

# DRINKSTONE

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018 - 2036

OUR VILLAGE • OUR CHOICES

REFERENDUM PLAN  
JUNE 2020

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---



More than 15 parishioners put in significant time and effort to distribute and collect questionnaires as part of the initial public consultation exercise. We would like to thank them. Their work contributed greatly to the high response rate we achieved in the questionnaire consultation. We would also like to thank all the Tuesday Club members who posted publicity through every door in the parish on four separate occasions, publicising the drop-in events and ensuring a good turnout.

Finally, and most importantly, we must also thank all of you who took the time to fill in the questionnaire, came on the village walk to learn about our landscape, came to the drop-in sessions and have given us so much useful feedback and encouragement.

Daphne Youngs  
On behalf of the Steering Group

### MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP

Ian Cooper	Resident
David Craggs	Resident
Peter Holborn	Parish Tree Warden
Jane Hill	Resident
Diana Hollins	Steering Group Secretary
Graham Todd	Resident
Jeremy Wiggins	Steering Group Treasurer
Daphne Youngs	Chair, Drinkstone Parish Council and Steering Group Chair

### MEMBERS OF SUB-GROUPS (\* = Steering Group Member)

#### Natural Environment Sub-Group

Peter Holborn*	Chair
Lindi Belfield	Resident
Duncan Hannant	Resident
Lyn Hannant	Resident

#### Built Environment Sub-Group

Daphne Youngs*	Chair
Joe Stebbings	Resident
David Craggs*	Resident

#### IT and Publicity

Liz Schmitt	Resident
Tony Schmitt	Resident
Lynne Woodward	Resident

Front cover drawing: Caitlin Sharp, Drinkstone Youth Club  
Photographs in the Plan have been contributed by the Working Group, AECOM and we also thank Nigel Rose  
The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been supported by Ian Poole of Places4People Planning

# FOREWORD

---

This document is the referendum version Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan. It has been prepared in accordance with the government regulations governing the preparation of such Plans and, if it passes referendum, it will become part of the Local Plan for Mid Suffolk, and the policies contained within it will be used in the determination of planning applications. Until the referendum is held, the Plan carries significant weight in that decision-making process.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on 14th May 2018, 84 out of 87 attendees voted in favour of a Plan being prepared. Under the auspices of the Parish Council, a Steering Group was established whose members, together with a number of additional volunteers, have been responsible for background research and guiding the content of the Plan.

The Steering Group was supported by Places4People consultancy and received support and financial assistance from the Government Neighbourhood Plan support programme.

## Drinkstone

The village is located in central Suffolk, approximately equidistant from Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. It lies to the south of the main A14 trunk road, albeit that the village is accessed by narrow country lanes from nearby villages and the A14. In the 2011 Census, the village was recorded as having a population of 548 living in 232 homes. (In 2017 the population was estimated at 638).

There are two main centres of habitation – an area known as ‘The Street’ to the north of the parish, broadly adjacent to the parish church, and an area some three quarters of a mile to the south of the church, known as Drinkstone Green, where the majority of the population resides. There are some additional clusters of dwellings elsewhere in the parish.

The village falls within Natural England’s National Character Area (NCA) 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands, described as ‘an ancient landscape of wooded, arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure, set on a gently undulating chalky boulder clay plateau’. There are a number of Listed Buildings across the parish and a small Conservation Area that incorporates the two isolated historic windmills at the north-eastern edge of the parish.

## Key Issues

In the Household Survey questionnaire, carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan, residents:

- valued highly the rural nature of the village, its tranquillity, access to the countryside, open spaces, footpath network, and sense of community;
- were concerned about poor broadband speeds and mobile phone connections, and about traffic speeds through the village;
- were not opposed to new housing but think that its volume should be limited, its location, types and design



standards should, in summary, be consistent with the current nature and layout of the village and broadly should be absorbed into the current boundaries;

- placed considerable emphasis on the need to maintain the village's character and to ensure that new housing does not compromise the key features of Drinkstone as currently valued by residents; and
- strongly supported the provision of 2-3 bedroom properties, affordable housing, houses for downsizers and single-storey houses.

Children and young people, whose views were sought directly, value highly the rural nature of the village and its access to the countryside. They would like to see improved communications and access to broadband and mobile telephone networks, but are opposed to any development that materially changes the village's essential characteristics.

With no up-to date Local Plan in place for the area, there has been an emphasis on putting the Neighbourhood Plan in place to provide locally-derived planning policies and to meet the identified housing requirement for the village, thereby ensuring that the Plan can be used to encourage planning applications that would avoid significant harm to the village character and its infrastructure.

#### The Plan

The document is structured to provide a thread that identifies the background to the Plan, the information that has been gathered to inform the policies, a vision for the future, the objectives of the Plan and the planning policies. In addition to the planning policies, the Neighbourhood Plan contains Community Actions which, although they do not form part of the Plan, nonetheless identify local initiatives that address issues and concerns raised during the community engagement. The community actions are identified separately from the planning policies to avoid confusion.

#### Community Engagement

Preparation of the Plan has involved extensive opportunities for the residents of Drinkstone to get involved. These have included a comprehensive household questionnaire as well as drop-in events at the Village Hall. The Plan was subject to eight weeks "pre-submission" public consultation held between 10 August and 4 October 2019. Following that consultation, the Plan and supporting documents were submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council to complete the preparation process in November 2019. Submission consultation was carried out between 16 December 2019 and 7 February 2020 and the Examination of the Plan by an Independent Examiner took place in March and April 2020. The Examiner concluded that, subject to modifications, the Plan can go forward to Referendum. Those modifications have been included in this version of the Plan.

## CONTENTS

1	Introduction and How the Plan was Prepared	6
2	Defining Characteristics of Drinkstone	10
3	Current Issue	16
4	Planning Policy Context	20
5	Vision and Objectives	22
6	Spatial Strategy	23
	Policy DRN1 - Spatial Strategy	23
7	Housing	24
	Policy DRN2 - Housing Development	25
	Policy DRN3 - Housing Allocations	25
	Policy DRN4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	27
8	Natural Environment	28
	Policy DRN5 - Protection of Important Views and Rural and Landscape Character	31
	Policy DRN6 - Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity	32
	Policy DRN7 - Dark Skies	33
	Policy DRN8 - Local Green Spaces	34
	Policy DRN9 - Biodiversity	35
9	Built Environment and Design	36
	Policy DRN10 - Buildings of Local Significance	36
	Policy DRN11 - Heritage Assets	37
	Policy DRN12 - Design Considerations	40
	Policy DRN13 - Sustainable Construction Practices	41
10	Infrastructure and Services	42
	Policies Maps	44-47
	Glossary	48
	Appendices	50
	Appendix A - Listed Buildings	50
	Appendix B - Buildings of Local Significance	51
	Appendix C - Development Design Checklist	54
	Appendix D - List of Evidence Documents	56



# 1. INTRODUCTION AND HOW THE PLAN WAS PREPARED

**1.1** At the Annual Parish Meeting on 14th May 2018, it was decided by a large majority (84 votes out of a total attendance of 87) that a Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared for Drinkstone under the auspices of the Parish Council. In deciding to proceed with the preparation of the Plan it was decided that the main purpose would be to ensure: “..that we can influence where any development goes over the next 20 years”, reflecting an acknowledgement that Drinkstone must play its part in achieving Mid Suffolk District Council’s (MSDC) requirement to provide at least an additional 10,000 houses across the district between 2018 and 2036.

**1.2** The Plan also provides an opportunity to address the needs of residents and record the aspects of village life and community that they value or may like to see changed, and to express how these issues affect their views on any expansion plans for the village over the next 20 years.

**1.3** The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations require a Neighbourhood Plan to:

- be appropriate, having regard to National Planning Policy;
- contribute to achieving sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
- be compatible with EU obligations and Human Rights requirements.

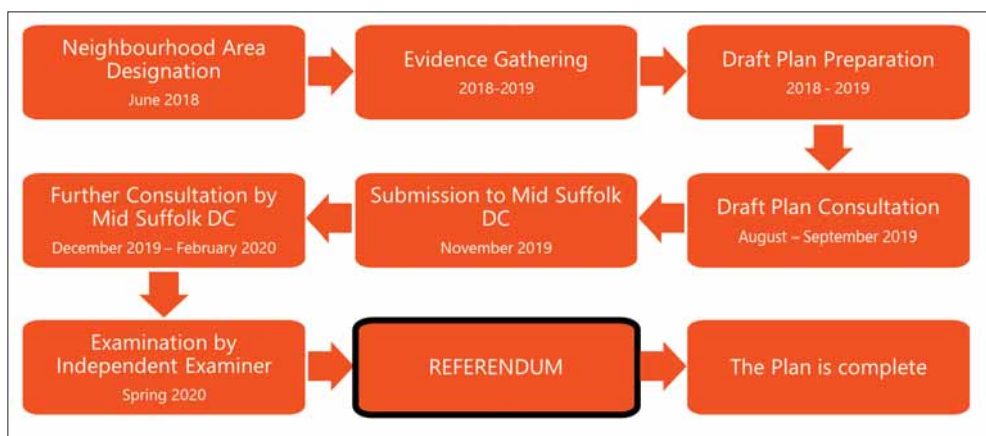
**1.4** The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government’s Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, has followed a number of distinct stages which can be simply illustrated in the diagram below and, in particular, has involved considerable local community engagement to gather evidence for the content of the Plan.

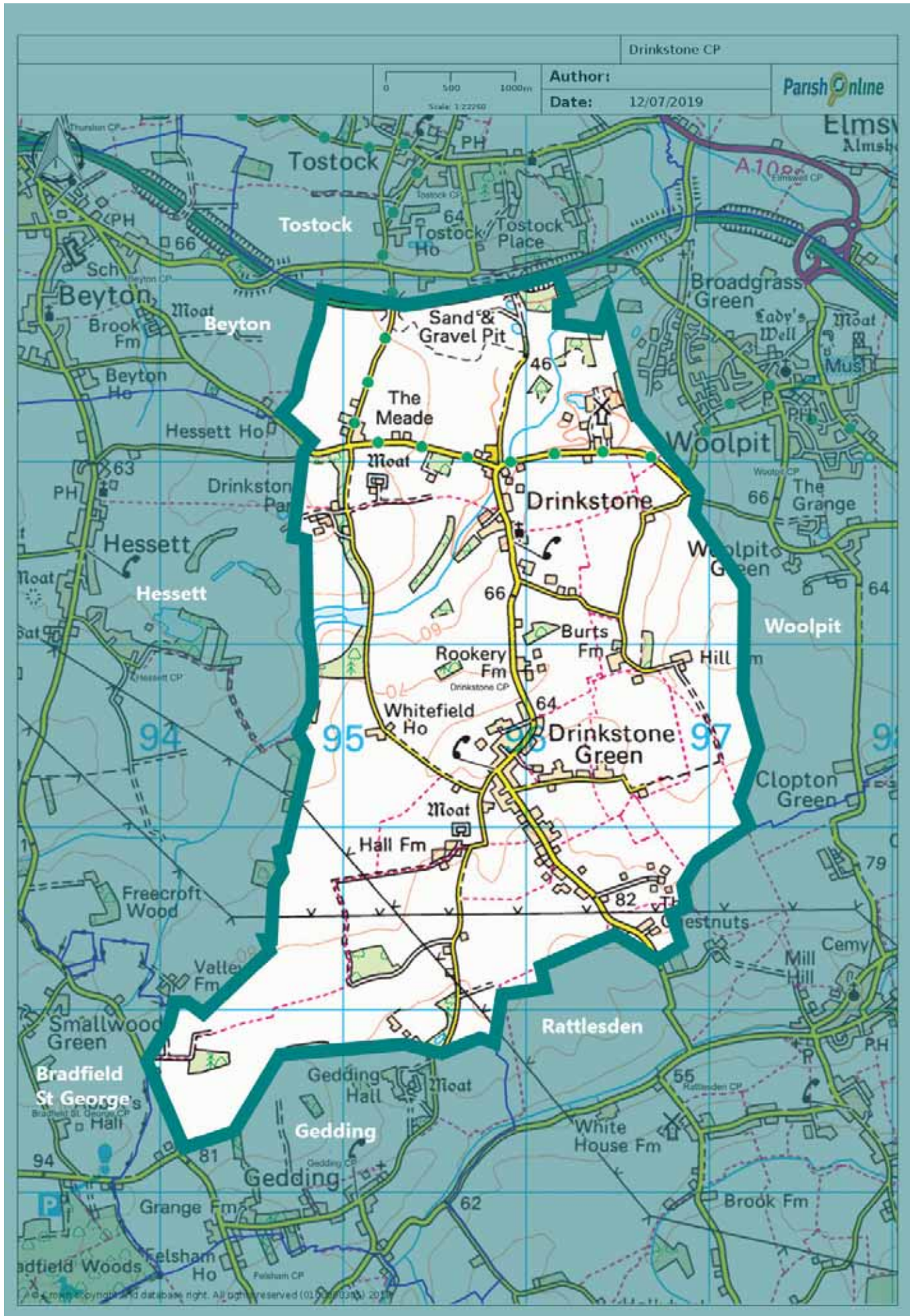


**1.5** The Plan has been developed by a Steering Group appointed by Drinkstone Parish Council, supported by an additional group of volunteers, and assisted by Place4People Planning Consultancy and the support provided by Government neighbourhood planning grants and Technical Support.

## Neighbourhood Area Designation

**1.6** The Parish Council is the “qualifying body” responsible for the preparation of the neighbourhood plan for Drinkstone and, in June 2018, requested Mid Suffolk District Council to designate the whole of Drinkstone Parish as the Neighbourhood Area (the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan). On 19th June 2018, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the District Council formally designated the Neighbourhood Area, as identified on Map 1. Details of the application, publication and designation can be viewed on the District Council’s website under Neighbourhood Planning in Drinkstone. There are no other designated neighbourhood plan areas within this boundary.





Map 1 - The Designated Neighbourhood Area (Parish Boundary)



## 1. INTRODUCTION AND HOW THE PLAN WAS PREPARED (CONTINUED)

---

### Evidence Gathering

**1.7** To provide a sound evidence base for the Plan, the Steering Group carried out a number of surveys. These were:

- (a) a **village-wide questionnaire** seeking to elicit the views of all village residents as to their aspirations for the village and their preferences regarding future development;
- (b) a **housing needs survey** seeking to define what type and quantity of new housing might be most suited to the village;
- (c) a **consultation with youth groups** to determine what the young people and children think of Drinkstone, what they wish to retain and what they would like to see changed;
- (d) a **local landscape appraisal** that analyses and defines the features and key views that determine the local character areas of Drinkstone;
- (e) a record of the **natural environmental features** and **biodiversity** of Drinkstone;
- (f) a **built character assessment** prepared by the Steering Group to identify and describe the distinctive features, appearance and feel of Drinkstone;
- (g) **the preparation of Design Guidance for Drinkstone** carried out by independent consultants, AECOM, on behalf of the Steering Group, to develop design guidelines for future development to retain and enhance the character of the village and protect the rural, tranquil character and scenic beauty of the area; and
- (h) **an independent assessment of potential housing sites** carried out by AECOM to identify the suitability and deliverability of sites identified by residents for potential housing development.

**1.8** The results and conclusions of these surveys, which are available as separate documents, have informed the preparation of the planning policies in this Plan.

### Public consultation

**1.9** A number of public consultation sessions were also held as the Plan was prepared.

These were:

#### First Public Drop-in Session

This was held on Saturday 29th September 2018 in the Village Hall and attracted a recorded total of 61 residents. A presentation of the Plan process was made using 15 story-boards, on which residents were asked to put their views on any aspect of the Plan by means of 'Post-It' notes and adhesive markers. A very valuable collection of views was recorded; these have been fed into the Plan itself and are summarised in Section 3.

