



SMANNELL
PARISH
COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL PLAN 2009 - 2011



This document is produced by Councillor Nigel Gooding on behalf of Smannell Parish Council

Smannell Parish Plan

1. Introduction

Dear Resident

We are delighted to present to you our first Smannell Parish Council plan.

The plan is a culmination of many months work by both residents and councillors. We would like to thank all those who helped in putting this plan together.

This plan will be a working document. The plan will assist the Parish Council in its work over the next two years.

You can monitor our progress by attending meetings, following online at www.smannellParishcouncil.org.uk or asking your Parish Councillor.

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**Smannell Parish Council
November 2009**

Its purpose

The Parish plan is a description of local qualities and character leading to recommendations for the way the Parish might develop while retaining its underlying qualities. These recommendations are contained within the sections coloured green throughout the document.



The plan attempts to identify areas which are important to both current and future residents. This should better enable the community to influence change to facilities, buildings or planning developments and to ensure that changes are in harmony with the Parish setting.

Finally, it helps residents, developers (with their architects and designers) and the planning authorities to produce buildings in harmony with their setting, and if possible, enhance the local environment.

What it covers

The plan covers the Parish of Smannell comprising the settlements of East Anton, Finkley, Little London, Smannell, Upper Enham and Woodhouse.

It includes sections on location and geographical setting, historical and current settlement form, the landscape, wildlife, community, access routes, architecture and buildings.

How it was produced

As part of the work on a village design statement (VDS), a small working party of residents arranged and collated a questionnaire which was completed by 56 households (45 % of dwellings). On this basis, a draft document with initial guidance proposals was presented to the Parish at an open meeting. The comments and suggestions were incorporated by a small group to produce a proposed document at the end of 2006.

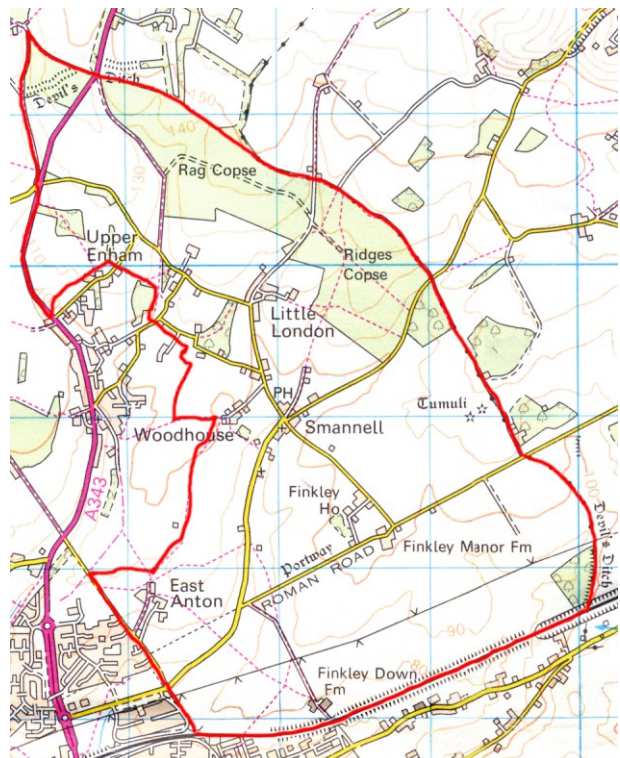
This work was followed up by a further survey completed by Smannell Parish Council during November 2008 with a wider brief where 61 households (51%) replied. The results of this survey were combined with the village design statement work to produce this Parish plan.

2. Location and Geographical setting

The Parish of Smannell is situated to the north east of Andover, and incorporates the settlements of East Anton, Finkley, Little London, Smannell, Upper Enham and Woodhouse. The settlements are separated by farmland and interconnected by a matrix of footpaths and roads.

