

FONTMELL MAGNA

Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2031



First Review Version - February 2025 final version

Prepared by Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
on behalf of Fontmell Magna Parish Council.

Foreword

Welcome to the Neighbourhood Plan for the village and wider parish of Fontmell Magna.

Fontmell Magna is situated in the Blackmore Vale in North Dorset, approximately 5 miles south of Shaftesbury. The Parish includes the village of Fontmell Magna, the hamlet of Bedchester, and settlements in Hartgrove, Kit Hill and Margaret Marsh. The village of Fontmell Magna is a designated Conservation Area and the eastern side of the parish lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL); the village is mentioned in the Domesday Book when Fontmell Brook powered three mills. Fontmell Magna is a beautiful village with a handsome 15th Century church, a vibrant pub, a primary school, and a village shop, post office and tea-room.

This Plan sets out how the parish should be developed over the period to 2031 to achieve a sustainable and thriving community, whilst retaining the distinctive character of the parish, which is highly valued by residents and appreciated by visitors.

Since April 2012, local communities have been able to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their local area, putting in place planning policies for the future development and growth of the neighbourhood. In May 2015, the Parish Council decided to commission the development of a Neighbourhood Plan which, combined with the North Dorset

Local Plan, will provide the planning policies for the parish and guide decisions on planning applications.

An initial scoping meeting was held on 7th July 2015, with 40 parish residents attending, to identify areas of interest and concern amongst residents and to determine the scope of the Plan. From there a Working Group was formed of volunteers from the parish, with Dick Stainer as chair, to take forward the work to produce a Plan on behalf of the Parish Council. The Working Group held its first meeting in September 2015 and has met monthly since then to co-ordinate and review the Plan's development, with much of the detailed work done in volunteer Focus Groups looking at housing, environment and infrastructure. The work has been greatly assisted by grant funding from the Locality organisation (a Government agency) and from the Parish Council, and by Jo Witherden, a Planning Consultant, who provided the technical advice. An application for the Designated Area of the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted by the Parish Council in January 2016 and approved by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd June 2016; the Designated Area follows the civil parish boundaries.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed through continuous consultation with residents, businesses and interested organisations and groups. A parish-wide questionnaire was conducted in May 2016 to seek views on the future development of housing, environment,

infrastructure, business and employment in the parish; an encouraging response rate of 41% was achieved from 336 households. A supplementary questionnaire on Business and Employment went to all businesses in the parish. The questionnaires were supported by a consultation event in the Village Hall, with 50 residents attending. This provided exhibits and information on local green spaces, housing needs, possible development sites and Local Plan constraints. A Call for Sites process was held in July 2016 inviting landowners to submit potential development sites for housing, employment or recreational use, for assessment and possible inclusion in the Plan; this was supported by a communications event for landowners in July 2016 and generated 15 sites for consideration. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was submitted to the Local Planning Authority and other statutory consultees in March 2017. An options consultation event was held for parish residents in March 2017, covering proposals on housing and the environment, through an exhibition, available online and in the Village Hall, which over 100 people attended. 71 responses were received, and they were broadly supportive of the proposals. A further focus group and online consultation was held in May 2017 covering proposals on infrastructure.

Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment which scrutinised the potential site allocations and policies in terms of their likely impact on the environment. This meant that possible harm

could be avoided through careful site selection and the inclusion of specific mitigation measures in the policies themselves. Also, a Conservation Area Appraisal was produced in May 2017 to supplement the body of evidence supporting the Neighbourhood Plan.

A further extensive consultation was held over October-November 2017, the Pre-submission Consultation, centred on an updated Draft Plan, an updated Strategic Environmental Assessment, and a draft Conservation Area Appraisal. The consultation was publicised in both the October and November issues of *The Gossip Tree*, on posters throughout the parish, and on the Parish Council website. In addition, statutory consultees were invited to participate by email or letter as appropriate. Two open meetings were held in the Village hall and copies of the documents were available in the Village Shop, the Surgery, the School Office and The Fontmell Pub. Residents were invited to provide feedback through a two-page questionnaire; 145 responses were received of which 90 contained comments on specific policies and issues, and suggestions. All policies in the Draft Plan were strongly supported by residents, with positive ratings in the range 77-98% and with the majority over 90% in favour. Residents' comments and those from statutory consultees were collated and analysed, and changes made to the Plan and supporting documents as considered appropriate.

Throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan residents have been kept informed through frequent articles

in the monthly parish newsletter The Gossip Tree. The notes of all Working Group meetings and all important documents have been published on the Parish web site, www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk, and the Parish Council has received regular updates on progress throughout. Communication events on aspects of the Plan's development were held in the Village Hall in May 2016, July 2016, March 2017 and November 2017 and were all well attended by parish residents.

The Parish Council, on behalf of parish residents, greatly appreciates the time and effort contributed by our consultant, and the group of volunteers from the parish and who have served at various times on the Working Group during its preparation. The people involved were:

[Dick Stainer \(Chair\)](#), [Jo Witherden \(Consultant\)](#), [Michael Humphreys \(Secretary\)](#), [Chris Bellers](#), [Michael Hobbs](#), [Barbara Humphreys](#), [Roy King](#), [John Knight](#), [Hannah Lister](#), [Robert McCurrach](#), [Lorna McCurrach](#), [Emma Reeman](#), [Ken Rhodes](#), [Caroline Rhodes](#), [Barry Roberts](#), [Nadine Robson](#), [Sven Thomas](#), and [Laura Scott Walby](#).

Their dedication and perseverance have ensured that this Neighbourhood Plan has been drawn up and guided through various consultations within the Parish and with other statutory consultees. A version of the Plan, incorporating revisions made as a result of responses to these

consultations, was then submitted for scrutiny by North Dorset District Council and an Independent Examiner which included further public consultation.

The last step in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan was for the final version, incorporating the changes recommended by the Independent Examiner, to be approved by a referendum open to residents living in the parish on the 15th November 2018. The referendum was passed with 91.5% in favour on a turnout of 47.8%.

The Plan was reviewed in 2023/24 to ensure that it remained up-to-date reflecting the needs and aspirations of parish residents.

[The review group consisted of Fiona Angilley, Rosie-Anne Yates, Jo Assael, Alix Austen, Anthony Bailey, Amelia Berriman, Katie Cooper, Andrew Davis, Graham Eames, Steven Herriott, Howard Horne, John Knight, Hanna Lister, Anna Markey, Andrew Powell, Bruce Ramsden, Dick Stainer, and Laura Scott Walby.](#)

Dick Stainer,

Chairman

Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Contents

Executive Summary	v	Known flood risk	42
Policies and Projects List	xi	Managing flood risk	43
1. Introduction	1	Sewage treatment	44
The Area	1	6. Community Facilities	46
The Planning Context	3	Important Community Buildings (and associated land)	46
Our Vision	4	Broadband and mobile telephone services	48
The Objectives for our Neighbourhood Plan	6	Community Energy Scheme	49
Effective pre-application consultation	7	Community Infrastructure Levy	49
Plan Period and Review	8	7. Employment needs	51
2. The Rural Character of the Parish	9	Supporting a rural economy	51
Local Green Spaces	9	8. Housing Needs	54
Local wildlife corridors and protected species	12	Housing types	54
Important views	14	9. Amount and location of new development	58
Setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape	15	General principles on sustainable growth	58
Local landscape character	17	Settlement boundary	60
Dark Skies	19	Locations for sustainable growth	62
3. The Built Character and Historic Environment	21	Land South of Home Farm (site 20)	63
Conservation Area	23	Blandfords Farm Barn (site 22)	64
Layout and Density	24	10. Plan Monitoring and Review	68
The design of housing (and other buildings)	25	Appendix 1: Evidence Base for the Neighbourhood Plan	69
Size scale and form of buildings	26	Appendix 2: Site Analysis November 2018 NP	71
Materials and design features and finishes	27	Appendix 3: Extract from Lawton Report	72
Planning for Climate Change	33	Appendix 4: Plan Objectives and Policies Cross-Reference	73
4. Getting around – Roads, Buses, Walking and Cycling	35	Appendix 5: NPPF - Achieving appropriate densities	75
Creating safer roads and pedestrian routes	35	Appendix 6: Crossing the A350 - Mill Street to Crown Hill	76
5. Flood risk, drainage and sewage treatment	42	Appendix 7: Housing Target Paper March 2023	77
		Appendix 8: Development in the countryside	87
		List of Maps (All Maps are courtesy of Parish Online)	88

Executive Summary

The Neighbourhood Plan defines a range of policies and proposals for the village and parish of Fontmell Magna to guide its development over the Plan period of 2017-31. The Plan is presented in ten topic sections, focussing on different aspects of the parish and its potential development. The Plan is supported by evidence, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment which scrutinised the potential site allocations and policies in terms of their likely impact on the environment; and a Conservation Area Appraisal, which sets out the special character of Fontmell Magna village and surroundings. It was reviewed and updated in 2023/24.

Introduction (p. 1)

The parish of Fontmell Magna in North Dorset is a largely rural area, bordered by Blackven Common to the west and Fontmell Down to the east which is part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Fontmell village lies at the centre of the parish straddling the A350 main highway and is a designated Conservation Area. People have been living in the area for over a thousand years, and today it has a population of about 680 residents.

Provision for development in the area is addressed through this Neighbourhood Plan and the North Dorset Local Plan in combination. A vision statement for the parish is offered, which is supported by a set of objectives published in this document.

Photograph 1: Village-wide view from Fontmell Down



Rural Character (p. 9)

From the public consultations that have been carried out in developing this Plan, it is clear that residents feel strongly that the mix of green, open and wooded areas, the streams such as Collyer's Brook and Fontmell Brook, and the historic and rural nature of the parish are what gives the area its distinctive character and that this should be protected. Policies have been drafted that identify and seek to protect these important environmental features of the parish, including local green spaces, local wildlife corridors and protected species, and panoramic

countryside views. Some 19 Local Green Spaces (shown in Map 3) are identified together with a set of 8 important views (shown in Map 5) which the policies are designed to protect.

A policy is included to preserve and protect the setting of the CCNL at the eastern extent of the Parish. There is a policy to protect the local landscape character of the parish and another to retain dark skies.

Built Character and Historic Environment (p. 21)

The built environment of Fontmell Magna village dates from the 15th century and includes 44 Grade II listed buildings. A further 47 non-listed buildings in the parish are considered as contributing to its character, along with notable and important local features. These are highlighted in Map 1 on page vii. A policy is included to protect these undesignated heritage assets in the Conservation Area.



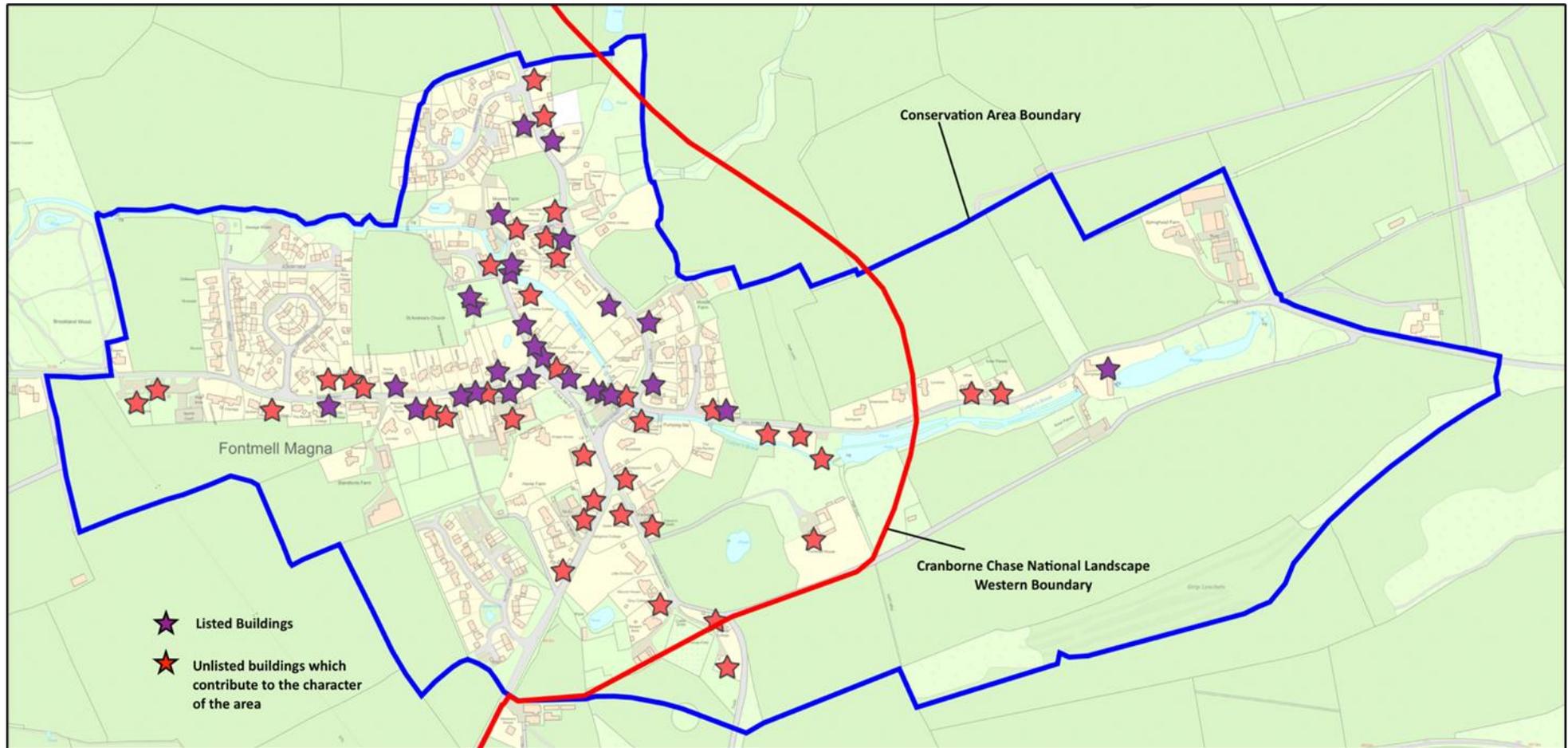
A policy is defined on the layout of developments, which should follow the pattern of existing village lanes in plot sizes, shapes and variation in building lines. For open-market housing the density should not exceed that of nearby properties which contribute to the character of the village. A further policy seeks to regulate the design and materials used in new building in order to prevent harm to the character of the Conservation Area.

Getting Around (p. 35)

The impact of traffic volumes and speed, along the A350 and through the village and parish lanes, has long been a major concern for residents. Whilst transport policy is outside the scope of this plan, a traffic management project is being pursued by the Parish Council working with Dorset Council Highways, Dorset Police, the A350 Communities Group, Community Speedwatch and adjoining parishes. This project has the aim of improving safety, lowering speeds, and reducing the harmful impact of traffic.

A map is provided showing the network of existing and proposed footpaths around the village. A policy is presented to safeguard the existing pedestrian network and in any new development to ensure suitable connections are provided for safe walking or cycling access to local facilities. The development of site 20 (Spring Meadows) is now complete and affords the possibility of an onward link to land at Blandford's Farm. An onward footpath and cycle path will link to the Village Hall and West Street.

Map 1: Conservation Area and Listed Buildings



Map created 08-01-2024 | ©Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (AC0000807647) 2024

Flood Risk, Drainage and Sewage Treatment (p. 42)

A policy on sustainable drainage is included to ensure consideration is given in any new development to surface water run-off and groundwater flooding to prevent risk of flooding to watercourses downstream, flooding of existing development or harm from water erosion to historic water features such as the sluices, weirs and mill structures, some of which are Listed. Any developer

will be required to undertake a flood risk assessment, including, where necessary, use of boreholes to determine the nature of underlying geology and to calculate accurate infiltration rates.

A policy is included to try to ensure that any necessary upgrades to Wessex Water Wastewater Recycling Centre (sewage treatment works) will be in place prior to the site's occupation.

Community Facilities (p. 46)

The results of consultation exercises have shown that parish residents greatly value the community facilities available in Fontmell Magna village which support a wide range of community activities enabled by a strong group of volunteers. The Plan provides a list of important community facilities and there is a policy included to safeguard and enhance these facilities.

The Plan acknowledges the importance of effective broadband and mobile phone services to parish residents and proposes that the Parish Council continues to lobby for better services than are currently available. Policies encourage the take-up of renewable energy and energy efficiency in building designs but avoid harming the character of the area. Community renewable energy schemes have been considered, with some support for a community Solar PV project.

It is anticipated that the plan will trigger projects to invest funds from s106 Developer Contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in new and existing community facilities intended to meet local needs. A policy is included to ensure that a new development also supports the maintenance and enhancement of existing social infrastructure and the provision of new social infrastructure in line with national guidance.

Employment Needs (p. 51)

Sufficient opportunities for local people to find work in the village will be limited in a rural area. The consultations highlighted support for further employment focused on tourism ventures and small-scale enterprises, particularly where they could re-use existing premises such as redundant agricultural buildings. A policy is defined to facilitate home working and measures for promoting business and employment opportunities.

A project is also defined to encourage the Parish Council to promote the area for tourism and hospitality which provides overall benefits to the locality and to provide information on existing local businesses and amenities.

Housing Needs (p. 54)

The Plan acknowledges the need for housing development, to provide affordable homes for local people, housing for young people, family homes and smaller retirement homes/flats.

The level of housing growth needed in the parish is estimated at a maximum of 40 homes over the plan period 2017-2031. A quota of 30 homes would equate to a “fair share” of the North Dorset Local Plan’s minimum target for the rural area. Additional homes above this level could provide additional affordable homes and other community benefits.

A housing needs assessment was prepared as part of the research underpinning this plan. A policy is defined setting out the types of housing required to meet the housing needs identified: predominantly 1, 2 and some 3-bedroom properties and suitable for young working individuals and families or suitable for older residents wishing to downsize. A further housing needs assessment carried out in February 2023 for this review reached the conclusion that the target of 40 homes remains appropriate, the current need for affordable housing is likely to be met, and therefore there is no need to identify further development sites at this time.

Amount and Location of New Development (p.58)

The plan includes a general policy on the spatial strategy for new developments. Locations for housing growth are proposed, with four sites identified to the west of the A350 highway and adjoining the current Settlement Boundary, as shown in Map 12.

The Settlement Boundary has been amended to more accurately reflect where development has taken, or is planned to take place and to exclude protected green spaces that are on the edge of the settlement, and this is shown in Map 11.

Two further policies are included to cover specific locations for sustainable growth in housing:

- > Policy FM19 covered the development of former site 20, now completed and known as Spring Meadows. 30 new homes have been built and a drop-off parking area for the school has been provided.
- > A specific policy covering the development of land at Blandfords Farm Barn (Site 22), for employment and/or community uses and some additional housing to help meet local needs. Vehicular access to this site is expected to come through to Site 20.

Plan Monitoring and Review (p. 68)

The Plan concludes with arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the Plan over the period of its currency from 2017-31. The Parish Council will assume responsibility for monitoring adherence to the Plan in planning decisions and will review and update the Plan when necessary.

Appendices (p. 69)

Appendices are included to provide references to the evidence base of the Plan, supporting documentation and external background papers.

Definition of Policy Wording

The Plan includes policies with a range of applications, including planning for domestic purposes, larger scale multiple sites, and wider ecological and community issues. Because of this, some flexibility needs to be built into the policy tests on occasion. Where the words “will” “would” or “must” have been used, this means that the policy test must be complied with. Where the word “should” is used, this means that in general it is expected that the policy test will be met, but recognises that exceptions may need to be made due to specific circumstances. It does not imply that the policy is optional. Developers are expected to use their best endeavours to comply with Plan policies, and this should be demonstrated in their application. Applicants who consider that their case is an exception must include information explaining the reasons why they consider such an exception should be made.

Policies and Projects List

Policy FM1. Local Green Spaces	11	Policy FM12. Development impacting on the Wastewater Recycling Centre at West View	45
Policy FM2. Local Wildlife Corridors and Protected Species	14	Policy FM13. Important community facilities	48
Policy FM3. Important Views	15	Project P2. Better Broadband and Mobile Telecommunications	49
Policy FM4. The setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape	17	Policy FM14. Social Infrastructure	50
Policy FM5. Local Landscape Features	18	Policy FM15. Facilitating home working	52
Policy FM6. Dark Skies	20	Project P3. Business Information	53
Policy FM7. The Conservation Area and Locally Important Features	23	Project P4. Local Housing Needs Assessment Review	54
Policy FM8. Development Layout	25	Policy FM16. Housing Types	57
Policy FM9. Building design	34	Policy FM17. Spatial strategy for new development	60
Policy FM10. Creating safer roads and pedestrian routes	39	Policy FM18. Settlement boundary	61
Project P1. Delivering traffic management solutions	40	Policy FM20. Land at Blandfords Farm Barn (Site 22)	67
Policy FM11. Sustainable drainage	43		

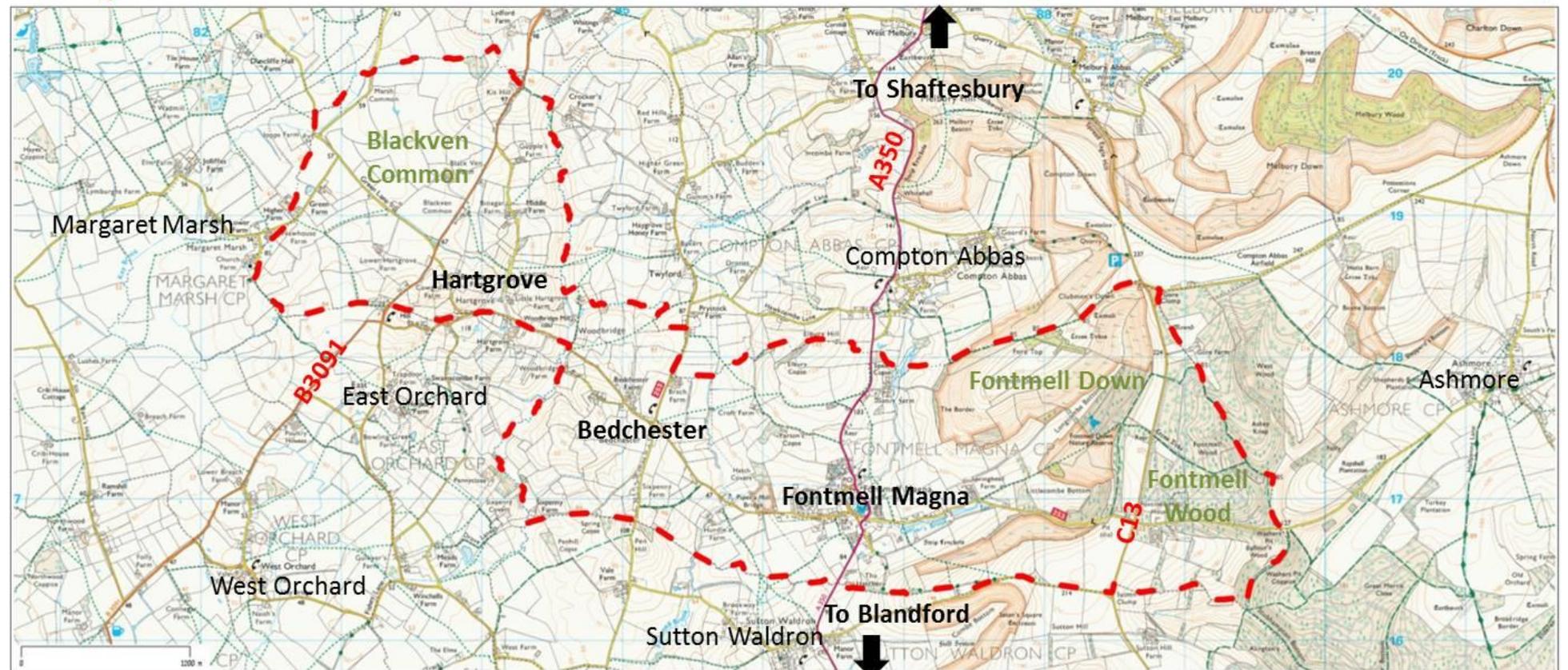
1. Introduction

The Area

1.1 The parish of Fontmell Magna in North Dorset stretches from Blackven Common, eastwards across the B3091, encompassing the hamlet of Bedchester, settlements in Hartgrove, Kit Hill and Margaret Marsh, and the village of Fontmell Magna (which straddles the A350), before rising up to Fontmell Down in the east on either side of the C13 Higher Shaftesbury Road.



