

History of Stoke Mandeville Evidence Paper [EHSM]

Part 1: Introduction

1. This evidence paper for the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan sets out a brief history of the Parish to provide context and understanding for its future. It should be read alongside the Neighbourhood Development Evidence Paper.
2. In summary, Stoke Mandeville was very much a closed rural community until the end of the First World War, dependent for work on its dozen or so farms, wary of outsiders and well aware of the County town of Aylesbury on its doorstep. A common saying in Aylesbury in the early part of the nineteenth century was "Stoke, where there are more crows than folk". Eighteenth and nineteenth century modernisation and reform created a more cohesive place with better public facilities, but it was the advent of the railway in the early 20th century and mass house building of the post-war era that began the huge transformation of the Parish into the largely suburban area it is today.
3. The historic roots of the Parish are still visible in its remaining historic buildings and in the settlement patterns and road names. Many local people still have a strong sense of identity. Retaining links with the past is a key principle of place-making and the Neighbourhood Plan, therefore, should retain and strengthen understanding of the Parish's past and honour it in the buildings, layout and structures of the future.

Part 2: Facts¹

Early History

4. Although records are sparse, there are a few pointers to the early background of Stoke Mandeville. As early as 1045 the Manor of Stoke was in the hands of Bishop Wulfwy of Dorchester and in 1066 it is said that William the Conqueror passed close to Stoke with his retinue, which included Geoffroi de Mandeville, on his way to receive the submission of the Saxon leaders at Berkhamstead Castle. It is not, however, until 200 years have passed that the name Mandeville is associated with Stoke. In 1086 Stoke (Stoches) was mentioned in the Domesday Book and in 1254 Geoffrey de Mandeville held the whole of Stoke.
5. In 1294 a chaplain was appointed for Stoke by the Bishop of Lincoln and in 1409 Henry Brudenell of Aynho possessed the Manor of Oldbury in Stoke. Some 200 years later, in 1601, Francis Brudenell possessed the Manor of Newbury in Stoke but shortly afterwards Edmund Brudenell sold the Manors of Oldbury and Newbury.
6. In 1645 parliamentary soldiers were billeted in the village and this was said, at the time, to be a heavy burden on the countryside.

Notable Dates Post-Enclosure

7. In 1798 the Parish was enclosed by Act of Parliament and in 1815 the Methodist chapel was founded. A short while later, in 1827, repairs were made to St Mary's Church which occupied a position south of the Village. Some 30 years later Stoke Mandeville was detached from Berton Parish, and the first Vicar was appointed. In 1866 the new Church of St Mary's, close to the now centre of population of the village, was consecrated. In 1868 the Methodist chapel was rebuilt. In 1884 the detached portion of the Parish at Prestwood was transferred out of Stoke and in 1892 the Metropolitan Railway arrived in the village. Two years later Stoke Mandeville Parish Council was established, and the Board School opened the following year. Mains water was laid to the village in 1903, the previous supply having been from individuals' wells and in 1908 John Henry Tapping became Lord of the Manor. The streets were lit by electricity in 1934 and mains drainage was installed in 1950, previous drainage having been into cess pits.
8. A new Methodist Church was opened in 1958 followed by Stoke Mandeville Village Community Centre in 1978.

¹ Alan Dell, Richard Pearce and their book entitled "Stoke Mandeville" are acknowledged as a prime source of material for this paper