The positions of the settlements have their roots in early history, which has influenced the position of the existing roads and footpaths. Their historical function was likely to be utilitarian, in terms of access for farm and woodland and droving of animals etc, or strategic, with respect to the two principal Roman roads intersecting on the boundary of the Parish.

The Parish is characterised by strong, rolling landforms, rising gently to domed hilltops and dissected by dry river valleys. A thick layer of chalk with flint produces softer contours and heavy moist soils which have retained their woodland cover. Sinuous woodlands cling to the steep slopes and, with interconnected hedgerow networks, create a strong sense of enclosure in some areas. The new East Anton Development is within the Parish Council Boundary.



The Parish is situated on a major aquifer; a layer of water-bearing permeable rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, silt, chalk or clay) from which groundwater can be usefully extracted. This provides a major water resource for Andover and its population. The soils are shallow in places allowing liquid discharges to appear in low lying areas.

A section of the Parish is within the North West Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Wooded areas in the AONB are planted with beech and conifers which were once managed by the Forestry Commission but are now in private hands.

Recommendation

- Water aquifers must be protected so that supply to dwellings whose water is from bore holes is not compromised by requirements for water supply both within and outside the Parish.

3. History and current settlement form

The area within the Parish of Smannell has been inhabited since the Stone Age. This evidenced by the remains of flint axe-heads found around Little London and Smannell. Iron Age barrows have also been found near Finkley and Little London.



Two major Roman roads, the Portway and Icknield Way, meet in the south west corner of the Parish at a possible staging post (Vindomis – Stevens).

There is historical evidence of hunting in 'Finkley Forest', the extent of which was defined with a '*perambulation... of the Forest of Fynkely....*' in A.D.1323 (*account page 326 - Parochial History of St Mary Bourne – J Stevens 1888*).

Although much of the land in the Parish was part of large farms, there were also many small landowners. The 1784 Enclosures map shows small strips of land beyond the Old Post Office Cottage in Little London being owned or tenanted by numerous individuals, and the 1850 tithe map of Andover Parish shows the area occupied by the houses in Ridges View (Little London) as small individual allotments of land.

The map also refers to the surrounding woodland as coppices, indicating that the trees were used for making hurdles and fences. Coppiced trees can still be seen,

as can the remains of pits in these woods which were possibly used for charcoal burning or sawing pits.

Around 1850 the Parish of Smannell was formed.

The community has evolved as nearly all ancient rural settlements have done, following a way of life which was always in close touch with the land, but with each settlement developing distinctive characteristics.

East Anton

East Anton is close to the site of a Roman settlement (probably known as Leucomagus, Leucomagno or Leucu Magna) where the several Roman roads and track ways crossed, most particularly the Icknield Way and Portway. Its name is thought to be derived from the Old English 'eastan tune' (east of the town).

Manor Farm House was built in 1647 and there are a number of 18th and 19th century farm buildings (some converted into company offices) and some more recently built dwellings. At present it comprises around 10 properties but is likely to be absorbed by the large development planned for the west of the Parish.

Work has commenced and we welcome the first residents in October 2009.



Finkley

Originally a forested area favoured by Royalty and gentry for hunting. Its name may be derived from the Old English 'Finaca Leah' meaning 'the wood of finches'. Finkley Manor Farmhouse is documented since 1238 as Fynknel. Near Finkley Farm a Roman dwelling house was excavated in 1871 and there are two Iron Age barrows in fields nearby.

The area contains around 10 dwellings surrounded by open farmland with far reaching views to the south and east.

Smannell

Smannell is a settlement of around 25 dwellings. It houses the school, the church and the pub, making it the focal point of the Parish. The church was built in 1856/57 by William White and consecrated in 1857. Until 1874 Smannell was part of the Parish of Andover but it became independent when the railway line was built to form its southern boundary. The Church of England school was built in 1873.

The name “Smannell” may derive from the old English 'Smethenhyll' – “(at the) smooth hill”, a reference to the gentle rise near Finkley farm. By 1652 the name had become Smanhill (Coates 1989), although the 1810 Ordnance Survey map quotes the name as Swanhill.

