Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023-2040

Made Plan
December 2024

Hargrave Parish Council

In July 2018 a parish referendum, with a turnout of 43% of the 234 residents that were on the register of electors, resulted in 88 people voting in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan for Hargrave being used by West Suffolk Council when determining planning applications in the parish and 12 people voting against. The Plan was subsequently adopted by West Suffolk Council.

The Plan was the first to be prepared in West Suffolk and put us in a strong position to ensure that planning decisions reflected the local priorities expressed in our Plan. However, the world of planning continuously changes and it is now an opportune time to build upon all the good work of the original team to bring the Plan up-to-date and in line with current national and local planning policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan Review (this document) takes the original Plan and all the good work that supported its preparation and adds further value to it to ensure that it remains relevant for West Suffolk Council when they consider future planning applications in our parish.

The new Plan has a very different look and feel to the 2018 Plan, but much of the content and intent of the original Plan remains.

Because of the scale of changes to the 2018 Plan, the Review was the subject to two rounds of public consultation and an independent examination. However, the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner deemed that the amendments to the 2018 Plan were such that a Parish Referendum was not required and that the Plan should proceed straight to adoption.

Prepared by Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
for Hargrave Parish Council with the assistance of

PLACES 4 PEOPLE
PLANNING CONSULTANCY

Neighbourhood plans in a nutshell

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, which establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. These Plans, when properly "made" become part of the legal planning framework for the designated area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is, therefore, a community-led plan for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It concentrates on the use and development of land and can contain planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, and the allocation of sites for specific kinds of development.

Parish councils are encouraged to produce their own Neighbourhood Plans, enabling local people to have a say as to how their neighbourhood grows and develops. In a designated neighbourhood area, which contains all or part of the administrative area of a parish council, that council is responsible for the preparation of the Plan. Neighbourhood Plans cannot contradict the main Government planning policies or the strategic policies in the Local Plan for the area. For example, they cannot propose less development than is planned for in the adopted Local Plan.

Before the Neighbourhood Plan Review could be brought into force it needed to complete the following stages:

1. "Pre-submission" public consultation on draft Plan carried out by Parish Council
2. Submission of draft Plan to West Suffolk Council
3. "Submission" public consultation on draft Plan carried out by West Suffolk Council
4. Examination of draft Plan by an independent Examiner

The Examiner deemed that the amendments to the 2018 Plan were such that a Parish Referendum was not required and that the Plan should proceed straight to adoption.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2018 the residents of Hargrave voted in favour of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish being used by West Suffolk Council when making decisions on planning applications. It was the culmination of two years' work by a team of volunteers working on behalf of the Parish Council.

1.2 While there was nothing wrong with the original Neighbourhood Plan (referred to hereafter as the 2018 Plan) the planning scene nationally and locally had moved on in the five years since it was formulated. Planning decisions are based on the most recently adopted national and local policies and it is therefore important to make sure that our Plan remains up-to-date and tackles the local issues that now exist. The Parish Council therefore decided to update the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it remains relevant to Hargrave parish.

1.3 The new Plan continues to focus on local planning related matters and ensures that the village influences change and development within our area, based upon a fair and democratic consultation process supported by West Suffolk Council and Hargrave Parish Council.

1.4 We know from the 2018 Plan that the local community wishes to preserve the village as much as possible. It has a charming and unique character but is vulnerable to external change and, hence, needs to be protected and preserved. There is a recognition that outside pressures will have a growing impact upon the village, and we will need to be prepared to respond.

Why a new Neighbourhood Plan for Hargrave?

1.5 The starting point has been to appraise whether the policies in the 2018 Plan remain fit for purpose, given the national and local planning policy changes. We have also assessed whether there are gaps in the Plan that should now be addressed. In essence, the 2018 Plan has not been torn up and discarded. Rather, it forms the basis and structure for the Review. It continues to cover the whole parish as originally designated as a Neighbourhood Area in 2015. The parish boundary has not changed in this time and the area covered is illustrated on **Map 1**.

1.6 The context for the review is:

i. West Suffolk Council has commenced the preparation on a new Local Plan covering their new administrative area. When complete, it will replace the policies in the current St Edmundsbury Local Plan and those in the 2018 Plan;

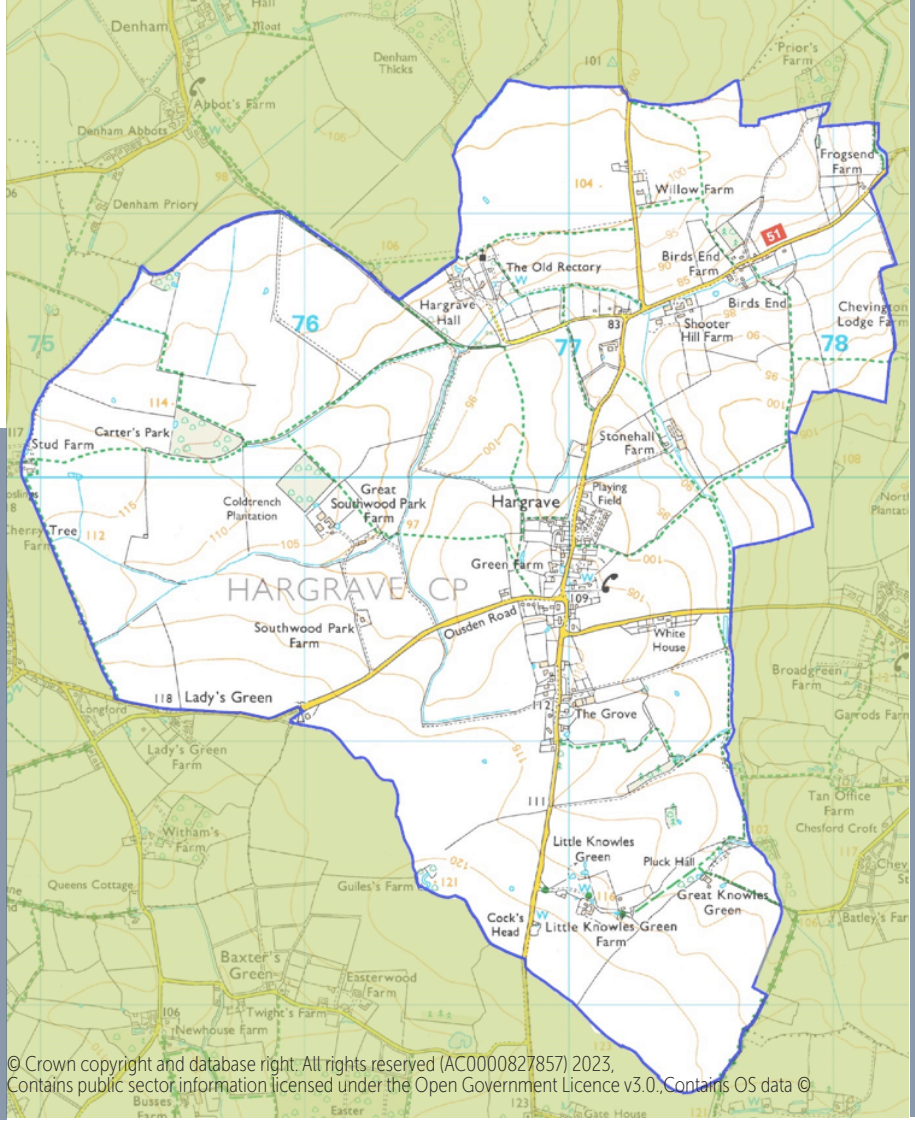
ii. a new National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2021 (and subsequently updated in December 2023) setting new national planning requirements; and

iii. new legislation covering biodiversity and habitats has been approved by the Government.

1.7 In January 2021 the Parish Council carried out a survey of all residents to test attitudes to development in the village and whether village issues and priorities had changed as a result of, for example, the Covid 19 pandemic. The results of the survey are published separately on the neighbourhood plan pages of the Parish Council website.

1.8 A further consultation event was carried out in February 2023 to ascertain whether the Vision and Objectives remain relevant and to consider an option for delivering a replacement Village Hall. This matter is addressed later in the new Plan.

MAP 1 - HARGRAVE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



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1.9 The 2018 Plan contained ten policies and the status of these in this new version of the Plan is set out below:

2018 POLICY	STATUS IN THIS PLAN
Policy HAR1 - Hargrave's Spatial Strategy	The policy has been replaced with a new, more detailed policy
Policy HAR2 - Hargrave Housing Settlement Boundary	The policy has been retained with minor amendments
Policy HAR3 - Housing Mix	The policy has been retained unchanged
Policy HAR4 - Communications Technology	The policy has been retained unchanged and becomes Policy HAR7
Policy HAR5 - Protecting and Maintaining Features of Landscape and Biodiversity Value	The policy has been replaced by Policy HAR8 which provides a more robust framework for protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats
Policy HAR6 - Protecting the Landscape Setting of Hargrave	The policy has been retained with minor amendments and becomes Policy HAR9
Policy HAR7 - Local Green Spaces	The policy has been retained with a greater explanation as to how development in local green spaces would be considered and becomes Policy HAR10
Policy HAR8 - Village Playing Field	The policy has been replaced by a new, more detailed policy and becomes Policy HAR6
Policy HAR9 - Local Heritage	The policy has been retained unchanged (other than corrections to the property name) and becomes Policy HAR11
Policy HAR10 - Village Character	The policy has been replaced by the more detailed Policy HAR12

1.10 In addition, new policies are included in the Plan to address the following matters:

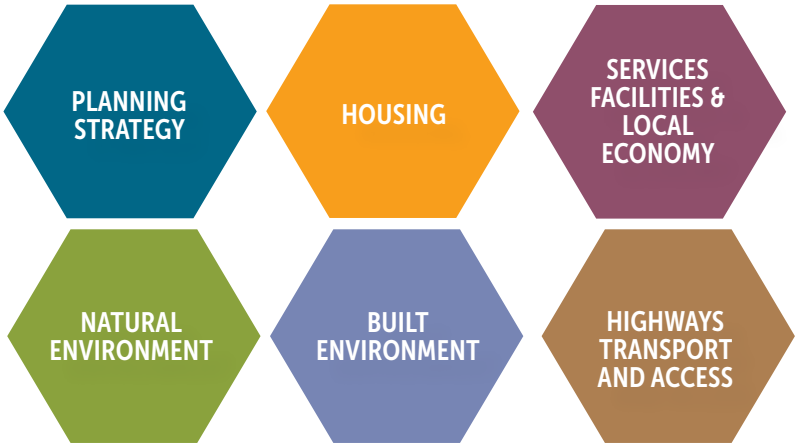
- Housing Design - covering internal room sizes and other design features (Policy HAR4)
- Community Facilities and Services - covering the provision of new and protection of existing community facilities and services (Policy HAR5)
- Development Design Considerations - informed by a bespoke Design Guide for Hargrave (Policy HAR12)
- Sustainable Construction Practices - seeking best practice in energy efficiency, solar gain, grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting (Policy HAR13)
- Flooding and Sustainable Drainage – ensuring measures are in place to manage surface water drainage and reduce flood risk (Policy HAR 14)
- Dark Skies - minimising light pollution from development (Policy HAR15)

1.11 The planning policies in the Plan are identified by the prefix HAR and are in distinct coloured text.

1.12 The 2018 Plan also contained 14 Community Actions; proposals which would not be relevant in the determination of planning applications, but which residents had identified as matters and initiatives that should be pursued locally. Given that the Community Actions in the 2018 Plan are now five years old, they have been reviewed and those that remain relevant have been carried forward and, where necessary, updated. They are identified to be distinct from the planning policies in the Plan and they will continue to not carry any weight in the determination of planning applications in Hargrave. Appendix 1 provides some commentary on progress with the 2018 Community Actions.

1.13 The new Plan covers the period 2023 to 2040, an end date which coincides with that of the new West Suffolk Local Plan that is currently being prepared. That doesn't mean that, once complete, the Plan will not be reviewed again for 17 years. To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan remains current it will be important to appraise the Plan on a regular basis to ensure that its planning policies, in particular, remain appropriate for Hargrave.

1.14 The new Plan now covers the following topic themes:



Plan-making Process

1.15 The Neighbourhood Plan must:

i. have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
ii. be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area and contribute to sustainable development; and
iii. be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations and human rights requirements, despite Brexit.

1.16 Because of the extent of the changes from the 2018 Plan, the new Neighbourhood Plan has to go through some of the statutory stages again. This is the first draft Neighbourhood Plan Review document. It has been prepared by the Parish Council with input from some members of the original team and with support from Places4People Planning Consultancy, the same consultants that supported us with the preparation of the 2018 Plan.

1.17 Pre-submission public consultation was carried out by the Parish Council for seven weeks in September and October 2023. Following this the comments received were considered by the Parish Council and any necessary amendments were made to form this "submission" version of the Plan. West Suffolk Council are now carrying out further public consultation ahead of the Plan being examined by an Independent Examiner. The Examiner required some changes to policies and also deemed that the Plan does not include modifications so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the made Plan. As such, no Parish Referendum was necessary and West Suffolk Council have "made" (adopted) the Plan Review.

The anticipated timetable is:

Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan Consultation SUMMER 2023 → **Submission to West Suffolk and further consultation SPRING 2024** → **Independent Examination SUMMER 2024** → **PLAN MADE DECEMBER 2024**

Plan Monitoring and Review

1.18 Just as with the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan, it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period. Hargrave Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

2. HARGRAVE'S CHARACTER, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Haragrava (according to the Little Domesday Book 1086)

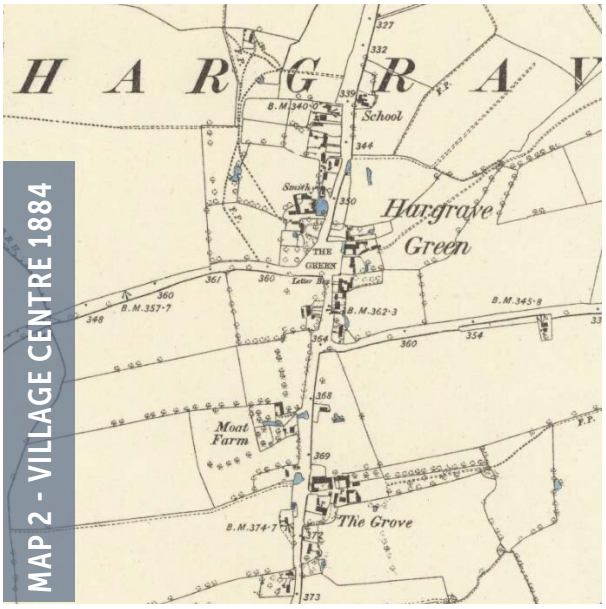
2.1 The parish is very rural in nature having an area of just over 720 hectares and sitting within a landscape reliant on arable farming and, to a lesser extent, equine establishments. The population in the 2021 Census was recorded as 293.

2.2 The nearest large villages with a higher level of services are Barrow (2 ½ miles to the north) and Wickhambrook (3 ½ miles to the south). The nearest town is Bury St Edmunds, which is seven miles to the east while the smaller town of Newmarket is nine miles to the west.

