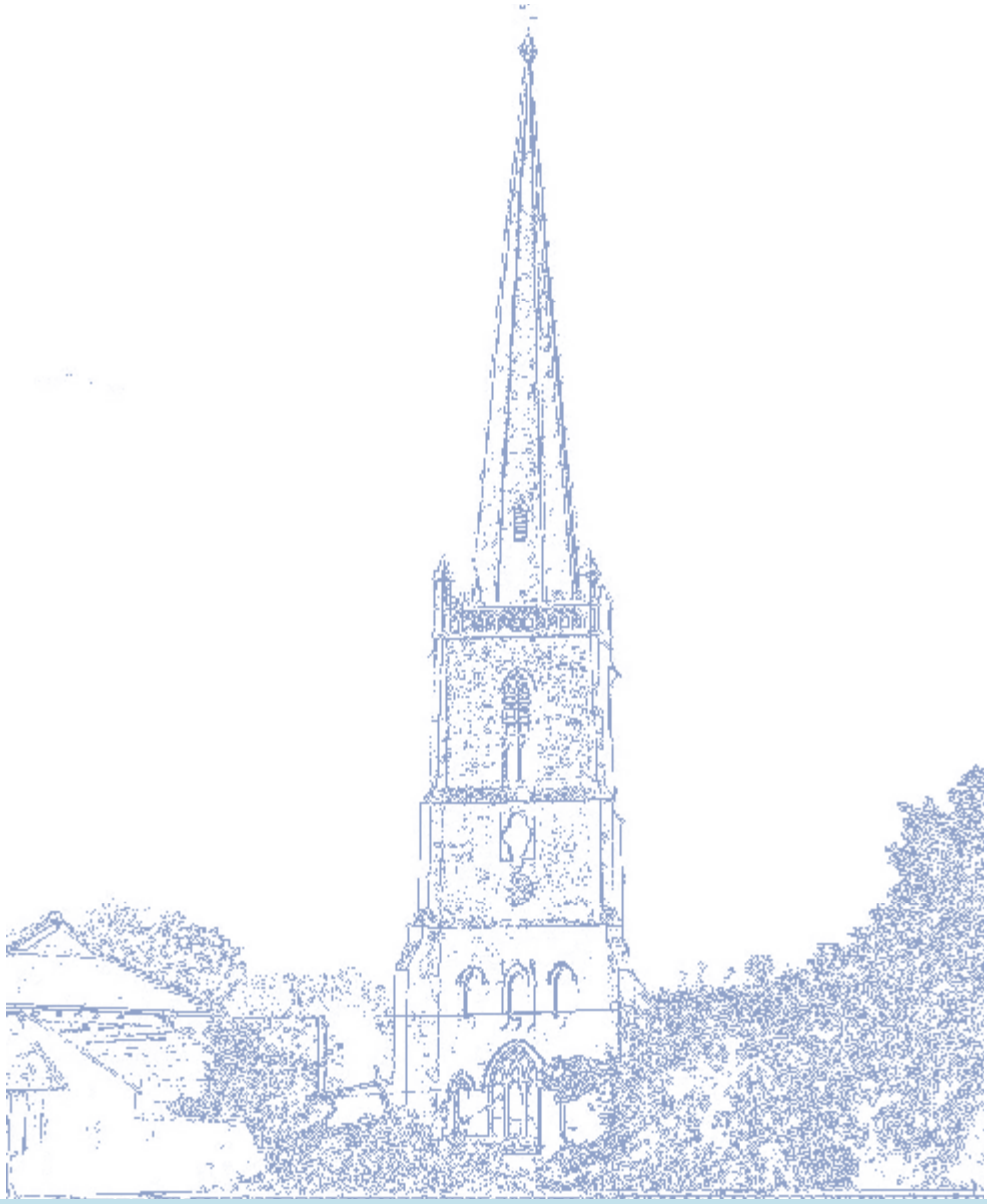
SLIMBRIDGE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2040

ADOPTED VERSION

MAY 2024



This document has been prepared by the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group on behalf of the community of Slimbridge Parish and the Parish Council.

This is the adopted version of the Neighbourhood Plan and together with its associated documentation is to be used for its intended purpose only.

This document is Part 1 of the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Part 2 is the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement

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The Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has received technical support during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan from consultants Place Studio.

This document was produced by the Slimbridge Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with assistance from consultants Place Studio

place

www.placestudio.com

Place Studio is a community planning and design consultancy which seeks to enable local communities to harness their local knowledge and objectives to produce sound and robust planning and design documents.

Thank you to Simon Mayer, our Stroud District Council Link Officer who is supporting us through the plan making process.

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Foreword

Slimbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is being produced so that local communities are closely involved in the decisions which affect them. Slimbridge NDP has been developed to establish a vision for Slimbridge Parish and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the NDP period 2022 – 2040. Once formally in place, Slimbridge NDP will be a statutory document that will be incorporated into the district planning framework to be used by Stroud District Council (SDC) to determine planning applications in the Parish of Slimbridge. The NDP has been produced by the Steering Group, with the full support of Slimbridge Parish Council, the Steering Group consisting of Slimbridge Parish Councillors and Parishioners of the Parish, using the views of the residents of Slimbridge Parish. The Steering Group has consulted and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that will influence the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in the Slimbridge NDP are a true reflection of the views of Parishioners in The Parish of Slimbridge.