Smannell is situated in an ancient river valley and at the junction of 5 old roads (one now a footpath) to Andover, Finkley, Stoke, Little London and Woodhouse.

The style is mixed; with some buildings from the mid 1800's to post World War II council houses and some more recent developments.

Woodhouse

Woodhouse is one of the most ancient settlements in the Parish consisting of 12 properties. In early days it may have been a charcoal burning settlement with the name Woodhams (1810 Ordnance Survey) although the name of Woodhouse appears in the earlier 1759 map by Taylor. It contains buildings as early as 1640, to more recent dwellings, and is surrounded by open countryside.

Little London

Legend has it that this settlement was founded by people fleeing the plague during the late 17th Century and this is consistent with the age of many of its thatched cottages.

Originally built on rising ground to the east, it now also occupies the valley bottom. The houses and fields rise steeply to the east before coming to the boundary of Ridges Copse where the land reaches the 130m level and from here there are magnificent views over Andover to the range of hills including the Danebury Ring.

Its 64 dwellings range from flint and brick thatched dwellings, to post World War II council houses and more modern developments.

Upper Enham

The formation of Upper Enham may date from the same time as Woodhouse and it has always been closely linked with the large manor houses at Enham. This diffuse settlement of 17 properties with largely modern buildings is situated between Little London and Enham surrounded by open farmland and spinneys.

Recommendation

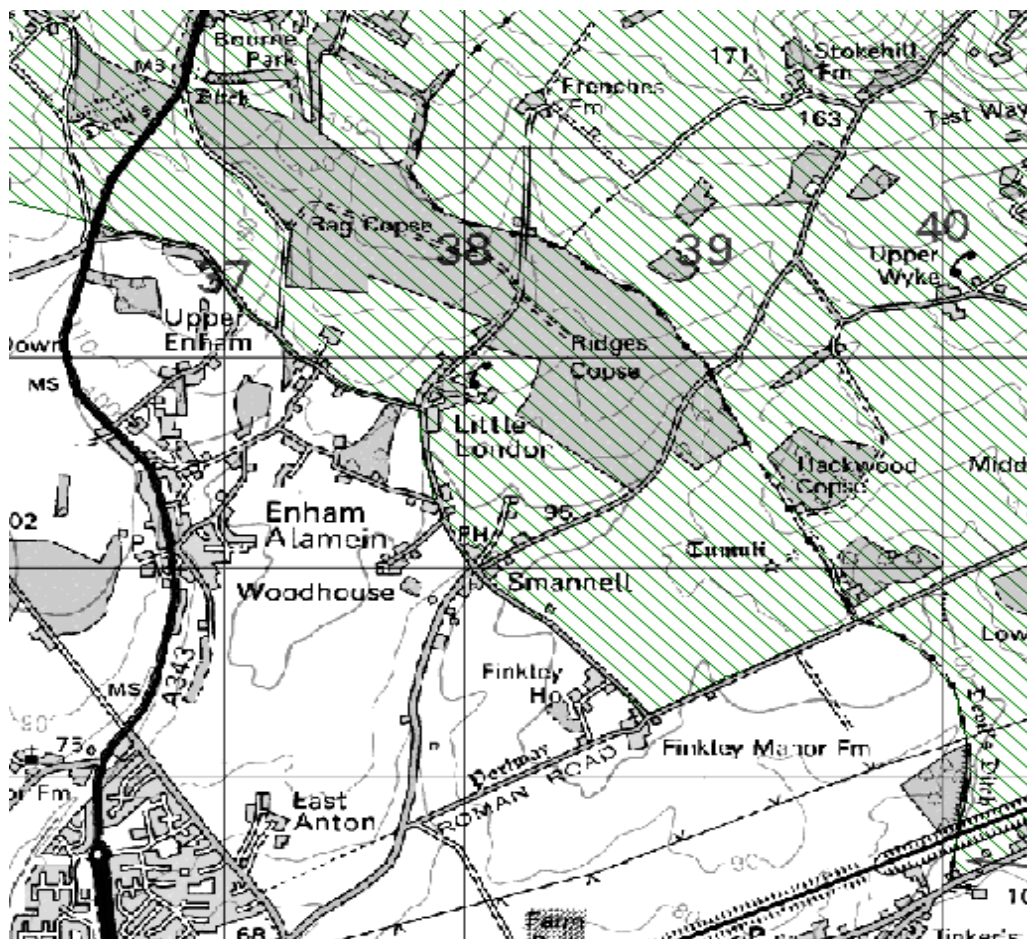
- Residents are sensitive to the continuing expansion of Andover from the East Anton Major Development Area and other possible projects. Sufficient strategic rural gaps should be used to preserve the unique identity of each settlement within the Parish.

