

**ASTON ABBOTTS**



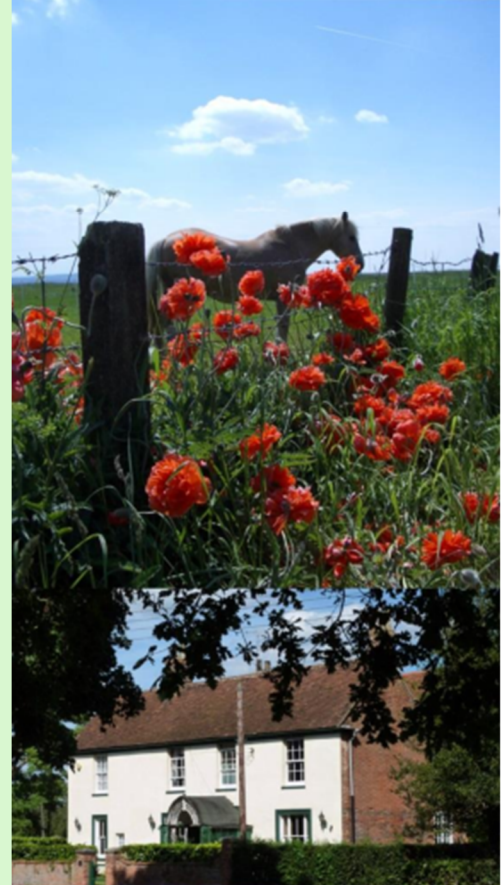
**Neighbourhood  
Plan**

**RESPECT CHARACTER AND HERITAGE**

SS

**2024-2039**

Submission Stage (Issue 1)  
October 2024



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## Foreword

Situated on elevated ground about 6km north of Aylesbury, the rural village of Aston Abbots is home to a close-knit community of around 425 residents. The village is largely Victorian in character and is a relatively good example of a nineteenth century “High Farming” settlement. The unique character of Aston Abbots, coupled with its beautiful surrounding scenery, holds immense value for its residents.

The Parish Council acknowledges the significance of planning for the future of the village. With the support of the community, it actively seeks to influence proposed changes, striving to mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the village's character, its surroundings, and the well-being of its residents.

In 2014, Aston Abbots Parish Council produced a Community-Led Plan ('The Village Plan') following extensive consultation with the village. The Village Plan was well-received and remains a useful document. However, it lacks the capacity to address and guide new development. Consequently, in 2021, the Parish Council decided to initiate the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Residents take great pride in our village and its community, and they are determined to preserve the rural character of Aston Abbots and its surrounding countryside for everyone to enjoy. The Neighbourhood Plan is viewed as a vital tool in ensuring that this goal is accomplished.

## Acknowledgements

A public meeting was held in the Village Hall in August 2021 at which a presentation was given on the role of the Neighbourhood Plan and what is involved.

Following very positive feedback from the meeting, the Parish Council undertook a survey which was completed by the end of April 2022. Nearly 50% of all households responded to the survey and the Parish Council is extremely grateful to all those who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

Following initial analysis of the results of the survey, a Steering Group was formed in November 2022 to produce the Plan on behalf of the Parish Council. Throughout the period of the Plan's creation, further open meetings have been held at which the Neighbourhood Plan has been discussed. The process will culminate in a referendum to agree, or otherwise, the final version, once approved by the appointed Examiner. The referendum requires a simple majority, of those voting, to vote in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan for it to be brought into effect.

The Steering Group members are:

Chairman: Trevor Hall (Parish Council)

Administration Support: Liz van Hullen (Parish Clerk)

Group members: Jane Baylis (Parish Councillor), Jane Plested (Parish Councillor), Kate Curry,  
Janet Walker and Neil Redding

Professional advisor: Sally Chapman

Previous members: Max Tatton-Brown (until January 2023) and Mike Coker (until September 2023)

Technical Support:

Design Guide: Dan Mathers, AECOM

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2011, the Localism Act introduced a new opportunity for local communities to shape their future formally as part of the planning system. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish Councils and when they have gone through all the required steps and processes, they become part of the development plan for the area. This means that any planning applications will have to take account of policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting green spaces and improving local character.

### Role of this Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.2 This plan deals with the important land use and environmental qualities of the parish that have been identified by the residents during various consultation events.
- It sets out a clear vision for the parish over the plan period, from 2024 to 2039.
  - It refers to the issues raised and suggests how they can be approached through planning policies and aspirations.
  - It contains policies to protect the parish and to enable appropriate development, to meet local needs for houses and jobs.
  - It acknowledges that some development might be appropriate, provided it meets the policies in this plan and the current strategic plan for the whole district.
  - It contains maps of the Area showing the features protected for various reasons for example, important local views, heritage assets and Local Green Spaces.

### Process

- 1.3 Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement. In order to rigorously test the policies of a neighbourhood Plan, an independent Examination is carried out. The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the following 'basic conditions':
- consistency with local planning policy;
  - demonstrates how the plan will contribute towards sustainable development;
  - regard to national policy;
  - general conformity with strategic local policy;
  - contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - compatibility with National obligations; and
  - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.4 Once the Plan has passed Examination, it is voted upon in a referendum by Parish residents and if a simple majority 'yes' vote is achieved, then the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' by Buckinghamshire Council and comes into force as a planning document with legal weight in decision-making.

## Screening requirements from EU regulations

- 1.5 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004) and the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) previously implemented the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives in England. These Regulations continue to apply and have been transposed into English law. In most cases, Neighbourhood Plans do not require a full Assessment but must be screened to confirm that this is the case. The Council carried out SEA HRA Screening and a report was published in July 2024 which confirms that no full Assessment is required.

## Neighbourhood area

- 1.6 Aston Abbotts Parish Council resolved in June 2021 to proceed with making a Neighbourhood Plan and the Neighbourhood Area was approved as being the whole of the Parish on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The Parish boundary is shown in the map in Figure 2.

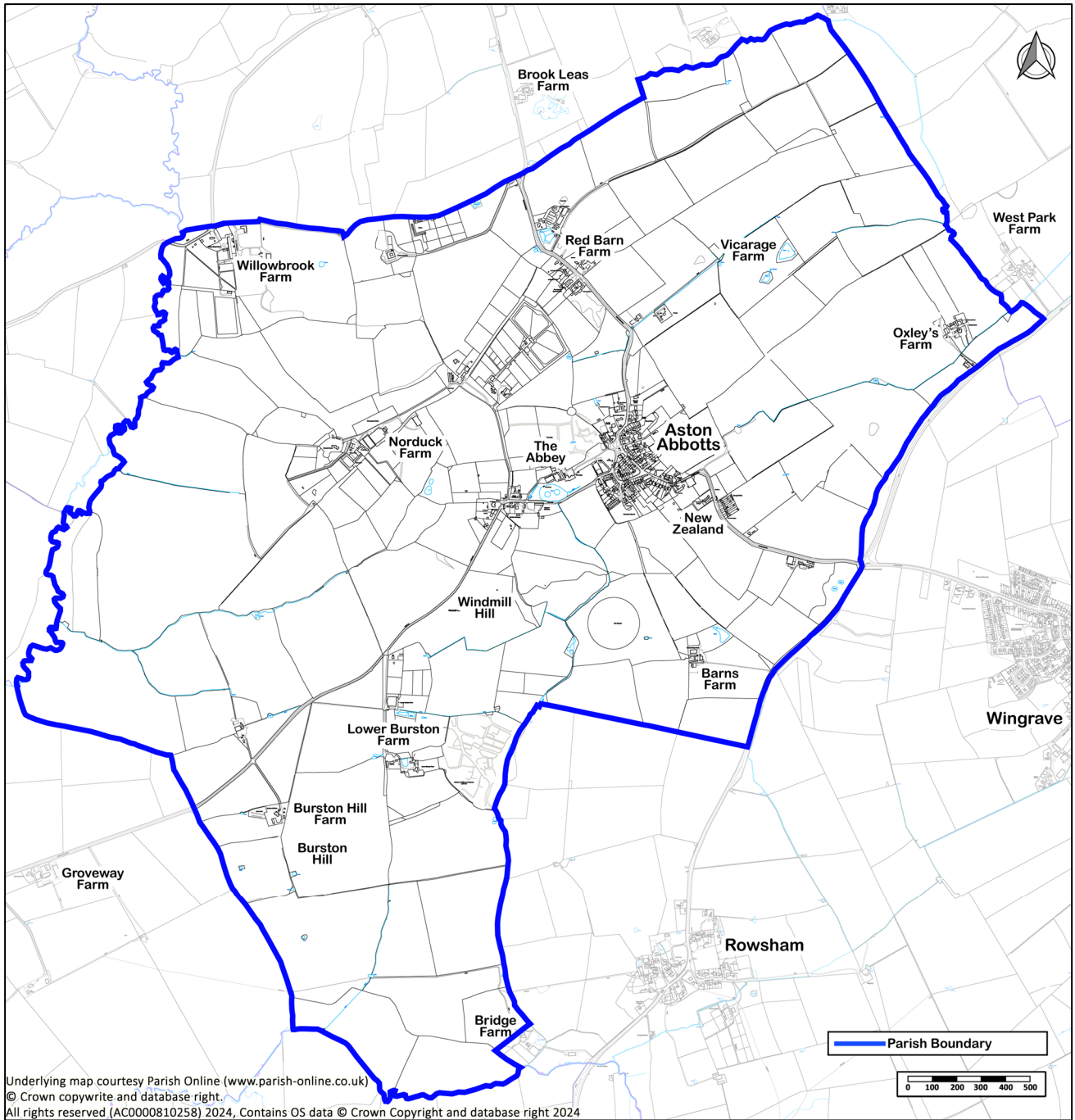
## Technical Report and Supporting Evidence

- 1.7 A Design Guide document was commissioned which should be read in conjunction with this Plan. This document details the Design Codes and provides a checklist against which design proposals should be evaluated. The document was produced by AECOM and is at Version 2 dated November 2023 (front cover shown in Figure 1).



**Figure 1 – Aston Abbotts Design Guide**

- 1.8 During the development of this Plan, evidence was gathered which was used to inform its content and policies. This evidence has been documented in several Evidence Reports which detail the source of information, methodologies used to assess the information, and conclusions. Whilst the Evidence Reports do not form part of the final Neighbourhood Plan, they have been made available for reference on the Aston Abbotts Parish Council website. Details of these reports are provided in Annex 3.



**Figure 2 – Parish Boundary**



## 2. The Strategic Policy Context

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) version was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government’s approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. Neighbourhood planning forms part of the NPPF approach to planning, to allow local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their strategic needs and priorities. The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area with planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area’s future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. However, a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support these policies.
- 2.2 As of June 2024, a Draft NPPF is being prepared by the new Government which will be for consultation summer-autumn 2025 and will not replace the December 2023 version until it is adopted.

### Sustainable development

- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (United Nations Brundtland Commission 1987).
- 2.4 The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development helps to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes is provided in a well-designed, beautiful and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces and to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 2.5 Therefore, the aims, objectives, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed against their ability to achieve sustainable development. Wherever possible the Neighbourhood Plan should actively promote the achievement of sustainable development.

### The Local Planning Authority and Local Plan

- 2.6 Aston Abbotts Parish lies within the local planning authority of Buckinghamshire Council which was formed in April 2020. The development plan remains that of the former Local Authority for the area which was Aylesbury Vale District Council. The adopted Local Plan in place is Vale of Aylesbury Plan 2013-2033 (VALP). A Buckinghamshire wide Local plan is being prepared and is likely to be in place by 2027.

## 3. Parish Description

- 3.1 Aston Abbots is a small village 6 miles north-east of Aylesbury. There are three roads providing access to the village. The road to the south leads to the A418 (the Aylesbury-Leighton Buzzard road), about half a mile from Aston Abbots, and to Wingrave, at what is commonly called the 'Wingrave Crossroads'. The road to the north leads to the adjoining village of Cublington, and then to Wing & Whitchurch. The road to the west leads to Weedon, along a lane called 'Lines Hill', after the farmer who owned the adjoining farmland some 200 years ago. The road is still a gated road, although now the gates are only rarely closed. This road leads past Burston and Burston Hill Farm, the site of an early Saxon settlement. Just beyond Weedon is the main trunk route to Buckingham, the A413. The area of the parish is 887 hectares, and the village itself is 142 metres above sea level.

### History and Heritage

- 3.2 Aston Abbots first recorded as Aston Abbats was documented in the Domesday Book (1086, as shown on a plaque located on the Church Room). The village name Aston, or Eastun, is AngloSaxon for Eastern Estate, was listed as being within in the Saxon Cottesloe Hundred and it recorded 6 villagers, 12 smallholders and a slave as resident. Aston Abbots an agricultural community was then recorded a part of a monastic manor of 10 Hides (1200 acres) which from 1163 belonged to the Demesnes of St Albans until the dissolution of the Abbeys by Henry VIII.
- 3.3 The lands were later sold by the King Henry to John Lord Russell who later sold them on to Lord William Dormer. The lands later came into the procession a number of owners including Sir William Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Overstone and Lady Wantage. Much of the land and the houses were sold to the sitting tenants in 1919 by Lady Wantage.
- 3.4 Located on the southwestern side of the current village is the farm known as Lower Burston located here was another settlement. First an Iron Age settlement and still visible are sited earthworks/remains of the village of Burston (aka Birdstane) established by Norsemen. This village was abandoned in 1488 when the then landowner John Swanfield destroyed 8 ploughs, cleared 400 acres of land and evicted 60 people when he inherited the manor. The local medieval open fields and common land became enclosed as a result of the Enclosure Acts of the late 1790's. Lands were given individual field names and to this day in a few green pastures evidence of the medieval ridge and furrow system of cultivation can be seen i.e. in the area known as Lines Hill. (Further detail available in the publication Aston Abbots 1000-2000).
- 3.5 Agriculture has been noted as the prime driver of income in Aston Abbots up to more recent changes to farming methods. As a result, although much of the surrounding land is still farmed modern methods have left few people directly involved within the industry. Today a considerable amount of the local land is also used for equestrian purposes. For a period, lacemaking became a cottage industry for local women in the village and more widely across Buckinghamshire. The local lacemaking industry has also long gone and in recent times so have the village pubs, shop and Post Office.

