

YARPOLE GROUP

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011 to 2031



BIRCHER Common

Public Consultation Draft

6th June – 17th July 2016

Regulation 14 Public Consultation Notice

In accordance with Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Part 5, 14(a)-(c) notice is hereby given that a formal pre-submission **public consultation** on the **Draft Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Development Plan** will start **at 8.00 a.m. on Monday 6th June 2016** for a period of 6 weeks ending **at 5.00 p.m. on Sunday 17th July 2016**.

The Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to help deliver the local communities' requirements and aspirations for the plan period up to 2031. The Plan has been created through listening to the views of the residents of Yarpole Croft and Bircher Parish, and Lucton Parish.

The Plan will provide a means of guiding, promoting and enabling balanced and sustainable change and growth within the designated area of Yarpole Group.

Yarpole Group Parish Council invites comments on the Draft Plan. All responses received will be considered by the Steering Group and the Group Parish Council to inform a revised version of the Plan. The revised version of the Plan will then be submitted to Herefordshire Council, as the local planning authority, for examination by an independent examiner.

The Draft Plan may be viewed at www.yarpole.com or be emailed to residents on request to yarpolegroup@gmail.com Paper copies of the Plan may be borrowed from the parish clerk on request via the above email or by calling 01568 780786.

Response forms may be deposited in designated boxes at **St Leonard's Church**, Yarpole or scanned and emailed to: yarpolegroup@gmail.com.

All comments must be received by 5.00 p.m. on 17th July 2016

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Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Robert Chitham for his work in developing the conceptual approach to the development adjacent to Brook House Farm and to both Robert and Kate Darby for the Design Guidance Statement set out in Appendix 1.

Photographs courtesy of Barrie Morgan.

1. Introduction

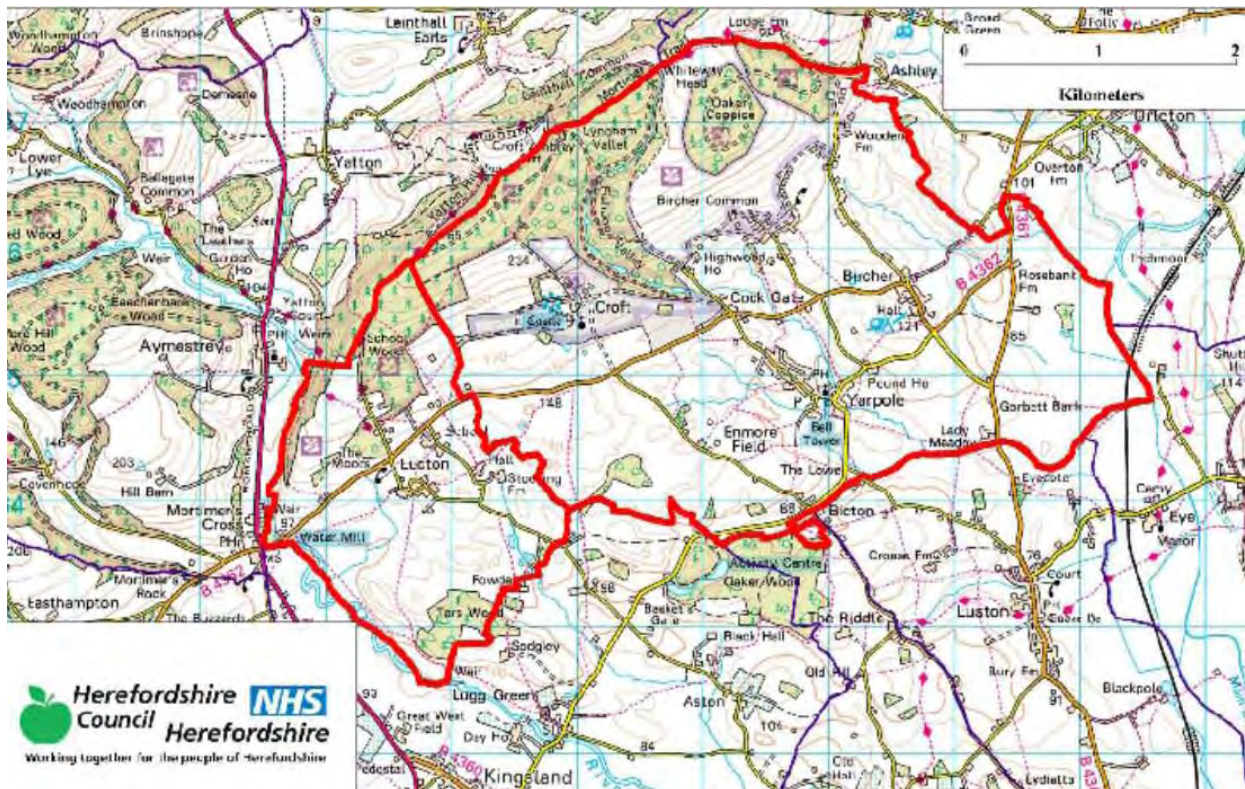
- 1.1 Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (the NDP) is a new type of planning document introduced by the Localism Act of 2011. It enables local communities to make a significant contribution to some of the planning decisions about how their areas should be developed.
- 1.2 In December 2012, Yarpole Group Parish Council made a formal submission to Herefordshire Council to designate the Group Parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area under the Localism Act 2011, with the intention of preparing this NDP. Following a consultation period this was approved on 8th February 2013. This draft NDP has been prepared following the adoption of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy by Herefordshire Council on 16th October 2015.
- 1.3 This draft NDP has been prepared on the basis of the evidence gathered from surveys undertaken in relation to the preparation of the Parish Plan and a consultation undertaken upon initial ideas held in March 2015. In addition other evidence was used to prepare the plan and this is listed at/on yarpole.com under **Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (YGPNDP) 'Evidence Base'**. The Neighbourhood Plan must also comply with the broad **criteria for sustainable development within Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** and also with Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy.
- 1.4 Policies and **proposals are set out in this document prefixed by 'YG'**. These will become part of the development plan guiding what might receive planning permission as well as indicating what measures are to be promoted to guide new development.
- 1.5 The plan has been prepared through the work of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, established by Yarpole Group Parish Council.

Community Involvement

- 1.6 Yarpole Group Parish Council established a Steering Group to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan in December 2014. This included members from the community involved in addition to parish councillors. This first met in January 2015. The Steering Group sought to build upon Yarpole Group Parish Plan prepared in 2012. Further consultation with the community specifically upon the Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken through two public meetings – in June and November 2015. In addition a stall was taken at **the village fete in June 2015 and 3 'Drop In' meetings were held in the July 2015. Throughout there has been a display and information in the Church.**
- 1.7 The community consultation in June and November 2015 supported the general direction being taken by the Steering Group who gained confidence for setting both an overall vision, objectives and draft policies, in particular for the approach to accommodating development **within the villages to meet Herefordshire Core Strategy's target. The Steering Group has**

now developed policies and proposals that it wishes the communities within the Group Parish to consider. These are set out in subsequent sections of this document.

Map 1: Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Plan Area



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- 1.8 The Steering Group consists of 1 member of the Parish Council and 9 members from the general community.
- 1.9 The Steering Group has written these policies with professional support from Bill Bloxsome MRTPI of Data Orchard and Gemma Webster of Herefordshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team.

2. Background to the Group Parish

- 2.1 Yarpole Group of Parishes comprises the two parishes of Croft with Yarpole and Lucton. They cover a large rural area within the north-west of the County of Herefordshire between the market towns of Leominster (5 miles to the south) and Ludlow (7.5 miles to the north). Hereford, the County town, lies some 18 miles to the South. Three settlements of any notable size lie within the Group parish and these are Bircher, Lucton and Yarpole.

Our People

- 2.2 The population of the Group Parish increased from 608 in 1991 to 703 in 2001 and to 787 in 2011. Its age structure indicates there is a high proportion of elderly present.

- 2.3 Yarpole has a village shop **run by the community from St Leonard's Church** but residents travel to the nearby market towns or Hereford for major shopping. There is a Parish Hall and Public House in Yarpole. Neither of the two other villages have any community based services or facilities.



LUCTON School Est.1708

- 2.4 Agriculture is an important employer across the Group Parish. Lucton School is a relatively significant employer within the Group Parish and draws staff and support workers from a wide area. Most other businesses within the Group Parish are small enterprises. Again residents must travel to the nearby towns for work, although working from home presents an alternative for some.

Our History and Settlements

- 2.5 There is some evidence of early prehistoric settlement in the wider area within which the Group Parish sits, such as the burial of a Neolithic child from Aymestrey to the west, but little is known of settlement patterns within this period. In the later prehistoric period, settlement was probably concentrated on the large hill fort of Croft Ambrey which lies at the summit of the high ground above Croft Castle, slightly over the parish boundary. Excavations within the hill fort in the 1960s demonstrated that a town with a well-planned and long lived street pattern may have supported up to a thousand people. After the Roman conquest the site continued to be used but probably more as a ritual site than for occupation. A series of enclosures which survive as earthworks on the slopes of Bircher Common probably represent Iron Age or Roman farmsteads and it is probable that settlement remained on high ground in this period.

