

West Lavington

and

Littleton

Panell



Village Design Statement

West Lavington and Littleton Panell Village Design Statement

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West Lavington and Littleton Panell Village Design Statement

Preface

This document has been written by residents of the two villages for the following purposes:

- To record key issues of concern relating to the built environment, the landscape setting, the infrastructure and the land use of the villages and the surrounding area.
- To recommend policies relating to future development and conservation - residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, social, educational and transport.
- To highlight matters which require further consideration and consultation.

It complements the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area Statement produced by Kennet District Council, which provides an excellent description of the two villages, particularly of the older buildings in the conservation area, and provides an introduction to the origins and history of the settlements.



Mercers Court at the cross roads marking the junction of West Lavington and Littleton Panell

1. This Village Design Statement was adopted by Kennet District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 16th September 2004. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan. Although it does not form a part of the Local Plan and, therefore, does not have the status that Section 54A of the 1990 Act provides in deciding planning applications, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPG when making decisions on matters that come before him, providing that it is consistent with the Local Plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner.
2. Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 - Development Plans states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. Kennet District Council considers that the consultation undertaken in the preparation of the West Lavington Village Design Statement, as outlined in this publication, is consistent with Government advice and meets the obligations set out in PPG12.
3. The Replacement Kennet Local Plan (March 2001) was adopted by Kennet District Council on 20th April 2004. This SPG provides detailed background information for the interpretation of policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policies PD1, HC6, HC22, HC26, HC32, HC33, ED10, NR6, NR7, HH2, HH5 AND HH6.

Introduction

Although the urban idea of country life may envisage a “typical” village, with its associations of agriculture, rural peace, parish-pump politics and a detachment from the concerns of the twenty-first century, this is often far from the case. It is certainly so in the case of West Lavington/Littleton Panell which is affected by such factors as its shape, position and activities. By considering these, we are able to assess the resultant advantages, disadvantages and dangers.

Together, the shape of the two villages is, to a large degree, linear, stretching for over one and a half miles along the A360. Many of the dwellings lie directly alongside this road, although there are a few lanes and minor roads which lead off but which do not link up to any other roads outside the village. Unlike a nuclear village which appears to radiate outward from a centre, such as a village green, there is no sense of a “heart” of the village. There is, therefore, perhaps a lack of familiarity in the relationships between the various settlements within the village, such as might be experienced in villages where there is a focal point.

One of the obvious advantages of village life is access to the countryside, but in this respect the opportunities are in some degree limited as the two villages lie within a mile of the escarpment of Salisbury Plain to the south and to land belonging to the Ministry of Defence. Since this is mostly closed to the public, stretching for three or four miles to the East and West, there is a sense of being hemmed in by this restriction. The only access on foot is by means of the busy and dangerous A360. Anyone who comes to live in the area does so knowing that such limitations exist (as well as the regular noise of gunfire which all surrounding villages endure). It is important that access to the countryside should, in other directions, be preserved along with the present limited access to the military land. The objection is not so much to the military activity which, after all, has been going on for a hundred years, but to any further restriction.

There were once several roads and lanes leading from the villages onto the Plain but only one route has been maintained for modern traffic. This main road, now the A360, forms the spine of the two villages. The traffic it carries has a prominent impact on the present character of the villages. The A360 is not just a link between Devizes and Salisbury but, although it is not the main route, it carries some of the traffic travelling between the Midlands and the South coast ports. Almost everyone in the village, therefore, has a constant awareness of the weight and size of the traffic passing through.

Both villages now include buildings from many periods and in many styles. New development has been particularly significant since the Second World War, individual houses infilling the old building lines, and new estates. The appearance and social dimension of these post war developments, and any future new estates, will be significant in determining the future personality of the two villages.

It is inevitable that older dwellings in the village may be, and in the past have been, lost because it has been no longer possible or financially viable to maintain them. Every effort should be made to preserve the buildings that remain and to resist attempts to replace them with modern dwellings. This kind of “development” was envisaged, for example, thirty years ago when the old Dauntsey Almshouses were sold to a developer who had intended to replace them by modern housing. Fortunately, he was instead required to preserve and refurbish them. They have, therefore, been allowed to retain their attractive appearance as small, practical private dwellings.