## Population & Household Data

- 3.6 At the date of the first census in 1801, the population was 276, and from that date until 1991 it has varied between about 250 and 350 people. In 2001 it rose for the first time above the 400 mark, to 404. The number of dwellings in 2001 was 160 and in 2011 was 167. The 2021 census shows 187 households and 426 residents (details provided in the *2021 Census Data* evidence report)

## Facilities

- 3.7 The village is very limited in terms of facilities, with no shop. The pub, the Royal Oak, ceased trading in 2021 with no prospect of it re-opening. The only facilities consist of the Village Hall (Figure 3), the Church, the allotments, the village orchard and the recreation ground. Residents have to travel to nearby towns and villages such as Wingrave, Wing, Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard for shopping, post office, education and health facilities.



**Figure 3 – Village Hall**

## 4. Consultation

### Overview

- 4.1 Full details of events and engagement with the community during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan are provided in the *Consultation Statement* report.
- 4.2 The primary channels used to inform the community about Neighbourhood Plan activities are a local magazine called The Chronicle and an Email Postbox which is a local mailing list. There is also an Aston Abbotts Facebook page.
- 4.3 In addition, prior to the Regulation 14 Consultation, several public events and activities have included:
  - Village Meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021
  - Parish-wide Survey, 11<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022
  - Annual Parish Meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022
  - Formation of the Steering Group, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022
  - Annual Parish Meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023
  - Display board at the Village Fete, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2023
  - Showcase Event in the village hall, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023
  - Annual Parish Meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Regulation 14 Consultation

- 4.4 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan was approved for Regulation 14 Consultation at an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 17th May 2024. Following this approval, the Plan, along with all associated documents, was made available on dedicated pages of the Aston Abbotts Parish Council website. These pages included detailed information about the Regulation 14 Consultation process and an online feedback form to gather responses. In addition, hard copies of the documents were placed in the Village Hall and the Church, for residents to access.
- 4.5 The consultation period ran from 1st July to 19th August 2024. All parish residents were notified of the consultation through multiple channels, including a flyer delivered to every residence, announcement via the Email Postbox, and a post on the Aston Abbotts Facebook page.
- 4.6 To further encourage engagement, two drop-in sessions were organized at the Village Hall. The first took place on Sunday, 14th July, from 15:30 to 16:30, but attendance was very low, with only three residents present due to competing events, including the Wimbledon Men's Final and the build-up to the UEFA Euros Final between England and Spain. The second session, held on Thursday, 25th July, from 19:30 to 20:30, saw a significantly higher turnout, with 19 residents in attendance.
- 4.7 During the consultation period, a total of 10 comments were submitted by residents. Nine of these were submitted via the online feedback form, and one was received by letter from a resident's representative. Additionally, Buckinghamshire Council provided 25 comments, and eight responses were submitted by statutory bodies.

## 2022 Parish-wide Survey

- 4.8 The largest source of evidence that has informed this Neighbourhood Plan has been the parish-wide survey that was undertaken in 2022. This survey involved 180 households of which 85 responded, close to 50%. This demonstrates the enthusiasm and commitment of our community to influence the way Aston Abbotts will develop over the coming years.
- 4.9 The survey covered the following topics:
- Housing
  - Economy
  - Communication
  - Infrastructure
  - Private Transport
  - Environment
  - History and Ecology
- 4.10 The full results of the survey are provided in the background evidence report 2022 Survey Results. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results.

### Summary of Survey Responses - Demographics

- 4.11 Number of members within the household

	Qty 1	Qty 2	Qty 3	Qty 4	Total
Number of adults?	23	57	2	2	151
Number of school-age children?	8	3			14
Number of pre-school-age infants?	2				2
					167

- 4.12 What is the gender and ages of all members of the household?

	Age not given	Under 12	12 to 17	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 75	76+	Total
Gender not given	1	1					2		4
Male	4	7	1	1	13	17	23	12	78
Female	4	3	1	6	13	27	17	12	83
Prefer not to say			1			1			2
	9	11	3	7	26	45	42	24	167

- 4.13 What is the work/education situation for all members of the household?

Employed	48	29%
Self Employed	26	16%
<b>Retired</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>40%</b>
Unemployed	2	1%
In full-time education	14	8%
Other*	10	6%

## 4.14 What is the housing status for the property?

Owned with a mortgage	25	30%
<b>Owned outright</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>62%</b>
Rented from private landlord	2	2%
Housing association	5	6%
Social housing		
Other		

## 4.15 How long have you lived in Aston Abbotts (years)?

	Nil	<=1 yr	2-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-30 yrs	>30 yrs
Number in each year range	8	6	11	13	6	4	13	23

## Top Level Summary of Survey Responses

4.16 The tables below provide a top-level summary of the tick box responses for each topic showing which option rated the highest. The numbers in parentheses show the number of households that expressed an opinion and the percentage that selected that option. For example, the following entry indicates that most of the households "Agreed" that Aston Abbotts is clean & tidy. It also shows that 82 households expressed an opinion of which 40 chose the option "Agree", which is 49%.

Is clean & tidy	"Agree" (40 out of 82, 49%)
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## 4.17 General Info

- How do you feel about living in Aston Abbotts?

Has a nice environment	"Strongly agree" (57 out of 83, 69%)
Is clean & tidy	"Agree" (40 out of 82, 49%)
Is quiet/peaceful	"Strongly agree" (41 out of 82, 50%)
Has strong sense of community	"Agree" (45 out of 81, 56%)
Has good facilities	"Disagree" (42 out of 83, 51%)
Has good public transport	"Neither agree nor disagree" (35 out of 82, 43%)
Is convenient for commuting	"Agree" (46 out of 81, 57%)
Is convenient for cultural activities	"Agree" (32 out of 79, 41%)
Is good for social activities	"Neither agree nor disagree" (32 out of 81, 40%)
Is in good school catchment area	"Neither agree nor disagree" (35 out of 79, 44%)

## 4.18 Housing

- New housing

Do you agree that there will be a need for more housing?	"Agree" (31 out of 82, 38%)
How many homes do you think would be appropriate?	"Less than 10" (41 out of 83, 49%)

- When new homes have to be built, which type do you think would be most suitable?

Affordable homes	"In favour" (23 out of 78, 29%)
Housing association homes	"Strongly opposed to" (22 out of 74, 30%)
Retirement/sheltered homes	"Don't mind" (26 out of 74, 35%)
Bungalows	"Don't mind" (29 out of 73, 40%)
Small homes (1 bed)	"Don't mind" (30 out of 70, 43%)
Medium size homes (2-3 beds)	"In favour" (39 out of 79, 49%)
Larger homes (4+ beds)	"Don't mind" (20 out of 73, 27%)
Flats	"Strongly opposed to" (31 out of 69, 45%)

- New Housing Sustainability and Location

When new homes are built, do you agree they must be built sustainably?	"Strongly agree" (50 out of 84 (60%))
When new homes are built, where do you think they should be located?	"Only within the village" (44 out of 82, 54%)

#### 4.19 Economy

- Businesses run from home

Do any members of the household run a business from home?	"No" (65 out of 80, 81%)
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- Business Premises

Does anyone in household own/rent business premises in the parish?	"No" (77 out of 79, 97%)
Do they see the business(es) staying in the parish for the next 10 years?	"Yes" (2 out of 3, 67%)

- Business Units

Do you favour development of more Business Units within the Parish?	"Neither agree nor disagree" (23 out of 79, 29%)
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#### 4.20 Communication

- Communication General

Community news and information - how important is it to you?	"Very important" (43 out of 83, 52%)
Is it easy to find community news and information for Aston Abbotts?	"Easy" (46 out of 79, 58%)

- As sources of community news and information, how would you rate the following?

Parish noticeboards	"Don't use it" (28 out of 80, 35%)
Parish Council website	"Don't use it" (32 out of 76, 42%)
Aston Abbotts website	"Don't use it" (24 out of 76, 32%)
Aston Abbotts Chronicle	"Very Good" (42 out of 82, 51%)
Aston Abbotts Email Post Box	"Very Good" (36 out of 80, 45%)
Local county newspapers	"Don't use it" (52 out of 76, 68%)
BBC Three Counties Radio	"Don't use it" (60 out of 74, 81%)
Facebook	"Don't use it" (36 out of 76, 47%)
Twitter	"Don't use it" (56 out of 74, 76%)

#### 4.21 Infrastructure

- Infrastructure

Do you have a broadband internet connection within the household?	"Yes" (74 out of 81, 91%)
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- Which of the following facilities do you use and how often do you use them?

Village Hall	"Rarely" (37 out of 82, 45%)
Recreation Ground	"Rarely" (33 out of 80, 41%)
Children's Play Area	"Never" (42 out of 81, 52%)
Church	"Rarely" (36 out of 81, 44%)
The Orchard	"Rarely" (32 out of 80, 40%)

- Which of the following do you think will need to be developed in the Parish?

Local shops	"Need more regardless.." (39 out of 76, 51%)
Leisure facilities	"Don't need any more.." (22 out of 73, 30%)
Parks/play area	"Don't need any more.." (32 out of 75, 43%)
Parking spaces	"Need more regardless.." (32 out of 77, 42%)
Road capacity	"Need more if new homes.." (28 out of 74, 38%)
Bus services	"Need more regardless.." (24 out of 77, 31%)

- Schools

Were the school(s) the preferred choice for the child(ren)	"Yes" (10 out of 11, 91%)
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- Recreational facilities

How do you rate the play and recreational facilities for the village?	"Adequate" (34 out of 83, 41%)
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- Allotments

Do any of the members of the household rent or share an allotment?	"No" (74 out of 82, 90%)
If they don't rent or share an allotment, would they like to?	"No" (63 out of 69, 91%)

#### 4.22 Private Transport

- Parking

Do you rely on on-street parking for your vehicles?	"No" (62 out of 79, 78%)
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- Electric Vehicles

Are you considering getting an electric vehicle in the next 5 years?	"No" (43 out of 76, 57%)
Would lack of an on-street charging stop you getting an electric vehicle?	"No" (52 out of 74, 70%)

#### 4.23 Environment

- Countryside and landscape

How important is to you is the countryside/landscape around the Parish?	"Very important" (76 out of 82, 93%)
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#### 4.24 History and Ecology

- History

How do you feel about our historical past being preserved?	"Very important" (63 out of 82, 77%)
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- Wildlife

How do you feel about our wildlife being preserved?	"Very important" (77 out of 83, 93%)
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- History and Ecology Ideas

Website (Historical and ecological information)	"Yes" (63 out of 77, 82%)
Information signs at points of interest	"Yes" (56 out of 78, 72%)
History display boards	"Yes" (47 out of 77, 61%)
Open History days and Ecology days	"Yes" (40 out of 75, 53%)
Walking guides – what to see where	"Yes" (67 out of 79, 85%)
Guided tours for history/ecology	"Yes" (38 out of 74, 51%)
Living memories website (for people inside and outside the parish)	"Yes" (43 out of 76, 57%)

4.25 Other

- If we were to encourage alternative energy, which would you support?

Wind power	"Agree" (53 out of 80, 66%)
Solar power	"Agree" (70 out of 80, 88%)

## 5. Vision and Aims

- 5.1 The Vision and Aims of this Neighbourhood Plan have been carefully developed and refined by the Parish Council to reflect the priorities of the community and help set the future of the village. The Vision is the overall aim of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Aims are more detailed, allowing the development of policies which in turn will be used to comment on and determine planning applications.

### Vision

***By 2039, Aston Abbotts' rural and historic character and hilltop setting will be valued and enhanced. The strong sense of community spirit will be strengthened such that existing and new residents will enjoy good health and wellbeing. The design of all new development will be of the highest quality and respect the character and heritage of the Parish.***

Neighbourhood Plan Aims	
1	The rural character and natural environment of the Parish including landscape features, biodiversity and green spaces will be enhanced and protected.
2	The historic character and heritage assets of the parish will be preserved and enhanced.
3	High quality design will be secured in all new development reflecting the distinctive character of Aston Abbotts.
4	Existing community facilities will be protected. New facilities or improvements to existing facilities will be encouraged to enhance opportunities for community cohesion and wellbeing.
5	Formal and informal amenity spaces will be protected and enhanced and Local Green Space designated to protect those spaces of particular community value
6	Existing local businesses, including farms, home-based and rural businesses will be supported. Small scale new businesses will be encouraged in the Parish.
7	New development will be accompanied by traffic calming measures and appropriate parking.
8	The public footpath and bridleway network will be improved and extended to be safe and accessible with additional links.

## 6. Sustainable Development

- 6.2 Reflecting the NPPF, new development must be sustainable, achieve high design & environmental standards, reflect local preferences in terms of location and especially important, deliver new community infrastructure.
- 6.3 The Parish has a distinctive character and new development should protect, reflect and enhance that character. There is a need for development to contribute to the quality of life for residents, including healthy lifestyles, access to local services, green open spaces, safe places for active play, and to be accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.
- 6.4 It is generally accepted that new development is necessary but there is a strong feeling that this should meet the needs of local people - existing and future generations, applying the principles of sustainable development to reflect environmental, economic and social needs. The policies reflect the issues facing the Parish, the Vision and the Aims.
- 6.5 For Aston Abbotts, the meaning of sustainable development is set out below.

