CASSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2021 – 2041

Referendum Version

MAY 2023

GUIDE TO READING THIS PLAN

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan and how you can take part in and respond to the consultation.

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of West Oxfordshire District Council.

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

This key section firstly provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed in Table 1. There are also Policy Maps at the back of the plan.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy which the Parish Council will have some influence over. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

CONTENTS

TABLE OF PLANS

FOREWORD

Cassington village is located to the north west of Oxford in an area to the north of the Thames. Archaeological evidence indicates the land has been farmed since the bronze age with continual evidence of agriculture in and around the village through Saxon times to the medieval age when St Peter's Church was constructed, a Grade 1 listed building. Cassington developed organically around two greens and much of the centre of the village, now forming the Conservation Area was built in the 17th Century. Substantial changes came to Cassington with the 1801 Enclosure Act with the Duke of Marlborough taking control of most of the land to the north of the village, re-routing the road through it, establishing local industrial sites and farms in the surrounding area. Since then, the village has grown slowly and now represents one of the few small villages lying close to Oxford in contrast to surrounding rapid development in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell districts numbering from tens to thousands of houses.

Many of the residents of Cassington village feel incredibly privileged to live in a place where there is a real sense of community. Village amenities including the school, public houses, the church, the Sports Pavillion, sports fields, allotments and Village Hall contribute to highly connected social networks where people know each other, enjoy their leisure time with each other and support each other during times of adversity. This sense of community is unusually strong in Cassington and something treasured by all of us. Given the pressures of development on the districts surrounding Oxford and the very limited infrastructure, especially related to transport and drainage, it was felt that the village residents should give their views on what constitutes sustainable planning for the future of Cassington including for green infrastructure. As a result, the production of the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan was requested by the Cassington Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Plans are important tools for planners, planning committees and developers as well as communities. They allow communities to identify what is important to them and how they would like to see the places where they live develop in the future. Together with the associated Green Infrastructure Plan they identify how a community can develop sustainably including consideration of human well-being, protection of biodiversity and minimising climate footprint both in terms of building and in subsequent operation of settlements (e.g. sustainable transport links).

This Neighbourhood Plan and Green Infrastructure Plan were prepared by a Neighbourhood Planning Committee comprising residents of Cassington, including a representative from the Parish Council. Funding was obtained from the government's support programme for neighbourhood plan preparation and support throughout the process by Oneil Homer Ltd. As such both plans have been prepared based on local knowledge by local people. During the preparation of the Neighbourhood and Green Infrastructure plans village residents were kept informed of progress and consulted on their thoughts on what policies and wider considerations were appropriate for Cassington. We hope the results of this process lays out guidance for a vision of the future sustainable development of Cassington Village owned by the village residents.

It remains for me to thank all those involved including the members of the Neighbourhood Planning Committee (Jonty Ashworth; Piers Beeton; Ian Finlay; Barbara King; Anne Luttman-Johnson) Oneil Homer (Leani Haim); the Parish Council (Hugh Thomas, David Butlin, Barbara King, Chris Metcalf, Julie Perrin and Clerk, Tracey Cameron) and the residents of Cassington who have contributed their time and thoughts to the completion of this process.

Alex Rogers, Chair of the Cassington Neighbourhood Planning Committee

LIST OF POLICIES

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1. Cassington Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), on 8 December 2020. The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A on page 4). The plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to March 2041. The Plan will form part of the development plan for the West Oxfordshire District, alongside the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. A Local Plan Review is due to start at the end of 2022 with the emerging Local Plan period to 2041. The Neighbourhood Plan has adopted the emerging Local Plan period due to the location of the Parish in the Green Belt.

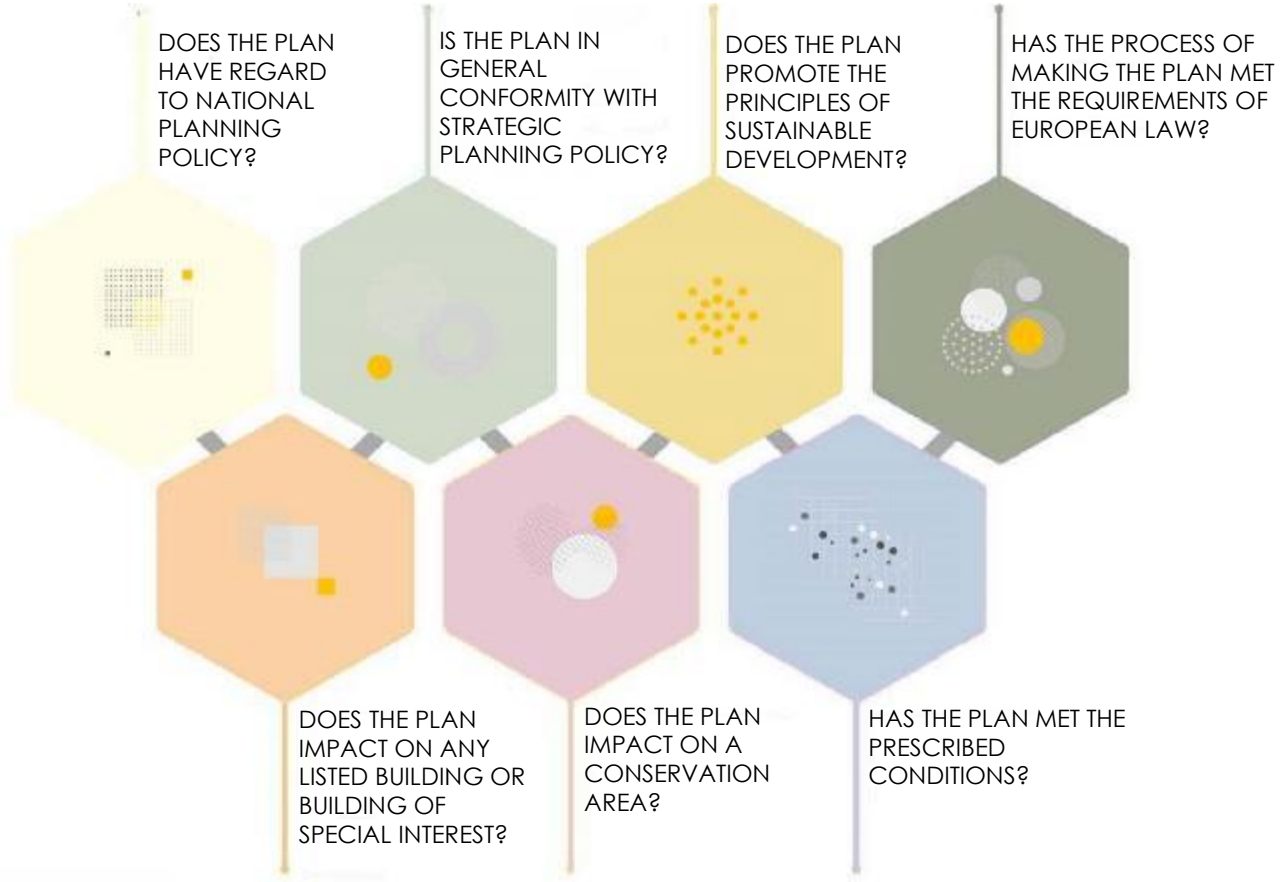
1.3. Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes part of the Council's statutory development plan and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided in the neighbourhood area. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning. Although there is scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet all of the relevant basic conditions (see Figure 2 overleaf).

1.4. In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community and stakeholders in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority (over 50%) of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the neighbourhood area.

THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

1.5. In February 2022 the Government published for consultation its White Paper, 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom'[1], which proposes to make changes to planning system. It indicates that there is still a future for neighbourhood planning in that system. It remains unknown when any proposed changes will be implemented..

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom



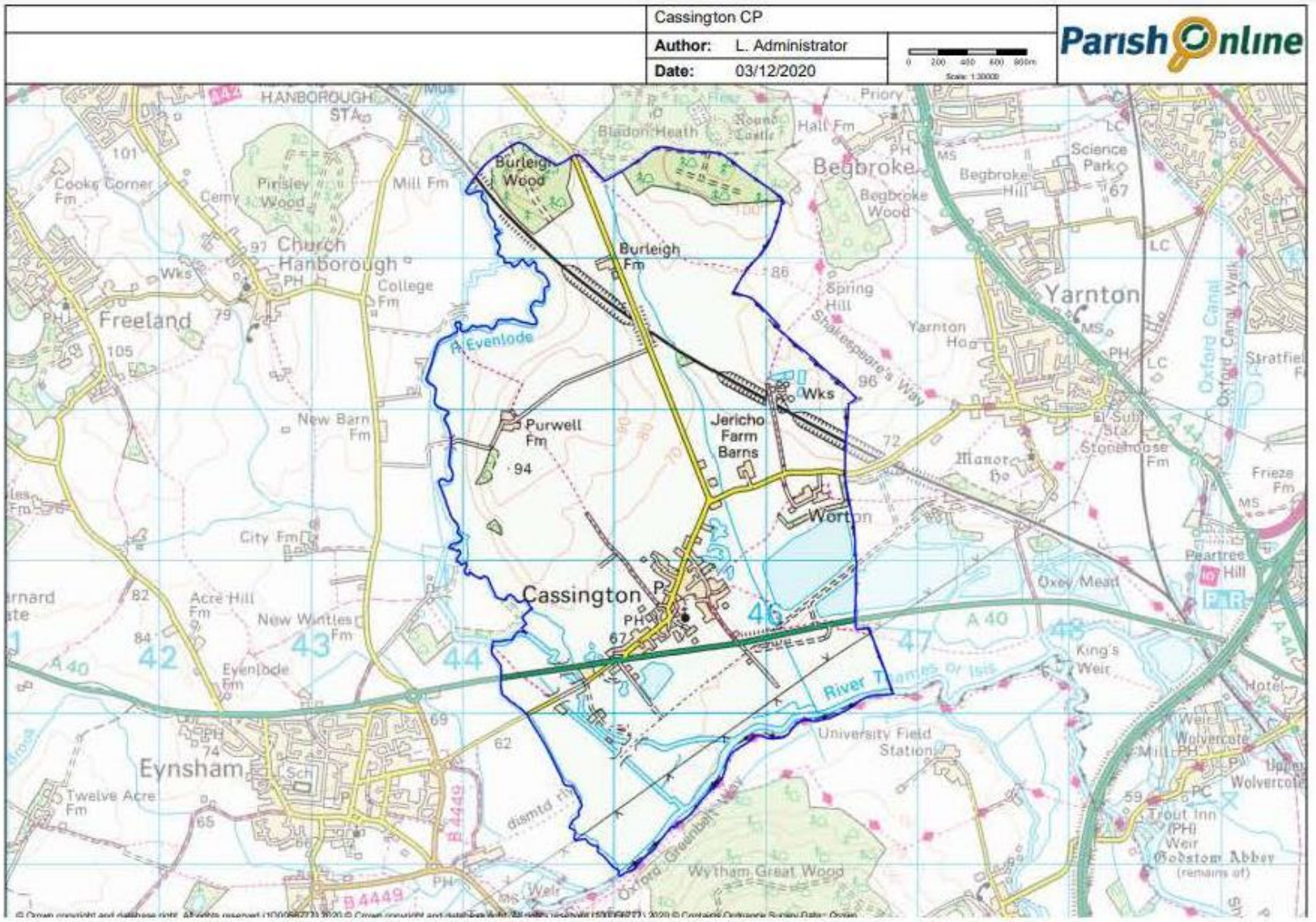
1 Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions

1.6. A draft Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation 6 January 2022 – 28 February 2022 in line with the Regulations. The Parish Council has reviewed the comments received from the local community and other interested parties and has made changes to this final version. They have also updated some of the reports included in the appendices of the plan.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & THE HABITATS REGULATIONS

1.7. WODC has confirmed in its screening opinion that the proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan do not have the potential for significant environmental effects and therefore no strategic environmental assessment is necessary in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended).

1.8. The screening opinion also confirms that a habitats regulations assessment is not required as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).



Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 The village of Cassington lies to the north of the Thames, in the District of West Oxfordshire, approximately 8km from the centre of Oxford which lies to the south east. The village is surrounded by arable farmland especially to the north, east and west. To the south lies Lowland Meadows and Floodplain Grazing Marsh located along the northern banks of the river Thames. These meadows date back to medieval times and include Oxey Mead, Pixey Mead, Yarnton Mead, Cassington Meadows and Oxford Meadows. These sites are either Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The entire Parish of Cassington is washed over with green belt. Lying 1.5km to the south west is the village of Eynsham and approximately 3km to the north east lies the village of Yarnton which is in the district of Cherwell. The nearest main service centre to Cassington other than Oxford, is Witney, which lies about 10km directly to the west, along the A40.

2.2 Cassington is a village of approximately 300 households. The 2011 census recorded a population of 750 people. The only other settlement in the Parish is the hamlet of Worton which lies about 1km to the east. This village was a similar size to Cassington in medieval times but now comprises just half a dozen dwellings as well as a café, an organic food shop, a function hall, stables and a range of rental buildings for small businesses. On the eastern side of Worton is the Agrivert food digestion facility used for converting food waste to energy.

2.3 Demographic statistics are not available for Cassington alone but are aggregated with those for Eynsham. The statistics in this section are drawn from the Local Insight Profile for "Eynsham and Cassington Ward" area published by Oxfordshire County Council and the District Data Service (published February 2021). These indicate that 17.9% of the population are children of age 0-15, 56.2% are of working age and 25.9% are aged 65 and above. The figures for aged 65+ are above those of West Oxfordshire (21.8%) and considerably above the national average of 18.4% indicating that Cassington and Eynsham have a higher-than-average proportion of people in this age category. Whilst West Oxfordshire has shown a steady increase in population since 2001. Eynsham and Cassington showed negligible growth until 2010 when the population began to grow to a level of 6-7% annual increase in 2014, remaining at this level since. Most households in the Cassington and Eynsham Ward are married households (929) whilst the next largest category is pensioner households (669). There are 295 one person households (below age 65), 222 cohabiting households and 105 households comprising lone parent families with cohabiting children.

2.4 Unemployment in the Cassington and Eynsham Ward (4.6%) is below the national average (6.4%), In line with these figures the proportion of residents in the Cassington and Eynsham Ward claiming benefits (6.5%) is below the national average (11.7%). Of the seven domains of deprivation (employment, income, health & disability, education, skills and training, crime, living environment, barriers to housing and services), the Cassington and Eynsham Ward score zero on every domain (national average of 19.5-21%) apart from barriers to housing and services, where 22.4% of the population are affected, higher than

the national average of 21.4%. This is indicative of issues with housing supply and access to services in the area. The average annual household income in the Cassington and Eynsham Ward is £52,551, considerably higher than the national average of £43,966. However, average house prices in the ward are considerably higher than the national average with a short supply locally particularly of the most affordable properties (Band A and Band B). Levels of health and education are better in the Cassington and Eynsham Ward than in West Oxfordshire as a whole and nationally.

2.5 Cassington parish lies on the north bank of the river Thames at its confluence with the Evenlode and covers 2,299 acres (930 hectares). It contains the hamlet of Worton and the site of the deserted medieval hamlet of Somerford. The parish boundary follows the Thames on the south, streams of the Evenlode in the west, and field boundaries on the east and north-east; in the north the parish extends into Burleigh wood which in the later 13th century was claimed by both Cassington and Bladon, and the boundary there is probably later than that in the rest of the parish. The streams which form the southern part of the eastern boundary were straightened in the earlier 19th century and were in 1982 little more than drainage ditches. By the end of the 18th century the main branch of the Evenlode flowed out of Cassington parish to Eynsham mill and then turned west to flow past Cassington mill, cutting off the south-west corner of the parish. The Thames has also changed its course slightly, leaving a small strip of Cassington, once an island, on its southern bank. A small brook which rises on Bladon heath and flows south through the parish to the Thames formed the boundary between the villages of Cassington and Worton; the southern part of its course was straightened at enclosure in 1801. A smaller stream flows from north to south through Cassington village and then through drainage ditches into the Thames.

2.6 The land rises from 60 m on the wide alluvial flood plain of the Thames to high points of 111 m on Worton heath and 102 m in Burleigh wood on the northern boundary, and 98 m. at Purwell Farm in the west. Along the western boundary the land slopes steeply down to the Evenlode at 65 m. Most of the parish is open farmland, but Burleigh wood and Worton heath on the northern boundary are both wooded. The latter was a 19th- and 20th-century plantation, having been rough pasture and furze in 1797. Burleigh wood was said to have been taken into Wychwood forest by Henry II, and although by 1300 the Evenlode formed the eastern boundary of the forest, leaving Burleigh outside it, the area has remained woodland.

2.7 Cassington is unusual in remaining a relatively small village close to Oxford. It is surrounded to the north, east and west by rapidly growing rural service centres including Eynsham, Woodstock, Long Hanborough (all West Oxfordshire District), Yarnton and Begbroke (Cherwell District). Significant major development has already taken place within the local area with the Eynsham / Cassington Ward being particularly targeted with the further expansion of Eynsham village to the west (approximately 1000 homes) on top of new estates built over the last 10 years to the east of the village and the plans for a further 2,200 homes in the Saltcross Garden Village lying on the northern side of the A40 opposite Eynsham, covering 531 acres of countryside with further options of expanding this development to the north. Woodstock has 300 homes currently being built and planning

applications for a further 300 approved. Long Hanborough has new developments including 50 homes at Myrtle Farm, 25 at Oliver's Garage, 169 at Church Road, 120 at Hanborough Park, and 32 at Vanbrugh Meadows. North Leigh has also been subject to new development at Marlborough Gardens (50 houses), Shepherd's Walk (76 houses) and Bluebell Gardens (10 houses) and Freeland a further 41 houses at Oakland Grange. Cassington lies on the border of Cherwell District Council who through a now adopted Local Plan Partial Review include the loss of Green Belt land around Begbroke and Yarnton, fusing the villages and building approximately 4,400 new properties in the process. These developments are materially relevant to the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan as local infrastructure such as the transport network, provision of school places and drainage and sewerage are already under significant pressure. Cassington itself has had two developments in the last 10 years, Barrow Court and Williams Court (20 houses), the former built on green belt land, the latter a brown-field development for rental properties.

2.8 Cassington has a number of businesses located within its boundaries including a building materials reclamation yard, a nursery, a physiotherapy unit, a facility for the storage of equipment for fairground entertainers, as well as two public houses. Much of the surrounding land is devoted to agriculture and there are several farms to the north of the village. Close by on the Yarnton Road, at Jericho Farm and in the hamlet of Worton there are also rental units for small businesses as well as Worton Hall, a venue for meetings and celebratory activities such as wedding receptions, and the Worton Café and organic food shop. There are also business premises located at the southern end of Burleigh Road. The presence of the main A 40 road, built through the parish in 1931 and 1932, has attracted some light industry to the south-west corner of the parish, notably at the junction with the Eynsham road; firms established there include the Evenlode Truck Centre (1951) and Smith's Ready Mix Concrete Ltd. A number of people within the village also operate from home in small business enterprises which include rural industries (e.g. farming, landscaping and gardening), building and renovation of properties, recruitment and other activities. The majority of small businesses in West Oxfordshire (72.6%) employ 0-4 people. The largest employment sectors in Cassington and Eynsham are in retail (15%), education (12%), and health and social work (10%) with many people travelling to work in the major urban centre of Oxford or the service centres of Witney, Carterton and Kidlington (including Oxford Airport). A higher proportion of the population of Cassington and Witney than the national average work in managerial occupations, professional or associated occupations, and skilled trades whilst employment in administrative / secretarial and elementary occupations is lower than the national average.

2.9 Oxford being the location of two major universities and a large number of private and publically-funded schools is a major driver of employment in education. The universities also have driven the development of high technology companies including through surrounding science and industrial parks (e.g. located at Begbroke, around Oxford Airport, Eynsham, Witney). Oxford is the regional retail centre although the lack of public transport provision and cost of parking in the city means that many people in Cassington use nearby villages or services centres for convenience shopping (e.g. Eynsham, Long Hanborough, Woodstock) and the retail and leisure facilities in larger towns in West Oxfordshire and

Cherwell such as Witney, Kidlington and Bicester. The average distance to the place of work for West Oxfordshire is 9.1km, above the national average of 4.6km.

2.10 Cassington and the surrounding area has been occupied for at least 3000 years with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Saxon and Roman activities uncovered in archaeological investigations at Purwell Farm, Worton Farm, Cassington Mill and even at the recent construction site of houses built by Blenheim Estates along the Cassington-Yarnton Road. Within its boundaries there is a Saxon Cemetery and much evidence of previous occupation. The Anglo-Saxon name 'caersentun', meant 'tun where cress grows and by the time of the Doomsday book in the 11th century it was known as Cersetone. The population of Cassington and the nearby hamlet of Worton fluctuated through medieval times. There was also the village of Somerford just north of the Thames but this was abandoned in the 14th Century. The church of St Peters was constructed in 1123 by Geoffrey de Clinton and Eynsham Abbey. Godstow Abbey also built up and estate in the area but from the 14th century onwards the local economy declined possibly as a result of absentee landlords. The Dissolution of the Monastries in the 16th Century led to further decline in the village as land holdings were broken up and sold off, mainly to Christ Church College, Oxford and to the Blenheim Estate.

2.11 Cassington village is divided by a small stream into two parts, known in the 20th century as the upper and lower village although both are on the same level; they may have been called west and east ends in the 16th century when property in the east end of Cassington was recorded. The main village streets, the Yarnton or Eynsham road and Bell Lane, form a V pointing northwards; a footpath, diverted southwards in the 19th century by the building of the school, links the upper and lower village. The upper village centres on a large, roughly triangular green. The surname 'at green' recorded in 1316 suggests that the green was an early feature of the village topography, but its exact form has changed from time to time. In 1797 it was smaller and further north than in 1982, on land later occupied by the 19th-century school and vicarage garden. On the western side of the green is a row of 18th- and 19th-century terraced cottages, including the Red Lion inn, of local rubble with thatched or tiled roofs. There is another terrace of similar date on the west side of the Yarnton road, north of the green, and a short terrace of heavily restored houses, some occupied as alms-houses in 1982, in Church Lane. The church lies on the southern edge of the upper village, north-west of the former manor house, Reynolds Farm, and away from the main streets. The 19th-century village school stands on the north-east side of the green, and south of it is its later 20th-century replacement. The other notable 19th-century addition to the upper village was Manor Farm, formerly Cassington House, a red brick building of two storeys with attics, set back from the road in a large garden.

2.12 The lower village centres on a small green. On the east side of it is the former Bell Inn, from which a datestone of 1688 has been recovered. On the south is the Old Manor, an L-shaped building of coursed rubble with a stone tiled roof, built c. 1735 by Roger Bouchier, fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. It comprises a large room, called in 1783 a dining room, which rises almost the full height of the house, two smaller rooms on the ground floor and two on the first floor, all with their original panelling. The kitchen and servants' quarters were in an outbuilding across a small courtyard. The house has no connexion with any

manor; its name, first recorded c. 1930, may have been given it by the historian Henry Minn who occupied the house from that date. In Horsemere Lane, leading south from the green, are a number of 18th century cottages, including Bell Cottage dated 1727 and Thames Mead Farm, the former Godstow manor house. In Bell Lane, which runs north from the green to the Yarnton road, is Lime Cottage, a substantial 18th-century house extended in the 19th century, and a terrace of largely 18th-century cottages repaired in 1836. Several terraced cottages and a larger house, Ivydene at the start of the footpath to Worton, were added to the lower village in the 19th century, as was the Primitive Methodist chapel of 1870 on the footpath between the upper and the lower village.

2.13 Significant changes were brought to Cassington with the inclosure of 1801. Roads were substantially altered, with the road to Bladon being straightened and moved eastwards and that to Eynsham being moved around 1/4 mile to the north. Between 1800 and 1802 the duke of Marlborough also built a short canal from the Thames to a wharf on the Cassington to Eynsham road. It was at this point that the farms lying to the north of the village were built. The L-shaped Burley farmhouse and outbuildings were built soon after inclosure (the date 1801 is on one of the roof timbers), but the builders re-used earlier material including 18th- century beams, doors and mouldings, and a datestone of 1605. Purwell Farm, whose plan is almost identical to that of Burley Farm, was also built immediately after inclosure, again re-using 18th-century materials. The materials may have come from houses in Cassington village demolished by the Blenheim estate. Jericho Farm was built in 1804.

2.14 Since the 1920s Cassington, like other villages near Oxford, has grown considerably. Much of the development has been along the Eynsham road, where 12 council houses were built c. 1930. There has been much infilling in the village, notably at the Tennis, west of Bell Lane, and in Elms Road in the upper village, and in Bell Close and St. Peter's Close in the lower, where estates of council and private houses have been built. This building seems to have been based on availability of land within the village. The Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) describes much of the 20th-century infill found in the village (most notably The Tennis and St. Peter's Close) as not responding with sensitivity to the appearance and aesthetic quality of Cassington's historic core. However, it identifies the recent corner development on the east side of the street between the upper green and St. Peter's Church as entirely in keeping with the form, scale and detailing of the village.

2.15 Worton consists of a single street; at its west end is the Old Rectory, a small 17th- or 18th-century building of local rubble which was greatly enlarged c. 1840; it was in the earlier 19th century the farmhouse for the rectory estate. At the east end of the street is Rectory Farm, dated 1808 and surrounded by modern farm buildings. Between the two houses are several 19th- or possibly 18th-century cottages, recently restored.

2.16 The core of Cassington Village, including the 12th Century church of St Peter's and the buildings of 17th and 18th Century origin, has been designated a Conservation Area. The church is a Grade 1 Listed building and 12 of the houses are Grade 2. A number of features in the graveyard of the church are also listed Grade 2 and the village War Memorial was designated as Grade 2 listed just in 2020.

2.17 The most significant areas for biodiversity close to Cassington are the Lowland Meadows and Floodplain Grazing Marsh located to the south of the village along the northern side of the Thames. These meadows date back to medieval times and include Oxey Mead, Pixey and Yarnton Meads, Cassington Meadows and Oxford Meadows. These sites are either Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The host a spectacular diversity of meadow plants, including the snake's head fritillary, insects and some species of wetland birds such as curlews and lapwings as well as wildfowl from the river. 97% of this type of habitat was lost between 1930 and 1984 (Wildlife Trusts, 2012) so it is nationally scarce community of plants and animals. To the south of the River Thames there are more flood meadows as well as Wytham Woods (SSSI), an area which is notable as being a site where the University of Oxford has run long-term experiments and observations on many aspects of ecology. It is a semi-ancient woodland with parts dating back to the ice age and hosts 500 species of plants, a wealth of woodland habitats, and 800 species of butterflies and moths amongst other animals.

2.18 To the north of Cassington there are several semi-natural woodlands. Pinsey Woods is a good example, which has a combination of natural woods with a considerable diversity of plants as well as conifer plantations which are of little value for nature. There are also small patches of lowland meadow and semi-improved grassland.

2.19 Both within and surrounding Cassington are several zones within the Natural England Habitat Network. These include areas of habitat restoration (e.g. Worton gravel pits), Network Enhancement Zone 1 (fields to the east of Cassington) Network Enhancement Zone 2 (south of A40) and Network Expansion Zone (areas surrounding the village especially to the north west and south). These are detailed in the Green Infrastructure Plan.

2.20 Other potentially restricting factors in terms of development in Cassington exist. One that concerns residents is flooding. Cassington is at low risk of flooding from the River Thames to the south and the River Evenlode to the west. However, the village is at risk from surface flooding events even at a 1 in 30-year event. Elm's Road appears to be particularly vulnerable from these events which result from surface water draining off the fields to the north of Cassington. This is consistent with flooding of properties on Elm's Road in 2007. Foxwell Court, St Peter's Close, Horsemere Lane, Foxwell End and Reynold's Farm are also at risk of flooding from extreme surface water events. Outside the village Jericho Farm and Worton are also vulnerable to flooding and the road junction to Worton Farm was flooded over the winter of 2020/2021. Following the 2007 flood events action was taken to mitigate future surface-water flooding including the clearing of previously blocked drains and the building of a drainage pond behind the south west corner of the playing fields. Since this time there have been no further property flooding events in Cassington village although the threat remains.

2.21 A further flood risk to the village is the existence of an ageing high-pressure water line which runs from Farmoor Reservoir to Banbury which lies to the north of the village. This buried water main crosses the track leading to Purwell Farm where there are several concrete manhole covers. The main has failed previously in other locations and has caused

considerable flooding issues and may represent a significant risk to village households and even possibly a threat to life. There are also concerns with respect to the ability of the local drainage and sewerage system to sustain further development around the village and local area.

2.22 It is also noted that in October 2021 Cassington was subjected to a Category T2/T3 (moderate to strong) tornado which caused significant damage to trees as well as to buildings, walls and other items. The same day a Category T4 (severe) tornado struck Burleigh Wood to the north of the village. This is the second occurrence of tornados in the area in and around Eynsham and Cassington in less than 10 years. Whether these are exceptional events or whether occurrence of such extreme weather is increasing is unknown at the present time.

2.23 Exploitation of the gravel along the Thames began in the 1930s and continued for c. 30 years but had ceased by 1982. It has left its mark on the landscape around Cassington, including the filled gravel pits south of Worton and land lowered to the east of Purwell Farm. Valuable resources remain in the vicinity of the village especially to the south and west mainly comprising sharp sand and gravel and Fuller's earth.

2.24 Transport is significant problem in West Oxfordshire. Cassington has limited access to public transport with a single bus stop outside of the village on the A40 and a relatively limited bus service into Oxford. The A40 is extremely congested with more than 22,000 journeys a day where it passes Cassington. A cycle route is available to Oxford but to reach other destinations in the local area requires the use of roads, many of which are dangerous for cyclists. Asides from making road journeys difficult congestion in and around Cassington is also a source of air and noise pollution. Although there are plans to place bus lanes on the A40 as well as an 800-space park and ride at Eynsham, plans to build many more houses in the area will likely mean issues of congestion remain or get worse. A railway has now been suggested which will run to the north of Cassington, but no stop is planned to service the village. It is important that plans for development within Cassington and around it consider the impacts on the already significant traffic congestion problems in the vicinity of the village. Potential mitigations to reduce dependence on private motor vehicles are discussed in the Green Infrastructure report.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Parish lies within West Oxfordshire District situated in the county of Oxfordshire. WODC is the local planning authority for the area.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs of the latest NPPF version published in July 2021 are considered especially relevant:

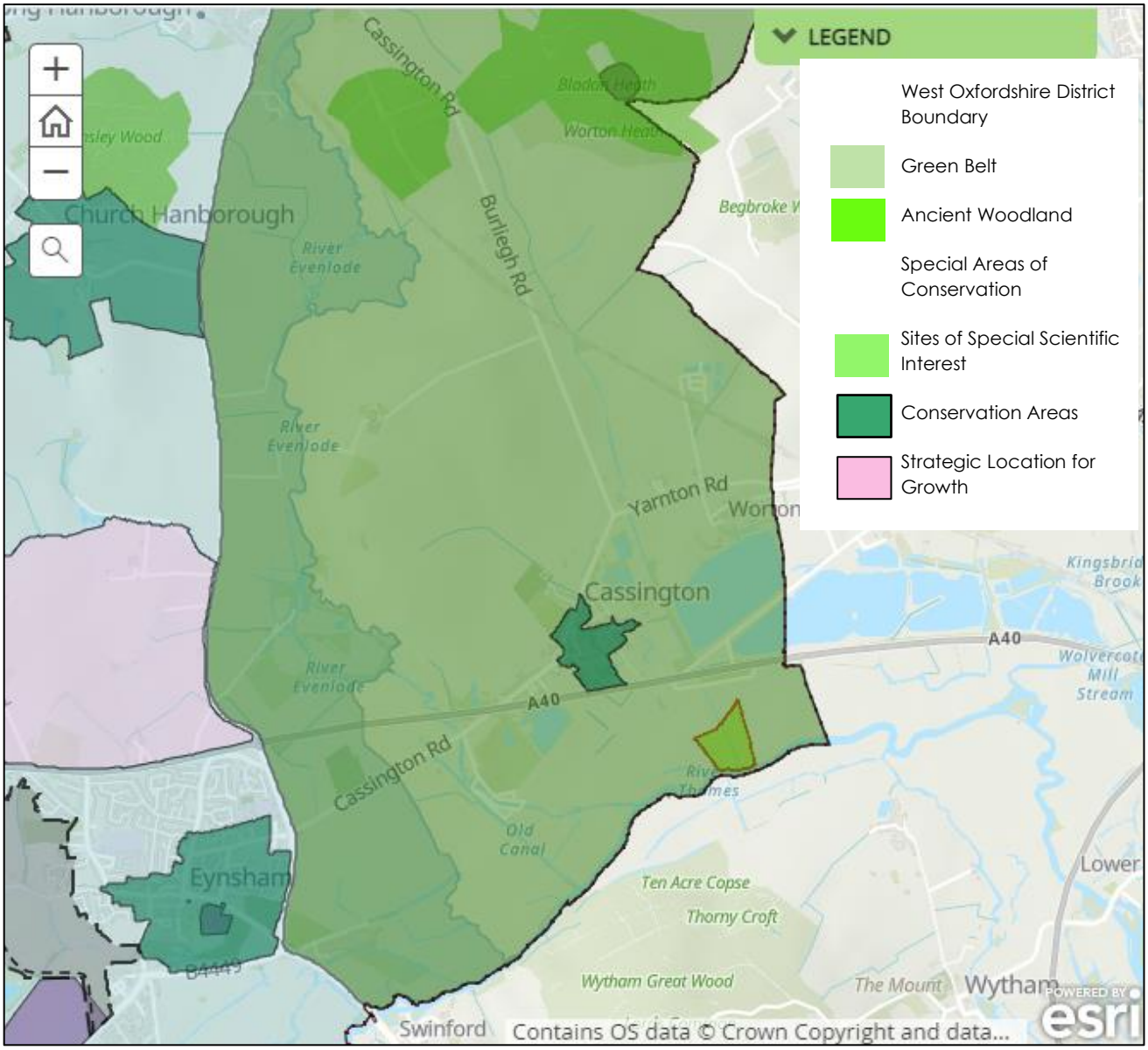
- Neighbourhood planning (§28 - §30)
- Healthy and Safe Communities (§92)
- Community facilities (§93)
- High quality design (§128)
- Proposals affecting the Green Belt (§149)
- The Natural Environment (§174)
- Biodiversity (§179)
- The Historic Environment (§190)

3.3 The Government has also set out a requirement for the provision of First Homes in a Written Ministerial statement on 24 May 2021. These requirements were subsequently incorporated into National Planning Practice Guidance. As the Parish is 'washed over' by Green Belt, First Homes Rural Exception Sites is unable to come forward in The Parish. However, this does not preclude First Homes forming part of the affordable housing contributions through infill or Rural Exception Sites allowed for by adopted policies of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. It is anticipated that the forthcoming Local Plan will deal with this matter appropriately.

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan which primarily comprises *The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted 27 September 2018) and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy.*

3.5 Cassington is defined as a 'Village' in the settlement hierarchy and remains 'washed over' by the Oxford Green Belt in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (WOLP 2031) (see Plan B overleaf). The WOLP 2031 makes no development allocations in The Parish and expects development proposals to have regard to relevant Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF. The WOLP 2031 includes a very large 'Salt Cross Garden Village' north of Eynsham on the western boundary of the Parish.



Plan B: WOLP 2031 Policies Map

3.6 The most relevant policies in the WOLP 2031 are set out below:

- **Policy OS2 Locating Development in the Right Places** – which includes a settlement hierarchy defining Cassington as a 'Village' and sets out a series of key design principles to shape sustainable development including having regard to National Planning Policy provisions on the Green Belt for managing development proposals.
- **Policy OS4 High Quality Design** – requiring new development to respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality.
- **Policy H1 Amount and Distribution of Housing** – requiring 5,596 homes in the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area (of which the Parish is a part). 2,750 of this total is to meet Oxford's unmet housing need and will be delivered through a strategic urban extension to the west of Eynsham and 'Salt Cross Garden Village' to the north of the A40 on the western boundary of Cassington.

