

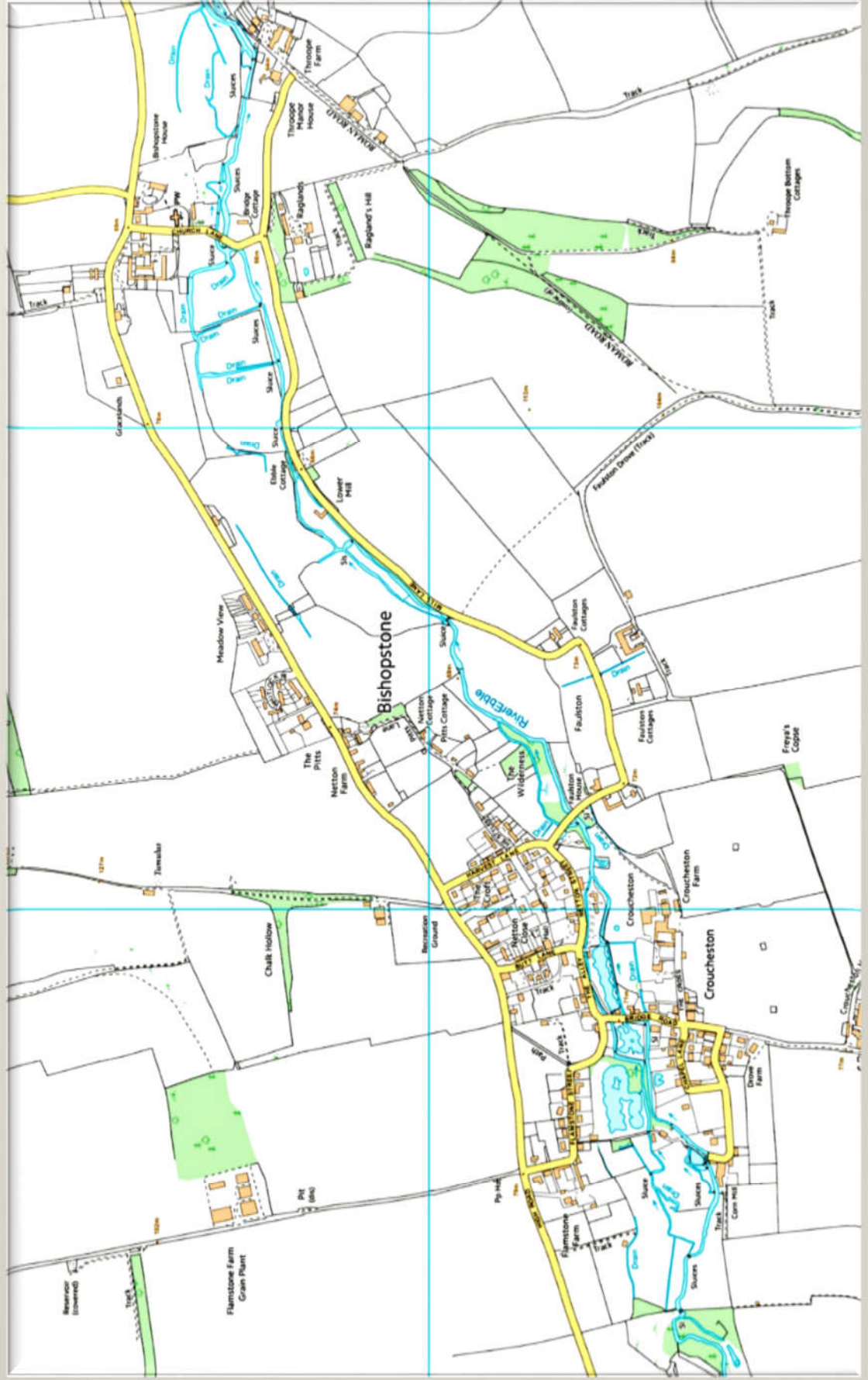
# **THE BISHOPSTONE PLAN**



**DECEMBER 2015**

### MAP OF THE VILLAGE

Note that our Bishopstone Plan embraces the whole village but does not include the 15 properties on the Blandford Road which are officially within the parish of Bishopstone



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## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Belinda Fowler of Community First, Devizes for guidance when we were deciding how this project should be handled.

We also thank all the people of Bishopstone for telling us what they like and don't like about our village as well as suggesting what needed improvement and what had to be conserved.

Importantly we are grateful to the Big Lottery Fund and to our own Parish Council for funding the production of the document.

## Photos

Thank you to Roger Stockton, Mike Ash, and Anne Stutchbury for supplying photos to illustrate this Plan.

## Steering Group Team

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is the Bishopstone Plan?

Let's face it, life is never perfect. There are things that we'd like to change, and others we'd like to stay just as they are. It's exactly the same in a village like ours: there are things that people would like to change, and others they would like to see left alone. This Plan embraces both. It's a summary of all the main issues that people are concerned about in the village – reported by the people in the village.

A Village Plan is a statement of how the local community sees itself developing over the next few years:

- it reflects the views of all sections of the community;
- it records which features and local characteristics people value;
- it identifies local issues and opportunities;
- it spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future;
- it identifies actions to deliver this vision and manage change.

## Why produce a Plan for Bishopstone?

There are bound to be changes over the next 5-10 years so we can try to make sure that they are in accordance with the wishes of residents. Successful Plans have the potential to influence a wide range of organisations and service providers whose actions affect our lives. They can identify actions for us, the local community, to undertake - as well as for others to do. They can influence the policies and decisions of other bodies, like Wiltshire Council, and are very important when seeking funding for projects in the village.

## Who drew up this Plan?

A Village Survey by the Parish Council and Village Hall Management Committee in 2011 established that almost 80% of the village were in favour of producing a Village Plan. This idea was eventually endorsed at a public meeting which led to a group of volunteers agreeing to take the idea forward. The group was not a "closed shop" so appeals and a little persuasion enabled us to have representation from all parts of the village. However, we did find it difficult to recruit ladies and youngsters to the Steering Group.



