

Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan

Dorset Council & Bradford Abbas Parish Council

Joint Response

Dorset Council and Bradford Abbas Parish Council jointly responded to the Examiners questions on the 8 October 2026.

Question 1 for DC. Climate Change.

In the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS)(page 6), the BRPC comment that climate change matters have been considered as part of the plan making process throughout the preparation of the Plan and include examples of policies which support the adaptation to climate change. Do DC agree with the statement regarding climate change?

Dorset Council response:

Dorset Council agrees with the statement in the Basic Conditions Statement that climate change has been considered throughout the preparation of the Plan and that this is reflected in a number of policies and proposals.

As set out in the Council's response on climate change, the Plan addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation through Section 3 (Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Flood Risk), Policy 7 (Flooding Considerations), and Policy 12 (Design Guidance). These provisions support renewable energy generation, sustainable drainage, biodiversity enhancement, flood resilience and energy-efficient design measures.

The Council also notes that the Plan promotes alternative travel options, including walking and cycling, through the transport-related proposals set out in Section 7. Whilst these measures are not expressed as specific climate change policies, they can reasonably be regarded as supporting climate change mitigation by encouraging more sustainable travel choices and reducing reliance on private car use.

Taken together, Dorset Council considers that the Plan demonstrates that climate change mitigation and adaptation have been considered during plan preparation and are reflected in its policies and proposals.

Question 2 for DC. Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Given the comments about the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in the BCS (pages 6 and 7), do DC agree that the Plan is broadly in accord with the policy of LNRS and that there are no clear conflicts with it?

Dorset Council response:

We agree with the comment in the BSC that "whilst it was not possible to take account of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in the preparation of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan is broadly in accord with the policy and no clear conflicts have been identified".

Our original comments were intended to encourage stronger links between the policies and guidance already included within the Neighbourhood Plan and the priorities and opportunities identified in the Dorset LNRS. Given the broad alignment between the two documents, we consider that even a brief reference to the Dorset LNRS within the Neighbourhood Plan would help support implementation and ensure users of the Plan are aware of the wider strategic context for nature recovery. However, this would be an enhancement rather than a matter of resolving a conflict.

Question 3 for BAPC and DC. Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The Habitats Regulations Assessment includes an AA (pages 15 and 16). Paragraphs 7.0.3 and 7.0.4 of the Conclusions state that adverse effects upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site from water quality can be avoided by inserting wording at the end of Policy 9 (Meeting Local Housing Need) in the plan stating that “*Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moor Ramsar Site*”. It can only then be concluded that the Plan will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site. The addition of paragraph 2.9.1 to the Plan which was also sought has been made, but the addition to Policy 9 has not been included. It seems that I should remedy this by making an appropriate recommendation. Do the Councils agree?

Dorset Council response:

Dorset Council agrees that a modification is required.

The Appropriate Assessment concludes that adverse effects on the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site arising from water quality impacts can be avoided by the inclusion of a policy requirement that housing development achieves phosphate neutrality. Whilst paragraph 2.9.1 has been incorporated into the Plan, the equivalent amendment recommended by the Appropriate Assessment has not been included within Policy 9.

Dorset Council therefore agrees that a modification should be made to Policy 9 to add the following wording:

Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site.

This amendment would ensure that the mitigation identified through the Habitats Regulations Assessment forms part of the policy framework rather than relying solely on supporting text. It would also align the Plan with the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment, which state that adverse effects on the integrity of the European site can be avoided through the inclusion of this wording.

Dorset Council also notes that Natural England, in its response to the HRA (ref. 552705, dated 29 July 2026), advised that adverse effects on integrity would be avoided through the inclusion of the recommended wording in both Policy 9 and paragraph 2.9.1.

Bradford Abbas Parish Council response:

BAPC agrees to recommendation to add wording at the end of Policy 9, but as a separate paragraph and not as an additional bullet point, as the requirement to achieve phosphate neutrality should apply to any new housing within the DDB and any affordable housing sites outside the DDB.

Question 4 for BAPC. Policy 6. Important Local Green Spaces (LGS).

NPPF paragraph 107 states that LGS should only be designated where the green space is ... “(b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.” I would be grateful for evidence to show how Gollops Ground, the Rose and Crown Pub garden and the Field opposite the Pub fulfil that criterion? I would also be pleased to know the cumulative area of the Gollops Ground, the Pub garden and the School Playing Fields LGS?