Parish Council

9. The first meeting of the Stoke Mandeville Parish Council was held in the National Schoolroom near the vicarage on Tuesday 4th December 1894. It had been called under the Parish Councillors' Election Order 1894 and a circular letter of instructions had been received from the Local Government Board, via the Parish overseers. This order was part of the reform of local government which had been undertaken in the last 3 decades of the century. School Boards had been set up in 1870 followed by the Public Health Act 5 years later, which had created urban and rural sanitary districts.
10. In 1888 the authority of the Justices of the Peace over administration ceased and the government of the counties, apart from the police, was put in the hands of the County Councils and the new urban and District Councils were given certain powers in their own right.
11. In 1896 moves were made to shift the Parish out of the High Wycombe union into that of Aylesbury, as it was just a short drive to the latter, whereas the journey to Saunderton, where the High Wycombe meetings were held, was extremely difficult in winter. After some tortuous discussion, this is what happened in 1897. Initially, meetings were held monthly but later there were only 2 a year. At the end of the Second World War the frequency reverted to monthly.
12. There was a proposal in the early 1930's to transfer the Parish into the borough of Aylesbury but this was opposed by residents. The Local Government Act of 1929 had recommended an adjustment of boundaries, where this would improve village facilities and the County proposed extending the borough to include the villages of Stoke Mandeville, Weston Turville, Aston Clinton and Berton.
13. The resolution from a meeting of the villagers in January 1931 made it clear that they were opposed to the plan and that "the present growth of the borough does not warrant it taking in the rural Parish of Stoke Mandeville and that the rural District Council can provide all the services necessary or required more economically than the borough". The desirability of maintaining the Parish's separate identity from its ever-expanding neighbour has lasted to the present day.

Parish Constable

14. It is interesting to note how some of the Parish Officers, established under earlier legislation, remained in place until comparatively recently. The annual appointment of the 2 Parish Constables lasted up until 1947, when it was dropped as "redundant". This position was finally abolished by the Police Act 1964.
15. The historic post of Parish Constable lost most of its authority when the police force was formed in the 1800s. Even then it appears to have carried with it a certain kudos, for there were quite a few seeking the job in the early days of the Council. The holder of the office was able, at his discretion, to detain a Parishioner for any wrongdoing.

Roads and Transport

16. There is no detailed map surviving for Stoke Mandeville before 1798 and earlier ones hardly mention the village. The 1798 enclosure map shows 2 turnpike roads running north and south (see image below). The one to the west is the Wycombe to Aylesbury road and the one to the east connects Wendover with Aylesbury and there is a track called New Road, later to become Station Road, which connects the 2 forming an "H" configuration. The 2 main roads, which were the responsibility of the turnpike authorities, came under the auspices of the County Council in 1891. However, the other roads remained with the Parish until 1895, when they were taken over by the newly formed urban and rural District Councils.

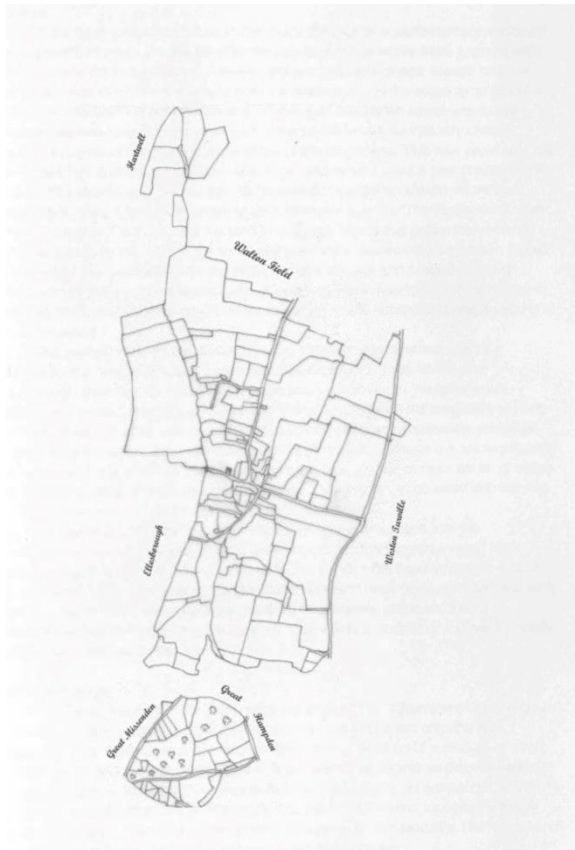


Image taken from 'The Remaking of the English Landscape: An Archaeology of Enclosure'.

