



**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**2022-2037**



**Submission Version  
February 2024**

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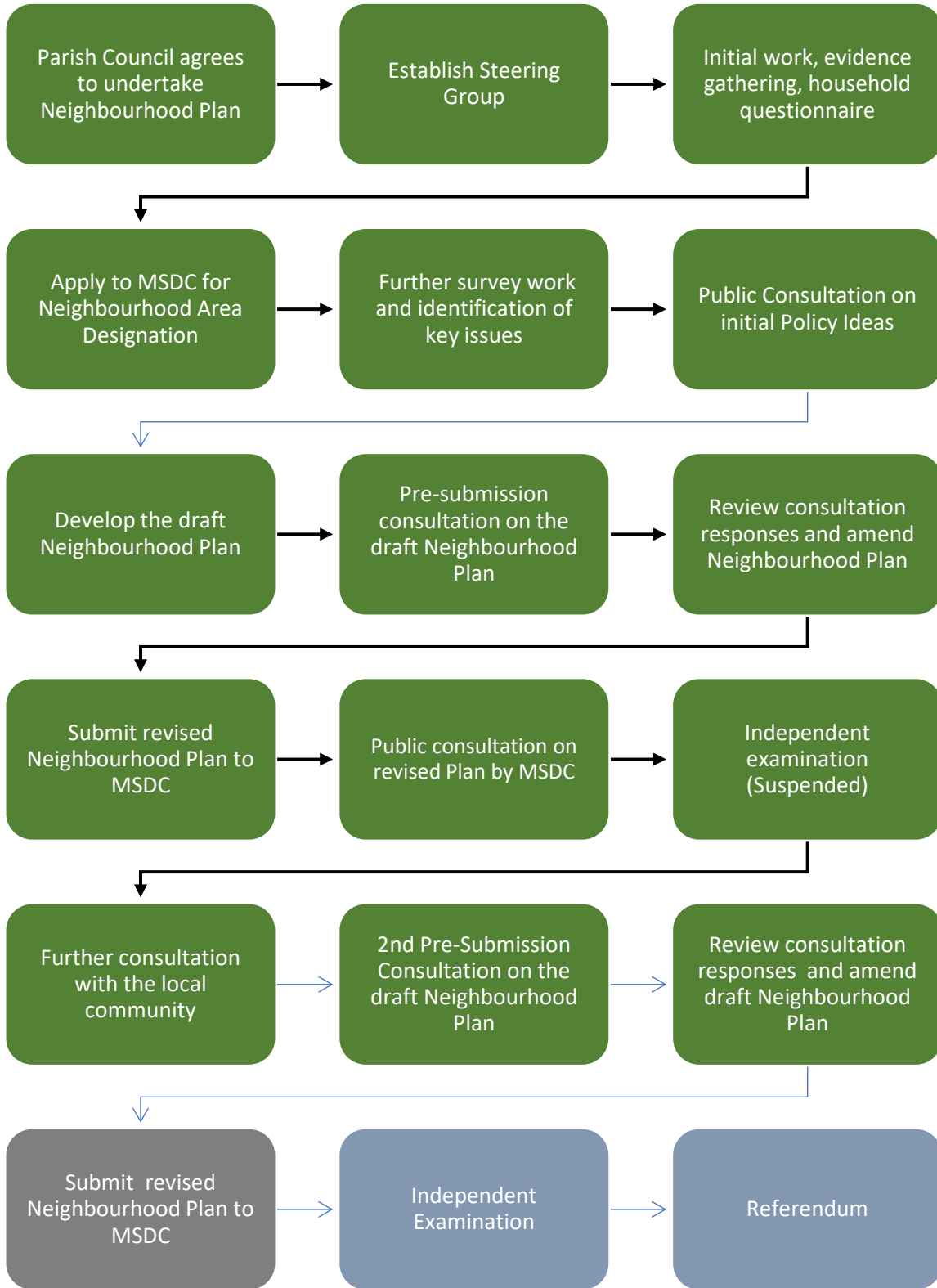
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# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan (WCBNP) will provide the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the parish of Wetheringsett cum Brockford. Neighbourhood Plans such as this were made possible by powers contained within the 2011 Localism Act which sought to decentralise policy making to the local level giving more powers to communities and the right to shape future development where they live.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It is about the use and development of land between 2022 and 2037. Once the Plan is made and adopted, Mid Suffolk District Council will use it to determine planning applications. Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council will use the Plan to respond to planning applications.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan for Wetheringsett cum Brockford has been prepared by a volunteer team on behalf of Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council (WCBPC), comprising local residents from around the parish including three Parish Councillors. The process of preparing the plan has involved several stages of public consultation and community engagement and originally began in 2019. (See **Appendix A** for Steering Group members).
- 1.4 The Plan looks ahead to 2037, which is consistent with the plan period of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan (BMSJLP). It recognises that there has been development in the parish and that there will continue to be so over the Plan period. The Plan seeks to manage development proactively to ensure it meets local needs, whilst ensuring that the historic and natural environment of the parish and the current community facilities are preserved and enhanced and encouraged to thrive. The key issues facing the Parish, which have been highlighted through public participation, include concerns about the design and impact of new development, the sustainability of the community facilities, impacts on the environment and employment development and ensuring that housing in the parish meets the current and future needs of residents. People wish to see the social and cultural role of the parish and its community spirit maintained.
- 1.5 The Plan operates in the context of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan's vision and objectives will be realised through policies and projects identified in this Plan and also from future promotions and advocacy. Most policies will guide new development across the whole Plan area, and the Parish Council will promote, and collaborate with others, to realise projects which will further the vision for the Parish.
- 1.6 The Plan's policies and proposals will rely on investment in the Parish by private, public, and voluntary agencies. Many of the specific proposals will only happen through partnerships and collaboration. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to give the sense of direction and momentum which will build confidence and commitment.

- 1.7 By undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group aims to:
- give a voice to the community to influence and shape future development.
  - enhance the sense of community.
  - ensure new development is sustainable and protects and maintains the rural character of Wetheringsett cum Brockford.
  - allow the village to develop sensitively, in terms of design, local linear character, heritage, community facilities, and the natural environment.
  - establish what is special about Wetheringsett cum Brockford.
  - identify community needs for the use of developer contributions and other possible funds.
- 1.8 This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan, and it has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The 1<sup>st</sup> draft Neighbourhood Plan had reached Examination in March 2023, but the Examiner suspended the Examination in May 2023 after identifying a procedural flaw and the Neighbourhood Plan was formally withdrawn by the Parish Council. This 2<sup>nd</sup> Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following some initial consultation with the local community on housing issues which took place during July 2023 and then a 2<sup>nd</sup> formal Pre-Submission consultation which took place between 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- 1.9 The flow chart below (**Figure 1**) outlines the stages the Steering Group has gone through and the future work programme. The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan is there to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the parish. It has been positively prepared, with the purpose of supporting and managing Wetheringsett cum Brockford's growth, not preventing it. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every parish and village across the entire district, whereas the Neighbourhood Plan can, by providing additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions.
- 1.10 The Neighbourhood Plan provides clarity on what will be expected from development proposals in the parish. A Neighbourhood Plan is a significant document and will carry legal weight so that developers have to take note when considering future developments in the parish.
- 1.11 The Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the entire Parish of Wetheringsett cum Brockford and was formally designated by Mid Suffolk on 21st January 2021.



**Key**  
 Completed stage   
  Current stage   
  Future stage

Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan process flow chart

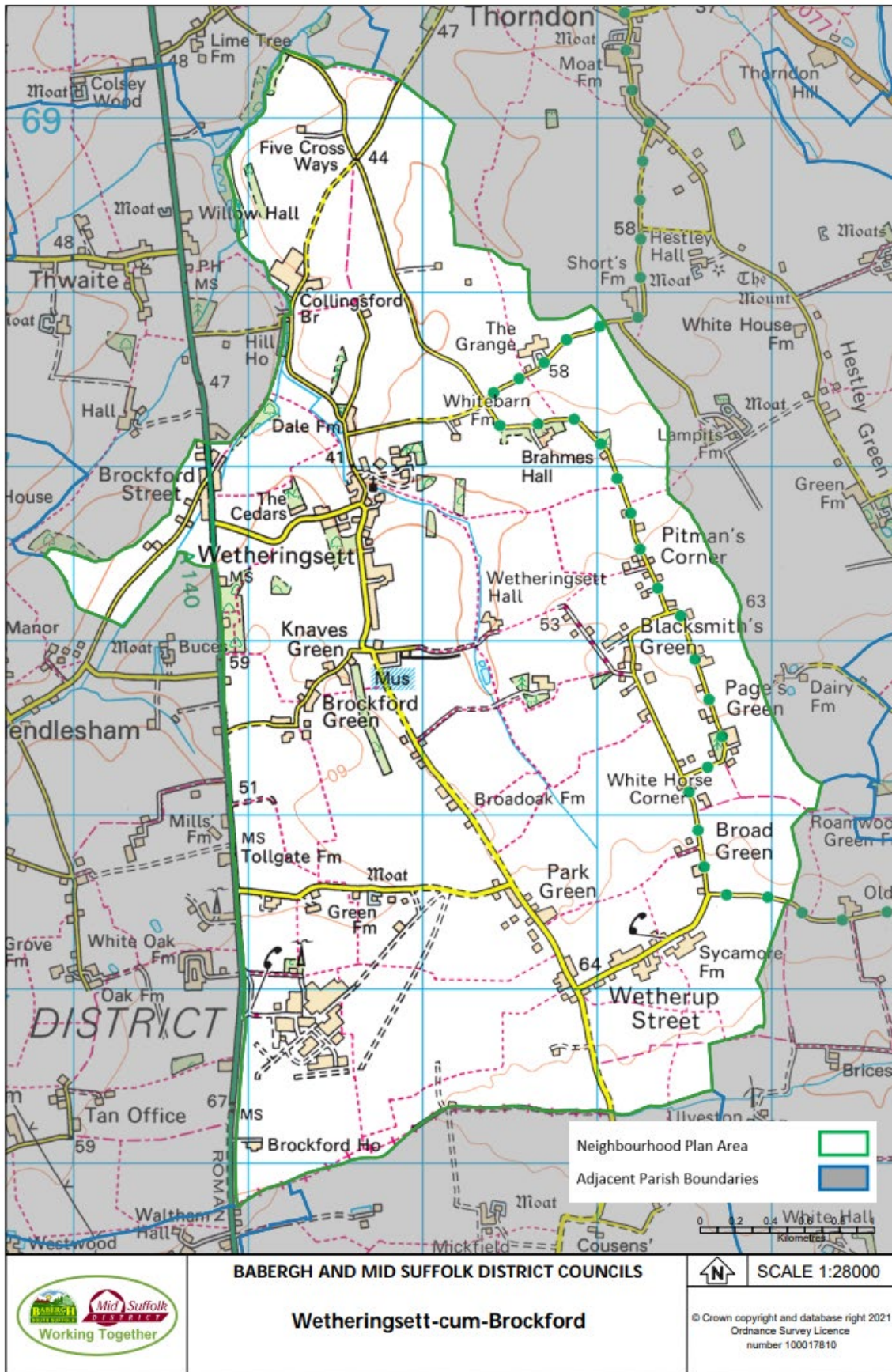


Figure 2: Neighbourhood Area

1.12 This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> submission version of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan. Local residents, businesses, landowners and statutory agencies have all had the opportunity to comment on the various draft versions of the Plan. All comments have been collated and considered. The Plan has been amended for submission to Mid Suffolk District Council in February 2024.

### Accompanying supporting documents

1.13 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by the following documents:

- **Wetheringsett cum Brockford Design Guidance and Codes** - undertaken by consultants AECOM and first completed in March 2022 with minor updates in October 2023 – a focus on design elements to inform policy making and application determination across the Neighbourhood Area.
- **Housing Needs Assessment** - undertaken by consultants AECOM in October 2021 – a desk top study of the likely needs within the parish.
- **Environmental Assets in Wetheringsett cum Brockford** – an audit of Environmental Assets in the parish, produced by a Steering Group member.

### Examination and referendum

1.14 After submission, Mid Suffolk District Council will undertake a checking process and further consultation. The Neighbourhood Plan will then go through an independent examination. Subject to the Examiner’s report, the Neighbourhood Plan should then proceed to referendum.

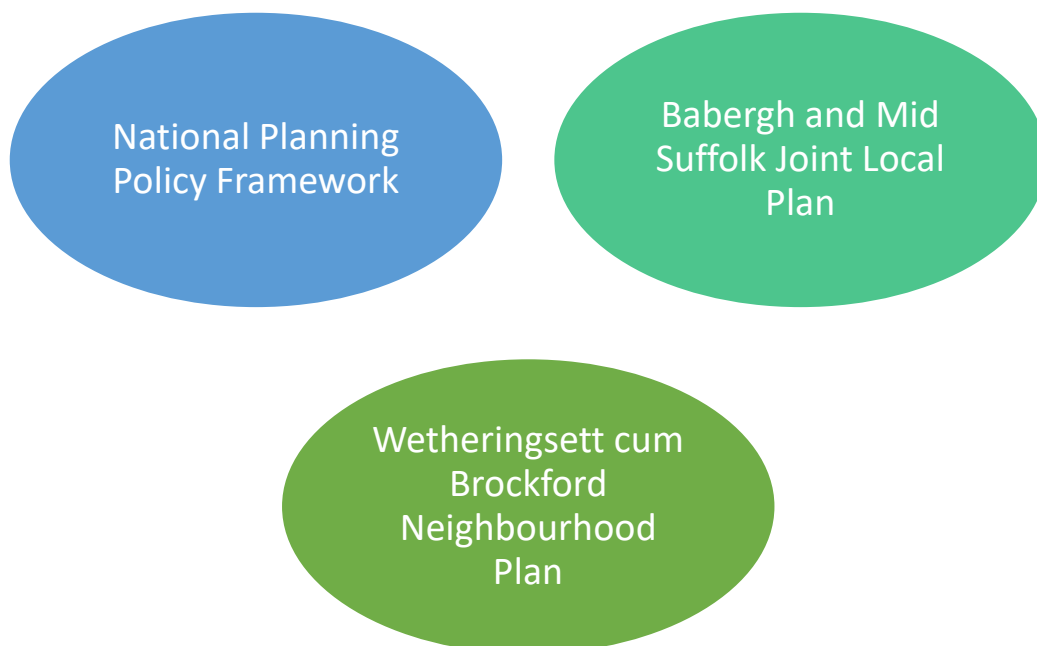
1.15 At referendum, every resident of Wetheringsett cum Brockford, who is entitled to vote in the Council elections will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not they agree with the Neighbourhood Plan. At referendum, residents will be asked: ***‘Do you want Mid Suffolk District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wetheringsett cum Brockford to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood area?’***. If the Plan gets over 50 per cent support from those who vote in the referendum, Mid Suffolk will ‘make’ (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan.

### National and local planning policy context

1.16 Every local planning authority in England is required to prepare a Local Plan. Local Plans include all of the local planning policies for the district’s area and identify how land is used, determining what will be built and where. The relevant documents covering Wetheringsett cum Brockford during our Neighbourhood Plan drafting stages were the saved policies of the adopted Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998), the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008), and the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2012). These have now been replaced by Part 1 of the BMSJLP which was adopted in November 2023. The Part 1 BMSJLP, any relevant saved Local Plan policies and this Neighbourhood Plan (when made) will, provide the basis for determining planning applications and future development in the parish.

- 1.17 The ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 and revised most recently in December 2023. It sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to be in conformity with the revised NPPF, in particular, taking a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As stated above, district level planning policy has changed.
- 1.18 The BMSJLP underwent an extensive period of public consultation and independent inspection. In December 2021, the District Councils agreed to progress the BMSJLP in two parts. Part 1 (now adopted) contains the strategic policies and development management policies for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk. It is also understood that Part 2 of the BMSJLP will consider, amongst other things, a new settlement hierarchy, the spatial distribution for any necessary housing allocations, and open space designations. Work on the Part 2 plan is expected to begin in early 2024.
- 1.19 Development is defined as ‘the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land’.<sup>1</sup> Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 emphasises that the planning system continues to be a ‘plan-led’ system and restates the requirement that ‘determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’.
- 1.20 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan once ‘made’ (adopted) will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and future planning applications for new development in the parish will be determined using its policies.

Figure 3: Spatial and strategic policy context: relationship between the NPPF, BMSJLP, and the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan. Own diagram.



<sup>1</sup> Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



## Policy framework for Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.21 Policy CS1 of the Adopted Core Strategy identified Wetheringsett as a 'secondary village' in the settlement hierarchy. These were villages that were identified as being unsuitable for growth but capable of taking appropriate residential infill and development for local needs only. Local needs include employment, amenity, and community facilities as well as small-scale infill housing and "rural exception" sites for affordable housing. Local needs could be identified through annual monitoring or in locally generated documents such as parish plans or local needs surveys. Development proposals were (and are still ) expected to be accompanied by supporting evidence of the need that is being met.
- 1.22 The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (BMSJLP) November 2020, made a distinction between the various parts of the parish. The historic core of the parish around the Church was identified as a 'hinterland village' whilst Brockford Street and an area at Wetherup Street and Park Green were identified as 'hamlets' and a settlement boundary defined for each.
- 1.23 The emerging BMSJLP (November 2020) also indicated that 'hinterland villages' as a collective were expected to account for 10% of planned growth over the Plan period (April 2018 to March 2037) which equated to 1267 dwellings over approximately 43 settlements. The BMSJLP also made it clear that not all 'hinterland' villages were equal and that there would be variance in the levels of growth based on a number of factors such as the availability of suitable development sites and considerations of the built and natural environment.
- 1.24 In addition, the emerging BMSJLP (November 2020) indicated that 'hamlets' had been defined where 10 or more well related dwellings exist. Hamlets were expected to collectively provide 3% of proposed new growth which equated to 404 dwellings across approximately 75 settlements. In the context of the parish, this related to Wetherup Street/Park Green and Brockford Street, although it was acknowledged that there are several other hamlets within the parish that were not originally identified as suitable locations for new development in the Local Plan.
- 1.25 The BMSJLP November 2020, defined three Settlement Boundaries within the parish (See **Appendix F** for Inset Maps). Settlement Boundaries are a mechanism that helps to define the built-up area of settlements and indicates where in principle, development for housing (and employment) would be suitable. They help to avoid the loss of further undeveloped land in the countryside whilst directing new development to appropriate locations and restricting the scope and scale of development.
- 1.26 It is proposed to use the settlement boundaries shown in **Appendix F** for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan policies and these are largely based on those in the BMSJLP (November 2020) with some amendments to reflect latest permissions and commitments.

## Local Housing Requirement

- 1.27 The NPPF requires strategic policy making authorities (e.g. District Councils) to establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.
- 1.28 The WCBNP Area was designated in January 2021, which was after the publication of the Pre-submission draft of the BMSJLP (November 2020). Consequently, the latter did not set out housing requirement figure for the parish. In a briefing note to parishes dated December 2021, the District Council subsequently confirmed that all neighbourhood plan housing requirement figures should be treated as indicative only, and until such time as revised figures are established through work on BMSJLP Part
- 1.29 The draft BMSJLP (Nov 2020) identified two housing site allocations at Brockford Street totalling 20 dwellings. In separate correspondence (Aug 2022) the District Council suggested that these allocations could be taken as representing the indicative housing requirement figure for this parish over the plan period to 2037. The allocations were as follows:
1. 'Land east of A140' (10 dwellings), and
  2. 'Land north-east of The Street' (10 dwellings).
- 1.30 The most northerly located of the two sites (land north-east of The Street) had a planning permission for 9 dwellings which was granted in 2020. In addition, a subsequent outline application for 14 dwellings was submitted in 2021 but refused in June 2022 on the basis it was in an unsustainable location and insufficient floodrisk information had been supplied. An appeal was subsequently submitted and then withdrawn. Meanwhile construction had begun on site to implement the 2020 permission. The other proposed allocation did not benefit from any permissions.
- 1.31 In preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, and specifically when considering the issue of new housing, regard has been had to the evidence in the Housing Needs Assessment, the District Council's policy position, and their own monitoring reports, and the views of local people expressed through consultation to date particularly those views which relate to scale, location and form of new development.

## 2. Wetheringsett cum Brockford parish

Please note: the information contained in this Chapter was accurate at the time of writing and has been updated with census 2021 figures where available)

- 2.1 Wetheringsett cum Brockford is a civil parish in Hartismere Hundred within the Mid-Suffolk District of Eastern England. It is located 16 miles from Ipswich to the south, 9 miles from Stowmarket to the southwest and 10 miles from Diss to the north. Close by are local services at Debenham (4.5 miles) Mendlesham (2.5 miles) and Eye (6.5 miles). Perhaps the most familiar landmark locator for travellers on the A140 is the communications mast, which rises approximately 305 metres above the Mendlesham Industrial Estate and whose red lights punctuate the dark skies for miles around.

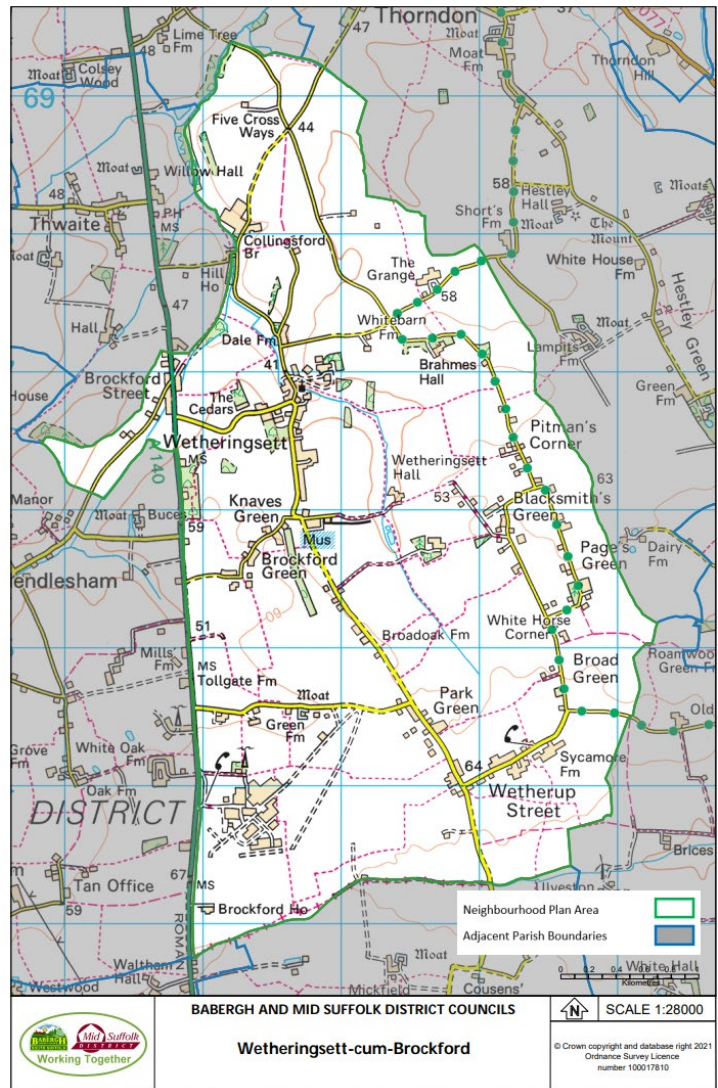


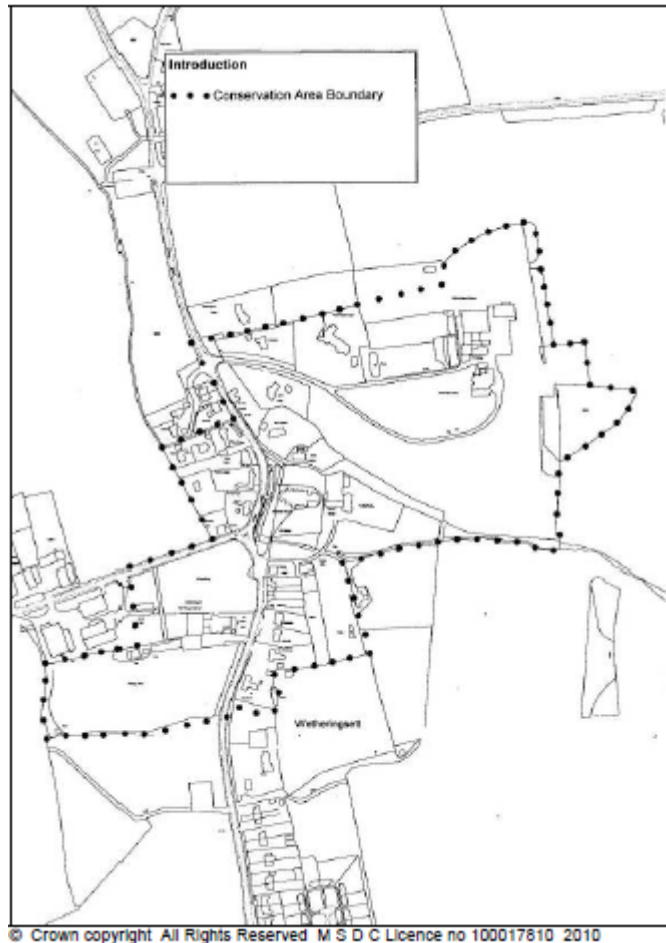
Figure 4: Map of the parish of Wetheringsett cum Brockford

- 2.2 The Saxons gave the village its name: “The settling place of the clan of Wedr”, and ‘forded’ the ‘brook’ at Brockford, making a great ditched land (Brook Lane) as a parish boundary, possibly as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2.3 The parish consists of a central village – Wetheringsett - and several outlying hamlets spread over a large area of nearly 1,500 hectares (15.4 km<sup>2</sup>, Density 4.6/km<sup>2</sup>). To the east are Pitman’s Corner, Blacksmith’s Corner, Pages Green, White Horse Corner and Broad Green; to the south-east, Wetherup Street; due south, Park Green; to the west Knaves Green, Brockford Green; and further to the west, Brockford Street. The “Greens” were originally pasture-land with different grazing rights which were enclosed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. While Wetheringsett and Brockford were always joined together for tax purposes, the identity of each part of the parish was recognised into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2.4 The Conservation Area around the church was designated in 1975, then appraised and extended in 2000. It lies in a wooded hollow at the head of a tributary of the River Dove which eventually joins the River Waveney north of Eye. In 2011, the Character Appraisal

concluded: “The conservation area should continue to protect the ‘arcadian’ nature of the village within its wooded setting.”

- 2.5 The population (2021 census) was 692 in 277 households. There are 53 listed buildings in the parish, most of them converted farmhouses and agricultural buildings, with the largest concentration of post-war and modern developments in the main part of Wetheringsett itself.

**Figure 5: Wetheringsett Conservation Area**



## History

### Archaeology

- 2.6 *Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) manages the Historic Environment Record for the county with publicly accessible records viewable on the Suffolk Heritage Explorer, which can be viewed at <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/>. Early consultation of the Historic Environment Record and assessment of the archaeological potential of the area at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments is recommended.* The Suffolk County Historic Environment Record lists over 50 archaeological finds scattered across the parish. These include finds from the more distant periods such as a Neolithic axe, Bronze Age pottery and Iron Age (HER no WCB 010). More recent finds include Roman pottery and coins WCB 028 & 062), a Saxon brooch (WCB 034 & 062) and some Medieval scatter finds (WCB 008, 010 and 061). Specific sites listed in the record include several Medieval moated sites, farmsteads, a fishpond, and a deer park. (Source: MSDC Conservation Area Appraisal 2011). In and around the Conservation Area alone are 11 HER sites.
- 2.7 West of Hockey Hill is a series of undated cropmarks, showing a possible track or road along with fields and small enclosures. These provide a high potential for the discovery of further below-ground heritage assets of archaeological importance in the area. (source: SCC Archaeological Service Dec 2020 in response to planning application). In relation to a planning application for land off the A140 near Brockford Street, the Service recorded that the western edge of the site is bounded by part of the Coddendam to Scole Roman road known as Pye Road during the medieval period (SAS 011).
- 2.8 Roman dated artefact scatters have been found close to the site, which include a scatter of grey ware pottery (THW 007) and a Colchester derivative brooch (WCB 013). Further, metal

detector searches around the site have found artefacts from the prehistoric periods to the post-medieval period. As a result, in both cases they reported a high potential for the discovery of below-ground heritage assets of archaeological importance within this area, with groundworks associated with the development having the potential to destroy any archaeological remains which exist.

### Socio-Economic History

2.9 Evidence, including its name, suggests that the Saxons were the original settlers of Wetheringsett cum Brockford. The church they built (probably of timber) was replaced by a new building, the Church of All Saints, in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, large parts of which remain today.

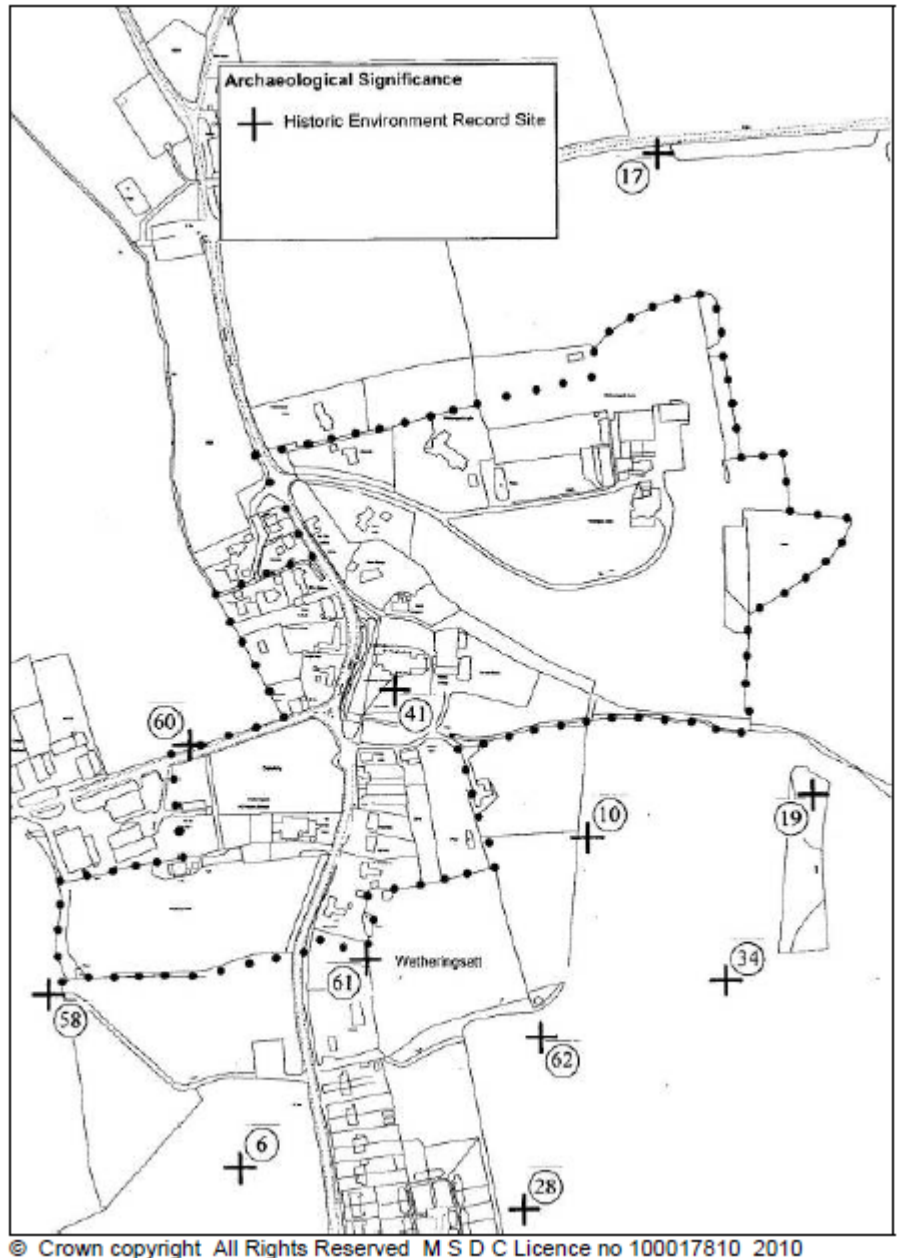


Figure 6: Historic Environment Record for Wetheringsett Church Area

By 1066 most of the land in the parish was owned by the Abbeys of Bury and Ely until the Dissolution, when it reverted to wealthy landowners.

2.10 Most of the timber-framed houses which form the bulk of the Parish's 53 listed buildings were built in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century though a significant number date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most were built as the homes of farmers, their families, servants and animals, and of artisans, though these would have had minimal comforts, unlike those restored in recent years. They were built as single dwellings, but as farms were amalgamated, they were divided into two, three or even four. Around a quarter of these buildings are rendered timber-frame with thatched roofs in the Suffolk vernacular, without exposed timber framing. Others are of render and pantile, red brick and pantile, or weatherboard and pantile.

