

## Combroke Parish Plan

### The Purpose of this Document

As part of the policy of 'active citizenship' the Government wants to give more power to parish councils to decide what's best for their own communities. A Parish Plan might increase the chances of getting local authority support to enhance its economic, social and environmental well-being. Local authorities are continuously involved in drawing up and reviewing land use plans as well as deciding individual planning applications. A Parish Plan can potentially influence both these processes.

A Parish Plan sets out a vision for how the community wants to develop, and identifies the action needed to achieve it. It can include everything that is relevant and important to the people who live and work in the community, such as the design and construction of new buildings, and the protection of hedges. It can include any social, environmental or economic issues.

A Parish Plan has the potential to influence a wide range of organisations and processes. It should complement and help deliver local planning policies. It is a statement of how the community sees itself developing over the next few years.

A Parish Plan:

- reflects the views of all sections of the community
- identifies which features and local characteristics people value
- identifies local problems and opportunities
- spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future
- prepares a plan of action to achieve this vision.

## **The Process of Developing this Document**

The seeds were sown as far back as 1997 when Combroke Parish Council began to discuss the possibility of creating a Village Design Statement. A decision was made in 2002 to begin the process with a village meeting to gather views. A steering group was formed in 2005 to build on this initial work. During spring 2006 four consultation workshops were held which were well attended by all age groups.

Following these meetings, the steering group devised a questionnaire which was circulated during the autumn to every household. It was delivered to the 66 households in the parish, however only 61 of these households were occupied at the time. 54 of these 61 households (89%) completed it, with responses from 102 adults and 26 children, which demonstrated strength of commitment to the community. In addition to the questionnaire, in order to identify the local landscape and architectural features that were felt to be important to Combroke, all residents were invited to participate in discussion walks to observe and record these features. The village had some expertise amongst its population so observations recorded from these walking sessions, as well as responses to the questionnaire were then analysed to provide design statement details. Updates on the progress of the Parish Plan have been reported to the Parish Council and in the Village Newsletter. A first draft was presented to the Parish Council in January 2007 and feedback and review workshops for villagers took place in March. A revised draft was presented at a village meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2007. The final plan was adopted by the Parish Council on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007

The steering group is confident that the final plan, including the Village Design Statement, is truly representative of the views expressed by parishioners. This is a key document based on those views and as such identifies what facilities and services the people of Combroke want to be retained and how they believe the character of the parish should be preserved.

When adopted by the parish and district councils this statement will be a material consideration in determining the outcome of planning applications and along with the Stratford District Local Area Plan [and the Stratford District Design Statement] will aid anyone planning building or development work. It is therefore designed to be of use to Combroke Parish Council, Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The steering group, supported by a number of villagers who gave their time and expertise, worked enthusiastically to produce this Parish Plan and I cannot thank them enough for their commitment to the project.

I thank you all for contributing to what we hope will be an effective statement of your opinions and aspirations for the community of Combroke.

Parish Plan Coordinator  
Jo Price

Steering Group Members  
Hazel Blenkinsop, Jim Blenkinsop, Peter Bridgewater, John Hughes, Gerald Neale, Jane Neale, Elaine Widdowson.

## The Parish Today

### Location and Setting

The village of Combroke is a small parish of just over 60 houses, approximately 12 miles south of Warwick and 10 miles east-south-east of Stratford upon Avon, just to the east of the Fosse Way. It is located in a steep-sided valley through which flows a brook, a lesser tributary of the river Dene. The village is currently discrete, enclosed and relatively hidden and respect for this distinctive topography is important and potentially perhaps a limiting physical factor in the future form development of the village, as can be seen from these examples of public views into the village. The form is discussed again later within the Village Design Statement section of the report (pages...-xxx)

Perhaps one of the best descriptions of Combroke can be found in 'Joseph Asby's Victorian Warwickshire' edited by Anne Langley:

*“Combroke is one of the prettiest villages in Warwickshire. It is surrounded by high ground on every hand, and cannot be seen from any point until it is approached. Such a reposeful, quiet village is rarely to be seen. All the land and house property of every kind belongs to Lord Willoughby de Broke, except a Wesleyan Chapel. Many of the cottages were built, I have been informed, during the lifetime of the late Lord Willoughby. They are commodious, substantial and exceptionally well designed. Nor were they built without regard to picturesque effect. As one wanders through the only street of the village from the path by which it is entered from Butler's Marston to that by which one proceeds to Compton Verney, one cannot fail to be struck by the harmony of the whole scene. The beautiful scenery awakens interest at every step.”*



The name has had various spellings over the years: Combrook, Combroke, Combroke, Cumbroc(e). Road and boundary signs show two spellings, Combroke and Combrook. Although the oldest and most consistent spelling to be found in public documentation such as Parish Council minutes is 'Combroke', the two main versions continue to be used. This Parish Plan reflects this by using the various spellings.

The histories of Combroke and neighbouring Compton Verney are closely linked as, until 1929, Combroke was a 'closed' village belonging to the Compton Verney estate. This provided more secure lives for the estate workers than was experienced elsewhere and helped to maintain the properties in good repair and provided education for the workers' families. Villagers were ordered to work the estate, and evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation is still visible.

The dividing road between the Compton Verney lakes developed by Capability Brown forms the northern boundary of the parish. The Lower Compton Verney lake abuts the north end of Combroke with a dam creating the divide between the lake and Keeper's Cottage grounds. The owners of Park Farm own most of the lake frontage, (about a mile), the owners of Combrook House own about 60 feet and the owners of Keeper's Cottage own about 30 feet. There is access via a public footpath around the west side of the lake. There is no public access around the east side.

## **Architecture, planning and conservation**

Architecturally, Combroke contains a range of styles from agricultural, through pragmatic, to design-led statements, but despite (or because of) this diversity, forms a cohesive and attractive rural environment which deserves some degree of protection, within the context of inevitable further development, for the benefit of future generations.

Combroke village currently has some 62 buildings excluding outbuildings, garages, stables, barns and the like, all of which are dwellings except for St Mary and St Margaret's Church, the Village Hall (previously the village school), the old chapel (now a domestic garage) and Combroke Garage. 21 of these are listed buildings. There are a further eight properties on the outskirts; at Red House corner, Brookhampton and Fosse Dene. Only two of the village properties are rented.

There are four small terraces of cottages (three of three cottages – one having been converted from agricultural buildings - and one of five), five pairs of semi-detached houses, and all the remainder are detached individual properties.

Virtually all properties, except for those built in the last few years, have been modified, extended or rebuilt, and most are in a reasonably good state of repair.

The earliest remaining buildings date from the 18th or late 17th century and the village contains three distinct periods of building:

- 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century cottages
- 19<sup>th</sup> century neo-Elizabethan Victorian properties built as a part of the Compton Verney Estate (including the Church) together with the somewhat differently styled Village Hall (previously the village school) and Combrook House
- 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century individual dwellings scattered amongst the older properties

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### Examples of current architecture



There was growing concern in the late 1970s that unrestricted development would result in detrimental changes to the nature of the village, and application was made to protect its heritage. As a result Combroke received its Conservation Area status in 1972 and this was subsequently re-defined in 1995. Currently the Local Plan does not support new development within the settlement, and the Conservation Area status would influence any redevelopment either inside or adjacent to its boundaries.

The last new development on land not previously used in Combroke was in the late 1970s (De Weide, now The Willows). Since then there have been some new properties built on the site of older houses eg Highfields, number 37 and Appletrees (formerly the Old Pump House) and there have been a number of extensions/ redevelopments - around a third of the houses (22) which responded to our survey had had work done which required planning permission since 2000.

#### **Action Points:**

- ***Architecture and development is considered in greater depth within the Village Design Statement section of this report***

#### **Road network**

The two roads leading into the village from the Wellesbourne - Kineton road or the Fosse Way are narrow and flanked by grass-banked verges with no kerbs or edging and are of limited width. These simple unengineered rural road characteristics are felt to be visually appropriate in such a rural setting as well as helping reduce speeds for vehicles approaching Combroke. However, where the verges are raised, rain water cannot easily drain away, so creating soft edges which are easily damaged by careless passing traffic.

The limited width road also causes some difficulty for lorries delivering materials to properties under repair/construction and damage has occurred to many of the verges as a result. There currently exists a 7.5 ton weight limit on the approach roads.

The Fosse Way, which forms the North West boundary of the parish, is a very busy road and noise pollution from heavy lorries and motor-bikes is noticeable. Traffic does not have to come through Combroke to access other villages.