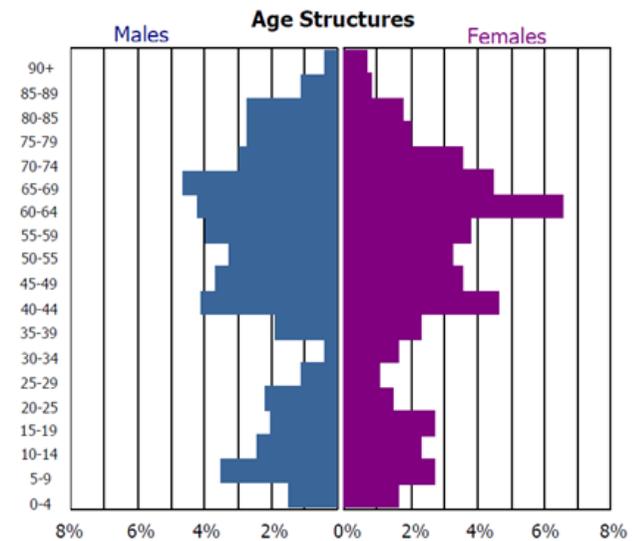
Map 2: Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area **Fontmell Magna CP** 



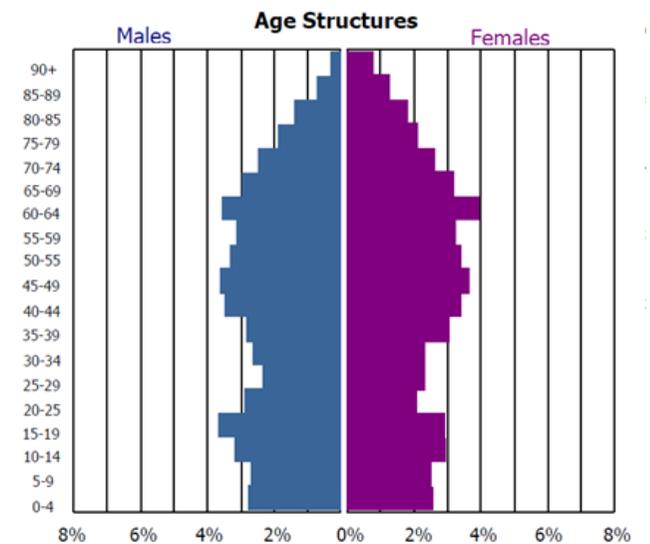
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- 1.2 The parish has a population of about 680 usual residents and 310 households (2021 Census). The area has a fairly typical but slightly 'older' profile than the North Dorset average, with fewer adults in their 20s and 30s, and consequently fewer children (graphs courtesy of Dorset Council 2011 Census profiles). This demographic may be the consequence of lack of affordable housing in the area.
- 1.3 Much of the area east of the A350 is of high environmental value and is nationally protected as part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Fontmell Down is part of the larger area 'Fontmell and Melbury Downs', which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation (protected under the EC Habitats Directive).
- 1.4 People have been living in the area for over a thousand years, with the presence of the springs thought to have been very influential in the early settlement of this area, so there is considerable historic interest in terms of old buildings and archaeological finds. The entire built-up area of Fontmell Magna village has Conservation Area status, and this extends to include a considerable extent of the countryside setting. Springhead is an historical mill site with gardens identified by Dorset Gardens Trust as being of local importance. There are 44 Listed Buildings in the parish, the most notable being the Church of St Andrew within the village (Grade II*), and 4 Scheduled Monuments (a bowl barrow NW of Gore Farm, the medieval strip lynchets south of Springhead Farm and the cross dykes on Fontmell Hill, and in Fontmell Wood).
- 1.5 Much of the land is in productive agricultural use, including areas of high grade farmland. There are also areas prone to flood risk, most notably on either side of the Fontmell/Collyer's Brook, at Marsh Common and along the brook at Woodbridge, but because of the geology and topography other areas away from these streams are prone to surface water and groundwater flooding.

Fontmell Magna



North Dorset



The Planning Context

- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan, together with the North Dorset Local Plan and the Dorset Minerals and Waste Plans, forms the development plan which sets out the planning policies for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan is important in guiding decisions on planning applications, which by law should be made in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (this is set out in section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 1.7 The strategy set out in the Local Plan (which was the 2016 adopted plan at the time the time November 2018 Neighbourhood Plan was commenced) focuses much of the housing and economic growth needed around the main towns, but it recognises that the larger villages (including Fontmell Magna) have an important role to play as the focus for growth to meet local (rather than strategic) needs for the rural area. The Local Plan makes clear that local communities can review settlement boundaries and allocate sites through their neighbourhood plans. Neighbourhood plans can also develop more detailed policies, such as guidelines for what new buildings should look like, where infill development may be appropriate, which areas should be kept as green spaces, and consider requirements or projects for infrastructure improvements, and actions that will help address climate change.
- 1.8 Although the Local Plan sets no specific housing targets for Fontmell Magna, Policy 6: Housing Distribution refers to the provision of at least 825 dwellings in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011 – 2031. So, there is an expectation that the Neighbourhood Plan will make provision for some growth. The latest needs evidence for the housing market area encompassing North Dorset includes a higher housing requirement for the district, which suggests that this overall rural target may well be increased through the review. A more detailed assessment of local housing needs has been carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan volunteers in liaison with the District Council, the results of which are explained in the Housing Needs section (Section 8).
- 1.9 Both the Local Plan and a review of more recent employment evidence indicate that there is sufficient employment land available in the rural area as a whole, so there is no need for communities to allocate more land for employment. But Policy 11: The Economy makes clear that rural communities can still make plans to meet their own local economic development needs through neighbourhood planning, and this is considered in the Employment Needs section (Section 7).

Our Vision

1.10 What do we want our parish to be like in the future? What type of development do we want to encourage over the next 15 or so years? What places or features do we want to protect? The Neighbourhood Plan sets the vision for the area, and the planning framework that allows this to happen, alongside the broader strategic planning policies that are contained in the North Dorset Local Plan. Our vision is set out below:

The parish of Fontmell Magna has a distinctive character that is highly valued by residents and appreciated by visitors. Our aim is to conserve the character of the village and wider parish and achieve a vibrant and thriving community, by guiding developments that will maintain the sustainability of the community and its amenities for the benefit of the local inhabitants.



Photograph 2: Fontmell Magna and the Blackmore Vale from Littledown



Photograph 3: Fontmell Magna set in a tapestry of green fields with the Blackmore Vale beyond as viewed from Brandis Down



Photograph 4: Cranborne Chase escarpment (Fontmell Down) from St Andrew's Churchyard



Photograph 5: Cranborne Chase escarpment from Bedchester



Photograph 6: Cranborne Chase chalk escarpment from Gupples Lane (southern end)



Photograph 7: Blackmore Vale and distant horizon from rolling hills of Hartgrove

The Objectives for our Neighbourhood Plan

Table 1. Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

<p>1. To contribute to environmental sustainability, by:</p> <p>1.(a) Encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies, energy efficient design and technologies and efficient management of water resources while addressing flood risk;</p> <p>1.(b) Influencing the location of new housing to be within safe walking or cycling distance of local amenities;</p> <p>1.(c) Ensuring new housing and business sites minimise the impact on restricted roads, e.g. Mill Street and West Street and minimise additional car journeys within the parish.</p>	<p>2. To maintain the local character and historic environment of the parish, by:</p> <p>2.(a) Ensuring new development respects the quality of the historic built environment, and does not have a damaging effect on any assets of historic or architectural importance;</p> <p>2.(b) Ensuring development contributes to the quality and interest of the local character of the different areas within the parish;</p> <p>2.(c) Preserving the character of the narrow local byways with their high banks, tall hedges and wildflowers;</p> <p>2.(d) Encouraging the growth of the village in a way which maintains its pattern of open spaces between developments and protects the amenity of current and future residents in terms of density and height of new housing, and proximity to existing developments.</p>
<p>3. To conserve the natural environment of the parish, by:</p> <p>3.(a) Ensuring that the Cranborne Chase National Landscape is protected from inappropriate development;</p> <p>3.(b) Ensuring that nature conservation sites and rare and protected species are safeguarded;</p> <p>3.(c) Enhancing the status of Collyer’s Brook/Fontmell Brook watercourse and other important sites as wildlife corridors and habitats;</p> <p>3.(d) Promoting 'soft edges' to the built environment, planting trees near boundaries, and maintaining and encouraging green corridors.</p>	<p>4. To maintain and enhance a thriving local community, by:</p> <p>4.(a) Promoting a range of mixed housing development appropriate to local needs over the period to 2031 in relation to affordability, size and location;</p> <p>4.(b) Supporting the development of the facilities and amenities offered by the Village School to ensure its long-term viability;</p> <p>4.(c) Prioritising affordable housing for households with a 'local connection' to the Parish;</p> <p>4.(d) Enabling the growth of business and employment opportunities to meet local needs;</p> <p>4.(e) Continuing to offer a wide and diverse range of social, sport and leisure activities;</p> <p>4.(f) Encouraging the provision of transport links to local towns;</p> <p>4.(g) Encouraging the adequate provision of health, education and retail facilities.</p>

1.11 These objectives are cross-referenced to the policies proposed in the Plan in Appendix 4.

1.12 Key achievements we hope this Plan will help deliver include:

- > setting the context and parameters for where and how much development will take place
- > identifying the locations where the village can grow, to provide affordable homes for local people, housing for young people, modest-sized family homes and retirement homes, and to provide more opportunities for local people to find work locally
- > protecting from harmful development the important environmental, ecological and heritage features, including local green spaces, local wildlife areas and corridors, the dark skies, and the many valued views and features of local landscape character
- > guiding building designs and layouts so that what is built preserves and enhances Fontmell's unique character and Conservation Area, whilst encouraging the take-up of renewable energy and energy efficiency in building designs, and the take-up of sustainable drainage solutions
- > providing a better network of footpaths and safer, quieter roads around the village, to resolve some of the existing problems with traffic volume and speed
- > supporting a wide range of community activities and facilities.

Effective pre-application consultation

1.13 The Local Plan (Policy 24) requires developers to engage with the local community and offer realistic opportunities for local people to influence development proposals where practical and feasible to do so. In this respect, developers would be expected to:

- > Advertise any consultation events in the Gossip Tree magazine which is distributed monthly to all households in the parish, giving at least 2 weeks' notice of the event
- > Provide material to be displayed on the Parish Council website for those unable to attend the consultation events
- > Allow at least 2 weeks for feedback on any proposals with both postal and email address for comments

- > Report back to the community via the Parish Council about the main issues raised and how these have been reflected in the proposals (or explain why changes couldn't be made).

Plan Period and Review

1.14 Our Neighbourhood Plan looks forward to 2031. Like the Local Plan, it can be reviewed before it expires, and the implications of any update to the Local Plan (anticipated in Spring 2027) and any new issues that might arise may influence when a review ought to be considered.



Photograph 8: North Dorset Chalk Escarpment and Blackmore Vale from the CCNL, looking west along Longcombe Bottom

2. The Rural Character of the Parish

- 2.1 At the first public consultation session on the possible scope of the Neighbourhood Plan (July 2015), and from the answers to a questionnaire distributed to every household in the parish (May 2016), it was clear that residents believed strongly that the mix of green open and wooded areas, the streams, and the historic and rural character of the parish were valued and should be protected.
- 2.2 A further Options Consultation event (March 2017) gave broad support to the objectives and emerging policies on the environment and housing, which have been taken forward into this Plan.

Local Green Spaces

- 2.3 The Government's guidance on open space, sports and recreation facilities states that a Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The early consultation confirmed that green spaces within the built-up areas and the water courses within the parish, such as Collyer's Brook and Fontmell Brook, were viewed as important elements of the local landscape character. The local green spaces that are proposed form an essential component of the chequer-board pattern of open spaces that are part of the character of the village of Fontmell Magna.
- 2.4 Many of the open spaces within the village were identified as Important Open and Wooded Areas in the 2003 Local Plan. Local communities are encouraged to review these designations and propose the most valued spaces as Local Green Spaces, a status which is recognised in national policy. This can be due to their recreational use, their historic significance, their wildlife value, or simply because they make such a strong contribution to the character of the area.
- 2.5 The following table lists all those spaces that are considered to qualify for designation as Local Green Spaces. This means that development in these locations will be strongly resisted. Not all valued spaces can qualify for this designation, for example large tracts of land, and sites that are unrelated to an existing settlement, do not meet the necessary criteria.
- 2.6 Public open spaces in new developments such as Spring Meadows will be assessed in a future review of this Plan for suitability as designation as Local Green Spaces, once they have become established.

Table 2. Local Green Spaces

	Local Green Spaces	Reason for importance
1	Springhead Trust	Historic mill buildings and pond with beautiful informal garden
2	Middle Mill Pond and Collyer's Brook	Historic mill pond, DWLT nature reserve and attractive watercourse
3	Middle Mill Dam Site	Historic and tranquil mill dam site, bought by and for the local community
4	Brookfield garden (north-east corner)	Provides attractive wooded backdrop to Collyer's Brook beside Mill Street
5	Princes Field	Commemorative woodland and buddleia collection open to public
6	Triangular Paddock south of Home Farm	Valuable open space by path, part of pattern of open green spaces in village
7	Knapp House Garden (eastern section)	Site provides a wooded backdrop to this historic area
8	Fontmell Magna School land	Wooded and open areas covenanted for educational use
9	Village Hall grounds	Regularly used amenity area, vital to the village community
10	Brookland Wood	Woodland part funded, planted & much valued by the community
11	Land between Elbury View and Fontmell Brook	Natural wildlife corridor alongside the Fontmell Brook
12	Pasture between War memorial & Dairy Farm Cottage	Green space within the village envelope maintains pattern of open spaces
13	War memorial and surrounds	Historical significance for the village and of great sensitivity
14	69 West Street Garden	Quiet green space in the heart of the village offering good views of Church tower
15	Gossip Tree Triangle	Historical preaching cross site in the centre of the village
16	The Fontmell Pub Garden and Car Park Garden	Central open space provides a setting to a row of historic buildings
17	Allotments at Penn Hill, Bedchester	Amenity site with extensive views of the chalk escarpment
18	Verge at Bedchester crossroads	Historically the centre of the community with shop, chapel, telephone box etc
19	Verges at Gupples Lane, Hartgrove	Remaining evidence of typical wide Blackmore Vale margins



Policy FM1. Local Green Spaces

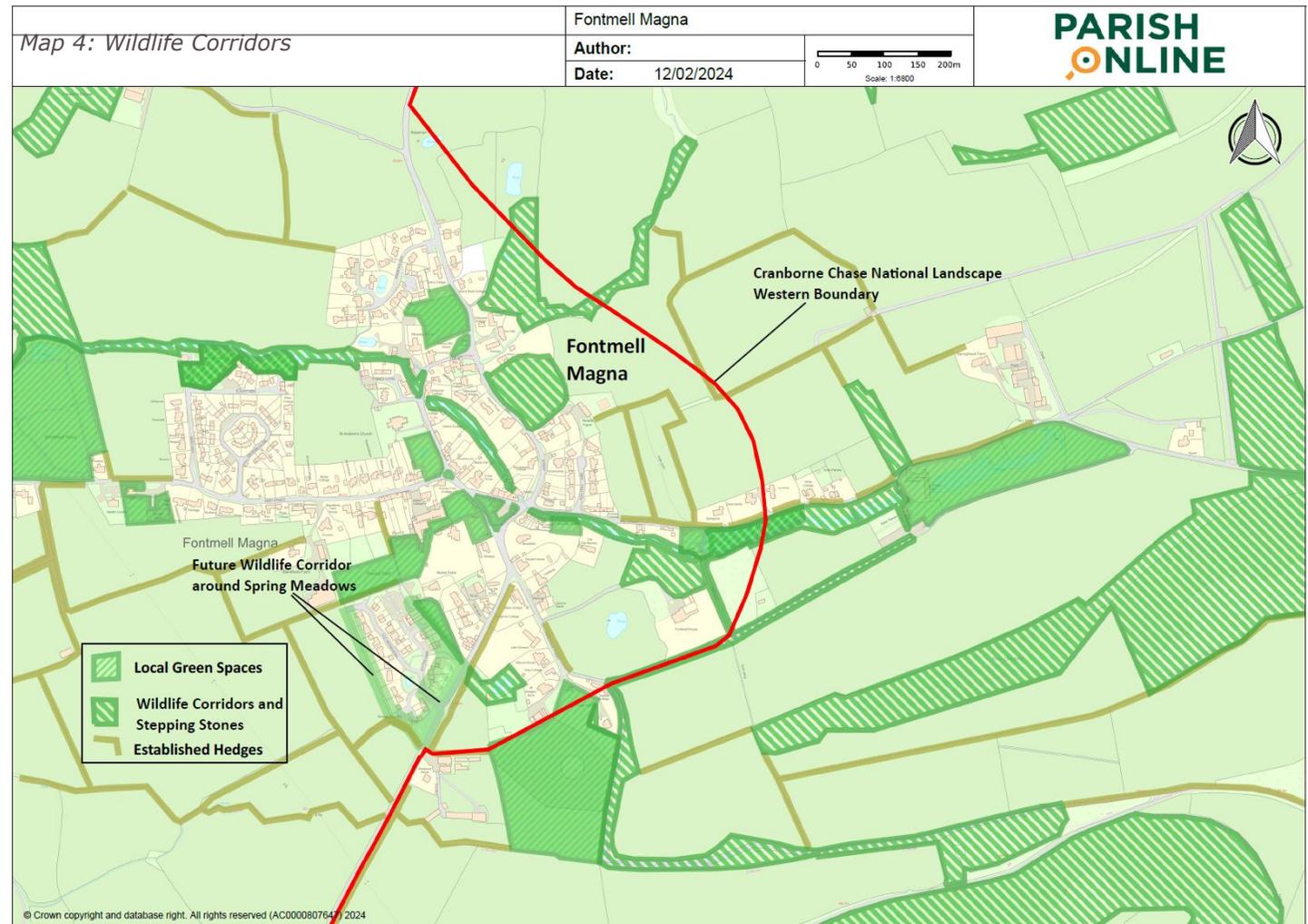
Local Green Spaces (listed in Table 2) have been identified as important to the local community. Other than in very special circumstances, no development may take place which would harm the enjoyment of these spaces or would undermine their importance.

Local wildlife corridors and protected species

2.7 The prime area designated as a local wildlife corridor is the entire length of Collyer’s Brook/Fontmell Brook, which runs through the parish. This watercourse is an important habitat in its own right, as well as a corridor between other important wildlife habitats. It includes the banks of the brooks and a buffer of up to 3m on either side to protect against water pollution from road run-off and field run-off. Other important habitats include the SSSIs on the escarpment of the chalk downland and several Sites of Nature Conservation Interest scattered throughout the parish. In addition, there are numerous copses and wild areas which form stepping stones linked by hedgerows forming a valuable network, as shown on Map 4 below.

2.8 Over a dozen species of birds that are Red Listed have been recorded in the parish and several species of endangered or threatened butterflies are also present. Otters have also been sighted from time to time.

2.9 Within the main settlement area, local biodiversity is to be protected by retaining and extending the checker



pattern of green spaces between developed areas. The linear features through the village such as Collyer’s and Fontmell Brooks, as well as the green spaces across the village, together with established hedgerows, create important corridors which aid in supporting sustainable ecological networks.

- 2.10 The Environment Act (2021) has put into effect provisions for the protection and improvement of the environment, including introducing biodiversity net gain as a statutory requirement. This requirement came into force in early 2024. As a result, there is a clear mechanism by which habitats are “valued” and a planning condition imposed to achieve a minimum 10% increase in overall biodiversity value (either through on-site or off-site measures or credits). Householder applications and some applications that are highly unlikely to impact on biodiversity are exempt from the requirements, and details on these exemptions is published as part of national planning guidance.
- 2.11 Whilst there is no need to repeat the legal requirements for biodiversity net gains that are now in place, a locally specific policy can help identify potential off-site opportunities for biodiversity enhancements. A Biodiversity Appraisal accompanied by a Biodiversity Plan may still be required to be submitted alongside planning applications. For example, this could be where there are particular issues around the presence of protected species or irreplaceable habitats. The requirements for this will be included in the revised Dorset Biodiversity Protocol¹. For example, further information may be needed where development requires hedgerow or tree removal, is in proximity to a watercourse or pond, or involves a barn conversion or changes to roof structures where bats may be roosting².
- 2.12 Developments should incorporate within building designs suitable nesting/roosting sites for declining species such as swifts, swallows, martins and sparrows. Similar consideration should be given to hedgehog habitation. Where off-site measures are likely to be required, these should prioritise enhancing and extending the local wildlife corridors through the parish.

¹ <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/biodiversity/biodiversity-appraisal-in-dorset.aspx>

² See extract: 2.2.1 What is an ecological network? from the Lawton Report 2010 ‘Making space for nature’ in the Appendix 3.

Policy FM2. Local Wildlife Corridors and Protected Species

All new development should have due regard for the network of local wildlife corridors and sites of nature conservation interest identified on Map 4; taking into account national policy to safeguard local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them, and to provide net gains in biodiversity where required.

The wildlife corridors should where possible be:

- enhanced through improved wildlife-friendly management, reducing sources of harm such as pollution;
- protected through the creation of 'buffer zones' around their perimeters;
- extended where there is opportunity to do so.

New buildings and landscaping schemes should incorporate wildlife-friendly features into their design and layout.

