



## North Warwickshire Borough Council

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**To: All Members of the Council**

Dear Sir / Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend an Extraordinary meeting of the Council, to be held in the Council Chamber, the Council House, South Street, Atherstone, on Monday, 8 January 2024. The meeting will commence upon conclusion of the Planning and Development Board to be held earlier in the evening at 6.30pm.

The following business will be transacted:

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.
- 2 Apologies for absence / Members away on official Council business.
- 3 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest.
- 4 **Adoption of Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan** – Report of the Chief Executive

### **Summary**

This report informs Members of the progress of the Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan and seeks approval to adopt in accordance with section 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Wilson (719499).

- 5 To authorise the Chief Executive, in accordance with Article 11.05 of the Articles of the Constitution, to Sign and Seal, on behalf of the Council, any Orders, Deeds and Documents necessary to give effect to any resolution of the Council, including any passed during part of the meeting which is held in private.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a large, rounded flourish.

Chief Executive

**Agenda Item No 4**

**Council**

**8 January 2024**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Adoption of Nether Whitacre  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the progress of the Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan and seeks approval to adopt in accordance with section 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

**Recommendation:**

**That the Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan be adopted and form part of the Development Plan for North Warwickshire.**

**2 Consultation**

- 2.1 Councillors Simpson and Phillips have been sent a copy of this report for comment. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

**3 Background**

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a mechanism for local communities to produce neighbourhood plans. Once a neighbourhood plan is 'made' (adopted) it becomes part of the statutory development plan for that area and will be used, alongside local and national planning policy and guidance, to determine planning applications. There are now 12 designated Neighbourhood Plan areas within the Borough and 8 made Neighbourhood Plans.

**4 Nether Whitacre**

- 4.1 Nether Whitacre is the 9th Neighbourhood Plan to be formally examined by an Independent Examiner and go forward to referendum. There is a requirement that 50% of those who vote must support the document for the Borough Council to consider adopting the Plan.

4.2 The referendum took place on Thursday, 14 December 2023 and the results are as below:

<b>Question: Do you want North Warwickshire Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Nether Whitacre to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?</b>	<b>Votes Recorded</b>
Number cast in favour of a <b>Yes</b>	114
Number cast in favour of a <b>No</b>	10

4.3 There is clearly good support for the Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the Plan be made (adopted) and becomes part of the Development Plan for the Borough. The Plan submitted for Adoption can be seen at Appendix A.

...

## 5 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

5.1 The Borough Council can claim £20,000 for each Neighbourhood Plan – the money can be applied for when a decision statement is issued detailing their intention to send the plan to referendum. This payment recognises the amount of officer time supporting and advising the community in taking forward a Neighbourhood Plan. It will also cover the cost of the referendum.

## 5.2 **Legal and Human Rights Implications**

5.2.1 The Borough Council has conformed with the legal requirements for holding a referendum as to whether a Neighbourhood Plan should be made for Nether Whitacre. Where more than half those voting in the referendum voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan the Borough Council is under a legal duty to make it unless doing so would be incompatible with any retained EU obligation or with any rights under Human Rights Act. There is nothing to indicate that either applies in this case and the Borough Council is therefore now legally obliged to make the Neighbourhood Plan. This must be done within 8 weeks of the date on which the referendum was held unless there is an outstanding legal challenge to the Plan, meaning that the Council has until 8 February 2024 to do so unless a challenge is made in the meantime.

## 5.3 **Human Resources Implications**

5.3.1 Staff time is expected to be provided by the Borough Council to support and advise the Parish Council and community in taking forward a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## 5.4 **Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

5.4.1 Each Neighbour Plan will need to consider the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan's contents in terms of environmental and sustainability issues in accordance with the relevant regulations.

## 5.5 Links to Council's Priorities

5.5.1 The designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area will have links to the following priorities:

1. Enhancing community involvement and access to services
2. Protecting and improving our environment
3. Defending and improving our countryside and rural heritage

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Wilson (719499).

### Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan Team and Nether Whitacre Parish Council	Neighbourhood Plan	December 2023



# Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan

2023 – 2038

Shaping the future of Nether Whitacre Parish



December  
2023

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## 1. Foreword

This is a Neighbourhood Plan (the 'Plan') as defined by the 2011 Localism Act and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. It provides planning and development guidelines for the Parish of NETHER WHITACRE (the 'Parish'), the boundary of which is detailed in the Parish boundary map contained herein. The Plan has been produced by the Nether Whitacre Parish Council as the official qualifying body, together with a Steering Group comprising representatives from different parts of the local community. It draws evidence from the views and aspirations of those living in the Parish through a consultation process. It is prepared within the framework of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and of the North Warwickshire Borough Councils' (NWBC) Local Plan September 2021. It reflects the opinions of the people of Nether Whitacre Parish and sets out policies to safeguard the future and sustainable development of our Parish.

Nether Whitacre Parish has a history which stretches back to Domesday. It is predominantly green fields, open spaces and farmland. Today it comprises some 460 dwellings and around 947 residents. It does not have many facilities, simply a number of public houses, churches, village halls, one shop, a limited bus service and a small industrial site at the edge of the Parish. Private transport is the predominant means of travel.

There are no formal requirements on the Parish by the NWBC for development and as such we are defined as washed over Green Belt and we wish to maintain the protection of it from unwanted and unwarranted development. There is a development boundary within the Parish however and subject to the policies of this Plan and the Borough planning process, windfall sites may be considered.

This Plan covers a period of fifteen years (2023-2038) however it is expected that it will be reviewed every five years to ensure continuing alignment with the changing requirements of the village and of North Warwickshire.

## 2. Vision of the Parish

To promote and steadily grow a thriving rural community whilst preserving its style, feel and character as the Parish develops into the future.

## 3. Why a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of plan introduced in the 2012 Localism Act which gives direct power to the community to develop a shared vision for the neighborhood and shape the development and growth of the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan would then form part of the development plan for North Warwickshire.

During 2015, Nether Whitacre Parish Council decided to embark on producing such a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council established a Neighbourhood Plan Committee, comprising of Parish Councillors and members of the community to drive the Plan forward.

The main objective is to protect the heritage of the Parish and conserve the rural environment for the benefit of residents both present and future.