4. The landscape setting

The vast majority of houses in the Parish overlook open farmland and most have at least one boundary with agricultural or wood land. This gives the Parish its distinctive link with the natural environment. The questionnaire, completed as part of the VDS, clearly identified that the community highly values the general rural peace and quiet, the feeling of space and the lack of light pollution.

There are still 6 identifiable copses within the Parish - Ashley, Postgrove, Long, Mongomble, Rag, and Ridges Copse.

Part of the Parish, including Little London and most of Smannell, lies in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers 1730 square kilometres. It was created in 1972 to protect one of the least developed areas of chalk down land in southern England and is the third largest AONB in England.





The areas included are classed as Downland with Woodland which is defined as “Landscape with soft contours with clay summits, small field patterns, hedgerows and a mosaic of woodland cover. Small villages nestle in sheltered valleys with the wide spread scattered farmsteads.”

AONBs are areas of precious landscape whose distinct character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them. In particular they aim to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, to provide quiet enjoyment of the countryside and have regard for the interests of those who live and work in the countryside.

In the North Wessex Downs management plan, general planning guidance is given to protect the tranquillity and remoteness of AONBs.

These include:-

- Retaining the quality of views from and to the North Wessex Downs
- Resistance to intrusive and unsympathetic developments within the AONB.
- Adoption of consistent AONB wide approaches to telecommunication masts and other intrusive structures.
- Adoption of consistent AONB wide approaches to noise generated developments that adversely affect the tranquillity (including noisy sports both within and around the periphery of the AONB).
- Control of lighting schemes or other developments that threaten the integrity of dark night skies. These also include recreational facilities and light spillage from surrounding urban areas.

Many of the ancient thoroughfares form the basis of the footpaths providing a large network for recreational access. Much of the east boundary of the Parish follows the route of the Devil's Ditch, while other paths developed as links between settlements or agricultural access or tracks to and through woodlands.

There are 16 identifiable footpaths amounting to over 22 km. Of these, eleven paths are named and include the Possessive Track, Main Ridge, Church Path, Crockery Bottom, Post Grove Copse, Cambers Copse, Upper Enham, Long Bottom, Ridges, Gravelly and The Avenue.

In the 2008 resident's survey, 97% of Parishioners used the footpaths, of which 38% of residents used footpaths every day.

Recommendations

- Any development needs to be aware of the AONB planning guidance.
- Footpaths are an important recreational resource within the Parish. It is important that they are maintained and preserved in a fit state with clear signage for safe use for the benefit of the Parish.
- Protection of rural peace and quiet, the feeling of space, the safeguarding of long distance views and the lack of light pollution should be a priority in any future development.
- Any development should retain existing hedgerows and trees to minimise noise and light pollution, and encourage wildlife

5. Wildlife

The rural settling of farmland surrounded by hedgerows and woodland shelter a wide variety of flora and fauna. The following have been identified in the Parish.

