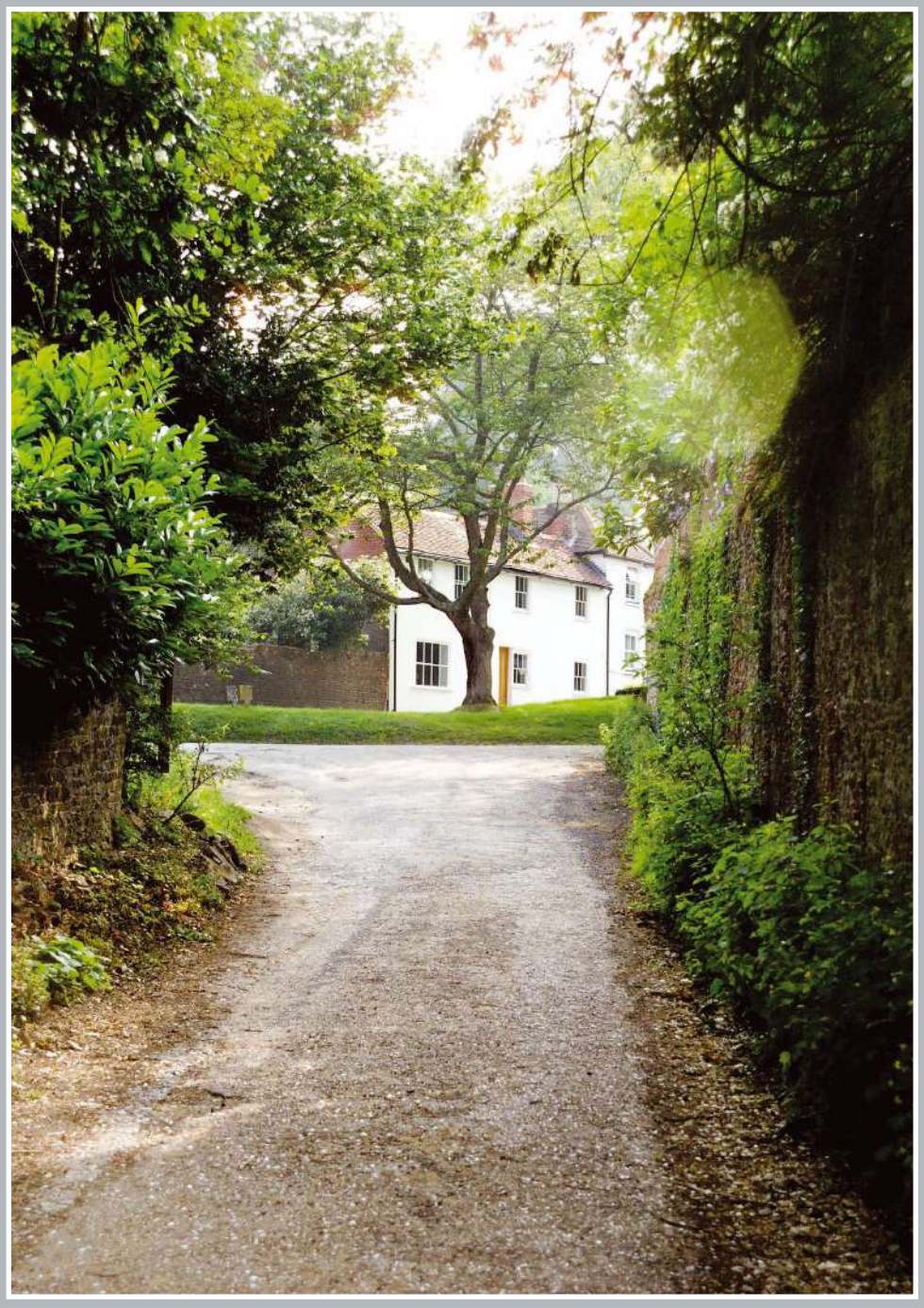
Thursley Parish 2009 (Updated 2018)



Village Design Statement

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Adopted as a material planning consideration by

Waverley Borough Council 21st July 2009 and updated 2018







Introduction

The people of Thursley are proud of their village and value all that it has to offer. This booklet explains many of the reasons for that pride and their interest in seeing that future changes respect these characteristics.