### Sustainable Development Principles

#### *Sustainable development for Aston Abbotts means that development should be:*

- *At an appropriate scale and in locations where it would support the community,*
- *Of a high standard of design, reflecting the historic, rural character of the surroundings,*
- *Contributing towards local infrastructure,*
- *Meeting contemporary construction, energy efficiency and water management standards,*
- *Located and designed to enable safe walking and cycling*

#### *The following adverse impacts must be avoided:*

- *The loss or inappropriate diversion of public rights of way,*
- *Avoidable intrusion into open countryside and unacceptable impact on the landscape,*
- *The loss of or damage to wildlife habitats and hedgerows and trees,*
- *A loss of amenity for existing residential properties and reduced efficiency for nearby businesses,*
- *Overloading existing utilities and services (water, drainage, sewage and waste).*

## 7. Character

### Rural character

- 7.1 The defining character of the Parish is the compact pattern of development forming the village, on the hilltop setting within a rural, gently undulating landscape, with the village green in the centre of the village providing an important identity and heart to the village (Figure 4). The tranquil, rural character is always present given the lack of standardised housing patterns and layouts and the dominating vegetation including some beautiful trees and hedgerows within the village. The modest scale of buildings in the village reflects its agricultural past with more modern buildings dispersed along the main routes out of the village centre. The countryside beyond the village slopes down to the east, south and west and is glimpsed through gaps between houses.
- 7.2 Residents understandably place a high value on the countryside and landscape, with 93% of respondents saying it is very important and the remaining 7% saying it is important.
- 7.3 Accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan is a Design Guide which identifies the elements which contribute to the rural character of the Parish. The Design Guide must be adhered to when proposing new development (see Policy SD2).



**Figure 4 – Village Green**

### Village Character

- 7.4 The village of Aston Abbotts has a great deal of historic character. This is protected by two conservation areas which cover a large part of the settlement and which also contain seven listed buildings. Some of these include: Oak Farm House (16th century), Royal Oak (16th and 17th centuries) and The Abbey (18th century). In the early to mid 1800's, Aston Abbotts was largely rebuilt by the Earl of Chesterfield which included the construction of the four terraces of 'Overstone Cottages' which have decorative brickwork around the windows and doors and is an architectural feature which is replicated on many properties within the village. A small example of the many housing styles in the village is provided in Figure 5.



**Figure 5 – Examples of the diverse housing styles**

## Hedgerows

- 7.5 There are three roads leading into the centre of Aston Abbotts: Cublington Road, Wingrave Road and Moat Lane. Two of these roads, Wingrave Road and Moat Lane, stand out with their distinctive avenues of hedgerows. These hedgerows not only contribute significantly to the village's character but also provide a striking visual panorama as one enters or leaves the heart of the village. In addition there are numerous hedgerows marking field boundaries and along other minor roads in the Parish. Hedgerows are also important to biodiversity as they provide wildlife corridors across the countryside. Hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and where parts of hedges are removed to allow access, they should be replanted if possible along vision splays.

## Protected Views

- 7.6 Unsurprisingly, given the hilltop location of the village within the Parish, one of the most valued characteristics of the area is the views available from many public vantage points. The questionnaire asked a specific question on how highly the residents valued the countryside and landscape around the parish. This question provided the opportunity for the residents to identify views that they valued the most by marking arrows on a map. It is important to acknowledge that, given the nature of the question, the views and vantage points identified from the survey focused on views across the countryside from public footpaths. Nevertheless, it is recognised that street views within the village are also an important characteristic that should be considered. All the responses were considered carefully and by also considering views within and out of the village, a number of important views which should be retained have been identified. All the information, including the methodology is set out in the background *Protected Views* evidence report.

7.7 As a result, certain views within the village and from public viewpoints in the wider Parish should be retained and not blocked or adversely affected by new development. These viewpoints are shown on the relevant Policies Maps in Annex 1 (Figure 8 and Figure 9) and are listed below:

- **Countryside Protected Views**

- PV01 Whitchurch North footpath by Freemasons Wood looking north
- PV02 North Bridleway looking northwest
- PV03 Cublington Footpath near Badgers Oak Farm looking west
- PV04 Lines Hill, wide panorama over the Vale of Aylesbury
- PV05 The Grove looking across earthworks towards village green
- PV06 Footpath by Chapmans Lea looking northeast towards Wing
- PV07 Recreation Ground looking south
- PV08 Footpath to Wing looking east towards Chiltern Hills

- **Village Protected Views**

- PV09 The Village Green (three views)
- PV10 The Green towards Old Cottage
- PV11 Moat Lane, on entering the village
- PV12 Cublington Road, on entering the village
- PV13 Wingrave Road, on entering the village

### **Policy RC1: Rural Character**

*The rural character of the village and its surroundings should be respected through new development by ensuring that:*

- *the scale and character of new buildings are modest and in keeping with the rural setting,*
- *the variable sense of space between and around existing buildings is retained where appropriate, particularly where views of the countryside beyond the village are available. The design of new buildings should ensure that adequate space is provided around them to compliment the rural character of the village,*
- *boundary treatment and landscaping schemes are carefully designed so as maintain the rural character of the area,*
- *proposals take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants in the vicinity and on the site.*
- *established hedgerows should be retained and enhanced wherever possible.*

*Views of particular importance as defined on the Policies Maps should be protected and not be obstructed by new development.*

## 8. Historic Environment

- 8.1 The village has a great variety of buildings in style, age and building materials. Originally dating from pre-Norman Conquest times, the present village is essentially Victorian in character and is a relatively good example of a nineteenth century “High Farming” settlement.
- 8.2 The original village is broadly triangular in shape and centres upon the Green, known simply as The Green, which is now infilled with housing and a smaller Green immediately north of The Green.
- 8.3 In the centre of the village is a large manor house known as The Abbey, which is a private residence. A building has been on this site since before the Domesday Book. Within the grounds of the Abbey, the ‘Moat’ (lake) contains two islands named after the expedition ships, the Erebus and Terror, of the notable owner Sir James Clark Ross who discovered the North Pole in 1831. In November 1940, President Dr Edward Benes of Czechoslovakia took up residence and conducted his government in exile in his goal to regain control of his country from the occupying German forces. Winston Churchill was recorded as a visitor here. In 1942 Dr Benes donated a globe to the local school and he also gave money for a bus shelter for the local people of Aston Abbotts in gratitude for village hospitality.
- 8.4 There are a number of 17-18th Century iconic timber framed listed buildings in the village including Church Farmhouse, The Old Cottage (1 The Green), Oak Farm House, Home Farm and the Royal Oak Pub. The Old Cottage which is part 15<sup>th</sup> Century, was also the location of the village shop from 1932 (operating for 80 years). On the land opposite the shop, the local Blacksmith was also located. The Bull and Butcher operated as a public house and bakery (this building is now apartments). The Royal Oak closed following the Coronavirus pandemic in 2019.
- 8.5 The Church of St James, by reason of its scale and elevated setting, commands the northern approach to the village. It is Grade II listed and dates back to 13th Century but was largely rebuilt 1865 although it retained the fifteenth century tower. Alongside the Church and the adjacent Old Vicarage, stands a magnificent line of beech and sycamore trees.
- 8.6 Another listed building, called Lower Burston Farmhouse, is located about 1km southwest of the village.
- 8.7 Respondents to the questionnaire thought it very important or important to conserve the parish’s historical past and heritage for the future (90%), there were no respondents who thought it was ‘not important’. The questionnaire also provided the opportunity for the residents to identify specific features that they valued the most.
- 8.8 The Parish has a total of 9 Grade II listed buildings and a Scheduled Monument, the medieval village of Burston, the location of which is shown in the Policy Map in Annex 1 (Figure 10). These are protected from harmful development by the NPPF which requires that great weight is attached to the asset’s conservation and that clear and convincing exceptional justification would be needed to justify any loss or harm to the asset. Local Plan Policy BE1 also protects heritage assets from harmful development.

### Conservation Area

- 8.9 The Conservation Area, which is in two parts was designated in 1989. A description of the Conservation Area is provided in Annex 4 . The area covered by Conservation Area is shown in the Policy Map in Annex 1 (Figure 6).

- 8.10 It is expected that new buildings will need to be designed so as to respect the bulk, massing, height and orientation of buildings both within and in close proximity to the Conservation Area, but can be designed in such a manner as to add to the varied character of the village. Locally distinctive materials and finishes should be used to ensure that the character of the Conservation Area is reinforced.

### **Policy HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting**

***Development in the Conservation Area and its setting should achieve high quality design, set in a clear context in terms of materials, scale, setting and layout. The following criteria apply:***

- ***Development will be supported where the scale and massing respond to and reflect the immediate area;***
- ***Use of locally distinctive details will be required (materials, openings/access and boundary treatments)***

***Applicants must explain, in a Design and Access Statement and/or Heritage Statement, how the proposal will address these criteria.***

### **Local Heritage Assets**

- 8.11 Neighbourhood Plans may identify important heritage assets which are not already protected by listing. The list of local heritage assets (also known as non-designated heritage assets) was compiled as part of the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and the process and details are available in the background *Heritage Assets* evidence report. The 10 buildings and features identified are not of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify national listing, but nevertheless, are an important part of the character of the Parish. The 10 non-designated heritage assets are shown in the Policy Map in Annex 1 (Figure 11) and are listed below in the Policy Statement HE2.
- 8.12 All the identified local heritage assets apart from the Ordnance Survey Trig Pillar and Lines Hill Gates are within the Conservation Area. While noted as local heritage assets, there are no more planning restrictions imposed on the owners than there are on buildings within the Conservation Area, but the policy will help to ensure they are recognized for their historic value, respected and retained.
- 8.13 Enhancements to the local historic features may be sought through funding bids to support their management.



## **Policy HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets**

*All development proposals affecting identified local heritage assets set out below will be required to take into account the character, context and setting of the assets. Development should be designed taking account of local styles, materials and detail.*

*The effect of an application on the significance of an identified local heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect a local heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset concerned.*

*Identified local heritage assets are:*

- *Tomb of Rear Admiral Sir James Clark Ross in the churchyard*
- *War Memorial in the churchyard*
- *The Village Pump in Church Row*
- *The Village Hall*
- *Lime tree on the village green*
- *Finger signpost on the village green*
- *Methodist Chapel*
- *Overstone Cottages (four terraces)*
- *Lines Hill Gates*
- *Ordnance Survey Trig Pillar located in the Village Orchard*
- *Church Bells housed in the bell tower*

## 9. Natural Environment

### Landscape

- 9.1 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the systematic division of the countryside into discrete and relatively homogenous units of land, within which the constituent physical, biological historical and cultural elements occur in repeating patterns and share certain aesthetic characteristics. The LCA for this part of Buckinghamshire was carried out in 2008 and has been amended and endorsed since then. It is a very useful tool for establishing important characteristics of local landscapes that can then be protected and/or enhanced when new development takes place.
- 9.2 The Parish lies mainly within two distinct character areas covering about 70% of the parish. The Cublington-Wing Clay Plateau which covers the elevated northern area of the Parish, including the village. The landscape is a rural slightly elevated agricultural landscape with hedgerows and some trees with a few minor streams and ponds. The landscape is not particularly sensitive to small scale development and the emphasis is on improving the wildlife value. The south-eastern half of the Parish lies within the Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge area which is characterised by grassland, hedgerows and small areas of trees. The shallow wide valley runs east-west along the A418 and then rises up to the ridge at Wingrave. The area is of historic interest including Burston and much of it forms part of the Rothschild Estate. The landscape is moderately sensitive to change.
- 9.3 Further information is contained in the background *Natural Environment* evidence report and the LCA area boundaries can be seen in the policy map in Figure 13. From the map, it can be seen that the western side, and the area to the very south of the parish are covered by three further character areas each occupying about 10% of the parish.
- 9.4 Some change that occurs in the landscape is outside planning control, but where planning permission is required for development, landscape features should be considered in a systematic way. Proposals for new development should include an appropriate landscape analysis either as a freestanding report or as part of a design and access statement.

#### **Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape**

***Any proposals for development should recognise and seek to protect and enhance the historic and natural landscape of the Parish, including field ponds, mature trees and hedgerows. Such features should be protected and where appropriate, incorporated into any landscape design schemes and their long-term maintenance ensured.***

### Biodiversity

- 9.5 Protection of the nature conservation interest in the Parish, which is valued by local people, is critical, with reference to the important habitats and landscape identified in both the Landscape Character Assessment (2018) and the Design Code. The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre keeps records of wildlife sightings and notable species include badgers, smooth newts, water voles, numerous species of bats, and barn owls. Of the notable

species, the rarest sightings of terrestrial mammals include hedgehogs which reflects the unfortunate decline that has been seen across the country since the turn of the century. There are also several Black Poplars in the parish which are a rare species. There are no protected wildlife sites in the Parish, although there is a traditional orchard. Further information is contained in the background *Natural Environment* evidence report.

- 9.6 100% of respondents to the questionnaire said that it was important for wildlife to be preserved.
- 9.7 All proposals for new development which would affect biodiversity should follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, rehabilitate and compensate/offset as last resort. Developments should demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on local habitats and species, particularly irreplaceable habitats and important trees and how it aims to minimise overall environmental impacts. Developers will be required to ensure that appropriate robust measures are put in place to protect existing wildlife and habitats and take every available opportunity to maximise the complementary benefits to people and wildlife afforded through nature-friendly development practices such as incorporation of swift and bat boxes into new housing, sustainable urban drainage schemes and using locally native species for landscape planting schemes (e.g. NHBC guide NF89 <https://www.nhbc.co.uk/foundation/biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments>).
- 9.8 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a concept proposed in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and mandated as a condition of planning permission in the 2021 Environment Act. Biodiversity Net Gain requires a 10% increase in biodiversity after development, compared to the level of biodiversity prior to the development taking place. In locations such as Aston Abbotts where all new development will be close to the countryside, it is really important that this requirement is implemented to mitigate the impact of losing biodiversity value of undeveloped land to development.