The village of Market Lavington lies close, the distance between the dwellings of the two villages being a mere three hundred yards. There is naturally a concern on the part of those who inhabit and take a pride in the independence of their village that it should not be subsumed into a large “Lavington” unit. Although there are bound to be shared activities between the two villages, such as the Lavington Gardening Club, the Lavington Cricket Club and the Lavington Amateur Dramatic Society, it is unlikely that most inhabitants of either village would wish to lose their particular identity. Whilst certain developments, such as the recent merging of the responsibilities of District Councillors (we now have two serving “The Lavingtons”) or the formation of a new Church Benefice, bringing five villages under one umbrella, may have become necessary, this is a trend which should in other respects be resisted.

An unusual feature of the two villages is the presence of a large independent school which occupies over 40 acres and which educates 700 pupils, 350 of them boarders and therefore, for part of the year, resident in the community. With the demise of labour associated with agriculture, this does offer the major source of employment within the village. In addition, the school makes many of its facilities available to people in the village and a harmonious relationship between the two has grown over the years. Nevertheless, it is yet one more way in which West Lavington/Littleton Panell is not a “typical” village.

The villages are fortunate in having an excellent sports field and village hall, which form the hub of many village activities for the benefit of young and old alike. These facilities must be carefully preserved and if possible improved.



The Village Hall

The Setting

The southern boundary of the study area is the top of the escarpment of Salisbury Plain. The Semington Brook forms the eastern boundary below West Lavington Manor. The northern boundary is formed by the mainline railway and the western boundary by the fields that separate the two villages from Little Cheverell.

West Lavington originated as a spring line village using the resources of the Semington Brook that rises from the chalk of Salisbury Plain to the south. In form, it was a nuclear village, centring more or less on All Saints Church, with a “tail” following the road north towards Devizes where it later joined the ancient settlement of Littleton Panell.

Bronze Age settlement is evident in the strip lynchets of Rams Cliff, a spectacular natural amphitheatre in the escarpment adjacent to the village, and at White Hill nearby.

In medieval times, before the Black Death, the settlements of West Lavington and Littleton Panell were significantly more extensive than now. The evidence can be seen in the lumps and bumps in fields on either side of the villages and on the slopes towards the Plain. Buildings in the centre of West Lavington were further reduced by a fire in 1689.



Semington Brook at Duck Street

- These areas are beautiful as well as historic and need full protection from damage or intrusion by development, intensive farming or inappropriate leisure activities.

- The areas of former development around the villages and Greenfield have never been excavated or otherwise investigated. They are not statutorily protected. They should be free from the threat of any development, and of deep ploughing. These fields should remain undeveloped and if possible as permanent pasture. Their use as public green spaces should be investigated although this would depend on the land owner's willingness to support such a proposal.



Greenfield

Both villages now include buildings from many periods and in many styles. New development has been particularly significant since the Second World War, individual houses infilling the old building lines, and new estates. The appearance and social dimension of these post war developments, and any future new estates, will be significant in determining the future personality of the two villages.

Largely as a result of the post war developments, the centre of the two villages now focuses more or less on the crossroads where the B3098 crosses the A360. Unlike the older centre near All Saints Church, this newer fulcrum does not have an intrinsic character reflecting its centrality.

There were once several roads and lanes leading from the villages onto the Plain but only one route has been maintained for modern traffic. This main road, now the A360, forms the spine of the two villages. The traffic it carries has a prominent impact on the present character of the villages.

The Semington Brook rises from a series of springs just above the village in a wooded valley known as the Warren, which cuts quite deeply into the chalk escarpment of Salisbury Plain. This is the largest group of springs on the north side of the Plain between the Wylde Valley and the Salisbury Avon. Unlike those two south-flowing rivers, however, the Semington Brook flows north, eventually to join the Bristol Avon.