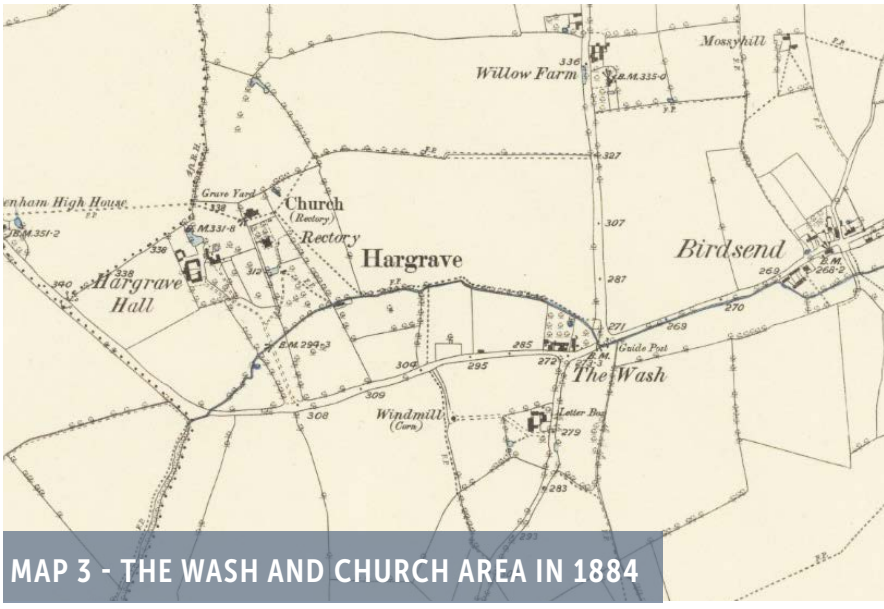
2.3 The roots of Hargrave lie hidden in the Dark Ages but we can be sure that in 1086 (Domesday date) Aelfgyth, a Free Woman of Bury St Edmunds, was resident in a village of 17 households with a church, five plough teams and numerous livestock. In short, Haragrava was a regular rural village based on subsistence farming and feudal hierarchy.

2.4 For the next seven hundred and fifty years not a lot changed as the industrial revolution had little direct impact on Hargrave; even the coming of the train kept a respectful distance. The population grew and subsistence strip farming was swept away by the Enclosure Acts transforming the landscape. The village had three centres of population - around the church and Bird's End, Hargrave Green (now just called Hargrave and the village centre), and Knowle's Green. These, together with The Grove, remain distinct centres today, albeit that the areas around the church and at Bird's End are now distinctly separate.

2.5 By the mid-19th century the village was still inward looking and very much focused on agriculture and supporting services. In 1844 the population had grown to 573 with a wide range of skills - tricker, thatcher, miller, shoemaker and a twice weekly "carrier" to Bury St Edmunds. These inhabitants probably still carried the genes of Aelfgyth. They married within the village and died here.
Maps 2 and 3 illustrate the two built-up areas of the village in 1884.



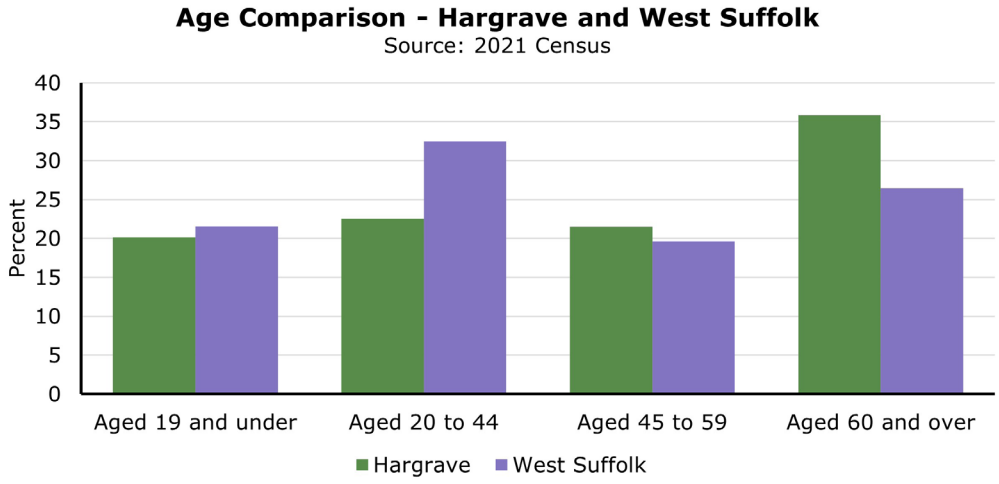
MAP 2 - VILLAGE CENTRE 1884

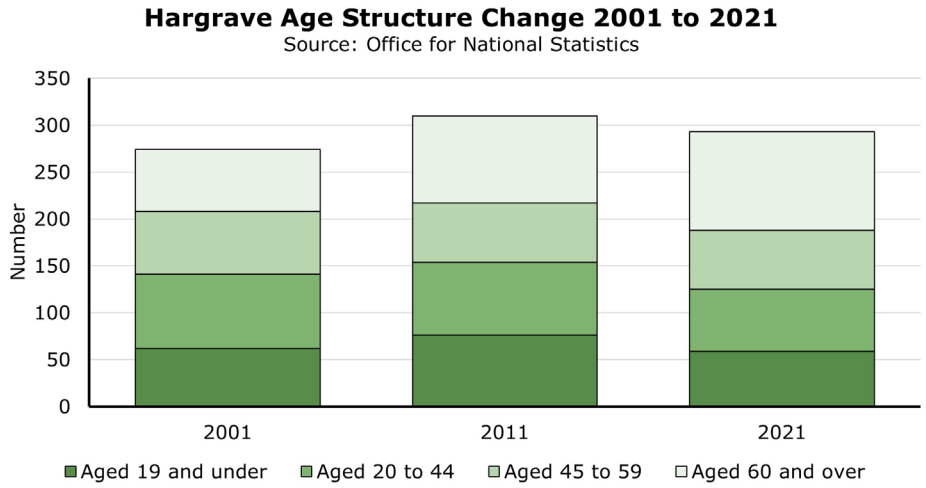


MAP 3 - THE WASH AND CHURCH AREA IN 1884

2.6 The great agricultural depression of the late 19th century and the toll wreaked by the two world wars (13 residents died in the two wars) meant we entered the second half of the 20th century with a population halved from that of 1844. The old certainties of son following father into the fields disappeared as the population was more educated and, more importantly, mobile. Farming was revolutionised by mechanisation in the 1940's and 1950's thus reducing the need firstly for skilled labour and later for unskilled labour and the workforce looked outside the village for employment. This is one of the biggest changes in the history of Hargrave. No longer do men quench their thirst on the way back from the fields at the three pubs that existed at the time and nor do they need the services of a blacksmith.

2.7 In the 21st century Hargrave has evolved from an inward looking mono-industry village based on the seasons to an outward looking community where most employment is now outside of the village. The 2021 Census records the parish as having a population of 293, of which some 36 percent were aged 60 or over, compared with 24 percent in 2001. It is a much higher proportion when compared with West Suffolk as a whole. The number of young people aged under 20 remains static at around 20 percent of the population. Across West Suffolk, the number of residents aged 65 or over is projected to increase by just over 30 percent in the period between 2021 and 2041.





3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the content of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Local Plan documents that cover the parish. The Plan must have regard to the content of with the NPPF and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The paragraphs below identify how these are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies that must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In December 2023 the Government published a Revised NPPF. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

   i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

   ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

3.3 The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:

- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development; and
- Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

The Development Plan

3.4 The following diagram shows the components of West Suffolk Council's Development Plan in place in February 2024 which are relevant to Hargrave. It currently includes Local Plan documents previously prepared by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the Development Plan and is being used by West Suffolk Council when considering planning applications in the parish.

3.5 The 2010 St Edmundsbury Core Strategy primarily sets the strategic planning framework for the borough identifying the scale and broad location of planned growth for the period to 2031. Policy CS4 identifies the settlement hierarchy of the local plan directing most growth to the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with some minor growth identified for Key Service Centres and

Rural Service Centres. It also designated a large number of villages as "Infill Villages". Hargrave, along with other smaller villages across the borough, was designated as "countryside" due to their lack of services and facilities at the time the plan was prepared. As such, it was considered that Hargrave was an unsustainable location for development due to the lack of services and facilities.

3.6 The Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (February 2015) contains a comprehensive suite of detailed planning policies by which planning applications across West Suffolk will be determined on a day-to-day basis. The neighbourhood plan does not repeat these policies but, where appropriate, adds value and detail to them from a local perspective. The local plan document did recognise that the "countryside" villages could offer some opportunities for limited development that would meet a local need without contradicting the overall sustainability of the Core Strategy. Policy DM27 allows the development of plots within a group of 10 or more dwellings for a single or a pair of semi-detached dwellings. This policy applies to those parts of Hargrave outside the Housing Settlement Boundary defined in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.7 Rural Vision 2031 reaffirmed the Core Strategy approach, primarily addressing the allocation of development sites in Key and Rural Service Centres, for examples in Barrow and Wickhambrook. However, the document also includes a number of aspirations for the rural parts of the former St Edmundsbury district that have been taken into consideration in preparing this Plan. (Policy LP26 of the Submission Draft West Suffolk Local Plan (2024) proposes to amend the size of a group down from 10 dwellings to seven.)

Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan

3.8 West Suffolk Council has commenced work on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the area. The Plan will cover the period to 2040 although the Local Development Scheme (June 2023) suggests that the new Local Plan will not be adopted until Spring 2025, after the expected time of adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan. In January 2024, West Suffolk Council commenced consultation on the "Submission Draft Local Plan".

3.9 The Submission Draft Local Plan identifies Hargrave as a "Type-B village", defined as settlements that "have a very limited range of or no services and poor accessibility to public transport. It is likely that residents will rely on the private car to travel to meet their day-to-day needs. In these villages no sites are allocated through the local plan and only limited infill development or affordable housing exception sites would be permitted, where it accords with other policies in the development plan."

3.10 Section 5 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states: "There may be circumstances where policies will allow development to take place in either type B villages or in the countryside and further details are set out in local policies of this plan. Examples of where development may be appropriate include:

- Small scale infill residential development comprising one or two dwellings.
- Replacement of existing dwellings on a one for one basis.
- Conversion and re-use of buildings for employment or residential purposes.
- An affordable housing exception site within or adjacent to a settlement boundary.
- An agricultural and/or essential workers dwelling.
- Where a neighbourhood plan is prepared and proposes site allocations."

In relation to the final bullet point, this Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development.

3.11 Given that the draft West Suffolk Local Plan had been published when the draft Neighbourhood Plan was submitted, regard has been had to its content while recognising that it might be subject to change following examination as it proceeds towards adoption in Spring 2025.

Suffolk County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan

3.12 In July 2020, Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Nowhere in the parish is defined as a "minerals consultation area" in the Plan, meaning that there is no requirement to consult the County Council in relationship to the potential impact of a proposal receiving planning consent to extract minerals under the current Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

4. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Arising from the outcomes of the research and surveys, our over-arching vision for Hargrave in 2040 remains as it was in the 2018 Plan and is:
To protect and enhance the distinctive character and assets of the Village for the community both young and old

4.2 The Vision is supported by objectives in the six theme areas that will contribute to its delivery.

Planning Strategy
Protect and enhance the distinctive features of the village settlement and its setting within the parish

Housing
To improve residents' access to a range of energy efficient sustainable housing to meet lifetime and generational needs

Services, Facilities and the Local Economy
Where sustainable, to improve residents' access to:
- employment, including the facilities necessary to support home working
- communication and technology
- education, health and welfare
- shops, services and amenities
- sports, leisure and culture

Natural Environment
Protect and enhance the natural environment of the parish, in particular:
- wildlife habitats
- public and private open space
- the road environment, in particular grass verges, hedges and trees
- best quality agricultural land

Built Environment
Protect and enhance the distinctive features of the built environment and its setting, including:
- local heritage and historical references
- building and streetscape
- reducing environmental impact

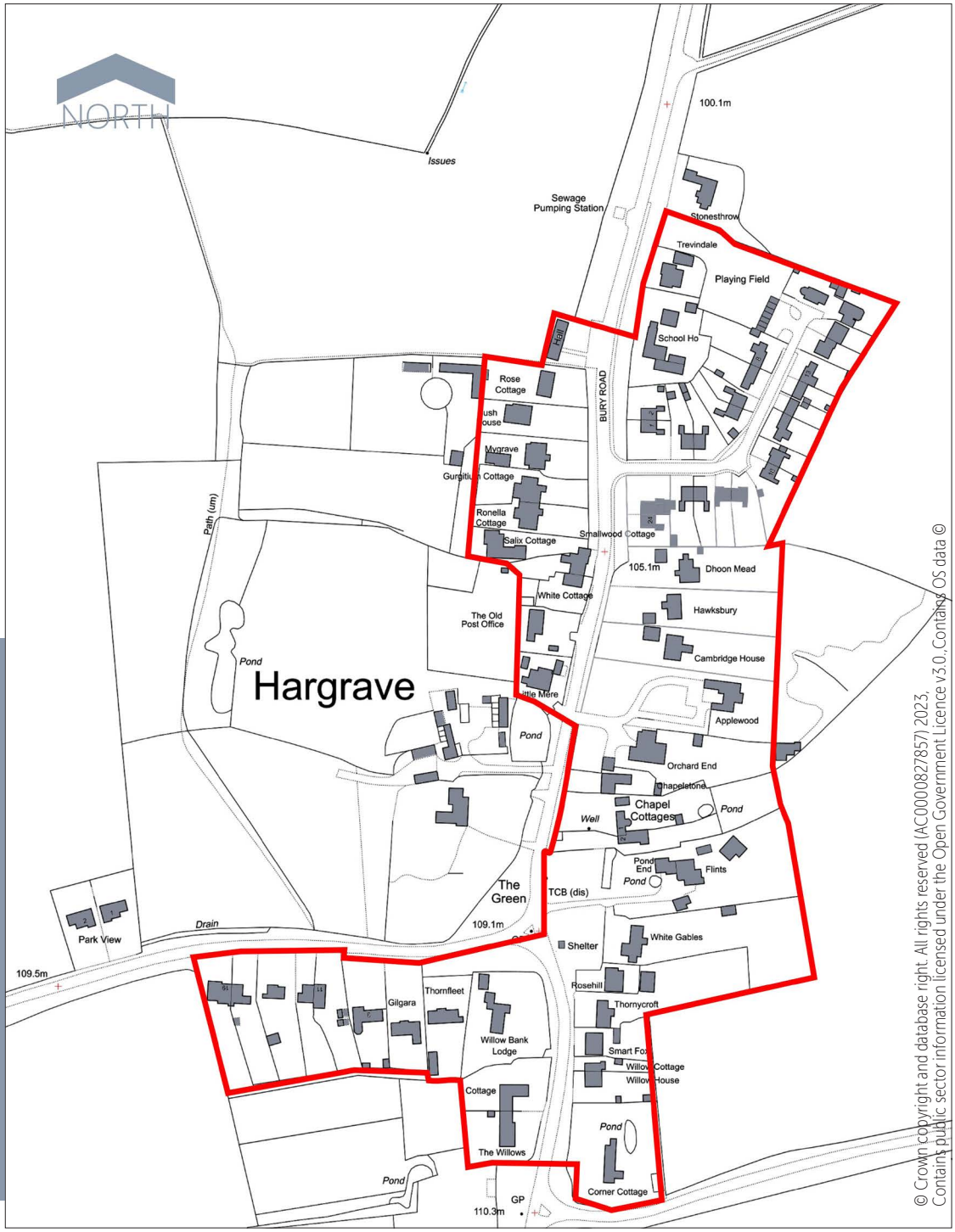
Transport and Travel
Manage existing and future requirements by:
- rebalancing the competitive demands on highways between dominant vehicular traffic and a safer pedestrian environment
- improving public rights of way to enhance accessibility and connectivity
- improving access to bridleways to offer safer equestrian facilities
- securing access to public transport

4.3 The remainder of this Plan identifies planning policies and community actions that have a direct relationship to the Vision and will deliver the identified Objectives.

5. HARGRAVE'S PLANNING STRATEGY

Context

5.1 The 2018 Neighbourhood Plan was prepared having regard to the content of both the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted local plan documents for the former St Edmundsbury district. The Spatial Strategy of the 2018 Plan promoted a sustainable approach to the location of development that would allow limited growth in the village to meet local needs and support opportunities for the improvement or introduction of local services and facilities. A Housing Settlement Boundary was defined in the Plan covering the main built-up area of the village as illustrated on **Map 4**.



