

**WESTON BEGGARD PARISH**

**DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)**

**REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION**

**14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2016**

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

This is a Consultation Document.

The Plan is now at its Regulation 14 stage and available for comment for the next 7 weeks. The comments received will be analysed and amendments made to the Plan where appropriate and justified. Following this consultation the Plan will be submitted to Herefordshire Council for a six week publicity period and following that will undergo Independent Examination. Subject to a successful examination, the Plan will proceed to a local referendum and if a favourable response is received will be formally adopted and form part of the Development Plan and used to determine planning applications.

A consultation statement accompanies this Plan and documents the consultations that have been undertaken and how the outputs of these activities have informed the progression of the Plan to its Draft stage. The Steering Group is grateful for the interest and participation of all residents in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and looks forward to continuing the conversations as the Plan moves forward.

All responses to this consultation will need to be received by 31st January 2016  
Please return your completed questionnaire to one of the following addresses:

Stoke View, Shucknall Hill, HR1 3SL

Pigeon House, Weston Beggard, HR1 4BL

Purlbrook Farm, Shucknall, HR1 3SJ

The Oast House, Hill End, Weston Beggard, HR1 4BW

6, Stanfield, Weston Beggard, HR1 4BL

All comments received will be carefully considered by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group and used to inform progression of the Plan.

Thank you for your time and interest.

**There is a public Drop in event on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015 from 10am-2pm in Yarkhill Village Hall. Please do try and attend and let us know your views.**

**ANY QUESTIONS? Email: [wbandp15@gmail.com](mailto:wbandp15@gmail.com)**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 was introduced with a view to giving communities more control in terms of how their neighbourhood should develop. A central part of the Localism Act is the right of communities to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), allowing people to shape the future of where they live. Such NDPs allow a 'local say' in terms of future development proposals in their area but the plan has to be in conformity with the Local Authority Plan and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.2 The decision to proceed with a NDP for the parish of Weston Beggard followed a number of discussions at the Parish Council meetings during 2012 and 2013 where opinion was divided, largely because some thought it unnecessary and that Weston Beggard had adequate protection under the Herefordshire Core Strategy. Two very well attended public consultation events were held in the Spring of 2014, preceded by explanatory letters to all households in the parish. Following the second event in May 2014, the results of a postal ballot indicated a wish of the large majority to proceed with a NDP. 170 voting forms were distributed to the 85 dwellings in the parish. Of 102 responses, 67 voted in favour and 35 against.
- 1.3 A NDP Steering Group was set up reporting to the Parish Council. The NDP area (ie the parish of Weston Beggard) was approved by Herefordshire Council on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014, following a statutory period of formal consultation. The steering group then circulated a questionnaire to all households during October 2014, seeking views on the Parish and its amenities and on what development people would find desirable or acceptable. This was followed by a drop in event in January 2015 at which the results of the questionnaire responses were presented.
- 1.4 Further progress on the NDP was temporarily interrupted due to funding issues, but in April 2015 we were successful in obtaining a grant of over £2000 which has enabled significant progress and allowed us to engage a professional planning consultant.
- 1.5 A first draft NDP, using information from the public events and initial survey, was produced and circulated for a 6 week informal consultation to all households in the parish and to Herefordshire Council in July/August 2015.

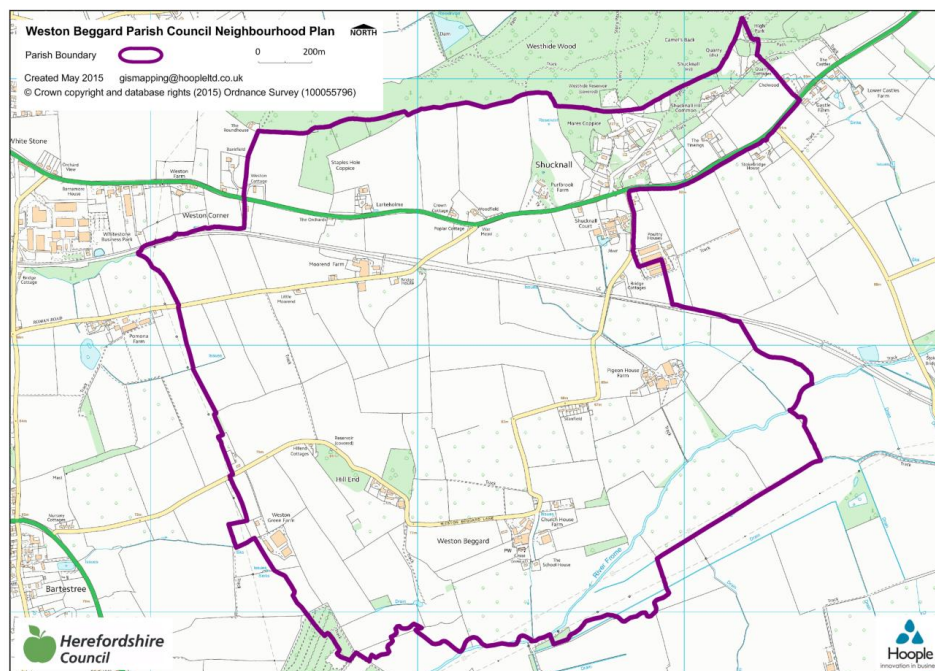
This draft NDP for formal consultation has been produced taking into account all the responses received during the informal consultation.