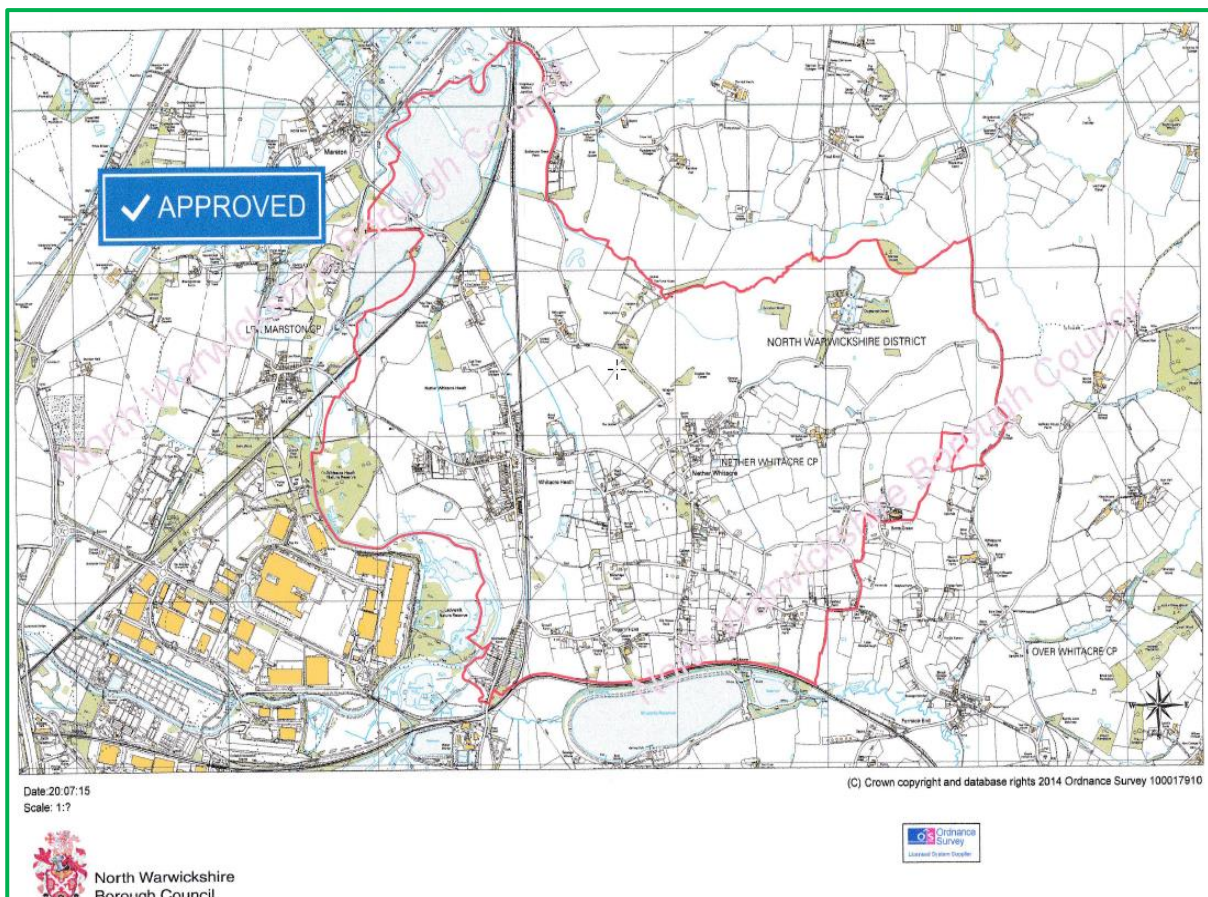
The Plan also recognizes that for the Parish to flourish, the Parish needs to develop and grow in the future but at the same time the Plan needs to:

- Protect it from inappropriate development and to ensure any new development is of a high standard.
- Defend the Green Belt to maintain the rural character of the Parish.
- Encourage the development of a strong and vibrant community.
- Maintain and develop community assets and facilities.

This Plan has been produced following consultation with local residents, local businesses and landowners and with direct support from North Warwickshire Borough Council. It has been subject to 2 formal consultations (carried out by the Parish Council and then a further one carried out by North Warwickshire Borough Council) and been amended accordingly.

The Plan was then sent to an Independent Examiner for Examination. The Examiner issued a report recommending modifications in order for the plan to proceed to referendum. The modifications were made and this plan is the result of those modifications and will be the plan going to referendum

### **Nether Whitacre Parish Boundary**



## 4. Steering Group.

Following the designation of Nether Whitacre as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in 2015, a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up – Nether Whitacre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NWNPSG).

This Steering Group has been responsible for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and all associated activities and comprises of the following:

- Chairperson – Mr J Thompson
- Secretary – Mrs B Woolaston
- Members – Mrs L Gamble. Mrs E Waters. Mr A Osborne. Mr A Hughes. Mrs C Taylor.
- Mr S Powell. Mrs C McNulty
- Elected Representatives - Mrs V Wright. Mrs D Starkey. Mr R Hemphill. Mr K Woodward.

## 5. Development Boundary Policy:

### Development Boundary Policy (DB1):-

Development may take place within the Nether Whitacre parish development boundary, as defined on the plan below providing such development is in accord with this Plan, the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF.



## 6. Housing Policies:

See Appendix 1 & 2 for supportive data.

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan will focus on the provision, if required, of new dwellings within the Nether Whitacre Parish Boundary.

The North Warwickshire Borough Council Local Plan does not allocate new dwellings within Nether Whitacre.

It is accepted that there will be windfall development over the Plan period but this will only be considered in accordance with the policies stated below. Such sites intend to ensure the continued but sustainable growth of the Parish for the life of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Development should provide the opportunity for local people to remain within the Parish. Development proposals will be subject to Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regulations and general conformity with the NWBC Local Plan and subject to review by the Parish Council and NWBC.

These policies are formed as a result of the data collected from our Parish Surveys and other sources identified herein.

### **Housing Policy 1 (HP1):-**

In conjunction with the local plan, this policy supports new dwellings over the Plan period that accord with the NPPF.

- New dwellings should represent limited infilling within the Nether Whitacre parish development boundary.
- Development should predominantly take place within the defined development boundary.
- New dwellings should consist of units of 1 -3 bedroom houses.
- Unless proved to be inappropriate, new dwellings shall include a sustainable drainage system that accords with current industry best practice.
- Site specific development may be instigated by the Parish Council under a Community Right to Build Order\*\*

\*\* A Community Right to Build Order is put together by local people (supported by the Parish Council) who can decide on the type, quantity and design of buildings they want and in the appropriate locations.

### **Housing Policy 2 (HP2):**

The support of this policy extends to the following categories of housing insofar as they accord with the NPPF and the Local Plan.

To allow:-

- The change of use of agricultural buildings to residential units.
- The conversion of existing properties into apartments.
- The use of brownfield sites.

**Housing Policy 3 (HP3):**

Subject to safeguarding the appearance of the street scene, two parking spaces of an adequate size shall be included within schemes for all new dwellings or one space per bedroom where space allows.

## 7. Transport Policy:

See Appendix 1 for supportive data.

This section will focus on local transport and highways issues highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. This policy is formed as a result of the data collected from the Surveys and other sources. Transport, traffic and parking facilities featured highly as required improvements for the area. Any new development that may take place within the Parish Boundary should not impact current parking provision (e.g. The Village Hall) and where feasible should enhance current provision or add appropriate parking facilities. On-kerb parking is not acceptable. The following policy will enhance and protect the Parish and its local residents. It is appreciated that further studies in association with WCC Highways and others will be required to support this policy.

**Transport Policy 1 (TP1):**

To work with the Warwickshire County Council in order to ensure that there is no reduction in the current on and off-street parking facilities within the Parish Boundary including the Village Hall.

## 8. Local Economy Policies:

See Appendix 1 for supportive data.

This section focuses on supporting and improving the local economy within the defined Parish Boundary in order to facilitate current and future business opportunities.

Additional visitor accommodation would support the local economy and would complement LEP1 and the tourism proposals put forward by NWBC for the Borough. Sites that could accommodate such uses would include elements of screening. These sites would be subject to review by the Parish Council and NWBC.

**Local Economic Policy 1 (LEP1):**

- To support the provision of new accommodation for arts / creative space/care services within the development boundary.
- Where appropriate buildings are identified that could accommodate space for arts/creative space / care services, this use would be supported provided that the current infrastructure is suitable and / or provided.

