



NUTBOURNE

Village Design Statement
2006

Nutbourne Village Design Statement

Prepared during 2005/6 by a Nutbourne Residents Steering Group and endorsed by Horsham District Council as interim planning policy for use in the assessment of planning applications within Nutbourne (as defined on the map on page 2).

The design statement is applicable to the area called Nutbourne, part of the parish of Pulborough and illustrated on page 2.

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Cover photograph circa 1985

Nutbourne Village Design Statement

About our Design Statement

Nutbourne is a small rural hamlet dominated by surrounding farmland and is part of the parish of Pulborough in West Sussex. In 2004 Horsham District Council, in conjunction with Pulborough Parish Council, suggested that a Village Design Statement specific to Nutbourne should be prepared in line with the guidance of the Countryside Commission.

A significant part of the village of Nutbourne, together with the millpond and its surrounds was designated as a conservation area on 3rd December 1973. The “Conservation & History Group”, set up to help preserve, protect and record the village history, has taken a close interest in the preparation of this design statement.

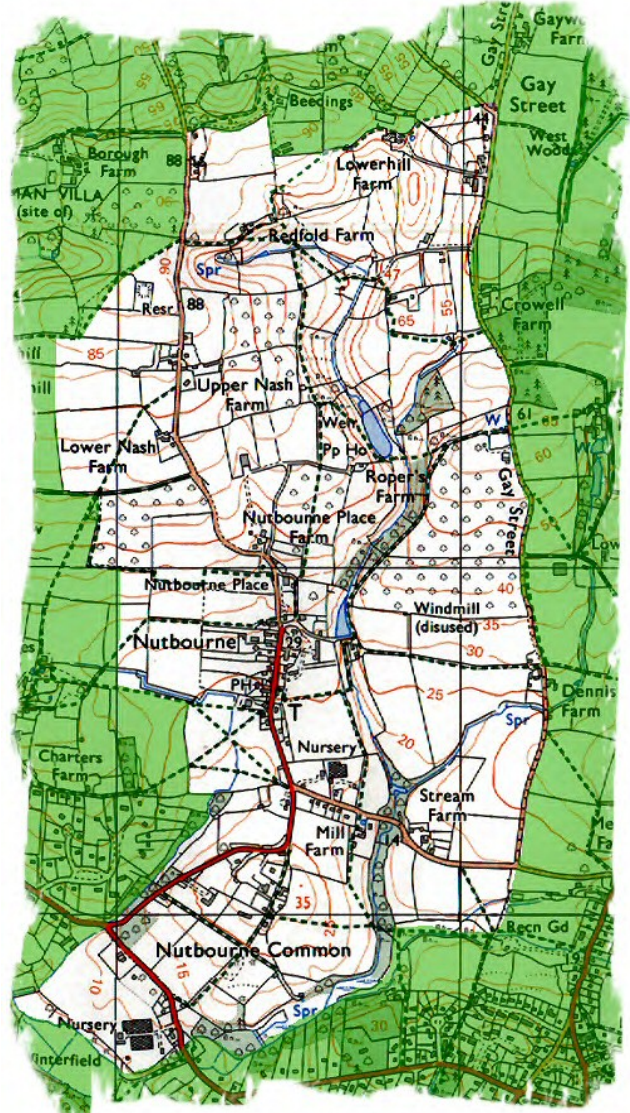
In May 2004 a Steering Group was formed following requests for volunteers on the village notice board and the Internet. The residents were canvassed in February 2005 and the results of that survey, along with National and County guidelines, are the basis for this document.

In total 124 questionnaires were sent out on the basis of 1 per household from which 51 responses were received representing the views of over 100 residents. Replies were received from a good cross-section of the community reflecting a balance of young and old, newcomers and long-standing residents. The great majority showed a keen interest in the design and character of Nutbourne and all said they liked it here. One person's comment that “*Nutbourne is a peaceful rural environment with a community feeling and good access to amenities*” echoed the feelings of most others in the village.

