**Sector Research Report**  11 April (revised 2 July 2015)

Sector – Environment Leader- Jamie Perry (resigned, Jan 2015)

Assistant - Deanna Fernie

1. Description of Sector-
   1. Wilmcote is a rural village of unique historic significance, set within the open Warwickshire countryside. The village attracts visitors from all over the world to the home of Shakespeare’s mother (‘Mary Arden’s House’) and to its historic canal which provides an important green corridor for recreation and wildlife habitats, and also contains vestiges of the local industry that flourished during the nineteenth century during the height of quarry production of Wilmcote stone (used for masonry and lime production). Broadly speaking, this sector report considers the sustainability of the village in relation to the potential impact of future development on the special character of its historic environment, its rural charm and public open spaces, and its ecology. The questionnaire conducted by the Neighbourhood Planning Group revealed that residents greatly value and would wish to protect the peacefulness of the village, its Green Belt setting, its nice views across open countryside, its rich history, its canal, the friendly village community and the fact that it is not overdeveloped.

In preparing this report on the Environment Sector, the following factors have been taken into account**:**

* **Greenbelt Policy** and the safeguarding of ‘character of openness and permanence’ (as stated in the National Planning Policy Framework)
* **Conservation** of the Historic Environment (both through the designated Conservation Area and undesignated sites as defined by English Heritage) and of local ecology and habitats (as set out in the Government’s Biodioversity Action Plan – BAP – and adopted by Warwickshire County Council)
* **Recreation** and the ‘securing of a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England’s traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations’ (Natural England)
* **Sustainability**: preservation of features of village that attract tourists and visitors (Mary Arden’s House and aim for year-round opening, the Wilmcote Canal; National Cycle Network; Ramblers’ Association); the creation of housing that will renew and sustain the village population and amenities (including school, shop, pubs); renewable energy considerations
* **Irreversibility** of developments and the effect on the Historic and Natural Environment of the Village (existing historic conservation areas and potential ‘SHINE’ candidate on HER records; the BAP Priority Habitat status for Wilmcote and other ecological conservation areas and scientific sites)
* **Statutory Requirements (bodies to be consulted once the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted):**
* HER
* Natural England (notes especially SSSIs and BAP Priority Habitat)
* English Heritage
* **Statutory Requirements (further investigations that may be required)**
* SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)
* Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)
* **The views of residents** as expressed in the responses to the NPG questionnaire of Feb-March 2015 and included here in the revised version of the report

1. List of Items Covered-
   1. A generic list of those items and areas covered:

* The Historic Environment (including buildings and landscape)
* Tourism and Recreational Activities
* Ecological Environment
* Green-Belt Policy
* Flooding and topography
* Renewable Energy

**The Historic Environment**

Wilmcote is entered in the Domesday Book (1086) where it is listed as part of the Pathlow ‘Hundred’. The Historic Environment Record office at Warwick holds maps and documents describing the historic landscape character, including field formation, and historic buildings and sites (a summary of which is provided in Appendix 1). Many features are no longer visible on the surface, such the Bronze Age ‘Round Barrow’, as well as the Medieval settlement of Wilmcote and its associated ‘ridge and furrow’ fields that are located to the south of the canal. The earliest structures still standing are Mary Arden’s House, built during the 16th Century, Palmer’s Farm, Kirkside Cottage and Pear Tree Cottage, as well as the houses along Old School Lane. All of these are within the designated Conservation Area which also includes the 19th Century buildings that flourished with the industrial quarrying (the Masons Arms, the cottages belonging to the quarry workers, known as ‘The Tens’ and the ‘Eighteens’, and the Congregational chapel), as well as Wilmcote School and Wilmcote Church. In addition, there are undesignated sites of historical interest, including the 18th Century Gipsy Hall Farm, the location of the main Wilmcote Quarry (a Site of Special Scientific Interest, or SSSI) and also the site of a disused cement work, sawmill, and tramway that transported stone and lime to the railway and the canal, as well as some of the lime kilns in the area. Any planning applications are reviewed by HER, which conducts archeological searches to ensure that no site of historical interest (‘SHINE’) is disturbed. In addition, as outlined above, HER have a statutory role in reviewing Neighbourhood Plans. English Heritage, which also has a statutory role, has expressed concern about development that could impact on Mary Arden’s House and the conservation area.

The NPG Questionnaire reflected a strong level of interest in Wilmcote’s local history, with 34% naming historic sites as features of the village they would wish to protect. The Aston Cantlow Historical Society and Billesley Preservation Group have produced a draft leaflet, ‘Wilmcote, a Warwickshire Village’, which provides an account of the village’s history (see Appendix 2). These groups are interested in making the public (both residents and visitors) more aware of the hidden industrial heritage of the village through publications such as the leaflet and annotated maps within the village and along the canal. They, together with English Heritage, are concerned to protect such ‘undesignated’ sites and features as well as the designated conservation areas. Peter Boland of English Heritage has kindly offered to review the Wilmcote Neighbourhood Plan before the statutory review stage.