**Local Economic Policy 2 (LEP2):**

Subject to compliance with the Local Plan and the NPPF, and subject to the need for planning permission, this policy supports B&B's, small touring caravans sites (maximum five caravans), childcare facilities and offices.

## 9. Environment Policies:

See Appendix 1 for supportive data.

The green open spaces are some of the most valuable assets in the Parish. They provide valuable leisure and recreational space for the local community and visitors. They also act as natural boundaries and should be protected and where possible enhanced.

A lack of access was highlighted by the local community as a major concern and an issue to be tackled which gives rise to the following Policies

### **Environment Policy 1 (EP1):**

Future development shall retain, protect and, where possible, enhance land designated in this Plan as Green Open Space and promote flood risk management benefits where appropriate.

### **Environment Policy 2 (EP2):**

Where appropriate, suitable and safe access will be sought in relation to Green Open Space.

### **Environment Policy 3 (EP3):**

- In Green Open Space, the maintenance and improvement of flood defences will be sought, supported and encouraged in conjunction with the Environment Agency.
- Development of flood resilience schemes within Green Open Space will be supported provided such schemes do not have a material adverse impact on the space.

**Nether Whitacre Green Spaces.**

These are considered Green Open Spaces however some are covered individually with other designations. Nether Whitacre is considered to be ‘washed over’ green belt.

NWGS1 – Land to the east of Coton Lakes, Coton Road

NWGS2 – Whitacre Heath Nature Reserve (SSSI), Birmingham Road

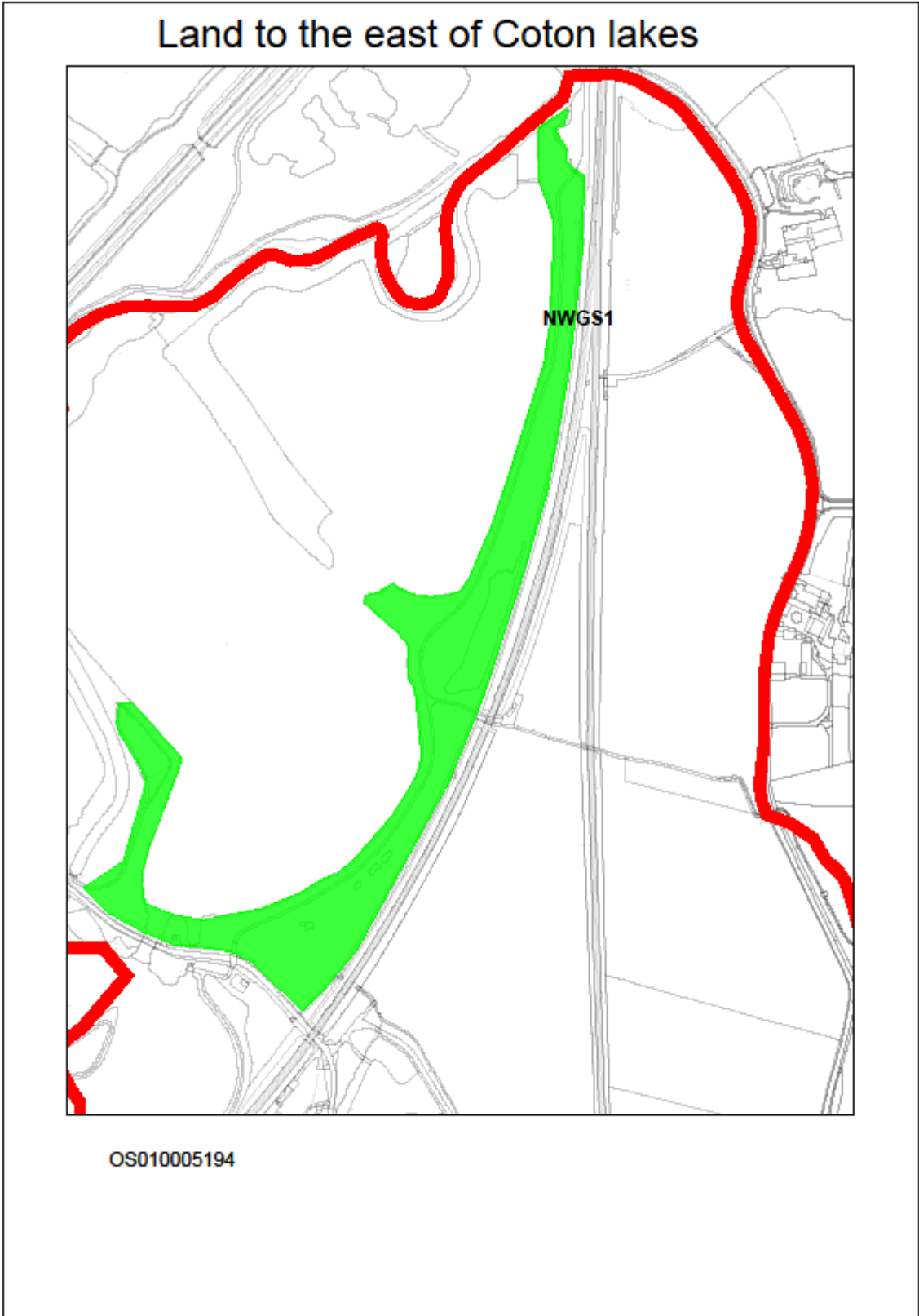
NWGS3 – Colin Teall Wood, Hoggrills End Lane

NWGS4 – Nether Whitacre Parish Council Playing Field, Birmingham Road/Cottage Lane