As will often be said in this Plan, it reflects the views of the community so it has not really mattered who joined the Steering Group since their job proved to be mostly "harvesters" of feedback. See the previous page for the Steering Group names.

## How has the Plan been compiled?

There's a fairly standard way of producing these plans which is to send out a questionnaire to every household, analyse the answers and produce an action plan responding to the majority view. We decided not to do that because:

- a healthy response could not be expected so soon after the Census and the Village Survey;
- studying plans from other villages clearly showed that the questionnaire was dictating the issues to be addressed;
- in research terms, questionnaires produced quantity responses but were poor at producing positive ideas.

In reality we already had a volume of data. The 2011 Census gave an inventory and all the numbers about the village. The 2011 Village Survey gave opinions from 67% of the households over a wide range of subjects. How much better then to find alternative ways of asking everyone what they like, what they wish to conserve, what needs improving and what should be changed.



# INTRODUCTION

It's taken two years to compile yet it's been time well spent in order to capture as many views as possible. It has highlighted the fact that our community is made up of individuals – people who have lived here all their life, families who specifically chose to live in the countryside, folk who desired to retire here and people who needed a home so ended up here.



Two factors shine brightly in the approach taken by those individuals - quality of life and social responsibility.

Bishopstone is a wonderful place to live and we are lucky to enjoy its landscape, tranquillity, security and friendliness. At the same time we must look to the future, tackling questions about how our young people who want to stay in the village can find a home, how we can adapt to the needs of our children as they grow up here, how to provide help and support for an ageing population and how we ensure that we are good neighbours.

So this Plan is not only about change but also about safeguarding those things that made people choose to make this their home. For it to carry weight with the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council it has been necessary to maintain proof that it is “community-led”. We are satisfied that we can show that the issues have come from the people of the village

because they include:

- issues identified at a public meeting on the plan held in October 2012;
- the views we collected at community events such as the 2013 Big Day Out;
- feedback received following our series of articles in the Parish Magazine STaB;
- discussions with groups in the village, such as the Mothers and Toddlers Club;
- the 2013 Parish Housing Needs Survey;
- replies to the short questionnaire that we delivered door-to-door in 2014;
- responses to the draft Plan delivered to every village household.

This Plan reflects the views of villagers. However it is important to avoid an unrealistic “wish list” of proposed actions. It is also necessary to take into account the statutory policies of Wiltshire Council and others that apply in our area. A list of the planning policies that apply in Bishopstone is contained on the Planning Matters page of the village website (see Appendix A).



## NEXT STEPS

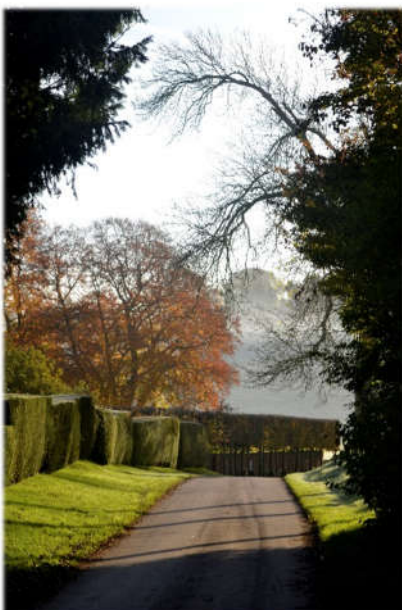
There will already have been action on a few points by the time this Plan is published. That's good because just producing a list of tasks is not going to make life in Bishopstone any better.



Volunteer action to improve footpaths in the village

We recommend that the Parish Council should accept responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the plan, producing an annual report to the village on progress, and as a result the Parish Council is recorded within the plan as being responsible for many of the actions identified. However it is not expected that the Parish Council will itself be responsible for carrying out these actions – indeed it would be unrealistic to expect them to do so – but we do see the Parish Council as being the central village body to coordinate action. It is suggested that this might best be done by the creation of a separate, volunteer-led Plan Implementation Group or Groups.

Further work is also required, for example to prepare a separate “Village Design Statement” to build on what is said in this Plan about The Built Environment and Housing, and which can be recognised by Wiltshire Council in deciding planning applications, and to deliver other action points as circumstances change.

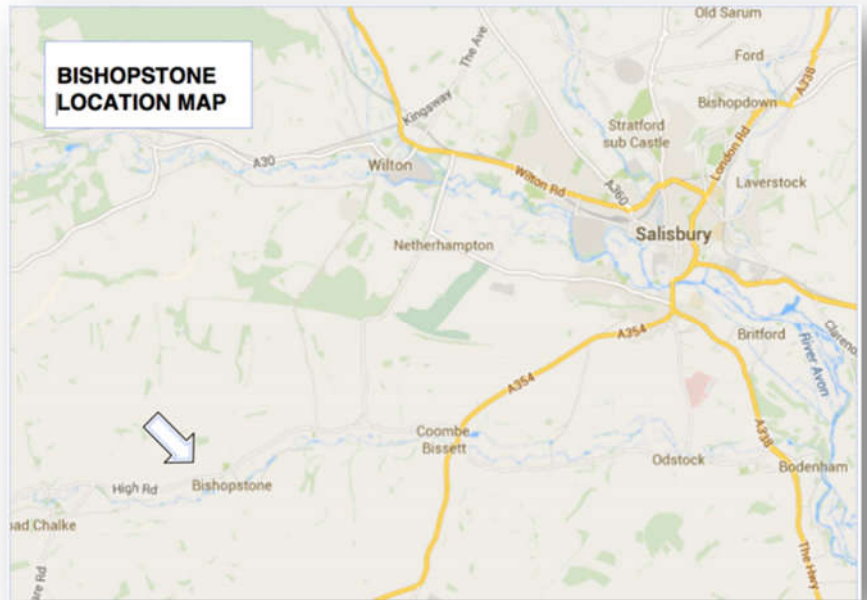


## PART 1 – ABOUT THE VILLAGE

### THE VILLAGE OF BISHOPSTONE

#### The Location

Bishopstone is situated in the Chalke Valley about 6 miles south west of Salisbury; it is rectangular in shape, 4 miles from north to south and 1.5 miles east to west. The River Ebble chalk stream and the single valley road run east/west through the village. Almost all the homes in this linear settlement are in the broad valley floor so that the inhabited village is only a sparse strip less than ½ mile south of the valley road; the valley's chalk slopes are devoted to agriculture. There is one other through road heading north to the ancient town of Wilton. On the southern boundary of the parish a major road, the A354 from Salisbury to Blandford Forum, passes close to the Hampshire and Dorset county boundaries. About 15 homes scattered along this road have not been included in this plan as they do not form a part of the main village.



