



Chideock Parish Plan

An action plan for the community

2003

Chideock parish plan 2003

Introduction

This parish plan is based on the responses to the village survey carried out in early 2002 under the Countryside Agency's *Vital Villages* initiative. A total of 192 householders completed questionnaires, representing 369 residents of Chideock and a response rate of over 60% – demonstrating that the village supports this initiative.

The parish plan describes Chideock as it is today, and highlights the qualities valued by residents. Its aim is to ensure that future development and change contributes positively to the village by protecting and enhancing Chideock's special nature.

It is not only large developments that produce change – small day-to-day alterations can affect the look and character of the whole Winniford valley.

The parish plan is intended to form supplementary guidance for the West Dorset District Council (WDDC) when it considers future planning matters affecting the parish of Chideock, especially in the context of the inset 47 map forming part of the local plan.

The parish plan provides a detailed statement of villagers' needs – from both a planning and quality of life perspective. The plan is a "blue print" for future projects and activities in the community. For example, discussions have already taken place with the Rural Housing Trust and WDDC on affordable housing. A proven housing need has already been established, which puts Chideock in a strong position when dealing with the planning authorities.

Parish Plan Steering Group, summer 2003.

Landscape and the built environment

Chideock is an attractive village situated on the A35 trunk road three miles west of Bridport. The Winniford valley encloses the parish, which is rural and of dramatic landscape quality. There are high hills to the east, west and north, and unspoiled coastal cliffs to the south. Golden cap and Langdon forest lie to the west and a wide bay with shingle

beach forms the southern boundary.

There are two outlying hamlets – Seatown to the south on the coast and North Chideock at the head of the Winniford valley to the north. Both are accessed by narrow lanes lined by high banked Dorset hedges. There is a large caravan park in the lower valley near the coast and by the beach, which is privately owned. The beach car park is also privately owned.

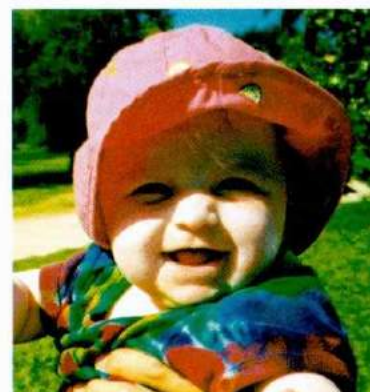
Chideock has some protection as it is in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A large part of the village is within a conservation area. The area between the sea and the A35 road is designated heritage coast and the coastline has World Heritage Site status.

The landscape of the parish is diverse and comprises four main components:

- The valley of the river Winniford.
- The eastern slope of the Winniford valley rising to the twin summits of Quarry Hill and Frogmore Hill some 130 metres above the valley.
- The western slope of the valley, the elongated summit of Langdon Hill and the western slope of Langdon Hill.
- The coastal strip of plunging cliffs at Doghouse Hill (140 metres) to the east and the 100 metres high cliff below Black Cover to the west. Golden Cap lies outside the parish, but at 191 metres dominates this dramatic stretch of coastline.

Hedgerow trees are an integral part of the landscape of the valley and its lower slopes, occasionally standing as isolated trees in fields, indicating the line of former hedgerows. Woodland is a significant component of the landscape, with many informally shaped copses and ribbons of riverside trees in the valley and on the slopes. However, it is the coniferous plantation on the summit of Langdon Hill that dominates the scene.

The parish has a limited special wildlife interest, with three woodland and grassland Sites of Nature Conservation and one Site of Special Scientific Interest.



Chideock has archaeological sites and finds dating from the Neolithic period to the 20th century. It has 12 recorded sites and finds on the Sites and Finds Monuments Record, one of which – the earthworks of the medieval Chideock Castle to the north of the village – is a scheduled ancient monument. A Neolithic settlement is located on the cliff at the foot of Doghouse Hill.

The grade I listed church of St Giles dates from the 14th and 15th centuries, and has a strong west tower. The grade II listed Weld Mortuary Chapel (1853) is a cruciform structure with an external stone rood and fish-scale tiles on the roof.