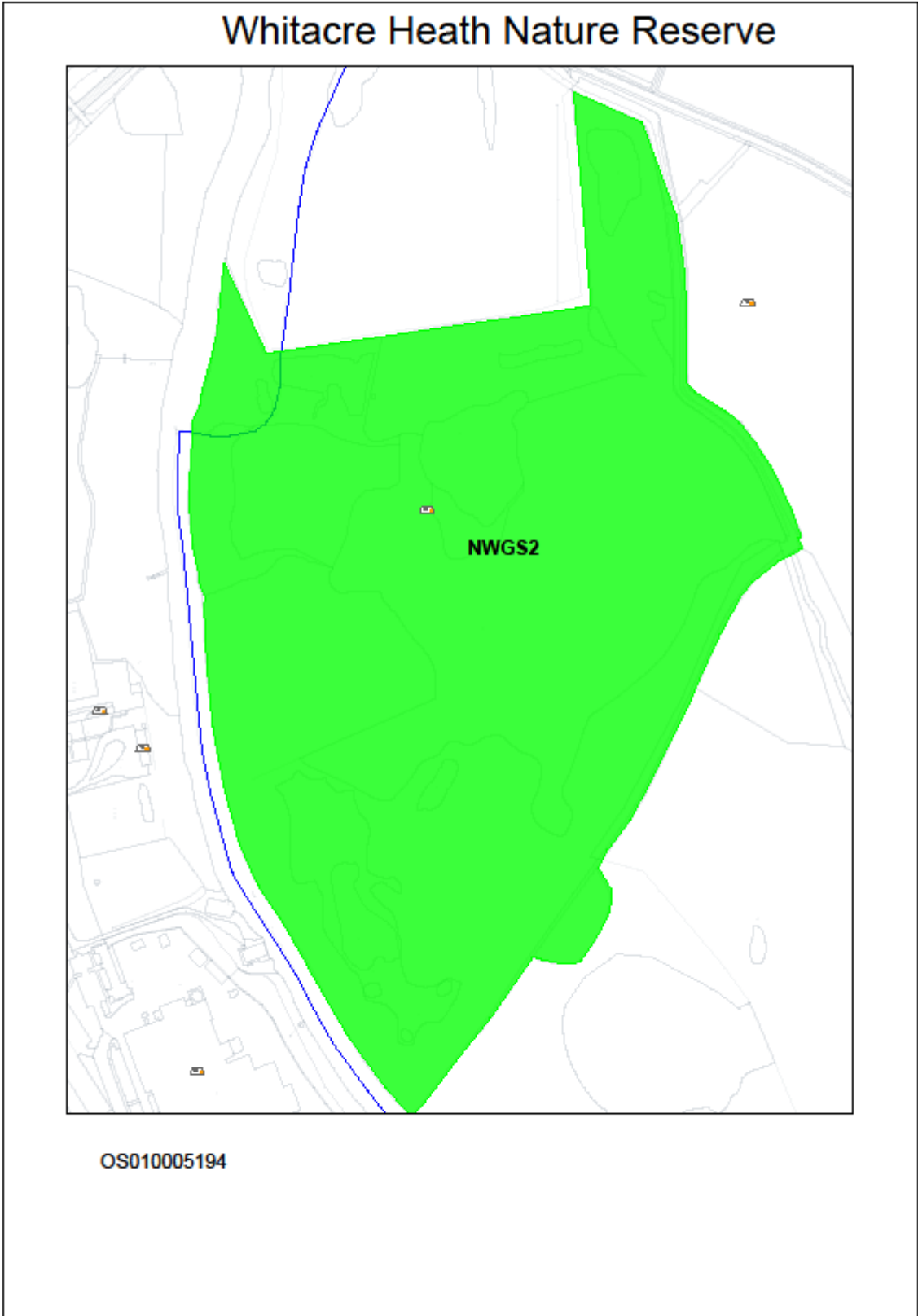
NWGS5 – Dingle Lane Cricket Club, Dingle Lane

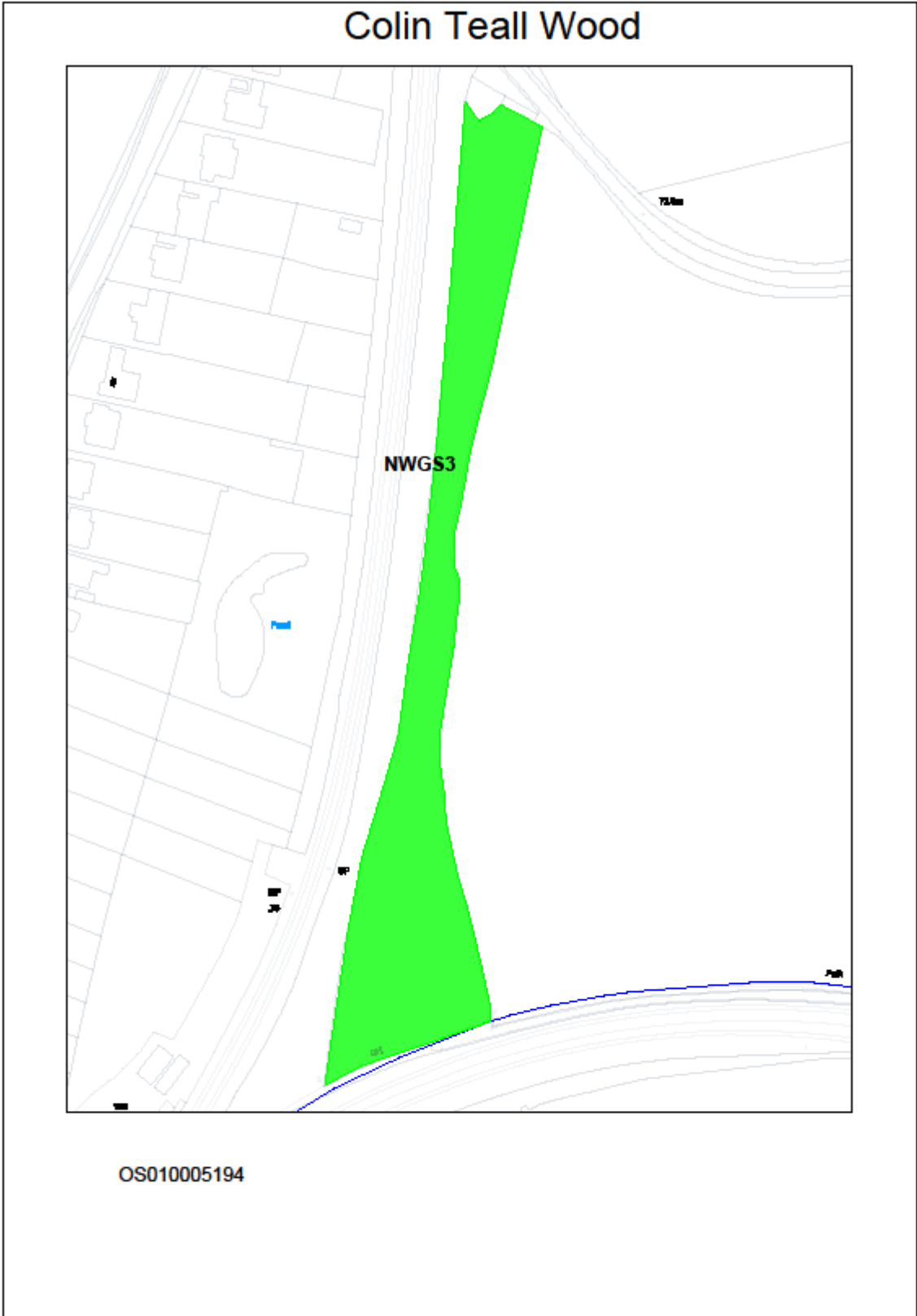
NWGS6 – Nether Whitacre Cricket Club, Coton Road