The village consists of a single road winding through the valley, together with Spring Lane branching off to the north on the west side of the brook and an offshoot no through road (sometimes referred to as School Lane) extending northwards from the main road at the church, where the main road turns to the east to rise up Church Hill, so that the village is effectively formed by two parallel roads on either side of the brook, linked by two pedestrian paths and the single road bridge. The Victorian estate houses and church are located within a fairly compact area, except for Combroke House, which is situated on the opposite side of the valley. The 20th century houses are mainly beyond this original settlement, up Church Hill and along Spring Lane to the west of the brook, though a few are on infill sites. School Lane leads to a private road serving some of the oldest properties. As School Lane is a narrow no through road there is a need to maintain the turning space in the entrance to the Leys field. Within the village, road marking and footways are limited. There are some kerbstones retaining the pavement which runs along one side of the road through the centre of the village.



None of the roads have road name signs on them and this, combined with the eccentric numbering system, makes deliveries challenging to those less familiar with the village. This means houses are as often identified by their occupants as by their location, which gives it a certain charm.

Due to the topography, the village suffers from flooding at the foot of the hills leading into it. This is exacerbated in the autumn, when fallen leaves build up to cover the drain gullies in times of heavy rainfall. Much debris is washed into the centre of the village, which creates a hazard on the roads at low levels. Most gullies are usually cleaned on a random basis by the council at least once a year. However, this does not extend to Spring Lane or School Lane, where the absence of kerbstones means the gullies are not cleaned. This causes additional build up of debris on these roads.

Combroke's valley setting means that in cold weather the roads are highly susceptible to dangerous ice and (occasionally!) snow. However, the roads are well gritted and the vast majority of the residents are happy with this service.

The small grass triangle and wide banks and verges are considered to be more visually important than useable features. Recent building work and heavy vehicles have damaged the edges of these and as a result 27% of respondents are dissatisfied with the maintenance of these.

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#### **Road conditions**



There is general dissatisfaction regarding the maintenance of the roads into and within the village (eight people spontaneously commented on the untidy roads within the village and over half of respondents are either somewhat or very dissatisfied with the road towards Kineton.)

The increase of home deliveries has brought with it a number of speeding drivers and this continues to cause concern for residents. Although the majority (53%) do not want speed humps/chicanes, seven respondents thought speeding traffic was one of the top three issues to be addressed, with a further six mentioning concerns about the significant increase in the volume of traffic.

Generally, local people are aware that children sometimes play on the road and drive accordingly. However, visitors and delivery people are sometimes not aware of this, which can lead to concerns about inappropriate traffic speeds.

**Action points:**

- ***There is a need to control traffic speeds. Villagers do not want chicanes or road humps but should consider false gates at both entrances to the village***
- ***Need to ensure maintenance of grass verges and triangles via the Parish Council. Widening of the road would not be a desirable solution as this would increase speed of traffic***
- ***Gullies and drainage ditches need to be cleared at least annually by the Highways Authority***
- ***Existing road signs to be kept clean but no others are needed/ wanted***
- ***Ensure the maintenance of the turning space in the entrance to the Leys field***

## **The natural environment**

### **Tree cover**

In the 1970s, Dutch elm disease destroyed the highly visible mature hedgerow elms which had been part of the Combroke landscape, but gradually other trees have taken their place, maintaining a green and wooded aspect to the village and surrounding fields, and sheltering it in its valley setting.

Combroke at first glance does not have many individual, notable specimen trees lining its two roads, these routes instead being fronted mainly by houses with limited space between the dwellings and the road for large trees. However, tree cover is viewed as very important in this settlement in more general terms. For example, there are **extensive woodland** rides north of the village, north of Combroke House and Keeper's Cottage and the lakes, presumably originating from the 18th century 'picturesque' style Capability Brown designed as part of the Compton Verney estate. This wooded backdrop is felt to be an important part of the character of the village. It makes a significant contribution to views in and out from both the roads and the well-used public footpath and bridleway network (eg towards the lake, including Knightley's Coppice, North West of the village). Combroke would, it was felt, be a very different settlement without this extensive woodland at the northern end of the village.

Another area of general but characteristic tree cover, as identified by villagers, is **trees along the brook** which bisects Combroke. The many footbridges that cross over it allow public views of this partially naturalised vegetation and it also provides much privacy between gardens either side of this brook.

**Orchard fruit trees** are also found to be a village characteristic. Whilst many gardens in Combroke contain old (and new) apple trees there is also a publicly visible and more sizeable orchard open space east of Combroke House, opposite Chestnut House.

Sizeable, significant, individual and appropriate rural deciduous species **specimen trees** are found within the grounds of Chestnut House; on the land immediately north of Combroke House and within The Leys field. The churchyard and some of the large modern 1960s/1970s property plots currently contain many highly visible trees although a number are more domestic, non-native coniferous garden trees. Trees, including fruit trees within the gardens of the estate and other older cottages, are largely not in public view. However, these add to the overall rural views of the village visible from the higher surrounding landscape.

### **Local Ecology**

The parish landscape features identified have direct and critical influence on the **wildlife** visible in Combroke. The presence of the brook watercourse, the sizeable lakes, extensive woodland rides, game cover, orchard trees, former railway, hedgerows, gardens and pasture provide a rich and wide variety of habitats over a relatively small area, for invertebrates, birds and mammals from rabbits and squirrels to badgers, foxes and various species of deer, all of which cause a potential danger to themselves and passing traffic when crossing roads such as the Fosse.

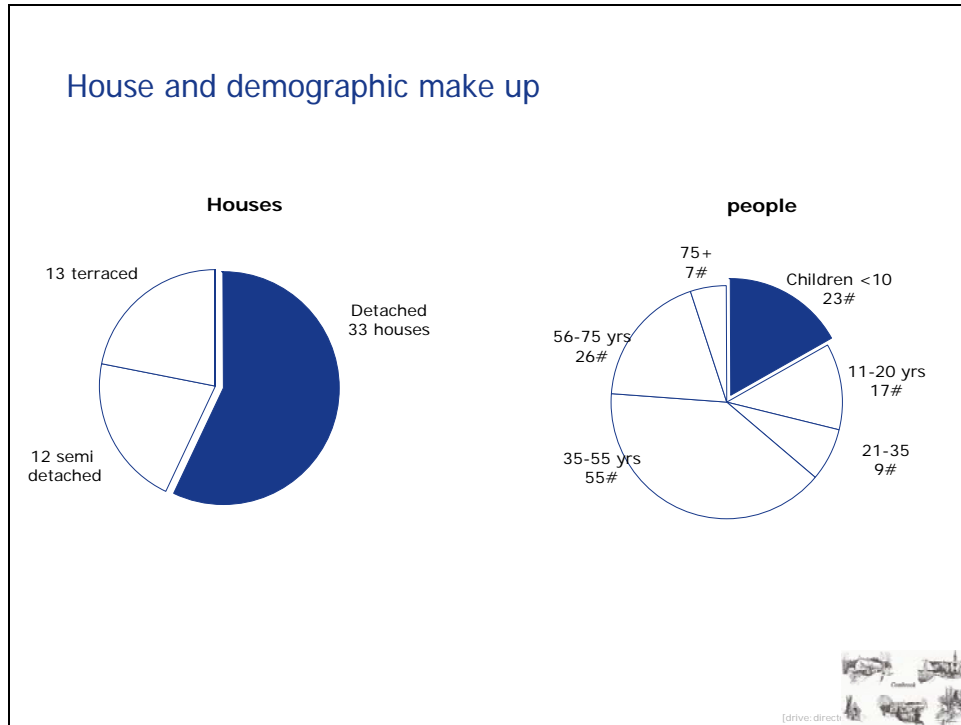
To the south east of the village there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Oxhouse Farm. This received its designation in 1973 and is managed by Warwickshire Nature Conservation Trust as a nature reserve. The site covers three herb-rich meadows and the adjacent railway line (formerly part of the Stratford on Avon and Midland Junction, closed in 1965). As well as being noted for its numerous grassland species, mention is also made of the habitat it provides for invertebrates and birds.