**Tourism and Recreational Activities**

Wilmcote attracts tourists and visitors to Mary Arden’s House as one of the five Shakespeare Houses within the Stratford-upon-Avon area, and to the Wilmcote Canal as a leisure and recreational area. Although both are highly seasonal, with Wilmcote Stores reporting significant increases in business during the spring and summer months, the Shakespeare Site Tour Bus comes through the village all year and The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is putting plans together for year-round opening of Mary Arden’s House. The SBT has expressed concern that housing development could impact on both the attractiveness of the village as a tourist destination, particularly in terms of the impact on the location and medieval farming practices of Mary Arden’s House.

The Aston Cantlow Road and Station Road extending to the canal path are part of National Cycle Route 5 and a steady stream of cyclists comes through the village year-round at weekends. The village is part of the network of roads that are marked as ‘Leisure Drives’ for touring the unspoilt Warwickshire countryside. Some of the sights to be enjoyed in Wilmcote and in approaching the village feature the unique historic landscape: Mary Arden’s House and Palmer’s Farm, the Masons Arms and the stone cottages, and the distant view of Gipsy Hall Farm. Visitors and locals can enjoy both walking through the village or along its outskirts and refreshing themselves at the Masons Arms or The Mary Arden pub. Public rights of way (such as those leading alongside the fields to Billesley, behind the Glebe Estate up to Marsh Road, and from Aston Hill across to Gipsy Hall Farm and the Wilmcote Quarry). Other open spaces include the Village Green, and the Council-owned field in the Glebe Estate and the areas of green bordering the Glebe and the Aston Cantlow Road. Natural England and English Heritage also emphasise the importance of public ‘sight lines’ of green and open spaces for residents within a community, which Wilmcote amply furnishes along all its approaches to the village and in the ‘green fingers’ mentioned above that penetrate the village itself. A children’s play area (within what is known as the ‘Bovis Triangle’ behind Swanfold), was provided as part of the housing development.

The NPG questionnaire showed that a majority of residents consider such recreational areas to be ‘important’, ‘very important’ or ‘essential’: 86% for the playground, 73% for its adjoining playing field, 81% for the Glebe playing field, and 92% for the canal.

**Ecological Environment**

Warwickshire County Council have identified the pasture area adjoining the end of Marsh Road and Hardwick Farm Meadows as Local Wildlife Sites. In addition, the copse woodland within the Bovis Triangle, and the field adjoining Edkins Park (off the Aston Cantlow Road) are identified as potential conservation areas (a PDF document for this is available on the internet, published by Stratford District Council as part of its Ecological and Geological Study of Local Service Villages). In its report, Natural England also names Wilmcote Pasture and Hardwick Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Sites (see Appendix 5). Natural England, which has a statutory role in reviewing Neighbourhood Plans, identifies two SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) within the Wilmcote area, one at the end of Marsh Road, ‘Copmill Hill’, and the other being the Wilmcote Quarry on Gipsy Hill Farm. It also names Wilmcote as a BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitat, including bats, barn owls and other birds of prey, and butterflies. The University of Warwick Natural Science Department notes, ‘Bat populations in the UK have seen a severe decline over the last century,’ stating further: ‘All 17 species of UK bat are currently protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is illegal to kill or harm bats, or to damage or destroy their roosts. In order to protect bat roost habitats an ecological survey must take place before development work can take place on any property with evidence of bats.’ Any development plans that potentially harmed or removed habitats for such protected species could be turned down.

The Wilmcote Canal is recognised by Stratford District Council as an important green corridor (see the SDC website for: UE Associates (2011) Green Infrastructure Study for the Stratford-on-Avon District. *UE Associates: Cheltenham, August 2011*), and, as noted above, the canal and pathway are valued by residents as a recreational amenity, with 11% of residents specifically naming the canal as a feature of the village they would wish to protect. Both the Canal and River Trust and Warwickshire Wildlife have confirmed the need to protect the flora and fauna of this area (including mallard ducks, moor hens, swans, brown trout, bank voles). Katherine Burnett of the Canal and River Trust has asked to be consulted once any plans are submitted, and has offered guidance in the drawing up of the Neighbourhood Plan. There is perhaps potential to formalise the green corridor as a nature reserve (compare the nature reserve of ‘Snitterfield Bushes’, an area of woodland for the preservation of wildlife species, including Marbled White, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Glow-worm, Jay, Woodcock, Bullfinch, Muntjac Deer, Fallow Deer, Roe Deer, Early Purple Orchid, Bird’s-nest Orchid, Primrose, Herb-Paris, Bluebell, and Columbine). It is proposed that Warwickshire Wildlife in conjunction with the Warwick Ecology Unit conduct an ecological survey of Wilmcote to identify the species living in the Grassland, Meadow, Woodland and Canal environments that the parish offers.