- 2.6 The current settlement pattern within the two parishes was probably established, in the Saxon period. There are three main foci of settlement; Yarpole together with its northern extension at Cock Gate, Bircher and Lucton and there are smaller settlements at Bicton and around Croft Castle. There is a scattered fringe of dispersed housing and farms along the southern edge of Bircher Common and houses scattered along three lanes leading to the higher ground; Croft Lane, Welshman's Lane and Leys Lane.
- 2.7 The settlement of Bircher is a hamlet of houses, and farm buildings, including seven listed buildings, in a nucleated group either side of the B4362 road. A small group of semi-detached houses were built on the east side of the road in the first half of the 20th Century and some former farm buildings have been converted to dwellings but in general the settlement pattern is little changed from the 19th Century although the extensive orchards which formerly surrounded and lay within the village have dwindled to a few remnants. To the west is Bircher Hall, an 18th Century stuccoed brick house which is set in wooded grounds. The Knoll, a large Georgian house, stands in grounds to the south of the settlement. The road through the hamlet became part of the Turnpike Road between Orleton and Presteigne after an act of parliament of 1756 prior to which the road to Orleton ran to the rear of Bircher Knoll. Several houses and farms are scattered along Leys Lane which leads from Bircher up a steep slope to the common.
- 2.8 Lucton which lies 2 miles to the west of Yarpole is a small nucleated village built around a circle of small lanes. There are nine listed buildings including the former church of St Peter which was built in 1834 on the foundations of an earlier church. The earthwork remains of a moated site lie to the north-west of the former church. Apart from some 20th Century infill, the settlement is little changed from its depiction on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885, although, as with most settlements in this area, the once extensive orchards surrounding the village have been removed.
- 2.9 Lucton School, which lies south of the B4362 road to the east of the village, was established in 1708. It comprises a group of buildings around a large Queen Anne brick building. To the west of the village is the 18th Century Mortimer's Cross Mill, an English Heritage property which is in partial working order.
- 2.10 Yarpole was the site of a monastic grange owned by Leominster Priory. The name refers to a fishpool of which the remains of the former dam survive to the north of Church Farm. The grange farm itself was probably based around The Manor House at the lower end of the village where a gatehouse survives. In the Domesday survey Yarpole was a large village of 34.9 households. The earliest parts of the church and timber framed bell tower were built in the 12th Century but are likely to have replaced an earlier wooden construction. Many of the older properties in the village, including twelve listed buildings, are based around the inverted 'T' shape formed by the junction of Green Lane and the lane leading from Bircher to Kingsland. Most listed buildings are timber framed and 16th Century, or later, in origin. Pound House, a cross winged timber framed house lies slightly outside the village at the junction of Red Oak Lane.
- 2.11 During the 19th and 20th Centuries settlement continued westwards along Green Lane also extending into the closes of Croft Lane, Green Crescent and James Close but a linear settlement pattern based on Green Lane survives in this part of the village. The lower part of the village was also subject to infill in the second half of the 20th Century. Three farms operated within the village until relatively recently. Brook House Farm remains, others having been converted into houses. A mill operated on the northern side of the village until

the 1950s and the building and related earthworks including a millpond and leat are well preserved. Until the 20th Century large areas of orchard stood both within and surrounding the village. Cock Gate lies at the junction of Green Lane with the B4362 at the entrance to Croft Castle. This small group of houses includes two listed buildings and the lodge to the Croft estate. To the west is the former Yarpole School. This was built in 1851, closed in 1968 and is now a private house.

- 2.12 Bicton is a small hamlet of 19th Century houses on the junction of Croft Lane and the road from Yarpole to Kingsland. Houses and farms are loosely scattered along Croft Lane as it rises up towards the castle including a small hamlet called Enmore Field.
- 2.13 Croft Castle, now more of a fortified manor house, has its origins in the 14th Century but may have replaced a Norman Castle. The remains of a medieval manor house were uncovered in excavations to the west of the building in 2003. The complex includes gardens, the Church of St Michael, a walled garden, a crenelated gothic wall glasshouse and several avenues of trees including a historic avenue of Spanish Chestnuts. The grounds of the castle are a former deer park which was landscaped in picturesque style in the 18th century. A village of Croft with six households is included in the Domesday survey but the location of this village is far from certain. It may have existed in the fields to the south of the Castle but no well-defined settlement earthworks survive. There are several buildings related to the estate scattered around the estate including the former stables, lodge house and keeper's cottage but the focus of the settlement remains the castle.



BIRCHER Common

- 2.14 The houses on the edge of Bircher Common can be divided into those scattered along the lane which forms the lower, south-eastern edge of the common and dispersed within the common itself. The former were probably small farms and related buildings benefiting from grazing rights on the common. Those within the common demonstrate the diverse style and

orientation typical of 'settlement on the waste'; houses originally built unofficially on common land. Some larger houses including Highwood House were also built on the edge of the common to take advantage of the picturesque location and extensive view to the south.

- 2.15 The field pattern within the two parishes is a mix of regular and irregular land parcels the latter suggestive of piecemeal enclosure, in which the strips of the former open field system were enclosed by agreement rather than Act of Parliament. On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, many narrow, curved fields reflect their origins as strip fields though many of these were removed by 20th Century amalgamation. Remnants of ridge and furrow survive across the two parishes, though degraded by ploughing in most instances. Orchards were formerly very common within the agricultural landscape concentrated on settlements but also within open country.
- 2.16 Early maps demonstrate that the pattern of woodland has changed little over the last 200 years and some plantations such as Oaker Coppice are still surrounded by woodland banks which may be medieval. Much planting of coniferous trees took place in the 20th Century although areas of mature deciduous woodland stand within the Croft Estate and wood pasture has recently been restored by National Trust, There is extensive evidence for charcoal burning within the woodlands which formerly supplied the iron industry based around Burrington about 5 miles to the north

Our Environment

- 2.17 The land within the two parishes lies between about 80m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and 280m at their highest point just below Croft Ambrey hillfort. The south western part of the parishes is undulating country on the Silurian Raglan mudstone formation whilst to the north-west; the land rises sharply onto the Silurian Whitcliffe formation, which forms a ridge of high ground between the parish and Wigmore some 3 miles to the north-west. The elevated parts of the two parishes are occupied by the Croft Castle estate to the south-west, a National Trust property based around a castle surrounded by extensive woodland and parkland. To the north-east, Bircher Common, also owned by the National Trust, is a large open area of common land with patches of woodland. The lower parts of the parish are largely rural, and a mix of pasture and arable land.
- 2.18 Most land within the Group Parish is either Grade 2 (Very Good) or Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) according to the Agricultural Land Classification. None falls within the category of Excellent. It possesses no derelict land or areas of land identified for regeneration. There are no areas where access to mineral reserves needs to be safeguarded. There are limited areas shown to have risk of flooding within the Group Parish, the most notable of which is at the eastern edge of Yarpole village. The extent of brownfield land has not been surveyed but understood to be negligible if any.
- 2.19 Landscape quality is important within the Group Parish and the extensive parkland surrounding Croft Castle is included on Historic England's National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Group Parish comprises a variety of landscapes with Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment identifying four particular types within its area. To the south of Yarpole village is an area defined as Wet Pasture Meadow; to the east surrounding both Yarpole village and Bircher the area is defined as Principal Settled Farmlands; Lucton sits within an area defined as Estate Farmlands; and to the north

around and above Croft Castle are Principal Timbered Farmlands. Within the first of these landscapes habitat management is considered important with an emphasis upon moving arable land back to wet pasture and the creation of new wetland habitats. Settled Farmland should have a balance between arable and pasture land while tree cover should be enhanced and opportunities taken to maintain and increase traditional orchards. Within the Estate Farmlands the field and parkland patterns should be conserved with tree planting to create small scale plantations and tree belts and wide field margins created as habitats. The emphasis is on conserving the landscape although opportunities should be taken to increase hedgerow tree planting or even planting new small woodlands, principally of oak.

- 2.20 There are no biodiversity sites with national designations within the Group Parish. However the area comprising Croft Castle Historic Park and Garden together with Bircher Common and Yatton Hill is an extensive local wildlife site. This extensive area is identified as a biodiversity core area and associated buffer upon Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map. With the exception of a small part of the Cock Gate area of Yarpole on the north-west corner of its cross roads, none of the settlements have any wildlife sites within their proximity that might affect the location of development. However the watercourse running through Yarpole is identified as a wildlife corridor. This does not suggest nature conservation is unimportant within the Group Parish and there are opportunities to contribute towards net gains in biodiversity in accordance with sustainable development principles.

3. Vision, Objectives and Strategic Policies

Vision and Objectives

- 3.1 In preparing Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Plan the following vision sets the basis for what it is hoped to achieve through the planning system by the end of the plan period:

"Yarpole Group Parish will be a parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people are valued and there are homes, businesses and facilities to meet the needs of our vibrant rural community."

- 3.2 This means:
- There is sufficient housing to meet the needs of local people, both young and old, and which is of mixed types, well-designed, in keeping with our local character, suitably located and including affordable homes.
 - Local facilities including the Parish Hall, St. Leonard's Church, and The Bell Inn continue to be supported; and sport or other leisure spaces are developed.
 - Roads, paths and public rights of way meet the needs of the community and are safe and maintained in good condition.
 - We are in control of the future development of our parish, in particular, the boundaries of our villages are respected and amendments will have been made with care and consideration.

- New residents are welcomed, people feel safe and community involvement and spirit is actively encouraged.
- Our natural environment and wildlife is protected and valued..
- Our archaeological and architectural heritage is recognised and valued
- Agriculture as a business is supported and the quality and quantity of agricultural land provision is given due weight when development is considered.
- There are more businesses in the parish providing additional employment opportunities.
- We will be safe from flood risk, better prepared for climate change and with a reduced carbon dependence.

3.3 To achieve our vision we have set the following objectives:

(i) Housing

Policies incorporated in the Plan will ensure that new housing contributes to a sustainable and balanced community, in particular through:

- providing a mix of properties in terms of size, tenure and price
- designs that are sensitive to and in keeping with our respective settlements
- satisfying locally identified needs for all life stages, and including affordable homes
- controlling the level of new housing such that there are sufficient numbers but without over-provision

(ii) Roads and Traffic

Within the Plan will be proposals to reduce the effects of traffic on the community so that:

- residents are safe using local roads and footpaths
- roads do not create an unreasonable physical barrier between residents
- traffic can move freely but without excessive speed
- new development does not significantly worsen road conditions
- proposals are designed to encourage initiatives to increase the use of public transport and to share private transport

(iii) Sustainable Environment

The Plan's policies will give a high priority to ensuring the environment contributes significantly towards sustainable development through:

- **protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, especially the parish's heritage, habitats and open spaces**
- maintaining a high quality landscape, built environment and settings of settlements
- reducing flood risk
- safeguarding agricultural land
- moving towards being carbon neutral

(iv) Opportunities for Employment

The Plan will enable more people to work where they live or closer to their homes through:

- attracting businesses and employment suitable for a rural area

- supporting appropriate agricultural development and diversification within the rural economy
- ensuring appropriate and up-to-date infrastructure

(v) Community Services and Facilities

Community spirit will be fostered by:

- maintaining and supporting existing services and facilities
- enhancing the present leisure and recreational facilities
- encouraging new and improved provisions, e.g. for safety, health and care to serve the needs of all ages where practicable

Parish Strategy for Sustainable Development

- 3.4 Sustainable development seeks to ensure proposals are advanced that will “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹. It covers social and economic factors as well as the environment so that the community is provided with sufficient and appropriate housing, jobs, opportunities for enterprise, and access to community facilities which will help us to maintain healthy and thriving communities as well as protecting our natural and historic environment, all of which contribute to our quality of life.
- 3.5 This plan acknowledges the local community’s concern that it wishes to accommodate development that respects the nature and scale of the Group Parish’s high quality environment. It wishes to see measures brought forward through development that will benefit suitable economic activity and community infrastructure, and although benefits and costs may need to be weighed when judging proposals they should not compromise the ability to meet the objectives. The following policy forms the basis for the overall approach being pursued.