This sentiment was carried through into a consensus view that further development outside the existing central village area would be hugely detrimental to the community as a whole and the very special rural setting that Nutbourne occupies.

In January 2006 a draft of this Design Statement was sent to each household, Pulborough Parish Council, Horsham District Council, and WSCC for comment. Where appropriate, changes have been incorporated.

This Nutbourne Village Design Statement can thus be said to be truly representative of the voice and wishes of the majority of Nutbourne households and their residents.



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Nutbourne is shown as the white area

Our Design statement defines the important characteristics that give Nutbourne its individuality. Most residents want to sustain and enhance what already exists rather than contemplate further new development which, it is believed, would greatly erode the essentially rural character of the hamlet. The acceptance of this document by Horsham District Council as interim planning policy (to become a Supplementary Planning Document) is a very positive aspect of the planning process.

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Nutbourne Yesterday & Today

Nutbourne is a small linear hamlet and the topographical features comprise gently sloping, undulating farmland, with a southerly aspect and loam soil that is ideal for cultivation. This together with a constant supply of water induced the establishment of a farming settlement, probably by the Saxons.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, the Manor of Nordborne was rated at six hides and contained two mills. Many signs of Roman civilisation still exist in or around the hamlet.

In the Middle Saxon period Nutbourne was known as *knutu burna*, the meaning of which is 'nut trees over a stream'. There appears to have been 'Medieval strip farming' in Marsh Field, as is shown in the bottom left of the photograph.



The Tithe map 1841



The Street looking north - early 1900's

Over the centuries it developed very gradually and today it still retains the essential features of a small rural hamlet. Although it has lost most of its soft fruit growing of the post-war period, a thriving vineyard and tomato nursery are well established.

The shops and school have long gone, but a garage and the public house remain in business. Increasingly many people work directly from their homes thanks largely to the Internet. This adds significantly to the quality of life and helps reduce unnecessary traffic and pollution.

Even in the early 1900s there were many circa 1400 oak frame houses and farm houses, a few of which still remain in good order and of original design. Others, as a result of decayed wood, have had their walls replaced by stone, whilst retaining the original roof. A few have smoke tar evidence on the rafters, indicating that they were probably pre-1400 'hall' houses.

Some houses have been replaced totally such as Marsh House, shown here on the right hand side.



The Street Looking North Today

The hamlet is a thriving and diverse community loved by its residents and the majority enjoy the proximity of good countryside and farming. They would like it to remain a small rural hamlet.

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Village Topography

The village street inclines northwards and, although developed on both sides, the general impression is of stone buildings and walls, built up to the road frontage on the west, with grassed banks and hedges on the east. The Street itself is criss-crossed by overhead lines.

In the village are various periods and styles of architecture, ranging from timber-framed cottages to modern red brick houses. However, most of the buildings are of a modest domestic scale, and it is this uniformity of scale, together with the variety of their massing, design, detailing, texture, irregular positioning and spacing along the road frontage that gives the village its basic physical character. Stone is the predominant building material used extensively for boundary walls as well as buildings, and is a unifying element of the street scene.



The rural nature of The Street itself results from the presence of grassed verges and banks instead of separate pavements for pedestrians. This character has however been lost in places by the formation of lay-bys to serve new development, superfluous road signs, utility supply lines and poor upkeep of the verge itself.

Unnecessary incursions into The Street's frontage, involving the use of modern materials, are in harsh contrast to the mellow and irregular lines of the rest of The Street and should be discouraged in future planning considerations.



At its northern end The Street divides into two, with the highway bending west and then northwards through a cutting towards Gay Street and North Heath, whilst the other part bends east past the former school to become a non-metalled bridle road. This narrow track becomes a dark, damp lane, bordered by banks and overhung by trees. After a short distance it suddenly emerges into a small valley containing a mill-pond to the north and the former mill buildings to the south. To the east there is a vineyard.

