

# Althorne

## Village Design Statement 2015





## CONTENTS

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Background.....	4
Scope and Purpose of VDS.....	4
Consultation Process.....	5
Status of the Document and Relevant Planning Documents.....	5

### 2 ALTHORNE VILLAGE

Historical Context.....	6
Landscape Character.....	7
Habitat and Protected Environments.....	9

### 3 SETTLEMENT AREAS

Settlement Areas Map.....	11
Settlement Area 1 - The Green and Summerhill.....	12
Settlement Area 2 - Burnham Road, Fords Corner to Tinker’s Hole, including The Endway.....	14
Settlement Area 3 - The Ridge - Fambridge Road including Riverview park, Sunningdale Road and Station Road.....	15
Settlement Area 4 - Althorne Creek and Cliff Reach.....	17
Settlement Area 5 - Outlying Areas.....	18

### 4 VILLAGE STYLE AND ELEMENTS EXPLAINED

Building Styles and Boundary Treatments.....	19
Material Finishes to Buildings.....	19
Buildings of Special Interest.....	22
Village facilities, Community and Leisure.....	23
Commerce and Industry.....	24

### 5 HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.....25

### 6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.....26

## Key to Guidance and Planning Policy Within The Document

All policies other than that relating to Special Landscape Areas and Coastal Zones have been taken from the ‘Draft Local Development Plan 2014-2029’.

The policies named Special Landscape Areas and Coastal Zones have been taken from the ‘Maldon District Replacement Local Plan 2005’ as part of ‘The saved policies of the replacement plan’

**Planning Policies:** Throughout the document, coloured boxes at the head of a section signify Maldon District Council Planning Policies. Please see key for boxes below

CC7

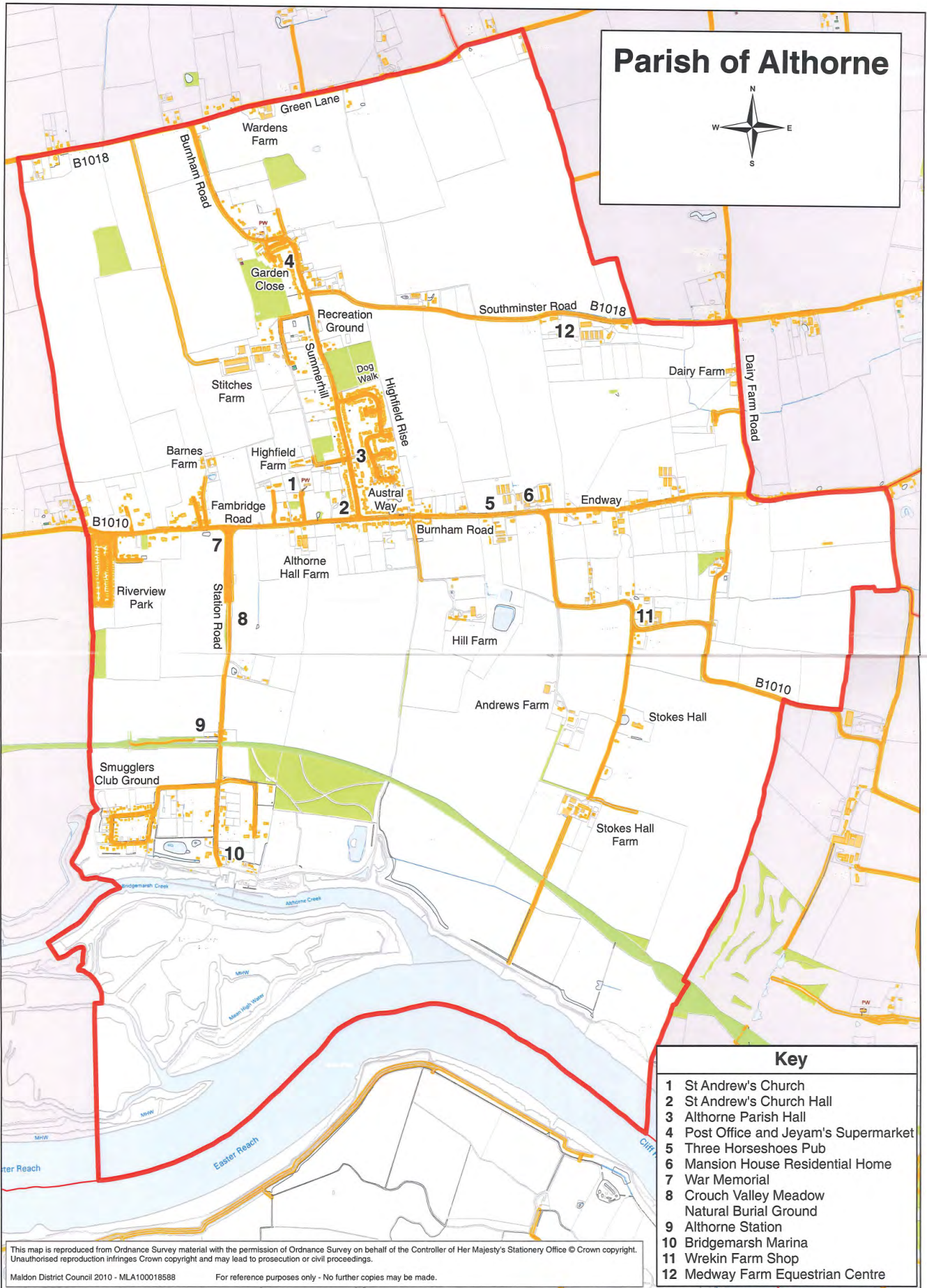
The yellow coloured boxes highlight the relevant planning policy in the ‘Maldon District Replacement Local Plan 2005’

S 1

The orange coloured boxes highlight the relevant planning policy in the ‘Draft Local Development Plan 2014-2029’

D3

- The text highlighted on a green background throughout this document is intended to be used as a Planning Guidance.



# 1. INTRODUCTION



View out across the River Crouch from Fambridge Road



St Andrew's Church

## Background

The Althorne Village Design Statement (VDS) was developed by a group of villagers, led by a Steering Group. The intention was to seek the views of the community in order to identify the local character of the parish and to make a record of it. From this, recommendations were drawn up to guide the design and character of future development proposals.



War Memorial on Fambridge Road



Old Cottages opposite Althorne Post Office

## Scope and Purpose of the VDS

The VDS is intended to:

- Manage change but not prevent it.
- Assist property owners and developers in adopting designs which are acceptable to the local community and in keeping with the style and character of the village.
- Help protect visually important buildings and their settings and promote the use of appropriate building materials.
- Improve and protect the local character and appearance particularly the use of open spaces and the street scene.
- Enhance development in rural areas.
- Ensure that the valued physical qualities and characteristics of the village and its surroundings are conserved and protected.
- Assist the local planning authority in their determination of planning applications.



Cliff Reach looking back west towards Bridgemarsh marina

## Consultation Process



Althorne Community Together Public Consultation Meeting

Althorne Community Together (ACT) was formed to produce a Parish Plan and Village Design Statement. Emphasis was put on consulting with the whole village and this Village Design Statement is based on findings from the ACT questionnaire which went to every household in 2009, as well as on the individual contributions of more than 100 people at the two workshops and exhibitions held in the village. Comments have been included from all those who regularly attended ACT meetings.

One of the items in the Action Plan of the Althorne Parish Plan published at the beginning of 2011 was to produce a Village Design Statement and this document has resulted from further meetings of ACT and consultation between the ACT Steering Committee and the Maldon District Council Planning Policy Team and the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE).

