

Winterbourne Down South Gloucestershire

Village Design Statement November 2012



The Winterbourne Down Society

The Village Design Statement

This statement was prepared by the community of Winterbourne Down. It was endorsed by South Gloucestershire Council on 28th November 2012 as reflecting the local community's aspirations for the treatment of design issues in the village.

It will be taken into account in the preparation of the Council's Local Plan documents and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Council's adopted development plan and emerging planning policy will however retain full primacy in planning decisions.

Introducing Winterbourne Down

Winterbourne Down is a distinct and compact village.

It is about seven miles north of Bristol and is separated from the urban edge at Frenchay by the Green Belt.

The village is bounded by the railway line to the north, by open fields to the east and west and by the wooded Frome Valley to the south.

It is within the Civil Parish of Winterbourne but separated from that village by the railway line.

As the name 'Down' suggests the village is hilly. It is built on a ridge of pennant sandstone surrounded by lower lying rolling countryside.

The Winterbourne Down Society

The Winterbourne Down Society was formed over thirty years ago with the aim:

'to improve the area in which we live, and to protect those natural or manmade features of the countryside which are of public concern by reason of their aesthetic, archaeological or traditional interest. Such features, if destroyed or allowed to deteriorate, represent a serious loss to our heritage.'



Why this document was produced

The Society has for a number of years been involved in commenting on planning applications which relate to Winterbourne Down and the surrounding areas of Moorend and Bury Hill.

The Society felt that its views, and those of other local residents, have not been given sufficient weight in planning decisions and that in consequence a number of undesirable schemes have been approved resulting in the erosion of village character.

The Society felt that something stronger was needed and found encouragement in Government support for communities to prepare design statements for their area. It is for this reason that this Village Design Statement has been prepared.

Winterbourne Down, South Gloucestershire Village Design Statement

Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared by The Winterbourne Down Society in consultation with local residents

It has been produced to ensure that the character of the village is formally recognised and so that those who care for the village can have their views more clearly expressed and heard in the planning process.

The aim is to ensure that Developers, Planning Officers, Planning Committees and Inspectors recognise and respect what makes Winterbourne Down distinctive and special.

The Statement provides an analysis of the existing village character and sets out guidelines which should help to ensure that new development is in keeping with local traditions and not detrimental to the local environment.

Local residents can also help to retain the character of the village by following the guidelines when maintaining or altering their properties.

A parish plan is also being prepared for the wider civil parish including Winterbourne and Frenchay but this Design Statement stands alone and is for our village.

The Design Statement focuses on design and development issues and should be read alongside the Council's Local Plan, emerging Core Strategy and other relevant planning guidance.

Behind the Design Statement there is a very active community which cares for the village. More detail on the history of the village and the community is given in Appendix 1.

A draft of this Design Statement was circulated for local comment during 2011 and amendments have been made in response. The consultation process is summarised on page 4 and a more detailed report is also available.



Contents

The Design Statement is set out in three main parts with three appendices. A separate statement of community consultation has been prepared.

- 1. General Character of the Village - The Design Context**
- 2. Key Character Areas and Buildings**
- 3. The Overall Approach**

Appendices

- 1. Village History and Community**
- 2. Relevant Policy and Background Documents**
- 3. Statutory Designations and Other Features of Interest.**

The Village Area

For the purposes of this Design Statement the village is defined by the railway line and viaduct, the River Frome, and Mill Road

Aerial photo showing Winterbourne Down VDS Policy area



© South Gloucestershire Council 2012 All rights reserved.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2012. Ordnance Survey 100023410.
 Contains Royal Mail data © Royal Mail copyright and database right 2012.
 Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2012.

Map 1 showing Winterbourne Down VDS Policy area



© South Gloucestershire Council 2012 All rights reserved.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2012. Ordnance Survey 100023410.
 Contains Royal Mail data © Royal Mail copyright and database right 2012.
 Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2012.

The Design Statement Process

1. In 2008/09 a questionnaire was sent out to every household in the village.
2. The responses were analysed and a summary produced. The feedback reinforced the Society's concerns that development issues in the village need to be more widely recognised and addressed.
3. The Society felt that the responses were sufficiently consistent and clear to proceed with preparing a draft VDS.
4. A draft VDS was prepared during 2010 and copies were distributed for comment to every household in the village early in 2011. A small but very helpful number of comments were received and were addressed in preparing a revised Draft. Most comments were very positive and some additional key features were identified. There is clear local support for the principles set out in the VDS.
5. The draft Design Statement was offered to South Gloucestershire Council for consideration and endorsement. It was endorsed by Committee resolution on 28th November 2012.
6. As endorsed we would expect the Statement to become a material consideration in planning decisions affecting the village.

Wider Policy Context

This Design Statement must be read in conjunction with all relevant statutory planning policies and guidance as set out in Appendix 2 including:

- The National Planning Policy Framework,
- The South Gloucestershire Local Plan (adopted January 2006)
- The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (adoption anticipated early 2013).

Feedback from the household survey

Local people identified the following key components which are considered particularly important to the character of the village.

Landscape setting

- Winterbourne Down, together with Moorend and Bury Hill, is recognised as a discreet community.
- It is bounded on three sides by green fields and woodland.
- The village has a distinctive character derived from the ridge of pennant sandstone on which it sits.
- Sandstone walls give continuity through most of the village.
- Tree cover on higher land, in the valleys and gardens give the village a green setting.

Green space

- The physical and visual links between the village and the surrounding countryside help to form the village character and should be maintained
- Green corridors and spaces within the village are also important to character and are under pressure from development.

Village form

- The village is now of mixed housing periods and styles.
- There is sufficient of the original character of stone built cottages and walls to protect as part of the future mix.



Traffic

- Vehicles are a major concern, particularly the impact of through traffic, cars parking on-street and in the erosion of garden space for parking and circulation.
- Winterbourne Down is seen as a rat-run and is dominated by through traffic at peak times. This results in congestion and tail backs at key junctions within Winterbourne and at Kendleshire.
- Traffic noise, especially from the Avon Ring Road and motorway intrude on, and detract from, the otherwise rural character.

Sensitive areas

- The ambience of particular buildings or sets of buildings such as cottages should be preserved as visual history to be seen both from within and from outside the village
- There are parts of the village where the existing density and privacy of houses should be maintained.
- The Frome Valley in particular should be preserved against any further building incursion.

