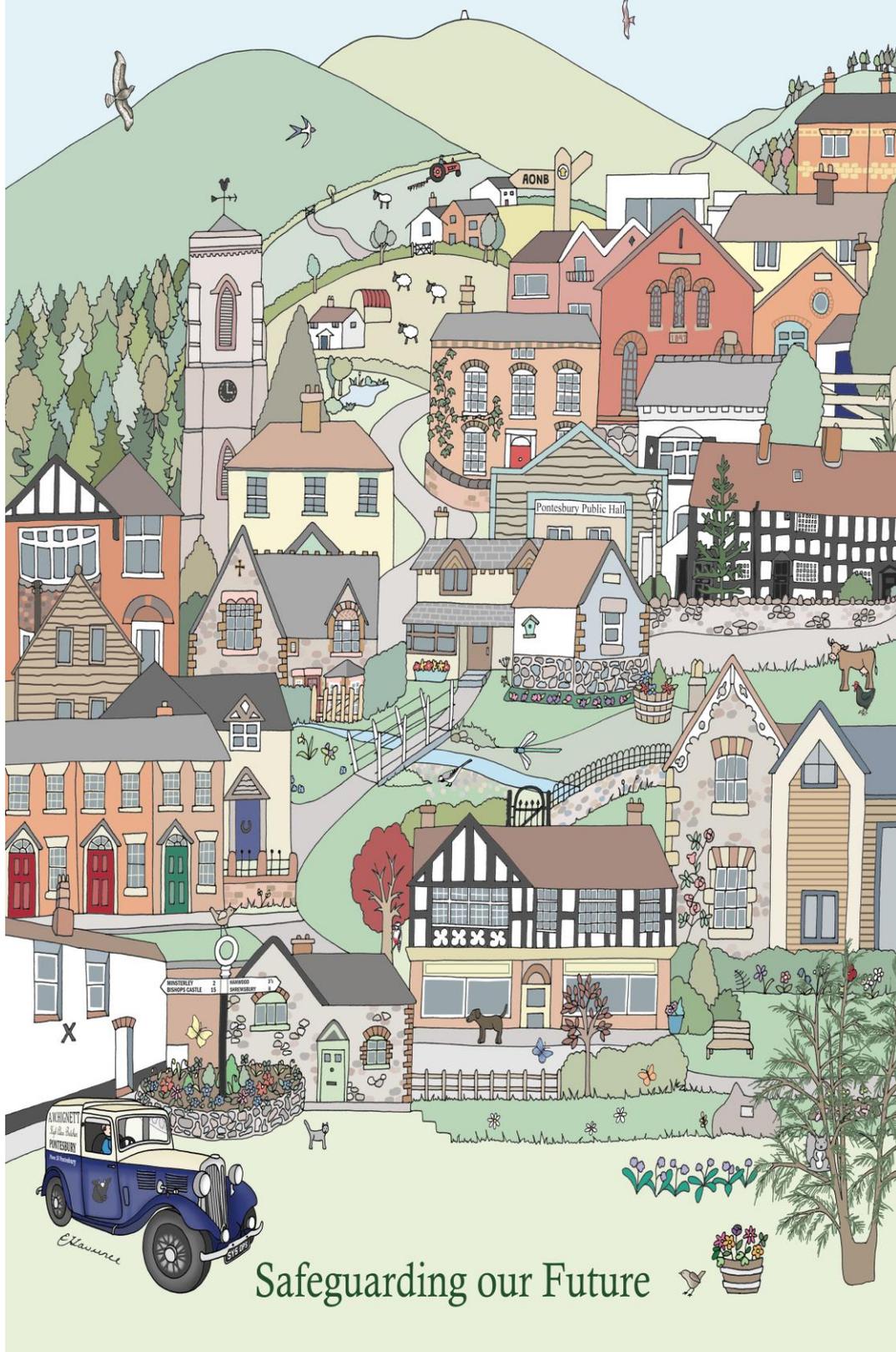


Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2038



As well as Pontesbury and Pontesford, the Neighbourhood Plan area includes these settlements:



Cruckton, Cruckmeole and Arscott



Lea Cross and Shorthill



Polemere near Edge and Hinton



Looking towards Habberley



Plealey



Asterley and Farley

Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - 2038

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1. Introduction

1.1 *"Cherish the past, adorn the present, build for the future."*

Insufficient attention to these words of wisdom from Clough Williams-Ellis, the eminent 20th century architect and champion of landscape planning has contributed to a mixed reception to recent development in our parish and widespread wariness regarding future building.

1.2 The Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan shares his passionate belief that successful and welcome development will promote beauty, happiness and sustainability. Cherishing the past means respecting the built and natural landscape and integrating new builds into it. Good planning strengthens a sense of identity and community. Development that adorns the present will enhance our beautiful parish so that people continue to be happy living in and visiting Pontesbury.

1.3 At the heart of our Neighbourhood Plan is the desire to make future development contribute positively to the beauty of our surroundings and so help our wellbeing. Our watchword is BIMBY [Beauty In My Back Yard] not NIMBY. The beauty of our Parish is to be found not just in a breath taking vista of an unspoilt landscape from the summit of Earls Hill but displayed in a profusion of wild flowers, well maintained hedgerows, noble oak trees or a well-proportioned, finely detailed building as is well seen in throughout the Parish. (See page 6)

1.4 *But "What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?" [William Davies]*

In a busy world we need to ensure that there is enough beauty to encourage us to slow down, stand and stare. There must be ample well maintained cycle ways and footpaths to facilitate a leisurely enjoyment of our surroundings. Development is not just about the actual appearance of a building, or a change of land use, but also its impact on our surroundings. As we build more homes, we must also provide well-maintained cycle ways and footpaths to reduce our reliance on cars, and to facilitate a leisurely enjoyment of our surroundings.

1.5 Clough Williams-Ellis's 3rd exhortation - to build for the future - is even more important today. We must build sustainably so that we hand to future generations not just a lower carbon footprint but also enhanced beauty, with our distinctive local character intact. By devising policies which emphasise high quality design, safeguard local services, enhance rural surroundings and promote the local economy we believe the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan will contribute significantly to beauty, happiness and a sustainable future. Everyone needs nature, beauty, history and space, but nature needs help, beauty needs protecting, Pontesbury's history needs to be respected and space needs to be protected.

1.6 In return for welcoming development, we expect these needs to be met.

It often takes the views of outsiders to make us appreciate fully what is on our doorstep.

Bill Bryson, an American in love with rural England, reminds us that our much-envied countryside has taken many generations of hard work to build up, and that the least we can do is to look after it and pass it on to future generations. Derry Brabbs, the landscape author and photographer, describes the Central Welsh Marches including Pontesbury Parish "a national treasure" to be protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

2. The Stages

2.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has been formulated on the basis of the public's response to the parish's consultations and early questionnaires held prior to July 2020. The Regulation 14 consultation took place between 1st March and 12th April 2022 where a number of consultation responses were received.

2.2 This stage of the planning process was a statutory consultation exercise which needed to be undertaken prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority. Comments received during this further period of consultation have assisted in producing a final version (Regulation 15) for submission to Shropshire Council along with supporting information. Shropshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority (following submission) will then carry out one final check to ensure the plan and its accompanying information comply with the relevant legal requirements. If satisfied, the Local Planning Authority will place it on their website for a final further six week consultation (Regulation 16), before passing it on to an Independent Examiner who will issue a report on whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a final referendum.

2.3 The Plan at its current stage offers a vision for the future and sets out clear objectives and policies based on previous comments received regarding the Neighbourhood Area. The policies within this Plan will also be subjected to scrutiny by the statutory agencies including;

The Environment Agency;
Natural England; and
Historic England

2.4 These will then be assessed by the agencies through a screening exercise relating to the submitted environmental screening assessments including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). If passed by examination, and then supported through referendum, the policies will then have to be taken into account by applicants, developers and the Local Planning Authority when considering development in the Neighbourhood Area. Thus giving much greater weight to the views of the Parish in the decision-making process.

3. How to comment

3.1 The Plan and accompanying Environmental and Habitats Regulations Assessments Reports can be inspected on the Parish Website: <https://www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk> or be emailed to residents and other interested parties on request to clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk

3.2 Paper copies of the plan can be viewed at Pontesbury Pavilion, Pontesbury, SY5 ORF. A paper copy can be made available on request.

3.3 The plan and accompanying documents can also be viewed on the Shropshire Council website: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-and-community-led-plans/emerging-neighbourhood-plans>

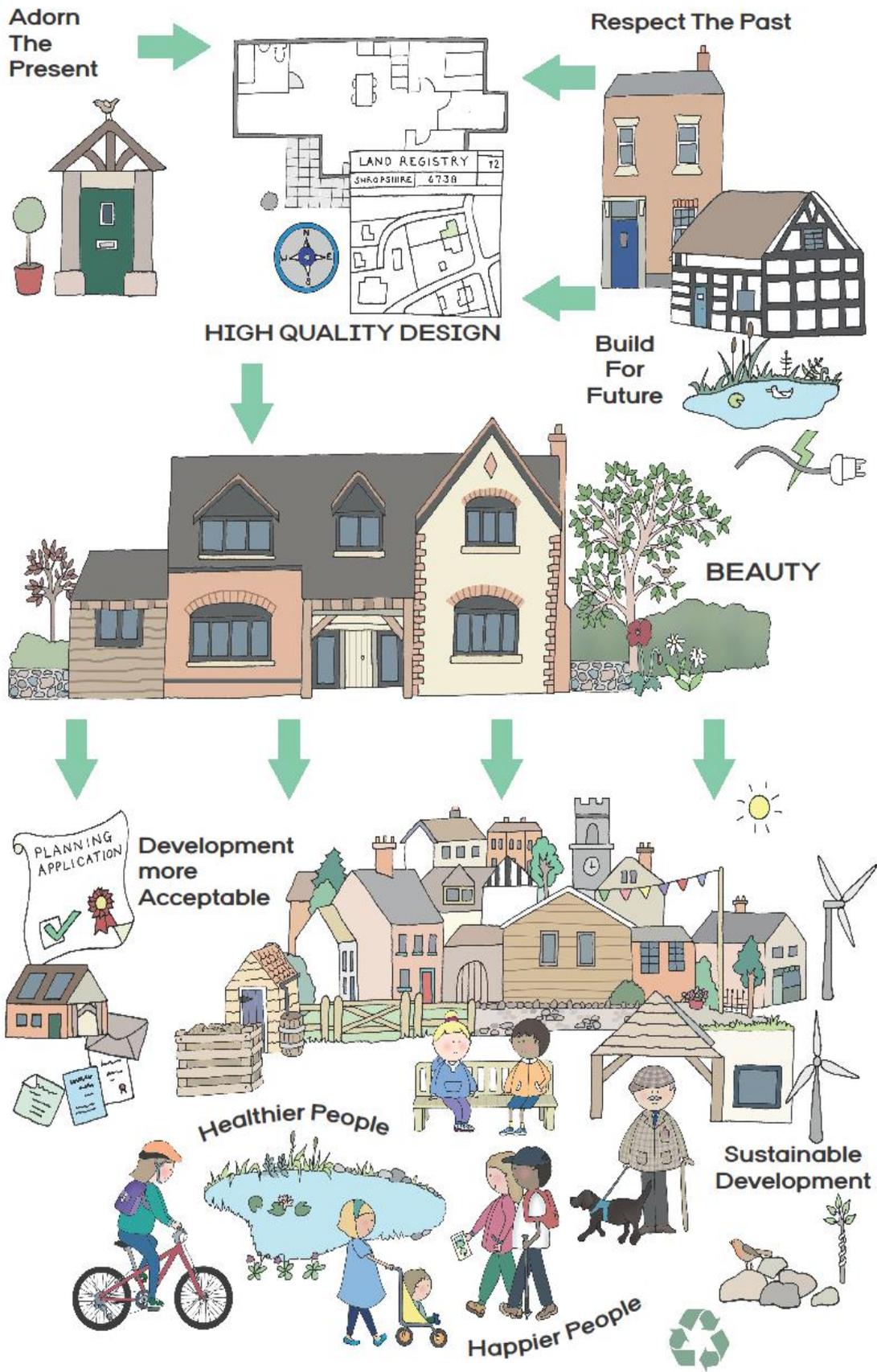


Fig 1. The Importance of Good Design

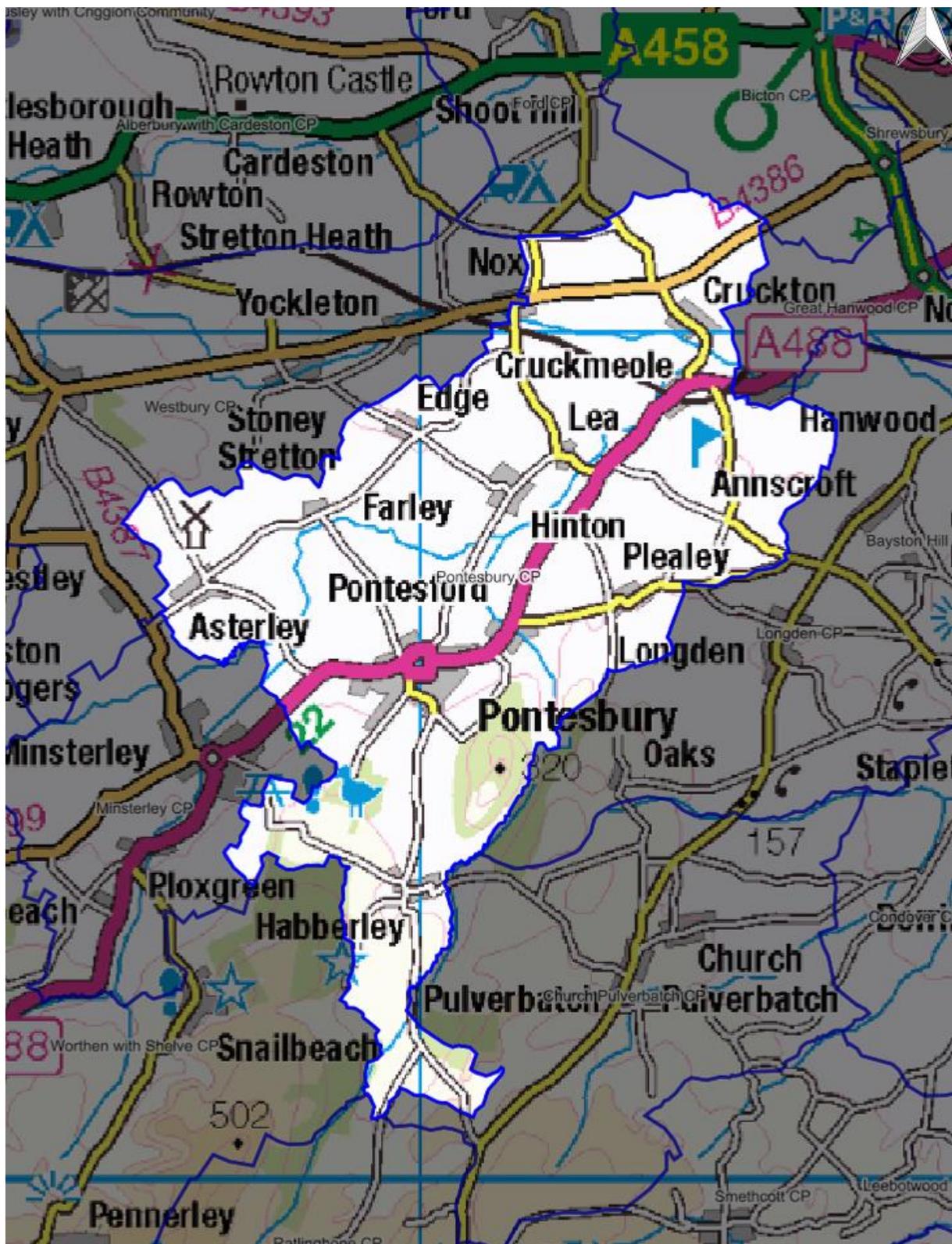


Fig 2. Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area (Fig.2)

3. Pontesbury Parish in the Present



3.1 Pontesbury is a large parish in the Rea valley between the Shropshire plain to the north-east and the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south-west. Its eastern edge is a mile from the A5 Shrewsbury bypass, and the busy A488 links the main settlement of Pontesbury with Shrewsbury town centre, seven miles away. Most visitors get their first view of the parish from this road. It also provides most people with their main contact and view of our Parish as they travel through the area.

3.2 The population has grown considerably since the last census in 2011 when it numbered 3,227, with a low population density of one person per hectare. Nearly one quarter of the population is aged over 65: this is significantly higher than county and national averages. It is a relatively prosperous population with low levels of deprivation and 78% of houses owner occupied at the 2011 census.

3.3 In appearance Pontesbury is very rural. The much-loved twin peaks of Pontesford and Earl's Hill dominate the valleys of pastures, cornfields and woods below. This countryside enfolds each village and hamlet. Farming dominates the landscape, with other commercial and industrial activity being largely small scale and unobtrusive. To date, tourism has been low key, having a very limited impact on the landscape.

