

CLIFFORD (HEREFORDSHIRE) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

August 2022

Incorporating Clifford, Clifford Village, Priory Wood,
Pen-Y-Parc, Hardwicke, Archenfield, Westbrook and Middlewood

Plan Period 2011 - 2031



SUMMARY

Clifford Parish is a cherished place, with features that make it special and worthy of careful protection. It is defined by its unique natural setting and overwhelmingly beautiful landscape. This is out-of-the-ordinary having been deemed to be an important transitional landscape in a number of planning decisions. Residents of the Parish value this natural setting and landscape highly and want to conserve it. Active engagements with residents took place during the development of this plan. The overall feedback was that residents love where they live and want to ensure that the Parish is enhanced and protected.

Other key points of note from the feedback include:

Clifford Parishioners generally accept a housing target of 30 for the planning period 2011-2031, though it is recognised that the plan must make positive provision for development, many residents expressed the view that there should be an upper limit when they were consulted, with developments being small-scale and in keeping with the area and landscape. There is a risk of disproportionate overdevelopment of Clifford Parish in the current planning period, and this should be prevented.

Settlement boundaries for Clifford Village and Priory Wood have been defined. The rest of the Parish is classified as "open countryside" where there are restrictions upon housing development. Affordable housing for local people using exception sites will be encouraged.

The special and delicate landscape of Clifford is of great importance to its residents. Housing, industrial, and agricultural developments would therefore have to safeguard this key feature of Clifford Parish and improve or enhance the landscape.

Because of its natural beauty Clifford Parish is popular with tourists and this provides a growing sustainable industry and job opportunities for locals. However, tourism should be small-scale and have an enhancing impact on the landscape and environment.

Local rural roads are narrow, and residents believe they are already at capacity. Traffic needs to be carefully managed to avoid road safety and capacity issues. Employment and similar developments that generate levels of HGV traffic capable of being accommodated on the local highway network would be supported.

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Photographs courtesy of Billie Charity, Mark Hope-Jones, Christine Bates, Andrew Craven, Margaret Davies, **Ben Whittle** and Egbert Smit

Front cover – View across the Parish to Hay Bluff

LIST OF POLICY HEADINGS:

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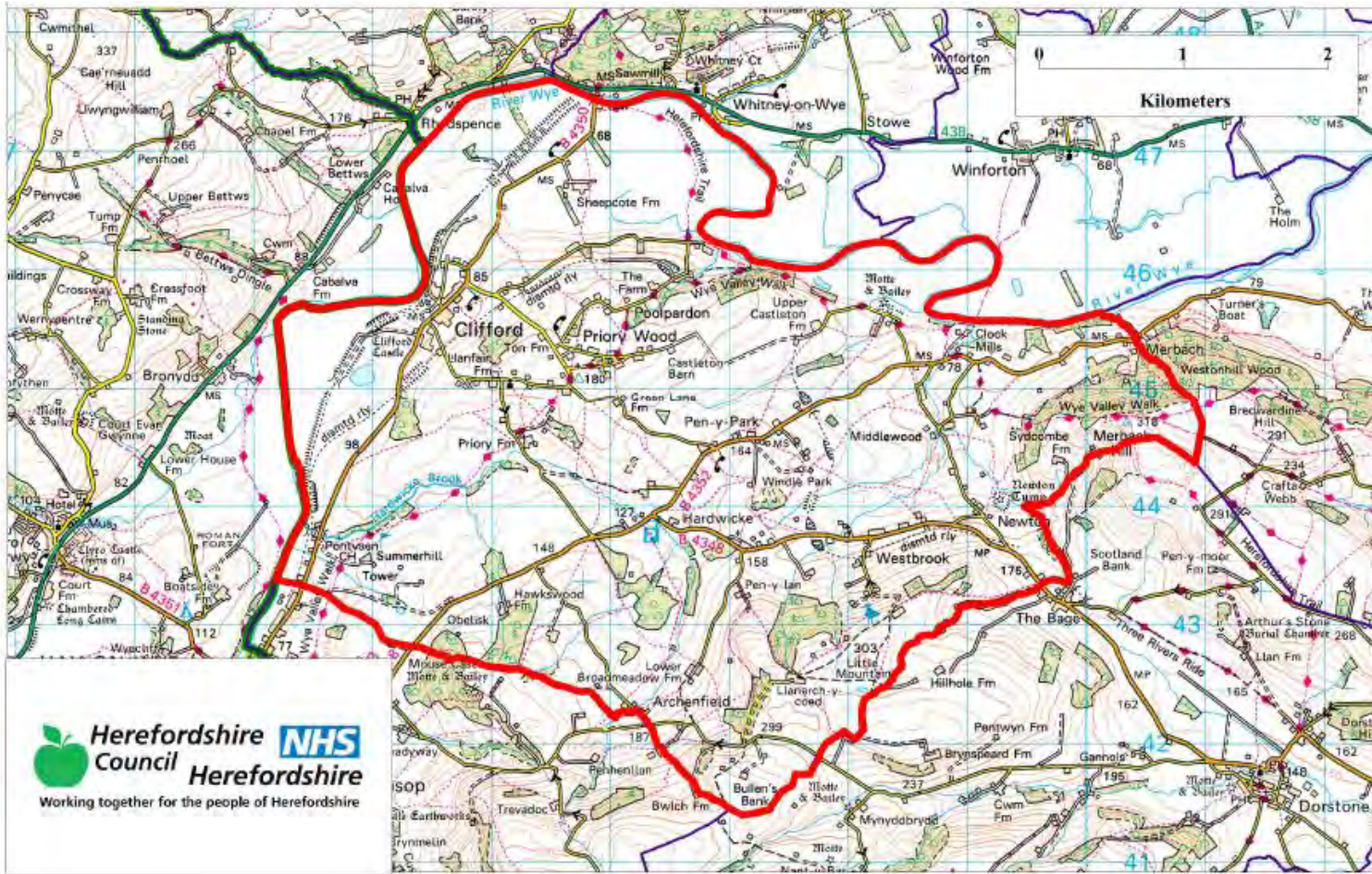
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) process is a 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 Clifford 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, on 25th March 2013.
- 1.3 In deciding to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council was aware of the alternatives which were:
 - i) Not to prepare a plan but rely upon Herefordshire Core Strategy which would allow developers to bring forward sites in any of the settlements as they see fit in order to meet and potentially exceed the target for new housing set for the Parish.
 - ii) Rely upon Herefordshire Council bringing forward its Rural Areas Sites Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD), which will cover those settlements where Neighbourhood Plans are not being prepared.
 - iii) The Parish Council to support the establishment of a local Steering Group to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan where the local community could be involved.
- 1.4 The first option was discounted in particular because it would provide no opportunity for the local communities to be involved in shaping the area they live and work in. For example, a developer might come forward with a scheme that would concentrate all the development in one settlement. The second option relies upon Herefordshire Council producing the Rural Areas Sites Allocation DPD quickly and this could not be guaranteed. Furthermore, the level of community involvement would be less than could be undertaken locally. The preferred approach gives the local community the greatest level of involvement.
- 1.5 This plan draws on a residents' questionnaire distributed in October 2017, itself informed by a large Neighbourhood Plan community event in July 2017 in Clifford Community Centre; and subsequent community consultation events during 2018. The response rate on the questionnaire was 48%, which – we were advised – is an encouraging return for a large but thinly populated Parish like Clifford.
- 1.6 Public meetings were held during the course of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process. All information about the development of the plan has been made available through the Parish Council's website and the Steering Group meetings

have been open to the public. The plan is also informed by Clifford's Parish Plan, produced in 2008, and is further supplemented by a range of other information sources produced by Herefordshire Council, such as its strategic environmental assessment and census data.

1.7 The map on the next page shows the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Map 1: Clifford Neighbourhood Plan Area



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2. ABOUT CLIFFORD

- 2.1 Clifford lies in a spectacular landscape between the foot of the Black Mountains National Park and the River Wye which is both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), and between Hay-on-Wye and Bredwardine. The Golden Valley runs through the east part of the Parish. Clifford Parish encompasses the areas of Clifford, Clifford Village, Priory Wood, Pen-Y-Parc, Hardwicke, Westbrook, Middlewood and Archenfield.
- 2.2 The Parish boundary extends for 27 kilometres (km) and encompasses a diamond shaped area of 253 km². It is one of the largest Parishes in the county of Herefordshire, covering more than 10 times the area of Hereford city. There are 38 km of public roads and 53.4 km of bridleways and public footpaths, and two disused railway lines cross the Parish. The River Wye, fed by numerous streams, forms much of the northern and western boundary. Part of the river – from the Dulas Brook just below Hay-on-Wye, to the Rhydspence Inn, which is to the west of Whitney-on-Wye toll bridge (the only remaining river crossing point in Clifford) – forms the national boundary with Wales.
- 2.4 The greatest cluster of the 221 households in the Parish are concentrated in Clifford Village, followed by Priory Wood. The remainder are at widely dispersed locations. The Parish population is 530, of whom some 330 are of working age; the balance is fairly evenly split between those aged under 15 and those over 65. A fifth of those of working age are associated directly or indirectly with agricultural activities, notably livestock and arable farming. Others are involved in manufacturing, repair, construction, real estate or the public sector. There is a thriving bed and breakfast trade because of Clifford's beautiful surroundings and proximity to Hay-on-Wye and the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- 2.5 Although the majority of homes in Clifford Parish are concentrated in Clifford Village and Priory Wood, the Parish **does not have a clear 'focal point'**. Its primary school, community centre and pre-school are all co-located in Pen-y-Parc, which is some two miles from Clifford Village. This cluster of community buildings hosts the majority of community events, including the annual community show and a variety of social and community clubs. The Parish has two churches, one located near Priory Wood, and one in Hardwicke, while the Parish's only pub is located at the eastern edge of the Parish, close to the border with Bredwardine. The lack of a single community focal point makes it difficult to indicate what the centre of Clifford Parish is.

2.6 Clifford has very limited services, facilities, and infrastructure¹, in particular public transport, and consequently there is heavy reliance on motorcars for access to urban centres. The cluster of community buildings constituting the primary school, community centre and pre-school are served by a very small car park, which is frequently congested at school drop-off and pick-up times. A public bus only serves the east part of the Parish; the majority of the Parish (including the community buildings, Priory Wood and Clifford Village) has no bus stop.



Picture 1: Flooding of the River Wye in October 2018. All (flooded) land to the right of the river is in Clifford Parish

2.7 Clifford has a rich natural and historical heritage, including the River Wye Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest, five scheduled ancient monuments², and 71 Listed Buildings³. Clifford Castle, in Clifford Village, has just undergone a significant restoration by Historic England. Clifford also has 14 Special Wildlife Sites⁴, 18 areas of ancient woodland⁵, and 5 areas of Common Land. The

¹ To illustrate the rurality of this Parish, Clifford has just one stretch of pavement, extending approx. 100 metres

² Clifford Castle; Newton Tump; The westernmost of a pair of bowl barrows, 310m north-east of Llanerch-Y-Coed; Motte & Bailey Castle, north of Old Castleton; Motte Castle 150m east of Tump House Farm.

³ See Appendix 1

⁴ River Wye; Clifford Common; Ton Wood; Leech Pool; Grove Wood; Hardwick Brook; Mousecastle, Hawks & Scudamore Common Woods; New Coppice; Alt Common & Cot Wood; Little Mountain & Newhouse Wood; Bach Dingle; Roadside verge, south side of B4348; Merbach Hill, Benfield Park & Weston Hill Woods; Windle Wood

⁵ Rhydspence Plantation (border); Kiln Ground Wood (border); Ton Wood; Grove Wood; Castleton Hill Wood; Windle Park Wood; Garnold Wood; Hardwick Brook Wood; New Coppice; Pikes Wood; Newhouse Wood; Cot Wood; Cwm Bach Wood; Hawks Wood; Mousecastle Wood; Benfield Park (border); 2 x unlabelled sites in the south-east of the Parish.

Parish lies just beyond the northern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park, from which there are extensive views across the whole Parish, including the River Wye valley. The Brecon Beacons is designated an International Dark Sky Reserve, with Hay Bluff – which overlooks the Parish – identified as one of 10 locations to visit for star gazing. It is therefore not surprising that residents emphasise the value of the dark night skies, exceptional views, and natural beauty of Clifford Parish.

- 2.8 Parts of the Parish are classified as having the highest risk of fluvial flood within the Upper Middle Wye catchment. When the River Wye breaks its banks, the north-western part of Clifford Parish is subject to flooding. Most river access is privately owned, however there is a small area of publicly accessible Wildlife Trust Reserve next to the river, near Clifford Castle.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of this document is to provide policies for future development and preservation of the Parish, make the voice of Parishioners heard, and to help interested parties understand how the planning system works and what the opportunities and boundary conditions are.

3.2 In preparing Clifford Neighbourhood Plan the community set the following vision:

To be a Parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people feel valued and there are homes, businesses and facilities to meet the needs of a vibrant rural community.

3.3 To support this vision the community was consulted upon a number of objectives that the Neighbourhood Plan should pursue. The following points were agreed as the basis for setting proposals and development management policies:

Housing

- Herefordshire Core Strategy calls for a minimum of 30 homes built in Clifford Parish in the period covering 2011-2031, and this should be accommodated in a way that will protect the important landscape and character of our settlements as well as meet other environmental and capacity constraints.

Landscape

- Any development should avoid damaging Clifford's precious and valued landscape.
- Clifford Parish lies within a key transitional zone between the upland plateau of the Black Mountains and the cultivated intimacy of lowland England, as referred to in the National Character Area 99. Despite not being formally designated, Clifford is part of a landscape that has physical attributes which take it out of the ordinary and its character and features should be protected as a valued landscape.

Roads and Traffic

- The effects of traffic should be reduced on the community so that residents are safe using local roads, including by bicycle where possible; traffic can move freely but at a safe speed; local roads are enhanced where they need to cope with new development; and HGV movements are minimised on the Parish's roads.

Sustainability

- The Plan contributes towards sustainable development through protecting and enhancing the Parish's rich cultural and environmental heritage. Flood risk will be actively managed and low-energy development supported.

- Sustainable farming is supported, where this can be accommodated sensitively within the landscape and meet other environmental and capacity criteria.
- Significant industrial, warehousing and potentially polluting development and/or operations out of scale with the landscape are not supported.

Opportunities for Employment

- The Plan includes proposals and policies to enable more people to work where they live, or closer to their homes. These include attracting businesses and employment suitable for a rural area, and supporting sustainable agriculture, tourism and diversification within the rural economy.
- New employment opportunities are encouraged, provided they are small-scale and do not have a detrimental impact on the landscape and/or quality of life of residents.

Community Services and Facilities

- The Plan fosters community spirit by defining and supporting existing services and facilities (the school, the community centre, the two churches, the pre-school and the pub); and setting parameters for future new and improved provisions.