Policy YG1: Promoting Sustainable Development

Positive measures that promote sustainable development within Yarpole Group Parish will be supported where they meet the principles and policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where development proposals are advanced they should, in particular, address the following high level priorities that are considered essential by the local community for maintaining sustainable development within the Group Parish.

- a) Sufficient housing will be provided to meet the needs of both the local and wider community through developments that contribute to identified needs in terms of size, type and tenure;**
- b) Infrastructure will be sought to enable ease of access to services, ensure risks are minimised, and the potential adverse effects of development on amenity are avoided;**

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, page 2.

- c) **A high priority will be given to preserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment within the Group Parish, and maintaining its local distinctiveness;**
- d) **Development supporting local businesses and diversification of the rural economy of the Group Parish shall reflect the scale of their surroundings, and working from home will be supported, in particular by seeking modern infrastructure, provided local amenity is suitably protected;**
- e) **Support for measures to retain community facilities and services, and where appropriate their increase, will be sought to sustain and improve the health and wellbeing of all the Group Parish's new and existing residents.**

Development proposals must comply with the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where this Plan does not cover a proposal, any decision should reflect, where possible, the above priorities as well as Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SS1. Benefits in association with developments will be sought in relation to the priorities set out in this policy.

- 3.6 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan and this overarching strategic policy sets out the essential sustainable development requirements which the local community considers important. Where exceptional reasons are such that the community's expression of priorities are overridden then the effects upon the principles that this policy sets out should be mitigated or compensated for.
- 3.7 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy indicates a preference for settlement boundaries to be defined within which development might take place. This might incorporate any site allocations as well as individual sites or small plots that could be accommodated satisfactorily as infilling. The approach to the location of development to meet the community's aspirations for and contribution to sustainable development while complying with the provisions of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy will be in accordance with the following policy.

Policy YG2: Development Strategy

The settlements of Bircher, Lucton and Yarpole village will be the focus for development within the Group Parish. The level and extent to which they are able to accommodate development will depend upon their environmental capacity and other constraints. Limited small scale employment opportunities will nevertheless continue to be provided for, including enabling limited new and extended premises outside of the parish's settlements in association with rural enterprises or through utilising brownfield land or existing rural buildings. There will be an emphasis on protecting high quality agricultural land unless land of a lower grade is not available and the need for the development outweighs this requirement. The accommodation of development to meet the needs of the Parish and contribute to County requirements will be based upon the following approach:

- a) A settlement boundary is defined for Bircher within which new housing and other appropriate forms of development may take place through infilling or the conversion and extension of existing buildings provided they meet relevant environmental and other safeguards. The settlement's local distinctiveness will be preserved.**
- b) A settlement boundary is defined for Lucton that will maintain its current form and distinctive character primarily through limiting new residential and other development to extensions to and conversions of existing buildings.**
- c) Yarpole will accommodate the majority of new residential and other development within the Group Parish where it will support the retention and possible expansion of facilities and services. Development boundaries, site allocations and protected areas are defined that will reflect the characteristics and facilities that have developed and been maintained over time.**
- d) Development outside of the settlements identified above should be exceptional and located in accordance with relevant policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, in particular but not exclusively Policy RA3, and where necessary the more detailed policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. The countryside will continue to accommodate development associated in particular with agricultural and rural enterprises where these reflect the scale and nature of the landscape within which they sit.**

- 3.8 This strategy directs where most forms of development should take place that are likely to occur within the Group Parish. Most will be located within the named villages although development can take place in the countryside where this will support the rural economy and the needs of the community. With the exception of housing no specific strategic development requirements are identified for the Group Parish within Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. In relation to housing Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA2 identifies levels of proportional growth that must be accommodated within the Group Parish.
- 3.9 The other forms of development that may come forward within the Group Parish include land and premises for employment, services, facilities and infrastructure. A number of more detailed policies for these are included later within this plan although it may be appropriate to rely upon policies in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy for some matters. Similarly where proposals are not covered by this plan, then Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies would be used, although the provisions of YG1 and YG2 in this Neighbourhood Plan should be considered where appropriate. Particular regard should be had however to the use of brownfield land and existing sites and the protection of high grade agricultural land where that of lower grade is available.

Meeting Housing Need

- 3.10 The proportional housing growth set out in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy RA2 comprises a minimum target that will apply to the Group Parish as a whole to include an allowance for windfall development within the countryside where proposals meet the provisions of Policy RA3.
- 3.11 The target for new housing within the Group Parish indicated for the period 2011 to 2031 by Herefordshire Council is 48 dwellings. However some 6 new dwellings, all within Yarpole have either been completed since 2011 or are under construction. A modest estimate of the allowance for dwellings that are likely to come forward outside of the village within the remainder of the Group Parish and based upon past trends is at least 8 dwellings. These would come forward through rural building conversions, agricultural dwellings and other acceptable forms of housing development in the countryside. Accordingly the Neighbourhood Plan should be looking to make provision for a minimum of 34 further dwellings within or on the edge of the three villages.
- 3.12 Housing provision associated with the three villages can be met through a combination of individual or small plots within a settlement boundary together with the three site allocations, one in Bircher and two in Yarpole. The site allocations should enable a mixture of house types, sizes and tenures as is necessary to be brought forward.
- 3.13 The approach to accommodating housing within each village together with supporting infrastructure is identified in the following three sections. However the summary of how these will meet and exceed the required target is set out in Table 1 below. It should however be recognised that these figures represent the expected minimum potential number for the relevant sites and plots in order to indicate that the required target can be met. A modest figure for developable sites is used in all instances. The result would provide an average of 3 new dwellings per year over the remainder of the plan period.

Table 1: Summary of Proposals to Meet and Exceed the Housing Target

Housing Target – 48		Number of dwellings-on available sites Immediate term
Completions since 2011 Or Under Construction – 6		
Revised target for whole Group Parish (to include rural windfall) - 42		
1	Bircher	
	a) Site allocations (Policy YG3)	5
	b) Small site/conversion (YG4)	6
2	Lucton (Policy YG6)	0
3	Yarpole	
	a) Small sites (Policy YG8)	10
	b) Allocation, Croft Crescent (YG9)	5
	c) Allocation. Brook House Farm and adjacent land (YG10)	14

	Dwellings resulting from this Neighbourhood Plan	40
4	Rural windfall based on past trends.	8
	Total	48

4 Bircher

- 4.1 Bircher is a small village straddling the B4362 between two sharp bends just to the north of Yarpole with which it is closely linked. It is predominantly based upon the development of a group of farms around Bircher Hall with some cottages infilling between. It contains few modern domestic buildings although sensitive barn conversions have provided relatively new accommodation. The wall running along the eastern side of Bircher Hall together with an area of slightly raised open land which divides the wall from the road through the village, combine to provide an important feature. Modern infilling has recently divided this space into two parcels. Other attractive features include the views from the south across to The Knoll which has been enhanced through tree planting; thick tree planting along boundaries and along road frontages at the northern approach; and the many attractive rural buildings along the village street. A widely drawn conservation area encompassing most of the village was designated in 1995.
- 4.2 Although stretching along the B4362 the village retains a compact appearance. The approaches along this route are important to its character, particularly that from the south where The Knoll is a particularly dominant feature even as you start to drive through the village from that direction. **Bircher's contribution to meeting the vision and objectives will in particular concentrate upon providing a limited amount of housing in a way that reflects the village's character while allowing plots for self-build or commissioned housing to come forward.** The street scene, important green space and views will be protected and the limited resultant traffic will be accommodated safely. There are no local community facilities or services within the village, the nearest being in Yarpole.

Policy YG3: Housing Development in Bircher

A settlement boundary has been defined upon Bircher Village Map within which development may take place where it meets the following criteria:

- a) Development shall be located to retain the village character.**
- b) Dwellings shall be in scale with the general density and massing of existing properties in the vicinity and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties.**

- c) Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows and green space that contribute to the unique character of the village.**
- d) Development shall not adversely affect the character and appearance Bircher Conservation Area but where possible will enhance these aspects and generally comply with Policy YG14.**
- e) Development should protect and enhance heritage assets within the village, including their setting.**
- f) There shall be safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**
- g) Development shall comply with other relevant policies contained within this plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**

The sympathetic conversion of existing traditional buildings to dwellings within the settlement boundary will in particular be encouraged.

- 4.3 The settlement boundary for Bircher is drawn tightly to maintain a generally consistent depth along the village street on its eastern side. Here it excludes both The Knoll, because its isolated yet dominating character is important to the village approach and character of the conservation area. A limited number of gaps and conversion opportunities exist on this side of the village street including along Leys Lane. No development opportunities exist along the western side of the B4362 in order to retain its particular character. The criteria included within this policy are considered important to ensure development retains important features; conserves the character and appearance of the village, especially in view of its designation as a conservation area; protect residential and local amenity; and to provide safe access and off-street parking. The settlement boundary provides the opportunity for 6 new dwellings, primarily through the conversion of traditional buildings at gatehouse farm expected to provide 5 units (see Appendix 3). A further parcel for a single dwelling is available on a parcel of land adjacent to Knoll Cottage. The relevant owners all submitted land or buildings in the 'Call for Sites' undertaken as part of the consultation process.

Policy YG4: Proposed land for Housing Development in Bircher

Land comprising 0.47 hectare between Leys Lane and the B4362 is proposed for housing development subject to the following site specific requirements:

- h) Dwellings shall be in scale with the general density and massing of existing properties in the vicinity and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties.**
- i) Development shall retain important features such as trees, hedgerows and green space that contribute to the unique character of the village. In particular regard should be had to design guidance set out in Appendix 1.**

- j) Development shall preserve or preferably enhance the character and appearance Bircher Conservation Area and in particular proposals should include screening from the B4362 in order to preserve the character of the approach to the village.**
- k) Accesses to properties shall be along Leys Lane, kept to a minimum along this Lane and in locations where they provide safe access for vehicles,**
- l) Parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**
- m) Development shall comply with other relevant policies contained within this plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**

4.4 This site is capable of accommodating 5 dwellings but it is important that its development includes careful screening in order to retain the character of the approach to the village from the west. The land slopes down fairly significantly to Leys Lane although this ought not to unduly hamper its development but promote high quality designs to reflect the character of the conservation area. Access arrangements should be informed by a detailed analysis of the conditions although a single vehicular access at a point furthest away from Leys Lane junction with the B4362 would be preferred. It is recognized that the junction onto the B4362 is problematic in that exiting right from Leys Lane is difficult as is the return left turn into it. However the level of further development along Leys Lane is very small and the difficulty is such that like the approach taken by existing residents on this lane alternative arrangements will be utilised as a matter of course. Other criteria in this policy reflect those in policy YG3.

