

Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan

**Covering the parishes of Tincleton, West Knighton,
West Stafford and Woodsford in Dorset**

Plan Period 2023-2033



West Knighton photo by Chris Painter

July 2025 Referendum Version

Produced by Knightsford Group Parish Council

Foreword

Welcome to the Neighbourhood Plan for Knightsford Parish.

This Neighbourhood Plan covers the villages of Tinkleton, West Knighton, West Stafford and Woodsford within the parish of Knightsford.

Work on our Neighbourhood Plan commenced in March 2021, when it was clear to the Parish Council that the local community wanted to have a say in how our Parish developed and to ensure that any development reflected its character and considered the needs and priorities of our community.

Our Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for Knightsford Parish until 2036 and aims to contribute to sustainable development in 3 key areas – economic, social, and environmental. It recognises the rural character of our Parish, its tranquil setting with expansive views, as well as its unique heritage and historical interest.

The development of our Neighbourhood Plan and ongoing work is led by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of the Parish Council. In developing the Neighbourhood Plan the group took account of the views of the local parishioners, businesses and other stakeholders who took the time to attend the various consultations, and to complete the questionnaires to give their views. The comments received at each of the consultation stages to date have been most useful and form part of the evidence base that supports the Neighbourhood Plan. These are expanded in more detail in the Consultation Statement.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Steering Group both past and present who are all volunteers and who generously devoted considerable time and effort to support the community:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| – Glyn Bush – Tinkleton | – Rhyan Holman – West Knighton |
| – Nicky Busst – West Knighton | – Tony Meader – Woodsford |
| – John Chittenden – West Stafford | – Martin Mitchard – West Knighton |
| – Kaye Chittenden – West Stafford | – Philip Postlethwaite – West Stafford |
| – Charles Cooper – Tinkleton | – Hilary Stonebridge – West Knighton |
| – Paul Eyles – Tinkleton | – Stephen Thorne – Tinkleton |
| – Ros Hepple – West Knighton | – Sandy Tubby – West Stafford |

Thanks also go to Steve Pallant for contributing some of the great photos used in this document and at the consultation events.

We also want to thank you our parishioners for your support. Without your input in taking the time to contribute your thoughts and views we recognise that the Plan could not have been submitted.

Quick Read

This is the referendum version of a Neighbourhood Plan for Knightsford. It is intended to help guide decisions on planning applications in our area.

The small, historic villages of West Knighton and West Stafford (to the west), and Woodsford and Tincleton (to the east) are friendly and safe rural communities in south Dorset. The area has little industry, but many people work from home or in the small businesses that operate in the locality.

The mix of farmland, woodland and heathland, the influence of the river Frome, together with the rich history of buildings such as, churches, manor houses and a castle and including, stone bridges and WWII pill boxes, have created a much loved landscape with many wonderful views and abundant wildlife, which this Neighbourhood Plan aims to retain.

This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain the rural character, community spirit and tranquillity of our area, in a manner which uses the best of modern technology combined with local materials and skills to help create a more sustainable place to live.

There is only limited need for new housing and employment, based on the evidence we have been able to compile. Neighbourhood Plans can provide detail on what should be built where to meet local needs, whilst ensuring that this is done in a way that is in keeping with the character of the area. Whilst a wide range of sites were assessed in terms of their potential to accommodate development, most were ruled out as unsuitable, based on a range of factors from landscape impact, impact on the character of the settlement and highway safety, and were not supported by the community.

Our local facilities and network of quiet lanes, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways mean that we can get about to socialise, and enjoy the countryside. Opportunities to expand these facilities are supported in this Plan, whilst ensuring that our roads are also more walker / cyclist / horse rider friendly. However such improvements are dependent on funding and/or commercial viability, and therefore there are no guarantees that such improvements will be forthcoming given the limited degree of development.

This Plan is intended to cover the period up to 2033, but it is likely to be reviewed sooner than that, particularly if the Local Plan or changes to national policy suggest that the amount of development in our area needs to increase.

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

1.1.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Government under the Localism Act of 2011. It is an important and powerful tool that gives communities, such as Knightsford Group Parish (consisting of the parishes of West Knighton, West Stafford, Tincleton and Woodsford) statutory powers to help with their development.

1.1.2 It is a document that sets out planning policies for the area – and these planning policies are used to decide whether in the future, Dorset Council, as our Local Planning Authority, can approve planning applications.

1.1.3 It is a document that is written by the local community; by the people who live and work within the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority. It is a plan for our communities developed by way of local consultation. It sets out how each village can protect its own special character, and where the community would welcome new development.

1.1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside the Dorset Council Local Plan (the “Local Plan”) when it is completed in 2027, but in the meantime, it will sit alongside the old West Dorset, Weymouth, and Portland District Council Local Plan.

1.1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to consultation with the local community and other interested bodies, such as Historic England and the Environment Agency, checked by an independent Examiner, and updated in line with his recommendations. This is the final version of all that work, which will be voted on in a local referendum in July 2025, before it can be made part of the development plan.

1.1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is a legal document: once established as part of the development plan for the area, Dorset Council, as our Local Planning Authority, is obliged to use it. It can assist in determining planning matters but cannot override strategic policies. In due course the revisions to the Local Plan may supersede elements of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan.

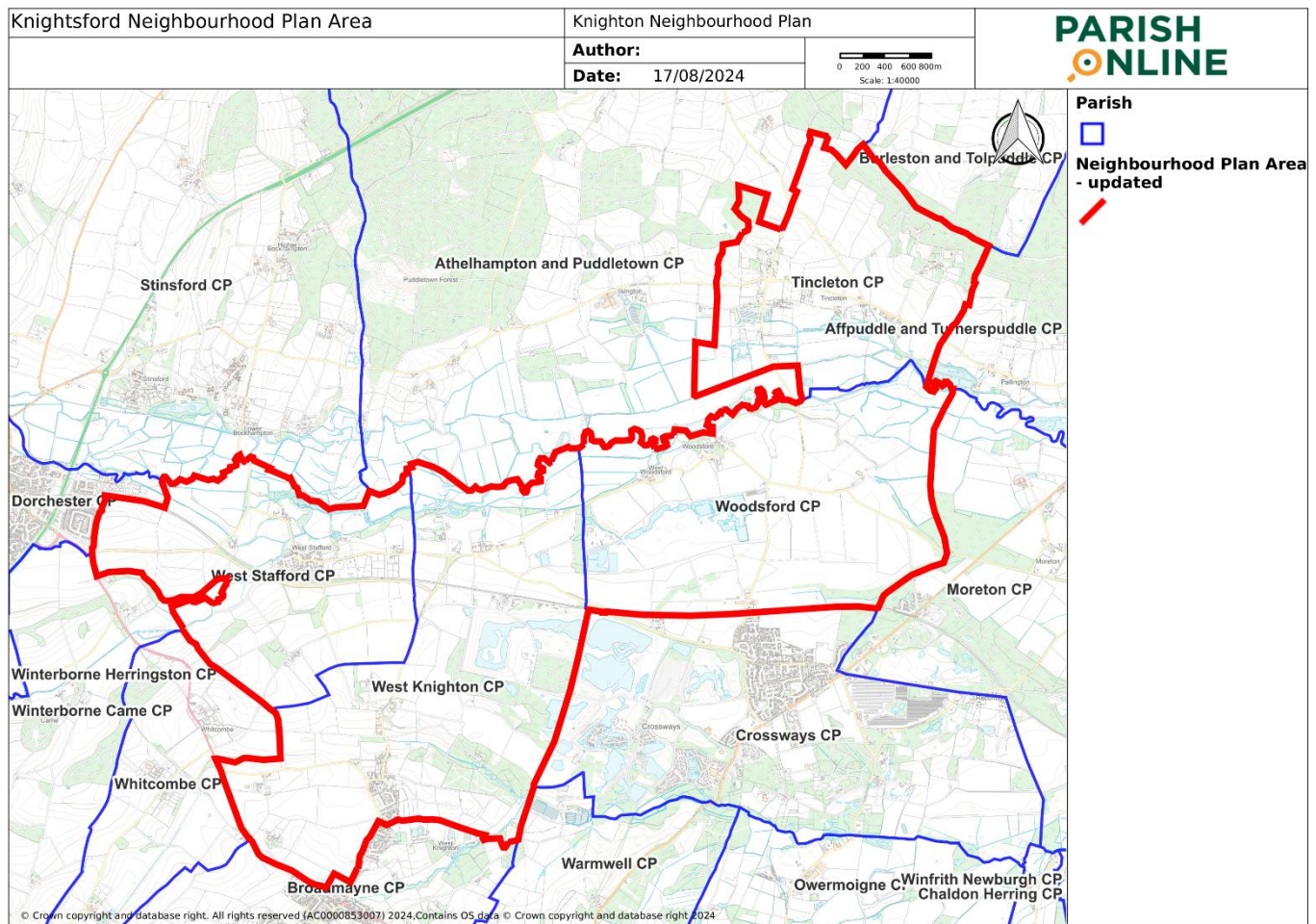
1.2.1 Knightsford Parish Council decided to initiate the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish villages of West Knighton, West Stafford, Tincleton and Woodsford, to give local people a greater say in the future of their communities. The decision to initiate the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan originated from concerns over development within the four villages and how that would impact the communities.

Designating the Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan process commenced by way of an application by Knightsford Parish Council to Dorset Council on 10 March 2021 to designate the area covered by the Parish Council (the four villages and the surrounding countryside) as a Neighbourhood Plan area. The area was formally designated on 15 June 2021.

1.2.3 Due to changes to the parish boundary at West Knighton in April 2024, the Parish Council requested to have the area redesignated (based on the new boundary), so that the Neighbourhood Plan area reflects the area that remains under the Parish Council’s jurisdiction.

1.2.4 More information about the Neighbourhood Plan area is in section 2.

Map 1. Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan Area

Setting up a Steering Group

1.2.5 A steering group was formed with representatives from the four villages and from the Parish Council, and the first Neighbourhood Plan meeting was held in September 2021. Grant funding was secured to engage specialists for technical support (from AECOM) and planning advice (from Jo Witherden – Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd) to assist the steering group.

Gathering evidence and formulating ideas

1.2.6 An essential part of the process is gathering evidence to help understand the issues that it would be helpful to cover in the Neighbourhood Plan, and how these can be addressed. The main way in which this was done was by way of a series of consultations.

1.2.7 The first stage of the process focused on gathering evidence to better understand local needs and desires. This was done by carrying out surveys of residents, local businesses and landowners, followed by input from technical experts to better understand the pros and cons of the possible development sites and to develop bespoke design guidance for the area.

1.2.8 The second stage included developing ideas and options from what the steering group had found through the initial surveys. The findings were presented to the community in October 2023, and the steering group asked for feedback on these ideas and options.

1.2.9 At this stage the steering group felt that they had enough information to draft the plan, which could then go back to the community for consultation.

Pre-submission consultation

1.2.10 The draft plan was then made available for consultation for 6 weeks from the middle of March through to early May 2024. This was aimed at local residents, workers and businesses, as well as statutory consultees including Dorset Council as the Local Planning Authority, adjoining parish councils, and agencies such as Natural England and the utility service providers that may be affected by the proposals in the plan.

1.2.11 All comments received during the consultation were considered, and further changes made to the Plan, before it was then submitted to Dorset Council for its examination.

Examination and referendum

1.2.12 Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ was appointed as the Independent Examiner. In March 2025, following a further consultation to invite comments on the Plan, he produced his report. This concluded that the Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan had been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements, and recommended four modifications to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. These modifications have been made, and the referendum is scheduled for July 2025.

1.3 The relevance of the Local Plan

1.3.1 The Local Plan sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out the overarching strategy for development across the area. The Local Plan sets policies for:

- How much development is needed across Dorset, and where this should be focused;
- Policies and site allocations for the different ‘tiers’ of settlement in its area;
- General policies for the countryside;
- Various environmental designations and how these will be considered in planning decisions;
- Generic design and other guidelines.

1.3.2 There are also Minerals and Waste development plans for the area, which are strategic matters that by law cannot be covered by Neighbourhood Plans.

1.3.3 Although the law requires that the Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, they can say slightly different things. Neighbourhood Plan policies give the opportunity to agree local priorities, identify development sites and highlight areas which are locally valued and should be protected. Both plans carry weight in making planning decisions, with any differences on non-strategic matters will be based on whichever plan was most recently adopted.

1.3.4 This Plan has therefore taken on board the existing policies in the 2015 West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan; and considered how those existing policies may change by looking at the emerging draft Dorset Council Local Plan.

1.4 How long the Plan will last.

1.4.1 The Plan is expected to last for 10 years, to cover the period 2023 – 2033. However, the need for a review will be considered following the adoption of the new Dorset Council Local Plan, to address any potential conflicts between the two plans. It may also need to be reviewed sooner, if there are significant changes in national policy or legislation, or local issues that arise that need to be covered. The decision when to review the plan will rest with Knightsford Parish Council, as the responsible body for Neighbourhood Planning in this area.

2. The Neighbourhood Plan Area

2.1 The designated Neighbourhood Plan area

2.1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the four parishes of Tincleton, West Knighton, West Stafford and Woodsford. Dorset Council governance changes in April 2024 led to small changes to West Knighton Parish. The updated Neighbourhood Plan area was confirmed by Dorset Council on 24 July 2024.

2.1.2 The area lies to the east side of the county town of Dorchester in Dorset. The main road (the A352) connecting Dorchester to Wareham and the Purbecks just touches the Neighbourhood Plan area to the south-west, and the London to Weymouth railway runs east-west through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The River Frome which flows into Poole harbour runs along the northern edge of the area, with the exception of Tincleton parish which is on the far side of the river.

2.1.3 **Tincleton** parish is located in the north of the Neighbourhood Plan area, closest to the larger village of Puddletown which lies approximately 1½ miles to the north-west. The village of Tincleton is somewhat fragmented, with some development around the junction at Tincleton Cross to the west, around the church to the east, and in between around the village hall on the junction with Blacksmith's Lane. There is also a cluster of 25 homes at Clyffe House.

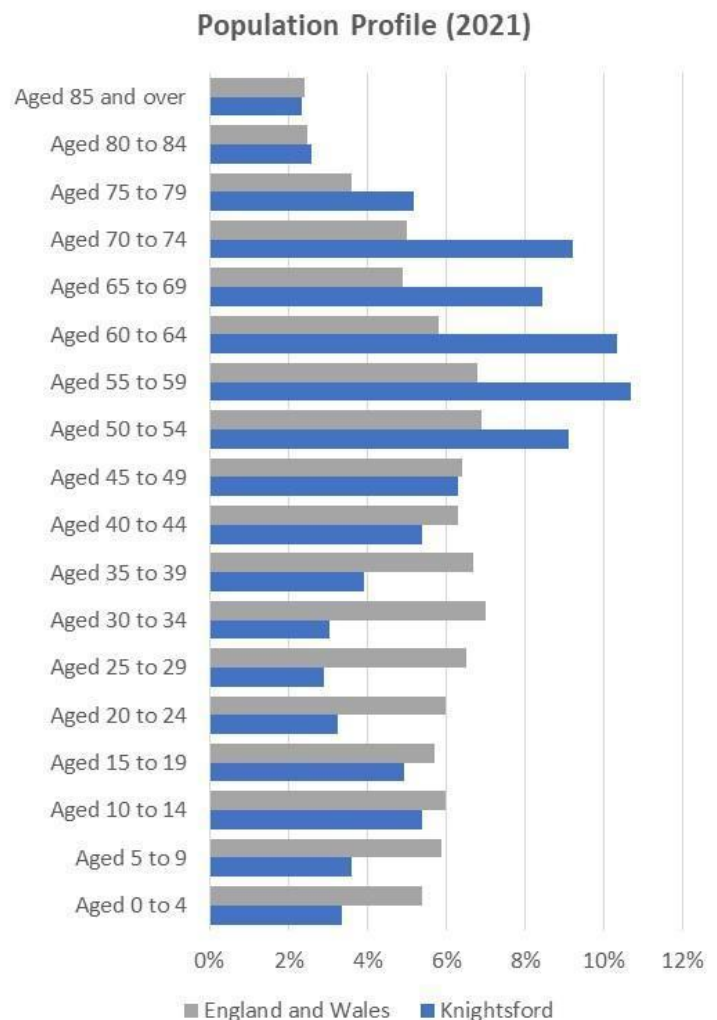
2.1.4 **West Knighton** is the largest parish in terms of population. It is located south of the River Frome and West Stafford and west of Woodsford and Crossways. The village of West Knighton lies on the southern edge of the parish, close to the larger village of Broadmayne which lies to the south. Lewell and Knighton Heath are to the north of the parish and Littlemayne is to the south west. The population of West Knighton is about 320.

2.1.5 **West Stafford** parish adjoins the easternmost part of Dorchester, with a population of about 310 people. The village of West Stafford is the second largest in the Neighbourhood Plan area. It is located between the grounds of Stafford House (to the north) and the railway line (to the south).

2.1.6 **Woodsford** parish is located south of Tincleton and east of West Knighton and West Stafford with a population of about 80 people. The main cluster of housing is around Woodsford Church, on the northern side of the parish. The railway line runs along the southern boundary, with the larger village of Crossways to the south.

2.2 Our community

2.2.1 The population of Knightsford is about 900 according to the 2021 Census data, West Knighton being the largest community, and Woodsford the smallest. The population



comprises mainly older people. The number of 20 and 30 year olds is significantly less than the national average.

2.2.2 Most of the housing in the area comprises of three and four bedroom family homes (these account for about 81% of the overall housing stock) – there are no apartments, only a handful of shared / sub-divided homes, and comparatively few terraced properties. These factors, together with the generally high house prices across Southern England, mean that the average house price over the past 5 years (2018-2023) has been around £410,000, with the lower quartile price around £290,000.

2.2.3 Given its rural nature, the area has a limited range of community facilities. These include two village halls (in Tincleton and West Stafford), two pubs (in West Knighton and West Stafford), two play areas (in West Knighton and West Stafford) and churches (in every parish).

2.2.4 Whilst the parish is not considered ‘deprived’, like many parts of rural Dorset it scores poorly when assessed against access to housing and services (based on the Government’s Indices of Multiple Deprivation).

2.2.5 There are no large industrial estates or leisure resorts in the area, the main businesses being working farms, quarrying and related to construction. Part of Silverlake lies within the parish, an exclusive holiday home development based in a ‘worked out’ quarry from which wildlife-rich areas and freshwater lakes have been created. Additionally, a limited range of small, largely independent businesses operate in the parish. It is estimated (based on responses to our household survey in 2022) that about 33% of workers work from home, about 50% work outside of the area and the remainder (about 10 – 15%) work locally.

2.3 Our environment

2.3.1 The countryside is mainly pasture bisected by the River Frome. There is a mix of farmland and heath covering much of the area and to the south of the railway line.

2.3.2 There are over 60 Listed buildings or structures within the Neighbourhood Plan area, five of which are Grade I, and one is Grade II*. There are also eight scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Plan area, mainly barrows. Conservation Areas have been designated covering much of West Knighton and West Stafford, highlighting and protecting the historic importance and character of these villages. The parkland around Stafford House is on the local list of historic parks and gardens.

2.3.3 The River Frome is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are two small areas of ancient woodland along the northern boundary of Tincleton Parish, several areas of deciduous woodland including Knighton Heath wood, Heron Grove, Gould’s Coppice, and along the River Frome valley. These woodland areas, together with the semi-improved grasslands, water meadows and miles of hedgerows, provide important habitats for our wildlife.