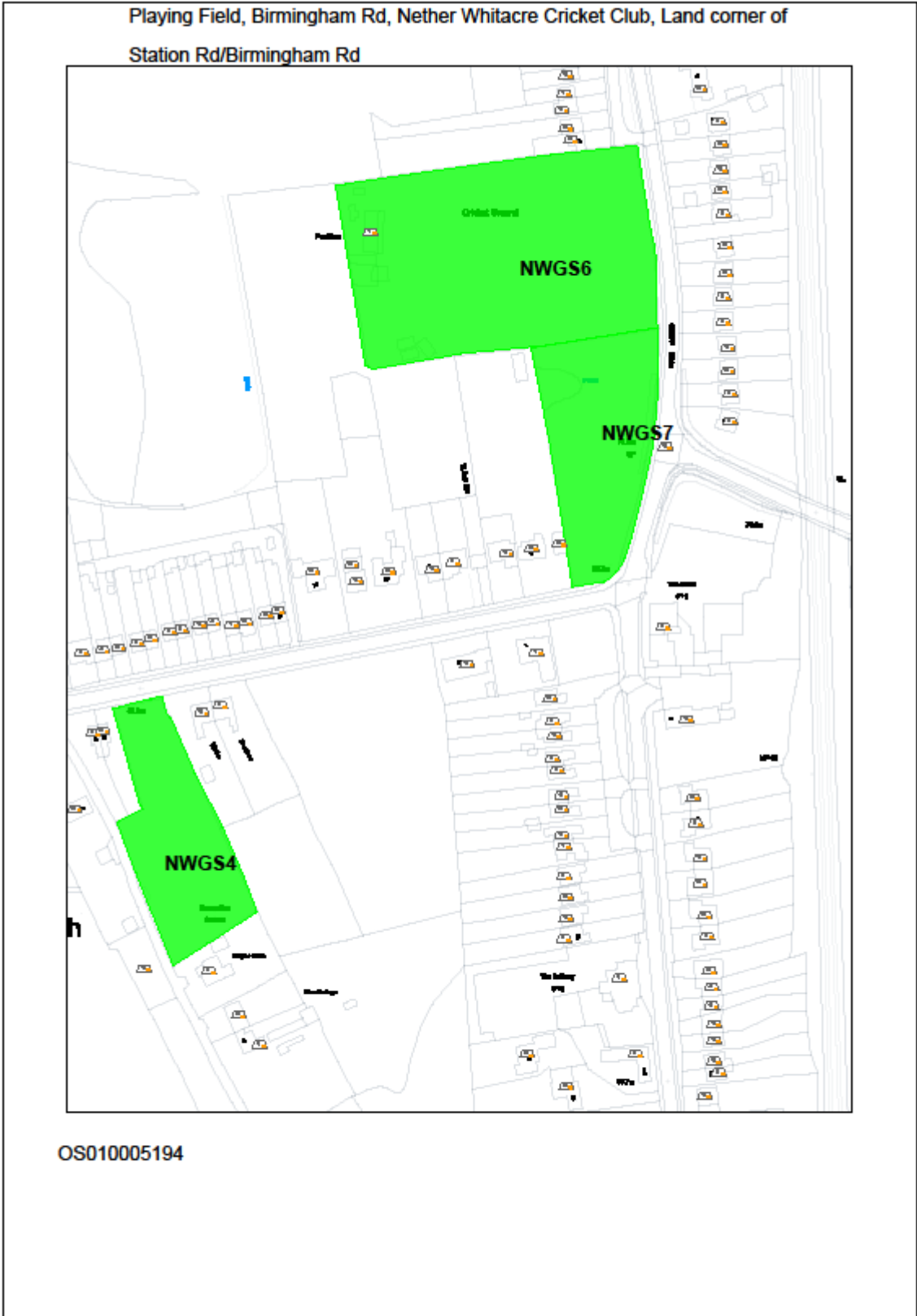
NWGS7 – Land corner of Station Road/Birmingham Road

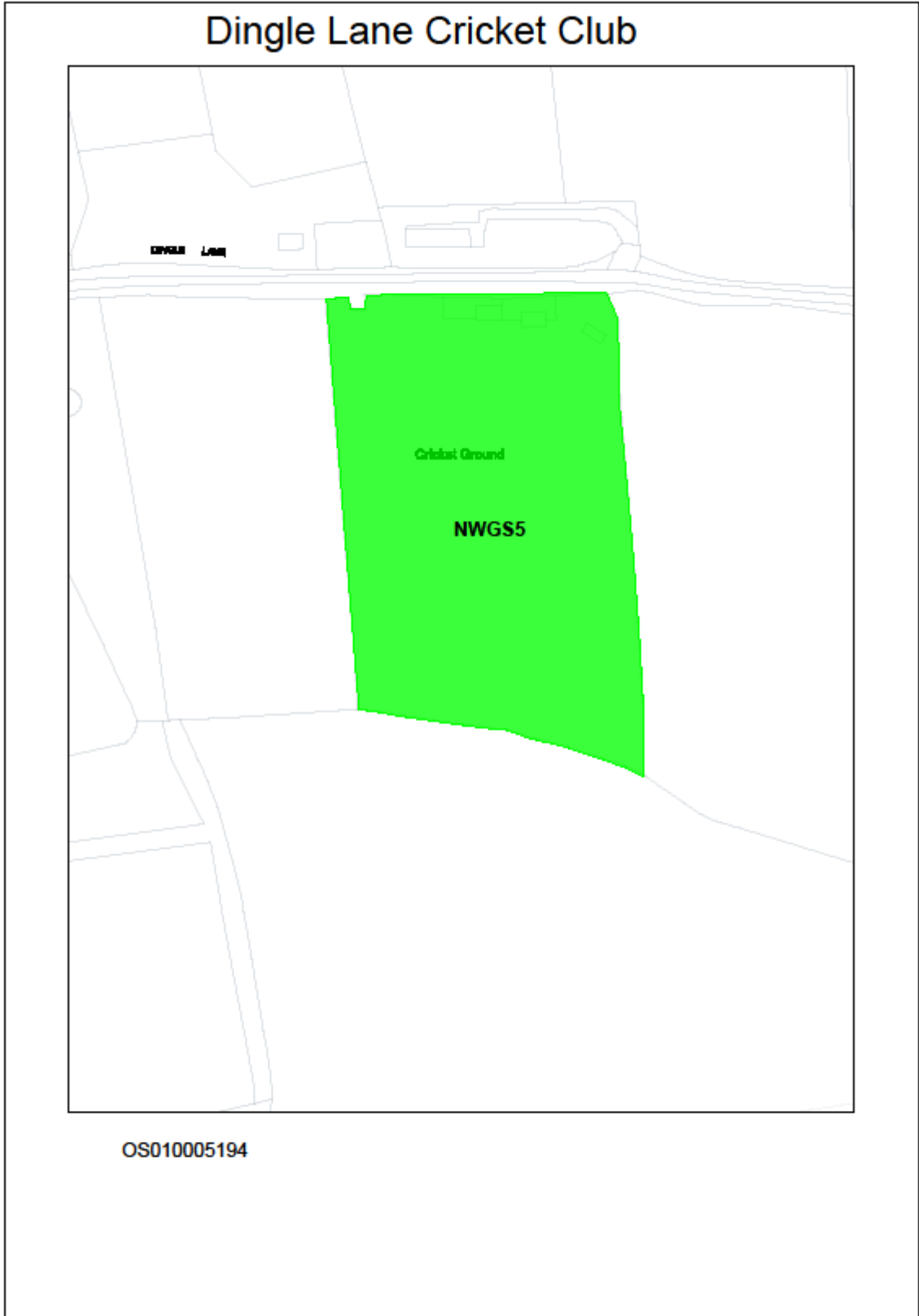












## 10. Community Policies.

These Community Policies are important to the community and will play a key part in the implementation of this Plan. Whilst they are not part of the development plan, they will contribute to the delivery of the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Maintain existing and further develop footpath, bridleway and cycle path amenities.
- To control traffic flow through the Parish.
- To promote the safe reduction of traffic volume, speed and size of vehicles.
- To develop further locations for and extend the use of, speed watch within the Parish.
- To provide (when the Parish lobbies for and it is deemed practically possible) a (public) vehicle parking area(s).
- Support local development of visitor accommodation.
- Support digital infrastructure provision such as mobile phone and broadband
- Provide further seating along footpaths, observation points and information points.
- When unauthorised development is detected, it will be reported to the Borough Council with the intent that relevant enforcement action is to be carried out.