Picture 2: Looking over Clifford Parish with the Black Mountains (part of Brecon Beacons NP) in the background

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

- 4.1 Clifford Parish residents place high value on the natural environment, views and landscape. Clifford Parish's landscape is out-of-the-ordinary having been deemed to be an important transitional landscape in a number of planning decisions and in that context should be considered valued in terms of Core Strategy policy⁶. To look sustainably after Clifford's natural environment, the landscape needs to be protected from inappropriate development and enhanced. Any development should not be out of character with the area or have a negative impact on the landscape. Both housing and employment development should protect or enhance the special landscape of Clifford Parish. Sustainable farm diversification is supported, providing it has a positive impact on the landscape.

Policy CNP1: Promoting Sustainable Development

Clifford Parish Council will support positive measures that promote sustainable development in accordance with 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 for maintaining a cohesive and resilient community:

- a) The highest priority will be given to ensuring new development is located and designed to conserve and enhance the character of the rural landscape within which it is to be located, in particular the setting of its settlements and views within and across the Parish.*
- b) Provision will be made for at least 30 dwellings over the plan-period 2011 to 2031, with emphasis given to ensuring new homes meet the needs of local people.*
- c) The development of the local rural economy will be supported particularly by enabling the diversification of businesses and employment opportunities but ensuring any new development does not damage the landscape and views of Clifford Parish.*
- d) Development should not result in danger from vehicles or traffic that cannot be accommodated upon the local highway network, both in terms of highway capacity and effect upon local amenity. Measures to reduce danger and the effect of traffic upon communities should be pursued.*
- e) The multi-use of local facilities and provision of infrastructure to support broadband and telecommunications will be promoted to improve accessibility to services where practicable.*

⁶ See National Planning Policy Framework (2019) paragraph 170(a)

*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 community's sustainable development priorities set out above and policies within** the Herefordshire Local Plan, in particular Policy SS1 (presumption in favour of sustainable development). Where there are overriding material considerations that indicate these policies should not be followed, the benefits sought in relation to the priorities set out in this policy should remain pertinent to compensatory or mitigation measures sought as part of any proposal.*



Picture 3: Clifford show at Clifford Community Centre

- 4.2 This policy sets the basis not only for this Neighbourhood Plan but should also guide development that is brought forward through the development management process, where matters are not covered by specific policies, in order to ensure the priorities are achieved. An integrated approach to development is promoted.
- 4.3 Quality of life in Clifford is highly valued and this is strongly linked to the local natural environment. More than two-thirds of residents identified the following issues as particularly important in the Parish: preserving existing woodland;

preserving river meadows; building in appropriate places; preserving hedgerows; enhancing natural habitats; and safeguarding views over the settlements and open countryside of the Parish.

- 4.4 Historically, housing development in Clifford Parish has been limited and come forward through 'windfall' sites, mostly the conversion of redundant farm buildings and other rural exception sites. Since the Herefordshire Core Strategy came into effect there has been a marked increase in the number of new residential developments in Priory Wood and Clifford Village. These two settlements are now identified as locations which could support 'proportionate' development. More than three-quarters of local residents consider that there should either be less than the minimum target of 30 homes built in the current plan period, or that 30 should be the maximum. 22% of residents feel that 30 should be the minimum, but there should be an upper limit, and only 1% state that there should be no upper limit. Although this sets the background to this NDP, it is recognised that some housing to meet local needs is required, to enable young families to live within the Parish.
- 4.5 Existing buildings, redundant farms buildings and previously developed brownfield land were identified by three-quarters of local residents as suitable for business or employment purposes.
- 4.6 The Parish's road network primarily comprises country lanes, many being narrow and of limited capacity. This hampers further development, as even current road use often results in damage to verges and drainage ditches. About half of local residents said that the ditches on local roads need improvement. In addition, poor drainage and road flooding is a problem, with a third of residents noting that flooding affects travel in and out of Clifford Village. Road safety is an increasing issue, with more traffic travelling through the Parish and HGVs using small roads as a shortcut to and from Mid Wales. 60% of residents support the introduction of HGV restriction orders and believe the Parish's roads are at capacity.

Development Strategy

- 4.7 Prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2015, the whole of Clifford Parish was considered open countryside and neither Clifford Village nor Priory Wood were defined as settlements within which housing development should take place. Housing development, therefore, resulted from rural exceptions. Priory Wood has never had a settlement boundary, whereas Clifford Village previously had a boundary defined for it in interim policy guidance prepared by the former South Herefordshire District Council. Clifford Village is the larger of the two settlements. The small hamlets of Pen-Y-Parc, Hardwicke, Archenfield and Middlewood have never been identified as settlements and are considered open countryside. Provision must be made in this plan for at least the minimum number of houses required by the Core Strategy. Other historic forms of development that are expected to continue during the plan period include those related to farming; agricultural and rural diversification, including tourism; the conversion of rural

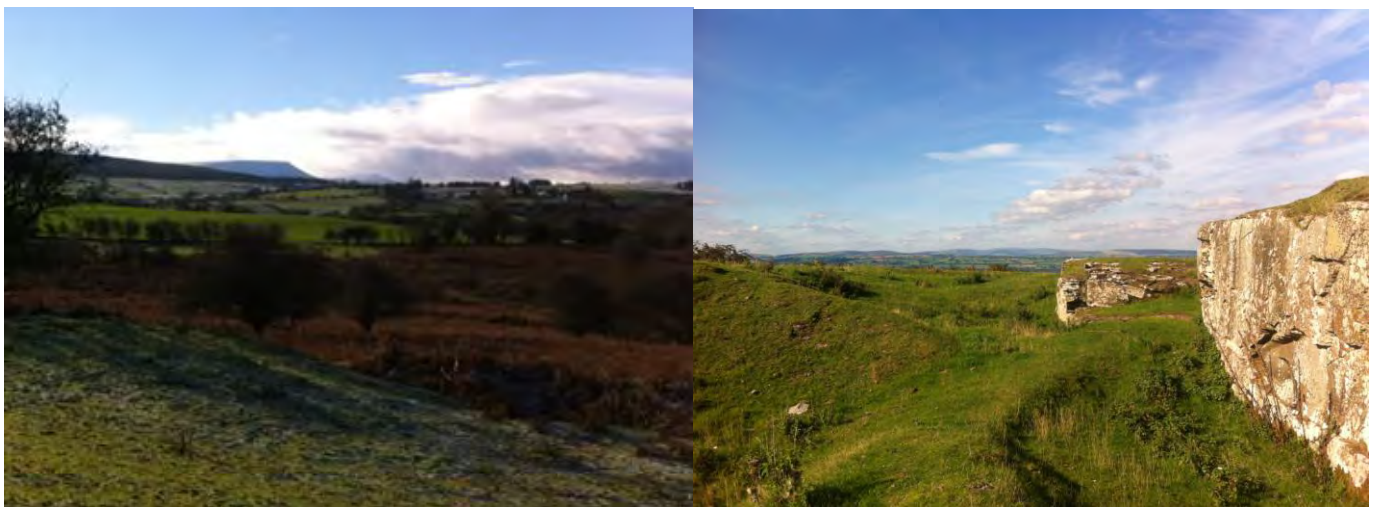
buildings to workshops, offices and studios; and the provision of infrastructure. Constraints to development, in particular landscape quality, flooding and the local road network, should influence the strategy for accommodating development.

Policy CNP2: Development Strategy

*The settlements of Clifford Village and Priory Wood will accommodate the majority of new housing required to meet the proportional housing growth requirements within the Parish. Housing development outside their settlement boundaries will only take place where they meet the requirements of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA3 (**Herefordshire's Countryside**). There should be an emphasis on housing types that meet the local need for family housing.*

Business needs, infrastructure provision and associated development will be accommodated within Clifford Parish primarily through the conversion of redundant farm and other rural buildings and limited new buildings and extensions.

New buildings and conversions should be of a scale and design to fit sensitively into the landscape and, where appropriate, comprise low-energy development.



Pictures 4 and 5: Views from the top of Little Mountain: Black Mountains (left), Old Quarry and views down the Golden Valley (right)

5. CHARACTER, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

5.1 Clifford Parish has a beautiful landscape with unique qualities including some impressive views and vistas, important landscape features and a rich biodiversity, all of which are greatly valued by residents and visitors alike. Although not a nationally designated landscape, it is recognised as having some significant qualities, including contributing to the wider setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park, which it borders. The National Parks Commission originally identified the area including part of this Parish for inclusion within a cross-border National Park, but it is understood not to have proceeded through difficulties in designating such areas across the national border⁷. This is, however, testament to the area's beauty and scenic value.

5.2 The United Kingdom Government is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention⁸. This defined landscape as:

"..... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."

Not only do local residents consider that the Parish's landscape is important, but its components and relationship to nationally important landscape features is widely recognised. The convention recognises that landscape comprises elements of both the natural and built environment. The Parish's geology sets the basis for the landscape, which sits as north- and east-facing lower slopes to the Black Mountains sandstone scarps. Below these and to their north, the River Wye meanders across the soft beds of Raglan Mudstone. Only a very small proportion of its land is occupied by residential buildings and farm premises.

5.3 The division between the higher ground and River Wye flood plain is reflected in the landscape falling within two distinct Natural Character Areas defined by Natural England. To the south, land falls within the Black Mountains and Golden Valley Natural Character Area⁹ (NCA99) where the objectives are to protect, manage and enhance its qualities and characteristics. This landscape incorporates working farms and small clusters of dwellings. However, outside of any clusters of dwellings, the landscape is dominated and characterised by open fields, hedgerows and woodland, and the steep-sided valley slopes, with only scattered or small groups of buildings visible from surrounding public vantage points. Because of its unique and special characteristics, the area is very popular

⁷ <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CPRE-Report-A-New-AONB-in-the-Marches-2011.pdf>

⁸ The convention was adopted on 20 October 2000 in Florence (Italy) and came into force on 1 March 2004. It is open for signature by member states of the European Community and European non-member states. It is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all dimensions of European landscape.

⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5391726126563328?category=587130>

with tourists, walkers and day-trippers alike. As a borderland transitional landscape between the upland plateau of the Black Mountains and the cultivated intimacy of lowland England, it is typical of landscapes referred to in NCA99. As such it has the same characteristics as that of the neighbouring Parish of Dorstone, which successive planning inspectors have identified as being a 'valued landscape'¹⁰. The transitional zone is all the more important in that it lies adjacent to the Brecon Beacons National Park on the other side of the Welsh border, and within which the Black Mountains sit. Of particular concern would be to ensure that development contributes to the local distinctiveness of the area; demonstrates that the character of the landscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection; and is of a scale commensurate with its location and setting, given the character and appearance of this transitional area. Medium and long-distance views are particularly important from public vantage points.

- 5.4 To the north is the Herefordshire Lowlands Natural Character Area¹¹ (NCA100), where the emphasis is upon protecting and managing the River Wye and its many associated watercourses, as well as the flood plain to improve the health of the river; protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, integrating new development through the use of green infrastructure principles informed by existing heritage, geodiversity and biodiversity assets; and protecting and managing existing semi-natural habits, to restore them. The Parish's two settlements fall within this Natural Character Area. The landscape character of this area also contributes to the transitional landscape qualities referred to in the previous paragraph, and potentially more so in terms of the rapid change from the Black Mountains to the valley bottom of the River Wye. This geographical variety adds to the valuable nature of the landscape within this Parish. Consequently, the concerns expressed above apply equally to this part of the Parish.
- 5.5 In addition, Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment¹² identifies three landscape types within the Parish: a narrow corridor bordering the River Wye described as Riverside Meadows in the north; Principal Timbered Farmlands to the south; and sandwiched between these, Principal Settled Farmlands. The approach taken within the Landscape Character Assessment, which forms part of the basis for Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD1, is that all landscapes make a contribution and that considerations of landscape description together with management of the measures for conservation, restoration and enhancement indicate how the character of the particular valued landscape should be

¹⁰ See Planning Appeal decision, March 16 2018, ref APP/W1850/W/17/3188897 at

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=172894&search=172894

¹¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4827527503675392?category=587130>

¹² https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape_character_assessment_for_herefordshire.pdf

protected and enhanced within the context set by National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 170(a).

- **Riverside Meadows:** This is an area prone to occasional flooding. Settlement is typically absent, with only mills and other buildings directly associated with the river being present. The sense of unity in these landscapes relies heavily on extensive views along the length of river corridor, so new-build development within them should be discouraged. They are secluded pastoral landscapes, characterised by meandering tree-lined rivers, flanked by riverside meadows which are defined by hedge and ditch boundaries. Tree cover is a notable element of riverside meadows, usually in a linear pattern along the hedge and ditch lines, and to the banks of watercourses. Typically, species are alder and willow, the latter often pollarded. Wetland habitats are becoming scarce, therefore opportunities to conserve and restore them, and to enhance biodiversity and landscape character by returning the land to a controlled annual flooding regime should be encouraged.
- **Principal Settled Farmlands:** This landscape type is settled agricultural landscapes of dispersed, scattered farms, relic commons and small villages and hamlets only capable of accommodating limited new development. Low densities of individual dwellings would be acceptable. Additional housing in hamlets and villages should be modest in size in order to preserve the character of the original settlement. Networks of small winding lanes nestling within a matrix of hedged fields are characteristic. Tree cover is largely restricted to thinly scattered hedgerow trees, groups of trees around dwellings, and trees along stream sides and other watercourses. Groups of trees and orchards are often associated with settlements. Woodland is not a characteristic feature of this landscape type. Opportunities should be taken to conserve and enhance the hedgerow pattern, tree cover and wetland habitat along watercourses. The pattern of tree cover associated with settlements should be strengthened. Opportunities should be taken to maintain and increase traditional standard orchards. The integrity of a dispersed settlement pattern should be retained. The north side of Clifford Village falls within this landscape type, while that on the southern side of the main road running through the village is within principal timbered farmlands.
- **Principal Timbered Farmlands:** This area typically has a dispersed development pattern and would not see clusters of dwellings forming any settlements. It has filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. Tree cover in the guise of small, ancient semi-natural woodlands, hedgerow trees, and linear tree cover associated with streams and watercourses provide a strong unifying presence. Woodlands are mixed native broadleaved species predominate, especially oak. Lines of mature oak are a particular feature of the hedgerows, which are visually very dominant. Species-rich, complex habitats support a wide range of flora and fauna. Emphasis is in terms of conserving and restoring the composition of hedgerows, trees along watercourses, native

broadleaved stock and the historic settlement pattern. Positive measures include additional planting of hedgerow oaks to broaden their age structure, enhancement of tree cover, and planting new small woods, favouring oaks. Emphasis is upon conserving the historic dispersed settlement pattern and the grouping or clustering of development is not appropriate within this landscape type in order to meet the provisions of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD1. Priory Wood and the southern side of Clifford Village fall within this landscape type, and its characteristics should inform the approach to development within these settlements where appropriate.

