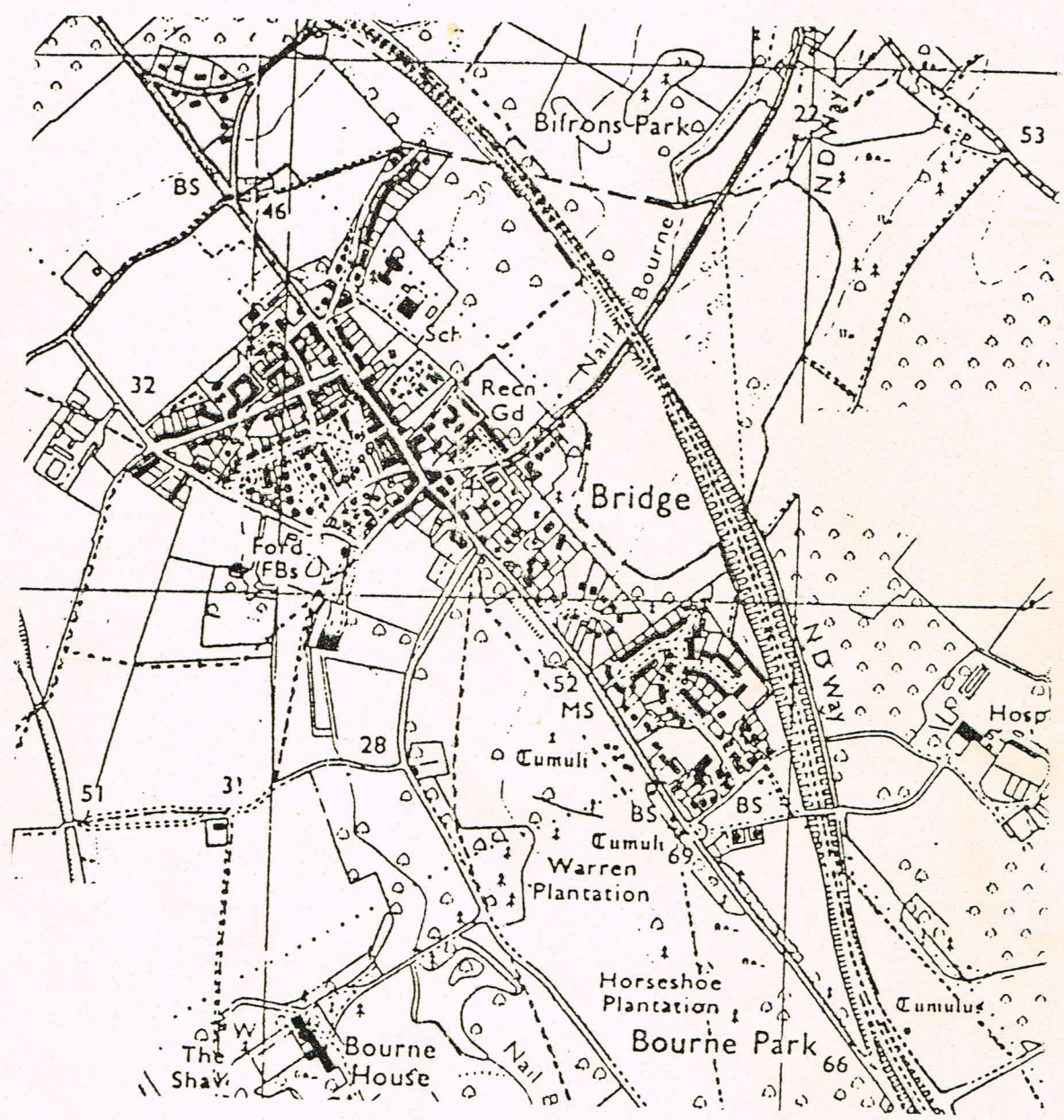


PARISH COUNCIL OF BRIDGE

BRIDGE VILLAGE APPRAISAL



1988 ~ 1989

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FOREWORD

When the Kent Structure Plan was published in 1987 it made far reaching plans for the countryside and villages of Kent which would affect Bridge in the foreseeable future and into the next century.

Whilst we on the Parish Council had our own views of how we wished Bridge to develop I felt that we should take stock of what facilities we had in the village and consult the residents as to how they wished to see Bridge develop.

I therefore, asked a number of people to form a Village Appraisal Sub-Committee initially under the chairmanship of Mervyn Gulvin and then Vernon David. We asked people with expertise in particular fields to deal with those areas which were likely to affect us. The Committee has met on a number of occasions and individual members have produced studies, diagrams, maps and generally dedicated a lot of time and effort to this project.

The result is this document which I commend to you.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their dedication and hard work on this important project and particularly Vernon David who has co-ordinated the whole input and produced the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hill', with a horizontal line underneath it.

JOHN HILL
Chairman
Bridge Parish Council

Introduction

In the Autumn of 1987 Bridge Parish Council set up a Village Appraisal Sub-Committee to consider the possible shape of Bridge in the year 2000 as an input to Canterbury City Council's Rural Plan currently under development.

As its first task the Sub-Committee undertook a survey by way of a questionnaire of the views of the villagers. This took place in January/February 1988. At the Annual Parish Meeting on 20th May 1988 which was attended by well over one hundred villagers the Sub-Committee presented the results on the questionnaire which was followed by discussion.

Following this presentation the Sub-Committee eventually encapsulated the views expressed into five recommendations which were endorsed by the Parish Council and presented to the villagers at the Annual Meeting on 25th May, 1989. The Meeting which was again well attended fully supported the recommendations.

The Village Appraisal Sub-Committee consisted of the following members:-

- Mr. V. David (Chairman).
- Mr. D. Cartwright.
- Mr. P. Fairweather.
- Mr. T. Flisher.
- Mrs. R. Green.
- Cllr. M. Gulvin (Chairman December 1987 - February 1988).
- Cllr. Mrs. M. Jones.
- Cllr. Mrs. A. King.
- Mrs. E. Stewart.
- Mrs. K. Walder (Clerk to the Parish Council).
- Mr. R. Whately.
- Mr. J. Williamson.