#### Second Public Drop-in Session

This was held on Saturday 16th February 2019 in the Village Hall with a recorded total of 76 residents attending during the day. Story boards summarised the work done to date, including the results of the village questionnaire and of the research into the village landscape, built character and building design guidelines. There was also information on the village footpath network and prominent views within the village. Attendees gave 100% approval to the proposed draft vision for Drinkstone, and strong approval also to the proposal that design principles should be respected in any future development. Proposed community actions (to be undertaken by the Parish Council) were ranked in order of priority.

#### Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

The formal consultation on the Draft Plan took place between 10 August and 4 October 2019. The commencement of the consultation was marked with a widely publicised drop-in event at the Village Hall at which 77 people attended. Display boards illustrated the main content of the Plan, including all the policies, and hard copies of the document were also available for inspection. The Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents were made available on the Parish Council website and other bodies were also consulted as noted in the separate Consultation Statement.

#### Submission Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

Mid Suffolk District Council carried out consultation on the submitted Plan between 16 December 2019 and 7 February 2020 in accordance with their Statement of Community Involvement. All comments received were forwarded to the Independent Examiner for consideration.





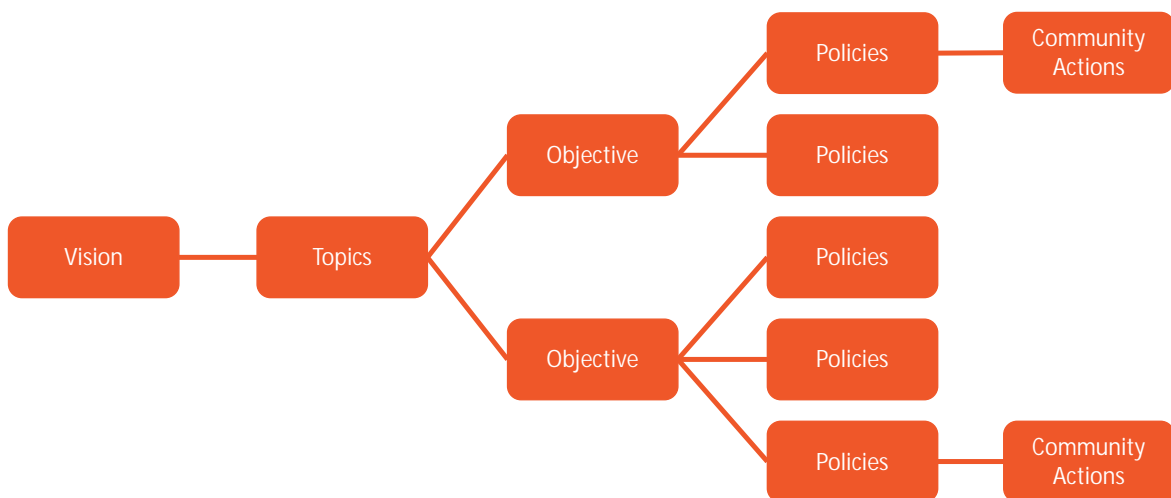
## The Plan

1.10 The Plan focuses on four themes, namely:

- Housing
- Natural Environment
- Built Environment and Design
- Infrastructure and Services

1.11 These themes form the foundation for the content of the Plan and distinct chapters cover policies and aspirations for each theme. Within each chapter there is a reminder of the relevant objectives, a summary of what the evidence showed, with further discussion culminating in planning policies and, where appropriate, community actions and projects.

1.12 The planning policies will, when the Plan is complete, form part of the statutory development plan which will be used to determine planning applications in Drinkstone. In addition to the planning policies, community actions are included in the Plan. It must be emphasised at the outset that community actions do not form part of the “statutory” Neighbourhood Plan but are included for completeness to identify other areas of improvement and change that residents have identified during the preparation of the Plan. The planning policies appear in boxes numbered DRN1, DRN2 etc., and distinctly different boxes define the non-statutory community actions.





## 2. DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF DRINKSTONE

---

### VILLAGE HISTORY

**2.1** The village of Drinkstone is located in central Suffolk. Drinkstone Village Hall, taken as a reference point, is approximately two miles from Woolpit, a larger village with several amenities, seven miles from Stowmarket and nine miles from Bury St Edmunds.

**2.2** There is some evidence that the Romans settled in Drinkstone and certainly there was a thriving Anglo-Saxon community – fragments of Saxon pottery have been found in the village. The three entries for the village in the Domesday Book (1085) show three different spellings – Rengestuna, Drenccestuna and Drincestona. The most complete entry records that it was held by St. Etheldreda when there was “... *one church and 12 acres, 15 small holders, 6 slaves, woodland at 100 pigs, 2 horses at the hall, 10 cattle, 32 pigs, 8 goats ...*”

**2.3** Drinkstone Green, along with a number of other settlements in this part of Suffolk, developed around the edge of former greens. These greens were enclosed in the 19th century and have subsequently been infilled with housing. They now largely survive only as place names such as ‘Green Farm’, ‘Green Close’ and of course ‘Drinkstone Green’.

**2.4** Robert Bacon, grandfather of the illustrious philosopher Francis Bacon, was born in Drinkstone in the 15th century at a time when it was “the seat of ambitious yeomanry” according to one writer. In the 18th century Drinkstone became a squirearchy; several wealthy gentlemen built large houses surrounded by beautiful grounds, giving employment locally to grooms, gardeners and servants.

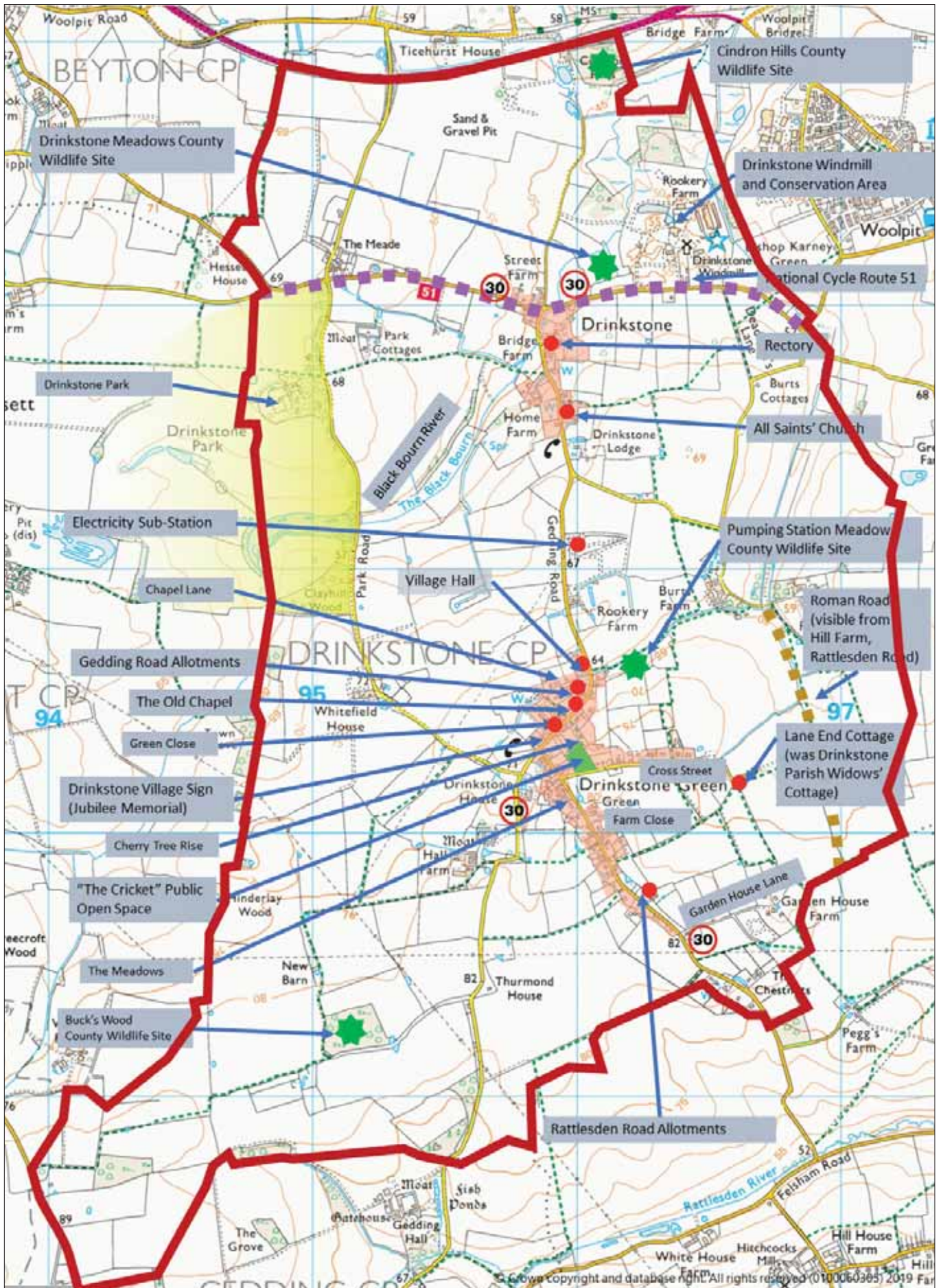
**2.5** The painter Thomas Gainsborough was summoned to make a portrait of a rich businessman, Joshua Grigby, who had built for himself a grand house at Drinkstone Park. Gainsborough also painted several rural scenes around the village, the most famous of which, is “Drinkstone Park”.



**2.6** In the 19th century the estate of Drinkstone Park was inherited by Joshua Grigby the Third who loved the place and asked to be buried in a corner of his garden. This piece of land was duly hallowed and on his death in 1829 he was buried there beneath a mulberry tree. During the war the big house at Drinkstone Park housed American servicemen who were attached to Rougham airfield, but the house was demolished just after the war. The lake and the parkland belts on the estate remain and, in the grounds, homes were fashioned from the converted stable block and other ancillary buildings.

**2.7** In the last 30 years, the village school, shop and pub have all closed. The village school, sited next to the church, was founded in 1859. It closed in 1986 after a valiant fight to keep it open and has since been converted to a private house. Currently Drinkstone offers no commercial facilities, the nearest being located in Woolpit some two miles distant; the centre of community activity is the Village Hall, newly-completed and opened in July 2013, replacing the previous building.

*Map 2 on the following page illustrates the main features of the village.*



Map 2 - Main Features of Drinkstone



## Population statistics

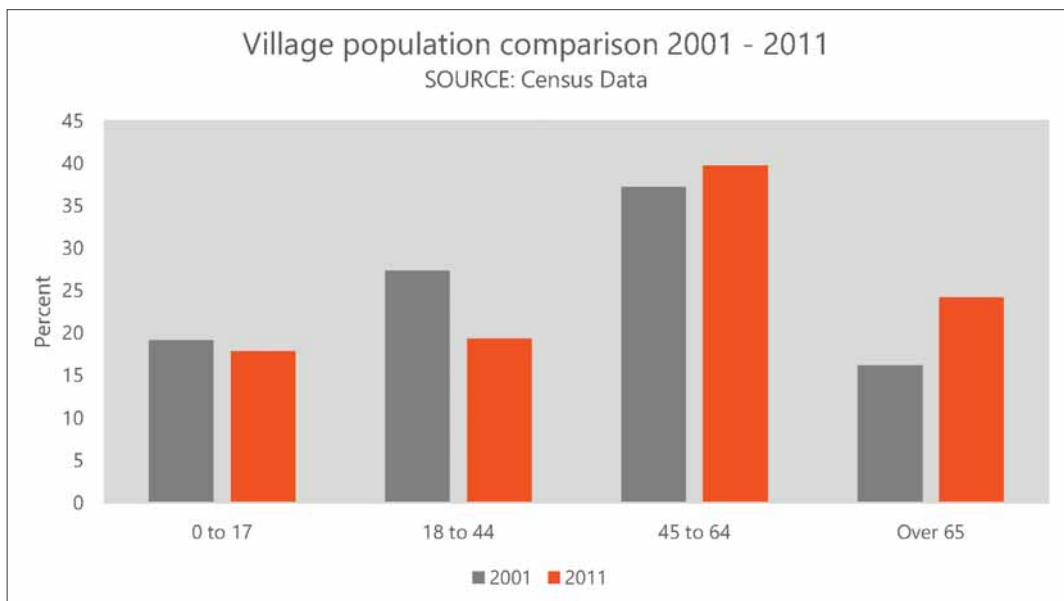
**2.8** In the 2011 Census there were 548 residents of the parish living in 232 households. The main centres of housing are twofold - adjacent to the church in the area known as the Street, and in Drinkstone Green, some half-to three-quarters of a mile to the south of the church and comprising the main centre of population. There are also outlying clusters of housing, notably along the western boundary of the parish in the Drinkstone Park area. The village has 36 listed buildings (see Appendix A)

**2.9** The age distribution of residents is biased towards the over-45s, where this age group accounted for 62.9% of the population compared to 49.4% for Mid Suffolk as a whole. While those in the 45-59 age group were proportionately much greater in Drinkstone (29.4%) than in Mid Suffolk (21.5%), the reverse applied for those aged 75 and over (6.5% against 9.1% in Mid Suffolk, suggesting that older people might move to areas with better services and transport links.

**2.10** Other areas in which Drinkstone differs markedly from Mid Suffolk are:

- the proportion of houses that are detached properties (70% in Drinkstone, 48% in Mid Suffolk);
- the much higher proportion of managers, directors and senior officials employed in Drinkstone in the 16-74 age range (21.8% against 12.6% in Mid Suffolk);
- the lower proportion of Drinkstone's population who are employed (61.7%) than in Mid Suffolk (67.0%); and
- the higher proportion of retired people (24.8%) in Drinkstone than in Mid Suffolk (17.4%).

**2.11** According to the 1901 Census, there were 382 inhabitants in the village in that year. In 2017 the population at mid-year was estimated at 638, representing an average annual rate of growth since 1901 of 0.44%. Over that same period, the population of Suffolk rose on average by 0.59% a year. If those trends continue, Drinkstone would have 697 inhabitants in twenty years' time, implying an additional 15 four-person households. (Note, however, that the population fell from 543 in 1851 to a low point of 375 in 1951. Since 1951 the population has increased at an average annual rate of growth of 0.8% a year.) In the period 2001-2016, 42 new homes were completed within the parish.





View of Drinkstone Green from Gedding Road near Rookery Farm

## Landscape Setting

**2.12** Drinkstone is located within two broad types of landscape according to the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, "Rolling Valley Farmland and Furze", and "Ancient Rolling Farmlands". Consequently, there are some fine and extensive views across the landscape into and out of the built-up areas of the village. Roads are typically bordered by long established hedgerows and avenues of trees and careful consideration has to be given to the potential impact of new development on sites both within and adjoining the parish.

## Built Character Assessment

**2.13** A Built Character Assessment was carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to identify and describe the distinctive features, appearance and feel of Drinkstone. This led to the identification of seven distinct character areas of the built-up areas of the parish as identified in the maps opposite. These areas were assessed by members of the Steering Group by site visits, walking the roads and footpaths and using the Planning Aid guidelines that cover:

- Topography
- Buildings
- Land uses
- Landmarks
- Layout
- Green and Natural Features
- Roads, streets and routes
- Streetscape
- Spaces
- Views

### Character Areas

- 1 The north side of Chapel Lane
- 2 Chapel Lane south side, Gedding Road and Rattlesden Road as far as Cross Street
- 3 - 3a The Meadows and Cherry Tree Rise
- 4 Rattlesden Road south of Cross Street
- 4a Cross Street
- 5 Drinkstone Street



Rattlesden Road hedgerows and verges



Map 3A - Character Areas, Drinkstone Green



Map 3B - Character Areas, Drinkstone Street

In addition, the areas around Drinkstone Park and The Mills have also been assessed. The Character Assessment is available on the Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan webpage.