Important views

- 2.13 The chalk downland at the eastern end of the parish gives extensive and much valued panoramic views westwards over the Blackmore Vale. The best sites for these views are Fontmell Down and Sutton Hill with a panorama extending from King Alfred's Tower in the north round to Hambledon Hill in the south. Many other points near the edge of the escarpment also give wide views to the west. In the other direction, there are good views of the chalk escarpment of Cranborne Chase looking east from St Andrew's Churchyard, from Bedchester and from the southern end of Gupples Lane.
- 2.14 From Hartgrove near the top of Hannah's Hill, there are also views to the northwest over Blackven Common. These views form an important part of the character of the parish giving a sense of how it sits between the chalk downs and the Blackmore Vale.
- 2.15 Significant landmarks are the church of St Andrew with its 25m tower standing on elevated ground surrounded by its churchyard, the War Memorial, also elevated, and the strip lynchets.

Policy FM3. Important Views

Any development that would harm an important view of the North Dorset Chalk Escarpment or negatively affect views of the parish and Blackmore Vale from the CCNL (as identified on page 5, on Map 5, and listed below) will be resisted.

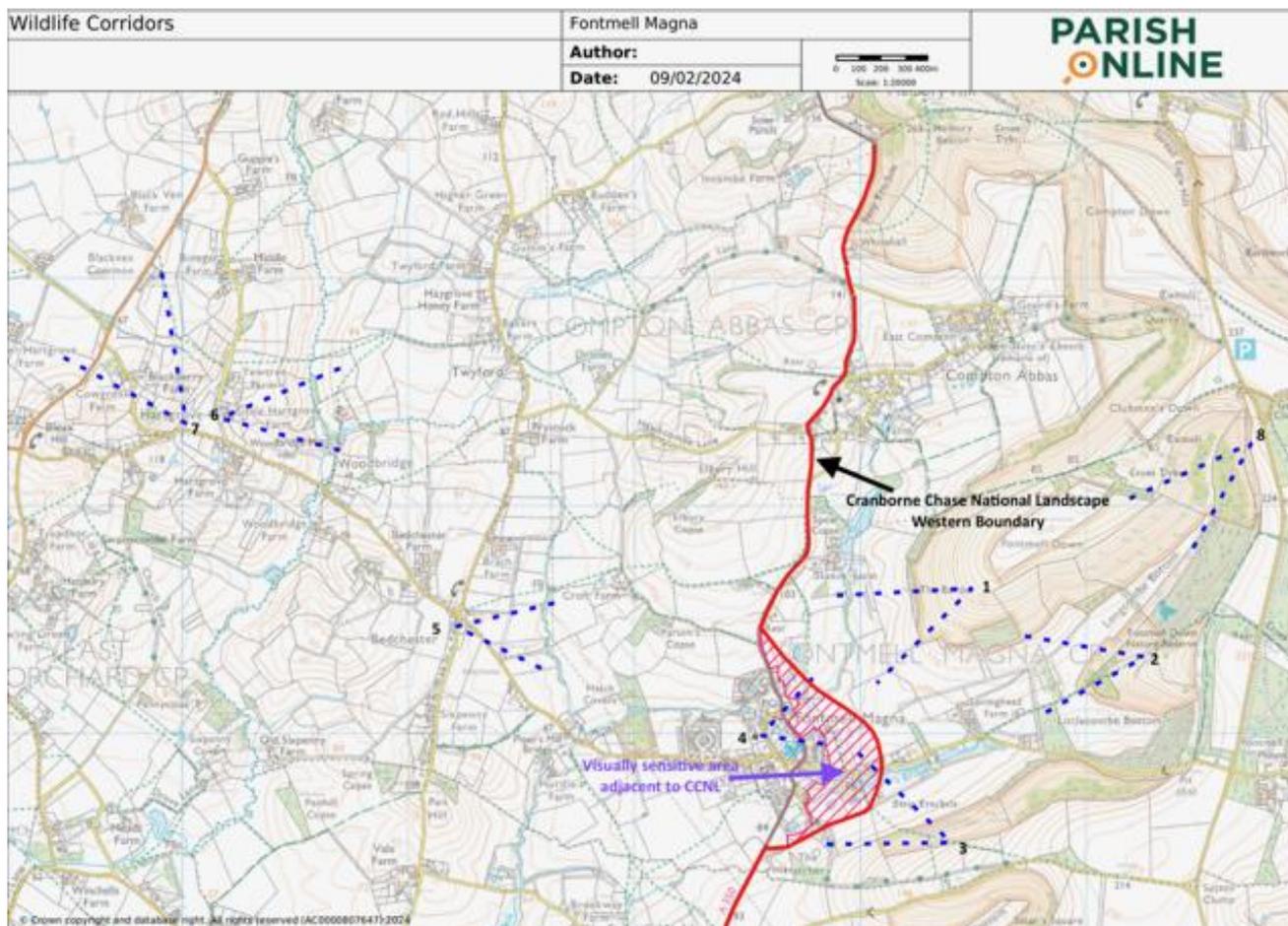
- View of Fontmell Magna and the Blackmore Vale from Fontmell Down (Photograph 1);
- View of Fontmell Magna and the Blackmore Vale from Littledown (Photograph 2);
- View of Fontmell Magna and the Blackmore Vale from Brandis Down (Photograph 3);
- View of the Cranborne Chase chalk escarpment from St Andrew’s Churchyard (Photograph 4);
- View of the Cranborne Chase chalk escarpment from Bedchester (Photograph 5);
- View of the Cranborne Chase chalk escarpment from Gupples Lane (southern end) (Photograph 6);
- View of the Blackmore Vale from Hartgrove Hill (Photograph 7);
- View of North Dorset Chalk Escarpment and Blackmore Vale from the CCNL (Photograph 8).

Setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape

2.16 Unlike the other settlements along the A350, the boundary of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL - formerly known as the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB) skirts around the village of Fontmell Magna on the eastern side cutting through open fields. This area to the east of the A350 forms part of the setting of the CCNL. As it is highly visible from Open Access Land overlooking this side of the village it is considered a visually sensitive area. New built development is unlikely to be acceptable because of the impact it would have on the setting of this nationally important landscape.

2.17 As a consequence of section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023, relevant authorities ‘must seek to further the purposes of designation’ of protected landscapes such as the CCNL, for which the purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. This aim goes beyond simply mitigating possible impacts and is likely to require authorities to explore additional measures that will help to deliver the aims and objectives of the CCNL’s management plan.”

2.18 The CCNL boundary to the east of the village is a little unusual in that it does not follow fixed features on the ground. It was drawn on the OS 1 inch to a mile scale plan and is clear enough to show which side of the A350 it follows and then it clearly indents eastwards. Nevertheless, the parts of the village east of the A350 are closely related to the CCNL and hence fairly obviously form part of its setting. Not only are there significant public rights of way that overlook the village but there are also extensive areas of Open Access Land that overlook the eastern side of the village. That eastern side of the village is, therefore, very sensitive. Applicants looking to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify development within this location will be required to particularise in what way any proposals would enhance the setting of the CCNL. Using natural



Map 5 Important views (the blue dotted lines) of North Dorset Chalk Escarpment and Blackmore Vale from the CCNL. The view numbers correspond to the Photograph numbers earlier in this plan.

materials or adopting either a conservative or innovative design would not of itself justify new development here, nor is it envisaged that landscaping could overcome the adverse effects of development in this location.

- 2.19 Key to understanding the qualities of the CCNL are the Management Plan, Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Reports available online at <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/>. The Partnership’s Position Statement 3 (Relevance of the Setting for AONB) and 6 (Good enough to approve in an AONB) are also particularly relevant to this policy.

Policy FM4. The setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape

Proposals for development within the visually sensitive area skirting the eastern extent of the village (shown on Map 5 overpage) which would harm the setting or natural beauty of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape will not be permitted unless it is clearly in the public interest to do so.

Local landscape character

- 2.20 The parish extends from the wooded chalk downland of the Cranborne Chase in the east to the flat clay vale of Blackmore Vale in the west. The chalk downland at its western limit drops in a dramatic steep and narrow escarpment with spurs to the west and deep combs between them. This escarpment is mostly unimproved grassland with some hanging woodlands. There are 4 designated SSSIs and several scheduled monuments in this area.
- 2.21 From the foot of the downs at Springhead to Hartgrove Hill in the west the parish lies in the North Blackmore Rolling Vales. This area contains most of the dwellings in the parish and is characterised by small fields with some hedgerow trees and small copses and narrow, twisting lanes with high hedgerows. The brook that has its source at Springhead is the main watercourse in the east of the parish and passes through the village of Fontmell Magna before turning to the south. Beyond Hartgrove the parish extends into the Blackmore Vale at Blackven Common and Marsh Common with their small to medium sized pasture meadows and clipped hedges.
- 2.22 Local residents were consulted on what they considered to be important characteristics, based on an appraisal of the landscape character descriptions, and all of the following characteristics were felt to be important (with only 1 or 2% of people disagreeing)

- > Rural character of the narrow roads and network of local footpaths – the rural lanes have no ‘urban’ pavements or streetlights, and are typically lined by hedgebanks;
- > Stone walls, hedgerows and mature trees;
- > Water courses within the parish, e.g. Collyer's Brook, Fontmell Brook and associated features.

2.23 The Conservation Area Appraisal (2017) highlighted further locally important features in the landscape. Trees are a regular feature of the village and exist in such a number that from a distance the dwellings are not easy to see due to the soft blanket of green which enfolds them. Also, the area around the village is characterised by small fields and occasional small copses.

2.24 As part of the research into the character of the area, the impact of traffic on some of the rural roads became apparent, such as where the increasing number of large vehicles travelling along the narrow lanes is causing erosion of the hedge banks. One such example is Mill Street, which is single track and bordered by Collyer’s Brook, Middle Mill ponds, Springhead gardens, mature hazel hedging and other species-rich margins. There are no pavements or footpaths for pedestrians along this road. Residential and agricultural entrances are used as passing spaces, others are the result of larger vehicles eroding the edges. Some of these passing places are not wide enough for a standard car and tractor, lorry or similarly sized vehicle to pass each other. Although not a main through route, the use of such roads is becoming greater through the increasing use of satellite navigation and is exacerbated when either of the A350 or C13 roads is closed.

Policy FM5. Local Landscape Features

Wherever appropriate, development should protect, and should reinforce, the local landscape character and its typical features, including:

- Collyer’s Brook / Fontmell Brook / Sturkel Brook, and their associated features – including the historic bridges, the sheep wash and the structures associated with the mills;
- the character of rural lanes such as Mill Street, Parsonage Street, the road from the Village Hall to Bedchester, Penn Hill, Woodbridge Lane, the road from Bedchester to Hartgrove, Gupples Lane, Hannah’s Hill and the roads across Blackven Common and Marsh Common, with occasional wide historic verges, verge-marker stones and finger posts;

- the traditional field and plot boundaries of hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- native deciduous mature trees and small native copses.

The character of rural roads is deemed to include the hedgerows and the absence of raised kerbs and footways.

Dark Skies

- 2.25 The early consultation on the plan highlighted that over 90% of the community believed that dark skies were important. There is no street lighting in the parish, and no desire for it to be introduced. When there is an absence of light pollution thousands of stars are revealed, and many residents enjoy the night sky. In 2019, the CCNL, which includes part of the parish of Fontmell Magna, was awarded International Dark Skies Reserve Status. This status puts an obligation on the local planning authority to reduce light pollution year on year – if this is to be achieved, new development in and adjoining the CCNL should not provide any additional light pollution. As the village sits within the setting of the CCNL, additional lighting from development needs to be considered and controlled.
- 2.26 National Landscapes are normally categorised as Environmental Lighting Zone E1 based on guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP). Their guidelines (ILP Guidance Notes 9/19 and 01/21) set maximum allowable amounts of different types of light pollution, and for Environmental Zone E1 there should no upward light (sky glow) at any time, and after 11pm no light either visible outside the lit area or intruding/spilling into buildings and causing a nuisance to building occupants.
- 2.27 In considering new development, the first factor to consider is whether external lighting is necessary. If there is a case for its inclusion (for example for security or safety reasons) its design should minimise its impact, both on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties, and in terms of light spillage and glare. Floodlights are particularly problematic as the majority of domestic and industrial fittings are of a 'point and shoot' design which is inconsistent with the desire to conserve and enhance the quality of the dark night skies. As such, floodlight fittings with the correct optics to be dark-sky-friendly should be the first consideration. Timed PIR lights, down-lighters or 'wall washers' are examples of lighting schemes that generally have less impact. A Developer's Guide to Dark-Sky compliant lighting on new builds & refurbishments provides further details on appropriate types of lighting and light fittings, and is available at <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Feb-22-Developers-Guide-7ai.pdf>

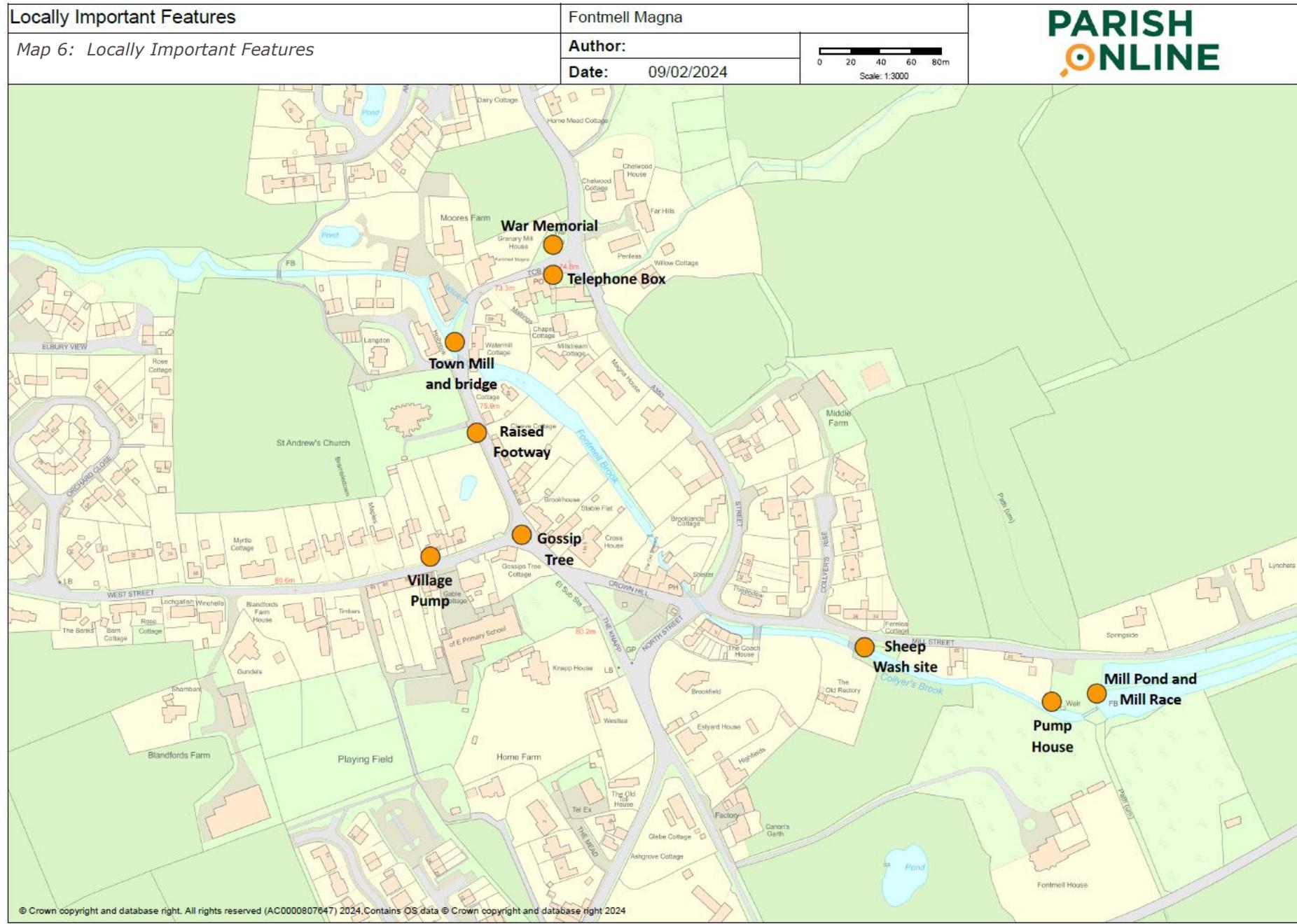
Policy FM6. Dark Skies

Development should be designed to conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of the dark night skies and prevent glare. External lighting should be avoided unless required for security or safety reasons. Where lighting is considered necessary it should be sufficient to meet the local needs and no more, and its design should minimise its impact on landscape character and the Cranborne Chase Dark Sky Reserve. Measures should be taken to ensure any light spillage is directed downwards.

As a way of assessing the level of light that may be emitted as a result of development, and the degree of harm, external lighting schemes should meet or exceed the level of protection appropriate to Environmental Zone 1 (as defined by the Institution of Lighting Professionals), and not exceed a correlated colour temperature (CCT) of 2700K.

3. The Built Character and Historic Environment

- 3.1 The built environment of Fontmell Magna that presently exists dates from 15th century, although the tracks and brooks that set the pattern of most of the present roads and lanes would have existed for centuries before. The following are the significant aspects which apply equally across the whole civil parish:
- > The settlements have grown up along historic tracks and the brooks feeding into the River Stour. The settlement of Fontmell Magna is located where two tracks cross a brook (the one running north-south being a significant trade route, and the secondary one running west-east). The high church tower (signifying the centre of a community), and the elevated war memorial are local landmarks, the settings of which are to be protected.
 - > The evolution of farms and smallholdings in the parish, and the presence of several farms and orchards close to the village, has meant that the village of Fontmell Magna has developed in such a way that it has retained a pattern of open spaces, including small fields, penetrating to the very heart of the village. These open spaces are to be retained.
 - > Although there was a period of major house-building after the Second World War (with the building of Orchard Close and West View by the Local Authority for social housing), followed by Collyer's Rise and then St Andrew's View (on a brownfield site) at the end of the century, development has generally comprised small-scale piecemeal growth. The standard and rather suburban designs seen in the post-war estates do not reflect the rural nature of the remainder of the village, nor does the 'model village' approach at St Andrew's View reflect the character of the village.
 - > Non-domestic buildings include a pub, a former brewery, a large former rectory, a shop, a former chapel, a primary school and a fine church built in the gothic perpendicular style. Of the buildings which survive from before 1940, most are of brick or stone, often combined with flint, and they are considered to contribute most to the character of the area.
 - > A number of local features add to the overall character of the area – including the brooks / mill streams and associated spaces and features, historic spaces such as the War Memorial and Gossip Tree, the rural roads, the raised footway and steps by the church, verge-marker stones, the village pump and its thatched shelter, the old pump house at Middle Mill, and the traditional red telephone boxes in Fontmell and Bedchester.



Conservation Area

- 3.2 When work on the Neighbourhood Plan began, there was no Conservation Area Appraisal setting out how the area’s special architectural and historic interest defines its character and appearance. This, as Historic England pointed out, was a key omission of the type of evidence that should support such a Neighbourhood Plan. As a consequence, local volunteers undertook an appraisal of the Conservation Area using the Historic England guidelines in liaison with the Conservation Officers, in order to provide the required evidence and a clear reference document to guide future development.
- 3.3 The Fontmell Magna Conservation Area Appraisal (adopted February 2018), is annexed to the Neighbourhood Plan (see Appendix 1), therefore the full text is not reprinted here. It should be used in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan when considering planning applications, and in particular in deciding whether they protect and enhance, or otherwise cause harm to the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identified a number of buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and these should be treated as undesignated heritage assets which should be retained and respected in any new development.

Policy FM7. The Conservation Area and Locally Important Features

Within the Conservation Area, the Fontmell Magna Conservation Area Appraisal, supplemented by more detailed investigation as may be appropriate to understand the impact of development on the heritage assets, will be used to determine whether any new development will enhance, protect, or is likely to cause harm to the Conservation Area. Layouts and building designs must be designed to have due regard to neighbouring buildings, their setting, and the built and natural environment as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The following local features are considered to contribute to the character of the area as undesignated heritage assets, and should be afforded protection having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset:

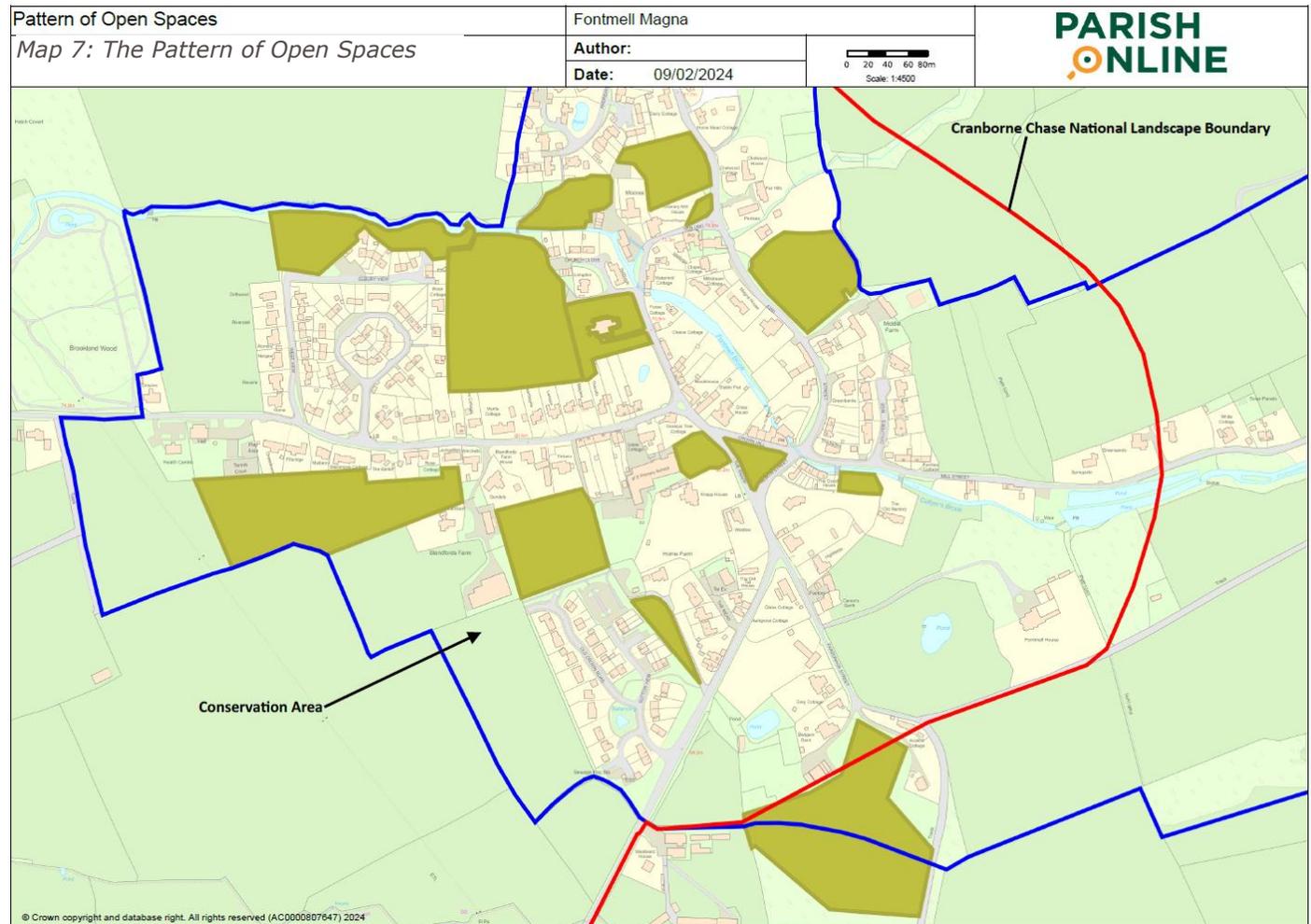
- the War Memorial;
- the village pump and its thatched shelter;
- the town mill structure, mill race and former water fountain with curved roof;
- the old pump house at Middle Mill;
- the traditional red telephone boxes in Fontmell and Bedchester;
- the raised footway and steps by the church;
- grassed areas adjacent to the road with verge marker stones;
- unlisted buildings which contribute to the character of the area as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal;
- the gardens at Springhead.