17. As mentioned earlier, the Parish was responsible for maintenance of minor roads until 1895 and it was for this reason, the Parish was allocated an area of gravel-bearing land in Prestwood. This provided the necessary base material for repairs but became redundant after 1895 and appears to have been forgotten about in the Parish until the 1980s (see para 23).

Schooling

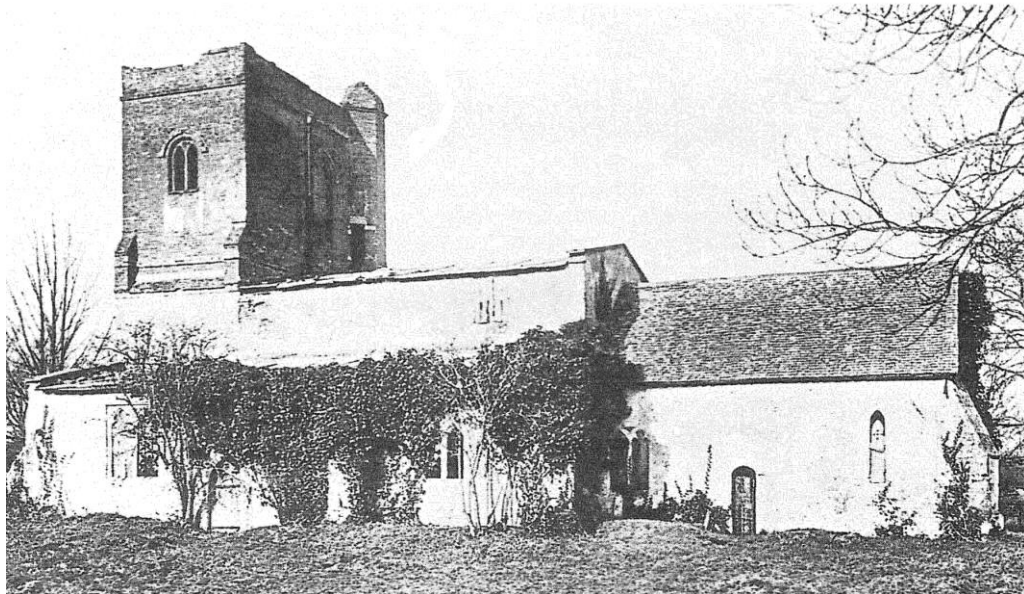
18. It was not until 1895, 25 years after the State Education Act, that an effort was made to establish a School in Stoke Mandeville. Until then, education in the villages was mainly in the hands of the Church authorities and the records show that perpetual underfunding prevented a coherent plan from being carried out.
19. The earliest record of a School in the village is in 1819, when the Vicar and Curate of Bierton, plus 6 villagers, asked for it to be taken into the National Society, a London-based organisation promoting education of the poor. This School's size and venue is unknown. In 1843, 50 to 60 children were taught in a barn, but as they were forced to leave at harvest time, it was proposed to build a Schoolroom. The site, on which The Ark now stands, was donated by a generous benefactor. The School appears to have been subject to many ups and downs over the next 90 years; largely it seems, due to the machinations of the Vicar, the Rev Dr Mensor.
20. Eventually a new School Board was formed which arranged to build a new School on land provided by Lord Rothschild, at the junction of Lower Road and Marsh Lane. Pupils were taught at the old School until the new building was completed in 1895. Additional classrooms were added in 1956, at a cost of about £7000, when nearly an acre of the allotments was sold to the County Council for £1200. Another one and a half acres were sold in 1972, for further extensions. On this occasion, however, thanks to an astute move by the Parish Council, the price obtained for the land was based on that for building, rather than agricultural purposes, as had happened in 1956. The bulk of this windfall, which was in the region of £100,000, was used in the building of the Community Centre.