## Services and Facilities

**2.14** The Village Hall is the main community facility in Drinkstone. The current building was opened in July 2013, replacing the old hall which was badly damaged in a fire in 2010. The new building has been designed to incorporate a high level of green credentials and is the venue for a number of clubs and activities including the Gardening Club, Local History Group, Women's Institute and Yoga and Tai Chi classes.

**2.15** There are no shops or public houses in the village. The Cherry Tree PH closed in 1997/98 and its site and the surrounding land were redeveloped in 2013 for housing.

**2.16** There are two plots of allotment gardens in the village, both in Drinkstone Green where "The Cricket" recreational open space can also be found. In addition to church services, the Church at Drinkstone Street is used for a number of functions including talks, although car parking space available nearby is severely limited.

## Roads and Access

**2.17** Although the village is located close to the A14 trunk road, access is very poor due to narrow roads. Reliance on private transport in Drinkstone is, not surprisingly, recorded as being higher than in Mid Suffolk, with 66% of Drinkstone households having two or more cars or vans, against 49.7% for Mid Suffolk.

**2.18** Up until September 2019, Drinkstone was served by two bus routes, to Bury St Edmunds and to Stowmarket. However, the operator terminated the contract with the County Council and, at the time of preparing this Plan, no replacement services had been introduced meaning that residents have little option but to rely on the car to access services and facilities in larger villages and towns. In the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, 66% of respondents stated that they never use the bus services, with only 7% using them "often or very often".

**2.19** A further feature of the village is the absence of pavements and street lighting. The majority of residents did not want this to change, particularly valuing the "dark skies" that are afforded by the lack of light pollution.

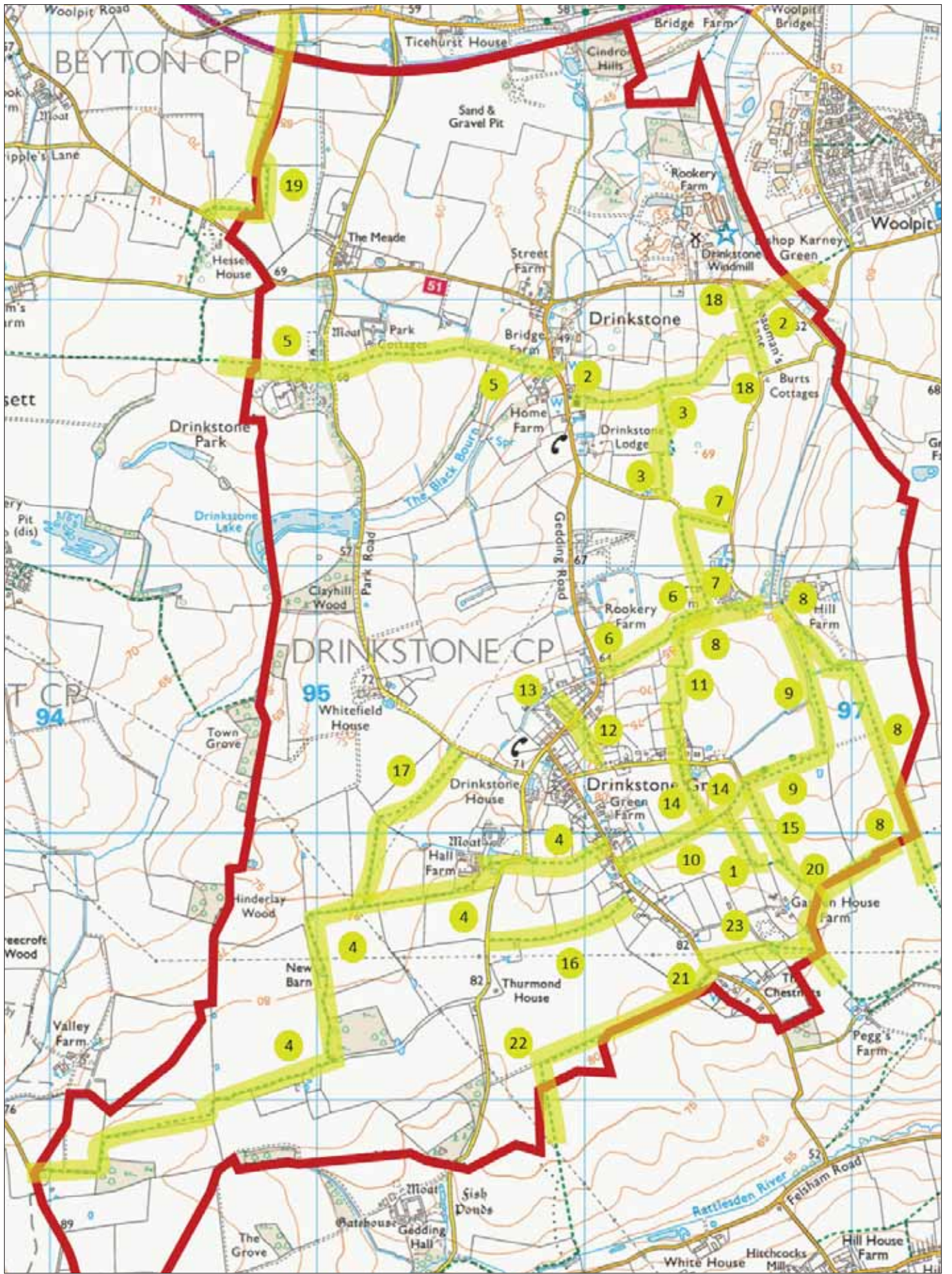
**2.20** There is a good network of public footpaths and bridleways across the Neighbourhood Plan Area, as illustrated on Map 3. Generally, the paths are in good condition and provide opportunities for circular walks around the village

## Services and Infrastructure

**2.21** During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan we have ascertained from UK Power Networks that there is ample electricity capacity in the sub-station for new houses. In addition, Anglian Water stated that the sewage pumping station's capacity could cope with more houses, although there may be issues with the processing capacity of the system outside the village's boundaries and possibly also within the village, depending on the scale and location of any further development. However, there is a record of serious local capacity / flooding problems in the sewerage system, particularly in Chapel Lane. Anglian Water has stated that there is in place a set procedure for developers to be required to contribute to the costs of expanding infrastructure should their developments necessitate it.

**2.22** Environment Agency data shows several areas within the village that are 'roads subject to regular surface water flooding', namely: the junction of Gedding Road and Beyton Road; the junction of Gedding Road and Chapel Lane; Gedding Road outside Drinkstone House; and Park Road. The Government Flood Risk map also indicates that properties in Chapel Lane are in an area where there is a high risk of surface water flooding. The majority of the parish is within (fluvial) flood zone 1, although there are areas within flood zones 2 and 3 where the River Black Bourn flows through the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

**2.23** The nearest health centre, which has recently been expanded, is at Woolpit. As the population of the wider area continues to grow, Drinkstone Parish Council will offer appropriate support to West Suffolk CCG to ensure suitable and sustainable provision of Primary Healthcare services is available for Drinkstone residents, including access for those that do not have access to a car.



Map 4 - Public Footpaths  
(numbers refer to Definitive Rights of Way Footpath Numbers)



### 3. CURRENT ISSUES

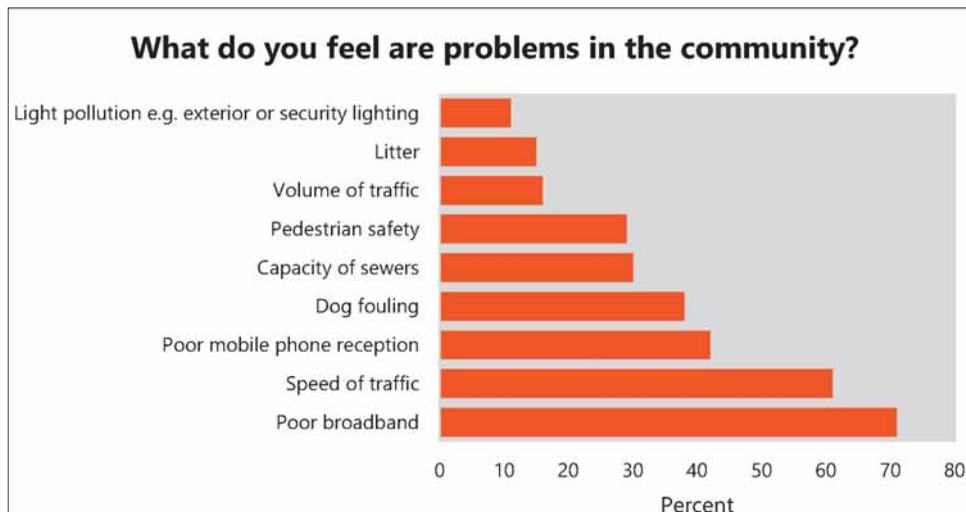
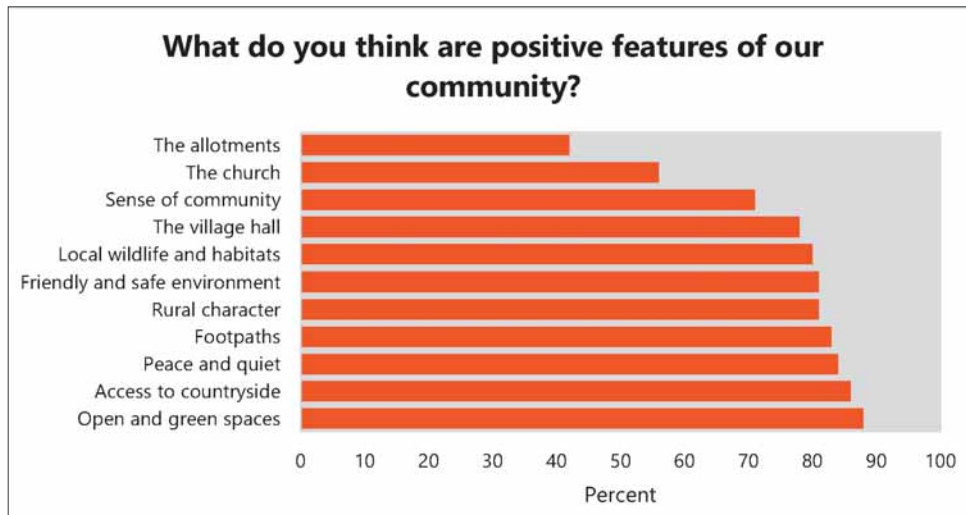
#### Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire

**3.1** During October and November 2018, each household in Drinkstone received a questionnaire for completion. The questionnaire contained two main sections. Part I sought a range of residents' views on the village, their experience of living in it and their views on its future, and Part II comprised a Housing Needs Survey.

**3.2** 247 questionnaires were distributed and 205 were completed and returned for analysis, a response rate of 83% (although response rates varied for some questions). Full details of the analysis of the questionnaire results are available on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Drinkstone Village website.

#### Residents' views of the village

**3.3** Drinkstone's residents value the rural nature of the village but also seek good, modern communications. More than four respondents in five stressed the value of open space, countryside access, peace and quiet, footpaths, the village's rural character, an environment that is viewed as friendly and safe, and local wildlife. Residents also valued the village hall, the sense of community, the church and, to a lesser extent, the allotments.



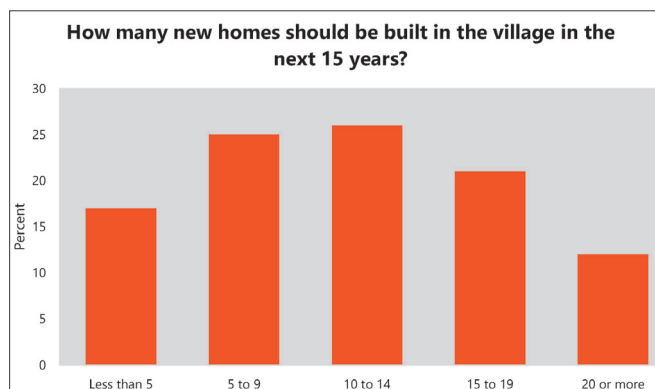


**3.4** Aspects that caused concern in the 2018 village questionnaire were the lack of fast broadband services (since improved), speeding road traffic and poor mobile phone reception. There were also some other traffic related concerns (pedestrian safety, on-street parking and traffic volumes), and issues such as dog fouling, the capacity of the village's sewers, litter and light pollution.

### Views on housing development

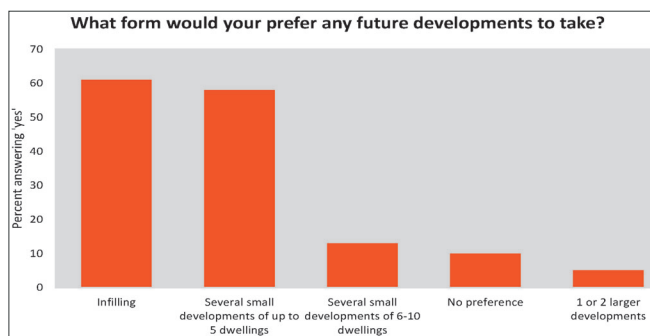
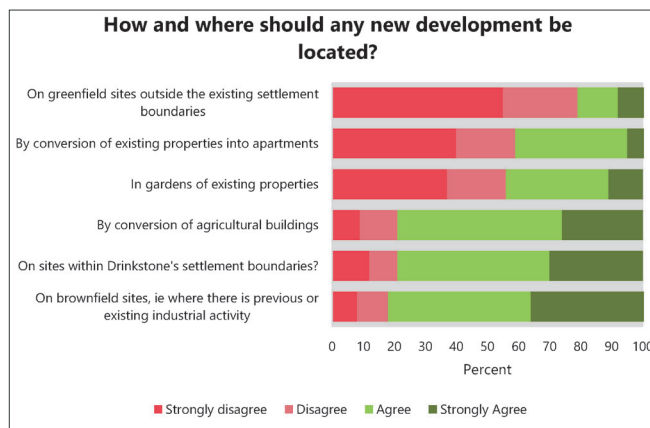
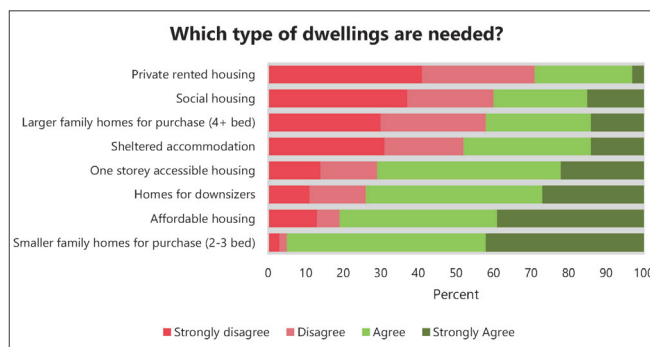
**3.5** At the heart of the questionnaire is the attitude of residents to potential additions to the village's housing stock. The questionnaire results indicate that the majority of residents were not opposed to new housing but think that its volume should be limited. Location, housing types and design standards should, in summary, be consistent with the current nature and layout of the village and should broadly be absorbed into the current boundaries.

