

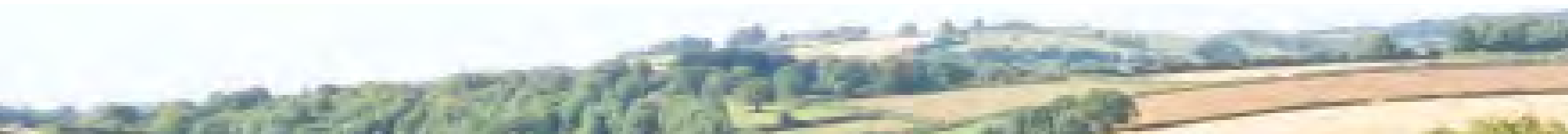
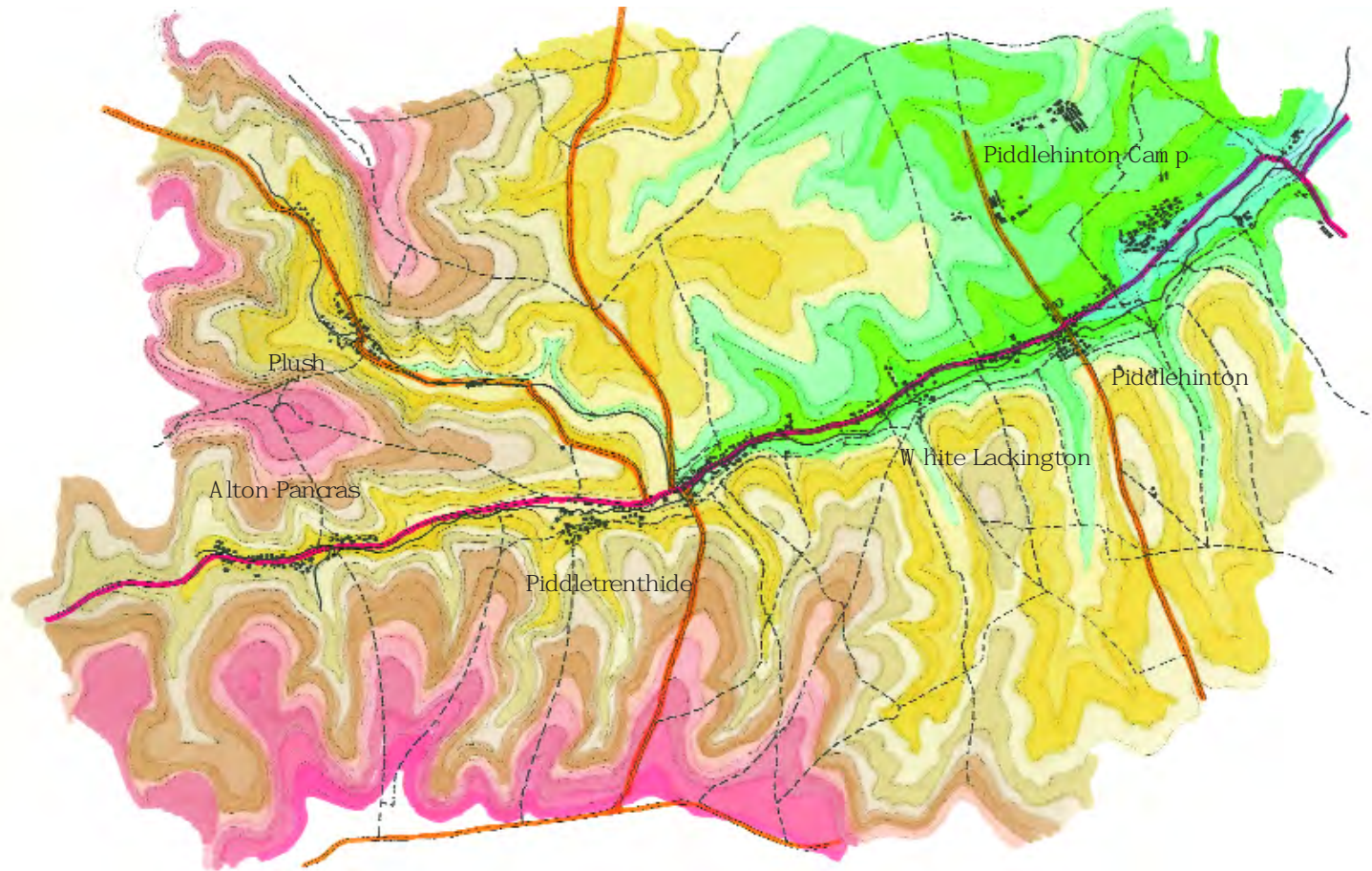
# *The Piddle Valley Design Statement*

Adopted by West Dorset District Council in November 2004  
and still current at October 2011

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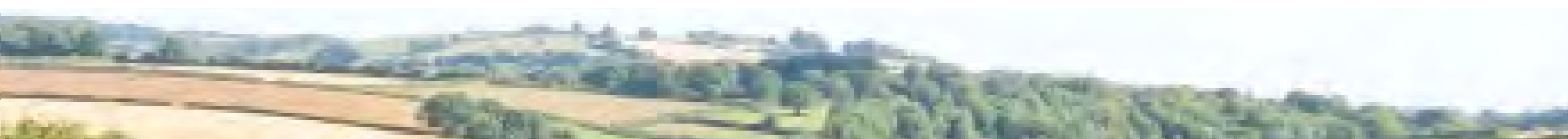
KEY

-  amenity landscape
-  cultivated gardens
-  woodland areas
-  listed buildings
-  other public building
-  conservation area
-  public road
-  footpaths
-  River Piddle
-  commercial premises



# contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	2	The Village Design Statement How was it produced ? How will it affect future development ?
<b>THE SETTING</b>	3	Location and Population Historical Context
<b>LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT</b>	6	The River Piddle Landscape Character Trees, Hedges and Field Boundaries Open Spaces Landscape and Environment Guidelines
<b>COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS</b>	12	Background Community and Business Guidelines
<b>SETTLEMENT AND TRANSPORT PATTERNS</b>	14	Background Settlement and Transport Guidelines
<b>THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	16	Alton Pancras Plush Piddletrenthide White Lackington Piddlehinton Piddlehinton Camp
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS AND DETAILS</b>	22	Walls Roofs Joinery Building and Development Guidelines
<b>LISTED BUILDINGS</b>	26	
<b>REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	28	



# introduction



## WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT ?

In 1993 the then Countryside Commission published *Design in the Countryside* which noted that the character of the countryside was under increasing threat from standardisation and poor design. The Commission proposed Village Design Statements as one mechanism for understanding and influencing future rural design.

The Village Design Statement (VDS) aims to record the characteristics, both natural and man-made, which are seen by the local community to influence the distinctiveness of the area and which need to be maintained and enhanced, and to recommend design principles based on this distinctive local character.