There are a large number of 16th and 17th century houses, cottages and farms within the parish. Around 25% of all properties in Chideock are grade II listed.

The population of Chideock is around 550, with an above-average proportion of older people reflecting the very significant inward migration to the village in the recent past. This is in turn reflected in the high price of property in the village and the

“We support the need for low cost affordable housing for rent or purchase by local people.”

lamentable fact that local young people are unable to remain in the village as they become young adults. Chideock has one of the highest proportions

of second and holiday homes in the south west of England.

There has been much development and infilling over the past four decades, starting with the development of houses on North Road and bungalows at St Giles and Winniford Closes in non-local Purbeck stone. The two most recent developments, both within the Conservation Area – Arundell and Foss Orchard – made no provision for affordable housing and produced only modest planning gain for the community.

Chideock benefits from two shops, a post office, three public houses, an hotel and restaurant and many guest houses and bed and breakfast businesses. Tourism is a major part of the local economy.

Chideock parish plan in detail

The following sections cover our parish plan in detail, setting out actions we intend to pursue and the principles underlying these initiatives in the following areas:

■ Housing

- Employment
- Transport
- Traffic and pedestrians
- Crime and safety
- Environment
- Youth
- Community
- World Heritage Site management

Housing

- We support the need for low cost affordable housing for rent or purchase by local people.
- We oppose the development of more executive homes.
- We oppose the development of second homes.
- We believe that any future development should reflect the historic character of the village, with particular emphasis on design specifications, construction and roofing materials.
- We support the strengthening of the current development boundary.

Action

- Pursue low cost housing provision with the Rural Housing Trust and other organisations.
- Pursue housing needs survey.
- Make an informed submission to the new local plan.

See appendix 1 for the village design statement, which covers planning issues in greater detail.

See appendix 2 for a statement on listed buildings.

Employment

Due to the high proportion of retired and semi-retired people in Chideock, the need for employment provision is practically non-existent, according to the village survey. Vacancies that arise in the local shops, public houses and guest houses are usually filled by workers from outside Chideock. The viability of the village as a working community in future is questionable, given the age profile of the current population and the low numbers of people seeking work in Chideock.

- There is no demand for further economic development.
- We oppose the further development of permanent caravan parks.

- We support a heritage centre/information point.

Action

- Place a situations vacant board in the village to advertise local jobs.
- Make an informed submission to the local plan.

Transport

Relatively small numbers of residents use the bus service and those that do are generally satisfied with the service, the survey suggests.

There is demand for an extended evening service and the younger members of the village would like a service to take them to the leisure centre and skate park.

- We support the provision of an extended evening bus service.
- We support the provision of a leisure bus for younger residents.

Action

- Inform the Western Area Transport Action Group and Dorset County Council of the need for an extended evening bus service.
- Pursue the provision of a youth leisure bus with grant funding from Dorset Community Action and the Countryside Agency.
- Encourage and promote the use of the bus service.

Just over half of village survey respondents want pedestrian crossings in Chideock.

Traffic and pedestrians

Lorry traffic, general congestion and traffic speed are identified as the top three traffic problems by the village survey. Specific areas identified as hot spots are: A35; Seahill Lane; Duck Street; North Road and Mill Lane.

- We support the removal of heavy lorries (through traffic) from the A35.
- We support a footpath/cycleway from Chideock to Bridport.
- We support pedestrian crossings on the A35.
- We support restrictions on the further development of caravan parks.

Action

- Information to be fed into the Highways Agency route management strategy action plan.
- Investigate grants from Dorset Community Action and Sustrans for a footpath/cycleway to Bridport. Liaise with other parishes, including Symondsbury and Char Valleys.
- Pursue quiet lanes initiative with Dorset County Council.
- Make an informed submission to the local plan.



Crime and safety

Few concerns were expressed about crime and safety in the village survey, but many wished to see an improvement in police presence in Chideock.

