

# RUSHALL

## VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This village design statement (VDS) has been written and compiled by members of Rushall Parish Council with contributions from the key organisation focal points within the village. The VDS is a comprehensive document that reflects the consensus of opinion of local residents and will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council Planning Authority. The objective is to provide key information to allow any further development or change in Rushall to be performed in a manner that will be sympathetic to the character of the village. The VDS also reflects the Kennet District Local Plan which was adopted in April 2004.

This Village Design Statement was adopted by Kennet District Council, as an emerging supplementary planning document, on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 for the purposes of development control. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) provide guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in the local development framework (LDF). Currently, Policy HC24 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan provides the policy context for development in Rushall. This policy will be replaced when the Wiltshire unitary authority adopts a new Wiltshire wide core strategy as part of its LDF. At that time, the authority will confirm the village design statement as a supplementary planning document, provided it is considered to conform with the LDF.

Government policy states that a SPD may be taken into account as a material consideration. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPD when making decisions on matters that come before her, providing that it is consistent with the development plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner. Paragraph 18 of Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing, states that “to facilitate efficient delivery of high quality development, Local Planning Authorities should draw on relevant guidance and standards and promote the use of appropriate tools and techniques, such as Design Coding alongside urban design guidelines, detailed masterplans, village design statements, site briefs and community participation techniques.

## 1.1 Who and What it is for:

The VDS is for everyone as it identifies both the natural and man-made features which residents believe are important elements that define the character of Rushall:

- for residents, it provides guidance to consider the aesthetics of any change that they are planning so that the selection of design and materials will be sympathetic with the location and overall street scene.
- for developers, it provides guidance on the design aspects and materials that the villagers believe are important to the character of Rushall and enables the developers to generate changes which will be in harmony with the setting.
- for the planners, it provides supplementary guidance when considering planning applications to ensure that the location, selection of design and material will maintain the character of a rural village.

## 1.2 Methodology:

The Parish Council conducted an initial survey to determine how neighbouring villagers were managing local planning and development and arranged for the Kennet

planning future development officer to provide a brief overview. An evaluation of other village's VDS was performed to consider the potential structure and assess appealing elements of the documents. An extensive questionnaire was distributed to gauge the villagers' opinions of what characteristics are valued to ensure that the VDS reflects a consensus of views. The VDS was incrementally made available to villagers and the local planning authority for review and comment and revised accordingly to obtain approval prior to formal publication. The villagers' were all notified of the opportunity to review and comment on each draft VDS and copies of the document were provided at the Coffee Mornings on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008 and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Villagers' comments were reviewed by the VDS Team to determine the most effective incorporation.

## 2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RUSHALL

### 2.1 The Parish and the Manor:

The ancient parish of Rushall (2204 acres), lying between Charlton St Peter and Upavon, is a long narrow parish typical of Salisbury Plain and the southern side of the Pewsey Vale. It lies north-east to south-west. Rushall is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The name seems to be derived from "Rusteselve", relating to a personal name of Rust rather than rushy meadows. At the time of the Norman conquest of 1066, the manor of Rushall belonged to the Godwins, the Saxon royal family, but passed to the demesne of William I. There is evidence of Neolithic and later periods of pre-historic activity; barrows; an Iron-age hill fort; Celtic field systems; a Saxon strip system and two Romano-British villages.



**The Poore Family Heraldic Arms**

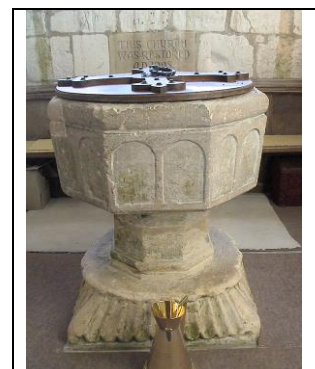
After the Norman conquest the manor passed successively through many families. In 1749 William Giffard sold the manor to Edward Poore. It remained in the Poore family until 1838 when it was sold to the Earl of Normanton and thereafter stayed with the Normanton title. In 1898 the downland, about half the parish, was bought by the War Department. The remainder was sold to Frank Stratton in 1917. Stratton sold it in 1920 to his Relative, Joseph Maggs, who was a specialist in

dairy farming and a long-term chairman of United Dairies Ltd.

After a disastrous fire in the dairy set of farm buildings in 1945 ( now the Old Tractor Yard), Joseph Maggs sold Rushall Farm to Percy Wookey of Upavon Farms. When he died in 1964 it was inherited by his son, Charles Barrington (Barry) Wookey.

### 2.2 Churches:

St. Matthew's Rushall existed in 1086. It was a dependency of Upavon monastic cell established by the great abbey of St. Wandrille de Fontenelle near Rouen. All that survives from that church is the 12<sup>th</sup> Century octagonal font placed on a reused Norman capital. The church was rebuilt in 1332 and from this rebuilding survive the chancel arch, two windows reset in the north wall, the nave buttresses and the western section of the north wall of the nave.

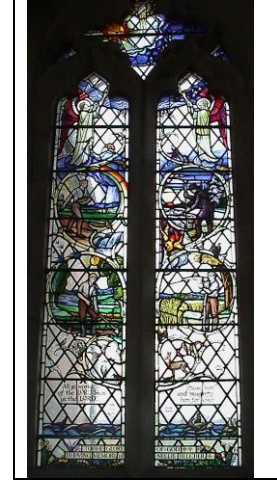




The graveyard was consecrated in 1402 and contains a Grade 2 listed grave, the Bray Monument. The tower was built in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century and contains three bells, founded in 1400, 1606 and 1740. There are some interesting stained glass panels in the south-east window of the chancel from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and a fine contemporary stained glass

Benedictine window in the north wall of the nave, by A.E.Buss. The benches are 16<sup>th</sup> century. To the north is a family chapel and underlying crypt added by the Poore family in 1789; it is now the vestry. Extensive rebuilding, in brick, took place in 1812 with further restoration in 1873 and in 1905.

A General Baptist Meeting House was built in the north of the village in 1760 through the trust of Anne Tyler. Her house opposite, known as Chapel House, was lived in by successive ministers. From 1913 until his death in 1956 the minister was G.H. Worsdell, but declining congregations led to the chapel's closure in 1973 and subsequent demolition.