The VDS must complement and not contradict the Local Plan. It is about influencing change by stating how planned development can be carried out in harmony with its setting.

In order to describe the distinct characteristics of the area covered by the Piddle Valley Parish Council, details of the geographical setting, natural environment, history, economic development and present built environment have been included. From these, guidelines have been agreed which we hope will have a significant influence in future village design.

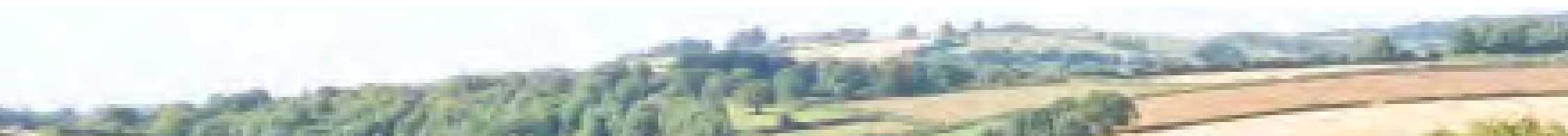
## HOW WAS THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT PRODUCED ?

The Piddle Valley Parish Council (PVPC) invited three councillors to investigate the advantages of producing a VDS. As a result, it was decided to proceed and a committee of seventeen consisting of councillors and other local residents was formed. A questionnaire led to an all-day workshop when comments from residents were recorded. Four groups then worked on the preparation of a draft document. After further editing and consultation, including an Open Evening, the Parish Council asked West Dorset District Council (WDDC) to adopt the VDS as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It was formally adopted in November 2004.

## HOW WILL THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT AFFECT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ?

It should help:

- to raise awareness of the local environment and provide guidance to ensure that development is in keeping with the character of the valley
- PVPC and WDDC, in considering planning applications
- householders, developers and architects, by ensuring that their proposals are in keeping with local expectations



# the setting

## LOCATION AND POPULATION

The Piddle Valley Parish Council covers the parishes of Alton Pancras, Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton, which are situated in the upper reaches of the River Piddle.

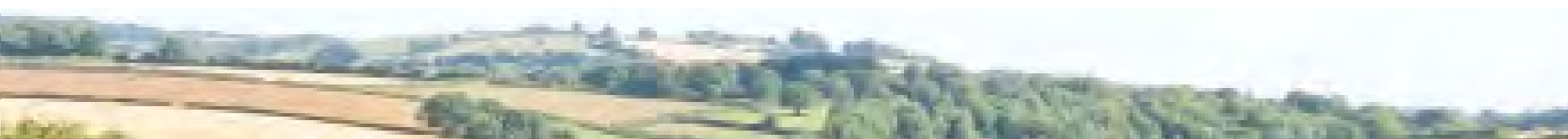
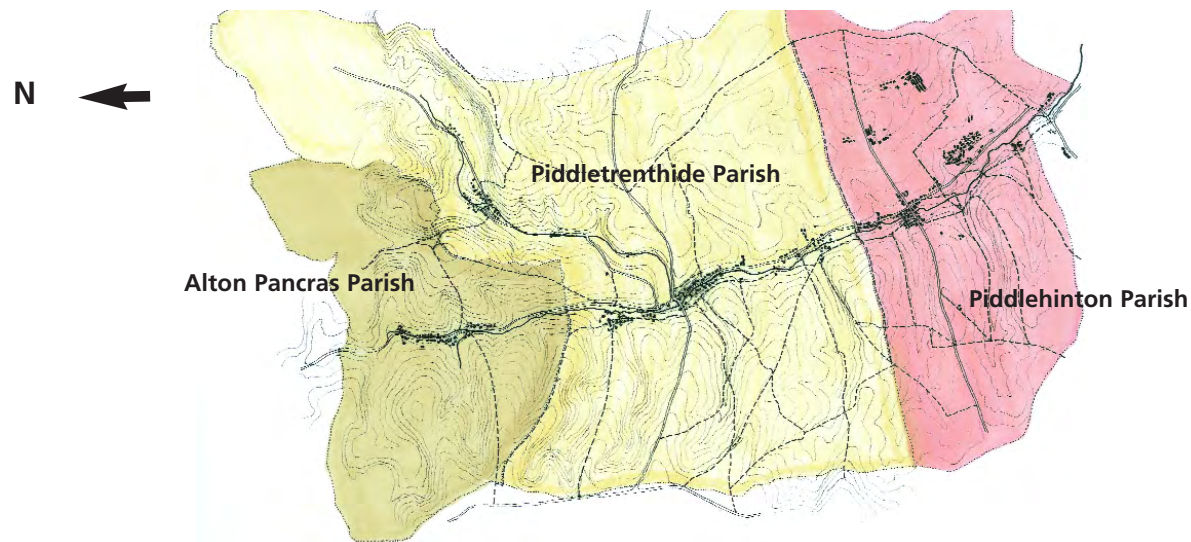
The Piddle Valley is in the heart of Dorset. Piddlehinton is some 6 miles north of Dorchester and Alton Pancras is approximately 9 miles south of Sherborne.

Piddletrenthide, with a population of 680 is the largest settlement, while Piddlehinton has 400 and Alton Pancras 140 residents. The parish of Piddletrenthide includes the smaller settlements of Plush and White Lackington.

The B3143 runs alongside the River Piddle from its source near Alton Pancras, southwards through Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton.



*The River Piddle north of Piddletrenthide*



# the setting



*Ancient trackway, looking south towards Piddletrenthide*



*Piddlehinton Church*



*B3143 in Piddletrenthide, looking north*

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The River Piddle is sometimes shown as the Trent, a name never used by locals. Trent is a corruption of the French for thirty; in medieval times Piddletrenthide was taxed for thirty hides.

The chalk hills surrounding the Piddle Valley bear witness to ancient man's presence. Round barrows, cross-dykes, lynchets and Celtic field-systems abound but the modern settlements are to be found in the bottom of the steep-sided river valley.

The Romans may have lived here. In about 1740 a mosaic pavement, presumed to be Roman, was uncovered near Piddletrenthide Manor. More certainly, West Hill at Plush was a Romano-British settlement. By Saxon times small settlements existed throughout the valley.

The Domesday Survey identified five 'Piddles'. One of these, Little Piddle (between Piddlehinton and Puddletown), had a population of 19. Piddletrenthide's three tythings were well established in medieval times, as were two settlements at Alton Pancras.

Churches give an indication of permanent settlements. All Saints, Piddletrenthide, was first recorded in 1,000 AD. St Mary's Piddlehinton has 13th century origins. St Pancras, Alton Pancras, has a Norman doorway, and St John the Baptist at Plush, now sadly redundant, occupies a site near the remains of the 12th century Chapel of Ease.

