

Latham, James

From: Liz Beth
Sent: 07 June 2018 17:37
To: Johnson, Karla
Cc: clerk@wellingtonheathpc.org
Subject: Initial questions regarding the examination of Wellington Heath NP

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Karla and Mary (hoping first names are OK),

I have had an initial look at the Plan and some of the supporting documentation, and have the following questions for you please. You will know best who can answer each. I am happy for you to take the time you need to do this within reason, and please note that I am not available all of next week, back in the office on Monday the 18th June.

Settlement Boundary

Was this originally established in the now superseded UDP for Herefordshire? If not, and it is drawn for the first time, what criteria were used to define it?

Local Green Spaces

At present I do not feel I have enough information about why these spaces are special, as required by the NPPF (paras 76-77). Certainly taking views from land can contribute to a reason for designation, but the NPPF sets out reasons for designation such as historic, recreational or ecological value, and I cannot see that this has been done in a way that would satisfy the requirement for a robust (but proportionate) evidence base. Could this please be considered, also as I assume the proposed designations are in private ownership, were the owners specifically consulted about the proposed designation during the Reg14 consultation?

Housing Needs Survey

A reference is made to a housing needs survey being undertaken to update previous work done by Community First in 2008. Can I please see a copy of this work.

Policy WH6 Polytunnels

Para 15 of the policy refers to proposals for polytunnels requiring a Landscape Impact Assessment – presumably this would more normally be referred to as a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment? Can you please consider the size and nature of polytunnel that would be included in the scope of this requirement, I am concerned that for a small residential polytunnel for example, this may not be a reasonable requirement.

Policy WH9 requires that overhead cables be routed underground. Has the utility provider offered any comment on this, or been consulted?

Policy WH15 refers to proposals for smaller wind turbines being acceptable if certain criteria are met. However a Written Ministerial Statement of 2015 stated that proposals for wind turbines would only be acceptable if within an area defined as suitable, or potentially suitable for wind. Was there any intention to define such an area, perhaps for smaller turbines, subject to these criteria?

Walking and Cycling Route to Ledbury

Mention of a potential route is made, and measures to protect it are discussed, but no indication of the route or options is given. While there may be implementation difficulties, it would be acceptable to show a desired route in the Plan. Without this, Policy WH16 is not clear enough in intent, as required by the NPPF. There is reference to a 2015 working paper on the route, that is quoted as an evidence paper, does this make the policy clear enough? If so, it could be mentioned in the policy. Can I please see a copy to assist in my examination.

Many thanks,
Liz
Examiner Wellington Heath NP

Ms L Beth BA (2.1 hon) MA MRTPI Dip Design in the Built Environment



Response to the NDP Examiner from WHNDP Working Group.

Responses are shown under each comment or question (*in italics*) from the Examiner.

Settlement Boundary

Was this originally established in the now superseded UDP for Herefordshire? If not, and it is drawn for the first time, what criteria were used to define it?

The most recent settlement boundary for Wellington Heath was prescribed in the Malvern Hills District Local Plan (adopted January 1998), but there was no settlement boundary identified in the later Herefordshire UDP. The 1998 settlement boundary was therefore taken as the starting point for application to the NDP.

Extensive community consultation took place regarding potential housing development sites within the village of Wellington Heath as this is the settlement identified in the Herefordshire Core Strategy as being suitable for proportionate growth, with a target of at least 28 new dwellings. Following explanation of the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, residents were asked at a consultation event on 19 March 2016 to mark on large maps their preferred sites and the number of dwellings that each should support. An assessment of likely windfall sites was also undertaken.

Having determined the sites that could be allocated for development a further consultation was undertaken on 10 December 2016 to identify the preferred settlement boundary. Three options were prepared for consultation that sought to focus development on the core central element of the village, restrict ribbon development and take account of key NDP policies relating to:

- The protection of key views.
- The protection of ridgelines such that development does not break the skyline.
- The impact of development on listed buildings and heritage assets.
- The impact of development on the amenity of other sites – significant issues of overlooking of existing dwellings may arise due to the topography of the village.
- Allocated housing development sites.
- Likely windfall sites.
- The target for housing development set by Herefordshire Council.

One option was based upon the Malvern Hills District Local Plan Settlement Boundary but with a less intricate and less restrictive shape. It sought to protect the Ochre Hill ridge to the east side with the boundary below existing properties and maintained the ad-hoc nature of the settlement line. All allocated sites lie within the boundary and the development target can be achieved.

The second option drew the boundary taking account of existing features on the ground, largely including existing property boundaries although a few very large gardens are cut through. The line runs along the centre of the road at Ochre Hill.

Following a detailed consultation event and process the community chose Option 3 which is an adaptation and combination of the two other options. It largely follows existing property boundaries but the settlement boundary line lies below the Ochre Hill ridgeline. The housing development target can be achieved and the ridge skyline is better protected, along with minimising overlooking of existing dwellings on the eastern side of the valley. This is the settlement boundary now prescribed in the NDP.

See Settlement Boundary Briefing Document distributed at and prior to the December 10th 2016 public consultation, and report on this consultation in appendices. All available on the WHNDP website.

Local Green Spaces

At present I do not feel I have enough information about why these spaces are special, as required by the NPPF (paras 76-77). Certainly taking views from land can contribute to a reason for designation, but the NPPF sets out reasons for designation such as historic, recreational or ecological value, and I cannot see that this has been done in a way that would satisfy the requirement for a robust (but proportionate) evidence base. Could this please be considered, also as I assume the proposed designations are in private ownership, were the owners specifically consulted about the proposed designation during the Reg14 consultation?

All landowners where Local Green Spaces (LGS) have been designated were consulted at every stage of the development of the NDP. Individual discussions were also held with these owners to explore their intentions for potential development of the adjacent allocated sites. Subsequent planning applications for three of the allocated sites have protected the proposed Local Green Spaces and a proposal prepared by the owners of site 23 also protects the proposed LGS and an accord has been reached to create a linking footpath through the LGS from The Common to the Ledbury Rd. Reg 14 comments from two landowners are recorded with responses in the Consultation Statement (S2 and S7).

The views of Herefordshire Council were also sought on the proposed Local Green Space designations as part of a wider discussion around the Strategic Gap policy. No issues of concern were raised.

Local distinctiveness of the village landscape is felt by residents to be an important issue within Wellington Heath and makes a significant contribution to the character of the village. All of the designated spaces lie within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The ad-hoc settlement pattern interspersed with open spaces is a key feature of the village. Again, community consultation was undertaken on the question of designating Local Green Spaces with options being offered for consideration. The proposed designations in the NDP reflect the wishes of the community and also take account of the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.

Wildlife thrives within Wellington Heath and the community demonstrated at consultation its wish to ensure that habitats and the ecology of the area are preserved and, where possible, enhanced. The NDP seeks to establish a corridor through parts of the village where flora and fauna are undisturbed by development.

The designated area on the higher slope of allocated development Site 19a South adjoins an area already covered by existing Tree Preservation Orders, which is another indicator of its value. The designations at sites 19a North and South also have the added benefit of protecting key views to the village from the west.

The Local Green Space designation of part of allocated Site 21 has an extremely steep slope that is very visible from the higher surrounding ground. In any event it is not likely to be viable for development due to the topography and cost of necessary engineering works.

The designation for the western part of allocated Site 23 is an old orchard that has been unmanaged for some years and again provides excellent habitat for wildlife. It contributes to the setting of the listed Old School House that lies to the western side of Ledbury Road that bounds the designated site. Negotiations with the landowner have successfully secured the line of a new footpath to adjoin the Local Green Space.

It is felt that the designated Local Green Spaces do accord with paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF for the reasons set out above.

See Local Green Space Briefing Document distributed at and prior to the December 10th 2016 public consultation, and report on this consultation in appendices. All available on the WHNDP website.

Housing Needs Survey

A reference is made to a housing needs survey being undertaken to update previous work done by Community First in 2008. Can I please see a copy of this work.

A copy of the 2008 study is enclosed for information. The figures were questioned as being somewhat exaggerated. The then Chair of the Parish Council met and walked the village with a Herefordshire County Council planning officer and did not identify any suitable site for affordable housing at the time. The eventual outcome of discussions was that any need arising could more successfully be met as an element of development of the Core Strategy strategic housing sites within the adjacent Ledbury Parish, one of which is relatively close to the parish boundary.

Further investigation of local housing need was undertaken as part of the community consultation exercises for the NDP. This did not reveal any significant need for social or intermediate housing and tended to support the approach taken earlier.

The allocation of sites for housing development has taken account of the dwelling mix that would serve to better balance the village housing offer. A number of two and three bedroomed homes are required to be provided. In any event if future need is established for affordable housing then Core Strategy Policy H2 can be applied for a rural exception site.

Policy WH6 Polytunnels

Para 15 of the policy refers to proposals for polytunnels requiring a Landscape Impact Assessment – presumably this would more normally be referred to as a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment? Can you please consider the size and nature of polytunnel that would be included in the scope of this requirement, I am concerned that for a small residential polytunnel for example, this may not be a reasonable requirement.

You are correct that we should say a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

In preparing the NDP we were conscious that Herefordshire Council had previously adopted a Poly tunnels SPD in December 2008. However, this was withdrawn some years later.

It was not intended to prevent domestic scale polytunnels for growing produce in gardens. A suggested new form of words for Policy WH6.15 could be:

“Proposals for new polytunnels for commercial growing, research or testing purposes must be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.etc”

Policy WH9 *requires that overhead cables be routed underground. Has the utility provider offered any comment on this, or been consulted?*

Herefordshire Council report that the National Grid has been contacted at regulation 16. National Grid provided a response on the 11/01/18, but have provided general comments to the plan and not specifically commented on this part of the policy.

At Reg 14 Consultation, National Grid, RWE Npower Renewables Ltd, and Western Power Distribution were consulted. National Grid replied and their response is recorded in the Consultation Statement (S10). The owner of Site 23 has had initial discussions with Western Power Distribution and has an initial agreement that some electrical apparatus and cabling will be removed and reduced.

Policy WH15 refers to proposals for smaller wind turbines being acceptable if certain criteria are met. However a Written Ministerial Statement of 2015 stated that proposals for wind turbines would only be acceptable if within an area defined as suitable, or potentially suitable for wind in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Was there any intention to define such an area, perhaps for smaller turbines, subject to these criteria?

The policy included in the NDP was based around guidance produced by Malvern Hills AONB and the NDP Working Group was not aware of the Ministerial Statement of 2015.

The Parish Council do not have the expertise or experience and believe it is not their intention to define such an area.

Walking and Cycling Route to Ledbury

Mention of a potential route is made, and measures to protect it are discussed, but no indication of the route or options is given. While there may be implementation difficulties, it would be acceptable to show a desired route in the Plan. Without this, Policy WH16 is not clear enough in intent, as required by the NPPF. There is reference to a 2015 working paper on the route, that is quoted as an evidence paper, does this make the policy clear enough? If so, it could be mentioned in the policy. Can I please see a copy to assist in my examination.