## Policy NE2: Biodiversity

***New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and where appropriate provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity. Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required, including, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.***

## 10. Sustainable Development

- 10.1 Sustainable development means ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF expands on what this means in practice and the Neighbourhood Plan must support sustainable development. For Aston Abbots, this means small scale development over time which integrates well into the village without damaging the natural and historic environment.
- 10.2 Aston Abbots is an attractive village comprising a mixture of house types of various types and ages. It is acknowledged that the NPPF promotes sustainable development and encourages consolidation of smaller rural settlements where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In terms of the VALP, Aston Abbots is identified as a ‘small village’ which are described as *‘smaller, less sustainable villages which have relatively poor access to services and facilities. It is expected that some small scale development could be accommodated at smaller villages without causing unreasonable harm. This level of development is also likely to help maintain existing communities. Sites at smaller villages will come forward either through neighbourhood plans or by individual ‘windfall’ planning applications, no site allocations are made at smaller villages.’*
- 10.3 In addition to the lack of facilities and the distance that residents have to travel to reach services via the rural road network, there are constraints on the village such as the historic character and hilltop landscape setting which means that most types of built development have the potential to have an adverse impact on character. Therefore, only small scale development would be in keeping with this character. ‘Small scale’ needs to be judged to be in the context of the existing number of dwellings.
- 10.4 No allocations are proposed in this Neighbourhood Plan, however there will be opportunities arising for ‘windfall’ development (i.e. not allocated in the Local Plan) within the parameters of the policies in this Plan.
- 10.5 Through the questionnaire, 50% of residents agreed there would be a need for more housing over the Neighbourhood Plan period, whilst 38% disagreed. 49% of respondents wanted fewer than 10 houses in total and 52% desired infill only. Detail of the responses to the questionnaire are contained in the background *Housing and Settlement Boundary* evidence report.

### Development within the Settlement Boundary

- 10.6 Opportunities for new small scale housing development may arise in the village throughout the plan period. To ensure new housing development is in keeping with the village, it is considered that a settlement boundary preventing extending the village outwards would ensure protection of the surrounding countryside. The Settlement Boundary for the village is defined in this NP and separates the village from the surrounding countryside. This has been drawn up carefully, acknowledging existing land uses and boundaries on the ground. For example, gardens are clearly a settlement related use and have been included within the boundary. Paddocks which are agricultural have been excluded. It should be noted that the Settlement Boundary as shown on the Policies Map in Annex 1 (Figure 2) does not coincide with the Conservation Area boundary which was drawn up by AVDC and its purpose was to include features of historic value. Information

relating to the settlement boundary, along with design guide character areas, is provided in the background *Housing and Settlement Boundary* evidence report.

- 10.7 Within the Settlement Boundary, development will be accepted for infill development, small-scale employment uses, and community facilities in principle.
- 10.8 New homes may be built on redeveloped sites or through infill development. Infill sites are defined as spaces between existing houses where new housing will repeat or respect the surrounding pattern of development. Generally, 'infill' sites can be acceptable for 1 to 2 new houses, provided that the amenities of the adjacent properties are not adversely affected and that the street scene and pattern of development remains appropriate to the rural character of the village.

### **Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary**

***New buildings, including housing, will be supported on infill or redevelopment sites inside the Settlement Boundary as shown on the Policies Map, where there is no adverse impact on existing residential, employment and community uses.***

***All development proposed should have no significant adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy; overshadowing; overbearing by a building or structure; car parking; removal of mature vegetation or landscaping and additional traffic resulting from the development.***

## **High Quality Design**

- 10.9 The NPPF and the proposals for planning reform recognise that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design. Good design is not just about appearance, but also functionality and the relationship to surroundings and it is not about copying past styles or preventing innovative modern design. The aim is to create site-specific creative design, which is contextual by referencing form and materials to surroundings.
- 10.10 The village has a wide variety of densities, building dates and materials, testifying to its historic past. It is important that this variety is carried through in new development whilst respecting the immediate surroundings. A Design Guide for the Parish has been prepared and is a separate technical document to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.11 The Design Guide describes the local context and key characteristics of the Parish and provides area-wide design guidance and codes based on these findings. Firstly, it sets out a series of Design Codes for the whole of the Parish, these are Historic character, Green Infrastructure and views, Distinctive palette (materials), and Streets.
- 10.12 Secondly, there are additional design codes for some of the identified Character Areas of which seven have been identified, these are described in the following paragraphs and are shown in the Policy Map in Annex 1 (Figure 7):
- 10.13 **Conservation Area North:** this area encompasses a significant portion of the village, spanning from Church Farm at its northern boundary, southwards to include The Abbey, and ending at Windmill Hill Barns along its southern boundary. The area features the village green which consists of three sizable grass islands adjacent to The Abbey's entrance gates. While many of the views towards

significant buildings should be protected, the oldest building in this area is the Church of St James which was originally built in the 15th century. The streetscape is dominated by vegetation, such as trees and hedges which soften the feel of the built environment. The layout of plots and buildings in the area has developed organically over the years and the buildings are 1 or 2 storeys, typically red brick or cream render.

- 10.14 **Conservation Area South:** is situated between The Green and Wingrave Road. The Conservation Area runs from the converted Methodist Chapel on The Green and continues along Wingrave Road to New Zealand Cottages on the southern boundary. The area is filled with characterful historic buildings such as the Royal Oak Pub and Oak Farm House which are focal points of the community's history. The pattern of development is linear with properties typically facing onto the road with a generous setback. The front gardens soften the feel of the built environment. Buildings are 1-2 storeys, usually red brick or cream render, there is much decorative brickwork and some thatched properties.
- 10.15 **The Ross Road and Inner Green area:** is in the centre of the village and is made up of several infill developments that have been added between the north and south parts of the Conservation Area. While they have a slightly different feel to the older parts of the village, several key local characteristics are retained in these newer developments. A lot of the development within the character area is in the form of short cul-de-sacs. Examples of these include Chapmans Lea and Ross Road. The Green is populated by bungalows which front onto the road. Although many properties within the character area have generous setbacks to allow space for front gardens and on-plot car parking, vehicle clutter is common and restricts the roads to a single lane. Again, the street scene is dominated by vegetation including verges, trees and hedgerows.
- 10.16 **Bricstock:** is located in the southwest of the village and is characterised by a number of small incremental housing developments including Nash's Farm. The road 'Bricstock' runs from the southwest corner of The Green to the village recreation ground which includes playing fields and a child's play park. On the edge of the recreation grounds is a viewing area with a bench providing panoramic views across the countryside towards Aylesbury. The Nash's Farm houses front into a parking court area while the 1970's bungalows, on the edge of the village, front directly onto the recreation grounds with parking contained on the road behind the buildings.
- 10.17 **The Lines:** On the western edge of Aston Abbotts, where Moat Lane runs into The Lines, there is a scattering of residential buildings. Houses in this part of the village are on higher topography than the rest of the settlement and, therefore, have stunning views towards the Buckinghamshire countryside. The building density of this character area is very low with large gaps between development. This allows for views towards green space from the street, providing a more rural feel to the area. Buildings often face onto the street and are typically 2 storeys in height which allows the trees and other vegetation to dominate the landscape in a rural part of the village. The Lines is a gated road with the gate situated on the corner where it meets Moat Lane. It is lined with grass verges and tall hedgerows. With the exception of Abbey Cottages, the buildings on the far western stretch of Moat Lane are more recent, being a mix of red brick semi-detached and detached houses.
- 10.18 **Wingrave Road:** Situated to the south of the village is a group of 10 semi-detached houses originally built in the 1950s. These properties are on the edge of the settlement and have countryside facing views to the rear. The buildings are all red brick, 2 storeys, semi-detached and have the same setback from the street. This creates a very uniform roofline and allows the trees

and hedgerows on the other side of Wingrave Road to dominate the skyline in the character area. Also located within the character area is the village allotments and the orchard.

- 10.19 **Longmoor:** Situated half a kilometre north of the village is Longmoor which is made up of a scattering of houses, barns and an industrial building. The area feels disconnected from the rest of Aston Abbotts, however it does have bus stops that link it to the village as well as to Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury. Development has occurred over time on either side of Cublington Road. Properties are typically forward facing onto the street, however they have generous setbacks with tall hedges defining the boundary which creates an element of privacy. Building heights range from 2 storeys to 1 storey on the edge of the built environment which softens the boundary between the Aston Abbotts and the surrounding countryside.
- 10.20 Development proposals should include a Design and Access Statement, or other written statement related to the scale and complexity of the scheme, which shows that the development has been designed to specifically relate to its setting. This is essential to ensure that the special character of the village and parish are protected and its local distinctiveness is enhanced and reinforced.

## Policy SD2: High Quality Design

***Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are in accordance with the guidelines and design principles set out in the Aston Abbotts Design Guide and Codes.***

***All new development must:***

- ***Ensure that the historic character is respected and development is designed to reflect this;***
- ***Not impede the quality of the existing outward views and hilltop landscape;***
- ***Include appropriate landscaping to reinforce the rural context;***
- ***Use materials and architectural details appropriate to the development's context;***
- ***Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces;***
- ***Be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting;***
- ***Be of a design with a locally inspired or distinctive character;***
- ***New dwellings should not be more than 2 storeys in height;***
- ***Be well integrated with the community by reinforcing pedestrian connections and taking opportunities to provide new ones;***
- ***Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street;***

## Sustainable Buildings and construction

- 10.21 The reality is that the homes built today will still be in use in 2050. Therefore, to achieve the UK carbon reduction targets cost effectively, new housing built today must be built to zero carbon

standards as soon as possible. However, even if all new housing were to be carbon neutral from tomorrow, this would still not be enough to achieve the carbon emission reductions, as around 70% of buildings that will be in use in the 2050s already exist. If carbon reduction targets are to be met, and if fuel poverty is to be tackled, it is essential that the energy efficiency of existing buildings, including historic and listed buildings is also improved.

- 10.22 60% of respondents to the questionnaire agreed that new homes must be built sustainably.
- 10.23 There are two main elements in achieving net zero carbon buildings: achieving net zero ‘whole life’ carbon emissions, which takes into account the building, operation and disposal of the building; and achieving net zero operational carbon – where a building uses no fossil fuels; all energy use has been minimised; it meets local energy use targets and all energy use is generated on- and/or off-site using renewables. Further information and definitions are available from several sources including the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the UK Green Building Council.
- 10.24 Aylesbury Vale, which has parts of both the Anglian and Thames Water supply regions is in an area of ‘water stress’. This means it has poor overall water quality and quantity of water resources. VALP policy I5 sets out the requirements for water resources and wastewater infra-structure including a standard for household water consumption. A small local contribution can be made by requiring that all new homes are provided with water butts for harvesting and storage of water for garden use and other measures designed to reduce water consumption.
- 10.25 Relevant information should be submitted, where required in relation to the scale and type of development being proposed, in an Energy Statement and/or in a Design and Access Statement accompanying planning applications.

### **Policy SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings**

***The design and standard of any new building should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero operational carbon emissions. This includes the following measures (where relevant to the proposed development, feasible, and viable):***

- ***Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,***
- ***The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,***
- ***Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.***
- ***Incorporation of on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels.***

***Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards.***

***The retrofit of existing buildings including heritage properties is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics.***

***All developments must be designed taking into account best practice in water efficiency, such as water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting and storage features.***



# 11. Community and Business

## Community Facilities

- 11.1 The community of Aston Abbotts has changed over the years, from a farming and agricultural community to a more diverse community with a significant number of new residents. Villagers very much value the countryside location with numerous local walks and the beautiful scenery. 83% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Survey either strongly agreed or agreed that Aston Abbotts has a strong sense of community. Only 3% disagreed. (Information in this section is derived from the background *Community and Facilities* evidence report.)
- 11.2 There is now a mix of ages living in the village and there are different models of community engagement, from joint community events in the village hall, to small network or friendship groups meeting in each other's homes or local pubs. Aston Abbotts used to have its own pub, The Royal Oak, but this closed in November 2020. This used to act as an informal community hub with a number of groups and individuals meeting there. There is still the Village Hall which hosts a number of events, including a monthly quiz, monthly Bingo, two-weekly Whist Drives and weekly Thursday morning café. A monthly Pop-up Pub was trialled for a short period and this might be rolled out more permanently in the future. This Village Hall is available for those who like to meet up for collective community events. Other residents prefer more informal gatherings for events such as the local ladies' group, men's group, book group, etc. There is also a local WhatsApp group for parents.
- 11.3 38% of respondents use the hall weekly or monthly. 45% rarely use the village hall.
- 11.4 The community spirit is also evidenced by the pride villagers have in where they live. The village won the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village for 2022 and previously in 2019. Volunteers take part in litter picking and also cutting the grass in the Church grounds. There is also an Annual Fete run by volunteers and Annual Firework Display.
- 11.5 The village is proud of its history and there are two History Boards on the Village Green. One shows the historic landmarks in and around the village and the other is dedicated to the story of the Czechoslovak community that resided in Aston Abbott during the Second World War when President Dr Edward Benes of Czechoslovakia took up residence in The Abbey whilst running his government in exile.
- 11.6 The other community assets in Aston Abbotts are the Church, Village Hall, Recreation Ground, allotments and orchard. The Church has introduced monthly "all age" services, led by lay-members, which are quite popular and are preceded by a Church breakfast in the Village Hall.
- 11.7 The Recreation Ground is mainly used by parents, carers and grandparents and their children or grandchildren. An outside table tennis table for all ages has recently been purchased by the Parish Council and there is currently discussion about replacing the existing play equipment, and possibly additional other all-age activities.
- 11.8 The policy is intended to retain the limited facilities available to residents. Accordingly, change of use, conversion or demolition of any of the facilities listed to a use which is not for the community will be resisted unless a replacement would prove more suitable for the needs of the community. Opportunities may exist to enhance the existing community assets and introduce more facilities, entertainment and recreational activities. This will require some innovative ideas, creative thinking and willing volunteers. New facilities and improvements to existing facilities will be encouraged and supported.