Action

- Promote and encourage the existing Neighbourhood Watch.
- Contact Dorset police to request more community police patrols.
- Pursue the provision of street lighting in Broadmead with Dorset County Council.

Environment

Waste management

- Support for kerbside recycling collection.
- Some support for bottle and newspaper banks in the village.
- Support for community composting.
- Some support for allotments.

Action

- Report findings to Dorset County Council and request action.

Pollution of River Winniford

- Problems associated with sewage pollution of the River Winniford.

Action

- Provide the Environment Agency with up-to-date information on effluent release into the river.

- Liaise with the Environment Agency in order to alleviate present problems.
- Liaise with landowners on clearing and cleaning stretches of the river so as to prevent back-up flooding.

Areas identified for special protection

- Seatown and the beach.
- Castle ruins and Ruins Lane.

Action

- Liaise with landowners, local authorities and the National Trust, and pursue a policy of maintenance and improvement.
- Liaise with local village groups and societies to protect and enhance these special environmental areas.

Areas identified for improvement

- Keeping the beach clean.
- Protecting woodland and planting more trees and hedges.
- Preserving old orchards.



Action

- Increase resident/visitor litter awareness.
- Liaise with local authorities.
- Liaise with the Countryside Agency and the National Trust.
- Promote tree preservation orders.
- Liaise with the Environment Agency.
- Make an informed submission to the local plan.

Wildlife

- There is support for action to preserve and maintain lakes, rivers, woodland and fields.
- There is support for initiatives to reduce pollution in the countryside.
- There is support for a campaign against litter and rubbish.

Action

- Liaise with landowners.
- Liaise with the Countryside Agency.

- Liaise with the National Trust.
- Liaise with the Environment Agency.
- Pursue a campaign against litter and rubbish.
- Liaise with the caravan park owners.

Community

Village hall

Excellent facilities are offered by the village hall, including facilities for disabled users.

Recent upgrading has added a committee

room, new toilets, gas central heating, double-glazing, new soft furnishings, a modern kitchen and a new floor. Community events are satisfactory but could be improved.

Many respondents to the village survey would like to see car parking provided at the village hall.

- There is support for car parking at the village hall.
- There is support for short mat bowls.
- There is support for moviola and film shows.

Action

- Liaise with the village hall committee.
- Pursue grants with Dorset Community Action.
- Pursue the provision of car parking.

Youth

Very few children appear to be excluded from local activities outside the village due to problems of access and cost. However, the proportion of children in the village is in long-term decline and currently stands at just over 10% of the population. This compares with 20% in the neighbouring group of parishes, Char Valley.

There is support for badminton and snooker, computer and IT facilities and holiday play and youth schemes.

Action

- Liaise with the village hall committee.
- Pursue grants with Dorset Community Action.
- Encourage parents to organise and run youth activities in the village hall and elsewhere.
- Encourage the creation of some affordable housing for village children when they grow up so that they can continue to live in the village.

Children's playing field/play area

Good facilities are provided and the area is well maintained. Further improvements could be made.

- There is support for the provision of football posts and nets.
- There is support for safety surfacing.

Local amenities

Chideock is well served by two shops and a post office, three public houses, one hotel/restaurant, together with various guesthouses, bed and breakfast businesses and holiday cottage accommodation. There is also a large caravan park owned by West Dorset Leisure Holidays Ltd.

The caravan park is well maintained and has obtained a David Bellamy award for



conservation. Support from the local community is vital in order to sustain this high level of amenity, which is very dependent on the tourist trade.

The parish council has published a new illustrated footpath guide featuring and supported by most of the local businesses.

Action

- Promote and encourage local community support for all village businesses.
- Erect a history/information noticeboard.
- Liaise with Dorset Community Action on grants.

Churches

Chideock is served by a Roman Catholic chapel and an Anglican church. Both churches are valued as historic buildings and as focal points for village life, according to the survey.

Action

- Encourage support and recognition of the value that the churches play in the community.