Previous Parish Plans have noted that a safe walking route to Ledbury was needed. A viewing of the narrow and winding Ledbury Road/Beggars Ash from Wellington Heath to Ledbury will confirm this need.

Most of the land that such a path would take is in Ledbury, outside Wellington Heath Parish. A previous meeting with the major landowner has proved fruitless.

The Working Group paper on the possibilities is attached as is a paper produced by Ledbury. The Ledbury response only defines existing pathways. What is needed is a route that is as direct as possible and therefore user friendly as well as safe. This remains a village aspiration.

A copy of the working paper is enclosed for information.

Wellington Heath NDP Transport Sub-Group ideas for a safe route to Ledbury for walkers and cyclists

Input to Ledbury Town Council after an
exploration of the options suggested in
the Wellington Heath working paper by
Phillip Howells – 17th June 2016

- Wellington Heath NDP calls for providing a safe route for walkers and cyclists from Wellington Heath to Ledbury
- Currently most who walk or cycle appear to use one of two road routes:
 - From the top end of Wellington Heath: Jacks Lane – Ledbury Road - Beggars Ash – Bromyard road route
 - From the middle of Wellington Heath: Farmers Arms – Horse Road – Beggars Ash – Bromyard road
- Both are along bending, narrow and quite dangerous roads, especially for the last half mile or so from The Frith to the junction of Beggars Ash with the main Bromyard road into Ledbury
- Options to provide safer routes off-road to reach key landmarks of Ledbury railway station and the Tesco supermarket have been investigated
- If safer options are coordinated through the two NDPs, this can also establish a currently missing link into the public rights of way network spanning the two parishes and beyond, such as extending the Riverside Walk and Town Trail, which would also be a way of helping to deliver parts of the Herefordshire County Core Strategy
- This references to bullet points LB1 5, 6 & 7 in the Core Strategy

- This report concerns itself mainly with options that fall into the Ledbury Town parish borders from where they abut to Wellington Heath
- Please note it is based on the author's 'on the ground' experience and may not reflect deeper knowledge of land owners and path options that are not apparent or known to the author
- To try and simplify cross-reference, this report uses the same letter point identifiers as in the Wellington Heath sub-group report (some letter duplications reflect where they have sometimes used 2 letters to identify the same point)
- Points 1, 2 & 3 are only used in this report
- The options explored in this report therefore start from The Frith on Beggars Ash, referred to as The Oak in the Wellington Heath report, point J or A on the map
- Additional notes:
 - There are several more footpaths from Wellington Heath generally heading east to a footpath above the orchards which goes from Little Frith to the Wellington Heath/Petty France road and which are usable on foot as access to Ledbury, although they are more hilly and much longer
 - A good and safe cycling option is to go north east from Wellington Heath to Raycombe Farm and half way down Petty France road to turn right up a metalled track that goes all the way through the lower part of Frith woods and eventually comes out at the top of Knapp Lane – again, this is longer

'Viable' route options (5 shown)

As identified by Wellington Heath:

- By road J-B-S to station and Tesco as currently used
- Cut new route A-D-F-C through orchards
- Cut new route J-W-V-U (same as A-D-E-C) through orchards
- Existing path J-N-P-T (The Frith – orchards – Little Frith – Wilce's Orchard – to stile at T on Bromyard Road) to reach station
- Existing path J-N-P-Q-R (The Frith – orchards – Little Frith – Knapp Lane) to reach Tesco

Note that at the top of map, the route from Wellington Heath to The Frith is an existing footpath

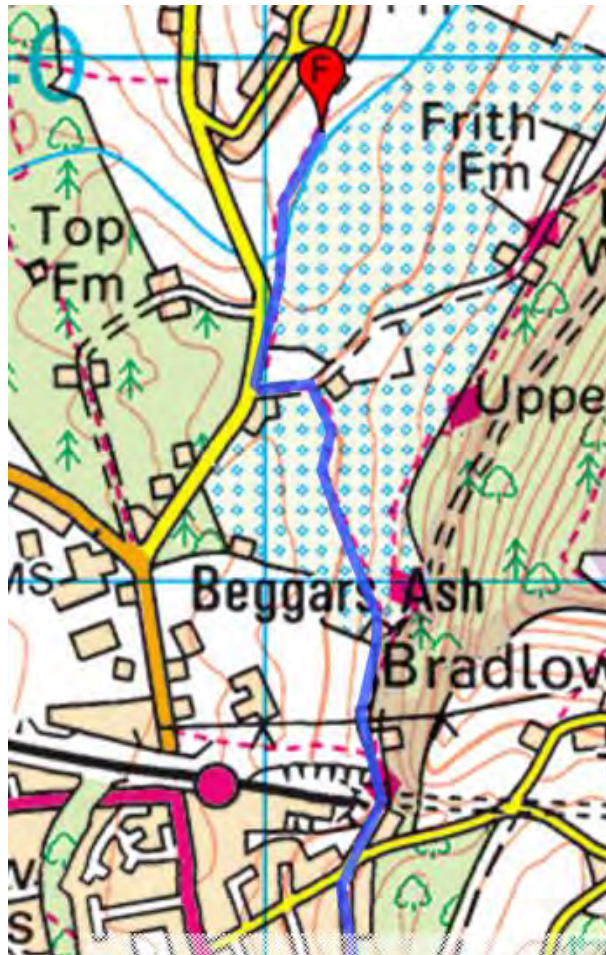
- L-M-J in Wellington Heath report, from Long Acre in Horse Road to join up with options in this report at J

Issues considered in this report:

- Perceived on the ground practicality of path options
- Potential use of options by both walkers and cyclists to optimise practical adaption



- Two other maps of the existing paths (found as an existing recommended walk on the internet):
 - Left hand shows path from Horse Road/Long Acre (point F) via The Frith - orchards – Little Frith – Knapp Lane (L-J-N-P-Q)
 - Right hand shows N-P-Q in more detail



- Existing and possible path exit points on map onto Bromyard Road:

T - existing stile from Wilce's orchard by the station

3 - drive opposite Sequani

U/C - Hillview drive near U/C point

B - gate at junction of Beggars Ash and Bromyard Road looking up into the orchards (note Private signs)



- From Bromyard Road up Beggars Ash to The Frith

F – View across orchards where any proposed new path would pass (note Private sign)

A/J – The Frith drive from Beggars Ash, gate on left is where path from L arrives, ahead up drive to point N in distance (W/D would be on right just past fence, no current path exists?)

N – Left hand pic, footpath turns south towards Little Frith at top of The Frith drive, right hand pic 50 yards further on looking along the footpath across the orchards south towards Little Frith and points 1 and P



- **From The Frith to Little Frith and then Knapp Lane**

1 – Top pic looking south on the path towards Little Frith, bottom pic looking west down towards the Bromyard Road and illustrating the sort of countryside any new path will have to be cut to reach points V/E, U/C or 3

P – Top pic looking back north along the path towards The Frith from Little Frith; right hand pic looking south on the path leading into the garden of Little Frith on the way to Knapp Lane

2 – looking south on the footpath near Frith Wood House, walkers turn right down hill to T on Bromyard Road, cyclists or walkers ahead through kissing gate to Q and up to Knapp Lane and town



➤ **Conclusions:**

- Whilst right to look at all options, with the caveat of not knowing nuances of ownership etc, given geographic and ownership challenges against a background of 'Private Signs', cutting new paths would seem unlikely, be time consuming and relatively expensive
- The only viable practical 'safe route' option for both walkers and cyclists appears to be on The Frith – Little Frith route
- For walkers this is J-N-1-P-2-T, for cyclists or walkers J-N-1-P-2-Q-R
- Pros: the path exists, is already promoted as a tourist path, is mainly wide, it's rolling but not unduly hilly and it's readily passable by both walkers and mountain bikers (2 gates at Little Frith and kissing gate by Frith Wood House both easily negotiated by cyclists - the author rode it on his bike; style at T only suitable for walkers)
- It also has greatest potential to meet Core Strategy and NDPs objectives
- Disadvantages are:
 - Section N-P is across orchards used by tractors so would be muddy and rutted in wet weather and churned up by wheels
 - It is quite long although not hugely greater than the road route
- Would not be difficult to install a hard core surface making N-P more permanent and less damaged by tractors, so could both suit farmers and make route more suitable for less rugged and non-mountain bikes
- Options exist from top of Knapp Lane to use Upper Fields, Bank Crescent and Homend Crescent/down the steps through garage (with permission?) to reach Tesco and town
- Could also consider a white lined pedestrian lane with 'Warning walkers and cyclists' signs on Beggars Ash, especially from The Frith to the Bromyard Road (J-B)

Wellington Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan.

March 19th 2016 Presentation and Consultation

Times: Continuous, 0900hrs to 1800 hr

Presentations at 1000hrs and 1400 hrs.

Data Orchard presented the results of the Parish Survey

Carly Tinkler explained how the Landscape Assessment was conducted



The WHNDP Working Group's presentation to and consultation with the parishioners of Wellington Heath on March 19th 2016 was a further stage in the information and consultation process and in particular presented the results of the Landscape Assessment Report and the recent Parish Questionnaire. Additionally parishioners were asked to indicate their preference as to where new housing developments should take place within the settlement of Wellington Heath. The Working Group were present throughout the day and were available to answer questions and explain the exhibits. The intention was that the presentation/consultation was as simple and focused as possible.

Around 90 people visited the Presentation and Consultation. The two briefing sessions were informative and questions from the floor were few but instructive. It was noticeable that there was great interest by the parishioners and a lot of interaction between the parishioners and the Working Group and also with the parishioners communicating with each other. The 3D model of the parish was of great interest and complemented the explanatory maps and other information on display.

Response from parishioners reference their preference as to where development should occur has begun with many responses already returned on the day. Those who have not returned their preference response sheet were asked to give it to a NDP Working Group member or put it in an envelope and post it in the Memorial Hall letter box.

Working Group members had spare copies of the information and response sheets for any parishioner, not present on the day, who needs one. {One response sheet per parishioner}. Full information on the presentations and also copies of the blank Development Preference Response Sheets are on line and able to be downloaded.

<https://sites.google.com/site/whnpgw/>

> Parish Surveys and Meetings > then scroll down.

WHNDP Consultation Day 19 March 2016.

Session 1. Questions from the floor

1. After 2031 could the number of houses required be changed/increased?

Yes. New targets are likely to be set. Historical old plans are inevitably superseded by new plans.

2. A question about housing densities.

In the AONB about 10 per hectare, in Herefordshire between 20 and 30 per hectare.

3. A question about how to maintain the rural nature of the parish road system. The concern was linked to the proposed Bromyard Road development.

Carly Tinkler commented that if a road has to be enlarged to accommodate the vehicles involved in a development than this change could be used as a reason for objection.

Frank Rozelaar commented that he was pessimistic about the Bromyard Road Development. He assured the audience that he was working with Liz Harvey, Ward Councillor, to try to ensure that the proposed accesses onto the Bromyard Road does not have an adverse effect on the roads within the Parish.

