Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031

DRAFT - Submission Document





PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

2016



Foreword by Chairman, Pluckley Parish Council

This Neighbourhood Plan has been produced with the contribution of the people of Pluckley. It has offered the community the chance to have a real say in how the parish evolves over the next fifteen years. It will, however, be reviewed within that time to ensure that parishioners' wishes continue to be met.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank the Steering Group who have driven the Plan through, Ashford Borough Council for their help and guidance, and all those who participated and gave their opinions. It is this community input that gives us the confidence that we can see our parish develop as a caring community and a good place to live.

Chris Housman

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2.Introduction

2.1.The Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) is a planning document. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act that came into force in April 2012.

2.2. The PNP provides a vision for the future of the community, and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. The PNP has been developed in liaison with, and with the assistance of, Ashford Borough Council and covers the period from 2016 to 2031.

2.3. The PNP has been shaped by the community, through extensive consultation with the people of Pluckley and others with an interest in the Parish and is based on sound research and evidence, as demonstrated in the supporting documents of the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement. Details of the consultation have been recorded in a series of reports, which are available to download from the Pluckley website www.pluckley.net and summarised in a separate Consultation Statement. This ensures that the Plan meets Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning system

2.4. Ashford Borough Council approved the designation of Pluckley as a Neighbourhood Area on 12 March 2015. The Neighbourhood Area follows the Pluckley Parish boundary (see map 1).

2.5. Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. They must also have appropriate regard for national planning policy; contribute to sustainable development; and conform generally to the strategic policies in the Ashford Local Plan.

2.6. The PNP has given local people the power to determine where new developments should go, and how the parish should evolve. Without the Plan, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) would make these decisions.

2.7. The policies of the PNP will be made by Ashford Borough Council and become part of the local development plan.

Parish Plan, Parish Design Statement

2.8. The Plan incorporates some aspects of the Parish Plan 2009 and its Update 2013. The Parish Design Statement (adopted 2003), which retains its relevance and strong support from the community, stands and is referenced in the policies in this PNP.

How this Plan is organised

2.9. The Plan is divided into eleven sections:

Sections 2-5 set out the background and a vision for Pluckley which sets out how the Parish should evolve.

Sections 6-9 deal with Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

Section 10 sets out Community Projects which seek to support the overall vision and improve the quality of life in the Parish.(This does not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan proposal.)

Section 11 covers monitoring and reviewing the Plan.

The Plan is accompanied by maps showing:

M1. The Neighbourhood Area

M2. The Landscape Character Areas

M3. Parish Views

M4. Local Green Spaces

M5. Protected Public Spaces

M6. Sites allocated for housing development

M7. Old Coal Yard Site

2.10. The PNP takes account of and is informed by supporting documents – the Evidence Base. These include the Basic Conditions Statement and the Consultation Statement. These can all be found on the Pluckley web site www.pluckley.net under the banner Parish Council, Neighbourhood Plan.

3.Scope, Methodology and Implementation

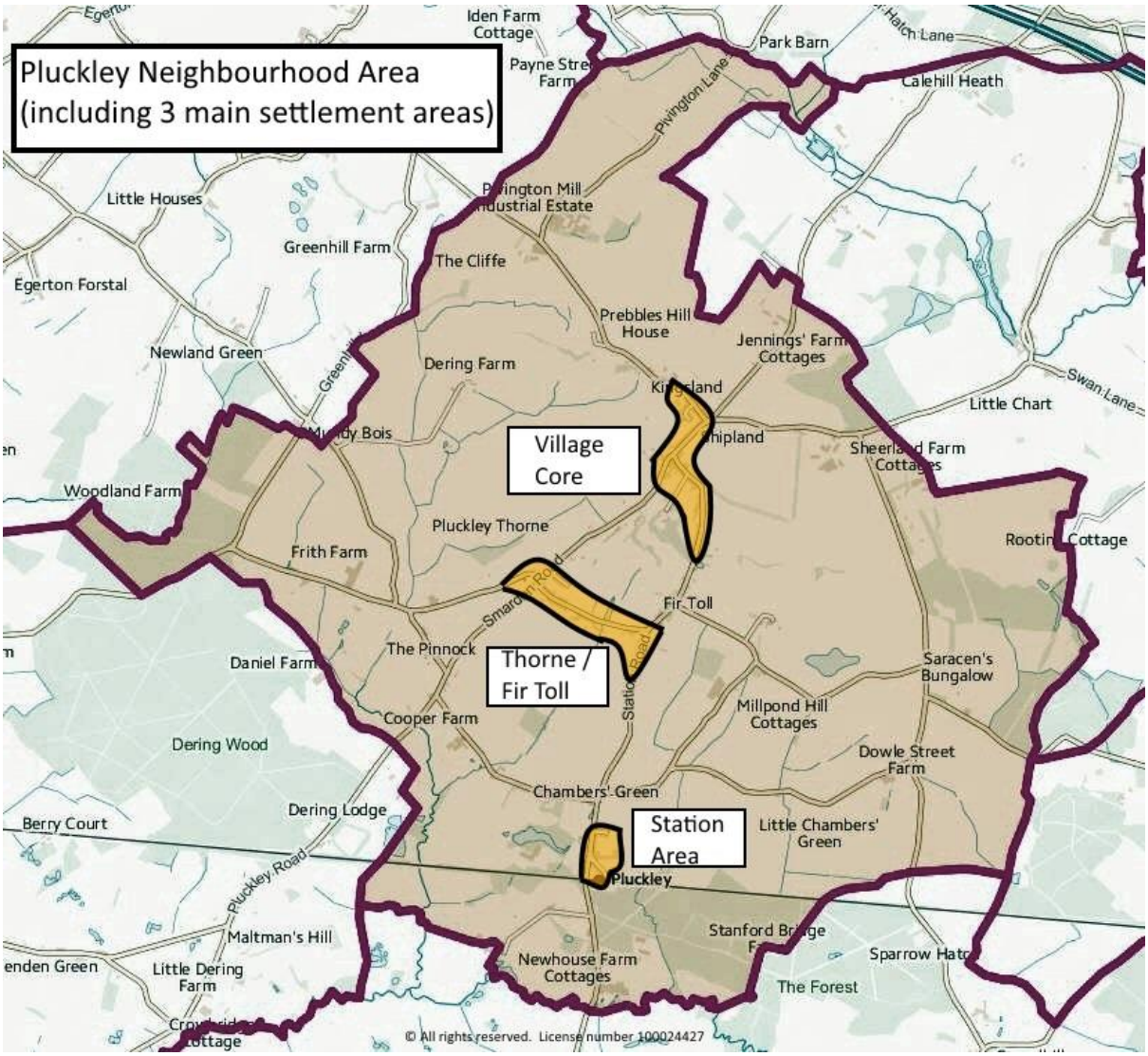
The Neighbourhood

3.1. Pluckley is more than its core – it is a parish. The largest residential concentration is at the village core, where most of the services are located, but this accounts for less than half of the community, given its dispersed nature. So the Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole Parish of Pluckley, as shown in Map 1.

3.2. The Parish comprises three settlement areas: the village core; Thorne/Fir Toll; and the station area. These areas are separated by fields given over to agriculture which is the main land use in the Parish. In addition, there are several outlying dwellings in small clusters or singly.

3.3. The Parish is a rural community, as are all the adjoining parishes. In developing the Plan, the neighbouring parishes: Egerton, Charing, Little Chart, Bethersden, Smarden, Headcorn, have been considered as, to some extent, they have an impact and reliance upon Pluckley just as it does upon them.

Map 1.The Neighbourhood Area



Consultation and Engagement

3.4. It is not enough to consult and engage – it is essential that such action is documented. The Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement describe the methodology, minutes, notes, meetings (formal and informal), working groups etc. These demonstrate the breadth of engagement and how issues and needs were identified to produce the Objectives, Policies and Actions.

Implementation

3.5. Pluckley Parish Council will work together with Ashford Borough Council to implement the PNP. Periodic reviews, engaging with the community, will be conducted to ensure that the evolving needs of the Parish continue to be met by the PNP. The intention is to review every five years.

4. About Pluckley

4.1. Pluckley is a rural community based on the Greensand Ridge and the Weald below it. It is a long-established community with activity identified from Roman times and mention in the Domesday Book (as Pluchelei), when it was the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The parish church of St.Nicholas is Grade 1 listed and has its origins in Anglo-Saxon times.

4.2. As with many villages in Kent, residents of Pluckley took part in peasant uprisings during the Middle Ages. In the fifteenth century, the parish became the property of the Dering family who built Surrenden Manor which stood until its demise in the 1950s. It was a Dering who introduced in Victorian times the distinctive rounded windows which remain today as a feature of properties throughout the parish.

4.3. In 1842, the railway was built and Pluckley station became an important centre for the dispatch of agricultural produce. During the Great War, the station played a key role in moving horses to and from the Front, as Pluckley became a Remount Centre.

4.4. In recent years, Pluckley was the setting for the TV series "The Darling Buds of May", based on H.E.Bates's stories about the Larkin family living in a rural idyll of hop farms and orchards in post-war England. H.E.Bates lived nearby and, rumour has it, he based the Larkins on a real-life family he observed in Pluckley. Such is the popularity of the series, and the lifestyle it depicts, that Visit Kent, the body responsible for tourism in the county has launched a Darling Buds tour centred on Pluckley. This, together with Pluckley's reputation as the most haunted village in England, attracts many visitors who come to enjoy the countryside and its walks. There are many footpaths in and around the parish, the most celebrated of which is the Greensand Way.

4.5. Today, Pluckley is a community of 1,069 residents (2011 Census) spread over the almost 5 sq miles (1,260 hectares). Much of the parish lies within a high sensitivity Landscape Character Area, there are two Conservation Areas and more than sixty listed properties, the earliest of which date from the 14th century.

4.6. Serving the needs of this community are a general store and sub Post Office, a butcher's, a farm shop, and three pubs. The village has its own school, Pluckley C of E Primary School, for younger pupils. For all other services, residents are dependent upon facilities in the nearby larger villages of Charing and Headcorn, or more importantly, Ashford (six miles away) and Tenterden(nine miles away).

4.7. Ashford, the Borough town is an important and growing centre. It is an excellent transport centre, with high-speed rail connections to London and the Continent and motorway links to London and to the Channel ports. It offers a wide variety of employment, retail and leisure activities. Pluckley has a regular train service to London (London Bridge, Cannon Street, Waterloo and Charing Cross) and to Ashford and the coast, and a less frequent bus service.

4.8. The dispersed nature of the Parish community is evidenced by the distribution of its 447 dwellings: Village core 45%; Thorne/Fir Toll 30%, Station area 10%; outlying 15%. This dispersed nature is a reflection of the agricultural holdings, which remain the dominant land use within the parish. On the outskirts of the Parish are the station- at one and a quarter miles from the centre, and the industrial estate at Pivington Mill.

4.9. Pluckley has a lower than average proportion of young residents:

	Pluckley	Ashford borough	England
Aged 0-16	18%	22%	22%
16-64	64%	61%	62%
65+	18%	17%	16%

4.10. Those working do so in a wide variety of locations: 23% in Pluckley itself (mostly working from home); 19% in Ashford; 37% elsewhere in Kent; 14% commuting to London and 7% elsewhere. Of those working, 14% do so from home, 13% travel by train, 7% walk or cycle, and 66% travel by car. The dependence on cars is significant - Pluckley has a much higher ratio of cars per household (1.8) than the national average (1.1). This is not unusual for a rural community.