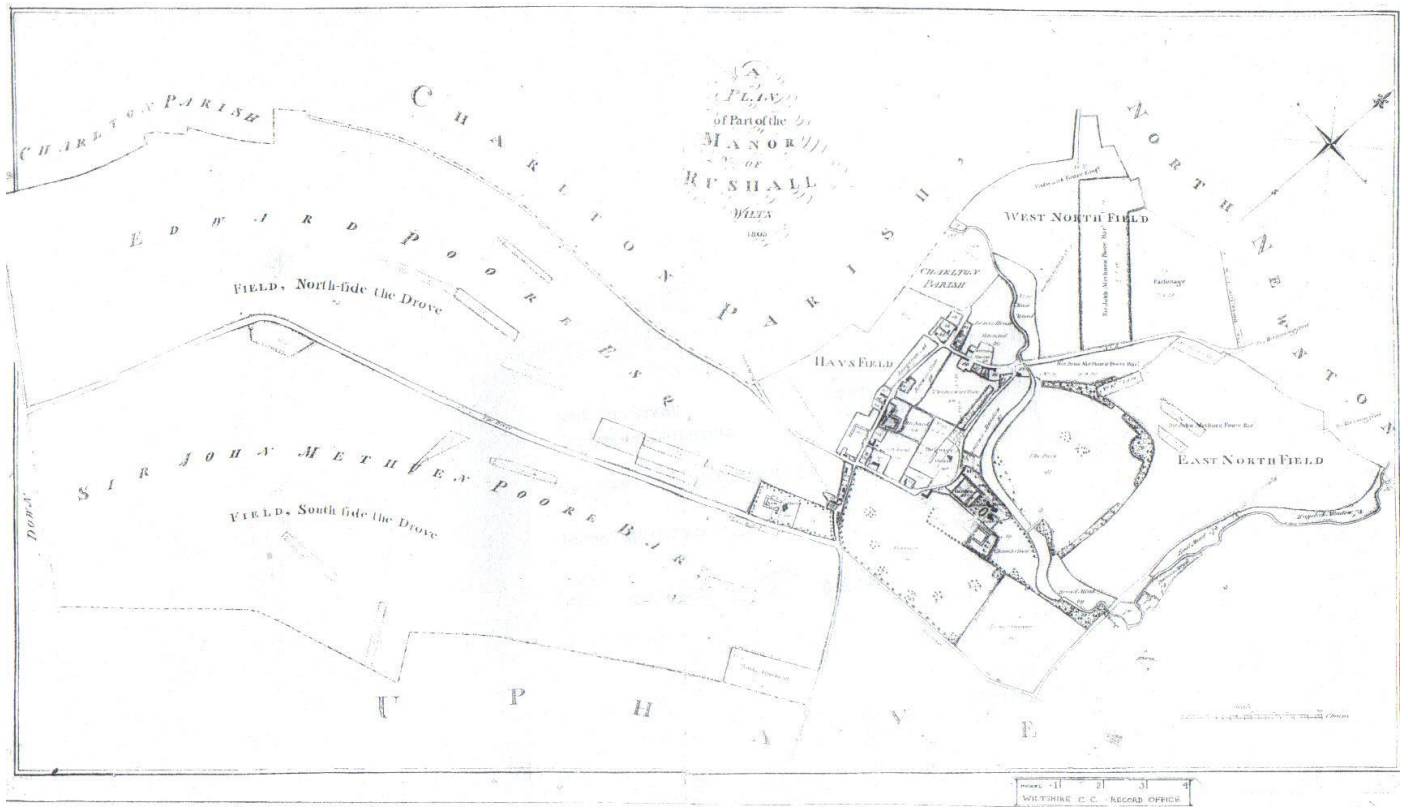


### 2.3 Layout of the village:

Although there are no maps of the period, it seems that in mediaeval times the village was clustered around the church. The manor house probably stood on the site where Edward Poore rebuilt it in 1749. What is now The Old Rectory was the demesne farmhouse in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Farm buildings near the manor house were demolished between 1803 and 1838 and the then farmhouse was converted into three cottages, later known as Laundry Cottages (now Churchstowe). New farm buildings and a bailiff's cottage were built in this period to the east of the Avon, known as France Farm by 1842.

The road system in the parish is complex, reflecting the fact that the confluence of the river Avon and its eastern headwater near Scales Bridge has made this area a natural crossroads for travellers using the Avon valley and Pewsey Vale. Early east-west routes probably included the present Charlton Footpath, which continues as the main road over Rushall bridge, and the present Devizes road which continued past Rushall church to Upavon. An early downland track, now designated The Ridgeway Route, skirts the military land above the village and Rushall Drove leads up to it from the valley. The Drove continued across Salisbury Plain to Tilshead and Shrewton. The present main roads are the result of turnpiking in 1762 (now the A342 Devizes-Upavon road) and 1840 (now the A345 Amesbury-Pewsey road, although then the turnpike headed north at Woodbridge towards Avebury). The latter road replaced an earlier route on the east bank of the Avon.

Edward Poore and his successors acquired almost everything in Rushall during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and landscaped and emparked all the land around their newly built mansion. Their main area of parkland lay northeast of the river towards Black Knoll, accessed by an elegant bridge built ca. 1780. By 1804 enclosure and emparkment was complete and led to the isolation and decline of the old village near the church and the development of the new village 500 yards to the west, from Rushall bridge in the north to Elm Row in the south. Edward Poore's estate was partitioned between his two sons in 1771 and a house called New House (now Rushall Manor) was built for one of them in the south. In 1838 the Poore's sold up and left the village; their old mansion house was demolished and reduced to the large grass mound visible today west of the church.



**Rushall - 1803**

#### 2.4 Farming:

Agriculture in Rushall followed the typical sheep-and-corn husbandry of the Wiltshire chalkland farm from the early middle ages until the Poores' arrival and formal enclosure in 1804. By 1838 there were three principal farms, Rushall Down with buildings on the southern side of Rushall Down; Rushall Farm, incorporating the manor farm, The Old House and its farm buildings and farm buildings behind New House, and finally Sargent's Farm. Rushall Farm was held throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Strattons, who acquired Rushall Down Farm in 1869 and Sargent's Farm in 1873. It now amounted to virtually the whole parish. When the War Department bought the land, Rushall Down Farm and its buildings fell into decay. In 1917, Rushall Farm comprised 947 acres, including 736 of arable and 149 of meadow and pasture.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century dairy farming superceded sheep-and-corn under Frank Stratton and his successor Joseph Maggs. After the 2<sup>nd</sup>. World War Rushall Farm was used for rearing beef cattle, and from 1968, under Barry Wookey's pioneering initiative, the focus



changed to chemical-free wheat. By 1985 Rushall Farm (including Charlton Farm)

comprised 1650 acres and was declared fully organic. A new mill and farm buildings were built in 1973 to the south of the Devizes road. This produced stone-ground wholemeal flour for bread-making.