Key benefits of the Neighbourhood Development Plan are:

- Positively influence any development that comes forward
- Ensure any development is sympathetic to, and improves, the look, feel and wellbeing of the village.
- Take steps to deliver housing to meet local needs for residents.
- Give the village the potential to access increased levy funding from developers to improve village facilities.
- Protect and improve community facilities of Slimbridge.
- Protect and enhance our Parish environment.

Slimbridge NDP Steering Group has considered and incorporated comments from residents, businesses, landowners etc. Comments were considered by the Steering Group and incorporated with the NDP where considered appropriate.

The Parish Council would like to thank the members of the Steering Group and pay tribute to their dedication in the production of the Slimbridge NDP, in addition the Steering Group is grateful for help from other members of the community that have helped compile the Slimbridge NDP.

The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Stroud District Council for examination which resulted in the recommendation that the NDP, with minor modifications, should progress to a referendum. The community voted 'yes' in the referendum held on the 2nd May 2024 which gives the Plan full weight in planning terms.

What's Next?

This document is the final version of the Plan which has incorporated the changes required by the Examiner and which our community has voted to make a legal part of the Development Plan for our Parish.If you have any questions, please contact Slimbridge Parish Council by emailing: clerk@slimbridge-pc.gov.uk or calling: 07943 894637

1

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 As we look ahead to the future, there are many challenges that face us. From tackling climate change and biodiversity loss, to balancing out the need for more houses and jobs, and ensuring a good level of health and well-being for all of our communities. We need to take proactive action to address these challenges from within our community.

1.2 This document is the referendum version of the Slimbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (also referred to as NDP / Plan / Neighbourhood Plan) and it is one of the tools we have to shape the future of our Parish. It builds on the views of the community stakeholders such as Stroud District Council and of parishoners received through consultations throughout the Plan preparation process and a formal consultations (known as Regulation 14) in early 2023. It is also based on extensive research undertaken by local representatives and presents a positive vision for our area looking ahead to 2040.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

1.3 The Localism Act 2011[1] introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development and promote better land use in their community by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans. The aim of the legislation is to empower local communities to use the planning system to promote appropriate and sustainable development in their area.

1.4 Neighbourhood plans must meet some legal requirements as specified by law: they must have appropriate regard to national policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)[2]; must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Stroud Local Plan; must be compatible with human rights requirements, and must be compatible with EU obligations (the latter remains relevant until/if/when legislation changes as a result of Brexit).

1.5 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations set out a number of formal steps that must be taken in preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, including formal consultation (this draft document is one of the required formal stages), examination and a Parish referendum to approve it. Once adopted – the formal term is 'made' - the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Stroud District Development Plan and forms the basis for determining planning applications in Slimbridge Parish.

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan provides a significant opportunity for local people to influence planning decisions, as planning applications are determined 'in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'[3]

1 Localism Act 2011 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

2 National Planning Policy Framework 2023 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf

3 Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38 (6) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/part/3/crossheading/development-plan

Where are we in the process?

Neighbourhood Plan Process

- ◊ **Defining the Neighbourhood Plan area**
- ◊ **Preparing the Plan**
- ◊ **Formal 6 week consultation** (Regulation 14)
- ◊ **Make changes and revisions in response to the consultation Submit to Stroud District Council**
- ◊ **Formal 6 week consultation (Regulation 16)**
- ◊ **Examination**
- ◊ **Referendum**
- ◊ **Legal Force**

Why produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Slimbridge Parish?

1.7 A Neighbourhood Plan for Slimbridge Parish will give those who live and work here a positive and proactive format to influence planning and development decisions.

1.8 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their area. Each stage of the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan process to date has aimed to build a clear understanding of

local community views, together with locally produced evidence, all set within the context of national and Stroud District planning policy. The Neighbourhood Plan brings together these elements to inform a local approach to development over the coming years.

1.9 The Slimbridge Neighbourhood Plan includes planning policies to influence planning decisions within the Parish. It also includes practical projects and actions on topics which are not directly related to land-use planning but are priorities for the local community.

Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.10 Slimbridge Parish was designated by Stroud District Council as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of creating a Neighbourhood Plan on 3rd July 2020 under the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan area follows the Parish Council boundary as shown on Figure 1

How will this Plan reflect the views of our community?

1.11 The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by local volunteers supported by the Parish Council and specialist consultants. Care has been taken to build up a clear picture and evidence base of local issues and ambitions, issues and opportunities.

