

Hilperton Village Design Statement



Hilperton Village Design Statement

2005

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I. INTRODUCTION

Any village in this Country today is always likely to be subject to change. It is not only large developments which can alter a village, but it can be equally affected by smaller alterations. Conversions, additions to buildings, homes, gardens, pressure on open spaces, footpaths, hedgerows, even street signs can also affect the look and feel of a village. Change cannot be prevented or undone and there will always be a need to move with the times if the village is to remain a lively and attractive community. However, new developments large and small can be planned and designed in a way that will enhance the existing character of the village and this document provides advice on how to do that.

The aim of the advice is to minimise the impact on Hilperton as a whole, and to ensure that any further development or change will protect and enhance the character of the village and its surrounding area. As Supplementary Planning Guidance, the recommendations will help to guide the decisions of the Planning Authority, and so will have to be taken into account by: statutory bodies, public authorities, planners, developers, builders, architects, designers, engineers, local community groups, commercial enterprises, and by individuals, making planning applications.

The area that was studied for the purpose of this Statement comprises everything contained within the Parish Boundary plus a small area which falls outside the Parish Boundary, altogether covering some 800 hectares. This consists of the old village of Hilperton, Hilperton Marsh, the settlement at Whaddon, and the whole of new development at Paxcroft Mead.

A large part of the old village is designated a Conservation Area. The Planning Authority (West Wiltshire District Council) has also defined a Village Policy Limit enclosing the conservation area, much of the old village outside it and Hilperton Marsh, restricting development outside. Paxcroft Mead is a new housing development adjoining Trowbridge and covered by urban planning guidance.

This document, which has been produced by a Steering Group made up of local people, is based on a considered understanding of Hilperton's past; describes the village as it is today and makes recommendations for the future. It highlights the qualities valued by its residents, whose views, and opinions were obtained at a series of public exhibitions held in April 2002.

Please pass this document on to any future occupant of your house.

2. A TOUR OF THE PARISH

Hilperton is a village in the county of Wiltshire, in the West Wiltshire District Council area. It is a long ribbon settlement, one mile to the east of Wiltshire's county town, Trowbridge. The towns of Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, Devizes and Westbury are all less than ten miles away, and it is twelve miles to the south east of the historic city of Bath. It is at the top of a gradual incline on a bed of mainly Oxford Clay with Alluvium in parts. The highest point in the Parish, at the Parish Church of St Michael, is sixty-four metres above sea level, and is on a par with the top of the spire of St James Church in Trowbridge. The land drops away to 30 metres on the northern Parish boundary formed by the River Avon and the Kennet and Avon canal. And at 40 metres, on the southern boundary is Paxcroft Mead, a housing development commenced in 2000, which has doubled the number of houses in the parish. The population of Hilperton in April 2002 was 4296, based on the Electoral Roll. There were 1796 dwellings of a great variety, types, ages and styles, from the oldest found in the Conservation Area, surrounding St Michael and All Angels Church to the newest at the Paxcroft Mead development. The key roads running through the Parish are the B3105 to Staverton, and through to join the A363 north of Bradford-on-Avon; and the A361, recently diverted to pass through the Paxcroft Mead development. Unfortunately the level of traffic through the village, especially heavy goods vehicles, detract from its rural character. The proposed expansion and development east of Trowbridge will inevitably increase these levels. There is a regular bus service to Trowbridge and Melksham.

Hilperton has a strong sense of community spirit, with many thriving special interest groups. The village hall and playing field in Whaddon Lane, St Mary's Church which doubles as a centre for those in the Marsh area and the new centre at Paxcroft Mead are all well used by groups as their base. A wide range of activities for all ages are covered, from toddlers, play-groups, scouting and guiding groups, walkers, gardeners, women's institute to over sixties. Football, skittles and darts are the main sports played. Events such as coffee mornings, church fete, open garden day, and Christmas pantomime raise money for village charities, and take place throughout the year. Three churches presently serve the community, St Michael's and All Angels in the old village, used for worship by Methodists and Anglicans, also used by Anglicans is St Mary Magdalen at Hilperton Marsh, and St Mary the Virgin at Whaddon. There are two primary schools, Hilperton Church of England School, Newleaze and The Mead, Paxcroft. Older children travel across Trowbridge to attend secondary schools.

