

# *Stoke Bruerne*



## *Village Design Statement*

ADOPTED MARCH 2017



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*This Village Design Statement was  
co-ordinated by a committee of members  
of the Parish Council and Village Residents.*

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This document can also be accessed via the  
Stoke Bruerne Parish Council website at: [http://  
www.stokebruerneparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.stokebruerneparishcouncil.org.uk)

# Foreword

**A**VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT (VDS) is a document which will enable the residents of Stoke Bruerne to have a say in the future development of the village and the surrounding environment, to protect areas of historical or special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. The main aim of the Village Design Statement is to enable us to have a say in the effects of future building development and the visual impact on the village.

This document was adopted by South Northants District Council on 22nd March 2017 as a Supplementary Planning Document that will cover Stoke Bruerne Village and the whole of the parish. when assessing any future planning applications. Also for any resident when alterations are considered to their existing property.

## Why we need to manage change

**P**LANNING PERMISSION over the last years has not been necessary for alteration to older properties in the village. The owners had their say, and carried out the work. Planning permission for new development is necessary but the Local Authority Planning Committee make the decisions on what can be built, where building can take place, materials used for the build and the design of the building. The Parish Council are asked for their opinion

on Planning Applications but it is only that. The Local Authority make the final decisions.

Buildings in the past have predominantly been made of natural materials including stone, slate and local made bricks, in styles suiting the environment of the village. This is how we would like to see development to continue in the future.

Parts of Stoke Bruerne are covered by the Stoke Bruerne Conservation Area and a section of the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area.

Outside the Conservation Area there are a number of buildings which are noted as being of special interest, and fields of Middle Age ploughing which are evident by their characteristic 'Ridge and Furrow', but are too widely spread to be included in it.

In 2015, the community of Stoke Bruerne were asked to complete a questionnaire about the village covering a number of topics ranging from potential housing developments and housing stock to community engagement and priorities for the village. 156 questionnaires were delivered with a 44% return rate. The results of this questionnaire have been used to influence the narrative in this document and the recommendations made within.

For further information see:

South Northamptonshire Council

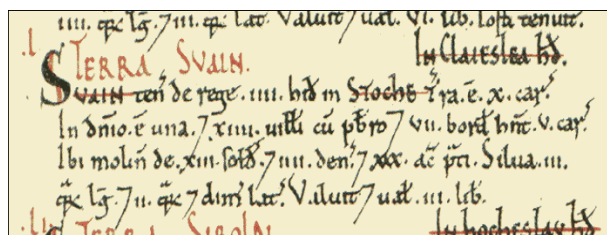
Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

<http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/690.htm>

# History

Long before Stoke Bruerne became a busy waterway village, life as mentioned in The Domesday Book was completely different. It consisted of 22 households comprising of 14 villagers and seven smallholders, with a value to the Lord of the Manor in 1066, of three pounds.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Stoke Bruerne was well established in an enlarged S shape between the church and a local stream, based on a farming community, but with lace-making an important



*Copy of entry in the Domesday Book*

local industry, even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one third of the females in the village were lace-makers.

When the canal arrived at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it cut the village in two resulting in a realignment of the old road and the building of a humped backed bridge over the canal in the centre of the village. Between 1800 and 1850 Blisworth and Stoke Bruerne were said to be two of the busiest inland ports in the country. The two villages were linked by a horse drawn tramway which carried freight over Blisworth Hill until the tunnel, which enters Blisworth Hill a short distance outside the village along

the towpath at the Northern end of the village, was completed in 1805.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural employment steadily declined and the local brickfield, now a nature reserve, which also generated local employment ceased production in the 1920's. The heavy freight traffic on the canal has also long since gone, but in recent times this has been replaced by an increasing flow of leisure craft which has given a new lease of life to the village.

There are still a number of attractive limestone cottages in the village surviving from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, some with thatched roofs. There are also red brick buildings with a characteristic Flemish bond, which appeared with the advent of the canal.

At the bottom of the hill the road bends sharply to the double arched canal bridge, revealing an attractive view Northward of the canal top lock, the adjacent dry lock and the Museum canal



side cottages which face the 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched Boat Inn public house. For a good proportion of the year the central part of the village is buzzing with visitors who come to walk along the canal side and visit the shops and Museum.



From the East the road drops more gently passing the three storey Rookery House, with a listed Giant Sequoia, facing its converted farm buildings (one of the Duke of Grafton’s model



farmsteads), built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beyond the farm the road forks beside a small green and a terrace of attractive stone Victorian gabled cottages. The road to the right (Mill Lane) has

cottages built tight to the road edge and ends in a footpath called ‘The Ridings’. The road through the village continues to the canal bridge mentioned earlier.

Stoke Bruerne has remained a relatively small village despite its popularity, with a few modern properties, mainly in buff brickwork built on infill plots, which have not detracted from the



fairly intimate character of the village settlement. There are also a number of mature trees to enhance the village setting with a particularly striking group of Lombardy Poplars next to the Museum.

Much of the village is covered by the Conservation Area (see map page 18) except Bakers Lane. There are a number of listed buildings in the village including the Church and Museum, along with a number of buildings of special interest. All the locks leading up to the village are listed, including the canal bridge and the South portal of the Blisworth tunnel.

# Landscape

The buildings within the existing conservation area are a mixture of dwellings and business premises, with those centred adjacent to the canal, principally built of limestone under slate or thatch.

On the eastern side of the canal the canal museum and café is housed in a former mill,



*Spice of Bruerne and canal-side cottages*

attached to a limestone terrace of three fine cottages. Next to the terrace on the south side is a detached brick built property with attractive brickwork to the gable end. This building is now used as an Indian restaurant. On the opposite side of the canal lies the 'Boat Inn', constructed of stone under thatch with fairly recent additions. There has been a public



*The Boat Inn*

house on the site since 1864. The pub has been owned by the Woodward family since they acquired it in 1880. To the north of the inn is a brick dwelling which, in past times served as the Wharfingers House, standing on the Wharf, with an adjoining Wharf Office and coal yard.