2.3.4 Just outside the Neighbourhood Plan area in Crossways parish lies Warmwell Heath, part of the Dorset Heathlands which are designated as an SSSI but also have European / international designations (RAMSAR, SAC and SPA). The recreational impact of disturbance and trampling from visitors to these heaths is known to harm the wildlife there. The area also falls within the river catchment basin of Poole Harbour, which is similarly protected as an internationally important wildlife site. The impact from nutrients (nitrogen and phosphate) through the discharge of waste water into the rivers that feed into Poole Harbour is known to be harmful to the ecology of that site, and will also require mitigation.

2.3.5 Land underneath West Stafford, West Knighton and Tincleton contains an important aquifer, which is vulnerable to pollution. Much of the area is therefore designated as Source Protection and Drinking Water (Groundwater) Safeguarding Zones¹.

2.3.6 Flood risk is a key consideration for much of the area, particularly in relation to the River Frome and its floodplain, but also in terms of susceptibility to groundwater flooding. A map showing flood risk areas is provided in **Appendix 2**. For further information on flood risk please refer to the latest version of Dorset Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment².

2.3.7 Key environmental issues for our area, identified through the Strategic Environmental Assessment, include:

- Protecting the local landscape's key characteristics, and the setting of the Dorset National Landscape (the new name for the Dorset AONB);
- Protecting the important wildlife habitats within and beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area;
- Ensuring the location and design of new development does not harm the heritage assets in the area, both directly or through changes to their setting;
- Minimising the loss of productive agricultural land, the potential sterilisation of areas where there are important mineral resources, and pollution of our rivers and groundwater;
- Increasing our resilience to climate change; avoiding building in areas at risk of flooding and increasing flood risk elsewhere, factoring in the need for drought resistance and extreme heat events, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

2.4 Planning Policy Framework

2.4.1 The West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) contains the main strategic planning policies for the area. There is also a Minerals Strategy (2014) that also forms part of the development plan for the area, together with the more recently adopted Minerals Site and Waste Plans.

2.4.2 The main settlement in the area (in planning terms) is West Knighton, which has a defined development boundary. The two villages of Broadmayne and West Knighton are considered as one "larger village" in the Local Plan (Broadmayne lies in a different parish outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the south).

2.4.3 The Local Plan's spatial strategy (SUS2) states that "Development opportunities in the more rural areas will be focused primarily at the larger villages, and should take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the village (unless identified as a strategic allocation). It is expected that neighbourhood development plans and other appropriate planning tools will be used to help bring forward new development, and may allocate additional sites, or extend an existing (or add a new) development boundary to help deliver this growth." The defined development boundary currently marks the area

¹ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

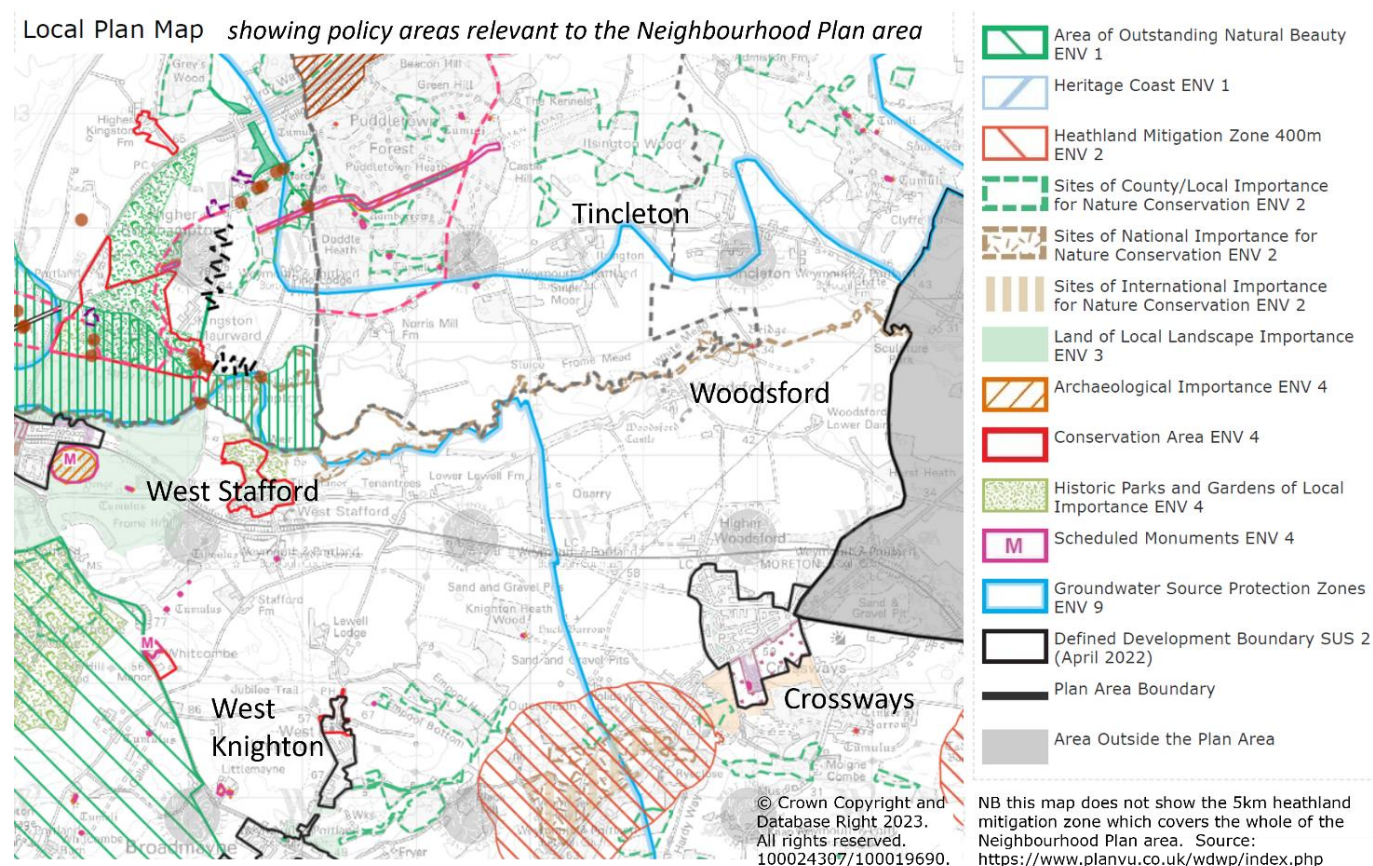
² <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-level-1-sfra,as> published March 2024.

within which further development can generally take place, and the Local Plan also allows proposals for affordable housing, businesses and community facilities outside but adjoining this boundary.

2.4.4 The remaining area, including West Stafford, Woodsford and Tincleton, is treated as 'countryside' for planning purposes. Within these areas, The Local Plan's spatial strategy states that "development will be strictly controlled, having particular regard to the need for the protection of the countryside and environmental constraints."

2.4.5 The main development proposals for the area are included in the Minerals Site Plan, which allocates a large area of land (approximately 90ha) around Woodsford Lower Dairy as part of a north-easterly extension of the existing Woodsford quarry. The allocated site (AG4) has an estimated mineral resource of 3,000,000 tonnes of sand and gravel. A planning application to expand the quarry was made in August 2023 (P/FUL/2023/04753) and as of end March 2025 had yet to be determined. In line with the allocation it includes restoration plans to form a series of ponds that could help reduce phosphate, nitrogen and sediment load in the lower reaches of the River Frome SSSI and Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites, as well as creating new wetland habitats and fishing areas, and a new footpath connection. It is estimated that, if granted, the extraction of this area will not be completed until 2041.

Map 2. Local Plan map for the area



2.4.6 Policy SUS5 of the Local Plan deals specifically with Neighbourhood Planning. This advises that Neighbourhood Plans should:

- Show how they are contributing towards the strategic objectives of the Local Plan and be in general conformity with its strategic approach;
- Set out how they will promote sustainable development in their area at the same level or over and above that which would otherwise be delivered through the Local Plan;
- Have due regard to information on local need for new homes, jobs and facilities, for their plan area and any outlying areas which they may serve;

- Demonstrate that they are credible, justifiable and achievable. This can be assisted by involving landowners, developers and service providers in their preparation.

2.4.7 Work has commenced on the review of the Local Plan, and the first draft was published for consultation in January 2021. There were no strategic allocations proposed for the Neighbourhood Plan area in this first draft, and the spatial strategy was largely unchanged from the adopted Local Plan. The latest timetable for finalising the Local Plan (as of March 2025) indicates that it is likely to be adopted in late 2027.

2.5 Key things that local residents have told us

2.5.1 We had some useful insights into resident's priorities through the results of the consultations that were undertaken in 2022 and 2023.

2.5.2 As a whole, local residents told us that they want to live in an area which has retained its rural character, is friendly, safe and tranquil. Access to natural woodland and open green spaces, garden spaces, the many trees and hedgerows in the area, the historic buildings and use of local materials in designs, were all highly important. There was some support for additional housing and employment, which was explored further through looking at potential sites for development.

2.5.3 One of the ideas floated as part of the consultations for this Neighbourhood Plan was the potential for a community renewable energy project, that could provide renewable energy collectively to a village. Whilst there was a lot of support for this idea in responses to the 2022 Household Survey a follow-up question (sent directly to the potential volunteers via the contact details they provided) to ask if anyone would be willing to lead such a group did not get any positive responses, and in the absence of a group leader this project has not progressed.

2.5.4 **Tincleton residents** did not generally feel that further development in their parish was appropriate, as the area lacks the infrastructure, mains drainage, public transport, community facilities and road access to sustain any development. They felt that it was important to maintain the rural and historic character and tranquillity of the village and its open spaces. Concerns were raised about the increasing levels of traffic, and traffic speeds, and residents were supportive of measures to improve local routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Whilst there was a desire to improve the village hall (including parking provision), there was no obvious options to do this through enabling development that would garner local support.

2.5.5 **West Knighton residents** were similarly keen to keep the rural feel, landscape and green spaces of the area, and protect the dark night skies. Almost everyone agreed that the village play area is a very important local asset which needs to be retained, and there was some support for the idea of a village hall, although at present residents can meet in the church and function rooms at the New Inn. Feedback from the consultations indicated that many residents believed that any development that does take place should not be extensive in size, but limited development either as infilling within the designated development boundary, or on brown field sites, could be accommodated provided this was done in a way that maintains the rural nature of the village. There were concerns raised about the number of homes used as second homes and holiday accommodation and how this may be impacting on the community, although the 2021 Census data does not indicate that this is particularly high compared to other parts of the county. Residents were particularly concerned about traffic on local roads, and how this affected the safe passage of walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

2.5.6 **West Stafford residents** were keen to keep the parish rural, tranquil, friendly, attractive, and safe. There was also a desire to respect the historic and rural character of the parish and retain the dark night skies. Local green spaces and views were seen as particularly important to the village, such as those over the water meadows and towards the church, and there was support for improving the

walking, cycling, and riding routes between neighbouring parishes. There was also some support for the idea of a local shop / farm shop, but it is difficult to see that this would be viable given the lack of passing trade. No sites were put forward that were considered suitable for building on.

2.5.7 **Woodsford residents** broadly supported the overall objectives set out in the draft plan. There were no sites considered suitable for development, and the area lacks the infrastructure, services and facilities to make it a sustainable location for much development. Residents felt strongly about keeping the individual, rural and historic character of our villages, the views across the countryside to the church and other local features, and retaining the dark night skies.



3. Vision and Objectives



3.1 Vision

3.1.1 The vision is based on input from the community in terms of what people value about living in our area and what is important to them for the future.

West Knighton, West Stafford, Tincleton and Woodsford parishes will continue to be thriving communities. They will be rural, tranquil, friendly, attractive and safe. Development opportunities will be sustainable and in line with the needs and wishes of the parishes, respecting the area's historic and rural character.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 The following objectives highlight those areas where this Neighbourhood Plan can help achieve the vision (taking into account that its main role is influencing planning decisions):

- Protect and enhance the rural and tranquil landscape of the parishes.
- Protect and enhance the distinctive local, natural and historic environment.
- Safeguard valued local views and greenspaces, and of possible identify new green spaces that local residents can enjoy.
- Keep roads safe, and ensure there are safe and attractive walking, cycling and riding routes around and between neighbouring parishes - this could be through making paths more accessible with gates; improving cycle and bridleways; traffic calming; etc.
- Identify land for possible development to help meet local needs.
- Ensure new houses and other buildings are well-designed, sustainable and in keeping with the character of the villages.
- Enable new employment proposals consistent with the rural character, for example rural diversification; small workshops etc.
- Protect, enhance and encourage local facilities and services, such as our pubs; village halls; farm / community shops.

4. Conserving Local Character

4.1 The landscape character of our area

4.1.1 Knightsford parish has a strong rural landscape and rich vegetation, and our residents enjoy immediate access to the unspoilt surrounding countryside. All four parishes have long distance views and areas of deciduous woodland, including two areas of ancient woodland, Napiers Copse and parts of Clyffe Copse in Tincleton known as the Hang.

4.1.2 An assessment of the landscape character of the area in Dorset is available online³. The main landscapes are the valley pasture landscape running along the valley of the River Frome, and the heath / farm mosaic that covers much of the area along and to the south of the railway line. Key characteristics of these two landscape types include:

Valley pasture

- flat and open valley floor landscape with distinctively meandering river channels which often floods.
- typically a grazed pastoral landscape based on deep alluvial and gravel soils.
- generally large fields with a mosaic of smaller fields abutting the river edges.
- settlements and transport corridors follow the valley floor.
- groups of riverside trees follow the watercourses creating key features along the valleys.
- old water meadow systems and features are common.
- historic river crossings points are often over old bridges.

Heath / farmland mosaic

- generally flat landform, which drains to the adjacent river basins.
- mosaic of mixed farmland (including some areas of estate farmland), heathland and scrub which creates a patchwork landscape.
- some large areas of open heath and small fragmented pockets.
- straight roads and lanes often lined with thick hedges.
- influenced by land uses such as leisure uses, transport corridors, quarrying.
- woodland and plantations create key features, which helps to integrate development.

4.1.3 The northern part of the area around Tincleton and Woodsford enjoys particularly dark skies and a general lack of light pollution⁴. Whilst street lighting is not envisaged in our area, it may be necessary to provide some lighting along foot/cycle paths, and external lighting for safety / security reasons. Dorset Council's guidance for rural areas outside of National Landscapes⁵ suggests our area should be treated as Environmental Zone 2, which means that upward light spillage should be prevented, and the CCT (the correlated colour temperature of any external lighting) should ideally not exceed 3000K (avoiding the cooler, bluer tones of higher CCT values, which are less tolerated by nocturnal wildlife). Low-level solutions such as solar cat's eye lighting and down-lighting along paths

³ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/the-dorset-landscape>. For the broader national character area profiles please see the Dorset Heaths area (NCA Profile:135 <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6271645295575040?category=587130>) and the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase area (NCA Profile:134 <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5846213517639680?category=587130>) which covers the western part including West Stafford and the western side of West Knighton.

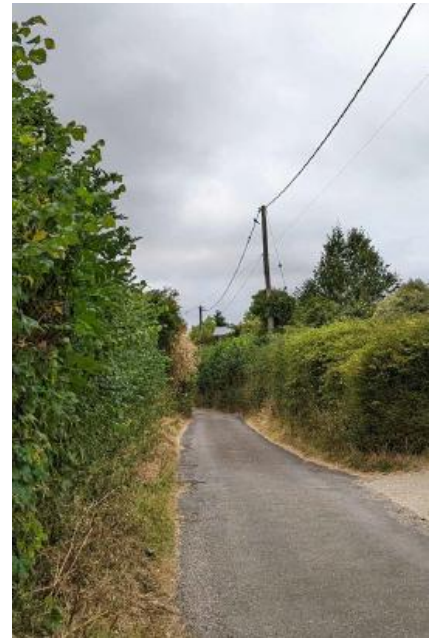
⁴ <https://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

⁵ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/street-lighting-and-illuminated-signs-policy#lighting-provision>

(either wall-mounted or on posts) are likely to be in harmony with the surrounding rural landscape. The use of PIR (passive infrared) or similar technologies that detect motion and enable lighting to be automatically reduced or switched off when not required can help minimise the impact on dark night skies and should also be considered.

4.1.4 The rural character of the lanes is an important characteristic of the area, and these are typically lined with thick hedges and lack pavements. Where measures are required to improve highway safety, the design should seek to reflect the area's rural character. This may, for example, be through separating any pedestrian / cycle routes through a grassed verge rather than an engineered kerb.

4.1.5 It is important that development recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and aims to enhance it. General principles to achieve this are therefore included in the following policy.



Policy 1. Development set in rural landscapes

Development should:

- retain and increase opportunities for small-scale broadleaved woodlands / copses, and native trees and hedgerows, particularly along the valley floors, settlement edges and locations where it would soften the landscape and visual impact of intrusive development;
- conserve and maintain watercourses / ditches, incorporating them into new designs in a natural (rather than overly engineered) form;
- where possible retain the rural character of the roads running around and between the villages, which are well-vegetated and in places offer views towards open fields and surrounding countryside, enhancing the feel of openness in the area;
- minimise the impact on dark night skies by restricting external lighting schemes as far as possible (taking into account any health and safety needs), avoiding light spill that would be directed upwards, and using warmer colours with a CCT not exceeding 3000K.

4.2 Wildlife Corridors and Biodiversity

4.2.1 The broadleaved woodlands, copses and native hedgerows, together with the habitats associated with the floodplain and drainage channels of the River Frome, provide important wildlife corridors through our landscape, as well as contributing to its landscape character. Around the villages, wildlife can also be found in our gardens and green spaces, including our churchyards. Each element plays its role in enhancing the rural feel of the area, improving the aesthetics of the environment and facilitating the movement of species.

4.2.2 Under the wider backdrop of climate change and global warming, protection of biodiversity is becoming an important priority and should start at the local level. Biodiversity has multiple benefits as it can protect the natural environment, provide opportunities to educate and involve the community in looking after features in their area, and even boost health and well-being and benefit the local economy. Where feasible, public access to wildlife areas is encouraged, providing that this will not unduly disturb protected species.

4.2.3 National and Local Plan policies already provide protection of the nationally and locally important wildlife sites in our area. The Environment Act (2021) contains provisions for the protection and improvement of the environment, including introducing biodiversity net gain as a statutory requirement. This will provide a mechanism to assess the value of habitats that may be lost as a result of development, and require a plan (either on-site or through off-site measures) to achieve a minimum 10% increase in overall biodiversity. Some minor developments, such as householder applications and changes of use, are exempt from the requirements. The Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol offers general guidance as well as specific requirements for new development in order to meet biodiversity aims, and will be updated as the requirements of the Environment Act come into force.

4.2.4 Guidance for incorporating wildlife features within villages is contained in Policy 9. The following policy considers the wider opportunities for enhancing the biodiversity of wildlife areas across all four parishes.

4.2.5 In general, where landscaping / planting proposals are considered necessary, details of the mix of species and maintenance schedule will be made as planning conditions. The Government expect the planting associated with any biodiversity net gain to be maintained for a minimum of 30 years, and a similar timespan is considered appropriate for landscaping where such planting is deemed necessary to make a development acceptable.

