

# Heritage statement

For parish of Thriplow Neighbourhood Plan



The parish of Thriplow is divided into two wards, Thriplow Village and Heathfield

### **Thriplow Village**

Thriplow is a small village of just over 200 houses in south Cambridgeshire on the borders with Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire, and lies 8 miles from the University Town of Cambridge and 8 miles from Royston.

The parish boundaries follow roads and Newton Bank on the south-east and north-west, and part of Wallington Brook on the west and a watercourse from Nine Wells on the east. A stream rising from springs near the centre of the parish joins Hoffer Brook in Newton. Several ancient trackways cross the parish, recorded from medieval times until the enclosure of the open fields and commons in 1840. The village settlement developed from the central springs and around and along the ancient tracks and large village green.

The underlying soil is chalk and springs abound making it fertile and easily cultivated. Surrounded as it is by low hills it has a unique micro-climate, dry and comparatively warm. The Parish Church was built over a large Bronze Age tumulus reputedly of a chieftain named 'Trippa' from whom the village takes its name, Old English Trippa's *Hlaw* or hill, thus Trippa's Hill. The Tumulus must have been being a prominent landmark, 20 feet round and 8 feet high, capped with white chalk and lying on the prehistoric routeway, the Icknield Way, it would have been visible from all directions for many miles. Unfortunately, it was ploughed out in the drive to grow more food during the Napoleonic wars, although it is still visible as a crop mark.

The village is essentially arable and covers approx. 2,500 acres. In Iron Age and Roman times there were several small family settlements scattered over the landscape, usually not far from a source of water. When the Saxons arrived they either took over existing settlements by force or settled in between these holdings. Christianity first came to England in the seventh century and by the tenth century the lord of these lands, Byrhtnoth had built a small Minster church against the great tumulus that stood out against the skyline on the Icknield Way.

The first written mention of Thriplow is in two books, *Liber Eliensis* & *Liber Ramsienses*, 'The Book of Ely' & 'The Book of Ramsey Abbey'. These books, written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, tell the story of how Byrhtnoth, Ealdorman of Essex and brother-in-law to the King, was killed defeating the Danes at the Battle of Malden in Essex in the year 991. He had been hospitably entertained prior to the battle by the Abbot and monks of Ely, and in return he bequeathed Thriplow among his other estates to the Abbey. In the Domesday survey of 1086, the village was held by Sigar the Staller, the Abbot of Ely's tenant, with a few acres usurped by Harduin de Scalers. There were then two manors, The Bury, the main manor belonging to the Abbot later the Bishop of Ely, and Barentons Manor (now known as The Manor House) held by Sigar. Later, in 1284 Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely, founded the first Cambridge College, the College of St.Peter (now Peterhouse); using tithes (taxes) from Thriplow.

From the beginning of the eleventh century, the great monastic house of Ely had acquired most of Thriplow and may have set about consolidating the numerous holdings into some semblance of a planned village surrounded by three great open fields cultivated by the strip system. The various branches of the Icknield Way were crossed at right-angles by paths leading to the Manors resulting in a grid system of roads and paths. Farming life changed little over the centuries. Using much the same tools, crops such as barley, wheat, oats and peas and beans were grown, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saffron was added and became a valuable cash crop. In the seventeenth century turnips were added to enable farm animals to survive the winters. Sheep had been kept since Domesday, and methods of husbandry used in the un-enclosed fields that surrounded the village were probably similar to those used for 600 years. By the fourteenth century subinfeudation or the splitting up of the main manor had resulted in several manors. Thriplow Manor, Bacons Manor and Barrenton Manor survive today as Thriplow Bury, Bacons Farm and The Manor House. Suttons Manor survives as Manor Farm; Crouchmans Manor was sited in Middle Street and Pittensaries Manor in Church Street.

The population has fluctuated over the centuries, at Domesday, 1086 it was approximately 181, in 1279 it was around 430 dropping in the 14<sup>th</sup> century to 260, due to over-population, famine and dearth, culminating in the Black death, 1349. It rose to its highest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 521. It is now the same as it was in 1279!

Living conditions for the villager were probably not too different, even in the mid-nineteenth century, from those of his ancestor in the fifteenth century. But in 1840 one of the greatest landscape changes since Saxon times occurred – Enclosure. By Act of Parliament the land was enclosed, the strips were amalgamated into larger fields and fences, hedges and ditches erected. Land that had once been open and treeless became private. Luckily the coming of the Railways gave work to many of the dispossessed farm labourers.