Bradford Abbas Parish Council response:

At a public meeting held in November 2022, a number of 'significant spaces' were identified as important to the residents of the parishes to protect, and in the subsequent 'Residents Household Survey' in March 2023, all households were asked (in Q.18) if these were important to the environment and character of the parishes. The 3 sites in question were identified by the residents, and the results of Q.18 were as follows:

	Gollops Ground		Pub Garden		Field opposite Pub	
	Number of households	%	Number of households	%	Number of households.	%
Strongly agree	69	62.2	59	53.2	56	50.5
Agree	21	18.9	35	31.5	27	24.3
Neutral	7	6.3	9	8.1	14	12.6
Disagree	2	1.8	0	-	2	1.8
Strongly disagree	6	5.4	0	-	7	6.3
No answer	6	5.4	8	7.2	5	4.5
	111	100	111	100	111	100

The above results clearly demonstrate a very high level of community support to protect the 3 sites as they are considered important to the environment and character of the parishes.

Gollops Ground

This field has attracted significant public attention in recent years due to a new landowner erecting fencing in 2021 preventing the public using the field and gaining access to the River Yeo. The subsequent outcry led BAPC to apply for a Defined Map Modification Order which involved the collection of evidence of use of a footpath along the riverbank. The unusually large number of evidence forms received resulted in Dorset Council prioritising the application, and in October 2025 the application was accepted and an Order made to modify the definitive map to show the riverside footpath

(<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/rightsofway/definitivemap/register/Details/T725>). BAPC holds a strong bank of evidence comprising the 56 evidence forms which were completed by local people who had used Gollops Ground over many years. Dorset Council concluded, " ... it would

suggest that the use was 'As of Right' from 1958 and was free and open to the public at large until a gate and fencing was erected in 2021". The strength of feeling to reinstate the public access to the field is undeniable showing that it is demonstrably special to the community as the field is close to the centre of the village where it is readily accessible to everyone via footpath N6/3. The evidence forms detail how people used the field: to walk their dogs and for exercise, to access the riverbank for relaxation and watch wildlife, to fish, for children to make rafts and use canoes on the river, to have picnics and for children to play (there was a rope swing from a large tree), and to meet friends . And, older parishioners recalled previous generations of their families enjoying the field and river. The evidence forms record how people have seen otters, kingfishers, heron and egrets on this stretch of river highlighting the richness of wildlife, and the pleasure derived from the tranquility of the running water, and the sound of bird song.

The evidence forms also record the community events held in the field including the 50th anniversary celebrations of VE day in 1995, a duck race on the river as part of the summer fete, the Beavers and Cubs having fun by the river, and even an artists' painting class.

The recently erected barbed wire fencing (following the reinstatement of the riverside footpath in 2025) is an on-going issue and BAPC is very concerned following representations from residents. It is understood that DC is negotiating with the landowner to remove the fencing along the riverside.

St Mary's Church and tower are clearly visible from Gollops Ground promoting a sense of place and belonging to the community. Historically, Gollops Ground is the only point where villagers have been able to access the river close to the village, and the river here is shallow to allow children and families to wade in the water during the summer months.

The river is intrinsic to the history of Bradford Abbas as the name means 'the broad ford of the abbot' reflecting its historic crossing over the River Yeo and its centuries-long ownership by Sherborne Abbey. Smith's Bridge is a single track road bridge which crosses the River Yeo at the south east end of Gollops Ground and marks the border between the parishes of Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank. The 16th Century Smith's Bridge is Grade II* listed and a Scheduled Monument.

In considering the significance of both the field opposite the Rose & Crown Pub and the pub garden (see below) which are located either side of Church Road at the heart of the Conservation Area, it is worth drawing attention to the Bradford Abbas Conservation Area Appraisal which was adopted as a supporting document to the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan in December 2013. The document on p.6 refers to Church Road being a medieval road which once connected the village to its owner, Sherborne Abbey. It records that Church Road had 'tofts' and 'crofts' on both sides of the road which "established spaciousness, a characteristic in this part of the village" (p7). Both sites lie at the heart of the Conservation Area, where gaps in the street scene are as important as the buildings.

