

# **Clyst St George Parish Design Statement**



**Model Cottages Clyst St George Village**

**Prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.**

**Adopted by the Parish Council**

**March 2018**

## **CLYST ST GEORGE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

#### **Message from the Parish Council**

Good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The government's objective for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable and durable places. This is a key element in achieving sustainable development which should be carried out so that it is harmonious and makes a positive contribution to the local environment. It provides a context for new development based upon local character or sense of place. It helps to manage change at whatever scale it occurs.

#### **Purpose**

This Design Statement is a means by which the Clyst St George parish community can influence the design of new buildings and help to ensure they add to the character and distinctive nature of the area. Building design should cover the layout, scale, materials and detailing of future development and its aptitude to the local environment. It is a companion document to the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and will become, when accepted, a supplementary planning document for the planning authority and the Parish Council when considering planning applications.

#### **Production**

This Design Statement has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, in consultation with the Parish Council and residents, in order to maintain the rural character and scale of housing that might be built in the parish.

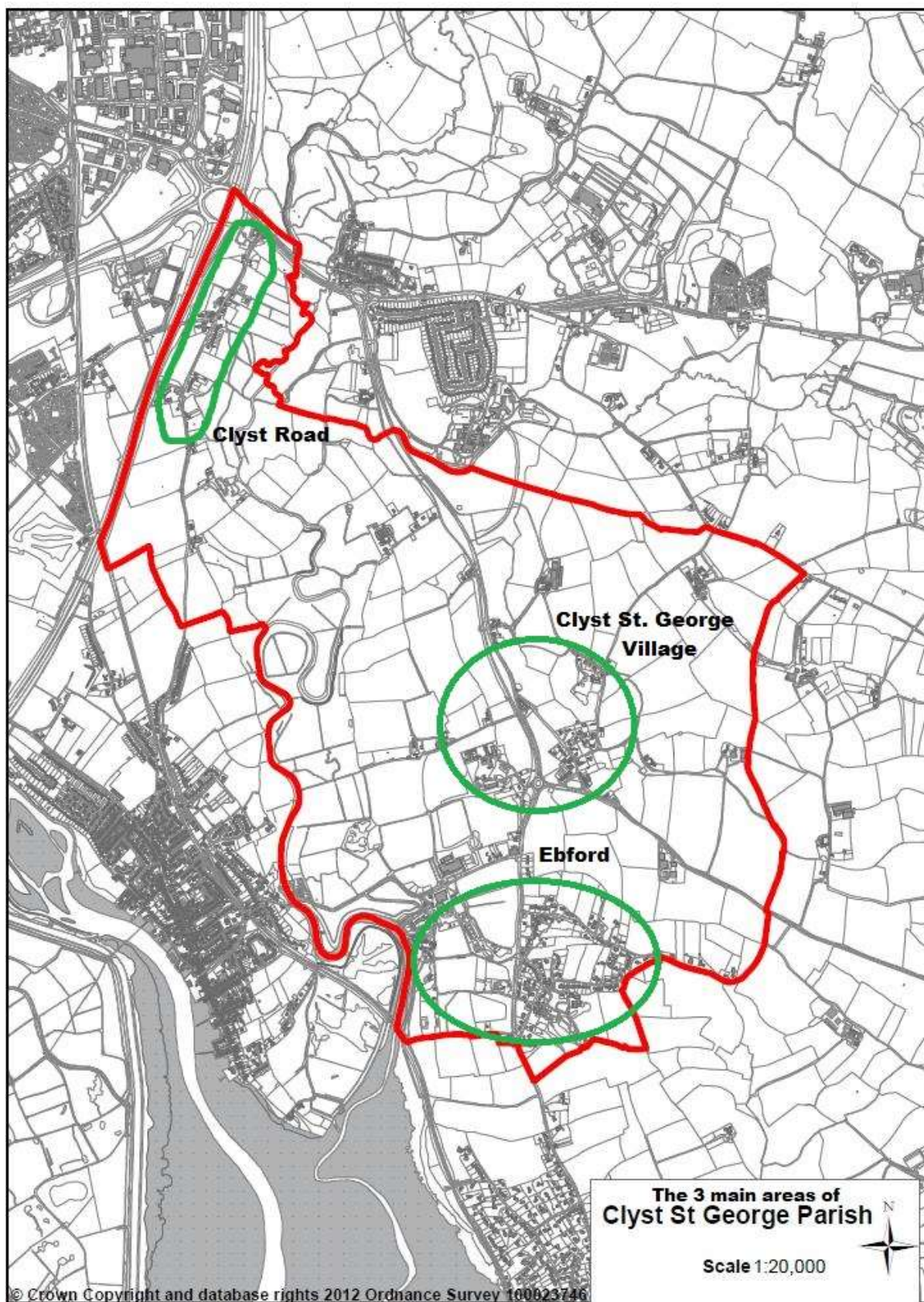
#### **Consultation**

All the parish councillors were asked for feedback, as were the residents. Comments have been taken into account for this final version adopted by the Parish Council.

#### **The Parish of Clyst St George**

Clyst St George parish is located in East Devon. It is the most southerly parish on the River Clyst which flows into the Exe Estuary just south of the parish. The River Clyst is tidal through most of the parish. It comprises the village of Clyst St George, the hamlet of Ebford and the area along Clyst Road as well as scattered farms and houses. It is connected to Exmouth, Topsham and Woodbury by very busy roads and to Clyst St Mary, Exeter and the M5 by a dual carriageway. The road to Topsham is via a 17<sup>th</sup> century bridge. The population of the parish in 2011 was 782, with 323 dwellings and 621 electors registered. The land, which is mainly used for farming, rises gently from the River Clyst to a maximum height of 60m. Much of the land close to the river is flood plain.

In spite of transport conduits running through the parish it maintains a rural character, but apart from boundary hedges and trees around homes there is very little woodland.