## 2.5 The School:

A school was built at Elm Row between 1808 and 1818; in 1833 it was attended by 30 children. It was demolished in 1872 and a new one built at the north end of the village. A Church of England Aided school, it was attended by children from Charlton and North Newnton as well as Rushall. Later the catchment area was increased and included children from RAF Upavon reaching a peak of 86 pupils by 1936. By 1973 numbers had declined to 29 but today it is now full again with 95 pupils and has had a new hall added.

## 2.6 Population:

Between 1377 and 1801 the population of Rushall remained around 150. It rose to a peak of 283 by 1841, declining steadily to 211 in 1871 and 110 in 1961. There has been little change since then until the construction of ten new houses at The Old Barnyard in 2007.

## 2.7 Businesses:

Agriculture was the principal business and employer in Rushall from earliest times until the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Rushall Farm, under Joseph Maggs, before the war employed about 80 men, but now, with the use of modern machinery, only nine people work there. In 1086 there were five mills alongside the Avon and its eastern headwater. A fulling - or tucking- mill stood near Scales Bridge in 1623 but by 1803 no mills remained. The new mill has housed several small businesses.

The Lewis family provided successive generations of blacksmiths and farriers in Rushall from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century until the 1970's. The forge stood next to Avon Villa at Rushall Bridge and adjacent was a wheelwright.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a post office at 1, Park View, later moved to The Old Post Office at the bend by the school. In the 1920's this had a petrol pump and it later became a shop. There was another shop at The Chestnuts in Church Lane just before and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. A thatcher still lives in the oldest cottage in the village, The Lane. Rushall does not appear to have had a public house.

The first Village Hall was built next to the Charlton path in the early 1920's. It was replaced by the present hall in 2002, funded mainly by a grant from The National Lottery.

# 3. **LANDSCAPE & NATURAL HISTORY**

## 3.1 Landscape & Setting:

Rushall is a small village at the southern end of Pewsey Vale in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The village is surrounded by open farmland much of which has been farmed organically since 1972. Immediately to the south of the village lies Salisbury Plain, one of Wiltshire's principal areas of chalk downland.

There are a number of footpaths and droves giving access to both the pastoral scene of Pewsey Vale and the more dramatic expanses of Salisbury Plain.



Salisbury Plain is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area for Conservation (SAC).

The River Avon is a significant attribute to the natural history and landscape of the village. The river rises in the Pewsey Vale as a network fed by chalk springs and since 1996 the river itself has become a SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981.

### 3.2 Natural History (Flora):

The combination of Rushall's location, layout and other contributing factors makes it a haven for an abundance of natural flora of varied types. Natural flora can be seen along the banks of the River Avon, the pond (Church Lane), around the 6 meter field fallow strips, along the Drove and under the hedgerows and wooded areas separating the fields, lanes and tracks. The enrichment of natural flora is aided by Rushall Farms policy of organic farming which means the flora is not destroyed or inhibited by crop chemicals or pesticides.

The River Avon supports various reeds, grasses and water lilies etc; the grass verges are home to clover, daisies, buttercups, dandelions and orchids etc and along Church Lane it would not be spring without an abundance of snow drops.

### 3.3 Trees and Hedgerows:



Trees and hedges are a significant part of the village landscape separating fields, as part of the landscape along the River Avon and as part of the village street scene. In order to protect natural environments the local authorities do, where appropriate, place preservation orders on selected trees.

Currently Rushall has two trees that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's):

- TPO No: 319 – Horse Chestnut Tree at the School House.
- TPO No: 461 – Yew Tree at Brambledown.

The Kennet Planning website advises that hedgerows on non-domestic land are usually protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. These may consist of hedgerows on field boundaries or roadsides for example, but not on garden boundaries. Protected hedgerows are governed by the council and as a consequence changes to hedgerows i.e. a removal of a section of hedgerow, requires formal removal approval.

### 3.4 Natural History (Fauna):

Rushall's low density of housing coupled with the integral areas of grazing land within the village and the River Avon flowing through the parish has led to a diverse local fauna.

Rabbits are very evident in the adjacent areas to Church Lane and are the subject of regular discussion to ensure their population is controlled.

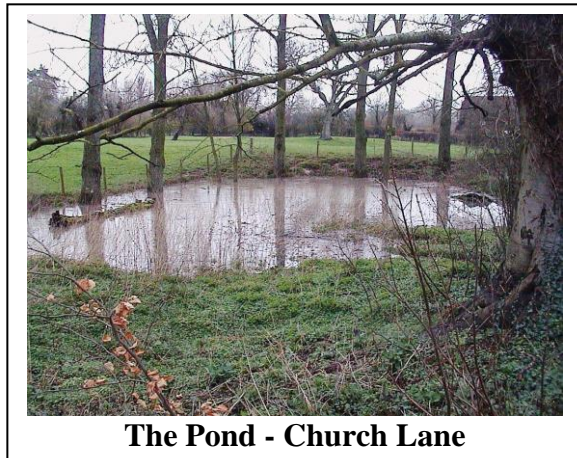
The fox population is healthy and they can be seen in the evening coming from the trees into the fields searching out their food.

Badgers and hedgehogs are evident throughout the parish and it is quite common for hedgehogs to wander through gardens.

Bats are regularly seen at night flying over the fields but their nesting locations have not been formally established, however, it is believed that a possible nesting habitat is within the roof of Chapel House.

Birdlife is extremely varied, from the common varieties which includes starlings, wood pigeons, house martins sparrow hawks etc to the more rare species: woodpeckers, barn owls, great bustard, stone curlews etc. The River Avon regularly hosts swans, ducks, moorhens and herons.

Mature trees and woodlands provide homes for large numbers of smaller birds including tits etc.



**The Pond - Church Lane**

The River Avon also supports water species including fish i.e. brown trout, rainbow trout, pike etc. Ducks and swans are continuously evident along the stretch of river and nest along the banks.