**Green-Belt Policy**

The meeting of the Wilmcote Neighbourhood Planning Group on 4 November 2014 unanimously voted to uphold Green-belt policy as set out in Section 9 (‘Protecting Green Belt Land’) of the National Planning Policy Framework, accepting the statement, ‘**The Green Belt acts as effective protection against excessive development of the village which would cause major loss of character. The Green Belt status must be maintained**’ (see Minutes of NPG Meeting 4 November 2014). The guidelines set out in Paragraph 89 of the NPPF had already been reflected in the report produced by the Independent Planning Consultant, David Holmes Associates (June 2014), which quoted the ideal of protecting the ‘character of openness and permanance’ of the British countryside, and were represented in the questionnaire delivered to residents in February 2015. Depending on the results from the questionnaire, a decision to uphold Greenbelt Policy would mean that future building in the village would be restricted to: limited in-fill; re-use of existing sites; recreational usage; and local housing needs (Paragraph 89 of NPPF).

The NPG questionnaire showed that a strong majority of residents, 74%, would not support building on rural land, compared to 13% who would.

**Flooding and Topography**

Wilmcote is identified by the Environment Agency as being within Zone 1 of the River Avon flood plain. It is therefore considered at low risk of flooding. However, issues of drainage, sewers, and the presence of the canal can lead to excess surface water, and the 2008 Flood Risk Assessment conducted for Stratford District Council identifies several causes of potential flooding that must be taken into consideration for any future building developments. Heavy rainfall can lead to flooding in the approaches to the village: Featherbed Lane (after the railway bridge), Billesley Road (immediately exiting the village), in the dip on The Ridgeway, and at the bottom of the Aston Cantlow Road. The following extracts are taken from the 2008 SFRA:

**2.3.7 PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (2006)**

PPS25 sets out a plan led approach to flood risk. It confirms that all

forms of flooding and their impact on the natural and built environment

are material planning considerations. It clarifies the Sequential Test, a

process that matches types of development to degrees of flood risk

and strengthens the requirement to include FRAs at all levels of the

planning process. Regional planning bodies and local planning

authorities (LPA) should, inter alia, reduce flood risk by safeguarding

land from development that is required for current and future flood

management e.g. conveyance and storage of flood water and flood

defences. (2006)

***“8.42*** *The implications of climate change for the severity of floods is uncertain but the most*

*realistic approach is to accept that flooding is an inevitable process. PPG25 [now PPS25]*

*Development and Flood Risk sets out detailed guidance on how flood risk should be considered*

*at all stages of the planning and development process, including a sequential approach to*

*locating development. Local authorities should also consider local Environment Agency plans,*

*Catchment Flood Management Plans and indicative floodplains (Quality of the Environment –*

*Assets Diagram).*

***8.43*** *For the review of this RPG the RPB with the Environment Agency and other partners should*

*identify where flooding issues are likely to be of Regional significance, assess their implications*

*for the distribution of development and where appropriate, set out appropriate policies and*

*measures to address them. This could include defining areas where sustainable drainage*

*systems would best contribute to reducing flood risk, and improving water quality where the need*

*to improve the performance of the floodplain, attenuate flows and provide local treatment of*

*polluted run-off is greatest. However it should be borne in mind that sustainable drainage systems*

*are unlikely to provide the complete answer to problems associated with large-scale river flooding*

*episodes; in the longer term they can help attenuate flows and reduce the risk of flooding in urban*

*areas downstream.*

***8.44*** *When considering the possible risks, implications and steps needed to prevent general*

*flooding affecting new development, the potential for sewer flooding should also be considered by*

*developers and planning authorities. Large new developments may require some new or updated*

*infrastructure in the existing sewer network and treatment works in order to cope with the*

*additional load. Sustainable drainage systems can, in the correct conditions, help alleviate sewer*

*flooding problems by preventing surface water from entering the sewerage system.”* West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy report (June 2004).