## Status of the Document and Relevant Planning Documents

The aim is for the VDS to be adopted by Maldon District Council to be used as material consideration in planning decisions.

The VDS will help ensure local involvement in the determination of planning applications.

The VDS builds upon the objectives of the built and rural environment policies for the district (Maldon District Draft Local Development Plan (2014-2029), and the Essex Design Guide (2005), offering guidance to encourage all new developments to respect and be in keeping with the traditional housing in towns and villages.

### The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Development 1997

*The Essex Design Guide was first published in 1973 by Essex County Council and has been influential in the planning of new housing, encouraging the use of vernacular design and local materials to create good design in varying situations throughout the County. The Guide was revised in 1997 by the Essex Planning Officers Association and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Local Authorities. The Guide aims to encourage all new developments to respect and be in keeping with the traditional housing in towns and villages and addresses such considerations as spatial organisation (layout), height of buildings, distances between dwellings, roof styles, window patterns, materials, treatment of ground surfaces and the use of landscaping. All these elements should reflect the context of existing development, creating housing of distinctive character and identity.*

## GUIDANCE

The Althorne Village Design Statement focuses on the settlement at the heart of the village as well as on the wider rural area covered by the Parish and is intended to:

- Assist designers and developers with future development proposals pertaining specifically to the Parish of Althorne on acceptable design from the community's point of view, so helping to avoid conflict either later or in the planning negotiations.
- Help protect visually important buildings and open spaces.

Adherence to "The Essex Design Guide" is strongly recommended. It is essential that the landscape and open spaces and views in and around the village should be protected.



River Crouch Sea Wall Public Footpath

## 2. ALTHORNE VILLAGE

### Historical Context S3 D3

Prior to the coming of the railway in 1889, the village would have consisted of farms, farm cottages, the forge, Methodist chapel, church and vicarage.

The station house and railway cottages were built in 1889. Areas of Althorne were marked out for plotland development, including areas on Summerhill and the Fambridge Road. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Chestnuts Estate on the London Road, Althorne, (now Fambridge Road) contained 108 lots. The fact that it did not materialise suggests that as a commercial idea it was over optimistic.

Over the past century there has been considerable flux in the village. The first major historic change was the coming of the Railway in 1889 and the second was the building of



*The Old Vicarage*



*Goldsmith's Stores, The Endway*

the Bradwell Power Station 1960 with an influx of workers and subsidised transport. The village has since seen a loss of shops in the Endway, on Summerhill and Riverview Park, Rosebank, DIY shop, houses and cottages along Burnham and Fambridge Road, petrol stations at Fords and Oakleigh, school and playschool and in 1928 the brickworks on Bridgemarsh Island.

The division between the top and bottom of Summerhill is due to farmland retaining its status as arable land. The village saw a major change in the 1960s and 1970s with

the building of Highfield Rise estate, followed by Garden Close, Austral Way, Cliffords Farm, Hamilton Court and Kirk Mews from the 1980s to the present day.

**Agricultural background** - The village has suffered the loss of many farms and smallholdings over the years: Portree, Summerhill, Crouch View, Chestnut Farm, Cliffords Farm, Bridgemarsh Farm on Bridgemarsh Island, Buttons Hill Farm, Russells Farm, Medway Farm, Austral Farm, as well as nurseries: Harefield, Summerhill, The Limes, Stones and Catherine Cottage.

The loss of farms from the rationalisation of the farming industry has seen a change in the village dynamic from an agricultural area with farm labourers to a commuter area with comparatively little employment in the village.



*The original Three Horseshoes Public House, Burnham Road*



*Black Lion Public House 1957 - Copyright The Francis Frith Collection – [www.francisfrith.com](http://www.francisfrith.com)*

### GUIDANCE

- The historic environment is instrumental in establishing landscape character and providing a sense of place and identity; this should be recognised through the protection, management and enhancement of heritage assets.
- All development proposals that affect a heritage asset (both designated and non-designated) and its setting will be required to: Preserve or enhance its special character, setting and townscape / landscape value in a manner which is appropriate to its significance.

## Landscape Character



*View of The Ridge From the Sea Wall*

This character area is the hinterland of the marshes north of the River Crouch. This drained marshland is now primarily arable with grazing at the sea wall. Gently rising from the marsh levels, the landform is gently rolling country indented by many creeks, with scattered blocks of trees, linear tree belts, scrub and formerly elm-dominated hedgerows around pastures. The narrow estuary penetrates far inland at Bridgemarsh Creek and Althorne Creek. This largely untouched landscape sits between two urban centres, historic but expanding Burnham-on-Crouch and modern South Woodham Ferrers, and yet due to its lack of access across the farmland, it retains a strong sense of place and offers many opportunities to find places with a great sense of isolation and tranquillity.



*Autumn Ploughing on Burnham Road opposite Mansion House*

The Althorne Character Area is dominated by arable farmland and extensive grazing marsh and contains numerous sites of nature conservation value and other ecological features. These include:

- Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar and SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Essex Estuaries SAC - supports a variety of internation-

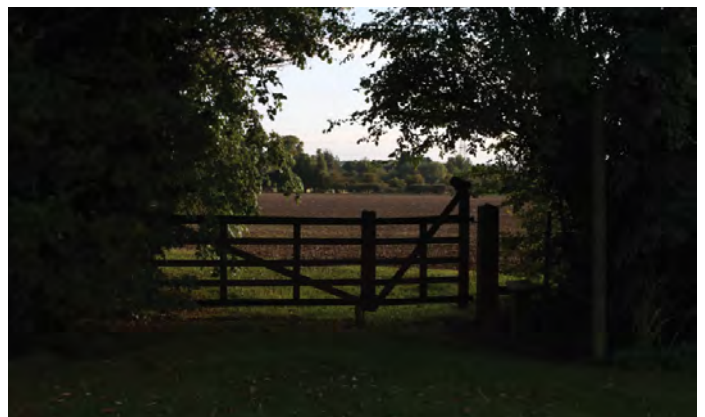
ally important habitats including estuarine, mudflats, sandflats, *Salicornia* colonising mud, *Spartina* swards and Atlantic salt meadows.

- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, salt-marsh and grazing marsh which support internationally important numbers of dark-bellied Brent geese, and nationally important numbers of black-tailed godwit, shelduck and shoveler plus other wildfowl and uncommon flora.



*Timber bridge within mudflats of the River Crouch*

Overall the landscape is highly sensitive to change. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a distinctive rectilinear field pattern and a dispersed historic settlement pattern including that of the river frontage and sea wall. The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development (especially in close proximity to the sea wall), which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity.



*Modern field gate with pedestrian access gate - Green Lane*

The character within the heart of the village is traditional and true to the rural community supporting traditional style boundaries and garden frontages of cottage style planting. Existing farmlands retain original features such as timber five-bar gates and native hedgerows.



*Vineyards on the Ridge*

The landscape tells a historic tale about the village through settlement patterns and open spaces but it also tells a modern day story of lifestyle and climate as arable fields change to vineyards.

## Views

Althorne offers a number of open, long distance views across arable land with associated hedgerow and woodlands, as well as long distance views across the River Crouch to the south and the River Blackwater to the north of the village. Vast distance views can be obtained from the ridge on Burnham Road near to Riverview Park, where on a clear day the Althorne and Burnham marinas are clearly visible as well as the wind turbines on the River Thames. Views to Canewdon and Southend, and on a clear day Kent can also be obtained in a few locations along the



*View South West of River Crouch. Canewdon central to the horizon*

ridge. The lay of the land, tree and shrub planting as well as existing houses and commercial buildings restrict these views when entering the centre of the village leaving views that are open to the public increasingly important to the present and historic character of the village. Views up to the village from the River Crouch are considered just as important as those looking out across the water. These views give a great sense of how the land rolls up to the

ridge and the magnitude in the height of the ridge above the sea wall.