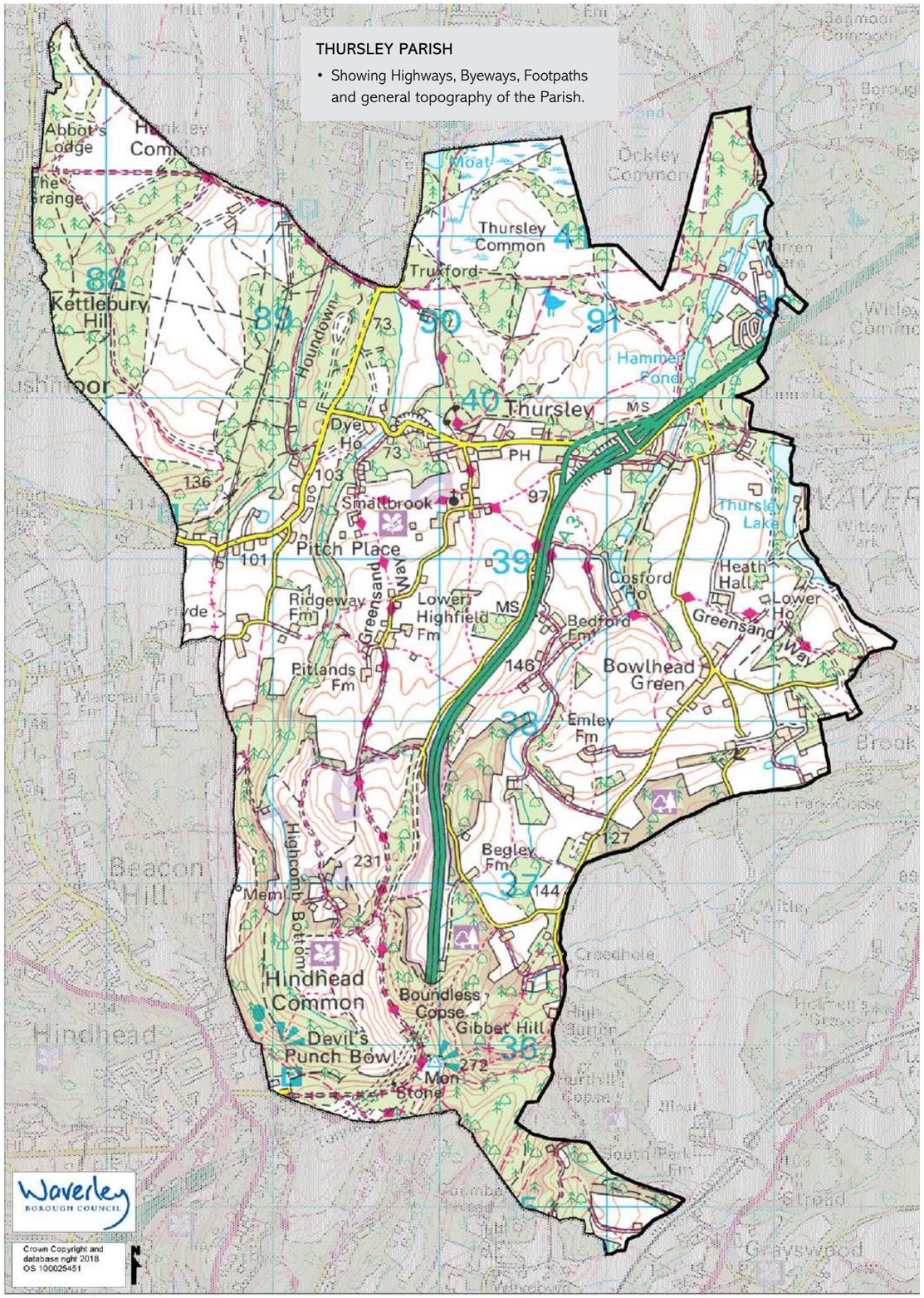
Thursley has evolved quietly over many centuries and will continue to do so. We look for change that is restrained, well mannered and welcome. By following these principles Thursley will continue to be a pleasure to those who live in and visit the parish.

The Design Statement has been widely discussed in its preparation and we hope that it will be a help to all who wish to undertake building work or any development of their properties in and around the village.

This guide follows the principles of Village Design Statements as referred to in paragraphs 11.7 to 11.10 in the Borough Local Plan. It is hoped that the Authority will take note of this guide as representative of local opinion and endorse it as a material planning consideration.

One overriding consideration is our wish for enduring quality in all that is done.





Thursley's Design Statement

The Thursley Design Statement has been produced by a group of volunteers from a cross section of the village residents and initiated by Thursley Parish Council.