As may be expected in a river valley, water mills were important. Alton Mill, Church Mill, Manor Mill, Lackington Mill and Piddlehinton Mill are all mentioned in the Domesday Book - further evidence that the permanent settlements were well established before the Norman Conquest. In 1855, four millers were recorded in the Valley. Thereafter the mills gradually fell into disuse, the last to close being Piddlehinton, which was still being used as a sawmill in 1930.

The old settlements would have been affected by the plague, which came into England via Melcombe Regis in 1348. Fire was also a problem and destroyed 22 houses in Piddletrenthide in May 1654. The most recent major fire, in December 1933 in High Street, Piddlehinton, left three families homeless.

# the setting

Land ownership has the greatest bearing on the way settlements have developed since medieval times. Piddlehinton was granted to Eton College in 1422 by Henry VI as part of the College's endowment. Piddletrenthide also had an academic landlord; Henry VIII gave the Parish to Winchester College after the dissolution of the monasteries. It had previously been held by Hyde Abbey. Ralph Wightman, arguably Piddletrenthide's most famous son, attributed the different character of the two villages to the attitudes of the colleges. Eton may have been the more conservative as it did not allow a chapel in Piddlehinton. He says that in the late 19th Century, Piddlehinton had the church and one pub. By contrast, Piddletrenthide had the church, two chapels, five pubs and a Salvation Army meeting place. Alton Pancras, owned by a resident squire, had no pub or chapel. Piddletrenthide expanded considerably; Piddlehinton and Alton Pancras did not grow to the same extent. Winchester College sold its estate in Piddletrenthide in 1953 and Eton College sold its estate in Piddlehinton in 1966.

The villages largely escaped late Victorian development and the 1902 Ordnance Survey shows that the present-day appearance of the villages was largely fixed by then.

Local Authority housing appeared after the Second World War in Piddletrenthide, Piddlehinton and Alton Pancras. The County Structure Plan of 1979 identified the Piddle Valley as suitable for expansion, and this resulted in developments throughout the valley. The District Council's Local Development Plans confirmed this expansion within village envelopes. This policy raised divergent views on design and density at the planning stage.

The churches in Piddlehinton and Piddletrenthide are Grade I listed buildings. There are 17 Grade II listed buildings in Piddlehinton, 31 in Piddletrenthide (the Manor is Grade II\*), 14 in Plush and 15 in Alton Pancras (again, the Manor is Grade II\*). A full record of listed buildings can be found on page 26 and 27.



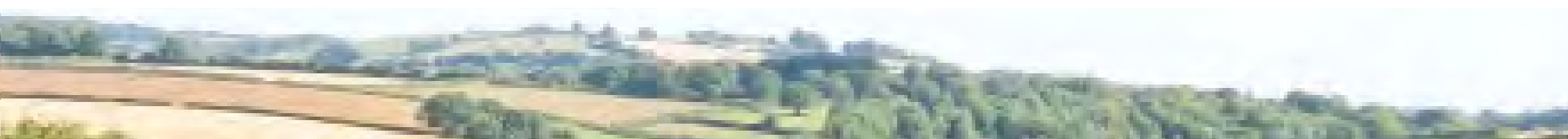
*View looking east from Piddletrenthide Manor*



*Former Post Office (Alton Pancras)*



*Post-war housing, Alton Pancras*



# landscape and environment



*The River Piddle at Piddlehinton*



*Chalk valley floor and slopes*



*Chalk uplands*

## THE RIVER PIDDLE

The River Piddle, which rises at Alton Pancras and eventually discharges into Poole Harbour, is an important chalk stream. The catchment for the upper reaches includes the whole area of the parish, with a winterbourne running from Plush to the main stream during periods of high rainfall.

The river and the surrounding open spaces and water meadows are a common theme linking the villages in the valley bottom. Settlements were established nearby and the river was used to provide power for local industry. Traces of former mills are still evident in the landscape, as are diversions of the river from its natural course. Continual management is needed to clear some stretches prone to invasive weeds, but with a sensitive approach, all of the surrounding areas can contribute to the river's character and be appreciated by the whole community. The areas surrounding the river provide a range of habitats for wildlife, but some, such as water voles, are increasingly threatened by inappropriate clearing and hard landscaping, preventing their access to the river.

Although the river and its surrounding open spaces are greatly valued, access is still very restricted. With the exception of the views from the public bridges, public access to walk beside the river is limited and could be improved.

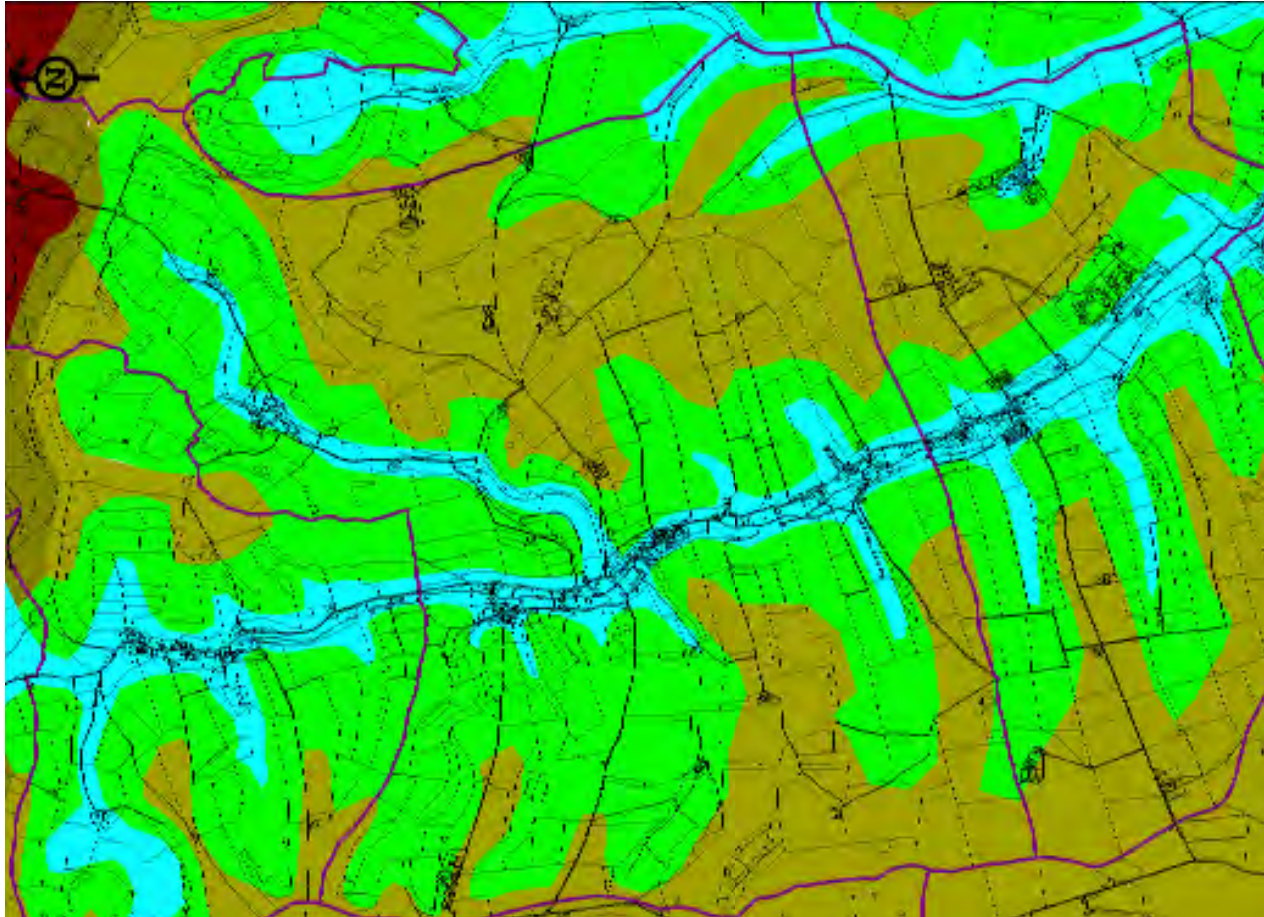
In recent years high rainfall has highlighted the decline in river management and the need for better drainage. Although clearance of the river takes place annually on the stretch beside the school and the playing field, Piddletrenthide is still prone to flooding every year. A much-needed flood alleviation scheme for the village is due to be completed in 2005. Improvements were made to the drainage in Piddlehinton in 2003 but seasonal flooding still occurs in the fields either side of the river in areas such as White Lackington.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