Semington Brook is designated as a river although it is still relatively narrow for most of its passage through the village boundaries. There are a number of old mills along its course. Over the centuries the stream has been dammed and diverted for a variety of purposes. Within The Warren are three small lakes, whilst around the many mills quite extensive diversionary works have been constructed. All of these have had an effect on the natural ability of the stream to allow deposits to flow, and siltation has occurred.

- It is vitally important to the future of the villages that attention to design and materials, etc. is not confined to buildings in the Conservation Area. The newer areas may not be of special historical interest, but they are no less significant to the people who live, work, play or visit there.
- Notes on building forms and materials appear elsewhere in this document.

- Traffic is an issue throughout the two villages and is addressed more fully elsewhere in this document.

- The Warren valley marks the transition between lowland and upland. It is an important landscape feature and amenity that merits full protection. There should be a presumption against any development in this area.



The Warren



Duck Street

- The watercourse is an attractive feature of the southern entrance to the village. Regrettably, the high volume of traffic on Church Street and the absence of any space for pedestrians prevent enjoyment of this area.
- Duck Street is a valuable amenity area for the village and there should be a presumption against any development here. At this point, more than any other, the stream is the central feature of the village streetscape. The mature trees are a major element and consideration should be given to encouraging a balance of new growth on adjacent properties to ensure the character is maintained for the future.
- Management and inspection of the watercourse is important to the village. Any changes to the watercourse must take account of the effects they may have further down stream. The growth of weed should be controlled.



Semington Brook at the north end of Littleton Panell

- The stream at Lavington Lane area marks the division between Market Lavington and West Lavington. Development, which started in the 1930's and has continued fairly regularly since then has already filled quite a lot of the gap between the two original villages. As long as the Semington Brook valley from West Lavington Manor to the northern boundary remains undeveloped, the stream valley itself will be effectively protected and the two villages will maintain their separate identities. It would be appropriate therefore, to protect the land in this area as open countryside and undeveloped land.



The Equestrian Centre with Strawberry Hill behind



Greenfield



West Lavington from Strawberry Hill

Building Forms and Materials

There are few buildings in West Lavington or Littleton Panell taller than two storeys with the notable exceptions of the tower of All Saints Church, completed in the late 13th or early 14th century, and the grander old houses (including Hunts House, Dial House, the Parsonage, the Old Vicarage, West Lavington Manor, Littleton Lodge and A'Beckets). Traditional dwellings are almost all two storeys but several single storey dwellings were built in the 1960's in Orchard Place and The Spinney, sheltered homes attached to Hedges House and at other in-fill sites in the two villages. More recently, Hooks Court is an attractive conversion of former single-storey farm buildings.



Hooks Court

Although many properties are detached, pairs of semi-detached houses are quite common in the two villages dating from Victorian, Edwardian, inter-war and post war times. Several were built by the council after the Second World War, notably in Sandfield, Eastfield and White Street. There are also many examples of short terraces of 4 or 5 houses. Dauntsey Court is a prominent and particularly attractive terrace of former almshouses dating from 1831, which had been founded in 1543. Short terraces and semi-detached dwellings are also common in modern developments, such as Ramscliff, Holmfield and The Mercers.

- New buildings should be built in sympathetic relationship with the existing buildings.
- Bungalows are not a traditional building form and ranch style designs can look incongruous if located close to traditional buildings. Fortunately all the bungalows in West Lavington have been handled carefully in the village setting. For instance bungalows off the High Street south of the former Horse and Jockey are unobtrusive.

- Semi-detached and terraced houses look better if the external treatment of each set is the same, and finished in traditional brick or render.



Holmfield

The character of the older parts of the High Street through both villages is generally of buildings facing the road from each side. Some 20th Century buildings set back from the road do not follow the traditional pattern and detract from this special character. In contrast, some 20th Century infilling on the west side of the High Street north of the former Horse and Jockey is particularly successful in enhancing the character of the area.



High Street Littleton Panell



West side of the High Street north of the former Horse and Jockey

- New buildings on the High Street, indeed in any location, must have particular regard to line as well as form and materials.