Key buildings

- Key buildings include All Saints Church, Bethesda Chapel, Wynnford Grange, Prospect House and the Railway Viaduct.

General approach

Residents do not feel that all new building should be opposed. However, any new development should avoid sensitive areas and fit the existing ambience of the village.

Some older properties do not meet modern space standards or the needs of growing families – but extensions should only be allowed where they are sympathetic to the village character.

Part 1 – General Characteristics of the Village – The Design Context

A. Landscape Setting

The village is located on a ridge of pennant sandstone cut through by the River Frome and its steep sided valley. The higher parts of the village (particularly the area around the Church) are highly visible in long distance views from the east, south and west. They also offer views out of the village to the countryside beyond. Key views to and from the village which local people have said they want to keep are identified below and on the plan opposite but this is not exhaustive and care is required to assess the potential impact of development on any existing views which add to local character.

1. Views To and From the West

The picture is viewed from Worrells Lane and shows the wooded hillside around the Church with homes on the lower slopes.



2. Views To and From the South

Views to and from Bury Hill and the Iron Age camp across the Frome Valley. Some views are panoramic others provide brief but important glimpses between the cottages on Church Road and Stone Lane.



3. Views To and From the East

Views to and from the open countryside over the Frome Valley and towards the railway viaduct. There are also distant views from the village to the Cotswold scarp.



Map 2 Key views



Key Development Principles Landscape Setting

- A1 - The compactness of the village boundary should be preserved to maintain the amenity of open space close at hand. (SGLP H2)
- A2 - Medium and long-distance views to and from the village are very important to the ambience of the village and should be recognised and respected.
- A3 – Green belt land, and the Frome Valley in particular, should be preserved against any further building incursion. (SGLP GB1)
- A4 - Care is required with any further infill development to ensure that local character, views and green space are not further eroded.
- A5 Individual trees and general tree cover make a significant contribution to local character and need protection.

B. Green Space

- Green space is a key component of local character and is also very important for people and wildlife.
- The village is bounded on three sides by green fields and woodland most of which is in private ownership and not accessible.
- Huckford Quarry, the railway corridor, Frome Valley and Bury Hill are important visual features and spaces for wildlife.
- Tree cover has increased over time and 'softened' the old quarries.



The higher parts of village have a good degree of tree cover.

- Useable public green space within the village is very limited. The main green accessible spaces within the village are:
 - All Saints Church and burial ground
 - Bethesda Chapel
 - The Church Hall
- These spaces are much appreciated but are minimal and do not meet play needs.
- Most older dwellings were originally set in a plot of generous proportions - often four or five times the footprint of the main building and with both front rear and side gardens (See Maps 3 and 4). This helped home food production and provided space for ornamental planting and play. A number of properties with large lawns and fields were used for 'community' events.
- Some recent developments have put pressure on garden space and on the harder to develop and more sensitive valley areas which are a particular concern for residents. Some schemes have resulted in the wholesale removal of trees, bushes and vegetation.
- The River Frome corridor with the Frome Valley Walkway is a key green space but needs regular maintenance. Enjoyment of it is at risk from neighbouring development. Some adjacent areas are at risk from flooding.

Key Development Principles Green Space

- *B1 – Remaining green spaces should be conserved.*
- *B2 - Key trees, hedgerows and other 'natural' site features need to be retained.*
- *B3 - Where it is not possible to retain landscape features they should be replaced by mature or semi-mature trees and/or hedgerows*



C. Garden Areas and Play Space

- Garden and other green spaces are an important component of local character and also provide opportunities for food production, hobbies, play and relaxation.
- The original settlement pattern of large gardens, orchards, fields, allotments and quiet roads gave a spacious feel to the village and gave ample opportunities for children's play and community events.
- Village houses typically had ornamental front gardens and long private back gardens used for food production and play.
- Development of garden areas and infill plots over many years has resulted in the gradual loss of garden and green space.
- While most homes still have garden areas plot sizes are tending to become very small resulting in a loss of village character and in opportunities for play and relaxation at home. In addition the roads and lanes which were previously used for play have become more intensively trafficked and parked with cars resulting in lost opportunities for play close to home. This is significant because useable public open space within the village is very limited.
- Children have no designated playing area within the village. The nearest areas for ball games are at the Recreation Ground in Winterbourne (approximately one mile away) and at Whiteshill Common (approximately half a mile) depending on starting point. These are not convenient for casual play are not easily accessed and lack informal supervision.
- When asked, some children said they could only play in their own gardens or, if accompanied by adults, go for walks along the Frome Valley. Some use the roads but these are too often full of parked cars or too busy with traffic.
- There is need for play areas for younger children and access to larger open spaces for older ones to explore safely. It follows that good access to gardens and local green space is vital.
- There are no identifiable opportunities to create new kick about and play spaces in the village.
- Where garden space is compromised there is both a loss in local character and in opportunities for quiet relaxation and children's' play.

Key Development Principles Garden Areas and play Space

- *C1 - Proposals should recognise the contribution which local gardens and generous plot sizes make to local character and minimise the loss of existing garden areas wherever possible*
- *C2 - Over development by 'cramming' of sites should be avoided.*
- *C3 - Where development is proposed it should respect the historic form and density of the neighbouring development*
- *C4 - The play needs of children and the absence of local useable play space should be recognised in considering proposals for development within garden areas. There is also a need to investigate the scope to create new local areas for play.*

D Settlement Pattern and Village Form

- The overall pattern of roads has been long established and changed little in the 20th Century. The Tithe Map of 1844 (opposite) shows all main roads in place except Station Road. This was in place by 1914 (Map 4).
- A number of new lanes and closes have developed since this period e.g. Colston Close and Prospect Close.
- The original settlement form was scattered with free standing cottages set in large plots or small groupings dotted across the village.
- Down Road remains the main road through the village and gives a generally linear form.
- Historically properties tended to be smaller and more tightly packed around Church Road and the Dingle. This is still evident.
- Most older buildings were built fronting the street with a distinct building line, and with both front and rear garden space. This gives a traditional village 'grid form'. A few buildings are at right angles but still follow a 'grid'.
- The one notable exception to this principle is the Cross Hands which is at an oblique angle at the junction of two roads.
- Most properties had a small front garden but longer, narrow rear gardens that allowed space for home produce and play.
- Most recent development has followed the grid pattern. This has helped to maintain a cohesive character

Map 3 Winterbourne Down (From a Tithe Map of the 1840s)



Impact of Recent Development

There are some recent examples where buildings have been 'squeezed-in' backing on to the streets or at oblique angles to the grid. This gives a more suburban feel and tends to undermine the settlement pattern and character.