MAP 4 – HOUSING SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

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Planning Policy Context

5.2 The most up-to-date planning policy for Hargrave is contained in the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan. It defines a Housing Settlement Boundary covering the main built-up area of the village.

At a strategic level, St Edmundsbury Core Strategy Strategic Objective C, seeks:
To sustain and enhance rural communities by providing, where infrastructure and environmental capacity exists, new housing to grow settlements and safeguard existing rural services while maintaining and, where possible, improving the rural environment.

and Strategic Objective 1 seeks:
To ensure that new development only occurs where there is adequate capacity in existing services, facilities and infrastructure or where this capacity can reasonably be provided where necessary before development is occupied.

while St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 Objective 1 seeks:
To meet the housing needs of the rural areas, with a particular emphasis on the provision of affordable homes and an appropriate mix of house types for local people and of appropriate housing for an ageing population.

and Objective 7 states:
Achieve an appropriate scale and form of development that meets local needs and maintains the villages' identities.

5.3 Policy DM27 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies document (2015) states that outside Housing Settlement Boundaries, "Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside subject to satisfying the following criteria:

a. the development is within a closely knit 'cluster' of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway;
b. the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one dwelling or a pair of semi detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage."

The adopted Local Plan policy is proposed to change in the Submission Draft Local Plan. Emerging Policy LP26 – Housing in the countryside, proposes to amend the size of a group down from 10 dwellings to seven.

Emerging West Suffolk Local Plan

5.4 The Submission Draft Local Plan contains twenty Strategic Objectives. The most pertinent to Hargrave are the three covering rural areas, as reproduced below:

SO10 Support agriculture, farm diversification, estate management and rural tourism that will sustain the function and character of the countryside and its communities.

SO11 Sustain and support the rural areas through the safeguarding of local centres and services and by encouraging rural diversification and the growth of the agricultural sector.

SO12 Meet the housing needs of rural areas appropriate to the requirements of individual settlements.

Paragraph 4.3.34 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states "The scale of growth considered appropriate for type B villages is an indicative maximum scheme size of around five homes, as infill plots within the housing settlement boundary including making use of previously developed or brownfield land dependent on infrastructure and environmental capacity".

Neighbourhood Plan Policy

5.5 Residents of the village are served by the nearby larger villages of Barrow and Wickhambrook or further afield towns for access to health, schools, shops and other services. However, this is the case with many villages in West Suffolk that are designated as Infill Villages in the Core Strategy where current policies allow infill development and make provision for affordable housing for local identified needs.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF recognises that housing can promote sustainable development in rural areas through enhancing or maintaining the vitality of rural communities. This approach is supported through the spatial strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan which promotes a sustainable approach to allowing limited growth in the village to meet local needs and support opportunities for the improvement or introduction of local services and facilities.

5.6 The settlement pattern of Hargrave contributes significantly to the character of the village and will therefore be retained. A Housing Settlement Boundary is designated for the main part of the village which will be the main focus for limited future growth and is carried over unchanged from the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan. Outside this area, the cluster of 16 dwellings at The Grove, Wickhambrook Road (between Meadow Cottage in the north and Alma Cottage in the south) meets the definition of a closely knit cluster referred to in Policy DM27 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies (Policy LP26 of the Submission Draft Local Plan). The spread out nature of this area is such that it is not a tight-knit built-up area and does not meet the Local Plan approach to defining Housing Settlement Boundaries. Proposals for development outside these locations will be treated as being in the countryside and proposals will only be supported where the uses are in accordance with Policy HAR 1. The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Policy LP22 of the Draft Local Plan supports opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites for affordable housing that are adjoining but outside the settlement boundary where there is evidenced and identified local need. In Hargrave it is considered that in, addition to the requirements of Policy LP22, such a scheme would not exceed five dwellings.

Policy HAR 1 - Hargrave's Spatial Strategy

In the period 2023 to 2040 the Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with the parish's designation in the adopted Local Plan settlement hierarchy.

New development will be focused within the Housing Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, where proposals will be supported where they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural and historic environment, infrastructure and highways.

Outside of the Housing Settlement Boundary, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. Proposals for development will only be supported where they are in accordance with national, district and neighbourhood plan level policies.

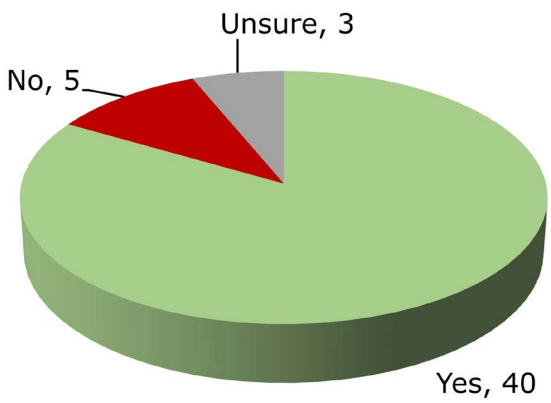
6. HOUSING

Context

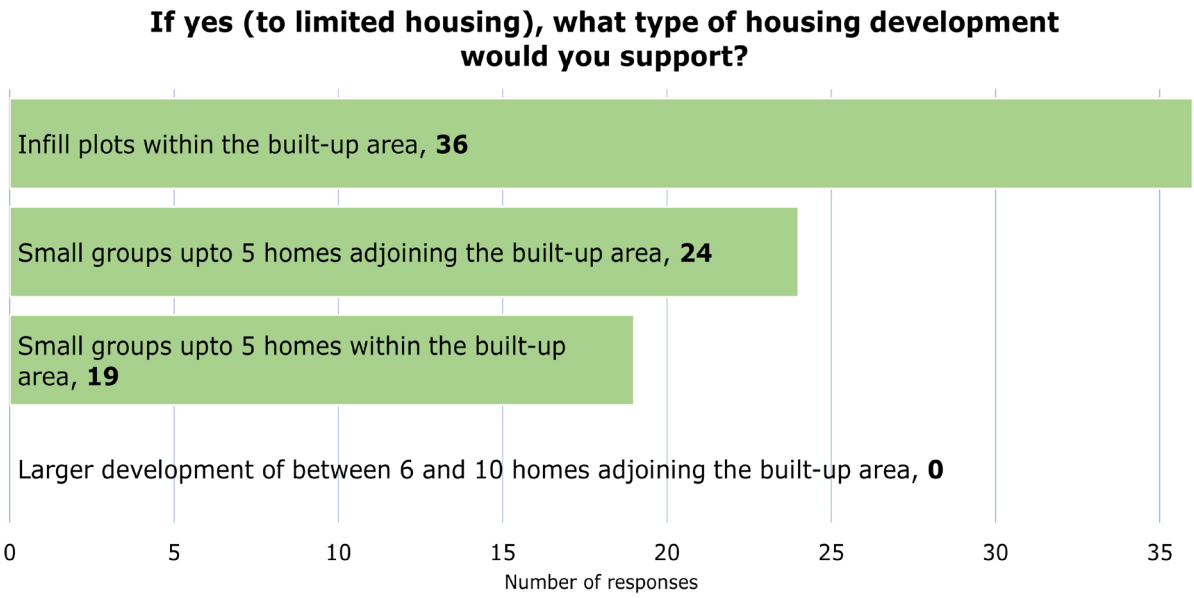
6.1 The 2021 Census notes that there were 120 dwellings in the parish, five more than recorded in 2001. Of these, 64 are within the Housing Settlement Boundary defined in the Neighbourhood Plan. Hargrave has a significantly higher proportion of homes with four or more bedrooms when compared with the whole of West Suffolk. Some 45 percent of homes in the village have four or more bedrooms compared with 22% across West Suffolk. However, there is a much smaller proportion of smaller homes with only 11 percent having one or two bedrooms compared with nearly 37 percent across the district. While this is not unusual given the size of the village, it does demonstrate that there are few opportunities in the village either for young families or for people to downsize but remain in Hargrave. The Local Plan evidence report "Housing Needs of Specific Groups" (October 2021) commissioned by the Cambridgeshire authorities and West Suffolk Council suggests the wider need across West Suffolk is for three bedroomed homes, while there is a need of between 25 percent and 35 percent of two bedroomed homes.

6.2 The January 2021 survey asked whether limited housing development in Hargrave should still be allowed in the period to 2040. Of the 48 households/residents that responded, 83 percent agreed that it should be limited.

Do you still believe we should allow limited housing development in our village between now and 2040?



Households/residents were further asked what type of housing development they would support. As illustrated, most supported infill plots within the built-up area. There was no support for developments of between 6 and 10 homes.



Neighbourhood Plan Policies

6.3 There is not a huge demand for new housing in Hargrave, but throughout the life of this Neighbourhood Plan there will be a need for minor growth that will provide opportunities to maintain and slightly increase the population of the village. Across West Suffolk, the latest government household and population forecasts suggest that the average number of persons per household will decrease from 2.35 in 2018 to 2.27 in 2038. This means that, when broadly applied to Hargrave, an additional 4 homes would be required just to sustain the current population level. That would represent a three percent growth in the number of dwellings in the village, lower than the planned 18 percent increase across West Suffolk to 2040.

6.4 A Housing Settlement Boundary for the central part of the village was defined in the 2018 Plan. This is retained unaltered in the new Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 4.58 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy states that, within Infill Villages, "only infill development comprising single dwellings or small groups of five homes or less within the designated housing settlement boundary would be permitted". There are few if any opportunities that can be identified for developments of groups of up to five homes within the Housing Settlement Boundary at this time. This is particularly so given the quality of the historic and natural environment and the need to ensure that proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment. However, during the lifetime of this Plan there may be opportunities that come to light, and the Plan supports the principle of such proposals as long as the environmental and infrastructure constraints can be overcome. The Neighbourhood Plan supports infill development, especially in the form of self-build development, provided it incorporates good quality design, which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of existing buildings which surround the site, the existing street scene and surroundings, and does not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

6.5 Hargrave has an open, rural character with Greens, verges and attractive open spaces contributing to the particular features that make up its distinct charm and appeal. But where wide gaps exist between properties within the defined Housing Settlement Boundary, or within a cluster that meets the requirements of Policy DM27 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan document (2015), there may be scope for limited infill development. In terms of such infill, it is important the development does not damage the village's essentially open character and does not adversely affect the rural landscape setting.

Policy HAR 2 - Housing Development

Within the Housing Settlement Boundary, planning proposals for:

i. new residential development comprising single dwellings or small groups of five homes or less, and/or;

ii. residential conversion schemes, and/or;

iii. the replacement of an existing dwelling with a new dwelling or dwellings, will be permitted where they are not contrary to other policies in the development plan.

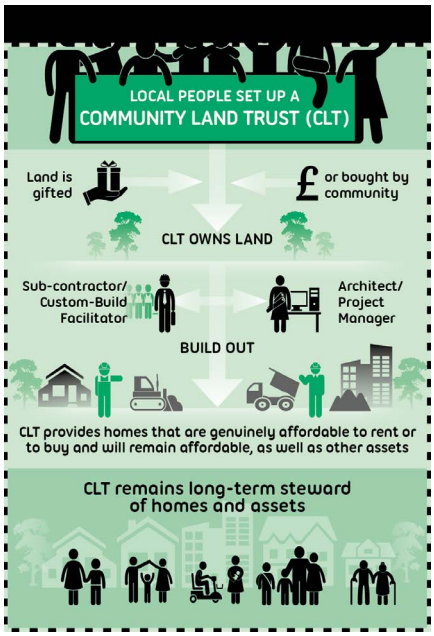
Affordable Housing

6.6 The Housing Settlement Boundary enables limited housing development to take place within the defined area, but such developments would not trigger the requirement to deliver affordable housing as part of the scheme unless the development comprised of ten or more homes or had a site of 0.5 hectares or more. Currently, Policy DM29 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document enables affordable housing to meet locally identified needs, as an exception, to be built outside the housing settlement boundary. Promoted by the Parish Council and known as "exception sites", the following conditions would need to be satisfied:

1. A local need has to be established, usually through a detailed parish housing needs survey and/or the West Suffolk Housing Register data; and
2. A willing landowner prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and
3. A registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to both secure grant funding and manage a scheme.

Furthermore, West Suffolk Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document in 2019 which, at paragraph 4.51, states that:
"An exception site is normally but not explicitly likely to consist of....no more than five units in a smaller village."

6.7 One option for securing affordable housing that remains available for the local community is through the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT), perhaps incorporating nearby smaller parishes. This is a form of community-led housing, set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier. A CLT scheme has recently been delivered at Lavenham and opportunities for a similar scheme in Hargave could be considered should there be an identified local need for affordable housing for those with a local connection.



[1] Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy makes provision for 20 percent affordable housing on sites between 0.17 hectares and 0.3 hectares or between 5 and 9 dwellings but this has been superseded by the NPPF which states that such an approach would only be appropriate in nationally defined rural areas. West Suffolk does not fall into such a definition.

House sizes

6.8 Hargrave has a smaller proportion of one and two-bedroom homes than surrounding villages. This limits the opportunities for smaller households to move into or stay in the village, for example when starting out or when downsizing from larger homes. The 2021 residents' survey asked what size of new homes were needed over the next 20 years. 63 percent of respondents said two bedroomed homes were needed and 74 percent said three bedroomed homes.

6.9 This Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to restrict the size of any new individual homes that are built. However, should developments of groups of three or more homes come forward that are compliant with Policy HAR2, the mix of homes should include provision for two bedroomed homes. The precise number two bedroom dwellings will be negotiated on each scheme. Where developers consider that accommodating two bedroom units would have serious implications for development viability, an 'open book' approach to assessing viability that illustrates all costs to the local planning authority, will be encouraged and, where necessary, the policy will be operated flexibly.

Policy HAR 3 - Housing Mix

Proposals for three or more dwellings located within the Housing Settlement Boundary will be supported where they incorporate homes with two bedrooms.

Housing Design Standards

6.10 The design features of new homes can have a significant impact on the character of an area. The Local Plan already contains detailed policies for the consideration of the potential impact on the character of an area and the amenity of existing residents. In addition, in December 2017, the local planning authority issued a "technical advice note" to achieve minimum internal floorspace standards. The advice note states that "the Government's national space standards [March 2015] are the minimum acceptable space standards that should be applied to build both open market and affordable housing within West Suffolk". Policy LP21 of the Submission draft West Suffolk Local Plan requires all new homes to meet or exceed the national space standards.

6.11 The 2023 NPPF states that "Planning policies for housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties." The March 2015 standards encourage provision of enough space in homes to ensure that they can be used flexibly by a range of residents. The standards also aim to ensure that sufficient storage can be integrated into dwelling units. It is emphasised that these standards, which are set out in Appendix 2, are expressed as minimum space standards.

6.12 Externally, it is also important that homes meet modern day requirements for the storage of wheelie bins and cycles. Without sufficient and appropriate space reserved for these uses, the consequence can be added clutter. The Suffolk Waste Partnership, which includes West Suffolk Council, published "Waste Technical Guidance for Residential and Commercial Developments" in 2019 and any successor document, and should be referred to when making space for wheelie bins. Designs should also be informed by the Suffolk Guidance for Parking, 2019, which provides information about specifications for cycle storage facilities.

6.13 Planning policies cannot influence the internal layout of dwellings but, given the generally ageing population, new homes will be particularly welcomed where they meet the accessible homes standards currently set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. Part M defines three levels of housing accessibility:

- Category 1: Visitable dwellings - Part M4(1);
- Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings - Part M4(2) and
- Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings - Part M4(3).