Important views raised from consultation include – Views of the River Crouch and River Blackwater. Views across to Southend and Canewdon as well as views across open farm land and to areas of woodland.



*View across arable fields on Burnham Road , North West of the Village*



*View across arable fields on Green Lane, North East of the Village*

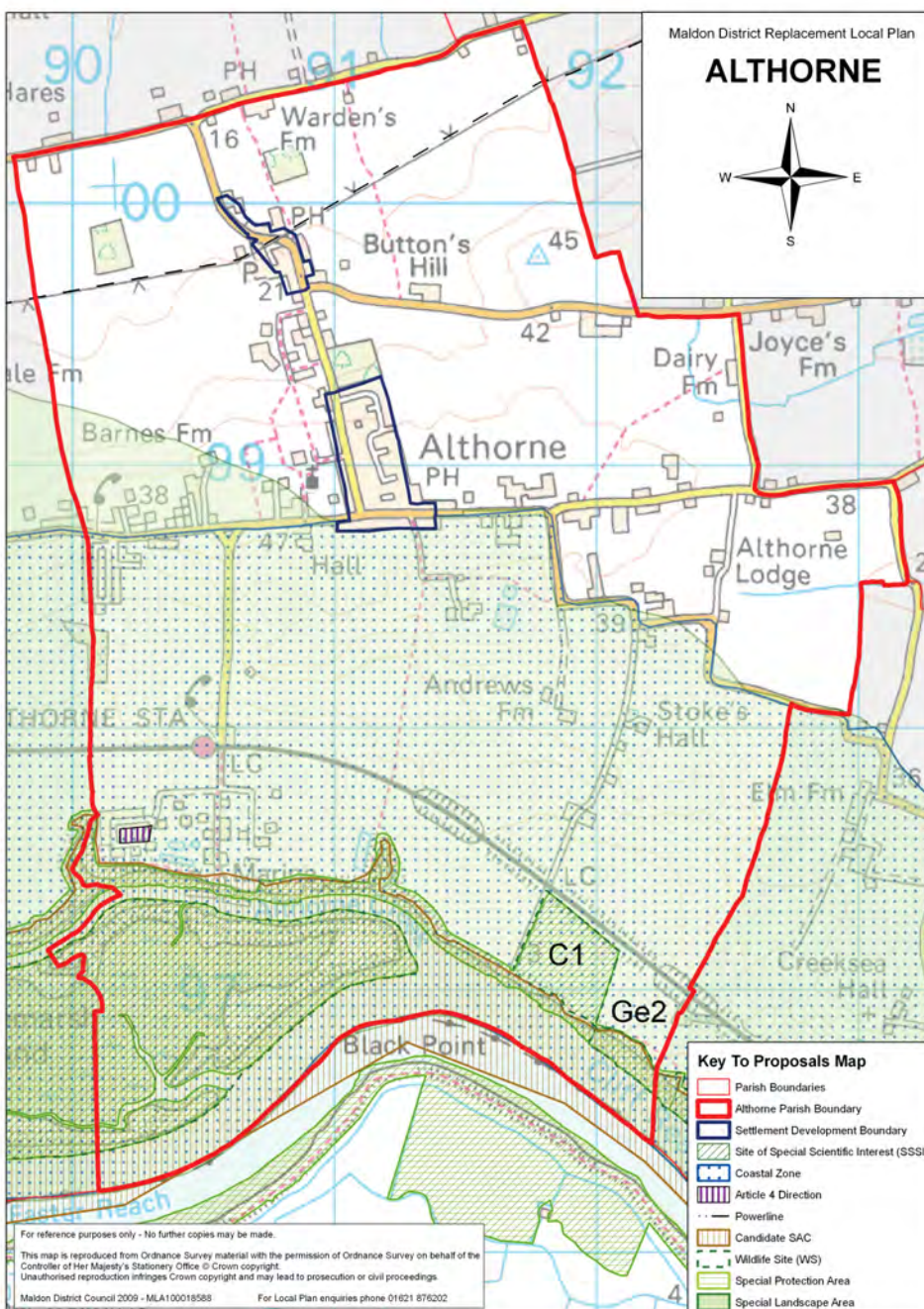
## GUIDANCE

- Conserve the rural character of the area.
- Conserve panoramic long distance views to adjacent character areas of drained and open estuarine marsh to the south.
- Ensure that any new development is well integrated into the surrounding landscape, responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials which are appropriate to the local landscape character.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape to accord with existing character.

## Habitat and Protected Environments

Along Althorne's estuary there are a number of protected areas of international, national and local importance due to the vital wetland habitat it provides. The estuary is also part of the Essex Coast Environmentally Sensitive Area due to the rich heritage and unique character of the coastal grazing marshes and associated ditches which provide an important habitat for rare plants and animals. The area is internationally important for birds, especially overwintering wildfowl and waders. Nearly twenty-five thousand water birds visit the Crouch and Roach estuary each year. For further details on the flora and fauna of the Althorne area, please see The Wildlife Appendix to the rear of this document.

The residents of Althorne value these habitat areas highly and are concerned that they should be protected from any development. Any increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors or potential growth in water sports, with the inherent demand for more marinas and river moorings could lead to the risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft, to potential damage to diverse, important habitats and to destruction of the generally undisturbed character of the area together with an adverse effect on the saltmarsh.



### C1, GE2 and Article 4 Directions Explained

C1 - Crouch and Roach Estuaries - is a Ramsar Site, a Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The areas of saltmarsh and grazing-marsh and intertidal mudflats which make up the SSSI, are of great importance supporting a range of nationally scarce coastal plants, internationally important numbers of overwintering wildfowl and waders and several rare and/or vulnerable invertebrate species. The area supports a large population of Hen Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) and Brent Geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla*) overwinter.

Ge2 - The Cliff - is a specific geological 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI). It is an exposed geological formation, valuable for study of bird evolution and type locality for several fish species.

Article 4 Directions are issued by MDC in circumstances where specific control over development is required, for example where the character of an area of importance would be threatened.

## Habitat Designations - To be read in conjunction with Replacement Plan Map page 9

N1 N2 CC7 CC11

**Coastal Zone\*** - the defined Coastal Zone has an open and rural character. As such, it is a unique, finite and irreplaceable resource in its own right and this is justification for its protection. Coastal views are available from within most of the Coastal Zone, though in some places views of the water itself are obscured by sea defence walls. It is also important for nature conservation and for the quality of the landscape. This zone is highlighted on Maldon District Plan as an area of planning restraint identified around the coast to protect it from unnecessary development.

**Special Protection Area (SPA).** SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with the EC Birds Directive. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species such as Brent geese, little terns and hen harriers, as well as the overall numbers of birds it supports. Althorne is part of the Mid Essex coast SPA.

**Special Landscape Area (SLA)\*** is an area where protection, conservation or restoration of existing character should be given highest priority. Permission will not be given for development unless its location, siting, design, materials and landscaping conserve or restore the character of the area in which the development is proposed.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** is a strictly protected site designated under the EC Habitats Directive and intended to protect natural habitat types of European importance and the habitats of threatened species of wildlife. The habitat features in Althorne include: pioneer saltmarsh, cordgrass swards, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean saltmarsh scrubs, estuaries and intertidal mudflats and sandflats.