The Canal Road Trading Estate abuts the Parish boundary to the north so there is no dedicated commercial area in the village, but a wide variety of small-scale commercial enterprises are spread throughout the Village, such as a garden centre; kitchen suppliers; ice cream seller; as well as two public houses, two post offices/shops, a supermarket, a gift shop, two take-aways, petrol station and car sales., private children's nursery, together with a number of active



Hilperton House

small businesses. Some of the newest enterprises are the development of those associated with the Kennet and Avon canal, where there is a holiday boat hire company, moorings and boat supplies and a small Touring Caravan Park. In the countryside surrounding the built-up areas are many farms, about 50% having an interest in arable and 50% in animals, beef, and dairy. Some of these have diversified with small business units along side their agricultural interests.

There is evidence of both Iron Age settlement and Roman habitation at Whaddon. East of the church is a well preserved example of an abandoned medieval settlement. The settlement is well documented and its ownership can be traced from 1086 to the present day. It is a Scheduled Monument, protected by English Heritage. Throughout the parish there is documented evidence at 30 sites of artifacts and settlements ranging from bronze age flints and iron age pottery to evidence of early farming.

The earliest written mention of a settlement in the area first appeared in the ancient Saxon book, Cantuarium Saxonium of 964AD, was that of Hulpryngmor. In the Saxon language, it is also recorded as Hylpric, a form of Helpric, a personal name, and as the 'ingtun' at the end means dwelling or homestead. The derivation of the name Hilperton could simply have meant Hylpric's Farm. In the Domesday Book of 1086 there is an entry of a settlement called Helprintone, with two tenants of the King. Since then the manors or lands of Hilperton have passed through many different families, owners and tenants, with slight variations in the spelling of



Andrews and Dury map 1773

the name of Hilperton, but still bearing the Saxon influence.

Apart from the names of numerous owners and tenants of land, little seems to have been recorded of any events in Hilperton's history until the first official census in 1801, when a working population of 708 was recorded. Only 20 people were employed in agriculture, compared with 688 employed in Trade, Manufacturing and Handicrafts' industries, probably linked to the existence of the large Woollen Industry in Trowbridge and also that the owners of the Mills lived in Hilperton, so it seems safe to assume that their workers also lived here. Many of the older cottages in the village are thought to have been weavers' homes.

There are four visually distinctive residential areas in Hilperton Parish; Hilperton Marsh in the north; the old village in the centre; further south, the new development of Paxcroft Mead; and the fourth is the hamlet of Whaddon, in the Northeast corner of the parish.

Hilperton Marsh

The Kennet and Avon Canal, opened in 1810, forms part of the northern boundary of the Parish. A wharf constructed at the time also served the needs of Trowbridge. Today, this is the site of Hilperton Marina, a gateway for visitors, just off Hammond Way adjacent to an industrial estate. The canal and the wharf are a busy thoroughfare for boat traffic and its towpath is a favourite place for anglers, picnickers, rambles, dog walkers, and cyclists. With the increased popularity of canals and boating, a number of associated businesses are starting to appear along its length in the parish. Holiday Boat Hire, boat building and repairs, permanent moorings, caravan touring campsite, are just a few. These contribute to the life of the village, making it more than just a residential area.

Before any houses were built in this area, the land literally was marsh land, hence the name of Hilperton Marsh. It is centred on a triangle of roads formed



Kennet and Avon Canal

by Wyke Road, Marsh Road, and Horse Road. The housing development in the middle of this triangle was built in the 1960s. At one time, there used to be a public house at each corner of the triangle. The Prince of Wales is now a private house. The Ring O' Bells on Marsh Road near the junction with Horse Road, is now a guest house and on the other corner, closest to the Canal, is the King's Arms, which remains a pub.