6.14 The current Building Regulations require that all new dwellings to which the Regulations apply should be designed to a minimum of Part M4(1) 'visitable dwellings' standard. Local authorities can opt into the requirements for Part M4(2) and Part M4(3) via Local Plan policy. However, a 2015 Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) specifies that neighbourhood plans cannot set this standard.

6.15 Given the restrictions set out in the Written Ministerial Statement, otherwise acceptable proposals for dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area are particularly encouraged to meet Part M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

6.16 It is important that new dwellings are appropriate for older persons' needs whilst still meaning that they are suitable for other types of occupiers such as first-time buyers. Proposals for new housing in Hargrave that are designed to be adaptable in order to meet the needs of the increasingly aging population, without restricting the needs of younger families will be especially welcomed.

6.17 Policy HAR 4 will apply to new housing developments in addition to the general development design requirements of Policy HAR 12.

Policy HAR 4 - Housing Design

Proposals for new dwellings are encouraged to achieve appropriate internal space through compliance with the latest Nationally Described Space Standards. Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycles, in accordance with the adopted cycle parking standards.

In addition, all new homes shall provide:

- suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable ultrafast broadband; and
- one electric vehicle charging point for each on-plot parking space required to meet the current adopted parking standards.

New dwellings that are designed to be adaptable in order to meet the needs of the increasingly aging population, without restricting the needs of younger families, will be supported.

7. SERVICES, FACILITIES AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Context

7.1 Hargrave has only a few services and facilities available to its residents, namely the Village Hall, the Play Area and the Parish Church. There are currently only school term time bus services serving the village and the nearest primary schools, shops and GP surgeries are located at Barrow (2.5 miles to the north) and Wickhambrook (just under 4 miles to the south). The mobile library calls at the village once a month on a Saturday morning.

7.2 The 2021 Residents' Survey asked whether, as a consequence to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, "the facilities in the village should change to support us better." Of those that responded, 60 percent said that they should, with suggestions including a shop, better broadband and mobile phone signals, improvements to the village hall, flexible workspaces, a community café and a bus service.

Policy Context

7.3 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Further, paragraph 97 states that planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. The NPPF also emphasises the need to "support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable development".

7.4 At a local level, the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains Policies DM41: Community Facilities and Services and DM 42: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities. Each seeks to retain existing facilities and provide a basis for the provision of new facilities, especially as part of larger developments.

7.5 The Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan consultation stated an intent to carry such policies forward into the new Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

7.6 The Neighbourhood Plan has an important role in making sure that there are sufficient and adequate services in the village to meet the needs of current and future residents. The village hall and play area provide a central facility for both formal and informal recreation while, although remote from the centre of the village, the Parish Church continues to play an important role in community life. In accordance with the Local Plan policies, the loss of existing community facilities will be normally be resisted. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a planning application that would result in the loss of a facility could be permitted. Such circumstances are set out in Policy HAR5 but, briefly are:

- where the current facility is no longer viable to operate;
- where there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use;
- where alternative facilities and services are available or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling and walking.

7.7 Opportunities for the provision of new or replacement facilities to serve the residents of Hargrave will be supported. Opportunities for such provision within the Housing Settlement Boundary are limited and where it can be demonstrated that such opportunities do not exist and available, sites should be sought in locations adjoining or in close proximity to the Boundary, and facilitate the ability for residents to access them on foot.

Policy HAR 5 - Community Facilities

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services that serve the needs of Hargrave will be supported where:

i. they are located on sites accessible on foot and within or in close proximity to the Housing Settlement Boundary;
ii. they contribute to the quality of village life and improve the sustainability of the village;
iii. there are no other appropriate and existing buildings within the Housing Settlement Boundary that can feasibly be converted for the required purpose(s);
iv. it will not have a significant adverse impact on nature conservation, biodiversity or geodiversity interests, or upon the character or appearance of the landscape and countryside; and
v. the benefits of the proposal outweighs the loss of open countryside.

Proposals that will result in the loss of the following existing community facilities:

- Village Hall; or
- St Edmund's Church;

will only be permitted where:

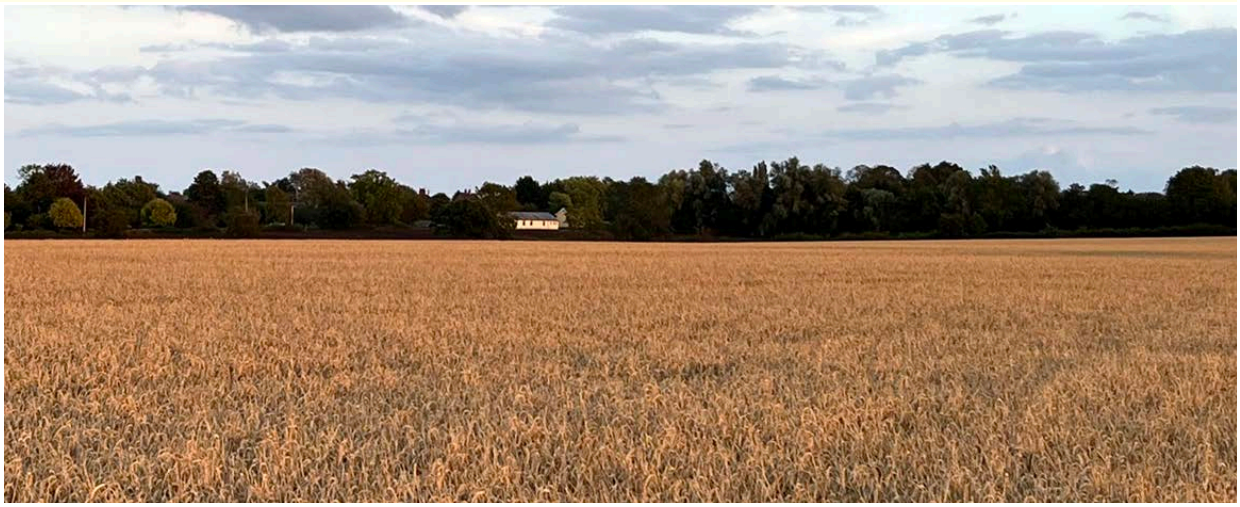
a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
b. it can be demonstrated that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling and walking.

7.8 A recent survey has not been carried out to ascertain which clubs and activities residents would attend in Hargrave if they were provided, but the most popular response in a 2013 residents' survey was a gardening club, followed by a rambling club and art club. In 2022 the Hargrave Heritage Group was established.

7.9 Many of the original suggestions would require a meeting place, such as the Village Hall, to function as well as volunteers and possibly resources to get the groups established. While the Parish Council could facilitate the establishment of new clubs and societies, ultimately if they are to be sustainable, they will need to be self-sufficient.

Community Action 1 - Groups and Societies

The Parish Council will investigate ways of supporting the establishment of additional groups and societies in the village, including organising a Clubs meeting at the Village Hall and identifying support mechanisms to get clubs established.



The Village Hall

7.10 The Village Hall was originally constructed in 1926 about the same time as the former Methodist Chapel. On 20 June 1926 a group of villagers formed a trust to purchase the Village Hall site and construct the hall. Responsibility for ownership relied on groups of villagers working together until the Parish Council assumed responsibility in 1973. The Village Hall is now the only public amenity available for the use of villagers. The hall is used on a regular basis by several local associations as well as the "pop-up pub" and, of course, for Parish Council Meetings.

7.11 The Hall is generally well maintained and in good decorative order. The kitchen was refitted, insulated and decorated in 2008. More work has been undertaken to improve the heating and electrics. The ongoing problem is with condensation, no doubt due to the outer skin not being a cavity wall. This requires the regular use of a dehumidifier to reduce the water on the walls and to prevent damp from affecting the furnishings and fabric of the building. Limited car parking also restricts the opportunities for large functions such as wedding receptions and large family parties.

7.12 Preparation of the 2018 Plan provided an opportunity to consider:

- whether the existing Hall should be refurbished and improved or,
- whether it might be feasible to build a new village hall that could provide additional facilities and which would be more efficient in terms of energy consumption and heating.

It noted that community consultations on the future of the Hall proved inconclusive in terms of refurbishment or new build but included a Community Action to establish a Village Hall Working Group "to investigate opportunities for the improvement of the existing village hall or the possible construction of a new village hall for the village in full liaison with residents and the users of the existing facility."

7.13 The work of the Village Hall Working Group since 2018 is set out in Appendix 3. Given the wide support for improvements to the Village Hall, the Community Action in the 2018 Plan is retained on the basis that any new or refurbished facility should meet the specification identified in paragraph 7.15 opposite.

Community Action 2 - Village Hall

The Parish Council will reconvene the working group to deliver Parish Council's objective and to re-engage with the Village.

Village Playing Field

7.14 A small site off Bury Road and opposite the Village Hall which has been used as the village Playing Field for many years, provides an important meeting and play facility for the children of the village and, to some extent, their parents. In 2016 new play equipment was installed and current plans are to provide a wildlife area as well as a Teen Shelter. It is leased and maintained by the Parish Council and the Playing Field provides the only equipped play area in the village. All homes in the main part of the village are within 500 metres walking distance of the play area, albeit that parts of the route do not have footways and are therefore not attractive for walking with children.

Policy HAR 6 - Village Playing Field

The parish Playing Field, as shown on Policies Map, will be protected from development that detracts from the use of the area as a recreation facility. Development which will result in the loss of the Playing Field will not be allowed unless:

i. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority's standards for that location, and the proposed loss will not result in a shortfall during the plan period or

ii. a replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in an equally accessible location to meet the current and future needs of users of the existing space or facility and with good access by cycling and walking.

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the parish and the current standards for play facilities adopted by the local planning authority. Facilities must be fully inclusive and cater to those of all equality, age, abilities and disabilities.

Shops and Services

7.15 For those residents without access to a car, getting to local shops or services and facilities, such a health care, can cause problems given the lack of a bus service. While car ownership in Hargrave is currently high, where a family only has one car which is used by one member of the household for travelling to work during the day, other members of the household can be isolated and unable to get out of the village to get to the shops, health facilities or even to work. One possibility for overcoming access issues could be to share private vehicles for shopping, school, social or leisure trips.

Community Action 3 - Car Sharing Initiative

The Parish Council will investigate opportunities for the introduction of a car sharing initiative to help residents to make trips to the shops, school, or social and leisure events.

The Local Economy

7.16 Although there are no major employers in the village the 2011 Census recorded that over 70 people worked in Hargrave including over 40 people travelling into the village to work. The 2021 Census figures on the number of people working in the village had yet to be published when the new Plan was prepared and information concerning the number working mainly from home was skewed by the fact that the Covid-19 restrictions meant that a very high proportion of employees were working from home at the time. However, it unlikely to be the same as in 2011 as a number of businesses have since ceased trading in the village.

7.17 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there is a need to improve the sustainability of the village and to seek to provide for day-to-day needs in the village. This can potentially only be achieved by enabling the provision of services and facilities; limited business growth; the protection of agriculture; allowing sustainable rural tourism and allowing housing that is designed to meet the needs of those that need to live in the village.

7.18 Rural areas such as Hargrave often offer local opportunities for small employment enterprises. However, retaining and improving prospects for appropriate levels and types of employment in the village can be dependent upon many factors including:

- availability of premises;
- quality of physical and virtual communication networks; and
- the ability to accommodate appropriate businesses into a high quality rural environment.

7.19 Throughout the parish, initiatives for employment provision could come forward during the lifetime of this neighbourhood plan. However, it is important that any such proposals have careful regard to the potential impact of the use on residents, the natural and historic environment and infrastructure. The village already suffers from high levels of HGVs passing through the village on narrow roads and anything that was going to make this worse would not be supported.

7.20 The policies in the existing St Edmundsbury Local Plan documents both protect against the loss of existing employment premises and enable the provision of new employment. The policies, in general and subject to caveats, allow:

- Farm diversification such as the development of farm shops, leisure and recreation uses, tourism facilities, sporting facilities, equestrian facilities and farm based food processing and packaging.
- The re-use, conversion and alteration of existing buildings in the countryside to employment uses, tourist accommodation, recreational uses, community facilities and, where justified, residential.
- The development of visitor accommodation such as self-catering facilities, holiday lodges, static and touring caravans and tenting fields.

Community Action 4 - Promoting small-scale employment opportunities

The Parish Council will seek to identify and promote small scale employment opportunities in Hargrave that are in keeping with the rural nature of the village and will not have an adverse impact on residents and the environment.

7.21 Tourism opportunities could be particularly viable given Hargrave's location, equidistant between Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket and, also, being within 30 minutes' drive of Cambridge. Carefully planned, designed and located new visitor accommodation that takes full account of the local landscape and potential highways impact, such as barn conversions or camping facilities, could be popular with tourists and provide sources of additional incomes in the local community. However, it is unlikely that a static caravan park would be appropriate given the potential for a detrimental impact on the open and rolling landscape of the village.

Community Action 5 - Promoting Hargrave

The Parish Council will seek to proactively utilise communications to positively promote Hargrave.

7.22 Subject to improvements, the Village Hall could provide opportunities for business start-ups through the provision of flexible office space with high speed broadband and communal facilities including meeting facilities.

Communications and Technology

7.23 Broadband and Mobile Communications are important to the sustainability of rural communities by enabling working from home and online shopping. Broadband speeds in the village centre are generally very good but this is not necessarily the case in locations away from the current fibre-optic broadband cabinets. It will be important to ensure that future broadband provision in the village keeps pace with improvements to technology. Mobile phone signals are surprisingly poor given the village's elevated position. The location of mobile phone masts can have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside and this can cause a conundrum between trying to improve mobile phones signals and protecting the character of the village. Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies local plan states that masts should be "designed and sited to minimise intrusion and visual impact" and proposals will need to be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment. In Hargrave, in addition to Policy DM9, the following policy will also apply to the consideration of proposals for mobile phone masts or equipment.

Policy HAR 7 - Communications Technology

Proposals from mobile phone network operators to improve mobile coverage will be supported where:

i. the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts are kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network, the needs of consumers and the provision of reasonable future expansion; and

ii. proposals have been sited and designed to minimise the impacts on the rural character of Hargrave, having particular regard to the important views identified on the Policies Map and described in the Hargrave Character Appraisal.

Should the need for any equipment and/or mast cease, developers and operators will be required to remove any redundant equipment and apparatus from the site in a timely manner.

Community Action 6 - Communications Technology Improvements

We will actively monitor, lobby and influence improvements to optimise communications technology infrastructure within the parish.

Supporting Local Agriculture

7.24 Agriculture is an important part of the parish, not only in the production of food but also in the way that it shapes and manages the rural landscape. Farm diversification, as noted earlier in the Plan, is an opportunity for farm enterprises to support their business and put redundant buildings to use. However, there may be additional opportunities in the locality to support the agricultural businesses to the mutual benefit of the village as a whole and the Parish Council is well positioned to act as a conduit for such co-operation.

Community Action 7 - Working with the agricultural community

We will develop positive co-operation with the local agricultural community to optimise mutual benefits.

8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Context

8.1 The village is close to the highest point in Suffolk and, as a consequence, enjoys many fine views out of the village. The landscape therefore plays an important part in defining the character and environment of the built-up areas. Across Suffolk a Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken that identifies the many varied types of landscape found across the county. In the Neighbourhood Plan Area there are three distinct character areas, defined as:

- Undulating Ancient Farmlands
- Undulating Estate Farmlands; and
- Wooded Chalk Slopes

8.2 Typical of these landscapes are the dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads within an undulating landscape with ancient woodlands. The villages in this area are often associated with greens or former greens and this feature remains and the four village greens, at Bridge Green, Hargrave Green, Little Knowles Green and Great Knowles Green have shaped the built-up area of Hargrave.

