villagers present. Election of all the Committee members was proposed, seconded and agreed. £100 contributed by Parish Council to cover start up costs. Plans made for Photo Survey.
Jun 2005	Reports from working groups. Decision made to carry out Photo Workshop 1 st October 2005. Invitations to be sent to all Good Easter parishioners.
Aug 2005	Working groups give progress reports on Photo Fun day and Questionnaire Survey. A Race Night to raise funds was proposed and discussed.
Sept 2005	Three committee members attended a VDS Surgery at Keene Hall, Galleywood. Plans were finalised for the Photo Fun day and decision made to run an Exhibition of the work carried out on 19 Nov 2005. Flyers advertising the Photo Fun day and asking for a response delivered to every house in Good Easter by supporters.
Oct 2005	Photo Fun Day – A successful day attended by 35 villagers plus several who joined later in the day. Donations toward our costs were made by several parishioners and the WI were there to help make the day a success. Final plans for the Exhibition agreed.
Nov 2005	Exhibition- Very successful. 72 people attended and many added their comments to the work of the photographic teams. Once again help from the WI and those who helped with all the setting up, made the day a success.
Jan 2006	Race Night A huge success, with the village hall filled to capacity. Thanks were given for all the support from local people and for the contributions from local businesses that sponsored the event, boosting our funds.
Feb 2006	A small working group was formed to complete a draft questionnaire. The questionnaire survey will be used to give every household in the parish an opportunity to contribute and be involved in the final VDS.
Mar 2006	Questionnaire design completed with guidance from Jamie Cole of CBC Planning Department. A number of quotes obtained for printing and decision made to give the work to Lithospeed Ltd. Howe Street, Great Waltham.
Apr 2006	Questionnaire Survey – Questionnaires were delivered to 150 houses in the parish and 113 were collected, representing 75.33%. 76 were signed and put into a draw at the May Monday Club meeting. The prize, to be a three course meal (including a bottle of wine) at the Punch Bowl, High Easter.

May 2006	<p>Annual General Meeting – The chairman presented an account of the progress to date and events carried out by the VDS Association.</p> <p>The Treasurer reported on the first year accounts to May 2006 and the accounts were accepted.</p> <p>Election of Officers. Question and answer session.</p> <p>VDS Exhibition in St Andrews Church at Cream Teas event, well attended by a good cross section of the community.</p>
Feb 2007	Draft copy of VDS submitted to Jamie Cole – Planning Dept. Chelmsford Borough Council.
Apr 2007	Feed back received from Jamie Cole. Action to be taken to incorporate recommendations agreed.
Jun 2007	Working group completed outline structure of revised draft.
Jan 2008	Second draft copy submitted to Jamie Cole – Planning Dept. Chelmsford Borough Council.
Feb 2008	Schedule of suggested amendments received. Action to be taken to incorporate amendments agreed.
Mar 2008	Revised draft presented to Parish Council for comment.
Apr 2008	Revised draft put on display in the Village Hall for villagers to have an opportunity to influence and comment on final version. 58 villagers attended and feedback indicated strong support. Third draft submitted to Jamie Cole – Planning Dept. Chelmsford Borough Council.
May 2008	A report outlining the consultation process and content of the VDS was submitted to Chelmsford Borough Council Cabinet Members by Jamie Cole – CBC Planning Dept. and recommended for approval.
Jun 2008	<p>On the 3rd of June the Village Design Statement was presented to Chelmsford Borough Council Cabinet for approval as a planning guidance document by Councillor Neil Gulliver, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control. The Good Easter Village Design Statement was approved as Planning Guidance.</p> <p>The document can now be published and help influence change and improvement.</p>

Further copies of this document are available from:

Good Easter Parish Council
c/o Berkeley
Tye Green
Good Easter
Chelmsford
Essex. CM1 4SH.

Chelmsford Borough Council
Planning and Building Control
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1JE

10.2. Consultation:



add their comments.

Teams at work on the Photo Fun Day

At each key stage of the process the whole village was consulted and given the opportunity to express its views. The **Photo Fun Day** where villagers working in small teams spent the morning capturing the essential character of our village with disposable cameras and the afternoon assembling the material gathered and providing the core material for the basis of the character assessment included in this document.

The subsequent **Exhibition** where their work was put on display provided another opportunity for villagers to

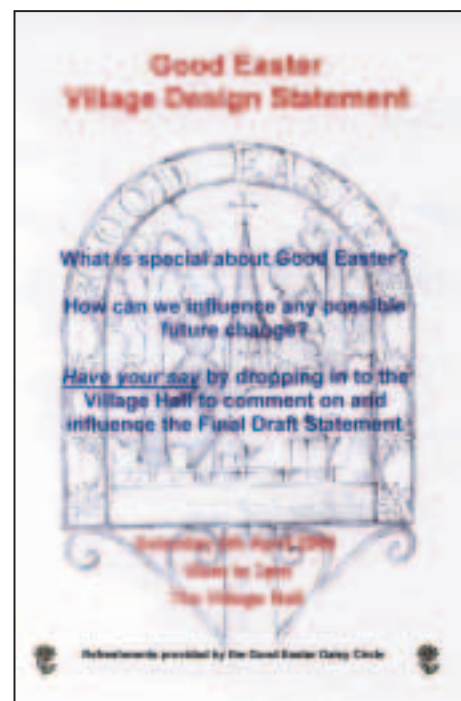


An exhibition of the work carried out by the six teams at the Photo Fun Day



A **questionnaire** was delivered to every house in Good Easter giving everyone an opportunity to contribute and be involved in the Village Design Statement, so that it represented the views of the whole community,

The **Village Design Statement** was **displayed** in the Village Hall to give villagers an opportunity to comment on and influence the final document.



Acknowledgements:

Good Easter Parish Council—For support and encouragement

Rural Community Council of Essex. (Michelle Gardiner) for technical support and guidance.

Chelmsford Borough Council. (Jamie Cole) for guidance and support.

The many **Villagers** who gave support along the way.

The members of the **Good Easter WI** for providing refreshments at most of our events.

Val Simpkins for her drawings.

Alex Clark for the front cover drawing.

Chapman & Andre map of 1777 Reproduced by kind permission of **Phillimore & Co Ltd.**, Chichester, West Sussex.



VDS Committee:

Pat Seeley (Chairman)

Gerry Smith (Vice Chairman)

Martin Allpress (Treasurer)

Maurice Bailey (Secretary)

Graham Seeley

Chris Larsen

In memory of:

Conrad Osborne — A founder committee member—for his financial support and creative thinking, who sadly died 21st August 2005.

References:

Local Plan (1997);

LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Development Plan Document, CBC (Adopted February 2008);

Making Places and Sustainable Development, Supplementary Planning Documents, CBC2007; Landscape character assessment, technical document to LDF, Chris Blandford Associates for CBC (2006)

Residential design guidance; side extensions and roof extensions, CBC (2004)

“Seven miles from everywhere on the way to nowhere” - The history of Good Easter.

“The Essex Landscape” by John Hunter.

Notes from a talk to Good Easter WI by John Earnshaw.

Hamilton-Baillie Associates – Projects

Brake the Road Safety Charity – Naked Roads

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