## **2. Parish Description**

- 2.1 Weston Beggard Parish sits in the heart of the Herefordshire countryside, 8 Km north east of Hereford. It is a rural parish of some 85 dwellings and 214 people; the parish comprises 2 community groupings (Weston Beggard and Shucknall) although there are no fixed nor accepted bounds between the two. There are no specific centres of population although there are some small concentrations of dwellings, these are isolated and spread throughout the parish.
- 2.2 The parish covers 371 hectares from the Southern slopes of Shucknall Hill to the River Frome. The A4103, Hereford/Worcester rail line and the River Frome run roughly east/west through the parish.
- 2.3 The parish is divided by the A4103, approximately 0.75Kms from the Northern boundary. The settlement of Shucknall is broadly located to the north of the A4103 with Weston Beggard located to the south. The settlement of Weston Beggard is made up of four main groupings of buildings which include the areas around the Church, Hill End, Stanfield and Pigeon House/Friars Court. There is only one road off the A4103 to the north, this is partially adopted and splits into 2, both branches fading out to non-metalled tracks. There are 2 minor roads to the south – both are through roads. Shucknall Hill to the north is generally wooded and consists of areas of ancient woodland, common land and disused quarries. The land to the south of the A4103 is generally agricultural, and is partially subject to flooding.
- 2.4 There are 4 farm complexes, 3 commercially significant enterprises, and other minor land holders. There is a parish church but no other community facilities.
- 2.5 There is no consistent architectural style within the parish. Most houses are 2 storey and are of varying construction from traditional brick, stone and timber framed to more modern brick and rendered walls. There are two thatched cottages. Houses are generally larger with more bedrooms and total number of rooms than Herefordshire and England as a whole (see paragraph on Housing below).
- 2.6 Parish facilities and industry have gone: the pub and brickyard about 100 years ago, the quarries closed in the 1950s and the Parish Hall closed in the 1960s. Whilst the Parish has no ‘centre’ and is slightly understated there is a strong community identity and spirit.
- 2.7 A key feature of the parish is ‘the spout’ a piped water stream which discharges into a trough at the bottom of the Shucknall Hill lane, abutting the A4103. The parish has ancient connections with the remains of a Roman road which ran from Hereford to Stretton Grandison and a 12<sup>th</sup> century moat, now a pond, at Shucknall Court.

- 2.8 The River Frome runs through the parish close to its southern border and adds a further dimension to rural landscape. It flows into the River Lugg just above Mordiford and the confluence of the two rivers then joins the River Wye which has European designation as a Special Area of Conservation.
- 2.9 There are small fingers of ancient woodland along the northern boundary of the parish which are part of Westhide Woods Special Wildlife Site, otherwise there are no significant historical or ecological sites located in the Parish. There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Churchyard Cross, and there are 11 listed buildings. There are also areas of recognised natural beauty, none of them designated.
- 2.10 The parish war memorial with names of parishioners from the First and Second World Wars, and The Falklands War is located adjacent to the A4103/Pomona Lane (Roman road) junction.
- 2.11 To the west are Withington and Bartestree, which are closer to Hereford and on the edge of its direct influence, whilst Yarkhill to the east is a rural parish larger but similar to Weston Beggard. To the north lies the rural parish of Westhide whose southern boundary, which abuts Weston Beggard, is formed by Westhide woods, a listed Special Wildlife Site. To the south is the rural parish of Dormington.
- 2.12 The parish is rural and does not enjoy the infrastructure of the two larger neighbouring parishes, Withington and Bartestree.
- 2.13 Whilst Weston Beggard has no major significant industrial complexes, the Whitestone Business Park, in Withington Parish is on the immediate parish boundary to the west, and to the east, astride the parish boundary with Yarkhill, is a significant poultry enterprise.
- 2.14 The rural nature of the parish is much appreciated by parishioners and visitors and there are a number of popular footpaths and bridleways throughout which are enjoyed by many people. There is a registered common at Shucknall Hill and this is a popular starting point for a circular walk, The Shucknall Hill/Westhide loop. There are many fine views from various places within the parish including those to the Malvern Hills in the east, the Black Mountains to the west, and across the Frome valley towards the Checkley hills to the south.

## The Parish of Weston Beggard



Ordnance Survey PMSA Licence No:100055796

### *The people of the parish*

- 2.15 The population of the parish has slightly increased over recent years; between the 2001 and 2011 censuses the population rose from 189 to 214. The population density is sparse at 0.6 persons per hectare, compared with 0.8 for Herefordshire and 4.1 for England. Age profiles remain unchanged, with 60% of the population aged between 16-64, 20 % under 16, and 20% aged 65 or over. Parishioners fall primarily into 4 groups: A significant number of young people 18 or under (57, 27%); people living and working in parish; people living in the parish and working elsewhere; and retired people, living in parish for 'quality of life' reasons. The large majority of people living in the parish appreciate the rural character of the parish, and regard this as a major attribute. This is also the case for new arrivals in the parish.

### *Health*

- 2.16 Residents of Weston Beggard rate themselves as healthy; 86% rate their health as good or very good compared to 81% for both Herefordshire and England. There is also comparatively less disability in the parish with 12% reporting limited day to day activities against 19% for both Herefordshire and England. This perhaps reflects the fact that there is a poor infrastructure in the parish for people with disabilities.

### *Deprivation*

2.17 Weston Beggard has a low level of deprivation measured by household with 40% of households deprived in at least one dimension compared with 66% for Herefordshire and 58% for England.

### *Education*

2.18 Educational attainment in the parish is high with 35% of residents aged 16 and over having a level 4 qualification (degree or professional qualification) compared with 27% for Herefordshire and 27% for England. A correspondingly low 13% of parishioners had no qualifications compared with 23% for Herefordshire and 22% for England.

### *Housing*

2.19 The number of dwellings has increased proportionate to the population with 82 and 84 recorded in the two censuses (2001 and 2011), but 2014 figures from Herefordshire Council indicate 85 with a further 5 commitments. None of the dwellings in the parish are shared between different households. 67% of dwellings are detached houses, 24% semi-detached or terraced, the remainder are flats or maisonettes.

2.20 Dwellings are generally larger than those in Herefordshire as a whole and the rest of England: 73% of dwellings in the parish have 6 or more rooms, compared with 54% and 42% in Herefordshire and England, respectively. Similarly, 38% of dwellings in the parish have 4 or more bedrooms compared with 25% and 19% in Herefordshire and England, respectively.

2.21 76% of dwellings are owner occupied, 14% privately rented, and 7% social affordable housing. This compares with Herefordshire figures of 68%, 15% and 13% and England figures of 63%, 17% and 18%, respectively. Thus, Weston Beggard parish has a relatively high number of owner occupied dwellings and a scarcity of affordable housing compared with the rest of Herefordshire and England.