**3.6** Most people would like to see new housing limited to 10 – 19 units (47% of respondents), with a further 25% wishing to see no more than nine new units. The predominant view (of 72% of respondents) therefore is that additions to the current stock of 232 houses should be no more than 19 units (an increase of 8%).

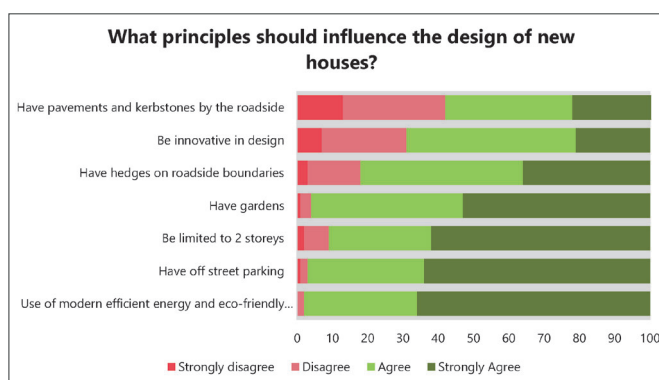


**3.7** The types of new houses most strongly supported would be 2-3 bedroom properties, affordable housing, houses for downsizers and single-storey houses. There was little support for private rented accommodation or for social housing, and only minimal support for 4-5 bedroom houses and sheltered housing.

**3.8** It was considered that new housing should be on brownfield sites within the current settlement boundaries, and possibly in converted agricultural buildings. There was strong disapproval of development on greenfield sites outside the current settlement boundaries, with little support shown for the conversion of existing buildings into apartments nor for building in existing gardens. A strong majority favour infilling and several small developments of up to five units; there is little support for larger developments. Nearly nine in ten respondents want new development to be phased over the next 20 years.



**3.9** In general, Drinkstone residents are in favour of modern, energy-efficient housing that makes use of current best-practice and innovative techniques. Most also would like to see houses with off-street parking, no higher than two storeys and with gardens.





### 3. CURRENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

#### Village services and amenities

**3.10** Many village residents make little or no use of the village’s amenities. However, usage of the village hall either often or very often is marked. Almost nine respondents in ten gave no answer to questions concerning difficult access either to a GP or to a school, implying that such difficulties are largely absent.

#### The environment and green space

**3.11** Strongly reinforcing the value placed on the rural nature and character of the village as expressed in the initial section of the questionnaire, there is very wide support for the conservation of the village’s rural character, of the sense of peace and quiet, rural views, wildlife, hedges, trees and of the village’s dark skies and lack of light pollution. These issues define the nature of Drinkstone and are central to residents’ appreciation of the village.

**3.12** In parallel to these views, strong support is given to the maintenance and preservation of the play area (‘The Cricket’), the churchyard and the network of footpaths that the village offers (some would like to see this network further extended and some new routes were suggested – see section 10.4 ‘Public Rights of Way’ below). Again, these are defining characteristics of Drinkstone. Support is also expressed, albeit slightly less strongly, for the maintenance of the current stretches of agricultural land that separate the built-up areas of the village.

**3.13** It follows that the natural features of the village landscape, such as trees, hedges and watercourses are highly valued, to which may be added some of the built environmental characteristics of the village such as the church and its setting, heritage buildings, the two mills, ponds, moats, Drinkstone Park and small meadows.

**3.14** All of the above underline the central point that Drinkstone’s rural setting and blend of built and natural environments both define the settlement and are seen as the primary focus of residents’ support and concern.

**3.15** Drinkstone is not seen by residents as a place in which businesses should be located as a policy priority. While 14% of respondents run small businesses, the majority of which have only the proprietor as an employee, there is little support for the construction of small business premises in the village and few think that the village needs to attract more small businesses.

#### Responses from children and young people

**3.16** To ensure that the opinions of young people were also taken into account, and in parallel with the distribution of the general questionnaire, the views of the under-16s resident in Drinkstone were also sought. This was done on 2nd November 2018, with the assistance of the organisers of the village’s youth groups. The session was structured as follows:

- introduction and discussion about what the Plan is, what it is trying to achieve, and discussion about community feedback;
- junior children then drew or wrote down what they liked about Drinkstone and the community and what they would like changed;
- senior children had a facilitated discussion with the youth groups’ organiser assisted by a member of the Steering Group

The results are summarised on the following illustrations:

FEEDBACK FROM SENIOR YOUTH GROUP		
Positive	Negative	New things wanted
Park	Poor wi-fi - this needs improving	Convenience store (but small)
Footpaths	Poor bus service	Regular bus to Thurston so train can be caught to Bury or Ipswich
Nature		
NOT too many houses - don't build more		
Village hall		
No street lights, don't need them we are not a town		



**3.17** Of particular note here is that the under-16s resident in Drinkstone are directly engaged in and aware of the various characteristics of the village. The rural nature of the village, its peace and quiet and direct access to the countryside are all valued by the children. The village's small size is valued, and the children have no desire to see a major expansion in housing. On the other hand, there is an awareness of a lack of facilities and infrastructure, and transport connections to larger settlements. In summary, the children have a positive view of the play area, nature, the community, open spaces, the footpath network, the village hall, the allotments (the youth groups have their own allotment plot), and the small scale of Drinkstone. There is a desire to see improvements in the play area, wi-fi, and bus services, the children want to protect trees and nature, and would like to see a shop established and the allotments used more.



## 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework

**4.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's high-level planning policies which must be taken into account in the preparation of development plan documents and when deciding planning applications. In February 2019 the Government published a Revised NPPF. The Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states:

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

For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

**4.2** The NPPF requires that communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans should:

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

### Mid Suffolk Local Plan

**4.3** At a more local level, the adopted development plan comprises:

- the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998;
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008; and
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012

**4.4** The 1998 Local Plan defines Settlement Boundaries for the village as illustrated on Maps 5A and 5B. Within the Settlement Boundaries there was a presumption in favour of development as long as it did not have a detrimental impact on the environment, the amenity of residents and on infrastructure capacity. The Neighbourhood Plan has reviewed the 20 year old boundaries as noted in Chapter 6.





Maps 5A and 5B - 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan Settlement Boundaries

**4.5** A number of the planning policies in the 1998 Local Plan remain in force some 20 years later as they have yet to be replaced by a more up-to-date local plan.

**4.6** In 2008 the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy was adopted. This contains the high-level planning strategy for the district, primarily identifying the scale and distribution of growth in the district up to 2031. The Core Strategy designates Drinkstone as a “Countryside Village” where development *“will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy, meet affordable housing, community needs and provide renewable energy.”* The Settlement Boundary was deleted from the Local Plan Proposals Map as a result of the “countryside” designation.

**4.7** Some elements of the Core Strategy were superseded by the Core Strategy Focused Review in 2012. In particular, the Focused Review updated the quantity of new housing to be built across the district. Policy FC2 of the Focused Review identified the distribution of housing growth across the differing settlement categories. It made no allowance for any housing growth in Countryside Villages.

### Emerging Joint Babergh & Mid Suffolk Local Plan

**4.8** Early in 2015 the District Council announced their intention to produce a new Joint Local Plan with Babergh District Council that would provide a planning framework for the management of growth across the districts to 2036. In August 2017 a consultation document was published that identified a number of options for the content of the Plan including the strategy for the location of growth across the districts. The consultation document proposed that Drinkstone be designated as a “hinterland village” based on its level of services and facilities and proximity to higher order settlements that had a greater

range of services and infrastructure. This was something that the Parish Council objected to at the time. The re-designation of the Settlement Boundaries for Drinkstone was included in the consultation document.

**4.9** In July 2019 the District Council consulted on the “Preferred Options” for the draft Joint Local Plan. At the time it was envisaged that the Joint Local Plan would be adopted by the end of 2020, after the anticipated date for the adoption of this Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, while we have had some regard for the content of the emerging Joint Local Plan, the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan do not have to be in general conformity with it because it carries little “weight” in the planning process.

**4.10** The emerging Joint Local Plan identifies a hierarchy of settlements according to their level of services and function within the District. For the purposes of the Joint Local Plan only, Drinkstone is proposed to be categorised as a Hamlet where draft Policy SP03 states that development will be permitted within settlement boundaries where:

- *“Design is sympathetic to its rural surroundings and demonstrates high-quality design by having regard to the relevant policies of the [local] plan;*
- *A high standard of hard and soft landscaping, appropriate for the location is used;*
- *Hedgerows and treelines which make an important contribution to the wider context and setting are protected, particularly in edge of settlement locations; and*
- *The cumulative impact of proposals will be a major consideration.”*

**4.11** The precise wording of the final policy will evolve over the course of the preparation of the Joint Local Plan and therefore carries no weight in the planning decision process at this time.



## 5. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

**5.1** In response to the outcomes of the evidence-gathering phase of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, a draft Vision was presented at the second Drop-in Session (February 2019) and received a 100% approval rating from those who attended. It has therefore been adopted for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Therefore, if Drinkstone's Neighbourhood Plan is effective and successful:

### VISION

In 2036 Drinkstone will be a place that has developed so that:

- it still has its own character and individuality;
- it is a place where people of all ages can live in a vibrant and friendly community;
- the natural landscape has been protected and enhanced.



### Objectives

The Objectives of the Plan have been developed in order to deliver the vision. Each Objective has informed and guided the content of the Planning Policies and Community Actions that follow.

#### Housing

- 1 Ensure that Drinkstone's housing growth is commensurate with the level of services and facilities in the village.
- 2 Deliver housing that is tailored to meet the needs of local residents.

#### Natural Environment

- 3 Protect the important green spaces, woodland and countryside and public rights of way.
- 4 Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.
- 5 Deliver net gains to the extent and quality of natural habitats.

#### Built Environment and Design

- 6 Conserve and enhance the village's heritage assets.
- 7 Ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects local character.
- 8 Reduce the impact of new development through the incorporation of measures that reduce their environmental impact.

#### Infrastructure and Services

- 9 Ensure that the scale of development is at a level and in a location that the local infrastructure and services can support.
- 10 Protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.



## 6. SPATIAL STRATEGY

**6.1** As noted above, the planning policy framework for Mid Suffolk is currently evolving from that which is set out in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998), the Core Strategy (2008) and the Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) into a new Joint Local Plan for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. The Preferred Options for the Joint Local Plan were published for consultation in July 2019 but the Plan is unlikely to be finally adopted by the District Council before the end of 2020.

**6.2** This Neighbourhood Plan supports limited growth in the village commensurate with its level of services and the poor accessibility via narrow country lanes from the nearest larger settlement of Woolpit. It is essential that the growth is focused on the existing built-up area of the village in order to limit potential detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape. The Plan does, however, recognise that the presence of heritage and landscape assets requires that development will need to be carefully designed and, where necessary, mitigates any impact on the historic and natural landscape and existing infrastructure.

**6.3** Settlement Boundaries are defined for the main built-up areas of the village, as defined on the Policies Map at the rear of the Plan, in order to manage the location of future development and to protect the countryside that surrounds them from inappropriate development. The boundaries are based on those contained in the 1998 Local Plan, but they have been reviewed to reflect changes during that 20-year period and opportunities for new development that will arise during the next 20 years. These changes include sites where permissions for new dwellings have been granted since 1 April 2018, given that the principle of development on these sites is accepted by the District Council. In order to manage the potential impacts of growth, new development will be focused within the Settlement Boundaries. This will ensure that the undeveloped rural countryside is preserved and remains largely undeveloped. There may be situations where it is necessary for development to take place outside the Settlement Boundaries, but this will be limited to that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside. However, this approach does not restrict the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential uses where proposals meet the government regulations and local planning policies for such conversions.

### Policy DRN1 - Spatial Strategy

The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Drinkstone's designation as a Countryside Village in the adopted Core Strategy and emerging designation as a Hamlet in the Joint Local Plan.

The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundaries of Drinkstone and Drinkstone Green, as defined on the Policies Map.

Proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundaries will only be permitted for that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses, where:

- i) it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal; and
- ii) it cannot be satisfactorily located within the Settlement Boundaries.
- iii) it is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses for which it can satisfactorily be demonstrated that it needs to be located there or meets the requirements of other development plan policies.





## 7. HOUSING

### Housing Objectives

- 1 Ensure that Drinkstone's housing growth is commensurate with the level of services and facilities in the village.
- 2 Deliver housing that is tailored to meet the needs of local residents.

**7.1** A key role of the Neighbourhood Plan is to identify the quantity of new housing to be provided during the period covered by the Plan and to identify where it will be located. The National Planning Guidance states that *"the 'policies and allocations' in the plan should meet the identified housing requirement in full, whether it is derived from the standard methodology for local housing need, the housing figure in the area's strategic policies, an indicative figure provided by the local authority, or where it has exceptionally been determined by the neighbourhood planning body."*

**7.2** At the time of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, the housing figures in the strategic policies are those in the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and the Core Strategy Focused Review (2012). A more up-to-date indicative figure was included in the Preferred Options Joint Local Plan document that is undergoing consultation. Policy SP04 of the consultation document identified a need for just one additional dwelling in Drinkstone between 2018 and 2036.

**7.3** As at 1st July 2019, planning consents for eight additional new homes had been granted in Drinkstone since 1st April 2018. As such, there is no need to identify any additional sites for housing in this Plan over and above those that have already been granted permission.

**7.4** However, although no additional sites are identified, it is acknowledged that there will continue to be opportunities within the Settlement Boundaries for small "windfall" sites to come forward as a result of, for example, redevelopment or plot rationalisation. It will, however, be essential that such proposals have regard to the characteristics of the local environment, any impact on the amenity of nearby residents and the ability to achieve safe access to the highway.

**7.5** Outside the Settlement Boundaries, there may occasionally be opportunities to convert existing buildings to residential use, as has already happened with the barns at Joli Farm. In some circumstances, planning permission is not required for such conversions, but the schemes do help to contribute to meeting the housing need of the area. Occasionally, works that are required to existing buildings to make them suitable for residential use can have a detrimental impact on the character of the building and its setting within the countryside. The Neighbourhood Plan, while allowing in principle works to convert buildings in the countryside to residential uses, seeks to limit the impact of proposals.

**7.6** With these factors in mind, the Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for around a further ten dwellings in Drinkstone between 2018 and 2036. The majority of these will be met by existing planning permissions while a small allowance is made for other "windfall" sites coming forward that comply with the policies of the Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore fully accords with the requirements of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF in meeting the identified housing requirement in full.







## Policy DRN2 - Housing Development

This Plan provides for around 10 additional dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2018 and 2036. This growth will be met through:

- i the site allocations as identified in Policy DRN3 in the Plan and on the Policies Map;
- ii small brownfield “windfall” sites and infill plots within the Settlement Boundaries that come forward during the plan period and are not identified in the Plan;
- iii in exceptional circumstances, dwellings outside the Settlement Boundaries where it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses for which it can satisfactorily be demonstrated that it needs to be located in the countryside.

In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant or disused agricultural barns into dwellings outside the Settlement Boundaries will be permitted where:

- a) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for extension, significant alteration or reconstruction; and
- b) the proposal is a high-quality design and the method of conversion retains the character and historic interest of the building; and
- c) the proposal would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting of the building, and the creation of a residential curtilage and any associated domestic paraphernalia would not have a harmful effect on the character of the site or setting of the building, any wider group of buildings, or the surrounding area.