### **Policy C1: Community facilities**

***The following community facilities will be retained and planning applications which result in either the loss of or significant harm will be resisted:***

- ***Church of St James***
- ***Village Hall***
- ***Recreation Ground***
- ***Allotments***
- ***Orchard***

***The provision of new community facilities will be encouraged. Any proposed replacement facility in a different location will need to demonstrate that the new facility is in a location where local people can access on foot.***

## **Local Green Spaces**

11.9 Consultation 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. Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) give a very high level of protection to such open spaces. In the NPPF it is stated that in Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection and to rule out new development, other than in “very special circumstances”. The proposed designations are in accordance with the requirement in Paragraph 106 of the NPPF:

- The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The area is 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;
- The area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

11.10 An audit has been carried out of green spaces and assessed to determine which of them fulfil the Local Green Space Criteria. The 20 potential candidate sites were suggested by residents through the questionnaire and then assessed against the NPPF criteria. Five green spaces fulfilled the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces. The assessment is included within the background *Local Green Spaces* evidence report. The list of the Local Green Spaces is shown below and their location show in the Policy Map in Annex 1 (Figure 12):

## Policy C2: Local Green Spaces

***The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:***

- ***Recreation Ground***
- ***Churchyard***
- ***The Village Green***
- ***Vic Scott Memorial Orchard***
- ***Allotments***

***Proposed development within the Local Green Spaces will be treated consistently with those for the Green Belt and development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Inappropriate development will be resisted to protect their special character and contribution to the Parish.***

## Local Businesses & Agriculture

- 11.11 Aston Abbotts parish has limited employment opportunities with 78% of working people working elsewhere, including Aylesbury and London. 19% of households who responded to the questionnaire said that they ran a business from home and there are a relatively large number of companies that list a property in Aston Abbotts as the company address. 230 residents were economically active during the 2021 census, with half of these being professionals or holding senior posts. Only 3 people fell into the agriculture, energy and water employment category. Further details are set out in the background *Local Businesses* and *2021 Census Data* evidence reports.
- 11.12 There are a numerous agricultural and horse related businesses operating from farms within the Parish.
- 11.13 In addition, there are a small number of business clusters following conversions of agricultural buildings, the largest of which is the Hay Barn Business Park on Cublington Road.
- 11.14 The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate employment sites, but it supports the viability of local businesses and their expansion, where this is proportionate and appropriate in the individual circumstances. Home working is also seen as a means of encouraging business and creating a sustainable community with less commuting and a more sustainable lifestyle, saving individuals the cost of travel and increasing their leisure time.
- 11.15 The diversification of agriculture and agricultural buildings is supported in principle. However, development must be of a scale and intensity appropriate to its context, must not impact detrimentally on residential amenity, and must have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village and its rural hinterland.
- 11.16 The provision of high-speed broadband is particularly important in rural areas and in supporting the viability and sustainability of rural enterprise and home-working.

### **Policy C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture**

*Proposals for the development of new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, including farm-based operations, will be encouraged, providing that:*

- *it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact from increased traffic, lighting, noise or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;*
- *it would have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village, its rural hinterland and landscape; and*
- *where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development; and*
- *the proposals make adequate provision for car parking and bicycle spaces for employees and visitors.*

*Applications for extensions or part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working will be supported, subject to there being appropriate parking and that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties is maintained.*

*In each instance, the provision of effective high speed broadband services will be encouraged and appropriate measures should be incorporated into the design of workplaces.*

## 12. Traffic and transport

- 12.1 Transport is important for Aston Abbots as people have to travel out of the Parish to shop, go to the Post Office, attend school, doctor appointments, meals out, etc. The *2021 Census Data* evidence report reveals that only 8% do not have access to a car or van. For those who do not have a car, or cannot drive, they rely on the buses although the service is very limited. From March to October, there is a weekly village bus trip to Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard for anybody to use, although the users tend to be retired villagers who have a bus pass. This is organised by a local resident and helps to promote the importance of using and maintaining our local bus services.
- 12.2 Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard are equidistant from Aston Abbots and there are some facilities in Wing which is close by. 68% of respondents to the questionnaire said the village is convenient for commuting.

### Traffic

- 12.3 It is recognised that issues around traffic calming and vehicle speed is a significant concern for most residents. The topic of heavy goods vehicles and traffic through the village is raised by residents through many channels - either directly with the Parish Council or through the public forums available to the villagers (i.e., the Chronicle and the AA Email Postbox). Concerned residents through the questionnaire made comments regarding road safety in relation to traffic speeds and heavy goods vehicles on the narrow roads particularly danger to pedestrians and damage to road edges and pavements. A summary of the concerns raised is included in the background *Traffic Calming, Heavy Vehicles and Parking* evidence report.
- 12.4 The Neighbourhood Plan unfortunately can have little influence over traffic calming since the responsibility for roads and traffic lies with Buckinghamshire Council and the behaviour and choices of road users cannot be controlled through planning policy. However, the Parish Council will continue to work to try and influence Buckinghamshire Council.
- 12.5 Any new development should provide appropriate traffic calming measures and levels of parking provision in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council's parking standards (currently set out within VALP Appendix B).
- 12.6 Electric vehicles are a broadly sustainable mode of travel that is increasing market penetration and current building regulations require that every new dwelling is supplied with electric car charging point.

### Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders

- 12.7 A partnership approach between the Parish Council and Buckinghamshire Council will be required to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and carriage drivers.
- 12.8 The questionnaire highlighted concerns regarding the lack of pavements around the village. This is increasingly important in a village where there are villagers who regularly walk around the village and in the surrounding fields and footpaths.
- 12.9 Where new development is proposed, the pavement network should be improved to assist in encouraging pedestrians.

### Policy TT1: Transport

***New development should include measures that that keep traffic speeds low and improve the provision of pavements and access for pedestrians and cyclists and horse-riders. Where they are proposed, new roads, junctions, pavements and traffic management measures should be designed to complement the rural character of the village and reflect local heritage.***

***Development proposals will provide parking in line with Buckinghamshire Council's parking standards and have adequate on-site parking to meet current and future needs, unless alternative and accessible car parking arrangements can be made which do not add to on-street congestion.***

***Electric charging points for cars should be incorporated in new housing development for each house.***

### Public Rights of Way

- 12.10 There are numerous footpaths and bridleways in the Parish. Respondents to the questionnaire often used the footpaths in summer (43%) and winter (35%) with only 6% saying 'rarely' or 'never'. 45% of respondents also said that they use the bridleways.
- 12.11 The background *Footpaths and Bridleways* evidence report sets out the existing footpaths and bridleways around the parish and describes the Circular Walk, known as 'The Village Walk'. This circular walk is highly valued by both residents and visitors. Given the demographics of the community, it is an important feature for peoples' health and wellbeing.
- 12.12 The circular Village Walk passes through two significant areas of agricultural land. The northern section goes through "The Grove," and the southeastern leg passes through several fields, offering stunning views of Aylesbury Vale.
- 12.13 The total length of the Village Walk is about 2km with about three quarters being on footpath or bridleway. The remainder being on road on both Moat Lane and The Lines. The longest section of road is The Lines going south from the village upon which the National Speed Limit applies.
- 12.14 Improvements to the network will always be encouraged, and the Parish Council are keen to consider additional routes and links. Possible schemes are set out in the Aspirations section of this Plan and further details can be seen in the background *Footpaths and Bridleways* evidence report.

### Policy TT2: Public Rights of Way

***The rights of way network will be retained and enhanced.***

***New footpath and bridleway links will be encouraged, within the village, extending the Village Circular Walk and to the wider countryside.***

## 13. Aspirations, Implementation and Monitoring

### Aspirations

- 13.1 The *Parish Issues, Aspirations and Parish Council Actions* evidence report examines the comments made by the residents in response to the 2022 parish-wide survey which raised issues or made suggestions (or aspirations). The following summarises the aspirations for the community.
- 13.2 **Recreation Ground Play Area:** While the residents have not explicitly raised issues with the play area equipment, the Parish Council views the deterioration of the existing equipment as a potential health and safety risk and is taking measures to address the issue.
- 13.3 **Heavy Goods Vehicles – Freight Strategy:** There is frustration within the community that little is being done to find a long-term solution to HGVs driving between the A41 and the A413 through Aston Abbotts and the surrounding villages. This frustration is heightened by the exclusion of Aston Abbotts within a Freight Zone like that implemented for Ivinghoe and surrounding villages. It should, therefore, be a long-term aspiration that Freight Zone, encompassing Aston Abbotts, is implemented.
- 13.4 **Adult Exercise Equipment:** The installation of adult exercise equipment, sympathetically integrated into the recreation ground, is widely recognised as a valuable asset for enhancing community well-being. Numerous residents have expressed a desire for such a facility. Presently, efforts of the Parish Council are focused on replacing the aging children’s play equipment, with limited funding available in the near-term budget for additional amenities. However, it remains an intent to initiate a project for adult exercise equipment when feasible.
- 13.5 **Additional Circular Walks:** Many residents highlighted a strong desire for additional circular walks that avoid roads as much as possible. It is recognised that new footpaths would place additional burdens and responsibilities on the landowners and would only proceed with their willing consent. Costs would be incurred (e.g. signage, gates, fencing and stiles), with the initial outlay having to be borne by the parish. Any future expansion of the footpaths can therefore only be investigated if a budget is made available and with the consent of the residents for parish funds to be spent on such a venture. For this to progress, it would be necessary to undertake a detailed feasibility study, in partnership with landowners, to produce budgeted proposals and explore external sources of funds. A full consultation process would then be required with landowners and other stakeholders. Given the current funding status, it is unlikely that any proposed plans for additional circular walks will be considered in the near future.

### Implementation and Working in partnership

- 13.6 Aston Abbotts Parish Council is committed to Localism and locally informed influence over planning decisions and it will be the key organisation in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will build upon its excellent track record in engaging in planning decisions (reactively through consultation and proactively through promoting the policies of this plan) and by delivering related projects for the local community.

13.7 The Plan will be used by the Parish Council to:

- guide comments on planning applications,
- negotiate with landowners and developers to achieve the best possible outcomes from new development,
- direct financial resources to the village in a structured way,
- bring together groups or working parties to improve the village environment,
- lobby local authorities to support the parishioners' wishes and aspirations.

13.8 However, it is recognised that partnership working is needed for the potential of the plan to be realised. Partnership and joint working will be key elements in the successful implementation of the plan. The main organisations and the roles that they can play are summarised below.

- **Buckinghamshire Council** - Planning Policy, Development Control, Housing Management and Improvement, Economic Development, Open Spaces, Recreation and Community Facilities and unitary authority functions, including: Drainage, Highways and Transport, Education, Landscape, Minerals and Waste and Social Services.
- **Adjoining Parish Councils** – Assessing impact of large scale planning applications and discussing local facilities.
- **Environment Agency** The planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of: Flood risk management; Water quality and water resources, Waste management, Land contamination and soil and other regulation.
- **Site owners and developers** will need to liaise with the Parish Council as well as the other agencies involved in development.

## Funding and Implementation Mechanisms

13.9 Financial contributions will be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (if introduced) which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments.

13.10 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations of the 2011 Localism Act enable areas with a Neighbourhood Plan in place to receive at least 25% of the CIL raised in their area to direct to their own local infrastructure priorities. These contributions will be targeted on the priority need to deliver new community infrastructure.

13.11 In addition, the Parish Council will seek to influence annual and other budget decisions by Buckinghamshire Council on housing, open space and recreation, economic development, community facilities and transport, through the Local Transport Plan.

13.12 The Parish Council will also work with the appropriate agencies and organisations to develop funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives. This might include: The Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, EU Funds and LEP funding.



## Monitoring and Review

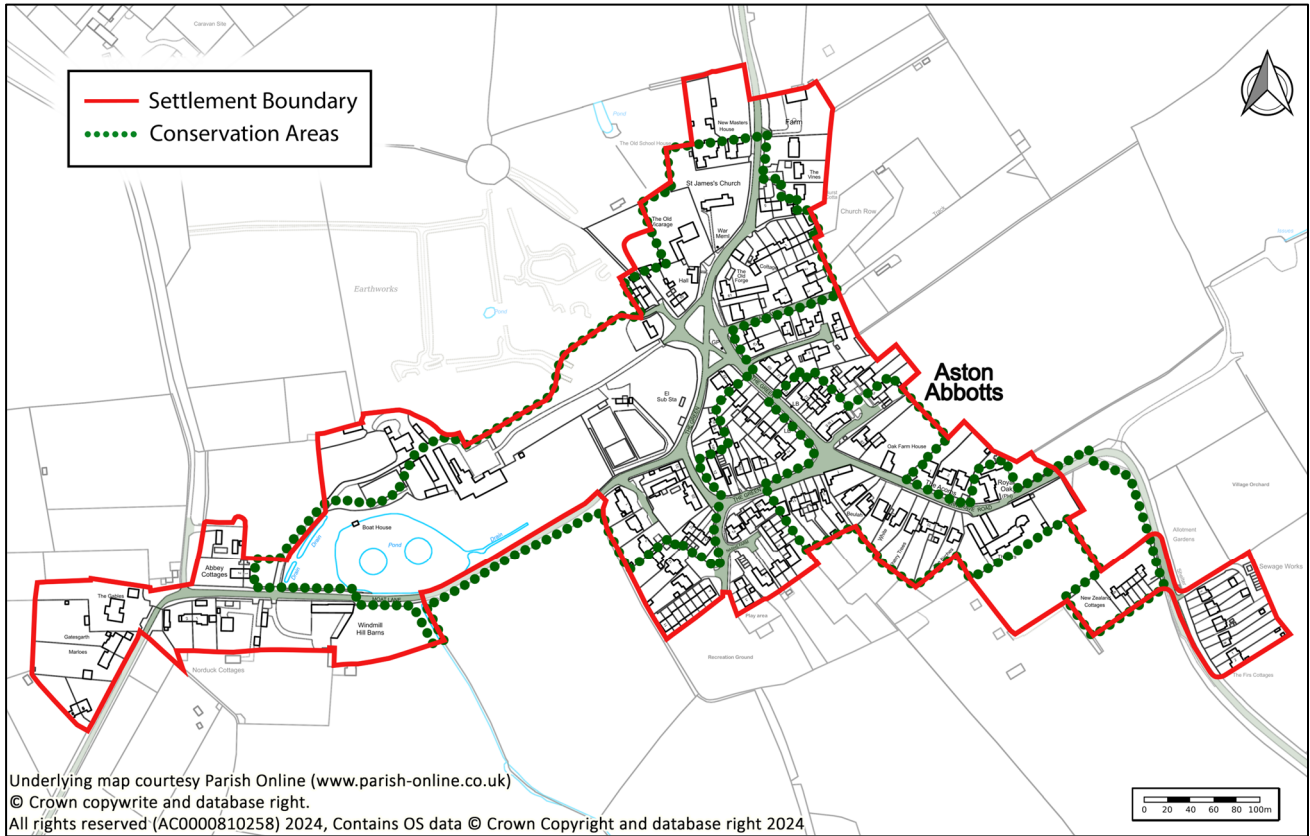
13.13 It is important to check that progress is made towards meeting the objectives and policies of the Plan. The Parish Council will report on the implementation of the Plan every 5 years and consider

- if progress is being made to achieve the vision and the objectives of the Plan
- if progress is being made towards the implementation of the policies in the Plan
- if financial contributions available to the community arising from development is being targeted towards the identified plans and projects
- if the Plan remains based on the most up to date information
- if the Plan is being taken into account by Buckinghamshire Council when determining planning applications

13.14 However, it may prove necessary to formally review the Plan prior to 2039, for example following a future review of the Local Plan or changes in national policy. The Parish Council will conclude whether a review is required. If so, it will commence the review at an appropriate time and secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.