Session 2.

1. Question about sites and compulsory purchase.

No compulsory purchase. The landowner drives the process making the decision to develop and then carries out the development.

2. Some parcels have private gardens included in them, why?

The parcel designates an area for assessment and ignores the ownership of the land.

Exhibits.



Landscape Maps 1, 3, & 4. and a summary of the findings for each land parcel as per the Landscape Assessment Report

Working Landscape Maps showing methodology.

Two printed copies of the Landscape Assessment Report.

Chosen Vision, as per recent questionnaire. Original Objectives, revised Objectives, and comments used to revise Objectives.

Businesses in the Parish; a summary report.

A "Next Steps" flow chart expressing the next processes for the adoption of the NDP.

AONB Information.

Wellington Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan Information sheets, as handed to all present, including a Development Preference Response Sheet. Not an exhibit: a handout to all present.

{ All the above will be available to be viewed, and downloaded from the NDP web site; <https://sites.google.com/site/whnpwg/> }

A three dimensional model of the whole parish with the Landscape Assessment Report sites clearly marked.

Appendices:

Photos of the day.

PowerPoint presentations by Data Orchard, Carly Tinkler CMLI, and Frank Rozelaar { Leader of the WHNDP Group }, on the NDP web site.

Plan of the hall layout.

Questionnaire analysis.

{ All the above can be viewed on the web site; <https://sites.google.com/site/whnpwg/> }



Proposed Allocated Development Sites in the Parish

What are Allocated Development Sites?

Neighbourhood plans are development plans, and will be used for determining planning applications. Accordingly, they are able to identify and allocate sites for new development including housing, employment, business use, leisure and other forms of development which the parish council considers appropriate. Establishing the principle that a suitable form of development can be located on a particular site is known as allocating sites.

It is important to note that site allocations do not give automatic permission to any particular proposal; this will still need to be secured through the planning application process which ensures that all planning policies, including those of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), are met.

Site Selection Process

Landscape Survey: The Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group (NDPWG) commissioned a landscape survey of the Parish which was carried out by a qualified landscape architect. This survey considered a number of possible parcels of land, and assessed, from a landscape perspective, their suitability for development. This was a complex process which is fully documented and available on the Neighbourhood Planning Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/whnpwg/neighbourhood-plan/landscape-assessment>.

Ultimately the survey categorised 29 parcels on a scale from very low to very high in terms of their capacity to accept new residential development. In summary none of the parcels was judged to have a very high, high or moderate capacity. Nine parcels were judged to have moderate to low capacity, fourteen were judged to have low capacity, seven were judged to have low to very low capacity and one parcel was judged to have very low capacity.

Parishioner Preferences: A public briefing and consultation event was held on 19 March 2016 where the results of the Landscape Survey were briefed along with the results of the Parish survey.

Parishioners were then asked to select their preferred development parcels and to give an indication of the number of houses they would like to see built on each of their selected parcels. The most favoured parcels were as follows:

Preference	Votes	Parcel Number	Description
1	70	19a South	Field opposite Twinkelow Cottage on Ledbury Road (South)
2	47	19a North	Field opposite Twinkelow Cottage on Ledbury Road (North)
3	27	23	Field at top of the Common on the West side south of Oak Tree Close
4	24	28a	Land on North Side of Church Lane, West of the Cemetery
5	22	21	Field behind the Farmers Arms
6	21	8	Small field West of Ochre Hill (to the North)
7	19	29	Field behind Myrtle Cottage at the North West of the Village
8	17	11	Small Field West of Ochre Hill to the South

Settlement Boundary & Parish Survey

The Parish survey showed the following:

- Over two thirds of residents would not support developments of over 35 dwellings, this increased to 80% who would not support 40 dwellings or more.
- Just over half of residents would support development of between 28 and 30 dwellings if the development meets a demonstrable local need.

The results of the survey, together with an assessment of the likely number of windfall developments in the parish, led the NDPWG to assume that allocated development sites for about 15 new houses would be required. As a

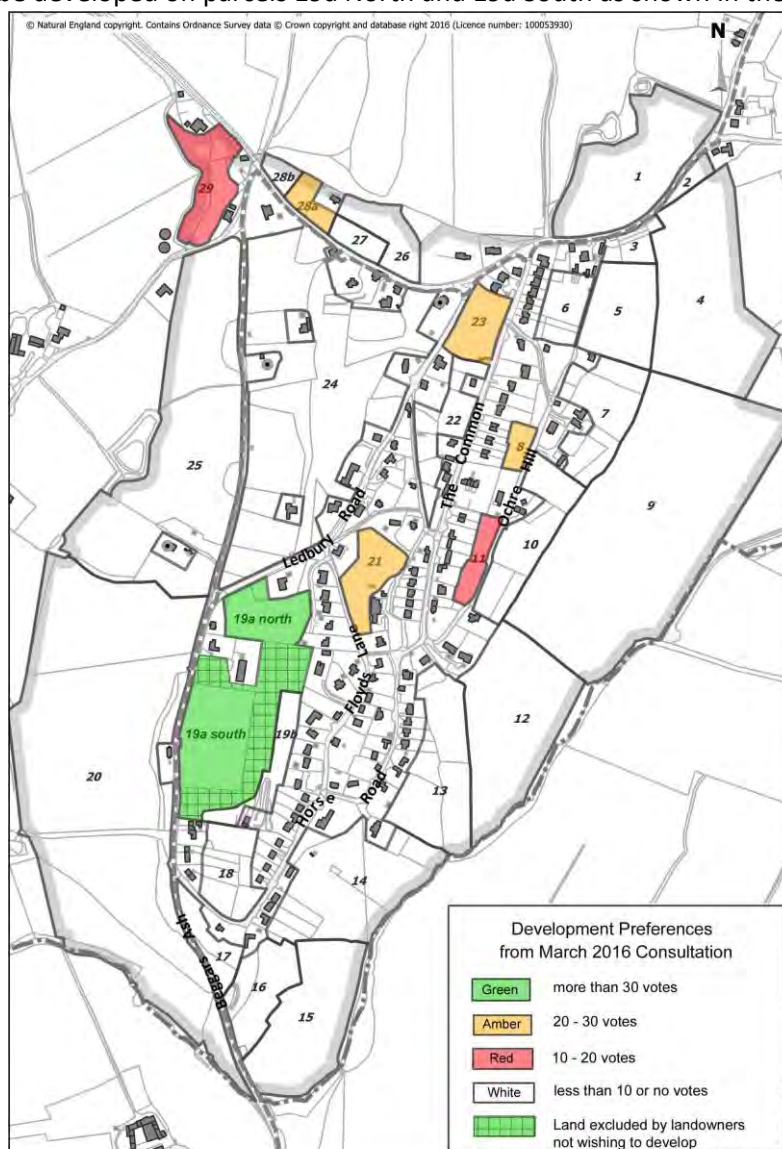
consequence three alternative settlement boundaries are under consideration. These are restricted in size in order to try to minimise the possibility of future development significantly exceeding the required 28 houses, in line with the results of the Parish survey.

- Development parcels 19a South, 19a North, 21 & 23 are included in Settlement Boundary Option 1
- Development parcels 8, 19a South, 19a North, 21 & 23 are included in Settlement Boundary Option 2
- Development parcels 19a South, 19a North, 21 & 23 are included in Settlement Boundary Option 3.

Site 28a was also identified as a preferred development parcel, scoring marginally above that for site 21. However it has not been included in the proposed Settlement Boundaries as it is located more to the edge of the village which would involve an increase in size of the settlement boundary risking more development than desired by parishioners. Parcel 21 is favoured due to its central location, thus restricting the size of the Settlement Boundary, and the potential to secure the open nature of its upper slopes as a designated Green Space.

Allocated Development Sites

In allocating development sites¹ within the preferred development parcels the working group took into account whether the owners of land within the selected parcels were interested in development on their land. This led to a reduction in the area to be developed on parcels 19a North and 19a South as shown in the following figure 1.



¹ The term development site is used to indicate that building is only likely to take place on parts of the development parcels selected for development by parishioners.

Proposed Green Spaces in Wellington Heath

1. What are Local Green Spaces?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012 provides communities with a means of protecting local green areas from development by designating them as a Local Green Space (LGS). Once designated, by the planning authority, the LGS is subject to the same strong development restrictions as green belt and new development on that land is ruled out other than in special circumstances.

However the NPPF also says that LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

2. Local Green Spaces in Wellington Heath.

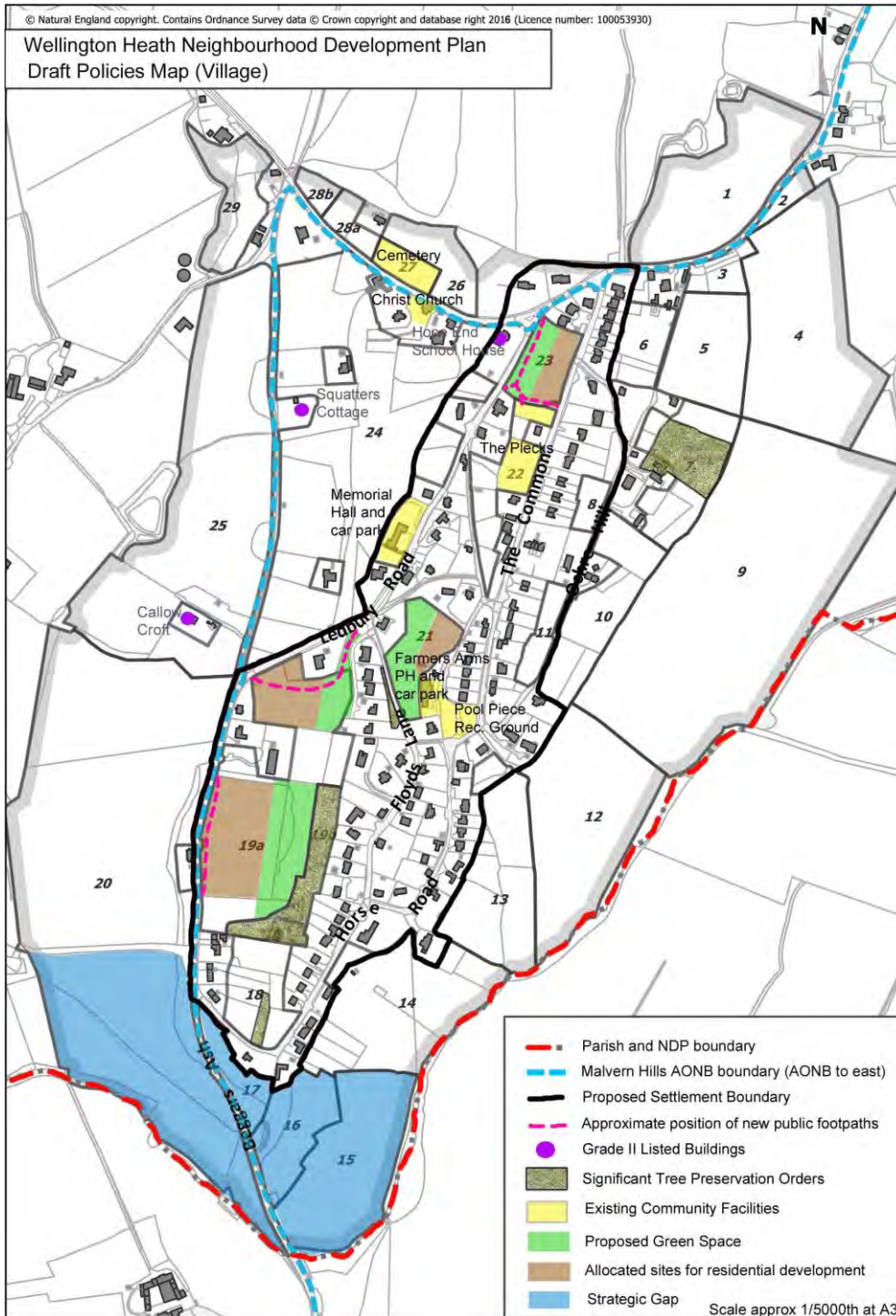
The Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group (NDPWG) have considered the following areas for Local Green Space designation: Pool Piece, the Pleck, Little Pleck, the Churchyard/ Cemetery¹, parcel 19b, and the upper reaches of the allocated development parcels 19a, 21, and 23.