4.2.6 In our area, Ash dieback could have a significant impact on landscape character. While the policies in this Plan cannot be used to address the loss of such trees (other than when tree planting may be needed to mitigate a direct impact from development), a project has been suggested for the Parish Council to consider. This would mean using some of the precept and any available grant funding to encourage replacement planting with dieback tolerant trees.

Policy 2. Wildlife corridors and biodiversity

1. Development should aim to strengthen the wildlife corridors in the Neighbourhood Plan area (in particular, areas of broadleaved woodlands, copses and native hedgerows, and habitats associated with the floodplain and drainage channels of the River Frome), and avoid measures that would impede the movement of species. Existing mature trees and hedges should where practicable be incorporated into the landscape design of public areas, and any landscaping schemes should include a maintenance programme.
2. Where new trees are to be planted, suitable native, climate change tolerant species should have priority, with a mix of species reflecting the local landscape character. Species typical of the area include oak, ash (where ash dieback tolerant stock should be used), beech, sweet chestnut, yew, lime, birch / silver birch, hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, spindle and willow in riverside locations. Fruiting trees should also be considered to help achieve a net gain for pollinators. Tree pits, if required, must be designed carefully responding to the needs of the particular species providing sufficient soil volume and ensuring that trees can easily flourish.
3. Opportunities should be taken where possible to link the small and isolated woodlands in the parish, to help connect these habitats and improve biodiversity.
4. Proposals to facilitate public access to wildlife areas should be considered and encouraged where compatible with the nature conservation interests of those areas.

Project 1. Tree Planting

The Parish Council will explore setting up a grant scheme to encourage the replacement planting of diseased / dead ash trees with new, dieback tolerant species.

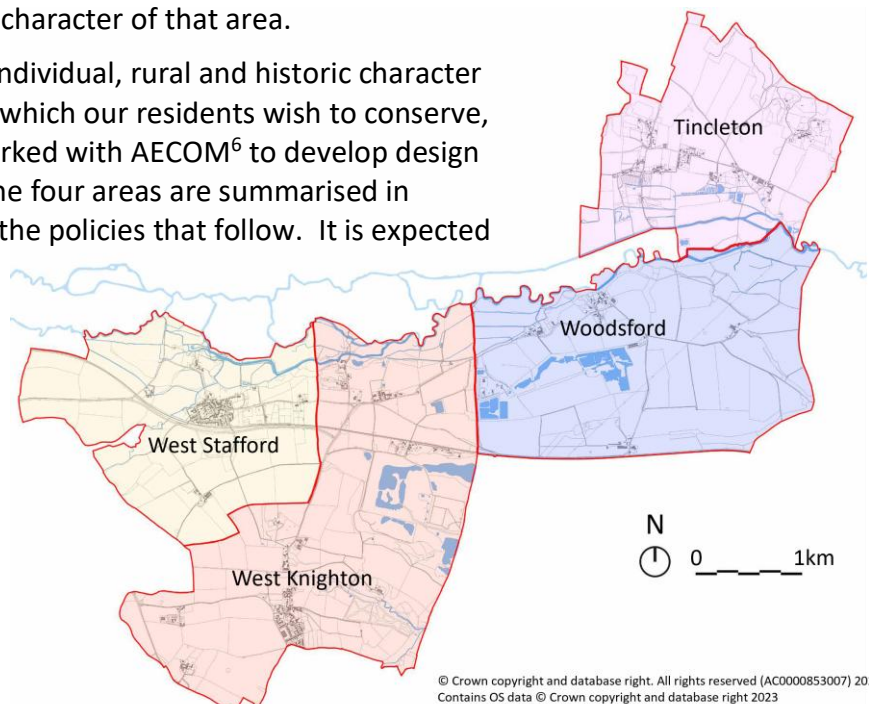
4.3 General Design Principles

4.3.1 The overwhelming priority expressed by local residents in terms of design, was to retain the individual, rural and historic character of each of our villages and hamlets. There was also general consensus that development should:

- Respect the area's heritage, landscape, and key views (this is covered in the next chapter);
- Reflects the local, traditional building types and character;
- Generally follow the layout, typical building size, setbacks, garden sizes and boundary treatments (such as hedges or low brick walls) found in each of the settlements;
- Include a mix of styles and use of materials in keeping with what already exists within that settlement, including an irregular, varied roof form and chimneys;
- Consider how the site layout and design can make the most of solar gain and incorporate renewable energy sources sensitively;
- Incorporate modern infrastructure requirements (drainage, parking, waste collection etc) sensitively, taking into account future maintenance needs;
- Be of an appropriate density, so that it does not seem crowded, and becomes less dense on the outskirts of the villages;
- Include enough on-plot parking provision to avoid increasing the number of vehicles parked along our roads and narrow rural lanes;
- Incorporate wildlife features (such as bird boxes and bee bricks) into buildings;
- Retain and where possible improve green spaces, tree coverage and wildlife corridors;
- Link development into the network of paths and lanes, retaining their rural character;
- Retain our dark skies and not cause noticeable light pollution.

4.3.2 Given the rural nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the level of development that is likely to take place will be small-scale, reflective of historic growth patterns, rather than creating suburban estates that are not in keeping with the rural nature of our villages. There is much variety across the four villages that has resulted in a strong local character and visual interest for each village. The different qualities of street layout, building setbacks, lines, plot sizes and widths, and levels of enclosure need to be taken into consideration in new design proposals. New development should complement or, where appropriate, seek to enrich the streetscape in a manner compatible with that village's character. Where there are areas of 20th century, more suburban style, development, there may be opportunities to reduce the obvious repetition and create visual interest in a manner that does not unduly jar with the established character of that area.

4.3.3 In order to understand the individual, rural and historic character of each of our villages and hamlets which our residents wish to conserve, The Neighbourhood Plan Group worked with AECOM⁶ to develop design guidance, and the descriptions of the four areas are summarised in **Appendix 3** and has helped inform the policies that follow. It is expected that proposals for development will have regard to the design guidance advice contained in the Knightsford Area-wide design guidance and codes: April 2023.



⁶ AECOM is a national environmental and planning consultancy funded through Government Neighbourhood Plan support

4.3.4 Design and access statements are often required to accompany planning applications, and should be used to demonstrate a good understanding of:

- the building orientation, building lines, and building setbacks of the village and the area immediately surrounding the development, and the amount of greenery (hedges, verges, trees etc) that this enables;
- the density, scale and massing of the village and the area immediately surrounding the development and how this works within the landform;
- the variety of built forms, materials and architectural details used in the village, and how these relate to different building uses and characters;
- the need to include aspects required for modern-day life – such as car parking spaces, charging points, meter boxes, waste / recycling bins, storage etc, without detriment to the character of the area.

Plot formation, building set-back, orientation and boundary treatments

4.3.5 Plots and building lines within the villages are generally irregular, with variations on how buildings are set back from and face onto the lanes. This is considered to be a key aspect of the rural character of the area, and should be introduced within the areas of more uniform 20th century development where opportunities arise.

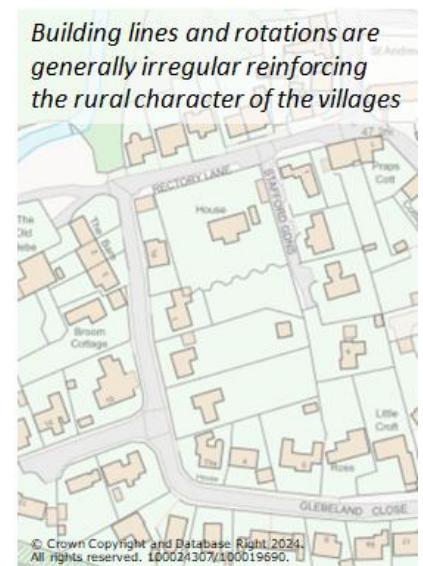
4.3.6 The interaction of buildings and front garden areas with the lanes and open spaces provides opportunities for natural surveillance (keeping crime rates low), as well as opportunities for social interaction (as people have opportunities to recognise each other and talk). This is only achieved where the doors and windows open out onto the street, and any boundary treatments are low level.



4.3.7 Boundary treatments are mainly natural (hedgerows and verges), but there are also examples of low-height brick walls, stone / rubble walls, railings, and wooden post and rail / picket fencing. The vegetation contributes to the rural character of the area and the low level brick and stone walls, and open wooden fencing provides opportunities for social interaction between the front gardens and the street, as well as helping define the street or pathway. Close-boarded panel fencing, high

walls, and the use of concrete or other materials not prevalent in the area, should be avoided as they are neither in keeping with the area or help create friendly streets. Similarly, the boundary treatment with the open countryside should be mainly hedges, shrubs and trees, providing a buffer zone between the site and the countryside to reduce the urban influence of the development in wider views, and create a wildlife corridor along this new edge.

4.3.8 Together with the creation of potential local landmarks, one of the crucial aspects of a successful streetscape is the issue of corners created by junctions. Buildings on these junctions tend to have at

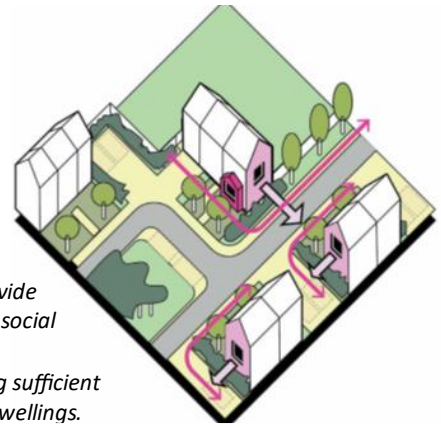


least two public facing façades, and as a place where people often stop to negotiate the junction, also have more influence on the street's appearance. The irregular nature of the street pattern in our area means that such corners are not always 90 degrees, and this in itself can add to the local character by creating designs / forms that are more unusual,



Doors and windows should be used to provide natural surveillance and opportunities for social contacts.

This will need to be balanced with ensuring sufficient privacy and security for occupants of the dwellings.



such as Floyers Field in West Stafford, where the building aligns with the curving nature of the street corner, providing a positive front and natural surveillance from all of the façade.

Policy 3. Plot formation, building set-back, orientation and boundary treatments

Development should complement and, where appropriate, enrich the streetscape into which it will be inserted. To achieve this, the following principles should be adhered to in considering plot formation, building set-back, orientation and boundary treatments:

- the size and pattern of plots should be irregular, reflecting the variety found within that village / locality;
- building lines and setbacks should be irregular, retaining the sense of informality and reinforcing the rural character of the villages, but without blocking views of important local landmarks or harming the important sequenced views along the village lanes. Careful consideration should also be given to ensuring that streets and public spaces within the villages have good levels of natural surveillance. Where the character is generally uniform, subtle variations in terms of the degree of form of recesses, protrusions and rotations, should be used;
- the majority of buildings within the villages should front onto streets, providing good levels of natural surveillance and opportunities for social interaction. Where buildings are side-on, their design should ensure that the front entrance is clearly identifiable from the street, and the street-facing façade complements the streetscape. The design of corner buildings (on junctions) should similarly ensure that all façades overlooking the street or public space are treated as primary façades, creating visual interest and interaction along both frontages. Buildings at important intersections should be designed to provide a local landmark (unless there is a landmark building already on the junction);
- the rural character of the lanes should be preserved, including the retention and continuation of native hedgerows and grass verges where possible. Within the villages boundary treatments should help define the street and public realm; natural boundary treatments (hedges / shrub borders) should prevail, with low-height brick or stone / rubble walls (and, to a lesser extent, railings and wooden post and rail or picket fencing) otherwise used. Where space allows, street tree planting should also be included;
- boundary treatments on the village edges should use hedges, shrubs and trees, to help integrate the village within its rural setting. Where fencing is needed, this should be post and rail or otherwise perforated so as to avoid creating a harsh edge, and allow wildlife to move along this green corridor more freely.

Incorporating the car in developments – parking guidelines

4.3.9 Car ownership levels are higher than average⁷, and are likely to remain high, as many of the day-to-day journeys will be outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area and public transport options are poor.

4.3.10 The dominant car parking typology found in the parish is on-plot parking, generally to the front or side of the property, but there are also examples where parking is provided to the rear or within garages. Parking courts are not typical of the area and are not encouraged.

4.3.11 It is important to consider the placement and design of car parking within developments, to avoid vehicles dominating the streetscape, or increasing on-street parking on our village lanes which are often of insufficient width (one example being along Highgate Lane in West Knighton due to the lack of on-plot parking), or the removal of front gardens and associated vegetation to provide off-road spaces. Garages are often used for additional storage, and therefore consideration needs to be given to the fact that cars may then still be parked elsewhere – whether in front of the garage or on the street. Where placed to the side, they can also close the gaps between buildings which can be detrimental to local character. Where garaging is needed, the use of more open car barns can ensure that the vehicle space is not re-purposed for storage, but consideration will also be needed to ensure good natural surveillance from nearby buildings to avoid creating opportunities for theft or other anti-social behaviour. Similarly any hardstanding areas for parked vehicles should have good natural surveillance from the property they serve. Should open car ports or barns be considered, then advice can be sought from Dorset Police's Secured by Design Officer. The inclusion of secure provision for cycle and waste bin storage should also be considered, either within or separate to the garaging.



4.3.12 Dorset Council have set out what they consider to be the optimum parking standards⁸, and these will be the starting point for considering if a development is providing adequate provision. For small sites of up to 5 dwellings, the guidance advises that 1 parking space is provided for any 1 bedroom dwelling, 1 or 2 spaces for 2 bedroom dwellings, 2 spaces for 3 bedroom dwellings and 2 or 3 spaces for larger dwellings, together with 1 visitor space. Spaces within car ports and car barns are counted in the supply, with spaces in garages discounted by ½ as these tend to be less well used.

4.3.13 With the growing take-up of electric cars, building Regulations now require electric car charging points to be provided for all new houses. In the absence of a garage or car barn, the charging points will generally be placed on the wall of the house closest to the parking space, and can harm the character of the house if not given careful consideration.

Policy 4. Incorporating the car in developments – parking guidelines

1. There should be adequate on-plot parking provision to avoid issues of parking overflow along the characteristically narrow lanes.

⁷ The 2021 Census shows that 63% of households in Knightsford had 2 or more vehicles (compared to the Dorset average of 45%) and far fewer had no vehicle (7% compared to 14%)

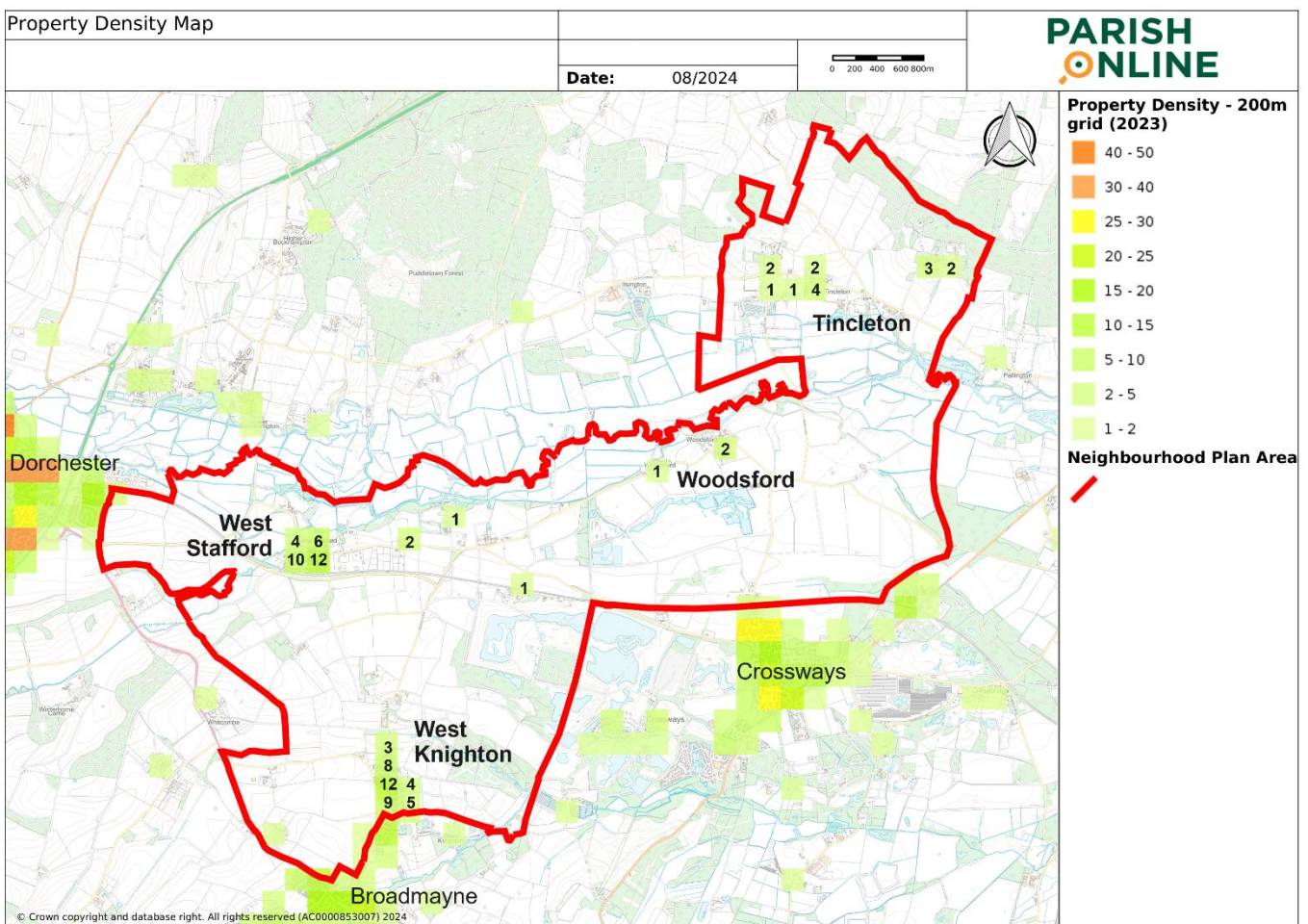
⁸ Residential Car Parking Provision – Local Guidance for Dorset, May 2011 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/car-and-cycle-parking-standards>

2. Parking spaces and garaging should be well integrated into design so as not to dominate the public realm. Where parking is to the front of the plot, soft landscaping should be used to soften the visual impact and retain the rural character of the lane. Parking positioned to the side, whether simply surface or within garaging, should be set back behind the building line if feasible and suitably overlooked to deter crime.
3. The placement of garaging should seek to retain gaps between buildings in keeping with the character of the area.
4. Mounted charging points and associated services should be integrated into the design of new developments, where possible within the garaging or on a side elevation, to avoid being overly prominent.
5. Where possible, waste storage and cycle parking should be incorporated within any garaging, and designed so that these can be easily accessed without having to move the vehicle. Where there is no garaging, covered and secured cycle storage should be provided within the curtilage; using materials in keeping with the character of the building and not overly prominent from the street.
6. Hard standing must be constructed from permeable materials, to minimise surface water run-off and therefore, help mitigate potential flooding

Density, building heights and rooflines

4.3.14 The density of development within the parishes is quite low, reflecting its rural character and influence of the front and rear gardens of varying sizes.