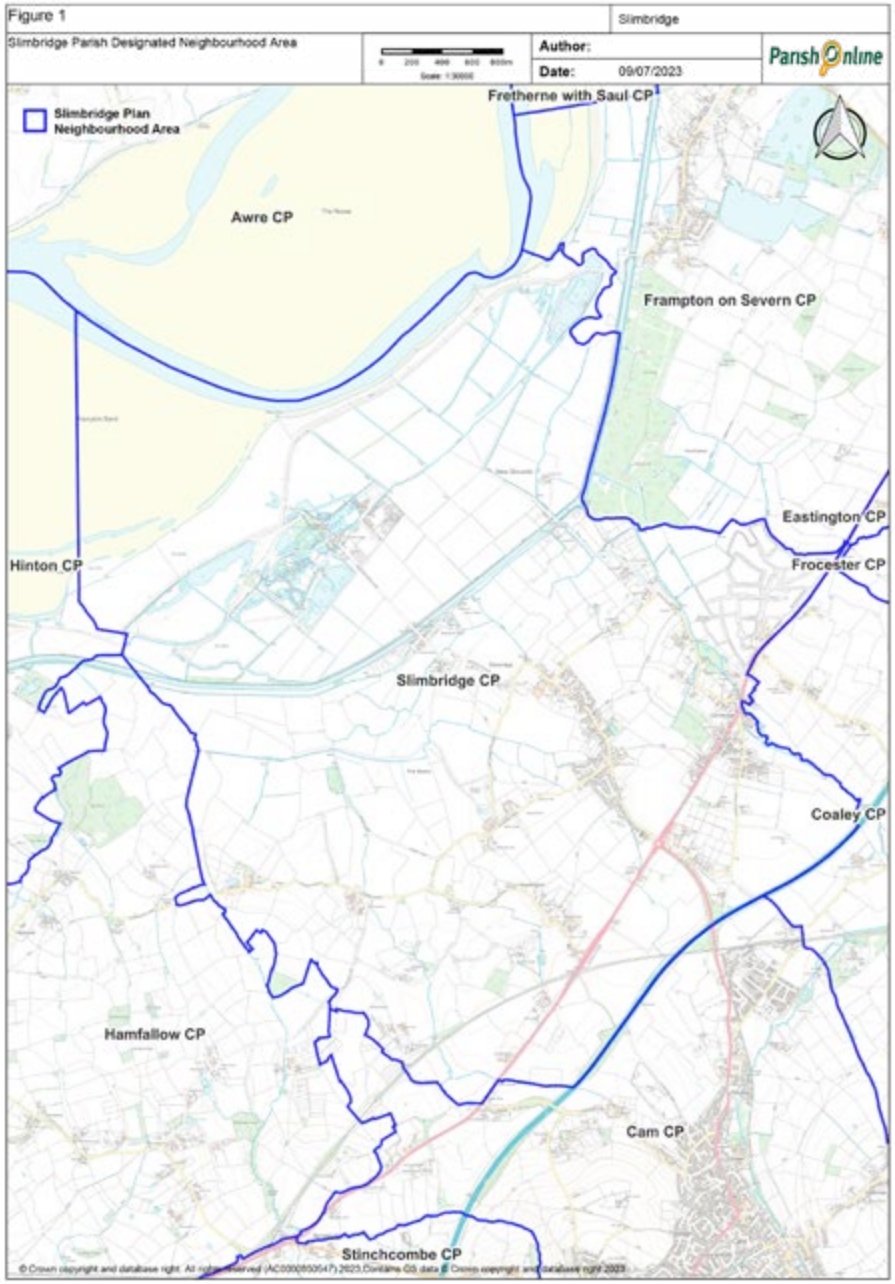


Figure 1 Slimbridge Parish - Designated Neighbourhood area

1.12 The evidence is made up of two elements:

- The views of local communities
- Local fact-finding and research evidence.

1.13 In order to ensure that this Plan is a 'shared vision' amongst the community, a range of community engagement activities have been undertaken over the period of time that we're producing the NDP. For example:

- Launch open event (March 2020)
- Residents Questionnaire (Spring 2020)
- NDP stand at the Parish Christmas Coffee Morning (December 2021)
- Regular Neighbourhood Plan updates on the Slimbridge Parish Council website and in the Parish Newsletter, including calls for comments and suggestions on various evidence topics
- Periodic open online meetings and NDP representation at the Annual Parish Meeting
- Neighbourhood Plan Community Event (September 2022)
- Monthly reports and updates to the Parish Council on NDP progress.
- Regulation 14 consultation on a full draft Plan (See below).

1.14 Local groups have contributed towards the evidence collection, for example the Parish's local footpaths group has been collecting evidence on walking routes in the Parish.

1.15 A full account of the informal consultation undertaken in developing the draft NDP will be recorded in the Consultation Statement, the draft of which is available on the Parish Council website: https://slimbridge-pc.gov.uk/ndp-draft-policies

1.16 The vision, objectives and policies that are set out in this Plan come directly from the views and opinions gathered through consultation and through work to generate local evidence.

1.17 A formal consultation was held on a pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan early in 2023. Changes were made to the Plan in response to comments where appropriate as a result of the feedback received from Parishoners and Stakeholders. The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Stroud District Council for further consultation (known as Regulation 16), examination and a referendum which was held on the 2nd May 2024, where the community voted 'yes'. This gave the Plan full weight in planning terms. This means it must be used by Stroud Council officers when considering planning applications in our parish.

2 Planning Context

2.1 As a planning document, this Neighbourhood Plan is required to operate within the context set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (2023, NPPF) and the latest national Planning Practice Guidance(PPG)[4].

2.2. National planning policy addresses a wide range of issues that are relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan. The most significant are the overall requirement to deliver sustainable development, and the requirement to be in 'general conformity' with local level strategic policy – in our case this is the Stroud District Local Plan.