On the lower lock, an imposing stone building, also a public house, known as the 'Navigation Inn'. This was originally owned by one George Savage: a farmer, coal merchant and brick manufacturer. The inn closed around 1854 and later reverted to farmhouse use as 'Home Farm' for many years. The property was acquired by Mansfield Brewery in the 1990's and reinstated as 'The Navigation Inn'. On the opposite side of the canal the old brick built lock-keepers cottage that is now a private dwelling, stands next to the lock ponds to the north and what remains of the old brickworks on its southern side. Local builders Messrs Chowns were the last producers of bricks on the site which closed around 1950. The site is now a nature reserve.



*The Navigation Pub*

On the west side of the canal bridge, on the left hand side, there is a pair of rendered stone cottages under thatch, while on the opposite side is a small stone built bungalow close to an attractive green opposite the Victorian stone and red brick primary school.

Surrounding the green stands the stone and thatched 'Rosebud Cottage', reputedly one of



*The Green and thatched cottages*

the most photographed dwellings in the county, adjacent to the listed Dower House probably the oldest dwelling in the village. On the other side of the green is Hoperidge Cottage, a white painted stone constructed property under a rare cedar tiled roof.

Bakers Lane strikes off to the left just before the green where on both sides are found houses built of brick in the seventies. Those on the east side were erected on land previously occupied by stone-built barns which were part of the Home Farm buildings destroyed by fire around 1972.

Bakers Lane rises gently and as it curves to the right past a mixture of older stone and modern brick structures, one of which was erected on

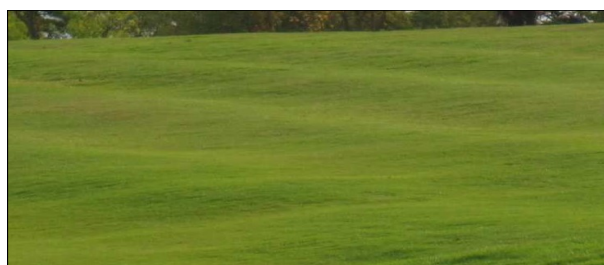
the site of the old bakery, eventually leading to Church Lane where a left turn at the top leads to a substantial modern house standing in extensive grounds known as 'Happylands'. It is said that before the great plague the village was



*The Church of St. Mary the Virgin*

clustered around The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, and at the height of the plague residents, fearing the disease emanated from the graveyard, decamped down the hill to where the village centre now stands. Happylands stands on part of the site of the old village; several derelict cottages remained on the site and were levelled when the new property was built.

The church is Grade II listed, dating from around the 12th century with restoration work carried out in 1853 by Edmund Francis Law, and further restoration in 1901. The church and



*Ridge and Furrow ploughing*

cemetery are adjoined to a 'Ridge and Furrow' field which was once a Glebe Meadow now used as the Church car park. Other examples of 'Ridge and Furrow' fields can be seen around the village, which is the result of a system of Mediaeval ploughing used in the Middle Ages.

On the opposite side of the lane one of the original cottages was occupied by a Miss Peppercorn. A modern house now standing in its place is named after her. Returning down the lane, it is said that in un-consecrated ground near the gate to St Marys Church is buried the body of a murderer from Shutlanger.

A Victorian brick built village hall, previously known as the reading room, is found on the right hand side further down from the church.



*The Village Hall, formerly the Reading Room*

The lane terminates at the junction with Bridge Road where there is a cluster of modern dwellings, among which is the Victorian village primary school standing next to the stone School House of the same period. On the other

side of the road is the imposing Bruerne House, currently undergoing major renovation and standing in extensive grounds, with views over the village and the Grand Union Canal. The road out of the village to the west towards the village of Shutlanger is a mixture of mostly post-war dwellings.

Immediately to the west of the church is Wentworth Way, a cul-de-sac of ex-local authority dwellings, beyond which is a public recreation field with a football pitch and playground owned and maintained by Stoke Bruerne Parish Council.

To the east of the canal the dwellings are a mixture of stone and brick construction erected at various times from the eighteenth century onwards. Chapel Lane bears the name of the brick chapel now used as a shop and ice cream parlour. There are stone and brick houses here and maisonettes reserved for the elderly. Rookery Lane too has a mixture of dwellings. Rookery Farm House is a large listed property with a protected Sequoia, or Giant Redwood, tree planted in the front garden. The tree was planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Several 1970's detached houses have been built on what was land and orchard belonging to Rookery Farm. Next door stands the old dairy now converted to a large chalet style bungalow with extensive paddocks attached. On the opposite side of the road the old farm buildings have been converted to modern living accommodation.

The village of Stoke Bruerne is situated 7 miles south of Northampton and 4½ miles south-east of Towcester. It is bordered to the east by Ashton, west by Shutlanger, north by Blisworth



and Roade and finally by Grafton Regis and Alderton to the south. It is situated on rising ground above the Tove valley at the top of a flight of locks on the Grand Union Canal, and its landscape is characterised by undulating farmland sloping gently to the east. The land cover is a typical combination of arable and pasture farming.

It is a rural settlement with the Grand Union Canal running through the village from north to south. It has a number of transport links and is in close proximity to the A5 and the M1 junction 15.

Woodland cover, fields and trees and hedgerows provide cover across the majority of this landscape with a concentration of woodland to be found at Stoke Park, and again adjacent to the canal corridor.