Pool Piece, the Pleck and the Little Pleck are owned by the Parish Council so they are already protected against development, unless parishioners, at some future date, wish to change the ownership of these sites. The Churchyard/ Cemetery has protection as it is owned by church authorities and parcel 19b has some protection due to tree preservation orders. Also, proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) polices which protect ridgelines from being spoilt by development will provide additional protection for parcel 19b. As a consequence the working group have decided not to recommend Local Green Space designation for these parcels.

The remaining parcels (upper reaches of parcels 19a, 21 and 23) are within the Settlement Boundary so they could be subject to development pressure, however their specific characteristics are such that they are regarded as important to the landscape, amenity, and ecological qualities of the parish. For example these areas together with existing gardens form a green corridor along the western ridge line which would enhance wildlife access and biodiversity. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Development Plan can meet the development requirements of the Herefordshire Core Strategy without the development of these areas.

As a consequence the Working Group are proposing that the upper reaches of parcels 19a, 21 and 23 (excluding the gardens of existing properties) are designated as Local Green Spaces. These are shown highlighted in green in the following map. This map also shows the settlement boundary preferred by the Working Group as well as existing community facilities.

¹ See Appendix 1 for descriptions of these areas.



Parishioner Feedback

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group would like to gather the views of Parishioners on the proposed Local Green Spaces. Specifically:

- Do you support or disagree with the LGS designations.
- Would you like to see other areas designated as Local Green Spaces bearing in mind the restrictions imposed by the NPPF outlined in paragraph 1. (NB excessive specification of green space is likely to be rejected when the NDP is inspected by an external examiner if it does not strictly comply with NPPF requirements.)

APPENDIX 1: Parish or Church Owned Land within the Parish

1. Pool Piece

The land was originally designated as a public open space and children's play area in the 1990's. However, its steep incline made access difficult, particularly for push chairs, the elderly or disabled. This was compounded in wet weather when it became wet and muddy. The nature of the existing slope also made games very difficult and there was only limited seating and no shelter.

Following a successful bid for money in 2013 and the efforts of a working party the site was transformed. The landscape has been reshaped to provide a banked auditorium feature and an area of flat land for play, village games and activities.

Areas around the stream have been planted with snowdrops, native daffodils and snakes head fritillaries. In addition 17 native species of marsh loving plants were introduced along the stream and new hedging, shrubs and trees were planted.

Pool Piece has become a defined centre for the village and a real asset to residents as well as providing an attractive environment for wild life.



2. Churchyard and Cemetery

Both the old graveyard and the current cemetery are important areas for a range of native wild flowers including wild orchids. These areas also are a habitat for a range of fungi and insect life. In addition they provide a peaceful haven for residents and visitors to relax and reflect as well as allowing wonderful views to the west.

- Maintenance of the cemetery is undertaken by a small group of volunteers and it is due to this managing that such a diversity of wildlife thrives.
- The religious and spiritual nature of these sites gives some protection but as the cemetery fills there may be a need to look elsewhere in the village to expand and provide not only resting places for the diseased but also to continue the protection of rare flora and fauna.
- The church currently has no running water or toilet provision, both of which restrict usage and development.

3. The Pleck_ ('Pleck' comes from the old Herefordshire name for a meadow)

Situated on The Common, the Pleck was purchased by the Parish Council from Malvern Hills District Council in 1984, as a haven for wildlife. A number of native trees have been planted since

that time, including specimen trees such as wild service, small leaved lime, field maple, oak and horse chestnut. In the last few years dormice have been spotted in this area. The site was recently cleared of some brambles and pernicious weeds to make it more attractive to wildlife. The site also contributes the local distinctiveness by providing an open green area in the heart of the village.

4. Little Pleck

Situated further along The Common, this area was created as a small nature reserve in 1984; the area was donated to the village in 1999. It has a variety of wild flowers, particularly wonderful displays of snowdrops, as well as native trees. There is also a seat donated in memory of Mrs Eileen Davies. The area is protected by a covenant and has seating for visitors to relax.

Report on the Wellington Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan Parish Consultation Saturday 10th December 2016.

Venue; Wellington Heath Memorial Hall

Time; 9.00 am until 4.30 pm

Presentations and Q&A sessions at 10.00am & 2.00 pm.



Visual Displays included;

- Settlement Boundary Options
- Proposed Allocated Site information including Local Green Space proposals and proposed policies specific to each site. Owner plans and proposals where available where appropriate.
- Maps illustrating the Landscape Capacity Assessment results and the March 19th consultation parishioner choices for favoured allocated sites.
- A viewpoints map.
- Parish and village policies maps.
- Proposed policies for building in the village and parish.
- The strategic gap proposal was illustrated on the village policies map.
- A Neighbourhood Development Plan Progress Chart.
- Vision & Objective statements.

All proposals were marked “DRAFT subject to consultation” other than final reports and Vision & Objectives which are already confirmed as agreed by a previous consultation.

The WHNDP web Site was up on a laptop computer within the display throughout the day.

Printed copies of the Draft Plan were available for examination as were printed copies of the Wellington Heath Photographic Guide and Landscape Assessment Report.



Summary of question and answer sessions at the 10 December consultation

Q: Has the sewer system been approved for the plan?

A: This gets done only towards the end of the next consultation period (known as the Regulation 14 Consultation); the utilities won't comment until then.

The questioner stated that it was necessary to ensure that new properties adequately provide for surface water run-off. He was assured that this is already covered in the draft NDP.

Q: Who will own the Local Green Spaces and new footpaths?

A: Green Space on Site 23 (the proposed allocated site to the top of The Common on the west) might be owned by the Parish Council. For the most part, this is still open.

Anyone might own it, including the Parish Council. Local Green Space is not a statement about ownership; it is a statement about the usage of the land.

Q: Will there be enough parking spaces on the new sites?

A: Yes. This is described in detail in the draft NDP.

Q: Do we have any influence on highways?

A: No. The Herefordshire Council is the highways authority and is therefore responsible for highways matters.

Q: Why are we proposing to talk to Ledbury NDP Working Group about the Strategic Gap?

A: We would like the gap to be larger and stretch into Ledbury, possibly as far as the Bromyard Road. This will not happen if we do not liaise with Ledbury.

Q: What are the Settlement Boundary options?

A: These were described (as per the hand-out notes). The aim is to define a Settlement Boundary separating the settlement of Wellington Heath from what is known as open countryside which will enable the housing target to be met but with a low likelihood of exceeding it (that being the parish's wish as shown by the March 2016 consultation).

Q: Should we extend the Settlement Boundary to include the houses that we want to be developed?

A: Yes. That is what we are doing.

Q: Will there be windfall developments?

A: Yes. These are allowed for within the NDP.

Q: In deciding on the Allocated Sites, have we examined the votes in terms of where people live?

(It was not clear whether or not the questioner felt that people living near a site should have a greater or lesser vote than those living further away.)

A: No. We have assigned equal votes to all people. It was pointed out that there were many sites which are remote from where many people live and which had a small number of preferences (votes).

Q: If we were to extend it to the northwest, could we reduce the Allocated Sites elsewhere?

A: Yes.

Briefing Papers giving information and justification for the proposals for a village settlement boundary, local green spaces, strategic gap and proposed allocated sites were given to all attendees together with a response form.

Further copies were taken by working group members to give to parishioner neighbours who did not attend.

Attendance numbers; Thirty four people signed the register, including eight working group members who were present during the day.

Summary of Responses from Consultation as at 31.1.2017

	Count	%	Comments
Strategic Gap			
good thing: yes	50	100%	
Not a good thing	0	0%	
about right	33	66%	
too small	15	30%	
too big	0	0%	Two offered no opinion
Local Green Space			
agree: yes	49	98%	
disagreed	1	2%	
approve proposals: yes	49	98%	
no	0	0%	One offered no opinion
Settlement Boundary			
option 1	6	12%	
option 2	6	12%	
option 3	33	66%	
none	4	8%	One offered no opinion

All Comments from parishioners are noted in a separate full and final response analysis.

50 forms were returned. There are approximately 200 dwellings in Wellington Heath Parish. The people who responded were from 31 households – 15%. Excluding members of the Working Group, 21 households responded – 10%.

Wellington Heath Settlement Boundary Options

Justification and logic.

Preamble.

Herefordshire Council strongly recommend that a settlement boundary {or village envelope} is drawn around a settlement¹.

A settlement boundary is a line that is drawn on a plan around a village, which reflects its built form, this is also known historically as a 'village envelope'. The settlement boundary is used as a policy tool reflecting the area where a set of plan policies are to be applied, this would include policies within our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The settlement boundary does not necessarily have to cover the full extent of the village nor be limited to its built form.

In general, planning applications for developments within a settlement boundary will be viewed favourably. However, it should be noted that any land which has been included within the boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which will need to be adhered to, for example; the protection of the character of a settlement. Any land and buildings outside of the boundary line are usually considered to be open countryside where development would be regulated with stricter planning policies.

Settlement boundaries are a well utilised planning tool for guiding, controlling and identifying limits to development for an individual village. The main advantages are:

- Certainty: with a 'black line' being plotted on a plan it is easy to identify the 'settlement' from 'open countryside'.
- They are an established and understood planning tool for guiding and controlling developments.
- They allow a more plan-led and controlled approach to future housing growth, allowing for allocating development sites within your village.
- They protect the countryside from unnecessary development and prevents ribbon development.
- They allow for more certainty to developers/land owners with sites/land within the boundary, as long as they adhere to all other plan policies.

The Former Wellington Heath Settlement Boundary.