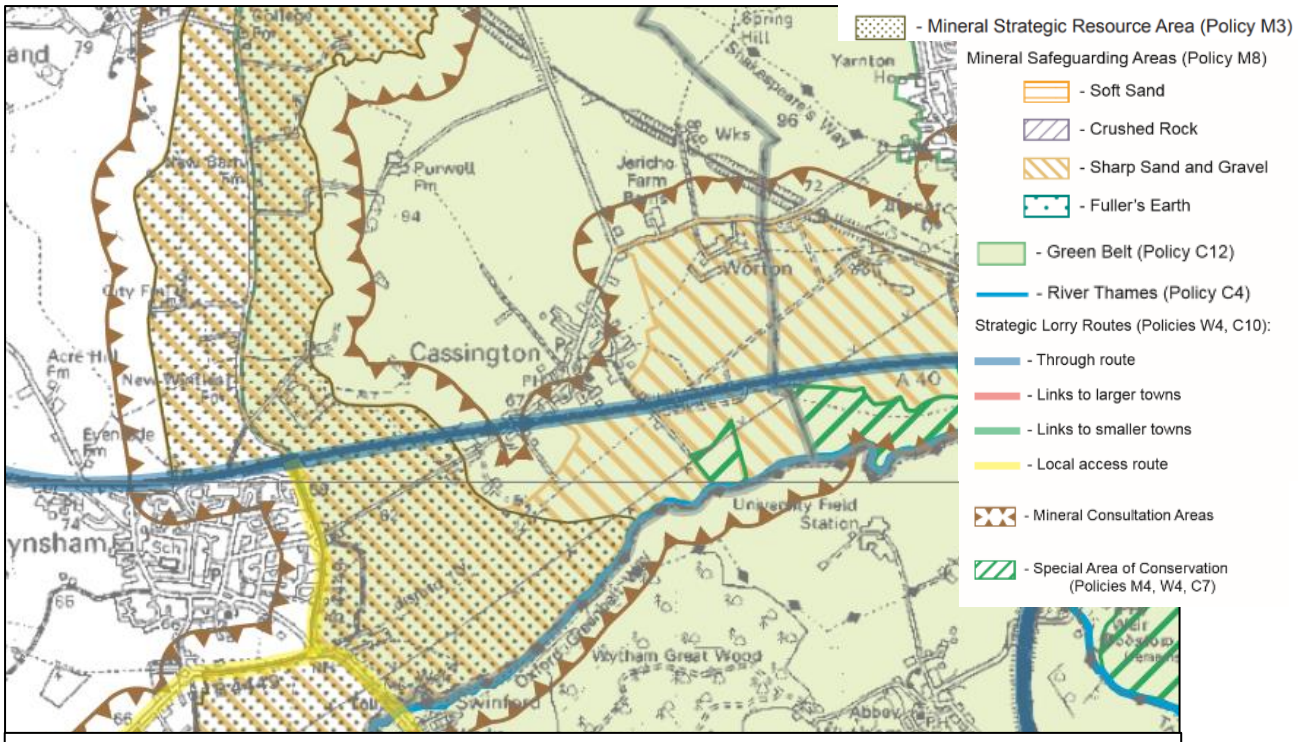
- **Policy H2 Delivery of New Homes** – allowing additional development in Villages in certain circumstances. For Cassington this would mean having regard to National Planning Policy provisions on Green Belt in managing development proposals. Whilst §140 allows for detailed amendments to Green Belt boundaries through neighbourhood plans, WOLP 2031 does not establish a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries which is a requirement in the first instance (see Policy EW10).
- **Policy H3 Affordable Housing** – defining the Parish as lying within a High Value Zone where 50% affordable housing provision is required on schemes of > 10 homes.
- **Policy H4 Type & Mix of Homes** – requiring housing schemes to provide or contribute towards the provision of good, balanced mix of property types and sizes
- **Policy E5 Local Services and Community Facilities** - supporting the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, interaction and healthy inclusive communities.
- **Policy T1 Sustainable Transport** – giving priority to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- **Policy T3 Public Transport, Walking and Cycling** – requiring all new development to be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- **Policy EH2 Landscape Character** – requiring new development to respect and enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and manmade features of the local landscape.
- **Policy EH3 Biodiversity** - ensuring development does not prevent the achievement of the aims of the Conservation Target Areas and protecting the Cassington Meadows SAC from development which will have an adverse impact.
- **Policy EH4 Public Realm and Green Infrastructure** – protecting and enhancing existing areas of public space and green infrastructure assets and creating new multi-functional areas of space to achieve improvements to the network.
- **Policy EH9 Historic Environment** – requiring all development proposals to conserve or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of the historic environment, and to conserve or enhance heritage assets, and their significance and settings (in relation to the Cassington Conservation Area and to its wealth of listed buildings)
- **Policy EH10 Conservation Areas** – permitting proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area where it can be shown to conserve or enhance the special interest, character, appearance and setting.
- **Policy EH11 Listed Buildings** – permitting proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building
- **Policy EH12 Traditional Buildings** – setting requirements for determining applications that involve the conversion, extension or alteration of traditional buildings
- **Policy EH13 Historic Landscape Character** – setting requirements for determining applications that affect the historic character of the landscape or townscape

- **Policy EW10 Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area Strategy** – proposing that the focus of new development to locations outside the Parish and limits new development in The Parish to meeting local community and business needs, steering development towards the rural service centres and larger villages. The policy also seeks to protect the Oxford Green Belt.
- **Policy OS3 Prudent Use of Natural Resources** – which includes the requirement for new development to achieve optional building regulations requirement for water efficiency of 100 litres/person/day. Thames Water has confirmed that this can only be achieved using the 'Fittings Approach'. The 'Calculation Method' will therefore not be appropriate as it fails to meet the intended water performance levels.

3.7 The Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) was submitted for examination in February 2021. Following hearing sessions in June – July 2021 the inspector confirmed that the AAP examination is now paused to enable the District Council to undertake some additional work on the phasing of key infrastructure. Alongside this Grosvenor Developments Ltd working on behalf of the landowners at the garden village site submitted an outline application in July 2020 which is currently under consideration.

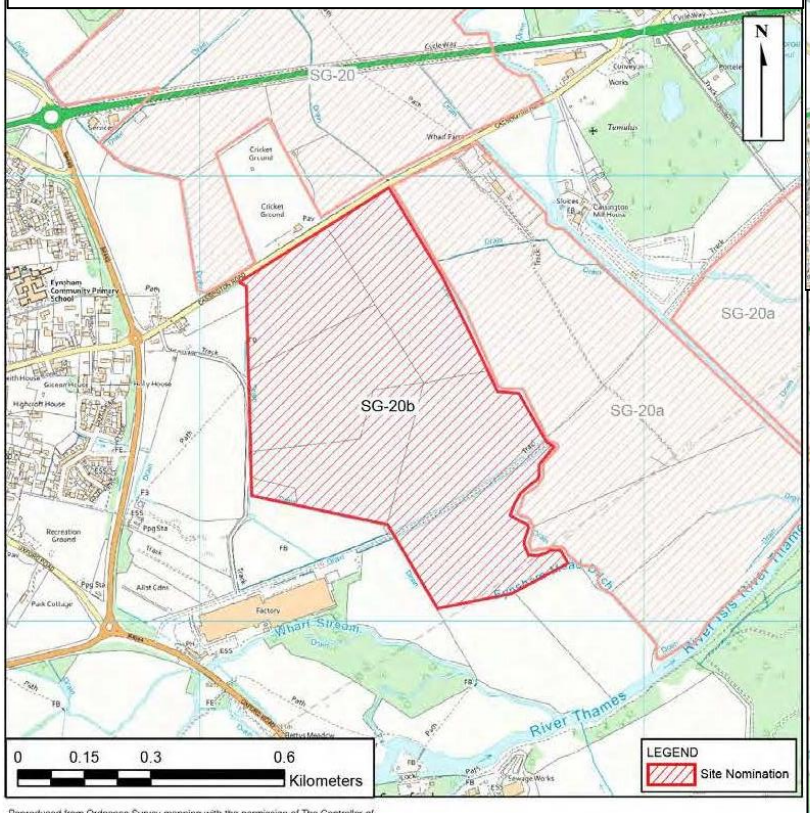
3.8 Western parts of the parish are designated as a Mineral Strategic Resource Area for sharp sand and gravel (Policy M3) and southern parts of the parish is designated as a Minerals Safeguarding Area for sharp sand and gravel (Policy M8) in *the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy* (see Plan C overleaf). The A40 is defined as a Strategic Lorry Through Route (Policies W4 and C10). *The Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations* is currently being prepared. It will provide and identify sites for minerals and waste management development and allocate sites required to provide additional capacity. The latest version included Land between Eynsham and Cassington as a preferred option for a new quarry for sand and gravel extraction.

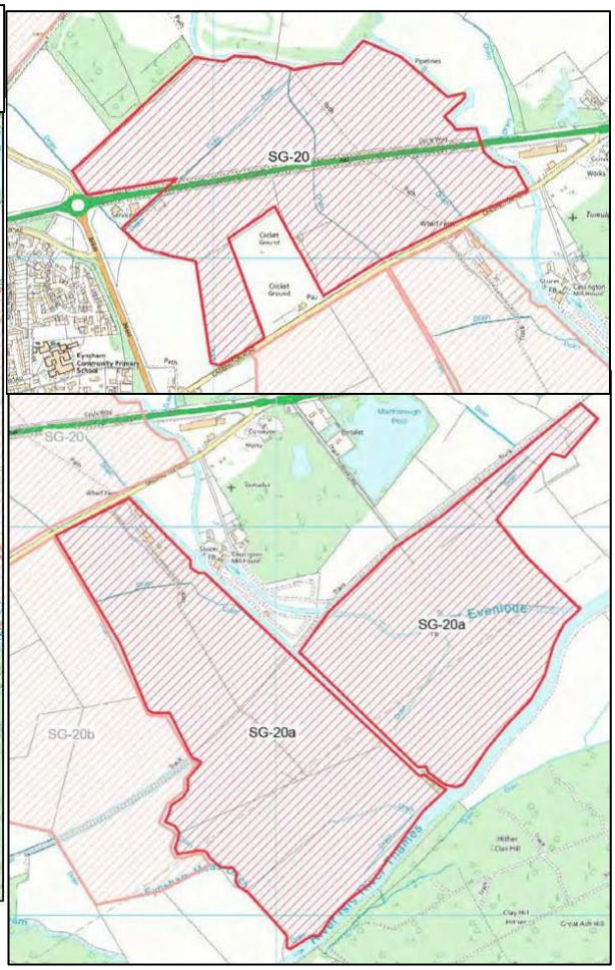
3.9 In January – March 2021 a consultation on an updated Site Assessment Methodology and Interim Sustainability Appraisal was consulted on ahead of a revised preferred options consultation. There is currently a delay in the production of this next consultation and an updated Minerals and Waste Development Scheme setting out a revised timetable is currently being prepared and was expected to be published in October. Three nominations for Land between Eynsham and Cassington is currently being considered, see Plan D overleaf. As minerals and waste matters are defined as 'excluded development' for Neighbourhood Plans, the Parish Council will continue to engage in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan preparation process.



Plan C: Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Part 1 Policies Map

Plan D: Minerals and Waste Site Allocations Part 2 nominated sites





3.10 West Oxfordshire has committed to a review of the Local Plan with the new plan being adopted in 2024 and covering a period up to 2041. The Parish Council will therefore commit to an early review of the CNP should it be necessary to bring the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan up-to-date with those in the forthcoming Local Plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING POLICY

3.11 The made neighbourhood plan of Eynsham, adjacent to Cassington, sets out a vision that seeks to ensure that both new and existing residents will enjoy the same benefits of living in Eynsham as current residents do with new development making the area more attractive.

CASSINGTON CONSERVATION AREA

3.12 The Conservation Area was designated by West Oxfordshire District Council in 1992 (see Plan B). Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, to protect areas of special interest as opposed to individual buildings. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 51 in West Oxfordshire District. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries. Such areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

3.13 The main attributes that define the special character of an area are its physical appearance and history, i.e. the form and features of buildings and the spaces between them, their former uses and historical development. Where there are a number of periods of historical development, the character of individual parts of the conservation area may differ. Contrasts between the appearance of areas and the combination of buildings of various ages, materials and styles may contribute to its special character. The Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal sets out the special character and details contributions to its appearance.

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood and Green Infrastructure plans village residents were kept informed of progress and consulted on their thoughts on what policies and wider considerations were appropriate for Cassington. The Neighbourhood Planning Committee also verbally reported to the Parish Council on progress. O'Neill Homer, the consultants contracted to assist with development of the Neighbourhood plan also were in regular touch with the Parish Council. The Green Infrastructure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan were presented to the public, mainly villagers, on the 26th June, 2021 at the Cassington Village Hall. This meeting was aimed at informing the village on the contents of the Green Infrastructure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan which was being put together by O'Neill Homer for the Parish Council. It included a presentation on the Green Infrastructure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan and a display of the slides in the presentation for viewing by the public. A questionnaire on the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Plans was also put together to obtain feedback for further input to both the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood plans. Any verbal feedback from the meeting was also noted for inclusion. For those not able to attend the meeting, the presentation, the Green Infrastructure Plan and the Questionnaire were all placed on the Parish Council website. The slides for the presentation were also displayed in the Sports Pavillion during the late summer Cassington Picnic for the village on the 4th September, 2021 and further questionnaires distributed for attending residents. Finally, the questionnaire was also circulated in the September 2021 issue of the Cassington and Worton News (CAWN), the village magazine which is circulated by post to most residents of the village.

4.2 The questionnaire was designed to collect information on a range issues related to the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Plans. It is available at: https://cassington-pc.gov.uk/documents/neighbourhood-plan-questionnaire/. Sixty residents of Cassington returned the questionnaires and responses were analysed and presented graphically in the Analysis of Village Questionnaires and available at: https://cassington-pc.gov.uk/documents/neighbourhood-plan-questionnaire-analysis/. The most common class of respondents was between 51 and 70 years of age with most people having lived in the village for between 1 – 30 years (largest class was 1-10 years). Some residents have been in Cassington for more than 70 years. Most households comprised two adults.

4.3 The areas of flood risk mitigation, traffic issues, maintaining the character of the village and maintaining its outdoor spaces were all viewed as important by the majority of respondents. Biodiversity and climate mitigation were viewed as less of a priority, although they still scored highly for the majority of village residents. These issues were the focus of the Green Infrastructure report which subsequently informed the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 Residents were asked about the importance of village amenities including the school, church, village hall, green spaces, sports facilities, children's play facilities, public houses, the forest school and Worton Café. All amenities were considered as highly important by the residents with the forest school and Worton Café being rated slightly lower probably as they are used by fewer people in the village. When asked what amenities

were missing from the village, a village shop was by far what most respondees felt was needed. Other important amenities included a bus stop and a better footpath network. These results were consistent with what had been covered in the Green Infrastructure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan but some are non-planning matters or matters which planning has a limited impact on.

4.5 Questions 8 and 9 gathered the views of residents on transport and traffic. 40% of residents felt that traffic through the village was unsafe mainly because of speeding vehicles and the narrowness of roads and footways. The overwhelming view from residents was that Cassington suffered from a significant lack of sustainable transport options. The largest need identified was for improved connectivity to regular bus services as is discussed above. Second in terms of priority is improved cycle path links with several mentioning a cycle link to Long Hanborough and the railway station as being particularly useful but also links to Yarnton and through to Botley in Oxford. These topics are specifically addressed in the Green Infrastructure Plan and reflect planning issues at local to district level.

4.6 Residents were asked about the level of housing development appropriate for the village, what type of housing was required and where it should be built. Most residents felt the village should grow from between 10 to 20 houses per annum. The greatest need was perceived to be for 1-2 bedroom and 3-bedroom houses, although there was some support for rental properties and 4-bedroom houses. Preferred building sites included brown-field and infill housing although there was some support for building in the surrounding area. Least support was for building on the green spaces in the village. Again, these responses are reflected in the Green Infrastructure report and have been considered in the Neighbourhood Plan. They are a useful guide for developers who may consider building in the village.

5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

VISION

"Cassington will have grown successfully as a community whilst protecting the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. New homes have addressed local need and these schemes have been well-designed to ensure the rural character of the village has been preserved and the significance of the Conservation Area has been sustained and enhanced.

The community has worked successfully with landowners to improve access and links for people and wildlife that surround the village and connect it with the wider countryside. Whilst change in the wider area has been significant, it has provided opportunity for improved connectivity of the multi-functional green infrastructure network of the Parish; the enhancement of biodiversity; and the mitigation of climate change"

OBJECTIVES

To protect and improve the multi-functional value and connectivity of the green infrastructure assets of the village and wider parish for nature recovery and mitigating the effects of climate change.

To create and integrate a safe and convenient walking and cycling network to serve the village and improve access to the wider countryside.

To conserve the special heritage assets of the village and its landscape setting.

To manage growth in the village through sensitive infill and affordable housing schemes that meet local needs.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE POLICIES

5.1 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of Cassington Parish. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community.

5.2 There are many parts of the Parish that are not affected by these policies, and there are many other policy matters that have been left to the adopted and forthcoming West Oxfordshire Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between this Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence. It is anticipated that WODC will take the content of this Neighbourhood Plan into consideration during the preparation of the new Local Plan 2040.

5.3 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map attached to the document. After each policy is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

POLICY CAS1: CASSINGTON NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK

A. The Parish contains a variety of green and blue infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for the community and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan designates this as a Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting nature recovery and for mitigating climate change. The Network comprises Cassington Meadows SSSI, woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, good quality semi-improved grassland and other land of biodiversity value.

B. Development proposals that affect the Network must maintain and improve the functionality of the Network, including delivering at least 10% net gain to general biodiversity assets, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes.

C. Proposals that will lead to the loss of land lying within the Network and that will undermine its integrity or affects its functionality will be resisted, unless suitable alternative provision can be provided. Development proposals that will lead to the extension of the Network, which includes the delivery of additional allotments for the use of the village, will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.

5.4 The policy defines the presence of green and blue infrastructure assets in the Parish with a view to protect them from harmful development and to encourage better habitat connectivity in the future. By doing so it supports WOLP Policies EH3 and EH4 on Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

5.5 The Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan attached as Appendix A shows that Cassington village, Jericho Farm and Worton are vulnerable to surface-water flooding. Historic natural flood management practices have improved the rate of occurrences but properties within the parish remains vulnerable. Despite the alteration of the natural environment within the confines of Cassington village and the surrounding land as a result of agriculture and transport development significant biodiversity remains within the village and in some areas of surrounding land. Some of this biodiversity is under threat from growing human influence in the village and surrounding areas.

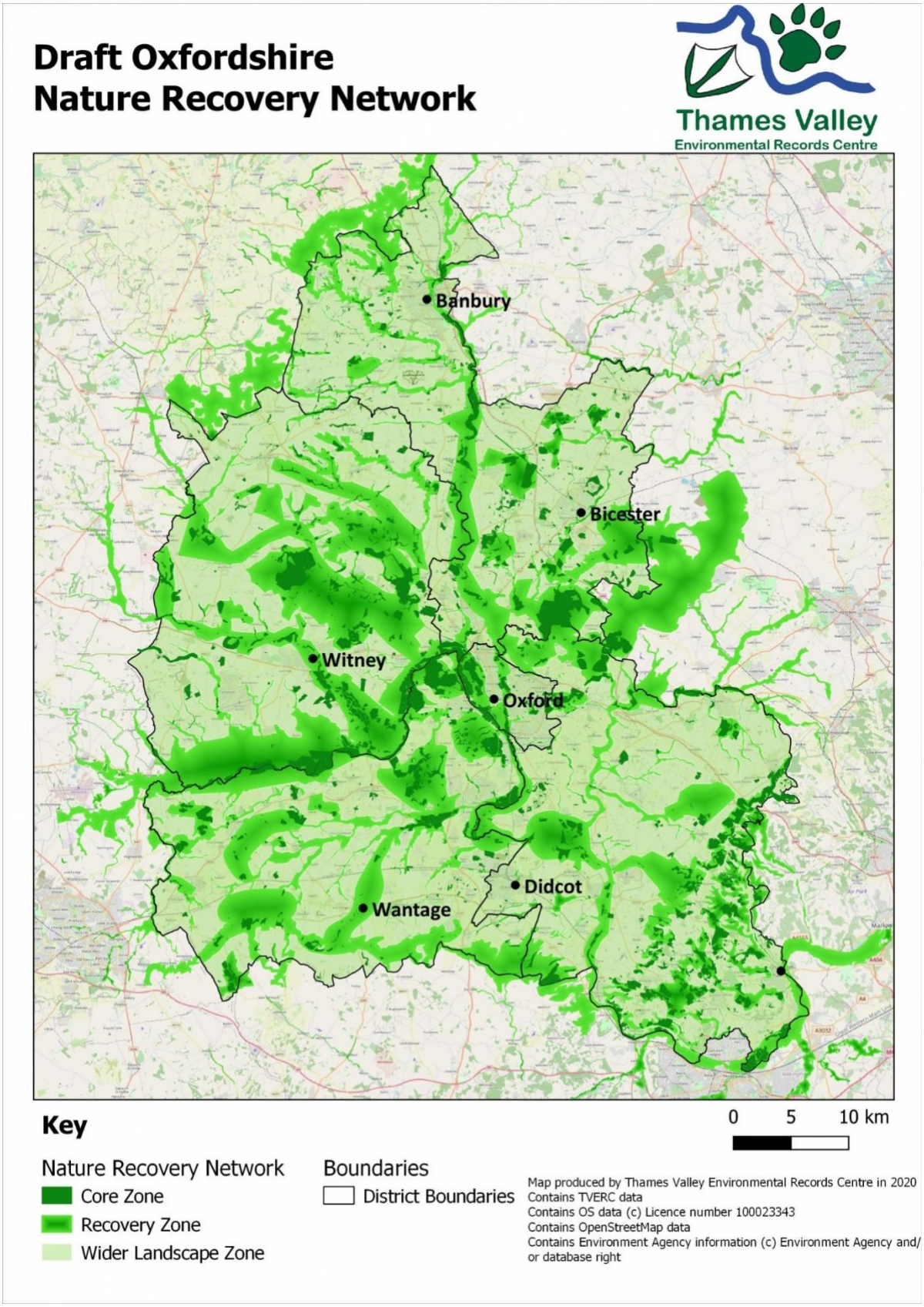
5.6 Alongside Cassington Meadows SSSI, there is a variety of other priority habitat areas in the Parish. A number of these assets form part of the Core Zone of the Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network prepared by Wild Oxfordshire. A large part of the Parish has also been identified as a Recovery Zone. Although it is not expected that the village will see any

significant development in the plan period, there may be the opportunity from even modest schemes that lie within or adjoin an asset, that are acceptable in other planning terms, to enhance or connect these assets which may also play a part in delivering the aims of the Recovery Zone of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network (see Plan E overleaf). Opportunities include proposed wildlife corridors as shown in the Policies Map, and schemes making provision for wildlife in the design of their proposals, particularly swift bricks, house martin nest boxes, bat box bricks, insect bricks and hedgehog holes in fences between gardens and external natural environments.

5.7 The policy therefore requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. The Policy Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network, for example in complementing existing biodiversity value through the design of the landscape scheme. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission.

5.8 The Network will become more valuable over time, and although the majority of these features are physically attached to enable habitat connectivity, some features of the Network are not. This does not devalue their integral biodiversity or recreational value and at some point in the future an opportunity may arise to achieve similar connectivity. The Neighbourhood Plan also signals to the Responsible Authority that it should consider that natural flood management measures and habitat provision will play a major role in its future Local Nature Recovery Strategy in terms of its application in Cassington.

5.9 The restoration of mineral sites can often bring positive environmental impacts and could improve the biodiversity and the Nature Recovery Network within an area. If a planning application was submitted for mineral extraction, it would be a County Matter application. As a County Matter, the development would therefore be excluded under part 61K of the Localism Act 2011. That being the case, Policy CAS1 would have no effect on for example a proposal to extract mineral from the site. However, once the site has been worked and restored, the policy would come into effect for any future development.



Plan E: Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network, Source: Wild Oxfordshire

POLICY CAS2: ACTIVE TRAVEL

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active and Sustainable Travel Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of supporting active travel in the Parish.

B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the multi-functionality of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.

C. Proposals that will harm the functioning or connectivity of the Network will not be supported. Proposals which fragment the routes will be resisted, unless this can be replaced in a way that improves the overall Network.

D. Development proposals that would make an appropriate contribution to the improvement and/or extension of the network will be supported.

5.10 The policy seeks to encourage safe, accessible and convenient means of walking and cycling in the parish. It refines WOLP Policy T1 by providing a local element to its provisions and reflects the aims of WOLP Policy EH4 that aims to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure.

5.11 There are 5 main footpath routes out of the village. Few of the paths are suitable for those who require the use of mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or scooters; or for parents with babies in prams or buggies and many crossing points are hazardous and unpleasant. There is only one cycle path close to Cassington, the A40 cycle paths which are located at present both on the north and south side of the carriageway. There are, however, several issues with this cycle track. Public transport is also lacking in Cassington and the only bus stops are located on the A40.

5.12 The Policies Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness of rural routes, through tree planting for example. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission. The extension of, and improvements to, existing paths has been identified as opportunities to improve the Network and these are shown on the Policies Map at the end of this document.

POLICY CAS3: DARK SKIES

A. Development proposals that require the installation of external lighting should be designed to minimise the occurrence of light pollution. The Parish Council will expect such schemes to employ energy-efficient forms of lighting that also reduce light scatter and comply with the current guidelines established for rural areas by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP).

B. Proposals for all development will be expected to demonstrate how it is intended to prevent light pollution. Information on these measures must be submitted with applications, and where a development would potentially impact on light levels in the area, an appropriate lighting scheme will be secured by planning condition.

5.13 Cassington village has never had street lighting installed which means there is a low level of disturbance to both people living in the village from streetlights and also to nature. This also makes the village a good location for star gazing with telescopes. At present the majority of residents are against installation of street lighting so new housing developments, modifications to the roads, such as traffic calming and other developments in the future should either maintain the "no street lights" policy or use lighting that is designed not to cause light pollution.

5.14 Many councils across England support measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky. The policy reflects the purpose and objectives of policies EH2 and EH8 on Pollution and Artificial Light of the WOLP. For all proposed developments, factors that will be considered when deciding the appropriateness of artificial lighting, include the location, the hours of operation, the quantity of lights proposed, brightness and control, and direction of the beam.

POLICY CAS4: CASSINGTON CONSERVATION AREA

Development proposals should sustain and enhance the historic environment, particularly the special architectural and historic significance of the designated Cassington Conservation Area and its setting. Features identified as positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting are defined in the Cassington Design Code attached as Appendix B, to which all proposals must have full regard.

POLICY CAS5: DESIGN CODE FOR CASSINGTON VILLAGE

Development proposals in Cassington Village should have full regard to the essential design considerations and general design principles set out in the Cassington Design Code attached as Appendix B.

5.15 The policies establish the importance of high-quality design of new development in the Conservation Area, its setting and the remainder of the village to maintain and enhance its character. It directs applicants bringing forward proposals in and around the village to the design codes contained in the Cassington Design Code attached at Appendix B. The Code is an integral part of the policy and is extensive in setting out the positive characteristics of the conservation area and in distinguishing the different character areas of the Parish. It is therefore published as an Appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Code has been prepared and consulted on as part of this Plan preparation and is an important component of the decision making process.

5.16 The Code refines the West Oxfordshire Design Guide 2015 and establishes the principles of essential design considerations within the two distinct area typologies of the village, its nucleated core and linear extensions. These design considerations set out features of each typology that make it distinctive, and the extent of each is defined in the Design Code Document. In turn it complements Policies OS4 and EH9 of the WOLP by highlighting particular characteristics of the Parish.

5.17 The policies require that development proposals demonstrate, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, that full regard has been paid to the Code. The policies do not advocate pastiche or historic solution, however it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making.

POLICY CAS6: LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS

A. **The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following buildings and structures, as shown on the policies map, as Locally Listed Buildings by way of their local architectural or historic interest. This is in addition to those identified in the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal.**

B. **The effect which development proposals would have on the significance of an identified Locally Listed Building should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets (which includes Locally Listed Buildings), a balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset and the public benefits of the development as referred to in WOLP Policy EH9 (Historic Environment)**

i. **The Bell**

ii. **Manor Farmhouse**

iii. **Drystone Walls in various locations in the village**

5.18 The policy identifies certain buildings or structures as Locally Listed Buildings (also known as non-designated heritage assets) in order to give them additional protection as heritage assets, in recognition of the important contribution they make to the special character of the Parish in line with Policy EH9 of the WOLP.

5.19 The appraisal in the Design Code Document attached as Appendix B identifies and describes their local interest in addition to those Locally Listed Buildings identified as part of the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal in 2007.

POLICY CAS7: LOCAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following community facilities, as shown on the Policies Map:

i. St Peter's Church of England School

ii. Upper and Lower Village Greens

iii. Cassington Village Hall

iv. St Peter's Church

v. Cassington Allotments

vi. The Pavilion, Sports Field and Recreational Equipment

vii. Red Lion Public House

viii. The Chequers Public House

ix. Marlborough Pools

B. Development proposals which would affect the use of the identified community facilities of the policy, or which would significantly undermine their quality, will be resisted unless suitable alternative provision is made. The provisions of Policies E5 (Local Services and Community Facilities) and EH5 (Sport, recreation and children's play) of the WOLP will continue to apply.

C. Proposals to change the use of part of a community, open space, sport or recreation facility that is surplus to requirements will be resisted unless it can be clearly evidenced that the proposal will not undermine the overall viability and importance of the community, open space, sport or recreation facility concerned.

5.20 The policy supplements and refines existing development plan policy on community, open space, sport or recreation facilities and by seeking to ensure that the long-term

potential value of land in community use is not lost without good reason. Given the small nature of the village, the loss of any of these facilities would be significantly detrimental, so even though a specific type of community use may no longer be viable, the opportunity to retain the premises or land in this use cannot be lost.

5.21 In addition to existing development plan policies which protect these facilities and encourages new facilities, the policy also allows for a partial change of use of a facility, it this is intended to help secure its longer-term viability. This may be an important way of putting to use space that is no longer needed, but which can make a financial contribution to sustaining the facility. However, such changes must be shown not to undermine the community functions of the use.

5.22 The Use Class Order of September 2020 now deems such these uses as either Class F2 ('Local Community Uses') or in the case of the school and St Peter's Church, F1 ('Learning and non-residential Institutions'). The pubs are now deemed 'sui generis' (i.e. not included in any class of uses). A description of each facility and its community value is provided in the Green Infrastructure Plan attached as Appendix A. Collectively, these facilities are cherished by the community and offer a valuable and vital resource to support community life, and therefore warrant the protection of policies.

POLICY CAS8: ZERO CARBON BUILDING

A. All development must be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.

B. Wherever feasible, all buildings should be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m2/year. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.

C. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause B. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.

D. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.

E. An Energy Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for householder applications). The statement will include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

5.23 The policy context for encouraging higher energy efficiency standards at the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan scale is complex. Background information has therefore been

set out in Appendix C. The policy may also appear rather technical, but it is a temporary measure as in due course, it is expected that the new Local Plan, if not national policy itseld, will make such provisions across the District. The policy is in five parts, the combination of which is intended to deliver a step change in the energy performance of all new developments in the Parish and, in doing so, encourage and incentivise the use of the Passivhaus or equivalent standard of building design. Along with the passive design capacity assessment, it is anticipated that designers will demonstrate compliance using a design for performance methodology such as the Passivhaus Planning package or CIBSE TM34 Operational Energy. Achieving this level of performance will make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change that the Neighbourhood Plan can deliver.

5.24 Clause A of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design. 'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial decisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost. Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, WODC and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt.[2]

5.25 Its Clause B requires all schemes, no matter what their intended use or size other than householder extensions, to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology for all buildings where it is feasible to do so. It is acknowledged that it may not be feasible to do so on some sites, for practical or cost reasons, and if that is the case it should be fully explained in the planning application.

5.26 In respect of scheme viability, any extra-over cost of building to the 'zero carbon ready' Passivhaus standard (now less than 5%) will diminish to zero well within the period of this Plan, as per both the Governments Regulatory Impact Assessments, research by the Passivhaus Trust, and the viability assessment published by Cornwall Council. The policy will also ensure that expensive and unnecessary retrofit costs are not passed down to building occupiers in the future, particularly in an area which has relatively high property values. Scheme viability will not therefore be acceptable as a reason for not using the Standard, unless the applicant can demonstrate the scheme has abnormal costs to accommodate.

5.27 The policy requires that the scheme density (measured by dwelling units/Ha) is assessed against that of the local 'character area', as set out in the Design Code attached at Appendix B, in the Design & Access Statement. Outside of such areas, the applicant may define the 'character area' that is relevant for the purpose of this exercise.

5.28 Proposals seeking to apply the PHPP must be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'pre-construction

[2] https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/how-to-achieve-net-zero-carbon-homes/

compliance check' completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.

5.29 Clause C requires the developer of a consented housing development scheme of any size to carry out a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) including actual metered energy use, and to submit the report to the local planning authority. It will be implemented by attaching a planning condition, which will only be discharged once the report has been submitted and any recommended actions to rectify any performance gap with the design stage assessment are carried out by the developer. Passivhaus certified schemes will not fail in this way and they are therefore exempted from this policy requirement. In the absence of supplementary guidance from the WODC on POE, guidance has been included in Appendix D.

5.30 The policy complements Policy EH6 of the WOLP. However, in the absence of any current adopted policy in West Oxfordshire covering the energy performance of new buildings, Clause D requires all development proposals that are not householder applications to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emissions Assessment, RICS methodology is preferred[3]. The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequences of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly; contributing to resource efficiency (Clause A) and contributing to the 'circular economy'[4]. This requirement will be added to the West Oxfordshire Validation Checklist for outline and full planning applications applying to proposals in the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan area until such a time that there is a district-wide requirement.

5.31 Clause E requires an Energy Statement to be submitted to cover the following:

- an assessment of the proposal to minimise regulated and unregulated emissions, the embodied emissions and the emissions associated with maintenance, repair and replacement of the new building(s), as well as its dismantling, demolition and eventual material disposal
- a calculation of the energy and carbon emissions covered by the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from any other part of the development that are not covered by the Future Homes Standard or Building Regulations
- the proposal to reduce carbon emissions beyond the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations through the energy efficient design of the site, buildings and services

[3] https://www.rics.org/uk/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/building-surveying/whole-life-carbon-assessment-for-the-built-environment/

[4] chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/design_for_a_circular_economy_web.pdf

- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low emission decentralised energy where feasible
- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site, utilising storage technologies where appropriate
- the proposal for a demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage
- an analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy

5.32 Every new build or redevelopment project in the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan Area provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting our climate change targets for 2050. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.

POLICY CAS9: PROVIDING NEW HOMES

In accordance with Policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, support will be given to appropriate limited housing development which respects the character and local distinctiveness of Cassington and which would help maintain the vitality of the village.
Given the location of Cassington, within the Oxford Green Belt, and in accordance with national policy and policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, unless there are very special circumstances, residential development in the Parish will comprise the following:

a) **Limited infilling in the village;**
b) **Limited affordable housing for community needs;**
c) **The partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, provided it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development or cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need.**

In respect of criteria a) above, 'limited infill development' will be classed as development on sites which form a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage provided that gap does not comprise an important visual feature.

In respect of criterion b) above,'limited affordable housing for local community needs' is taken to mean that affordable housing which is necessary to meet a locally identified need for new affordable homes. Any such proposals must be located on previously developed or undeveloped land, either within or adjoining the built-up area. This Plan supports the delivery of up to 10 affordable homes in this context over the plan period, unless there is clear evidence of additionally locally identified need that would support additional affordable homes.

Any new affordable homes proposed beyond the built-up area of Cassington will be classed as 'Rural Exception Sites' and therefore will be subject to the relevant considerations of Policy H3 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and National Policy set out in the NPPF.

In terms of property sizes, new affordable homes will be expected to comprise a mixture of 1 & 2-bed properties, unless there is clear evidence of local housing need that would support an alternative mix.

In terms of tenure, a mix of options should be provided, broadly comprising about 25% low-cost home ownership and 75% affordable housing for rent (inc. both affordable rent & social rent) unless there is clear evidence of need that would justify an alternative mix.

5.33 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan identifies an overall housing requirement of at least 15,950 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. Cassington is located within the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area which is anticipated will accommodate 5,596 homes. The majority of these new homes will be provided through strategic allocations at Eynsham, as well as at other allocated sites at Woodstock, Long Hanborough and Stanton Harcourt.