- 2.11 As well as its characteristic domestic buildings, the parish has some larger buildings of architectural and historical interest including the Church; Wetheringsett Manor (built in Suffolk white brick in 1843 on glebe land in the early gothic revival style by the then rector); and Wetheringsett Hall, originally a Tudor moated hall, now with an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century frontage in red brick and a slate roof.
- 2.12 The local authority-built houses in the inter- and post-war periods on Hockey Hill, with the most recent bungalows for elderly people finished in the 1980s. Further small “infill” developments, mainly of bungalows and larger detached houses have increased the number of residences in the parish subsequently, and many of the older buildings and redundant barns have been converted into desirable homes in the past 50 years or so.
- 2.13 For much of its history the parish had of necessity been self-sufficient. Occupations listed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century included: carpenter, spoon maker, cooper, thatcher, scrivener, tailor, and fletcher. In 1841 we have: grocer, butcher, cobbler, draper, harness-maker, blacksmith, wheelwright, woolcomber, tailor, carpenter, baker, and tailor, with 15 shops in the parish.
- 2.14 With the decline in mixed farming, and the closure of local stock markets and abattoirs, by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were fewer working farms, and farmhouses were sold off separately from their land, some with paddocks attached, and redundant farm buildings converted into homes, or small business units. One by one, the pubs/beerhouses closed: The Trowel, now “Old Trowel Farm”, had closed by 1871; The Old Dun Cow in Church Street (now “The Old Forge”) in the early 1900’s; The Fox in Station Road sometime between 1905 and 1923; the Trowel and Hammer in Wetherup Street in 1960; and finally the Cat and Mouse (formerly the White Horse) closed its doors in 1993.
- 2.15 Encouraged by the Light Railways Act of 1896, the Mid Suffolk Light Railway brought trains to Brockford as a branch from the main line at Haughley. Intended to go east through to Halesworth, and then to join the main line at Lowestoft, it only ever reached Laxfield and was plagued by financial problems. In fact, in 1906 it was insolvent, but the receiver kept it going until the newly-created LNER was persuaded to take over an impoverished Middy, but it finally closed in 1952. In 1990 it was revived by volunteers as a heritage railway and museum with the original MSLR name. The track is now being extended, and with its museum, tea-room and shop it has become the parish’s most famous tourist/heritage attraction. Converted railway carriages and buildings at Brockford Sidings now provide self-catering accommodation for visitors. Less romantic vestiges of a post-agricultural age include the old potato storage sheds at Old Station Yard, some large intensive poultry farms, and the 4-storey container stack which is the predominant feature of the landscape on Town Lane.
- 2.16 The parish’s most famous resident was Richard Hakluyt, Rector of Wetheringsett from 1590 until his death in 1616. Buried in Westminster Abbey, he is described by the Victoria History as “one of the greatest men of that age of great men” who compiled the work for which he is most famous: “The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English nation made by sea or over land...”, first published in 1589, then superseded 10 years later while in Wetheringsett by a longer version, and described as “one of the prose epics of our language”, a compilation of tales from merchants and sailors and the stories of voyages and

explorations, finding new lands and planting the flag. Hakluyt’s place in economic history is as an advocate of colonization though in the interests of mercantile, rather than imperialist, expansion. He is remembered to this day on the village sign, in the stained-glass panel on the telephone box, as a cycle route round the parish and in Hakluyt Close, a small modern development on Hockey Hill whose choice of name the local authority originally opposed on the grounds it was too difficult to pronounce but gave in to parish pressure.

2.17 Also commemorated on the village sign is its more infamous cleric, George Ellis, who falsified documents to become rector of Wetheringsett from 1883 – 1888. Despite not being ordained, he baptised, buried, and married villagers. Subsequently these marriages had to be legitimised under The Marriages Validation Act 1888 by an order of the Queen. Ellis was imprisoned for his crime.

**Population**

2.18 The table below summarises the changes in the population of Wetheringsett cum Brockford over 210 years.

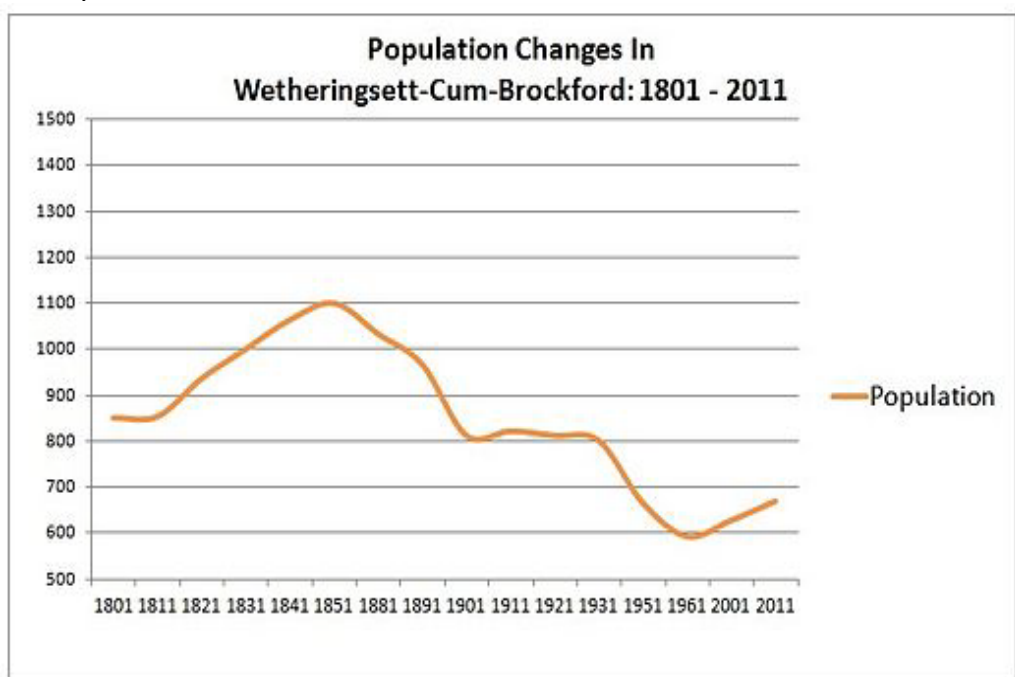


Figure 7

**Sources:** Census data from 2011.

2.19 Today, the demographic profile of Wetheringsett cum Brockford suggests a relatively affluent, middle-aged to ageing population of white homeowners with spacious houses, who are either retired, running their own businesses, working from home or commuting to work. This however is unlikely to be the whole picture.

2.20 According to the 2021 Census, the population of the Parish was 692, an increase of 23 since 2011. Of this figure 50.7% were males and 49.3% females.

- 2.21 17.5% of residents were under 18, compared with 24% in 2011, with 14% being children under 9 years, increasing slightly from 12% in 2011. 56.4% were aged 18 – 64, which was up from 49% in 2011 and 20% are over 65, which is also up from 17% in 2011.
- 2.22 In 2011, 84% of residents reported that their day-to-day activities were not limited by health issues, 10% said they were limited a little, and the remaining 6% said they were limited “a lot”. 85% of residents reported their health as good or very good, 10.5% as fair and 4% as bad or very bad. In 2011, 96% of residents were born in the UK, and in 2011, 98% were white, compared with 96.8% in 2021. In 2011, 69% identified as Christian, compared with 54.6% in 2021, while in 2011, 30% claim no religious affiliation compared with 44.8% in 2021.
- 2.23 In 2021, of the 277 households in the Parish, 175 (62.5%) live in detached houses or bungalows; 72 (25.7%) semi-detached homes; 13 (4.6%) were terraced; 18 (6.4%) lived in other forms of housing including caravans.
- 2.24 81.7% of households were owner-occupied – and of these just under half of were owned outright. 14 (5%) were socially rented and 36 (12.9%) were privately rented.
- 2.25 Just under half (45.5%) were two person households and 44% lived in houses with 4 or more bedrooms.
- 2.26 18.1% were single person households, compared with 25% in 2011
- 2.27 In 2021, 60.2% of residents aged 16 – 74 were economically active compared with 75% in 2011. Almost all of those inactive were retired.
- 2.28 In terms of occupations, in 2011, less than 5% of the economically active population worked in agriculture, with the remainder of the workforce spread across all other sectors, with construction, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades and education each accounting for around 10%. Comparable figures for 2021 were not available at the time of writing. However in 2021, 49.3% were in managerial, professional, and associated professional and technical occupations, and 15% in skilled trades.

### **Business and Employment**

- 2.29 Local small businesses employ 69 people full time and 39 people part-time mainly in units on Cedars Hill, Old Station Yard and Town Lane. A further 150 are employed full-time and 40 part-time on the Mendlesham Industrial Estate. It is not known how many of these are Wetheringsett residents.
- 2.30 The largest employer on the business units at Cedars Hill is a medical services company with 32 fulltime staff. Other businesses, each employing 1 – 6 staff, include two upholsterers, a firm making soap and sanitizers, a recording studio, a photographer, a lawn care company, a pet food company, a hair and beauty salon, and a maker of curtains and blinds.
- 2.31 The Primary School and Nursery School employ 11 and 8 part-time staff respectively and the school at Wetheringsett Manor also employs local people.



- 2.32 In Old Station Yard there are three businesses doing vehicle repairs including one specialising in classic cars, a firm making oak-framed buildings, an electrical company, and the Mid-Suffolk Railway. Numbers of employees range from 1 – 5. At Knaves Green the Sidings employs 2 people part time. There is a vehicle repair firm at Old Trowel Barn on Station Road and a garden machinery business at Park Green. At Town Lane is a large and expanding haulage depot, currently also storing shipping containers, and a steelwork fabrications company. Again, these mainly employ between 1 and 4 people. However, on the Mendlesham Industrial Estate CEVA Logistics employs 150 people and Trade Counter Ltd a further 40. Significantly the only local agricultural employer is D. Alston Farms, as the arable farms in the Parish use subcontracted labour providers based elsewhere.



### Parish Facilities

- 2.33 Community facilities and services in Wetheringsett cum Brockford are limited, which may account for it being better than only 15% of other areas in England in terms of the “Living Environment”, and then only 6% in terms of access to services, despite ranking much better in terms of the other indices of deprivation in 2015.
- 2.34 In 1841 there were 15 shops in the parish, but the last general stores closed in 1978 and the Post Offices in Wetherup Street and Wetheringsett in 1984 and 2003 respectively, leaving the garage shop at Brockford and the Mendlesham stores and post office the nearest sources of basic supplies and services for those in the west and north of the parish and services in Debenham for the south and east of the parish. The last public house of the six in the parish closed in 1993.
- 2.35 Community life now focuses on the Church, the Village Hall, the School, and the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (“The Middy”).
- 2.36 **The Church of All Saints** is a Grade 1 listed building dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, which replaced a Saxon predecessor. Probably the oldest building in the Parish, it was enlarged and enriched in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and was described by Pevsner as “a stately church” – a large, handsome structure of stone and flint in the Perpendicular style with a slate roof.
- 2.37 Currently its bat population is causing problems for the internal fabric, but the church is being supported to seek solutions through The Bats in Churches Heritage Lottery funded project. Weekly coffee mornings as well as rostered religious services provide a meeting place for the community. The church has no toilets and a basic kitchen (no running water) and the church community are looking into solutions to resolve this and make the building more accessible for the community.
- 2.38 **The Village Hall** has been the focus of activities, including drama productions and social events as well as private hire since it was bought as a timber ex-army hut in 1920 and placed on brick foundations on the playing field next to the school. It is now used during the day by

the school as a dining room. It is a hugely important parish facility, but over the years the Village Hall Committee has had to rely on a massive amount of voluntary effort to maintain it and fundraise to patch up its ageing fabric. There have been several refurbishments to update basic facilities, but in 2021 storm damage necessitated the replacement of the roof, and the south wall was rebuilt, incorporating bi-fold doors, outside patio area and new windows. The floor had to be replaced and other improvement measures taken to meet current standards.

- 2.39 **The Primary School** was built in 1859 to cater for 130 pupils but came under threat in 1986 when the number fell to 40. A campaign to save small schools in Suffolk was successful and the school survived. Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School became an Academy in November 2019 and was rated “Good” by Ofsted. Then the number of pupils had dropped to 28 and a proportion of these travelled from outside the parish. However, the situation is now being redressed as more children enrol, and the presence of a pre-school and after-school provision is expected to improve recruitment. There is an active parents’ association. Other local primary schools are at Debenham, Thorndon and Mendlesham.
- 2.40 A mobile library visits the parish every four weeks calling at Brockford St, Hockey Hill, Wetherup St and Park Green. (15 mins at each).

#### **Other educational provision:**

- 2.41 Next door to the Primary School, the old School House accommodates a pre-school/nursery, “Jungle Cubs and Jungle Giants”, for children 0 – 5 years with 50 places.
- 2.42 The catchment secondary school is Debenham CEVC High School (11 – 16 years), though pupils from the parish also attend Hartismere High School at Eye. Both these schools have had “outstanding” designations by Ofsted in recent years. Sixth Form provision is available at Hartismere High School and in schools at Framlingham, Ipswich, Woodbridge, and Bury St. Edmunds (some fee-paying), though Suffolk County Council’s recent policy change on funding school travel may restrict pupils’ options.
- 2.43 In 2020, an independent school for pupils 11 – 18 with special educational needs was opened in Wetheringsett Manor, but this draws its referrals from across East Anglia, and is not essentially a local facility.
- 2.44 The parish is in the catchment for two **Primary Care Centres**, at Debenham and Mendlesham. The nearest hospitals are at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds.

#### **Tourism**

- 2.45 **The “Middy”**. Today the heritage Mid Suffolk Light Railway (the “Middy”) is the parish’s most important visitor heritage attraction, providing short steam train rides, a museum, shop and tea-room. Residents can apply for free membership and enjoy real ales in the carriage bar which opens to residents on some Fridays in the summer. As such, it is a very welcome facility in an otherwise “dry” village.

- 2.46 Near to the Middy, at Knaves Green, is “Brockford Sidings”, a group of heritage railway buildings converted for use as holiday lets together with 18 camping pitches.

### **Community Groups**

- 2.47 Of the formal community groups, the Parish Council has 12 Councillors including the County & District Councillor and a Parish Clerk. 4 Councillors are represented on the Village Hall Committee which has 7 members in total and a bookings co-ordinator. The “Townlands Trust” (officially The Church and Town Estate including Allotment Lands”) is a registered charity originally set up ‘for the benefit of the Church, Education & the Deserving & Necessitous of the village’ and has 10 trustees including 3 parish councillors, the churchwardens and parish priest. The Charity owns and leases plots of land in the parish and uses its income to make grants. The Primary School has an active Parents’ Association, the Friends of Wetheringsett Primary School. The Church has a regular congregation for its rostered services. Wednesday coffee mornings at the Church have been a popular feature of village life until curtailed by the pandemic.
- 2.48 The monthly Newsletter, circulated in both print and digital formats, is an important vehicle for communication in this scattered community. It has an editor, treasurer, and a team of distributors. There are also a number of “What’s-app” groups and social media forums used by parishioners, including the “official” village website.
- 2.49 The Drama Group, “Curtains Up”, has produced its inimitable annual pantomimes and other ad hoc productions for many years in the Village Hall, which Eastern Angles (a touring Theatre Company) has also used as a regular venue. In previous years, committees have also organised the Village Fetes on the Playing Field and Harvest Suppers, with Christmas Lunches for over-60’s at a local hotel. However, these events have tended to rely on a small band of volunteers who are ‘not getting any younger’ and need support from others in the community.
- 2.50 The Village Hall has had limited capacity for regular activities as it has been used by the school during the day, but a yoga class has recently restarted following the pandemic. Negotiations ongoing with the school may free up additional capacity, and the refurbishments which have taken place in 2021 will hopefully encourage more groups and private hirers to take advantage of its facilities.
- 2.51 There is anecdotal evidence of the existence of other informal groups in different parts of the village e.g. a book club in Wetherup Street, but wider community life has perhaps attenuated over recent years.

### **Transport**

#### Road connections

- 2.52 The latest Conservation Area Appraisal in 2011 describes this as “a very quiet backwater”. Nevertheless, only half a mile away to the West, traffic on the A140 – once a Roman road and later part of the Turnpike runs between Ipswich and Norwich, straddled by Brockford Street.

The main mode of transport for parishioners is the private car. However, while 60% of households in 2011 had 2 or more cars, 33% had only one, and 7% had none, meaning that transport could well be a significant issue for them. There is also an issue with traffic on the parish's narrow roads, especially with heavy agricultural vehicles during the grain harvest and sugar beet seasons. Although the speed limit on most roads into and through the parish, including the A140, is 30mph (20 by the school), there is evidence that this is widely disregarded including the 50mph speed limit on the A140. There is an increasing volume of HGV and LGV traffic as the A140 is used as a major route to access logistic site developments in the surrounding areas and as the road is frequently used as a diversion route when the A14 is impacted. On the A140, a number of accidents have occurred ranging from minor accidents to those requiring full attendance of emergency services, including the air ambulance and which have resulted in at least two known fatalities. However, despite this there is little evidence that this has been a factor in the determination of recent planning applications.

### Public Transport

- 2.53 Frequent mainline train services between Norwich and London Liverpool Street with connecting services east- and west-bound go from Stowmarket station (9 miles), Diss (10 miles) and Needham Market (10 miles), providing for commuters with the private transport to access them. However, the only bus serving Wetheringsett cum Brockford is the 113 Simonds service from Ipswich to Diss via Mendlesham and Eye. The only bus stop in Wetheringsett is on Brockford Street at the turn for Cedars Hill, approximately 1km from the village centre. There are 4 buses to Ipswich Mon-Fri, and 3 on Saturday, with no Sunday service. However, a SCC "Connecting Communities" service will collect people with no public transport to connect with appropriate bus/rail links but has to be pre-booked.
- 2.54 Cycling and footpaths are potentially other ways of getting about within the village, and the Hakluyt cycle route links all parts of the parish. The public rights of way (PROW) network, once pervasive, is now restricted and in places difficult to identify as fields are ploughed over. There are some circular walking routes and paths which join parts of the parish, but essentially, they are recreational rather than a functional means of getting from place to place. Some still have stiles which restrict access for the less able.

### **Natural Environment**

- 2.55 The geology of Wetheringsett cum Brockford is basically the clay of "High Suffolk's" till formation, overlying crag deposits dating from the Pliocene era and chalk, which stretch eastwards to the coast. There is fine loam over clay soil with a slowly permeable subsoil, which is subject to seasonal waterlogging.
- 2.56 The physical aspects of this agricultural parish have always been dictated by changing patterns of farming. While the edges of Suffolk were populated earlier, the boulder clay here was too heavy to be cultivated with wooden ploughs, and its thick forests remained undisturbed, probably until the Romans came. During Norman times, the landscape was characterised by great communal open fields – larger even than those familiar today –

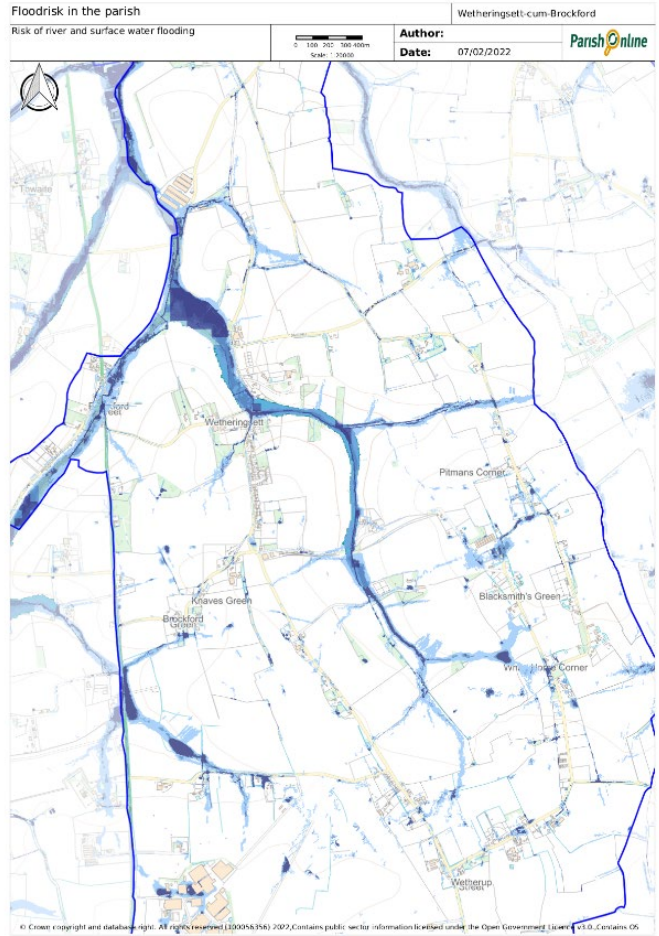
divided into strips. By Elizabeth 1st's time, much of the Saxon woodland must have been cleared, though the parish was still well wooded, and the Turnpike thickly bordered by trees. There was also a lot of water around, running off wet, undrained lands, as well as in moats and ponds, and streams crossed by a number of bridges, most of which have now disappeared. The Parish was also "riddled with roads" and on a map "would have looked like a coarse sieve". While most of these "roads" have disappeared, some are still marked by footpaths while others were enclosed for farming.

- 2.57 Perhaps the most dramatic changes have taken place since the mid19<sup>th</sup> Century. Until then, the landscape was still wooded with hedges and tree-lined roads. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw big changes, when small, mixed farms with meadows and pastures for horses and cattle gave way to larger farms and mechanisation, allowing the land to be drained and ploughed for arable crops such as potatoes, sugar beet, wheat, barley, and later oil seed rape. Economies of scale meant "prairie" fields and the destruction of hedgerows and much of the special flora and fauna such as the fritillaries which had thrived in the damp meadows and which are now isolated in rare meadows such as Mickfield Meadow SSSI. During WW2 around 500 acres of land southwest of the parish was taken over as an Airfield by the RAF, though subsequently it was largely returned for agriculture.
- 2.58 However, since the Millennium, tree planting schemes have at least alleviated some of the hedgerow loss; and the impact of "the desert of surrounding intensive agriculture" ( Character Appraisal 2011) is mitigated by undulations in the landscape and the continued presence of some fine old trees and copses (of oak, copper beech, lime, ash, poplar, horse chestnut and willows )which in places are dominant feature of the local landscape. Much damage has however been caused by intensive agriculture to local flora and fauna.

## **Flooding**

- 2.59 Records and reminiscences speak of the general wetness of the countryside around the parish, and it sits on the floodplain of the River Dove. At the pumping station north-west of Dale Farm, there is a separate smaller unnamed tributary which flows west of Church Street and then east and down Church Street at Dove Cottage and the Church. Normally a benign stream, it can rise significantly in wet weather, and parts of Church Street, where once there was a ford until the road was raised in the last century, are still at high risk of surface water flooding. Water running off from fields is also a recurrent problem on the parish's roads.
- 2.60 In October and November 2023, properties in Church Street, Wetherup Street and Brockford Street experienced serious flooding and damage from surface water. This arose largely as a result of high rainfall with water running off from fields and hard surfaces of new development.

**Figure 8: Areas at risk of river or surface water flooding in the parish**



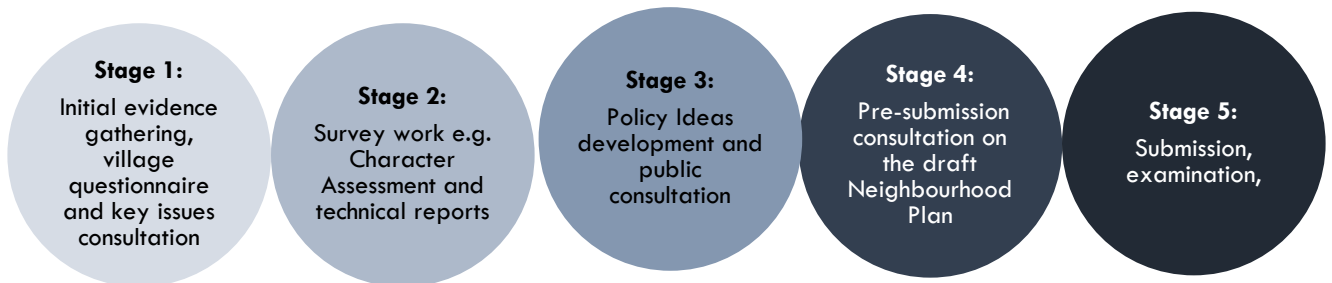
# 3. How the Plan was prepared

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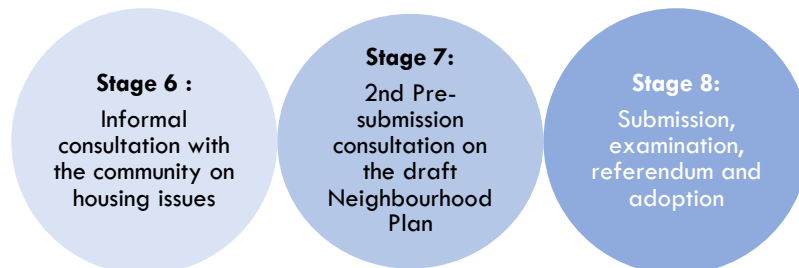
- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been responsible for the preparation of the Plan and in the latter stages has been supported by an independent consultant. The formal process began in January 2021 when the Neighbourhood Area was designated by Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 3.2 The Plan has been commissioned by Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council. Funding for its production has come from a central government Locality grant.

## Community engagement and consultation

- 3.3 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken with community engagement and consultation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Steering Group had to be innovative in their early approaches, meeting online for almost all Steering Group meetings. However, face to face public engagement was possible in September 2021. More details of all the consultation, including that undertaken to inform this version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be outlined in the Consultation Statement, accompanying the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to Mid Suffolk District Council in 2024.
- 3.4 Below is a summary of each of the community engagement and consultation stages.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> draft Plan:



**Stage 1: Initial evidence gathering, household survey and key issues consultation. (2019, 2020 and early 2021)**

- Village Questionnaire delivered to every household and placed on-line using survey monkey, 39 responses received and all comments analysed (2019)
- Initial Evidence gathering (2020) including business survey
- Work paused due to COVID-19 pandemic
- Place check launch <https://www.placecheck.info/app/maps/wetheringsett>
- Neighbourhood Area Designation in January 2021
- 5 Best Things survey in the Parish Magazine and online, to establish what residents value about the parish and what they felt needed to change.

**Stage 2: Survey work e.g. Character Appraisal, commissioning of technical reports e.g. Housing Needs Assessment and Design Code. (April 2021-August 2021)**

- The Steering Group undertook a detailed character assessment of the parish and completed the Business Survey
- Evidence collected to date was reviewed and analysed
- Consultants AECOM were commissioned to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment and produce a specific Design Code for the parish.

**Stage 3: Development of Policy Ideas and Public Exhibition (September 2021)**

- Following evidence review, draft policy ideas were developed
- Public exhibitions held in the Church over two sessions on 17 and 18 September 2021 seeking feedback from the public on the draft policy ideas
- Event advertised in the parish magazine and on social media via the village Facebook page
- 49 residents attended the exhibitions
- Results of the exhibitions written up and placed on the Neighbourhood Plan web page.
- Housing Needs Assessment concluded





**Stage 4: Pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14) (Summer 2022)**

- The Draft Neighbourhood Plan was issued for pre-submission consultation (from 20th June to 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022). It was sent to statutory agencies and available for residents to comment in both hard copy and online.
- Flyers and posters were placed around the parish to advertise the consultation and an article featured in the parish magazine

**Stage 5: Submission, examination, referendum, and adoption (Autumn 2022 to May 2023)**

- Modifications were made to the Neighbourhood Plan following pre-submission consultation.
- Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to Mid Suffolk District Council in 2022
- Examination, 2023
- Consultation undertaken on the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Examination suspended in May 2023.

**2<sup>nd</sup> draft Neighbourhood Plan**

**Stage 6: Informal consultation with the community on housing issues (July 2023)**

- Update on the Neighbourhood Plan included in the Parish Newsletter in July 2023
- Update included latest position with housing supply in the parish following two appeal decisions
- Residents invited to give their views on the desirability of further housing allocation above the current commitment.
- Consultation advertised on website, via social media using the community Facebook page, parish newsletter and posters on parish noticeboards.
- 20 responses received.

**Stage 7: 2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-submission consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14) (Autumn 2023)**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft Neighbourhood Plan was issued for pre-submission consultation (from 16<sup>th</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023). It was sent to statutory agencies and available for residents to comment in both hard copy and online.
- Flyers and posters were placed around the parish to advertise the consultation and an article featured in the parish magazine.
- Responses were received from local people and statutory consultees resulting in 56 individual comments.

### Stage 8: Submission, examination, referendum, and adoption (January 2024 onwards)

- Modifications were made to the Neighbourhood Plan following the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-submission consultation.
- Submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to Mid Suffolk District Council in 2024
- Examination and Referendum, 2024

## Communication

- 3.5 Communicating with residents and businesses throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan is particularly important and all relevant information was placed on the Neighbourhood Plan page of the parish council website.  
<http://wetheringsettcumbrockford.onesuffolk.net/neighbourhood-plan-2/>  
The website also contained information on how to contact the Group.
- 3.6 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford parish newsletter, which is delivered monthly to most houses in Wetheringsett cum Brockford, has featured regular articles about the Neighbourhood Plan, made requests for feedback and comments at various stages, and has advertised the consultation events and the locations of the venues where a printed copy of the Neighbourhood Plan may be viewed.
- 3.7 Facebook, posters, and flyers were used to promote the work of the Neighbourhood Plan. An update for the Parish Council on the Neighbourhood Plan progress was presented at monthly meetings and the Parish Council website contains the Neighbourhood Plan webpage, with a link to the bespoke Neighbourhood Plan website.

## Summary of key Issues from consultation

### Village Questionnaire

- Importance of the countryside and rural character
- Footpaths
- Tranquility
- Traffic speed and pedestrian safety
- Condition of the rural roads
- Environmental concerns – rubbish, fly-tipping, odor from pig farm, dog fouling
- Design of new housing development
- Too many large houses being built
- Community services – school, village hall and the Middy are valued
- More starter homes needed
- 2-3 bedroomed homes needed
- New development must not erode the village character
- Protect the green spaces
- Resist ugly and inappropriate development
- Protect wildlife
- No mass housing

### **Policy ideas exhibition**

- Protect green spaces – playing field, cemetery, churchyard, meadow, play area, Hockey Hill, allotments, war memorial field
- Encourage access by foot and by bicycle
- Protect wildlife habitats from development
- Keep indigenous hedges
- Don't develop between the hamlets
- Protect important views – those towards, church, from Hockey Hill, top of Hall Lane
- Protect dark skies
- Retain existing facilities e.g. church, hall, school and Middy
- Ensure pavements are clear and safe for people to use
- No suburbanisation of landscape
- 20mph speed limit through the village
- Protect heritage and the conservation area
- Need high quality design that reflects rural character
- Prevent development that doesn't fit with the aesthetics of the village
- No flats
- Off street parking for new development
- Protection for listed buildings
- Housing needs to be close to facilities
- No large-scale development in the village
- Infill is better than development on greenfield land
- Affordable housing for locals first
- Affordable housing to be integrated into a mix of developments
- Business use needs to be appropriate to a rural area and have noise, pollution, or other environmental impacts
- Barn conversions shouldn't just be for business.

### **Regulation 14 Consultation – Key Issues raised and amendments made**

- Clarification of policy wording
- Removal of a non-designated heritage asset
- Update on the position of the Joint Local Plan
- Mapping clarifications
- Mapping amendments

### **Regulation 16 Consultation – key issues raised and amendments made**

- Minor amendments to Design Code to refer to SCC design documents
- Minor wording suggestions in respect of Policy WCB1
- Minor comments relating to terminology
- Map title errors
- Comments made in respect of environmental supporting information and biodiversity policy

**Informal Consultation with community on housing issues (July 2023)**

- Concerns over a lack of infrastructure in the parish to support further growth
- Sufficient housing already exists in the parish and there is no need to allocate more
- New housing is required to meet housing needs
- If new housing is to be allocated it should be in the main part of the settlement close to the school and it should be smaller affordable housing for families to support the school

**2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Submission Consultation Version (October 2023)**

Prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-submission consultation taking place the following amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan, predominantly as a result of the passage of time :

- Factual updates to reflect the current position of the Local Plan
- Factual updates to reflect the latest position in respect of current planning permissions and appeal decision
- Factual updates to reflect the publication of NPPF September 2023
- Removal of former site allocation at Brockford Street
- Removal of Local Green Space at Hockey Hill

Following the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Submission consultation, the following amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan

- Factual updated to reflect the adoption of Part 1 of the BMS Joint Local Plan
- Changes to the wording of Policy WCB2 to reflect the MSDC position re First Homes
- Amendments to supporting text and Policy WCB6 to reflect concerns raise following recent flood events in the parish.
- Other factual amendments and correction of typos and mapping errors.
- Updates to Policy WCB9 to reflect the latest position on Biodiversity Net Gain
- Updates to reflect the publication of the NPPF in December 2023.