- 5.6 Quality of life in Clifford Parish is highly valued and this is strongly linked to the local natural environment. More than two-thirds of residents support preserving woodlands, meadows and hedgerows. They also feel strongly about building in appropriate places and safeguarding views over the settlements and the Parish's open countryside.

Policy CNP3: Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape of the Parish

*Development proposals should conserve or enhance the Parish's **important** landscape through:*

- a) *Maintaining landscape character, including where appropriate measures to conserve, restore or enhance its inherent characteristics, particularly those comprising its local distinctiveness.*
- b) *Ensuring development is of a scale which is commensurate with its location and setting, given the character and appearance of this transitional area.*
- c) *Requiring proposals to demonstrate that the character of the landscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection.*
- d) *Ensuring the historic landscape informs both the location and sensitive design of proposals.*
- e) *Retaining valued landscape features such as important trees, ponds, orchards, waterways and hedgerows, adding to these assets where opportunities are available.*
- f) *Ensuring the beauty, amenity and visual quality of the features contributing to the setting and village-scapes of Clifford Village and Priory Wood are retained.*
- g) *Requiring full and detailed landscape schemes to ensure that development fits sensitively into the Parish's **landscape and, where appropriate, the setting of the** relevant settlement. This should include areas of significant tree planting, utilising native species.*

Key Views in Clifford Parish

- 5.7 There are many important landscape views within the Parish, and the medium and long-distance ones, in particular, are of more than local significance. Striking views are available in many locations, especially to the Black Mountains, Hay Bluff, and

Wye Valley. Views across the Parish from its edges, and just outside its area to the west, are no less attractive, with the Parish's **landscape contributing to panoramas** from many viewing points. Linear views along the River Wye add to the variety available, encouraging visitors and promoting walking for a healthy lifestyle to residents. Both the Wye Valley Walk and Herefordshire Trail pass through the Parish, **linking with Offa's Dyke Path just outside the Parish** to the west. The panoramic views and viewpoints across to notable receptors, especially from these trails, are worthy of being retained for their contribution to a highly regarded transitional landscape on the periphery of a National Park and part of a valued landscape. The Wye Valley Walk passes through the settlement of Priory Wood. Local and wider vistas within and out from the two principal settlements complete an extensive range of impressive views. The most important views within the Parish are presented on maps and photographs in Appendix 2. The policy below identifies views which should be protected in accordance with Herefordshire Local Plan policy LD1(landscape and townscape).

Policy CNP4: Protecting the Scenic Beauty of the Parish

The following vistas and panoramas in Clifford Parish, including those revealing the character of and associated with the Wye Valley Walk and Herefordshire Trail where they pass through the Parish, should be protected from the adverse effects of development:

Views in, around, and of Priory Wood

1. From the upper section of Church Road, looking south across the area within the Parish in the foreground of Hay-on-Wye, the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons National Park.
2. Priory Wood Presbyterian Chapel (a Listed Building) from the triangular area of Common Land with a playground.
3. The series of views along the Wye Valley Walk looking north towards the Wye Valley and uplands beyond, some of them **through gaps in Priory Wood's central triangle/core located on the northern frontage along the hamlet's southerly road.**
4. From the stile where the Wye Valley Walk enters the large field between Priory Wood and Poolpardon, **looking north over open countryside to Lockster's Lane** and the Wye Valley beyond.

Views in, around, and of Clifford Village

5. From the lower section of Church Road as it descends into Clifford Village, looking west to Clifford Castle (a Scheduled Monument) and across the valley to the hills of East Powys and the Cambrian Hills.
6. Clifford Castle (a Scheduled Monument) from the B4350.
7. From the B4350 heading towards Hay-on-Wye from Clifford Village, looking west at open pastures, the Old Priory Trout Pond, and the River Wye.

Views within the rest of the Parish

8. From the easterly tip of Priory Wood, looking east across open countryside towards Castleton Barn (a Listed Building).
9. From **St Mary's** churchyard, looking south down the valley with the Black Mountains to the left, the Brecon Beacons National Park in the distance, and the Cambrian Hills to the right.
10. **From Lockster's Lane, looking west down at Clifford** Village and across the Wye Valley to the Cambrian Hills beyond.
11. **From Lockster's Lane, looking** north to the Wye Valley and the Radnor Hills beyond.
12. As you exit Clifford to the south on the B4350, looking south-east across Summerhill to the Black Mountains beyond.
13. From Castleton Lane up to Merbach Hill and over to Middlewood and Little Mountain.
14. Looking down from Merbach Hill over the River Wye, up to Castleton, and over through Westbrook.
15. View of Holy Trinity Church in Hardwicke from the B4348.
16. Looking down from Little Mountain over most of Clifford Parish.
17. The River Wye, Wye Valley, and Merbach Hill from the B4352 at Pen-y-Park.
18. The River Wye from the Wye Valley Walk around Poolpardon.
19. Panoramic of Priory Wood, Middlewood, Merbach Hill and the Wye Valley from the layby on the B4348 between Westbrook and The Bage.
20. Panoramic view looking east as you descend from Pen-y-Parc along the B4352.



Picture 6: **Clifford's landscape lends itself well for watching beautiful sunsets.**

Biodiversity

5.8 The Parish contains a range of habitats across the hierarchy designations and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the levels of protection that they should be afforded. The River Wye is a major watercourse of international ecological importance, designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The ecological importance of the Parish is also reflected by it containing 13 Special Wildlife Sites and a further three close to its border. It also contains 15 areas identified as ancient woodlands. These are all important elements of green infrastructure within the Parish that must inform where and how new development should be accommodated within Natural Character Areas and what biodiversity net gains should be sought. Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map¹³ further emphasises these features that have been used to identify important biodiversity core areas (areas of high nature conservation value) and buffer zones (areas that protect core areas from adverse effects of the wider environment), indicating the breadth of biodiversity present. Natural wildlife assets within the Parish are listed in Appendix 1. Statements submitted with planning applications should provide supporting ecological information and analysis indicating the importance of an area and what measures are necessary to enhance the local ecological network. This should be informed by the biodiversity audit and associated recommendations for conservation, restoration and recreation of habitats; the protection and recovery of important species; and the enhancement of the ecological network of sites, wildlife corridors and stepping-stones identified within the Parish at the time. Parts of the wider catchment are of such concern that restrictions have been placed on new development. In the absence of adequate records supporting the requirement of the Wye SAC's management objective to meet favourable conservation status a precautionary approach has been taken to ensure the longer-term potential of the NDP's policies. Proposals have been put forward to cover the eventuality of the sub-catchment finding itself in a similar position in the future.

Policy CNP5: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment of the Parish

*Development proposals should conserve or enhance the Parish's **important** natural environment by ensuring:*

- a) Designated and other priority habitats and species, including ancient woodlands and assets included in Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, should be protected*

¹³ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/ecological_network_map

in accordance with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy LD2 (Biodiversity and geodiversity).

- b) *Measures to enhance connectivity within the local ecological network will be sought through:*
- i) creating, retaining and enhancing important natural habitats and features such as ancient trees, adding to tree cover utilising native tree species, ponds, orchards and hedgerows; and*
 - ii) supporting the biodiversity value of sensitive sites through creating buffers around these and adding to the network through creating or enhancing wildlife **corridors and 'stepping-stones'**.*
- c) *There should be a net gain in biodiversity wherever possible and the loss of any features, where absolutely necessary, shall be offset through full compensatory measures.*

Development proposals must, in particular, demonstrate that they will not have a significant adverse effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation and species of European importance. In the event that the integrity of the Upper River Wye catchment is found to be failing to meet its favourable conservation status, planning permission will only be granted where it is shown the proposal will not increase nutrient inputs into the SAC. This could include through the delivery of mitigation to make a proposal nutrient neutral.

Heritage Assets

- 5.9 There are six Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 71 Listed Buildings spread throughout the Parish. These are listed in Appendix 1. Clifford Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument sits on the western edge of Clifford Village, contributing to the character of the settlement. There are currently around 230 entries on **Herefordshire's Historic Environment Record**, which is an indication of the importance of heritage to the Parish's character and indicating its importance to the use of green infrastructure principles in determining how development should be accommodated. This includes 37 references to historic farmsteads. Historic England sponsored a Historic Farmstead Characterisation within Herefordshire and advice has been issued upon how such farmsteads should be conserved. Other locally important buildings also contribute to the character of the landscape and the Parish's settlements. **There are three unregistered but locally important parks and gardens.** Heritage Impact Assessments should be undertaken to inform developments that might potentially affect heritage assets and to show how the following policy has been complied with.

Policy CNP6: Protecting and Enhancing the Heritage Assets of the Parish

*Development proposals should conserve or enhance the Parish's **important** heritage assets through:*

- a) *Supporting development that would not adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings, particularly Clifford Castle.*
- b) *Requiring development proposals elsewhere, where appropriate, to be accompanied by full archaeological investigations. In the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ wherever possible.*
- c) *Supporting development that sustains or enhances the significance of features and the settings of Listed Buildings and other similar heritage assets.*
- d) *Ensuring every effort is made to retain and conserve buildings and heritage assets of local importance, including traditional rural buildings such as historic farmsteads.*
- e) *Only allowing development within Clifford Deer Park, The Priory, and The Moor unregistered parks and gardens if an assessment has shown the effects of works will fit sensitively into its design. In addition, the contribution that the park makes to the wider landscape will be relevant to this consideration.*

Local Green Space

5.10 An assessment of potential areas for inclusion as Local Green Space¹⁴ was undertaken and the conclusions used to inform proposals within this NDP. The areas identified in the following policy are considered important green space and special to the whole community. They are identified on Maps 2 and 3 and also shown on Clifford Village and Priory Wood Policies Maps. Any proposals for development within these **should be for the benefit of the site's current use**. Designation as Local Green Space does not indicate a right of public access if it is not already public space, neither does it change the current use. The protection afforded is simply to ensure the current benefits or alternatives that are compatible with their particular characteristics, are retained.

Policy CNP7: Protection of Local Green Space

The following areas are designated Local Green Space. Development that would result in the loss of these sites will not be permitted. Proposals for any development on these sites will be resisted unless they are related to their retention, management or enhancement of the green space and there is no significant adverse effect on residential amenity:

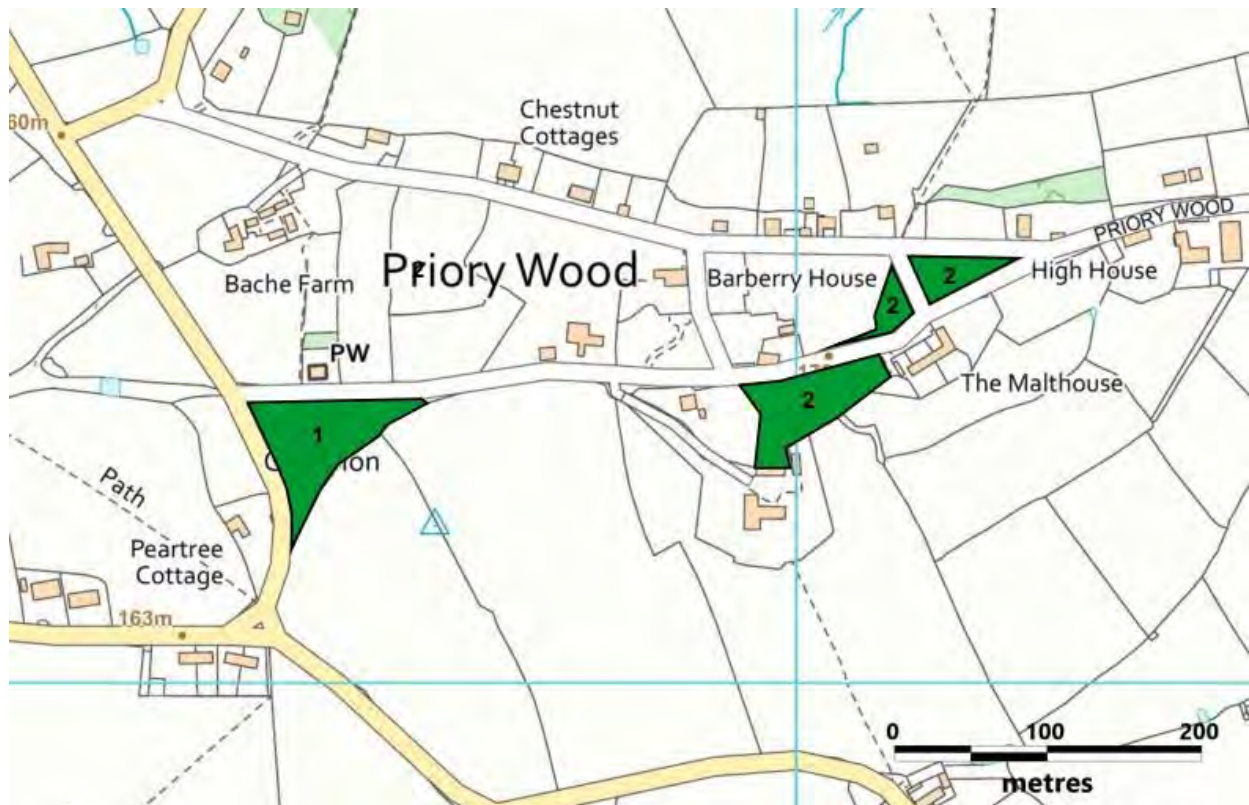
¹⁴ <http://cliffordparishcouncil.co.uk/clifford-neighbourhood-plan/>

- 1) *Priory Wood Playground Common*
- 2) *Malthouse Common*

5.11 The reasons advanced for the designation of each site are as follows:

- 1) Priory Wood Playground Common: This area of Common Land comprises a small parcel used as a community recreation area and wildflower meadow serving primarily Priory Wood hamlet. Its contribution is in terms of recreational value; tranquillity; richness of local wildlife; and the history, sense of place, and character of Priory Wood. Its extensive use by the community makes it special.
- 2) Malthouse Common: The site comprises small parcels of Common Land within Priory Wood hamlet. Its special qualities are appreciated by the local community through its contribution in terms of recreational community use value; tranquillity; richness of local wildlife; and sense of place and character of Priory Wood.