5.34 In addition to these housing allocations, the Local Plan anticipates around 289 new homes coming forward from unallocated windfall sites across the sub-area in the period 2017-2031. Cassington is defined as a village in West Oxfordshire's settlement hierarchy and is washed over by the Oxford Green Belt. Therefore, in addition to meeting the relevant criterion of Local Plan policies OS2 and H2 and to be in accordance with national policy (NPPF paragraph 149), any such windfall housing provision will need to meet an identified local housing need and will comprise:

- Limited infilling
- Limited affordable housing for local community needs; or
- The partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land provided the proposed development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

5.35 The policy establishes the goal of delivering affordable homes to meet local needs. In January 2021, the Housing Needs Survey commissioned by the Parish Council identified a need for approximately 10 affordable homes. It is acknowledged that additional land may be needed to deliver affordable homes and that this may be outside the built-up area of Cassington. The Survey identified a greater need for social or affordable rented accommodation and therefore the policy reflects that finding.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by WODC. The Parish Council will endeavour to monitor the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan, in line with best practice. It will look to review the Plan on a five yearly cycle so that its contents remain valid and up-to-date.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

6.2 The planning authority will use a combination of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the Parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by WODC. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

6.3 Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.

LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

6.4 Although the scale of development likely to be consented in the Parish during the plan period is likely to be very limited, there may be opportunities to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Where contributions to community infrastructure are required, they will be made through Section 106 Agreements and/or (if it is introduced during the currency of this Plan) the Community Infrastructure Levy. Should an opportunity arise, the Parish Council will review the evidence base and community consultations for the neighbourhood plan to inform its view in liaising with WODC. A preliminary list has been set out below:

- Traffic management measures informed by traffic modelling of effect of major housing development proposals in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell and a safe crossing or traffic calming to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic through the centre of the village to enable a safe crossing point on the main road through Cassington.
- Mitigating pollution from the A40 including reducing vehicle journeys within and to/from and through the village, road surfacing, planting of trees and other forms of acoustic barriers;
- Creation of a Greenway by connecting Footpath 1 to Long Hanborough;

- Improvements to the accessibility of footpaths, increasing the connectivity of Cassington with the wider cycle route network and better public transport links, particularly links to the three railway stations around Cassington;
- Pedestrian crossing on the A40 (see Green Infrastructure Plan) as part of the A40 HIF2 improvement scheme and on the roundabout on the B4449 connecting Eynsham to the Cassington – Eynsham Road – currently the A40 HIF2 Infrastructure Scheme includes the following active travel provision in the Cassington Area:

    - Widened and improved shared use pathways with adequate drainage provision for pedestrians and cyclists on the north and south sides of the A40;

    - In line controlled crossings on the north and south arms of Lower Road roundabout;

    - A crossing for pedestrians and cyclists, just to the west of the A40/Eynsham Road crossing, slightly removed from where they are at present, to align with the proposed slightly moved bus stops;

    - A new single stage toucan crossing on the north side of the A40 at the junction with Eynsham Road;

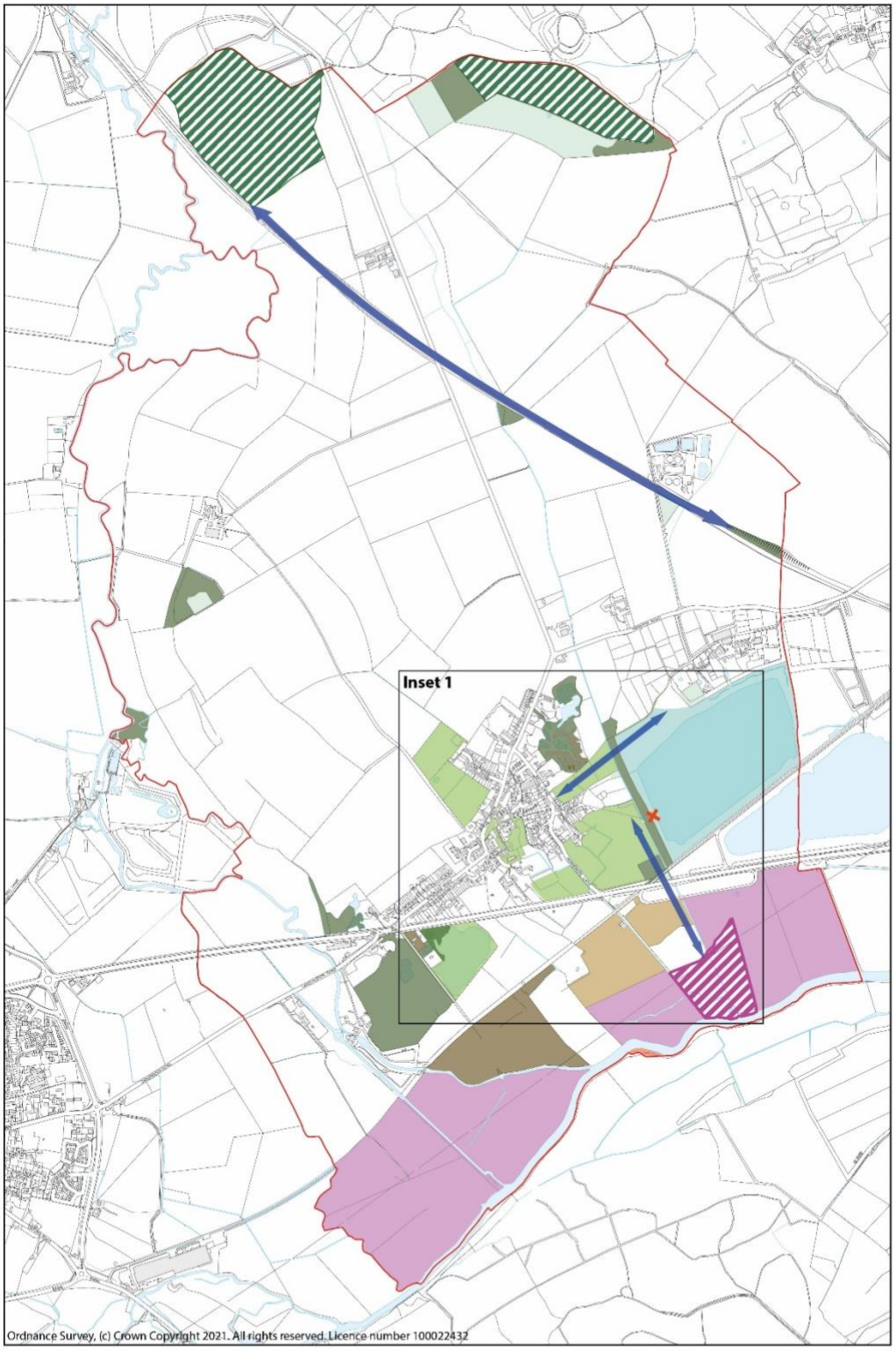
    - A new controlled toucan located west of Horsemere Lane will provide a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A40 and access for the new bus stops at this location;
- Improvements of junctions with the A4095 and roads leading to Cassington to improve safety for cyclists;
- Replacement footpath/route of Footpath 4 as a result of the development of Salt Cross village;
- Small bird hide to view birds on the western gravel pit at Worton Farm and/or at Marlborough Pools for both leisure and educational purposes.

OTHER NON-PLANNING MATTERS

6.5 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Parish Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties. These include:

- Engaging with landowners and relevant organisations in relation to maintenance of the network of drainage ditches, especially those around Elm's Road and culverts to the south of the Eynsham/Yarnton Road including road improvements to ensure sufficient means of drainage are in place and maintained;
- Development of an emergency plan in collaboration with Thames Water and West Oxfordshire District Council for the eventuality of a flood originating from the Farmoor to Banbury high pressure water main;

- Engaging with landowners to the north of the village in relation to measures to prevent surface water flooding resulting from intense rain events and rapid movement of water from fields towards the Thames;
- Request from WODC that air quality monitoring is put in place for Cassington to assess the threat from increasing traffic levels through the village and along the A40;
- Ensure that the Parish Council has effective representation on the consultative committee for London Oxford Airport to try and prevent air traffic from significantly increasing over the village;
- Better maintenance of footpaths and cycleways;
- Applying for a decrease in the speed limit on the Burleigh Road to 50mph from its currently unrestricted limit;
- Provision of cycle racks in strategic locations in Cassington and surrounding villages / work locations to improve accessibility for cyclists;
- Discussions with surrounding landowners to explore the scope for land management measures that improve biodiversity and reduce the risk of surface flooding to the village;
- Where land becomes available through sale the Parish Council should consult with the village to look into the possibilities for purchase through charitable fund raising or through grants to increase space for nature and to enhance the Local Nature Recovery Network;
- Consideration of whether further applications for Asset of Community Value status should be made for other village amenities;
- Boring of a water hole for provision of water on the allotments should also be moved forward by the Allotment Association and the Parish Council;
- Calls for further ideas for amenities, amenity improvement and improvement of green space for people and nature in the village. Ideas could include the provision of a community well-being area, further allotments, a village orchard, provision of small areas of forest, restoration of hedgerows or other village projects;
- Creation of an advice package for elderly residents on how to access grants for adaptation of housing, identifying reliable or specialist traders who undertake such works, and how to access other services or community care options that they may need (e.g. Homeshare);
- Consultation with Churchfields Care Home or other care providers on the possibility of developing a new model of support for elderly people wishing to remain living semi-independently in their own homes.



Cassington Neighbourhood Plan - Nature Recovery - November 2021

Parish Boundary

CUL1 Nature Recovery

Cassington Meadows SSSI

Ancient Woodland

Deciduous Woodland

Other Woodland

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

Lowland Meadows

Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland

No main habitat but additional habitat exists

Open Mosaic Habitat

Other Important Open Spaces

Opportunities

Wildlife Corridors

Potential Bird Hide

Cassington Neighbourhood Plan - Nature Recovery - Inset 1 - November 2021

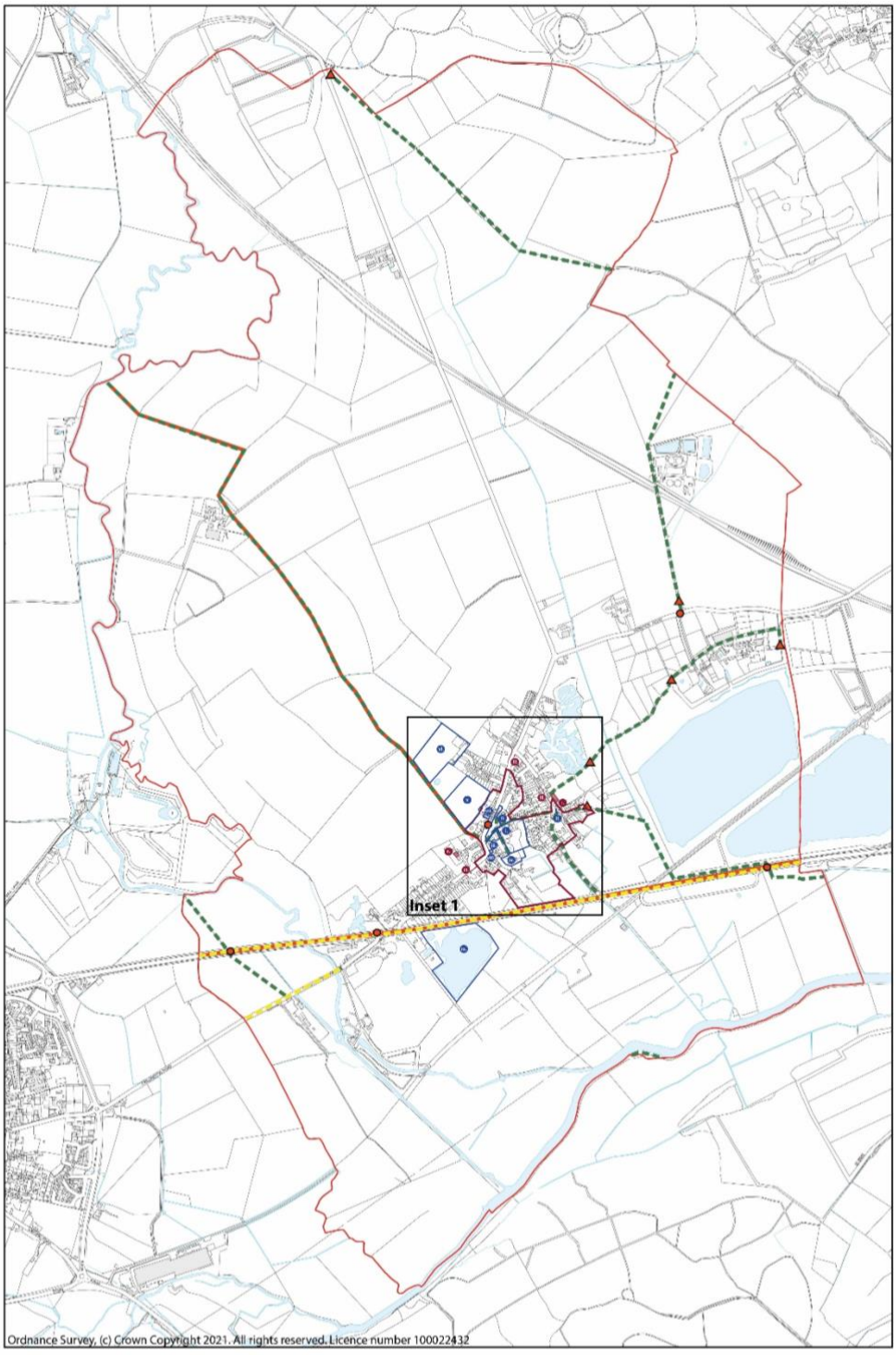
Parish Boundary

CUL1 Nature Recovery

- Cassington Meadows SSSI
- Deciduous Woodland
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland
- No main habitat but additional habitat exists
- Open Mosaic Habitat
- Other Important Open Spaces

Opportunities

- Wildlife Corridors
- Potential Bird Hide



Cassington Neighbourhood Plan - Policies Map - November 2021

Parish Boundary

CAS2 Active Travel

- Existing Pedestrian Routes
- Existing Cycle Routes
- Existing Stiles
- Hazardous Crossing Points
- Improving Existing Routes

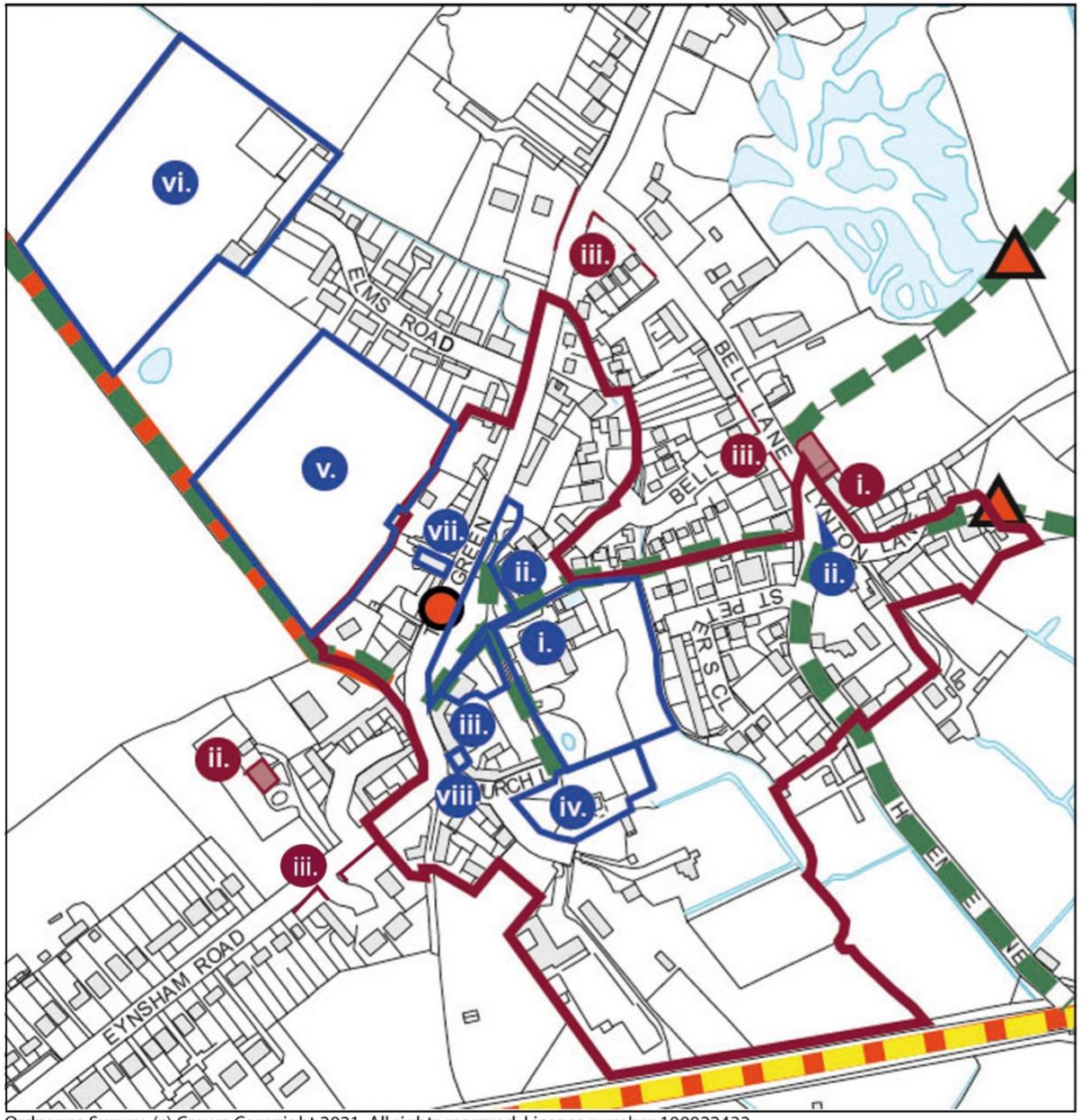
CAS4 Cassington Conservation Area

CAS6 Locally Listed Buildings

i. The Bell
ii. Manor Farmhouse
iii. Drystone Walls in various locations in the village

CAS7 Local Services and Community Facilities

i. St Peter's Church of England School
ii. Upper and Lower Village Greens
iii. Cassington Vilage Hall
iv. St Peter's Church
v. Cassington Allotments
vi. The Pavilion, Sports Field and Recreational Equipment
vii. Red Lion Public House
viii. The Chequers Public House
ix. Marlborough Pools



Cassington Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map - Inset 1 - November 2021

Parish Boundary

CAS2 Active Travel

Existing Pedestrian Routes

Existing Cycle Routes

Existing Stiles

Hazardous Crossing Points

Improving Existing Routes

CAS4 Cassington Conservation Area

CAS6 Locally Listed Buildings
i. The Bell
ii. Manor Farmhouse
iii. Drystone Walls

CAS7 Local Services and Community Facilities
i. St Peter's Church of England School
ii. Upper and Lower Village Greens
iii. Cassington Vilage Hall
iv. St Peter's Church
v. Cassington Allotments
vi. The Pavilion, Sports Field and Recreational Equipment
vii. Red Lion Public House
viii. The Chequers Public House
ix. Marlborough Pools

APPENDIX A – THE CASSINGTON GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan

A Report Prepared for Cassington Parish Council and the Residents of Cassington Village by AD Rogers

Contents

Introduction

Cassington Village has a history stretching back more than 3,000 years. It is located in West Oxfordshire in a rural area now subject to considerable pressure for housing development. In response to increasing concerns that development may be imposed upon the Cassington with insufficient consideration of sustainability and the well-being of its residents a Neighbourhood Plan was proposed by the Parish Council. As a result, a Neighbourhood Planning Committee was drawn from the residents of Cassington Village with representation of the Parish Council. O'Neill Homer were taken on to act as consultants for the Cassington Village Neighbourhood Plan with funding being obtained from XX by the Parish Council. This Green Infrastructure Plan forms part of the consultation process for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Parish and Town Green Infrastructure Plans are a valuable tool for planners, committees, developers and communities themselves. They can help inform important decisions and assist local people to identify what is important to them, and what they would like to happen in the future. For example, they can inform Neighbourhood Plan policies and designations, and shape the aspirations of a non-statutory Parish Plan. Parish and Town Green Infrastructure Plans have been used to support funding bids, helping people make important improvements to their local environment, and they also provide a snapshot of the local environment.

It should be acknowledged that not all of the aspirations identified in this plan will be delivered, because there are many other influencing factors, such as the views of landowners, existing planning permissions and allocations, potential future land use allocations and the cost of implementation.

The value of this Green Infrastructure plan lies in the fact that it has been produced by Cassington residents for their own community. As such it includes a lot of local knowledge not available to those in local government (e.g. District and County-level planners), regional and national agencies, utility companies and other commercial interests. It can help inform planning decisions and be used as a mechanism to identify where financial benefits from development should be directed. It cannot be used as a tool to prevent development but may influence considerations in the planning process. All aspirations which gained community support have been included; however, it remains a community owned document which, whilst supported by Cassington Parish Council, has not been formally adopted. The plan as a whole is based on a robust approach to mapping and implementing a high-quality Green Infrastructure network for the existing, and future, residents of Cassington Village.

Endorsements

TBA

Green Infrastructure

Definition of Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which provide:

- a healthy and diverse environment
- attractive places to live and visit
- a good quality of life
- a sustainable future

Green Infrastructure assets include:

- Accessible green space
- Country parks
- Green corridors
- Urban parks and gardens
- Habitats for wildlife including nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County
- Wildlife Sites.
- Historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Waterways and water bodies, including flooded quarries
- Public rights of way and cycleways
- Allotments
- Children's play space
- Formal sports facilities
- Cemeteries

It is important to plan the GI network in the same way that we plan other networks and facilities, so that we can safeguard and enhance the environment and meet the needs of a wide range of people, both now and in the future. Green infrastructure also provides social and economic benefits, including:

- Places that can be used as a focus for community and cultural activities as well as events
- Opportunities to keep fit and healthy
- Helps support the local economy, including village shops, pubs and B&Bs
- Links between town and country helping people in rural areas to access facilities
- Helps reduce the use of cars through connectivity of sustainable transport options
- Creation of safe and accessible (for those with disabilities and prams / young children) pedestrian and cycles routes

Green Infrastructure Themes

Green Infrastructure is composed of 5 themes; landscape, history, biodiversity, access and open space. These themes are presented separately to enable the different elements of GI to be considered both individually in detail and as part of the integrated GI network.

Aims of the Plan

To identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

Objectives:

- To create a comprehensive document that will assist the local community to:
- Protect and where possible enhance the landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment
- Improve access and links for people and wildlife
- Provide a multi-functional green infrastructure network
- Provide a source of information and guidance for planners, landowners and developers in formulating land use plans
- Consider the next generation in planning for the future
- Promote community involvement
- Improve safety and protection of people
- To improve the well-being of the people of Cassington
- Identify projects and produce an action plan to implement projects.

Links to other Plans

The Cassington Green Infrastructure links to policies out lined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031 (WODC, 2018). It specifically provides background and informs policies in the Cassington Village Neighbourhood Plan.

Methodology & Community Involvement

The Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan was assembled largely through research using planning documentation and other sources from West Oxfordshire District Council (grey literature) as well as academic literature (peer-reviewed papers) on specific topics. As well as these sources local knowledge was used on topics such as foot paths, biodiversity and amenities. In addition to these sources maps were prepared using a combination of ESRI Map Viewer Classic (e.g. Environment Agency Flood Risk maps) and ESRI Map Viewer Classic for a base map and MS Powerpoint for labelling (e.g. Footpaths). Maps for biodiversity planning were downloaded from Magic Maps (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/). Most of this research was undertaken by Prof. Alex David Rogers, a resident of Cassington Village in consultation with the Neighbourhood Plan Committee (Members: Piers Beeton, Ian Finlay, Parish Councillor Barbara King, Anne Luttman-Johnson) and with Leani Haim from O'Neill Homer.

Subsequent to this initial work, the Green Infrastructure Plan was presented to the public, mainly villagers on the 26th June, 2021 at the Cassington Village Hall. This meeting was aimed at informing the village on the contents of the Green Infrastructure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan which was being put together by O'Neill Homer for the Parish Council. Feedback was gathered from the meeting for further input to both the Green Infrastructure and Neighbourhood plans.

Cassington: Current Environment and Considerations for Future Planning

Flood Risk

As can be seen in Figure 1 Cassington is at low risk of flooding from the River Thames to the South and the River Evenlode to the west. However, the village is at risk from surface flooding events even at a 1 in 30 year event. Elm's Road appears to be particularly vulnerable from these events which

result from surface water draining off the fields to the north of Cassington. This is consistent with flooding of properties on Elm's Road in 2007 (WODC, 2008). Foxwell Court, St Peter's Close, Horsemere Lane, Foxwell End and Reynold's Farm are also at risk of flooding from extreme surface water events (WODC, 2008). Outside the village Jericho Farm and Worton are also vulnerable to flooding and the road junction to Worton Farm was flooded over the winter of 2020/2021. Following the 2007 flood events action was taken to mitigate future surface-water flooding including the clearing of previously blocked drains and the building of a drainage pond behind the south west corner of the playing fields. Since this time there have been no further property flooding events in Cassington village although the threat remains.

A further flood risk to the village is the existence of an ageing high-pressure water line which runs from Farmoor Reservoir to Banbury which lies to the north of the village. This buried water main crosses the Track where there are several concrete manhole covers. The main has failed previously in other locations and has caused considerable flooding issues and may represent a significant risk to village households and even possibly a threat to life.

Mitigation measures to prevent future flooding should include:

- Maintenance of the network of drainage ditches, especially those around Elm's Road and culverts to the south of the Eynsham / Yarnton Road.
- Road improvements to ensure sufficient means of drainage are in place and maintained.
- Ensure that any new builds do not impede surface water run-off.
- Developments that potentially affect surface water runoff in the vicinity of Elm's Road should be avoided.
- Any future development of housing in Cassington should be accompanied by an upgrading of drainage in the village (including sewage) to keep pace with population.
- Discussions should be initiated with Thames Water to ascertain the level of flood risk from the Farmoor to Banbury high pressure water mainAn emergency plan should be developed in collaboration with Thames Water and West Oxfordshire District Council for the eventuality of a flood originating from this water line.
- Discussions should be held with landowners to the north of the village in relation to measures to prevent surface water flooding resulting from intense rain events and rapid movement of water from fields towards the Thames. Measures might include improvement of ditches, planting more trees or shrubs along hedgerows and even consideration of inserting more hedgerows across current large fields. Agroecological methods that increase soil organic matter content may also help to soak up water and release it over longer time periods.

Figure 1. UK Environment Agency Flood Risk Map. Flood Alert Areas shown in mid blue. These are mainly associated with rivers in the area. Surface flooding event risk is shown in pale blue (1 in 100 year event) and dark blue (one in 30 year event). These are consistent with recent flooding history.

Traffic Pollution

Figure 2. Local traffic surveys (latest dates 2017-2019) around Cassington. As can be seen the traffic loading on the A40 is 22,700 vehicles a day with a further 3,500 journeys recorded on the Yarnton Road. No data has been collected for the Bladon Road or for Cassington itself.

Road traffic is a significant cause of air pollution in the United Kingdom. As with other parts of the country, Oxfordshire is seeing a significant level of respiratory diseases such as asthma (OCC, 2015) which may be caused or aggravated by air pollution. Estimated mortality rates caused by airpollution in the county are at around 5% but this figure is subject to considerable uncertainty (OCC, 2015). Ascertaining the impacts of increasing traffic on air quality in Cassington is not possible at present because no studies have been undertaken. The nearest measurements of air quality are at Eynsham Surgery where a level of 9.11 µg m^{-3} for PM 2.5 is recorded. This is just below the World Health Organisation annual limit of 10 µg m^{-3}. Note that these measurements are annual averages so levels by the roadside or daily levels may exceed the average figure. Within Oxford itself recommended levels of airborne pollutants such as PM 2.5 periodically exceed WHO recommendations. It is also notable that Bladon, through which A4095 runs (13,000 - 14,000 car journeys per day), has nitrous oxide levels that exceed recommended levels on some months of the year (WODC, 2020). There is therefore a risk that the heavy traffic on the A40 and increasing traffic within Cassington itself may lead to levels of pollution exceeding WHO recommended limits on occasions. This risk will increase substantially with major housing developments at Eynsham and Salt Cross (3,100 houses) and at Yarnton/Begbroke as well as development taking place in Long Hanborough and other surrounding villages which will all lead to an increase in traffic. Over the long-term (20-30 years) adoption of electric vehicles or electrofuels may reduce hazards from traffic pollution. In the meantime, it would be sensible to take the following measures:

(i) Request from WODC that air quality monitoring is put in place for Cassington to assess the threat from increasing traffic levels through the village and along the A40

(ii) Adopt policies both locally and at district level that reduce vehicle journeys within and to/from and through the village

(iii) Undertake measures to mitigate pollution from the A40

(iv) Survey traffic density through Cassington now and monitor in the future in case measures to mitigate traffic flow are required.

(v) Request modelling of traffic flows for Cassington over a 10-year horizon with inputs including the increased housing, car ownership and traffic from surrounding developments in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell

Noise

Noise from the A40 is a significant problem for the village and is now noticeable across 24 hours. Heavy Goods Vehicles are a particular issue as they accelerate down the hill from Cassington Traffic Lights. Further sources of environmental noise include air traffic from London Oxford (Kidlington) Airport and RAF Brize Norton. Traffic through the village is light at night times. Some noise from local farms can also be heard at certain times of the year (e.g. gas guns to scare birds) but this is at acceptable levels and reflects the rural location of the village. The following measures should be undertaken:

(i) Consultation with WODC is undertaken to ascertain what mitigation measures for traffic noise from the A40 might be put in place especially with the planned widening of the carriageway to incorporate bus lanes (e.g. planting of trees / shrubs to reduce traffic noise and pollution; adding other forms of acoustic barriers; road surfacing to reduce noise). This is especially important as planned works may result in loss of current vegetation along the A40.

(ii) Ensure that the Parish Council has effective representation on the consultative committee for London Oxford Airport to try and prevent air traffic from significantly increasing over the village.

Light

The benefits of a dark night sky are wide ranging and include (adapted from Cornwall Country Council, 2019):

- Enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- Health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
- Wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Educational outreach – potentially including formal education and more informal activities
- Leisure advantages – enhancing conditions for amateur astronomy
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) states that planning policies and conditions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation” (Cornwall Country Council, 2019). This is supported by National Planning Policy Guidance on Light Pollution (2014; Cornwall County Council, 2019)

Cassington village has never had street lighting installed which means there is a low level of disturbance to both people living in the village from streetlights and also to nature. This also makes the village a good location for star gazing with telescopes. At present the majority of residents are against installation of street lighting so new housing developments, modifications to the roads, such

as traffic calming and other developments in the future should either maintain the “no street lights” policy or use lighting that is designed not to cause light pollution.

Potential policies could include:

Proposals for development should demonstrate that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution through:

- The number, design, specification and position of lamps;
- Full shielding (at the horizontal and above) of any lighting fixture exceeding 500 initial lumens and evidence of limited impact of unshielded lighting through use of adaptive controls; and
- Limiting the correlated colour temperature of lamps to 3000 Kelvins or less.

Proposals for development should demonstrate that, light spill from within buildings will be reduced by:

- avoiding or recessing large areas of vertical fenestration;
- avoiding glazing which is facing upwards (whether horizontal or angled) including conservatory roofs; and
- within a site, locating and orientating development as sensitively as possible.

Footpaths

Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities (National Planning Policy Framework, 2019). Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision (National Planning Policy Framework, 2019). Cassington is located in an area mainly of agricultural land although to the south lie ancient flood meadows including Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are 5 main footpath routes out of the village (Figure 13):

- Path 1. Known locally as “The Track” (Figure 3,4) this is a commonly used route for walking, jogging and exercising dogs. The track comes to a dead end beyond Purwell Farm although it is possible to make a circuit by walking / jogging along the private road to the farm and then down the Burleigh Road and back to Cassington directly or via Worton (5.4km).
- Path 2. Known locally as the “Worton Path” (Figure 5a,b, 6a,b, 7, 8) this is also a route commonly used for walking, jogging and exercising dogs. The path runs through Worton Farm and then connects to footpaths to Yarnton or across the A40 to Yarnton Meadows and the Thames. From Yarnton it is possible to connect to a wider network of footpaths to the east including the Oxford Canal (Shakespear’s Way). An alternative route crosses the Yarnton Road up past the Cassington Sewage Works connecting to Begbroke, Bladon and Bladon Heath.
- Path 3 This footpath connects to Lynton Lane and runs across meadows to a mix of native trees and conifer plantation then along the A40 in the trees just north of the cycleway (Figure 9a,b 10a,b). The footpath along the A40 is often overgrown and poorly maintained making it difficult to pass (Figure 10b). It connects to the Yarnton Meadows but this entails crossing the A40 and is hazardous (Figure 11,12). Beyond Yarnton Meadows the footpath connects to Wolvercote and Oxford or alternatively to Shakespeare’s Way and the Oxford Canal heading north through Yarnton and beyond.

- Path 4 Eynsham Mill. The footpath can be accessed via the old Cassington – Eynsham Road (involves crossing the A40 at the traffic lights then crossing a field then crossing the A40 again so hazardous). Alternatively, pedestrians can walk from Cassington down the north side of the A40 until the footpath is reached. From here it crosses a field, follows the River Evenlode for a short distance before crossing the grounds of Eynsham Mill. Beyond here the footpath follows field boundaries, crossing Lower Road (hazardous) and then traversing field boundaries to Eynsham Wood. From here the A40 can be crossed into Eynsham. Footpaths connect this footpath west of Lower Road to footpaths heading north to Church Hanborough and Freeland. Note that the building of Salt Cross will largely obliterate the countryside to the west of Lower Road through which Path 4 traverses.
- Path 5 Eynsham. This walking route is along the old Cassington – Eynsham Road ending at Eynsham. This route forms an important pedestrian / cycling link to Eynsham and its amenities including shops, cafes, schools and public houses. It is particularly important for families (e.g. for those walking with prams and / or young children) and also for cyclists, (especially for teaching children to cycle safely on a road with light traffic). Footpaths at the southern end strike south to connect with Eynsham Lock and the Thames Path. The Thames path also connects to the east with the Oxford Green Belt Way with access to Wytham Wood (permission required). The Thames Path connects to the south with Farmoor Reservoir, Stanton Harcourt, Northmoor and Newbridge (historic location). Chimney Meadows, a Wildlife Trusts Site.

Figure 3. Entrance to Foot Path 1 “The Track”. This is the only footpath accessible to less mobile members of the community. Note that even here the gate is quite narrow.

Figure 4. Footpath 1 “The Track” Cassington, adjacent to the allotments. Note that although the track is wide it is quite uneven rendering it difficult to use for wheelchair users. The borders of the track are rich in wildflowers.

Figure 5a,b. Foot Path 2, the “Worton Path” (a) Style at start of foot path and (b) field showing band of mixed trees that runs from the Yarnton Road to the A40.

Figure 6a,b. Foot Path 2 (a) Footpath to the east of Worton Farm (b) Dense growth along the foot path where it runs parallel to the railway tracks.

Figure 7. Meadows south of Yarnton accessible as part of a walk from Foot Path 2 or Foot Path 3.

Figure 8. Yarnton Church viewed from meadows in Yarnton accessible as part of a walk from Foot Path 2 or Foot Path 3.

Figure 9 (a) Start of Footpath 3, view from Lynton Lane style; (b) Crossing the fields through lowland meadow towards A40.

Figure 10 (a) Footpath 3 track along mixed forest to the east of Cassington (b) Overgrown footpath along A40.

Figure 11. The hazard of crossing the A40 on Footpath 3 from east of Cassington to the lowland meadows to the south of the A40. Sunday 30th May ~ 10.30am. The cycle path along the A40 is visible on the right (southern side of A40).

Figure 12. Cassington Meadows SSSI, an example of rare lowland meadow.

Most of these footpaths or pedestrian walkways offer walking and jogging routes from 3km to 20km plus. Common jogging routes tend to be circular or partly circular routes closer to the village. Several of these paths or walkways involve crossing dangerous roads, especially those that head south from the village (A40). Rivers also constrain some routes. The development of Salt Cross will lead to a loss of amenity to villagers who use Path 4.

Few of the paths are suitable for those who require the use of mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or scooters; or for parents with babies in prams or buggies. Path 1 is accessible in good weather, although the surface can be very rough and pitted, and the gate at the start of the track beside Williams court is very narrow. Path 2 is inaccessible because of a stile at the start of it. Path 3 and 4 are inaccessible as they run across fields. Path 5 is accessible as far as the roundabout on the Eynsham bypass, but then it is necessary to go along the grass verge, which is not easy or safe.