The biodiversity of the village varies. There are underlying landforms, soil conditions, land

use and hydrology. Manmade features such as The Grand Union Canal and the Brick Pits are further evidence of the diverse landscape.

The housing in the area reflects the local underlying geology. This is evident with the traditional characteristics within the properties; which are locally sourced limestone and bricks from the local brickyard, which is now a nature reserve. The houses along the canal are mostly of brick formation, while the limestone



properties are located in the more historic part of the village. This gives a more harmonious feel to the buildings which needs to be maintained.

Mill Lane or Wood Lane as it was once called, leads off to the right from the small triangular green at the eastern end of Rookery Lane. Many of the dwellings in the lane are of limestone construction built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; most of these, but not all, lie on the lower part of the lane. Until the early part of the last century the majority of these houses were owned by the Grafton estate until sold by auction around 1920, probably to pay death duties.



*View of Mill Lane showing a mix of local building materials*

On entry to the lane on the left-hand or west side, is a row of four cottages gable-end on to the lane. Number five, a little further up the lane, is detached with an interesting stone built bread oven extending from its gable end. Beyond is a further row of cottages facing the lane the first of which is a listed building which incorporated a butchers shop, but now wholly converted to living accommodation and recently re-thatched in long straw, one of only six thatched dwellings left in the village. This row, at the time of the Duke of Grafton's auction consisted of four dwellings, one of which was merged with another during modernisation at a later date.



*The stone-built bread oven at number five*

The detached Manor Farm occupies an imposing corner position and terminates the stone built houses on that side of the lane. The house has been extensively modernised in recent years and enjoys a tranquil rural outlook across rolling paddock land towards the canal.

A modern chalet type detached house terminates the dwellings on the west side of the lane. A gateway leads to the Riding through which a footpath provides access to Blisworth and Roade, and once led to Plain Wood which gave Mill Lane its original name.



*View from the railway bridge, Blisworth road, showing the track of Midland Junction Railway ('bread and scrat')*

The wood was cleared in the 1970s by the Turner family who farmed at Roade. From the lower east side of Mill Lane as it leaves the green, is a substantially large stone built detached house and single storey annexe with extensive attractive landscaped grounds to the rear and adjoining paddock land. This property, known as 'The Meadows', originally had a high stone

wall enclosing a stream and weeping willow trees. Further along are two adjoining cottages, one of which housed a blacksmith and the other a chimney sweep. These cottages complete the stone element of lower Mill Lane.

There are several modern brick built houses beyond, and a detached bungalow, all erected in what was once an orchard belonging to Manor Farm. Beyond these modern dwellings near the entrance to the Riding lies another stone-built property which once served as a bakery—one of two in the village. It is believed this was near the site of a windmill from which the lane’s present name was derived. The Riding was once crossed by the Midland Junction

Railway (colloquially ‘the bread and scrat’), During the construction of the railway at this point evidence was found of a Danish camp. Water supply for residents of the lower part of the village was supplied from a pump on Willetts Hill, now the cricket ground, and had to be carried from there by bucket until the farmer piped it down to the dairy at Rookery Farm, and thence to a pump in a niche on the stone wall on the lower green. This niche served till lately as a station for a telephone exchange unit until being upgraded to supply fibre optic broadband to the village.

The main approach to Stoke Bruerne from the A508, is dominated by the view in which



the church plays a major part. The church of Saint Mary the Virgin sits on top of the hill, dominating the skyline. As you continue from the A508 you have the cricket club—a typical English scene. Through the middle of the village is the Grand Union Canal, where the bridge appears to split the village into two sections.

There are numerous footpaths and two bridleways that criss-cross the village and from

these paths there are views from every angle of the village giving a great sense of the countryside.

Stoke Bruerne has become a tourist attraction over the years and some believe the canal is the heart of the village; however, it is the residents who are the heart and soul of village life and when the visitors have long departed and the seasons change it is the villagers who maintain the balance within it.



*Rookery Lane looking west with Rookery House and giant Sequoia tree*

# Highways

## Character of the Highways

### Main Highways

There are three roads that lead in and out of the village, that have varying qualities. There are two roads which lead to the busy A508: Rookery Lane is used as a main route for cars and lorries wanting to get to Towcester. There is a sign for HGV's indicating 'local traffic only' at the top of the



*Rookery Lane looking west*

road, and it is busy at peak times with cars travelling quickly down this road into the village.

Although enforcement of the new 20mph speed limit through the village is controlled under the 'Speed Watch' scheme, traffic continues to speed using the main road as a thoroughfare towards Towcester, Northampton or Milton Keynes.



*Bridge Road looking north*

Eventually, Rookery Lane changes to Bridge Road as it bends round the corner. This is where the newly implemented 20mph limit starts. There have been incidents where speeding vehicles have lost control round the corner at this point and collided with garden walls and gateways.



Bridge Road narrows before reaching the canal bridge and continues to have restricted room over the bridge itself. Two known accidents have happened on the bridge, with the most



*Stoke Bruerne C of E Primary School*

recent in 2015, costing £30,000 plus, with The Canal and River Trust funding the repairs. There is no parking at all on Bridge Road, but there is one disabled parking space near the bridge for use by residents and tourists alike, and often disabled visitors are forced to park in other areas adjacent to this area including double yellow lines.

As Bridge Road continues past the village green and the school, it becomes very narrow and develops a slight incline before the 20mph



*Bridge Road leaving the village towards Shutlanger*

changes back to 30mph. The incline and narrowing here is a potential hazard, particularly as there is a bend near the primary school which is most dangerous when approaching from the west. The road then leads out of the village towards Stoke Park, Shutlanger and Blisworth at a cross roads.