8.3 West Suffolk Council published a Landscape Character Assessment in March 2022 to support the new Local Plan. It identifies the landscape around Hargrave as being within an area defined as the Glem and Wickhambrook Farmlands landscape that extends from Barrow in the north through Hargrave, Chevington and Wickhambrook to north of Hundon in the south. The distinctive features of described in the County and District Landscape Assessments have been used to inform the objectives and policies of this Plan.

8.4 There are relatively few landscape or built environment designations in Hargrave. Coldtrench Wood and Carter's Park Wood, to the west of the village centre, are probably remnants of middle-aged deer parks and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. There is also a Tree Preservation Order on the eastern edge of Barrow Hill and adjoining Willow Farm. An isolated tree is protected in School Cottages. Furthermore, the verges of Barrow Hill are a County Wildlife Site.

Policy Context

8.5 The Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document contains detailed policies on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, as listed below:

- Policy DM10: Impact of Development on Sites of Biodiversity and Geodiversity Importance
- Policy DM11: Protected Species
- Policy DM12: Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity
- Policy DM13: Landscape Features
- Policy DM14: Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards

Appendix A of the Submission Draft Local Plan identifies the new policies which would replace these policies.

Biodiversity

8.6 The Environment Act 2021 places a statutory requirement for all appropriate developments to deliver a minimum 10 per cent measurable net gain in biodiversity (BNG), calculated using the statutory metric and a biodiversity statement, submitted at the planning application stage, should set out how a development will deliver BNG. A Biodiversity Net Gain (Interim) Planning Guidance Note for Suffolk has been developed by the Suffolk authorities. The purpose of the interim guidance note is to provide further detail on how aspects of biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated within planning applications. The application of the mitigation hierarchy (avoiding impacts before mitigating and, as a last resort, compensating impacts) should be demonstrated. Suffolk County Council is preparing a local nature recovery strategy (LNRS) which will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. The strategy will include a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities. Until the LNRS is completed, the alternative plans which determine strategic significance are the West Suffolk Green Infrastructure Study (April 2022) or any subsequent published Suffolk wide guidance on strategic significance.

8.7 There may be occasions where a new access to an otherwise acceptable development site would result in the loss of part of an existing hedgerow. Where this is necessary, a new hedgerow should be planted using native species of a local provenance on the visibility splay returns to minimise the loss of hedgerow and habitat and maintain the character of the area.

Policy HAR 8 - Biodiversity and Habitats

In addition to the biodiversity net gain requirements of the Environment Act 2021, development proposals must seek to protect and should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, trees, grass verges, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds and watercourses. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:

i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated to clearly outweigh any impacts; and
ii. suitable mitigation measures, that provide better replacement of the lost features will be required to achieve measurable biodiversity net gain.

Any such mitigation measures should form an integral part of the design concept. In addition, the layout and design of the development proposal concerned should be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting and context and have regard to its ongoing management.

Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened, through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.

Proposals will be supported where they integrate improvements to biodiversity which will secure a measurable net gain as part of the design through, for example,

a. the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
b. the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Hargrave's traditional trees and hedgerows);
c. the installation of bird and bat boxes; and
d. restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks and creating new links between them.

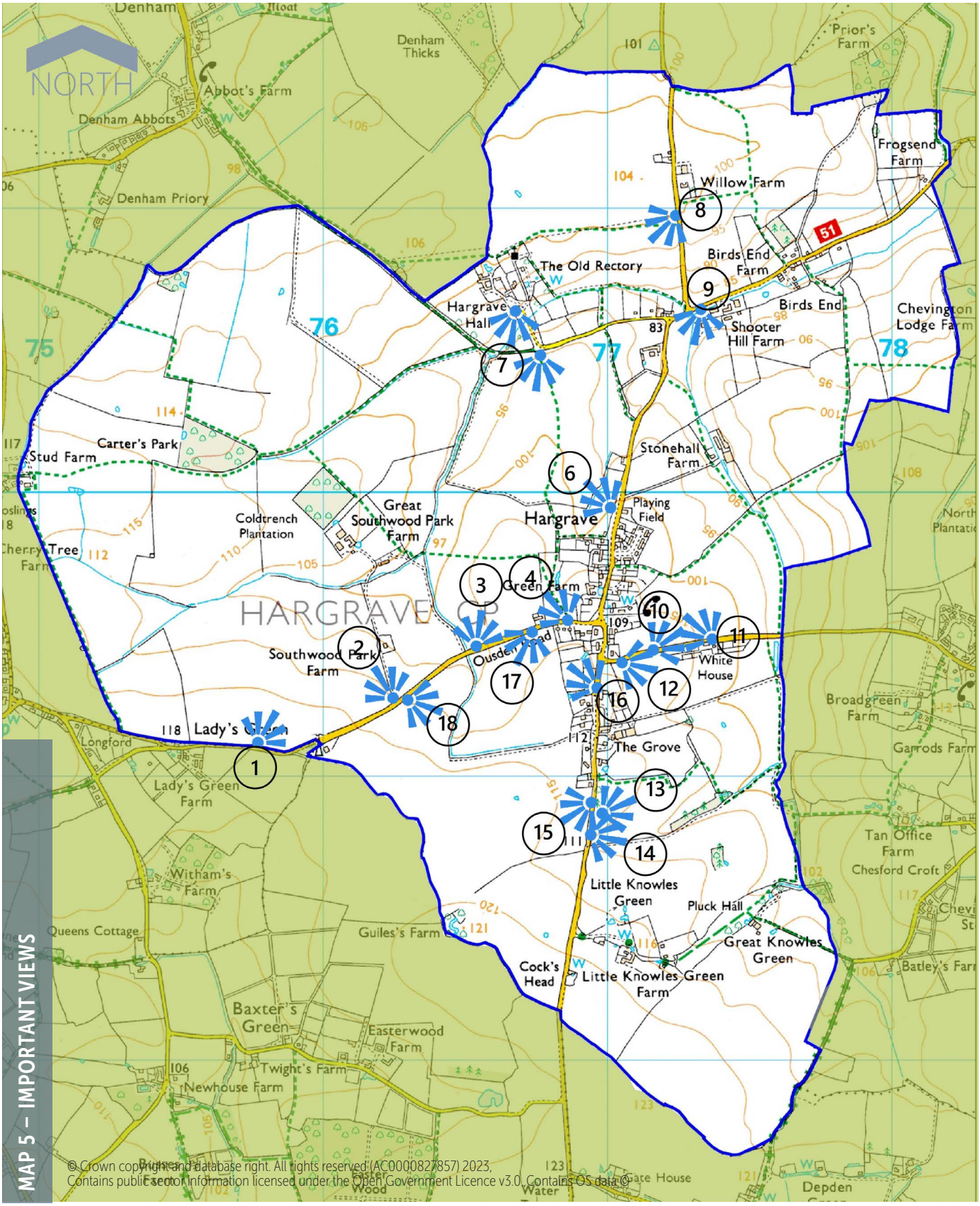
Community Action 8 - Hedgerows

We will encourage landowners to maintain existing hedgerows and plant new hedgerows to retain and improve wildlife corridors through the parish.

Landscape Character

8.8 The three landscape character areas referred to above have been used to identify the important landscape characteristics of the area and inform the strategy and policies of the Plan. In addition, important trees and woodland, hedgerows and water features that contribute to the setting of the village and its character and distinctiveness have also been identified in the Hargrave Character Appraisal (December 2017) maps which supplement the current designations (County Wildlife Site and Tree Preservation Orders). Proposals that would result in the loss of the identified features will not be supported unless the loss is unavoidable, and the benefits of the development proposals can be demonstrated to outweigh any impacts. In such cases we would expect provision to be made for replacement features.

8.9 Given the location of Hargrave on a relatively high plateau, views into and out of the village are of high importance to its character and sense of rurality. Development that does not have regard to its potential impact on the key features of these views could have a significant detrimental impact on the setting of the village. During the preparation of the Plan, an assessment of views from public areas was undertaken to determine which are most important in terms of the setting of the village in the landscape.
The Hargrave Character Appraisal identifies the important views and, as a result, the most significant views that need to be protected are identified on **Map 5** as well as on the **Policies Map**.



MAP 5 – IMPORTANT VIEWS

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8.10 The nature of the settlement pattern in the village means that there are important gaps between the clusters of homes that, if filled with development, would change the character of the village. In particular, the gap between the main village centre and The Grove is especially important. The principle of development in the gaps is already discounted except in exceptional circumstances by Policy HAR1. However, in those circumstances where development is proposed that meets those exceptional circumstances, the Plan identifies an important gap, as annotated on the Policies Map, between the Housing Settlement Boundary and The Grove and such development should not be of a nature that the gap would be either lost or eroded.

8.11 In order to understand how a proposal might impact on the identified important views or important gap, planning applications outside the Housing Settlement Boundary should be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment prepared in accordance with the Landscape Institute "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition" (2013) or subsequent guidance, or appropriate and proportionate evidence relevant to the scale of the proposal, that demonstrates how the key features of the important views and the important gap will be protected in all seasons.

Policy HAR 9 - Protecting the Landscape Setting of Hargrave

Outside of the Housing Settlement Boundary, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. A proposal for development will be permitted where:

a. it is in conformity with Policy DM27 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan Document 2015 or any successor policy;
b. it would not have significant adverse impact on the landscape setting of Hargrave;
c. it would not result in the loss or erosion of an important settlement gap as identified on the Policies Map; and
d. it would maintain the key features of the important views as defined on the Policies Map and described in the Hargrave Character Appraisal.

Proposals for new buildings outside the Housing Settlement Boundary will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, that demonstrates how the proposal:

1. can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the building's scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the main built-up areas as identified by the Housing Settlement Boundary; and
2. conserves and enhances the unique landscape and scenic beauty within the parish.

New Woodland

8.12 We want to increase the amount of woodland in the village but recognise that achieving this will, by and large, be subject to the willingness of farmers to make land available for new woodland. The Woodland Trust offers grants for woodland creation but there are few projects in the Hargrave area despite the landscape being traditionally characterised by woodland. The Parish Council has, in recent years, facilitated initiatives to plant trees across the parish such as at Knowles Green. Opportunities to continue such projects will continue.

Community Action 9 - New woodlands

The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, including farmers, to identify opportunities to plant additional broadleaved woodland. We will also seek to identify means of funding and managing new woodland, possibly through a community woodlands project.

Local Green Spaces

8.13 Consultation during the preparation of the Plan showed that people place a high value on the relationship between the village, the countryside and on the open spaces that help to define the landscape and character of the area. There are a number of important open areas within the parish that make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment. The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces ('LGS') in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

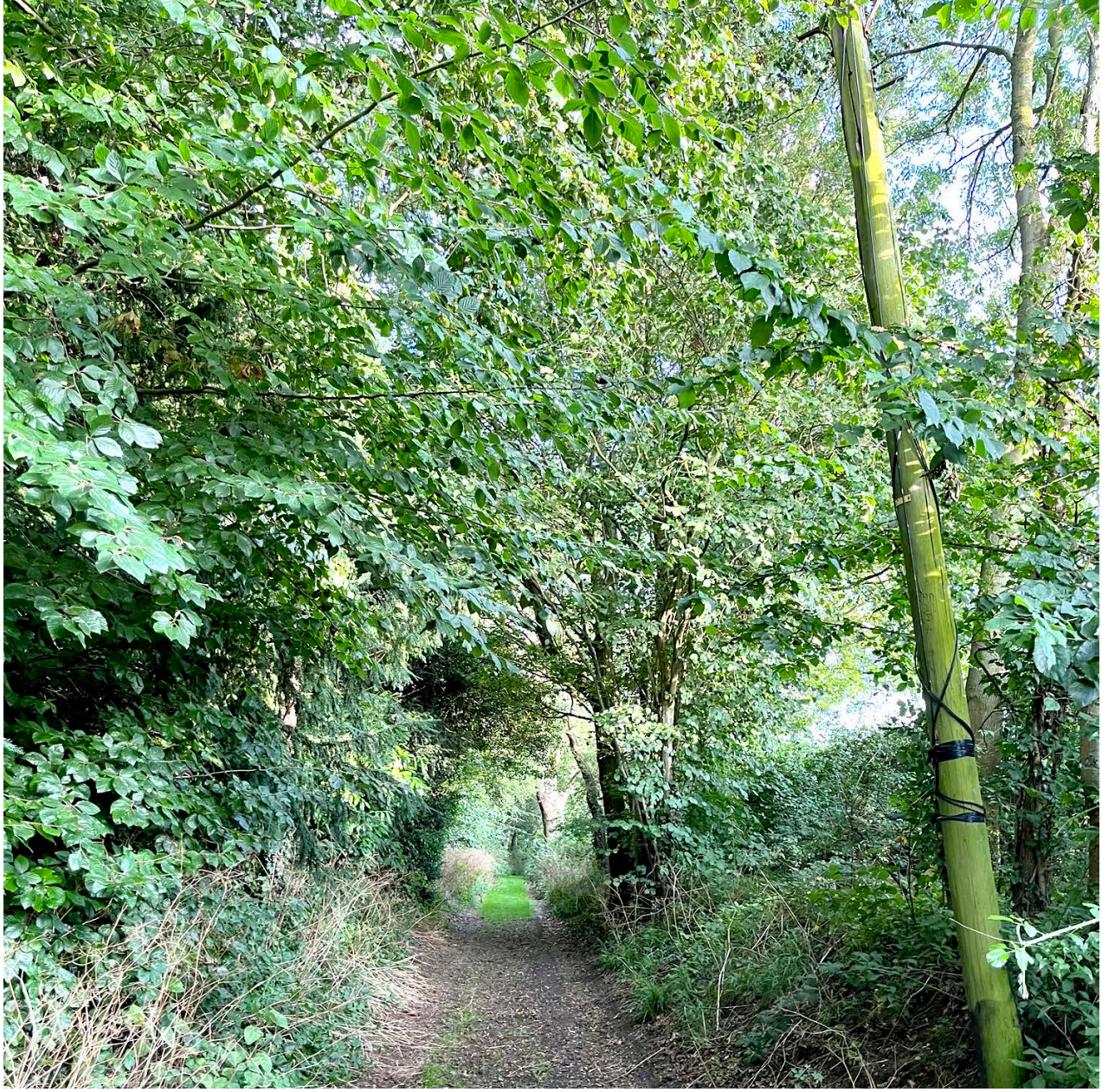
It is recognised that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used simply to block development.

8.14 A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which demonstrates how certain local spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 106 of the NPPF. The spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy HAR10 and are illustrated on the Policies Map.

8.15 The Local Green Spaces form, in the main, the distinct and extensive grass verges that are so distinctive to Hargrave. Community engagement undertaken during the preparation of the Plan highlighted the importance of the verges to residents although it has also identified questions around the ownership of the verges which remain unsolved. These verges fully meet the NPPF criteria and are demonstrably special to the local community, as identified through the Plan preparation process. In addition, the green area at Little Knowles Green is identified as Local Green Space. The land is in the ownership of the Parish Council and is maintained as accessible open space for the whole community.

8.16 The identification of these spaces as Local Green Space means that the construction of new buildings on them is inappropriate, except in exceptional circumstances as defined by paragraph 154 of the NPPF. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation as planning permission is not required for matters such as broadband cable boxes, utility infrastructure provided by Anglian Water or highway works carried out by the County Highways Department.

8.17 In the event that development proposals come forward on a local green space, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by West Suffolk Council, through an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the NPPF.



Policy HAR 10 - Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map:

1. Bury Road verges
2. The Green verges
3. Wickhambrook Road verges
4. Church Lane verges
5. Little Knowles Green
6. Great Knowles Green

Development in the Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts

Community Action 10 - Village Verges

The Parish Council will seek to identify the ownership of all the verges in the village and will prepare a management plan for the maintenance and improvement of them including, where appropriate, positive management mechanisms for biodiversity purposes.