The former settlement boundary which was set by the Malvern Hills District Council in 1998 is shown in figure 1. This boundary, which is now defunct, severely restricted development possibilities. However we now have governmental instruction to build more houses with a minimum target for the parish of 28 new houses between 2011 & 2031. Our Neighbourhood Development Plan must reflect this need.

¹Local Plans Modifications/Neighbourhood Plans – Update Note. 9th April 2015, and Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 20. Guide to Settlement Boundaries.

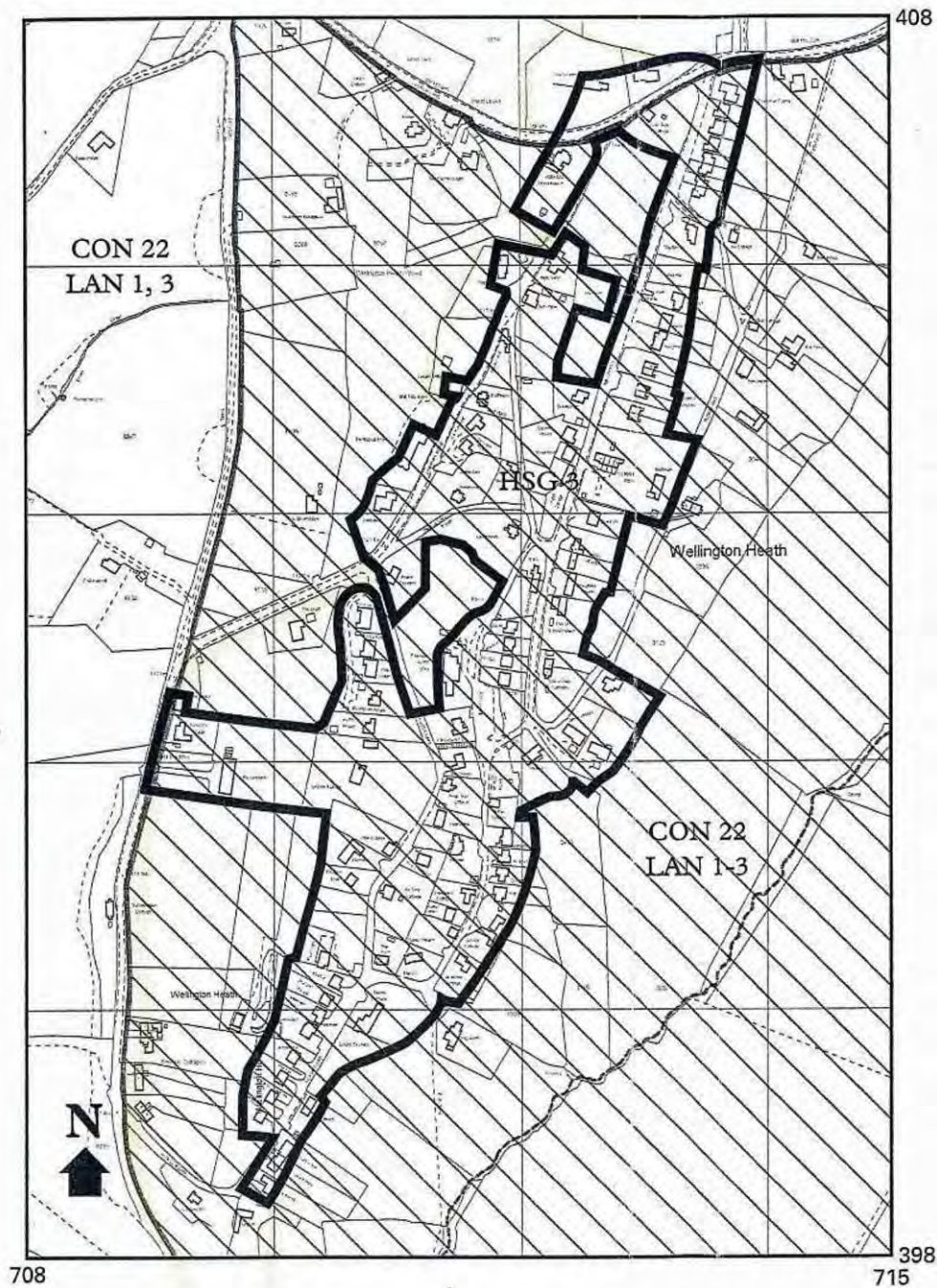


Figure 1: 1998 Settlement Boundary Set By Malvern Hills District Council

Development of Settlement Boundary Options for the Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group have taken into account the following factors in developing settlement boundary options:

- The guidance of parishioners as expressed in the Parish Survey of January 2016
- The development parcel preferences selected during the 19 March 2016 public event at the Memorial Village Hall.
- The likely number of windfall development in the Parish between 2011 & 2031.
- Protection of local character or distinctiveness.

The January survey results for the number of houses to be built in the Parish up to 2031 was as follows:

- Over two thirds of residents would not support developments of over 35 dwellings, this increased to 80% who would not support 40 dwellings or more.

- Just over half of residents would support development of between 28 and 30 dwellings if the development meets a demonstrable local need.

The top eight parcels selected for potential development at the 19 March public meeting are as follows and are highlighted in figure 2.

Preference	Votes	Parcel Number	Description
1	70	19a South	Field opposite Twinkelow Cottage on Ledbury Road (South)
2	47	19a North	Field opposite Twinkelow Cottage on Ledbury Road (North)
3	27	23	Field at top of the Common on the West side south of Oak Tree Close
4	24	28a	Land on North Side of Church Lane, West of the Cemetery
5	22	21	Field behind the Farmers Arms
6	21	8	Small field West of Ochre Hill (to the North)
7	19	29	Field behind Myrtle Cottage at the North West of the Village
8	17	11	Small Field West of Ochre Hill to the South

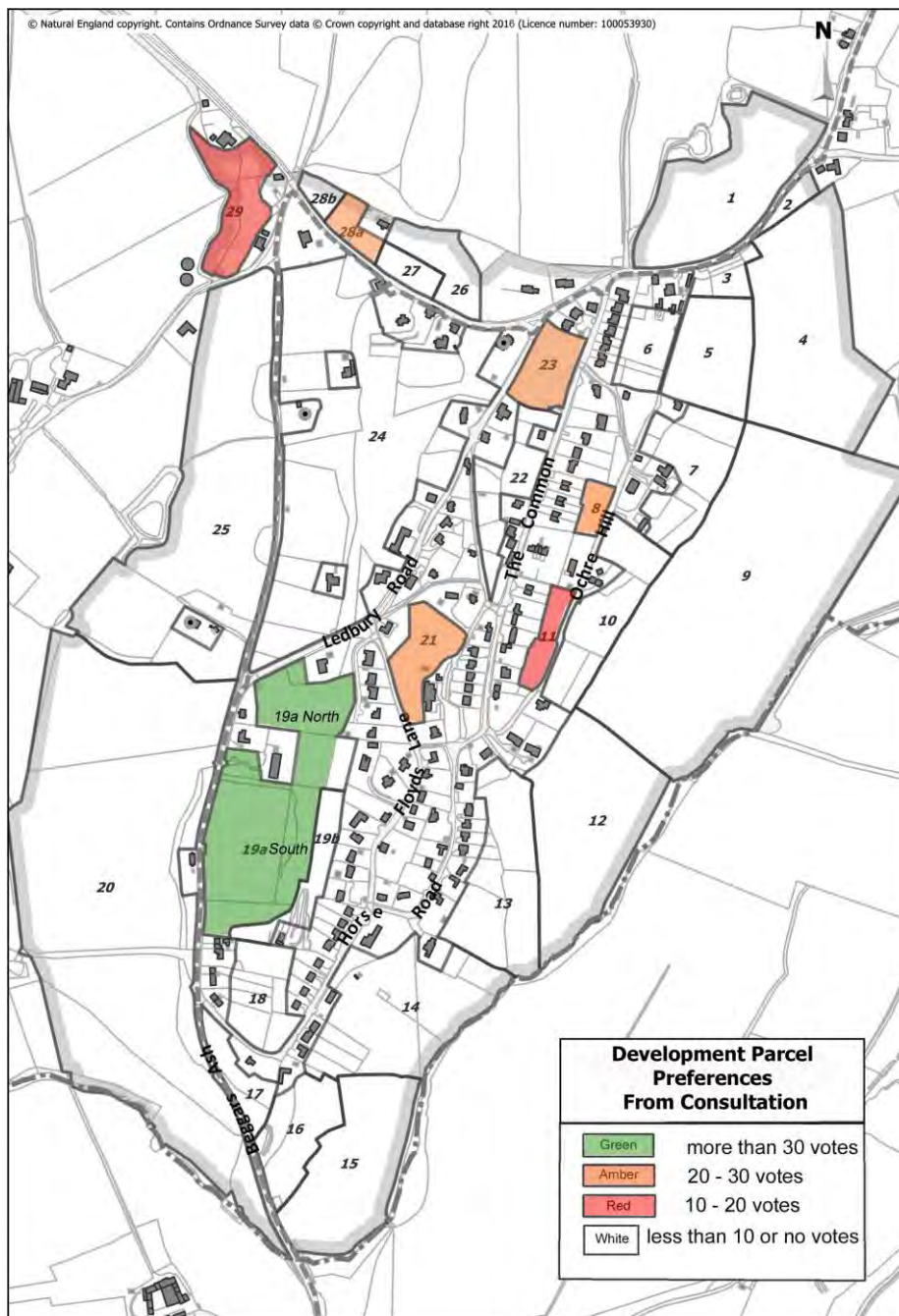


Figure 2: Top 8 Development Parcels

Windfall development sites are those that have not been specifically allocated in the NDP process; they normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available. Examples are the conversion of redundant buildings or sub-division of large gardens.

Between 1999 & 2011, windfall developments in Wellington Heath have averaged almost one a year.

Since 2011, there have been 16 completed or planned windfall developments within the parish.

In order to reach a total of at least 28 new houses by 2031 it was therefore considered that allocated development sites may be required for about 15 new houses as not all windfall development may come to fruition.

Local Distinctiveness. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Herefordshire Core Strategy emphasize that preserving local character or distinctiveness is an important element in planning. The distinctive character of Wellington Heath has evolved over centuries, but is centred on the scattered, ad hoc, nature of the dwellings nestling within the central valley between wooded ridges. The traditional large plots, fields, wooded copses, and the remnants of old orchards still exist in and adjacent to the settlement. Together with the high hedges, winding and narrow lanes create a special character within an area of outstanding natural beauty. The main elements identified are:

- The intricate topography of the village with its two wooded ridges and sheltered central valley
- The mature trees and vegetation adding scale, colour and character
- The resulting spectacular scenery and views
- The way the settlement has evolved with its narrow lanes, trackways and footpaths
- The rural feel and its close proximity to adjacent farmland and orchards
- The high native, mixed species hedgerows to roadsides and boundaries
- The open green spaces and wooded areas within the village providing biodiversity and wildlife
- The numerous historic (some listed) buildings of great character
- The many small rural cottages with large gardens from the early days of the settlement
- The diversity and quality of dwelling design in the last 20 years

Settlement Boundary Option 1 (Figure 3)

This is based on the now defunct 1998 Malvern Hills District Council settlement boundary, though with a much less intricate shape, and includes four of the preferred development parcels (19a North and South, 21 & 23). It protects the Ochre Hill ridge on the east side and hence the local distinctiveness of Wellington Heath village is better protected.