#### The History

Six manors made up the parish; Bishopstone, Netton and Flamstone north of the river and Throope, Faulstone and Croucheston south of the river. Each had been a hamlet by the river with its farmland running up the valley slope. Not until the Middle Ages did the whole area become known as Bishopstone. Down by the river were grazing meadows, the lower slopes of the downs were cultivated and the upper slopes left to rough pasture. Any woodland serving the Cranborne Chase would have diminished as foresters felled it so that hardly any wooded areas were left by the late 18th century.

In the late 14th century well over 300 people lived in Bishopstone and it grew to almost 700 by the 1800's since when it declined to about 400 by 1930 but grew back to over 600 today. Until mobility improved, the villagers were mainly employed on the land and in work to support the community; 6 farms employed 162 labourers in 1851. Shoemaking began in the early 19th century and by 1869 Thomas Barter had 17 cottages for his workers with boots being sold widely around Salisbury and beyond; watercress was grown throughout the 1900's and another business that thrived in the early 20th century was the Bishopstone Wagon Works. Between the wars it grew into a building business as well as developing into making bodies for motor vehicles.

The impression of an insular society trapped in the valley is probably near the truth. Great impact must have been felt when the Roundheads took over Faulstone House as their headquarters for south Wiltshire during the Civil War. Activity increased again during the 1939-1945 war with evacuees arriving from Portsmouth, a searchlight station being built in the village and heavy activity leading up to D-Day with Americans camped in the woods over the northern ridge.

Coming up to date, those 160 farm workers from Victorian times have dropped to less than 15 and the days of mechanisation, technology and communication has brought Bishopstone to a new century.

# THE VILLAGE OF BISHOPSTONE

## **Bishopstone Today**

Bishopstone is now a lively rural village that has not suffered any major visual change since the 1960's when The Croft housing estate was built. The most noticeable characteristic that would be spotted by a stranger would be mobility. The minor valley road has over 2,500 vehicles passing by each day. Approximately 600 people are resident, yet 85% of the 280 who are employed travel out of the village to work. The children travel out too since there is no village school.

Young people travel to Salisbury and further afield for college education. Shopping also involves travel since the post office and the shop have closed. Nevertheless we are noted as a community with a good spirit and ongoing activity. The Village Hall is the best-equipped in the area making it a thriving centre for meetings, entertainment, culture and education. The Recreation Ground has been bought by the village so that a sports area and children's playground can be secured for future generations.

Visitors come to enjoy the wonderful landscape with well-maintained footpaths affording "wow" views across the open downland and visitors in large numbers pass through as they travel the flat valley road by road bike, classic motorbike and vintage car.

## **The Countryside**

The individuality of Bishopstone village is characterised by its setting in the beautiful downland of the Chalke Valley. It falls within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty so an inherent objective is to conserve and enhance the unique character, tranquillity and special qualities of the landscape.



Most of the homes and gardens in the village share a view of the landscape thereby making it the backdrop to daily living. It is also important to remember that many people living in the village do so because of the joy that the natural environment gives them.

The valley floor contains a range of landscape environments. In the west through Flamstone, Croucheston and into Netton is a mix of housing with fishing ponds and lakes. This creates a predominantly rural village character. Moving east from Harvest Lane the areas of Netton and Faulstone include small pastures, a woodland shelterbelt of poplars and then open water meadows running down to the church; this produces a contrast between the semi-enclosed feeling at Faulstone and the wide-open views further east. The eastern end of the village leading to Throope continues the open pastureland with a small concentration of housing near the church and a small copse of woodland to the north of the river.



## THE VILLAGE OF BISHOPSTONE



The valley slopes have been shaped by agricultural activity since mixed farming would have influenced the fields, tracks and hollow ways due to livestock movement. Now we see a little rough pasture on steep slopes south of the river but mostly arable production, contained within a system of extensive fields which were enlarged by hedge removal as mechanisation developed. That is also the reason for the siting of field barns at a distance from the river, in contrast to the original valley floor location of the home-farm buildings.

River and farm management have influenced the extent of wildlife to be observed through the village. Roe deer, badger, rabbit, hare, fox and grey squirrel are regularly seen but adder, stoat, weasel and others are more shy. Among the less common birds supported by the landscape are lapwing, red kite, tree sparrow, skylark, yellow wagtail and the little owl; the river supports kingfisher, heron and egret with signs of otter being present.

Of course pressures to increase arable yields eliminated many wild flowers yet they are returning in pockets right across the downs such as the access land at Faulstone Hole and where set-aside remains. The four Sites of Scientific Special Interest known as Throope Down SSSI include several important botanical specimens, notably sheep's fescue meadow oat-grass.

Access to the natural environment is important so the pattern of footpaths, bridleways, hollows and droves provides routes for residents and visitors.