THE DESIGN STATEMENT AIMS TO:

- Give an overview of what makes Thursley the unique community it is now.
- Pay attention to the three separate settlements, Thursley, Pitch Place, Bowlhead Green and also to Warren Park.
- Describe its history - how and why it is as it is today.
- Demonstrate what makes up its community - (social, ecological, agricultural, commercial).
- Describe its built environment (architectural, highways and by-ways).
- Uphold the integrity of the two Conservation Areas and the views within them and from a distance in line with the principles set out on their original designation.
- Make clear its position within an unspoilt environment paying attention to Thursley Nature Reserve, The Devil's Punch Bowl and Hankley Common.
- Give guidance to the local planning authority with regard to the qualities that make Thursley Parish unique.
- Demonstrate how Thursley can best manage change in the future whilst retaining its essential character.

Several themes emerged during the consultations for this Village Design Statement that should be taken into account by landowners, developers, the parish, borough and county councils and other organisations.

- There is a wish to influence proposals for new buildings, to conserve existing heritage, and promote high quality in future development. New building styles are not discouraged, but each would be judged on its own merit.
- There is concern about the impact of any future development on existing infrastructure and services.
- There is a deep appreciation of our surrounding countryside with its unique environmental qualities, the lanes, bridleways and footpaths.
- Residents do not want to lose the natural areas within and around the parish, either by piecemeal encroachment or by an extension of the three settlements.
- There is alarm at the increase in the volume of traffic and the size of vehicles using the lanes through the parish.
- It is hoped that this Village Design Statement will assist the local community, landowners, developers, architects and planners to maintain the character of Thursley village in line with the wishes expressed by its residents.

Location and Setting

Thursley has a comparatively small population (approx 600) resident in one of the larger parishes (8 sq. miles) of the 21 in the Borough of Waverley, South West Surrey. The parish runs south from its border with Elstead Parish to the southern edge of the Devil's Punch Bowl near Hindhead.

Many years ago, the parish boundaries of Thursley extended as far as Haslemere, but now they are curtailed. They run round Thursley Common, including Warren Mere, and cut across to Bowlhead Green almost to Brook, then back past Boundless Farm to the Devil's Punch Bowl. They then continue round the bowl to Pitch Place, down to Truxford and back on to the common again.

Thursley has a cricket green, a large recreation ground which allows parking and a play area upgraded in 2015 as a result of community funding. It attracts many visitors who come to see the village and the local commons via the extensive footpath and bridleway network. The Greensand Way runs through the parish. Bowlhead Green also has an attractive green, and is more agricultural in character than Thursley. Pitch Place has Hankley Common to the north, the orchards and fruit farms to the south and tracks that lead to Hindhead Common and beyond.

ACTION POINTS:

- Development has been restricted by the neighbouring commons and estates which has allowed Thursley to retain much of its original character as a small agricultural community. Substantial development that would threaten this unique character should not be permitted but small scale individual buildings would be considered.
- Location and setting are an important part of the essence of Thursley, development must compliment the natural setting and views should not be obstructed.
- With one of the largest amounts of designated rural land in the county the qualities of the village's open countryside must be protected.
- Areas of woodland and heathland which are important features in the overall character, quality and appearance of the parish must be protected.
- Along with its many other qualities there is a tranquillity in the parish and this should be maintained.



History

In popular myth the name Thursley is of Scandinavian origin, meaning the “sacred grove of Thor”, the Norse god of thunder. In the 13th century it was recorded as “Thoresle” (Old English þunres leah), possibly referring to Thunor, the Saxon god of thunder.

An outcrop of sandstone on a prominence on Thursley Common was believed to have been Thor’s Stone, created by a thunderbolt thrown by the god. This stone, the Cricklestone, now lies almost unknown since its reputation was transferred for literary purposes to a block of chert (alias the Pudstone) near Pudmore pond, in 1896 by the popular Victorian writer Baring-Gould in his book The Broom-squire.

During the 15th and 16th centuries the woollen cloth industries flourished at Godalming. Although it was illegal to weave outside the cloth towns, two Surrey families, the Hookes and the Chittys, carried on the industry at Thursley.

In the 17th century Thursley became a centre for iron smelting when the industry was flourishing with contracts from the Navy for cannon and shot. The iron mills were built near a brook on Thursley Common, which was widened in places to make the ponds, known as the Hammer Ponds. Gradually the iron industry with its attendant occupation of charcoal burning died out, and by the end of the 18th century very little iron was worked. Thursley ironworks were the last to operate in Surrey. It is generally accepted that the first four cottages in The Lane were used as workshops connected with the industry, while the cottages above them were the dwelling houses of the workmen.