## 4. Vision and objectives

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### A Vision for Wetheringsett cum Brockford 2037

*Wetheringsett cum Brockford will continue to be a quiet and peaceful place where the landscape, wildlife, open spaces, and heritage valued by its residents are protected and enhanced.*

*The school, the church and the village hall are at the heart of village activities and include and serve the whole parish.*

*New development is sustainable and well-designed, respecting the area's existing character, whilst meeting the economic and social needs of a range of people who choose to live, work, and participate in this thriving rural community.*

- 4.1 It is important that any Neighbourhood Plan contains a simple vision statement which sums up the community's aim for the future of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan vision is an overarching statement describing what Wetheringsett cum Brockford should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e., 2037. It has been developed with local people and has been refined and adapted through consultation. The result is a vision statement which captures the overarching spirit and ambition of the local community and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 The vision underpins the objective and policies of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout.
- 4.3 The overarching aim of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF. Sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development through planning requires the balancing of three interdependent and overarching objectives:
  - a. An economic objective - ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right location to build a strong, responsive economy which is supported by the right infrastructure;
  - b. A social objective - ensuring the sufficient number, type and quality of homes and jobs are provided to meet identified needs in inclusive, healthy communities;
  - c. An environmental objective - ensuring mitigation and adaptation to climate change, protecting the natural and built environment, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting the move to a low carbon economy.

These broad, high-level objectives, along with the 4 specific Neighbourhood Plan objectives set out below, are reflected throughout the Plan. The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan guide development proposals and decisions, taking account of these objectives and local circumstances and reflect the character, needs and opportunities of the area. The approach supports the delivery of sustainable development in a positive way, so that opportunities to secure net gains across each objective can be taken.

**Area Wide Objectives**

**Objective 1: To manage appropriate new housing, business, and employment development for the benefit of the community and ensure it meets the needs of residents**

**Objective 2: To champion sustainable high-quality design and celebrate the parish’s historic environment and heritage assets.**

**Objective 3: To protect the rural character, biodiversity, and open spaces of the parish.**

**Objective 4: To safeguard the parish’s existing facilities, to encourage the provision of appropriate new facilities and encourage the greater use of the school, church, and village hall buildings by the whole community.**

4.4 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent which are there to help deliver the vision and link to the issues that Wetheringsett cum Brockford is seeking to address. They have been drafted using themes picked up at an early stage and have been refined through the community consultation exercises. The diagram below outlines this relationship.

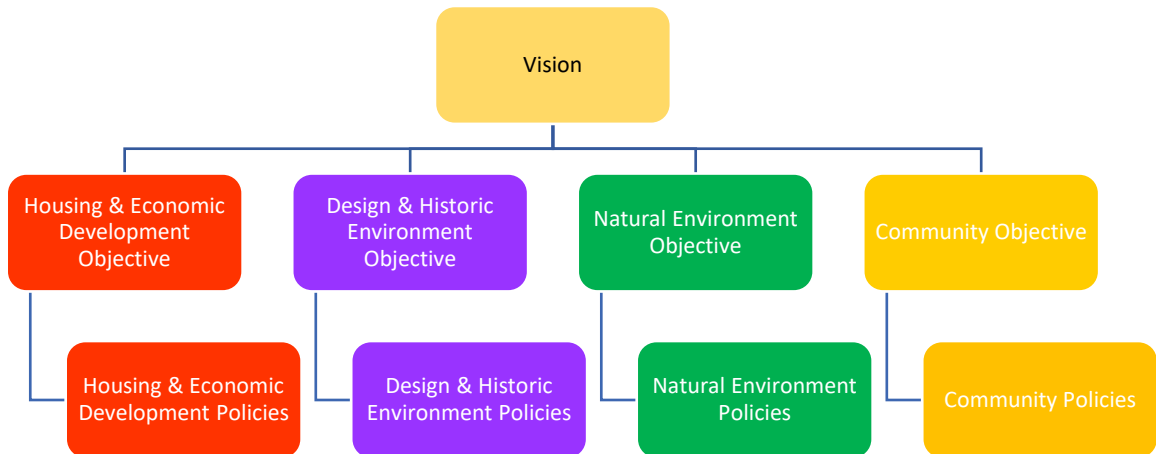


Figure 9 above: Structure of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan.

# Planning Policies

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## Introduction to policies

The vision and objectives have provided the framework to develop the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under the following four area wide themes: Housing and Economic Development, Design and Historic Environment, Natural Environment and Community. The Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document for planning purposes. All policies in the Plan have been derived from a series of consultation exercises, stakeholder engagement and desk research, which provide the justification and evidence base for their selection.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance. They exist to:

- Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the parish.
- Inform and guide decisions on planning applications.
- Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole<sup>2</sup>.

To aid interpretation for decision makers and planning applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text, which includes context for the theme, the views of residents, guidelines, and reference to strategic plans. This is set out before each of the policies.

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.



## Chapter 5: Housing and Economic Development

**Objective 1: To manage appropriate new housing, business, and employment development for the benefit of the community and to ensure it meets the needs of residents**

### Housing

#### Scale and location of new housing

- 5.1 Housing is often one of the key reasons why a community decides to embark upon the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. The issue of future housing development in Wetheringsett cum Brockford has been a key topic of conversation and interest during the production of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2 Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>3</sup> advises that Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area. The planning policy context for this Neighbourhood Plan is discussed in Chapter 1.
- 5.3 Neighbourhood Plans should be used to set out more detailed policies for specific areas or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of community facilities, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out detailed policies for the management of development. The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan (WCBNP) has been prepared with regard to both existing and emerging development plan policies. The NPPF requires Neighbourhood Plans to support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans and shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.

#### Existing Housing Commitment

- 5.4 Figures from the 2021 census indicate that the population of Wetheringsett Parish was 692 people living in 277 occupied households. Figures from Mid Suffolk District Council's Annual Monitoring reports indicate that between April 2001 and March 2021, 36 dwellings were constructed in the parish.

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<sup>3</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/national-planning-policy-framework)



5.5 Figures obtained from Mid Suffolk, from April 2023, indicated that there were 21 outstanding unimplemented planning permissions for new dwellings in the parish at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Information submitted to the JLP Examinations in September 2021<sup>4</sup> indicated that the Local Housing Requirement for the parish over the plan period 2018-2037 was 10 dwellings.

5.6 Furthermore at the time of writing (January 2024) there is one further application still awaiting an outcome.

- DC/20/05495 – Change of use of land to Gypsy and Traveller site for stationing of 1 mobile home and 1 touring caravan (Decision still pending)

5.7 Appeal decisions for two applications refused in Autumn 2021 were received in March 2023 as follows:

- 11 dwellings – DC/20/04692 – Appeal dismissed
- 14 dwellings – DC/20/04921 - Appeal upheld

5.8 Therefore the housing composition for Wetheringsett cum Brockford (between 01.04.2018 and 31.03.2037) is as follows:

Unimplemented permissions at 01.04.23:	21 dwellings
Completions since 01.04.2018	3
Under construction at 31.03.23	14

Total Commitment: **38 dwellings**

**Plus**

Applications awaiting determination: 1 dwelling

Overall Total should permissions be granted: **39 dwellings**

5.9 In December 2022, Mid Suffolk published its Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2022. This confirmed that the District had a 10.88 year housing land supply against its 5-year requirement. Taking this into account, together with the outstanding commitments, it is considered that the indicative housing requirement for the parish has already been met. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore is not compelled to make further provision although it can choose to do so if there was sufficient community support for it and suitable sites could be identified. Consultation with the local community during the Neighbourhood Plan preparation and repeated in July 2023, has consistently revealed little support for new housing development in the parish above that already committed.

5.10 This Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges that ‘windfall sites’ are likely to come forward during the Plan period. The NPPF defines ‘windfall’ as ‘sites not specifically identified in the development plan’. These can include previously developed land that has unexpectedly become available, new dwellings formed through the sub-division of an existing property,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/h31-spatial-distribution-statement>

barn or building conversions and small infill plots within the existing settlement boundaries. It is also acknowledged that throughout the plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan there will continue to be applications submitted for infill or other development within the parish, however the focus of development should be within the identified settlement boundaries as set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Applications for new development outside of the settlement boundaries should be refused unless consistent with national policies.

### **Environmental Screening**

- 5.11 The Neighbourhood Plan is subject to environmental screening, which is performed on the Plan as it evolves to assess the likely significant effects of the Plan's policies on protected environmental sites. The screening processes have been repeated on this version of the Neighbourhood Plan (on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council). Recommendations from the screening exercises are reflected in **Policy WCB1** below and applications for new residential development will be determined in accordance with this policy.

### **Results of Public Consultation**

- 5.12 The household questionnaire undertaken (in 2019), did not ask residents a specific question about the overall quantum of development in the village but did ask for views about potential locations. Of the 39 returned questionnaires, 25 of those indicated that there were no suitable locations and only three suggestions were made. These were alongside the existing village envelopes (no specific location given), Hockey Hill, and Town Lane next to the industrial area.
- 5.13 The Policy Ideas Exhibitions (held in September 2021), were slightly better attended with 49 attendees. Respondents expressed agreement with the overall housing objective that new housing should be managed for the benefit of the community and to ensure it meets the needs of local residents. There were however divergent views on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should allocate any new housing sites. However, there was a clearer steer that any new housing development should be small scale, infill to meet local needs. Infill should be focused within the existing settlement boundaries at Wetheringsett (Church), Brockford Street and Wetherup Street/Park Green. Attendees also indicated that the Neighbourhood Plan should avoid development in the gaps between the distinct hamlets.
- 5.14 Following the informal consultation undertaken with the community on housing issues in July 2023, it is considered that there is not sufficient community support for the Neighbourhood Plan to make allocations for new housing above the existing commitments in the parish. The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing to allocate additional sites for housing above those already committed.
- 5.15 It is recognised that applications will continue to be submitted. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is clear that in order to be successful these would need to be small scale, suitably located within the existing settlement boundaries without adverse effects upon heritage, natural environment, or highways. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there are limited local services and facilities in the parish to provide for new residents (e.g.

no shop), few public transport opportunities exist, and travel is very much dependent upon the private car.

- 5.16 Proposals for new development outside of the settlement boundaries, particularly those that would result in the erosion of the gaps between distinct hamlets, will not be supported. This approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to appropriate new uses, provided that these do not adversely impact upon the environment or the amenity of local residents, or proposals for replacement dwellings or new single dwellings required to meet an essential need as outlined in the NPPF<sup>5</sup>, where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions.

**POLICY**

**WCB1: Location of new housing**

The scale of new housing within the parish during the plan period will reflect its position within the adopted Local Plan settlement hierarchy.

The focus for new development will be the defined settlement boundaries at Wetheringsett (Church), Brockford Street and Wetherup Street/Park Green as shown on the relevant policies maps.

New infill or windfall development within these defined settlement boundaries will be small scale (meaning individual houses or small groups) and proposals should enhance the area's form, character and setting and not have significant adverse impacts upon:

- a) Heritage assets (designated or undesignated)
- b) Nature conservation interests
- c) Highway safety or public rights of way
- d) the amenity of adjoining occupiers, or
- e) other identified constraints (e.g. floodrisk, water and wastewater supply).

New developments should actively seek to facilitate walking and cycling.

Proposals for development located outside of the defined settlement boundaries, will only be permitted where they are in accordance with adopted national and local policies, they comply with criteria a-e above and where they would not result in the erosion of undeveloped gaps between the distinct hamlets.

Development may only be supported where no likely significant effects (LSE) or adverse effects on site integrity (AEoI) have been demonstrated through an individual project-level HRA.

<sup>5</sup> National Planning Policy Framework 2023, para 80.

## Housing Mix and Housing Need

- 5.17 Government guidance indicates that delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, vibrant, and mixed community. The size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities. The specific mix will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining both mix and need. The size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities in respect of new housing. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix.
- 5.18 Community consultation, including the results from the questionnaire in 2019 and from the Policy Ideas Exhibitions in September 2021, revealed that residents have a wide range of views about the types of accommodation within their parish that might be required in the future. This included bungalows and smaller properties to allow for downsizing, support for smaller family homes (2-3 bedrooms) and for affordable housing. Families may want to move to larger homes, older residents may wish to down-size or move to specifically adapted accommodation, residents may be looking to start a family and find the right accommodation to allow that to happen. New homes should be of high quality, accord with environmental design standards and meet community aspirations for new and existing residents. The view was also expressed that affordable housing should be available for local people ahead of meeting general housing need.

## Affordable Housing

- 5.19 In Summer 2021 the Steering Group commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) for the parish to explore the issues of housing type and tenure in more detail. The work was undertaken by consultants AECOM and the final report is a submission document that supports this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.20 Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market, which includes housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers. Annex 2 of the NPPF (2023) sets out the definition of affordable housing and is split into the following four main categories:
- affordable housing for rent,<sup>6</sup>
  - starter homes,
  - discounted market sale housing
  - and other affordable routes to home ownership<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> includes **Social Rented Housing**

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.

<sup>7</sup> Affordable home ownership tenures include products for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. The three most widely available are discounted market housing (a subset of which is the new First Homes product), shared ownership, and rent to buy.

- 5.21 The HNA suggests that Wetheringsett cum Brockford has a notable undersupply of affordable housing, and that property is around 40-60% more expensive than the wider district. The report also noted that a household would need an income comfortably above the average (or a very large deposit) to qualify for a mortgage even for an entry-level home in the area. Home ownership through the mainstream market is therefore not an option for the majority of local first-time buyers. For someone to purchase at the median house price, they would require an annual income more than twice the current average. According to figures from the HNA, indicate that there were 16 properties owned by registered social landlords – 2 in Knaves Green and the remainder at Hockey Hill. Only one has been identified as since being sold on the open market.
- 5.22 Private renting is broadly affordable to average earners and households. However, there is a general lack of homes to rent in Wetheringsett cum Brockford – which is itself an indicator of limited choice and a lack of more affordable, transitional options like renting. The HNA notes that rented housing appears comfortably affordable to Wetheringsett households and the evidence suggests that the small affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Wetheringsett cum Brockford as the only option for those in the greatest need. Being cheaper for the occupant, social rent performs this function best.
- 5.23 The Ipswich and Waveney Housing Market Areas SHMA Part 2 Partial Update 2019 finds that 1,298 social or affordable rented homes will be needed in 2018-36 across Mid Suffolk, and that there is potential demand for a further 1,391 affordable home ownership units. On the basis that the share of this need attributable to the Neighbourhood Area is in proportion to its share of the district population (0.69%), this suggests that Wetheringsett cum Brockford will need 15 affordable homes, 7 of which should be for affordable rent and 8 of which should be for affordable home ownership.
- 5.24 MSDC confirmed (in July 2021) that there were 5 households with a local connection to Wetheringsett cum Brockford on the housing register. However, if only a small proportion of the existing units of social rented housing come vacant each year this is expected to be able to satisfy newly arising need and lessen the backlog over time. The report therefore recommended that Wetheringsett cum Brockford seeks to deliver some affordable rented housing, particularly early in the Plan period.
- 5.25 There are households within Wetheringsett that are, by and large, adequately housed in rented accommodation already. They do not lack their own housing but would prefer to buy rather than rent. They have been included in the national planning definition of those in need of Affordable Housing, but their needs are less acute than those on the waiting list for affordable rented housing.
- 5.26 It may not be achievable or even desirable to deliver this volume of affordable home ownership properties in the plan period, notwithstanding that this can only be delivered through sites of 10 dwellings or more, as even greater numbers of market homes would be required to cross-subsidise its delivery, and this may not be appropriate to the rural character of the parish.

- 5.27 Adopted BMSJLP Policy SP02 – Affordable Housing requires that on sites of 10 or more dwellings or of 0.5ha or more, a contribution of 35% affordable housing on site will be required on greenfield sites. For brownfield sites a contribution of 25% affordable housing will be required.
- 5.28 The fact that Affordable Housing made up 0% of the new housing in Wetheringsett cum Brockford completed over the last decade is not surprising given all of the permitted schemes were below the relevant thresholds. Given the size of the parish, and the fact that the threshold is 10 homes it is realistic to expect that most future development will also fall below the threshold and will not be expected to contribute Affordable Housing.
- 5.29 The HNA (September 2021) recommends that roughly 40% of new affordable housing in the parish should take the form of rented tenures such as social and affordable rent (preferably the former), with the remaining 60% as affordable routes to home ownership. The Government’s changes to the Planning Practice Guidance in May 2021, required that Neighbourhood Plans published for Regulation 14 consultation after 28 June 2021 include a policy requirement for 25% of affordable homes to be First Homes<sup>8</sup> and thereafter prioritise rented tenures. The affordable housing secured via planning obligations from any relevant sites in the parish is justified on the basis of meeting district wide need as set out in BMSJLP Policy SP02 which sets out that the starting point for determining affordable housing mix should be the district wide needs assessment but that localised assessments can also be considered. Furthermore, community consultation has indicated that there is support in the parish for affordable rented housing rather than affordable housing to buy, with concerns expressed about how some of the affordable routes to home ownership would effectively keep housing affordable in perpetuity. Policy WCB2 therefore seeks to reflect national policy requirements whilst also reflecting views raised during community consultation and being aligned with the practice of the District Council.
- 5.30 There is a relatively large group of households in Wetheringsett cum Brockford who may be able to afford to rent privately but cannot afford home ownership. They are typically earning between around £30,000 per year and £75,000 (at which point entry-level market sale homes become affordable). This ‘can rent, can’t buy’ cohort may benefit from the range of affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership. All of these products would be valuable to different segments of the local population, with shared ownership at a lower than 25% equity share potentially allowing lower earning households to get a foot on the housing ladder, while rent to buy offers poorer long-term prospects but is helpful to those with little or no savings for a deposit, and First Homes at a 50% discount currently provides the best long-term support to those with slightly higher incomes.
- 5.31 Neighbourhood plan qualifying bodies will have discretion to increase the discount on the new First Homes product from 30% to 40% or 50% where there is evidence to suggest this is

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<sup>8</sup> **First Homes**

The Government has recently confirmed the introduction of First Homes as a new form of discounted market housing which will provide a discount of at least 30% on the price of new homes. These homes are available to first time buyers as a priority, but other households will be eligible depending on agreed criteria. New developments will be required to provide 25% of Affordable Housing as First Homes. A more detailed explanation of First Homes and its implications is provided in the main body of the HNA

appropriate. This HNA finds that the highest possible discount level of 50% is necessary and justified in Wetheringsett cum Brockford.

- 5.32 The study also provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of homes based on demographic change. Other factors will also determine the dwelling mix that is desirable in the parish or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design) and site-specific factors which may justify a particular dwelling mix.

### **The existing housing stock**

- 5.33 Wetheringsett cum Brockford has a housing mix that is skewed toward larger homes – i.e. a far higher proportion of detached homes than the district and country and fewer other types. This is not unusual for a rural village.
- 5.34 Around 15% of homes in Wetheringsett cum Brockford are bungalows, which is a lower proportion than for Mid Suffolk overall. Although it is not necessarily a given that bungalows are completely accessible (e.g. for an occupant using a wheelchair), and ground floor maisonettes can be equally suitable for people with mobility limitations, the relative lack of bungalows may be an additional factor, beyond the limited size options, obstructing downsizing in Wetheringsett cum Brockford.
- 5.35 As of 2021, the size mix of housing locally is dominated by larger homes, with 40% of homes having 4 or more bedrooms, compared with just 28% across Mid Suffolk and 19% across England. Correspondingly, Wetheringsett cum Brockford has a notable lack of 1 bedroom housing. Recent development has not meaningfully widened housing choice in Wetheringsett cum Brockford, though it also has not made the oversupply of large homes much worse.
- 5.36 Wetheringsett cum Brockford has a high rate of under-occupancy, with 78% of people living in a home with at least one bedroom more than they would be expected to need (at the time of the last Census). The percentage of people living in homes with fewer bedrooms than they might be expected to need, is small at 4%, although this does indicate that a number of people may have been (or still be) living in inadequate housing conditions.
- 5.37 Given the high property values in the area, the largest homes are not necessarily occupied by those with the largest families but by those with the financial capacity to do so, irrespective of their household size. Indeed, over-occupancy is strongly correlated with age, with those aged 50 and over the most likely to have more than two additional bedrooms.

### **The future dwelling mix**

- 5.38 The results of the future dwelling mix modelling suggests that a focus on medium and smaller homes e.g. 2-3-bedroom properties, will continue to be needed as generally the most popular, suitable to many groups, and existing at lower proportions in the parish than across the district and country. The other clear direction is to boost the supply of smaller

homes from the current low base, while avoiding too many additional large homes because there are already more than the population is expected to need

- 5.39 A further injection of small and mid-sized homes would both improve Wetheringsett cum Brockford's offering for younger households who have few options for their next step on the property ladder and enable older households currently under-occupying larger homes to downsize and in so doing potentially create churn in the market (although it is acknowledged that many of the larger historic properties may be too expensive to be taken up by young local families).
- 5.40 The HNA found that affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in Wetheringsett cum Brockford. While the provision of Affordable Housing (subsidised tenure products) is one way to combat this, another is to ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type, and density for local residents' budgets. Continuing to provide smaller homes with fewer bedrooms would help to address this situation. However, it is never advisable to entirely restrict the supply of specific size categories as is suggested here for homes with 4 or more bedrooms. Further considerations that would justify incorporating flexibility into this relatively imbalanced recommended mix are summarised below.
- 5.41 To best meet the needs of the large cohort of older households expected to be present by 2037, it should be considered whether the existing options are well tailored to older people's requirements in terms of space, flexibility, quality, location, and accessibility. Variety should be sought within the mid-sized homes that come forward in future to attract both newly forming households on lower budgets and older households with substantial equity from their existing larger homes, whose needs are far from identical. Facilitating downsizing among older households may release those larger homes for use by families who need more bedrooms.
- 5.42 It may not be realistic to expect growing families to be able to afford the larger detached homes that are currently under-occupied in the parish. Reducing the issue of dwelling size to a number of bedrooms is potentially unhelpful in this case. There may be a valid justification to continue supplying larger homes despite their abundance because a different kind of larger home is needed to accommodate growing families with less buying power.
- 5.43 Any new housing that does come forward needs to be delivered in a balanced way. Those wishing to move within or relocate to the area will have a range of circumstances and preferences, and they should be offered a range of choices. As such, it is recommended that priority is given to smaller homes but that this is done to a degree that aligns with the wider objectives of the community and does not limit choice or threaten viability. The evidence in this section represents a starting point for further thought and consultation.
- 5.44 ONS<sup>9</sup> 2019 population estimates suggest that there are currently around 60 individuals aged 75 or over in Wetheringsett cum Brockford. This is projected to grow to 91 by 2037 (an increase of 31 older people).

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<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics [Home - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)



## Specific Needs

- 5.45 The potential need for housing with enhanced accessibility features and the potential to be further adapted in future can be estimated by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.46 This method of estimating the future need in Wetheringsett cum Brockford produces a range of 5 to 15 accessible housing units that might be required to accommodate older people with moderate mobility challenges during the Plan period. Providing this estimate as a range reflects uncertainty about the extent to which existing older households live in suitable homes: the lower end is a minimum for how many new older households are likely to need such homes, and the higher end assumes that existing households are likely to be in need as well. Note that 'new households' does not necessarily mean households arriving from elsewhere – it refers predominantly to existing residents who will enter the 75+ age bracket in the coming years.
- 5.47 This estimate does not include people in younger age brackets with similar needs, nor older people requiring more extensive support (such as the help of a carer). It would be wise to maximise the provision of this type of housing as a way of future proofing the parish for further ageing, and to help accommodate other people who could potentially benefit but were not incorporated into the estimate.
- 5.48 Around one tenth of the households identified here are expected to require their accessible or adaptable homes to be offered as social or affordable rented tenures, with the majority likely being able to afford to buy their next home on the open market, assuming that it is of a value equivalent to or lower than the home they currently occupy. That said, it is generally desirable to achieve the same rate of Affordable Housing whether the homes in question are accessible or not, and to provide equal access to accessible housing irrespective of a household's financial situation. This point is simply to emphasise that all housing (both market and affordable) would benefit from increased accessibility standards.
- 5.49 Whilst the previous Local Plan was largely silent on this issue, the adopted BMSJLP (November 2023) Policy LP24 states that 50% of dwellings which meet the requirement for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations (or any subsequent regulations that supersede or replace). Policy WCB2 therefore does not seek to introduce any additional standards.
- 5.50 The evidence gathered here would certainly appear to justify meeting or exceeding this target in the Neighbourhood Plan. One option would be to increase the target up to 75% or higher because the overall delivery of housing in the NA is likely to be insufficient to meet the need identified here at a lower target (though this question cannot be firmly answered at this stage because the parish is not in receipt of a formal target from MSDC).
- 5.51 Finally there is the question of homes that meet an even higher standard of accessibility, namely Category M4(3) Building Regulations meeting the requirements of wheelchair users. There is no robust data on the number of wheelchair users at parish level, and this assessment has focused on the group of people whose day-to-day activities are limited 'a little'. This is because it is hard to separate out within the people whose activities are limited 'a lot', those who use a wheelchair and those who require a carer for medical or other reasons.

- 5.52 MSDC confirmed in July 2021 that there was a household on the waiting list for Affordable Housing (representing 20% of those on the list, though this is a very small sample) that required an adapted level-access dwelling. This demonstrated some need for homes with the highest standards of accessibility.
- 5.53 If the stock of housing in the parish is poorly equipped for wheelchair users and/or there are more residents who currently need such housing (which is likely given the age and difficulty in adapting many existing homes), there may well be justification for an additional target for the number of new homes that should be M4(3) compliant. This is usually much lower than targets set for M4(2) standards – typically around 3-10%.
- 5.54 Without a firmer understanding of the quantity of development expected in Wetheringsett cum Brockford during the Plan period overall, it is difficult to specify what targets would be appropriate. But it is clear that there is an ageing population and that a notable proportion of such people would need or benefit from highly accessible accommodation and this should be secured in the Neighbourhood Area to the greatest extent possible through planning policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. Further information on planning for specialist needs such as dementia has been prepared by the Royal Town Planning Institute<sup>10</sup>

### **Custom and Self Build Housing**

- 5.55 Custom and self-build housing can provide a cost-effective route to home ownership, a high degree of specialisation to meet individual needs, and add valuable architectural interest to residential areas. However, it tends most often to be provided in the form of serviced plots on large-scale development sites that may not be likely to come forward in the parish.
- 5.56 However, plots can also be offered by developers on their own or in conjunction with a housing association partner; a group of custom and self-builders can come together to secure economies of scale and reduce building costs; and landowners sometimes service and sell plots themselves. Self-build projects on infill sites within the parish may be the most realistic route in Wetheringsett cum Brockford, although the upcoming sites may be encouraged to supply a small number of plots to meet clear demand.
- 5.57 Demand for custom and self-build housing is generally captured on Mid Suffolk's Self-Build Register. It is generally referred to as demand rather than need because it is not known how many people expressing interest on the register need a custom home because their needs (e.g. for special features) are not being met by the market, and how many simply wish to be part of the process or influence aspects of aesthetic design.
- 5.58 Babergh and Mid Suffolk operate a joint Self Build Register, which had approximately 390 applicants as of the end of June 2021. The detail provided by each applicant varies considerably, and it is not known how many currently live in the parish. Most have stated that they wish to build 'in any location', and it should be noted that many applicants apply to the registers of multiple local authorities.
- 5.59 Filtering out the applicants who specifically identify a location other than Wetheringsett cum Brockford reduces the figure to 130. Of these, 5 applicants specifically mention the area as their preferred location. Again, it is not clear whether they already live in the parish, and it is

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<sup>10</sup> [RTPI | Dementia and Town Planning](#)

therefore not possible to say what proportion of the local population want to self-build in the parish. However, 5 applicants is a reasonably large figure for a small parish, and it is common for Self-Build Registers to under-represent demand. As such, there appears to be some clear demand for self-build plots in the parish which would justify encouragement for custom and self-build provision in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**POLICY**

**WCB2: Housing Size, type, and tenure**

Proposals for new housing should provide for and contribute to a mix of housing that meets local needs (both now and in the future) and enables the creation of a mixed and balanced community.

In line with the latest evidence of need<sup>11</sup>, proposals (including those for 10 dwellings or less) should in particular include elements of the following:

- Small and medium sized homes – 2-3 bedrooms
- Opportunities for Self-build or Custom Build
- Housing capable of being adapted to meet changing needs

Where affordable housing is proposed it should comprise the following:

- 75% Social or Affordable Rent
- 25% First Homes provided at a discount of 50%.

**Exception sites and Community Led Housing**

5.60 Given that the Local Housing Requirement as set out in the emerging BMSJLP had already been met but that a need for specific forms of affordable housing has been identified within Wetheringsett cum Brockford, the Steering Group were keen to investigate how this need might be met, either in full or in part. In particular the Group were keen to explore how such housing might be delivered to meet the needs of the existing residents of the parish or those with a local connection. In addition, the Steering Group considered that the delivery of affordable housing as a % of an overall allocated or windfall site was extremely unlikely given the size of site likely to be considered acceptable within the parish (i.e. below the 10-dwelling threshold) and that other opportunities for delivering affordable housing should be explored.

5.61 One option considered would be to support the grant of planning permission for development on land outside of the settlement boundary but immediately adjacent to it on an 'exceptional basis'. Such sites are known as 'rural exception sites' or 'community led developments'. The former usually require the involvement of either the District Council or a Housing Association or other form of Registered Social Landlord and the latter by 'not for profit organisations set up primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of the local community e.g. a Community Land Trust (CLT). Such developments also tend to be small scale. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF 2023, restricts Community Led Developments to 1 hectare in size or a maximum of 5% of the size of the existing settlement. Where such sites

<sup>11</sup> This can include the AECOM HNA, plus any SHELAA or District level info

are proposed, clear justification must be given that demonstrates that there is an identified housing need within the parish and that the proposed site is suitable to meet this need and is an acceptable site in overall planning terms (e.g. scale, design, location etc). It is recognised that the parish does not have many facilities that might be required to support new residents in affordable housing and therefore the location and scale of such development should bear this in mind. This housing must also remain available to meet identified housing need in perpetuity. The following Neighbourhood Plan policy supports the principle of the delivery of affordable housing through exception or community led sites but does not identify any specific sites.

**POLICY**

**WCB3 Affordable Housing on Community Led Sites**

Proposals for the development of small-scale<sup>12</sup> affordable housing schemes on sites outside of but immediately adjacent to the settlement boundaries will be supported in principle, on an exceptional basis, where there is a proven local need in the parish, and where the proposed site is suitable to meet this need. Proposals for such housing should be proportionate in scale to the size of the relevant settlement.

Proposals will need to demonstrate that such housing:

- Remains affordable and available in perpetuity
- Is available for people identified as being in housing need by virtue of being unable to buy or rent properties in the parish at open market prices
- Is offered in the first instance to people with a demonstrated local connection to the parish

Where there are insufficient applicants with a local connection to the parish, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in adjoining villages and thereafter if needed to Mid Suffolk as a whole.

The occupation of this housing should be secured through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. The development of such housing should also be consistent with other policies in this Plan.

Proposals for housing of this kind should be accompanied by a detailed housing needs assessment which demonstrates that a local need exists, that the accommodation proposed will contribute to meeting this proven need.

In addition, proposals for such housing should also comply with criteria a-e in **Policy WCB1**.

<sup>12</sup> Generally, less than 10 dwellings

## Economic Development and Tourism

- 5.62 The role of Neighbourhood Plans within the planning system is not just about housing growth or environmental protection. They also have a role to play in delivering the economic objectives related to sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. National planning policy supports a prosperous rural economy and specifically encourages planning policies to enable sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas both through the conversion of existing buildings but also well-designed new buildings. Policies should also support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and enable the diversification of agriculture.
- 5.63 The NPPF however does recognise that new employment or economic development should be sensitive to its surroundings and does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads. Planning policies and decisions should mitigate and reduce potential adverse impacts of developments such as noise, dust, light and air pollution. The strategic policies in the emerging BMSJLP support the change of use to small scale employment ‘where the hours of operation are compatible with residential use and the business use does not involve significant dust, noise, fumes and outdoor storage which could adversely affect local amenity’. The Neighbourhood Plan whilst supporting economic development similarly seeks to protect the amenity of adjoining uses and residents.
- 5.64 The 2011 Census<sup>13</sup> revealed that approximately 62% of Wetheringsett cum Brockford’s residents were working age adults (416) of which 356 were economically active – i.e. they were in full or part time work, self-employed or students. By the time of the 2021 Census<sup>14</sup>, 60.2% (352) of the population was economically active. In 2011, of those residents that were economically inactive 15% were retired and just over 1% were unemployed. In 2021, the number of retirees formed 74% of the economically inactive population. Despite being a rural area with a landscape characterised by farming, there was no one employment sector that is a dominant employer in the parish in either 2011 or 2021. The proportion of people in higher paid occupations (professionals, managers, and senior officials) was approximately 36% in 2011 compared to a Mid Suffolk figure of 27% which would tend to indicate that the parish has a relatively high proportion of senior managers, professionals and directors living in it. In 2021 this picture was similar. When taken with the relatively low level of benefit claimants this begins to paint a picture of a relatively affluent parish, very different from the Wetheringsett of the nineteenth century where employment was dependent upon the traditional forms of employment such as farming.
- 5.65 Within the parish there are a range of registered businesses. These vary in size and sector and include some large employers and some small scale and starter businesses. As part of the early evidence gathering for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group undertook a business survey of the parish in an effort to understand the composition of existing businesses within the parish and to try to identify any additional business needs that may need to be accommodated within the Neighbourhood Plan period.