**Action Points:**

- ***As this is a Conservation Area, trees have special protection because of the contribution they make to the character and setting of the area. No tree work can proceed without giving six weeks prior notice to the SDC Planning Department. Given the turnover of properties since 2000, it might be advisable to consider undertaking a reminder, for example a mention in the Parish newsletter about trees and the Conservation Area. There is a suggestion that the chestnut tree on the public land by Chestnut House should be considered for a Tree Preservation Order.***
- ***The general level of tree cover needs to be maintained and residents taking down conifers should consider replacing them with more rurally appropriate native species.***
- ***Combroke should continue to celebrate its orchard/apple pressing event as orchards are in severe decline.***
- ***Potential threats, such as planning applications or Hedgerow Removal Notices, to any of the important wildlife habitats such as the woodland, the old railway, the lakes, brook or hedgerows, should be raised as concerns by the Parish. Within Combroke village itself, the view towards the church as a major focal point was considered paramount and appropriate native tree species and their long term positions within the churchyard need thought in order to retain this.***
- ***The stream is already crossed by a number of public footpaths but no other bridges should be allowed as they may impede the flow of the brook and exacerbate flooding.***
- ***The area beside and behind the Village Hall belongs to the Diocese and is treated and considered by the parishioners as a village amenity, so any clearance or change in land use should be done in consultation by the village and the Diocese.***
- ***The valley setting means smoke from bonfires or building sites hangs in the valley: although garden bonfires are an occasional nuisance more noxious or significant fires should be discouraged.***

## Community

The Parish today is a lively and dynamic community with a mixture of long-established residents (over a third of those who responded have been in the village more than 20 years, some of whom were born and educated here) and people who have moved to the parish more recently. People who have lived in the parish for 11-15 years account for a further 20% of the respondents. Nearly one in three of the households have changed occupants since the 'Lifting the Lid' book was written in 2000, though this rate of change is similar to that seen at that time too.



There is a strong sense of community in Combroke which residents value greatly: the community spirit and friendly nature of the residents was the single most mentioned element in our survey which people value about living in the village. This tends to be focused around people's homes, and in the village hall, where many functions and events take place, as there is no pub or shop. Combroke lost its Post Office and general store in 1984. However, 22% of residents say they would really like to have one now, with an additional 25% feeling it might be nice. It is a general 'corner shop' type store which attracts the most interest, though suggestions are also made about a coffee shop, suggesting that the desire is as much for a central meeting place as it is for a shop per se. However, views on a pub are less enthusiastic, with 59% saying they definitely don't want one and only 15% really in favour of the idea.

### Action point:

- **Potentially positive consideration should be given to any applications for change of use to a small 'corner shop' type store**

There is less active farming than there used to be around the village. The livestock and agricultural use of the fields are appreciated. There are areas of 'Set Aside', pasture and arable land surrounding the village. Pheasants are reared for the shooting season in the woods on the outskirts of the village.

Due to the changing nature of employment some residents work from home, either full or part time. However, most people who work commute by car to the surrounding towns and cities, and three people commute to London. Twenty people work or study in Combroke, which should be encouraged (for low carbon impact) subject to low impact on traffic volumes. Combroke Garage is a thriving business which serves the village and surrounding areas. This sustainability argument (ie very limited employment opportunities, services and facilities in the village) means that there is a currently general presumption against further residential development in the Local Plan. New development would create increased vehicle activity which, as per the questionnaire, is not favoured and the low level of traffic is a valued feature of Combroke.

The village has a church and a Village Hall but no other public buildings.

### **Church**



The church has an electoral role of 16 people with small congregations, usually consisting of about 8-12 people, and this number has been steady for at least 20 years. The church services were reduced from weekly to fortnightly in 2006. Main festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Harvest, and an annual Carol Service are always well attended, with congregations of around 30. Half our respondents claim to attend church occasionally, with a further 13% being regular worshippers. 70% of those who responded felt it was very important to preserve the church building as it is, and 9% spontaneously mentioned its potential closure as a source of concern to them.

## Village Hall



The Village Hall, set up in the former school building in 1966, is also a highly valued facility and represents the village's only amenity, with 81% of respondents feeling it is important to preserve and virtually everyone attending events organised by the Village Hall committee, made up of local residents, on at least an occasional basis.

It hosts a Pantomime which nearly half the village regularly takes part in or attends as the audience, Cream teas in the early summer, a mid-summer gig and barbeque, and a Duck Race on New Year's Day are also attended by around half the residents, as well as less frequently occurring events such as apple pressing, boules tournaments, harvest suppers, quizzes and performances by a local organisation 'Live and Local'. The Village Hall is also available for private hire and many of the local children (and adults) have attended birthday parties and the like there: there were 15 lettings in the last year. There was a certain amount of enthusiasm for other events to be held here too, or for the facilities to be available for activities such as table tennis, a film club or for Pilates/ yoga classes. Events such as these would ensure the building is used even more frequently than currently and as such would help to keep it warm, thus helping the fabric of the building as well as providing a valuable community service.

The Hall is funded partly through fund-raising events but its basic maintenance costs are provided for out of the parish precept. 75% of the residents are happy to keep the funding this way although 23% said they would be happy to pay more.

### **Action Point**

- ***Maintain the current funding arrangements for the Village Hall and seek to ensure a wide variety of events are held there to involve the whole community***
- ***Ensure this very highly valued Village Hall facility remains available to the village from the diocese as a local community building***

Outside of arranged community activities, often centred around the Village Hall, a number of the village residents are keen walkers and access to the local countryside for walking is a highly valued aspect of life in Combroke - not just amongst the one in five households with dogs. Most years there is an annual village walks day, organised by enthusiasts, where guided walks are arranged for others to join in. This helps get people used to the wide variety of well-signposted footpaths which emanate from the village.

Combroke is also featured in a number of published books of walks, so it is not unusual for groups of walkers from outside of the village to meet up and start off from the church. Although this does not normally cause much disruption there can be problems if too many cars try to park at the same time, as there is only on-road parking available, and this has to be shared with some of the home owners. Parking problems and/or significant growth in traffic volumes are cited as a concern by 15% of respondents.

As well as being a centre for walkers, Combroke has some bridleways frequently used by both horses and mountain bikers. The heavy clay soil and a number of natural springs can lead to churned up areas, a concern for walkers where the bridleways and footpaths share the same space.

In the past the village has actively resisted applications for agricultural buildings where it is felt there is no long-term agricultural use.

**Action Point:**

- ***Investigation of grant or regular user funding for footpath and bridlepath maintenance and surface improvements where possible***

Although Combroke has this extensive and well used network of footpaths, publicly accessible land is limited within Combroke; the main areas being the land around the Village Hall and the churchyard used by residents for recreational purposes. These are both owned by the Coventry Diocese.

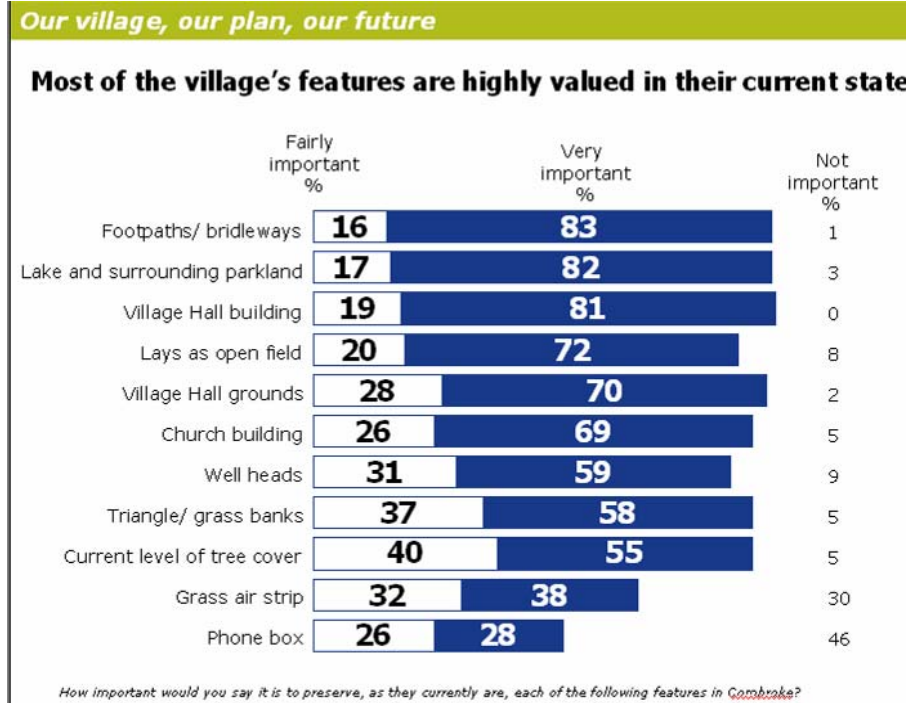
There is neither a village green nor playing fields, nor children's play area, but the close proximity of the privately owned Leys field, which has a footpath through it, is felt to be of real importance locally (three quarters feeling it is very important to maintain as an open field as currently) and is used for occasional village events such as an annual Bonfire Night (with permission of the landowner).