**Ramsar Site** - Wetlands of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention with respect to birds, plants and invertebrates and which regularly support internationally important populations of several species of waterfowl.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - areas of saltmarsh and grazing marsh and intertidal mudflats which are botanically and ornithologically of great importance, supporting a range of nationally scarce coastal plants, internationally important numbers of overwintering wildfowl and waders and several rare and/or vulnerable invertebrate species.

**Wildlife Sites** - are sites of a local or county significance. These are usually adopted by local authorities for planning purposes.

\* This is a Replacement Local Plan Policy

## Other Habitats

There are other areas of important habitats within the Althorne area such as the ponds on the glebe land by St Andrew's Church and on the Fambridge Road near the war memorial. Although unprotected, villagers value these natural habitats highly.

A number of the habitats within the Althorne area are part of the Biodiversity Action Plan (supported by JNCC and DEFRA) including traditional orchards, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland.

The Dog Walk Area next to the Recreation Ground and the Bass Wood are natural and semi-natural green spaces which are locally important areas of habitat and green linkage.



*Pond on the glebe land by St Andrew's Church*

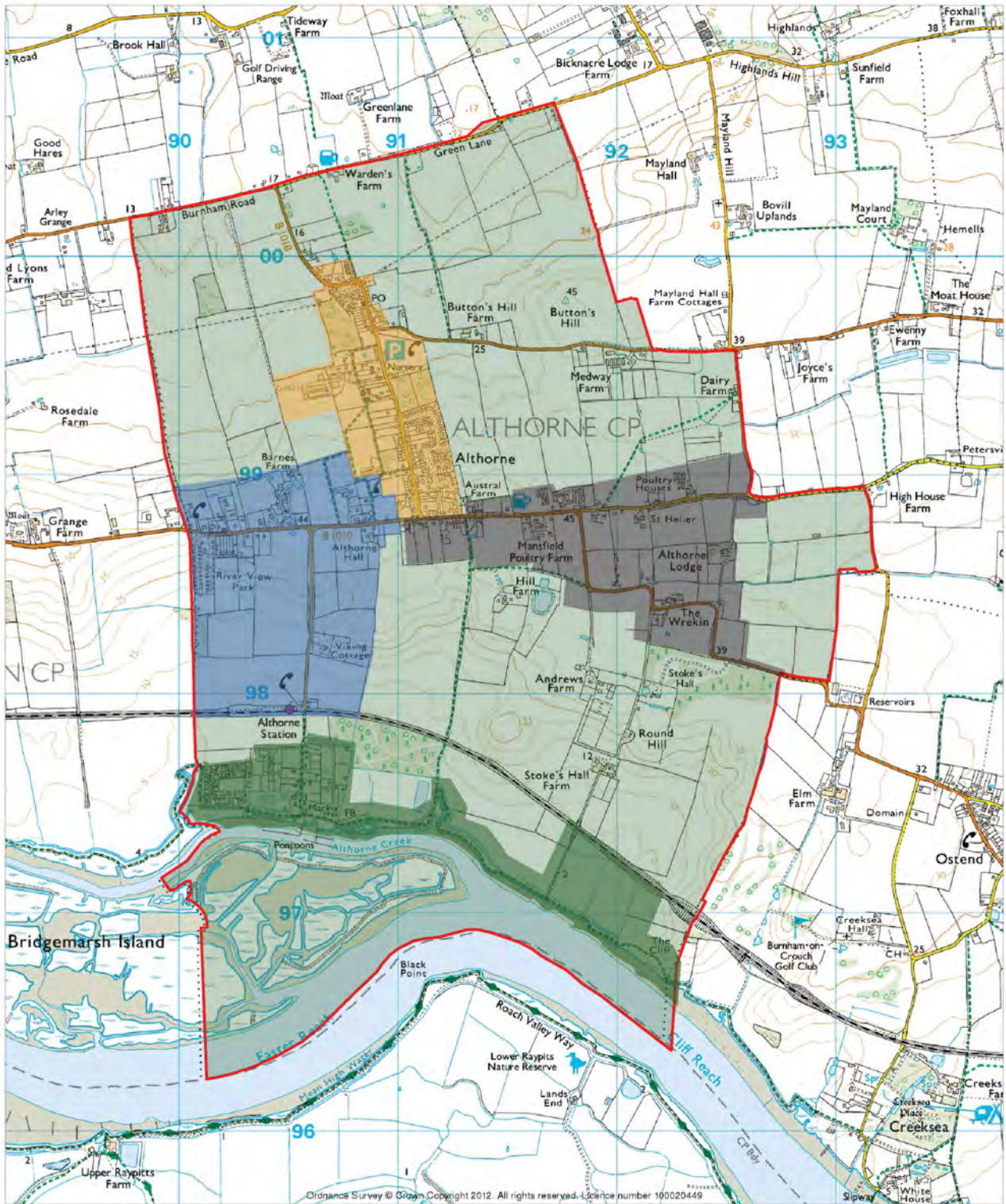


*Shore Crab on Cliff Reach*

## GUIDANCE

- The recreational use of the Crouch channel by motorised craft should be managed to prevent erosion of mudflats and saltmarsh.
- It is important that the special landscape area should not be damaged by development.
- The natural habitats should be conserved and protected.
- Restore and enhance habitat areas, both protected and unprotected, as part of the Essex Biodiversity Plan.

# Settlement Areas Map



- The Green & Summerhill.
- Althorne Creek & Cliff Reach.
- The Ridge - Fambridge Road & Station Road.
- Burnham Road, Fords Corner to Tinkers Hole Including The Endway.
- Outlying Areas.

### 3. SETTLEMENT AREAS

#### The Green and Summerhill

This area covers the most populated part of the parish including areas within the Settlement Boundary (refer to the map of page 9) as well as open countryside surrounding the built up areas which are outside of the Settlement Boundary and contribute to the character of the area. It also contains two of Althorne's listed buildings - the old Black Lion Public House and Black Lion Cottages. It stretches from Oakleigh to Fords Corner and includes Garden Close, the Black Lion Area, both sides of Summerhill - including the Upper and Lower Chase, and the Highfield Rise and Austral Way estates.

Althorne Post Office and Jeyam's Supermarket are located in this area but the former Grade II listed Black Lion Pub has now become a house and the garage and petrol station next to Oakleigh no longer exist. Interesting old buildings include the early 18th century Grade II listed Black Lion Cottages, Ravenscot, The Limes, The Limes Cottages, Winterdale Manor and Winterdale Cottages, and The Old



*New Build Windles Cottages matching the style of the old Black Lion Cottage built in 2012*



*Limes Lodge - Left (new build), Limes Cottages - middle and new extensions on side*



*Village Sign on the Green in front of Garden Close*

#### Poste Cottage.

Garden Close is an estate of semi-detached and terraced houses built in the 1970s, and a few detached properties built in the 2000s. There is a distinct change in building style from the older, more decorative 17th and 18th cen-

A significant feature of this area is that some of the recent development close to the old Black Lion Pub (Limes Lodge, Windles Cottages, and the extension to No.2 Limes Cottages) has been carried out sympathetically so that the old and the new houses complement each other. The area has now taken on the appearance of a traditional village green centred round the Althorne village sign on land at Garden Close. This area of the village is also home to the only block of flats for permanent residents, although it does not give the appearance of flats.



*Garden Close built in 1970s*



*Hamilton Court Flats built in 2000s*



*St. Andrew's Church Hall built in 1909*



*King's Lodge, Summerhill*

Summerhill runs from the Southminster Road to Ford's Corner and includes the Recreation Ground, the Parish Hall and St. Andrew's Church Hall built in 1909.



*Althorne Recreation Ground and Dog Walk*



*Gilder Drake Almshouses built in 1930, Summerhill*

Houses range from Edwardian houses (King's Lodge, Portree and Hillside) and the 1930s Gilder Drake Almshouses, to 1970s Highfield Rise estate, 1980s Austral Way and a number of 1990s and 2000s houses dotted throughout. Houses are nearly all set back from the road, some with open-plan frontages, many with picket fences or native hedging.

Open spaces on Summer Hill include the Recreation Ground and dog walk, woodland north of Highfield Rise (although there is no access to the public) and the Glebe land next to the Church Hall.

Due to the rise in the land, Summerhill has distant views to the north overlooking the River Blackwater. Glimpses of the Blackwater can be enjoyed from the Ridge on the Fambridge Road but here on Summerhill the view of the Blackwater is the dominant view. Many houses back on to open farmland maintaining the feeling of tranquillity and open space within the village. There is a good view of the village from the high ground on Buttons Hill on the Southminster Road.



*Highfield Rise, Summerhill built in 1970s*

## **GUIDANCE**

- New developments or extensions near old buildings should be designed sympathetically to complement the existing buildings.
- Openness at the front of the houses, open plan front gardens or low 'see through' fencing / hedging should be encouraged.
- The open spaces at the Green and the Recreation Ground should be retained.

## Burnham Road, Fords Corner to Tinker's Hole, including The Endway



*Mansion House Residential Home - 16th and 19th Century Grade II listed*

Burnham Road was historically the built up area of the village and although there is a higher density of houses elsewhere in the village nowadays, this road still holds some of the original village buildings and original settlement pattern. The road has a mixture of modern semi-detached and detached houses, a terrace of former farm cottages, bungalows, the old forge, and late Victorian and Edwardian houses. Outside the village development envelope the village development pattern is sporadic and the area once again becomes very rural. The Grade II listed Mansion House Farmhouse, one of the original farm houses and now a residential home with a complex of close-care bungalows, is however an exception.



*Austral Cottages 19th Century*

Past Mansion House the Burnham Road continues along the Burnham Bends past Andrews Farm, the Wrekin Farm Shop, and Stokes Hall to The Round House, a Grade II listed C18/early 19C timber framed house.

The Endway is a narrow rural road of 21 houses, many of them small cottages with some close to the road, and includes the three pairs of former council bungalows.



*The Old Forge 18th Century – parts possibly dating back to 16th Century*



*The Round House 18th Century - Grade II Listed*



*Part demolished - original outbuilding of Mansion House Farm*

With the exception of the old cottages and the old forge, all the houses in this area are set back from the road with mostly open frontages to 1.5m. There are very few enclosed boundaries over 1.5m high.

### GUIDANCE

- It is important that the openness and rural aspect of this area should be retained.
- Listed Buildings should be preserved wherever possible.

## The Ridge - Fambridge Road including Riverview Park, Sunningdale Road and Station Road

This area includes Fambridge Road (the B1010) and all the roads running off it, including Riverview Terrace, Barnes Farm and Chestnut Farm Drives, Sunningdale Road and Station Road. It runs along the ridge from Fords Corner to Riverview Park with distant views to the River Crouch and beyond. Houses consist mainly of large detached houses, some of which have replaced smaller dwellings.



Replacement dwelling at Chestnut Farm Drive entrance - built in early 2000s

Buildings along the ridge include St. Andrew's Church and the modern vicarage and Althorne Hall Farm which has diversified into holiday flats, a natural burial ground and a vineyard. Older houses include The Old Vicarage, Richmond Cottage, and Gilder Lodge, a typical weatherboarded Essex house with cast-iron veranda.

Riverview Terrace is an Edwardian terrace adjacent to Riverview Park comprised of semi-detached houses, two of which have recently been replaced with detached houses. Riverview Park is a settlement of mobile homes for over 55s running down towards the River Crouch.

Fambridge Road lies within the Special Landscape Area and Coastal Zone and offers panoramic views to the River



Riverview Park (over 55s retirement park) with original red telephone box

Crouch and Bridgemarsh Island, Canewdon, and even to Kent on a clear day. Some of the houses on the northern side of Fambridge Road also have views across farmland and out to the River Blackwater to the north.

Most houses are located on the north side of the road leaving the landscape and views to the River open for everybody to enjoy.

All the houses on Fambridge Road are set back from the road by front gardens or driveways. Patches of farmland



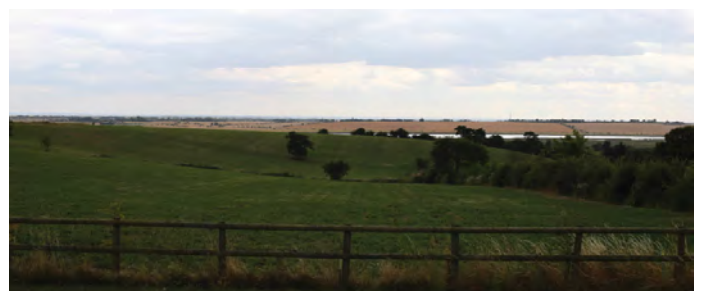
Replacement dwelling north of Fambridge Road - built in 2013

and glebe land remain amongst the houses maintaining the rural appearance of the village.

Many gardens and driveways are edged with native and non-native hedging or red brick walls further strengthening the rural style.



Fambridge Road



View to Canewdon from the Ridge

The Ridge is also home to the war memorial, one of the most-liked features of the village, located at the top of Station Road.

Station Road is a steep tree-lined country lane which belongs to Network Rail, ending at the railway where there are still station cottages and the stationmaster's house, although the old Victorian station buildings no longer exist.



View up to The Ridge showing Riverview Terrace and Riverview Park from Station Road



War Memorial on Fambridge Road



Classic tree lined lane - Station Road



Althorne House - old station cottage - Photo by Terry Inkpen



Althorne station 1966 - Great Eastern Railway Society



Red telephone box at Althorne Station

## GUIDANCE

- The panoramic long distance views to the south from this area over the special landscape area and coastal zone should be conserved.
- No development should be allowed which would compromise the openness of this area.

## Althorne Creek and Cliff Reach

This area along the bank of the River Crouch and Bridgemarsh Island includes all the nature conservation areas within the village including the two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site. Areas of recreation include the Smugglers Club Ground holiday home site and Bridgemarsh Marina. It is an open tranquil area with views across the River Crouch to the south to Canewdon and beyond, and up to Burnham Road and The Ridge across the Coastal Zone and Special Landscape Area.

The Althorne Creek and Cliff Reach area also includes the Smugglers Club Ground holiday homes and the permanent homes in Bridgemarsh Lane. This is a unique part of the village with very little development apart from a few large houses, but mostly still holiday plots as it was intended.

The public footpath along the sea wall gives access along the whole of the river front and marshland.

### GUIDANCE

Potential new development either within the area or within adjacent areas may disturb the strong sense of tranquillity.

Any development should:

- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impact on views from and to the area, including the coastal farmland and opposite bank of the river.



*Cliff Reach*



*Entrance to The Smugglers Club Ground off Bridgemarsh Lane*



*The Smugglers Club Ground adjacent to the sea wall*



*Bridgemarsh Marina and old oyster pits along public footpath*

## Outlying Areas

The outlying areas of the village include Latchingdon Straight, the South side of Green Lane, Dairy Farm Road, the South side of Old Heath Road to Tinkers Hole junction, Buttons Hill/Southminster Road, Hill Farm, Andrews Farm and Stokes Hall and Farm cottages.