Privacy

The main village is built on the rising land of the 'Down' and with housing stretching down into the Frome Valley. It follows that many houses have views open to the countryside and are fortunate in this respect. Some new developments, because of their mass and height, have removed privacy and blocked views, which is regrettable. This should be avoided wherever possible.

Key Development Principles Settlement Pattern and Village Form

- *D1 - The existing village grid pattern of development should be recognised and respected in new development.*
- *D2 - Where distinct building lines exist they should be maintained.*
- *D3 - Developments in Winterbourne Down would be more in keeping with the existing village if built in a linear rather than nuclear form.*
- *D4 – Key views should be recognised, protected, conserved and enhanced.(See also Section A)*
- *D5 – Development proposals should avoid overlooking into the windows and the private garden areas of neighbouring properties.*

E. Boundary Treatments

The Stone Walls

- Much of the village character is formed from the pennant sandstone walls which line the main roads. This was originally sourced from local quarries and laid dry or with a lime/ash bonding.
- The continuity of stone boundary walls is a major component of local character.
- Within the village stone is traditionally laid dry or with a lime/ash mortar and in the natural plain/bed with copings laid vertically.
- These traditional methods have helped longevity and continuity of the boundary treatments and street scene.
- There are variations in wall height in some streets especially where used for retaining e.g. Mill Road and Harcombe Hill.
- Many walls are over 100 years old and are showing signs of wear. They need sympathetic attention if they are not to be lost.
- Increasing the height of walls needs careful consideration in securing a decent match and also in terms of long-term stability and safety.
- Inclusion of cement and concrete within walls can trap moisture, which when frozen, can result in damage. Traditional walling appears to offer the best long-term solution.



- The removal of walls, opening of new gaps and/or replacement with non-local stone can undermine the continuity and character of the street scene.

Field boundaries

- Outside of the village area field boundaries tend to be either old stone walls (many of which are in a poor state of repair) or hedgerows which also need continual maintenance.



Key Development Principles Boundary Treatments

- *E1 – The traditional dry stone walls built from local stone are a feature of the village and should be preserved.*
- *E2 – In areas where walls have been used as the principal boundary they should be retained, repaired and maintained using traditional materials and construction methods.*
- *E3 – New development should ideally incorporate dry stone walls to all boundaries but where this is not practicable priority is for provision fronting public areas i.e. roads and public paths.*
- *E4 – Local sandstone and dry stone walling is preferable to large lap-fencing or reconstituted stone.*
- *E5 – New openings in walls (gateways etc) should be minimised in number and scale to what is absolutely necessary and should be resisted where local character would be lost.*
- *E6 – Older walls and hedgerow field boundaries need to be retained and maintained.*
- *E7 – Post and rail fencing should only be used as a temporary means of fencing to protect hedgerows during establishment.*

F. Building Design

- The village has become one of mixed development in terms of dwelling size and materials.
- Different streets tend to have different characters. This is considered in more depth in Part 2. General principles are outlined here.

Scale, Mass and Proportions

- The majority of early properties were simple two storey dwellings with low ceiling and eaves heights and without dormer windows.
- Although building styles changed with fashion most provided relatively small accommodation and a limited unit size.
- The recent trend has been for ever larger format new buildings and for major alterations and extensions to former cottages to the detriment of original character.
- Some new dwellings are out of scale with their context.



Materials

- While historically local pennant sandstone has been a cheap and useful material for boundary walls it is not ideal for use in buildings.
- The stone is generally thin, up to 75mm in depth, and is not good for random rubble or dressed face stonework. Most stone walls need to be at least 300 mm wide with an outer and inner skin with rubble infill and with no cavity.
- Where stone was used in older buildings it tended to be rendered or sparged with only front elevations exposed and pointed. Some buildings have brick detailing around windows and for quoins.
- Village properties therefore tend to be of mixed character and age and have used a range of materials and external finishes.
- Construction using faced stone work is increasingly expensive and is therefore best concentrated where it would have most impact on building character e.g. in front elevations, with rendered block work to sides and rear.
- Large scale use of brick as an exterior finish is generally out of character with the village and best avoided.
- There is some consistency of materials within small groups and particular parts of the village e.g. stone in some areas – render in others.

Key Development Principles Building Design

- *F1 - Proposals should include an analysis of building materials and styles on neighbouring plots/local groups and should aim to respect that character.*
- *F2 - The ambience of particular buildings or sets of buildings such as cottages should be preserved as visual history to be seen both from within and from outside the village.*
- *F3 - Proper scaling and positioning of houses in relation to neighbouring buildings and the available plot is essential to maintaining local character.*
- *F4 - Two storey houses with pitched roofs and garden space front and back fit the general ambience of the village.*
- *F5 - Traditional building materials should be used where necessary to support local character. Use of reconstituted or non-local stone and brick can detract from continuity in the village and local character.*
- *F6 - New development should be both energy efficient and sustainable and good modern design is encouraged where it respects the character and setting of the neighbourhood.*

G. Traffic and Car Parking

Traffic

- Traffic is a major issue locally with increasing on street parking and use of the village as a commuter rat-run.
- Crossing Down Road during commuter times is hazardous, especially for children and the elderly. There are no crossings and the visibility is hampered by parked cars and vans which are staggered along the road - although this can help to reduce vehicle speeds.
- Rat runs affect the character of the village and diminish both the street scene and the traditional activities of the villagers. Walking (including walking to school), horse riding, and cycling are constrained except when the main street is closed for special events.
- The rat runs through the area which are of particular concern are:
 - i. From the Badminton Road through Bury Hill and Moorend up to Hambrook Common.
 - ii. From the Badminton Road through Winterbourne Down via Down Road and Church Road.