As mentioned previously planning consent outside a settlement boundary is possible if strict planning conditions are met. A recent planning consent outside this boundary on parcel 11 illustrates this:-

- *151917 Eco dwelling of exceptional architectural merit compliant with policies applicable in open countryside. Permission was refused (140811) for an earlier proposal that did not have exceptional architectural merit*

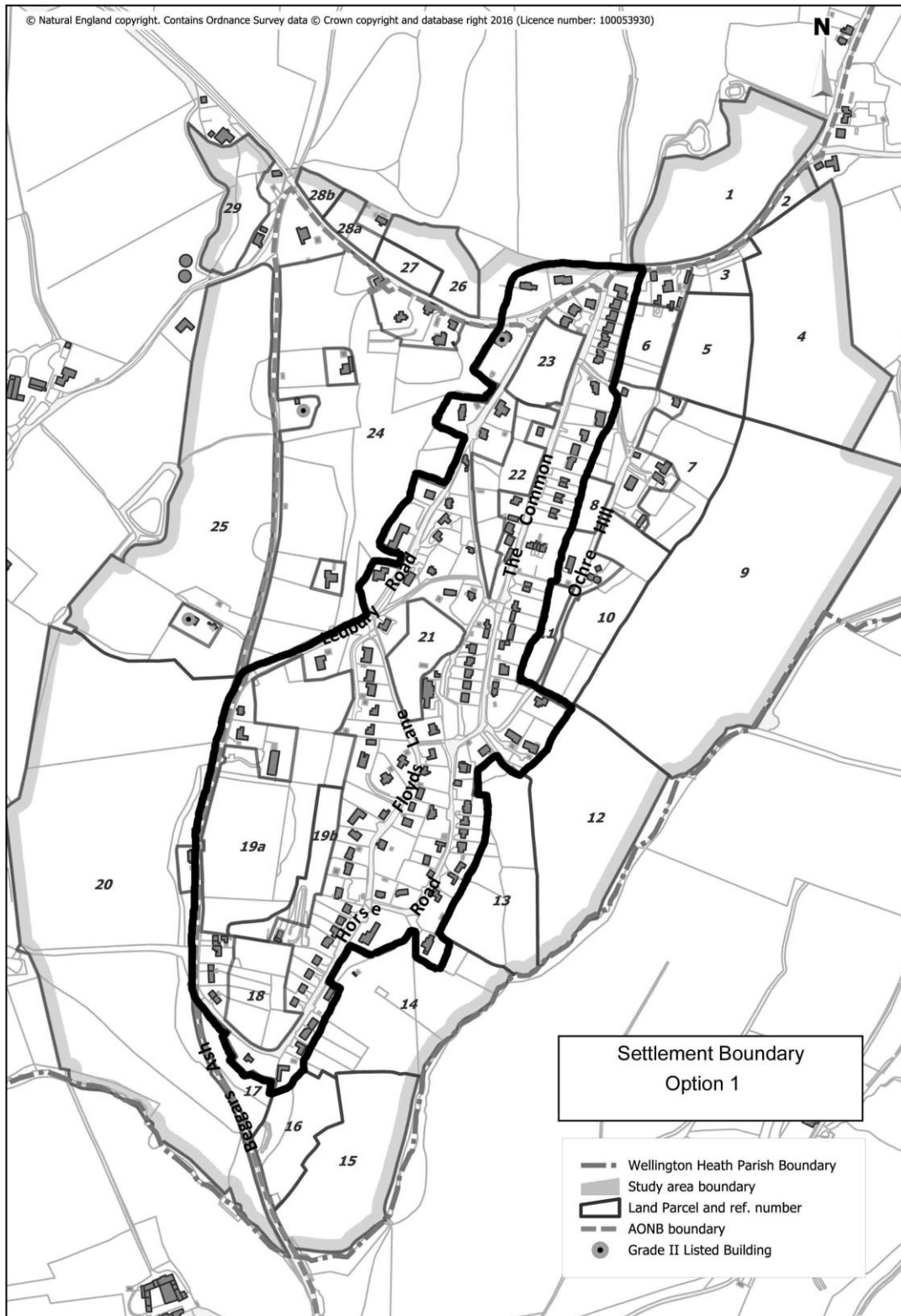


Figure 3: Settlement Boundary Option 1

Settlement Boundary Option 2 (Figure 4)

(This settlement boundary is the preferred option of the neighbourhood development plan working group.)

Settlement boundary option 2 has been drawn to follow clear features on the ground. It follows the ridges to the west and east of the settlement and eliminates the somewhat arbitrary nature of the western line of the boundary which was a feature of option 1. It encompasses six of the preferred development parcels (19a North & South, 21, 23, 8 & 11) and nearly all existing development in the village although it cuts through some larger gardens.

Although the Eastern and Western ridge lines are now incorporated within the settlement boundary the Working Group felt that a settlement boundary along the natural lines of the east and west ridges, encompassing the main village, was a better reflection of the village; and that other policies should be put in place to protect the local distinctive character, in particular any development encroaching on the ridge lines.

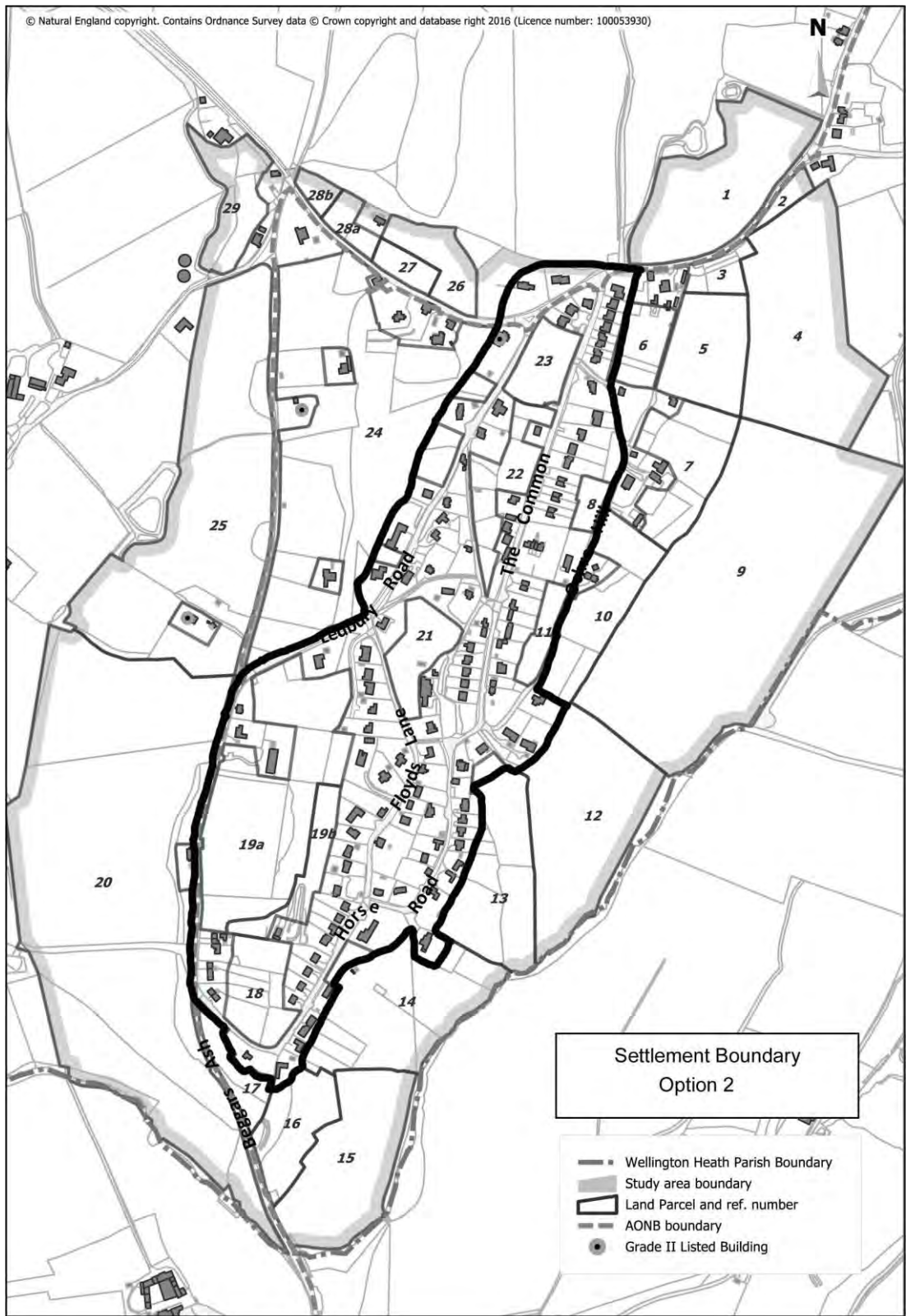


Figure 4: Settlement Boundary Option 2

Settlement Boundary Option 3. (Figure 5)