Map 2: Local Green Space at Priory Wood



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6. HOUSING

- 6.1 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy proposes a level of proportional housing growth of 30 new homes. Between April 2011 and March 2020, eleven homes had been completed and seventeen were committed through planning permissions including a site of 0.4 hectares with outline planning permission for five dwellings. The minimum target remaining is therefore two dwellings to be provided for during the period 2011 to 2031, mainly through this plan.
- 6.2 The community's aspirations are that 76% of residents believe the target during the plan period should be 30 new homes or fewer, believing development greater than this figure would change the landscape and rural character of the Parish. Since the resident's survey was undertaken and work began upon preparing the plan, numerous planning permissions have been granted for small developments, and it is evident that restricting housing development to the minimum number required is not practically possible. In order to respond to the expressed need for affordable housing for local young families and for older people, this would require at least a medium-sized site capable of providing a range of accommodation. Some residents are keen to see a scheme of community-led housing brought forward to build affordable homes. This is still possible, however, a dedicated group of volunteers is required to take it forward. Privately owned homes were preferred by the majority of respondents, though residents were overwhelmingly not in favour of blocks of flats or larger homes of four bedrooms or more.
- 6.3 Trends in terms of planning permissions granted within the Parish since 2000 but outside of Clifford Village and Priory Wood show a declining rate, with six built or granted planning permission since 2011 (at March 2019). An allowance for rural windfall housing development, utilising the provisions of Core Strategy policy RA3 (**Herefordshire's countryside**), might be considered to make some contribution to housing requirements during the remainder of the plan period. A similar modest rural windfall allowance of seven dwellings within the remaining plan period might be suggested, although would carry a degree of uncertainty.
- 6.4 In order to meet the basic condition required for NDPs, greater certainty had to be provided to Herefordshire Council that the required level of housing growth is likely to be met. Following calls for housing land, settlement boundaries have been defined for the two settlements and a number of sites allocated for housing. Residents expressed support for the defining of settlement boundaries for the two named settlements. Their boundaries have been defined using guidance prepared by Herefordshire Council following an assessment of the character and features that it is understood the community consider important. These assessments have informed a number of site-specific criteria that must be met in order for development within the boundaries to proceed. Other policies set out in this NDP and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy should also be taken into account to ensure development is sustainable.



Picture 7: Clifford Village along the River Wye. Clifford Castle can be seen on the right.

Settlement 1 - Priory Wood

- 6.5 Priory Wood is identified as a smaller settlement within Table 4.15 of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy where proportionate housing growth is appropriate and particular attention should be paid to the form, layout, character and setting of any sites and their location in that settlement. Development should also contribute to, or be essential to, its social well-being. It has not previously had a settlement boundary defined for it and was considered open countryside. Only limited infilling opportunities are considered to exist within the settlement boundary. Where opportunities do exist, it is essential that they are designed to fit sensitively into the street scene.
- 6.6 Historically, the built-up area within Priory Wood has been along the north side of the northerly east-west road, and along the south side of the southerly east-west road. The central triangular area, enclosed within these two, diverging east-west roads, has always been sparsely populated. It contains only five properties (including the chapel, now converted into a home), all of which have been there for at least 170 years. Three of them have a significant amount of land, used for horses (Bache Farm), sheep (Priory Wood Cottage) and subsistence farming (Oak Cottage). This is what gives the central area an open, agricultural feel, quite distinct from the built-up area. It constitutes a crucial element of the character of Priory Wood, with the openness of the central area affording views of the Wye

Valley to the north from the southerly road, which forms part of the Wye Valley Walk, and providing a clear sense of Priory Wood being on a ridge.

- 6.7 Herefordshire Council's **Guidance Note 20** indicates that although it is best for settlement boundaries to follow physical features such as field boundaries and curtilages, in order to conserve character, large gardens, orchards and other areas can be excluded. This applies particularly to Priory Wood, so that only its built-up frontage area is encompassed within the settlement boundary, but not the central triangular area. In defining the settlement boundary, it is recognised that few further opportunities for housing development are available beyond those granted planning permission since 2011, although a proportionate level of housing growth has already been accommodated through recent planning permissions.

Policy CNP8: Housing Development in Priory Wood

A settlement boundary is defined for Priory Wood, shown on Priory Wood Policies Map. Within this boundary, sensitive infilling can take place where, in addition to complying with other relevant policies in this NP and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, it retains those important frontage gaps that contribute to the character of the hamlet and maintains the opportunity for open views across the Wye Valley Floodplain from the Wye Valley Walk, which passes through the village.

Settlement 2 - Clifford Village

- 6.8 No settlement boundary was defined for Clifford Village in the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, although one was defined in a previous planning policy document prepared by the former South Herefordshire District Council. This has been used as the starting point for producing a new boundary within this NDP. Clifford Village is identified in Table 4.14 of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and as such is the main location for new housing. Consequently, land where proposals for new housing would be acceptable are included within its settlement boundary. These have been identified following an assessment of those submitted for consideration and indicated in Policy CNP9. Only a limited number of sites were identified for assessment. A balanced view was taken in terms of meeting local housing needs, weighed against environmental and other factors. One site was rejected because it was considered that any potential benefits were outweighed by the adverse environmental effects. The site assessment process is provided on the Parish Council's website¹⁵. The inclusion of land for housing immediately to the

¹⁵ <https://cliffordparishcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Meeting-Housing-Requirement-Report-and-Site-Assessment-.pdf>

north of Lower Court Farm has resulted in drawing both that farm and Upper Court Farm into the built-up area of the settlement and have therefore been included within its boundary.

- 6.9 Development in Clifford Village is constrained by two particular factors. These are the need to preserve the site and setting of Clifford Castle (see Policy CNP6) and the need to protect the amenity of the residents of new dwellings from the pollution effects arising from the poultry units on the south-west boundary of the settlement. In addition, the following village characteristics should also inform how and what development should be accommodated. The settlement is dissected by the B4350, which provides the opportunity for linear development along this axis. Historically, development has predominantly been single-depth, two-storey detached properties, of varying size, with front and rear garden space. This has created a balanced level of development appropriate for the fact there are limited pavements in the settlement and that the northern boundary of the Parish is restricted by the single-lane toll bridge.
- 6.10 In addition, there are important views within, to and from the village as a consequence of its historical development and surrounding topography, which are listed in the following policy.
- 6.11 Some development may arise from infill opportunities within the settlement boundary. These will be in addition to development upon proposed housing sites.

Policy CNP9: Housing Development in Clifford Village

A settlement boundary is defined for Clifford Village, shown on Clifford Village Policies Map. Within this boundary, sites are identified for housing development and sensitive infilling can take place where it complies with relevant policies in this NDP and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.

- 6.12 Three sites are proposed for new housing within Clifford in order to ensure that the required level of proportional housing growth is achieved. These were identified following an assessment of opportunities presented for consideration against a range of criteria¹⁶. For the chosen sites, specific requirements are identified to comply with design and other detailed policies within the NDP. These factors should be addressed through Heritage Impact Statements and Design and Access Statements. In addition, developers should note that Clifford Parish currently has a majority of detached homes with less than one-third either semi-detached or in a **terrace**. This has reduced the supply of smaller “affordable” homes. There is also a strong recognition of the rise in working from home and small business development, and therefore the need for future development to reflect this

¹⁶ <http://cliffordparishcouncil.co.uk/clifford-neighbourhood-plan/>

through the creation of live/work properties. Developers should seek to address this desired mix of properties, including the need for homes that cater for adapted living.

Policy CNP10: Housing Sites in Clifford Village

The following areas of land are identified on the Clifford Village Policies Map where new housing development may take place, provided they meet the requirements set out in relevant design and detailed policies within this plan:

- i) Land of approximately 0.4 hectares north of Wellfield Bungalow, Clifford.*
- ii) Land of approximately 0.2 hectares to south of White House.*
- iii) Land of approximately 1.5 hectares north of Lower Court Farm.*

Any development proposals for the development of the Lower Court Farm site should protect the settings of the Listed Buildings within the complex and full consideration given to the relationship with and potential impact on the Clifford Castle SAM. Development proposals should be accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment and full landscape scheme.

6.13 Relatively low development densities are expected upon the sites in order to retain the character of the settlement and its setting, to pay regard to the presence of heritage assets, and for the protection of residential amenity. This NDP contains a range of detailed policies in view of the importance that should be given to issues affecting the settlement and its location within such a sensitive environment. Advice upon those considered most important are highlighted below.

i) Land north of Wellfield Bungalow

This site already has outline planning permission (code P173967, granted April 2018) for five dwellings, but development has yet to commence. It falls within a previously defined settlement boundary for the village and the principle of its development should remain. It is subject to a number of conditions, including measures to ensure suitable vehicle access and parking, appropriate foul water and land drainage, landscaping and habitat enhancement, and water conservation and efficiency. Policies within this NDP cover these and other matters to which regard should be paid when determining any approval of reserved matters or should a further planning application be made. Policies CNP3, CNP12 and CNP19 are considered particularly relevant.

ii) Land south of White House

This site might accommodate between four and six dwellings, depending upon the size of houses proposed. For the purposes of assessing the contribution it might make towards the required level of proportional housing growth, the lower figure is suggested. The layout of the access road to the south of White House will set the form of development which should also be informed by a heritage impact assessment and include a high standard of layout, architectural detailing to reflect locally distinctive features, and landscaping in order to ensure it can be accommodated satisfactorily within the village's character. The opportunity to achieve biodiversity net gains should be taken in addition to the protection of existing natural capital. Again, in this regard policies CNP3, CNP12 and CNP19 are most important.

iii) Land north of Lower Court Farm

This comprises the combination of two sites identified through the NDP process which should be developed in combination. The larger area includes a range of agricultural buildings, to the rear of which is a commercial timber yard. It lies immediately adjacent to the curtilage of a complex of Listed Buildings, including Lower Court Farm, which is grade 2*. There would be benefits to the setting of this complex of buildings through the removal of the large agricultural buildings, although any scheme would need to be designed extremely sensitively. There is no indication upon Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record that the farm was identified within its Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project¹⁷, although the advice associated with this may be useful to inform a Heritage Impact Assessment, which is considered necessary to inform the development of the site. This assessment must also indicate how development should take place to protect the settings of the Listed Buildings within the complex. Regard might also need to be given to the relationship of any development to the setting of Clifford Castle SAM. A high-quality landscape scheme will also be required. The public right of way along the north side of the site will need to be protected. There are therefore a number of significant constraints to the development of the site, although also potential benefits. Consequently, a low density of development is anticipated, and it may be that development will not be possible within parts of the allocated area. However, as the largest site proposed within the plan, it should seek to address the need for a range of accommodation. The contribution suggested towards the required level of proportional housing growth from this site is 10 dwellings. Development should therefore pay special regard to policies CNP3, CNP6, CNP12 and CNP19.

¹⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/wm-county-summaries/herefordshire-county/>

6.14 For the purposes of contributing to the minimum housing requirement indicated for Clifford Parish, the three areas proposed should enable a minimum of 14 dwellings to be provided. **This is larger than the community's expressed wishes but meets the Government's requirement that NDPs should plan positively for growth.** It would result in a potential benefit to the environment within Clifford Village, especially enhancing the setting of Lower Court Farm, and could reduce pressure for development in more sensitive areas of the Parish.

Table 1: Meeting the Housing Target 2011-2031

		Number of dwellings*
Dwelling requirement 2011–2031: 30 dwellings		
1	Dwellings built or committed up to December 2020 (source Herefordshire Council)	29
2	Site allocations (minimum) i) Land north of Wellfield Bungalow ii) Land south of White House iii) Land north of Lower Court Farm	(5*) 4** 10
3	Small sites within settlement boundaries	see para 6.11
4	Rural windfall allowance	see para 6.3
5	Housing potential during plan period excluding future windfalls	41

* Included in commitments in line 1 – see paragraph 6.13 (i). An application that would reduce this site from 5 to 4 dwellings is awaiting determination. Should it be approved, the option to develop 5 houses will remain until development commences.

** Outline planning permission has now been granted for 2 dwellings on this site although for a different configuration (included in line 1). The allocated site could accommodate 4 dwellings at a density consistent with the adjacent development (additional 2 dwellings). Should only two proceed through a detailed planning application, the NDP will still produce a small surplus.

Community-Led Housing

6.15 Some 75% of residents identified the need to attract younger people to live in the Parish as necessary for it to thrive and become more sustainable. Attracting young families to the Parish requires housing to be available to suit their needs and which they can afford. The scale of the Parish and its settlements is such that the allocation of large housing sites that would require elements of affordable housing are unlikely to respect its environmental qualities. It is possible and more appropriate to utilise Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy H2 (Rural exception sites), which provides exceptions to the normal restriction on housing development outside of settlements, to bring forward proposals for affordable

housing to meet local needs. However, it is understood to be highly unlikely that such schemes advanced by housing associations will come forward within the Parish during the plan period, especially because the size of scheme required is unlikely to receive their support. As a consequence, it is considered that the promotion of a community-led housing scheme may offer a more appropriate mechanism to enable family affordable housing to be delivered within the Parish. Government has expanded its definition of the types of affordable housing to include other low-cost homes for sale where they are at a price at least 20% below market value¹⁸. In addition, there is also flexibility to provide 'entry level homes'¹⁹ as exception sites. In combination, these provisions should offer the opportunity to enable a community-led scheme for affordable housing which can be promoted through this NDP, although such a scheme could only be realised through the committed work of local volunteers. Both Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework allow for some market housing to facilitate such schemes²⁰. Neither indicate how such market housing might facilitate a scheme. It is proposed that an approach based upon community-led schemes where savings can be achieved of at least 20% across the scheme as a whole compared to its market value should be promoted and that this would comply with the exception provisions. To ensure any scheme is developed in accordance with principles required for exception schemes, community-led housing groups should be registered through an appropriate body that promotes and supports such housing.

Policy CNP11: Community Led Housing

Proposals for community-led housing, as exception schemes in accordance with Herefordshire local Plan Core Strategy policy H2, and meeting the following requirements, will be supported where:

- a) they meet an identified need for affordable housing, in particular to provide for younger people and households;*
- b) the housing is developed and/or managed by a Community Land Trust, Housing Co-operative or similar registered housing provider; and*
- c) can be shown to provide for homes at least 20% below the market value when assessed across the scheme as a whole.*

6.16 Should there be a proven need for other forms of affordable housing within the Parish, this should be brought through Core Strategy policy H2 (rural exception sites).

¹⁸ NPPF Annex 2

¹⁹ NPPF paragraph 71

²⁰ NPPF paragraph 77

Development within Settlement Boundaries

6.17 Sensitive design is required in order that new development fits into the character of the settlement, ensuring that their settings are preserved, and the landscape quality is maintained. In addition, locally distinctive features should be incorporated where appropriate. Other design elements, such as protecting landscape and biodiversity features and ensuring safe access and off-street car parking, are important. Although the scale of development needed is relatively small, efforts to provide housing for young families and to enable older residents to remain within the community are needed.