BRIDGE VILLAGE - Geographical Location

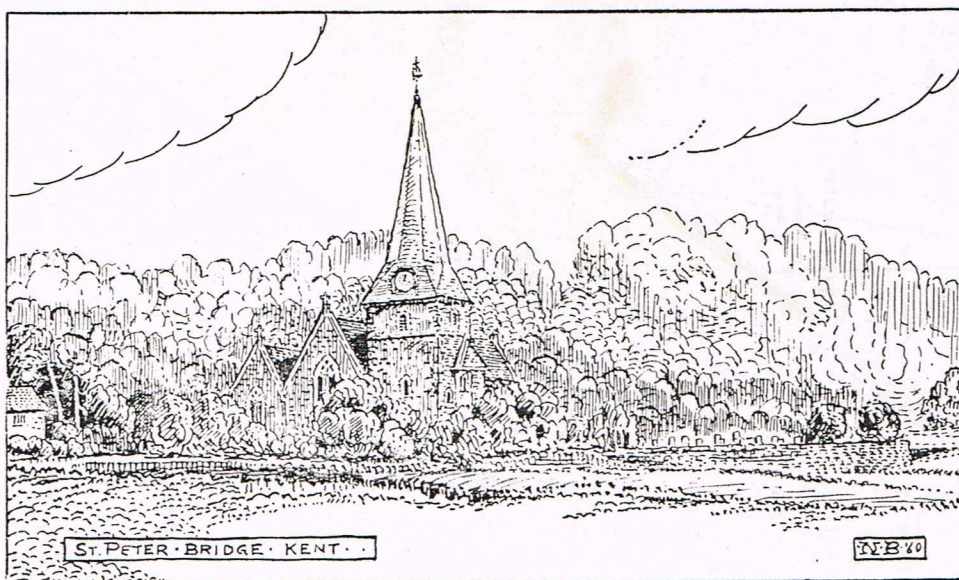
Bridge village is situated in the Nailbourne Valley in an attractive rural setting on the old Roman Watling Street, formerly the main road between London and Dover. The village is the main settlement in the Parish of Bridge and lies 2.5 miles south east of Canterbury and 12 miles from Dover.

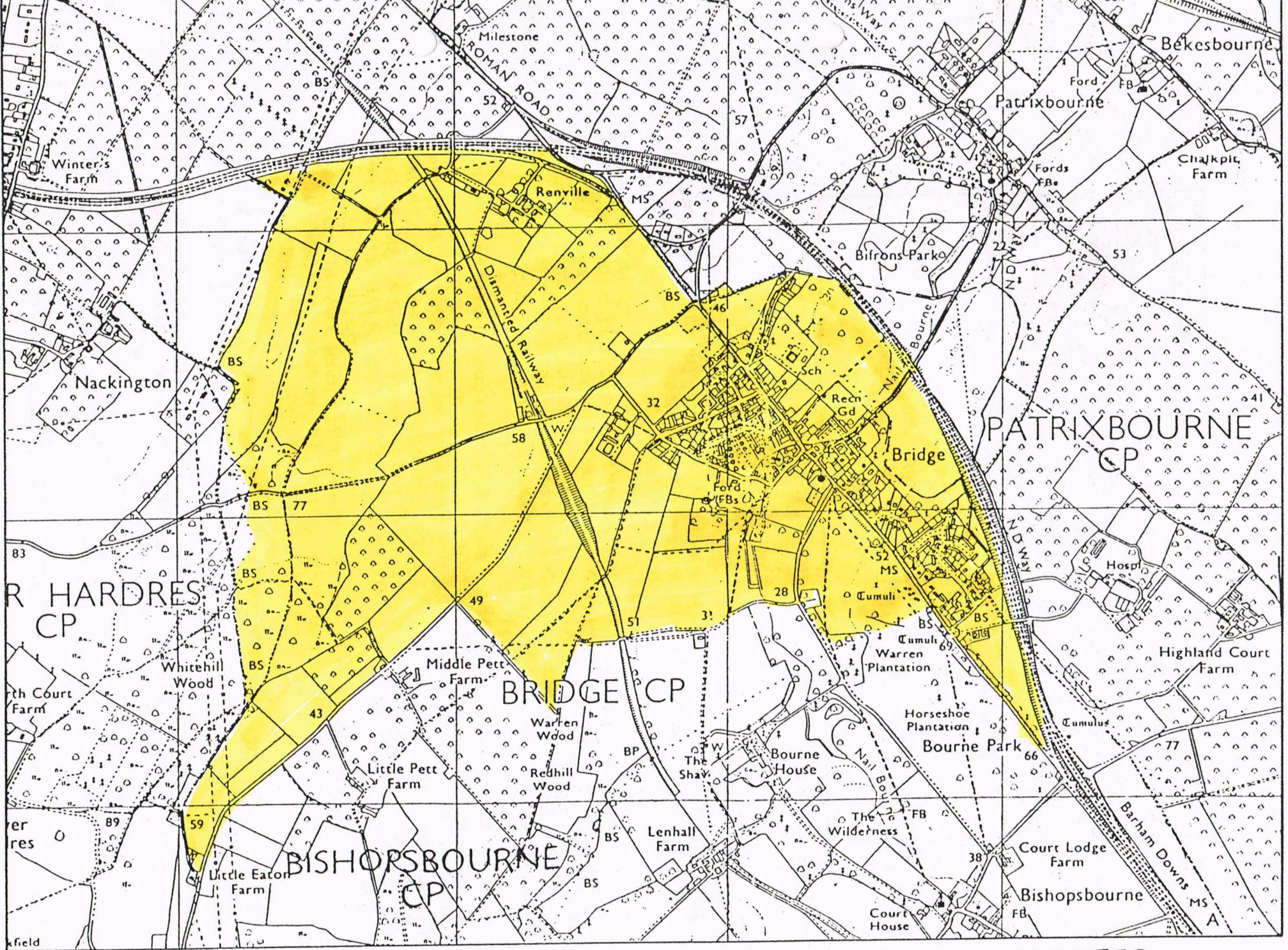
It is likely that the parish took its name from "Bregge" a bridge which crossed the Little Stour, a tributary of the Stour itself.