2.22 The parish is generally unsuitable for short term tenancies due to isolation and poor infrastructure services.

### *Industry*

2.23 The main industry within the parish is agriculture. The four main farms engage in a variety of enterprises including mixed arable and livestock. There is also a strong emphasis on the traditional Herefordshire hop yards and cider orchards.



- 2.24 There are a few small industrial units engaging in light engineering and one joinery. There are a few diverse businesses such as domestic, design, building and administration. Of the 9 responses to a questionnaire to businesses in the parish all but one lived in the parish.

#### *Employment*

- 2.25 There is a slightly higher proportion of residents in higher managerial and professional occupations at 42% of the population compared with 38% for Herefordshire and 41% for England. Unemployment is at 3.9 % which is similar to Herefordshire at 3.3% and lower than the national figures of 4.3%.
- 2.26 Responses to the parish survey indicate that of those who did respond 20% worked in the parish and 80% outside. 52% work within 16Km of home and a further 17% within 32Km.

#### *Transport*

- 2.27 Public transport is very limited with no effective bus routes serving the parish, although there are school/college buses. The parish is too remote to enable pedestrian access to towns and there are no footways. Cycling is dangerous; whilst small unclassified roads can be used for part of the journey to Hereford, Ledbury and neighbouring villages, it is impossible to avoid using busy main roads and there is a complete absence of cycle paths. Parishioners are therefore reliant on private transport.

#### *Schools and Healthcare facilities*

- 2.28 Primary schools are located at Withington, Bartestree, Burley Gate, Ashperton and Mordiford and are all within 8Km of the parish although require cars for transport. Secondary schools are John Masefield in Ledbury, St Mary's RC School in Lugwardine, Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School in Tupsley and Aylestone School in Hereford.
- 2.29 The nearest GP surgeries are in Hereford, 8-9 Km away or Fownhope, 10Km distant. There is a district general hospital in Hereford.

#### *Other Infrastructure*

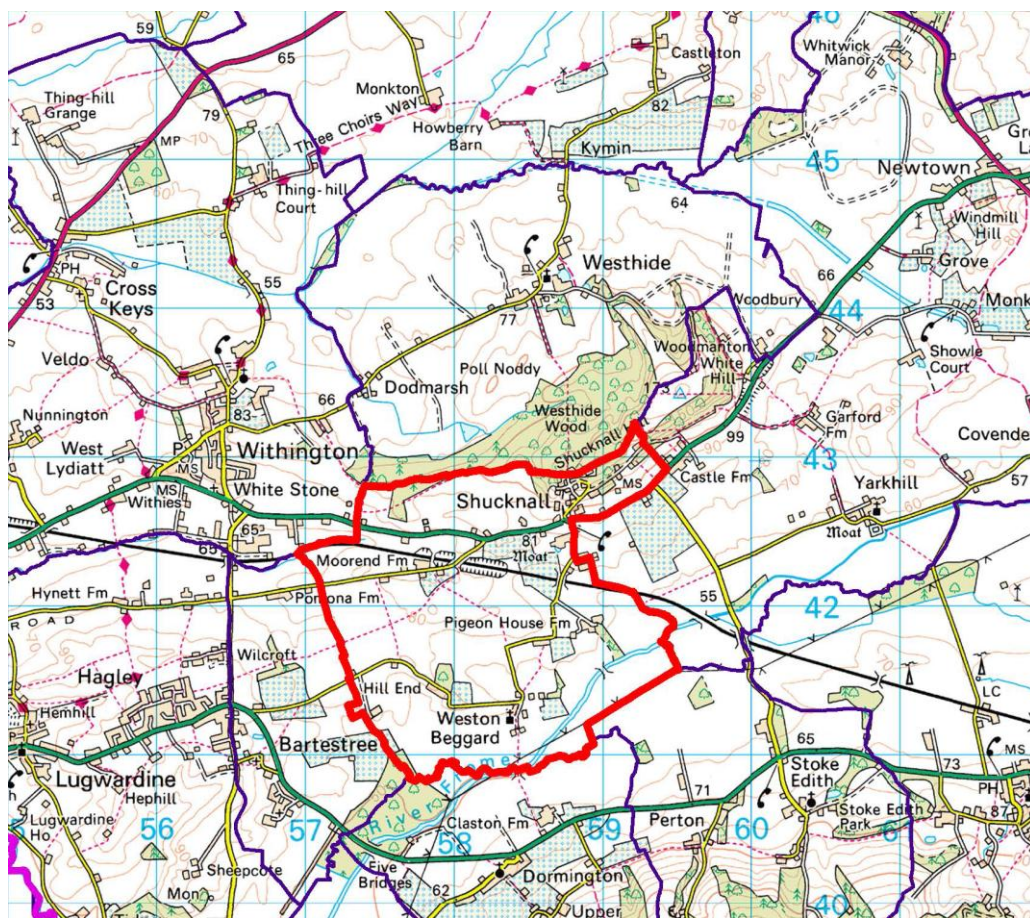
- 2.30 There is mains electricity and mains water.
- 2.31 There is no mains drainage.
- 2.32 Telephone lines are vulnerable and there are frequent line faults; Weston Beggard Lane has one of the 6 slowest speeds for Broadband in the country. Mobile telephone coverage is poor.

2.33 Some parts of the parish are supplied with mains gas.

#### *Relationship to neighbouring communities*

2.34 The nearest urban hub is Hereford, 8Km from Weston Beggard. Ledbury is 18Km to the east. There are local shops in Withington, 3Km east and Bartestree 4Km southeast. There is also a hairdressing salon in Bartestree and a post office in Withington. The Cross Keys Inn in Withington, the Crown & Anchor in Lugwardine and The Tarrington Arms in Tarrington are equidistant at 5Km from Weston Beggard. There is a filling station and shop at Newtown Cross, 4Km east of Weston Beggard. Thus, parishioners support local retail outlets in the neighbouring villages.

