

# DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE PARISH of LAPFORD



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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **WHAT IS A PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT?**

DEFRA encourages rural parishes to participate in and to influence the way the local planning system operates via the creation of the Parish Design Statement.

By highlighting the features, character and qualities that people value in their village and its surroundings, the Parish Design Statements enable local priorities to be considered and help ensure that any development is in harmony with its setting. As such they contribute to the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of the local environment.

Most of us have little contact with the planning system other than to be offered the chance to comment on specific proposals. Parish Design Statements offer a much more creative involvement, allowing local people to make a positive contribution to the development debate, rather than having to rely on individual protest or lobbying to make their views heard. Once approved and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parish Design Statements act as a complement to the existing planning and development control system and represent an effective statutory account of local views.

## **WHO IS IT FOR?**

Change is brought about not only by large developments, but also by smaller day-to-day modifications to homes, gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges that can alter the look and feel of a village. Indeed, the cumulative effect of many small changes can sometimes have as much impact on local character as big new developments, yet many of these will not be subject to planning control. The Parish Design Statement is therefore of use to all interested parties, including:

- Statutory bodies and local authorities
- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers and engineers
- Local community groups
- Householders and businesses

A copy of this Parish Design Statement have been provided to Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council planning departments, Lapford Parish Council, Lapford Archive and is available on the Lapford.com web site.

## **WHAT DOES IT COVER?**

The Design Statement covers the Parish of Lapford and contains sections on:

- the village context, character and landscape setting
- plots and buildings
- spaces and boundaries
- highways and traffic
- initial guidance when beginning to consider a development or extension
- useful references

Its contents have been developed, in conjunction with Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council and are consistent with their Local Plans.

Statements in plain text describe the characteristics of the environment to be found in the parish.

***Sections of highlighted italic text (like this) offer guidance for use in the preparation or consideration of development or planning within the parish.***

When proposing developments or alterations within the parish, it is recommended that the plans that are developed are sympathetic to the character descriptions and guidelines in this Design Statement.

## **HOW WAS IT PREPARED?**

The statement has been produced by:

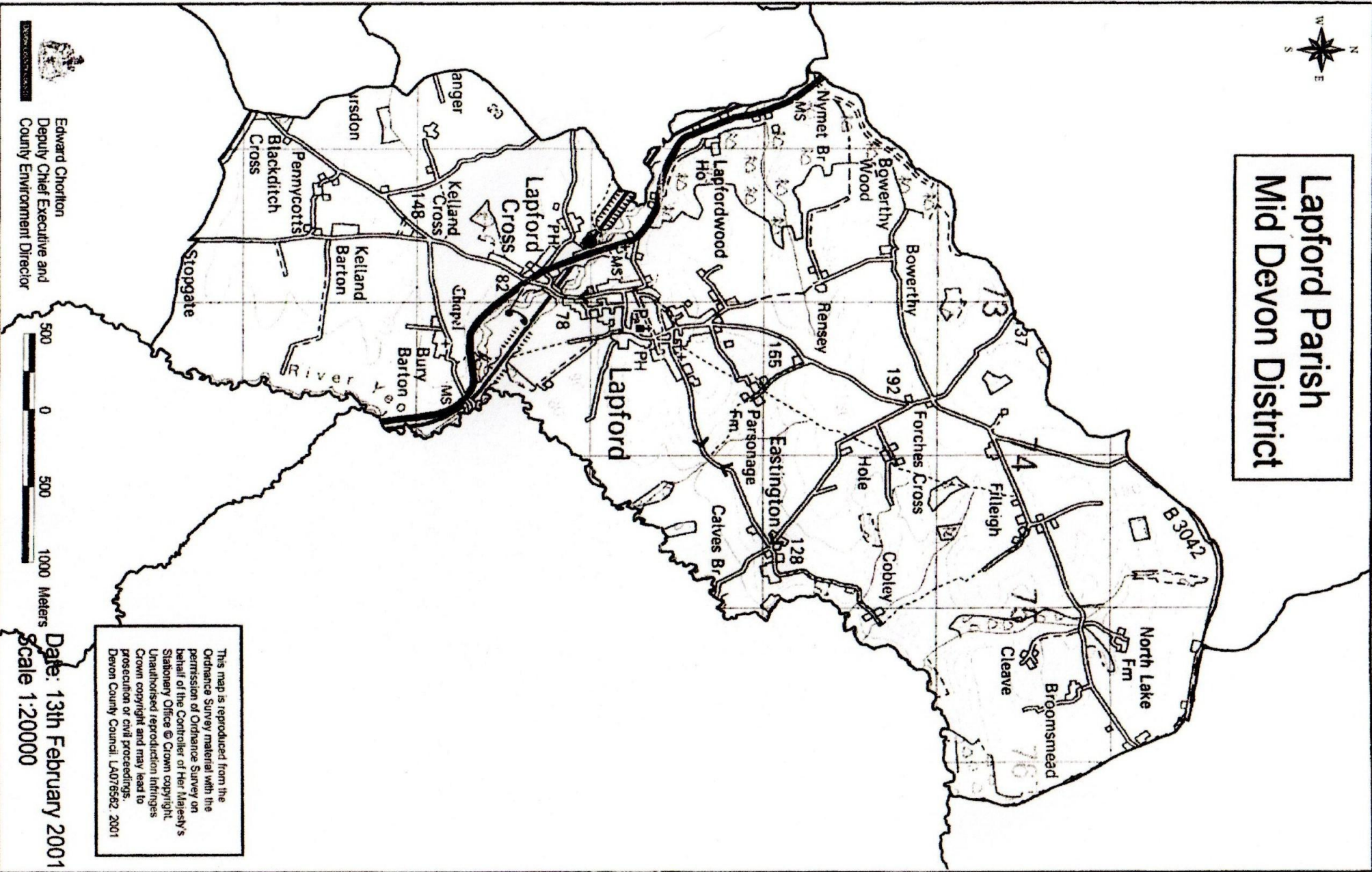
- Sue Briant-Evans
- Keith and Zena Worters
- Peter Lacey

The team has also had support from Noel and Beryl Parry. Noel has written the section on Lapford and its Local setting. In addition we have been supported by Lapford Parish Council, Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council. Comments and suggestions received from the wider community are reflected in the statement which results from:

- several public meetings; in Victory Hall, the Church and Rose's Van in the car park
- the questionnaires sent out to all households used to produce the Parish Plan
- a series of photographic surveys
- a survey of properties. Many of you saw some of us walking round the village, looking at properties and making notes, which aroused curiosity and comments
- consultation with planning officers of Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council and other local government representatives



# Lapford Parish Mid Devon District

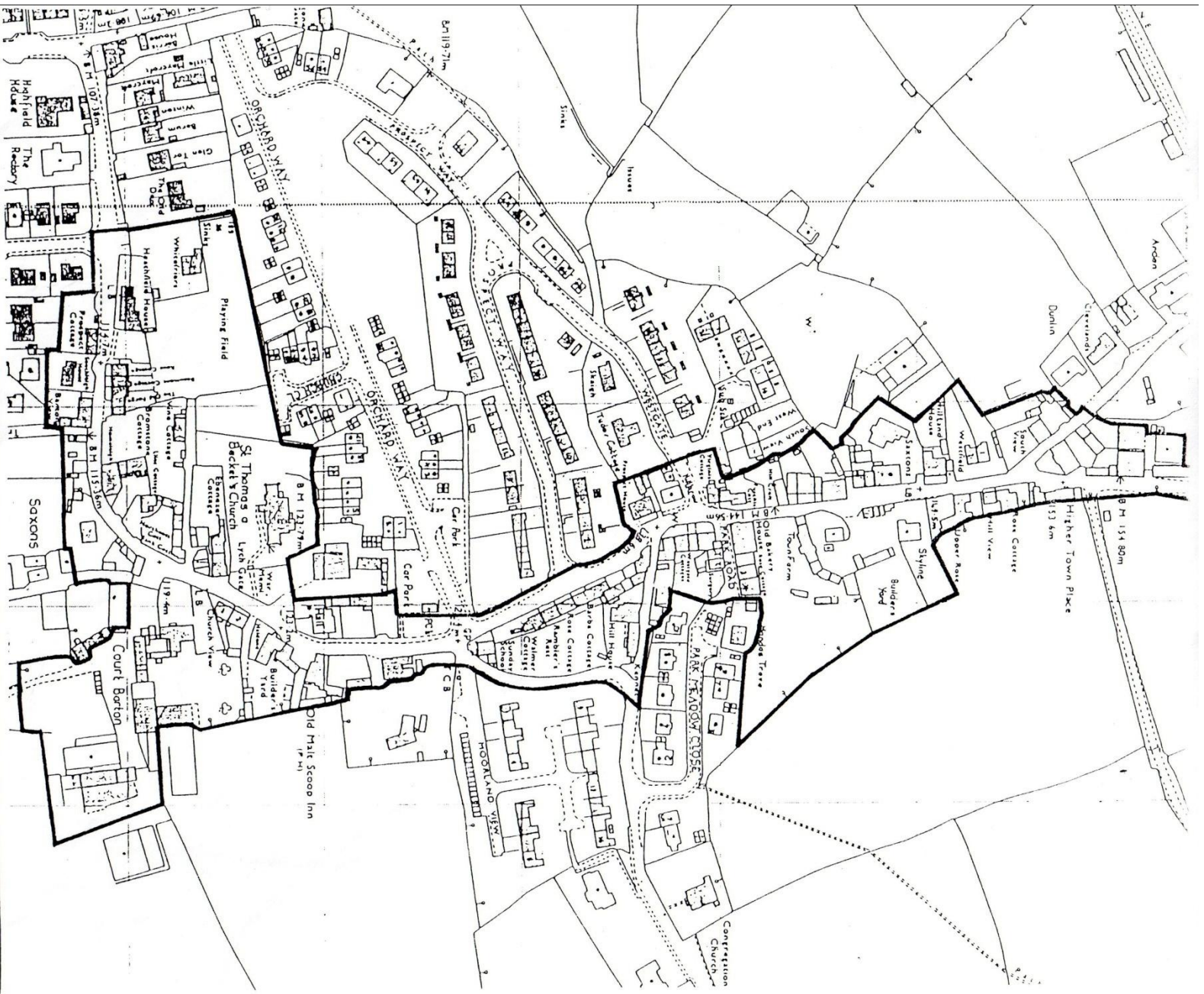


Edward Chorlton  
Deputy Chief Executive and  
County Environment Director

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Devon County Council, LA076592, 2001

Date: 13th February 2001  
Scale 1:20000

## MAP OF THE CONSERVATION AREA



**LAPFORD**

Scale 1:2500

Date 6.2.91

# PLANNING GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Housing (Reference Parish Plan pages 7&8)

Opinion is against further large-scale, single-type-design development in the parish. Affordable, three bedroom housing is seen to be desirable as a means of housing young families & therefore contributing to the viability of the school & keeping a healthy social & age mix in the village. There is a huge range of age, design, & size of buildings in Lapford, see Buildings Survey, which gives a wide scope for the design of new buildings & the materials of which they are made.

- **PG1 - Proposed building developments in Lapford should ONLY be permitted where:**
  - such development reflects the proportion, style and colours of nearby buildings.
  - extensions complement the character of the original.
  - traditional features and materials are incorporated into the build where possible.
  - infill buildings are not significantly different from their neighbours, particularly in proportion.
  - existing gardens are not reduced in size.
- **PG2 - Old buildings should be adapted for re-use where possible.**
- **PG3 - New buildings should not dominate their neighbours or otherwise have a detrimental effect on existing vistas and skylines.**
- **PG4 - Roofs should be pitched, not flat.**
- **PG5 – The size of rooms in new build must conform to National Standards.**

## Environment (Reference Parish Plan pages 5&6)

There is significant support for the use of alternative, environmentally friendly power sources. Recycling facilities are now a way of life in Mid Devon and should be included in any development plan.

- **PG6 - As the technology becomes ever more affordable and available, solar panels should be incorporated – e.g. into new builds/conversions.**
- **PG7 - Environmentally friendly materials & designs should be incorporated, with locally sourced materials being used whenever possible.**
- **PG8 - New builds should have safe, dedicated non-intrusive storage facilities for recycling & rubbish bins. Dog waste bins should be provided.**
- **PG9 - Existing landscape features, particularly trees & traditional banks & hedges should be preserved & maintained. New banks & hedges should be used as boundary markers where feasible.**
- **PG10 - Footpaths should be retained and maintained as an important recreational amenity.**
- **PG11 - Cables & pipe work should be buried.**
- **PG12 - Street lighting should be downward directed to preserve the view of a dark sky at night.**

## Employment (Reference Parish Plan page 11)

Employment opportunities are limited in this area.