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<sup>13</sup> Source: [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

<sup>14</sup> <https://wetheringsett-cum-brockford.parish.uk/census/>

## Employment Locations

- 5.66 The Business Survey results identified that the principal locations for businesses within the parish were Mendlesham Airfield, Town Lane, The Old Station Yard and Cedars Hill. There were also individual businesses operating from converted farm buildings in a range of other locations such as Park Green and Station Road. There are no areas within the parish that are identified as strategic employment locations in the emerging Local Plan and policies within the Local Plan seek to safeguard existing employment sites in employment uses where they remain viable.
- 5.67 **Mendlesham Airfield** is a former airfield site located in the south-west of the parish with access onto the A140. The airfield is home to some larger firms such as CEVA Logistics Ltd which has approximately 150 employees and Trade Counter Ltd with 40 employees. Permitted uses range from Storage and Distribution (B8) to B2 General Industrial and Offices (E(g)). The Mendlesham Telecommunications mast is also located here. The most recent application for 3 additional warehouses was approved on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- 5.68 To the north-east of the Mendlesham airfield is an area known as the **Old Airfield, Town Lane**, which contains an extensive area for lorry container storage (James Kemball) and a manufacturing business A N Steel Fabrications. These employ fewer people (4 and 6 respectively) but take up relatively large areas of land. Permitted uses here tend to be B8 Storage and Distribution with the most recent permission for the storage of shipping containers being granted in August 2021.
- 5.69 **The Old Station Yard** at Hall Lane contains a number of individual units that are occupied by a range of businesses including a small cluster related to vehicle repairs (including classic cars). This area is also home to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway and Museum (also known as the Middy).
- 5.70 Further north and west is a complex of former farm buildings known as **Cedars Hill**. The units include the offices of one of the major farming and agricultural businesses in the parish (D I Alston Ltd) together with a range of other small businesses such as upholsterers, furniture, and blinds, medical (physio supplies), hand sanitiser production, hair and beauty, pet products and recording and photography studios.
- 5.71 Other notable businesses within the parish include a poultry farm at Collingsford Bridge in the north-east of the parish and The Sidings tourist accommodation at Knaves Green.
- 5.72 The Policy Ideas Exhibition sought views on the level of support for new business. The results revealed that there was a high degree for support for new business, provided it was in appropriate locations and there was also support for expansions to existing businesses subject to impacts such as landscape, traffic generation and amenity. There was also support for the reuse or conversion of barns and farm buildings for suitable employment and tourist uses again subject to the impact upon the amenity of adjoining occupiers.
- 5.73 There were two key concerns for residents in relation to the expansion of existing businesses. These were traffic generation – specifically HGVs and their use of rural roads

which may be inappropriate for this use and the visual and landscape impact of further expansion. This was largely in relation to the lorry container storage use currently located at Town Lane which has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in 2021 following delays at Felixstowe, with shipping containers now stacked five high dominating the landscape to the southwest of the parish. There have been local concerns over noise and light pollution. Planning permission has recently been granted for an extension of the haulage depot site but with a condition that no containers are sited there. Currently an application for a Lawful Development Certificate to legitimise the existing container storage is yet to be decided. Any further extension of the site for its current usages would be unlikely to be acceptable in landscape terms.

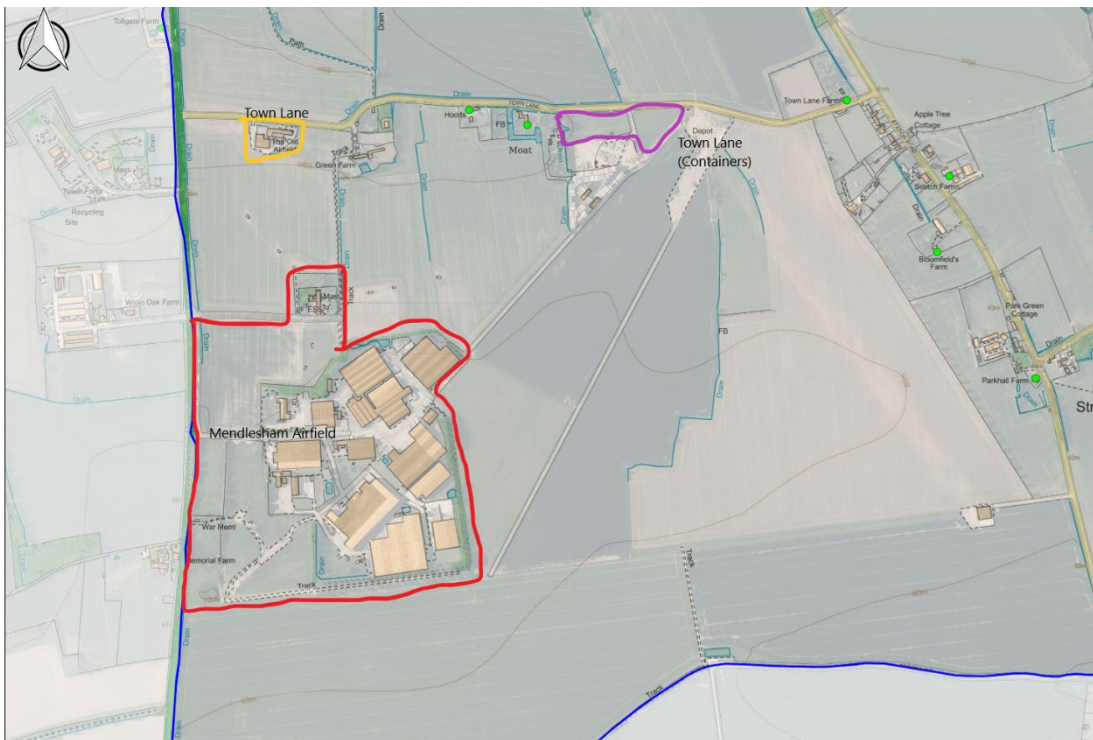


Figure 10: Employment/Industrial Areas at Mendlesham Airfield and Town Lane

- 5.74 The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should create the conditions in which business can invest, expand, and adapt. Weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account local business needs and the impact upon the local character of the area.

**POLICY**

**WCB4: Employment and Economic Development**

Proposals for small scale new business uses will be supported at the existing employment locations shown on **Figure 10** where they do not have a significant adverse impact upon:

- a) the overall visual and environmental character of the area, including impact upon landscape, tranquility, nature conservation interests, the setting of heritage assets, and dark skies
- b) adjoining uses
- c) the amenity of local residents (including noise, dust, fumes, and light pollution) either through their built form, proposed use, outdoor storage, hours of operation or traffic generated
- d) the capacity and safety of the highway network, as demonstrated through an impact assessment, or
- e) Increase the risk of flooding

Proposals for larger scale expansions on existing employment sites will only be supported where they can satisfy the criteria a) - e) outlined above and where an overall visual, landscape or environmental improvement to the site can be secured.

Proposals for the conversion of existing rural buildings for employment, business and tourist uses outside of the identified existing employment locations will be supported in principle, subject to the criteria a) - e) above.

**The Middy**

5.75 As referred to earlier, the Middy acts as an increasingly popular tourist attraction. On site is a refreshment room, real ale bar, photographic display and artifacts museum, shop, carriage, and wagon works, with real vintage steam and diesel locomotives and rolling stock. The Middy is also a popular community facility with the real ale bar being open to residents at specific times.





Figure 11: The Middy/Old Station Yard at Hall Lane



5.76 The results of the Policy Ideas Exhibition revealed an appetite from local people to support the raising of the profile of The Middy as a visitor destination and tourist attraction and would therefore support proposals that would underpin its current role and proposals for expansion that would maintain its viability.

**POLICY**

**WCB5: The Middy**

Proposals that would reinforce the important role of The Middy as a heritage attraction and would enhance its value as a community facility will be supported in principle, subject to their highways, amenity, and environmental impacts.

Proposals for the Old Station Yard site will be considered using the criteria in **Policy WCB4** above.





## Chapter 6: Design and the Historic Environment

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**Objective 2: To champion sustainable high-quality design and celebrate the parish's historic environment and heritage assets.**

### High Quality Design

- 6.1 One of the key determinants of whether any new development, irrespective of scale or use, is successful or not is its quality and how well it is considered to integrate with its surroundings. Matters such as design, materials, form and massing, the impact on local character, layout and scale are the most common issues that will cause the local community concerns about any proposed new development.
- 6.2 If a community believes that it has been involved in and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage, the higher the likelihood that the development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 6.3 Whilst to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgments, these can be influenced by breaking design elements down into component parts and attempting to address them. Whether a proposed new development is acceptable and appropriate and relates well to its surroundings is one of the most common judgments to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people (or decision makers) in making that judgement.
- 6.4 A key purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not only to help influence the designers and proposers of development at an early stage of formulating their proposals, but also to help promote an understanding of what elements make up the character of the area and what constitutes good design that respects local character.
- 6.5 Government guidance places considerable emphasis on achieving well-designed Places and this has been reinforced in the most recent revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF describes it as

fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps make development proposals acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities, and local planning authorities is essential.

- 6.6 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states ‘Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics.’ Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and how they should be reflected in development.

### **Village Design Statement**

- 6.7 In 2003, a Village Design Statement (VDS) was produced for the parish by a group of local residents who formed a Village Design Committee. The VDS was adopted by both Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council as supplementary planning guidance. Local residents were able to contribute to the document through the various engagement methods used by the Village Design Committee which included a survey of the views of residents via a questionnaire, a specific school’s project and exhibition, discussion groups and public meetings, public exhibitions, and notices in the parish newsletter.
- 6.8 The work on the Village Design Statement resulted in the production of a series of themed guidelines (settlement design, landscape & wildlife, rural economy & roads) aimed at influencing new development and also a code of behaviour for developers.

### **Character Assessment**

- 6.9 An early stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook a Character Appraisal of the whole parish. The document is shown in **Appendix B**
- 6.10 The parish was divided into nine separate character areas based largely on the distinct hamlets that make up the settlement pattern within the parish (**See Figure 12**). The Character Areas are as follows:
- 1: Church Street
  - 2: Hockey Hill
  - 3: Hall Lane
  - 4: Brockford Street
  - 5: Brockford Green & Knaves Green
  - 6: Station Road
  - 7: Town Lane
  - 8: Wetherup St, Park Green & Broad Green
  - 9: Pitman’s Corner, Blacksmith’s Green, Pages Green & Whitehouse Corner

6.11 The appraisal includes a brief overall description of each character area together with photographs illustrating key characteristics. Each character area is also appraised in detail under the following headings: layout, topography, spaces, access, notable, buildings and materials, landmarks, green and natural features, and important views. The Character Appraisal work has influenced a number of policies within this plan including those relating to Design, Historic Environment, Non-Designated Heritage Assets, Local Green Spaces, and Important Public Views.

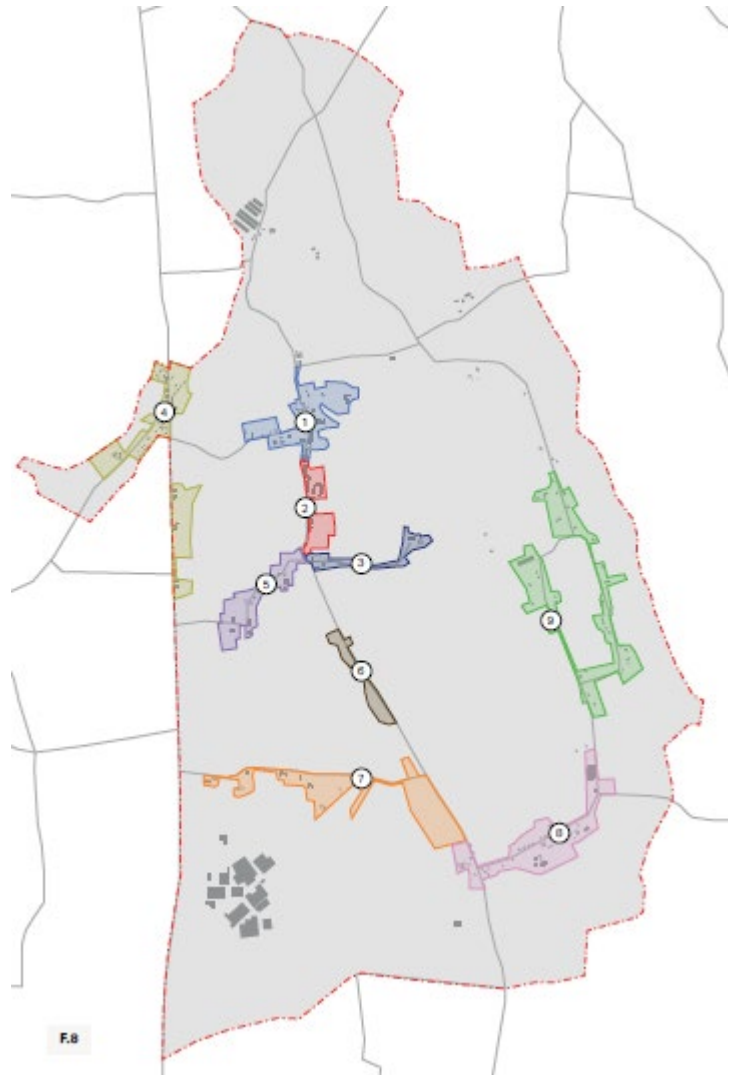


Figure 12: Character Area Map

**Design Guidance and Codes**

6.12 In addition, the NPPF makes it clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals. It also makes clear that the level of detail and degree of prescription within design codes and guides should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.

6.13 Design coding is one tool available to local planning authorities, communities, and developers to define and deliver design quality, in addition to design guides, planning briefs, heritage characterisation studies, standards and masterplans as set out in the NPPF and planning practice guidance. A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.

6.14 The Government is heavily advocating the use of design codes and expects all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the

National Design Guide<sup>15</sup> and National Model Design Code<sup>16</sup> and which reflect local character and design preferences.

- 6.15 In June 2021, the Steering Group commissioned consultants AECOM to produce some Design Guidelines for the whole of the parish. An updated version of the Design Guidelines document (dated October 2023) now accompanies this new WCBNP. The Design Guidelines reflected a detailed analysis of the local character of the parish, developed some strategic design guidelines and identified a palette of materials which should influence the design of future development. In addition, the report provided specific guidance to be used by the Parish Council when assessing and responding to consultation in future planning applications for new development.

### Consultation results

- 6.16 The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire asked a specific question about the biggest concern that local people would have in relation to future development. The most highlighted answer related to mass housing (30 responses) and increased traffic (29 responses) although other popular answers related to the visual impact of development (26), wildlife impact (26), loss of green space (24). Other responses relating to design included concerns over ‘ugly development’, ‘inappropriate development’, ‘materials and design not in keeping’.

### Policy ideas exhibition

- 6.17 The policy ideas exhibition sought local views on what constitutes ‘high quality design’ and ‘sustainable design’. There were high levels of support for a policy that recognises the important character of the different parts of the parish e.g. the distinct hamlets and also for guidance that encourages high quality design in all new development and provides design guidance specific to the parish covering, layout, materials, style, density, parking etc. There was also support for the promotion and incorporation of environmental measures into new developments e.g. electric car charging points, and sustainable features such as solar, air/ground source heat pumps, rainwater capture, etc.
- 6.18 Comments left at the exhibition included the following:
- “Prevent the building of new houses, flats that do not fit into the aesthetics of the village!”
  - “Prevent the style of new builds that do not suit the charm of this pretty village”
  - “In John Gummer’s words ‘stop building crap houses’”
  - “Use local materials/high quality design/sustainable practices”
  - “Any development should respect the existing gap from the highway to the building line to ensure that there is space for landscaping”.
  - “Parking space is important to avoid further parking on the road which makes walking and cycling more dangerous”.

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<sup>15</sup> [National design guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

<sup>16</sup> [National Model Design Code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- 6.19 Given the increasing importance that both local people and national Government are placing on design, it is considered that achieving well designed places and promoting high quality design should also be fundamental to this Neighbourhood Plan and go to its heart.
- 6.20 New development should contribute to the general health and well-being of the local community by prioritising movement by foot, bicycle, and public transport over other modes, where appropriate, protecting the amenity and health of residents and considering the needs of the disabled and the ageing population. The Plan therefore sets out its key design criteria in the following policy which is applicable to all new development irrespective of scale (e.g. residential extensions, conversions, changes of use and non-residential developments).

### **WCB6 Design Principles**

New development should contribute to improving the health and well-being of residents, increasing local community pride and cultural activity, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and reducing pollution.

The design of all new development in Wetheringsett cum Brockford should be of a scale and design to reinforce the locally distinctive character of each character area and seek to enhance its quality. **(See Appendix B)**. This will be achieved through:

#### **Layout:**

- a) Proposed densities should reflect the relevant character area of the parish, with regular breaks designed to increase visual permeability, opportunities for habitat corridors, contextual views, and new pedestrian/ bicycle access connections.
- b) The predominant one-plot deep development pattern of the hamlets in the parish should be retained to preserve the rural feel and proximity to the open countryside.

#### **Scale and Massing:**

- c) The scale, height and massing of new buildings should be consistent with the form and massing of neighbouring properties, should not be overbearing, or exceed two storeys, and ensure a sufficient level of privacy and access to natural light for their occupants.

#### **Details and Materials**

- d) High quality local materials which fit with the context of the area are encouraged. These include:

Roofs: tiles (grey and red); slate; red and black pantiles; thatch.

Elevations: lime render construction; red and white brick; white/cream and pink render walls; weatherboard.

#### **Landscaping and Gardens:**

- e) Properties should comprise front and rear gardens which should be delineated with soft landscape elements. Native planting is encouraged as part of the boundary treatments to enable assimilation into the rural setting.
- f) Developments affecting the transitional edges between a settlement and farmland should be softened by landscaping to complement the character of the adjacent or surrounding countryside. Edge of settlement development should gradually transition to the surrounding landscape context.
- g) Development adjoining any of the open spaces should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface or a soft landscaped edge.

#### **Sustainability:**

- h) New development should respond to site specific micro-climates and sun paths and use these to increase the environmental comfort for building users, both internally and externally.
- i) Passive energy design: Development should be designed to optimise passive solar gain without risking overheating.



j) Sustainable Drainage Systems should be integrated into development to protect against incidences of flooding, pollution, provide drainage and water attenuation, and wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits. Developments should seek to improve the four pillars of SuDs – water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity.

k) Encouragement is also given to proposals that incorporate sustainable and environmental design features or technologies such as electric car charging points, solar, air/ground source heat pumps, rainwater capture, passive ventilation, permeable pavements etc.

#### **Connections**

l) New development should be planned to be permeable, providing vehicular and non-vehicular connections to connect with existing public rights of way.

m) Convenient pedestrian connections through new developments should be encouraged and design features such as pedestrian barriers should be avoided.

#### **Parking**

n) The preference is for parking to be provided off-street. Residential car parking should be a mix of on-plot side, front, garage, and courtyard parking, depending on the most appropriate solution for each location.

o) Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise impervious surfaces, for example, using permeable paving.

p) Parking should be designed to minimise the visual impact of vehicles and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials, to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings.

q) Cycle parking should be integrated into all new housing.

r) A proportion of parking should be provided on street within any new developments, but it should be well designed, located and integrated into the scheme to avoid obstruction to all highway users or impede visibility.

More detailed information on the above criteria is contained in the **Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines and the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2019**.

## **Heritage and the Historic Environment**

6.21 Wetheringsett cum Brockford possesses a high quality and varied historic environment. The current Conservation Area which is centred on Church Street was originally designated in 1975 by the newly formed Mid Suffolk District Council and was re-appraised and extended by the District Council in 2000. Local planning authorities have a duty to review their conservation areas from 'time to time' and the most recent appraisal of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Conservation Area was carried out in 2011 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

6.22 In addition, there are 53 Nationally Listed Buildings within the parish. The Church of All Saints is Grade I listed with the remaining all Grade II. The central nucleus of the village

around the church forms the heart of conservation area. Here can be found the greatest concentration of listed buildings, for the most part Grade II 16th Century houses of timber-framed construction with thatched roofs. There is also a further concentration of seven Listed Buildings at Brockford Street, clustered close to the junction of The Street, Griffin Lane and Brockford Street.

- 6.23 The Church of All Saints was described by Pevsner as '**A stately church**'. Much 13th Century work can be seen: the nave arcades, chancel arch and various doors and windows, added to in the 15th Century with tower, porch and clerestory, and finally 'restored' in the 1850's.
- 6.24 Tucked away in the north-east part of the conservation area lies Wetheringsett Manor, a striking Suffolk white brick early gothic revival country house, now used as a school. It was recently listed grade II and dates from 1843, designed by Samuel Teulon, one of the major High Victorian gothicists.

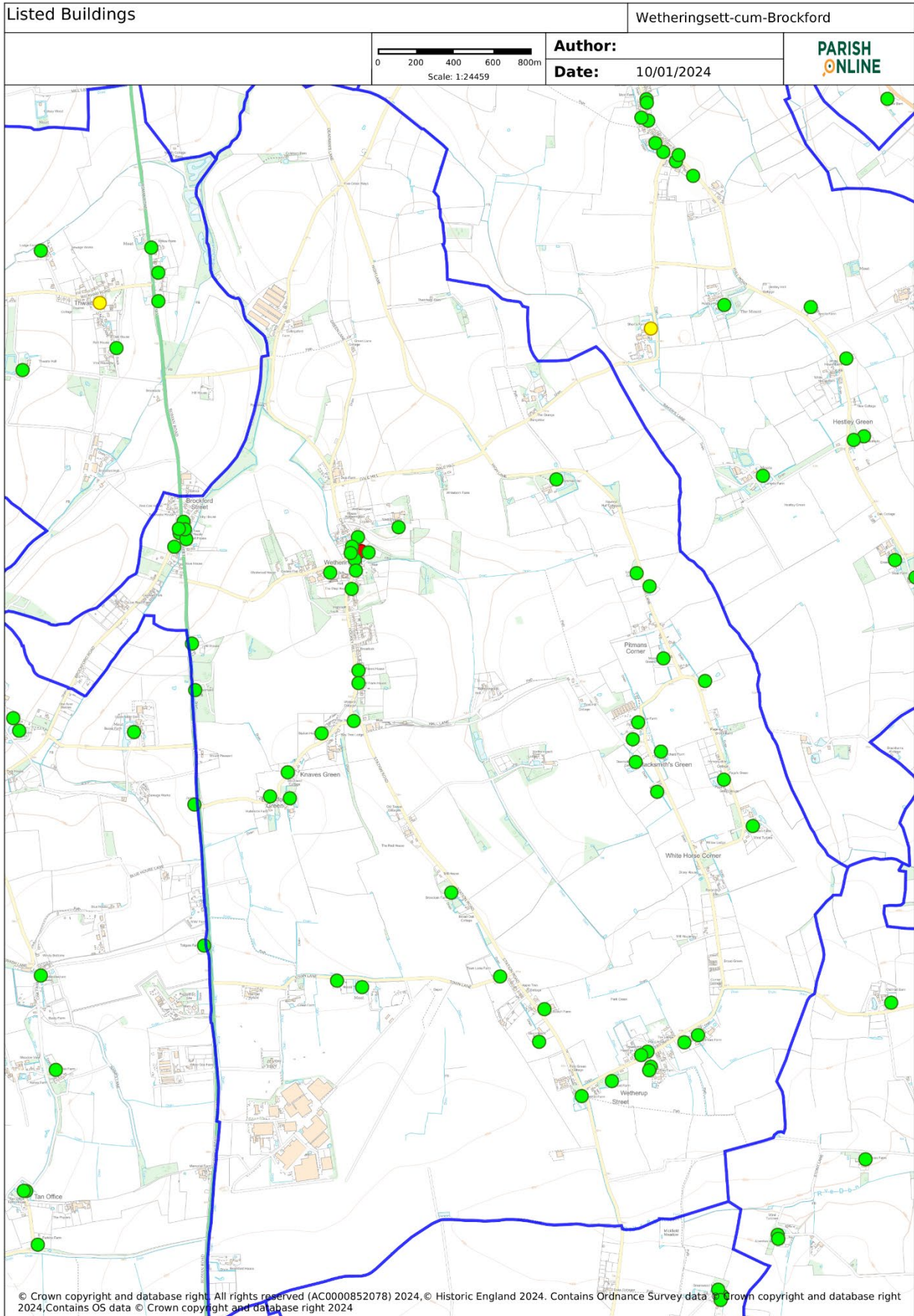


Figure 13 Map of Listed Buildings

- 6.25 The Suffolk County Historic Environment Record (HER) for Wetheringsett cum Brockford lists over 50 sites scattered far and wide within the large parish. These include finds from the more distant periods such as a Neolithic axe, Bronze Age pottery and Iron Age coins. More recent finds include Roman pottery and coins, a Saxon brooch and some Medieval scatter finds. More specific sites listed in the record include several Medieval moated sites, medieval greens, a fishpond and a deer park.



- 6.26 As referred to in paragraph 2.6 earlier, the 2011 Conservation Area Appraisal includes a map of 11 HER sites in and around the Wetheringsett Conservation Area.

### Traditional Materials

- 6.27 All Saints is largely of flint construction with a chequered flushwork to the tower and buttresses and a slate roof. A quarter of the buildings in the Conservation Area are rendered with timber frame with thatched roofs which is typical of this part of Suffolk. Other rendered buildings are roofed with either pantiles or plaintiles, slate or even occasionally concrete. More recent additions to the village have tended to be red brick with pantile roofs which have taken their lead from the re-front of the timber framed cottages at 1-4 Church Street which took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when a single house was subdivided into Almshouses for the poor.
- 6.28 The Victorians used red brick for the school and the schoolhouse along with white brick dressings, whilst Wetheringsett Manor was solely white brick.
- 6.29 Many buildings within the Conservation Area are set back within their own grounds, many well hidden behind mature hedges and trees, some even built up on the high banked valley sides. The screening and changes in level help create a feeling of enclosure in the valley, an element of the area's character well worth preserving. Wetheringsett Manor is perhaps the ultimate in this trend: set up on the hillside, looking out across farmland and approached via a long tree-lined drive, it is almost totally separate from the rest of the village. The Conservation Area Appraisal recommends the conservation area should continue to protect the special 'arcadian' nature of the village within its wooded setting. Many of the trees are mature and efforts could be made to look for opportunities for future tree planting with younger specimens of local origin to secure succession. Defra has confirmed an area in the centre of the village as a Nature Improvement Zone. Historically the few areas of pavement within the village are generally blacktop with concrete kerbing. A flint chipping surface

dressing could be more appropriately low key, perhaps with exposed aggregate kerbing to match.

6.30 The policy ideas exhibition sought to gauge support for a policy that identifies and reinforces the heritage importance of the conservation area and measures to control new development within it. There was a high level of support for this and also for a policy that identifies the important contribution to the overall character of the area made by the Listed Buildings. Comments left at the exhibition included:

- “Not just the Conservation Area. The context of all our wonderful, listed buildings is critical.”
- “More help needed to conserve and protect and make older houses in the village more energy efficient.”

**Policy WCB7** below has been informed by these views.

### **Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

6.31 The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG<sup>17</sup>) recognises that there are buildings, monuments, sites and places, and areas of landscapes identified as having a degree of local significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets e.g. as listed buildings. In some areas, local authorities identify some Non-Designated Heritage Assets as ‘locally listed’. The PPG goes on to explain that these can be identified through Neighbourhood Plans (and Local Plans) and can be a positive way for the local authorities and the community to identify Non-Designated Heritage Assets against consistent criteria to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development.

6.32 The NPPF indicates that the effects of an application on the significance of a Non- Designated Heritage Asset should be taken into account in determining applications.

6.33 The preliminary survey work undertaken as part of the Character Appraisal identified a small number of potential non-designated heritage assets within the parish. The policy ideas exhibition sought local feedback on the original list of candidates and asked for further suitable candidates that would be worthy of a form of local protection due to their contribution to the character of the parish. The list has been revised and the candidates have been assessed against the criteria in the Local Heritage Listing: Historic Advice Note 7 page 9. The results are shown in **Appendix C**.

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<sup>17</sup> [Historic environment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-practice-guidance)

**POLICY**

**WCB7 Historic Environment**

Proposals for development which may affect a Listed Building or is to be located within or adjacent to the Conservation Area should respect the historic character and appearance of those heritage assets. Proposals should seek to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and protect the heritage significance of listed buildings, protected trees, and other heritage assets.

New development should ensure that the design of new development complements the shape and form of the settlement and the relationship between heritage assets and the spaces around them.

The special ‘arcadian’ character of the Conservation Area and its wooded setting will be protected and reinforced. This will be achieved by:

- a) Encouraging the retention and maintenance of designated and non-designated heritage assets which contribute to the overall character and setting of the Conservation Area.
- b) Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of the Conservation Area through the use of appropriate, high-quality materials.
- c) Protecting the Conservation Area from development within its setting which would adversely affect its character, appearance and historical setting including views into or out of the Conservation Area.
- d) Requiring the use of high-quality traditional building materials and detailing, **(See Policy WCB6)**.

Proposals for new or reconfigured signage within the Conservation Area should be sensitively designed with consideration given to size, design, materials, and siting to ensure that they do not detract from its character and appearance.

Figure 14: The Cedars and The Old School House



Figure 15: The Former Trowel and Hammer, Wetherup Street





Figure 16: The former Old White Horse Public House, White Horse Corner



Figure 17: Stone Cottage, Brockford Road



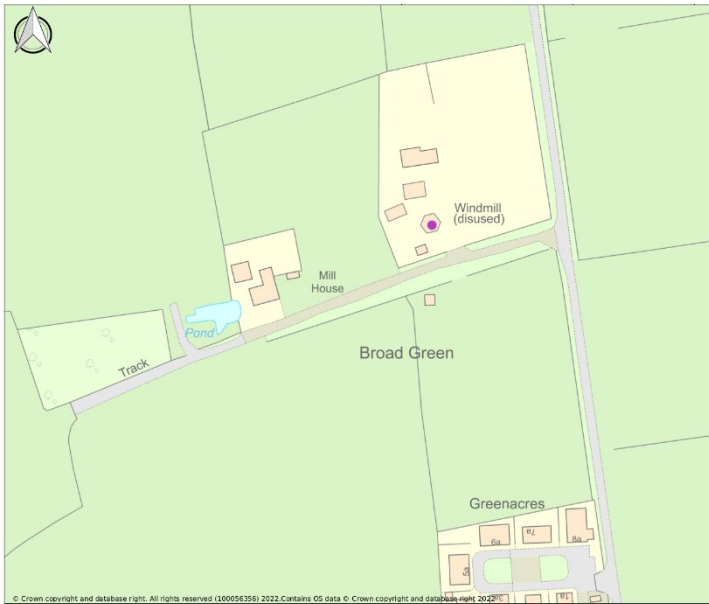


Figure 18: The Roundhouse of the former Windmill, Broad Green

**POLICY**

**WCB8 Important Unlisted Buildings (non-designated heritage assets)**

The following (as shown on Figs 14-18) are heritage assets that are considered to be locally important to Wetheringsett cum Brockford in terms of their architectural, historical, or cultural significance and these will be treated as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

1. The School House
2. The Cedars
3. The former Trowel and Hammer Public House
4. The former Old White Horse Public House (also known as The Cat and Mouse)
5. Stone Cottage, Brockford Road
6. The Roundhouse at the former Windmill at Broad Green





## Chapter 7: Natural Environment

**Objective 3: To protect the rural character, biodiversity, and open spaces of the parish.**

### Landscape

- 7.1 As mentioned in earlier chapters, the parish of Wetheringsett cum Brockford consists of a number of outlying hamlets spread over a large area, along with a small central village clustered around its church. This core lies in a wooded hollow at the head of a tributary of the River Dove which flows northwards from the village to eventually join the Waveney north of the town of Eye.
- 7.2 Apart from alluvial deposits in the river proper, the geology locally is basically the clay of 'High Suffolk's' till formation. This overlies crag deposits dating from the Pliocene era and chalk, which stretch eastwards to the coast. The village itself presents a quiet backwater, despite being very close to the increasingly busy A140 Ipswich to Norwich route.
- 7.3 The Parish is dominated by open fields interspersed with small woodland areas. Due to its layout, the village also offers direct connections with the open countryside. Wetheringsett cum Brockford is located with the National Character Area (NCA) 83: South Norfolk and Suffolk Claylands (NE544)<sup>18</sup> The character of the land centred around the course of River Dove is typified by wooded valley and meadowlands. The Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Landscape Guidance (BMSLG) produced in August 2015 identifies Wetheringsett cum Brockford as falling within the 'plateau claylands' landscape character type<sup>19</sup>.
- 7.4 The BMSLG describes the key characteristics of this landscape character type as gently rolling heavy clay plateau with sparse woodland cover and some extensive areas of post WWII field boundary loss. This landscape type covers the majority of the Mid Suffolk district

<sup>18</sup> [NCA Profile: 83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands - NE544 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/nca-profile/83-south-norfolk-and-high-suffolk-claylands-ne544)

<sup>19</sup> [Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance](#)

and is the core landscape of the High Suffolk and South Norfolk National Character Area. Typical characteristics include poorly drained areas of the clay plateau covered with numerous extant or former greens and commons.