#### **Map of Weston Beggard Parish showing neighbouring parishes**



Ordnance Survey PMSA Licence No:100055796

### **3. Plan Methodology**

- 3.1 A steering group, made up of members of the community, have managed the progression of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and have arranged a number of consultation events which have helped inform it.
- 3.2 The plan identifies the views and concerns of the parishioners in identifying and developing a vision for the parish. The plan further identifies issues arising from the consultation and then sets objectives which underpin the vision, and policies to support and achieve each objective.

### **4. Neighbourhood Development Plan Issues**

As a result of consultation the following plan issues have been identified:

- Maintain the rural integrity, identity and character of community.
- Protect and enhance the local environment - air and water quality, green and open spaces, woodland and hedgerows, wildlife, footpaths and cycleways, and views.
- Meet local housing requirements.
- Meet the needs of small and home based businesses.
- Develop tourism through B&B provision and other local small scale initiatives
- Concern over large scale farming units/polytunnels due to impact on the local environment.
- Support for new community facilities eg shop, pub, cafe
- Support for small scale renewable opportunities linked to individual developments only.
- Concern over large scale commercial renewable projects due to impact on the local environment.
- Support for improvements to local infrastructure including Broadband, public transport, road improvements, gas supply improvements, and telecommunications.

## 5. Neighbourhood Development Plan Vision

Weston Beggard to develop up to 2031 as a thriving, cohesive, secure rural community set in open countryside in harmony with the landscape and nature.

Expansion to Vision:

**Community:** this includes the domestic and economic (agricultural and other) communities who live and/or operate within the parish.

**Thriving:** the communities should be able to sustain themselves financially and socially, this implies flexibility, within the overall vision to allow adaptation to meet changing circumstances.

**Cohesive:** the community should see itself as a single entity, united by its endeavours and in support of the vision and community functions: eg: Parish Council, Parochial Church Council.

**Secure:** the community should be secure in respect of economic and environmental sustainability, and free from environmental and health and safety endangering or degrading activity.

**Landscape and nature:** meaning the natural environment.

## 6. Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

**WB Objective 1: To maintain the rural integrity, identity and character of community.**

6.1 To achieve objective 1 future development will need to be in keeping with and sympathetic to surrounding buildings, setting and topography, in respect of location, design, size/mass, build style and materials.

**WB Objective 2: To protect and enhance the local environment - air and water quality, green and open spaces, woodland and hedgerows, wildlife, footpaths and cycleways, and views.**

6.2 To achieve objective 2 all future proposals will need to consider the impact on the holistic aspects of the environment; there should be limited impact.

**WB Objective 3: To meet local housing requirements**

6.3 To achieve objective 3 the future housing needs of the parish will be met on previously developed sites, on sites within/adjacent to the built form of Shucknall and Weston

Beggard on individual plots or in small groups and through replacement/conversion opportunities without compromising the character of parish.

**WB Objective 4: To meet the needs of small and home based businesses.**

6.4 To achieve objective 4 the needs of small home based business will be met on previously developed sites, on existing farms and employment sites and within/adjacent to the built form of Shucknall and Weston Beggard without compromising the character of the parish and amenity of residents.

**WB Objective 5: To support tourism through B&B provision and other local small scale initiatives**

6.5 To achieve objective 5 the Plan will support appropriate, small scale tourism enterprises to strengthen the rural economy of the parish.

**WB Objective 6: Manage development of large scale farming units/polytunnels.**

6.6 To achieve objective 6 the Plan will ensure any development is as environmentally sustainable as possible and accords with this plan.

**WB Objective 7: Provide support for new community facilities eg shop, pub, café.**

6.7 To achieve objective 7 the Plan will support sustainable/innovative social/community enterprises.

**WB Objective 8: Provide support for small scale renewable energy opportunities linked to individual developments.**

6.8 To achieve objective 8 the Plan will support the inclusion of small scale renewable energy proposals linked to individual applications or to appropriately sited community initiatives which have direct benefit only to the parish community and are in accordance with this Plan. The plan does not support the provision of large scale commercial renewable energy projects in the parish due to their impact on the local environment.

**WB Objective 9: Improve local infrastructure including Broadband, public transport, road improvements, gas supply improvements, and telecommunications.**

6.9 To achieve objective 9 the Plan will include policies which will support improvements to local infrastructure and provide guidance on the siting of telecommunication projects. The Parish Council will engage fully with providers of services to ensure they are aware of local requirements, that the community understands what is possible and to encourage suppliers to upgrade facilities.

## **7. Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies**

7.1 This section of the Plan identifies specific policies which seek to deliver the Plan's objectives and overall vision provided in sections 5 and 6 of this Plan. These policies have arisen from the information provided by the residents of the parish in responding to the various plan consultations. These policies need to be read in conjunction with the Herefordshire Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework. Collectively these documents provide the Local Development Framework for the area and contain the policies which will guide and inform future development in the parish.

### **A Valued Environment in which to live**

7.2 Underpinning all aspects of this Neighbourhood Plan is the overall desire to preserve and enhance the natural environment of Weston Beggard parish.

7.3 Residents have responded by saying that the ongoing preservation and enhancement of the parish's attractive and valued rural environment including its open spaces, views, footpaths, bridleways, hedgerows, woods and coppices is important and will continue to enhance their quality of life. Of particular interest are the Westhide Woods, an identified Site of Wildlife Interest, which protrude into the northern part of the parish.

7.4 In addition to protecting the local environment it was also agreed that modest growth to meet the needs of the parish and ensure a vibrant community in the future needed to be addressed in the Plan.

7.5 The Plan therefore provides the policy context to allow proportionate growth in line with the requirements of the Herefordshire Core Strategy whilst protecting the environmental setting that the parish enjoys and treasures.