Map 3. Property Density Map



4.3.15 Building densities in smaller and more scattered villages of Woodsford and Tincleton are generally much lower than in West Knighton and West Stafford, but even in those villages the density

barely reaches 12 dwellings per hectare (dph). In comparison, the larger settlements of Crossways include areas of around 28dph, with the county town of Dorchester having some areas where the density exceeds 50dph.

4.3.16 Whilst infill development will inevitably increase building densities, it is important that this does not result in the closure of gaps and views between properties that are important elements of that village's character.

4.3.17 Properties tend to be between 1-2 storeys high, with the storey height being relatively low on many of the workers' cottages, often with rooms in the roof (i.e. 1½ storeys). Churches are the tallest elements in the landscape. Whilst there are manor and other grander houses of 2½ to 3 storeys (such as at Stafford House, Talbothayes Lodge, Lower Lewell Farmhouse, Woodsford Castle, and Clyffe Manor House), there are very few examples within the villages themselves (Manor House at West Stafford, Woodsford Manor and Woodsford House) which are taller than 2 storeys within the villages. It is also important to consider the actual heights within each storey and the height of the roof, as if these are much greater than typical for the area, it can look out of place.

4.3.18 Rooflines are generally irregular and interrupted by the gaps between buildings.

Chimneys and dormers often decorate the roofs of domestic

properties, offering visual interest. The undulating topography in some villages, especially West Stafford and West Knighton, adds further interest to the roofline and creates good perspective views.



Local examples of a single storey building and 1.5-storey buildings, the roofline of which has chimney and gabled dormer windows which adds visual interest.

Policy 5. Density, building heights and rooflines

Development should complement and, where appropriate, enrich the streetscape into which it will be inserted. To achieve this, the following principles should be adhered to in considering density, building heights and mix:

- Proposals should respect the density of the area in which they are proposed (with reference to Map 3 and descriptions in Appendix 3). The loss or substantial reduction of existing gaps between buildings within the villages should be carefully considered where these allow views out to the wider countryside / vegetated area. Such gaps are important to the area's character, and should be retained as far as possible, although mitigation may be possible through considering set-back and landscaping to ensure the rural character of the area is reinforced.
- the scale of the building should be a maximum height of 2 storeys (with any taller buildings requiring clear justification as to how a taller building in that location would enhance local character), with storey heights designed so as to ensure that, other than in exceptional circumstances, the overall scale of the building does not notably exceed the surrounding rooflines, taking into account the varied topography and potential use of features such as dormer windows and chimneys (such features being appropriate to the building type. Applicants are encouraged to provide existing and proposed street scene plans (including the context of buildings to either side) to help demonstrate the building heights, roof forms and gaps which are important to the policy;
- designs should create an interesting roofscape through variation in the roofline as seen from the street, through the building form, potential use of dormer windows and use of chimneys if appropriate to the building's use and character. Flat roofs are not characteristic of the area and

should be avoided. In general, chimneys should be incorporated on all new residential properties unless the design is based on non-domestic forms such as agricultural barns.

Building mix

4.3.19 The current mix of housing in the village includes bungalows, detached and semi-detached houses, terraces, and converted farm buildings. In order to retain this mix so that the villages can accommodate the varied housing needs of a thriving community, new development should offer a range of building types and sizes.

Policy 6. Building mix

1. New residential development should help create a mix of building types and sizes, providing opportunities for households with varying needs and supporting a more balanced population profile.
2. The quality and architectural design of any affordable housing should be indistinguishable with open market housing, in order to ensure that its occupants have pride in belonging to and living in our Neighbourhood Plan area.

Built forms, materials and architectural details

4.3.20 The materials used in many of the older buildings in the villages reflect the building materials that were locally available at that time. They create a distinctive local colour palette that we wish to retain to help reinforce the local nature of our villages. Whilst some of these traditional building materials may no longer be available (for example, Broadmayne brickworks no longer exists, and only reclaimed bricks are now available), complementary materials can be sourced that use the same colour palette and should therefore help new buildings or extensions integrate more successfully. The following tables summarise the commonly recurring forms, features and materials seen across the four villages (as marked with 'X'), together with a diagram indicating the approximate colour palette found in each village.

4.3.21 Key local materials and architectural features include, but are not limited to, red and buff brick, cob/render, stone rubble, local pale Purbeck and Portland limestones, thatch or clay tile for roofs with brick chimney stacks, masonry or timber lintels and sills, and drip moulding (over windows and doorways to protect the area below from rainwater). Information on traditional local building stone, produced by Historic England, can be found at <https://cms.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/building-stones-england-dorset/>

4.3.22 The choice of colour and finish of materials is also an important consideration in reducing the impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape. Generally very light colours, like white, cream or light grey, and large areas of intense strong colours do not blend well with the rural landscape, whereas muted and darker tones can be less intrusive.

4.3.23 Natural materials tend to weather well, have better eco-credentials (particularly if these can be locally sourced), and over time develop subtle variations in colour and texture that reflects the wider environment and landscape. In contrast, man made synthetic, pre-coloured materials, tend to lack the variation of colour and texture found in natural materials and do not weather well, and as such are less likely to blend into the streetscape.

Figure 1. Built Form

		Woodsford	West Knighton	West Stafford	Tincleton
Roof	Gabled roof	x	x	x	x
	Hipped roof	x	x	x	x
	Thatched roof	x	x	x	x
	Clay tiles	x	x	x	x
	Grey slate tiles	x	x	x	x
	Brick chimney	x	x	x	x
Facade	Limestone chimney	x			
	Gabled dormers	x	x	x	x
	Red brick	x	x	x	x
	Yellow brick	x	x	x	x
	Render	x	x	x	x
	Weatherboarding	x	x		x
Windows	Rough ashlar stone				x
	Tile hanging		x		
	Casement windows	x	x	x	x
	Sash windows	x	x	x	x
	Bow windows			x	
	Stone mullioned windows	x			x
	Timber lintel		x	x	
	Masonry lintel	x	x	x	x



Figure A: Local example of an eco-house with grey slate roof, off-white rendered facade and stone and orange coloured timber detailing.



Figure B: Positive local example of modern development. Floyers Field, West Stafford

		Woodsford	West Knighton	West Stafford	Tincleton
Porches	Enclosed, pitched/hipped roof front porch	x	x	x	x
	Open, pitched/hipped roof front porch		x	x	x
	Pitched/hipped roof canopy porch		x	x	
	Pentice porch	x	x	x	x
	Pentice canopy porch		x	x	
	Flat roof canopy porch		x	x	
Decorative Features	Old wrought iron fencing	x			
	Railings		x		
	New wrought iron fencing			x	
	Decorative ridge tiles		x	x	x
	Decorative eaves				x



Figure C: Open pitched roof porch (foreground) and pentice canopy porch (background), West Stafford.



Figure D: Pitched roof canopy porch, West Stafford.

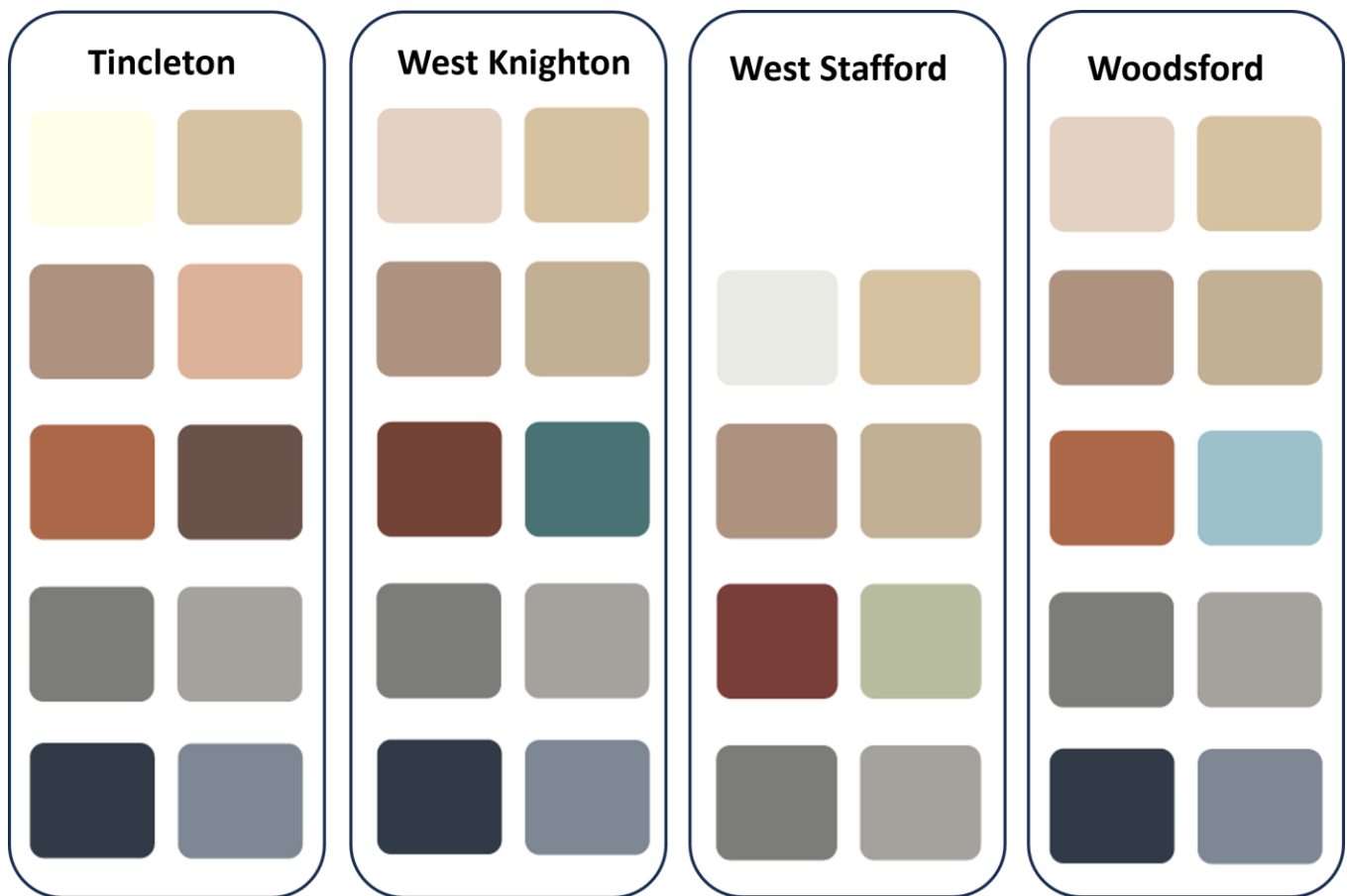


Figure E: Decorative ridge tiles, decorative eaves and pentice porch, Tincleton.



Figure F: Enclosed, pitched roof front porch, Woodsford.

Figure 2. Colour Palette



Policy 7. Materials and architectural details

Development should complement and, where appropriate, enrich the streetscape into which it will be inserted. To achieve this, the following principles should be adhered to in considering the built forms, materials and architectural details used:

- the built form and design should seek to reinforce the rural character of the area's settlements, and use built forms and designs that reflect the prevailing character of that area (see Figure 1);
- the choice of materials used should reflect the local vernacular and colour palette within that village / locality (as per Figure 2), avoiding light or intense colours where these would be prominent in the streetscape and wider views. The use of traditional, natural, and locally sourced, materials is preferred. Synthetic, pre-coloured materials, should be avoided unless there is no viable alternative;
- the level of architectural detailing should be appropriate to the character of the building and be applied proportionately to all potentially visible elevations;
- the use of lintels and sills, drip-moulding, and decorative ridge tiles and edge treatments should be considered where appropriate to the character of the building.
- care needs to be taken in incorporating services and utilities within the design, such as manhole covers and meter boxes. These should be shown on the design drawings, with trenches and pipework grouped together where feasible to facilitate easy maintenance. Chimneys can be used to disguise flues / ventilation needs or incorporate wildlife-friendly features where they do not serve as a working fireplace, and meter boxes and similar requirements should be designed into a scheme from the outset to avoid cluttering the elevations, where possible placed on the side rather than front elevations and in a colour that blends in with the surrounding wall.

Extensions and alterations – general principles

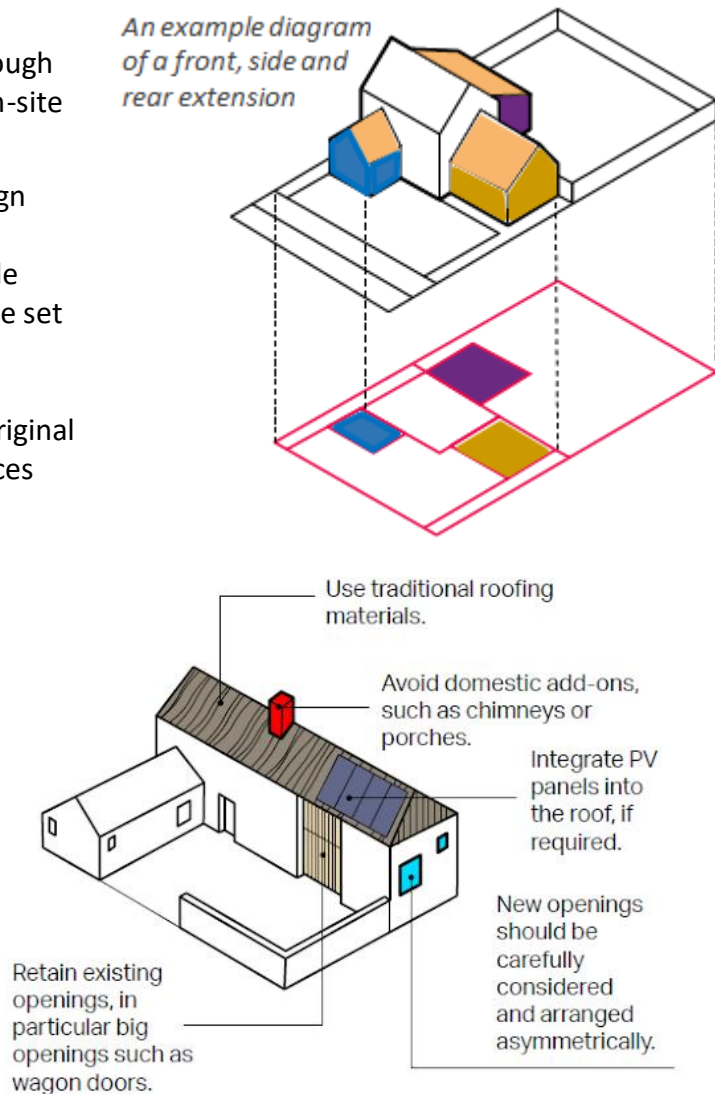
4.3.24 It is important that extensions and alterations, including conversions, are designed to preserve the character and appearance of the original building itself, as well as the street scene within which it sits. The pitch and form of a building's roof forms part of its character; materials, architectural features and the proportions of the original building also need careful consideration to ensure that the alterations complement these existing elements. As a general rule, they should not be visually dominant or taller than the existing building.

4.3.25 Other considerations include the need to safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties (which is covered through the Local Plan policies), and retain sufficient on-site parking and private amenity (garden) area.

4.3.26 Forward extensions are difficult to design successfully, and they tend to overwhelm the original building form. Single-storey and double storey side may be more feasible, but should be set back from the main building, complement its materials and detailing, while the roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building. It will be important to retain the spaces around the building where these reinforce the character of the area by providing views and a feeling of spaciousness. Single storey rear extensions are generally the easiest way to extend a property, although care may be needed to minimise any effects on neighbouring properties, such as blocking daylight. Double storey rear extensions may be possible, and the roof form and pitch should reflect the original building and sit slightly lower than the main ridge of the building. Upward extensions should be sensitive to the surrounding rooflines.

4.3.27 Farmsteads were a dominant feature of the Neighbourhood Plan area and mainly developed by the end of the 17th century. Over time, a number of the farm buildings have become redundant, and these have potential to be converted to alternative uses, whether for new homes or businesses. These often have interesting features that remind us of the past use of the building, and the history of our parish – for example, openings or wagon doors, and the courtyard style arrangement of buildings.

An example diagram of a front, side and rear extension



Policy 8. Extensions and conversions – general principles

1. Proposals to extend or alter existing buildings should respect the original building and streetscape in which it is situated. Features and other factors that relate to the historic working of farm buildings and/or contribute to its character need to be retained. Features that would be inappropriate to the heritage of that building (such as domestic chimneys and dormer windows on working barns) should be avoided.

2. Extensions to dwellings should be subordinate in terms of scale and form, and the roof (including any dormer windows) should harmonise with that of the original building, through similar pitch, form, rhythm and materials. Loft conversion incorporating dormers which are out of scale and do not consider existing window rhythm nor frequency should be resisted.
3. Side extensions to dwellings should be set back slightly from the building line if possible, and not result in the gaps between dwellings being filled. The roof form of any extensions should generally be pitched with ridgelines of the extension kept lower than the main ridge of the building. Flat roof extensions should not be used where this would detract from the character of the main building.
4. Materials and details should match the existing building, although consideration may be given to contrasting materials and details with a contemporary design approach if this would not overwhelm the character of the original building and would create a harmonious composition overall.

Sustainability in Design

4.3.28 There are a range of factors that can help ensure that the buildings we create today are less resource intensive and less damaging to our environment. This includes:

- Incorporating sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS)
- Considering of the choice of building fabric and orientation, as well as the size and placement of windows, for reducing energy requirements
- Including renewable / low carbon energy systems
- Building in wildlife-friendly features

4.3.29 Central Government is using Building Regulations and legislation to improve energy efficiency, drainage and biodiversity. Such measures are coming into effect, such as the Future Homes Standards which should achieve a 75-80% reduction in carbon emissions from new homes from 2025 (and similar measures being considered for non-domestic properties), and biodiversity net gain requirements that will ensure building developments create more wildlife habitats than they destroy, starting from 2024.

4.3.30 It is therefore important that these considerations are factored in from the very start of the design, as they can impact on the appearance and effectiveness of the development, and are generally cheaper to design in rather than retrofit.

Sustainable Drainage Solutions

4.3.31 Woodsford and Tincleton villages are not on mains drains, while West Knighton and West Stafford are. The area drains towards the River Frome, which in turn drains into Poole Harbour, both of these are of great importance for wildlife. It is crucial that development uses drainage systems that do not result in an increase in nutrients going into the Frome.

4.3.32 The most effective type or design of SuDS will depend on site-specific conditions including the underlying ground conditions and infiltration rate (much of the area is susceptible to groundwater flood risk – see Appendix 2). Some SuDS are vegetated, using natural processes to slow and clean the water. These should be favoured where there is sufficient space and the conditions are right, as they will also support wildlife and enhance the rural character of our area.

4.3.33 Rainwater harvesting (systems that capture and store rainwater and/or the reuse of grey water, such as from baths and washing machines) can help reduce demand on our water resources, and lessen the amount of water going into our drains. Simple storage solutions, such as water butts, can help provide significant reduction. Larger systems may be better using underground storage tanks to enable the more efficient use of land, and as such are best considered early in the process.

4.3.34 Most forms of development include footpaths, driveways, car parking spaces and other hardstanding that, unless permeable, will increase the risks of surface water flooding. Whilst the underlying ground conditions can lead to waterlogged soils, ensuring new surfaces are permeable will nonetheless be effective for much of the year, and reduce the risk of flash floods. This could include:

- gravel surfacing, potentially using grids to reduce ‘travel’
- permeable asphalt, of a colour that will blend with local roads
- stone setts, brick and clay pavers, of a colour that compatible with the local colour palette, laid on to compacted aggregate with gaps to ensure rainwater can penetrate.