### 3.5 Planning Recommendations:

- *Careful consideration should be given to the preservation of mature and/or visually significant trees whether rare species or otherwise.*
- *Existing hedging should be preserved and developers should be encouraged to incorporate indigenous hedging into any new development.*

#### 4. COMMUNITY (& Links – Village Hall & Church (Benefice))

##### 4.1 General:

Although Rushall has a relatively small population it has a thriving community with a number of significant groups which work to support the needs of the villagers. The Parish Council is the focal point for the sustainment of the infrastructure of the village and represents the villagers' views on planning and development etc. The Church Parochial Council provides the links on the spiritual aspects but also ensures the church is maintained including the churchyard grounds to an exceptionally high standard. The school is an integrate element of the village providing both primary and nursery school placements for Rushall and neighbouring villagers' children. The Village Hall Committee is a combined Rushall and Charlton St Peter forum that ensures regular activities/events are made available to the residents of both villages.

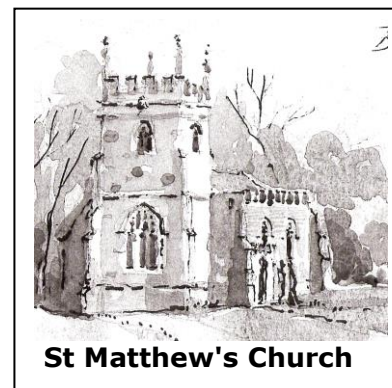
##### 4.2 The Village Hall:

The current hall was built in 2002 and provides both Rushall and Charlton St Peter villages with a centre for community events. There is a well-equipped kitchen, large car park and disabled facilities. Suppers, The Annual Flower Show, Villager's Day lunch and monthly Coffee Mornings are all opportunities for people to get together. The hall is in regular use for Pilates and Yoga classes, Short Mat Bowls, Aerobics, Ballroom Dancing Lessons and Exercise for the over 50s. There are also monthly meetings of the Gardening Club, The Toy Library and Bingo. The hall is available for hire and is popular with people from the surrounding villages for children's parties and other family events. Rushall and Charlton St Peter Village Hall is run by the people of the villages for the benefit of the villagers. The results of the questionnaire identified that 95% of the villagers' believe that it is very important/important to maintain a strong Community Spirit and hold Community Events.

##### 4.3 Parochial Church Council:

The church is situated down Church Lane as this was the original centre of the village, and it is the only building in the village that has been available for the use of the whole community for hundreds of years continuing to the present day. Rushall PCC intends to preserve this tradition and is determined to maintain the fabric of this charming building as the spiritual heart of the village.

Up until six years ago Rushall enjoyed the pastoral care of a vicar dedicated to serving the three parishes of Upavon, Rushall and Charlton St Peter. Today, the priest-in-charge is the rector of the Vale of Pewsey Team consisting of no less than 16 parishes. Nevertheless there is a weekly 11.00am Sunday service at St Matthew's. The Order of the Services follows the Book of Common Prayer. The PCC provides support to the rector for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the church which includes arranging for the organist, order of service, financial control including payment of bills and fund raising, husbandry, cleaning, church flowers, repairs etc. The PCC also act as the rector's link to the villagers and advise the rector of any parishioners who may be in need of pastoral support during illness or difficult times.



New parishioners are always warmly welcomed. In the past, the Advent and Christmas Carol services led by the Jubilate Choir, and their Summer Concert, have

been very well attended, and serve to demonstrate the excellent acoustics of St Matthew's. The dramatic reading of "*Three men in a Boat*" by Michael Bawtree saw the church full to overflowing. Such events focus on this lovely church as a centre for the local community and help to meet the heavy financial demands of maintaining this treasured listed building. Other annual fund raising events include the Wiltshire Historic Churches Ride and Stride in aid of St Matthew's and other Wiltshire churches. The PCC is always keen to welcome new cyclists or walkers to this event which normally takes place on the second Saturday in September.

The monthly magazine, *Together*, contains news about current activities in the three parishes and is distributed to all the houses in the village.

The results from the questionnaire identified that 89% of the villagers' believe it to be very important/important to ensure the maintenance and retention of an active church.

#### 4.4 Rushall Church of England Aided Primary School:

The original school was built in Elm Row between 1808 and 1818: in 1833 thirty pupils attended the school. This building was demolished and a new one built at the north end of the village in 1872. The Church of England Aided Primary School, supported by the Diocese of Salisbury, was originally established to educate the children of the parishes of Rushall and Charlton St Peter.

The present day catchment area includes the villages of Wilsford, Charlton St Peter, Rushall, North Newnton and parts of The Manningsfords. The number of pupils on the school roll has varied over the years with a peak in 1936 when children from RAF Upavon also attended the school. When the school closed at Manningford the children transferred to Rushall where some were educated in the old village hall. Today the school is in high demand with 95 pupils on roll. It is popular and attended by the vast majority of pupils of appropriate age within the catchment area and beyond, thus making it the school of choice for the locality. Recent OfSTED and Diocesan reports reflect the school's success in providing high standards in terms of academic achievements, spiritual and moral guidance as well as an extremely broad and balanced curriculum based on many first hand experiences. The school makes full use of the locality to extend children's learning and understanding of the need to respect the environment.



The school building has grown from its original two classrooms and the school house. A third classroom was added in the 1950's and then in the 1970's the smallest classroom became the headteacher's office and staffroom and was replaced with the mobile classroom seen today. The school house was sold at this time. A school hall was built in 2004 and the school has planning permission to build a new nursery classroom with a permanent two storey

extension. The head teacher, governors and children are keen to ensure that any development of the school is in keeping with the original building design and to this end have ensured that new parts of the building reflect window shape, similar building materials and that the building sits comfortably within the village.

The school has good links with the village and beyond. Children attend church at least three times per year for special services, place entries into the village Flower Show. Villagers attend school events such as the firework display, concerts and fund raising events with some older residents donating handicrafts to support specific projects. The school has hosted afternoon tea sessions for the older residents of the village which have benefited villagers and children alike.

The school is a vibrant, positive and active organisation within the rural community it serves. The results of the questionnaire identified that 92% of the villagers' believe it is very important/important to retain the Village School.

#### 4.5 Planning Recommendations:

- *The village hall should be maintained and retained as an active part of the community.*
- *The church should be maintained and retained as an active part of the community.*
- *The Village School should be retained as an active part of the community.*

## 5. **BUILDINGS & SPACES**

### 5.1 General:

The predominant character of Rushall is the open spaces with grazing land as an integral element within the actual village and extensive areas of grassed areas and banks which generally separate the houses from the road. The development of the village has evolved over centuries and has resulted in the joining of the original distinct settlement areas located around the Devizes road junction and the Chapel House. It is noteworthy that the questionnaire identified that 97% of villagers' believed that the current level of spaces between buildings i.e. density of houses was very important/important to the character of Rushall.

