

MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

Neighbourhood Plan 2031



Prepared by:

Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

On behalf of Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council

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Glossary of abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AuW	Ascott-under-Wychwood
CCB	Cotswolds Conservation Board
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CFO	Community First Oxfordshire
CNL	Cotswolds National Landscape
CPPCS	Charity and/or Parish Council Controlled Spaces
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
ELMS	Environmental Land Management Scheme (Defra)
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
HACT	Housing Association Charitable Trust
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LEMP	Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
LGS	Local Green Space
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery scheme (Defra)
LRS	Landscape Recovery scheme (Defra)
MARC	Milton Allotments and Recreation Charity
MSA	Milton Sports Association
MuW	Milton-under-Wychwood
MuWAGA	Milton-under-Wychwood Allotments and Gardens Association
MuWNP	Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan
MWT	Milton Welfare Trust
NatEng	Natural England
NFMW	Natural Flood Management Woodland
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPSG	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
NPCQR	Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire Report
NPCQ	Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire
NRN	Nature Recovery Network (Defra)
OCSI	Oxfordshire Consultants for Social Inclusion
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPS	Other Private Space
OWLS	Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004)
PC	Parish Council
PROW	Public Rights of Way
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFI	Sustainable Farming Incentive (Defra)
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document (WODC)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
SuW	Shipton-under-Wychwood
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
UM	Upper Milton
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WFT	Wychwood Forest Trust (formerly The Wychwood Project)
WOCT	West Oxfordshire Community Transport Limited
WOLP	West Oxfordshire Local Plan
WOD	West Oxfordshire District
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council
WOPFR	West Oxfordshire Parish Flood Report

1. Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

Milton-under-Wychwood (MuW) Parish Council (PC) is classed as a “qualifying body” and is authorised to lead in the preparation of the Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan (MuWNP) 2031. To produce the Plan the Parish Council appointed the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG), which includes parish councillors and community volunteers. The PC and NPSG also have support from Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

The MuWNP sets out a plan for a sustainable future for the Parish. It presents Objectives and Policies that will be used in shaping the future development of the Parish. Those Policies have been established through extensive public consultation and are underpinned by both statistical information and local knowledge. The aims and objectives of the MuWNP relate principally to planning matters but also have relevance to other issues important to the community. The Plan Policies are compatible with the development plan for the District (currently the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031).

This document and accompanying appendices constitute the (Regulation 16) submission version of the MuWNP for comment by the District Council, statutory consultees and other interested stakeholders, during a six-week consultation period.

This submission follows the pre-submission (Regulation 14) Statutory Consultation process conducted up to January 2022 after which comments were analysed and used to refine the documentation. The PC now submits the MuWNP and accompanying twelve Appendices to WODC, together with the documents below:

- **A Basic Conditions Statement:**
This demonstrates how the MuWNP meets the statutory requirements set out within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012)
- **A Consultation Statement:**
This comprises a statement and eleven appendices and sets out who has been consulted, how consultation has been undertaken and how the representations have informed the MuWNP.



A winter morning walk along a much-loved Milton-under-Wychwood bridleway

2. The Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan

2.1. How the Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system

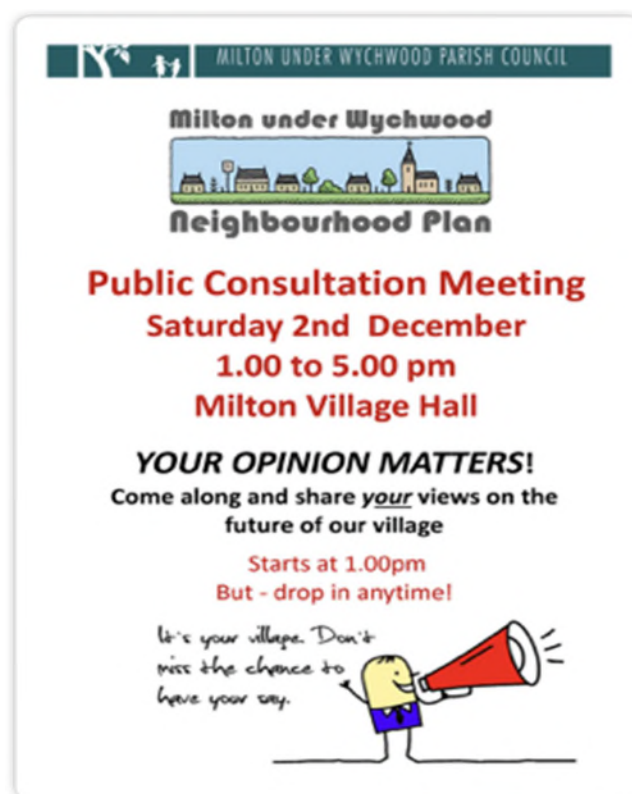
Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 and allows local people a say in how development is shaped within their local areas. Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Guidance and the development plan for West Oxfordshire District which consists of:

- The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031
- The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan
- The West Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- The West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD.

WODC has also prepared a draft Developer Contributions SPD setting out the approach to be taken in securing new growth-oriented infrastructure through the use of planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with European regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitats assessment.

Our entire parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)/Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) thus it is obligatory for this Neighbourhood Plan to achieve consistency with the aims of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and the related documents of the Cotswolds Conservation Board (CCB).



Poster advertising Public Consultation Meeting held in 2017

2.2. Designation

Milton-under-Wychwood (MuW) Parish Council (PC) submitted an application to WODC for the designation of the Milton-under Wychwood Neighbourhood Area (to follow the Parish Boundary shown on **Figure 1** below) on 7th February 2017. The Milton Neighbourhood Area was designated by WODC on 1st March 2017.

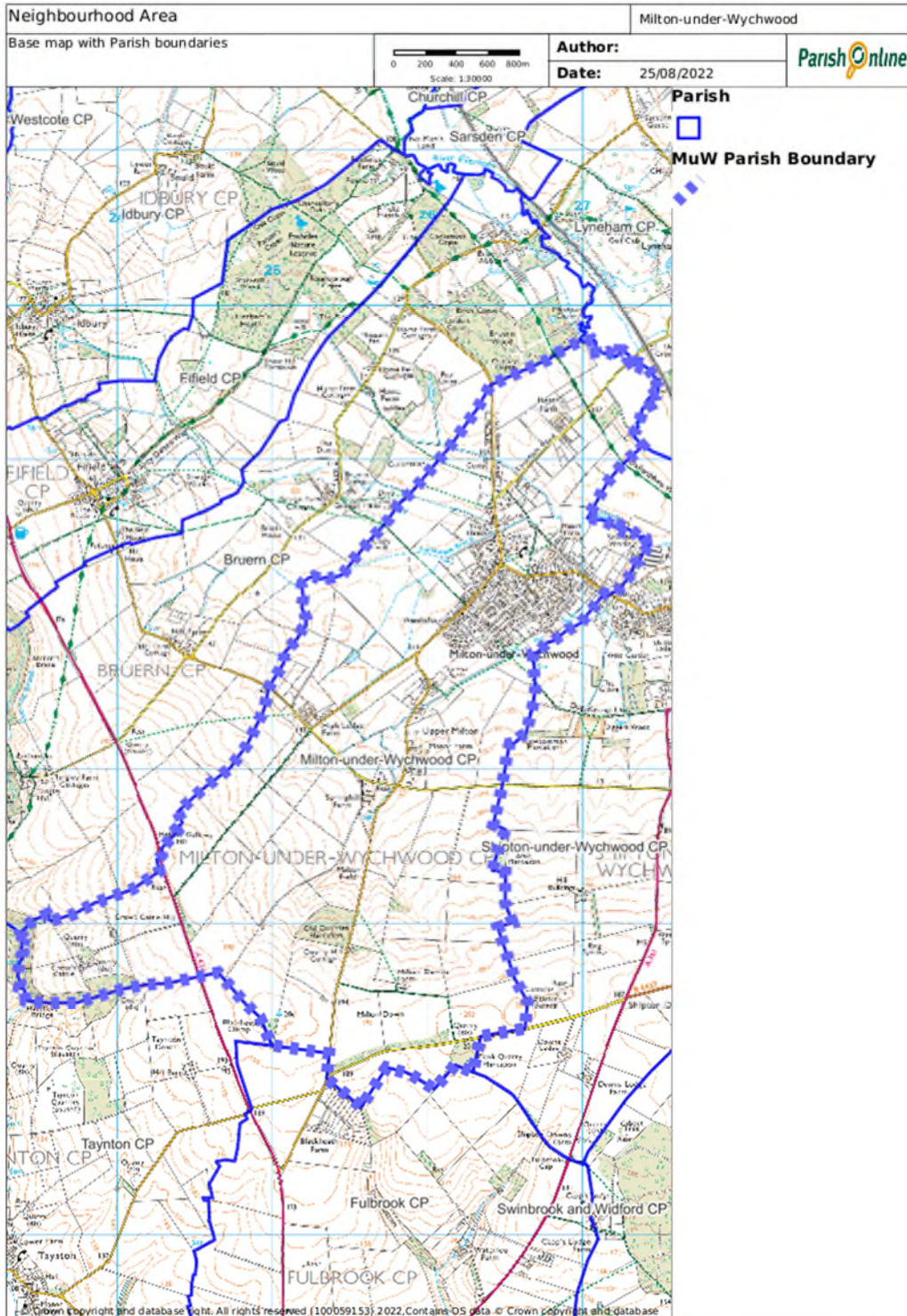


Figure 1 Milton-under-Wychwood Parish

2.3. Plan period, monitoring and review

The Plan will apply from the date of its adoption until 31st March 2031, running concurrently with the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. It is recognised that the concerns and priorities of local residents and businesses may change over this period. It will be necessary to revisit and revise the plan from time to time. MuWPC, as the responsible body for the Neighbourhood Plan, will maintain and periodically revisit the Plan to ensure continued relevance and to monitor its delivery.

2.4. Community engagement

Since the community was first consulted about the proposed MuWNP in April 2017, until this submission stage, the NPSG has followed a community focussed consultation strategy. This included open meetings, presentations, newsletters, and a public access section on the Parish Council website. Comprehensive community surveys were also conducted during April 2018, which sought feedback and opinion about housing need and other key issues for the village.

At each stage in the Plan process, elements such as the Plan Vision, Objectives, and draft Policies have been refined in response to feedback from residents.

The community consultation process is comprehensively documented in the statutory Consultation Statement.



Figure 2 Public Consultation Meeting at the Village Hall, 11th September 2021

2.5. Draft Plan creation

The NPSG drafted Policies to meet the MuWNP objectives. During this task the NPSG had input from CFO and informal discussion with WODC. The draft Policies were approved in principle by the Parish Council in November 2020.

Following a notice to all households by a hand-delivered Flyer with accompanying Feedback Form, the draft Policies were presented to members of the public during a consultation session on 11 September 2021. In advance, as notified in the Flyer, all draft documents of the Plan were placed in hard copy in the public Library, and published on the Parish website. Feedback was received and the Policies and supporting text were subsequently refined. The draft Policies were adopted by the Parish Council in November 2021.

Statutory Consultation (Regulation 14) was conducted during the period 6th December 2021 to 20th January 2022 in respect of the revised draft NP and Appendices. Besides providing statutory consultees with an opportunity to make representations, all households of the Parish received a further hand-delivered Flyer, with accompanying Feedback Form. They were also encouraged to respond by email. Comments from all respondents were analysed and used to refine the MuWNP.

The planning justification and evidence and local support underpinning each of the MuWNP Policies is set out in this document.

We have tried to include all members of the community at each point in the preparation of this Plan by, for example, ensuring that help was available to those without access to a computer but who wished to add their voices to the Consultation. Complete copies of the Plan and Appendices were made available at the Public Library where there is computer support. The library was also a convenient location for those who were unable to complete their response online and wished to hand deliver it. When the Community Survey of the Village was conducted in 2018, after hand delivery of the questionnaires, every home was revisited twice to support homes where it was known there was a person with a disability and to collect their response. Special arrangements were also made for people with access difficulties living in The Paddocks Extra Care facility.

2.6. Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

In August 2021 the PC requested a screening opinion from WODC in respect of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under EU Directive 42/2001 and the 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations.

In October 2021, the SEA and HRA screening opinion was delivered by WODC as follows:

The West Oxfordshire District Council confirms that the Draft Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan (MuWNP2031, August 2021) is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and thus does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

In consideration of the small geographical area of the MuWNP, and its distance from European sites outside the MuWNP and Local Plan boundaries, this HRA screening considers that the MuWNP is not likely to have significant effects on EU designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The implications of effects from planned development on the integrity of European sites has been previously tested through HRA of the Local Plan 2031. The HRA of the Local Plan remains valid and there is no new material and relevant information that should be considered.

2.7. Submission, examination and adoption

This document is the submission version of the MuWNP. The PC is responsible for submitting this (Regulation 16) version to the District Council which will consult with statutory consultees and other interested stakeholders for a statutory six-week period before the Plan is subjected to an Examination by an Independent Examiner. Once any further amendments have been made the Plan will be subject to a local Referendum. If the Plan is supported by a majority vote at the Referendum, the Plan will be 'made' or adopted by the District Council. This means that the Policies of the MuWNP will have full material weight – just as the policies of the District-wide Local Plan do - when WODC determines planning applications in the NP area.



Village Hall - MuW Women's Institute celebrate 100 years



Village Library – hosts many activities for adults and children

3. The Parish of Milton-under-Wychwood

3.1. Location and context

The Parish of MuW is located in North-West Oxfordshire and sits in the centre of a triangle formed by the nearby townships of Stow-on-the-Wold (7 miles), Charlbury (7 miles), and Burford (5 miles). The Parish also abuts the South bank of the River Evenlode which flows into the neighbouring settlement of Shipton-under-Wychwood. The whole of the Parish is contained within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its highly attractive landscape setting. A context map showing MuW and its location is detailed in **Figure 3** below.

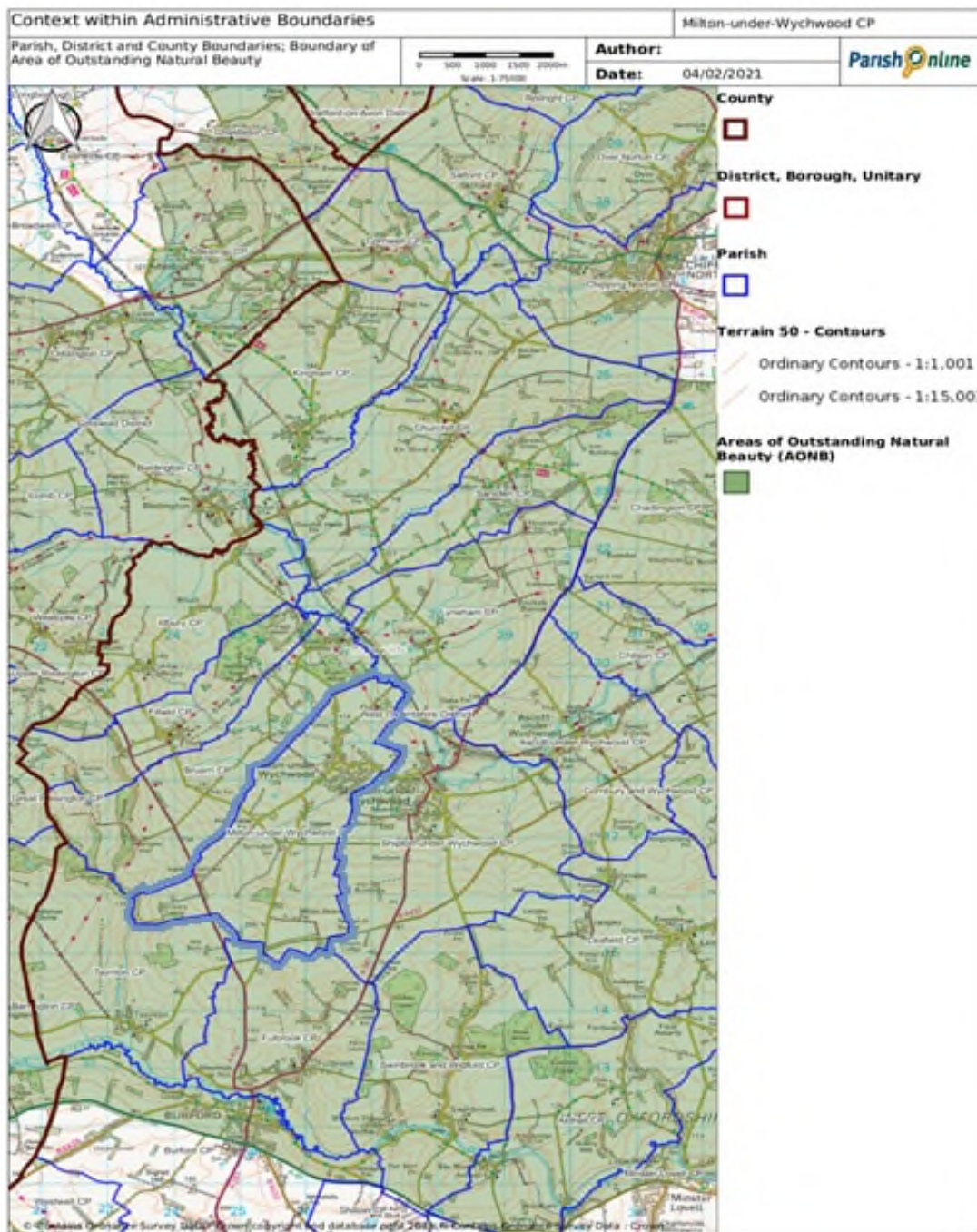


Figure 3 Context map of the administrative boundaries and boundary of AONB

The built area of the Parish comprises the village of MuW, the hamlet of Upper Milton (UM) and a further scattering of small clusters, farmsteads and the occasional individual house. The de-facto centre of MuW is at the junction of the High Street, Church Road and Shipton Road. This has long been the epicentre of the village.

Bordering the epicentre is the Village Green (Recreation Ground), once the village common, though in the 21st Century it mainly functions as an area for recreation and play and serves as the location for the annual village fete. The centre of the village also houses the longstanding village pub, The Hare (formerly The Quart Pot), and a cluster of larger houses including “Number 1 High Street”, “Inns Keep” and “Blenheim” on Church Road and “Hillborough House” on Shipton Road, mostly mixed among other more modest dwellings.



Figure 4 Photograph looking northerly from Dog Kennel Lane towards Milton which sits unobtrusively within the AONB.

3.2. Brief history and built environment

A summary of village history and character is presented here; however, **The Character Assessment (Appendix 1)** provides a fuller account of some of the key characteristics of the village, including those features that give Milton its specific identity.

The main village of MuW can be broadly described as a small to medium Cotswold settlement with agricultural origins, a description that is in common with many other villages in the area. However, the village history differs from its neighbours in a number of distinctive ways, and this history is reflected in the built environment.

MuW is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but scant evidence of that period is now visible. In the early medieval period MuW probably existed as a series of small farmsteads sited on the periphery of the once-extensive Wychwood Forest.

From the late middle-ages up to the mid-19th century MuW was a part of the much larger ecclesiastical parish administered from Shipton-under-Wychwood (SuW). The growth of the identifiable main village would have been a slow process, but by the 18th century the village had something of its present outline, as evidenced in maps of the village dating from the later 18th Century (see example in **Figure 5**)



Figure 5 Detail from Richard Davis's map of Oxfordshire 1797, showing the distinct settlements of Upper Milton and the main village, identified as Upper End and Lower End respectively

The first half of the 19th century saw gradual growth in the village in line with the increasing rise in population throughout England, driven by the agrarian and industrial revolutions. At first this resulted in a much higher population density and more modest artisanal dwellings must have proliferated - some pockets remain on The Square and Fettiplace off Shipton Road and The Terrace off the High Street (see **Figure 6**).



Figure 6 A view of The Terrace in a photograph circa 1930

In short, MuW was slowly transformed from a loose conglomeration of farmsteads with a handful of larger residences, to a more self-contained parish in its own right. Enclosure occurred relatively late in 1849 and, finally, independent Parish status was achieved in 1854.

In the early decades of the 20th century, small scale development and replacement continued and some of the older lower quality houses were slowly removed or replaced. The slow drift of agricultural workers from villages

like MuW to the bigger towns and cities continued, but the population in MuW was held stable by the continued success and therefore employment opportunities provided by Alfred Groves and Sons.

The most significant new development was the introduction of a small group of council houses in the 1920s. These were built along Shipton Road and the South side of Green Lane. A second significant public housing development came during the interwar period with the building of The Sands (now 70 dwellings and the largest single development in the village). Once The Sands was completed it linked Jubilee Lane to Frog Lane and thus the area now framed by the High Street, Jubilee Lane, The Sands, Frog Lane and Shipton Road. From the 1960s to the early 21st Century a total of over 170 new homes were built within this area.

Smaller housing estates were built from the 1960s onwards, the more significant of these being Church Meadow and Brookfield Close off Church Road, Poplar Farm Close off the High Street, and Elm Grove estate off the Shipton Road.

Historic England currently lists 18 buildings and other structures in MuW. The NPSG has also identified over thirty non-designated heritage assets (buildings and structures) that it believes to have significant architectural or historical significance for the village and wider area. The full list of designated (i.e. listed) and non-designated assets are presented in **Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets (Appendix 2)**. This document adds further detail at the local level to specific features of our built environment of architectural and historic significance.

A characteristic feature of the village worthy of comment is the fact that most street frontages are generously provided with front gardens. The building line is set back from the street line, giving an open aspect to these streets and allowing a certain greening of the street scene through shrub and hedge boundary plantings and the cultivation of front gardens.



A High Street frontage example

4. Planning and development context

4.1. Planning Context

As well as having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework the MuWNP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

Milton-under-Wychwood Parish lies within the district of West Oxfordshire in the County of Oxfordshire. Currently, the development plan in West Oxfordshire consists of:

- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans must also be in line with European regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. In addition, Neighbourhood Plans must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

Particular note has also been taken of

- Cotswold Conservation Board (CCB) plans and Policies
- Natural England's (NatEng) contribution to development of national policy for creation of Nature Networks across England
- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

In the Local Plan 2031, MuW forms part of the Burford-Charlbury Sub-Area. The most relevant policies in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 to the MuWNP are listed below:

- **Policy BC1 – Burford-Charlbury Sub-Area Strategy:** Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and are suitable for a modest level of development in accordance with Policy OS2. Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local housing, community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.
- **Policy E1 - Land for employment:** Non-employment uses on employment sites will be refused except in the following circumstances:
 - where it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for employment purposes; or
 - where the site or premises are considered unsuitable on amenity, environmental or highway safety grounds for employment uses; or
 - where the proposed use includes community, leisure, or retail uses which are complementary and compatible to the functioning of the employment site and the local community, and conform with Policy E6: Town Centres; or
 - where substantial community benefits would be achieved by allowing alternative forms of development.
- **Policy E2 – Supporting the rural economy:** New small employment sites in or adjacent to Service Centres and the Villages [as listed] will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale of the settlement and the character of the area.

- **Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism:** Tourism and leisure development will be supported which utilises and enriches the natural and built environment and existing attractions of West Oxfordshire to the benefit of visitors and local communities.



Summer Market on Village Green, 2021

- **Policy E5 - Local services and community facilities:** The Council will support the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, interaction, and healthy inclusive communities.
- **Policy EH1 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty:** In determining development proposals within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and proposals which would affect its setting, great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, landscape and countryside, including its wildlife and heritage. This will include consideration of any harm to the contribution that the settlement makes to the scenic beauty of the AONB.
- **Policy EH2 - Landscape character:** The quality, character, and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's natural environment, including its landscape, cultural and historic value, tranquillity, geology, countryside, soil and biodiversity, will be conserved and enhanced. We note that special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Wychwood Project area which, like the AONB, encompasses the whole of our Parish.
- **Policy EH4 - Public realm and green infrastructure:** The existing areas of public space and green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced for their multi-functional role, including their biodiversity, recreational, accessibility, health and landscape value and for the contribution they make towards combating climate change. Public realm and publicly accessible green infrastructure network considerations should be integral to the planning of new development. New development should avoid the loss, fragmentation, loss of functionality of the existing green infrastructure network including within the built environment, such as access to waterways *It should* provide opportunities for walking and cycling within the built-up areas and connecting settlements to the countryside through a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes.

- **Policy EH9 - Historic environment:** Development proposals shall conserve and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire’s historic environment, also taking into account the setting of those assets.

MuW makes its own particular contribution to the historic character of the area and the **Character Assessment (Appendix 1)** identifies the historic characteristics that are a particular feature of the Village.



Milton-under-Wychwood Allotments and Gardening Association (MUWAGA) Annual Show

- **Policy EH11 - Listed Buildings:** This policy recognises the particular special architectural or historic features of the Listed Buildings and supports the proposal that any additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, be respectful of the architectural or historic interest of the building’s fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting.

The designated (listed buildings) within MuW are identified in **Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets (Appendix 2)**, which also lists non-designated buildings and assets that are felt to be significant to the village.

- **Policy EH12 - Traditional buildings:** This policy provides protection for the traditional buildings within West Oxfordshire and will generally not allow proposals for additions or alterations to such buildings where they would extensively alter the existing structure or remove features of interest or compromise the form or character of the original building. MuW still retains many buildings traditional to the area which, though altered or converted, still retain their traditional features and identity. Those considered of local significance are listed in **Designated and Non-designated Assets (Appendix 2)**.

- **Policy EH13 - Historic landscape character:** This policy says that the assessment of developments will take into consideration the age, distinctiveness, rarity, sensitivity and capacity of the particular historic landscape or townscape characteristics; the extent to which key historic features resonant of the area's character, such as hedgerows, watercourses and woodland, will be retained or replicated; the degree to which the form and layout of the development will respect and build on the pre-existing historic character (including e.g. street and building layouts); and the degree to which the form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic character of its surroundings.

The Character Assessment identifies some of the particular historic townscape and landscape features within the Parish.

- **Policy EH16 - Non-designated Heritage Assets:** When considering proposals that would affect, directly or indirectly, non-listed buildings, non-scheduled, non-nationally important archaeological remains or non-Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, as such assets are also irreplaceable, the presumption will be in favour of the avoidance of harm or loss. A balanced judgement will be made having regard to this presumption, the significance of the heritage asset, the scale of any harm or loss, and the benefits of the development. Proposals will be assessed using the same principles set out for Listed Buildings (EH11).

The non-designated heritage assets within the Parish of MuW are included in **Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets (Appendix 2)**.

- **Policy H1 - Amount and distribution of housing:** MuW falls within the Burford-Charlbury sub area in which a target of 774 new homes is identified in the WODC 2031 Local Plan. This target takes into account the more restrictive approach to development that applies to the Cotswold AONB and as such, is based on past completions and commitments only. No reliance is placed on future windfall development but such development is not precluded where proposed such development is shown to accord with relevant national and local plan policies including particularly, WODC Local Plan Policy OS2 and the constraints applicable to the environmentally sensitive Cotswold AONB.

Within the Cotswolds AONB windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas will be particularly closely scrutinised and will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need and any such development will also need to be in accordance with the indicative distribution set out in Policy H1 and other relevant policies, including, in particular, the general principles in WODC Local Plan Policy OS2 and Local Plan Policy EH1.

- **Policy H2 - Delivery of new homes:** New dwellings will only be permitted where they comply with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and in the very particular circumstances specified in WODC Local Plan Policy H2.
- **Policy OS2 - Locating development in the right places:** The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities.
- **Policy OS4 - High quality design:** New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings.
- **Policy OS5 - Supporting infrastructure:** New development will be required to deliver, or contribute towards, the timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development, or through an appropriate financial contribution.

- **Policy T3 - Public transport, walking and cycling:** This policy requires all new development to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport and states the expectation for it to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to promote healthier lifestyles, particularly for safe and convenient routes to school.
- **Policy T4 - Parking Provision:** The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality.
- **West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - West Oxfordshire District Council has published a Design Guide SPD (2016) which is a comprehensive guidance document covering many aspects of planning and design specific to the region. The purpose is to describe the qualities and characteristics that make West Oxfordshire special – its landscapes, settlements and buildings – and to describe ways in which good design can protect and enrich the character of the District. The introduction states:

‘The central theme linking all parts of the Design Guide is the belief that good design can only result from a comprehensive understanding of, and meaningful response to, local context in all its forms; that each context is unique and merits an individually tailored design response.’

The MuWNP acknowledges the value of this Guide and is supportive of all the advice it contains, and where our Policies reference “good design” this Design Guide is considered a key consultation document. The Design Guide places a strong emphasis on local context in all its forms as an important consideration in any large or small development.

The MuWNP (see in particular the **Character Assessment (Appendix 1)** and the **list of Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets (Appendix 2)**) is intended to provide an account of the context specific to our Parish, in other words to provide some detail relating to our specific locale within the wider West Oxfordshire context.



High Street – spine of the main village, looking North East



Our rural setting, considered 'very important' by 83% of our community

Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in July 1996 and covered the period to 2006. It will be replaced by the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan that is being prepared in two parts. In Part 1 of The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2017), the adopted Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives, spatial planning strategy, and policies for meeting development requirements for the supply of minerals and the management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031.

Part 2 is being prepared – it will provide a policy framework for identifying sites for new minerals and waste developments, including the site allocations document, and for making decisions on related planning applications. The corresponding Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies Map North identifies the whole Parish of MuW as lying within the Cotswolds AONB and, in the Western upland zone of the Parish, the presence of the A424 as the local (and only) access route for strategic lorry movement.

No exploitable mineral resources are identified for the Parish in the map. The closest identified mineral resource is Mineral Strategic Resource Area 1 (Policy M3) for crushed rock at Burford, South of the A40 highway. The nearest sharp sand and gravel workings identified in the map are in the Lower Evenlode valley outside the AONB. An accompanying map (Special Habitats and Valley Environmentally Sensitive Areas) in **Baseline Evidencing (Appendix 3)** identifies monitored wildlife sites, including the site on the Western fringe of the Parish at Taynton Bushes.

It is noted that Policy M10 for restoration of (former) mineral workings requires restoration to a high standard and in a timely and phased manner to an after-use that is appropriate to the location and delivers a net gain in biodiversity.

The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan part 1 - Core Strategy calls for any proposal for a waste management site to lie within or affecting an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to be considered against policy C8 for Landscape. This requires that:

‘Proposals for minerals and waste development shall demonstrate that they respect and where possible enhance local landscape character and are informed by landscape character assessment. Proposals shall include adequate and appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impacts on landscape, including careful siting, design and landscaping. Where significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensatory environmental enhancements shall be made to offset the residual landscape and visual impacts. Great weight will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and high priority will be given to the enhancement of their natural beauty.’

Under Policy W10 for management and disposal of wastewater and sewage sludge:

‘Permission will be granted for proposals for the treatment and disposal of wastewater and sewage sludge where they are: in the interests of long-term waste water management; or to improve operational efficiency; or to enable planned development to be taken forward. However, proposals should accord with policies C1 – C12 and will otherwise only be considered favourably if there is an over-riding need that cannot be met in a more suitable location and provided that any adverse environmental impact is minimised.’

The referenced policies are as follows: C1 Sustainable development, C2 Climate change, C3 Flooding, C4 Water environment, C5 Local environment, amenity and economy, C6 Agricultural land and soils, C7 Biodiversity and geodiversity, C8 Landscape, C9 Historic environment and archaeology, C10 Transport, C11 Rights of way, and C12 Green Belt.

Cotswolds Conservation Board (CCB)

Consistent with the Local Plan policies that are cited earlier in this section - *notably our selection among policies EH1 to EH16, and policies OS2 and OS4* - CCB provides a wealth of guidance documentation that has been referred to in this Plan, especially at **Appendix 3 – Baseline Evidencing**, towards assisting MuWPC to fulfil its statutory duty to support conserving and enhancing of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). In this regard the following CCB documents have been referred to:

- Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023;
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment – from which our Appendix 3 focusses on the six Landscape Character Types (LCT) existing in our Parish;
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, with regard to the LCTs;
- Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change; and
- CCB Position Statements including the Statement on Preparing Neighbourhood Plans in an AONB.

Where necessary explicit reference is given to assure consistency with the AONB Management Plan and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

Natural England (NatEng)

In 2010 NatEng coordinated the multi-expert report ‘Making Space for Nature’, widely known as the Lawton report, shaping both the Natural Environment White Paper and the Biodiversity 2020 strategy. The report proposed a “resilient and coherent ecological network” across England and, having stood the test of time, continues to heavily influence policies of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) including the development of Defra’s 25 Year Environment Plan (2018; updated 2021). In follow-up to the 2010 report, NatEng’s 2020 handbook of ‘Nature Networks: A Summary for Practitioners’ provides guidance for evidence gathering and partner identification towards achieving appropriate vision of goals for each nature network encompassing biodiversity, natural capital, ecosystem services, landscape character, cultural heritage and other societal goals such as countryside access.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)

Relevant to the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and other guidance documentation published by CCB, Defra has recently introduced 3 new schemes that will reward environmental land management. These comprise the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI; introduced in 2021), the Local Nature Recovery scheme (LNRS; piloting during 2022) and the Landscape Recovery scheme (LRS; piloting during 2022). They are intended to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. Through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering the following: clean and plentiful water; clean air; thriving plants and wildlife; protection from environmental hazards; reduction of and adaptation to climate change; and, beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment. The ELMS plan to establish a Nature Recovery Network will protect and restore wildlife, as well as providing greater public enjoyment of the countryside; increased carbon capture; and improvements in water quality and flood management.

4.2. Development Context

The development context for MuW is provided by the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, in which MuW forms part of the Burford-Charlbury Sub-Area.

Policy BC1 Burford-Charlbury sub-area strategy explains that the focus of new development within the sub-area will be Burford and Charlbury as rural service centres, with development anticipated to be of an appropriate scale and type that would reinforce their existing service centre roles. Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local housing, community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Policy OS2 explains that villages such as MuW are suitable for limited development which respects village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the viability of these communities. The policy states that a number of site allocations are proposed within the Local Plan to ensure identified needs are met and that further allocations may be made through Neighbourhood Plans.

No specific housing need has been established for the Burford-Charlbury sub-area (or MuW Parish). This is not to claim that there is no housing need, nor that a development might not be forthcoming, based on a soundly based decision balancing the benefits and harms of further housing development and incorporating detailed evidence, including housing need, submitted as part of a specific planning application.

Anticipated housing in this sub-area included an existing planning commitment of 62 units at land South of High Street, MuW (now built, fully occupied and named St Jude's Meadow).



A wide variety of insects and flora is essential to our biodiversity

4.3. Housing Development and Site Allocation

The MuWNP has not identified or allocated sites for future housing development other than the existing 62-unit commitment set out in the Local Plan 2031 because there is no specific expectation or requirement in the Local Plan to allocate additional housing in the Parish. It is of note that, of the 62 homes referred to above, 31 were designated for social housing and are occupied.

However, the Local Plan does allow for speculative 'windfall' proposals to be considered on a case-by-case basis, where supported by robust evidence that any harms would be outweighed by the benefits. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 provides an up-to-date policy basis upon which to determine the suitability of any speculative windfall proposals that may be put forward within the Parish, in conjunction with policies set out in the MuWNP. After the formulation of the 2031 Local Plan, a further development of a nine-unit development called Wildbourne Close was approved on the South-eastern edge of the village (now built and occupied).

The Parish Council will regularly review the West Oxfordshire spatial planning context as per the NP monitoring requirements.

This is of particular importance with regard to the five-year housing land supply. According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), if a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites, local plan housing policies will be deemed out of date, opening the possibility of unplanned, speculative development (notwithstanding any protections that may be offered by MuW being in the Cotswolds AONB). At this time the housing supply equates to 5.3 years.

In this hypothetical scenario, a future, revised MuWNP may seek to allocate a development site to meet identified local housing requirements/needs and thereby seek to reduce the possibility of unplanned, speculative development taking place, whereby, per the NPPF:

'The adverse impact of allowing [another] development that conflicts with [a NP allocation policy] is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, where, for instance, the local planning authority has at least a three-year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five-year housing supply requirement) - NPPF, para 14.'

Community consultation undertaken for the MuWNP also supports the approach set out above. In the 2018 Community Survey, 60% of respondents (289 of 484 replies) stated that infill only would be the most appropriate kind of development for MuW. And 43% of respondents (214 of 500 responses), would support NO additional planned houses. However, 116 respondents did state that they required a new (i.e. alternative or different) home in MuW within the next 5 years (52 whole households; 64 individuals within a household).

The 2018 Community Survey strongly identified the community's concern for preservation of the setting of the village in the rural landscape (83% in support i.e. 419 of 526 respondents), minimisation of residential housing development impact on landscape (83% in support i.e. 368 of 445 responses) and protection of greenfield land (82% in support i.e. 355 of 442 responses) and high quality farmland (69% in support i.e. 307 of 444 responses).

5. Our Sustainability Challenges

Noting and reflecting on key themes from the background evidence noted above, the MuWNP has given full consideration to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that may arise locally with regard to social, environmental and economic issues.

Community consultation in this regard included:

- 1- A **Community Scoping Survey** to determine the felt need for a NP conducted by the Parish Council in April 2017 with guidance, data processing and report preparation by CFO.
- 2- A well-publicised Public Consultation session facilitated by CFO at the village hall in December 2017 at which the development of the NP was formally launched and the scheduled topical discussions were reported for future reference.
- 3- A **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) **Analysis** in April 2018 that was updated in November 2019 in the light of responses both informally and during public feedback sessions (**SWOT Analysis** is appended to the Consultation Statement). The analysis is collated under three broad themes: Community; Services and Infrastructure; and Environment.
- 4- The **2018 MuWNP Community Survey** and **2018 Young People's Survey**, appended to the Consultation Statement. These surveys explored resident opinion on multiple themes (community, environment, character and heritage, housing, housing needs, transport and movement).

In addition, detailed research has been undertaken on a range of sustainability indicators, the result of which is presented at **Appendix 3 - Baseline Evidence**. **Appendix 3** presents background information considered too voluminous to be included within the main NP document but vital to supporting the justification for proposed policies set forth in the NP. The history and evolution of the built settlement of MuW is presented, including identification of the location of historically important architecture, and the landscape and natural environment are summarised, drawing on specific assessments and classifications carried out recently by the Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board and, in significant detail, by consultants to West Oxfordshire District Council in 1998. Special habitats as defined by public bodies and land managed under Countryside Stewardship are mapped. Green spaces accessible to the public according to the Local Insight classification are presented. The evolution of the human population and current categorisations according to age, employment, mobility and other factors related to sustainability are presented in significant detail followed by a section describing housing development, and numbers and types of housing currently occupied and reported housing demand. An overview of the local economy and services is presented, followed by a section describing available transport. **Appendix 3** concludes with summaries describing the social and community infrastructure and health and wellbeing of the community and the respective support services.

The totality of research and consultation suggested several key areas facing the village which the Parish Council is seeking to address through Neighbourhood Plan Policies or by being taken forward as community-led projects. These key areas are summarised below.

5.1. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and village character

The SWOT analysis drew attention to the location of the Parish within the Cotswolds AONB, its land resource assets, open green spaces and views to and from the village as significant strengths of MuW. It similarly stated that biodiversity, rurality, air quality, good farmland and the presence of the Community Orchard were all strengths. The analysis also identified that protection of green spaces, establishment of a 'nature' area and biodiversity initiatives all offered good opportunities for environmental improvement. Among identified

threats, housing development was felt to be in conflict with biodiversity and green space. In addition, climate change may contribute to increased flooding risk.

Following the 20th July 2007 intensive storms that caused widespread flooding, the West Oxfordshire Parish Flood Report (WOPFR) for MuW (May, 2008) identified specific areas vulnerable to flooding and referenced the ground floors of several dwellings of The Heath being affected by flooding from Littlestock Brook in 2007. There were instances of surface water flooding of the main road at the Village Green (near the public house) and petrol station just beyond the parish boundary. There was also flooding of dwellings in Shipton-under-Wychwood in 2007.

The District Council subsequently undertook a programme of installation of non-return-valve airbricks in flood-affected properties in The Heath. Residents of this cul-de-sac now hold stocks of sandbags to provide an emergency bund to combat flood water. Although placed several times since 2007 there has been no new flood event where they have been breached. Moreover, an early warning system for respective residents is operational from web-based open-access telemetry to a stream level monitor deployed at The Heath since 2016. This is part of a flood mitigation project of The Environment Agency (to 2021). The project installed woody dams and associated bunds in landowners' fields higher up the catchment to reduce flood surge events. In 2021, to meet future stream level monitoring needs, the Parish Council invested in a telemetry scheme that is approved by The Environment Agency.

The development of the land south of the High Street (15/03128/OUT) known as St Jude's Meadow had a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) undertaken in 2015 which indicated the land being in flood zone 1 and having a low risk of surface water flooding.

The Parish Council continues to monitor flood-vulnerable areas identified on Environment Agency 'risk' mapping and actual flood events. The most vulnerable, highest risk areas are shown on the Parish Council's Emergency Plan map. Reference to this map and the WOPFR by the Parish Council continues to be made when considering planning applications in and around the village. All developments will need to show they can meet FRA requirements.

The 2018 MuWNP Community Survey strongly identified the community's concern for preservation of the setting of the village in the rural landscape (83% in support), minimisation of residential housing development impact on landscape (83% in support) and protection of greenfield land (82% in support) and high-quality farmland (69% in support).

In terms of green spaces respondents to the community survey showed that maintenance (and enhancement) of the Village Green (88%) and all publicly accessible open spaces in the village (81%) were priorities. Particular attention was given to the Calais Field at the ends of Jubilee and Frog Lanes (67%), the Parish Field's allotments and orchard (61%) and green communal spaces in new housing developments (67%) such as Elm Grove and St Jude's Meadow.

These opinions offer strong support for ensuring that potential future development contributes, where appropriate, to the conservation and enhancement of valued green spaces within the village and with the rural green spaces that offer public access and valued landscape.

5.2. **Retail, services and local economy**

In contrast with many other Cotswold villages, the population of Milton-under-Wychwood comprises a healthy mix of young and old, of people who work and people who have retired, and of people in a wide range of different economic circumstances.

25% of respondents to the 2018 Community Survey stated that they work or study from home: a figure that has doubtless increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these businesses are run from people's

houses but an important number of them rely on the existence in MuW of suitable premises in which to base these businesses; premises that tenant business operators hope will not be subject to future change of use.

Some of the premises that are currently designated for use by small businesses - for example, Groves Industrial Estate (see **Figure 7**) in the centre of the village - are rented by businesses that, because they provide services to the local community, would have difficulty in relocating elsewhere – see **Appendix 4 - List of Businesses and Services**.

Notwithstanding the protection offered to existing employment sites by Policy E1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, the potential risk remains that these buildings could be re-designated. This would lead to a reduction of employment opportunities in the village which in turn would lead to more commuting from the village to places of work outside the village.

In the case of Groves Industrial Estate in the centre of MuW, the potential for re-designation has been reduced by its inclusion in WODC's September 2016 Article 4 Direction for Business sites in West Oxfordshire. This Direction will however cease to have effect from 1st August 2022, after which it is hoped that WODC will move quickly to find an alternative vehicle through which to ensure that this site's role is protected as a vital place of employment for MUW residents.



Main Entrance to Alfred Groves Industrial Estate

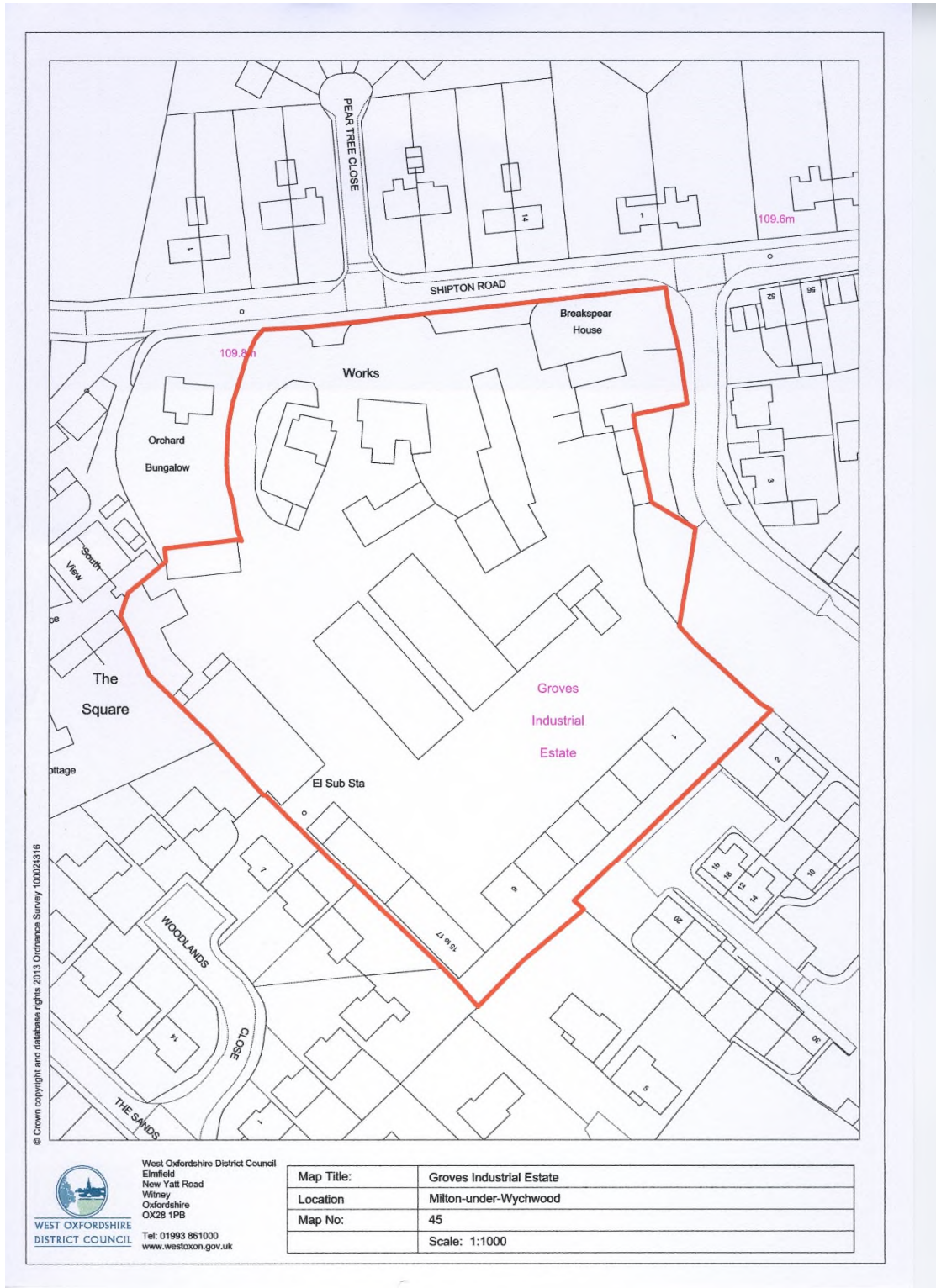


Figure 7 Plan of Groves Industrial Estate

The Parish also includes a number of smallholdings and farms with additional buildings to the main house/premises and some of these additional buildings are currently underutilised. Some may provide opportunities for adaptation into facilities for small businesses, shared workspaces and other forms of community shared space. Support for planning applications to facilitate such adaptations, where they are consistent with the character and heritage of the buildings around them and their immediately surrounding area, will support the NP objective of ensuring sufficient provision exists in the village to support a population comprising a healthy proportion of people who both live and work in the village.

Despite the fact that the community supports a number of 'retail and local services', which the 2018 Community Survey showed were well supported, the results also revealed that there is a small number of additional retail and other services that, if they were present, would also be well supported. Examples are a full-time post office and farm shop, and more recreational facilities for, most importantly, older children.

Additionally, as pressure of competition from internet-based businesses increases on retailers (such as Groves DIY shop), local services come under further pressure as a result of constricting funding (such as the MuW library) and the trend continues towards the consolidation of services (such as health services) into ever fewer and larger centres, there is a risk to the future sustainability of retail and other local services present in the village. This potentially gives rise to the additional risk whereby the village becomes a less attractive place for people to live and work.



Village Library in High Street – a highly valued community asset



Milton Volunteers undertake valuable work around our community

5.3. Social and community infrastructure

Respondents to the 2018 Community Survey showed strong support for the addition of new recreational facilities to the village, with an emphasis on facilities for young people and children. This would seem to be an important factor in maintaining the village's current healthy population mix of people of all age groups and different economic circumstances.

The village is proud that the range of clubs and organisations that are active in the village caters for all sectors of the community. In particular there are several organisations for women and girls, for the very young and for people in the older age groups. Development of more facilities for older children is being actively pursued, with an emphasis on physical activity to promote health and in recognition that it is these older children who have been particularly badly affected both physically and psychologically by the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the limits on their activities imposed by the succession of lockdowns.

However, despite the good range of well-supported groups and organisations, in common with most other communities, they can often be in a precarious situation financially and with regard to maintaining the volunteers pipeline required to sustain them.

If these groups and facilities are not well supported, there is a risk that the village will become a less attractive place for younger people to live and work which would, as a consequence, lead to an unhealthy change in the profile of the population to reduce the number of younger/ working people living in the village and increase the proportion of older/retired people.



Guides and the Wychwood Saplings Amateur Dramatics Group

5.4. Traffic and parking

In the 2018 Community Survey, there were a number of questions about traffic, road use and parking, high responses to which indicated that these were issues of great concern to the village community. These concerns have been exacerbated by, firstly, the loss of the public house car park to housing infill development and, secondly, the addition of some 100 – 150 extra cars to the population of private cars in the village resulting from the occupation of recently constructed new housing.

In response to concerns expressed by residents about the speed of traffic in Church Road, a group of Speedwatch volunteers monitored traffic speeds with a Speed Indication Device in January 2021. Although gear changes might make vehicles sound like they were 'speeding', less than 2.5 % of drivers were found to be in violation of the prosecutable threshold of 34 m.p.h. This reflected a pattern identified in a Police survey on the same road carried out in October 2016. Despite the continuing irritation to some residents, both surveys established that it would be unjustified to install traffic calming measures and/or permanent speed cameras in Church Road.

The MuWPC recognises the community's concern about traffic and parking issues and supports investigation into measures designed to reduce traffic speed (possibly to 20 mph in the built area), alleviate traffic congestion and optimise road use. However, it is not possible to directly address such issues within the guidelines currently laid down for Neighbourhood Plan policies.

5.5. Footpaths and green spaces

The SWOT analysis identified the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network as a significant strength of the infrastructure of MuW. The network of paths and spaces is integral to the character of the village and this permeability should be enhanced wherever new development is planned.

The 2018 Community Survey identified that 85% of respondents considered maintenance and improvement of footpaths and rights of way as important for public health and wellbeing. The responses prioritised paths radiating from the village curtilage but also included consideration for the paths attracting visiting tourists, such as the Oxfordshire Way.

Respondents supported improvement to the existing footpath network by addressing boggy/muddy patches and, to a lesser extent, overgrowth. Respondents also sought enhancement of footpath and bridleway signage (36%) and provision of information boards at key locations (65%).



Oxfordshire Way – an important National Path passes through the northeast of our Parish

The aerial photographic map at **Figure 8** below presents the PROW in the Parish demonstrating permeability offered by bridleways and footpaths.



Figure 8 Map showing the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network



Many and varied footpaths contribute to the health and wellbeing of our community

Nearly 27 hectares of green spaces have been classified in MuW by NPSG during the preparation of this Plan as follows and are presented in **Table 1**:

- Designated Local Green Spaces (LGS) (See Local Green Spaces Assessment - **Appendix 6**)
- Charity and/or Parish Council Controlled Spaces (CPCCS)
- Other Private Space (OPS)

Reference	Name	Reason	Area (sqm)	Area (hectares)
LGS1	Manor Farm Wetland Open Space and Nature Reserve	Biodiversity enhancement project on permanent pasture	21370.94	2.14
LGS2	Mactaggart and Mickel Ecological Space	Ecological area acquired to complement 62 new homes; the area is adjacent to LGS1	13050.29	1.31
LGS4	St Jude's Meadow Green Space and Footpath	Woodland, grassland, balancing pond & footpaths associated with completion of 62 new homes in 2021	11916.89	1.19
LGS5	OCC Paddocks and Footpaths Green Lane	Meadow landscape along two Public Footpaths and in Key Views 1, 3 and 11 (Appendix 8)	14517.1	1.01
CPCCS1	Village Recreation Ground	Public sports and recreation field	24539.53	2.45
CPCCS2	Milton Allotments and Recreation Charity (MARC) and Milton Welfare Trust (MWT) shared Parish Field Farmland	Let arable farmland	116317.98	11.63
CPCCS3	MARC (30) and MWT (30) Allotments (60 total)	Allotments portion of Parish Field	15992.15	1.60
CPCCS4	Parish Council Woodland and Walk	Natural Flood Management, Biodiversity and Recreation	10317.35	1.03
CPCCS5	Parish Council Cemetery	Extended cemetery area	5021.16	0.50
CPCCS6	Community Orchard	Community Orchard portion of Parish Field	2399.81	0.24
CPCCS7	Buffer area in Parish Field	Fallow and trees	1456.18	0.15
CPCCS8	St Jude's Churchyard	Churchyard maintained by Parish Council	4632.64	0.46
CPCCS9	Elm Grove Green	Small green maintained by Parish Council	2779.72	0.28
CPCCS10	Fettiplace-Ansell Way Green	Public Lawn and Footway	652.71	0.07
CPCCS11	Ansell Way Verge	Verge maintained by Parish Council	613.46	0.06
OPS1	Elm Grove Play Green	Play green owned and maintained by Sovereign Housing Association	490.46	0.05
OPS2	Church Meadow - Brookfield Close Green	Connecting footpath and green space owned by Laserarch Properties Ltd	1005.53	0.10
OPS3	Calais Field	Public Open Space 2019 with associated Landscape and Ecological Management Plan	21566.55	2.16
			268640.45	26.43

Table 1: Green Spaces in the Parish of Milton-under-Wychwood

6. The Neighbourhood Plan – vision and objectives

The Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan vision, objectives and policies have evolved and been refined throughout the NP process through extensive community consultation.

They respond to the main sustainability challenges set out above and will be achieved: 1- through a policy; or 2- by being taken forward as a community-led project, as set out in **Community Projects (Appendix 7)**.

The community consultation process included the following documented events (the totality of the consultation process is documented in detail in the Consultation Statement):

- **The MuWNP scoping survey** (April 2017)
- **The MuWNP launch event** (December 2017)
- **The MuWNP Community Survey and (separate) Young People’s Survey** (April 2018)
- **Consultation event** (October 2018)
 - o Run over two days to present and discuss the survey findings and next steps in the MuWNP,
- **Consultation day** (July 2019)
 - o A MuWNP stall at the Village Fete collected feedback and ideas
- **Consultation event** (September 2021)
 - o Presented and discussed proposed policies and associated projects.

Additionally, minutes of NPSG meetings, related documentation and NP survey reports were posted promptly on the Parish Council website.



Neighbourhood Plan stall at the Annual Fete 2019

6.1. The vision of the Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan

To retain our separate identity as a rural parish set in open countryside, protect and enhance the rural environment and provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations, while retaining and developing the facilities that make the Parish of Milton-under-Wychwood an attractive place to live and work.

6.2. Objectives

Objectives have been grouped under themes:

CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

- Enhance our strong sense of community spirit and local identity
- Conserve and, where possible, enhance the rural character of MuW and its surrounding countryside
- Maintain the discrete identity of the village of MuW and the adjacent hamlet of Upper Milton, each of these villages having their own distinct character within the Parish
- Maintain the separation of MuW from its neighbour Shipton-under-Wychwood.

ENVIRONMENT

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek environmental improvements
- Conserve the high-quality and accessible countryside setting of the Parish, open landscapes and key views
- Protect important green spaces of high amenity and biodiversity value from development
- Protect local aquatic corridors from land use change.

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Protect community facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to sustain and improve their viability
- Nurture and support existing local services
- Convert underutilised buildings into premises for small businesses and shared workspaces.

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

- Promote healthier lifestyles by maximising opportunities for walking and cycling through suitable infrastructure
- Protect, improve and extend the PROW network for promotion of walking, riding and cycling (where approved) for health and general wellbeing.

7. The Neighbourhood Plan – Policies

Policies and objectives have been grouped under themes. In this section each of those themes is given a general introduction. Evidence and justification are set out and then the policy is set out within that context.

7.1. Character and Heritage

Introduction

The location and design of new development would have an impact on the unique and distinctive character and separateness of each of the built areas within the Parish of Milton-under-Wychwood.

The following Policies aim to ensure this impact is such that character is conserved and enhanced and they should be read in conjunction with the **Character Assessment (Appendix 1)**.

Objectives	Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance our strong sense of community spirit and local identity To conserve and, where possible, enhance the rural character of MuW and its surrounding countryside To maintain the discrete identity of the village of MuW and the adjacent hamlet of Upper Milton, each of these villages having their own distinct character within the Parish To maintain the separation of MuW from its neighbour Shipton-under-Wychwood. 	<p>POLICY CH1: VILLAGE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DESIGN</p> <p>POLICY CH2: KEY VIEWS</p> <p>POLICY CH3: NON-COALESCENCE OF MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD WITH UPPER MILTON</p> <p>POLICY CH4: SEPARATION OF MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD AND SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD</p>

7.1.1. POLICY CH1 Village character and environmentally sensitive design

The Village of MuW and the neighbouring hamlet of Upper Milton form a diverse pair of Cotswold settlements within the Parish of MuW. The fringes of the Parish contain a further scattering of farmsteads and occasional individual houses, but otherwise the two settlements nestle within an agricultural hinterland which provides a distinctly rural setting of farmland, small woodlands and copses. The Parish sits within the Cotswolds AONB.

Whilst both settlements have a core of predominantly 18th – 19th Century buildings, the village of MuW has been much enlarged throughout the 20th and early 21st Centuries, with properties of varying types, including short terraces, detached and semi-detached houses, and bungalows of varying scale. These additions have been predominantly to the periphery of MuW. The hamlet of Upper Milton did not undergo the same transformation and retains most of its 18th Century makeup, with relatively few 20th Century additions apart from a few insertions and the conversion of agricultural barns and buildings to residences; it thus retains a separate and distinct identity from MuW.

The Village Character Assessment (**Appendix 1**), for convenience, divides the Parish of MuW into six discrete built areas and looks in detail at the key identifying features of these areas. It then provides guidelines to be

followed by any new development in each of these areas to ensure that the positive features of that particular area are conserved and enhanced.

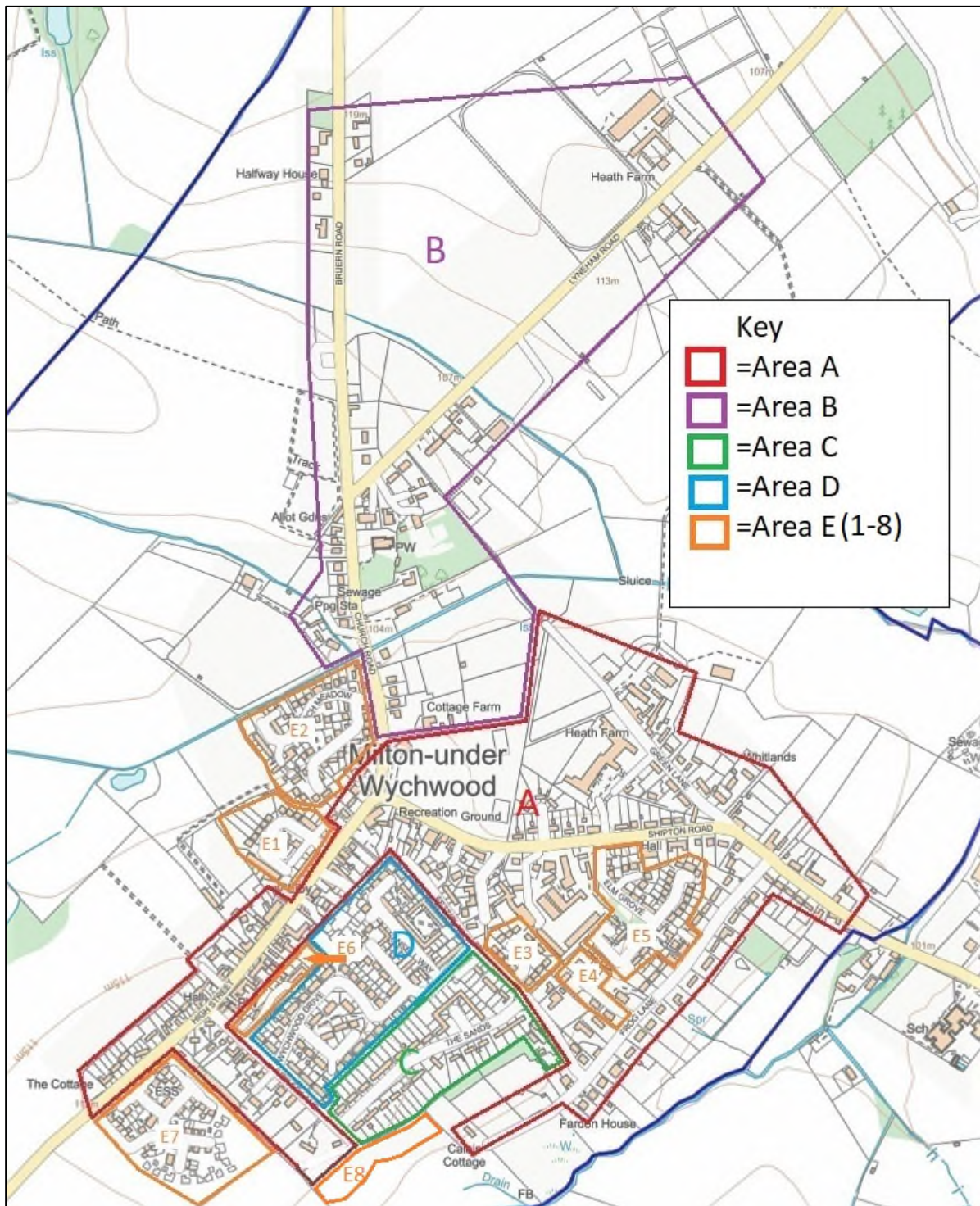


Figure 9 Main urban area of MuW with key areas marked as identified in the Character Assessment (Appendix 1)

- Area A Historic core i.e. The Village Green, High Street, Shipton Road, and adjoining streets
- Area B: Upper Church Road and the Bruern and Lyneham Roads
- Area C: The Sands
- Area D: Wychwood Drive, Ansell Way, Reade Close, Greenlands Court and environs
- Area E: Poplar Farm Close, Brookfield Close and Church Meadow, Woodlands Close, Forest Close, Elm Grove, Harman’s Court, St Jude’s Meadow and Wildbourne Close
- Area F: (*off map*) Upper Milton

The following is a summary of the Plan guidelines for each area:

Area A: Historic core i.e. The Village Green, High Street, Shipton Road, and adjoining streets

Any proposal for planning permission in this area as shown in **Figure 9** should have no adverse impact on the open aspect of the Village Green and its connectedness to the countryside beyond. Materials should be chosen to harmonise with the predominance of local limestone as a building material. Enhancements to existing buildings in this area should maintain the garden settings to properties, and conserve the positive features identified in the Village Character Assessment (**Appendix 1**). Any infill development should be limited to avoid a significant change in the overall open and green character of the area and be in keeping with current build densities.

Area B: Upper Church Road and the Bruern and Lyneham Roads

Any proposal for planning permission in this area should be sensitive to the setting of the Church of SS Simon and Jude and its adjoining former Schoolroom, these all being listed buildings. Any enhancements to existing properties should not erode off-street parking provision to keep these roads as free of parked cars as they are at present. Any infill or 'demolish and replace' development should maintain current densities. The quiet nature of these roads should be maintained to conserve the peaceful environment enjoyed by churchgoers, allotment holders, and visitors to the churchyard and the burial ground.

Area C: The Sands

Any proposal for planning permission in this area should maintain the integrity of this estate which is a capsule of the post-war housing boom. Materials should be chosen to harmonise with the buff-coloured brick used in this location. Whilst acknowledging permitted development rights, enhancements to existing buildings in this area should maintain the garden settings to properties, and not lead to any increase in on-street parking which is generally minimal at present. Infill development is not desirable in this area for the same reason, and to conserve the current pleasing build density.

Area D: Wychwood Drive, Ansell Way, Reade Close, Greenlands Court and environs

This area is one of the most constrained in the village being bounded on all sides by other streets and having been subject to further small "infill" developments in recent years. It is thus not anticipated that any further development or infill should take place in this area other than that allowed under permitted development rights. Enhancements and extensions should have minimal impact on current densities and not increase needs for on-street parking. The pedestrian connections through to other areas of the village should be maintained, as should the internal green spaces.

Area E: Poplar Farm Close; Brookfield Close and Church Meadow; Woodlands Close; Forest Close; Elm Grove; Harman's Court; St Jude's Meadow and Wildbourne Close

These estates, being relatively recently built and complete entities in themselves in terms of continuity of design, and laid out to recent planning standards, are not in want of much enhancement or adaptation. Any proposal for planning permission in these areas should respect the overall style and use of materials in each estate and maintain the levels of communal amenity provided – such as integrated green space, separation of pedestrians and traffic, and off-street parking and garaging for motor cars. Enhancements to properties should also minimise impact on these amenities, and not impinge upon the green buffers that often surround these estates.

Area F: Upper Milton.

Any proposal for planning permission in this area should respect the independent identity that Upper Milton maintains from the main village of MuW. This will include maintaining the separation of the two centres by a strict preservation of the current margin of countryside. Any development should also maintain the distinctive agricultural setting that Upper Milton enjoys. Materials should be chosen to harmonise with the predominance of local limestone as a building material. Enhancements to existing buildings in this area should maintain the historic integrity of the existing buildings and not overwhelm or obscure their original make-up. Any infill development should be strictly limited to maintain the relative low density that is a part of Upper Milton's identity.

POLICY CH1: VILLAGE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DESIGN

The design and location of any new buildings, alterations or extensions should take into account the potential impact of such development on the distinctive character of the particular area in which it is located within the Parish of MuW, as described in the MuW Character Assessment (Appendix 1).

This is to ensure that the particular character of the area in which any new development is located is conserved and enhanced and thus that the special character of the Parish of MuW as a whole is conserved for current and future generations.

In particular, applications for planning permission will only be supported if they contribute positively to the character of the Parish by conforming to the following guidelines:

- Any new development, alteration or extension should conserve and enhance local character by way of their scale, massing, density, height, landscape design, layout and materials, following the guidelines contained in the MuW Character Assessment (Appendix 1) for the particular built area of the Parish in which they are located, and in conformity with the guidelines provided by the West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.
- New buildings should be set back from the building line, in keeping with this common feature throughout the Parish, with adequate provision of front gardens to contribute to the continued “greening” of the street scene, and to minimise urbanisation of the village
- Existing front garden space should be conserved where possible and its conversion or partial conversion to parking space is discouraged. Development which resists the loss of front garden space will be supported.
- Any new development should retain natural features, mature trees, existing hedges, watercourses, and characteristic Cotswold stone boundaries to properties, leave buffers for planting and have edges that are visually “soft” as well as being permeable to wildlife to ensure biodiversity net gain
- Any new development should ensure that settings are conserved in every sense - i.e. approach, frontage, proximity and orientation of adjoining properties, where settings are integral to the identity and architectural integrity of buildings potentially affected
- Any new development should make a positive contribution to protecting and where possible enhancing the key views into and out of the built area of the Parish, as described in detail under MuWNP Policy CH2
- The design and nature of any new developments should also be consistent with the policies of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy
- In line with the respective CCB Position Statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light adopted in March 2019, street lighting should be minimised and low height where possible, to avoid disturbance to residents, disorientation of nocturnal wildlife and urbanisation of the village character
- The Village Green must be preserved as an open and public green space within the heart of the village, together with its seamless visual connection to the wider Wychwood landscape.

7.1.2. POLICY CH 2 – Key Views

The 2018 Community Survey strongly identified the community's concern for preservation of the Parish's setting in the rural landscape (419 of 502 responses: 83%), minimisation of housing development impact on landscape (368 of 445 responses: 83%) and protection of greenfield land (355 of 434 responses: 82%) and high-quality farmland (307 of 444 responses: 69%) from residential development.

Vital contributors to the 'rural setting' that residents value so highly are a number of important views from within and towards the built area of the Parish that exemplify what residents mean by our 'rural setting' and which this plan seeks to protect by designating them as 'key views'.

To help define exactly which these 'key views' were, we examined the 2004 Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) for potential guidance but found it did not offer the level of detail previously provided by the 1998 West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (Atlantic Consultants) commissioned by WODC. This MuW specific and valuable assessment by Atlantic Consultants for WODC provided meaningful observations and recommendations as follows:

North of village

Visual: moderate to high intervisibility across open land - around Heath Farm for example; good distant views in most directions; views into and out of the urban edge filtered by mature vegetation.

Key sensitivities and considerations: need to strengthen landscape structure to bind together the urban edge; need to resist any further changes which will make settlement more dispersed in character.

South of village

Visual: medium to low intervisibility - views filtered by intervening vegetation; views in and out of the urban edge limited by intervening vegetation; urban edge a bit harsh in places; more distant views further west beyond woodland blocks towards Shipton Down; distant elevated views of southern edge of Milton from Shipton Down and Swinbrook Road; ridgeline at Shipton Down - important skyline.

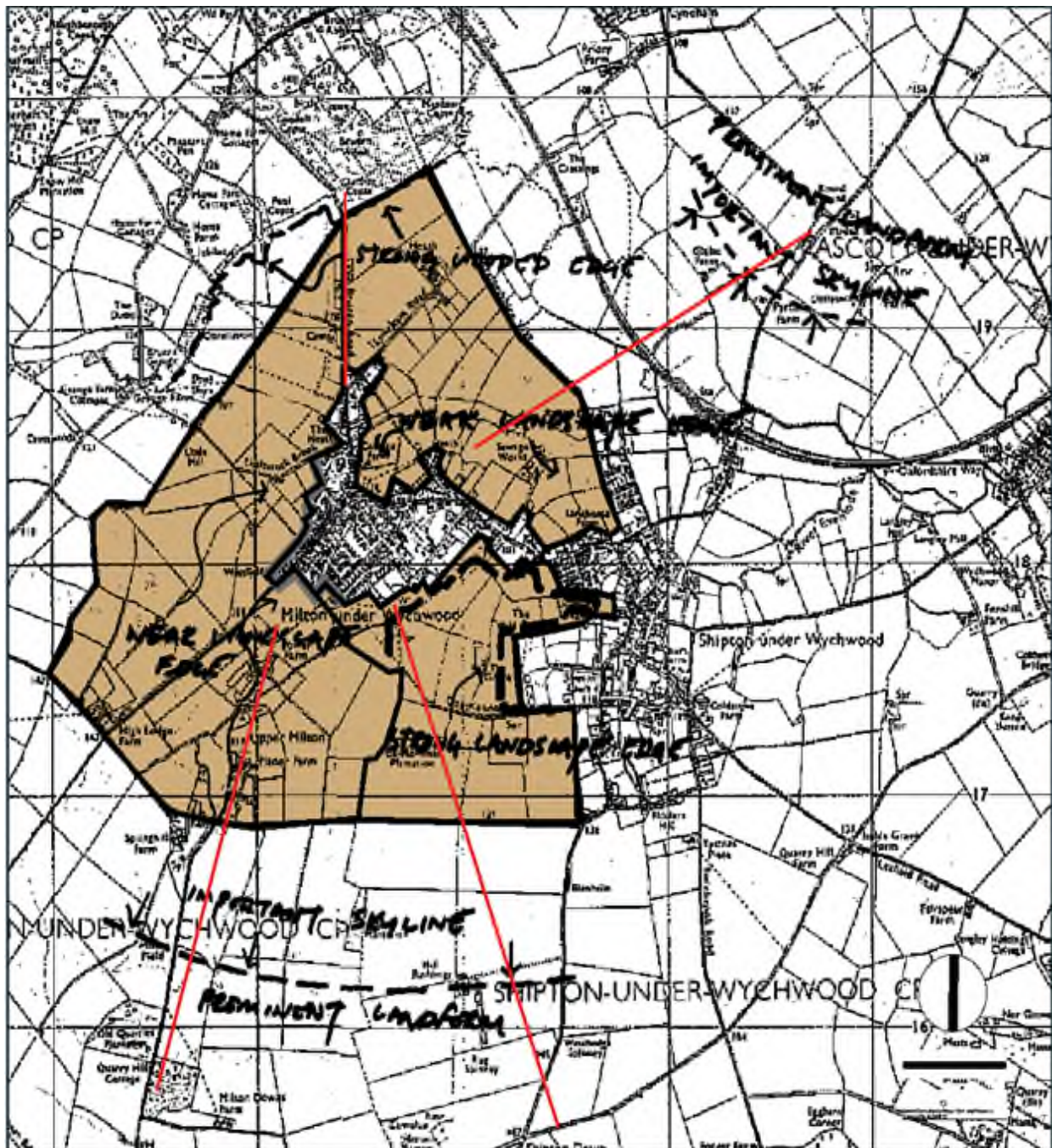
Key sensitivities and considerations: need to strengthen landscape structure to bind together the urban edge; need to soften urban edge in key places; open land on rising ground to the south particularly sensitive to change.

West of village

Visual: moderate to high intervisibility across open land; urban edge harsh in places; good distant views in most directions; ridgeline at Shipton Down - important skyline.

Key sensitivities and considerations: Need to soften the urban edge to form a more cohesive boundary; need to strengthen landscape edge; need to resist any further changes which will make settlement more dispersed in character.

The Assessment additionally asserted for the Parish some important landscape features and views, as reproduced in **Figure 10** below which remain relevant and have influenced this Plan:



MAP LEGEND: RED LINES INDICATE OPEN VIEWS

Figure 10 Landscape Map Extracted from Landscape Assessment for WODC 1998 (Atlantic Consultants)

The **Character Assessment (Appendix 1)** also identifies the importance of spaces between buildings allowing views out into the surrounding countryside, and views along street lines that terminate in rural vistas, and across the Village Green from Shipton Road looking north.

All of this gives the village identity as sited within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with its very high level of protection. New development (including infill) should help to maintain this sense of place.

With the above considered, the NPSG has consulted widely to add further local detail and clarity to the definition of which of the many views into and out of the village and across open countryside are of most importance and quality, and why. Those identified as ‘Key’ and deserving special protection through policy CH2 are a carefully selected shortlist of the following:

1. Views that contribute most to the setting of the Parish in a rural landscape that respondents to the 2018 Community Survey nominated as the most important characteristic of the Parish that they wish to see preserved (419 of 502 responses: 83%).
2. Views identified by Atlantic Consultants in the 1998 West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment as requiring protection because of the crucial contribution they make to the unique landscape setting of the Parish and its location within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
3. Views that make an important contribution to the unique character of one or more of the sub areas of the Parish as defined and described in detail in the NP Village Character Assessment.
4. Views that support the health and wellbeing of the community through the vital contribution they make to creating a pleasing open aspect and a soft edge between the built areas of the Parish and the surrounding rural landscape.
5. Views identified as most important to residents of the Parish in their responses to an informal survey of residents conducted in July 2019.
6. Views that contribute most to enjoyment of the rural nature of the extensive network of Public Rights of Way and Other Paths that traverse the Parish.

The results are presented in **Key Views (Appendix 8)**.

The aim is to prevent the loss or significant diminution of these key views firstly from within the built area of the village out into the rural hinterland, secondly towards the village from the surrounding Cotswolds AONB and thirdly views across open countryside so that they can continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors, present and future.

Table 2 presents the Key Open Views (KOV) selected for preservation.

View ID from Fig. 11 below	View Ref	View Description
1	KOV 1	Village Green/Recreation Ground to Merriscourt Ridge
2a	KOV 2a	Fulbrook Ridge/A361to UM/MuW Village Gap
2b	KOV 2b	Fulbrook Ridge/MuW and Upper Milton Settlements
3	KOV 3	Green Lane/MUW Village Green/Recreation Ground
4	KOV 4	Jubilee Lane/Dog Kennel Lane rise
5a	KOV 5a	Heath Farm/Lyneham Bridge fields
5b	KOV 5b	Lyneham Bridge Heath Farm ridge
6	KOV 6	Lyneham Bridge/Valley Floor/ SuW Church Spire
7	KOV 7	Calais Field (Sands Field)/Upper Milton and Downs
8	KOV 8	High Street from Library southwards
9	KOV 9	New Road/Wychwood School green gap
10	KOV 10	Milton Downs Farm northern panorama
11	KOV 11	Green Lane/Lancut Footpath
12	KOV 12	Allotments Field/Western Uplands
13	KOV 13	Allotments Field south easterly/MuW Anglican Church
14	KOV 14	Allotments Field/Bruern

Table 2 Identification and Description of Key Open Views

Figure 11 below shows the principal vectors of the respective views which are more fully described in Appendix 8 – Key Views.

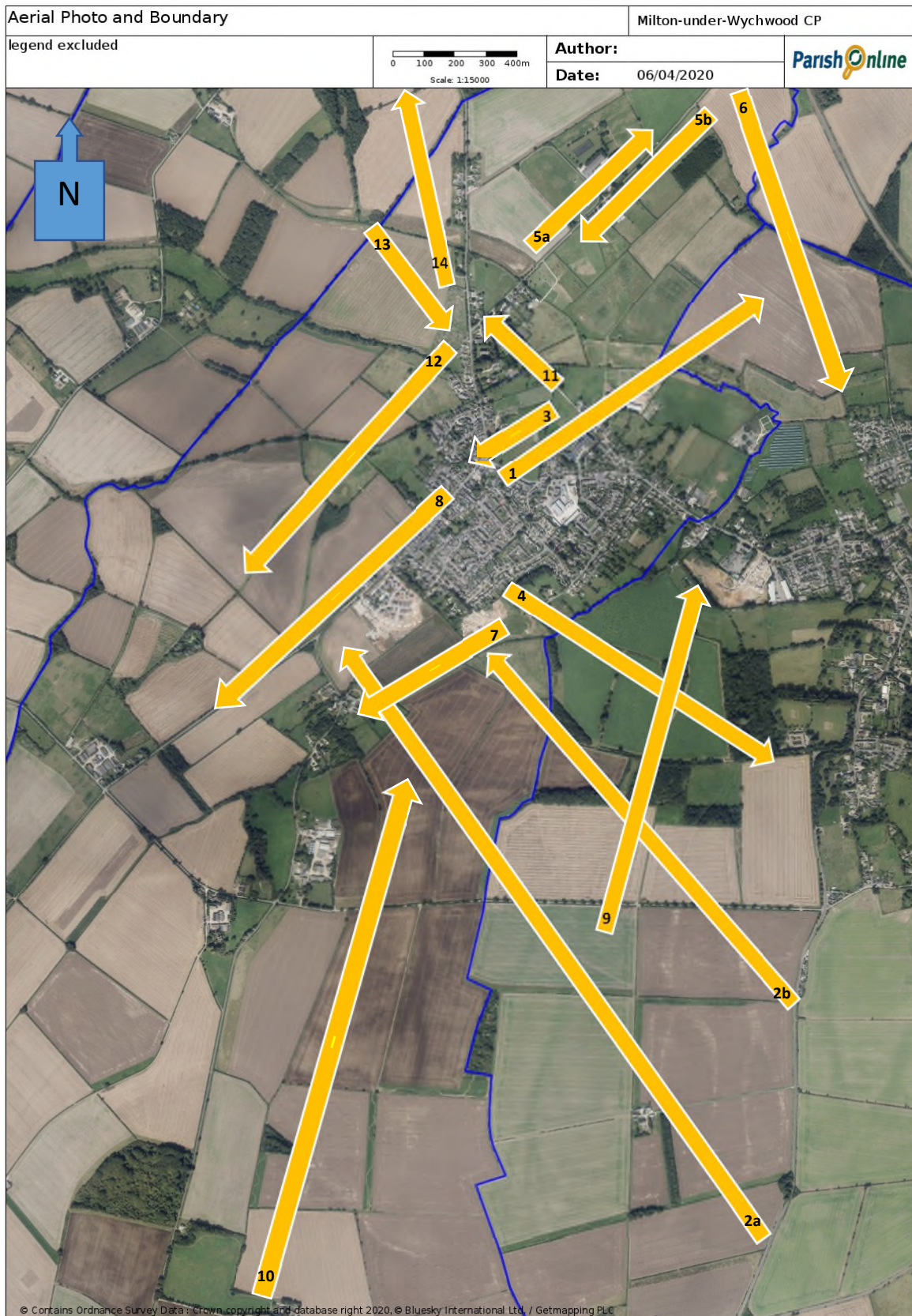


Figure 11 Map showing Key Views

POLICY CH2: KEY VIEWS

Any new development or land use change will be expected to make a positive contribution to protecting and where possible enhancing the key views identified at Figure 11 and more fully described in Appendix 8.

In particular, the design of any new development should respect the landscape and architecture along the sight lines that define the key views set out at Figure 11 and ensure that the key historic features resonant of the area's landscape character and heritage, such as hedgerows, watercourses and woodland that are part of these key views are retained.



View over Parish Field towards Church Road



View from Parish Field towards Western Uplands

7.1.3. POLICY CH 3 - Non-Coalescence of Milton-Under-Wychwood with Upper Milton

The Parish of MuW includes two distinct and very different settlements, i.e. the village of MuW and the small hamlet of Upper Milton.

The village of MuW comprises an eclectic mix of different types of building of different ages and includes residential properties, retail premises, facilities for small businesses, two churches, a library and a village hall.

It is a vibrant village and home to a healthy mix of young and old, of people who work and people who have retired, and of people in a wide range of different economic circumstances. And of the people who work a very high proportion work in the village and/or from their own homes (2018 Community Survey - 121 of 480 respondents: 25% stated that they worked or studied from home; a figure that has doubtless increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020).

The small hamlet of Upper Milton (UM) to the south of MuW is quite different. Encroachment from new development of an estate of 62 homes on the southern fringe of the main village has reduced the hamlet's corridor of separation by 40% to just 300 metres. This encroachment has had some negative impact on the character of Upper Milton and the potential for further, cumulative, negative impacts from further development in this area is a concern.

With the exception of one residential building that is a more modern infill, and some purpose-built farm structures, all of the Upper Milton buildings are constructed of Cotswold stone with traditional roof materials. They are over 100 years old (with many dating back 300 years or more) and were once components of two very long-established agricultural enterprises, i.e. Lower Farm at the top end of Upper Milton, and Manor Farm at the bottom end.

Many of these buildings have been extensively renovated internally to make them suitable for accommodation in today's world. However, that restoration has been undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic with the unique and historic character of these and the other buildings that comprise Upper Milton.

The result is a small settlement that retains all the character and beauty of a traditional Cotswold farming community. It is enjoyed for its unique character, and the splendour of the unspoilt countryside that surrounds it, by numerous walkers who use the public right of way that runs through it.

Currently UM and MuW village are separated by an expanse of agricultural land that makes a vital contribution to retaining the separate and distinct identities of these two quite different communities. The map at **Figure 12** demonstrates the separation and surrounding natural features. At **Section 7.2**, where biodiversity and wildlife movement are discussed, the map is overlaid with two identified connecting corridors that provide opportunities for free movement of wildlife between these communities. The respective corridors are designated Blue-Green Corridors.



View over Lower Farm - Upper Milton



Figure 12 Upper Milton – MuW main village farmland gap

The photograph at **Figure 13** shows the actual landscape in the respective gap towards the South East between the settlements.



Figure 13 Farmland gap between MuW main Village (left) and Upper Milton (right)

This agricultural land and its margins and hedgerows between the main village of MuW and the smaller hamlet of UM provides an important continuation of a south east-north west corridor for wildlife moving between the agricultural lands from neighbouring parishes as is explained in **Section 7.2.1** and makes a major contribution to the beauty of the AONB when viewed from surrounding vantage points like the view from the South East on the A361 from Fulbrook to Shipton (see **Figure 11 Key Views** map and **Appendix 8** photo **KOV2a**)

The importance of this piece of agricultural land is also recognised in WODC's Landscape Character Assessment which designates MuW as a 'Key Settlement' within the Upper Evenlode Valley and draws particular attention to:

1. The important contribution made to MuW's unique visual characteristics by the 'distant elevated views of the southern edge of MuW from Shipton Down and Swinbrook Road' (See **Figure 11** above, and photos **KOV 10** from South [Milton Downs] and **KOV 2a** and **2b** from South East [A 361/Swinbrook Road direction] in **Appendix 8**).

2. The particular sensitivity of the 'open land on rising ground to the South (of MuW village)' which it emphasises is 'particularly sensitive to change' (See *WODC Landscape Character Assessment, 1998* pp. 97 and 98 and associated MuW settlement map).

The importance of maintaining this gap has been heightened by the significant narrowing of this gap that has resulted from the approval on appeal by the Planning Inspector of the construction of 62 houses on this rising ground on the southern flank of the main village of MuW as shown in the photograph at **Figure 14**.



Figure 14 Narrowing corridor between Upper Milton and Main Settlement

It is, consequently, important that the remaining gap is retained so that the built area of MuW and that of UM remain two separate settlements and the space between them continues to make a vital contribution to highlighting, through their separation, the unique and distinctly different characters of these two communities. This is consistent with Policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the general principles of which emphasise the importance of avoiding the coalescence and loss of identity of separate settlements.

POLICY CH3: NON-COALESCENCE OF MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD WITH UPPER MILTON

Development proposals which would result in the coalescence and loss of the separate identities of the village of MuW and the hamlet of Upper Milton will not be supported.

This is to ensure that they remain two unique and distinct settlements and that the village and landscape character as well as the wildlife and heritage of this part of the Cotswolds AONB is conserved.

This approach supports Policy CH2 which aims to protect a number of key views (2a and 2b, 7 and 10) by providing additional protection for the openness of views from the west and northwest.

It also provides vital support for the development of an emerging larger biodiversity corridor that stretches from the western parish boundary with Bruern to the eastern parish boundary with Shipton-under-Wychwood. (see Policy E1 – Blue Green Corridors for Biodiversity and Wildlife Movement).

7.1.4. POLICY CH 4 - Separation of Milton-under-Wychwood and Shipton-under-Wychwood

The village of MuW with its Village Green/Recreation Ground at its centre, and the village of SuW with Church Green and the Conservation Area at its centre are two separate and distinct settlements.

Each has its own parish council, and each values its personality and separation from the other, although there is much cooperation over the shared facilities such as village halls for events of common interest, the Co-op in MuW, the surgery and school located in SuW, and the coordination of Emergency Plans.

The two settlements are also clearly separated physically by open countryside to the North and to the South of the Shipton/Milton Road that runs through them and where the separation of the two communities is less obvious.

This physical separation makes a vital contribution to the unique visual quality of the Cotswolds AONB in which both villages are located as illustrated by the photograph below of the settlements taken looking Northwards. (Also see photo **KOV 9** in **Appendix 8 - Key Views**).



Figure 15 Corridor between Main Settlements of MuW on the left and SuW on the right.

It is also a key contributor to the unique visual characteristic of MuW, as described by WODC's Landscape Character Assessment within which MuW is identified as a 'key settlement'. The area that separates MuW and SuW runs either side of the Simmonds Brook which, like Littlestock Brook, has been designated and mapped by EA as a high flood risk area. The high-risk area includes works in the eastern part of the site of the MuW Sewage Treatment Works at the confluence of the two Brooks.

The map at **Figure 16** shows the main area of separation between the two villages and the location of the Simmonds Brook which constitutes nearly all of the MuW Parish boundary in the centre of the separation corridor which has been designated as a Blue-Green Corridor for free wildlife movement under Policy E1 at Section 7.2.1. The Blue-Green Corridor on the right bank of Simmonds Brook has not been mapped for the purposes of presentation in **Figure 16** because it lies in the neighbouring parish. To the South particularly, it is also an area in which there are a number of well used and important footpaths and bridleways as shown in **Figure 17**.

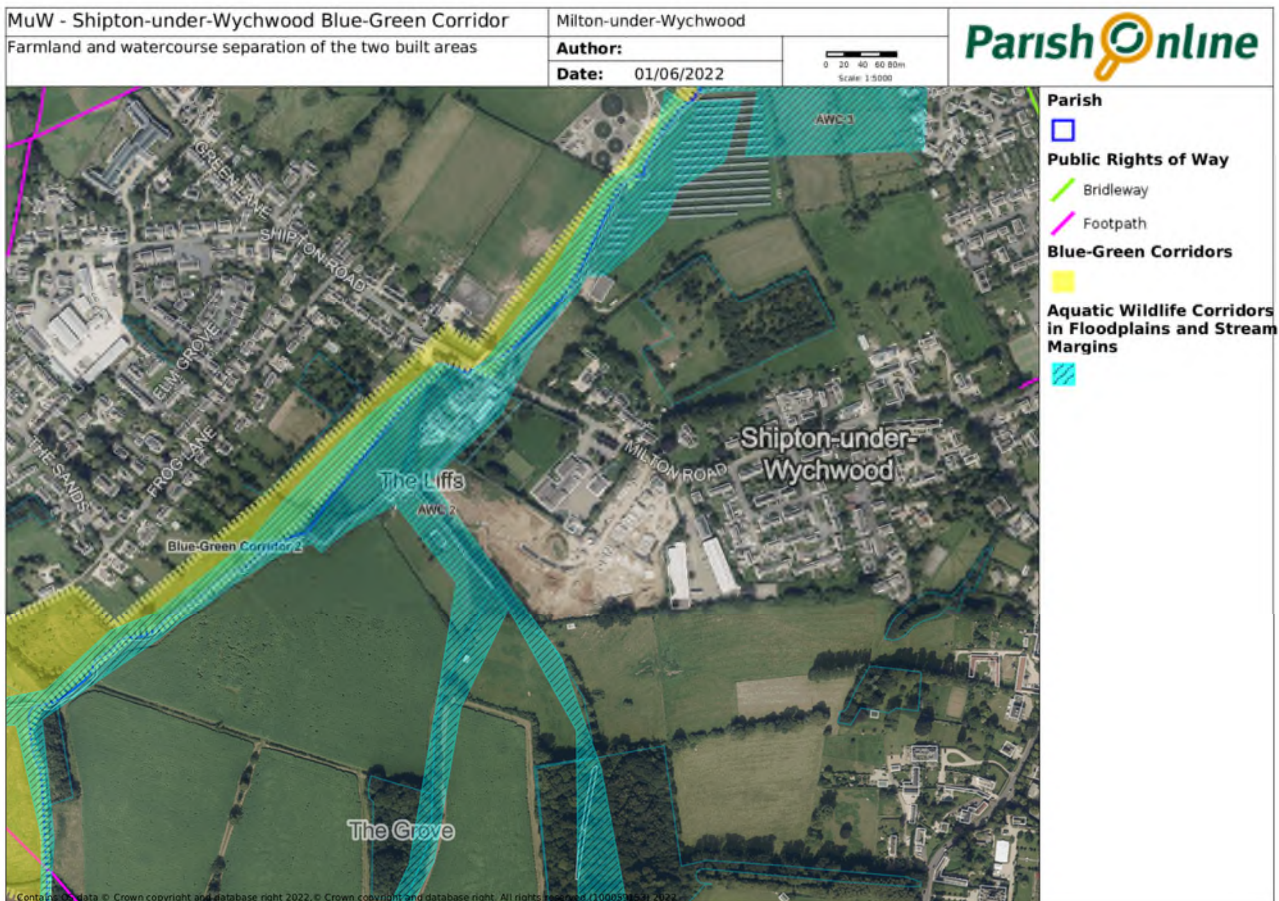


Figure 16 Corridor of separation between MuW built area and built area of SuW

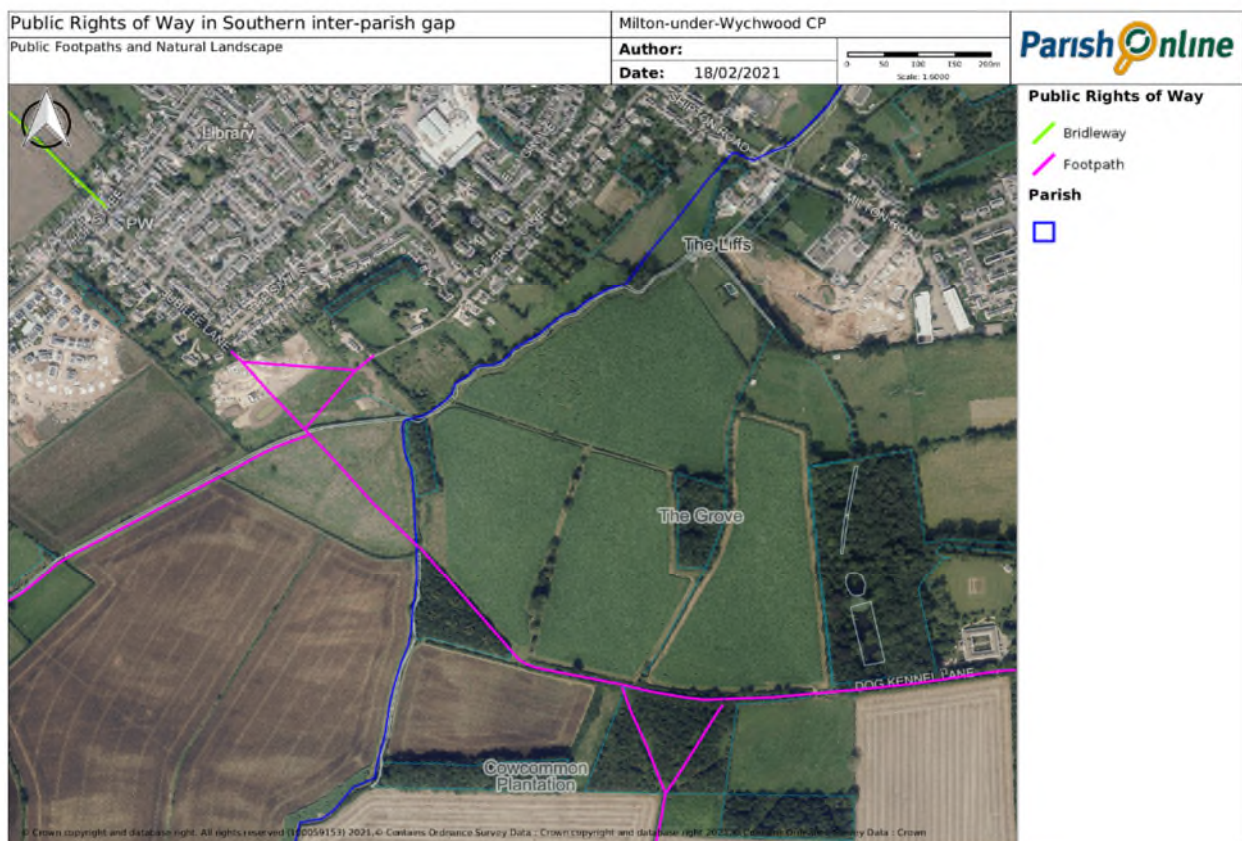


Figure 17 PROW network from the southern fringe of the main settlement

POLICY CH4: SEPARATION OF MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD AND SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

Proposals for development on the land identified by the Environment Agency as having a high risk of flooding between the main settlements of MuW and Shipton-under-Wychwood and on the land identified as a blue-green corridor between these two settlements will not be supported.

This is in order to avoid the risk of flooding, to maintain the integrity of this important wildlife area, and to ensure that the distinct and separate historic character, landscape character, and identity of these two settlements is conserved.

This is consistent with Policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and with conserving the biodiversity and heritage of the Cotswolds AONB.



View over field planted with wildflowers to help reverse biodiversity decline and improve our environment

7.2. Environment

Objectives	Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek environmental improvements ● To protect local aquatic corridors from land use change ● To conserve the high-quality and accessible countryside setting of the Parish, open landscapes and key views ● To protect important green spaces of high amenity and biodiversity value from development. 	<p>POLICY E1: BLUE-GREEN CORRIDORS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE MOVEMENT</p> <p>POLICY E2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES</p>

7.2.1. POLICY E1 – Blue-Green Corridors for Biodiversity and Wildlife Movement



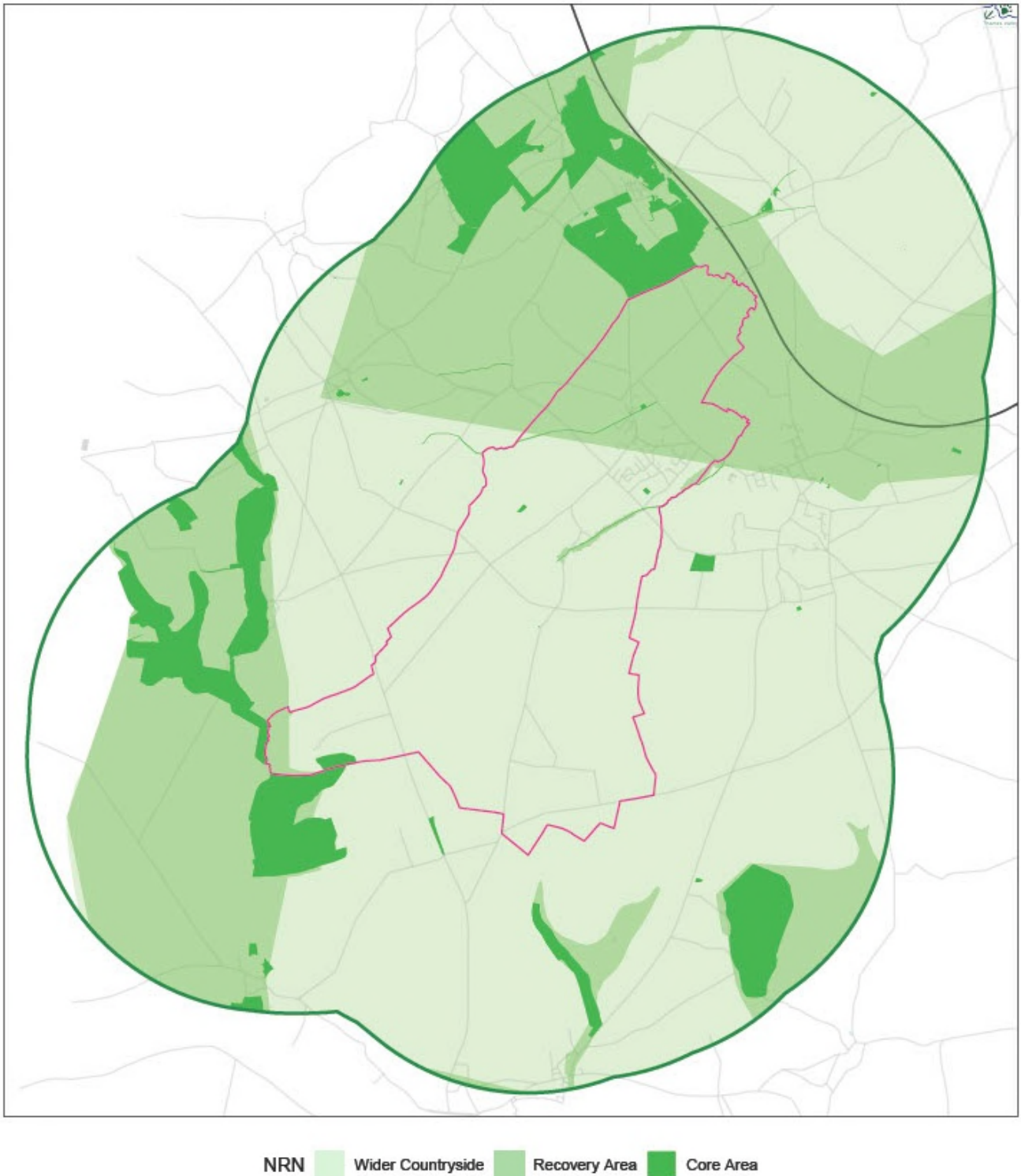
Blue-Green Corridors facilitate movement of wildlife

This Plan heads the Local Plan Core Objective CO14 to conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire’s high quality natural, historic and cultural environment, including its geodiversity, landscape and biodiversity and aims to contribute locally to implementation of Defra’s emerging Nature Recovery Network (NRN). The Plan will be reviewed in future to align with Local Nature Recovery Strategies that may be devised for a wider area encompassing all or part of the Parish.

Under the coordination by the charity Wild Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire’s Biodiversity Advisory Group has proposed policies for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. These include protecting and enhancing habitats of particular importance for nature and strengthening ecological networks. Wild Oxfordshire has stated that a NRN should be used to develop a Nature Recovery Strategy, make strategic land use decisions that help nature’s recovery, target activity to generate best outcomes for wildlife, build nature recovery actions into local decision making and target investment into restoring the natural environment.

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has mapped (May 2022) the NRN defined for the Parish of MuW as follows in **Figure 18**:

milton-under-wychwood parish Nature Recovery Network



Map produced by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre in 2022
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Figure 18 MuW Nature Recovery Network map

On the Northern boundary of MuW Parish the TVERC NRN map highlights the important Core Area of Bruern Wood which connects with Bould Wood to the West and a proposed wide contiguous Recovery Area across the Northern portion of MuW Parish which continues into both adjacent respective parishes (i.e. Bruern and SuW).

In the same manner the 2004 OWLS study identified *“important habitats “abutting the parish” include ancient semi-natural woodland at Bruern and Bould woods, which are around 35 ha and 53 ha respectively. The parkland and lake associated with the Bruern Estate is also “locally important.”* The study also provided specifically for MuW a *“Biodiversity Bioscore/bioband 91/MH”*. It noted *“there are a number of locally important habitats including plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedgerows with trees and tree-lined watercourses”*.

The TVERC NRN map also demonstrates a narrow ‘finger’ for recovery along the watercourse of the Simmonds Brook in the Parish’s Eastern central area. Similarly, the South West of the Parish abuts the Taynton Bushes woodlands of Taynton parish and partly includes some of these woodlands.

The parish characteristic that residents of the Parish value above all else is the ‘rural setting’ (2018 Community Survey results). A vital contributor to this ‘rural setting’ is the presence both within the Parish and in the immediately adjacent parishes of Bruern, Lyneham, Shipton and Taynton of a number of key woodland, rough grass and rewilded sites in which the development of wildlife and biodiversity has been specifically encouraged. These key sites are currently connected by a network of hedgerows, widened field margins established under the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and other areas set aside from cultivation that help facilitate the movement of wildlife between them.

In order to maintain the long-term health of the Parish’s rural setting and the richness of its wildlife it will be vital to ensure that the connections are conserved and enhanced. This plan accordingly includes the identification of corridors offering areas considered most important for biodiversity conservation and enhancement and free movement of wildlife. These are broadly defined with a view to protecting these areas from deleterious land use change and/or development which would threaten the vital role they play in protecting and promoting biodiversity and thus, the rural setting of the Parish.

This is also the reason that the Parish Council, in consultation with adjacent Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, has embarked on a programme compatible with Defra’s ELMS to encourage local farmers and other landowners to follow the example of some existing innovators to implement additional measures to conserve the natural environment, facilitate biodiversity gain and wildlife movement and contribute to combating climate change. **Appendix 5 - Blue-Green Corridors in Milton-under-Wychwood**, which essentially matches the content of this Section, has been compiled to offer mapping that shows how adjacent parishes are important to free movement of wildlife. The Appendix also serves as a document to facilitate the respective dialogue with adjacent parishes.

The study of the biodiversity situation in MuW is ongoing and being built from, and beyond, specific **TVERC Biodiversity Studies** of the Parish commissioned by the Parish Council in 2019 and then updated by TVERC in 2022 as presented at **Appendix 9**. The TVERC database will additionally be able to receive new entries of species identified by parishioners under the ongoing Springwatch programme and other identification programmes run by specific interest groups in the Parish.

The MuW Springwatch 2022 added valuable, up to date information. Residents observed 11 of the 15 bird species on the TVERC Protected and Notable Species List, and also some that were unusual in the area like Oyster Catcher, Glossy Ibis, Little Egret and Reed Bunting.

The Springwatch project also identified many examples of wildlife-friendly practices that residents were following. These were described by a wide range of people, from those who had lived many decades in the Parish, to children in our primary school. Those practices were both small and large in scale varying from the planting of a few trees or the digging of a pond in residential gardens to the planting of wildflower meadows and hundreds of native trees in local green spaces, and important changes in farm practices (see **Appendix 7 - Community Project 3 – Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group** for further detail).



Blue-Green Corridors conserve and enhance biodiversity and help combat climate change

Guidance is also drawn from the 1998 West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (Atlantic Consultants) commissioned by WODC in which enhancement priorities suggested for valleys included:

- retaining and managing areas of floodplain pasture and meadows
- reintroducing traditional practices of willow pollarding and ditch management
- introducing new planting along watercourses and in lines and groups within valley floor, using typical riparian species such as willow and alder
- where possible introducing new woodland planting along the valley-sides and converting arable fields to grassland.

Priorities suggested for clay wolds included:

- retaining and replanting hedgerows with hedgerow trees with oak as the dominant species
- where possible, encouraging conversion of arable land to pasture
- planting large blocks and belts of native broadleaved woodland to link with existing woodlands and restore a more mixed pattern of woodland and farmland.

The community SWOT analysis drew attention to the location of the Parish within the AONB, its land resource assets and open green spaces. It similarly stated that biodiversity was a strength. The analysis identified that protection of green spaces, establishment of a conservation area, 'nature' area and biodiversity initiatives all offered good opportunities for environmental improvement. Among identified threats, housing development was felt to be in conflict with biodiversity.

Based on lessons from its 2019 collaboration with Wild Oxfordshire and the Environment Agency in developing a 1-ha streamside Woodland and Walk in the Parish Field and ongoing dialogue with Wild Oxfordshire and Wychwood Forest Trust (WFT), the Parish Council will continue to encourage wildlife and biodiversity enhancement by itself and other landowners. This will generally be along field boundaries and by tree planting, tree protection, hedgerow conservation and enhancement and support to the creation of nature trails and nature reserves. It is anticipated that Wild Oxfordshire's 'Hedgerow Heroes' project will be adopted as an important initiative by the Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group (see **Appendix 7 – Community Project 3**).

MuW finds itself no exception to trends identified nationally by The Royal Society for Protection of Birds and locally by observation of the Wychwood Project and other voluntary bodies where biodiversity and numbers of certain species, especially birdlife, have significantly declined over the last 40 years. This is partly as a result of increased farming efficiency and replacement of pastures for grazing by arable cultivation. It is crucial to ensure that this decline is reversed. One way of doing this is by ensuring that important habitats and their connecting corridors are not lost and by ensuring that new habitats are created or restored and ongoing appropriate management secured.

The landowner who farms land comprising a corridor from High Street into Bruern parish, Mr H. Astor of Bruern Farms, has commented as follows:

"I am fully supportive of enhancing biodiversity and am trying as hard as possible to do this at Bruern so anything I can do to help let me know. Regarding the proposed Green Corridor across my land, it is a good idea and I am hopeful that besides conserving our hedgerows, ponds and tree plantings, our future farming practices in the Corridor will be gradually modified in the way we have done elsewhere on our farms, such as minimum tillage and wide field margins, to favour greater biodiversity."

Respondents to the 2018 Community Survey expressed that encouragement of wildlife and biodiversity (408 of 492 respondents: 83%) and enhancement by the Parish Council and other landowners generally along field boundaries (249 of 405 respondents: 61%) should be supported by:

- tree planting (296 of 443 respondents: 67%) and valuing of existing trees (276 of 494 responses: 56%)
- nurturing the proposed Ecological Area associated with the new residential development of St Jude's Meadow (250 of 436 respondents: 57%)

- creation of a nature trail (257 of 452 respondents: 57%) and nature reserve (256 of 450 respondents: 57%).

One of the habitats under consideration in this Plan is the rivers and streams and their banksides. CCB gives high attention to this in its Cross Cutting policy 6 (CC6) for water in the AONB Management Plan which states that water resources should be carefully managed and conserved to improve water quality, ensure adequate aquifer recharge, ensure adequate river flows and contribute to natural flood management systems including sustainable drainage.

Although water quality of the Parish's small tributaries is generally good, the Lower Littlestock Brook and the River Evenlode no longer meet water quality targets set by the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Therefore, opportunities will be taken to support initiatives to improve water quality that will contribute to the restoration and balance of aquatic biodiversity in these catchments.

More broadly there is an opportunity for the principal tributaries of the River Evenlode and their floodplains, some of which contain public footpaths, to be conserved for biodiversity and habitat enhancement including tree planting. Maintenance and supplementation of existing wetlands/marshes will encourage the consolidation, as well as the migration of aquatic wildlife and riverine animal species. Protecting these areas from development would be a win-win for character, biodiversity, and the health and wellbeing of local residents and visitors without restricting development in the Parish where it would be most sustainable - this is what Policy E1 seeks to do.

Figures 19 and 20, below, present four corridors across arable and pastureland and mostly enclosing watercourses. Their floodplains and some woodlands have been identified as needing conservation for the purpose of maintaining wildlife protection and movement. The water courses, along with their flood plains, are important corridors for free movement of aquatic fauna. Three of these corridors are close to the main settlement of MuW. The corridors are designated Blue-Green Corridors (BGC) as described below.

BGC1: This embraces part of the Nature Recovery Area presented by TVERC in **Figure 18** in the North of the Parish. This is a broad continuous corridor of farmland of mixed uses along the Evenlode Valley that adjoins the Bruern Ancient Woodland and includes farmland in Countryside Stewardship (see **Figure 21**) that in several cases includes extra wide margins of planted wildflowers. It includes a planted woodland on the eastern side of the Oxfordshire Way. Field hedgerows and riverine tree cover across the area tend to be thick. The overall space proposed for BGC1 is less ambitious in scope than the Recovery Area proposed for the North of the Parish by TVERC since the proposed corridor excludes farm buildings, a small ribbon of 20th Century residential development, and rising land used for horse training and arable farming. For much of its length the western boundary of this corridor is taken as the Oxfordshire Way, i.e. the Oxfordshire Way will look eastwards over land designated as a Blue-Green Corridor. The largest field of farmland in BGC1 that abuts the River Evenlode has been in a cover crop and no-till trial since 2018 (sponsored by Thames Water) for which the landowner has written "*The farm is now in Countryside Stewardship so we have reintroduced margins back along the water courses... ...I am open to ideas on how we can reduce our impact on the environment and increase biodiversity in the area*". BGC1 includes two Key Views. Its natural aquatic connection with BGC2 and BGC3 (see below) occurs in the neighbouring parish of SuW.

BGC2: This corridor constitutes a narrow band of mostly rough pastureland, predominantly along the boundary between the Parish and SuW, enclosing the Simmonds Brook aquatic corridor from the Brook's source in Upper Milton downstream to the confluence with Littlestock Brook at Milton Sewage Treatment Works. It includes the wetland copse of The Homestead and of adjoining properties along the unmade Stone Lane between Frog Lane and Calais Field. BGC2 is naturally connected with BGC3 (see below) through Littlestock Brook and its other tributaries which flow from West to East. Through two hedgerow-lined arable fields between the main settlement and Upper Milton, BGC2 abuts BGC3 again at a band of new woodland (mapped as NFMW3 in **Figure 19**). In BGC2 hedgerow-lined arable fields and the adjacent proposed Local Green Space No 4 (LGS4), including its footpath strip to the Simmonds Brook footbridge, connect eastwards with a transition into an area of rough pastures and wetlands including old pastures along the southern bank of Simmonds Brook which are to be designated as LGS1 and LGS2 respectively (mapped in **Figure 22** at **Section 7.2.2**). In its western, mid-parish

arms this corridor embraces several fields in Countryside Stewardship (see **Figure 21**) and the corridor includes all the Nature Recovery Areas presented by TVERC in **Figure 18** for the strand of the Simmonds Brook from Upper Milton and for the extreme East of the Parish. BGC2 includes several Key Views.

BGC3: The aquatic sources of this corridor include two streams rising in High Lodge Farm and another stream rising in the adjacent Bruern parish which, alongside the landowner's wildlife conservation wetland, merge near the main settlement into a stream that flows to its confluence with the Littlestock Brook at Church Road. The corridor includes four woodlands comprising more than 5,000 trees planted by the landowner. Two of them (NFMW1 and 2) are alongside the small brook from Bruern that hosts a Natural Flood Management scheme upstream. Another planted woodland (NFMW3) abuts BGC2 in the gap between Upper Milton and the main settlement. The fourth planted woodland (NFMW4) is part of a Natural Flood Management project alongside the stream from Bruern Home Farm, which is the natural Northern boundary of the Parish Field. BGC3 also includes the 1 ha strip of woodland (mapped as CPCC4) planted along the Littlestock Brook on the southern fringe of the Parish Field. From Church Road BGC3 continues to enclose the Littlestock Brook and the Home Farm stream from Bruern and the small meadows of rough pasture behind Pebblebrook House before widening across the floodplains and adjacent pastureland continuing to the River Evenlode Floodplain. In its Western, upper arms this corridor embraces several fields in Countryside Stewardship (see **Figure 21**) and the Northern arms of the corridor includes part of the Nature Recovery Areas presented by TVERC in Figure 1 for the North West of the Parish. BGC3 includes several Key Views.

BGC4: Essentially matching the Core Area proposed by TVERC for the Taynton Bushes on the western fringe of the Parish below the disused quarries at Crow's Castle and embracing fields in Countryside Stewardship (see **Figure 21**). This corridor includes the aquatic habitat of the Coombe Brook that rises in Upper Rissington and the adjacent natural woodlands which continue extensively in Taynton parish. There is no public right of way in the area designated BGC4.



Good farming practices including wide field margins support greater biodiversity

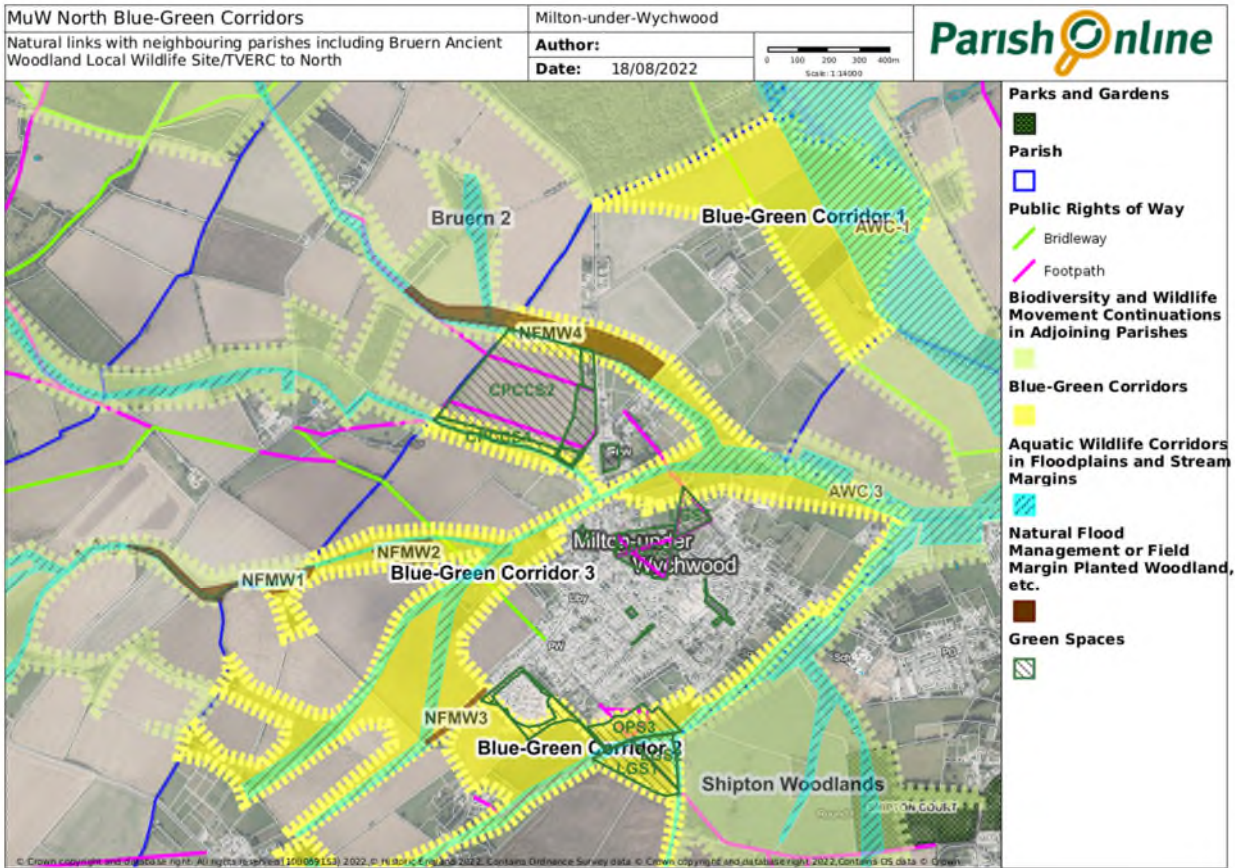


Figure 19 MuW North map showing Aquatic Wildlife Corridors and MuW Blue-Green Corridors

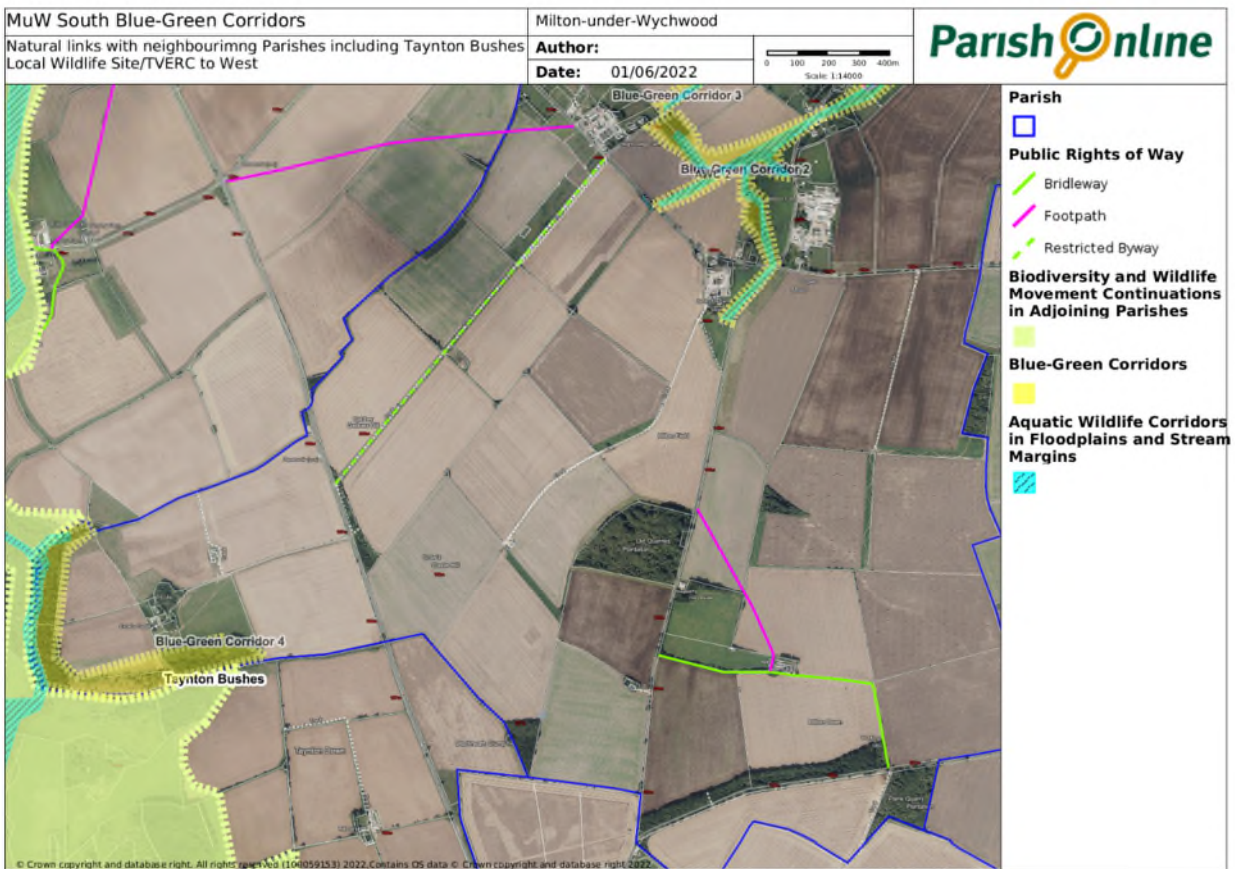


Figure 20 MuW South map showing Aquatic Wildlife Corridors and MuW Blue-Green Corridors

Figure 21 presents mapping of habitats of special interest and farmland contracted with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

