

February 2015

Belmont Rural Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan



Consultation Draft
9th February – 23rd March
2015

This is a consultation document.

The draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for Belmont Rural Parish has been published for consultation and your comments are invited until 23rd March 2015

Please use the representation form provided or submit comments in writing or by email.

Comments should be returned to:

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Belmont Rural Parish Council
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Belmont
Hereford
HR2 7XX**

**Email: clerk@belmontrural-pc.gov.uk
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Belmont Rural Parish Council gratefully acknowledges a grant awarded by the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning Programme. This is led by Locality in association with RTPI/Planning Aid England, CDF and partners, available through the My Community Rights Website

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Parish of Belmont Rural is located to the South of the City of Hereford with boundaries formed by Newton Brook to the South and East, Ruckhall Lane to the West and the River Wye to the North.
- 1.2 The boundary follows the south side of the River Wye (Special Area of Conservation and Site of Scientific Interest) and Belmont Abbey to the northern boundary and comprises an area of 991 hectares
- 1.3 The Parish of Belmont Rural¹ was established in April 2000, having previously been a ward within the Parish of Clehonger. The Parish falls within the Belmont Ward of Herefordshire Council.
- 1.4 The parish is divided by the A465, one- third of the houses to the south and two-thirds to the north. There is a clear distinction from the urban to the rural. The last properties on Dorchester Way mark the end of the of the urban boundary as the open fields and parklands surrounding Home Park and Belmont Parklands stretches out to the west.
- 1.5 Facilities include Belmont Community Centre (a further room is occupied by a small public library²) and Northolme Community Centre just off Northolme Road. Other local services and facilities include a doctors' surgery, a health centre and a pharmacy (all near the Belmont Community Centre) and, across the A465, a Tesco supermarket.
- 1.6 Belmont is an attractive Parish to live, which is close to the city whist at the same time having excellent links and close proximity to the surrounding countryside, giving the parish it's name Belmont Rural.
- 1.7 There are a total of 6 Listed Buildings within the area and no conservation areas. The listed buildings are concentrated to the western part of the parish around Belmont House II* which dates back to 1788 and was remodeled in 1866. The surrounding parkland

¹ From the 15th May 2015, Belmont Rural will be a ward in its own right

² The long term future of the library is currently being considered

was designed by Humphry Repton, whilst the parkland is not formally registered, it forms part of the 'Herefordshire Lowlands' national landscape character area (LCA) and historic parks forms a key component of this LCA.

- 1.8** The Grade II* Belmont Abbey lies to the edge of the Parish boundary, formally within the Parish boundary of Clehonger. The abbey was built to the designs of Edward Welby Pugin and is home to the Benedictine community. The site was also heavily discussed as part of a planning inquiry made in 2013 for development on land at Home farm. The Alms House is a Grade II listed building which lies on the most westerly boundary of the existing Belmont Rural residential area.



Belmont Abbey

1.9 Neighbouring parishes and Neighbourhood Planning activity



Updates as of September 2014:

- Breinton (to the north) currently working on a draft NP
- Hereford City (to the east) have no plans to date for a NP
- Callow & Haywood (to the south) currently working on a draft NP
- Clehonger (to the west) have no current plans for a developing a NP

1.10 The plan clearly shows that the parish has two distinctive parts; to the east the suburban housing developments either side of the A465 and to the west the tranquil parkland setting taking in a section of the former golf club, Belmont House and land associated with Home Farm.