Wyke Road was once the main thoroughfare from Trowbridge to Staverton, Holt, and Melksham. Opening on to it was the driveway to Wyke House, a large property, owned by the Hammond family, who were owners of cloth mills in Trowbridge. The original Jacobean house was built in 1616 and was replaced with a Victorian house in 1864, built in the same grand style. Opposite was The Poplars, a large Victorian house, characterised by a row of Poplar trees, of which only one remains today. In the late 1930s a row of semi-detached houses was built in Wyke Road by a builder, Mr Sprules, who at the time lived in The Poplars and subsequently further housing developments have covered the area. The Poplars still remains today, but Wyke House was demolished in the 1950s and the site is now occupied by modern housing at Tudor Drive and Saxon Way. Through traffic to Staverton was diverted to Hammond Way, Wyke Road was closed to vehicles at its northern end and traffic-calming measures were introduced.

Marsh Road starts at the King's Arms with a petrol station, post office, and shop. It has houses on each side ranging from old cottages to 1930s

semi-detached houses. There is an access road to the Gardens Estate.

Hill Street leads from Marsh road at the junction with Horse Road. In the corner formed by these roads are Marshmead and Newleaze, with houses mostly built in grey reconstituted stone or concrete block. Marshmead includes 40 houses that were built as a self-

build project, one of the first schemes of its kind in Britain. Started in 1950, the group of people included a few skilled builders, but mainly office or other workers, a majority of whom had not put a spade in the ground before this project. A good many are still occupied by members of the original group or their family. The project was finished and opened in 1954. It caused a lot of interest at the time and was a remarkable achievement considering that the group had virtually no model to follow and received no external encouragement or media interest. Newleaze was local authority housing although many of the houses are now owner occupied and it provides the only access to the village school, other than a footway link to Hill Street. There is also some housing for older residents.



Self Build Marshmead.

Much of Hill Street has houses only on one side; opposite are the arable farmlands of Marsh Farm. It has some of the first local authority houses to be built, constructed of red brick in 1926. Opposite this is The Giffords, a group of warden controlled elderly persons bungalows.

The Old Village

Hill Street starts to rise as it enters the old part of the village and older stone cottages with stone walled gardens close in on either side. Little Ashton was originally known as Slades Farm and was once owned by Donald Mackay, nephew of Major Eric Mackay, the then owner of Hilperton House. Also in the same vicinity is Yew Tree Cottage, the once home of the Baptist minister, John Dymott after whom Dymott Square was named. The old Baptist Church schoolroom is still on this property and there is an interesting old Folly or sanctuary in the garden.



Hill Street 1985

At a narrow right hand bend Hill Street leads into Church Street. Whaddon Lane branches off to the left here and there is a driveway to the old and new Rectory. There is a record of the existence of the old Rectory in 1672. It was sold when a new rectory was built in the orchard next to it in 1980 and is now a private house. The stables belonging to the old Rectory have been converted into another house. About 100m down Whaddon Lane are Hilperton Village Hall and Playing Fields. The Hall, originally a converted nissen hut, was rebuilt and opened in 1974, with a further extension in 1981. Although by no means an architectural gem, the Hall and its playing field is the social centre of the community, and both are used by many organisations.

At the top of Church Street is the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel and schoolroom. Built in 1891 to replace an earlier chapel of 1819; it has been converted into two homes. Adjoining this is the Old Crown, built in about 1800 and a public house



Weavers Cottages, Church Street

until 1966, when it was converted into a home. A terrace of weavers' cottages, originally a mid-17th century coaching inn reputedly frequented by Cromwell and his soldiers, is now known as Cherry Tree Cottages, after the trees planted in the 1930s by Major Mackay of Hilperton House. In Spring of each year these trees in full bloom are a familiar village scene. The cottages are Grade II listed, but the last cottage, 231, was not actually built until the 1920s. Cherry Gardens was built on allotments at the rear of the cottages in the 1960s, which involved demolishing an old cottage to gain access.