Source: Stratford District Council SFRA (2008)

**Renewable Energy**

There is potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider possible renewable energy schemes at the level both of village (and beyond, if a commercial scheme) and private supply. Nearby solar farm developments at Bishopton indicate the potential for renewable energy sites in the area. However, the commercial aspect of such enterprises must be remembered: even when a proportion of energy generated is available for local residents, such large-scale sites can create negative impact on the environment (both visual and ecological) that can outweigh the sustainability benefits for a local community. On a private level, some households have invested in solar panels and are able to feed back unused electricity to the National Grid, thereby contributing to the country’s sustainability. Below is a list of documents referred to for the Burton Farm application for its 4.4MW solar panels:

Statement of Community Involvement

Corporate Strategy 2011-2015

Sustainable Community Strategy

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Resource Assessment and Feasibility Study –

CAMCO April 2010

Renewable Energy Capacity Study for the West Midlands – March 2011

Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines

Proposed Submission Core Strategy 2014

UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a brighter future – Department of

Energy and Climate Change October 2013

UK Solar PV Strategy Part 2: Delivering a Brighter Future, April 2014

Statement by the Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change (November 2013)

Other Legislation

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality Act 2010

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

CIL Legislation

Localism Act 2011

Climate Change Act 2008

1. Research Data Collection-
   1. List of all parties contacted

* Mary Arden’s House (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Manager Abi Moore)
* English Heritage (Peter Boland has offered advice and is willing to look at the Neighbourhood plan before it goes to the statutory review stage)
* Aston Cantlow Historical Society and Billesley Conservation Group (meeting held with Alan Bailey, August 2014)
* Canal and River Trust/British Canals and Waterways (Email Correspondence with Katherine Burnett, 4-12 September 2014)
* Warwickshire County Council (Environmental Impact Group)
* Warwick Ecology Unit (David Lowe, Principal Ecologist) and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
* Council for the Protection of Rural England (August 2014, conversations with volunteer planning officer, Nicholas Butler)
* Historic Environment Records Office (HER, Warwickshire County Council – Ben Wallace has sent HER data; DF has requested HER visit Wilmcote to help survey the historic characteristics of the village)
* Natural England (Email Correspondence with Alistair Welch, 10 September 2014, including report from Natural England on the area)
  1. Publications Reviewed.- List of publications
* ‘Knowing Your Place’ (English Heritage)
* ‘The Building in Context Toolkit’ (English Heritage)
* ‘Heritage at Risk’ (English Heritage)
* Heritage Gateway (English Heritage)
* *A Passage Through Time in a Warwickshire Parish* (2012 revised edition)
* Warwickshire Direct website (Environmental section)
* Briefing Note for Natural Environmental White Paper June 2011
  1. Copies of Correspondence- Letters and email (See Appendices)
  2. Minutes/Notes - Record documents of meetings (See Appendices)
* Meeting with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust between Alan Griffith and Abi Moore (Manager, Mary Arden’s House) 25 June, 2014 (see Appendix 3)
* Meeting between Deanna Fernie and Alan Bailey (Chair, Billesley Conservation Society) August 27, 2014
* Conversation and further email correspondence between Peter Boland (English Heritage, Historic Places Adviser for West Midlands) and Deanna Fernie 2 October 2014 (See Appendix 4)
* Email correspondence between David Lowe (Principle Ecologist of the Warwick Ecology Unit) and Jamie Perry, September 2014
* Email correspondence between Katherine Burnett of the Canal and River Trust and Jamie Perry, September 2014
* Email correspondence between Natural England and Jamie Perry, August 2014 (See Appendix 4 for Natural England Report)

1. Reports Prepared
   1. This can be a reference to reports already prepared and would be attached to this document or copied into this section. They may well show a story of the research undertaken.

* Work in progress from the Aston Cantlow Historical Society/Billesley Conservation Society: leaflet entitled, ‘Wilmcote: a Warwickshire Village’
* HER data was supplied by Ben Wallace and a summary has been written by Deanna Fernie (see Appendix A). An invitation to Ben Wallace was issued October 2014 with a view to enlisting further input from HER in putting together the Neighbourhood Plan.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to be commissioned by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. It is known that the area contains a BAP Priority Habitat (Natural England). Cost of Warwickshire Wildlife Ecology Consultation £250 per day over 2-3 days

* Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) have been designated at Copmill Hilll, beyond the end of Marsh Lane, and at the Wilmcote Quarry, located on the northern edge of Gypsy Hall Farm

1. Conclusion
   1. Key issues of Importance-

These are issues that will have to be considered when selecting sites for housing:

* In line with NPPF, Planning Consultant David Walsh outlined Green Belt Policy of tolerance of ‘small scale development’ and ‘limited infilling or redevelopment of brownfield’ sites, ‘subject to it not being harmful to the character of openness and permanence’ of the area
* English Heritage emphasises the importance of open spaces: ‘Views and lines of sight can be an important aspect of your local heritage, particular when they are valued by the community as a whole’ (‘Knowing Your Place’). English Heritage warns of the irreversibility of developments which can mean that places significant for their history and beauty are ‘lost forever’ (‘Remember to consider the landscape surrounding the place where you live – it is just as historic as any listed buildings’, ‘Knowing Your Place’)
* Mary Arden’s House has emphasised that they would not approve developments that compromised their practice of Tudor farming methods; moreover, SBT’s intention to keep Mary Arden’s open year round as a tourist attraction necessitates maintaining Wilmcote’s picturesque and historic character
* It is possible that certain sites would necessitate the need for an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment, outlined in Matthew Neals’ email of 18 July, 2014)
* **English Heritage** have a statutory role in reviewing plans and will have a consulting role once the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted
* **HER** have a statutory role in reviewing plans, which can involve interruption to future development if an area of potential archaeological significance is found (some of which may be identified in advance through the Aston Cantlow Historical Society and consultation of data with Ben Wallace of HER), e.g. former quarry sites
* **Natural England** have a statutory role in reviewing plans