This photo of Stoke Mandeville Combined School was taken in 2010

Church

21. The original Norman Parish Church of St Mary stood about half a mile to the south of the present Church, towards Terrick and not far from Stoke House. Extensive repairs were required in 1827 after a spate of lead stripping from the roof. Robert Gibbs wrote in his "History of Aylesbury", that the Church was in a damp, inconvenient and secluded spot, no longer used for regular worship. However, as late as 1908, 42 years after it ceased to be a place of worship, burials were still taking place in family graves in the old Churchyard. In 1964 the Parish Council drew the Church authorities' attention to the dangerous condition of the old Church, and it was partially demolished by a troop of Royal Engineers of the Territorial Army. The ruins later passed into the ownership of the Parish Council. The site of the old Church is currently being excavated as part of the HS2 railway project, which will pass over and may cause potential significant harmful impact.



The derelict old Church of St Mary, as it was in the late 19th Century



This is all that remains today, but beneath it will be vital archaeological finds

22. The present Church of St Mary the Virgin was built in 1865-6 and the cost of the whole project, including the land, was £1300. Nearly half the cost had been raised by the villagers themselves and this in itself was quite remarkable, as Stoke was a poor place. Even for those days £1300 was very little to pay for such a building and, as it turned out, corners had been cut during construction. Problems with the tower and the structure of the main fabric were revealed, as it began to move. Remedial work was carried out as a labour of love by a villager, Joseph Stilton, who, single-handedly, carried out underpinning of much of the building with concrete over a period of 3 years. This has not been entirely successful as further movement has taken place, especially as a result of dehydration of the surrounding land, during the drought of 2018.



Church of St Mary the Virgin, as it is today

Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity

23. In the 1980s, forensic research by Councillor Richard Pearce led to the re-discovery of the gravel field at Prestwood, which as mentioned in para 17, had been in the Parish of Stoke Mandeville. As a result, the Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity was constituted on 11th November 1986, and it was duly confirmed that the land in question was the sole property of the charity. Part of the land was sold for building purposes and the proceeds invested, Stoke Mandeville getting, via the trustees, ten-elevenths of the investment income with Great Hampden and Great Missenden sharing the remaining eleventh. The income arising from the investments brings significant benefits to the inhabitants of the Parish every year.

Public Opinion About History

2017 Consultation

1. In November 2017 the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought public views about one History based objective. This objective and the responses to it are summarised below.

Objective	Responses
Objective 8 : To conserve and enhance the historic buildings and assets of Stoke Mandeville	The 'Churches of Stoke Mandeville' were cited as historic buildings to be protected. Church of St Mary – Lower Road The Old Church Site – off Risborough Road/near Stoke House Old Church ruins – off Risborough Road Village Church and Grounds Old Stoke Church

See Annex 1 for full list of Consultation Responses

Public Consultation 2017 & 2018

2. A Public Consultation Exhibition was held in November 2017 and September 2018 by the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Steering Group which included the display board below.

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE

FEEDBACK	SURVEY RESULTS	OBJECTIVES
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Conservation of footpaths and green spaces</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Maintain distinctive character and heritage of Stoke Mandeville</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Maintain or increase wild habitats keep trees and hedge rows</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Conservation of village identity to remain a village - not a housing estate</div>	<p>In addition to the Grade II listed buildings, other buildings/assets that respondents would like to see protected were:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Village School (6) The Bull Public House (4) The Old Church Site (4) The Bell Public House (2) BCC Sports & Social Club (2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">plus 9 other buildings/assets with one request each</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 15px; padding: 20px; background-color: #f0f0f0; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">To conserve and enhance the historic buildings and assets of Stoke Mandeville</p> </div> <p style="margin-top: 20px; font-size: 1.2em;">Do you agree?</p>

Poster displayed at the Public Consultation event November 2017 and September 2018