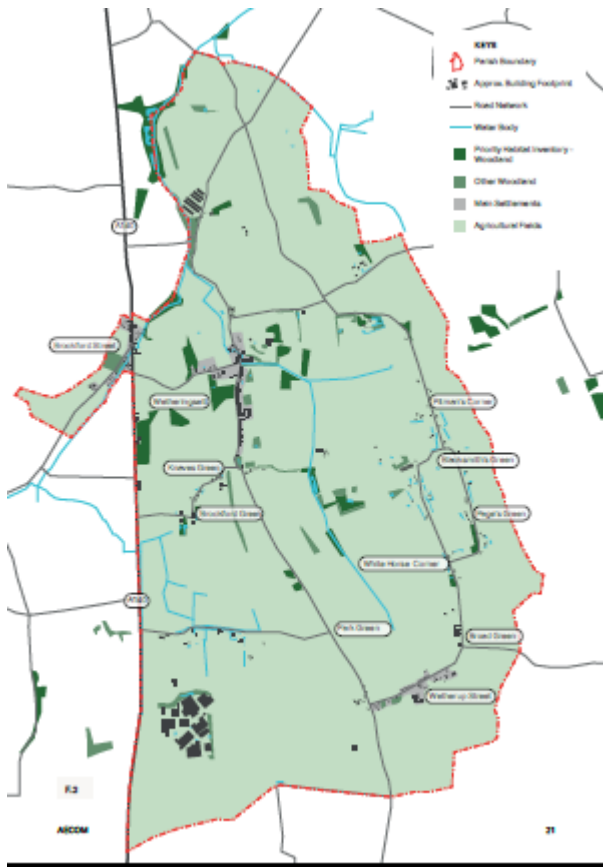


Figure 19: Extract from AECOM Design Code

Although the loss of greens and commons within this landscape type overall was significant, they give their names to many of the hamlets within the parish e.g. Knaves Green, Park Green, Brockford Green, Pages Green and Blacksmith's Green. Remnants of the original green can be seen at Blacksmiths Green and the historic greens influence the housing layout such as that at Pages Green. The enclosure of former greens has left a very distinct landscape with straight "surveyors" roads running through the centre of the former greens.

- 7.5 The wet land of the plateau was often used for medieval deer parks, an example of which is land in the south of the parish around what is now Wetheringsett Lodge. The landscape was also extensively used for World War II airfields, such as Mendlesham airfield in the south-west of the parish.
- 7.6 Arable farming activity dominates the landscape with hedging providing a variable visual impact. Some parts of the parish, particularly Broad Green, are characterised by a pattern of smaller fields with hedged boundaries. Boundary trees (ash and oak in particular) are present in many of the hedges and poplars have a significant visual impact in this landscape. The trees around Wetheringsett village are for the most part fairly mature and consequently form a very dominant feature of the local landscape, particularly set against the open prairie of adjoining farmland.
- 7.7 The overall appearance is of wide-open views with small clusters of hedges, trees, and houses. The scattered historic settlement pattern ranges from farmsteads, clustered development of various sizes to the elongation (ribbon development) of larger groups. Many of the traditional farmsteads retain their historic farm ponds and moats which form characteristic features. Most of the hamlets within the parish offer a prominent shelter with mature trees and hedgerows throughout their farmlands and gardens. The private gardens within the residential settlements occupy a substantial proportion of land and contribute to the overall landscape character of the parish.

- 7.8 The BMSLG identifies a number of key design principles for this landscape type which are relevant to the rural character of Wetheringsett cum Brockford. These include:
- a) Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
  - b) Retain rural character of the small settlements and conservation areas by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features.
  - c) Restore, maintain, and enhance green and woodland areas.
  - d) Hedging for boundaries will be designed to reflect the local planting scheme to reduce visual impact on the distinctive character of the area.
  - e) To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off-site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

7.9 The policy ideas exhibition results reflected the great value that local residents place on the rural setting and landscape of the parish (29 responses). The survey work undertaken by the Steering Group to inform the Character Appraisal identified a number of important views and vistas throughout the parish. These were highlighted at the exhibition and members of the public were invited to comment upon the value of the suggested views as well as to nominate any further candidates. The Steering Group have been mindful that any policy which sought to protect views should focus on those that are 'important' to the overall landscape character of the parish and should also be enjoyed from publicly accessible locations e.g. footpaths, public highway, an existing open space or through a gap between buildings. Some rationalisation of the original list has therefore been undertaken and the following have been identified:

**1) Views towards All Saints Church (looking east from Cedars Hill)**

Travelling east along Cedars Hill from the A140, tantalising glimpses of the church, nestling within the valley bottom are revealed.



**2) View from bridge adjacent to Mill Cottage overlooking unnamed tributary of River Dove.**

This is an attractive subsidiary view and can be enjoyed from the bridge adjacent to Mill Cottage, overlooking the tributary of the River Dove. Located close to the Church it again reinforces the well vegetated and arcadian feel to this part of the village.



**3) View down Hockey Hill towards the school, and then the church**

The road winds down the hill into the Conservation Area with the school to the west, and thence to the Church. The houses to the east of the road show the easy juxtaposition of old and new with elevated verges, gardens and trees framing the picture and blurring the differences in architecture. The view illustrates how mixed linear development can still retain a rural and indeed 'arcadian' feel.



**4) Views west from Hockey Hill**

This view is another archetypal parish landscape fringed by hedges and old oak trees across open fields to the far tree line and copses bordering the A140, from which they protect the eye. Sunsets here are dramatic and enjoyed by the residents of Hockey Hill, the most populated area of the parish.



**5) View from the top of Hall Lane towards Wetheringsett Hall**

A view down the long lane to Wetheringsett Hall, which is partly obscured by large willows marking the valley of the River Dove, with a well-used public footpath alongside, which continues past the Manor and thence the Church. To the right of the Hall is a willow plantation which is regularly coppiced and glows red in the winter. A mature mixed hedge borders the Middy rail track on the south side of the lane and two majestic lone trees on the north side emphasise the wide-open field which stretches all the way down the lane to the river and across to the Manor. Beyond is the view – and the footpath – across to Pitman’s Corner.



**6) View from eastern end of Wetherup Street, south towards Debenham**

The view marks the junction between Broad Green, with its small, enclosed fields and a sweep in the road west towards the hamlet of Wetherup Street. Uninterrupted vistas of expansive skies over arable fields to trees in the distance and beyond where the ground gently slopes down to the village of Debenham.





**7) View looking from the footpath (south of and parallel to Wetherup Street) looking towards Broad Green and Pages Green.**

An open landscape viewed from the footpath which runs parallel and south of Wetherup Street gives wide reaching views across to Broad Green and north across to Park Green.



7.10 Taking the above into account **Policy WCB9** below has been developed which covers the distinct related elements of landscape character and the protection of important public views.

Figure 20: Views 1-4 – Church Street and Hockey Hill



Figure 21: View 5 towards Wetheringsett Hall

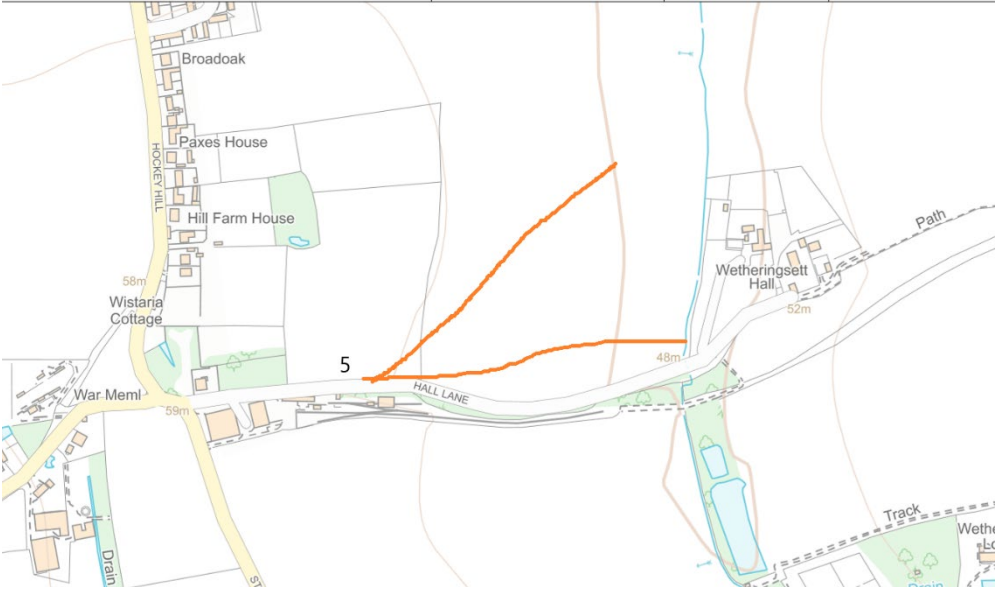
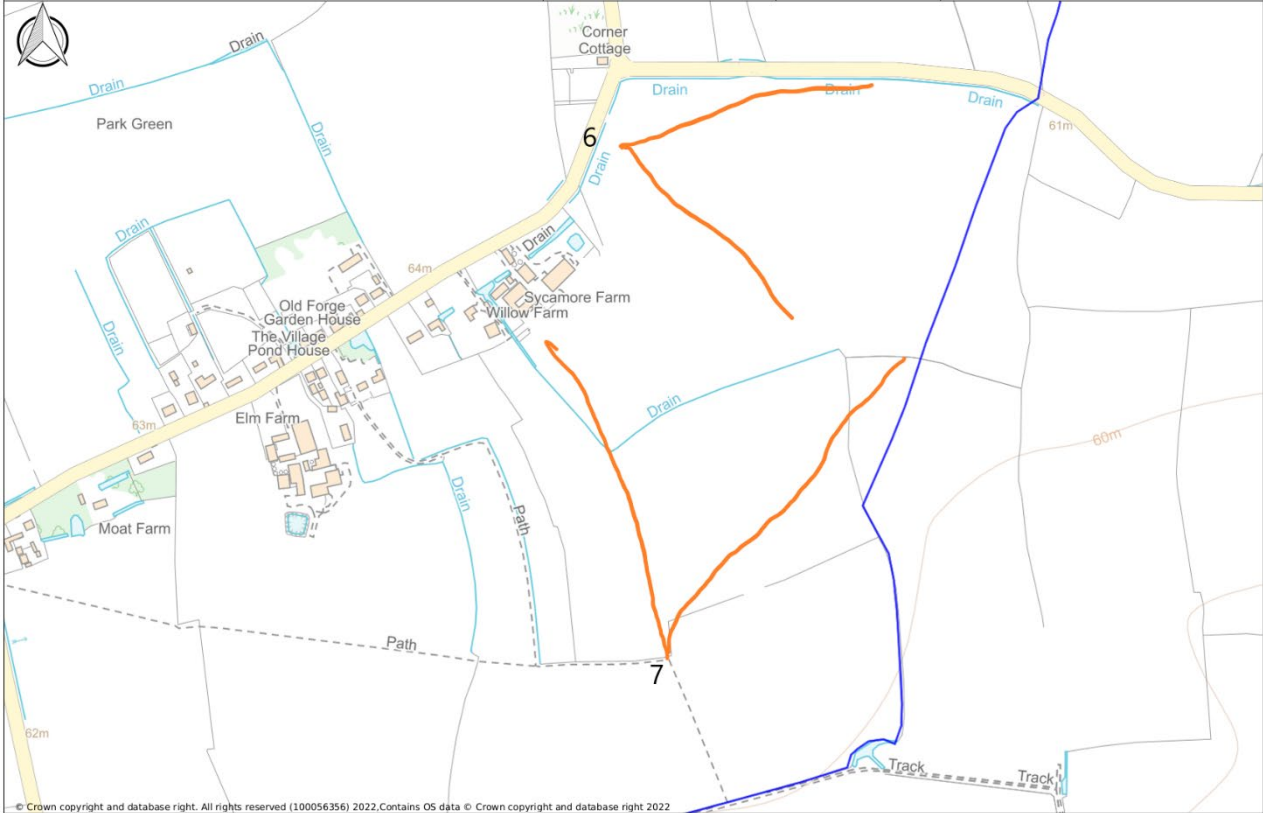


Figure 22: Views 6 and 7 – Wetherup Street



<b>POLICY</b>	<p><b>WCB9: Landscape character and important views</b></p> <p>The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside within the parish outside of the defined settlement boundaries will be protected from development that may adversely affect this character.</p> <p>The existing clear landscape breaks that physically separate different hamlets within the parish shall be maintained in order to prevent coalescence and loss of individual settlement identity and distinctiveness.</p> <p><b>Important Public Local Views</b></p> <p>The following views and vistas as shown on (<b>Figs 20-22</b>) above are identified as important public local views.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Views towards All Saints Church from Church Street</li> <li>2) View from bridge adjacent to Mill Cottage overlooking unnamed tributary of the River Dove</li> <li>3) View down Hockey Hill towards the Church</li> <li>4) Views west from Hockey Hill</li> <li>5) View from the top of Hall Lane towards Wetheringsett Hall</li> <li>6) View from eastern end of Wetherup Street, south towards Debenham</li> <li>7) View from footpath (south of but parallel to Wetherup Street) towards Broad Green and Park Green.</li> </ol> <p>Development proposals within or that would otherwise affect an important public local view should be accompanied by a statement (appropriate to the scale of the proposal) that demonstrates how the view has been taken into account. Any proposal that would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view concerned should not be supported.</p>
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## Biodiversity

- 7.11 The NPPF indicates that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity or geological value and minimising impacts on and providing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 7.12 The Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent in Autumn 2021 and introduces a new system for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). In simple terms, BNG is an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a *measurably* better state than it was beforehand. Planning policy that seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity is not new, but this latest approach focuses in more on the *measurability* aspect. Planning applications will need to quantify the different habitat types on site both before and after the proposed development using the latest Biodiversity Metric. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design to secure a minimum of 10% net gain firstly onsite or if not locally. Where this cannot be achieved a developer can secure the shortfall by securing a site for biodiversity uplift elsewhere. BNG will be mandatory on all sites by April 2024 and its importance in the

planning process will be elevated within Schedule 14 of the Environment Act. Measures are included that allow planning authorities to recognise any habitat degradation since 30th January 2020 and to take the earlier habitat state as the baseline for the purposes of biodiversity net gain.

7.13 Many Districts have begun to embed BNG as a policy requirement in their Local Plans, which is the level at which a consistent and districtwide policy will apply. Neighbourhood Plans therefore need not repeat or duplicate such matters unless there is clear, robust local evidence for doing so. Policy LP16 in the Adopted BMSJLP requires that development proposals create, protect, and enhance ecological networks, and seek to ensure that all new development secures high standards of design and green infrastructure which creates attractive and sustainable places where people want to live and spend time. Networks of green infrastructure should be provided across new developments, linking with existing networks of open space. Suffolk County Council have recently committed 'to deliver twice the net gain required' and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan aspires to a 20% BNG where appropriate.

7.14 There are no formally designated international or national wildlife sites within the parish. Mickfield Meadow, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies just outside of the parish to the south. It is a rare example of species rich hay meadow with associated boundary hedges. An area to the south of the parish does fall within the SSSI Risk Zone and therefore should be referred to when assessing development in Wetherup Street or to the south of it.

7.15 There are two Roadside Nature Reserves within the parish as follows:

- MDSC 186, Roadside verge, RNR 116. Designated for its' flora.
- MSDC 163, a ditch alongside Old Brook Lane. Designated for the rare Tassel stonewort.



**Tassel stonewort/Purple Orchids**

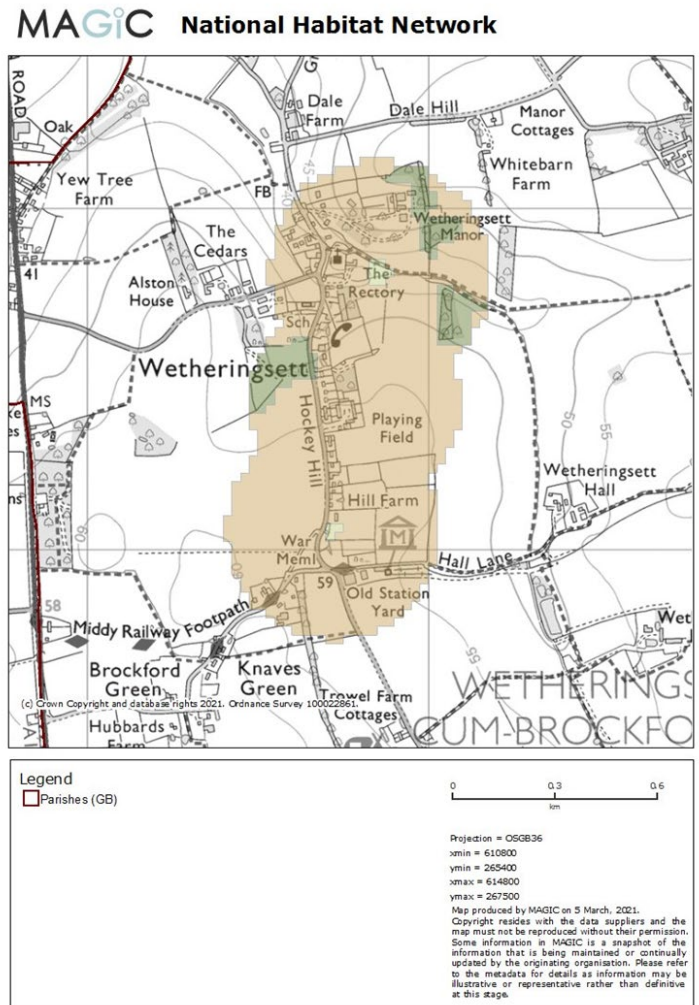
7.16 The land in the centre of the village has been identified as a Habitat Network Enhancement Zone One by Natural England. Within this zone are located priority deciduous woodland habitat, priority parkland and traditional orchards. Natural England has recognised one traditional orchard in the centre of the village near Wetheringsett Manor and All Saints Church within the Enhancement Zone. A further 3 provisional traditional orchards have been identified within the parish on Brockford Road, opposite the war memorial on Hockey Hill, and at Pages Green.

**Trees**

7.17 Trees are an important feature throughout the parish but are particularly prevalent within the Conservation Area. Within the historic core of the village itself there remain fine examples of Oak, Copper Beech, Lime, Ash, Holly, Yew, Poplar, Horse Chestnut and Scots Pine. The approaches to Wetheringsett Manor include an avenue of Limes and within the grounds many other species abound including Corsican Pine and a large Wellingtonia. There are formal Preservation Orders on trees including two Horse Chestnuts at Wetheringsett Lodge (TPO 216) and an area of mixed woodland further south at Moat Farm, Wetherup Street, one of the outlying hamlets (TPO 215).

7.18 In addition there are records for a number of Veteran Trees within the parish. These are trees that may not be very old but have significant features that contribute to their exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. The parish hosts 33 pedunculate oak, 2 cedrus, 1 ash, 1 horse chestnut. The Churchyard hosts a number of specimen trees of red beech, lime, and oak. The NPPF considers veteran trees, along with ancient woodland as an ‘irreplaceable habitat’ and any development impacting on such features should be carefully considered.

Figure: 23 Ecological Network enhancement area



7.19 Historic features such as ponds and moats, are found throughout the parish, some of which are large garden ponds, with a significant density in the southern hamlets of Pages Green, Blacksmith’s Green and Wetherup Street, forming an ecological network of drains.

## Priority Habitats and Species

7.20 Section 41 (1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, which came into force on 1st October 2006, requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

7.21 There are a number of Priority Species and Habitats within the parish that have been identified through the Environmental Assessment as follows:

### Habitats:

- a) **Hedgerows** – at Griffin Lane, Green Lane, and Broad Green; support species such as bullfinch, yellowhammer, brown hare, hedgehog, pipistrelle bat
- b) **Deciduous woodland**, supporting bat species such as pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and natterers; farmland birds
- c) **Pond and freshwater habitats**, supporting species such as toad, grass snake, grey heron, kingfisher
- d) **Traditional orchards**: confirmed in Church Street and proposed in Brockford Road, Hockey Hill (opposite war memorial field) and Pages Green (opposite Green Farm)
- e) **Wood pasture and parkland**: four provisional parklands, two at Wetheringsett Manor grounds, and two others near Seamans and Westwood House.

**Birds of Conservation Concern:** lapwing, turtle dove, yellowhammer, skylark, herring gull, spotted flycatcher, marsh tit, starling, field fare, mistle thrush, house sparrow, linnet, house martin and swift.

**Priority Species:** common toad, grass snake, hedgehog, brown hare

7.22 The policy ideas exhibition revealed a high degree of support from attendees (21) for a policy that would protect and enhance wildlife and that would require the creation of new habitats including woodland creation and new tree planting on development sites.

7.23 **Policy WCB10** below has been developed taking all of this into account. It refers to ‘wildlife’ corridors which is a term used to refer to any linear feature in the landscape that can be used for the migration or dispersal of wildlife. Such corridors allow for the linking of habitats and reduce the isolation of populations. Linear features may vary and may also not be continuous however patches of natural habitat can benefit wildlife and occasionally the terms ‘stepping-stones’ is used to refer to these. The role of wildlife corridors is assuming greater importance and opportunities should be taken to create these as a consequence of new development.

**POLICY**

**WCB10: Protecting and enhancing biodiversity**

Development proposals will be expected to protect and enhance existing ecological networks, wildlife corridors and priority species in accordance with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimise, restore, offset) . Proposals should retain existing features and habitats of biodiversity value such as ponds, hedgerows, trees (including veteran trees), traditional orchards, woodlands, wood pasture and parkland and any other semi natural habitats within the parish.

. Where loss of damage is unavoidable, it must be demonstrated that the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the impacts and the development shall provide for mitigation in the form of appropriate replacement or replanting or appropriate natural feature on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting or feature or as a last resort, compensation measures will be sought. If suitable mitigation or compensation measures cannot be provided, then planning permission should be refused.

Otherwise acceptable development proposals will be supported where they provide a minimum net gain of 10% in biodiversity, rising to 20% where possible through for example:

- a) The creation, restoration and enhancement of new natural habitats including ponds
- b) The planting of additional trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of the areas traditional hedgerows),
- c) the restoration and reparation of fragmented ecological networks to be targeted within the area highlighted in Figure 23.

Biodiversity net gain should be targeted to improve habitats for key species recorded in the parish as identified in paragraph 7.21 above. Support will also be given for other measures that will enhance existing areas in the parish for the benefit of wildlife e.g. the school meadow, the Churchyard, the allotments, or the creation of a community orchard.

New tree planting should be of a scale, location and type which adds value and optimises benefits to wildlife. New and replacement planting should be native or near native species and landscape maintenance and management plans should be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Proposals for new buildings (including non-residential development) should incorporate measures to protect wildlife species and enhance habitats including the incorporation of wildlife friendly measures such as:

- i) bat boxes and swift bricks (on appropriate elevations),
- ii) hedgehog highways – gaps under fences to enable hedgehogs and other small mammals/amphibians etc to move freely
- iii) insect (bee) bricks
- iv) new garden native hedgerows and trees.



The design of new gardens should take account of the contribution gardens can make to enhancing wildlife and include trees and hedgerows in boundary treatments.

Consideration should also be given to Sustainable Drainage Schemes and the benefits they can provide for biodiversity and pollution control.

In line with the results of environmental screenings, development may only be supported where no likely significant effects (LSE) or adverse effects on site integrity (AEoI) of a European Protected Site can be demonstrated through an individual project-level Habitats Regulation Assessment.

### Local Green Spaces

- 7.24 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023, at paragraphs 105-107 introduces the concept of Local Green Spaces which can be identified through neighbourhood plans by local communities and allows green areas identified as being of particular importance to be protected. Paragraph 106, sets out 3 broad criteria for identifying and designating such spaces as follows:
- ‘The Local Green Space designation should only be used when the green space is:*
- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.*
  - b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field) tranquillity and richness of its wildlife: and*
  - c) local in character and not an extensive tract of land’.*
- 7.25 The NPPF at paragraph 107 then goes on to state that ‘policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for green belts’ and therefore affords them a very high level of protection. The NPPF at paragraph 137 outlines the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts, the fundamental aim of which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of green belts are their openness and their permanence. It is also clear that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used as a mechanism to try to block or resist development on agricultural land immediately adjacent to village development boundaries and that a successful designation must meet the criteria outlined above.
- 7.26 Such spaces can be viewed locally as equally as important as the landscape setting of an area. Such spaces are green spaces found within the built-up area that contribute to the character of a settlement. These can vary in size, shape, location, ownership and use but such spaces will have some form of value to the community particularly for benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing and help define what makes that specific settlement what it is.
- 7.27 Areas of open space in the parish which meet the criteria for designation as local green spaces include All Saints churchyard, the cemetery, the village hall field, the war memorial

field and Wetheringsett Manor. The original Pre-Submission and Submission versions of the Neighbourhood Plan also included the Hockey Hill football field however planning permission for 14 dwellings was granted on appeal on the site and it therefore no longer meets the criteria.

7.28 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group identified a number of spaces and asked for feedback from the local community at the policy ideas exhibitions. Following that feedback and the assessments of the candidate spaces against the NPPF criteria, this list has now been rationalised. Each space that meets the criteria should be protected because of their value to the local community. The result is the 9 spaces shown in **figure 24** and listed within **Policy WCB11**. Assessments for each one against the criteria set out in the NPPF have been carried out and these are shown in Appendix **D**

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>WCB11: Local Green Spaces</b>
	<p>The following are identified as Local Green Spaces (as shown on Figure 24).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Churchyard of All Saints Church</li><li>2. Cemetery</li><li>3. Playing field adjacent Village Hall</li><li>4. Play area (with equipment)</li><li>5. Meadow at Church Street</li><li>6. War Memorial Field</li><li>7. Allotments at Knaves Green</li><li>8. Parkland at Wetheringsett Manor</li></ol> <p>Development within Local Green Spaces will be managed consistent with the approach taken for Green Belts.</p>

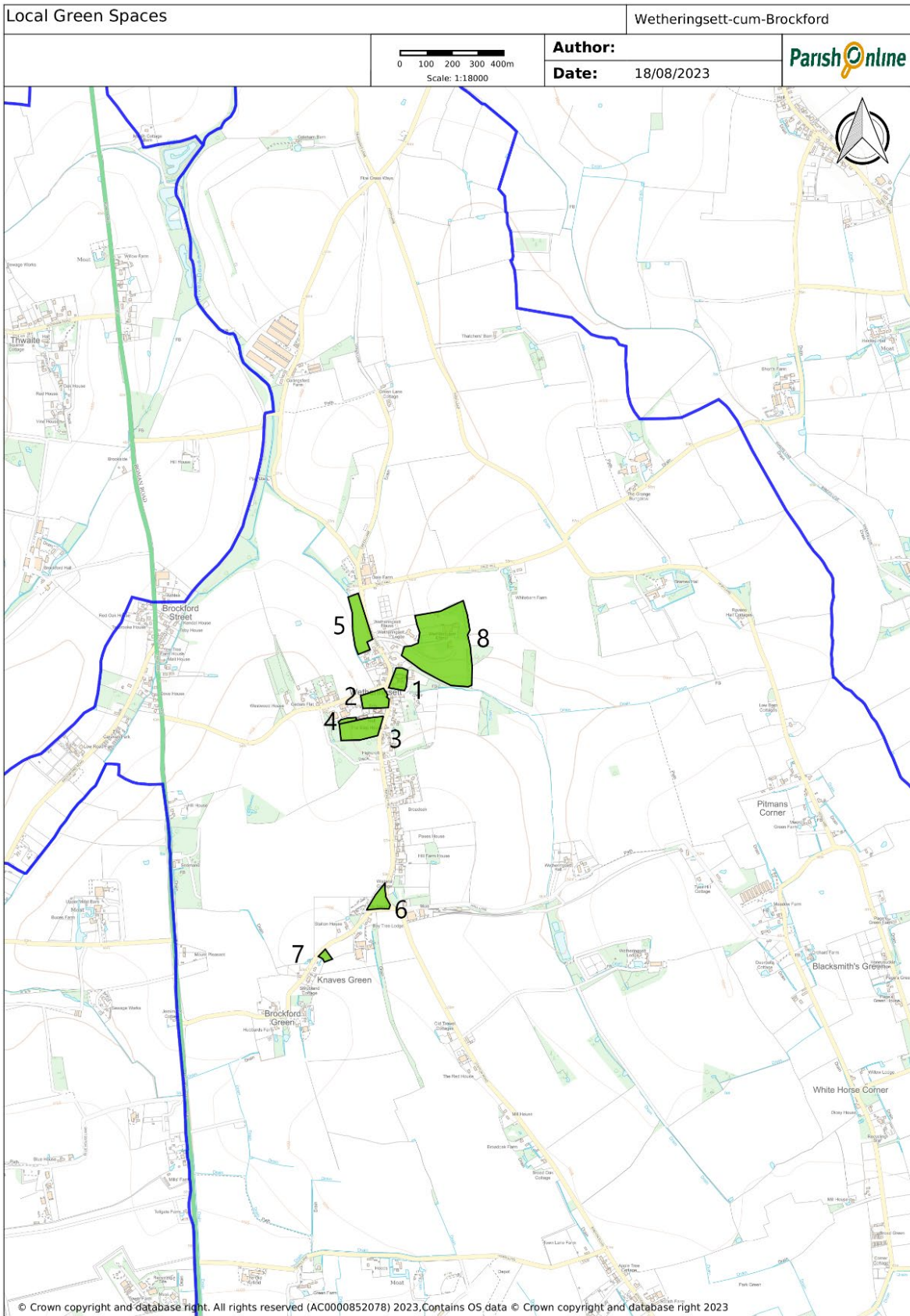


Figure 24 – Local Green Spaces (see also Appendix D)

## Amenity and pollution

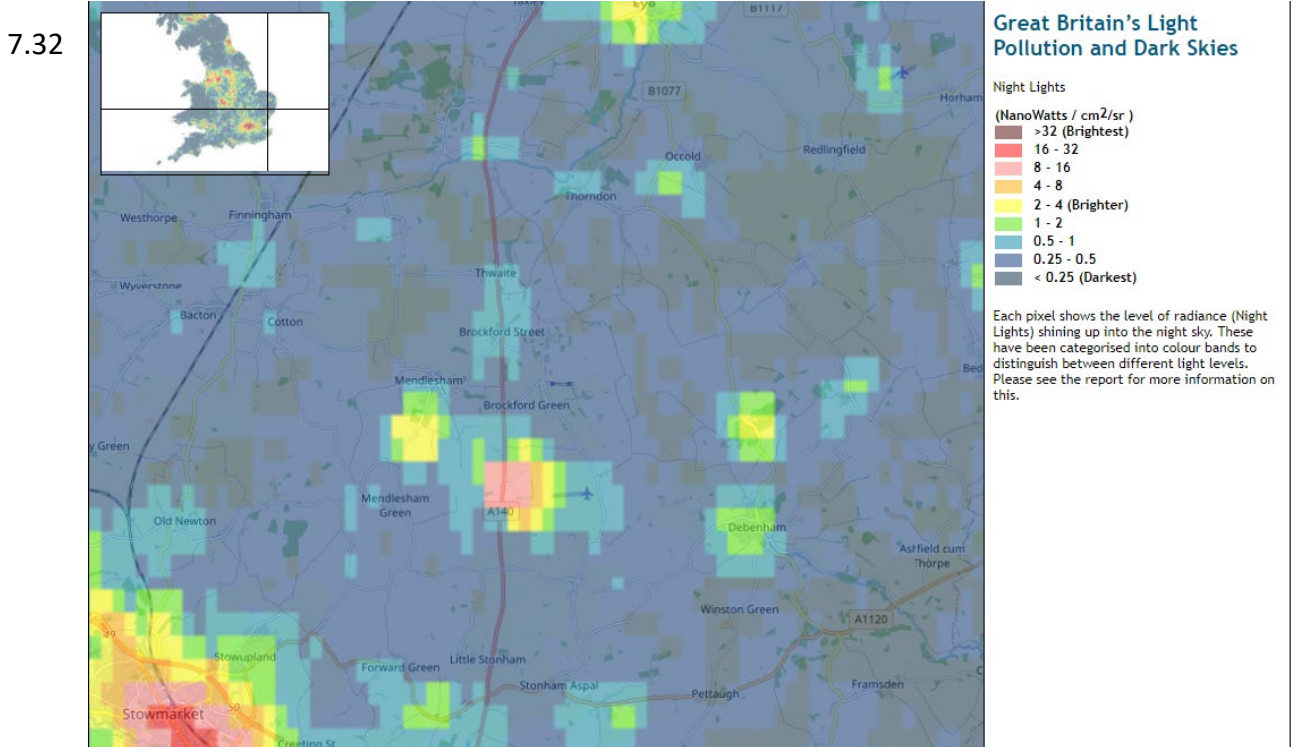
7.29 The NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate to its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution (light, noise, air, and dust) on the health, living conditions and amenity of residents as well as the impacts on the natural environment. The NPPF also requires that development proposals should seek to mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise (and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life)

7.30 Community consultation through both the questionnaire and the policy ideas exhibition revealed that the rural character and high-quality environment of the parish are elements that they highly value. There was support (23 responses) for a policy that would protect the existing dark skies of the parish, and which sought to restrict the outside lighting of new development. There was also support for broadening this to cover all forms of pollution that might affect residential amenity such as air pollution, dust, and smell. One of the most commonly cited forms of noise pollution was the A140 and in particular traffic noise.