**Clyst St George** is a small village; it has a church, primary school, village hall and cricket pitch. The houses are mainly of a village/cottage style built in the materials and design of their period with some larger houses. There are no shops or other facilities and a limited bus service.

**Ebford** is an informal settlement of houses of varied types and styles along rural lanes. The lanes form a rough triangle around an area of open fields which create part of the village's character. There are several larger houses some built of cob, stone or brick under roofs of thatch, tile or slate. Ebford has a good bus link to Exeter/Exmouth, a foot/cycle path also to Exeter and Exmouth but no other facilities.

Between Clyst St George and Ebford is the Saint George and Dragon Inn (dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century) and the retail and business area of Darts Farm/Darts Business Park.

**Clyst Road** is a mainly development of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century houses. There is the Blue Ball Inn but no other facilities. There are two business areas at Clyst Works and Newcourt Barton.

### **The parish historical context**

The Church of St George dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1940 it was the first church in the country to be destroyed by enemy action. It was rebuilt in an updated but traditional style and re-consecrated in 1952.

There are several notable farmhouses, all are Grade 2 listed. Marsh Barton was originally constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Kenniford is an Elizabethan House, Haydons Farmhouse dates back to 16<sup>th</sup> century, also Marianne Pool, Courtbrook and Old Winslade Farm which stands on the site of a medieval manor house. The changing nature of agriculture has meant a reduction in the number of working farms and some farm buildings have been converted for domestic or commercial use. There are several substantial houses. Pytte House and Ebford Manor were built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but were extensively remodelled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ebford House, Mount Ebford, Knowle House and Fishers Mill date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all are Grade 2 listed some are in multi-occupation. Knowle House is currently the HQ of the Devon & Somerset Fire Service.

Clyst St George Parish housing stock consists mainly of village type homes, some large older properties and more modern detached houses. There have been no large developments/estates built in the parish, however a 25 home development is under construction in Clyst St George village with a variety of designs, in keeping with the village.





The parish church of St George.

In 2014 there were 73 companies in 8 business areas in the parish employing a total of 1280 people, less than 3% of these live in the parish. The main reason for the location of the businesses is geographical convenience. The business areas are indicated on map 02.