Part 3: Conclusion

24. For hundreds of years, Stoke Mandeville was a characteristic small rural community based around its Church and Manor House. Eighteenth and nineteenth century modernisation and reform, created a more cohesive place with better public facilities, but it was the advent of the railway in the early 20th century and mass house building of the post-war era, that began the huge transformation of the Parish into the largely suburban area it is today. The historic roots of the Parish are still visible in its remaining historic buildings and in the settlement patterns and road names. Many local people still have a strong sense of identity. Retaining links with the past is a key principle of place-making and the Neighbourhood Plan, therefore, should retain and strengthen understanding of the Parish's past and honour it in the layout and structures of the future.

Annex 1 – Complete List of Public Consultation Responses 2017

Question 8. To help us understand which historic buildings and assets matter to you, please specify any other historic buildings and/or assets you would like to see protected.

- Church of St Mary.
Woolpack Inn.
- Stoke Mandeville School - Lower Road.
- The Bull Pub - Risborough Road.
The old Church site - off Risborough Road near Stoke House.
- Stoke Mandeville Primary School - Lower Road.
- Old Church ruins off Risborough Road.
- Village Church and grounds.
- The Bell PH.
- Various cottages along Lower Road.
- Terrick House, Risborough Road.
Church, Lower Road.
Woolpack Inn, Risborough Road.
- The Bull - Brudenell Drive/Risborough Road.
- All Grade II buildings are listed for a reason and should be preserved.
- All the above, also protect them from unsuitable adjacent development.
- Stoke Mandeville Parish Church.
The Bull Pub - Risborough Road.
The Bell Pub - Lower Road.
Old School building - Lower Road.
- Church of St Mary - Lower Road.
Tudor House - 225 Wendover Road.
- All of them.
- Bucks CC Sports Club/Lower Road.
- Church of St Mary/Lower Road.
- Village Church.
Community Centre.
Allotments.
Burial Grounds.
The Ark.
- Church of St Mary Lower Road.
Stoke House Risborough Road.
- All have their own character and historical background all to be judged on their own merit.
- Old Stoke Church.
- All. No houses. No building.
- Bucks CC Sports & Social Club Lower Road.
- N/A.
- The Primary School in Stoke Mandeville village.
- Any historic buildings should be protected.

- N/A.
- Agree with original list.
- The Village School and green.
- All adds character and interest.
- Stoke Mandeville railway station buildings. Protect older properties and gardens on Wendover Road (no inappropriate replacement or upgrading by speculative builders).
- Surely, if they're listed, they should all be protected? Otherwise, what's the point in having the register?
The Churches would be high on the list.
- Chapel House on the corner of Chapel Road.
- All of them.
- 47 Risborough Road (Pondmead) was the village sweet shop in the early 1900's. If the traffic conditions continue to shake the house that is over 300 years old for much long, it will probably fall down!
- I would like the Churches and Lower Road to be protected. Farmhouses with historical relevance and we know who they belong to.
- N/A.
- The Bull PH, Risborough Road.
- No others.
- N/A.
- Oak Tree House, junction of Risborough Road/Lower Road; Combined School, Lower Road.
- They are all listed for a reason and therefore should be kept as such.
- The Barn (currently used for cars) at Old Moat Farmhouse is listed in the Domesday Book and should have specific protection.
- I'm less interested in listed buildings, they are valuable but I value open space more.
- I'd rather you knock down stupid buildings to rebuild on the site instead of ruining fields and green areas. How in the hell can you compare the value of a building to fields? Space? Wildlife? Your priorities are all wrong.
- Preserve History. When we have visitors, they are attracted to these places.
- Any listed property.
- Stoke Mandeville Combined School (Old Building).
Red House Farm, Lower Road.
- G) Woolpack Inn. Risborough Road.
W) Church of St Mary. Lower Road.
- The Site of old St Mary Church.