The village is linear in form having grown northwards and eastwards along Watling Street and away from the River Nailbourne which floods periodically. The older part of the village is built on fairly level alluvial and head deposits, the height of the land varying between 25m. and 50m. above sea level. In the early 1960's a significant amount of residential building took place to the south of the centre of the village at Bridge Down. This development is situated on north west facing chalkland between 50m. and 75m. above sea level.

As a result of the 1986 parish boundary changes Bridge village now lies slightly off-centre in a parish reduced in size. Although land to the north west, north east and south east was gained from Patricxbourne and Bishopsbourne, more to the south west was lost to Lower Hardres, Upper Hardres and Bishopsbourne.

Bridge, like other similar villages in the locality is a popular residential area for people working in Canterbury and other nearby towns.





0 Scale 1KM.

MAP SHOWING BRIDGE PARISH BOUNDARY AFTER THE 1986 REVISION OF CANTERBURY PARISHES.

BRIDGE VILLAGE - A Short History

The village of Bridge, straddling the main road from Dover to Canterbury has been an important village since the Roman occupation of England.

There was probably a Roman bridge across the river (cf. Bruges which has a similar site and name). The village is situated on the old coaching route from Dover to London, known as Watling Street. In the parish records there are detailed many marriages between passing travellers and local villagers.

Near by on the Barham Downs the armies used to assemble for campaigns abroad such as "The Field of the Cloth of Gold", the Seven Years War and also India in the mid 19th Century.

The church in characteristic Kentish flint was such restored with money given by Mrs. Gregory in 1852. It is a feature of the village as you come down the hill from Canterbury and is even more exposed since the great storm in October, 1987.

A characteristic of Bridge are the large manor houses near the village: -

- Bridge Place was the home of the Braemes family (Sir Arnold Braemes was the first manager of the Dover Harbour Board),
- Higham House, now known as Highland Court was one of the largest country houses in East Kent in the 17th Century, Count Zebrovsky of Chitty, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang fame lived in the house earlier this century.
- Bridge Hill House was the former home of the grandson of the French philosopher Montesquieu,
- East Bridge House,

to mention but a few. A little further away is Bourne Park where Mozart stayed once to attend the horse races on the Barham Downs!

There are three pubs of great antiquity. In The White Horse a famous brawl took place which is recorded in the Church Archives of Christopher Applegate, a contemporary of Marlowe.

The Post Office is a great centre of the village and was used by Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, then living at Broome Park, to send his first despatch in 1914.

One of the first work houses in Kent was built in 1837 in Union Road and the Record Book gives the names of many inmates who, often forced by poverty, took up residence there.

There are not many villages that can boast such varied architecture from Tudor to Victorian. The centre of village is a designated conservation area but constant vigilance is needed to see that a high standard is maintained.

Bridge which has survived two wars mercifully undamaged, has grown since the war and with this growth has come social change and mobility. The population of Bridge was 1,297 at the 1981 Census. New houses have been built at Bridge Down and Western Avenue in the 1950's and 1960's. Riverside Close was developed in the 1970's and 1980's and the most recent addition is Mansfield Court.

One of the surgeons returning from the Battle of Waterloo, Dr. James wrote that "he was much impressed by the happiness and jollity of the inhabitants" of Bridge!

BRIDGE VILLAGE - Road and Transport

Roads

The village has evolved on either side of the old Roman road, which until recently formed the main route between London and Dover. However, the opening of the Bridge Bypass in 1976 removed the vast majority of through traffic, and the main road through the village was down graded from an 'A' class road to a 'C' class road. Traffic flows on the Bridge Bypass now average of 20,000 vehicles a day - compared with about 14,000 vehicles a day through Bridge immediately prior to the opening of the bypass. Although there has been no recent traffic census in the village, it is estimated that current traffic flows are about 3,000 movements a day, and are essentially locally based.

Generally, the road network in, and around, Bridge is adequate for the foreseeable future, although some of the side road junctions with the High Street (particularly Union Road, Dering Road and Brewery Lane) are below normal highway standards. There are no major highway schemes planned in the vicinity of Bridge.

Public Transport

Bridge is relatively well served, with three bus routes passing through the village. Route 15 provides an hourly service between Canterbury and Dover, while Routes 16 & 17 each provide an additional hourly service between Canterbury and Folkestone. Hence for journeys to and from Canterbury there is a choice of three buses an hour. However, the Canterbury bound bus services are overloaded between 0800 - 0900, with large numbers of school children competing with local residents commuting to Canterbury. In the evening the position is reversed, with most of the buses leaving Canterbury between 1600 - 1700 being full.

Since the deregulation of bus services in 1985, the three serving Bridge during the day are being operated on a commercial basis by East Kent. However, there are insufficient passengers in the evenings, and on Sundays, to be commercially viable and these services are currently operated with the assistance of a subsidy from Kent County Council. A considerable number of people rely on the bus service for their mobility.

The last bus from Canterbury to Bridge leaves at 10p.m. (half an hour later on Saturday), which can cause problems for those relying on public transport in the evenings.

Train services are available at Canterbury (approximately 2.5 miles) and at Bekesbourne (approximately 1.5 miles). The two railway stations at Canterbury offer between them a reasonably frequent access to the rail network in the south-east - including fast trains to London. Bekesbourne station is on the Dover-Canterbury-London line, but fewer trains serve this station than Canterbury.

Parking

The construction of the bypass allowed on-street parking to return to much of the High Street. This causes some narrowing of the carriageway in places, but generally this causes little more than a minor inconvenience to passing traffic. It is likely that this parking helps to keep down vehicle speeds through the village.

Most of the on-street parking in the village is fully used - especially on Saturdays. There is little or no scope for providing additional spaces.

Pedestrians

Compared with many villages, Bridge is relatively well provided with footways. In the village centre, most roads have footways on both sides. However, there are no footways in Higham Lane (which serves the Bridge Down area), or on parts of Union Road. Bourne Park Road, which leads to the Bridge Country Club, and Bekesbourne Road are also without footways.