**Action Point:**

- ***Try to ensure the publicly accessible land is kept available for public use and not taken into private ownership***
- ***The village has very limited facilities of its own and no long-term control over the privately owned but very highly valued Leys field. If in the future the number of properties in the village is proposed for increase, the idea of village owned open space/recreational space/play area or the provision of some other facility currently lacking should be discussed in association with the District Council.***
- ***Fund-raising and grant or lottery application to purchase or lease some land for recreational use could be considered if ownership of the Leys field changed and its current use arrangements came under threat.***

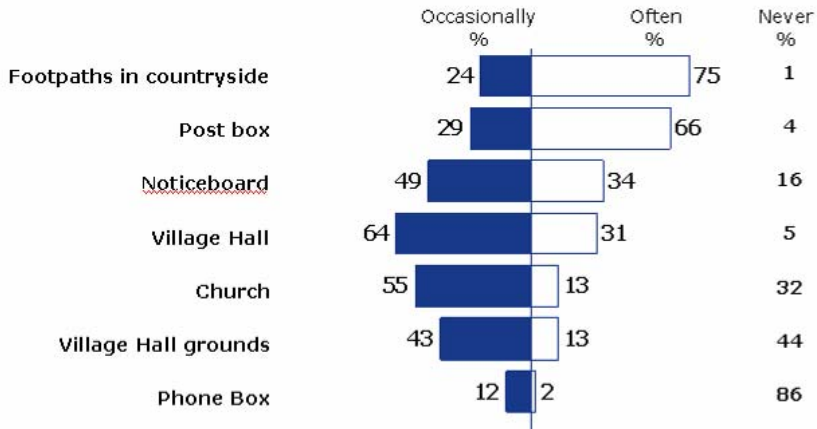
### Other village facilities

There is a notice board next to the post box on the wall outside the Village Hall. Both of these facilities are well used, unlike the traditional telephone box, which is rarely used by villagers but considered to be an important feature in the village, and worth maintaining. In addition to the post box near to the Village Hall, another post box is post mounted at the junction with the Kineton/Wellesbourne road. There are two collections per day but only one delivery, usually mid-morning. There seems to be a fairly equal split between wanting better postal deliveries and not being too concerned about it.



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**Linking in with the appreciation of the surrounding countryside, is high use of the footpaths in the area. The Church & Hall are used often or occasionally by most**



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**What 3 things are valued most about living in Combroke?**

**A sociable community  
and a beautiful/ peaceful place to live**

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Community spirit #38</i>        | <i>Peaceful environment #68</i>           |
| <i>Friendly/ sociable #35</i>      | <i>Beauty of setting #28</i>              |
| <i>Safe/ lack of crime #13</i>     | <i>Access to/walks in countryside #25</i> |
| <i>Lack of traffic (noise) #11</i> | <i>Isolated/ tucked away #12</i>          |
| <i>No street lighting #8</i>       | <i>Attractive village #11</i>             |
| <i>Wildlife #5</i>                 | <i>Rural #13</i>                          |
| <i>No pub #2</i>                   | <i>Location (access to towns)#16</i>      |
| <i>Family #5</i>                   | <i>Road network #2</i>                    |
| <i>Privacy #2</i>                  | <i>Small #4</i>                           |
|                                    | <i>Space #3</i>                           |

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**What 3 things concern us most about Combroke's future?**

**There is a need to balance the quality of life currently enjoyed with the need to ensure the village doesn't become too difficult/ expensive to live in**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>(over) development #32</i>                                | <i>Property too expensive (for young families) #10</i> |
| <i>Inappropriate/ oversized/ unsympathetic new build #18</i> | <i>Have to rely on own transport #2</i>                |
| <i>Selfish development #3</i>                                | <i>Difficult for elderly#2</i>                         |
| <i>Devel for profit #4</i>                                   | <i>Might become stuck in a time warp #2</i>            |
| <i>Loss of community activities #11</i>                      | <i>Travellers #6</i>                                   |
| <i>Church closure #9</i>                                     | <i>Upkeep of churchyard #4</i>                         |
| <i>Urbanisation #9</i>                                       | <i>Maintenance of common areas/ verges #3</i>          |
| <i>Industry #7</i>   | <i>Untidy roads in village #8</i>                      |
| <i>Parking #7</i>  | <i>Overhanging hedges #3</i>                           |
| <i>Speeding traffic #7</i>                                   | <i>Devel of countryside #5</i>                         |
| <i>Significant growth in traffic #6</i>                      | <i>Children playing by bridge #2</i>                   |
| <i>Increased noise #5</i>                                    |  |
| <i>Light pollution #5</i>                                    |  |

## **Provision of Utilities and Services**

### **Telephone, Internet and Cable connections**

Most households have a telephone land line and the majority are somewhat (23%) or very (31%) dissatisfied with the services, though recent improvements made to the cabling by BT have not yet had a chance to show their worth.

There are six mobile phone providers used by residents, with the majority using Orange (53%) - the one network to give strong reception in the village. This means that the majority of mobile phone users are very dissatisfied (26%) / somewhat dissatisfied (27%) with the service in Combroke. This dissatisfaction exists even amongst Orange users and means that over half of all residents (54%) really want to have better mobile phone reception.

There is a traditional phone box in the village but 86% say they never use it. However, over half feel it is important to preserve it. (28% say this is very important)

Only 11 households do not have internet connection, with the majority (35) now having broadband, following improvements to the Kineton exchange in 2004/2005. The other eight households still access the internet using dialup services. There is a desire for faster broadband access from nearly half the respondents.

Currently Cable TV is not available in the village and a majority (53%) are not interested in having it provided. Those who would like access to other than terrestrial TV obtain the service via satellite link (15 households). Half the households in the village have access to digital television.

#### **Action Point:**

- ***Improvements to mobile phone network are favoured but actual location via any additional masts would need to be very carefully considered and if coverage is proposed for improvement the possibility of networks mast sharing should be explored***

### **Overhead power and telephone lines**

Electrical power is delivered to the village via underground cable from the Kineton road through the Rides and down through the Leys to a pole mounted transformer (PMT) in the top of the orchard of Combroke House. From here it travels underground, with connections to properties along the way until it reaches two further poles. The first is by Forge Cottage, where the power is split and carried overhead across the valley to and along Spring Lane. This goes underground at the triangle before emerging at another PMT at the foot of the drive to Deepdene. The line which goes on from the first pole at Forge Cottage emerges at another by No.1, where it is carried overhead to the properties on Church Hill. All other properties receive their power from the underground supply. There is generally a good level of satisfaction with the electricity supply, with relatively few power cuts occurring, other than during extreme weather conditions.

Telephone/broadband is supplied via an underground cable routed alongside the north side of the road out of the village to Kineton. This has been replaced during December 2006 in an attempt to eliminate the high number of faults reported in recent years. The local telephone exchange is located in Kineton. Most telephone lines to households come via a pole and overhead wire.

Comments have been received that villagers would prefer to have fewer overhead lines visible.



**Action Point:**

- ***The parish council should request Central Networks and BT to bury the lines where possible or when replacement becomes necessary***

## **Water, Sewerage and Gas**

Water and sewerage are provided by Severn Trent Water to all properties in Combroke. Although there still exists a spring of fresh water at the foot of the path to No. 41, this is no longer used. The village has its own sewage works located to the south west of the village and adjacent to the brook. This is maintained by Severn Trent on a regular basis. A new storm water pipe was installed during 2006 between a manhole close to the rear of Combroke Garage and the sewage works.

At present there is no mains gas in the village. However, six households use LPG for heating and eight use it for cooking. When asked whether mains gas should be provided, 41% said they weren't bothered, and 27% each said they might like or would really like it.

## **Buses**

Children in the village go to a wide range of schools in the surrounding area. They are transported by school buses for both the primary and secondary schools, which pick up and set down in the village, or by parents who try and share a school run. Public transport is limited. The Flexibus provides a service once a week on a Tuesday to Stratford-upon-Avon. Bearing in mind that 95% of respondents own a vehicle, the majority were either not bothered or might like to have a more regular bus service during weekends/school holidays. A clear majority (63%) were not bothered about having a volunteer-run community bus.

## **Lighting**

Combroke does not have any street lighting and the questionnaire revealed that a clear majority (76%) do not want it. Lack of street lighting is one of the main features respondents mention in their three most valued things about living in Combroke. Indeed, unwanted light pollution in this very rural location is of concern to the villagers, especially now that recent building and attached landscape lighting has been installed at a number of properties within the village. The special attraction of living in a minimal light polluted environment is being eroded by careless outside lighting.

In addition, the unlit character of the area is important in a wildlife context, particularly in relation to the extensive woodland.