The Knap, from 'cnaep' – a hill in old English, is a cul-de-sac, joining Church Street. In the Knap are St Michael's and All Angels Church, Hilperton House, the old school, and schoolhouse. Middle Lane, a public bridleway that is thought to have been an old drove road for villagers taking their sheep and cattle to



The Knap

markets in Trowbridge, leads from the Knap. Even today, this is still a very well used route to Trowbridge, and is a popular starting point for walkers using the other footpaths leading from the Knap. Due to a lack of other parking spaces in the village, the Knap has become a parking place for cars belonging to residents, and for those using the church.

T H Wyatt rebuilt the original twelfth century church of St Michael and All Angels between 1847 and 1852 in the fourteenth century style. However, the tower, south porch, and nave floor date back to Norman times and were retained during the rebuilding. It has a three-stage tower, topped with an octagonal "broach" spire. There is also a clock with faces to the south and east. There is a peal of six bells, which is unusual in so small a tower. The oldest bell was cast in 1663 and bears the name of John Slade, who was the church warden at the time. He lived in 209 Church Street, as did his family for over 200 years. The original church of St Michael and All Angels was valued at £5 in 1291. By 1535, this had risen to £16!

Hilperton House, once visited by Queen Mary, could be considered as the most important house in the village and is favourite village feature with many residents. Its previous



Old Village School

owners, who were mostly engaged in the Woollen trade, included, in the 1920s, Major Eric Mackay of Palmer and Mackay, whose prominent woollen mills occupied a large area of Trowbridge. The current owners have carried out extensive restoration works. Behind its wall is a large, spring fed pond at one time thought to be the origin of the village name – 'hilsprintun' or hill with springs. At one time, there were over 60 wells in the village and many still remain in private gardens.

The village school was located in the Knap from 1832 until 1970 when new premises were opened in Newleaze. The old school building has now been converted into a private residence with an added storey and dormer windows, but still has the school bell in its place on the roof. The schoolmaster's house also remains as a private dwelling.

Opposite the Knap is the War Memorial, which commemorates those lost in the two World Wars. Alongside this is the village lock-up or Blind House, so named because it has no windows. Thought to have been in existence before 1600, it was used to 'house' miscreants. It is scheduled as an ancient monument by English Heritage and is in the ownership of the Parish Council.

At the end of Church Street is the

Lion and Fiddle Public House, which is a thriving business with a good restaurant trade. A building adjoining the Pub was thought to have been where Wilts United Dairies commenced business. This enterprise went on to become a nation-wide business and its head office once occupied large premises in Trowbridge. It later merged with Cow and Gate and became Unigate. Eastwards is Devizes Road, where traffic calming measures and a 20mph speed limit have been introduced. At the junction is one of two turnpike houses in Church Street (the other being at the corner of The Knap), reminders of the days when the main route to Trowbridge lay along Church Street and along Middle Lane. Road tolls ceased in 1868, and the gates across the road were removed. The Turnpike house's roof was raised in 1926, making it a two-storey house. Next to the Turnpike House, built in the early 1800s, is a house once a shop, tea-rooms and bakery. Nearby is The Grange, a large Victorian house built in 1859. Standing in large grounds, it rivals Hilperton House for size and grandeur.

Paxcroft Mead

The Paxcroft Mead development in the very south of the Parish covers approximately 100 hectares of previously agricultural land, which was designated for residential

development by the local Planning Authority. The roads on the development were largely named after the names of the original fields except Hackett place, which was named in memory of Linda Hackett a Parish Clerk who died just before Paxcroft Mead was completed.

This development has had a huge impact on the parish as it has more than doubled the number of houses in Hilperton. It has stimulated much thinking about our built environment. The houses have been built by a number of well-known national house builders. The design of the houses follows the companies' corporate national style too, which are not, in the main, indicative of the style of the original cottages and houses.