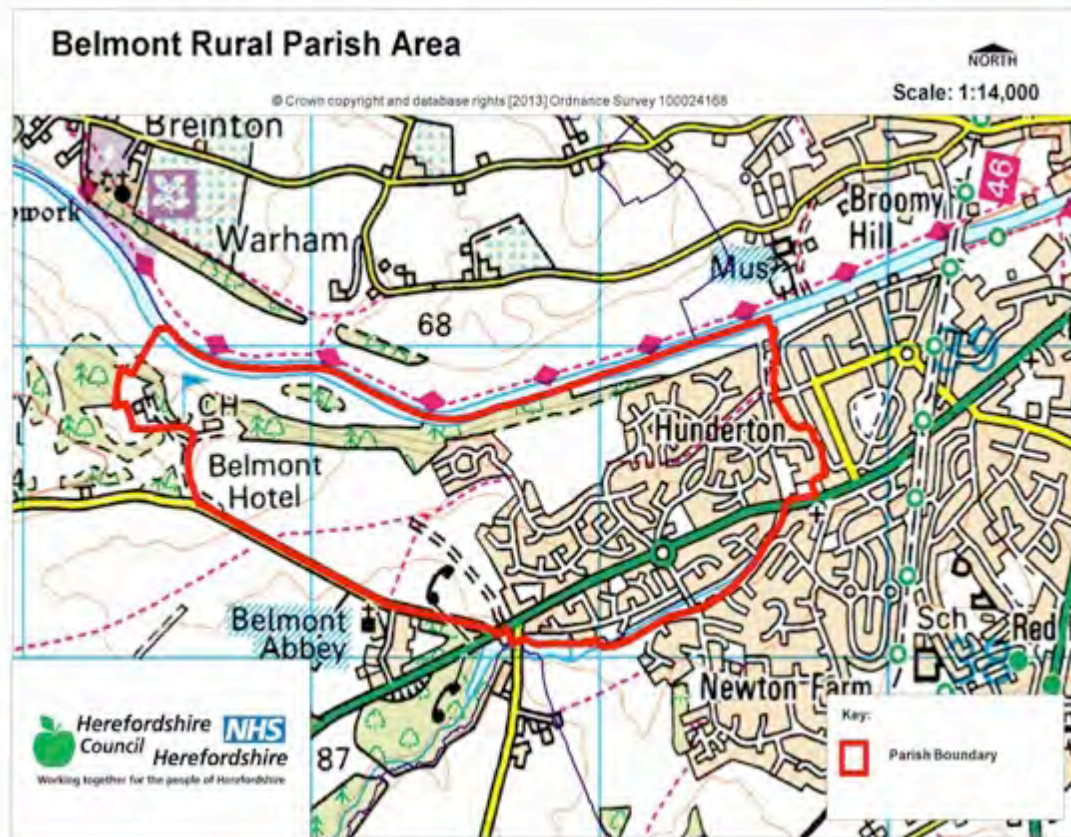


Figure 1 - Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

'A plan which sets out policies (however expressed) in relation to the development use and of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan'.

Definition of a Neighbourhood Development Plan as stating in 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act as amended by the Localism Act Section 38 A (2)

2. Why are we preparing a neighbourhood development plan for Belmont Rural

2.1 Neighbourhood Plans are a new part of the statutory development planning system. Just as local authorities, such as Herefordshire, can produce development plans to promote, guide and control development of houses, business, open spaces and other uses of land. Parish councils now have the ability to do the same in the shape of a neighbourhood plan.

2.2 Neighbourhood plans, when complete, form part of the statutory development plan for an area. They will be used to promote and guide what type of development goes where, and more importantly, will be used to help determine planning applications.

2.3 In 2012 a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established and have regular meetings to move forward with the NP. Belmont Rural was also one of the first parishes to get designated in June 2013, following a 4 week consultation period on the area from May - June 2013.

Belmont Rural Parish Plan³

2.4 Belmont Rural is an active parish that developed a Parish Plan in 2002/03. The Parish Plan has been the focus for the group, trying to deal with local issues and help achieve the objectives set within the plan. In summer 2002 a 'planning for real' exercise was held to encourage local people to be involved in identified local issues. This was also complimented with a series household questionnaires which were used to produce the plan.

³ The Parish Plan still exists but is now out of date and work is underway to update it. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) will not override the Parish Plan (PP), the NP focuses more on shaping the Parish through planning policies whereas the PP helps focus the parish on a wide range of issues which aren't just planning related.



2.5 Since 2002 there have been a series of updates to the plan, and in 2010 a further questionnaire was produced and shared with all households in the parish primarily to get views on the Abbey View Park (part of which is now known as Jubilee Field⁴). In 2012 a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established and have regular meetings to move forward with the NP.

⁴ In celebration of the Queens Golden Jubilee

3. The Neighbourhood plan process

The regulations for creating a neighbourhood plan are set out in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011, the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

BRP - Belmont Rural Parish HC - Herefordshire Council

Stage 1 Designation	October 2013 BRP submitted a map and statement explaining why it is considered appropriate NP area and the organization taking it forward is appropriate to HCC	HC consulted for 6 weeks	Approval for the NP was given June 2014
Stage 2 Plan Preparation	September 2014		
Stage 3 Informal Consultation on the Issues, Vision, draft policies	November/December	BRP consult on the draft plan for 4 weeks: newsletter to be published Nov and Consultation event planned Dec.	
Stage 4 Revisions to the draft	January 2015		
Stage 5 Submit to HCC	February 2015		

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Stage 6 HCC Public consultation 6 wks	February - March 2015		
Stage 7 Examination			
Stage 8 *Referendum			

*If the referendum vote is YES, then Herefordshire will 'make' the Belmont Rural NP as part of the development plan for Herefordshire. The NP will then be used in the determination of planning applications.

The above dates may be subject to change.

