

## APPENDIX 10: CHALLABOROUGH VILLAGE STUDY

### Challaborough Village Study for Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

#### Introduction and Historical Context

The hamlet of Challaborough nestles in a small valley on the Devon coastal path, looking out to sea towards the Eddystone Lighthouse, with views of Burgh Island to the left and Stoke Point to the right. Challaborough features Parkdean Resorts, Fryer Tucks and the RNLI lifeguard hut, with residential properties on both sides of the valley. The stream running through the centre of the valley divides the hamlet between two parishes – Bigbury on the eastern side and Ringmore on the western side. Both sides are flanked with farmland. The parish of Ringmore is working on its Neighbourhood Plan.

Originally an iron-age settlement with its coastline on the sandbar, the central area above the tideline in Challaborough used to be a marshy grassland before the arrival of a caravan site business in the 1950s. The area in the Ringmore parish section has historic iron-age workings beneath the dune at the end of the beach, and the piles of the old jetty still can be seen on the rocks further down on the western hedge. Coasters would deliver limestone, coal and other goods to the area that were then collected by horse and cart and taken inland.

#### Layout of the hamlet

As with Bigbury-on-Sea, arrival in Challaborough is announced by a dramatic seascape, but the lanes that leave Challaborough on either side are still more suited to horse and cart in terms of width. The eastern (Bigbury) end of the coastline is subject to some erosion, affecting properties that are perched above the eastern cliff.

Parkdean Resorts is a holiday park open from March to mid November providing disabled access to the beach, a waterfront bar/restaurant, leisure facilities including a gym, pool and sauna, a shop and toilets, all open to the general public. Another thriving business is Fryer Tucks, a fish and chip shop situated at the bottom of the coastal path. There is a grocery shop that is open for nine months of the year on the Ringmore side. There is no post office or free access to cash.

On the Bigbury side of Challaborough, about 40% of houses are owner occupied. On the cliff between Fryer Tucks and Bigbury-on-Sea, there are chalet bungalows – some are visible in the old photo above. Newer modest size properties have been built, but these do fit neatly into the landscape. A collection of fourteen large, square, architect designed holiday homes have been constructed inland on the eastern side, placing increased pressure on the narrow lane that runs past them.

Property owners are mainly retired, and home maintenance provides work for small local businesses. Parkdean generally provides accommodation for its seasonal staff, retaining a small local team for mostly up keep duties.

Car parking is problematic and difficult to control. Parking is available at Parkdean and, at times, a field is used on the eastern side during the peak summer months. Leaving the hamlet by car during these periods can be a fraught experience. There is a single bus to Plymouth that arrives every Friday on the western side.

The beach is essentially the “heart” of Challaborough, and enjoyed by surfers, swimmers and boat owners. The RNLI employ lifeguards in the summer months, providing a safe environment for holidaymakers. There has been some erosion over the years and steps have been taken to avoid further ingress. Flora and fauna are abundant on the cliff despite the rockfalls. It is important to remain vigilant to ensure the safety of all users. The beach is cleaned by the park in the summer months and volunteers in the winter.

#### Property Types and Designs

Housing on the Bigbury side of Challaborough is varied in design dating from the 1920s to the present day, some with painted rendered exterior walls and others with the more modern use of cladding. The majority of houses are low rise with the exception of Beachdown, the new development overlooking the holiday park and facing the western side of Challaborough. The coastal properties enjoy excellent views of

- BELOW: POSTCARD FROM 1931; AERIAL VIEW OF CHALLABOROUGH; THE BEACH FROM PARKDEAN; CHALLABOROUGH FROM THE EASTERN SIDE





• ABOVE: SW COASTAL PATH - RED LINE SHOWS COMMON ROOFLINE OF COASTAL HOUSES  
 • BELOW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) BRIDGE OVER STREAM THAT DIVIDED THE HAMLET; NARROW EASTERN LANE; SW COAST FOOTPATH TOWARDS BIGBURY ON SEA

sea and countryside, especially those on the South-West Coast Path, all of which are low level with the ridge heights all in accordance with each other. No individual house adjacent to the coastal path diverts the eye when seen from the top of the cliff path or from Toby's Point. It is important that coastal walkers, holidaymakers, visitors and residents all appreciate this area as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. New builds should be interesting and varied, with gardens appropriate to the size of property, enhancing the area and not intruding upon neighbours' privacy, views and sense of space.

**Proposals for Future Development and Design Policy**

There is limited space available for further housing development on the Bigbury side of Challaborough. However the non-agricultural privately owned plots to the rear of 'The Loft' at Follyfoot and up to the bungalow at the top could be earmarked for possible future development. This would infill the plots between Follyfoot and above to the Beachdown modernist cedar clad houses further along the lane in the picture below.

Facilities in Challaborough are particularly put under pressure in the holiday season. Road access and refuse collections are always problematic with the lane up to Bigbury being very narrow and subject to flooding. During very severe winter weather, Challaborough has been cut off completely from road access.

Affordable housing may not be the best option: Challaborough has no year-round shop, and no public house – although locals can use the Parkdean clubhouse bar during the months it is open. The mobile phone signal has improved substantially, as has broadband. Superfast fibre broadband is being installed in the parish by Gigaclear at the time of

writing. Conventional TV signal can be erratic at times. Also, there is no daily public transport; anyone planning to live in Challaborough would have to own a car. The road to the Bigbury side of Challaborough is narrow and sometimes the council is slow to mend potholes. There are passing places, but tempers can rise with the growing number of delivery vans, especially in the summer months. The road is flanked by hedgerows and provides natural habitat for wild life. There is a weekly bus, but many people would like to see a more regular service, especially to Modbury.

The coastal path from BOS to Challaborough is maintained and owned by Mount Folly Farm. It is flanked by a Devon Bank on one side and hedgerow on the other. Local wildlife abounds, overseen by our resident kestrel! There is access across farmland to the north and east of Challaborough, all clearly signposted, well used and well kept.

In conclusion, we will need to embrace a more cohesive set of principles and values. Local people enjoy good design and thoughtful sensitive development that is unobtrusive, not overbearing or dominant; development that is in sympathy with this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and complements the local built and natural environment.

Future development in Challaborough is in real need of having these principles properly applied. Our beautiful coastal valley, rising towards Bigbury-on-Sea, merits special protection because of its attractive unobtrusive homes and gentle littoral lines. Any new development would need to rise to this visual challenge to the benefit of everyone who lives, works, and holidays here.