There are no pelican or zebra crossings in the village and, taking account of the relative volumes of traffic and pedestrians, none is likely to be provided in the foreseeable future. The record in Bridge is good; an analysis of the accidents reported to the police over the last eight years shows a better than average record of accidents involving pedestrians.

Lorry Traffic

A relatively small number of large lorries (juggernauts) now passes through the village. Some of them service the cold store at Highland Court Farm. There may be a case with the help of limited signing to encourage these lorries to use the by pass rather than the High Street.

KEY



BELOW 25m



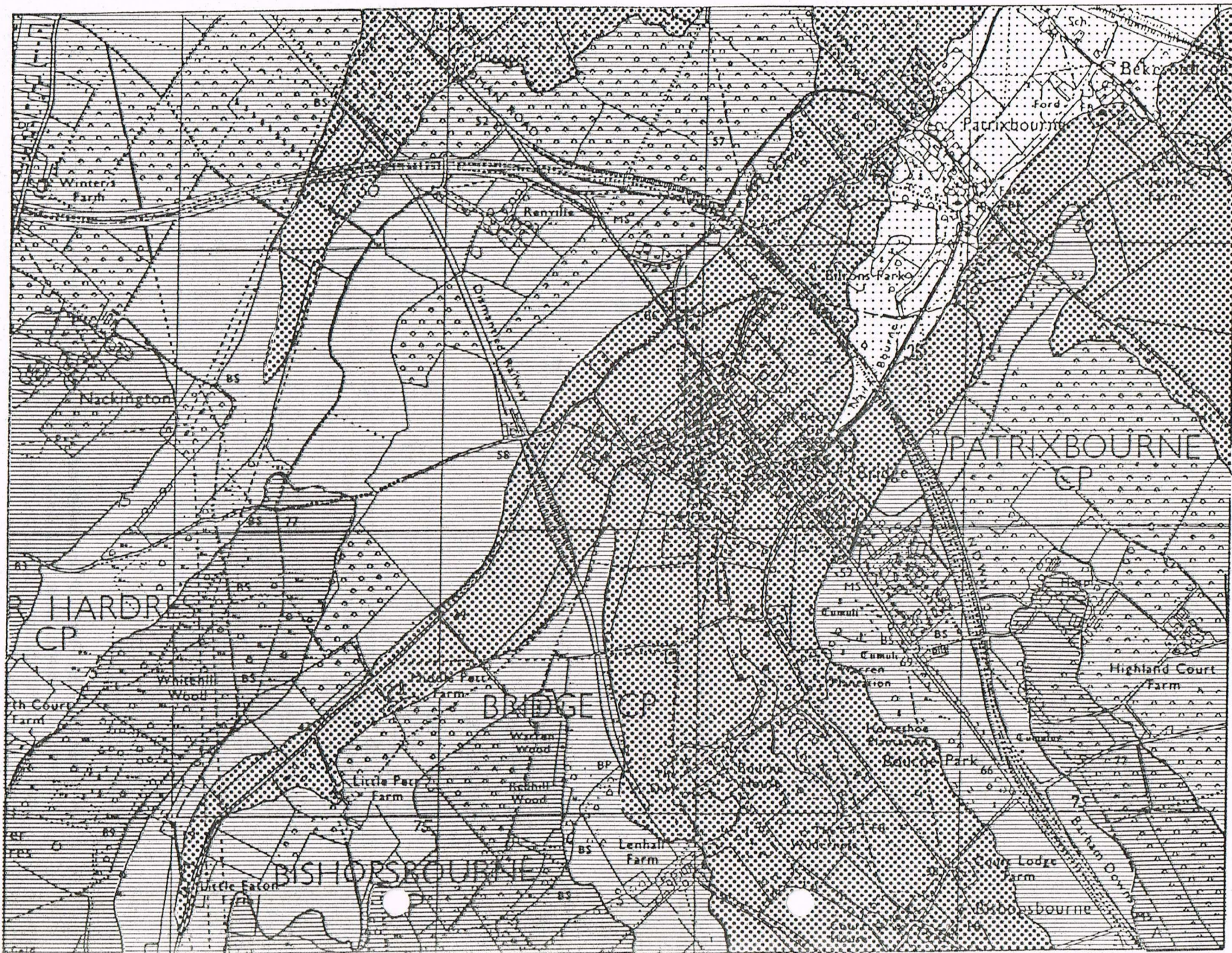
25-50m



50-75m



OVER 75m



BRIDGE VILLAGE - Village Organisations

BABY SITTING GROUP	Mrs. J. Johnson, Owletts, Beech Hill Bridge.	GIRL GUIDES	Miss. M. Bevan, 1 Green Court, Bridge.
BADMINGTON CLUB	Mrs. A. Clare, 60 High Street, Bridge.	HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY	Mrs. D.E. King, 2 Windmill Close, Bridge.
BRITISH LEGION	Mr. T. Heap, Granville Lodge, Bridge Hill, Bridge.	KARATE	Mr. M. Batt, The Cottage, Bridge Hill, Bridge.
BROWNIES	Miss. S. Leaney, Que Sera, Pett Bottom (after 6 p.m.) or 45a High Street Bridge (shop hours).	KEEP FIT - SHAPE UP	Mrs. P. Dinsmore, 1a High Street, Bridge
CHESS CLUB	Mr. J. Sullivan, 2 Meadow Close, Bridge.	LEAGUE OF FRIENDS OF CANTERBURY HOSPITALS	Mrs. M. Field, Bournes Corner, Bekesbourne Road, Bridge.
CUBS	Mr. M. Barnard, 9 Oaklands Way, Sturry.	NAILBOURNE LADIES GROUP	Mrs. L. Flisher, 52 Riverside Close, Bridge.
CHURCHES		PLAYGROUPS	
St. Peter's C.E. Church	Vicar: Rev. R. Gilbert, The Vicarage, High Street, Bridge. Churchwarden: Mr. S. Pike, 12 High Street, Bridge.	Bridge Village Playgroup	Mrs. Webb, 4 Bridge Hill House, Bridge Down, Bridge.
Methodist Church	Mr. P.A. Grant, 62 Western Avenue, Bridge.	Mrs. Rook's Playgroup	Mrs. H. Pike, 12 High Street, Bridge. Mrs. A. Rook, St. Stephen's Cottage, Bekesbourne.
Junior Church	Mrs. H. Pike, 12 High Street, Bridge.	SCHOOL	Bridge & Patrixbourne C.E. Primary, Conyngham Lane, Bridge.
CRICKET CLUB	Mr. G. Bourn, 36 College Road, Canterbury.	SCOUTS	Mr. N. Drewett, 57 Regent Street, Whitstable.
DANCING		SENIOR CITIZENS	Mrs. O. Knight, 5 Dering Close, Bridge.
Children's sequence dancing	The Scarlett School of Dancing, Mrs. V. Scarlett, 8 The Ness, Canterbury.	TENNIS CLUB	Mrs. H. Whiting, 20 Conyngham Lane, Bridge.
Folk Dancing	Mrs. J. Hopkins, 22 Union Road Bridge.	WOMEN'S INSTITUE	Mrs. E. Stewart, Beddgelert, Medow Close, Bridge.
FISH SCHEME	Mrs. J. Warren, 2 Bridge Down, Bridge.	YOGA	Mrs. E. Cartwright, 78b, Riverside Close, Bridge.
FOOTBALL			
Bridge Juniors F.C.	Mr. P. Sinnock, 2 Flint Cottages, Bishopsbourne.		
Broomfield Utd. F.C.	Mr. J. Edgington, 4 Damerham Close, Canterbury.		
Brymore Sports F.C.	Mr. W.P. O'Reilly, 78 Oxford Road, Canterbury.		