In the north-east the valley is contained by a steep tree-covered slope, while to the west are more gentle slopes with field boundaries defined by trees and bushes. The views outwards are restricted by the topography, making this valley a distinctive environmental area, virtually isolated from the village, while retaining clear evidence of its historical associations with the settlement. There is a much-used network of footpaths in and around the hamlet.

The verges and footpaths have deteriorated in recent years and need restoration and improvement in places. Where possible the stiles should be replaced by kissing-gates that would provide access for less-able people.

The Lanes

These vital arteries are mostly single track and very restrictive to traffic, especially large vehicles, which frequently get stuck and unable to turn round without damage to verges and property.

Any new development could generate more traffic and increase the problems of access in the narrow lanes.

The residents like 'the lanes' the way they are, winding, without pavements, with natural passing bays; they walk and drive accordingly. They are anxious to maintain the peaceful, safe and rural nature of the lanes.



The character of the lanes must be maintained, having due regard for safety; and any proposal to upgrade, widen, add passing bays, remove or alter hedges, banks, fences or verges that would destroy their nature, should be discouraged. The restrictive nature of the lanes naturally discourages the introduction of business undertakings or developments that would cause significant additional or unsuitable traffic.

The Rising Sun Inn



The 'Rising Sun' occupies a fine old stone building with much ironstone in its construction. The front part is Victorian and many of the original features are still in use today.

In 1836 the premises became a drinking establishment when Charles Chatfield was granted a licence to sell ale and during the first half of the 20th century it also served as the village cinema. Prior to this the original buildings are believed to have housed the local blacksmith shop.

Today it is a busy 'Pub', central to the life of the village, and the Howard family offer good food and hospitality to all-comers. It plays a vital part in many of the village activities, such as the terminus for the Easter walk and at election time its restaurant section is used as a polling station.

The villagers of Nutbourne consider the 'Pub' to be a vital village amenity and would very much like to see it prosper in its current form.

Architectural Style

Nutbourne has a wide variety of houses dating from the past few hundred years; including a few oak frame 'hall houses' and others built of ashlar and random stone, ironstone and brick. There has not been any widespread development to spoil the hamlet and it has evolved slowly over the last 1000 years. Part of the hamlet's charm is the higgledy-piggledy irregular aspect of the house positions relative to The Street. This should be borne in mind for future planning. Examples of different house types from the area are shown below:



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Agriculture

Traditional farming is mostly livestock, mainly from beef cattle and sheep and this makes a major contribution to the food supply.

By the middle of the 20th century large parts of the land around Nutbourne were devoted to dairy herds and fruit production. Orchards of apples, large fields of soft fruit and even rhubarb were common. Competitive pressures from abroad and supermarkets have resulted in most of the fruit and milk production being abandoned in favour of beef herds, sheep and horse-based enterprises.



Horticulture

There is an established vineyard producing first class white wine that has been chosen for at least one Royal occasion and, from April until October, it offers tours and wine-tasting at an old windmill in the vineyard.

A second vineyard has recently been constructed and planted with Pinot Meunier vines. This is an expansion of the neighbouring 'Nyetimber' vineyard that has won many International Awards for its sparkling white wines.



Where blackcurrants were once cropped for nearly 50 years some very successful Dahlia growing and breeding has now taken root and adds to the bio diversity.



Tomatoes have been grown in Nutbourne for over 50 years at a Nursery established in the late 1930s. The tomatoes are now grown 'insecticide free' with pest control by bio-friendly insects and pollination by bumblebees producing a high quality crop. Carbon dioxide from the heating furnace is recycled to every plant by a network of pipes. The produce is sold at Covent Garden and by local shops, under the fair-trade scheme of 'Sussex food for Sussex people'.



The countryside setting is a valuable part of Nutbourne's heritage and it is vitally important that, as far as possible, there are no major changes from agricultural use in the agricultural areas. The restrictions of the Countryside Planning Policies in the adopted Local Plan, the emerging Local Development Framework and the normal Planning Policy provisions for agricultural land should continue to apply.

