

Village Design Statement 2016 Update

Comments by Julian Francis

Firstly I would like to thank the VDS Steering Group for their personal time and effort in undertaking this review. The high quality and unbiased professional approach is readily evidenced when viewing the documentation and is gratefully acknowledged.

My personal comments on the VDS draft documents are as follows:

PART 1

1. The first edition VDS published in 2006 document appears to have been thoroughly reviewed and brought up to date. I therefore believe that when the proposed version is finalised, it should simply state the new publication date on the cover and reference to the original 2006 dated version on the cover should then be omitted.
2. There are a few sentences and words within the document that could perhaps be clarified through the use of "plain English". One such example is contained in the Foreword on Page 2, first paragraph, line 2, "are not set in aspic".
3. Foreword and Part 1: It might be worth adding the words, "above ordnance datum" (a.o.d.) after the heights provided for the Moelydd and Mynydd Myfyr.
4. There doesn't appear to be a dedicated section in Foreword s1.1 for Nantmawr to follow-on from Trefonen and Treflach?
5. In s1.3, could there be reference to the importance of the old drover's route and its connection/ relevance to local house names, for example, to individual property names along Little London Lane?

PART 2

1. In s2.1, the term Special Landscape Character was derived from the former OBC Local Plan. It's unfortunately not a nationally recognised formal designation, but nonetheless it's a local term that was invoked after much consideration by OBC planners and is still referenced by villagers.
2. Would it be worth listing important sites of the stone hedges on the plan in s2.1.1?
3. It may be useful to mention in s2.2.1 that the main Oswestry Road through Trefonen was formerly subject to the national speed limit of 60mph but only following a concerted effort by local residents the limit was reduced to 30mph through Trefonen and Nantmawr, in coordination with Maesbury and Maesbury Marsh.
4. In the early part of s2.2.2, the term "footpaths" is used. The term public rights of way is only referenced later in this section. Would it be worth clarifying this, as footpaths could be permissive paths and not rights of way, or perhaps simply desire lines.
5. In s2.3.1, it could be useful to clarify that the development termed Chapel View, comprises the relatively significantly sized development of Whitridge Way, Carneddau Close and Onnen Gardens which were developed post 2002. I think there could be a paragraph written around the stone walls and stone hedges helping to form Trefonen's character (then referencing through to s2.4 for more detail)?
6. Also in s2.3.1, there have been a number of significant trees brought to the attention of the Planning Authority by local residents and the Trefonen Rural Protection Group since 2013.

This has resulted in a number of new Tree Preservation Orders being introduced where trees were considered to be under threat from possible development.

7. In the latter part of s2.3.1, there is a paragraph relating to some of the key reasons for objections to the three larger planning applications. Another key aspect which was mentioned many times in individual objections was the impact on the proposed development on the character of the village. It may be helpful to include this.
8. Fig 13: The plan requires some amendments as not all the roads shown are adopted highways. As far as I'm aware, Little London Lane (the majority of it), Springbank, The Hollies, Sandrock Lane and the lower "dogleg" off Silverdale Drive are not adopted.
9. During the last 15 years, the amount of traffic on the "Hillside" area of Trefonen has increased disproportionately to the number of dwellings. Combined with the trends for internet based on-line shopping and home based businesses, the narrow lanes at peak times have become busy and any further increases in trafficking would be unsustainable. Damage by delivery lorries has been evidenced and reported on occasions to the Parish Council and to the police.
10. In s2.4, I don't think that Fig 36 is a particularly good example of a stone hedge in the true sense, probably more of a dry-stone earth retaining wall.
11. In 2.5.3, the availability of phone lines is currently at a premium. Where villagers move locally out of the village and take their current numbers with them, and then new owners move in from outside the village, I understand that there is extremely limited availability of spare lines.
12. In s2.5.5, there isn't a "regular" public daily bus service in the true sense. It's even more limited on Saturdays and I don't believe there are any on Sundays at all.
13. In s2.5.6, it may be worth mentioning that high pressure sodium lights are progressing to white LED lanterns (I think the lantern at the junction of lanes on the Trefonen Road in Coedy-Go may be of this type and is managed by ORPC?) This is more efficient and is even less light polluting where fitted with a down-lighter lantern head.