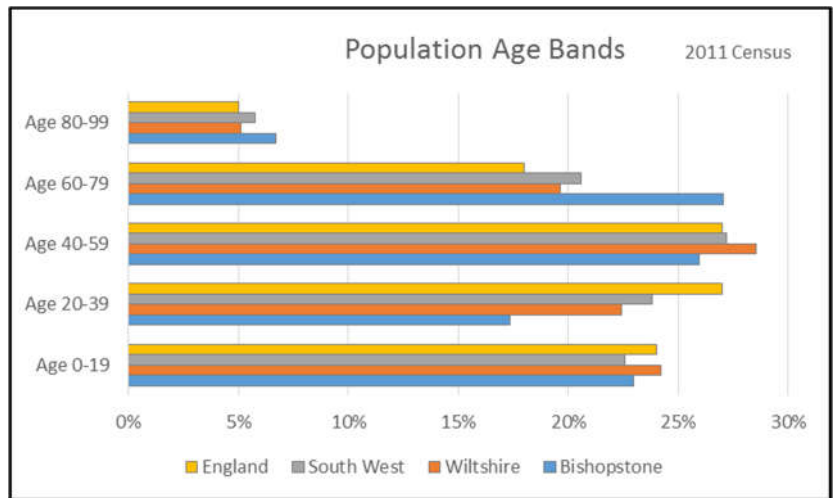


# THE VILLAGE OF BISHOPSTONE

## The People

There are 600 people living in the village, 140 young people in education, 280 going out to work and 180 at home (mothers, disabled, retired etc).

We find the typical rural village age mix illustrated in the chart on the right by comparing our village, Wiltshire, the south west of England and all of England. Children & teenagers make up about the same proportion everywhere but in early adulthood the village loses many young people and so does rural south west England to a lesser extent. This is mostly due to employment choices drawing people to where their career takes them but is also influenced by the choice of housing to go with it. From age 40 to 70 the trend reverses as careers allow some to choose to move to the rural areas. Although the actual numbers may be small the proportion of over 70's is greater in the south west and in our village. Again, Bishopstone follows the rural pattern in that most of the retired people have chosen to move to the village in later life. Clearly this background influences the community activity.



In practice the greater influences on community life come from outside. Youngsters go to various schools and colleges outside the village so they form friendships and associations outside as well as inside the village. However the Mums & Toddlers group is an important grounding. College and university then become another influence on ties to the village.

Factually there is not one community but a whole series such as neighbourly groups, friendships through shared interests, groups associated with village amenities (church, village hall, pub, recreation ground, etc) and age-related. With a small population it produces a "chain-link" effect because individuals belong to more than one group. It is perhaps why our small village has a spirit which is envied by larger parishes.



# THE VILLAGE OF BISHOPSTONE

## The Businesses

Historically the village of Bishopstone relied on agriculture. This century has opened with expansion of small businesses, self-employment and working from home; we can count ground works, double glazing, thermoplastics supply, blacksmith, building, accountants, fencing, motor repairs, insurance broker, hair stylist, heating engineer, taxi, landscaping, pet care, electrician, bespoke joinery and others so that almost 20% of the working population are self-employed. In employee terms these local businesses are small yet they illustrate that small organisations working from home or, for example, refurbished farm buildings spawn viable firms. The trend will no doubt continue as proper phone signals and broadband speeds arrive.



The landscape of the Chalke Valley with its downland cut by deep coombes, coupled with the reduction of grazing on the higher slopes has opened up the business of game bird shoots. This enterprise promotes economic activity elsewhere in the village, eg at the pub.

The White Hart inn is a traditional “local” with the added benefit of a good restaurant serving fresh food. With the number of local businesses noted above and an active retired population there should be an improving market for the pub to tap into.



## PART 2 – ISSUES AND ACTIONS

### COMMUNITY

Community means different things to different people so it's good to see that, according to the 2011 Survey, 88% of households feel part of the community and 83% of households are content with the community spirit in the village. These figures are reflected in comments received during the preparation of this plan – a strong feeling that there are enough activities and events, a large majority satisfied with the level of conservation of open spaces, rights of way, country lanes, river, trees and hedges and wildlife; ad-hoc comments also provide a clear picture that people want to conserve the real countryside village feeling.



There is much appreciation of the Bishopstone Country Fayre and support for the busy range of activities happening in the Village Hall. In order to find out what's going on, the parish magazine STaB still seems to be the most popular route with the village website an alternative as technology makes access to it more convenient.



Even in a vibrant community there is scope for improvement and innovation. Top of the agenda is youth. Any largely rural setting can sometimes be a bit dull for some young people and Bishopstone is no exception. That's not to say that there is nothing for young people – it's just that there aren't the facilities that somewhere larger would have. And young people can't easily reach local services, with no bus in the evenings and very few at weekends. So there are repeated calls for more facilities and activities for young people. Concrete action on this would make a real difference, to benefit not just the young people but the whole village. It would be great if a few folk could volunteer some time to organise and help.

## COMMUNITY

No specific demands came through for special needs of older people although it could be advantageous for the village to think about it now rather than face a problem in the future. It has been suggested that older people want to continue to live independently in their own homes whilst maintaining a positive quality of life; also that we are likely to see a larger proportion of people unable to drive. If so, the existing Chalke Valley Community Link Scheme, which provides transport for the elderly and disabled, plays an important part, but needs more volunteers. These and other questions could best be actioned by asking the older people what they need.

The Church is also viewed as an important contributor to village life with two lay pastoral assistants who are licensed by the clergy to provide pastoral support and care to those in need in the village. Financial support is also there for emergency need through the Rev George Augustus Montgomery Coal Charity.

There is a general contentment with law and order issues; however the measurable number of households that want to see more police presence and participation in Neighbourhood Watch has been well noted.

For the future it will be important to build on the strong community spirit in the village and channel that into voluntary action since Wiltshire Council cannot be relied upon to do everything. This has already been successful with regard to river clearance and footpath improvement projects. On an individual level, 14% of villagers have a disability restricting their involvement in village life and comments indicate a benefit would come from improved communication/contact and “somebody there” to be a good neighbour. We shy away from too much organisation but there is a case for a system of “Area Helpers” and a register of volunteers.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Need to conserve the rural, independent character of the village and sustain a vibrant village life	Prepare a Village Design Statement	Parish Council
	Carry through all the actions in the Bishopstone Plan	Everyone
	Maximise opportunities to promote our village character	Everyone
Need to have a channel to communicate and have contact with village residents	Introduce a system of “Area Helpers” in each section of the village to liaise between the residents and the Parish Council	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need to maintain strong communication through STaB and the village website	Encourage broader range of input into STaB by commissioning and encouraging material for publication	STaB editor
	Develop wider participation in the website by encouraging contributions for publication and promoting use of the site	Web Manager
Lack of police presence in the village	Ensure that local area policing is maintained and discuss with police team if presence can be increased	Parish Council
Need to increase participation in Neighbourhood Watch	Establish if police team would increase their support and set up a village scheme	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Lack of facilities and activities for young people	Develop a Youth Forum to speak for young people’s needs	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need to foresee the needs of older people in the community	Ask the older generation what they are lacking	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need to establish a habit of volunteering for “public realm” and self-help projects	Nurture a volunteering habit by establishing a register of volunteers	Parish Council / Implementation Group

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Bishopstone people make it clear that there is a deep appreciation of our countryside and that our tranquil, rural environment, with abundant public footpaths and quiet country droves and lanes is of enormous importance to them.

