



Four Winds, Eastcott

Older Buildings

Most of the older buildings in the village are constructed on a stone base. Some of greensand stone (in the case of The Royal Oak, both Easterton and Eastcott Manors, Court Close Farm, Fairfield Farm and Willoughbys), or malmstone (in the case of Ridgeway House and Drapers Cottage). The walls, before the C18, were generally made of timber frames filled in with hazel wattle, the earliest close-studded with small panels, later versions using the timber more economically so that the frames were more widely spaced with larger panels.

From the early C18 brick became the most common walling material. Produced locally at a clay pit at Spin Hill in Market Lavington as early as the C17, they were of a rather soft and crumbly texture, but extremely pleasing from an aesthetic standpoint. 'Kestrels' and Halstead Farm, both dating from the C18, with Jubilee Cottages, from the late C19, are all fine examples of the use of these bricks.

The same company, Brickell, manufactured single-roman roofing tiles from the C19 onwards. From this time there was a decline in the use of thatch.

The earliest windows were small casements often with stone or oak mullions and leaded lights. Sashes began to be used in superior houses from the mid C18 onwards and were later adopted into the styles of more modest houses and cottages.

Early doors consisted of vertical planks, ledged and braced internally, sometimes studded with square-headed forged nails. From the C18, front doors to grander houses began to be panelled and this style was later adopted in the construction of smaller dwellings. Doors would not have included glazing but, sometimes, an over-light, generally in the shape of a fan, was introduced.

Later Developments

Much of the land to the south of the village on Salisbury Plain, was acquired by the War Department for military use in the late C19. This had a profound effect on the village as many farmhouses were destroyed and the main grazing lands for sheep and cattle were lost.

The railway was built to the north of the parish in 1902. Its coming did not greatly affect most of the villagers, many of whom had not travelled on it even as late as the 1970s.

In 1908, Samuel Moore started a small jam-making business at his home, Woodbine Cottage. He later re-erected an old army hut on high ground on the other side of The Drove. This was the beginning of the jam factory which continued in business for most of the rest of the century, employing at one time more than 100 people, until it finally closed in 1998.

Most housing development in the village has been on a small scale, individual houses being built on various sites throughout the village, in particular along Kings Road. Groups of two to six houses have been constructed on in-fill sites in the High Street, Oak Lane and White Street. The biggest single development was just after the war when a small estate of houses was built at Haywards Place. At about the same time, three timber cottages, opposite Easterton Manor, were demolished in order to widen the road.

Mains water was installed in the early 1950s. The Village Hall was built in 1955 on a piece of land donated by Samuel Moore. A mains sewer was laid shortly after this.

The village school closed in 1971 and, despite many protests, it was demolished in 1973. There were two shops, one of which was also a Post Office; both are now closed. In recent years, the planning policy of the local council has permitted only small-scale development and this meets with wide approval.



The Brook and the High Street

Transport and Communication

Since early times the topography has been a major influence on the lines of communication. The ancient route, The Ridgeway, avoiding the forested valley sides and the marshy clay vale, kept to the summit of the scarp slope.

Today, the B3098 follows the springline settlements linking the A342 in the east to Westbury in the west. As it passes through Easterton it is confined to the narrow valley floor. Although not a busy main road, traffic increases at peak times and it is not suitable for very heavy lorries. Speed limits and traffic calming in the form of painted road markers have been introduced.

The nature of the settlement with terraced houses and cottages along the main road means there is no off road parking. This leads to congestion. It does, however, reduce the road to single lane and reduces traffic speed.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the future use of the Jam Factory site in relation to traffic and access.

The bus route from Bath via Devizes terminates at Easterton. This presents problems as parked cars often occupy the bus stop.

The mainline railway forms a boundary of the parish to the north, taking a route across the low-lying clay vale. There is no station access in the locality. Rail links at Pewsey and Westbury provide commuter access to London and Bristol. The regular bus service to Bath via Devizes and Melksham is very much appreciated in the village and seen as an essential service.