### **Action Point:**

- ***No street lights should be introduced to the village***
- ***Careful consideration should be given to any applications with potential to cause light pollution and alter the existing dark character of the village. Warwickshire Museum ecologists should be contacted to advise the Parish where there is concern about proposed lighting and potential harm to wildlife, especially in the wooded areas, the lake or along the brook***
- ***Encourage sensitive use of security and garden lighting***

## **Recycling**

In addition to weekly household waste collections there are fortnightly doorstep collections of paper, glass and tins for recycling via black boxes. Wheelie bins have been provided for green waste and this is also collected fortnightly. There is general satisfaction with this provision of recycling facilities but there would also be great interest in doorstep collections of plastic bottles and cardboard (95% and 82% respectively): facilities for the recycling of these are currently only available via the tips such as those at Wellesbourne or Leamington. The idea of a recycling point in the village is met with mixed feelings, with 40% not wanting this and 60% feeling it might be a good idea.

### ***Action Point:***

- ***Ask SDC for doorstep collection of plastic bottles and cardboard***

## **Parking**

Parking is also a concern. Although most houses have some form of off-road parking or a garage, there are still a number of properties without either and the fact that Combroke is home to 110 cars, with most households having two cars, demonstrates the number of spaces needed by residents. When events are held in the Village Hall, or a significant number of walkers are in the village, this problem becomes exacerbated so there is a demand for visitor parking in the village,

### ***Action Point:***

- ***Any new plans need to take account of provision of appropriate car parking spaces***

## **Mobile Library**

This service is provided by Warwickshire County Council every fortnight and used by a few regulars.

The Next Steps – Herewith are a summary of the Action Plans listed within each section for action by the Parish Council:

**Road Network:**

- *There is a need to control traffic speeds. Villagers do not want chicanes or road humps but should consider false gates at both entrances to the village.*
- *Need to ensure maintenance of grass verges and triangles via the Parish Council, Widening of the road would not be a desirable solution as this would increase speed of traffic*
- *Gullies and drainage ditches need to be cleared at least annually by the Highways Authority*
- *Existing road signs to be kept clean but no others are needed / wanted.*
- *Ensure the maintenance of the turning space in the entrance to the Leys field*

**Natural Environment:**

- *As this is a Conservation Area, trees have special protection because of the contribution they make to the character and setting of the area. No tree work can proceed without giving six weeks prior notice to the SDC Planning Department. Given the turnover of properties since 2000, it might be advisable to consider undertaking a reminder, for example a mention in the Parish newsletter, about trees and the Conservation Area. There is a suggestion that the chestnut tree on the public land by Chestnut House should be considered for Tree Preservation Order*
- *The general level of tree cover needs to be maintained and residents taking down conifers should consider replacing them with more rurally appropriate native species*
- *Combroke should continue to celebrate its orchard/apple pressing event as orchards are in severe decline*
- *Potential threats, such as planning applications or Hedgerow Removal Notices, to any of the important wildlife habitats such as the woodland, the old railway, the lakes, brook or hedgerows should be raised as concerns by the Parish. Within Combroke village itself, the view towards the church as a major focal point was considered paramount and appropriate native tree species and their long term positions within the churchyard need thought in order to retain this*
- *The stream is already crossed by a number of public footpaths but no other bridges should be allowed as they may impede the flow of the brook and exacerbate flooding*
- *The area beside and behind the Village Hall belongs to the Diocese and is treated and considered by the parishioners as a village amenity, so any clearance or change in land use should be done in consultation by the village and the Diocese*
- *The valley setting means smoke from bonfires or building sites hangs in the valley: although garden bonfires are an occasional nuisance more noxious or significant fires should be discouraged.*

**Community:**

- *Potentially positive consideration should be given to any applications for change of use to a small 'corner shop' type store*

**Village Hall:**

- *Maintain the current funding arrangements for the Village Hall and seek to ensure a wide variety of events are held there to involve the whole community*
- *Ensure this very highly valued Village Hall facility remains available to the village from the diocese as a local community building*

**Footpaths:**

- *Investigation of grant or regular user funding for footpath and bridlepath maintenance and surface improvements where possible*
- *Try to ensure the publicly accessible land is kept available for public use and not taken into private ownership*
- *The village has very limited facilities of its own and no long-term control over the privately owned but very highly valued Leys field. If in the future the number of properties in the village is proposed for increase, the idea of village owned open space/recreational space/play area or the provision of some other facility currently lacking should be discussed in association with the District Council*
- *Fund raising and grant or lottery application to purchase or lease some land for recreational use could be considered if ownership of the Leys field changed and its current use arrangements came under threat.*

**Utilities and Services:**

- *Improvements to mobile phone network are favoured but actual location via any additional masts would need to be considered very carefully and if coverage is proposed for improvement the possibility of networks mast sharing should be explored*

**Overhead power and telephone lines:**

- *The parish council should request Central Networks and BT to bury the lines where possible or when replacement becomes necessary*

**Lighting:**

- *no street lights should be introduced to the village*
- *Careful consideration should be given to any applications with potential to cause light pollution and alter the existing dark character of the village. Warwickshire Museum ecologists should be contacted to advise the Parish where there is concern about proposed lighting and potential harm to wildlife, especially in the wooded areas, the lake or along the brook*
- *Encourage sensitive use of security and garden lighting*

**Recycling:**

- *Ask SDC for doorstep collection of plastic bottles and cardboard*

**Parking:**

- *Any new plans need to take account of provision of appropriate car parking spaces*

### **Action Plan**

The following actions should be initiated by village bodies in response to issues raised during the Combroke Village Plan process:

<b><u>Priority</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Owner</u></b>	<b><u>Target date</u></b>	<b><u>Cost Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>
2	Consider false gates or other forms of non invasive speed control	Parish Council	2007	£2,000	Not necessarily funded by Combroke village
2	Consider stones or sets for the preservation of specific verges from wheel damage	Parish Council	2007	£1,000	Not necessarily funded by Combroke village
1	Write to Highways Agency to request annual clearing of gullies and drains or agree to do this on behalf of the County Council for an appropriate fee	Parish Council	2007	£500 pa	Not necessarily funded by Combroke village
2	Apply for a Tree Preservation Order on the Horse Chestnut Tree near Chestnut House.	Parish Council	2007	Minor	
2	Consideration of native tree species to be planted in the churchyard to protect views of the church	Parochial Church Council	2007	£200	
1	Request the removal of bridges recently built over the stream without the approval of the water authorities to avoid flooding and other problems	Parish Council	2007	Minor	This may need Severn Trent enforcement. Support of impacted land owners to be sought.
2	Consider a project to enhance the use of the land behind the village hall as a nature reserve and village amenity, in conjunction with the Diocese of Coventry	Village Hall Management Committee and Parochial Church Council	2008	£3,000	Use of local volunteers where possible

2	Consider the raising of funds and grant applications to build the ability to buy local amenity land (such as the Leys or the Village Hall) if it comes under threat.	Village Hall Management Committee and Parish Council	2008	£10,000 plus	May require a specific target or project to focus grant applications on.
1	Investigate the availability of grants or regular user finding (e.g. commercial stables) for the maintenance of foot and bridle paths	Parish Council	2007	Minor	Parish Paths Partnership (contact Stuart Ikeringill at Warwickshire County Council) is a possibility
3	Write to Central Networks plc and British Telecom plc to request the burial of power and telephone lines where possible.	Parish Council	2008	Minor	Utilities have some funds for improving the visual impact of their networks.
1	Write to Stratford District Council requesting a doorstep collection of plastic and cardboard.	Parish Council	2007	£3,000 pa	Not necessarily funded by Combroke village

## **The Village Design Statement**

### **Purpose**

The aim of the design statement section of this Parish Plan is to provide guidance on the development of the village of Combroke, taking into account the views and wishes of residents and local businesses. The text here contains advice rather than specific 'action points' in that the features and characteristics identified here are what give Combroke its local distinctiveness. It should be given careful consideration and the parish should encourage that its advice is adhered to, as and when proposals and plans emerge for development and growth in the future.

The overriding theme that emerged from both the questionnaires and the built environment and the landscape and natural environment assessments undertaken by groups representing the village is that any development within the village should maintain and enhance the distinctive character found here. These distinctive elements that the village value and wish to see preserved and enhanced include:

- estate village
- appropriate use of materials for existing and new buildings, boundaries and tree planting
- a range of house sizes, from terraced cottages to detached larger dwellings
- respect for the topography, discrete well-contained, and defined valley setting
- surrounding landscape and wildlife areas retained and respected
- the older properties are maintained and repaired sympathetically
- its peaceful rural character is kept
- should have a balance of residential and small scale employment sites as currently and thus not become a dormitory village

### **The Architectural Environment**

The village is defined as much by its geographical situation in a rural valley as by its architecture, but the seven (originally eight but two now combined) Estate houses and Church provide a strong visual cohesion, which is both reinforced and yet made more subtle by the integration and continuity with the earlier stone-walled cottages.