*Grafton Road known locally as The Greenway*

### Minor Highways

There are a number of roads which lead off the main highway through the village: Mill Lane, Chapel Lane, Bakers Lane, Church Lane and Wentworth Way. Bakers Lane is a through road and the others are dead ends. They represent various periods in time from 1800's

to 1980's. These offer various widths of road, but are predominantly narrow. Wentworth Way and Chapel Lane have capacity for turning, but Mill Lane and Church Lane have minimal capacity for vehicle manoeuvres. There are varying conditions of road surface on these roads.

### Pavements

There are a variety of pavements through Stoke Bruerne. Most are tarmac and of standard width. However, there are areas that are significantly narrower - predominantly on Mill



*Entrance to church showing raised verge otherwise known as 'The Pitching'*

Lane and sections of Bridge Road past Bruerne House. None of the roads in Stoke Bruerne have pavements on both sides consistently. Bakers Lane, Stoke road and Stoke Park road have no pavements on either side of the road. Church Lane has a raised verge, rising to the church and falling away. The grass verges within the village confines are regularly maintained by the Parish Council.

### Parking

Parking for residents is achieved in a number of ways. A number of houses have off-road parking



*Canal Bridge built with local stone and bricks.*

for one or more cars, others use on-road parking where permits are required in Bakers Lane, Mill Lane, Chapel Lane and sections of Bridge Road, which have to be paid for by the residents. Rookery Lane and Bridge Road have double yellow lines throughout the residential areas and Wentworth Way is signposted residents only. These restrictions pose difficulties for residents due to low number of spaces and cost of permits, and large numbers of visitors accessing tourist attractions putting pressure on availability of parking.

There are three car parks: at the Navigation Pub, the museum (accessed from Chapel Lane), and in front of the Church, in Bridge Road. A further field is opened at times of high visitor numbers. There are also parking facilities at the local restaurants.

Most of the village has double yellow lines to prevent parking overload. However, it has been widely reported that visitors to the village park on these lines and other inappropriate spaces such as grassed areas. On regular occasions, traffic wardens are requested to come and place tickets on these cars but this is not always possible. Many villagers have expressed a wish for further traffic calming.

### **Open Green Spaces**

There are five in all; two at the end of Rookery Lane with seats on each, one on the canal side next to the museum with picnic tables, a small one at the bottom of Bakers Lane, known locally as ‘Bakers Lump’—and another opposite the school which is bounded by posts and chains marking its boundary with Bridge Road. There is also a bench here that is used by parents

during school-time, and is popular with tourists alike.

There is also a small area at the bottom of Mill Lane on which sits another bench and a finger signpost purported to have been erected for the Festival of Britain in 1953. This is often one of the first sights seen on entering the village from the east.

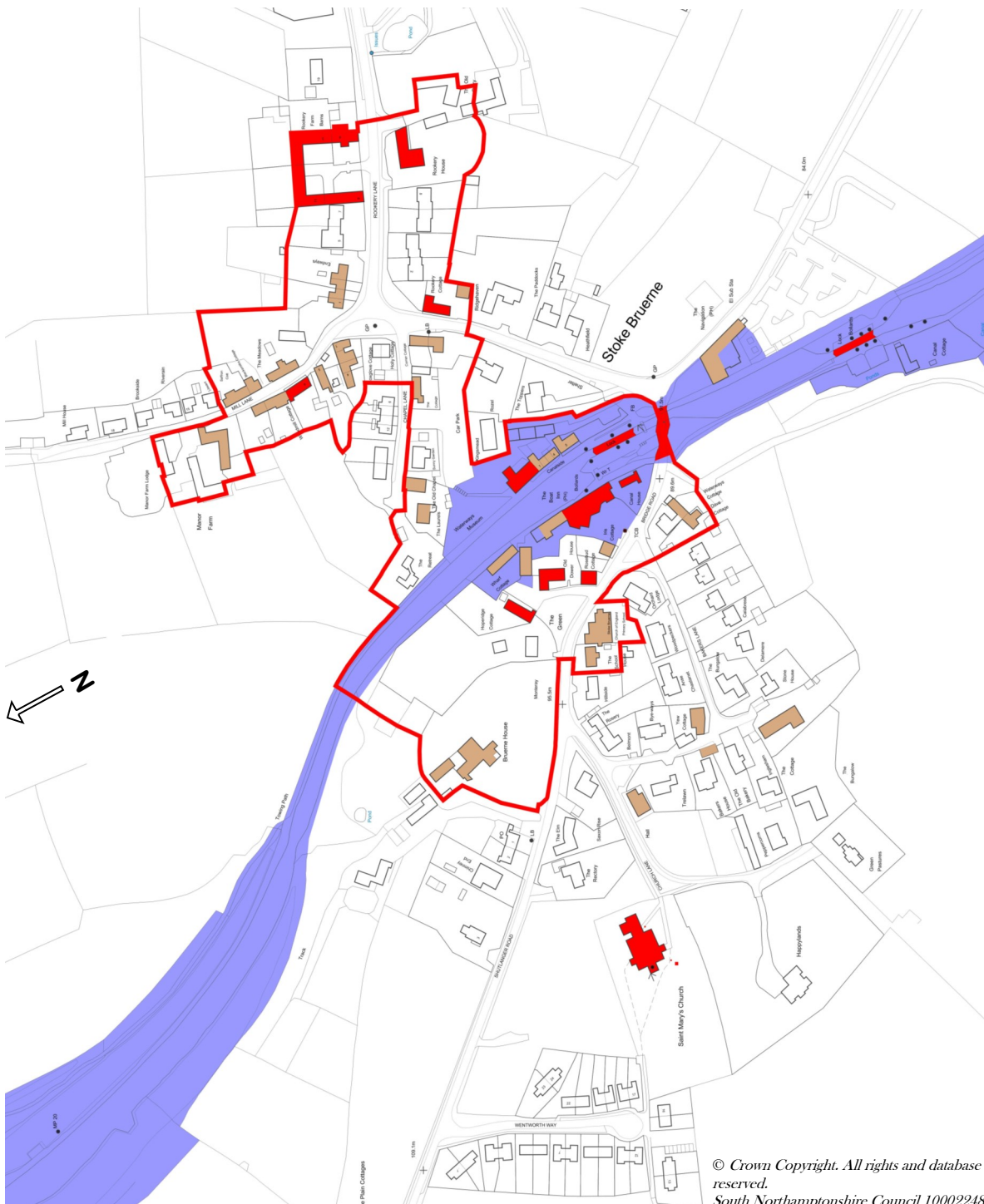
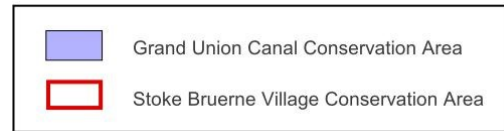
The museum green is only accessed on foot from either the towpath or the tourist car park. This was formed with the closure of the loading dock in times when canal traffic was at its industrial peak. There are a number of benches here, and this spot forms the centre of village festivities such as the Summer Family Festival and the Village at War Weekend.