## **Policy WB1: A Valued Environment in which to live**

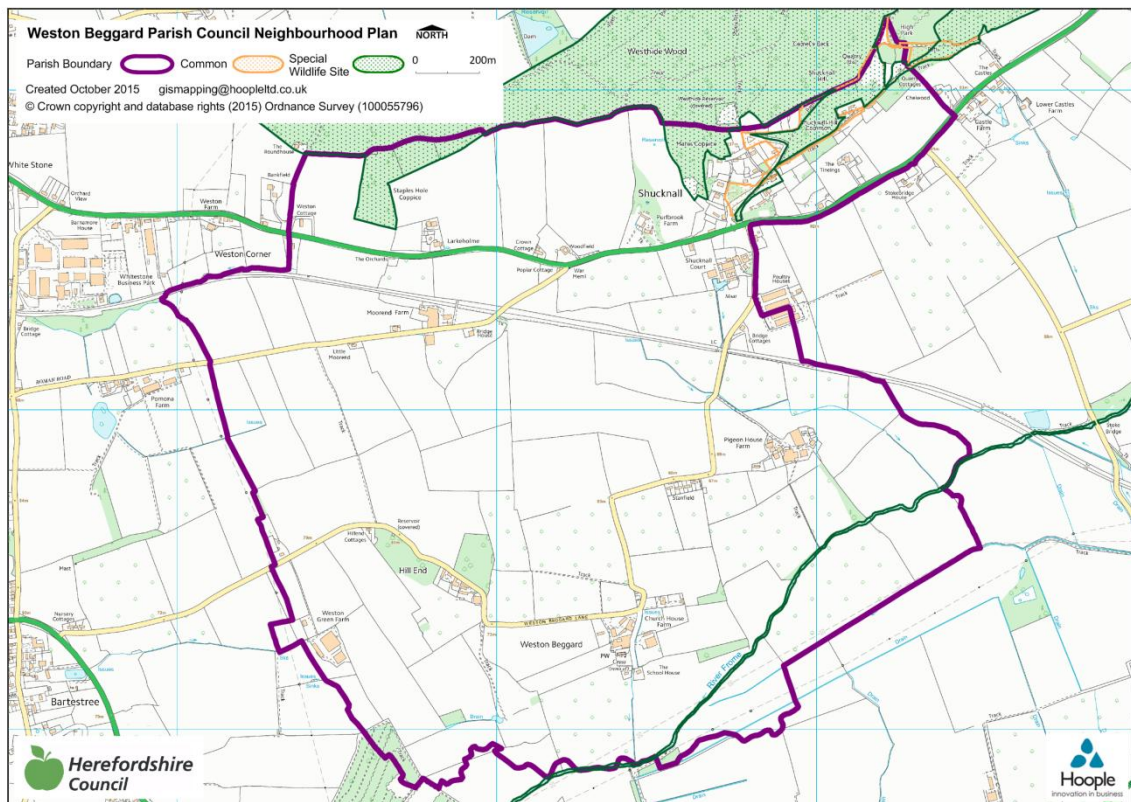
**Development proposals will need to protect the valued, tranquil, natural environment of the parish by:**

- **Respecting and protecting important open spaces, views and the areas landscape quality**
- **Protecting and enhancing local habitats and areas of biodiversity value;**
- **Protecting mature trees and hedgerows and incorporating these features into landscaping schemes wherever possible;**
- **The planting of native tree/hedge species within new development;**
- **Protecting local orchards and woodland from development and where possible enhancing them**
- **Maintaining and enhancing footpaths and bridleways**

### *Policy Justification*

- 7.6 This policy seeks to protect the valued natural environment, views and habitats of the parish.
- 7.7 It has been difficult for this Plan to specifically identify important Parish views due to the open nature of the local environment. The parish is located within the Frome Valley and enjoys long distant views to the Malvern Hills in the east, the Black Mountains to the west, and across the valley towards the Checkley Hills to the south. The settlement of Shucknall is located on the valley side and enjoys views across to Dormington, Checkley and the hills beyond as well as along the valley. Weston Beggard and Hillend are located on the valley floor and enjoy views out to and along the valley. These long distance views and the general open character of the parish need to be protected. As a result proposals will need to be sensitively sited to maintain and enhance the valued environment of the parish and include comprehensive landscaping schemes as part of any application to reduce any potential visual impact.
- 7.8 In addition to these views there are many areas of valued open spaces within the parish which the community enjoy and should be protected from development. In particular there is Shucknall Common, a 5.26 hectare area of common land at the heart of Shucknall, areas of ancient woodlands which abut the parish to the north, Westhide Woods, an identified Site of Wildlife Interest and the many bridleways and footpaths which traverse the parish.

**Parish map showing Shucknall Common and Westside Woods Special Wildlife Site (note that there is some overlap between the two)**



## The Right Housing in the Right Place

- 7.9 The delivery of dwellings in the parish over the last 25 years has been limited reflecting the rural nature of the parish and has included some conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings mainly through the conversion of redundant rural buildings.
- 7.10 Looking forward, the Weston Beggard Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the proportional policy approach being taken to residential development in the Herefordshire Core Strategy through Policy RA2.
- 7.11 A proportionate residential growth target of 18% of the number of dwellings in the parish has been established in the Herefordshire Core Strategy for the Weston Beggard Neighbourhood Plan area. The Council has identified 85 households in the parish which equates to a housing requirement of 15 dwellings to be delivered by 2031. As at April 2014 there were 5 housing commitments (3 dwellings under construction at Purlbrook Farm and 2 under construction at Moorend Farm) which provides a total net housing requirement of 10 dwellings.
- 7.12 The location of new residential development will need to be directed to the identified settlements within Weston Beggard and Shucknall in line with Policy RA2 of the Core



Strategy. Development proposals will be supported on sites that lie within or adjoining the main built form of these settlements. In addition, Policy RA3 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy provides guidance on the limited development opportunities that exist outside of these settlements. This Plan supports this approach and is in conformity with these policies.