There are open play areas, a community centre, a small parade of shops including a supermarket, a primary school and a privately run nursery. Many public rights of way were diverted. Paxcroft Brook on the southernmost boundary of the Parish was considerably altered to control flooding and landscaped with traffic free areas where residents can walk and cycle. New footbridges were built over the brook at various points together with a road bridge to southern areas of the development. A cyclepath and footway running under the A361 allows people living north of the road to gain access to the school and shops.

Whaddon

The hamlet of Whaddon is one mile to the northeast of the old village and is reached via Whaddon Lane, a single track road. It is situated beyond the Kennet and Avon canal, and overlooks the River Avon. The houses are strung out along the lane, with clusters beyond the canal, around the Church, and surrounding Whaddon Grove Farm. Many have been renovated or rebuilt on sites of older properties.

Whaddon is an ancient site, which has been occupied since prehistoric times and there is evidence of Roman habitation. Humps and hollows in the field around the Church mark the site



View from Whaddon

of a medieval village. This is a scheduled ancient monument protected due to its archeological importance. At the time of the Domesday Book, it was a small village with a manor house and a mill. It was larger and more important than Hilperton, but in the 14th century Whaddon suffered a significant depopulation because of the plague, the Black Death. In the 16th century, it was simply a cloth-making site with a mill on the Semington brook.

The Long family, who were wealthy clothiers, once owned Whaddon, together with Hilperton and other estates in Wiltshire. In 1660, Walter Long built a large addition to the manor house. Whaddon House, which was surrounded by parkland, was destroyed by fire in the 19th century. Whaddon Grove Farm now stands on the site of the House. There remains a 17th century back door in a moulded frame. There are two stone former dairies. A pair of semi-detached stone cottages, to the south of Whaddon Farm, was the Poor House in the 1830s. Eight houses were noted in 1783, and appear again

on the tithe map of 1838. Four of these houses have gone but three new houses were built in the 20th century and one outbuilding opposite Whaddon Farm at the centre of the hamlet. This was originally the stable of the vicarage house and has been converted to a single storey residence. Agricultural buildings belonging to both farms now make up much of the hamlet. These range from modern galvanised metal barns, to old stone barns. The agricultural use is mainly dairy with some cattle and a pig-rearing unit. Some business diversification has taken place.

St Mary's the Virgin, or the 'church in the field' is a small, simple Norman church, with a nave, chancel and north chapel. It stands high above the River Avon, and was probably built in the twelfth century but it has undergone extensive alterations with a major restoration in 1878/79. It still features windows and doors from the 14th and 15th centuries. Of interest



Whaddon Church

is a tombstone on the church floor opposite the south door dedicated to the Rev. Edward Cooper, an uncle of Jane Austen. There was a close relationship between the Austen family and their Cooper cousins. Outside, the brick wall enclosing the churchyard is an unusual feature in this part of Wiltshire, and dates from the 18th century.

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

The Development Plan

Development in West Wiltshire is planned at regional, county and local levels. Local development documents are prepared in accordance with national planning policies and guidance.

The Structure Plan

The Structure Plan is prepared by Wiltshire County Council and sets out the broad strategic planning policy for the whole county. The Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 covers the period to 2011 and was approved in January 2001. A new structure plan is expected to be approved in Spring 2005 to cover the period to 2016.

The District Local Plan

The District local plan is prepared by the District Council and elaborates on the structure plan policy framework by providing detailed development policies and proposals for the towns,

villages and rural areas. The Council's current District Plan 1st Alteration was adopted in June 2004 and covers the period to 2011. Future local developments and documents will progressively replace the Local Plan.

Village Policy Limits

The District wide local plan identifies village policy limits for over 30 villages in West Wiltshire including Hilperton. Within these policy limits limited infill housing development to support local services will be permitted provided that a number of detailed criteria are met.

