

The Mortimer Vision:

Mortimer retains a distinctive rural character and a strong sense of community while providing a wide range of services and a thriving small business economy. All development is in harmony with this vision and ensures that Mortimer's distinctive character is retained.

What does the *rural character* of Mortimer mean?

The rural character of Mortimer is the set of characteristics and ambience that the community values and wishes to see retained and, where appropriate, developed. This concept of the rural character of Mortimer, now and in the future, forms the fundamental and distinctive focus for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

How do Mortimer residents define our rural character?

A village A village is defined as a compact settlement of houses, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town, having a church and a Parish Council and with a population ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand

Agricultural Although the livelihoods of most parishioners of Mortimer are no longer linked to agriculture there is still significant rural commercial activity – farms, forestry, small holdings, and equine services

The landscape and setting of the village Distinctive views, open spaces, woodland, rural paths and bridleways combine with the more immediate setting of the village to create the landscape within which the village is set. Examples are the approach to village via St Mary's Church, the area of the Fairground with community centre and the Horse & Groom, the focussed centre of the village with St John's Church, shops, bank, Post Office.

Separate from neighbouring villages The approach to the parish through clear green belt, open fields or natural woodland between us and neighbouring communities of Burghfield, Wokefield, Beech Hill, Mortimer West End, Silchester and Padworth, and along the east side of The Street. Other villages within the area are similarly approached through working countryside.

Quietness A rural ambience pervades the parish rather than that of a town or urban area with the sounds of the countryside, wildlife, quietness not the urbanised hum of motor traffic or shopping malls.

Easy access to countryside Public paths/walks and rural activities are available for walking, cycling, shooting, hunting, horse riding

Local design Local or typical architecture and design is to be encouraged rather than that of urban characteristics. Large car parks, lighting, road signage, advertising, taxi ranks and general street clutter found in a town are alien to a rural environment.

A close and flourishing community The village has shops, small businesses, schools, churches, pubs, community centres, recreation and sports facilities, open spaces at centre of village. Residents should be able to live all their lives in the parish/village if they so wish. The community are able to satisfy day to day activities from the village e.g. post office, banking, medical appointments, dental appointments, schooling and shopping.

Trees The village has a significant, distinctive and important complement of mature native trees and shrubs which make a major contribution to its rural character.