

SIBLE HEDINGHAM

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Autumn 2010



← The River Colne in Sible Hedingham.

The Pump at High Street Green. →



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Q: What is a Village Design Statement? (VDS)

A: It can:

- Describe the character of the local area and be used to provide guidance in the future planning of housing and amenities.
- Highlight what is special, and distinctive about the village.
- Help to manage change, but not prevent it.
- Help property owners and developers maintain the character by adopting designs which are acceptable to the local community.
- Help protect visually important buildings and their settings.
- Promote the use of sustainable and appropriate building materials.
- Protect open spaces and maintain the appearance and character of the street scene.
- Guide the local Planning Authority in their determination of Planning Applications.

ABOUT OUR VILLAGE

Sible Hedingham lies in the Northern corner of Essex, close to both the Suffolk and Cambridgeshire borders. The village covers some 2123 hectares (5248 acres) and has around 1700 dwellings with a population of 3700. In terms of area it is the second largest village in Essex. The majority of people live within a few hundred yards of the main A1017 road consisting of Queen St, Potter St, Swan St and Yeldham Road. The remainder of the village consists of a number of outlying Greens and Hamlets, described on page 10. The village centre has a range of essential services and shops, including a pharmacy, bakery, butcher, hardware store, schools, 2 petrol stations, 3 hairdressers, car sales, library, surgery, Funeral Director, four Public Houses and a Post Office. There is also a Fire Station and Telephone Exchange. The Parish Church has a burial ground and the Parish Council maintains a separate Garden of Remembrance. There are also two Baptist churches. Non Christian worship is not formally catered for.

We are fortunate in having a number of open spaces, including the Recreation Ground, Football Field and Grays Hall Meadow - see pages 8 and 9.

The River Colne runs through the village, and is supplemented by three brooks, at Rectory Road, Alderford Street. and Queen Street. The village has suffered serious flooding in the past but two schemes, at Wethersfield Road and Cobbs Fenn, have been designed to prevent future occurrences. The Wethersfield Road scheme, consisting of three flood lagoons, was completed in 2008 and has already proved its worth in preventing the Rectory Road brook from overflowing and thus saving the northern end of the village from flooding. The Cobbs Fenn scheme is designed to protect Alderford Street and is yet to be started, being dependent upon purchase of the necessary land, and other considerations.



Geology and Topography

Sible Hedingham nestles in the Colne Valley together with its sister village Castle Hedingham and, as is to be expected, both share some geological characteristics. These include the local boulder clay which has a chalky nature and glacial gravels. There are also London clay and gravel areas within the river valley. The glaciers left those deposits when they shaped this valley some 15,000 years ago.

Both the clay and the river were important for the brick industry of Sible Hedingham during its industrial history. Fresh impetus was provided by the construction of the railway line, which, at the peak of its production, transported between seven and eight million bricks per year, such was the extent of the industry in the village.

The Hedinghams straddle the River Colne with Sible Hedingham on the west bank of the river with Cambridge some 26 miles to the north west and Colchester 17 miles distant to the east. The residential heart of the village is generally at a lower altitude than that of neighbouring Castle. It does however rise to a height of over 95 metres above sea level at its western boundary.

Landscape

The River Colne and its tributaries run through Sible Hedingham, with the Colne wending its way south and east towards Halstead, Earls Colne and beyond. Throughout its meanderings, the River Colne and its valley has been, and will hopefully for some time to come, be home to a host of wild life not least of which is the deer that enjoy this habitat.



Otters are returning to the River Colne

Despite having approximately 3700 occupants it is not a densely populated village but is the second largest village in the county, encompassing over 5,000 acres and has a number of wooded areas and meadows. These include Broakes Wood which is located on the very south eastern edge of the village boundary and Meakley Wood situated more centrally near Cuckoo Hill.

In addition to these there is the local nature reserve sandwiched between Castle and Sible Hedingham on the eastern boundary.

The numerous outlying Greens such as High Street Green, Forry Green, Morris Green and Southey Green are also notable landscape features typifying this part of Essex. These locations as well as additional ones have been identified on the village map on page 10 of this document.

New flood prevention lagoons have been created, one (outside the village) adjacent to the Halstead road and the other beside the Wethersfield Road, to alleviate the flooding problems of recent years which affected the Hedinghams as well as Halstead.

Although Essex is generally thought to be a flat county, Sible Hedingham has its share of undulations and gently rolling countryside, which can be observed by simply walking just over a mile, down Swan Street and along the Yeldham Road or by turning in a westerly direction along the Wethersfield Road. These variations in altitude although not great, naturally give rise to small water courses and brooks which eventually find their way into the River Colne at various points along its route.

The footpath from Alderford Mill to Hulls Mill which is a section of the "Pauline Stevens" Walk, affords the chance to observe the countryside and wild life that is so much a part of Sible Hedingham. Alderford Mill is now open to visitors thanks to the efforts of Brian Mills and "The Friends" in conjunction with Essex County Council to preserve and return this worthwhile historic mill to working order.

Green areas are enhanced by the amenity greens such as the informal recreation area of Grays Hall Meadow adjacent to St Peters Church (much frequented by dog walkers and children at all hours of the day), Lawn Meadow, next to the Yeldham Road (leased to the Football Club) and the other informal area which is the Recreation Ground - see pages 8 and 9.

The largest areas, of course, are represented by the farms dotted throughout the surrounding countryside, farms such as Red House Farm, Birds Green Farm, Peppers Farm, Pevors Farm and numerous others. These are farms that have usually been handed down through the generations but have had to adapt to new farming techniques and crops to continue their existence, mostly as arable farms.

Policy RLP79 of the adopted Braintree District Local Plan Review (2005) is currently in place to give added protection to the surrounding countryside of Sible Hedingham village, which is located within a classified Special Landscape area.

In recent years a number of sites have been developed throughout the village. Some industrial and business estates such as Premdor (formerly Rippers) have generally been located on "brownfield sites", while some of the housing developments have spread into what were previously "greenfield areas" such as Abbey Meadow. et al

Guidelines

Future developments should not be allowed to detract from and spoil this unique example of Essex countryside, for damage to this environment could well be irreversible and the quiet charm of the area could be lost for all time. A feeling echoed by a significant proportion of the village's inhabitants in a recent survey.

Green areas are important to this village and any future developments must allow adequate provision for green open spaces.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SIBLE HEDINGHAM

PAGE 5

A settlement has existed on the west bank of the River Colne since around 500BC. The natural landscape of sloping valleys down to the river provided resources for industry, shelter and food.

In Saxon times the settlement expanded and developed, gaining the name Hedingham, a Saxon word for habitation/village at the head of meadow or pasture.

In the Domesday Book in 1086 Hedingham appears as one village and was not split into Sible and Castle Hedingham until the reign of Henry 111 (1216). It is said that our village was named after Sible de Laverton who held land here in 1237.

Over the centuries Sible Hedingham villagers were involved in a variety of trades including Agriculture and Stock Farming, Coopers, Smelting, Milling (Alderford and Hulls), Iron works, Forestry, Carpentry, Thatching, Weaving, Straw plaiting and Hop growing and Malting.