Once away from the centre of the village and the mainly strip development of the Fambridge and Burnham Roads the remainder of the parish becomes extremely rural with quite isolated houses.

As can be seen both from maps and aerial photographs, the houses in the outlying areas are invariably surrounded by farmland. An important characteristic is the openness and far-reaching views.

The outlying areas include two of Althorne's listed buildings, Wardens Farm and The Cottages in Green Lane.



*Wardens Farm on Green Lane*



*View of Althorne from Buttons Hill towards Highfield Rise*



*Dairy Farm - Dairy Farm Road*



*The Cottages at Green Lane*



*View of Althorne from Buttons Hill towards the Black Lion*

## GUIDANCE

- People in Althorne value the open landscape and rural views. Development outside the village development boundary should be avoided wherever possible. Listed buildings should be conserved.

## 4. VILLAGE STYLE AND ELEMENTS EXPLAINED

### Building Styles and Boundary Treatments

S3, S8, D1, D2, H4

Althorne is characterised by mostly strip development along the Burnham and Fambridge Roads with buildings set back from the road, often behind picket fences, walls or hedges. In each area of the village there is a mix of larger brick built family houses, small cottages which were originally farm cottages and a considerable proportion of bungalows. Many of the smaller properties have been extended over the years or demolished and replaced by larger houses. The majority of houses in the village are detached.

The building style of the village is a historic patchwork of Essex vernacular ending with modern houses newly built to reflect that of the original dwellings and commercial buildings of the village including the style of 15th century timber framed buildings and 18th century brick buildings. The 1960s and 70s buildings are simple in their architectural details and lack the character associated with the early buildings still existing. The village has a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses of both the new and the old.

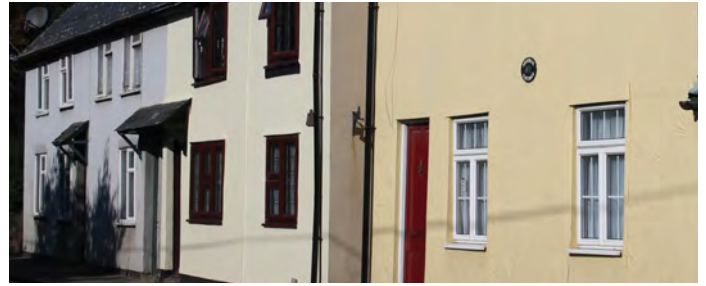
### Material Finishes to Buildings

#### Weatherboard

Weatherboard is a classic building material used throughout East Anglia and in particular Essex. Many houses in the village are weatherboarded either in black or white, or colour washed. This style has been adopted for many new houses which helps them blend in with the older buildings of the village.



*Cream, Black, White and Grey Weatherboard*



*Render in pastel colours*

#### Render

A number of houses are full, half or part rendered in pastel variations of cream, pink, blue and olive. Rendered walls pick out detail within the architecture and contrast well with other exterior finishes such as brick and weather board.

#### Brick

There were a number of small brickworks locally including one on Bridgemarsh Island which might explain so many brick houses in the village. The classic brick of Althorne is the red brick and can be seen throughout the village including the 1930s Gilder Drake Almshouses and the 1909 St Andrew's Church Hall. The Almshouses also have decorative brick features within the wall design offering character and distinction of place. Houses built in close proximity over the past 15 years have echoed this decorative brick pattern linking the new with the old. Other pre-1950s buildings use a natural coloured brick including the Grade II listed Mansion House, now the residential home. The later buildings of the 60s-70s use a mix of buff and red brick but feature little change in course pattern or natural colour variation in the bricks themselves.



*Brick and Render combined, Original 1930 Herringbone Brick Detail, Modern Herringbone Brick Detail, Window Brick Detail*

## Roofs

### Roofs

Althorne sees a number of roof types including the well-known gable ended 45° and 30° pitched roofs, the 45° Hipped roof and the least recognised Mansard Roof. There is a wide range of mansard roofs in the village, both in the old Black Lion Cottages and in the new houses close by, as well as on the 1930s houses built in the village by the well-known architect, Peter Cooper – Windrush/ Viking Cottage/Merrilees. It is however argued that this style roof is not true to most of the Essex vernacular.

### Roof Tiles

Again there is a variety of roof tiles within the village including traditional Clay Peg tiles and modern variations found on 45° roofs, red clay Pan tiles and modern variations found on 30° roofs, Pre-fabricated concrete tiles of grey or red as well as traditional natural slate tiles.



30° Pitch , 45° Pitch, Hipped Roof, Mansard Roof

### Dormers, Porches and Windows

#### Dormers

Dormers are a feature of houses in the village, both old and new. Used to utilise space within 45° pitched roofs the Dormer allows for headroom that would otherwise be absent. Although the dormer is essentially an engineering feature it has great aesthetic value breaking up roof lines and adding subtle detail and a degree of individuality to building style.

#### Porches

A number of buildings include traditional porches of three styles. The enclosed porch which is closed on all sides with the front door to the face, the open porch which covers the front door to the house with a roof but the sides are left open to the timber support posts and half walls or stone columns as featured on the listed Mansion House. There are also canopy porches that are fixed to the wall so need no other structural support and only offer shel-

ter over the front door from above. The building materials used for these porches match that of the building they belong to using the same wall finish and roof tile. Like the dormer the porch is an attractive architectural element that adds character and individuality to a building.



canopy Porch, Enclosed Porch, Classic Dormer, Open Porch

#### Windows

Windows and doors are a crucial element in the architectural character and appearance of a building. Many buildings see replacement PVC double glazing doors and windows which generally do not need planning permission; however when considering a new build, doors and windows should be checked for their suitability to the host building and its setting. Under planning legislation doors and windows for listed buildings must be original in design and material. Althorne sees a mixture of window styles in both traditional and modern materials. Traditional timber sash windows feature in both timber and the PVC equivalent. The majority of the windows in the village are casement windows, however there is great variety in the finish of the well-known casement window. Some have diamond lead or modern equivalent detailing, others have oblong or square lead detailing. There are also examples of Bay Windows in both modern and traditional style and materials.



Timber Sash Window, PVC Sash Window, Timber Arch Window, Bay Window, Timber Casement Window with oblong lead detail, PVC Arch Window, Light Brown PVC Casement Windows

## Boundary Treatments

Most buildings in the village are set back from the road with front garden buffer zones and defined boundaries in the form of red brick walls, black metal railings, railings and brickwork combined, brickwork and rendered walls combined, white picket fencing, and hedge planting of native species. The majority of frontage boundaries are up to 1m high offering a sense of openness. Dwellings at Garden Close have no frontage boundary at all but open out onto a wide green that acts as the buffer between the property and the road. This is also true for bungalows and two storey houses on the Highfield Rise and Austral Way estates.



Brick Wall, Indigenous Hedge, Picket Fencing, Red Brick and Metal railings

## Mobile homes

Open views across the River Crouch, access to the river front via Public Footpaths and the Althorne Marina make the village an attractive location for holiday homes in the form of mobile homes and chalets. Established in the 1960s as a holiday park the Riverview Park is now an over 50s retirement park consisting of 111 plots. These homes although mobile have features of fixed houses including mock clay tiled roofs, rendered exterior walls, double glazing, red brick skirts to the bases of the homes, paths and steps up to the doors making them more sympathetic to the building style of the village than that of the typical static home or caravan.