- **PG 13 - Design of new housing should encourage home working/the running of small businesses by incorporating discreet working spaces & having appropriate planning permissions for such activities in place.**

## Traffic & Roads (Reference Parish Plan Page 13, also Traffic Report published 30.6.2007)

Most young families in work need to run more than one vehicle in a rural area such as this.

- **PG 14 - Future planning decisions must take account of rising traffic, speed levels and the need for adequate off-road parking.**
- **PG 15 - Speed limits on roads should be changed to reflect any alteration of village boundaries caused by new development.**
- **PG 16 - Pavements and traffic calming measures should be essential features of any proposed development.**



## **Crime & Safety (Reference Parish Plan Page 14)**

Criminal activity is low in the area though there have been recent occurrences of anti-social behaviour.

- ***PG17 - New design should take account of possible criminal activity by providing adequate lighting, wide entrance ways and open spaces sited in public view.***

## **Open Spaces**

Open spaces are very important to the character of the village. Some are safely preserved e.g. the Churchyards, Playing Field, and Church Green. Others have been part of deliberate design e.g. Orchard Way. In the light of the high cost of building land & therefore the small size of the gardens provided with new housing, provision for safe, visible play areas for children, and space for allotments should be a priority

- ***PG 18 - Any new development should be designed with open spaces in mind, particularly on the Southwest side of the A377***
- ***PG 19 - Provision should be made for safe, visible play areas for children and space reserved for allotments in the neighbourhood.***

## **Conservation Area**

The central part of the village is protected by a Conservation Area and it is essential that this Conservation Area be maintained.

- ***PG 20 – Development within the conservation area shall be strictly limited to improvements to existing buildings which maintain the look and character of that building and its surroundings.***
- ***PG 21 – Any new development shall be limited to in fill or replacement of existing buildings which must maintain the look a character of that area.***

## **Old Ambrosia Creamery**

It is recommended that the area occupied by the Old Creamery be adapted for industrial use, or the site cleared and made suitable for either industrial or housing development.

## LAPFORD AND ITS LOCAL SETTING

Lapford was settled by the Saxons some time probably in the mid 700's AD, when families pushing on north from Crediton found an ideal site for their little huts on the hillside where the village has existed and grown ever since.

That little group of Saxon families must have been delighted to find a site on a steep hillside facing directly south, warmed by the sun and with rising ground behind protecting it from the cold north winter winds. The River Yeo runs along below, along the valley bottom, and there was plentiful water both there and in the springs not far below the surface of the ground. This met the needs of the village for the next 1200 years with wells and pumps, which still exist. The shallow ford across the river below gave the settlement its name Eslapaford, meaning the slipway/steep ford. The river's winter and spring floods helped to fertilise the meadows at the bottom of the valley, and as a result the ground is rich for growing crops. There is still a lot of woodland and coppiced timber, and there would have been far more a thousand years ago. Along the high ground to the north lay the Ridgeways leading from north to south, and to the east, so communications were easier to link up in all directions.

So the main shape of the village was settled by its geography as it grew up on each side of the down to the ford, and a small wooden church erected at its heart. When the first Norman stone church replaced it 300 years later there would have been an open space and graveyard. Part of this became the village green, and at some time an inn would have been built across from the church. William the Conqueror's Domesday Book records Eslapaford as having about 150 inhabitants, and gives further details. This natural centre, with the church, an ancient pub, and the green and later village hall has existed for a thousand years and still determines the main shape of Lapford.

Consequent growth, especially over the last 50 years has been at right angles to the spinal road and consists of several estates, with restriction orders limiting the growth to the east. Alongside the river valley lies the main A377, and the railway line, linking the north and south of the county, while other roads lead to the east and west.

From the centre of the village there are open views to the immediate south and east, while from the higher ground on either side of the valley there are magnificent views south to Dartmoor and north to Exmoor, and down into the village below, still with its ancient central focus of the parish church, village green, the pub and the hall. In all directions lies the patchwork of fields, hedges, woods, hills and valleys, which embrace the village at its heart.

The central area of the village which contains most of the earliest and the listed buildings is protected by a conservation area.

### **Books on Lapford available**

- "A North Devon Village" – Nellie Drake
- Parish Church Leaflets "Memories of Old Lapford" – E.W. Challice
- "Lapford – a mid-Devon village" – Noel Parry
- "Lapford – in photos" – Noel Parry
- "The Light on the Hill" – Lapford Congregational Church – Noel Parry
- There is also a great deal of information available at the County Record Office and in the local archives.

### **Looking in/Looking Out**

When approaching Lapford the best views of the village can be seen from the top of Kelland Hill and the footpath up to Nymet Rowland with the church clearly visible as the centre of the village.

A different viewpoint is from the A377 near the Railway station where Barris is in the foreground and the church and rooftops behind. Those approaching from the north above the village see a superb panoramic view of the countryside, but little of the village until they start descending the main road.

Looking out from the village over a pastoral landscape of farms, fields and trees there are far reaching views to Exmoor and Dartmoor.

## CHARACTER AND FEATURES OF THE PARISH

### Landscape and Setting

Lapford is a small rural parish with a population of approximately 1000. It is situated in Mid-Devon, part of the Taw Vale ward, and is approximately 10 miles from the small town of Crediton and is 8 miles from the old hill market town of Chulmleigh. The nearest main road is the A377 which runs between Exeter and Barnstaple and is about half a mile from the centre of the village and passes through Lapford Cross.



The predominant landscape from which ever direction the village is approached is rolling hills of arable farm land, very often with sheep and cattle grazing. Approaching along the A377 from Barnstaple there is an abundance of forestry passing Eggesford Forest and Lapford Wood. The village has a mixture of very old cob constructed buildings, a number with thatched roofs, to estates built between the fifties and eighties. When approaching Lapford the best views of the village can be seen from the top of Kelland Hill and the footpath up to Nymet Rowland with the church clearly visible as the centre of the village. A different viewpoint is from the A377 near the Railway station where Barris is in the foreground and the church and rooftops behind. Those approaching from the north above the village see a superb panoramic view of the countryside, but little of the village until they start descending the main road. Looking out from the village over a pastoral landscape of farms, fields and trees there are far reaching views to Exmoor and Dartmoor.