There were also tanners who manufactured leather for waterproofs, shoes and baggage. The most famous and wealthy of these tanners was Gilbert Hawkwood, Master Tanner whose son was Sir John Hawkwood, the famous soldier of fortune. Hawkwood endowments were a great part of the building of St Peter's Church in 1320.

In the 19th century Hedingham became famous for its brickyards. Hedingham reds were widely used in buildings at home and abroad, including sixteen churches in north London, Claridge's Hotel, and Dublin Barracks.

In 1861 the railway was extended to Hedingham and provided a new impetus for the village in the movement of manufactured goods. Ripper's Joinery was established in 1894, expanding to become the village's main employer. The early twentieth century saw Hedingham's greatest expansion away from the medieval streets of Church Street, Alderford Street and Queen and Potter Streets with the building of speculative housing in 1901-1902. In 1920 (the former) Halstead Rural District Council built houses on Alexandra Road for rent. The 1920's also saw the homes built in Cambridge Avenue and Gibson Road.

In 1924 Ripper's built 100 houses for their workers, because of a lack of suitable accommodation in the village.

The railway was closed to passengers in 1962 and to goods in 1964. The station was demolished in 1974 and rebuilt on the site of the Colne Valley Railway Preservation Society,

Housing expansion was restarted in the 1960's and continues to this day, with developments on the former Ripper's (later Premdor) site, and in Station Road. A new period of housing growth approaches for the second decade of the 21st century and it is to be hoped that this document will define the challenges and outline the parameters under which this will take place.



Street names - some facts:

Gibson Road

Frank Gibson was a local builder and benefactor who gave the Recreation Ground to the Village.

Alexandra Road

From Princess, later Queen, Alexandra, the very popular wife of Edward VII

Spurgeon Close

John & Joseph Spurgeon were carpenters, builders and shopkeepers in the 19th century.

Webster Close

The Webster sisters endowed the almshouses in Swan St.

Hilton Way

John Hilton was surgeon and anatomist to Queen Victoria and his father, a brickmaker lived at Hilton House (the present Doctor's Surgery)

Warburton Avenue

Three generations of Warburtons were Rectors of Sible Hedingham.

Oxford Meadow

From the de Veres, Earls of Oxford

Charlton Close

From Charlton Ripper, one of the three founding brothers of Rippers Joinery.

Hills Road

After Alfred Hills, solicitor to the Gibson family.

Sparrow Close

The Sparrows were a local family, many of whom are buried in St Peter's Church.

Everitt Way

Bert Everitt was a long serving clerk to the Parish Council.

Guidelines

Street names relevant to the history of the village should be encouraged in all future developments.

WORK

Currently, Sible Hedingham is a working village with surrounding rural and agricultural areas. However, one major employer (Milklink, formerly Tanners Dairy) closed in 2006 after a period of contraction, and another, Premdor (originally Rippers and subsequently Bowater and then Crosby) left the village in 2009 after more than 100 years. We must bear in mind that once brownfield sites are turned over to housing, they can never be recovered for employment use and for this reason it is important that the future of these sites is managed very carefully.

One of the challenges facing the village in the coming years is to create a work/live balance. With two former industrial sites awaiting redevelopment, we must ensure that employment opportunities persist whilst managing housing growth in keeping with local needs, and resisting over-development. As one of the largest villages in the Braintree District Council area, Sible Hedingham will play an important role as a service village for smaller communities, offering schools, shops, and medical facilities but we must not lose sight of the fact that we are still a village, and resist all attempts to transform us into a town.

The future of our former industrial sites must take into account adequate provision for leisure facilities, open spaces and consideration of the needs of young children, teenagers and the older, retired, members of our community.

In spite of the loss of the Tanner and Premdor sites, employment opportunities still exist at, *inter alia*; Rippers Court, Prayors Farm, Wash Farm, Everitt Way, and Brickwall Farm, all of which have small industrial units. Shops, petrol stations, schools, agriculture, surgery, care homes and fast food outlets provide further scope for jobs.

Guidelines

- *The former Tanner's site, being outside the village envelope, should be preserved for primarily employment or leisure use.*
- *Heavy industry is not to be encouraged because of associated traffic problems, but light industry would be welcomed, as would modern, high-tech enterprises and service industries.*
- *A concentrated industrial area is preferred to scattered sites.*
- *All new employment sites must have access to green open spaces and opportunities for leisure activities.*



The Premdor factory approximately 18 months before its closure.

LEISURE

Leisure facilities in the village are many and varied. There is a wide range of play equipment in the Recreation Ground including an area reserved for the under-fives. The skateboard park and Multi Use Games Area are extensively used by older children and teenagers. A petanque course will shortly be provided which, it is hoped, will appeal to the more mature parishioners.

In addition, Hedingham United Football Club is a thriving club for children of all ages and there is a Youth Club attached to Hedingham School. The Youth Council, together with the Police and the Parish Council, organise two events on the Recreation Ground every year for young people. The Hedingham Fest (THF) is a summer youth festival held in July and in past years a Halloween Party has been organised on the Recreation Ground by the Parish Council.



Halloween 2009

There are many clubs and societies catering for adults of all ages, as diverse as the Hedingham Choir, Flower Club or the Art Group. There are groups such as the W.I. and the Thursday Club for the over 55s – both have speakers, entertainment and outings; the Library hosts an enthusiastic Book Talk Group once a month. The Social Club and the various Pubs are good places to meet friends for a drink, a meal or perhaps enjoy a game of snooker.

For the more energetic, there is a tennis court, various keep fit classes at the School and the Village Hall, and a vast network of footpaths through some beautiful Essex countryside and along the River Colne .

In addition to the normal services the churches hold social events. St Peters Church holds fetes, a Christmas Market and a flower festival, for instance, and the Baptist Church holds concerts and hosts a mother and toddler group and a coffee morning once a week, which is open to all.

Many organisations such as the Friends of St Peter's Church, the Village Hall, and the Twinning Association hold fundraising events. Their barn dances, quiz nights, dinners, concerts, coffee mornings, fetes and garden parties all add to the social mix of events in the village.



THF09

Map showing open spaces within the main part of the village - see facing page for details.



GUIDELINES

We are fortunate in having a number of green open spaces in the village centre. For the future, however we must:

- *Preserve the existing open spaces and protect them from development.*
- *Ensure that they remain open and green - none should be given over to car parking.*
- *As the village grows, all new housing developments must provide adequate green space for adult recreation and children's play.*

See map on facing page with numbered locations

1 CHRISTMAS FIELD

An open space with mature trees at the northern end of the village. This green area divides the houses on the two sides of the road named Christmas Field.



Christmas Field

2 LAWN MEADOW

Situated on Yeldham Road, this open space is leased to Heddingham Football Club by Braintree District Council. The football club recently obtained funding to provide a surrounding fence. The area between the football pitch and Oxford Meadow is also an open green space, owned and managed by Greenfields Housing Trust who have kindly allowed the Parish council to position a flower cart on the site.