The Common

The Common, which once extended over a much larger area, is now about 4 acres. In the 1950s cricket was played there, but nowadays it is simply a valued wildlife area abounding with flora and fauna. Its bluebells, primroses and the bracken make attractive ground cover used by nesting birds such as woodcock and pheasant. Most of the trees are birch and oak and these attract a varied woodland bird population including birds of prey and owls.

The open woods also offer an ideal haven for a variety of insects including butterflies, moths and dragonflies.



Protection of this important village amenity as a wildlife area is high amongst the priorities of the local residents.

The Woodlands



Most of Nutbourne's historic woodland has been cleared to make way for agriculture or fruit growing. To the east is a small but quite beautiful bluebell wood and, thanks to being left alone, is in very good order and harbours a wide variety of wildlife. The trees are oak, beech, hazel, birch and a good variety of indigenous flora and fauna (e.g. badgers, foxes, rabbit, and deer).

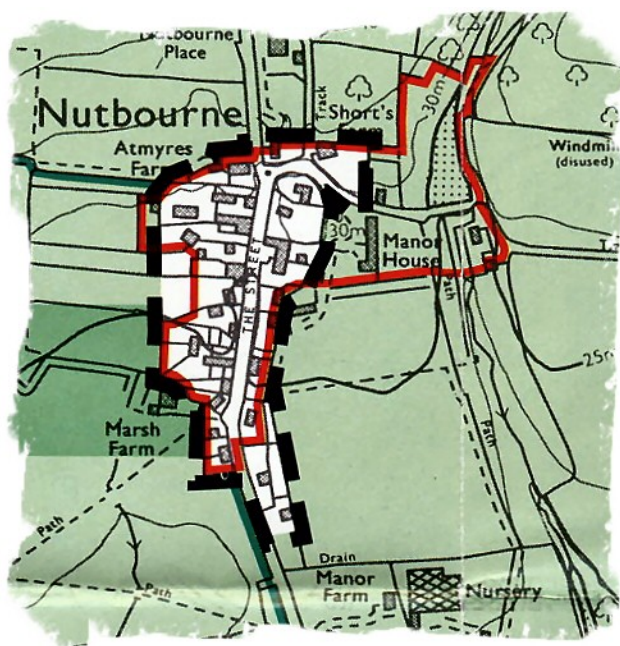
On the western side some non-native trees such as rhododendrons, camellias etc., have been planted, changing the appearance of the once ancient woodland.

The network of footpaths that wind through these woodland areas is much used and is highly prized by local residents. It is essential that these are retained and maintained for future generations.

'Stuart's Wood' to the southeast is named in memory of Stuart Brown, who grew asparagus there for nearly twenty years. His family planted the trees in 2003 with the aid of a grant from the Forestry Commission and a lot of help from their friends. Public access was granted in the hope that Stuart's Wood would give as much pleasure in the future as his asparagus had in the past. The trees are all indigenous and include; oak, ash, hornbeam, field maple, lime, whitebeam, crab apple and wild cherry with a mixture of native shrubs around the edges and clearings.

At present the wood, with its strategic clearings, is still in its infancy but is already a joy to all.

The Conservation Area



The major part of the built up area of Nutbourne is the subject of a conservation area set up by the local planning authority under Section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

The overriding objective of the conservation plan is the protection of the village environment and its historically important features.

Red outlining = The Conservation Area.

Black dashed outlining =
The Hamlet Area/Village Boundary.

The residents of Nutbourne endorse the objectives and implementation of the 'Conservation Area Policies' and the authorities are urged to follow these guidelines wherever possible.