## Dark Skies and light pollution

7.31 The NPPF indicates that development proposals should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation.

Figure 25 Source: CPRE Light Pollution Map covering the parish



According to the CPRE light pollution maps<sup>20</sup>, the majority of the parish falls within the most category of the darkest skies e.g. <0.25 nano watts/cm<sup>2</sup> (Category 1 of 9 with 9 being the most polluted). However, there are some areas around Brockford Street along the A140, Mendlesham Airfield and Town Lane where this rises to 0.5 nano watts/cm<sup>2</sup> (Category 3). High levels of lighting can affect the health, wellbeing and amenity of adjacent residents but also have impacts for natural habitats and species.

- 7.33 Nil or low levels of light pollution are an important aspect of tranquillity which was also an important characteristic of the parish that people valued. Light pollution comes in many forms – sky glow as a consequence of water droplets in the air, illumination from artificial light and glare. Artificial light is not detrimental in all cases and the solution to light pollution is not turning off all lighting. Light pollution is where light is excessive or intrudes where it is not wanted or expected. Well-designed lighting sends light only where it is needed and without scattering it elsewhere. The NPPF advises that by encouraging good design in planning policies this should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation.
- 7.34 Not all lighting schemes require planning permission, however where they are part of a proposal it is reasonable to seek to control them – on residential or commercial buildings.

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<sup>20</sup> [England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies \(cpre.org.uk\)](https://www.cpre.org.uk)

**POLICY**

**WCB12: Amenity and dark skies**

**Amenity**

Proposals for new development should not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent users, exacerbate existing or cause new pollution problems. This includes pollution (air, noise, dust, vibration, and light) from the use itself and that from traffic generated.

**Dark Skies**

The existing intrinsically dark skies of the parish will be maintained. Development proposals will be expected to address light spillage and glare and ensure good lighting management and design (including down lighting and environmentally efficient lighting) particularly where adjacent to the countryside, heritage assets and priority habitats and species identified in **Policy WCB10** above.

While ensuring that new development proposals are secure in terms of occupier, other user and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over lighting. All outdoor lighting schemes (including street-lighting), should be designed to minimise the overall impact on the environment, including through making use of energy efficient technologies and using technologies that minimise adverse impacts on wildlife.

Where appropriate to the development proposal, planning applications should include a detailed lighting scheme/strategy that demonstrates how the proposal addresses both energy and environmental concerns without comprising safety.

Therefore, lighting will only be supported where:

- a) Any future external lighting systems would have minimal impact on the landscape.
- b) Any external lighting would minimise light pollution and the adverse effects on wildlife. Lighting should not exceed 700 lumens and be shielded with lighting beams directed downward. No 'permanently on' external lighting should feature in new developments, and security lighting should be motion activated.
- c) Schemes would reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.

### Environmental Projects

- 1) Monitoring Indicators for development sites:
  - no loss of species rich hedgerows
  - no loss of ancient or veteran trees
  - no loss of ponds, existing ponds restored
  - no deterioration of biodiversity in the Parish
- 2) Hedgerow mapping and planting
- 3) Ancient/Veteran Tree Mapping
- 4) Roadside Verges scheme – possibly through SCC Community Self Help
- 5) Enhancement of allotment field (e.g., installation of standpipe)
- 6) Woodland creation/community orchard
- 7) Environmental enhancements to the playing field
- 8) Encourage cycling through the provision of cycle parking at the Village Hall



## Chapter 8 : Community and access

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**Objective 4: To safeguard the parish’s existing facilities, to encourage the provision of appropriate new facilities and encourage the greater use of the school, church, and village hall buildings by the whole community.**

### Community

- 8.1 The overarching social objective for the planning system as set out in the NPPF is to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and supports the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- 8.2 To achieve this, new development needs to be planned hand in hand with community services and facilities and a range of cultural facilities to support that new development. This includes transport, education, green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, public rights of way, cycleways, allotments health and social care facilities. These are often collectively referred to as ‘community infrastructure’.
- 8.3 Housing and other development will be expected to pay towards improving local services and infrastructure through either, the payment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), planning obligations (via a Section 106 agreement/Section 278 agreement) or through the use of planning conditions.
- 8.4 Parish Councils receive 15% of CIL monies collected from development within their parish. This figure rises to 25% once a ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan is in place. Where development is expected to take place within a parish, the Parish Council will often have a key list of projects that the community has identified as priorities for spending the CIL income.



## Existing Community Facilities

- 8.5 The parish contains a church, village hall and a primary school and pre-school/nursery. There is also a playing field and children's play area and a cemetery separate to the graveyard at the church. There is no shop; and the Brockford garage petrol filling station which contains a small shop lies outside of the parish boundary and therefore the Neighbourhood Area. In addition, there is a bar at The Middy which is open to local residents.
- 8.6 Those residents that responded to the Household Questionnaire clearly made some regular use of the church, school, and village hall although how this relates to their use by the wider community is less well documented.
- 8.7 The policy ideas exhibition revealed support from attendees (34 responses) for a policy that would safeguard the existing community facilities in the parish particularly in terms of resisting their loss or change of use. In addition, support was also expressed for the enhancement of the existing facilities to make them more attractive and useable for wider community uses which in turn would underpin their sustainability. Environmental enhancements were also suggested including the creation of a wildflower meadow adjacent to the school.

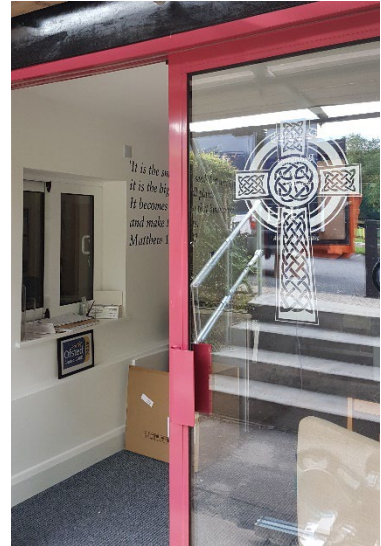
## Enhancing existing community facilities through the use of CIL monies

- 8.8 With one eye on the potential for future use of CIL monies that might be available in the future as a consequence of new development, the policy ideas exhibitions asked for feedback on a range of potential enhancement projects related to the existing community facilities as detailed below:

1) **All Saints Church:** The Church has played an important role (particularly during the covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns), in supporting local people including older people and vulnerable people. Prior to the pandemic the Church building was regularly used for hosting coffee mornings and fundraising events. Currently there are regular monthly services held at the church, along with monthly community events aimed at, but not specifically for, families. The church building itself however does limit the number and duration of such events due to a lack of facilities in terms of kitchen and toilets. There is support within the community (21 responses) and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to re-order the layout of the building, utilising space that is currently underused to provide toilets, a seating area, and a kitchenette. This is identified as a Project within the Neighbourhood Plan and could benefit from CIL funding as it provides a wider community benefit. Improved facilities would enable more events to take place, a greater and wider use of the building and encourage those to use it who may currently be unable to due to the lack of facilities.

2) **Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School and Pre-School/Nursery:** The primary school makes use of the village hall during the day for lunches and indoor activities such as

PE that require a larger space. The children have access to the playing field for PE and outdoor activities in the summer month and the adjacent woodland is used for Forest School. There is a keenness to use opportunities to provide environmental enhancements to the school grounds and areas where the children have access, to enhance the environmental knowledge and wellbeing through specific nature conservation and wildlife projects such as tree planting and the creation of a wildlife meadow. In addition there is also support for the wider use of the meadow and adjacent green areas for wider community use outside of school hours e.g. hosting outdoor community events such as picnics, community celebrations, fetes, and charity events.



3) **Wetheringsett Village Hall:** As stated earlier the village hall is used by the school during the day and community usage tends to occur in the evenings, weekends and during school holidays. These include a range of organisations including a drama group, yoga, and the parish council. Due to its age and timber construction it has required a high degree of maintenance over the years, the most recent being a new roof, south wall, and floor in Autumn/Winter 2021.





A specific section of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire related to the future use of the village hall and asked questions around the usage of the hall and any potential improvements that people wished to see. The most popular included improved kitchen and toilet facilities, parking, and access improvements, outside seating and terrace and internal improvements to heating and lighting.

**4) The Middy (Mid Suffolk Light Railway):** Many of the facilities provided by the Middy for tourists and visitors are also important facilities for and used by the local community e.g. the summer bar. Measures that would enhance facilities for local people as well as visitors (e.g. a shop) would be supported including those to raise its profile as a visitor destination.

- 8.9 The NPPF advises that planning policies should promote social integration including opportunities for people to meet or otherwise come into contact with each other and to provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services that the community needs. Plans should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly those which would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Facilities and services should be able to develop and modernise and be retained for the benefit of the wider community.

<b>POLICY</b>	<p><b>WCB13: Community Facilities</b></p> <p>Proposals including changes of use that would involve the potential loss of an existing community facility will not be supported except where an improved or equivalent facility can be located elsewhere in the parish in an equally convenient, safe, and accessible location or where there is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use where this can be sufficiently demonstrated.</p> <p>Support is given for maintaining, developing, and enhancing the services offered by the Church, School, Village Hall, (including the play area and the playing field) and the Middy including new facilities, alterations and extensions that would enable wider community usage and integration and provide a benefit to the environment such as electric charging points.</p> <p>Proposals that would make facilities accessible to residents with limited mobility or that would help to support vulnerable or isolated residents will be supported.</p>
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## Access

### Walking and Cycling

8.10 Wetheringsett is relatively well served by rights of way which include the footpath network, circular routes, and bridleways. National Cycle Route 40 (Eye to Framlingham stretch) goes through the eastern part of the parish and provides a north-south route linking Pitman’s Corner, (skirting Blacksmiths Green), Pages Green, White Horse Corner and Broad Green before continuing southeast on to Debenham. In addition, the parish accommodates the ‘Hakluyt’ cycle loop which is a six-mile cycle route along public roads which connects the various hamlets within the parish.

8.11 The Hakluyt route was developed as community initiative to help promote cycling with its associated health, wellbeing, and environmental benefits as well as to increase road users’ awareness of cyclists. The route is largely circular and ‘begins’ at the junction of Church Street and Cedars Hill and is signed in a clockwise direction by green signs. The loop can also be cycled in an anticlockwise direction. The former telephone kiosk in Church Street was adopted by the parish council and refurbished as part of the project to form an information point promoting the cycle loop.



8.12 The NPPF encourages development proposals to provide for high quality walking and cycling networks.

New cycling and pedestrian routes should be safe, secure, and attractive and respond to the character of the area. The NPPF also advises that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance existing Public Rights of Way including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example adding links to existing networks.

- 8.13 The results of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire revealed that walking and cycling and access to the countryside was one of the key benefits and attractions of living in the parish. The policies ideas exhibition sought feedback in respect of a policy that would promote safe and healthy access to the countryside although concerns were expressed about safety where footpaths and rural roads met and the safety of children going to school.

**POLICY**

**WCB14: Safe and healthy access**

New development proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents by providing opportunities for safe walking and cycling, including to school, through the provision of safe and attractive routes and crossings suitable for all users.

New routes could contribute to a cohesive countryside network by providing enhancements such as new links to existing routes, safe routes to facilities (e.g. the school), improvements to surfaces and signage and connections to green corridors.

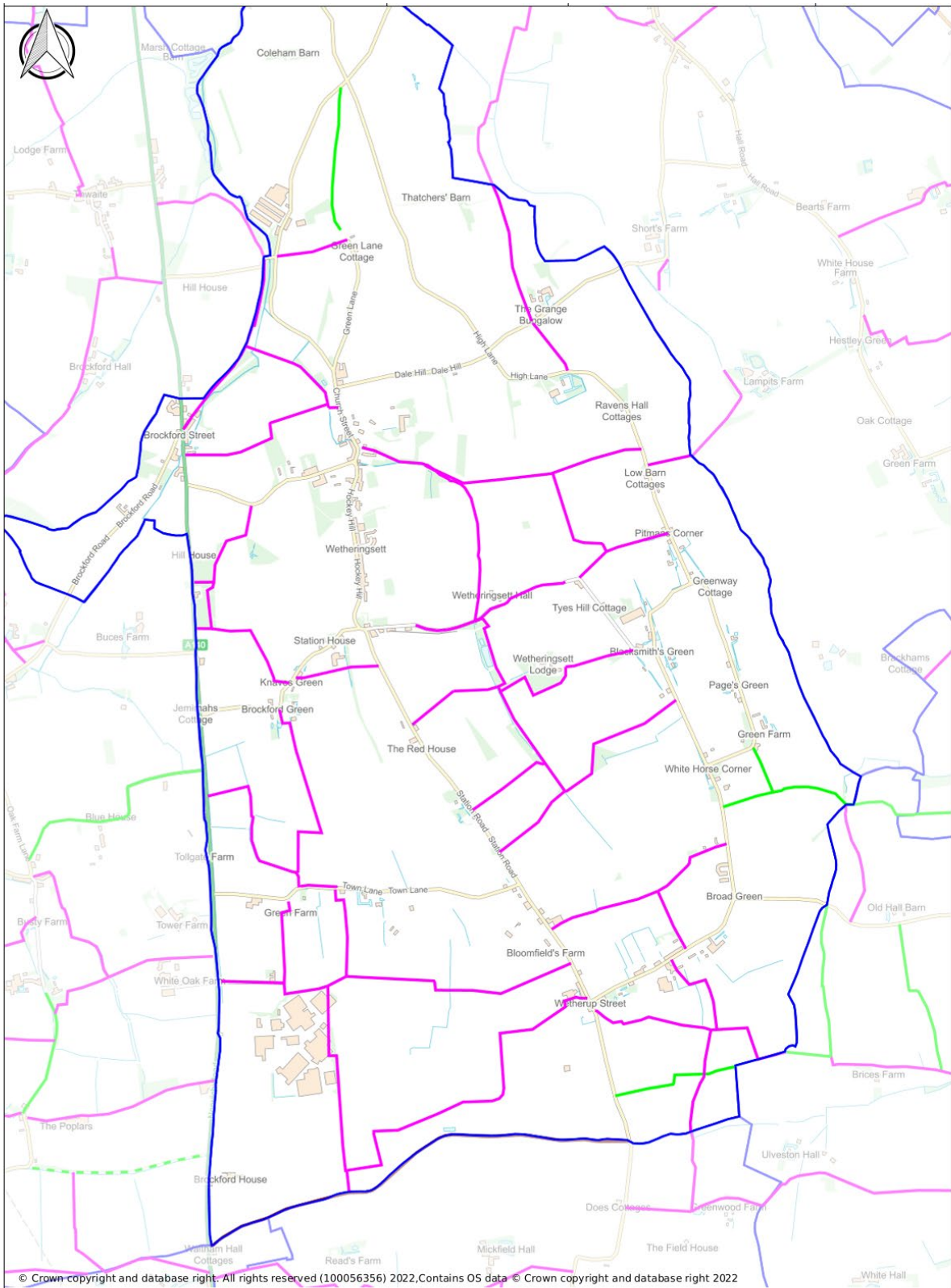
Development which is likely to affect an existing Public Right of Way should take account of its route and incorporate it into the scheme, preferably in a wide and open green corridor. Where Public Rights of Way are impacted, appropriate diversions or new routes should be provided that are more or at least, equally safe, accessible, and convenient for users.

Development proposals should give consideration to both the levels of traffic generated and the wider impacts of this traffic. Measures should be included that address and mitigate potential impacts upon highway and pedestrian safety.

Developments that would result in impacts that cannot be mitigated, and which would result in unacceptable increases in traffic generation, or which would be detrimental to highway safety will not be permitted.

Figure 26 : Public rights of Way Network

Key: --- Parish Boundary; --- Public Footpath; --- Bridleway; --- byway open to traffic



**Community Projects**

8.14 The Neighbourhood Plan is principally concerned with land use planning matters. However, where there are issues of legitimate interest to the community, which fall outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, these are featured in the plan in order for the community and the Parish Council to examine outside of the prescribed process of the Neighbourhood Plan. These are identified below:

<b>Project</b>	<p><b>Improvements to facilities at All Saints Church</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of kitchenette and toilet facilities at All Saints Church to enable wider community use including events, coffee mornings etc.</li> </ul> <p>Project to be led by the Parochial Church Council with support from local volunteers and the Diocese with funding contributions from the local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).</p>
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<b>Project</b>	<p><b>Supporting the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Community Action Suffolk <a href="https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/">https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/</a> to develop funding and a variety of resources including community and social enterprises, and establish a network of volunteers to provide assistance to specific groups within the community (e.g. the elderly, the vulnerable, the isolated) in times of emergency.</li> <li>• Encourage the establishment of an internet café at the village hall</li> <li>• Support for the establishment of a Toddler Group in the parish.</li> </ul>
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## Chapter 9: Implementation and Monitoring

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### Implementation

- 9.1 The Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to assist with the planning of sustainable growth across the parish for a period up to 2037. The implementation of the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan will require the co-ordinated input and co-operation of a number of statutory and non-statutory agencies, private sector organisations, landowners, and the local community.
- 9.2 Alongside other strategic documents and policies, the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan is intended to provide a starting point for working together to implement positive sustainable growth in the parish.
- 9.3 The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan shape the way in which development will happen within the parish of Wetheringsett cum Brockford. Some of the policies included within the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan have a delivery element, often a requirement of development or ‘planning obligation’. Planning obligations (often referred to as section 106 agreements) are legal agreements negotiated between the District Council and a developer or landowner (usually in the context of a planning application). Planning obligations are typically used to ensure that new developments:
- Comply with planning policy - for instance, by requiring affordable housing or public open space to be provided; and
  - Do not impose undue burdens on existing facilities - for instance, by requiring financial contributions to improve local services such as schools, libraries, or transport.
- 9.4 In order to see delivery realised, it will require Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council and partner organisations to be proactive in getting the best results for the parish. Working in partnership with the District Council and Suffolk County Council will be particularly important regarding strategic matters such as addressing traffic and highway safety issues.
- 9.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area. Mid Suffolk District Council has introduced CIL which currently operates at 15%, although Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from development that takes place in Wetheringsett cum Brockford once the Neighbourhood Plan is made (adopted).
- 9.6 In addition to its role as part of the statutory Development Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan will be the key document used by Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council in formulating their responses to Mid Suffolk District Council in respect of consultations on planning applications.



## Monitoring

- 9.7 It is understood that the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan will require review during its life and that it will be the role of the Parish Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. Some of the first Neighbourhood Plans that were “made” (adopted) across the country are now in the process of review and alteration.
- 9.8 A formal review process in consultation with the local community and the District Council should be undertaken at a minimum of every five years, to ensure that the Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the District and Parish Councils will monitor development in Wetheringsett cum Brockford along with the local and national policy and legislative context.
- 9.9 The Parish Council will report annually on the implementation of policies, and the progress made on taking forward any Community Projects.

## **Appendix A – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Members**

Ann Arnold, Parish Councillor and resident (joined Steering Group in 2022)  
Hilary Green, Parish Councillor and resident  
Mike Laycock, resident  
Nigel Lingard, Parish Councillor and resident  
Emma Morris, resident  
Cathy Smith, resident  
Win Stenning, resident  
Robert Townshend, Chairman of the Steering Group, and resident

*Supported by Andrea Long, Compasspoint Planning*

Thanks also to :  
Former steering group members (prior to 2021) who include  
Mark Allen  
Janine Hart  
Fiona McGillavray  
Grace Murray  
Camille Nickson  
Melanie Stevens  
Peter Stevens  
Sam Surl

### Parish Council

Charles Harvey – website  
Liz Cain – Chair  
Lynne Cockerton - Clerk

## Appendix B – Wetheringsett cum Brockford Character Appraisal

Below is a map and a description of distinct character areas within Wetheringsett cum Brockford, undertaken and written up by the Wetheringsett cum Brockford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

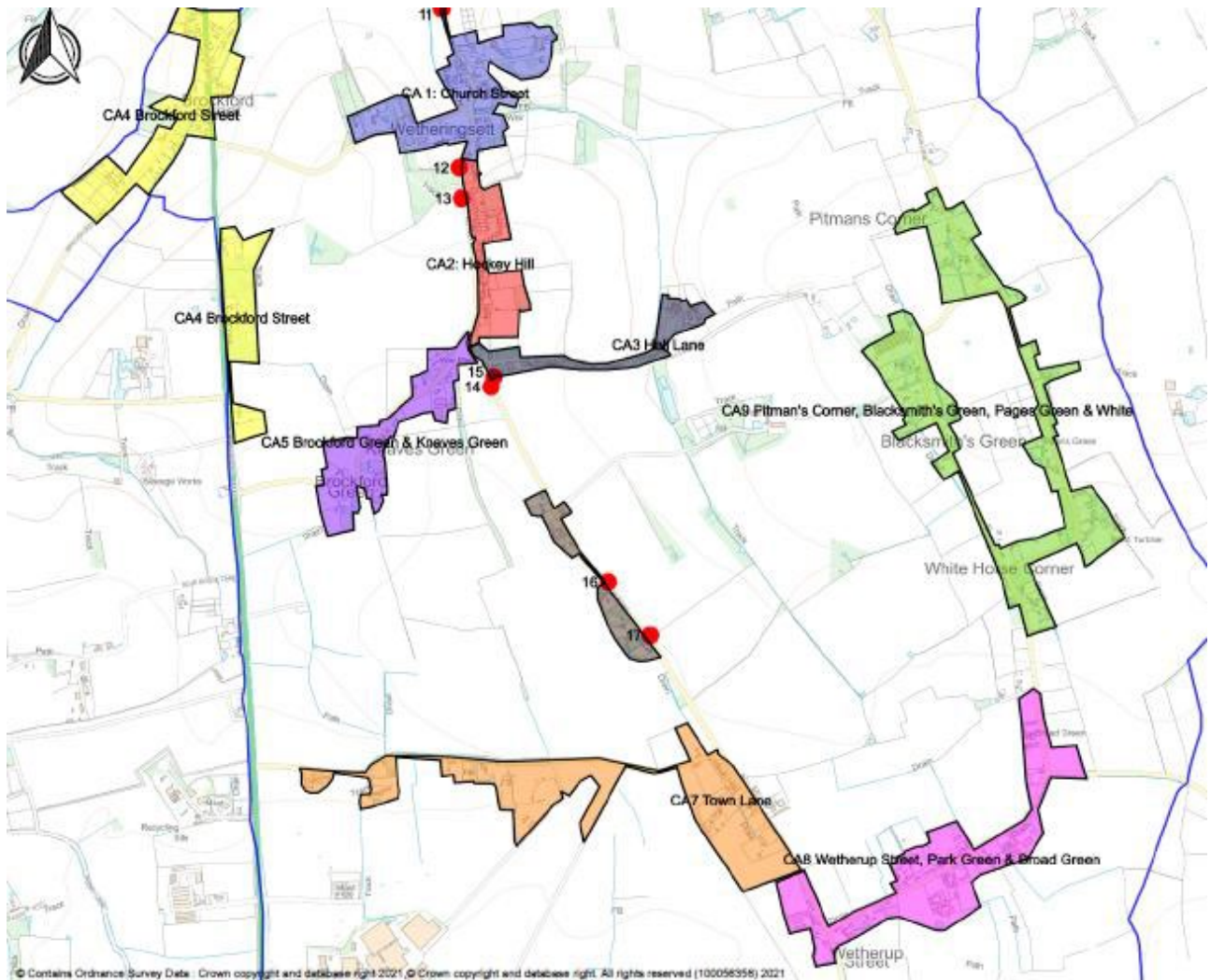
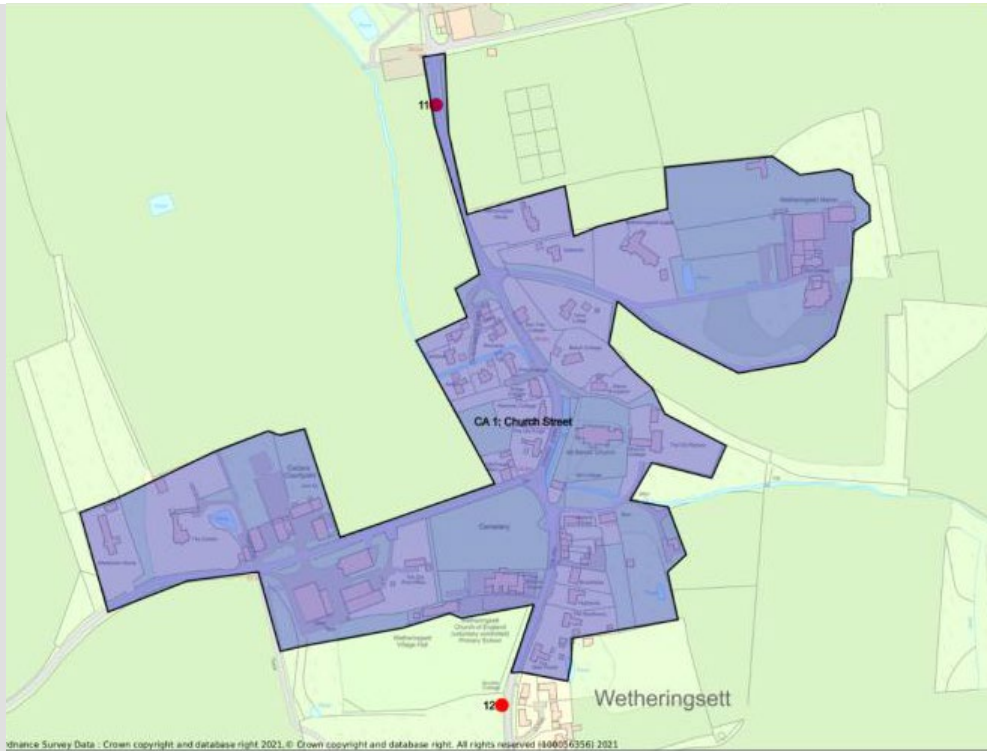


Figure 1 above: Character areas. Colours refer to table below (source: Parish Online mapping with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

**Area 1 (Blue area): Church Street**

**This character area includes the historic core of the village which is almost entirely within the Conservation Area. The area contains most of the parish facilities - Church, School, Playing Field, Cemetery, Village Hall, the K2 telephone box, and is home to the village sign. Primarily a residential area, with a mix of dwelling style and age, with a spattering of community buildings and spaces, agricultural activity, and with some office and studio space from converted farm buildings.**





### **Layout**

- The bulk of the buildings are in the 'historic' centre of the village, clustered around the church. Sequential development and building has taken place to the south end of Church Street, leading up the slope to Hockey Hill.
- Most development is single plot in width and linear in form following the main street.
- There is a modern cul-de-sac of detached dwellings northwest of the Church known as All Saints Close
- The area is characterised by a working farm, converted farm buildings, small cottages and the principal house for the farm 'The Cedars' is situated at the top of the rising ground to the west.

### **Topography**

- Church Street sits in a fold in the land, a small shallow valley, with gradients sloping down from the surrounding plateau to the east, south, and west. A stream, the River Dove, runs along the valley floor towards the north.

### **Spaces**

- The key spaces in this character area are the playing field, the cemetery, and the churchyard. All three meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces (See Policy WCB11); they are in close proximity to a number of residential properties and have clear community and historic value.
- An additional space that adds to the character of the area is known as Church Street Meadow which is a relatively narrow strip of land which runs parallel to Church Street and lies just north of the modern development at All Saints Close. This area lies within the Conservation Area and affords footpath access over the River Dove.
- Immediately beyond the village curtilage to the north are two small grass fields, one used for grazing, the other as a game farm.

### **Access**

- Access in this area is via a two-way rural road in varying condition, with sections of pavement alongside it outside the Church and opposite the village school.
- The majority of the roadside has no footway, and some areas of highway are poorly maintained adopted tarmac road.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- The Church dominates this area and is a distinguished Grade 1 listed medieval building.
- The remainder of the area is a mixture of detached and semi-detached cottages, in the cluster around the Church. Most of these are listed and comprise single storey or storey and a half and with a mixture of thatched and tiled roofs. These form the historic centre of the village.
- The majority are of wattle and daub/render construction.

- The Old Rectory is a larger two storey, Grade II Listed 19<sup>th</sup> C building, immediately to the east of the Church.
- Wetheringsett Manor is a mid 19<sup>th</sup>C former rectory, (Grade II) set in the remnants of its parkland.
- A number of more recent single and two storey buildings are located immediately on the north edge of the village conservation area.
- 20<sup>th</sup>C infill development of mixed styles, but notably using red brick has taken place towards the south end of Church Street, where it borders Hockey Hill.
- The school building is Victorian.
- There is also a terrace of late 18<sup>th</sup>C/mid19<sup>th</sup>C brick cottages, which are the former Almshouses (Grade II).

#### **Landmarks**

- The most notable of these are:
  - All Saints Church,
  - Mill Cottage – a white rendered cottage with a thatched cottage which sits perpendicular to the roadway at the junction of Church Street and Cedars Hill and just southwest of the Church.
  - Waveney Cottage – another white rendered cottage with thatched roof that occupies a prominent position in the bend in the road almost opposite the Church.
  - The former post office, a pink rendered cottage situated off Cedars Hill and set amongst a number of mature trees.
  - The village sign at the entrance to the churchyard.
  - The telephone box, with a stained-glass memorial window.
  - The Alms Houses, a row of red brick cottages that hug the roadside northeast of the school.

#### **Green and natural features**

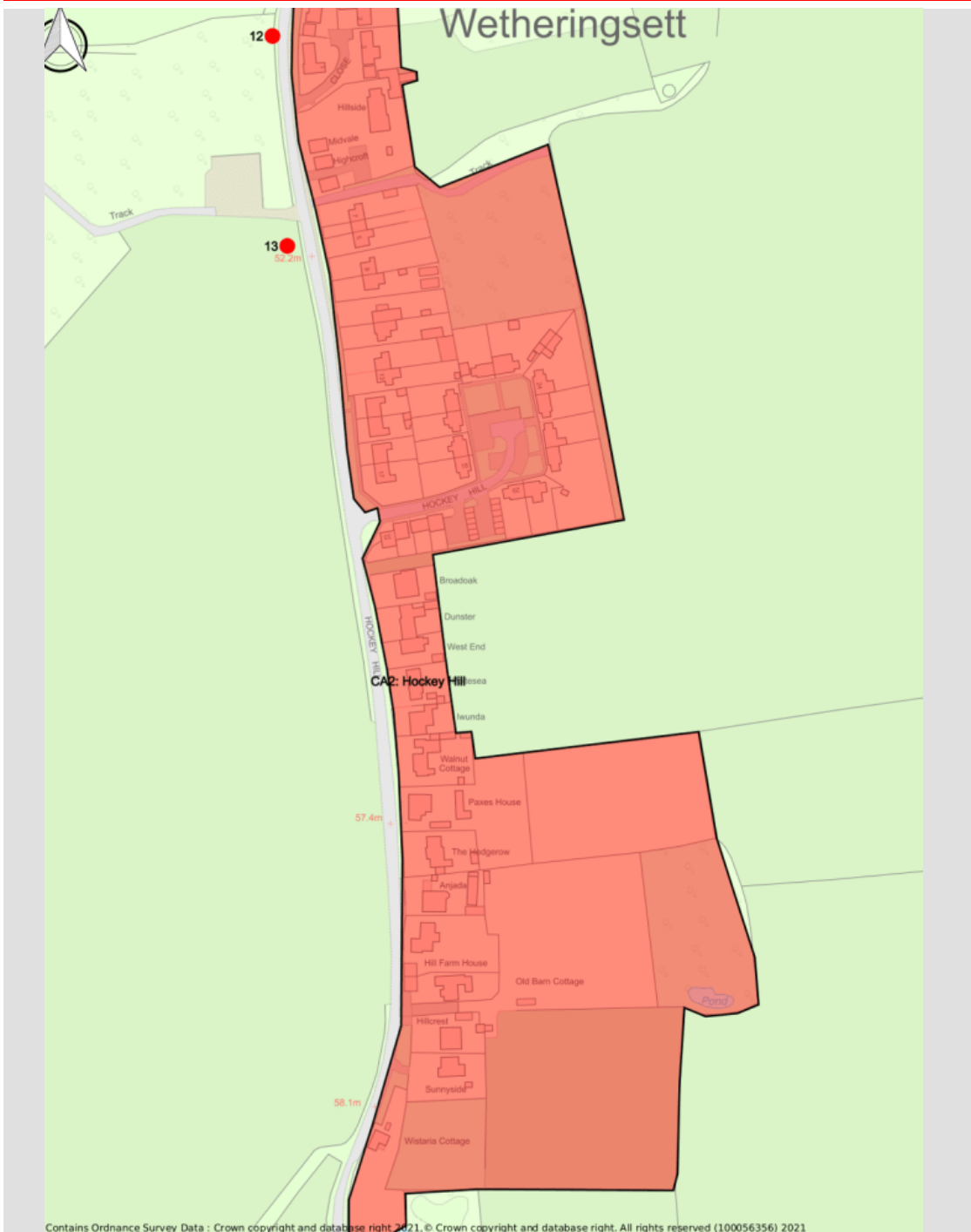
- The area is characterised by a substantial number of large trees interspersed throughout the area and around the Churchyard and the Cemetery.
- There are large specimens of purple beech, lime, and oak, with later plantings of poplar, Cupressus and some pine.
- The roads leading to the village are partly hedged, well treed and there is a definite rural feel to the area.