OLD
GROVE

9. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Context

9.1 Community engagement carried out during the preparation of the Plan provided a strong steer to protect, preserve and future proof the village and its surrounding area, together with enhancing the quality of life for its inhabitants.

9.2 Although there is no conservation area, there are a number of Listed Buildings located around the older parts of the village, especially in the vicinity of The Green. Details of these are contained in Appendix 4. The most significant Listed Building is the Grade II* Listed Church of St Edmund's. Although spaced apart in a seemingly random pattern these valuable properties contribute greatly to the distinctiveness of the village, and represent valuable architectural and historical anchors to the Hargrave of the past.

9.3 Suffolk County Council maintains the Historic Environment Record, which comprises a database of information on recorded archaeological sites in the County. Non-designated archaeological heritage assets would be managed through the National Planning Policy Framework, and Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service advises that there should be early consultation of the Historic Environment Record and assessment of the archaeological potential of the area at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments, in order that the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan policies are met. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service is happy to advise on the level of assessment and appropriate stages to be undertaken.

9.4 The Neighbourhood Plan provides a powerful tool to assist the local community identify and preserve the essential character of the village and its local surroundings. The adopted Local Plan documents do not provide a detailed local identification of important features that will assist developers and decision takers to ensure proposals reflect and have regard to the local character.

Planning Policy Context

9.5 The NPPF notes that heritage assets "are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations." Policy DM15: Listed Buildings, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (Policy LP50 in the Submission Draft Local Plan) sets out the considerations and criteria against which proposals to alter, extend or change the use of a listed building, or development affecting its setting will be considered. In addition, Policy DM18: New Uses for Historic Buildings (Policy LP52 in the Submission Draft Local Plan) addresses how proposals for the adaptation and re-use of historic buildings will be considered.

9.6 In terms of the design of development, the NPPF makes it clear, in paragraph 131, that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.' In January 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide to illustrate how well designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It 'provides a structure that can be used for the content of local design policies, guides and codes, and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites.' This was followed up in July 2021 by the more detailed National Model Design Code which sets out guidance for what could be included in a Design Code for sites and places.

9.7 Policy DM2: Creating Places - Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness, in the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan document (Policy LP10 Well-designed places - in the Submission Draft Local Plan) sets out a range of criteria against which all development proposals, as appropriate to their scale, will be considered by West Suffolk Council.
Other relevant adopted policies are:

- Policy DM6: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage (Policy LP5 of the Submission Draft Local Plan)
- Policy DM7: Sustainable Design and Construction (Policy LP1 of the Submission Draft Local Plan)

9.8 West Suffolk Council are proposing a strategic policy in the emerging Local Plan to cover development design across the wider district. It also proposes to carry forward policies for the protection and management of heritage assets.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

9.9 This Plan develops a strategy to best safeguard those elements that contribute to the importance of these historic assets, to ensure they can be enjoyed by future generations of the area. Where a building is Listed, consent will be required for any external alterations which affect its special and unique interest. Whilst all proposals would be considered on their merits, certain works to Listed buildings are most unlikely to be acceptable in principle. This Plan supports sympathetic alterations to Listed Buildings provided it would improve, restore or maintain the fabric of the building. Development which would have a negative impact upon a Listed Building, its curtilage or its setting will not be supported.

9.10 Listed Buildings already benefit from robust statutory protection, but there are other properties, some quite historic and/or of architectural merit, that are unlisted but should receive recognition and are signalled as making an important contribution to the street scene and overall character of the village. The 2018 Plan identified the Old School House and School Hall as buildings of local significance. These are now one building (School House) and is confirmed as a Local Heritage Asset in Policy HAR 11. It is identified on the **Policies Map**.

Policy HAR 9 of the 2018 Plan is retained as Policy HAR 11

Policy HAR 11 - Local Heritage Assets

The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest will be sought. Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of or substantial harm to a local heritage asset or a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider benefits of the proposal.

School House, Bury Road, as illustrated on the **Policies Map**, is designated as a building of local significance.

Protecting the Character of the Village - Design Guidance

9.11 New development proposals require careful and detailed consideration, particularly where they could impact upon the general aspiration of the local community to maintain its unique rural and unspoilt character as far as possible. It is accepted that to attempt to 'preserve the village in aspic' and prevent all new development is both unrealistic and ultimately detrimental to the future health of the village, its community and its facilities. However, this should be balanced with the view that any future development should be appropriate to the size of the village and the maintenance of its character as a small rural community.

9.12 Hargrave has essentially a linear, roadside, housing character, being a diverse mix of a settlement set within a wider rural landscape, with evidence of small scale 'ribbon development' along the primary routes in and out of the village. However, a continuation of this 'creep' will result in the loss of the distinct clusters identified earlier in this Plan and will change the character of the village irreversibly. What does exist is a mix of historic and more recent contemporary houses, single and two storey, with often generous land around and between plots within an open landscape with extensive views across the rolling countryside.

9.13 In 2021, AECOM consultants were commissioned as part of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning support programme to prepare Design Guidance and Codes for the whole Neighbourhood Plan Area on behalf of the Parish Council. The document, published separately on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council's website, provides guidance that seeks to inform the design that all development should follow in order to retain and protect the character and distinctiveness of Hargrave.

9.14 The Design Guidance document should be used alongside the National Model Design Codes published by the Government in July 2021, or any subsequent published national as well as district level guidance.

Key Design Principles

9.15 The Design Guidance establishes the following urban design principles which have also informed the included design codes and which should be acknowledged, as appropriate, in planning proposals:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Respect, reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, wide verges and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services (including fibre broadband and charging electric vehicles) and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site

(CONTINUED PAGE 44)

layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

9.16 The Design Guidance provides a development management checklist against which development proposals should seek to respond where applicable. The checklist is included as Appendix 5 of the Plan.

Policy HAR 12 - Development Design Considerations

Proposals for all new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances of the site by creating and contributing to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.
Development proposals must take into account the Design Guidance and Code August 2021 or any successor document and must demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 5 of this Plan and, as appropriate to the proposal:

1. Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity, including Public Rights of Way;
2. Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. Include boundary treatments that reflect the character and traditional materials of the local vicinity;
4. Respect the rural character of views and gaps, as identified on the Policies Map;
5. Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
6. Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including retaining and preserving long distance views, as identified on the Policies Map, and ponds, hedgerows and woodland;
7. Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
8. Retain and incorporate important existing landscape features into the development;
9. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
10. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
11. Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality, in accordance with the adopted standards of West Suffolk Council;
12. Incorporate necessary services and sustainable drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained natural features;
13. Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
14. Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
15. Positively integrate energy and water efficient technologies;
16. Produce designs that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that vehicle parking to Suffolk County Council standards is provided within the plot on site.

Climate Change

9.17 Energy use in the construction and operation of development is currently a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Minimising energy demands from development and increasing the generation of energy from renewable sources can make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions. The starting point for minimising energy use is to maximise energy efficiency, both in new developments and through the retrofitting of existing buildings. This can have a direct economic benefit in terms of significantly lowering the running costs of new and existing buildings, helping to address fuel poverty, as well as tackling the Climate Crisis. The Building Regulations set minimum energy efficiency requirements of for new development but exceeding the minimum requirements will be necessary if emission reduction targets are to be met.

9.18 Where energy use is necessary, then priority should be given to utilising the most sustainable sources. Many energy saving initiatives can be installed on homes within permitted development rights (when full planning permission is not required) and residents are encouraged to implement such measures. There may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. The Neighbourhood Plan has limited powers to require developments to meet energy saving standards, especially in the construction of new homes. However, that does not stop the encouragement of the incorporation of measures in development that meet the energy hierarchy (in order of preference) of:

1. Minimising energy demand;
2. Maximising energy efficiency;
3. Utilising renewable energy;
4. Utilising low carbon energy; and
5. Utilising other energy sources.

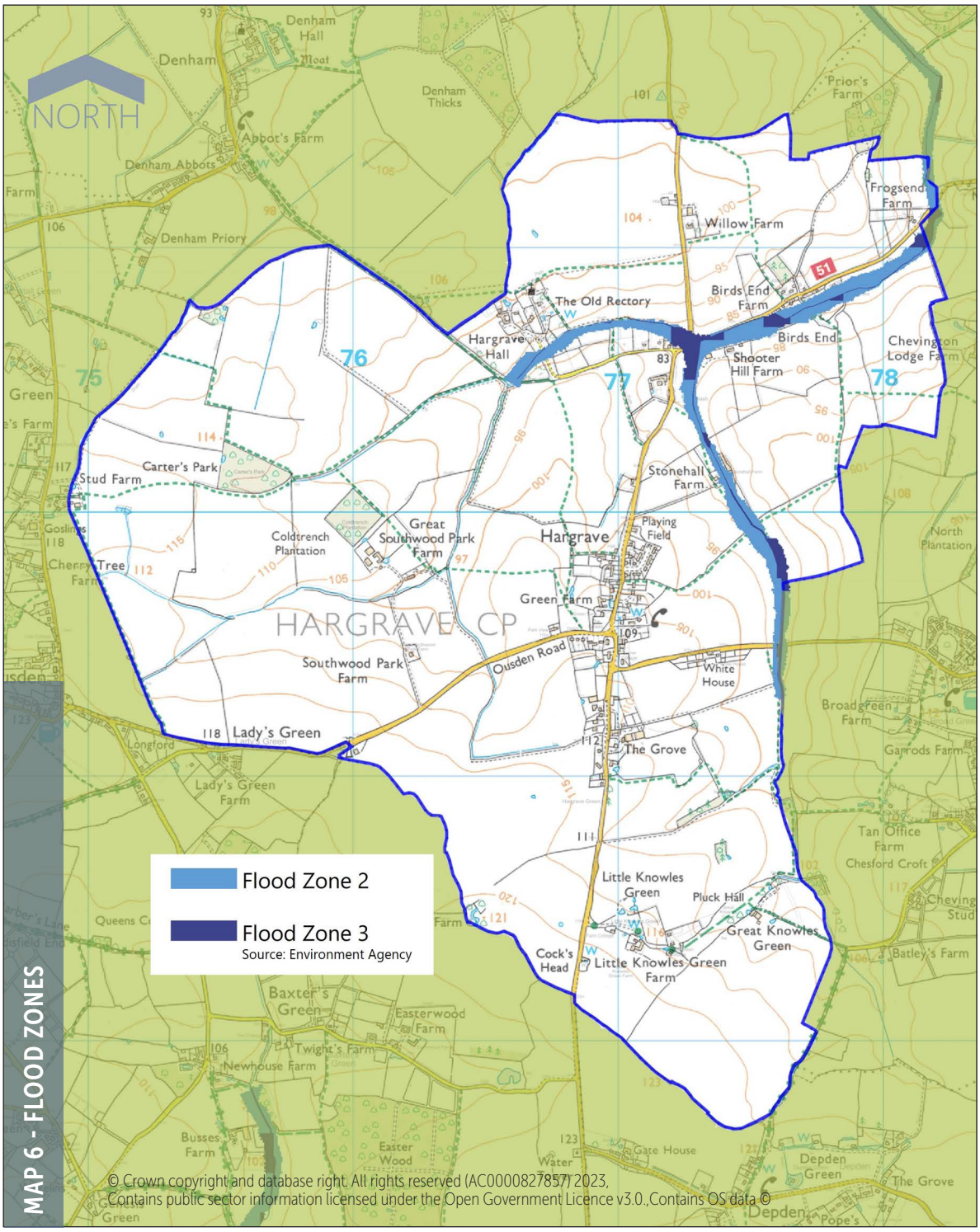
Policy HAR 13 - Sustainable Construction Practices

For all appropriate development, proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate how they:

a. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings having regard to the incorporation of sustainable methods of preventing overheating;
b. incorporate current best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;
c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems;
d. incorporate current sustainable design and construction measures and renewable energy measures, such as, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels, thermal and PV systems; and
e. make provision for grey water/rainwater, and/or surface water harvesting and recycling that manages run-off and reduces water use.

Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

9.19 Birds End and The Wash, in particular, sit at the bottom of steep slopes and feature a stream running parallel with Birds End. The area has been subject to flooding on a number of occasions and the immediate vicinity along the course of the stream is designated as Flood Zone 3 as defined by the Environment Agency. Flood Zone 3 is the area most likely to flood from rivers. The route of the stream is also a receptor for surface water and at high risk of surface water flooding with multiple flow paths that contribute to this risk. New developments in areas of surface water flood risk are also subject to sequential and exception testing in accordance with the criteria set out in the NPPF. Surface water flood risk is managed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (Suffolk County Council). Wider areas along the course of the streams are also at medium and low risk of flooding. The flood risk areas, as identified by the Environment Agency, are illustrated on **Map 6**.



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9.20 National planning policy restricts the type of development that can take place in the areas likely to flood. It is essential that development proposals do not add to this risk through creating surfaces where rainwater can run-off into the highway or neighbouring sites and create new or exacerbate existing surface water flooding problems. New development should not increase flood risk off site, ideally limiting discharge rates to greenfield runoff rate (or 2 L/S whichever is higher) whilst observing the hierarchy of drainage discharge set by the Lead Local Flood Authority. New development will be required, where appropriate, to make provision for the attenuation and recycling of surface water and rainwater through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that might include on-site rainwater and stormwater harvesting and greywater recycling, and the management of run-off and water management in order to reduce the potential for making the situation worse.

Policy HAR 14 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

Any proposals for new development, or the intensification of existing development in areas that are at risk of flooding from any source should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy and will not be permitted, unless the applicant has satisfied the requirements of the National Planning Policy Guidance, the NPPF, Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority, and the Local Planning Authority Sequential/Exception tests (where applicable).

Proposals for all new development will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site surface water drainage and water resources will be managed so as not increase flood risk in the surrounding area.

Proposals should, as appropriate include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include:

- basins, swales, and raingardens, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/ recreational areas, and biodiversity benefits; and
- rainwater and stormwater harvesting and recycling; and other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved.

Light Pollution

9.21 Paragraph 191 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation". Artificial lighting of development, while increasing a sense of security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact.

Policy HAR 15 - Dark skies

Dark skies are to be preferred over lighting while ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife, subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.

30

10. HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Context

10.1 Concerns relating to highways and transport were a consistent topic raised by residents during the preparation of the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan. At that time, the school bus was also open to regular passengers and the Connecting Communities service run by the Volunteer Network also served the village.

10.2 Traffic speed is also an issue that has been frequently highlighted during the course of preparing this Plan. A 30 mph speed limit is in operation in the village centre, from just north of The Old Bull to immediately south of The Grove, as well as west along the Ousden Road and east along Chevington Road. In addition, there is a 40 mph speed limit at Birds End.

10.3 There is a network of public rights of way in the parish and these are celebrated and promoted in the Map of Public Rights of Way produced by the Parish Council. A village footpaths map was produced in 2015 and a board outside the Village Hall illustrates the village network. The Parish Council has a footpaths warden who monitors the condition of the paths.

Planning Policy Context

10.4 The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable transport through reducing the impacts of development on transport networks and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. At a local level, the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy states that the District Council "will develop and promote a high quality and sustainable transport system across the borough and reduce the need for travel through spatial planning and design."

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

10.5 Neighbourhood plans have little power to introduce highway improvements as most schemes will not require planning permission. Improvements are therefore reliant on Suffolk County Council, as the highways authority, for investment in projects or improvements required as part of the mitigation of the impact of development proposals.

10.6 Given that some residents experience difficulties getting out of the village, and the tendency towards people living longer in their own homes, it is considered essential that the village should be served by a bus service. The County Council is responsible for public transport services, including co-ordinating volunteer and community transport initiatives. Therefore, any service provision in Hargrave will need to be agreed with them. Currently a rural transport initiative operates in the former Forest Heath area known as "Connecting Communities". It is provided by Suffolk County Council working in partnership with Suffolk Community Transport Operators and is designed to help people travel around the county of Suffolk who might not have access to a regular bus service. It might be possible, working with neighbouring parishes, to extend the service to the Hargrave area.