Timber frame buildings were almost certainly the most common form of construction for most dwellings in the two villages for many hundreds of years. Today, such construction is visible on Duck Street in the Old House, in the Old Manor and a few other buildings. However, it is likely that many cottages still retain the traditional timber frame behind later brick cladding.



Old House

The predominant building material in the two villages is brick although the use of stone is not uncommon, particularly in some of the older and larger buildings. Chalk blocks are evident in the Old Manor, close to the church, and were probably once more common but, being soft, have eroded away. The church itself is built of a variety of stone, both free-stone and ashlar, from various periods. West Lavington Manor, Dauntsey House, Pyt House and Hunts House are also largely stone built.

- Free stone has been successfully used in modern walls in the area, particularly along Littleton Panell High Street, but the few examples of modern stone buildings are not successful. Reconstituted stone or imitation ashlar are unsuitable and go particularly badly with the usual finish of most village buildings. Stone cladding on brick is to be avoided.

Many other older properties show signs of stone cores over-built in subsequent reconstruction by brick.

Traditional brick building used the local mellow-red bricks produced in Market Lavington and other local brickworks until the mid 20th century. Early examples may be seen in the Tudor walls of The Manor garden and in Dial House built in 1691. For the most part, this brick has weathered well throughout the village and remains in good condition after several hundred years.



West Lavington Manor from White Street

The use of stucco (rendering over brick painted to resemble ashlar) is represented only by Littleton House, which dates from the mid-18th century. However, for at least a hundred years, and possibly longer, many brick (and brick and stone) houses in the two villages have been partly or wholly painted or pebble dashed. In some cases, the coating hides alterations to the original brickwork that might otherwise look messy. The effects are perhaps least successful where adjacent buildings that once matched each other, or made a coherent assembly, have been treated differently.

Modern bricks are not made locally. While some have mellowed and blended nicely with the traditional colours, others in colour or texture contrast with the older buildings, as in Holmfield, for example. Some brick extensions do not closely blend with the original buildings to which they are attached. Others, while making a fair match in colour, are less than wholly successful

- Re-pointing of old brick is a skilful job that needs to be carefully and professionally done to avoid destroying the mellow effect. Lime mortar is preferred and the use of cement mortar pointing should be avoided.



All Saints Church



Littleton House

- Paint needs always to be in good condition. Some older brick would undoubtedly be more attractive unpainted.
- Some new brick could be improved by painting, but only if done in a careful and consistent scheme in keeping with the building forms.
- The appearance of new brick constructions could possibly be improved if attention is paid not only to the colour but also to the form of bonding. Extensions, should always, if possible match the original in style and materials.

owing to the use of different patterns of bonding from the originals, as in the extensions built on the front of the former Almshouses at Dauntsey Court.



Dauntsey Court



High Street Littleton Panell

One of the most prominent brick constructions in the village in recent years is the retaining wall on the High Street south of Sandfield. This is built of hard engineering bricks with a semi-gloss finish and many people consider it to be one of the least attractive features of the village. In contrast, the stone-faced retaining walls of similar date on the west side of the High Street in Littleton Panell have blended well and form a comfortable part of the village scene.

- A future village project could be focused on a different treatment for this wall.

In a further contrast, the council estate of semi-detached and terraced houses in Sandfield, Eastfield, and The Spinney, built after the Second World War, was originally clad in concrete slabs resembling large weatherboarding. The visual effect was not wholly successful, especially after weathering for a few years and many houses have been refaced in the last 15 years or so. Some of the houses have been sold to the former tenants while others are now owned and managed by a housing association. As a result of this fragmentation of ownership, resurfacing materials have varied and include pebbledash, brick and other materials.

- It is difficult to impose strictures that prevent people dealing with their own property as they wish outside a conservation area, unless it is a listed building. For future estates, however, stronger guidelines could be considered.

Some of these treatments are visually more successful than others and the effect is possibly least attractive where two houses in a semi-detached pair are treated differently.