Policy CNP12: Design of Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries

Within Priory Wood and Clifford Village settlement boundaries, new housing development, including alterations and extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where it meets the following criteria:

- a) ***It respects the character of the development's surroundings by adopting a design approach utilising a range of materials and architectural styles and incorporating appropriate locally distinctive features.***
- b) *With regard to new innovative design or features, these will be encouraged where they are of high quality and fit sensitively within the area concerned.*
- c) *It incorporates an environmentally conscious design approach, especially in terms of thermal efficiency and the use of renewable energy.*
- d) *It respects the scale, density and character of existing properties in the vicinity, including retaining significant frontage gaps that contribute to the character of the settlement.*
- e) *The subdivision of gardens should be avoided where this would result in an uncharacteristic form of development.*
- f) *It protects the amenity and privacy of adjacent existing residential properties and ensures new residential development avoids locations where residents may suffer significant adverse effects from adjacent uses.*
- g) *There is no net loss of biodiversity by preserving existing trees, boundary hedges, ponds, orchards and hedgerows and, should there be any losses of such features, offsetting for this loss. In addition, the natural assets of the Parish should be added to where opportunities are available.*
- h) *There should be safe access for vehicles and parking arrangements are an integral part of the overall design in order not to detract from the street scene but be an integral and sensitively designed part of the overall proposal.*
- i) *Housing to provide for the needs of young families and to enable older people to remain within the Parish will especially be encouraged.*

7. SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

- 7.1 Clifford Parish is sparsely populated, with no major employer. The distance of the Parish from major centres and the limited capacity of the local highway network are also recognised as potential constraints upon the development of the local economy and provision of employment for residents. Historically, farming has had a significant influence over the local economy, but there has been a gradual loss of agricultural employment. As a consequence, the community recognises the need for flexibility in terms of the forms of employment and economic activity it would be happy to see encouraged.
- 7.2 Surveys of residents show significant support for a range of employment types, in particular for **small-scale selling 'at the gate' (82%), craft workshops (76%), holiday accommodation (66%) and tourism (61%)**. However, there is a desire that such uses should be compatible with the general serenity of the area and protect the amenity of residents. Waste storage and warehousing were the business types considered least appropriate by survey respondents. Although residents supported the identification of appropriate sites for small scale business and industry, no deliverable sites were submitted for consideration and a more general policy approach was considered. There are concerns about road safety and the ability of local roads to accommodate traffic beyond their capacity.

General Requirements for Economic Development

- 7.3 Proposals for the development of local businesses should result in sustainable economic growth. The community wants to promote employment opportunities, encouraging traditional farming with appropriate farm diversification, home working and **tourist-related activities**. **The area's rural character, together with its environment and heritage, are seen as essential resources upon which to build its economic base.** A number of factors are critical to all forms of economic development, particularly that new and expanded businesses are of an appropriate scale. Small-scale enterprise and home working are seen as **consistent with the area's landscape qualities**. The scale of a proposal can also be judged in terms of its effect on the highway network, landscape and residential amenity.

Policy CNP13: Supporting Local Business

Development proposals for local business should:

- a) *Be small-scale, reflecting and complementing the local environment.*
- b) *New businesses should make use of redundant rural buildings or utilise previously developed (brownfield) land where possible.*
- c) *Protect the residential amenity of nearby residents, including from the effects of traffic.*

- d) *Ensure traffic generated can be accommodated safely upon and within the capacity of the local road network, ensuring the safety of pedestrians.*
- e) *Where possible, enhance or improve the quality and character of the buildings being utilised and avoid unacceptable external storage and paraphernalia.*
- f) *Protect the natural and historic environment, especially the Parish's **heritage**, habitats and open spaces, and the River Wye SAC.*
- g) *Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the landscape and open countryside of the Parish.*
- h) *Ensure sufficient on-site car parking is available to meet the needs of staff, service vehicles and visitors.*



Picture 8: Working the land in Clifford

Farm Diversification

7.4 Survey results showed strong support for traditional farming activities, in recognition of the degree to which they have shaped and maintained the character of the local landscape, its natural and historic environment, and associated habitats and open spaces. There is wide support for safeguarding agricultural land. Appropriate farm diversification activities such as farm shops, rural crafts and adding value to locally produced foodstuffs, for example through cheese-making, where they are of an appropriate scale, are seen as beneficial to the local economy without detrimental effects on the quality of life, the environment and tourism. Selling fresh produce 'at the farm gate' can achieve a number of benefits to the farmer, promoting a healthy diet and reducing 'food miles'. Adopting a flexible approach will support local employment and business opportunities, provided the qualities of

the area are not adversely affected. The criteria listed in the policy below, in addition to those within section five, are aimed at protecting the area's character.

Policy CNP14: Farming Diversification

Proposals for farm diversification, including development that broadens the rural economy, will be supported where:

- a) The proposal is complementary to the agricultural operations on the farm and is operated as part of the farm holding.*
- b) The character, scale and location of the proposal is compatible with its landscape setting and any area of nature conservation importance.*
- c) The proposal would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.*
- d) The proposal re-uses or adapts existing farm buildings, where these are available, before developing new buildings.*
- e) Redevelopment of existing buildings that may no longer be suitable for an existing farm diversification proposal will result in benefits to the environment and deal comprehensively with the full extent of the site. The floorspace should not represent a significant expansion upon the original area to be replaced, such that it would be out of scale with the area and landscape concerned.*
- f) Any new buildings are of an appropriate scale to the rural area and sited in or adjacent to an existing group of buildings, are compatible in design and materials, and blend sensitively into the landscape.*
- g) The proposal will not cause noise, air or water pollution.*
- h) Provision will be made to fully screen any external storage, parking and ancillary uses.*

Tourism Development

7.5 The natural environment and landscape of Clifford Parish allows ample employment and diversification opportunities for tourism. It provides an ideal base for visitors to enjoy the Black Mountains, Brecon Beacons National Park, Hay-on-Wye and the River Wye. Two thirds of respondents of the **residents'** questionnaire want to encourage tourism through better/more provision of:

- B&B accommodation
- Better signed footpaths
- Tourist information on website

However, the same proportion believe that the roads in the Parish are not safe for cycling and would welcome improvements to promote this. Similarly, improved safety of walkers would encourage more visitors.

- 7.6 The importance of tourism to the Herefordshire economy is well summarised in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy: “The tourist industry is a major factor in the sustained economic development, stability and financial wealth of Herefordshire as a whole. It is an emerging market with considerable potential presenting opportunity for diversification and growth of both communities and traditional rural industries which were primarily centred upon agriculture.”
- 7.7 The Parish should capitalise upon current and future tourist-related opportunities by enabling and managing such development without damaging the integrity of the existing environment, landscape or historical heritage, which are the very qualities that draw tourists to the area. Ensuring such development is of an appropriate scale in accordance with policy CNP12 is also a major consideration.

Policy CNP15: Tourism Development

Proposals for new tourist-based activities that utilise or enhance existing assets or benefit the community will be encouraged, especially where they:

- a. *Support initiatives to improve and expand public rights of way, bridleways and the cycle way network.*
- b. *Provide local employment opportunities.*
- c. *Enhance the landscape and/or biodiversity, including its interpretation.*

All tourism proposals should:

- i. *Ensure the scale and location of the development respects landscape character, conserves the visual appearance of the surrounding countryside, and avoids the introduction of alien features into the landscape but utilises those present in a positive and sustainable way.*
- ii. *Avoid causing noise, air or water pollution.*
- iii. *With regard to the conversion of rural buildings, address the development of the full site comprehensively, retaining or enhancing their character in order to contribute positively to the landscape.*
- iv. *Make provision to fully screen any external storage, parking and ancillary uses.*

Intensive Farming

- 7.8 There is concern that large-scale development comprising polytunnels and intensive livestock farming should be controlled to avoid them having significant adverse effects on the community and the area’s landscape. Some 80% of resident do not support these kinds of developments.



Picture 9: The Castlefields along the B4352 is the only pub in Clifford Parish. The River Wye can be seen in the background.

Polytunnels

7.9 While supporting agriculture development and its diversification, safeguards are needed to protect the environment, amenity and highway safety from some of its adverse effects. Scale of development is important in order that it does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape, given the area's proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is essential that the effects of polytunnels on the environment, and particularly the natural beauty of the landscape, are considered fully. A landscape assessment will be required to assess any proposal, and this should ensure that future development is compatible with the Parish's landscape character. Notwithstanding changes to national and local policy which are encompassed within this policy, there is detailed advice within Herefordshire Council's Polytunnels Planning Guide 2018.

Policy CNP16: Polytunnel Proposals

Proposals for polytunnels should comply with the following requirements:

- a) they should not adversely affect the natural beauty, landscape character or important features within the landscape, including through the cumulative effect in association with other proposals;*
- b) they should not adversely affect the character or setting of Clifford Village, Priory Wood or the Parish as a whole;*

- c) they should not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings;*
- d) they should not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards the local ecological network;*
- e) local and residential amenity should be protected, in particular, from noise and air pollution;*
- f) any traffic that is generated must be capable of being accommodated safely upon the local road network; and*
- g) they should not result in additional flood risk to nearby properties.*

Intensive Livestock Units

7.10 Protection of the landscape is also a consideration that is relevant to decisions about proposals for intensive livestock units. Reference has already been made to the importance of views to the Brecon Beacons National Park. The importance of the Parish's **landscape** character and appearance must be recognised in terms of its wider economic benefits, especially for tourism, and this should be given significant weight. Additional considerations include traffic generation, maintaining water quality, and effect on residential amenity. Potentially polluting effects need to be considered, such as noise, smell, dust, late-night working and lighting. A working method statement setting out provisions and appropriate agreements is necessary to ensure the provisions of NPPF paras 180-183 are taken into account and this should cover all forms of pollution including noise, emissions to air and light pollution. Normally a protective distance of 400 m should be maintained as the protective distance around isolated dwellings that are not associated with any intensive livestock operation.

7.11 Where development is proposed within this protection zone, it must be clearly demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse effects on residential amenity. In this regard it should be borne in mind that the other regulatory regimes may not properly protect such amenity. A distinction needs to be drawn between the requirements of the planning system to protect amenity and that of the environmental regulatory or permitting regimes. The systems and tests are different and DEFRA guidance indicates that potential problems should be addressed at the planning stage because those that arise later may not be fully addressed by the Environment Agency Permitting regime in terms of effect on amenity. When determining effect on amenity regard should be had to the sensitivity of the local population²¹. In addition, it may be necessary to restrict hours when certain activities are undertaken to ensure residential amenity is protected. These

21 <https://www.ciwem.org/assets/pdf/Policy/Policy%20Position%20Statement/Control-of-odour.pdf>

considerations affect not only general amenity, but also human health, the natural environment and the potential sensitivity of the area.

- 7.12 Special regard is given to the need to protect local watercourses, all of which flow into the River Wye, which is a Special Area of Conservation. This nationally important river already suffers from high levels of phosphates to the extent that it is in an unfavourable condition and a Nutrient Management Plan is being prepared to address this concern. Measures aimed at ensuring agriculture does not add further to the current phosphate and other nutrient loads are necessary. Amenity may also be affected by noise, for example from extractor fans, lighting and traffic (as opposed to the ability of the network to accommodate vehicles). In addition, it is important that any proposals do not harm the Parish's heritage assets or its community facilities and services, in accordance with other policies in this CDP.

Policy CNP17: Intensive Livestock Units

Intensive livestock units and associated structures will only be permitted where:

- a) They do not intrude unacceptably into the landscape or adversely affect important views or landscape character. Proposals seeking to utilise tree screening and choice of materials to reduce adverse visual and landscape effects should only be permitted where these can achieve effective mitigation of the adverse impact.*
- b) Any traffic generated can be accommodated safely upon the local highway network.*
- c) Proposals involving intensive livestock units and/or associated walled storage compounds or lagoons are sited no closer than 400 m from a protected building or residential property which is not associated with the operation. Where it can be demonstrated that a small-scale operation will have no impact at a closer distance due to the size of the operation or other factors, then this distance requirement may be reduced.*
- d) There are no other potentially polluting effects from traffic, noise or smell upon local amenity.*

Where proposals for intensive livestock units are likely to give rise to the handling, collection, storage, treatment, transportation and disposal of manure waste or other waste materials arising from the intensive livestock units, they should ensure that due consideration has been given to the waste they will generate and include appropriate measures to protect public amenity, human health and the environment, which can be implemented and enforced. Such proposals will require sustainable and efficient management measures which should:

- i) Require the location of manure disposal or manure spreading areas for waste arising from intensive livestock units to be located where they would not have an adverse effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation. The in-combination effects of a number of such operations will also be a consideration.*

ii) Require any planning application for an intensive livestock unit to be accompanied by a working method statement that includes clear details on the number and quantity of animals and by-products, methods of dealing with inputs and outputs from the process and pollution controls, transportation requirements and any other relevant matters as specified by the local planning authority. The in-combination effects of a number of such units on the environment should also be considered.

8. RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

- 8.1 The community is keen to reduce its carbon footprint, in particular by exploring the production of renewable energy and the use of more innovative housing design and implementation. This includes schemes with communal or individual benefits. As many proposals for new development as possible should address the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, with respect to the use of low carbon technologies, low energy architecture and sustainable design, where they do not conflict with other areas of the plan. High carbon-impact heating systems should be avoided – e.g. direct electric heating (storage or panel heaters), heating oil and LPG.



Picture 10: Building an energy efficient Passivhaus in Clifford Village.

Sustainable Design

- 8.2 There is an overwhelming desire within the Parish²² to promote housing and other development which has a low impact on the local environment. A range of measures are available that should be considered, of which those included in the policy below are considered most appropriate. New developments utilising innovative design are to be encouraged, and housing should be designed with carbon reduction strategies in mind in the first instance. Consideration should also be given to how new developments may affect other dwellings (or land likely to be used for dwellings) in the future, and the ability to utilise renewable energy or

²² 92% of respondents to the questionnaire listed this as either Very Important or Fairly Important.

other sustainable technology/design. Off-road parking, provision to charge electric vehicles and storage for bicycles should all be considered in new developments. The biggest opportunity for carbon reduction revolves around ensuring low carbon heating in new homes (and replacement heating systems), housing designed around low energy principles, and encouraging the use of electric cars or bicycles more in the future. The minimal use of external lighting is also beneficial to reducing energy wastage and has the additional benefits of supporting the Brecon Beacons International Dark Sky Reserve, which overlooks the Parish, preserving the Parish's own dark night skies, and protecting nocturnal wildlife.

Policy CNP18: Sustainable Design

Development proposals should achieve the maximum possible reduction in carbon footprint through containing 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 storage for waste including provision for recycling, provision for electric charging of vehicles, 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) *Enabling a sustainable drainage system to serve a wider range of properties where opportunities exist.*
- d) *Minimising construction traffic and reducing waste.*

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

8.3 Support for renewable energy and possible community energy projects was very high in the survey results, however it is unlikely that any significant community energy projects could be realised given the spread-out nature of the housing stock, along with a strong desire for preserving views and the character of the Parish. Options for community energy projects probably revolve around heating the school and community hall using heat pumps, or a community owned Solar PV array. Criteria should ensure proposals fit sensitively into the landscape and do not adversely affect other environmental features, residential amenity or the highway network, and these are consistent with planning practice guidance. Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SD2 requires proposals for wind turbines to receive local

backing. In terms of local opinion, it is considered unlikely that wind turbine proposals would receive a positive response.