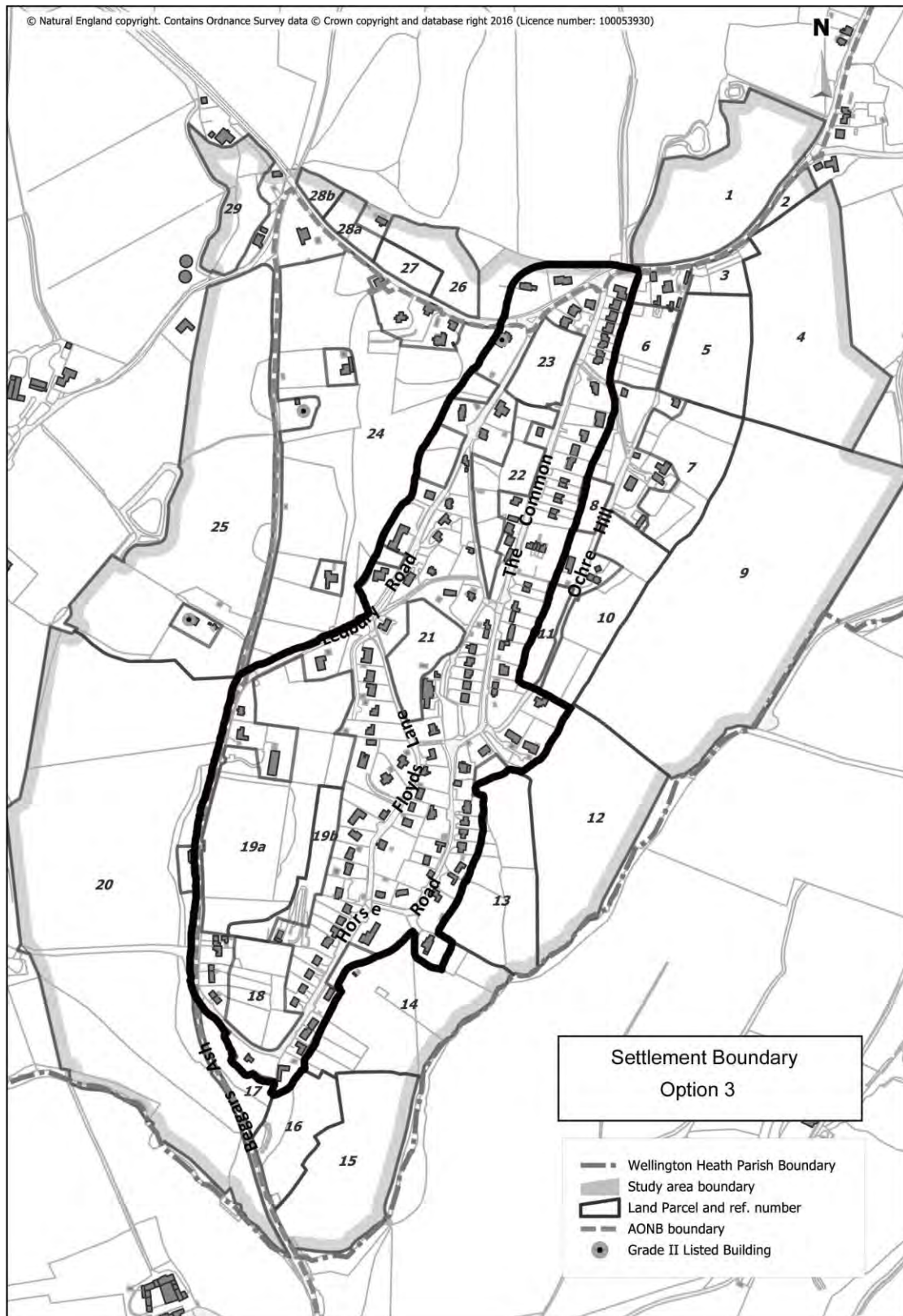


Figure 5: Settlement Boundary Option 3

This Option is essentially a combination of Options 1 and 2. It gives greater protection to the Ochre Hill ridgeline and provides the same western boundary as Option 2 but only includes four of the preferred development parcels (19a North & South, 21, 23.)

Wellington Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group Transport Sub-Group working paper on a safe route

distribution : Frank
Rozelaar

issue date : 30 April 2015

author : Gordon Kirk

version : 1 (interim)

contents

1. introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. the need for a safe route (or routes)	2
3. conclusions (interim)	2
3.1 Jacks Lane to the Oak	2
3.2 The Farmers Arms to the Oak.....	3
3.3 the Oak to the bottom of Knapp Lane	3
3.4 the Oak to the station	3
3.5 summary of conclusions.....	3
4. details of alternatives	3
4.1 Jacks Lane to the Oak	4
4.1.1 Jacks Lane to Horse Road (c.380m) A-C	4
4.1.2 Horse Road to the gate (c.100m) C-D	4
4.1.3 along the verge (c.160m) D-E-F.....	4
4.1.4 crossing the stream (c.160m) F-G	4
4.1.5 along to the gate opposite Hilltop's drive (c.50m) G-H	4
4.1.6 avoiding the narrow section of Beggars Ash (c. 180m) H-J.....	4
4.2 The Farmers Arms to the Oak.....	5
4.2.1 The Farmers Arms to Long Acre (c.300m) K-L.....	5
4.2.2 Long Acre to the footbridge (c.190m) L-M	5
4.2.3 footbridge to the Oak (c.530m) M-J	5
4.3 the Oak to the bottom of Knapp Lane	6
4.3.1 the Oak to The Frith (c.100m) J-N	6
4.3.2 The Frith to Little Frith (c.500m) N-P.....	6
4.3.3 Little Frith to Frith Wood House driveway (c.350m) P-Q	6
4.3.4 Frith Wood House driveway and Knapp Lane (c.500m) Q-R	6
4.4 the Oak to the station	6
4.5 cut the corner at Beggars Ash and Bromyard Road	7
5. details	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.1 a path through the old brickworks	7
5.2 a path to the east of the old brickworks	7
5.3 cut the corner next to Blossoms.....	8
5.4 map of the northern section	9
5.5 map of the southern section.....	10

1. Introduction

A task of the Transport Sub-group is to identify possible safe walking and cycling routes between Wellington Heath and Ledbury. This working paper is to identify such routes and weigh up their advantages and disadvantages.

At this stage, no consideration has been taken of the attitude of the landowners. Some are known to be averse to allowing permissive paths on their land. However, if we initially exclude all paths where land-owners are averse, we shall have a very short working paper.

Note: a sensible safe route for walkers need not be a safe route for cyclists, and vice versa.

Note: there are diagrams at the end of the paper.

2. The need for a safe route (or routes)

From observation, one of the main needs for a safe route for walkers and cyclists is to avoid walking along Ledbury Road and Beggars Ash from Jacks Lane to Bromyard Road and thence to Ledbury. The walkers who use this route are mainly pickers (ie: the people who work at Withers Farm), but there are also other people from all parts of Wellington Heath who use significant parts of this route. One might include more of Ledbury Road but this is much less used. The line has to be drawn somewhere.

The other main need can be encompassed by taking the Farmers Arms as a starting point and going via Horse Road and Beggars Ash to Ledbury. This is representative of the people who live on The Common, Ochre Hill, lower Floyds Lane, and Horse Road.

There are two principal destinations in Ledbury: the station; and Tesco and beyond. Unfortunately these two need to be separated as if you take one rather than the other as a destination you might get to different conclusions.

So, for a safe route we have two starts and two ends.

3. Conclusions (interim)

If you look at the options, you find that all the feasible routes go via the large oak tree on Beggars Ash at the bottom of the drive to The Frith. This is hereafter called the Oak. So, we have four sub-routes to consider:

1. Jacks Lane to the Oak (via Ledbury Road and Beggars Ash);
2. The Farmers Arms to the Oak (via Horse Road, Long Acre, the foot-bridge, and the orchards);
3. the Oak to the bottom of Knapp Lane;
4. the Oak to the station.

Each of these needs to be considered in terms of distance, land ownership, and cost (ie: engineering difficulty). In this working paper, we ignore land ownership and address cost only very approximately (see Section 4 for the definitions of "low cost" etc).

3.1 Jacks Lane to the Oak

This route is currently via Ledbury Road and Beggars Ash. It is rather dangerous as the road is used by a number of speeding motor vehicles (as evidenced by the speed at which they take blind corners).

Two thirds of the new path would run to the west of the road – behind Twinkelow, along the verge south of Horse Road, across the road near the stream, then over the stream and through the orchards next to the road. See the details in Section 4.1.

The length of the new path would be a little longer than going by road (c.1030m), but by only a small amount (too small to measure on my maps – maybe 5% more).

Almost none of it is on existing footpaths; all would require new permissive paths (with 4 or 5 landowners). However, it would be possible to implement it in independent sections.

It would not be cheap: about half is low cost; half is medium cost.

3.2 The Farmers Arms to the Oak

This uses existing rights of way: Horse Road, Long Acre, over the footbridge, across the orchards to the Oak (c. 1020m). It would be low cost.

Although it is much more feasible than Route 1, it is of lower priority as fewer people would use it.

3.3 The Oak to the bottom of Knapp Lane

There are three options:

- a. by road;
- b. via the orchards, Little Frith, and Knapp Lane;
- c. via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road (see s.5.3).

Route (b) has the major disadvantages that it is 23% further than by road and involves a useless 30m climb and descent (the road ascends but it doesn't go up and down as the path does). Its end part (Knapp Lane) is not safe either. Its cost would be 850m of low cost work.

Route (c) is only 12% further than the road (with no useless climb). Its disadvantage is that it is not on existing paths. Its cost would be 700m of low cost work.

3.4 The Oak to the station

Here, there are four options:

- a. by road;
- b. via the orchards and Knapp Lane;
- c. via the orchards and down by Wilce's orchard parallel to the railway;
- d. via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road (see s.5.3).

Routes (b) and (c) are not viable: they are 100% and 50% further than by road and they involve a 30m useless climb. No-one would use them.

Route (d) is 16% further than by road (no useless climb); it's mostly the same route as route (c) in Section 3.3.

3.5 Summary of conclusions

Getting from Jacks Lane to the Oak is feasible (given a lot of landowner permission) but it wouldn't be cheap.

The Farmers Arms to the Oak is on existing paths, but getting landowner agreement to make them weatherproof could be tricky. The work would all be low cost.

The best route from the Oak to Knapp Lane would be via a new path cutting the corner at the Bromyard Road junction. It would need about 700m of low cost work, but would need landowners' permissions for a new path. An alternative, via the orchards and Little Frith, is on existing paths but is 23% further than the road; I have doubts as to whether it would be much used.

For the Oak to the station, going via the orchards is not viable (50% and 100% further than by road). The only alternative to the road is via a new path cutting the corner at the Bromyard Road junction. This doubles the case for this new path.

4. Details of alternatives

This section considers each of the 4 sub-routes (1 to 4) in the previous section.

Land ownership is ignored in this working paper.

I have no easy way to estimate costs. I have simply made a best guess and said they are low, medium, or high (per kilometre). Roughly speaking:

- low cost is where you are simply starting with flat(ish) ground and laying a path;
- medium cost is where there would be significant earth moving and carting or where bridge-like structures might be needed;
- high cost is where you have medium cost but more so (ie: where the cost is likely to be beyond the realm of reason).

4.1 Jacks Lane to the Oak

This route is currently via Ledbury Road and Beggars Ash. It is rather dangerous to speeding vehicles. (see Section 3.1).

The length of the new path would be a little longer than going by road, but by only a small amount (too small to measure on my maps – maybe 5% more).

Almost none of it is on existing footpaths; all would require new permissive paths (with 4 or 5 landowners). However, it would be possible to implement it in independent sections. If we take this route in sections, we can examine them.

4.1.1 Jacks Lane to Horse Road (c.380m) A-C

It would be quite feasible to put a footpath to the west of the road. This would run along the top of the blueberry field, round to the west of Twinkelow's garden, through the next field, and up to the gate opposite Horse Road. This would be a low cost path.

4.1.2 Horse Road to the gate (c.100m) C-D

This would run to the west of the road. From the gate opposite Horse Road, the path would run along what looks like an ancient track to emerge at a field gate on Beggars Ash. This would be a medium cost path.

4.1.3 Along the verge (c.160m) D-E-F

There is a verge along the west side of the road here; it could (if widened slightly) be used as a footpath. There is quite a drop (several metres in places) through the hedge to the field, so this would be medium cost work.

The path would then cross the road to a gate on the east side. It is desirable to cross the road here as bridging the stream on the west side would be a much harder job, and we have to cross the road somewhere anyway.

