
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

September 1998

Village Design Statement

June saw the launch of the production of a Village Design Statement for Colwall. On 4th June a well-attended meeting heard Mrs Jo Rose talk about the many advantages of producing such a Statement. Then there was a workshop session on 20th June, when about 15 villagers discussed topics such as where the settlement edges of the village were, and listed the important features of the village. This was followed by an extensive photographic study - it is surprising the features we miss but that the photograph shows.

Since these meetings we have met as a group and decided on a framework. We talked about the Local Plan for Colwall, adopted by Malvern Hills Council in January 1998, in which the local settlement profile is described (there is a copy in Colwall Library). We agreed that this profile would provide the basis for our Village Design Statement. With this in mind we have agreed to address the following topics, and some individuals have agreed to lead the discussion and put some words down on paper on these subjects:

- Settlement - to help David and Eileen Fisher
- Environment - to lead David Goodwin
- Economy - to lead Edward Mason
- Buildings - to lead Graham Cowan
- Highways and railways - to help Mary Carver

As you can see we would still like contributions, and would like to hear your views on any of these topics.

This Design Statement will become very important in the following months as the new Herefordshire Council is looking to re-write these settlement profiles. They are undertaking the production of a Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan to be adopted by the year 2001. This plan will undergo consultation processes and will look at the following subjects: Housing; Economic Development (including retail activity); Transport; Environmental Conservation (including energy); Tourism, Leisure and Recreation; Minerals and Waste. I will aim to learn more about their plans for Colwall over the next few months. I am sure our Design Statement will make a contribution. So please do get involved. Contact me on [REDACTED], and let's make sure we are part of this consultation process.

Nicky Carless

1st October

An important date for everyone's diary. We are lucky enough to have Pamela Hurle coming to speak at our next general meeting about the Malvern Hills - past and present - with references to Colwall of course!

Pamela Hurle is well known as a local historian and has published books on the Hills and on Malvern, Upton-upon-Severn, Castlemorton and Hanley Castle. Mrs Hurle is currently writing a history of The Elms School and is researching the life and works of Stephen Ballard. This talk will provide a useful reference point for those who have expressed an interest in researching local history. But more than that, it promises to be a splendidly entertaining evening for all members and indeed anyone who wishes to come along.

So mark the date on your calendar now: **Thursday 1st October at 7.30 pm in Colwall Village Hall.** The meeting will start with some Society business, to be followed by our Speaker at about 8 pm.

Hedgerow Survey Group

For readers new to the Colwall Village Society, here is a brief introduction to the hedgerow survey group. The idea for the hedgerow survey started when parliament passed the new hedgerow regulations last year. This gives 'important' hedges protection for the first time. Very simply put, a hedgerow is considered important if it is older than a certain date or is rich in species. But how many hedges are 'important' in Colwall? That is what we aim to find out.

We are fortunate that in this parish a hedge is considered to be important if it is on the field boundary which appears on the 1842 tithe map of the parish. Members of the group have been walking on the footpaths around Colwall to find out where there are currently hedges in the parish. We had a meeting on the 20th May, where we were able to bring together which parts of Colwall had been walked so far. It also gave us a chance to start looking at how the current hedge lines tie up with the 1842 field boundaries.

By the time you read this newsletter, we will have had a second meeting to see how things are getting on, and have arranged a further follow up meeting on **November 18th** at 8 pm at my house, Beacon View, Mill Lane. I will then be looking for some volunteers to look at the maps produced by the walkers and compare them with the 1842 tithe map. Fortunately the Colwall footpath map and the 1842 tithe map are to the same scale.

Though only agricultural hedges are protected by the law, it is quite likely that there are garden hedges in Colwall which pre-date their houses. One member in The Crescent has already pointed out that her garden hedge appears on the 1842 tithe map.

If you are interested and would like to help, please contact me, Liz Taylour [REDACTED].