Car ownership and parking

- Residents have become increasingly dependent on use of cars due to decline in local services and limited access to public transport.
- Dependence on cars has resulted in increasing demands for parking space both on and off street, the removal of many front gardens, boundary walls and safe street play areas. Many garden areas have been replaced by garages and parking spaces. New developments have generally eliminated front garden dividing walls and cleared rear stonewalls. Some walls have been replaced by wire or timber fencing.
- With any new development the need is to ensure that the plot/building ratios are increased to accommodate the additional burden of car parking without impacting on the character of the village. Development plots need to be of a size to meet the building, services (including cars) and amenity/garden space. i.e. plots should not be overdeveloped. To date there has been limited use of the topography to accommodate vehicle and other storage under buildings.

Key Development Principles Traffic and Parking

- *G1 – Proposals will need to take account of District Wide Parking Standards (See: <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/draftparkingspd/consultationHome>).*
- *G2 - Any development should be sited so that safe pedestrian and vehicular (car) access is achieved from the road with adequate space and visibility. This means a clear space between the building and the road and that retained boundary walls and gateposts should not block visibility.*
- *G3 - When a group of buildings is constructed the parking area design should also act as 'green' space to enhance the area.*
- *G5 - Density of development should maintain overall open space within plots and make provision for motor vehicles - a triangular balance/vision between buildings, garden, and parking provision.*
- *G6 - The potential impact of additional cars and the scope to reduce reliance on cars should be taken into account when planning applications are considered.*

Part 2 - Key Character Areas and Buildings

1. The Main Roads

Down Road



- Down Road is classified as a minor road. It forms the main spine and artery of the village in a distinctly linear form. Within the village it runs for approximately half a mile from Damsons Bridge across the River Frome, up the first steep hill, through a short level area by the Cross Hands and then it rises again between the Church and Chapel to the railway bridge.
- The original stone walls are largely intact throughout Down Road and give continuity of character while the main buildings have a variety of designs reflecting their period or construction. The variety of stone built houses and cottages provide the basis of local character.
- From the east at Damsons Bridge the open aspect to the right and the high foliage on the left, coupled with single-side pavement, gives a very rural feel. As one moves up the road into the village, the overall impression is of stone walls and bushes/trees with glimpses of housing behind.
- In the central part of the road most houses are parallel with and front the main road with varying depths of front garden and generally distinct building lines. The majority are two storeys with bungalows and 1.5 storey properties being the exception. There is a variety of housing styles, the predominant facia is either stone or render.
- Near the Church and Chapel there are more limited views due to the high walls. (Conversely when travelling down the main road the Church and Chapel afford long distance views as they are on high ground.)
- Between the Churches and railway bridge there are high walls and tree cover which screen houses in that area and give a different, more enclosed, feel to the road. There is a single side pavement at this end of the village.
- Overall, the character of the road, the buildings on it and the lack of 'urbanisation' combine to ensure that currently Down Road both makes and retains the village feel.
- Down Road contains the only remaining commercial establishments in the village; the Cross Hands pub, a beauty parlour and two hairdressers all utilising original cottage style properties and with very limited off-street parking. Down Road also has a post box by the shop.
- The Cross Hands pub is a focal point for the village - particularly at carnival and holiday times. It is over one hundred years old.
- Traffic on Down Road can be very busy during the 'rush hours' with many drivers using it as a 'cut through'.
- The main road is narrow, main junctions are generally sub-standard, the hills are steep with sharp bends, there is much on street parking and most frontage properties have direct access. These all present potential hazards and which require extreme caution. While speed of traffic is a concern on street parking helps to regulate speed but parked cars are at risk.
- While the majority of properties in the road have driveways and garages on-street parking is limited in some areas due to parking restrictions (yellow lines).
- Apart from overhead cables street furniture is unobtrusive and is limited to street lighting along the length of the road, a signpost at the junction with Harcombe Hill/Church Road, and warning signage at the approach to Damsons Bridge.

Key buildings in Down Road

All Saints Church

All Saints Church, Winterbourne Down, was founded in 1858 by the Greenstreet family in memory of their parents. The instigator was Frederick Waters Greenstreet, curate of Frenchay at the time. He took a great interest in the inhabitants of 'The Downs' mainly miners squatting on common land on the outskirts of Frenchay Parish. Some squatters were hatters, a trade that was gradually dying out.

In the Trust Burial Ground there is a large Stone Cross, a private memorial to two sons, but on which was placed the names of men who lost their lives in the 1914-18 First World War and the 1939 Second World War.

The Church and its lych gate are Listed Buildings.



Winterbourne Down Methodist Church (Bethesda)

Bethesda Methodist Church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1959 having been opened in May 1879. The decision to build a chapel had been taken some years earlier, when the need for a place for religious meetings was recognised. 'Cottage' meetings had been held and use had also been made of the schoolroom, which was built in 1840, but something more than this was felt to be necessary. For the first twenty years or so the singing at the services was led by a flute.

The Cross Hands

The Cross Hands public house is situated in the centre of the village at the principal crossroads and is visually prominent. It is one of the few remaining secular buildings which are used by the community and it is one of the few buildings set at an oblique angle to the village grid.

The pub provides a focus during the May carnival and Boxing Day Mummings Play.

The play, which died out at the onset of WW1, was revived in 1979 and now draws large crowds every year. There is a painting of the Mummings within the pub.

The current owners provide major floral displays. The lack of parking for the pub is an issue.



Harcombe Hill

- Harcombe Hill is also a main route. It has a similar character to Down Road but climbs even more steeply than Down Road.
- Access to properties tends to be more difficult than on Down Road due to on street parking, bends and the steep hill.
- There are high retaining walls in pennant sandstone on both sides of the main hill area and only a narrow pavement on the west side.



Examples of stone built cottages on Harcombe Hill



Larger Stone Built houses (right) and on-street parking issues in Harcombe Hill

Mill Road

- Mill Road provides the western limit of the village. It is generally narrow and lined by high walls and trees. There is a narrow pavement on only one side.
- As the land rises it affords views across open fields towards Whiteshill and Pye Corner and the M4 beyond.

Key Buildings

- **The Old Rectory** – (left in picture) is one of only two listed buildings in the village the other being the Church. It is prominent in long distance views.
- **The Old School House** – (right in picture). The primary school closed in 1960 and has been converted to residential use.

Local children now generally attend either Hambrook or Winterbourne Schools.