What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development is commonly defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Important aims include minimising the need to travel with a view to reducing the effects of climate change and avoiding environmental impact that compromises sustainable, functional communities.

4 National Planning Practice Guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance

Stroud District Local Plan

2.3. The Stroud District Local Plan (2015 - 2031) provides an overview of how the District should evolve over the Plan period and, through its strategies, aims to help local communities achieve sustainable development. The Local Plan is currently being updated, to be recast to cover the period until 2040.

2.4. The emerging Stroud District Local Plan review sets out the Council's development strategy for meeting growth and development needs up to 2040. It is now in the examination stage. The Slimbridge Neighbourhood Plan has a proposed plan period up to 2040 which dovetails with the plan period for the emerging Stroud Local Plan Review. The Neighbourhood Plan looks forward towards the emerging Local Plan, and is being prepared in the context of the emerging policies. The emerging strategic planning policy context is shown on Figure 2 with PS37 to the North of the M5 and PS24 to the South.

Importantly, the emerging Local Plan enables Stroud District Council to address the Climate Crisis through planning policies. Stroud District has committed to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. The emerging local plan Core Policy DCP1 - Delivering Carbon Neutral by 2030 outlines how all new development in the district is expected to help meet this target.

2.5. The emerging Stroud District Local Plan categorises Slimbridge village as a Tier 3b settlement in Stroud District; a medium-sized village with no retail or employment role, but a good basic level of local community facilities and services. Access to key facilities and services elsewhere is considered poor. It should be noted however that the community considers this 'good' basic level of community facilities and services to be quite limited.

2.6. Cambridge village is categorised as a Tier 4a settlement; a small settlement which, whilst providing no retail role, and minimal local services and facilities itself, is well connected to Slimbridge and the facilities it provides. However, Cambridge does play a notable employment role with Cambridge Mill Industrial Estate and N-Virocycle but its footpath connections to Slimbridge Village are limited to two Public Rights of Way.

2.7. Both Slimbridge and Cambridge have a defined Settlement Development Limit (SDL). Limited infill and redevelopment is permitted inside the SDL and (exceptionally) adjacent to the SDL (subject to policy criteria), with a view to sustaining or enhancing the role and function of the villages.

Wisloe Garden Village

All the text in this section is interim, subject to any final decision by the Local Plan Examiner on the basic allocation of the proposed Wisloe Garden Village site. If the decision is taken not to allocate, this text will be removed in future versions of our Neighbourhood Plan.

2.8. Significantly for our Parish, the emerging Local Plan includes the draft allocation of a large scale new settlement within our Neighbourhood Area. Draft proposals in the emerging Stroud District Local Plan include approximately 1,500 homes, employment, residential, retail, community and open space uses (including a primary school), as well as strategic green infrastructure and landscaping.

2.9. The potential allocation of a new settlement within our Neighbourhood Area is a Stroud District Local Plan matter. Our Neighbourhood Plan has no power to set the strategic allocation approach. Nevertheless, once our Neighbourhood Plan policies are formally approved (or 'made'), they will apply to development that is brought forward within any Local Plan strategic allocation sites in Slimbridge Parish during the lifetime of our made Neighbourhood Plan.

2.10. The potential allocation of the 'Wisloe Garden Village' is of fundamental importance to our community. It would significantly affect our Parish our residents and our environment in numerous ways. It should, of course, affect our Neighbourhood Plan although the timing of both this plan and the Local Plan make this difficult.

2.11. Strategic developments of this sort are the responsibility of the District Council, not this Neighbourhood Plan. However, given that the garden village may be allocated in the Local Plan, it is imperative for us that we comment on it here, especially because none of the publicly available information on the garden village makes any mention of our Neighbourhood Plan. As the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan proceeds through the stages of consultation, examination and referendum it accrues more 'weight' in the balance of considerations for planning