3 GRAYS HALL MEADOW

A 6 acre site formerly owned by Braintree District Council and purchased for one pound by Sible Heddingham Parish Council in 1990. The Garden of Remembrance is within this area and part could be used as a consecrated burial ground should the Churchyard eventually become full.

4 BROOK MEADOW

Open spaces at either end of Brook Meadow. The half oval space at the Rectory Road end has swings and a see-saw. The Brook, feeding into the River Colne runs along the edge of this area.

5 CHURCH ST GREEN

A registered Green owned by SHPC

6 PARKFIELD

Open area owned by Greenfields Community Housing Ltd, (GCH) which is equipped with children's swings. GCH also owns and manages open areas on both sides of Parkfields at its junction with Alexandra Road.

7 RECREATION GROUND

Given to the Village in 1927 by local builder Frank Gibson this 5 acre green space houses a skate board park (2004), Multi Use Games Area (2009), children's play area with roundabout for the disabled (2008) and public toilets (refurbished 2008). Disabled access is provided from Gibson Road and Colne Road. As can be seen in the photograph, a tree lined path runs through this area. The Recreation Ground is administered by the Parish Council as a Charitable Trust.

8 ALDERFORD GREEN

A registered Green on the junction of Alderford St and Swan St.

9 BROAKES WOOD (not shown on map)

In addition to the above, the Forestry Commission owns Broakes Wood, a 62 hectare (153 acre) ancient woodland situated at the south east corner of the village. The entrance is in Gosfield Road at Cutmaple.



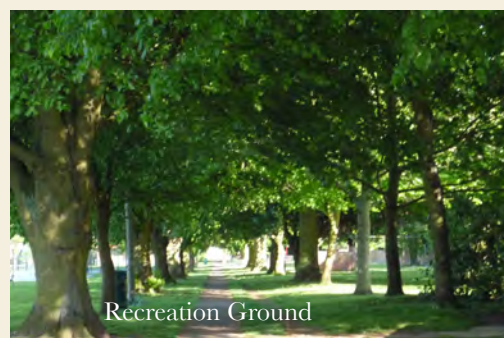
Village sign on Alderford Green. There is also an identical sign on Church St Green.



Grays Hall Meadow



Brook Meadow



Recreation Ground

Sible Hedingham has 11 settlements within the village boundary, but outside the main area of population enclosed by the village envelope. These are rural communities where expansion is not practical or desirable.

Delvin End
circa 11 dwellings, 5 of which are listed

Almshouse Green
A small area of around one acre, half of which is owned by Sible Hedingham Parish Council with the remainder in private hands.

High Street Green
circa 37 dwellings, 2 of which are listed, Application for registration in name of Sible Hedingham Parish Council pending.

Harrow Cross
circa 8 dwellings, none of which is listed

Birds Green
Owned by Essex County Council



Morris Green
circa 12 dwellings, 7 of which are listed

Southey Green
Two acres of common land owned by Sible Hedingham Parish Council. The surrounding area has 17 dwellings, 4 of which are listed. Some of the 19c houses are built of bricks made by William Corder of the Southey Green Brick, Tile & Pottery Works

Cobbs Fenn
circa 10 dwellings, 1 of which is listed

New England
circa 4 dwellings, none of which is listed

Forrey (or Forry's) Green
Nearly three acres of Village Green owned by Sible Hedingham Parish Council
The surrounding area has 5 dwellings, 2 of which are listed.



The Windmill at Cut Maple, a former pub, now a private house

Cutnaple
Several dwellings, 1 listed, a small industrial area and Broakes Wood



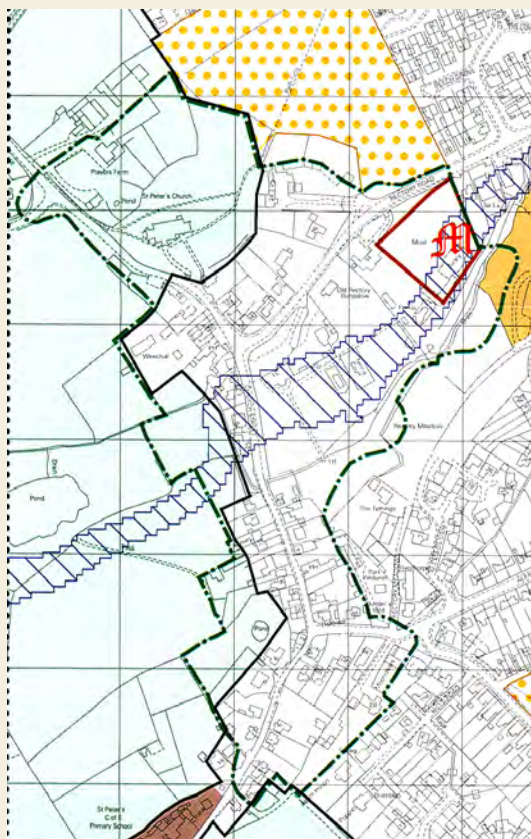
Conservation Areas

In 1969 two distinct areas of Sible Hedingham were designated as Conservation areas - Church Street and Alderford Street.

CHURCH STREET

Church Street conservation area includes all of Church Street, plus School Road as far as the Primary School, and in the opposite, northerly direction as far as Prayers Farm.

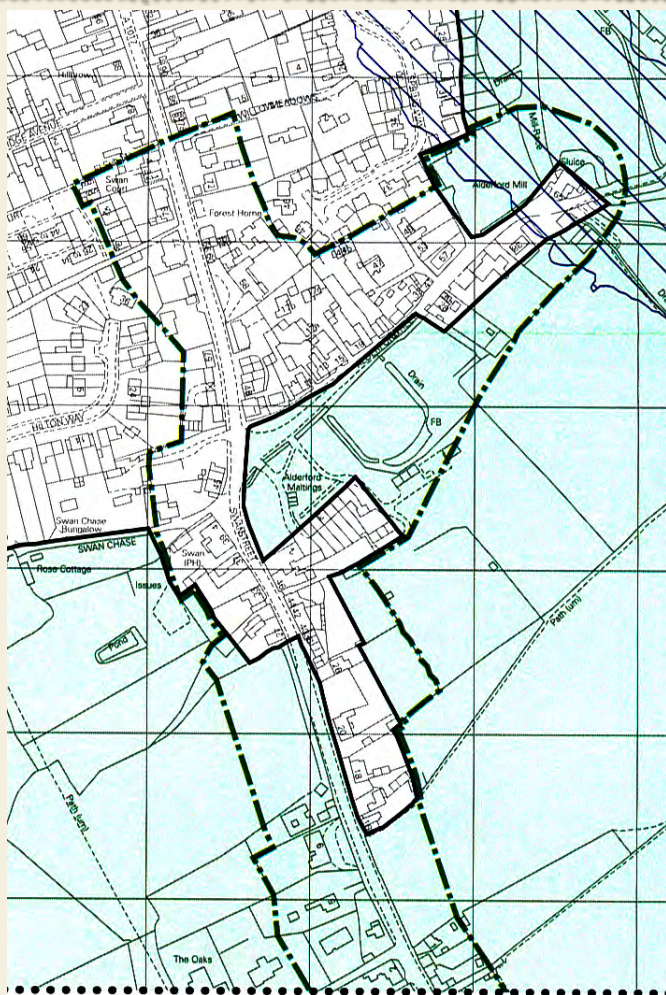
Church Street was originally one of the two principal streets of Sible Hedingham and 15 listed buildings still remain. Many of these were known to be shops; two butchers, one specialising in pork, a baker, sweet shop, grocer's (Carter's Store) as well as 2 public houses. Some of these properties date from as early as 14th century but more generally are of 16th/17th century, timber framed, rendered, with peg tile roofs and red brick chimneys. The Croft is the only property in the street which has a thatched roof, although there is a further example in nearby School Road. Windows vary from vertical or horizontal sash to casement - one house has leaded windows (there are others at Delvin End and Sugar Lane). Several old cottages were demolished and replaced with modern brick built houses and bungalows in the 1900's..