There are significant parking issues around the Hambrook School at Whiteshill Common



2 THE SIDE ROADS

Church Road

- Church Road comprises many older cottage properties many of which have been 'improved' over the years. Most have short front gardens and longer back gardens.
- Parking for the narrow terraces is a major issue. On street parking creates problems in the narrow road.
- It would be ideal to maintain the existing character of Church Road, particularly in the area of the older buildings.



- Church Road offers important glimpses between properties towards Bristol and to the Roman Camps south of the Frome



- Church Road still has some high stone walls and old buildings of simple design.

Key buildings - All Saints Church Hall,

- All Saints' Church Hall is used extensively for various activities and is a feature of the village.
- Situated in the centre of the village, the hall is well used and is let to a wide variety of user groups - Border Morris Dancers, the Pre-School Group, Women's Institute, Ladies Probus, Praise and Play Group, Jazz Dancers, the Rainbows, Art Group and the Horticultural Society are regular users.
- A Survey of Condition was commissioned in July 2005. Following the survey report, the All Saints' Management Group established a Refurbishment Project, aimed at giving the hall a further ten years life. Phase 2 was completed in June 2009. The Refurbishment project has been supported by grants from Winterbourne Parish Council, South Gloucestershire Council, 'Awards for All' Big Lottery Fund and the Quartet Community Foundation Express Fund.
- The church hall is owned and managed by All Saints' PCC. The site on which the hall is built was purchased by the PCC from Mrs Dorothy Moore (who at that time lived in the village) on the 2nd March 1956. The hall, a timber framed 'temporary' construction clad in Cedar wood, was built soon after the land was purchased.



- The green space around the hall substitutes as a village green and adds to the character of the village. It is invaluable at our May Day Carnival as an outdoor play area.

Stone Lane

- Stone Lane is a long cul-de-sac. It was originally a narrow lane with cottages on the south side. These were built at right angles to the road and nestled in their own productive plots.
- On the north side the garden of Wynford Grange was a wilderness of fruit trees and indigenous plants. The Grange stood in about 4 acres of land. Some of this land was sold in the late 1960's and a developer built modern houses along the length of the land. Reconstituted stone in Cotswold colour was used. Stone Lane was widened to allow easy access to the new homes. We therefore have the original pennant stone walls on the south side of the lane and the newer 'Cotswold' colour on the north side.
- At the west end of the lane the houses are a mixture of old cottages and more modern houses and bungalows. The eastern end is a dead end with just steps descending to Damsons Bridge on Down Road, where the River Frome flows.
- Since the 1980's many gardens of any size have had a new property or properties built upon them. Although there seems little space left for further development, one house has recently been demolished and a new, much larger property has been built on the site. It would be a case of over-development if this were to happen again.
- There is concern that more houses in Stone Lane will overload the already delicate infrastructure of sewers, water and so on and if they are built in the wrong style, this will create an imbalance and have a negative impact on the amenity and living conditions of existing residents.

The Dingle

- The Dingle is one of the roads with most character in the village. It descends from Stone Lane, at a steep gradient, to the valley of the River Frome. On either side of the road there are garden walls and cottages, mainly original, often extended, with gardens terraced into the bank of the escarpment or old quarry.
- All of the houses benefit from views of the woodland on the far side of the river.
- Fifty percent of the properties are 19th Century or older.
- The Dingle is a single track, one-way road with extremely limited parking at the junction with Damson Bridge on Down Road. There are no pavements.
- Any further development in or at either end of The Dingle could very adversely affect the precious Frome Valley.

The River Frome bisects the sandstone ridge to form a steeply sided valley. This was the original source of building stone and location of the first squatters' cottages in Stone Lane and what became known as The Dingle.

The River Valley, The Dingle and Stone Lane



The Dingle



Station Road

The road has very narrow, difficult junctions at both ends. The junction with Harcombe Hill is almost single lane and is at the top of a steep hill. The junction with Down Road is also narrow and at the bottom of a steep hill. Traditional stone and rendered cottages are concentrated at both entrances to Station Road. There is little or no through traffic, just domestic, giving a relative sense of quiet.

The middle section consists of a variety of housing styles and ages, but all are set back from the pavement with front gardens. House boundaries are defined by a variety of means, dry stone wall, picket fences, to red brick and rendered walls. Station Road has several side lanes and alleys which lead to traditional cottages.



3 THE LANES AND CLOSES

The lanes and closes lead off the main roads and side roads and include:

- Quarry Lane,
- Rose Close,
- Colston Close,
- Camp View,
- Prospect Close,
- Mill Steps,
- Frome Glen,
- Stone Close,
- Cairn Gardens
- Pump Alley

- Each of the lanes and closes has an individual character largely drawn from its main period of development. For example Camp View has a row of late Victorian houses; Colston Close is a quiet cul-de-sac dating from the 1960s; and Cairn Gardens consists of brick built 'town houses', which although arguably not in keeping with the village character, these are relatively self-contained and discrete visually.
- The separate character of each lane and close should be analysed and respected in any new development proposals.

Camp View



Colston Close



Cairn Gardens



PART 3 - The Overall Approach to Development

Overview

Residents do not consider that all new development should be opposed but wish to ensure that each new building which is proposed should fit the existing ambience of the village.

There are particular concerns to avoid high density development and to maintain the privacy of existing houses particularly in the more visually sensitive parts of the village.

Some older properties do not meet modern space standards or the needs of growing families – but extensions should only be allowed where they are sympathetic to the village character.

While the village is not opposed in principle to further development there are practical considerations with infill development which give rise to specific concerns which need to be recognised and addressed in shaping and assessing proposals.

Survey Information

The key issue is to ensure that before any development is proposed there is a clear analysis of the site to show:

- The site context
- Key views into and out of the site
- Neighbouring buildings
- Levels
- Trees and other vegetation
- Features of current or potential historic or ecological interest including walls.



Sensitive areas

There is particular concern at development of higher land and in valley areas where changes in levels can result in obtrusive development and overlooking/privacy issues.

Key Development Principles:

The Overall Approach

- *H.1 - The need is to understand the unique context, assets and design challenges of each property and to use that as a platform for proposals which are appropriate to the individual site and sympathetic to the village as a whole.*
- *H.2 - The starting point for any proposal should be accurate surveys and an analysis of the site and its context to note key features and design challenges. This should include an assessment of the contribution that the site, garden areas and neighbouring sites make to village character and tree cover.*
- *H.3 - Pre-application consultation with local residents can be very helpful in bringing forward a sympathetic and acceptable design solution.*
- *H.4 - Proposals which are not appropriate to the site or sympathetic to the character of the village should be refused.*

Appendix 1 - Village History and Community

Village History

The landform and history of the village informs the present pattern of development.