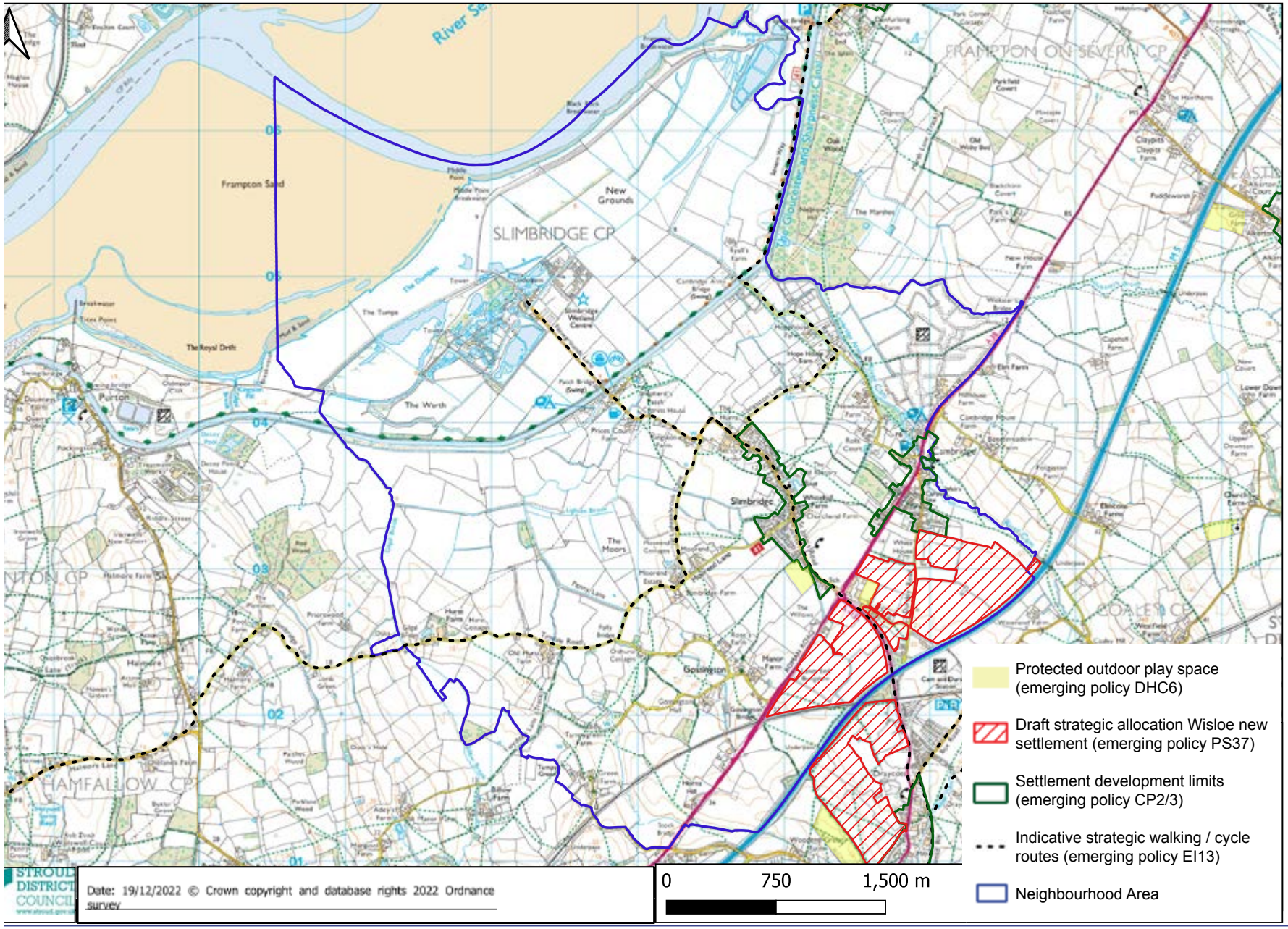


Figure 2 Emerging Strategic Planning Policy Context

applications in the Parish. Once formally made the requirement to conform with our Plan's policies (in addition to those of the Local Plan) will be enshrined in planning law.

2.12. The latest material on the Wisloe Garden Village proposals (submitted to Stroud District Council on 20th February 2023) raises two key concerns for our Neighbourhood Plan. First, that many of the suggestions in the latest plans, especially the 'Wisloe Design Code', will need to be updated and refined to meet our Neighbourhood Plan policies. Secondly, that, with a few exceptions, the proposals are internally focused and do not mention or offer solutions to some of the impacts that the garden village would have on our wider parish. A few examples of these issues follow below.

- The plans propose some as yet undetailed 'community facilities'. If these come forward they will affect the use and possible viability of existing facilities within the parish, e.g. shops, pub and the village hall. If not provided, or provided very late in the construction process, that would generate considerable and probably unsustainable pressure on our existing facilities. If, for example, a new Village Hall is to be provided it must be sized for the whole of Slimbridge Parish and not just Wisloe Garden Village
- A similar argument can be made about the proposed new Primary School because no evidence is provided about the likely impact of that school (and its timing) on Slimbridge Primary School. This is important if our school is replaced and children from the parish have to cross the main road to the new school (or vice-versa if our school is expanded). See Policy SLW1.
- Flooding is an issue for Slimbridge (see Policy SCE1) and must be addressed satisfactorily.
- Our draft Plan deliberately highlights areas of woodland etc. well beyond the parish boundary, in part because landscape features have a large scale impact, but also because of important wildlife corridors.
- While it is accepted that the new developments need to create their own, distinctive design identity, there is a local context of all the local patterns and characteristics of design as outlined in the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement. The 'new' needs to relate in some key ways to the 'old'. See Policy SD1

2.13. According to the main Wilsoe website, "involving the local community is an important part of shaping plans for Wisloe"(accessed March 2023). The Plan seeks to enable good practice and consistent standards that the community would seek to ensure were applied rigorously to the project. This would enable principles, such as the following, to underpin the detail of the delivery of a new community in the Parish:

- Integrate and connect the new development into the existing community both physically and socially
- Ensure a co-ordinated and timely approach to the delivery of infrastructure to accompany the homes
- Seek to create a new settlement area, of unique character grounded with local history and the outstanding natural environment.

There is very little local support for, and significant concerns about, the proposed Wisloe Garden Village; but through this Plan the community seeks to be proactive and enable positive input to proposals should the allocation be confirmed in the new Local Plan.

Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2.14. Our Neighbourhood Plan will run concurrently with the Stroud District Local Plan time frame; covering the period until 2040. This is a long time period, and it is recognised that the context, and related needs, aspirations, challenges and concerns of the local community may change over the Plan period.

2.15. Slimbridge Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure its relevance and to monitor its delivery.

2.16. The Slimbridge Neighbourhood Plan adds local detail to supplement national and local planning policies and ensure a locally responsive and positive community input into the planning system.

2.17. Once agreed at a referendum and officially 'made' (brought into legal force by the local

planning authority), a neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the District Local Plan, and becomes part of the statutory development plan.

2.18. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on robust information and analysis of the local area; the 'Evidence Base' will be available in full on the Parish Council website (https://slimbridge-pc.gov.uk/ndp-draft-policies/). The evidence base was prepared by members of the community and the Steering Group together with Plan consultants, Place Studio. A full list of the evidence can be found in Appendix 1.

Slimbridge Parish Church

3 About Slimbridge Parish

3.1 Slimbridge Parish lies on the Severn Plain and is mostly flat with open views across the River Severn to the Forest of Dean and Black Mountains beyond. The Cotswold escarpment to the south is part of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and forms a magnificent backdrop for the whole Parish. The Cotswold Way follows the edge of the escarpment looking down on the Parish and valley floor.

3.2. The Parish is positioned between Gloucester and Bristol - between junctions 13 and 14 on the M5. The A38 is the main route through the Parish and Cambridge, crossing the Slimbridge roundabout from where Slimbridge village, The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust and the other hamlets can be reached.

3.3. Slimbridge Parish covers approximately 6.5 square miles containing two main villages, Slimbridge and Cambridge, and the hamlets of Gossington, Moorend, Tumpy Green, Kingston, Troy Town and Shepherds Patch.

3.4. The Parish has a population of 1136 with 463 dwellings (ONS 2011 census). This compares to 1107 population with 423 dwellings in 2001 (ONS 2001 census). In the 10 years from 2001 – 2011 there has been a decrease in the younger population (0-24yrs) and an increase in the older population (65+) (ONS 2001 & 2011 census). The Parish population would be dramatically increased if strategic development of a new settlement comes forward in the Local Plan, which could include around 1,500 new homes. The potential development of a new settlement within the Neighbourhood Area is covered in more detail in 'Key Issues and Opportunities' below.

3.5. The Parish supports community facilities such as a Parish Church, Cemetery, Village Hall, Primary School, Playing Field and Pavilion, Slimbridge Social Club, Rosie's Wood and a Village Green in Cambridge. There are a number of businesses including the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, a garage, industrial estates, Post Office, 2 public houses, a cafe (Black Shed), caravan parks together with a few holiday lets and B&B facilities. There are a number of societies and sporting clubs, such as Slimbridge AFC, which provide opportunities for Parishioners to meet and socialise. The Parish is criss-crossed with footpaths and walking is a popular pastime.

3.6. The M5 and the River Severn form part of the Parish boundary. The Gloucester & Sharpness canal separates Shepherds Patch from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the New Grounds, with a bridge providing access. The river Cam flows through Cambridge to the canal along what was the 'Cambridge Arm' of the Canal.

Key Issues and Opportunities

3.7. Drawing on all of the community input and research to date, the following have emerged as key themes, issues and opportunities for our Neighbourhood Area:

- Addressing the Climate Crisis and building our climate resilience locally.
- Local flooding events are a key concern
- Taking local steps to tackling the biodiversity crisis.
- Retrofitting our existing building stock.
- New development incorporating sustainable design and construction methods.
- Valuing and protecting our rural and peaceful landscape.
- Celebrating and supporting our strong community spirit. There is potential for creation of a community hub, such as a meeting place, shop or cafe, where people can meet, work and socialise.
- Managing the local impacts of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust site, particularly:
  * Addressing traffic concerns
  * Harnessing opportunities to cater for visitors.
- Ensuring that any strategic development that comes forward through the Stroud District Council Local Plan meets the community's priorities and aspirations.
- Harnessing the creation of the Cam, Dursley and Uley Greenway; an opportunity to provide safe, active travel links between Slimbridge Parish and Cam and Dursley Station.

4 Vision and Objectives

Vision

Looking ahead over the next 20 years, Slimbridge Parish will be a place where:

- Our villages and hamlets maintain their distinctive ambience; reflecting their close connection to the peaceful countryside, strong community spirit and local character.
- Change continues to happen organically, as it has done over the centuries. New development responds to the needs of local people.
- Slimbridge parish is a safe place to live and work and the quality of life is improved for residents of all ages and physical abilities.
- Opportunities to respond to climate change and manage flooding issues are taken.
- Biodiversity thrives; orchards and allotments flourish, green spaces are respected, and the cherished views conserved.
- Tourism continues to benefit the Parish economically; the local impacts of WWT Slimbridge are managed through the encouragement of public transport, low emission vehicles and other sustainable transport modes.
- Walking and cycling is easier; local rights of way and lanes are maintained and enhanced.
- Appropriate businesses and agriculture, especially those offering apprenticeships, are encouraged. People can work from home easily.
- Improvements and expansion of community facilities will promote their use.
- The exploration and understanding of our rich heritage and archaeology will illuminate our past and guide our way into the future.