The first metalled road was constructed in Thursley in 1749 and the Portsmouth road became a turnpike road in 1767 when travel by stage coach became popular. Naturally the Portsmouth road has always had its influence upon Thursley’s life.

St Michael & All Angels Church is of Saxon origin although it was enlarged and restored in 1860 and 1884.

The building that now serves as the Village Hall was formerly the school which replaced the Dame School in the churchyard. It was built of local Bargate Stone in 1843 and enlarged in 1854. After the school closed in 1959 it was decided to use the building as a community hall and money was raised by selling The Institute (now Prospect Cottage) and the site next to the Three Horseshoes Pub on which stood the old wooden village hall (now Tilhurst). The Institute was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, whose father leased The Cottage (now Street House). Lutyens also designed extensions to The Corner, opposite Street House.

During both World Wars thousands of troops camped and exercised on Thursley Common. King Edward VII reviewed the troops on Thursley Common early in the twentieth century, a road being specially built for this occasion.

ACTION POINTS:

- Thursley has enjoyed a slow evolution over a long history. Development should be sensitive in terms of scale and compatibility to the fragility of the village character.
- Thursley Village is blessed with numerous listed buildings dispersed throughout the village. Development should be sensitive to these listed buildings and their settings.
- Today’s buildings should become the listed buildings of tomorrow; therefore quality is of the utmost importance.
- St.Michael & All Angels Church is an important building in the village and all efforts should be made to maintain and enhance the views of the church and from the church (see Conservation Area Policy).
- Historic landscape features such as dry sandstone and Bargate Stone walls and boundary banks should be protected.













THURSLEY
THORS
~LEE

















THE STREET LEADING TO
HIGHFIELD LANE
THURSLEY PARISH CHURCH
NO THROUGH ROAD














Architecture



"No coherent village views, but some of the best individual cottages in the County" Nikolaus Pevsner

OBJECTIVES:

The Design Statement seeks to reflect the predominantly rural character of the parish whilst respecting that development in some form is inevitable. It aims to ensure that change is beneficial and encourages the use of high-quality finishes and detail. This is to be achieved with "an honesty in architecture" and a respect to the local environment.

West Surrey is an increasingly affluent area and parishes such as Thursley are attractive places to live. Development should be appropriate to this unique rural village setting with a diverse collection of housing.

TYPICAL STYLES:

THURSLEY VILLAGE CENTRE

The village centre is a Conservation Area well described in the Approved Designation Paper of 4th September 1969. It contains a number of cottages and more senior listed buildings, between which are interspersed dwellings of 18th Century, Victorian and modern descent. The mixed nature of the developments reflects the "organic" development of the village nucleus. Interestingly the older buildings tend to hold more prominent locations and as such the more modern dwellings generally hold more discreet locations.

The use of traditional vernacular construction details dominates. This includes hand made clay tiled roofs, weather board, tile hanging or masonry walls and there is an ever present local Bargate Stone in boundary walls and even as part of many dwellings. Extensions and alterations in all styles are common; generally a lower roof line has been maintained and all these features culminate in an interesting and pleasing street scene.

BOWLHEAD GREEN

Bowlhead Green is also a Conservation Area well described in the Approved Designation Paper of 8th February1983.It contains many fine examples of early farmsteads, which reflect its origins as an agricultural settlement. The number of listed and period buildings is high. The high banks and hedges abound the narrow lanes which give the hamlet a peculiar isolated quality.

PITCH PLACE SMALLBROOK AND OUT LYING AREAS

Although Pitch Place has a number of 16th and 17th century farmsteads (Upper Ridgeway, Pitch Place Farm, Smallbrook Farm etc.), the predominant architecture is post Victorian. The dwellings are generally located in spacious plots and are set back from the main road with extensive screening and mature gardens/landscapes. There is no high density settlement in any of these areas, and the whole area is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value.

WARREN PARK

Warren Park is an exception to the general pattern of development within the parish. It is a high density settlement of forty Park Homes occupying the former site of a public house. Any development or re-development of the site may be considered detrimental to the Green Belt, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Area of Great Landscape Value and merits careful consideration.



ACTION POINTS:

- A GENERAL DIRECTIVE

  The nucleus of the settlement centre has a wealth of sensitively constructed dwellings and buildings spanning six centuries that marry together to present a village centre that collectively provide a traditional ambience. The less densely developed parts of the parish show a similar array of buildings, but the distribution and proximity of these allows opportunities for some more contemporary and modern designs without detracting from the nucleus on the Conservation Areas.