West Dorset District Council's Survey of the Built and Natural Environment 2000 divided the Piddle valley into five Landscape Character Areas: chalk valley floor, chalk valley slope, chalk uplands, escarpment and escarpment foothills.



# landscape and environment



## Landscape Character Areas

Chalk Valley Floor

Chalk Valley Slope

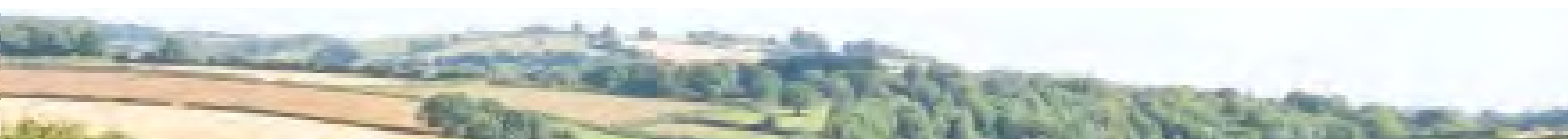
Chalk Upland

Chalk Escarpment

Escarpment Foothills

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Survey



# landscape and environment



## Chalk Valley Floor

- The linear corridor incorporating River Piddle floodplain and adjoining dry valley bottoms
- Piddle Valley floor prone to flooding
- Water extraction at Alton Pancras
- Main valley road follows valley floor
- Largely developed within the confines of the valley
- Open spaces between settlements are important for views across the valley; some are designated Land of Local Landscape Importance
- Ornamental and garden planting
- Small scale hedged meadow
- Remains of former water meadows

## Chalk Valley Slopes

- The area most likely to be affected by future development
- Development spreading up slopes is conspicuous
- Hedged arable and pasture fields gradually give way to a more open arable landscape
- Grassland and woodland plantations on steeper slopes with habitats that may be neglected e.g. coppice woodland
- Earthworks and ancient field systems on steeper slopes

## Chalk Uplands

- Exposed open landscape with long distance views and few trees
- Large scale arable fields, intensively farmed but affected by extensive hedge removal
- Virtually undeveloped except for recent agricultural enterprises
- Sensitive to development because of openness e.g. transmission masts
- Many important ancient earthworks, which may not be protected

## Escarpment

- Only a small area within Alton Pancras and Piddletrenthide
- Wild and secret with panoramic views
- Rich ecological interest with a mosaic of wood, grass and scrub
- Ancient landscape
- Almost totally undeveloped
- Sensitive to development

## Escarpment Foothills

- Only a small area within Alton Pancras and Piddletrenthide
- Undeveloped
- Improved pasture fields of varying sizes and shapes and densely hedged
- Small woodlands and individual trees
- Views over the Blackmoor Vale
- Sensitive to development



# landscape and environment

Apart from the southern part of the valley, the whole area is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which has equivalent status to National Parks and where priority should be given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Development should only be permitted in this area where it will not result in harm to this natural beauty and particular attention should be paid to the design, external appearance and location of all proposed development.

Although it is the policy of central government and West Dorset District Council to promote renewable energy sources, it is recognised that certain forms of renewable energy, most notably windfarms, will not be generally accepted in nationally designated landscapes and the most sensitive or vulnerable landscape character areas due to the visual impact. It is therefore considered that the upland areas of the Piddle Valley are an unacceptable location for wind turbines as the area is within the AONB and part of the sensitive chalk upland landscape character area.

Land in the north of the valley is within the South Wessex Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area; this provides farmers with incentives to retain traditional farming methods, thus encouraging and protecting the wide range of flora and fauna found in chalk uplands.

There are many Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, almost entirely in Alton Pancras and Piddletrenthide. These grass and woodland sites are recognised as important wildlife habitats but are not necessarily protected. There are also woodland sites listed in the Inventory of Ancient Woodlands and many recorded archaeological sites dating from prehistoric to modern times; some of these are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. A large part of Piddletrenthide as well as parts of Alton Pancras and Piddlehinton is a Conservation Area and large parts of the valley floor are designated Land of Local landscape Importance.

Views from the villages to the surrounding chalk downland are restricted, but magnificent views from the escarpment in the north east of Alton Pancras and Piddletrenthide encompass the Blackmoor Vale as far as the Mendips. From the chalk hilltops there are sweeping views across the chalk downs and into the valley itself.



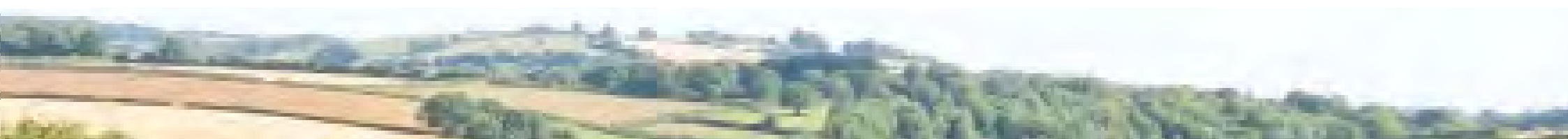
*Land of Local Landscape Importance*



*An Environmentally Sensitive Area*



*Higher landscape towards the Blackmoor Vale*



# landscape and environment



*Small fields bounded by trees and hedges*



*Millennium Green, Piddlehinton*



*Large fields with hedgerow boundaries*

Slopes from the river valley vary in their gradient, but are steeper towards the north, rising from the narrow valley floor. Towards the south the valley broadens and the slopes are gentler. This has enabled more development to climb the valley slopes, and where this has happened the result is highly visible. On the steeper slopes, archaeological remains of ancient field systems and enclosures can be seen, which are often clothed in species-rich chalk grassland or scrub.