4.1.4 Crossing the stream (c.160m) F-G

It is not obvious from the road, but the road crosses the stream here. The road has been built up (by 3 or 4 metres) and the stream runs through a large pipe rather than a bridge as such. However, a footpath would not want to descend to stream level and then ascend so a bridge-like structure would be needed. It would be only a footbridge (possibly for bikes too) but it would need to be built to bridge standards and would be medium cost work.

4.1.5 Along to the gate opposite Hilltop's drive (c.50m) G-H

From crossing the stream, we emerge up a ramp and then to the road. It would be desirable to go through the hedge into the orchard and then along to the gate opposite to the end of Hilltop's drive. This would be low cost work.

4.1.6 Avoiding the narrow section of Beggars Ash (c. 180m) H-J

This is one of the most dangerous sections of the road. There are two possibilities. First is to go east from the gate for 30m to connect with the footpath that runs from Long Acre to the Oak. Second is to make a new path inside the orchard for 100m and there join the footpath. Both would be low cost.

4.2 The Farmers Arms to the Oak

This is an existing right of way – along roads and footpaths.

If we take this route in sections, we can examine them.

4.2.1 The Farmers Arms to Long Acre (c.300m) K-L

This is along Horse Road. There is no sensible alternative and there is little traffic anyway.

4.2.2 Long Acre to the footbridge (c.190m) L-M

This is a grassy path. It would be low cost work to make it a weather-proof path.

4.2.3 Footbridge to the Oak (c.530m) M-J

This section is an existing footpath. It would be low cost work to weather-proof it. However, it would be more expensive than superficially expected as it crosses an orchard which is used extensively by tractors – so the path would need to be strong enough to avoid tractor damage.

4.3 The Oak to the bottom of Knapp Lane

There are three options:

- by road;
- via the orchards, Little Frith, and Knapp Lane;
- via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road The figures are clearer in a table.

	option	distance	distance ratio v. road option	extra height
a	by road	1180m	1	0
b	via the orchards, Little Frith, and Knapp Lane	1450m	1.23	30m
c	via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road	1320	1.12	0

The road is shorter than via the orchards – the orchards are 23% further. Also, via the orchards you ascend and descend (30m climb is wasted); on the road you ascend progressively; you never lose height. Even if there were a nicely paved safe route through the orchards, it is not obvious to me that people would use it when the road takes less work. Cyclists might use it.

Cutting the corner at Bromyard Road has attractions: it's not much further; you don't climb 30m uselessly. There is further discussion in Sections 4.5 and 5.3.

So, what would be involved in making the existing footpath past Little Frith weather-proof?

4.3.1 The Oak to The Frith (c.100m) J-N

This is along the drive to The Frith. No work needed.

4.3.2 The Frith to Little Frith (c.500m) N-P

This is an existing footpath through the orchards. It would be low cost work to weather-proof it. However, it would be more expensive than superficially expected as it crosses an orchard which is used extensively by tractors – so the path would need to be strong enough to avoid tractor damage.

4.3.3 Little Frith to Frith Wood House driveway (c.350m) P-Q

This is an existing footpath. It runs through Little Frith's garden and then along the top of two fields below Frith Wood House. The work would be low cost.

4.3.4 Frith Wood House driveway and Knapp Lane (c.500m) Q-R

This runs along hard roads on existing rights of way. No cost. However, this is not wholly suitable a part of a "safe route" as Knapp Lane itself has is dangerous for walkers and cyclists.

4.4 The Oak to the station

Here, there are four options:

- by road;
- via the orchards and Knapp Lane;
- via the orchards and down by Wilce's orchard;
- via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road. The figures are clearer in a table.

	option	distance	distance ratio v. road option	extra height
a	by road J-V-S	880m	1	0
b	via the orchards, Little Frith, Knapp Lane, and station J-N-P-Q-R-S	1770m	2.0	30m
c	via the orchards, little Frith, down by Wilce's orchard, and station J-N-P-Q-T	1350m	1.53	30m
d	via a new route to cut the corner at Beggars Ash / Bromyard Road J-W-V-U	1020	1.16	0

It seems clear to me that no-one would use options (b) or (c) as they are so much longer than the road - never mind that they cost 30m in useless climbing. Option (d) might be used were it available.

The main benefit of option (d) is that it avoids the road traffic at the bottom of Beggars Ash. In fact there are two options that could be used; both start at the Oak. See the next section.

4.5 Cut the corner at Beggars Ash and Bromyard Road

The traffic on the hill at the bottom of Beggars Ash is a danger to walkers. If a footpath across the fields could be found, it would solve this problem.

The obvious route would be a path just to the east of the hedge along Beggars Ash. However, this is not feasible because of cost – see Section 5.1.

The next obvious route would be along the hedge to the east of the old brickworks. However, this is not sensible because of its distance – see Section 5.2.

Another option would be a path which ran from the Oak, round the back of Frith Cottages, through the orchards, and then across the sheep pasture to Bromyard Road next to Blossoms (opposite Wye Valley Fruit on Bromyard Road). See Section 5.3.

Although this option is about 140m further than by road (+26%), taken as part of the walk from the Oak to the station it is only 16% further. It's hard to know whether walkers would choose to use it though.

One general benefit to this option is that it could be used as the safe route for both the Oak to Knapp Lane and the Oak to the station.

5. Details

5.1 A path through the old brickworks

When you drive from Ledbury and turn right into Beggars Ash, you drive up a hill to the Oak. For the first 200m there is a wood on your right. This would be an ideal place for a footpath you might think. Except it's not really a wood; it's an old brickworks – used to make bricks for the viaduct. At one place, quite close to the road, there is a bank about 10m high which would need to be made level. To make a footpath here would require a lot of earth moving and the removal of several large oak trees (some 3m round). I can't see this being done. If the required earth moving were to be done, it would make sense simply to widen the road by 15m as far as the Oak and put a footpath along the side. I don't see this getting much public support (not to mention a budget). I discarded this option reluctantly.

5.2 A path to the east of the old brickworks

Having discarded the brickworks, I investigated a path around the edge of the brickworks. You can see this as route BCA on the diagram below. The problem with this is that it is 50% further than by

road. I can't imagine walkers using such a route on account of the extra distance. Thus, I discarded this route too.



5.3 Cut the corner next to Blossoms

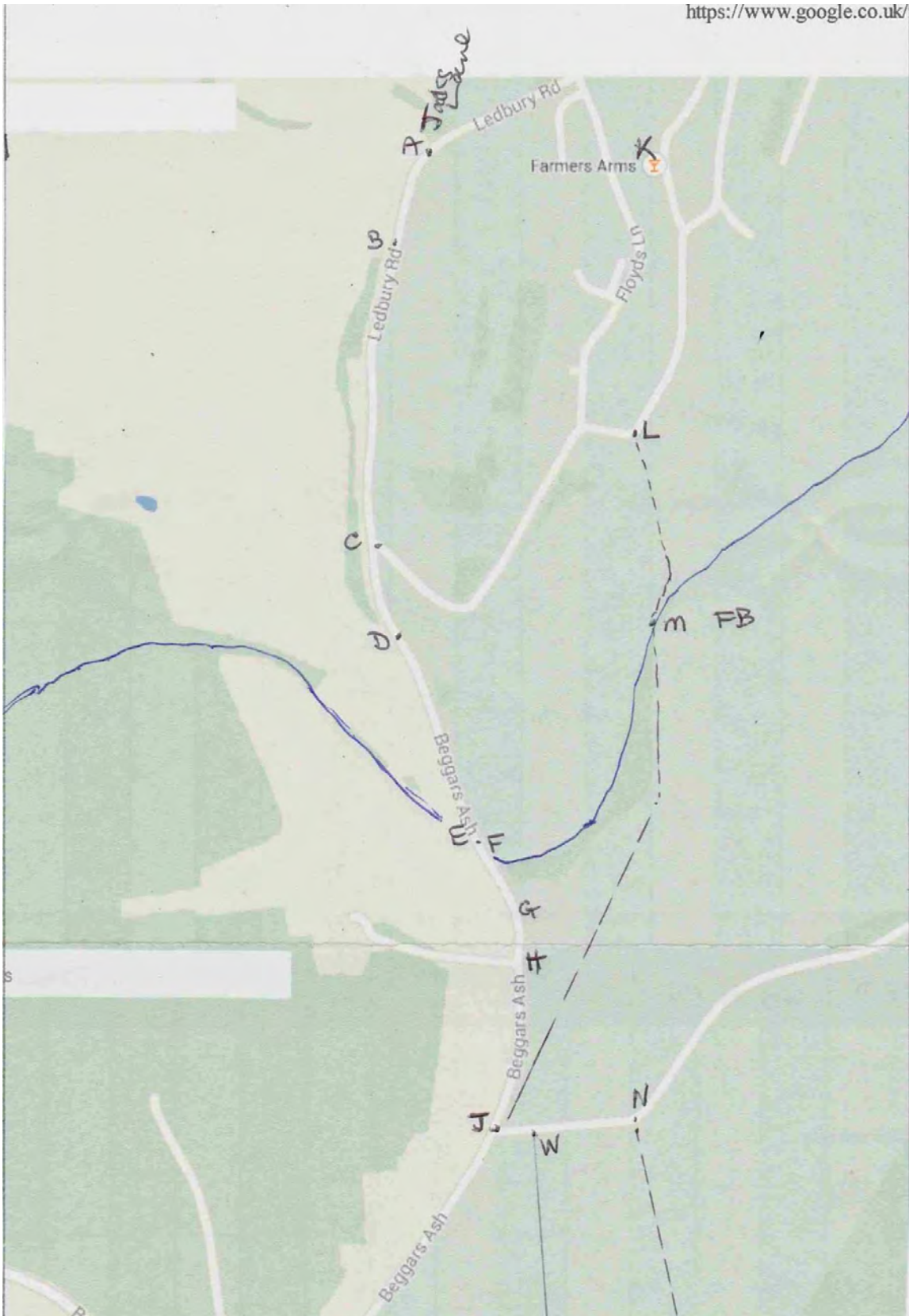
In looking at the map, it would be possible to create a route from the Oak to the Bromyard Road which cuts the corner at the junction. By creating a route which cuts the corner, you still end up with a route which is longer than via the road (by between 26% and 30%). There are two possible routes (taking account of the roads through the orchard); the ideal route is not possible as it's blocked by apple trees. The possible routes are shown on Diagram 5.3A. They are A-D-F-C and A-D-E-C.



Diagram 5.3A – showing the optional footpaths which cut the corner at the Bromyard Road

5.4 Map of the northern section

This map shows the two routes at the north end of Wellington Heath. These run from the end of Jacks Lane (A on the map) and the Farmers Arms (K on the map) to the Oak (J on the map) at the end of the drive to The Frith.



5.5 Map of the southern section

This map shows the two routes at the south end of Wellington Heath – from the Oak (J on the map) to the station (S on the map) and to the end of Knapp Lane R on the map). Note: the Oak is at the end of the drive to The Frith.