Policy YG5: Local Green Space in Bircher

The orchard area opposite gatehouse farm is identified on Bircher Village Map as Local Green Space in order to protect the contribution it makes to the amenity of the village, biodiversity and the character and appearance of Bircher Conservation Area:

No development shall be permitted in this area that will adversely affect the contribution it makes to the aspects of the village environment.

4.5 The area of green space protected through this policy makes a major contribution to village character through its importance to the street scene, to the setting of the village and as an orchard habitat has biodiversity value, this being a habitat type that is considered important within Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan . Its designation as Local Green Space meets the provisions of National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 77.



BIRCHER Orchard

Map 2: Bircher Village Map



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- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|
|  | Development Boundary (YG6) |  | Housing Development (YG4) |
|  | Conservation Area (YG14) |  | Local Green Space (YG7) |
|  | Development Opportunities (Appendix 3) | | |



NOT TO SCALE

5 Lucton

5.1 Lucton is a small village centred on St. Peter's Church, now a dwelling, and located in a hollow on the south-east side of the B.4362 down a narrow lane. It contains a number of timber framed buildings and historic barns, many of which are Listed Buildings. Lucton School, an elegant Queen Anne building, lies just to its north on higher ground. The Church, the Listed Buildings, the physical inter-relationship of buildings, the ford, various landscape features, together with views across the roof-scape from the B.4362 create a particular impression of a small Herefordshire hamlet nestled attractively within a hollow. The settlement was designated a Conservation Area in 2000 with the principal aim of conservation policy for Lucton being to ensure the character of the settlement and particularly its setting is maintained and enhanced. There is a public right of way link between the village and Lucton School (Independent). The school is serviced directly from the B4362. In promoting sustainable development within Lucton the emphasis is upon retaining its historic character and local distinctiveness and avoiding increased use of the junction onto the B4362. No sites were submitted in the call for housing sites.

Policy YG6: Housing Development in Lucton

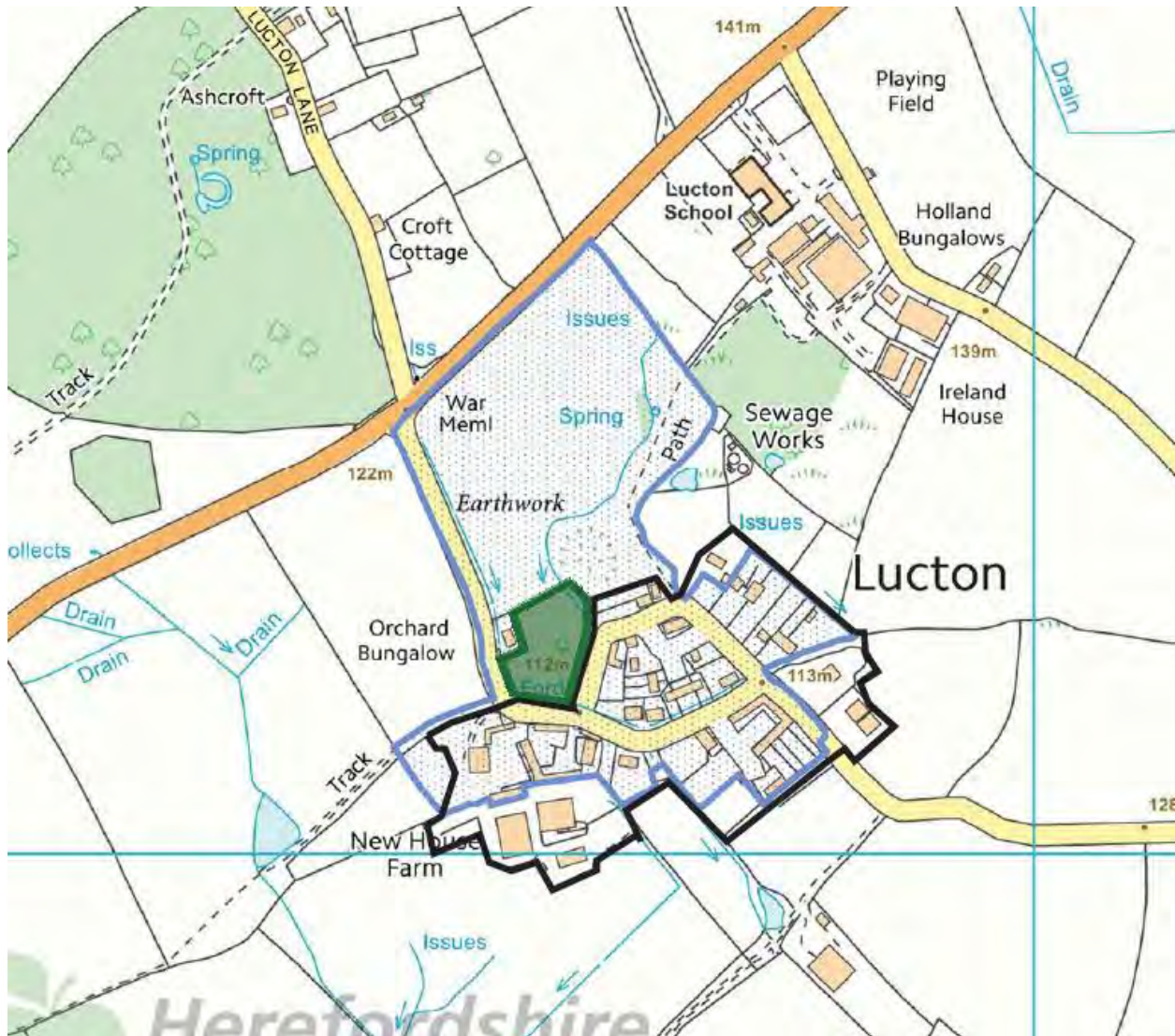
A settlement boundary is defined upon Lucton Village Map within which limited development may take place. This is expected to comprise principally extensions to existing properties and conversion of non-domestic buildings to dwellings. In all instances development shall:

- a) Development shall not adversely affect the character and appearance Lucton Conservation Area but where possible will enhance these aspects and generally comply with Policy YG14.**
- b) Respect the general density and massing of existing properties in the vicinity, and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties.**
- c) Not result in the loss of important features such as trees and hedgerows that contribute to the unique character of the village.**
- d) Protect and enhance heritage assets within the village in particular comprising St Peter's Church, the earthworks to the south-west of Lucton School and its Listed Buildings including their settings.**
- e) Have safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**
- f) Comply with other relevant policies contained within this plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**

5.2 The absence of facilities, narrow approach road with substandard junction where it meets the B.4362, and, most particularly, the architectural and historic character of the settlement suggest that further residential development would not be appropriate. There are few if any apparent infill opportunities within what might be defined as a settlement boundary although limited further sensitive conversion proposals may be possible. However no sites were forthcoming through the call for land. Nevertheless there may be some limited interest in the future. The criteria indicated within this policy are considered important in terms of meeting

environmental and other relevant objectives set for the plan. The housing and social needs of the plan area can be better accommodated in other settlements, particularly Yarpole and consequently any new dwellings that might come forward within Lucton's settlement boundary will count towards the windfall allowance and not contribute towards proposals in the plan to meet the target set for the Group Parish's settlements.

Map 3: Lucton Village Map



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Development Boundary (YG6)



Conservation Area (YG14)



Local Green Space (YG7)



NOT TO SCALE

- 5.3 The orchard separating Orchard Bungalow from the settlement boundary is an important feature recognised in previous local plans, is still important in relation to the setting of the village and adjacent earthworks, and the gap should remain.



LUCTON Archaeological site

Policy YG7: Local Green Space in Lucton

The land between the settlement boundary and Orchard Bungalow identified on Bircher Village Map is designated as Local Green Space in order to protect the contribution it makes to the character, appearance and setting of Lucton Conservation Area. No development shall be permitted in this area that will adversely affect the contribution it makes to the village's environment.

- 5.4 This continues the previous approach to retaining the character and appearance of Lucton Conservation Area by resisting development of this area of land which was identified as an important area of open space. In addition to comprising a remnant orchard and its location adjacent to an earthwork suggests the possibility of archaeological remains within this area.

6 Yarpole

- 6.1 Yarpole village lies immediately adjacent to and just to the south of the B4362 close to its junction with the B4361. It extends along the narrow Green Lane, a Class III road, from that part of the village known as Cock Gate to the historic nucleated core area around **St Leonard's Church** and associated farmsteads, where a number of very fine timber framed houses, some dating to medieval times, contribute to an attractive village setting and character. Further historic buildings are scattered westwards along Green Lane reflected by the conservation area boundary which extends in that direction. There are a number of examples of domestic and agricultural timber framed buildings which have been relocated and restored upon a site at the village's southern edge. Road access from the south and east to the village centre is very poor along a series of narrow lanes.
- 6.2 The previous approach to development was to allow a very limited amount of infilling within a settlement boundary. Conversions of existing buildings afforded some additional new dwellings. There is concern that the requirement to accommodate further development within the village will increase congestion, in particular within the nucleated core close to **St Leonard's Church** and consequently an approach that might limit such effects is sought. Previously a shortage of children's play space and public open space in Yarpole was identified. A potential solution to address this through a planning agreement which provided the opportunity for an area adjacent to the village graveyard to be used for this purpose has yet to be delivered. The land to the south of the graveyard was to be retained as pasture land until such a time as it is offered to and accepted by the Parish Council for community use.
- 6.3 Yarpole Conservation Area was defined in 1984. It encompasses the historic village centre and extends to incorporate open land which contributes to the village's setting both to its north and to its south. It does not extend beyond the curtilages of village property to the east and excludes modern estate development to the west. Trees are important to the character and setting of Yarpole Conservation Area. Its character is somewhat introverted in that it has few outward looking views and lacks more than a minimal degree of permeability to the countryside beyond.
- 6.4 Yarpole is the largest settlement within the Group Parish and possesses a range of services and facilities, including a relatively new Parish Hall at Cock Gate and a public house. It also has a community shop, post office and cafe housed within the Parish Church. The village is served by Luston Primary School which is about 2 miles away. In this respect Yarpole is best placed to accommodate the major part of the housing target set for the Group Parish. The approach proposed is to spread development throughout the village, avoiding concentrations that might increase traffic congestion, respecting the character of the wider village and particularly its conservation area, and drawing together its component parts. In addition additional benefits will be sought in terms of parking, open space, play space and access to the countryside in order to promote health and well-being among the whole community. Opportunities to develop two particular foot routes exist, one to the north of the village which might eventually enable a circular village route and the second extending from the historic nucleated core north-westwards to Croft Castle, a National Trust property.
- 6.5 To achieve these specific objectives for Yarpole, **development boundaries for the village's** component parts will be defined and a number of small sites identified for housing

developments that would be slightly larger than infilling. Additional specific measures are advanced to support community facilities and the local economy.