Layout and Density

3.4 The main settlement pattern can be described as having a chequer pattern of open spaces, either fields or other large grassed or wooded areas. This inter-relationship between built and green spaces should very much continue in any new development, the aim being to prevent the village character changing from its open rural nature to a denser suburban area more usually found in towns and cities.

3.5 The rural through roads of the area tend to be narrow, bordered with high banks and hazel hedges, and without street lights or pavements. These character traits are to be protected and replicated where possible. Some variation in building orientation and spacing is desirable, but generally dwellings face onto the lanes and create an active street scene. Similarly plot sizes are quite varied, reflecting the building type and history.

3.6 The village edge is a transition area between the countryside and the built environment. This transition is to be protected by lower densities of development and also by longer rear gardens



backing onto the countryside. This will help assimilate the village within the folds of the landscape as will soft landscaping along this boundary, as opposed to close board fencing or other less sympathetic boundary treatments.

- 3.7 The density of new development should be determined by local characteristics to comply with NPPF para 58 (see Appendix 5). In the main settlement area of Fontmell Magna the housing density for properties which contribute to the character of the area varies from 10.8dph to 15.6dph. It therefore follows that new development should be within this range. However, to answer the stated aim of creating a suitable transition between settlement area and countryside (para 3.5), density should be reduced near the countryside boundary to accommodate a deep area of planting.

Policy FM8. Development Layout

The layout of new development should generally reflect the pattern of existing village lanes, with a variety of plot sizes, shapes and variation in building lines, with opportunities for social interaction created by open spaces, verges and front doors and windows overlooking the street. The design, layout and orientation should be appropriate to the character of the surrounding area and should avoid adverse impacts of overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring properties. The orientation of buildings should ideally provide roof slopes within 30 degrees of south in order to maximise opportunities for solar energy through roof-mounted photovoltaics. Particular regard should be had to the layout and landscaping of schemes proposed within the sensitive transitional areas lying between the village and the open countryside.

Off-street car-parking will normally be required for two vehicles (or one plus a garage), together with adequate access for service vehicles.

The precise location of affordable housing within a development will be determined having regard both to overall design and layout considerations (which must include the objective of ensuring that it is indistinguishable from other housing) and to the reasonable requirements of efficient management and maintenance.

The design of housing (and other buildings)

- 3.8 In the May 2016 questionnaire to the whole of the community views were invited on the importance of the character of the area and the historic environment. Local Plan policies state that development should be designed to improve the character and quality of the area within which it is located. 95% of residents who responded felt that the variety of buildings

contributes to the charm of the area and 90% considered that works to new and non-Listed buildings merit particular scrutiny (to ensure that such works harmonise with the character of the area), although 76% felt that imaginative solutions would be acceptable throughout the Civil Parish, including the Conservation Area.

- 3.9 The Local Plan makes clear that special regard will be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Proposals for any new development, alterations or changes of use to existing buildings and land, which have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, will not be supported. The ability to own land and build within a Conservation Area comes with an obligation to complement the built environment that necessitates more careful design, and sometimes expenditure, to achieve an appropriate standard of build.
- 3.10 Should it be intended that the new building works are to follow a more traditional approach in their design, then consideration should be given to including some element within the proposed design that is visually 'uplifting' rather than pastiche. This could be a feature or features that are not necessarily essential but are constructed or incorporated in such a way that it adds interest whilst fulfilling a function, without being overly elaborate or dominant.
- 3.11 New housing developments, including affordable homes, should be attractive and in keeping with the character of the area. Whilst natural building materials may not be viable for affordable housing schemes, good scale, well considered window and façade proportions, and a good roof pitch with a minimum 20cm projection beyond the wall face should certainly be achievable and can add character to a building.

Size scale and form of buildings

- 3.12 The Conservation Area Appraisal exercise revealed that 50% of the existing buildings are either single-storey or 1½ storey, i.e. where the upper storey is built substantially within the roof space. Eaves heights for two-storey buildings are relatively low with 55% being below the head of the upper windows. Very few buildings (3%) are three storeys high, including those where the third storey is within the roof space and these were largely public or commercial buildings built on lower lying ground. Some recent buildings such as Home Farm are overly large in size and have been created with disproportionate entrance features which are not typical of local traditions. Such a scale and massing, and such features, are not considered appropriate and will not be acceptable in new development.

New house No. 34 is out of scale within this street scene

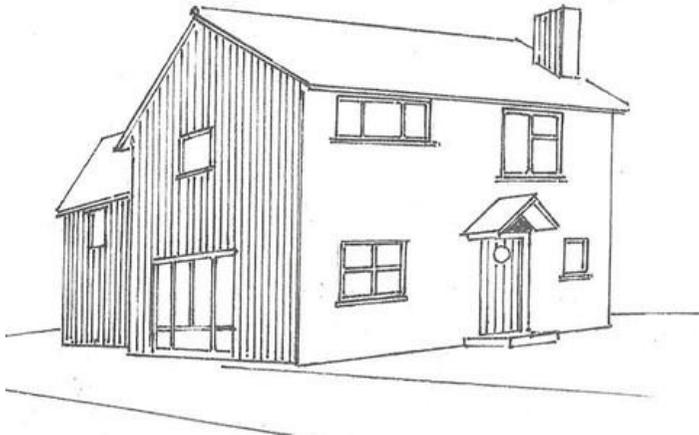


Materials and design features and finishes

- 3.13 Although the Neighbourhood Plan cannot set specific technical standards for energy or water efficiency (as these are covered under Building Regulations that are being stepped up to achieve zero carbon ready by 2025), it can encourage the take-up of renewable energy technologies and sustainable building designs. Such designs will need to avoid harming the character of the area. The inclusion of energy efficient measures on buildings, designed to be in keeping with the character of the area, such as frameless in roof PV panels or air-source heat pumps, is encouraged. Sustainable drainage systems should include measures to store and re-use rainwater, as well as considering drainage. Rainwater can be re-used in toilets, washing machines and outside taps.
- 3.14 Material choices should reflect those found within the parish in buildings constructed before 1940, as subsequent developments tended to ignore regional variations, and finishes were imported which were not in character with the area.
- 3.15 Building materials for external walls and roofing should match the local vernacular (see table 3a). Several listed buildings use coursed Greensand on the front elevation whilst the side elevations are in rubble or brick and such a variation would not be out of character. Table 3a does offer a wide pallet of materials and textures. Concrete materials for walls and roofs are

inappropriate. Whether the proposed design be modern or more traditional, the use of natural materials such as clay bricks, local stone, natural flint walling and timber elevations, with slate, thatch or clay tiles for roofing materials, and copper and leadwork for detailing, are to be preferred to concrete based products, sheet metal and uPVC components. External bright white, magnolia or highly coloured renders are not vernacular and tend to draw the eye in a wider landscape setting. Their use in the Conservation Area or the open countryside should be avoided.

3.16 Within the Conservation Area and its surroundings, timber window frames and external doors (whether painted or natural) are much preferred to standard PVC-u products (and such products are rarely suitable for Listed Buildings). High grade PVC-u products with a wood grain effect finish can be considered, but should only be used (for example in windows, external doors, cladding and eaves boards) if they would not detract from the character of the area. Care must be taken in determining the proportion of windows and their subdivision with mullions transoms and glazing bars. Casements should always be of the flush-faced types, being more appropriate to the village vernacular.



and unsatisfactory relationship of each window frame

3.17 Aluminium window frames may be acceptable, certainly in modern architectural designs, but could be acceptable in more traditional buildings for larger windows such as patio doors, in which case the preference is likely to be for dark anodised or powder coated finishes. Roof lights / skylights should be avoided unless these can be designed to avoid adding to light pollution.

3.18 Proportions, especially of the windows and external doors, should also be carefully considered in relation to the elevations in which they occur, with a solid to void ratio that reflects local characteristics of scale, symmetry and rhythm, thus avoiding large unrelieved expanses of walling.

Example of poorly proportioned windows

3.19 The design of porch roofs, canopies, or entablatures, requires care to be taken to ensure that they are in scale with the façade and entrance door beneath. Too often a clay tiled and hipped porch roof can look overbearing above a standard sized entrance door.

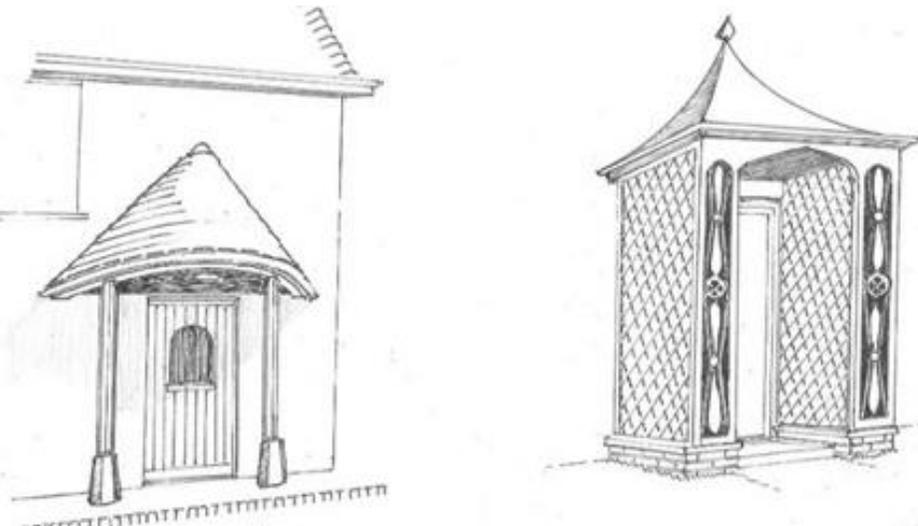
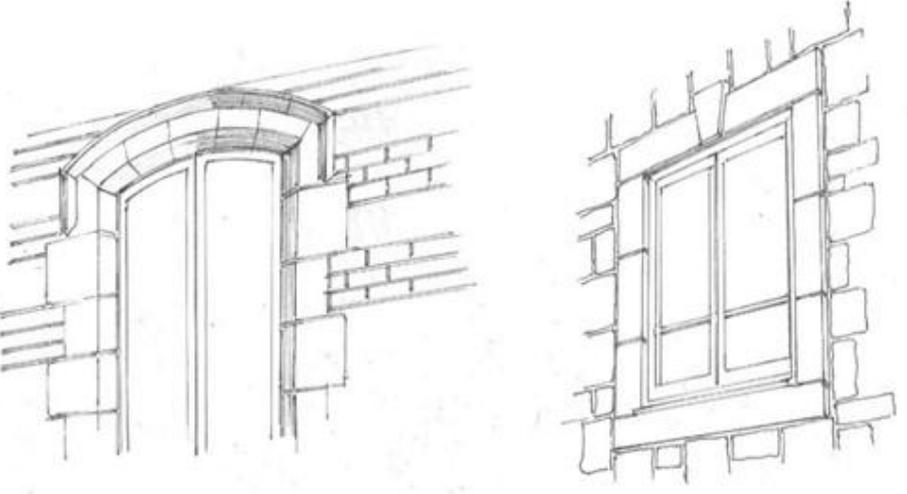
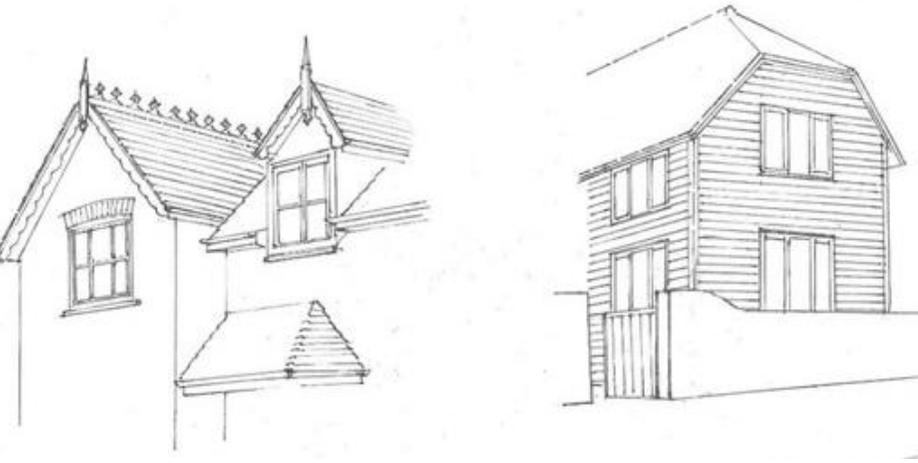
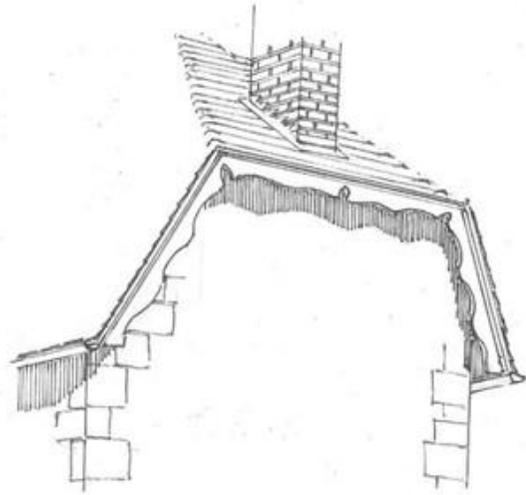
3.20 Features such as segmental arches or stone ‘hoods’ above ground floor windows can be attractive in traditional designs but may look inappropriate above 1st Floor windows when the window head is tight under the eaves.

3.21 Examples that show the design and character of Fontmell Magna dwellings are shown in Table 3b.

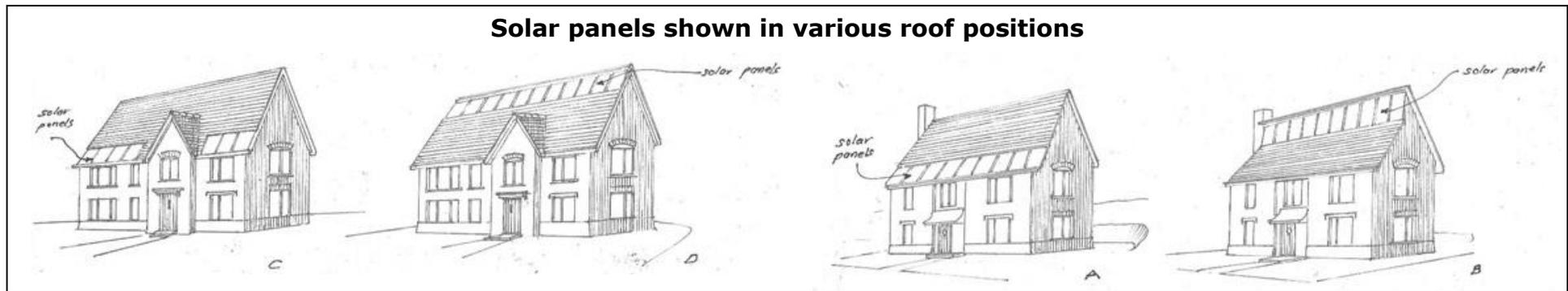
Table 3a Materials and design features and finishes

Walls	Roofs	Doors and Windows	Other Design Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Red brick of suitable tone and texture.</i> → <i>Flint with brick lacing courses and quoins</i> → <i>Stone (Greensand rubble, coursed or random)</i> → <i>Chequerboard pattern flint and Greensand rubble</i> → <i>Hardwood weatherboarding</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Plain clay tile</i> → <i>Slate</i> → <i>Thatch</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Vertical plank front door</i> → <i>Door canopies of simple bracketed design with tile or slate roof</i> → <i>Gabled dormers, especially breaking through the eaves</i> → <i>Upper window heads tight to eaves</i> → <i>Timber framed casements (if PVC it should be the flush-faced type to reduce frame profiles)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Chimneys, if provided, with dogtooth pattern to top corbel course</i> → <i>Exposed purlins at verges</i> → <i>Flemish bond headers of deeper colour</i> → <i>Segmental arches over windows</i> → <i>Square hoodmoulds to windows</i>

Table 3b Examples that show the design and character of Fontmell Magna dwellings.

<p>Examples of Porches</p> 	<p>Window and stonework surround</p> 
<p>Dormer window and exterior cladding</p> 	<p>Chimney and end view of roof pitch with stonework</p> 

<p>Example of good extension design break in building line</p>	<p>Another example of extension design</p>		
<p>Example of cast hood over window</p>	<p>Low profile Dormer window and matching style porch</p>	<p>Example of exposed rafters under roof</p>	<p>Exposed purlins with roof extension over end wall</p>



- 3.22 Roof mounted photovoltaic solar panels do not look well on clay tiled roofs especially within the Conservation area, but if no alternative option is possible a rear or side elevation will be preferred. There are, however, new designs of solar panels that fit flush with the roof tiles and tend to look neater.
- 3.23 Rainwater goods, though a necessity, can also be detrimental to the appearance of the building if not carefully considered. Black or dark grey will be better on red/brown brick walls and dark green or grey on local stonework whilst white may be appropriate on light coloured render.
- 3.24 If proposing to extend or alter a building under Permitted Development Rights (PDR), bear in mind that PDRs within a Conservation Area tend to be more restrictive, and poor design will do nothing to enhance the Conservation Area or the original property. Visually separating the new extension from the original building by means of 'articulation' i.e., a change in material or a short recess in wall or roof alignment is often preferable.
- 3.25 Fontmell Magna is a small village with over 40 listed buildings and a great many simple but attractive traditional houses. Before embarking on the design process of any project it is worthwhile walking around the village noting the attractive features and finishes employed by builders a hundred years ago or more. Individual residents may if they wish submit plans to the Parish Council for informal feedback prior to submitting a planning application.
- 3.26 Further policy on house sizes appropriate to fulfil local need is included in the policy on housing needs.

Planning for Climate Change

- 3.27 Dorset Council’s guidance and position statement on Planning for Climate Change³ seeks to clarify existing planning policy requirements in relation to planning for the climate and ecological emergency. This guidance is fully supported by this Neighbourhood Plan. From January 2024, a Sustainability Statement will be required to support planning applications to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed. This is to meet the requirements of policies relating to sustainable design and construction, and should therefore cover the sustainability aspects for design set out in the following policy. Further details of the information required can be found in Dorset Council Guidance Note – “Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications”. For Listed Buildings – Dorset Council has a document that aims to explain what can be achieved to save energy and at the same time conserve the special interest of Listed buildings.
- 3.28 In late 2023 the Government consulted on Future Homes and Buildings Standards⁴, which indicated that all new dwellings should be fitted with an air source heat pump, and possibly also require solar PV panels covering the equivalent of 40% of the ground floor area and wastewater heat recovery. In the interim, these measures are strongly encouraged (and should these not be included in the design, the reason for their omission should be made clear). Updates to water efficiency requirements are likely to be the subject of a future review, but are also strongly encouraged in the parish given the flood issues and linked benefits of reducing the amount of water through recycling and re-using the water on site. Grey water systems treat waste water from applications in the home (such as baths, sinks, dishwasher and showers) so that the water is suitable for use in washing machines, toilets and outside taps. Rainwater harvesting systems collect water running off roofs and other surfaces which can similarly be treated and used. Whilst it is recognised that all of these measures add to the initial build costs, they will reduce running costs (and therefore future energy and water bills), and are much more cost-effective as part of the initial build compared to retrofitting these systems.
- 3.29 There is increasing take up of electric vehicles. Whilst building regulations mean that all new houses should be provided with EV charging points, this may not be possible to be retrofitted within existing homes and businesses, and there is a lack of

³ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/planning-for-climate-change>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation>

local public charging points in the local area. This could be addressed through the provision of public charging points in accessible locations such as the car parks of The Fontmell and the Village Hall.

Policy FM9. Building design

New construction and alterations to buildings should respect the local rural character of the area in terms of scale, form, materials and layout, with reference to the characteristics set out in the preamble to this policy, and an appropriate level of detailing to add interest and reinforce local character. Materials and detailing should have regard to the vernacular features described in the reasoned justification to this policy, including those described in Table 3a and shown in Table 3b.

Energy efficient measures that are designed to be in keeping with the character of the area, such as frameless in-roof solar panels or air source heat pumps are encouraged. Water recovery systems should be encouraged for toilets, washing machines and gardening/ outside taps.

The installation of public charging points in accessible locations is encouraged, provided that these do not harm the rural and historic character of the area. Where EV charging points are installed, these should be sited so as not to cause an obstruction for other road users.

4. Getting around – Roads, Buses, Walking and Cycling

- 4.1 The overriding concern for many years, established at the first public consultation session on the Neighbourhood Plan in July 2015, remains the A350: the lack of footpaths; difficulty crossing the road safely because of the general speed, volume and weight of traffic; lack of safe crossing points; and pinch-points contributing to minor collisions. Further concerns include general traffic speeds and safety of pedestrians along West Street and Mill Street, lack of adequate signage to prevent heavy vehicles using these roads, including seasonal but at time intensive use by agricultural contractor vehicles. The main access and limited parking for the school was also adding to the traffic problems along West Street and Church Street. Map 8 shows the hazardous crossings and the blind bends where pedestrians are forced to walk on a major road.
- 4.2 The current bus routes, serving Shaftesbury and Blandford Forum, are used by residents, but services are infrequent. The loss of the Salisbury service was regretted. Moreover there are few community volunteers to run alternative bus schemes. The surgery building in the village is no longer used by the Blackmore Vale Partnership, and therefore the nearest available surgery is located in Shaftesbury, four miles to the north. The nearest minor injuries unit and local hospital beds post 2018 will be in Blandford, eight miles to the south. The nearest accident and emergency hospital is in Salisbury, 22 miles to the north east. The nearest maternity hospital is in Dorchester, 25 miles to the south west. Inadequate public transport services mean car ownership is higher than average, which needs to be considered in strategic housing decisions.
- 4.3 In a rural area, it is inevitable that any development that supports growth will lead to potentially more vehicles using the local road network. Much of the growth on roads is likely to be a result of changes in business and patterns of travel originating from outside the area. An increase in traffic is acceptable to facilitate new housing and businesses, provided traffic management is planned to maintain safety, avoid congestion and protect those local landscape features that characterise the rural roads.