The White Lion public house, thought to be the Poor House, also contained a row of cottages (now demolished) to the rear of the car park where Hedingham Toy Works was situated. This was a flourishing business until the First World War, making children's toys for shops in London and Birmingham, using local birch and ash poles. Part of the Old Rectory walls face onto Church St and are of Flemish Bond bricks, probably from local brickyards. Cresswells Farm, dating from the 16th century has panel pargetting and wall paintings were found internally.

St Peter's Church dominates the street and was built in the 14th century, with the West Tower and South Porch dating from the 16th century. There is flint rubble with some Roman tile and the church has a leaded roof over the north and south aisle, the remainder being tiled. There is a tower containing five bells. The Hawkwood family are believed to have been principal benefactors as there are two hawks carved in the tower. A recess in the south wall formerly contained a monument in memory of Sir John Hawkwood, a notorious fourteenth century soldier and mercenary, but only the canopy now remains. King Richard II ordered that Sir John's remains should be brought back to Sible Hedingham, and buried in St Peter's. It is not known whether that actually happened; however there is a fresco by Paolo Uccello dated 1436 of Sir John Hawkwood in the Duomo in Florence which would indicate his influence and esteem. A full history of Sir John Hawkwood has been written by William Caferro - "John Hawkwood, an English Mercenary in Fourteenth Century Italy"





The Alderford Street conservation area extends from the A1017 to the River Colne and comprises in excess of 50 dwellings, 13 of which are listed, plus three business premises and Alderford Mill. The boundary is as shown on the map to the left.

The Alderford name has existed in various forms since the Domesday Book of 1086 when it was recorded as 'Alreforda', and a mill is referred to as early as 1547. It was subsequently known as Watermill Lane during the later part of the 19th century. The street is dominated at one end by the current Alderford mill, a timber framed and weather boarded water mill now owned by ECC and recently fully restored and operational. It is open monthly during the summer when it is manned by The Friends of Alderford Mill. At the end of the 18th century a woolcombing factory existed to the rear of Alderford House and legacies of this remain in the names of two houses, Woolcombers and Baymakers (nos. 4-6).

Many of the properties are worthy of mention, including;

No 1 Alderford Street and the adjoining house, is of 17th century or earlier origins and has a 19th century shop front facade with 20th century alterations. It is timber framed and pargetted with red tiled roof. In the past it was used as a shop (Carter's Stores and Mudplugger Motorcycles) and is now the Yellow House - a small, highly specialist day school for approximately 15 pupils aged 13+ with complex needs including Aspergers, ADHD, ODD, OCD and Tourettes.

Nos. 4-6 Alderford Street, (Woolcombers and Baymakers), are 16th century or earlier with later additions. The construction is exposed timber frame with plaster infill and red plain tiled roof. Woolcombers has an interesting rose and leaf panel above the door to the left.

Alderford Maltings (18th century) has subsequently been converted into 6 housing units. It is timber framed, with brick faced ground floor and weatherboarded first floor. The roof is a red plain tiled half hipped gambrel roof with jettied gabled hoist loft to left.

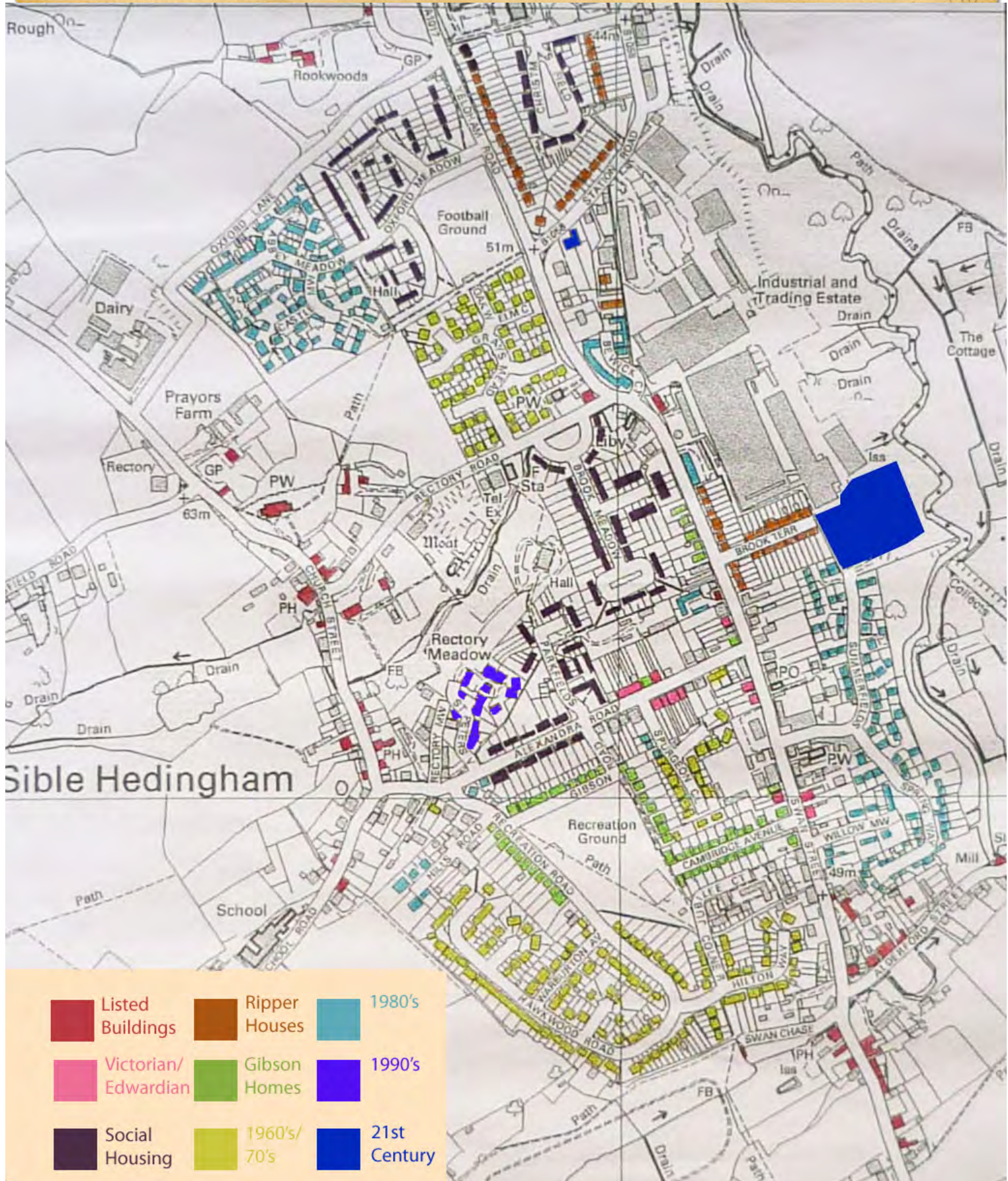
Lying back from the road at the opposite end to the mill sits Alderford Grange which has a 18th century rendered facade with earlier 16th century origins, plus later alteration and additions. In the past it has been used as a school and doctor's surgery but is now a private residence.