*'Bakers Lump'*

# Conservation Area

Stoke Bruerne has a large Conservation Area through which is The Grand Union Canal Conservation Area.



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# Furniture



*Grade II listed post box*



Interspersed through the village are a number of benches with the largest cluster at the bottom of Mill Lane and on the green opposite. There are a further two to be found on the village green opposite the school. Each bench has either a stone or concrete base and are predominantly made of wood with some having metal or concrete structures. The exception to this is the round bench outside of the church that is made solely of metal and is fully circular around a tree. There are many stories associated with this tree and bench! The benches are in varying condition, while all are serviceable, some have been maintained in a better condition than others.

Traditional lampposts are spaced throughout the village and have recently been replaced with LED lightbulbs that have changed the quality of the light in the village. There are two post boxes in the village servicing the two ends of the village. These are traditional post boxes mounted in walls/pillars at the edge of now residential properties. There are a number of litter bins throughout the village in various states of repair. These are traditional styled in keeping with the village. There is one phone box outside The Boat inn. This is a traditional red phone box made from a combination of metal and wood. It has a working public phone in it and is in the conservation area.

There are two locations for accessing the public bus—at the end of Wentworth Way and on Bridge Road before the road bends over the canal bridge. At Wentworth Way





*Unconsecrated grave of a local murderer*

there is a new styled metal bus stop on the road as it leaves the village towards Shutlanger, the opposite side has a metal sign. At the other end of the village there is a traditional stone bus stop with concrete tiles and a bench inside. There is a metal bus sign on the opposite side of the road. The War Memorial, situated in the churchyard, is purported to be the first to have the inscription of a female WWI army nurse on it.



*Bus shelter constructed of local stone*



*Grade II listed War Memorial*



*Grade II listed telephone box-still in use*

# Community

**There are a number of community facilities, active groups and businesses within Stoke Bruerne, namely:**

**Canalside**—The Canal and River Trust manage the Canalside attractions including the Museum and café, and all maintenance issues relating to the Canal, assisted by The Canal Partnership and The Friends of the Museum. In addition there are Morris Dancers, a Blacksmith, a Stained Glass studio and two very popular Public Houses/ Restaurants which attract many visitors.

**Cricket Club**—Cricket has been played on the cricket field since 1950. The land was purchased from a local farmer and the club members raised sufficient funds to build the pavilion. The Club, despite others in the area, is still thriving and continues to offer a sporting facility to local residents and players from neighbouring villages and towns.

**Local Groups**—Greyhound Rescue (charity fund raising by residents).

Walking Group - health walks led by a local resident.

**Parish Council**—Comprises 7 elected Councillors who represent the local residents. The Parish Council's key purpose is to look after village facilities and assets and also act as Consultees for South Northants Council on a variety of local issues.

**Primary School**—Our local school represents one of the smallest schools in the county and as such has joined with other local small schools to form a federation managed by one Head teacher. It is currently fully-subscribed and has been judged as Good by OFSTED.

**Recreation Field**—A good sized field has been set aside for many years for use mainly as a football pitch. More recently the Parish Council have

funded the addition of a play facility comprising a number of pieces of play equipment at the top end of the field, this is well used during good weather.

**St Mary's Church**—This is an integral part of the village community and has seen many generations of local families christened and married there, attending many services and finally being buried in the Churchyard. There is an active Church community that raises funds to help maintain the Church and many local people volunteer their help with this. A monthly newsletter *GRASS* is produced and distributed by volunteers.

**Village Hall**—Previously the Reading Room, was built in 1878 as part of the Stoke Park Estate. It was purchased for the residents of the village and kept as a community room when it was feared that it was going to be developed.

A committee was formed to manage the hall and these members all donated along with Mr Taylor, to keep the hall and the Parish Council was appointed Trustees and thus holds the Deeds.