4.11. In modern times, Pluckley has grown with the addition of the Westfields development (about 50 homes) and a number of small-scale developments of 1 to four homes. In the past fifteen years, little more than half a dozen homes have been added, including four local needs homes. Between 2001 and 2011, the population showed a modest increase of 19, probably the result of people living longer.

4.12 The parish is an attractive location for workers, with its easy links to both Ashford and London; and for retirees. The comparatively high price of property (£418,000 compared with SE average of £367,000 – Rightmove, December 2015)

suggests that the leaning towards an older population is unlikely to change significantly.

5.Our Vision for Pluckley

Our vision is for Pluckley to continue to thrive, meeting the evolving needs of its community while preserving the rural character, natural beauty and views that are what attract its residents and visitors alike.

This vision was formulated from comments at the resident workshops and has been tested through subsequent public engagements.

5.1. Our vision supports the vision of the Ashford Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) which states "Set in the heart of the Garden of England, Ashford borough provides a safe, healthy and thriving environment that offers an excellent quality of life to all who live, work and visit the area."

5.2. Each policy in the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan has been tested to ensure that it meets this Vision and responds to local people's wishes.

5.3. All sections of the community: young, working age and retired, should expect to live in a community that encourages social interaction and the opportunity for physical exercise, to enhance their well-being.

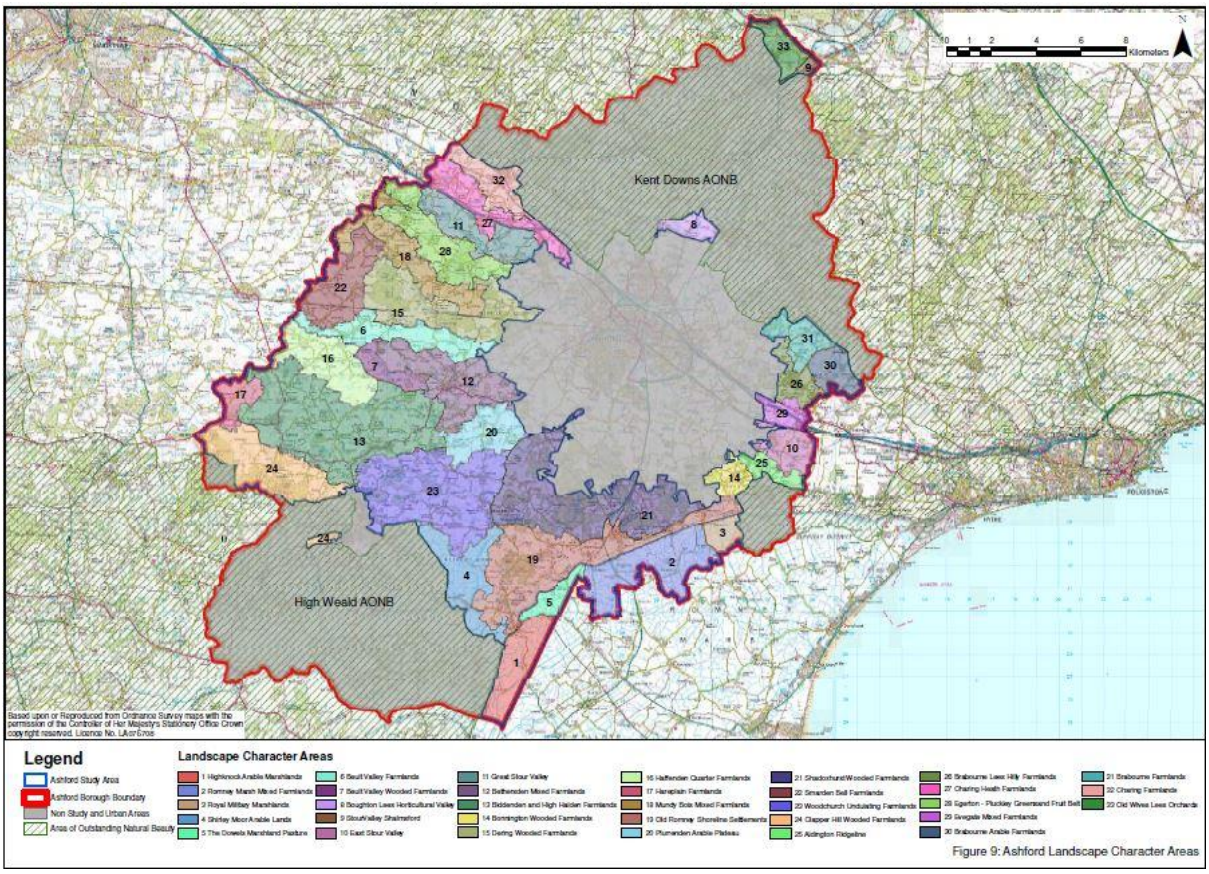
6.Managing our Rural Environment

6.1. The environment in which the Parish of Pluckley sits is described in Ashford Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment (adopted 2011). The parish occupies three of the areas identified in the Assessment: Dering Wood Farmlands; Mundy Bois Mixed Farmlands; and the Egerton-Pluckley Greensand Fruit Belt (see Map 2).

6.2. The assessment is that the landscape has either a high or moderate sensitivity and the overall guidelines for the three areas are to conserve and reinforce, conserve and improve, and conserve the landscape, respectively.

Map 2.Landscape Character Assessment

(source: Ashford Borough Council, Landscape Planning Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 28 April 2011)



6.3. The descriptions of the three areas echo that in the Parish Design Statement (2003) adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance: "Pluckley is a parish with distinct characteristics in differing areas – but all linked by a common theme. Almost everywhere views open up to the wider surrounding countryside or into more intimate green spaces close within the road network. This openness is largely achieved by the fact – part accidental and part by design of planning policy – that almost all roads are only built up on one side for long stretches....The character of Pluckley parish is defined as much by its openness to the countryside as by its buildings."

6.4. There are three main settlement areas: along the Greensand ridge towards the northern end of the parish and encompassing the Village Conservation Area; Pluckley Thorne; and the Station Conservation Area (see Map 1). These areas, and additional isolated dwellings are linked, as the Parish Design Statement describes "by linear development – of sufficiently low density not to spoil the openness of

aspect....Where infill has taken place, there is usually a richness of trees, which either conceal or shelter houses from view."

6.5. The policies in this plan ensure that the character of the rural landscape will be maintained.

6.6. The Conservation Areas and the Listed buildings in the parish are already protected by a raft of laws and guidelines at both national and Borough level, and do not require any additional policy in this document.

Policy R1 – Landscape Character and Design

Development will be supported where it is designed in a way that protects, and where possible enhances, the landscape character and complements existing development and meets other policies within this plan. All developments must be accompanied by a landscape strategy, proportionate to the scale of the development, and that will incorporate the following details:

(i) existing and proposed hard and soft landscaping;

(ii) a condition survey of all existing trees and hedgerows;

(iii) an outline of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees and hedgerows during construction;

(iv) consideration of both near and distant views of the development from the principal public vantage points (see Policy R2) showing the existing landscape and an illustration of how proposed landscaping will have matured after 10 years; and

(v) details, where appropriate, of how those areas retained for open space and/or woodland will be managed in the future.

Policy R2 – Protection of Views and Rural Setting

Development will be supported where it respects the views highlighted in Map 3, as detailed below, and accord with other policies in this plan.

These views are grouped as:

V1 a-g – Views of the valley below the Greensand Ridge to the west of the village

V2 a-c – The "Green Heart"

V3 a-b – Malmains valley

V4 a-b - Views from Smarden Road across open farmland

V 5 a-b - Views from Station Road across open farmland

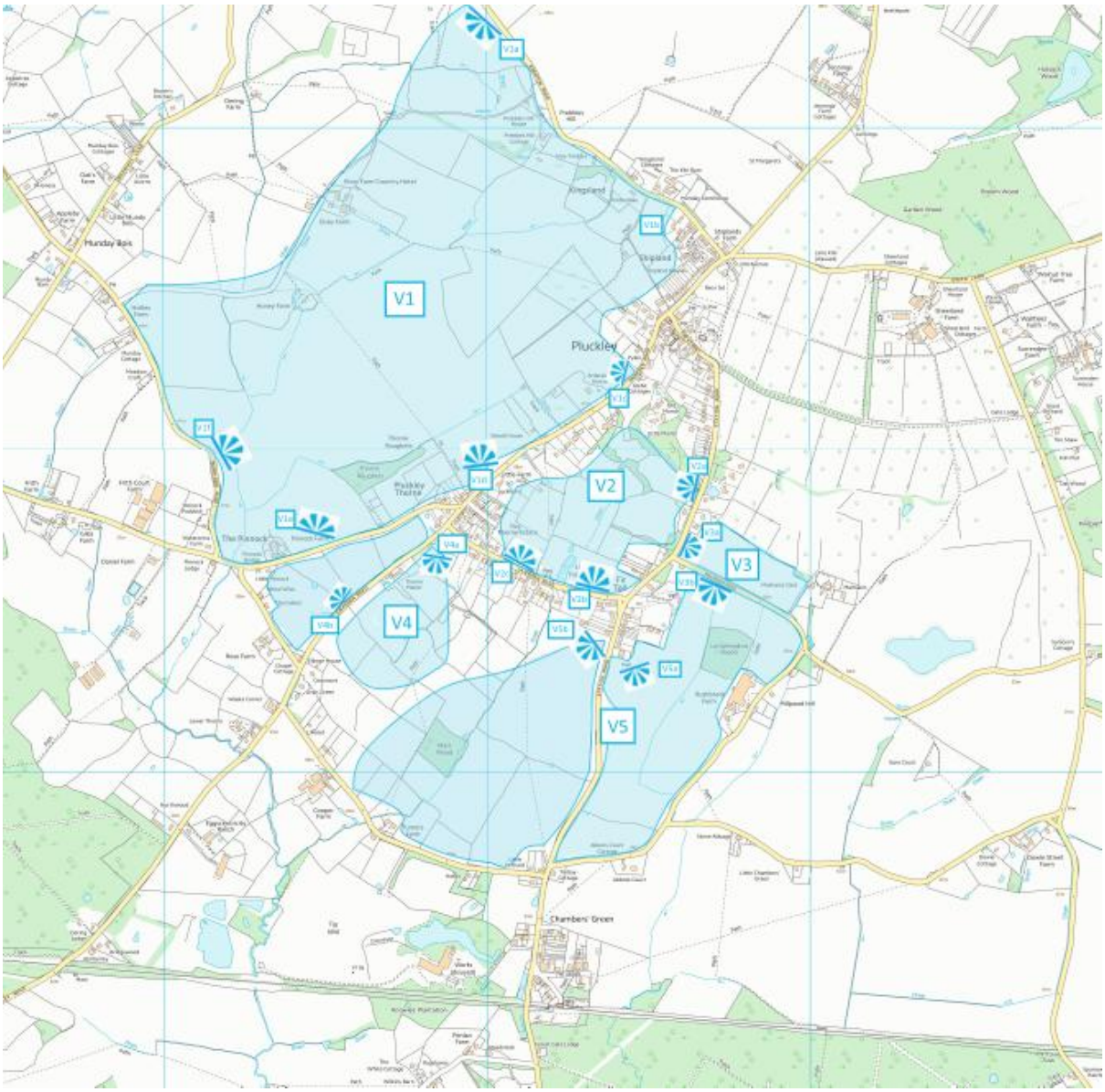
Development that significantly detracts from these views (shown in Map 3), by failing to respect their distinctive characteristics, will not be supported unless they are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose.

Pluckley benefits from a traditional rural landscape dominated by farming activity, with fields, woodlands and hedgerows that provide a habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna. There are several ponds too with resident great crested newt populations. These are important rural features which must be protected for the benefit of the community.