November, 1988

BRIDGE VILLAGE - Village Shops, Businesses and Facilities

ARCHITECT Gulvin & Marsh, 92 High Street

BAKER The Burgate Bakery, 94 High Street

BUILDING SOCIETIES Halifax Sub-Agency, 29 High Street
Woolwich Sub-Agency, 92 High Street

BUTCHERS Cullens, 52 High Street
Wakeham, 59 High Street

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT Mr. F. Whitten, 29 High Street

CHEMIST Mrs. G. Goodman, 16 High Street

CHIROPODY CLINIC Bimonthly at The New Close, Conyngham Lane (contact Mrs. Warren, 2 Bridge Down.

CHURCHES St. Peter's C.E. High Street
Methodist Church, Patricxbourne Road.

DECORATORS Mr. M. Bennett, 21 Brewery Lane
Mr. J. Buckmaster, Jonette, Patricxbourne Road.
Mr. R. Davies, 7 Ford Close

DENTIST Mr. G. Hamill & Associates, 78 High Street Bridge

DOCTORS Dr. D.M. Jones, The New Surgery, Gree Court.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS Morgan-Ridge, The Old Telephone Exchange, High Street.
L. & S. Electrical Contractors, 14 Windmill Close.

ESTATE AGENTS Priors, 92 High Street.

FISH & CHIPS VAN White Horse Car Park, High Street on Thursdays from 4.00 to 7.00 p.m.

GARAGE AND REPAIRS Roger's Garage, 36 High Street
Dave Clark Motorcycles, Old Reliance Garage, 8 Brewery Lane.

GARDEN CENTRE Bridge Garden Centre, 45a High Street

GARDENER J.B. Gardener, 20 Conyngham Lane

GUEST HOUSES, B. & B. Mr. & Mrs. Fry, Linden Cottage, 20 Union Road.
Eastbridge House, Bridge Hill.
Mrs. P. Kirk, Wych Elm, 17 High Street.
Maudsley Guest House, 47 High Street.

HAIRDRESSERS

A Cut Above, 88 High Street.
Barbaranne, 45 High Street.
Nicholas James, 4 Western Avenue.
Colin's (Gents' Stylist), 84 High Street.

HALLS

Methodist Hall, Patricxbourne Road.
Sport Pavillion, Recreation Ground.
Village Hall & Hunter Room, High Street.

INFANT WELFARE CLINIC

4th Thursday of every month, 2 to 4p.m., Methodist Hall, Patricxbourne Road.

LIBRARY (KCC MOBILE)

Every Thursday 4 to 5 p.m., Green Court.

NEWSAGENT

Hawkins, 80 High Street.

OIL

Corrals, Oil Terminal, Union Road

OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES

Saxon Lodge, Residential Home (Private), 30 Western Avenue.
The New Close (KCC owned), Conyngham Lane.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Alfie Harvis, The Lodge, Bridge Place

PLUMBER

Mr. J. Buckmaster, Jonette, Patricxbourne Road.

POLICE

Police Sub-Station, Conyngham.

POST OFFICE

16 High Street.

PRINTER

Mr. F. Lockwood, High Street.

PUBLIC HOUSES

Plough & Harrow, High Street.
Red Lion, High Street.
White Horse, High Street.

RESTAURANTS

Skippers, High Street.
Willow Brook, High Street.

ROOFING AND FLOORING

S. W. Asphalt, (Flat roofing and flooring specialists) 16 Union Road

SUPERMARKET

LoCost, Western Avenue.

TAXI

S. Jarvis, (Private Car Hire) 40 Bridge Down Bridge.

VET

Mr. D. Redfern, Riverdale House, 82 High Street.

VILLAGE SHOP

26 High Street

WINE IMPORTERS

Whiclar Wines, Mill Lane

GENERAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

THE GOVERNMENT

The Government's publication in 1987 of its advice concerning building on farmland provoked much alarm that widespread new building in the countryside would result and contributed to the desire locally for a village appraisal.

In its final form, however, the advice (in Department of the Environment Circular 16/87) not only reiterated the need to keep the best farmland, but also expressed the need to protect the countryside for its own sake against development.

Thus the Government is not accepting large scale rural development, as originally feared, and remains committed to countryside protection.

Nevertheless, some loosening of planning controls is taking place, especially over small scale industries and old farm buildings, and the Government is considering further diversification of farms and the rural economy.

THE KENT STRUCTURE PLAN

The present Structure Plan, prepared by the County Council, was approved in 1983, and sets out broad planning policies on a range of matters. It is not concerned with detailed uses of particular land, which are considered by District Councils in Local Plans. There is no Local Plan for Bridge.

The Structure Plan is presently being reviewed, and some policy changes are proposed.