### *Policy Options*

- 7.13 In terms of identifying the development limits for Weston Beggard and Shucknall consideration has been given to the requirement for a settlement boundary for the two settlements. This approach, however, was not supported at consultation due to the dispersed settlement pattern of these two settlement areas and concern that the rigidity of a settlement boundary did not fit with the historic organic growth patterns experienced in the parish. Instead there is strong support for a criteria based approach which is seen to aid delivery of more locally distinctive schemes.
- 7.14 This criteria approach seeks to avoid isolated dwellings in the countryside and instead guide development proposals to sites which lie within and adjacent to the main built form of Weston Beggard and Shucknall. In terms of identifying the built form of these settlements Shucknall is more easily defined than that of Weston Beggard. This is because the latter settlement area is characterised by a more dispersed pattern of development. That said, there are four distinct groupings of buildings which collectively have been identified in this Plan as representing the settlement of Weston Beggard and two groupings representing the settlement of Shucknall. A criterion for identifying these settled areas is the presence of 5 or more dwellings within a group. The following detail provides guidance on defining the built form and therefore development limits of these settlements:

#### **The settlement of Weston Beggard constitutes the following four areas:**

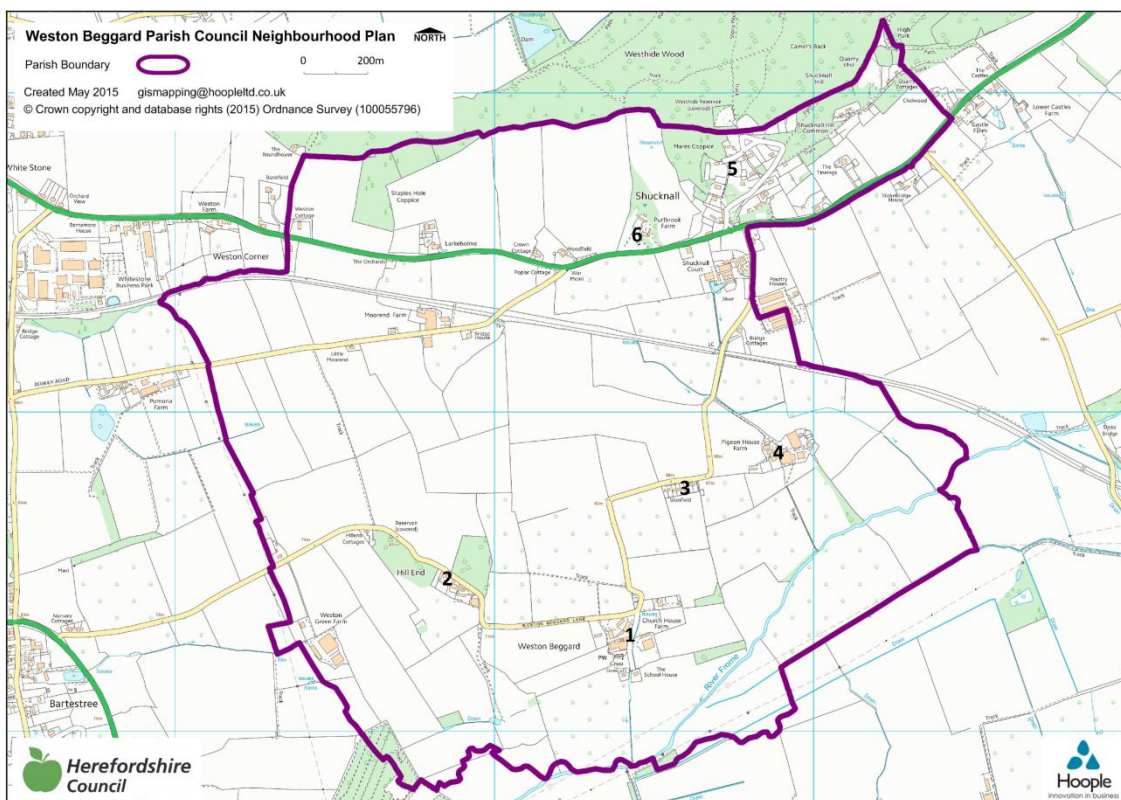
- **Weston Beggard Church:** The area around the church from Vicarage Cottages to the north, Church Cottage and Old School House to the south, Church Farm to the west and Church House Farm to the east. (Marked as area 1 on map).
- **Hill End:** The area west of the church including The Cider Mill, The Farm House, The Grange, The Oast House, The Granny Apartment and Nos 1,2 &3 Hill End. (Marked as area 2 on map).
- **Stanfield:** The area north of the church that comprises a linear development of 10 houses, Stanfield. (Marked as area 3 on map)

- **Pigeon House/Friars Court:** The area northeast of the church comprising Friar's Court, White Friars, The Bungalow, Gordon Croft and Pigeon House (Marked as area 4 on map).

**The settlement of Shucknall constitutes the following areas:**

- **Shucknall Hill:** The built area from the parish boundary to the north and the A4103 to the south. The western boundary is along the line of dwellings from Dingly Dell in the north to Yew Tree Cottage in the south. The eastern boundary is from Long View in the north following the line of dwellings along the eastern side of the unclassified road down the hill to Shucknall Spout. Shucknall Hill Common is explicitly excluded from any development. (Marked as area 5 on map)
- **Purlbrook Farm:** The built area around Purlbrook Farm, excluding the immediately adjacent fields and wooded areas. (Marked as area 6 on map)

**Settlement areas of Weston Beggard and Shucknall**



Land that falls outside these areas will be regarded as open countryside and will need to comply with the requirements of Policy RA3 of the Core Strategy.

7.15 Careful consideration has also been given to whether policies should be based on identifying specific sites or whether an agreed set of criteria should be developed against which future planning applications can be assessed. On balance, given the

limited scale of future development, a criteria led policy is considered to be the right approach to assess the suitability of housing proposals. This approach will reflect more appropriately the historic patterns of growth and the dispersed settlement form of Weston Beggard and Shucknall.