Objectives

Addressing the Climate Emergency in Slimbridge Parish

O.1 Upgrade the quality of new and existing residential and commercial buildings through sustainable design and the use of sustainable construction methods and materials that reduce carbon emissions and energy demand.

O.2 Reduce the risk and impacts of flooding and sewerage problems in Slimbridge Parish.

O.3 Protect and improve biodiversity and ecosystems.

O.4 Promote and support local food production, particularly through the provision of allotments, the preservation of existing orchards, the encouragement of new orchards and the encouragement of farm shops.

O.5 Preserve existing trees, woodland and hedgerows and encourage the planting of new native species.

O.6 Encourage community-led initiatives for local renewable energy schemes.

Locally Responsive Development and Design

O.7 Ensure that all new developments are of high quality design that protects and enhances the distinctive character of each village and hamlet within its setting.

O.8 Plan for a mix of open market and affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community.

O.9 Enable and promote early community involvement for future development by following the pre-application protocol.

O.10 Ensure that the design of any new large strategic developments protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the Parish.

O.11 Encourage self-build or custom build houses to help diversify the housing market, increase choice and contribute towards meeting local housing need.

O.12 Enable inclusive and accessible development that responds to the needs of residents of all ages and physical abilities.

Living and Working

O.13 Retain, expand or improve our community facilities, including play areas and sports facilities.

O.14 Designate Local Green Spaces.

O.15 Promote an integrated, safe and accessible active travel network, encouraging the use of our footpaths, bridleways, cycleways and lanes.

O.16 Encourage the use of low carbon vehicles and support the provision of EV charging points.

O.17 Protect existing local employment and businesses, including our valued local agricultural activity. Encourage the use of local employees and promote more apprenticeships.

O.18 Encourage the diversification of our local economy, allowing flexibility for different types of businesses (especially high tech) to start, expand and stay in the Parish, and support home working.

O.19 Ensure that the whole of the Parish benefits from tourism and that the negative effects are minimised.

Landscape and Heritage

O.20 Maintain the locally valued key views within the Parish and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside.

O.21 Celebrate, protect and enhance the unique locally valued heritage assets in the Parish and encourage further archaeological and historical investigations.

Drone View of Slimbridge

2

PART 2 PLANNING POLICIES

Structure of Part 2

Introduction to this Section

We have colour coded this section to make it easier to navigate.

Addressing the Climate Emergency in Slimbridge Parish

- Policy SCE1: Natural Flood Management in Slimbridge Parish
- Policy SCE2: Retrofitting of Existing Buildings to Improve Energy Efficiency
- Policy SCE3: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services
- Policy SCE4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy SCE5: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation in Slimbridge Parish

Locally Responsive Development and Design

- Policy SD1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- Policy SD2: Sustainable Development to Meet Local Housing Needs

Living and Working

- Policy SLW1: Community Facilities
- Policy SLW2: Local Green Spaces
- Policy SLW3: Getting Around
- Policy SLW4: Local Economy
- Policy SLW5: Managing Tourism and Rural Diversification in Slimbridge Parish

Landscape and Heritage

- Policy SLH1: Locally Valued Key Views
- Policy SLH2: Heritage Assets and Archaeology
- Policy SLH3: Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets

5 Planning Policies

Introduction to this section

5.1 This section includes a total of 16 draft Planning Policies which will be used to help determine planning applications within Slimbridge Parish (our Neighbourhood Plan Area).

5.2. Government guidance sets out that a policy in a Neighbourhood Plan should be: "clear and unambiguous... It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared".

5.3. The following sections include policies and a priority statement which relate to the development and use of land in the designated Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Area. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community.

5.4. There are many other policy matters that have been left to the adopted (and emerging) Stroud District Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between the two plans, though they have a mutual, helpful interdependence.

5.5. Planning policies are shown within a box to clearly distinguish them, as below:

Policy number: Policy title

Below the policy number and title is the policy text.

5.6. Before each box is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy / statement, how it will be applied and, where helpful and/or relevant, what evidence it draws upon and how it relates to other development plan policies.

5.7. This section is presented in 4 sections:

- 5A Addressing the Climate Emergency in Slimbridge Parish
- 5B Locally Responsive Development and Design
- 5C Living and Working
- 5D Landscape and Heritage

5.8. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a series of Practical Projects – detailed National Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 41-041-20140306[5] – that are related to the key themes and policies of the NDP, but relate to issues that cannot be directly influenced by land-use planning policies. They are therefore structured around the four sections that the planning policies fall into (see para. 5.7). The practical projects cover ideas, topics and actions that are important to the community and in some cases are already underway, so it's important that they are included in this document.

5 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2

Our Planning Policies and the Climate Emergency

Each planning policy is drafted to support the delivery of sustainable development in Slimbridge Parish. It is only through truly sustainable development that the planning system can make a positive contribution towards addressing the global climate emergency

This is an important issue for local people and so we have included a planning policy section (5A) which specifically addresses the climate emergency locally.

However, all of our planning policies contribute positively towards addressing the climate emergency locally in our Parish. Where relevant throughout sections 5B-5D of the Plan, we have included a short summary of how the policies do this – identified in a box like this one.