Creating safer roads and pedestrian routes

- 4.4 The concerns over traffic volumes and speed, both on the A350 and through the village, have been known for some time, and in 2014 the Parish Council supported the need for a village traffic management scheme, recognising the impact the A350 has on the safety and daily lives of the village residents. The A350 through Fontmell Magna has no pavement along most of its 30 mph limit, forcing pedestrians onto the carriageway. It is far too narrow for the volume of lorries that pass through

the village in both directions, and the road winds through the village limiting drivers' forward sight lines thus making it difficult for pedestrians hoping to cross the road to gauge the presence and speed of on-coming vehicles.

- 4.5 The Parish Council paid for a Highways traffic survey to be carried out in March 2022 and the results can be seen in the Table below. The results were such that the Parish could justify the installation of a SID (Speed Indicator Device) which became operational in March 2023 – shared between the three sites at South Street, North Street and West Street, and the Table includes data from June 2023. A post-installation traffic survey will be done by Highways to verify any speed reduction.

Location	Survey date	5 day average flow number per day	85th percentile
A350 South of FM Northbound	June 2023	1830	31.7
A350 South of FM Southbound	June 2023	1704	40.4
A350 North of FM Northbound	March 2022	1479	37.9
A350 North of FM Southbound	March 2022	1726	36.7
A350 centre of village	March 2022	n/a	27.8
West Street Eastbound into village	March 2022	306	37.3
West Street Westbound to Bedchester	March 2022	314	33.6

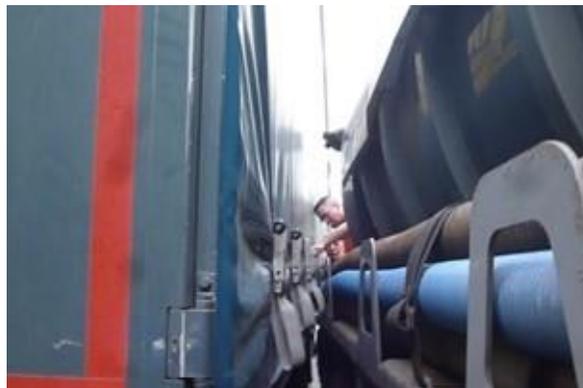
- 4.6 Further evidence of the issues is available in the study "Sight Lines at Crown Crossroads" (see Evidence Base). This study looked at the time interval available to safely cross the A350 at the Mill Street intersection (see Appendix 6). The study estimates that there is a 5 second "window" to cross the main road (based on vehicles on the main road travelling at 30mph). This short time presents a severe challenge for elderly pedestrians and for vehicles crossing the A350. Crossing the A350 relies on agility, hearing and vision, plus the absence of vehicles obscuring vision of traffic coming in both directions at the same time. The east-west link, although not carrying such heavy traffic, also experiences similar problems associated with perceived speed, absence of pavements, and parked vehicles. This has been especially notable at school opening and closing times, when parents are dropping off and collecting children.
- 4.7 Not all traffic accidents are reported to the Police; consequently, Dorset Council Highways do not have a full picture of the traffic problems in the county. Similarly, the Parish Council does not have records of all accidents, but we do hear from residents their direct experience of accidents and near-misses. Ten near misses have been advised to the Fontmell Parish Community Speed Watch Team. Accidents do happen, and the cause is nearly excessive speed for the conditions. Moreover,

there are virtually no safe places to walk along the A350 and residents on foot experience, on a daily basis (a) HGVs braking sharply and skidding to a stop, and having to reverse, to get past each other (b) frustrated drivers accelerating to above the speed limit when the road is clear, and (c) higher speeds at night when drivers (especially of HGVs) think they can tell if nothing is approaching because of an absence of headlights.

4.8 In 2022, the Parish Council carried out a canvas of residents regarding speed limits. The results were:

- > 95.2% of Fontmell Residents support 20mph through the village;
- > 82.5% support 20 mph on A350 through the village;
- > 34.5% use their car for local short trips because they believe the roads are too dangerous to walk on.

4.9 One of the main tasks the Neighbourhood Plan took on was to identify a network of safe and pleasant pedestrian routes connecting different areas of the village, thus allowing residents to get to the main community facilities easily and safely. This includes those walking to and from the village hall on West Street at the western end of the village, and those walking along Mill Street to access Springhead and Fontmell Down at the eastern end of the village.



Above: Pictures taken from Middle Farm House on A350.

Below: Pictures of Stuck / touching HGVs on the A350

- 4.10 Having surveyed the pedestrian routes, there were a number of areas where this network could be improved. This could be achieved by either making the existing routes more pedestrian-friendly, or by placing conditions on permissions for new housing development to make them provide the benefit of new off-street foot and cycle paths to create better, safer connections for the community. Existing footpaths and proposed new footpaths are shown in Map 8.
- 4.11 The rural nature of village roads, the relative lack of dedicated parking spaces (including garages), and increasing levels of car ownership have created problems because the levels and location of on-street parking on narrow streets make it difficult for road users to pass parked cars. The consequences of such poor layouts, with the lack of turning and parking provision, cause aggravation and road safety concerns to residents, pedestrians and cyclists. This adverse impact should be considered in the planning balance. As a guide, all new homes will be required to provide safe water permeable off-street parking for at least two vehicles (or one such space plus a garage) as well as cycle storage. Guidance on the latter is set out in the Local Plan and its Appendix 3, and whilst flexible generally encourages storage for at least 2 cycles per dwelling.
- 4.12 In line with the Plan's proposals, a new vehicular access has been built from the A350 to the new development south of Home Farm (Spring Meadows). There is a requirement to provide a further road link to join with land at Blandford's Farm (site 22). The design of this link should be as a village lane, with dedicated space for pedestrians and cyclists. An onward footpath and cycle path from site 22 will link to the Village Hall and West Street (see Map 8).
- 4.13 Any development should adhere to the Rural Roads Protocol as adopted by Dorset Council as the Highway Authority, specifically to:
- > Balance the safety and access needs of users with care for the environment and the quality of the landscape and settlements;
 - > Use local materials with designs sympathetic to the character of the rural settlements;
 - > Consider the landscape adjacent to the road, address ecological and historical needs and interests;



Photo showing lack of pavements / verges on the main road

- > Address sustainability and consider the potential impacts of climate change, ensuring that the management of rural roads and streets does not create or contribute to foreseeable environmental problems in the future;
- > Keep signs, lines and roadside furniture to the minimum and remove intrusive roadside clutter where this can be achieved without unduly compromising road safety;
- > Where signs and markings are needed, adapt standard designs wherever possible to make them the best possible fit with local surroundings;
- > Encourage and test innovative approaches and make full use of the flexibility in national regulations, standards and codes of practice.

Policy FM10. Creating safer roads and pedestrian routes

Pedestrian routes must be safeguarded. Proposals should contribute to the safety and attractiveness of the pedestrian routes, so that more people walk rather than drive locally. West Street and Mill Street act as shared space streets where there is no differentiation between the footway and carriageway, therefore developments impacting on these routes should prioritise the movement and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic, by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and keeping vehicle speeds below 20mph.

In addition to safeguarding the important pedestrian routes, the design of new development should improve or, where feasible, create new footpath and cycle connections to access local facilities such as the school, the shop, the village hall and playground, and the public amenity woodland.

Where possible, developments will be required to enable onward vehicular and pedestrian / cycle links with adjoining sites, to create permeable layouts that provide for a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists and allow traffic flows to be safely distributed.

Any new paths and connections must be designed in a manner in keeping with the rural character of the area.

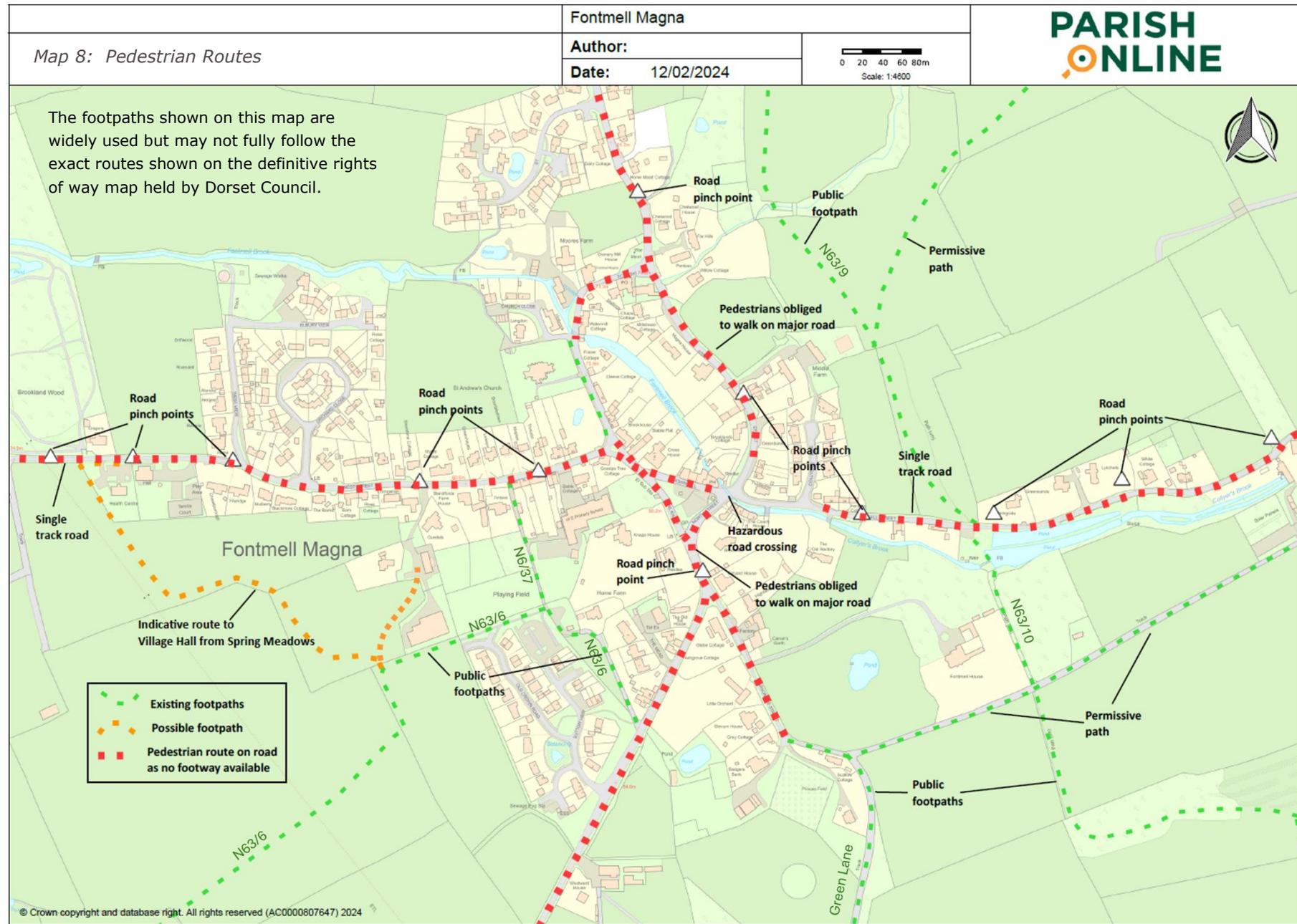
Development should not be located where it would lead to a level of on-street parking or traffic that would adversely impact on the safe use or crossing of local roads. Development will not be permitted where an existing narrow access is not suitable for increased use unless this issue would be addressed and mitigated as part of the proposals.

The design of any road improvement scheme should be consistent with the Rural Roads Protocol set out in 4.13.

Project P1. Delivering traffic management solutions

The Parish Council will continue to work with the Highway Authority and others to achieve the following:

- Identify and improve safe pedestrian crossing points on the A350, and maintain existing off-road pedestrian routes in between the Village Hall and Brooklands Wood;
- Ensure the road signage through the parish is appropriate, correctly sited and clean, and the minimum necessary (to avoid too much signage and clutter);
- Improve the safety of pupils, parents, staff and residents at the entrance to St Andrew's School through measures to manage parking and drop-off/collection;
- Facilitate the reduction of and monitor and record incidents of inappropriate vehicle speeds on the A350 and other parish roads;
- Seek the provision of new 20mph speed limits on West Street, Mill Street and the A350 to improve safety (an initial application rejected by Dorset Council in June 2023 is to be reviewed and re-submitted following support from the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner).



5. Flood risk, drainage and sewage treatment

Known flood risk

- 5.1 Reducing the risk of flooding, by not developing housing and similarly vulnerable uses in areas where flooding is likely to occur, is well established in national and local plan policies. Flood risk in the Plan area can be from rivers, surface water or groundwater sources, and can affect both the development itself and existing and future development beyond the site depending on the site's location and siting of drainage infrastructure for both foul and surface water management.
- 5.2 There are river-related flood risk areas either side of the Fontmell/Collyer's Brook, which runs from east to west through the main village. In the west of the parish there are flood risk areas at Marsh Common and along the brook at Woodbridge. The indicative surface water flood maps also show some potential for flooding on areas of land feeding into this river network.
- 5.3 Most historic development in the Parish has been on lower lying ground; the topography and geology of the Parish means that outlying developments are susceptible to seasonal surface water and ground water flooding, and it is not unusual for the ground to be saturated. However, it is considered that the risk of riverine flooding is minimal due to the proximity of built up parts of the Parish to the spring heads, and it may not be considered necessary to provide fluvial flood risk assessments unless there has been historic incidence of fluvial flooding occurrence. The bedrock ranges (west to east) from West Walton & Kimmeridge Clay, Gault Mudstone, Greensand to Chalk, overlain by limited superficial alluvial deposits of sand and gravel.
- 5.4 The nature of the topography and underlying substrata gives rise to two distinct but related features: springs and seasonal high water tables. On the rising ground to the north and east of the settlement there are a number of springs fed from the sedimentary bedrock of the chalk uplands where the Upper Greensand overlays the sandy Gault clays – whereas those within the gardens of Springhead are constant, many of the others are more seasonal, but nevertheless significant. On the ground south of the Collyer's and Fontmell Brooks, the Gault clays give rise to perched water tables which seasonally overflow towards the brooks, creating a sustained water course along part of West Street (eventually finding its way to road gullies). This clay strata may also account for seasonal local surface water flooding in the area of The Mead.

Managing flood risk

- 5.5 The general Local Plan policy follows national guidance, requiring appropriate sustainable drainage solutions to be incorporated into all new development of ten dwellings or more. However, in an area where there are issues relating to surface water and groundwater flooding, and development tends to be through smaller, incremental developments, it is important that drainage matters are properly considered at all scales of growth.
- 5.6 Where an initial assessment highlights flood risk issues that are associated with nearby sites, the developer is encouraged to make contact with those adjoining landowners to establish whether the mitigation could be extended to alleviate their flood problems (in such situations it is expected that the adjoining landowners would contribute towards any additional cost).
- 5.7 The use of rainwater butts and/or harvesting can help reduce flooding and make efficient use of water and should be encouraged. Water-permeable hard surfacing treatments can help reduce surface water run-off, and the use of soakaways as a means of drainage will be viable where groundwater levels and infiltration rates allow. Where infiltration is unlikely to work effectively over the lifetime of the development, alternative techniques for regulating the discharge of surface water will need to be explored. Wessex Water have made clear that no surface water connections will be permitted to the foul sewer system. The use of positive discharge schemes to the brook under licence will not be supported due to the ecological harm that is likely to result to the chalk streams. Collyer's Rise is served by a private surface water chamber, and therefore Wessex Water is not in a position to agree future connections to this facility, which will be dependent on negotiations with the owner.

Policy FM11. Sustainable drainage

A site specific and proportionate Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is to be submitted in support of all development proposals that would result in increased surface water run-off. It should include an assessment of site characteristics and identify any prevailing flood risk from all potential sources (i.e. fluvial, surface and ground water, sewers, existing infrastructure).

Continued over

Whilst the supporting FRA should outline any mitigation measures that are to be adopted to ensure that proposed development is not placed at risk, or any off-site worsening generated, there will be presumption against sites or proposed developments with a significant prevailing risk.

Equally all development proposals should be supported by a viable and deliverable strategy of surface water management that reflects relevant ground conditions and which adheres to planning guidance and best practice.

The specific use of infiltration measures and soakaways is to be substantiated by appropriate investigation, modelling, calculations and testing. Details of maintenance and control measures to be undertaken throughout the life of the infrastructure to prevent failure of the system must be agreed with the appropriate drainage authority and any third parties if reliant on the use of their land / infrastructure. Infiltration measures such as attenuation basins and tanks must be located where there is no risk that they would overflow and cause flooding to the highway or built development.

Any engineered elements, including safety fencing and visible elements of any overflow pipes, should be designed to be unobtrusive and using materials in keeping with the vernacular.

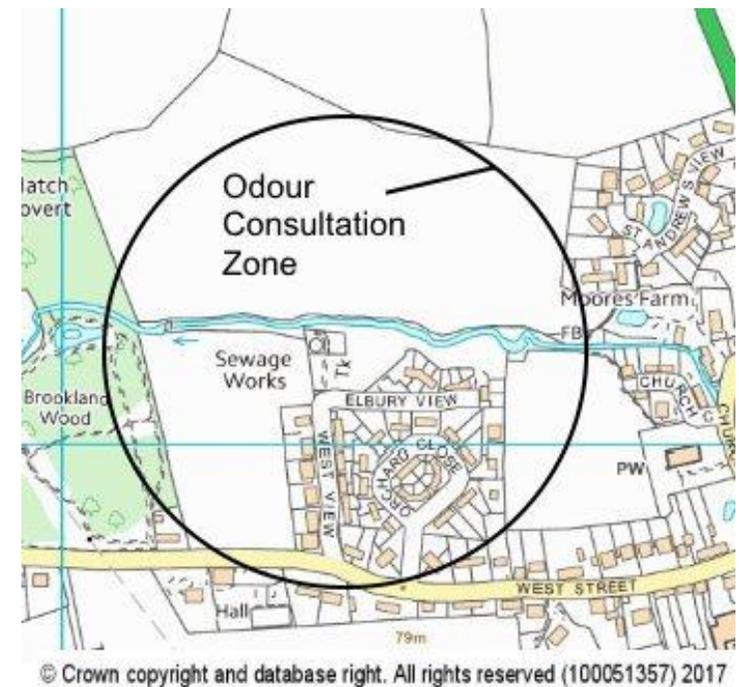
Sewage treatment

- 5.8 Wessex Water’s Wastewater Recycling Centre “WRC” at West View is likely to require further improvement works during the plan period to support the anticipated level of growth – based on their existing permit this requirement would be triggered when the number of residents connected to the WRC increases to 250. Wessex Water’s estimated population equivalent served by the WRC in 2021 was approximately 200, which was calculated before 30 homes were connected at Spring Meadows in 2023.
- 5.9 Developers have a right to connect to the sewer network at the appropriate “point of connection”, and Wessex Water are monitoring the situation. Normally, upon any grant of planning permission, Wessex Water will undertake a modelling assessment to identify whether improvements to accommodate the additional loading are needed, and if they are, Wessex Water will then plan, design and construct the works to meet the catchment growth.
- 5.10 In order to ensure that any improvements to the WRC happen in a timely manner, developers should contact Wessex Water at an early stage to discuss this issue, as Wessex Water would hope to reach an agreement with the developer and Dorset

Council as the Local Planning Authority upon the timetable for implementing the works to ensure that capacity can be made available for the new connections prior to the site's occupation.

- 5.11 Land adjoining the plant (approximately trebling the existing WRC area) is likely to be required for these improvements and should be safeguarded for this purpose. Previously this site has been considered for mobile telecommunications infrastructure (2/2017/1163/TEL), but given its low-lying position, impact on the wider landscape (given the height of the mast in such a location) and the need to allow the future expansion of the WRC, other alternatives are likely to be preferred.
- 5.12 Because the WRC may give rise to occasional odours, Wessex Water should be consulted, to make sure that future occupants are not likely to be badly affected by such emissions. This constraint is likely to prohibit development to the north and west of Elbury View. Any application within the odour consultation zone should be accompanied by an odour assessment modelling the potential and future odour levels and identifying any mitigation necessary to reduce the potential impact to acceptable levels, to the satisfaction of Wessex Water.

Map 9: Odour Consultation Zone



Policy FM12. Development impacting on the Wastewater Recycling Centre at West View

New dwellings will not be allowed within the odour consultation zone (as shown on Map 9) unless there is clear evidence that the potential impact of likely odours and emissions on future occupants would be within generally accepted limits, and the development does not compromise the future upgrading of this facility.

Where new development is intended to discharge into the Fontmell Magna WRC which would exceed the WRC's current capacity, the developer should work with Wessex Water and Dorset Council to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in place prior to occupation, and a condition may be imposed to limit occupation of the development until such time that Wessex Water have confirmed that any necessary upgrades have been carried out.