## 11. Appendix 1. Data collection.

Initially, a detailed questionnaire was hand delivered to all properties within the Nether Whitacre Parish. This questionnaire was created from our drop in session activities which are highlighted in our consultation statement.

Of the (450) recipients of the questionnaire, (218) replied.

With particular reference to HP3 below, a second questionnaire was again, hand delivered to all properties within the Parish in our Connecting Four magazine, June 2020. Of the (450) recipients, (188) replied.

These results form the basis of our Plan.

Survey data.

### Ref HP1.

- Is there a need for new homes in Parish? 99 No
- Is there a need for affordable housing to meet local need? 92 No
- What Type of new Dwelling is required?
  - 1 or 2 bed 116 Yes
  - 3 beds 70 Yes
  - Retirement 84 Yes
  - Housing for rent 62 Yes
  - Flats for rent 24 Yes
  - Care homes 44 Yes
  - Flats for purchase 36 Yes
- What scale of development do you think is appropriate to accommodate new homes?
  - One or two dwellings-filling gaps 122 Yes
  - Small scale development 88 Yes
  - All developments on one site 28 Yes
  - Combination 22 Yes
  - Larger developments 16 Yes

### Ref HP2.

- How and where should any building sites be located?
  - Brown field sites. 139 Yes
  - Within the development boundary. 64 Yes
  - Green field sites outside the development boundary. 38 Yes
  - Conversion of existing properties into apartments. 70 Yes
  - In gardens of existing properties. 44 Yes

### Ref HP3.

- Should parking allocation to new dwellings be at 1 space per bedroom plus 1, excluding garages. 168 yes, 16 No.

**Ref TP1 and TP2**

- Is there need for off street parking? 140 yes
- Is speed through the village a concern? 187 yes

Survey data.

**Ref LEP1.**

- Support the establishment or development of new business opportunities. (these need specific Designation sites when available)
  - Care services 140 Yes
  - Small scale horticulture 124 Yes
  - Arts/creative 122 Yes
  - Agriculture 116 Yes
  - Childcare 110 Yes
  - Garden services 110 Yes
  - Shops 108 Yes
  - Taxi 98 Yes
  - Offices 16 Yes
  - Other 4 Yes

**Ref LEP 2.**

- Support for additional visitor accommodation within the Parish.
  - B&B 113 Yes
  - Camping/caravan sites 48 Yes
  - Holiday lets within existing buildings 38 Yes
  - Hostel within existing buildings 35 Yes
  - New Holiday lets 22 Yes
  - New Hostel 15 Yes
- Aspirations.
  - Improved Mobile communications 180 Yes
  - Faster broadband 162 Yes
  - Info points 154 Yes
  - Benches/seating 139 Yes
  - Observation points 129 Yes
  - Litter bins 119 Yes

Survey data

**Ref EP1, 2, 3**

- Should Green spaces be protected from development? 212 Yes
- Should green belt/green spaces have other uses e.g. Flood mitigation? 182 Yes
- Are flood defences a weakness? 42 Yes

## 12. Appendix 2. Further research supporting HP3

Parking on the pavement is more than just an inconvenience. It can intimidate some people, particularly visually impaired pedestrians, wheelchair users or people with prams making them anxious about leaving their homes, and potentially needing to step onto and walk along busy roads.

Pavements are not designed to bear the weight of vehicles and over time the surface can become uneven or cracked, causing trip hazards. For example, Local authorities spent around £1bn between 2006 and 2012 on pavement repairs.

When you park on the pavement, you're blocking part of the footway. As a result, all pedestrians, including children, might have no choice but to walk round your car via the road – putting them at risk. If the footway is blocked then this is an offence.

Stephen Edwards, director of policy and communications at [Living Streets](#), said:

“We're regularly contacted by disabled and older people who feel trapped in their homes because there isn't enough room on the pavement for wheelchairs or mobility scooters. “This has impacted more people during the pandemic, with blocked pavements affecting everyone's ability to physically distance”.

Local authorities can restrict pavement parking on individual streets (or by area) by making a traffic regulation order (TRO). The drawback is that this can shift the problem elsewhere. Making a TRO is also a time consuming and expensive process - it takes up to two years and requires extensive public consultation. However, once parking on pavements is banned on particular street, civil enforcement officers are able to enforce it by issuing a parking control notice – code 62. In April 2017 the government committed to undertake a review of traffic regulation orders. If the process of making traffic regulation orders was less onerous it would make banning pavement parking easier.

Too many drivers are parking on pavements and it's putting pedestrians at risk. A YouGov survey (2018) commissioned by Guide Dogs, found that 65% of drivers had previously parked on pavements and 43% of drivers had parked on pavements in the last six months. Living Streets FOI request (2018) found that 93% of local authorities in England and 87% of local authorities in Wales have received complaints from members of the public about pavement parking, but the existing laws are clearly not working.

[Public health Warwickshire](#) recommend that any new developments take account of the needs of all of the people in the community, including those with disabilities, special needs, including the elderly and young people for example.

[Driving on the pavement is illegal](#) – so too is causing an obstruction – but our police forces don't have enough 'bobbies on the beat' to enforce the law and respond the scale of the problem. If they did, we wouldn't have MPs proposing action or progressive transport bills in Scotland, and we and all our partners, including Guide Dogs, Sustrans, RNIB, British Cycling, Scope and Civic Voice (among many others), would not be leading a pavement parking campaign.

Government is currently considering the issue on kerb parking for the rest of the UK. [It is Illegal in London to park on the Kerb](#).

[The Police initiative, Operation Snap](#), where you upload footage, has been modified to allow stationery vehicle traffic offences, like parking on kerbs.



NPPF paragraph 108 states that maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network and improving the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

The 2021 census data as provided by the Business Intelligence unit, Warwickshire County Council, shows that the proportion of households with no cars has gone down as has that with one car. However, a higher proportion of households have 2 or 3 or more cars so the number of cars per household has increased.

Nether Whitacre Parish is a rural community. Space is not necessarily a premium. We have a physical example of what we believe is poor site planning and development. That is Tame View, Whitacre Heath. Nine in number of four and five bed roomed homes with insufficient parking attributed to them. Pavement parking is the norm in the cul de sac and overspill is now on Station road otherwise service vehicles would not gain access.

When Tame view was built and occupied, the Parish council was subsequently inundated with complaints of insufficient parking, when this is clearly down to agreement with the Developer and Borough planning.

Much is being said today on this parking issue. In the NPPF, flexibility is provided for planning bodies to accommodate better parking availability in developments. If adjustment to housing density is required on specific developments then surely that is something to consider and equally the way to go. We cannot continue to force home owners onto new developments to park on the street or the kerb when planning and design are quite able to accommodate off street parking more often than not.

Our Housing Policy HP1 here, is for properties of 1 to 3 bedrooms. So we are simply suggesting that a 3 bed home has at least 3 vehicle spaces excluding the garage in order to ease the burden of on street parking and or on kerbs.

If Planning Departments continue to apply Maximum parking standards in all cases and ignore the flexibility available within the NPPF then they will continue to perpetuate poor parking standards and inevitably individuals breaking the law.