- CAR PARKING

  The visual impact of the motor car should be minimised both from within and from a distance. In all new development adequate offstreet parking needs to be provided. Car parking in front of any new development has a regrettable impact on the street scene and should be sensitively located to the side or rear of any new building and preferably undercover. Sympathetic and complementary open car port or garage designs are most satisfactory. Caravans should be parked discretely, out of sight at least from within the Conservation Area.

- SECURITY

  Whilst the need for security is recognised, fortress development is not appropriate to the village and attractive views into gardens and yards should be maintained and wherever possible there should be lockless pedestrian access.

- EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

  These should reflect the scale of the dwelling to which they attach, and should be complementary to the dwelling and its immediate environs. Where possible some of the key, local architectural features should be included.

Architecture

- “NEW BUILD”

  There are very few opportunities for new build sites and those where it is proposed should be designed so as not to detract from the street scene and the village. The scale and density should reflect the nature of the immediate locality. The interaction of any new development should be such that it promotes social inclusion and integration with the surroundings.

- LIGHTING (EXTERNAL)

  External lighting should be kept to the minimum required for safety or security reasons. Permanent night lighting does not form part of the rural ambience and should be discouraged. Where night lighting is necessary, this should be kept at a low level and down-lighting should be used. preferably activated by passive infrared (PIR) on a timer setting.

- REFUSE BINS

  Careful consideration should be taken regarding the storage of “wheelie” bins for refuse, food waste, recycling and garden waste. Where possible, bins should be stored out of sight from the road to maintain the rural setting.

- GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES

  Sensitive and sympathetic landscape works are encouraged and these should be of a style and nature that befits the plot or development. The predominant flora and fauna species in the historic landscape are those to be found in deciduous woodland and open heath-land (depending on location), and landscapes which compliment these habitats are encouraged. The extensive use of conifers and non-indigenous evergreen plants should be discouraged.

- FENESTRATION AND CLADDING

  Detailing of the elevations and the materials used are of particular importance and care should also be taken with the selection of windows and doors having regard to examples shown in the photographs in this Design Statement

- CHIMNEYS

  Whilst central heating is now universal a chimney is a basic architectural feature of all domestic buildings especially those that make up the traditional village scene. Their removal should be resisted and their inclusion in new development welcomed.

- ROOFS AND WEATHERPROOFING

  Handmade clay tile pitched roofs dominate the settlement. The choice of tile colour and roof pitch should reflect those of other nearby dwellings, care should be taken with the design of the ridges and eaves as well as all other details. Flat or mono-pitched structures will be discouraged.

- LOCAL MATERIALS

  A common decorative feature has been the insertion of iron stone fragments between the mortar joints of the Bargate Stone. This is a local feature known as galleting. Bargate Stone has historically been used as local building material, and forms a key part of much of the early architecture in the parish.

- SUSTAINABILITY

  Global warming and the effects of development on climate change are now appreciated facts of life and national and local requirements are supported. The principle use of low energy systems, high quality insulation and low carbon construction techniques is encouraged. Well-integrated, imaginative solutions will be welcomed. Such solutions should not materially detract from the nature of the development and its immediate surroundings.

- CONSTRUCTION

  All construction work should be carefully programmed and undertaken tidily with all materials, skips and parking contained on the site or otherwise off the roads and verges of the village.

- QUALITY

  All new development and other building work should be of a high quality. Brochures from retained architects and designers with examples of their work are welcomed.











Commerce and Agriculture

Historically, Thursley was a village of small tenanted farms belonging to three large estates. Throughout the twentieth century these estates fractured, culminating with the sale of the last remaining, The Cosford Estate, in the nineteen fifties. This resulted in the creation of independent units of about 60 acres apiece. Despite the soil and terrain being unsuitable for the production of crops, the undulating and free-draining soil is well suited for livestock production.

Today there are still a number of farmers whose livelihood depends on agriculture and many villagers still work the land in many varied ways. This influences the activities and contributes to the agricultural ambience of the village, something which is becoming increasingly rare in West Surrey.

The use of land will continue to be influenced by government policy and market conditions. However, conservation methods such as encouraging field margins/ headlands and hedges for wildlife, and decreasing or avoiding pesticide use and fertiliser run-off, should be supported. The use of intense lights at night should be minimised. Diversification from traditional farming methods should, from a village design point of view, be sympathetic to the agricultural nature of Thursley. Traditional barns are now mostly converted to desirable residences, and new barns are constructed with modern designs and materials.

The vast areas of common land that can be enjoyed by riders have led to a marked increase in horsiculture with the creation of many livery yards. Further development of livery yards, stables and related activity should be examined carefully because of the total impact to the village and the common land could become very harmful.