Sandfield

There are nine properties in the two villages that still retain thatched roofs, three in Littleton Panell and six in West Lavington. Despite being few in numbers, these buildings add a particular charm to the village scene.

- The remaining thatched roofed buildings should be treasured for their historic and aesthetic value. New thatched houses would be welcomed.

Other buildings are roofed in slate or tiles. As a general rule, older buildings are roofed with slates while some old and most new buildings are tiled. Thankfully, there are very few flat roofed constructions in the village.



High Street West Lavington

If, in the post Second World War period, new walls and roof treatments have not always been attractive in the two villages, the same can be certainly said of new windows. Traditional windows, be they sash or casements or even leaded, were integral to the appearance of the whole building of which they formed part. Replacement windows, particularly in older buildings, have, in many cases, damaged this integrity. The loss of glazing bars in favour of plate glass is probably more damaging than the use of new materials, usually uPVC, in place of wood.

- Flat roofs are almost always undesirable and should be avoided where they have a detrimental effect on the visual appearance.

- Replacement glazing in uPVC that closely resembles original forms should be encouraged.
- In semi-detached or terraced houses, efforts should be made to keep glazing styles consistent.

Mention should be made of the boundaries to properties in the villages. All types of materials are used, including hedges, iron railings, brick and stone walls, post and rail or close-boarded wooden fencing, wire or a combination of these. All forms, with the possible exception of wire, can be attractive if well maintained and co-ordinated with its neighbours.

- Wire fencing should be avoided and, where existing, replaced when feasible.
- The concrete posts and wire fencing adjacent to the Millennium cross should be replaced or hidden by hedge.

Finally, most properties in the two villages receive electricity and telephone services by overhead wire with the result that, in some places, the effect is an unsightly “cats cradle” of wires above the roads and properties.

- Services to old and new properties should be put underground whenever possible.



*Overhead wires
High Street Littleton Panell*

*Overhead wires
High Street West Lavington*



Schools

Dauntsey's School

Dauntsey's School is the largest employer in the two villages and the largest land user. The school occupies a site of approximately 40 acres in a prominent location on the west side of the built-up area.

The main school building was constructed of brick and tile in 1895 to a design by C. E. Ponting. It is approached from the High Street via an avenue of mature limes. The overall effect is most pleasing and adds a considerable quality to the otherwise unprepossessing centre of the two villages.

The school includes a variety of other buildings from subsequent periods in a wide variety of styles. With one or two exceptions, most are enclosed within the campus and the impact upon the village landscape is relatively benign. The standard of design and the choice of materials have undoubtedly improved in recent years.

Buildings fronting Cheverell Road are mostly domestic in scale and thus do not detract from the village scene. Buildings visible from the High Street, including the 1898 block and the Memorial Hall dating from the 1970's are grander in scale but the large sports field in front of them moderates their impact.



Dauntsey's School from Strawberry Hill

- The setting of the avenue and the main building should be maintained. The avenue trees have now reached full maturity and some have been removed. It is hoped that the overall impact is maintained when the original avenue trees finally come down.



The main drive to Dauntsey's School

- The large playing fields also form an important visual amenity, particularly from Strawberry Hill.

- New building should be confined within the existing campus and should not exceed the ambient height of the existing buildings.

- Large buildings would not be appropriate along Cheverell Road.
- New planting will improve the appearance of the school campus from other angles when it matures.
- Shading of the lights is desirable and in any future development, directional lighting should be employed to avoid excessive light spillage.

Dauntsey's Aided Primary School

Dauntsey's Aided Primary School is set in 5 landscaped acres at the far eastern edge of the village adjacent to the village playing field. It is a modern purpose built facility with currently 159 children on roll.

There is also a thriving pre-school with 50 children attending. Lavington pre-school are planning to have their own building on site within the next few years.

- The retention of both the primary school and pre-school on the same site is vital to the maintenance of a thriving village community.

- The site would greatly benefit from the planting of some more mature trees especially along the boundary with the village playing field.



Dauntsey's Aided Primary School

Traffic

The impact of traffic on life in West Lavington and Littleton Panell cannot be overstated.