- 7.16 With respect to the scale of growth at any one location the results of the residents' questionnaire showed strong support for the delivery of new housing on small plots of up to 3 dwellings and on individual plots. This approach would reduce the overall impact of new development at any one location and retain and reflect the parish's environmental setting and its historic pattern of growth.
- 7.17 In terms of improving the mix and type of dwellings in the parish, the NDP supports development proposals which deliver smaller new dwellings of 3 bedrooms or less to meet the needs of local people. This also reflects the Herefordshire Council's Rural Housing Background Paper 2013 which, based on the Plan's evidence, identifies a need for smaller houses (predominantly 3 bedroom market properties) to be delivered in the Hereford Rural Housing Market Area. Delivery of smaller houses will help to redress the balance in the existing housing offered in the parish by providing smaller accommodation which collectively will meet the needs of all generations. This ensures that the delivery of future housing in the parish supports the social wellbeing of the area.

#### *Affordable Housing*

- 7.18 The Herefordshire Council's Rural Housing Background Paper 2013 states that the parish has a need for three affordable homes.
- 7.19 As identified above this Neighbourhood Plan seeks residential proposals ranging from individual properties to small scale developments of up to three dwellings in order to protect the character of the area. This scale of growth falls below the thresholds for negotiating affordable homes. As a result the affordable housing needs of the parish are best met within the adjoining larger sustainable settlements of Bartestree and Lugwardine, whose parish council has been consulted. However, to ensure flexibility is built into the Plan, a policy has been included which confirms the Plan's commitment to providing a range and mix of houses to meet the needs of those in the parish and links to the Herefordshire Local Plan exceptions Policy H2.

### **Policy WB2 The Right Housing in the Right Place**

**The Plan will support the provision of approximately 10 new homes to meet local housing needs and contribute to the wider housing market over the plan period between 2011 and 2031.**

**Housing proposals will be supported where they are:**

- Located within or immediately adjacent to the main existing built form of the defined settlements of Weston Beggard and Shucknall on small infill sites of up to 3 dwellings or on individual plots which reflect the historic pattern of growth of the two settlements;
- Preferably up to 3 bedrooms in size to meet the local needs of the area and improve the mix of housing types within the parish;
- Of a sustainable design and incorporate low carbon technologies;
- Able to provide safe and suitable highway access and parking that meets the requirements of the Highway Authority;
- Of a scale, form, layout, density and character which reflects the immediate setting, does not impact on residential amenity and contributes towards or is essential to the social wellbeing of the parish.
- Accompanied by a landscape proposal which forms an integral part of the site design, seeks to retain existing trees and hedgerows where possible and leads to an enhancement in the biodiversity value of the site.

Outside of the built form of Shucknall and Weston Beggard, housing proposals will need to comply with Herefordshire Core Strategy policies on rural exception sites (Policy H2); dwellings in Herefordshire's countryside (Policy RA3); agricultural, forestry and rural enterprise dwellings (Policy RA4); and the re-use of rural buildings (Policy RA5).

**Development that does not meet the above will not be permitted.**

*Policy Justification*

7.20 This Policy fully accords with the Core Strategy and its growth requirements. The settlements of Weston Beggard and Shucknall have been identified to accommodate approximately 10 dwellings up to 2031 to meet local housing needs in line with Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy. Proposals will be directed to within or immediately adjacent to the built form of these settlements. A definition of the limits of the built form for these two settlements is provided at paragraph 7.14 of this Plan. Proposals that come forward on land outside these limits will be regarded as being located in the countryside and will be assessed against Policy RA3 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy. Policy RA3 provides guidance on the limited development opportunities that exist outside the settlements of Weston Beggard and Shucknall.

7.21 Preference is given in the policy to the delivery of smaller new dwellings of up to 3-bed in size to meet the housing need requirements as documented in the Council's Rural Housing Background Paper 2013. This size limit will help to improve the mix and type of properties available within the parish and meet local needs.

7.21 To help reduce the impact of new homes on the character of the parish and to reflect historic patterns of organic growth, the size of new sites have been limited to small sites within the settlements of Weston Beggard and Shucknall of up to three dwellings. Proposals on such sites must be of a scale, form, layout, density and character which reflects the immediate setting, and protects residential amenity. Developments which do not comply with these requirements will not be supported.

7.22 The approach to affordable housing has already been justified in paragraph 7.19 and has the support of Withington and Bartestree parishes.

### **Supporting a Thriving Rural Economy**

7.23 Weston Beggard is a rural parish, with much of the land owned, managed and 'worked' by a small number of parishioners. They are stewards of the land and the landscape and the maintenance of the vision is dependent on their well being and support. Agriculture is very important to the local economy and food and drink is a key growth sector for the County. The consultation responses sought sufficient flexibility in the interpretation of the Plan to allow these enterprises to develop and adapt to maintain their viability and therefore their ability to complete the stewardship function. This needs to be balanced with preservation of the open agricultural landscape of the Frome valley.

7.24 The consultation responses also provided support for tourist related development, some small scale commercial development especially home-based businesses and small scale artisan businesses where the vision is not adversely impacted.

#### **Policy WB3: Supporting a Thriving Rural Economy**

**Proposals which support the development of small scale employment opportunities, the development of sustainable small scale tourism enterprises, farm diversification opportunities as well as home based employment will be supported where they:**

- **Protect the character and tranquillity of the parish;**
- **Are located within or adjacent to the built form of Weston Beggard or Shucknall or utilise where possible previously developed land opportunities, are located on farm complexes, utilise a redundant rural building or relate to a small extension to an existing dwelling or**

**business;**

- **Can be satisfactorily accessed and can be accommodated on the highway network;**
- **Are of a size, scale and massing which is commensurate with their surroundings;**
- **Protect residential amenity;**
- **Protect and where possible enhance landscape quality;**
- **Can be undertaken within the capacity of the local infrastructure.**

**Proposals for change of use of existing business premises will need to demonstrate that the existing use is no longer economically viable.**

**Proposals for large scale employment activities including large scale industrial farming development such as intensive poultry/cattle rearing units and large scale polytunnels will generally not be supported due to their impact on the local environment and the limitations of the local highway network. Any application will need to fully address the impact of the proposal on the following areas:**

**The Landscape and historic built environment of the area,  
Ecological issues,  
Access and highway safety,  
Drainage and flooding issues,  
Residential amenity.**

**Any proposal must ensure that impacts are minimal and are appropriately mitigated against to the satisfaction of the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority.**

### *Policy Justification*

- 7.25 This plan supports the development of small scale businesses, small scale home based business and small scale extension to existing established business as well as appropriate farm diversification opportunities. Conversion of existing buildings to employment uses will also be supported. The Plan will support the promotion of sustainable tourism opportunities in the parish and the provision of sensitively located small scale B&B and self catering tourist accommodation.