Parish Council

There is general satisfaction that the issues discussed by Chideock Parish Council reflect local concerns. The parish council is responsible for implementing this action plan.

Action

- Encourage electors to support the implementation of this action plan.
- Chideock Parish Council will regularly discuss the action plan and the progress of projects proposed in it.

World Heritage Site management plan

Part of our parish, Seatown, is within a World Heritage Site. Residents cherish the unspoiled views and tranquillity of this area. They think it most important to keep the beach clean and look after this special site. Seatown and the beach need special protection. Congestion and the speed of traffic in Seahill Lane is another area of concern, as are access and car parking pressures in the hamlet.

Action

- Pursue a comprehensive Seatown plan with all interested parties to address the above issues.
- Make an informed submission to the local plan.
- Make an informed submission to the heritage coast management plan.
- Seek a traffic management plan from Dorset County Council for Seahill Lane during the holiday season.

Review and revision

We recognise that factors internal and external to the village may require this plan to be updated in future. The steering committee will consider the need to update the plan as required.

Appendix 1:

Village design and landscape statement

“Conserving the best of the Winniford Valley”

The Winniford Valley and its high horseshoe of surrounding hills, ending in unspoiled coastal cliffs and a shingle beach, contains a parish which is rural and of the highest landscape quality.

The settlement pattern reflects past dependence on agriculture and fishing, with the main community centred in Chideock, the coastal community by the beach at Seatown, and the outlying community at North Chideock with its cluster of farms.

More recent development in the past few decades reflects the shift to a greater dependence on tourism and the inward migration of retired people.

Although the use of the settlement has changed with

social and economic circumstances, the basic geographic pattern of the parish has remained unaltered.

To provide an appreciation of the local context, and inspiration for landscaping and conservation, we submit the following design and landscape guidelines.

1 Context

1.1 These guidelines are intended to become special planning guidance within the district council’s planning system.

1.2 They should be taken together with the parish council’s responses to the local plan review (March 2003) and the *West Dorset 2000 Chideock Parish Statement* amended by the parish council.

1.3 At some future date it may be convenient to merge these and the parish plan into one document, while keeping the action plan separate.

1.4 A landscape character assessment should be made based on the Vital Villages Parish Plan Guidance (CA122), guidance leaflet number 13.

1.5 Landscape character should consider:

- Internal landscapes within the village;
- The view from within the village of the wider landscape outside;
- The view of the built landscape of the village from outside; and
- Important gaps and green spaces which need to be retained.

2 Historic and economic guidelines

2.1 The special historic sites and buildings in the Winniford Valley need to be protected.

2.2 The built landscape should conserve historic settlement patterns within the wider landscape setting.

2.3 Ecological and associated economic development in the Winniford Valley should be encouraged in consultation with the National Trust, CPRE, the Dorset Wildlife Trust and English Heritage.

2.4 The retention of the village hall, the post office, the two village shops, the three pubs, and the Chideock House Hotel and Restaurant is essential for the vitality of the village.

2.5 Industrial and commercial development is not appropriate.

3 Geographic and landscape guidelines

3.1 The AONB and world heritage coast, and the access to them, should be considered before any

development is allowed.

3.2 The existing treescape of the village and the valley should be retained. Planting of new copses and hedgerows is encouraged.

3.3 Planting of indigenous trees in the village and valley is encouraged to achieve a lightly wooded effect.

3.4 Further screening of Cains Farm and the caravan parks is needed.

3.5 The long-outstanding landscape plan for the caravan park main entrance should be completed.

3.6 The water quality of the River Winniford should be maintained and waterways kept free-flowing.

3.7 Overhead cables should be put underground.

3.8 New electricity and telephone cables should be underground.

3.9 Improvement of existing open spaces and the creation of new public open spaces is encouraged.

4 Settlement pattern guidelines

4.1 The conservation area should be extended to include the whole of the built landscape of the village, and to create new areas at both Seatown and North Chideock in order to preserve the historic patterns.