Building Fabric, Solar Gain and Overheating

4.3.35 Thermal mass and insulation are critical to achieving more energy efficient buildings, and can generally be achieved without impacting on the external appearance. Some traditional materials such as cob walls, if used, may need to be adapted to achieve the levels of thermal efficiency required by Building Regulations. Brick, stone (as a facing), and timber construction are likely to be able to achieve higher standards.

4.3.36 Solar gain, daylight and sun penetration also contribute significantly to a building’s energy efficiency, although care needs to be taken to avoid overheating. In principle, the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain, but whether this is possible will also depend on the topography, the relationship of the building with the highway, proximity to neighbouring buildings, and local character. Consideration should also be given to the potential for overheating, and how this can be reduced: options include longer roof overhangs and deep window reveals (as opposed to using external louvres / shutters that are not typically found in the area) to provide shading in hotter summer months. Conversely, north-facing facades should reduce large areas of glazing to minimise heat loss on this cooler side.

Renewable / Low Carbon Energy Solutions

4.3.37 The use of renewable / low carbon energy solutions such as air and ground source heat pumps and solar panels are strongly encouraged. District heat networks can play an important role in the transition to low carbon energy, and would be more efficient than individual heating systems and generate less carbon emissions, but the limited scale of new development in our area means that such systems are unlikely to be viable.

4.3.38 Air source heat pumps require the unit to be placed outside, and therefore should be considered in the design. They do not tend to be noisy (modern heat pumps make about as much noise as a refrigerator). Ground source heat pumps typically need more outside space (albeit underground) to allow the installation of the pipes, which can either be installed vertically or horizontally. Vertical installation will depend on the ground conditions – for example, high groundwater flows and soft clays should be avoided⁹.

4.3.39 The design and installation of solar panels will need to be done carefully given the historic character of much of our area. These can be more successfully integrated if considered as part of the design, as less intrusive options include solar shingles and photovoltaic slates; using black solar panels with black mounting systems and frames.



⁹ Information sourced from <https://www.theecoexperts.co.uk/>

4.3.40 Not all renewable / low carbon energy measures require planning permission, and there may be other options that can be considered, such as the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in boilers as an alternative to heating oil.

Building in Wildlife-Friendly Features

4.3.41 New buildings, extensions and alterations provide opportunities to build in features that can support local wildlife. This can be in the form of bat and bird boxes, swift bricks, bee bricks. Other wildlife such as hedgehogs can also be encouraged into garden areas, with composting piles, and making sure that there are gaps or holes in boundary walls / fences to let them come and go.

Sustainability Checklists

4.3.42 In January 2024 Dorset Council introduced a requirement for planning applications proposing new or replacement buildings to include a completed sustainability checklist. This includes matters such as reducing energy consumption, the use of sustainable materials, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable drainage, and incorporating green infrastructure. The following policy requirements should be referenced in completing this checklist.

Policy 9. Sustainability in design

1. Where sustainable drainage systems are proposed, preference should be given to those using vegetation to help slow and clean the water, linked to surrounding wetland habitat if possible. Rainwater / greywater harvesting systems should be considered and where practicable included in the design. Planning conditions may be necessary to secure the ongoing management / maintenance arrangements, to ensure these are achievable and will remain effective.
2. Hard surfacing should be designed to be permeable, with the choice of material and colour to reflect the colour palette for that area.
3. The choice of building fabric should give preference to locally produced and sourced materials, including the re-use of materials, or otherwise achieve high standards of sustainability including thermal efficiency, where these will be in keeping with local character. In order to achieve high standards, the following factors should be considered, and where feasible and appropriate to the character of the building, incorporated into the design:
 - orientation and window size to benefit from solar heat gain;
 - the use of roof overhangs and window reveals to reduce potential for overheating on southerly-facing rooms;
 - the integration of solar panels, with built-in systems that are part of (rather than added to) the roof preferred, particularly where visible from the public realm and where this would otherwise detract from the area's character; the integration of air source heat pumps, sited to minimise adverse impacts on the streetscape;
 - the inclusion of renewable energy storage systems, sited to minimise adverse impacts on the streetscape.
4. Wildlife-friendly features should be included within the design of new buildings, extensions and alterations, such as bee bricks, swift, swallow and house martin bricks, bird boxes and bat habitats (typically tubes and boxes within lofts). Barn owl nest spaces / boxes should be included in properties in outbuildings and barns in the wider countryside whenever possible;

4.4 Local Green Spaces

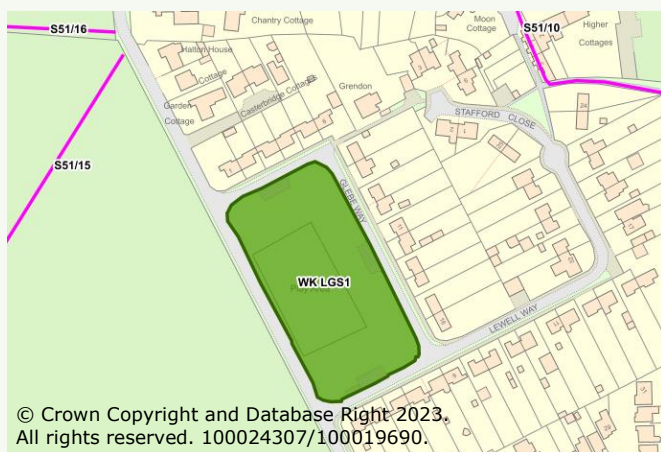
4.4.1 National planning policy allows for green spaces that are local in character, well related to an existing settlement, and which are of local value and significance (for example due to their landscape, recreation or historic / cultural interest) to be designated as “Local Green Spaces”. This designation provides strong protection against development (similar to Green Belt policies). Such spaces can be in public or private ownership, and designation does not convey any new public access rights or management responsibilities. Like Green Belts, the designation is expected to last well beyond the Neighbourhood Plan period, and therefore it is important to consider whether the land may need to be developed in the longer term, prior to designation. In our area, The Local Plan policies and allocations do not envisage any large-scale housing or employment requirements that would be prevented by Local Green Space designation. Major development is envisaged in the form of minerals workings, but the policies in this Plan cannot influence planning decisions on such workings, as these minerals and waste matters fall outside the remit of Neighbourhood Planning

4.4.2 Three Local Green Spaces have been confirmed in our area, one in West Knighton and two in West Stafford, as described in the following table:

Table 1. Local Green Spaces

West Knighton Village Green and Playpark

Located between Knighton Lane, Glebe Way and Lewell Way.

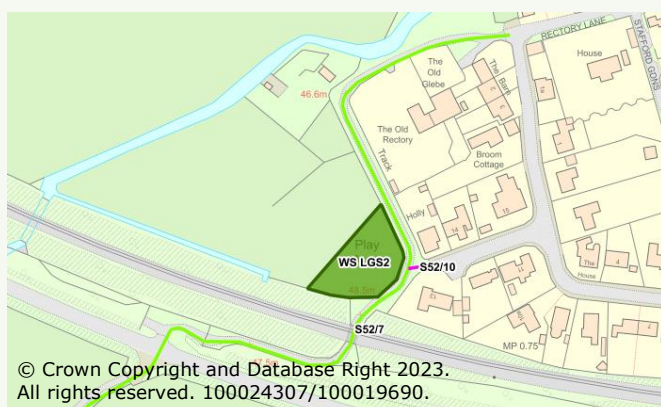


Approx 0.7ha in size, owned by Magna Housing. This is an important recreation area for the village, as well as providing a focal point for the late 20th century development on the southern edge of the village.



West Stafford Play Area

Located west of Glebeland Close and also accessed from the track joining to the corner of Rectory Lane (part of the Hardy Way).



Approx 0.12ha in size, owned by West Stafford Village Hall.

This is an important, accessible recreation area for the village, run by local residents through the WSVH charity, and funded by the precept. The play equipment spans across all age groups from babies / toddlers to teenagers.



The Green, West Stafford

Located to the north side of Glebeland Close, in Floyers Field



Approx 0.11ha in size, owned by Knightsford Parish Council.

This is a quiet green space within the centre of the village, set aside as public open space and used for events such as the 'Coronation Party'.

**Policy 10. Local Green Spaces**

The following local green spaces should be protected. Inappropriate development that would harm their character and reason for designation, as set out in Table 1, will not be permitted, other than in very special circumstances:

- West Knighton Village Green and Playpark;
- West Stafford Play Area;
- The Green, West Stafford.

4.5 Important local views and landmarks

4.5.1 Most of the views cited by local residents as important to them, are within the countryside rather than the built-up areas of each village. This is probably in part due to the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways crossing our area, and rural lanes that are used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The following local landmarks, views, and sequence of views, have been identified as particularly important, and their location are indicated in the maps in Appendix 4:

Table 2. Locally valued views and landmarks

Tincton

The long, straight nature of the road east west through the parish offers provides a sequence of views and understanding of the scattered nature of the village with its green gaps between the clusters of development. **St John's Church** and the **Old School** stand out as important local landmarks – the view of these buildings from the western approach (T-V1) being particularly noteworthy.

The views from the same road, looking north towards the local landmark of **Clyffe House**, including through the entrance pillars as well as directly from the south (T-V2). In these views, the house appears in isolation, projecting above the trees.

There are also long-distance, panoramic views looking south across the River Frome valley, seen from the network of footpaths to the north of the village (such as from T-V3 and T-V4). These are perhaps most notable when coming from Tincton Hang / Clyffe Copse, where the open views contrast strongly with the more enclosed nature of views from within the wooded areas.



West Knighton

There is a sequence of attractive views through the historic core of the village travelling in both directions between the northern end of the village and junction with Loscombe Lane (WK-V1). These are formed by the various historic buildings along Highgate Lane, a number of which are noted in the Conservation Area appraisal, and glimpses out to the wider countryside via the gaps and tracks leading off the lane. **St Peter's Church** and the **New Inn** are obvious local landmarks.

There are also much valued, long-distance views across the open fields surrounding the village – such as the sequence of views experienced from the public footpath to the west of the village (WK-V2) including from the junction with Loscombe Lane and along the Jubilee Trail, looking over fields towards the village.



West Stafford

There are many long-distance views towards open fields generated along the rural lanes outside the village settlement. **Stafford House** with its parkland setting is a local landmark, and there are views of this from the west (travelling along Bockhampton Lane) across farmland (such as WS-V1), as well as the south-west approach where the parkland borders are marked by the metal railings (such as WS-V2).

The **views of the river and water meadows** are also noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, particularly from the bridge south of Stafford House (the traditional stone-built bridge is mentioned in Thomas Hardy's 'Tess') where you exist from the village, but also from the ends of Rectory Lane and Manor Drive (WS-V3, looking west and through the gate to the east – depending on the degree of roadside vegetation at that time).



Whilst there are limited views of **St Andrew's Church** away from the settlement, it is an important local landmark, together with the grouping of the **Village Hall** and **Wise Man Inn**, as seen in views travelling through the village (such as indicated by WS-V4). The entrance into the village from the north is framed by stone bridge and tunnelled vegetation (WS-V5). The Conservation Area appraisal also notes the glimpses out, into Barton Close, along Rectory Lane, and down to the river and Manor House.

Woodsford

There are various attractive, long-distance views to the north of the parish, created by the open nature of the landscape and presence of the **River Frome**. One such example is the view from the stone bridge on Watery Lane, looking east (W-V1).

There are also views from the road and local footpaths (in particular S39/57) of **The Castle**, a local landmark, standing in relative isolation (such as from W-V2).



Policy 11. Important local views and landmarks

Locally valued views, as described in Table 2), are to be respected. Development that would significantly degrade these views and significance of local landmarks, by virtue of scale, massing, design or poor location, will be resisted.

4.6 Development in proximity to heritage assets

4.6.1 There are many Listed Buildings in our area, but also many important unlisted historic buildings and features. The unlisted historic buildings and structures (non-designated heritage assets) contribute to the character of the area, and are identified in the Conservation Area appraisals and Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER), and Dorset Council is in the process of compiling a 'local list' of such features. An example of a non-designated heritage asset would be the WWII pill box to the south of Frome Bridge, in Woodsford parish. Another example is the historic barn at Glebe Farm in West Knighton, with its half-hip metal roof over older slates, and four loop lights in the gable end.

4.6.2 In the past, the impact of development on these historic buildings and their importance in the street scene has not always been well-considered.

4.6.3 One such example is the late 20th century house in the centre of the view along the main thoroughfare in West Stafford is an example of where little thought appears to have been given to how this would impact on the approach to the church – whilst clear views of the church are maintained, the property is central in the view along the street, and the style and materials used jar with the village's historic character.



4.6.4 Another example is the case of Woodsford Castle. The setting of this castle has been much debated in relation to the quarrying proposals in the wider area. Historic England helpfully advised that, whilst the views to and from the building within its surroundings were important, it was also important to consider how the open and rural landscape has contributed to its significance, recognising how it would have been experienced in late medieval times when it was built with defensive capabilities¹⁰.

4.6.5 The following policy expands on the general protection given to these heritage assets under national planning policy (whether designated or not), highlighting the importance of ensuring that our historic buildings and features are not overwhelmed or otherwise harmed by new development, and, where possible, that development is designed to raise people's awareness and understanding of our area's history.

Policy 12. Development in proximity to heritage assets

New development in proximity to a heritage asset should look to minimise harm to its significance in line with national planning policy, and where feasible and appropriate, raise awareness of that asset, through consideration of:

- how the heritage assets are and would likely to have been experienced in their immediate setting and wider landscape;
- the scale and extent of setback required to retain views of the asset and ensure the proposed development is less dominant in the streetscape;
- the orientation of the development, inclusion of paths and green space / corridors to draw attention to, and raise awareness of, the heritage asset;
- the use of architectural details and materials that compliment that used on the heritage asset.

¹⁰ for further information please refer to the response from Historic England dated 23/11/23 to P/FUL/2023/04753, P/VOC/2023/04761 & P/VOC/2023/04760 which can be found at <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=399138>

5. Improving Road Safety and Opportunities for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding

5.1 The road network and other public rights of way

5.1.1 The main route through **Tincleton** is the east-west link (the C80) which eventually connects to the A35 at Stinsford, and links to the B3390 in the adjoining Pallington parish to the east. The north-south link (the C59) provides access to Woodsford and Puddletown (which has the local First and Middle school). The cluster of homes at Clyffe House are served by a private access road. All of the roads are rural in character, typically with hedgerows and/or grass verges and improvised passing places. A network of public footpaths circle the village. The D21305, an old green lane, links north from the centre of the village to the wooded area known as the Hang (and Hardy Way) with a spur to Clyffe House, but as of 2023/24 was impassable and closed on a temporary basis. There is a footpath running south to Watery Lane and on to the River Frome forming part of the extension to the Frome Valley Trail¹¹.

5.1.2 The main route through **West Knighton** is Knighton Lane / Highgate Lane (the C82) which runs north-south through the village, and on through Broadmayne to the A352. It connects at its northern end to the C33 that runs from West Stafford, through Lower Lewell and onto Woodsford. Both the Frome Valley Trail and National Cycleway run through the northern end of the parish at Lower Lewell, The Jubilee Trail runs east-west through the southern part of the parish, and the Hardy Trail turns south at Lower Lewell to run down the eastern side of the village before heading west to Warmwell Heath. There are a good number of bridleways as well as public footpaths radiating out from the village in all directions.

5.1.3 Within **West Stafford**, the main road (the C33) runs to the south side of the village and railway line. It links to the A352 which in turn connects to the A35 to the west. The route through the village has effectively been bypassed by the C33, but is part of the national cycle network (on-road) route. The remaining network of roads in the parish are generally narrow, single track lanes. Public rights of way include an east-west link of footpaths and bridleways linking across fields to Dorchester, and a number of bridleways to the south. The Hardy Way runs from the A352 via bridleways to the western end of the village, and then on roads to Lower Lewell,

5.1.4 Within **Woodsford** the main road network is composed of an east-west link (the C33 - which is also part of the national cycle network) from Lower Lewell in West Knighton parish to the B3390 in Moreton parish, with a staggered north-south link to Crossways and Tincleton. These routes are typical rural lanes with hedgerows to either side, with generally narrow verges and improvised passing places. A network of public footpaths offers off-road walking routes to and along the River Frome, connecting north to Tincleton (partly along the C59 Watery Lane) and south to Crossways and Moreton Station. The Frome Valley Trail runs through the parish, mainly using the lanes.

5.1.5 It is unlikely that the scale of development within the area will extend the existing road network, although new access points may be created and some businesses – including the quarries beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area – could give rise to significant levels of traffic and the need to improve highway safety, particularly for more vulnerable road users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

¹¹ The route for the section of the trail from Dorchester to Poole Harbour has been agreed by Dorset Council, but has yet to be signposted.

5.2 Highway safety on the network of rural lanes

5.2.1 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan has limited options to address traffic and road safety problems, it can help highlight local highway issues that should be considered in transport statements or assessments and consider projects to help reduce known transport / highway safety issues.

5.2.2 Local residents are particularly concerned about speeding through the villages – even those with 30 mph speed limits. Many of the roads in and around the villages do not have separate footways – and these ‘shared’ highways need be (and seem) safe for all users. Tincleton has a community speed watch group and in 2023 installed a Speed Indicating Device (SID). There have been calls for the support for 20mph speed limits in West Stafford where speeding cyclists have also been identified as a particular problem.

5.2.3 As part of the consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan in late 2023, two road safety ideas were put forward for feedback: the 'Quiet Lanes' initiative; and traffic calming measures in the villages. Local residents who responded generally supported these proposals, and made further suggestions on limiting access for HGV's, introducing a speed limit for the length of the National Cycle Route (to 40mph outside of the existing limits), and the need for better hedgerow management.

5.2.4 The term 'Quiet Lanes' has been used in other Neighbourhood Plans (including the adjoining Puddletown area) to indicate roads which have low levels of traffic and are important for walking / riding routes (in conjunction with the off-road public right of way network). The term is also used in a legal sense where a Highway Authority can designate part of its highway network as a 'Quiet Lane' under the Transport Act and related regulations. Should Dorset Council choose to formally designate the roads as Quiet Lanes, this does not require any physical changes other than appropriate signage to raise awareness of the status of those roads, but measures to encourage motorists to slow down and look out for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vulnerable road users can be introduced. In order to avoid confusion, we have adopted the term 'Quiet, Low Traffic Routes' for the roads that have been identified through this Plan as routes where walking / riding is particularly important and which ideally should be designated as Quiet Lanes.

5.2.5 Not all planning applications will require a transport statement or assessment, but when these are required by Dorset Council, they should set out, amongst other matters, the likely trip generation and implications for the surrounding highway network¹². In this context, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that this includes consideration of how the development may impact on the use of the Quiet, Low Traffic Routes by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

5.2.6 Any traffic calming or other highway safety measures will need to be designed in a manner appropriate to the rural character of the roads and villages. For example 'visual narrowing' where the edge of a street is paved in a different material to the carriageway could reduce visual road width to encourage slower speeds, while still allowing sufficient road width for vehicle accessibility. Pavements within villages, if required, should not use the taller, concrete kerbstones that are more typical of suburban estates. Additional guidance on how to encourage lower speeds in rural environments can be found in the series of documents on the rural roads protocol, traffic in villages and other rural settlements. These are published in the Dorset National Landscape's resource library <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/resource/planning-development/>.