Justification of Policies R1 and R2. Development must fit within the landscape. The natural features of topography that contribute to the character of the area, which is described in the Parish Design Statement, must be protected and views into and from the village, much valued by residents, should be a significant factor in assessing the impact of a proposal. The pattern and composition of woodlands and field boundaries constitute valuable features in the open, rural landscape. Hedgerows should be maintained so as to preserve open views.

The comments made by residents during the consultation show a strong desire to ensure that these characteristics are protected and maintained. The open views, the protection of green spaces and the importance of trees and natural screening are all highly valued for their visual amenity, their leisure offering, and as a habitat for wildlife.

Map 3 Parish Views



From Map 3, Parish Views, the following pictures are for identification only and cannot be fully illustrative of the panorama of the actual views.

The Views at V1 are down, along and up the valley below the greensand ridge and across farmland with Elvey oast in the distance. This is a Landscape Character Area of high sensitivity. V1a looks down from the Egerton Road on the Greensand Ridge and the Greensand Way footpath. V1b looks south ten miles distant from Westfields. V1c looks from Forge Hill down the valley to Elvey Oast. V1d looks from Smarden Road across farmland down the valley. A public footpath runs from this point down the valley.V1e looks up from the Pinnock towards the village on the greensand ridge with the spire of St.Nicholas on the skyline. V1f

looks from Mundy Bois Road up towards the village. V1g looks from Smarden Bell Road up the valley towards the village.



V1a – Far-reaching view from Westfields looking SW across the Weald, a high sensitivity Landscape Character Area



V1b - View from the top of Forge Hill looking SW across high sensitivity LCA



V1c - View from Forge Hill looking NW towards Egerton Road and the Greensand Way



V1d - View across Elvey valley with oast house up to Egerton Road and the Greensand Way



V1e - View of village skyline with spire of St. Nicholas from Mundy Bois road

Views at V2 give on to what is described in the Parish Design Statement as the "green heart" of the parish with its fields, trees and ponds acting as a haven for wildlife. V2a looks west from Station Road across the "green heart". V2b looks north from Lambden Road across the area where there are most of the ponds and a public footpath runs from here across the "green heart" to Smarden Road. V2c looks from the Thorne Estate across the "green heart" towards the spire of St. Nicholas' Church.



V2a - View from Station Road looking down into Green Heart in the core of the parish



V2 - View from the top of the Green Heart looking West – also shows far reaching views across View 1 area



V2b - View from Lambden Road looking N into the Green Heart toward village core



V2c - View from mid Lambden Road looking up into the Green Heart

Views 3 are along/across Malmains valley. V3a looks east down the valley towards Malmains Oast. V3b looks south over fields and is enjoyed from a public footpath.



V3a - View from Station Road/Malmains Road looking across to Malmains Oast and Manor



V3b - View from Malmains Road looking south across Weald

Views at V4 are of open farmland. Throughout the parish, with its dispersed development, there are views of open farmland which characterise the parish. The main roads are lined with trees, including oaks, old English and turkey oak, horse chestnut, poplar, ash, sycamore and hornbeam. V4a looks east from Smarden Road across farmland and mature oak trees. There is also a public footpath here. V4b looks west from Smarden Road across open farmland.



V4 – View from Smarden Road

Views at V5 a and b are from Station Road across open farmland, crossed by a public footpath.



V5a - View from the Village Hall (Station Road) looking south-east



V5b - View from Station Road opposite Village Hall looking south-west

Policy R3 – Designation of Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1.The triangle of land at the junction of Fir Toll and Station Road
2. The area between the station car park and The Grove.

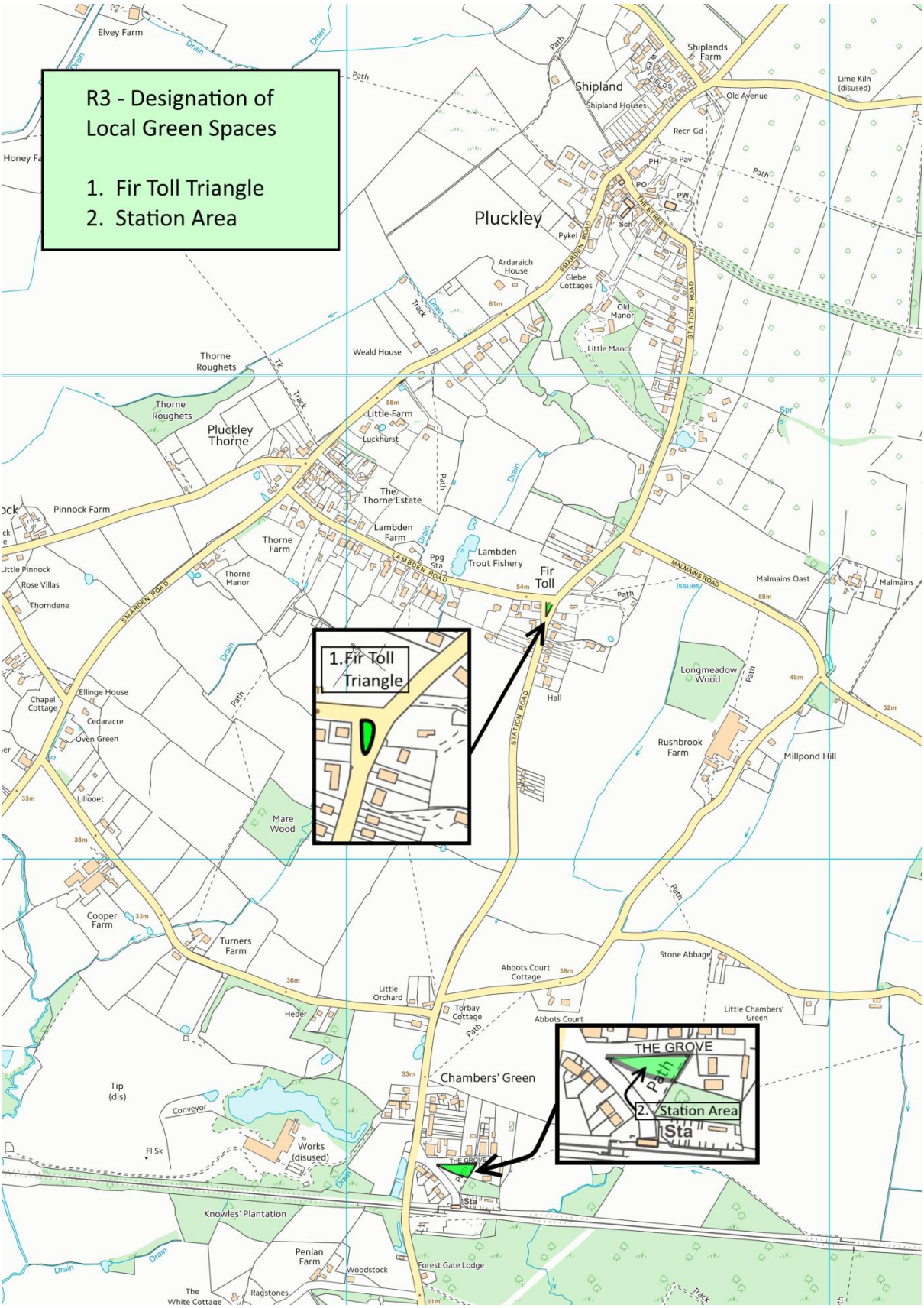
Proposals for development in a designated Local Green Space will not be supported, unless they are ancillary to the use of the land for a public recreational purpose or are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose (Map 4 refers).

Justification of Policy R3. These spaces meet the requirements of paragraph 77 in the NPPF Guidelines of being reasonably close to the community; demonstrating special local significance in terms of beauty, recreational value, tranquillity and richness of wildlife; and are local in character rather than extensive tracts of land. These spaces within the community are a feature of the parish and allow the countryside to come into the developed areas, affording open views and providing habitats for a variety of wildlife to be enjoyed and yet which are bounded at points by buildings and structures contributing to the particular characteristic of built and natural environment for the village.

The triangle of land at Fir Toll is a small, tranquil garden area in the middle of the community at Fir Toll providing shaded seating on the route to the station from the village. It has been landscaped and is regularly maintained by the local residents.

The area between the station car park and The Grove is at the heart of the community by the station, within a Conservation Area. It is local in character, offering an intimate green, wooded introduction to visitors arriving by train, and a recreational facility for dog walkers. It is a haven for bird species such as owls, woodpeckers and nightingales.

Map 4 Local Green Spaces



Policy R4 – Recreation and Community Use

The open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields identified below shall be preserved for leisure use by the community:

1. QEII Recreation Ground,
2. the field adjacent to Thorne Estate,
3. the woodland and lake adjoining the brickworks,
4. the parking area in The Street and
5. the Village Hall and garden

Proposals for development will not be supported that impinge or in any way detract from these areas, unless they are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose, are shown to be surplus to requirements from a formal assessment, any loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location or development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. See Policy C2 for a more detailed explanation of what could be permitted.

Justification of Policy R4. These spaces are key features of life in the parish. In addition to their visual amenity, they allow residents to engage in social activities and take exercise.

1.QEII Recreation Ground. Various sporting clubs use the recreation ground and pavilion as well as the school, and the children's play area is popular. The QEII Recreation Ground is designated as a Field in Trust in perpetuity.

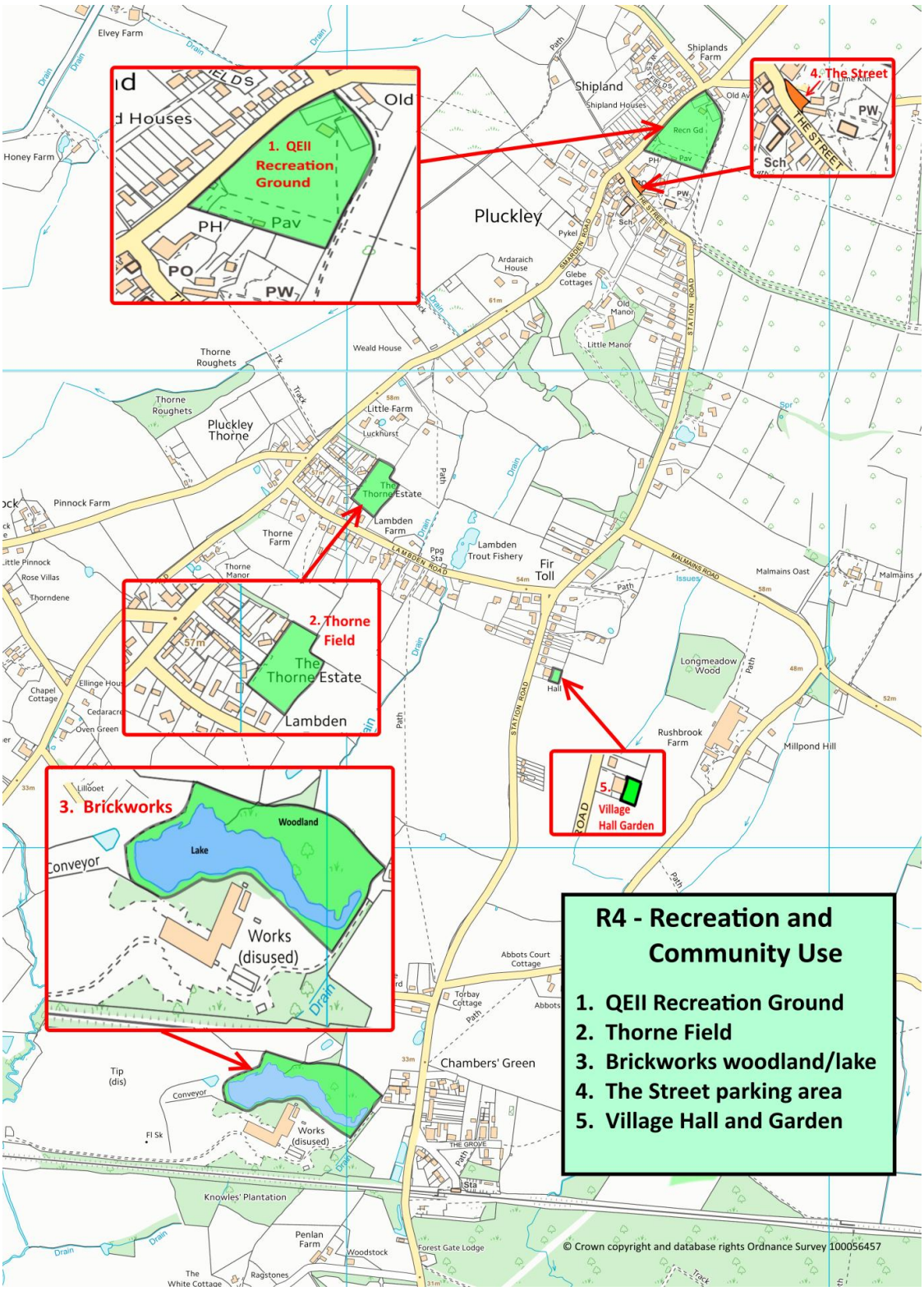
2.The field adjacent to the Thorne Estate is enjoyed by the residents of the estate as a space for children to play rather than having to walk the half-mile to the QEII Recreation Ground, and for dog walkers.