#### **Views**

- The principal views in this area are towards the Church which sits at the heart of the village.
- An attractive subsidiary view can be enjoyed from the bridge adjacent to Mill Cottage, overlooking the River Dove. (See Policy WCB9

### Area 2 (RED): Hockey Hill

This area is just south of Church Street and the historic core of the village. The area is almost exclusively residential and is located on a plateau at the top of the hill as you travel south from the village core. Development is confined entirely to the east of Hockey Hill and consists of a mix of single and two storey houses, set back from the road, in single width plots, with a small cul-de-sac of former local authority housing from the post-war period.







### Layout

- Hockley Hill is primarily a residential road, with some 50 homes. The Hill itself slopes down towards the historic core at the bottom of the river valley where it joins Church Street.
- The area is characterised by linear development extending south on the eastern side of Hockley Hill in the form of detached, semi-detached houses and bungalows as you reach the entrance to the cul-de-sac at the top of the hill and further south towards Hall Lane.
- The undeveloped western side affords long views across the agricultural land. (See Policy WCB9)

- The area sits outside of the Conservation Area.
- The main building form is one plot width and linear, but there are two exceptions:
  - Hakluyt Close, which is a recent small development; and
  - A cul de sac comprising former local authority housing consisting of a mix of bungalows and semi-detached dwellings with separate garaging.

### **Spaces**

- Behind the cul-de-sac and the bungalows south and further up the Hill is 'Hockey Meadow' upon which football and cricket teams once played, and which is now used by dog walkers etc.
- The site now has planning permission for 14 dwellings won on appeal in 2023.
- This area is characterised by being set back from the highway and most properties have both front and rear gardens; many are laid to lawn, and they are well kept.
- Another planning application for 11 dwellings behind "Hillside" and Hakluyt Close on Hockey Hill was refused in 2021 and was dismissed on appeal.

### **Access/Streetscape**

- Hockey Hill is the main vehicular route through Wetheringsett, used primarily by cars and vans but also by agricultural vehicles and heavy lorries, particularly during the sugar beet harvest. It is generally sufficiently wide for light vehicles to pass but larger vehicles regularly erode the verges.
- There is a continuous footpath from the cul-de-sac down to the bottom of the hill ending at the old almshouses on the eastern "residential" side of the road.
- There is no path on the school/cemetery /village hall side, nor beyond the cul de sac towards Hall Lane.
- The road is asphalt. There are no lampposts or benches. The only signage is the warning notices and 20 mph limit outside the school and the fingerposts at top and bottom. There are poles carrying power cables on both sides of the road.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- There is a diverse mix of buildings on Hockey Hill, which begins in the core of the village and is characterised by the Victorian school, a number of Grade II listed houses, interspersed between properties representing most decades from WW2, earning the disparaging and misleading description "suburban sprawl" in the Conservation Area Review.
- The recent small development of detached houses in Hakluyt Close reflects some of the design characteristics of their listed neighbours, Step House e.g., brick and render exterior and dormer windows.
- Three recent distinctive detached homes, tall and narrow in red brick, follow this historic pattern.
- The former local authority housing is a mixture of bungalows and semi-detached and terraced homes in red brick, some of which have been substantially extended.

- Further along are a number of mostly detached bungalows dating from the 1960/70s. The remaining homes are 2-storey detached and in various styles, some mainly brick others brick and render.
- Paxes House at the top end of the Hill is thatched.
- All dwellings are in their own way distinct, but coherence is maintained by the verges and hedges which fringe gardens setting most of the modern housing back from the road, elevated from it on the rise of the hill.

#### **Landmarks**

- At the bottom of Hockey Hill, The School and Village Hall stand out on one side of the road.
- At the top end of the road at the junction Knaves Green is the listed War Memorial
- At the end of Hockey Hill, in Church Street, sits the old Almshouses.
- The houses at the bottom of the Hill are elevated above the road, with a mix of walls, hedges, trees, and verges on their garden boundaries. This mix continues to the top of the hill.
- On the western side after the village hall/playing field are arable fields bounded by mixed hedging and the characteristic oak trees lining the road, which increase in density and size at the top of the hill.

#### **Green and Natural Features**

- Most houses have verges to the front with mainly small hedges behind.
- The shortage of garaging and parking space means that cars are routinely parked on the roadside outside the semis down from the cu de sac.
- There are attractive views across the fields to the tree line adjacent to the A140.

#### **Views**

- The view down the Hill towards the Church and river, fringed by hedges and trees, captures its diversity and yet essentially cohesive character.
- Facing west, homes have the benefit of dramatic sunsets.

**Area 3 (dark blue): Hall Lane**

Hall Lane runs west-east from its junction with Hockey Hill and close to the junction of Hockey Hill and Knaves Green. This area is characterised by the business units in Old Station Yard including motor vehicle repairs and the site of the Mid Suffolk Light Railway (The Middy) at Brockford Station. The Railway track follows Hall Lane down to the river.



### **Layout/Topography**

- After the main concourse, the railway's various station buildings and workshops are screened from the Lane by trees and shrubs and include a pond.
- On the other side is an area of woodland, with ditches on both sides of the road, followed by a large open field with a verge and a mature tree.
- At the end of the Lane is Wetheringsett Hall, with its outbuildings which include a number of barn conversions.
- The Railway has buildings running alongside the track to midway down the lane.
- There is a single bungalow at the top of the Lane on the other side, and no further development until the Hall and barn conversions at the bottom.

### **Access/Streetscape**

- Hall Lane runs in a gentle gradient from the top of Hockey Hill to the river
- This is a narrow lane only suitable for single light traffic, shared with walkers. It is of ageing concrete for most of its length.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- The large utility buildings on business site are of agricultural vintage.
- Many of the railway buildings are of heritage stock, and in varied sizes and materials, mostly wood.
- The single bungalow is detached.
- The Hall is a substantial dwelling with an early 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage in red brick, with outbuildings, approached down a long drive.
- The barn conversions are in black weatherboarding with brick plinths.

### **Landmarks**

- The Railway and its associated complex of buildings is itself distinct and recognisable, by its many visitors.
- The industrial/agricultural buildings are large and very visible. They are chiefly constructed of corrugated tin sheeting with concrete roofs.
- Wetheringsett Hall is distinctive, but not easy to see clearly especially when the trees are in leaf. It is largely red brick with grey slate roof tiles and a long, gated entrance drive.
- The neighbouring barns have been converted into substantial separate residences.

### **Green and Natural Features**

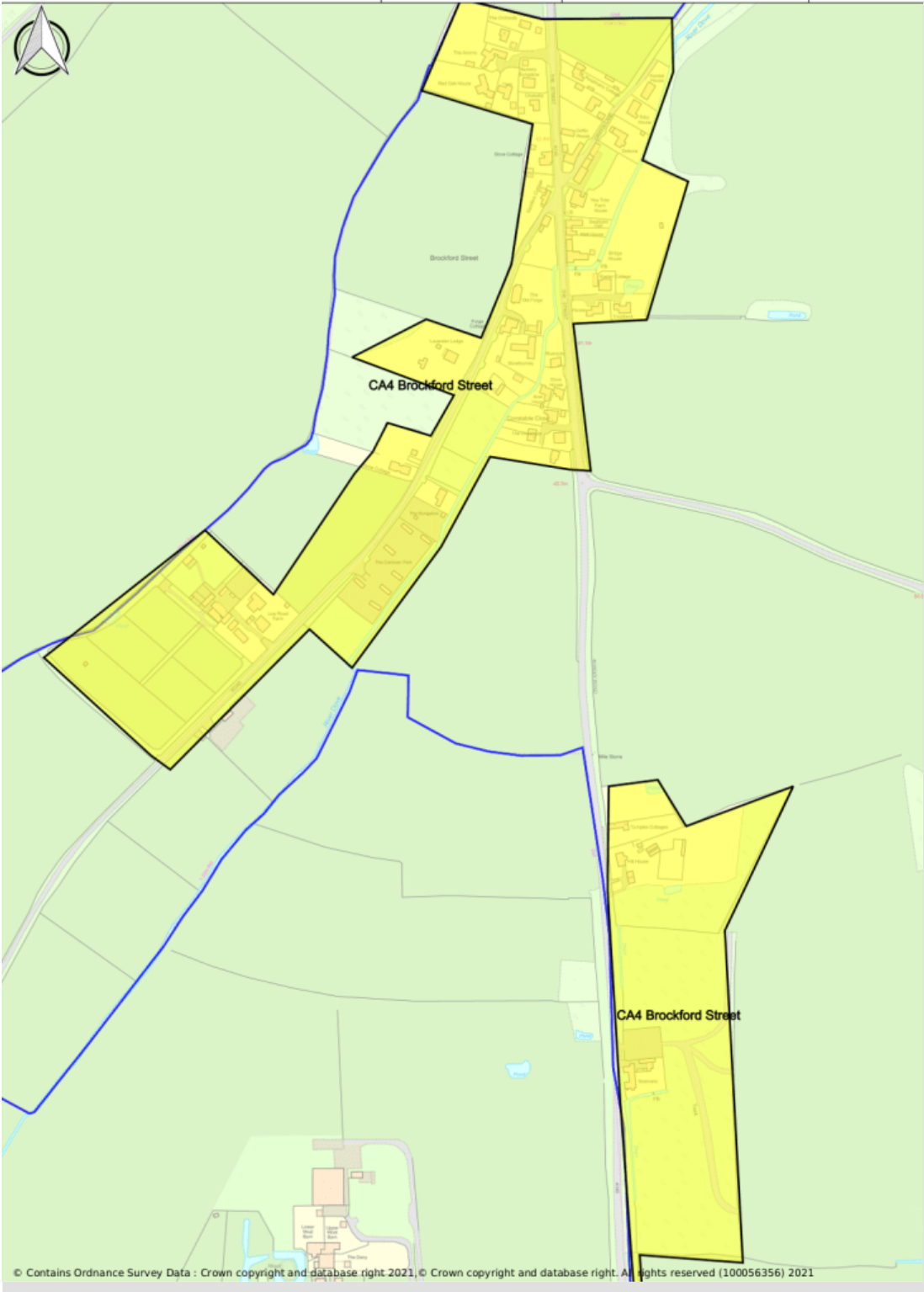
- There are hedges and trees screening the railway track and hedges and woodland at the top of the Lane on the other side.
- The river/stream winds its way past the Hall towards the Church with a footpath alongside and is bounded on the Hall side by mature trees – mainly willows.
- There is some signage relating to the Railway, some of it moveable. The remainder of the Lane is unsigned/uncluttered.

**Views**

- The view from the top of the Lane towards the Hall is particularly attractive, with the river valley running towards the Church and the willow plantation to the right.

**Area 4 (yellow): Brockford Street**

**This character area is dominated by the busy A140 (Norwich to Ipswich Road) which runs north-south through this part of the parish. There are a cluster of listed buildings (largely Grade II) which are located close to the junction of Brockford Road and the A140.**









### Layout/Topography

- The area is largely defined by the cluster of properties located at the of the A140 north-south route with Brockford Road, which connects the Parish with the village of Mendlesham to the southwest.
- The land uses are predominantly residential with some commercial/business and a predominantly arable farming landscape.
- The properties in the centre of Brockford Street are clustered around the junction with Brockford Road.
- The centre of Brockford Street is in a slight dip, rising up to the north. The land to the east and west is largely flat.
- There are several small cul-de-sacs or closes along Brockford Street itself.
- Housing along Brockford Road is, on the whole, widely spaced along the road with housing becoming sparser towards Mendlesham.
- There is a caravan park for static caravans east of Brockford Road on land southeast of Low Road Farm (DC/20/05405)
- There are also other mobile homes/static caravans located further south along Brockford Road closer to Mendlesham, the largest concentration lies between the road and the River Dove. The emerging Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Plan (Submitted for Examination in March 2021) allocates two sites for Gypsy and Travellers.
- Brockford Road itself runs through a flat landscape.

### **Spaces**

- There are no notable green or community spaces within this character area.

### **Access/Streetscape**

- The A140 is a busy road with heavy HGV and other vehicular traffic. The traffic is a dominating factor here in terms of noise, movement, and dust.
- On the eastern side of the A140 there is a narrow, tarmacked pedestrian path runs which runs between Cedars Hill and the fuel station, just north of the Parish.
- South of Cedars Hill there is no footpath, only a rough grass verge. This isolates the footpaths from the rest of Brockford.
- There is no entry to traffic into Brockford Road from the A140. This is important for safety due to the width of the road at this point, which is largely single track with mature trees and hedges on either side. But the restriction forces cyclists from Wetheringsett to ride along the A140 for a greater distance before they can travel to the west of the A140.
- Griffin Lane becomes a footpath which connects Brockford to the centre and north of the village of Wetheringsett. It appears well maintained and used. The footpath which runs parallel just to the south of Griffin Lane offers a circular route.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- There is a distinct cluster of historic houses at the junction with Brockford Road.
- Notable materials include render (pink and white), thatch, grey tiles, and red pantiles.
- Many of the properties are cottage style and site very close to the road frontage including a characterful cluster.
- Many of the properties are cottages or detached dwellings.
- Older properties include architectural details such as pargetting and weather boarding.
- housing of varying proportions
- Many of the houses along the A140 are more modern, late 20thC and early 21<sup>st</sup> C – these include large, detached family houses with red brick and tiled roofs.
- Interspersed are cottages and bungalows of more modest size.
- Both sites shown as allocations in the Local Plan are in this character area. The site furthest north site already has planning permission for 9 houses on a 2acre plot and will introduce a more contemporary style of housing to the mix.

### **Landmarks**

- The coloured properties along the A140 are very visible and have a landmark status visible for some distance.

- A large tree on the western side of the A140 just north of the junction with Brockford Road is visible in both directions.

#### **Green and Natural Features**

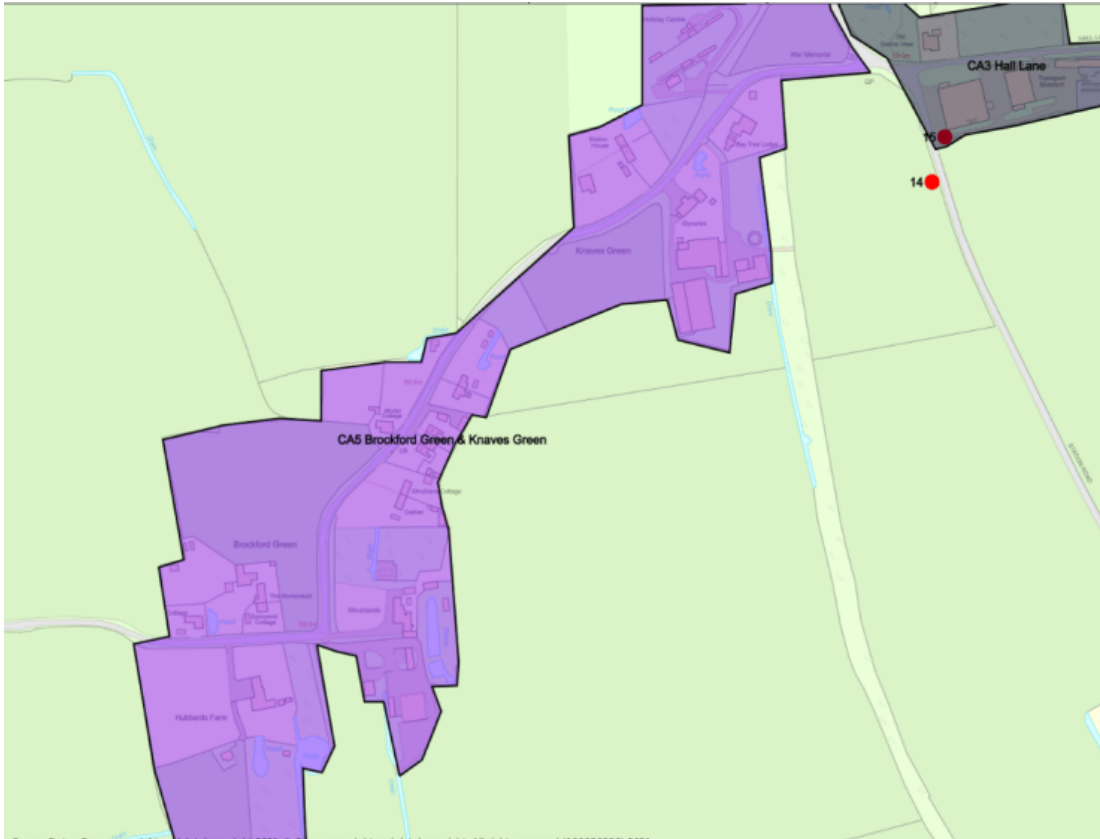
- Brockford Road is lined by hedges and mature trees.
- Boundary treatments for residential properties include low hedges and trees.
- The River Dove passes under the A140 at Brockford.
- The influence of the river is most seen from the footpath beyond Griffin Lane, here the river enters an area of woodland with what appears to be an ancient bank and hedgerow to the north of the path.
- Natural England identifies potential parkland to the east of the A140 by Seamans.
- Viewed from the public right of way, there appear to be a few remaining mature trees, the woodland is dominated by more recent natural regeneration / planting.

#### **Views**

- Due to clusters of continuous development, there are few long views or vistas in this area.
- Brockford Road has mature trees and hedges and these also channel views along the road rather than to the sides.
- At the southern end of Brockford, there are views over large arable fields in the parish of Mendlesham

**Area 5 (purple): Brockford Green and Knaves Green**

This area consists of the small largely residential hamlets of Knaves Green and Brockford Green and the triangle of land at the junction with Hockey Hill/Hall Lane which hosts the village's War Memorial.





### Layout

- The area is characterised by a small triangle of land which hosts the War Memorial which is Grade II Listed. Like most parish war memorials, it was constructed after the 1914-18 War in 1921.
- Constructed of Cornish Granite it has later additions in commemoration of the 1939-45 Second World War.
- Knaves Green lies just to the southwest of the War Memorial and broadly consists of the former Station House (Grade II Listed) and now two dwellings, some railway sidings that have been converted into self-catering tourist accommodation, a few residential properties and agricultural buildings.

- The road is largely single track and winds its way westward towards the A140 before becoming Brockford Green.
- Brockford Green is another small hamlet consisting of approximately 15 dwellings in the form of cottages.
- The most notable building is Shrublands, a large black and white timber framed house Grade II Listed and dating from 1450, set well back from the road behind mature trees and hedging and on to Hubbards Farm with sporadic residential dwellings of differing ages opposite.
- Most dwellings are well spaced with gardens and meadows between them.

### **Topography**

- The land is largely Flat Suffolk plateau with high levels of hedging and tree cover.

### **Spaces**

- Despite the names Knaves Green and Brockford Green there are no publicly accessible spaces.
- Dwellings are well spaced with green areas of largely meadow between.
- There are a number of privately owned green spaces, which are semi domestic in nature rather than farmland.
- This includes a meadow of c. 1.5 hectares at Eversons Farm plus three areas owned by the Church & Town Estate
- One of the meadows circa. 0.5 hectares is used for dog-training.
- There are also some allotments c. 0.1 hectare used by local residents.
- The area behind the War Memorial is known as Memorial Field and is approximately 0.5 hectare of meadow.

### **Access and Streetscape**

- The lane is largely used as a minor through-route between the A140 and the village centre.
- Mostly single width carriageway with verges regularly damaged by larger vehicles and agricultural machinery.
- Streetscape includes a mix of older farmhouses from the 17<sup>th</sup> C, some still thatched, others pantiled; 1950s semi and terrace council houses; 1970s detached bungalows.

### **Landmarks**

- Southerly aspects looking out of this area are dominated by views of the feature the 'Mendlesham TV Mast' which is over 305m tall.

### **Green and Natural Features**

- Farm and domestic hedgerows along much of the road.
- Several ancient oak trees.
- Green meadows between residential gardens.
- Several properties have large ponds to the rear.

- There has been recent hedge coppicing in Station Road.

#### Views

- Hedges tend to limit views from the road, although most properties enjoy extensive farmland views from their gardens.
- Any views towards the south are dominated by the TV Mast.

#### Area 6 (brown): Station Road

This area covers two groups of residential properties set out in linear form along Station Road which runs north-south and links the Station complex at the junction of Hall Lane and Knaves Green with the hamlet of Wetherup Street/Park Green and Town Lane.





### **Layout and Topography**

- Primarily arable farmland (Broad Farm), with a few residential properties in linear form located on the western side of Station Road.
- Just 10 houses on a one-mile length of road with open fields between them.
- The landscape is largely flat Suffolk plateau with few intervening features and no specific green spaces.

### **Access and Streetscape**

- Station Road is a relatively straight road running north to south linking Wetheringsett to Park Green.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- There are three 17thC farmhouses; 1 barn conversion; and three pairs 1950s farm cottages.

### **Green and Natural Features**

- There are roadside hedgerows and trees particularly along the eastern side of the road although the arable fields in this location tend to be large with far away boundaries.

### **Views**

- Good views across open farmland; however, these tend to be slightly featureless and there are no significant views.
- Southern views can just pick out the TV Mast.



**Area 7 (orange): Town Lane**

**This character area runs west-east from the A140 to Station Road and is characterised by widely separated residential properties, some of which have a historic character and high hedging. To the south lies the Mendlesham Airfield industrial estate.**





### Layout and Topography

- The junction with Station Road is well hedged which breaks out into expansive views over arable fields to the north the further west you travel.
- Mixed native hedgerows are associated with two small pieces of land owned by a local charity and used as allotment land.
- There are few widely separated residential houses, mostly screened by high hedging.
- Business premises include Anglia Fabrications and Haulage Site located on the southern side of Town Lane.
- All buildings are situated on the southern side of the road.
- The landscape is largely wide-open clay plateau. The northern aspect is, in the main, characterised by expansive arable fields.
- The exception is a couple of small fields, part enclosed by hedging, at the Park Green end of Town Lane.
-

### **Access and Streetscape**

- Town Lane provides access from the southern end of the village to the A140.
- It is not wide enough for two cars to pass along its entire length. The edges of the road have been eroded by HGV movements.
- A small section of footpath between Green Farm and Moat House runs parallel to the road.
- Generally, the highway is tarmacked road with broken and rutted edges.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- There is a decorative village signpost at the junction with Park Green.
- To the south, the container stack and smell from material piled on the concrete pad is widely visible although not attractive.
- More intimate views created by the hedging of surrounding Church, Town, and Allotments fields.
- Residential buildings typify those of the area, two storey detached ex-farmhouses.
- Whilst most are tiled, Hoods and Town Lane Farm retain their thatch.
- Outbuildings opposite Town Lane Farm have been recently converted to provide a single detached single storey house.

### **Landmarks**

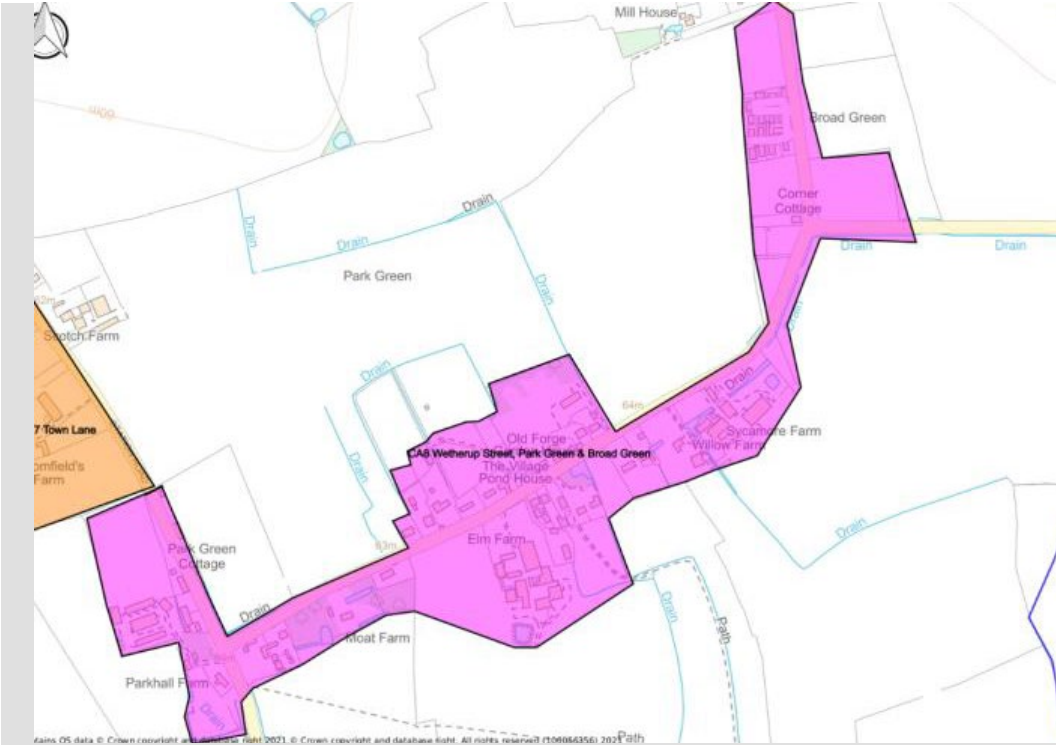
- The Mendlesham Mast, standing at 305.4m high is a significant landmark to the south of Town Lane.  
<https://www.thebigtower.com/live/Mendlesham/Index.htm>

### **Views**

- Views to the south are dominated by the TV Mast and the industrial activity on the airfield.
- Views to the north are expansive over agricultural fields with distant tree lines.

**Area 8 (pink): Wetherup Street. Park Green and Broad Green**

**Wetherup Street and Park Green are distinct and separate hamlets consisting of predominantly linear development containing several notable Grade II Listed Buildings. The area is predominantly residential.**







### **Layout and Topography**

- This area is characterised by a linear largely residential form interspersed with pockets of arable land.
- There are three farms on the southern side of Wetherup Street – Sycamore, Elm and Willow Farms.
- The style and age of properties varies with listed buildings in proximity to modern detached dwellings.
- Housing along the southern side of Wetherup Street continues along most of the length of the street.
- Housing is generally widely spaced.
- Much of the housing is well set back and faces the carriageway.
- A new development of two houses and adjoining historic house overlook an open space set back from the road.
- Housing on the northern side of the road is concentrated in the central length of the street.
- Most housing faces the street and is closer to the road than on the northern side. A static caravan is set back.
- The land along this hamlet is on a flat plateau. Land falls away along a gentle gradient towards Mickfield and Debenham.
- There is a Caravan Park known as ‘Green acres’ which provides homes in static caravans for residents aged 50+.

### **Spaces**

- There are no publicly accessible spaces.
- A small space created when land was cleared to build two houses on a former coal yard site.
- Connection to a footpath network is accessed to the side of this space.
- There are some open areas of arable fields between the hamlet of Broad Green and Wetherup Street.

### **Access and Streetscape**

- There is no surfaced footpath or continuous verge; pedestrians walk along the edge of the carriageway.

- Public rights (footpaths) of way run in and out of Wetherup Street to the south and north.

#### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- Most of the housing is detached; many are rendered with a few brick faced houses.
- Large 'traditional Suffolk' farmhouses dominate the southern side of the road.
- There are also a couple of smaller detached properties.
- On the other side of the road there are more diverse housing, cottages with dormer windows, 20<sup>th</sup> C houses.
- A number of houses are thatched, others have red tiles.
- The names of now residential properties give clues to their former uses – The Old Forge, The Pump House and The Trowel and Hammer (Grade II Listed).
- There are no notable landmarks in this area.

#### **Green and Natural Features**

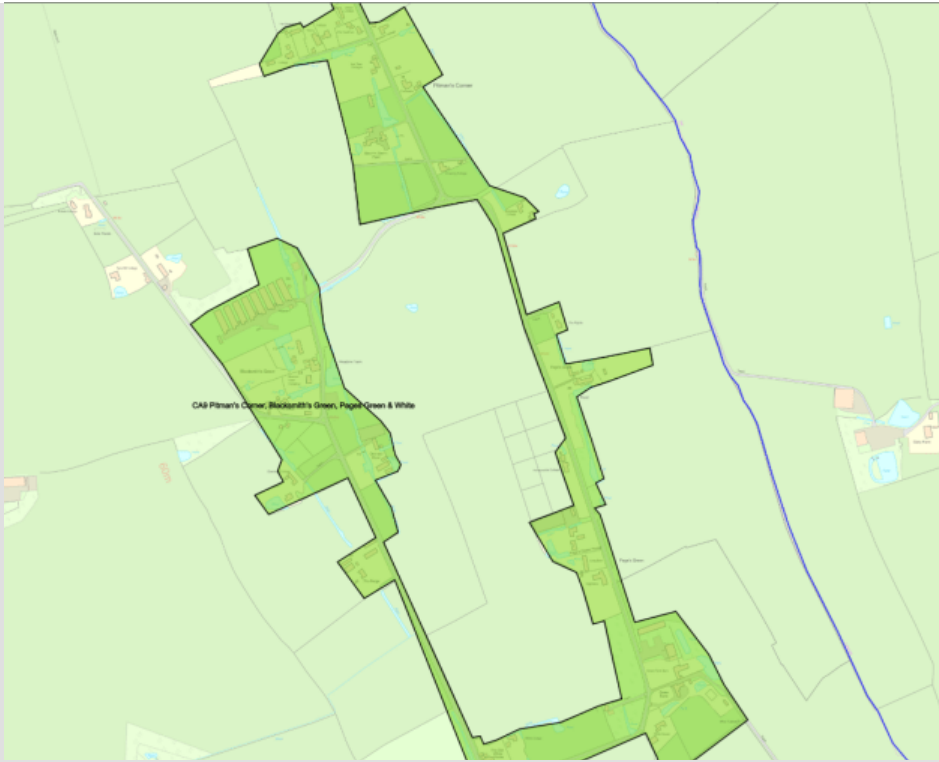
- There are a number of mature garden trees, and the property names imply an area formerly characterised by trees and plants – Primrose Cottage, Cherry Bank, The Firs.
- Many of the ancient trees on the veteran tree register are found in and to the south of this hamlet.
- There are Preserved Trees noted in the gardens at the western end of the street.
- Houses fronted by a variety of hedging, although mainly mixed natives.
- Other houses fronted by picket or paddock fencing.

#### **Views**

- Views from the eastern end of Wetherup Street, south towards Debenham across open fields. (See PolicyWCB9)
- An open landscape viewed from the footpath which runs parallel and south of Wetherup Street gives wide reaching views across to Broad Green and north across to Park Green.

**Area 9 (green): Pitman's Corner, Blacksmith's Green, Pages Green and White House Corner**

**This area is a collection of four small hamlets connected by narrow unadopted rural lanes. Buildings are largely residential with a number of historic buildings and spaces.**









## **Pitmans Corner**

### **High Lane and 'Clay Lane'**

#### **Layout and Topography •**

- There are (in the main) widely separated residential houses on High Lane (also known as Rose Lane) and a narrow unadopted lane off High Lane known as 'Clay Lane')
- Residential properties are arranged on either side of High Lane, and most are built near the road.
- On 'Clay Lane', properties are built on the northern side with ponds on the southern side. The lane is also a footpath to farmland to the west through private land bounded by tall poplars.
- This area sits with the wide-open clay plateau.
- The surrounding land is characterised by expansive arable fields with occasional small strips of land adjacent to High Lane which are privately owned, arable farmland or farmland set aside as wildflower meadows.
- High Lane extends to Pages Green and Blacksmiths Green at its southern end. It is not wide enough for two cars and passing/larger traffic has affected the verges.

#### **Spaces**

- The southern edge of 'Clay Lane' abutting the ponds has been subject to collective wild gardening by homeowners along the lane.

#### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- Residential buildings along High Lane and 'Clay Lane' are varied (detached and semi-detached) and a mixture of older and newer properties.
- Of note on High Lane is the converted level crossing gate lodge of the old Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

#### **Landmarks**

- A small red post box is located on the corner of High Lane and 'Clay Lane'

#### **Green and Natural Features**

- At the northern end of High Lane there is a pond on the east side of the road adjacent to residential buildings.
- 'Clay Lane' has ponds to its southern side.
- Hedgerows and trees characterise High Lane edges.
- High Lane is tarmacked. 'Clay Lane' is hardcore and maintained by its residents.