### 5.2 Layout:

The majority of housing in Rushall today lies along the main road through the village and is clearly the result of progressive infill. Housing is generally low density with spaces between individual housing plots and terraced housing rows as shown on the map below. The questionnaire identified that 100% of the villagers' believed that it was very important/important that the village layout should be preserved and 76% of the villagers' also identified that further housing infill was not acceptable. It is believed that the villagers' response is a reflection of the importance of the retention of the current space between houses and the open aspect views provided by the current density.



**Rushall - 2005**

**5.3 Buildings:**

Rushall has a range of styles of buildings which have been built in clusters i.e. a row of lime washed thatched cottages, a row of brick faced tiled cottages, a row of detached bungalows etc. However, generally each cluster appears to blend into the street scene in a sympathetic manner. There are a number of significant villa styled properties within the village which occupy large grounds i.e. Rushall Manor, The Old Rectory (formally the Parsonage), Rushall Lodge etc. It is noteworthy that although at least two of these houses were built before 1803 along with a number of other historic buildings in the village they have not been included within the English Heritage listing register. The following buildings etc are listed: St Matthews Church, Bray Monument (in the churchyard), The Old House, 1 & 2 Elm Cottages, The Chestnuts, The Lane and Rushall Manor Park Bridge (Church Lane).

#### 5.4 Undeveloped land, views and spaces:

Rushall has significant open spaces around and between buildings with Twintown Close and Twintown Meadow providing grazing land as an integral aspect of the village. The open characteristics provide panoramic views over The Park, West & East North Field, Garsons Field, Hays Field, and Lower House Ground with a back drop of remarkable views over the rolling hills and downs. This open aspect of agricultural grazing and crop fields is significant in providing Rushall its integrated rural feel. The majority of undeveloped land is designated as farmland and supports the natural flora and fauna. Twintown Meadow grazing land, along the banks of the River Avon, facilitate the swelling of the river after heavy rainfall and the grazing land is regularly transformed into a flood plain.



To date the swelling of the river into the flood plain has not resulted in a threat to any of the neighbouring properties. However, the degree of flooding this year (2008) was significantly more than previous years which could be connected to the development of the new houses on 'The Old Barnyard'.

The questionnaire identified that 84% of the villagers' believed that it was not acceptable for any future development on the current undeveloped farmland and open spaces.

#### 5.5 Boundaries:

Rushall has two significantly different boundaries, the Parish boundary and the village housing boundary. The Parish boundary extends beyond the main road bridge up to North Newton and then encompasses the farmland out to the A345 (Upavon Rd) back past the perimeter of France Farm down to Green Way (Track), across to the A342 and up Rushall Drove. In simplistic terms the village housing boundary starts at Rushall Manor at one end of the village and extends down the main road to Avon Villa at the other end of the village. The results of the questionnaire identified that 89% of the villagers' considered it

unacceptable for any future development to extend beyond the current village housing boundary.

#### 5.6 Planning Recommendations:

Developers and designers must be aware of the history of the village and take into consideration the character of the village and nature of existing buildings if increased 'suburbanisation' is to be avoided.

The Kennet District Local Plan states “Villages without a good range of local facilities should not provide additional housing of any consequence. The countryside needs to be protected for its own sake.” Rushall is identified (Table H.5) as a ‘Village with Limited Facilities’ and therefore Rushall is covered by Policy HC24:

#### **VILLAGES WITH LIMITED FACILITIES**

*Within the villages in the countryside listed in Table H.5, which do not have defined Limits of Development, new housing development will be restricted to infilling, the replacement of existing dwellings or the re-use of existing buildings or the redevelopment of existing buildings provided that the development:*

- a) is within the existing built up area of the village;*
- b) does not consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development; and*
- c) the development is in harmony with the village in terms of its scale and character.*

*All new housing proposals should conform with other policies of the Plan, including those that seek to protect local services (ED28), amenity (PD1) and employment or tourism uses (ED11, ED12) and promote affordable housing (HC32).*

The Kennet District Local Plan recognises the potential for replacement of existing dwellings and identifies the Policy HC25:

*In the countryside, the replacement of an existing dwelling which has not been abandoned will be permitted where:*

- a) the siting is closely related to the footprint of the dwelling it replaces, unless the re-siting of the dwelling would remove a road safety hazard, and*
- b) the scale of the replacement dwelling is not significantly larger than the original structure.*

*In cases where a dwelling is re-sited to remove a road safety hazard careful attention will be given to the potential impact of the proposed development on the wider, landscape particularly where the site is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Special Landscape Area.*

The Kennet District Local Plan also identifies Policy HC26 as applicable to Rushall as a village listed in table H.5:

## **HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

*Outside of the Limits of Development defined for the villages listed in Table H.4 and outside of the existing built up area of the villages listed in Table H.5, new residential development will only be permitted in the following circumstances:*

- a) To provide accommodation for the essential needs of agriculture or forestry or other employment essential to the countryside as established HC27;*
- b) To provide holiday accommodation from the conversion of an existing building; or*
- c) Where the conversion of a listed building to residential use is the only economic means of retaining the historic structure.*

*Provided that the development does not affect the character of the local landscape.*

New developments should protect the local character and complement the village's appearance if further detracting is to be avoided.

- *Infill development should be discouraged but where permitted should be designed to integrate well with the landscape of the surrounding countryside.*
- *The siting of any new developments should be carefully considered with regards to the surroundings.*
- *Developers and landowners should ensure that they are sympathetic to the rural landscape and consider views from all directions with drawings and sketches of prospective properties.*
- *The sites of new development should also allow for the planting of shrubs and trees in a manner sympathetic to the rural character of the village.*
- *No development should extend beyond the current outer housing boundary of the village.*

## **6. BUILDINGS, MATERIALS**

### **6.1 General:**

Rushall contains a range of building styles, materials and details. Traditionally, it has been a community of two storey thatched cottages and houses with lime-washed walls although brick built properties with slated and tiled roofs are common. Larger houses exist, mainly at the edges of the village in the shape of The Old Rectory, Rushall Lodge and The Manor. It is essential to the retention of the character of the village that the design of any new development and the selection of materials is sympathetic to the style in the specific location of the village.