Note regarding Conservation Areas

At the time of writing Braintree District Council is conducting a review of Conservation Areas in Sible Hedingham which could result in boundary changes. The latest maps and information are available at:

www.braintree.gov.uk

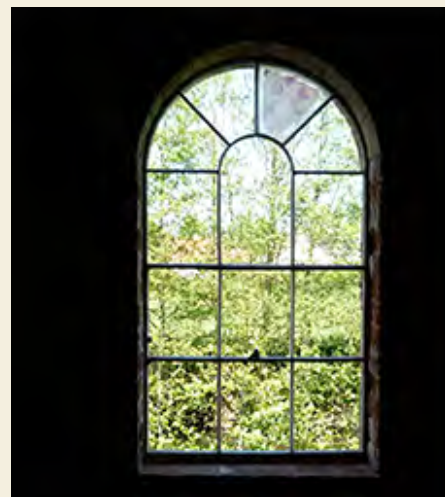




Note: Properties shown as Social Housing were built as such, but are now either privately owned or in the ownership of Greenfields Community Housing. 21st century property locations are approximate only as the map predates the build.

There are 585 listed buildings in the Halstead Postal Area, of which around 110 are in Sible Hedingham. These are mainly situated in the outlying areas, as shown on page 10, and in the conservation areas of Alderford Street and Church Street, as well as sections of Swan Street, Potter Street and Queen Street, which make up part of the A1017 road. Some of our most interesting and historic buildings are described below.

Alderford Mill



Alderford mill is a medium sized white painted timber watermill set on the River Colne and one of the best preserved watermills in Essex. The mill is now owned by Essex County Council and has undergone restoration to its former glory by their experts over the past few years. It is open to the public once a month through the Summer - for details see www.alderfordmill.org.uk



49 Swan Street. A 16th century property with later alterations This two storey house with attics is of exposed timber frame with plaster infill and a red plain tiled roof. If it ever had a name, no-one now seems to know what it was.

The Old Rectory, Rectory Road

Built circa 1714, this Grade 2* listed building is of red brick with hipped red plain tiled roof. It has four symmetrically placed chimney stacks and five dormers to the main block.



Rookwoods, Rookwoods Lodge & Rookwoods Cottage, Yeldham Road



Rookwoods

Rookwoods is early 19th century, of Gault brick with hipped grey slate roof with projecting eaves.



Rookwoods Lodge, a single storey building circa 1887 is of red brick, with hipped red plain tiled roof with pierced ridge tiles and ornaments. It is notable for its ornate brickwork which is similar to Rookwoods Cottage approximately 30 metres north and is a particularly good example of moulded brickwork in Queen Anne style.



Rookwoods Cottage (sometimes known as Coachman's Cottage) was built around 1888 of local red brick with red plain tiled roof and pierced ridge tiles.

Baykers Farmhouse, Lamb Lane



This two storey Elizabethan 6 bedroomed house with attics is of timber frame with plaster infill and a red plain tiled roof. The house is at the end of a long tree-lined drive and sits in 17.5 acres which includes 2 lakes. The red brick extension on the right is a Victorian addition, built as an artist's studio.

Websters Almshouses



These almshouses in Swan Street were built around 1884 by the two Webster sisters in memory of their mother, Maria. Managed by the Webster Almshouse Trust, these almshouses are for retired people with Hedingham connections. During the 1980's the original six almshouses were converted into the four existing homes.

Guidelines

Many of our historic buildings are either listed, and/or in conservation areas and are therefore subject to existing controls. However, if the village of Sible Hedingham is to grow, we must maintain a balance between the old and the new. New developments must not impinge upon the visual impact of our historic buildings, but we must also recognise that even historic buildings are to be lived in or used, not preserved in aspic. Sympathetic modernisation should be allowed, but not at the expense of the essential ethos of the original concept of the building

As well as Conservation Areas and Historic buildings the village has examples of housing from the Victorian and Edwardian eras through to the 1920's 30's, 60's, 70's, 80's and present day.

Victorian & Edwardian



The Victorian cottages in Wethersfield Road (left) were built by Mark Gentry using materials from his adjacent Brick Yard, which is now the site of the Hedingham Omnibus Company. These houses have a trademark flower design on the keystone in the arches above the doors and windows. There are Victorian and Edwardian houses in Alexandra Road (below) and Swan Street. Many have had porches added and replacement windows fitted, but a few still retain the original features, such as the unusual window mouldings and cast iron gates and railings in Alexandra Road.



Railings in Alexandra Road - presumably from a local foundry, as the same style appears on other houses in the area including Halstead.

Guidelines

- *Encourage the preservation of original features of these Victorian and Edwardian houses.*
- *Resist the introduction of 21st century replacement windows, unless the original style is replicated*

The 1920's

In 1927 Frank Gibson donated the Recreation ground to the village and in the same year built bungalows in Cambridge Avenue. The design consisted of a central front door flanked by two rectangular bay windows, Although many of these bungalows have been extended and improved, the roof height along the road has not been increased and all have retained their bay windows. Cambridge Avenue is an unadopted road with a distinctive character which should be preserved.

Also in the twenties, Council Houses were built in Alexandra Road, many of which are now privately owned, with the remainder being owned and managed by Greenfields Housing Trust.



“Ripper’s” Houses

From 1924 Rippers Limited built one hundred houses in Swan Street, Brook Terrace, Station Road, Crosspath and Yeldham Road for their workforce. These have a distinctive style, but many have been extended and altered over the years, making conservation of the “type” difficult.

Guidelines

Maintain the distinctive style of the Rippers Houses. Modernisation cannot be halted, but the Rippers houses should be clearly identifiable as such.



Rippers houses had distinctive roof eaves and decorative brickwork between the ground and upper floor.

Gibson Road

Gibson Road, on the North side of the Recreation Ground was built by Frank Gibson in 1933 and a further 10 bungalows were constructed in Recreation Road. Properties in Gibson Road change hands more frequently than elsewhere in the village as they represent good value at the lower end of the market. Although many have been improved and extended, the proximity of each house to its neighbour and the small size of the gardens only allows limited scope for this.