Animals and reptiles – badgers, bats, dormice, foxes, frogs, grass snakes, hares, hedgehogs, moles, muntjac, newts (common and great crested), roe deer, rabbits, shrews, slow worms, stoats, voles and weasels.

Birds – blackbirds, cuckoos, magpies, pheasants, pigeons, yellowhammers, buzzards, Red kites, tits, collared doves, dunnocks, finches (4 types), goldcrests, house martins, jackdaws, jays, lapwings, nuthatches, owls (barn, little and tawny), redstarts, rooks, skylarks, swallows, swifts, thrushes, tree creepers, wagtails (pied and yellow) and woodpeckers (green and spotted).

The farmland is cultivated mostly with cereal crops with the fields surrounded by hedgerows made up of common species including blackthorn, hawthorn, beech and dog rose.

The woods provide contrasts of light and shade. In spring, before the canopy opens, wild spring flowers form a carpet of wood anemones, primroses, foxgloves and bluebells. Within the woods ash, beech, blackthorn, conifers (larch, scots pine), hazel, holly, horse chestnut, lime, oak, silver birch, sycamore and willow have been found.

The Nature Conservancy have identified Hampshire's most northerly colony of great crested newts breeding in a local pond. Dormice have been found locally, indicating the presence of mixed nut and fruit species required to support these small rodents.

Recommendations

- The recreational value of the woodlands, hedgerows and wildlife for the Parish and the wider community must be protected.
- Woodland within the Parish is a major recreational resource. These areas should be sympathetically managed to ensure that the character of the Parish is maintained.

6. The community

The Parish consists of approximately 130 dwellings and, although the individual settlements are separated by agricultural land, the community maintains its identity through numerous social events.



The Church, School and Pub in Smannell and the playing fields in Little London form the social "hub" of the Parish. The church has numerous events throughout the year and provides many opportunities for parishioners to meet.

Smannell and Enham C of E Primary School was one of the first church schools in the country. It is a thriving school with over 100 pupils in four classes with approximately 30% from the local catchment area. Its facilities, particularly its large hall, are much used by the Parish for meetings and social events.

Until 1992 Woodhouse barn was often used by a local skittles group to raise money for many local charities.

The public house, pictured below (originally called The British Oak) dates from the mid 19th century, and in 1990 was sold to Wadworths Brewery, refurbished in 2003 and renamed The Oak.



In 1995, the Stevens family (a local farming family from “Camber House”) donated a parcel of land to the Little London Playing Field Association (LLPFA), who in turn, passed ownership to the Parish council. The LLPFA manages the day to day running of the playing field, raising funds through many annual events such as the summer walk and barbeque, “Little London-bury Music Festival ” pictured below and the bonfire night fireworks display. These well supported events have enabled the LLPFA to provide a slide, climbing frame, swings and a play hut.



Little London is also well known for its amazing displays of Christmas lighting. The majority of houses in the settlement have some form of display, and the community enjoy a formal ‘turning on’ ceremony which is usually performed by a local dignitary.

The 2008 survey identified the need for improved sports facilities. In particular, an all weather pitch for use for tennis/basketball/5-a-side football was highlighted as a long term aim.

The survey also identified the need for indoor space for meetings and clubs. It may be possible to liaise with the school to use their facilities in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

Eighty percent of residents felt 'safe' within the Parish, but there were comments that visible policing should be increased (November 2008 survey). Particular areas of concern included the possible risk from the Major Development Area at East Anton, and anti-social behaviour in the woodlands.

Over 80% of replies in the 2008 survey regarded the Parish open spaces as tidy and well maintained. This has been largely achieved due to the tireless work of Parish volunteers. However, continuing resources from local government must be allocated to maintain the attractive rural environment of the Parish.

The 2008 survey also identified that 96% of people recycled their rubbish, but a significant number felt that a Parish recycling facility would be useful. This might be sited centrally, in the pub car park for example.

In addition the 2008 survey highlighted that although 65% of people currently have broadband, only 17% have speeds above 1-2 MB. The vast majority viewed reliable, fast and affordable broadband for educational, commercial and personal use as essential.