#### **Views**

- Views to the east and west of High Lane are of arable farmland in the main

## **Blacksmith's Green, 'Joe's Road' and White Horse Corner**

### **Layout and Topography**

- At the northern end of Blacksmiths Green is a poultry farm owned by Moy Park but is currently not operational.
- Otherwise, there are a few residential properties.
- Similarly, a cul de sac off Blacksmiths Green (known as 'Joe's Road'), has a few residential properties.
- White Horse Corner, at the southern end of Blacksmiths Green, has six residential properties
- Residential properties are arranged on either side of Blacksmiths Green and Joes Road, and most are built near the road.
- The area sits within the wide-open clay plateau.
- The surrounding land is characterised by expansive arable fields.
- The smell of waste material on the hard concrete pad by the pond at the northern end of Blacksmiths Green is unpleasant.

### **Access and Streetscape**

- Blacksmiths Green extends from High Lane/Pages Green/Blacksmiths Green crossroad in the north to White Horse Corner/Pages Green and Broad Green crossroad at its southern end.
- Blacksmiths Green is not wide enough for two cars and larger traffic has affected the verges.
- 'Joe's Road' is, similarly, a single lane tarmacked road.
- There is footpath off Blacksmiths Green on its western edge
- Blacksmiths Green, White Horse Corner and 'Joe's Road' are tarmacked
- The village Hakluyt route follows Blacksmiths Green.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- The residential buildings along Blacksmiths Green and Joes Road are varied and a mixture of older and newer properties.
- The industrial buildings of the Moy Park poultry farm consist, broadly, of sheds, hoppers, and gas tanks.

### **Landmarks**

- The Mendlesham mast is visible from Blacksmiths Green.

### **Green and Natural Features**

- There is a large and recently re-dug pond at the northern end of Blacksmiths Green.
- Otherwise, the road (and 'Joes Road') is bordered by hedging, trees, or open farmland.

### **Views**

- Views to the east and west of Blacksmiths Green are of arable farmland in the main

### **Pages Green**

- Pages Green is a 'remarkably unaltered section of linear common that was formerly known as Wetheringsett Green and extended to over 100 acres.
- The relatively small area which survived the enclosure of the mid-19th century was re-named Page's Green after the tenant of the farm as recorded on the tithe survey of 1841: Thomas Page'. (Alston L, (2011), 'The Barn at Pages Green Farm, Wetheringsett, Suffolk, WCB 066', The Archaeological Service, Suffolk)

### **Layout and Topography**

- There are (in the main) widely separated residential houses at Pages Green.
- There is a hard pad at the southern end with an old barn and unused pig sheds which is currently being considered for housing development.
- Residential properties are arranged on either side of Pages Green, and most are built near the road.
- The land sits within the wide-open clay plateau.
- The surrounding land is characterised by expansive arable fields with occasional small strips of land adjacent to the Pages Green Road which are, in the main, privately owned.
- Alston's (2011) Historic Record of The Barn at Pages Green Farm describes it as adjoining 'a narrow strip of pasture defined by a metalled lane to the west and a broad ditch on the east which represents a remarkably well-preserved section of a large rectilinear common marked on Hodkinson's County map of 1783 as Wetheringsett Green'.

### **Access and Streetscape**

- Pages Green extends from the High Lane/Blacksmiths Green crossroads in the north to the Blacksmiths Green/White Horse Corner at its southern end.
- It is a single vehicle lane.
- Pages Green has a tarmacked road.
- The bridleway heading south from beside The White House leads towards Aspal then on to Debenham or to Broad Green.
- National Cycle Route 40 and the Heart of Suffolk Cycle route are signed from Broad Green through Pages Green and north to Thorndon via Pitmans Corner.

### **Notable Buildings and Materials**

- Residential buildings along Pages Green are varied and a mixture of older and newer properties.
- All are detached and are largely set well back from the road.
- Materials include red pantiles, red brick, and some coloured render.
- Some of the newer builds are single storey.
- A concrete pad on which there are redundant agricultural buildings has, subject to an official complaint, been granted planning permission for conversion to 4 residential properties.

**Landmarks**

- A red post box is located just east of the green triangle at the junction of Pages Green and Blacksmiths Green
- 'Natural England' shows that a potential ancient orchard is located opposite Green Farmhouse

**Green and Natural Features**

- Pages Green is heavily bordered by trees and hedgerows.


**Views**

- Views to the east and west of Pages Green are of arable farmland in the main.

## Appendix C: Non-designated heritage assets justification

### Non-Designated Heritage Assets


The table below outlines the justification for the inclusion of important character buildings and historic features. The criteria are based on the ‘Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7’, page 9.

<b>1. Name of Asset: The School House</b>	
<b>Age</b>	Victorian
<b>Rarity</b>	Only surviving purpose-built school building in the parish.
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	Typical of the design of Victorian school houses built by Church/Diocese. Intricate cross detailing in entrance elevation, window arch detailing and brick quoins
<b>Group value</b>	School House linked to the Primary School
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Historical interest as being linked to the school
<b>Landmark status</b>	Centrally located in the village adjacent to the Primary School
	

<b>2. Name of Asset : The Cedars (also known as Hawthorn House)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> century farmstead
<b>Rarity</b>	One of a number of farmsteads of this age found on key routes into the village.
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	Redbrick and slate roof mansion style house, with some gothic style features including windows with some arch window details on front elevation. Set in its own grounds and back from the road
<b>Group value</b>	Adjacent courtyard of outbuildings including stabling and groom flat.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Unusual design for Wetheringsett
<b>Landmark status</b>	House is set back from the road behind mature hedges and is therefore not prominent.





<b>3. Name of Asset : The former Old White Horse Public House (former Cat and Mouse Public House)</b>	
<b>Age</b>	1837
<b>Rarity</b>	One of a series of former public houses in the parish. Traded as White Horse and latterly the Cat and Mouse until 1993. Now residential.
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	Two storey residential dwelling house. Cream rendered with dark tiles roofs with pantiled ridge (originally white render) . Single storey extension is rendered with red pantiles and a shallow pitch Both have tall red brick chimneys in central position on the roof.
<b>Group value</b>	None obvious
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Formerly the White Horse Public House and later the Cat and Mouse
<b>Landmark status</b>	Set back from the road and sits at 180 degrees from it. Good views from the street via the gateway.
	

<b>4. Name of Asset: Former Trowel and Hammer, now residential dwelling</b>	
<b>Age</b>	Circa 1851
<b>Rarity</b>	One of a series of former public houses within the parish. Closed in 1960.
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	1 <sup>1/2</sup> storey residential dwelling originally the Trowel and Hammer Alehouse. Constructed of red pantiled roof with rendered elevations. Has been extended. Retains at least one original chimney on gable. Now white rendered with black roof and window frames but contains examples of 'rat trap masonry'. The pub was struck by lightning in 1939 which destroyed the thatched roof & roof beams. The roof was replaced with a tiled roof
<b>Group value</b>	None. Original association as a public house.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Formerly the Trowel and Hammer Public House.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Set well back from the road but with an open undeveloped frontage and is therefore visible. Provides a wide space of frontage development.



<b>5. Name of Asset : Stone Cottage, Brockford</b>	
<b>Age</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> C?
<b>Rarity</b>	Only Stone House of this type in Brockford. Unusual materials for this part of the parish
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	C19th stone and flint cottage with interesting features including quoining and a detailed cornice. The building is unusual in that it was originally built as a square, so part of the building's importance comes from its symmetry and proportions. The building has a slate roof, central chimney stack and a central dormer in each elevation. The building is not listed but is considered to be an undesigned heritage asset with significant architectural and aesthetic qualities.'
<b>Group value</b>	Has the appearance of a Lodge or gatehouse at the entrance to larger estate which would be outside of the parish
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None Known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Has the appearance of a Lodge or gatehouse at the entrance to larger estate which would be outside of the parish
<b>Landmark status</b>	Building is close to the road /public rights of way and is visible from it.



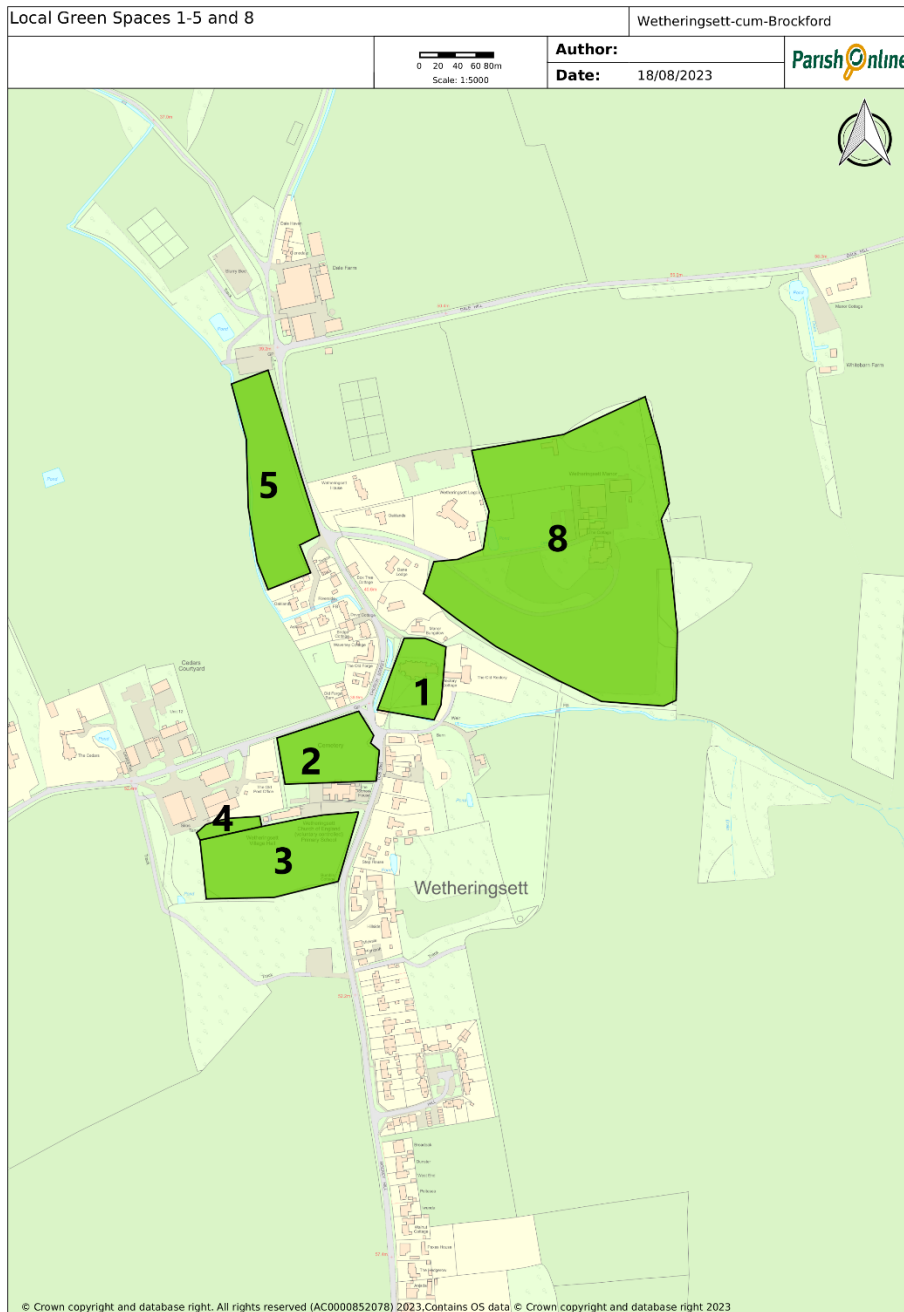
**6. Name of Asset: Roundhouse, remnant of former post mill, Broad Green, formerly used as a store following demolition of the post mill in 1957.**

<b>Age</b>	Built in 1882 by Whitmore G Binyon and the Clarkes to replace a post mill blown down in 1881. It ceased work circa 1936 and was pulled down in 1957.
<b>Rarity</b>	Only surviving remnant of this mill; only mill in the parish. There were four patent sails, two pairs of stones in the head and a fantail Post mill first mapped 1825/6.
<b>Architectural and Artistic interest</b>	Roundhouse is two storey and brick built. Mill had four patent sails, two pairs of stones in the head and a fantail Post mill first mapped 1825/6.
<b>Group value</b>	Association with the post mill.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known
<b>Historic interest</b>	Constructed as a circular building at the base of a post mill to provide storage space and to give protection to the superstructure. The roundhouse is not attached to the mill itself. Some roundhouses were later converted for domestic purposes.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Visually prominent in this part of the landscape, located next to the road and visible from it.



## Appendix D: Local Green Space justification

The table below outlines the justification for the inclusion of each Local Green Space identified. The criteria are based on paragraph 106 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Spaces and should not be approved except in very special circumstances and the local planning authority should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm.



**1. All Saints Churchyard, Church Street**

**Description:** Churchyard consisting of grassed area and mature trees, surrounding, and providing the setting for All Saints Church


<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Located adjacent to the church and within the main built-up part of the village
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<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Provides the historical setting to the Grade II* Listed church. Historical and community value through its use as a parish graveyard. Provides a tranquil area and is being actively managed for wildlife.
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<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Area is an enclosed area with definable boundaries. Not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 1.09 acres.
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<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria.
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<b>2. Cemetery, Church Street</b>	
<b>Description:</b> Parish cemetery located on Church Street	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Located within the main built-up part of the village and inside the Conservation Area. Close to the school and the village hall
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value through its use as a cemetery also provides an area of tranquility.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Area has definable boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 1.62 acres
<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria
	

**3. Playing field, adjacent to the Village Hall**

**Description:** Playing field immediately adjacent to the village hall and close to the school

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Within the main built-up area of the village. Close to other facilities such as the school and the village hall
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value through its use as a playing field used in conjunction with the village hall and by the school.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Areas has definable boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 3 acres.
<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria





**4. Play area (equipped)**

**Description:** Children’s equipped play area located within the wider playing field close to the village hall and the school

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Located within the main built-up part of the village; forms part of the wider playing field. Close to the school and the village hall
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<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value through its use as a play area. Used by the school and also the community more generally.
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<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Smaller defined area within the wider playing field. Not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 0.2 acres
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<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria
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**5. Meadow at Church Street**

**Description:** Area of meadow located at the periphery of the village centre and northwest of the Church. An area of improved grassland with hedges on three sides

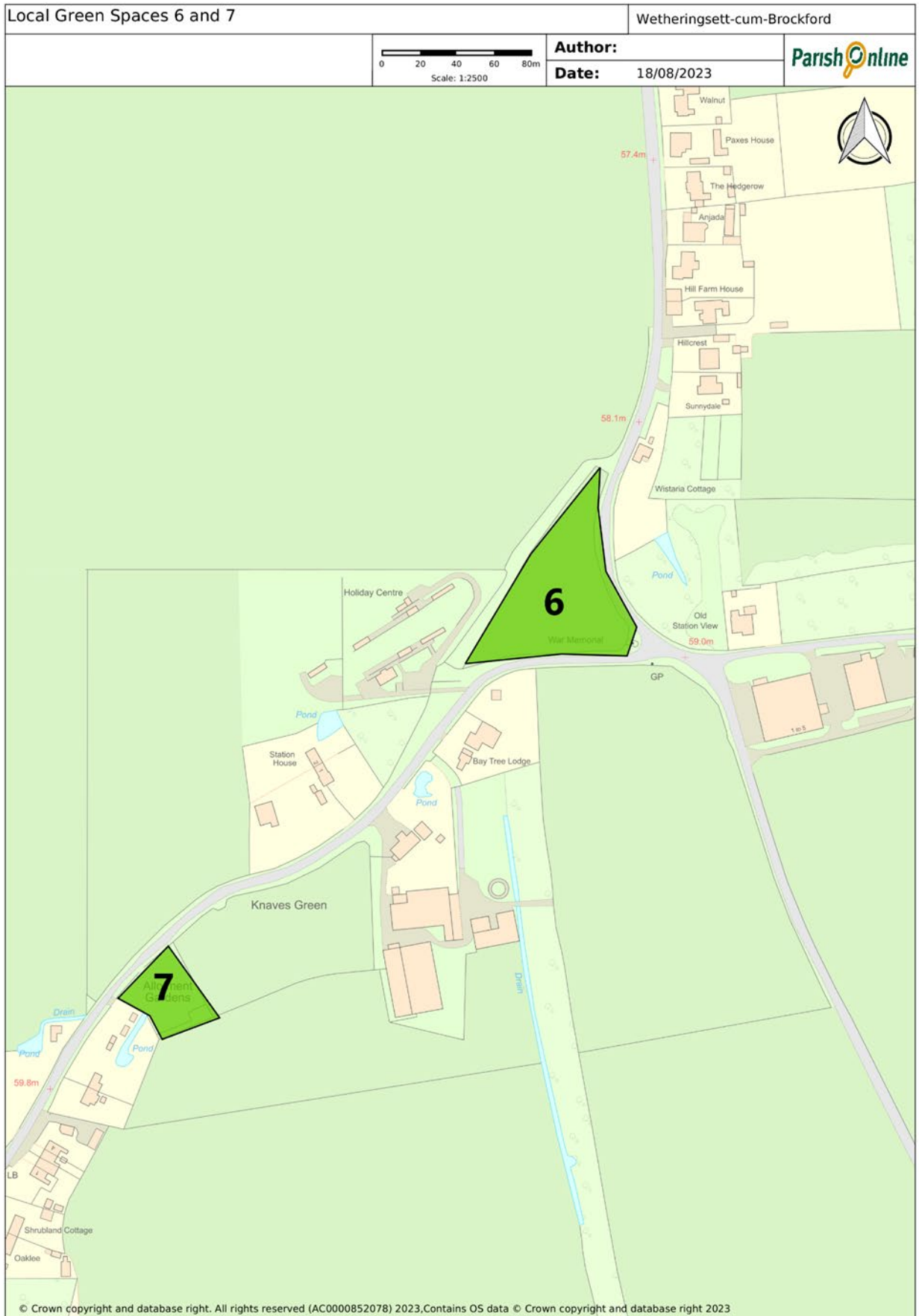
**In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves** Located close to the main built-up part of the village and adjacent to new development at All Saints Close

**Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance** An open area of land providing a tranquil location near the river, at the edge of the Conservation Area. Affords views to the church and provides a wider setting.


**Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land** Area has well defined boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 1.2 hectares.

**Include in NP y/n?** Meets all criteria





<b>6. War Memorial field</b>	
<b>Description:</b> Area of paddock/meadow which provides the setting for the War Memorial in the centre of the parish. Triangular in shape and forms the junction of Hall Road, Hockey Hill, and Knaves Green.	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Development of Knaves Green to the southwest, residential developments on Hockey Hill to the northeast and the Old Station Yard units and the Middy to the east.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Provides the setting to the War Memorial which has an historical and community significance. Is owned by a Charitable Trust and used by the Middy at certain times. Therefore, has an historical and community value
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Area has three easily definable boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 1.15 acres.
<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria and owners have indicated agreement
	

<b>7. Allotments at Knaves Green</b>	
<b>Description:</b> Area of allotment land. Owned by a Charitable Trust.	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Within the hamlet of Knaves Green. Residential development to south-west and east.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value by virtue of its use as allotment land.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Area has easily definable boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land. Area approximately 1.57 acres.
<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria and owners have indicated agreement
	

<b>8 Parkland at Wetheringsett Manor</b>	
<b>Description:</b> Area of historic mature parkland surrounding Grade II Listed Wetheringsett Manor which is used as a special school.	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves</b>	Located close to the main built-up part of the village northeast of the church.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Provides the mature woodland/parkland setting to the Manor House which is a listed building. The parkland contains a number of veteran tree species. The Manor is used as a school and the parkland forms part of the school grounds. There are attractive short and long-distance views across the parkland which provide the setting to the historic building. The parkland has an historical and community value.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Area has clearly defined boundaries and is not an extensive tract of land in the context of this part of the settlement as a whole. Area approximately 5 hectares.
<b>Include in NP y/n?</b>	Meets all criteria and landowners have indicated agreement.



## Appendix E: Glossary

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Glossary of terms used and/or relevant to the Walsham le Willows Neighbourhood Plan and supporting submission documents. Definitions are taken directly from the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023, except where stated.

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) *Affordable housing for rent:* meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20 per cent below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) *Starter homes:* is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of Plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) *Discounted market sales housing* is that sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) *Other affordable routes to home ownership* is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20 per cent below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Ancient or veteran tree:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**Build to Rent:** Purpose built housing that is typically 100 per cent rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Community-led developments:** : A development instigated and taken forward by a not-for-profit organisation set up and run primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of its members and the wider local community, rather than being a primarily commercial enterprise. The organisation is created, managed and democratically controlled by its members. It may take any one of various legal forms including a community land trust, housing co-operative and community benefit society. Membership of the organisation is open to all beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of that organisation. The organisation should own, manage or steward the homes in a manner consistent with its purpose, for example through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider of Social Housing. The benefits of the development to the specified community should be clearly defined and consideration given to how these benefits can be protected over time, including in the event of the organisation being wound up.

**Conservation:** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites that are not major development, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (e.g., they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

**Development plan:** Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that



remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Local housing need:** the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

**Local plan:** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

**Major development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floor space of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Neighbourhood plan:** A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

**Non-designated heritage asset:** Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration

in the planning process (definition from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#non-designated-heritage-assets>).

**Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

**Strategic environmental assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

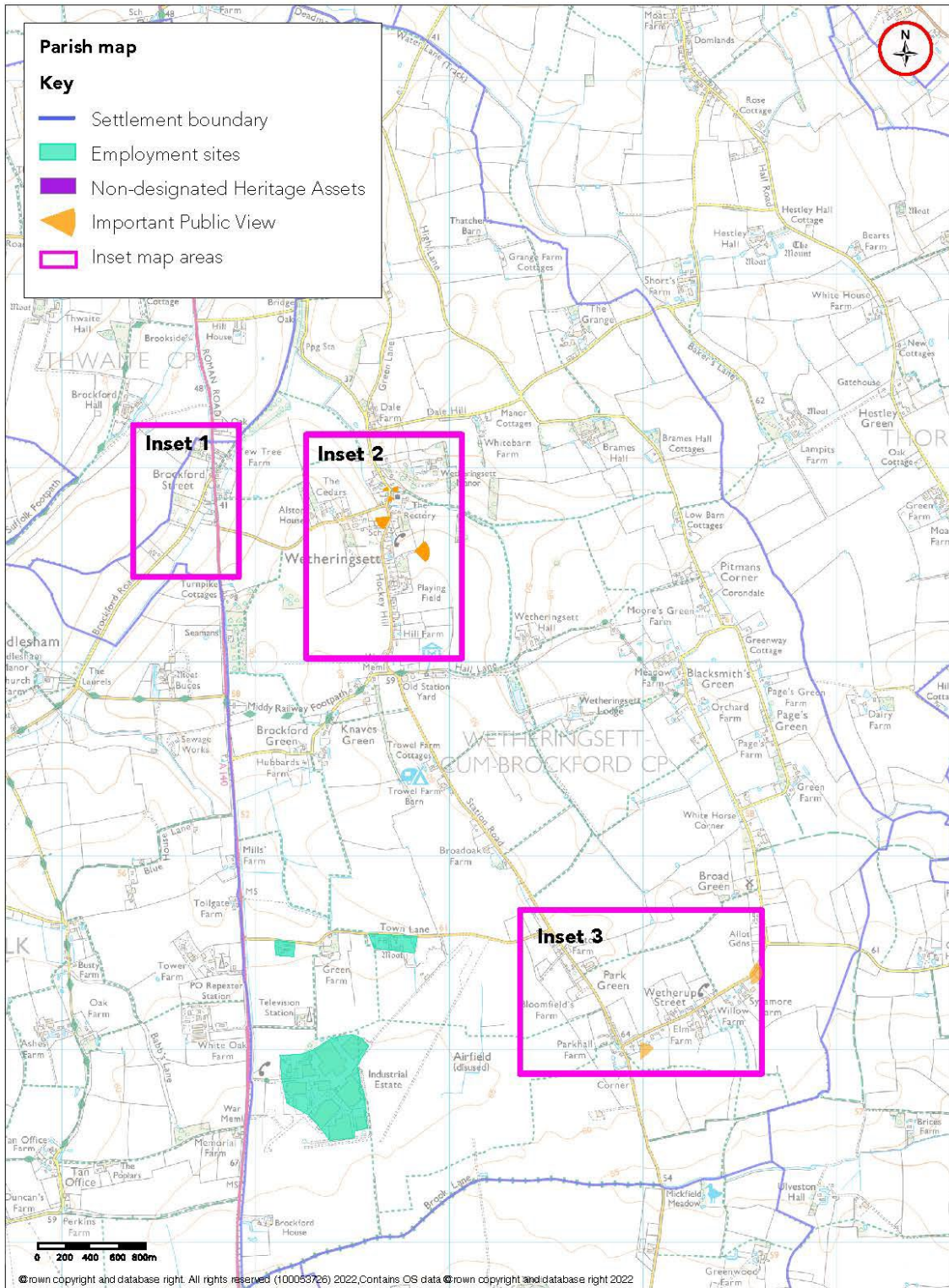
**Strategic policies:** Policies and site allocations, which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

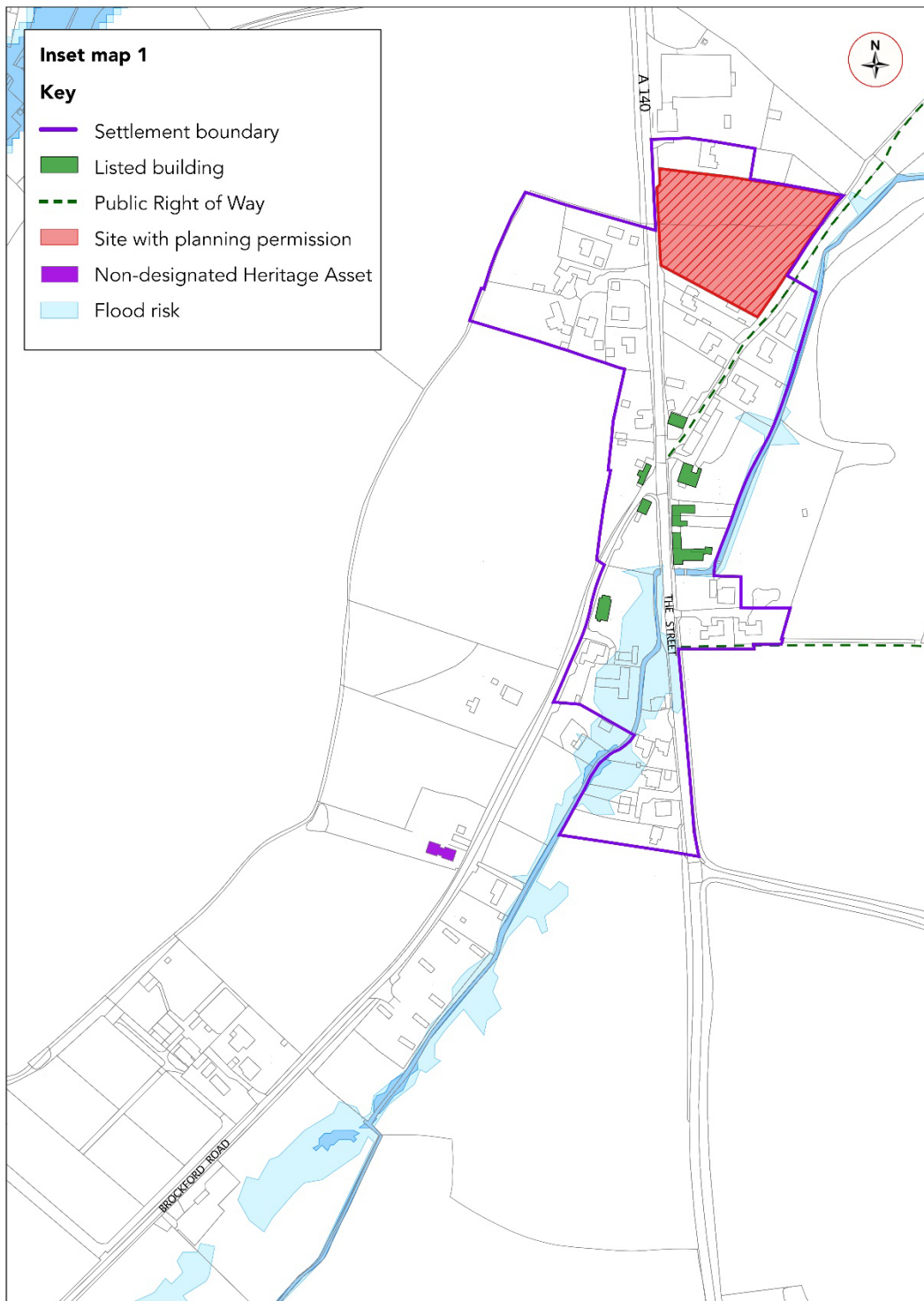
**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations. Also known as Ecological Corridor

**Windfall sites:** Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

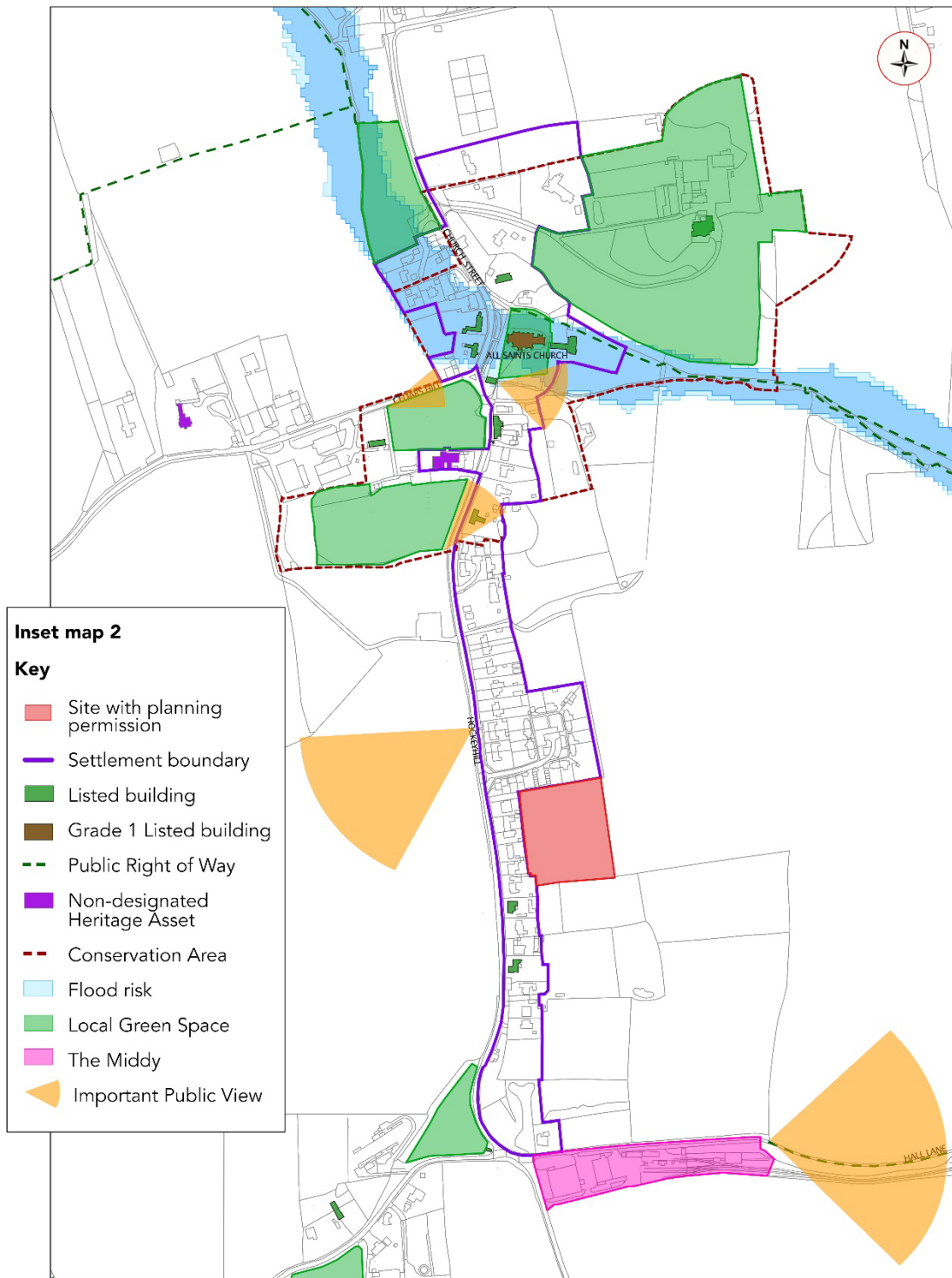
### Appendix F – Parish Policies and Inset Maps Parish Wide Policies Map



**Inset 1 – Brockford Street**



**Inset 2 – Wetheringsett (Church)**



### Inset 3 – Wetherup Street/Park Green