PS to Fun Day: For all those who took a guess at where the Treasure was hidden on the Colwall Village Society stand at the Fun Day - it was in the vaults of the former Lloyds Bank - where else? The winner was spot on, and received their prize that afternoon.

History projects

Over 30 members have so far indicated an interest in and/or a willingness to help with a variety of the projects in the original schedule, with a few extra ones being added from your replies.

We have a copious history to occupy many more hands and minds so please keep on sending in your forms to Janet Sutton ([REDACTED]), Maureen Creamer ([REDACTED]) or to me Derek Turner ([REDACTED]). All forms will be very welcome whenever they are received.

I have spent two half days at the Hereford Record Office familiarising myself with their indexing procedures and finding out that they have a wealth of information to help us with some of our history projects, some of the records going as far back as the 15th century and even earlier. Miss Sue Hubbard, the chief archivist, has been most helpful and, with her staff, is willing to assist any and all of us to locate whatever information is available. (Get your pencils ready because we are requested to use only pencils for note-taking in the office - many of the records are on parchment or similar delicate material which they need to protect from marking as best possible.)

Having returned from holiday, I am now ready to start you all off on the subjects that interest you most - so be prepared!!

Derek Turner

Have you heard of Colwall Quoinings?

Three special trees have been planted at Martins Orchard. They are apple trees called 'Colwall Quoinings', and they were donated by Hereford and Worcester County Council.

Liz Taylour, the parish Tree Warden and Julia Boyle, Chairman of the Trees and Countryside panel were responsible for this idea, and planted the trees in the spring.

Lockyears Site

An application for full planning permission to build a three-storey block of 13 two-bedroom flats with 13 garages on the Lockyears Site has been submitted by the site owners, Miton Ltd, Hanley Swan. This is a new application which, if approved, would replace the existing outline approval for a block of 20 flats to be occupied as sheltered accommodation for the elderly. The Parish Council arranged a public meeting in the Village Hall on August 12th to hear residents' views on the plans before making their formal comments to the Planning Authority (the Herefordshire Council). About 50 people attended. The main concerns expressed were about the type of accommodation proposed and the visual impact of the building. The following points were amongst the many individual views put forward.

It was suggested that the absence of a designated warden's flat or common room facilities indicated that the development might not be sheltered accommodation, restricted to the elderly. Some of those present expressed concern at the increased number of potential bed spaces and possible resulting increase in traffic using the site if this were the case, and at the possibility of children living there where no open space or garden facilities would be available. If the accommodation was for sale on the open market, the saleability of such a large number of 2-bedroom flats might be difficult. The possibility of unsold units being used for social housing and the resultant imbalance in the village if further accommodation of this type were to appear was of concern.

On the visual aspects, the comment was made by a number of speakers that any development on this site should not be allowed to dominate the street scene to the detriment of other buildings in the area, particularly the Colwall Park Hotel which was considered to be a Landmark building. The proposed building came right to the edge of the site on the corner of Walwyn Road and Station Drive which would make it particularly visible from the north as one approached this centre point of the village. The footprint of the development filled the frontage of the site which was not typical of and would detract from the village street scene of lime-tree lined grass verges and front gardens. The elevation along Station Drive was felt to be overpowering and would lead to a tunnel effect. The height of the building would dominate the location and detract from and intrude on any remaining views of the Hills from the village centre. Generally it was felt that the proposal was not fitting for the location. It was urban in style, more suitable for a medium size town than for a rural village. The dormers, gable ends and balconies were felt to be fussy and obtrusive, and generally the architecture was felt to be out of keeping with the Colwall vernacular.

On a positive note, it was suggested that a more sympathetic type of development that might be acceptable would be for a courtyard-style building with wider, planted green areas on the highway frontages, thus maintaining and enhancing the existing village street scene. To avoid the overpowering and massing it would have to be a building having a smaller footprint and a two and a half storey maximum height. Materials matching the existing buildings without it being a pastiche of the current scene would be desirable.