The most important Structure Plan policies for Bridge are those for Rural Settlements and the Countryside.

RURAL SETTLEMENT POLICIES

These policies aim to confine new housing to the built-up parts of villages, unless there is a special local justification. New industry of the right type and scale and in the right place is generally to be permitted. Outside villages, in the countryside, new building and new uses are very tightly controlled.

The altered policies for rural settlements are similar to the existing policies, but recognise that larger scale development may be needed in some villages; conversely, some villages may have even tighter control than at present due to their special character.

COUNTRYSIDE POLICIES

These policies aim to conserve good farmland, attractive countryside and important wildlife habitats.

Generally, high grade farmland surrounds Bridge, especially north of the Nailbourne and east of Bridge Down.

Part of the parish, north of Whitehill Road and Bifrons, is within an Area of Special Significance for Agriculture, which implies special protection for farmland.

The Structure Plan also defines Special Landscape Area which include the best scenery in Kent, and where protection of the countryside is given priority. Almost all of the parish is within the North Downs Special Landscape Area and also the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is designated by the Countryside Commission, and relates to scenery of national importance.

There are no specific sites of special nature conservation value in the parish, but the Structure Plan aims to safeguard the wildlife interest of all the countryside.

No changes are proposed to these countryside policies.

A2 BY-PASS
LONDON - DOVER

LARGE SCALE MAP OF BRIDGE VILLAGE.

TO CANTERBURY

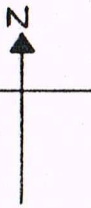
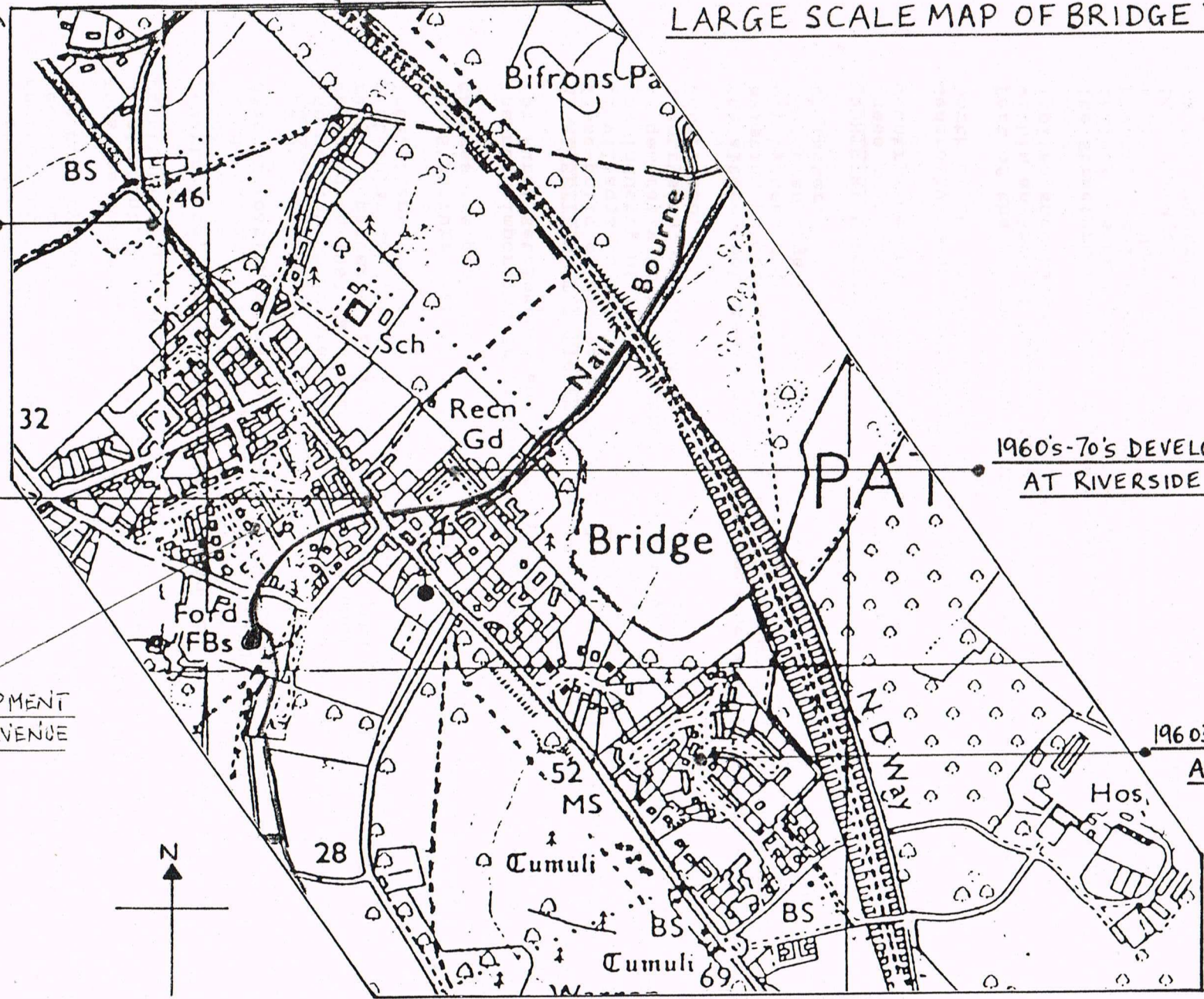
ROMAN
WATLING ST.

CENTRE OF
OLD VILLAGE

1960's DEVELOPMENT
AT WESTERN AVENUE

1960's-70's DEVELOPMENT
AT RIVERSIDE CLOSE.

1960's DEVELOPMENT
AT BRIDGEDOWN.



0 ————— 1 Km.
SCALE.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the Village Appraisal Sub-Committee were adopted by the Bridge Parish Council on 9th February, 1989.

RECOMMENDATION 1 - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITY: 1

Background

(a) Bridge has developed steadily during the past 25-30 years and has reached the stage at which its very existence as a village is at stake. The response to the questionnaire clearly demonstrated that the great majority of the villagers are opposed to large scale housing developments; they wish to see Bridge retain its village character in the future. They do not wish Bridge to become part of the Canterbury urban area.