4. Planning policy context & key issues for Belmont Rural

- 4.1 The Belmont Rural NP must take account of national planning policy. This is primarily, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must 'plan positively' to promote local development' and must 'support the strategic development needs' set out in Herefordshire Councils (HC) Core Strategy (submission document May 2014)
- 4.3 This draft NP is not required to be tested against the policies in the emerging Core Strategy although the reasoning and evidence informing Core Strategy is relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which the NP is tested.
- 4.4 During the production of this draft document, the parish council has liaised with HC on the relationship between the policies in:
- The emerging Belmont Rural NP
 - The emerging Herefordshire Core Strategy
 - The adopted Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan
- 4.5 A comprehensive Policy Assessment document has been produced as part of the initial stages of the NP preparation this can be viewed on the Parish Council's website: www.belmontrural-pc.gov.uk
- 4.6 **Scoping Report⁵**
- HC have produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (September 2014). This was consulted upon for a period of 5 weeks. The aim of the consultation process is to involve and engage with statutory consultees and other relevant bodies on the scope of the appraisal. In particular, it seeks to:

⁵ Also available on www.belmontrural-pc.gov.uk

- Ensure the SEA is both comprehensive and sufficiently robust to support the Neighbourhood Development Plan during the later stages of full public consultation;
- Seek advice on the completeness of the plan review and baseline data and gain further information where appropriate;
- Seek advice on the suitability of key sustainability issues;
- Seek advice on the suitability of the sustainability objectives.

Comments on this Scoping Report were invited from the three consultation bodies as required by the SEA regulations, together with the Natural Resources Wales.

The three consultation bodies are as follows:

1. Natural England;
2. English Heritage;
3. Environment Agency.

A further SEA has been carried out on the draft plan, copies of which are available with this 6 week consultation.

4.7 The key issues for Belmont Rural are the following:

Open spaces

Whilst closely related to Hereford City, Belmont wants to retain its rural identity and connections with neighbouring parishes and be able to protect and enhance open space

Transportation & Connectivity

The impacts of the Western Relief road have potential positives for the area

Safer routes to school needs to be developed and would need to work with HCC

Public rights of way are important within the parish and any possibilities to extend and enhance should be considered.

Housing

There are opportunities to look at small infill housing opportunities, the golf course identified as a potential housing site.

Community

The area needs to access any available funding to keep existing community facilities going

Limited emergency access especially to the north of the A465 needs further consideration

A pub/restaurant in the area would be a huge benefit to the community

Medical services including doctors and dentists are currently over subscribed. Will need to link into the The Doctors Consortium and Wye Valley Health to find out any future plans they have for the area

5. Vision and Objectives

5.1 Belmont Rural's Vision:

'By 2031 Belmont Rural will have grown to take advantage of the Western Relief road. Key green areas and spaces will have been protected. Access to and from the area will have been improved allowing safe, easy access to quality services, open spaces and the wider countryside.'

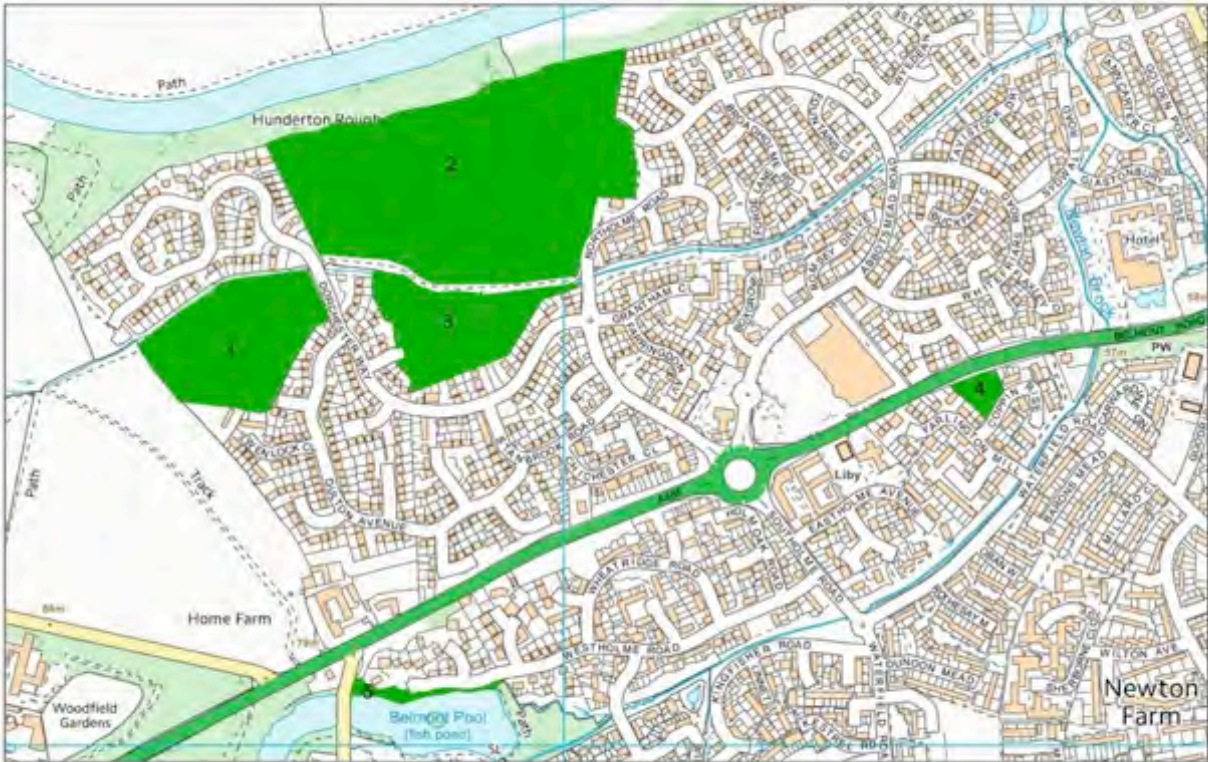
To achieve this Vision the following objectives have been identified for the Belmont Rural NP:

5.2 Objective 1 – to protect and improve open space



Abbey View Park

Protected Open Space



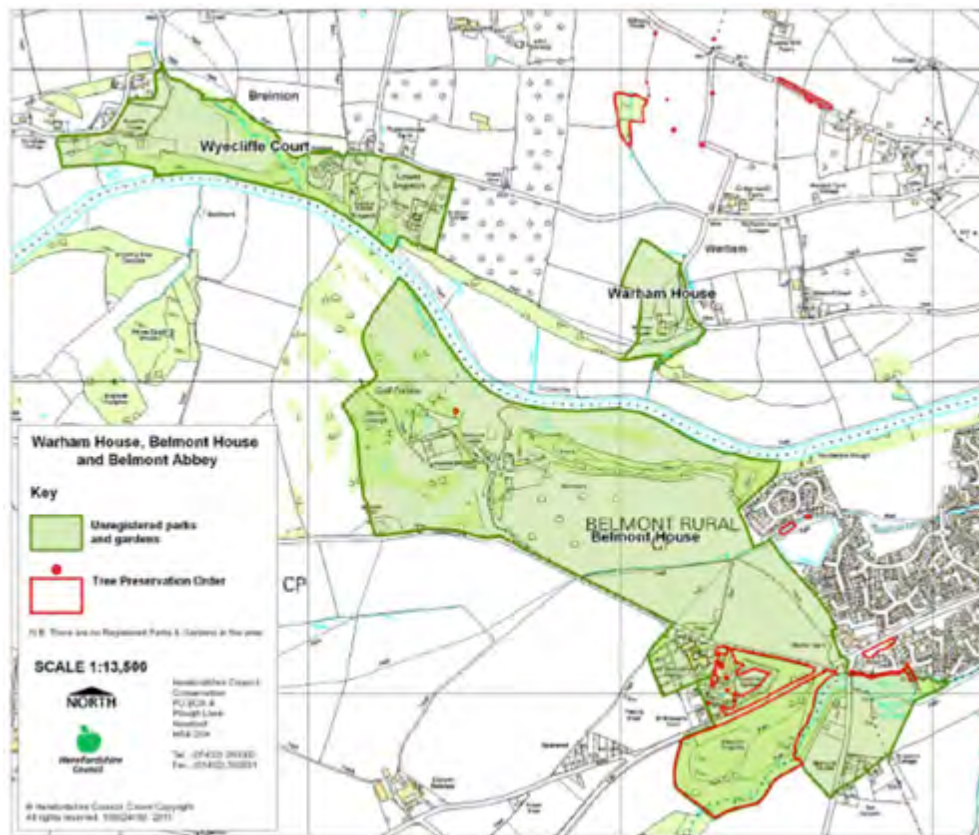
- 1. Abbey View West
- 2. Abbey view East
- 3. Jubilee Field
- 4. Coppin Rise

5.3 Objective 2 – to protect 'Home Farm'.

The key area of open land in the western half of the parish to the north east of Belmont Abbey

Background to the Home Farm

Home Farm site, is located on western fringe of Belmont. The site comprises agricultural land that lies outside of the urban settlement boundary, as defined in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and within an unregistered parkland.



Extract taken from the Hereford UDP showing the extent of the Unregistered parks and gardens within Belmont Rural parish

A planning application was submitted in 2012 for a residential development of upto 85 dwellings on 'The Triangle'. The application was refused by Herefordshire Council in 2012 and in 2013 a planning appeal was made by the developer. The appeal was dealt with as an Inquiry and in January 2014 the appeal was dismissed. Key considerations in the Inspectors decision were:

- harm to the character and appearance of the area
- a number of Grade II listed buildings surround the site. These include the Abbey, Home farm house and Stables, the cottage under reconstruction in the fields and Belmont House former Golf Club site.
- ecological impacts to the parkland, grazing land and veteran trees which are of high ecological interest

The appeal was made at a time when HC could not demonstrate that they had a 5 year housing land supply (HLS). The Inspector stated that ;

' notwithstanding the shortfall in the HLS, these adverse environmental impacts and the harm to the setting of heritage assets would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the economic and social dimensions/benefits of the scheme.'