The A360 links Devizes with the A303 and Salisbury. For much of the 18 miles between West Lavington and Salisbury it is a good road passing through only Tilshead and Shrewton. It seems to attract heavy and light vehicles, which would be better using the recommended route of the A342/A345 which is signed from Devizes.

- More effort needs to be made by the traffic authorities to encourage heavy traffic to use the recommended route, the A342 and A345 by stronger signage to use the other route.
- The A360 between Devizes and the A303 should be re-classified as a B road.
- The most attractive solution both for villagers and drivers alike is a bypass for West Lavington and Littleton Panell.

There are a number of specific traffic issues in the villages:

1. The descent from Salisbury Plain is through thick woodland and a shaded sunken "hollow-way", with frequent bends. The carriageway is narrow and quite steep. There have been a number of serious accidents on this stretch as drivers fail to adjust to the conditions after the open plain. Traffic is often still travelling fast as it enters the village past the 30-mph sign.
- 2 The most significant issues arise in the approximately 200 metre stretch from Dial House to the Duck Street turn off. Within this distance the road narrows to less than 4.8m adjacent to the wall of Dial House, whilst at the Old Post Office, the width is only 4.2m allowing 2 cars to pass, but not lorries or larger vehicles.

- Improved warning signs need to be placed at both ends of this section of road and a reduced limit to 50mph would also overcome the excess speed as vehicles enter the village.



The A360 at The Old Post Office



The A360 at Dial House

- Visibility is sufficiently good for a priority system to be installed opposite the Bridge Inn in favour of southbound traffic. A 'throat' traffic system could provide for the installation of pathways to assist pedestrians negotiating this point.

Many minor bumps occur at this point. Again, alongside the church the road is only 4.5m wide with no footpath and several road access points.



Narrowing of the A360 at All Saints Church

The new reactive signs have undoubtedly improved the position over this section of road, but there remain major problems for pedestrians.

- 3 The building line again narrows between the old Horse and Jockey and the former Manor Estate Office. The footpath is reduced to about 0.20m outside 65 High Street, too narrow for a pushchair or wheelchair, which must thus use the roadway. Yet at this point, the road itself is straight.
- 4 The most significant traffic calming measure in the village is the Village Shop and post office. For much of the day, cars and delivery vans are parked on the roadway outside the shop.



The new interactive signs at All Saints Church

- Pedestrian access to the church should be improved from the north side.
- Visibility is sufficiently good at this point for a priority system to be installed in favour of northbound traffic.
- Parking outside the Village Shop should remain as it acts as an effective traffic safety measure.



The Village Shop and Post Office

5 The entrance to Dauntsey's School is busy at peak hours when about 20 buses and 150 cars arrive in a 20 minute period.

- The Dauntsey's one-way system should remain during the day time.

6 Close by is the staggered crossroads of the B3098. This is a badly arranged junction for traffic and a nightmare for any pedestrians who try to navigate it.

- Improvements to this junction should be considered. A mini-roundabout could probably be accommodated.

7 The B3098 road to Little Cheverell is particularly narrow close to the junction with the A360. Traffic is often held up at this point, unable to pass or held up at the junction. A well-used footpath crosses the B3098 about 20m from the A360 junction. The 30 mph speed limit ends more or less at this point, yet there are two school exits/entrances and many other access points on the unrestricted section.

- A speed restriction should be applied on all the unrestricted road towards Little Cheverell.

- The B3098 is wholly unsuitable for heavy traffic and would benefit from suitable signage to discourage all but essential heavy vehicles.

8 The B3098 road to Market Lavington is used by many children going to and from Lavington School, Dauntsey's and Dauntsey's Aided Primary School. However, there are no satisfactory crossing points for children.

- The facilities for pedestrians on this stretch need improvement.

9 At many points through the two villages access to the A360 from side roads is difficult and dangerous owing to poor visibility. Notable problems occur around the Church, at Rutts Lane, Rickbarton, Duck Street, White Street, Sunnyside, Russell Mill Lane and Pagnell Lane.