**Overall Conclusion**:

As one of the few Shakespeare Birthplace Trust sites and the location of the home of Shakespeare’s mother, Mary Arden, Wilmcote village holds significance for visitors from all over the world; any development therefore has implications beyond our parochial concerns. Decisions must be taken within the long view, not just to meet short-term requirements, as we are responsible now for the preservation of Wilmcote’s special qualities for future generations. Moreover, beyond purely environmental considerations, the village’s economic sustainability (Mary Arden’s House, The Mary Arden Inn and The Masons’ Arms, the Wilmcote Canal, cyclists, and walkers) largely depends upon attracting visitors. The conclusion of this report is that any future development should avoid building on sites that would change the village’s character irreversibly, including its historic buildings and landscape, its ecological habitats, and its green open spaces. Further, housing should be developed that is in keeping with the village’s rural image.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1

**Wilmcote Historic Landscape and Historic Sites (Summary of HER data)**

**1. Designated Sites (extant buildings are ‘Listed’ and are within the Conservation Area)**

Wilmcote Canal (MWA 4330 and Canal Wharf, MWA 4337 – the Canal Wharf building does not appear to be listed)

Mary Arden’s Farm (MWA 8576), including Wilmcote Stocks (MWA 1586)

Palmer’s Farm

Dovecote (part of Palmer’s Farm) (MWA 1571)

Former Congregationalist Chapel (now residential)

The Masons Arms pub

Wilmcote Smithy (7607), 100m North of Church (building still standing?)

St Andrew’s Church (MWA 9110), dates from 1843

Wilmcote School, dates from 1846

Medieval Chapel (MWA 1578) is thought to have been located within what is now the Swanfold housing area (no visible remains).

Possible building located opposite Mary Arden’s Farm (MWA 7414), ‘The Orchard’ – may have belonged to Robert Arden, Shakespeare’s maternal grandfather (also nearby site of MWA 19115).

Wilmcote Medieval Settlement (MWA 9113); Domesday Book lists Wilmcote in the Pathlow Hundred (appears to be roughly within the existing Conservation Area).

Wilmcote Parva (MWA 923 - deserted medieval settlement) – South-East of existing Conservation Area?

**2. Sites outside the Conservation Area (‘Undesignated’ in English Heritage terminology)**

Blue Lias Lime and Cement Works located near canal (400m north of Featherbed Lane Bridge - MWA 7695)

Tramway (MWA 7696) - on Gipsy Hall Farm land?

Wilmcote Quarry (MWA 1583), 150m West of Wilmcote Football Ground, within Woodcote Mobile Home Park? (Different from the main ‘Wilmcote Quarry’ situated on Gipsy Hall Farm which is an SSSI. Additonal quarry site once existed behind the Masons Arms pub (not listed in HER records).

Gipsy Hall Farm (HWA 15521), ‘Historic Farmstead’ (HER).

Lime Kilns (MWA 7692), 500m north of Pathlow, also at MWA 7698 near canal, South of Featherbed Lane and 350m North of Church, between Canal and railroad (MWA 7699)

Former Wilmcote Train Station (MWA 7700, 200m North of Featherbed Lane, borders existing green corridor)

Former Midlands railroad (section of Hatton-Honeybourne-Stratford Line, MWA 7840)

Canal Turning Circle is not listed in the HER records (just North of Featherbed Lane, within existing green corridor).

**3. Historic Landscape Features**

Round Barrow (Bronze Age) 500m East of Pathlow (MWA 1579), no visual evidence

Hundred mound (MWA 6082), 550m East of Pathlow

Ridge and Furrow:

* Field at end of Aston Cantlow Road (West)
* Field North of Mary Arden’s Farm and East of Railroad
* Fields South of Mary Arden’s Farm, extending along canal
* Field Northwest of Pathlow

Gipsy Hall Farm (Eighteenth Century Historic Farmstead, HWA 15521)

Medieval Turnpike Route - now the Birmingham Road (MWA 4775) and ancient road AD 1016 (Feldere Street, MWA 8641)

Sources: HER Data; Aston Cantlow and District History Society publication, *A Passage Through Time in a Warwickshire Parish* (2012 revised edition), and discussion with Alan Bailey, Chair of the Billesley Preservation Society.