3.4 Pontesbury village is the commercial and social hub for the parish's population. The estimated population in 2016 was 1,897. For its size, it has an excellent range of services, supporting both villagers and the population of outlying settlements. The village has pre-school nursery, primary and secondary schools, three pubs, a post office, shops, chemist, GP surgery and dentist, library, and eating places. The busy A488 passes through the centre of the village, with a one-way system circling round St George's parish church. Relatively new housing dominates the village centre but there are reminders of its long history near the church and the picturesque ford. The large Hall Bank development, completed in 2021, has significantly increasing the population and is integrating well by providing better shopping, parking and community facilities.

3.5 There are smaller settlements outside of Pontesbury: Habberley, Cruckton, Plealey, Hinton, Arcscott, Asterley, Lea Cross and Cruckmeole. Many are the remnants of past mining communities; hamlets and villages which lack pavements or street lighting but enjoy enviable peace and tranquillity.

3.6 Two outstanding heritage assets of the parish are Earls Hill Nature Reserve, in the care of Shropshire Wildlife Trust, and the conservation area of Plealey, which contains the finest group of historic buildings in the parish, including some exemplary restoration projects and beautiful architectural details. Pontesford has several reminders of the coal and lead industries, including an engine house and smelt works. The distinctive squatter settlement along Pontesbury Hill Road is partly a result of this Victorian industrial activity.

3.7 Although Pontesbury village is mainly a commuter and retirement settlement with fairly easy access to Shrewsbury and Telford, it contains a surprising number of small businesses with nearly 1/5 of the workforce being self-employed. 50% of people use a car to travel to work. The main employers are the four schools and the Malehurst Industrial estate.

3.8 Leisure facilities include Arscott golf course, Pontesbury play area, and public halls at Cruckmeole, Habberley and Pontesbury which host a variety of social and cultural activities. There is a need for more youth facilities. Residents and visitors make good use of the public footpaths and popular cycle routes, with easy access to them from each settlement – an important consideration for future health and well-being.

3.9 As one of the main gateways to the Shropshire Hills AONB, Pontesbury is attracting an increasing number of tourists. Earls Hill is a popular destination.

3.10 For planning purposes, outside of Pontesbury village, the rest of the parish is classified as open countryside, which means that development is strictly controlled. This policy plays a crucial part in safeguarding the rural nature of the area. Maintaining the tranquillity of this countryside is a primary concern for most residents and the main attraction for visitors.

3.11 Consultation has been carried out between December 2018 and February 2019 on the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review until 2038. The review includes a slight modification to the development boundary for the parish and a suggested further 42 dwellings to be built (over and above permissions granted to date). Work has started on the preferred site in Pontesbury village for nearly all of the 42 dwellings and the others are envisaged to be provided by windfall sites. The review does not include preferred sites anywhere else in the parish.

3.12 The Climate Emergency Action Group is working hard to guide our community into a greener future with greater biodiversity, cleaner air, more opportunities for active travel and a lower carbon footprint.

4. Character and appearance of Pontesbury Village

4.1 This sets out the character, appearance and historic interest which together with the back drop of hills make up the distinctive identity of the village which future development should conserve and enhance.



4.2 Screened by hills and woods, and lacking tall buildings, Pontesbury lies unobtrusively on the gentle southern slopes of the Rea Valley. It is a popular residential village with a wide range of services and a gateway to the Shropshire Hills Area of Natural Beauty.

4.3 The rural feel of the village is sustained by abundant hedges, trees, grass verges and the wooded slopes of Pontesford and Earls Hill. In past centuries Pontesbury was an important local centre for defensive, strategic, religious and industrial reasons, and these have left their mark. The Iron Age hillfort on the summit of Earls Hill overlooks the whole village.

4.4 The winding 'ring road' formed by Hall Bank, Chapel Street and Brookside probably follows the alignment of the Saxon village defences, which, in turn, were replaced by the Norman motte.

4.5 Industrial activity in the late 18th and 19th Centuries based on coal, lead and stone quarrying have left their mark on house buildings, boundary walls, non-conformist chapels and the large squatter settlement on Pontesbury Hill Road with its haphazard layout.

4.6 Today Pontesbury is quite densely settled, much changed from the much smaller, loosely knit settlement of the 1950's which had wide open spaces and generously-sized house plots. The infilling of these spaces has significantly changed the village character. Within the historic core and spine (along A488), and extending to Station Road and Pontesbury Hill Road, there has been small-scale piecemeal development which has largely retained the unplanned, informal and varied character of the village. Future development should respect this character and not damage it.

4.7 Since the 1950s, most development has taken place in former fields, including Mount Way, Brook Road, Ashford Drive and Linley Avenue, where larger scale development has resulted in the more formal, planned layout typical of that time, with curving roads, crescents and cul-de-sacs but less variety than along the older core and spine.

4.8 Although attractive, these estates lack local distinctiveness and are very similar to those found in suburbs throughout England.

4.9 A special part of the character of the village is the area around the ford with the brook, footbridge, old buildings including the Plough Inn (the only known mediaeval survival), and the old road. Little has changed here since an Appeal Inspector in the 1980s found it 'distinctly attractive', an area where significant development would represent a serious loss to village amenity and character. In view of recent developments, the conclusion of the inspector is even more important today in maintaining the character of the village and its tangible reminders of its long history and former agricultural importance.

4.10 Development in the village since 1950 has resulted in a considerable reduction in views of the church tower and Pontesbury/Earl's Hill, and there has been much less use of traditional local building materials such as timber, stone and local clay brick. Future building should preserve vernacular styles and materials.

4.11 Consultations with local residents have identified the essential features of Pontesbury's built environment:

4.11.1 Building styles. These include a few timber framed buildings, attempts at 'Georgian' symmetry, Victorian buildings with contrasting brickwork, Arts and Crafts villas and modern highly glazed houses. Generally building styles have been conservative with very few examples of ambitious architecture.

4.11.2 Window variety. Styles include traditional and modern casements, mullions, dormers, sashes, bays and fanlights. Shapes include square, rectangular, circular and round-headed. Glazing is small or large panes, plate glass with glazing bars - thick or thin, straight or curved. Frames are made of wood, metal or uPVC.

4.11.3 Materials. Stone, mainly in the form of rubble stone and often covered by render – was until the late 19th century the most common building material. Today brick in different colours, texture and bonding is the dominant material. Timber framing - once commonplace – is rare on new buildings apart from porches. Roofs were once handmade from local clays (with a lesser use of slate) but largely replaced in more recent developments by machine-made synthetic tiles.

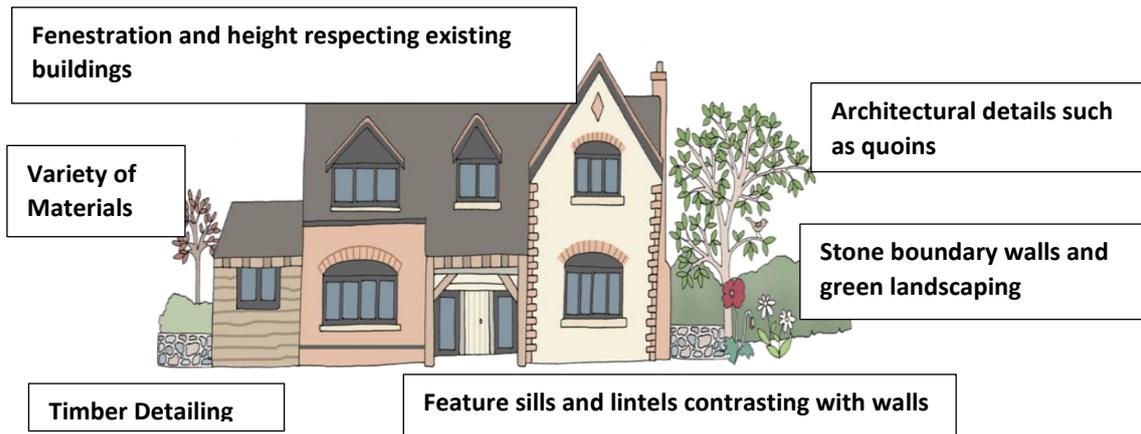
4.11.4 Architectural details. These include vertical or horizontal strips of wood in gables, prominent brick details under eaves of front elevation, date and name stone inserts, patterned ridge tiles, decorative chimney stacks, decorative lintels and contrasting cills. Bricks were often used for heads of windows and doorways to provide architectural interest on otherwise simple stone buildings. In contrast, many recent buildings lack interesting details.

4.11.5 Boundaries. These vary from hedges, stone, brick, iron railings, wooden panels and fences. Hedges are an important feature of the parish and help to maintain local character.

4.11.6 Layout. Side streets and lanes curve away from the main road and there are no long straight streets. Peripheral houses are set back from the road by front gardens but many houses in the historic core are close to the road. The composite illustration on the cover and the drawings of the architectural features (Page 29) convey the character and architectural variety of the village.

4.12 In summary, the built environment is small-scale, partly vernacular and varied. There is a notable absence of buildings over two storeys high, relatively little terraced housing and until recently facades of uninterrupted red brick.

4.13 The house below is an example of how to contribute to local character and beauty.



5. Landscape character of the Parish

5.1 An understanding of the character of Pontesbury Parish can be gained by comparison with other areas. It lacks the dramatic mountains, craggy peaks, high hills or large stretches of water found in the Lake District. Unlike the Fens it does not have extensive areas of flat land, which, unbroken by hedges, permits wide views. Absent are the long, straight wide roads of Mid Northumberland. Fields are small and irregular in comparison with the large fields of East Anglia or the planned, regular pattern of fields established by Enclosure Acts to be seen in parts of East Leicestershire.

5.2 The shallow valley of the Rea Brook permits views of several miles but narrow winding, sometimes sunken, lanes beneath high hedges, an abundance of hedgerow trees and woods means that it is an intimate, often hidden landscape where from many viewpoints there is barely an isolated building or settlement to be seen. Gently rolling lowlands characterise much of the parish. By contrast more dramatic scenery is to be seen to the immediate east and south of Pontesbury village with steep sided volcanic hills, a wooded gorge and more extensive woodlands. There the landscape is highly sensitive to development, forming either the setting or being part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.

5.3 Most of the parish is officially classified as principal settled farmland with land used predominantly for mixed farming. There is a centuries old pattern of relatively small irregular hedged fields where the rate of hedge loss and field enlargement has been considerably less than many parts of England. There is a clustered settlement pattern of at least eight small villages and hamlets such as Cruckton, Habberley, Plealey, Lea Cross, Cruckmeole, Asterley, Hinton and Arscott. These are linked by narrow lanes with a significant number of dispersed farmsteads and wayside cottages.

5.4 Each village/hamlet is clearly separate from other settlements, nestling unobtrusively in the landscape but all having soft boundary between settlement and countryside.

5.5 Flat waterside meadows along the Rea Brook which meanders from west to east through the centre of the parish are subject to flooding and so tend to be lacking in buildings but provide important seasonal cattle grazing with linear tree cover giving some shelter.

5.6 In the extreme south of the parish beyond Habberley, the farmlands provide a more intricate landscape, characterised by a network of winding lanes, scattered farmsteads, smaller irregular fields, more ancient woodlands and some steep slopes.

5.7 The parish is large but the population is small and the elements which make up the landscape are likewise small – hills, woods, fields, roads, buildings, rivers and other areas of water, settlements. Small scale, mainly unplanned, understated, unobtrusive, unspoilt and tranquil – here lies its character, attractiveness and beauty which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance.

5.8 **Examples of Landscape Character**

5.9 A country lane typical of small scale elements making up our landscape. Note the high hedges hiding the landscape:



5.10 Note trees, hills, hedges, woods, hedgerow trees, farmland and unobtrusive settlements:



5.11 Unspoilt and tranquil wildlife havens:



6. Vision Statement

6.1 This Vision Statement describes how we would like the parish to look by 2038:

Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

1. It is 2038 and Pontesbury parish still retains its largely rural character whilst having enhanced the range of services and facilities offered to all age groups. It has safeguarded the much loved rural environment, partly by only a modest population increase, with new development mainly confined to Pontesbury village. Adequate low-cost/affordable housing has met the needs of young people wishing to remain in the parish.
2. Employment opportunities have been created, mainly in the service sector. The attractive landscape of woodlands, hedges, hills and undulating countryside including the AONB has encouraged more visitors, who have provided diversification opportunities for farmers. Increased tree planting and mini-dam projects have reduced flooding risks. Pontesbury Parish has assisted Shropshire Council in their target of being carbon neutral by 2030.
3. The availability of high-speed broadband throughout the parish has aided businesses and helped more people to work from home, contributing to a reduction in commuter traffic along the A488. The hub building with its ultra-fast broadband offers support and development opportunities for new local business.
4. Measures have been taken to alleviate traffic problems including more parking spaces and speed restrictions in residential areas throughout the Parish. Public and community transport initiatives have been implemented. All new houses built in the parish have electric car charging points.
5. Improved leisure facilities have been developed, partly by better use of green spaces and by opening up more waymarked footpaths to allow more residents and visitors to enjoy the attractive rural landscape. The village halls and community hub continue to be well used, providing vital social meeting places and activities for all ages which help to sustain the community spirit and reduce social isolation of elderly/disabled residents. Pontesbury continues to be a Dementia Friendly village. The community hub plays a strong role in providing information and support for local residents.
6. For its size, Pontesbury continues to have a wide range of services which have been sustained by the increased population and growing number of tourists. The rural landscape is still largely maintained by active farming, and is accessible for leisure use.

7. Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

7.1 The following objectives were drawn up from the 2018 Consultation, made available for approval at a drop-in session on 2 July 2019 and refined in light of the responses to the 2020 Questionnaire.

A. Protecting and developing Community Amenities

1. To enhance facilities and services for a vibrant community

B. Landscape and Local Character

1. To conserve the character and beauty of the rural landscape of the parish
2. To conserve the historic heritage of the parish
3. To safeguard the setting and character of AONB and conservation areas of Plealey and Habberley
4. To safeguard amenity views
5. Maintain gaps between settlements
6. Conserve the character of the land adjacent to the A488

C. Provision of adequate and well-designed housing

1. Housing in Pontesbury village which respects variety of styles and materials and existing character.
2. Provision of small sized homes and affordable homes

D. Movement and Transport

1. To support safe, accessible network of roads, cycle ways and footpaths to promote healthier lifestyles and access to the countryside and improve active travel between homes and amenities
2. To improve car parking in Pontesbury

E. Employment and business Opportunities

1. To support small scale economic development including farm diversification which brings landscape benefits

F. Green Environment

1. To protect Local green spaces
2. To protect and enhance natural habitats and wildlife and increase biodiversity
3. To reduce pollution
4. Carbon reduction

8. Why are we preparing a Neighbourhood Plan?

8.1 Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area. They are prepared by Parish Councils to promote, guide and control local development and importantly, are used to help determine local planning applications. For the first time, local authorities can have a direct input into the planning process and have an influence on shaping the future of their community based on the views expressed through surveys of the local population and businesses.

8.2 Not all Parish Councils choose to produce a neighbourhood plan. However, in 2016 Pontesbury Parish Council decided that this was an important right to exercise, seeking to ensure the future sustainable development of the settlement by providing detailed planning policies for their area. The move was considered both sensible and appropriate, which will allow flexibility for controlling future development in the Neighbourhood Area.

8.3 Pontesbury Parish Council made the application to Shropshire Council in August the same year under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Shropshire Council consulted on the proposed area for a period of 4 weeks between September and October 2016. Due to concerns expressed locally, a re-consultation took place for a further four weeks between November and December 2016. Only one response was received to these consultations but this did not object to the principle of using the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area and therefore did not require further consideration in defining the Neighbourhood Planning area.

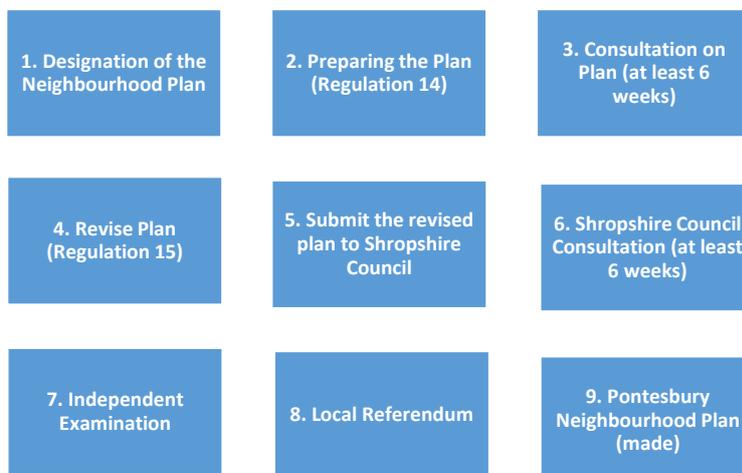
8.4 In response, at Cabinet it was agreed that the Pontesbury Parish Plan Area was an appropriate basis for the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and notified the Parish Council accordingly. A formal notice confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan area was acceptable and was published on 1st March 2017.