1960's/70's**The "Janes" estate.**

Still referred to by the name of the original builder, but properly called the Colne Valley Estate this development comprises around 200 dwellings in seven streets including Hawkwood Road, Colne Road, and Hilton Way. It is typical of developments from this era and over the past 40 years many homes have been extended or improved. A smaller, similar development of 33 houses was built about this time in Spurgeon Close, off Alexandra Road,

**Guidelines**

Extensions and improvements in keeping with the surrounding area to be allowed, but back land development to be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

The Sugar Loaves Estate

So called because it lies behind the Sugar Loaves Public House, this is another 60's development comprising 66, mostly semi-detached, houses in Graysmead, Beech Grove, Elm Close and Hawthorns, plus some fronting on to Rectory Road. Also known as the Graysmead Estate, this development was on land formerly used by Rippers Joinery for its wood store. The houses here typically have painted weatherboarding and large picture windows.

**Guidelines**

Householders to be encouraged to retain weatherboarding and picture windows wherever possible.

Swan Street

A development of 64 1 and 2 bedroom flats in 2 blocks; Cygnet and Bewick Court, this development provides a mixture of rented and owner-occupied dwellings and is ideal for single professionals, young couples or first time buyers. The development features contrasting brickwork with weatherboard. Feature windows are incorporated at first floor level.



Guidelines

In order to maintain a good mix of housing in the village, new developments should provide low cost housing as well as family and executive homes.

All new developments must include adequate provision for parking for both residents and visitors.

1980's/90's

Abbey Meadow Development

The Abbey Meadow development lies between Gray's Hall Meadow and Oxford Lane. Built in the 1980's it comprises over 100 homes, and the development has a distinct style which differentiates it from other developments in the village. The accommodation ranges from two bedroom terraced to four bedroom detached homes.

Guidelines

The distinctive nature of this development should be preserved.



Summerfields/Spring Way Development

Originally, the Summerfields development consisted of 39 four bedroomed detached homes in Summerfields and a few in Spring Way, off Swan Street, behind the Co-op store. It finished at the boundary to the Premdor factory. This 1980s development was followed in the 90's by approximately 40 houses in Spring Way, to the South. In 2007, Summerfields was extended by the development by Wimpey on the Premdor site, described on the next page. Summerfields was designed as an open-plan development with no boundary gates or walls.



Guidelines

Extensions and alterations in keeping with the surrounding area to be allowed, but open plan feature to be preserved.

Access to the Riverside Walk can be gained from Summerfields.



The Wimpey Development

The major village employer, Premdor, had long standing plans to build on part of its factory site and this finally came to fruition in 2007/8. This is a mixed development of flats, two, three, and four bedroomed homes and includes some social housing. There is, however no green open space included within the development, although a small tree plantation has been included near the river bank.



Station Road

Two large dwellings, one of which was built by Charlton Ripper were demolished to make way for this development of 12 three and four bedroomed linked homes off Station Road. The Parish Council recommended that the new Road should be called Charlton Close in memory of the original owner.



Crow Court

A 1930's bungalow on this site at the junction of Rectory Road and Swan Street, opposite the Sugar Loves Public House was seriously affected by flooding, leading to its demolition. A local builder erected this small development in 2007. It is a sympathetic development which blends well with the flats opposite in Swan Street (see page 20)



Guidelines

New developments should reflect both the character of the area in which they are situated and the history of the village as a whole.

Developments for the future

The 2nd Premdor Development

Since 2007 the Premdor site between Swan St and Station Road has been under threat, and in Spring 2009, Premdor announced it would be closing its factory, ending over 100 years of employment on that site. This is a 30 acre site (10 acres of which are on the flood plain), and any development is likely to be phased over a few years. The inclusion of a further factory site (Rockways) in Station Road will increase the area by some 4 acres and give further scope for enterprising housing and community use.

Guidelines

The challenge for this site is to include:

- *Sufficient open, public space.*
- *Access to the Riverside Walk*
- *Provision for allotments.*
- *An element of community use, for example a new Doctor's Surgery.*
- *Affordable/Social housing.*
- *Adequate living space in both private and social housing units.*
- *Adequate vehicular access and traffic management.*
- *An interpretation centre using the former Natwest Bank building and some public art.*
- *The possibility of some employment use.*

Swan St

The site of the former Cinema and then Citroen Garage on Swan Street has been designated for future development. Unfortunately an earlier planning permission for 12 homes has expired and the site awaits a new developer, In the meantime it remains something of an eyesore on our main thoroughfare.

Coopers Yard

Situated in Swan Street this former transport yard has seen a number of planning applications over the past few years. Although permission for 22 dwellings had been granted, progress has stalled for the time being.

Guidelines (Swan St and Coopers Yard)

Any renewed planning application should include adequate off-street parking and ensure that the development is unobtrusive to the existing street scene. Also:

- *Affordable Housing*
- *Adequate living accommodation in terms of room size.*
- *Highways consideration.*
- *Green open space.*

Former newsagent's shop

The shop has been demolished and a development of 4 houses is under way.

The former Tanner's Dairy site

This is currently a derelict site for which development of some kind will inevitably be sought in the future. The Parish Council is keeping a close eye on this and will seek active involvement with developers when the time comes. Being outside the village envelope, this site is not ideal for housing development but use for local employment would be welcomed. St Peter's Church, which is close to this site, has need of car parking facilities and this should be considered in any development plan



Guidelines

- *Primarily employment usage, not housing*
- *Employment usage could include Leisure or Retail, as well as Industrial.*
- *No encroachment on neighbouring farmland or greenfield sites.*
- *Parking facility for St Peter's Church to be provided.*

Social Housing

Until the Conservative government of the 1980's encouraged the sale of council houses, there were many local authority homes in Sible Hedingham, of which only 195 now remain, the rest being privately owned.

In November 2007 ownership of the former council houses passed from Braintree District Council to Greenfields Community Housing Ltd. a not-for-profit, Community Gateway housing organisation launched to give tenants and leaseholders influence in how their housing service is run. In addition to Greenfield's properties, a small number of houses are leased and managed by other Housing Associations, such as Colne Housing Trust, who let properties on behalf of Braintree District Council.

Consultation with the villagers has shown that a number of young people who have grown up and have parents or other family here would like to make Sible Hedingham their home. Unfortunately, many are unable to step on to the property ladder and renting social housing is their only option. Sometimes this results in housing being offered far outside the village.



Former Council houses in Alexandra Road, now owned by Greenfields, or in private hands.

Guidelines

By means of a local lettings policy a proportion of new affordable housing in Sible Hedingham should be made available at first let to people with long-standing family associations within the area and to people currently living in the area who require a transfer. Allocation of homes will be determined on need but could be offered to people with a residency qualification of, say, 2 years and should not exclude or be to the detriment of other applicants who have strong connections with the village but have been forced to move away. Guidelines and a workable framework for allocation of new affordable housing should be agreed between the District and Parish councils.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing is provided at:

- Park Court. A Greenfields Community Housing owned development of 9 flats for the elderly, which are warden controlled. There is a lack of demand for this type of housing and these properties are scheduled for imminent closure, demolition and possible replacement with social or affordable housing.
- Jubilee Court. Also owned by Greenfields Community Housing, this development of flats and maisonettes is for elderly people who are able to live independently.
- Hedingham Place. A private development of 36 apartments, some leasehold, some rented. This development is restricted to the over 55's and is warden controlled.
- Forest Home. A privately owned and run care home for the elderly, providing nursing facilities.
- Webster Almshouses - see page 16.