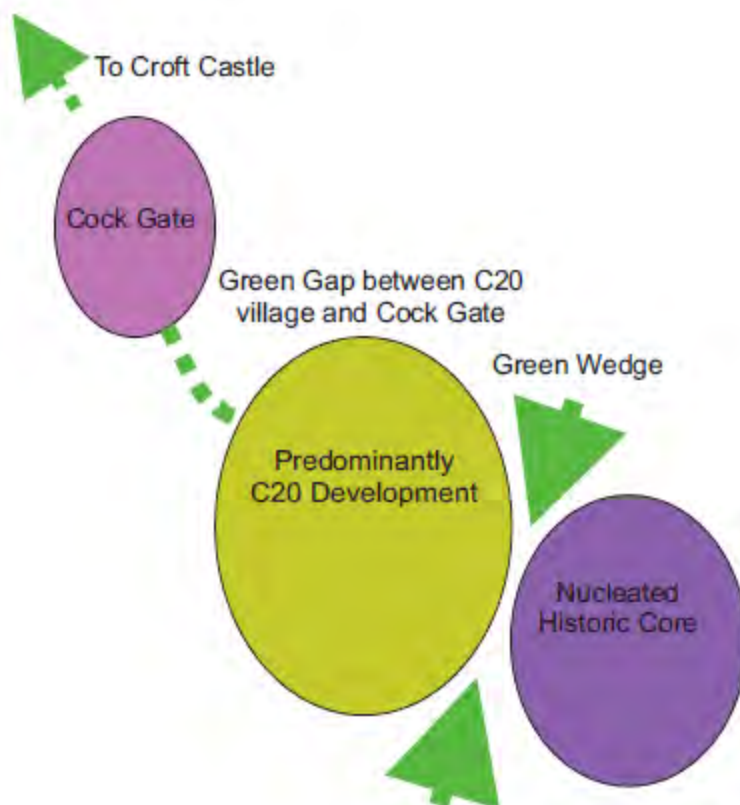


Diagram 1: Characterisation of Yarpole Village Defining the Historic Core, C20 development and Cock Gate components

Policy YG8: Housing Development in Yarpole

Housing Development within Yarpole over the period 2011 – 2031 will be accommodated upon identified sites (see Policies YG11 and YG12) and within the development boundaries defined upon Yarpole Village Map. Individual houses and small developments comprising infilling within the development boundaries will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- a) **Development shall reflect the general building line and plot depth of adjacent development;**
- b) **Development shall not adversely affect the character and appearance Yarpole Conservation Area but where possible will enhance these aspects and generally comply with Policy YG14.**
- c) **Dwellings shall be in scale with the general density and massing of existing properties in the vicinity and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties;**
- d) **Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows, or significant frontage gaps or green spaces that contribute to the unique character of the village;**

- e) **Development shall not adversely affect important heritage assets within the village, including their setting;**
- f) **There should be safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the village street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.**
- h) **Comply with other relevant policies contained within this plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.**

6.6 Yarpole can be split into three specific character areas interspersed by green wedges or gaps. These three areas, identified by development boundaries, reflect its historic origins around the church and farmsteads; the twentieth century extension; and the area around Cock Gate which contains the village hall. The green wedges or gaps separating the three development areas **are important to the village's overall character.** The first is a green wedge comprising land between the Bell Inn and Vicarage Farm which rises steeply from the highway and its development would be prominent within this part of Yarpole Conservation Area. Both the land in front of Vicarage Farm and that opposite comprising the graveyard with the old orchard towards Brook House contribute to an open green space within the village centre in the foreground of St. Leonard's Church. St. Leonard's Church is a Grade II* Listed Building while the separate square tower just to its south is Grade I. The majority of buildings which surround this space are also Listed Buildings. In effect it is a narrowing where green space creates a pinch point to separate the original settlement from more recent predominantly C20 development. The second is the green gap comprising a number of field parcels separating the C20 development from the Village Hall and Cock Gate at the northern end of Green Lane which forms the main village street. The development boundary for Cock Gate and other **measures in this plan will contribute towards the aim of drawing together the village's component parts.**



YARPOLE Cockgate

- 6.8 Particular care will be required in the development of the site adjacent to the Bell Inn. The site comprises part of the green wedge. It has been recognised in previous successive plans as a particularly sensitive site and excluded from the settlement boundary within those policy documents. However it is felt that the integrity of the green wedge and **particular location within Yarpole Conservation Area could be maintained provided the site's** development was of particularly high quality, respecting, in particular the scale of surrounding properties. As such a proposal for two small dwellings reflecting designs elsewhere in the village, particularly that recently at Phillips Acre would be most appropriate. Regard should be had to design guidance provided in Appendix 1.



YARPOLE Upper House Farm

- 6.9 Opportunities for at least 6 dwellings are available within the development boundary at Cock Gate, and these are located upon each of the four legs around the junction of Green Lane with the B4362. Two comprise the conversion of existing buildings. Development of land to the rear of the village hall will utilise a brownfield site to provide 2 dwellings. Access will be needed from Green Lane to the side of the Parish Hall. Unless the access arrangements in this location are rationalized to reduce the number of exit/entrance points onto Green Lane, the development of the site to the rear of the Parish hall would not be in the interest of road safety, particularly given the intention to create a 'Quiet Lane' in policy **YG11. The potential housing site's landowner has indicated a willingness to work with** Yarpole Parish Council to rationalize access arrangements. Appropriate agreements to this effect will be expected in order for the site to receive planning permission in particular in accordance with the provisions of Policy YG8 f).
- 6.10 The criteria listed in this policy are considered important to ensure local amenity, conservation objectives and highway safety are protected appropriately.

Policy YG9: Land off of Croft Crescent

The development of land adjacent to Croft Crescent comprising approximately 0.6 hectare and shown on Yarpole Village Map for housing will be permitted subject to the following site specific requirements:

- i) An area of open space shall be provided between the new development and the existing properties along the north side of Croft Crescent and laid out as parkland with a footpath extending eastwards with the potential to link with the existing public rights of way network close to the historic core of the village. The parkland area should have a minimum width of 5 meters at its western end from any access road linking to Croft Crescent and gradually open out to the east to reveal views across to Church Farm comprising at least 25% of the site.
- ii) In particular, regard should be had to design guidance set out in Appendix 1.



YARPOLE Church Farm

6.11 This site falls within the area of 20th century expansion of the village. For the purposes of assessing contribution to the housing target an extension to the short cul-de-sac at Croft Crescent could accommodate around 5 dwellings although, depending upon the proposal and taking into account the design guidance set out in Appendix 1, this area may accommodate up to 8 units. The site sits to the west of Yarpole Conservation Area but potentially overlooks the nucleated core and more particularly the historic Church Farm

complex. The area and views have a parkland character and there is a strong line of oak trees to the south east. **In addition to meeting the site's contribution to open space needs,** the requirement to provide open space in the form described is to protect the amenity of nearby dwellings; protect the setting of the Conservation Area, parkland character and views **across to the village's historic nucleus;** and **to contribute to health and wellbeing of the community** through contributing to a providing a potential footpath link to the existing network running along its eastern edge. Without the proposed mitigating measure to enable some of the view across to the historic farmstead to be protected, the development would be questionable in terms of its adverse effect on the setting of conservation area and views across to important buildings.

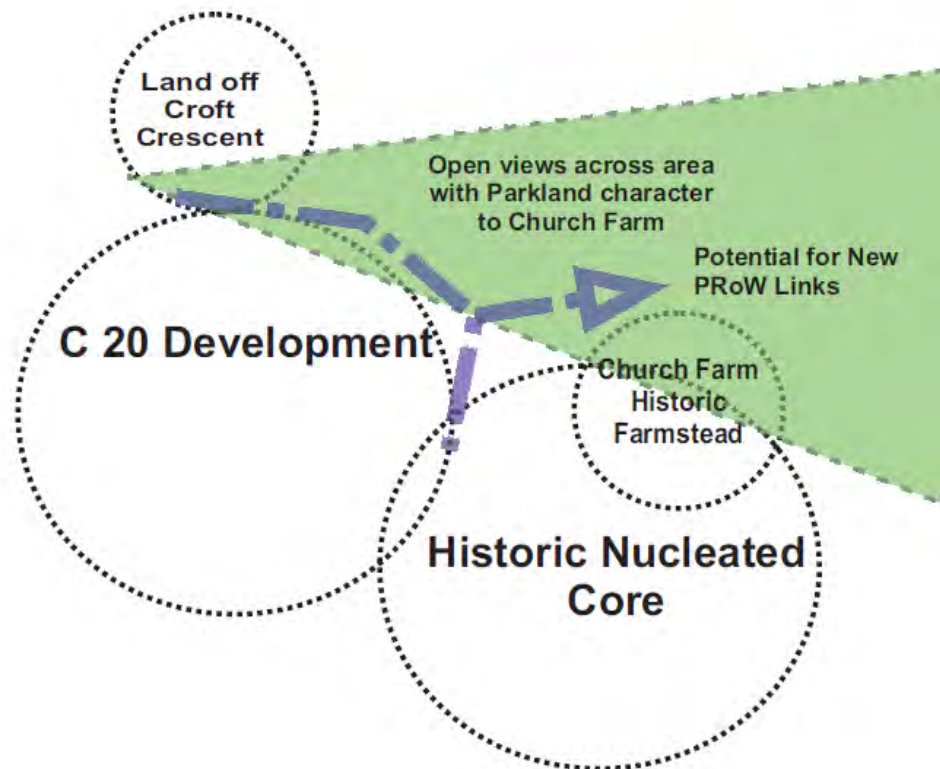


Diagram 2: Contextual Guidance for the Development at Land off Croft Crescent.