The Chalke Valley is part of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which exists to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, making it effectively equivalent in status to that of National Parks. The parish has a wide range of natural habitats for wildlife and wild flowers and contains the important Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Throope Down.

When asked about specific environmental issues the reaction seems to be one of caution – wanting to embrace progress and change but concerned that the environment may be damaged. For example 38% of households would participate in developing a sustainable energy strategy for the village but a heavy majority would oppose wind turbines or solar panel farms. The conclusion must be that a local energy policy is not an issue right now.

*The natural beauty of the landscape has regularly cropped up in feedback, making it an obvious reason why people have chosen to live here. Many of the comments paint a clear picture:*

- *quiet rural surroundings;*
- *the area is very attractive and must be defended;*
- *we must take care of the River Ebble and "watery" issues;*
- *keep landscape/AONB as unspoilt as possible.*

Occasional incidents arise like dog fouling, excessive bill-posting, fly-tipping or off-roaders damaging droves and these complaints can usually be quickly dealt with.

The River Ebble, with its associated streams, lakes, drainage ditches and water meadows, forms the "spine" of the village. Resident's feedback reflected the need for care and conservation by the people with waterways passing across their land. The floods of 2014 also demonstrated the large number of groundwater springs in the village: those floods brought home some weaknesses in our ability to cope with emergencies. The Parish Council has put in place an Emergency Plan, with identified Flood Wardens and a team of helpers to deal with flooding issues and other emergencies.



## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

For our Village Plan it's evident that caring for the natural environment is achieved through actions under other headings; for example farming practices, highway maintenance, rights of way, housing development and even the way we look after our hedges and gardens. The AONB and Wiltshire Council's policies will dictate the background for conservation. In our village it's up to us to be vigilant. A Village Design Statement can establish in more detail what needs to be conserved and protected.



THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Need to protect the natural environment, particularly when progressing other matters	Consult the AONB for practical advice	Parish Council
	Explore what should be included in a Village Design Statement	Parish Council
	Take account when commenting on planning applications	Parish Council
Need to maintain the river, waterways and land drains	Apply the Environment Agency guide "Living on the Edge" including clearing drainage ditches	Landowners
	Maintain the Emergency Response Plan	Parish Council

# THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The village has a long history, which is reflected in its buildings, walls, hedges and other man made artefacts. People want to see the historic structure of the village retained. This protection, and ensuring the appropriate design of new buildings, is through the operation of the planning system. See the Parish Council/Planning Matters section of the village website for a list of relevant policies.

## Village structure

Between the six main clusters of development that make up the village lie water meadows, fields and small paddocks that separate and define the built areas. Within the village there are small woodlands, large numbers of mature trees and narrow lanes and footpaths enclosed by high hedges. These form a “green lattice” - a natural framework within which the areas of built development are set. This is an essential component of the character of Bishopstone.



In part, the character of the village is defined by the groups of farm buildings, within, on the edge and sometimes outside the built areas. Some of these buildings are of architectural or historic importance, others may present opportunities for re-development for other uses. New farm buildings can be very large and have a major impact on the landscape. It will be important to the character of the village to ensure that the views of the surrounding downland, and particularly the skyline, remain clear of such developments by the appropriate siting of barns and other structures.

## The buildings

Historic buildings in the village include the parish church of St John the Baptist, Throope and Faulstone Manor Houses, Bishopstone House and a number of former farm houses and traditional cottages. Smaller houses and cottages are mostly constructed of local materials - bonded brick, sometimes used with stone, flint and cob - creating a sense of close harmony with their landscape setting. The use of banding of brick and flint is common throughout the Conservation Area and is used both on buildings and walls and the use of chequers is also visible on buildings. Buildings in the village are predominately two-storey in height.



Bishopstone has also seen a significant amount of development during the 20th century. Construction is mainly of brick and tile and many are uncharacteristic, being of modern design using a single material, although some incorporate traditional styles. Some former farm buildings have been converted to residential use, such as at Manor Farm. It is clear from responses to the surveys carried out that there is strong support for the use of traditional materials in any new developments in the village.



# THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## The Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

A large part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area and there are 23 buildings listed as of architectural or historic interest. See the Parish Council/Planning Matters section of the village website for a map of the Conservation Area and a schedule of listed buildings. Despite 20th century infilling the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the village's buildings remains notable. It will be vital to ensure that these buildings are preserved and their settings retained by careful control of any development of adjoining land.

## Trees and hedgerows

Mature and growing trees, hedgerows and other vegetation add significantly to the character of Bishopstone. Individual trees and groups of trees both within private gardens and the wider landscape greatly enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area and the wider village, adding to the rural ambience. The loss of trees without replacement would severely damage the visual amenity of the area. Some of these trees are protected by virtue of being within the Conservation Area, a small number have Tree Preservation Orders.

## Historic stone boundary and dividing walls

Boundary and dividing walls make a positive contribution to the character of the village. Brick and flint banding is a special feature of the area. There are also a number of cob and flint walls in the village. All historic, and other, walls of vernacular construction should be retained when development is being carried out.



THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Need to retain the pattern of the historic settlement of the village.	Use "gaps" between the built areas for appropriate rural uses.	Landowners
	Resist applications for new houses outside the built areas.	Parish Council
Protect the rural landscape setting of the village.	Implement AONB Management Plan approaches.	Landowners/farmers
	Avoid structures being installed on the skyline or in particularly conspicuous locations	Landowners/farmers
Need to nurture good design and standard of developments	Prepare Village Design Statement as a guide to new development.	Parish Council
	New development to reflect the vernacular style of the village and use materials that complement existing buildings.	Developers, landowners and Parish Council
Conserve trees, hedgerows, woods, walls, fences and other structures that contribute to the village character	Retain trees, hedgerows, walls, fences and other structures which contribute to the character of the village.	Landowners, residents
	Seek additional protection of trees through more Tree Preservation Orders.	Parish Council

# HOUSING

There are 241 homes in the village of which 60% are owner occupied and the remainder equally split between private and social rented accommodation.



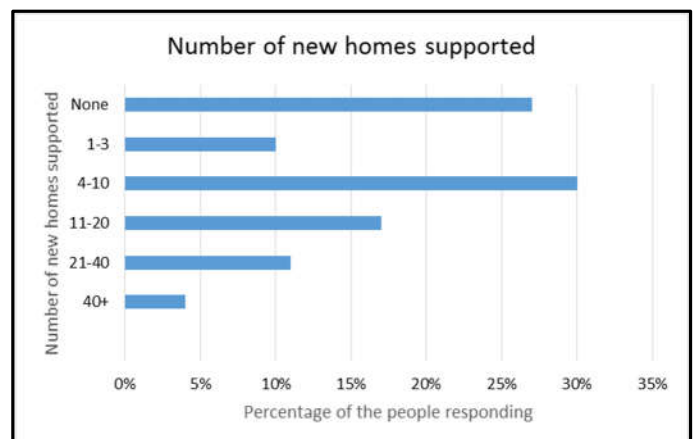
A desire to build more housing exists in all communities but establishing the need is always a controversial affair. The 2011 Village Survey received replies from 148 households, with 68 saying yes and 71 saying no to the “need for some additional affordable housing (e.g. Housing Association houses for rent) in the village to enable more young families to live here”.

*The mixed reaction to housing development is echoed in villagers’ feedback:*

- *no large scale development, but a little “infilling”;*
- *I don’t go along with the usual cries for more affordable housing;*
- *a small number of new smaller houses for younger families or elderly downsizers, no huge areas of new housing, and a balance between social and private build;*
- *the village must not be allowed to become a retirement community so infilling with some affordable homes for young families and the children of existing residents;*
- *I would not want to see the essential character of the village changed by over-development and/or inappropriate building.*

The 2013 Housing Needs Survey received replies from 125 households and 92 of them were “in support of some new housing in Bishopstone” as shown in the chart on the right.

Probably the nearest to a consensus in the village is to say that people agree that some infill housing would be acceptable as long as the character of the village is maintained; those houses should be for young people from the village and of a type that would be affordable to them.



# HOUSING

The official planning policy of Wiltshire Council is that new housing development will be limited to small scale infilling within the existing built up areas. Infill is the filling of a small gap that is “only large enough for not more than a few dwellings, generally only one dwelling”. Such proposals must be within the existing built up area and respect the existing character and form of the village.

However, Bishopstone is made up of several small pockets of homes separated by fields and meadows. There is therefore an issue of what constitutes “the existing built area” within which infill housing can take place. The character of the village will only be maintained if the “gaps” between the hamlets that make up Bishopstone are retained. As part of this plan it is proposed that the “built areas” be defined as in the map at Appendix B.

The Mill at Croucheston and redundant barns at Faulstone were raised as sites that should be converted into homes. These are not within the proposed “built areas” yet it would seem appropriate to encourage their redevelopment if attractive architectural features could be retained, as is the case with the conversion of Faulstone Barns which is now underway.



From the 2013 Housing Needs Survey (see the details on the village website) it is apparent that a small development of houses for letting at affordable rents is required and supported to meet the needs of young people from the village.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
The location of new housing developments.	Generally infilling should only be allowed within the “built areas” as shown on the map in Appendix B	Parish Council Wiltshire Council
	Landowners and developers should be encouraged to provide some smaller houses for younger families	Parish Council
	Encourage the owners of opportunity sites to bring forward suitable proposals for redevelopment for housing, although historical and architectural features should, wherever possible, be retained.	Parish Council
	Implement the Rural Housing Survey report	Parish Council Landowners Wiltshire Council
	Ensure that local people have first choice on any affordable housing	Wiltshire Council Parish Council

# EMPLOYMENT

Bishopstone was once primarily agricultural with the farms run on a traditional basis. They are still the biggest businesses in the village but employ very few people directly. The strong feeling that people want to conserve the landscape and countryside can be interpreted as a desire for traditional farming to remain the mainstay. However it is likely that farms will increasingly supplement their core activity with other businesses bringing additional small scale employment. Commercially run pheasant and partridge shooting is a feature across several farms and the landscape provides some of the most desirable venues around. Although this doesn't itself provide significant employment opportunities it can promote economic activity elsewhere in the village (e.g. at the pub).



Of increased importance are the small number of tenanted units that have evolved amongst the farm buildings, notably motor repair, blacksmith, joinery workshops and a food processing business. Whilst providing important services to the community they do only offer limited employment. Nevertheless 64% of households would like to see more small scale industries encouraged.



The White Hart pub/restaurant is the sole retail business in the village providing an important source of local employment for young villagers. Like others elsewhere, the business has been struggling for turnover in recent years yet its survival is important to residents as a community asset.

The fastest growing sector of business is home-based firms, self-employment and working from home. There are about 20 home-based businesses operating and this seems likely to grow as people embrace the opportunity to work and live in an agreeable rural environment instead of commuting. In some cases this no doubt drives the widespread demand for better mobile phone and broadband services. Improvements to the broadband services are now in progress.

69% of households would favour small scale business development being encouraged. An interesting aspect of that shows up through the small number of people who lack an opportunity to learn new skills.