Policy CNP19: Renewable Energy and Climate Change Impact

Renewable energy proposals that will benefit the individual or community will be encouraged where the proposals:

- a) Comprise small-scale operations serving the individual or local community needs.*
- b) Respect the rural and/or settlement character.*
- c) Do not adversely affect heritage assets such as archaeological sites and historic buildings, including their settings.*
- d) Will not adversely affect biodiversity, especially features that contribute towards the local ecological network.*
- e) Protect local and residential amenity.*
- f) Safely accommodate any traffic that is generated upon the local road network.*



Pictures 11 and 12: Clifford Parish has two churches: Holy Trinity (left) and St Mary's (right).

9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

9.1 Clifford Parish has limited services and facilities available, due to the size and nature of the community. Those that are available are highly valued - 92% of residents feel the school is a valued asset, and very important to the community. 75% of residents support and value the community/village halls, which are charities and run by volunteers. Proposals that assist their retention or that provide additional facilities will contribute towards community wellbeing, provided they do not adversely affect amenity and can be accommodated safely within the location concerned. These may include facilities in association with other developments that comply with policies in this NDP and the Core Strategy.



Picture 13: Tug of war at Clifford Community Centre. Clifford Primary School is in the background.

Policy CNP20: Community Facilities

The retention of key services and facilities will be supported where possible through enabling development that would enhance their viability. These services and facilities currently include:

- Clifford Primary School
- Clifford Community Hall Centre

- *Hardwicke Hall*
- **St Mary's** church in Clifford
- *Holy Trinity church in Hardwicke*
- *The Castlefields public house*

Proposals for new or additional services and facilities within the Parish will be supported, provided:

- a) They do not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties through creating unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance, including through the generation of traffic.*
- b) Traffic generated can be accommodated safely and within the capacity of the local network. Appropriate provision should be made for off-street parking.*
- c) They do not restrict the operation of an existing use on adjacent land.*

10. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

- 10.1 Clifford is dissected by a three-pronged network of B roads originating from the market town of Hay-on-Wye, which neighbours the Parish. The B4350 (approximately 3.5 miles long to the west of the Parish) links Hay-on-Wye with the Whitney-on-Wye toll bridge. The B4348 from Hay-on-Wye passes through eastern areas of the Parish, including Hardwicke and Westbrook, and the B4352 emanates from Hay-on-Wye and passes by the primary school on the eastern edge of Clifford, heading out towards the hamlet of Middlewood, beyond this to Bredwardine, and up to the A438 road to Hereford.
- 10.2 Since it offers the quickest route to Hereford, the B4352 is in practice Clifford's most significant road. The rest of the road network is made up of a web of single-track unclassified minor roads and lanes that link farms and individual houses together with the B roads. The roads are generally in a poor state of repair, with many potholes, particularly the unclassified roads.
- 10.3 The 7.5 tonnes weight limit on the 18th century toll bridge limits the volume of traffic that can be accommodated on the B4352 (acting almost as a dead-end for larger commercial and agricultural traffic). As a consequence, the B4348 and the B4352 carry the majority of the Parish's traffic flow. The roads observe national speed limits, but there are few other traffic calming measures throughout the Parish. The greatest concentration of traffic arises around Clifford school during drop-off and pick-up times, when traffic flow can be difficult, otherwise traffic flow across the Parish is good at all times.



Picture 14: Road signs at Middlewood

- 10.4 There is a limited bus service between Hereford and Brecon that passes through the Parish on the B4348. There were once three train stations in Clifford, but the two branches of railway which once linked the Parish with Hereford, Mid Wales and South Wales were closed to passengers in the 1940s and closed completely in 1950.



Picture 15: Official opening of the first (and only) sheltered bus stop in Clifford at Hardwicke Turn in 1986

10.5 There are 52 km of bridleways and public footpaths cross Clifford, including parts of the Wye Valley Walk and the Herefordshire Trail, but there is only a single short stretch of pavement in the entire Parish (approximately 100 m long, in Clifford Village). This means that, in practice, pedestrians are confined to fields and grass verges. There are no segregated cycle paths in the Parish. There is no street lighting within the Parish, and local residents support maintaining the dark night skies and general tranquillity.

Policy CNP21: Highways and Transport

Proposals for development should be capable of being accommodated safely upon the local highway network through:

- a) *Ensuring proposals do not lead to a significant increase in speed or volume of traffic travelling through the Parish on roads that do not have sufficient capacity.*
- b) *Avoiding any significant increase in the volume of traffic travelling through the settlements within the Parish by directing development that generates high levels of vehicle trips to appropriate locations.*
- c) *Providing segregated safe cycling routes, where possible.*
- d) *Protecting the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, especially where there are no public footpaths.*
- e) *Ensuring development does not lead to pressure for the provision of street lighting where none is currently present.*

- f) *Providing, where possible, safe and practical connections to the existing Public Right of Way Network through new public rights of way.*
- g) *Making adequate provision for off-street parking within residential development, including parking for visitors in-line with highway design guidance and cycle parking provisions.*
- h) *Ensuring the amenity of residents is not adversely affected by traffic.*
- i) *Ensuring development proposals do not detract from the enjoyment of users of the Public Rights of Way Network.*

10.6 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy SS4 (movement and transportation) indicates that Herefordshire Council will encourage developers and local communities to bring forward improvements to the local and strategic transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety, and offer greater transport choices. Residents have expressed concerns over a number of transport matters that will be pursued with the Highway Authority in the light of that strategic policy. These include:

- The ability of the local network to accommodate growth: The majority view of residents (60%) is for the Parish's road network to have capacity to handle the current volume of traffic, but no more. It is acknowledged that the Parish's need for additional housing will potentially have an impact on traffic volumes. There is also support for HGV restriction zones.
- There is a desire to have greater bus coverage in the Parish: In particular as Clifford Village and Priory Wood lost their bus stop some years ago.
- Improving transport choice: Some 60% of questionnaire respondents support Herefordshire Council's desire to offer greater transport choices through retaining existing bus services and safeguarding pedestrians/walkers and cyclists. However, 55% of residents believe it is currently not safe to cycle on the Parish's roads.
- Calming traffic: There is support for speed warning measures, especially on the routes close to Clifford School, but also other parts of the Parish's road network. Traffic around Clifford School and the Community Centre at peak times is challenging, and there have been suggestions to move back hedgerows and create footpaths around this community hub. More visible/comprehensive signage in areas where there are speed limits, and a mirror opposite the Church Road/Clifford Village junction, were also suggested. More respondents who expressed an opinion were in favour than were against the use of red tarmac bands displaying speed limits and Speed Indicator Devices, but other traffic calming measures had less support.
- Road maintenance: 78% of respondents felt that road maintenance was urgent.

11. DRAINAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Drainage

11.1 Whilst dangerous flooding of the River Wye in the Parish is relatively rare, it does need to be considered and the low areas are not suitable for development. In the consultation questionnaire, local flooding did not feature highly in the list of people's concerns. However, there was a general opinion that more care should be taken to ensure good drainage provision, especially on the larger roads where there is a persistent problem with run-off and blocked ditches and gullies. Concern has also been noted that new developments of multiple houses need to have their plans properly assessed for likely impact on neighbouring properties with respect to foul drainage provision and surface water run-off onto roads and neighbouring properties. There is no public sewer or waste-water system serving properties within the Parish. This means properties or groups of properties have septic tanks that need emptying and access by lorries.

Policy CNP22: Addressing Flood Risk and Drainage

Developers should show, through appropriate evidence, that foul and storm water drainage can be accommodated without causing pollution or flooding elsewhere, especially to other properties. In addressing the management of drainage, developers should ensure any proposed scheme that meets the above requirement is fully implemented before development is brought into use. Developers should utilise or contribute to sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) and wet systems where this is practicable, including measures to support biodiversity.

Where appropriate, new development shall be subject to the Flood Risk 'sequential' and 'exception' tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and housing development will not be permitted in areas identified as flood zone 3.

Environmental Protection

11.2 Consideration should also be given to the potential for other forms of nuisance or pollution caused by development which might adversely affect neighbouring properties, and to avoid locating new dwellings close to existing such uses. Factors such as noise, including from vehicles, and air contamination can affect residential amenity. The community is also concerned about the effects of increased lighting upon the tranquillity of the area and the night sky and would wish to see the effects of any external lighting kept to a minimum. The Brecon Beacons National Park contains a dark skies reserve. There is no street lighting within the Parish, and this is something that should remain the case. The concerns in this regard are to retain visibility of the night sky, protect local amenity, safeguard important habitats and biodiversity species, and preserve the character

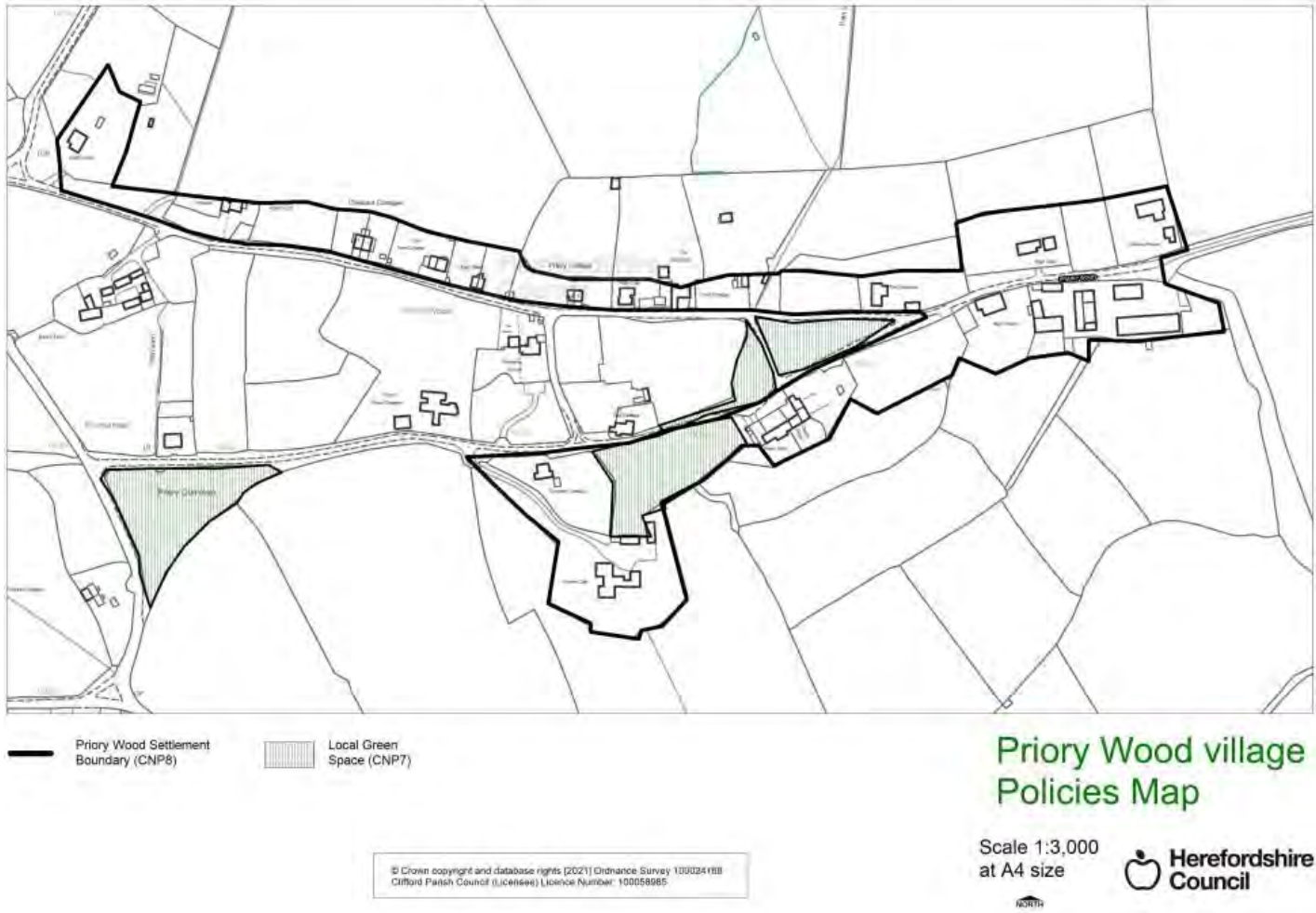
of the area. Other measures comprise good sustainability practice. Provision needs to be made for the contamination to be addressed wherever it is found.

Policy CNP23: Protecting the Environment and Amenity

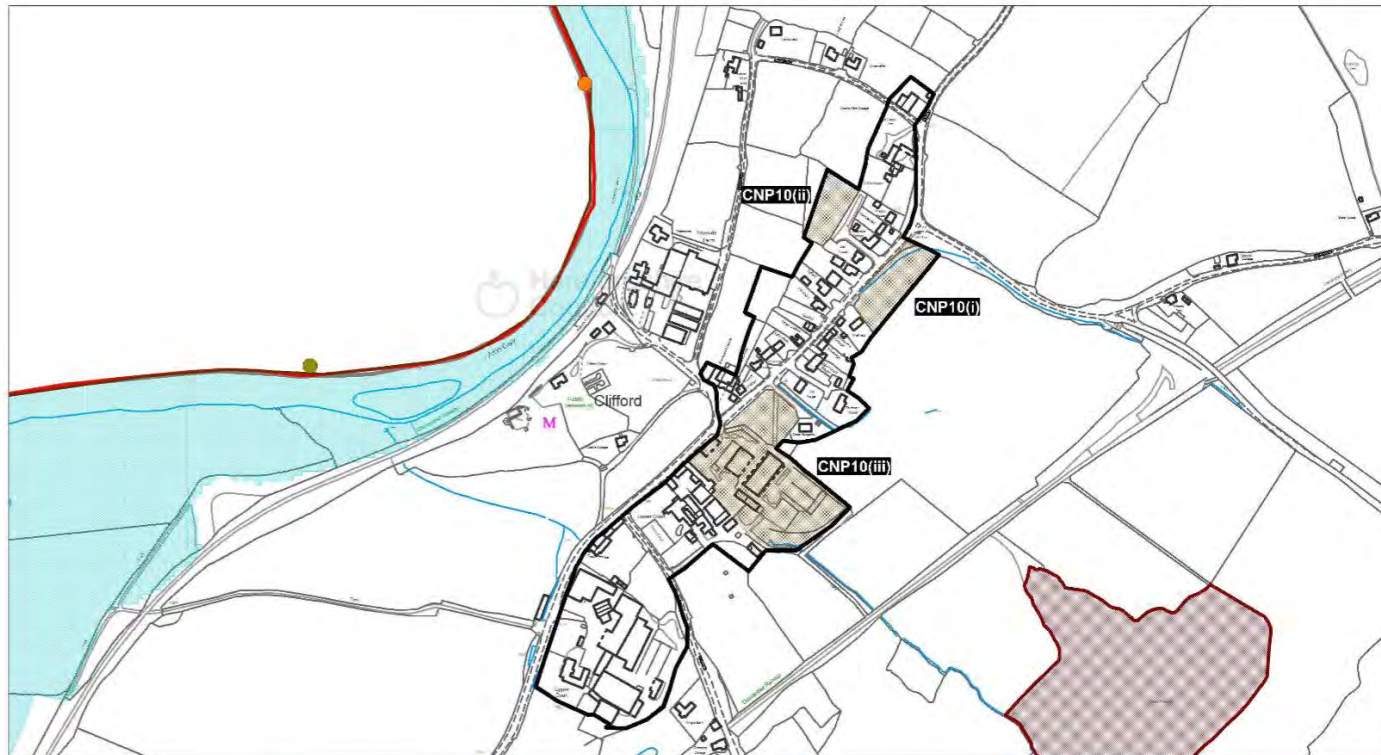
Development proposals should:

- a) *Protect the amenity of adjacent existing residential properties and ensure new residential development avoids locations where residents may suffer significant adverse effects from adjacent operations.*
- b) *Where external lighting is required, 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.*
- c) *Where there is good reason to believe that contamination of land may exist on any site, including through agricultural processes, ensure an assessment is carried out to establish the extent and nature of the contamination, and effective measures taken to ensure potential occupiers, and the wider environment, are not put at unacceptable risk.*

Map 3 – Priory Wood Policies Map



Map 4 - Clifford Village Policies Map



- Clifford Settlement Boundary (CNP9)
- Proposed Housing Sites (CNP10)
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Special Area for Conservation
- Land Liable to Flood
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Clifford village Policies Map

Scale 1:5,500
at A4 size



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APPENDICES

List of appendices

Appendix 1: Environmental Assets within Clifford Parish

Appendix 2: Important Views

Appendix 1: Environmental Assets within Clifford Parish

Heritage Assets

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Clifford Castle

Newton Tump

The westernmost of a pair of bowl barrows, 310 m north east of Llanerch-Y-Coed

Motte & Bailey Castle, north of Old Castleton

Motte Castle 150m east of Tump House Farm

Listed Buildings

Grade 1

Clifford Castle and Barbican

Grade 2*

Church of St Mary

Lower Court

Priory Farmhouse

Upper Court

Grade 2

Agriculture buildings about 30 m south-west of Hardwick Cottage

Barn about 10 m north of Priory Farmhouse

Barn about 10 m north-west of Newton Farmhouse

Barn about 10 m west of Sidcombe Farmhouse

Barn about 15 m south of Westbrook Court

Barn about 25 m north-east of Lower Court

Barn about 30 m north-west of Priory Farmhouse

Barn and horse gin about 35 m south-east of Hardwick Court

Barn at Castleton Farm

Barn, granary and stables about 20 m north-west of Lower Broadmeadow Farmhouse

Barnett Memorial about 5 m north-east of Chancel of Church of St Mary

Beaven and Higgins Memorials about 42 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary

Beaven Memorial About 42 Metres North of North Porch of Church of St Mary

Brace Memorial about 10 m south-east of chancel of Church of St Mary
 Cartshed about 25 m south-east of Hardwick Court
 Chest Tomb about 40 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Church of the Holy Trinity
 Cowhouse and Cartshed about 30 m west of Sidcombe Farmhouse
 Davis Memorial about 25 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Eastview
 Four memorials to the Williams family about 15 m north-west of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Hardwick Court
 Hardwick House
 Harewood Farmhouse
 Higgins Memorial about 28 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Lower Broadmeadow Farmhouse
 Lower Castleton Farmhouse and garage
 Lower Middlewood
 Methodist Chapel
 Middlewood House
 Milestone about 4,130 m east-south-east of Church of St Mary
 Mill Cottage
 Morris Memorial about 25 m north-west of west tower of Church of St Mary
 Newhouse Farmhouse
 Obelisk about 270 m south of Upper Moor Lodge
 Outhouse about 20 m east of Priory Farmhouse
 Phillips Memorial about 20 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Phillips Memorial about 30 m north-west of west tower of Church of St Mary
 Pontvaen
 Powell Memorial about 2 m east of chancel of Church of St Mary
 Powell Memorial about 5 m south of tower of Church of St Mary
 Price Memorial about 57 m north-west of west tower of Church of St Mary
 Sheepcote Farmhouse
 Sidcombe Farmhouse
 Stables, coachhouse and outhouses attached to south-west corner of Middlewood House
 Stallards Memorial about 3 m south of chancel of Church of St Mary
 Storehouse about 20 m north-west of Lower Court
 Summer House, kitchen garden walls and ha-ha about 50 m south-east of Middlewood House
 Tan House
 Tanner Memorial about 10 m east of chancel of Church of St Mary
 The Old Vicarage
 Toll Cottage
 Two barns about 15 m north-east of Old Pont-Faen
 Two barns about 20 m south of Lower Castleton Farmhouse
 Two Chambers Memorials and railed enclosure about 55 m north-west of Church of St Mary
 Two Chest Tombs about 47 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Upper Castleton Farmhouse
 Upper Moor Lodge
 Upper Pen-Y-Lan
 Upper Westbrook: Westbrook Manor, Westbrook barns, water wheel opposite Westbrook barns
 along B4348, stone wall opposite Westbrook Manor along B4348
 Walters Memorial about 23 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary

Water Tower about 500 m north-west of Upper Moor Lodge
 Watkins Children Memorial about 22 m north-west of Church of St Mary
 Wheeler Memorial about 4 m south of south-west Corner of Nave of Church of St Mary
 Williams Memorial about 15 m north of north porch of Church of St Mary
 Williams Memorial about 35 m north-west of west tower of Church of St Mary
 Williams Memorial and railed enclosure about 3 m south of nave of Church of St Mary

Unregistered Parks and Gardens

Clifford Deer Park
 The Priory
 The Moor, Clifford

Local Heritage Assets – Common Land

Alt Common: (SO 2716 4228 - 11 hectares). This comprises a long narrow strip of sloping grazing land, steep sided woodland and scrub with exceptional views to the north, east and west. There is a registered footpath along the length of its western border. The common is also a Special Wildlife Site.

Bullens Bank Common: (SO 2690 4172 - 11 hectares). Adjoining the southern tip of Alt Common, it similarly comprises sloping land and steep-sided woods with exceptional views to the north, east and west. Access is from unregistered tracks on Watery Lane.

Clifford Common: (OS 245 459 - 4 hectares). Located on the north east edge of the Parish alongside River Wye, it is a grassland reserve and Special Wildlife Site. Its associated qualities include a potential otter refuge; a richness in invertebrates; a tree-lined river-bank; the flood-plain contains a mixture of damp-loving plants such as tansy and hemlock; and the mixed deciduous woodland on the steep bank is frequented by woodland birds. The path leading from the reserve entrance partly follows the remains of an old horse-drawn tramway from Hay-on-Wye, constructed about 1818 as an embankment along the eastern edge of the common.

Little Mountain Common: (SO 3281 2427 - 52 hectares). This contains grazing meadows, woodland, trees and scrub, all on gently undulating land. It is criss-crossed with numerous pathways, both registered and unregistered. The common is a Special Wildlife Site being a haven for wildlife and fauna. A survey undertaken over many months identified 89 different species of birds visiting or resident on the Common.

Merbach Common: (SO 2716 4228 - 66 hectares). The common is spectacularly positioned, rising to 318m and overlooking the Wye valley, with glorious views to Hay Bluff and the Black Mountains to the south, the Welsh Hills to the west, Clee Hill to the north and the Malvern Hills to the east. The Common is mostly rough gorse, fern, scrub and grassland, and is a little haven for butterflies. Again, the common is also a Special Wildlife Site.

Priory Wood Common: (SO 2716 4228 – approximately 5 hectares). The common comprises over 20 plots of varying size, half of which are roadside verge. There are 3 larger plots, 2 of which are

essentially pasture (Orchard and Barn Common) and 1 (Chapel Common) which is maintained as a children's playground. The remaining smaller plots are retained as wild havens for flora and fauna.

Further information about commons and other open spaces within the parish can be found at <https://cliffordparishcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/OPEN-SPACES-IN-CLIFFORD-2021-Nbhd-Plan5b.pdf>

Natural Assets

Special Area of Conservation

The River Wye flows along the northern and western borders of the Parish.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

River Wye (Unfavourable recovering)

Special Wildlife Sites

River Wye
 Clifford Common
 Ton Wood
 Leech Pool
 Grove Wood
 Hardwicke Brook
 Mousecastle, Hawks & Scudamore Common Woods
 New Coppice
 Alt Common & Cot Wood
 Little Mountain & Newhouse Wood
 Bach Dingle
 Roadside verge, south side of B4348
 Merbach Hill, Benfield Park & Weston Hill Woods
 Windle Wood

Ancient Woodlands

Ton Wood
 Grove Wood
 Castleton Hill Wood
 Windle Park Wood
 Garnold Wood
 Hardwicke Brook Wood
 New Coppice
 Pikes Wood
 Newhouse Wood
 Cot Wood

Cwm Bach Wood
Hawks Wood
Mousecastle Wood
2 x unlabelled sites in the south-east of the Parish

Appendix 2: Important Views

A2.1 A number of important views from within the Parish considered worthy of protection have been identified. These represent vantage points for the many landscape features within this valued transitional landscape between the high hills within the Black Mountains to the valley bottom of the River Wye. Hay Bluff is a particular example of the first, with views along the Wye Valley Walk examples of the second. Most views are at the public highway crossing points, especially where roads meet public rights of way. Both the Herefordshire Trail and Wye Valley Walk pass through the Parish and there are also other public rights of way enjoyed by walkers. The network connects to the Offas Dyke National Footpath, from which there are extensive views over the Parish. It is understood that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot protect views emanating from outside of its area, although they may be of national importance. Development within the Parish falling within those views should not detract from this national footpath where it passes through the Brecon Beacons National Park, which lies to the south of the Parish. Walks both within and outside of the Parish are important to the wider tourism economy of the area, including businesses within Clifford Parish.

A2.2 In defining these views, it has been recognised that the UK is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention. This states:

“Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”

A2.3 The following views within the landscape are those that are considered most important to protect. Their locations are shown on Maps 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 at the end of this appendix. This does not discount the probability that there will be others within Clifford Parish that should also be protected.

Views in, around and of Priory Wood

1. From the upper section of Church Road, looking south across the area within the Parish in the foreground of Hay-on-Wye, the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons National Park.

This vantage point sits at a point where the Wye Valley Walk emerges onto the minor road leading down to Priory Wood and also Clifford Village, giving you time to look to the south-west across Hay-on-Wye to the plateau and Hay Bluff; beyond which is an iconic view of the Black Mountains. This view is also available as an uninterrupted and continuous panoramic for some considerable distance along Church Road beyond the western end of the short row of cottages at its eastern end.



Figure 1: View from the upper section of Church Road, looking south towards Hay-on-Wye, then the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons National Park beyond.

2. Priory Wood Presbyterian Chapel (a Listed Building) from the triangular area of Common Land with a playground.

This is an important local view that shows the historic setting for the chapel as an isolated rural building at the approach to, but separated from, Priory Wood. The building itself is relatively substantial and imposing for a rural chapel and the view emphasises this feature.



Figure 2: View of Priory Wood Presbyterian Chapel from the triangular area of Common Land.

3. Views through important gaps in the central triangle located on northern frontage along Priory Wood's southerly road, where it forms part of the Wye Valley Walk, looking north towards the Wye Valley.

These views look through important breaks where the Wye Valley Walk passes through the core of the hamlet, enabling visitors and locals to overlook the Wye Valley. Moving from the west, having passed the Presbyterian Church, there is a wide view across to the edge of the Clun and Radnor Forests followed by a series of intermittent views from within the centre of Priory Wood culminating in a panoramic where the route opens out at Malthouse Common. They therefore link the settlement to the rural landscape and represent valued assets that are of more than local importance along a national route.



Figure 3: Views along the northern **frontage Priory Wood's southerly road, looking north towards the Wye Valley.**

4. From the stile where the Wye Valley Walk enters the large field between Priory Wood and Poolpardon, looking north over open countryside to Lockster's Lane and the Wye Valley beyond.

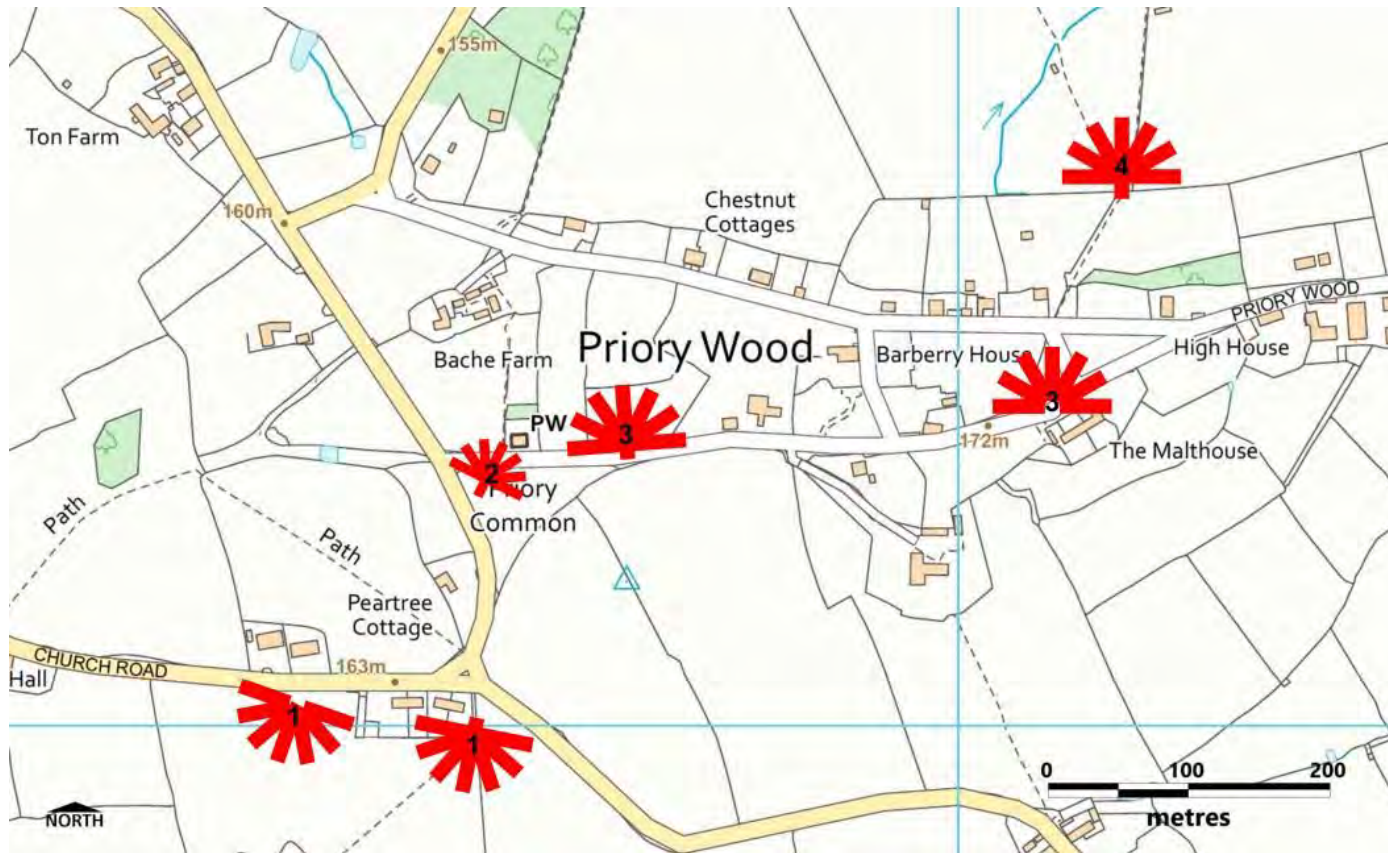


Figure 4: View where the Wye Valley Walk enters the large field between Priory Wood and Poolpardon, looking north over **open countryside to Lockster's Lane and the Wye Valley beyond**

This is a panoramic view across the uncluttered Wye Valley from the open countryside, rather than the setting of a settlement. It continues the sequential range of views along the Wye Valley Walk where it passes through Priory Wood.