Recommendations

- Any development of the school should consider a building layout (or format) which allows better use of their facilities by the local community. In particular, facilities which can be used for regular meetings and clubs would be useful.
- In the longer term, an all weather facility for recreational sports should be considered.
- Visible policing should be increased to prevent risk areas within the Parish.
- Continuing resources from local government must be allocated to maintain the attractive rural environment of the Parish.
- A Parish based recycling facility should be considered.
- Broadband coverage is poor within the Parish. This must be addressed to allow residents to take advantage of communication methods which have become standard in larger communities.

7. Commercial activity

Much of the land (around 2500 acres) is owned by local farmers with production based on crops and some small scale animal enterprises. Very few inhabitants are now involved in agriculture as farming has declined, however a varied range of other light industries has developed to take its place, often using converted farm buildings.

The businesses in the Parish include a local children's farm activity park, a local builder, self storage depot, car repair and servicing enterprises, a plastics company and a fencing business. An increasing number of self employed people run businesses either from home or from converted offices.

The trees in the privately owned woodland are harvested regularly.

Recommendations

- Proposals which may lead to local employment opportunities should be treated sympathetically, providing they do not lead to unacceptable noise, traffic flows, or light pollution.
- New business or light industrial buildings should be sited carefully and screened to enable them to fit into a rural setting. Businesses should pay special attention to minimising light and noise pollution.
- New or upgraded telecommunication resources are required to encourage home workers and reduce the damage to the environment by road travel.

8. Road patterns and transport issues

There are three through routes within the Parish.

Finkley Road

The old Roman Portway branches off the Andover to Smannell Road to pass through Finkley before continuing through Middle Wyke to St Mary Bourne. This road is single track with passing places. Although it is used by local traffic (mostly to St Mary Bourne) it is unsuitable for heavy use or large vehicles.

Smannell Road

This is the main route to and from Andover. The road continues past the pub as the Stoke Road to eventually link to Stoke. From this point it becomes a narrow single track road unsuitable for heavy use or large vehicles.

Smannell Road/Green Drove

The Smannell Road links to Little London and then becomes Green Drove before meeting the Andover to Newbury Road (A343). The road is winding, undulating and narrow, again unsuitable for heavy use or large vehicles.

In addition to these routes there are small roads which connect Finkley to Smannell, Woodhouse to the Smannell Road, and several from the Smannell Road/Green Drove to Enham Alameim.

None of the roads in the Parish have pavements or cycleways, although 66% of Parishioners cycled on Parish highways (2008 survey).

There are no street lights and the village design statement questionnaire identified that most Parishioners would resist street lighting because of the desire to protect dark night skies. The signposts within the Parish are of standard design which are functional but charmless.

There are significant temporary parking problems within the Parish. These centre on the school and the church. The school has particular problems with 70% of the pupils living outside the catchment area (80% outside the Parish) and only a tiny proportion of the pupils walking or cycling to school. The traffic increases on Smannell Road twice a day and there are potential parking problems outside the school on a dangerous bend.

Church parking tends to be on the Smannell Road and can be a problem with large attendances at weddings or funerals. This narrows the road further.

A number of residents in the 2008 survey supported the possible improvement of the footpath from Little London to Smannell via Ridges Copse to a standard which allows all year use for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Ninety six percent of residents own a car, with 60% owning more than 1 car and of these 90% are not parked on highways. Only 8% of residents currently use the Cango bus. However, those who do not use buses would consider the bus if the service provided was with a published timetable which covered the morning and evening peaks (2008 survey).

The 2008 survey also investigated a community car scheme, but only 18% of replies expressed an interest.