In recent years a number of brick built executive homes have been built on reclaimed 'brownfield' sites. These developments were subject to considerable consultation that did influence the house design and selection of materials used. The height of the houses on the Tractor Yard was reduced and stepped down so as not to be obtrusive with the neighbouring properties. Flint was introduced as a building facing material and was also used on the street boundary wall.

A subsequent development was also a ‘brownfield’ site known locally as the ‘Beefyard’ and then renamed as part of the development as ‘The Old Barnyard’. The density of houses on the Barnyard was reduced from earlier proposals and two of the houses were thatched in recognition of the cottages and houses in that location of the village. Although the original street wall was demolished as part of the build a replacement boundary wall was reinstated.

Policy PD1 of the Kennet District Local Plan recognises the importance of maintaining local distinctiveness which and includes the selection of building materials (clause 9). Building materials and some of the key vernacular features include the following:

- Cob – found in particular in the south of the District, and generally coated with limewash.
- Thatch – one of the most distinctive elements in the District. This traditionally used long straw and the use of water reed is not appropriate for repair or extension to historic buildings.
- Stone – not one of the most significant elements due to the paucity of good material, but Corralian Beds in the west of the District provide local rubble stone, and sandstones and other local sources have been used.
- Flint – knapped flint has been used on buildings of all types, generally in association with brickwork.
- Tiles – clay tiles are commonly found in association with brick. Tile hanging to clad buildings often over timber framed buildings, is also common. Slates from North Wales became popular for a short while following the opening of the Kennet and Avon canal, and feature in specific areas close to canal wharfs.

The feedback from the questionnaire identified that 95% of the villagers’ believed it is very important/important to maintain the current styles of buildings in the current clusters. The villagers’ also believed that it is important to retain existing cottages/houses and build new cottages/houses with thatched roofs and lime washed rendered walls.



## 6.2. Planning Recommendations:

Developers and designers must be aware of the character of the village and nature of the design of existing buildings. New developments/changes should protect the local character and complement the village's appearance using designs and materials that blend with neighbouring properties.

Note! There are currently 70 houses in Rushall and 33% of these houses are thatched.

- *Developers and designers shall ensure that their designs complement neighbouring buildings and are appropriate in scale height and massing to existing housing found in the locality.*
- *Developers and designers shall ensure that they select materials that are sympathetic to materials used on adjacent/neighbouring buildings.*
- *Road and driveway material should be appropriate for a rural village.*

## 7. UTILITIES

### 7.1 Overhead power lines:

Although there are no high voltage national grid power pylons located within the village most houses get their electricity feed from domestic voltage overhead power lines. The power cables are supported on wooden poles that run along the main road through the village and also down Church Lane. Telephone cables are also supported by similar wooden poles running along the same route; in some cases the poles support both cables. Some of these poles are also used to hang sodium street lighting along the main road and one light along Church Lane. A typical example of the multiple use of these poles is shown alongside. The questionnaire results have identified that 81% of the villagers' believe the level of street lighting to be very acceptable/acceptable.



### 7.2 Water supply and sewage disposal:

The majority of houses within the village are on mains water supply and main drains. However some houses, those that are tied to Rushall Farm, get their water supply from a pump that uses a Well as its source. A condition of sale of these tied cottages is that they transfer to mains water supply upon completion of sale. There are also some houses in the village that still use septic tanks for the disposal of foul water and sewage.

### 7.3 Street furniture:

Apart from the telegraph/power line poles mentioned above, there is a collection of road signs at the foot of the Devizes road (A342) directing traffic either north or south. There are three entries to the village (north, south and west) and all have signs on entry denoting Rushall and requesting careful drivers through the village. There are 30mph and speed delimiting signs at each entry and exit and painted



signs (white on terracotta coloured tarmac) on the road surface itself. One way entry and exit signs are located at the entry and exit to the village hall and its car park. Warning signs of bends in the road (and associated chevrons) and of the approach to the school are sited appropriately. The school has its own sign alongside the pavement.

Part of the main road through the village has an associated metalled pavement on one side. This pavement starts at the northern end of the village outside "Forge House" and terminates at the school. There is no pavement in the southern half of the village. The result of the questionnaire has identified that 69% of the villagers' do not believe that the current level of pavements is acceptable in the village.

At the northern end of the village where the road crosses over the River Avon there are signs either side of the bridge indicating the river's name. The bridge itself has baskets and tubs of flowers that are maintained throughout the year by a local resident (funded by the Parish Council). Close by the bridge is a sewage pumping station.



There is a telephone kiosk along the main road through the village for which the parish council is currently seeking a listing status. Situated at the southern end of "The Gardens" is a post box. Outside of the Village hall there is the Parish Council notice board on one side of the front door, on the other side is a newspaper collection box that the local newsagent uses to deliver newspapers to the villagers for their collection.

There is a second newspaper box situated in the lay-by alongside the main road just south the of "The Old Barnyard". Behind this box is a telephone distribution panel. Entry and exit to the lay-by is bordered by white plastic bollards.

Situated within the grounds of the Village Hall are two 3-seat benches donated by the Parish Council for use by the general public. One faces over the water meadows toward the River Avon. On the grassed mound outside of the hall there is a tree planted in memory of a local resident, planted by his wife.

At one time there were stocks positioned at the foot of the Devizes road where it enters the village and the houses nearby celebrate this by being named "Stocktree Cottages". The original stocks disappeared a long time ago, but in celebration of the new millennium a replica set of stocks was built and installed by local people and these are still there along with a commemorative plaque.



Three housing developments within Rushall have street names visible: “The Gardens”, “The Old Tractor Yard” and “The Old Barnyard”.

There are signposts indicating public footpaths/bridleways. Some of those which enter a field have new galvanised “kissing gates”. Church Lane is nominated as a “Pewsey Quiet Lane” and has associated signage – which also acts as a signpost to the church.

At the southern exit to the village there is a brick built bus shelter. Although this is no longer in use it is adorned with hanging pots of flowers to help keep its appearance acceptable.

There are no advertising hoardings or any other signs to distract passers-by from the simple beauty of Rushall.