Field opposite the Rose & Crown Pub

Whilst the field opposite the pub is privately owned and there is no public access, it forms an intrinsic part of the green gap/corridor between the village centre and the river which is of particular local significance valued by the local community. This undeveloped gap, together

with the river corridor to the south, is identified in the adopted West Dorset Local Plan as Land of Local Landscape Importance (ENV 3). The open nature of the field in this central location plays a very important role in protecting the open, spacious and rural character of the village, and provides views into and from the Conservation Area. The view southwards from Church Road and the elevated pub garden over the field towards the river and the Dorset Downs beyond is unique and demonstrably special to the local community and visitors to the village.

It is important to recognise that there have been previous unsuccessful planning applications to develop the field for housing (1/N/82/000059 in 1982, and WD/D/17/000077 in 2017). In both cases it was acknowledged that the field contributes positively to the setting of a number of designated and non designated heritage assets: the Grade I listed Church to the north, the Grade II listed St Mary's House and Tudor Cottage to either side, and the nearby War Memorial. The pub directly opposite is also an undesignated heritage asset. It was also recognised that the field contributes positively to the local landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area which provides an important open gap allowing views into and out of the village, connecting the village and rural hinterland. Indeed, the Inspector considering the refusal of permission in 1982 concluded that "the Vicarage [St Mary's House], the Parish Church, the 'Rose and Crown' Public House, and the stone-walled field forming the appeal site, form a group which give a particular sense of quiet charm and distinctive character to this part of Church Road... [development here] would detract from the attractive views which are enjoyed at present by the public, when looking in a southerly direction across the site and school playing field towards the open countryside and distant hills, or north-westwards towards the Parish Church".

The field is situated where Church Road is at its widest and as such provides a green and open setting in front of the pub for many community events, good examples of which have been the Jubilee Street Party in 2022, and the Car Show held in May 2025. Local family oral history recalls the field itself being used for village activities. For example, when it was previously owned by the brewery it was regularly used for the annual flower and produce show which took place in a marquee. It was also used to land a Sea King helicopter from Yeovilton as an attraction in connection with a summer fete.

Rose & Crown Pub Garden

The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the Rose & Crown pub garden is "a rare survivor" of undeveloped land plots on the north side of this medieval road (p.7).

The pub and its adjacent garden is one of a number of community facilities clustered at the heart of the village where community events tend to focus. Indeed a number of community events, including numerous events organised by the pub, have involved the pub garden over the previous few years, for example:

- June 2022 Jubilee Street Party in Church Road including music and a BBQ in the pub garden
- April 2023 Beer Barrel Race hosted by the pub to raise funds for the Preschool and Church
- May 2024 Family Friendly Fun Day hosted by the pub with music, children's activities and food
- Easter 2025 children invited to search for clues around the pub garden to win a chocolate treat
- August 2025 Big Summer Charity Party to raise money for a local gymnastics club and the Stroke Association

- June 2026 1990s Garden Party

- August 2026 Family Summer Fun afternoon with music, magic, stalls, etc to raise money for charity

- July 2026 BA Preschool end of term party in pub garden.

The pub and garden are popular with local families and visitors, and the garden is well maintained and provides numerous tables and chairs, as well as a newly refurbished children's play area. Therefore, the fact that the pub garden is of particular local significance because of its recreational value is indisputable.

The garden lies between the Grade I St Mary's Church and churchyard wall, and the historic Rose and Crown Pub which is identified by the Conservation Area Appraisal as of local historic interest, and is therefore of immense importance to the settings of these buildings at the heart of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the elevated position of the garden provides a much appreciated view south through the green corridor to Gollops Ground, the river and hills beyond.

As requested, the areas of the proposed LGS are as follows:

Gollops Ground	0.90ha
Rose and Crown Pub Garden	0.07ha
Field opposite pub	0.30ha
School Playing Fields	0.63ha

Question 5 for BAPC. Policy 10 Local Employment Opportunities.

For reasons described in the Regulation 16 representation, DC suggest rephrasing the second bullet point of the second paragraph of the policy to: *“any business use must remain ancillary and incidental to the occupation of the dwellinghouse.”* Please may I have comments from BAPC?

Bradford Abbas Parish Council response:

BAPC agrees to this revised wording of Policy 10 regarding any business use of a residential property remaining ancillary to the use of the dwelling.