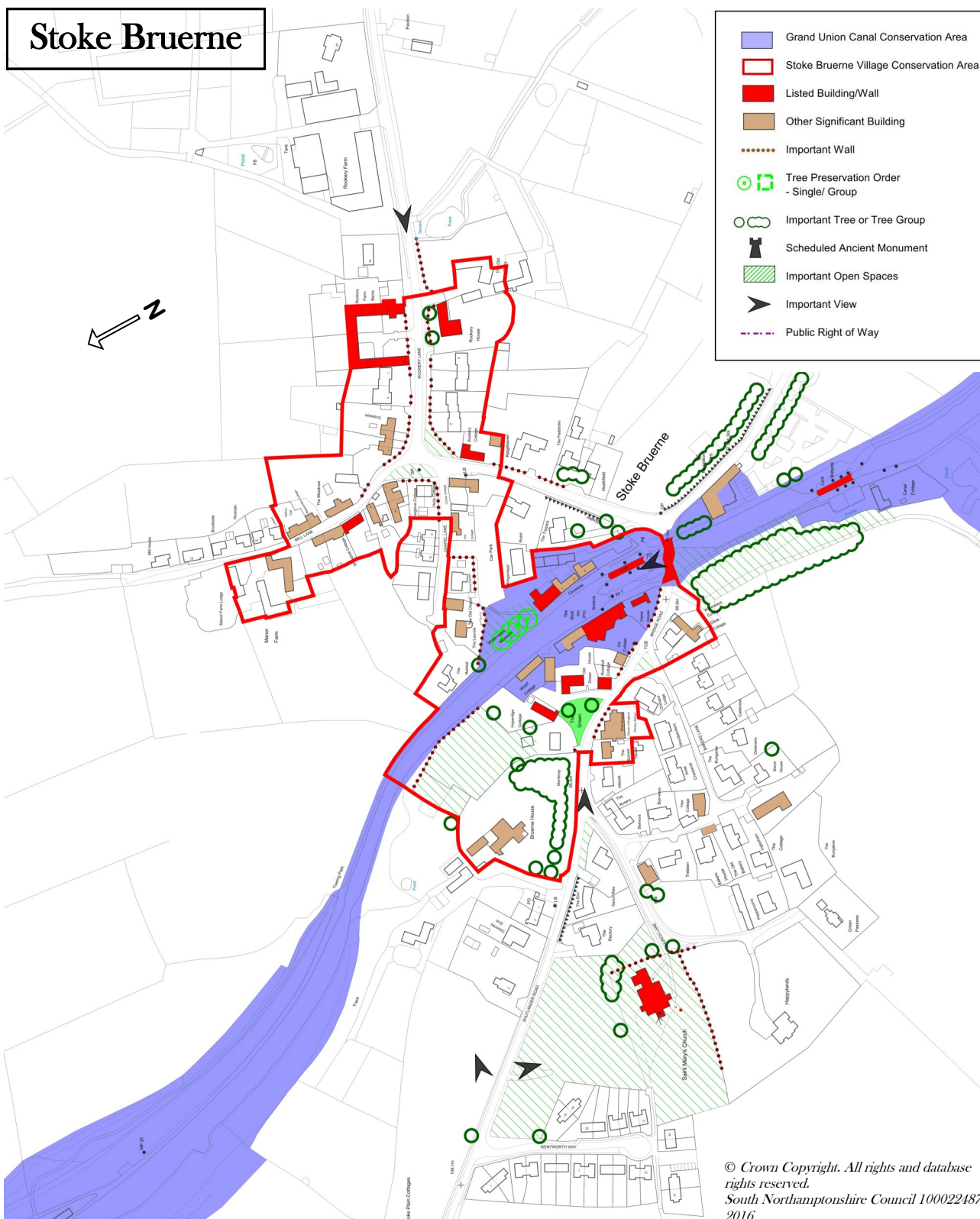
Whilst there is a Management Committee, it is up to them to manage the hall and its use. Over the years it has been used by many clubs, *i.e.* WI, Girl Guides, Flower Shows, Table Tennis and Youth Club. Also the Doctor held a surgery there and a mobile Post Office counter. Currently the School uses it for before and after school clubs, Parish Council meetings, coffee mornings and various fund raising events. The Committee aim to undertake various repairs and upgrading each year.

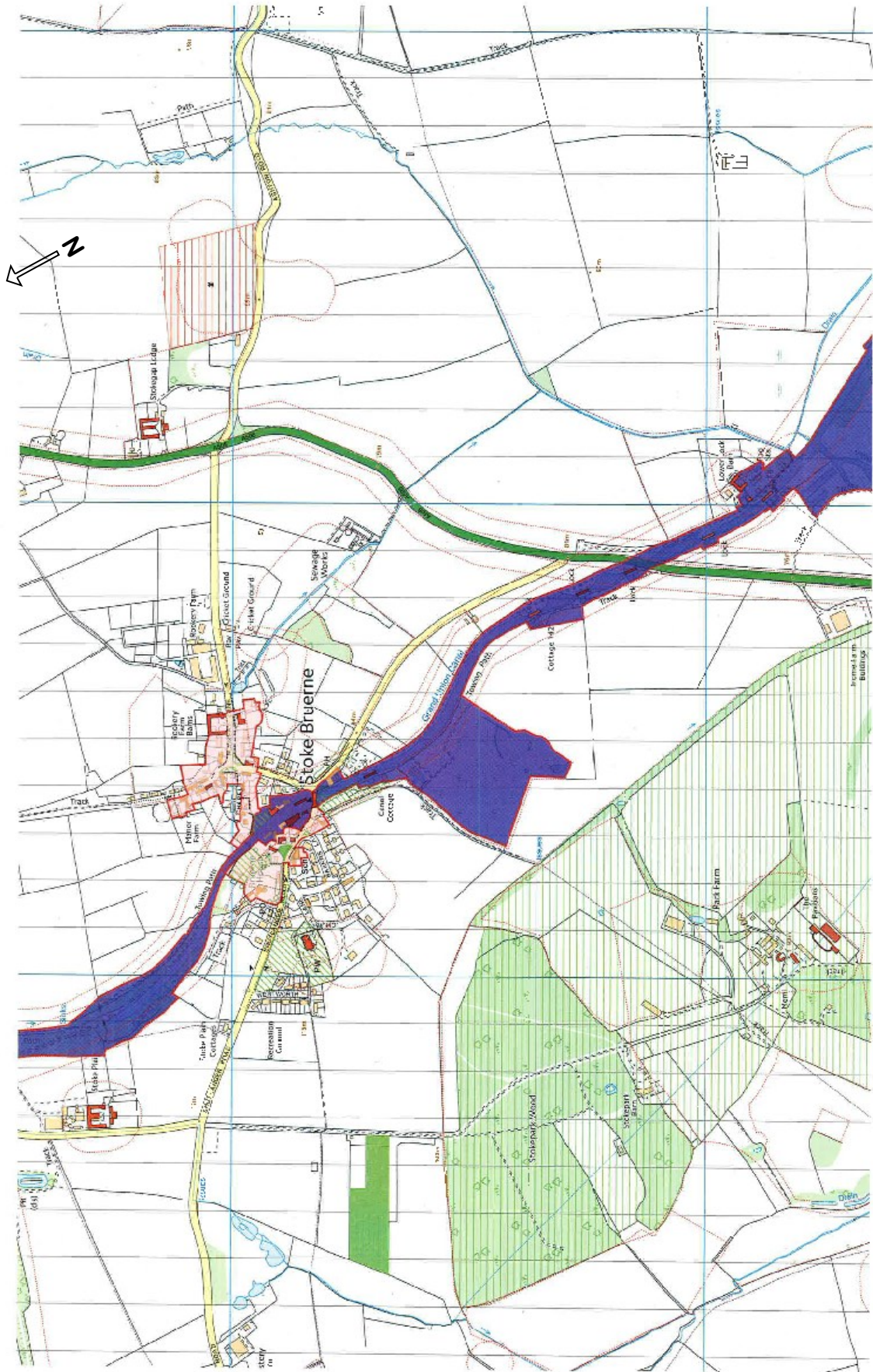
**Visiting Businesses**—Mobile shop.

Mobile Fish & Chip van visits weekly.

Mobile Library visits the 2nd Wednesday each month.

# Maps





**The Parish of Stoke Bruerne**

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# Analysis

## 1. VILLAGE REPRESENTATION

1.1 44% of villagers filled out the survey which was a good return rate.

1.2 They were asked to include information about their household and of the survey results returned, of the 44%, forty eight of the villagers were 60 or over; ten were minors aged 0-17 and sixty three were aged between 18-59. This demonstrates there is a wide spread of ages within the village. The village appeals to families with children of all ages and also to an older population, many of which have lived here most of their lives.

**1.3 These views represent the whole of the village and reach beyond the conservation area.**

## 2. COMMUNITY SPACES

### Research Findings

2.1 22% of the villagers are retired so the mobile services, such as the mobile library, shop and fishmonger are welcomed for those who do not drive. 78% of villagers expressed a preference for a general shop which would further improve these services.

2.2 The parish council, with the help of a 50% Lottery grant, provided equipment for the playing field designed by Wicksteed Park for toddlers to teens. Some of it is suitable for the disabled.

### *Development Guidelines*

*Further equipment for the playing field can be provided when funds permit.*

## 3. ADDITIONAL HOUSING

### Research Findings

3.1 Villagers are keen to preserve the look and feel of Stoke Bruerne and therefore, 34% of villagers felt the village was big enough

3.2 In addition to this, despite there being no redundant farm buildings in the village, the strength of feeling to keep with traditional builds is demonstrated by the fact that 87% of villagers surveyed preferred the conversion of redundant buildings.

3.3 If additional housing was necessary, 56% of people were in favour of affordable housing for first-time buyers and villagers wishing to downsize to stay in the village. 45% asked for small affordable family homes.

3.4 81% were concerned housing development would have a negative impact upon village character and 25% would prefer infill only.

3.5 Despite part of the village being in a conservation area, 54% are concerned over the design of the properties.

### *Development Guidelines*

*Any further development needs to be reflective of the character of the village and the location, density, form and layout of the existing development. Infill and the conversion of redundant buildings should ideally be considered as a first option. Any future development within the village confines should respond positively to the established character of the village and local characteristics.*

*Development within the village confines should not alter the feel of the village in any way (see SNC Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan). Any additional housing should reflect the characteristics of the traditional design of the village inside and outside the conservation area.*

*This would include:*

- *Be in keeping with the limestone and brick.*
- *Grey slate, look-alike roof, or thatch.*
- *Mixture of housing sizes.*
- *Roof height in keeping with nearby buildings.*
- *Open frontage, front and rear gardens.*
- *Adequate off street parking.*
- *Chimney stacks where possible.*
- *Dry stone wall where possible.*

*Stoke Bruerne is a rural setting - high walls and hedges around properties, and concrete post fencing detract from this character. A more open aspect, with views of houses and gardens from the roads, should be preserved.*

*The rural enclosure around the village forms one of the most important characteristics of Stoke Bruerne. Any new building or extension including garages and converted outbuildings must relate to both its setting and to the street scene. It must be clearly demonstrated that it has not been considered in isolation.*

*Wherever possible, new development should reflect the existing density of building within the village, with careful consideration given to the special relationship of surrounding buildings.*

*Each dwelling should have adequate space for off-street parking.*

*Kerbside bins should be suitably screened .*

## 4. ENVIRONMENT

### Research

4.1 Light pollution from exterior security lights on houses can be a matter of concern, both in terms of safety for road users and neighbourliness. Energy efficiency is a matter of national and local concern. The village street lighting has been made more environmentally friendly by changing to low energy bulbs which fade between 11.00p.m. and 5.00a.m.

### *Development Guidelines*

*Individuals should be encouraged to adapt to energy saving and alternative sources. Solar panels and wind turbines should be installed so as not to be seen from the road, especially in the conservation area, to avoid adverse visual impact. Any further street lighting would need to be traditional in form and meet this specification while being sensitive towards light pollution issues. Such structures are welcome features unless unacceptably intrusive.*

## 5. EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

### Research

5.1 Stoke Bruerne has distinct areas of property age and style (as outlined in this document and the SNC Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan). It is important that extensions throughout should blend with the original building in terms of design. Alterations should include consideration of windows and door style and material, particularly on the older properties.