The chalk uplands are broad, rounded and gently undulating with coombes incising the downland and creating attractive spurs with varying gradients. New and ancient tracks cross and rise up the slopes from the valley below. Small copses and woodland plantations on the downland and valley slopes are valuable features within the landscape.

As farms have become highly mechanised, field sizes have been increased by the removal of hedgerows, resulting in large exposed fields. Traditional farm buildings have become redundant while large and visible farm complexes have been built on the downs.

## TREES, HEDGES AND FIELD BOUNDARIES

Trees as individual specimens, groups or woodland, form a key part of our distinctive character and wildlife heritage. Wide ranges of tree species are found, a number of which are veteran trees.

Many ancient hedgerows have been lost as fields have been enlarged to cater for modern agricultural machinery. It is important that existing hedgerows are retained and landowners encouraged to plant new ones. Most farm hedgerows are now managed using flail trimmers but landowners should be encouraged to lay hedges using traditional methods, as increasing financial help for this is now available.

## OPEN SPACES

There is a variety of open spaces, both public and private within the valley which greatly enhance the villages and contribute to their characteristics.

Many of these open spaces are privately owned and are vital in preventing urbanisation of the valley bottom. They include: the open space opposite the Brace of Pheasants at Plush; the fields opposite Austral Farm at Alton Pancras; the area between the Old Vicarage and the Poachers Inn, and the valley opposite the Manor at Piddletrenthide; the open fields adjacent to the road south of Piddletrenthide through White Lackington to south of the Thimble Inn at Piddlehinton; and the water meadows along the valley bottom.

# landscape and environment guidelines

- All areas of conservation policy, as set out in the Local Plan, should be rigidly adhered to.
- Landowners should be encouraged to provide opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the River Piddle. Any proposals that limit significant views of the river from public places should be resisted.
- The natural landscape and open spaces adjoining the River Piddle are greatly valued by the local community and should be maintained, or enhanced, for their scenic and wildlife value.
- Riparian owners should be required to consider the impact on existing and potential wildlife of any changes to existing open spaces and to preserve riverbank habitats.
- Any new development should respect the river valley setting of the village and its significant buildings and natural features.
- Further building encroachment on the skyline should be avoided.
- Developers should aim to maintain or improve the landscape characteristics of the villages and in particular consider the landscape setting of buildings within the Conservation Areas.
- Key views into or out of the villages must be safeguarded. Views from public rights of ways should be protected.
- Further developments, including wind turbines, on the upland areas are likely to be considered highly unacceptable due to visual impact.
- The open spaces separating the villages within the valley should be preserved.
- The record of significant trees within the Piddle Valley should be updated.
- The removal of hedgerows should be strongly resisted due to their historical and aesthetic value and wildlife importance. New planting should be encouraged to create corridors for wildlife.
- Plans for new developments should include details of new tree planting using appropriate native species of a significant size, to develop landscape character. Mature trees should be retained whenever possible.
- Building in areas subject to flooding is likely to be unacceptable.



*Modern housing around a central space, Plush*



*Skyline encroachment, White Lackington*



*Open spaces separate the villages*



## community and business



*Traditional farm buildings are often not suited to modern use*



*Piddletrenthide First School*



*The former Piddlehinton village shop*

With no mineral or other materials to encourage industry, the main business of the valley for centuries has been farming. The thin and hungry soils forming the higher land and valley sides were traditionally retained in grass and stocked with sheep, as this was the only effective way of farming low-quality land. The introduction of fertilisers, particularly nitrogen and potash, during and after World War II transformed the yield potential of these soils with the result that mixed farming systems, including large areas of cereals, were introduced. The change was also facilitated by increasing mechanisation, with a consequent reduction in the size of the labour force – a trend continuing today.

Over the twentieth century the population of the Piddle Valley showed little variation, but the nature of the population changed dramatically. Agricultural workers have moved away from a valley of low wages and high property costs to towns offering higher wages and lower property prices. Their place in the Piddle Valley has been taken by the retired and professional classes who commute to Dorchester, Weymouth, Poole, Bournemouth and beyond. The trend to second homes has also had an impact in the valley with the result that approximately one in twenty houses is now a holiday home. House purchase for the young first-time buyer is therefore extremely difficult.

New industries have become established, and provide modest local employment. Many of these small to medium-sized businesses comprise light industry, and are located at the former Ministry of Defence camp at Piddlehinton, built in 1937 to house National Service personnel. Elsewhere, businesses tend to be small, providing trades that directly serve the valley.

Sadly, only one village shop/post office (in Piddletrenthide) remains, as the shop in Piddlehinton closed in January 2004. There are five public houses, one of which, The Poachers, is the single largest employer in the valley. The vast majority of the working population, however, works outside the valley.

Tourism provides an appreciable income in the valley, with accommodation being available in the form of bed and breakfast, and self-catering properties. There is also some accommodation available at the local pubs. The valley provides a good base from which to explore Thomas Hardy Country and the World Heritage Coast.

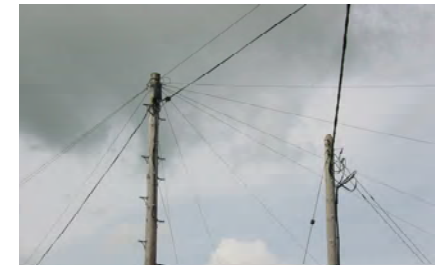
In addition to the pubs and the shop, the community is served by a number of other facilities. There are active churches in Alton Pancras, Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton. There are two thriving village halls (Piddlehinton and Piddletrenthide), which support a number of clubs, societies and events. There is a new First School in Piddletrenthide, with a recreation ground adjacent to it which is open to the public outside school hours. The Millennium Green has been a welcome amenity in Piddlehinton. There is a tennis court for the Piddle Valley Tennis Club, a football club in Piddletrenthide and a cricket club at Plush. A rugby club is based at Piddlehinton Camp, where the former gymnasium is used for badminton and indoor bowls.

# community and business guidelines

- Where a genuine demand from local people can be established, and the application respects the character of the existing traditional development, affordable local needs housing should be supported.
- The housing needs of an increasingly elderly population should be addressed whenever opportunities arise.
- The provision of social, educational and recreational facilities in the valley should continue to be supported and developed.
- Proposals which lead to local employment opportunities should be treated sympathetically, provided that they are not intrusive for existing residents and do not lead to unacceptable pollution from noise, traffic, smells or light.
- New industrial and agricultural buildings should be carefully sited, designed and landscaped.
- The conversion of redundant traditional farm buildings for employment or tourism should be encouraged in suitable locations (avoiding remote employment) where a genuine need can be defined.
- The conversion of existing commercial properties to residential use should generally be resisted.
- Further supplementary street lighting should be avoided. Light pollution should be controlled by the use of low-level lighting appropriately positioned and pointing downwards wherever possible.
- All new electric cables and telephone lines should be buried wherever practicable.
- Further telecommunication masts would be acceptable if placed sensitively in unobtrusive positions, well away from domestic buildings.