### **Landscape(Left)**

Looking out from Lapford in all directions there are farms which reflect the very nature of Lapford as an agricultural village with the patchwork of fields, hedges and significant trees. In the distance are the tors of Dartmoor

### **Open Spaces(Right)**

The grassy area next to the industrial estate edged with a variety of trees, which should be a place for villagers young and old can relax



**Lapford's Significant Trees which need preserving**

Court Barton Monkey Puzzle



Row of Yew trees in the Churchyard.



Scots Pine at Great Hole



Row of trees at bus stop on the Industrial Estate.





Copper Beech at Lapford Mill

Sybil's tree and other trees which commemorate occasions or people.



## Main Street



This winds up through the village, passing many old houses of character which played an important part in the history of the village, and including several thatched cottages. The road is narrow in places and winding – including a right angle turn at Barris Gate. This, coupled with the fact that there are many stretches without pavement; causes congestion and potential danger to pedestrians (see traffic section). Half the houses on the main road are detached. A quarter of the houses are built of stone, and 30% of cob – a significantly higher proportion than in the village as a whole. Those walking up from the A377 to, and through the village will, after crossing over the river Yeo and the railway, pass, amongst other buildings of interest, the Mill House on the right (former site of the Post Office), a Georgian mansion adjoining it (Lower field house); another substantial Georgian house further up on the same side of the road (Highfield House); the entrance to Pope's Lane with the Youth Club (the site of the old school) 30 yards up on the left; the village Post Office, just past the entrance to the largest estate (Highfield); on the left the weavers cottages/ the forge; the old school house (Lapford Academy); Saxons Farm; Court Barton; the Parish Church; the Malt Scoop Inn; the Victory Hall (opened in 1919); the entrance to Eastington Lane, which leads up past the Primary school out to Eastington and Morchard Bishop; a number of large estates on the left (Orchard Way, Prospect Way; Westgate); the butchers; Town Farm. From there the road continues up the hill and out of the village towards Witheridge and Tiverton.



## The Estates

### Barris



Council houses were built near the top of Mill Hill to house workers from the Ambrosia factory opened in 1926. A row of bungalows was subsequently built alongside the main road in the late 50's early 60's.



### Highfield Estate



1971/72 marked the start of a gradual development of the **Highfield Estate**, opposite and below the Post Office, over 15 years. The buildings were mostly bigger and better bungalows for families – block and brick rendered, with concrete tile not natural slate.



### Moorland View



Significant post-war development led to two rows of houses at **Moorland View** in 1948 on the eastern side of the road.



### Orchard Way



Finally the land below Prospect Way was developed in the 70s and 80s, creating **the Orchard Way Estate**, containing a lot of one and two bed bungalows for retired people and starting couples. This reflected, as well as population increase, more retired people moving to Devon, and greater willingness of people to commute – e.g. to Exeter or Barnstaple.

**Orchard Way** contains a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, block building rendered with distinctive pink and dark red pebbledash, with most properties owning garages, and some communal and drive parking.







Looking at the bottom of Orchard Way, this is a fairly modern development, which blends into our rural village with sensitive planting. Also the significant trees were left in place and the buildings fitted around them

## Prospect Way



There was substantial further development on the **Prospect Way** estate in the 1950s and 1960s – on one side two storey semi-detached houses, and on the other a long row of terraced bungalows. This responded to increased local population, and continuing employment needs at the Ambrosia factory (where there were 200 people on roll at one time)



## Westgate



*Tudor Cottage*

Opposite and a little higher up the **Westgate** estate was developed. In addition to some pre-war semi-detached houses, and bungalows built in the 1950/60s, on the other side of the road four sites were sold off for private development. (Including Tudor Cottage), There are very good views down over the church and across the valley from this estate.



## INDIVIDUAL FEATURES OF THE VILLAGE

### Lapford Mill



Lapford Mill was built in 1433 by the Gater family who ran it in an unbroken line until 1820. The Mill has had many owners since then. It was built of cob, timber and thatch and burnt down in 1887. At one time it housed the village Post Office. Now it is a private house and hosts various community activities for Lapford including Lapstock Music Festival.

### The Youth Club



This building of stone in the Gothic style under a steeply pitched slate roof dates from 1865 when it was constructed by the Anglican Church to provide a school room for the village. The work cost £600. Later the building was enlarged by adding a porch to the front and an infants' classroom with a cellar underneath it to the rear. In 1874 the running of the school was handed over to the government and the building remained in use until 1935 when a new school was provided at the top of the village. In 1975 enough funding had been raised by local people to purchase the old school from the Church authorities and convert it for use as a Youth Club for the village. It has been altered slightly over the years with a lowered ceiling in the main hall, provision of a kitchen in the cellar, and most recently an all weather games area in the grounds.

### The Weavers' Cottages



Next up from the present Post Office there was originally a row of five thatched weavers' cottages adjoining Heathfield House, three cottages projected out in line with the two remaining (Primrose Cottage and Weavers' Cottage) these three were demolished in the late 50s and early 60s. There was also a long shed behind used for weaving. These were known to have been occupied at one time by the local serge weavers. Cloth weaving had become a great part of Devon's Industrial production by the 1600s, and much of the initial work was done on looms in the cottages of many of the small towns and villages. These cottages were still known as the Weavers' Cottages long after their use as such: they were demolished after the Second World War.

### The Old Forge



The Blacksmith's trade in Lapford will always be linked with the Challice family, who served as Blacksmiths, Farriers and Agricultural engineers through the 1800s and the early 1900s. The Old Smithy itself is just after the Weavers Cottages. For many generations the forge was where horses were shod, machinery repaired and sometimes made, and iron made into the circular, hoop shapes for cart wheel tyres. The forge was then sold to Mr Tom Bone, who retired in 1945.

### The Village Poor House



Next to the forge was the **Village Poor House**. Whereas the ground floor of this building was a private residence, inhabited at some time by Thatcher Northcott (also the church sexton), the upper floor – separate and accessible by outside steps – was where poor people came to receive support from 'overseers', usually linked to major landowners or the church. (Also referred to as, the village sickness benefit club). In 1891, when the Parish councils were formed, the building passed into Parish ownership, and the upper room of the Poor House was used by the Parish Council for meetings. At some stage the upper floor was also used as a practice area by the Lapford Fife and Drum band, whose members used to march through the village. (It is said that the band ceased to exist after a drunken brawl in Chapel Lane).