**Appendix 2**

‘Wilmcote, a Warwickshire Village which mirrors English History’ draft leaflet prepared by Alan Bailey, Chair of the Billesley Preservation Society

**Wilmcote: - a Warwickshire Village which mirrors English History**

**The early days – the Saxon Period and beyond into the Middle Ages**

Wilmcote is a product of the industrial revolution its growth and structure reflecting the impact of the industrialisation of its natural resources, blue lias stone, and the new modes of transport linking it with Birmingham and the west Midlands. Its roots maybe mediaeval but its size and range of house types belong to the 19th century.

Long before recorded history there were a small group of cottages located just north of Stratford and they were known Wilmud’s Cotes or cottages which later became known as Wilmcote. Wilmcote was, in Saxon times, overshadowed by the hamlet of Pathlow, where the Court Baron held a Court Leet twice a year. It was located on the main road north from the Street Ford across the Avon. In 1228, William de Wilmcote was in dispute with the church over who had the right to appoint a priest for the local chapel indicating that the hamlet was big enough to warrant a chapel. By the 14th cent the Hamlet was divided into Little Wilmcote and Great Wilmcote which was given to John, son of John de Wyncote by the Earl of Pembroke. In 1561, The Manors were given to George Gibbes and Adam Palmer, who was an executor to Robert Arden, Shakespeare’s grandfather. By William Dugdale’s survey of 1672 each village consisted of some forty houses and belonged to Lord Abergavenny and the Duke of Dorset. The open three field system which had been worked for generations was enclosed in 1743.

The most notable property in the village is Mary Arden’s House, prior to the period before she married John Shakespeare of Snitterfield in Aston Cantlow Church. It was built in the 16th cent and remained a working farm until 1930 when it was purchased by the Shakespeare Trust.

Other older cottages in the village such as Peartree Cottage, Palmer’s Cottage Kirkside Cottage and some cottages down the Old School Lane date back to the 16th century and form the old centre of the village.

**The impact of the Industrial Revolution**

Opposite Mary Arden’s House is a large house which was built in 1850 and was converted into the Swan Inn in 1870. The Swan Inn closed in 1916 and was then converted to a farmhouse and Sweet Shop. It was converted back to the Swan Inn in ? and was renamed as the Mary Arden in 1998?

Gypsy Hall Farm, located along the Aston Cantlow road has played a large part in the history and economy of the village. Not only was it a significant farm but also on its land were quarries and lime pits. The farm had a quarry, cement works and sawmill for sawing stone flooring slabs employed some 56 men in 1883. It was sold by the Wood’s estate in 1918 and then sold again in 1940 to a writer, Frances Donaldson for £8,000. She farmed the land for 8 years while her husband, Lord Donaldson was in the army during World War II.

She also lived in one of the old quarry worker’s cottage known at the “Eighteens” located on the Aston Cantlow Road, close to the Farm. She took a lease on one for a £1 a week. It consisted of one room downstairs and two up. Water was obtained from a stand pipe in the road and lavatory was out the back.

During the 19th century the community of Wilmcote had expanded rapidly with the development first of the Stratford canal opened in 1816 and then the railway to Stratford. These methods of transport allowed the expansion of quarrying for the local lias limestone which had been used as a poor quality building stone since the 16 cent and also burnt for lime. Even before the invention of the steam railway Wilmcote had its own horse drawn tramway system linking the quarries at Gypsy Hall Farm and the quarry behind the Mason’s Arms to the works by the wharves at the canal and later the railway. In 1860, with the opening of the railway the stone was crushed and burnt to make cement. Some houses for the quarry workers still remain and they are known at the “Eighteens” and the “Tens”, located just off the Village green.

In 1824 Richard Greaves developed the stone quarrying industry and by the 1830’s he had opened a lime and cement works by the canal. Other kilns were built by Thomas Higgins & Co in 1845 but by 1870 these two enterprises had been amalgamated. By 1900 some 150 men worked at Wilmcote Quarries. Wilmcote stone has been used in other significant places over the years including: St Mary’s Church for its partial rebuilding after the great fire of Warwick 1694, Castle Bridge over the Avon at Warwick, and flooring at the Houses of Parliament in 1852 and the Royal Courts of Justice in 1882.

An indication of the village rapid growth during the 1800 was the number of public houses it supported: - The New Inn, the Laurels, the Mason’s Arms, the Wharf and the Swan Inn. And down the road in Pathlow there was also the Dun Cow and the Six Bells.

By the early 19cent the population growth in the village was thought to warrant a church. The village did have had a Chapel in the 13cent and it is thought to have been located between the Village Green and Peartree cottage, however it was not until 1841 that the church of St Andrew was built in the gothic style by Rev Fortescue-Knottesford of Alveston Manor, Stratford.