- Each of these junctions needs improvement where possible.

10 To the north of the villages the 30mph limit ends shortly after the junction with Pagnell Lane and southbound traffic enters the village very fast. The road remains narrow in a hollow-way for several hundred yards in which there is no provision for pedestrian walkways. The entrance to Dauntsey's Manor House is on the east side at this point, making a difficult access for the buses that carry children to and from the main school.

- The 30mph limit should be extended to the North side of the railway bridge.

- The 30mph sign needs reinforcing with other measures.

11 The final danger point occurs at the railway bridge. At 4m wide, the railway arch is not wide enough for two large vehicles to pass. The road bends slightly under the arch and vision is limited. Nevertheless, there is no speed restriction, road markings are non-existent and signage concentrates as much on height as width. The bridge has been hit on many occasions. There is also an entrance to a mobile home site, reclamation yard and crane depot at this point. This is used by a variety of heavy vehicles and adds considerably to the danger.

- Sightlines could be improved by realignment of the road north of the bridge to allow clear sight lines. If achieved there could probably be a traffic priority arrangement which would additionally slow traffic down as it enters the villages.



The railway bridge at Littleton Panell

Footpaths

There are some 46 footpaths and byways that delineate the ribbon development of the village. The network allows walkers to keep away from the busy A360 Devizes to Salisbury road. Most are in a fairly good condition and are maintained and monitored by the Parish Council.

- The footpaths and byways are an important aspect of village life and it is essential that they continue to be properly maintained and open for use at all times.

The byways provide access to Salisbury Plain and the neighbouring villages. Some are well used by walkers and horseback riders, but others have been damaged through over-use by 4 x 4 utility vehicles and scramble bikes.

- Restriction on the use of these byways by 4x4 vehicles is vital for the benefit of walkers and horse-riders.



Bridleway near The Warren damaged by 4 x 4 vehicles



Footpath from White Street northwards



Open Spaces

The following areas contribute significantly to the character and visual amenity of the two villages and must be protected from development or alteration of character.

- *The meadow to the north of Littleton House fronting the High Street*



- *The green at the junction of Sandfield and High Street*



- *The Churchyard and burial ground of All Saints Church*



- *The small green in front of Dial House formerly known as "The Gun"*



- *Greenfield (bounded by Duck Street and Stibb Hill)*

- *The fields and woods on either side of Lavington Lane and to the East of the Sandfield/Eastfield estate*



- *The fields behind the former Horse and Jockey*
- *The river valley from The Manor gardens to Lavington Lane*
- *The field bounded by Wyneshore House, the new burial ground and the A360*
- *The land to the west of White street, opposite the burial ground*



- *The village playing field*

- *The Equestrian Centre paddocks and fields*



- *The Warren area*
- *The river valley from Lavington Lane to the railway*
- *The environs of Russell Mill Lane*
- *The paddocks and fields to the south of Rutts Lane and to the east of the Salisbury road*

Economy and Employment

In the 2001 Census the two villages had a total population of 1281 of whom 374 were children under the age of 18, 319 of whom were of school age. There were 540 houses.

State education is provided by Dauntsey's Aided Primary School and the nearby Lavington Comprehensive School, both of which are of great value to the community. In addition Dauntsey's School is situated in the village. There are over 700 on the roll of which half are boarders. It is the largest employer with some 240 full and part time staff, of which 90 are village residents.

Elite Registrations at A'Becketts is the second largest employer with some 44 full time and 18 part time employees of whom 26 live in the village.

The only other significant employers in the two villages are Dauntsey's Aided Primary School, the two care homes and the Equestrian Centre, although local farms and the three public houses between them are also extremely important.

The village shop and post office is one of the largest and best stocked in the area, and, being close to Dauntsey's School, the cross roads and bus stops, it acts as an unofficial communal focus to the villages. The smaller shop in Littleton Panell with its mobile unit also provides a valuable facility.

- It is important that the villages retain a balanced mix of residents to ensure a continuing intake of children to these two schools.