#### 7.4 Planning Recommendations:

- *The level of street lighting is acceptable and appropriate for a rural village and should not be increased.*
- *Any future development should consider an extension to the current level of pavements in the village where possible.*
- *The level of signs is acceptable and appropriate for a rural village and should not be increased.*
- *The telephone box should be retained.*
- *The stocks should be maintained and retained.*

## 8. **ROADS & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

### 8.1 Roads and Parking:

There is only one main road in Rushall, the A342 from Upavon which meets the Pewsey Road from North Newton at the junction with Church Lane. Although the Pewsey Road is only designated as a ‘C’ Class road it carries a heavy volume of commercial vehicles which are cutting through to Devizes.

All houses in the village have provision for off road parking therefore residents parking on the road is not an issue. Prior to the relocation and building of the new village hall parents parking outside the school to ferry their children to and from school was a significant issue. However, the new village hall design incorporated specific parking to reduce this issue.

One of the most significant issues resulting from the questionnaire is the villagers’ concern over traffic speed control with 78% of villagers’ identifying that the current control measures are not effective.

## 8.2 Quiet Lane Project:

Church Lane is designated as a 'Quiet Lane' as it is a single track road with limited passing places and care needs to be taken when passing pedestrians. It is difficult to gauge how effective the 'Quiet Lane Control' is as Church Lane is a dead end and only services 4 houses and the Church. However, the results of the questionnaire identified that 64% of villagers' believe the Quiet Lane control to be very effective/effective.

## 8.3 Public Rights of Way (Footpaths):

The main footpath links Rushall with Charlton and is used daily by children attending Rushall School. The questionnaire identified that 94% of villagers believe the maintenance and retention of this footpath to be very important/important. There are numerous other footpaths across the fields providing direct links to the church and to Upavon.. The questionnaire identified that 100% of villagers believe these Public Rights of Way to be very important/important.

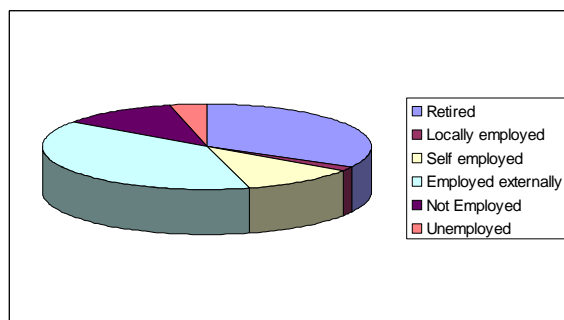
## 8.4 Planning Recommendations:

- *Urgent action is required to implement an effective method of speed control through the village.*

## 9. EMPLOYMENT

Historically Rushall has always been concerned with agriculture, farming and rural crafts. In modern times there has been a gradual shift towards a mixed population of local workers and families, retired people and those who have moved to the village for a rural lifestyle but who work elsewhere. The population of the village has remained relatively constant throughout the years, at an average of 150 residents. Although this average number increased during the agricultural booms of the 1600's and 1800's to about 250 persons, before slowly shrinking back again. Although Rushall is still situated in a rural area supporting diverse agricultural activities, with the introduction of mechanisation and less labour intensive tasks over the decades, agricultural employment has declined substantially.

As there are only three employers in Rushall - Rushall Farms, Hambledon Herbs and Rushall Primary School, very little employment is available within the village itself and consequently there are very few people who live and are actually employed in Rushall (today less than 2% of the village population are employed in Rushall and less than 1% are employed in agriculture). 10% of residents are self employed. Nearly one third (31%) of Rushall's population are retired and 10% are not employed. 37% of Rushall's residents work outside of the village and commute to work almost exclusively by car. There are very few villagers who are unemployed in Rushall (less than 4%).



Although Rushall has a thriving and successful Primary school only a handful of children who attend the school actually live in Rushall. However, the head teacher of the school does live in Rushall.

## 10. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kennet District Local Plan states “Villages without a good range of local facilities should not provide additional housing of any consequence. The countryside needs to be protected for its own sake.” Rushall is identified (Table H.5) as a ‘Village with Limited Facilities’ and therefore Rushall is covered by Policy HC24. Developers and planners should also note the applicability of Policy HC25, Policy HC26 and Policy PD1 which recognises the importance of maintaining local distinctiveness including the selection of building materials (clause 9).

This Village Design Statement has also identified the following recommendations:

- Careful consideration should be given to the preservation of mature and/or visually significant trees whether rare species or otherwise.
- Existing hedging should be preserved and developers should be encouraged to incorporate indigenous hedging into any new development.
- The village hall should be maintained and retained as an active part of the community.
- The church should be maintained and retained as an active part of the community.
- The Village School should be retained as an active part of the community.
- Infill development should be discouraged but where permitted should be designed to integrate well with the landscape of the surrounding countryside.
- The siting of any new developments should be carefully considered with regards to the surroundings.
- Developers and landowners should ensure that they are sympathetic to the rural landscape and consider views from all directions with drawings and sketches of prospective properties.
- The sites of new development should also allow for the planting of shrubs and trees in a manner sympathetic to the rural character of the village.
- No development should extend beyond the current outer housing boundary of the village.
- Developers and designers shall ensure that their designs complement neighbouring buildings and are appropriate in scale height and massing to existing housing found in the locality.
- Developers and designers shall ensure that they select materials that are sympathetic to materials used on adjacent/neighbouring buildings.
- Road and driveway material should be appropriate for a rural village.
- The level of street lighting is acceptable and appropriate for a rural village and should not be increased.
- Any future development should consider incorporating an extension to the current level of pavements in the village where possible.
- The level of signs is acceptable and appropriate for a rural village and should not be increased.
- The telephone box should be retained.
- The stocks should be maintained and retained.
- Urgent action is required to implement an effective method of speed control through the village.

## **11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- Permission for the use of valuable data from Victoria County History of England: Wiltshire, Volume 10.
- Permission for the use of valuable data from Dr. John Chandler's books "Marlborough and Eastern Wiltshire" and "Devizes and Central Wiltshire", Rushall Concise History.

## **12. QUESTIONNAIRE**

12.1 A single copy of the questionnaire was distributed to all occupied houses on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 with a request for completion and return by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008. At this time there were 70 houses in Rushall but only 62 were occupied.

12.2 A total of 37 completed questionnaires plus additional comments were received which represents 60% of households. This is considered to be a good response and is believed to be representative of a wide spread of the villagers'. The results of the questionnaire are included as an Appendix.

12.3 The questionnaire specifically requested comments on the level and type of road signs and the effectiveness of traffic speed control. The responses to these questions were incorporated into the specific sections covering these topics. Additional comments were also provided by villagers' and these were also incorporated into the main body of the document.