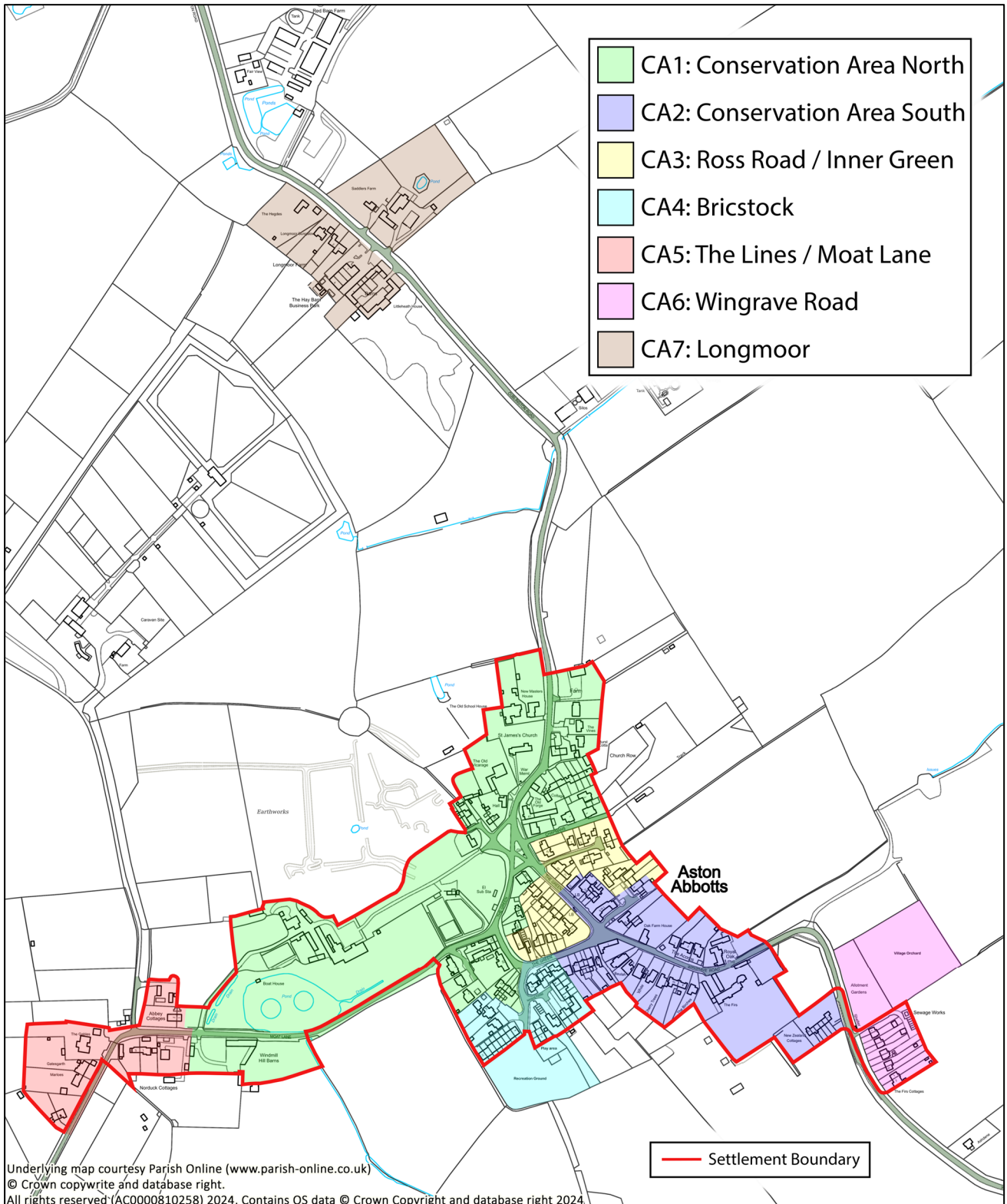
# Annex 1 Policy Maps

## Settlement Boundary and Conservation Areas



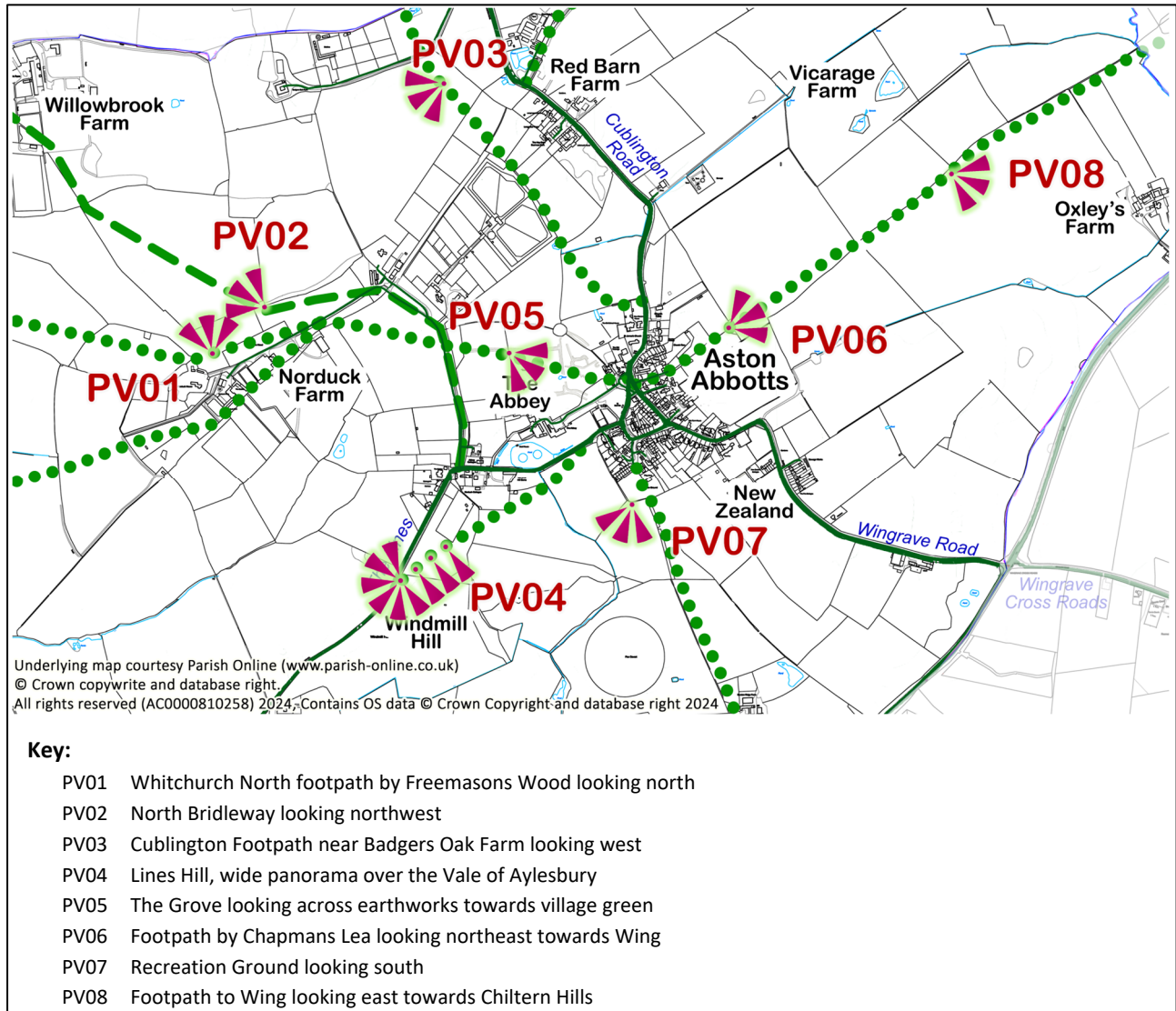
**Figure 6 – Policy Map – Settlement Boundary and Conservation Areas**

## Design Codes Character Areas



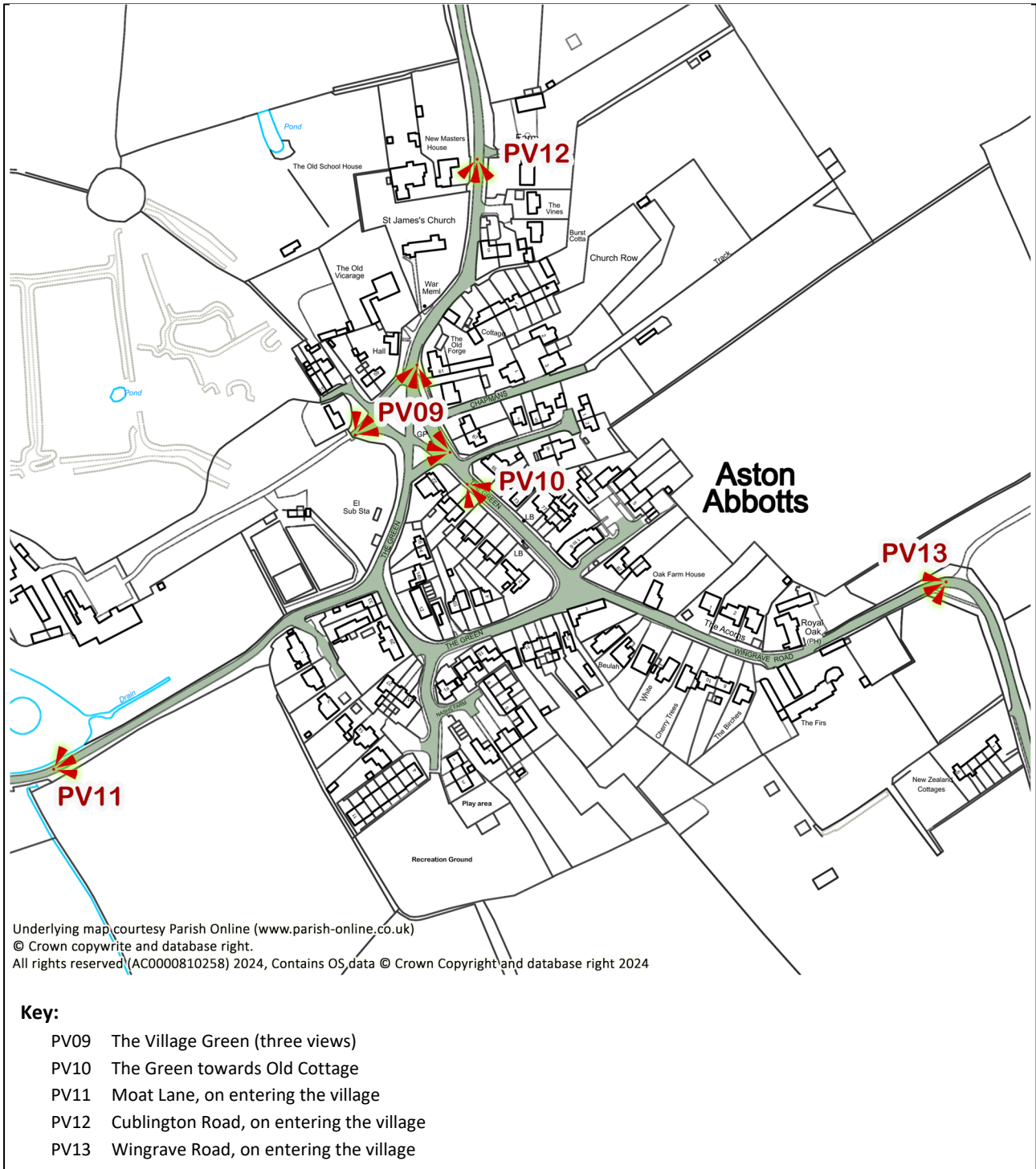
**Figure 7 – Policy Map – Design Codes Character Areas**