Elite Registrations



Equestrian Centre

- The shops offer an amenity of immense value to the community, and their long term survival should be positively supported.
- The Post Office is an essential service to many villagers particularly the elderly and should be similarly supported.

There are many other small business units in the two villages, which along with those mentioned above, employ in total close to 400 full time and 100 part time, of whom at least a third of the total live in the village. Presently these are almost entirely service industries.

For those working outside the villages and for those without their own transport there are adequate bus services to Devizes, Salisbury and some other local towns. However, they are not frequent, and this results in limited use being made of them. The biggest transport gap is in the distance to local railway stations, where Pewsey, Westbury, Salisbury and Chippenham are the nearest stations.

- There would be support in the village for the re-opening of a station at Littleton Panell or at Lydeaway.

Farming

There are six farms in commercial operation around the village comprising a total of 13,488 acres, of which 7,738 acres lie within the village boundaries. A total of 22 workers are employed by these enterprises, and of these 12 live within the village.

- Deep ploughing is inappropriate in areas of former ancient settlement.

Of the village farmland 2,548 acres are currently arable land with 2004 harvest crops being wheat (1,140 acres), barley (690 acres), rape (668 acres) and linseed (50 acres). Sometimes maize and oats are also grown. The remaining 4590 acres are grazing and grassland. Stock numbers currently grazed are cattle (3,180 head), tack sheep (3,300 head in winter only) and ewes & lambs (300 head). Some rare breeds of sheep and cattle are kept.



- The maintenance of trees, hedgerows and woodland is important to the setting of the village.

There are also 120 acres of managed woodland with two full-time employees.



Fields at Ram's Cliff and Littleton Panell

Future Development

Within the limits of development and the villages as a whole, there are very few opportunities for development other than as in-fill or as extension of existing properties. This type of development is in keeping with the village structure and large-scale development outside the current limits of development would be detrimental to the village.

However, many of the smaller houses, suitable for first time buyers or young families, have been extended into larger properties. Recent and proposed housing developments have all been for larger properties. This trend continues and there is now a need for some cheaper, starter homes to cater for this section of the population. There is a fine new Primary School in the village whose numbers could decline as the population ages. To retain a vibrant and active village it is essential that there is a good mix of all ages.

Although the location and environment of the village make it unsuitable for manufacturing or heavy industry, a limited amount of light industry and commercial development such as offices, craft workshops etc, should be encouraged, if possible using existing buildings. Job opportunities within the village have not only social benefits for the villagers, but benefit the environment by reducing journeys between home and work.

- To retain the village structure and ambience, no development should take place outside the present limit of development as defined in the Kennet District Council Local Plan.

- The construction of starter homes should be encouraged on the few remaining building plots within the village envelope.

- It is also important that a good mix of housing is encouraged.

How we did it

At the Annual Parish meeting in May 2001, the subject of Village Design Statements was discussed and it was decided to call a village meeting to progress the matter. A meeting of villagers was held in June at which a representative of Community First explained the function of a V.D.S. and how it was produced. A meeting was held to get the document started and about twenty people expressed an interest in taking part. Accordingly a meeting was held in November at which areas of research and fieldwork were identified and groups of villagers appointed for each area of research.

Meetings were held each month up to June 2002 when a questionnaire was distributed at the village fete and a presentation made in the village hall. Most sections of the V.D.S. had now been prepared in draft form. The response from 55 households was very positive and some good ideas were generated. From July, meetings were held every two to three months until December 2003 while the document was refined, photographs obtained and the layout decided. By this time the drafting committee had reduced to about ten regular members and several other villagers interested in various aspects of the document.

Meetings were held each month up to June 2004 when the final draft was ready. A draft copy was commented on by Kennet District Council in March and a copy placed in the village post office for comments. The village was kept informed of progress through articles in the monthly village magazine. Copies were sent to Wiltshire County Council, and the County Archeologist. A display was held in the village hall at the 2004 village fete.

The Village Design Statement was approved by Kennet District Council at their September 2004 meeting.



*Scenes from the
Annual Church Fete*



