

# **BARKESTONE PLUNGAR & REDMILE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

The objectives of the Village Design Statement are to describe the distinctive character of the three villages in the parish as they are today and to highlight the qualities valued by their residents.

From these qualities, design principles based on the distinctive local character of the settlements have been drawn up to guide future development and maintenance.

This Village Design Statement has been prepared in conjunction with the Planning Department of Melton Borough Council, liaison with the Barkestone, Plungar and Redmile Parish Council and consultation open to the residents of the three villages.

The Village Design Statement draws on local knowledge and residents' views of how they would like to see their communities develop. Information was gathered by a variety of means including:-

- Consultation with Melton Borough Council
- Village Walks
- Photographic survey of the villages
- Displays in each of the villages open to every resident
- Questionnaires available at the displays
- Newsletter and notices issued to every household
- Consultation with the Rural Communities Council
- Historic and archive records

The aim is to ensure that future development and changes will reflect the valued and traditional features of each settlement and be seen as a beneficial and positive influence on the character of each of the parish villages.

The Statement is accordingly addressed to:

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

The Statement was adopted as a Local Design Statement on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007 by Melton Borough Council. A Local Design Statement is not a statutory planning document but can be used as informal guidance within the planning system. This VDS is a material consideration that will be taken into account by Melton Borough Council when determining planning applications.

The guidance in the VDS amplifies and compliments the policies contained in the adopted Melton Local Plan and should be taken into account by any party, including the Council, who are involved in the planning application process. There is also an expectation that development which falls outside of the planning application process should also take into account the guidance which has been developed by the community.

The intended audience of the guidance includes:

- i. prospective developers – of both new builds and extensions/adaptations;
- ii. any party involved in the decision-making process (where applications are required) including consultees (such as Parish Councils) and the Borough Council which is empowered to make the final decision; and
- iii. the local community, including those who wish to undertake development (regardless of whether a planning application is required) and those who are affected by development.

The community, planners and developers should take the VDS' contents fully into account in order to ensure that any development within the parish reflects the traditional design features in each of the three villages. Where development falls outside of the scope of the planning process, the local

community and parish council should look to implement the VDS through considerate negotiation despite the lack of a formal process.

It is anticipated that the analysis and information contained within the Village Design Statement will be a valuable tool, particularly in circumstances where it is necessary to demonstrate why a development is out of keeping. This does not alter the decision-making mechanisms established by law within the Planning Act. It will remain important that the content of the Village Design Statement be applied to the specific context of individual proposals. Failure to meet its guidelines will not always be grounds upon which to resist a development, unless it can be shown that such failure causes significant harm to its surroundings.

## **THE PARISH OF BARKESTONE, PLUNGAR & REDMILE**

### **HISTORY:**

The history of the three villages and parish is closely linked to Belvoir Castle and the Duke of Rutland. Much of the property, both land and buildings, was owned by "The Estate" until the 1920's. Housing development has historically been limited, initially due to ownership by The Estate and later by the parish's location in rural north-east Leicestershire, far from the social and economic influence of larger conurbations.

Whilst the three villages in the Parish are distinct, each with its own church and parochial boundary, there has for many years been a connection between Barkestone and Plungar, having been a joint ecclesiastical parish since the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the Rector living in what is now The Old Vicarage at Vale Farm between the two villages. For many years the children of Plungar also attended the Smith's Free school in Barkestone, until its closure in the late 1980s.

Historically, Barkestone, Plungar and Redmile all fell within the Framland Hundred of Leicestershire. When Rural Districts were introduced in 1872 Barkestone and Plungar were placed within the Bingham Rural District (which otherwise consisted entirely of Nottinghamshire parishes). By contrast, Redmile was placed within Grantham Rural District, as were Bottesford, Muston, Belvoir, Croxton Kerrial, Harston and Knipton (the remainder lying within Lincolnshire).

The three villages were reunited in 1894 when Belvoir Rural District was formed out of all the above-named parishes. In 1935 Belvoir Rural District was dissolved and all its parishes transferred to Melton and Belvoir Rural District. This was later merged with Melton Mowbray Urban District to form the present Borough of Melton.

The three villages continued to form separate civil parishes until 1935 when Barkestone and Plungar were transferred to Redmile Parish. Only in the last few years has it become known as Barkestone, Plungar and Redmile Parish.

## **ENVIRONMENT:**

### **Ecological:**

The Parish incorporates, and is surrounded by, areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, namely the Grantham Canal. Some agricultural land bears evidence of ridge and furrow fields, whilst grassland, arable fields, hedgerows, woods and ponds are categorised as significant at Parish, District or County level dependant upon the plant and animal communities present. The preservation of all these sites is considered essential by the community and all developers are requested to liaise with the Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4DG.

### **Archaeological:**

Each of the three Parish villages has medieval and post-medieval sites including buildings (some of which are now extinct), mounds and earthworks. All such sites are identified and categorised by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services, Community Services Dept., Leicester-shire County Council Suite, 4 Bridge Park Plaza, Thurmaston, Leicester LE4 8BL. Such sites should remain undisturbed and referral made to this body before any development is undertaken.