Hilperton Conservation Area

The Hilperton Conservation Area was designated in 1991 to preserve and enhance the special architectural or historic interest of this area of the village. Within or adjacent to this area, the preservation of the special character or appearance is the primary consideration when assessing proposals for development. Stricter

planning controls exist in conservation areas over minor alterations to existing land uses and buildings and over proposals for demolitions or tree works.

Village Design Statement

This guidance supplements the following policies contained within the adopted West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration:

C17-C25 Conservation Areas; C26-C29 Listed Buildings; C31a Design; C40 Trees and Tree Planting; R2 Protection of Recreation Areas; H16 Flat Conversions; H17 Village Policy Limits; H18 Areas of Minimum Change; H21 Residential Conversions in the Countryside; H24 New Housing Design; E6 Rural Employment; E7 Farm Diversification; E8 Employment Conversions in the Countryside; E10 Horse Related Development; T03 Hotels, Guest Houses and Self Catering Accommodation; T04 Camping, Caravans, Holiday Homes; CF3 Rural and Village Facilities.



A sunny day in Dymott Square Audrey Hall

4. HILPERTON SET IN ITS SURROUNDINGS:

The vast majority of land in the Parish is open countryside, amounting to approximately 600 hectares. All the land, apart from public areas such as playing fields, is farmed; approximately half is arable and half pasture. The earliest record of the field boundaries largely as they appear today can be found in the Enclosure Map of 1816 and again in the Tithe Map of 1837. All the fields shown on the Tithe Map have individual names. The field and hedgerow pattern created then, with its typical patchwork form, can still be appreciated today even with modern farming practices. Where arable farming is practised, some hedgerows have been grubbed out. In the south, a large area of open farmland has been lost to the new housing development at Paxcroft Mead, as have smaller areas within the village due to infilling. Those areas that remain support a varied range of wildlife and species of birds, and can be accessed by a network of public footpaths and rights of way.

To the west, between the village and Trowbridge, is the area of land, known colloquially as the Hilperton Gap. This is an important area of open countryside, as it provides a barrier between the village and the eastern outskirts of Trowbridge. There are attractive rural views across the Gap from the old village and to the church from Hilperton Marsh which contribute greatly to the village atmosphere and character of Hilperton. Middle Lane, a public bridleway, lined with hedgerows, trees and a deep ditch, reminiscent of the old drove roads, crosses the Gap from the village to Victoria Road in Trowbridge. Every day many people use it to gain access to the fields in the Gap, and in particular those walkers, joggers and cyclists going to the town as it avoids the busy roads. The rest of the land, which is criss-crossed by a network of Public Rights of Way, is an important amenity area for informal recreation, which for the most part runs successfully alongside its agricultural uses. The most popular footpaths are those radiating from the Knap across the open fields of the

Gap. These are principally used by dog walkers (including walkers from Trowbridge). Path numbers are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 33, and 54. The fields beside the B3105 were known as Courtleaze and those nearest Horse Road were known as Cowleaze. Path 33 is a pleasant walk to and from Trowbridge, featuring hedge, ditch, raised path, and a useful wide bridleway. It cuts across the middle of the “gap” and gives expansive views across to Bradford and Holt. There are pockets of ecological interest with hedgerows, old ponds and hay meadows. Although the hedgerows are not the best in the Parish, they are still inhabited with a good range of wildlife and many species of birds. The narrow brook at its lowest point always has water in it even in the driest of weather.

The Kennet and Avon Canal crosses the Parish from east to west and is an important landscape and wildlife feature. It is of crucial worth for its amenity value, for boating, fishing, walking and cycling. This and the River Avon form the northern boundary of the Parish. The river valley in particular incorporates a rich area of marshland. These two waterways are designated as County Wildlife Sites and are managed by the Environment Agency and British Waterways. They provide an excellent and interesting nature corridor conveniently reached via Whaddon Lane and through Marsh Farm. The canal is a favourite area for informal recreation and has the most popular paths for local and long distance visitors. Path 31, the towpath, is part of the Sustrans national network of cycleways which attracts long distance cyclists. British Waterways estimates in 1995 between Bradford on Avon bridge and Martinslade bridge (near Seend) suggested there were 332,000 informal visitors along this 14 kilometre length, plus 7000 anglers and 62,000 cyclists, with 1000 boats.