¹² Dorset Council's Validation checklist (October 2022) <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/new-validation-checklist-v16-final-updated-22-08-2024> provides guidance on the coverage and detail of the transport assessment/statements. For smaller schemes, the assessment is expected to outline the transport aspects of the application including: the expected trip generation and implications on the surrounding highway network; access to public transport; expected impacts on parking; and provision of car or cycle parking.

Policy 13. Village roads and Quiet, Low Traffic Routes

1. Development accessing onto or extending village roads which do not have a separate footway, should ensure that the safety and comfort of pedestrians using these routes is not compromised.
2. Transport statements / assessments, when required, should include consideration of the impact of increased motorised traffic on the network of Quiet, Low Traffic Routes (as shown on Map 4 and including the national cycle network). Mitigation measures may be necessary to ensure that the routes remain safe and attractive for recreational use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Project 2. Improving highway safety on our rural lanes

The Parish Council will request Dorset Council as the Highways Authority to formally designate the network of Quiet, Low Traffic Routes as shown on Map 4 as Quiet Lanes, and manage these accordingly.

The Parish Council will work with Dorset Council as the Highways Authority to identify and where feasible deliver traffic management measures that will address the concerns raised by local residents and businesses. This may include:

- Placing gateway entrances, appropriate road markings and signage at the entrances to the various settlements where these do not currently exist;
- Providing additional passing places (sensitively designed, signed and located) to allow vehicles to pass safely on the narrow rural lanes without unduly damaging the verges and hedgerows, and including road markings to emphasise the narrow nature of the lanes;
- Supporting measures to reduce speeds to 20mph within the settlement limits; and a 40mph speed restriction on National Cycle Route 2 outside of the settlement limits.

5.3 Our network of footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways

5.3.1 The area has a reasonably good network of public footpaths. There are bridleways in West Knighton and West Stafford, but none in Woodsford and Tincleton. The national cycle network, albeit mainly on-road, runs through the parish. The network of routes could be improved, and developments can create opportunities to achieve good levels of connectivity and encourage walking and cycling for short journeys. In the wider area, there are also opportunities to make better connections that avoid stretches of road where the narrow nature of the lane and traffic speeds makes walking, cycling and horse riding particularly dangerous or off-putting.

5.3.2 Local residents on the steering group researched possible routes and links that could help address the typical concerns over safety raised by walkers, cyclists and horse riders in the area, and these ideas were consulted on in late 2023. This included promoting a network of roads as Quiet Lanes and improving public rights of way, such as: a new off-road cycle path / bridleway connection from Moreton Station to Watery Lane, at the river Frome Bridge south of Tincleton; connecting the east-west lane (D21320/105 Knighton Heath Barn Lane) which links Highgate Lane to Silverlakes to the National Cycle Route 2 at Lower Lewell by using the unclassified road, D21321, and a railway underpass (as an alternative to the much busier C33). This is part of the Hardy Way. These ideas were



generally supported and are detailed below. Other ideas were also put forward in response to consultations that have been added where feasible. To avoid cluttering the map only on road cycle paths 1.1, 3.1, 5.1 & 5.2 have been shown. Others could be actively supported as part of the overall traffic calming measures.

Table 3. Cycle paths, Bridleways and potential Quiet Lane routes (see also Map 4)

	Routes	Work required / general comments / numbers refer to those on map
1	Tingleton to Moreton Station	<p>This could be in two parts.</p> <p>1: Upgrade existing farm tracks from the Mill Leat bridge just south of the River Frome to the existing S60/3 footpath to Moreton Station (in the adjoining parish). A footpath is being offered as part of the new quarry application.</p> <p>1.1. On-road between the Frome Bridge and Tingleton designated as a Quiet Lane. This is part of the Frome Valley Trail and therefore reinforces the importance of its status as a 'Quiet Lane'.</p>
2	Tingleton to Tingleton Hang	<p>This is an unclassified road, D21305, in bad repair. It will eventually be repaired to a standard for cyclists to reach Tolpuddle and Briantspuddle and should be designated as a Quiet Lane.</p>
3	Knighton Heath Wood / Barn Lane west of Silverlakes to the National Cycle Route 2 at Lower Lewell.	<p>This could be in several parts.</p> <p>3: This is a relatively unused part of the adopted highway network (D21321) that runs up to either side of the railway lines, and forms a section of the Hardy Trail. The route should be designated as a Quiet Lane. There is a pedestrian crossing kissing gate over the railway, and what was originally a livestock underpass under the railway (with limited height). One option may be to deepen the underpass, which would enable Network Rail to close the level crossing. Barrier signs would probably be required to help crossing the road at Lower Lewell to reach the national cycle network which is off road and slightly north of the C33 road at this point.</p> <p>3.1: A similarly, relatively unused part of the adopted highway network (D21320) that runs up to the railway crossing at Lane End (the crossing is closed to motor vehicles), and should be designated as a Quiet Lane.</p> <p>3.2 and 3.3: The proposals for Silverlakes provide an opportunity to extend 3.1 on to Crossways. The potential links are shown as indicated on the Access and Movement plans accompanying the plans for Phase 7 of the development (application reference P/RES/2023/04131).</p>
4	West Knighton to Crossways	<p>There is a reopened footpath that links the southwest corner of Silverlakes to the southwest corner of Knighton Heath Wood. Allowing this to be used by horseriders and cyclists would make it much easier to travel off-road to Crossways from West Knighton. There is already a bridleway, S51/2, from the lane west of Silverlakes, 3.1, to West Knighton.</p>
5	Broadmayne, West Knighton to West Stafford.	<p>The possibility of a cycle path from Broadmayne through West Knighton to join up with the West Stafford by-pass and on to Dorchester has been talked about for a while, as a safer alternative to the A352. Suggested improvements to explore further include:</p> <p>5: upgrade/link existing footpaths and bridleways connecting the western side of West Knighton village (C82) with the lanes south of West Stafford (D21314). This should also include consideration of</p>

	Routes	Work required / general comments / numbers refer to those on map
		improving the safety of the by-pass crossing, which is challenging due to vehicle speed and limited visibility. 5.1 and 5.2: designating the adopted highway to the south of the West Stafford by-pass (D21314) as a Quiet Lane. This, together with 5, will link West Knighton to West Stafford and also provide an alternative route to Highgate Lane and on to Crossways (via 3.1, see above).
6	West Stafford by-pass	Extending the off-road cycle path (which currently stops at Frome Farm, west of the village) along the West Stafford bypass (which is wide with generous verges) could help provide a more usable link through the area, allowing more direct connections to Dorchester (via 7) and Crossways (via 3.1). There are two options: 6: from Frome Farm to the Sixpenny Gate lane junction south of Wynd Close (where routes 5.1 and 5.2 described above can then be used); 6.1: continue eastwards all the way to Highgate Lane.
7	West Stafford to Dorchester	Improving the surface of the bridleway between Frome Cottage to St Georges Road (S52/8), and reducing the number of gates to accommodate cyclists and walkers, could make this a popular route.
NCN2	National Cycle Network 2	This route should be designated as a Quiet Lane. It coincides with significant on-road sections of both the Hardy Way and (proposed) Frome Valley Way.

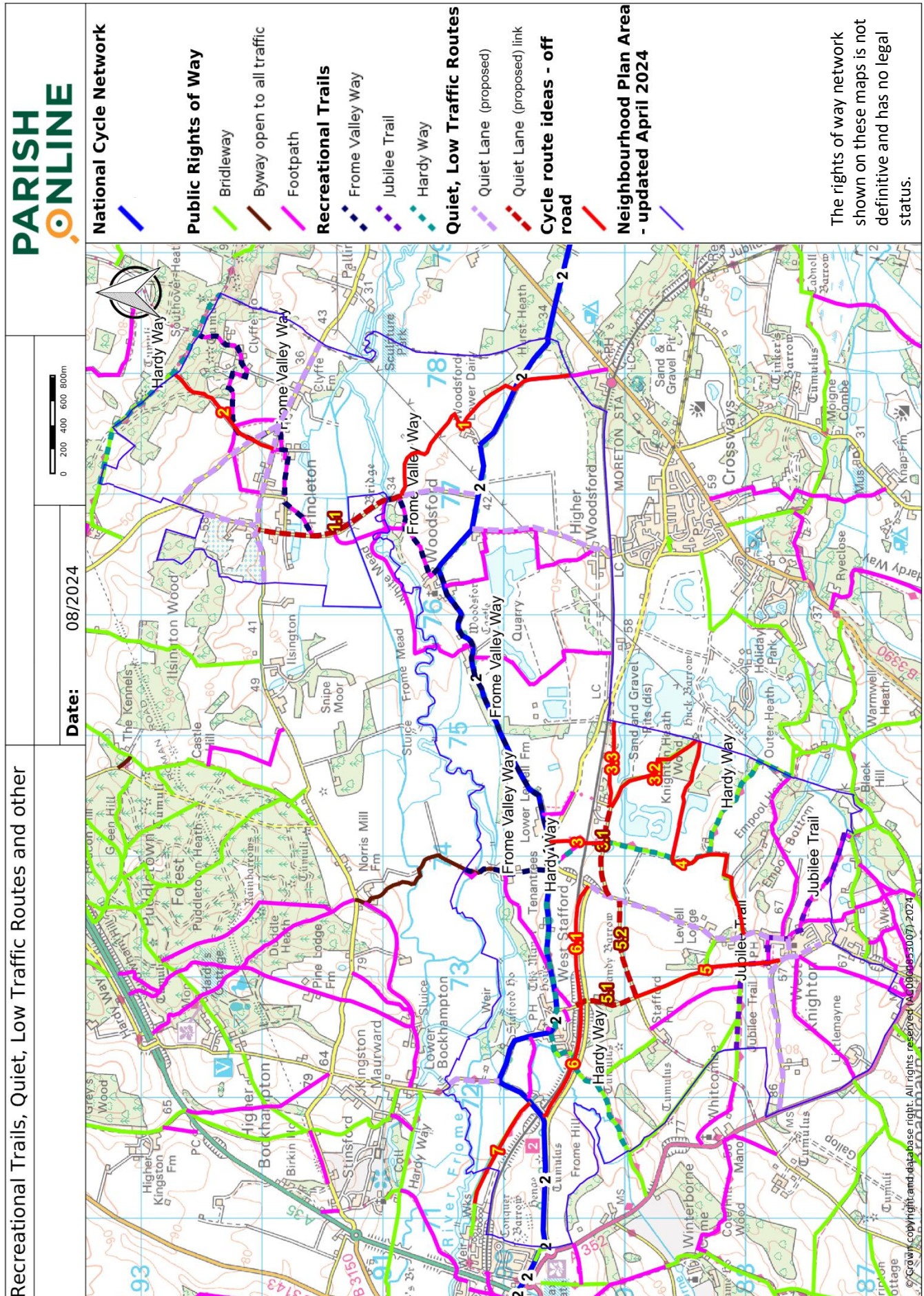
5.3.3 Whilst some of these routes may be aspirational, they would be of real benefit to local residents, improving links to adjoining settlements as well as better access to the countryside for recreation.

5.3.4 The actual alignment, surfacing and changes to existing gates, signage etc would be subject to negotiation with the appropriate landowners. Ideally routes should be a minimum of 2m wide, segregated from the highway where possible. Signage should relate well to the rural setting - traditional black wording on white background finger posts are quite common for roads in Knightsford and would also be an appropriate design. Additional measures may also be needed such as fencing / hedging to ensure that increased public access does not interfere with farming activities. Stiles should be replaced by gates, particularly where footpaths meet a road. as this will improve safety and accessibility for less able residents and residents with buggies, pushchairs, prams etc. . The extent to which all routes can be inclusive will be cost dependent.

5.3.5 All of this will also be dependent on funding. However development on land where these routes are proposed, or where mitigation measures are required to address the transport impacts of development, may mean that these projects could come forward as part of the development package.



Map 4. Recreational Trails, Quiet, Low Traffic Routes and other Public Rights of Way



Policy 14. Prioritising walking, cycling and horse riding

1. Where possible, development should retain and create reasonably direct, safe and attractive walking, cycling and horse riding links with nearby lanes, footpaths and bridleways. In assessing the design of such routes within and adjoining development sites, care should be taken to ensure that the routes are, wherever possible, overlooked by properties, and suitably wide and open with good visibility and avoid unnecessary barriers, so that they feel safe to be in.
2. Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and horse riding in the area through the provision of new or improved routes are described in Table 3. Where feasible and related to a potential development site, the development should enable these routes to be provided or improved. Their feasibility should also be considered as potential mitigation to address adverse impacts of traffic arising from development arising within the local area.
3. Development that would adversely impact on the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists and horse riders using the rights of way network will not be supported. Particular regard will be given to the importance of the long distance trails (the Frome Valley Trail, Hardy Way and Jubilee Trail) that run through the parish.

Project 3. Improvements to the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes

The Parish Council will work with local landowners and Dorset Council as the Highways Authority, in consultation with local residents, to bring forward improvements to the network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes described in Table 3, as funding and resources permit.



6. Retaining and Improving our Local Community Facilities

6.1 Community facilities in our area

6.1.1 There are a limited number of community facilities in our area. There are two modest-sized village halls (in Tinkleton and West Stafford), two pubs (in West Knighton and West Stafford), two equipped children's play areas (in West Knighton and West Stafford) and four churches (one in every parish, together with burial grounds).

6.1.2 Many of the services used by local residents are located in adjoining areas. Local first schools can be found in Broadmayne (serving West Knighton and West Stafford) and Puddletown (serving Tinkleton and Woodsford), with middle school provision for the area provided in Puddletown. Healthcare, in terms of GP surgeries, are located in Crossways and Puddletown, as well as the county town of Dorchester. NHS dental practices also operate from Dorchester, although there is a capacity shortage which means that there are no practices in the whole of the county taking new adult NHS patients (as of November 2023). There are also local shops in Broadmayne, Crossways and Puddletown. Broadmayne and Puddletown have Post Offices.

6.1.3 The 2022 Household Survey indicated that typically the village halls and pubs were used by around a quarter of households, and there was slightly lower usage of the play areas and churches. The majority of Tinkleton residents responding to that survey indicated at that time that they would like to have a children's play area and/or recreation area, but this was not the case in the follow-up survey in 2023 where there was little support for such development on the sites put forward. Whilst there were limited suggestions otherwise put forward, the most popular included:

- Village hall and church parking (Tinkleton)
- Village hall (West Knighton)
- Village / farm shop (West Stafford)
- Access to a chemist / pharmacy (Woodsford)



6.1.4 Given the limited scale of growth that is likely to take place locally, the provision of additional local services is unlikely to grow.

However, should new facilities come forward, these could include uses such as a small shop, café or leisure facility. These would need to be small-scale to avoid harming the vitality of nearby town or local centres through drawing significant levels of trade away from those areas. As a guide, the reference in the policy to 'small-scale' should therefore be interpreted as below 280m² gross floorspace, as this is considered to be of a scale that would not require any sequential or impact assessment (based on the recommendations of the 2022 update to the Dorset Retail & Leisure Study) and therefore appropriate to a rural area.

Policy 15. Supporting community facilities

1. Community facilities listed below should be retained, and every effort should be made to work with the local community to investigate potential solutions to avoid any unnecessary closures, and consider alternative services that may benefit the community.

- Churches and burial grounds (in all four parishes)
- Pubs (in West Knighton and West Stafford)
- Village Halls (in Tinkleton and West Stafford)

2. Proposals that would allow such facilities to modernise and adapt for future needs, including complementary facilities that would support their long-term viability, are encouraged.
3. Proposals for new small-scale facilities that can help meet local needs will in principle be supported, provided the site is within or readily accessible from the built-up areas of Tincleton, West Knighton, West Stafford and Woodsford, and subject to consideration of environmental, road safety and amenity concerns.

7. Meeting our Housing and Employment Needs

7.1 Housing Needs

The Local Plan context and housing requirements

7.1.1 The Local Plan (adopted in 2015) does not set out how much housing is expected to be built in the area. However, as much of the area is countryside, opportunities for housing are limited to:

- infill development within the defined development boundary for West Knighton (under Policy SUS2-ii);
- small-scale affordable housing exceptions sites adjoining settlements (under Policy HOUS2);
- the conversion, replacement, or subdivision of an existing rural buildings (under Policies SUS3/4 and HOUS6);
- the provision of rural workers dwellings where such a functional need is demonstrated (under Policy HOUS6).

7.1.2 The first draft of the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, currently in preparation, set out the basis for how minimum housing targets for Neighbourhood Plan areas will be calculated¹³. As our plan period runs from 2023 – 2033 this is calculated as follows:

■ Completions / extant planning permissions	1 ¹⁴
■ Large sites within settlement boundaries (none)	0
■ Strategic site allocations (none proposed)	0
■ Windfall allowance (0.66 * 7 years)	5
= MINIMUM HOUSING TARGET	6

Defined Development boundary for West Knighton
(including area within Broadmayne parish)
Source: <https://www.planvu.co.uk/wdwp/index.php>



¹³ A minimum housing target is to be based on the sum of the existing completions since the start of the plan period, the number of dwellings with planning permission, the capacity on identified large sites within defined development boundaries of towns and larger villages, and strategic allocations, plus an estimated windfall allowance on small sites based on historic completion rates from 2014, applied to year 4 of the plan period onwards.

¹⁴ net residual at West Knighton Farm WD/D/19/003063 & WD/D/20/002984 (2 gross)

7.1.3 Dorset Council have agreed the above figure, but acknowledge that this cannot be confirmed until it is adopted through the Dorset Council Local Plan.

7.1.4 The amount of development included in the housing target is expected to come forward through windfall development¹⁵ and Dorset Council do not require the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate further sites. Significant development is also planned in Broadmayne¹⁶ and Crossways¹⁷ that may assist in meeting some of the housing needs for the Knightsford area, and there is also more development coming forward in Dorchester. Nonetheless, this Plan has considered whether it should also allocate sites (and amend the defined development boundaries where infill development can happen) to identify areas where additional development can happen. Allocating sites to help meet local housing needs also means that, if the Local Plan becomes out-of-date, this Neighbourhood Plan will still be given full weight in decision-making for the first five years following adoption.

Evidence of local housing need

7.1.5 Consideration has also been given to local needs for affordable housing, based on the affordable housing register (using data from December 2023). This shows a need for 7 affordable homes across the four parishes, requiring a mix of 3 x 1, 1 x 2 and 3 x 4-bedroom homes, from households with a local connection to the Knightsford area. Whilst the housing register fluctuates over time (as households find suitable accommodation as affordable housing becomes available and other households are formed or fall into or out of need¹⁸), the registers are generally considered to be an underestimate, as many households that could qualify for affordable housing – particularly for affordable home ownership – do not think to register.

7.1.6 Earlier work on housing needs undertaken in 2022¹⁹ which was based on 2011 Census data, average income data from 2018, land registry house price from 2021 and affordable housing register data from 2022, suggests that:

- Additional affordable housing over and above that shown on the housing register would be beneficial, and should provide for a range of affordable housing tenures.
- The discount on First Homes should be set at 50% if viable in order to bring these homes into reach of households on average incomes. Shared ownership provided with 10% equity may be a more affordable option for many and should also be considered. According to the 2021 Census there were no such properties in the area. The proportion of affordable housing as ‘home ownership’ options should be increased to 40% (as opposed to the 30%) to address the larger scale of demand for home ownership.
- Affordable rented tenures are vital for households on below-average incomes. The provision of social rented accommodation rather than affordable rents would have the benefit of reducing those household’s reliance on housing benefits, and more likely to suit households with only a single income.

