

STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY SHOULDHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA SUBMISSION

Shouldham village lies on the western escarpment of a chalk ridge that rises above the Fens to the west and which runs north/south between the coast and Breckland. The village is situated in the central western half of the parish, surrounded by farmland and several woods. To the north and west is a particularly extensive woodland area known as Shouldham Warren and The Sincks. The former is managed as a business by Forestry England which allows public access that is enjoyed extensively by local people. Several businesses and farms are to be found in the parish, one such farm lies between the village and the Warren and is known as Abbey Farm. It takes its name from a medieval priory that was formerly on this site, although there is no visual evidence today of the priory building itself other than the incorporation of its building materials into the current farm house. Further north still, beyond the parish boundary, is the Nar valley and its long distance footpath. RAF Marham is in an adjoining parish to the east, although part of the base extends into the SE corner of Shouldham parish.

The medieval parish church (built in the late 13th century with 14th and 15th century additions) is detached from the village and is sited on top of a hill to the east, overlooking the village. On its western slope is a field that is used for pasture but which holds earthworks that mark the medieval location of the village.

Today, the heart of the village is its green on which is sited the community owned pub: "The King's Arms". Spread around the green are many examples of buildings that are constructed in a mix of local Gault brick, Carrstone, clunch and flint. Some of these are recorded on Historic England's register as Grade II protected. The green is also the centre of a conservation area that extends east/west from the (detached) church to several historic barns that have been residentially converted and are sited approximately 175m west of the green. The conservation area contains not only listed buildings but other buildings that make an important contribution to the overall quality of its visual appearance. Further listed and historic buildings are spread throughout the village.

No main 'A' roads pass through the parish. The principal access is a 'C' class road that runs on an east/west axis. A second 'C' class road, running from an adjacent parish to the east, provides an alternative route into the village, albeit a poor one due to its narrow single carriageway. Many footpaths and byways cross the village and radiate out to the adjoining countryside.

By selecting the Shouldham parish boundary (see attached map) as the perimeter for its Neighbourhood Area, the Parish Council takes the view that this reflects the intensely rural and historic nature of the village.

Working within the constraints of the Borough Council's Local Plan and the National Planning Framework, the Parish Council believes that Shouldham will benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan that protects and enhances the conservation area and the characteristics of the village whilst ensuring that existing and proposed development is reflective of local needs.

Shouldham's Neighbourhood Plan, whilst acknowledging the village's accessibility constraints, will seek to promote practical and sympathetic development that both maintains the traditional appearance of the village and also delivers opportunity and provision for the whole community.