The Sussex Weald & South Downs

This area of West Sussex presents a typical South-Wealden geological profile, being of chalk, clay, and sandstone beds, closely spaced and parallel, running east-west and each responsible for an individual topography and ecology. The northern part of Nutbourne sits on fertile Hythe Beds of the Lower Greensand. The Marsh Farm fields, south of the *Rising Sun*, are 'head deposits' of impure clays, silt and sand. Towards the Common, there is the 'Pulborough Sand Rock Member' and at the hillcrest, 'Marehill Clay'. The Common is on the poor, dry, land of the 'Folkestone Beds'. To the east, lies south-sloping, mostly fertile, farmland. To the west lies the parish of Pulborough, where the river Arun separates it from the Bedham hills, Petworth and beyond.

To the south is the river Chilt and a sandy ridge on which the West Sussex Golf Club is situated. Beyond this the land rises to the South Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The heights of the South Downs dominate the southern skyline and almost all of Nutbourne has views of them. They have been designated an AONB, and are currently protected and conserved by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board but this may change if the area becomes a 'National Park'.



The distant view of the South Downs can be seen from most Nutbourne houses, and residents should be discouraged from inappropriate development, and the planting of high hedges and trees, which would affect the village's open view of the Downs.

PLANNING & VILLAGE DESIGN GUIDANCE 1 OF 2

(The following incorporates most of the existing conservation area policies)

The Village Design Survey indicated that the residents feel Nutbourne to be already at maximum capacity. Consequently almost all are opposed to any further development outside the current village boundary (hamlet area, see map on page 9) and most agree there is limited opportunity for further infilling without destroying its existing character. To the limited extent that some further development may be permitted the following Planning and Village Design Guidance should be closely adhered to.

DEVELOPMENT

Scale. Additional significant development within Nutbourne is undesirable, as it would have an adverse impact on the character of the existing hamlet as well as putting too much strain on the surrounding sunken lanes and infrastructure. The scale of any new building or extension must be considered carefully so that it ‘blends in’ with the existing houses and acknowledges the importance of space surrounding the property.

Balance. Nutbourne is characterised by a mix of small, medium and some large buildings. Any new building proposal should demonstrate that it is in balance and harmony with the existing village, as well as being ‘appropriate for the plot size’ and shall not adversely affect properties nearby.

Separation gap. The preservation of the existing separation between Nutbourne and its neighbours is essential and consequently development outside the existing village boundary/built up area should be discouraged at all costs. This applies especially to ‘ribbon’ development along the lanes.

The Conservation Area. Any new development adjacent to, or visually related to, the conservation area shall be designed so as not to conflict with the aesthetic qualities of that area.

Parking. The very restrictive nature of The Street, and the lanes, means that ‘on-site parking’ for residents, and their visitors, is vital for all new dwellings. Adequate off-street parking shall be provided. Parking on the narrow street shall not impede the access to other properties by emergency services, delivery lorries etc. Any new surfacing required for hard-standing should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and not detract from the rural aspect of the area.

STYLE

Design. New buildings or extensions should as far as possible blend with ‘Old Nutbourne’ and utilize a sympathetic choice of materials. Formal building-lines should be avoided. Appendages such as solar panels, aerials etc., should be unobtrusive.

Materials. The predominant use of the local stone contributes towards the area's distinctive character and should be retained in its natural form. It should not be colour-washed, rendered, or otherwise obscured. Furthermore, the colours of painted surfaces should emphasise the natural building materials rather than detract from them.

New structures within the Conservation Area. Any new buildings or extensions shall reflect the traditional styles and character of the hamlet; especially in their form, scale and materials used, so as not to be unduly assertive. The historic buildings shall remain dominant. Schemes for the treatment of the spaces around new buildings, such as hard surfaces, planting, walls, etc. shall be accord with the character of the Conservation Area.

Historic buildings. Buildings and other structures, of particular merit, are included in the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The preservation of these structures is essential, and renovations, repairs etc. should follow the guidelines of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and English Heritage. For example, the use of lime mortars should be encouraged to reduce the deterioration of stone and soft bricks caused by non breathable cements. Owners are required to maintain such buildings in a good state of repair, and are encouraged to reinstate former architectural features where appropriate. Other structures, of merit or of group value, such as the stone walls lining the street and the Mill-pond, which contribute towards the character of the Conservation Area should be preserved and protected.