The village includes a limited number of commercial enterprises but in an historic village with narrow lanes careful consideration needs to be given to the addition of any new businesses.

Facilities within the village that prevent or reduce transport by car should be encouraged and supported. This extends to community services such as the pub, the nursery school, village hall (and the attendant societies) and the church.

The increase in people who work from home is regarded as positive for the village in that people who work from home are normally better-placed to contribute to community life, being located within it. However working from home can lead to the development of outbuildings and the building of new structures to be used as home offices and the impact needs to be carefully assessed.

ACTION POINTS:

- Maintain the underlying agricultural nature of land usage within the parish.
- Encourage commercial enterprises that will further enhance the parish and community and are of an appropriate scale.
- Further development of commercial livery yards will be examined carefully because of the impact on the village and the common land.



Community

For a parish with less than 600 adults and spread across four separate locations (the village, Pitch Place, Bowlhead Green and Warren Park), Thursley has an incredibly strong community spirit. This spirit comes from the residents themselves, their general interest in their neighbours and their well being and a variety of informal networks that ensure that anyone in need is supported. Each part of the village has its own network linked to the groupings of houses and cottages. Regular meetings of village organisations, the church and the pub facilitate these networks. There is also a local Neighbourhood Watch to minimise crime in the village.

Thursley residents are very conscious of their village spirit, having won the Surrey Best Kept Village Competition, for many years. It is a testament to the social responsibility of the individuals of the community that very few collective initiatives are orchestrated to keep our village looking presentable.

ACTION POINTS:

- Thursley Parish is a small but well integrated community with a feeling of mutual responsibility to preserve the special environment. Developers and those planning development should be sympathetic to the impact on other parishioners and try to work with the community as opposed to being in conflict with it.



Open Spaces and Landscape Features

The whole of our parish is recognised as an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. The rocks and soils that make the scenery give each section of the village a distinctive character. They are all part of the Lower Greensand. The oldest phase is the Hythe beds, that form the high ground of Hindhead and the Punch Bowl. The Gibbet Hill is the highest point of the district, with views into neighbouring counties and it catches the most rain, which helps erode the sandstone into very steep-sided valleys and sunken lanes. The Devil's Punch Bowl is the biggest inland comb in England. These are the features that give the **Area of Great Landscape Value** designation.

The heavy rainfall on the tops washes the nutrients out of the soil very readily and so the tops tend to be heaths, with heathers, bilberry gorse and birch, while the valley bottoms become wooded where the nutrients collect lower down. Vanhurst Copse is a remnant of an **Ancient Woodland** on the northern part of the Punch Bowl.

There are clay bands that cause many water seepages out of the sides of the hills and these form the Cosford stream on the east flank and the Smallbrook on the north side. They flow over the Bargate beds to the north, to join the River Wey at Peper Harow and Westbrook. The rock is a limey phase of the Greensand, which is dissolved out by the streams, so freshwater clams, fish and crayfish too can thrive. Early man exploited this and Flint implements and flakes produced by Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age man have been found close by and scattered across the district. There are Early Bronze Age Bell Barrows of about 4000 years ago.

To the north of Hindhead and the Punch Bowl, the change of the rock type is very clearly shown by the sudden change to rolling fields, with hedges and copses. The lime in the rock that makes the streams support fish makes the rock usable as a building stone, and the soils very fertile. Cobbett described it as some of the best barley land in the kingdom. This is still the farming and fruit growing section of the village though most of the land is now horse grazing paddocks.

The change to acid heaths along the northern sector of the Parish is very marked. Here a fault line brings an abrupt end to the fertile soils and the Folkestone beds dominate the landscape. The high parts of the Hankley and Thursley Commons are on these very poor sands. This deposit does not have any chemical that bonds the sand grains, so it erodes rapidly into individual grains, and produces a very free draining acid soil. A by-product of water movement through the sand beds in previous ages has washed a lot of iron compounds down to accumulate in concretions called carstone - an iron-sand compound that was used as a strengthening and decorative feature – galliting, or gelleting or garneting as tiny broken bits in the mortar between the Bargate building stones or even as a building stone if nothing else was available, though it cannot be dressed.

The sand is colonised by heathers, gorse and birches. The Dartford Warblers, Woodlarks and Nightjars are found in this vegetation as they are on Hindhead and this why **Special Protection Area** designation has been applied to all three commons to help protect these species.