In 1924 the Village Poor House and the downstairs residence (then inhabited by Mr Galling) was sold to Mr Sidney Boatfield, and the house was renamed Vine Cottage.

### The Old School House



This fine, large house fronting on to the road was known as “Clark’s Commercial Academy” between 1860 & 1903. It was a privately run boarding and day school for farmers’ sons, and boys whose parents were serving over seas in the armed services of the civil service. The school gave a classical, mathematical and commercial education to its students, and its Principal was Mr William Clark. When it was closed in the early 1900’s, due to being unable to conform to new standards set by acts of Parliament; the main house was converted into separate dwellings. William Clark’s son, Edgar, was living in the main house; Captain Binney of the Royal Marines lived in another part. The adjoining cottages of “Homeleigh”, “Lilac Cottage” and “Broomfield”, parts of the school were sold off.

### Court Barton Manor



Court Barton Manor, a listed building dating from the mid 1450s, is situated almost opposite the Parish Church in the centre of the village. The site is one of the longest inhabited in Lapford, the present house probably resting on even older foundations. It is constructed of cob on stone footings & would originally have been thatched. It has a three-bay roof over a passage hall & inner room. The roof timbers show evidence of smoke escaping from the open fire before the upper floor was inserted. Other woodwork & carpentry remains from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Barns associated with the building still stand & the remains of others can be traced. The name “Court” refers to the fact that as the seat of the Lords of the Manor the building was used for dispensing justice locally.

### Lapford Church Green



The Green, formerly the site of the village saw pit, was bought by the Rev C.W. Wilson in the last half of the eighteen hundreds. He gave part to the Parish Church to add to the Churchyard, & retained the rest for the use of the village. This, the present Church Green was to be public land, and was conveyed to the Vicar and Churchwardens as Trustees in 1909. It was registered as a charity in 1972, and conveyed by the then trustees to Lapford Parish Council in 1974. The Parish War Memorial stands on the Green; the annual November Remembrance service is held there. Two memorial seats have been placed by the Churchyard wall and in recent years spring bulbs have been planted. Traditionally the Lapford Revel King and Queen are crowned on the Green in July.

## Parish Church St Thomas of Canterbury



Lapford Parish Church dates back as far as Saxon times. Then it was just a small chapel, most likely served by monks from Zeal Monachorum.

After the murder of Thomas-a-Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, William de Tracey, the owner of Lapford and one of the four knights who killed him, is said to have been ordered by King Henry the second to build a number of churches in expiation of his sin. He did not build a completely new church in Lapford, but enlarged the existing building, adding chancel, tower and porch. This was done about AD1180. About AD1300, the north aisle was added, and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the tower was reconstructed, the nave was renovated and the elaborate pews were installed. Previous to this, there would have been only stone benches around the walls, and only the weakest and frailest parishioners would have sat down. This is the origin of the saying that, "The weakest go to the wall".

The North aisle was rebuilt around the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the very elaborate and beautiful carved oak main screen was erected, together with the much plainer parclose screen, which now separates the Lady Chapel and the chancel. At this time there were only four bells; the remaining two were added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the chancel area constructed by William de Tracy was reconstructed and enlarged, so that now the only obvious reminder of his works is the ancient oak door between the porch and the interior of the church.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main attention was the addition of the clock tower, for which funds were raised by public subscription, which is why the clock belongs to the parish and not the church.

Some reordering of the chancel area was also carried out in time for the millennium. The High Altar was moved forward so that the celebrant can stand behind the altar facing the congregation. The reredos which had surrounded the altar was moved back flat against the east wall of the sanctuary. The choir benches were removed and the chancel floor was levelled, providing a small worship area where priest and people are not separated by the screen, thereby enhancing worship when the congregation is small.

The Lady Chapel is dedicated to St Mary & St Anne, and dates from 1939. Previously it was just part of the north aisle.

It is thought that the church was originally dedicated to All Saints, but the name fell into disuse, and the church was eventually renamed after St Thomas of Canterbury in recognition of the enhancement carried out after his murder.

## Malt Scoop Inn



The history of the Malt Scoop Inn is very ancient. It may well have been the site of the first ale house in the village, directly across from the church green and probably provided hospitality for the builders who renovated and rebuilt the church in the 1400's. It seems likely that at some stage it became a row of cottages, then an inn in the 1600's. An interesting story is that it was bought by Mr George Woolway in 1870 for "a hatful of sovereigns". It was later bought by Mr William Partridge in 1914. For a period, it also provided the workshop for the local undertaker.

## Victory Hall



The Victory Hall was built shortly after the 'First World War' to provide a meeting place for village activities, the money being raised by subscription. The foundation Stone was laid on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1919 by W.J. Martin J.P. the Sheriff of Devon. The land for the building was given by Sidney Snell, a local farmer. Exeter architect T. Archibald Lucas prepared the plans, and was built by W. Partridge, a local builder. An extension to the building was constructed in 1983, consisting of a new Kitchen and a Doctors Surgery. The project was partially funded with monies remaining from Her Majesty the Queens' 1977 Jubilee celebrations.

## Town Farm



Town Farm, a Grade 2 listed building is an excellent example of a Devon Longhouse. It was restored in 1985/1987 by the present owner. Typically, it is set with the gable end at right angles to the village street, with originally a sunken lane (now filled in) leading past the front of the house to the fields beyond. A raised cobbled area gave access to the house itself.

The earliest part of the house dates from about 1450. Built from cob on a stone footing with a frame of jointed crucks, it was originally a three bay house, consisting of a cobbled cross passage with double plank-and-mutin screens, the hall on the right being open to the roof and the quarters for the animals on the left. The original roof timbers still exist and the smoke-blackening from the fire in the central hearth can be clearly seen. Smoke from the fire escaped through the thatch from a smoke hole in the roof. The thatch has been replaced. The large fireplace and bread oven, together with the addition of a large chimney on the front of the house, were built about 100 years later. A staircase was added to give access to the upstairs rooms when the hall was sealed.