Guidelines

The needs of the elderly and/or vulnerable should be considered in future plans for the village

Car Parking

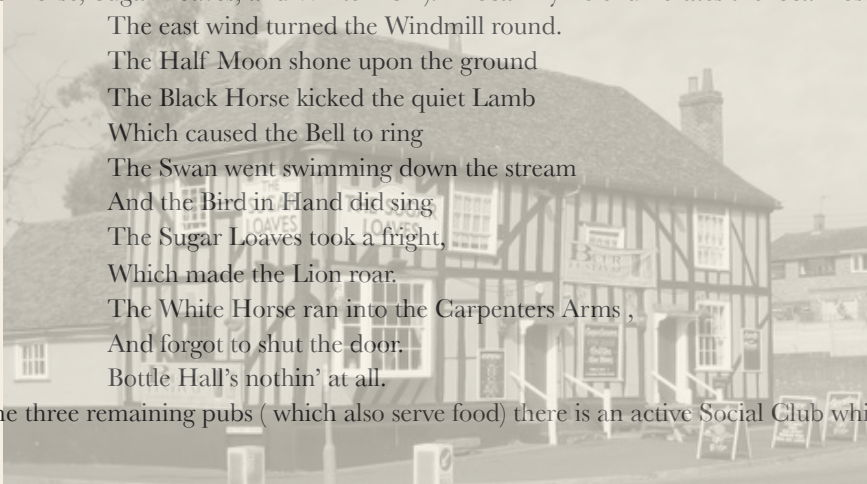
Sible Hedingham has a car park with up to 40 spaces, including disabled bays, situated behind the Co-op store. Formerly owned by Braintree District Council, this car park passed into the ownership of Sible Hedingham Parish Council in Spring 2010. During the daytime, this car park, which is free to use, is frequently full, causing shoppers to park on double yellow lines in Summerfields, or in other inappropriate places. Any future development in the village must take account of the lack of parking in the centre of the village - a problem which will need to be addressed sooner rather than later. The continued provision of free parking is essential - charges should not be imposed.

Cycling

With the advent of the Riverside Walk, consideration should be given to other leisure activities such as cycling. It should be an aim to provide a cycle path from Station Road towards Alderford Mill, a short distance from the actual Riverside walk path. If cycling visitors are encouraged, they may also wish to avail themselves of other village facilities and a bicycle park may need to be provided.

Public Houses

Sible Hedingham has a variety of public houses, although at one time there were many more - 12, in fact, where there are now just three (White Horse, Sugar Loaves, and White Lion). A local rhyme enumerates the local hostelrys, thus



The east wind turned the Windmill round.
The Half Moon shone upon the ground
The Black Horse kicked the quiet Lamb
Which caused the Bell to ring
The Swan went swimming down the stream
And the Bird in Hand did sing
The Sugar Loaves took a fright,
Which made the Lion roar.
The White Horse ran into the Carpenters Arms,
And forgot to shut the door.
Bottle Hall's nothin' at all.

In addition to the three remaining pubs (which also serve food) there is an active Social Club which has recently been refurbished and updated.

Transport

Like many rural and semi-rural areas, Sible Hedingham is not particularly well served with public transport. Buses run to Halstead, Braintree and Great Yeldham, but it is not possible to get a through bus to either Cambridge or Colchester. A Hedingham Omnibus service to Sudbury runs only twice a week, on market days, as it did forty years ago. Any future growth of the village must recognise the need for travel in and out of the village both for work and the use of the facilities that Sible Hedingham will be expected to provide to the surrounding area. Transport companies should be encouraged to expand and co-ordinate their services.

Gosfield Airfield

Although named after our neighbouring village, much of the former Gosfield Airfield lies within the Sible Hedingham boundary. During WW11 the airfield was used by the US Air force and consisted of three runways. It was bombed by the Luftwaffe in 1943. At the end of the war jurisdiction passed from one RAF headquarters to another until Gosfield airfield was closed down during February 1946. Gosfield was put under care and maintenance until the early 1950s when civilian caretakers were left to supervise. Suitable areas eventually returned to agricultural use and the hangars and saleable installations were auctioned in 1955. With the facility released from military control, the Consumers Association made use of the runways and perimeter track for testing cars from 1965 to 1987, the results being published in their magazine, Which?. After the departure of this organisation, the vast majority of the airfield was returned to agricultural use although nowadays there are a number of commercial enterprises operating from the site.

Guidelines

- *Car parking is at a premium. Any future development, whether residential, industrial or commercial must incorporate sufficient car parking space. Free parking must continue to be provided in the centre of the village.*
- *Car usage can only be reduced if viable public transport options exist. Section 106 agreements should be used to encourage public transport options and contribute generally to Highways issues.*
- *Where practical, Section 106 agreements should be used to encourage alternative forms of transport to the car, such as cycling and public transport*

Schools

There are two schools in Sible Hedingham; Hedingham School and Sixth Form College located in Yeldham Road, and St Peter's C of E Primary School (incorporating a pre-school nursery) which is situated in a rural location on the edge of the village. Access is via a narrow country road and is proving a growing problem with increasing pupil numbers and the modern tendency to drive, rather than walk children to school.

Hedingham School caters for children between 11-19 years of age and offers secondary education including a sixth form. It was given specialist status as a Maths and Computing college in 2008. The school has existed on this site since 1938 and has a capacity for over 1100 students. The school's catchment area not only covers the immediate neighbouring villages of Castle Hedingham and Great Yeldham, but stretches as far as Pentlow to the north and Lamarsh to the east and also includes the Bumpsteads to the south of Haverhill. It has 13 feeder primary schools in all. The majority of students from outside Sible Hedingham are bussed in.

St Peter's, which was built in the 1840s, is a Church of England School controlled by Essex County Council. It has around 200 pupils in four junior classes, two infant and one reception year at the foundation stage. The school incorporates two playgrounds, two large playing fields and an outdoor swimming pool for use by the pupils. Planned future development in the village is likely to put a strain on the resources of both schools, particularly St Peter's and Section 106 agreement must be tailored to cover this need.

Both schools are popular and, in recent years, have been oversubscribed.

Doctor's Surgery

The Sible Hedingham surgery which operates in conjunction with those of Castle Hedingham and Great Yeldham occupies a site in Swan Street and has a small car park.

The building, known as Hilton House was built in the early 19th century by John Hilton.

It is a group practice, currently with three duty doctors, two nurses, receptionist and dispensary. As with the schools, future development could put pressure on an already over-stretched service and a group medical practice with modern facilities and extended services should be encouraged.

Pharmacy

This is also located in Swan Street dealing with prescription drugs for the National Health Service. It also sells remedies, cosmetics, batteries, spectacles and the general consumables normally required from a pharmacy. There is also private room for individual consultations.

