

SHINFIELD VILLAGE

1. Introduction

It is necessary to distinguish the Village of Shinfield from the Parish of Shinfield. This note is a description of Shinfield Village. Shinfield Village is just one of six settlements in Shinfield Parish. The other settlements are Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross, Grazeley, Shinfield Rise and Ryeish Green.

Whenever reference is made to Shinfield, it will mean the village and not the Parish, which will be referred to as Shinfield Parish.

2. Location

The settlement of Shinfield Village is about 6km south of the centre of Reading, south of the M4 motorway on the A327 and around the B3349 Hyde End Road/A327 junction. It is bounded to the South and South East by the River Loddon. Approximately 2km to the east, on the opposite side of the Loddon, is Arborfield. Ryeish Green and Three Mile Cross are approximately 1km and 2km respectively to the west, and Spencers Wood about 2km to the south-west. The M4 motorway runs east-west, immediately to the north

The M4 motorway Junction 11 lies about 1.5 km west of Shinfield, linking with the A33 Basingstoke Road, which runs north into Reading and south towards Basingstoke. East of Junction 11, and north of the M4 motorway, is the B3270 Whitley Wood Lane this links to the Early Outer Peripheral Road (EOPR) to the east of the A327.

North of the M4 motorway, along the A327 is Shinfield Rise. This adjoins Whitley Wood, which is part of Reading, and Lower Earley, which is part of Wokingham District. There are large office campuses, schools, shops, restaurants and the University of Reading along Shinfield Road.

The A327 is variously named Shinfield Road, Hollow Lane and Arborfield Road as it runs south from central Reading, crosses the B3270 north of the motorway, then through Shinfield towards Arborfield, Eversley and to the Blackwater Valley towns, to the south-east.

2. Setting

The area of Shinfield Parish, south of the M4 motorway consists of the valley floors of the Foudry Brook and River Loddon, with a south-west to north-east ridge running between

them. The M4 motorway cuts west to east across the valley floors and ridge. North of the M4, the urban area of Reading generally occupies the higher ground. South of the M4, the settlement pattern is scattered and rural, with the Shinfield Parish settlements occupying the higher ground of the ridge. The Loddon and Foudry Brook valley floors include areas of farmland, forming part of large and productive farms.

3. Topography

Shinfield village is separated from Reading and Shinfield Rise by the M4 motorway. The main north-east to south-west ridge, extends from Shinfield Rise, at about 80m AOD, through northern and western parts of Shinfield Village and Ryeish Green, at 50 to 70m AOD, to Spencers Wood. Its north-western and western slopes form a steep edge to the Foudry Brook flood plain, which lies at 40 to 45m AOD: its southern and south eastern slopes fall more gently to the flood plain of the River Loddon, also at about 40 to 45m AOD.

A secondary ridgeline, extending eastwards from the main ridge, is severed by the motorway cutting, south of which it extends around land to the north-east of Shinfield, falling from 70 to 50m AOD. The village is predominantly situated on the gentle southern slopes of the ridge, between 43 and 65m AOD.

Beyond the Shinfield Parish settlements, the area comprises chiefly arable agricultural land and some pasture, with occasional woodland blocks; parts of the Loddon Valley are well-wooded. There are isolated farm buildings and dwellings throughout the surrounding area.

4. Housing

Shinfield is recorded in the Domesday Book, so dates from the mid-11th century. St Mary's Church on Church Lane, with Church Farmhouse and the Manor, forms the oldest group of buildings in Shinfield. St Mary's Church has a more than 900 years history. There is also a small group of older buildings at School Green, and farmsteads at Lane End Farm, Church Farm, Parrot Farm and High Copse Farm.

Shinfield is chiefly residential, but contains substantial areas of University research, farm and horticultural buildings. There are currently about 650 dwellings in the village, in several distinct areas with approved development for an additional 400 dwellings.

The main residential area is defined by Cutbush Lane to the north and the A327 to the

west and south, this is an area of medium-density C20th residential development, of semi-detached and detached houses. The building styles are typical of their times. The eastern boundary of this area is defined by rear gardens to properties backing onto farmland, but is visible from the east due to its location on the valley side. Sporadic development extends beyond the village edge along the northern side of Arborfield Road. A public footpath follows the north-eastern edge of the village.

The south part of the village is centred on School Green, is an area of Special Character, with medium-density C20th housing, mostly semi-detached and around a loop estate road. School Green itself is a small triangular village green, with some trees, car parking, the 300 years old Infant School and a modern office block. The Junior School, its playing fields, allotments and a Recreation Ground lie at the southern edge of this area.

Residential development extends along the eastern side of Hyde End Road, at the southern end of which is woodland on the opposite side of the road. Along the eastern side is a well-vegetated zone comprising allotments, recreation and school grounds, woodland and hedgerows. There is access by public footpath to farmland to the west, but none to the countryside and River Loddon, beyond the Recreation Ground, to the east.

The north-western area is primarily low density residential development, with substantial garden and perimeter woodland vegetation, extends along the northern side of Brooker's Hill and north along Hollow Lane to the Black Boy public house, just south of the motorway bridge. There is pedestrian access, via the footbridge at the bottom of Brooker's Hill, to Shinfield Park and Whitley Wood, on the north side of the motorway.