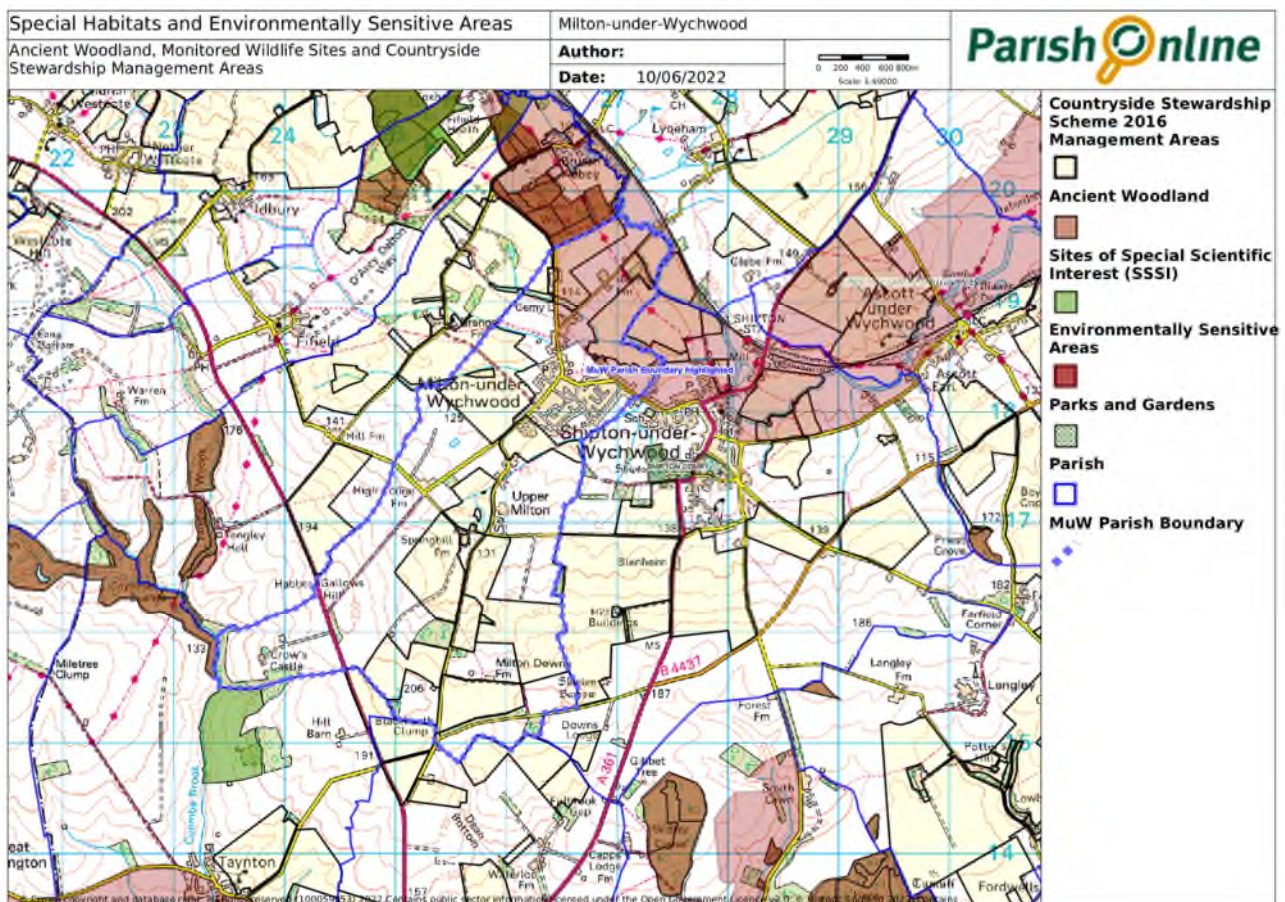


Figure 21 Map showing special habitats and farmland in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme

POLICY E1: BLUE-GREEN CORRIDORS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE MOVEMENT

The four Blue-Green Corridors identified in this Plan, comprising duly mapped corridors that provide vital connections along hedgerows and between woodlands, open spaces, farmland and the aquatic corridors that they mostly enclose, are important for biodiversity conservation and enhancement and the free movement of wildlife.

It is also important for the River Evenlode and its tributaries to be protected by uncultivated buffer margins to farmland.

Land use change and/or development within the Blue-Green Corridors which would threaten aquatic buffer margins, conservation of biodiversity and free movement of wildlife, that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated, will not be supported.

In addition, as historically the Parish was situated within the environs of the ancient Forest of Wychwood, it will be a priority to ensure that long established natural features such as woodland, hedgerows, trees, watercourses and other habitats are enhanced and protected from development.

Appendix 7 – Community Projects – describes three projects proposed for implementation outside the immediate scope of neighbourhood planning but which are regarded as important long-term complements to the requirement to sustain Blue-Green Corridors.

The projects are entitled as follows:

- **Comm 1 - Improvements to Water Quality in Local Water Bodies**
- **Comm 2 - Catchment Protection from Sewage Pump Failure During Power Cuts**
- **Comm 3 - Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group**

Appendix 7 discusses water quality issues in the Parish and proposes the first two community projects to protect and improve water quality in the Parish’s water bodies based on analysis offered by the Environment Agency at **Appendix 10 – Environment Agency - Littlestock Brook Review**. The first project will focus on reduction of dissolved phosphate in water bodies that is derived from anthropomorphic sources. The second project will seek to acquire the means to reduce risk of storm overflows of sewage from pumped systems.

The third listed project, **Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group**, will sustain the work of the enthusiastic and committed group of members of the community that evolved through the period of development of this NP and who were primarily responsible for the Springwatch initiative. It will continue through the formation of a Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group.

The TVERC database will continue to receive new entries of species identified in the Parish through the Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group and local members of other special interest groups like The Hare Preservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, The Oxford Bat Group and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society.



The Biodiversity Monitoring and Action Group will help protect precious wildlife

7.2.2. POLICY E2 – Local Green Spaces

As already noted, the characteristic of the Parish that residents value most is its 'rural setting'. A key contributor to this is the number of green spaces that are located close to or at the edge of the Parish's current built area that contribute to biodiversity enhancement, are particularly highly valued by local residents and into which there is currently public access.

To protect the contribution that these spaces make to the Parish's rural setting and to the health of the community (through opportunities for exercise), and to ensure that they remain open to residents and free from any development that undermines their role, it is proposed that a number of these spaces are specifically designated as 'Local Green Spaces'.

This represents a commitment to improving the quantity and quality of, and access to, green spaces in conformity with Local Plan Policy EH4 on public realm and green infrastructure which includes the statements that "the existing areas of public space and green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced for their multi-functional role, including their biodiversity, recreational, accessibility, health and landscape value and for the contribution they make towards combating climate change".

Concerning existing accessible green spaces, respondents to the 2018 Community Survey felt maintenance and enhancement of amenity of the Village Green (453 of 517 responses: 88%) and all publicly accessible open spaces in the village (408 of 506 responses: 81%) were priorities. Particular attention was given to Calais Field, traversed by three public footpaths at the ends of Jubilee and Frog Lanes (328 of 486 responses: 67%), the Parish Field's allotments and orchard (292 of 476 responses: 61%), and green communal spaces in new housing developments (320 of 478 responses: 67%) such as Elm Grove and St Jude's Meadow.

Appendix 3 – Baseline Evidencing explains that in 2021 the Local Insight office of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) reported that, according to its specific criteria, publicly accessible green spaces in the Parish amounted to just 6.2 ha. The same **Appendix 3** at its Table 1 identifies that application by NPSG of the same criteria shows publicly accessible green spaces in the Parish already amounted to some 10.2 ha by 2021 after allowing for:

- the creation of a Woodland Walk in 2019, providing a 1 hectare buffer zone alongside the Littlestock Brook next to the Allotments
- the use of green space surrounding the new St Jude's Meadow development
- access to the green space in Calais Field adjacent to Wildbourne Close.

The 10.2 ha of green spaces meeting the Local Insight criteria amount to 1.2% of the Parish (841 ha). However, this proportion is very low compared with a national average of 2.22%, which serves to reinforce the desirability of increasing public green space close to the built area. This is a driver for this policy E2 which aims to designate new Local Green Spaces in co-operation with respective landowners as opportunities permit.

This will involve protecting existing green spaces, mostly meadows constituting Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Type (LCT) 17 – Pastoral Lowland Vale under low intensity management, and also encourage and enable new green spaces to be created as amenities as well as havens of biodiversity.

Local Green Spaces are assessed in **Appendix 6**, applying the *Cotswold Methodology* (as advised by WODC). This Appendix includes description of comments received from respective landowners and from other individuals and organisations. The assessment justifies the following (**Table 3**) Local Green Spaces for Designation:

Reference	Name	Reason	Area as plotted: ha
LGS1	Manor Farm Wetland Open Space and Nature Reserve owned by Richard Hartley Ltd and under improvement in a scheme supported by Thames Water Utilities Ltd and Natural England	Biodiversity enhancement project on permanent pasture within Blue-Green Corridor 2. LGS designation supported by landowner.	2.14
LGS2	Mactaggart and Mickel Ecological Space: a developer-owned area to be <i>either</i> reincorporated into ownership of Manor Farm <i>or</i> transferred to the Parish Council and managed as an integral component of the above Wetland Open Space, LGS1	Ecological area acquired to complement 62 homes within Blue-Green Corridor 2. Landowner has no objection to LGS designation.	1.31
LGS4*	St Jude's Meadow Green Space and Footpath: developer-owned woodlands, green spaces and paths under management of Mainstay Group Ltd.	Woodland, grassland, balancing pond and permissive footpath associated with development of 62 homes, partly within Blue-Green Corridor 2. Landowner has no comment on LGS designation.	1.19
LGS5	OCC Paddocks and Footpaths Green Lane	Meadow landscape along two PROWs abutting Village Green and in Key Views 1, 3 and 11 (Appendix 8) including a small portion within Blue-Green Corridor 3.	1.01

Table 3 Proposed Local Green Spaces for Designation

***Note from Decision of 17/08/2022:** There is no LGS 3 for designation.



LGS 5 - helping protect our landscape edge and access to the surrounding countryside

The map at **Figure 22** presents the proposed Designated Local Green Spaces Nos 1, 2 and 4 between High Street and Frog Lane. The map at **Figure 23** presents the proposed Designated Local Green Space No 5 comprising paddocks between the Village Green and Green Lane.

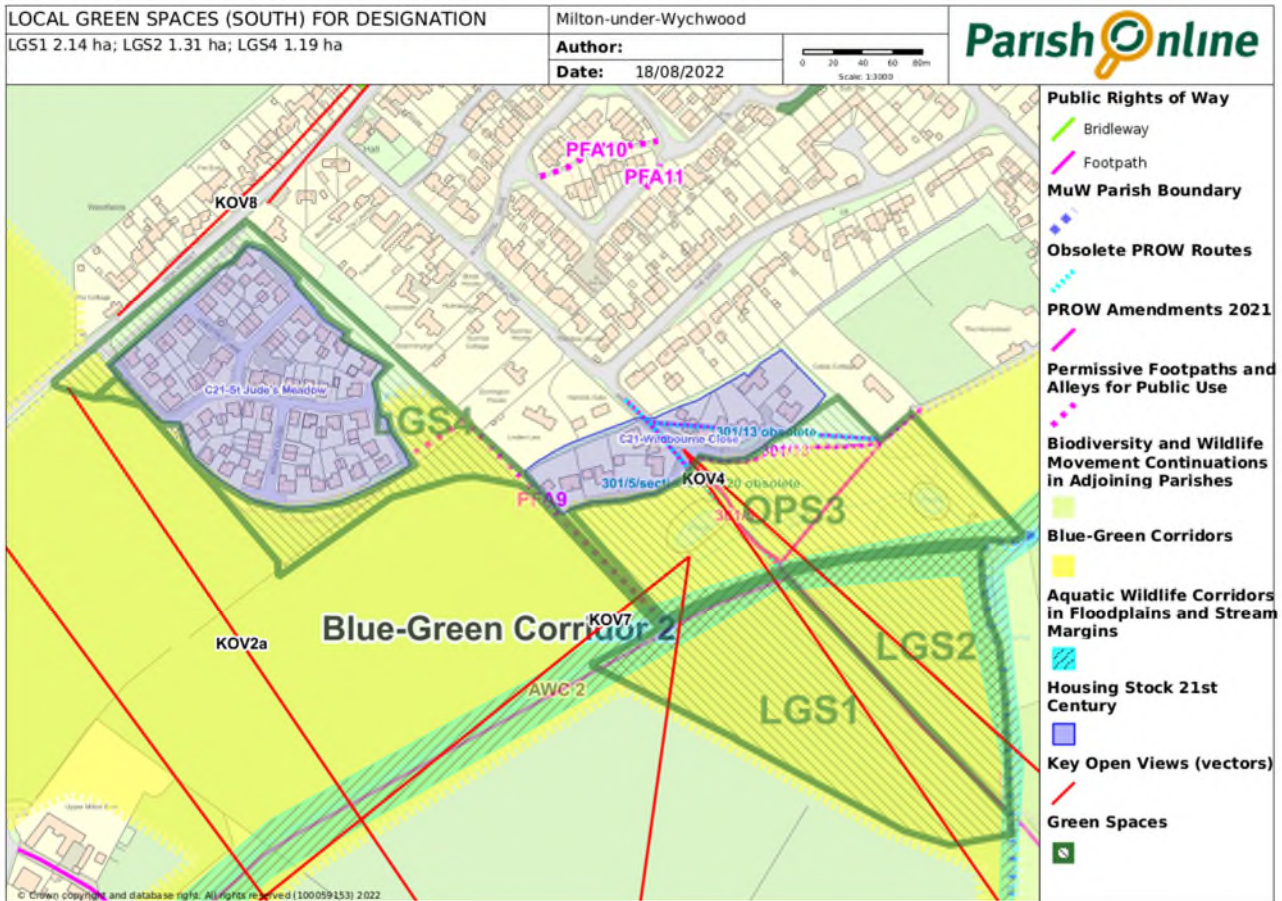


Figure 22 Proposed Designated LGS Nos 1, 2 and 4 adjacent to High Street and Frog Lane

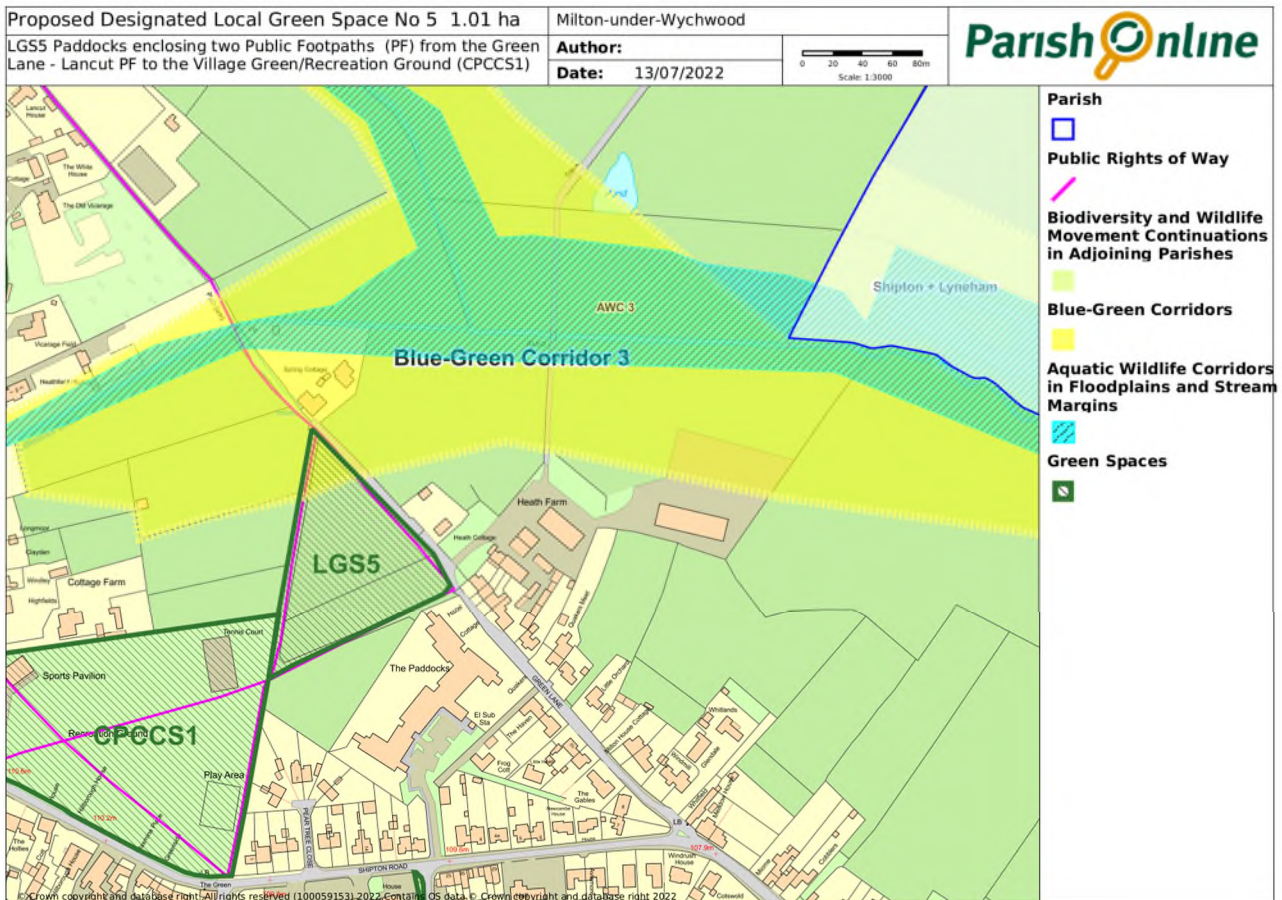


Figure 23 Proposed Designated LGS No. 5 comprising paddocks between the Village Green and Green Lane



LGS 1 - Planting of over 400 trees by the community

POLICY E2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following green spaces are designated as Local Green Spaces (LGS)

- LGS1: Manor Farm Wetland Open Space and Nature Reserve – 2.14 ha
- LGS2: Mactaggart and Mickel/Manor Farm Supplementary Ecological Wetland Space (to be managed with LGS1) – 1.31 ha
- LGS4: St Jude's Meadow Green Space and Footpath (to be managed by Mainstay Group Ltd) – 1.19 ha
- LGS5: Green Lane Paddocks and Footpaths (owner: Oxfordshire County Council) – 1.01 ha

Change of use and/or development within these spaces which would reduce their landscape beauty and/or tranquillity, undermine MuW's efforts to promote a healthy inclusive community, threaten the existing wild flora, fauna and biodiversity or threaten free wild animal movement across them, that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated, will not be supported.



Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Village Hall - a well-used facility

7.3. Facilities and infrastructure

Introduction

Many villages in the Cotswolds contain a disproportionately large number of houses that have been purchased as second homes by people who do not normally live in the village.

Many villages also provide a home for a disproportionately large number of people who have retired. These same villages are also often made up of almost exclusively traditional Cotswold stone buildings. As such, they are very beautiful to look at and often attract large numbers of tourists to view and experience the heritage that they represent.

By contrast, MuW is a dynamic and contemporary village with an eclectic mix of different house types, the vast majority of which are primary homes occupied by their owners. In addition, the population of MuW comprises a healthy mix of young and old, of people who work and people who have retired, and of people in a wide range of different economic circumstances. And of those who work, some 25% work in the village and/or from their own homes (2018 Community Survey).

This mix of people and large number of people who live and work in the village ensures that the ‘retail and other local facilities’ that exist in the village are well supported. It also means that there is a keen interest amongst the MuW community in how the village might develop in the future, as evidenced by the much higher response rate (67% compared with lower percentages for similar villages) to the 2018 Community Survey.

One key finding from the Community Survey is an overwhelming desire on the part of the MuW community to retain the current character of the village and this includes retention of both its unique rural character and setting and importantly, its rich mix of buildings and people.

This includes both the ‘retail and local services’ that are present in the village and the ‘facilities for small businesses’ that currently exist in the form of premises for small businesses and shared workspaces. This is consistent with both the WODC Local Plan as a whole (OS2, E1, E2 & E3) and its specific policy for the Burford and Charlbury sub area (BC1).

The presence of good facilities for ‘recreation and play’, especially for young people, are an important factor in maintaining the current healthy population mix in the Parish.

Key is the availability of the Village Green and the ease of access to other recreational facilities, including the development of suitable new facilities, either in the village itself or in nearby places.

Facilities need to be well supported, especially to keep the village an attractive place for younger people to live and work and to sustain the balance with the number of older/retired people.

Objectives	Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To convert underutilised buildings into premises for small businesses and shared workspaces ● To nurture and support existing local services ● To protect community facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to sustain and improve their viability. 	<p>POLICY F1: FACILITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES</p> <p>POLICY F2: RETAIL AND LOCAL SERVICES</p> <p>POLICY F3: RECREATION AND PLAY</p>

7.3.1. POLICY F1 - Facilities for Small Businesses and Healthy Workplaces

Of the people who work, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, a very high proportion were already working in the village and/ or from their own homes. It is this distinction that sets MuW apart from most other Cotswold villages. It is also a key strength of the village, the unique character of which, as the 2018 Community Survey showed through the responses to many questions, the majority of the population of the village wish to retain.