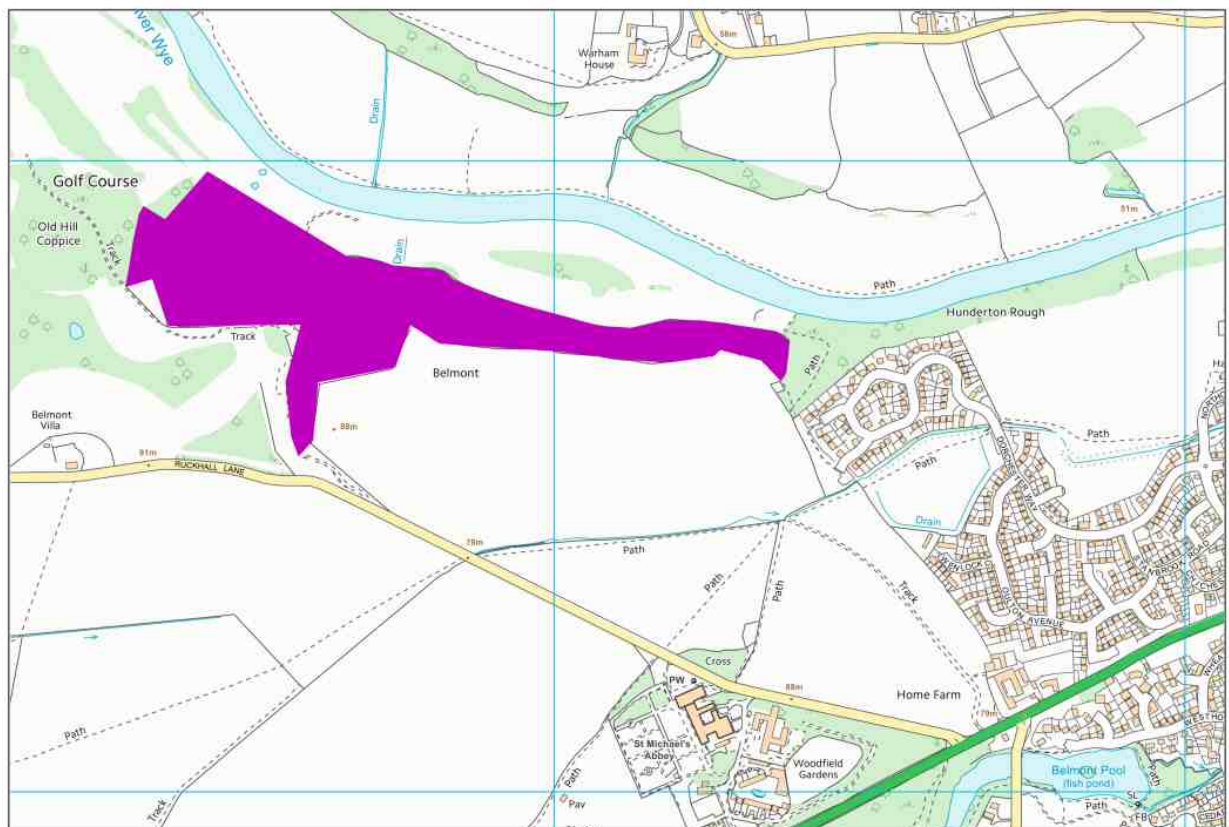
Home Farm looking towards Dorchester Way and Hereford City beyond

5.4 Objective 3 – To support long term development proposals for the former Belmont Golf Club

The Club closed in March 2014. Belmont House (listed building part of which was used as the Clubhouse) and Belmont Lodge (hotel) were subsequently decommissioned. The golf course has been leased for agricultural use for the medium term.

A private property exists just inside the northwestern parish boundary adjacent to the course and Belmont Lodge. (The wall surrounding the garden of this property and a stone in the grounds are listed.) Future decisions on the route of any Western relief road could impact future development of this area of the parish.

Future development of Belmont Golf Course



5.5 Objective 4 – to improve the quality of, and access to community facilities.

The area needs to access any available funding to keep existing community facilities going

Limited emergency access especially to the north of the A465 needs further consideration

A pub/restaurant in the area would be a huge benefit to the community

Medical services including doctors and dentists are currently over subscribed. Will need to link into the The Doctors Consortium and Wye Valley Health to find out any future plans they have for the area



5.6 Objective 5 – to identify small, infill sites for new housing



5.7 Objective 6 – to support local businesses

Need to identify the local businesses, whilst Tesco is clearly the biggest business within the Parish other small/medium businesses do exist within the area, some 'home working'.

6. Policies for Belmont Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan

6.1 Open spaces

Objective 1 - to protect and improve open space



Play area to the rear of Northholmne community centre

Core strategy linking policies

Policy OS2 – Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs

Policy OS3 – Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities

Policy LD3 – Green infrastructure

Open space

Belmont Rural has a wide range of green spaces which the community considers to be a huge asset. These green spaces play an important role in the wider Green Infrastructure network. The following green spaces marked on map * shall be protected:

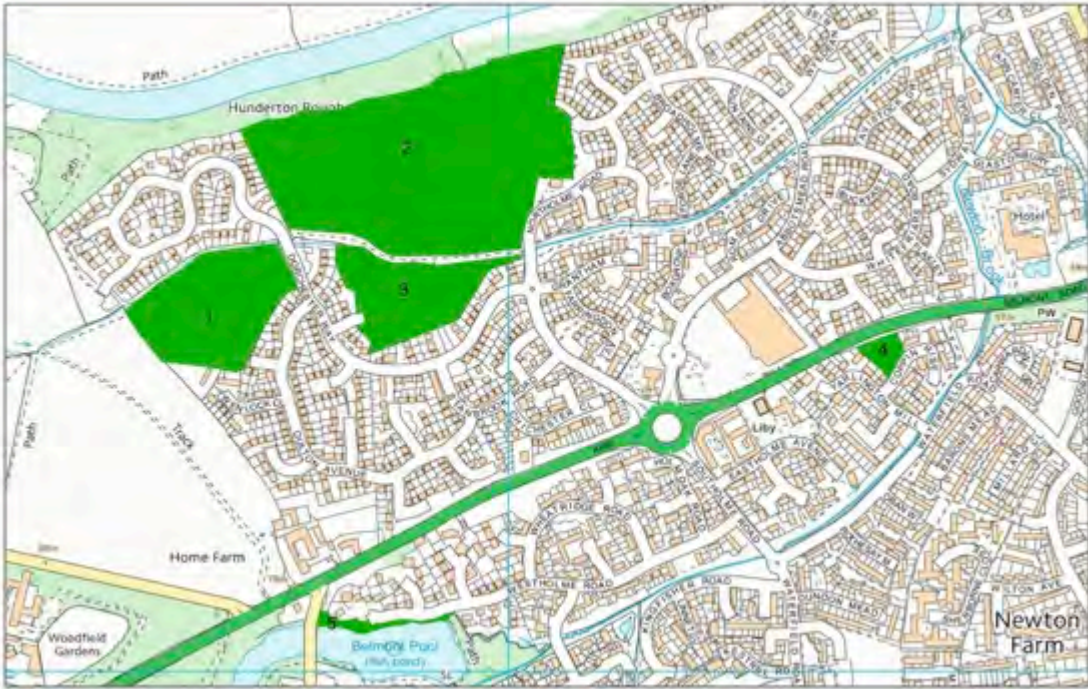
- Jubilee Field
- Abbey View East
- Abbey View West
- (should also detail and identify the GI network)

The enhancement of the above sites and linking in potential new sites identified on map ** shall be implemented

Where opportunities exist (suggestions shown on plan **) linkages to 'cross parish' green spaces will be promoted to provide defined areas for public access

A management plan for the open space shall be maintained and monitored.

Protected Open Space



6.2 Protecting Home Farm

Objective 2 - to protect 'the Triangle'⁶. The key area of open land in the western half of the parish to the north east of Belmont Abbey. There are no other historic parklands of this scale or quality on the city boundary of Hereford, the site is therefore a unique feature for Belmont Rural and for the city.



Core strategy supporting policies:

LD1 – Landscape and townscape

LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

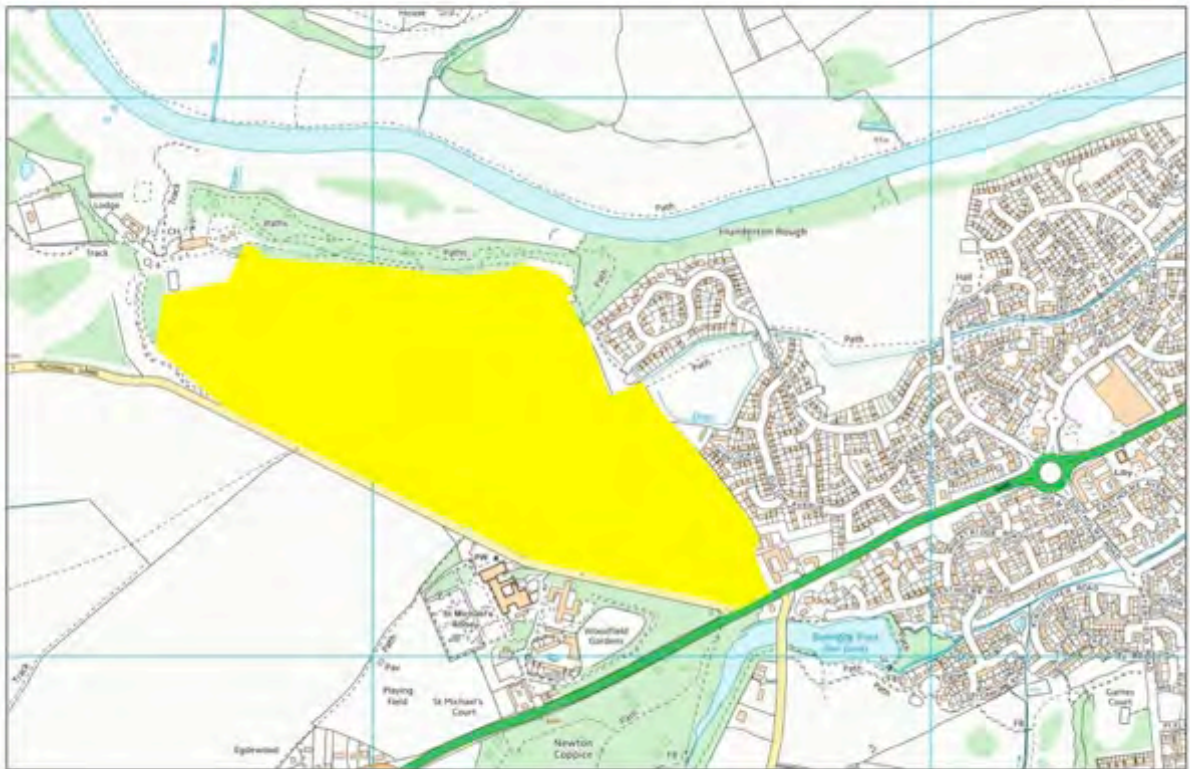
⁶ Protecting the land around Home Farm was widely discussed at the Planning Inquiry in 2013.