Summary and Recommendations

- **The Plain**, with its open vistas and views over farmland, is considered to be part of the essential character of the village.
- **Trees, Hedges & Byways** are vitally important features and the planting of native species should be encouraged.
- **The Brook** and natural water sources should be protected from contamination by sufficient waste drainage provision which should be properly maintained to minimise the risk of flooding.
- **The Former Jam Factory Site** is by far the most significant challenge. Outline planning permission has already been granted for 24 houses, with one third of the site to be retained for commercial use. The village would like to see residential development of mixed social types with recreational space and light industrial units, all of which should be sympathetic to the surrounding area. Safety of vehicular access is an important consideration, as Kings Road is unsuitable for any increased volume of traffic. Any development on this site would need to take into account the requirement for additional waste-water drainage provision. It should also enhance the wildlife and habitat of The Drove.
- **Open Spaces** such as the field behind Halstead Farm House, the fields between the High Street and White Street, and the fields surrounding the village hall should be retained as open landscapes in the heart of the village.
- **Traffic** passing through the village on B3098 is heavy at peak times. The introduction of some traffic-calming measures is highly recommended.
- **Public Transport** is limited to a regular and essential bus service.
- **New Development** on only a very small scale is recommended, in line with the present planning policy of KDC.
- **Building Materials** similar to those which were locally sourced in the past (red brick and clay tiles) are preferred. A mixture of housing styles is encouraged.

Further Reference Material

Kennet District Council. Easterton Conservation Area Statement. Kennet District Council; 2003.

The Kennet Landscape Assessment; 1999.

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Acknowledgements

This document was produced by and for the villagers of Easterton. The views expressed in it are exclusively those voiced at one or other of the consultation exercises which were carried out. The text was written up by members of the steering group. The illustrations are by Stephen Brown and Valerie Griffiths. The layout and design was done by Shawn White of Raisin Productions. The production of this VDS was made possible by grants and support from Community First, Easterton Parish Council, Kennet District Council, and the residents of the parish of Easterton.



Easterton Manor



Introduction

In 2003 a Steering Group of volunteers was formed to produce a Village Design Statement (VDS) for Easterton, Eastcott and the surrounding area within the Parish boundary. The project aimed to identify the landscape setting, the shape of the settlement and the nature of the buildings within the defined area.

The Steering Group undertook to consult with members of the local community, the Parish Council, Kennet District Council (KDC) and other interested parties. Village Workshops and surveys were held to gather information and opinions from local residents. The materials, drawings, photographs, written comments and views expressed provided the basis for drafting the VDS.

The VDS was submitted to Easterton Parish Council and Kennet District Council for approval and is intended for inclusion as a Supplementary Planning Document.

History

Easterton was one of three tithings of Market Lavington until 1873 when it became a separate ecclesiastical parish. Eastcott was, similarly, one of three tithings of Urchfont until, in 1934, it was transferred to the civil parish of Easterton.

The name Easterton began to be used around the end of the C14. The Manor had become part of the Duchy of Lancaster in the mid C14 and was annexed to the Crown in 1399. In the early C17 it was divided into two, the eastern side being called Easterton Kingside and the western side Easterton Gernon, named after a James Gernon recorded in 1294 (sometimes called Easterton Garnhamside). This, by the end of the C18 included the Court Close estate and the farm opposite it built in the C17 (now called Easterton Manor). Easterton Kingside was conveyed in 1615 to Thomas Grubbe of Potterne and it remained in this family until the death of William Hunt Grubbe in 1820.

Eastcott was included in the Domesday assessment for Urchfont as an economically separate estate. It seems to have been divided into two estates in the early C14, but in 1363 they were merged and conveyed to the rector and convent of Edington, in whose ownership they remained until the convent was dissolved in 1539. In the C17 the land was conveyed to Sir Walter Ernle and it then remained in the Ernle Drax family until the early years of the twentieth century.