(b) At the 1981 Census 24.2% of the residents in Bridge were aged 65 years and over and there is evidence that this percentage has risen since then. There is a view among villagers which the Sub-Committee supports, that efforts should be made to see the age balance change in favour of younger people.

To retain young people in the village in today's housing climate it will be necessary to provide affordable houses to rent or buy at below market rates. Villagers, however, are only prepared to encourage a modest building programme in the village provided arrangements can be made to ensure that such houses remain available to our young people in need on a continuing basis.

We have discovered that the National Agricultural Centre Rural Trust (NACRT) of which HRH The Princess Royal is President promotes village housing developments for rent or shared ownership, mainly through the English Village Housing Association or Rural Housing Associations.

Under their scheme houses to rent offer "assured tenancies" under which there is no "Right to Buy". Shared-ownership houses always remain shared i.e. there is no "Right to Staircase". Both schemes ensure that the houses remain available only to local people at below market rents or value.

Such schemes have been developed in many parts of the country with the active cooperation of District Councils who have powers to make so called, 'Voluntary Section 52 Agreements' with charitable Housing Associations to provide the legal framework for such schemes.

NACRT promote housing schemes for young people as well as the old. The Sub-Committee feels that a scheme should be developed for young people in the first instance, in line with the above stated objectives.

The availability of a small area (1/2 - 2/3 acre) of suitable land is, of course, a key requirement for the successful outcome of this scheme.

For planning purpose it is necessary to identify the 'built confines' of Bridge. This map of Bridge is attached to this recommendation.

*** Recommendation 1

The Parish Council:-

- (a) should take into account, at all times, the strongly expressed view of the villagers to retain the village character of Bridge in the future and, in particular,
- (b) should oppose any large scale housing developments to meet the need of Canterbury City. Any housing developments in Bridge should be on a small scale.
- (c) should agree to explore the possibility of a small housing development with the assistance of the National Agricultural Centre Rural Trust to enable young people in the village to rent or part-own a house at below market value on a continuing basis.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - EMPLOYMENT & VILLAGE FACILITIES PRIORITY: 2

Background

50.3% of the responding households said 'NO' to the question in the questionnaire: "Do you feel that further employment opportunities should be provided in the village?"

Bridge residents within the economic age group (16-65 years) are fortunate in enjoying a high level of employment. However, in February 1988 about 30 residents, it is estimated, were seeking employment, mostly in the 45 - 64 age group. Whilst it is not suggested that all these residents could be found employment in the village a sizeable minority of villagers would like to see Bridge make a modest contribution towards providing new job opportunities for people in this area. This view is shared by the Sub-Committee.

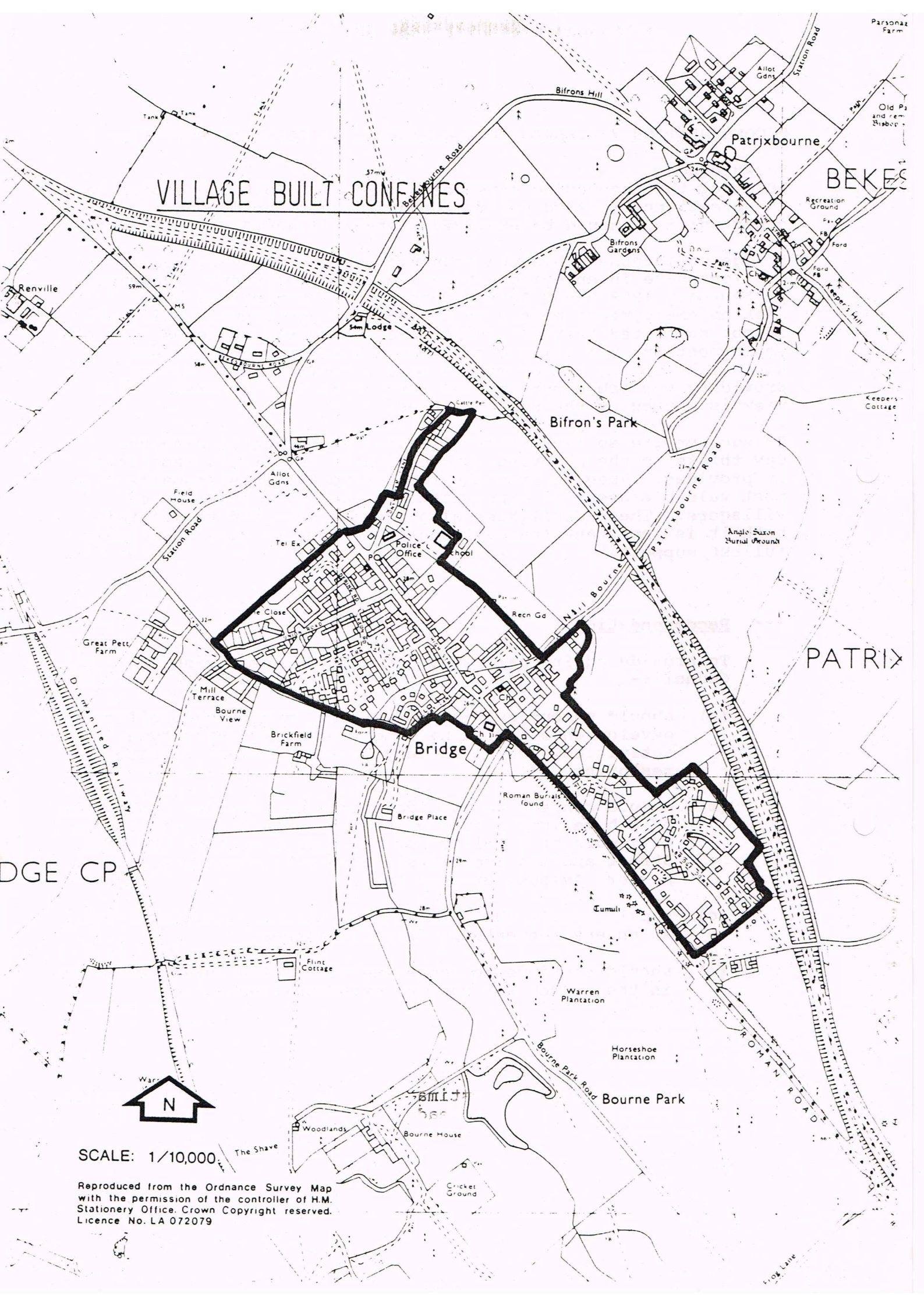
Bridge, unlike so many other villages, is 'alive' during the day thanks to the shopping, professional and service facilities it provides. Judging from the replies to the questionnaire this most valuable asset is appreciated by the great majority of villagers. These facilities also provide jobs and to maintain both it is important that villagers continue to give them their fullest support.