There was a Romano-British encampment at 'Bury Hill' south of the village which may have been linked to a burial ground next to All Saints Church.

One house on Down Road is noted in the Domesday Book as a pin factory.

The rolling hillside gave the village its name as the 'Down' and principal road as 'Down Road'.

The local pennant sandstone provided excellent building material and was quarried. The importance of stone is reflected in the street names of 'Stone Lane' and 'Quarry Lane'. 'The Dingle' derives from the steep sided valley.

Very small 'squatters' cottages developed around the quarries and in the steeper areas which were of little agricultural value.

The cottagers had access to work in the local quarries, the coal mines (at Harry Stoke and Coalpit Heath) and in agriculture.

Dwellings in the valley areas tended to be very basic rubble built cottages with very limited amenities. These developed as an unobtrusive 'organic' part of the landscape.

At Mill Bridge there stood a four-storey water mill for corn and later cider. It was demolished in the early 1950s. However, the water wheel had an adjoining room which was spared along with the blacksmith's building.

The River Frome has flooded many times and the Dingle has been badly affected. Damsons Bridge, formerly 'Damason', remains unaffected, but Mill Bridge lost its stone parapet wall in the 1960s and the weir collapsed on another occasion.

In the early 19th century Winterbourne Down was a sparsely populated rural community based on the Down. Before the church was built the area was inhabited by 'a number of squatters on quasi-common land, in poor cottages with or without legal title – some were hatters, the greatest part were colliers. The place had a rather bad name for manners and morality' (F.W.Greenstreet).

It became more established in the Victorian era when the Church and Chapel were built and other services developed to support the growing population.

A fine vicarage was built in 1860 and a school in 1866 both on Mill Road.

In the Victorian era the village attracted some wealthier families who built larger houses on generously sized plots. It was however still a relatively poor area.

Winterbourne Down became a parish separate from Winterbourne with the building of All Saints Church, dedicated in 1858. It was consecrated 1860, by Order of Council, on 25th July 1861.

The Order spelt the name without the 'e' i.e. Winterbourn Down and the spelling has been a subject of much debate over the years.

Opposite All Saints Church is the Bethesda Methodist Chapel built in 1878. Annexed to the Chapel is a hall used by many local groups.

All Saints has a church hall in nearby Church Road.

A village parish hall complete with tennis court was built in 1921 but closed and was redeveloped as a private dwelling in the late 1950s.

By the early 1900s the village had become relatively self contained and had developed a very separate identity from neighbouring Winterbourne, Hambrook and Frenchay.

Many cottages had large gardens with livestock and vegetable plots with the aim of being self sufficient. The area was 'sustainable' of necessity rather than fashion.

The railway employed a number of workers especially when the viaduct was built in 1903. The Station opened in 1908. Later again many started working at Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton.

In the mid 20th Century many more houses were built. This phase of development saw a mix of larger terraced, semi-detached and bungalow properties most notably in the Station Road/Colston Close area, Down Road and Stone Lane. There was also a trend to modernise some of the older cottages for example in the Dingle.

While the number of houses has continued to grow the village has become less self contained with very few local jobs and dependence on a wider area for jobs and services including work in the aircraft industry at Filton, and in the schools, hospitals and businesses in and around Bristol.

Until recently the village seemed able to absorb new housing by gradually developing on larger gardens and green spaces.

The village was also able to absorb a range of building sizes and architectural fashions because the key components of character - a grid pattern form of development, continuous stone boundary walls and relatively generous garden areas - were retained.

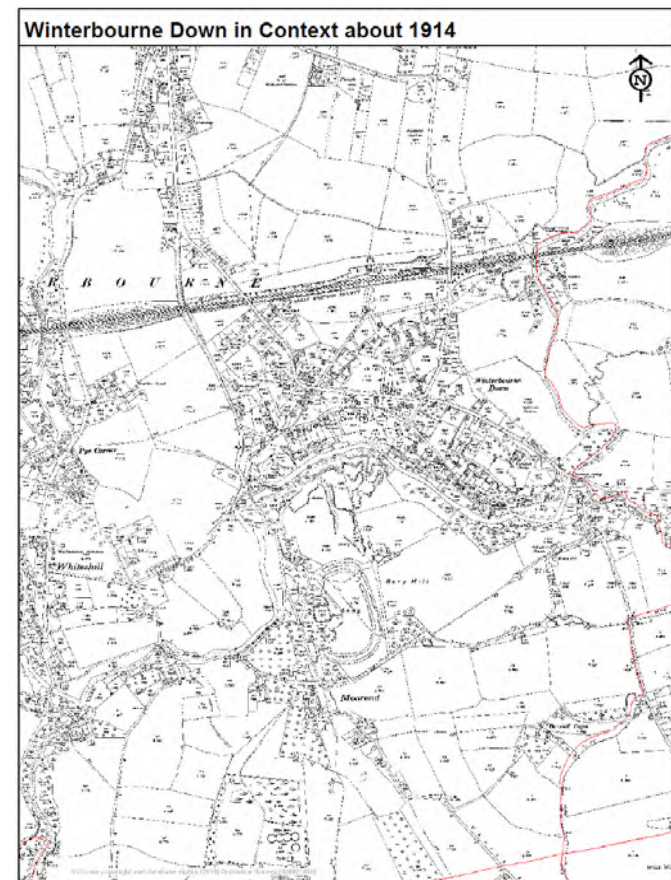
Towards the end of the 20th Century there were increasing local concerns that village character was being eroded by:

- the continued intensification of built form;
- over alteration and extension of cottages;
- increasing car ownership and associated traffic pressures;
- the development of very large and incongruous new houses in the valley areas; and,
- the loss of local services and increasing car dependency.