From a design perspective they are often the reuse of farm buildings, often of brick, Darts Business Park has recently been expanded with modern buildings, but is mostly out of sight, **NP Policy CSG19**; Development of these sites will be supported as long as it does not lead to the outward expansion of the sites.

All business/commercial development should:

- i. respect the character of its surroundings by way of its scale and design;
- ii. not harm the surrounding landscape;

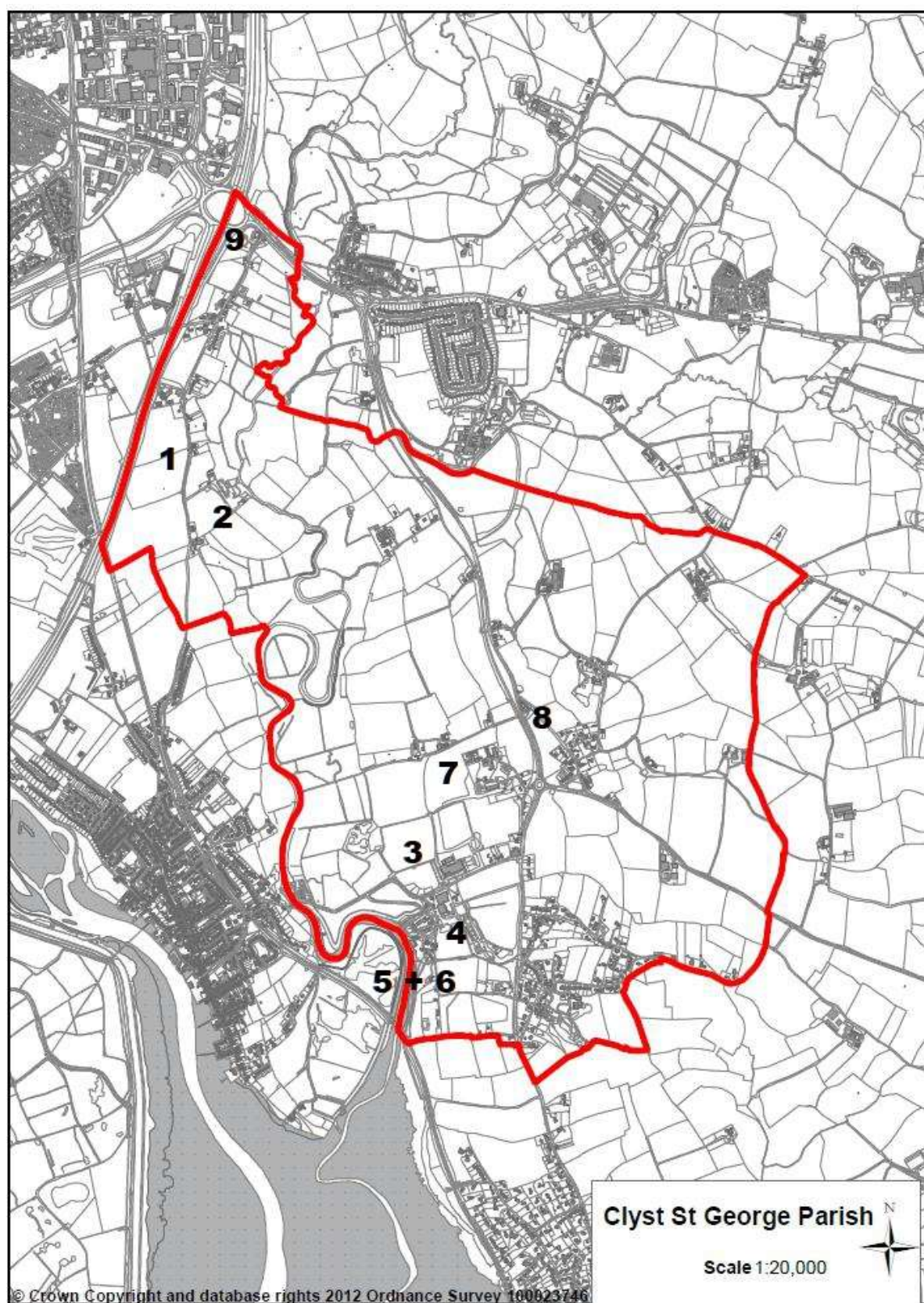
- iii. not have an adverse effect on its neighbours;
- iv. not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the transport network and parking; and
- v. safeguard residential amenity and road safety.