Because very little work had been done to the interior of the house, a number of original features were uncovered, including wooden window seats, wooden mullion window frames which had never been glazed, some panelling in the hall dated 1709 covering an earlier board at the back of the settle and in the solar, which was the first upstairs room, the remains of a wall painting, probably from the 1600's, of a text from Ecclesiastes Chapter 12, Verse 14: "For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil".

Downstairs, a parlour and storeroom were added and a lap-and-dovetail cruck dates the last part of the house in the early 1700,s.



## Congregational Church



There is a saying that “much of history will always be a mystery”, and that’s certainly so for the story of non conformist worship in and around Lapford. Several references are made to the “old chapels” in the village in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and by the 1840’s there were frequent visits by ministers from both Chulmleigh and Witheridge Congregational Churches. By 1838 a small group of committed Christians had formed a Congregational Church, and they met in “the old chapel”, probably two cottages joined as one, in the middle of the village somewhere. In 1846 a plot of land was given by Mr W. Croote, and the present church building was erected at a cost of £600, and opened in the autumn of that year. The church is still very much “The Light on the Hill”, both physically and spiritually in the life of the community.

## Lapford Community School



The building dates from 1935, the time of huge investment in school buildings in Devon. The design is typical of the period, a row of classrooms opening onto a covered walkway running the length of the building with staff room, office & storage at one end. The roof is of grey slate. Later a kitchen was added & later still the walkway was enclosed & eventually a new cloakroom area provided. The latest addition, locally financed & arranged, has been a large school hall. All the later building has been designed to blend almost seamlessly with the original.

## Lapford Playing Field



This roughly L shaped 0.3 hectares of public open space lies in the centre of the village to the north of the Churchyard. It was acquired for the village in 1961 & is looked after by the Playing Field Trustees. The Field contains a children’s play area & goals for football. Traditionally the village Revel Fair is held on the Field each July.

## The Football Field



This lies at one of the highest points in the parish at Edgerley Cross, & in one of the few places which provides a large enough area of acceptably flat land. There is a purpose-built club house which replaced a large caravan which was famously blown over the hedge & into Edgerley Lane at the height of the great gale in 1987.

## Bury Chapel



**Bury Chapel** was built in 1440 for the Bury family as a chapel of ease where they could go and worship instead of making the journey to the church. It was licensed in 1434 and dedicated by Bishop Lacey.

## Lapfordwood House



**Lapfordwood House** is a quarter of a mile from Lapford village on the A377 overlooking the valley of the Lapford Yeo. Originally a farmhouse called Lower Rensy it was thought to have been extended by the company building the railway to house the manager. A further extension was added in Victorian times. The centre of the house is cob faced with Morchard Road brick and rendered, the west end is wood, lath and plaster and the east end stone. There are six bedrooms, four reception rooms and a billiard room. 87 hectares of woodland adjoin the house.

## Other Historic Sites/Settlements

**Pennycotts**, a cruck-built, thatched house with later additions & a magnificent courtyard of later barns.

**Kelland**, an ancient core of a house & important farm, much altered & added to in the eighteenth century. The barns contemporary with the original house were destroyed by fire in 1826. It is named after the local Kelland family.

**Edgerley**, from the Saxon Eggesle – Ecgi's clearing. It is a square house of Georgian appearance almost certainly on the site of & incorporating an earlier building. *Made famous as the retreat of the "most wanted man in England" bank robber John McVicar who narrowly escaped arrest there in 1968.*

**Bury Barton**, from the Saxon – Bury - a fort, one of the most important old farms in the parish known to have been in occupation since the eighth century & recorded in the Domesday Book. It has a medieval chapel still recognisable amongst its 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Century buildings. The farm was taxed for 8 hearths in the Hearth Tax of 1662. All of this is on the site of a Roman military outpost, excavated in the 1980s.

**Bowerthy**, from the Saxon – Bowewurd: the farm by the curve. It is mentioned in the Domesday book.

**Great Hole**, Named together with Little Hole after Richard-De-La-Hole who owned the property in 1249. Great Hole house was destroyed by fire around the year 1900 & a replacement house built on a nearby site.

Other sites known to have been in occupation since Saxon times:

**Cobley** – Cobeleghe – Cobba's Clearing; **Broomsmead or Brinsmead** – Brymysmede

**Hele Farm** – Healh – a nook: **Filleigh** – from the Celtic Saint Fili & the Saxon Loeswe – good pasture.

## BUILDINGS SURVEY

- There are 421 dwellings in the village.
- A quarter of these are properties on or near the main road running north from the A377 (the old turnpike road) over the river and railway bridges, and up the hill through the village. Main of these are old properties, - this was the original village - and there is a wide variety of building styles. Of the remaining properties, two thirds are on the four main estates which have grown up over the years – Orchard Way, Prospect Way, Westgate, and Highfield. The rest are on smaller estates, and otherwise spread out through the village. Distribution (of the main centres of population) is as follows:
- Main Road, including Mill Hill 100 properties

Highfield	65
Prospect Way	60
Orchard Way	49
Westgate	21
Moorland View	17
Houses on the A377	14
Kelland Hill	13
Park Meadow Close	10
Eastington Lane	7
- A look at overall statistics about Lapford houses shows:
  - 7% are cottages, 46% houses, 47% bungalows
  - 45% are detached, 19% semi-detached, 30% terraced, 6% link detached
  - 62% are predominantly block, 18% brick, 12% cob, 8% stone, although many buildings combine different materials – e.g. old buildings of stone and cob.
  - Roofs are 68% tile, 28% slate, only 4% now thatch – (a strong contrast to former times, between 1950 and 1960 many thatched roofs were replaced by tile)
  - Windows are largely UPVC (76%), with 22% wood and 2% metal.
  - Half the properties have garages, though a considerable number of cars are parked in communal car park areas and on the roadside

## FARMS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENT

<b>Farm</b>	<b>Farm House</b>	<b>(Additional) Recent Conversions</b>	<b>Other converted farm buildings</b>	<b>Other buildings nearby</b>
Great Hole	Yes	2 large converted houses (5yrs ago)		
West Filleigh	Yes			House (Morchard View) – recent
Lower Filleigh	Yes	Conversion under way (house)		Filleigh Barton
Broomsmead	Yes	2 converted houses + 1 under construction		
Parsonage Farm	Yes		2 cottages	Broomfield House
Cobley	Yes			
Bury Barton	Bungalow			2 houses
Kelland	Kelland House	1 House 1 Cottage (semi-detached)	(2) Kelland Cottages	2 Houses (Kelland Barton & Easter Park)
Pennycots	Yes	Barn Conversion		Wolfhayes
North Lake	Yes	Outbuildings		
Rensey	Yes	Outbuildings		
Cleave	Yes	Outbuildings		
Higher Town Farm	Yes	Barn Conversion	Planning Permission for a Barn Conversion plus four houses	
Bowerthy	Yes			
West Farm	Yes	Outbuildings		
Lower Eastington Farm	Yes	Outbuildings		
Town Farm	Yes	Outbuildings		

# TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

## Traffic

The road through the village is narrow. When cars are parked, buses and lorries often have difficulty in getting through, and there is a danger to pedestrians from traffic speeding through the village, particularly where there is no pavement or walkway.