Policy YG10: Brook House Farm and Land to its East

Land at Brook House Farm and extending to its east amounting to approximately 0.8 hectare defined on Yarpole Village Map is proposed for housing development subject to the following site specific requirements:

- a) An integrated development approach is required covering the issues of access (vehicle and pedestrian), parking, protection of amenity, inter-relationship between developable compartments, design characteristics, open space provision, and the protection and enhancement of the village setting and views.**

- b) Land comprising approximately 0.4 hectares and set out in the Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) dated 12th November 1993 shall continue to be made available for appropriate community use in association with the development of land comprising part of this site. The current agreement with the Local Planning Authority may be revised in order to identify appropriate community uses, any revision to its exact juxtaposition, the laying out of the agreed area, and provision made for its continued maintenance as part of the development of the site for housing covered by this policy.**
- c) The design and layout of the site shall preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Yarpole Conservation Area. In particular, regard should be had to design guidance set out in Appendix 1.**
- d) Appropriate archaeological investigations shall be carried out and in the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ in accordance with paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- e) In particular the layout should protect open views running south-east to north-west through the site into the nucleated historic core of the old village and retaining the historic gap between the clusters of buildings around Lower House Farm and Brook House Farm.**
- f) A flood risk assessment should be undertaken to determine the exact extent of developable land and the site's development should not increase the likelihood of flooding elsewhere.**

6.12 Both the owner of Brook House Farm and land to the north have submitted their land through the call for sites indicating they wish to develop areas for housing. These two sites could in combination accommodate around 14 new dwellings, 7 dwellings through development at Brook House Farm and 7 new dwellings on the land to its east **in another's** ownership. The inter-relationship between the two holdings needs to be carefully determined for a range of reasons and an approach based upon a joint development brief would be welcome. An approach based upon two clusters is suggested to reflect the character of the existing groups of buildings constituting the two farms. The setting of clusters away from the nucleated historic core is justified in that it will preserve the character of the conservation area in this location. The barn complex at Brook House Farm already contains a number of properties used for holiday lets. Any scheme to convert these and other barns to dwellings would need to ensure appropriate levels of residential amenity given the surrounding uses, including that resulting from other agricultural buildings, in particular Dutch barn. Access to any development may be constrained by the narrow lane currently providing access to Brook House Farm. This has no footpath. The provision of an alternative driveway to serve some or most of the combined site may be necessary to retain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Separate pedestrian access to the village core will also be important but should not be at the expense of the hedgerow along the south side of the lane to Brook House Farm. The development of this area should

incorporate appropriate measures to protect the public right of way through the combined site.

- 6.13 The combined site falls within Yarpole Conservation Area and the development will need to preserve and preferably enhance its character and appearance. Key features include the setting of the village from the east and views out of the site to the east. For this reason the open area between Brook House Farm and development backing onto it along Green Lane has been identified as a key area of open space which should be retained as a meadow although it may accommodate some community uses that would not alter its character to any significant extent.

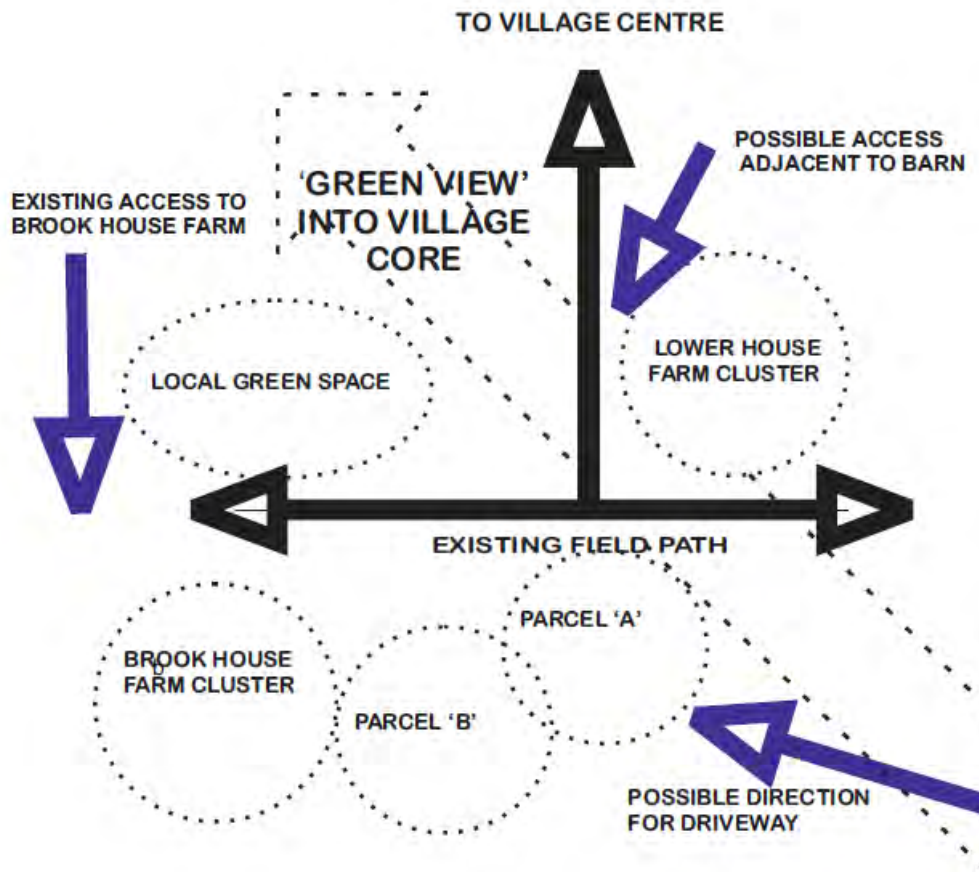


Diagram 3: Contextual Guidance for the Development at Brook House Farm and Land to its East.

- 6.14 An agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides the opportunity for an area to the south of the village cemetery to be utilised for **children's play space**. **Herefordshire Council has indicated** it is for other interested parties to decide what facilities should be incorporated on this land and to bring such measures forward, including through such sources of grant aid that might be identified. The need for such a community facility remains even though a proposal has yet to be brought forward. This proposal should be integrated into the development principles and any subsequent scheme for the combined site. It might include other measures that would benefit both the local community and development of the combined site. **Yarpole Group Parish Council will need to be party to any revised agreement.**

- 6.15 Areas falling within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 are located in the vicinity of this combined site and consequently a more detailed local flood risk assessment is considered necessary to confirm it falls outside areas that might be prone to flooding, taking into account the effects of climate change. In this regard development will need to meet the requirements of Herefordshire Core Strategy Policy SD3. There is no purpose in duplicating the specifics of that policy within this plan. Similarly as a precautionary requirement an evaluation of whether any archaeological remains might be present is considered appropriate given its location within the nucleated historic core. Herefordshire Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document on archaeology and development which provides guidance on this matter.



YARPOLE Lower House / Brookhouse Farms

Policy YG11: Highway Measures at Yarpole

Measures will be promoted, in association with Herefordshire Council, to reduce the impact of vehicles upon amenity and promote greater accessibility, including through public transport.

In particular the designation of Green Lane as a Quiet Lane between the western end of the C20 development and its junction with the B4362 will be promoted as a measure to benefit the integration of the village.

- 6.16 Yarpole Group Parish Plan contains a number of highways and related measures which it wishes to discuss with Herefordshire Council and these have received the general support of residents. These include various measures to reduce speed. In addition the provision of bus shelters has been identified as a measure that would support public transport use.

6.17 The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 (Department for Transport Circular 02/2006) provide for the designation of Quiet Lanes. Green Lane provides an excellent opportunity for such a lane which would also serve to improve the connection between parts of Yarpole village. Development is proposed that would also contribute to such integration. However such development might best wait until a Quiet Lane is designated although assistance from a developer might enable matters to proceed more quickly. The measure would also contribute to the public rights of way network and accessibility to the countryside with its consequent health benefits. In addition discussions might be held with The National Trust about the possibility that a Quiet Lane might be extended to Croft Castle. Improving the link between Croft Castle and businesses within Yarpole might benefit the local economy. Improved car parking at Yarpole Parish Hall that can be utilised when the hall is not in use might also benefit such a link.

Policy YG12: Local Green Space in Yarpole

The following areas identified on Yarpole Village Map are designated as Local Green Space:

i) The area comprising the village cemetery.

ii) The area in front of Vicarage Farm.

iii) The area of meadow land between Brook House Farm and Lower House Farm comprising the open 'green view' into the village core area from the east

No development shall be permitted in these areas that will adversely affect the contributions they make to the village environment. However with regard to feature iii) limited development may take place in that portion covered by the agreement referred to in Policy YG10 where this serves a community purpose and does not adversely affect the integrity of the view through to the village core area.

In addition the area brought forward through Policy YG9 at the end of Croft Crescent should be provided as Open Space as part of the development within this site.

6.18 Both the land in front of Vicarage Farm and that opposite comprising the graveyard with the old orchard towards Brook House contribute to an open green space within the village centre in the foreground of St. Leonard's Church and its separate square tower just to its south. This policy therefore seeks to protect the setting of these Listed Buildings as well as the retention of green infrastructure. It continues the protection given to these areas in the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. An additional area providing open views from the east across to the core of the village is important to its character and that of the Conservation Area. It will contain the area of land expected to be brought forward in association with development proposed in Policy YG10 and already covered by a planning agreement to enable its use by the community in the event that development might take place nearby. In addition

this will contribute towards the green infrastructure of the village. A further area of open space is proposed through Policy YG9 which would enable development to proceed that would otherwise be unwise in terms of protecting views from the west towards the historic farmstead of Church Farm. When development has taken place it is appropriate that the additional open space be safeguarded.



YARPOLE Saint Leonards Church and Belltower

Policy YG13: Treatment of Foul Water in Yarpole

Development requiring connection to the public sewer will only be permitted if and when there is sufficient capacity within the combined Luston and Yarpole Sewage Treatment Works. Should there be insufficient capacity then development shall be resisted until such work as is necessary has been undertaken to ensure the Treatment Works meets to requirements of its consent regime. Developers may wish to contribute towards improvements that would bring forward measures to increase the capacity of the Treatment Works in advance of any works programmed by Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru.

- 6.19 Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru advises that there is currently no capacity within the combined Luston and Yarpole Sewage Treatment Works and it is investigating options that might make sufficient headroom available. An improvement scheme is included within its Asset Management Programme (period 6 – 2015 to 2020) Plan. As a consequence further development may have to be delayed or phased to later in the plan period. Developers should liaise with Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru should they wish to bring sites forward. The

Treatment Works serves not only Yarpole but the larger village of Luston. Consequently the in combination effect of development within them will need to be taken into account.