Should the development boundary change?	
Relax it	10.4%
Strengthen it	44.8%
Don't change it	44.8%
Source: Village survey.	

4.2 The development boundary should be firmly protected, and reduced to exclude the open land at Ridwood.

4.3 The separation of the caravan parks from Chideock and Seatown should be maintained.

4.4 Further screening of the caravan park from Seatown should be encouraged.

5 Buildings guidelines

5.1 The distinctive character of stone and thatch in the conservation area should be retained and is recommended for future buildings where appropriate.

5.2 The use of local thatch is recommended for new development where appropriate.

5.3 Steep eaves are not recommended, especially on outbuildings, garages and workshops.

5.4 Stone walls and mixed hedges should be retained and encouraged in any new development.

5.5 The character of outlying farms should be retained.

5.6 The design of new buildings associated with farm redevelopment should complement the colour and shape of existing farm houses.

5.7 Views of the significant buildings and open spaces should be considered in any new development by leaving green spaces and carefully positioning any new access roads.

5.8 Any new development should be affordable housing for local people and remain affordable in perpetuity.

5.9 Any new in-filling should retain the open nature of the village and maintain existing densities.

6 Highways and lanes guidelines

6.1 The country lanes character should be retained.

6.2 Attractive street furniture in keeping with the historic nature of the village is encouraged.

6.3 A traffic management plan for access to Seatown is needed.

Appendix 2:

The historic and built environment

Most of historic Chideock is characterised by buildings constructed from the local yellow sandstone salvaged, allegedly, from the demolition of the castle in 1646 at the end of the Civil War.

There is a high proportion of thatch, and small multi-paned windows predominate. Notable buildings include: the Chideock House Hotel – a 17th century building which was chosen by

Should planning specifications exist in the following areas?	
	Yes
Building design	149
Construction materials	146
Roofing materials	136
<i>Source: Chideock village survey.</i>	

Colonel Fairfax as his headquarters during the Civil War; St Giles Church – grade I listed; Roman Catholic Chapel – grade II listed and built by the Weld family in 1872; and the Chideock Manor House.

The historic character of Chideock abounds and is evident in the old village pump in Ruins Lane, the cider shed at Silverbridge Farm, the Martyrs' Cross and the Castle Ruins field, the Old Bakery, The Old Post Office, The Old Schoolhouse, The Forge and The Farmers Arms (cider house), most of which are



private residences. There are many listed buildings, 80 in total, and 25% of the built environment of Chideock has grade II listed status.

The main characteristics of Seatown, lying to the south of the parish, are the former coastguard watch houses, the former customs guard houses, and the Anchor Inn, all of which remind us of a fishing past and the clandestine smuggling which augmented meagre fishing incomes of latter years. The Anchor Cottage is grade II listed.

Significant farmhouses of yellow sandstone and thatch exist within the parish and demonstrate past agricultural prosperity, including Hell Farmhouse, Roadstead Farmhouse, Seatown Farmhouse, Glenacres and Gate Farmhouse.

To retain the distinctive character of our village and preserve and enhance our listed buildings and conservation area, while moving forward into the new century, we submit the following Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidelines.

- A) Extensions to, or walls adjoining, listed buildings should always be in the same stone or building material.
- B) Double-glazed sealed unit windows reflecting the same style and materials (ie wood and not UPVC) do not materially affect the character of listed buildings and should be allowed.
- C) Where old hedgerows and walls exist as boundaries they should not be removed or partially removed.
- D) Solar panels should be encouraged in and beyond the conservation area. They do not materially affect the character of some properties, particularly those of more modern design.

Note: A consistent approach by the local planning authority is a prerequisite to maintaining and preserving historic buildings. Lack of enforcement provides precedent and causes confusion, leading people to be wary of requesting listed building consent and carrying out works without permission. This can cause irrecoverable damage to an important building.

(Other relevant policies:

CD1: Design standards.

CD5: Protection of character in conservation area.

CD11: Demolition within conservation area.)

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