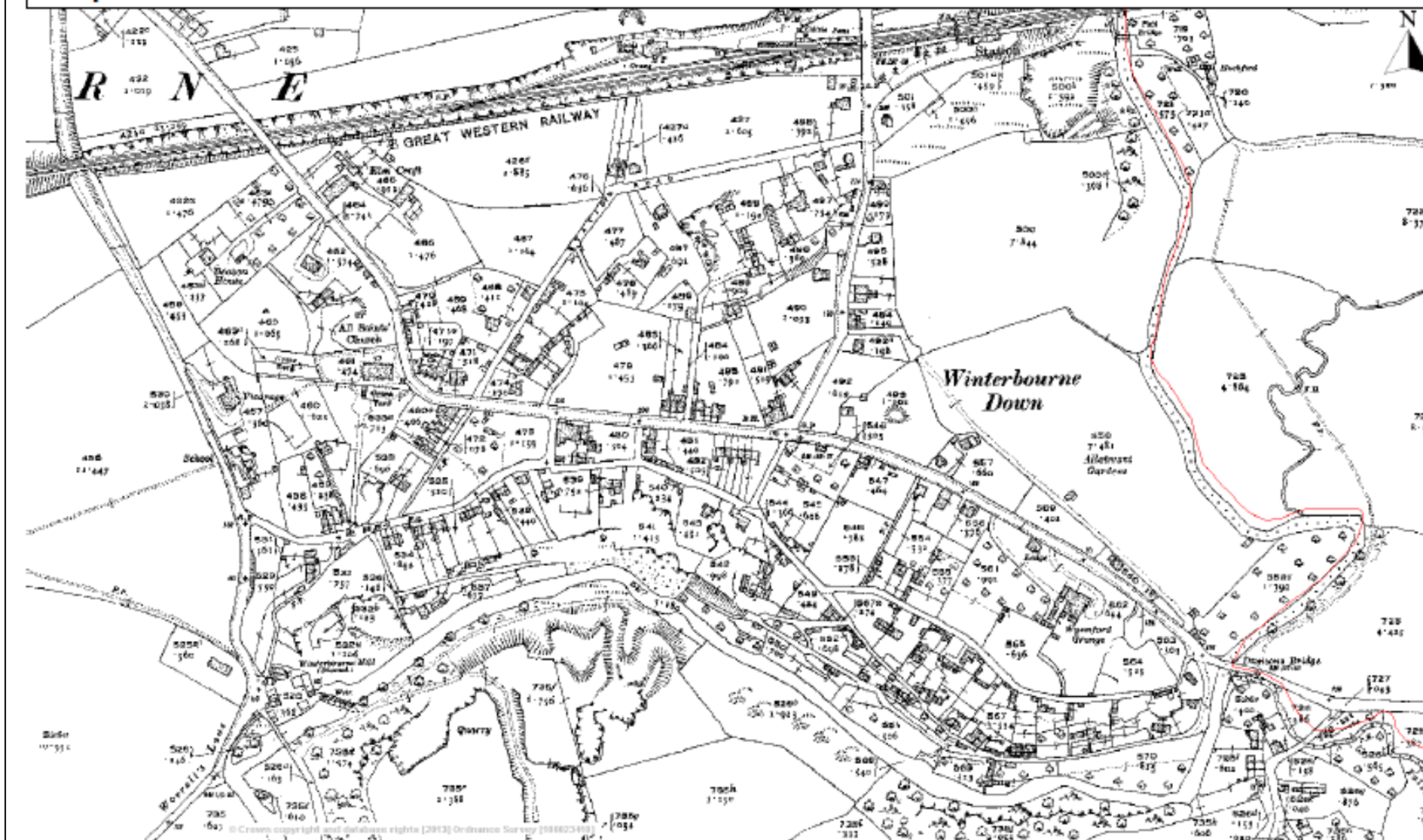
Despite the number of houses built through infilling and influx of new residents from other areas the village still remains a good mix of rooted families and newcomers. Many of the old family names to be found in the churchyard are still very much alive today.

At present the village also retains its rural feel, complementing the fields and woodlands, which surround it.

A number of houses still retain relatively large gardens which provide exercise, fresh air, and in the south of the village, beautiful views over the valley and across to the Roman Camp on Bury Hill.



Map 4 - Winterbourne Down around 1914



The map on page 22 shows the village around the time of WW1.

It shows:

- A number of small holdings and allotment gardens.
- Major quarries south of the Frome, near Bury Hill, and close to the Station – the railway had opened in 1908.
- Smaller quarries throughout the village providing local building stone.
- Allotment gardens north of Down Road (still there).

It is also apparent that:

- The setting on rising land and surrounded by open fields has changed little.
- The road layout hasn't changed.
- The original scatter of houses with large gardens has become much more intensively developed.
- In most cases the 'grid pattern' of village development has been followed.

Loss of Local Services and Affordable Housing

At one time there were a number of shops in the village, four selling groceries, a post office, a bakery, two off-licences, a fish and chip shop, monumental masons, and several offering milk deliveries.

In some villages new development has been welcomed to help maintain local shops and services and to provide affordable housing.

In Winterbourne Down despite significant recent housing growth there has been a significant loss of local services and no extra provision made for 'affordable housing.'

The post office and grocery shops have all gone and the only remaining commercial services are a pub, hairdressers and a beauty shop which, although valued, do not meet essential local needs.

Recently the one bus that ran alongside the village has been re-routed so village people now have to walk or drive to Badminton Road or Winterbourne to catch a bus. This makes life particularly difficult for the elderly and non-drivers.

The topography and difficult ground conditions substantially increase building costs and small infill sites do not generally contribute to affordable housing (See South Gloucestershire Council Policy).



One of the few remaining commercial premises - on Down Road

It cannot be argued that new development helps to maintain services or meet the housing needs of lower income households in Winterbourne Down.

Community Issues

Winterbourne Down has had an active community for many years. The community has many groups that create a strong unified spirit.

- All Saints Church and Bethesda Methodist Church together provide the centre of village life as they have done for over a century. Both churches have vibrant church halls that let out rooms to a large number of local interests including the Horticultural Society, Play groups for Young Children, and WI and Golden Circle.
- The societies in the village include W.I., Horticultural Society, Golden Circle, Winterbourne Down Society, Probus etc.
- Guides, Brownies and Rainbows meet at the Church Hall. The Scouts have their own facility in Winterbourne.
- The village atmosphere is shown through the May Day weekend carnival an event, centred on the two churches, which has been held for the last fifteen years.
- In recent years the May Carnival and Boxing Day Mummers Play have become major community events involving closure of Down Road to traffic.
- The village and pub are the home and centre for the Mummers who tour the village and perform on Boxing Day each year.
- Although not strictly a 'design' issue the degree of community activity does reflect a spirit and care for the 'village'.