PART 3

1. In s3.1.1, I wouldn't go as far as agreeing that we have got "ease of access to practically all services" although I would agree that we are fortunate at present to have our shop and post office up and running again.
2. The tables in S3.1.3 and 3.1.4, and s3.1.5 whilst being brilliant achievements, may not need quite so much detail in the VDS. Could a summary be provided for each perhaps?
3. In s3.2, I'd reserve caution in stating that our countryside is recognised as being an area of Special Landscape Character (see earlier comment). It certainly was formerly but has less weight now that the SAMDev has been approved and the OBC Local Plan policies are of less relevance.
4. IN s3.3.1, Fig 5 is a little old now, as timber posts with reflectors have helped during the past 3 years to prevent damage by lorries in particular to the verges at this location. Fig 6 is correct as a reference but the Chapel elevations are now somewhat different.
5. In s3.3.1, I agree that there are a relatively large number of signs through the village, but this is something that the villagers and Parish Council reluctantly accepted following public engagement meetings in order to enable the policing of the reduced speed limits and the implementation of a new crossing in Trefonen. Without the signs, there would still have

been a national speed limit through the village. I'd be grateful if this paragraph could be appended in some form to the existing text.

6. Re s3.8, should this be inserted earlier under "Trefonen" as it appears to follow Nantmawr village entry? It would also be useful in my view to state that the village needs to work in unity to protect the remaining walls and stone hedges for future generations as they are being removed and eroded at an alarming rate.

PART 4:

1. In s4.1, I would like to see a policy relating to the protection of mature trees in the village. Particularly in the fields around the village boundaries which help form part of the special character. Where trees are lost through natural causes, extreme weather etc., these should be replaced as soon as practicable.
2. In 4.2.3, I would like the following sentence added, "and normal highway standards may also not be appropriate".
3. In 4.2.4, I would like to see a reference adding in relation to "weight, width or length restrictions".
4. In 4.2.6, I agree with the text. However with technical progress, down lighter LED's are now becoming more affordable and I think the Parish Council may already have started using these (worth checking with the Clerk perhaps where they are undertaking replacements).
5. In s4.3.1, it would be useful to add the word "proportional" with regard to development and plot size.
6. In 4.3.2, the tendency for using "national housing types" must be avoided for any future housing in the village, with a preference for cottage style dwellings.
7. In s4.3.9, the addition of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) could be added to replace "drainage" at the end of the sentence.
8. It would be useful to help dissuade the owners of older buildings from removing earlier features of historic interest and replacing them with modern and more functional products. For example, the use of replacing fascias with PVCu instead of using timber material products.
9. In s4.4.1, it would be worthwhile adding "sustainable" development at the end of the sentence.
10. In s4.4.10, the land at the end of Silverdale Drive at its junction with Old Post Office Lane contains numerous services and as a consequence is unfortunately unsuitable for tree planting.
11. In s4.7.5, it would be worth adding that materials "and design" should match those characteristics...
12. In s4.8.1, landowners should be encouraged to seek grant aid and other sources of funding for the upkeep of stone boundary walls and stone-hedges.
13. In s 4.11, landowners should be dissuaded from undertaking "development by stealth", i.e. additional access ways onto adopted roads, commencing development without having proper planning consents in place and expecting retrospective consent where development is commenced in advance of a formal planning decision being granted.
14. In both 4.11 and 4.14, villagers should be encouraged to participate and attend environment and heritage events where they are being organised for the benefit of the wider village.
15. In 4.14, it is suggested that villagers work together to help protect those areas of the village where there is high Cultural heritage value though working to seek Conservation Area status.