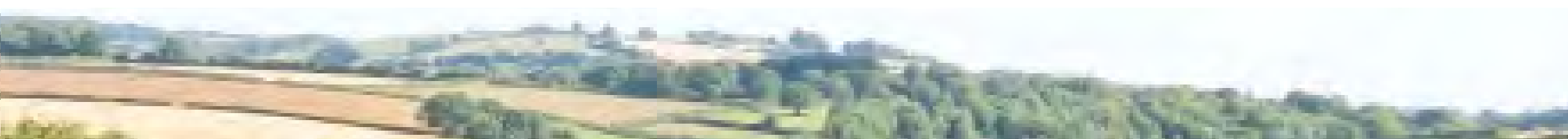
*Tourism is important in the Piddle Valley*



*Wirescape near Piddletrenthide village shop*



*The Brace of Pheasants, Plush*



## settlement and transport patterns



*The valley road in Piddlehinton, looking north*



*Popular footpath in Piddlehinton*



*White Lackington bus shelter*

The settlements of the Piddle Valley are all found along the valley floor. Alton Pancras, Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton lie either side of the main river, while the hamlet of Plush lies in the deep valley of a tributary stream north-east of Piddletrenthide.

The villages of the main valley all have a linear form, following the B3143 and the river along the narrow valley floor. A wider road, the C12, runs parallel along the chalk upland some 3 kilometres to the west. The settlements at Piddletrenthide, White Lackington and Piddlehinton have grown up at points where important east/west routes (often drove roads) have crossed the main valley road.

The narrow strip of flatter land which has for long been the focus of settlement is an area of verdant pasture and clustered trees with occasional reminders of the orchards which were once so extensive along the valley bottom.

The B3143 provides the main traffic route linking Alton Pancras, Piddletrenthide, White Lackington and Piddlehinton. A narrower road leads from Piddletrenthide to Plush. All the roads follow the valley bottom and the watercourses.

Traffic using these routes includes local residents, tourists, heavy goods vehicles, farm vehicles, horse riders and cyclists. Large lorries are unsuited to the narrow roads of the Piddle Valley. The proposed upgrading of the Old Sherborne Road (the C12) would help alleviate some of these problems, as would re-routing lorries southwards down the valley from the light industrial units being proposed for the site of the former Piddlehinton Camp.

Constriction of the road by parked cars is a considerable problem on the B3143 particularly in the southern part of Piddletrenthide and around the War Memorial in Piddlehinton. Adequate off-road parking should be provided in the vicinity of new developments.

The valley has a regular bus service, the use of which must be encouraged. The community is also served by two taxi services. Rail links are available at Dorchester and Sherborne. There is an extensive network of public rights of way which are well used by ramblers, dog-walkers and horse-riders. Some of these are of historical interest. The roads throughout the Piddle Valley are generally without pavements. Few roads have kerbs and most are edged with grass. These natural verges and hedges support a variety of wildlife.

There is generally an absence of street lighting, which helps to retain the rural character of the valley.



# settlement and transport guidelines

- The C12 should be upgraded to discourage the use of the B3143 as a through route.
- The impact of development on the use of existing roadways and footways should be considered when planning applications are made.
- Parking areas for small groups of cars should be identified for local residents and tourists and protected from further development, whilst each new dwelling should continue to be provided with adequate off-road parking spaces, according to the parking guidelines in the Local Plan.
- Existing rights of way should be maintained and protected.
- Traditional finger posts should be maintained. New signs should be restricted to the minimum necessary.



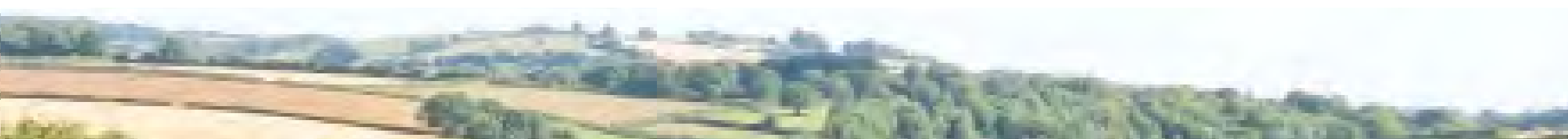
*Large vehicles and equipment squeeze through the Valley road*



*Off-road parking at Piddlehinton*



*Traditional finger post, Plush*

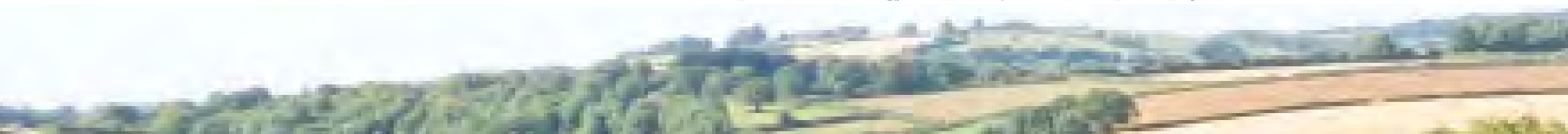


# the built environment



ALTON PANCRAS

Alton Pancras nestles on the valley floor and consists of two distinctive clusters of development: a northern block of mixed housing of varying ages, types and materials and a looser southern group which is the historic core of the settlement. The two clusters are divided by an area of open countryside on the east of the road. There are three important gaps in development, each designated as Land of Local Landscape Importance.



# the built environment



## PLUSH

The houses in Plush are informally arranged along a twisting lane that enters and leaves the village with sharp right-angled bends.

The wooded gardens of the Manor House, together with the paddock in the centre of the hamlet, create a sense of space. The Brace of Pheasants public house makes a focal point to the hamlet which combines a number of older cob and thatched cottages, brick and flint properties with slate roofs and the most recent cul-de-sac development on the former orchid farm where a variety of traditional materials has been used.



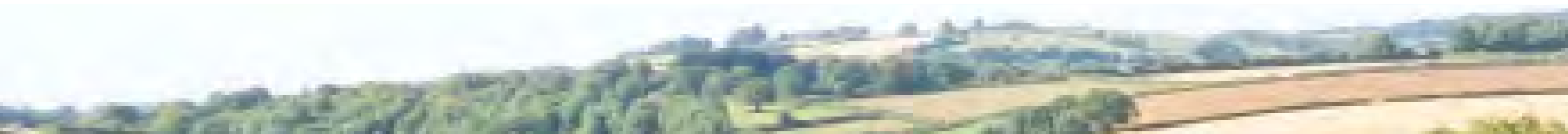
# the built environment



## PIDDLETRENTHIDE

Piddletrenthide is a long, linear settlement. The village is divided into several distinct clusters, separated by open countryside or parkland. The northern cluster marks the core of the old village around the church and has a nuclear form. Church Lane leads from the valley road across the river to Egypt, where a number of newer homes have been built.