Author. J.Thompson. Cllr. Nether Whitacre Parish Council. Jan 2023.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parkitright>

<https://www.confused.com/on-the-road/safety/is-it-illegal-to-park-on-the-pavement>

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk>

## 13. Appendix 3.

### History and character attractions in the Parish.

**Nether Whitacre** is a small village in a rural parish of the same name in North Warwickshire. The Parish also includes the settlement of Whitacre Heath and the hamlets of Hoggrills End and Botts Green. **Hoggrills End** comprises of a cluster of farms and cottages, four of which are c.1800 and listed. **Botts Green** consists of a few cottages and the grade II\* listed hall (1593) an exceptional building of timber frame on a sandstone plinth. It is one of only a few in the county.

Half of Botts Green is in Nether Whitacre Parish and half is in Over Whitacre Parish. Beyond this and along Station Road is a small general store. This stretch overlooks the Ladywalk Nature reserve on the opposite bank of the Tame.

**Nether Whitacre appears in Domesday Book** where it is noted as already being held by Wulfric in the Saxon period. By 1086, it comprised eight households and its lord of the manor was Edwin who held under Thorkil of Warwick, its overlord, a relatively unusual name being strongly Norse rather than a hybrid or Norman. It had an additional listing of one household, held under Robert of Vessey. **Whitacre** was in the early medieval period recorded as '**Witecore**', which still means 'white acre' thus 'white field'.

The Parish has within it about half a dozen stone-built buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Church House Farm, the Old House and the Malt House in Hoggrills End.

Whitacre Heath, the centre of the Parish, is built on the heath which was a mixture of common land and waste land, partially used for agriculture with the most fertile and well-drained land being in the village itself. Just outside the village of Whitacre Heath you will find Whitacre Heath Nature Reserve, an SSSI site.

Many areas and destinations around the Parish are important places that affect the historic character of the Parish, and along with other community facilities, should be taken into account when development is being considered because people come to and travel through the Parish to visit these places. In doing so they influence the needs of the Parish, such as housing, parking, transport, B&B, walking, cycling, green spaces, speeding and traffic calming.

**Whitacre Hall**, a double moated manor house, perches on the north western slopes of the Parish. Much of the present structure dates from the mid-1800s, but a 17<sup>th</sup> century wing indicates some of the long history of the site. Tudor Gothic details add architectural interest to the building. At the height of the Industrial Revolution this was the home of the Jennens family, who were early Ironmasters. John Jennens supplied Birmingham blacksmiths with iron bars and then sold their products. The hall is Grade II listed.

**The Parish Church** is St Giles's Church. Early English in style, it contains some 14th century glass and a 16<sup>th</sup> century West Tower but most of the church is of 1870s restoration. The Parish Register dates from 1439, making it one of the earliest in the area. Within the Church is a large monument to Charles Jennens, Handel's librettist, who wrote the words to the Messiah. The original **Village school** (now residential) was built in 1783 and endowed by Charles Jennens to educate the children of the Parish. The former school is adjacent to the parish church and shows how the church invested in the community's children welfare and education.

The **Methodist church** (built in 1819, later replaced in 1901) is still used for services and village facilities. **Nether Whitacre Church Hall**, a venue for social activities is adjacent to the Methodist church. The Methodist church is a good example of the Art and Crafts style, particularly the large east facing arched window, buttresses and use of clay tiles for decoration around the openings.

**Nether Whitacre Village Hall** was built with money raised from donation and one of the inside walls has a large mural depicting the rural life in the Parish of Nether Whitacre.

Nether Whitacre **cricket club** was established officially in 1887, however records indicate that matches were played at Nether Whitacre as early as July 1880. The club moved on to its current ground in 1907. The club nickname is "The Ducks" after the similarity of the Swan and also an incident in the clubs history when it became one of the first ever instances of a team being dismissed for 0 all out with 10 separate batsmen being dismissed for a duck.

The Parish boasts a total of four public houses.

- **The Dog Inn** is a true country pub tucked away in Dog Lane. It sits opposite the Grade II listed Church End Farm and is a short walk to St Giles' Church and the Old School House.
- **The Gate** is located at a key junction linking the villages in the parish.
- **The Railway**, a traditional country pub with links to the historic railway which ran through the village.
- **Swan Inn**, is 16<sup>th</sup> century former coaching inn, located in the rural village of Whitacre Heath.

**Halloughton Grange** was a cheese making school for Warwickshire at the turn of the century and has the appearance of a model farm with an impressive extensive set of period agricultural buildings.

**The Rectory**, a substantial two storey brick building with ecclesiastical architectural detailing is sited in a prominent location at the junction with Coventry Road and Dog Lane with a former footpath linking it to St Giles.

There was a railway station to the south of Nether Whitacre and the Railway Inn at the centre of the village catered for extra visitors and workers associated with the building of the Stonebridge Railway to link the route from the north Midlands and Yorkshire to the London and Birmingham. It was opened in 1839. The line lost its final passenger service in 1917 as a wartime economy measure.



**Whitacre Railway station**



**Whitacre Junction**

### **Nether Whitacre Footpaths**

The Parish has numerous footpaths, providing amenities for ramblers, dog walkers and cyclists, all linking all of the elements mentioned within and forming the basis of the Plan.

**The Heart of England Way** cuts straight through the Parish and onwards. All these features of the community and landscape have an influence on the way the Parish develops.

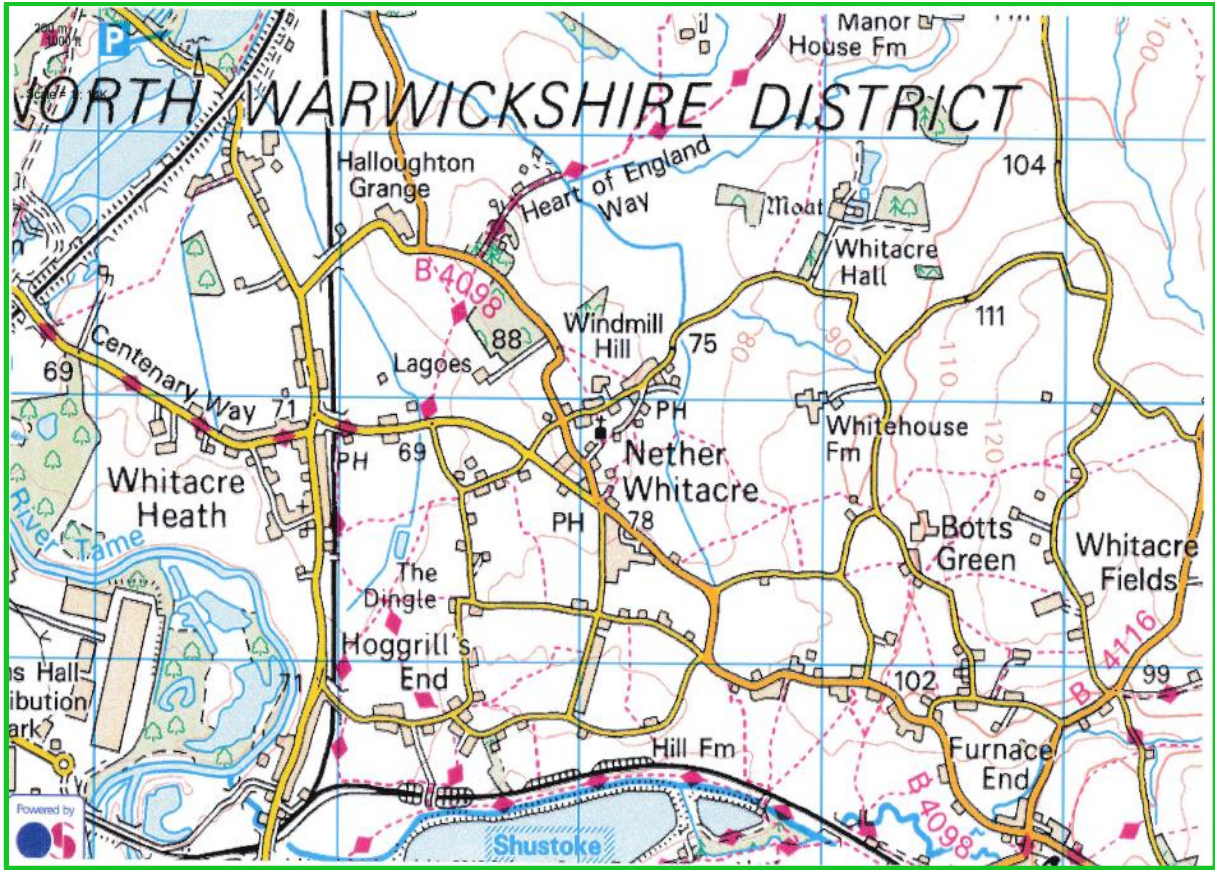
**Nether Whitacre Walking Group** meets at St Giles' Church.