In 1867 Louisa Hay, grand-daughter of Lord Radnor, who had acquired the Market Lavington manors towards the end of the C18, offered to Easterton the sum of £1,000 for either a school or church. A school was built but it was so designed that, by the addition of a chancel, it could be converted into a church and was licensed for divine service. A Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1868; it is now a private dwelling.



St Barnabas Church

In 1874, the ecclesiastical parish of Easterton was formed and included the tithings of Fiddington and Eastcott. At the same time George Bourdieu Rogers gave his house and 50 acres of land with an endowment of £1,500 to the benefice of Easterton. The Church began its ministry in 1875. A new school was provided nearby, maintained by a voluntary rate plus a small grant from Christ Church Oxford and this continued in use until the building of a new school in Drove Lane in 1971.

Site and Situation

The parish of Easterton is situated in the Vale of Pewsey and comprises the settlements of Easterton, Easterton Sands, Eastcott and Eastcott Common. It stretches from Salisbury Plain in the south, down across the scarp slope to the valley, before rising to the greensand ridge at Easterton Sands, finally dipping to the clay vale to the north. The sweeping vista of the scarp slope is a defining feature of the village.

The boundary of the parish is a distance of 5.5 miles from north to south and 1 mile from east to west. This elongated shape is a legacy of the medieval field system. The parish owes its distinctiveness to its diverse topography and this is a reflection of the underlying geology.

Salisbury Plain is a chalk upland characterised by unimproved grassland. On the scarp slope, at the boundary of Upper Greensand and Chalk, much of the pastureland has been improved for arable farming and the hedgerows have been removed.

Greensand predominates in the valley and to the north. The steep sides of the valley remain heavily wooded, but above the valley floor towards the area known as the Sands, the soil is fertile and has been cleared for agriculture, pastureland and market gardening.

As the land dips northwards, the steep slopes are characterised by broadleaved woodland, with clearings for pasture. The area, known locally as The Folly, is accessed by bridleways and rights of way and is a natural and undeveloped part of the parish which should be conserved.

To the south-east, at the edge of the scarp slope, the greensand borders on gault clay and gives rise to an area of gently sloping land above the valley floor, known as The Clay. The land use is mixed, with both pasture and crops.

On the north-western side of the village several wooded lanes, in greensand cuttings, wind steeply and narrowly up the valley side onto the fertile area of The Sands.

The variety of topography has been identified in the Kennet Landscape Character Assessment. Within the resulting Kennet Local Plan, areas of the parish have been recognised for landscape conservation and landscape strengthening.

Settlement Patterns

Easterton is one of a series of springline settlements. The springs feed a small southwest flowing brook and the old pump is an important feature of the Village.

The approach to the village, from the east, through Eastcott, is wide and open with the vista of the Plain a defining feature.

Scattered farms along the winding road are interspersed with some more recent housing. A small road to the north leads to a part of the settlement known as Eastcott Common. A few houses give way to a bridleway. The lack of division and ease of access between settlement and open space, both here and in other parts of the village, is a characteristic to be preserved.

The main road descends to the valley floor in Easterton, and a linear pattern of settlement has developed along this natural routeway, restricting growth mainly to the narrow floor. Along the High Street there is a mixture of old and new housing which forms part of the character of the village.

White Street extends from the High Street towards The Clay, where the land opens out towards the Plain. To the north the land rises quite steeply and settlement is scattered along the main roads. An area of raised level land to the north of the High Street has seen a small community housing development. At Easterton Sands the settlement follows the ridgeline, with extensive views across the vale to the north.

Environmental Aspects

The views to and from the Plain, together with the surrounding open countryside, are of paramount importance. The field attached to the Village Hall is considered to be a sensitive area and a vital amenity.