## Housing Sites

7.7 As noted above, eight dwellings have been granted planning permission since 1st April 2018, including two conversions located outside the Settlement Boundaries. The sites for the construction of new dwellings are either within or well related to the Settlement Boundaries. Given that the principle of development on these sites is accepted and, even though these permissions might lapse before work commences, they are allocated for housing development in Policy DRN 3. Development on these sites is expected to take place in accordance with the planning consents in place at the time the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development on the site. The sites are also identified on the Policies Map at the rear of the Plan. The existing planning permissions for barn conversions outside the Settlement Boundaries are not allocated in Policy DRN 3.

## Policy DRN3 - Housing Allocations

The following sites, as identified on the Policies Map, are allocated for housing development. Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent for each site (as noted) unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.

- i) Land west of The Street (1 dwelling – MSDC ref DC/19/01959)
- ii) Abbots Lodge, The Street (1 dwelling – MSDC ref DC/18/05409);
- iii) Adjacent to Greyfriars, Rattlesden Road (1 dwelling – MSDC ref DC/18/01727);
- iv) Briar Cottage, Gedding Road (1 dwelling – MSDC ref DC/18/01476);
- v) Land west of Shortgate, Beyton Road (2 dwellings – MSDC ref DC/18/01268).

Following the publication of the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan in August 2019, a further dwelling was granted planning consent adjacent to Greyfriars, Rattlesden Road. As a result of the examination of the Plan, the Settlement Boundary illustrated on the Policies Map was amended to include the dwelling.



## 7. HOUSING (CONTINUED)

### Current Housing Stock and Future Needs

**7.8** As part of the Household Survey, the Housing Needs Survey invited the views of those residents who either wished to change their current housing, were prevented from doing so by financial or other constraints, or whose families were affected by a need for additional or alternative housing. Since these features apply only to a minority of respondents, specific questions relating to future housing needs were relevant only to a minority.

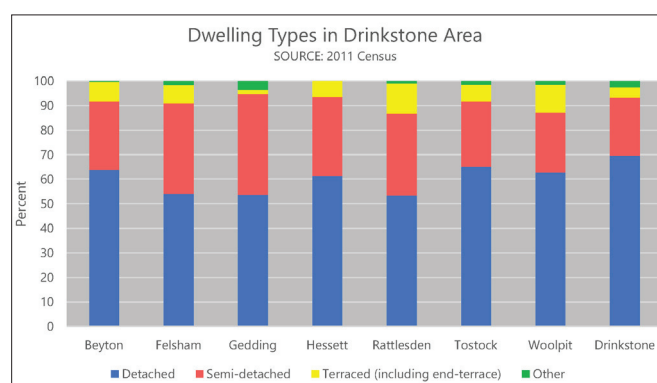


Figure 7.1 – Dwelling Types (2011 Census)

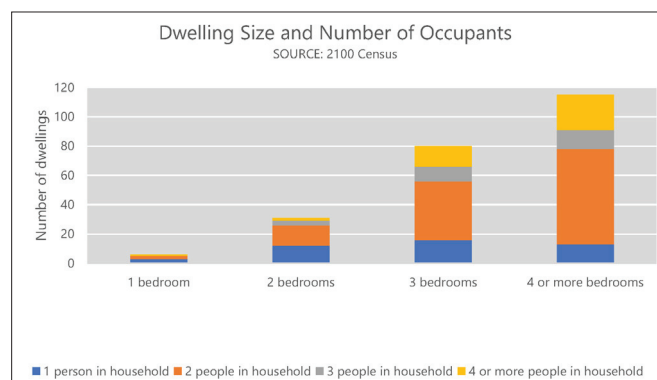


Figure 7.2 - Dwelling Size and number of Occupants

**7.9** Almost 80% of Drinkstone's responding households live in a detached property – either a house (65%) or bungalow (14%). Over 90% are owner-occupied, of which 65% are owned outright without mortgage or loan liabilities. Joint ownership with spouse/partner is most common. 41% of all houses have four bedrooms and a further 29% have three. At the time of the 2011 Census, two-thirds of the houses with four or more bedrooms were occupied by no more than two people.

**7.10** The rate of turnover in the housing stock is relatively low, with over half of respondents having been in their houses for over ten years. Most were attracted to Drinkstone by the ability to have a larger garden, a desire for country living away from urban areas, and a desire for a larger home. Residents also appreciate the safer and 'better' area that Drinkstone is perceived to offer. These views were further reinforced by the textual (non-numeric) responses to this part of the questionnaire, in which the peace, quiet, dark skies and rural nature of the village again came out top as a reason for choosing to live in Drinkstone.

- 7.11** In terms of future housing needs:
- only 15% of respondents thought that they would need to move within the next 3 – 5 years;
  - two-thirds of those would like to stay either in Drinkstone or in the surrounding parishes;
  - there was an interest in moving to modern houses for reasons of energy-efficiency and lower maintenance costs;
  - most people would seek a detached property of 3-4 bedrooms, and two-thirds would require no loan finance;
  - about one third of current households have family members, mainly children who are growing up, who will require housing in the next 3 – 10 years;
  - over two-thirds of those likely to require housing will be looking to move out of Drinkstone;
  - half of those will expect to own or part-own their property, that will most likely be an apartment, terrace or semi-detached house bought with the use either of their own savings (33%) or with the help of their parents (41%);
  - a relatively small proportion of current residents suffer from either a long-term limiting illness or physical disability that requires some adaptation measures within the home, and would benefit from some help with either their house or garden, or both; and
  - most of these receive sufficient support from either their family or the National Health Service and do not need to move to deal with their limitations.

## Meeting Affordable Housing Needs

**7.12** Affordability of housing remains a significant barrier for many seeking their own homes. With government published figures indicating that, in Mid Suffolk, average house prices are over ten times the average household income, many newly-formed households will be excluded from the housing market. One way that the planning system can address this problem is through the provision of affordable housing, as defined by the NPPF and set out in the Glossary. Affordable housing schemes can primarily be delivered through a percentage of a larger development of over ten dwellings or, as an exception, small-scale schemes, including entry level homes for purchase on “rural exception sites” outside the Settlement Boundaries where housing would not normally be permitted. The only possible opportunity for Drinkstone to deliver affordable housing would be through the “exception sites” approach but this would require:

- i) a need to be established;
- ii) a willing landowner being prepared to sell land at a price significantly below the market value for housing land; and
- iii) a registered social landlord (housing association) willing to work with the Parish Council and District Council to fund and manage a scheme.

**7.13** The emerging Joint Local Plan (July 2019) does not contain a policy for the delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites and, therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan addresses the matter should a local need be identified during the period up to 2036.

**7.14** Where a “rural exception” site is proposed for development, it must be demonstrated that there is an identified local need in the village and its hinterland, and that the site is suitable to meet that local need. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to permit an element of open market housing to facilitate the delivery of the affordable housing. This is in accordance with paragraph 77 of the NPPF which states that local authorities should consider whether this approach would help to provide additional affordable housing. The exceptional circumstances, where a small number of market homes will be permitted could include, for example, where there is insufficient government grant available, and it is demonstrated, through financial appraisal, that the open market housing is essential to enable the delivery of the affordable housing. In these cases, the applicant would need to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the District Council, that the inclusion of open market housing is the minimum necessary to enable the delivery of the affordable housing and is not being developed to generate uplift in land values for the landowner. This could be demonstrated through the provision of affordability/profitability modelling data. Where an element of open market housing is proposed as part of an affordable housing exception site, it should be sympathetic to the form and character of the settlement and in accordance with local needs. Local needs can vary, and it could be that smaller market homes are required to meet the needs of first-time buyers or people wishing to downsize to a smaller home. This would need to be established at the time in consultation with the District Council’s Housing Service.

## Policy DRN 4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 71 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside the Settlement Boundaries, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:

- i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and
- ii. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices; and
- iii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Mid Suffolk Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.

These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot otherwise be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing. Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed needs assessment and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.

In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:

- a) that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and
- b) the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.

Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.



## 8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

---

### Natural Environment Objectives

- 3 Protect the important green spaces, woodland and countryside and public rights of way.
- 4 Protect important views and links to the wider countryside.
- 5 Deliver net gains to the extent and quality of natural habitats.

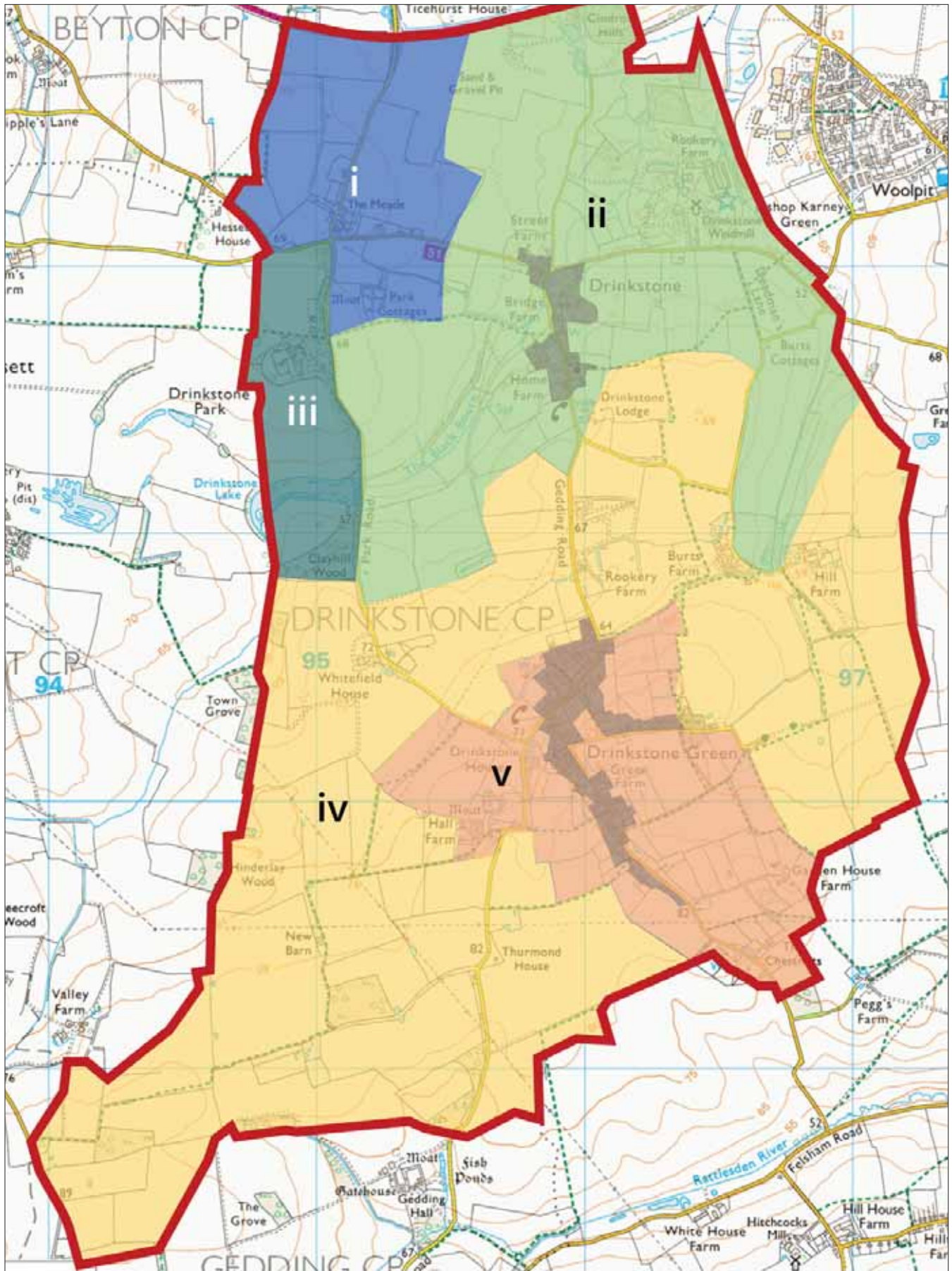
### The Landscape

**8.1** Drinkstone has a rich and extensive network of paddocks, meadows and mature trees within and surrounding the two main settlement areas. Along the River Black Bourn and its attendant natural vegetation, these features and networks create a special visual quality and sense of place. A key element in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan has been the assessment of the landscape qualities and character of the parish in order to inform our approach to the consideration of opportunities for new development. Landscape character is defined as a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that make one landscape different from another. Only by paying proper attention to the existing character can informed and responsible decisions be made about its management, and sustainable future landscapes planned for.

**8.2** At a higher level, the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment identifies two broad types within the parish. At the northern end and adjacent to the village of Woolpit and the A14 trunk road lies an area defined as "Rolling Valley Farmland and Furze", and at the southern end the character is of "Ancient Rolling Farmlands". The former tends towards sandy soils, hedgerows, sand and gravel extraction and a focus on larger settlements. The latter is described as arable farmland, dissected by river valleys, hedgerows (of hawthorn, oak, elm, ash, field maple), open areas, some ancient woodland, dispersed settlements and farms and settlements associated with village greens or the remains thereof.

**8.3** For the Neighbourhood Plan a more detailed Landscape Appraisal of the parish has been prepared and published as a separate evidence document. It is set within a hierarchy of National and Suffolk Landscape Character Assessments and follows the same principles used in those studies. The Appraisal describes the landscape setting, key views, landmarks, valued characteristics and spaces. Local character areas have been defined and used as a framework for understanding the relationship between the built form and its landscape setting.

**8.4** In Drinkstone, the two broad types have been further subdivided into five unique local character areas: (i) Meade Farmlands; (ii) Black Bourn River Valley; (iii) Drinkstone Park; (iv) Drinkstone Ancient Rolling Farmlands; and (v) Drinkstone Green Paddocks and Meadows as illustrated on Map 5. Proposals for development within these particular areas will be expected to have regard to the Drinkstone Landscape Appraisal.



Map 6 - The Five Landscape Areas of Drinkstone

Open arable farmlands looking towards Drinkstone Mills



Rare Breed Cattle in the Black Bourn Valley



Raw Edge of Woolpit Business Park from Drinkstone Road



Important views towards Drinkstone Church as painted by Thomas Gainsborough



Open arable farmlands, Lane End



Drinkstone Green Meadows





## 8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)

### Important Views

**8.5** Reflecting the mixed nature of settlement and landscapes within the parish, there are many valued views that form part of the defined character of the village (Map 6).

They are:

- 1** View from Tostock Road across Meade Farmlands
- 2** View along Black Bourn Valley from Drinkstone Road
- 3** View towards All Saints' Church from Park Road
- 4** View towards Drinkstone Mills from Footpath 2
- 5** View along Deadman's Lane
- 6** View towards Drinkstone Green near Rookery Farm
- 7** View towards Drinkstone Green from Park Road near Whitefield House
- 8** View across open farmland from Footpath 9 near Lane End Cottage
- 9** View towards Drinkstone Green from Footpath 10
- 10** View to Drinkstone Green from Gedding Road south of Hall Farm
- 11** View along Rattlesden Road, Drinkstone Green
- 12** View west across farmland from Bucks Wood Footpath 4
- 13** View from Village Hall towards Burts Farm

### Policy DRN5 - Protection of Important Views and Rural and Landscape Character

To conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, development proposals shall, where appropriate, demonstrate how they:

- i) have regard to, and conserve or enhance, the rural and landscape character and the setting of the village as identified in the Drinkstone Landscape Appraisal;
- ii) conserve or enhance the rural character of the open countryside in and around the village; and
- iii) will ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the key features of important views identified on the Policies Maps.