This sequence of views along the Wye Valley Walk within and close to Priory Wood is indicative of the high value nature of the landscape. Their 'in combination effect' representing elements of village and countryside is of the highest quality and should be conserved as presenting the valued landscape comprising important elements identified within Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment.

Map 2.1: Views associated with Priory Wood



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Views in, around, and of Clifford Village

5. From the lower section of Church Road as it descends into Clifford Village, looking west to Clifford Castle (a Scheduled Monument).

This view looks west to Clifford Castle and shows its setting within the Wye Valley and also the setting beyond, including the higher land to the north, comprising the hills of East Powys and the Cambrian Hills.



Figure 5: View from Church Road as it descends into Clifford Village, looking west to Clifford Castle

6. Clifford Castle (a Scheduled Monument) from the B4350.

This view as you enter Clifford Village looks across to Clifford Castle behind Castle Cottage. Its visibility, including of its mound, is increasingly revealed as you move further towards the village. This reveal is important to the character of the village as well as exposing the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Figure 6: View of Clifford Castle from the B4350

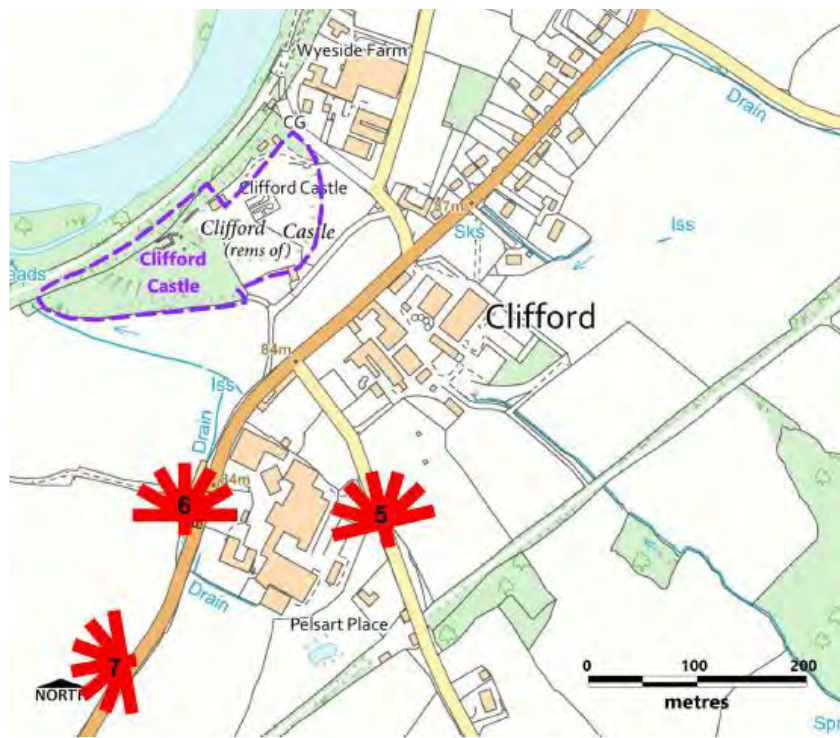
7. From the B4350 heading towards Hay-on-Wye from Clifford Village, looking west at open pastures, the old Priory Carp Pond, and the River Wye.

Although this provides an expansive view across to the River Wye as you leave Clifford Village, its predominant focus is the Old Priory Carp Pond, a locally important heritage asset surrounded by a standing of trees.



Figure 7: View as you leave Clifford Village, looking west at open pastures, the Old Priory Carp Pond, and the River Wye beyond

Map 2.2: Views associated with Clifford Village



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Views within the rest of the Parish

8. From the easterly tip of Priory Wood, looking east across open countryside towards Castleton Barn (a Listed Building).



Figure 8: View from the easterly tip of Priory Wood, looking east across open countryside towards Castleton Barn

Castleton Barn marks the eastern end of Priory Wood wider settlement and is typical of an outlying building set just away from the built-up part of the settlement within a rural setting. It is an important in this regard as well as in terms of its historical significance as a Listed Building. It sits within an open rural landscape when viewed from the west.

9. From St Mary's churchyard, looking south down the valley with the Black Mountains to the left, the Brecon Beacons National Park in the distance, and the Cambrian Hills to the right.

The rural churchyard provides a peaceful scene enhanced by the opportunity to look over an undisturbed rural foreground and middle-distance to the far hills beyond. It comprises a wide panoramic view of a Marches borderland setting.



Figure 9: View **from St Mary's churchyard, looking south** to the Black Mountains, the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Cambrian Hills.

10. From Lockster's Lane (south), looking west down at Clifford Village and across the Wye Valley to the Cambrian Hills beyond.

A number of views across to Clifford village open up along Lockster's Lane. That of particular note is where the southern end of the public right of way linking the two parallel strands of the circular route meets the lane. Walkers are also provided with extensive rural views to the north.



Figure 10: View **from Lockster's Lane (south), looking west down at Clifford Village and across the Wye Valley to the Cambrian Hills beyond.**

11. From Lockster's Lane (north), looking to the Wye Valley and the Radnor Hills beyond.



Figure 11: View from Lockster's Lane (north), looking to the Wye Valley and the Radnor Hills beyond.

The other end of the public right of way linking the two parallel strands of Lockster's Lane similarly opens up extensive views to the north while you feel closer to the flatness of the Wye Valley bottom. The route of the dismantled railway emphasises that you are closer to the lowland settlement form.

12. View as you exit Clifford to the south on the B4350, looking south-east across Summerhill to the Black Mountains beyond.

This view gives a good sense of the change of the border landscape between lower lying western edge of England and the rugged mountainous landscape of Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park. The road slowly sinks into Hay-on-Wye with an uninterrupted view of fields, woods and the Black Mountains standing proudly in the background with Hay Bluff at its summit.



Figure 12: View as you exit Clifford to the south on the B4350, looking south-east across Summerhill to the Black Mountains beyond.

13. From Castleton Lane up to Merbach Hill and over to Middlewood and Little Mountain.

Looking off the B4352 onto Castleton Lane and up to Merbach Hill to the south east, this panoramic view also takes in the hamlets of Middlewood and Westbrook together with Little Mountain to the south. The view is unspoilt with only fields and trees giving a good indication of the rural character and natural beauty of Clifford Parish.



Figure 13: View from Castleton Lane up to Merbach Hill and over to Middlewood and Little Mountain.

14. Looking down from Merbach Hill over the River Wye, up to Castleton, and over through Westbrook.

Merbach Hill sits on the Wye Valley Walk and is the highest ground in the east of the parish. From the trig point the views stretch across many points of the Parish, County and Neighbouring Counties. Views of the River Wye can be seen as it loops across its floodplain. Merbach Hill looks down westwards on the hamlets of Middlewood, Westbrook and across to Little Mountain on the south, and further afield to The Black Mountains, Hay Bluff, The Brecon Beacons, The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills. The hamlets have charming old farmhouses and cottages on them with small traditionally farmed fields surrounded by hedges and uninterrupted views across the parish.



Figure 14: View looking down from Merbach Hill over the River Wye, up to Castleton, and over through Westbrook.

15. View of Holy Trinity Church in Hardwicke from the B4348.

From multiple locations on the B4348, both before and after its junction with the B4352, the 19th century stone church is visible with its 2 bells at the top. Its slightly elevated position and standing on its own makes it a very impressive sight from a range of angles.



Figure 15: View of Holy Trinity Church in Hardwicke from the B4348.

16. Looking down from Little Mountain over most of Clifford Parish.

This is an elevated viewpoint with uninterrupted views of Westbrook, Hardwicke and Pen-Y-Parc. The woods of Little Mountain make way for compact green fields cordoned off by hedges and small farmsteads. The River Wye can be seen snaking through the landscape towards the north.



Figure 16: View looking down from Little Mountain over most of Clifford Parish.

17. The River Wye, Wye Valley, and Merbach Hill from the B4352 below Pen-y-Park.

Full uninterrupted views of Merbach Hill open out as you travel along the B4352 between occasional roadside woodland. That indicated shows the view from the

point at which a public right of way meets the road close to the dismantled railway.



Figure17: View of the River Wye, Wye Valley, and Merbach Hill from the B4352 at Pen-y-Park.

18. The River Wye from the Wye Valley Walk around Poolpardon.

As you cross the bridge over the dismantled railway upon the Wye Valley Walk you get a lower level range of uninterrupted views across the River Wye valley backed by wooded hills.



Figure 18: View of the River Wye from the Wye Valley Walk around Poolpardon

19. Panoramic of Priory Wood, Middlewood, Merbach Hill, and the Wye Valley, from the layby on the B4348 between Westbrook and The Bage.



Figure 19: Panoramic view showing Priory Wood, Middlewood, Merbach Hill, and the Wye Valley, from the layby on the B4348 between Westbrook and The Bage.

From this layby you get extensive and uninterrupted panoramic views across the Wye Valley framed between the wooded Merbach Hill and woodland on the northern slope of Little Mountain. The settlement of Priory Wood sits on the western edge of this view and Middlewood and the west side of Merbach Hill are visible as you move eastwards. Besides the small settlements there are no houses or other buildings visible. The level of the land drops towards the river Wye whilst it climbs back up towards the Radnor Hills and hills around Brilley and Kington. The layby is to the south of the public right of way network that sits within the core of the Parish and provides a safe viewing point adjacent to the highway from which to view this extensive scene.

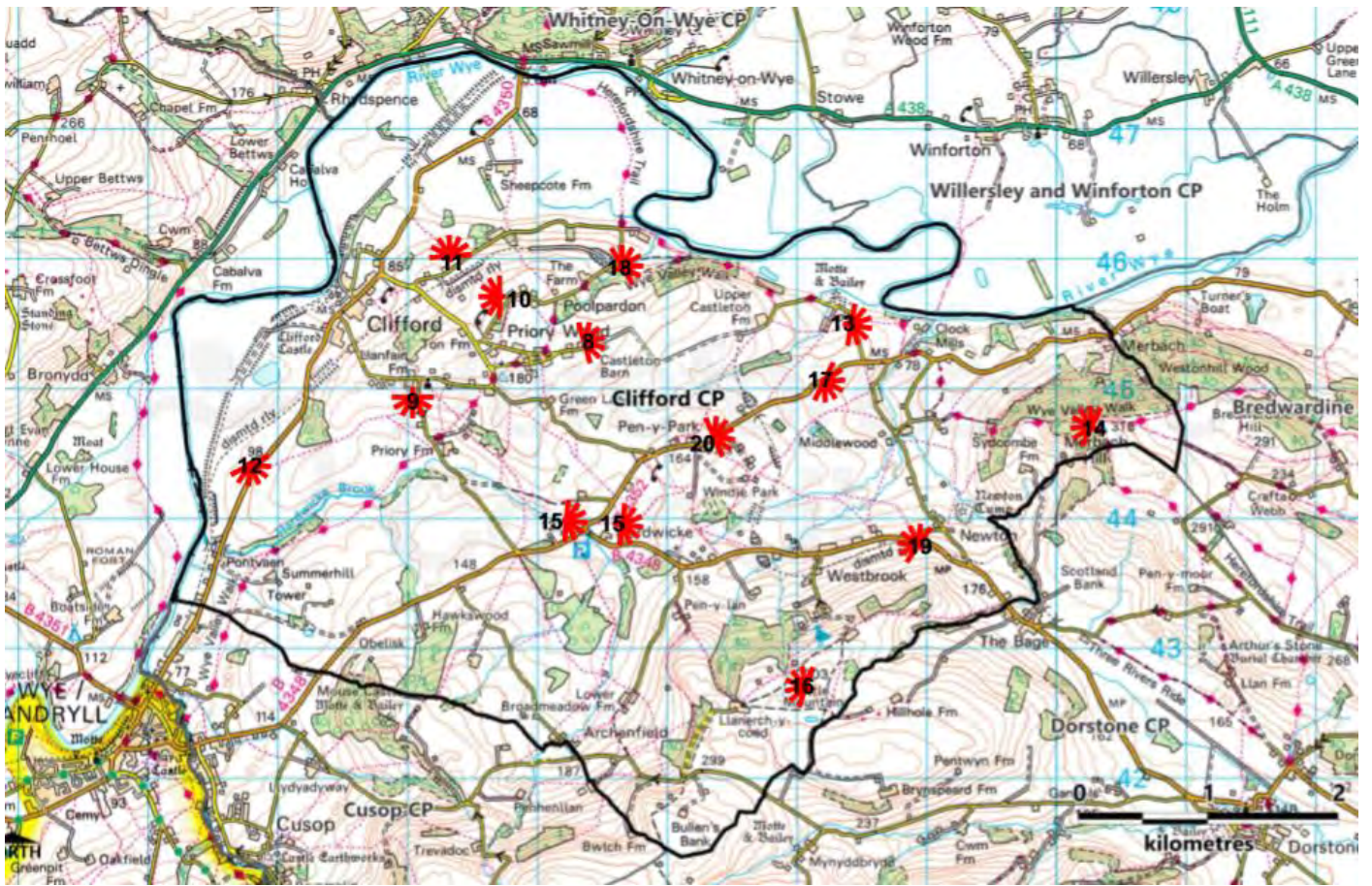
20. Looking east as you descend from Pen-y-Parc along the B4352

As you descend from Pen-Y-Parc the road channels your view beyond the old railway bridge to show the breadth of the Wye Valley below with Middlewood and Westbrook sitting below the wooded Merbach Hill on your right and Castleton on your left nestled closer to the valley bottom below lower lying woodland that marks the eastern edge of Priory Wood. In the winter views are revealed of the River Wye, often with many fields that border the river being in flood. Summer brings the fishermen and walkers for the Wye Valley Walk that traverses this view along with many other public footpaths.



Figure 20: Panoramic view looking east as you descend from Pen-y-Parc along the B4352

Map 2.3: Views from elsewhere within Clifford Parish



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