Protecting Home Farm

The land marked on map 'Protection of land at Home Farm' shall be protected, and working with HCC and the landowner a parkland management plan shall be put in place in order to safeguard the future sustainability of the site.

Opportunities to enhance the ecological assets including hedgerow habitats and landscape character of the triangle will be promoted.

Protection of land at Home Farm



6.3 Future development for Belmont Golf Course

Objective 3 – To identify any potential future use of the golf club, subject to decisions on the Western Relief Road



Core strategy supporting policies:

HD5 – Western urban extension (Three Elms)

SS4 – Movement and Transportation

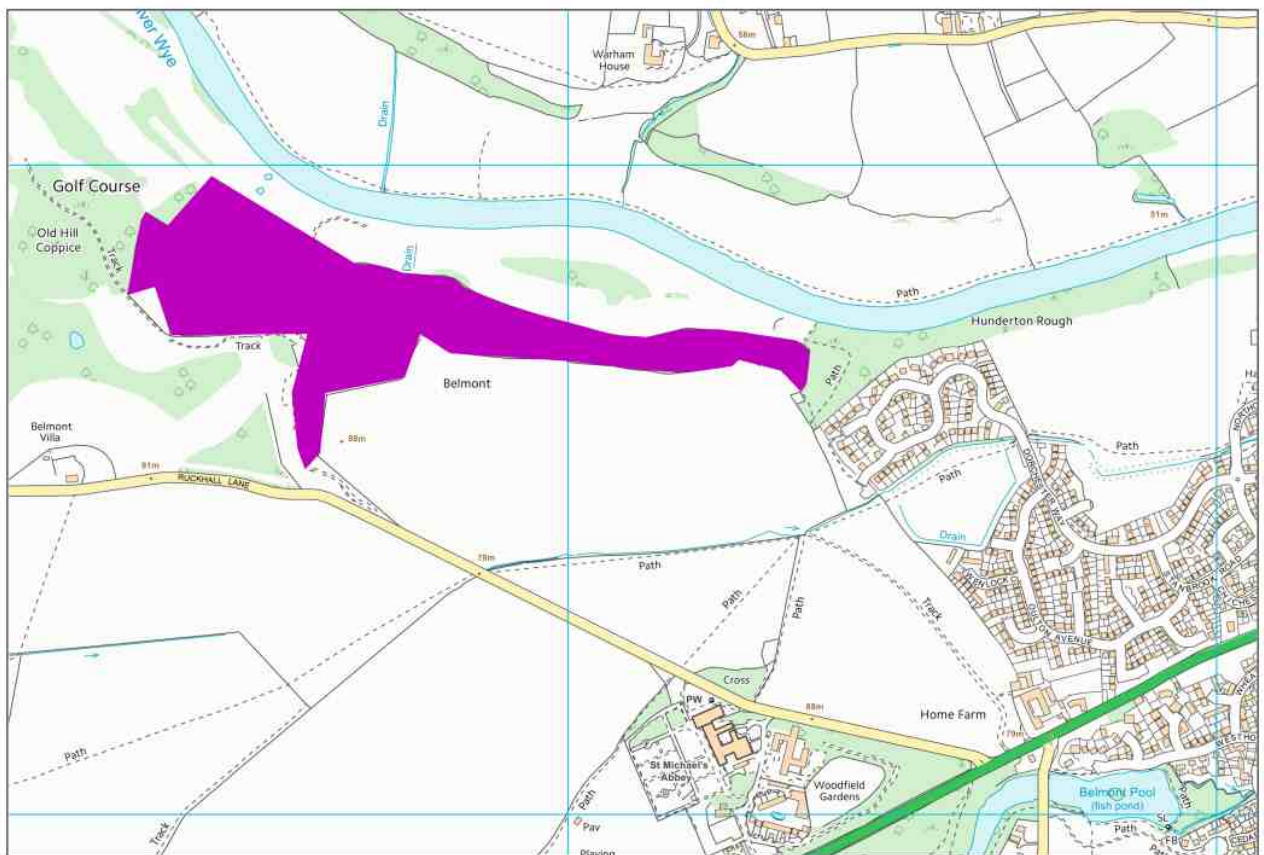
Belmont Golf Course

Opportunities for a sustainable use of the former golf club site (as indicated in plan 'Future development of Belmont Golf Course') will be supported in principle, provided the following criteria can be met:

- should be easily connected to the wider Belmont area both by foot, cycle and car with improved infrastructure
- All new development must demonstrate good quality design. This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the existing built environment.