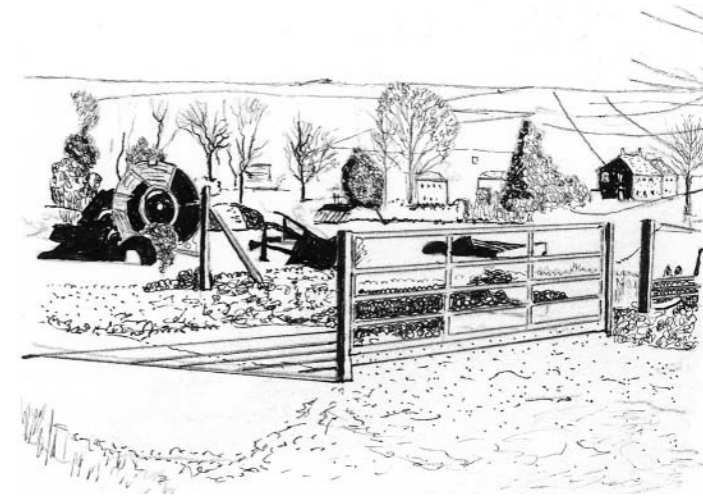
The wealth of footpaths and bridleways, which are easily reached from the centre of the village, are valued highly. They are a haven for wildlife including butterflies, birds and bats. There is a concern about lack of maintenance and the heavy damage inflicted by 'off-road' vehicles.

The large number of trees and hedges around the village is highly

valued. Of particular note are the limes and the holm oaks in the churchyard; the beech circles on the horizon; the mixed native species hedges which define ancient tracks up to the Plain and the Sands, together with other patches of natural woodland which the village would like to see increased; many long term residents considered that the loss of trees and hedges has been a major contributory factor in the flooding which has occurred in recent years. Several villagers are concerned about the tendency to plant Leyland cypress instead of native species.

The brook has had an influence on the way the village has developed. It provides a delightful sight and sound running through the heart of the community and is host to a variety of wildlife, including an important colony of water voles.

Just behind Halstead Farm House (which is situated in the High Street at the junction with Kings Road) there is a field, often used for grazing, which not only provides an open landscape in the heart of the village but also an appropriate setting for the surrounding buildings. This is considered to be an important environmental amenity and is much valued by the community. The Easterton Conservation Area Statement suggests it could "become an accessible amenity for the community as open space or a village green."



Hayward's Place and the Plain from Oak Lane

The Village

Land use, farming practice & special features

Farming is mainly arable but land is also used for stabling, paddocks, a nursery and some smallholdings. Sheep are kept on the lower slopes of the Plain. Central to the landscape is the brook, rising from local springs and continuing along the High Street towards Market Lavington.

A sizeable area of the village, fanning out from the High Street, is included in the Easterton Conservation Area In its Conservation Area Statement (see Further Reference Material) KDC concludes that large scale development would be detrimental to the distinct character of the village.