- 6.20 An alternative to linking to the public sewer might be to provide development with its own system such as a wet system and developers may wish to explore this. There is evidence that the public sewer causes pollution at times.



YARPOLE Vicarage Farm

Map 4: Yarpole Village Map



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7 Historic and Natural Environment and Local Distinctiveness

- 7.1 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy contains a number of detailed policies to control the adverse effects of development upon the historic and natural environment. These have **been used to inform site specific policies relating to the Group Parish's three settlements** and it is not proposed to duplicate them within this plan. They comprise policies LD1 (Landscape and Townscape), LD2 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), LD3 (Green Infrastructure) and LD4 (Historic Environment and Heritage Assets). The Core Strategy also contains policies on Sustainable Design. Yarpole Group Parish Council is happy to rely upon these policies to address its objectives in relation to protecting and enhancing the natural **and historic environment, especially the parish's heritage, habitats and open spaces** and to maintaining a high quality landscape, built environment and settings of settlements. However there are two particular aspects of concern to the community which would benefit from detailed policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. These are ensuring development within the three conservation areas preserve or enhance their character and appearance and the need to achieve high quality and sustainable design, especially incorporating measures that would result in development being carbon neutral.
- 7.2 All three settlements within the Group Parish fall either within or have parts designated as a conservation area. The following policy seeks to ensure the character and appearance of **the Group Parish's conservation areas are preserved or preferably enhanced.**

Policy YG14: Development within Conservation Areas

All development should conserve or, where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of particular conservation area within which it is located or that it might affect. To ensure this the following criteria should be complied with:

- 1. Proposals for development should preserve important settings where they relate to the character and appearance within, into and from the particular conservation area. These should remain protected from inappropriate forms of development.**
- 2. High quality design will be required in terms of site layout and architectural features and detailing, respecting local characteristics. Innovative design features will not be resisted provided they can be shown to fit sensitively into the street scene and other settings.**
- 3. Development should not adversely affect the setting of important buildings and other heritage assets within the particular village conservation area concerned.**
- 4. New development should contribute positively to the respective conservation area.**

5. Trees and hedgerows should be an integral part of any new development as essential components.

Particular regard should be had to design guidance for development within the Group Parish's conservations areas set out in Appendix 1.

7.3 Particularly important settings at Bircher include:

- The approach to the village from the south with open views to the Knoll that sits within a parkland setting.
- The setting of the wooded Holloway at the base of Leys Lane.
- The grassy bank and hedges on the western side of the B4362 and views over the orchards and gardens beyond.
- The setting of the high, brick wall of Bircher Hall and the formal atmosphere of this section of the village.



BIRCHER Knoll Cottage

7.4 Those at Lucton include:

- The view of the village nestling beneath the B4362.
- The picturesque enclosed feeling which the network of lanes lends the village.

- The strong links to the agricultural history of the village evident in surviving buildings.

7.5 For Yarpole those settings identified as particularly important are:

- The view on the north side of the village looking across to Church Farm.
- **The setting of St Leonard’s Church and associated bell tower.**
- The View from the junction of the two lanes looking west towards Tudor House.
- Distinctive and sudden transition from rural to village scenery when entering the village from the Kingsland Road.
- The open nature of the area of the section of Green Lane outside
- The Bell and views northwards into pasture fields.
- The picturesque and varied orientation of houses along the lane towards Pound House and the distinctive grassy bank.

7.6 The incorporation of traditional building features present within the particular village will help new development to sit more comfortably within it although high quality architectural compositions may show how this objective can be achieved through an appreciation of the **site’s potential contribution to the respective conservation area.** There are a number of good local schemes in Yarpole village where this has been achieved. Developers should demonstrate how their layout reflects village character, in particular the relationship with the village street and its associated spaces. The height, size, massing and scale of buildings and plot width and form should respect those surrounding the development. Choice of materials should be sensitive to the character of the village. This includes ground surface and roofing materials as well as those for external walls, fenestration and joinery. There is a general absence of such clutter and proposals should require the minimum amount of street furniture, signage and traffic management elements.

7.7 Landscape proposals should form an integral element within the design of proposals for all but minor works. New development should include a strong component of tree planting, whilst also retaining as many valuable trees on site as possible. Trees that contribute to the character of the particular conservation area should be retained, where appropriate, by making Tree Preservation Orders. Trees that die should be replaced. Hedgerows that support the historic pattern of the particular village setting and development should not be removed.

Policy YG15: Sustainable Design

An integrated approach to achieve a high standard of sustainable design will be required to, in particular, achieve the maximum possible reduction in the carbon footprint of any development. Development proposals should contain a co-ordinated package of design measures which, in addition to regulatory requirements, include:

- a) **Utilising physical sustainability measures associated with buildings that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, broadband infrastructure, and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels where these do not detract from any historic fabric or settings;**
- b) **Seeking on site measures that support energy conservation such as through tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to provide shade and shelter, the maximum use of permeable surfaces, and minimising the use of external lighting to that which is necessary;**
- c) **Where the management of surface water drainage needs to be addressed, developers should utilise sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity;**
- d) **Where development is in areas where flooding is identified as an issue, proposals will need to be supported by full and detailed flood risk assessments, including taking into account climate change, to inform decisions upon planning applications;**
- e) **With regard to housing development the new homes are fully integrated into the existing neighbourhood and support a more pedestrian friendly environment through convenient links to local facilities and public transport connections which are suitable for those pushing pushchairs, in a wheelchairs, walking with aids or using a mobility scooter;**
- f) **Assisting offsite measures such as supporting infrastructure to promote sustainable travel and enabling a sustainable drainage system to serve a wider range of properties where opportunities exist;**
- g) **Where external lighting is required it should be appropriate to its purpose and supported by a lighting plan that demonstrates that it will not have an adverse effect through unnecessary glare, light trespass, scenic intrusion or sky glow upon issues of importance;**
- h) **Minimising construction traffic and reducing waste;**
- i) **Retaining important natural habitats and features such as tree cover, ponds, orchards and hedgerows while ensuring there is no net loss of biodiversity through providing offsetting for any loss and adding to the natural assets of the parish where opportunities are available; and**

Where new innovative sustainable design or features are incorporated this fits sensitively within the street scene and incorporates a number of locally distinctive features to maintain the areas cohesive character. Regard should be had to design guidance set out in Appendix 1.

7.8 The need to ensure development is sustainable and in particular contributes towards addressing climate change and being as carbon neutral as possible is widely supported. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies SS7 and SD1 promote sustainable design. However there is a need to ensure this is addressed in an integrated way in terms of building design, site layout and support for off-site measures. This policy seeks to support the strategic measures set out in the Core Strategy and sets out those measures that developers should consider at the outset in their design process.

8 Economic, Social and General Supporting Measures

- 8.1 Again Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy covers a wide range of policy issues which have been taken into account in site related policies. The issue of addressing flood risk has already been referred to in Policy YG10 and paragraph 6.14. The need to safeguard high quality agricultural land is reflected in the approach to accommodating housing across the **Group Parish's settlements. The highway safety and design standards utilised by** Herefordshire Council across the whole of the County need to be implemented in a consistent way and are therefore not considered to be a matter for this plan. However, again the approach to spreading development across and within the villages where sites are available and it is generally environmentally acceptable has sought to address highway and transport objectives.
- 8.2 This plan does not seek to restrict the development of new or existing businesses by adopting an approach that would add criteria to Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy economic development policies that might make attracting such development more difficult. There has been no indication of the need for the plan to propose any land for such development or landowner wishing to make land available for such use. Herefordshire Council is working with the communications industry to roll out high speed broadband but it is considered this does not need any neighbourhood planning policy to enable this to proceed swiftly. Core Strategy policies RA5 (Re-use of rural buildings for business and enterprise) and RA6 (Rural economy) seek to provide flexibility for local business development that is of an appropriate scale to the location and should be utilised to support objective (iv) – Opportunities form Employment.
- 8.3 No proposals are advanced to provide land for further community facilities beyond the proposal included in policies YG9 and YG10. No specific proposals have been requested by groups within the community for further leisure or recreational land or facilities. Measures to improve access arrangements that might also benefit parking at Yarpole Village Hall are expected in association with a potential housing site that will come forward through policy YG8. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policies SC1 – Social and community facilities, and OS2 – Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs – are considered sufficient to enable new and improved community facilities that might subsequently be identified during the plan period.
- 8.4 The funding of community needs may potentially benefit from the Community Infrastructure Levy which Herefordshire Council proposes to introduce towards the end of 2016. Currently the amount of any funds Yarpole Group Parish will receive through this mechanism, if any at all, is uncertain. Nevertheless it is considered that the issue should be addressed through the following policy

Policy YG16: Use of Community Infrastructure Levy

Appropriate new development within Yarpole Group Parish should contribute towards the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of community facilities and infrastructure in order to address the demands that such development places on the area and to support the social dimension of sustainable development. Contributions should be made through Section 106 Agreements, CIL or other agreements that may be available at the time during the period of the Plan.

- 8.5 This policy may enable resources to be obtained towards various projects which will be needed partly as a consequence of accommodating additional housing growth.



YARPOLE Bell Inn

9 DELIVERING THE PLAN

- 9.1 Landowners and developers will primarily deliver proposals that are promoted through policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.2 Yarpole Group Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented primarily through Herefordshire Council as the local planning authority determining planning applications for development within the Group Parish. Such determinations should be in accordance with this Plan unless material circumstances outweigh its provisions.
- 9.3 While the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, Yarpole Group Parish Council will also use this Neighbourhood Plan as the basis for making its representations on planning applications and for monitoring its effectiveness. Where

Herefordshire Council is considered to have departed from the plan it will be asked to provide an explanation of why this may have been the case. Such information may be used to inform any revisions to the plan at appropriate times.

- 9.4 Herefordshire Council is required to monitor the achievement of its targets for a range of development types, in particular whether sufficient housing sites are coming forward for development. This information will be obtained when available so that a report might be received, normally on an annual basis which in particular shows:
- i. The number of dwellings granted planning permission within the Group Parish, including a running total covering the plan-period 2011-2031;
 - ii. A list of other planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, **the Parish Council's representations made, and whether they have been determined in accordance with the plan.**
- 9.5 It is anticipated that a review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be needed most likely when Herefordshire Core Strategy is also reviewed. In the unlikely situation that the strategy and approach in relation to housing does not deliver the level of housing required to meet the target for the Group Parish, discussions will take place with Herefordshire Council upon whether an early review is necessary.