The later brick buildings are sufficiently dispersed (and all but invisible in Spring Lane from the main road) to avoid intruding on the essentially stone-built core of the village. Individual properties of all ages each make an architectural statement, but generally avoid visual domination of the environment due to the soft landscaping and their setting in what is a relatively steep valley for Warwickshire.

This village contains a unique balance between the Victorian core, the original cottages and the range of more modern one-off houses, and its architectural charm is primarily derived from this harmonious diversity.

## **Physical form of the village**

Combrook Conservation Area leaflet (Stratford District Council 2003) succinctly describes Combroke as **'a compact linear settlement following the contours of the land in a horse shoe layout, sheltered in the valley and contained by tree lined ridges. Its character is enclosed and intimate.'**

The linear development of the village means it does not have a central 'village green', but the building of the Church at the junction between the main road where it becomes what is now known as Church Hill and the no through road (sometimes referred to as School Lane) has created a visual focus as the village centre, enhanced by the adjacent location of the Village Hall and its associated communally-used land. There is a secondary and less well-defined 'centre' spreading between the bridge over the brook, garage and junctions with Spring Lane and the path leading to Deepdene.

Presently both old and newer dwellings, to a greater extent, have respected the local topography well, but it is also therefore very important to preserve this contained valley characteristic and give very careful consideration to proposed heights as well as proposed locations of any replacement dwelling or new dwellings proposed to be built.

The village currently therefore has a visually distinctive edge which is visible when viewed on plan and internally within the settlement. However, due to the valley and tree cover, external views into the settlement are mainly confined to the many public footpaths but are limited from both the Fosse Way and the approach road to the west and the road to Kineton in the east. The rural backdrop of the open fields and field hedgerows on the ridgeline above Green Farm on the east side of the valley are in clear view when approaching Combroke from the Fosse. Similarly the view of the field above Spring Lane, opposite New Enclosure Farm, also respects the contained valley character, by still remaining as open field.

## **Plot character**

In terms of plots that make up the linear form of the village, several characteristics can be seen. The estate and the older smaller cottages within the village have relatively modest front or rear gardens. Several of the older detached properties eg Combrook House, Keeper's Cottage, Wheelwright Cottage, Quince Corner, No 26, generally have more significant plots, although Beggars Roost extended its garden into a field. Properties on Spring Lane have relatively similar sized and length plots with the brook at their rear, (excluding the large plot at The Old Pump House which is currently being redeveloped into a large property). The more modern properties on Church Hill are low density and thus within large spacious garden plots, presumably defined by the former field boundaries. Sites outside but adjacent to the Conservation Area such as New Enclosure Farm's working buildings, Sewage Works, Imladris and Serendipity are also low density sites with relatively low rise buildings. Although not architecturally or historically significant, they are relatively unobtrusive and appear to sit at ease with the surrounding Conservation Area settlement because of their limited height and the amount of space, including some planting, surrounding them.

Generally, as in most settlements, in Combroke the larger low density plots eg Keeper's Cottage and Combroke House to the north, Imladris to the east, New Enclosure Farm to the west and Serendipity to the south are established on the outer edges of the village. The smaller plots, ie the estate and older former farm cottages, are not on the edges of the village and these higher density properties are closer to the middle of the village. The density of any development proposal should therefore take into account the plot location within the village.

Another noticeable characteristic is that there are no private shared roads leading to new developments of houses. Instead each plot, including both the smaller terraced properties and the larger detached properties, are accessed directly off the main roads. The one exception to this is the conversion of existing farm buildings at Green Farm. As these are not characteristic of this very distinctly linear settlement, such untypical form should be avoided in the future.

The sewage works area, Combroke Garage and New Enclosure Farm outbuildings are acknowledged as functional but also desirable 'working' non-residential areas of the village. These sites both currently and in the future help prevent the village becoming purely a dormitory village for drivers commuting to work elsewhere. However, if any future development or changes are proposed on these sites they would need very careful attention due to their sensitive setting and levels: they are current low rise and low density of buildings in relation to their plot but their prominent, highly visible location at the main entrance into the village Conservation Area makes them very sensitive.

### **Enclosure of Frontages**

The front gardens of dwellings in Combroke are largely enclosed and not bare, hard surfaced or open plan style, and this is therefore an important key characteristic. Traditional enclosure by white-lias stone walls and by estate railings and or hedges survives well amongst the older properties, although the older cottages themselves, where located very close to the road, form the sense of enclosure without these. Cottage style soft informal planting and hedges are present rather than just hard paving, and most newer properties have replaced or retained enclosed frontages, thus successfully reinforcing the character. Such enclosed boundary treatments or mitigating tree planting should be requested on new development proposals in order to help integrate and soften new buildings into the village.

### **Trees in Combroke**

This has been covered in some detail earlier in the plan and this earlier section should therefore be referred to again. In summary, in terms of design guidance, locally native deciduous trees should be planted and replacement of non-native coniferous trees encouraged; the field hedgerows on the sides of the valley and presence of general tree cover in the brook valley provide wildlife habitats, useful screening and are highly visible from a number of surrounding public footpaths; native woodland is an especially important and distinctive feature in Combroke, such woodland and old orchard trees should be retained, managed and replaced when felling is necessary.

## **Hard Landscape**

In terms of **hard landscape features**, white-lias or similar Cotswold **stone walls** are particularly apparent - although some are in need of urgent attention and repair - as well as two stone well head features. The crumbling stone walls that are clearly visible on either side of the road in the south of the village and even the absence of the original railings around the church are seen as areas that should be repaired or reinstated in the near future so that they are not lost over time.

There are two Victorian **stone wells** in the village, both on Parish Council owned land. One is adjacent to the grounds of Chestnut House and elaborately decorated with a gabled stone backing. The other, adjacent to Beggars Roost, is less elaborate, but each contributes to the historic environment and are considered integral features defining the character of Combroke and should therefore be preserved and respected. These interesting old village well head features have been restored quite recently by the Parish and District Council, but views towards them and sufficient space around them need to be preserved in perpetuity.

## **Recommendations for Future Development**

It would be inappropriate if new building developments or alterations to property in Combroke clashed visually with the existing environment. Overdevelopment, inappropriate oversized development, development for profit, urbanisation and development of the countryside were all cited and frequently referred to as of the most concern for Combroke's future in the questionnaire responses received. This is not to say that innovation should be excluded - on the contrary, as virtually every house here is of individual design, good modern architecture should be encouraged - but no new building ought to be permitted to dominate the surroundings to the detriment of the overall context. This is particularly the case for properties or extensions to properties which are visible from the many public rights of way which descend into the valley from higher surrounding fields and implies consideration of scale, location, height, density and construction materials.

Current lifestyles and economic prosperity have led to an increase in average dwelling size, and in Combroke most of the older properties have been combined or extended, and there are many large houses. However, there are no buildings above two-storey except insofar as a number have, in addition, attic rooms and dormer windows. Proposed area of development should be commensurate both with the size of plot and with the scale of adjacent properties.

Location is the most important factor, and the position of building, ground and ridge levels must be considered in relation to the skyline and visibility from other parts of Combroke. While many existing houses are of substantial floor area they appear acceptably in scale with the village because they are large floor area but of single-storey or low rise and/or cut into the hillside and their bulk is therefore partly concealed from view.

Where there are parish concerns about respect for the valley topography and adjacent levels, new development plans should include accurate detailed site surveys and several cross sections including adjacent houses across the site to illustrate how the buildings would sit in the surrounding landscape.

If multiple building were to be considered in the future, a small terrace of three cottages as seen elsewhere in the village or pair of semi-detached houses, as the estate cottages are, might be acceptable, but to follow the way in which the village has developed each property should be individual, and, for example, a group of identical detached new houses would not be in keeping.

Use of stonework should be encouraged, but clearly brickwork is also appropriate in places. Only one property (built in the 21st century) uses render as a significant external wall finish (excepting 'The Little House' and the terrace of Nos 42-44), but this is not a common building characteristic of the village and is not one that people favoured in their questionnaire responses because of its anonymity, its reflective quality and therefore tendency to dominate even distant views.

### **New Development: Locations**

As mentioned previously the key concern raised by residents in the parish plan survey and workshops was over-development of the village and inappropriate, oversized or unsympathetic new buildings.

As this is the residents' main concern over the future in Combroke this requires significant focus in the Design Statement.