ENVIRONMENT

Spaces surrounding buildings. A basic element contributing towards the character of the area is the size and arrangement of spaces surrounding buildings. These characteristic spaces shall be maintained and enhanced where necessary by the sensitive use of indigenous materials and planting. The traditional village-sized garden should be encouraged, and of sufficient size that the house does not appear 'jammed-in'. Hard-standing for cars shall be adequate, unobtrusive and not spoil the rural character of the area.

The Street and the lanes. Good maintenance of the verges is to be encouraged, so that they retain their rural aspect. The use of hard sharp-edged objects, and unnecessary barbed wire as road or path-side furniture shall be discouraged, especially where they cause a danger. Raised kerbs should not be used to edge the roadway.

Common areas and footpaths. The local footpaths and Nutbourne Common are vital amenities and should be properly maintained. Where possible, landowners shall be encouraged to replace awkward stiles with kissing gates to provide access for less-able residents. Unnecessary barbed wire shall be discouraged (Section 164 Highways Act 1980).

Boundaries and hedgerows Planning consents must encourage boundary enclosures that are compatible with the existing character of the village. Stone walling and rustic hedgerows are preferred whilst close-boarded fencing and high hedging should generally be avoided. In accordance with West Sussex County Council land management guidelines derived from the Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (www.westsussex.gov.uk), field boundaries should not use non-native plants.

Planting and Surfaces. Existing indigenous trees and hedgerows, which are a feature of the Nutbourne landscape, should be retained and properly cared for. Where necessary Tree Preservation Orders shall be requested. Where tree felling cannot be avoided, replanting using indigenous trees should be required. Trees shall be properly cared for, and not allowed to grow where they are likely to cause damage to walls, obscure views or overshadow houses.

Landscape character. In common with West Sussex County Council land management guidelines derived from the Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (www.westsussex.gov.uk), landowners shall be encouraged to maintain the historic and ancient hedgerows and not use non-native species.

Infrastructure

Services. In order to avoid damage to the environment, or to ancillary features, effective consideration shall be given towards the infrastructure such as water, electricity, foul sewers and access.

Street furniture. Any essential road improvement schemes, including street furniture, shall be designed and sited so as to cause the minimum visual impact on the street scene.

Overhead lines. Efforts shall be made to replace the obtrusive overhead lines by underground cables.

Traffic. The lack of an appropriate speed limit in the village centre is of concern and some form of traffic-calming measure would be welcomed.

Street and house lighting. To preserve the night sky (and reduce the use of carbon fuel), the village and its environs shall remain without street lighting. Where external private lighting is used, it is recommended that this should be of low intensity and fitted with automatic controls.

Plans

Planning Applications. In order to demonstrate how a planning application, or an outline planning application meets these criteria, proposals must clearly show 'street elevations' with detailed proposed dimensions. They should show how any buildings sit relative to adjacent properties in order to assess fully the impact on those properties and the area in general.

Plans. Developers shall provide a clear and detailed statement on how they plan to meet the appropriate Guidance Criteria.

Planning Controls. In granting any planning application that complies with the above criteria, the Council shall consider incorporating appropriate planning conditions to restrict and control the disruption to neighbours and the lanes during the period of the site development.

In Conclusion

So this is Nutbourne, our Nutbourne, as we the residents and our District Council see it, and as we wish it to continue. The guidelines we have set out represent our ideals and aspirations for this small but ancient “Hamlet”. By adhering to them we anticipate that any planners or developers will preserve this special corner of Sussex for future generations to enjoy as we do.

We wish to thank Horsham District Council, West Sussex County Council, Pulborough Parish Council, and the residents of Nutbourne for their opinions, input, support and advice in the preparation of this document.

This Village Design Statement was endorsed by Horsham District Council as interim planning policy for use in the assessment of planning applications within Nutbourne (as defined on the map on page 2) in August 2006.