3.The woodland and lake adjoining the Brickworks offer a space for residents in the Station area to exercise. Otherwise, the QEII Recreation Ground is over a mile distant. The lake is used for fishing.

4.The parking area in the Street, in front of The Black Horse is used constantly by residents parking to use the village shops or to drop off and collect children from the primary school, or to attend church services. It is also used as a village gathering place for events such as the Carols around the Tree celebration, Remembrance Day, and Street Parties.

5.The Village Hall and Garden is the principal venue for social meetings in the parish. It is used for elections, by clubs and societies, by the Parish Council, and for informal hire by residents and visitors. It enjoys the facility of its parking area to the front and a garden overlooking farmland to the rear.

Map 5. **Location and extent of Recreation and Community spaces identified in Policy R4**



Policy R5– Renewable Energy

Renewable energy technology is welcomed in the Parish. Proposals for new renewable energy structures requiring planning permission will be required to demonstrate a minimal impact on the visual scene, and not to disturb agricultural land particularly of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land (BMV).

"The National Planning Policy Framework includes strong protections for the natural and historic environment and is quite clear that, when considering development proposals, local councils should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Meeting our energy goals should not be used to justify the wrong development in the wrong location and this includes the unnecessary use of high quality agricultural land. Protecting the global environment is not an excuse to trash the local environment. The particular factors relating to large scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms that a local council will need to consider include making effective use of previously developed land and, where a proposal involves agricultural land, being quite clear this is necessary and that poorer quality land is to be used in preference to land of a higher quality." (Ministerial paper, 25.3.15)

Justification of Policy R5. Energy saving is encouraged and energy generation is welcomed when sited in non-sensitive locations visually. Renewable energy technologies are developing constantly and becoming smaller and more efficient. Large-scale installations, however, have the potential to cause harmful impact on the rural scene. Where applications for large-scale installations are made, they will need to demonstrate that their impact on the rural scene is limited.

7.Housing

7.1. In 2011 Pluckley had 427 households (Office of National Statistics). Since the second World War, there has been significant growth. After the war, council houses were built at Shiplands, south of the village hall on Station Road and the Thorne Estate. A number of individual cedar 'Colt' houses followed and, in the early 1990s, the Westfields estate was built, containing owner-occupied, tenanted from housing associations and homes sold with shared equity. In the 1990s too, a number of larger, detached homes were built along Forge Hill and Lambden Road.

7.2. Growth in recent years has been limited, with an estimated six new dwellings in the past fifteen years. As with many villages in the south east, there is a

significant elderly population and a shortage of young people. The high cost of housing locally is a contributing factor.

7.3. It is recognised that some housing growth is desirable for the community to ensure a sustainable future. At the same time, the community wishes to preserve its existing characteristics. In determining the number of homes to be delivered, the following have been taken into account: the views expressed by parishioners during Consultation; past trends in the Parish; and the envisaged future need over the next fifteen years.

The site selection process, including criteria used, is outlined below and described in detail in a separate document, attached as an appendix to the Basic Conditions Statement.

The allocated sites were selected from Ashford Borough Council's call for sites in 2014 and from those sites that came forward directly to the Parish Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. All of the ten sites were tested through methodology supplied by Ashford Borough Council together with locally detailed specifications that came out of the parish consultation. The sites chosen meet the needs expressed by residents during the consultation and scored higher in the scoring matrix used. They were confirmed through public engagement and consultation.

The other sites submitted scored lower on the scoring matrix used and were discounted for being contrary to the views expressed by residents and the aims of the policies in this plan. (Further information is provided in the Basic Conditions statement on the method of site selection and the reasons for those sites not considered suitable.)

In the case of all new developments, a Contribution may be sought from the developer, to address the projects in the Community Projects Management Plan.

Policy H1 – New Residential Development

Up to 33 additional homes shall be provided on allocated sites within the parish and delivered over the plan period to 2031.

The following sites are allocated for housing development:

Site A up to 4 dwellings
Site B up to 4 dwellings,
Site C up to 25 dwellings

Development elsewhere in the Parish will not normally be supported. Map 6 below shows the supported areas with red lines around them. Development outside these red lines will normally not be supported.

Exceptionally, should a site come forward where development would be in the interests of the parish and comply with the policies set out in this document, it could be considered.

Justification of Policy H1. This total of new dwellings reflects the amount and rate of growth in numbers of housing built over the last 40 years and to meet the perceived pressures on the Parish from existing residents and is in keeping with the character of the parish. It also utilises a brown field site in a way that responds to residents' wishes. The total of new dwellings is supported in views expressed by residents during the consultation period. The rationale and type of dwelling supported are outlined below. This total of 33 homes has the support of Ashford Borough Council.

These supported numbers of dwellings balance the need for the parish to evolve, meeting the needs of residents with the desire to retain the rural character that makes the parish attractive. Residents specifically asked for two/three-bedroom homes designed either for young people seeking their first home, or for elderly residents looking to downsize. See page 38 Consultation Statement.

As regards deliverability, all three site owners are anxious to progress the developments as soon as the PNP is adopted.

Policy H1A – Windfall sites

Outside of allocated sites, 'windfall'* sites which come forward for development within the confines of the continuous developed areas of the three settlement areas of the parish, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on site (e.g. garden areas) are supported subject to the following criteria, where the proposal:

a. Is of a scale, layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area;
b. Does not create an adverse significant impact on the amenity of residents;
c. Would not result in harm to or the loss of public or private open spaces that contribute positively to the local character of the area (including residential gardens);
d. Would not result in significant harm to the surrounding landscape; nearby heritage assets or important biodiversity networks.;

e. Is capable of having pedestrian access provided without significant impact on neighbours or on the integrity of the street-scene.

f. Is able to be safely accessible from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the wider road network,

g. Does not need substantial infrastructure or other facilities to support it;

h. Would not displace an active use such as employment, leisure or community facility.

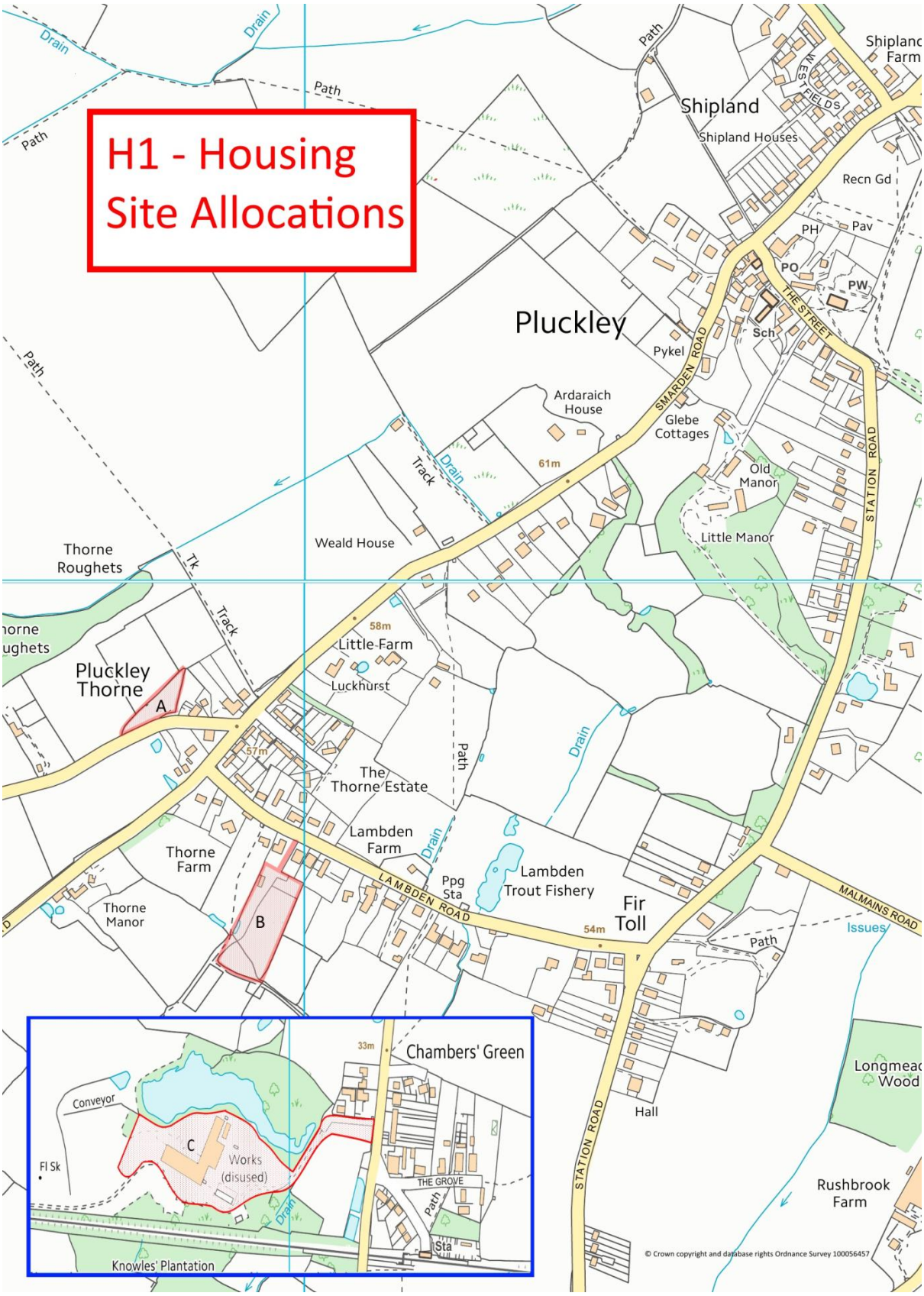
i. Development for self-build or other housing suitable for downsizers would be particularly encouraged;

j. The location of the site provides residents with easy opportunities to walk or cycle when travelling to work, school, shopping, community and leisure facilities.