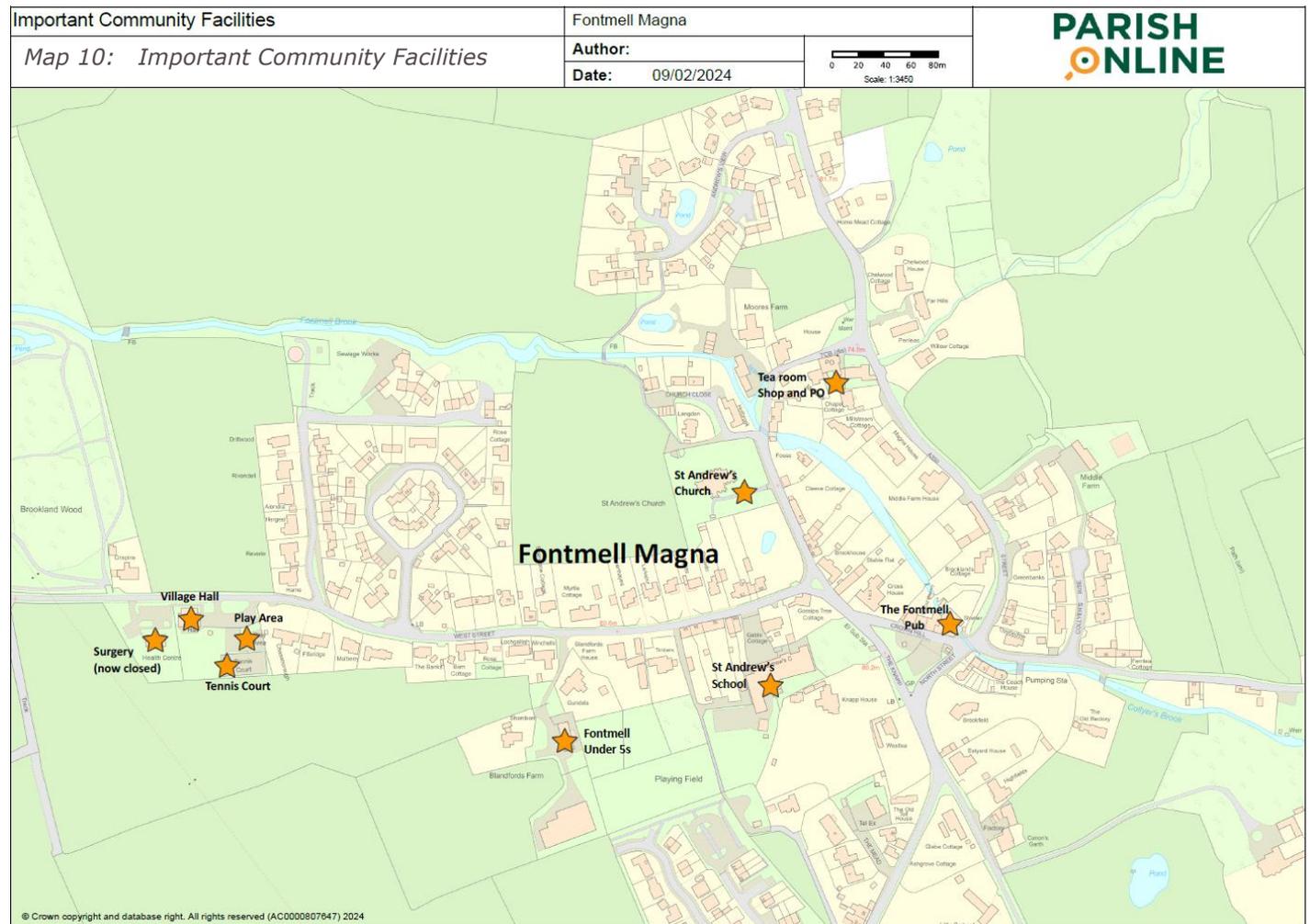
6. Community Facilities

- 6.1 At the first public consultation session on the possible scope of the Neighbourhood Plan (July 2015), residents highlighted the importance of village amenities, such as the doctors' surgery, Fontmell Pub, the village shop, post office and tea room, the village school, church, and also raised the possible need for improvements to these facilities, such as extension to the village hall and a better playground. Another issue that most people agreed on was the importance of good quality broadband & mobile networks, both for business and leisure uses. There has been considerable dissatisfaction with the continuing poor quality of mobile telephone service, though some improvement in broadband was evident.
- 6.2 Changes in the population profile can impact on the need and funding available for local services, such as the local school and healthcare provision. More affordable housing, and more affordable open market housing, should attract families with children to the area, and the proportion of young residents should rise.

Important Community Buildings (and associated land)

- 6.3 The results of the household questionnaire (May 2016) showed that the Village Hall was highly valued by the community (92% support) but there were suggestions that it could be improved by the installation of further sports facilities such as a badminton court and improved football pitch, by development of the children's play area, by the installation of Wi Fi and an audio loop system. An enlarged village hall and additional use of the school premises could provide further educational, training, sport and leisure activities.
- 6.4 Despite community support for the GP Practice to increase surgery hours and provide a wider range of medical services, the Fontmell Surgery is now permanently closed. Having a surgery in the village is considered an important asset for the health and wellbeing of the village and wider parish, and the owners are invited to contact the Parish Council to discuss how best to involve the local community in assessing potential solutions to retain the facility. If this is not possible, the following policy asks that alternative options for other community facilities or services which would have the community's support should be considered. However, in some certain circumstances a change of use may be possible under permitted development rights (meaning that the development plan policies are not used), and the Blackmore Vale Partnership are looking to use such rights to change the former surgery into a dwelling (application ref P/PACD/2024/02991 registered June 2024). This has now been approved, and should this change be implemented then the surgery premises will be removed from the list of facilities in the next update.

6.5 Under the Community Right to Bid, the Parish Council can nominate community buildings and facilities that are important to residents as an ‘asset of community value’. Once registered, their sale can be delayed allowing community groups to prepare a bid to buy and run them. The fact that a community asset is listed as an ‘asset of community value’ in itself can be a material planning consideration. The essential community facilities identified in Policy 13 are those that the Parish Council would be minded to nominate under the Community Right to Bid, if their continued use as a community facility were likely to come under threat. The following policy provides additional protection whilst recognising that these facilities may need to adapt over time, to remain fit for purpose for future generations. Map 10 on page 48 shows their location. The list does not include green spaces protected under Policy FM1, or the services that do not require planning consent, such as the local bus service, the mobile phone and broadband coverage, or the network of recreational trails in the area, which are also much valued.



Policy FM13. Important community facilities

Community facilities (as listed below) are important to residents and should be retained where possible. The loss or reduction of such facilities will only be supported if, after involving the local community in assessing potential solutions to retain the facility, it is clear that their retention would be unreasonable on the grounds of viability, or the change proposed has the community's backing. Proposals will be supported that allow such facilities to modernise and adapt for future needs, including diversification schemes linked to the long-term operation of that facility as a viable concern.

- St Andrew's School and Hall;
- St Andrew's Church;
- Village Shop, Post Office and Tea Room;
- The Fontmell Pub;
- Village Hall, play area and tennis court;
- Fontmell Magna Under 5's;
- Fontmell Surgery and Clinic (currently closed).

The provision of a new community facility to meet local needs, such as education, health services, cultural facilities, recreation and sport facilities, will be supported and should be well-located in relation to the main population that it is intended to serve.

Broadband and mobile telephone services

- 6.6 At the time the November 2018 Plan was written, the rollout of Superfast Broadband was in progress with three existing cabinets providing access for most of the village of Fontmell Magna, and further upgrades planned before the end of 2017 which will provide Superfast Broadband to Hartgrove (and East and West Orchard). Unfortunately, there are still problems with capacity.
- 6.7 Coverage from all mobile phone network providers is poor in general and non-existent in some areas. Discussions with the four major providers initially indicated that there were no plans for improving coverage in the foreseeable future but in July

2017 Vodafone advised the Parish Council that it was considering applying for Planning Permission to install a base station in the village at the Wessex Water Sewage Treatment works: an initial application was refused.

Project P2. Better Broadband and Mobile Telecommunications

The Parish Council will continue to press for better broadband and mobile telecommunication facilities and work is on-going to identify a suitable location for a mobile phone mast which will be adopted by a service provider. It is recognised that mobile connectivity is essential for emergency calls, and the Parish Council has initiated a community resilience plan to aid residents.

Community Energy Scheme

6.8 The Neighbourhood Plan considered various possibilities for energy conservation schemes. Consultation elicited some interest in hydroelectric, solar and biomass power generation but it was clear that any initiative in this direction would need considerable organisational and financial input.

Community Infrastructure Levy

6.9 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, on development within the area of any local authority in England and Wales. A levy liability is triggered by planning permission for the development and the levy starts to become payable from the commencement of the development. Part of the CIL, known as the Neighbourhood Portion, can be allocated to the Parish Council, to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. The amount of the Neighbourhood Portion depends on whether there is a Neighbourhood Development Plan in place that has been through a successful referendum and has been agreed as part of the planning policy, or “made” by the Local Authority. In areas where this has happened 25% of the levy collected from development is available; otherwise it is 15%.

6.10 It is anticipated that Dorset Council will start collecting Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments for the former North Dorset area following the adoption of the Dorset Council Local Plan and CIL charging schedule in 2027. In the interim, Section 106 agreements will continue to be used in order to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.

6.11 The following policy has therefore been included in the plan to highlight that contributions may be required from developments where the adverse impacts of development need to be mitigated, and where appropriate projects have been identified. The infrastructure projects relate to improvements to the pedestrian and cycle network for getting around the village of Fontmell Magna and improvements to recreation facilities. It would therefore be appropriate for any housing schemes whose residents would be likely to use these local recreation facilities, or who would use the walking / cycling routes to access the local community facilities, to contribute to these upgrades. The level of contribution sought should relate to the size and impact of the development and will be a matter for negotiation with the Local Planning Authority. Since the Neighbourhood Plan was first written, a completely new play area has been created at the Village Hall using S106 money, and the footpath to South Street from West Street was completed in early 2024 as part of the Spring Meadows development.

Policy FM14. Social Infrastructure

Development should support the maintenance and enhancement of existing social infrastructure and the provision of new social infrastructure, in line with national guidance on planning conditions and obligations, through the provision on site and/or contributions to provision off site. The facilities listed below reflect the need for improvements to the pedestrian and cycle network and recreation facilities, but other projects will be considered on their merits as appropriate:

- Parish-wide upgrades to footpaths to ensure all-weather, all-year-round access as part of the Parish Council's "Footpaths for All" project;
- All-weather footpath between Village Hall and footpath N63/6 with connection to the Fontmell Under Fives Pre-School and on to N63/7 which links to the School;
- All-weather five-a-side football pitch.

7. Employment needs

- 7.1 In the initial consultation (July 2015) residents expressed strong support for there being sufficient employment opportunities to enable some people to work as well as live in the parish. The household survey in May 2016 indicated that 80% of employed people work outside the parish.
- 7.2 Typically of rural areas, business and employment opportunities in Fontmell Magna are limited and the number of self-employed people is higher than average for North Dorset. The 2011 National Census indicated that 30% of economically active residents were self-employed, and the household survey in May 2016 indicates that this figure is likely to have risen. At the time of writing the November 2018 Neighbourhood Plan, within Fontmell Magna village the main local businesses are the School and Pre-School, the Pub, and Perry and Son building contractors. There are a cluster of businesses operating from units at Black Venn Farm in Hartgrove.
- 7.3 Parish consultations showed support for additional employment opportunities in tourism and small-scale enterprises, particularly where this involved re-using existing premises such as redundant agricultural buildings. In comparison, there was little interest in businesses which would incur a detrimental increase in traffic, for example, storage facilities or which would degrade the rural character of the area such as with large-scale industries.

Supporting a rural economy

- 7.4 The main opportunities for new employment are likely to be through: home-based working connecting to a wide customer base via broadband; local enterprises that benefit from the highly attractive rural environment of Fontmell Magna parish; and local enterprises that can be sustained by a relatively small rural community, its links and its visitors. These options are likely to encompass tourism, hospitality, local services, and companies based around locally produced goods and Dorset related or rural skills.
- 7.5 The Local Plan countryside policies support employment and sustainable tourism through:
- > the re-use of redundant farm buildings and other premises where the building is suitable for conversion and merits retention;
 - > the retention and small-scale expansion of existing employment sites;

- > new built tourist accommodation where needed to support an existing rural enterprise – for example as a farm diversification project, or to support an environmental studies centre;
- > small-scale caravan and camping sites close to local services – although suitable sites that wouldn't harm the landscape character of the area may be difficult to find locally.

For example, in March 2017 planning permission was granted to develop a whiskey distillery re-using some redundant farm buildings along Mill Street on the east side of the village. Where a former or proposed use represents a 'fallback' position to an application (i.e. there is already an existing permission or permitted development rights that could be used), this should only be relied upon if such a use is a realistic proposition, in line with case law.

- 7.6 The Local Plan makes clear that "Whilst an increase in the floor-space of an existing dwelling in the countryside may facilitate homeworking, such development to enable commercial or business activities will not be permitted."
- 7.7 However, given the importance of self-employment and the limited number of existing employment sites, the following policy has been included to provide greater flexibility for allowing home working where there is an established business and its expansion would not harm local character or significantly affect nearby residents. Any application for expansion should include information regarding the nature of the existing business, current actual (rather than permitted) and predicted actual traffic movements (both number and size of vehicles), and specific reasons for the proposed expansion. Given that this flexibility is intended to support home working, consideration should be given to imposing conditions or requiring a legal agreement to make sure the outbuilding remains available to support a business use associated with the main dwelling.

Policy FM15. Facilitating home working

The extension of existing homes and provision of outbuildings to support expanded home working may be acceptable, provided:

- the scale and design of the development is sympathetic to the character of the existing buildings and surrounding area;
- the outbuilding or extension will remain available for business use ancillary to the primary use as a dwelling;
- the development would not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity or cause harm by increased traffic movements.

7.8 In keeping with the Local Plan there is a requirement to use existing buildings for business development. For example, Blandford's Farm Barn Site 22 contains a barn that could be adapted to many uses:

- > meet the needs of local small-scale business ventures;
- > become a venue for showcasing local skills and crafts;
- > house relevant local enterprises; and importantly;
- > provide facilities that strengthen community relationships.

This requirement is covered in Policy FM20 Land at Blandford's Farm (Site 22).

7.9 Information on the local area including available premises and existing businesses and local skills (which may be complementary) may also support existing and establishing businesses. The following actions have therefore been identified.

Project P3. Business Information

The Parish Council will:

- promote the area for tourism and hospitality, and promote parish initiatives such as the Best Kept Village competition, via its website;
- keep a directory of local businesses and individuals able to provide local skills relevant to the area;
- keep a register of sites and buildings available for business and employment use.

8. Housing Needs

- 8.1 This chapter sets out the type of housing needed, and the following chapter sets out the locations for new development, with the aim of meeting the projected housing needs. The initial consultation session with residents (July 2015) highlighted that people thought there may be a need for affordable housing for local people, housing for young people, family housing and retirement homes/flats or sheltered accommodation in the village.
- 8.2 Our research into the level of housing growth likely to be needed suggests that a maximum of 40 homes would be reasonable for the plan period from 2017 to 2031. 30 homes would equate to a 'fair share' of the Local Plan's minimum target for the rural area, with any more potentially helping to provide much-needed affordable homes to reverse the outflow of younger people and families, and they could also provide other community benefits. Although there may be evidence of demand from people who 'desire' to live in Fontmell Magna, trying to meet the relatively limitless demand for inward migration would not be sustainable.
- 8.3 The review of housing needs carried out in February 2023 concluded that the target of 40 homes remains appropriate, the current need for affordable housing is likely to be met, and therefore there is no need to identify further development sites at this time. The Housing Target Paper undertaken as part of the review is included in Appendix 7.

Housing types

- 8.4 A housing needs assessment was prepared as part of the research underpinning this Plan. With support from local volunteers and the Local Planning Authority, the Parish Council intends to review and update this assessment of local needs over the Plan period.

Project P4. Local Housing Needs Assessment Review

The Parish Council, working with local volunteers and the Local Planning Authority, carried out a review of the Housing Need Assessment in February 2023. A further review should take place within 5 years to ensure it remains up to date.

- 8.5 The findings of the housing needs assessment show that some sectors of our community struggle to find affordable housing, access to jobs and further training and education opportunities. Most households are made up of two adults, and under-

occupancy of 2+ bedrooms is common. Residents aged 65 and over comprise the largest age group. Much of the housing stock is in the highest council tax bands (32% of homes with a Fontmell Magna address are in Council tax bands F or G, compared to 13% in Council tax bands A or B), and in 2016 the average property in Fontmell Magna was estimated to be worth £484,000 (which is unaffordable to anyone on an average North Dorset income). There are very few properties for rent available in Fontmell Magna, and typical private rents would require 50% of average earnings.

8.6 From our survey, it is clear that there are a significant number wishing to move to a smaller home in order to downsize, a significant number wishing to build their own home if there was an opportunity to do so, and a lack of suitable one and two-bedroomed properties to meet the need for affordable or desirable homes. This evidence, together with a review of Census data, the affordable housing register, Land Registry data on house sales and distribution of stock within the council tax bands, all point towards a need for more starter homes, two and three bedroomed properties, including houses without stairs or otherwise adapted for older residents. There is less need for four bedroomed properties, because of the overbalance towards larger properties in the village.

8.7 The census data for 2021 shows an increase over 2011 figures in the number of 4+ bedroom homes and it is above the percentage of 4+ bedroom homes in Dorset. It also shows a decrease in 2 bedroom homes over 2011 to a figure that is well below the percentage for Dorset. Over the same period, the proportion of the parish’s population aged 65 or more has risen from 28% to 39%, whilst the proportion of children under 16 years has fallen from 16% to 10%. An exodus of younger families, unable to find more affordable housing on the open market, is likely to have an adverse impact on the viability and sustainability of local facilities such as the school.



- 8.8 On larger sites 2 out of every 5 homes should be genuinely affordable, in line with the Local Plan policies and accepted definition of affordable housing, and would include affordable rented accommodation, starter homes and shared ownership. National Planning Policy Guidance suggests that at least 10% of the overall number of homes (and at least 25% of affordable homes) within major development sites should be for affordable home ownership including first homes <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#first-homes-in-plan-making-and-decision-making>. The most recent Local Housing Needs Assessment for Dorset (Tables 9.25 and 9.27 within Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment, November 2021) suggest that about 60% of shared ownership and at least 70% of affordable rented should be 1 and 2 bedroom within this part of the county. However, the affordable housing register should also be referenced to see if this is the best split, based on those with a local connection to the area. The Local Plan specifically requires that “Affordable housing should be designed to be indistinguishable from other housing on a development site. On a larger site, the affordable units should be pepper-potted amongst the market housing, or where there is a high proportion of affordable housing, grouped in small clusters amongst the market housing.” This Local Plan policy will apply here.
- 8.9 Whilst there is no government definition of eligibility for affordable housing, it is recognised that need is measured in relation to local wage levels and local house prices in the sales and rental sectors. Any household which cannot afford to meet its need with reference to local house prices is eligible for affordable housing, so in practice, people in the Parish with higher incomes than average may still be eligible for affordable housing due to the higher than average house prices and rental costs in this area. Given that development in the area is based on meeting local needs, prioritising the allocation of such housing to local people is justified. Qualifying criteria would include:
- > having family, work, residence or education connections in Fontmell Magna or the surrounding villages, and;
 - > being on Dorset Council’s Affordable Housing Needs Register.
- 8.10 The Local Plan requires a mix of housing types and sizes, and recognises that a different mix to the district-wide general need may be justified by local circumstances or viability considerations. Emerging households will typically include smaller sized families due to divorce etc., or single adults such as elderly people living alone after bereavement. As time passes these smaller households ‘emerge’ as larger households become smaller. The most recent Local Housing Needs Assessment for Dorset (Table 9.23 within Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment, November 2021) projects a requirement of 39% 1 and 2 bedroom homes, 44% 3 bedroom homes and 17% 4+ bedroom homes in terms of open market housing within this part of the county.

- 8.11 By increasing the proportion of one and two-bedroom open market homes built, a larger proportion of the housing stock should become attainable to people on local wage levels and older people wishing to downsize. The size of such “smaller” homes should provide sufficient space for storage or working from home and not compromise on space standards. As the percentage of 4+ bedroom properties has grown significantly over the past decade and is already well above the figure for Dorset and the projected local need, there is no tangible benefit to building more large homes unless a clear local need can be evidenced.
- 8.12 Residents in need of affordable housing or wishing to self-build are encouraged to register their need on the appropriate websites:
- > www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing-register (for affordable housing)
 - > <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-buildings-and-land/build-your-own-home> (for self-build and custom-build plots)
- 8.13 Policy FM16 sets out the housing types required in new developments in the parish.

Policy FM16. Housing Types

Where affordable housing is provided in line with Local Plan policies and National Planning Policy, it should consist of at least 60% 1 and 2 bedroom homes and at least 30% 3+ bedroom homes. These percentages could be changed if a need is indicated by the affordable housing register from those with a local connection to the Parish. Affordable housing should be allocated to households with a local connection to the Parish, before cascading to those with a local connection to the adjoining parishes, and then to the rest of Dorset.

New open market housing should predominantly be of 1, 2 and some 3 bedroom properties, and be suitable for young working individuals and families or suitable for older residents wishing to downsize. It should also be capable of adaptation and extension so that residents can adapt their housing to suit their future needs without having to relocate. Any new applications to build 4+ bedroom properties should be justified by evidence to support the local need for their construction.

9. Amount and location of new development

General principles on sustainable growth

- 9.1 The Local Plan provides the spatial strategy for North Dorset, and makes clear that Fontmell Magna, as one of the District's larger villages, will be the focus of local growth, to meet local (rather than strategic) needs. Outside the village settlement boundary, development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met.
- 9.2 The Neighbourhood Plan area is largely rural (only the village of Fontmell Magna has a settlement boundary), and development across the area could harm the tranquillity and rural characteristics that we all value so highly. Although there are a range of community facilities and job opportunities, mainly within the village of Fontmell Magna, inevitably there is reliance on the nearby towns for various needs, and a lot of journeys are made by private car.
- 9.3 The historic pattern of development in Fontmell Magna has grown up around and along its water courses. This has meant that most development in the parish has been on lower lying ground, making less impact on the natural landscape and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our aim is to continue with similarly sensitive and sustainable development that respects and where possible enhances the natural and built environment.
- 9.4 The level and pace of development is an important consideration. Historically the village has experienced a relatively slow and steady pace of growth, using local materials and labour, and it was only towards the end of the last century that large-scale growth took place. Inevitably large-scale developments tend to look more homogenous, even if efforts are taken to vary the designs and materials used, and meet more than local needs. However, economies of scale associated with larger sites can provide community benefits, such as better infrastructure and more affordable housing. Most recently, Spring Meadows was built, providing 30 new homes in a short period of time. Given the housing target, this level of growth at any one time is not expected to be repeated in the plan period. Whilst it would be desirable to phase the release of sites to ensure that development does not happen all at once over a short timescale, and that the level and pace of change better reflect the needs of the local community and the organic nature of the village's history, this is likely to be waived (as it was with Spring Meadows) to ensure the community benefits will be delivered at an early stage.
- 9.5 The focus of any development will inevitably be directed towards the village. It should encourage residents to use local services and help maintain a vibrant and sustainable local community and avoid creating isolated pockets of development

unrelated to historic patterns of housing growth. Further development to the east of the A350 is not desirable, particularly on greenfield sites, due to the greater potential impact on the setting of the CCNL and the obvious difficulties crossing the main road safely to access the local facilities. There are no proposals to extend the settlement boundary in the proximity of the CCNL, or the local green spaces and wildlife corridors in the more rural areas of the parish. No development will be permitted that would harm the natural beauty and tranquillity of the CCNL. Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as revised in December 2023, now advises that the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (and therefore should be refused) provided the Neighbourhood Plan has been made (or re-made following a review) in the last five years and contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

- 9.6 The village is relatively unique in the way that green spaces and fields penetrate into the built-up areas, creating a chequerboard pattern of places and spaces. This pattern underlies the rural character and charm of the village, and perhaps explains why the original Conservation Area was drawn so widely. So, although the infilling of these spaces would in theory create a more compact and walkable form, it would be at the expense of this very precious character. The clear link to farming also serves as a reminder that agriculture and the farming community are custodians, conservators and experts of countryside and landscape management. The benefits of maintaining this character are generally felt to outweigh the benefits of creating a more compact village form, and this has informed our approach to the future pattern of growth.
- 9.7 The locations for growth identified in this plan are on sites to the west of the A350, adjoining the village (see Map 12). Away from the village, the re-use of existing buildings capable of conversion in line with Local Plan and national planning policy will provide the main opportunities for growth.
- 9.8 In all cases, further detailed consideration of the impact of development on the Conservation Area and the setting of the many Listed Buildings will be required at planning application stage. More detailed guidance on the character of new buildings and landscaping requirements is provided in Section 3.4 to 3.26.