The historically named 'Smugglers Club' on Bridgemarsh Lane also sees examples of this type of mobile home with in private plots as well as some of great individual style designed and built by the owner to reflect the Essex vernacular of dwellings and old commercial arable buildings of the county. Some plots feature weatherboarded facades, porches, dormers and detailed window finishes all on a miniature scale.



Riverview mobile home, holiday chalets at Smugglers Club

## Bungalows

The 1970s bungalows on the Highfield Rise estate have little association with the local building style or of the county wide building vernacular. Built for purpose rather than aesthetics, the bungalows do offer open space of grass verges and front gardens within the layout as well as conservation of long distance views through the one storey building height, and low pitched roofs.



Summerhill, Highfield Rise, The Endway

## GUIDANCE

- New buildings should respect the scale, form, and design of the adjacent properties.
- The pattern and style of windows and doors should be replicated in extensions to existing properties.
- Resist building houses with more than 2 storeys.
- Wherever possible new roofs should be pitched.
- Hedge boundaries should be native species. Native hedging contributes to wildlife but also to the rural aspect of the village.
- Traditional fencing, railings and walls should be encouraged.
- Any dormers and porches should be suitably designed to ensure detail is sympathetic and to maintain historic building style.
- Most frontages in the village are either open plan or with low or "see-through" fencing or hedging – giving an impression of openness.

## Buildings of Special Interest

S3, D1, D3

Although many old buildings in Althorne have been lost over the years, there are still a considerable number of old buildings of special interest, including seven listed buildings. Unlike many villages which have a conservation area containing most of their listed buildings, Althorne's seven listed buildings are spread throughout the parish.

**[1] Warden's Farmhouse Grade II**, Green Lane - (Image on Page 18) - House C17, extended in late C19 and C20. Timber framed, clad with C19 red brick in Flemish bond, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. 3 bays facing SE, with central stack.

**[2] The Black Lion Public House Grade II**, Burnham Road, Public house (Image on Page 22). C18 and early C19, extended in C20. Partly timber-framed and weatherboarded, partly of painted brick in Flemish bond, roofed with handmade red clay tiles.

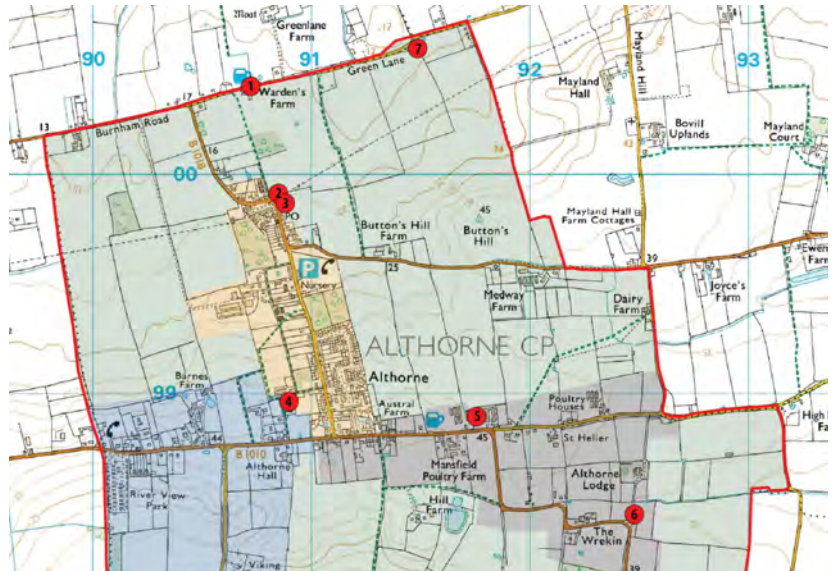
**[3] Black Lion Cottages, Grade II**, Burnham Road - Range of 3 cottages (Image on Page 22). Early C18. Timber framed, weatherboarded, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. Single range facing E, with one axial stack and external stack at left end.

**[4] Parish Church of St Andrew Grade II**, Farnbridge Rd - Parish church (Image on Page 4). Late C14, altered in early C16, restored in C20. Dressed flint and stone rubble, with dressings of limestone, clunch and red brick. Chancel of red brick in English bond. Roofed with handmade red clay tiles. Nave late C14. Chancel early C16. W tower c.1500. S porch C18.

**[5] Mansion House Farmhouse Grade II**, Burnham Rd - House (Image on Page 14) - Early C16, altered in C19. Timber framed, roughcast rendered, with facade of gault brick in Flemish bond, roofed with interlocking concrete tiles and handmade red clay tiles.

**[6] The Round House Grade II**, Burnham Rd - Cottage (Image on Page 14). C18/early C19, extended in C19. Timber framed, weatherboarded, roofed with slate. Octagonal with central chimney shaft, facing W.

**[7] The Cottages Grade II**, Green Lane - House (Image on Page 18). Early C18, extended in C19 and C20. Timber framed, weatherboarded, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. 5 bays facing SW, with 2 axial stacks. Full-length lean-to extension to rear.



Althorne listed buildings map



The Black Lion Cottages Grade II, Burnham Road



Black Lion House Grade II, Burnham Road

### GUIDANCE

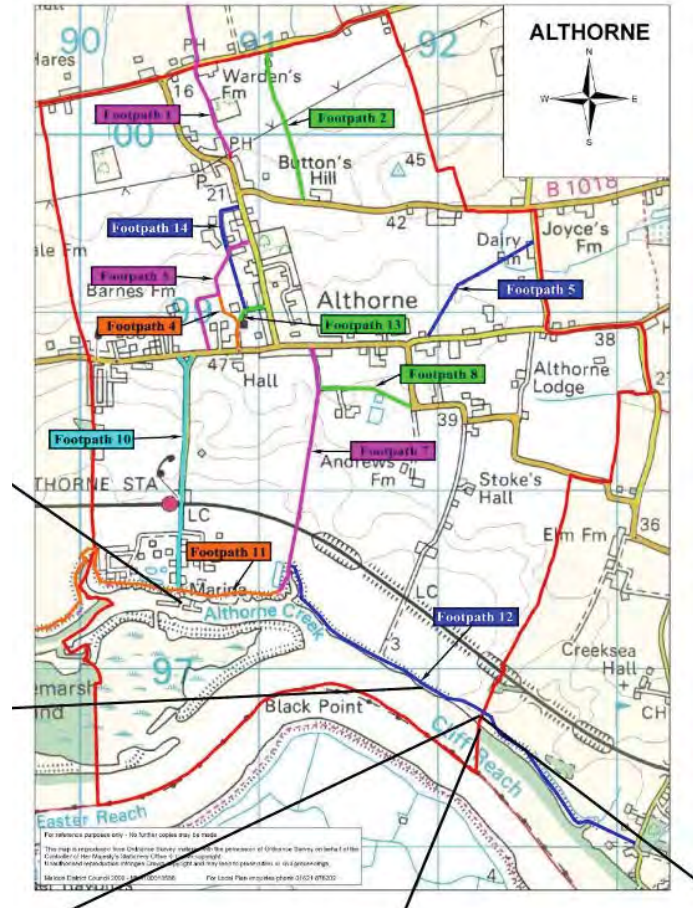
- Wherever possible, old buildings should be saved rather than demolished and replaced.
- New buildings should respect the scale, form, and design of listed building.