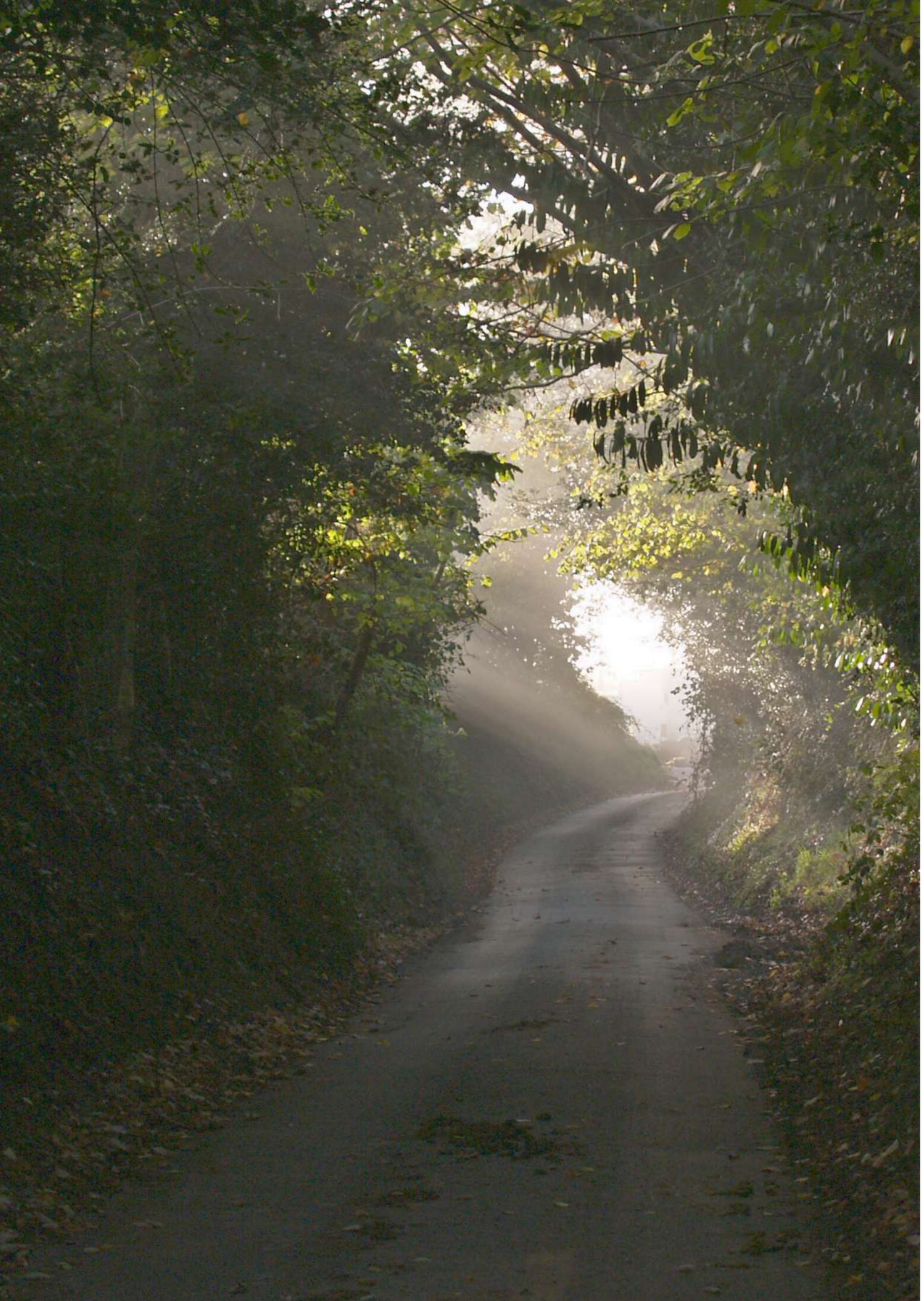
No streams flow into the Thursley's Mire or into Hankley's Dropping Zone but springs are found along these valley bottoms, that drain out into the Wey. The Moat is filled by springs and was a shared water source with Elstead. The parish boundary crosses the pond through the Springs, and out across the waterlogged area marked since Saxon times at least with a bank and a ditch. The Sandgate rocks underlying this are hard packed, so water does not drain through them, but holds up the water level and forms the Mire (Bog). This flat site, with plants from tundra type climates as well as invertebrates of similar origins, suggests a landscape that goes back 10,000 years. This is the part of the common has been classed as a **RAMSAR Site** (a wetland of International importance) as well as a **Special Area of Conservation**.

Hindhead, Hankley and Thursley Commons are all **Sites of Special Scientific Interest** and Thursley Common is a **National Nature Reserve**.