Map 7 - Important Views

### Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity

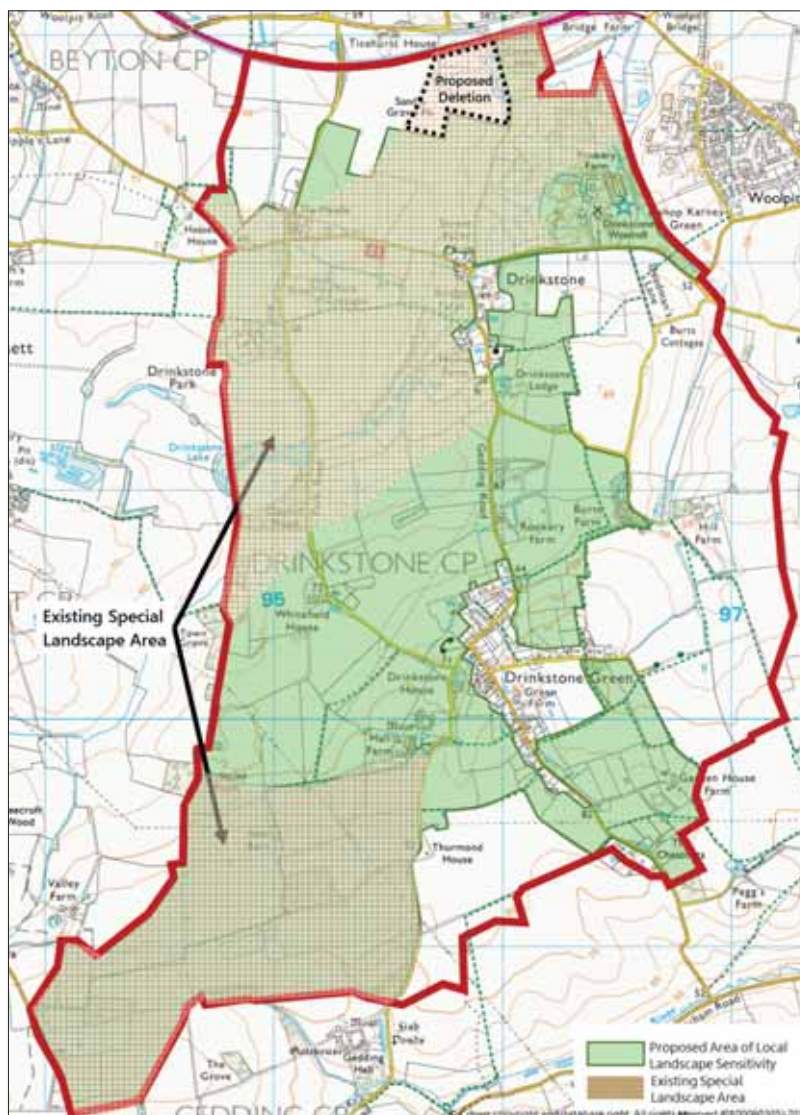
**8.6** Special Landscape Areas were originally designated in the Suffolk County Structure Plan in the 1980s. This local landscape designation tends to relate to historic parks and river valleys or other areas of undulating topography and natural vegetation, particularly broadleaved woodland. In such areas, these landscape elements combine to produce an area of special landscape and quality, in contrast to the more intensively-farmed areas where trees and hedgerows have been removed. In Drinkstone the adopted Mid Suffolk Local Plan identifies a Special Landscape Area (SLA) covering the Black Bourn valley and the northern side slope of the Rattlesden valley to the west of the Drinkstone Road and bordering Hessett and Gedding. This designation was removed from the emerging Joint Local Plan (July 2019) and we have therefore re-assessed the local qualities of this landscape as part of the Drinkstone Landscape Appraisal.

**8.7** The original boundary has been refined, as a result of detailed field survey work, to follow physical features on the ground such as field boundaries, and to close the gap in the SLA west of the Gedding Road which shares the same landscape characteristics of small- to medium-sized fields bounded by species-rich hedgerows and hedge-row trees with scattered patches of small woodland and tree belts. The new Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity (as illustrated on Map 8) also incorporates the paddocks and meadows around Drinkstone Green and Drinkstone Street which give rise to so much of the character of the area adjoining the settlement boundaries.

**8.8** The area at Rookery Farm around Drinkstone Mills has been painstakingly restored in recent years and now

forms part of the pastoral landscape of the Black Bourn Valley, and this has been included in the new Landscape Area of Sensitivity. The small section of SLA within the former gravel workings next to the A14 has been omitted from the Drinkstone Area of Landscape Sensitivity as it no longer merits classification. This area is illustrated on Map 8.

**8.9** The implication of designating land as an Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity is that proposals that otherwise satisfy the other policies of the development plan are not ruled out by this designation. In addition, however, it requires that they protect and enhance the landscape qualities and are designed to harmonise with the landscape setting.



Map 8 - Landscape Designations

## Policy DRN6 - Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity

Development proposals in the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity, as identified on the Policies Map, will be permitted only where they:

- i) protect and enhance the special landscape qualities of the area, as identified in the Drinkstone Landscape Appraisal; and
- ii) are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting.





## 8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)

### Dark Skies

**8.9** The lack of street lighting and resultant dark skies add to the rural character and sense of place of Drinkstone and residents have voiced their support for maintaining this characteristic. Paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should “*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*”. Artificial lighting of development, while increasing security, can also impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location, or the expulsion of unnecessarily high levels of light can also have a harmful impact.

### Policy DRN7 - Dark Skies

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

**8.10** Drinkstone’s dark skies are considered important in defining Drinkstone’s character, and thus merit conservation – 66% of respondents consider them an asset to the village. 11% of respondents cite light pollution from external or security lighting as a problem. This is a particular issue for the northern end of the parish that is affected by light pollution from the unscreened 24-hour security lighting on the Woolpit Business Park.

### Local Green Spaces

**8.11** There are a number of important open areas within the village that not only make important contributions to the character and setting of the built environment, but also play important roles in providing space for recreation. The 1998 Local Plan identifies four Visually Important Open Spaces (VIOSs) – All Saints’

### Community Action 1

The Parish Council will approach the landowner and Woolpit Parish Council about the possibility of agreeing and installing/planting appropriate and sympathetic screening to reduce the impact of external lighting on Woolpit Business Park.

Churchyard, the grounds of the Old Rectory, the pond and surrounding area at Green Farm and the recreation ground in Drinkstone Green known as ‘The Cricket’.

**8.12** The NPPF enables the designation and protection of land of particular importance to local communities as Local Green Spaces in neighbourhood plans. Such designations rule out new development on them other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 100 states that the designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

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

**8.13** A separate Local Green Space Appraisal has been undertaken in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan that demonstrates how spaces meet the criteria in paragraph 100 of the NPPF. Those spaces that meet the criteria are identified in Policy DRN 8 and illustrated on the Policies Map. The identification of these spaces means that development on them is restricted to that which is essential to these sites, e.g. that required for utility service providers such as telecommunications equipment.

### Biodiversity

**8.14** The Drinkstone Landscape Appraisal has identified the importance and prevalence of natural habitats and features across the Neighbourhood Plan Area that contribute to supporting biodiversity. These include



The Cricket Local Green Space



Bridge over River Black Bourn

## Policy DRN8 - Local Green Spaces

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

- 1 All Saints' Churchyard
- 2 Albert Horrex memorial oak and green
- 3 Gedding Road allotments
- 4 Cherry Tree Rise verges
- 5 Green Close
- 6 The Cricket
- 7 Park Road verges
- 8 Gedding Road verges
- 9 Rattlesden Road allotments and parish meadow
- 10 Black Bourn verges

Development on these sites will only be permitted in very special circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.



Map 9 – County Wildlife Sites

ancient hedgerows, ancient woodland, ponds and streams. Drinkstone falls within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands, described as 'an ancient landscape of wooded, arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure set on a gently undulating chalky boulder clay plateau'. There are important semi-natural habitats within the village such as scattered lowland meadows and ancient woodlands.

**8.15** Of particular note is the density and extent of species-rich hedgerows. Drinkstone has 46 kilometres of hedgerows, giving a density of 5.07 km of hedgerows per square kilometre, placing Drinkstone in the top quartile of hedgerow density for the county of Suffolk; 78% of these hedgerows are classified as species-rich compared with 52% for the county as a whole.

**8.16** The village contains four County Wildlife Sites – Bridge Farm Wood and Drinkstone Meadow at the northern end of the village, Pumping Station Meadow close to the Village Hall, and Buck's Wood in the south-western corner of the parish. There is an extensive list of rare and protected species that have been recorded by the Suffolk Biological Information Service in Drinkstone. These include smooth and great crested newts, common frogs and toads, 23 bird species, 12 plant species, three

types of bat and species of mammal such as hedgehog, otter, polecat, water vole and hare. The parish also contains a number of veteran, historic and significant trees (these are identified in the Natural Environment and Greenspace Assessment Report).

**8.17** The rich and extensive network of habitats referred to in paragraph 8.1 above also provide hunting and nesting opportunities for a variety of birds of prey including tawny, little and barn owls, kestrels, sparrowhawks and buzzards. The River Black Bourn and its attendant riparian habitats are critical ecological corridors for a number of protected species including otters, water voles and kingfishers.

**8.18** Loss of natural habitats can have a significant detrimental impact on the wider landscape and opportunities for maintaining and improving the biodiversity of the area. In addition, it has been shown that hedgerows fronting properties make a significant contribution to the unique character of Drinkstone. Any loss of features such as trees, hedgerows or ponds as part of a development will therefore be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the resultant benefits of the development outweigh such a loss. In such circumstances, a mitigation scheme will be required as part of the proposal that provides the equivalent or better features on site.



## 8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)

### Policy DRN9 - Biodiversity

Development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, important trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds and watercourses. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:

- i) the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts; and
- ii) suitable mitigation measures, that may include equivalent or better replacement of the lost features, will be required.

It is expected that the mitigation proposals will form an integral part of the design concept and layout of any development scheme, and that development will be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting, context and ongoing management.

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

Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example,

- a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;
- b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Drinkstone's traditional hedgerows), and;
- c) restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks.

**8.19** The Landscape Appraisal and Natural Environment reports identify both the visual and biodiversity value of veteran and other significant trees in and around the two settlement areas. These trees convey a strong sense of place and form a key component of the character of these areas.

#### Community Action 2

The Parish Council will seek the serving and confirmation of Tree Preservation Orders by Mid Suffolk District Council on trees that are of high amenity value and threatened, either directly or indirectly, by development

#### Community Action 3

The Parish Council will work with local landowners to develop and encourage the take-up of government environment schemes to protect and manage meadows, hedgerows, trees and woodland, ponds and watercourses for benefit of flora and fauna





## 9. BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN

### Built Environment and Design Objectives

- 6 Conserve and enhance the village's heritage assets.
- 7 Ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects local character.
- 8 Reduce the impact of new development through the incorporation of measures that reduce their environmental impact.

### Heritage Assets

**9.1** The village retains a number of important heritage assets that make a significant contribution to the character of the village. A small Conservation Area was designated in 1991 around the two Drinkstone Mills, one of which is listed Grade I and the other Grade II\*. Elsewhere there are a further 36 Listed Buildings, as detailed in Appendix A. In addition, the parish is known to be rich in archaeological finds and records. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service's Historic Environment Record provides details of finds and the Service should be consulted at the earliest possible stages of preparing a planning application.

**9.2** The NPPF explains that the significance of a nondesignated heritage asset should be taken into account in the determination of any planning application. A balanced judgement will be needed, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset. Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of buildings in the village that are of local significance and which, while not yet formally designated as 'Local Heritage Assets', make a significant contribution to the historic environment and character of Drinkstone and may be worthy of being protected as Local Heritage Assets. We will pursue their registration on a Local List with the District Council. In the meantime, we have identified them in Appendix B as Buildings of Local Significance and they are also identified on the Policies Map.



### Policy DRN10 - Buildings of Local Significance

The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest, must be appropriately secured.

Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset to enable a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appendix B identifies Buildings of Local Significance which are also identified on the Policies Map.



## 9. BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN (CONTINUED)

**9.3** The Local Plan policies for the consideration of development affecting Heritage Assets are significantly out-of-date and therefore planning decisions are reliant on the high-level guidelines provided in the NPPF. A planning policy is therefore included in the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that development proposals affecting heritage assets are given appropriate consideration.

### Policy DRN11 - Heritage Assets

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the village's heritage assets, proposals must:

- a. preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the conservation area as identified on the Policies Map;
- b. retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c. contribute to the village's local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Landscape Appraisal and Built Character Assessment, through the use of appropriate design and materials;
- d. be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area's character, appearance and its setting, in line with the AECOM Design Guidelines for Drinkstone;
- e. demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and
- f. provide clear justification, through the submission of a heritage statement, for any works that would lead to harm to a heritage asset yet be of wider substantial public benefit.

Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on heritage assets. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.



## Built Characteristics

**9.4** In the Built Character Assessment prepared as part of this Neighbourhood Plan, five distinct character areas were defined around the built-up areas of the village, together with three small but distinct outlying areas.

**9.5** The Built Character Assessment has been supplemented by Design Guidelines prepared by AECOM Consultants in 2019 as part of the Government-funded Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support package. The report is published as supporting evidence to the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Local Character Analysis may be summarised as follows:

<p><b>Streets and Public Realm</b></p>	<p>The main streets are organic in nature and seemingly evolved from historic routes, natural features and topography. Most streets are bordered with hedges and mature trees, and most lack pavements. There is no street lighting.</p>
<p><b>Pattern and layout of buildings</b></p>	<p>Most buildings in Drinkstone are detached houses sited on wide plots, with a minority of semi-detached houses. Recesses of varying depths in the building line enable the formation of large front gardens or yards. There remains a high degree of openness to the countryside and green spaces; most properties back on to or face open land.</p> <p>Most post-war development was achieved through infilling along roads. Other 20th and 21st century developments tend to have strong linear arrangements of semi-detached houses facing the streets (Gedding Road, Green Close), or organic arrangements of buildings creating residential enclaves (the Meadows, Cherry Tree Rise).</p> <p>Outside the settlement boundaries, the settlement pattern is characterised by dispersed farmsteads.</p>
<p><b>Building Heights and Roofline</b></p>	<p>Building heights vary between one and two storeys. Typically, the roofline is pitched, many buildings have prominent chimneys and gabled dormers are common.</p>
<p><b>Car parking</b></p>	<p>The prevalence of large plots enables either on-plot front yard parking or garage parking adjacent to houses. Front yard parking is partially screened by tall hedges. Streets are usually too narrow to accommodate on-street parking.</p>
<p><b>Open Spaces and Landscape</b></p>	<p>Drinkstone Green and Drinkstone Street are divided by a three-quarter mile-long stretch of open countryside and are surrounded by vast open fields with long views towards the countryside. Settled areas are punctuated by smaller fields, allotment gardens and sports pitches. The streets also feature tall hedges and a large number of mature trees.</p>



## 9. BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN (CONTINUED)

**9.6** This work primarily seeks to develop design guidelines that any future development in Drinkstone should follow to retain and protect the rural, tranquil nature and scenic beauty of the area. Supporting this overall objective are a number of principles to which development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area are advised to adhere, namely that:

1. integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
2. reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
3. respect the rural character of views and gaps;
4. harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
5. relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
6. reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
7. retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
8. respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
9. adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
10. provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
11. incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
12. ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
13. make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours; and
14. positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

**9.7** The Landscape Appraisal highlights the importance of protecting from development the three-quarters of a mile gap of countryside between Drinkstone and Drinkstone Green. This is important to conserve the separate identities and character of the two settlement areas and to respect its designation as an Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity. Similarly, the gap along Rattlesden Road between Garden House Lane and the dwelling known as High Acres is equally distinct and important to conserve.