A small group of Lapford residents conducted a survey in 2005, which identified traffic problems in the village, and presented a report to the Parish council in June 2007. Speeding through the village was of most concern to residents. The report's recommendations include:

- 20 mph signs at the entrances to the village
- repositioning of speed restriction signs
- speed humps or other traffic calming measures (e.g. slow signs, road narrowing)
- marked walkways in various places
- better road maintenance (e.g. road painting)
- restriction on large heavy lorries through the village
- white lines to indicate parking areas
- measures to improve the dangerous exit from the railway station onto the A377 ( near the site of a fatal accident in 2003), - e.g. lighting, warning signs, a walkway over the railway bridge

A number of recommendations have been accepted, and will be implemented in due course

Below are some samples taken from the Traffic Report.



Figure 3 - Top of village, 30mph sign is too far into the village and should read 20mph



Figure 8 - Middle of the village. This area is particularly hazardous for pedestrians. A marked walkway should be provided as well as arranging for "slow" signs to be painted on to the road. Some of the bollards are damaged and need to be replaced. However, the materials used for these make them very modern in appearance. Perhaps wooden posts with reflective patches would be more suitable and in keeping with the area. A rope or chain could be added between the posts to make a physical barrier between the car and pedestrian. The addition of "SLOW" painted on the road surface, or raised painted strips may be an additional help along this narrow stretch of road.



Figure 22 - The speed limit sign is right at the school entrance. It should be further back, out of the village and, as at the other entrances to the village should be 20mph.

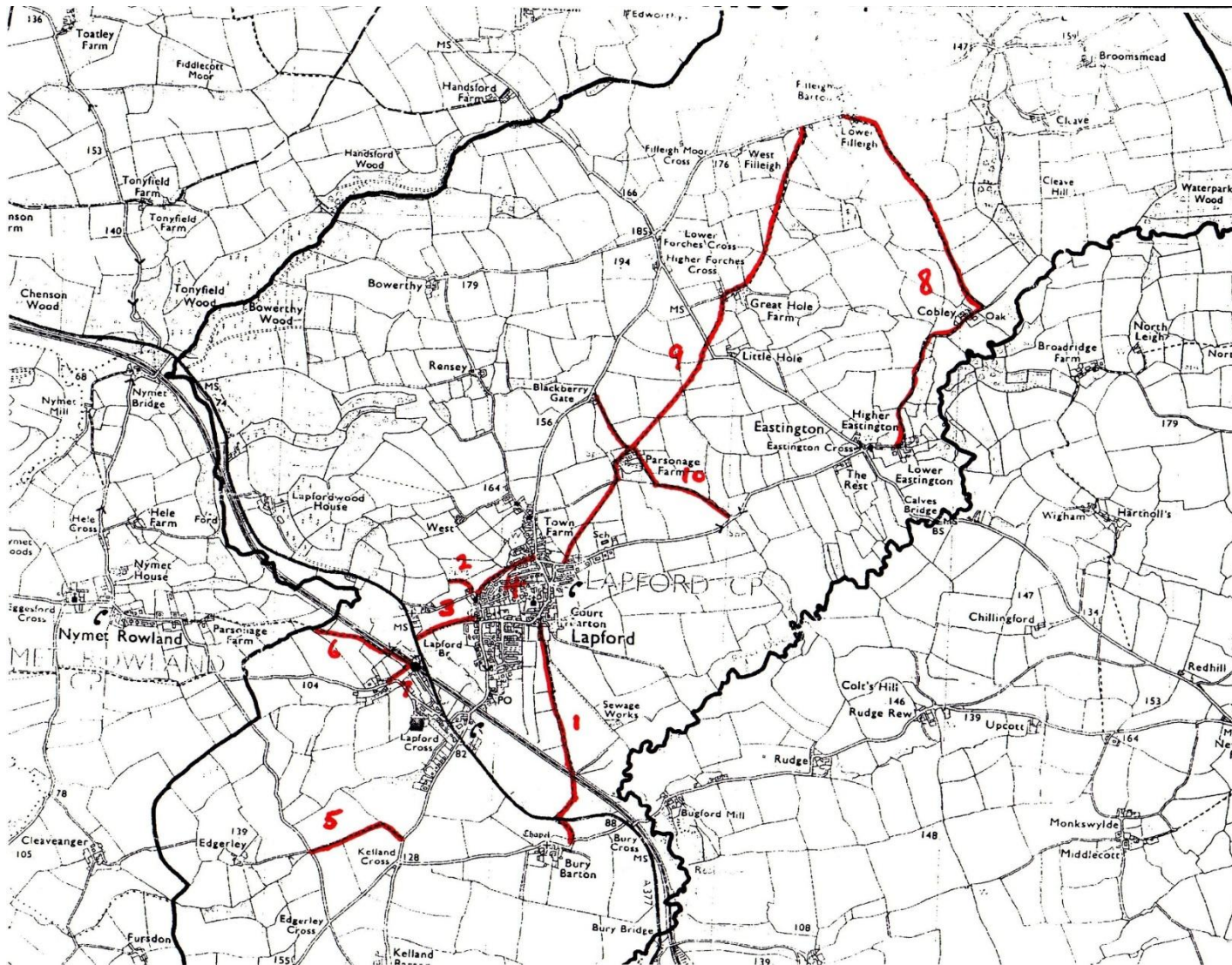
## Transport

### Lapford Railway Station

The rail link should be further developed in the future to provide services for goods to and from the village, and to provide a regular service for the public to work, shopping and leisure destinations, thus making the village a more viable place in which to live and to enable the carbon footprint of the area to be reduced.