68% of households would encourage more employment opportunities and 64% think small scale service industries should be favoured. The AONB notes that most business development and employment opportunities continue to be outside rural areas; they propose that an opportunity can be the effective development of green tourism in order to sustain the landscape and ensure economic and social wellbeing.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Need to encourage small scale business development and home working to sustain the local economy	Encourage the conversion of suitable redundant buildings in the right location to industrial/commercial use	Landowners Parish Council

# HIGHWAYS

As described in the Introduction, Bishopstone has one east/west road along the valley floor with a feeder road from the north over the hill from Wilton. All the other minor roads to the south of the valley road provide access to housing only. People want to see ongoing road maintenance (e.g. repair of pot-holes) but are generally satisfied with the upkeep of the verges. A majority would be willing to be involved in removing litter.

Over 60% of people would support restricting lorries along the valley road to “access only”.



Speeding is a major concern, as expected, and feedback covers a range of issues. Most people wish to see speed limits extended right along the valley road, including demands for them to be lowered to 30mph at the Recreation Ground and for them to be extended beyond Flamstone Street. Some people make the point that speed limits need to be enforced. To this end a Community Speed Watch scheme is now in place.

There are over 40 Rights of Way registered in Bishopstone allowing access to the beautiful landscape for both residents and visitors. They are generally well maintained and notably appreciated, with a few paths needing work which will always be the case. There are some specific issues about signage needing attention which causes several people to be concerned. A survey of the state of all the Rights of Way in the parish has been done and improvements are being made as part of a wider initiative by Wiltshire Council. This has included some new signage and the replacement of some stiles with kissing gates.



There is a good reaction to the level of conservation of open spaces and rights of way in the village with isolated instances of criticism illustrating the need for ongoing liaison with the authorities.



Two areas generate public interest – linking up bridleways and creating more cycleways. The former may not be attainable but there may well be a demand for the latter in future years.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Vehicle speeding on the valley road and back lanes	Pursue effective means of controlling vehicle speeds throughout the village by continuing to lobby for lower speed limits and by maintaining a Community Speed Watch scheme	Parish Council
Need to restrict the use of the valley road as a through route for HGV	Present concerns to the Community Area Transport Group and Wilts/Swindon Freight Partnership for continual improvement	Parish Council
Need to maintain all Rights of Way	Liaise with Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Officer and use volunteers when feasible	Parish Council / Implementation Group Landowners

## AMENITIES

For a geographically elongated village the amenities are an essential means of contributing to the community spirit by bringing villagers together from the spread out locations. This is well illustrated by the highly successful Country Fayre using the Recreation Ground and The White Hart for the annual summer and Christmas celebrations. At other times of the year the amenities compete with other attractions for support.

The Recreation Ground, purchased by the village in 2000, is well maintained as a sports area used by individuals. It does not meet the demands for changing facilities made by sports leagues nowadays which The Chalke Valley Sports Centre at Broadchalke is able to do. Nevertheless there is a desire for it to be retained and used. The children's play area has been a valuable addition with a strong demand for developing more facilities for all young people.



50% of households want to see more facilities for children in the village and there are many suggestions for indoor activities. A common theme is to provide the means for young people to get together as was once the case with scouts/guides and youth clubs however this is reliant on volunteers coming forward to organise and run such activities.

The Church, with 70% or so of villagers professing Christianity, is an important centre of worship and people want it to receive continuous care and attention.



## AMENITIES

Another important amenity receiving support is the Village Hall showing that the investment in extending, refurbishing and upgrading to make it the best such facility in the valley has obviously been rewarded. 65% of households use the Hall at least twice per year reflecting that the mix of educational, social, cultural and private events is serving the community well.



The village pub is seen as an amenity, with no shortage of suggestions about improving it and diversifying its core business to enhance viability, but it is also an independent business so our community has limited influence over investment decisions. However, the pub has been formally registered as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011 so that the community would have a right to bid to purchase the property and run it as a community enterprise should the owners propose to sell it for any other use.

There has been a small but steady demand for allotment gardens confirmed by the rapid take-up of the plots in The Styles. The consequent issue is the retention of allotments, given that the land is owned by Wiltshire Council.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Church conservation and upkeep	Explore ways of maintaining and expanding the use of the Church building as a community asset	Parochial Church Council Friends of Bishopstone Church
Need to sustain a Village Hall meeting the needs of all villagers	Continuously refresh the programmes of classes, activities and events to reflect the demand in the village	Village Hall Management Committee
Risk of “losing” the pub	Retain The White Hart on the Asset Register and “use it or lose it”	Everyone Parish Council
Need to protect the Recreation Ground for the future	Develop a plan for the long-term upkeep of the Recreation Ground	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need for more facilities and activities for village children	Maintain and gradually develop the required facilities/activities	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need to retain allotments	Resist any proposal to use the land for other purposes	Parish Council

## SERVICES

Adequate, reliable services are vital to a rural village. This applies equally to all age groups in the community. There is a wide range of village services provided by utility companies and local government including matters such as refuse collection and recycling, electricity, telecoms, mobile library, emergency and health/medical services, schools, policing and parish cleanliness/upkeep.



At the time of the 2011 Village Survey the services upon which we all rely were considered to be mostly satisfactory. However some issues were identified where the village felt improvements could – or should – be undertaken and areas where existing services should be protected and maintained. An example of the latter had been Wiltshire Council's decision to contract out the work previously done by the Parish Steward. This had given rise to a number of problems and produced a much reduced service. Another has been recent rumours about the future of the Mobile Library which is so important to our residents with limited mobility.

Wiltshire Council is now reviewing the contract that delivers - amongst other things - highways, drain clearance and grass cutting services. This Plan's actions will need to ensure that satisfactory new arrangements are put in place and that these, and other services, deliver what the village needs. Even where services are satisfactory the resilience of those services, and the reliability/continuity of service in adverse and unexpected weather conditions, is essential.





## SERVICES

Poor mobile phone signals and slow broadband speeds have long been identified as problems in our area. Improvements to broadband speeds are due to be delivered to most of the village by late 2015.