## 13. APPENDIX - QUESTIONNAIRE & RESULTS

### 1. LANDSCAPE & NATURAL HISTORY:

A. How strongly do you feel that Rushall's Open Views should be preserved?

a) Strongly - **95%** b) Preferably – **5%** c) Does Not Matter - **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

B. How important is the maintenance and retention of the grassed area's, verges and banks to Rushall's appearance?

a) Very Important – **78%** b) Important – **22%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

C. How strongly do you feel that Rushall's Nature Areas ie river, pond etc should be preserved?

a) Strongly - **92%** b) Preferably – **8%** c) Does Not Matter - **0%**

D. How important is it to retain the sheep and cattle grazing pastures within the internal boundaries of the village?

a) Very Important – **84%** b) Important – **14%** c) Not Important – **2%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

E. How important is the retention and maintenance of Tree's and Hedges?

a) Very Important – **76%** b) Important – **24%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

F. How important is the maintenance of the Churchyard and adjacent verges?

a) Very Important – **76%** b) Important – **24%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

G. How important is the Seasonal Planting ie bulbs etc?

a) Very Important – **41%** b) Important – **51%** c) Not Important – **8%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

### 2. COMMUNITY & LINKS:

A. How important is a strong Community Spirit & Community Events ie Coffee Mornings, Bingo, Flower Show, Villagers' Day etc?

a) Very Important – **68%** b) Important – **27%** c) Not Important - **2½%** d) Don't Know- **2½%**

B. Is Your Home?

a) Owned - **76%** b) Privately Rented - **5%** c) Tied - **2½%** d) Housing Association – **14%**  
e) Other - **2½%**

C. How important are the Community Links with neighbouring villages for both the Village Hall and Church as part of the Benefice?

a) Very Important – **35%** b) Important – **49%** c) Not Important - **10½%** d) Don't Know - **5½%**

D. How important is the maintenance and retention of an active Church?

a) Very Important – **57%** b) Important – **32%** c) Not Important – **11%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

E. How important is the retention of a Village School?

a) Very Important – **62%** b) Important – **30%** c) Not Important – **8%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

F. How important is Neighbourhood Watch and Community Policing?

a) Very Important – **73%** b) Important – **27%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

G. How important is a Clean Dogs Policy?

a) Very Important – **81%** b) Important – **19%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

H. How important is an effective litter collection?

a) Very Important – **81%** b) Important – **19%** c) Not Important – **0%** d) Don't Know – **0%**

### 3. BUILDINGS & SPACES:

A. How important is Rushall's Layout and should it be preserved?

- a) Very Important – **68%**    b) Important – **32%**    c) Not Important – **0%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

B. How important is the current level of spaces between buildings ie density of houses?

- a) Very Important – **70%**    b) Important – **27%**    c) Not Important – **0%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

C. Is further 'In-Fill' development acceptable?

- a) Very Acceptable – **0%**    b) Acceptable – **24%**    c) Not Acceptable – **76%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

D. Is further development on 'Undeveloped Land' acceptable?

- a) Very Acceptable – **0%**    b) Acceptable – **16%**    c) Not Acceptable – **84%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

E. Is the development of further 'Brown Sites' for housing acceptable?

- a) Very Acceptable – **6%**    b) Acceptable – **40%**    c) Not Acceptable – **46%**    d) Don't Know – **8%**

F. Is it acceptable to extend the boundaries of the village to include further houses?

- a) Very Acceptable – **3%**    b) Acceptable – **8%**    c) Not Acceptable – **89%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

G. How important is the maintenance and retention of the Bus Shelter?

- a) Very Important – **8%**    b) Important – **43%**    c) Not Important – **41%**    d) Don't Know – **8%**

### 4. BUILDINGS & MATERIALS:

A. How important is it to maintain the current styles of buildings in the current clusters?

- a) Very Important – **46%**    b) Important – **49%**    c) Not Important – **5%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

B. How important is it to maintain and retain existing cottages/houses and build new cottages/houses with thatched roofs?

- a) Very Important – **43%**    b) Important – **35%**    c) Not Important – **19%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

C. How important is it to maintain and retain existing cottages/houses and build new cottages/houses with painted rendered walls?

- a) Very Important – **40%**    b) Important – **34%**    c) Not Important – **17%**    d) Don't Know – **9%**

D. Is it important for windows on existing properties and new build properties to be sympathetic with the original build and close neighbouring properties?

- a) Very Important – **38%**    b) Important – **38%**    c) Not Important – **21%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

E. How important is the type of Road/Driveway Material to the appearance in a Rural Village?

- a) Very Important – **32%**    b) Important – **35%**    c) Not Important – **30%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

### 5. UTILITIES & STREET FURNITURE:

A. Is the level of Street Lighting in the village acceptable?

- a) Very Acceptable – **13%**    b) Acceptable – **68%**    c) Not Acceptable – **19%**

B. Is the level and type of Road Signs acceptable?

- a) Very Acceptable – **9%**    b) Acceptable – **88%**    c) Not Acceptable – **3%**

C. Is the retention of a Public Telephone Box in the village important?

- a) Very Important – **22%**    b) Important – **27%**    c) Not Important – **41%**    d) Don't Know – **10%**

**D.** Is the maintenance and retention of the Stocks important?

a) Very Important – **39%**    b) Important – **44%**    c) Not Important – **14%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

**6.            ROADS & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT:**

**A.** Is the current Traffic Speed Control in the village effective?

a) Very Effective – **0%**    b) Effective – **19%**    c) Not Effective – **78%**    d) Don't Know – **3%**

**B.** Is the current level of pavements in the village acceptable?

a) Very Acceptable – **0%**    b) Acceptable – **31%**    c) Not Acceptable – **69%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

**C.** Is the Quiet Lane control to the church effective?

a) Very Effective – **6%**    b) Effective – **58%**    c) Not Effective – **14%**    d) Don't Know – **22%**

**D.** How important is the maintenance and retention of the Footpath between Rushall and Charlton?

a) Very Important – **63%**    b) Important – **31%**    c) Not Important – **6%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

**E.** How important are the Public Rights Of Way Footpaths?

a) Very Important – **84%**    b) Important – **16%**    c) Not Important – **0%**    d) Don't Know – **0%**

**F.** Is On-Road Parking an issue in the village?

a) Big Issue – **6%**    b) Issue – **22%**    c) Not An Issue – **62%**