Ebford Manor



**Map 02 Business areas**



1. Clyst Works; 2. Newcourt Barton; 3. Darts Farm shop; 4. Darts Business Park;  
5 & 6. Danny's Court & Odhams Wharf; 8. Addlepool Farm (Offices);  
7. Knowle House (Offices of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue); 9. Sandy Gate (Martins Caravans)

## **Evolution of the settlements**

**Clyst St George** developed around the junction of the roads from Clyst St Mary, Topsham, Exmouth & Woodbury which was the local centre of administration and justice until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The school dating from 1705 and church dating from around 1300 supplied the needs of the local people. There was a post office, blacksmiths and a number of cottages for agricultural workers were built in Victorian times, for example Model Cottages. There still exists the parish pound where stray animals were impounded. The road to Topsham was regularly made impassable by spring tides until the 1960s when earth banks were raised to protect it. It still floods after heavy rainfall events in East Devon during the winter months.

**Ebford**, as the name suggests, was the lowest fording place of the River Clyst on the ebb tide. The bridge to Topsham was originally built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century but was often destroyed; the current stone bridge was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A toll for the use of the bridge would have been levied so that many people on foot or horse would still have used the ford. This was located approximately 150m upstream of the current Exe Trail Bridge. Fallow deer used to cross at this point until fencing for the Exe Trail restricted their movement. The wharf on the River Clyst was built by a Dutch trader named Odams where goods of many kinds were landed. Fishing, boatbuilding and associated industries were sited here. The arrival of the railway and the bridge over the river in 1860 meant that boats had to be dismasted to reach the wharf. This caused ships to disembark cargo into lighters on the river which were then brought to Odams Wharf.

In 1865 Mr Gibbs of Pytte House, Clyst St George was travelling in Chile, he found local people were fertilising the soil with guano. Noting how successful this treatment was he transported a cargo of guano home setting up the Odams Manure & Chemical Co. Ltd which became a substantial works and was an important local employer until 1920 when it went into receivership. A railway siding linked Odams Wharf to the Exeter/Exmouth line. A row of cottages in Ebford were built by the company. During WW2 Odams Wharf was an ammunition store.

**The Clyst Road:** The Blue Ball Inn dates from 1709, two lodge cottages date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Diamond Cottages are Victorian. There are some old farm buildings and housing dating back to the 16th century. The road was/is an important link from Topsham and Countess Wear to the bridge at Clyst St Mary and now to the M5 Junction at Sandy Gate.





Blue Ball Inn



Diamond Cottages, Clyst Road

## Character of the Parish

The geology of the Parish is mainly sandstone and mudstone with the edge of Woodbury Common pebble bed overlaying some areas. Soils away from the flood plain are mainly heavy red clays and are of high agricultural value.

The River Clyst runs through the western side of the parish and the flood plain is a valued wildlife corridor which runs through the farmed landscape; with wetlands and grassland along its banks, and is a valued feature identified by local residents. This is noted by the Natural England Devon Redland Report (1). This area has a sense of 'wildness', tranquillity and a close association with the maritime environment as it meets the Exe Estuary. Clyst Road runs adjacent to the west of this area which is in the main bordered by existing hedge banks. The houses along Clyst Road are mixed with no unique identifying features with only a few houses which are uniformed. Mainly fields adjoin the boundary on the western side of the road with minimal housing and a small industrial unit. Beyond these are the Exeter- Exmouth railway line and the M5 motorway.