Community Action 11 - Public Transport

The Parish Council will work with local bus companies and Suffolk County Council to lobby for an increase in availability of public transport.

10.7 The use of signs and painted lines bring an urban solution to the rural environment and are therefore not always appropriate. Large traffic signs in particular can have a detrimental impact on the natural environment while the removal of white lines in some villages has been proven to reduce traffic speeds.

10.8 Given the concerns raised previously by residents, it would be fitting to investigate a project to find suitable measures to reduce the impact of traffic in the village in a sympathetic way. One possible example of such an initiative is contained in "Traffic in Villages" produced by the Dorset AONB Partnership in conjunction with Hamilton-Baillie Associates and using the checklist of features contained within the document to inform an action plan.

Community Action 12 - Traffic Calming

The Parish Council will seek to work with the County Council Highways Department to implement environmental sympathetic and self-enforcing traffic calming measures in the village.

10.9 **Heavy Goods Vehicles**

During the preparation of the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan concerns were raised about the number and size of HGVs travelling through the village and these concerns remain. The lorries appear to be passing through the village taking a short-cut between the A14 north of Barrow and the A143 at Chedburgh. As a result, damage is being caused to the grass verges of the narrow roads through the village and, left unmanaged, the lorries could lead to a deterioration of the quality of life of residents.

Community Action 13 - HGV management

The Parish Council will seek to work with neighbouring parish councils to lobby for a reduction of non-essential HGVs passing through the village.

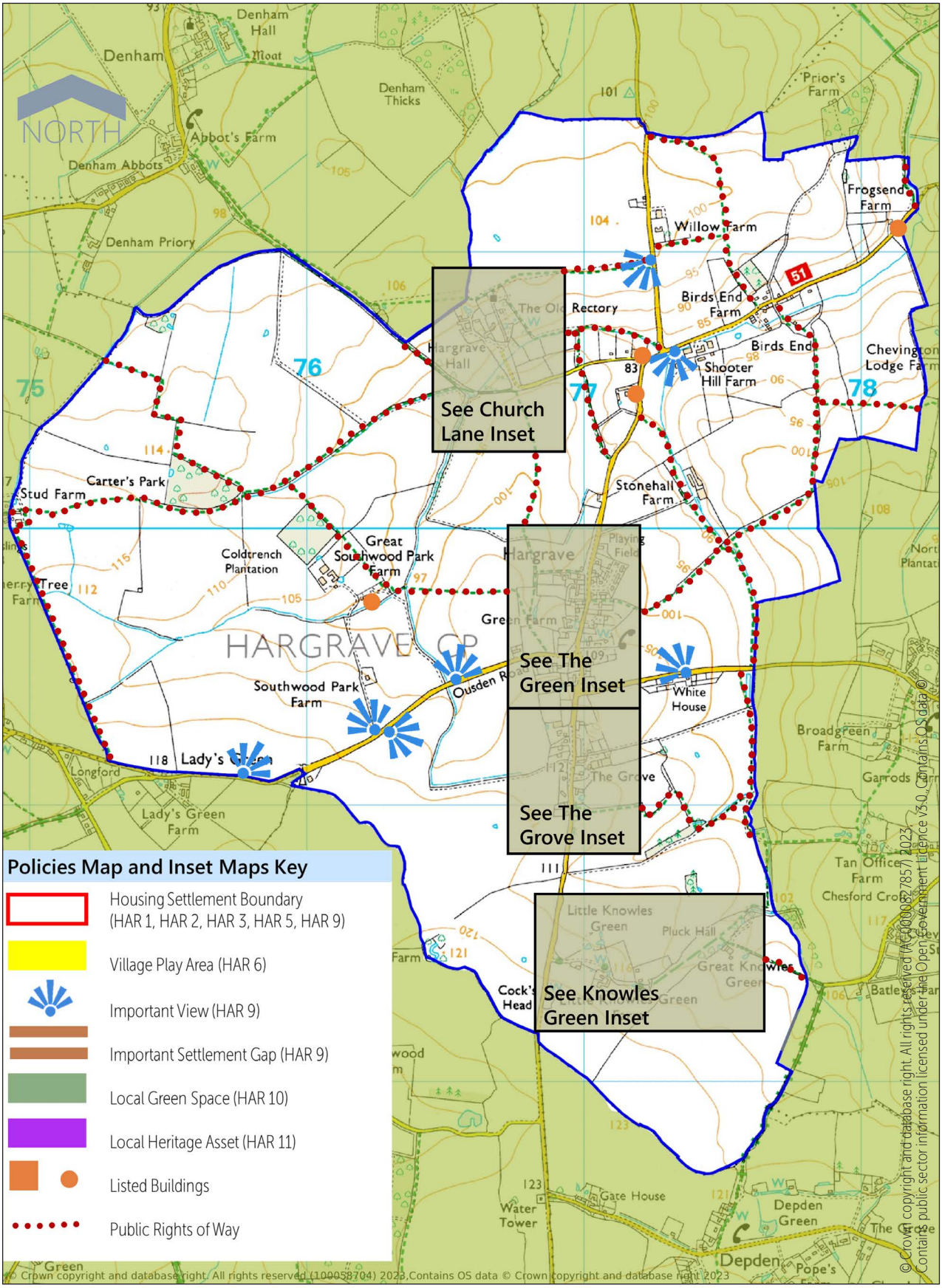
10.10 **Public Rights of Way**

There are some gaps in the public rights of way network and routes that need improvement. Horse riding is popular in the parish although there is limited availability of bridleways or other public routes off the highway. One particular opportunity that could be explored is the improvement of the paths to Ousden and to the rear of Ickworth Park.

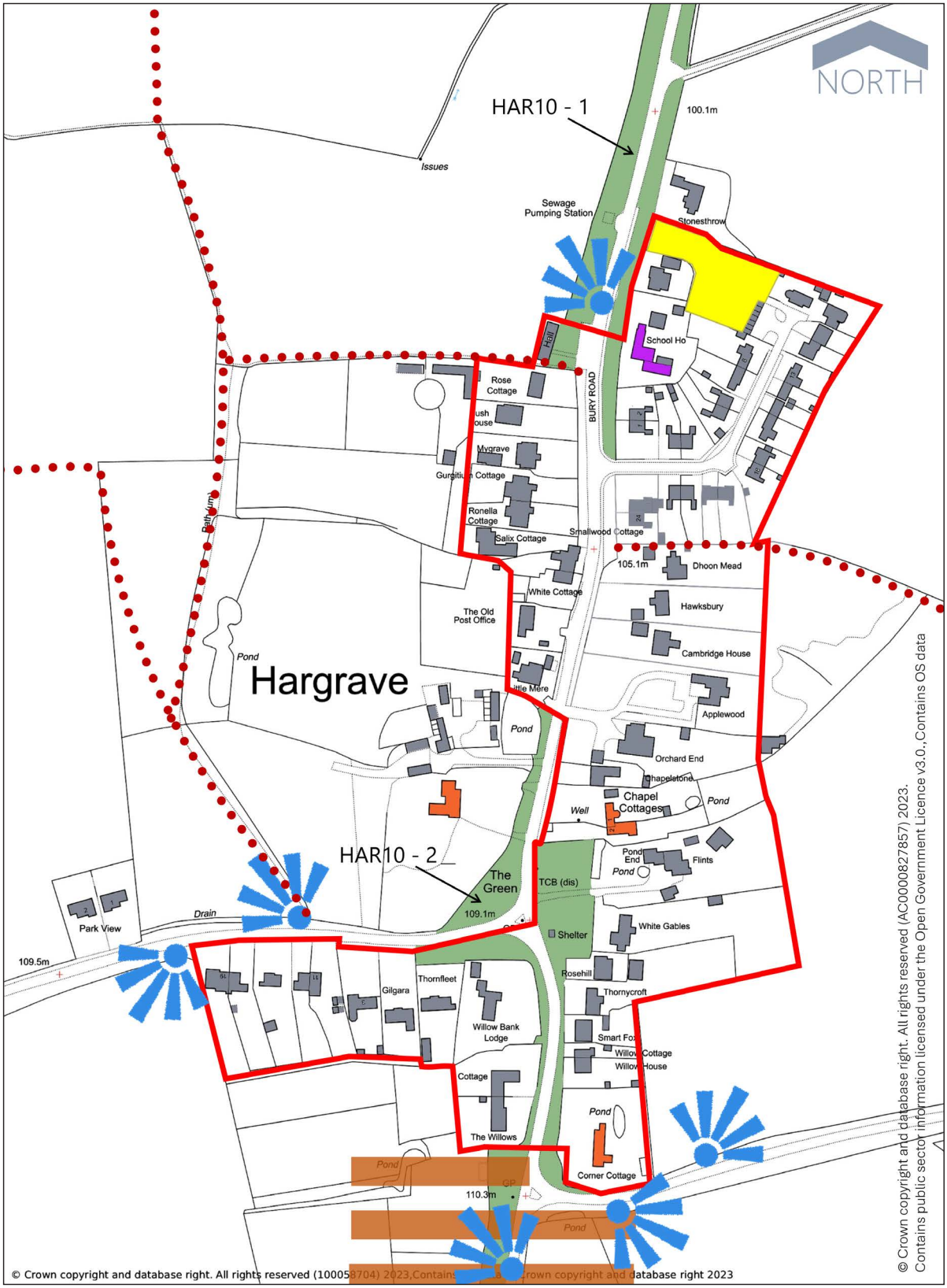
Community Action 14 - Public Rights of Way

Gaps have been identified in the public rights of way network, including bridleways around the village and the Parish Council will seek to work with landowners and the County Council to create additional paths to complete the network.