## Countryside Protected Views



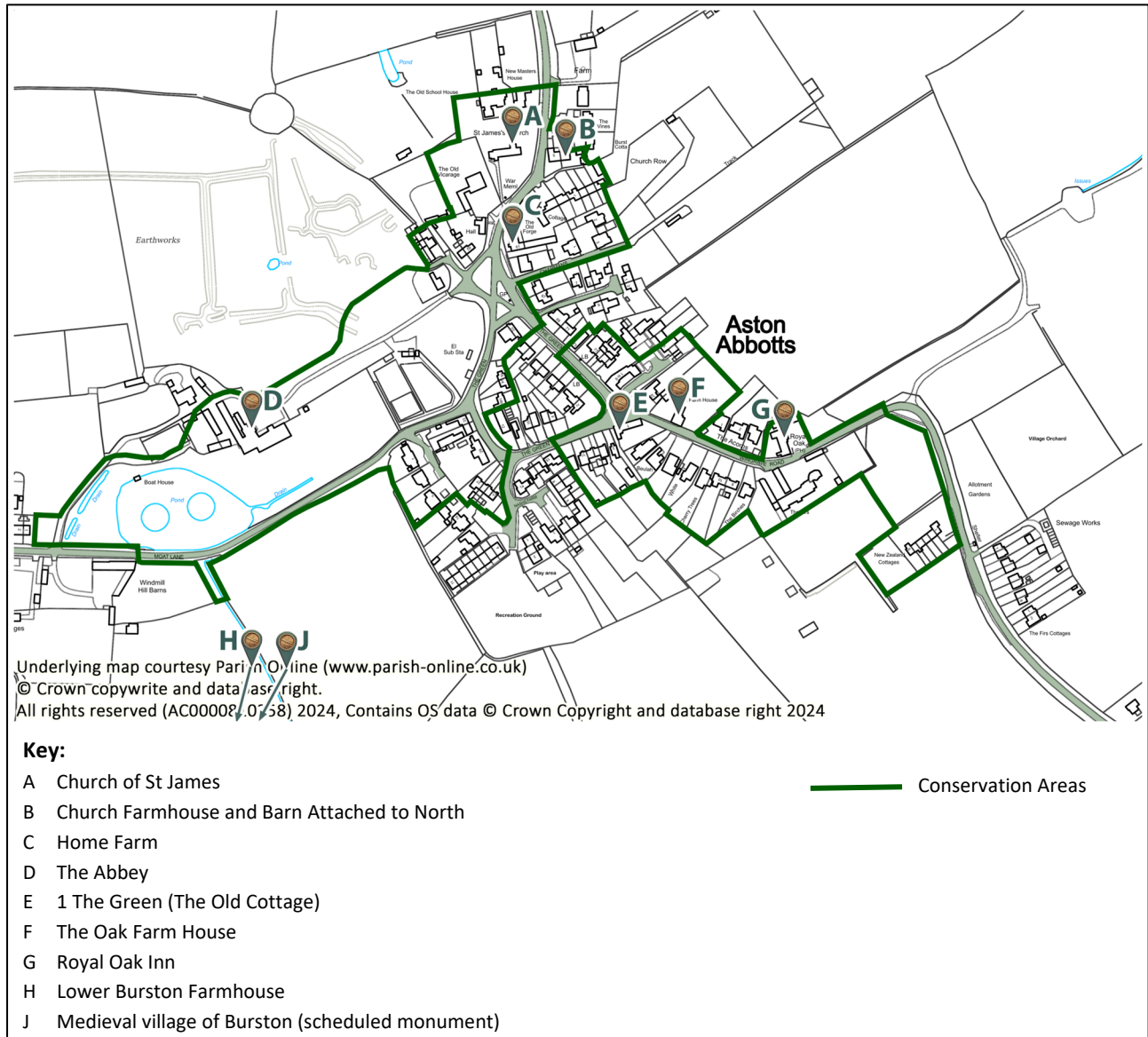
**Figure 8 – Policy Map – Countryside Protected Views Policy Map**

## Village Protected Views



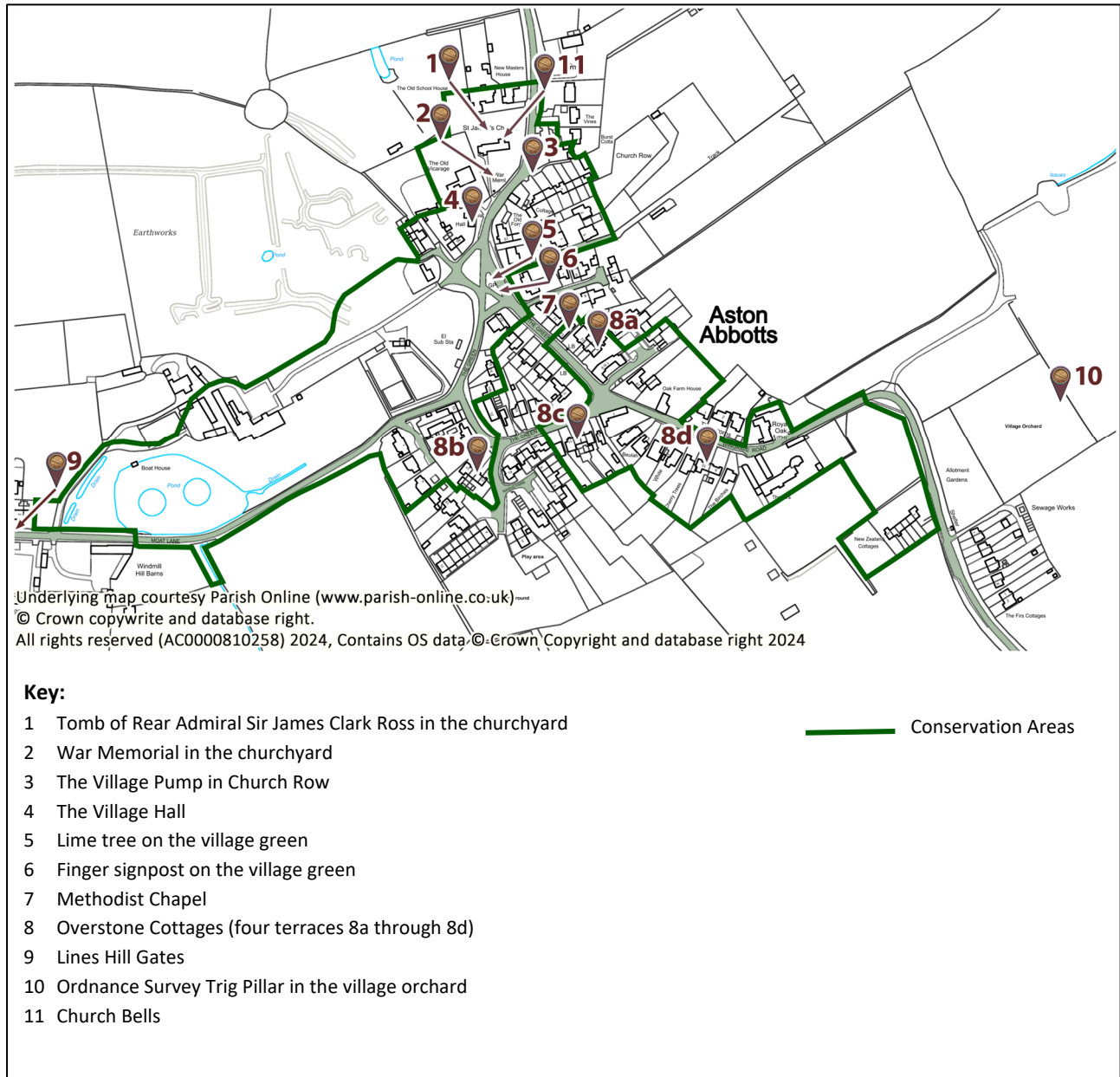
**Figure 9 – Policy Map – Protected Village Protected Views Policy Map**

## Historic England Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monument



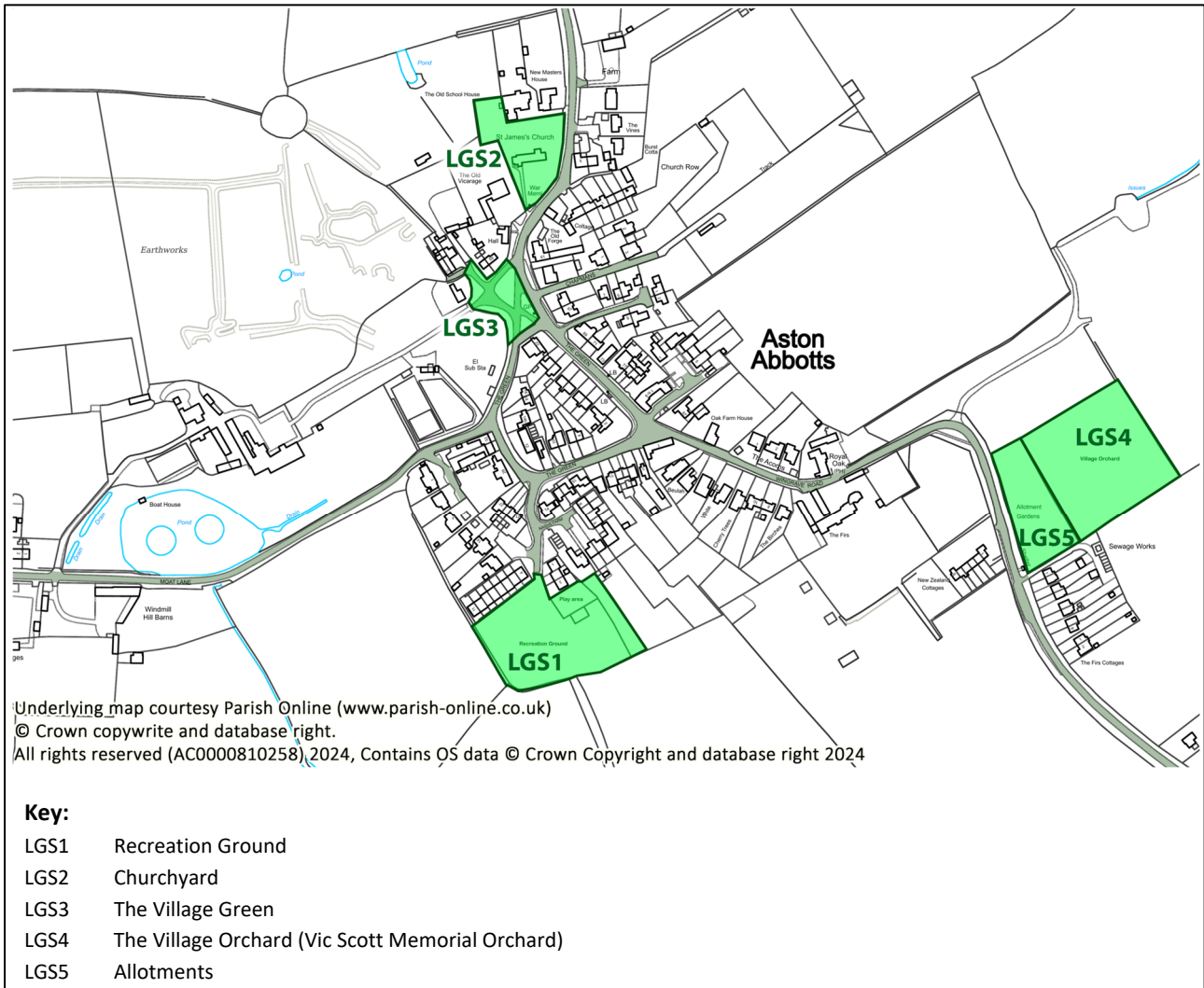
**Figure 10 – Policy Map – Historic England Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monument**