**The Rogation walk** takes place annually on the first Bank Holiday in May and attracts many in the community and visitors who walk between the five churches, taking in the pubs.

**The North Arden Heritage Trail** project worked with local communities to establish a circular heritage trail in North Warwickshire passing through the parishes of Atherstone, Mancetter, Hartshill, Ansley, Arley, Astley, Fillongley, Maxstoke, Shustoke, Nether Whitacre, Kingsbury, Baddesley Ensor and Merevele.

The trail's foundation is the historic network of ancient tracks, farmers' walks for driving livestock and delivering local produce or timber to market, and miners' walk between their home, work, friends, family and place of worship. Historically the parishes had strong connections with its neighbours via trading, supply labour and materials. The trail particularly concentrates on the heritage from the 16th Century to the present day.

There is no particular start or finish to the 25 mile trail route, but starting in Atherstone (former centre for the hatting industry) the trail follows the Coventry canal (with its unique style of sign writing) in a clockwise direction towards Mancetter (a site of Roman pottery industry), onto Hartshill Hayes (where manganese was discovered), Ansley (renowned for ribbon making), Arley (whose coal was reputedly supplied to Victorian Royal family), Fillongley (home of the silk weavers), Shustoke (with its pumping house), Nether Whitacre (home of the Jennen's Family), Hurley (with its mineral railway line), Baddesley, Merevale and finally Atherstone.



## Appendix 4. Sites of special interest

The Parish is not isolated. The following are areas which must be taken into consideration when development is being considered.

These following topics affect the Parish greatly. Others come to and travel through the Parish because of these interests and in doing so influence the needs such as housing, parking, transport, B&B, walking, cycling, green spaces, speeding and traffic calming and as such these are included in this Plan.

### Lea Marston Lakes



As a result of the River Tame improvement scheme which took place in the mid 1970's the river was re-routed from a single channel to cross Coton Road at three points via large precipitation lakes most of which lie within the Whitacre Parish boundary. The course of the river resumes at Kingsbury. Originally these were dredged to remove the settled debris, but this was discontinued several years ago.

The area has become naturally diverse and huge improvements in the Tame water quality has resulted in a proliferation of fish species and a haven for wildlife. There is also a considerable winter wildfowl population and the lakes attract migrant birds. The northern lakes have several walks and the Environment Agency have provided a bird hide.

### Whitacre Nature Reserve (SSSI) and Colin Teall Wood.



This SSSI site has over 40 hectares of wetland and woodland areas, lies to the south of Birmingham Road and is owned and maintained by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

The reserve was identified in 1989 as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) by Natural England mainly for its attraction to wetland birds. It is also recognised for its importance to an overwintering bird population and to breeding birds and passage migrants. It forms part of the Tame Valley - the largest group of interconnected wetlands in the Midlands. The site is a significant LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) habitat for species such as snipe and otters.

A bequest to the Parish Council in 1995 this woodland area runs parallel to Station Road. Local volunteers have put considerable effort into establishing pathways and woodland walks and providing nest sites and habitat for indigenous birds and insects. The area has been replanted with native species and active woodland management is underway. It links to the Heart of England Way and Centenary Way and is popular with walkers

## 15. Appendix 5. Areas of influence connected to the Parish

The Parish is not isolated. Development within a Parish is influenced by the surrounding elements within the Parish. A Parish itself is influenced by those elements sitting outside of its boundaries.

These following topics affect the Parish greatly. Others come to and travel through the Parish because of these interests and in doing so influence the needs such as housing, parking, transport, B&B, walking, cycling, green spaces, speeding and traffic calming and as such these are included in this Plan. They must be considered as influencers.

### Whitacre Water Works.



Dominating the skyline approaching Whitacre Heath on Station Road and built in 1872, the works were originally intended to pump water from Shustoke reservoir to supply Birmingham using the then available steam power- there was originally a rail link to the main building for coal supply. Operations continued until 1904 when the Birmingham water supply from the Elan valley started to come online and the site became a standby facility. Two of the original steam units were Watt Compound Beam engines and were reported to be among the most elaborate and ornate ever built. Following replacement in the late 1930's one was preserved in the Birmingham Science Museum. The original steam boilers have been long since removed and the chimney demolished. The pumping facility was replaced with a modern building and installation in 1977 and the original site is largely abandoned.

Parts of the building carry a Grade II listing based on intactness, architectural quality and historic interest as an example of 'Civic Gospel' and as a contributor to the quality of life of Birmingham residents.

Regrettably in 2018 it was put into Historic England's Heritage at Risk register due to its increasing deterioration.

**Kingsbury Water Park** lies on the River Tame. It has 15 lakes and is situated in 600 acres. It is renowned for its walks, bridleways, birdlife and water sports. There is also a miniature railway manned by enthusiastic volunteers.

**Middleton Lakes** was formed out of gravel pits; it was created in 2011 and is run by the RSPB. It has four established walking trails and a public bridleway. The reserve lies to the rear of Middleton Hall.



**Middleton Hall** is a Grade II listed building dating back to medieval times. Since 1980 it has been restored by a charitable trust. It is surrounded by 40 acres of land which includes two walled gardens, woodland and Middleton Lakes.

**Shustoke Reservoir** was built in the 1880's to supply clean drinking water to Birmingham; it took ten years to build. Today, however, it supplies Shustoke, Coventry, Nuneaton, Bedworth and Atherstone. It is open to the public and has a variety of walks through our Parish and there are opportunities for bird watching, fishing and sailing.

**Ash End House Children's Farm** is a family owned farm with lots of farm animals to pet and feed. It has an indoor play barn and lots of outdoor play areas. It is situated off the A4091, Middleton Lane.

**Drayton Manor Theme Park** the park covers 280 acres and has seven theme zones, Thomas Land, Action Park, Aerial Park, Fisherman's Wharf, Pirate Cove, The Zoo and Farmer McColl's. It is the fourth largest amusement park in the UK and has a daily capacity of 15,000 guests.

**Roman settlements** of Coleshill, Atherstone and Tamworth are important towns which are close to Nether Whitacre.