The following measures should be investigated:

- The loss or degradation of Footpath 4 as a result of the development of Saltcross village is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Cassington Parish Council should make enquiries as to whether a replacement footpath or route is planned which will provide a similar experience of walking in the countryside.
- The connection of Footpath 1 to Long Hanborough by extending the path to connect with the existing bridge over the River Evenlode or construction of a new bridge and from there to connect with the northern end of Lower Road or cross it to an existing footpath. This footpath could be converted to a Greenway, allowing both walkers and cyclists to use it and to open a new, mostly off-road cycle path to Long Hanborough for purposes of both commuting to work and for leisure. It provides an opportunity to

extend the local open space for recreation and adds to the footpath network, consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and provides a safer commuting route for workers travelling between Cassington and Long Hanborough.

- Better maintenance of Footpath 3 along the A40.
- As part of the A40 improvements scheme a pedestrian crossing should be placed to allow walkers on Footpath 3 to safely cross from the north side of the A40 to the meadows on the southern side. This would improve Footpath 3 and access to the meadows to the south of the A40, consistent with the National planning policy Framework (2019). Concerns about the crossing interfering with traffic flow could be allayed by only operating the crossing at weekends and during public and school holidays outside of peak traffic flow times.
- Improvements to the accessibility of the footpaths should be considered to enable greater use of them by all residents including those with mobility issues and parents and grandparents pushing prams and buggies. These improvements could include the changing of Stiles to gates more friendly to people with mobility issues or on wheelchairs / scooters. This is a clear opportunity to provide better facilities for users and is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Cycle Paths

There is only one cycle path close to Cassington, the A40 cycle paths which are located at present both on the north and south side of the carriageway (Figure 11, 13). This is an important cycle route as it connects to Oxford City Centre to the east and to Witney in the west. It is therefore important for those that wish to use a bike to commute to work at these locations. There are, however, several issues with this cycle track:

- It is fully exposed to noise and pollution from traffic on the A40 and therefore the wearing of an anti-pollution mask is probably a wise precaution.
- The cycle path is unmarked and unlit so bright lights are required in conditions of poor light or at night.
- It crosses the exits from several roundabouts which are dangerous to negotiate.
- During the summer the cycle path can be encroached by vegetation including sting nettles.
- During winter months pooling of water on the cycle path can lead to frozen sheets of ice which are hazardous to cyclists (the author has witnessed one cyclist injured this way).

There are plans to improve the cycle path as part of the A40 improvements by widening between Cassington and Oxford. This may include the placement of a new cycle connection to the cycle path along the canal into Oxford. As a result, this will allow cyclists on the north side of the A40 to avoid the dangerous crossing of the A40 at the Pear Tree roundabout. Such a connection, however, will be expensive so whether it is approved or not remains to be seen.

The cycle route to Eynsham is via the Cassington – Eynsham Road which is a no-through road for vehicular traffic and therefore reasonably safe for cyclists. This is up to the point of the roundabout on the B4449 which is hazardous to cross into Eynsham by foot or cycle as demonstrated by a teenager being knocked off their bike by a driver and injured in July 2021. Cycling routes to Yarnton, Bladon / Woodstock and Long Hanborough are along country roads. These routes are hazardous for cyclists for various reasons including fast-moving traffic, blind bends, hump-backed bridges, difficult junctions (especially on the A4095 travelling east and trying to turn into Lower Road or the Burleigh

Road) and badly maintained road edges which are partially collapsed, cracked or pot-holed. Recommended improvements include:

- Maintenance of existing cycleways so they are cycle friendly all year around.
- Development of a new Greenway connecting Cassington and Long Hanborough (see Footpaths). This would be consistent with policies on Open Space and Recreation in the National Planning policy Framework (2019).
- Maintenance of main road cycle routes to keep the roads safe for cyclists as well as vehicles. This is particularly with respect to crumbling verges.
- Improvement of junctions with the A4095 to improve safety for cyclists, for example by provision of an island at the junctions to protect cyclists travelling east turning right onto the Eynsham and Burleigh Roads).
- Placement of a pedestrian crossing at the roundabout on the B4449 connecting Eynsham to the Cassington – Eynsham Road.
- Decrease the speed limit on the Burleigh Road to 50mph from its currently unrestricted limit.
- Provision of cycle racks in strategic locations in Cassington and surrounding villages / work locations to improve accessibility for cyclists.
- There should be consideration of infrastructure improvements that would increase the connectivity of Cassington with the wider cycle route network. As such the new connection of the cycle route along the A40 with cycle paths into Oxford along the canal is to be encouraged. It would also be consistent with the National planning Policy Guidance (2019).

Village Safety

There are major concerns which are repeatedly discussed at Parish Council meetings in relation to the safety of the village particularly with respect to speeding traffic on the main road through Cassington. Existing highways and footways are not adequately designed for the volume of traffic through the village (narrow highway, blind bend at the end of the straight from the A40 to the Chequers Pub, narrow and uneven footpaths). Future plans for the village require mitigation of dangers arising from traffic which may increase as a result of development from within the village or as a result of large-scale development surrounding the village. In the former case, developers will need to deliver such mitigation measures as part of developments. In the latter case, West Oxfordshire District Council or Oxfordshire County Council should foot the bill for mitigation measures, not the residents of Cassington.

- Dangers arising from traffic increases related to developments within the village should be mitigated through measures designed and paid for by the developers.
- Increasing hazards from elevated traffic levels resulting from development in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts should be mitigated through traffic calming measures paid for by Oxfordshire County Council or West Oxfordshire District Council.
- Opportunities to increase the safety of the residents of Cassington from traffic or other sources of hazard should be examined by the Parish Council and reviewed regularly.

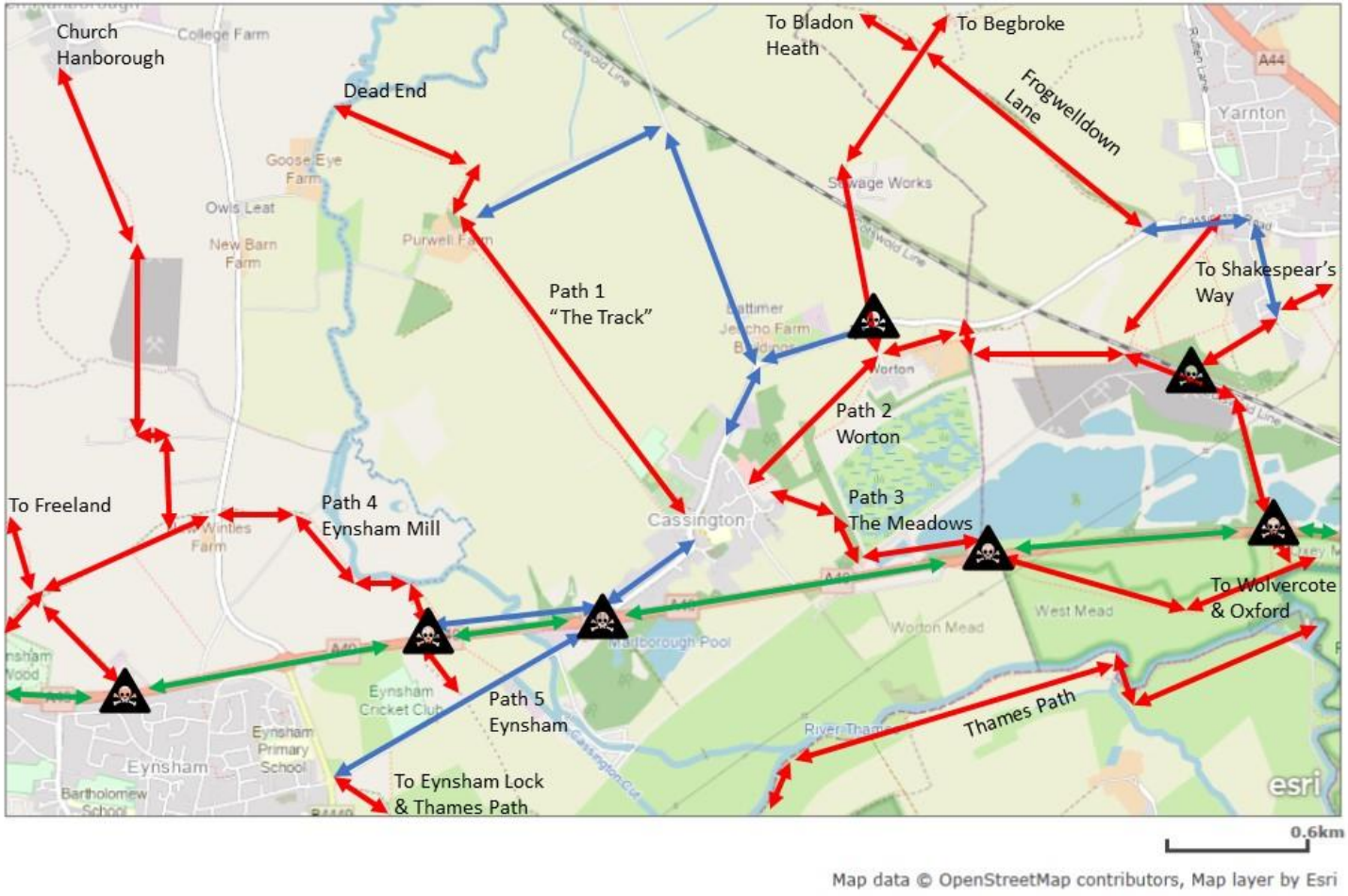


Figure 13. Cassington Village. Footpaths (red arrows), pedestrian routes along roads (blue arrows), cycle paths (green arrows). Hazardous cross points of fast roads or railways are indicated (skull and cross bones).

Cassington, History and Heritage

Cassington and the surrounding area has been occupied for at least 3000 years with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Saxon and Roman activities uncovered in archaeological investigations at Purwell Farm, Worton Farm, and even at the recent construction site of houses built by Blenheim Estates along the Cassington-Yarnton Road (Barrow Court). The village was a part of a network of peasant farm villages in the area. Within its boundaries there is a Saxon Cemetery and much evidence of previous occupation. Despite the impacts of the building of the A40 and the extraction of gravel to the north and south east of the village as well as new build, the centre of the village still retains much of its original character and old settlement pattern. This is why the centre of the village is designated as a Conservation Area (Figure 14) with a high concentration of Grade 2 listed buildings as well as a 12th Century Church and significant boundary walls (WODC, 2007; Figure 15, 25,27). Essentially the village developed piecemeal along the high street and attached lanes. Existing new builds essentially follow this development pattern (e.g. along the Cassington – Yarnton Road) or are infill or brown-field sites.

As part of the history of Cassington Village it was subject to land enclosures over a period of several hundred years. The Inclosure Act of 1801 was particularly significant for Cassington where nearly 2000 acres of land were enclosed between 1801-1804, the great bulk of which went to the Duke of Marlborough, more than 1,300 acres, covering most of the land to the north and west of the village (Baggs et al. 1990). Blenheim set about a reorganisation of the roads, waterways and land surrounding the village leading to its current configuration. It was at this stage that the outlying farms surrounding the village were established.

Figure 14. Cassington Conservation area showing boundary (dark green), listed buildings, significant boundary walls and views (WODC, 2007).

The buildings in Cassington that make up the core area of the centre of the village are described as vernacular in character and are small in scale and of simple construction. Cottages are typically two stories high, some with dormers, with plain timber lintels and gable-end chimneys. The building material is typically the local pale limestone in coursed rubble form. Roofing materials are generally replacement materials with some remnants of Stonesfield slate and one thatched roof remaining. St

Peter's Church is the most significant building and is Grade 1 listed (Figure 15). It dates from the 12th Century and includes a "wealth of fine details" both outside and inside the building. Many of the old cottages around the Upper Village Green and some in the vicinity of the Lower Village Green and Horsemere Lane are Grade 2 listed buildings, as is the Cassington War Memorial. Drystone walls are a notable feature of some areas of the village and also lie along the footpath connecting the Upper Green and Lower Green (Figure 25). The Conservation Area reports that much of the 20th Century development of the village was out of character with its historic buildings with the exception of the development to the southwest of the Upper Green (includes the Chequers Pub; Figure 16). Much of the Upper Green has been lost over time to building, such as for the village school (St Peter's). The wider area around the village is rural in nature and essential to protecting its rural character. Green space dividing Cassington from the small settlement of Worton and larger settlements of Eynsham, Yarnton, Long Hanborough and Bladon must be maintained for this purpose. It is also noted that these spaces include important archaeological sites, for example the field to the east of Bell Lane is the site of a Saxon Cemetery (Bell & Hey, 1999) but lies outside of the Conservation Area. These spaces are also crucial for wildlife and for outdoor activities such as walking. It is important that the following are considered for the future preservation of the character of Cassington Village:

- Restrict development within the current conservation area, including where important view-points are indicated.
- Where development is permitted in the village it should be restricted where feasible to brown field sites or sites which have a low-level of impact on the visual character and amenity value for current residents.
- If development is permitted, it should be of keeping with the historical character of the village buildings. An example of this is given in the Conservation Area report (WODC, 2007; Fig. 16). This would seem to relate to use of local building materials and small scale of buildings as well as sympathetic to the general rural character of the village and the curtilage of Listed buildings.
- There should be further consideration and survey of features of the village that may be worthy of conservation, such as drystone / boundary walls and historic or archaeological sites. An example of a recently designated site is the village War Memorial.
- The village is made up largely of properties for residential use. This should be maintained and the opportunity for any industrial / commercial development is not demanded or appropriate. An exception to this may be rural-based commercial activities (e.g. development of fisheries ponds).
- Cassington is a "small" village and this character is a rare survivor in Oxfordshire and particularly in such proximity to the city. This character must be protected through limited development and growth.

Figure 15. Cassington Church viewed along the path from the Upper Green.

Figure 16. Modern development in the village Conservation Area stated as being in keeping with the vernacular style of the village. Note the use of similar materials to traditional cottages in the village centre including stonework and roofing material.

Figure 17. Recent development off the Upper Green at Williams Court. Note that although the stonework is similar to the "ideal" development in Figure 16 the roofing material is modern and not in keeping with older buildings.

Biodiversity

Wider Area

Much of the countryside surrounding Cassington Village has been given over to intensive modern agriculture, predominantly arable farming (e.g. Figure 21). This has led to gradual amalgamation of fields and a steady degradation of hedgerows. Rapid run-off of rainwater contains a significant amount of soil and probably residues of fertilisers and other agrochemicals such as pesticides and herbicides. The result is that many of the minor waterways and ditches are of low grade for freshwater animals and plants although they may be relevant to biodiversity as wildlife corridors. Likewise, much of the ancient forest of the area, particularly associated with the Wychwood, has also been lost and what remains has been degraded, and in many cases replaced with plantations, mainly of conifers (e.g. large areas of Pinsey Wood, Church Hanborough). Green space is often not respected as evidenced by littering in the countryside, a result of a poor connection of Oxfordshire's citizens with the natural environment, despite living in a largely rural county.

Whilst this picture is a bleak one there are biodiversity hotspots surrounding the village of Cassington. Some of these are natural, others are examples of human restoration or natural reclamation of land by native vegetation and fauna. Many of these areas are connected to Cassington by footpaths or walking routes, whilst some are out of bounds as they lie on private land. Figures 18, 19 and 20 shows some of the large-scale habitats and areas designated for conservation present in the vicinity of the village.

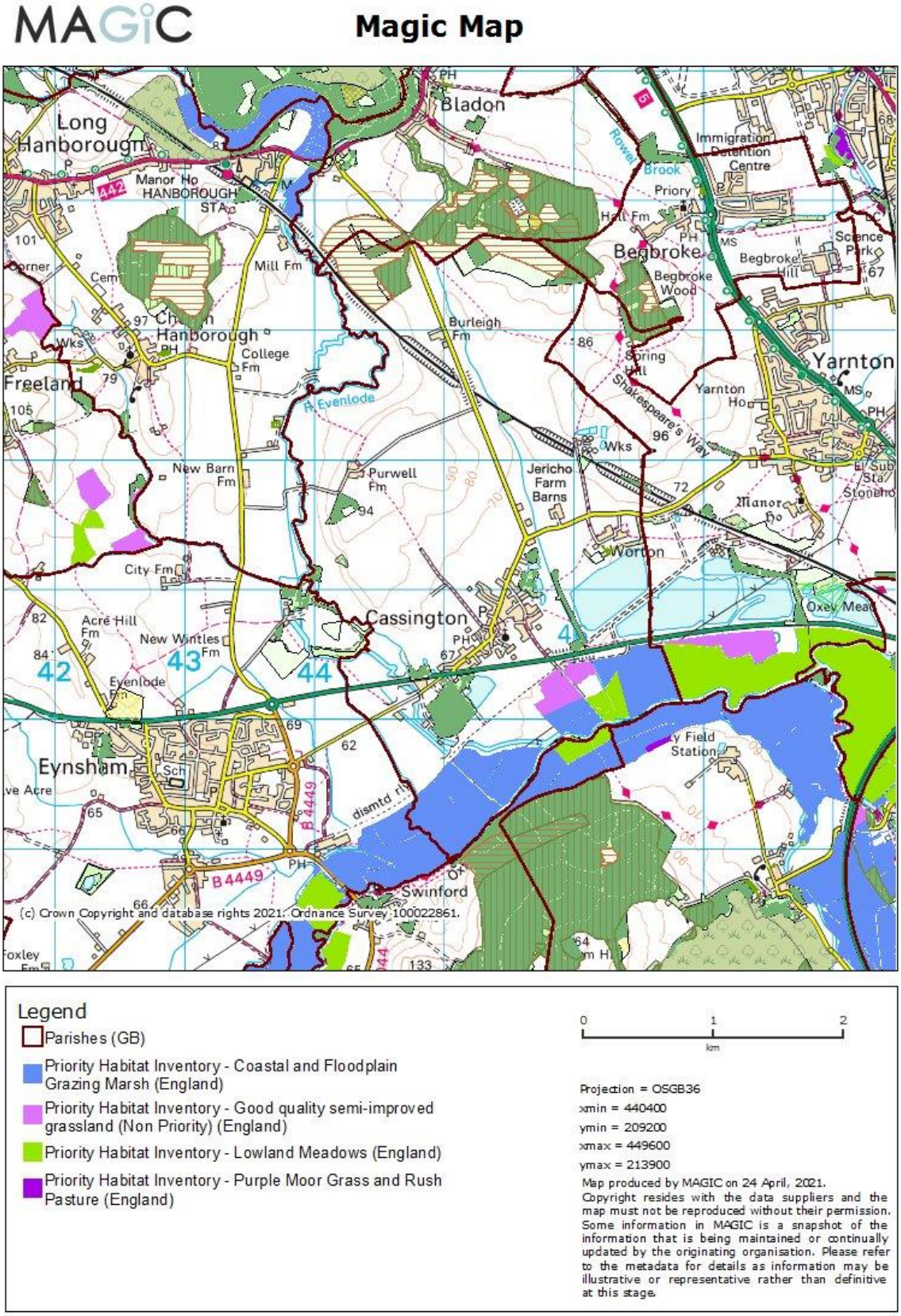


Figure 18. Cassington and surrounding area, priority habitats.

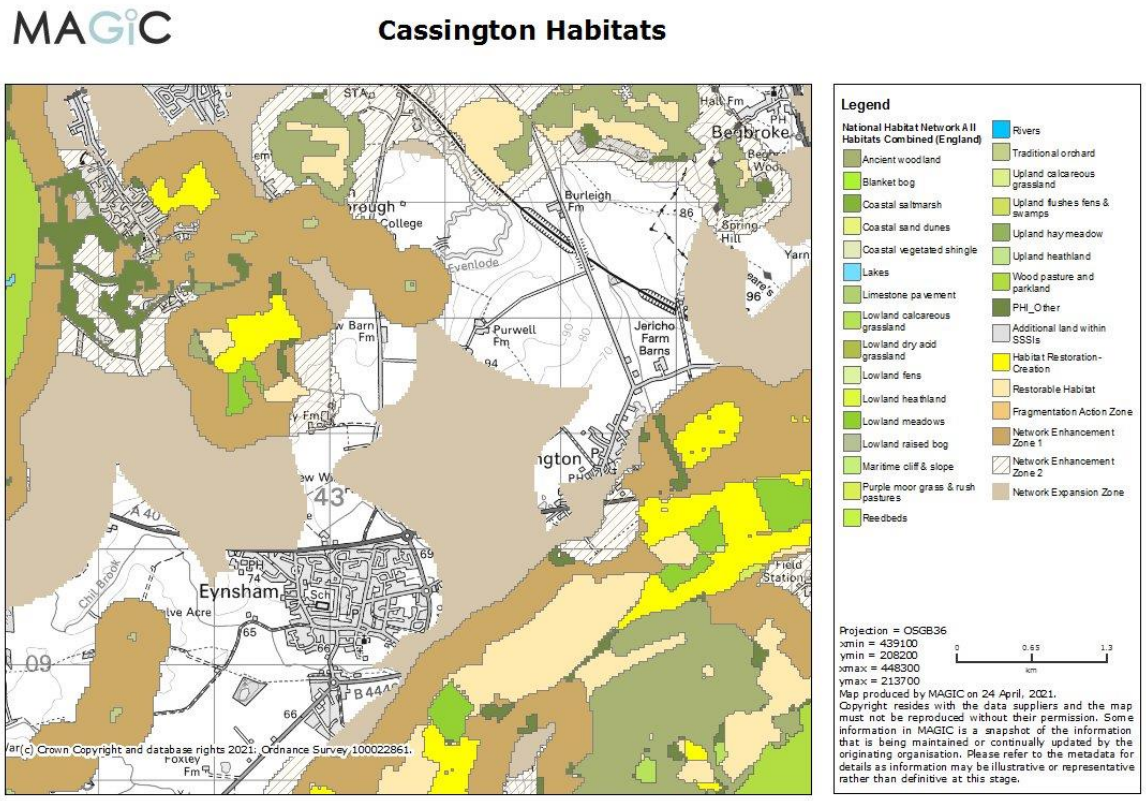


Figure 19. Cassington and surrounding areas National Habitat Network.

The most significant areas for biodiversity close to Cassington are the Lowland Meadows and Floodplain Grazing Marsh located to the south of the village along the northern side of the Thames. These meadows date back to medieval times and include Oxey Mead, Pixey and Yarnton Meads, Cassington Meadows and Oxford Meadows. These sites are either Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The host a spectacular diversity of meadow plants, including the snake's head fritillary, insects and some species of wetland birds such as curlews and lapwings as well as wildfowl from the river. 97% of this type of habitat was lost between 1930 and 1984 (Wildlife Trusts, 2012) so it is nationally scarce community of plants and animals. To the south of the River Thames there are more flood meadows as well as Wytham Woods (SSSI), an area which is notable as being a site where the University of Oxford has run long-term experiments and observations on many aspects of ecology. It is a semi-ancient woodland with parts dating back to the ice age and hosts 500 species of plants, a wealth of woodland habitats, and 800 species of butterflies and moths amongst other animals.

To the north of Cassington there are several semi-natural woodlands. Pinsey Woods is a good example, which has a combination of natural woods with a considerable diversity of plants as well as conifer plantations which are of little value for nature. There are also small patches of lowland meadow and semi-improved grassland.

Both within and surrounding Cassington are several zones within the Natural England Habitat Network. These include areas of habitat restoration (Worton gravel pits; Figure 28), Network Enhancement Zone 1 (fields to the east of Cassington; Figure 9) Network Enhancement Zone 2

(south of A40) and Network Expansion Zone (areas surrounding the village especially to the north west and south).

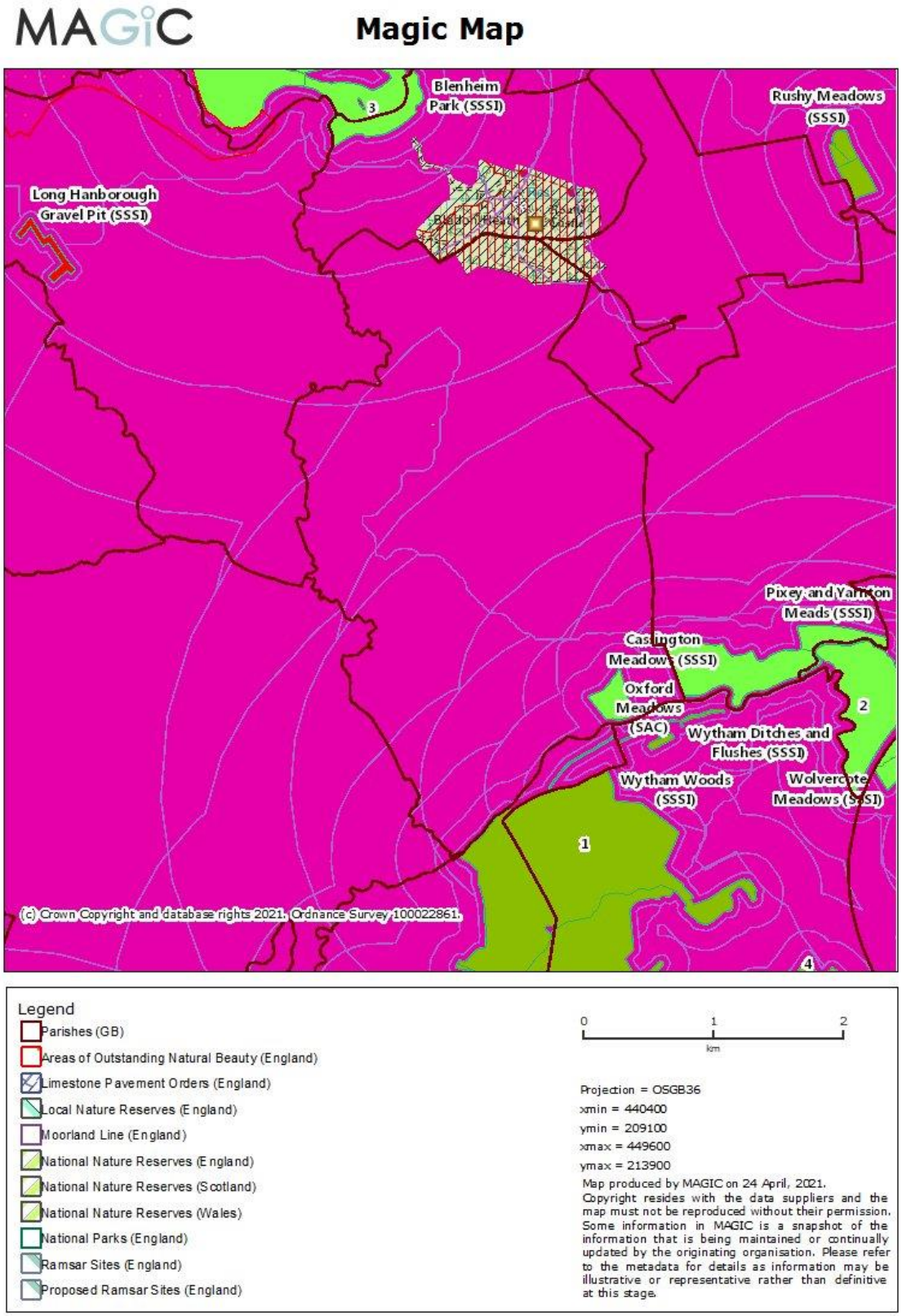


Figure 20. Designated nature conservation sites near to Cassington.

These Habitat Network Zones can be defined as follows (Natural England 2020):

- Network Enhancement Zone 1 - Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat. Factors affecting suitability include proximity to primary habitat, land use (urban/rural), soil type and slope. **Action in this zone to expand and join up existing habitat patches and improve the connections between them can be targeted here.**
- Network Enhancement Zone 2 - Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is less likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat. **Action in this zone that improves the biodiversity value through land management changes and/or green infrastructure provision can be targeted here.**
- Network Expansion Zone - Land beyond the Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking/joining networks across the landscape i.e. conditions such as soils are potentially suitable for habitat creation for the specific habitat in addition to Enhancement Zone 1. **Action in this zone to improve connections between existing habitat networks can be targeted here.**

Biodiversity Within Cassington Village

Much of the village of Cassington and the surrounding intensively farmed land and road infrastructure could be considered as anthromes, land which is intensively used by humans. Maintaining a 20% coverage of land by native habitat has been recommended to sustain local nature's contributions to people (e.g. Garibaldi et al., 2021) with higher areas of coverage of 30% of representative habitats recommended to conserve biodiversity. Such action at a local level is significant because if applied systematically across a region such as West Oxfordshire it can add up to significant action to conserve biodiversity, as well as mitigating climate disruption and providing contributions to people's well-being. Even in the most built up city scapes introducing opportunities for nature, such as parks, gardens and green roofs can help to improve biodiversity and to improve human lives through direct effects such as reducing urban temperature as well as increasing a sense of well-being through provision of green space.

Figure 21. Large arable field at the start of Foot Path 1. This illustrates modern intensive agriculture with very large monoculture fields.

Despite the fact that Cassington is a settlement, its organic growth since the 17th Century has left space for nature. The village Upper Green (Figure 22) comprises a grassed area with six mature lime trees and the surrounding buildings, mainly built in the 17th Century, but also more recent ones, provide opportunities for nesting and sheltering by birds such as jackdaws, house sparrows (RSPB Red Category; see below for explanation of RSPB Categories), swallows and house martins (RSPB Amber Category).

The village provides an important breeding site and feeding ground for a nationally declining bird species - the swift, which has seen more than a 50% decline in the last 20 years. As a consequence, it is Amber listed and is denoted as being in long-term breeding decline. Part of the reason for that decline has been the removal of appropriate nest sites (old buildings being removed or refurbished) in tandem with loss of foraging habitat adjacent to nest colonies. Colony size is important in terms of swift survival and steps to conserve and enhance colony size should be taken wherever appropriate.

In tandem with the swift, the house sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, is experiencing similar levels of decline, albeit over a slightly longer time frame (40 years). Agricultural intensification and elevated levels of urbanisation are the primary cited causes for the declines. Rather surprisingly to many, the house sparrow is red listed and denoted as being in rapid long-term breeding decline. Despite this, good numbers of the species can be found in several locations around the village, likely to be a consequence of good quality habitat and nest site availability. As such, steps to preserve and enhance their status within the village should be a primary biodiversity conservation target. We note that the tree sparrow, *Passer montanus*, has also been sighted in gardens in the centre of Cassington village and this species is also red listed.

From this central location St Peter's School provides an adjacent sheltered green space including a pond and a nature garden for outdoor education of the pupils (Figure 23, 24). This location is a haven for wildlife, including rodents, slow worms and viviparous lizards, grey squirrels and a variety of birds including robins, jackdaws, green and lesser spotted woodpeckers, black cap, tree creepers, pied and grey wagtails, dunnocks, black birds and song thrushes. At certain times of the year tawny owls can be heard at night making territorial calls right in the centre of the village presumably from the trees in these areas. A footpath from the village green to the church offers broad grassed verges with habitat for wildflowers (Figure 15). The grounds of St Peter's Church provide meadow colonised by a variety of common wildflowers such as daisies, oxeye daisies, buttercups and forget-me-not. A large variety of lichens grow on the gravestones and mature yew trees are also found in the graveyard. The church grounds are surrounded by dry-stone walls and mature hedges including broadleaved trees and ivy.

Figure 22. The Upper Green Cassington Village.

Figure 23. St Peter's School grounds showing part of the Forest School area used for outdoor education and play.

Figure 24. St. Peter's School showing part of the grounds with the pond (behind the hedges).

A footpath leads from the Upper Green to Lower Green in Cassington and is mainly flanked by drystone walls with a mixture of cultivated and wildflowers growing from the edges (Figure 25). As with the Upper Green, the Lower Green provides open space for the residential area of the village centred around Bell Lane. Dry stone walls are an important feature of the village for wildlife and plants providing hiding and nesting places for insects such as bees and also habitat for reptiles, especially slow worms and viviparous lizard (Figure 25, 27). They are also a favoured habitat for Kenilworth or Oxford ivy (*Cymbalaria muralis*) which can be seen growing out of old drystone walls all around the village (Figure 26). Gardens in the village are also an important habitat for wildlife especially where they are bordered with hedges, trees and/or drystone walls. Gardens provide habitat for a range of insects, birds, mammals (e.g. hedgehogs, mice and bats), amphibians (e.g. common toad, frogs) and also reptiles (slow worms, viviparous lizards, grass snakes). Some residents in Cassington also provide bird feeders providing a source of food through the winter and in some cases all year around. Bees and other pollinators also find nectar producing flowers in gardens as well.

Figure 25. Footpath from the Upper Green to Lower Green. Note the growth of shrubs and plants along the edges of the footpath and the dry stone walls.

Figure 26. Kenilworth ivy growing on a much-repaired drystone wall on the Upper Green – Lower Green foot path. Note also the various species of lichens growing on the stone.

Figure 27. The strong contrast in construction and wildlife friendliness of old dry stone walls compared to modern built stone walls in Cassington. Both photos from the vicinity of the foot path from the Upper Green to the Lower Green. The old walls have many living spaces for insects, slow worms and other organisms and a strong growth of lichens.

To the south of Cassington there are a number of fields between the village and the A40 which host meadowland which is grazed but not significantly disturbed through ploughing or use of agrochemicals (Figure 9a,b). These meadows provide habitat for wildflowers and wildlife including deer, foxes and birds such as barn owls, tawny owls, kingfisher, red kite and buzzards. Insect life is rich and includes the rugged oil beetle (*Meloe rugosus*), a nationally rare species which is on the S41 list of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Outcome 3 of the UK Government's Biodiversity 2020 Strategy (DEFRA, 2011) contains the ambition that: "*By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species.*" Natural England have stated that "Protecting and enhancing England's S41 species is key to delivering this outcome"[1]. The rugged oil beetle favours flower-rich meadows (especially dandelion and buttercups) on limestone or sandy soils which are found in the area around Cassington village. These meadows are included in Network Enhancement Zone 1. To the east these meadows are bordered by a band of broad-leafed trees and then coniferous plantation stretching from the Yarnton Road to the A40 before giving way to water-filled gravel pits which are located on private land but which host a range of wildfowl, at certain times of the year large numbers of starlings, and also herons and egrets (Figure 28). These gravel pits are also a known breeding location for the Mediterranean gull, *Larus melanocephalus*, which is rare in the U.K. (RSPB Amber Category). Given the location it is also likely they are visited by otters. Within Cassington village itself there is also a series of old water-filled gravel pits adjacent to Foot Path 2. This area is fenced off and overgrown but certainly intermittently hosts water birds including swans, mallard ducks, coots and herons. Grass snakes are common in the area and likely to use this series of gravel pits as habitat as are amphibians such as frogs and toads which are prey. Assuming there are fish in these waters they may also be visited by otters.

Also, to the south west of the village on the south side of the A40 is Marlborough Pool an old, water-filled quarry belonging to Blenheim Estates but leased to the Abingdon and Oxford Angling Alliance Fishing Club (see village amenities). The lake is a hotspot for wildlife and is regularly visited by birds including king fishers, bitterns, egrets, herons, cormorants, reed warblers and others. It is surrounded by wildflowers and trees including silver birch, hazel, ash apple and blackthorn trees and is also rich in insects and other animals. Given its immediate connections to the rich lowland

[1] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4958719460769792

meadows bordering the Thames this is a significant sight for flora and fauna within Cassington Village.

Figure 28. Water filled old gravel pits lying to the south of Foot Path 2 “the Worton Path”. Although they can be viewed at a distance these water bodies are on private land and not accessible for bird watching.

Figure 29. Marlborough Pool showing a rich cover of broad-leaved trees and vegetation. A dragonfly resting on the twig at the lake. Photos © Matt Britton.

Figure 30. Grey heron comes into land at Marlborough Pool. Photo © Matt Britton.

Figure 31. Great crested grebe carrying chicks at Marlborough Pool © Matt Britton.

The allotments in Cassington are probably one of the most important habitats for wildlife within the confines of the village (Figure 32, 33). Large numbers of reptiles are encountered in this habitat including mainly slow worms, viviparous lizard and grass snakes (Figure 30a). All these species are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Amphibians include the common toad (protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework), the common frog and smooth newt (protected under the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981). The bird species found on the allotments include:

RSPB Green List species (least conservation concern)

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue tit, Canada goose (flying over), Chaffinch, Collared dove, Crow, Garden warbler, Goldfinch, Great tit, Greenfinch, Jackdaw, Magpie, Mallard duck, Pheasant, Pied wagtail, Red kite, Red legged partridge, Reed bunting, Robin, Rook, Snow goose (flying over), Swallow, Whitethroat, Willow warbler, Woodpigeon, Wren

RSPB Amber List species (at least one factor negatively affecting populations)

Black headed gull (flying over), Dunnock, Kestrel, Mute swan (flying over), Swift

RSPB Red List species (highest conservation priority species needing urgent action)

House sparrow, Fieldfare, Linnet, Song thrush, Starling

As can be seen 8 of the species which have been observed on the allotments are classified as Amber List or Red List species meaning they are in decline and require conservation action (Red most urgently). The allotment also represents an area of low-intensity land use and is therefore likely provide foraging for agricultural and migrant birds species. It is noted that the red kite has benefited from a multi-million-pound restoration scheme and is now well established in the village and often forages in the allotment. In addition to these species, rugged oil beetle have been observed several times in the allotment breeding during the autumn (Figure 33a). As stated above, this is on the S41 List of rare species for the U.K. The allotments comprise a diverse range of habitats including artificial habitats (allotments and associated sheds and other equipment), semi-natural meadowland including tussock grass favoured by rugged oil beetle and hosting abundant wildflowers, as well as thickets of hawthorn, blackthorn and briar bushes. These are rich in insects and other wildlife including various species of rodents, hares, foxes and deer. Bats also forage in the allotments at night.