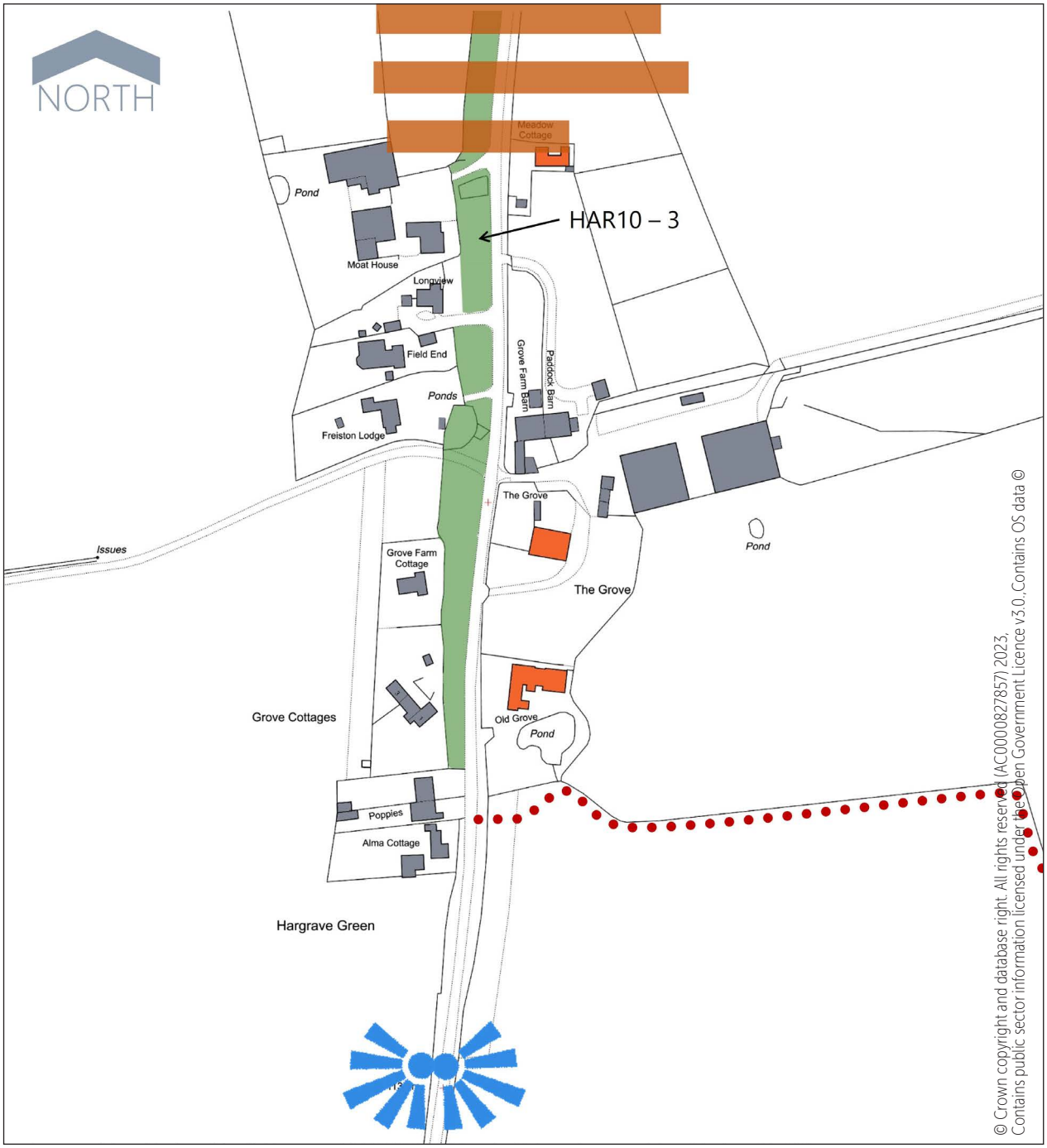
POLICIES MAP



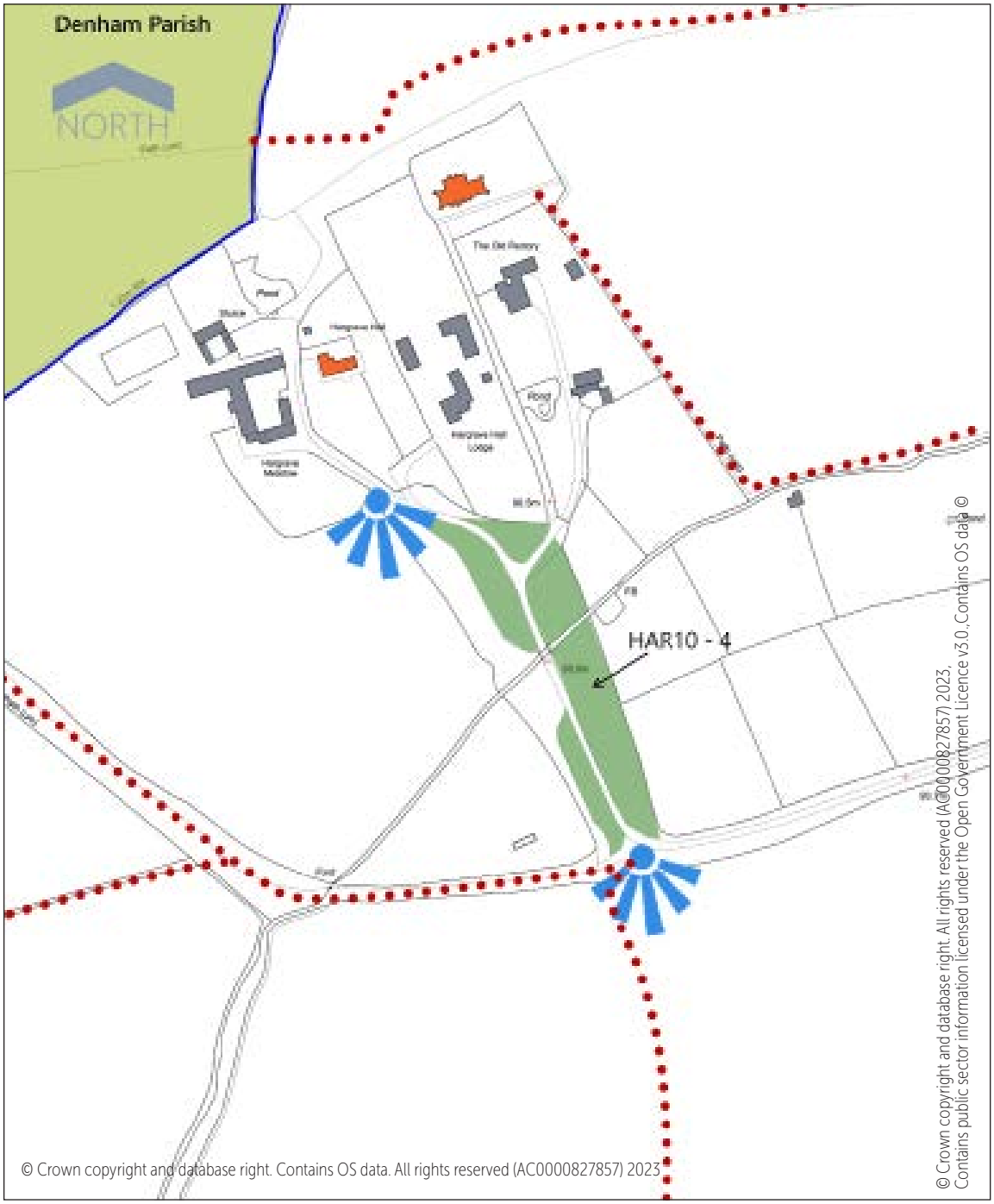
THE GREEN INSET MAP



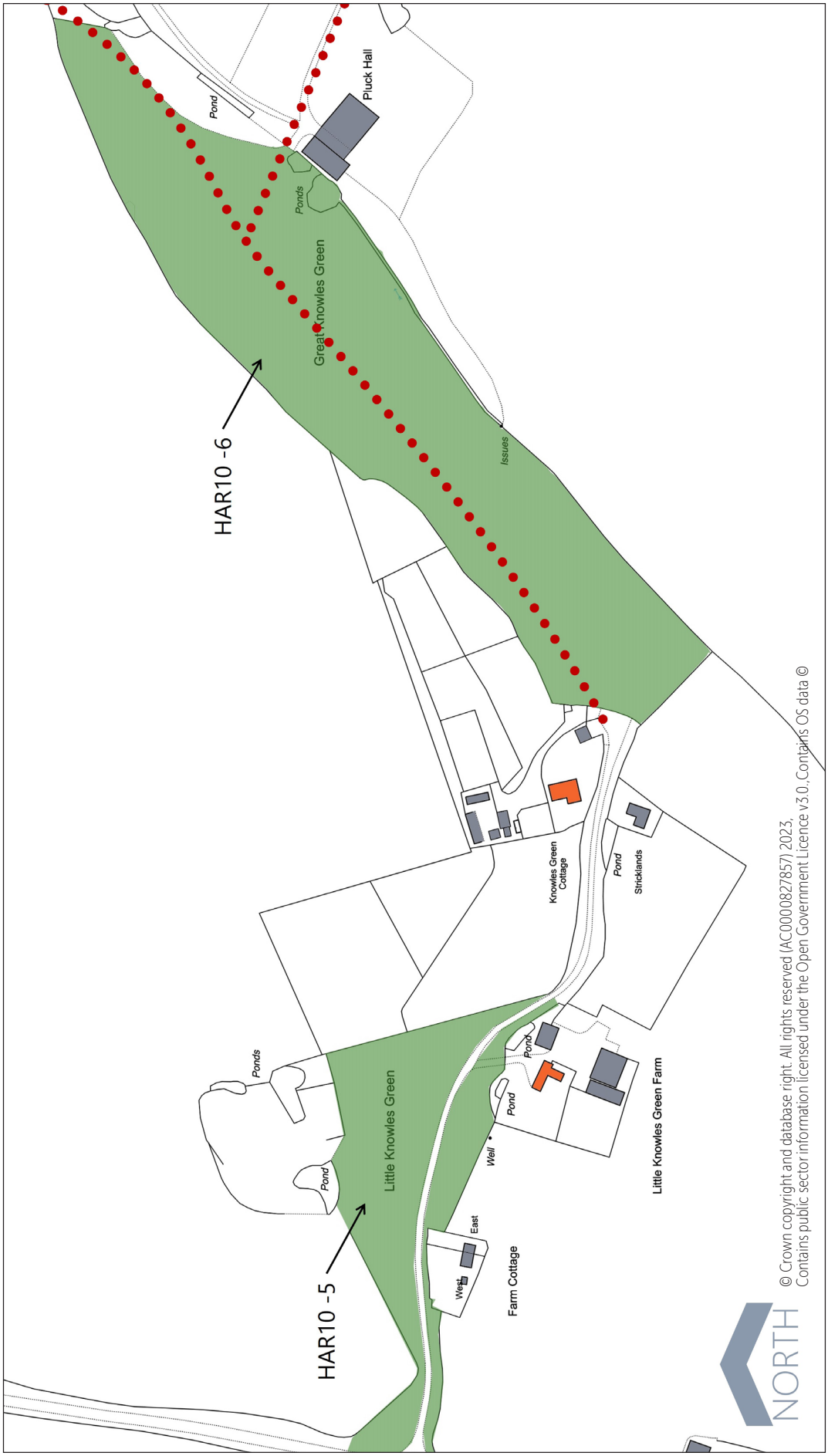
THE GROVE INSET MAP



CHURCH LANE INSET MAP



KNOWLES GREEN INSET MAP



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APPENDIX 1 - PROGRESS WITH THE 2018 COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Community Action 1 The Parish Council will seek to identify and promote small scale employment opportunities in Hargrave that are in keeping with the rural nature of the village and will not have an adverse impact on residents and the environment.	**Progress**: The impact of Covid and restrictions to working practices continue to affect how and where people work. The Parish council should be looking at how to support people working from home in terms of work spaces possibly in any village hall development and the continued importance of effective broadband connections.
Community Action 2 The Parish Council will seek to proactively utilise communications to positively promote Hargrave.	**Progress:** The Parish Council uses the Village website and the village newsletter to share information and to raise issues facing the village. A village Facebook site is run by a resident.
Community Action 3 We will actively monitor, lobby and influence improvements to optimise communications technology infrastructure within the parish.	**Progress:** Whilst there has been some improvements to communication technology within the village there are still areas of the village like The Wash where internet cover is intermittent. This will remain an issue for the Parish council to try and influence improvements.
Community Action 4 We will develop positive co-operation with the local agricultural community to optimise mutual benefits.	**Progress:** Since the 2018 Neighbourhood plan the funding support programmes for farming have gone through radical changes. These are still working through and the Parish Council needs to maintain links with local farmers to see what opportunities this could provide for enhancing the environment of the village.
Community Action 5 The Parish Council will investigate ways of supporting the establishment of additional groups and societies in the village, including organising a Clubs meeting at the Village Hall and identifying support mechanisms to get clubs established.	**Progress:** Covid restrictions have inevitably led to reductions in group activities within the village. One new initiative that occurred during this time was the establishment of The Hargrave Heritage project group, a joint initiative between the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council. This led to a successful launch of the project in 2022 followed up with the establishment of the Hargrave Heritage society.
Community Action 6 The Parish Council will seek to establish a Working Group to investigate opportunities for the improvement of the existing village hall or the possible construction of a new village hall for the village in full liaison with residents and the users of the existing facility.	**Progress:** As explained in the body of the new Neighbourhood Plan, considerable work has been carried out to investigate the viability of delivering a new village hall funded by limited housing development. The site under consideration is now no longer available and the new Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate it for the development.
Community Action 7 The Parish Council will investigate opportunities for the introduction of a car sharing initiative to help residents to make trips to the shops, school, or social and leisure events.	**Progress:** No progress with car sharing. This is part of the wider priority of transport within the village and in particular access for those without cars. See Community Action 8 for update on buses.
Community Action 8 The Parish Council will work with local bus companies and Suffolk County Council to lobby for an increase in availability of public transport.	**Progress:** The Parish council has been in contact with our local bus provider to see if a small change to the existing route of the buses could include Hargrave. Unfortunately, this has not met with any success and the current issues around fuel costs will likely put any improvement further back.

Community Action 9 The Parish Council will seek to work with the County Council Highways Department to implement environmental sympathetic and self-enforcing traffic calming measures in the village.	**Progress**: The Parish council is in regular contact with SCC Highways about speeding issues and the state of roads. The village has taken a very proactive stance in trying to reduce speeding within the village and will be trialling new technology proposed by the County Council. The impact of these initiatives has yet to see any real reductions in speeding issues.
Community Action 10 The Parish Council will seek to work with neighbouring parish councils to lobby for a reduction of non-essential HGVs passing through the village.	**Progress:** The Parish Council has been in contact with neighbouring Villages to see how we might work together to reduce speeding and unnecessary HGV traffic whilst recognising we live in a rural community where farmers will need to be using HGV vehicles. This is likely to be an ongoing issue.
Community Action 11 Gaps have been identified in the public rights of way network, including bridle paths around the village and the Parish Council will seek to work with landowners and the County Council to create additional paths to complete the network.	**Progress:** Footpaths within the village are an important asset and this was particularly recognised when Covid restrictions were imposed. Following contact with local landowners improved access to the footpaths has occurred, continued contact with landowners is likely as local issues are identified. The Parish Council has been working with SCC footpaths section to see what further improvements can follow.
Community Action 12 The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, including farmers, to identify opportunities to plant additional broadleaved woodland in line with the objectives of the St Edmundsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy. We will also seek to identify means of funding and managing new woodland, possibly through a community woodlands project.	**Progress:** The village has as an initiative planted 400 trees at Knowles Green and a recent review of that planting has identified some 100 trees needing replacement due to wastage and in particular the drought of 2022. Funding has been obtained to replace these trees. In addition local landowners have planted around 4000 further trees and bushes. The village is keen to see further planting continue.
Community Action 13 The Parish Council will seek to identify the ownership of all the verges in the village and will prepare a management plan for the maintenance and improvement of them including, where appropriate, positive management mechanisms for biodiversity purposes.	**Progress:** The Parish Council has agreed with the verge grass cutting company to reduce the areas cut whilst at the same time ensuring the verges are safe for traffic. In addition an area has been identified on the village green (opposite the Ousden turnoff) for reduced cutting to allow for natural plants and flowers to take hold. In addition local landowners have also taken initiatives to manage cutting areas to allow for natural plants and flowers. This is an ongoing initiative.

APPENDIX 2 - NATIONALLY DESCRIBED SPACE STANDARDS

The Government's spaces standards for new homes was published in 2015 and can be found here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads attachment_data/file/1012976/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard.pdf

The current standard requires that:

a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in the table below;
b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom;
c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sq m and is at least 2.15 m wide;
d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5 sq m;
e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75 m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55 m wide;
f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5 m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m2 within the Gross Internal Area);
g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900 - 1500 mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50 per cent of its floor area, and any area lower than 900 mm is not counted at all;
h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72 sq m in a double bedroom and 0.36 sq m in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement; and
i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3 sq m for at least 75 per cent of the Gross Internal Area.

A summary table is provided below.

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in Storage
		square metres			
1b	1p	39 (37)			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Where a one bedroom, one person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39 square metres to 37 square metres, as shown bracketed

APPENDIX 3 - THE VILLAGE HALL

Since the 2018 Plan was completed the Village Hall Working Group has considered outline proposals for:

- a village designed extension,
- an architect designed extension,
- an architect designed new hall, and
- a pre-assembled new hall.

Because of the condition of the current structure, the costs of all options were much the same.

Residents were invited to attend a presentation of the options and those that attended, voted in favour of a new building, be it architect designed or pre-assembled. The decision was communicated to residents via the Village Newsletter and has been reported in subsequent communications and Annual Parish Meetings.

The Parish Council's ambition is therefore to build a new facility to last for future generations which will provide:

- a community "hub" in a location well related to the main village centre
- at least the same floorspace as currently provided
- more car parking with charging points
- outdoor space
- adequate storage
- a separate meeting room
- a more energy efficient building that is cheaper to run

As part of the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, investigations were carried out as to whether it might be feasible to construct a new village hall. The process considered:

a. what any new hall should provide;
b. the assessment of potential sites;
c. further consideration of a preferred site; and
d. how a new village hall could be funded.

A separate and independent Site Assessment was carried out as part of the Government's neighbourhood plan support programme, which looked at five potential sites which had been suggested to the Parish Council as possibly being suitable. Of the sites considered, they were either considered unsuitable/unviable or were later withdrawn from being available.

APPENDIX 4 - LISTED BUILDINGS

Up to date information on listed buildings and other heritage assets should be sought from Historic England or another reliable source.

Listed Property	Grade
Frogsend Farmhouse, Bird's End	II
Green Farmhouse, The Green	II
Chapel Cottages, 1 and 2 The Green	II
Little Knowles Green Farmhouse, Little Knowles Green	II
Little Knowles Green Cottage, Little Knowles Green	II
The Mill House, Bury Road	II
Meadow Cottage, Wickhambrook Road	II
The Grove Plus barns within and formerly in the curtilage, Wickhambrook Road	II
Corner Cottage, Wickhambrook Road	II
The Old Grove, Wickhambrook Road	II
Hargrave Hall, Bridge Green	II
Church of St Edmund, Bridge Green	II*
Wash Cottage, The Wash	II
Barn 300 yards north of Southwood Park Farmhouse, Ousden Road	II

Church of St Edmund, Bridge Green II*

APPENDIX 5 - DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CHECKLIST

Not all items in the Development Management Checklist will be appropriate to every planning application. The checklist should therefore be applied accordingly, taking into consideration the proposal, its scale and location.

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?
- Is the road proposal respectful of the rural character of the village? This means that highways solutions are not overengineered.
- Is the road proposal highlighting the unique spatial qualities of the village and creating a series of distinct spaces?

Green spaces, views and character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquility of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, is it clear how this will be used by the new owners and how it will be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

Building heights and roofline:

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?

- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

Building materials and surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Are electric vehicle charging points provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

Architectural details and design:

- If the proposal is within a Conservation Area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?
- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?
- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

APPENDIX 6 - SUPPORTING EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents have been produced in support of the Neighbourhood Plan:

Hargrave Design Guidance and Codes; August 2023
Hargrave Character Appraisal and Important Views; December 2017
Hargrave Household / Residents Survey; February 2021

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing: Housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market including social and affordable rented and starter homes. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Biodiversity: Describes the range and variety of living organisms within an ecosystem. It can include all living organisms, plants, animals, fungi and bacteria and is often used to indicate the richness or number of species in an area. Such an area can be defined at different levels across the globe or be limited to a local area such as a parish.

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

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Habitat: The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

Heritage asset: A term that includes designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings, world heritage sites, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority.

Infrastructure: The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads and power supplies) necessary for development to take place.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Local Heritage Asset: Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area which in this case is West Suffolk Council.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the district, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

Neighbourhood Area: The Neighbourhood Area is that which the Neighbourhood Plan covers. It normally covers a whole parish and is formally designated by the local planning authority upon request of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared by a Parish Council for a particular Neighbourhood Area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and/or the Localism Act 2011

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

Rural exception sites for affordable housing: Sites for affordable housing development in rural locations where market housing would not normally be acceptable because of planning policy constraints. Homes can be brought forward on these sites only if there is a proven unmet local need for affordable housing and a legal planning agreement is in place to ensure that the homes will always remain affordable, will be for people in housing need and prioritised for those with a strong local connection to the Parish.

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

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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

Wildlife corridor: A wildlife corridor is a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joints two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat, Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations of plants and animals.

Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023-2040

Made Plan
December 2024

Hargrave Parish Council