8.5 The Parish Council has been preparing this draft Neighbourhood Plan since June 2021. Following consultation with residents and stakeholders, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subjected to external examination before it can proceed to a final referendum of all eligible parishioners. Thereafter, its policies will reflect the aspirations of the majority of the people of Pontesbury who have all had an opportunity to play a part in shaping the future of their Parish.

9. Process of preparing a neighbourhood plan

9.1 Neighbourhood Plans have to be prepared in a manner that is appropriate to the procedure set out by the Government. The table below briefly describes these processes:

The Neighbourhood Plan Process



9.2 In accordance with Regulation 14, a six week consultation of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 was carried out with Pontesbury Parish residents, businesses and consultative bodies. The point of this consultation period was to give people the opportunity to provide feedback on the first draft of the plan.

9.3 However, the Shropshire Local Plan is currently under review and is about to undergo Independent Examination. This will likely result in changes through required modifications by the Inspector. In this instance, the Parish will consider the implications of these likely changes, as well as considering the representations received during the 6 week Regulation 14 consultation stage. As a result of the Local Plan Examination the Neighbourhood Plan may need to be amended so that it complies with any relevant modifications to Shropshire Council's Local Plan.

9.4 Following both the consultation and required changes, the Neighbourhood Plan was revised to account for updated plans and responses from consultees. In preparation of the Regulation 15 submission, the screening process of both a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) have been completed concluding that policies within the Neighbourhood Plan do not have a significant effect on the natural environment or a European Site, and thus demonstrating that environmental implications have been considered as part of the preparation process. In addition, both a Basic Condition Statement and Consultation Statement have also been submitted to Shropshire Council.

9.5 At an early stage a decision was taken not to designate particular sites for development and therefore policies were not likely to have significant environmental impacts. The screening statements for both the strategic Environmental Assessment and the Habitat Regulation Assessment concluded that none of the proposed policies within the draft Neighbourhood Plan had the potential to have a significant impact on the natural environment or any European site and therefore could be screened out of the SEA and HRA processes and appropriate assessments were not required.

10. National and Local Planning Policy

10.1 One of the requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan is to account for both National and Local Planning Policy. If the Plan does not comply with both it will fail the basic conditions which are required to be met. This is tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum.

10.2 **National Planning Policy.** National Planning Policy is mostly contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This states that the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan should “*support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies*” in this case the Shropshire Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to “*shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies*”.

10.3 Para 14 of the NPPF considers that “*situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*” provided the following criteria apply:

10.3.1 the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision is made;

10.3.2 the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement;

10.3.3 the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73); and

10.3.4 the local planning authority’s housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years.

10.4 Para 21 considers that “*Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies*”. This means that some policies that are specific to the neighbourhood area are better placed within neighbourhood plans, this could include improvement to local transport networks or control of land within the area.

10.5 The role of Neighbourhood Plans is further expanded in Para 29 stating that “*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies*”.

10.6 Para 30 continues “*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently*”.

10.7 When considering the achievement of well-designed places para 125 states that “*Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development*”.

10.8 **Shropshire Council Policy.** Shropshire Council’s strategic planning policy is contained in the adopted Shropshire Core Strategy (adopted 24th February 2011) and the Site Allocations & Management of Development (SAMDev) (adopted 17th December 2015).

10.9 The current Shropshire Development Plan is now out of date and therefore the existing Core Strategy and SAMDev policies are under review. Shropshire have now reached the examination stage. An appropriate and sensible approach from this point is to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of the emerging strategy and policies and work closely with Shropshire Council during the preparation of both documents. The Parish Council recognises that it will need to consider implications arising from the examination of the Local Plan and that they may need to pause the Neighbourhood Plan process to take these into account.

10.10 The Core Strategy sets out Shropshire Council's vision, strategic objectives and the broad strategy to guide future development and growth in Shropshire during the period up to 2026. Shropshire's SAMDev sets out proposals for the use of land and policies to guide future development in order to help deliver the vision and objectives of the Shropshire Core Strategy.

10.11 The purpose of the Shropshire Local Plan Review (2016-2038) is to update elements of the current Development Plan and to make sure that Shropshire can respond flexibly to changing circumstances in line with the NPPF. The Review includes consideration of housing numbers (including the objectively assessed need), employment land requirements, and the distribution of development and review of Green Belt boundaries as part of the consideration of strategic options to deliver new development.

10.12 However, at the time of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan the relevant Shropshire Development plan is the Core Strategy and the SAMDev.

10.13 **Emerging Shropshire Local Plan.** The Emerging Shropshire Local Plan in Policy SP2 Strategic Approach considers that the production of Neighbourhood Plans will be supported and can identify development opportunities which will complement proposals in the Local Plan. The policy also considers that where appropriate Neighbourhood Plans can also identify additional Community Clusters.

10.14 Policy SP3 supports the prioritisation of active travel through the creation and enhancement of walking and cycling links within and between new developments and new developments to existing neighbourhoods and community facilities.

10.15 Policy SP6 looks to ensure the health and well-being of individuals, communities and place. This will be achieved by ensuring the quality of life and delivery of community well-being, through the use of land' type of development; the safeguarding, maintenance and improvement of community facilities and services; and by ensuring that the form, design, location and layout of new development enhances community well-being.

10.16 Policy SP7 in relation to housing development, will support development of housing in addition to the allocations set out in policies S1-S20 (S12 Minsterley and Pontesbury), there will be positive consideration of other sustainable housing development where this does not conflict with the policies of the Local Plan. The policy reiterates that additional housing development which would support the reuse of disused land or premises within settlement development boundaries as shown on the Shropshire's policies map will be supported.

10.17 Policy SP8 considers that community hubs are significant rural service centres and the focus for development in the rural area. As such appropriate development will need to positively respond to design criteria and policies identified within relevant Neighbourhood Plans and Community Led Plans.

10.18 Within the rural area, the Shropshire Plan identifies Community Hubs and Community Clusters as the focus for new development within the rural area (Policy SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside).

10.19 The Shropshire Local Plan also looks to manage and support town centres (Policy DP9), aiming to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Shropshire's network of Town Centres and High Streets in

line with national policy. The policy goes onto support the provision of neighbourhood based local shopping and other community facilities will be supported where this will help consolidate and improve existing provision.

10.20 Policy DP14 Green Infrastructure expands on Shropshire's vision to improve and expand the green infrastructure network as an integral part of open space provision. All new development will need to ensure that they enhance existing green infrastructure assets and extends the green infrastructure network in accordance with the Shropshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, whilst also regarding Neighbourhood Plans and other relevant local strategies.

10.21 DP28 looks to improve communications and transport network in the borough, looking to widen travel and transport choices and improve connectivity and accessibility.

10.22 It is considered that local travel options play an essential role in influencing travel behaviour including footways cycle ways (including the National Cycle Network), public rights of ways, bridleways and the canal network especially within or close to settlements.

10.23 Policy S12 is particular relevant considering the development strategy for Minsterley and Pontesbury Community Hubs. The policy states that both Minsterley and Pontesbury will act as community hubs and will receive development to support their function as Community Hubs which provide services and facilities to serve the needs of the broader Place Plan area. The residential development guidelines for the Pontesbury Community Hub is around 175 dwellings.

10.24 New residential development will be delivered through the saved SAMDev residential and mixed-use allocations and the Local Plan residential site allocations. These allocations will be complemented by appropriate small-scale windfall residential development within the development boundaries for Pontesbury shown on the Policies Map where it is consistent with Community Hub Policy SP8 and other relevant policies of this Local Plan.

10.25 New small-scale windfall employment development within Pontesbury, where it is again consistent with Community Hub Policy SP8 and other relevant policies of this Local Plan.

10.26 Development proposals will be expected to positively respond to policies and guidelines identified within relevant community-led plans and any masterplans that are adopted by Shropshire Council.

10.27 Mitigation measures will be required to remove any adverse effect from increased recreational pressure arising from development in Pontesbury on the integrity of the Stiperstones and Hollies SAC in accordance with Policies DP12, DP14 and DP15. Mitigation measures for recreational impacts are identified in the Local Plan Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and supporting documents.

11. Consultation and Engagement

11.1 The Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan is a community led plan that derives from the vision and objectives of people who live within the neighbourhood area. From the outset the Parish were determined that residents be kept informed and have an opportunity to inform the content of the plan. Communication and consultation in a variety of forms have played a major part in developing the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan.

11.2 Following the approval of the designated area, the Steering Group issued and analysed an initial short questionnaire at a variety of venues with nearly 400 responses in 2019 which then enabled them to draw up a draft version of a Vision for Pontesbury. Following this the draft objectives for achieving this vision was published.

11.3 In the spring of 2020, The Steering Group pooled all of this information and put them in the form of a questionnaire. This was distributed to each household to gauge the community's approval and thoughts on the work completed to that point. A total of 1, 400 forms were sent out to households within the parish.

11.4 The survey was intended to be a household one, where the views of everyone in that household were combined into one response but extra forms could be obtained if requested or obtained or views submitted online. With the online system, the answers were not 'locked in' until the respondents clicked 'Submit' at the very end of the survey. A 'Back' button allowed returns to earlier sections in the questionnaire if the respondent felt the need to make changes.

11.5 The online survey also offered a 'Restart' button to allow the respondent to discard all previous answer to begin the questionnaire again.

11.6 The deadline to complete the survey was 31st July 2020 but it stayed open until the beginning of September whilst paper submissions were being processed and to encourage further responses, if respondents missed the deadline.

11.7 A total of 38 questions were included with the survey covering a number of key themes, the first two questions were a quick analysis on the draft vision statement, published by the Parish before covering the following themes:

- 11.7.1 Rural Landscape and Open Spaces
- 11.7.2 Protecting / Developing Community Amenities
- 11.7.3 Provision of Adequate Housing
- 11.7.4 Movement and Transport around the Parish
- 11.7.5 Employment and Business Opportunities

11.8 The final five questions looked to explore the age range of the members of each responding household and where in the Parish these were located. In order not to duplicate this information the survey asked if the response was the only one for their household and if not, the survey asked respondents not to fill this part in twice.

11.9 **Summary.** Out of a total of 330 responses received, 125 were submitted online and 205 responses were transcribed and added to the online responses into specialist software for analysis. The overall response rate was 24%.

11.10 Of the survey forms distributed:
5 came back as undeliverable;
1 form came back entirely empty; and
3 of the Freepost envelopes contained other documents (e.g. Council Tax Application) instead of a completed survey form.

11.11 The Regulation 14 draft Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to a wide range of consultees and all households within the parish as detailed in the Consultation Statement. The consultation ran from 1st March 2022 to 12th April 2022 and over 140 responses were received and numerous amendments made to the draft plan. Further information on all consultations undertaken during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan may be seen at www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk

12. Technical Evidence

12.1 A great deal of additional technical evidence has been collated by the Parish Council in preparing this first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been drawn from Shropshire Council sources; in particular, information compiled during the preparation of the emerging Local Plan Review and contributing to its extensive evidence base

13. Strategic Environment Assessment

13.1 The content of a Neighbourhood Plan will be informed by a wide range of evidence. Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) where required, can provide a key component of the evidence base.

13.2 SEA's are required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017)¹. SEA's are more likely to be necessary if both of the following two elements apply:

13.2.1 A Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development (for housing, employment etc.) and;

13.2.2 The neighbourhood area contains sensitive environmental assets (e.g. a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) that may be affected by the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.

13.3 In light of the above, it is very unlikely that a Neighbourhood Plan would require an SEA if the plan is not allocating land for development for development is more likely to generate physical changes which lead to significant effects.

13.4 Another element of the Basic Conditions relates to Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, often referred to as the Habitats Directive. Under the Habitats Regulations which implement the Directive, an assessment referred to as an appropriate assessment must be undertaken if the plan in question is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site.

13.5 For the SEA to be an effective process which adds significant value to plan making, it is vital that a Neighbourhood Plan is screened at the appropriate time.

13.6 The Neighbourhood Plan should be screened as soon as there is sufficient information available to consider whether the proposed content of the plan or its likely intent are likely to lead to significant effects. A draft Screening Report has been prepared and is published for consultation alongside the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

13.7 The screening report, should be sent to the three statutory consultees for SEA these include: the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England². There is no timescale set out in the SEA Regulations for this consultation period; a period of five weeks is generally considered to be a suitable timeframe given other consultation provisions within the SEA Regulations.

13.8 The NP policies were devised to reflect the views of the Parish. They will be taken into account when decisions are made about new development through the planning process. All policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, Shropshire Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans will be considered when Shropshire Planning Authority decides whether to approve an application.

¹ These regulations will continue to apply unless new legislation is introduced to withdraw or amend them.

² As set out by Regulation 4 of the SEA Regulations. The role of the statutory consultees within SEA is to bring their individual environmental expertise to the assessment process. Note: statutory consultees are not required to respond to screening requests. Limited resources mean they may need to prioritise the plans they engage with in detail based on an assessment of risk.

14. **Policies**

14.1 In order to meet the Objectives above, the following Policies have been developed:

A. Community Amenities

COM1 Community Amenities

B. Landscape and Local Character

LAN1 Conservation of Pontesbury's Rural Character

LAN2 Conservation of Pontesbury's Historic Character

LAN3 Protection of Plealey and Habberley Conservation Areas

LAN4 Visual Amenity

LAN5 Separate Identities of Settlements

LAN6 A488 Development

C. Housing and Design

HOU1 Housing design

HOU2 Provision of small sized homes and affordable homes

D. Movement and Transport

MOV1 Highway Links and Connections

MOV2 Parking

E. Employment and Business

EMP1 Small-Scale Development and farm diversification

F. Green Environment

GRE1 Local Green Spaces

GRE2 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity

GRE3 Pollution

GRE4 Carbon Reduction

15. Community Amenities

15.1 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Community Amenities:

Objective A1: To enhance facilities and services for a vibrant community.

15.2 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Community Amenities Policy:

Policy COM1 (Community Amenities):

1. Specific Community Amenities and Facilities in Pontesbury Parish are shown below in Table 1. Proposals for the enhancement or protection of community amenities will be supported.
2. Changes of use or redevelopment of community amenities will be supported where:
 - The proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community, or
 - Any replacement facilities are built in sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and have adequate car parking, or
 - Evidence is provided to demonstrate that the facility is no longer required.
3. Proposals for new community facilities in appropriate locations will be supported, particularly if they contribute to the health and wellbeing of the public.

Table 1. Community Amenities in Pontesbury Parish:

Community Amenities in Pontesbury Parish		
Public Hall (Memorial Hall)	Parish pubs ³	GP Surgery
Pavilion Community Hub & Library, including Police office	Connections: Shops and Tea Room	Restaurants and take-away food facilities ⁴
Primary and Secondary Schools	Hair dressers	Dentist
Pontesford Hill Car Park	Cliffdale Nursing Home	Severn Farm Machinery
The Co-operative shop	Hignett's Shop, Pontesbury	Wynstay Farmers
Post office	Pharmacy	Earl's View Fishery, Cruckton
Parish Churches ⁵	Childcare Nursery	Plealey Fishing Pools
Cruckton Hall School	Dr Brown's Hill Farm Project, Pontesbury	Garage and vehicle repair - Plough Garage
Cruckton Village Hall, Cruckmeole	Polemere Nature Reserve	Budget Skips and Recycling Yard, Cruckmeole

³ The Nag's Head, The Plough Inn, The Horseshoes Inn, Mytton Arms

⁴ Village Fish and Chip Shop, Zenna Chinese, Fairwood Chinese, Lea Cross Tandoori, Balti Spice

⁵ St George's Church, Pontesbury Congregational Church, Pontesbury Methodist Church, Pontesbury Baptist Church, St Mary's Church, Habberley

Malehurst Industrial Estate	Storage Master, Pontesbury	Lower Mill Kennels, Pontesford
Longmynd Travel, Lea Cross	Allcare Nursing, Pontesbury	Arscott Golf Course

15.3 Evidence and justification

15.4 In all consultations with the public in relation to both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan, there was significant concern that community facilities should be retained in order to keep the Parish a viable and active community. The majority of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire use at least one of the parish amenities throughout the year, with well over three quarters of respondents using shops at least weekly, and over 50% of respondents made suggestions about new facilities and amenities that they would like to see in the parish. The vast majority of NP Questionnaire respondents support the concept of encouraging new businesses and amenities to be developed and also support the idea of more small campsites and B+B facilities, and proposals to encourage visitors to use local facilities and services.

15.5 The Local Plan recognises the importance of community facilities in the rural area and stresses that it is especially important that these facilities are protected. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to build on this approach by identifying and seeking to protect the relevant facilities in the Parish.

15.6 Changes to the Permitted Development Rights laws concern 'Change of Use' from one class of use to another, including from Business to Residential, subject to various restrictions and requirements⁶, and not in Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, albeit that there are limitations to the size of properties which can be converted without Planning Permission. The Parish Council seeks to preserve and enhance all amenities in the Parish and will work closely with SCC and potential developers to achieve this goal.

15.6 This policy conforms to:

Local Plan policies: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside; SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy; SP13.7 Delivering Sustainable Growth and Enterprise; DP9.8 and DP9.9 Managing and Supporting Town Centres; DP10 Tourism, Culture and Leisure; DP14 Green Infrastructure; DP15 Open Space and Recreation.

NPPF paragraphs: 7, 9, 16, 20, 28, 70, 84d, 187.

⁶ Prior Approval required from SCC concerning: Transport and Highways Impacts; Contamination and Flooding Risks; Impact of Noise on potential occupiers. There is a 150m² limitation on the size of the property, and all rooms in the new residence must have natural light.

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use/2

16. Landscape and Local Character

16.1 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and Local Character:

Objective B1. To conserve the character and beauty of the rural landscape of the parish

16.2 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and Local Character Policy:

Policy LAN1 (Landscape Character):

1. Development in the parish outside the Pontesbury village development boundary will be supported if it meets the requirements of SP10 in the revised Local Plan (Managing Development in the Countryside) and maintains or where possible enhances the landscape character of the parish as expressed in the Landscape Character Statement.
2. Development proposals likely to have a significant impact on the rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan area should demonstrate how this has been taken to account by the proposal.

16.3 Evidence and justification

16.4 In the 2018 Questionnaire, the most popular response (137) to what people liked about living in Pontesbury Parish was the “open countryside” with a significant number specifying “views to the hills”.

16.5 In the 2020 Consultation 86% of the respondents agreed with the draft vision statement which “safeguarded the much loved rural environment”.

16.6 The Landscape Character statement is based on Shropshire Council’s “Landscape Assessment” which describes most of the parish as “Principal Settled Farmland”

16.7 Comparison of historic Ordnance Survey maps of the 1950’s with the present landscape reveals a relatively high rate of hedge and field boundary retention.

16.8 Gillespie’s Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment

16.9 Shropshire Revised Local Plan SP10 (Managing Development in the Countryside) requires development to “maintain or enhance countryside vitality and character.”

16.10 NPPF’s environmental objective as part of sustainable development requires development to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment.

16.11 The policy will assist in passing on an enhanced heritage to future generations rather than a depleted one.

16.12 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and Local Character:

Objective B2: To conserve the historic heritage of the parish.

16.13 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and Local Character Policy:

Policy LAN2 (Conservation of the Parish's historic heritage):

Development will be supported which, where appropriate:

1. Conserves and enhances the significance and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets in the parish
2. The residential conversion of heritage assets which involve minimum alteration or rebuilding, are not in isolated spots and are close to services and facilities.
3. Development in or adjacent to Cruckton Village in line with SP10 will respect the historic environment in association with Cruckton Hall in terms of the Hall, Home Farm, boundary walls, tree planting, road alignment, linear shape of village and pattern of footpaths. Where appropriate design draws some inspiration from the six County Council small holdings set up after the break-up of the Cruckton Hall Estate.
4. Development proposals should take full account of known surface and sub-surface archaeology and ensure unknown and potentially significant deposits are identified and appropriately considered during development after consultation with the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Lack of current evidence of sub-surface archaeology must not be taken as proof of absence

16.14 Evidence and justification

16.15 The 2018 consultation revealed that the most popular response to the enjoyment of life in the parish was the countryside and rural feel. Over 150 respondents wished to protect and maintain the existing countryside to which heritage assets make a strong contribution with historic farmhouses, farmsteads, agricultural features and the remains of rural industries figuring prominently in the list of hundreds of heritage assets in the parish. (116 designated and 382 non designated).

16.16 Outside the smelt works and engine house in Pontesford there are few prominent or obvious visual reminders of mid Victorian times when Bagshaw's Directory noted a 'great proportion of the labouring classes' in our parish were employed in lead, coal and quarrying industries. Remaining industrial features are therefore important visual reminders of this very different but significant part of the history of Pontesbury Parish.

16.17 The character of Cruckton village is heavily influenced by the historic contribution of the Cruckton Hall Estate with evidence of its influence contained in its sale catalogue of 1929.

16.18 Revised Local Plan DP23 'Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment' section 6 supports proposals which appropriately conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets.

16.19 Revised Local Plan SP10 'Development in the Countryside' supports residential conversions in suitable sites and the sustainable reuse of buildings with heritage significance.

16.20 NPPF section 16 relating to the historic environment states that historic assets are an 'irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to that significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'

16.21 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and Local Character:

Objective B3: To safeguard the character of the conservation areas of Plealey and Habberley

16.22 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and Local Character Policy:

Policy LAN3 (Conservation areas):

Developments proposals will be supported which conserve and enhance the character and settings of Plealey and Habberley Conservation areas by:

1. Safeguarding the listed buildings , highlighted views into/out of the Areas, open spaces, hedges forming soft boundaries between gardens and fields, layout of buildings which line roads with little back development and other key elements of their character as outlined in the Shropshire Council Character Appraisals
2. Designing new buildings whose siting, scale and external appearance – with special regard for materials and fenestration – complement existing structures and do not appear obtrusive or suburban in character.
3. Developers must provide clear evidence as to how their proposals have taken into account the character of each conservation area. Proposals that fail to respond adequately to their context or reduce the character of the conservation area will not be supported.

16.23 Evidence and justification

16.24 The Character Appraisals produced by Shropshire County Council for Plealey and Habberley conservation areas.

16.25 98% of respondents to 2020 questionnaire supported special measures to protect the character of the Conservation Areas

16.26 In refusing an appeal to build two houses in an open field bordering Well Lane, Plealey and within Plealey Conservation Area in February 2016, the inspector stated that the open field was a key element in the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which would be adversely affected by the proposal.

16.27 DP23 of Shropshire’s Revised Local Plan seeks to protect its heritage assets which include Conservation Areas

16.28 Section 16 of NPPF aims to conserve the historic environment and desires new development to make a positive contribution to local character.

16.29 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and Local character:

Objective B4: To safeguard amenity views

16.30 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and Local character Policy:

Policy LAN4 (Safeguard amenity views):

1. Development will be supported which respects the following highly valued amenity views by demonstrating how the key features of the view have been safeguarded so that the view can continue to be enjoyed. The views are identified on map at Annex A.

View 1	Plealey Village
View 2	Cruckton Terrace
View 3	Arscott Golf Course
View 4	Field beyond Pontesford Hill car park
View 5	Grove Lane, Pontesbury
View 6	Pontesbury Hill Road

16.31 Evidence and justification

16.32 Each view has been supported by local people living close to the designated view. Views have been chosen not just for their intrinsic value but because they are easy of access (near a road) or in the case of view 3 a few minutes easy level walking, and shown at Appendix A. These criteria ensure that each view is enjoyed by significant numbers of people whether as a backdrop to everyday life or as part of a recreational walk.

16.32.1 Safeguarding view 1 provides an extra layer of protection for the setting of Plealey Conservation Area.

16.32.2 View 2 is one of the several outstanding views along the elevated Cruckton Terrace identified in the Parish Handbook as a Top 10 place to visit in the Parish.

16.32.3 View 3 is a low level panoramic view, ideal compensation for those who do not wish to make the steep climb to the top of Earl's Hill which has a truly outstanding view of the whole parish which already enjoys three levels of protection.

16.32.4 View 4 provides an immediate and striking view of the beauty of the AONB on exiting the popular car park at Pontesford Hill.

16.32.5 View 5 provides an excellent view into the Shropshire Hills AONB on a popular route from Pontesbury Village to the AONB.

16.32.6 View 6, Pontesbury Hill, is one of the views recommended for protection in the Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment.

16.33 The art historian Kenneth Clark wrote that excepting love, nothing else unites people of all kinds than their pleasure in a good view.

16.34 The draft Revised Local Plan states in DP17 – Landscape and Visual Amenity - that development should safeguard visual amenity in Shropshire.

16.35 GLVIA3 defines visual amenity as “The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings which provide an attractive setting for people as they go about everyday activities whether at work, play or travelling through an area.

16.36 NPPF2021 paragraph 130(F) “Planning policies should ensure that development is sympathetic to landscape setting” and paragraph 130(F) planning policies should promote “health and well-being”.

16.37 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and local character:

Objective B5: To maintain gaps between settlements

16.38 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and local character Policy:

Policy LAN5 (Maintain gaps between settlements):

1. In order to maintain the landscape character and separate identity of the settlements of Cruckmeole and Hanwood, and Pontesbury and Minsterley, development will not be supported if it leads to the coalescence of the settlements.

16.39 Evidence and justification

16.40 Community consultation regarding preferred development sites for the current Shropshire local Plan revealed a desire to keep Cruckmeole physically separate from Hanwood and this was acknowledged when the proposed development site at the western edge of Hanwood was reduced in size to allow a larger gap between the site and houses in Cruckmeole. Regulation 14 consultation responses strongly supported this separation.

16.40 Pontesbury and Minsterley villages are in separate parishes with the latter having a visual distinctiveness in terms of large industrial buildings compared to the more residential ambience of Pontesbury.

16.41 NPPF Paragraph 185C - development should contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

16.42 Shropshire revised Local Plan SP10

16.43 The policy will help to maintain the individual settlement identities and geographical separateness. Maps showing the gaps between settlements are shown in Appendix B.

16.44 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Landscape and local character:

Objective B6: To conserve the character of the land adjacent to the A488

16.45 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Landscape and local character Policy:

Policy LAN6 (Conserve character of the land adjacent to the A488):

1. Proposed development along the A488 between Cruckmeole and Pontesford will be supported if it meets the requirements of SP10 in the revised Local Plan (Managing Development in the Countryside) and maintains or enhances the landscape character of the land bordering the road, respecting the sporadic distributions of buildings.

16.46 Evidence and justification

16.47 In the 2020 questionnaire 97% of the respondents wanted protection for views towards the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

16.48 In the 2018 questionnaire the most popular response [137] to what people most liked about living in Pontesbury Parish was "the open countryside", with a significant number specifying "views to the hills".

16.49 There are three strands to the character of the land adjacent to the A488.

The A488 runs through the centre of the parish with views of, and close proximity to, Shropshire Hills AONB to which the road provides an attractive approach.

The area adjacent to the A488 is characterised by hedges, hedgerow trees, ample green verges and very sporadic settlements.

It is part of the wider landscape of the Rea Valley defined as principal settled farmlands as outlined in the Landscape Character of the Parish statement. This policy aims to prevent significant damage to these characteristics.

16.50 NPPF Paragraph 8C "protect natural / built environment"

16.51 Shropshire revised Local Plan SP10 Managing Development in the countryside "to maintain or enhance countryside character"

16.52 For most residents and visitors the perception of Pontesbury Parish as an unspoilt rural environment of treed hedgerows, woods, rolling farmland and a backdrop of hills is gained from travelling along its main traffic artery, the A488.

16.53 The current gaps between buildings permit several opportunities to see the iconic view of the Parish towards Pontesford and Earls Hills.

16.54 The policy is designed to prevent uncharacteristic ribbon development.

17. Housing and Design

17.1 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Housing and Design:

Objective C1: New housing in Pontesbury village respects variety of styles and materials.

17.2 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Housing and Design Policy:

Policy HOU1 (Housing design):

1. New development in Pontesbury village will be supported which demonstrates high quality design by maintaining and enhancing the character/appearance, beauty and historic interest of the village as expressed in the Character of Pontesbury village statement.
2. Important design aspects which require a sympathetic response include:-
 - General village characteristics in terms of layout and greenery.
 - Maintaining views of church tower and hills
 - Inclusion of some of the existing architectural details, especially window design, doorways and chimneys.
 - Variety of materials in treatment of boundaries and buildings without creating an over fussy appearance. A predominance of brick is acceptable with building variety being achieved through colour, texture and bonding. Village distinctiveness is strengthened by use of stone in boundary walling.
 - Larger scale development should maintain a village feel by being broken down into distinct areas and the inclusion of a focal point such as a green.
 - Historic interest is strengthened by naming new developments or streets after aspects of the history of the village for example, Quarry Close or Snailbeach Avenue refer to its industrial past.

17.3 Evidence and justification

17.4 The 2020 Questionnaire Q12 showed significant majority support for a variety of house design in keeping with local / nearby properties. A frequent comment to recent housing applications in the Parish has been a perceived lack of respect for the character of neighbouring buildings.

17.5 The revised Local Plan stresses the importance of development maintaining and enhancing the character, appearance and historic interests of a local area and this policy is designed to provide these local details. The Living with Beauty report of the 'Building Better' Commission 2020 stresses that new development should be designed to fit in with the texture of a place and that it should be an improvement of that place.

17.6 This conforms with NPPF section 12 paragraphs 125/129 which states that beautiful and sustainable buildings are fundamental to the planning process, should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping.

17.7 The policy conforms with Shropshire Local Plan SP5 [High Quality Design}, SP6 Health and well-being.

17.8 The policy will strengthen the distinctiveness of settlements, a sense of belonging and help to redress the recent loss of local character in Pontesbury village.

17.9 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Housing and Design:

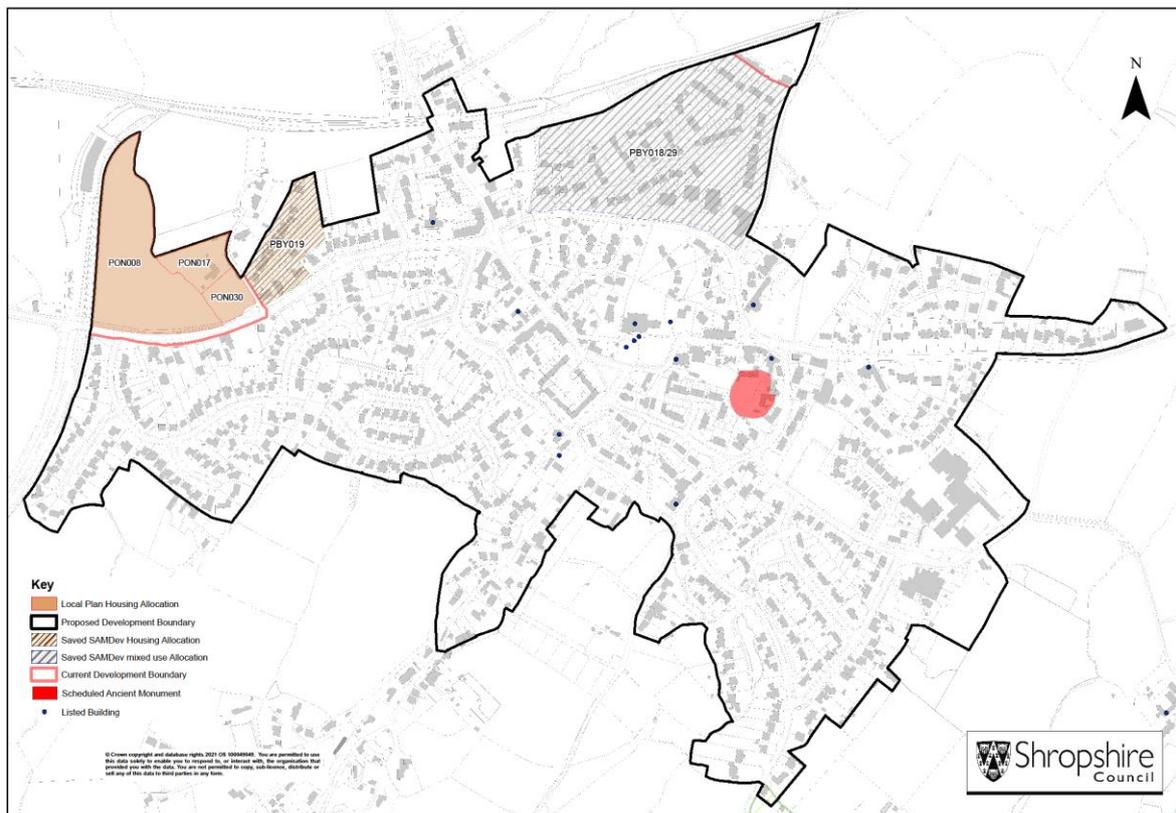
Objective C2: To enable the provision of small sized homes and affordable homes

17.10 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Housing and Design Policy:

Policy HOU2 (To enable to the provision of small sized and affordable homes):

Small infill developments of between two and four houses within Pontesbury village development boundary will be supported if one or more houses are suited to the needs of younger or older generations subject to clear local evidence of housing need and in conformity with other relevant policies.

Pontesbury Development Boundary (Fig.4)



17.11 Evidence and justification

17.12 The January 2020 Right House Right Place report commissioned by Shropshire Council for Pontesbury village noted that 41% of those contemplating moving wanted to downsize to a bungalow or detached house, with 2 bedrooms being the most popular choice. 12 people wanted a starter home or self-build and 15 required an affordable home to buy (regarding the latter the NP believes that the various affordable schemes in the revised local plan will meet this need.)

17.13 The 2020 questionnaire recorded a similar need for small bungalows with 227 indicating it was their preferred type.

17.14 The 2 surveys reflect a higher percentage of residents over the age of 65 compared with Shropshire and national figures.

17.15 NPPF paragraph 50 states "plan for a mix of housing based on needs of different groups."

17.16 Shropshire revised local plan DP states "a mix of dwellings to meet the identified needs of local communities".

17.17 Revised Local Plan DP3 – D7 deal with different schemes for affordable houses including an increased percentage of affordable homes for new developments in Pontesbury.

17.18 In view of the limited space for development within Pontesbury, the small remaining quota of houses to be built by 2038 and DPI covering sites of five or more houses the above policy is both complementary and appropriate. The policy will enable more local people to remain in the Parish and homes for the elderly especially bungalows will allow more people to remain in their own homes. As the Revised Local Plan makes extensive provision to expand the number of affordable homes, the Neighbourhood Plan regards this as adequate provision for future affordable homes.

18. Movement and Transport

18.1 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Movement and Transport:

Objective D1: To support a safe, accessible network of roads, cycle ways and footpaths to promote healthier lifestyles, access to the countryside and improve active travel between homes and amenities.

18.2 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Movement and Transport policy:

Policy MOV1 (Highway links and connections):

Developments that seek to enhance / improve Public Rights Of Way (PROW), including pedestrian and cycle links will be supported.

1. Development should promote the protection and maintenance of the existing PROW to provide easy, accessible traffic-free routes for non-motorised users but including mobility scooters throughout the local area and to improve active travel links between homes, services and amenities.
2. Upgrading of pathways to allow access to the countryside for everyone, including people with reduced mobility.
3. Developments in proximity of an existing PROW or area of public access (e.g. the Council owned stretch of dismantled railway north of Pontesbury (Fig 5) or the Thieves Lane Bridleway east of Cruckton (Fig 6) must include access points for all forms of active traveller to the right of way.

18.3 Evidence and justification

18.4 Transport plays an important role in supporting economic growth and enhancing a community where people want to live, work and play. It is also essential in achieving sustainable development and ensuring safe accessibility at various levels for all individuals. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey reiterated respondents support for good public transport to serve the needs of the people travelling to and from work without a reliance on private transportation. New and ongoing challenges such as global warming have highlighted the opportunities that transport modes can have in helping the parish seek a carbon neutral approach, as well as showing us the importance of our surrounding area and ways of travel between our communities. Protection and maintenance of our existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) enhances access to the local countryside, which is agreed as key to improving wellbeing and supporting mental health. For clarity, PROW as used in MOV1 include footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways.

18.5 One area that respondents considered to be a major issue was car parking. It was generally considered that new developments should be provided with sufficient off-street parking, with the control of (and enforcement against) inappropriate parking, such as on pavements, considered to be an important matter.

18.6 The importance of the interconnectivity in our neighbourhoods and continued access to the open countryside are regarded as high priority by the community of Pontesbury with 95% of respondents using PROW on a frequent or occasional basis. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the existing network of PROW and take opportunities to enhance existing provision by creating new links where possible, in order to promote outdoor activities and provide outlets to improve physical and mental health.



Fig 5. Route of dismantled railway and proposed development area



Fig 6. Route of Thieves Lane Bridleway

18.7 Respondents to the survey were keen to see PROW kept open and in good condition (96%) with most (95%) agreeing that well marked routes were important. Some comment was made to request improvements in safety and the possibilities for mobility scooters, whilst overall use of PROW was for pleasure and exercise through walking, running and cycling. In line with government guidelines on usage of PROW, we have included mobility scooters in the policy.

18.8 Whilst Pontesbury village is well supported with convenience and specialist stores, primary health care and a secondary school, it remains a rural parish, with outer areas reliant on transport to access these facilities. However, the reduction of public transport provision in the rural area has resulted in residents being more dependent on private vehicle transport. The 2011 Census showed that Pontesbury has on average 1.6 cars per household, 0.2 higher than the 2018 National average. Traffic regeneration by new developments must be mitigated by improved links to the public transport network, which will minimise the additional carbon footprint generated by the introduction of the new housing.

18.9 This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change; SP4 Sustainable Development; SP6 Health and Wellbeing; DP28 Communications and Transport

NPPF Paragraphs 8b, 88, 92, 98, 100, 104, 105, 106, 112

18.10 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objective relating to Movement and Transport:

Objective D2: To improve car parking in Pontesbury

18.11 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Movement and

Policy MOV2 (Parking):

1. Development proposals that do not result in the loss of off-street public car parking will be supported. Alternative schemes will be considered if equivalent or improved parking capacity is provided elsewhere.
2. Retail, commercial or business developments that provide appropriate parking facilities that avoid or minimise 'on street' parking will also be supported.
3. Opportunities, where possible, to provide electric vehicle charging facilities for both commercial and domestic development in line with requirements in the Shropshire Local Plan will be supported.
4. All new developments must seek to maximise off-street parking whilst bearing in mind the needs of high quality design.

Transport policy:

18.12 Evidence and Justification

18.13 Provision of parking spaces can be beneficial to communities, helping to reduce traffic obstructions, increase road safety and provide convenience for householders, businesses and visitors in the area. In response to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, many considered car parking to be a major issue in the Neighbourhood with inconsiderate on-street parking regarded as a very serious negative factor in many areas of the parish. Increased traffic on the A488 highlights the inconvenience and potentially dangerous nature of an increase in on-street parking.

18.14 In addition, problems caused by parking near schools were universally considered to be an issue and that a robust approach to parking enforcement would make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the Neighbourhood Area. Whilst there are no county standards for off street parking facilities on new builds, the NPPF states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- The accessibility of the development;
- The type, mix and use of development;
- The availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- Local car ownership levels; and
- The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

18.15 All new developments must consider each of the above points and due to the level of car ownership in the area, limited availability of public transport and the identified desire to increase local sustainability, must seek to maximise off-street parking and electric charging opportunities wherever possible. However, the visual impact of many cars can conflict with the requirement for high quality design. Road layout and planting should therefore be considered.

18.16 This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test and SP6 Health and Wellbeing.
- NPPF Paragraphs 104, 107, 108, 110

FARM DIVERSIFICATION



19. Employment and Business

19.1 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to Employment and Business:

Objective E1: To encourage small scale economic development including farm diversification which brings landscape benefits.

19.2 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Economic Development Policy:

Policy EMP1 (Small scale employment and farm diversification):

Subject to respecting the character of Pontesbury village and the landscape character and historic heritage of the rest of the parish and an acceptable impact in terms of traffic changes and the amenity of residential properties, the following will be supported:

1. The development of new, small scale businesses which are well screened and sit unobtrusively in the landscape. New industrial activity will be supported within the existing Malehurst Industrial Estate or in the area adjoining it.
2. The diversification of farm and rural businesses which can demonstrate environmental improvement including biodiversity with particular reference to hedges, hedgerow trees and ponds, maintain the tranquillity of their surroundings and where appropriate improve the provision or condition of footpaths. See illustration on page 36.
3. Tourist accommodation in the form of glamping, camping and touring caravans on sites in or adjacent to settlements and which do not exceed 10 pitches. Multiple sites in close proximity will not be supported.
4. Proposals to promote or provide facilities for home working and businesses operating from home.
5. The sustainable re use of redundant or disused buildings of sufficient character in accessible locations to be used for high quality tourist accommodation or small scale economic development.
6. Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form. Due reference should be made and full consideration be given to the Shropshire Farmsteads Characterisation Project.
7. Development for new small scale businesses that include renewable energy schemes that are well adapted to the impacts of climate change and which are appropriately located which maintain the visual amenity and surrounding character.

19.3 Evidence and justification

19.4 With the exception of schools which have a large number of staff in large buildings, the characteristic business is small scale employing few staff. Over 90% of the responses in the 2020 questionnaire relating to those who run their own businesses within the parish employ only one or two people. The list of over 100 businesses in the parish handbook contains very few which employ more than a handful of people.

19.5 The 2011 census and 2020 questionnaire indicate nearly one fifth of Pontesbury's population is self-employed, significantly above England's national average.

19.6 Hedges and hedgerow trees not only provide shelter for livestock, support for wildlife and reduce soil erosion they also make an important contribution to the landscape character of the parish but like most areas of England, they have suffered from a reduction in the agricultural workforce leading to many gaps and poor maintenance especially a lack of traditional layering.

19.7 The 2018 consultation revealed a high level of satisfaction with the existing character of the parish – aside from ‘traffic’ the most disliked feature was ‘nothing’ with ‘peace’ one of its most valued attributes.

19.8 The 2020 questionnaire revealed that 74% wished to encourage more tourism; 94% wanted an improvement in the footpath network; 94% supported the conversion of buildings for an alternative use.

19.9 There was minority support for allocating additional employment land with Malehurst gaining most mentions.

19.10 Farm diversification schemes are potentially a significant way of maintaining viable farms which are important for the local economy and our much loved landscapes which are largely the result of many centuries of farming activity with farmers continuing to be the main custodians of our countryside.

19.11 SP10 and DP11 of the draft revised Local Plan relating to countryside and tourism support small scale, well screened development which respects local character.

19.12 The revised 2021 NPPF states that planning policies should support a prosperous rural economy by the growth of all types of businesses through conversion of existing buildings, well designed new buildings and diversification of farming and land use business. Planning policies should enable rural tourism and leisure activities which respect the character of the countryside.

19.13 Small scale renewable energy schemes will help minimise any reduction to the existing acreage of farmland in line with several responses to Regulation 14 regarding possible loss of farmland as well as maintaining balance between the needs of agriculture, green energy and landscape conservation.

20. Green Environment Policy

The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has developed the following Objective relating to the Green Environment:

Objective F1: To protect Local Green spaces

20.1 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Green Environment Policy:

Policy GRE1 (Local Green Spaces):

The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces where new development is ruled out except in very special circumstances.

LGS1	School Green and Jubilee Garden, Pontesbury
LGS2	Mary Webb School Playing Field
LGS3	Pontesbury Play area
LGS4	Pontesbury Sports Association Field
LGS5	Hall Bank Village Green, Pontesbury
LGS6	Pontesbury Cemetery
LGS7	Church Close Green, Cruckton
LGS8	Cruckton Hall Sports Field

20.2 Evidence and justification

20.3 The designated areas were put forward by respondents to the 2020 Questionnaire with the following results:

Pontesbury Play Area was widely used according to the 2018 Consultation

The Sports Association Field is the only area in the village for football and cricket.

The designated green spaces contribute to the character of Pontesbury and Cruckton.

20.4 The 2021 revised NPPF paragraph 101 allows communities to identify and protect Local Green Spaces which are:

In reasonably close proximity to the community each one serves

Demonstrably special and hold a particular local significance

Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

20.5 Development for future parking on Mary Webb playing fields will be opposed unless significant improvement in provision of playing fields in the surrounding area was delivered through development gain.

20.6 Maps of the designated Local Green Spaces are shown at Appendix C.

20.7 A map of Pontesbury open spaces is shown at Appendix D.

20.8 The table at Fig 7 (below) describes how the Local Green Space criteria have been met:

Name of Green Space	Size and Location	Special value and significance	Ownership
LGS1 Pontesbury School Green and Jubilee Garden	Centre of the village 1,260m ² and 540m ²	Informal meeting place, close views of landmark church tower and proximity to war memorial. Close to shops and bus stop.	Part Parish Council, part Shropshire Council, part Sevenside Housing
LGS2 Mary Webb School Playing Fields	Edge of village 41,200m ²	Provides essential space for secondary school sporting activity	Shropshire Council
LGS3 Pontesbury Play Area	Centre of village Station Road play area 9,000m ²	Children's play area equipment and BMX track	Parish Council on long term lease from Shropshire Council
LGS4 Pontesbury Sports Association Field	Edge of village 8.22 acres/33,260 m ²	Football, cricket, netball and bowling facilities	Parish Council on long term lease from Shropshire Council
LGS5 Hall Bank Village Green, Pontesbury	Centre of village 1,400m ²	Adjacent to main shop, community hub, surgery, nursery and essential green space for new development of 86 houses	Pontesbury Parish Council
LGS6 Pontesbury Cemetery	Centre of village 7,800m ²	Away from main road it has long provided a much valued and relatively peaceful green space for quiet contemplation	St Georges Church
LGS7 Church Close Green, Cruckton	Centre of Cruckton village 6,100m ²	Site of Roman villa, informal play area, part wildlife habitat	Shropshire Council
LGS8 Cruckton Hall Sports Field	Within Cruckton village 6,000m ²	Cruckton Hall School playing field, no other sports field in village.	Private

Fig 7. Pontesbury Parish Green Spaces

20.8 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objective relating to the Green Environment:

Objective F2: To protect and enhance natural habitats and wildlife and increase biodiversity

20.9 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Green Environment Policy

GRE2 Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Proposed developments may be considered if they are planned and designed to protect and enhance local wildlife species and habitats including those that are undesignated. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how these will achieve *at least* a 10% net gain for biodiversity. This includes:

1. Preserving or creating wildlife habitats, including trees and hedgerows on their boundaries,
2. Establishing and maximising wildlife corridors linking up to local green infrastructure assets through the use of native planting,
3. Retaining ancient, veteran and mature trees and hedgerows as well as trees that have amenity value. Where trees must be lost they should be replaced at a ratio of 2:1 with a preference for native trees/fruit or nut trees,
4. Provide features in areas of open space which increase and enhance natural habitats and native wildlife e.g. wildflower areas, bird and bat boxes, fruit/nut trees,
5. Where on-site net gain for biodiversity is not feasible then other areas specified by the Parish Council may be appropriate to add such value to the local Nature Recovery Network,
6. Implement Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), using natural features such as drainage ditches and ponds.

20.10 Evidence and justification

20.11 In recent years there has been a radical change in attitude to the need for biodiversity net gain at both national and local planning level. As a society it is now accepted that we need to conserve and enhance our biodiversity in the face of a global biodiversity crisis.

20.12 Nationally the UK government is committed to building Nature Recovery Networks to “help us deal with three of the biggest challenges we face: biodiversity loss, climate change and well-being.” (www.gov.uk/nature-recover-network)

20.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) further backs the protection that planning should act as a way of minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

20.14 The NPPF also considers that plans should “promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species, and pursue opportunities for securing net gain for biodiversity.”

20.15 Although natural diversity is present in the rural landscape around Pontesbury and the Parish villages, and there is some connectivity of hedgerows and trees to larger areas of woodland and open green space, this diversity is under threat from many pressures and the general neglect of our natural assets over many years. Species numbers among both local and national flora and fauna have been falling for decades.

These declines are well documented, for example The Natural History Museum’s latest analysis reveals that the UK has just 53% of its biodiversity remaining, and is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.



Fig 8. Protected Species Sites

20.16 The Map at Fig 8 is produced by Shropshire Council showing sites of protected species in the Pontesbury area. Shropshire Council also produces lists of sightings of these species, available on the SC website.

20.17 The importance of protecting our biodiversity was also reflected within the Neighbourhood Plan consultation questionnaire, with several respondents supporting the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the parish, including working with local farmers to this end.

20.18 Additionally Shropshire Council aims to ensure that all development delivers at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity, as well as avoiding harm to Shropshire’s natural assets, which need to be conserved, enhanced and restored.

20.19 This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP4 Sustainable Development; SP6 Health and Well-being; DP12 The Natural Environment; DP14 Green Infrastructure and DP16 Landscaping of New Developments.

NPPF Paragraphs 8,15,153,174 and 179.

20.20 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objective relating to the Green Environment:

Objective F3: To reduce Pollution

20.21 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Pollution Policy

GRE3 Pollution

Development in Pontesbury will support the transition to a zero-carbon economy, so development proposals will be required to include effective measures to minimise pollution by:

1. Being sited in an acceptable place in relation to the A488 to minimise the impact of pollution from traffic on future occupants.
2. Increasing opportunities for walking and cycling.
3. Supporting changes of land or building use which encourage local food production for local consumption.
4. Minimising light pollution particularly for development sites outside or on the edge of the existing settlement.

20.22 Evidence and Justification

20.23 Pontesbury is a quiet village in a scenic rural area, but any increase in traffic along the A488 which runs directly through the village will contribute to a significant increase in air pollution. A number of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire considered that the traffic on the A488 is already a huge problem and additional developments along the main road without proper assessment will only increase vehicle movement and air pollution in and through the village.

20.24 One the impacts of national lockdown due to Covid-19 was the remarkable reduction in air pollution as traffic was at a very low level. One respondent in the questionnaire considered that air pollution had noticeably improved during lockdown. The aspiration of this policy is that air pollution in our parish should not be allowed to worsen through development, to protect our health and well-being and that of the planet, as pollution from cars running on fossil fuels contributes significantly to global heating / climate change. Hence the consideration of the impacts of the existing highway as well as promoting alternative modes of travel.

20.25 Minimising light pollution helps maintain the rural nature of the parish and lessens the impact on nocturnal fauna.

20.26 This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP6 Health and well-being and DP18 Pollution and Public Amenity

NPPF Paragraphs 8, 174 and 185

20.27 The Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan has the following Objective relating to the Green Environment:

Objective F4: Carbon reduction

20.28 In pursuit of this objective, the Parish Council has developed the following Green Environment Policy

GRE4 Carbon Reduction

1. Development in Pontesbury will support the transition to a zero-carbon economy by the following measures designed to meet a high level of sustainability and energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions and relevant development proposals will include a statement setting out how the development will achieve this, including where appropriate:
 - a. The compliance of energy efficiency standards exceeding building regulations by at least 19%. (LA 4.100-4111); for example the use of thermally efficient and environmentally sustainable building materials, and the siting of buildings for maximum passive solar gain.
 - b. The use of low carbon heat sources e.g. air/ground heat pumps and solar PV, avoiding the need to use fossil fuels,
 - c. Generate a proportion of its energy on-site from renewable and low carbon energy sources and set out a minimum percentage of this to be achieved. (Merton Rule policy)
2. The installation of community renewable energy generation will be supported where the following criteria are met:
 - a. Biodiversity improvements/habitat enhancement are planned in from the start of the project
 - b. Generation facilities will result in a significant reduction in community carbon emissions over their lifetime;
 - c. Developments of renewable energy generation facilities are led by and meet the needs of the local community;
 - d. The business case for each facility is sound, and is reasonably required to meet community objectives; and
 - e. Each facility is installed in such a way that land can be used and subsequently returned to its existing use over time, as more efficient technologies are developed.
3. Where appropriate selection of suitable locations for such facilities is based on choosing sites:
 - a. Of low ecological value and wildlife impact;
 - b. Where land requirement can be minimised by adopting less space intensive technologies;
 - c. Where the land can be shared by renewable energy facilities and some agricultural use as appropriate;
 - d. Where the noise, smell and visual appearance of the installations are minimised such that they do not cause unacceptable nuisance; and where on-site compensatory measures can be taken to reduce any residual impact.

20.29 Evidence and Justification

20.30 The effect of climate change means temperature rises around the world leading to more extreme weather and further danger to the population. However, unless further action is taken, the planet could still warm by more than 2degC by the end of this century. If nothing is done, scientists think global warming could exceed 4degC, leading to devastating heat-waves, millions losing their homes to rising sea levels and irreversible loss of plant and animal species.

20.31 The UK government puts a “statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their local plan designed to tackle climate change,” and that there is the “expectation that neighbourhood plans will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.” (www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change)

20.32 The document ‘Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency’ (Centre for Sustainable Energy and TCPA, February 2020), notes that rural communities often have greater potential for renewable energy, and that ‘a requirement for 10% of energy to be provided from renewable energy isn’t that ambitious anymore’.

20.33 Public consultation also reflected the change toward becoming carbon neutral in the village with 84.6% of responses in 2020 wanting houses to be carbon neutral and 82.6% wanting charging points with new housing.

20.34 On a local level Shropshire Council also declared a climate emergency in 2019, with climate change representing a major challenge to people’s way of life, and alongside this is to ensure that development meets today’s needs for future generations. In 2008 the Climate Change Act required the country to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050.

20.35 In June 2019, the Government announced that the UK will ‘eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050’ by legislating for net zero emissions. As part of this, all buildings need to be net zero carbon by 2050. However, the Committee on Climate Change has reported that by 2030, current plans would at best deliver around half of the required reduction in emissions, 100-170 MtCO₂e per year short of what is required by the carbon budgets. A 36% reduction in UK emissions is required from 2016 to 2030, with approximately a 20% cut in emissions (89 MtCO₂e) required from the buildings sector as a whole. The Committee has made clear that this will require “stronger new build standards for energy efficiency and low carbon heat”.

20.36 This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP6 Health and Well-Being and DP11 Reducing Carbon Emissions.

NPPF Paragraphs 8c, 152, 153, 154, 155.

21. Monitoring and Review

21.1 It is expected that Shropshire Council, as the Planning Authority, will continue to monitor progress relating to the number of dwellings and number of affordable homes delivered during the Plan period, as part of the wider monitoring responsibilities for the Council area set out in their Annual Monitoring Report.

21.2 The Plan covers the period until 2038. For long term success it is essential that developments in the Plan area are reviewed against the Plan's Objectives and Policies.

21.3 Pontesbury Parish Council will monitor the delivery of its policies and work to ensure that benefits to the communities within the Parish are achieved.

21.4 Each agenda for the Parish Council meetings will include a 'Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan' which will ensure that the item is continually reviewed and reported upon during the Plans lifecycle.

21.5 On the anniversary of the adoption of the Plan, the Parish Council will assess the impact of the Plan during the previous year and discuss the implementation of the Plan for the forthcoming year, taking into consideration any significant changes that may have come about as a result of the plans adoption. Any matters or problems will be raised by the Parish Council and brought to the attention of the Borough Council, this will then be used as part of their contribution to the Annual Monitoring Report produced by Shropshire Council.

21.6 In 2027, 2032 and 2037, there will be thorough five year reviews of progress by a recruited community-based steering group. The purpose of these more comprehensive reviews will be to hold the Parish Council to account by assessing how / whether the 'Objectives' are being achieved. Continued confidence in the Plan for the next Plan period will depend upon ensuring that all current and relevant information is taken into account. Each five year review will be assessed along with the combined Annual Monitoring Reports, and their results will inform any decision on the need for a 'Full Formal Review'. If there is a need for a Full Formal Review, up-to-date data on Housing Needs Survey, Parish Profile, Census results etc. will be used.

21.7 In 2038, a community-based Steering Group will be re-informed to undertake a Full Formal Review to decide on the need for a subsequent 15 year Plan, and to oversee the development of this new Plan if required. This should coincide with work at Shropshire Council.

21.8 In conjunction, Shropshire Council will undertake its statutory role and continue to monitor Neighbourhood Plans as part of its monitoring framework.

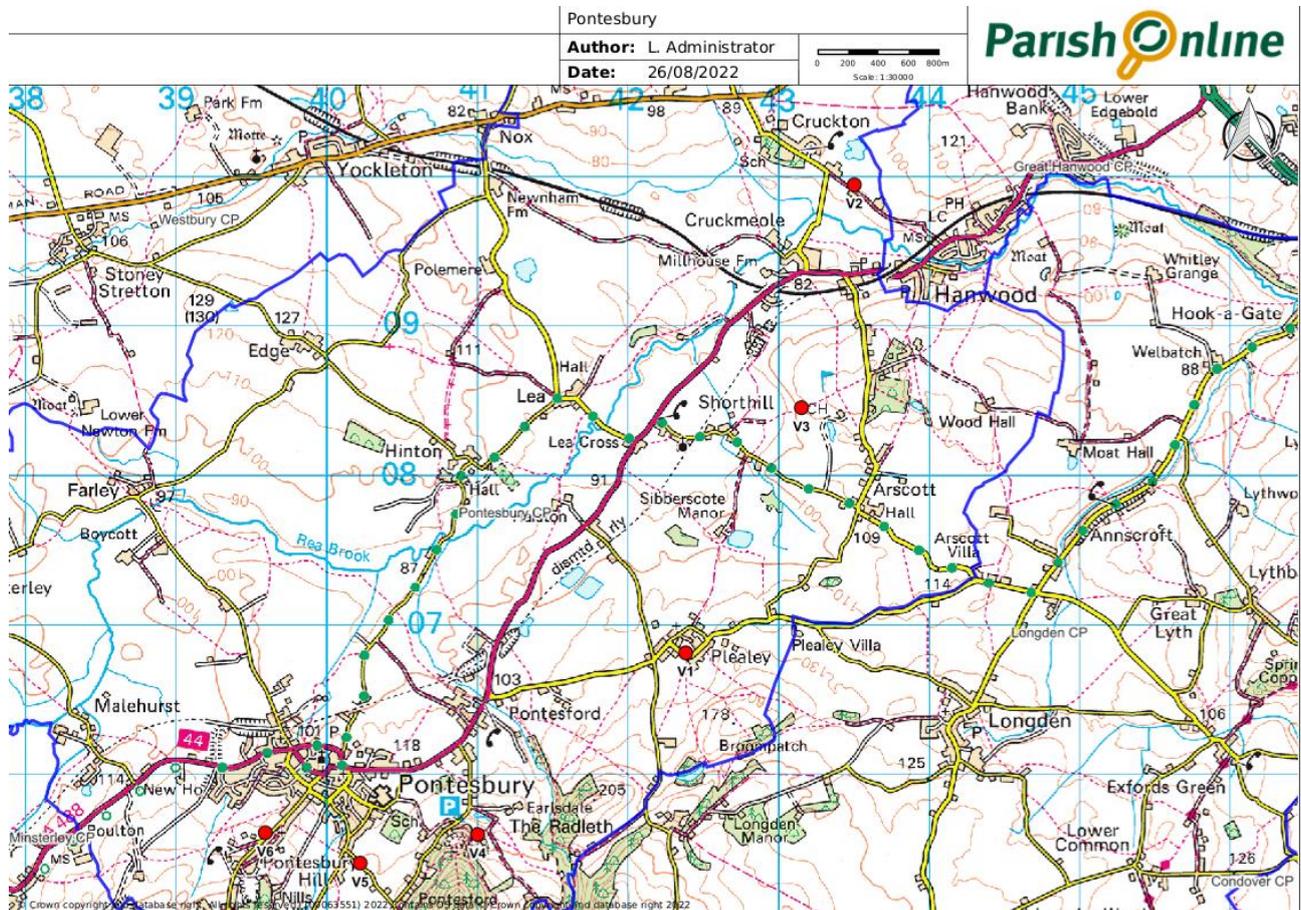
21.9 The Parish Council may be best placed to monitor the progress of certain elements of the Neighbourhood Plan; the division of responsibility will be agreed with Shropshire Council. This might mean that Shropshire Council leads on monitoring the strategic delivery of housing while the Parish Council monitors local delivery. Monitoring arrangements are to be recorded in a Memorandum of Understanding⁷ between the two authorities.

21.10 The Parish Council's monitoring could take the form of a spreadsheet listing all planning applications and decisions made on them. It should be possible to see the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan has been successful in influencing planning and development decisions by recording which policies are being used in decision making and the outcomes. Hence, we should be able to access how well policies are providing the expected outcomes. Findings from this should be shared with other interested parties to inform future Plans.

⁷ An agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document. It is not legally binding but signals the willingness of the parties to move forward with a contract.

Amenity View Points

1. The following map and associated pictures describe the Amenity Views within Pontesbury Parish.



View 1 (Grid ref 424068) Plealey

From the start of the footpath next to Red Barn.

Key features – foreground pasture, distant views of woods and Pontesford Hill, hedgerows and trees in the viewpoint field.



View 2 (Grid ref 436098) Cruckton Terrace

From the first gateway South east of Terrace Farm.

Key features – distant hills of Earls Hill/Stiperstones, Rea Brook water meadows and foreground trees.



View 3 Arscott Golf Course (Grid ref 433084)

From 20 metres before the stile on the footpath at the SW exit from the golf course.

Key features – foreground hedge, panoramic view of both Pontesford and Breiddon Hills, contrasting view of hills and gently undulating farmland.



View 4 Near Pontesford Hill Car park (Grid ref 410057)

From near start of footpath exiting back of car park in the SE direction.

Key features – lake, hedgerow trees in the foreground, distant woods and pastureland.



View 5 Glove Lane (Grid ref 402054)

From the first gateway above Whitecroft on the west side of the lane.

Key features – pasture land, wooded slopes and hill fort ramparts.



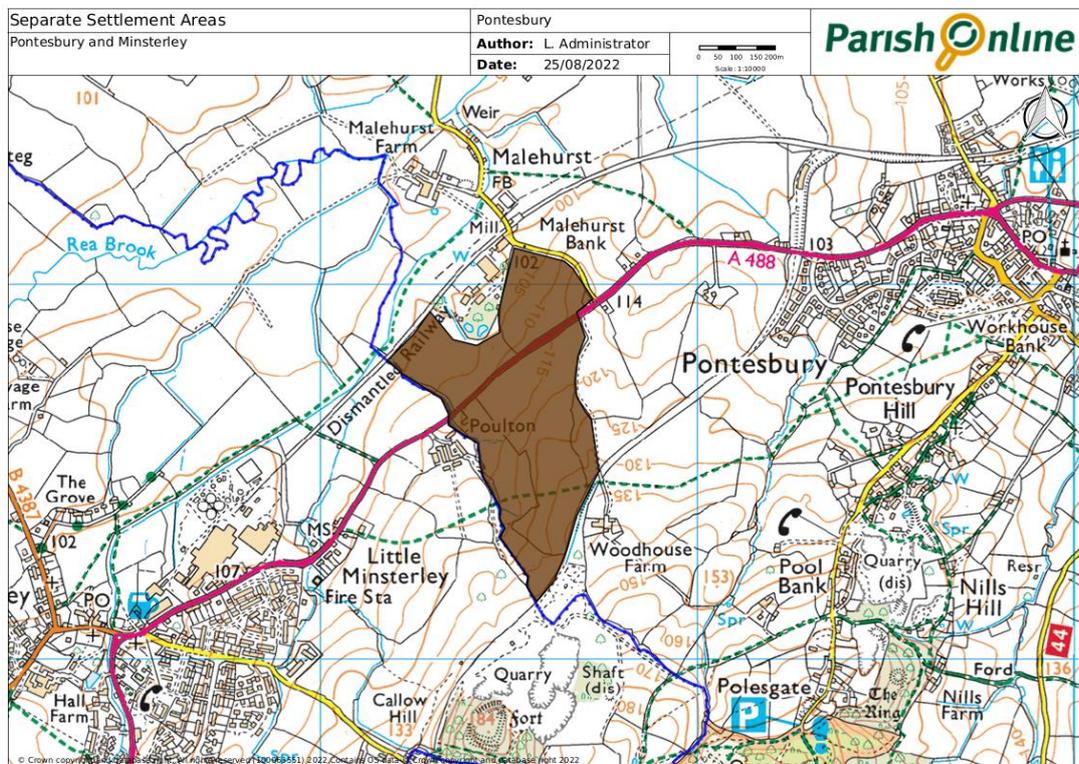
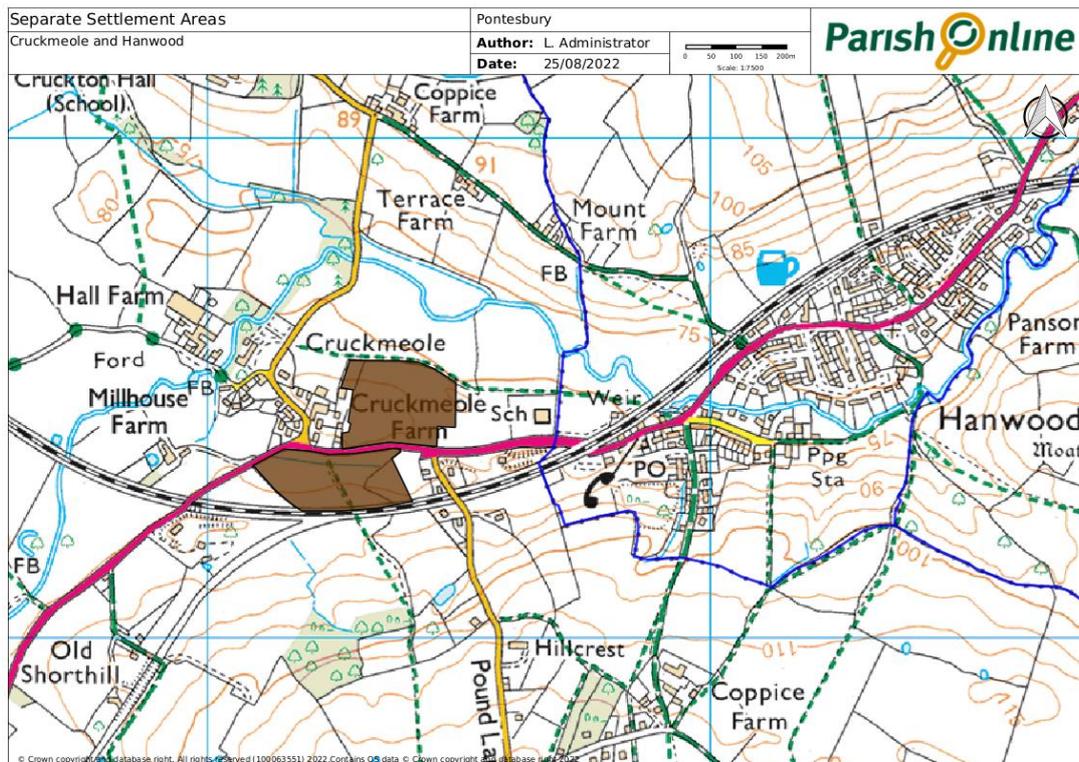
View 6 Pontesbury Hill Road (Grid ref 397058)

From the large hedgerow gap almost opposite Langafel House.

Key features – open countryside, hedgerow trees and distant hills.



Separate Settlement Identity

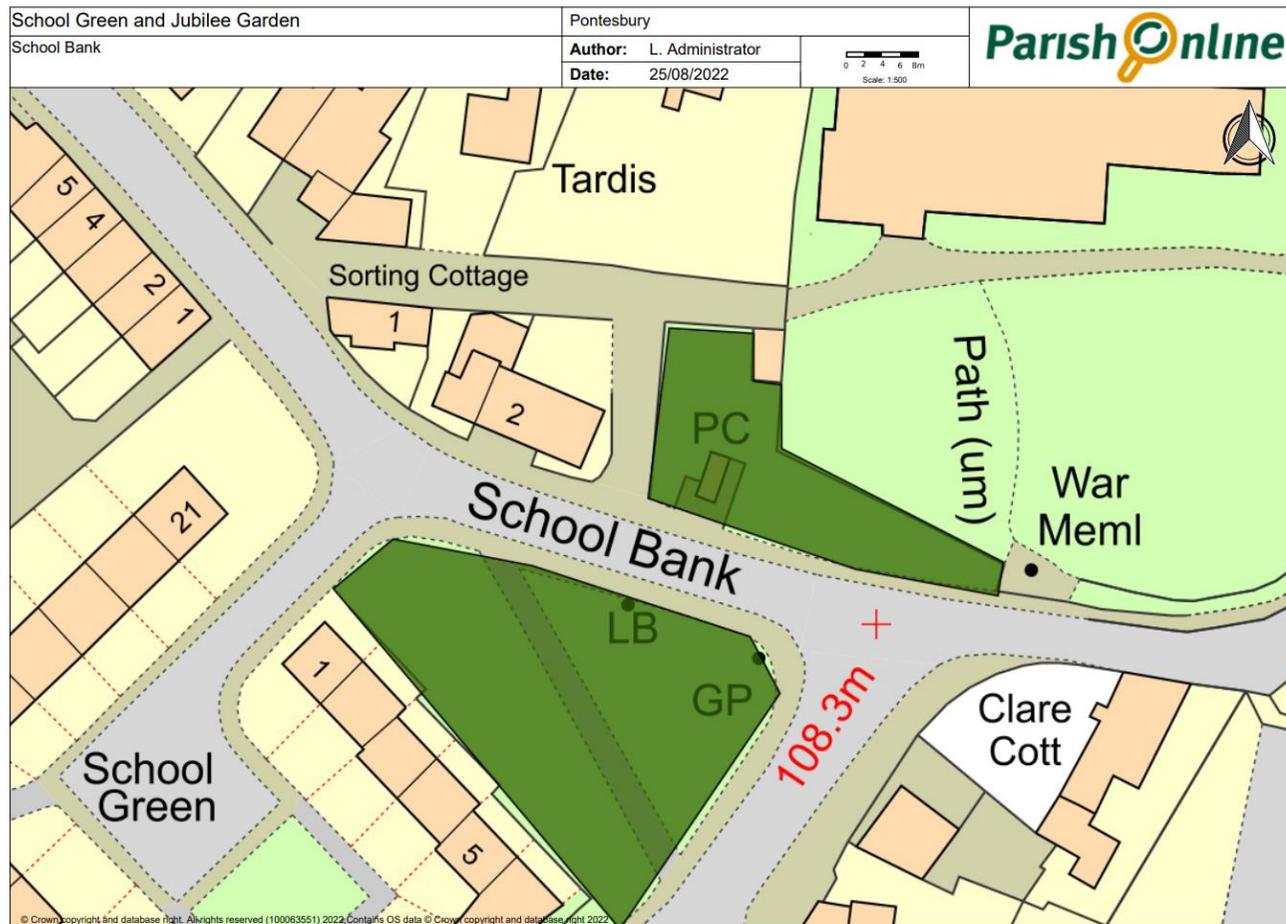


The maps above show the boundaries between Cruckmeole/Hanwood and Pontesbury/Minsterley.

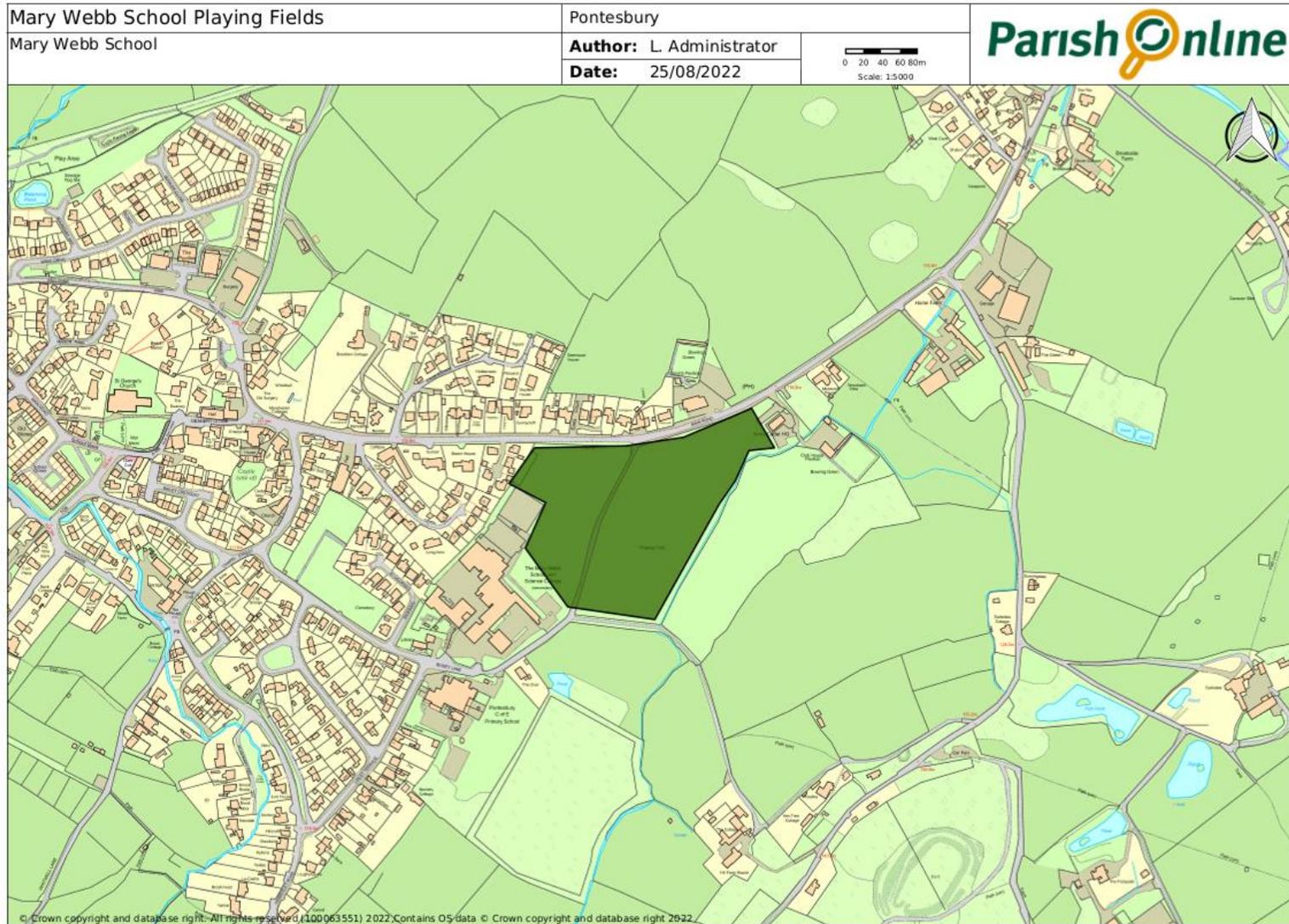
Brown shaded areas indicate where settlements would encroach on one another if the settlements were to increase in size.

Pontesbury Parish Local Green Spaces

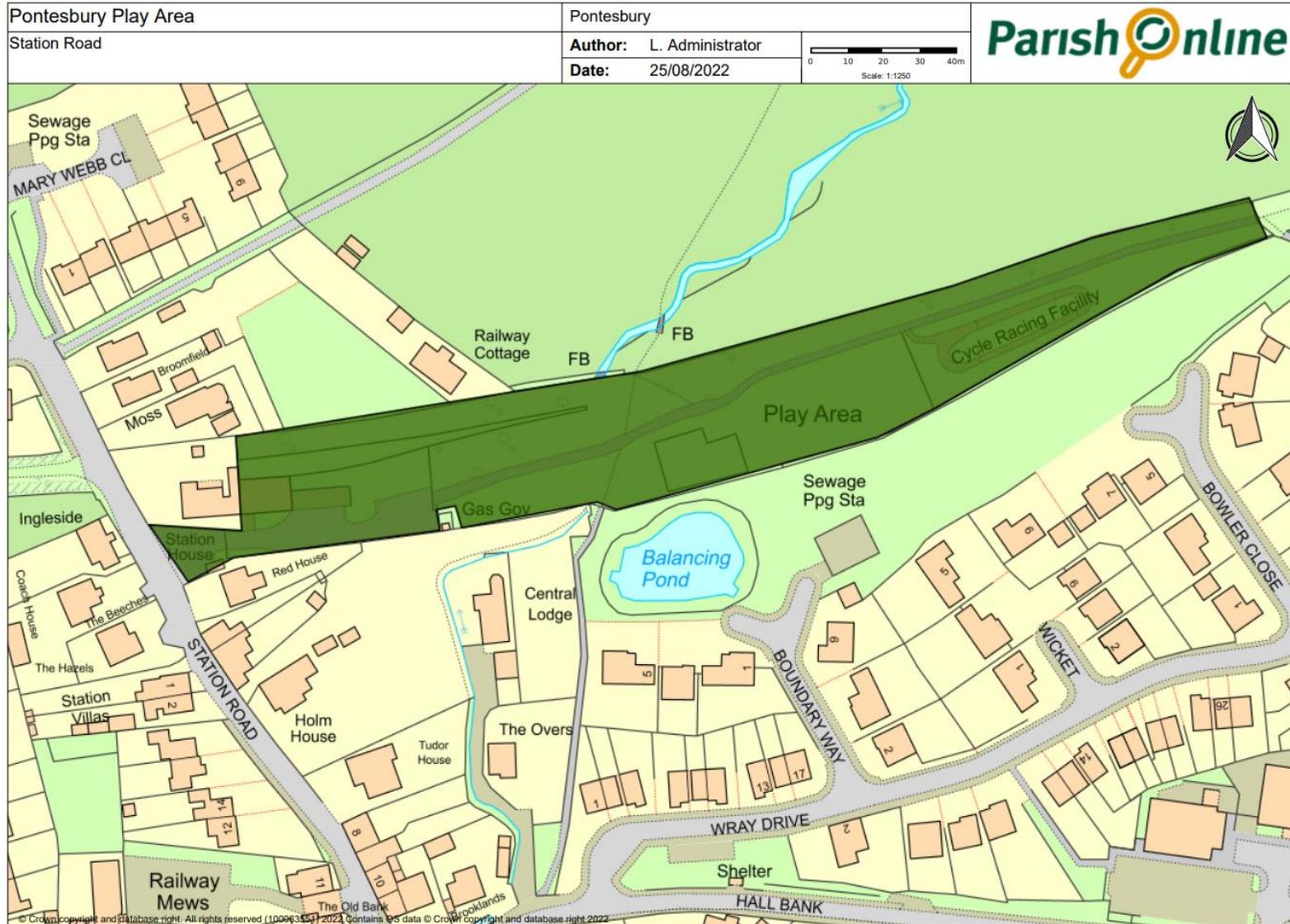
1. The following maps show the Local Green Spaces as described in Policy GRE1.
 - 1.1 School Green and Jubilee Garden.



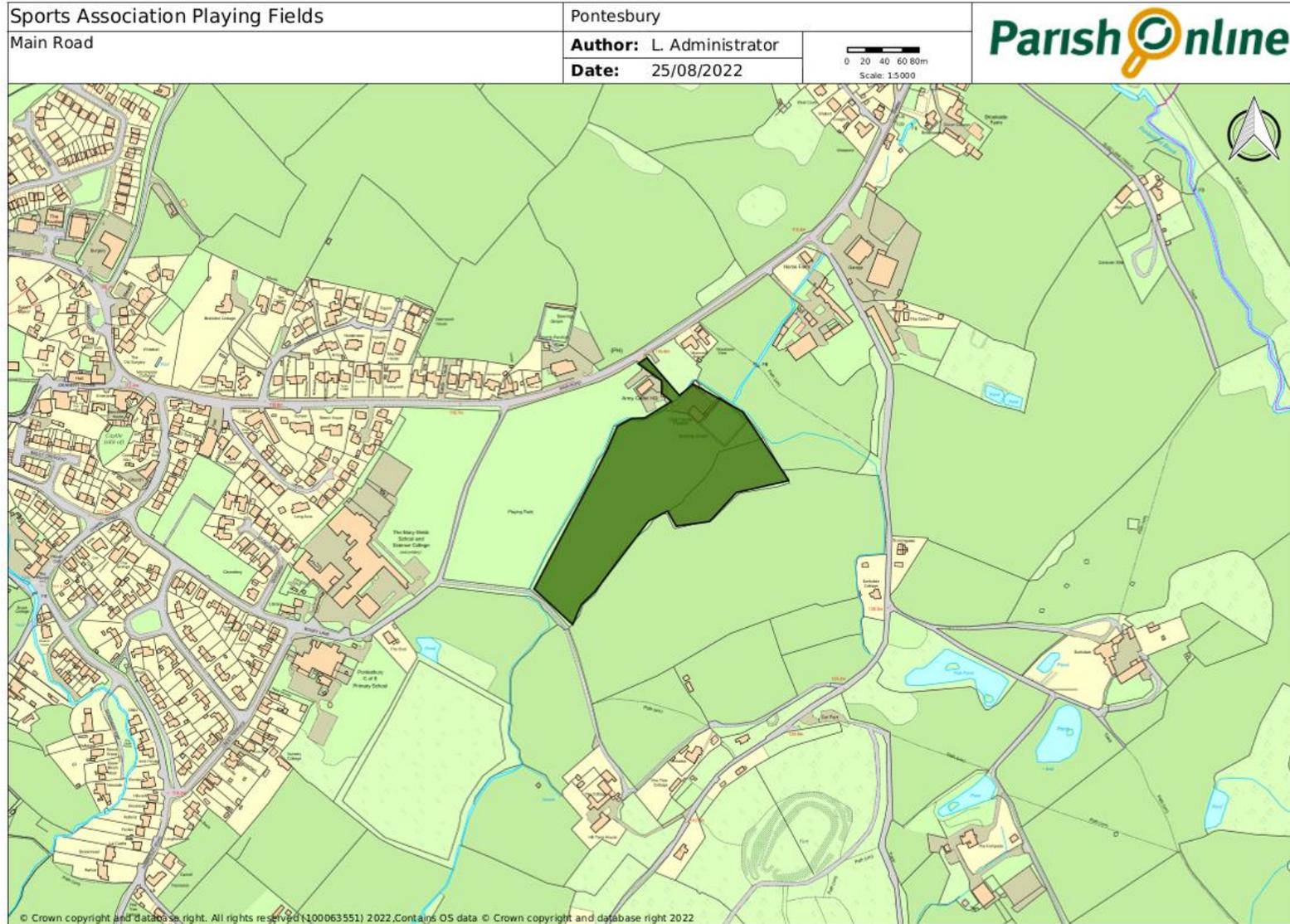
1.2 Mary Webb School Playing Fields



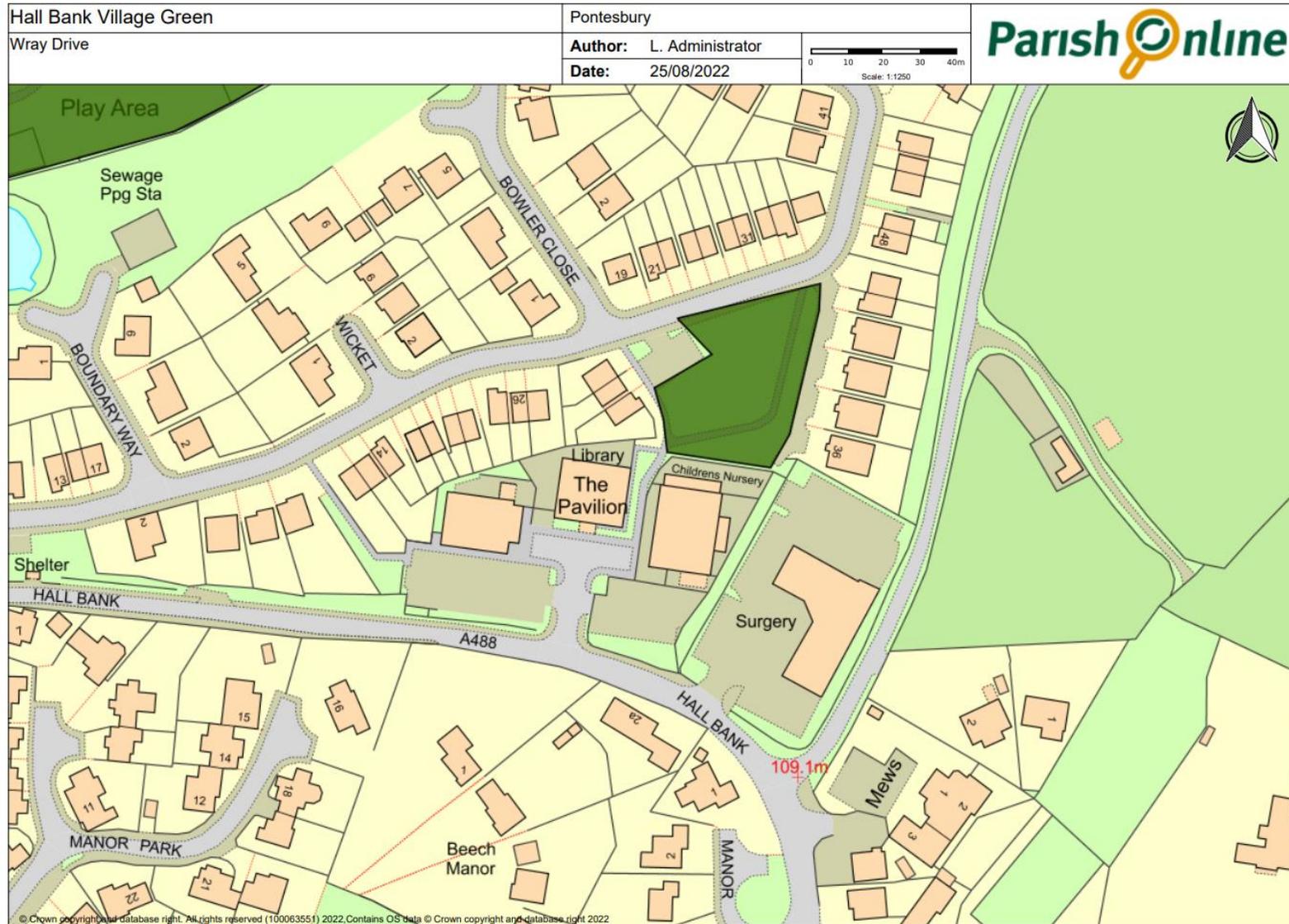
1.3 Pontesbury Play Area



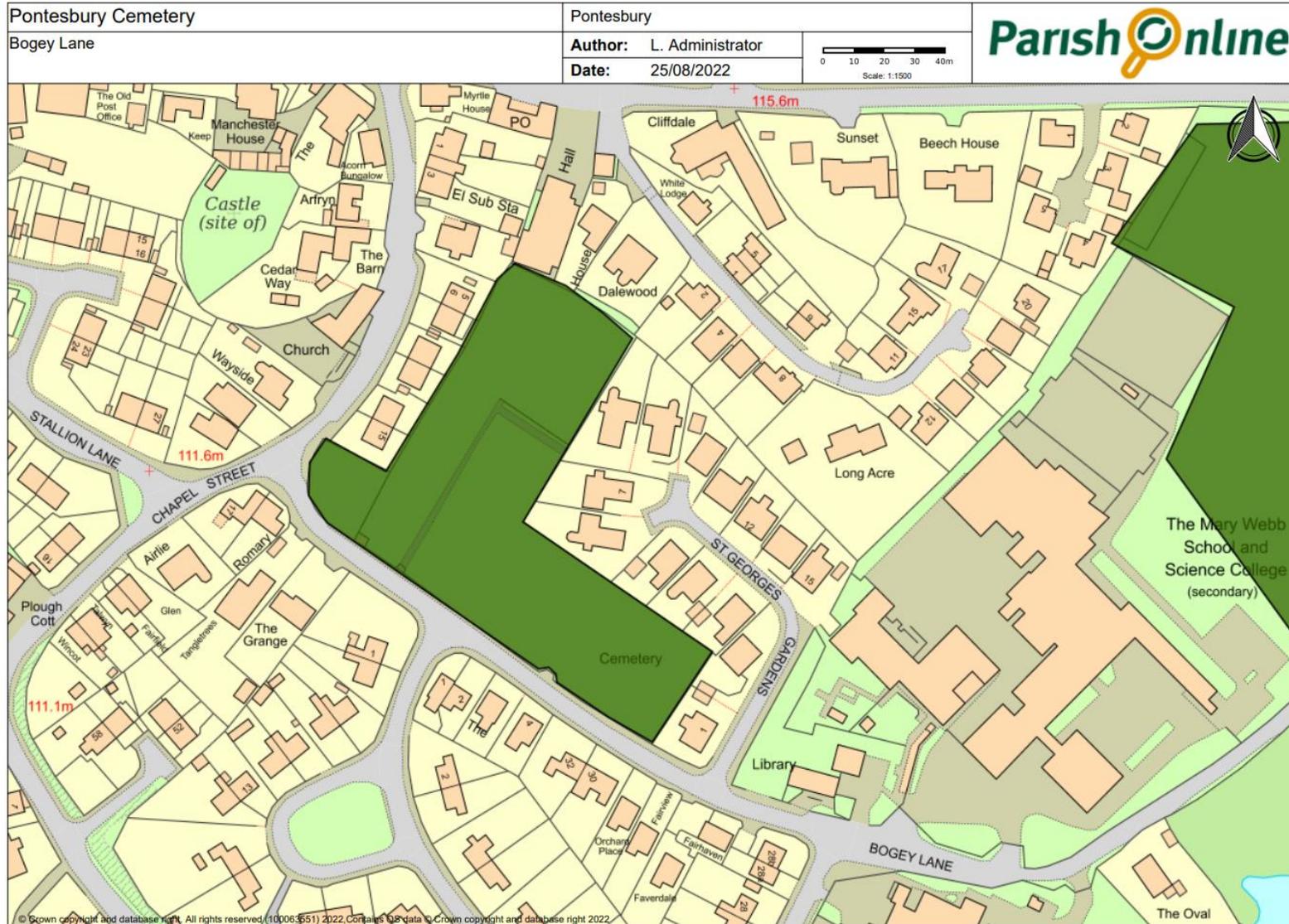
1.4 Pontesbury Sports Association Playing Fields



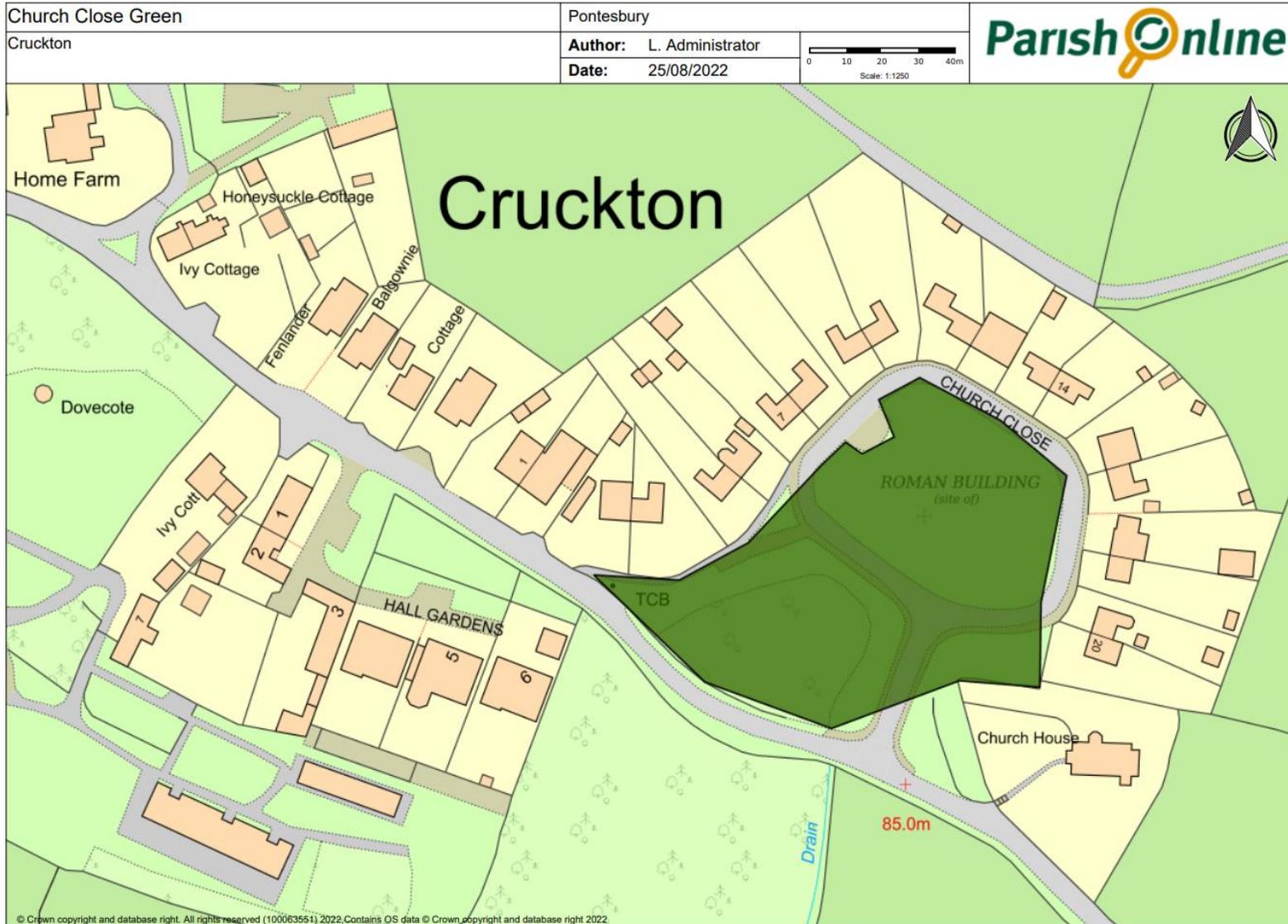
1.5 Hall Bank Village Green, Pontesbury.



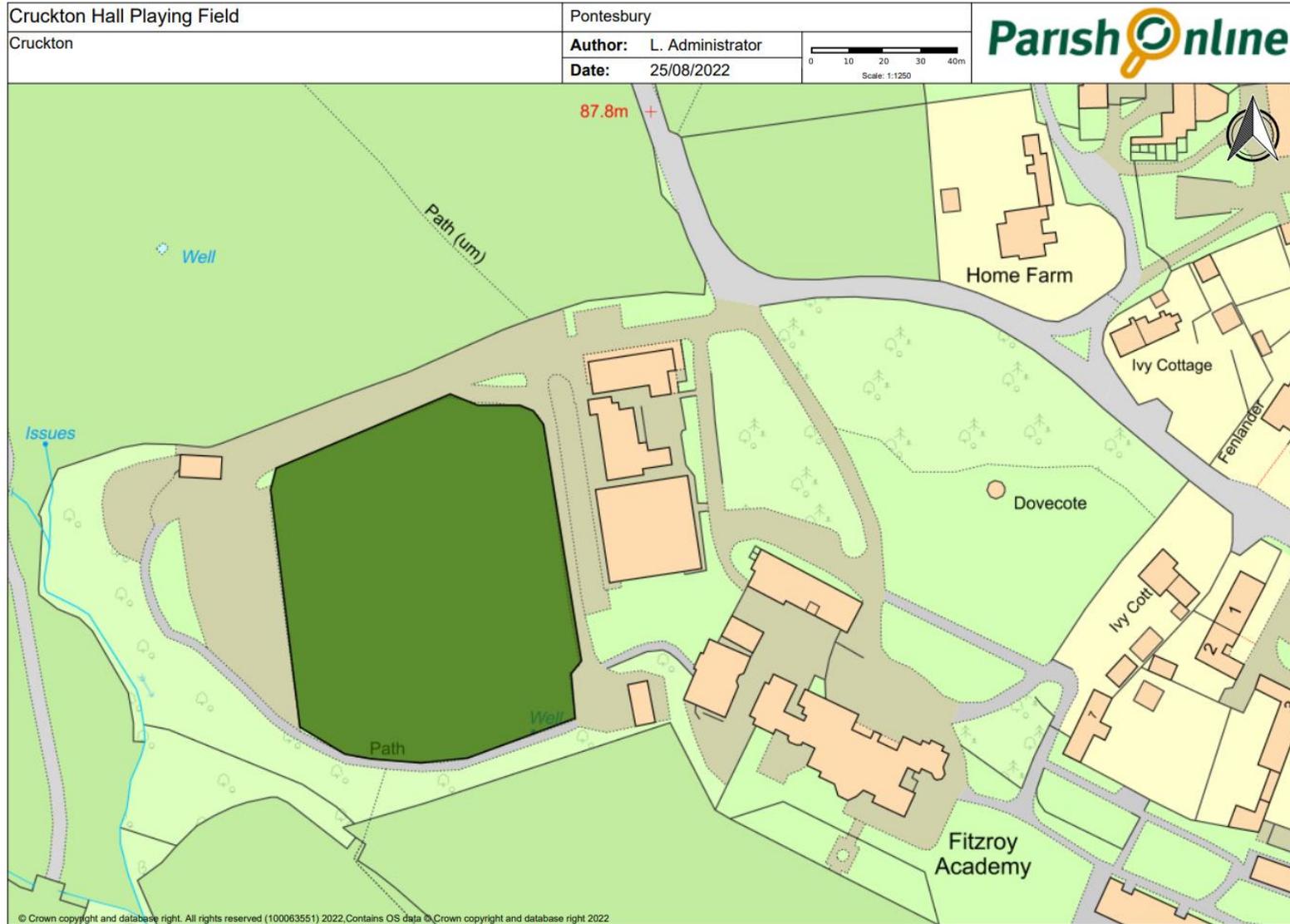
1.6 Pontesbury Cemetery



1.7 Church Close Green, Cruckton

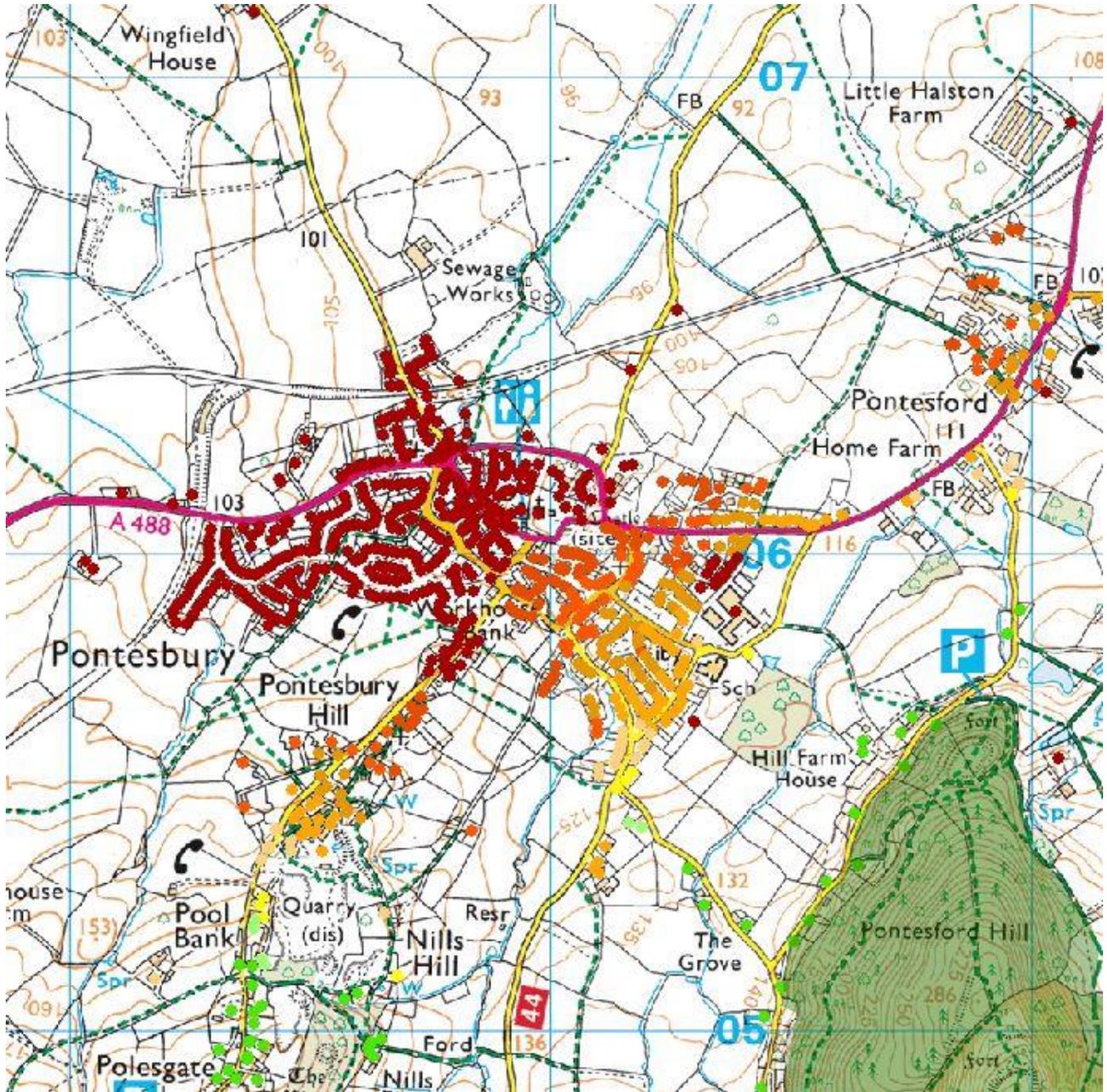


1.8 Cruckton Hall Playing Field.



Pontesbury Open Spaces

1. The following map shows an assessment of the amount of open space in Pontesbury village:



National Guidelines for recommended open spaces within developed areas.

Green = ideal amount of open space

Red = much less than ideal open space