*** Recommendation 2

To provide additional job opportunities the Parish Council:-

- (a) should encourage, indeed welcome, modest shop/office developments including some cottage industry type activities such as pottery, basket making, furniture restoring.
- (b) should consent to the occasional use or part conversion of a home into a studio, office, shop etc., within the framework of a policy for the development of the High Street and the immediately adjoining streets e.g. Western Avenue, Brewery Lane.
- (c) should ensure that all such developments are achieved in an environmentally friendly manner.
- (d) should continue to cooperate with neighbouring Councils in the search for new job opportunities.

VILLAGE BUILT CONFINES



SCALE: 1/10,000

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown Copyright reserved. Licence No. LA 072079

Background

The results of the Questionnaire clearly indicate the high level of support given by adult members of the community to existing leisure activities both in the village and in Canterbury and elsewhere.

The lack of leisure activities in the village for our children in the 11 - 16 age group is evidently of concern to parents and the formation of a Youth Club is favoured. An impressive number of villagers have indicated a willingness to help with such a project.

The Sub-Committee is aware that there have been unsuccessful attempts in the past to set up a Youth Club in Bridge but believes the climate for such ventures can change among succeeding generations of children. In view of the evident support for such a scheme from parents at this time the Sub-Committee believes that another attempt should be made.

In the course of our work we became aware that the Rev. Raymond Gilbert was also thinking along similar lines. We are glad to record that both groups have joined forces and that planning to date has been carried out jointly.

We have been advised that the appointment of a professional Youth Leader for one year is an essential first step. The cost is estimated at £1,000 and would require funding from Parish Council sources. Mr. Curtis (Education Youth Service Department) has offered help with the interviewing. Grants for equipment are available. Incidental costs (e.g. hire of premises) could be covered by a small club membership fee and local fund raising efforts. Training for village volunteers is also available.

It will be for the Youth Leader and a supporting Committee to decide such matters as the constitution, level of subscription, venue.

*** Recommendation 3.

The Parish Council :-

- (a) should support the setting up of a 'Village Youth Club' for our young people of secondary school age to provide a social club for recreation, informal education (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Awards), outings, a meeting place as the children separate from the village primary school to many different secondary schools and a Youth Christian Fellowship Group for those members who wish to participate.
- (b) should provide funds, estimated at £1000 for the appointment of a professional Youth Leader for one year, an essential first step.

Background

The present traffic situation in Bridge bears no comparison with that existing before the by-pass was opened in 1976. Nevertheless villagers continue to express concern about parking and road safety, particularly in the High Street. These are not new problems and they have been considered by the Parish Council on numerous occasions but without success. The difficulty is that the County Highway Authority no longer regards Bridge as an area with a significant traffic problem.

The Sub-Committee accepts that excessive parking (and, in some instances, bad parking) detracts from the good appearance of the village which its residents evidently wish to promote. The creation of some additional, environmentally discreet off-street parking spaces would help. Finding such spaces are admittedly difficult.

The Sub-Committee believes that sympathetic environmental treatment and, possibly, some re-alignment of footways in Western Avenue near its junction with the High Street would not only enhance the visual appearance of that part of Bridge but could also provide some additional parking spaces.

The section of the High Street between its junctions with Western Avenue and Brewery Lane would also benefit from sympathetic environmental treatment. A recent (7.6.88) proposal under Kent's Highway Environmental Management Initiative for Kent villages situated on main highways is attached to this recommendation and could be adapted to meet the needs of Bridge.

*** Recommendation 4

The Parish Council:-

- (a) should seek to enhance the visual impact of the High Street between its junction with Western Avenue and Brewery Lane.
- (b) should, if possible, create some additional discretely situated off-street parking spaces in the village.

Background

From the replies to the Questionnaire it is evident that a majority of villagers are dissatisfied with the services provided by the authorities. The dirty state of the High Street and poor state of the drains came in for particular criticism.

There is clearly insufficient road sweeping in the village, particularly in the High Street. Admittedly road sweeping in the High Street is made difficult by the many parked cars. The Sub-Committee is aware of the efforts currently being made by the Parish Council to improve matters but feels that the relevant authority/contractor should be pressed to give advanced information of their intention to sweep the commercial area in Bridge so that signposts can be placed asking residents and visitors not to park in the High Street etc., for an hour or two on the day road sweeping is to take place.

Undoubtedly some of the untidiness is due to litter on the pavements. The Sub-Committee believes that there is a case for employing a part-time pavement sweeper for the commercial area of Bridge. In addition local businesses could be encouraged to sponsor litter bins (but such litter bins need to be emptied regularly - nothing is more discouraging to the well-intentioned than to be faced with an overfull litter bin!) Once termly litter clearance drives by our children under supervision (PTA/Brownies/Cub-Scouts) in the outer areas of Bridge might be fun as well have educative value.

The poor state of some of the drains was all too clearly demonstrated during February, 1988 when Bridge suffered the worst floods for nearly three decades. Lack of maintenance of both stream bed and some of the drains undoubtedly contributed to the havoc that was caused. We are aware that 'Southern Water' has agreed to undertake work on the stream bed.

*** Recommendation 5.

The Parish Council :-

- (a) should ensure that the relevant authority provides a higher standard of road sweeping.
- (b) should consider the part-time employment of a pavement sweeper.
- (c) should encourage pride in the village by seeking the cooperation of villagers and businesses in a new drive to keep Bridge tidy.

We might yet win the 'Best Kept Village in Kent' trophy!