Street Party at Wynford Grange June 6th 1953



May Day Carnival Parade - 2010



Mummers play – Station Road - 2010



Appendix 2 – Relevant Policy

National Policy – All contained within Planning Policy Statements which are currently under review.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan (Adopted 2006) - Key Policies include:

- **D1** – Achieving Good Quality Design in New Development
- **L5** – Open Areas within the Existing Urban Areas and Defined Settlements.
- **L8** - Sites of Regional and Local Nature Conservation Interest
- **L15** – Buildings And Structures Which Make A Significant Contribution To The Character And Distinctiveness Of The Locality.
- **GB1** – Development within the Green Belt
- **T12** – Transportation Development Control Policy for New Development
- **H2** – Proposals For Residential Development
- **H4** – Development Within Existing Residential Curtilages – Including Extensions And New Dwellings.
- **H6** - Affordable Housing (Winterbourne Down is a rural area for the purposes of the policy)

N.B. Local Plan policies D1, GB1, T12, H2 and H6 will be superseded upon adoption of the Core Strategy.

Draft South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (Emerging Document approved by Council December 2011) – Key Policies include:

- **CS1** – High Quality Design
- **CS2** - Green Infrastructure
- **CS5** – Location of Development
- **CS9** – Environmental Resources and Built Heritage
- **CS16** – Housing Density
- **CS17** – Housing Diversity
- **CS18** – Affordable Housing (Winterbourne Down is a rural area for the purposes of the policy)

South Gloucestershire Council – Supplementary Planning Policy

- Design Checklist SPD (August 2007)
- Affordable Housing SPD (Sept 2008)
- Development in the Green belt SPD (May 2007)
- Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2005)
- South Gloucestershire Local List SPD (March 2008)
- Telecommunications network Infrastructure SPD (2005)

South Gloucestershire – Technical notes:

- Biodiversity and the Planning Process SPG
- Planning and the Forest of Avon SPG
- Sustainable Drainage systems SPG
- Trees on Development Sites SPG
- Waste Audits SPG
- Front Gardens and Parking (emerging guidance – not yet published).

All planning policies and supporting Supplementary Planning Documents and Technical Notes can be viewed on South Gloucestershire Council's Web Site.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/Pages/Topic%20Pages/Planning%20Transport%20-%20Strategic%20Environment/Planning%20Environment/Planning-policy.aspx>

Appendix 3 - Statutory Designations And Other Information

Listed Buildings

- All Saints Church
- The Old Vicarage – Mill Road

Locally Listed Buildings

- The Council has published a Local List of significant local buildings and structures in line with Policy L15 of the Local Plan. Buildings in the village currently identified include:
 - Booking Office Winterbourne Railway Station Buildings Hicks
 - Dansons Bridge, Down Road (Damsons Bridge),
 - Lansdown View No 47 Down Road
 - Winterbourne Lansdown View,
 - Methodist Chapel,
 - Paved Footpath Winterbourne Viaduct
 - Post Box Hicks Common Road
 - The Cottage No 58 Station Road
 - Viaducts - Filton Wooton Bassett Railway - River Frome and Bristol Road/Bradley Brook
 - Wall Lansdown View No 47 Down Road

Tree Preservation Orders

Within the village there are individual, woodland and area TPOs. It is advisable to check with the Council before contemplating any works to trees

Biodiversity

Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Regionally Important Geological interest.

The railway cutting and some of the quarries are identified for geological interest. It is advisable to check with the Council for ecological and geological interest before undertaking works.

There are key areas of bio-diversity. The main one is the River Frome Valley that runs along two sides of the village. The valley provides natural recreational space for all ages to enjoy. Linked to this is the Huckford Quarry Local Nature Reserve.

Accident Record

The narrow streets, on street parking, high volumes of traffic and general issues of speed result in a number of accidents and damage to vehicles and a general feeling that the environment is not safe for children. Fortunately, however, serious personal injury accidents are relatively few. During the past five years there have been several slight injury accidents but only one with serious injuries - at the Cross Hands Cross Roads.

OVERALL SUMMARY

- Winterbourne Down has a distinctive village character which is made up from:
 - A village form of development with mixed housing character in different areas.
 - A general grid form of development with distinct building lines and properties either fronting or at right angles to roads;
 - Houses with front and back gardens in generous sized plots which contribute to green space.
 - Continuity provided by stone walls.
- The local character is at risk from inappropriate development including:
 - Lack of understanding and respect for the context of each site and the overall character of the village
 - The loss of garden space and opportunities for play and the removal of green space and vegetation
 - The loss, alteration and inappropriate replacement of boundary walls
 - Over intensive site development and inappropriate scale and massing of new buildings.
 - Inappropriately designed 'Town houses' cramped into small and irregular shaped plots space with no safe front area and very little rear space.
 - Development of over two storeys which can impact on privacy for neighbours and block key views.
 - The loss of local services
 - Small developments with a very high percentage of circulation space for vehicles etc and Increasing on- street parking and traffic issues.

The local community is not opposed in principle to new development but is concerned at the potential consequences of over development.

The loss of garden space and traffic pressures is resulting in an environment which is out of character, of little aesthetic value and not good for children or wildlife. The continual loss of local services and increasing car dependency is also a major concern.

The village has an active community but at present the only real time the community can enjoy the village is when Down Road is closed for the very successful May carnival or Boxing day mummers play.

While the National Government and South Gloucestershire Council have policies which support good and sustainable design local people do not feel that these have always been applied appropriately in the village. Any further new development or redevelopment should enhance the village.

How You Can Help

The Winterbourne Down Society is grateful for the positive feedback which has been received to date and which has helped to shape this document.

However the main contribution which residents and developers can make is to give sympathetic consideration to the ideas and principles set out in this Design Statement whenever planning new developments, extensions or maintenance within the village.

Contacts

Should you wish to make any further comments, offer new ideas or support the work of the Winterbourne Down Society please contact either.

- **Connie Jarvis**
3 Quarry Lane, Winterbourne Down, Bristol, BS36 1DB.
Connjohn@blueyonder.co.uk or,
- **John Godwin**
19 Prospect Close, Winterbourne Down, Bristol, BS36 1BD
jpgodw@yahoo.co.uk