¹⁵ Windfall development is development of small sites (of less than 10 homes) that may happen through infill development, conversions, subdivisions or other means and is not included as an allocation in a development plan.

¹⁶ Outline planning permission P/OUT/2021/05309 was granted 12/07/24 for up to 80 dwellings on land at Broadmead, Broadmayne and includes the provision of 36 affordable homes.

¹⁷ Detailed planning permission P/RES/2021/01645 was granted 27/10/21 and will deliver 140 dwellings on land West of Frome Valley Road and the planning application WD/D/16/000378 (which has yet to be determined) proposes a further 500 dwellings on land allocated for such development through the Local Plan.

¹⁸ As illustrated by the data from March 2022, which showed a higher level of need (for 9 homes) but much more concentrated on 1 bedroom properties.

¹⁹ Knightsford Parish Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), October 2022, prepared by AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited for Knightsford Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

- Data from the 2022 household survey suggests that the main need for affordable housing is likely to arise in the parishes of West Knighton and West Stafford. *According to the 2021 Census (now available), the proportion of private rented accommodation is notably higher in Woodsford and Tincleton (accounting for 29% of housing tenures, which is considerably higher than the Dorset average of 16% and lower levels in the rest of Knightsford).*
- Future housing development should focus its delivery towards smaller to intermediate units (especially one and two-bedroom units ideally as terraced homes and houses subdivided into apartments) to increase the variety of types and sizes available in the local housing stock.
- The area is unlikely to be suitable for specialist accommodation for the elderly, on the basis of its relatively poor accessibility and need for cost-effectiveness (as small care homes struggle to be profitable). Achieving higher standards of accessible and adaptable dwellings could be made a requirement in at least 20% of new homes. *Since the study was completed, the Government has announced its intention to mandate the current M4(2) (Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes.*
- Increases in the proportion of vacant / second homes should be monitored - the proportion of vacant homes in 2011 was 7.2%. *According to the 2021 Census (now available), this has risen to 8.9%, and 5.1% of households are using their property as a second home. Whilst this increase is unlikely to be at a level that would justify a restriction on such homes, further increases may begin to impact on local communities, particularly West Stafford where the vacancy rates are the highest.*

Consideration of additional sites to deliver further housing

7.1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group initiated a 'call for sites' in late 2022 in order to better understand the locations where landowners would be interested in building new homes. This provided additional sites to consider over and above those suggested to Dorset Council. 14 sites in total were independently assessed by AECOM to determine whether they may be suitable for development and identify possible issues that would need to be addressed if they were taken forward. Part of one of the sites (land at Glebe Farm North, West Knighton) was provisionally assessed by AECOM as suitable for development, two sites were considered wholly unsuitable, with the remainder having issues identified that would require resolution but potentially suitable. These findings were shared with local residents. There was very little support to bring forward any of the sites for a wide variety of reasons, with the exception of land north of Yoah Cottage which was included as a possible allocation in the first draft of this Neighbourhood Plan. Serious consideration was also given to the inclusion of part of Glebe Farm (the areas which have been previously developed) which had engendered more mixed views, but discussions with the Highways Team at Dorset Council indicated that, contrary to the initial finding that it may be a suitable site for development, there are no obvious solutions to provide a suitably safe vehicle access to this site. Dorset Council also objected to the inclusion of the site north of Yoah Cottage based on heritage, highways and environmental grounds, and the policy proposing its allocation has therefore been deleted.

7.1.8 At the time the Plan was being drafted a housing site was being promoted on the edge of West Stafford (off Wynd Close). Outline planning permission for 14 dwellings (P/OUT/2022/00153) was refused by Dorset Council in August 2022, and the appeal against this refusal was dismissed in October 2024 as being contrary to the spatial strategy, recognising that, in terms of its suitability for development, West Stafford has only a limited range of services and facilities.

7.1.9 Whilst this Neighbourhood Plan does not include site allocations, there are other opportunities for housing to come forward as established through the Local Plan, on infill development within the settlement boundary of West Knighton, through conversions of existing buildings, as rural worker's

dwelling where a need for on-site accommodation is shown, and for affordable housing on what are called 'rural exception sites' (as an exception is made because of the need for affordable housing in that community). Land adjoining West Knighton can be considered for rural exception sites, as the combined settlement of Broadmayne and West Knighton in a sustainable location given the range of facilities here. Whether there is a clear need for affordable housing here will need to be examined further in light of the development coming forward in Broadmayne. The village of West Stafford is not considered to be as suitable for affordable housing because of the lack of local facilities, but it is reasonably close to Dorchester and there may be opportunities for infill development that could come forward for affordable home ownership which would be appropriate on a limited scale. The smaller settlements in the area are not considered to be suitable locations for affordable housing because of the lack of facilities, unless there is a functional need for a rural worker's dwelling.

Additional requirements

7.1.10 Residential development in the area will also need to comply with wider requirements set out in the Local Plan and national planning policy. This is likely to include the need for nutrient neutrality, measures to address the recreational-related pressures on the Dorset Heathlands, and biodiversity net gains, as well as avoiding development within flood risk areas. Mitigation for water quality impacts on Poole Harbour SPA and recreational-related pressures on the Dorset Heathlands will be required for any net gain in dwellings (including tourism accommodation), and Dorset Council has provided guidance in relation to these matters in the form of the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework²⁰ and on its website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/nutrient-neutrality-1>. For small-scale development mitigation in relation to the heathlands will normally be through contributions collected through CIL payments (if applicable). With regard to nutrient neutrality, there are a broad range of measures available to mitigate potential adverse effects from treated sewage effluent, both within development sites and off-site, and the details of mitigation will need to be identified for each application.

7.1.11 The following policy sets out how this Plan proposes to meet local housing needs in the area.

Policy 16. Meeting local housing needs in the Plan area

1. The housing target (6 dwellings over the plan period) is expected to be met through:
 - sensitive infill development within the defined development boundary for West Knighton;
 - small-scale affordable housing exceptions sites, subject to identifying a suitable site adjoining the villages of West Knighton, or as infill development within the village of West Stafford;
 - sensitive conversion, replacement, or subdivision of existing rural buildings; and
 - the provision of rural workers dwellings where such a functional need is demonstrated.
2. The mix of dwelling types should seek to deliver:
 - affordable homes for rent, in line with identified local need (as demonstrated through the affordable housing register), where possible as social rented tenure;
 - first and shared-ownership affordable homes, where possible based on a 50% discount or 10% equity share;
 - open market homes, primarily for smaller, one or two bedroom, properties unless such homes would not be appropriate to the site and local character.

²⁰ Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document, April 2020
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-heathlands-planning-framework>

3. Where affordable housing is provided, this should be tenure-blind and made on the basis of prioritising people in housing need who have a local connection to the Neighbourhood Plan area (based on the local connection criteria of the Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy), cascading out to the adjoining parishes if there is no local need. Mechanisms should be used to ensure that affordable housing remains so in perpetuity.
4. Any development bought forward must ensure that it can be implemented without any adverse effect upon the integrity of the European sites. Proposals that will adversely affect the integrity of European sites will not be supported.

7.2 Business Needs



7.2.1 Neither the Household Survey nor Business Surveys conducted in 2022 identified significant requirements for new business premises in the area. From the very limited number of responses received from local businesses, two indicated that they were likely to be looking to extend or relocate their premises in the next 15 years, and a further two indicated that this was a

possibility, but only one business was likely to require new premises or land beyond their existing site. Local residents, in responding to the household survey, did not consider that there was a need for further holiday accommodation in terms of holiday cottages or caravan parks, and there was only limited support for more office, retail, catering or workshop based employment (which were supported by between 16 – 36% of those respondents). In general most residents felt that the main business to be encouraged should be based around agriculture / horticulture / food production.

7.2.2 The Local Plan (adopted in 2015) does not set a target for additional employment development in the area. However its policies allow new employment sites in the Knightsford area through the following means:

- development within or on the edge of a settlement (under Policy SUS2 and ECON1);
- the conversion or replacement of an existing rural buildings (under Policies SUS3/4 and ECON1);
- through farm diversification schemes (under Policies ECON1 and ECON8); or
- where a rural location is essential for that type of business (under Policy ECON1, and also ECON6/7 if providing tourist accommodation or ECON5 for other tourist businesses).

7.2.3 None of the landowners who responded to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's 'call for sites' in late 2022 were seeking to develop their land for employment / business use.

7.2.4 On this basis, the Neighbourhood Plan does not include a bespoke policy for meeting local business needs, with any proposals to be considered against the Local Plan and appropriate design / location policies contained in this Plan.

Appendix 1: Supporting Documents

Unless otherwise linked the following documents are available on the Parish Council's website.

Appeal Decision Ref: APP/D1265/W/23/3317274 - Land on the east side of Wynd Close, West Stafford, Dorchester DT2 8AJ, October 2024

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?Caseid=3317274&CoID=0>

Building Stones of England: Dorset, Historic England, May 2023

<https://cms.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/building-stones-england-dorset/>

Dorset Council Landscape Character Assessment available from

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/the-dorset-landscape>

Dorset Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, February 2023

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-level-1-sfra>

Dorset Council Street Lighting and Illuminated Signs Policy available from

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/street-lighting-and-illuminated-signs-policy#lighting-provision>

Dorset Historic Environment Record - Dorset Explorer layer available from

<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer/history#map>

England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map available from <https://www.cpre.org.uk/light-pollution-dark-skies-map/>

Knightsford Area-wide design guidance and codes, Final Report, AECOM, April 2023

<https://knightsford-pc.gov.uk/design-guidance-codes/>

Knightsford Group Neighbourhood Plan: Site Options and Assessment Final Report, AECOM, September 2023 <https://knightsford-pc.gov.uk/site-options-and-assessments/>

Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement, October 2024

Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement, October 2024

Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2024

Knightsford Parish Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), AECOM, October 2022 <https://knightsford-pc.gov.uk/housing-needs-assessment/>

ONS Census Profile available from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/draw/>

Osmington, West Knighton, West Stafford & Owermoigne Conservation Area Appraisal, West Dorset District Council, January 2007 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/conservation-areas-west-dorset>

Residential Car Parking Provision – Local Guidance for Dorset, May 2011

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/car-and-cycle-parking-standards>

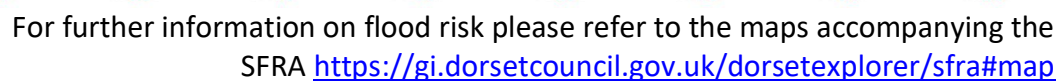
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan, AECOM, March 2024 / October 2024

The Parish of West Stafford – Village Design Statement, West Dorset District Council, December 2002

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>

West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, October 2015

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/west-dorset-weymouth-and-portland-adopted-local-plan>



Appendix 3: Village Character Appraisal summaries

Tingleton village

Tingleton village is located in the meadows of the River Frome valley, along and around Ilsington Road, and includes the cluster of development around Clyffe House. On the 1888 Ordnance Survey the village comprises farmsteads with the Church of St John, rectory, a school and post office to the south-east. There is a complex series of drains to the south of the settlement within the agricultural fields. On later maps watercress beds appear to the south-west. The settlement and valley appear to have changed little during the 20th and 21st centuries, apart from the significant development in and around Clyffe House.

Road network, public rights of way

All roads have the character of countryside lanes, most are narrow (approximately 2m wide) one-lane roads permitting two-way travel. There are no pavements. The lanes are, in some places, bordered with rich vegetation, hedgerows, trees and green verges creating strong enclosure. However this is juxtaposed in other places in the parish by long views across fields, providing a feeling of openness. There is also a good network of public footpaths, offering access to the countryside around the village, and up to the cluster of homes at Clyffe House and south-west to Woodsford.

The long, straight nature of the road east west through the parish allows views of the Church and Old School from within the residential areas of the village. There are also views from the same road, looking north towards the local landmark of Clyffe House, and wider views of the Frome Valley from the network of footpaths to the north of the village.

Plot and boundary treatments

Buildings tend to be set back from the road with green front gardens and boundary treatments including hedgerows and vegetation as well as low stone walls and wooden fences. A high level of vegetation screens many buildings which further reduces the impact of the built environment on the landscape.

The cluster of development around the junction with Blacksmiths Lane has a more regular building line and rotation, softened with natural boundary treatments in the front and rear gardens.



Car parking

The dominant form of car parking is on plot, normally to the side of the property, and occasionally to the front or rear.

Density

Tingleton has a relatively low building density, with generous gaps and abundant vegetation between buildings.



Building heights

Building heights are generally low, 1, 1½ and 2 storey buildings, the only taller buildings being the church and agricultural barns. Due to the variety of building types, these create an interesting and varied, if somewhat scattered, roofline.

Building forms and styles

Tinkleton has a rich local vernacular, with buildings of differing ages and designs. There are a variety of building typologies, the dominant being Victorian properties including farm workers houses, the church, rectory and school. Buildings are often detached or semi-detached and building line and orientation is often irregular with large gaps between buildings reflecting the village's rural character.

Roof materials & types

Tiled roofs are the most common roof type, with examples of clay rosemary tiles and slate tile and less often clay pantile. There are two thatched roofs, though some original thatch roofs have been converted.

Roof types range between gabled, cross gabled and hipped roofs in grey and brown plain tile, pantile and thatch. Dormers, chimneys and porches with pitched roofs add interest together with other decorative roofing features on some buildings.



Red, clay pantiles on a hipped roof



Light red/ orange, clay pantiles on a gabled roof



Pitched roof with dormers.



Gabled (and cross gabled) roof with decorative roof detailing and dormers

Colour Palette, walling & window types

In the main, residential properties are constructed of red or grey brick or stone. Some have a white or off-white render finish, and some have tile hung elevations. Farm buildings are mainly built by weatherboarding, red brick or stone. The church, old school and the old post office, now a listed residential property, have rough ashlar walls.

The bungalows built in precast concrete blocks do not reflect the character of the parish.

Walling & window types



Rough ashlar wall with stone mullioned window



Grey brick



Weather boarded farm building



Brick walls in English bond



Red wall



Off-white render



White casement window



White sash window



Leaded light windows

There is a consistent window style of white, vertically proportioned either casement or sash windows with white rectangular panels. Darker painted frames are seen, but are less common. The old post office, old school and church all have stone mullioned windows. The old post office has Crittall windows which is not seen elsewhere in the parish, but both the old school and church have leaded-light glazing which can also be seen in other properties.

West Knighton village

The village is situated on elevated ground on the edge of a gravel plateau. The settlement was historically linear in plan, running north south. On the 1888 Ordnance Survey West Knighton is shown comprising St Peter's Church, rectory, a smithy, a school, West Knighton Farm, Higher Lewell Farm and the New Inn. The 1901 OS map shows little change from the 1888 OS map. Post-war there has been significant residential development to the south of the village, sprawling towards Broadmayne outside the Knightsford Parish study area.

The historic core of the settlement has been maintained, designated as a conservation area, and the Conservation Area Appraisal²¹ should be referenced for more detail with regard to development in this area.

Road network and public rights of way

Within the village, the streets within the historic core of the village have a meandering character bordered by green verges but no pavements. The late 20th century cul-de-sac developments, such as along Lewell Way, Glebe Way and Oakwood, are slightly more suburban in character with pavements and narrow green verges in places.

There is a good network of public footpaths and bridleways, connecting to West Stafford to the north, Broadmayne to the south, and allowing access to the wider countryside. There are also several footpath connections within the village itself that allow for shortcuts (such as to the church and First School).

There are a number of noteworthy views from Highgate Lane, as well as views across the open fields surrounding the village from the wider network of footpaths and bridleways.

Plot and boundary treatments

Buildings are typically set along the rural lane, with no or small setbacks, or are arranged in short cul-de-sac layouts. The informality and variation enhance the rural feel of the area. In addition to this, the topography, as the ground slopes down along Highgate Lane with Knighton Lane being the highest point, adds to the general environment allowing for evolving views along the streetscape.



There is a mixture of boundary treatments including both soft, (hedges, hedgerows, trees and flower beds), and hard surfaces. The latter include low-height brick or stone walls, black iron railings and timber fencing. Properties facing directly onto the streets are also considered as part of the boundary treatments adding interest along the streetscape.

Car parking

The majority of properties have car parking facilities within their boundaries or on the newer roads, particularly Lewell Way, Glebe Close, Oakwood etc. Parking laybys are also present but in places have impacted negatively on the sequence of attractive views as seen along the highway.

²¹ Osmington, West Knighton, West Stafford and Owermoigne Conservation Area Appraisal, January 2007
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/conservation-areas-west-dorset>

Density

Plot sizes and widths vary. Within the historic core the average density is relatively higher (although still well below that found in towns), dropping towards the edge where there are wider gaps between properties.

Building heights

The majority of properties are 1½ or 2 storeys, although there are a few post-war bungalows in the village. The tower of St Peter's Church is the highest element within the village.



Building forms and styles

Within the older parts of the village, the majority of buildings are simple cottages. The farmhouses tend to be grander, as are the former school and the public house. There are a number of traditional farm buildings, including converted barns, cart sheds and a converted granary. Short terraces of cottages are set facing onto the road, but there are also more modern courtyard-style developments occupying old farmyards.

The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that architectural details are basically simple, with a pattern of irregular door and window openings in older cottages and more symmetrical, designed openings in the more gentrified homes and modern architecture.

The modern estates are dominated by larger houses set in the middle of their plots, with less variation, typical of the more generic styles of their time.

Roof materials & types

The topography, the meandering character of the streets and rich vegetation within the historic core of West Knighton village create interesting rooflines of varied character. In contrast, the more recent developments present more uniform rooflines with little variation, and this should be avoided.

The prevailing roof types are gabled and thatched,

although there are also examples of other roof forms, including cross gabled roofs. Other features such as chimneys and dormers add interest to the rooflines. Those characteristics result in generally irregular rooflines which are often interrupted with vegetation.

Roof materials range between grey slate tiles and clay tiles, while there are also examples of thatched roofs. Chimneys, of red or dark brown engineering brick, and gabled or hipped dormers are also found adding visual interest.

Roof materials & types



Grey slates on half-hipped roof with hipped dormer



Grey slate tiles on gabled roof with gabled dormer



Thatched roof



Clay tiles on cross gabled roof with brick chimneys



Grey slate tiles on hipped roof with brick chimney on the side



Clay tiles on cross gabled roof

Colour Palette, walling & window types

Materials range between renders (traditionally applied to cob walling), of off-white and other pastel colours, as well as buff, red and dark brown brick, Purbeck stone and other local limestones. There are also examples where materials are combined for instance, renders with Purbeck stone to the bottom, or bricks of different colours.

Window types include mainly casement windows, while there are also examples of sash and bow windows.

The more recent developments show less variety in material palette and style, which should be avoided.

Walling & window types



Off-white render



Brick colour combination (buff and dark red)



Flint wall with red brick coping



Half black weatherboarding and half off-white render



Local limestone and dark red brick reveals



Local limestone and dark red brick reveals



Casement windows (painted white)



Casement windows (painted blue)



Casement windows (uPvc)

West Stafford village

The village of West Stafford sits on elevated ground bringing it above the River Frome's floodplain. The village is nucleated with a defined historic core. On the 1888 Ordnance Survey the village is shown to comprise Frome dairy to the west, The Church of St Andrew, rectory, and school, with Manor Farm and Stafford dairy to the east and Stafford House to the north.