- (1) [publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6280781](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6280781)

The area around the village of Clyst St George gently slopes away from Knowle toward the north east with mixed farmland and long sweeping view across open countryside. There are small discrete wooded areas; with regular-to-large fields. The lanes in this area are bounded by low roadside hedges and banks with a few hedgerow oaks. Around the cricket field is a stand of Lucombe oaks. There is some mixed pattern housing around Knowle

The centre of the village of Clyst St George forms a cluster to the west of the church with a few uniformed Victorian cottages of red brick design (see cover Model Cottages). Around the heart of the village there are some older buildings mainly the rectory and Lady Seward's primary school which are of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century design.



Lucombe Oaks CSG Cricket ground



Lady Seaward's School

The farms in the village are mainly on the outskirts of the village and are scattered in location to each other. There has been recent 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion but this was limited, in 2017 a new development of 25 houses is being built but keeping a village feel, using render and brick; they have already blended in. There is a little commercial development in this area, some farm buildings being converted to small office use.





Seawards Park CSG (new development 2017)

The hamlet of Ebford forms the final areas in the parish of Clyst St George. The land in Ebford is a shallow valley, east-west orientation sloping west, towards the River Clyst.



The land is used for arable cultivation, grazing and a vineyard. There are small discrete broadleaf woodlands and regular medium-to-large field pattern with some variation. The hedges are in the main high and some of the banks contain hedgerow oaks. The settlement pattern of the hamlet follows the narrow lanes and is fairly spread evenly on the outer fringes of the hamlet but is more compact within the centre of the hamlet, along Old Ebford Lane. There is a sense of space and there are long sweeping view across open countryside.



Open view across fields from Ebford Lane.

Commercial development is clustered towards the western side of the A376; this is not overbearing and sympathetically blends in with the environment.



Darts Business Park

The geology of the area has formed the natural landscape of the parish today. There is also clear evidence of the local materials being used for building materials in the parish, for example Fishers Bridge was built using limestone and local quarried sand, the lych-gate of St George's church dated 1867 was built of coursed rubble and sandstone walls, the local clay would have been used for the Cob construction of many a cottage, some of which have now disappeared, or been rebuilt in brick.



Fishers Bridge to Topsham.

### **Landscape features**

The parish borders areas of special scientific interest (SSSI sites), Special Protected Areas and County Wildlife Sites. All of these are home to rare and vulnerable plants and bird species. The Exeter to Exmouth cycle track (part of Sustrans route 2) runs along part of the western boundary of the parish. Clyst St George village has a small village green (0.06ha.) with seating. Clyst St George has an active Cricket Club which uses Bohea Field by kind permission of the landowner. The vines of Pebblebed vineyard are increasingly becoming a new landscape feature within the parish. These are just some key landscape features that make a positive contribution to the character of the countryside within our parish, which we must look to retain and enhance.

The local evidence report combined with community views gathered from the local community survey identified the following areas to be worth of protection:

- All heritage assets as identified within the local evidence report
- View across open countryside from within settlements



- Natural escarpments bordering villages and hamlets
- Roadside hedges and banks
- Species rich hedgerows
- Mature trees
- Regular and large fields
- Vineyards
- SPA and SSI sites
- Cricket field
- Village greens
- Wet pastures
- Cycle routes
- Trees and copses on the hillsides
- Open countryside between settlements to protect unique village/hamlet identities.
- Protect high value agricultural land.

The community survey identified the following three things that people most like about the area where they live:

- Rural
- Peace and quiet
- Tranquil

The Neighbourhood Plan will encourage sympathetic management of the countryside and natural outdoor environment in and around the parish to enhance the quality of the landscape, improve local biodiversity and provide other benefits to the community's quality of life.

### **Future development**

**Clyst St George** is small and compact; it is vital that it retains its rural character and maintains its natural limits, to preserve its own identity and small scale.

**Ebford** has developed along the local lanes with fields or green areas adjacent. Development infilling these green areas would affect the character of the settlement; it should not join up with Clyst St George. Local open views are also important to the rural feel that residents value.

### **Important hedgerows and trees**

There is very little woodland in the parish which makes boundary hedges and garden trees particularly important. The land between A376 and Odams Wharf is the most extensive area of trees and has become an important natural habitat for many species of birds and small mammals and should be protected. The area to the east of Ebford Manor has some mature trees which should also be protected. All mature trees should be examined by an arboriculturist before a decision to fell. Natural hedges should be preserved, and where possible reinstated after any development; garden boundaries should be hedges planted with native species.