One of the factors that makes it possible for a large proportion of the MuW population to both live and work in the village is the availability of premises suitable for small businesses and shared 'workspaces'.

A number of smallholdings within the village include additional buildings to the main house – for example, outbuildings that comprise part of Springhill and High Lodge Farms – and some of these additional buildings are currently underutilised.

Some of these buildings provide opportunities for adaptation into facilities for small businesses and/or shared workspaces, in a manner that conforms with WODC's Local Plan (OS2, OS3, E1, E2 & E3) that supports the conversion of such buildings for this purpose.

Support of planning applications for such adaptations, where they are consistent with the character and heritage of the buildings around them and their immediately surrounding area, will underpin the NP objective to ensure sufficient provision exists in the village to enable a population comprising a healthy proportion of people who both live and work in the village.

In the future a key factor that will encourage the ongoing provision of employment opportunities within the village, as well as the ability for residents of the village to work from home, will be the provision of first-class telecommunications facilities including super-fast broadband.

This is consistent with WODC Local plan policy to support the installation of super-fast broadband capabilities (BC1, E2).



Groves Business Park in the centre of MuW with units of differing sizes



A variety of different businesses in Groves Business Park contribute to the MuW economy

POLICY F1 - FACILITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Where planning permission is required, the change of use or loss of buildings and areas currently designated for small businesses and/or shared workspaces will not be supported.

The retention of the village's central area known as 'Grove's business park' as an area for small businesses and/or shared workspaces is supported, as will be any new action taken by WODC to provide regulated protection of this dedicated work area to succeed the protection under the Article 4 Direction expiring in 2022.

In addition, proposals that would adapt, in a manner consistent with their heritage and the surrounding buildings, under-utilised existing farm buildings into premises suitable for small businesses, shared workspaces or other community shared spaces will also be supported.

Where proposals for competing uses arise, support for business use will be prioritised over adaptation into residential accommodation.

Recognizing the growing need, especially in a COVID-19 environment, to provide firstly, facilities that enable working at or close to home; secondly, the environmental benefits of reducing the need for travel to and from work; and thirdly, the benefits to mental health of facilities that allow for social interaction and encourage collaboration, proposals that provide for shared workspaces will be particularly supported.

7.3.2. POLICY F2: Retail and Local Services

There is a strong presence in the village of a healthy number of ‘retail and local services’ which the 2018 Community Survey demonstrated are well supported. See **List of Businesses and Services (Appendix 4)**

The same survey revealed that there is a small number of additional retail and other services that, if they were present, would also be well supported e.g., a full-time post office, farm shop and a standalone coffee shop (since opened), in addition to more recreational facilities for, most importantly, older children. These ‘retail and local services’ are a key component of the current persona of the village that, as the 2018 survey clearly showed, the village population wishes to retain.

This desire to retain and support these services is consistent with WODC Local Plan Policy, both overall (E1 & E5) and with particular reference to the Burford-Charlbury sub area (BC1). These services are also important because they make it a practical option for a high proportion of the village to work in the village and/or from their own homes, consistent with WODC Local Plan Policies (BC1).

Of the 107 businesses that have been found to be based in MuW, approximately 70 can be described as ‘retail and local services’ and this Plan seeks to support not only their sustainability but also the potential for their expansion.

POLICY F2 - RETAIL AND LOCAL SERVICES

In order to ensure the ongoing vitality and viability of the village, development proposals which would help to retain and where possible enhance existing retail and other local service provision and prevent such uses from being lost to other uses will be positively supported.



The popular ‘Hare’ public house on High Street



The library supports the community in a variety of ways



The Shop provides an essential service to the community

7.3.3. POLICY F3 - Recreation and Play

MuW seeks actively to support the achievement of Local Plan Core Objective 8 (CO8) to help the tourism economy to prosper and to contribute to meeting the aspirations of CO11 to maximise the opportunity for walking. MuW also seeks to support the achievement of Local Plan Core Objective 12 (CO12) which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the District’s residents through increased choice and quality of leisure and recreation facilities.

In contrast with many other Cotswold villages, the population of MuW comprises a healthy mix of young and old, of people who work and people who have retired, and of people in a wide range of different economic circumstances.

One of the factors that makes it possible for a large proportion of the MuW population to both live and work in the village is the availability in the Parish, or in nearby places, of good facilities and well supported clubs and societies for ‘Recreation and Play’ as indicated in the 2018 Community Survey. Of 529 respondents to the first question, their use of key recreational facilities was as follows:

- Village Green 58%
- Library 37%
- Hare pub 32%
- Children’s play areas 26%
- Village Hall 22%
- Allotments 12%
- Churches 12%
- Milton Sports Association (MSA) 7%
- Tennis Court 6%



An important event in the life of MuW – the Annual Village Fete

The Wychwood Library is based in Milton High St and is an important village facility, hosting a weekly coffee morning and various clubs. The Milton Sports Association (MSA) is based on the Village Green and has many recreational activities. These include darts, cribbage and pool indoors, and Aunt Sally and a football pitch for outdoor sports. There are well over 35 active clubs and societies accommodating all ages and groups of people in the village and many more in adjacent settlements supported by residents of the village.

Many members of the village community also play sport regularly, either in the village where facilities are available or in nearby places, as indicated by responses to the second question in the 2018 Community Survey (234 of 540 respondents: 43%).

The Wychwood Football Club is particularly successful with Junior teams ranging from 10-16 year-olds and a number of senior teams. The management and administration are entirely voluntary.

The active and successful Scout Troop, Guides, Cubs and Beavers are also all run by volunteers. In addition, there are several annual community events including the annual Village Fete, carols around the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve, and the 'MuWAGA' Annual Flower & Produce Show, again all run by volunteers to whom the community is greatly indebted.

Important factors in maintaining the current healthy population mix in the village is the availability of the Village Green and the ease of access to other recreational facilities, either in the village itself or in nearby places. If these facilities are not well supported there is a danger that the village will become a less attractive place for younger people to live and work which would lead to an unhealthy change in the profile of the population to reduce the number of younger/ working people living in the village and increase the proportion of older/retired people.

Such a change in the profile of the population, especially if, as is highly likely, the houses vacated by younger/ working people leaving the village are acquired by people wanting to use them for retirement and/ or as second homes, would then further reduce support for the recreational clubs and facilities, leading potentially to their demise.

POLICY F3 – RECREATION AND PLAY

The maintenance and improvement, including changes designed to facilitate use by people with a disability, of existing clubs and facilities will be supported.

Changes of use or loss of buildings and areas currently designated for recreation and play will not be supported.

Proposals to create additional and new recreational facilities that are compatible with the existing village character and form, and support a more inclusive community, will also be supported in principle with priority to be given to the re-use of suitable, existing buildings.

New areas of open space for recreation and play but also for public access to nature will be subject to long term stewardship arrangements with an appropriate body.



Children's Enclosed Play Area on the Village Green



MuW Sports Association Clubhouse with popular bar and games facilities



MuW Football Club on the Village Green/Recreation Ground

7.4. Transport and Movement

Objectives	Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote healthier lifestyles by maximising opportunities for walking and cycling through suitable infrastructure To protect, improve and extend the PROW network for promotion of walking, riding and cycling (where approved) for health and general well-being. 	<p>POLICY TM1: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND WELLBEING</p>

7.4.1. POLICY TM 1: Public Rights of Way and Wellbeing

A map of the Parish public footpaths, bridleways and restricted bye-ways is presented at **Figure 8**, reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping and based on the OCC Definitive Statements and Maps of Public Rights of Way (PROW) dated 21/02/2006 Sheets SP 21 NE and SP 21 NW at scale 1:10,000. Hyperlinks to these documents are provided at **Public Right of Way and Other Paths (Appendix 11)**.

Part of Local Plan Policy EH2 on Landscape Character underpins our desire to conserve, maintain and enhance our footpaths and bridleways in a proper manner compatible with the quality, character and distinctiveness of our natural environment, including its landscape, tranquillity, geology, countryside, soil and biodiversity.

Walking, riding, cycling and jogging are important ways of moving around the village as well as promoting wellbeing and enjoyment. MuW has a good network of bridleways and paths, including paths built into new developments, and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to further improve this permeability across the Parish.

The SWOT analysis identified the PROW network as a significant strength of the infrastructure of MuW and that associated green spaces needed protection. **Public Right of Way and Other Paths (Appendix 11)** provides an inventory of all PROWs in the Parish and their characteristics as described on the County Council PROW Register and states the respective levels of use reported from the 2018 Community Survey. The inventory also includes unadopted and/or permissive paths in traditional and continuing public use. Over the past 20 years, the PROW network has remained largely intact, with increased use of routes close to the main settlement especially during the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020, and modest use of other routes in the Milton Downs that traverse, rather than circumnavigate, cultivated fields.

Recent residential development off Jubilee Lane in Calais Field - which is traversed by three public footpaths - has been accompanied by approved modification of the routes and surfacing of public footpaths 301/5 and 301/13 in the sloping portion of the field that is still undeveloped. In their newly laid state, the modifications have reduced the rural character and impaired the landscape of walking the respective routes, however, as described under **Appendix 12 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan**, the landowner is developing the land as a public open space that, when fully naturalised, may eventually result in restoration of rural character and good landscape. The less used footpath 301/14 in this field provides a connection between Upper Milton and Frog Lane.

Cotswold Voluntary Wardens are strongly represented in the Parish and neighbouring parishes and continue to carry out excellent maintenance and improvement work on public footpaths as their slender resources allow; they are assisted from time to time by the Milton Volunteers.

As set in the respective approved plan, the residential developer of the 62 homes in St Jude’s Meadow has incorporated a new permissive footpath leading into the countryside, connecting with footpath 301/14 at an intersection over the Simmonds Brook from Upper Milton. This is a valuable amenity to the community generally, offering both a connection with High Street and a key connection in the new circular walks that it

creates. The developer also purchased land for an ecological area (LGS2) abutting public footpath 301/5 as an 'offset' in its adopted plan. Discussions are progressing with the adjacent landowner of LGS1 and the Parish Council for guidance and co-operation to maximise the effectiveness of the area and the public and informal footpaths it hosts as sustainable public amenities that satisfy the aims cited in the identified Local Plan Policies.

The three Blue-Green Corridors and the four LGSs described in **Section 5.5**, host paths that connect with or are part of circular public footpath networks linked with already public green spaces (Wild Garden; Digger's Wood/ Woodland Trust) in neighbouring SUW. Consideration is being given in MuW as to how PROWs, where necessary, can be made more wheelchair and child-buggy friendly.

MuW wishes to ensure that any development proposal does not materially interfere with the valued public footpath and bridleway network or with the identified unadopted and/or permissive paths in traditional public use.

POLICY TM1: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND WELLBEING

New development should preserve, improve and extend where feasible the circular interconnection, accessibility and appeal of public rights of way and unadopted and/or permissive paths in traditional public use for increased movement, outdoor recreation, health and wellbeing of all generations of the community.

New development path creation will take into account the needs of all groups in the community including wheelchair users and others with disabilities, and parents/carers with child buggies.



The Bridleway between High Street and Bruern

8. Implementation and Monitoring

8.1. Implementation

Implementation of the MuWNP plan will be ongoing and primarily the responsibility of the MuWPC although ultimate responsibility for determining planning applications rests with WODC.

It should be noted that there are a number of potential changes to the planning context in the short to medium term that could have an impact on implementation of the MuWNP. These include the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2030, the potential change to the administration of the Cotswolds AONB and the Government's stated intention to change some elements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The manner in which each policy will be implemented in practical terms, with aims/ objectives and indicators of progress is presented in the following summary table:

NP POLICY	Related NP objective/s - what the policy is aiming to achieve	Implementing the policy - comment	Delivery partners	Measures to be used to monitor progress
CH1: VILLAGE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DESIGN	To conserve and, where possible, enhance the rural character of MuW and its surrounding countryside.	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	Assessment of applications either rejected or supported
CH2: KEY VIEWS	To conserve the high-quality and accessible countryside setting of the Parish, open landscapes and key views.	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	Assessment of applications either rejected or supported
CH3: _NON-COALESCENCE OF MUW WITH UPPER MILTON	To maintain the discrete identity of MuW and the adjacent hamlet of Upper Milton, each of these villages having their own	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	Assessment of applications either rejected or supported

NP POLICY	Related NP objective/s - what the policy is aiming to achieve	Implementing the policy - comment	Delivery partners	Measures to be used to monitor progress
	distinct character within the Parish.			
CH4: SEPARATION OF MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD AND SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	To maintain the separation of Milton-under-Wychwood from its neighbour Shipton-under-Wychwood	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	Assessment of applications either rejected or supported
E1: BLUE-GREEN CORRIDORS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE MOVEMENT	To conserve and enhance biodiversity and seek environmental improvements.	<p>MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy</p> <p>MuWPC will maintain an ongoing dialogue with neighbouring parishes and with landowners and land managers to support the maintenance and enhancement of these vital areas for wildlife development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC • EA • Wild Oxfordshire • Wychwood Forest Trust • TVERC • Landowners and land managers • Members of the community including wildlife monitoring groups including MuW's 'Springwatch' 	<p>Assessment of applications either rejected or supported</p> <p>Reports to be sourced from relevant delivery partners at the end of each year</p>
E2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	To protect important green spaces of high amenity and biodiversity value from development.	<p>MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy</p> <p>MuWPC will maintain regular communication with neighbouring parishes and with owners and land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC • Landowners and land managers • Members of the community including wildlife 	<p>Assessment of applications either rejected or supported</p> <p>Reports from landowners and land managers and members of the public</p> <p>Reports from relevant local health organisations</p>

NP POLICY	Related NP objective/s - what the policy is aiming to achieve	Implementing the policy - comment	Delivery partners	Measures to be used to monitor progress
		<p>managers re: maintenance and development.</p> <p>Sources of further funding for biodiversity and environmental improvements will be explored.</p>	<p>monitoring groups like MuW's 'Springwatch'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local health organisations 	<p>concerning wellbeing of MuW community</p>
F1 - FACILITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES	To convert under-utilised buildings into premises for small businesses and shared workspaces.	<p>MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy</p> <p>MuWPC to actively explore potential opportunities with local landowners and businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	<p>Assessment of applications either rejected or supported</p> <p>Number of new initiatives supported by the PC</p> <p>Number of new initiatives actioned</p>
POLICY F2 - RETAIL AND LOCAL SERVICES	To nurture and support existing local services.	<p>MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy</p> <p>MuWPC to actively explore potential improvement opportunities and initiatives with relevant local groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	<p>Assessment of applications either rejected or supported</p> <p>Number of improvement projects supported by the PC</p> <p>Number of improvement projects actioned</p>
F3 – RECREATION AND PLAY	To protect community facilities and services from unnecessary loss and encourage proposals to	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review each planning proposal to assess conformity with policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC 	Assessment of applications either rejected or supported

NP POLICY	Related NP objective/s - what the policy is aiming to achieve	Implementing the policy - comment	Delivery partners	Measures to be used to monitor progress
	sustain and improve their viability.	MuWPC to actively explore potential improvement opportunities with relevant local groups		Number of improvement projects supported by the PC Number of improvement projects actioned
TM1: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND WELLBEING	To protect, improve and extend the PROW network for promotion of walking, riding and cycling (where approved) for health and general wellbeing.	MuWPC Planning Sub-Group to review planning proposals to assess conformity with policy MuWPC to actively explore potential improvement opportunities and initiatives with relevant groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MuWPC • WODC • OCC • Landowners • Local health organisations 	Number/length of public rights of way available within the Parish Reports also to be requested from relevant local health organisations concerning wellbeing of MuW community

8.2. Monitoring

The Parish Council (MuWPC) will monitor the Neighbourhood Plan and the implementation and effectiveness of its Policies.

Twelve-month review

MuWNP will be reviewed in detail one year after its adoption. This review will be conducted by MuWPC and the reconvened Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) or their successors.

The purpose of the review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been met in practice and the contribution that each of the Policies and projects contained within the MuWNP have made towards meeting those objectives.

This twelve-month review will also identify any errors and omissions that need to be rectified.

Five-year review

MuWNP will be reviewed every five years thereafter.

These reviews will also be led by MuW PC and have the same purpose as the first twelve month review.

If amendments or additions are identified as causing significant public concern, a public consultation will be undertaken to be sure that 50% or more of respondents to the consultations accept any changes proposed to alleviate the concern.

End of plan review

At least two years prior to the expiry of the MuWNP, a full review will be undertaken to gauge the success of the Plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession plan.

MuWPC Responsibilities

In order to be able to conduct these reviews, MuWPC will need to collect information from its own records, from WODC and from other “partners” who, depending on the policy in question, have expertise or data with particular relevance to the policy concerned.

As far as planning applications are concerned, MuWPC will review every application in the light of relevant MuWNP policies to the application concerned and keep a record of how planning applications that it has supported have fitted into MuWNP policy areas and how many applications that it has opposed have been rejected because they do not conform to a particular MuWNP policy. This practice will be built into procedures and the results recorded by the Parish Clerk in the minutes.

In respect of planning and landscaping conditions set by WODC on or in association with developments such as St Jude’s Meadow and Wildbourne Close, MuWPC will continue its cycle of monitoring compliance, identifying breaches that need to be remedied, promptly raising concerns with the relevant parties and WODC and verifying the implementation of remedies.

WODC

With regard to WODC, MuWPC will monitor how planning applications fare against the relevant MuWNP policies and promptly raise any concerns it has with the relevant officers at WODC.

Environment partners

With regard to the objectives and policies which concern the conservation and enhancement of the environment, MuWPC will request data from TVERC, Defra, Wild Oxfordshire, the Wychwood Forest Trust, Environment Agency and other relevant organisations in order to assess the extent to which the MuWNP Environment objectives have been met.

Landowners, local wildlife monitoring groups, and other relevant local organisations as well as interested members of the public will also be consulted. Staff at the Doctors’ surgery will be asked for their views on any impact that use of open green spaces and enhanced PROWs have had on the health and wellbeing of patients.

9. Appendices

Appendices are available as separate pdf documents.

Appendix 1 – Village Character Assessment

Appendix 2 – Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Appendix 3 – Baseline Evidencing

Appendix 4 - List of Business and Services

Appendix 5 – Blue-Green Corridors in Milton-under-Wychwood

Appendix 6 – Local Green Spaces Assessment

Appendix 7 – Community Projects

Appendix 8 – Key Views

Appendix 9 – TVERC Biodiversity Report – Milton-under-Wychwood Parish

Appendix 10 – Environment Agency - Littlestock Brook Review

Appendix 11 – Public Rights of Way and Other Paths

Appendix 12 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan for Calais Field



Sunset over a conservation area just off Milton-under-Wychwood High Street

Acknowledgements

The Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (listed at the foot of this note) would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and organisations who contributed to the creation of this Plan and without whose assistance we could not have reached this point. There are numerous others who helped deliver questionnaires for our surveys, participated in consultation events and helped in other ways who are not listed here but we thank them too. If you think that others should be included here please let us know at miltonnpsg@gmail.com or miltonparishclerk@gmail.com .

Past members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Paul Young – founding Chairperson
Nicola Boulton
Colin Saxby

Siobhan Baillie
Katie Boyle

Contributors to Character Assessment

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Advice on Blue-Green Corridors, Landscape and Local Green Space Assessments

Max Askew
Neil Clennell - Chief Executive Officer, Wychwood Forest Trust

Providers of additional photographs and artwork

Rhiannon Evetts - Nature Recovery Engagement Officer, Wild Oxfordshire
Wychwood Photo Group, especially members Dean Griffiths and Alan Vickers
Wychwoods Local History Society

Others

Mark Purvis, on water quality issues
Members of the community who have engaged with the development of the Plan and provided input since 2017

External Organisations

Our consultants Community First Oxfordshire and their team past and present, in particular:

Tom McCulloch – Joint Chief Executive
Stephen McKenna – Community Planning Officer
Fiona Mullins and Rachel Riach – former Community Planning Officers
Andrea Pellegram – Policy Development Consultant

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Astrid Harvey, Janice Bamsey and other staff at WODC for help and advice on production of the Plan

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John Bennett
Brian Watson

Cllr Pat Ward – Vice-Chairperson
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