The majority of respondents (80%) do not favour infill within the existing conservation area and even greater numbers (89%) do not want to see building outside built up village boundaries. A majority of residents did not want any more buildings to be built where there are none currently. A sizeable minority (42%) would only be happy to see new housing if it comes from reusing redundant buildings.

Based on the parish plan survey and on the workshops, nearly half the respondents felt there should be other work/employment opportunities in the parish, primarily from small rural businesses or craft workshops. The only areas where some form of new development was considered to be appropriate (NB although still by a clear minority - 25% of residents) was the New Enclosure Farm yard and the area currently occupied by Combroke Garage. However, concerns about building in the flood plain is likely to preclude this garage option as the lower lake dam would need to be reinforced/raised by one metre to facilitate this.

There were specific spontaneous comments against any development in many areas in private ownership, namely:

- The Leys
- Combroke House orchard
- The area by the lake
- The Village Hall grounds

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## Potential Development sites

- Possibly (less than 25% of respondents agreeing)



New Enclosure Farm



Combroom Garage \*

(\* NB flood plain issues may restrict this potential)

- Definitely No:



Combroom House Orchard



The Leys

## **New Development: Form**

**Type of buildings:** A majority (57%) stated that they 'absolutely did not want' any light industrial development. There is, however, as mentioned above, a general view (85%) that more work/employment opportunities should be available in the parish, mainly from small rural businesses or craft workshops. This is again more sustainable than other land uses as it could employ local people or offer a valuable additional service (as in the case of Combrook Garage) thus reducing vehicle journeys, so reinforcing the peaceful environment which was valued by so many residents.

**Low cost housing:** The houses in Combroke are getting larger. Some smaller semi-detached cottages have been knocked into single dwellings and new build houses replacing older properties have tended to be considerably larger than the buildings they replaced. This has led to concerns, mentioned in the survey, over the affordability of homes in Combroke, especially for local people and younger people. When considering new planning applications weight should be given to ensure that if a single property is demolished the replacement for it is not significantly oversized in comparison in order that Combroke's stock of smaller homes do not all disappear. Encouraging a mix of housing sizes and costs in the village would help to maintain the mixture of ages and income levels which currently makes the village such an effective mix of residents.

**Design of buildings:** A very large majority of parish residents (91%) believe that traditional style buildings (such as the cottages round the church) and new buildings sympathetic to the existing traditional style buildings are appropriate. There is particular concern about knocking down older traditional buildings to replace them with more modern ones, with some comment about some recent development not enhancing the conservation area.

**Scale:** Buildings which dominate their environs, by being out of scale with their plot size or out of scale in terms of their location within the settlement and its sensitive topography or are of greater height than neighbouring dwellings are not favoured. Extensions are to be of similar or identical materials to the main building and should be subsidiary in scale so that they do not significantly change the general shape or character of the existing building.

## **Type of materials**

**Walls:** the building material preferred as per the questionnaire responses is traditional stone with low hedges or stone walls enclosing the boundaries. The 'Estate' houses have white-lias stone walls with mostly sandstone quoins and some brick quoins. However, Spring Lane properties are mainly constructed in brick so this may be more appropriate in terms of character in this particular part of the village.

**Roofs** in the village are typically mixture of thatch, clay tiles and slates on older buildings. Recent new buildings (21<sup>st</sup> century) have also used slates. These materials are regarded as the most appropriate for renovation or new building work. Concrete or ridged modern tiles should be avoided, and any roof lights should be 'conservation' style ie not significantly projecting and visually dominant.

**Windows:** dormers are common in the traditional buildings and are perhaps a good way of keeping the height of buildings down. All windows should seek to reflect the styles used in the more traditional buildings – stone mullions, leaded light and traditional timber framed casement windows not UPVC, nor disproportionately large windows (even if timber framed).

**Lighting:** With no street lighting, light emitted by houses and businesses should be kept to a minimum. This includes garden lighting, porch lights and sky lights which can interfere with neighbours' enjoyment of the night sky as well as being undesirable and in conflict with the great diversity of wildlife present in Combroke. Detailed lighting plans should be requested on new development proposals if there is concern about light spillage.

**Energy efficiency** was favoured by respondents to the questionnaire and is to be encouraged, especially if it is of low visual impact such as solar cells or ground source heat pumps.

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## **Examples of types of building features to maintain/encourage**



### **New Development: Impact**

**Families:** Combroke is notably a village with a large number of families with children. This contributes significantly to the life and liveliness of the community, and development should ensure that properties do not become excessively expensive for young families to afford. The community spirit was far and away the most valued quality of living in Combroke.

There are currently 56 houses in the village, with newer development being dispersed amongst older properties, but this is more prevalent on the 'newer' part of the village in Spring Lane. Any further new development should not be concentrated in one area or lead to a significant increase in the overall number of properties, as this would be unsustainable in such a small settlement with so few facilities and where heavy reliance on car travel is unavoidable. It would directly conflict with the characteristics valued by residents ie peace and quiet, and limited vehicle traffic.

Work in the village should be encouraged but there are strong concerns over increased traffic, industrial development and increased noise and light pollution. The impact of any employment development should be considered with these in mind. Where work opportunities are developed in the parish, residents prefer small rural businesses and craft workshops (live/work units might be an option) although many would prefer no further development of work opportunities, fearing the impact on the quiet and peaceful nature of the village.

**Traffic and Parking:** As noted elsewhere, there are serious concerns over increased traffic, speeding traffic and the lack of parking. Any future development should not add to these concerns.

## Appendices

1. **Appendix 1: Map of Parish boundaries (inc contour lines to show topography)**
2. **Appendix 2: Conservation Area Plan**
3. **Appendix 3: Aerial map of village and surrounding area**
4. **Appendix 4: Details of listed structures in Parish**

### **5. Appendix 5: An historic outline of Combroke**

Historically, Combroke's location was ideal for settlement because of:

- Its proximity to the Fosse Way, the main route between the Roman camps at Exeter and Lincoln
- A source of water
- Fertile but heavy blue lias clay

The division of the land into 'hundreds' took place during Anglo-Saxon times, each 'hundred' being a court or 'moot' to ensure obedience to the King. Following the successful Norman invasion, William rewarded his knights with parcels of land and manorial rights; the seat of power in this region was at Warwick Castle, where Henry de Newburgh was made constable in 1068 and subsequently 1st Earl of Warwick by William II in 1081, when he was granted estates in Warwickshire, including Compton Murdak. In 1086, Compton was held by the Manor Count of Mealan and was rated at seven hides. A chapel in Combroke was consecrated by Bishop Simon (1125-50) in honour of St. Margaret. In 1232, Henry de Trublewill had livery of lands in Combroke. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Compton Murdak fell into decline due to a combination of poor harvests, plague and enclosure of land for sheep and the wool trade.

The Manor was granted to John Verney by Henry VI (1422-61). The histories of Combroke and Compton Verney were closely linked. Villagers were ordered to work the estate, and evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation is still visible.

There was a common meadow following the brook, which was used to grow winter fodder. This is the land on which the houses in Spring Lane were built from the 1950s onwards.

The remains of Compton Murdak were transferred to Combroke and re-built there for servants of the mansion.



The village church has been modified several times; the present building of 1866 was paid for by the Dowager Lady Margaret Willoughby de Broke, the chancel of 1831 being left intact.

The chaplain at Compton Verney lived at the old school house in Combroke, now Combroke House, where he was also schoolmaster; the school was first noted in 1641. In 1763 Lady

Tryphena Verney gave an estate at South Littleton, Worcestershire for the maintenance of two scholars of Combrook School at Trinity College, Cambridge, if any were considered fit for university.

In 1840, a Wesleyan chapel was built; this closed in the 1950s and is now a private garage belonging to an adjacent cottage.

In 1855 the village school was founded and provided the village children with their primary education until it was closed in 1966. The building was saved for the village by community effort with the consent of the diocese and is now an indispensable asset to the village, surrounded by one of the few areas of flat ground in the village where outdoor events may be held, and, having been up-dated internally, is now available for community and private functions.

John Gibson designed the Victorian estate houses and the well heads, which are much photographed by visitors to the village.



Until 1929 Combroke was a 'closed' village belonging to the Compton Verney estate. This provided more secure lives for the estate workers than was experienced elsewhere and helped to maintain the properties in good repair and provided education for the workers' families.

In 1863 the village was supplied with gas by Kineton Gas, Light, Coal and Coke Co. from the gas works on the Warwick Road. The village Post Office was opened at No. 14 Combroke in 1873 and later moved to No. 4 across the road, where it was the Post Office and general store until 1984. Following the closure of the Post Office, the post box was re-sited in the wall near the village hall.