By the middle of the nineteenth century most of these manors were once again in the hands of one man, Joseph Ellis, who in 1840 was the prime mover in enclosing the fields. His son, also Joseph, acquired the remaining manors and by 1918, his son, Arthur Cole Ellis, owned or leased 1,728 acres out of 2,500. Most of Thriplow was then in the hands of one man as it had been in 991, but the wheel had not yet turned full circle, for in 1928, Arthur Cole Ellis sold up and the land was once again split between a few large landowners, and many small owner/occupiers, as it had been at the dawn of the second millennium, before the Saxon Lord Byrhtnoth died, leaving his estates to the monks of Ely

Gradually as the village moved into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the University of Cambridge relaxed its restrictions as to where their members could live and allowed them to move further out into the surrounding villages. In 1970 Thriplow was still very much a farming based village with many residents working on the farms but the advances in farming technology led to the need for less agricultural labourers and the demography of the village gradually changed from agricultural to university and related research companies.

Many former farmworkers cottages have been extended and new houses have been built so there are now several large houses in the village. Historic England have 39 listings for Thriplow however one of these was lost to Fowlmere with the parish boundary changes in the late 1900's. There are 5 Grade II\* listed buildings in the village with the remainder being Grade II.

The parish church dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and was restored in 1876. The farmhouses and cottages are timber-framed and plastered with plain tile or thatched roofs. Timber frame continued to be used until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the use of brick became more common. Clay lump, an unfired clay brick, was also used in cottages and farm buildings. There are a number of notable early buildings dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century including Bacons Farmhouse, Manor Farmhouse, Thriplow Bury (early 18<sup>th</sup> century) and Thriplow House (1864) The Smithy on the village green is still a working smithy and is opened occasionally throughout the year including at the annual Daffodil Weekend festival when the forge is fired up and blacksmiths come to demonstrate their skills.

Thriplow Meadows, Thriplow Peat Holes and Thriplow Hummocky Fields are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Thriplow village has a church, a school, a village hall, a community owned pub operated very successfully by lessees and an equally successful community run village shop, but no post office facilities.

## **Heathfield**

Heathfield is a settlement opposite the Duxford Imperial War Museum (formerly RAF Duxford) on the A505 about a mile to the south of Thriplow village. A map dated 1840 names a large area of land running along the northern side of the A505 between the eastern and western parish boundaries as Heathfield. The current residential development is at the eastern end of this area. The area was also known as Thriplow Heath much earlier than 1840. Records relating to Oliver Cromwell state "In mid-June 1647 the Parliamentary army quartered on open land adjoining the Icknield Way around Thriplow village. Although lodging by night at Royston (Herts), Cromwell and the other senior officers paid frequent visits to the army quarters on Thriplow Heath."

The airfield started in 1917/18 with many of the buildings being built by German prisoners of war. Housing built for RAF staff based at Duxford followed very soon after, probably starting in the early 1920's. Houses at the eastern end were for the officers and these are in the neighbouring parish of Whittlesford. The Heathfield houses in Kingsway, Woburn Place and Whitehall Gardens (some 125 houses) were to house the 'other ranks'. They were built over a period of time, with the last houses in Kingsway dating from the 1950's & 60's. When they were no longer needed for military personnel they were sold off to private individuals and the new residents chose to call the development "Heathfield". The former RAF roads have not been adopted by the County Council Highways and there is a requirement for these residents to belong to the Heathfield Residents Association (HRA) who charge an annual subscription in order to manage the upkeep of these areas. Many

of these houses have since been extended and modernised by their owners which has brought some individuality to the street scenes.

Since the 1990's Heathfield has since seen three further modern developments, Pepperslade, Hurdles Way and Ringstone and there are now some 300 houses at Heathfield. The roads in the modern developments have been adopted and there is no requirement for residents of these areas to belong to the H.R.A.

With each of the three modern developments there were planning requirements for public open space to be provided which has resulted in a large open space to the north of Pepperslade and two smaller ones to the west of Ringstone and Hurdles Way. These open spaces are owned and managed by the parish council.

There is a concreted path, known as The Greenway, between the two parts of the parish but this is not suitable for vehicles and there is no vehicular access at the Heathfield end. It is well used by walkers and cyclists.

Heathfield has no church, community hall, school, pub or shop. Many children from Heathfield attend Thriplow school and some residents also use other village facilities but unless they walk or cycle using The Greenway they have to travel by car and negotiate the very busy A505.

The Parish Council would like to encourage better connections between the two parts of the parish which would lead to more integration and cooperation within the parish.