Reassurance was sought over the continuation of full medical services at Broadchalke Surgery; in addition evidence was provided of poor out of hours service.



Bus service 29 is vital to those residents dependent upon it for access to work, school and the services and facilities in the towns. There are demands for cheaper fares and more frequent and later buses. However, Wiltshire Council has embarked on a review to cut the cost of subsidising bus services, which could pose a threat to this route. Consultation on proposals is scheduled for 2016 and the priority for the village may well be to persuade the Council and the bus operators to maintain the existing services through the valley.

THE ISSUES	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Need to improve mobile telephone reception	Support initiatives to provide additional mobile phone masts to serve the village.	Parish Council
Lack of fast, reliable internet connection service.	Continue to lobby for those parts of the village not improved by 2015.	Parish Council
Need to protect doctors' surgery provisions at Broadchalke and out-of-hours service	Ensure adequate presence on the Patient Reference Group	Parish Council / Implementation Group
Need to monitor and protect reliability of utilities (electricity, water, telecoms, etc)	Use the emergency contact numbers backed by the Community Response Group (see village website)	Everyone
Need to protect and maintain Bus Service 29	Monitor developments in public bus services and any opportunities for improvement	Parish Council
Shortfalls in service from Wiltshire Council contractors	Continue to lobby for a satisfactory service	Parish Council

## PART 3 – APPENDICES

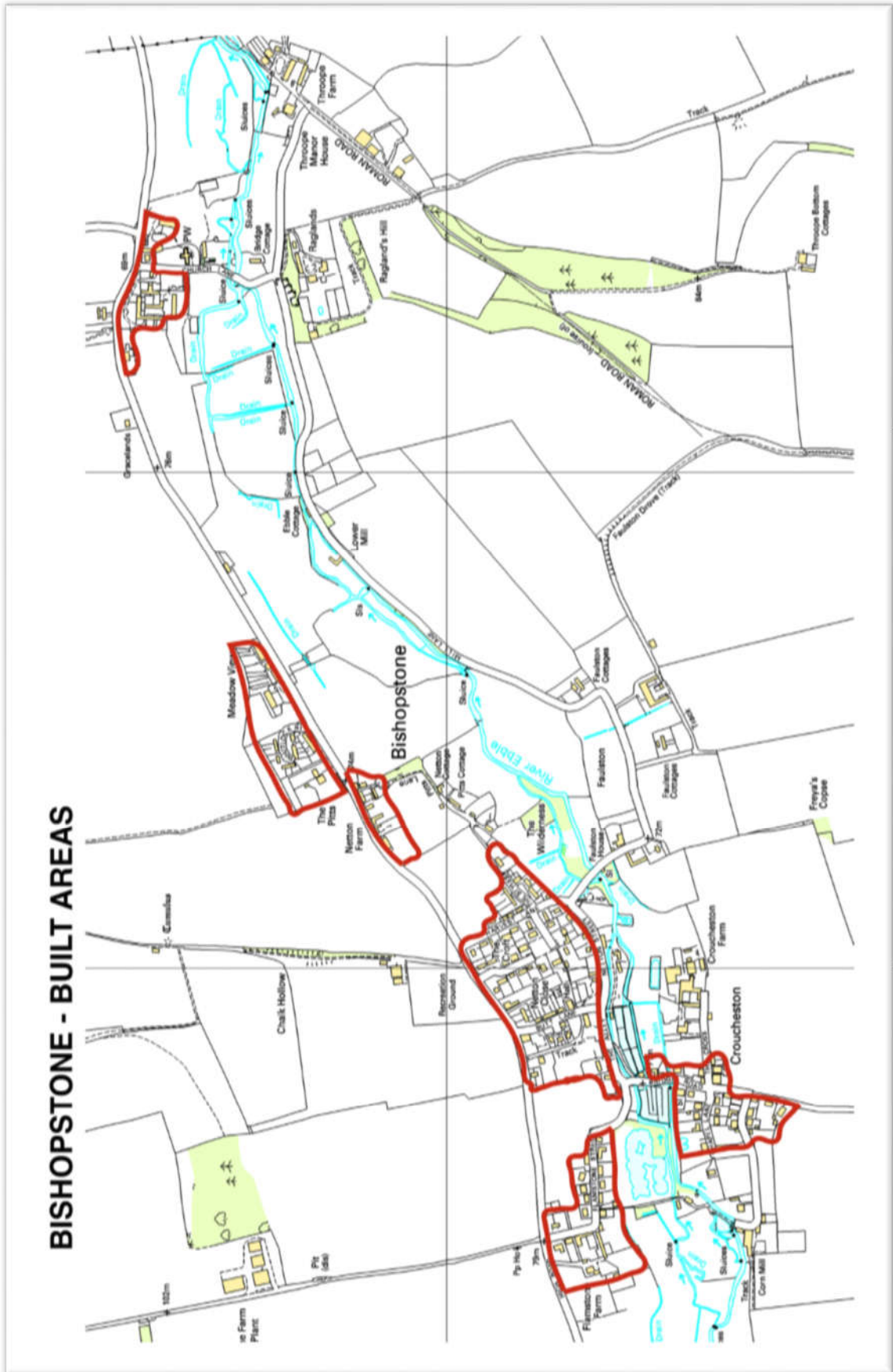
### Appendix A – Village Website & Other Media

The extensive village website at <http://www.bishopstone-salisbury.co.uk/> has an address that confirms you have the correct Bishopstone. Under the heading “Bishopstone Plan” you will find material that acts as a background to the information supporting this Plan.

STaB (Stratford Tony and Bishopstone Parish Magazine) is published by the Parochial Church Council and is delivered free to every home in the area covered by this Plan. It is also included on the website.

Chalke Talk is the newsletter for the Chalke Valley Team Ministry with a contact at <http://www.chalkevalley.org.uk/>

# Appendix B – The “Built Areas”



The boundaries of the Built Areas are marked in red



Bishopstone School 1920 - Headmaster Mr Drutt



Mr Gulliver outside Bramley Cottage