Recommendations

- The expansion of dwellings in the East Anton major development area will increase traffic flow through the narrow road system within the Parish. All efforts should be made to prevent Parish roads becoming 'rat runs' by introducing appropriate signposting and traffic calming measures
- Signposts should be based on the more rural fingerpost style to differentiate from the urban environment.
- Parking may continue to be a problem outside the school, situated as it is on a sharp bend and close to a five-way junction. A long term solution for safe and convenient collection and drop-off at the school is required.
- Bus services should be improved to reduce environmental pollution, reduce car parking problems within the Parish and reduce congestion within Andover at peak times. This service should be based on a published timetable.
- Footpaths into Andover should be maintained at a standard that allows them to be used as cycleways.
- Road speed reduction measures should be considered to improve pedestrian, cyclist and horse riding safety.
- The improvement of the Little London to Smannell pathway to allow all year use by push chairs and wheelchairs should be a priority.

9. Buildings and materials

There are a large variety of buildings in the Parish. These are both domestic and commercial and they accurately reflect the Parish's development over the last four hundred years. No specific style can be called "typical", but the older buildings tend to be flint, brick and thatch.

The Georgian period provided examples of large flint and brick farmhouses of which Woodhouse Farm, Finkley Farmhouse and Postgrove Farmhouse are the best examples.



There are a number of brick, or flint and brick, thatched buildings mostly in Little London and Woodhouse with one in Smannell.

Many of these would originally have been farm worker cottages. For example "High Grounds", in Big Street, Little London started life as a stables and a barn in the early 1800s and was converted in the 1870s into four small thatched cottages owned by Woodhouse Farm. In the late 1950s the tenants moved to Ridges View and the cottages were converted into one house.

The house now known as "Flintstones" was once the Little London pub (the Horse and Jockey) and "Highfields", another flint and brick cottage in Big Street, once housed the local village farrier and his horse and cart. Other examples include Meadow House in Smannell.

In Smannell the majority of the houses date from the mid-1800s. Both the church and the original part of the school buildings are solid flint and brick with the adjacent house which once housed the school teacher a later brick construction. The pub, "The Oak", was built during the mid 19th century with more modern houses constructed post World War II and during the 1960s.



With the need for better houses in the 1950s, a number of council houses were built. Pound View was constructed in Smannell and Ridges View in Little London. Most of these houses were occupied by local village families who, at that time, left their old farm cottages for more modern accommodation. These original cottages have now been restored.

Dwellings built during the 1960's, 70's and 80's are brick designs, with both bungalows and houses spread throughout the Parish.

The Parish has an example of 21st century architecture in Little London, with a modern glass and timber framed house.



A survey of the types and ages of dwellings in the Parish show that flint and brick houses with thatch, tile or slate roofs account for 18%; brick with thatch or slate 23%; brick and tile 52%; render and slate 5% and stone and slate 2%.

There are many thatched properties within the Parish. Little London has the most, with Big Street and Little Street forming the core around which other houses in the hamlet have developed. These thatched houses are about three hundred and fifty years old and are constructed of "clunch", a mixture of rubble and chalk which was rendered over to stabilise it.

All the cottages vary in size and shape and no two are alike. Many have wells, which were used within living memory. Most of the houses as they stand today have been expanded from the original tiny cottages which housed the farm workers and craftsmen and women of the Parish. Little Thatch in Big Street, for example, is clearly two distinct cottages linked together and April Cottage once consisted of several smaller dwellings.

Many properties have a variety of extensions, modern windows and other additions.

The 2008 survey largely supported the provision of a small number of rented properties for first and last time accommodation.

Recommendations

- Appropriate developments in the Parish, either as 'in fill' or extensions of existing communities should be considered, providing the balance of individual building styles is maintained within its setting.
- New housing should include both affordable units for first time house owners and appropriate accommodation for the ageing 'last time' population.

10. Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the thanks all those within the Parish of Smannell who contributed to this plan. We would like to thank Hampshire County Council for their financial grant support in producing this document.

Further information

Further Information on this document and the work of Smannell Parish Council can be obtained from the editor or the Parish Council website www.smannellparishcouncil.org.uk

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