Figure 32. Cassington allotments (a) Wilderness area with abundant hawthorn and blackthorn in blossom (b) Cowslips (*Primula veris*) are found growing in the meadow within the wilderness area, a species which has declined nationally as a result of loss of ancient meadowland habitat.

Figure 33 Examples of wildlife from Cassington Allotments (a) The rugged oil beetle (*Meloe rugosus*) and (b) grass snake. The rugged oil beetle is nationally rare and listed as an S41 species.

Bats

Three bat species - Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bat are commonly encountered throughout the village environs and there is a likelihood that other species will be encountered from time to time. The conservation of bats within the village is reliant on the delivery of several factors, namely the provision of roosting opportunities, the availability of foraging and commuting habitat and the appropriate management / protection of existing roosts and areas. It is important to note that all UK bat species and their roosts are protected under national and European law and that this legislation has been incorporated into planning policies, meaning that planning authorities have a legal obligation to consider whether bats are likely to be affected by any proposed development. Bats may roost in a wide range of structures and the legislation makes no distinction between the size or type of development. Legislation dictates that any structures or place which bats use for shelter or protection are protected from damage or destruction, whether occupied or not.

Bats in and around the village will use a variety of landscapes or habitats throughout the year as they feed, roost and travel. They use hunting grounds or foraging habitats to find food and commuting habitats to travel between roosts and foraging habitats. Bats are known to roost in village buildings, but they also forage in the variety of green spaces on offer, namely gardens, the allotments, meadows, sports field and water bodies. In reference to this it is important to note that bats use linear features to commute from one area of the village to another. These features act as navigational landmarks and can also provide some protection from predators. As bats fly through the night, their echolocation calls bounce off these linear landscape features, helping the bats find their way to and from their roosts and foraging habitats. If bats' commuting routes are severed (for example, by roads or housing developments) they can be cut off from their foraging habitats, making it difficult for them to hunt and survive.

Great crested newts

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is a protected species in the UK under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and in Europe under the European Union Directive on Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (Ratcliffe, 2021). Section 9 regulations of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 protect the great crested newt at all life stages, from eggs to mature adults, stating it is illegal to kill, harm, capture or be in possession of parts of individuals; disturb, damage or obstruct access to breeding sites, areas of shelter or habitats; and/or partake in any form of trading in this species (Ratcliffe, 2021).

The suitability of Cassington for great crested newts was assessed by the NatureSpace Partnership, who have concluded that large parts of Cassington are highly suitable habitat for this species shown by the red polygon (Figure 34; Ratcliffe, 2021). The polygon bordering the red core area is defined as a suitable habitat where GCN's are known to be present, thus emphasising the importance of creating a key area of habitat so that nearby newts can be conserved (Ratcliffe, 2021).

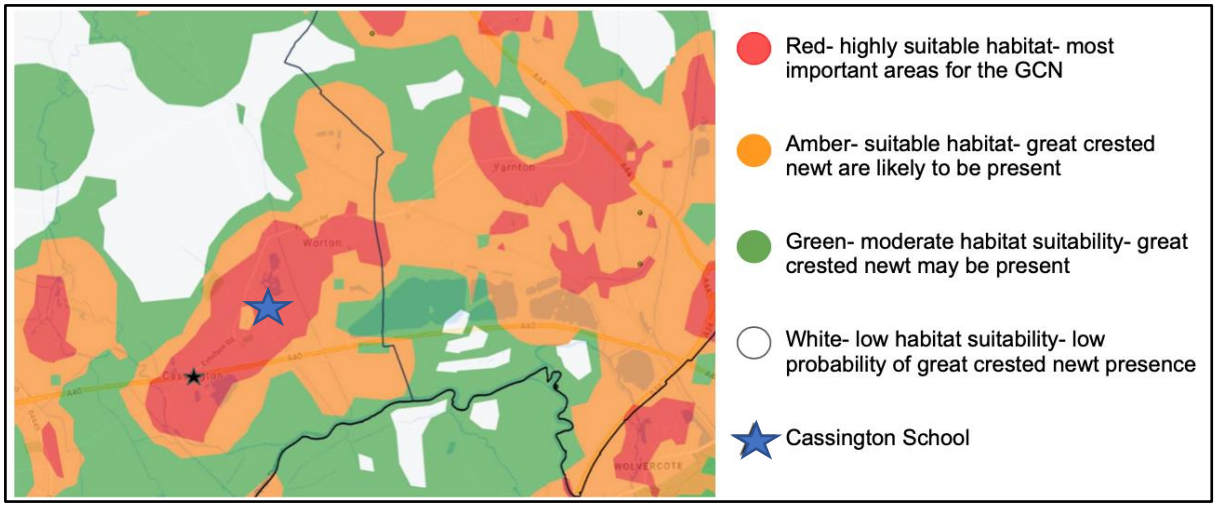


Figure 34. Suitability of habitat for the great crested newt in Cassington Village (Ratcliffe, 2021).

In particular, it is noted that the school pond is a suitable habitat for great crested newts although at present it has become overgrown and there is some litter at the site (Ratcliffe, 2021). The finding of a healthy adult great crested newt on the school grounds by pupils in July, 2021, is evidence supporting the modelled high habitat suitability for the species in the centre of Cassington (Figure 35). Restoration has been recommended by NatureSpace Partnership and they have provided an outline of how this can be done to residents of the village (Ratcliffe, 2021). It is also notable that the red polygon for great crested newts includes part of the allotments and also the water-filled gravel pits adjacent to Foot Path 2 within the confines of the village. The presence of great crested newts should be assumed at these other sites unless surveys indicate otherwise.

Figure 35. Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) found by pupils of St Peter's school on the school grounds, 5th July, 2021.

Biodiversity Offsets and Translocation

National policy now sets a target of net biodiversity gain for any new developments. How this is achieved, however, is important. For example, biodiversity offsetting has been shown to work for only approximately 30% of schemes and for some ecosystems it doesn't work at all (e.g. Ermgassen et al., 2019). Likewise, whether translocation of wildlife from development sites to resettlement sites works is also open to question (e.g. for slow worms, viviparous lizard and adder; Platenburg & Griffiths, 1999; Nash & Griffiths, 2018; Nash et al., 2020). On the basis of this evidence it is reasonable to assume that offsetting of biodiversity or translocation of animals as part of a development scheme is as likely to not work as it is to work in terms of conserving biodiversity or populations of wild animals.

Agro-Ecological Approaches

Conventional intensive agriculture is the prevailing food production approach used across much of the world, including in the U.K. and in Oxfordshire. It is characterised by the industrial management of livestock or large-scale monocultures with high external inputs and mechanisation that circumvent ecological limits to production (Van Bergen et al., 2020). However, such approaches transform the landscape and have become the predominant pressure on biodiversity across much of the world leading to degradation of natural ecosystems and the erosion of nature's contribution to people (Van Bergen et al., 2020; Dasgupta, 2021). A societal consensus is emerging that to mitigate climate change and losses to biodiversity while continuing to feed people a transformation is required to more sustainable agricultural practices (Van Bergen et al., 2020). Agriculture essentially simplifies and homogenises ecosystems by directly altering habitat and the use of agrichemicals (Van Bergen et al., 2020). Increasing land cover heterogeneity at field, farm or landscape levels can increase populations of pollinators as well as natural predators of pests (Van Bergen et al., Dasgupta, 2021). This can be achieved through developing complex landscapes with smaller and/or irregularly shaped fields (Van Bergen et al., 2020). In the context of the surrounding farmland of Cassington this might be achieved by restoration of intact hedgerow networks using native species of trees and shrubs, breaking up large fields into smaller units (including restoration of historical field boundaries) and the introduction of additional habitats such as copses of trees or ponds. Leaving the margins of fields uncultivated is another practice that can enhance biodiversity of vegetation and provide wildflowers for pollinators and habitat for natural predators (Van Bergen et al., 2020).

Such approaches, However, do not address issues such as soil biodiversity or organic content of soils. There are now a variety of approaches to more sustainable agriculture. These include (after Van Bergen et al., 2020):

- Sustainable intensification: essentially the adoption of precision methods in application of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides with crop rotation. Criticised as essentially reducing waste but without working within natural ecosystem limits or processes.
- Organic agriculture: farming of a variety of intensity but substituting most synthetic fertilisers and pesticides with organic ones.
- Ecological intensification: agricultural practices that confer greater resilience on the farm system by working with co-existing biota and ecological processes to optimise soil fertility, plant performance, crop pollination and natural defences. Practices in this type of agriculture include reestablishment of ecological infrastructures (e.g. hedgerows, floral or grass strips), preserving or creating natural or semi-natural habitats within and adjacent to farms and modifying management to include intercropping, reduced or no tillage operations or leaving a proportion of land fallow.

- Conservation agriculture: focuses on the management of soil and water resources to support crop production. This emphasises maintaining soil biodiversity, water holding capacity and nutrient levels by minimising physical disturbance of soils and input of agrichemicals. Practices include zero tillage and maintaining a permanent soil cover by covering with crop residues or living mulches to increase soil carbon and fertility and diversifying cropped plants through rotation, use of cover crops or intercropping.
- Agroecological farming: aims to integrate environmental, sustainability and production goals by regenerating long-term agroecosystem properties by incorporating functional biodiversity alongside technological or management innovations. A central focus of agroecological approaches is to move away from monoculture approaches to more diversified agricultural systems including intercropping, permaculture, diverse crop rotations, conservation agriculture methods, agroforestry and integrated crop-livestock management.

It is notable that several of the practices associated with more sustainable agriculture systems, including woodland planting, conservation tillage, buffer strips and buffer zones (e.g. contour grass strips, hedges, shelter belts), establishment of ponds, ditches and wetlands all potentially contribute to retaining water following heavy rainfall and preventing surface water flooding (Dadson et al., 2017).

The UK Government has recently laid out their roadmap to help farmers to adapt to life outside the EU. The roadmap will focus future agri-policy provision in a way that rewards land managers and farmers for sustainable farming practices. In their report "Path to Sustainable Farming" (DEFRA, 2020) the UK Government provides details related to how this will be achieved with key changes surrounding the introduction of the Environmental Land Management Scheme, which will incentivise sustainable farming approaches, create opportunities for nature recovery and establish schemes which will help tackle climate change. Given the (demonstrated) high biodiversity value of much of the village environs, the forthcoming changes provide for further nature conservation value elevation in those locations which are adjacent/contiguous with the current farmed landscape. This timely change in strategy with respect to management of agricultural land provides an opportunity for the village and Parish Council to work with the local farming community to maximise the biodiversity and wellbeing benefits these changes can bring about.

Despite the alteration of the natural environment within the confines of Cassington village and the surrounding land as a result of agriculture and transport development, significant biodiversity remains within the village and in some areas of surrounding land. Some of this biodiversity is under threat from growing human influence in the village and surrounding areas. A good example is hedgehogs which were a common sight 10 years ago in the village but have been decreasing in numbers most visibly because of animals being crushed by cars. Future development of the village has the potential to further decrease biodiversity if it is undertaken in a way that harms biodiversity rich locations or significantly increases human pressures. The following recommended policies are therefore proposed:

- That development is excluded from biodiversity rich locations in the village particularly if they impact on nationally rare or declining species.
- Biodiversity offset or species translocations are not acceptable for developments within Cassington Village or its immediate surrounding area. Scientific studies have demonstrated that these strategies for biodiversity conservation are unlikely to work.
- Where development is permitted to take place 30% of the overall land area allocated for development should be allocated to nature. This should be in a form which is likely to best

match the location or adjacent land or which adds to the connectivity of the existing network of habitats as indicated in Network Expansion Zone land which is much of the land surrounding Cassington to the west and the north. Land should be managed by local environmental groups or the Wildlife Trusts in a way that maximises the benefit to biodiversity and to the people of the village. This would meet the requirements for a Local Nature Recovery Network (O'Neill Homer, 2021) as well as enhancing open space and conserving and enhancing the natural environment as is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

- Within the village of Cassington it is important that existing structures important for biodiversity are retained. These include: lowland meadows, mature trees, natural scrub, drystone walls, hedges, drainage channels and ditches. A survey should be undertaken of trees and drystone walls and preservation orders initiated to preserve them for the future.
- New developments should include features which enhance biodiversity. These include:
    - Compulsory placement of swift bricks and house martin nest boxes on all properties; placement of bat box bricks and insect bricks is also encouraged
    - Placement of "hedgehog holes" in all fences between gardens and between gardens and external natural environments (i.e. not onto the street)
    - Boundary walls should be drystone walls or have a layer of drystone wall on their external faces.
    - The overall design of a development should be wildlife friendly with green space to increase the wellbeing of residents
- Discussions should be initiated with surrounding landowners to explore the scope for land management measures that improve biodiversity and reduce the risk of surface flooding to the village. Land management practices which carry out both functions include:
    - woodland planting
    - conservation tillage
    - buffer strips and buffer zones (e.g. contour grass strips, hedges, shelter belts)
    - establishment of ponds, ditches and wetlands
    - Restoration or planting of hedgerows
- If feasible transformations in agricultural practice around Cassington should be encouraged towards ecological intensification, conservation agriculture or agroecological approaches.
- Where land becomes available through sale the Parish Council should consult with the village to look into the possibilities for purchase through charitable fund raising or through grants to increase space for nature and to enhance the Local Nature Recovery Network.

Village Amenities

School

St Peter's is a Church of England primary school (https://www.st-petersoxon.co.uk/) and part of the Eynsham Partnership Academy (https://www.epa-mat.org/ ; Figure 36). As of the last school inspection St Peters was rated as Good overall with a rating of Outstanding for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare (OFSTED, 2017). At the time 102 pupils were enrolled in the school making it smaller than average size for a primary school in the U.K. (OFSTED, 2017; note that numbers of 106-109 pupils have been recorded on various websites since this date). The school has in recent years had a change in Head Teacher (Jon Jeffries) and has also expanded with a new classroom for reception year pupils. There has been a notable increase in the use of the outdoor space in the school for environmental education in recent years (e.g. Forest School).

St Peter's is an important element within the village for families with primary-school aged children and therefore makes the village attractive as a place to live. As well as carrying out its educational function the school also provides a focus for social activities for children and their families through various social and fund-raising functions. These either take place on the school grounds or take advantage of the Village Hall. As a Church of England School there are also strong links to St Peter's Church.

St Peter's school is currently at capacity as are many other village primary schools in the area. Any planned expansion of Cassington Village through development would therefore need to assess whether the school has the capacity to take an increase in primary-aged children associated with such housing. Expansion of the school may be feasible in the future but such expansion would need to be funded and might be at the expense of a portion of the school grounds which are currently a valuable asset for teaching and play. It is also notable that the approval of the Salt Cross development to the north of Eynsham will exceed the capacity of the current secondary school for the area, St Bartholemews. This will require the building of a satellite school in Salt Cross itself which is proposed to be run by the Eynsham Partnership.

The Forest School

A small patch of forest on the meadows to the south east of Cassington is the location of the Forest School (https://www.forestschoolfun.co.uk/). This educational activity is run by two qualified Forest School Teachers and provides for an outdoor experience with educational activities while children have fun. Many local children and those from surrounding villages have benefitted from the Forest School over a period of years. Given the lack of opportunities for outdoor exploration of nature this is a valuable amenity within the village.

Figure 36. St Peter's School, Cassington.

Village Greens

The village greens offer a natural green space located at the centre of the village (Upper Green) and in the residential area of Bell Lane (Lower Green). These spaces add to the rural character of the village and provides green space for the well-being of residents, especially those living around the greens. The Upper Green has also been used for social events such as Cassington's Annual Bike Night in June. Benches are provided on the Upper Green for use by the residents and visitors. The Village War Memorial, now Grade 2 listed, is located on the eastern part of the Upper Green.

Village Hall

Cassington Village Hall is located adjacent to the Upper Green and provides a venue for the village for up to 100 people seated or 150 standing. It is equipped with a stage, a screen, a kitchen, toilets and also WiFi. The Village Hall is fully wheelchair accessible and also has a small car park for visitors (used by parents for dropping off and picking up children at St Peter's School). The Village Hall is one of the main centres for social events in Cassington and hosts: music, dance, games and theatre events; receptions, anniversaries and parties; children's parties; fund raising events; business meetings, conferences, training sessions; sales and promotion events; exercise and dramatics classes. It is a very popular venue within the village for birthday parties and regular events such as Cassington Cinema. The building is structurally sound but in future years could be reviewed in terms of its energy sourcing for heating and other purposes to bring it in line with green / renewable energy use and minimisation of energy waste. At present the building has sufficient capacity for the social needs of the village.

St Peter's Church

Cassington's church is a Grade 1 listed building and dates back to the 11th century. The church is used during the week for worship and also for important family events such as Weddings and Funerals. Celebrations at Easter and Christmas Time are significant village events with a wider community of people attending the church. The grounds of the church are part of the green infrastructure of the village (see Biodiversity).

Allotments

Cassington allotments have been in use for more than 100 years and covers an area of about 7.4 acres (Figure 32, 33, 37), including the wilderness area on the northern boundary. Currently there are 30 plots on the site which are fully subscribed. These plots are of a considerable size and ownership varies from a single plot-holder to shared plots. Allotment gardeners come from Cassington Village, but some come from the wider area including Eynsham and Kidlington. This is because of a shortage of allotment spaces in West Oxfordshire at present, which reflects a national trend of loss of allotments and increasing interest in growing healthy food by the public. The allotments provide a communal meeting place, a place of recreation and a haven for relaxation and well-being. The main use is therefore recreational but given the long history in the village it is also of cultural value.


Figure 37. Cassington Allotments, an amenity for the entire community for growing healthy and nutritious food. It has been a life-line for many during lock down.

The Cassington Allotment gardeners include people of a range of ages from young to old. For the many senior allotment holders, working on their plots and talking to fellow gardeners provides them with essential social interaction and exercise that might not otherwise be available to them. For families the allotments provide an important opportunity to teach children about gardening, the environment and healthy food. Working the allotments has an undeniable positive impact on the social and physical well-being of Cassington Allotment holders and many people from the village who use the site to walk in or as a safe route to the Sports Fields. This was recently acknowledged by West Oxfordshire District Council in response to an application to make the allotments an Asset of Community Value. They stated: "*The location of the allotments connects it to sports pitches and field and the social centre which make it an important part of the green and community infrastructure of Cassington*." Other benefits of the allotments include the growing of healthy, nutritious and cheap food for local families. When it occurs over production is distributed within the village.

The land on which Cassington Allotments are located belongs to Vanbrugh Trustees LTD (Blenheim Estates) who have recently attempted to gain support to develop a large portion of the site. The proposal was controversial and has been largely rejected by the residents of the village who view the develop as too large, impacting on an important village amenity, residents on Elms Road as well as on village traffic and other issues such as flooding and drainage. An application was made to have Cassington Allotments made an Asset of Community Value in late 2020 and this was accepted in January 2021 (Cassington Allotments Association 2020; WODC, 2021).

One long-standing issue on the allotments which reduces its value to the allotment holders is a lack of provision of water. With increasingly erratic weather patterns, especially prolonged dry spells in spring losses of plants and poor growth of some crops can be an issue. Discussions have been held with Blenheim Estates and they are amenable to the digging of a borehole on the allotments. This needs to be further investigated and funding found to move the project forward. Blenheim Estates have also stated that further allotment provision (regardless of the outcome of planning applications) may be possible on their land in the future.

Sports Field and Sports and Social Club

Another important element of the green and community infrastructure of Cassington is the village Sports Field and the Sports and Social Club. The Sports Field is used for football and cricket and also includes a children's playground and a range of outdoor exercise machines as well as a zip wire. There is also a MUGA pitch which is used for both tennis and occasionally hockey. The Sports and Social Club itself includes changing rooms as well as a hall and a kitchen. It is used for sporting events but also social events such as parties or fund raisers. It is also an important venue during Cassington

Bike Night. The building has recently had a refurbishment. At present the Sports and Social Centre has sufficient capacity for the village's needs.

Public Houses

Cassington has two public houses, the Red Lion and the Chequers. Both are used by members of the community for socialising throughout the week as well as special events. The Red Lion is a 17th Century building and includes a large garden, including seating and children's play equipment. The Chequers includes Bed & Breakfast and also provides food throughout the week. This is the only eatery within Cassington Village.

Newspaper shop

There is a small newspaper shop in the front porch of one of the houses in Elms Road where daily newspapers can be purchased. No other shops are located within the village.

Marlborough Pool

Marlborough Pool (Figure 38) lies on the southwestern edge of the village across the A34 and bordering the biodiverse meadows on the north side of the Thames. The pool is a water-filled quarry and has been a club fishing lake for over 70 years. The lake is owned by Blenheim Estates and has been leased by Abingdon and Oxford Angling Alliance Fishing Club for 71 years. The club offers a low-cost fishing opportunity to all people young and old (Figure 39). Aside from being an important site for biodiversity in the village (see above) the lake is considered the hidden gem of Oxford in fishing history books and some of the country's most famous fishermen have had the pleasure of angling there. The lake used to be open to all and free to walk around until there was an uncontrolled release of mink which combined with the increasing otter population in the area. Predation from these piscivores saw the loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of 40-50 year-old carp losing the club many members. This led to the building of a £20,000 anti-predator fence so unfortunately the lake is now fully fenced to keep the otters out. Restocking of the lake over the last 5 years has shown a healthy return to the fish stocks. Recent tree management has opened up some gaps around the perimeter so the lake can be enjoyed by people walking around the surrounding fields. Cassington residents can arrange a tour of the lake via the club if they are interested in fishing.

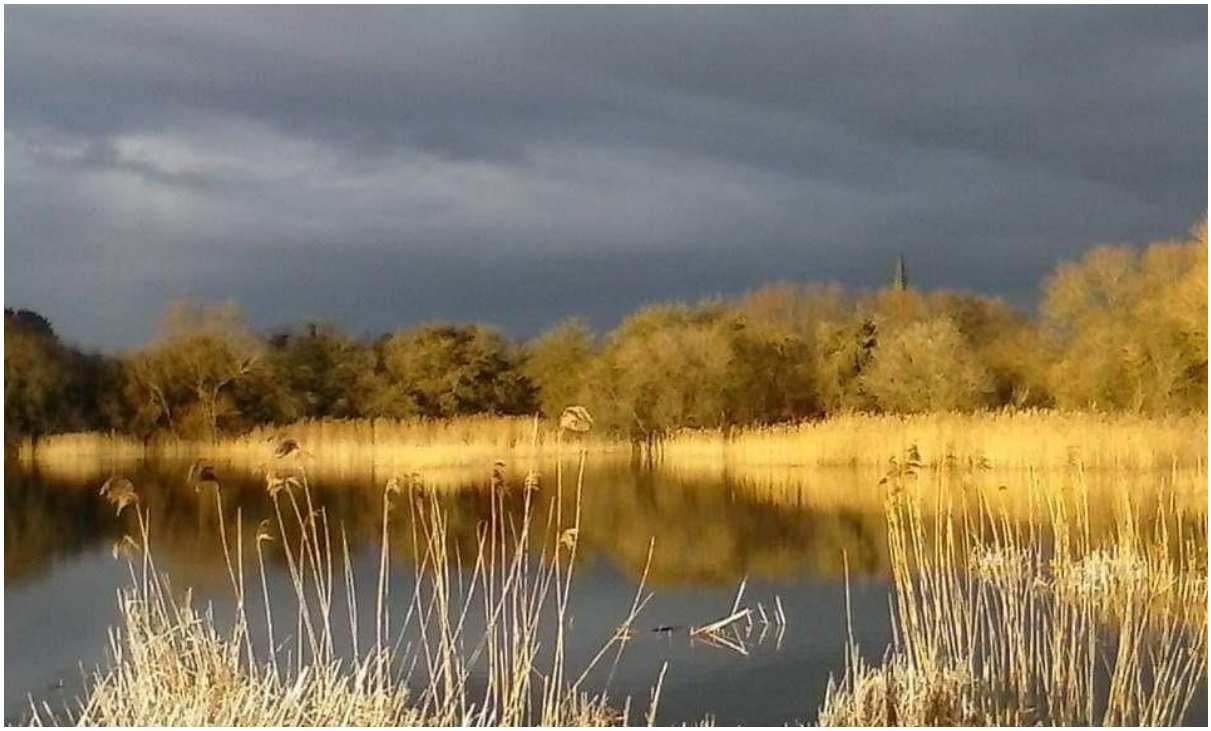


Figure 38. Marlborough Pool fishing lake (© Matt Britton).

Figure 39. A fisherman holds his prize, an enormous carp from Marlborough Pool (© Matt Britton).

Worton Farm

Worton Farm includes a range of small business premises as well as horse stabling, paddocks and a covered exercise area for horses. A large venue was recently constructed for events such as weddings. This is also the location of Worton Farm Café which provides a local venue for lunches, coffee and cakes. For walkers this is accessible via foot path 2 but it also has parking. Alongside the café there is also an organic produce farm shop. Worton Farm is also the location of a number of habitat restoration projects (old gravel pits now filled with water). These are inaccessible at present and too distant for the public to view. The placement of a bird hide close to foot path 3 could be achieved with minimal disturbance to wildlife but would require permission from the land owner as well as permission to cross a distance of about 10-15 m from foot path 3 to the hide. This could be achieved through a permissive foot path (i.e. not a right of way but specific permission given by the landowner to allow access).

Public Transport

Currently Cassington Village is served by a bus stops on the northern and southern sides of the A40. These bus stops are a considerable distance from the centre of the village and so not friendly to passengers who have a low level of mobility. Buses travel to / from Oxford to the East and Witney to the west. The service current stops in the early evening from Oxford. The planned upgrades for the A40 will include bus lanes so decreasing journey times on the bus from Cassington to Oxford in the mornings. However, in the outlined plans there was some suggestion of moving the bus stop on the northern side of the A40 (i.e. east bound) possibly further from the village. Buses currently include:

853 Cheltenham Royal Well Bus Station – Oxford via Witney

H2 Carterton – John Radcliffe Hospital via Witney

S2 Carterton – Oxford via Witney

S2X Carterton – Oxford via Witney

Taxi provision for Cassington is also quite poor with several local companies charging a surcharge for pick-ups from Cassington to go to destinations such as Oxford.

Village amenities summary

Cassington Village has a range of amenities focused on education, social activities, religious worship, leisure, sports and other outdoor pursuits. Many of these amenities have the capacity to take more users including the Village Hall, the Sports and Social Club, the Church, and the public houses. St Peter's School is currently at capacity and so further development within the village and surrounding area will require monitoring. Secondary school provision will certainly be exceeded in the area as a result of development at Eynsham and the building of Salt Cross village, should it go ahead. The village currently lacks a shop/convenience store and it is likely that many villagers would favour such a store as part of future development. Whether such a store would be financially viable on its own in a village the size of Cassington is uncertain so a combination with another business (e.g. one of the public houses) might be a more economically sustainable prospect. Public transport is also lacking in Cassington and the only bus stops are located on the A40.

In terms of Green Infrastructure Cassington has a very notable rural aspect in the centre of the village. There is connectivity from the Church and its grounds, via the Upper Green, through the allotments to the Sports and Social Club and Sports Fields. The main road through Cassington intersects this green infrastructure outside the Red Lion public house on the northern edge of the Upper Green. This is one point of hazard when moving from the church or centre of the village to the

Sports Field. From the Upper Green foot paths connect with all parts of the village with the path from the Upper Green to Lower Green being particularly important connecting residential areas on the eastern side of the village. Other green corridors which bring green space close into the residential areas of the village include the land at the start of Foot Path 2 (saxon cemetery and fields accessed from Bell Lane) and Foot Path 3 (southern meadows at the end of Lynton Lane). All of these green corridors and natural green spaces within the confines of the village should be regarded as Local Green Space (Figure 40) as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and should be preserved because of their importance to the well-being of villagers and to wildlife.

Figure 40. Map showing Local Green Space, proposed route of Greenway to Long Hanborough and proposed bird hide location in Worton Farm.

We recommend the following policies with respect to amenities in Cassington:

- All existing amenities are essential to the well-being of residents in Cassington Village and as such should not be lost to development (e.g. Church grounds, Upper and Lower Greens, Village Hall, allotment, public houses, Sports Field, Sports and Social Club and green corridors).
- Cassington Allotments have been recently accepted as an Asset of Community Value to the village. Consideration of whether further applications for Asset of Community Value status should be made for other village amenities (e.g. public houses; Sports Field).
- The boring of a water hole for provision of water on the allotments should also be moved forward by the Allotment Association and the Parish Council.
- For some amenities current use or future development may exceed provision. These include the allotments and St Peter's School. Review of pressures on these amenities should be undertaken with any development proposals in the village. We note that further allotment provision has been verbally offered by Blenheim Estates (regardless of outcomes of current development proposals).
- There is currently no safe crossing point of the main road through Cassington for St Peter's School or for pupils from St Bartholomew's School being dropped in the evenings from the school bus which creates significant risk for parents and children; consideration should be

given to introducing either a safe crossing or traffic calming to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic through the centre of the village.

- Growth of St Peter's school may become an issue for parking for parents as parking spaces are very limited in the centre of the village. This may represent a constraint on further growth of the school.
- There may be support for a local shop if it could be run as a sustainable business. This might be more likely if it was combined with another business in the village.
- Public transport links to Cassington Village are poor and particularly so for people with low mobility. It is essential that the village is consulted and puts forward its points of view on any decisions regarding public transport links in the future. An example is the proposal to move the bus stop on the eastbound side of the A40 for Cassington. West Oxfordshire District Council should be encouraged to increase public transport links to the village (e.g. a bus route that goes through the village; a light railway stopping at Cassington as part of a Witney – Oxford rail scheme).
- A limited Saturday service and no Sunday service on existing bus routes along the A40 make it unsuitable for weekend users seeking to use sustainable transport from the village to Oxford / Witney. The Parish Council should discuss this with the bus operators and West Oxfordshire District Council.
- Although there are three railway stations around Cassington (Long Hanborough, Oxford Parkway, Oxford Central) there are no bus links to any of them from the village. This makes joined-up sustainable transport very challenging and results in essential car ownership for business and leisure journeys. The whole issue of sustainable transport is an important consideration for Cassington Village.
- The Parish Council should investigate the possibility of building a small bird hide to view birds on the western gravel pit at Worton Farm for both leisure and educational purposes. The village and Parish Council should provide the funding for building this structure and also pay for maintenance each year. Minimal investment could provide the village with a valuable asset for nature education as well as the well-being of residents interested in wildlife.
- The creation of a safe and accessible walking and cycle route would enable Worton Farm to become a more significant amenity to the village. The construction of such a route would require careful design to prevent loss to biodiversity.
- The Parish Council might consider commissioning of signage around the village to provide residents and visitors with information on points of historical interest, biodiversity and other features. This may improve the experience of people when moving about the village for leisure.
- The Parish Council should put out calls for further ideas for amenities, amenity improvement and improvement of green space for people and nature in the village. Ideas could include the provision of a community well-being area, further allotments, a village orchard, provision of small areas of forest, restoration of hedgerows or other village projects.

Green Development

National to Local Building Policies and Recommendations from the Green Infrastructure Report

All of Cassington is located in Green Belt land and as such should be considered in this context for proposed developments to meet local needs for housing as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) Section 13. It is summarised here:

- Inappropriate development should be avoided in green belt land.
- When considering planning applications substantial weight should be given to any harm to the green belt land.
- Exceptions to inappropriate development include:
    - Buildings for agriculture and forestry
    - Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments as long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes for which it was designated
    - The extension or alteration of a building as long as it is not a disproportionate addition
    - The replacement of a building with another of the same use and size
    - Limited infilling in villages
    - Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites)
    - Limited infilling or redevelopment of land which has been previously developed whether in use or not in use (not including temporary buildings) which would:
        - Not have a greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing development
        - Not cause substantial harm to the Green Belt where the existing developed land was used for affordable housing.
- Certain other forms of development are not inappropriate to Green Belt land if they maintain its openness and does not conflict with the purpose for which the land was designated. These include:
    - Mineral extraction
    - Engineering works
    - Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a need for Green Belt location
    - The reuse of buildings providing they are of a permanent and substantial construction
    - Material changes in the use of land (e.g. for sports and recreation or for cemeteries and burial grounds)
    - Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or
    - Neighbourhood Development Order
- Inappropriate development will include many renewable energy projects.

In addition, Cassington is classed as a Village in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (WODC, 2018) and as such "*some development will be supported ……. but this will be limited to that which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help maintain the vitality of the local community*" (WODC, 2018 Para 4.22). The Local Plan also outlines principles of sustainable development as that which includes:

- Reduces reliance on the private car for journeys
- Reduces out-commuting and encourages self-containment
- Reduces the risk of flooding (WODC, 2018, Para 4.6)
- Achieves mixed use developments that create vibrant active places
- Maximises the use of previously developed land

- Tackles traffic congestion on key routes such as the A40 and A44
- Improves air quality
- Tackles climate change
- Protects the Green Belt (see also WODC, 2018 Para 4.2, 4.6)
- Ensures that the leisure and recreational needs of residents and visitors are met both in terms of the quality and quantity of facilities available
- Ensures that new development is supported by appropriate investment in new and/or enhanced infrastructure including education, water supply and disposal, transport, affordable housing and open space
- Improves the health of local communities
- Protection and enhancement of the District's rich historic and natural environment (see also WODC, 2018 Para 4.5, 4.6)

Outlined in this document are other guidelines for where development should and should not take place that may be adopted as policies in the Neighbourhood Plan or as guidance to help planners propose sustainable developments or assist with planning decisions. Many of these guidelines are in line with the National planning Policy Framework (2019) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Others go beyond these policy documents but put forward recommendations for more sustainable development for the village of Cassington that takes into consideration the needs of its residents, local and regional biodiversity networks and climate change. These include:

- Avoidance of building in areas subject to flooding or which are important in terms of drainage
- Avoidance of building where there will be substantive impact or the possibility of increased risks in terms of traffic volume and safety
- Avoidance of building on areas which represent important amenities to the residents of Cassington
- Avoidance of building where there is a likelihood of substantive harm to biodiversity
- Avoidance of building on Local Green Space
- Adoption of building design that is in keeping with the vernacular style of the village (see Figure 16) as outlined in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (WODC, 2007)
- Incorporation of features which enhance biodiversity into buildings, walls and gardens
- Encourage the set aside of land for nature and/or for recreational purposes
- Encourage the provision of or contribution to further land, amenities, improvement of sustainable transport routes (e.g. the Greenway from Cassington to Long Hanborough) and/or routes for walking during leisure time as well as improvement of such routes for accessibility

Building for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

The design of a housing development, including the use of land, planting, connections to sustainable transport networks, building orientation and the buildings themselves can contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation. In terms of mitigation the UK Government has laid out its vision and a 10-point plan in its Energy White Paper (2020) to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This plan includes a commitment to improve building energy performance to meet this target and as such all

new builds by 2030 must operate at net zero. An important aspect of the Government's Policy with respect to housing development and climate mitigation is the adoption of Passivhaus Building Standard. In line with this the following policies are recommended:

- All development must be 'zero carbon ready by design' to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping.
- Wherever feasible, all buildings should be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m^2/year. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character of the village.
- All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.
- All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment , using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.
- An Energy Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policies outlined above (except for householder applications). The statement will include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy, and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

In addition, the following recommendations are made to further improve climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience in new building developments in Cassington:

- The planting of trees and shrubs that store carbon as part of a development. This could be undertaken as part of land set aside recommended as part of the Cassington Nature Recovery Network to improve biodiversity. Such areas of land should be uncultivated or include uncultivated areas (e.g. restoration of wild forest, scrubland, hedgerows or meadows) to maximise soil carbon uptake and storage (also helps to store water). It should be noted that such areas can have local effects of lowering temperatures (e.g. through the albedo effect of the vegetation; Pörtner et al., 2021) as well as reducing the occurrence of surface-water flooding. They would also improve the spiritual well being of the residents of the village through provision of more green space. These are triple win solutions (e.g. benefiting climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and people; Pörtner et al., 2021)

- Use of green roofs or green walls where appropriate as these also have the potential to lower temperatures during summer and insulate during the winter. They are also beneficial to nature.
- Include sustainable transport infrastructure with new developments such as charging points for electric vehicles or bicycles with each household.
- Adoption of renewable power sources and new technologies to reduce power consumption (e.g. non-fossil fuel gases such as hydrogen; ground-source heat pumps etc.).
- Developments to contribute to sustainable transport infrastructure where feasible (e.g. new cycle routes, improvements to existing foot paths etc.