Path 17, used by local horse riders, runs on the opposite side of the canal. It joins up in Semington with path 22 which is the only safe rideable circuit not ending at a busy road.

Semington Brook joins the Avon at Whaddon alongside pasture and is an important area of scrub and copse. Several streams occur in the Parish that also create diverse habitats for wildlife. Running through Paxcroft Mead is Paxcroft Brook, which has been widened to control flooding and this in turn has created open areas and habitats for many creatures

Farm ponds can be found in the open countryside but many of these have been neglected and are generally overgrown or used as a dumping ground. Some have been filled in completely. Two ponds have been created in recent years at Marsh Farm and Paxcroft Farm, adjacent to Paxcroft Brook. Both these take run off water during flooding but are managed sympathetically. The area known as Hilperton Marsh has largely been drained and built on.



Farm pond, Marsh farm



View to Roundway Hill from byway 22

To the east the village adjoins open countryside that spreads out along both sides of the ridge bordering Gypsy Lane (byway no.22 to Semington) and affords widespread rural views to Whaddon and beyond and to Salisbury Plain. To the southeast open countryside lies between the B3105, the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Avon. These areas are easily accessible through the fields except when recently ploughed.

The open countryside setting is an essential part of Hilperton’s rural character.

Some fields in the Parish, display evidence of the ancient ridge and furrow method of farming. Four areas displaying this are in the Gap, including Church Field, adjoining the Cemetery, others can be found at Whaddon, and between Maxcroft and Marsh Farms adjacent to the Canal. Further surveys may discover more examples.

There are no areas of woodland in the Parish but trees add interest to the landscape, sited in the open countryside, either standing alone or in small groups. A copse is situated west of Whaddon Lane with ash and maple but with many dead elms. Another one is sited at Paxcroft Mead. Farmers have planted trees and shrubs in the Parish including oak, cherry, ash, and broad-leaved lime among other species either in clumps, or in hedgerows or alongside farm tracks. The orchards that were once commonplace around the village have all but disappeared, although remnants remain in back gardens, notably along Church Street. The Parish Council undertook a survey of trees in the residential areas in 2002 and are in the process

of obtaining Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate. There are still several areas where trees add interest to the landscape, are of importance to the village environs and form essential wildlife habitats. Examples are: the row of beech and cluster of pine and lime trees in fields on the approach to Hilperton from Trowbridge; two separate oaks at Marsh Farm and Paxcroft Farm; the two copses of ash and maple off Whaddon Lane and at Paxcroft. It is worth noting that trees with trunks of over 75mm (3ins) in diameter growing in the Conservation Area cannot be lopped or felled without consent of the local Planning Authority. This includes trees in private gardens.

The Parish Boundary plays a crucial role in the protection of our landscape and wildlife resources. Approximately three-quarters of the boundary is in open countryside and usually consists of a sometimes double hedgerow, ditch, and bank. This is generally unmanaged and uncut, and contains many native hedgerow species such as blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, elder and dog rose. Ash, oak and field maple trees are present along with the occasional crab apple, and willow and alder if near water. These trees are all more likely to grow to maturity if situated in a boundary hedge.

Boundary hedges between farms in different ownership also provide areas richer in wildlife, and shape important wildlife corridors. These in turn provide links to the River Avon and to the Kennet and Avon Canal. Many dead elms are often left unchecked in the corridors and hedgerows. If they were extracted and destroyed it would prevent the further spread of Dutch elm disease. Elms can, and do thrive, in hedgerows if either traditional layering or cutting checks their growth.



Landmark trees from Fieldways