In the 1950s homes were built in Spring Lane and, in the 1960s, new homes were built on Church Hill as part of ribbon development, and also on an old orchard by the bridge.

In 1970 the old wooden building known as Band Hill, thought to be so named because the village band practised there, was pulled down and a new bungalow built named 'Band Hill House', now 'Serendipity'.

In the same year a house was built at New Enclosure Farm for Jack and Sidonia Harding and their family, Donie's parents, Rachel and Ted Oldham, owned and farmed the land there and Donie used to help with the work and also with the milk round, which they ran until September 1954 when milk had to be bottled.

Combroke received its Conservation area status in 1972 and this was re-defined in 1995, as a result currently no new houses would be allowed in the conservation area.

In the 1970s dutch elm disease destroyed the beautiful mature elms in and around the village, but gradually other trees have taken their place in maintaining the green and wooded aspect of the village and surrounding fields, and sheltering it in its valley setting.

**PHOTO** of Combroke looking across the back of Green Farm towards Bowshot showing the nestling in the valley setting appearance.

## **Appendix 6:**

### **Description of Village Architecture:**

The earliest properties, built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries, are traditionally built stone cottages with thatched or tiled roofs and timber windows. Most are two-storey, some have attic rooms and dormer windows. A number were originally single-storey with thatched roofs, but have been converted to two-storey with tiled roofs, using red brickwork to build up above the stone walls. The original steep-pitched roof line is visible on gable walls, and a projecting stone or brick band course is used at first floor level on front elevations.

Other stone cottages show a variety of qualities of stone cutting, some hammer-dressed, some sawn, some roughly squared, but throughout the village all stonework is coursed, with random variance in thickness between the courses. The local stone is generally a light grey/cream/buff, and although some other varieties have been used, much of the variation in appearance is due to the type of cutting, dressing and jointing used. A dark-brown sandstone (Hornton Stone) is also much in evidence, as described below.

The 19th century Compton Verney Estate houses are elaborately detailed two-storey stone buildings with tiled steeply-pitched parapet-gable-ended roofs, some with semi-dormer first floor windows, and are detailed in contrasting yellow/brown sandstone for architectural features. They are built with a projecting plinth course with chamfered top edge, and the contrasting brown sandstone is used to window surrounds and building corners in long-and-short work, also in cover stones to ends of roof purlins, at angles of 45 degree bay windows, and at heads and eaves of gable walls. Some have rectangular windows with stone mullions and transoms, some have gothic arched-head windows without transoms. There are low pointed relieving arches in stone-on-end above some of the rectangular windows. Windows are wrought iron/mild steel, with decorative glazing, either diamond paned or hexagonal. Arch blocks, lintels and sills are in the brown Hornton stone, and some houses have engraved coats of arms built in to the front elevation. There are some lancet-style windows in the front gable walls in the terrace of Nos 18-20.

Chimney stacks are relatively tall and of various forms, some solid and some pierced, built in stone and brick. There are no eaves fascias, but the eaves are formed with corbelled stone or brickwork, either in diagonal dog-tooth or traditional Warwickshire dentil band form.

The 20th century houses range in date from the wartime corrugated-iron-roofed garage and pair of 1930s semi-detached houses at one time adopted by the council (Hillside and Orchard Cottage), to the 1960s and 1970s, and are all brick built (of various colours from dark brown to pale yellow/buff), mainly pitched tiled 40-45 degree roofs with boxed eaves and painted timber windows.

Note should be made of Nos 40 and 41, which were probably built just after the turn of the 20th century. These were stone-faced and built to reflect the style of the Victorian estate, and use some brown stone but mainly blue-brick for contrasting detailing and have false brick-on-end gothic arches above the rectangular windows.

**APPENDIX 7 - SCHEDULE OF ALL PROPERTIES WITHIN VILLAGE BOUNDARIES**

<i>Address</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Description</i>
Imladris	1970s	Dark brick with significant front glazing
Highfields	2000s	Rendered elevations, glazed atrium
October House	1960s with additions currently under construction	Brick bungalow on several levels
Lorien	1960s	Traditional brick house of the period, much extended
1	Victorian	Compton Verney Estate houses
2	Victorian	Ditto
Church	1866	An attractive and compact example of Victorian gothic, replicating 'Early English' through to 'Decorated' period, and built in hammer-dressed stone in the manner of the Compton Verney Estate houses, with semi-dormer windows each dressed with the contrasting brown stone
18	Victorian	Ditto
19	Victorian	Ditto
20	Victorian	Ditto
Hill Cottage	18th century Formerly 2 houses	Stone walled, agricultural ventilated slate roof
Forge Cottage	18th century	Stone and brick cottage extended in 1990s
23a, Rosebank	1960s rebuilt 2000s	Stone composite with brick at first floor level, tiled roof
Orchard Cottage	Former Council adopted house, built in 1930s, extended 1990s	Extended brick semi-detached post-war house, hipped roof
Hillside Cottage	Ditto	Ditto
Chestnut House	1960s	Modern design when built, since altered
27	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Thatched stone cottage
Peregrine Cottage	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Ditto
Croft Cottage	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Ditto
Coombe Cottage	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Ditto
The Little House	18 <sup>th</sup> century	White rendered tiled roof extended cottage
Keepers Cottage	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Stone house with tiled roof, much extended
Former Wesleyan Chapel (now domestic garage)	19 <sup>th</sup> century	Built in red brick, with two round-topped windows and a dentil-banded gable pediment on the front elevation
26	18 <sup>th</sup> century	Stone cottage with tiled roof, much extended
25	18th C. Formerly 2 houses. Rebuilt 2000s	Stone cottage with tiled roof, rebuilt 2003
Old School Cottage	1960s	Semi-detached stone faced house
Woodstock	1960s	Ditto

Village Hall	1855	Built in yellow/brown stone with dark brown stone details, ecclesiastical design by virtue of its stone buttresses (diagonal on corners), with decorative roof tiling using alternating bands of rectangular and semi-circular-edged tiles and distinctive ridge tiles. The steel windows are set into worked stone surrounds
Wheelwright Cottage	18th century Formerly 3 houses	Thatched stone cottage
3 and 4	Victorian Formerly 2 houses, combined in 1990s	Compton Verney Estate house
13	17th century	Stone, brown stone framed leaded light windows with chamfered mullions corrugated iron roof and lintel drip mouldings
14	17th century	Ditto
Beggars Roost	Probably late 19 <sup>th</sup> / early 20th century, much extended in the latter part of the 20th.	The current red brick house with tiled roof has one stone wall. It appears to have been built on the site of, and incorporating the remains of, an earlier stone cottage
Quince Corner	18th century	Stone and thatch
6	Victorian	Compton Verney Estate house
7	Victorian	Compton Verney Estate house
8	Victorian	Compton Verney Estate house
9	Victorian	Compton Verney Estate house
Green Farm	Late 17th century	Stone with massive quoins in grey sawn stone, moulded cornice beneath the eaves on the front elevation and tiled roof
Honeysuckle Cottage	Built from barns 1980	Stone and slate roof
Driftway Barn	Built from barns 1980	Stone and slate roof - driftway door as window opening
Drovers	Built from barns 1980	Stone and slate roof
Hillbrook House	1960s	Brick with Stonewold slate roof, aluminium windows
Bank House	Built from barns 1980	Stone and slate roof
Serendipity	Timber rebuilt 1950s	Brick and concrete tiled roof
Garage	1940	Corrugated iron semi-circular roof on brickwork
42	18th century	Stone and tiled roof, rendered first floor and rear extensions
43	18th century	Ditto
44	18th century	Ditto

40	Early 1900s	Stone copy of CV Estate houses but with blue brick features
41	Early 1900s	Ditto
Deepdene	1960s	Brick and tile roof
New Enclosure Farm		Series of farm barns/ outbuildings
39	17th century	Thatched and slate roof stone cottage rebuilt 2000s
Appletrees (formerly The Old Pump House)	1950s rebuilt 2006-7	Stone-faced, under construction
Redholm	1960s	Brick bungalow with tiled roof
The Willows (formerly De Weide)	Late 1970s, recently renovated	Brick and tile
Touchdown	1960s	Brick and tile
37	Rebuilt 2006	Brick to lower floor, timber clad and Eternit slate roof
Tamara	1960s	Brick and tile
Windlesham	1960s	Brick and tile
Rose Cottage	1850s	Stone and tiled roof
Combrook House	1850s	Built in yellow/brown stone, using dark brown stone for detailing with a tiled roof. This house is built to a grander scale but less ornate style than the Estate houses