### **Watercourses (apart from the River Clyst)**

The boundary between Clyst St Mary (Bishops Clyst) and Clyst St George is the Grindle Brook, this rises to the east, in the parish of Woodbury Salterton. In Clyst St George there is an un-named stream which flows from Marianne Pool to be forded by the road past Pytte House then flows to join the Grindle Brook near Winslade Park.

In Ebford the only watercourse is a small un-named stream that flows from Ebford Lane, then to the south of Lower Lane and links up with the outflow of fish ponds at Ebford Barton then to Odams Wharf and the River Clyst.

### **Protected habitats**

There is an RSPB protected area for wading and water birds just across the River Clyst opposite Odams Wharf. The land between the Topsham Road and Tremletts business area is an SSSI. To the north of the road is a bird hide erected by Darts and plenty of waterfowl and waders can be seen there. Toad migration was, until recent years, an early spring event in Lower Lane Ebford, as the toads moved up the lane in search of their home pond at Redlands, Ebford Lane. It is thought that increased grazing by sheep in fields on the north side of the lane has reduced the numbers.

### **Important views**

From Mount Ebford along the ridge to the River Clyst the view across and down the River Exe to the Haldon Hills is exceptional; considered in the past to be important by local ship-owners who could see their vessels arriving in the River Exe. Looking up or downstream from Fishers Bridge to Topsham is very pleasant pastoral view over the flood plains and similarly from Court Farm Cottages and Old Winslade Farm over the valley of the meandering River Clyst. The view from The Saint George and Dragon inn is also very pleasing, looking across to the Haldon Hills with Topsham in the frame. Additionally from a seat at Darts Farm shop positioned north of the shop on a circular footpath gives views down the Clyst to the Exe Estuary and north across the floodplain toward Sandy Gate rugby ground and beyond.

### **The character of the built environment**

The whole parish has a rural character both in scale and density of housing. Clyst St George village has mainly red brick buildings with slate or tiled roofs, mainly two stories high. Clyst Road has a wide mix of housing, again low density and scale, a contrast to the newer developments in Rydon Lane (Exeter City).

Ebford has a larger proportion of bungalows, some of which have been converted to chalet style bungalows over the years. There are more houses with a rendered finish, a homage perhaps to the cob cottages that were more common than today, again low density and low scale housing. More recently larger homes have been built, as Ebford is ideally placed for professionals working in Exeter or needing good access to the M5.



**View across the cricket ground showing trees in gardens.**

#### **Design guidelines recommendations**

- Any proposed building or extension development should respect the scale and character of the area with similar roof pitches, windows and external materials to existing properties in the immediate neighbourhood.
- Any proposed building should include a requirement for off-road parking commensurate with the size of development. Parking areas should be permeable.
- Natural, traditional materials should be encouraged where possible for new buildings, extensions and alterations.
- Developments should respect the natural environment, with appropriate landscaping and minimal exterior lighting to minimise its impact on wildlife.



- Surface and boundary materials and scale should respect the immediate neighbourhood. In Clyst St George village street boundaries are often red brick, in Ebford native hedgerow.
- Surface materials should permeable when possible.
- Listed buildings should be preserved and their setting protected.
- Appropriate modern design should not be discouraged provided the local area character is protected.
- Industrial buildings should respect the local area character in terms of scale, materials and colour and should only be allowed to be developed in the existing business areas as indicated on map 02.
- Innovation to achieve low carbon, sustainable design should be encouraged.
- Good examples of street furniture should be preserved.
- Sign posts should be discreet with simple lettering.
- New building should continue this tradition. “Stock design” housing estates are not appropriate, and it would look out of place to have a block of identical or similar housing.

The intention of the Clyst St George Design Statement is not to recommend that further development of the Parish should not take place, the status quo is not an option.

However, if Clyst St George Parish is to retain its character then new buildings, extensions and alterations should respect its character which is derived from individuality and variety.