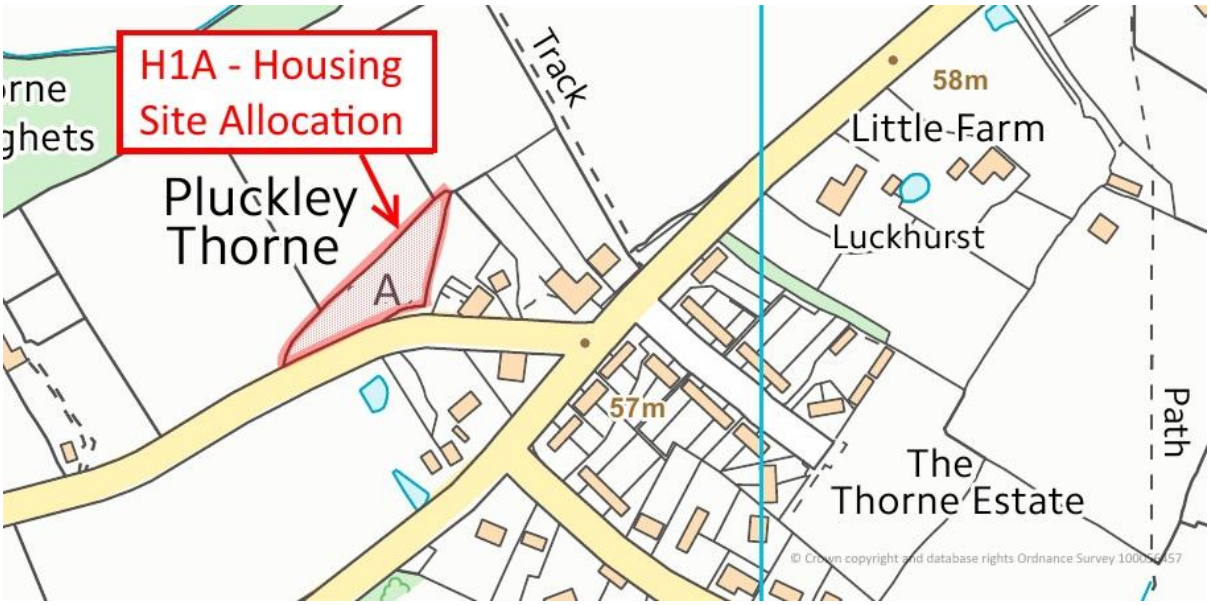
(* NPPF definition **Windfall sites:** Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.)

Whilst some aspects of this policy overlap with Ashford Local Plan Policy, these criteria are included here for completeness and this PNP policy adds two locally specific criteria (i) and (j).

Map 6. Sites Allocated for Housing Development

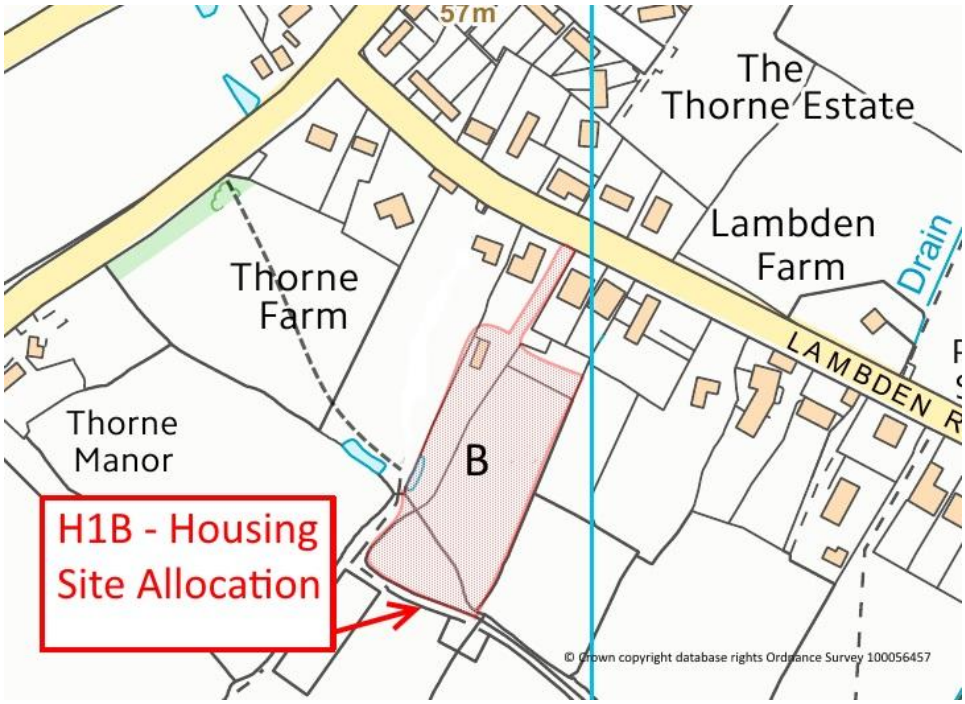


Site A proposes four affordable, two/three bedroom homes with the potential to be suitable for young people. This responds to residents' expressed wishes. It is small-scale, as residents demand, utilises existing access onto the highway, and does not impact on views. It also tidies up visually a currently unattractive storage yard. Although technically an employment site, it has not offered employment for at least twenty years and there will, therefore be no consequent loss of employment possibility.



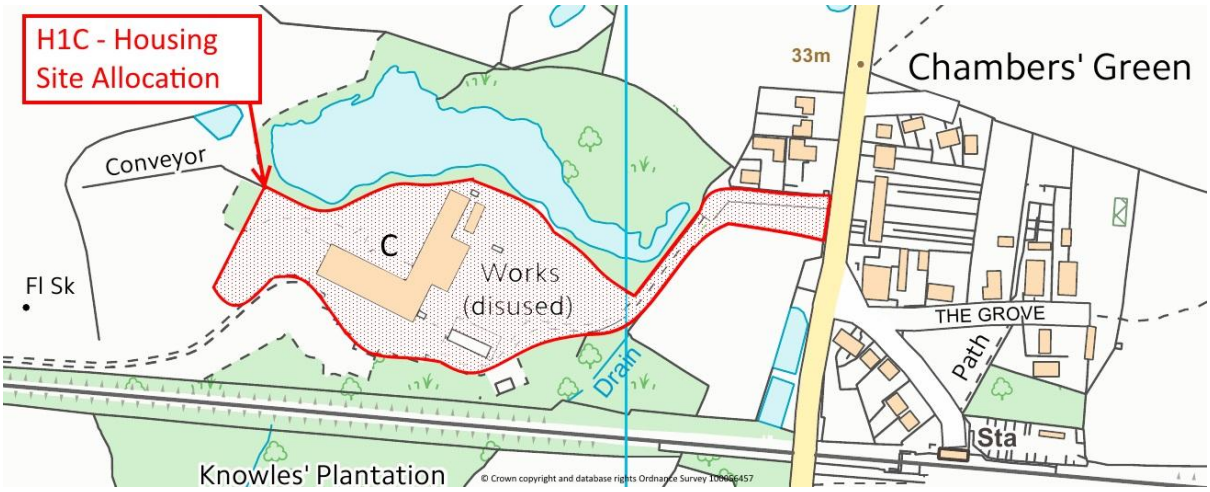
Site B will offer four two/three-bedroom homes designed to be suitable for elderly downsizers, able to meet flexible living requirements and with a design and layout that avoids negative impacts on the settings of the listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. This development too is small-scale, utilises existing high way access and is

tucked away visually.



Sites A and B scored the highest in the assessment process described above. They fulfil the prime needs of minimal visual intrusion and small-scale development.

Site C, the Brickworks site, is a special case. Although the number of homes envisaged here takes the total for the parish to more than is deemed necessary or was wanted, residents have expressed the view that twenty or so dwellings would be a more attractive replacement for the current industrial permit.



The development of twenty five dwellings put forward by the site owner is supported with the following provisos: that four of the homes be two/three bedroom homes such as required by the parish; that a sound management

agreement is in place to provide continuing care for the adjacent lake and woodland; and that the adjoining green field site off Chambers Green Road remains as grazing land, as promised by the site owner. This site uses a brown field site which, although it has not been used for twenty five years, retains its industrial permit. Residential use, without the consequent HGV traffic on a road with limited sight lines and opposite housing, represents a much more satisfactory option. The figure of twenty five homes is the maximum acceptable number as any more would be disproportionate to the scale of this Chambers Green area of the Parish. Kent Wildlife Trust, commenting on the application have submitted "The Ecological Appraisal submitted in support of this application reveals considerable ecological interest at the site, including an exceptional population of slow worms; the presence of a great crested newt population; significant foraging / commuting habitat for bats; a possible greater horseshoe bat record; 42 bird species (including Kent Red Data Book species nightingale and turtle dove) confirmed as or assessed to be breeding or holding territories within the site; dormouse records (one nesting); and significant invertebrate interest with two Priority, four nationally scarce and eight nationally local species records from only a one day survey. The site appears to exhibit three Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, two 'important' hedgerows and two large mature oak trees. "Further development would therefore seriously impact the habitat of several species that have made this abandoned site their home. Moreover, the consequent impact of traffic on an area that already experiences traffic flow problems would be serious.

Site H1C received outline planning approval in March 2016 for the development described above.

Policy H2 Proposals for development must observe the following:

Policy H2A – Design Standards

Proposals for all forms of new development must plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design, at the same time demonstrating they have sought to conserve local distinctiveness and the aesthetic qualities of traditional rural settlements and buildings found in Pluckley and take account of the Parish Design Statement (adopted and published in 2003). In particular developments should have regard to:-

*** typical building form**

*** roof lines**

*** materials. Preference will be given to the use of durable, attractive and locally available or reclaimed materials used in the distinctive Pluckley style, using red and buff stock brick, Kentish ragstone, white or cream painted brickwork and slate roof tiles.**

*** openings and boundary treatments as well as responding well to its context, both the street and when viewed from open spaces and open countryside. Developers and owners are encouraged to plant screens of trees and hedgerows to soften impact on the roadside frontage.**

Policy H2B - Encouraging Sustainable Development

New development which incorporates the use of micro-energy generation technologies will be encouraged. The minimum standards required for new developments are those being laid down by Ashford Borough Council in its Local Plan.

Careful consideration should be given to the impact on heritage assets and buildings of local merit and the landscape setting.

Development is to be co-ordinated with the provision of infrastructure and will not be permitted to proceed unless it connects to the sewerage system at the nearest points of adequate capacity as advised by the service provider, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate and other adequate means can be found to the satisfaction of the service provider or other appropriate body. Developments will also need to check National Grid capacity.

Developments of 10 or more dwellings, non-residential or mixed use development as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 will be expected to put in place sustainable drainage systems for the management of run-off unless demonstrated to be inappropriate.

Policy H2C - Lighting

Lighting associated with any activity including leisure, recreation and business must be demonstrated to be essential and, where demonstrated, it must be managed to reduce light pollution, reduce energy usage and impact on biodiversity, any potential harm to local residents and to minimise the visual impact on the local character of the area. Therefore, where lighting is considered necessary, it is expected that consideration will be given to any lighting at an early stage of design and planning so that this can be

achieved in consistency with the existing Dark Sky SPD adopted by Ashford Borough Council.

Justification of Policy H 2. The Parish Design Statement was adopted in 2003 and has retained strong support in every survey undertaken in the Parish since then. Dark skies are an important part of the rural characteristic of this village. Ashford Borough Council's Dark Sky SPD does not cover the parish of Pluckley.

8.Economy and Communications

8.1. The local economy is dominated by agriculture and tourism. The greatest land use is farming which covers the bulk of the parish. This is carried out by half a dozen local farmers and is arable, fruit growing or grazing land for sheep, with just a few cattle. There is some light industry, mostly on the Pivington estate, with isolated operations such as vehicle repair at dispersed locations. There is also the old Brickworks site, which although it retains its planning status as an industrial site, has not been active for twenty five years.

8.2. Tourism is important in attracting many visitors who come for the rural environment, as depicted in "The Darling Buds of May" and to explore the haunted reputation of the parish. They are provided for by two small hotels, two public houses, two certified location caravan sites and a number of bed and breakfast accommodations.

8.3. From the responses given to questionnaires distributed in the Parish, most employment in the parish comprises people working from home. Scaled up from the questionnaire response, there could be as many as 100 home workers. Economic activity is, therefore, small-scale, quiet and unobtrusive. Retail activity is confined to the general stores, the butcher's and the farm shop – all of which are much appreciated. The general store includes a sub-post office which is highly valued by residents.

Policy E 1. Support for Agriculture and Tourism Development

Development, particularly agricultural and tourism initiatives, are supported where they are demonstrated to make improvements to the economy, environment and landscape, and well-being of the parish as outlined elsewhere in this PNP. Such improvements might take the form of jobs, risk management and sustainability of businesses, or a positive management plan for retention of historic buildings or landscape.

Where planning permission is required, proposals that cannot demonstrate benefits to the parish will not be supported.

Justification of Policy E 1. These are the core activities of the parish that contribute to the way of life and the attractiveness of the area. Provided that attractiveness is not impaired, initiatives are encouraged.

Policy E 2. Seek better Communications

Applications for new residential development must contain a 'Connectivity Statement' demonstrating how the proposal takes communications connectivity into account.

Justification of Policy E 2. During Consultation, residents called for improved broadband. As well as facilitating the rural economy, for Pluckley's businesses and home workers, this is essential.

Policy E 3. Traffic management through the parish

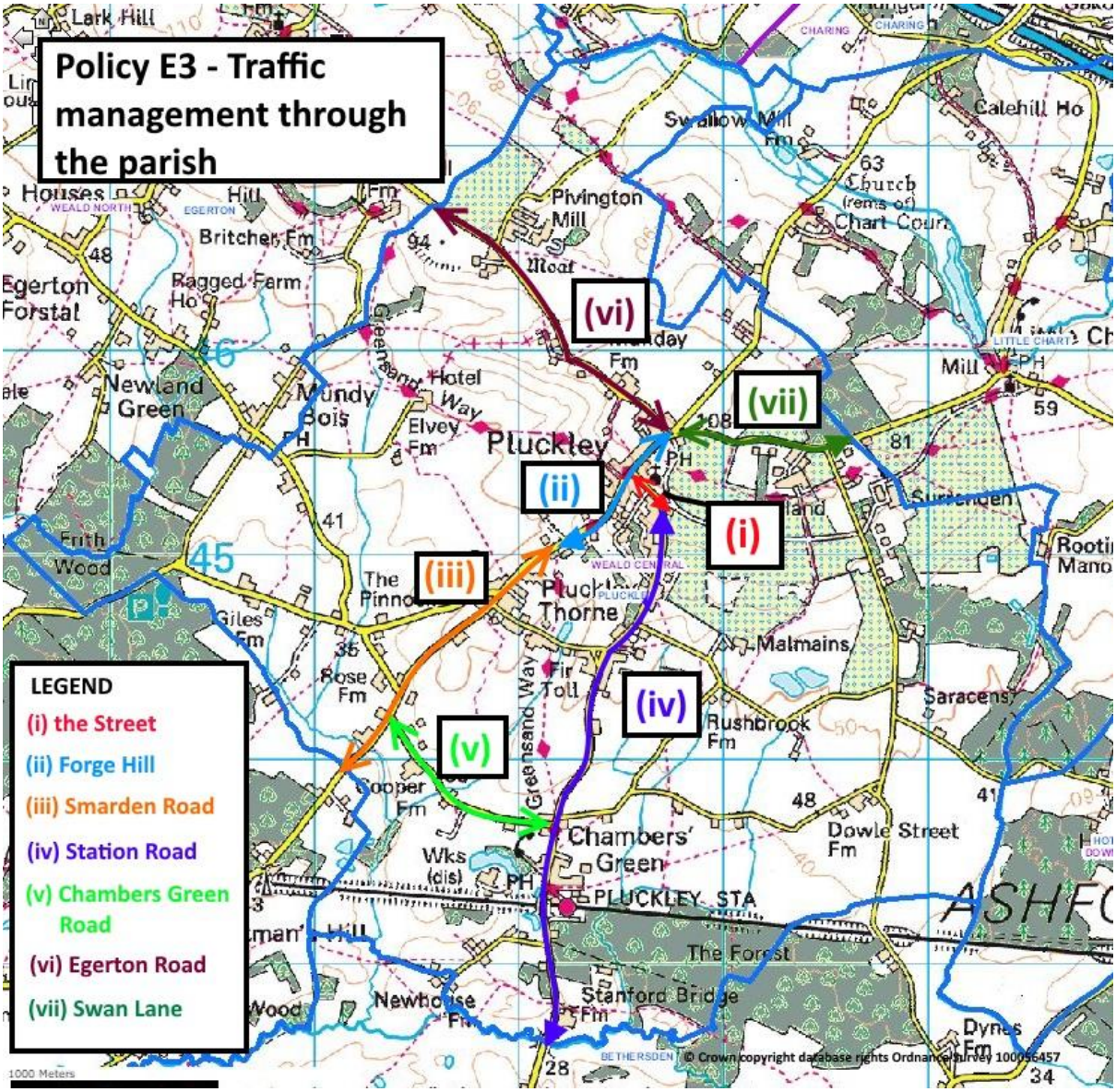
Proposals will be supported that accord with the policies in the PNP and result in improvements to the free flow of traffic in the village.

Proposals requiring planning permission and which seek to increase the number of access points or which would involve an increase in traffic generation, particularly increasing the flow of HGVs through the Parish, will need to demonstrate that they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate parking conditions, including conflict with larger vehicles, in the following areas: (i) The Street; (ii)Forge Hill; (iii) Smarden Road; (iv) Station Road; (v) Chambers Green Road; (vi) Egerton Road; (vii) Swan Lane, as identified on Map 7. These are the areas most used by HGVs.

Development proposals that would generate a significant amount of movement or would potentially affect a known and evidenced traffic hazard must be supported by a Transport Statement or Assessment as appropriate. The Statement or Assessment will set out details of the transport issues relating to the development including the measures to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and to take any opportunities as appropriate for improving the pedestrian and cycle connectivity.

Justification of Policy E 3. The passage of HGV traffic through the parish is seen by residents as the single greatest problem facing the parish. It has been cited repeatedly in consultations undertaken (Parish Plan 2009 and 2013, and this Neighbourhood Plan) as the biggest problem facing the parish. HGV traffic passes routes that fail the Government's minimum width requirement for a HGV and car passing, damages the road surfaces and verges, creates potentially dangerous incidents, and impacts the quality of life of residents. KCC Highways has said of the east-west route through Pluckley "There are, therefore, parts of this route which are unsuitable for HGVs" (Mr. Hogben, May 2009). HM Inspector of Planning, July 2010 "In my view it is reasonable to keep the number of trips by vehicles to a minimum...if there were no limitations imposed, there would be considerable harm to local residents because of the amount and type of traffic." HM Inspector of Planning March 2011 in rejecting a development application "cars will pass HGVs on a daily basis" and because the proposal would "generate the type and amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it" the proposal was in breach of policy TRS8 of the DPD.

The current speed limits in the parish do not accord with national guidelines for villages, nor given the density of housing. They are also out of kilter with all surrounding parishes. Much of the area within the 40mph speed limit zone does not have the protection of a footpath, with the consequent danger to pedestrians, especially with children going to and from the local school in the village centre. Moreover, an on-site survey undertaken by the PNP Steering Group, shows that more than fifty dwellings in the current 40mph zone have sight lines at their entrances that KCC Highways judge to be inadequate. A reduction in the 40mph speed limit to 30mph would alleviate this.



9.Community and Leisure

9.1. Significant efforts have been made in recent years to improve the facilities for leisure and social inter-action in the parish. The QEII Recreation Ground has seen the addition of new children's play park, a multi-games court, a new and extended sports pavilion, a resurfaced tennis court, a petanque piste, and a car park. The Ground is now preserved in perpetuity for leisure as a Field in Trust.

9.2. The field adjacent to the Thorne Estate is also used as a leisure facility by the local residents and is to be maintained as such.

9.3. The Village Hall has also been given a face lift, with new ceiling and lighting, new heating, refurbished floor, new windows, an improved kitchen, redecoration, and a planting scheme in the garden. Further improvements are planned by way of

a new entrance foyer, embracing new toilets, disabled facilities, and a new lounge, as soon as funds allow.

9.4. The result has been an increase in social activities within the parish. The Village Hall is now self-funding and no longer needs to rely on annual grants from the Parish Council. The further improvements planned to the hall will enhance its attractiveness and encourage further community activities.

Policy C 1. Social interaction and Community life

Development related to community use, including changes of use and temporary or permanent structures or alterations to permitted opening hours, where express planning permission is required, will be supported subject to other policies in this Plan.

Justification of Policy C1. The Consultation process highlighted the need for basic community services and a wish for greater social action and community life.

C.2. Protection of community facilities

Proposals that would allow these facilities to modernise and adapt for future needs are encouraged, subject to the other policies in this PNP:

- **Parish Church, The Green churchyard and graveyard**
- **Primary School**
- **Village Hall and associated parking**
- **Public Houses and shops**

(See Map 8 Protection of Community Facilities)

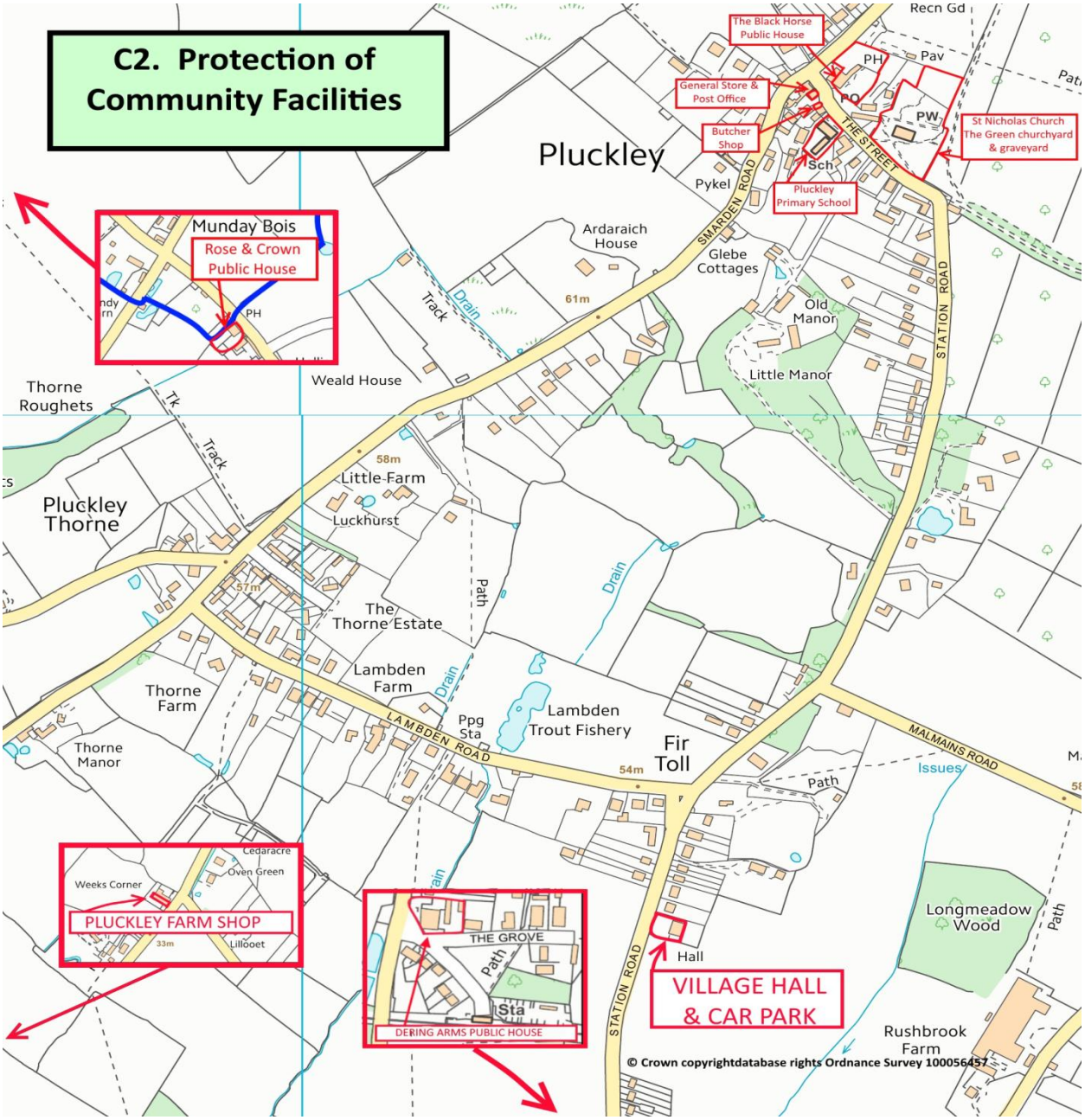
Development of existing community facilities will be supported where they will enhance their community function. Where it is demonstrated that an existing community use is not viable, preference will be given to a change of use or redevelopment to alternative community uses before other uses are considered. Every effort will be made to work with the local community to investigate potential solutions to avoid any unnecessary loss of these valued facilities and services.

Proposals that will result in the loss of an existing community facility will only be supported where:

a) adequate alternative provision exists or will be provided in an equally accessible or more accessible location within the reasonable walking distance of 800metres; or

b) all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility but it has been demonstrated that it would not be economically viable, feasible or practicable to retain the building or site for its existing use; in such cases evidence must be provided to confirm that the property or site has been marketed for a meaningful period and that there is no realistic interest in its retention for the current use or for an alternative community use.

Proposals for development which involve the unavoidable loss of community facilities for which there is a proven demand will be required to consider the scope for relocating or re-providing the facility either within the new development or on an alternative site within the locality and to make such provision where feasible and practicable.



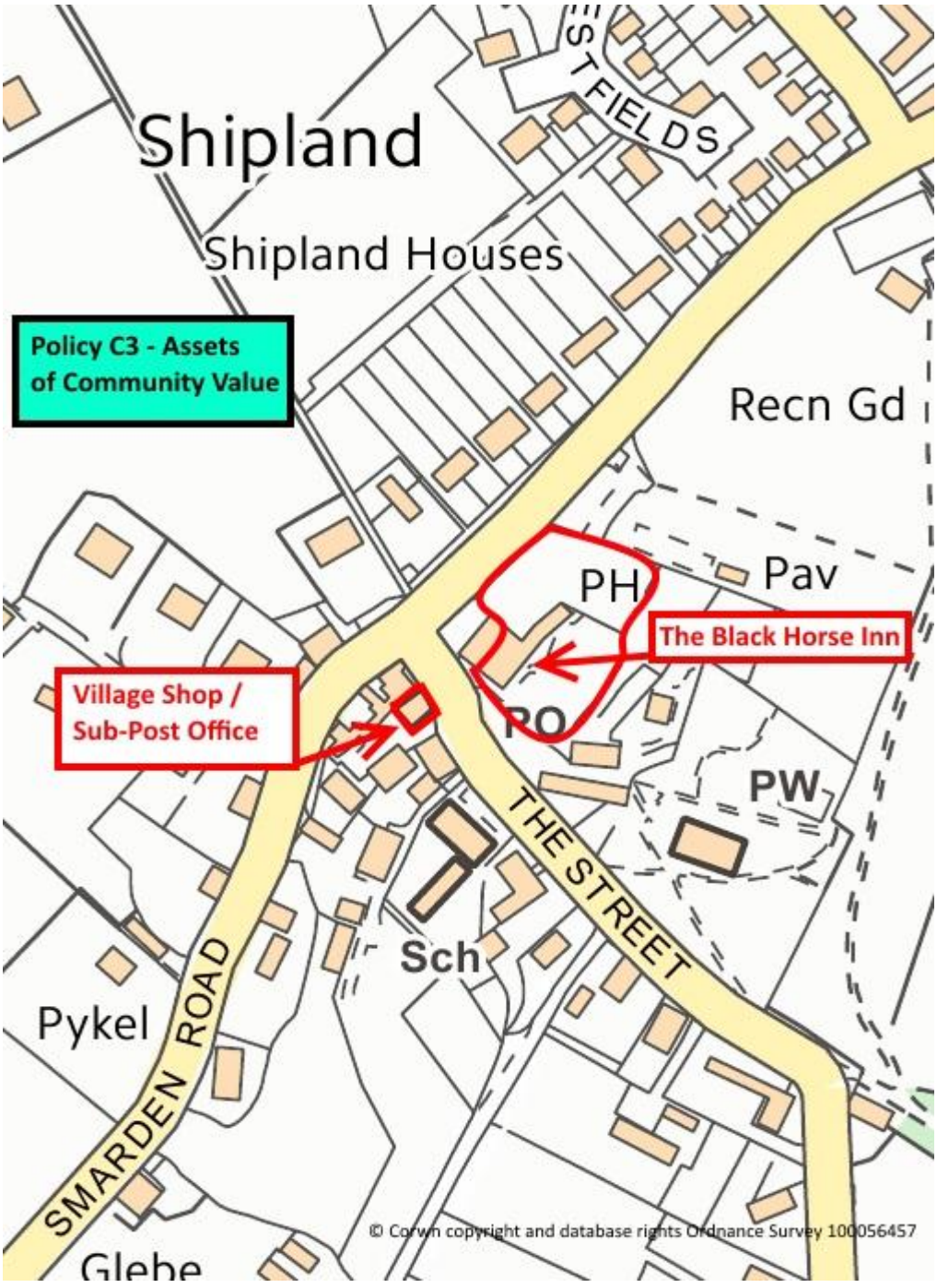
Justification of Policy C2. The above listed facilities are all valued by residents, as expressed during the Consultation process (see Consultation Statement) and seen as vital parts of the community. Given the importance to the parish of these facilities, their loss would have a detrimental effect on life in the parish and is to be avoided if at all possible. Their maintenance and enhancement will be sought wherever possible through public engagement and support and where they need to evolve to continue to meet the parish's needs, then they will be encouraged to do so.

Policy C 3. Proposals that will result in either the loss of an Asset of Community Value or in significant harm to an Asset of Community Value

will not be supported. The Assets of Community Value are the village shop/sub-post office and The Black Horse Inn at the heart of the village. See Map 9.

Justification of Policy C3. The assets are seen as so integral to the maintenance of community life in the parish that they are nominated an Asset of Community Value, giving the parish greater opportunity to preserve it.

Map 9.Assets of Community Value



10.Community Projects Management Plan

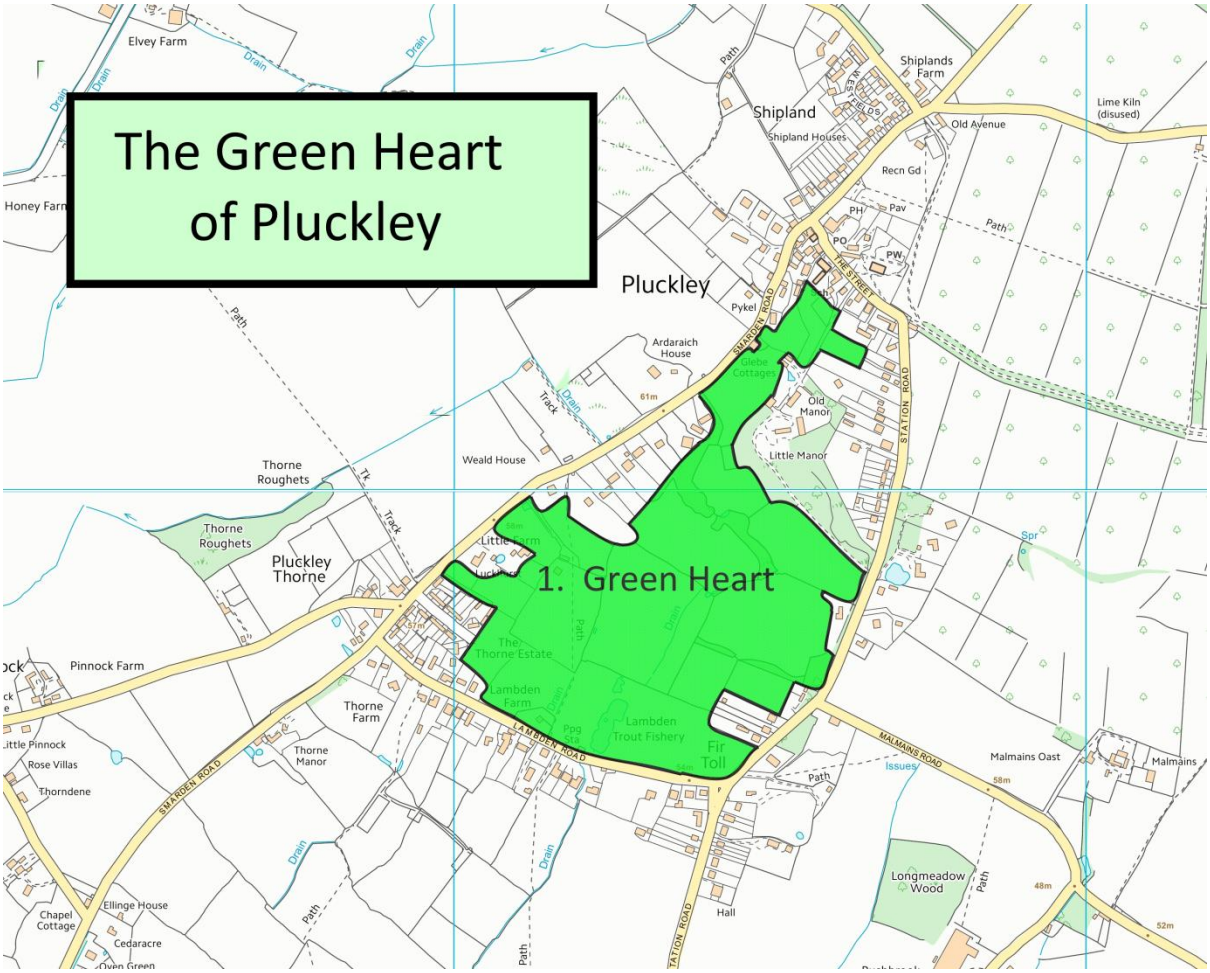
This section does not form part of the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan proposal.

10.1. In addition to the above planning policies that emerged from the Consultation, a number of other aspirations were expressed. Some of these are of a planning nature but are already covered by Ashford Borough Council's Core Strategy or Local Plan, others are not of a planning nature but are designed to improve life in the community. They are expressed here as Projects and the Parish Council will endeavour to deliver them.

Project CR1. Further designation of Local Green Space

The "green heart" is referred to in the Parish Design Statement and occupies a notable area of woodland, fields and ponds at the heart of the community between the village core and Thorne/Fir Toll. It is immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and several listed buildings. It is an area rich in wildlife with a large population of great crested newts and, because of its enclosed nature with varied topography is tranquil. It is clearly defined and bounded within the village. It is crossed by a public footpath. See Map 10.

It is the intention to add the "Green Heart" to the Local Green Spaces in the Parish. This will be pursued with the relevant landowners, seeking to establish a mutually satisfactory management programme and to protect this important asset.



Project CH 1 – Local Needs Housing

Based on surveys, sites for Local Needs Housing will be sought to meet identified demand.

This continues a long-standing commitment by the Parish Council to respond to the housing needs of people with a connection to the parish. Following a housing needs survey in 2013, four local needs homes were built adjacent to the Westfields development. They were occupied in early 2015 and exhausted the then identified needs of people with a Pluckley connection. Further housing needs surveys will be undertaken on a regular basis to establish emerging local requirements.

Project CH 2 – Managed homes for the Elderly

Pluckley supports the 'village cluster' approach adopted by Ashford Borough Council.

During the Consultation workshops, residents suggested that there is a growing need for housing for elderly residents requiring varying levels of care. This is a need that is likely to increase. Residents feel strongly that this should be provided within a village environment. While the preference is for residents to be able to remain in Pluckley, it is recognised that the advised minimum requirement of thirty dwelling units cannot be met within the parish. The Parish Council has communicated its support for the 'village cluster' approach adopted by Ashford Borough Council, and residents support this solution which is likely to be in Charing.

The 'village cluster' is the most sensible means of providing such homes: in a rural environment and yet having the degree of care and supervision called for.

Project CH 3 – Footpaths/pavements

The footpaths in the parish are to be better maintained. Public rights of way are to be maintained.

Many of the footpaths/ pavements in the parish have become overgrown and consequently difficult to use, particularly for pushchairs or wheelchairs. This requires cutting back of hedgerows and verges. Additional footpaths/pavements are not favoured, nor 'improvements' that would render the street scene more urban in nature. The existing rural style is favoured. The possibility of installing a footpath linking Fir Toll to the station was raised in the consultation workshops but was rejected on the grounds of visual intrusion and the envisaged limited use given the distance.

The parish enjoys several public rights of way, many of very long-standing. This enables not only residents but also the many visitors to the parish to exercise and to appreciate the countryside.

Large areas of the parish do not have a footpath. That is a result of its dispersed nature. Where they do exist, however, they are regularly used and need to be better maintained. The public rights of way continue to be an important leisure feature of the parish and are what attract many visitors. They too must be preserved and managed correctly.

Project CE1. Rail Service

The current rail service to London and to the coast is valued and is to be supported.

During Consultation, residents stressed the importance to the village of the rail service, and urged that every effort be made to at least maintain the current level of service.

The parish has the benefit of a limited bus service linking to Ashford. There is also Wealden Wheels, a charity based in Pluckley that offers a vehicle hire service (with or without driver) to local groups or families. The Parish Council has, for many years, supported this charity.

Project CE2. Broadband/mobile phones

Faster broadband has now been installed and is welcomed. The currently poor mobile phone reception throughout the parish needs to be improved.

During Consultation, residents called for improved broadband and mobile phone reception.

Project CE 3. Limit HGV traffic through the parish

Any development that is likely to increase the flow of HGVs through the parish will be resisted.

The passage of HGV traffic through the parish is seen by residents as the single greatest problem facing the parish. It passes routes that fail the Government's minimum width requirement for a HGV and car passing, damages the road surfaces and verges, creates potentially dangerous incidents, and impacts the quality of life of residents.

Project CE 4. Contain the speed of traffic through the parish.

A reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph is to be sought to create safer traffic conditions, reduce wear and tear on the highways, reduce noise and enhance the quality of life for residents.

A reduction in the 40mph speed limit to 30mph is widely supported in the parish. This proposal was put to KCC Highways in 2012 as part of the review of speed limits in the parish, undertaken by the Parish Council. The other recommendations were accepted but this one has been delayed because Highways advise that costly traffic calming measures would be required to render the reduction effective. The

Parish Council is exploring with Highways appropriate calming measures and will seek to have them, and the speed limit reduction, installed.

Project CC 1. Recreation Spaces.

All opportunities are to be taken to manage and improve the spaces available for leisure and sporting activities.

Continuing attention will be given to maintaining the QEII Recreation Ground and to encourage its use by the community. The Thorne Estate field will also remain as a leisure facility. The lake and woodland on the Brickworks site and the green field off Chambers Green Road will also be maintained as leisure areas for the community.

All sections of the community should have facilities provided for them that encourage regular exercise. The parish is blessed with several public rights of way that allow for safe walking through attractive countryside. The QEII Recreation Ground, within the constraints of its size, offers the opportunity for various physical activities. The ground is to be maintained and its use by clubs and individuals encouraged.

Project CC 2. Social Interaction.

Opportunities for engaging with all sections of the community are to be encouraged.

New initiatives that bring the community together will be supported. Recent examples include the Arts Festival, the Carols around the Tree, and the re-launched Tennis Club. They are dependent upon volunteers coming forward as ever, but with encouragement and support, can be brought into reality.

The Primary School is seen as a vital part of parish life and the community will seek to engage with, and support the school and its children. The school has as a policy, priority admission for children resident in the parish, and this is welcomed and supported.

In a rural community, with some commuters, it is easy for residents to feel isolated and without support, especially the elderly. The provision of a range of social activities helps to bring the community together and enrich life in the parish.

Project CC 3. Village Hall

The Village Hall improvement programme is to be pursued with a view to creating a modern, attractive venue that is used by the community.

The improvement planned and approved by residents is for an extension embracing a new entrance foyer and toilets, including a disabled toilet. Subsequently, a further extension at the front will be undertaken to provide a new lounge/additional meeting room. This will allow a greater variety of activity at the hall. The exterior will also be timber clad to add insulation, improve appearance and encourage further use.

In response to the need identified at one of the consultation meetings, wireless broadband will be installed at the village hall. Apart from the opportunities offered for display to users by internet access, the hall could then be used as a co-located working hub. This will allow the many home workers in the parish to have a break and interact.

The Village Hall is a focal point for social activities in the parish. These have become more varied in recent years and the improvements to the hall have encouraged more parishioners to take an active part in using it.

Project CC 4. Station Parking

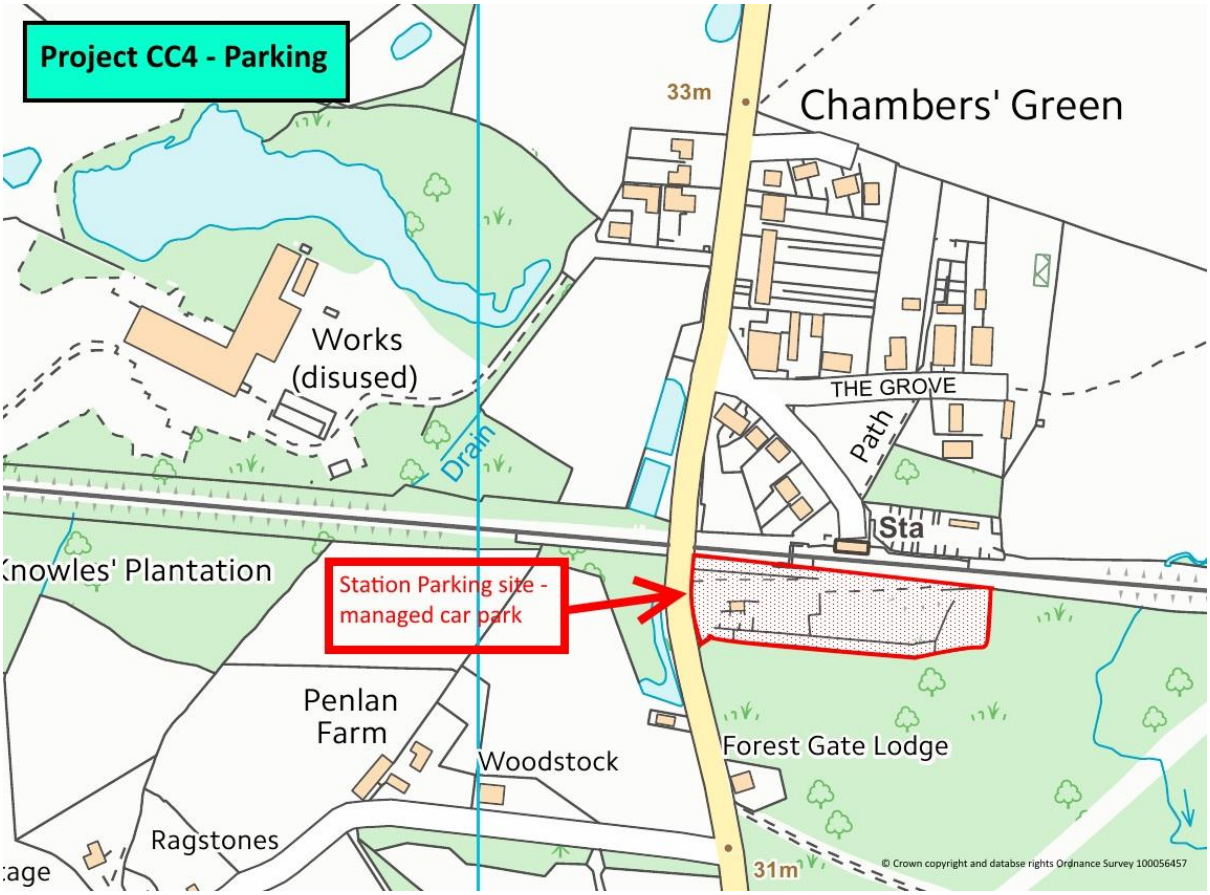
We will seek to alleviate parking at the station by the provision of extra parking. The Old Coal Yard site to the south of the station (see Map 11) is supported for development as a managed car park if a solution can be found to access it safely.

The Old Coal Yard site is adjacent to Pluckley station, on the south side. There is already access available from this site to the up line. The existing car park on the north side of the station is considered unlikely to be sufficient to cope with the envisaged increase in traffic. There is real concern that the planned Chilmington Green development will give rise to additional traffic seeking to use Pluckley station. As it is at present, many commuters park their cars outside the existing car park along Station Road impairing traffic flow and diminishing the amenity of local residents. The owner of the Old Coal Yard site has approached the Parish Council with a view to operating a managed car park and this is supported. The precise number of spaces will be agreed with the operator in due course.

Parking at the station is seen as a problem, both by local residents and station users, and every attempt should be made to alleviate it. The rail service is seen as

an important asset and facilitating its use by improving car parking is helpful in maintaining the service (see Community Project E1.)

Map 11. The Old Coal Yard site



11. Monitoring and Review

11.1. The PNP will be monitored by the Parish Council and formally reviewed every five years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Parish as it evolves.

Through liaison with Ashford Borough Council, the PNP will be checked against emerging planning changes both at national and local levels. It will also be monitored regularly to ensure that it is proving effective in the assessment of planning applications as they arise.