Schools, Public Buildings and Spaces

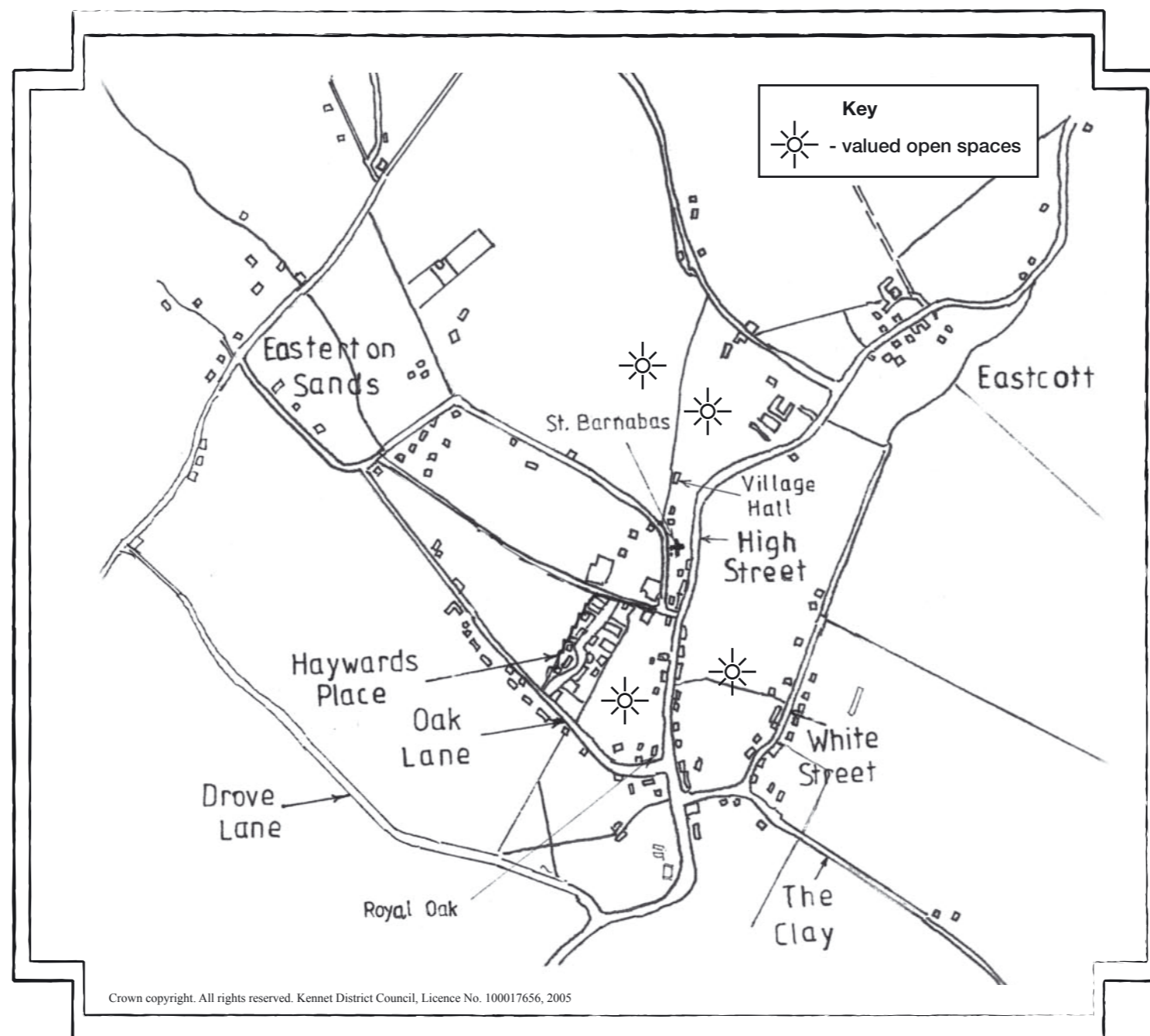
St Barnabas' Church of England Primary School in Drove Lane serves Market Lavington, Easterton, Eastcott and the surrounding area.

The Church provides a place of worship and has a vital role to play in the social life of the village. The Royal Oak pub serves as a meeting place for residents and visitors.

The Village Hall and Playing Field provide a home for a number of clubs and societies. Both the hall and the field are used by a variety of groups from within and beyond the immediate area. Regular activities include Brownies, dog training, archery, short-mat bowls and playgroups. The Village Hall is a popular venue for many social events.

Demographics

The village serves as a place of residence for upwards of 500 people. A small minority works within the boundary – The Royal Oak, two repair garages, farms, plant nursery, a veterinary surgery, a nutritional supplement & natural medicine business, various equestrian establishments and a few other small businesses provide some employment. Many residents of Easterton commute to local towns such as Devizes, Trowbridge, Salisbury, Swindon and Bath.



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Royal Oak Inn