Figure 41. Green roof on building in Cassington village. Not only does this provide advantages in terms of cooling of the building but it also provides flowering plants for pollinators such as bees.

At What Rate Should Cassington Grow?

Over the last 10 years 20 dwellings have been built in Cassington in the Barrow Court and William's Court Developments. This represents a growth of about 10% in the size of the village. A survey of local housing needs by the Parish Council has identified the requirements for approximately 10 1-2 bedroom-dwellings and 2-3 starter homes for families. It is acknowledged that there is a considerable demand for housing in the West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts but it should be considered that there are large developments of hundreds to thousands of homes occurring to meet this demand in Eynsham, Salt Cross (assuming it is approved), Woodstock and Yarnton/Begbroke as well as in North Oxford. As such it is justified that the Neighbourhood Plan focuses on local needs. Given the data from the housing needs survey there is a current need for up to 15 homes in the

village with a mix of affordable homes and smaller dwellings for purchase or rent. This is relevant when considering the National Planning Policy Framework with respect to acceptable development on Green Belt land (development to meet local needs). This would suggest a growth rate for the village of 5% per decade but this should be kept under constant review with changing trends in population of Oxfordshire. The Parish Council can review housing needs through consultation with West Oxfordshire District Council and through follow-up local housing needs surveys.

New Housing Should be Built with Current Demographic Trends in Mind

When considering the development of new housing it is important to plan not just for young buyers seeking an entry point onto the housing ladder or young families seeking affordable homes. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Oxfordshire (OCC, 2018) identifies that by 2031, there are expected to be 174,400 people aged 65+ living in Oxfordshire, up from 121,000 in mid-2016 (+53,500, 44%). The number of people in the oldest age group (85+) in Oxfordshire is expected to increase from 17,000 in 2016 to 26,500 in 2031 (+9,400, 55%). In 2011, there were 29,900 people aged 65+ living alone in households Oxfordshire, below the regional and national averages (OCC, 2018). As the questionnaire for the Cassington neighbourhood plan has indicated this is a problem which also effects the village. Existing housing which is not designed with adaptability and flexibility in mind can present enormous barriers to older and disabled people. For example, many millions of homes have steps to the front door and very few have toilets at entrance level, essential for so many people who find it hard to get around. Poorly designed homes can present a daily struggle that impacts on every aspect of life, from the ability to simply get up and dressed, to maintaining social contacts or holding down a job.

A solution to this problem for new housing is to ensure that buildings are designed to be accessible and adaptable. At present there is no strict policy on the building of houses that are accessible and adaptable. However, the U.K. Government has laid out optional guidelines for the building of a Lifetime Homes Standard which can only be applied if a local authority has assessed needs and proved a requirement for such housing and it is viable (Age UK, 2019). The Government has also laid out design specifications for accessible and adaptable homes (see HM Government, 2015). Given the figures in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment there does seem to be such a need in Oxfordshire.

Other options to care for elderly residents in Cassington do exist. Obviously, adaptation of an existing home is one way of addressing the needs of a person with mobility issues. Residents attempting to do this face a number of challenges, including the costs and also finding trustworthy trades people for building work and other technical adaptations to households. Disabled Facilities Grants are available to assist with such home modifications but they are limited in what they can be used for, are means tested and are extremely slow, sometimes taking years to come through following an application. What is currently lacking at village level is clear local advice (or direction to advice at district and county level) for elderly or disabled people seeking advice on adaptation of homes and other matters with respect to maintaining a healthy and independent lifestyle.

Another option, if an elderly person wishes to remain in their home is to become involved in a Homeshare Scheme. Homeshare is when an older person with a spare room is matched with a person who is in need of low-cost accommodation, in return for up to ten hours of household tasks or company per week. The tasks that the homesharer carries out in return

for reduced rent are agreed during the initial matching process. These tasks will depend on the want and ability of both parties and will be unique to their match, for example, shopping, cooking and gardening. Homeshare is not a personal care service but obviously can be a way of avoiding a lonely existence for a single aged person and also providing assistance with sustaining an independent lifestyle. All aspects of matching, vetting, supporting, monitoring and ending the Homeshare are managed by expert staff from one of the local delivery schemes, in the case of Oxfordshire this is located here: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/homeshare-oxfordshire/# . However, the same sustainable transport issues that affect the elderly in Cassington may also impact on Homesharers. This is because they are likely to be people who are dependent on low-cost accommodation and so may not own a car and have to rely on public transport. This facility may therefore be of limited availability for the village.

Another possibility which has not been explored is that the Churchfields Care Home (or an alternative provider) may be interested in developing a model that would enable carers from the Home to look after and support some people in their own homes in the village. Such a model is not common at present but if it could be made to work might prove a scalable solution to providing support for elderly members of the village that wish to remain in their own homes.

The adaptation or building of homes targeted at elderly or disabled people in Cassington still does not resolve the issue of the lack of some village amenities, particularly public transport. The village questionnaire has identified that this lack of connectivity of the village is already influencing decisions regarding location of homes for the elderly. This is a complex problem to resolve and the residents of Cassington may have to consider the development of more formalised methods of community support for elderly or disabled members of the community (acknowledging that this happens informally in some cases already).

Recommendations regarding accessible and adaptable housing in Cassington:

- The Parish Council assesses needs for what proportion of new housing should be built to accessible and adaptable standards from West Oxfordshire District Council or Oxford County Council.
- Based on the outcome of such a consultation the Neighbourhood Plan could adopt a policy that a certain proportion of houses are built to accessible and adaptable standards.
- The Parish Council should put together an advice package for elderly residents on how to access grants for adaptation of housing, identifying reliable or specialist traders who undertake such works, and how to access other services or community care options that they may need (e.g. Homeshare).
- The Parish Council should initiate a conversation with the Churchfields Care Home or other care providers on the possibility of developing a new model of support for elderly people wishing to remain living semi-independently in their own homes.
- Cassington, as a community, may need to step in and consider how to provide care and support for elderly or disabled members of the village where services, such as public transport, do not exist. During the Covid pandemic some village social networks, such as the Cassington Café have had to be closed down and re-

establishment of these as soon as possible once the current health emergency has receded should be a priority.

Acknowledgements

ADR would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Neighbourhood Planning Committee for comments and suggestions for this report (Jonty Ashworth; Piers Beeton; Ian Finlay; Barbara King; Anne Luttman-Johnson). Special thanks are due to Leani Haim, Oneill Homer, who provided guidance and reference material for design and development of the Cassington Green Infrastructure Plan. Thanks as well to Stewart Thompson for providing feedback on this report as well as contributing sections of text on birds, bats and newts as well as the new DEFRA agricultural policy. Thanks also go to Matt Britton for providing the text and photographs on Marlborough Pool. Special thanks to Tracey Cameron for providing support to the Neighbourhood Planning Committee through its deliberations. Finally, I thank the residents of the village of Cassington for making it such a pleasant place to live. I hope this report only improves your collective well-being.

References

Age UK (2019) Housing design, adaptations and support (England). Policy Position Paper, 6pp. https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/policy-positions/housing-and-homes/ppp_housing_design_england.pdf

A P Baggs, W J Blair, Eleanor Chance, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C J Day, Nesta Selwyn and S C Townley, 'Cassington: Economic history', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 12, Wootton Hundred (South) Including Woodstock*, ed. Alan Crossley and C R Elrington (London, 1990), pp. 44-48. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol12/pp44-48 [accessed 15 June 2021].

Cassington Allotment Association (2020) Assets of Community Value Nomination Form. Cassington Allotment Association, Cassington, Oxfordshire, UK, 18pp.

Cornwall County Council (2019) Neighbourhood planning Guidance on the Dark Night Sky. 8pp.

Dadson SJ, Hall JW, Murgatroyd A, Acreman M, Bates P, Beven K, Heathwaite L, Holden J, Holman IP, Lane SN, O'Connell E, Penning-Rowsell E, Reynard N, Sear D, Thorne C, Wilby R (2017) A restatement of the natural science evidence concerning catchment-based 'natural' flood management in the UK. *Proceedings of the Royal Society A* 473: 20160706.

Dasgupta P (2021) *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*. HM Treasury, London, UK, 601pp.

DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, London, UK, 45pp.

DEFRA (2020) The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, London, UK, 66pp.

Ermgassen SOSE, Julia Baker J, Griffiths RA, Strange N, Struebig MJ, Bull JW (2019) The ecological outcomes of biodiversity offsets under "no net loss" policies: A global review. *Conservation Letters* 12: e12664.

Garibaldi LA, Oddi FJ, Miguez FE, Bartomeus I, Orr MC, Jobbágy EG, Kremen C, Schulte LA, Hughes AC, Bagnato C, Abramson G, Bridgewater P, Carella DG, Díaz S, Dicks LV, Ellis EC, Goldenberg M, Huaylla CA, Kuperman M, Locke H, Mehrabi Z, Santibañez F, Zhu C-D (2021) Working landscapes need at least 20% native habitat. *Conservation Letters* 14: e12773

Nash DJ, Griffiths RA (2018) Ranging behaviour of adders (*Vipera berus*) translocated from a development site. *Herpetological Journal* 28: 155-159.

Nash DJ, Humphries N, Griffiths RA (2020) Effectiveness of translocation in mitigating reptile-development conflict in the UK. *Conservation Evidence* 17: 7-11.

National Policy Planning Framework (2019) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London, UK. 73pp. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810507/NPPF_Feb_2019_print_revised.pdf

National Planning Policy Guidance on Light Pollution (2014) Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution#what-factors-should-be-considered-when-assessing-whether-a-development-proposal-might-have-implications-for-light-pollution

OCC (2015) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Annual Summary Report 2015. Oxfordshire County Council. Downloaded on 14/6/2021 from: http://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/20150623%20JSNA%20Annual%20Summary%20Report%20FINAL%20Corrected_0.pdf

OCC (2018) Needs Analysis for Older People in Oxfordshire 2018. https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/Older%20People%20JSNA%202018%20Oct18%20v2_0.pdf

O'Neill Homer (2021) Cassington Neighbourhood Plan: Neighbourhood Plan Policy Ideas. O'Neill Homer, London, UK. 5pp.

Platenberg RJ, Griffiths RA (1999) Translocation of slow-worms (*Anguis fragilis*) as a mitigation strategy: a case study from south-east England. *Biological Conservation* 90: 125-132.

Pörtner HO, Scholes RJ, Agard J, Archer E, Arneth A, Bai X, Barnes D, Burrows M, Chan L, Cheung WL, Diamond S, Donatti C, Duarte C, Eisenhauer N, Foden W, Gasalla M, Handa C, Hickler T, Hoegh-Guldberg O, Ichii K, Jacob U, Insarov G, Kiessling W, Leadley P, Leemans R, Levin L, Lim M, Maharaj S, Managi S, Marquet P, McElwee P, Midgley G, Oberdorff T, Obura D, Osman E, Pandit R, Pascual U, Pires APF, Popp A, Reyes-García V, Sankaran M, Settele J, Shin YJ, Sintayehu DW, Smith P, Steiner N, Strassburg B, Sukumar R, Trisos C,Val AL, Wu J, Aldrian E, Parmesan C, Pichs-Madruga R, Roberts DC, Rogers AD, Díaz S, Fischer M, Hashimoto S, Lavorel S, Wu N, Ngo HT (2021) IPBES-IPCC Co-Sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change; IPBES and IPCC. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.4782538. Summary 24pp; Scientific Outcome 295pp.

Ratcliffe E (2021) Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) Survey, Habitat Restoration and Legislative Compliance. NatureSpace Partnership, Stamford, Lincolnshire, 9pp

UK Government (2015) The Building Regulations 2010: Access to and Use of Buildings Approved Document M - Volume 1 Dwellings. 25 Edition Incorporating 2016 Amendments for use in England. 59pp.

UK Government (2020) Energy White Paper: Powering Our Net Zero Future. Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, UK. 164pp.

Vanbergen AJ, Aizen MA, Cordeau S, Garibaldi LA, Garratt MPD, Kovács-Hostyánszki A, Lecuyer L, Ngo HT, Potts SG, Settele J, Skrimizea E, Young JC (2020) Transformation of agricultural landscapes in the Anthropocene: Nature's contributions to people, agriculture and food security. *Advances in Ecological Research* 63: 193-253.

Wildlife Trusts (2012) *Where To Go For Wildlife in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire*, Fifth Edition. Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, Littlemore, Oxfordshire. Pisces Publications, an imprint of NatureBureau, Newbury, Berkshire, 184pp.

WODC (2007) Conservation Area Character Appraisal Cassington. West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Service, Witney, Oxfordshire, UK, 7pp.

WODC (2008) Parish Flood Report Cassington November 2008. West Oxfordshire District Council, 20pp.

WODC (2018) West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Adopted September 2018. West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney, Oxfordshire, UK, 322pp.

WODC (2020) 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management June 2020. West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney, Oxfordshire, 37pp.

WODC (2021) Executive Decision Notice: To approve Cassington Allotments, The Green, Cassington, Oxon OX29 4DR as an asset to be included on the Council's List of Assets of Community Value. The listing applies to the allotments area of land that comprises HM Land Registry Title Number: ON29652. 2pp.

APPENDIX B – THE CASSINGTON DESIGN CODE

Cassington Design Code

July 2022

–The Red Lion and 'The Cottage'.

Contents

Front Cover Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

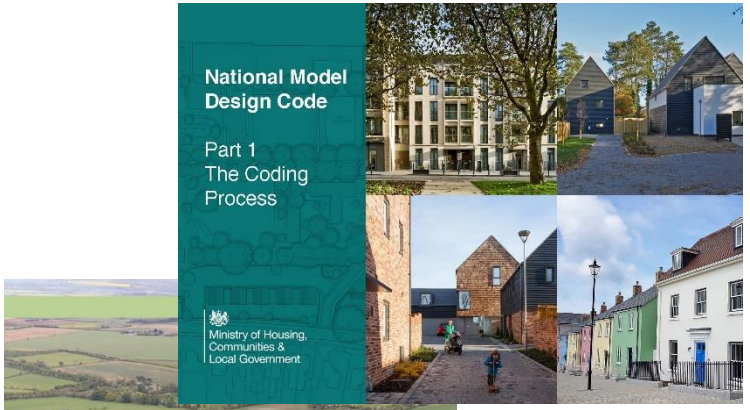
1. What is a Design Code?

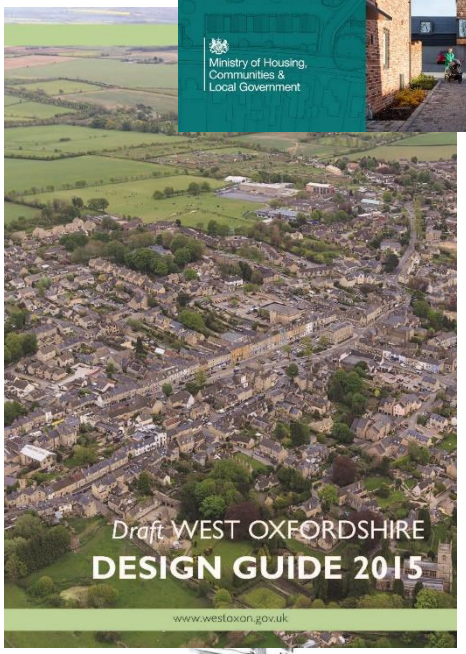
Design Codes are tools used to inform the design process of new development. They are prepared through establishing the principles of essential design considerations.

2. The purpose of this document

The Design Code Document refines the West Oxfordshire Design Guide that covers the whole of West Oxfordshire District. This Design Code Document appraises the main village settlement outside of the Cassington Conservation Area. Cassington Conservation Area was designated in 1992 and its Conservation Area Appraisal sets out the special character and details contributions to its appearance. The Code has been informed by the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposals for Preservation & Enhancement produced by West Oxfordshire District Council in 2007 and the analysis of the remainder of the village in this document.

The Code has been prepared in accordance with the National Model Design Code and its Guidance Notes published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in July 2021 as relevant to this area and policy context. Its content will inform the Cassington Neighbourhood Plan to bring clarity to the definition of the village and to raise the standards of design for the purpose of managing future infill development proposals and/or rural exception sites.





Cassington Design Code
October 2021

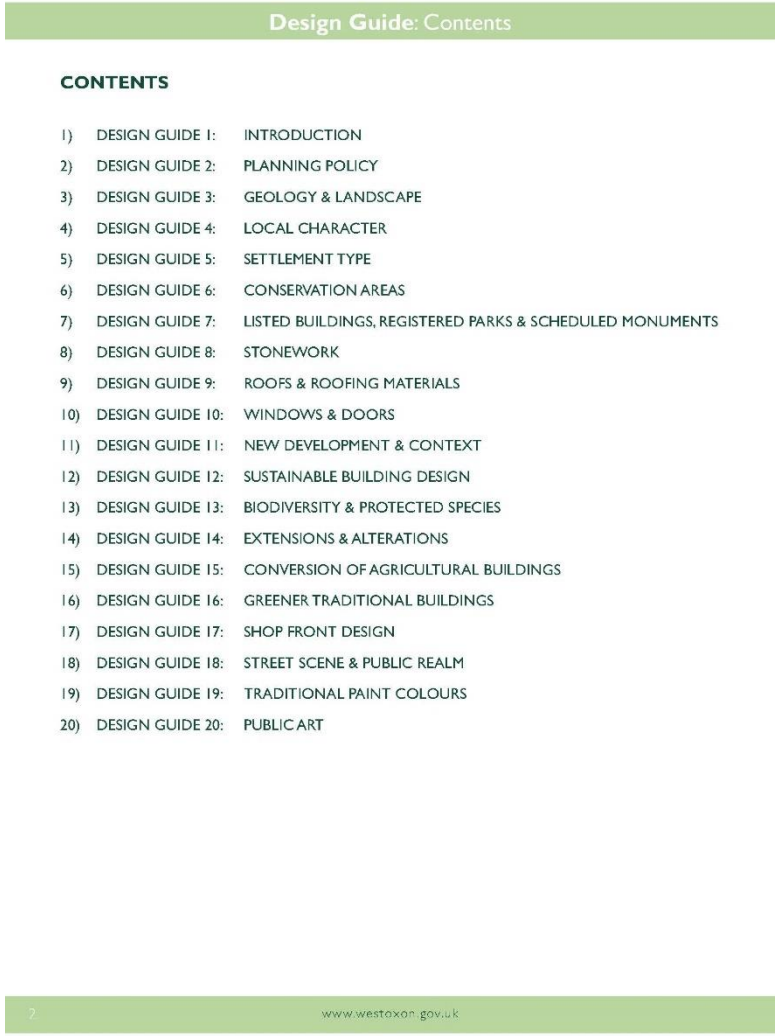
The Red Lion and 'The Cottage'
Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

3. Understanding, Responding to and Applying the Code

The West Oxfordshire Design Guide comprises 20 sections. The Cassington Design Code relates itself to the relevant sections and refines the guidance in a way that reflects the distinct characteristics of the main village settlement.

Applicants preparing development proposals should be familiar with the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and then relate the proposed development location to the Neighbourhood Area. The District Council will apply the generic and process principles of the Design Guide and the specific requirements of this Code as relevant to the location and nature of the proposal. The Parish Council will use both the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and the Code to inform their judgement of proposals in making their representations to the District Council when it is consulted on planning applications.

As with all design guidance, the standards and requirements should be regarded as setting the design brief for a proposal, but the applicant may depart from them where it can be justified in the circumstances. Given the Green Belt status of the Neighbourhood Area, for which full regards needs to be paid to national policy, the scope for change in character will remain very limited. However, in all cases, the burden will be on the applicant to demonstrate that the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and this Code have been acknowledged, understood and responded to in a way that is appropriate to the location and nature of the proposal.



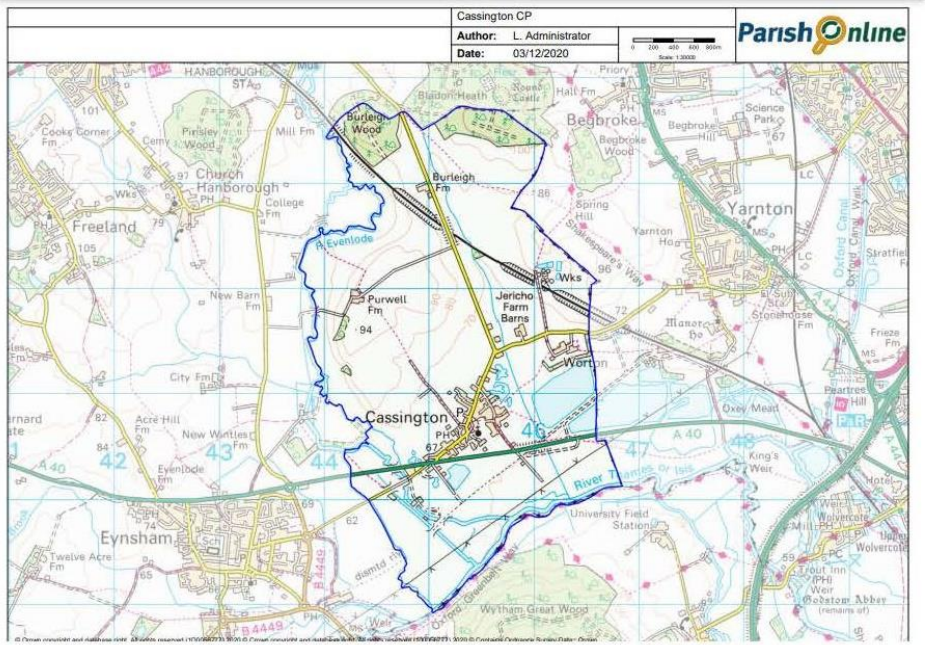
Design Guide: Contents

CONTENTS

4. Analysis

Location & Setting

Cassington is a rural parish within the southwestern corner of the area covered by West Oxfordshire District Council. The parish's eastern border forms West Oxfordshire District's eastern border with the Cherwell District. The main village settlement is prominent in an open landscape and is 'washed over' by the Oxford Green Belt. The village sits more or less at the centre of the parish on the northern side of the A40 between Eynsham (1 mile to its west) and the northern suburbs of Oxford (3 miles to its south east) where major strategic growth proposals are planned in the plan period to 2031. The north of the settlement is dominated by arable fields forming regularly shaped field patterns. The ancient woodlands Worton Heath and Burleigh Wood lies partly within the parish at its northern boundary. The southern part of the parish maintains a pastoral character with grazing meadows and small fields of permanent pasture. The Cassington Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest, also part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation, lies within this part of the parish on the north bank of the River Thames which forms the southern parish boundary.



4. Analysis

Historical Development

Source: Cassington & Worton Village Appraisal undated.

“People have been visiting Cassington and Worton since the last Ice Age. Even before the use of pottery and the introduction of domesticated animals and crops, hunter gatherers passed through the area hunting reindeer and bison, and leaving behind the flint tools that they made.

The earliest farmers settled in the parish around 6,000 years ago and the remains of their habitation sites - post-holes for small buildings and pits containing decorated pottery and finely crafted flint tools have been found in gravel workings around Cassington Mill, in the old Tuckwell's pit near Bell Lane, and in the new ARC workings to the east of the village. These Neolithic people (so-called because of their use of new, ground-stone implements) were probably nomadic pastoralists, moving around this part of the Thames Valley and the Cotswold slopes. They started to clear the forests which covered the area to create grazing for their cows and sheep.

By the time that people started to use bronze tools (in the Bronze Age between about 2,000BC and 800BC), they had settled permanently around Cassington and Worton, building small circular houses with pens for their animals and growing small plots of wheat and barley. They buried their most important people beneath round barrows, often with precious objects.

The barrow mounds have mostly been ploughed down, but the circular ditches dug to provide the soil can still be seen from the air in many parts of the parish and several were excavated during work around Cassington Mill.

As the forest was cleared in the Upper Thames Valley, so the amount of water in the river system increased, and as the ploughing intensified, soil started to be washed down into the valley. Previous settlers had mostly occupied the lowest-lying ground as it was the best pasture but, as the water table rose, the flood plain was abandoned for occupation and small permanent villages were established on the edge of the gravel terraces. We know of three Iron Age settlements in Cassington: one at Purwell Farm, another to the south-west of the village near the present A40 junction, and another to the east of Bell Lane. An Iron Age hill fort was built to the north-east of the present village on Bladon Hill and, just before the arrival of the Romans, a large earthwork fortification was begun at the confluence of the Evenlode and the Thames. The villages were occupied into and through the Roman period when they were thriving agricultural communities.

In the 14th century Cassington and Worton had almost equal numbers of people paying poll tax. From this time onwards Cassington's wealth was reduced, partly through the problem of absentee landlords. At the Dissolution, the Monastic properties reverted to the Crown and its prosperity declined further.

4. Analysis

Historical Development

Over the following centuries, the other manors gradually broke up and were sold off. Worton, which had belonged to Osney Abbey went to Christ Church, Oxford, and most of Cassington to the Duke of Marlborough. By 1525, Cassington had twice the population of Worton.

In the Domesday Book, Cassington is recorded as Cersetone (that is to say 'the tun where cress grows'), with its hamlets of Somerford (now lost) and Worton. Through the Middle Ages, Cassington's economy revolved around farming and continues to do so to a great extent. In 1851, Cassington and Worton had 15 farms which, by 1871, were reduced to 9: Manor Farm, Jericho Farm, Rectory Farm, Purwell Farm, Burleigh Farm, Glebe Farm, Thames Meade Farm and Wharf Farm. From 1920 until 1941 Christ Church kept a dairy herd in Worton which by 1941 had 95 cows and heifers and 35 bulls! Cassington men and women supplied to and bought from Oxford Market in the 17th century, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, carrier carts ran from Cassington to Oxford twice a week. Some small scale and short-lived industrial enterprises took place outside the immediate vicinity of the village within the intervening centuries. These included cloth working and weaving at Cassington Mill during the 1600s and 1700s, and a 19th century canal and railway. They had little impact upon the village which essentially remained a small farming community.

The building of the canal and wharf by the Duke of Marlborough in 1802 brought canal and river trade right to Cassington. Barges arrived with coal and salt from Warwickshire. Several boatmen lived in Cassington until 1840. The wharf was let to the Oxford Canal Company for 10 years in 1834 but was not profitable enough for the licence to be renewed. The opening of the railway from Oxford to Witney in 1861 was the end of the canal business and the canal was out of use by 1870. A Halt was opened at Cassington in 1936 but was closed in 1962 and the railway is now dismantled. Until the construction of the A40 from Oxford to Witney in 1935, the village was linked by the old roads to Yarnton and Eynsham and the route to Oxford was via the Toll bridge at Eynsham. The present footpath between Cassington and Worton was part of an ancient route used by monks from Eynsham Abbey processing to Yarnton and traditionally kept wide enough to bring coffins from Worton for burial in Cassington. The vicars of Cassington tended to be absentees and in the 1860s the church was served only by a curate living at Rectory Farm, Worton; he increased communion services from 4 to 7 a year. In 1774, there were 5 licensed alehouses in Cassington and Worton: the Bell, the Chequers, the Red Lion, the Crown, and the Masons Arms. The Masons Arms closed in 1775 and the Crown in Worton in 1796. A pub called the Barge was opened at Wharf Farm in 1804 for the canal trade but was closed in 1872. The Bell, which also served as the village shop, closed in the mid-1970s.

4. Analysis

Historical Development

Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

Currently, Cassington is a small village of some 800 inhabitants, situated on the gravel strata between the ancient forest of Wychwood and the Thames. Commercial gravel extraction began in the 1930s and signalled a new phase in the village's development. Cassington also grew substantially in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of population pressures from Oxford. Today, while there is some light industry in the north of the village, Cassington retains its rural qualities with mainly low density housing and spacious informal boundaries.

The centre of the village is the Village Green, unchanged through the centuries and shaded by mature trees. It is hugged by a linear development of traditional dwellings to the north-west (attractive cottages and the 18th century Red Lion), and opens out to the north to the Victorian former vicarage, the old school and the old post office (all now The Old Schoolhouse. privately occupied).

The Village Hall on the south side was built in the 1920s. An avenue of lime trees directs the eye from The Green towards St. Peter's Church. The village fete is held on The Green on the Saturday nearest to St. Peter's Feast Day. There is a smaller second Green in the 'lower' village, linked to the 'upper' Green by a narrow walled footpath around which older properties are sporadically scattered, interspersed with more modern buildings.

Despite considerable infill development in recent years, the village's historic settlement pattern has been largely maintained.

The coarse rubble limestone Church of St. Peter is the most impressive building in the village in terms of its architectural and aesthetic quality and merit. It was built as a private chapel by Geoffrey de Clinton, Chamberlain and Treasurer to King Henry 1. The Cartulary of Eynsham Abbey records that the church was consecrated in 1123, and four of the original consecration crosses are still visible. The magnificent Norman arches survive, as do windows and doors. The font too is Norman. It is thrilling to find that two old doors still swing on their ancient hinges to bring us into the wonder of the past.

4. Analysis

Historical Development

The faded remains of a Doom painting were uncovered over the chancel arch and the church retains many f the original 15th century bench pews, said to be among the oldest in the country. The stalls, panelled and canopied, are Jacobean, brought from Oxford Cathedral. The pulpit, however, is modern. The church has 6 bells, the first dated 1604 and, unusually, a striking clock with no face.

The Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1870 on the footpath between upper and lower Cassington, but is no longer used for worship.

The largest of the old houses is the farmhouse which stands on the site of the manor house of the de Clintons and still retains its moat and rectangular dove house. It is known as Reynolds Farm after the family who owned property in the area in the 15th and 16th centuries. They were Roman Catholics, and during the religious troubles of the 16th century, Cassington and Worton became refuges for recusants from Oxford. Later, during the Civil War, royalist sympathisers, who had been deprived of their posts, gathered at Cassington.

The former bakery now known as Hampton House has a ghost, the victim of a 'crime passionnel' in the early 19th century, which caused a great stir. The popular petition on behalf of the murderer is held in the County archives. He was tried and hanged nevertheless, the last person to be hanged in Oxford.

Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

4. Analysis

Historical Development

An exorcism was held in the 1920s but the victim still seems dissatisfied. Hampton House and Old Manor especially stand out within the village due to their size, high quality of construction and refined architectural detail.

The War Memorial to those who gave their lives in the two World Wars was commissioned in 1919 by the vicar, the Revd. Cecil Paget, who had lost three sons in the war.

Cassington Mill on the Evenlode, mentioned in the Domesday Book, continued to grind corn into this century; and the buildings still stand. In the surrounding grounds there is a flourishing caravan site, visited by many tourists from all parts of the world.

The village also has outstanding sports facilities including a football field, cricket pitch, and all weather tennis courts. The last shop in the village closed a few years ago and the Post Office operates from the Red Lion two mornings a week.

Business Parks have been established with great taste around the nucleus of farm buildings at Worton and Jericho farms.

In the centre of the village is the Primary School and a Play Group. The school is fortunate to have a large playing field where conservation work has been carried out to preserve a pond and encourage its wildlife.

Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

The original school in Cassington was founded by the vicar, Thomas Forster, in 1853. It was a stone building on the Village Green and is still standing today as a private house, conspicuous for its bell tower. In July 1971, the department of Education gave permission for the building of a new school on a larger site, adjacent to the Green. Work started the following year and the school was officially opened on the 1st July 1973. The school bell from the original building was moved to the new one and is still rung to mark the end of playtime and the school day .

4. Analysis

Historical Development

Parents raised money to provide the heated swimming pool that was constructed in 1974 and changing rooms were built four years later. There have been a number of other additions since 1974. In 1991, an extension provided office space, a staff and medical room, and improvements to the entrance hall and resource room. In 1997, additional facilities were built for Early Years teaching, and in 1998, a lobby was erected to provide a secure and pleasant entrance to the school.

The thriving School Association works hard for the school. Parents renovated the pond in 1991 and the wild life area is a tribute to much hard work. Among other projects too numerous to mention, they provided an onsite Adventure Programme in 1997 for the enjoyment of the children.

The attractive modern buildings and extensive grounds provide a delightful and inspiring environment in which the children can work and play.

Alma Cottage, Alma House and Stone Leigh.

Image source: Cassington and Worton Village Appraisal

4. Analysis

Settlement Pattern

The historic village was established through lane-side development along the main village streets – Yarnton Road and Bell Lane which form a V-shape pointing northwards. Much of this development lies within the Cassington Conservation Area for which there is a separate appraisal. The remaining Historic Core of this part of the village history consists of piecemeal development such as the former Bell Inn and Grade II listed Lime Cottage on Bell Lane; The Elms and Grade II listed The Laurels on Yarnton Road and Manor Farm, formerly Cassington House, to the west of the Conservation Area, set back from its access road from Eynsham Road.

Since the 1920s Cassington grew considerably with the construction of council housing along Eynsham Road c. 1930 and Elms Road. The former arranged along Eynsham Road as pairs of semi-detached homes with regular breaks in between considerably set back from the street to the north of Eynsham Road, less so on the southern frontage, with a continuous building line and large grass verges which creates a sense of spaciousness along the street. The Elms Road development follows a similar pattern with pairs of semi-detached homes with regular breaks in between set back from the road. A large proportion of front gardens have been covered by hardstanding, coupled with the tarmacked roads, pavement and curbs, gives Elms Road a more formalised, suburban character.

Throughout 1950 – 1980s further council and private houses were developed through lane-side development along Eynsham Road, Yarnton Road and Bell Lane.

A HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE

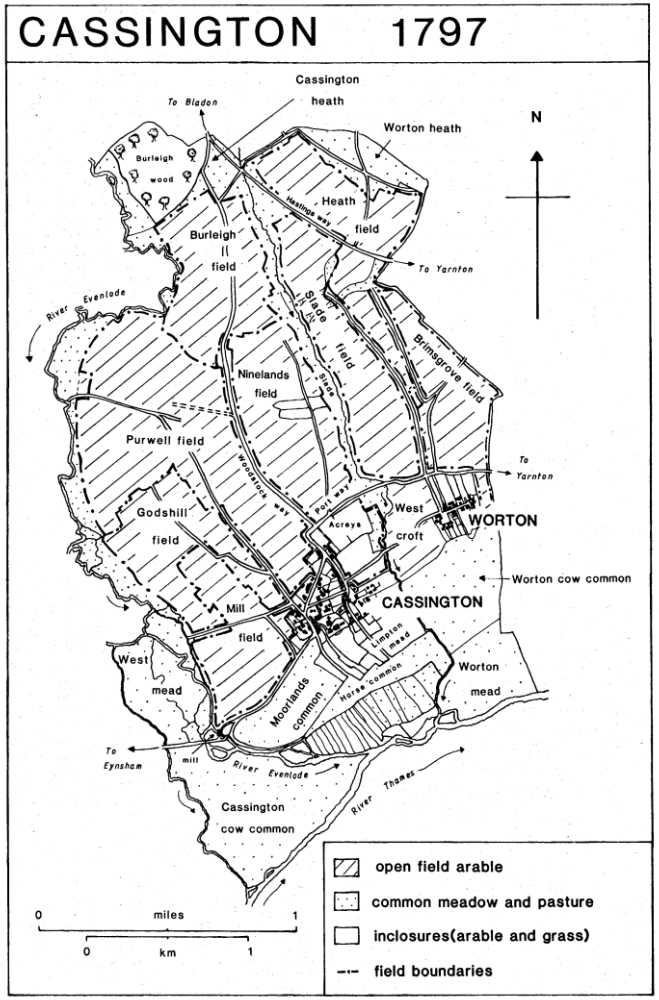
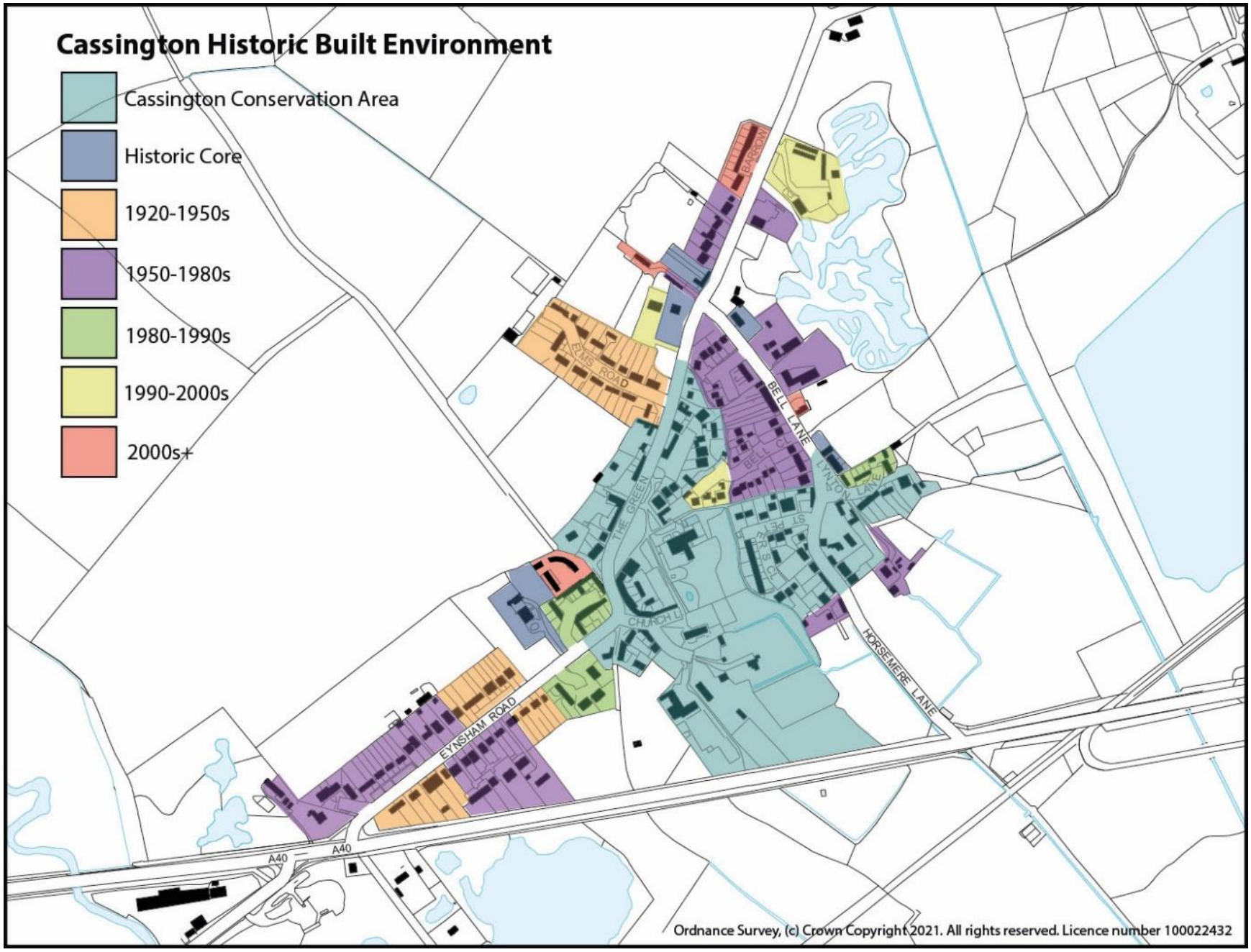


Image source British History Online

38


Cassington Historic Built Environment
Cassington Conservation Area
Historic Core
1920-1950s
1950-1980s
1980-1990s
1990-2000s
2000s+
BARROW
ELMS ROAD
BELL LANE
THE GREEN
CHURCH L
EYNSHAM ROAD
A40
A40
HORSEMERE LANE
Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

4. Analysis

Settlement Pattern

Development along the northern fringe of Eynsham Road continued the considerably set back building line and large grass verges from the earlier 1930s homes as pairs of semi-detached homes with regular breaks in between with the exception of a cul-de-sac of bungalows at the entrance of Yarnton Road off the A40. Large grass verges at the entrance of the cul-de-sac and extension of open space into the development continues the sense of spaciousness in this part of the village. The development of bungalows, some now chalet bungalows, on Yarnton Road is much deeper than the early Grade II listed The Laurels buildings which draws attention to these historic buildings. The stepped building line arrangement eliminates breaks between buildings and is well screened from mature trees and hedges which is mirrored on both sides of the road providing a verdant character to this area of the village. The cul-de-sacs of Bell Close and The Tennis have radiated away from the historic lane-side development of Cassington. Both with large, detached houses set back and variously arranged along a cul-de-sac. Two pairs of detached chalet bungalows set back from Bell Lane forms the entrance either side to Bell Close. Of note are the remaining drystone walls with a random pattern of upright coping stones, which is a significant feature of the Conservation Area, running parallel to the road in line with the row of terraced homes further along Bell Lane with no set back from the street other than the tarmacked and curbed pavement providing some sense of enclosure. A row of terraced homes overlooks the business and industrial units, partially screened by vegetation, on the opposite side of the road which extends along to the entrance of The Tennis cul-de-sac on the opposite side.

Development along the northern fringe of Eynsham Road

Bungalows on Yarnton Road

Grade II listed The Laurels

4. Analysis

Settlement Pattern

A remaining drystone wall with a random pattern of upright coping stones features once again on Bell Lane providing remnants of the historic core of the village coupled with the Grade II listed Lime Cottage on the opposite side of the road.

The 1980s saw three pockets of cul-de-sac developments being built at Hollow Furlong and Manor Close on the western side of the Conservation Area and Lynton Lane on the eastern side of the Conservation Area. The Hollow Furlong cul-de-sac, a modern barn conversion/courtyard development, somewhat screened by mature hedges and drystone wall boundary treatments along Eynsham Road extending along The Green until the starting point of a terrace of bungalows which are set back from The Green which re-introduces a sense of spaciousness. The large, detached houses of Manor Close is arranged in a low-density suburban cul-de-sac arrangement set back from the street reflecting the sense of spaciousness along Eynsham Road. The grass verges help complement the drystone walls with curved mortar coping and vegetated boundary treatments at the entrance of Manor Close to achieve a more rural character at odds with the suburban cul-de-sac arrangement of the development. The short terraces of Lynton Lane fronting onto the lower green maintains a continuous building line with the former Bell Inn where Lynton Lane meets Bell Lane. This style of short terrace blocks set back from the road continues into Lynton Lane with open plan gardens creating a spacious feel.

Drystone walls on Bell Lane and at Manor Close, a significant feature in Cassington

4. Analysis

Settlement Pattern

Smaller pockets of infill cul-de-sac development has also been delivered in more recent years at Orchard Close and Williams Court. Barrow Court along Yarnton Road was delivered as a Rural Exception Site. The private cul-de-sac at Orchard Close follows a similar pattern to Bell Close with large, detached houses set back and variously arranged along a cul-de-sac. The central open green enclosed by two blocks of terraces and one curved terrace block at Williams Court contributes to the strong sense of openness and spaciousness of the village. Barrow Court continues the historic lane-side development along Yarnton Road and consists of pairs of semi-detached homes with some breaks in between.

A grass verge and native species mature hedgerow separates the access road and buildings from Yarnton Road creating a rural character at the entrance to the village somewhat detracted by the operational appearance of Cassington Nurseries on the opposite side of the road.

Finally, Worton Park is situated between the villages of Yarnton and Cassington and a public footpath connects the main village settlement to it. Worton Farm has been diversified to include holiday lets and a Business Park. It is a small nucleated area situated at the end of a service road from Yarnton Road. Worton Farm has been diversified to include holiday lets and a Business Park.

Orchard Close © Google 2021

Barrow Court © Google 2021

Williams Court

4. Analysis

Architectural character and quality of buildings

None of the typical British semi-detached suburban housing of the 1930s remain in its original condition in the village today which is not unusual as many homes of these types were adapted over the years, most notably the total replacement of timber mullioned windows and timber panelled front doors, by windows and doors in uPVC plastic. Nos. 29, 31, 33, 63 & 65 Eynsham Road are the closest surviving examples of this architectural style. The sense of variety introduced consisting of the combination of the double cross gable end roof with a ridge mounted chimney stack in the centre. A gable end chimney stack on each gable end, pebbledash rendering (now painted), and projecting porch with canopy pitched roof also survives at nos. 63 & 65 with nos. 29, 31, and 33 retaining different combinations of brickwork and stone corner quoins. A small number of plots feature hipped roofs and unpainted pebble-dash render. These are concentrated on the northern part of Eynsham Road adjacent to the field which separates these plots from Hollow Furlong. The space between these pairs of two storey semi-detached homes, uniform in height, is an important feature of the vernacular revival style of this period. Later development along Eynsham Road saw the introduction of brick bungalows with gable end roofs and ridge mounted chimney stacks in the centre and gable and valley roof elevations. Spaces between buildings and the building line is maintained. Many of these features were duplicated in the Elms Road development. A pair of gable and valley roof plots feature brick corner quoins and keystone lintels but maintains space between buildings and the building line. The use of concrete roofing tiles dominates this area and there is also some use of red brick, principally on chimney stacks.

The local pale limestone features on a variety of later additions to buildings. Although varied in style, some commonalities can be identified across these plots on Eynsham Road on the approach to the Conservation Area.

29, 31 Eynsham Road

63, 65 Eynsham Road

Northern part of Eynsham Road © Google 2021

4. Analysis

Architectural character and quality of buildings

Whilst the cul-de-sacs of Bell Close and The Tennis feature the use of local limestone in course rubble form the use of external cladding and flat roof garage buildings contribute little to the local character. More traditional detailing is evident at the row of terraced homes on Bell Lane, with Lilly Lodge an excellent example of such, although alterations made by successive occupiers have decreased their uniformity. The use of mainly brick on the bungalows at Yarnton Road does work well however the application of this on-mass within a development parcel would not reflect the character of the village.

All of the plots at Manor Close feature gable and valley roofs with single storey gable roof double garages attached serving each plot. The traditional local pale limestone is employed in coursed rubble form at Manor Close and The Hollow Furlong as well as the use of concrete brick tiles with some use of red brick on chimney stacks on the terrace of bungalows. The brick segmental arches over windows and a pair of dovecotes at The Hollow is out of character to the plain timber lintels of the adjacent Conservation Area. The pair of terraced buildings fronting onto the Lower Green features the traditional local pale limestone in the form of quoins and lintels – these features are not duplicated within the development along Lynton Lane away from the Conservation Area – as well as in coursed rubble form as the main building material. Mono pitch porch canopies are consistent throughout the development as well as slightly projecting end units.

The architectural detailing of more recent developments, perhaps with the exception of Orchard Close to an extent, has done well to respond to Cassington's most attractive features. Specifically, the uniform height of two storeys, plain timber lintels, use of local stone, red brick ridge mounted chimney stacks on gable roofs.

Terrace in Bell Lane including a later addition of Lilly Lodge as an excellent example of the use of traditional detailing © Google 2021

The two Grade II listed buildings at Worton Park, Rectory Farmhouse and The Old Rectory and attached building consists mainly of early 17th century coursed limestone rubble and concrete tile roofs. Old Farm buildings have been successfully and tastefully restored to accommodate the office park.

4. Analysis

Boundary Treatments

The majority of buildings outside of the Conservation Area are set behind grass verges and front gardens creating an open, spacious feel which also sets back properties from the road. Hard boundary treatments are most commonly drystone walls either with a random pattern of upright coping stones or curved mortar coping with softer treatments such as mature hedgerows and planting very common reflecting Cassington's sense of greenery and spaciousness. High level fence panelling is rarely used and does little for the environmental quality of the area.

Landscape, trees and views

Rolling topography and steep slopes characterises the northern part of the parish with the main village settlement lying within a gently rolling almost flat topography and flat, low-lying topography towards the River Thames in the south. Gaps between buildings allows for glimpse views out into the countryside on both approaches to the village centre with the steep slopes of the northern part of the parish evident at the end of Elms Road looking across the Recreation Ground. A short intimate view of St Peter's church spire is evident in Manor Close. Significant mature trees on Yarnton Road, Bell Lane, at Manor Close and the entrance to Manor Farm on Eynsham Road mark the entrance to the more historic core of the village and emphasises the rural character of the village.

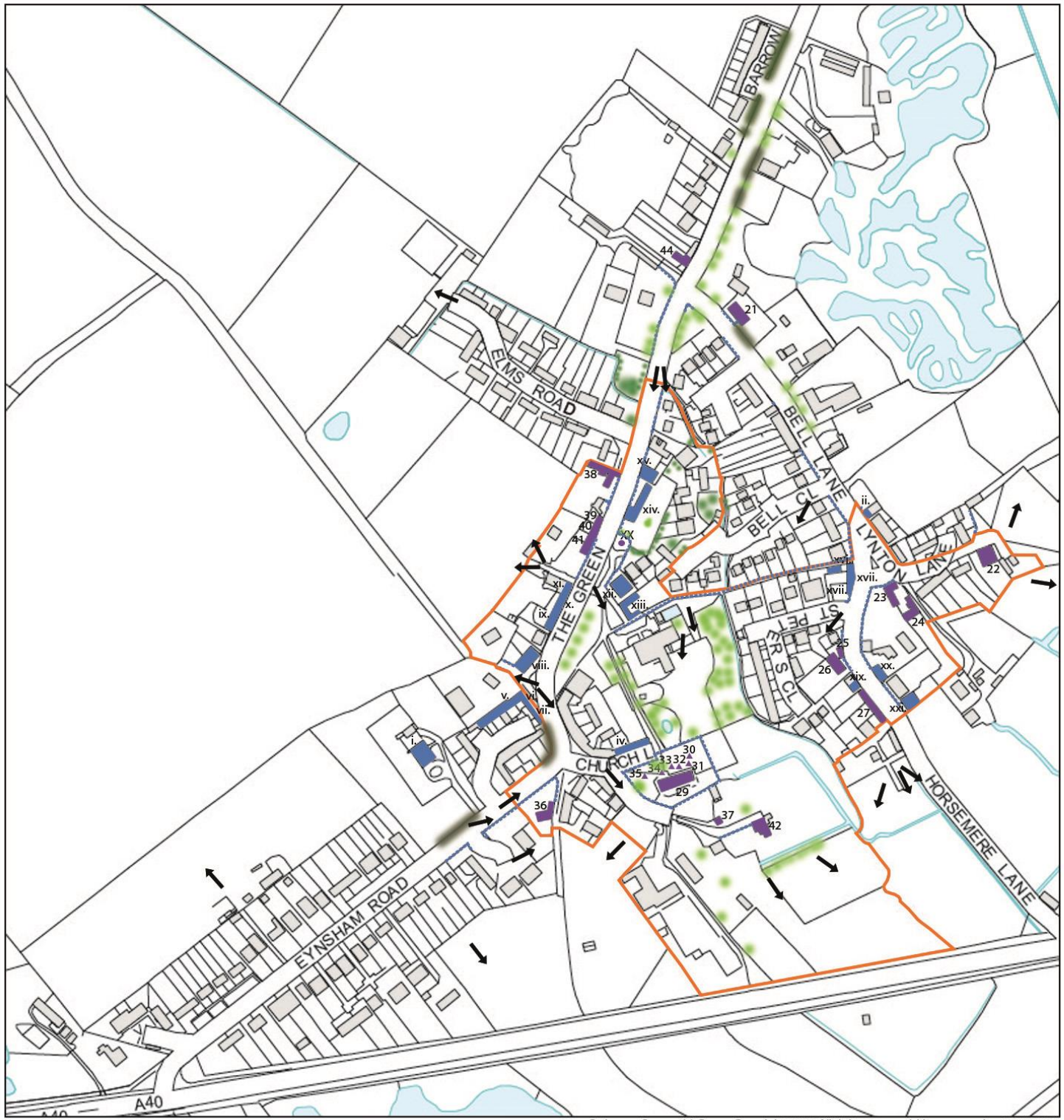
Eynsham Road

Aerial image of Cassington ©West Oxfordshire Community Web

St Peter's Church spire from Manor Road

Yarnton Road

Cassington Neighbourhood Plan
Design Code Analysis



- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Significant Boundary Walls
- Significant Hedges
- Significant Trees and Tree Groups
- Tree Preservation Order
- Significant Views

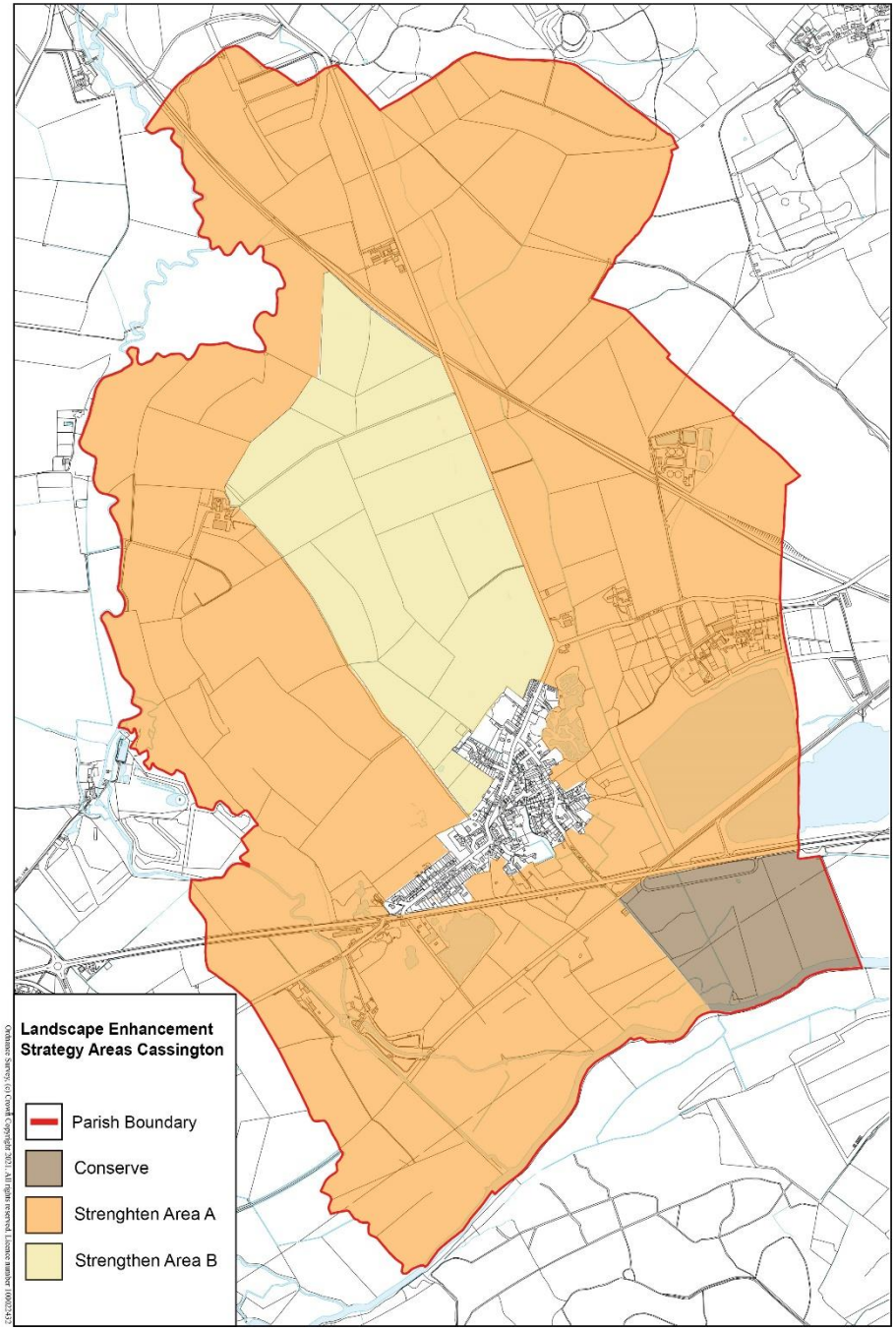
4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

The well-established West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA, 1998) identifies Cassington as lying within the Eynsham Vale Landscape Character Area. Overall, the landscape has an attractive largely unspoilt, rural character with some localised variations in quality and condition which demand different strategies.

The Landscape Enhancement Strategy Map shows the majority of the landscape surrounding the main village settlement as lying within Strengthen Area A with the exception of much of the steep slopes of the northern landscape lying within the Strengthen Area B and an eastern parcel of the landscape south of the A40 lying within the Conserve area.

The strategy notes that those areas of landscape identified as Conserve have a particularly strong, unspoilt character. The landscape that surrounds much of the village settlement identified as Strengthen Area A also represent rural, attractive landscapes which would benefit from some enhancement to strengthen weakened landscape structure and reinforce local distinctiveness. The Strengthen Area B landscape to the north of the village settlement as having a particularly denuded character. Whilst allowing extensive views, its ecological value is diminished through intensely farmed land.



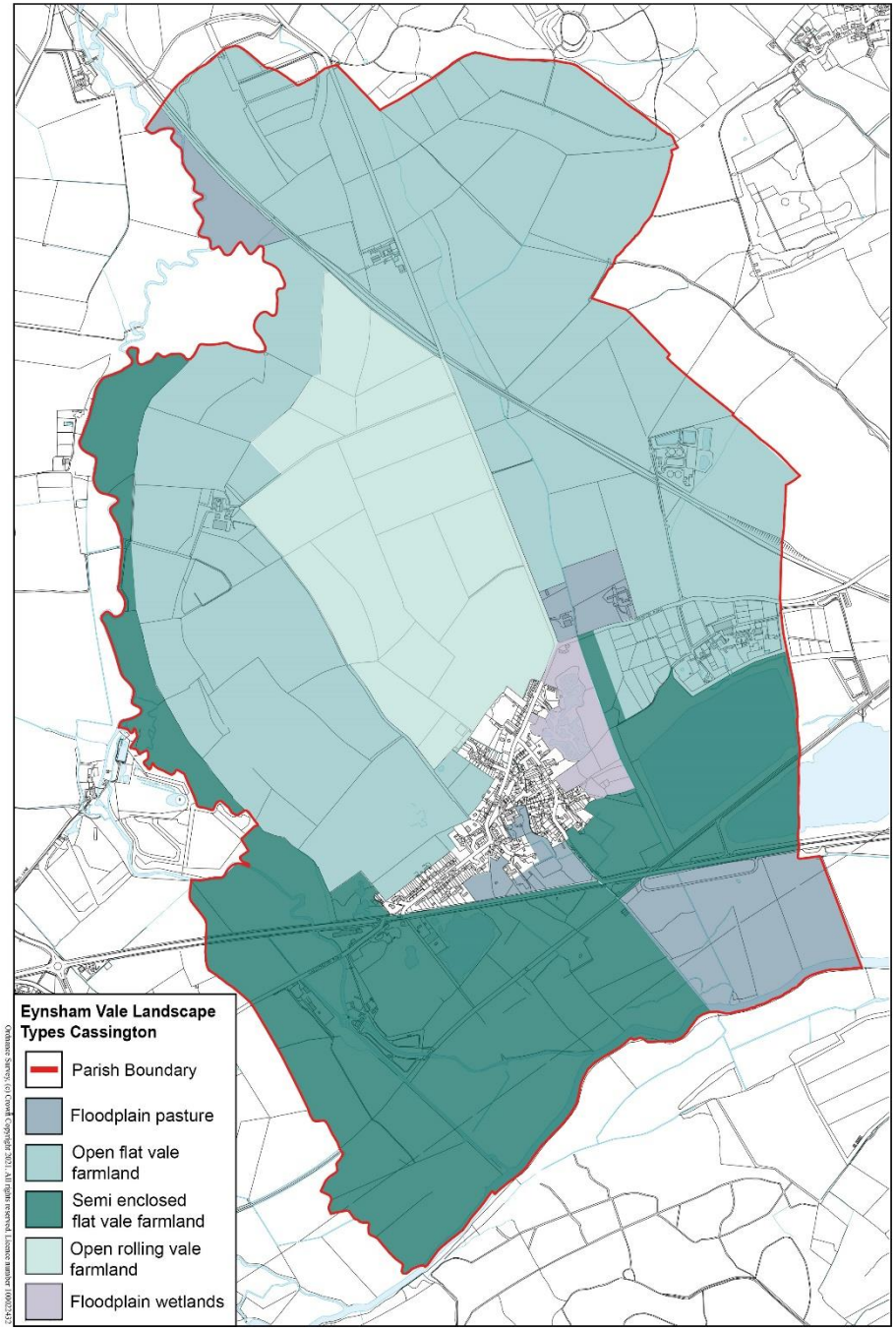
4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

The Eynsham Vale Landscape Character Area is characterised by various landscape types. In Cassington the following landscape types are recorded in the WOLA 1998:

- Floodplain pasture
- Open flat vale farmland
- Semi enclosed flat vale farmland
- Open rolling vale farmland
- Floodplain wetlands

The key characteristics of each landscape type has been set out in the table overleaf.



4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

Source: WOLA 1998

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Floodplain pasture	• Typically located immediately adjacent to rivers and minor watercourses on land prone to flooding, particularly in winter; • Distinctively flat, low-lying land (below 70m AOD); • Predominantly under permanent pasture with only occasional cultivated land; • Riparian character, with strong pattern of ditches often lined by willow; • Landscape structure provided by lines and groups of matures trees, with willow and alder conspicuous; • Intimate, semi-enclosed and pastoral character; • Remote and tranquil with limited intrusion by people or buildings; • Moderate to low intervisibility.
Open flat vale farmland	• Drained and cultivated land (arable or reseeded grassland) within the floodplain; • Distinctively flat and low-lying; • Network of ditches; • Weak landscape structure with few trees, low or gappy hedges open ditches and fences; • Open, denuded character with high intervisibility; • 'Two-dimensional', expansive landscape with dominant sky.

4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

Source: WOLA 1998

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Semi enclosed flat vale farmland	• Drained and cultivated land (arable or reseeded grassland) within the floodplain; • Distinctively flat and low-lying; • Network of ditches; • Stronger landscape structure of willow-lined ditches, hedgerows and occasional woodland blocks; • Semi-enclosed character with moderate to low intervisibility.
Open rolling vale farmland	• Low-lying land off floodplain floor (generally above 70m AOD) with a discernible raised landform; • Well-drained, productive land underlain by reiver terrace gravels; • Large-scale, cultivated fields (arable predominant) with regulation field boundaries; • Weak structure of tightly clipped hedges and few hedgerow trees (dry-stonewalls absent); • Open, denuded character; • High intervisibility; • 'Two-dimensional', expansive landscape with dominant sky.

4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

Source: WOLA 1998

LANDSCAPE TYPE	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Floodplain wetlands	• Areas of open water occupying former gravel pits within floodplain; • Associated wet grassland and marsh/fen vegetation communities with semi-natural character; • Distinctively flat, low-lying land (below 70m AOD) • Structure and visual enclosure provided by developing scrub and tree cover; • Moderate to low intervisibility.

4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

The Parish lies within the **Clay Vale** vegetation character area.

Key tree and hedgerow species

Oak	*Querces robur*
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*

Significant species

Willow	*Salix alba*
	Salix caprea
	Salix viminalis
	Salix fragilis
Poplar	*Populus spp.*
Field Maple	*Acer campestre*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*

Key Species

4. Analysis

Landscape, trees and views

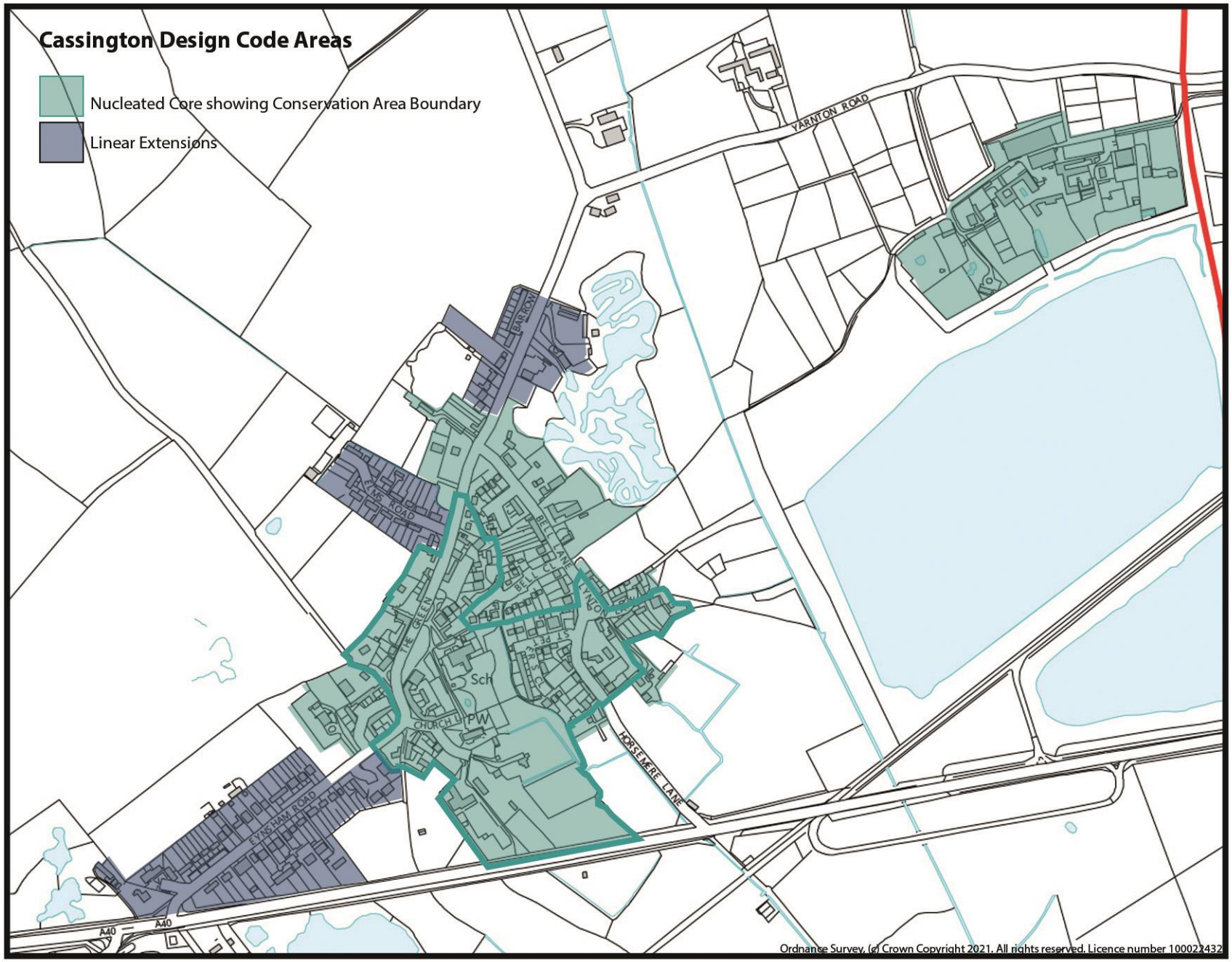
Significant Species

5. Design Codes

The Code establishes the principles of essential design considerations in the residential environment of the main village: dwelling design, boundary design, building materials and landscaping, based on the analysis of local character presented in this report, the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposals for Preservation & Enhancement produced by West Oxfordshire District Council, community consultations and discussions with members of the neighbourhood plan steering group. Beyond these considerations, there remain other design matters where the Code does not specify an approach. In these areas the existing pallets of materials, detailing form and layout may provide evidence of the most appropriate design response. Nevertheless, attention should always be given to the wider District design guidance and the need to achieve a high quality of design.

For the purposes of the Code, the main village settlement has been divided into two parts: its nucleated core (including the Conservation Area and Worton Park) and its later linear extensions (see Plan overleaf).

For each area the Code translates the standards into specific requirements. For ease of reference, the Code numbering matches each area's Code to the relevant section in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide e.g. 3. Landscape; 4. Local Character etc. Throughout the Code, there are local photographs to illustrate the guidance where necessary.


Cassington Design Code Areas
Nucleated Core showing Conservation Area Boundary
Linear Extensions
YARNTON ROAD
BAILRON
THE GREEN
CHURCH LA
Sch
PW
HORSEMERE LANE
EYNSHAM ROAD
A40
A40
Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

	3. Geology and Landscape
	West Oxfordshire Design Guide: "An understanding of historic landscape types is crucial if the distinctive local character of the District is to be maintained…The management of flora and fauna should reinforce or restore those landscape characteristics which contribute to local distinctiveness and biodiversity."
NC3 i.	Proposals should acknowledge the key characteristics of the landscape types in the Eynsham Vale Character Area identified in this Code Analysis.
NC3 ii.	Proposals within or adjacent to the floodplain pasture landscape should retain riparian vegetation to maintain the landscape character.
NC3 iii.	Proposals should, where appropriate, include new planting along watercourses and in lines and groups using typical riparian species such as willow, to maintain and enhance the landscape character.
NC3 iv.	Proposals within and adjacent to the open flat, and rolling, vale farmland landscapes should retain and enhance the existing hedgerow network.
NC3 v.	If it is necessary to plant new trees as part of a scheme, proposals should include the use of the Clay Vale species where appropriate.
	4. Local Character
	"Unless special care is used in the design and choice of materials for new buildings, the character of our historic settlements will be progressively eroded and ultimately lost to future generations. Good design, which responds sensitively to its context, should overcome these problems."

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

NC4 i.	The developments of The Chequers Inn and cottages on the Green, Williams Court, and of Lilly Lodge in Bell Lane, are excellent examples of the use traditional detailing. Proposals should take into account the dominance of the following walling materials: • Oolitic limestone in very narrow beds; • Cornbrash limestone for field and boundary walling, laid in very narrow beds; • Red 'Oxford' brick, sometimes glazed with blue headers; • Lime render on infill panels; • Weatherboarding of elm, oak or chestnut; left natural to bleach silver grey, or stained or painted black; • *Artificial stone.* and the following roofing materials: • Stone slate; • Welsh slate; • Red clay tiles; • *Artificial stone slate;* • Concrete tiles. Special care should be taken when using modern materials (shown in italics above) to avoid an appearance which appears alien or out of place to protect the character of the historic settlement.