In addition a new school completed in 1846 and guest house, to be used as a religious retreat, was also built on land given by the local squire, Charles Corbett, who wished to improve the social behaviour of many the incoming villagers who were working in the quarries and associated industries. Members of the Oxford movement were often to be found there during the later part of the 19 century. The previous old School/Chapel was situated opposite the Church and the Old Post Office at the end of Old School Lane and was used as a school from 1816.

By 1871 the census recorded a population of 468.

The Crofts located by St Andrews Church was the location of one of the village blacksmiths, Harry Barrat in 1883. And next door during the 1930’s in the house now known as Apple Tree Cottage was a bakery and sweet shop.

**20th century commuting and residential development.**

In 1908 the North Warwickshire Railway brought the village in easy reach of Birmingham and a large number of bungalows were built for commuter use.

Some were built on Aston Hill for week end use.

As local industry changed over recent years, sometimes disappearing altogether, as locations that once produced a living locally are converted into residential accommodation for people who work and commute all across the Midlands and even to London:

* The Bungalow Stores and garage opposite the Sport and social club on Aston Cantlow road.
* Foxes Spices store and trade sale location behind Bungalow stores becomes a mews location.
* The old Congregational Chapel by the Masons Arms is now residential accommodation
* Holiday accommodation at Aston Hill rebuilt as luxury houses.
* Bungalows with large gardens along Aston Cantlow Road have been rebuilt as large detached houses,
* What was the dairy and milk supply depot behind Wilmcote Manor has become gated luxury detached houses and
* The Manor is now gated residential accommodation.

The village reflects a cross section of 21st cent social England from a gypsy site near Pathlow, mid twentieth century social housing on the Glebe Estate, bungalow accommodation situated around Swanfold behind the Mary Arden Inn, a new private housing estate Stone Pits Meadow located just off the Aston Cantlow road and a significant number of large gated properties on the outskirts of the Village.

Appendix 3:

**Wilmcote Neighbourhood Plan**

**Notes of meeting with Shakespeare Trust. 25th June 2014**

**Meeting held at 9.30am at Mary Arden’s House**

**Present:** Philippa Rawlinson Head of Operations

Mark Armstrong Project Manager

Abi Moore Manager Mary Arden’s

1. **Purpose of Meeting**
   1. To update the Trust on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.
   2. To review their objectives for the future and how they may affect the development of the village.
   3. Identify areas of mutual interest.
2. **Review of Land owned.**
   1. The Trust own some 40 plus acres of land and buildings in Wilmcote.
   2. The land and buildings can be listed as; Historic properties associated with the Mary Arden’s House, largely ancient undisturbed pasture (farmed to conservation standards), Property associated with the Historic Properties and Properties held as investments where income is earned.
   3. The Trust would not want to see the farming operation run on Tudor methods being compromised in any way with any housing developments This would include land being developed adjacent to their site that could detract from the environment being created in the farm (ecology, vision, setting).
   4. The investment properties acquired in previous years include; the Chapel, the allotment on station road, the end railway terrace house adjacent to the allotments and the terrace house and land adjoining the shop.
3. **Future Expansion**
   1. They will be seeking to expand;

Heritage and Medieval aspects of the centre

Historical and Environmental elements of the Farm

Education facilities

* 1. Looking actively to open the centre 12 months per year. This would be welcomed by the village.
  2. No expansion outside the site envisaged.

1. **Car Parking in the Village**
   1. Car Parking in the village and at Mary Arden’s House was discussed.
      1. The Trust would not want to see any part of the main farm being given over to parking.
      2. It was recognised additional hard standing car parking would be beneficial to the Trust, particularly if they open in the winter.
      3. The village will be addressing car parking generally, particularly associated with the station and users of the canal area.
   2. It was muted that there may be an option to consider additional parking using the allotments as access to parking behind on the open field area. This could be a joint parking area for the Trust and Village. This is one option that could be considered. This was only an observation, no commitment was made by the Trust.
   3. If (b) above occurred, it would open up the field used for grazing and overflow car parking for grazing and functions. The village may also be able to use such a facility. Again no commitment made by the Trust.
2. Other Matters.
   1. All communications to be with Abi Moore in future. 07775 581865
   2. It was suggested that Mary Arden’s use the Village Vine for liaising with the village, 40% of the households receive the Vine. The Vine is issued every month. Contact Sue Marr, [pmarr29@btinternet.com](mailto:pmarr29@btinternet.com)
   3. The Trust noted the importance of Public Toilets. NPG to consider.
   4. AG pointed out that all the main correspondence can be found on the PC web Site.
   5. The trust would like to develop dialogue with the PC, contact is Colin Ray, Chairman [colin@colinray.org.uk](mailto:colin@colinray.org.uk)

Appendix 4

**Peter Boland, English Heritage**: Minutes (summary) of telephone conversation with Deanna Fernie, October 2, 2014:

1. The British Heritage

Development Dept. have considered the map of

potential sites. At first glance,

the plot they would be concerned

about is plot 10 because of proximity to the

conservation area, but

they would need more information about the other plots

(based on HER

data) in order to comment comprehensively.