The nearest pharmacy outside the Village is in Halstead.

Fire Station

The fire station is sited in Rectory Road and was built in 1962. The fire brigade was originally a joint affair and known as the Castle and Sible Hedingham Joint Fire Brigade with the horse-drawn appliance at one stage being housed behind Brook Farm House. It ceased as a voluntary force in 1929.

The current fire station houses a fire tender and associated equipment. It is manned by retained fully trained and qualified firefighters. It also incorporates a drill yard and training tower.

Post Office

The Post Office, is next to the Pharmacy, centrally located in the village. In earlier days the post office, together with the telephone exchange was part of Spurgeon's grocery and drapery stores.

From its original location it moved to its present one where it has been since 1928.



Library

The village library is situated at the northern end of Swan Street, adjacent to a former Citroen car show room (originally a cinema), now demolished. It employs 2 staff and is a well used library with nearly 5,000 books covering a wide spectrum of literature; fiction, non fiction and reference books for all ages. It also keeps a stock of audio cassettes and DVDs and has free internet access from three computer workstations.

This again is a relatively new single storey building constructed in the 1960's. Unlike older buildings of its type it is not an imposing building but has a warm and light character typical of buildings of its age. Pevsner's "Essex" describes it as "A good example of the type being built by the County Architect, H. Conolly, in the early 1960's." It has undergone a complete re-furbishment in 2010.

Bus Garage

The Hedingham Omnibus Company has a depot on the Wethersfield Road leading out of Sible Hedingham. Their red and cream buses are a common sight in the area but their services include routes to Ipswich in the north, Harwich to the east, Saffron Walden in the west and Little Baddow in the south. As well as these routes they also call at places such as Colchester, Clacton, Sudbury and Fordham.

The company has existed since 1960 when it became Hedingham and District Omnibuses, but its origins go back to a time shortly after the end of the first world war, when Aubrey Ernest Letch started a bus route from his parents house in High Street Green and in the years that followed proceeded to acquire other small bus companies and, together with P W Fitch, went from strength to strength increasing his routes in the process.



We cannot stand still - change is inevitable, but we must manage the way in which change comes about. It is important to preserve the best of our environment while striving to enhance that which is merely acceptable and improve that which is sub-standard.

Guidelines - overview

- Development should be confined, wherever possible, to within the village envelope and not encroach the countryside.
- Creation of new Conservation Areas should be considered. No development should adversely impact on the character and appearance of any Conservation Area.
- Consideration should be given to the likely change of balance from Industrial to Residential with suitable provision being made for Health, Education & Community facilities.
- All new buildings should be in keeping with their surroundings and respect the integrity of the Village.
- If Sible Hedingham is to be a service village for the surrounding area, adequate car parking and public transport must be provided for those using the services
- Appropriate landscaping and Open spaces will be essential in the planning of new housing developments.
- Renewable energy sources should be encouraged as far as possible, including geo-thermal, and grey water recycling.
- Wherever possible new and replacement utility services should be run underground.
- New street names should be relevant to the history of the village.
- Social Housing, including shared ownership should be encouraged as should affordable and “starter” homes.
- Consideration should be given to transport plans with a view to providing a safe environment.
- Considerations of large scale schemes in areas not covered by the Parish boundary should take account of the short and long term impact of traffic through the village.
- Sible Hedingham’s history as brick-making centre should be reflected in the choice of building material for new developments.
- Future development should include the needs of all age groups, particularly the under 18’s and the over 60’s
- Back-land development should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.
- In the absence of a village “centre” or focal point such as a village green, consideration should be given to fostering a community spirit.
- Retail outlets, other than fast food, should be encouraged.
- Any increase in housing provision must be matched by an increase in amenities, including education and leisure.
- Increased educational facilities for the under 11’s must consider improved access to St Peter’s Primary School.
- Existing facilities such as Library, Chemist, Surgery, & Post Office, must be preserved.
- Social and affordable housing already has to meet Design and Quality Standards approved by the Homes and Communities Agency. Developers should be encouraged to

adhere to these standards in all new developments, irrespective of whether they are categorised as private, social, or affordable housing.

- Building work should only be carried out within specified days and hours to minimise disturbance to neighbours.

- Developments in the vicinity of schools should be particularly aware of traffic hazards. Developers should be conscious of the large number of busses dropping off and collecting in Station Road from Hedingham School and section 106 agreements put in place to alleviate congestion problems.

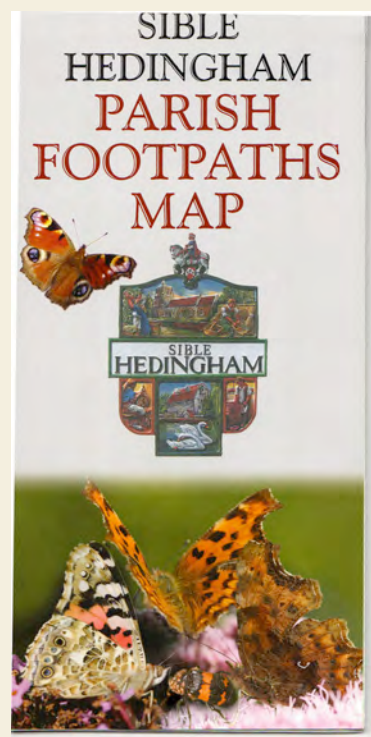
- New developments should include, wherever possible, provision for planting schemes of shrubs, flower beds or trees and appropriate street furniture.

Progress to date

The consultation process highlighted a number of areas of concern. Many of these have already been addressed, and progress has been made in the following areas;

Riverside Walk

This is finally under way, a “Friends” group has been established, grants obtained, and work commenced. Plans include the provision of a new footbridge at Alderford Mill.



Footpath Map

A definitive footpath map, available to all has been produced and is proving very popular. Copies are available from the Parish Council Office.

Street Cleaning & Litter.

This has improved immensely since the first consultation meeting and most residents now seem happy with the level of street cleaning.

Floral Displays.

Flower tubs have been introduced in 5 village locations, and some tree planting has been

undertaken. A flower cart with bedding plants has been generously donated and installed at Oxford Meadow.

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Useful Contacts

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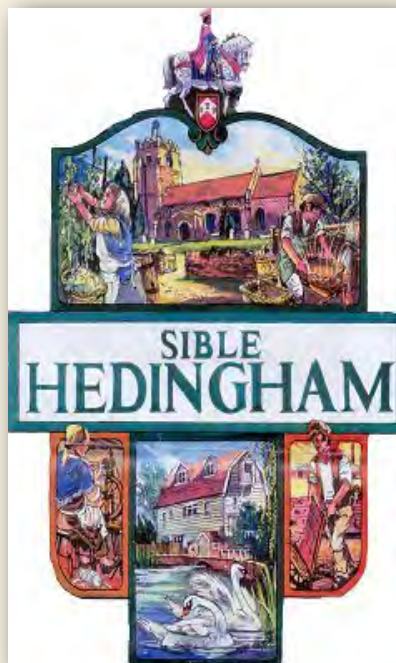
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St Peter's Church
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Sible Hedingham Library
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