## Policy DRN12 - Design Considerations

Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics of Drinkstone and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

Planning applications should, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix C of this Plan and take account of the AECOM Design Guidelines for Drinkstone.

In addition, proposals will be supported where they:

- a. recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building as identified in the Built Character Assessment and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;
- b. maintain or create the village's sense of place and/or local character avoiding, where possible, cul-de-sac developments which do not reflect the lane hierarchy and form of the settlement;
- c. do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas or the erosion of the settlement gaps identified on the Policies Map, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;
- d. taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:
  - i. any historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, including those locally identified Buildings of Local Significance listed in Appendix B; and subject to Policy DRN10;
  - ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features as set out in the Landscape Appraisal;
  - iii. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest;
  - iv. the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity;
- e. not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;
- f. produce designs that respect the character, scale, height and density of the locality;
- g. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided in accordance with adopted guidance and designed to be integrated into the development without creating an environment dominated by vehicles and seek always to ensure satisfactory permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement;
- h. wherever possible ensure that development faces on to existing lanes, retaining the rural character and creates cross streets or new back streets in keeping with the settlement's hierarchy of routes;
- i. not result in water run-off that would add-to or create surface water flooding;
- j. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and for cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards;
- k. include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and
- l. provide one electronic vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.





## 9. BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN (CONTINUED)

---

### Renewable Energy

**9.8** Many energy-saving initiatives can be installed in homes within permitted development rights (ie – planning permission is not required) but there may be occasions where schemes that do require planning permission could have a potential adverse impact on the character of the area and the amenity of nearby residents. Due to its remoteness, Drinkstone does not have access to mains gas, and the principal fuel used for heating is oil, delivered by tanker. Oil is unsustainable and polluting in its production, shipping, distribution and use. In line with national government policy, the long-term aim should be to reduce the overall use of all fossil fuels – gas, oil and coal.

### Policy DRN13 - Sustainable Construction Practices

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

- a. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;
- b. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and the orientation of buildings;
- c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems; and
- d. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels and grey water recycling and rainwater and stormwater harvesting.



## 10. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Infrastructure and Services Objectives

- 9 Ensure that the scale of development is at a level and in a location that the local infrastructure and services can support.
- 10 Protect and improve the range of existing community facilities and services.

**10.1** In the initial Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, 71% of respondents cited poor broadband as the most serious problem for the community. A community-wide survey carried out by the Parish Council in 2018 showed that 49% of respondents achieved a download speed of less than 5Mbps, with only one household achieving a speed of 11Mbps. While broadband provision is improving, the roll-out of super-fast fibre broadband is still incomplete at the time of writing.

### Community Action 4

The Parish Council will continue to monitor super-fast broadband provision across the parish and continue to work with our MP and with BT Openreach to ensure access at acceptable speeds for all households that want it.

**10.2** Speeding traffic is the second most serious issue identified in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, cited by 61% of all respondents. In the Parish Plan of 2008 it was cited by 67% of respondents, so it is obviously an on-going concern. Drinkstone's roads are narrow. With few pavements, many blind corners and no street lighting, speeding traffic is a danger, particularly for walkers and cyclists. A Community Speedwatch scheme, shared with three other parishes, was set up in 2008 as a result of the Parish Plan exercise. It ran successfully for three years before folding due to a lack of anyone to run it and poor quality equipment.

### Community Action 5

The Parish Council will:

- a. seek to work with the County Council as the highways authority, and Suffolk Police, to look at ways of addressing speeding in the village;
- b. seek the installation of traffic calming measures such as sensitively-located interactive speed awareness signs and "gateways" on the verges at the beginning of or within the 30mph zone;
- c. consider re-establishing the Community Speedwatch initiative.



An example of traffic calming that has regard to the historic and natural environment



## 10. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES (CONTINUED)

### Flooding

**10.3** As noted elsewhere, there are locations across the village where surface water flooding occurs regularly. While the planning of new developments can ensure that the risk of rainwater water run-off from the proposal can be managed, it will not solve the ongoing problems.

#### Community Action 6

The Parish Council will actively pursue Suffolk County Council Highways Department or individual landowners to remedy serious and long-standing flooding problems, including:

- by the Church;
- Blacksmith's Corner;
- Chapel Lane;
- Park Road
- the junction of Park Road and Gedding Road;
- from Cherry Tree Rise across Gedding Road; and
- by poor maintenance of ditches along Cross Street and at Marsh Green.

### Public Rights of Way

**10.4** The parish has a good network of public rights of way – around 14 miles of walkable public footpaths, offering a range of short and longer circular walks off-road, or largely off-road. 83% of respondents consider the footpaths an asset to the village. However, there are noticeable gaps in the network – the result of historical patterns of land ownership - where additional paths would improve connections to other villages or points of interest. In the textual responses to the questionnaire, a number of possible new paths were suggested, and there has been an approach from the neighbouring village of Hessett about improving the footpath between the villages.

#### Community Action 7

The Parish Council will approach landowners to seek to establish possible new bridleways or permissive paths, in particular:

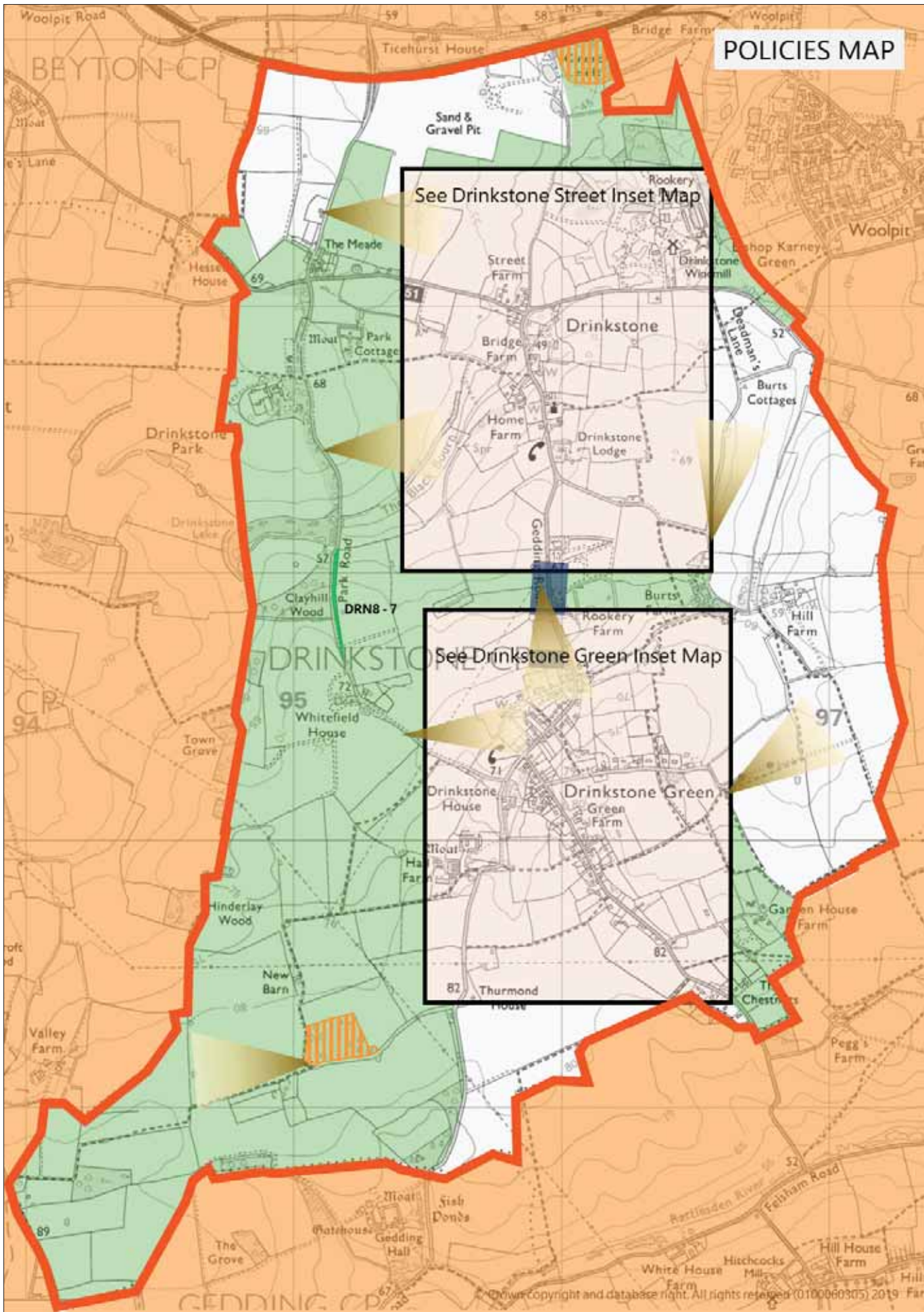
- between Hubbards Lane, Hessett and Park Road/Drinkstone Lakes;
- around Drinkstone Lakes; and
- from Blacksmith's Corner to Woolpit.



## KEY TO POLICIES MAP AND INSET MAPS

-  Settlement Boundary (DRN 1, DRN 2)
-  Housing Allocations (DRN 3)
-  Important Views (DRN5)
-  Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity (DRN6)
-  Local Green Spaces (DRN 8)
-  County Wildlife Site
-  Conservation Area
-  Settlement Gap (DRN12)
-  Buildings of Local Significance (DRN10, DRN 11)

POLICIES MAP



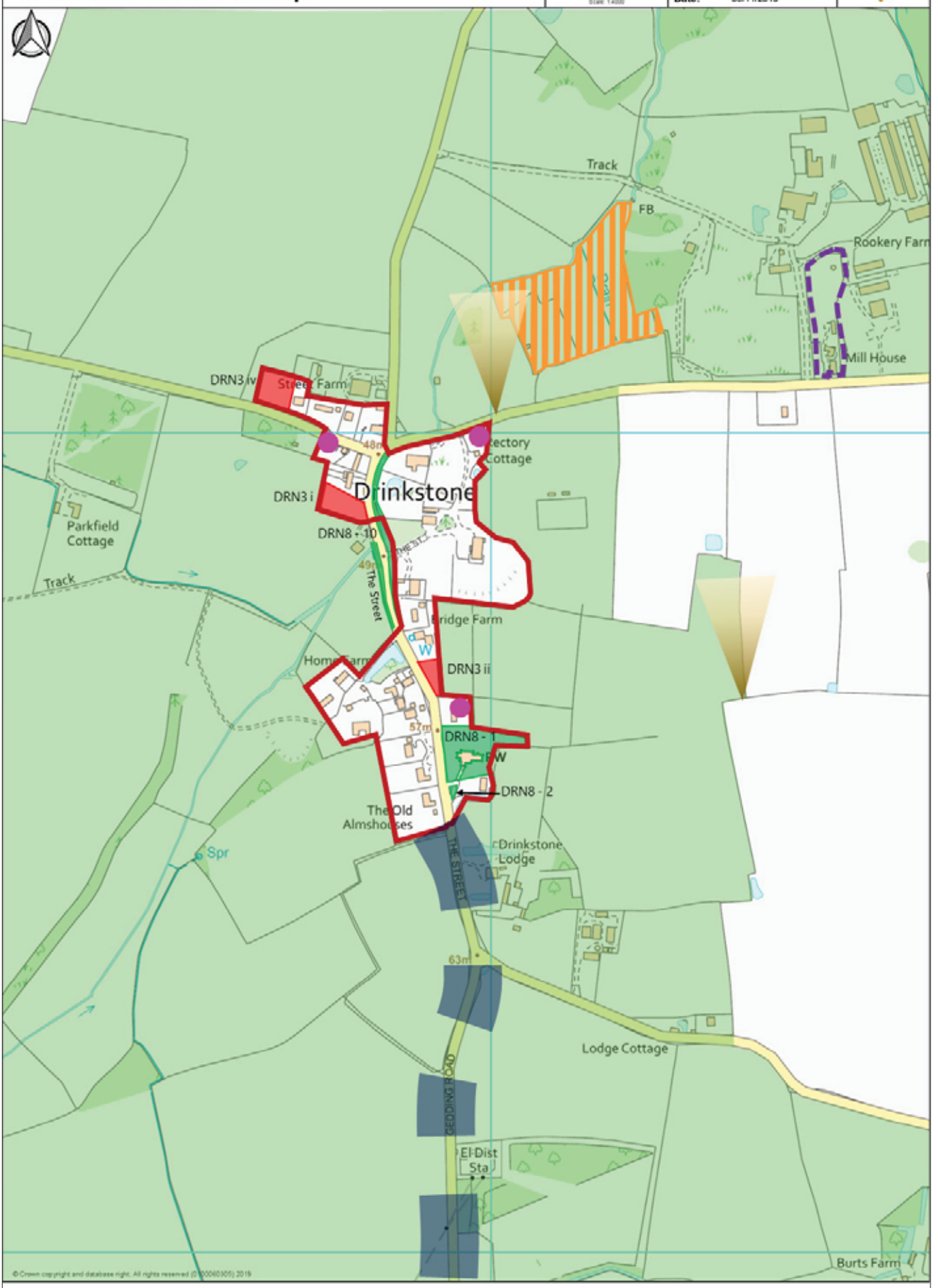
# Drinkstone Church Inset Map

Drinkstone CP

Author:

 Parish Online

Date: 05/11/2019



© Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (200040305) 2019

# Drinkstone Green Inset Map

Drinkstone CP

Author:



Date: 05/11/2019





## GLOSSARY

---

**Affordable housing:** The NPPF defines Affordable Housing as “housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:” Definitions are set out for a) affordable housing for rent; b) starter homes; c) discounted market sales housing; and d) other affordable routes to home ownership.

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

**Best and most versatile agricultural land:** Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

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

**Buildings of local significance:** Locally important building valued for its contribution to the local scene or for local historical situations but not meriting listed status.

**Settlement Boundary:** These are defined in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 and the policies in the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 also refers to them. They are a planning term that do not necessarily include all buildings within the boundary.

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

**Community Infrastructure Levy:** A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

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

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

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

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

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

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

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

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

**Neighbourhood Plans:** A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).





**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Appendix A – Listed Buildings

Source - Historic England – June 2019

This appendix reflects information that was correct at the time of writing this Plan. Up to date information should be sought from the Local Planning Authority or appropriate statutory body.”