## Village Facilities, Community and Leisure

S7, S1, E3

Althorne is a rural community where people have chosen to live away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. People living here value the natural environment and it is important this essence is not lost. The population of Althorne Parish is 1,159 (2001 Census with a projection of 1,462 in 2033 Maldon District Rural Facilities Survey, 2011). Most residents are retired (50%) or full-time employed (33%). The public consultation showed that most commute to work with a journey over 20 minutes. The elements that contribute to Althorne as a thriving community are its social amenities, Church, shops and post office, and its sports and recreation facilities:

- St. Andrew's Church - 14th century listed building
- St. Andrew's Church Hall built in 1909
- Parish Hall
- Recreation Ground with football pitch and play areas, Dog Walk, Pavilion, tennis/netball court and Skate Park.
- Post Office and Jeyam's Supermarket, Wrekin Farm Shop
- Public House – The Three Horseshoes
- Railway Station
- Bridgemarsh Marina
- Mobile Library Van
- Crouch Meadow natural burial ground
- Public Footpaths
- Public telephone boxes on Fambridge Rd and the Train Station.
- Clubs - (Althorne Ladies Club, The Friendly Circle Over 60s Club, Judo, Girl Guides, Painting Group, Junior football club)



Public Footpaths Within the Village



The Three Horseshoes Public House, Burnham Road



Play Area, Summerhill Recreation Ground



Althorne Parish Hall, Summerhill



Post Office and Jeyam's Supermarket, Burnham Road

### GUIDANCE

The facilities in the village are greatly valued. It is important to:

- Conserve the halls and the church.
- Ensure there is sufficient parking for facilities.
- Maintain the public footpaths.

## Commerce and Industry E4

There are number of local employers in the area. These include: Fords Coaches, Wrekin Farm Shop, Stitches Farm, Andrews Farm, Mansion House Residential Home, Kingwood Joinery/Buttons Hill Farm, Ashwaste, Fly Odyssey, Dairy Farm Animal Feed, PDR, Bridgemarsh Marina, Medway Farm Equestrian Centre, Althorne Hall Holiday Flats, Crouch Valley Meadow Natural Burial Ground, D.F Clark Contractors and D.F Clark Bionimique.

Sadly, some local businesses have been lost over the years. These include: two petrol stations, shops in Endway, River-view Park, Stones Nursery, Rosebank, a DIY shop and hair-dressers, three nurseries, Black Lion Public house, Global Invacom, Bridgemarsh brickworks and a forge.



Wrekin Farm Shop, Burnham Road



The Black Lion Public House as a working public house, Burnham Road - Photo by Brian Sandilands (Panoramio)



Fords Coaches, Burnham Road



Global Invacom, Winterdale Manor, Southminster Road



Bridgemarsh Marina, Bridgemarsh Lane - Photo by Terry Joyce



D.F Clark & D.F Clark Bionimique, Andrews Farm, Burnham Road

### GUIDANCE

- Commerce and industry is important to the village both for employment and for the services/ facilities provided.
- Industrial operations should be screened as far as is possible to preserve the rural character of the village.

## 5. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Transport and Roads T1, T2, S1

Speeding is an issue in Althorne with the majority of feedback saying there are major 'danger spots' on the roads and calling for more traffic calming measures such as speed cameras or speed indicator device. In places, the Lower Burnham Road/Fambridge Road (B1010) is not wide enough for two large lorries to pass. There is concern for narrow footpaths and difficult bends in the road along with the poor condition of the roads and pavements. The majority of residents use their car on a daily basis stating this was due to lack of public transport.

### Pedestrian and Cycling N1, N3, S3, T1, T2, D1, S1

There are no dedicated cycle routes through the village and no provision for cycle parking except at the train station.

Pedestrian access paths adjacent to roads are narrow leaving the user exposed to moving traffic.

### Parking H4 T2, D1,

Most properties within the parish have off street parking helping to keep roads and footpaths clear from obstruction and accessible to all. Much of the private off street parking is screened by property boundaries such as walls or hedges helping to maintain the tranquil and rural appearance of the village.

### Street Furniture S3

Street furniture which is not in keeping with the scale and character of the village detracts from the overall visual amenity. There was negative feedback about the bus shelters at the Parish Hall and Fords Corner in comparison with the sympathetic design of the bus shelter on Southminster Road, Burnham.

### Verges and Ditches

Overgrown verges and hedges and untidy ditches detract from the appearance of the area. The majority of residents felt that more could be done to keep these areas tidier.

### Utilities D1, D4

Utility cables (e.g. telephone and power) create unsightly views within the village and surrounds. In the consultation process views were expressed on the pylons, telegraph poles by Church Hall and bend in Green Lane, the Oil tank at Highfield Rise and Substation near Huntsman Corner.



Example Bus Shelter - Southminster Road, Burnham



Exposed Car Parking - 1m high Hedging could better screen this from view

### GUIDANCE

- Continue to work with Highways to install more traffic calming measures and speed restrictions that are sympathetic to the character of the area.
- Continue to work with Highways to improve the road condition and existing pavements.
- New utility services should be located underground so not to spoil views with pylons and telegraph poles and sharing of facilities by telecom companies must be encouraged.
- Replace existing street furniture with items more sympathetic to surroundings.
- In new developments off-street parking that does not adversely affect the appearance of the street scene should be encouraged.
- Enhance the village entrances with additional landscaping such as bulb planting and safety features such as gateways, change in road surfacing.
- Keep ditches clear and clean and ensure Highways maintain verges and hedges.
- New foot paths should offer enough width that users feel safe.
- Car parking should be screened from view.

## 6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### PROTECTION, ENHANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT H5



*The River Crouch and Bridgemarsh marina left - The ridge Riverview Park in the centre - The ridge Fambridge Road right*

Althorne is a rural community and the balance must be achieved between provision of housing to supply local needs and retaining the character and quality of the environment.

Housing needs to be considered for first time buyers who want to remain in the village or want to move to the village. All ages should be considered to ensure the sustainability of village amenities.

The public consultation established that the majority are in favour of conversion of existing redundant buildings and single dwellings in controlled locations.

The rural character of the village is very important and should be retained as well as retaining buildings of character, the views to the river and historic features such as red phone boxes.

Increase in traffic and speeding is a concern and developers will need to take this into account as it will have an impact on the future of the village.

Over time, houses age and decay and may need modernising, extending or replacing to suit changing demands. The result is sometimes the loss of a small more affordable house, or more houses on the same plot, or may be the loss of a house of character.

It is important to remember that the infrastructure in Althorne is very poor with no school, only one shop, no doctor's surgery, poor broadband connectivity and mobile phone service.

#### GUIDANCE TO RESIDENTS

- If you are considering altering the exterior of your property, changing any external detail of the building, garden or boundary, consider the visual impact of your proposals:
- Thinking about changing frontages, are features out of character, out of scale, how will it affect your neighbours, will it make a positive contribution to the character of the area, find out if there are any restrictions on the development of your property, consult local Planning authority, etc.

#### GUIDANCE

- New development should respect the quality of the local natural and historic environment, character and landscape in terms of scale design and materials.
- Discourage inappropriate "in fill" development.
- Where possible sympathetically restore existing houses or better integrate into the landscape.
- Appropriate landscaping and open space will be essential as part of any housing scheme.
- New utility services should be located underground so not to spoil views with pylons and telegraph poles.
- New development should have minimal impact on views into and out of the area.
- Use Section 106/CIL to improve village infrastructure.
- Consideration of large scale schemes outside the parish boundary should take account of the short and long term impact of traffic through the village.



# ALTHORNE VILLAGE DESIGN STATMENT 2015

## *Althorne*



## *Parish Council*

THANK YOU PAGE TO BE DISCUSSED & GOOD QUALITY LOGOS USED

Nick Robson, Blue House Farm Warden ,Essex Wildlife,

Thanks to The Francis Frith Collection – [www.francisfrith.com](http://www.francisfrith.com) for historic image of Lion Public House