- sustainable uses which utilize the existing buildings should be explored which ultimately respects the character and setting of the buildings
- as the site is located within close proximity to the River Wye, any future proposals for the site should respect this exceptional position and work with statutory bodies to ensure there is no detrimental impacts to the rivers vegetation and habitats.

Future development of Belmont Golf Course



6.4 Community facilities

Objective 4 – to improve the quality of, and access to community facilities.



Dorchester Way Notice Board

Whilst Belmont Rural is a small parish, it has the following community facilities:

- Northolme Community centre
- Belmont Community Centre
- Doctors surgery
- Library (operated in a small room within Belmont Community Centre)
- Schools (no schools located within the parish boundary)

Core Strategy linking policies:

Policy SC1 – Social and community facilities

Community Facilities

The community facilities identified on plan 'Community Facilities' will be protected. Development of these community assets for non-community uses will only be permitted when:

- a). an alternative site or building is provided of equal or greater community value than the facility to be replaced
- b). the asset to be replaced has been unused for a significant period of time, marketed to find another user, and is not subject to the community right to bid process



6.5 Infill Housing

Objective 5 – to identify small, infill sites for new housing

Core Strategy linking policies

SS2 – Delivering new homes

H1 – Affordable housing, thresholds and targets

Infill Housing

Applications for small residential developments on infill and redevelopment sites within Belmont (as identified on plan **) will be supported subject to proposals being well designed and meeting all relevant requirements set out in other policies in this plan and the Core Strategy, and where such development:

- a. fills a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings or on other sites within the built-up area of the parish where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.
- b. is not considered to be backland or unneighbourly development that requires unsuitable access, reduces the privacy of adjoining properties or is inconsistent with the character of the locality; and
- c. provides at least 2 bedroom properties with useable garden space and incurtilage parking

Barwood House - Potential Infill housing site



Barwood House, off Sydwall Road

Barwood House is a Grade II Listed building located to the southern boundary of the Parish. The site is located close to the River Wyre within substantial grounds. The site has been subject to several planning applications and the following table gives a brief overview:

CW2000/2538/F	Change of use of site and buildings to residential nursing home use; erection of residential nursing home including reuse of existing buildings with associated works including services provision, parking, service road alteration and landscaping as shown on application drawings	Refused	21/03/2001
CW2000/2540/L	Change of use of listed building and site to residential nursing home use	Refused	21/03/2001
SH930888PO	Four New Dwellings	Refused	20/10/1993
SH760093PF	Deposit of soil to fill depression in land and form a flood bank	Approved	10/3/1976

The site presents a housing opportunity as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Further site appraisals would need to be carried to explore the housing potential and any development would need to work within the setting of the listed building.

A most recent application was submitted in 2012 (S122536/L) for Listed Building Consent for the following:

Alterations to existing extension comprising replacement windows, new entrance doors. Lean to porch slate roof and internal reordering.

This application was approved.



Southern Elevation: Image taken from Design, Access and Heritage Statement from application S122536/L



Historic Image from North East: Image taken from Design, Access and Heritage Statement from application S122536/L

6.6 Accessibility and Connectivity

The Parish has an excellent position via road, foot and cycle in that it is close to Hereford City at the same time as having its own rural identity and strong linkages to the surrounding rural areas. The national cycling path (46) runs through Belmont as well as the 'Great Western Way Link' and smaller local routes.

Objective 6 – to improve emergency access to the area, taking advantage of the Western Relief Road



Abbey View west

Core strategy linking policies

MT1 – Traffic Management, highway safety and promoting active travel

SS4 – Movement and transportation

Accessibility & Connectivity

Walking and cycling will be encouraged by the enhancement of existing routes (the national cycle path 46 and Great Western Way Link) through the Belmont rural.

New development will be permitted only where it provides natural surveillance of public spaces, safe footpaths and cycle ways as well as satisfactory lighting.



Footpath between Northholme Rd and Abbotmead Road

6.7 Local business

Objective 7 – to support local businesses

Core strategy linking policies

SC1 – Social and community facilities

E3 – Homeworking

□

Supporting businesses in Belmont Rural

Existing businesses will be supported within the NP area and where opportunities exist small scale expansion will be supported, providing the following are met:

- there is a satisfactory means of access and adequate parking provided on site
- there will not be unacceptable harm to the amenity of any neighbouring properties
- All new development must demonstrate good quality design.

This means responding to and integrating with local surroundings and landscape context as well as the existing built environment.

Kirkwells

The Planning People

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