The feeling against the development as now proposed was significant amongst those present. At the request of the meeting the Parish Council has approached the developers to invite them to discuss the proposal, and to attend a further public meeting to discuss the fears and concerns of the village. Such a meeting would have to be held in September, to fit in with the timetable for consideration of the application by the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee.

The plans can be seen at the Herefordshire Council Office at St Katherine's, Ledbury: the Reference number is N/98/0347. If you wish to make your views known directly to the Herefordshire Council Planning Authority write to Mr Kevin Bishop, Northern Division Planning Office, PO Box 43, Leominster HR6 8ZE (with a copy for information to the Parish Clerk, [REDACTED]).

Evendine Lane Mediaeval barn

At Lower Farm, Evendine Lane a mediaeval barn has been stripped for renovation exposing the timber skeleton. It is a listed building and stands on a damp spot, for the brook runs directly alongside its eastern wall.

The one-storey structure is L shaped, the main building being a rectangle approx. 22ft by 9 with a small lean-to on the south west side. The stone foundations are topped by a horizontal wooden sill into which 19 corner and intermediate posts are fitted stretching to a wall plate or rail running horizontally to support the ends of the rafters. There is a middle rail half way up the storey height dividing the walls into square panels. In one panel 5 upright staves are still to be seen which are blunt at the lower end but pointed at the top end to fit into auger holes on the underside of the wall plate and interwoven with 11 wattles. There are 2 intermediate frames between the long sides giving 3 bays inside. Into the middle bay run two entrances, the larger measuring the full height of the building and running straight off the lane and a smaller one opposite. The floor is on two levels, that in the western end being lower.

The wooden frames would have been constructed first before being pushed or hauled into an upright position. The carpenter's marks - here they are scratches - made to assist assembly are still to be seen. A frame of 8 feet could reputedly have been pulled into position by 2 oxen. Joints were secured by wooden pegs, nails being too expensive. The roof would have been thatched.

Joyce Ingledew

(Sources: R W Brunskill; A Carriss; M Percy)

Telecomms mast

The application by Cellnet to erect a mast at a site near Chances Pitch has been approved in principle by the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee. It was delegated to the Head of Planning Services for final decision, subject to clarification of the overall height of the mast and aials, which must be set at a minimum.

The dummy mast put up on 12th May showed that at that site the mast would be screened by trees to the south and east, but exposed when viewed from the Colwall Road and the ridge of hills towards Ledbury. There were 30 letters of objection from individuals and organisations about its impact on the landscape. However, the Council has to follow government guidelines, which state that improved telecommunications must be encouraged and that natural beauty should be conserved, so the two factors have to be balanced. Bearing in mind the mobile phone coverage in Colwall, the Parish Council recommended approval, as they considered that this site is probably the best that could be found.

The mast will have to be reviewed in 10 years to justify its continued existence, or removed when it is obsolete.

Birds and houses

A tree creeper has been nesting in a small gap between the house and the garage.

(Source:Derek Turner)

Ravens are often to be observed on the Hills above Broadwood Drive. Last year they nested in Hollybush Quarry.

(Source:Bill Poole)

In June a wagtail built a nest at the end of a rain-water gutter above the front door, and was sitting on 2 eggs. The nest and eggs were scattered by a predator, before a heavy downpour the next day would have swept away bird, nest, eggs and all.

(Source:Susan Bond)

Investigating a noise in the lounge early one morning I found a Little Owl, probably a young one, which had fallen down the chimney. With some difficulty, we managed to get it out into the garden.

The next day, we heard a noise again, and there was another Little Owl sitting on the curtain rail. This too was put outside, but immediately started to dive-bomb the chimney to try to get back in. Was it the adult in search of its offspring, which had disappeared?

(Source:Janet Sutton)

The Colwall Village Society is open to everyone interested in the environment and history of Colwall, and the annual subscription is £5. If you would like to enrol as a member, please contact the Membership Secretary, Joyce Ingledew [REDACTED].