- 7.26 The Plan, however, does not support the development of large scale industrial and agricultural development. The impact of this development is not considered to be consistent with the Plan's overall vision and will not be supported.
- 7.27 The Herefordshire Core Strategy has identified strategic employment sites in Hereford and the market towns which will provide the main focus for employment activity during the plan period. That said the Core Strategy also seeks to strengthen the rural economy by providing flexibility for new and expanding businesses subject to them being of an appropriate scale and location and ensuring they do not significantly impact upon environmental quality of the area. This Plan supports and is in conformity with Policies RA6, E1, E2, E3 and E4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan.
- 7.28 In line with these policies this Plan will support appropriate proposals which are located within or adjacent to the built form of Weston Beggard or Shucknall or utilise where possible previously developed land opportunities, are located on farm complexes, utilise a redundant rural building or relate to a small extension to an existing dwelling or business. The built form and therefore development limits of these two settlements are provided in paragraph 7.14 of this Plan.
- 7.29 This Plan recognises the importance of supporting the local economy through small scale initiatives and providing local jobs. However this must be balanced against protecting the local environment which is so cherished and valued by the local community. The Plan also reflects the location of the parish which lies close to the economic hub of Hereford which provides the main focus for employment growth.

### **Delivery of Local Infrastructure**

- 7.30 Through the Plan consultations residents have agreed that the parish needs utilities (or access to them) to ensure longevity; these include:
- Power – Gas, electricity
  - Public transport- A regular reliable bus service to Hereford along the A4103
  - Infrastructure – roads, footpaths, cycleways. This includes adequate maintenance.
  - Broadband –including superfast fibre
  - Small scale renewable energy opportunities as addressed in paragraphs 6.8/7.32 of this Plan
- 7.31 Proposals to improve access to a quality broadband service and mobile phone signal were also identified by the local community. These are key components in delivering rural employment growth and the development of sustainable tourism proposals and will be supported in the Plan.

7.32 In addition the community did not support the delivery of large scale commercially led renewable energy projects due to the impact of these on the local environment but would support smaller initiatives directly linked to individual development proposals or community initiatives which provide benefit to those living in the parish.

#### **Policy WB4 Delivery of Local Infrastructure**

**Development proposals will need to be supported by appropriate high quality infrastructure to contribute to the local community through developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

**The development of high speed broadband infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sympathetically designed and located.**

**Mobile phone infrastructure proposals will be supported where they are sensitively located, are of an appropriate type and scale which protect local amenity, will have minimal environmental impact and will be of direct benefit to the community.**

**This Plan will support the inclusion of low carbon renewable energy initiatives including solar, heat pumps and water power within individual proposals or to sensitively sited community renewable energy schemes which directly benefit the community. Proposals for commercially led renewable energy schemes will not be supported within the parish due to their impact on their local environment**

#### *Policy Justification*

7.33 The availability and capacity of necessary utilities to support future developments will need to be fully justified in future applications. In addition consideration should be given to improving local services including those listed by the community in paragraph 7.30 through developer contributions, CIL and any other future opportunities.

7.34 Support will also be given to small scale, environmentally friendly and sustainable renewable energy initiatives but only where they are related to proposals which do not adversely impact on the landscape and are linked to individual applications or to appropriately sited community initiatives which have direct benefit to the parish community and are in accordance with this Plan. The plan does not support the provision of large scale commercial renewable energy projects in the parish due to their impact on the local environment.



7.35 In terms of the provision of solar, the community seek non ground mounted panels attached to existing or proposed buildings to reduce their impact on the local environment.

### **Community Facilities: Access to Services**

7.36 The consultation responses stated that the parish needs access to community facilities to build spirit and longevity including a:

- Church
- Village Hall
- Shop
- Pub
- Schools

7.37 It was accepted that other than the Church, which exists, most of the other community facilities listed are aspirational and in current circumstances are not viable. That said, this may not be the case in the future; consideration should be given to access to these facilities during the plan period.

### **Policy WB5 Access to Community Facilities**

**Future proposals for viable new community facilities will be supported in principle.**

#### *Policy Justification*

7.38 The Plan will encourage proposals which deliver community facilities to the benefit of parish residents. In addition, and given the parish currently only has one very valued community facility, the Church at Weston Beggard, this Plan supports the retention and enhancement of the community facilities that are located in the adjoining parishes of Yarkhill, Bartestree and Withington. The parish relies on these facilities and will support positive policies in the parishes' Neighbourhood Plans which seek to protect and enhance these facilities for the benefit of the wider rural area.

## **8. Review and Monitoring the Plan**

8.1 The Plan covers the period until 2031. Within this period there may be further changes for example:-

- Changing Demographics

- Changes to certain National Planning Policies
- Changes in economic forecasts and delivery of housing and employment development
- Changes to the needs of the rural economy

8.2 These and other unforeseen developments may make it necessary for this Plan to be reviewed. It is proposed to hold a formal review in 2021, to ensure that the details of the Plan, particularly in terms of housing and the economy, are still relevant and that the plan continues to serve the best interests of the parish.

## 9. Next Steps

9.1 The Draft Plan is now at its formal regulation 14 consultation. All responses need to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016. Following this consultation the Plan will be reviewed in light of the responses received and will then be submitted to Herefordshire Council for a six week publicity period. The Plan will then undergo Independent Examination. Subject to a successful examination, the Plan will proceed to a local referendum and if a favourable response is received will be formally adopted and form part of the Development Plan and used to determine planning applications within the parish.

## References

### ONS

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadAreaSearch.do?a=7&r=1&i=1001&m=0&s=1432813690864&enc=1&areaSearchText=weston+beggard&areaSearchType=16&extendedList=true&searchAreas=>