Policy FM17. Spatial strategy for new development

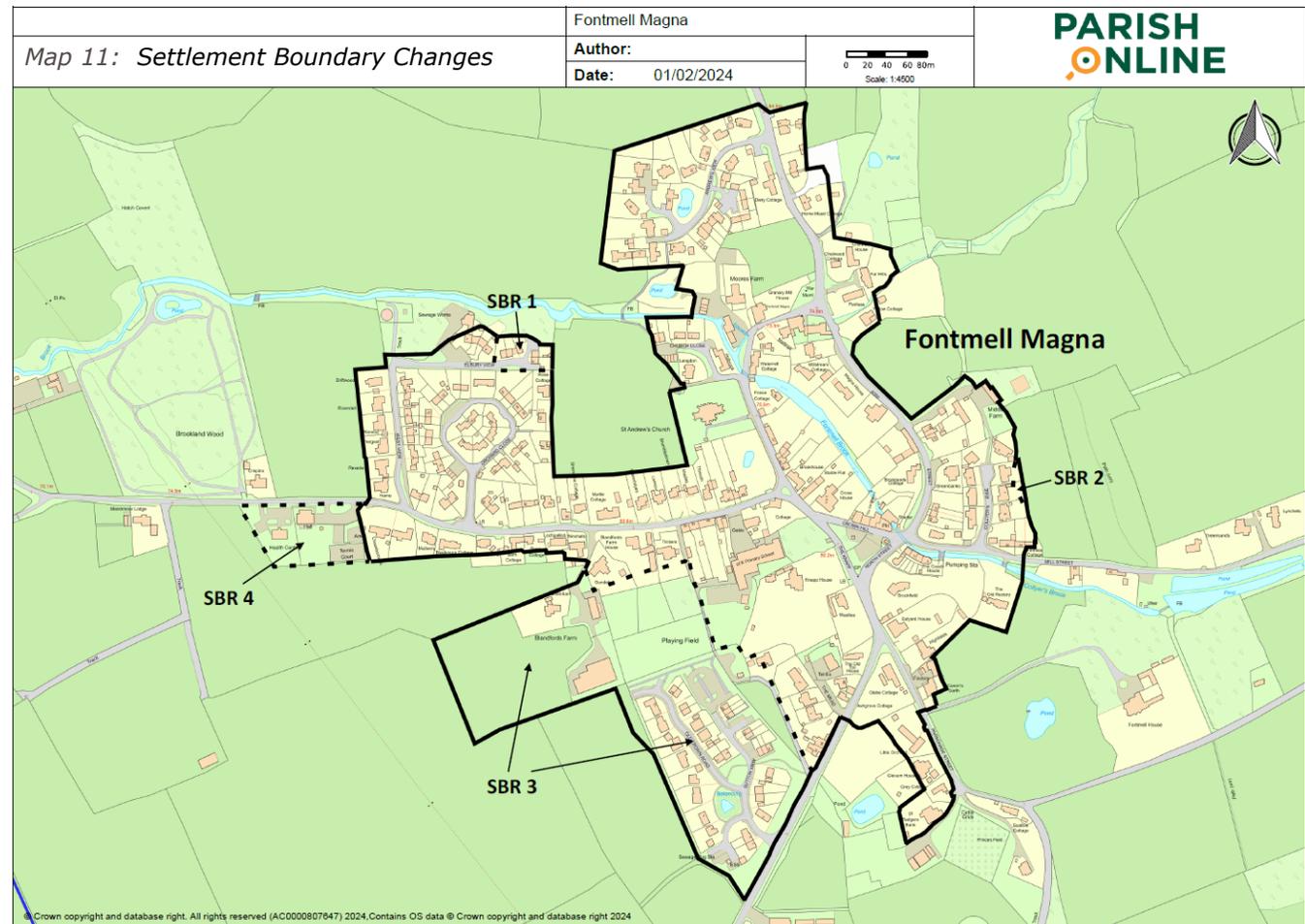
The proposed site allocations, together with completions and potential infill within the settlement boundary, will exceed the housing of 40 new homes to 2031, providing what is considered a sustainable level of growth. Other than infill development within the settlement boundary, and the re-use of existing building, additional dwellings must be focused on sites that lie to the west of the A350, and that are within easy walking distance of the main service amenities in the village (the shop, school and village hall, pub and surgery) and that are not within areas known to be at risk from flooding or otherwise protected.

Unless a countryside location is essential, is either an enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets or the design is of exceptional quality (based on the criteria established through national planning policy), new open-market development should take place within the defined settlement boundary, on allocated sites, or through the re-use of existing buildings where their existing use is no longer required, in line with national and local plan policy.

Settlement boundary

- 9.9 When the Local Plan was updated, the settlement boundary adopted in the 2003 Local Plan was not reviewed, despite the development that has occurred during the intervening period. Settlement boundaries are often used in planning policy as a means of defining the predominant "edge" between built development and the countryside, and within which infill development, including both housing and employment, would in principle be encouraged. In North Dorset, Policy 20 restricts development in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries unless it is of a type appropriate in the countryside (and for ease these are summarised in Appendix 8) or, for any other type of development, there is a demonstrable and overriding need for it to be located in the countryside.
- 9.10 The Local Plan encourages Neighbourhood Plans to review their own settlement boundary, and the settlement boundary changes made in the November 2018 Neighbourhood Plan are shown in Map 11. Key changes are indicated with the reference SBR 1, 2, 3, 4 as shown in Map 11:

- > Amendments to the boundary at SBR1 and SBR 2 where developments or other changes have taken place, better to follow the settlement edge;
- > The inclusion of SBR3 where new development is planned;
- > The exclusion of green space which is on the edge of the settlement, SBR4, given that its inclusion within the settlement boundary could be misinterpreted as meaning that development of that area might be acceptable.



Policy FM18. Settlement boundary

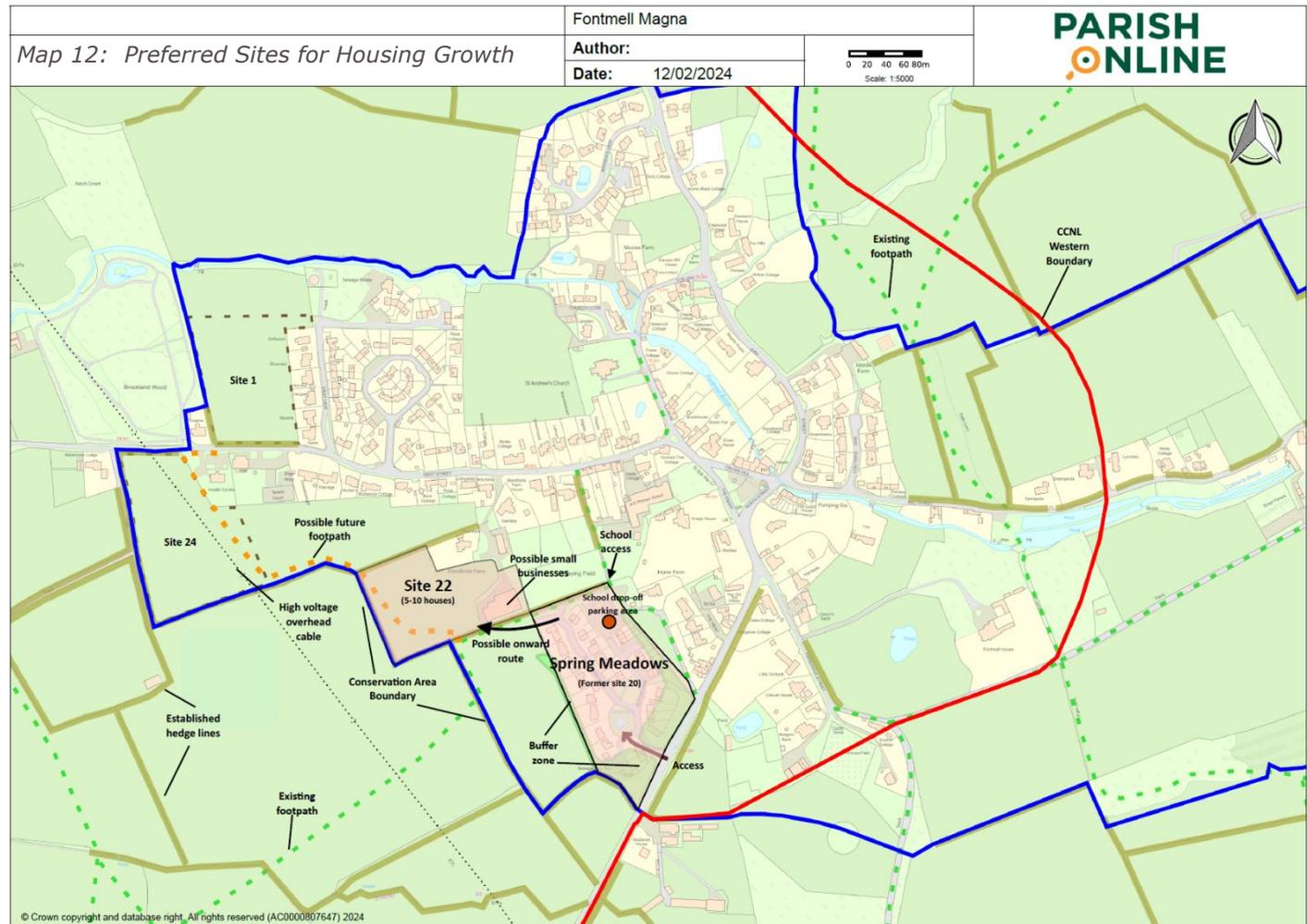
The settlement boundary is amended to more accurately define the existing and proposed built-up area, as shown on Map 11. Development outside the Settlement Boundary will be treated as 'countryside' in respect of the Local Plan policies, with particular care taken to protect the character and significance of the Conservation Area and setting of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

Locations for sustainable growth

9.11 Following a call for available sites in 2016, potential sites were assessed against a range of sustainability criteria, and subject to consultation. The site assessment procedure, which is expanded in the Strategic Environmental Assessment, highlighted four preferred options, and these were generally supported by the feedback received from residents. These were (in order of local preference):

- > Land South of Home Farm, now developed as Spring Meadows (site 20);
- > Land at Blandfords Farm Barn (site 22);
- > Land adjoining the Village Hall (site 24);
- > Land to West of West View (site 1).

9.12 The total developable site area of all four sites is estimated to be more than 6.5ha, giving an estimated capacity of about 80 houses, far in excess of the maximum 40 homes likely to be needed. As such, the two sites most supported by the local community and which had the potential to provide additional



community benefits, have been included as site-specific allocations. These should provide a maximum of 40 new homes, improved school parking provision accessed from the A350 (and providing a potential link onwards to the Village Hall and West Street), and the potential for employment and some self-building housing.

- 9.13 The other two sites are unlikely to be required to meet local housing need but do provide additional potential as rural exception sites for affordable housing, if the need for additional affordable housing were to arise over the plan period (and this need would not be met through the site-specific allocations). These two sites may be reconsidered when this Plan is reviewed and rolled forward beyond 2031.
- 9.14 As part of the work underpinning this Plan, other sites were assessed. These sites were not considered sustainable, and Appendix 2 provides a record of some of the key issues connected with the rejected options. Fuller details are given in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Land South of Home Farm (site 20)

- 9.15 This site was formerly a largely flat agricultural field (2.3ha in size) at the southern entrance to the village and within the Conservation Area, adjoining the main A350 road.
- 9.16 The options consultation (2017) indicated that the community would support development here if it would achieve a new road access and parking and drop-off facilities for the school.
- 9.17 The first version of the Neighbourhood Plan included Policy FM19 that set out the requirements for the development of this site.



Photograph 9: View of Site 20 from the A350 (Google Street View, June 2023)

9.18 An application to develop site 20 was made in June 2020 by Pennyfarthing Homes. After some revisions and protracted negotiations on the terms of the s106 agreement, the site was granted planning permission in January 2022 (reference 2/2020/0577/FUL) to erect 30 dwellings including 12 ‘affordable homes’. Building works commenced and the site was completed by early 2024. The policy has therefore been deleted as part of the first review, as it no longer serves any clear purpose. As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan’s policy, key benefits included a car parking for a school drop-off area and footpath link through to West Street. The developer did not purchase the land required for a vehicular link to land at Blandfords Farm, but left open the possibility of a future link.

Blandfords Farm Barn (site 22)

Table 4 Site 22

9.19 The site is a largely flat agricultural field within the Conservation Area, with some large agricultural barns and the pre-school nursery building and parking area (total area 1.4ha).

9.20 The options consultation (2017) indicated that the community would prefer the site to be phased after a new road access is provided from Land to the South of Home Farm. However, if access from the A350 were not possible, some support was expressed by local people for an alternative access from the site south of the Village Hall. Since the

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Good access (within walking distance) to facilities. → Relatively well-concealed site in terms of landscape setting, and well related to reinforce the village form → Potential for employment / community use of existing farm buildings → Potential for self-build plots → Potential for footpath to amenity spaces avoiding West Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Western end is visible from Sutton Hill in the CCNL, though impact softened by current hedgerow and hedgerow trees → Existing access onto West Street is poor (via unpaved, single width lane), and development of this site would increase traffic along West Street if unable to link from A350 → <i>Access to the site through Site 20 was not secured by the developer of that site.</i> → <i>Traffic through Spring Meadows would be much increased during construction on site 22</i>

planning application in 2023 (reference P/OUT/2023/02893), significant local concerns have been raised about allowing vehicular access to this site from West Street - both during the construction phase and long term - due to the relatively heavy use of the road by pedestrians to get to the village hall and play area and ‘shared’ nature of the road. Interim improvements to the existing site entrance do not appear to be feasible. The residents of Spring Meadows have also raised

significant concerns about access through their development, both during the construction phase and long term, due to the increased traffic, the narrowness of Old Crown Road, and the proximity to movements of the school drop off point. Should West Street become a 20mph speed limit zone (with changes as appropriate to highlight the shared nature of the carriageway), the need for alternative routes avoiding West Street would reduce.

- 9.21 When the plan was first in preparation (2017/18), Pennyfarthing (as the prospective developer of Spring Meadows) agreed to provide a layout to enable access from within their site. In late 2023 an outline application P/OUT/2023/06625 was made to build on the intervening land. This included an indicative layout showing a potential link between both sites - but without reaching an agreement with Pennyfarthing Homes who retains ownership of the access road. This application was refused in July 2024, nonetheless the Parish Council would hope that all of the landowners can work together to come to a sensible agreement to deliver the aspirations of the community, respecting the fact that further housing on the intervening land is not needed at this time. The revised wording seeks to try to achieve this end, but recognises that this cannot ultimately be forced.
- 9.22 The landowner has indicated that, in addition to the pre-school community use (which could be further enhanced), the site could potentially be used for small-scale employment units if required by local businesses (that could include the re-use or replacement of the existing farm buildings), and the site would also potentially lend itself to providing additional housing to meet local needs such as shown in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment or with reference to the Local Planning Authority's Self-Build and Affordable Housing Registers. However whilst one or two plots could be self-build, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to require this given the need for greater certainty over delivery and construction impacts.
- 9.23 The site is reasonably well screened by existing trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries, these will be strengthened further through an appropriate landscape scheme, of native species, to provide biodiversity benefits. The layout and design of new development will need to be in keeping with the local vernacular and take into account proximity and impact on neighbouring land uses. The westernmost end of the field is the most sensitive in potential views from Sutton Hill and buildings being located close to this edge should be avoided.
- 9.24 A heritage assessment at the site allocation stage concluded that this site also provided the opportunity to strengthen the underlying character and appearance of the village through good design and limited materials palette and landscaping. The subsequent ecology check flagged the potential importance of the hedgerows which should therefore be maintained wherever possible as they are key features of the wildlife corridors.

- 9.25 The developer of the site must exercise best endeavours to construct the site access via the onward link from the development of Spring Meadows and will be required to demonstrate their efforts to achieve this. This will ensure that problems associated with the existing site access and vehicular traffic along West Street are not exacerbated. A transport assessment will be required if a vehicular access onto West Street is proposed. This should consider the impact of traffic on West Street and the adequacy of the access road into the site for the anticipated level and type of traffic, including during construction, as well as impacts of non-motorised users along West Street and their access to and from the site.
- 9.26 Although the majority of the site lies outside any recognised flood risk zone, there is a very small area on the north-western boundary that current (2017) flood maps indicate may be prone to surface water flooding and given the local geological conditions and low-lying nature of the site, further investigation into groundwater conditions and surface water run-off will be required. Discussions with the adjoining property owners are encouraged, as there may be solutions that would also benefit these properties. If connecting to the existing wastewater treatment plant, the capacity and timescales for any necessary upgrades will need to be considered to ensure that the additional waste water can be accommodated. The developer will be expected to contribute directly to the costs of any upgrades to the sewage treatment works, under the Water Industry Act 1991.
- 9.27 Subject to viability, the existing barn or a replacement building(s) of at least equivalent volume should be provided for business/community use, with the aim of supporting small businesses, particularly those focussing on teaching local skills, sales of local produce and products and upon space being adapted for community activities. The development should be comprehensively planned to ensure the juxtaposition of different uses is compatible and the necessary infrastructure, including parking spaces, and mitigation measures can be secured.

Policy FM20. Land at Blandfords Farm Barn (Site 22)

The barn in the SE corner of the Site 22, as shown on Map 12, known as Blandfords Farm Barn, is allocated for employment/community facilities, and the surrounding land, within the area shown for Site 22, is allocated for housing, which may include self/custom-build housing and affordable housing provision according to evidence of local need and viability. The employment / community use of the barn should be compatible with the rural nature of the village and nearby residential uses.

The total number of dwellings should not exceed 10 units. The range of house types and size should be in accordance with Policy FM16 Housing Types.

Design and layout, scale, massing and materials should respect the vernacular character of Fontmell Magna, in accordance with Policies FM8 and FM9 and be based on a thorough understanding of the character of the Conservation Area.

The layout and design should enable the retention of the tree belt along the southern boundary and hedgerow boundaries, except for access to site 20. A landscape scheme should be agreed that reinforces the site's screening and enclosure as viewed from public rights of way.

The hedgerows are potentially important as wildlife corridors and should be safeguarded and if possible enhanced in line with policy FM2 Local Wildlife Corridors and Protected Species. A flood risk assessment must be undertaken as stated in Policy FM11 Sustainable Drainage.

Vehicular access into the site should be from the A350 via the onward link provided within Spring Meadows (site 20), and the developer will be required to use best endeavours to provide this link. Should the developer demonstrate that, despite best endeavours, the link road cannot be delivered to serve the development, a transport assessment will be required to determine the measures necessary to accommodate the likely vehicular and pedestrian traffic flows onto and along West Street, in a manner which is safe (taking into account the pedestrian use of the road), and appropriate to the Conservation Area. In any event, the layout of the development should include pedestrian access connecting to land south of the village hall and the play area.

10. Plan Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 The Neighbourhood Plan presents the local policies which the residents of Fontmell Magna have voted on, and support. Residents will wish planners to adhere to these policies in making planning decisions, during the Plan's currency from 2017 to 2031. The Parish Council will assume responsibility for monitoring adherence to the Plan over this period and will review and update the Plan when necessary.
- 10.2 The Parish Council will report each year in its Annual Report to residents on how the Neighbourhood Plan is working in relation to the following:
- > Developments requiring planning permission, noting whether the planning decision is in line with the Neighbourhood Plan policies and the Parish Council's views;
 - > Unauthorised developments, and the action taken by the Council's enforcement team;
 - > Housing developments, in particular the number and type of houses built and whether these meet local housing needs;
 - > Planning applications that affect a protected community asset;
 - > Impact of developments, from the Highway Authority and local developers, on traffic management through the village and wider parish;
 - > Projects and changes made by environmental groups, such as Dorset Wildlife Trust and CCNL, that may affect the local landscape and heritage of Fontmell Magna parish;
 - > Growth of businesses and employment in the parish;
 - > Progress on projects identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.3 External factors may change, such as national planning policy and strategic policies of Dorset's Local Plans, and developments will take place, which may necessitate a formal update to the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure it remains appropriate and effective. The Parish Council will review the position every three years through the Plan period and judge whether a Plan update is needed. The Parish Council will report on whether a formal update is needed in its Annual Report.
- 10.4 The Parish Council's Annual Report will be available to all parish residents and published on the parish website.

Appendix 1: Evidence Base for the Neighbourhood Plan

Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted by Local Planning Authority on 14th February 2018

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/conservation-areas-north-dorset>

Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan 2014-2019 and subsequent update (2019–2024)

<https://cranbornechase.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

DERC Environmental Records – Ecological Networks on Dorset Explorer <https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/explorer/>

Dorset AONB traffic in villages toolkit <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf>

Dorset Garden Trust Dorset Gardens of National and Local Significance, October 2014 - Springhead Entry

<https://www.dorsetgardenstrust.co.uk/research-recording>

Ecological Assessment of Selected Sites at Fontmell Magna, Bryan Edwards, DERC, June 2017

FMNP Basic Conditions Statement

FMNP Consultation Statement

FMNP Strategic Environmental Assessment

Heritage Assessment, relating to proposed site allocations, Kevin Morris Heritage Planning, June 2017

Housing Needs Assessment, March 2017 and subsequent update December 2023

Landscape Character Assessment, Dick Stainer, May 2017

Local Green Spaces, criteria and assessment sheets

Mill Street Rural Character, FMNP Environment FG, 2017

Mobile Coverage Checker <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage>

National Heritage List for England

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search>

North Dorset Landscape Character Assessment, March / July 2008 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/evidence-to-support-the-north-dorset-local-plan>

North Dorset Local Plan part 1, January 2016

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

Office for National Statistics <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Red Listed Birds recorded in the Parish, 2017

Site Assessments for Housing, November 2017

Sight Lines at Crown Crossroads, survey by Dick Stainer, 2017

Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Eastern Dorset Housing Market Area, October 2015
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/nd-part-of-eastern-dorset-strategic-housing-market-area> and subsequent update Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment, November 2021

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/2012718/Housing+Needs+Assessment.pdf/caac9843-8acc-66bd-91f3-554b75c70091>

The Fontmell Magna Directory 2018

Appendix 2: Site Analysis - Preferred and Rejected sites – November 2018 NP

SEA topic areas	Objective (summarised)	Site 1 - Land West of West View - Brooklands	Site 9 - Field East of 3,4,5, North Street	Site 10.2 - Site 10.2 Middle Farm Dutch Barn	Site 10.3 - Site 10.3 Middle Farm Paddock	Site 12 - Site 12: Land North of Mill Street	Site 20 - Land South of Home Farm (pre-policy)	Site 20 Stage 2 (Policy)	Site 22 - Land at Blandfords Farm Barn (pre-policy)	Site 22 Stage 2 (Policy)	Site 24 - Land South of Village Hall	Site 27 - Land West of Surgery by Marshmoor	Site 31.2 - Slurry Pit, Bedchester Farm	Site 35.2 - St Pennhill Farmhouse Paddock	Site 46 - Land Bordering Hannah' s Hill
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Ensure no ecological interests would be harmed, enhance habitats and biodiversity	👉	👉	👉	👉	👉	👉	-	👉	-	👉	👉	👉	👉	👉
Landscape	Protect and enhance the AONB, views and features that contribute to local character	-	**	**	**	**	*	-	-	-	*	*	*	*	*
Cultural heritage	Protect and enhance the area's heritage assets and the historic character of the area	-	*	-	*	*	*	-	-	-	*	*	👉	-	*
Soil, water and air	Avoid unacceptable risk of pollution and significant loss of productive farmland	👉	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	👉	-	👉
Climatic factors	Reduce flood risk and support reduction in energy consumption	✓	*	*	-	*	-	✓	👉	✓	👉	*	*	*	*
Population and human health;	Provide housing and/or opportunities for work and community facilities	✓✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	-	✓	-
Material assets	Create safe and accessible places	-	**	-	-	*	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	*	**	**	**
OVERALL		✓	**	**	**	**	-	✓	✓	✓	-	*	**	**	**

KEY:	 significant positive impact likely	 adverse impact likely
	 positive impact likely	 significant adverse impact likely
	 neutral impact likely	 impact uncertain

Appendix 3: Extract from Lawton Report

Extract from the Lawton Report 2010 'Making space for nature'

2.2.1 What is an ecological network?

Much of England's wildlife is now restricted to certain places, our wildlife sites, consisting largely of semi-natural habitats moulded by millennia of human-use. These sites are essential for the survival of many plants and animals and will remain important even if the species and habitats within them change. Surviving in small, isolated sites is, however, difficult for many species, and often impossible in the longer term, because they rarely contain the level of resources or the diversity of habitats needed to support sustainable populations. However, an alternative is to designate a suite of high quality sites which collectively contain the range and area of habitats that species requireand allow species to move between them. It is this network of core sites connected by buffer zones, wildlife corridors and smaller but still wildlife-rich sites that are important in their own right and can also act as 'stepping stones' that we call an *ecological network*. 'Wildlife corridors' do not have to be continuous, physical connections: a mosaic of mixed land use, for example, may be all that is needed – it is the permeability of the landscape to species that matters

Appendix 4: Plan Objectives and Policies Cross-Reference

Here the Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan, set out in Table 1, are cross-referenced with the Policies included in the Plan, to show how the objectives are pursued through these Policies.