### ***Development Guidelines***

*Alterations and extensions should:*

- *Follow existing guidelines in the SNC Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan throughout the whole of the village in terms of matching materials and features.*
- *Ensure any alteration blends with the original in proportions, style and roof pitch.*
- *Be compatible with the original stonework to all elevations on stone-built properties, and rear appearance should reflect the materials of adjoining properties. Rear extensions should not protrude excessively.*
- *Doors and windows should be in similar materials and colours, and in keeping with the style of adjacent properties.*

## **6. HIGHWAYS**

### **Research**

6.1 89% of villagers' main means of transport is a car and therefore sufficient off-road parking would need to be made available for any development.

6.2 68% are concerned over traffic volume and speed. Calming devices in place are already ineffective and existing roads wouldn't cope. Further to this, 51% villagers are concerned about the environmental impact of an increase of cars.

### ***Development Guidelines***

*Greens and open spaces are important part of the village and additional open spaces should be encouraged.*

*The un-kerbed country lane approaches to the village are important rural features and should not be materially altered. Any proposals for development along these roads should be carefully considered to ensure that the un-kerbed rural nature of the roads with grass verges and hedges is preserved wherever possible. Just as importantly the use of kerbing should be avoided, in order to maintain the rural character of these lanes.*

*Careful consideration needs to be taken when deciding where development may be as the centre of the village is already very restricted and roads are very narrow, often with only one pavement. Only shallow kerbing should be used if kerbing is essential.*

*Any future development should respect existing roads in the village as they are a distinct style, often narrow and lined with one pavement at the most (none in some areas).*

*New footpath development should:*

- *Be incorporated into any new housing developments, and linked to existing footpath network with minimal kerbing.*
- *The village centre and developed areas, should be accessible to push chairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.*
- *The pathways should be maintained to a high standard.*

*New road development should take into account the following:*

- *There should be a minimum of road signs commensurate with safety, to reduce street clutter and avoid urbanisation.*
- *Traffic calming and parking control measures should be aesthetically pleasing, eg: no concrete bollards.*
- *The need to ensure that adequate off-road street parking is provided with the curtilage of a dwelling and within view of routinely inhabited buildings.*
- *Traffic lights do not fit in with the village design.*

## 7. UTILITIES

### Research

7.1 At the time of the survey, the internet speed for the village was slower than required (broadband) but since then it has been upgraded to fibre optic.

7.2 Most of the houses in the village are heated by oil 57% or open fires 32% because there is no mains gas in the village. Chimneys and oil tanks are a common feature in the village and need to be aesthetically pleasing and placed in appropriate places.

7.3 There is a limited bus service from Northampton to Towcester, via the village. There is also the X4 on the weekend which goes to MK to encourage tourists to come to Stoke Bruerne. 34% of villagers say they would like more routes and improved frequency.

7.4 In the SNC Conservation Area plan it was identified that some over-head cables obstruct the view.

### ***Development guidelines***

*Chimneys should be a feature of new houses.*

*Every opportunity should be sought to place existing intrusive overhead utility cables underground (both for new development and replacement).*

## 8. LANDSCAPE

### Research

8.1 The results of the village survey out-rightly show that preserving green areas; places of historical significance; views of surrounding countryside; trees; wildlife habitats and the canal corridor were all of high importance.

8.2 73% villagers were in favour of extending the existing conservation area in order to protect the village landscape.

### ***Development Guidelines***

*Important views coming into and going out of the village should be respected. These spaces are important as they separate the village from Roade, Shutlanger and the A508. These fields, their hedgerows and trees should be conserved and maintained.*

*The church of St Mary dominates the skyline when approached from the A508. This view should be respected.*

*Conserve hedgerows and trees in the existing landscape and seek opportunities to increase these.*

*New development should not compromise the open nature of the countryside within the parish.*

*Development, whether in the conservation area or not should be of a sympathetic nature and in keeping with the look and feel of the village as outlined in this document and the SNC Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.*

## 9. STREET FURNITURE

### Research

9.1 Items of street furniture in the village are in need of repair. The paint on litter bins is peeling and some of the benches are in need of maintenance. The traditional telephone box needs some care to bring it back to good decorative order.

9.2 68% of villagers are already concerned about litter in the village.

### ***Development Guidelines***

*Litter bins and seating should be of a traditional nature, in keeping with those already present.*

*The up-keep and addition of any bins and litter collecting services would be welcomed.*

*Post boxes should remain as they are and the telephone box renovated to keep it in good decorative order.*

## 10. BUSINESSES

### Research

10.1 There are many businesses within Stoke Bruerne and, although most of them rely on income from the tourist trade, the villagers have strong feelings about how they impact upon village life.

10.2 Most of the current businesses attract large numbers of tourists in the summer months and some are then closed the rest of the year.

10.3 The village has a cafe, two public houses plus an Indian restaurant. In addition to this, there is a canal museum, blacksmith and stained glass studio.

10.4 Most of the businesses have small car parks nearby but the capacity for the demand is not always available.

10.5 50% of villagers were not aware of the Canal Partnership 10 Year Plan document which shows communication could be improved.

### ***Development Guidelines***

*Resident's business vehicles should be encouraged to use off road parking to avoid restriction of narrow roads and unsightly appearance.*

*Illuminated business signs are not in keeping with the village.*

*Any new signage must be constructed of suitable materials and of a design compatible to its location and that future development should be designed with appropriate parking.*

STOKE BRUERNE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

# Village Pictures