2. The process

that he envisages we would go through is that once we

have information from

our questionnaires, the favoured sites are

selected in terms of both the

practicability of development and also

which are least sensitive in terms of

environmental impact. Our further

researches on this latter point should

include consideration of the

historic landscape including ridge and furrow,

sites of potential

archeological interest (for both of which we have data from

HER), and

both the designated and undesignated historic sites (data from HER

and

the local historical society).

3. When we are further along, we should

invite Ben Wallace of HER to

visit the village in order to assess the

character of the place, in

terms of buildings (we do have an appraisal

already, quoted by David

Holmes, of the historic landscape character).

4.

We could also contact the Conservation officers at SCD to see if we

could have

access to their draft appraisals of the 'local character' of

Stratford's

outlying villages, particularly their descriptions of our

conservation

areas.

5. He advised me to look at the EH website and the point about

'guidance on setting'.

6. As mentioned above, he would be happy to review

our draft plan

pre-consultation stage.

Peter has also supplied a PDF of a presentation he has given to Neighbourhood Planning Groups.

Appendix 5

Natural England: Response to Jamie Perry from Alistair Welch, 10 September 2014

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date: 10 September 2014  Our ref: 130519 | |
| Jamie Perry  The ASA  SportPark  Pavilion 3  3 Oakwood Drive  Loughborough University LE11 3QF  **BY EMAIL ONLY** | Customer Services  Hornbeam House  Crewe Business Park  Electra Way  Crewe  Cheshire  CW1 6GJ  T 0300 060 3900 |

**Wilmcote Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 29 August 2014 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning. We must be consulted on draft Neighbourhood Development Plans where the Parish Council considers our interests would be affected by the proposals. We must be consulted on draft Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders where proposals are likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest or 20 hectares or more of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. We must also be consulted on Strategic Environmental Assessments, Habitats Regulations Assessment screening and Environmental Impact Assessments, where these are required. Your local planning authority will be able to advise you further on environmental requirements.

**Designated sites**

The following Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are triggered by Natural England’s Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). Therefore an assessment to clarify whether there are any potential impacts on these SSSIs interest features is recommended. The IRZs can be viewed on the MAGIC website (http://magic.defra.gov.uk/). Further information on these SSSIs can be found using the following link (http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/search.cfm).

 Copmill Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) falls within the Neighbourhood Development Plan’s western boundary and an impact risk has been identified for any housing allocation within 1km of this nature conservation site.

 Aston Grove & Withycombe Wood SSSI is outside the Neighbourhood Development Plan’s western boundary and an impact risk has been identified for developments of 50 or more new dwellings located outside of existing settlements within 1km of this nature conservation site.

 Snitterfield and Bearley Bushes SSSI is outside the Neighbourhood Development Plan’s north east boundary and an impact risk has been identified for any housing allocations outside or on the edge of existing settlements within 2km of this nature conservation site.

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Wilmcote Pasture and Hardwick Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are located within the Neighbourhood Development Plan boundary to the centre with Marsh Row Meadow LWS to the west. You should ensure you have sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the plan on the LWSs. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust or Warwickshire County Council may be able to provide further information in relation to these sites. Local environmental record centres also hold a range of information on the natural environment. A list of local records centre is available at: <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

We advise that the Neighbourhood Development Plan includes criteria based policies for the protection and enhancement of the national and locally designated sites present. This is in line with para 113 of the NPPF which makes it clear that distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological network. The Neighbourhood Development Plan should always seek to avoid environmental impacts by directing development away from the most sensitive areas with mitigation considered only when this is not possible.

**BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitat**

Natural England note that there is BAP Priority Habitat within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The value of these areas and their contribution to the ecological network of local, national and internationally protected sites should be considered when locating new development. The Neighbourhood Plan should, in accordance with paragraph 117 of the NPPF, encourage the preservation, enhancement and creation of priority habitats where these opportunities exist.

**Protected species**

You should consider whether your plan has any impacts on protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced standing advice to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected or Biodiversity Action Plan species should they be identified as an issue. The standing advice also sets out when, following receipt of survey information, you should undertake further consultation with Natural England.

**Natural England Standing Advice**

**Opportunities for enhancing the natural environment**

Neighbourhood plans and proposals may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment, use natural resources more sustainably and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature.

Opportunities to incorporate features into new build or retro fitted buildings which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes should also be considered as part of any new development proposal.

If, as you develop your plan, you consider it will affect Natural England’s interests, you should consult Natural England at [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Alastair Welch on 0300 0601148. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Welch, South Mercia Area Team