### Hill Farm Lane Area

BARN, 60 METRES SOUTH WEST BURTS FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

MARSH GREEN COTTAGE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

GRANARY, 20 METRES SOUTH WEST OF HILL FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

BURTS FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

CARTLODGE, 50 METRES SOUTH OF BURT'S FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM ROAD - Grade: II

HILL FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

BARN AND ATTACHED STABLE, 40 METRES NORTH WEST OF HILL FARMHOUSE, HILL FARM LANE - Grade: II

### The Street area

THE BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE, THE STREET - Grade: II

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, THE STREET - Grade: II\*

STREET FARMHOUSE, THE STREET - Grade: II

THE OLD RECTORY, THE STREET - Grade: II\*

HOME FARMHOUSE, THE STREET - Grade: II

THE OLD ALMSHOUSES, THE STREET - Grade: II

DOVECOTE 30 METRES SOUTH EAST OF HOME FARMHOUSE, THE STREET - Grade: II

DRINKSTONE LODGE, THE STREET - Grade: II

CHURCH COTTAGE, THE STREET - Grade: II

THE OLD POST OFFICE & WHITEGATE COTTAGE, THE STREET - Grade: II

ABBOTS LODGE, THE STREET - Grade: II

PAIR OF COTTAGES, BEYTON ROAD, 490 METRES WEST OF THE OLD RECTORY - Grade: II

### Park Road area

WHITEFIELD HOUSE, PARK ROAD - Grade: II

BARN 50 METRES WEST OF WHITEFIELD HOUSE, PARK ROAD - Grade: II

CARTLODGE, 40 METRES SOUTH WEST OF WHITEFIELD HOUSE, PARK ROAD - Grade: II

### Woolpit Road

MILL COTTAGE, WOOLPIT ROAD - Grade: II

POST MILL 120M NORTH OF MILL COTTAGE, WOOLPIT ROAD - Grade: I

DRINKSTONE SMOCK MILL (including attached engine shed and oil engine) 20 metres north of Mill Cottage, Woolpit Road - Grade: II\*

### Gedding Road/Chapel Lane

ROOKERY FARMHOUSE, GEDDING ROAD - Grade: II

BARN, 40 METRES NORTH WEST OF ROOKERY FARMHOUSE, GEDDING ROAD - Grade: II

HIGH BARN, CHAPEL LANE, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

ELM TREE COTTAGE, GEDDING ROAD, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

BROOKSIDE, Chapel Lane - Grade: II

### Rattlesden Road/Cross Street area

STOTT COTTAGES, 1 AND 2, CROSS STREET, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

KOPSEY COTTAGE, RATTLESDEN ROAD, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

THE CHESTNUTS, RATTLESDEN ROAD, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

TREACLEBENDERS, CROSS STREET, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

THE GABLES, RATTLESDEN ROAD - Grade: II

FYFERS, RATTLESDEN ROAD, DRINKSTONE GREEN - Grade: II

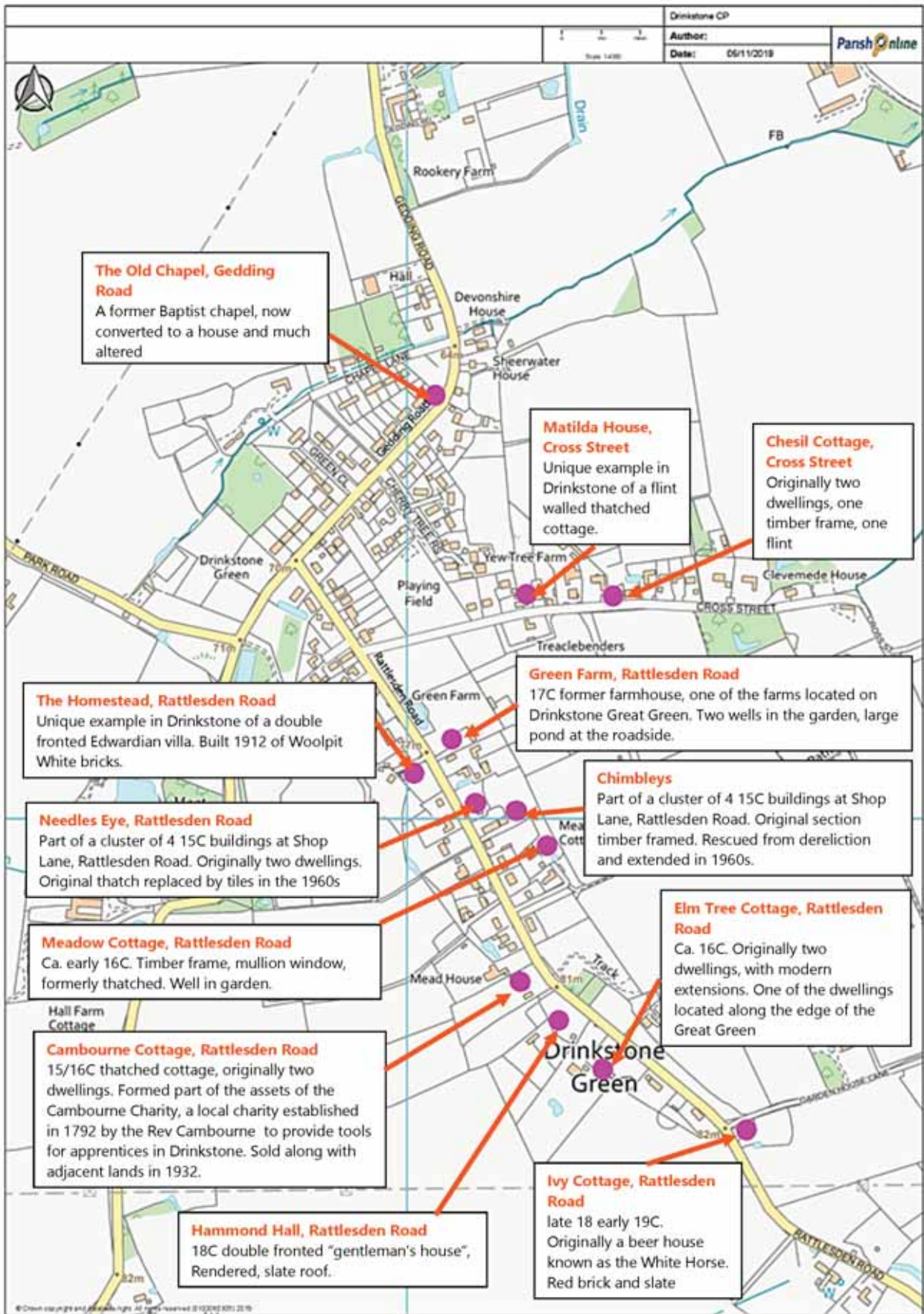


## Appendix B – Buildings of Local Significance

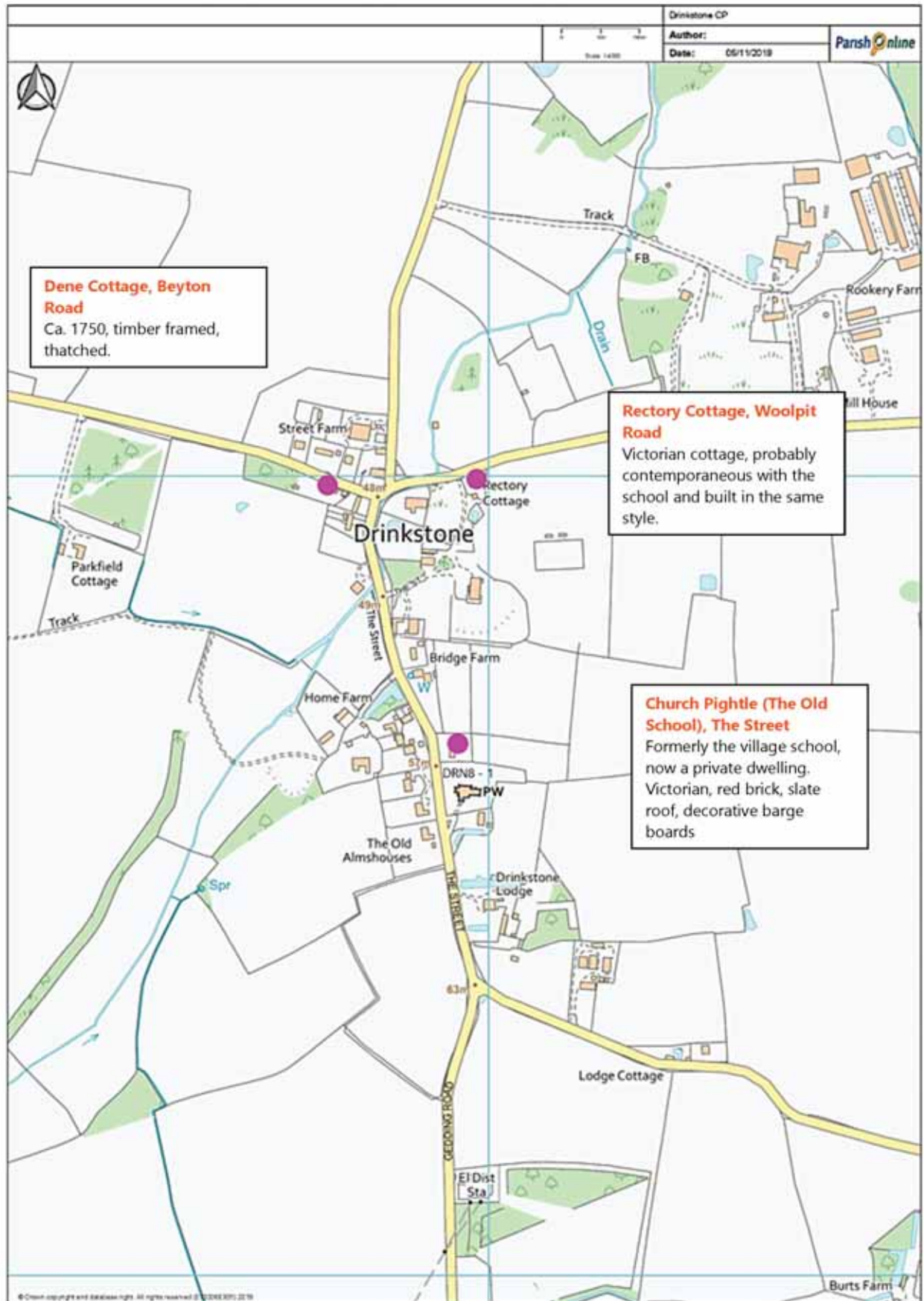
Matilda House, Cross Street  
Chesil Cottage, Cross Street  
Green Farm, Rattlesden Road  
Needles Eye, Rattlesden Road  
Chimbleys, Rattlesden Road  
Meadow Cottage, Rattlesden Road  
The Homestead, Rattlesden Road  
Cambourne Cottage, Rattlesden Road  
Hammond Hall, Rattlesden Road  
Elm Green Cottage, Rattlesden Road  
Ivy Cottage, Rattlesden Road  
Dene Cottage, Beyton Road  
Rectory Cottage, Woolpit Road  
Church Pightle (The Old School), The Street



# Location of Buildings of Local Significance - Drinkstone Green



Location of Buildings of Local Significance - Drinkstone Church





## Appendix C – Development Design Checklist

Source - AECOM Design Guideline January 2019

Street Grid and Layout
Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de- sac models?
If not, why?
Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists, and those with disabilities?
What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern?
Are these reflected in the proposal?
How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?
Green Spaces, Views and Character
What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
Has the proposal been considered in its widest context?
Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?
How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
Can any new views be created?
Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
Gateway and Access Features
What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between villages?
Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?
Buildings Layout and Grouping
What are the typical groupings of buildings?
How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?



### **Building Line and Boundary Treatment**

What are the characteristics of the building line?

How has the building line been respected in the proposals?

Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

### **Building Heights and Roofline**

What are the characteristics of the roofline?

Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing, and scale?

If a higher than average building is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?

### **Household Extensions**

Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing, or overshadowing impact?

Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?

Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?

In case of side extension, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?

Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?

Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?

Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

### **Building Materials and Surface Treatment**

What is the distinctive material in the area, if any?

Does the proposed material harmonise with the local material?

Does the proposal use high quality materials?

Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves, and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?

Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

### **Car Parking Solutions**

What parking solutions have been considered?

Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?

Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?

Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?



## Appendix D – Evidence Documents

The following documents were prepared to support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and are available to view and download on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Drinkstone website

[www.drinkstonevillage.co.uk/parishcouncil/drinkstone-neighbourhood-plan/](http://www.drinkstonevillage.co.uk/parishcouncil/drinkstone-neighbourhood-plan/)

Natural Environment and Local Green Space Assessment - November 2019

Character Appraisal - November 2019

Landscape Appraisal - August 2019

Drinkstone Design Guidelines - April 2019

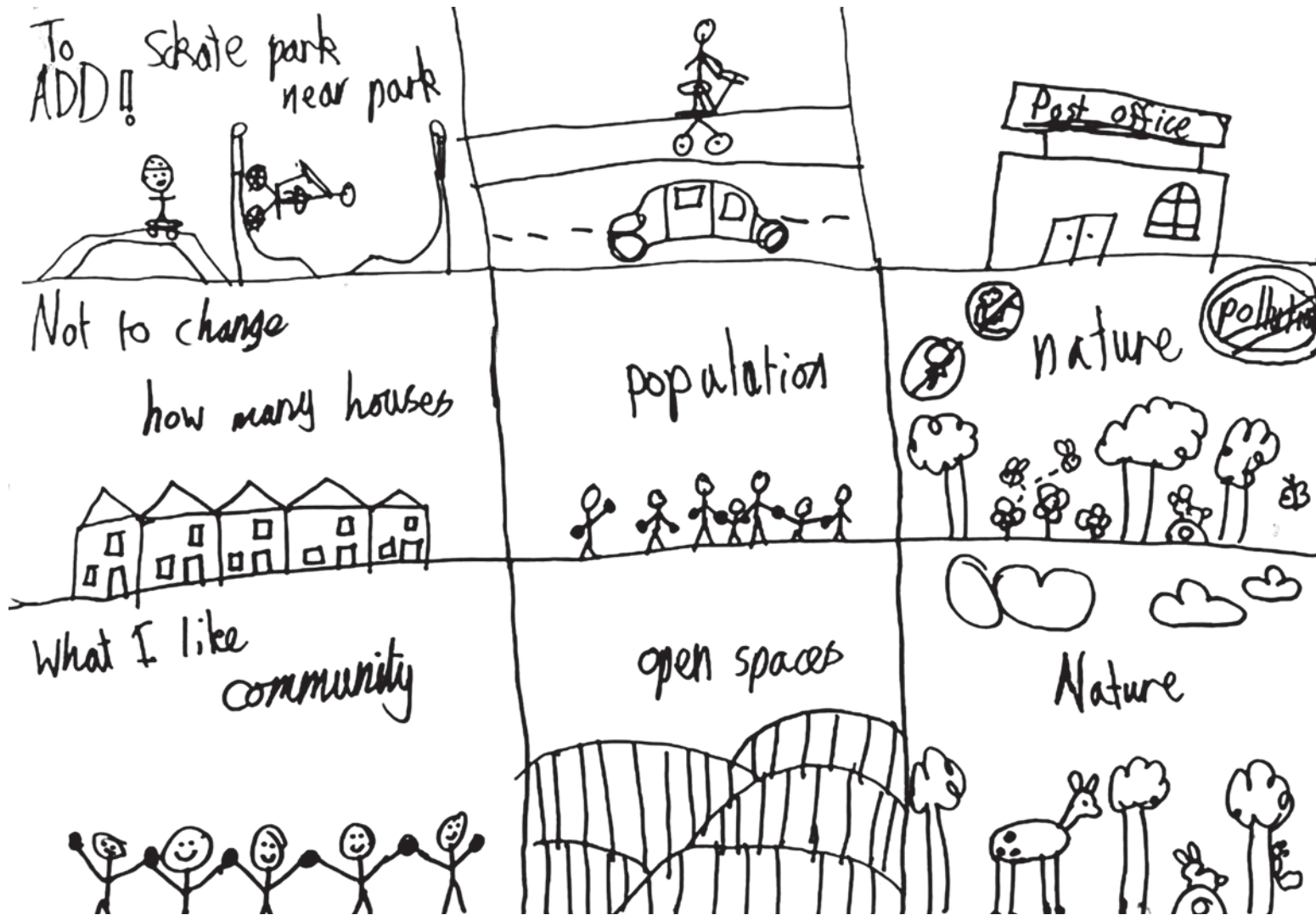
Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan - Summary of Questionnaire Responses – December 2018

Neighbourhood Plan Village Walk - September 2018

Drinkstone NP Draft Census Data – August 2018







# DRINKSTONE

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018 - 2036

OUR VILLAGE • OUR CHOICES

REFERENDUM PLAN  
JUNE 2020