Shinfield Court/Church Lane: This area, to the north-west, approaching Three Mile Cross and separated from the village by the break of slope. consists of a row of houses, Shinfield Court, Church Lane Farm and a transport depot, The 6 Bells public house and Nursery Cottage are detached from the group.

Cutbush Lane east: Individual buildings, including Cutbush (listed), Shinfield Grange and Upperwood Bungalow are along Cutbush Lane north-east of the village. Cutbush Lane is cut off for vehicles at the M4 overbridge.

Farmsteads: On the village edge, there are groups of University owned farm buildings, Oldhouse Farm (including some listed buildings) are to the east High Copse Farm to the south-west, with prominent silos, and Parrot Farm, to the east.

5. Community Facilities

There are two shops at the Hollow Lane/Arborfield Road junction, including a General

Store and Post Office and a news agents. The petrol filling station on Arborfield Road includes some retail facilities. Around School Green are Shinfield County Infant School, the Parish Hall, the British Legion Hall and two public houses. Other community facilities are Shinfield Baptist Church, a small police office on Hollow Lane, a doctor's surgery-annex in Millworth Lane and St Mary's Church and a church hall in Church Lane. There is a restaurant, l'Ortolan, in Church Lane.

6. Schools

Infant and nursery education is provided at the school on School Green; the junior school is off Chestnut Crescent, south-east of School Green. A secondary school is at Ryeish Green, to the west of Shinfield.

7. Development

Development is taking place on the redundant University of Reading land. This land surrounds the cemetery and the listed Church Farm house and barn, on Church Lane. The buildings are visible from Ryeish Green and from the footpaths west and south of Shinfield.

The University of Reading also owns an area known as the 'National Institute for Research into Dairying' north and east of the Church. Proposals for extensive commercial development of this area has been approved.

The area to the east of the A327, between the M4 and Cutbush Lane, comprises Lane End Farm with a listed farmhouse. There is approval for housing development on this site.

8. Employment

There are employment uses at an office block, Shinfield House, on School Green and a transport company operates from Church Lane. There is a major employment site west of Shinfield Road immediately north of the M4 motorway. One third of the new Green Park business development, north of the M4 motorway, is in Shinfield Parish. Two small business parks are located in Spencers Wood and a third, in Swallowfield Parish, borders Shinfield Parish.

4. TRANSPORT AND CIRCULATION

4.1 Rights of Way

4.1.1 Shinfield is currently served by a network of public footpaths which link not only

to the west and east, but also north to south and south-east Reading via motorway overbridges to Whitley Wood and east to Lower Earley.

- 4.1.2 West of Shinfield, foot paths (FPs) 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17 link Ryeish Green, old Shinfield and School Green with Shinfield Court, and from Church Lane to School Green. Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) 34 continues across Hyde End Road as FP 15, to the Junior School and Recreation Ground. There is no further access south to the River Loddon.
- 4.1.3 To the north-west, FP 8 links Brooker's Hill across a motorway overbridge, to Whitley Wood. This is linked to a footpath/cycleway along Church Lane to access to Ryeish Green School.
- 4.1.4 The footpath route from Ryeish Green School to its catchment area of Lower Earley runs along FP 16 and through the Cattle Breeding Centre, to FP 13: then along Church Lane and through the Churchyard/Manor site, on FP 10a, to Hollow Lane. FP 28 links Hollow Lane to Cutbush Lane. The truncated Cutbush Lane continues across the motorway bridge as FP 39/12, then FP 11 into Lower Earley.
- 4.1.5 East of Shinfield, FP 7 links Cutbush Lane to Arborfield Road, first alongside the back gardens, then along Oatlands Road. Further east, the parallel FP 6 also links these two roads, from Cutbush Lane at Shinfield Grange to the Pumping Station at Arborfield Road. There are no direct footpath links from Shinfield to the Loddon: FPs 3/4 and FP 5 run from Shinfield Grange and Arborfield Road respectively, east to a river crossing at FP1 then through Hall Farm to Arborfield, and east on FP2.

4.2 Public transport

- 4.2.1 There is an hourly service which passes through Shinfield en route from Reading via the A327 Shinfield Road to Wokingham: some buses on this service are extended to Bracknell. Another service passes through Shinfield en route from Reading to Arborfield and Yateley.

4.3 Road network

- 4.3.1 The A327 Hollow Lane meets the B3349 Hyde End Road at a roundabout at School Green. Hyde End Road runs south-west, to Spencers Wood, and Basingstoke Road.
- 4.3.2 The network of minor roads west of Shinfield - Brookers Hill, Church Lane and Hyde End Lane - link the farms, school and housing groups in this area to Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood and Shinfield.

- 4.3.3 Cutbush Lane originally ran north-east, across the motorway, to Lower Earley, but was severed for vehicles with the construction of the EOPR north of the bridge. Cutbush Lane from Shinfield is now therefore a vehicular cul-de-sac, serving properties up to the motorway bridge, with footpath access across the bridge.

6 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The existing village of Shinfield lies on the south side of the Kennet/Loddon watershed ridge, on the western valley sides of the Loddon. It is a mixed settlement, of about 650 dwellings, with local services. The village lies 6km south of the centre of Reading, on the A327 south of the M4 motorway.
- 6.2 A footpath network links Shinfield to the surrounding countryside, Reading and other villages. There are bus services to Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell.