EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021-2040



MADE MARCH 2022

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1



INTRODUCTION

What does neighbourhood planning mean for Egerton?

1.1 Neighbourhood plans form part of the Government's overall approach to planning and aim to give local people more say about development in their area. The Egerton Parish Plan (2016) covers a wider range of issues than the Neighbourhood Plan but does not include planning and development and does not have legal status. If the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is passed at a referendum, it will be made (adopted) by Ashford Borough Council and will form part of the Development Plan for Egerton Parish. It will also have legal status and becomes a material consideration which must be taken into account as part of the response to all planning applications in the parish of Egerton, carrying greater weight than some other local planning documents such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

1.2 Neighbourhood planning has given people in the parish direct power to develop a shared vision for the long-term future of the parish and the distinctive countryside in which it is situated. It has allowed local people to shape the development and growth of the parish to ensure its future sustainability. It has enabled us to say where we want new homes or businesses to be built and to suggest what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. Neighbourhood planning has furnished us with a powerful set of tools for all of us to plan for the types of development to meet our community's needs whilst ensuring that the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

1.3 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan takes as its starting point the principal conclusion of the Egerton Parish Plan as typified in the words of one resident - 'Please don't change too much. We love our village as it is'. Both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan recognise that some change is inevitable and necessary for the sustainability of a rural community; and the Neighbourhood Plan, if approved in a Referendum, comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the Borough and gives local people a voice in the process of change.

This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- protect the individual character and environment of Egerton
- ensure a sustainable future for the village
- improve the health and well-being of all residents
- facilitate the development of housing in the best positions geographically, socially and environmentally in order to meet the needs of local people
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layoutand design

How does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan fit into the planning system?

1.4 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan to 2030 (adopted February 2019).

1.5 Neighbourhood Plans must comply with current regulations on strategic environmental assessments and habitats (see 1.9 below) and the NPPF, and generally conform to the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan. In order to future-proof the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (see Appendix 3 for membership and Terms of Reference) has also ensured through dialogue with Ashford Borough Council that the Plan takes account of up to date evidence of any strategic needs and constraints identified for the area. Any new development should take into consideration the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (KMWLP) and the three safeguarded land-won mineral deposits in the parish – Hythe Formation-Limestone (Ragstone) (see para.7.31), Sub-Alluvial River Terrace Deposits and Paulina Limestone.

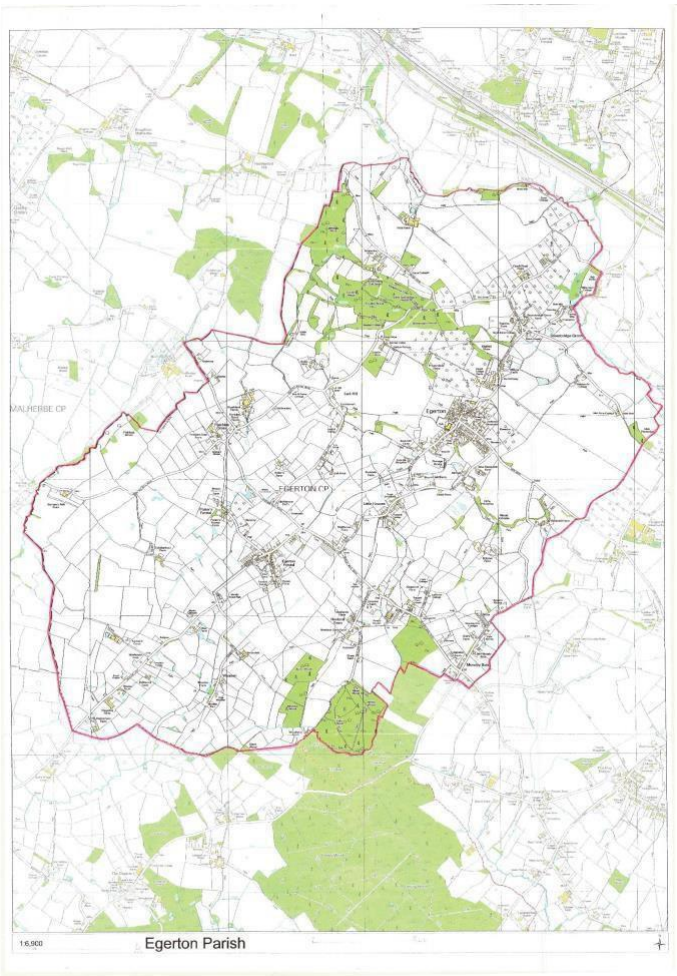
1.6 ENP policies do not duplicate policies already adopted in the Ashford Borough Council 2030 Plan but aim to provide strategic direction specific to Egerton and its environs.

What period does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan cover?

1.7 The ENP covers the period 2021 - 2040 but will be subject to review at five yearly intervals to ensure that its policies are still compliant with national and local policy, are responsive to climate and other environmental changes and are meeting the overall strategic vision for the future of Egerton.

The Egerton Neighbourhood Area

1.8 In July 2017 Ashford Borough Council approved the designated neighbourhood area as the current parish boundary (see map). The parish covers an area of around 4.8 square miles, mostly farmland with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing with some pockets of woodland. The parish contains the main settlements of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal as well as smaller dispersed communities including Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pembles Cross and Stonebridge Green.



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

1.9 Ashford Borough Council undertook full assessments and presented their report (Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report) in March 2021.

The Screening Assessment concluded that:

- The assessment finds that no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore concluded that a full SEA is not required at this time.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment screening concluded that:

- In respect of six designated Natura 2000 sites there is unlikely to be significant environmentaleffects on these sites.

- Based on the latest communication from Natural England (January 2021) there is no longer the potential for a likely significant effect to result to the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest. Consequently, a full Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not required.

2



PREPARING THE EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Process

2.1 In October 2016 Egerton Parish Council publicly announced their decision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, following completion of the Parish Plan and overwhelming public support at a well-attended public meeting. A Steering Group was formed, composed of a combination of parish councillors and volunteers. Terms of reference for the Steering Group were agreed in early 2017 (see Appendix 3), followed by public consultation to determine the vision for Egerton's future and the key objectives to ensure its achievement.

2.2 In 2018 the Steering Group consulted on key views and vistas in the parish, initiated a Housing Needs Survey conducted on their behalf by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) and issued a call for sites followed by workshops with residents to consider the key sites and draft site selection criteria.

2.3 In 2019 the Steering Group undertook, with the support of their consultants - the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service - a Local Green Space Assessment, a Local Heritage Sites Assessment and a refined Site Selection exercise based on criteria conforming with national and local planning policy guidelines. The Steering Group also reviewed the effectiveness of the Parish Design Statement as a guide both to new development and extensions to existing housing over the past ten years. The results of all these initiatives have informed the final plan.

Community Consultation

2.4 There has been extensive consultation with Egerton residents throughout the planning process:

- in a series of open meetings and workshops,
- at each of the annual Parish Assemblies,
- through regular updates at the monthly meetings of Egerton Parish Council,
- in printed fliers and questionnaires,
- in the village's quarterly community magazine, *Egerton Update*,
- on the Neighbourhood Plan web site,
- and in other social media.

At each stage in the process, village residents have been invited to express their views in person or in writing, and a full record of that consultation has been maintained by the Steering Group. All comments and observations made at any stage in developing the Neighbourhood Plan have been conscientiously considered. Whilst some individual comments have been included in the Plan where they capture the majority view, other individual comments that were not in line with the views expressed by the majority have not been included. It is the majority view that has prevailed in the final Plan.

2.5 A full Community Consultation Statement accompanies this Plan.

3



EGERTON NOW

3.1 Egerton parish covers an area of about 2,800 acres (4.8 square miles). Less than 3% of the total area is developed with buildings and roads. Most of the remaining land is farmed with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing for sheep and some cattle, with pockets of woodland.





3.2 The main settlement of Egerton stands on a 350 ft ridge of Greensand 9 miles north-west of Ashford and has one of the most magnificent and easily-accessible views to the south west across the Low Weald and beyond to the High Weald, and to the north east, the North Downs. The tower of the 13th Century Church of St. James dominates the skyline and the many old cottages around it.

3.3 Almost every type of domestic architecture is evident, from Hall Houses, Yeoman Houses, Kentish Barns and oast houses, to modern bungalows, detached, semi- detached and terraced houses. The predominant style in Egerton remains red brick with plain tile roofing, and some white weather boarding or hung clay tiles. Some of the farm houses, buildings and walls constructed with Kentish ragstone, are unique in their local distinctiveness.

3.4 The oldest surviving houses in the village date from about the 15th Century, but the presence of the Church with 13th Century origins clearly indicates that the settlement is older than it appears. The prominently sited long barrow (or tumulus) between Stonebridge Green Road and New Road indicates there was a Neolithic settlement here.

3.5 There are currently 84 listed buildings or structures of architectural interest in the Parish. More than 50 historic farmsteads in Egerton are listed on the Kent Historic Environment Record. The village centre was designated a conservation area in 1976 and contains 23 listed buildings (see Map 3, p 74).

3.6 On the Wealden clay area around and beyond Egerton Forstal there are many natural and man-made ponds, believed to have been dug out for clay. There is evidence of a Roman settlement, based on the finding of the remains of a charcoal- fired furnace to produce wrought iron from the iron ore in the clay and a cremation burial jar, as well as the remains of a Roman road near Bedlam Lane.

3.7 The scattering of dwellings indicates the importance of farming in the Parish, with homesteads built where the land was worked. Damp pasture on the Wealden Clays south of the village still support livestock grazing: richer soils on the better-drained Greensand Ridge support orchards and arable farming.

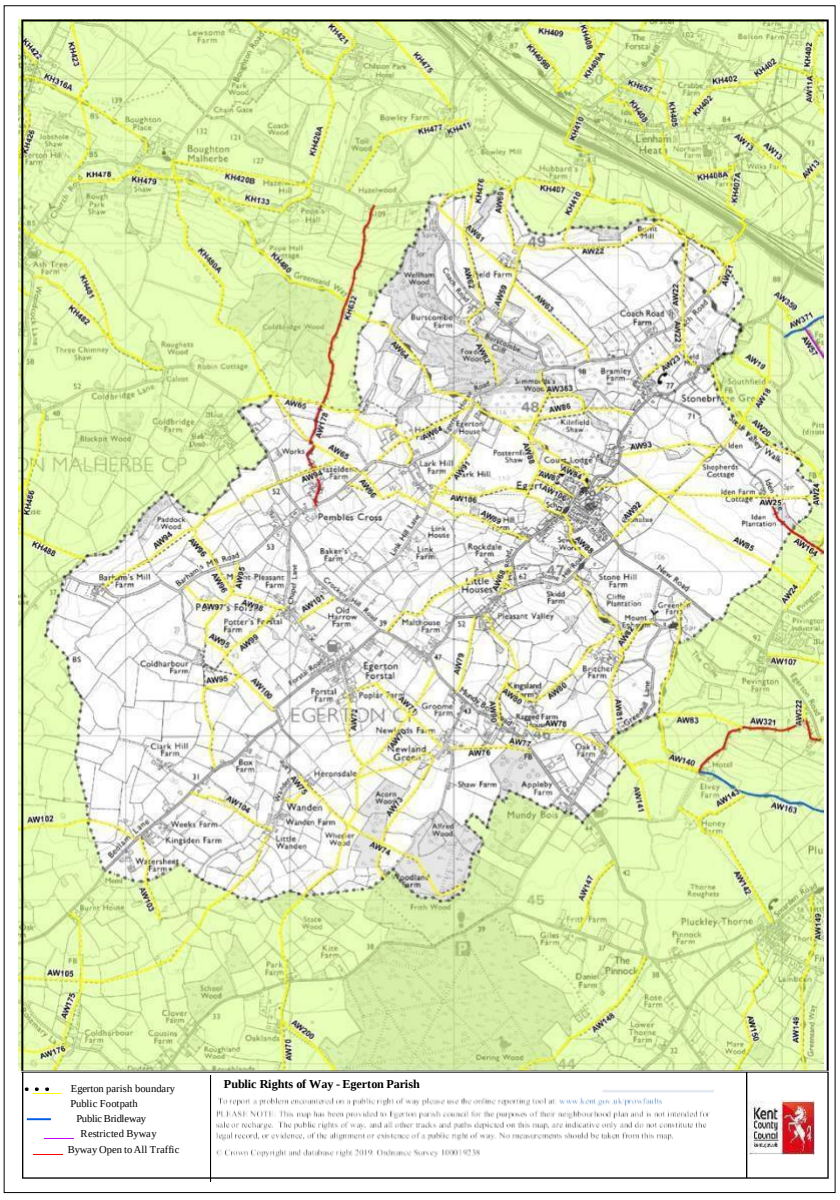
3.8 Much of the farmland is enclosed by mixed hedges and there are many ponds, ditches and streams that feed into nearby rivers. There are springs on the edge of the Greensand Ridge.

3.9 There are also significant areas of woodland, including ancient woodland at Foxden Wood, Welham Wood (Egerton House Road/Coach Road) and Acorn Wood (Newland Green Lane). In addition, there are about 30 individual Tree Preservation Orders, many of which are in the Egerton Conservation Area at the top of the village.

3.10 Kent Wildlife Trust lists several Local Wildlife Sites in Egerton which, although without the legal protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, are considered important for the protection of wildlife at the local level. These are Dering Wood, Wanden Meadows and School Wood, Egerton Forstal, Foxden Wood and Pasture at Pembles Cross. Wildlife sites may be in private ownership and therefore not open to the public unless crossed by Public Rights of Way.

[see maps of Local Wildlife Sites and of Ancient Woodland and Tree Preservation Orders, pages 77 and 78]

3.11 The parish is criss-crossed by about 40 Public Rights of Way (PRoW), mostly public footpaths with two byways open to all traffic. Kent County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the PRoW network is recorded, protected and maintained in partnership with the parish's Footpath Warden.



3.12 One of the striking characteristics of Egerton is that whilst it is dissected by many roads, these are minor highways and Egerton is not on a direct through route from one village to another. By contrast, Egerton is traversed by frequent ramblers who are walking along the Greensand Way that stretches for miles and crosses the parish. This renders it a peaceful and tranquil location, with no through vehicle traffic, making it one of the most desirable locations in which to live in Ashford borough. This is, however, a double-edged sword: the cost of housing in Egerton is significantly higher than in many other parts of the borough and is out of reach of many of the younger residents still living with their families and who wish to start out on their own.

3.13 The main population concentration is in the centre of the village, as are the church, shop, one of the inns, the school, the Millennium Hall and the garage. The lower part of Egerton, mainly in Egerton Forstal, is formed on Weald clay, where a 19th century Chapel is situated. Smaller communities in the parish include Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pembles Cross and Stonebridge Green and there are several part-ribbons of development as in Rock Hill Road and Crockenhill. Beyond the settlements lies open countryside, sporadically dotted with farms, cottages, farm buildings and conversions of farm buildings.

3.14 Most communities are just about within walking distance of the main village, on the road or by footpath. Public transport is very limited – only three buses a day to and from Ashford plus a term-time school bus to and from local secondary schools.



View of Egerton Forstal



View of Egerton from the South West

3.15 In 1801, the population was 731; in 1961, the population was 773; in 2011 it was 1,073; in 2013 it was 1,075. The average density is about 230 people per square mile, but this does not reflect the concentration of houses in a few settlement areas. The increase in population over the 50 years from 1961-2011 inevitably required an increase in both affordable and open market housing. Growth appears now to have slowed down, but the 2018 Housing Needs Survey (see paras. 7.22-4) indicates a need for some additional housing for older people, and affordable housing to allow younger people and families to stay in the village.

3.16 In October 2013 the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Evidence Project recorded Egerton's **housing stock** as compared with England averages:

- 278 detached houses = 67.3% of dwellings (England average = 22.3%)
- 132 semi-detached houses = 27.2% of dwellings (England average = 30.7%)
- 49 terraced houses = 10.1% of dwellings (England average = 24.6%)
- 18 flats = 3.7% of dwellings (England average = 23.1%)
- 8 mobile homes or other temporary accommodation = 1.6% of dwellings (England average = 0.4%).

3.17 The ACRE parish population statistics also showed some significant divergence from local and national averages, for example:

- 265 people over 65 = 24.9% (England average = 16.3%), and 65 single pensioner households = 14.8% (England average = 12.4%)
- above average owner occupation = 79.9% (England average = 64.1%) and house prices (10-15% above England average)
- above average vacant household space = 6.6% (England average = 4.3%)
- 30 households without cars = 6.6% (England average = 25.8%)
- all travel times to key public services significantly longer than Kent average
- more residents working from home than the England average = 10.9% of people aged 16-74 (England = 3.5%), and higher than average self- employment = 21.1% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 9.8%).

3.18 One of the priorities identified in the Egerton Parish Plan and illustrated by the considerably above-average number of larger, higher-priced detached dwellings and the above average number of older residents, was the need for more housing for local people - both for older people wishing to downsize and stay in the village, and for younger people and those with young families wishing to remain but not able to do so without affordable housing. The statistics also indicate the importance of working from home, and the resultant need for improved telecommunication systems and internet connection, and the paucity of public transport provision which has produced a dependency on private cars. The PRoW network provides important access and connectivity within the parish and, with improvement, could provide alternatives to local car journeys.

3.19 The Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Local Plan 2030 includes residential development for an indicative capacity of 15 units on a site in the north eastern edge of the village on New Road (Policy S30). In addition, an adjoining site became available through a gift of land to the Parish Council as a suitable site for the development of 8 dwellings for older or disabled people in the village who wish to downsize and live in accommodation more appropriate for their needs (see ENP Policy D5, p 61).

Economic Activity

3.20 Although most of the land is farmed, the number of Egerton residents working on the land is small. Ashford borough has the highest number (537) of agricultural holdings in the UK, covering 44,737 hectares and with 1,738 workers (not including the landowners/farmers). Kent overall has 2,714 agricultural holdings employing 12,957 people. Local employment opportunities may increase as diversification in agriculture leads to a greater emphasis on leisure and tourism, more B&B accommodation, and the conversion of farm buildings for wedding venues and/or catering and for permanent and holiday accommodation.

3.21 All businesses in the parish are small and most are family-owned. In addition to Egerton Stores and Post Office (currently closed), two garages, two inns (one closed) and engineering and fencing companies, there are several businesses involved in catering and tourism, and a significant number of sole traders and individuals working full or part time from home. Opportunities for employment for younger people within the parish are limited, but the community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates that there is a potential demand for local needs housing for younger people who wish to remain in the village while commuting to work or working from home.

3.22 The current status of Egerton Stores is uncertain, but the continuing existence of at least a Post Office and convenience shop and one of the inns is of increasing importance to the sustainability of village life over the next 20 years. Both Egerton Stores and The George (formerly The Barrow House) are listed as Assets of Community Value.

The Community

3.23 Egerton residents have a strong sense of community involvement. They have pride in, and enjoyment of, the beauty of the rural environment. This is evidenced in the Parish Plan Appendices giving survey results (see Evidence Base p 71) and the section on Community in the Parish Design Statement, published in 2009 (see Evidence). There are a number of clubs and societies with active memberships, as well as sports and health clubs which actively encourage involvement in sporting and other physical activities by people of all ages. In a three year cycle, volunteers from the village organise a Village Fete, a Music Festival and a Cricket Week.







Village Assets



3.24 The Millennium Hall, completed in 1999 with a combination of a Millennium Fund grant and funds raised by the village, acts as a venue for many village events as well as for external hire. Although in need of refurbishment, the Games Barn provides opportunities for indoor sport and well-being activities; and the Sports Pavilion not only provides a centre for the village sports clubs but also for other clubs and societies holding events or committee meetings.

Local Infrastructure

3.25 The village is currently raising funds to move the **pre-school** from its temporary home in the Millennium Hall to dedicated space within the grounds of the Church of England **Primary School**. There are no medical services in the village, the nearest being in the villages of Headcorn, Lenham and Charing. The **bus service** is extremely limited and the **road network** around the village is narrow and winding and in a poor state of repair. The **PRoW** network, with improvement, could provide some local, sustainable transport choices. Mobile **telephone coverage** is poor, although improvement is anticipated in the vicinity of Egerton Forstal with the installation of a new mast on Crockenhill Road/Forstal Road. High speed **broadband** coverage has improved considerably in recent years and it is hoped that Superfast broadband speeds can be achieved in some parts of the parish, to facilitate likely increases in home working over the period of the Plan. In terms of **utilities**, mains gas is only available in the centre of the village and in the Forstal and is unlikely to be extended. Where mains sewerage systems are available (in the centre of the village and in Egerton Forstal), they are already operating close to capacity. Additional development beyond the rural exception sites described in this Plan (see paras 7.28 and 7.29) could require Southern Water to obtain a new or extended Dry Weather Flow (DWF) permit from the Environment Agency.

3. 26 A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis undertaken in consultation with residents as part of the preparation of the Plan is included at Appendix 4.




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4



VISION AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Our vision for the future of Egerton is of a rural, relatively secluded community which retains its distinctive character, vitality and sustainability while responding sensitively to social, technical, economic and environmental change.

4.1 The vision and key objectives which follow have been developed after consultation with Egerton residents about their hopes and fears for the future of the village and the surrounding countryside. Egerton's Parish Plan also emerged from extensive consultation from 2013-16. Throughout 2017-21 the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have consulted on the vision and key objectives of Egerton's Neighbourhood Plan, both in workshops and open meetings and via the Neighbourhood Plan website, the ENP Facebook page and other social media.

4.2 Our **vision** for the future of Egerton combines the need:

- to **protect** and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents;
- to ensure that there is a **sustainable future** for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and
- to **develop** housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.

4.3 Our **key objectives** for future land use in Egerton are:

- to protect the local environment;
- to maximise the opportunities of the PRoW network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for health and well-being, tourism and local sustainable transport;
- to ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents; and
- to develop appropriate housing to meet local needs.

Protect

4.4 **Protection** of the overall quality of rural community life includes conservation and enhancement of:

- the distinctive rural, agricultural character of the village landscape that sets it apart from other parishes in the Ashford area, combining Greensand fruit farming in the upper part of the parish with mixed farmlands around Mundy Bois and extensive pasture for grazing on the Low Weald;
- the views and vistas both down from the village centre over the Kent Weald and up from the outlying communities towards Egerton;
- the PRoW network as a valuable resource that provides significant opportunities for both recreation and active travel;
- the conservation area at the heart of the village, its immediate environs and the existing overall settlement pattern of Egerton positioned at the top of a hill on the Greensand Ridge;
- the green spaces which enhance the setting and character of the existing built environment throughout the parish;
- heritage assets such as the church, the significant number and distribution of medieval and later timber frame buildings, Kentish ragstone houses, farm buildings and walls, oast-houses and more modern buildings that have character and prominence such as the Millennium Hall;
- the quality of the physical environment, including trees and deciduous woodland, remnants of former orchards, mixed hedgerows and wildlife.

Sustain

4.5 **Sustainability** of village life includes:

- ensuring that the Parish contains a mix of housing reflecting local needs and therefore increasing the provision of housing for young people, families and older residents;
- providing facilities to support older and disabled people wishing to remain in the community;
- support for the local services and businesses essential to the maintenance of village life such as the local school and pre-school, the shop, garages, inns;
- support for the rural economy, including agriculture, local businesses and individuals working from home;
- maintenance and improvement and more facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall, Games Barn, PRoW network and recreation ground;
- ensuring continuation of public transport connecting Egerton to other larger centres, of school bus services, and of community transport services such as Wealden Wheels and hospital car services;
- maximizing the PRoW and the Kent County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to contribute to sustainable development by providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open air recreation as well as alternative local transport.

Develop

4.6 Small-scale housing **development** and the infrastructure necessary to support it means:

- affordable, adaptable and smaller homes allowing younger people, older residents and/or families to stay in or return to the parish;
- small-scale local business premises;
- energy-efficient, sensitively laid-out development that conforms with the vernacular materials, density and models described in the Parish Design Statement;
- growth in keeping with the existing character in terms of size, layout, routeways, massing and materials;
- provision of essential services and utilities such as water, sewerage, drainage, high-speed broadband and adequate mobile phone signal.

5



PROTECTING AND CONSERVING EGERTON'S INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

"Please don't change too much. We love our village as it is."

This sentiment was voiced by one village resident during the early stage of consultation on the Egerton Parish Plan but was repeated over and over again by the majority of village residents in the course of consultation on both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan. It is the richness of the landscape with its combination of sweeping views, historic patterns of agriculture, scattered communities and the serene quality of the natural environment that gives the parish its distinctive landscape character so loved by residents. This abundant and varied landscape also provides a diverse habitat for wildlife.

Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity

5.1 In the Ashford Local Plan (2030), Policy ENV3a *Landscape Character and Design* identifies particular landscape characteristics, including; 'the pattern and composition of trees and woodland', 'the type and composition of wildlife habitats', field boundaries and 'the pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths'. Development is required to be designed to complement the landscape character. In accordance with Policy ENV3a, all new development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character which are identified in ENP Policy P1 (see p26).

5.2 The Greensand Ridge, with its national public footpath the Greensand Way, crosses the upper part of the parish, with significant views down over the Weald. Although not currently designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as are other stretches of the Greensand Way in Kent, the proposal from Maidstone Borough Council to extend AONB

protection from the Sevenoaks Commons to Ulcombe reinforces the environmental significance of the Greensand Way right across Kent and is strongly supported by Egerton residents and Egerton Parish Council, on their behalf.

5.3 The Conservation Area at the centre of the main settlement is already recognised and protected as of 'special architectural and historic interest' by Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Policy ENV14.

5.4 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent and its development over time. Many elements in Egerton's landscape go back to medieval times, and field boundaries and hedgerows have often survived Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the post-medieval period. However, in common with the rest of the country, there has been a loss of hedgerows locally over the past 60 years. The relatively small fields that are bordered by hedgerows and veteran trees present an attractive patchwork landscape which is enhanced further for public enjoyment by an extensive pattern of over 40 footpaths. The tracts of ancient woodland and natural springs, ponds, ditches and grass verges provide the habitat for an abundance of wildlife.

5.5 Ashford Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), June 2009, identifies Egerton as a hilltop settlement on the Greensand Ridge. The LCA also categorises parts of the parish as:

Egerton – Pluckley Greensand Fruit belt, key features of which are the Greensand Ridge, pasture within sheltered valleys and arable land on higher, more open ground, scarp face of the Greensand Ridge which overlooks the landscape to the south, mosaic field pattern with fields of different shapes and sizes, fruit orchards enclosed by shelterbelts within small and regular fields, scattered pockets of broadleaf woodland and chestnut coppice, historic hilltop settlements of Pluckley and Egerton centred around ragstone churches, distinctive architectural detailing with 'Dering' windows and chequered brickwork.

Smarden Bell Farmlands character area including Egerton Forstal, key features of which are flat to gently undulating, mixed land use, varied field pattern, hedgerow enclosed pasture with oak hedgerow trees, remnant orchards, plantations, large arable fields, field ponds, traditional timber framed buildings, converted farm buildings, recent housing and static caravans.

Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland characterized by gently undulating landform as part of the foreground to the Greensand Ridge, fields set within a framework of native hedgerows, regular and frequently spaced hedgerow trees, narrow hedge and ditch lined lanes, and large traditional and often converted buildings scattered along lanes and clustered around junctions.

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland and that these areas should be protected. Some ancient woodland may represent the only link with the original post-glacial 'wildwood' and is more likely to contain vulnerable animal and plant species than any other habitat. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands – bluebells, wood anemones, ramsons (wild garlic) – all of which provide havens for insects and bees - and the bird song of warblers and nightingales are part of the natural beauty and heritage of the parish, and are rapidly disappearing elsewhere. Much of the valued woodland wildlife, invertebrates, lichens and fungi are associated with old trees, deadwood or open ground and are generally restricted to ancient woods and wood pasture but field boundaries and margins can also be a useful sanctuary for plants and creatures.



5.7 Grass verges, springs, streams and ponds, woodland, orchards and hedgerows add to the rural character of the Parish and to the setting of the dispersed settlements, businesses and residential dwellings. The felling of trees or removal of copses, hedgerows and other natural habitats for development could change the amenity and natural environment of the area, and seriously affect wildlife habitats.



5.8 Alongside its numerous lanes, many of which are enclosed by hedges and banks, Egerton has a large number of wide grass verges, some with ditches containing wildflowers in abundance depending on time of year such as primrose (primula vulgaris), cowslip (primula veris), lesser celandine (ficaria verna), bluebell (hyacinthoides non-scripta), cuckoo flower (cardamine pratensis), yarrow (achillea millefolium), cow parsley/wild chervil (anthriscus sylvestris) and wild garlic (allium ursinum). Examples of wide grass verges are listed in Appendix 1.

5.9 These wide grass verges in the parish are significant as they contribute to the distinctive character of the environment and provide an essential habitat for wildlife, especially those with ditches. These should be maintained carefully to take away excess water from the highway, alleviate the effects of flooding in times of heavy rainfall, and contribute to the watercourses that feed rivers such as the Sherway to the south of the Parish and tributaries leading to the Upper Stour which starts just a few miles west of the parish and flows through the northern part of the parish (see Appendix 1).



5.10 The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that all new development is sensitive to the individual character and richness of Egerton's landscape, preserving and enhancing specified distinctive features and biodiversity. The large number of ponds, the arable field margins and traditional orchards not only contribute to landscape character but are recognised by Natural England as priority habitats for species such as the great crested newt and dormouse, and are essential to the biodiversity of the parish. Development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the biodiversity and landscape character of the site and surrounding areas. This should be through green infrastructure plans that include the provision of green spaces, suitable planting of native trees, creating ponds, preserving natural boundaries and ensuring the protection of features that already exist to provide shelter for wildlife, whilst also generating harmony between development and nature. Green corridors will need to be preserved or created to ensure that wildlife has a continued safe haven. This is ever more important in view of the loss of wildlife habitats locally, nationally and universally – and in recognition of the positive part played by the natural environment in sustaining the world's ecosystems and in mitigating the effects of climate change (see also ENP Policies D7 and D8, pp 66 & 70). Opportunities to create a community woodland and wildflower meadows will be explored (see Community Aspiration, p 69) to increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity with the additional benefit to all residents now and in the future.







Egerton NP Policy P1 - Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity

1. **All new development should conserve and if possible enhance the landscape, safeguard the scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character. Egerton areas of distinctive character have been identified as follows and are shown on Map 10 on page 84:**

   a) **The Greensand Ridge and Greensand Way**
   b) **the Conservation Area at the centre of the main settlement**
   c) **ancient woodland, hedgerows and orchards**
   d) **the dispersed settlement pattern over the Greensand Ridge, its slopes and the Low Weald**
   e) **field patterns dating from medieval times, surrounded by native hedging and crossed by ancient stone pathways, sunken tracks and bridleways, reflecting the combination of Greensand fruit belt, Pluckley Mixed Farmland and Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland which straddle Egerton and other parishes.**

2. **All new development should conserve and enhance landscape features of historic and environmental significance. These have been identified as the sunken lanes listed below which are shown on Map 10 on page 84:**
   a) **Egerton House Road,**
   b) **Greenhill,**
   c) **Stone Hill,**
   d) **Stonebridge Green,**
   e) **Pembles Cross, and**
   f) **Field Mill to the boundary of Charing Heath.**

3. **Development proposals should seek to include measures which will promote and enhance biodiversity, for example by safeguarding existing habitats, by including appropriate landscaping schemes and by maintaining wildlife corridors.**

4. **Development proposals that have the potential to result in damage to or loss of woodland habitats and wide grass verges or result in the loss of protected ancient trees, ancient woodland, veteran trees or hedgerows and which cause an adverse impact on biodiversity, which cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for, or which harm the locality's special qualities, will not be supported (see also ENP P2).**

Trees, Woodland and Hedges

5.11 Ashford borough is the most wooded borough in Kent, and Egerton parish contains several woods and narrow strips of woodland, called shaws.

5.12 Egerton benefits from several significant tracts of woodland high up on the Greensand Ridge: Welham Wood, Foxden Wood, Simmonds Wood, and shaws such as Kinfield Shaw and Iden Plantation. On the Low Weald there is Acorn Wood, Alfred Wood, Frith Wood and Wheeler Wood. The predominant trees are pedunculate (English) oaks but there are also ash, birch, sweet and horse chestnut, black poplar and beech. Willow grows in the wetter low-lying areas.

5.13 The Woodland Trust has an ancient and veteran tree inventory that shows: a veteran pendunculate oak in Newland Green Lane; a veteran hawthorn and notable red horse chestnut in the Recreation Ground; two veteran yews, a veteran ash, a notable horse chestnut and common beech in the Churchyard; and in Foxden Wood, a veteran ash, a veteran sweet chestnut, and notable variegated sycamore, holly, sweet chestnut and common ash. *Tree Preservation Orders* (TPOs) legally protect a *tree* or group of *trees* to prevent them from being heavily pruned or cut down. They keep and protect woodland, individual trees or groups of trees which add to the appearance and character of the locality. There are several Tree Preservation Orders in place within Egerton: All trees in Frith Wood; a swathe above Stone Hill Barn, 11 along the footpath off the Street between Stisted Way and the Glebe, 6 along Mundy Bois Road near the junction with Newland Green Lane, 6 at the lower end of Greenhill Lane, 2 along the track off the Street and 2 in Rock Hill road opposite Old School Court (see Map 6, p76) .

5.14 Hedges in Egerton represent decisions taken by our ancestors over hundreds of years, planted as a result of the enclosures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although some new hedges have been planted or replaced more recently. They indicate land ownership and administrative boundaries, assist with livestock management, provide shelter for farm animals and crops, and once would have been a source of timber and fuel. Most of the hedges in Egerton provide wildlife corridors across the landscape, linking small woodlands and other wildlife habitats. The older hedges consist of a variety of trees: field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, wild rose and hazel. They can harbour many different species of creatures, especially where dense with a bushy base. These include wood mice, shrews, voles, slow worms, and a variety of birds, caterpillars and insects. Trees that have been allowed to grow in the hedges are a characteristic feature of the Low Weald such as in Egerton Forstal, Wanden and Mundy Bois. Most of these trees are oak and ash.

5.15 Trees and hedges are critical for the future of the planet and for our own wellbeing, health and happiness. In just one day, a single tree provides enough oxygen for four people. From the air we breathe to the water we drink, trees are vital to life on earth. They can also:

- reduce air pollution
- absorb CO2 from the atmosphere
- give us shade and shelter
- guard us against flooding
- enhance the attractiveness of an individual house or neighbourhood
- create vital homes for wildlife

5.16 Strategically-placed tree planting where there are few trees can make a huge impact on the character and quality of an area. It can also contribute to the mitigation of the impacts of climate change by helping cool those parts of Egerton that are more built-up.

5.17 Most of the woodland in and around Egerton has, historically, been coppiced. When undertaken correctly, coppicing creates both natural regeneration from the cut trees and a variety of habitats to support animal and insect life. The continued practice of coppicing should therefore be encouraged as the preferred method of woodland management both for its economic and environmental value.

5.18 In order to sustain the unique character, beauty and overall environment of the parish, not only should tree planting schemes be included in all new development plans but also, and in line with national and local policy, additional tree planting throughout the parish will be encouraged as a means of providing locally-sourced renewable energy and carbon offset resources (see also Community Aspiration – Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadows, p68).

5.19 Recent research by The Ash Project, The Woodland Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust and other bodies indicates that we may lose as much as 80% of all ash trees, and that the impact of ash dieback could be five times as severe as that of Dutch elm disease. This reinforces the need for a more proactive approach to tree planting and improved woodland management across the parish.

5.20 The purpose of policy P2, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Natural England Standing Advice, BS5837:2012 is to preserve ancient woodland, individually important trees and hedgerows for their contribution to the character of the parish (see Map 6, p 76). The policy also seeks improved woodland and hedgerow management and new planting as a means of responding to the climate emergency, providing wildlife habitats and contributing to human well-being.

Egerton NP Policy P2 – Trees, hedges and woodland

1. **Any new development should include tree and/or hedge planting of native species, and additions to existing planting to ensure succession. All development proposals should seek to enhance the biodiversity of the site and avoid or mitigate against damage to existing trees and/or hedges. The loss of ancient trees, veteran trees, trees that are subject to Tree Protection Orders, Conservation Area trees, trees that are of good arboricultural and amenity value, or loss of native hedges, will not be supported.**

2. **Proposals should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value, allowing for the extent of tree roots and canopy spread which must be protected.**

3. **Proposals should be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and any hedges on or bordering the site and ensures that:**
   a) **there is no loss of ancient woodland and no net loss of woods and trees in general;**
   b) **any felled trees are replaced by native amenity trees giving colour, texture and year-round interest on a 3 to 1 ratio in a suitable position; and**
   c) **there is no loss of native hedges except for necessary access points; green spaces with new native hedging should be included in site design and layout to compensate for any loss.**

Local Green Space Policy and Designation

5.21 Protecting and conserving the green spaces which enhance the setting and distinctive character of the existing built environment throughout the parish is one of the key objectives of this Plan.

5.22 There is no single national definition of green space; it can consist of a wide range of land including public parks, sports and recreational areas, allotments, cemeteries and areas with nature conservation importance. Examples of types of green space include land with sports pavilions, boating lakes, land around war memorials, allotments or spaces that provide a tranquil oasis. National guidance and Local Plan policies seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure to help link local green spaces as a means to support healthy lifestyles and to enhance the local environment. The NPPF provides local communities with the opportunity to designate areas that are demonstrably special to the local community as Local Green Space.

5.23 A long list of green spaces (see Appendix 1), considered to reflect the individual open green character of the parish landscape and which provide wildlife habitats and have local amenity value, was drawn up by the Steering Group after consultation with the community at open meetings and through the Neighbourhood Plan web site and social media. After consultation with the landowners, the list included some land that is in private ownership, since there are small fields or paddocks that create useful gaps of green space between existing development that add to the landscape character. The community believes these provide important visual value and should not be used for infill development. Other open spaces on the long list act as informal or formal recreational amenity space to the adjoining residential development as well as provide good sight lines for traffic or safe havens and should be retained.

5.24 The long list was evaluated by the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service and reduced to three sites considered to meet the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (paras. 101-103). All three meet the key objective to maintain and improve facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall, Games Barn and recreation field (see maps p 75) and are accessible by Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to support health and well-being and to avoid dependence on private vehicles:

- The Glebe, The Street – designated principally for its recreational value to the community;
- Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road, the Upper Recreation Ground comprising the cricket and football pitches – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community
- Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community.

5.25 In addition, village opinion was strongly in favour of including Pembles Cross and Stonebridge Green in the policy listing for their historic and amenity value.

- Pembles Cross is a sloping green island, providing a semi-wild oasis for wildlife and a resting spot for pedestrians and cyclists, offering far-reaching views over field hedges up towards Bakers Farm, the late medieval Old Harrow farmhouse and Pleasant Valley. It includes a stream, seasonally changing wildflowers, a large ash tree and a substantial oak bench made by a local craftsman.





- Stonebridge Green is a triangular island containing the heritage K6 red telephone kiosk and a traditional cast iron signpost. It faces the former Good Intent Inn, now affordable local housing managed by Egerton Housing Association, with views to the North Downs.

5.26 The purpose of this policy is to designate local green spaces which are demonstrably special to the local community.

Egerton NP Policy P3 - Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Space as defined on the inset maps contained at Map 4 on page 75 :

a. The Glebe, The Street
b. Green Space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road
c. Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road
d. Pembles Cross
e. Stonebridge Green

Proposals for development at the sites identified on the inset maps at Map 4 as designated Local Green Spaces will be considered in line with national planning policy on Green Belts. Proposals which would result in loss of all or part of any designated Green Space will not be supported.

Key Views and Vistas

5.27 The parish as a whole is scenic: attractive views of the surrounding landscape can be seen from most roads, lanes and footpaths. A central focus for many of the key views is the Grade 1 listed Church of St James. The height of buildings is normally maintained at two storeys to ensure there is no adverse impact on key views (see also Policy D2, p 52).

5.28 Through Neighbourhood Plan workshops, website and other media, local people identified a number of notable and uninterrupted views from footpaths and open spaces across the Parish both to the Weald and the North Downs towards the main village and its hamlets – for example, dramatic views can be gained from the Greensand Ridge over the Weald below, notably near Egerton House, from the recreation ground and between Stone Hill House and Greenhill, where the sense of leafy openness is enormous. The findings in our workshops highlighted residents' strong opinions about the importance and need for protection of these shared publicly available views. The most significant are listed in Policy P4 for protection (see Maps and photographs, p79).

5.29 The purpose of this policy is to conserve and enhance certain key views outside the built settlements which contribute to the distinctive character of the parish or which are of historic or environmental significance. All views listed in Policy P4 have been assessed against criteria suggested by Historic England for their topographical significance, their green and/or architectural characteristics and their unique/focal features. They are sweeping panoramic views, with largely uninterrupted lines of sight beyond open foregrounds, and show the historic field and hedge patterns with very little visible development. They are summarized as follows:

Court Lodge Farm to Charing/North Downs - The gently sloping pasture and orchards fall away to sweeping pastoral views across the Upper Stour valley and to the distinctive ridge of the North Downs beyond. The panorama is completed by views across farmland and orchards to the east and south.

New Road to Greenhill/The Weald - Tree and hedge-lined lanes open up to reveal a sweeping panorama, taking in the Greensand Ridge and the outskirts of Pluckley to the South East, and the extensive and largely flat landscape of green pastures and woodland that characterises the Low Weald stretching towards Tenterden to the South. Distant views here extend up to thirty miles to the crests of the South Downs, near Hastings, with the compressed view in between deceptively appearing to be uninterrupted woodlands with little visible built development or human imprint.

New Road to the North Downs - Sloping down over arable, and grazing land with an orchard, to the valley of the River Stour, can be seen a sign of an early prehistoric community, the Bowl Barrow, a funerary monument dated between 2400 to 1500BC. The land rises from the valley to a view of the North Downs and, just visible, the line of the Pilgrim's Way.

Mundy Bois Road to the village/church - The northerly view from the Mundy Bois Road encompasses a farming landscape, with grazing cattle and sheep, that gently rises towards the Greensand Way and the ridge beyond. A variety of waterfowl species visit the lakes nestled between woodland with the Egerton church tower in the view above.

Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge– a far-reaching view across lowland pasture, often with its cattle and sheep immersed in low-level mist at dawn and dusk, yet revealing the distant Greensand Ridge in sharp focus with its contrasting orchards and woodland across several parishes.
Egerton House over the Weald – At almost the highest part of the village, and the start of two of the many footpaths in the Parish. A vast far-reaching view over the Weald in the direction of Ulcombe and Royal Tunbridge Wells, an area which was once heavily wooded but is now mainly pasture. An excellent point to stand and watch the sun set over the vast panorama of the Weald.
Link Hill to Pembles Cross/ The Weald - The ancient country lane descends from the Greensand Ridge, through a landscape characterised by tree fringed fields and mature woodlands, with only occasional glimpses of isolated farm buildings and secluded homesteads. The sequence of interrelated views encompasses the gentle folds of the Greensand Ridge to the North West, more distant open aspects to the South West across the Low Weald to Headcorn and to Cranbrook in the High Weald beyond, and some long distance uninterrupted views to Romney Marsh to the South East.
Elm Close and Recreation Ground to the Weald – a unique panoramic view over many miles of the Kentish Weald, with uninterrupted views beyond Sissinghurst Castle of historic field patterns, hedgerows and trees, and clearly showing the historic pattern of settlement.

Egerton NP Policy P4 - Key Views and Vistas

1. **Development proposals should protect, and where possible, positively contribute to the following views and vistas. These views and vistas are shown on the photographs and inset maps at Map 9 at pages 81-83:**

   a) **Court Lodge Farm to Charing/North Downs**
   b) **New Road to Greenhill/ The Weald**
   c) **New Road to the North Downs**
   d) **Mundy Bois Road to the village/church**
   e) **Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge**
   f) **Egerton House over the Weald**
   g) **Link Hill to Pembles Cross**
   h) **Elm Close and the Recreation Ground to the Weald**

2. **The Grade 1 Listed Parish Church of St James is a focus for many key views towards and within the village. Any new development should be sensitive to this and avoid obscuring this significant landmark.**

Heritage

5.30 The historic centre of Egerton is designated as a Conservation Area as shown on Map 3 (see p 73). The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements. Ashford Local Plan (2030) - Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas states that development should not jeopardise important views into or out of the conservation area.

5.31 Historic England lists two Scheduled Monuments in the Egerton parish;

Bowl Barrow 350m south-east of Egerton church
List entry: 1012266
National Grid Reference: TQ91106 47350

Paddocks within the boundaries of Coldbridge Farm (medieval moated site, fishpond and paddock boundary)
List entry: 1013125
National grid reference: TQ 88375 47545, TQ 88494 47908

There is one Grade I listed building;
Church of St. James
List Entry: 1071496
National Grid Reference: TQ 90815 47556

There are numerous Grade II listed buildings, mainly houses in the parish, but three additional entries have been listed for protection;

Wall and gate piers to churchyard, Church of St. James
List Entry: 1071497
National Grid Reference: TQ 90835 47537

Mounting Block, opposite Rock Hill House
List Entry: 1319909
TQ 90466 47209

K6 Telephone Kiosk, Stonebridge Green
List Entry: 1275166
TQ 91196

5.32 A number of other sites/objects in the archaeological heritage and historic landscape have been identified and reinforce the historic pattern of settlement. For example, a Roman road crosses the south of the parish; a 2nd Century AD cremation burial was found to the west of Potters Forstal with Romano-British pottery sherds; a series of rectilinear cropmarks to the south of Field Farm may be prehistoric in date; a late Mesolithic 'Thames Pick' was found at Kingsland Farm in 1966; a polished Neolithic adze was found in 1968 near Stonebridge Green and numerous iron age coins have been found across the parish. In the post-medieval and modern period there are indications of a possible moated manor site at Wanden and a smock mill at New Stone Farm. There is also a designated site on Bedlam Lane where a Hawker Hurricane crashed during the 2nd World War and which is under the protection of the Military Remains Act 1986.

5.33 The ENP steering group organised a village workshop in the summer of 2018 to identify any additional 'heritage' sites and features that residents felt were worthy of protection. The list obtained from the workshop, and in subsequent consultation, identified buildings and heritage assets that are currently not on the Ashford Borough statutory list and which are proposed as non-designated Parish Heritage Assets in addition to those buildings or features already protected as Listed Buildings. These have local significance for their historic, archaeological and architectural interest and their contribution to the communal life of the parish. The list has been assessed using Historic England guidelines (Historic England Advice Note 7, Local Heritage Listing) and was endorsed by residents in November 2019. The list will be reviewed by EPC every 5-7 years as there are a number of potential historic assets from the modern era that need investigation as well as assets as yet unknown.

5.34 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection of both designated and non-designated local heritage assets.

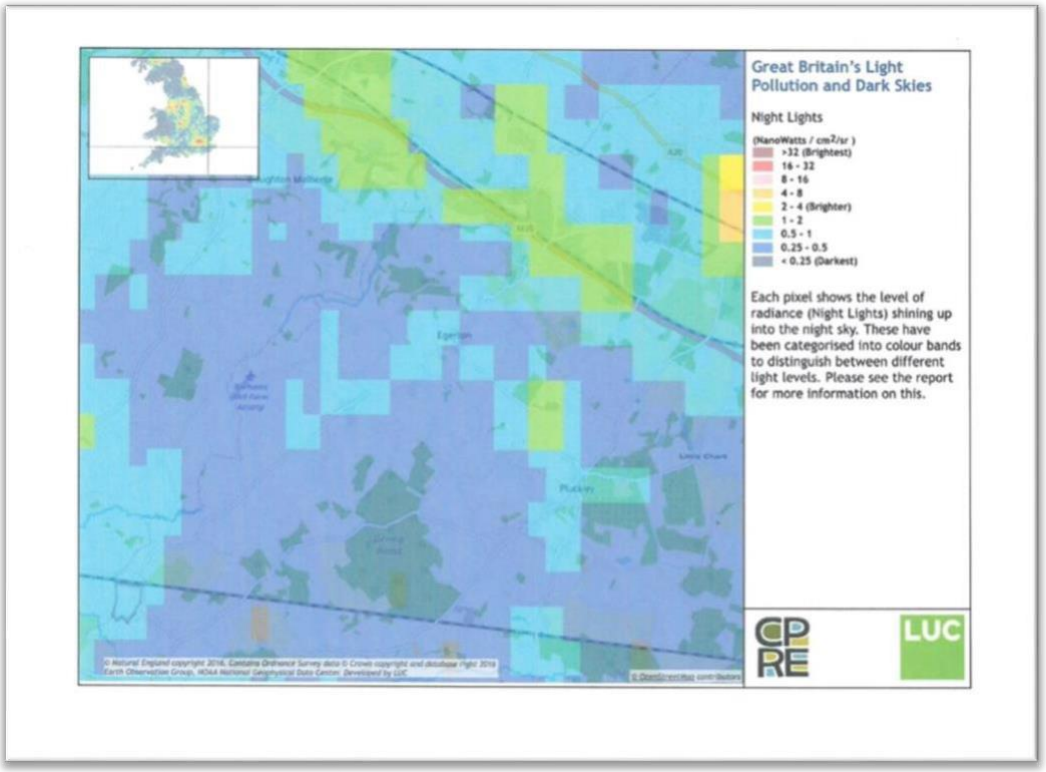
Egerton NP Policy P5 - Local Heritage Assets

1. **Proposals for new development in the Plan area should preserve or enhance the existing designated heritage assets and their settings.**
2. **Such proposals should also preserve or enhance the non-designated heritage assets which are listed at Appendix 2 at page 86 and, where appropriate, the setting of those assets.**

Light Pollution – Conserving our Dark Skies

5.35 Dark skies benefit both people and wildlife. Dark skies are a special quality of Ashford Borough – the darkest skies in Kent are above us but they are still not the darkest skies in the country. They are generally defined as skies relatively free of light pollution where you can see a clear starry sky and importantly, our own galaxy the Milky Way, stretching as a ribbon of faint stars across the sky. Sadly, in the last few decades the South East of England has suffered a decline in dark skies quality; dark skies have gradually brightened as urban development and the population grows. The Ashford Local Plan 2030 also recognises the need to minimise the impact of lighting schemes in policy ENV4 Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies. All new development should conform to policy ENV4 and to the appropriate 'Environmental Zone' (E1 or E2) in para. 9.51 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

5.36 In recent years, the areas across Egerton that benefit from really dark sky have reduced. This is due to the effects of more development around us, which tends to bring more lighting, outside and inside, adversely affecting our own local environment. Nevertheless it is the case that most of the uninhabited parts of Egerton are in the second-to-lowest category for light pollution (see map below) and there is still scope to make some efforts to minimise the impact of lighting in our localised area. Wasted light is wasted energy and, in the interests of both energy conservation and preservation of dark skies, policy P6 will apply across the Parish. In addition the Parish Council will encourage residents to reduce light pollution with measures that can be taken at home including switching off lights when not needed, use of proximity sensors and closing curtains at night.



© **English Nature and The Ordnance Survey**

5.37 The purpose of this policy is to identify measures which will protect as far as possible Egerton's current dark skies from further light pollution and diminution of the dark skies already reduced by surrounding development. There will be a presumption against proposals that detrimentally affect the tranquility of the area including through unnecessary lighting that results in the loss of night time dark skies or causes intrusion to neighbours and wildlife.

Egerton NP Policy P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies

1. **Proposals for new development in the Plan area should be accompanied by a proposed lighting scheme which meets the requirements set out in Policy ENV4 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan and the guidance contained in the Borough Council's 'Dark Skies' SPD.**

2. **Development proposals in the main settlement areas of Egerton and Egerton Forstal should seek to avoid the use of external lighting unless it is required for security and health and safety reasons, in order to avoid increased light pollution and a further reduction in the dark skies in those areas. Where external lighting is necessary for the reasons stated, lamps should be of 500 lumens or less for domestic purposes and are installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of lighting.**

3. **In all other parts of the Plan area, external lighting schemes should only include lamps of 500 lumens or less for domestic purposes and only use lamps above that level where required for agricultural use or security and where they are installed in suitable fixtures which prevent the upward spillage of light. All external lighting should be installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of light.**

6



ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EGERTON

Background

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that 'the vitality of rural communities' is essential to sustainable development. As set out in more detail in earlier sections, Egerton is a village of small, scattered communities in a distinctive landscape. Population numbers have fluctuated over the period of census data collection, but village life in a relatively inaccessible location has continued to thrive and to retain a mix of long-established farming families and incomers, still capable of sustaining the primary school and pre-school, a shop and post office, an inn and garage alongside other local businesses.

6.2 The beauty and variety of Egerton's topography, and its seclusion, explains in part the scattered communities, its continuing attraction to incomers and why it is different from many other rural villages with a more homogeneous topographical and settlement pattern. Renewable energy and climate change impacts on environmental sustainability are included in pages 68-69 and in Policy D8. The present and future sustainability of the parish is, however, dependent less on the physical environment than on the spirit of community that has long been recognised as being particularly active and vibrant. In the recent past, the village won Ashford's Community of the Year in 1995, was the winner for Southern and South East England in the Regional Village of the Year Competition in 2001 and was runner up in the National Village of the Year Competition in 2001.

6.3 The range of social, cultural, educational and sporting activities taking place in the village and attracting participants from the surrounding communities is widely considered to be exceptional (see Evidence Base, p71 and www.egertonkent.co.uk). Many of the clubs and societies are well established, well financed and supported by local fund-raising events and volunteers from within the village. They provide education, social gatherings, sport, health and well-being and entertainment for the local community. Their sustainability over the next twenty years is enhanced by the buildings and recreational spaces where these activities take place, provided that these are well maintained and/or enhanced to respond to changing needs. This spirit of involvement and community is also reflected in the groups and individuals who run community initiatives such as the Egerton Over-Sixties Club, Neighbourhood Watch, ~~Community First Responders and Egerton Friends (which raises funds for village causes).~~

6.4 The continuing existence in the village of a shop and post office, a pub and a garage, will also be essential to the sustainability of the village over the period of this plan, as will the maintenance of bus services to Ashford and the free 'home to school' bus service for secondary school students to Ashford, Tenterden and Lenham. Without these local services there is a risk that dependence on privately owned cars will not only cause environmental damage but will squeeze out lower income families which will, in turn, result in higher house prices and a further imbalance of age groups and income levels in the community. The housing needs survey undertaken in 2018 identified the need for additional local housing for lower income families and individuals (see paras. 7.22-24).

6.5 Provision of housing to meet this need will go some way to offset economic imbalances in the community. In addition, economic opportunities exist in the community in areas outside the traditional agricultural activities and related services - for example there has been modest growth in catering and accommodation for rural tourism, providing local employment and work experience.

6.6 New technologies (including the provision of high-speed broadband) will also allow a greater degree of home-working and help to offset the economic threats to rural communities in the 21st century. Improvements in both mobile phone and high- speed broadband coverage need to focus on assistance for local people and local businesses to ensure that they can adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

Local Services and Businesses Essential to Sustaining Village Life

6.7 Local businesses directly serving the community and providing local employment include 2 pubs and 2 garages. The George's location at the centre of the main settlement makes it a natural focus for certain village activities and for tourists and other visitors. The pub is listed as an Asset of Community Value and, after a recent change of ownership, has re-opened as The George, its original name, rather than The Barrow House. The loss of the Queens Arms as a pub will be a blow to Egerton Forstal. Questions as to its future use will need very careful consideration. The Rose & Crown lies just outside the parish boundary (the pub car park is in Egerton Parish), but the pub itself is a natural part of the Mundy Bois settlement and as such is an important element in the sustainability of one of Egerton's outlying communities. Also important to Egerton's sustainability are the weekly Farmers' Market and Pluckley Farm Shop. Egerton Post Office and Stores has been closed by its present owners pending its sale.

6.8 Other businesses based locally and contributing to the practicalities of sustainable daily life in a rural environment include the garage, building, carpentry, house painting, plumbing, engineering, fencing, hedging and gardening. Health and well-being is also well

served with locally based businesses providing services such as physiotherapy, osteopathy and yoga; while residents can also call on Egerton-based insurance and accountancy services or web design and printing.

Education

6.9 At present there is both pre-school and primary school provision in Egerton. In a survey conducted for the Parish Plan in 2015, 87% of all respondents felt it was essential for the wellbeing of the village to sustain the primary school and the pre-school which feeds into it. Currently the pre-school meets every morning in the Millennium Hall but the relocation of the pre-school, which would enhance its functionality and role, was also considered a priority in the Parish Plan. On the initiative of the Egerton Parish Council, planning consent for a new purpose built facility has already been granted and it is anticipated that, once suitable funding has been obtained, a new building to house the pre-school will be constructed on the primary school site within the next 3 to 4 years. In the event of successful delivery of the Orchard Nurseries site (see Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton), construction of the new pre-school will be the first project to receive funds from the income generated.

Community Aspiration – Egerton Pre-school

Construction on the Egerton Church of England Primary School site of a purpose-built building to house the Egerton Pre-school, based on the planning consent already acquired and subject to funding from the Orchard Nurseries project or other sources.

6.10 Re-location to the primary school site will enable the pre-school to operate in both the mornings and afternoons, which it is unable to do at its present location, and also free up the Millennium Hall for other community uses. The Hall's position with far-reaching views has an attraction for outside organisations running events and release of the space used by the pre-school is expected to generate additional income. The Church of England Primary School has received an overall good rating at its most recent inspection and is highly rated by families within and outside the village. Their current and, in the case of the pre-school, proposed locations at the centre of the main village settlement provide both an essential service within the community and an important opportunity for social connection between families from different parts of the parish.

6.11 Most students at secondary level travel by bus or car to Tenterden, Ashford, Lenham or possibly Maidstone on a daily basis. The continued provision by Kent County Council of free school buses is essential to the sustainability of a rural community where the nearest secondary schools are considerably over the 3-mile limit beyond which 'home to school' transport is currently provided free of charge in most cases.

Rural Economy

6.12 The current range of business activities in Egerton is listed in the Evidence Base. Whilst some aspects of traditional agriculture are under threat, and the post- Brexit economic viability of small-scale farming enterprises is unclear, there are opportunities both to change farming practices and in diversification. Farm buildings may be converted either to provide accommodation and catering for rural tourists who may also take advantage of local activities and services, or into small scale business premises (see Policy D6, p64).

6.13 **Working from home** is expected to play an increasingly important role in a wide range of business activities and provides opportunities in rural communities for parents with young children, as well as individuals, who do not have either the means or the time to commute. There is therefore a requirement not only that all the new small scale developments listed in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirements outlined in policy EMP6 in the Ashford 2030 Plan on the Promotion of Fibre, Fibre To The Premises (FTTP), but also that FTTP, or acceptable alternatives providing speeds in excess of 24Mbps, should be available to all dwellings in all parish settlements.

Maintenance and Enhancement of Village Facilities

6.14 Safe places for residents of all ages are essential to sustain village clubs and societies, the health and well-being of all residents and to respond to future need. Village facilities (not including registered Assets of Community Value) include the Millennium Hall and its possible extension, the Games Barn, the Sports Pavilion and playing fields, recreation areas for younger children and St James' Church and the Chapel with Sunday School. Enhancement of some of these facilities, and a review of how to maximise use of the traditional buildings sympathetically, would provide additional space for both recreational activities and social activities for residents of all ages.

6.15 Community consultation both for the Parish Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan identified a need to protect **the Millennium Hall** and to improve and develop the existing building to facilitate additional space for village activities. If a change of location for the Pre-school is achieved, then medium scale modification to the existing layout and construction of additional room/s could help not only to alleviate the large demand for use of the Hall but possibly allow day-time commercial hire. The Hall is a vital amenity for the community and the income received allows the Hall to be self-funding currently. Any development would need a village fundraising initiative, but this ultimately could provide opportunities for further income generation and therefore help sustain this facility for the future. Some £10,000 has already been raised for this purpose (see Parish Plan).

Images below of The Millennium Hall, the Games Barn, the Sports Pavilion, the village shop and The George Inn (formerly The Barrow House).











6.16 The purpose of this policy is to protect key community facilities which host locally generated activities and are essential to the future sustainability of the rural community.

Egerton NP Policy S1 - Community Facilities

1. **Proposals for the development of new community facilities in the Plan area will be supported where they comply with the relevant policies in the adopted Ashford Local Plan for the protection of the environment, biodiversity and heritage assets and where the development is designed to meet community needs in accordance with Policy COM1 of the adopted Local Plan.**
2. **The principal existing community facilities in the Plan area are:**

   The Millennium Hall

   The Games Barn

   The Sports Pavilion

   The Barrow House (now The George) Inn - a registered Asset of Community Value.

The MUGA

6.17 There has been interest in developing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) that could accommodate the sports of 5-a-side football, tennis, netball, basketball and walking football (a sport steering towards the older generation). This would complement the existing sports facilities in Egerton and provide an excellent all year round surface that could also complement the school curriculum. The Egerton Village MUGA Project, in memory of Josh Wilkinson, consulted the Egerton Parish Council and the Playing Fields Committee on two possible sites. A fund-raising initiative is current but no specific location approved. Siting of this proposed facility needs to be accessible but sympathetic to the impact on neighbouring residents, on the environment, its setting and on wider views and vistas.

Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal

6.18 There is currently no recreation or amenity open space for Egerton Forstal residents, in particular families with children. Demand was identified during consultation for this plan at open meetings in 2017 and again in 2019. An opportunity to address this deficit has been identified, subject to the requirements in Policy COM2 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and in conjunction with a proposed local needs housing development determined in this Neighbourhood Plan at Section 7. The purchase of the additional space required for community open space adjacent to this development would be funded by donations already committed, and its upkeep would be the responsibility of Egerton Parish Council.

6.19 The purpose of this policy is to secure the provision of a new community open space in Egerton Forstal (see map of Village Confines, Egerton Forstal. p 78) which currently has no public open space provision within the settlement.

Egerton NP Policy S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal

Proposals for new residential development within or adjacent to the defined Village Confines of Egerton Forstal, as shown on Map 8 at page 80, will be supported where such proposals include provision of suitable accessible public open space for use by the community as a whole.

Community Parking Provision

6.20 Parking for public buildings such as the primary school, the Millennium Hall and the playing fields is limited and is not covered by Ashford 2030 Policies TRA3a & 3b which deal with residential and non-residential parking standards but do not cover public buildings and spaces. Currently planned extensions to both the Games Barn and the Millennium Hall and increasing use of the playing fields and Sports Pavilion, which currently has parking space for only 3 cars, will require additional parking to improve access to these facilities and to the open sports and recreation spaces.

6.21 Additional parking to extend the parking spaces by the Sports Pavilion would be the most immediately beneficial and could be provided by the use of grass protecting matting or a similar permeable surface without damaging the physical character of the landscape or key views.

Community Aspiration – Additional parking

1. **Egerton Parish Council will work with Egerton Playing Fields to secure funding and to develop approximately 10 additional parking spaces for the Sports Pavilion and Games pitches, using a permeable surface to allow drainage in accordance with Policy ENV9 of the Ashford Local Plan and to maintain the visual appearance of the playing fields.**
2. **A cycle rack will also be installed in the same location.**
3. **Where feasible, electric charging facilities will be provided.**

Public Rights of Way, Roads and Transport

6.22 The network of green corridors, public rights of way, quiet rural roads and sunken lanes characterise and support the nature of the parish and should therefore be conserved and enhanced for the convenience and safety of users, for their ecological, landscape and recreational value, and to enhance connections across the village. In order to continue to protect the tranquility of the parish, roads should not be widened to accommodate increased traffic flows or larger vehicles in general. Most of these are protected in the Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy ENV5 – Protecting Important Rural Features which covers rural lanes and public rights of way. Given the potential impact on non-motorised users (NMUs) of additional traffic, potential developers should submit traffic impact studies to identify negative impacts and mitigation measures.

6.23 **Public Transport -** Bus Services for rural communities such as Egerton are not covered by policies in the Ashford 2030 Plan as they are the responsibility of the Local Highway Authority. As the only bus service at present, maintenance of the bus service to and from Ashford (the 123) is essential. There are no buses at present to and from Maidstone and

Tenterden, or to Pluckley and Headcorn stations, which limits employment and education opportunities for some village residents. Wealden Wheels is a community not-for-profit transport initiative and is supported by Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and the Parish Councils of Charing, Chilham, Egerton, Pluckley and Smarden. It supplies mini buses for hire but regulations do not allow it to operate in place of a bus service. Although based in Pluckley, our neighbouring village, an annual donation from the Parish Council contributes to their costs.

6.24 The narrow and winding nature of almost all the roads in the parish make their use by **HGVs** a potential danger to other road users, whether on wheels or on foot. There is no reason to use any road in the parish as a through route to another destination. A 7 1/2 tonne weight limit (except for access) has already been imposed on the approach to the village from Charing Heath and the A20, and this includes several other local lanes. A Highway Improvement Plan should by developed by Egerton Parish Council and representations should be made to Kent County Council to investigate a reduction of the speed limit to 40mph along sections of Mundy Bois Road, Bedlam Lane and New Road in support of safety for all road users and a reduction in pollution levels.

Egerton NP Policy S3 – Public Rights of Way

Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to protect and, where appropriate, provide improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way in the Parish.

The Parish Council will work in partnership with Kent County Council to secure improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way, through the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought from new developments towards the implementation of such improvements.

6.25 **Cycling** as an alternative to the car is to be encouraged for both health and well-being and to reduce the number of short car journeys. EPC should consider installation of cycle racks at the Millennium Hall and by the Games Barn to encourage more use of bicycles by providing secure storage. One or two charging points for electric bicycles should also be considered at both locations.

6.26 **Pedestrian routes.** There are some 40 footpaths and other public rights of way across the parish, most of which are used by pedestrians, runners and dog walkers and are of

particular importance not only for the general health and well-being of residents but also for their safety by reducing pedestrian use of the narrow, winding roads in the parish. Maintenance and improvement of all existing public rights of way, including replacement of stiles to kissing gates where appropriate, is important to the continued health and well-being of the community by enabling safe and attractive walking connections, and should be carried out to KCC PRoW standards.

6.27 The footpath which begins near the foot of Crockenhill and the junction with Forstal Road (Public Footpath AW368), and which runs from there up to the stile almost opposite the entrance to the memorial trees field (Lower Recreation Ground) in Rock Hill Road provides a safe pedestrian route to the village centre and amenities both from Egerton Forstal and from Crockenhill, minimising the need to walk on the narrow and crowded roads. With the agreement of the landowners, regular cutting of the grass in spring and early summer, regular cutting back of overhanging branches in one location, improvement or replacement of existing stiles and the addition of some gravel, scalpings or other reinforcement where necessary, this footpath would allow children and parents/carers to walk to school when weather permits. Kent County Council have visited the site and have strongly advised inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, noting 'Public Footpath AW368 is identified for particular improvement to provide a safe and attractive route for pedestrians into the village centre facilities (school, shop, church etc.) from such outlying areas as Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill'.

Community Aspiration

Footpath AW368 from Crockenhill to a point on Rock Hill Road opposite Buss' Farm provides a safe walking route to and from the main village for all residents of Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill, including children's daily journey to and from the primary school. With the support of Kent County Council, certain areas of the path will be improved and the full length maintained to allow its use in all seasons.

7



DEVELOPMENT TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEED

Key Aims for Development 2021 - 2040

7.1 Research carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan has demonstrated that there is no local need for substantial new development in the parish in the forseeable future. Whilst there is a community preference for little or no change to the current level of development beyond the conversion of redundant farm buildings, there is also an acceptance of the need to accommodate changes that inevitably arise as families grow, shrink, divide or relocate in and out of the parish. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 objective for sustainable development as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', this Plan recognizes that local development needs will evolve over time and has therefore identified some new housing development to meet changes in local needs. In this section, the general context for new development is first set out in terms of design quality and is followed by the more detailed assessment of development needs, including mitigation of climate change impacts. Policies P1-P6 are also relevant to any new development as they relate to the protection of distinctive landscape character, trees and hedging, green spaces, key views and local heritage assets, and mitigation of lighting impacts on neighbours, the environment and remaining dark skies.

7.2 Two separate, but related, issues give rise to considerable concern in the parish about any additional development. **Excess surface water** results in regular localised flooding at the entrance to Harmer's Way, on Green Hill Lane and at several locations in Egerton Forstal. Paragraphs 7.46-48 in this Plan cover the requirement for sustainable drainage systems (eg the use of natural land drainage and rainwater management, avoiding its entry into and overloading of the main sewerage system) for all new development and the need for improved maintenance of existing systems. **Utilities** such as water, electricity and sewerage appear to be operating at or close to capacity, resulting in reductions in water pressure, intermittent electrical faults and ongoing failure of the sewerage pumping station at Egerton Forstal. In addition to the provisions of ENP Policy D7 – Water Supply and Drainage (see p66) and ENP Policy D8 – Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation (see p70) , Egerton Parish Council (EPC) is committed to scrutinising all development proposals in the parish with a view to ensuring they conform to the policies in this Plan. EPC will play an active role in

encouraging service providers and landowners as appropriate to carry out regular maintenance and upgrading of land drainage systems and other infrastructure serving the parish.

7.3 The NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. The Ashford 2030 Plan develops these aims in Policy SP6 – Promoting High Quality Design and requires that development proposals should respond positively both to Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements. The 2030 Plan additionally requires 'layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area' in policy HOU3a for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (Egerton Forstal); and that 'development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design' in policy HOU5 for Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (Egerton main village settlement). The Kent Design Guide, which aims to aid decision-making and to promote good design in public path and countryside access management, complements technical and design information and provides useful guidance and principles for the delivery of sustainable development.

7.4 This Neighbourhood Plan sets out a clear design vision and expectations, so that future planning applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies were originally developed with the local community in the drawing up of the Egerton Parish Design Statement in 2006 to reflect local aspirations and were grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Unfortunately, not all new development in the parish since then has followed that guidance. This Plan aims to steer the design of new development to being more in tune with that guidance, and to place more emphasis on layout to complement and enhance its setting. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Thus the Design Statement, which is an official planning document on Ashford Borough Council's website, will in future be treated as a valued and useful tool in considering planning applications and will be referred to by the Parish Council before making any comments to the planning authority (ABC). Wherever there is scope, the Parish Council will engage with prospective developers before any plans are finalised, in order to influence the design and layout of any new development.

7.5 Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape in Egerton would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location design or layout. Any development must be well integrated into the landscape - for example through the use of existing and new landscape buffers. All new development should engage with Kent County Council regarding impact on the PRoW network. Areas of distinctive character within Egerton Parish include (Ashford Landscape Character Assessment 2005) the Greensand Fruit Belt, the Sutton Valence to Pluckley Mixed Farmlands and Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland (see para. 5.5).

7.6 This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- locate development in the best possible positions geographically, socially and environmentally ;
- facilitate the development of housing that meets the needs of local people;
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design;
- provide open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Design

7.7 There are several elements that combine to create good design for built development, including the form, scale, and detailing of the building, the site layout, positioning and spacing, together with its relationship to neighbouring buildings and the wider landscape (see also Policy P1, p 26). New developments often fail to have regard to every aspect, because they have tried to import an alien design at variance from the special local characteristics of the parish.

7.8 The distinctive character of Egerton is informed by those special traits that positively contribute to the local environment, which may not be unique but are typical of the locality. Characteristics which are harmful to the overall appeal of the locality are unworthy of repetition and should be guarded against, if the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard the local character. Rather than resisting new development, this means that the Plan should seek to manage it so that it accords with key design principles, without unnecessarily stifling compatible innovative designs.

7.9 Unwelcome aspects in the design of proposed new developments can often be remedied, if they are addressed early on in the design process. Common failings in design are as follows. The *scale* of new buildings is frequently incompatible with neighbouring development and the local context, where designers have looked no further than the site boundary, or simply sought to introduce an alien design. The visual *appearance* of new development can be harmful to its surroundings where inadequate attention has been given to detailing and articulation. The appropriate choice of external building *materials* (masonry, roofing and fenestration) also has a great impact on the compatibility of new buildings with existing development and can assist modern buildings to successfully sit in the historic context. Sensitive choice of *boundary treatment* (trees and hedging, medium height fencing or walling using local materials) helps to assimilate new development in the streetscape and the local landscape, by avoiding unsightly hard edges and the introduction of anachronistic urban and suburban features (such as high walls, security gates and oppressive fencing).

7.10 One of the aspects on Design, that came out of the earlier public engagement workshops, was that many residents wanted to ensure that creative and innovative building

designs were not ruled out by other policies advocating more traditional designs. Both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Design Statement before it aim to avoid stifling any modern approaches to design, if they can be successfully accommodated without eroding the overall special character of the settlement and the surrounding landscape. There are ways of achieving that, apart from seeking a secluded or unobtrusive site, such as respecting the scale and proportions of existing properties, even if the external materials differ or using similar external materials even though the scale and proportions might differ. National planning policy guidance already makes provision for creative designs in the countryside, but only where of exceptional architectural design quality, so the Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy more applicable to lesser grandiose developments.

7.11 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all development is of the highest design quality which reflects and respects the local character of Egerton.

Egerton NP Policy D1 – Development Principles

1. **Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to achieve a high quality of design, as defined in Policy SP6 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan, and to make a positive contribution to the local character and environment of Egerton (see also Policies P4 and D2 in this Plan).**

2. **Proposals must respect and enhance Egerton's distinctive built character and its high quality countryside setting. Where contemporary building designs are proposed, they must be complementary to their local context, and respect the scale, spacing and external materials of existing buildings.**

3. **All development proposals should take into account the Kent Design Guide, the KCC PRoW Improvement Plan and relevant planning and design guidance issued by Ashford Borough Council, of which the Egerton Parish Design Statement forms a part. New developments should also take account of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.**

7.12 Reference to the **Egerton Parish Design Statement** at an early stage in the design process would avoid developments that harm the local character, in favour of those that could positively contribute to protecting and maintaining it. In particular, the Design Statement explores the local characteristics of the various parts of the parish and includes recommendations in its Style Guide for different types of development.

7.13 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, it was decided to assess the effectiveness of the Egerton Parish Design Statement, by examining the built developments that have occurred since in the parish. There have been few substantial developments in Egerton since the Design Statement was published in 2006, with the exception of the local needs housing at Chantler's Meadow. Most developments have been replacement dwellings or domestic extensions, including some major extensions of existing properties. Overall, apart from Chantler's Meadow, there is a disappointing lack of referencing to the Parish Design Statement by the planning applicants, agents and architects, and also by the Local Planning Authority.

7.14 It was concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan itself ought to re-affirm the key principles of the Design Statement, and include some clear policy encouraging developers to refer to the design guidelines before embarking on development projects, rather than unconsciously importing alien designs and materials and eroding the local character of the environment that they have come here to enjoy. Suggested actions included:

- the Parish Council to refer more consistently to the Parish Design Statement in responding to planning applications (whether positively, negatively or neutrally disposed to a particular development proposal);

- policies to be included in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan to re-affirm the key design principles of the Parish Design Statement, and to encourage developers to take its guidelines into consideration in deciding development proposals; and

- consideration to be given to re-issuing the Egerton Parish Design Statement, to broadcast its key messages and principles, via the village websites and in Welcome Packs for households new to the Parish.

7.15 The Egerton Parish Design Statement has been adopted by Ashford Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and is a companion document to the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, with its contents and principles being broadly supported in more recent public engagement sessions on the Neighbourhood Plan.

7.16 Policy D2 reaffirms the key principles of the Design Statement, and the importance of good design to preserve the distinctive local character of the parish. Building projects which fall outside the scope of planning control should still take into consideration the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement.

7.17 The purpose of this policy is to ensure all relevant development proposals incorporate the principles and guidelines of the Parish Design Statement and to provide examples of locally distinctive styles, materials and boundary treatments.

Egerton NP Policy D2 – Application of the Parish Design Statement

1. Proposals for all new development in the Parish, including extensions to, and the conversion or replacement of, existing properties, shall include details of how far the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement have been taken into consideration in formulating the proposals, in order to maintain the special local characteristics of the Parish. In devising and assessing proposals for new development account should be taken where appropriate of:

a) development that creates places that are sustainable, durable, safe and suitable for their location and use, whilst meeting the relevant policies of the Development Plan;
b) building form and style that is valued and promoted locally, including smaller houses with characteristically pitched and/or hipped roofing, richly detailed walls, small panel windows, timber doors, with subservient garaging and outbuildings;
c) the use of locally distinctive external building materials, as appropriate to the location, such as clay roof tiles, Kentish ragstone, timber weatherboarding, red stock bricks;
d) suitable boundary treatments, such as traditional mixed hedging, red brickwork or ragstone walls, as an attractive method of delineating new boundaries;
e) attention to design detail, with the discreet positioning of service features, such as bin stores, cycle stores, meter boxes, flues and ventilation ducts, renewable energy components, external lighting, satellite dishes, aerials, telephone cabling, etc.
f) the density of the proposed development and its impact on the character of the existing built environment and of the surrounding, distinctive landscape character.

2. The height of new dwellings in the parish should normally be limited to two storeys to prevent a prominent visual edge to the village or obscuring key views and vistas (see Policy P4, p.33), including views of the Church tower.

3. Development proposals should also take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.















Housing

Housing Policy to 2040

7.18 Egerton's housing need up to 2023 was identified in a Housing Needs Survey (see paras. 7.22 - 24 below) as a requirement for 27 dwellings, of which 12 need to be affordable for local people. The Ashford Borough Council Local Plan (2030) allocates a site on New Road (see Map 2, p 72) for an indicative 15 new homes, of which 40% should be affordable (5/6 affordable homes), with an anticipated mix of 1-2 for rent and the remainder for shared ownership or other forms of affordable ownership. The Orchard Nurseries site owned by Egerton Parish Council (see paras. 7.30-31) could provide 8 open market dwellings for local older residents. Therefore, there remains a shortfall of affordable local needs housing for rent. Following a call for sites and site assessment (see para.7.25) the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address this shortfall through the provision of up to 8 affordable local needs dwellings on the Gale Field site (see paras. 7.28-29). In combination, the Orchard Nurseries site and the Gale Field site could provide both housing for older residents and affordable local needs housing as rural exception sites. Table 7.1 sets out the housing need for Egerton as identified in the Housing Needs Survey and how this is provided for through the ENP and Ashford Local Plan.

Table 7.1.

	Total No. of homes	Affordable homes	Open Market homes
Housing Needs Survey 2018-2023	**27**	**12**	**15**
Land on New Road (Ashford Local Plan Policy S30)	15	6[i]	9
Rural Housing Exception Site (Policy D4)	10	10	
Orchard Nurseries (Policy D5)	8		8[ii]
Total provision in Ashford Local Plan & ENP	**33**	**16**	**17**

[i] The HNS analysis of incomes for the local needs affordable housing indicated that 8 should be rented and I shared ownership. Only I-2 houses on the New Road site would meet this need, resulting in a shortfall of 10 local needs affordable dwellings, of which 3 would be for older residents.

[ii] The open market homes at Orchard Nurseries will be for older people with a local connection to the parish.

7.19 The current housing need can be met by the provision of homes that are:

a) affordable for local people (see 7.26 - 7.29 below)

- to rent, or
- for shared ownership

b) suitable for local older or disabled people (see 7.30-31)

- who are owner-occupiers requiring different accommodation
- to rent.

c) on a small scale to allow integration with the existing pattern of development.

7.20 Any additional housing requirement beyond the 5 year period covered by the 2018 Housing Needs Survey will be subject to review every 5-7 years both for affordable local needs and for open market housing. It is anticipated, however, that any additional requirement for open market housing to 2040 will be met by a combination of:

a) the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential dwellings at a rate of 2-3 per year (analysis of the current rate of conversion over the past 10 years suggests a rate of 2 per year on average – see Evidence Base, p 71):

b) up to 8 larger houses released by older residents downsizing to the accommodation in Orchard Nurseries, and

c) applications covered by policies HOU3a and HOU5 in the Ashford 2030 Plan – residential windfall development within settlements and the countryside.



7.21 The purpose of this policy is to define and quantify the local housing requirement to 2023 and beyond as identified in the Housing Needs Survey (November 2018), in addition to the housing already identified in the Ashford Local Plan.

Egerton NP Policy D3 –Housing Policy

1. An indicative 16 affordable local needs dwellings, as identified in the 2018 Housing Needs Survey, shall be provided on allocated or exception sites in the parish and delivered over the first 10 years of this plan.

2. An indicative 18 open market dwellings shall be provided on the land on New Road (Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy S30) and on windfall sites in the parish and delivered over the first 10 years of this plan.

3. Where there is a mix of affordable and open market housing provided on a development site, the affordable housing should be appropriately integrated with open market housing in the site layout.

4. Proposals for new residential development should take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.

5. Housing need in the Parish for the period 2031-2040 will be subject to future review in light of an updated Housing Needs Survey and a review of the adopted Ashford Local Plan.

2018 Housing Needs Survey and Results

7.22 The Housing Needs Survey undertaken for Egerton Parish Council by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) in 2018 identified a need over the next five years for 27 additional dwellings. Of these,12 affordable homes for single people, couples and families were identified, 8 of which should be rentable, 3 for older people and 1 for shared ownership. One self-build requirement was also recorded. The survey also identified a need for 12 homes for older households (including the 3 mentioned above), split equally between couples and

single people; plus a need for 6 open market homes excluding those for older households and ranging between single people and couples and families.

7.23 The Ashford Local Plan site, land on New Road (ALP Policy S30) in combination with the ENP Orchard Nurseries site could provide an indicative number of 17-18 open market dwellings i.e. 2-3 more than the 15 open market need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. These sites could also in combination provide 12-13 dwellings to meet identified local needs. The shortfall of affordable local needs housing identified by the Housing Needs Survey is between 6- 10 dwellings.

7.24 One small additional site is therefore required to provide the additional affordable, local needs housing identified above.

Call for Sites and Site Selection

7.25 As part of the preparation of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, a call for sites resulted in suggestions from a number of landowners and developers for sites outside the current village confines. A number of the suggestions were ruled out after consultation. The remaining suggestions, with modifications in some cases, were formally assessed against criteria based on national and local policy (see Map 2, p 73 and Site Assessment Process and Conclusions) and the findings of the Housing Needs Survey. Sites proposed after the original Call for Sites were also formally assessed against the approved criteria.



Local Needs/ Affordable Housing

7.26 The Government's recently published guidance on First Homes recognises the need for lower cost (entry level) market housing for first time buyers, at a level of at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes must be offered at a minimum of 30% discount against market value, with a maximum price after discount of £250,000. On first sale, a restriction on the title of properties sold as First Homes will ensure that the discount is passed on to any subsequent eligible owners. In due course, a number of new homes in the Plan area may be built as First Homes, thereby contributing to the provision of affordable housing.

7.27 Our research and consultation has established that the main concern of some of the younger people and families in the Parish is the lack of available properties in the village either to rent or at an affordable price for first time buyers who wish to stay in the village because of their family links and commitments, such as children attending the local school or employment in local farms and businesses. There is a continuing demand for the existing 27 local needs housing units already available in Egerton, almost all of which are rental properties (The Good Intent, managed by Egerton Housing Association, Harmer's Way managed by Sanctuary Housing and Chantler's Meadow managed by English Rural Housing). However, there is a shortfall both of rental properties and of very low-cost properties to enable young people to remain in the village.

7.28 An additional scheme is therefore needed to provide affordable housing for local young people in Egerton to rent or buy. The density of housing within the confines of Egerton and Egerton Forstal, and the need to avoid adverse impacts on the Conservation Area in Egerton, mean that a development on the scale of 6-8 dwellings would be on a rural exception site and would be developed either by a recognised developer of affordable housing or by a locally created 'not for private profit' entity, established to provide housing to meet local needs. The land would be acquired at 'exception site' value and the provider would build up to 8 'affordable' units, varying in size from single bed studios to 3 bedroom houses, to meet local needs.

7.29 The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify and secure the development of a suitable site as a rural housing exception site of sufficient size to develop up to 10 affordable homes for local residents. The call for sites undertaken in 2018 as part of the preparation of this Plan, and the subsequent site assessment process that was undertaken, identified land at Gale Field, Crockenhill Road, Egerton Forstal as a potential suitable site for such a scheme. The Parish Council will continue to work with the landowner, local residents, the Borough Council and other partners to establish whether a scheme can be delivered in the period up to 2030.

Egerton NP Policy D4 – Local Needs Affordable Housing

1. **The Parish Council will support the development of a rural exception site for local needs affordable housing in order to meet an identified need for such housing. Proposals should comply with national policy and the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan concerning rural exception housing schemes.**

2. **The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify opportunities for rural exception sites to meet the local needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey (2018) and any subsequent reviews of local housing need.**

Older People's Housing

7.30 One of the requirements in the Egerton Parish Plan (see Evidence Base, p.71) was the creation of dedicated semi-sheltered accommodation specifically to meet local needs and designed to be readily adapted to deal with growing disabilities and other difficulties of old age. A small working group was established by the Parish Council to take this proposal forward. After consideration of several potential sites, a site at Orchard Nurseries was gifted to the Parish in 2017 by Derek Marks, a former Parish Council Chairman.

7.31 The site falls within an area to the east of the Conservation Area in which the safeguarded Hythe-Formation Limestone/Ragstone occurs. The viability of extraction of all the useable mineral on the site has been assessed in accordance with The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP), Policy DM7: Safeguarding Mineral Resources of the KMWLP and discussed with both Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council. Exemption from the presumption to safeguard the minerals on the site has been argued on the grounds that 'extraction of the mineral would not be viable or practicable' (KMWLP, Policy D7, Clause 2) due to the small size of the site, the proximity of the adjacent housing and the limitations on access. The current workable area of the minerals reserve is less than 1.2 acres, and additionally the site is closely surrounded by built development, making access for any mineral extraction not only difficult but also potentially of significant detriment to residential amenity. Additionally, the small extent of the reserves renders future extraction as commercially unviable, especially given the current generous extent of more readily accessible ragstone reserves elsewhere in the county.



Egerton NP Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton

1. Land at the former Orchard Nurseries, Egerton, as shown on the inset plan on page 61, is proposed for the development of eight dwellings suitable for occupation by older persons presently living in less suitable homes within the community. The development of these dwellings will be restricted to occupation by older persons.

2. The development of the site will only proceed when arrangements for suitable access to the site have been secured, and which meet the requirements of Kent County Council as Highways Authority.

Defining the Village Confines

7.32 Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan (2030) describes the change from the traditional approach of defining a settlement area in a written statement to the use of a boundary line drawn on a map.

7.33 The confines of a settlement are defined as:
'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (ie 'garden areas').'

7.34 The Local Plan (2030) also sets out policies for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (HOU3a) and Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (HOU5). HOU3a applies to Egerton Forstal. It limits further development to the current confines in which space is already limited, and confirms the requirements that must be met for residential development 'that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement', including compatibility with the character and density of the surrounding area and avoidance of 'significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents' and 'significant harm to the landscape, heritage assets or biodiversity interests'. HOU5 applies to the main Egerton settlement and covers proposals both for development within the settlement and for 'residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines' provided that 'the scale of development is proportionate to the size of the settlement', the design is of a high quality, sustainability criteria are met, and that conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and heritage assets are ensured.

7.35 The built form of the parish comprises two larger settlement areas (the centre of the village and Egerton Forstal), smaller communities such as Stonebridge Green, Mundy Bois and Newland Green, and more isolated farmhouses and farm buildings. After consultation, the village confines have been defined around the two main settlement areas and are shown in the maps at pages 79 and 80.

Brownfield Sites and Small Scale Development

7.36 The reclamation and reuse of brownfield sites is a key factor in the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy integrating a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives. Brownfield redevelopment can not only clean up environmental health hazards and eyesores, but can also be a catalyst for community regeneration, particularly when communities are brought into the consultation process of site identification and restoration. Managed effectively as a sustainable redevelopment scheme, brownfield sites can provide affordable housing, create opportunities for employment or home working, promote conservation and wildlife, and offer a shared place for play and enjoyment. The transformation of a brownfield site can be a vision of hope for the future.

7.37 **Barn conversions.** Class Q - permitted development rights - was introduced as part of the General Permitted Development Order in 2013 allowing barns in recent agricultural use to be converted to residential use within certain specific criteria. Even new barns - very often, portal frame structures with large spans typically used for housing livestock or farm machinery - can be converted without the need to apply for full planning permission except within the setting of the Egerton Conservation Area or a Listed building. Converting such disused buildings adds to Egerton's housing stock without creating additional development and can free-up homes elsewhere in the housing market with potential to help support the rural economy at the same time. In the past 7 years approval has been granted for 15 homes to be created from barn conversions in Egerton, nearly all in the outer reaches of the parish (see Evidence Base). Future conversions are likely to be in similar locations, distant from village amenities and not strictly fulfilling sustainability criteria. To mitigate this, the materials used should ideally be sourced sustainably to minimise their carbon footprint.

7.38 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) states that good design is 'a key aspect of sustainable development' and indivisible from good planning (paragraph 126). Developments should 'establish a strong sense of place', and be sympathetic 'to local character and history' including 'the surrounding built environment and landscape setting' (paragraph 130). Kent contains some of the most beautiful timber-framed agricultural structures in England and the most common older barn type in Egerton is the threshing barn - a large, almost two storey structure, often timber frame and weatherboarded on a brick or stone plinth with Kent-peg tiles. Kent Farmsteads Guidance, a collaborative series of publications by Kent County Council, Historic England, Kent Downs and Kent Design, contains practical guidance on redeveloping farmyard sites or redundant farm buildings. Modern underused or redundant farm buildings may provide opportunities for significant enhancement of the site overall, particularly in views to the site from the open countryside. Conversions are expected by planning authorities to be instantly recognisable as buildings that were once barns and this has led to conversions of newer barns reflecting a contemporary style, making use of concrete, steel and glass rather than traditional and reclaimed materials. It is desirable that the setting of the Egerton Conservation Area or a listed building should still be a consideration in the design and exact materials chosen.

7.39 Policies EMP1 (New Employment Uses), EMP3 (Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area) and EMP4 (Conversion of Rural Buildings to Non- Residential Uses) in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) permit conversion of rural buildings for employment provided that there is no adverse impact on the character of the buildings themselves, on the surrounding countryside, on the road network and on neighbouring residential amenities. EMP5 (New Employment Premises in the Countryside) discourages new development in the countryside unless it is essential. Development of brownfield sites will ideally require good sustainable transport connections, both within the community to encourage active travel and links to local amenities and externally to link with the wider transport networks.

7.40 There are several farms in the parish that contain redundant buildings. To date, many of these have been converted to individual dwellings, either for permanent residence or holiday lets. These individual cases would be classed as “windfalls”. A few other such sites exist, somewhat derelict, redundant or partially redundant. Although most of these sites were not put forward by their owners, they need to be borne in mind in the event of proposals for new businesses. One site was put forward as a self-build site to meet local needs and should be considered by Ashford Borough Council as part of the planning application process (Local Plan Policy HOU6) . It would not be appropriate to develop a greenfield site in the open countryside if brownfield sites, and some capacity in already developed sites, exist.

7.41 All brownfield sites need to be assessed by an experienced environmental consultant before they can be redeveloped. This involves an analysis of the soil, groundwater and surface water through testing for hazardous compounds, and ensures that appropriate measures are taken to reduce identified risks and liabilities. Any development plans must comply with regulations. Licences are required to reclaim brownfield sites; strict environmental regulations in relation to wildlife habitat and other issues can be prohibitive for developers. If the environmental assessment is positive and supports the redevelopment, the next step is to take any remedial action needed to render the site safe.

7.42 The purpose of this policy is to support the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings for local business use as well as for residential development, where appropriate.

Egerton NP Policy D6 - Reuse of Redundant Farm Buildings

1. The conversion or redevelopment of redundant farm buildings to provide small-scale business units (up to a maximum of 10 single units or on a footprint equivalent to the floorspace of the redundant buildings) will be supported. The conversion or redevelopment of such buildings to provide residential or visitor accommodation will also be supported, where such proposals conform to all other relevant Policies in this Plan and the adopted Local Plan, and where suitable sustainable transport connections, such as for walking and cycling, can be achieved.

2. Development in such cases should not have unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and vehicular movement on the local highway network or on wildlife and landscape.

Infrastructure and Facilities to Support Current and Future Development

7.43 **Mobile phone reception coverage and broadband coverage.** Good, reliable mobile phone coverage and high-speed or super fast broadband availability over the whole of the parish is essential to replace the currently inconsistent and unsatisfactory provision. Efficient mobile phone technology and consistent high-speed or super fast broadband provision will increasingly be essential for business use and for working at home as an alternative to commuting, as well as for everyday living in rural areas (for example, online shopping and delivery or the installation and operation of smart meters for public utilities). Expansion and improvement will ultimately be a commercial decision taken by private providers, and therefore not directly within the Neighbourhood Plan's scope, but Egerton Parish Council should treat as a priority the need to encourage providers to improve both mobile phone reception and broadband coverage as a means of communication and access to services for the entire local community. A proposal to install a mast on Crockenhill is a valuable step towards better mobile telephone coverage for the Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill communities.

7.44 **Utilities.** All new developments for 10 or more dwellings, must include the provision of adequate water supply and sewerage systems to meet current environmental policy (ABC ENV8) and public health requirements. As the existing sewerage systems serving the centre of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal are already close to maximum capacity, future provision for developments of less than 10 dwellings should also meet the ENV8 requirement. In some cases an individual system will be required and any such system should also meet current environmental policy requirements.

7.45 **Sustainable drainage and flood risk.** In accordance with the Ashford 2030 Plan (ENV9) 'all development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality'. Retention and protection of the local drainage network combined with SuDS in any development will avoid capacity reduction or adverse quality impacts. This is of particular importance in Egerton where surface water draining off the hillside regularly causes localised flooding.

7.46 Landowners will be encouraged to maintain and regularly clear ditches and culverts to minimise the risk of surface water flooding. Initiatives to reduce surface water run-off from agricultural land will also be encouraged.

7.47 In line with the ABC Local Plan (2030) – ENV6 – new development will only be permitted where there would not be 'an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site itself, and there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere'. Drainage systems should be designed to manage both the risk of flooding (groundwater and flash flooding) and surface water run-off.

7.48 Waste Management. There are currently no waste management facilities within the parish and the combined Ashford Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre at Chart Leacon is at operational capacity. Any increase in waste tonnage by development will require mitigation and a contribution by developer.

7.49 The purpose of this policy is to address current difficulties across the parish in relation to water supply and drainage by requiring the impact assessment of new development on the current water infrastructure, the provision of additional capacity if required and the installation of site specific approved systems where no network connection is possible.

Egerton NP Policy D7 - Water Supply and Drainage

1. **All proposals for development in the Plan area must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the relevant statutory undertakers that adequate capacity is available within the sewerage, drainage and water supply network to meet the requirements of the development proposed and that the development will not lead to any increase in flood risk.**

2. **In situations where it is not possible to make a connection to the sewerage network, proposals for new development should provide an on-site solution to manage drainage and sewage which does not lead to any adverse impacts upon the local community or to the natural environment.**

3. **All proposals for new development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the Plan area must be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment*.**

4. **Development proposals should retain and protect the local drainage network and adopt a sustainable drainage (SuDS) approach to protect capacity and water quality in the Plan area.**

*see Map 5 Illustrating location and extent of Flooding Risk in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, prepared by Ashford Borough Council.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change Impacts

7.50 Climate change is a key sustainability issue, and it is critical to determine how resilient we are to its potential consequences, such as flooding, heatwaves and drought. The impact of climate change will vary from place to place, and different communities will be more or less resilient (or vulnerable) to these different impacts. Older and listed buildings may present challenges to sustainability and carbon neutrality targets; however, all future development in the parish should be designed to achieve both.

7.51 Parliament has confirmed that climate change represents a national and international emergency. The current figure for production of electricity from renewable energy sources is 40% and this needs to increase if the targets set for 2040 are to be met. Technology is moving rapidly in this area and locally-based small scale schemes, such as locally generated clean energy initiatives should be actively investigated by Egerton Parish Council and positively supported. For sites already allocated within this plan, landowners and developers should work together to deliver exceptional sustainability benefits for the community.

7.52 The highest point in Egerton parish is 116 metres and the lowest point 30 metres above sea level, a drop of 86m in 2 miles. The run-off from the higher area to the low-lying area is significant. Since the low-lying land is mostly Wealden clay, the extremes of climate are observed and experienced more easily: extensive and deep fissures in hard-baked clay in dry spells, waterlogged and equally unworkable during persistent wet weather. In recent years, weather extremes have become more pronounced, with prolonged drought in summer and heavy rain in winter and spring, lasting days and sometimes weeks. This has caused localised flooding in low-lying Egerton Forstal and Mundy Bois at the lower end of Green Hill on numerous occasions in the same year. To some extent this been exacerbated by a lack of regular ditch and pipe clearance and, in the case of Egerton Forstal, the loss of several ponds. An example of this is in Chapel Lane, where at least 3 significant ponds have been filled in since the 1960s. Where new development took place in Egerton Forstal between 1960 and 1990, many of the ditches too were filled in. Some surface water has been piped beneath the ground but the narrow gauge of pipes used has led to silting up and the responsibility for tackling this problem has not been sufficiently well addressed. Flooding across roads and homes at risk has become a reality. Steps need to be taken to mitigate the risks and this requires a collective effort in and beyond the parish to move this forward positively and constructively.

7.53 All development involving the loss of permeable surfaces, loss of trees, loss of soft landscaping or loss of any other feature that reduces flood risk should therefore use appropriate mitigation measures to prevent an increase in flood risk within the site or elsewhere. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be used proportionately to mitigate any predicted increase in flood risk. These may include: i. Planting, particularly trees. ii. Introduction of permeable driveways, parking or other ‘hardstanding’ areas. iii. Rainwater water harvesting and storage features (including butts). iv. Green roofs. v. Attenuation tanks.

vi. Soakaways. vii. Attenuation ponds. SuDS must be designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure and street network. The system should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property and the ecological value of the local environment. A surface water sewer should be seen as a last resort and no surface water will be permitted to enter the public foul sewage network. Where a site is near to areas that are known to flood, developments must provide a SuDS Strategy and drawings showing all SuDS features. This must be supported with calculations showing how surface water flood risk will not increase. All developments must be designed to take into account best practice in water efficiency, such as water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting and storage features, and green roofs.

7.54 It is the Government's ambition, expressed in Next Steps to Zero Carbon Homes 26 and elsewhere, to implement zero carbon homes from 2016. Therefore, during the Neighbourhood Plan period, it will be necessary and increasingly possible for developers gradually to improve the energy-saving performance of the dwellings they build. New-build homes will have a lifetime of perhaps 100 years. If new homes are built to a lower than achievable standard, they will be consuming energy in a less than optimal way throughout their lifetime at a cost to the finances of the residents and to our local environment. They will not constitute the "sustainable development" which the NPPF seeks.

7.55 In line with Policy ENV10 in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) renewable and low carbon energy systems will be encouraged, not only on all new buildings and all substantial conversions, but also on existing properties, including solar thermal and photovoltaics panels, ground or air source heat pumps and combined heat and power systems and even using fast-flowing streams or rivers that used to have mills on them - provided that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including in respect of historic buildings, cumulative landscape and visual impacts on neighbouring properties or on the key views and vistas detailed in this plan. Any larger scale proposal for renewable energy creation should be encouraged if potentially adverse impact on neighbouring properties or on key views and vistas detailed in this plan can be mitigated. With Egerton's well-wooded surroundings, a wood chip enterprise if well-managed in the coppiced areas (and not in the ancient woodland) could prove to be a significant one. Wood chip is one of the key forms of biomass which can be used to create renewable energy. Its use to provide energy to new developments should therefore be supported and any application for development which proposes a biomass facility to generate renewable energy from local sources should be viewed favourably unless the environmental impact outweighs it.

7.56 Energy efficiency in all heating systems and improved insulation for both existing and new developments will be actively encouraged and supported to reduce reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves and to reduce energy bills, reducing fuel poverty and limiting flows of money out of the local economy. The ideal would be to achieve passive housing - a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological/carbon footprint. It results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling. There is an example of this in a converted building at Coldharbour Farm. Approved Document L of the Government's Building Regulations provides guidance on the

conservation of fuel and power, which will be followed closely for future amendments to take account of advances in technology.

7.57 Managing water consumption is a strategic objective in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and, in Policy ENV 7, requires that all new residential development must achieve water efficiency that minimizes water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day.



7.58 Planting of indigenous species of trees in new woodland and wildflower meadows, and appropriate management and replacement of existing woodland, will make a further contribution to governmental and local carbon reduction targets, will maintain the distinctive character of the parish and will contribute to residents' general health and wellbeing. With local community support, Egerton Parish Council is encouraged to implement the following Community Aspiration:

Community Aspiration – Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadow/s

Egerton Parish Council (EPC) will explore opportunities to identify a site or sites suitable for the planting of community woodland, made up of indigenous species. and wildflower meadow/s to help mitigate the impact of climate change and for the benefit of the community as a whole.

7.59 The purpose of this policy is to ensure long term sutainability and effective climate change mitigation for the parish as a whole.

Egerton NP Policy D8 - Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation

1. **Energy efficient building will be expected on the grounds of sustainability and should deliver warmer homes to improve comfort and better health, including a minimum 19% carbon dioxide reduction against Part L (2013) of the Government's Building Regulations on energy conservation through energy efficiency of the building.**
2. **Use of "Passivhaus" principles will be supported.**
3. **Water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling will be supported. Water efficiency measures should be included in all residential developments - with a maximum usage of 110 litres per person.**
4. **The creation of ponds, swales and other means to conserve water and minimise flooding should be part of any new development. More effective land drainage will be promoted by the Parish Council through a collaborative approach with property owners and landowners and with Kent County Council as Highways Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority, to help mitigate the effects of climate change.**
5. **The provision of charging points for electric vehicles will be encouraged.**
6. **Developments which propose on-site renewable energy generation through the demonstrable use of new technology such as ground or air source heat pumps, local biomass (wood chip) shall be encouraged and considered favourably.**
7. **Proposals for individual and community scale energy will be supported subject to the following criteria:**
    - **the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape;**
    - **the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and**
    - **the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.**

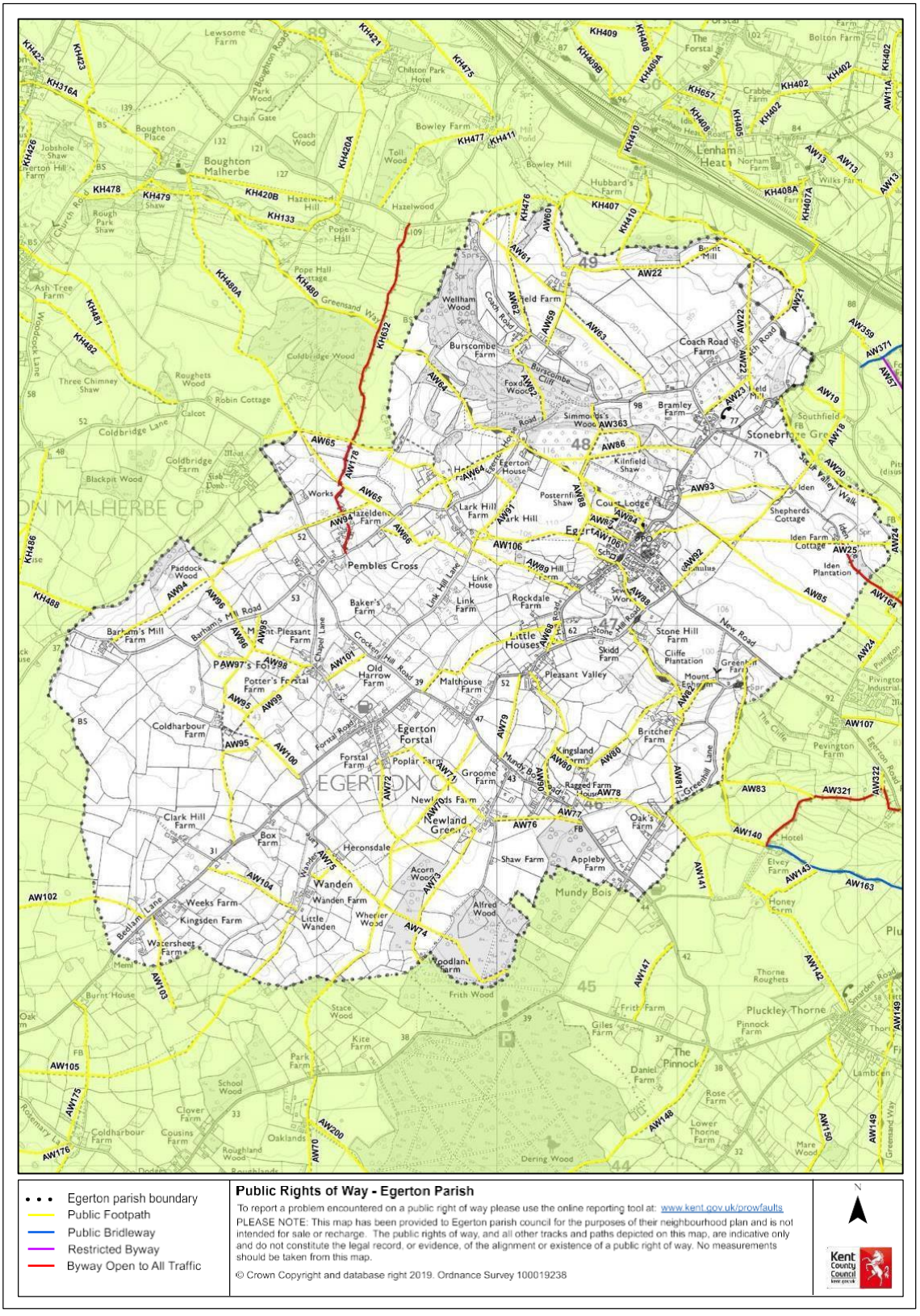
Evidence Base

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is based on the views of residents, businesses, statutory consultees and other interested parties gathered during consultation and a range of studies the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and other parties have carried out. These documents include, but are not limited to the following:

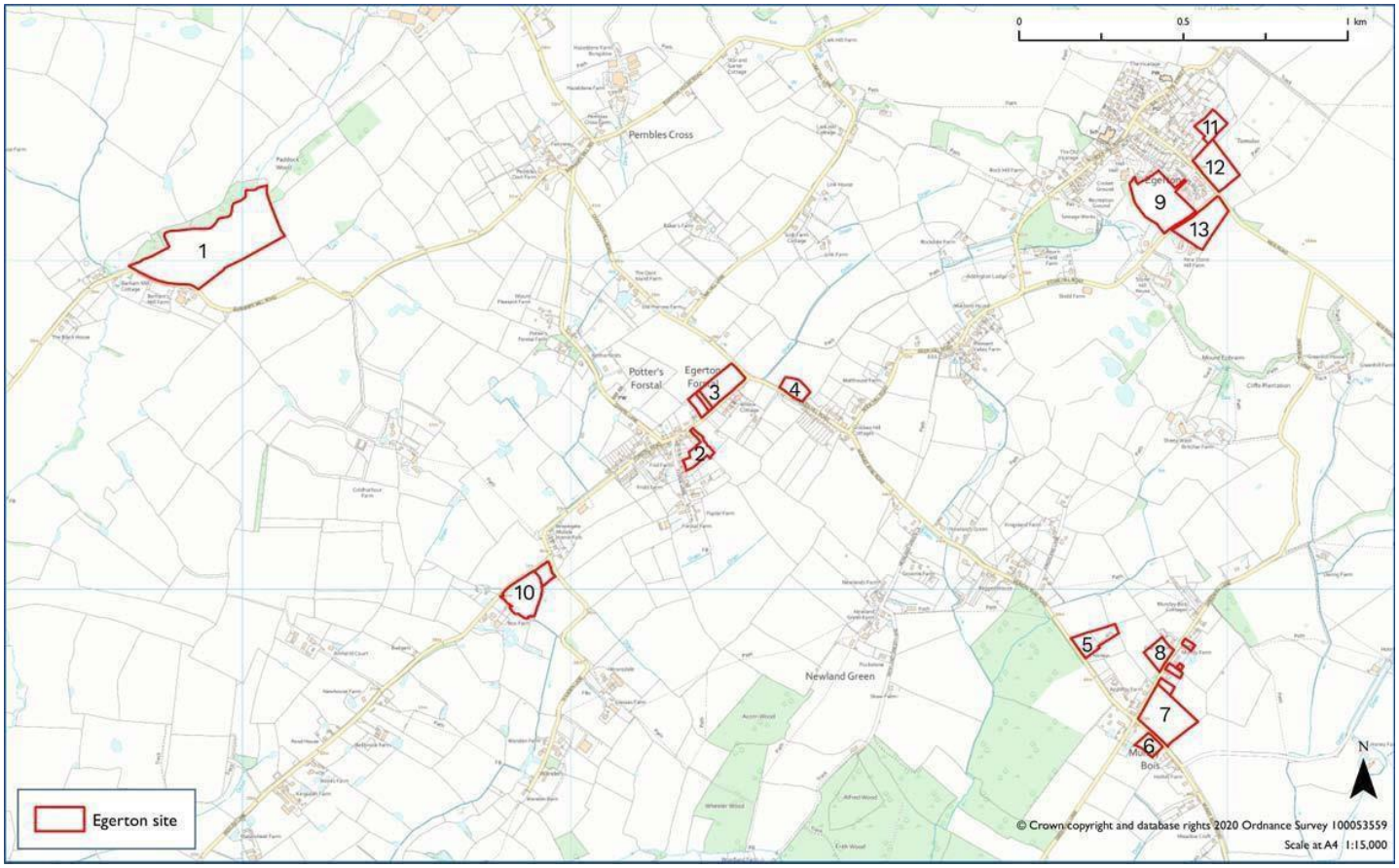
- Egerton Parish Plan (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Parish Design Statement (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group membership and Terms of Reference (see Appendix 3)
- Housing Needs Survey Report
- Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Report prepared by Ashford Borough Council
- Community Consultation Statement
- Local Green Spaces Assessment
- Key Views and Vistas – maps and photographs (see Maps, p80-82)
- Village Clubs and activities
- Business activities in Egerton
- Older People's Housing Survey Results, 2015-16
- Site Assessment Process and Conclusions
- Application of the Parish Design Statement recommendations on development since its publication – a review
- 10 Year analysis of planning applications (conversion of obsolete farm buildings)

Maps

1. Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way

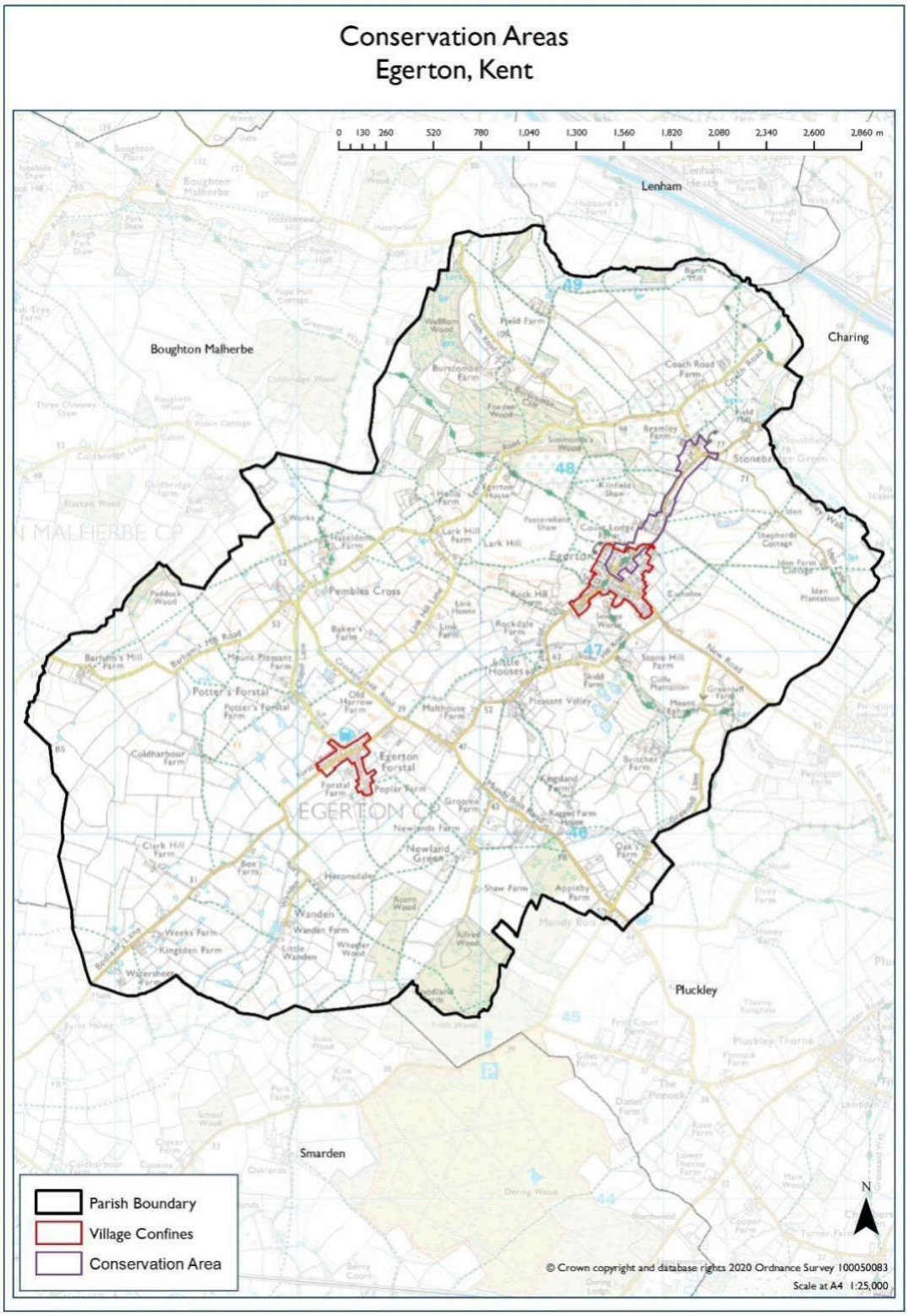


2. Sites Offered for Development



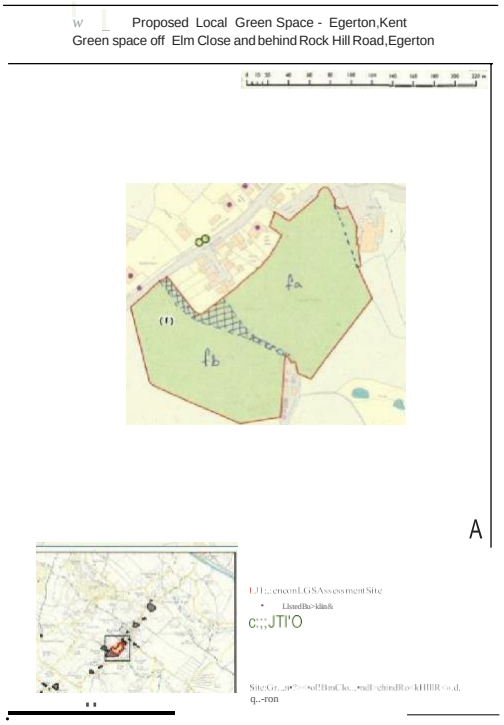
1. Harden's Field
2. Field behind Forge Lane
3. Crockenhill Road/ Forstal Road
4. Gale Field
5. Honess
6. Orchard Cottage Land
7. Single plot at Little Mundy Farm
8. Appleby Grange field
9. North Field
10. Bedlam Lane
11. Orchard Nurseries
12. New Road
13. Stone Hill

3. Conservation Area



4. Local Green Spaces







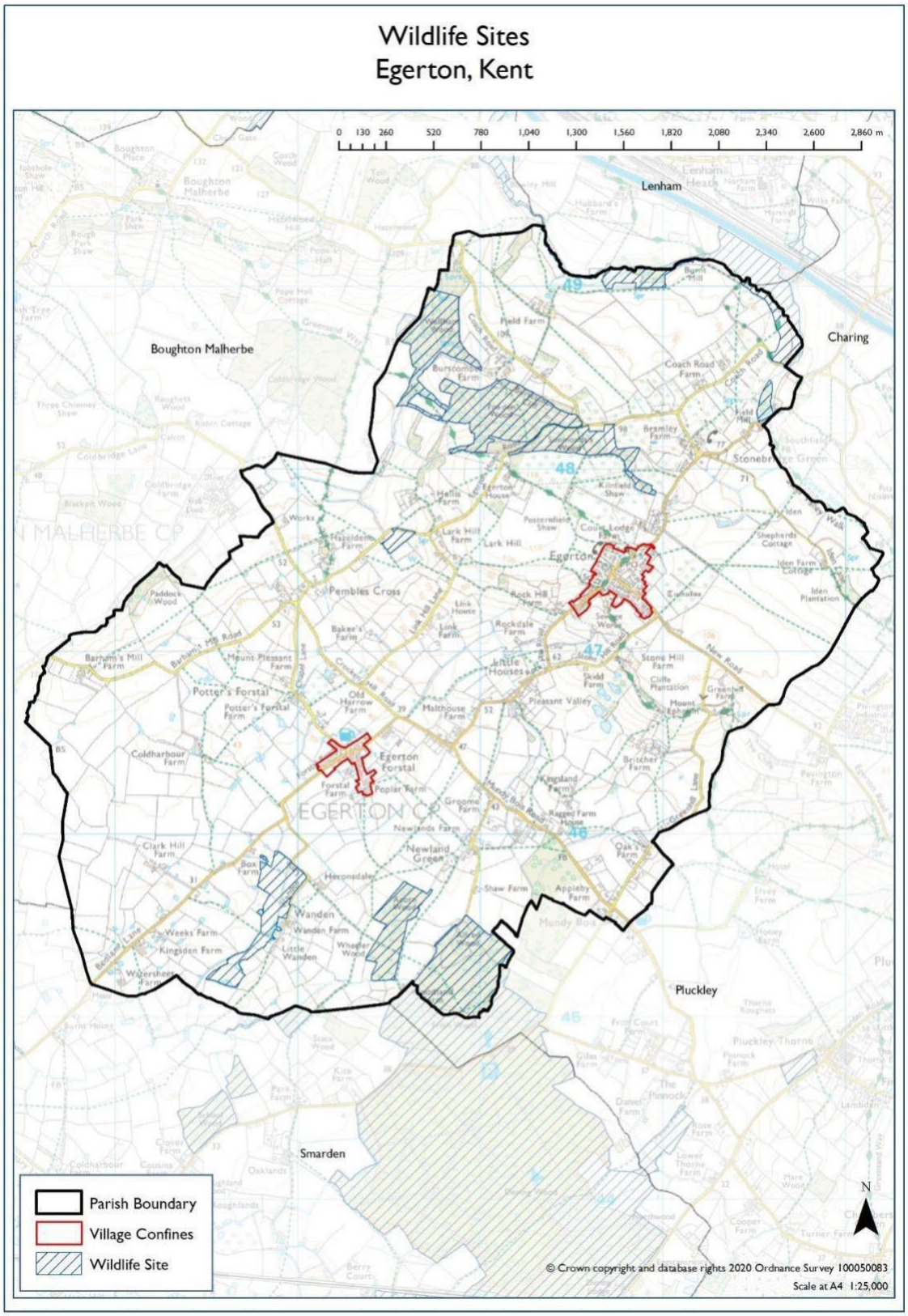


Pembles Cross, Egerton, Kent

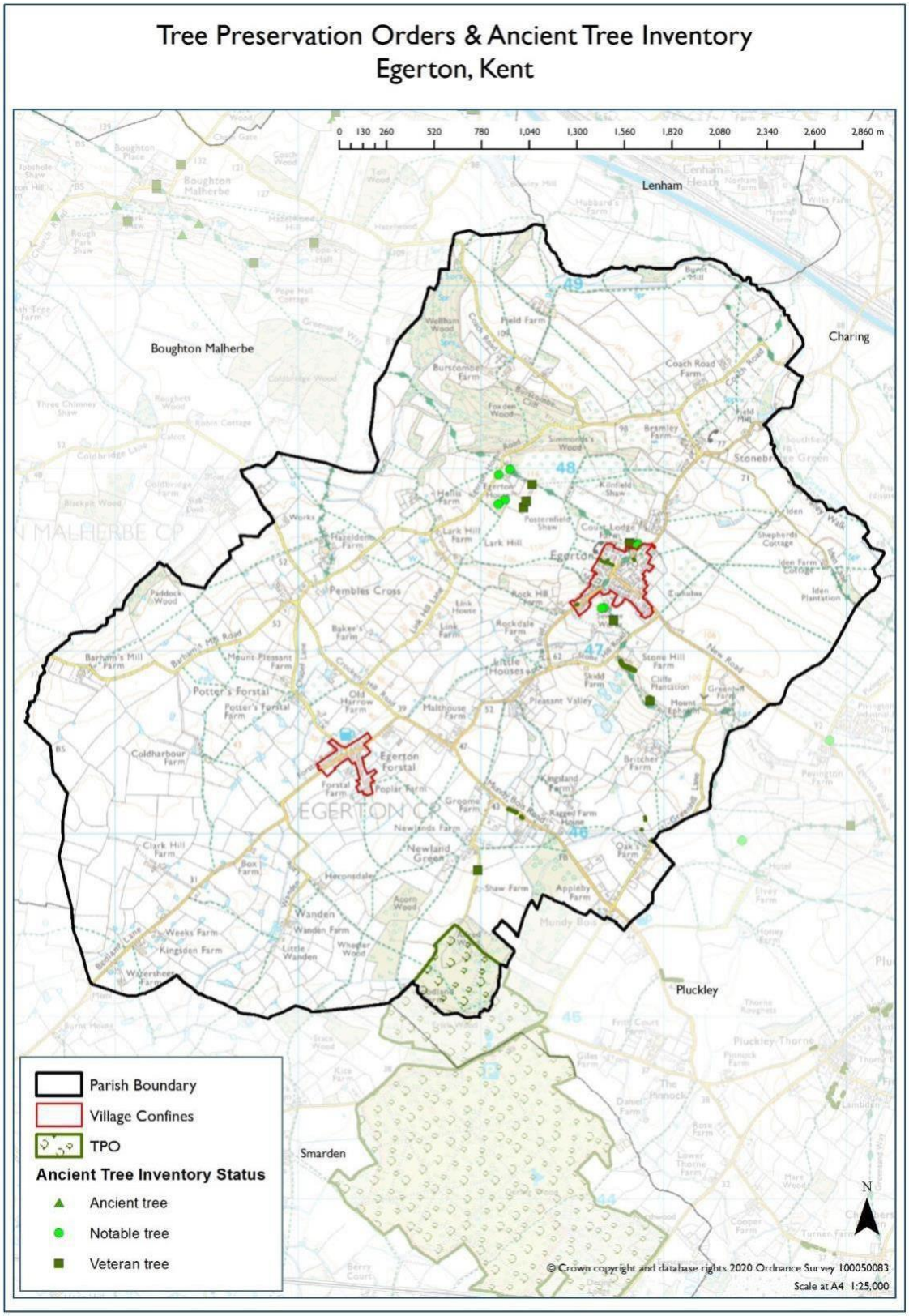


Stonebridge Green, Egerton, Ken

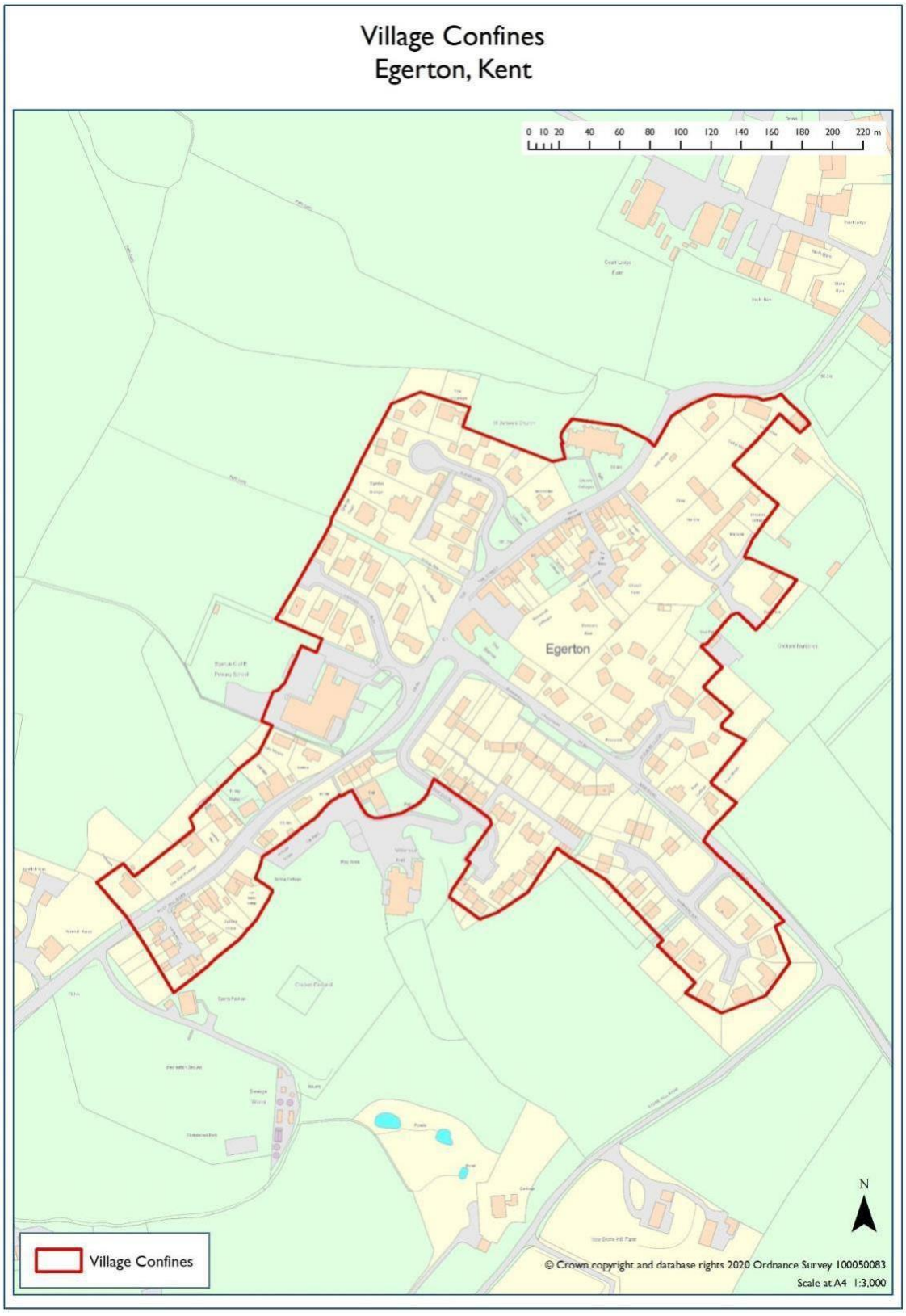
5. Local Wildlife Sites



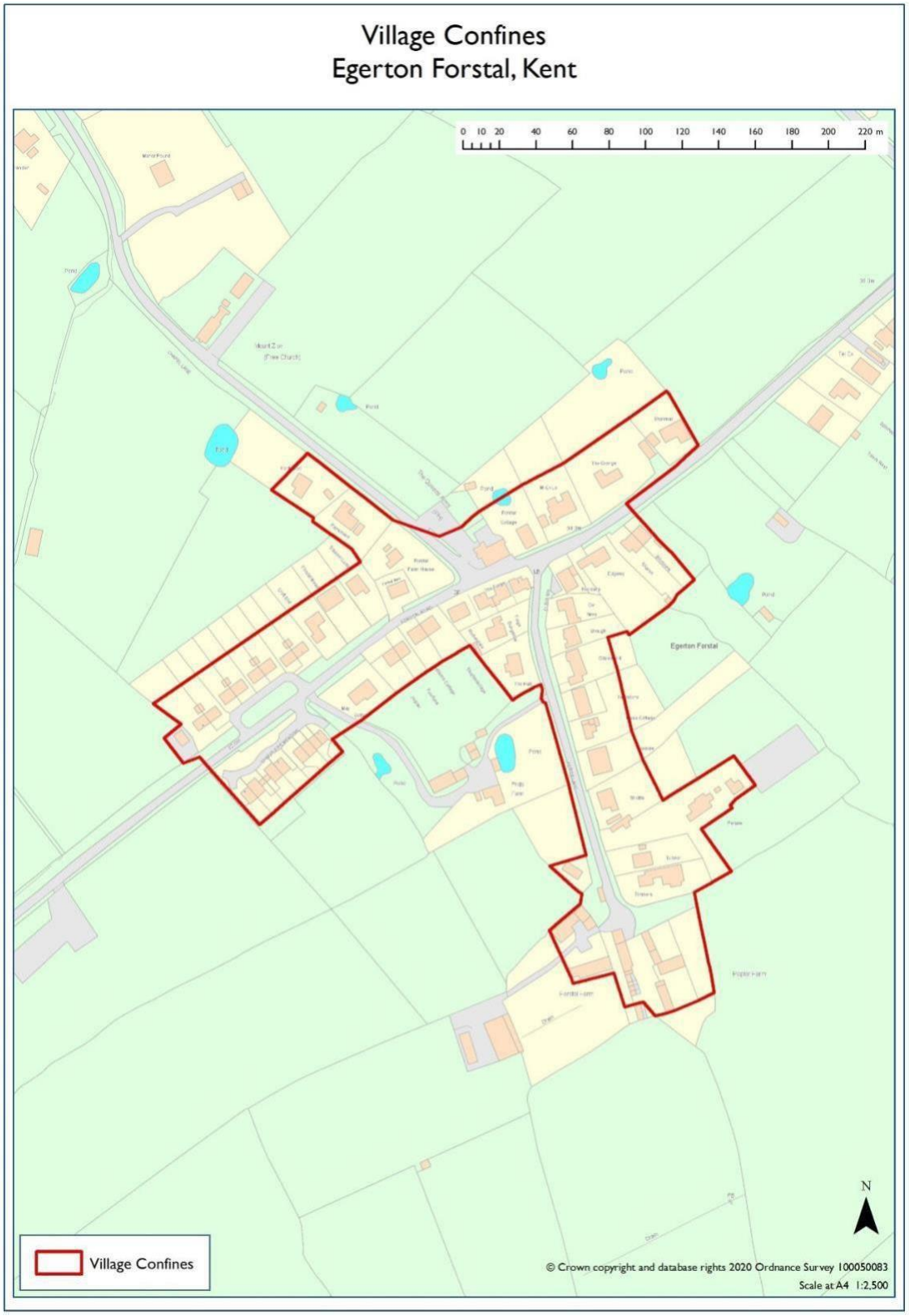
6. Tree Preservation Orders and Ancient Tree Inventory



7. Village Confines: Egerton



8. Village Confines: Egerton Forstal



9. Key Views

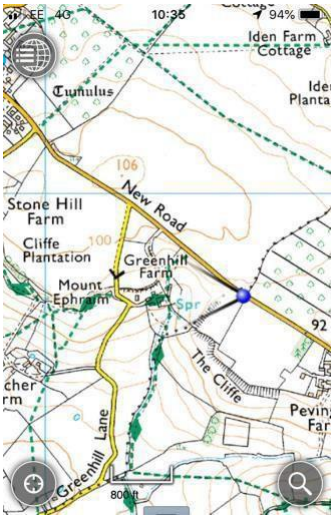
Court Lodge Farm to Charing/ North Downs





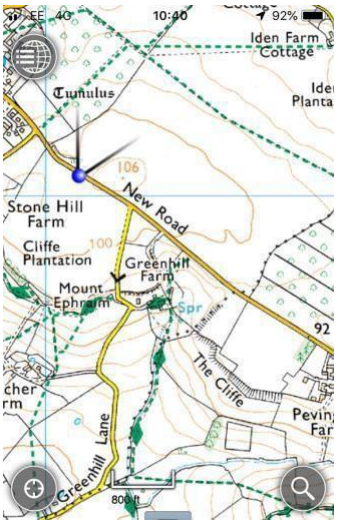
New Road to Greenhill/ The Weald





New Road to the North Downs





Mundy Bois Road to the village/Church





Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge





Egerton House over the Weald





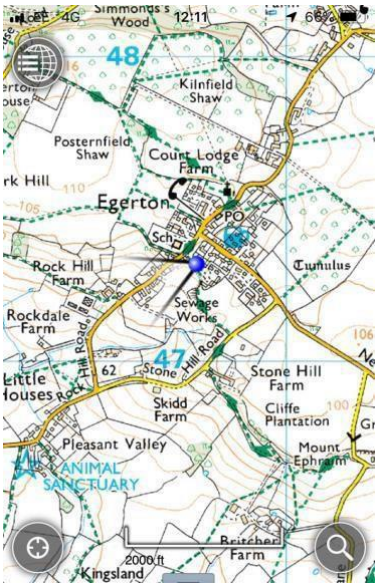
Link Hill to Pembles Cross/ the Weald



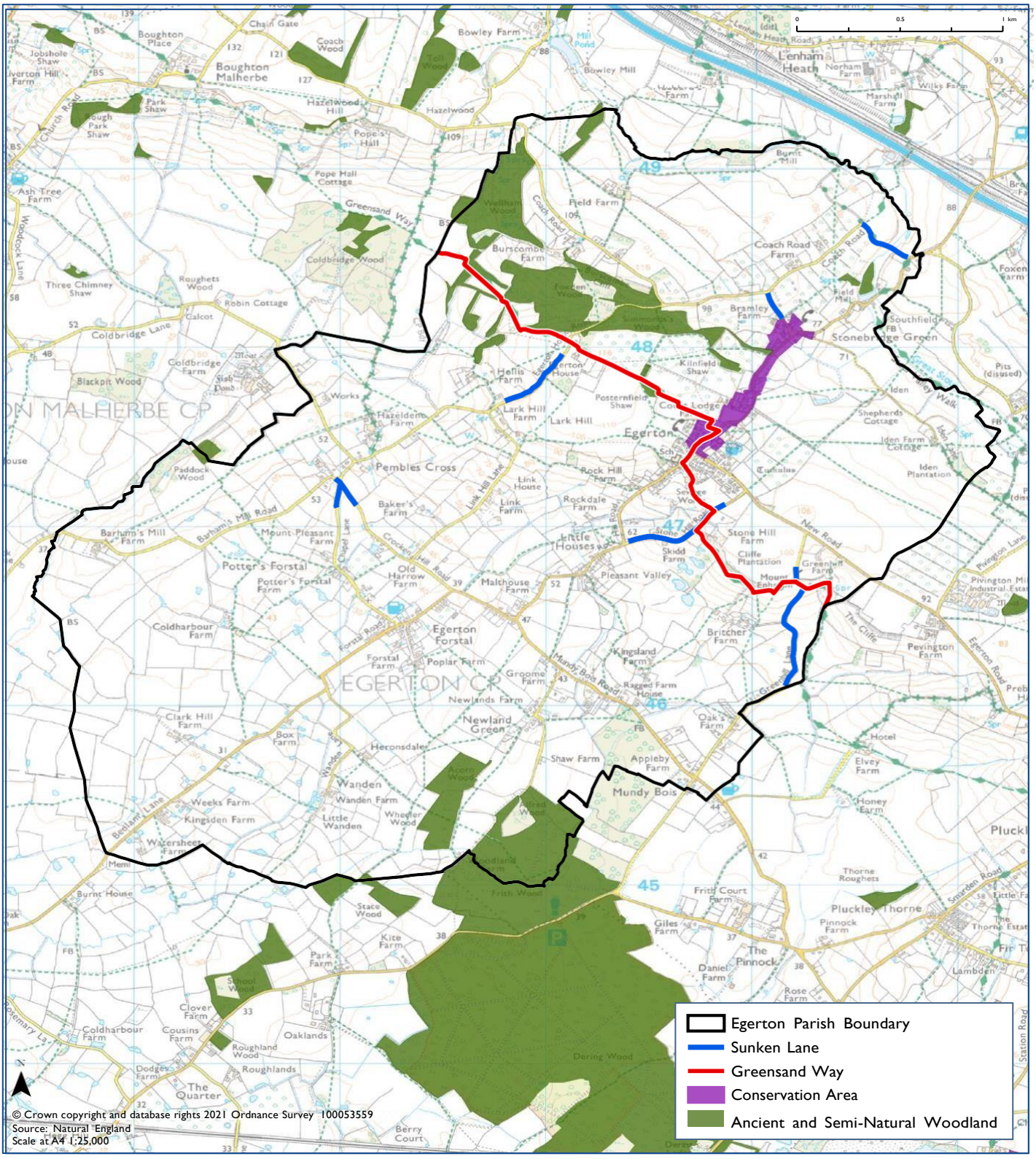


Recreation Ground to the Weald





10. Distinctive Landscape Features



Appendix 1

Wide grass verges

Pembles Cross/ Barhams Mill Road – wide verge outside Orchard House Pembles Cross/Egerton House Road - verge with post box - outside Fairview Barhams Mill Road wide verges towards the track to Coldharbour Farm Egerton House Road – wide verge opposite Willowdene
Coach Road – wide verge either side of entrance to Burscombe Farm
Stonebridge Green Road - verge outside Willow Farm, verge outside the Old Dairy
Rock Hill Road: outside the School, with Kentish Ragstone wall; outside Rock Hill House and Rock Hill bungalow; around the track leading to Rockdale; either side of Rock Hill Road near junction with Mundy Bois Road
Mundy Bois Road/junction with Newland Green Lane, grass verge with old iron signpost, deep ditch Newland Green Lane- wide verge from Groom Farm onwards and opposite Tresmond
Mundy Bois Road – wide verges and ditches from The Homestead over the stream bridge to Greenhill Lane
Greenhill Lane – wide verges from the crossroads to Mundy Bois cottages
Stonehill – wide verge outside Barlings
Crockenhill along the hillside – a steep bank of grass and flowers, some cultivated
Crockenhill Road/ Forstal Road – wide verges opposite and around the road sign
Crockenhill Road/Link Hill Lane at the Old Harrow– wide grass verges and private pond at edge of road.
Chapel Lane wide grass verges (some mown) and ditches most of its length. Ponds in fields near the road.
Forstal Road - wide verges and ditches towards Brookgate at double-bend on Bedlam Lane – several stretches of wide verges and ditches – near Wanden Lane, Goodwin House.

Appendix 2

Non-designated Heritage Assets

HERITAGE SITES CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT												
												MEETS
SITE NAME						REASON FOR SPECIAL COMMUNITY REGARD					COMMENTS	CRITERIA
												GREEN - YES
					AGE/	AESTHETICI	HISTORICAL	LANDSCAP	WILDLIFE	COMMUNITY		
					RARITY	INTEREST	INTEREST	INTEREST		VALUE		
HS 01 CAST IRON SIGNPOSTS					YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	TRADITIONAL RURAL. LOCATED AT THE BOUNDARIES	YES
											OF THE PARISH AND IN THE VILLAGE	
HS 02 WOODEN SIGNPOST IN VILLAGE					YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	TRADITIONAL RURAL. LOCATED IN HEART OF VILLAGE	YES
HS 03 RED POST BOX VR					YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	TRADITIONAL RURAL. INCREASINGLY RARE	YES
HS 04 RED POST BOX GR					YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	TRADITIONAL RURAL. INCREASINGLY RARE	YES
HS 05 BUCKLES SIGNAGE IN THE STREET					YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	IMPORTANT RECORD OF PAST COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AT	YES
											VILLAGE CENTRE. FORMER LARGE BAKERY	
HS 06 OLIVER'S GARAGE SIGNAGE IN THE STREET					NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	RECOGNISES FAMILY HISTORY OF SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE	YES
											ECONOMY - THREE GENERATIONS	
HS 07 WAR MEMORIAL IN CHURCHYARD					NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	IMPORTANT HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL RECORD	YES
HS 08 STONE PATHWAY FROM EGERTON					YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ANCIENT PATHWAY	YES
HOUSE THROUGH THE ORCHARDS TO THE CHURCH												
HS 09 SUNKEN BRIDLEWAY UP THE HILL FROM												
HAZELDENE FARM					YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	ANCIENT PATHWAY	YES
HS 10 MILLENNIUM HALL, HEART OF VILLAGE					NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	BUILT IN TRADITIONAL STYLE IN CELEBRATION OF 2000 WITH	YES
											FUNDS RAISED BY THE VILLAGE AND MATCHED BY H.L.F.	
HS 11 EGERTON FREE CHURCH, CHAPEL LANE					YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	BAPTIST CHURCH FROM 1750. REBUILT IN 1825 FOLLOWING A	YES
											FIRE. RETAINED FLEMISH BONDING AND CLAY TILES	
HS 12 PARISH BOUNDARY STONES/MARKERS					YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	INCREASINGLY RARE DEFINITION OF PARISH BOUNDARY	YES
HS 13 BROWNS KITCHEN, GREENHILL ROAD					YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	STONE WINDOWS AND PART OF CURRENT STRUCTURE POSSIBLY	YES
											DATING FROM 17TH CENTURY	
HS 14 EGERTON MAIN SIGN, THE STREET					NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT MARKER AT THE HEART OF THE	YES
											VILLAGE	
HS 15 COBBLESTONE PAVEMENT					YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	OUTSIDE THE OLD VICARAGE TO JONSTONE EAST, ROCK HILL	YES
HS 16 NEWLAND GREEN					YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO 3 HALL HOUSES, CENTRE OF A	
											TRADITIONAL FARMING COMMUNITY & ESSENTIAL GREEN SPACE	YES

Appendix 3

The NP Steering Group

Jane Carr, Chair
Lois Tilden, Secretary
Jerry Crossley
Elaine Graham
Graham Howland
Richard King
Ian Mella
Claire Stevens

The NP Terms of Reference

1. The main purpose of the Steering Group is to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for Egerton in order that it can proceed to independent Examination and community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as part of their overall plan for the borough. The plan will seek to:
   - identify the important aspects of life in Egerton which are to be considered in planning for the future
   - make proposals which will enhance the quality of life in the village in the years to come
   - provide a framework for future land usage within the plan's boundary
2. The **membership** of the steering group will include both members of Egerton Parish Council (EPC) and Egerton residents; and may be augmented by co-opted individuals with particular skills/ expertise. A Chairman and, if necessary, a Deputy Chairman will be elected by the members of the Steering Group and will be responsible for reporting progress monthly to EPC. All members of the steering group, and any co-opted members, must declare any personal interest that may be relevant to the recommendations made by the group, including membership of an organisation, ownership or interest in land or a business within the parish or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group. All members of the steering group, and any co-opted members, must share in the obligation to ensure that there is no discrimination in the planning process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process to all groups in the parish and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the planning process.
3. The main roles and responsibilities of the steering group are:
   - to be responsible for drawing up a Draft Neighbourhood Plan and any necessary revisions that is fully researched and evidenced and reflects as far as possible the views and aspirations of Egerton residents
   - to produce, monitor and update a project timetable

- to report regularly to EPC on progress to ensure that a) any recommendations are supported by the EPC as well as the steering group; and b) that the steering group's minutes are available via the EPC website
- to produce and implement a consultation and engagement strategy, to ensure as wide and open a consultation process with the community
- to undertake evidence gathering and analysis to support the production of the plan, maintaining comprehensive records of all evidence gathered
- to gather data from a range of sources to ensure that conclusions reached are fully evidenced, and that the aspirations and concerns of all residents are understood
- to identify sources of funding
- to liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to ensure the effectiveness of the plan

Specifically the Steering Group will:

- establish the future housing and business needs of Egerton parish, bearing in mind the broader social, economic and welfare needs of the community
- develop a robust framework to inform future development and use of land in Egerton, including infrastructure requirements
- identify both sites for development and any sites/ areas that should be considered for protection as identified through the Community Engagement strategy
- ensure that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has taken into consideration both national policy and the strategic policies of Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council
- provide support to EPC through the Examination and Referendum process

4. All **funds and grants** will be applied for and held by EPC and no expenditure may be committed without the prior approval of EPC.

Appendix 4

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Beauty of landscape/location, peace & tranquillity Desirable place to live Historic nature of settlement Many buildings with character and appealing design Community spirit, volunteering, range of activities, societies and clubs Pre-school and primary school Millennium Village Hall, Games Barn, Sports Pavilion Church, Chapel Playing Fields Pubs and garage/s Public Rights of Way Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows and green verges Dark skies Abundant wildlife Not on a through road to anywhere Egerton Housing Association	Above average house prices Above average commercial rents Some newer buildings and their layout unsympathetic to the village setting Poor mobile phone coverage Inconsistent and insufficient broadband provision/speeds Poor bus service and no connections to other public transport High proportion of older residents Lack of employment opportunities for young people Heavy vehicles on narrow roads No local medical facility Small farms employing fewer workers Focus on grazing land rather than crops, causing loss of wildlife species Not on a through road to anywhere
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Scope for affordable local needs housing Community transport provision? Gift of land to the parish (Orchard Nurseries) Community based and run older people's housing Improving Public Footpath (AW68) and the wider PRoW network Encourage more sustainable heating systems Measure to improve water efficiency More farm diversification: different & more employment Potential for well-situated and effective renewable energy sources Creation of a purpose-built pre-school facility Extensions to the Games Barn and Millennium Hall to improve facilities and increase/extend use The MUGA (multi-use games area)	Lenham Heath garden village and impact on roads and services Speeding vehicles Inappropriately sited and unsympathetic new development More barn conversions yet increased demand for new barn buildings Decline in volunteering for village activities Poorly sited and uncertain benefits of alternative energy generating systems Closure of the village shop and post office Damage to views and the natural environment Loss of young people/ young families of no scope for affordable housing Village sustainability in decline Light pollution from expanding towns, unsympathetic domestic lighting Wildlife displaced by human activitiy or lost altogether