# FOOTPATHS

On the Parish Map of Lapford there are ten footpaths marked, ranging from a hundred yards to one and a half miles in length, although one of the shortest has not been maintained. Of the remaining nine, four are dirt tracks, five cut across farm land for most or all of the way. Many give excellent views of the village and the surrounding countryside. The paths are generally in good condition, and generally cut twice a year, although there are some muddy patches and occasionally the need to go round the borders of fields where there are crops growing. They are an important recreational amenity for the village.





**Path Number 1 - Bury Barton to Saxons Farm**

Distance: ¾ mile. Difficulty: Moderate. Description: Fields and lane, 2 gates, 1 style.

Start: Gate onto field 20 yards down (towards A377) from Bury Barton Farm. Signpost directs you across fields and down onto the A377 (crossing A377 needs care). Over the style and down to the bridge across the river Yeo, then you walk along up the edge of a field until you join the lane leading up to Saxons Farm in the centre of the village.

Good views of Lapford from Bury Barton. NB: occasionally there is a bull in the field leading down to the river (on the south side) – see sign on style.

**NB: Path Number 2 – Pope’s Lane to ??** The short footpath shown on the map as crossing the fields from the end of Pope’s Lane (to the west) does not appear to exist!

**Path Number 3 - Barris to Lapford Bridge**

Distance: 350 yards. Difficulty: Easy. Description: Lane, 3 gates.

Start: From signpost to the Station at the top of Barris (near entrance to Pope’s Lane), from where there is a good view of the path down to the station, surrounding countryside and the back vies of the Barris houses. Walk down to gate near bridge.



**Path Number 4 - End of Pope’s Lane to Prospect Way**

Distance: ¼ mile. Difficulty: Easy. Description: Lane, 1 gate.

Start: From gate on right at far end of Pope’s Lane. Gradual ascent to Prospect Way, pass in the end of Orchard Way and Prospect Way Car Park.







### **Path Number 5 - Kelland Hill to Edgerly**

Distance: 1/3 mile. Difficulty: Easy. Description: Fields, 3 gates.

Start: Near the top of Kelland Hill signpost on west side. Proceed along the edge of the field, turn left along another field to come out on the lane to Nymet Rowland opposite the entrance to Edgerley (spur road). Good views of Lapford.



### **Path Number 6 - Lapford Bridge to Nymet Rowland (Lapford Parish Section)**

Distance: 1/3 mile. Difficulty: Moderate. Description: Path/fields, 1 gate, 3 styles.

Start: Just beyond Lapford Bridge, signpost on left. Proceeds down steps alongside the railway line, crosses over a bridge and then continues along the other side of the railway line until it leads up across fields towards Nymet Rowland. Good views of Lapford seen from the west.

### **Path Number 7 - Nymet Road to the Railway Line.**

Distance: 120 yards. Difficulty: Easy. Description: Grassy lane and railway crossing, 3 gates.

Start: Nymet Road just below Lower Bridge Farm. Leads to your right. Path leads along a grassy lane, the down over the railway line, where it joins path number 6.





### **Path Number 8 - Lower Filleigh to Eastington Cross.**

Distance: 1¼ miles.    Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult.    Description: Fields & Lanes, 3 gates, 1 style.

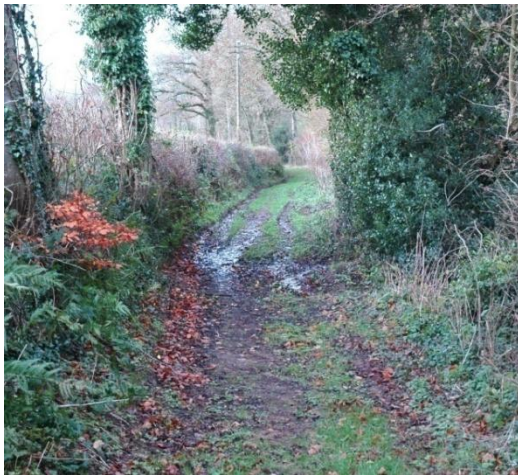
Start: Start by going to Lower Filleigh Farm and out onto a farm track (can be flooded in wet weather). Carry straight on through fields and down to Cobley Oak, where you turn right and follow the road to Eastington Cross.



### **Path Number 9 - Eastington Lane to Filleigh Barton**

Distance: 1½ miles.    Difficulty: Moderate/Difficult.    Description: Fields & Lanes, Several gates, & styles.

Start: Lower end of Park Meadow Close. Cross style and proceed diagonally across three fields, passing behind Lapford School. Join Lane and skirt around Parsonage Farm, then up, quite steeply in places, across four more fields until you reach the lane running from Forches Cross to Eastington. Excellent views back over Lapford. Cross the lane and continue along the drive way towards Great Hole Farm, and the path leads round the farm. Crossing two more fields brings you to a short section through a wood, then up a lane to the road to Lower Filleigh Farm, where the walk ends.



### **Path Number 10 - Blackberry Gate to Eastington Lane**

Distance:  $\frac{3}{5}$  mile.    Difficulty: Easy.    Description: Road then Grassy Path, 2 gates.

Start: Follow the road to, and then past Blackberry Gate. Turn right down lane, when you reach Parsonage Farm, continue through the farm, through a gate and follow the Public Footpath sign along a grassy path until you reach Eastington Lane.

**NB:** Paths 8 & 9 can be combined into a circular walk starting at Park Meadow close, if on arriving at Eastington Lane you take the Lapford road back to Park Meadow Close. This adds a further mile to the walk, making the total distance for the circular walk approximately  $3\frac{3}{4}$  miles.

NB: Map of Footpaths to be included.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following sources were referred to in compiling this Design Statement:

- Parish Survey results – these are available at [www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford](http://www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford)
- Data from Public Consultations and Exhibitions during the preparation of the Parish Plan.
- The Parish Plan – this is available at [www.lapford.com](http://www.lapford.com) and at [www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford](http://www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford)
- The Building Survey of the Parish – this is also available at [www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford](http://www.middevon.gov.uk/lapford)
- Data from the Public Consultation and Exhibition during the preparation of the Statement.
- Mid Devon District Council – Planning Guide for Parish & Town Councils.
- Reference to other Parish Design Statements available on the internet.