Low-density frontage development on the western side of the main road leads south to the junction with Smith's Lane. From here, older cottages run west from the main valley route. The large grounds of the Manor House form a break in development but south of the western access to Cerne Abbas the main part of the village is found. This consists of a mixture of older cottages, 18th and 19th century housing, the former school and late 20th century culs-de-sac, on either side of the road. The modern First School is found on the southern edge of the village.



# the built environment



WHITE LACKINGTON

The hamlet of White Lackington is situated within the civil parish of Piddletrenthide but the ecclesiastical parish of Piddlehinton. It developed at the crossroads of an important east/west drove road and the valley road and has a simple nuclear form centred on the former Fleet Farm. The line of former council housing, called South View, stretches east from the main road up a shallow combe.

The hamlet contains a mixture of older housing, Lackington Mill, former farmhouses, the 19th century European Inn and a number of houses built during the last decade. Recent development to the north of the hamlet threatens to erode the open space between the villages.



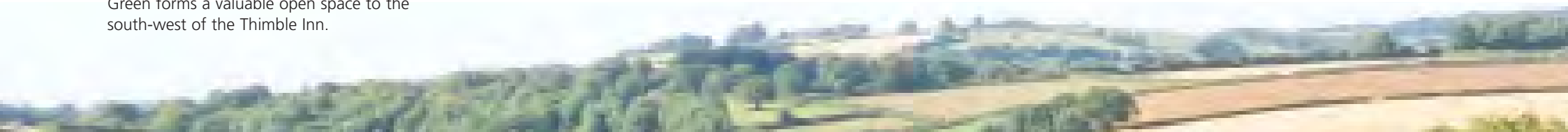
# the built environment



## PIDDESHINTON

The settlement developed as a bridging point and crossroads and the main crossroads junction still forms the centre of the village. The valley road north of the crossroads is known as High Street and contains a number of larger properties including the Thimble Inn, and a small modern cul-de-sac, White's Close, on the western side. The eastern side of the road is less developed, probably due to the sharp rise in gradient from the road.

To the west of the crossroads, Rectory Road has a mixture of older cottages with more modern infill and the large Old Rectory. At the western end of the village a modern development, Payne's Close, extends northwards in a cul-de-sac while eastwards from the crossroads London Row climbs the valley side to London Close, a modern cul-de-sac estate which dominates the village setting from the western approach. The Millennium Green forms a valuable open space to the south-west of the Thimble Inn.



# *the built environment*



## PIDDLEHINTON CAMP

Piddlehinton Camp, a 90-acre site approximately one mile to the south of Piddlehinton, was built during the Second World War to house troops. The main area, consisting of the former barracks, is partly let as small industrial units. Improvements to the camp by the present owner have helped to reduce the impact of this area on the rural landscape. Several of the units have been refurbished. It is important that the footprint of the units should not be significantly increased or the height of the buildings raised, particularly on the higher slopes, in view of the high visibility from surrounding areas.

Limited refurbishment and lettings for similar start-up, light industrial, electronic and storage businesses are to be encouraged, providing the existing footprint and height of buildings is respected and consideration is given to the effect of increased traffic on the road network. Residential development would not be appropriate on this land as services in the valley are not geared for new residential areas and the intrusion of full-height housing on the skyline would be considerable.



## building materials and details



*Accommodating tree root, Alton Pancras*



*Similar building materials combine*



*Modern materials used traditionally*

All types of traditional materials may be found in the Piddle Valley and the periods of their use relate to their availability. Until the early 19th century and the introduction of long distance haulage, all but the most important buildings relied on locally produced products.

### W ALLS

Chalk and clay have been used for humbler buildings to make cob for cottage and boundary walls, with flint and brick used for more significant buildings. Field stone was locally quarried for laying coursed or uncoursed random rubble walls for larger houses while dressed stone, often banded with flint, as at Whites Dairy House in Piddlehinton, has been used for the Parish Churches and surrounding cottages in Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton. Mixtures of different materials have added a richness of variety, most commonly flint banded with red brick and ashlar or facing stone with brick and render. Examples are the former Village School and Pear Tree Cottage and Middle Thatch in Piddletrenthide.

Bricks were produced here from the early 18th century and were still locally available from Broadmayne until the 20th century. They can be recognised from their buff to red colour with carbon spots on the surface. From the early 19th century brick was often considered of inferior appearance and limewashed or even rendered and incised with course lines to represent stone blocks as can be seen at Beechmead, set away from the main road at Alton Pancras. Unusual old purple brickwork with red dressings may be seen at Alton Pancras Manor House contrasted with yellow ashlar stonework.

The use of lime in building was universal until the early 20th century when production of cement became common. Simpler to use than lime, it tends towards a dull grey and is often harder than the material it bonds and can cause movement cracking and frost spalling or splitting of the wall face. By contrast lime is enjoying a revival for jointing natural materials and for external decorative treatment. It is lighter and brighter, lets materials breathe by absorbing and evaporating rainwater and allows movement without cracking in the heat and cold of the changing seasons.

Structural timber framing is less common here but green oak is often used for beams, lintels over openings and for external cladding.

In the last 50 years, the greatest period of change in the diversity of available materials and their aggressive marketing has led to the use of less environmentally sympathetic products such as artificial stone blocks and flint panels, concrete tiles, plastic joinery, short-lived softwood and plastics-based roofing systems. By contrast, examples are beginning to be seen of traditional materials used in a modern and sustainable way.



# building materials and details

## ROOFS

Purbeck stone slates may still be seen at eaves and for wall cappings but the traditional straw thatch is evident everywhere, sometimes replaced in modern times with water reed. Thatch is relatively expensive with outer layers needing to be renewed every 25 years or so. Slate from Wales and Cornwall became common with the introduction of the railways in the 19th century. Clay tiles were used less commonly and cheaper, concrete versions were adopted during the 1960s and 70s. Fortunately less so today. Plain clay tiles and double pantiles can be seen in Piddlehinton. Other natural materials such as lead and zinc are also used.

## JOINERY

Windows and doors used to be made in oak or other hardwoods, and often limed or painted with lead-based paints, which are now banned except on historic buildings. Softwood of high quality became available in the 18th century but this has given way to the less reliable, fast-grown products of today and plastics-based paints which tend to seal the timber and can cause decay. UPVC plastic windows of standard white colour are beginning to spread into the valley. Demand for reliable weather resistance and draught sealing with cheapness is attractive, but bulkier section size and less durability than painted hardwood can be seen to devalue property. UPVC windows should not be used within the conservation areas and are not permitted for listed buildings.