Appendix 1: Yarpole Group Design Guidance Statement

YARPOLE GROUP NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: DESIGN CRITERIA

A. INTRODUCTION.

Proposals for new development within the Group Parish should seek to enhance the character of its settlements and the special architectural and historic interest of its conservation areas. Such proposals should therefore reflect the following design criteria which contribute to this character.

Central to these criteria are those matters that distinguish villages from towns, and particularly from the suburbs of towns. Chief among these are:

- a. Villages have commonly developed along streets forming the original means of communication between settlements. So these are usually through routes connecting places, rather than estate layouts with a number of culs-de-sac.
- b. Villages thus tend to be linear in form, often with continuous runs of building frontages, interspersed with entrances to courtyards, clusters of farm buildings and the like, and sometimes punctuated by a single grand house.
- c. One of the results of this form is that there are frequent glimpse views, between houses, of open country as opposed to further lines of housing.
- d. Materials used in early buildings, unless these are very grand, are usually those available locally. It was not until the industrial revolution introduced easier, cheaper transport that the movement of building materials over long distances became economical. Brick came late to this part of the country; the earliest known brick building in Shropshire dates only from about 1540.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Houses of any antiquity are likely to be of one of two types:

- a. Timber framed (sometimes subsequently provided with stone exteriors, with characteristically steep pitched (over 45 degrees) roofs, with a small window – wall relationship, the windows apparently randomly placed but following the frame pattern.
- b. Houses of stone or brick, dating mostly from the early C19 onwards, with low pitched (about 35 degrees) roofs, the windows again small in relation to wall area but more formally composed. A number of these have been subsequently rendered externally, disguising their stone origins and perhaps compensating for the poor quality of the original material.

Of these two types, houses of masonry construction outnumber framed houses, especially when more recent construction is taken into account. Modern houses are almost entirely of brick, though this is probably not a traditional building material in the area.

Note that:

- **There are some masonry houses with higher pitched roofs, but no timber-framed houses with low pitched roofs.**
- Historically houses of 2 storeys are virtually universal in the parish. Modern bungalows, of which there is a significant number, whilst individually satisfactory do not really contribute to the architectural character of the core of the parish.
- One or two framed houses have been dismantled elsewhere and reconstructed on their present sites.
- Decoration and architectural details are generally sparing, and confined to occasional colour-varied or moulded brickwork and the like. In the vicinity though not in the parish, there are excellent examples of decorative barge boards to gables.
- **Windows are almost always of painted timber, and side-hung casements predominate over sliding sashes.**
- **Plain tiles or slates cover nearly all roofs, depending on the roof pitch; thatching is very rare, as are pantiles.** Most roofs are gabled; very few are hipped.

B. AREAS OF DIFFERENT CHARACTER.

Different settlements within the parish display quite different characteristics:

Yarpole is the largest settlement, and in architectural terms is divided into three contrasting areas, the old village, to the south and east, where most buildings pre-date the 20th century (though with some modern infill); the new village to the north and west, almost entirely of the latter half of the 20th century, and predominantly of houses of the bungalow type; and the Cock Gate area of Yarpole which is a very small group of houses, containing the Parish Hall as well as the principal entrance and lodge to Croft Castle. There are no major roads though the first two parts of the village although the (un-numbered) road from Kingsland to Orleton which forms the south east boundary is quite heavily trafficked. The B4362 travels through Cock Gate.

Bircher is a linear village along the B4362 with a small amount of back-land development, partly new-build and partly conversion of agricultural buildings.

Lucton is a quite tight cluster of houses, of a wide spread of dates of origin, around the former church.

Bicton is a small hamlet, mostly of older houses and conversions.

Bircher Common is a scatter of individual house along the lower fringe of the common.

It follows that in different parts of the parish different design considerations may apply, though many criteria are common to all. Although consideration applies chiefly to Yarpole, because elsewhere identified sites are mainly for single units, it may apply elsewhere in instances where larger schemes may be brought forward that comply with planning policy.

C. LAYOUT.

Single units

The layout of single units depends on the arrangement of neighbouring existing buildings. New development should:

- Only depart from the existing building line where there is a clear advantage in terms of townscape, privacy, optimum use of site etc.
- Best exploit the relationship between new and existing buildings; e.g. sometimes forming a close group will be better than isolating a new unit in the centre of its site.
- **Minimise impact on neighbours sunlight and views and avoid encroaching on neighbours' daylight.**
- **Generally minimise the diminution of existing owners' privacy and quiet enjoyment of their property.**

Groups

Groups of houses can be quite characteristic of the village setting. The existing *Phillips Acre* is one instance (but by no means the only possible solution) showing how a group can recall (without copying) existing groups of farm buildings. Grouping houses should:

- Avoid locating individual units separately in the centre of uniformly-sized plots, in a suburban manner.
- Replicate a traditional vernacular arrangement.
- Include units linked in pairs or greater numbers, disposed so as to maximise the privacy of the outside space of each unit.
- Consider the provision of safe outdoor play-space and also how this could be a vehicle to provide unifying central space. [The two principal opportunities for this type of development are north of Croft Crescent (site 5) and south of the New Burial Ground / designated public open space (site 10).]

D. DESIGN AND MATERIALS.

The design and materials of new housing are strongly dependent on its location.

Within or adjoining the conservation areas

The design should aim to preserve or enhance the existing character and appearance of the area. Here, whilst no attempt need be made to copy existing design or details:

- The scale and disposition of existing houses should be reflected in the new design. Houses of more than 2 storeys are very rare in the area.
- New buildings should be sited to reinforce existing street frontages. [Too much street frontage might become 'town like', is it not the case that many old village properties are set back from the road]
- Variety and interest could be introduced into the details of the design e.g. door cases and door hoods, dormer windows, etc.
- The artificial variation of materials in a single building or groups of buildings would be discouraged

Walls:

- The choice of material should reflect the traditional materials of each settlement (see **B** above).
- Stock brick is to be preferred to pressed or sand-faced types, as its aging and weathering characteristics, as well as its appearance when new, are superior. It is moreover more likely to enhance the local character of the work.
- Reconstituted stone is to be avoided as its manufactured nature cannot be concealed.
- Render finishes to walls are almost entirely painted within the parish and painting with permeable material helps to maintain the wall surface as well as to keep the appearance fresh. The majority of painted render in the parish is white or off-white and strong colour should be used sparingly.
- Occasional contrasts in colour or texture may lift a design but too much variation should be avoided.

Roofs:

- Are normally pitched; pitches of about 45° and 30° are common.
- **PV panels, TV aerials and other roof clutter is where possible best** kept away from publicly visible elevations
- Roofs in the area are commonly gabled; hipped roofs are seldom used.
- **45° roofs may be tiled or slated. 30° roofs must be slated.**
- Hand made plain tiles give much more variety of course and texture than machine-made tiles, but are correspondingly more expensive. Roman or other interlocking tiles are unknown.
- Natural slates from Wales (widely used traditionally) are expensive and difficult to obtain but some types of imported slates perform well.
- Slate of substitute materials because of their additional thickness and utter uniformity impair the character of a roof.
- Roof lines traditionally are articulated with chimney stacks; where there is a purpose for these they should be of reasonable height and not stunted.
- Well-designed dormer windows can break up roof expanses and add to incident.

Doors and windows:

- It is a common current misconception that UPVC windows and doors are always superior to timber. They have gained such general use because of the poor quality of the timber windows they have replaced, coupled with aggressive marketing, but the manufacture and in particular the weather treatment of timber windows is now such that they can compete on cost, maintenance and durability.
- Traditional vertical sashes and side-hung casements are appropriate in appearance. Both types provide good ventilation.
- Size and spacing of windows should observe existing precedents – most windows in **existing buildings are 'portrait' rather than 'landscape' in orientation.**
- Boarded and panelled doors are appropriate but panelled doors containing mock fanlights detract from their appearance.

Outside or remote from the conservation areas

Whilst regard should be had to the constraints set out above for building in the conservation area, there is an opportunity for more freedom in design, including examples of contemporary design and in particular:

- Varied number of storeys.
- Contemporary forms, e.g. mono-pitched, low pitched or flat roofs.
- A broader range of window types and sizes.
- A broader palette of materials.

At the same time, the constraints on layout set out in section B above should be respected.

D. EXTERNAL WORKS.

Boundaries:

The considered treatment of boundaries will help to enhance the continuity of new development and its coherence within the context of adjacent buildings. There is plenty of opportunity for variety of materials. Brick walls provide useful links between buildings and are immediate in their effect. Hedges take a little time to establish but are valuable linking elements as well as providing worthwhile wildlife habitat. Boarded boundary fences need not detract, but are often better disguised with hedges. Walls of pierced blockwork are best avoided.

Planting:

All developments should consider the use of planting and especially of trees. Areas of shrubbery may be of value but have become something of a cliché in residential development. Whenever development involves the loss of hedging or trees, provision should be made for at least an equivalent new planting within the site or elsewhere in the parish. Indigenous species are to be preferred to recent introductions.

Hard surfaces:

Traditional paving surfaces should be employed where possible. Stone paving, brick paving and bound and loose gravel are preferred to *tegulae* or concrete paving slabs. Footpaths are to be carefully laid out to follow desire lines, to avoid unnecessary wear to grass or other planting. Permeable hard surfaces are to be preferred for dispersal of surface water.

Parking:

As far as possible, car parking should be unobtrusive, and preferably out of public view. It may be advantageous in some cases to cluster garages or parking spaces to the rear of developments. On-street parking by residents is to be avoided.

Appendix 2: Schedule of Small Sites and Conversion Opportunities within Settlement Boundaries

The owners of the following sites within settlement boundaries have indicated they are available for development within the Plan period.

No	Site Location	Estimated Number of Dwellings
1 and 2	Agricultural building and agricultural pole barn at Gatehouse Farm, Bircher	5
3	Plot adjacent to Knoll Cottage, Bircher	1
4	Paddock at the Coach House, Cock Gate, Yarpole	2
5	Land to rear of Parish Hall, Cock Gate, Yarpole	2
6	Plot to side of Mortimer House, Cock Gate, Yarpole (including possibility of building conversion)	1
7	Rural building conversion to rear of Cockgate Cottage, Cock Gate, Yarpole	1
8	Plot at corner of Green lane/James Close, Yarpole	1
9	Plot adjacent to Brook House Farm, Yarpole	1
10	Plot adjacent to Maund House, Yarpole	2
	TOTAL	16

NB The above schedule comprises existing buildings which might be converted to dwellings and plots which would not require joint access to garden land of existing dwellings. This does not indicate that the plan restricts such development but simply that such development cannot be used to support the approach the plan makes to achieve the required housing target.