The historic core of the village appears little changed, and the Conservation Area Appraisal²² should be referenced for more detail with regard to development in this area. More recent development has occurred on the south side of the village.

Road network and public rights of way

Within the village, roads retain their rural quality with green verges and, in some cases, pavements on one side of the road. The topography and meandering nature of the lanes adds interest and variety to the environment, providing evolving views as you pass through the village, although traffic on the main thoroughfare can make walking, cycling and horse riding along that road seem dangerous.

There are a number of important views into and through the village from the main route through the village, as well as the setting of Stafford House. The village hall, pub and the church act as focal points. Views of the river and associated meadows can be seen from a number of rights of way.

²² Osmington, West Knighton, West Stafford and Owemoigne Conservation Area Appraisal, January 2007
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/conservation-areas-west-dorset>

The network of public footpaths and bridleways provide access to the countryside, as well as connecting to Dorchester and West Knighton. There are also several footpaths within the village allowing pedestrians easier access through the village.

Plot and boundary treatments

There is variety in terms of how many buildings are setback from the highway, with some fronting directly onto the lane, others allowing space for front gardens of varying sizes. Building lines, rotation, plot sizes and widths are very irregular in the historic core, and slightly more consistent within the more recently developed part of the village to the south. This informality contributes to the rural character of the village, and in general grass verges and/or front lawns and low front walls are encouraged to ensure an open, rural feel is maintained.



There is a mixture of boundary treatments, including native hedgerows, trees and flower beds, low-height brick or stone walls, black iron railings and wooden picket fencing. Properties facing directly onto the streets are also considered as part of the boundary treatments adding interest along the streetscape.

Car parking

Generally car parking spaces are either on the plot to the front or garage parking, although there are also examples of courtyard parking and on-street parking.

Density

The village has a generally compact character. Some of the 20th century development on the southern side of the village is set within more generous plots allowing larger gaps between buildings, promoting a greater sense of openness, particularly where building heights remain low.

Building heights

The average building height is generally low, around 2 storeys, while there are examples of bungalows. The Conservation Area appraisal notes that the whole of the main route, from Church Cottages to The Wise Man and the Village Hall, has a unity of scale. The spine of St Andrew's Church is the highest element within the village. The topography, the meandering character of the streets and rich vegetation create interesting rooflines within the village settlement.



The village has a range of large detached and semi-detached properties, terraced housing, cottages and bungalows. Historically, many of the smaller cottages had simple one storey plus attics plans around a central entrance lobby, with chimneys at both ends. There are also several former agricultural buildings, most notably Barton Barn. A mix of house types characteristic of the historic

Building forms and styles

The village has a range of large detached and semi-detached properties, terraced housing, cottages and bungalows. Historically, many of the smaller cottages had simple one storey plus attics plans around a central entrance lobby, with chimneys at both ends. There are also several former agricultural buildings, most notably Barton Barn. A mix of house types characteristic of the historic

part of the village is seen as important, with the 2002 Village Design Statement emphasising the need to avoid monotonous repetitions and avoidance of suburban, executive-style housing.

Floyers Field in West Stafford provides a good example of where modern development has complimented the historic built forms, although the loss of the view over rooftops to the church tower and water meadows (as lauded in the Conservation Area Appraisal) was unfortunate.

Roof materials & types

Roof materials include grey slate tiles and clay tiles, while there are also examples of thatched roofs. The prevailing roof types are gabled and thatched, while there are also examples of cross gabled roofs. Larger Purbeck stone tiles feature as the lowest course on some of the traditional buildings.

Roof pitches are typically between 37.5 to 47.5 degrees, and at least 50 degrees on thatched properties.

Chimneys, constructed of red or dark brown brick are common and should be included wherever possible. Some roofs have modest-sized gabled or hipped dormers. Ornamental ridge tiles and the use of scalloped tiles in decorative bands are also a notable feature.

Colour Palette, walling & window types

Wall materials are typically either rendered (traditionally cob, off-white and other pastel colours), Portland or Purbeck limestone or buff, red and dark brown brick. Stone and thatch tend to dominate the main thoroughfare. There are also examples where materials are combined, for instance, renders with random or coursed rubble to the bottom, or bricks of different colours used as quoins, lintels, architraves and sills.

Windows are mainly casement, although there are examples of sash and bow windows. More modern developments mostly maintain the typology and white colours on the frames.

Doors are generally wooden, with rain hoods and porches also a common feature, using identical materials to the main roof.



Thatched gabled roof with brick chimney



Gabled roof with grey slate tiles



Hipped roof with clay tiles



Half hipped thatched roof



Half hipped thatched roof with hipped dormers

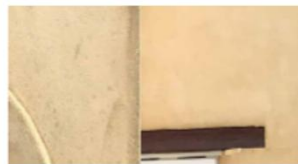


Gabled roof with clay tiles and hipped dormers

Walling & window types



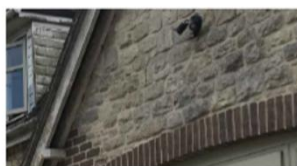
Off-white render



Buff render



Red brick (different shades)



Local stone combined dark brown brick around window and doors



Buff brick combined with red brick reveals and lintels



Off-white render combined with limestone cladding



Modern casement windows



Casement windows



Modern bow window

Woodsford village

Woodsford is located in the rising ground south of the River Frome and water meadows. It appears on the 1888 Ordnance Survey subdivided into East and West Woodsford. East Woodsford is the larger of the two, concentrated around Woodsford Church. West Woodsford comprises Woodsford Castle, Castle Dairy, and cottages to the east. .

Road network and Public Rights of Way

The countryside lanes are narrow, and well-vegetated with hedgerows, trees and green verges creating a strong sense of enclosure. There are no pavements. The public footpath network offers connections to Tincton and Crossways, as well as to the River Frome.

There are various attractive, long-distance views from the road and rights of way network, including The Castle, which although slightly set back from the road, is quite visible and acts as a local landmark for the area.

Plot and boundary treatments

Buildings are typically set back from the main rural routes through the area, often down short cul-de-sacs, allowing for generous green buffers. Building orientations, spacing and building lines are very irregular, contributing to the rural feel and visual interest through unexpected views.

Native hedgerows are the main boundary treatments, although there are examples of low-height stone walls and post and rail wooden fencing.

Car parking

Car parking is typically within the plot either in front or to the side of the main property or garage parking.

Density

The building density is relatively low, with generous gaps between buildings, creating open views to the wider countryside.

Building heights

The average building height is generally low, around 2 storeys, while there are examples of 1-storey houses and barn buildings. There are a few taller buildings: the church, Woodsford Castle and some relatively modern, industrial-style barns.

Building forms and styles

7.2.5 Building types include traditional cottages, terraced farmworker cottages and barns, farm/manor houses, barns, as well as a mix of 20th century bungalows, post-war council houses and more modern, late 20th century homes.



Roof materials & types

Roof types range between gabled, cross gabled, hipped and thatched roofs. Roof materials range between clay tiles and grey slate, while there are also examples of thatched roofs. Chimneys, made of brick or limestone, and gabled dormers also decorate the roofs adding visual interest.

Colour Palette, walling & window types

Walls are typically limestone or buff and red brick (sometimes painted). Farm buildings are mainly built by weatherboarding, red brick and limestone.

Window types include painted timber-framed casement and sash windows. Occasionally some of the more modern developments have used darker colours or minimum details on the frames.



Thatched, hipped roof



Red clay tiles on a gabled (& cross gabled) roof



Grey slates on gabled roof



Chimney and gabled dormer



Clay tiles on bonnet tiled hipped roof



Gabled dormers with blue details

Walling & window types



Limestone



Painted brick and part plastered cob



Red and yellow brick



Half red brick and half black weatherboarding



Limestone and weatherboarding



Red brick



Casement windows

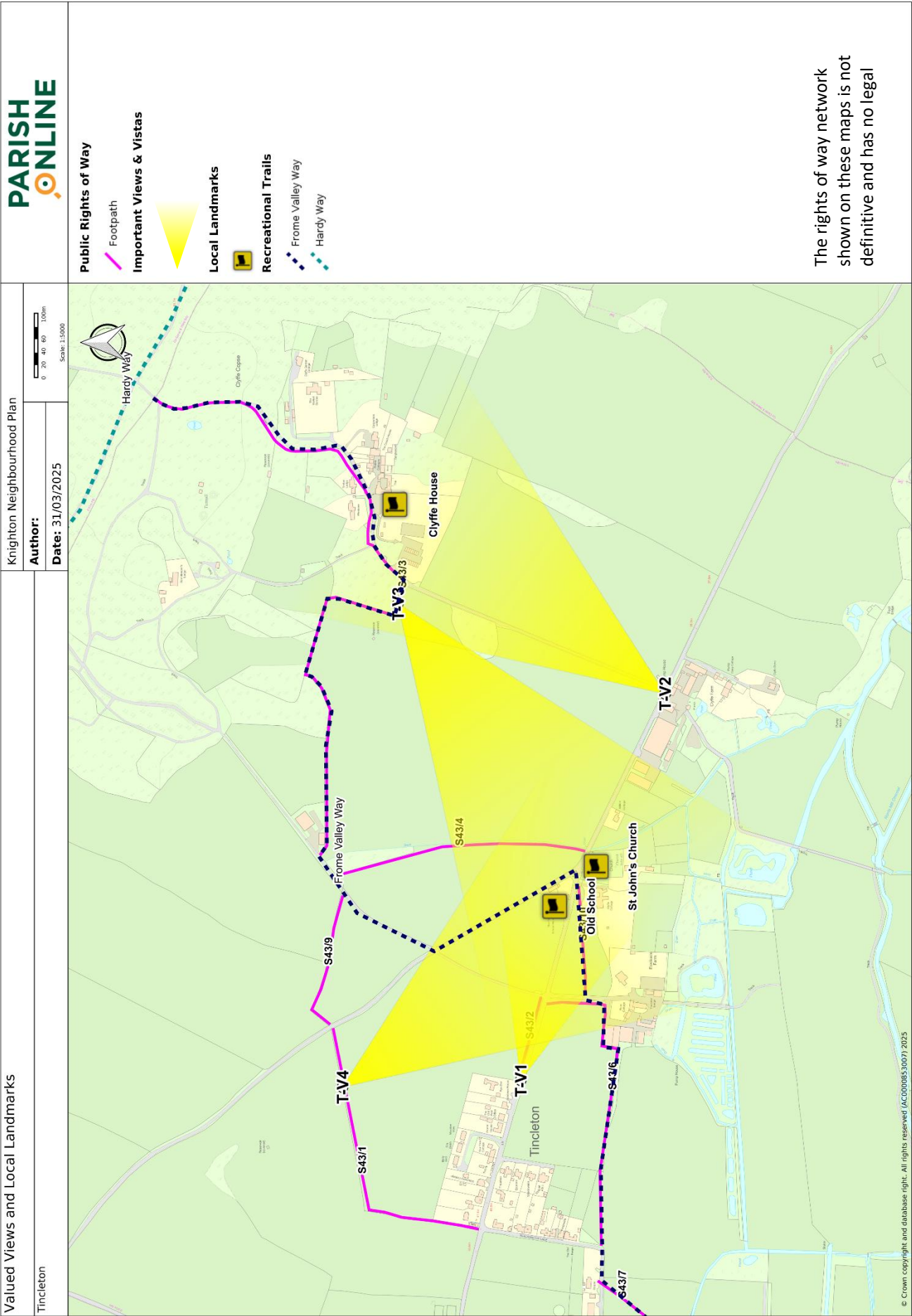


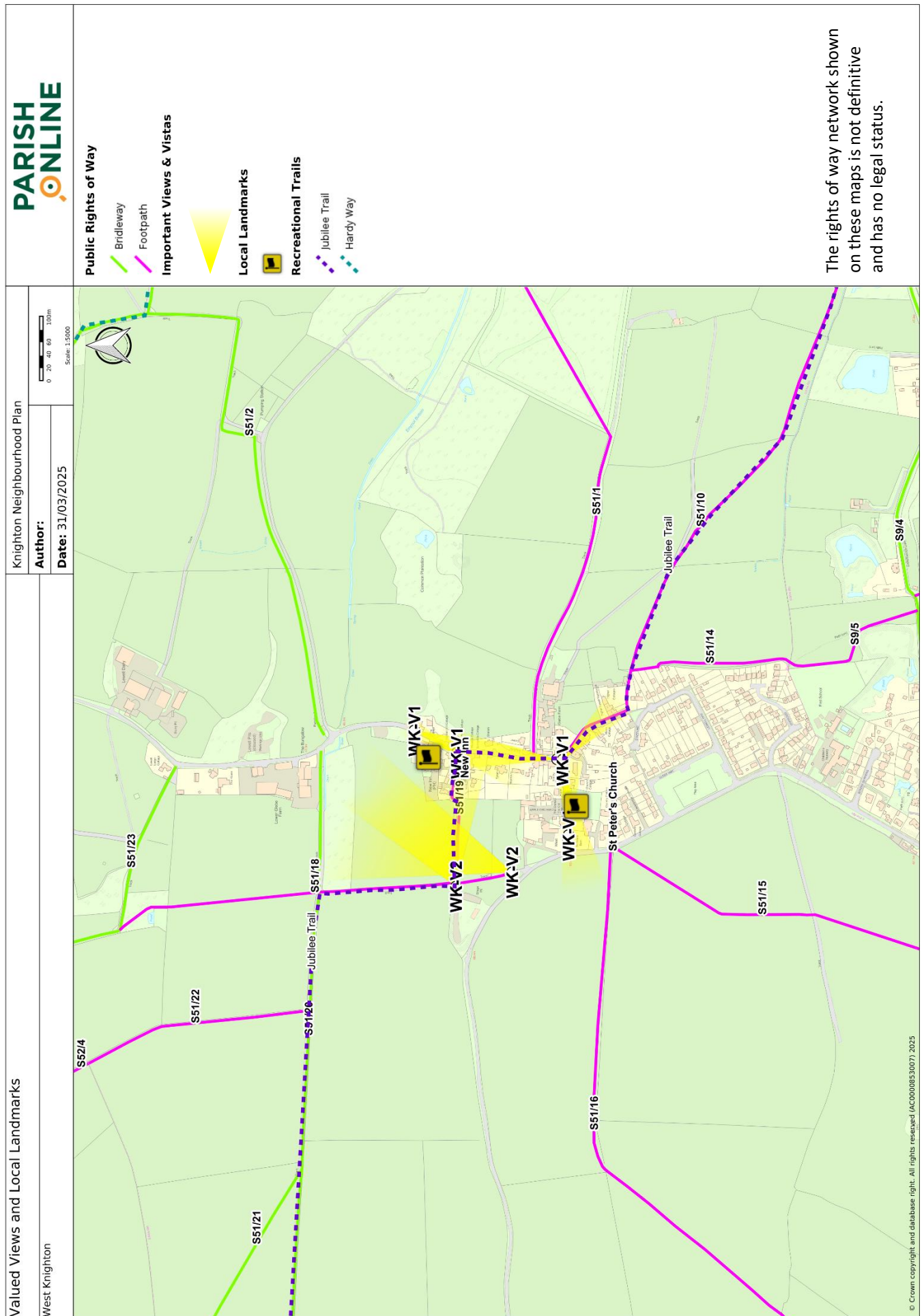
Painted timber frame on sash

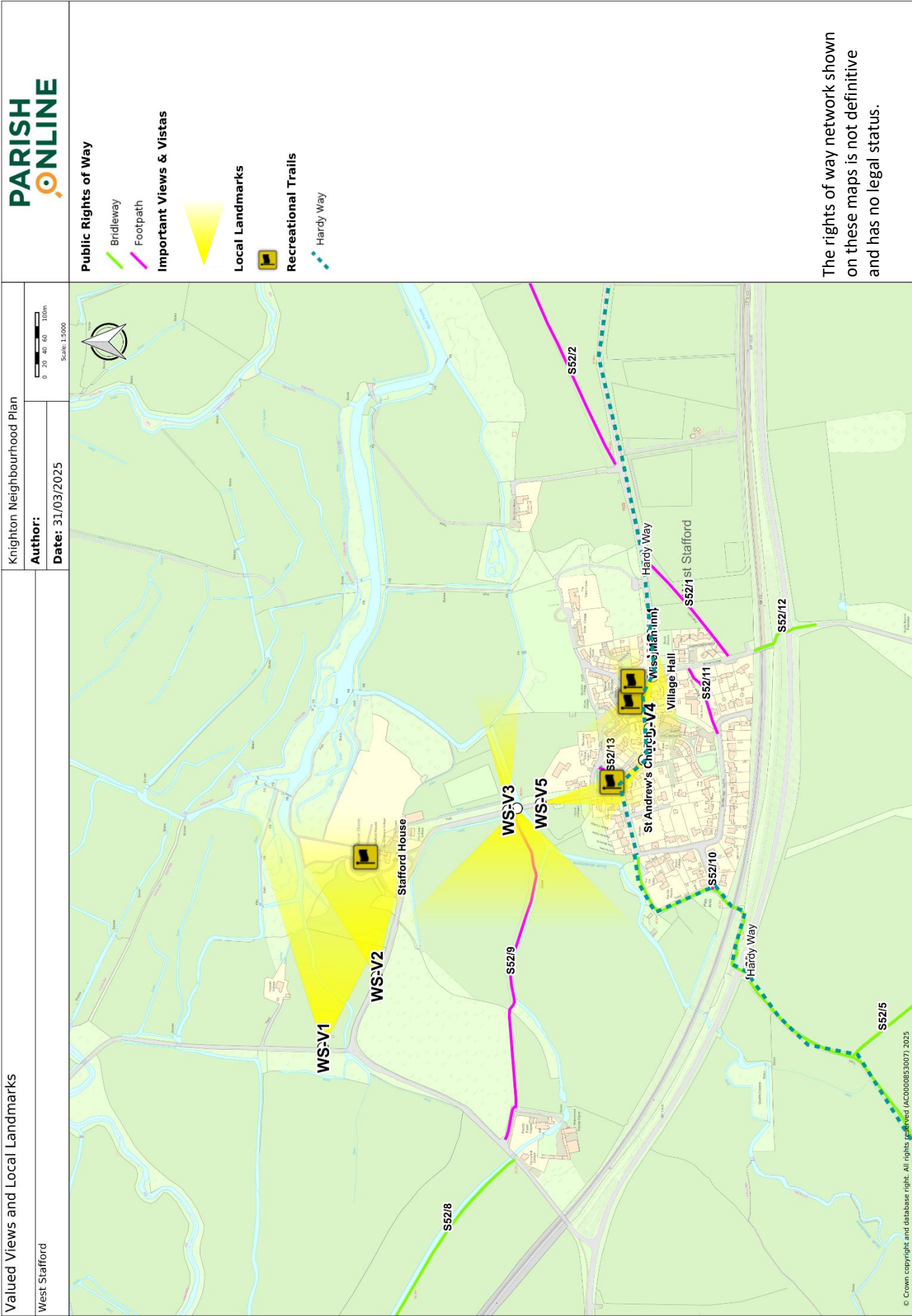


Modern windows

Appendix 4: Local Landmarks and Views Maps







The rights of way network shown on these maps is not definitive and has no legal status.