*A blending of old and new*



*Split pole cladding*



*Modern materials carefully used*



## building and development guidelines



*Blend of scale, Alton Pancras*



*Extension by separation, Piddlehinton*



*Tight-knit spaces, Piddletrenthide*

- The defined development boundaries agreed in the West Dorset Local Plan should be strictly adhered to, with exceptions made only in very special circumstances.
- Development that detracts from the character and setting of the individual settlements within the valley should not be permitted.
- The settlements within the Piddle Valley should not become one long linear village. The green and open spaces between them should be preserved.
- Removal of redundant utility buildings in the landscape, that are not appropriate for re-use, should be encouraged.
- New development, including extensions and porches, should be sympathetic to the form, style, scale and colour of the existing traditional buildings. It should respect but not necessarily copy the style of existing buildings.
- Imaginative design using well-chosen natural materials that weather well should be encouraged. Traditional building materials such as stone, flint, brick, slate, timber and lime mortar and render rather than cement should be used for facework. The use of modern materials, per se, should not be discouraged.
- Development strategies should include a range of housing types and sizes while layout should observe the current planning aims for density.
- Development should not dominate the landscape but be designed to maintain or enhance the environment. Development on the valley slopes should be restricted, to avoid skyline intrusion.
- The replacement of existing wooden joinery with UPVC should be discouraged, and consideration given to withdrawing permitted development rights, within the Conservation Area.
- Special attention should be paid to landscape design and structural tree planting to enhance the overall village character.

# building and development guidelines

- Proposals should be encouraged for sustainable design in construction to support the natural environment, biodiversity, flood prevention, the recycling of water, re-use of materials and energy saving.
- If affordable housing for local people is proposed, it should be built to match local needs and include 1 or 2 bedroomed units, built to good quality specifications and with materials which look attractive. Affordable homes should be in small developments interspersed with other housing. Such housing should be retained to meet local housing need.
- New building should not result in undue loss of light or outlook for immediate neighbours.
- Care should be taken with the type and colour of roof materials on both new and old buildings. Replacement doors and windows should respect the style and period of the building.
- Every new dwelling should have dedicated off-road parking spaces, in accordance with the Local Plan parking guidelines, not necessarily adjacent to the house.
- Further refurbishment and lettings of the former barrack buildings at Piddlehinton Camp for start-up, light industrial, electronic and storage businesses is to be encouraged, provided that the existing footprints and heights of buildings are not significantly increased. Residential development on the former camp area should not be permitted. Development should not generate an unacceptable increase in vehicle movements and the size of vehicles using the local highway network. Landscape and visual improvements which will reduce the visual impact of Piddlehinton Camp will be encouraged.
- New development should make adequate provision for children's play areas.



*Roofing materials, Piddlehinton*



*Replacement doors and windows, Plush*



*Refurbished unit at Piddlehinton Camp*



## listed buildings in the piddle valley



Beechmead, Alton Pancras



The Manor, Piddletrenthide



Pear Tree Cottage, Piddletrenthide

### ALTON PANCRAS

Probable Ice House and Stables at Manor  
Pigeon-cote and Brew or Bakehouse at Manor  
Churchyard wall  
Manor House (Grade II\*)  
Gate Piers to Manor House  
Parish Church (Grade II\*)  
Table Tomb in Churchyard  
Beechmead  
Cherry Cottage

Austral Farmhouse  
Meadow View  
Box Cottage  
Grey Thatches  
No 1 & 2 Terrace Cottages and Old School House  
(No 2 Terrace Cottages now Halycon Cottage)  
Kipper's Cottage (now Keeper's Cottage)  
The Old Post Office  
Hillside

### PLUSH

Harvey's Farmhouse  
Butt's Cottage  
Range of three cottages SW of Butt's Cottage  
(now Gardener's Cottage and 2, Garden's Cottage)  
Manor House  
Millers Barn (curtilage listing)  
West Barn (curtilage listing)  
Manor Gate Cottage

The Brace of Pheasants  
The Old School House  
Plush Bottom  
Corner Cottage  
Astra  
Cottage 130m NE of Astra (now Four Corners)  
Church (now disused)

### PIDDLETRENTHIDE

Dole's Ash Farmhouse and two pairs of gate piers  
Kingsmead  
West House  
The Granary  
Glebe Cottage  
No 3 Church Lane (now Bridge Cottage)  
All Saints' Church (Grade I)  
The Old Barn (now The Barn)  
House 110m S of Church (now Kiddle's House)  
Dovecote ENE of Manor Lodge  
Gazebo E of Manor Lodge  
Hodgecliff Cottage  
Crown Cottage  
Crown House  
Ivy Cottage (now Ivy House)  
House adjoining Pear Tree House (now Middle Thatch)

Pear Tree House (now Pear Tree Cottage)  
East House  
Old Primary School  
Old School Gates and Piers (Gates now at new school)  
Bellamy's Farmhouse (now Brick House)  
Southcombe Farmhouse  
Higher Tything Cottage  
The Manor House (Grade II\*)  
Stables and Outbuildings Manor House  
Manor Lodge  
Sunny Cottage (now Brook House)  
Nos 1, 2 & 3 Baker's Row (now 1 and 2/3 Baker's Row)  
Brownsville  
South House  
Colescote (now Littlebrook Cottage)

# *listed buildings in the piddle valley*

## W H I T E L A C K I N G T O N

Fleet House (now Fleet Farmhouse)

## P I D D L E H I N T O N

Little Puddle Farmhouse (now Lawrence Mead)

Muston Manor plus attached Wall, Dovecote and Mounting Block

Two lengths of Walling, Muston Manor

Granary Muston Manor

The Thimble

East Farmhouse (now White's Dairy)

Barn, East Farmhouse (now Barn, White's Dairy)

Stables and Carriage House, East Lodge (now West Lodge)

Nos 22, 24 & 26 High Street (now Romaines Cottage)

Morteyn and adjoining Cottage, London Row (now Morteyn and Shepherd's Thatch)

Bridge over River Piddle, Rectory Road

Inglenook Cottage (now Payne's Cottage)

No 9 Rectory Road (now Hawthorn Cottage)

No 11 Rectory Road (now Denches Cottage and 12 Rectory Road)

Glebe Court (now The Old Rectory)

Glebe Court Cottage (now Glebe Cottage)

House 50m NE of Glebe Court (now Bridge House)

Church (Grade I)

Table Tomb

***All Grade II unless shown***

***Taken from "List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Importance" -  
Department of Environment 1984***



*Bridge over River Piddle, Piddlehinton*



*Muston Manor Dovecote, Piddlehinton*



## references and acknowledgements



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- A Framework for the Future of the Dorset Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Management Plan. Draft for Consultation AONB Partnership (2003)
- Piddle Valley Village Design Statement – Questionnaire responses

### MAPS

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