Chequers Inn development

Williams Court development

Lilly Lodge on Bell Lane © Google 2021

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

	5. Settlement Type
	"Settlement pattern: Nucleated: Nucleated settlements are compact, with less dense development on the periphery of the central core. Historically, the core may have been formed by a church or manor house. The tight-knit form of nucleated settlements makes them particularly vulnerable to loss of character if development takes place beyond the fringes of the settlement."
NC5 i.	Proposals in and around the nucleated core should strengthen the landscape structure and quality of boundaries to reduce the impact of existing or proposed peripheral developments.
	8. Stonework
	"Traditional dry stone walls are a key feature of the landscapes and settlements of West Oxfordshire, enclosing farmland and stitching together towns and villages. Dry stone walls vary in height, and may be topped by one of several coped finishes, depending on the use or status of the wall."
NC8 i.	Hard boundary treatments should comprise of new drystone walls either capped with a random pattern of upright coping stones or curved mortar coping or have a layer of drystone wall on their external faces.
	9. Roofs and Roofing Materials
	"Chimneys were traditionally constructed in stone or brick …tend to be located on the right…such is the importance of chimneys, both to the physiognomy of individual houses and to the appearance of wider roofscapes, that they should generally not be lost altogether – even where functionally redundant."
NC9 i.	Proposals should take into account the common use of, centre or gable-end, ridge mounted chimney stacks. **See also Design Code NC4 i.**

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

	10. Windows and Doors
	"Windows are the eyes of a building. They make a fundamental contribution to the character and appearance of buildings, and settlements more widely. Changes to windows represent one of the easiest ways to dramatically alter the character and appearance of buildings."
NC10 i.	Proposals should retain and provide plain timber lintels over doors and windows, small squared timber casement windows and timber doors.
	11. New Development (11.4)
	11.4.11 "How might the scheme work with the existing grain of the site, and take advantage or account of existing site orientation, topography, landscape features, roads and paths, trees and plants, ponds and watercourses, wildlife habitats, and existing buildings and features?"
NC11.4.11 i.	Proposals should acknowledge the irregular variety in grain and orientation of buildings. **See also Design Codes NC3 i. – v.**
	11.4.12 "Are any designated heritage assets (such as Listed Buildings, Listed Parkland or Scheduled Monuments) likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

NC11.4.12 i.	There are 21 listed structures of architectural or historic interest within this Character Area as identified in the Code Analysis which are classified in grades of relative importance as follows: **Grade I – Buildings of national importance and exceptional interest (2% of Listed Buildings)** 25/29 CHURCH LANE (South side) Church of St. Peter **Grade II – Buildings of special interest** 11/42 WORTON Rectory Farmhouse 11/43 WORTON The Old Rectory and attached outbuilding 25/22 BELL LANE (East side) Ivydene 25/23 BELL LANE (East side) Old Manor 25/24 BELL LANE (East side) Outbuilding approx. 5m SSE of Old Manor (Formerly listed as Cottages) 25/25 BELL LANE (West side) Willow Dene 25/26 BELL LANE (West side) Lyme Regis 25/27 BELL LANE (West side) Thames Mead Farmhouse and Bell Cottage 25/30 CHURCH LANE (South side) Graveboard approx. 13m NE of chancel of Church of St. Peter 25/31 CHURCH LANE (South side) Chest tomb approx. 6m NE of chancel of Church of St. Peter 25/32 CHURCH LANE (South side) Group of 5 headstones approx. 3m N of chancel of Church of St. Peter 25/33 CHURCH LANE (South side) Headstone approx. 4.5m N of chancel of Church of St. Peter 25/34 CHURCH LANE (South side) Chest tomb approx. 4m NE of N porch of Church of St. Peter 25/35 CHURCH LANE (South side) Base of churchyard cross approx. 12m WNW of nave of Church of St. Peter 25/36 EYNSHAM ROAD (East side) Phoenix Cottage 25/37 POUND LANE (East side) Reynolds Farm, Dovecote approx. 30m NW of Farmhouse (not included) 25/38 THE GREEN (West side) Hampton House 25/39 THE GREEN (West side) Osborne Cottage 25/40 THE GREEN (West side) Stork Cottage 25/41 THE GREEN (West side) The Cottage *25/42 REYNOLDS FARM The Farmhouse *XX WAR MEMORIAL (East side) The Green south of the Old Vicarage *Note: The numbers indicate the unique identification number by which Listed Buildings are referenced* **Listed after the publication of the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal*

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

	11.4.13 "Are any non-designated heritage assets (such as Locally Listed Buildings or historical boundary features identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal) likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
NC11.4.13 i.	Proposals should retain the built form and architectural features of the buildings and structures listed below as Locally Listed Buildings. i. Manor Farmhouse ii. The Bell (including outbuilding) iii. Significant Boundary Walls (various locations as identified in this Code Analysis) iv. Nos. 1-3 Church Lane v. Nos. 4-8 Hollow Furlong vi. Wild Forest, The Green vii. The Old Stables, The Green viii. Nos. 1-2 The Green and ix. Nos. 3-4 The Green x. Red Lion Cottage, The Green xi. The Red Lion Public House xii. The Old School House xiii. The Old Post Office xiv. The Old Vicarage xv. Nos. 3-4 Foxwell Court xvi. Stone Leigh xvii. Alma House xviii. Alma Cottage xix. Glebe Cottage xx. The Homestead xxi. Thamesmead Farmhouse

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

Manor Farmhouse Notable 19th century building (formerly Cassington House). Red brick building with stone quoins (often used to reflect higher status buildings) of two storeys with attics and a slate roof.

The Bell Licenced as an alehouse in 1750 and named in 1774 as The Bell. Also served as a village shop. The outbuilding to the left is thought to have been associated with the pub. Closed in the late 1970s and was converted into a private house. Remaining drystone wall forms garden boundary to Bell Lane.

Significant Boundary Walls Remaining dry stone walls in various locations in the Character Area as identified in this Code Analysis. A significant feature in Cassington.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

All of the buildings identified here has been recorded as Locally Listed Building in the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal

4-8 Hollow Furlong, Wild Forest and The Old Stables Former barn buildings converted as part of cul-de-sac development in 1980s.

1-4 The Green and Red Lion Cottage Part of a row of attractive 18th and 19th century terraced cottages on the western side of the Upper Green of local rubble with tiled roofs.

1-3 Church Lane Original 19th century cottages, now heavily restored.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

All of the buildings identified here has been recorded as Locally Listed Building in the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal

The Old School House The original school was founded by the vicar, Thomas Forster, in 1853. The stone building, conspicuous for its bell tower, still stands and is used as a private dwelling. The school bell from the building now hangs at the new school building.

The Old Post Office

The Old Vicarage and Nos. 3-4 Foxwell

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

All of the buildings identified here has been recorded as Locally Listed Building in the Cassington Conservation Area Appraisal

Alma Cottage, Alma House and Stone Leigh

The Homestead

Glebe Cottage

Thamesmead Farmhouse

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

NC11.4.13 ii.	Proposals should acknowledge the significant contribution the cluster of Locally Listed Buildings and Listed Buildings on The Green, Williams Court and Church Lane enveloping the Upper Green make to the Cassington Conservation Area.
NC11.4.13 iii.	Proposals should acknowledge the significant contribution the cluster of Locally Listed Buildings and Listed Buildings on Bell Lane enveloping the Lower Green make to the Cassington Conservation Area.
NC11.4.13 iv.	Proposals should retain drystone walls as a significant feature of the village as identified in this Code Analysis.
	11.4.16 "If the site is within (or within the setting of) a Conservation Area, the AONB or other designated area, will the proposed development preserve or enhance this aspect of the area?"
	There area specific parts of the setting of the Conservation Area which make important contributions by enabling views or features that lie at entrance of the Conservation Area:
NC11.4.16 i.	Proposals must acknowledge the role of the Chequers Inn plays in terminating the view into the Conservation Area as identified in this Code Analysis.
NC11.4.16 ii.	Proposals must acknowledge the group value of the Chequers Inn, the Grade II listed Pheonix Cottage and the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St. Peter in the setting of the Conservation Area from Eynsham Road.
NC11.4.16 iii.	Proposals should not obstruct views of the Grade I listed Church of St. Peter which can be seen from various locations in the character area as identified in this Code Analysis including from St Peter's CE Primary School, The Green, Yarnton Road, Bell Close, St Peter's Close and glimpse views between buildings on Bell Lane.
NC11.4.16 iv.	Proposals must acknowledge the welcoming role of the remaining drytone wall on Yarnton Road into the Conservation Area.
NC11.4.16 v.	Proposals must acknowledge the orientation and position of the Grade II listed Hampton House, Locally Listed Buildings The Old Vicarage and Nos. 3-4 Foxwell Court in framing this internal Conservation Area view from Yarnton Road to the Green.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

An attractive view from Yarnton Road to the Green in the heart of the Conservation Area

Drystone wall on Yarnton Road at the entrance to the Conservation Area

Glimpse view of the church spire between buildings on Bell Lane

	11.4.18. "Are any sensitive views (for example, of an important heritage asset or landscape) likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
NC11.4.18 i.	Proposals at Williams Court, on the western side of The Green and on Church Lane should acknowledge the long views from within the settlement out to the countryside beyond. **See also Design Code NC11.4.16 iii.**
	11.4.20 "Are any important or protected habitats, trees, hedgerows, ponds or watercourses likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
NC11.4.20 i.	Proposals should acknowledge the importance of the Upper Green area and its significant trees as an important nesting and sheltering site for birds.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

View countryside beyond from Upper Green

View countryside beyond in Church Lane

View from The Green of the Grade I listed Church of St. Paul

NC11.4.20 ii.	Proposals should acknowledge the sheltered green space and its significant tree groups adjacent to St Peter's School, including pond as a haven for wildlife including rodents, slow worms and viviparous lizards, grey squirrels and a variety of birds which is an important nature garden for outdoor education of pupils.
NC11.4.20 iii.	Proposals should retain and enhance wide grassed verges with habitat for wildflowers.
NC11.4.20 iv.	Proposals on Bell Lane and Yarnton Road should retain and bolster the Significant Trees and Hedgerows (as identified in this Code Analysis) planting on the plot frontage.
NC11.4.20 v.	Proposals should consider the important role of drystone walls in providing habitats for wildlife and plants.
NC11.4.20 vi.	Proposals should retain and bolster the established trees and vegetation within Worton Park, particularly on the service road off Yarnton Road and on the Park's boundaries.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

NC11.4.20 vi.	Proposals to fell any tree having a diameter of 9'' (225mm) or more measured at 2'0'' (600mm) above the ground will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated there is sufficient justification to remove the tree or it is dead, dying, dangerous or diseased.
NC11.4.20 vii.	If it is necessary to remove trees to carry out a development, proposals should make provision for the replacement on a 'one for one' basis or where the existing tree has been identified as Significant in this Code Analysis, on a 'two or more for one' basis, with replacements being of the Clay Vale species where appropriate.
NC11.4.20 viii.	All development should embed green infrastructure in ways that help support nature recovery to reverse the decline in biodiversity and result in a 'net gain' including the placement of swift bricks, bat box bricks, insect bricks, house martin nest boxes, 'hedgehog holes' between gardens and the external natural environment avoiding openings onto roads.

Sheltered green space and its significant tree groups adjacent to St Peter's School with a view of the Grade I listed Church of St. Paul

Drystone walls in the walkway linking the Upper and Lower Greens

Grade II listed The Laurels with Significant Trees on eastern boundary of Yarnton Road

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

	11.4.22 "Are there any drainage or flooding issues associated with the site?"
NC11.4.22 i.	Proposals should not lead to the reduction in effectiveness of an existing drainage channel or ditch, which are vital for the removal of surface water in the village.
NC11.4.22 ii.	Proposals should consider flood resistance and resilience measures such as the use of permeable paving surfaces and new planting in lines and groups, using typical riparian species such as willow.
	11.4.27 "What existing characteristics or features (including landform, trees and key buildings) may be worth retaining and incorporating into the proposed new development? "
NC11.4.27 i.	Buildings or structures on the public open spaces of the Upper and Lower Greens will be resisted as it would otherwise undermine their essential open character.
	11.4.28 "What is the prevailing local settlement pattern in terms of development density and the arrangement and interrelationship of buildings, building lines, roads, footpaths, public and private space?"
NC11.4.28 i.	Proposals should retain and enhance the rural and open character of the village created by a combination of domestic gardens, grass verges and trees and hedgerows, particularly in the central area surrounding The Upper Green.
NC11.4.28 ii.	Proposals must not lead to new buildings or existing buildings extending in front of any building line to the plot frontage that is common to both adjoining buildings.
	11.4.29 "What is the prevailing local built character in terms of building scale, form, type, style and materials?"
NC11.4.29 i.	Proposals should be no more than two storeys in height unless there is local precedence for taller buildings in the immediate vicinity.

5. Design Codes

Nucleated Core

NC11.4.29 ii.	The style and form of proposals should reflect the typically vernacular, small scale, simple form and detailing character with a variety of building types.
	See also Design Codes NC4i.; NC8 i.; NC9 i. and NC10 i.
	11.4.30 "What are the prevailing local surface and boundary treatments?"
NC11.4.30 i.	Proposals should maintain or reinforce wide grass verges with stone kerbs and soft borders creating a spacious open character of much of the village.
NC11.4.30 ii.	Proposals should consider the retention and provision of mature hedgerows and planting as soft boundary treatments.
	See also Design Codes NC8 i. and NC11.4.22 ii.

Service Road to Worton Park from Yarnton Road © Google 2021

Aerial View © Worton Park

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	3. Landscape
	West Oxfordshire Design Guide: "An understanding of historic landscape types is crucial if the distinctive local character of the District is to be maintained…The management of flora and fauna should reinforce or restore those landscape characteristics which contribute to local distinctiveness and biodiversity."
LE3 i.	Proposals should acknowledge the key characteristics of the landscape types in the Eynsham Vale Character Area identified in this Code Analysis.
LE3 ii.	Proposals should, where appropriate, include new planting along watercourses and in lines and groups using typical riparian species such as willow, to maintain and enhance the landscape character.
LE3 iii.	Proposals within and adjacent to the open flat, and rolling, vale farmland landscapes should retain and enhance the existing hedgerow network.
LE3 iv.	If it is necessary to plant new trees as part of a scheme, proposals should include the use of the Clay Vale species where appropriate.
	4. Local Character
	"Unless special care is used in the design and choice of materials for new buildings, the character of our historic settlements will be progressively eroded and ultimately lost to future generations. Good design, which responds sensitively to its context, should overcome these problems."
LE4 i.	Proposals should take into account the use of traditional local pale limestone in coursed rubble form as walling materials reflecting one of Cassington's most attractive features.
LE4 ii.	Proposals should take into account the dominance of concrete tiles as roofing materials.

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	5. Settlement Type
	"Settlement pattern: Linear: Linear settlements have a distinctive ribbon form, and develop along both main roads and the smaller side roads that branch off these routes. Development in linear settlements may only be a single house deep on each side (as at Long Hanborough) thereby allowing significant views into the landscape beyond."
LE5 i.	Proposals on Eynsham Road, Yarnton Road (including Barrow Court) and Elms Road should sustain the pattern of linear development.
	8. Stonework
	"Traditional dry stone walls are a key feature of the landscapes and settlements of West Oxfordshire, enclosing farmland and stitching together towns and villages. Dry stone walls vary in height, and may be topped by one of several coped finishes, depending on the use or status of the wall."
LE8 i.	Hard boundary treatments on Eynsham Road or Yarnton Road should comprise of new drystone walls either capped with a random pattern of upright coping stones or curved mortar coping or have a layer of drystone wall on their external faces.
	9. Roofs and Roofing Materials
	"Chimneys were traditionally constructed in stone or brick …tend to be located on the right…such is the importance of chimneys, both to the physiognomy of individual houses and to the appearance of wider roofscapes, that they should generally not be lost altogether – even where functionally redundant."
LE9 i.	Proposals should take into account the common use of red brick, centre or gable-end, ridge mounted chimney stacks. **See also Design Code LE4 ii.**

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	10. Windows and Doors
	"Windows are the eyes of a building. They make a fundamental contribution to the character and appearance of buildings, and settlements more widely. Changes to windows represent one of the easiest ways to dramatically alter the character and appearance of buildings."
LE10 i.	Proposals should take into account the use of plain timber lintels over windows and doors reflecting one of Cassington's most attractive features.
	11. New Development (11.4)
	11.4.11 "How might the scheme work with the existing grain of the site, and take advantage or account of existing site orientation, topography, landscape features, roads and paths, trees and plants, ponds and watercourses, wildlife habitats, and existing buildings and features?"
LE11.4.11 i.	Proposals should acknowledge the regular loose grain and buildings fronting onto the main road. **See also Design Codes LE3 i. – iv.**
	11.4.13 "Are any non-designated heritage assets (such as Locally Listed Buildings or historical boundary features identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal) likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
LE11.4.13 i.	Proposals should retain drystone walls as a significant feature of the village as identified in this Code Analysis.

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	11.4.16 "If the site is within (or within the setting of) a Conservation Area, the AONB or other designated area, will the proposed development preserve or enhance this aspect of the area?"
	There area specific parts of the setting of the Conservation Area which make important contributions by enabling views or features that lie at entrance of the Conservation Area:
LE11.4.16 i.	Proposals must acknowledge the role of the Chequers Inn plays in terminating the view into the Conservation Area as identified in this Code Analysis.
LE11.4.16 ii.	Proposals must acknowledge the group value of the Chequers Inn, the Grade II listed Pheonix Cottage and the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St. Peter in the setting of the Conservation Area from Eynsham Road.
LE11.4.16 iii.	Proposals should not obstruct views of the Grade I listed Church of St. Peter from Eynsham Road and Manor Close as identified in this Code Analysis.
LE11.4.16 iv.	Proposals must acknowledge the welcoming role of the remaining drystone wall on Yarnton Road into the Conservation Area.
	11.4.18 "Are any sensitive views (for example, of an important heritage asset or landscape) likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
LE11.4.18 i.	Proposals should acknowledge glimpse views of the surrounding countryside on both approaches to the village (Eynsham Road and Yarnton Road) and the steep slopes of the northern part of the parish evident at the end of Elms Road looking across the Recreation Ground.
	See also Design Code LE11.4.16 iii.
	11.4.20 "Are any important or protected habitats, trees, hedgerows, ponds or watercourses likely to be affected by the proposals, and in what ways?"
LE11.4.20 i.	Proposals should retain and enhance wide grassed verges with habitat for wildflowers.

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

LE11.4.20 ii.	Proposals on Eynsham Road (at the Manor Close end), Bell Lane and Yarnton Road, should retain and bolster the Significant Trees and Hedgerows (as identified in this Code Analysis) planting on the plot frontage which contributes to the rural character of the village.
LE11.4.20 iii.	Proposals to fell any tree having a diameter of 9'' (225mm) or more measured at 2'0'' (600mm) above the ground will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated there is sufficient justification to remove the tree or it is dead, dying, dangerous or diseased.
LE11.4.20 iv.	If it is necessary to remove trees to carry out a development, proposals should make provision for the replacement on a 'one for one' basis or where the existing tree has been identified as Significant in this Code Analysis, on a 'two or more for one' basis, with replacements being of the Clay Vale species where appropriate.
LE11.4.20 v.	All development should embed green infrastructure in ways that help support nature recovery to reverse the decline in biodiversity and result in a 'net gain' including the placement of swift bricks, bat box bricks, insect bricks, house martin nest boxes, 'hedgehog holes' between gardens and the external natural environment avoiding openings onto roads.

Wide grass verge and drystone walls at the entrance to Manor Close

Open character of Elmstead Road with the Chequers Inn terminating views into the Conservation Area and church spire can bee seen over rooftops

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	11.4.22 "Are there any drainage or flooding issues associated with the site?"
LE11.4.22 i.	Proposals should not lead to the reduction in effectiveness of an existing drainage channel or ditch, which are vital for the removal of surface water in the village.
LE11.4.22 ii.	Proposals should consider flood resistance and resilience measures such as the use of permeable paving surfaces and new planting in lines and groups, using typical riparian species such as willow.
	11.4.28 "What is the prevailing local settlement pattern in terms of development density and the arrangement and interrelationship of buildings, building lines, roads, footpaths, public and private space?"
LE11.4.27 i.	Proposals should retain and enhance the rural and open character of the village created by a combination of domestic gardens, grass verges and trees and hedgerows, particularly on Eynsham Road and Elms Road.
LE11.4.27 ii.	Proposals should adhere to the uniform plot shapes and sizes and to the strong building lines of every road in this area.
LE11.4.27 iii.	Proposals on Eynsham Road should retain or provide gaps between buildings that provide glimpses to the open countryside and beyond.
	11.4.29 "What is the prevailing local built character in terms of building scale, form, type, style and materials?"
LE11.4.29 ii.	Proposals should be no more than two storeys in height.
LE11.4.29 iii.	The style and form of proposals should reflect the typically vernacular, simple form and detailing character with a variety of building types.
	See also Design Codes LE4i. And ii.; LE8 i.; LE9 i. and LE10 i.

5. Design Codes

Linear Extensions

	11.4.30 "What are the prevailing local surface and boundary treatments?"
LE11.4.30 i.	Proposals should maintain or reinforce grass verges and front gardens creating an open, spacious feel.
LE11.4.30 ii.	Proposals should consider the retention and provision of mature hedgerows and planting as soft boundary treatments.
	See also Design Codes LE8 i. and LE11.4.22 ii.

Drystone wall at Manor Close with the Chequers Inn terminating views into the Conservation Area party seen in the background

View of church spire from Manor Close

Wide grass verges on Eynsham Road

Prepared by

oneill homer

planning for good

APPENDIX C – ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS

1. The UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency[5] in May 2019, followed by West Oxfordshire District Council in January 2020. The Climate Change Act 2008[6] is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements and commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050.

2. Policy EH6 of the WOLP 2031 was adopted in September 2018 prior to Government committing the UK in law to 'net zero' by 2050 as per the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended)[7] and emission cuts of 78% by 2035 to bring UK Law in line with the recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) Sixth Carbon Budget Report, and the Paris Agreement commitments[8].

3. The Energy White Paper published in December 2020 sets out the government's Vision and 10-point transition plan for how the UK will reach the UK target of 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050. The White Paper confirms the government's intention to ensure significant strides are made to improve building energy performance to meet this target. This means that by 2030 all new buildings must operate at 'net zero', the means by which this can be achieved is described in the diagram overleaf.

4. Planning plays an important role in minimising our contribution to and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change. It can provide a positive and encouraging framework for change and can resist harmful development. The CCC highlights that we need to build new buildings with 'ultra-low' levels of energy use. The CCC also makes a specific reference to space heating demand and recommends a maximum of 15-20 kWh/m2/yr for new dwellings[9][10].

---

[5] 'Emergency' – "a sudden serious and dangerous event or situation which needs immediate action to deal with it"

[6] Amended by the 2050 (Target Amendment Order) 2019

[7] The Climate Change Act established a long-term legally binding framework to reduce emissions, initially committing the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% below 1990/95 baselines by 2050. In June 2019, following the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C and advice from the independent Committee on Climate Change, the CCA was amended to commit the UK to achieving a 100% reduction in emissions (to net zero) by 2050. 2019 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions: BEIS Feb 2021 (Link)

[8] The Govt communicated to the UN the UK's contribution to the agreement on 12 Dec 2020

[9] The UK housing: Fit for the future? report published by the Committee on Climate Change in February 2019 recommends ultra-low levels of energy use and a space heating demand of less than 15-20 kWh/m2/yr. (Link)

[10] The costs and benefits of tighter standards for new buildings report, produced by Currie & Brown and AECOM for the Committee on Climate Change's UK housing: Fit for the future? Report (Link)

Net Zero Operational Carbon

Ten key requirements for new buildings

By 2030 all new buildings must operate at net zero to meet our climate change targets. This means that by 2025 all new buildings will need to be designed to meet these targets. This page sets out the approach to operational carbon that will be necessary to deliver zero carbon buildings. For more information about any of these requirements and how to meet them, please refer to the: UKGBC - Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework; BBP - Design for Performance initiative; RIBA - 2030 Climate Challenge; GHA - Net Zero Housing Project Map; CIBSE - Climate Action Plan; and, LETI - Climate Emergency Design Guide.

Low energy use

1. Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) - Energy use measured at the meter should be equal to or less than:
   - **35 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for residential[1]

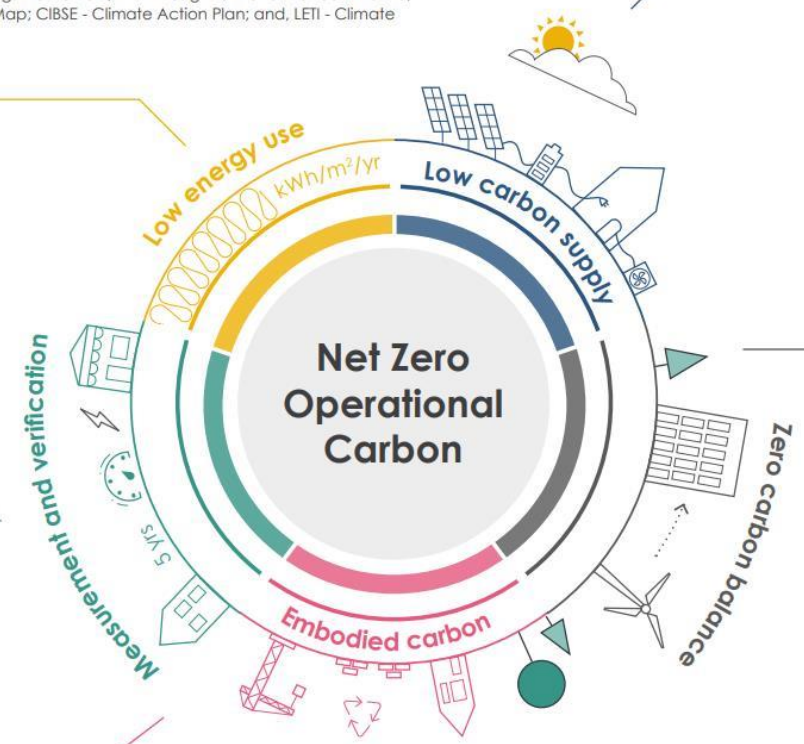
   For non-domestic buildings a minimum DEC B (40) rating should be achieved and/or an EUI equal or less than:
   - **65 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for schools[1]
   - **70 kWh/m²/yr** (NLA) or **55 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for commercial offices[1,2]
2. Building fabric is very important therefore space heating demand should be less than **15 kWh/m²/yr** for all building types.

Measurement and verification

3. Annual energy use and renewable energy generation on-site must be reported and independently verified in-use each year for the first 5 years. This can be done on an aggregated and anonymised basis for residential buildings.

Reducing construction impacts

4. Embodied carbon should be assessed, reduced and verified post-construction.[3]



Low carbon energy supply

5. **Heating and hot water should not be generated using fossil fuels.**
6. The average annual carbon content of the heat supplied (gCO_2/kWh) should be reported.
7. On-site renewable electricity should be maximised.
8. Energy demand response and storage measures should be incorporated and the building annual peak energy demand should be reported.

Zero carbon balance

9. A carbon balance calculation (on an annual basis) should be undertaken and it should be demonstrated that the building achieves a net zero carbon balance.
10. Any energy use not met by on-site renewables should be met by an investment into additional renewable energy capacity off-site OR a minimum 15 year renewable energy power purchase agreement (PPA). A green tariff is not robust enough and does not provide 'additional' renewables.

Notes:

Note 1 – Energy use intensity (EUI) targets
The above targets include all energy uses in the building (regulated and unregulated) as measured at the meter and exclude on-site generation. They have been derived from: predicted energy use modelling for best practice; a review of the best performing buildings in the UK; and a preliminary assessment of the renewable energy supply for UK buildings. They are likely to be revised as more knowledge is available in these three fields. As heating and hot water is not generated by fossil fuels, this assumes an all electric building until other zero carbon fuels exist. (kWh targets are the same as kWh_{source}). Once other zero carbon heating fuels are available this metric will be adapted.

Note 2 – Commercial offices
With a typical net to gross ratio, 70 kWh/m² NLA/yr is equivalent to 55 kWh/m² GIA/yr. Building owners and developers are recommended to target a base building rating of 6 stars using the BBP's Design for Performance process based on NABERS.

Note 3 – Whole life carbon
It is recognised that operational emissions represent only one aspect of net zero carbon in new buildings. Reducing whole life carbon is crucial and will be covered in separate guidance.

Note 4 – Adaptation to climate change
Net zero carbon buildings should also be adapted to climate change. It is essential that the risk of overheating is managed and that cooling is minimised.

Developed in collaboration with:

Supported by:

5. A 'net zero' carbon building is therefore first and foremost an energy efficient building in which the amount of energy used for heating or cooling is minimised, as is the demand on the energy supply network.

6. This approach unequivocally focuses on the Energy Hierarchy – BE LEAN, BE CLEAN, BE GREEN, BE SEEN – the latter requiring comprehensive post occupancy monitoring, verification and rectification (if necessary) to ensure buildings perform in the way approved at design stage, ensure planning commitments are delivered and any 'performance gap' issues are resolved.

7. There is a significant weight of evidence that buildings rarely live up to their designers expectations when completed and occupied, and depart significantly from the standards against which they were certified at design stage. This is known as the 'performance gap' and is a widely acknowledged problem[11]. Research indicates this gap can be anything from 50% increase in energy use than designed for, to 500%.

8. The consultation on the 'Future Buildings Standard' announced in January 2021 aims to 'radically improve' the energy performance of new homes ensuring they are 'zero carbon ready' by 2025. This means having high levels of energy efficiency and fabric performance that produce 75 to 80 per cent lower carbon emissions than houses built to current standards.

9. By 'Zero Carbon Ready' the Government has confirmed this means that no further retrofit work will be necessary to enable them to become zero carbon homes. To do otherwise, as the Consultation Impact Assessment (CIA) confirms, would create homes which are not fit for purpose and would pass on a significant financial liability to future homeowners, many of whom may be struggling to meet the purchase price or rental costs of their new home in the first place. It could also unnecessarily push householders into fuel poverty. A Climate Change Committee Report in 2019[12] confirmed the costs of achieving higher energy performance standards via retrofit can be five times the cost (about £25000 per home) compared to designing these requirements into new buildings from the outset.

10. In the absence of policy direction, new buildings in the district will require retrofit will require retrofit which will result in disturbance to future occupiers and may contribute to pushing householders into fuel poverty. A recent appeal decision[13] notes *"It seems to me folly to build new houses now that will commit owners to potentially expensive and disruptive alterations as the UK moves to decarbonise heating of its housing stock."* East Hampshire District Council have also confirmed that it will demand zero-carbon homes in its new Local Plan with the leader of the Council echoing the Planning Inspector's position: *"It is ridiculous that homes being built now will need to be retro-fitted with*

[11] Section 3.3. The Future Buildings Standard consultation, Jan 2021
[12] The Costs and Benefits of tighter standards for new buildings; Final Report for Climate Change Committee 2019
[13] APP/K1128/X/20/3252613

energy-saving measures in 10 or 15 years' time. Today's homes should be built to meet tomorrow's challenges."[14]

11. In January 2021, the Government in their response to the Future Homes Standard (FHS) consultation[15], acknowledged the legislative framework had moved on since the publication of the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) in March 2015 (HCWS488). The response confirmed that to provide certainty in the immediate term, the Government would allow local energy efficiency standards for new homes to be set locally. This is further supported by the legal opinion supplied by the Environmental Law Foundation in relation to the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan which confirms that the WMS from March 2015 appears to have been superseded by subsequent events and should not be read in isolation[16]. To all intents and purposes the WMS is no longer relevant to plan making.

12. The NPPF states at paragraph 148 that:

"The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate…it should help to shape places in ways that contribute to ***radical*** *reductions in greenhouse gas emissions…" (Plan emphasis)*

13. The NPPF also makes clear that 'landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping' all contribute to well-designed places which are both efficient and resilient to climate change[17]. The Government's Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener - October 2021 confirms a commitment to review the NPPF to make sure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible.

14. There are a number of ways in which climate change may be mitigated in a local area using land use and development management policies. Neighbourhood plans are well suited to providing this policy framework in the interim, where there is an absence of up to date strategic policies at the Local Plan level. Aside from ensuring sustainable patterns of land uses in settlements, policies can be used to minimise the energy demand of buildings, to store carbon and to generate renewable energy. National planning policy encourages each of them but does not specify precisely how a local area should go about realising opportunities.

15. There are practical ways that each can be delivered in a local area. The Passivhaus standard has been shown to be the most effective means of improving the energy performance of new and existing buildings. The more buildings, of all uses, that meet this standard, the better. And storing emitted carbon in plant life can reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide that is increasing global temperatures. The more that storage capacity in

[14] Council calls for zero-carbon homes, November 2021 (Link)
[15] The Future Homes Standard : 2019 Consultation on changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations for new dwellings. Summary of response received and Government response; MHCLG. Exec Summary Page 4. (Link)
[16] Appendix 1 Evidence and arguments for binding Energy Efficiency policies in neighbourhood plans (Link)
[17] National Design Guide: 10 Characteristics of Well Designed Places.

the local area is increased, the greater the contribution to reducing the pace of temperature increases.

16. The Government's Heat and Building's Strategy highlights the need for local, as well as national, level to achieve Net Zero and refers specifically to the 'Local Climate Action' chapter in the Net Zero Strategy. A key commitment of that Strategy being to promote best practice...and share successful net zero system solutions. Policy CAS8 is therefore intended as an interim measure until WODC review and update their current policy.

17. Policy CAS8 will ensure the updated legal framework will apply in the Parish, whereas in the intervening period since its adoption, WOLP policy has become inconsistent with this framework and hence falls short of the Local Planning Authority's duty to act under Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and reflected in NPPF (2021) paragraphs 152 and 153 and footnote 53 ("Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change", "in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008"). As such, the Parish Council will willingly offer this policy to WODC to help frame a District-wide policy in the new Local Plan.

18. Furthermore, Policy CAS8 also applies the 'precautionary principle' which provides the basis to anticipate, avoid and mitigate threats to the environment. Hence, the policy acknowledges the CCC's Sixth Carbon Budget recommendation that delaying action or a failure to follow the critical dates in the 'balanced pathway'[18] will require costly corrective action in the future[19].

19. The Government addressed the CCC's recommendation head on in their response to the Future Homes Standard consultation[20]. Confirming that 'it is significantly cheaper and easier to install energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures when homes are built, rather than retrofitting them afterwards'. Failure to implement Policy CAS8 on new development will add to the existing and costly retrofit burden that will be required of the existing housing stock in the Parish; only adding to the costs across the area as a whole.

20. In respect of the impact of Policy CAS8 on scheme viability, any extra-over cost of building to the 'zero carbon ready' Passivhaus Standard – UK evidence is indicating that this is already less than 5% and will fall to zero well within the period of this Neighbourhood Plan, as per both the Government's and CCC's impact assessments and research by the Passivhaus Trust. The policy will ensure that expensive and unnecessary retrofit costs are not passed down to building occupiers in the future, particularly in an area which has relatively high property values. Scheme viability will not therefore be acceptable as a reason for not using the Standard, unless the applicant can demonstrate the scheme has abnormal development costs to accommodate.

---

[18] The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's Path to Net Zero; Committee on Climate Change, December 2020. Table 3.2a page 112. (Link)

[19] ibid (vi): Paragraph 5.3 'Retrofit Costs'.

[20] Ibid (vii): Paragraph 1.4 'Net zero emissions and climate change.

21. Policy CAS8 only applies to [the parish] and therefore, by definition, is non-strategic (NPPF §28) nor is it considered to undermine WOLP Policies (NPPF §29). The NPPF confirms "all plans should" mitigate climate change (NPPF §11a). The policy has both 'regard to' the NPPF and advice issued by the Secretary of State, including the Governments response to the FHS consultation, while also supporting and upholding the general principle that the WOLP and its vision in particular are concerned with, while providing "a distinct local approach" (PPG ID:41-074). It supports the WOLP 'as a whole' including its vision and objectives which require the delivery of high environmental standards and mitigating climate change.

22. In the Parish Council's judgement, the approach taken in Policy CAS8 and the neighbourhood plan as a whole is consistent with the law as it currently stands and its interpretation of paragraphs 8(2)(a)&(e) of Schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990[21].

[21] BDW Trading Limited vs Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan (2014 - EWHC 1470 - Paragraph 82)
Crownhall Estates Ltd vs Chichester DC and Loxwood PC (2016 EWHC 73 - Paragraph 29ii)

APPENDIX D – POST-OCCUPANCY EVALUATION GUIDANCE NOTE

Pulling on latest guidance and best practice, this guidance note sets out how Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) should be undertaken.

1.01 Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is the method of obtaining feedback on a building's energy performance 'in use', to ensure it measures up to the commitments made by the team that designed and built it. It offers significant potential to address the performance gap and occupant satisfaction.

1.02 Where a monitoring regime to ensure the 'as designed' building performance targets are achieved in practice for all new and refurbished buildings is required, it is important that data is collected robustly, following good practice POE principles. It is therefore recommended that for residential development the POE methodology in section 11.4 of the Home Quality Mark ONE: Technical Manual: England, Scotland & Wales SD239 (2018)58, or as updated, is used as a guide for meeting this requirement. For non-residential buildings the BSRIA Soft Landings and Design for Performance framework (BG 76/2019), or as updated, may be used.

1.03 Applicants are required to set out in their Energy Statement how their monitoring regime, based on the HQM, BISRIA or similar methodology, will work in practice and be independently verified by a third party. The Energy Statement to be submitted with the planning application.

1.04 As each new or refurbished building comes into use, the developer must ensure performance monitoring and data collection for all relevant parameters for one whole year is carried out once the building is substantially occupied, in line with good POE practice for residential or non-residential uses. This verification process should entail, after appropriate commissioning has taken place, comparison of the 'as designed' parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) to monitoring data under the same categories, to assess and compare actual performance.

1.05 In order to account for seasonality, a minimum of 12 months monitoring data is required. On the other hand, to account for actual weather, the modelling results can be adjusted with degree days for the relevant year.

1.06 A 'performance gap metric', which will compare designed and actual performance (e.g. a percentage difference) for each of the 4 required parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) should be issued at POE stage. This needs to be issued for both the 'central' scenario and the 'lowest acceptable performance /reasonable worst-case scenario' as a minimum, with multiple scenarios considered if at all possible.

1.07 The process and reporting methodology used for the POE will need to be repeatable, so that performance can be monitored for at least 2 annual space heating cycles.

1.08 A report will then be required to be submitted to both building owners/occupiers and to South Oxford District Council, which states the performance gap metric and identifies any reasons for deviation from predicted energy usage, carbon emissions, indoor air quality and overheating performance, as well as recommendations for reasonable corrective action that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the performance gap.

1.09 The submission of the monitoring report to owners/occupiers and the council must be secured by planning condition, to be determined at the time of application based on case-specific factors. The applicant must demonstrate that the reasonable corrective actions committed to in the monitoring report, and subsequently agreed by South Oxfordshire District Council, have been implemented through another annual heat cycle before the condition will be discharged.