## Non-Designated Heritage Assets



**Figure 11 – Policy Map – Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

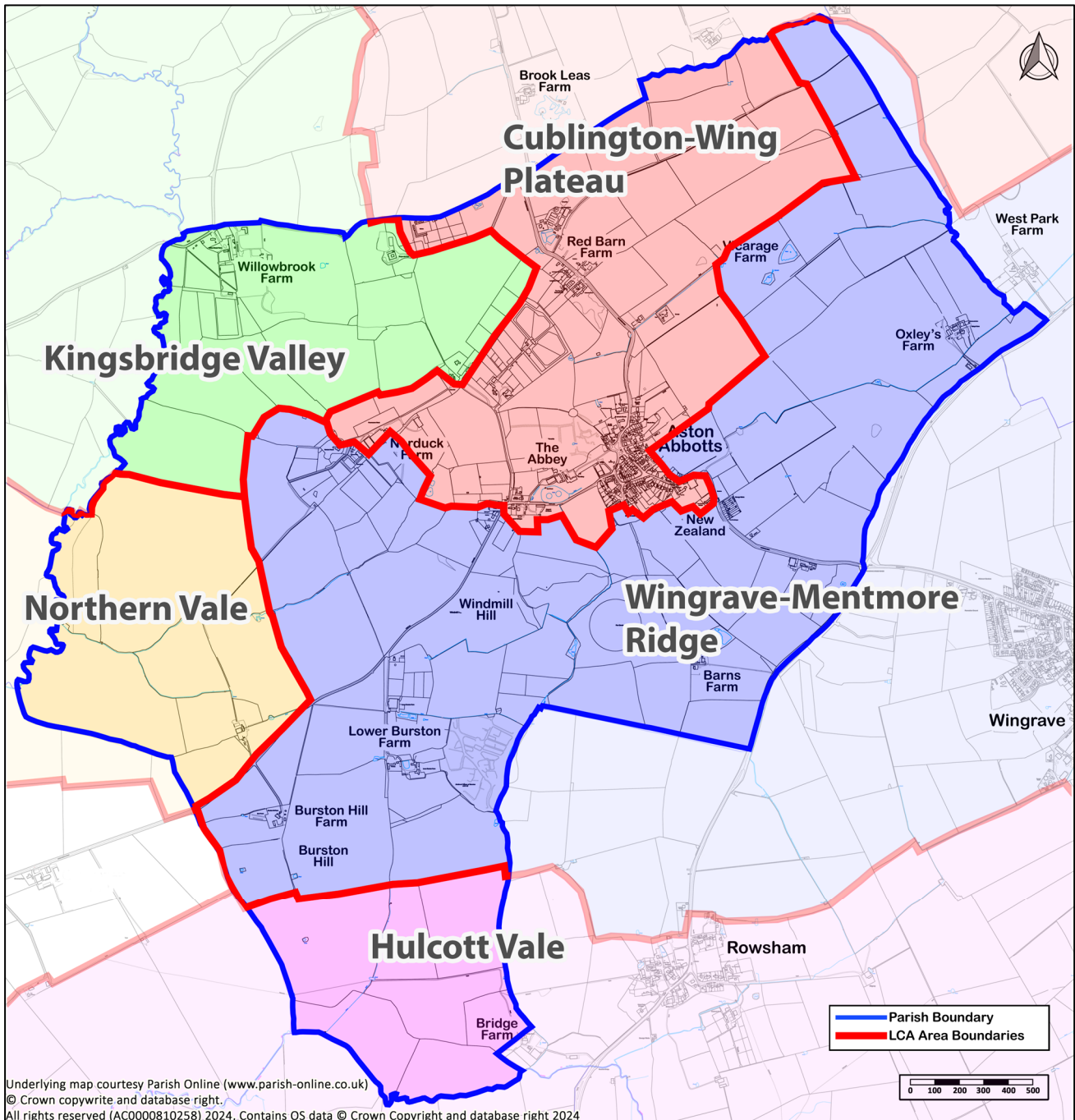
## Local Green Spaces



**Figure 12 – Policy Map – Local Green Spaces**



## Landscape Character Assessment Area Boundaries



**Figure 13 – Policy Map – Landscape Character Assessment Area Boundaries**

## Annex 2 Table of Aims and Policies

Neighbourhood Plan Aims		Policies
1	The rural character and natural environment of the Parish including landscape features, biodiversity and green spaces will be enhanced and protected.	RC1: Rural Character NE1: Protecting the Landscape NE2: Biodiversity SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary
2	The historic character and heritage assets of the parish will be preserved and enhanced.	HE1: Conservation Area and its Setting HE2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets
3	High quality design will be secured in all new development reflecting the distinctive character of Aston Abbotts.	SD2: High Quality Design SD3: Provision of energy and water efficient buildings
4	Existing community facilities will be protected. New facilities or improvements to existing facilities will be encouraged to enhance opportunities for community cohesion and wellbeing.	C1: Community facilities
5	Formal and informal amenity spaces will be protected and enhanced and Local Green Space designated to protect those spaces of particular community value	C2: Local Green Spaces
6	Existing local businesses, including farms, home-based and rural businesses will be supported. Small scale new businesses will be encouraged in the Parish.	C3: Supporting Local Business and Agriculture
7	New development will be accompanied by traffic calming measures and appropriate parking.	TT1: Transport
8	The public footpath and bridleway network will be improved and extended to be safe and accessible with additional links.	TT2: Public Rights of Way

## Annex 3 Supporting Documents

### Evidence Reports

During the development of the neighbourhood plan, several background evidence reports were produced which informed both decisions and policies. These reports describe the source information that was used. Where decisions were made (e.g., identification of Local Green Spaces or Non-Designated Heritage Assets) the report describes the process that was used and includes identification of candidates and assessment criteria.

The table below shows the evidence reports produced and the page numbers on which they are referenced.

<i>2021 Census Data</i> .....	6, 30, 32
<i>2022 Survey Results</i> .....	8
<i>Community and Facilities</i> .....	28
<i>Footpaths and Bridleways</i> .....	33
<i>Heritage Assets</i> .....	19
<i>Housing and Settlement Boundary</i> .....	23, 24
<i>Local Businesses</i> .....	30
<i>Local Green Spaces</i> .....	29
<i>Natural Environment</i> .....	21, 22
<i>Parish Issues, Aspirations and Parish Council Actions</i> .....	34
<i>Protected Views</i> .....	16
<i>Traffic Calming, Heavy Vehicles and Parking</i> .....	32

### Technical Report

One technical report was commissioned to support the Neighbourhood Plan. Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to produce the Design Guide.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening report

Buckinghamshire Council undertook SEA and HRA screening and produced a report dated 24 July 2024, Version 1.1.

## Annex 4 Conservation Area Description

The following is the description of the conservation area, which was designated in July 1989. It is available at: <https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/documents/CA-Aston-Abbots.pdf>

Aston Abbots Conservation Area

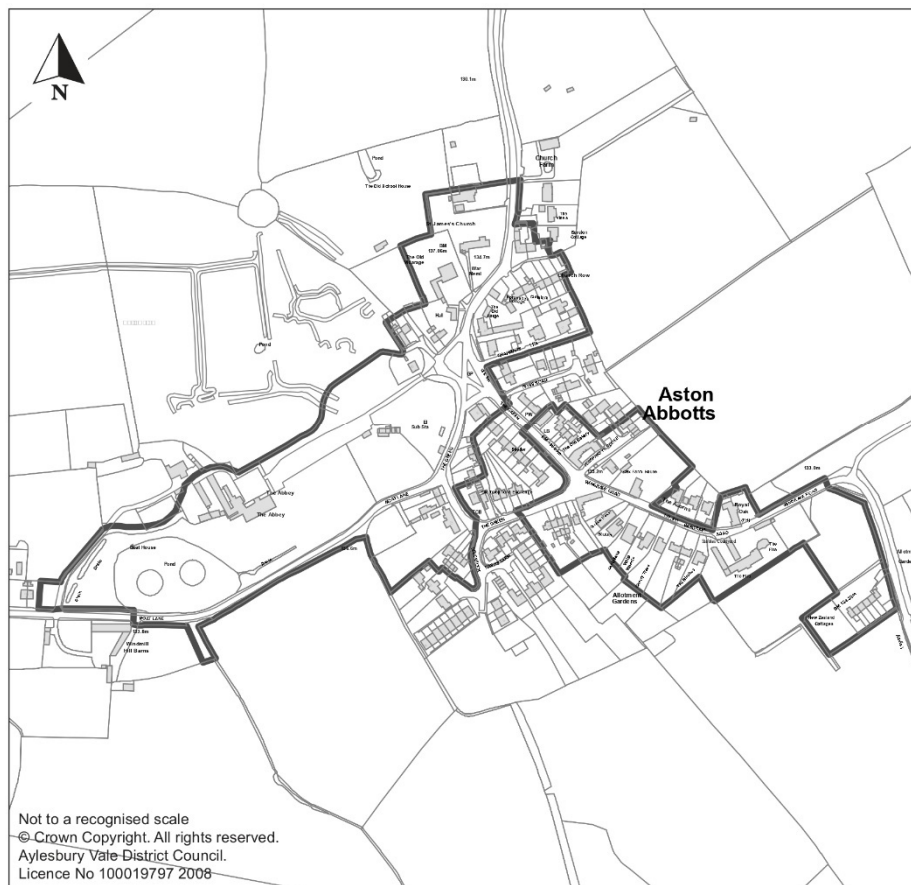
### ASTON ABBOTTS CONSERVATION AREA

Designated 19th July 1989

Aston Abbots is situated on elevated ground half a mile west of the A418 Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard trunk road, five miles north north west of Aylesbury. Originally dating from pre-Norman Conquest times, the present village is essentially Victorian in character and is a relatively good example of a nineteenth century “High Farming” settlement.

The village is broadly triangular in shape and centres upon the original Green, known simply as The Green, which is now infilled with housing and a smaller Green immediately north of The Green. The village is entered from one of three roads: Cublington Road, from the north; Moat Lane, from the south west; and Wingrave Road from the south east.

The northern entrance, along with the winding hedgerow lined Cublington Road, enters between the twin listed buildings of Church Farm and the Church of St. James. The tight enclosure afforded by the tall hedgerows in the lane gives way to iron railings in front of the Old School House and a one metre high, brick retaining wall around the elevated site of the Church.



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The Church, (which is Grade II\* listed), does by reason of its scale and elevated setting, command the northern approach to the village. Although retaining its fifteenth century tower, the remainder of the Church was rebuilt by G.E. Street in 1865. Alongside the Church and the adjacent Old Vicarage, stands a magnificent line of beech and sycamore trees.

Fine townscape views are obtained between the Church and the thatched, half timbered Church Farm, of a group of Victorian dwellings dated 1854, comprising The Old Forge and two terraces of former labourer's cottages known as The Haven, Cloisters and Church Row.

Turning south westerly from Cublington Road, the road opens out to reveal what remains open of The Green. It is here that some of the finest townscape views in the village are obtained of: the entrance to The Abbey, with its thatched gatehouse; the former Chapel, erected in 1861 but now converted into a pair of dwellings; a further block of Victorian cottages and Home Farm. This Green is enclosed by neat box hedges and contains a number of fine trees.

The bulk of the former green has been infilled with modern dwelling houses but despite this, its outer ring retains much of its essentially Victorian character. Three blocks of distinctive red brick terraces, each dated 1854, face inward across The Green, as do the similarly distinctive properties The Old House, The Methodist Chapel and The Bull and Butcher Public House. Perhaps the most striking of all properties fronting The Green is that at the junction of Wingrave Road, the fifteenth century thatched and timber framed Old Cottage, part of which contains the village shop.

The south east approach, along Wingrave Road is again characterized by wide grass verges and neat hedgerows. Having passed a small ribbon of modern dwelling houses on the right, ones vision is attracted to another terrace of Victorian cottages known collectively as New Zealand and its backdrop of magnificent sycamore and copper beech trees. The road then turns left to reveal The Royal Oak, a part thatched and timbered seventeenth century public house. Opposite The Royal Oak, behind a tall and imposing brick wall and two very fine fir trees, is The Firs with its stable yard and workers cottages. Swinging right towards The Green there is, on the left, another of the Victorian terraces built in 1854 and on the right is the partly thatched Oak Farm House.

The south western approach, along Moat Lane, affords fine commanding views south and south east over the Vale of Aylesbury towards the Chiltern escarpment. In similarity to both of the other approach roads into the village, Moat Lane is bounded on either side by hedgerows, with the exception of a small stretch on the southern side of Windmill Hill Farm where the enclosure is provided by a brick wall. The hedging along the southern side of the road tends to be lower and less dense than that on the northern side, which defines the southern boundary to the extensively landscaped and private ground of The Abbey (formerly known as Aston House). Originally the country seat of the Abbot of St Albans, only geometrically shaped earthworks indicate the site of the original buildings. The present house is a Grade II listed building built in the late eighteenth century and subsequently altered in the nineteenth century. During the second World War, it was the official residence of the exiled President of Czechoslovakia Dr Edward Benes.

Off the southern end of The Green is a short, cul-de-sac known as Bricstock which leads to the Recreational Ground, across which are fine views over the Vale of Aylesbury. A couple of modern dwellings and a terrace of old people's bungalows are sited at the end of this road.

*February 2008*

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## Annex 5 Glossary

Allocation		A piece of land that has had a particular use earmarked via a Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan. This might be for housing, employment or another use such as open space.
Amenity		A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area or property. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the interrelationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity, privacy, light etc.
Biodiversity		The whole variety of life encompassing variations, including plants and animals.
Conservation Area	CA	An area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of 'special architectural or historical interest' the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.
Consultation Statement		A document which details when, where and how the public and stakeholders have been consulted, issues that were raised and how they were addressed.
Countryside		Land not within settlement boundaries
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	An amount of money payable to the Council on new housing and other development which is used for infrastructure and community facilities and services
Design Code		A document containing a set of design principles for a specific location or site.
Developer Contributions/Planning Obligations/Section 106		Developer contributions, also known as planning obligations, can be secured via a section 106 legal agreement or planning condition attached to a planning permission. They help mitigate any adverse impacts generated by new development on infrastructure and facilities.
Employment Use		Land that is used or is proposed to be used for offices, industry and/or storage and distribution – covered by the B Class in the Use Classes Order
Evidence Base		The information and data gathered by local authorities and other plan makers to inform and support the policy approaches to be set out in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan
Examination		For neighbourhood planning, an independent assessment carried out by an examiner to determine whether your plan meets the Basic Conditions

Flood risk		The combination of probability of a particular flood event and its corresponding hazard and is used to refer to the scale of flood effect, combining hazard and probability, upon a particular site.
Green Belt	GB	Designated areas around major built up areas which can only be developed under very special circumstances set out in the NPPF
Green Infrastructure	GI	A network of multi-functional green space and other environmental features, urban and rural, including both established and new sites - which support natural and ecological processes, and are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Habitats Regulation Assessment	HRA	Tests the impacts of a plan or project on nature conservation sites of European importance and is required under EU legislation.
Heritage asset		A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and undesignated heritage assets identified by the local planning authority or Neighbourhood Plan (sometimes called local listing).
Infrastructure		Refers to the fundamental facilities and systems serving an area, including the services and facilities necessary for its residents and economy to function, including transport.
Local Plan		The main planning document in an area which sets out what type and how much development will occur across the area for the next 15 years or so. It also provides a suite of policies that help manage development including for design, access and amenity etc.
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
National Planning Practice Guidance	NPPG	A web-based resource, provides more detailed guidance on the contents of the NPPF
Neighbourhood Area		This is the area that the Neighbourhood Plan will focus on. For Aston Abbotts, the designated area is the parish boundary.
Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood plan	NDP/NP	Will set out the vision for a neighbourhood area and the planning policies for the use and development of land. These policies will be at a local level to support the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan. Plans should guide development rather than stop it. If adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory plan carrying equal weight with adopted local plan policies
Policy		A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.

Policies Map (s)		Illustrates the spatial extent of the planning policies and designated areas.
Referendum		Neighbourhood Plans are subject to a referendum of the eligible voters within the neighbourhood area. There is a specific question set in Regulations which has a yes or no answer.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	SEA	European requirement assesses the significant environmental impacts of plans and programmes.
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	An assessment of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of a Local Plan to check that the plan accords with the principles of sustainable development.
Sustainable Development		An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment of natural resources thereby development which 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'
Sustainable Drainage System	SuDS	An artificial drainage solution which reduces and slows the quantity and rate of surface water run off from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible
Windfall Site		Sites which have not been identified as available in the Local Plan. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.



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