ACTION POINTS:

- All of the designations in heavy type are relevant to planning applications, water well drilling, sand and gravel extraction licence requests etc.
- These are all of the highest levels of protection available. They confirm that these areas merit the highest level of protection available, and co-operation with the authorites to see that high standards are maintained will be welcomed.
- The landscape is very fragile, as the sands of the commons are easily eroded, Increased use for recreation will destroy the value of the sites.
- Increased water abstraction from the deeper Aquifers will lower the water tables for farmers gardeners as well as the important wetlands of our RAMSAR site.
- Development should respect the proximity of these special sites and areas and should ensure not to impact detrimentally upon their unique qualities and character.
- With one of the largest amounts of designated rural land in the county the qualities of the village's open countryside must be protected.
- The village and its surrounding areas contain many special features and vistas and any future development should conserve and enhance these.
- Protect these special sites and vulnerable surfaces against intensity of use from off road bicycles, motorcycles, and 4x4 vehicles that have already led to excessive erosion.





Highways, Roads, Byways, Bridleways & Footpaths

The parish is criss-crossed with ancient footpaths, bridleways and byways totalling 65 km in length which are well maintained and used throughout the year by walkers and riders. The Greensand Way is of much more recent origin designed by the Rambler's Association in the 1980s and follows the Greensand ridge through the centre of the Weald. It winds its way through the parish including Saint Michael and All Angels Churchyard, using established footpaths. An underpass under the A3 for the Greensand Way and FPs 89 & 90 is part of the A3 Tunnel scheme.

Our roads link Thursley to the towns of Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere as well as to the nearby villages of Elstead, Milford, Witley, Churt and Tilford. Dye House Road which runs from the A3 through Thursley Village has a traffic calming scheme in place. This scheme was built in 2002 and has made a big difference to peace and safety especially during the morning and evening rush hours.

The area is divided by the A3 trunk road, a major link between London and the south coast ports. In July 2011, the Hindhead Tunnel was opened after a four and a half year construction project to build the longest non-estuarial road tunnel in UK. In 2004, following years of campaigning, a bridge was built over the A3 at Thursley which not only created a safe crossing into Thursley but also reunited the two halves of the parish.

ACTION POINTS:

- Development should not detract from the network of footpaths, bridleways and lanes.
- Boundary treatments to footpaths should blend with immediate and overall surroundings and not detract from the pleasure of using the footpaths.
- Maintaining the character of the rural lanes, footpaths and bridleways and avoiding road widening, excessive use of road markings and road signs, where they would detract from the character of the village.
- Any proposal, especially businesses/livery, must consider Thursley's single track lanes which must not be allowed to be ruined by over use.
- Efforts must be made to ensure 4x4 vehicles and trail bikes, which have already led to excessive erosion, do not further damage BOATs (byway open to all traffic) or the surrounding delicate landscape.
- The construction and completion of the A3 tunnel will have various consequences for the village. These will need to be carefully assessed and evaluated to ensure there is no detrimental effect on the village.

The Future

Thursley considers itself a mature community, which understands change but has a passion to preserve the quality and character of the settlement.

The future wellbeing of the village will depend greatly on how the pressures and opportunities of social economic and environmental change are met.

When Change is proposed the key will be how the people react to it and how the community accepts and influences change.

Conclusion

This Design Statement is the first to identify what makes the Thursley so greatly appreciated by its people and others who value all it has to offer.

Thursley has evolved quietly over many centuries and will continue to do so. Change there will be but it is hoped that those considering building works or other changes will pay heed to all this Statement tells them. Likewise it is hoped that those in the village who take custody for our surroundings will find it a help in their work.

The people of Thursley are proud of their village and this Statement is evidence of the pride and interest. We hope by following the principles outlined in this guide Thursley will continue to be a pleasure to those who live in and visit the parish.

As Nikolaus Pevsner says: ". . . . cared for but not suburbanised"

Footnote:
The Design Statement has been widely discussed in its preparation and was exhibited in the village for public consultation.
Subsequent consultation has been with: Borough Council Departments and Ward Councillor (the Planning Portfolio holder), Surrey County Council Highways and Rights of Way, Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust.
Acknowledgements:
The Village Design Team thanks all those who have given their time, guidance and support to this project.
Quotes: "The Buildings of England, Surrey" Nikolaus Pevsner published by Penguin Books 1962.

Enquiries to: The Clerk to Thursley Parish Council, c/o Thursley Village Hall, Thursley, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 6QD

Any policy document demands regular review and it is recommended that the Statement be the subject of a thorough review at least every five years.