1. To contribute to **environmental sustainability**, by:

	Objective	Policy
1.(a)	Encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies, energy efficient design and technologies and efficient management of water resources while addressing flood risk	8, 9, 11, 12
1.(b)	Influencing the location of new housing to be within safe walking or cycling distance of local amenities	10, 17
1.(c)	Ensuring new housing and business sites minimise the impact on restricted roads, eg. Mill Street and West Street	17, 20

2. To maintain the **local character and historic environment** of the parish, by:

	Objective	Policy
2.(a)	Ensuring new development respects the quality of the historic built environment, and does not have a damaging effect on any assets of historic or architectural importance.	7, 8, 9, 18
2.(b)	Ensuring development contributes to the quality and interest of the local character of the different areas within the parish.	3, 6, 8, 9, 17
2.(c)	Preserving the character of the narrow local byways with their high banks, tall hedges and wildflowers.	2, 5
2.(d)	Encouraging the growth of the village in a way which maintains its pattern of open spaces between developments and protects the amenity of current and future residents in terms of density and height of new housing, and proximity to existing developments.	5, 8, 9, 16, 18

3. To conserve the **natural environment** of the parish, by:

	Objective	Policy
3.(a)	Ensuring that Cranborne Chase National Landscape is protected from inappropriate development.	4, 6
3.(b)	Ensuring that nature conservation sites and rare and protected species are safeguarded.	1, 2
3.(c)	Enhancing the status of Collyer's Brook/Fontmell Brook watercourse and other important sites as wildlife corridors and habitats.	1, 2
3.(d)	Promoting 'soft edges' to the built environment, planting trees near boundaries in particular, and maintaining and encouraging green corridors.	2, 8, 9

4. To maintain and enhance a **thriving local community**, by:

	Objective	Policy
4.(a)	Promoting a range of mixed housing development appropriate to local needs over the period to 2031 in relation to affordability, size and location.	16
4.(b)	Supporting the development of the facilities and amenities offered by the Village School to ensure its long-term viability.	13
4.(c)	Prioritising affordable housing for households with a 'local connection' to the Parish.	16
4.(d)	Enabling the growth of business and employment opportunities to meet local needs	13, 14, 15, 20
4.(e)	Continuing to offer a wide and diverse range of social, sport and leisure activities.	13, 14
4.(f)	Encouraging the provision of transport links to local towns.	13*
4.(g)	Encouraging the adequate provision of health, education and retail facilities.	13, 14

* Not an explicit link

Appendix 5: NPPF - Achieving appropriate densities

129. Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.

130. Significant uplifts in the average density of residential development may be inappropriate if the resulting built form would be wholly out of character with the existing area. Such circumstances should be evidenced through an authority-wide design code which is adopted or will be adopted as part of the development plan.

Existing Housing Densities

The densities of the housing in the village where the properties contribute to the character of the conservation area are as follows:

West Street	12.4dph
Church Street	10.8dph
North Street	15.6dph
South Street	11.4dph

Appendix 6: Crossing the A350 from Mill Street to Crown Hill

The diagram shows the sight lines from Point A, at the corner of Mill Street and the A350, and Point D, at the corner of Crown Hill and the A350, to the point at which a vehicle becomes visible coming from the south and from the north.

The length of sight lines AB, AC, DE and DF was measured using Parish Online mapping software. The table below shows the time taken for a vehicle travelling at 30mph and 20mph to travel these distances.

Sightline	Length	Time taken to travel to crossroads	
		At 30mph	At 20mph
AB	62.03yds	4.23secs	6.34secs
AC	79.87yds	5.45secs	8.17secs
DE	73.46yds	5.01secs	7.51secs
DF	66.73yds	4.55secs	6.83secs



Appendix 7: Housing Target Paper (Neighbourhood Plan Review, March 2023)

This paper looks at assess whether the housing target for the Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan remains a robust basis for the plan.

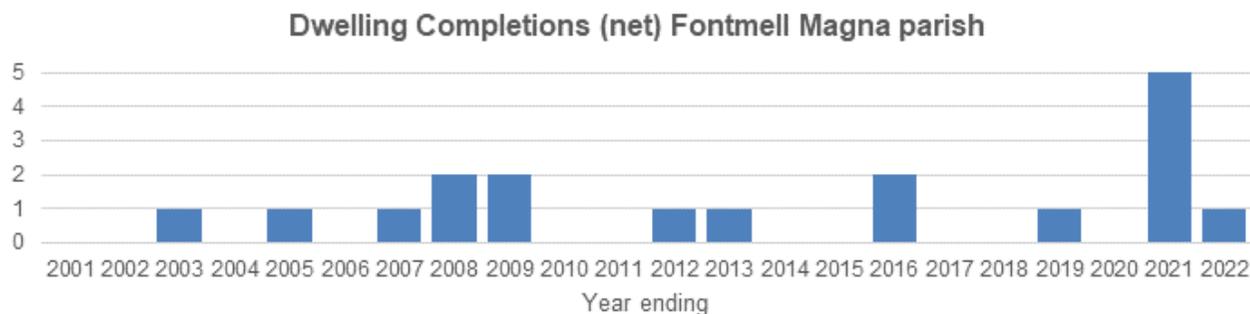
Neighbourhood Plan Period

The Plan period runs from 2017 to 2031 (14 years in total).

Past growth Rates

Past growth rates provide an indication of the level of development that has taken place, and therefore what level of development could be expected to come forward with no intervention.

Detailed monitoring records on dwelling completions are available from 2000/1⁵. At the time the Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared, building rates had averaged around 0.6 dwellings per annum, ranging up to a maximum of 3 completions in any year.



Updating this to include more recent completions (to 2021/22) gives an average of 0.8 dwellings per annum, ranging up to a maximum of 5 completions in any year.

⁵ The data was researched as part of the previous Housing Needs Assessment for the made Neighbourhood Plan, based on previous monitoring records published by Dorset County Council up to 2014, and monitoring records since 2015 supplied by Dorset Council.

This includes **7 completions** from the start of the Neighbourhood Plan period (April 2017) to March 2022, detailed in the table below:

Year	Application	Address	Description	Dwellings
2018-19	2/2018/1822/ FUL	Little Hartgrove Farm, Gupples Lane, Hartgrove	Change of use outbuilding to dwelling (retrospective).	1
2019-20				-
2020-21	2/2018/1235/ AGDWPA	Barn At Gupples Lane, Hartgrove	Conversion of agricultural buildings into 1 No. dwelling	1
	2/2018/1260/ FUL	Land South of Little Orchard, Parsonage St	Erect 1 No. dwelling; detached garage etc	1
	2/2019/0840/ FUL	Gupples Farm, Gupples Lane, Hartgrove	Erect 3 No. dwellings, 2 No. car barns, form access etc	3
2021-22	2/2012/1049/ PLNG	Green Farm, Marnhull Road, Margaret Marsh	Replace temporary agricultural workers dwelling	1

Affordable Housing needs

Affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework⁶ and includes a range of affordable housing types, from social rented through to starter homes and discounted sale (where the property is sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value, and this discount is carried forward in future sales). There is also an overlap between affordable and open market housing due to the role of the private rented sector in meeting the housing needs of those that can afford such private rented

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

homes (with or without housing benefit) but are unable to afford the deposit or qualify for a mortgage to be able to become a home owner.

At around the time that the Neighbourhood Plan was being produced (February 2017), Dorset Council’s Housing Register had identified 14 households interested in finding accommodation in Fontmell Magna, although the majority (11) of these did not put Fontmell Magna as their preferred choice, and most of the demand came from those currently living in Shaftesbury. The mix of house types needed were 1 – 3 bedroom.

Dorset Council undertook a major overhaul of their Housing Register in late 2021 following a refresh of the allocation policy, which required households to re-register (therefore eliminating households that were on the register but no longer in actual need), still focused on looking for rent. An update from the Register was requested in February 2022, and this identified 5 households who would qualify for an affordable home and who had declared a connection to Fontmell Magna, with a further 1 application not yet assessed. The mix of house types needed were 1 – 3 bedroom. There were also other households with no local connection who had expressed an interest in Fontmell Magna as one of their preferred areas.

Households with a local connection to Fontmell Magna on the Housing Register February 2023	Affordable dwellings needed				
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
Band A - Urgent Housing Need	-	-	-	-	-
Band B - High Housing Need	1	-	-	-	-
Band C - Medium Housing Need	-	-	-	-	-
Band D - Low Housing Need	3	-	1	-	-
n/k (to be assessed)	1	-	-	-	-

The majority of those on the housing register are looking for affordable rented accommodation. It is difficult to assess how many households may need affordable home ownership tenures, but this is likely to come primarily from those currently housed in the private rented sector, and there may be some overlap with those in Band D (lowest housing need).

The latest viability evidence⁷ suggests that major development sites (of 10 or more dwellings) should be sufficiently viable to provide 35% of the housing mix as affordable homes, including some social rented homes for those in greatest need and allowing for higher standards of design and sustainability. This is not dissimilar to the 40% affordable housing requirement for rural areas as tested under the adopted Local Plan.

Adopted Local Plan

The current adopted North Dorset Local Plan (2016)⁸ sought to address the housing needs of the wider area as part of its housing strategy, policies and allocations. This was based on a housing needs assessment from 2012⁹.

The Local Plan does not identify a specific housing need figure for the neighbourhood plan area of Fontmell Magna, or for the village. However, it does set out a housing need figure for rural areas outside the four main towns. Over the period 2011 to 2031, it states that at least 825 dwellings out of a minimum of 5,700 dwellings district wide will be built in Stalbridge and the eighteen villages (of which Fontmell Magna is one).

To establish the specific Local Plan housing need target for Fontmell Magna, we can look at what this would mean applying this rural target on a pro-rata basis. The pro-rata apportionment is therefore based on Fontmell Magna's percentage of the total 'Stalbridge and more sustainable villages' housing stock in North Dorset (as existing at the beginning of the plan period), multiplied by the rural area target. The process for calculating this (based on households as the more appropriate indicator than population) is set out below:

⁷ Dorset Local Plan Viability Assessment, May 2022, Three Dragons <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/dorset-council-area-viability-assessment> - where the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the Dorset West and Central market area

⁸ North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 2011 -2031, January 2016, North Dorset District Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/north-dorset-adopted-local-plan>

⁹ Bournemouth / Poole Housing Market 2011 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update, January 2012, JG Consulting in association with Chris Broughton Associates <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/285432/Summary+Report+for+North+Dorset+District+Council.pdf/d2f99ec9-4da0-3d6b-6442-0aac54a78480>

Step 1: 2011 'pro rata' estimate

Total household spaces in Fontmell Magna [334] ÷ Total household spaces in Stalbridge and the 18 villages [9,045]

= 3.69%

Step 2: applying the 'pro rata' estimate to the rural target

Rural target [825] x Pro-rata amount [3.69%]

= 30 - 31 dwellings for the period 2011 - 2031

Step 3: deduct completions for years prior to start of plan period

Target [30 - 31] – Completions between 2011/12 – 2016/17 [4]

= 26 - 27 dwellings for the period 2017 - 2031

Adjustment: Latest Housing Needs Assessment (Dorset Council)

At the time of making the Neighbourhood Plan, an uplift was applied to this target based on the most recent housing needs assessments (looking at the 2015 housing needs assessment). This further step resulted in a proposed uplift of 15.8%, that suggested a housing target in the region of 30 dwellings.

Data from the published Local Housing Needs Assessment for the emerging Dorset Local Plan¹⁰ calculated a potential housing figure for the North Dorset area as 332dpa¹¹ - this is an uplift of approximately 16.5% compared to the adopted Local Plan target of 285dpa (slightly higher than uplift applied at the time that the Neighbourhood Plan was made).

¹⁰ [Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment](#), Icen Projects Limited on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Dorset Council, November 2021

¹¹ the household growth figure (set out in Table 5.2) is 264 dwellings per annum. The report then factors in an affordability adjustment (set out in Table 5.3), which raises the figure to 332. It then considers whether this exceeds the 40% 'cap' at that level (Table 5.4), which it does not do.

These statistics can be updated further, based on more recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which includes updated median house prices, median workplace-based earnings, and the ratio between the two (as 11.00)¹². Based on this latest information, the housing need figure for North Dorset calculated using the standard method figure for 2022 onwards would be 377dpa. The calculation is shown below:

Step 4a - projected household growth

34,631 - 32,009 (anticipated household growth in North Dorset between 2022/3 to 2032/3)
= 2,622 over 10 years
= 262dpa

Step 4b - affordability adjustment

Adjustment of $((11.00 - 4) \div 4) \times 0.25 + 1 = 1.4375$
Applied to projected household growth = [262dpa] x 1.4375
= 377dpa

Step 4c - capping adjustment

Capped at the higher of either:

- 40% above the projected household growth = $262 \times 1.4 = 367\text{dpa}$; or
- 40% above the Local Plan housing requirement figure = $285 \times 1.4 = 399\text{dpa}$.

As such, it would not be applicable to apply a cap (as 399dpa exceeds the revised target)

Retaining the adopted spatial strategy, the latest housing need assessment would suggest an 'uplift' of 32.3% (based on the difference between 285dpa and the revised rate of 377dpa from Step 2). As such, the overall target for the current Neighbourhood Plan period would be as follows:

¹² Available from

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningsforformerlocalauthorities>

Step 4d – Uplift applied to Fontmell Magna Local Plan-based target

Proportional uplift = $(377 - 285) \div 285$

= 32.2%

Applied to Fontmell Magna's pro-rated share (26.5 dwellings for the period 2017 – 2031)

= 26.5×1.322

= 35 dwellings for the period 2017 - 2031.

As seen in Step 2, the overall target includes an affordability uplift.

Emerging Local Plan

Only limited weight can be afforded to the emerging Dorset Local Plan¹³ at present, given its early stage (as of March 2023 the plan is not expected to be examined until 2025¹⁴). Nonetheless, it is useful to consider the early draft plan to understand whether it would suggest a different strategy.

The first draft of the emerging Dorset Local Plan includes an indicative housing requirement figure for Neighbourhood Plans areas such as Fontmell Magna, based on the existing completions and commitments, any adopted housing allocations (including those in made Neighbourhood Plans), capacity on major sites (of 10 or more dwellings) within development boundaries as evidenced through the SHLAA, plus a windfall allowance based on past trends on small sites (i.e. excluding major development and based on the data from 2013/14 onwards, projected forward for Year 4 onwards). The published draft plan (Appendix 2) gives a figure of 62 dwellings for the Fontmell Magna Neighbourhood Plan area using this method, which would apply for the proposed Local Plan

¹³ The first (and only) draft to be published is the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation, January 2021, Dorset Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/about-the-dorset-council-local-plan-january-2021-consultation>

¹⁴ At the time of drafting the plan, the Local Development Scheme for Dorset Council, October 2022, Dorset Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282495/Dorset+Council+Local+Development+Scheme+-+October+2022.pdf/dae6a342-c6f2-a946-8cf2-3bdb87ef56ed> indicated that the plan was not expected to be examined until 2025.

period (April 2021 – March 2038). ***Dorset Council planning officers have confirmed that this housing target is not dependent on making any further site allocations to meet the indicate Local Plan housing target for Fontmell Magna.***

For completeness, a pro-rata apportionment based on the comparative size of Fontmell Magna to the rest of the Dorset Council area (based on the latest available Census data), has been tested, but this does not take into account the focus of the proposed strategy on the main towns and strategic site allocations. The calculation is shown below:

Step 1: 2021 'pro rata' estimate

Total households in Fontmell Magna (2021) [302] ÷ Total households in Dorset [169,300]

= 0.18%

Step 2: applying the 'pro rata' estimate to the Local Plan target

Applied to Local Plan target 1,793 x 0.18%

= 3.2dpa (suggesting a target of 45 dwellings over a 14 year plan period).

It is recognised that the emerging Dorset Local Plan target will be revised in the next version of the plan based on the latest available housing figures and standard methodology, however it is also noted that the Government has indicated as part of its latest consultation (December 2022)¹⁵ that the standard method is due to be reviewed in 2024 after the new household projections data based on the 2021 Census are published, and that they are considering making it clearer that the derived figure is advisory and what demographic and geographic factors may be used to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to deviate from this.

Whilst only limited weight can be afforded to the emerging Dorset Local Plan and the above calculations, it would appear clear from this light-touch analysis that there is no apparent reason to assume that the strategy for the area will change in any significant way.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy>

Housing Supply

In the period from April 2017 to March 2022, monitoring data confirmed by Dorset Council records 7 dwelling completions. Together with the following extant permissions¹⁶ and existing site allocations, there is a demonstrable housing supply of at least 45, and up to **55 dwellings** for the plan period (from 2017 to 2031), including at least 12 affordable housing units:

Address	Application Ref / Allocation	Granted	Dwellings	Affordable Homes
Completions			7	
Home Mead Cottage, 8 North Street	2/2015/0459/FUL	29/01/2016	1	
Buildings At Lower Hartgrove Farm, Green Lane, Stour Row	2/2020/1025/FUL	27/01/2021	4	
Middle Farm, Lurmer Street	2/2017/1856/FUL	14/08/2018	3	
Land south of Home Farm	2/2020/0577/FUL NP allocation FM19: Site 20	07/01/2022	30	12
Blandfords Farm Barn	NP allocation FM20: Site 22		up to 10	tbc
TOTAL			45 - 55	12+

All of the permitted developments are extant (having made a material start), with the largest site (land south of Home Farm) being built by Pennyfarthing Construction Ltd, a local housebuilder. This large site was based on the Neighbourhood Plan site allocation and included a direct benefit to the village (through the provision of a parking areas for the school) together with affordable housing (a legal agreement (S106 planning obligation) has been signed and the developer will provide not less than twelve (12) of the dwellings as affordable housing units, of which at least half (6) will be affordable rented homes). The remaining site allocation (Blandfords Farm Barn) is identified for self/custom-build housing, or affordable housing.

¹⁶ Excluding the two permissions for replacement dwellings, ref 2/2009/0229/PLNG and 2/2017/0224/FUL:

In addition, the plan also considered that there were potential opportunities for one or two small scale rural exception sites to come forward under the Local Plan policy, should a demonstrable need over and above that being brought forward through the site allocations be needed. At the present time such need is not apparent.

Housing target Conclusions

The current made Neighbourhood Plan includes provision for up to 40 dwellings to be built in Fontmell Magna between 2017 and 2031. Policy FM17 makes clear that, unless a countryside location is essential, new open-market development should take place within the defined settlement boundary, on allocated sites, or through the re-use of existing buildings in line with national policy where their existing use is no longer required. This was considered a sustainable strategy and amount of growth by the Inspector, who considered in detail how the housing target had been calculated and the site allocation process. It will significantly boost housing delivery compared to the rate of development prior to the Neighbourhood Plan period.

Taking into account the most recent data on housing need, the housing target of up to 40 dwellings remains appropriate, and the plan remains on track to deliver this quantum of development (with flexibility for barn conversions and for infill within the defined settlement boundary over and above this target). It is also on track to deliver sufficient housing to address current evidence of local need for affordable housing. There is no evidence to suggest that there should be any need to identify further sites for housing as part of this first review.

Appendix 8: Development that may be appropriate in the countryside

As set out in Figure 8.5 of the North Dorset Local Plan.

Type of Development	Main Local Plan policy	Development Management Policy
Renewable energy schemes	3	22
Housing: Rural exception schemes	9	
Housing: Occupational dwellings	6	33
Housing: Re-use of heritage assets	5 / 6	29
Housing: Re-use of redundant or disused buildings	11	29
Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	10	26
Businesses: Re-use of existing rural buildings	11	29
Businesses: Redevelopment or expansion of existing employment sites	11	30
Equine-related developments	11	32
Rural tourist accommodation	11	31
Community facilities	14	27

List of Maps (All Maps are courtesy of Parish Online)

Number	Title	Page Number
1	Conservation Area and Listed Buildings	vii
2	Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area	1
3	Local Green Spaces	11
4	Wildlife Corridors	12
5	Important Views of North Dorset Chalk Escarpment	16
6	Locally Important Features	22
7	The Pattern of Open Spaces	24
8	Pedestrian Routes	41
9	Odour Consultation Zone	45
10	Important Community Facilities	47
11	Settlement Boundary Changes	61
12	Preferred Sites for Housing Growth	62

List of Photographs (Photographs by Members of the November 2018 NP Working Group unless otherwise attributed)

1	Village-wide View from Fontmell Down	v
2	Fontmell Magna and the Blackmore Vale from Littledown	4
3	Fontmell Magna set in a tapestry of green fields with the Blackmore Vale beyond as viewed from Brandis Down	4
4	Cranborne Chase escarpment (Fontmell Down) from St Andrew's Churchyard	5
5	Cranborne Chase escarpment from Bedchester	5
6	Cranborne Chase chalk escarpment from Gupples Lane (southern end)	5
7	Blackmore Vale and distant horizon from rolling hills of Hartgrove	5
8	North Dorset Chalk Escarpment and Blackmore Vale from the AONB	8
9	View of Site 20 from the A350	63