Rainbow over the Parish

5A Addressing the Climate Emergency in Slimbridge Parish

5A.1 Slimbridge Parish Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency. The NDP has been instrumental in regard to this and fully supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

5A.2 Whilst the majority of our energy demand is met by national energy suppliers, our commitment to addressing the climate emergency is reliant on their use of low carbon energy sources. As we must move away from fossil fuel for the provision of our energy requirements, local wind and solar generation of electricity becomes more important. Many buildings and dwellings in the Parish have the potential for solar panels. Within the Parish there is also the potential for on-land wind turbines. In some other areas of the country these have been built by a consortium of local people who benefit not only from local energy but also from the dividends that accrue from the sale of electricity to the national network and the NDP therefore encourages both home, businesses and community-led renewable energy generation.

5A.3 The Parish Council would like to see Slimbridge Parish become an information hub to promote and inform Parishioners of changes they can make in their own lives and homes, with advice on energy efficiency, home insulation, heat pumps etc. With the change to electric cars, households will wish to charge their vehicles at or near their homes. For those who are unable to do this, the Parish Council supports the provision of charging facilities to be made available in Parish Council managed car parks.

5A.4 The geographical location of Slimbridge Parish, situated between the edge of the Cotswold Hills and the tidal plain of the River Severn, places it at high risk from both severe rainfall and rising sea levels. We have therefore necessarily considered flood risk and coastal change as integral to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5A.5 Changes in current agricultural management practices can affect the potential for flood events. Planting trees and hedgerows can significantly increase water infiltration rate into soil and storage thereafter. This reduces the potential for surface runoff and overland flow, a key factor in reducing flood peaks. As we experience more frequent storms with higher wind speeds, our older trees are more vulnerable to loss and damage. These trees, many isolated in the centre of fields, are not being replaced.

Fallen Oak Tree in Glebe Field

5A.6 Slimbridge is internationally renowned as an important breeding ground and habitat for a multitude of bird species. Over the millennia, land around the River Severn has been claimed as productive pasture and grazing land. As sea levels rise and flood risk increases, this land may play an important role in flood management. As well as the obvious benefit of protecting our Parish from flood damage, natural flood management schemes also provide benefits for biodiversity. In Slimbridge this could increase the availability of habitat for bird life, in particular our wading birds. Implementation of natural flood management schemes in Slimbridge could mean that we could expect a further expansion of both our current wild bird flocks and the arrival of further species.

5A.7 Slimbridge Parish has a rich network of green and blue spaces that are locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important. From the Severn Estuary designated RAMSAR site, to our roadside verges and garden ponds, our environmental assets are all connected and provide a wealth of different benefits for our community and local biodiversity.

5A.8 Cutting energy used in producing and transporting food encourages people to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Possible ways to encourage this in Slimbridge Parish include organising a land-share scheme, letting local people grow food on unused bits of Parish land that aren't used for amenity (e.g. verges), and ensuring allotments/orchards are made available.

Flooding

5A.9 Slimbridge Parish has suffered from surface water flooding and sewerage problems over many years. This was highlighted as a key concern during preparation of the NDP; both through technical evidence gathering and community consultation. Properties in Slimbridge and Cambridge villages have experienced increasingly regular flooding events, and have experienced at least three serious surface water flash floods in the last 25 years. The most recent and most serious of these was in December 2020.

5A.10 One of the major impacts of a changing climate is a further increased risk of flooding. The UK Met Office predicts that Britain could experience a decrease in summer rainfall by up to 47%, and up to 35% more rain in winter by 2070[6].

5A.11 The Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Questionnaire Residents' Views Report (May 2021), showed that over one quarter of properties had suffered from flooding and over one fifth from sewage problems. The sewage flooding problems occur at times of high rainfall when the water table is high and surface water infiltrates the sewerage system.

5A.12 In 2016, Gloucestershire County Council spent an estimated £600k installing a new road drainage system through the centre of Slimbridge village to mitigate repeated surface water flooding of properties. The

Surface Water running off the fields towards St John's Road

Flooding in Ryalls Lane - the ditches are full

6 https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/index

system has only been partially effective which was dramatically demonstrated as surface flood water closed the A38 in December 2020, and flooded St Johns Road, areas of Ryalls Lane , the local social club and a number of properties in Slimbridge and Cambridge. Also in 2016 Severn Trent Water spent £1.2 million[7], flood grouting the sewers of St John's Road and Churchend to reduce infiltration of surface water into the sewerage system. The objective was to reduce infiltration by 75% and the limited analysis available suggests there has been an improvement. However, this only covers part of the Slimbridge Parish sewerage system.

5A.13 The Environment Agency surface water flood risk data is shown on Figure 3a, however this is incomplete, failing to show flooding from field runoff. Locally recorded evidence of recent surface water flooding is shown on Figure 3b. More detail on flooding in the Parish is in the Slimbridge Parish Flooding Report (2023) and the Stroud Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2019).

5A.14 The Gloucestershire County Council and Severn Trent projects have reduced (but not eliminated) the flood risks. In areas prone to flooding new developments should incorporate flood mitigation techniques into their construction (e.g. increased height above ground level, flood barriers at doors, raised electric wiring and possibly non-return valves in the sewers). New developments should not be permitted unless Severn Trent can confirm their systems can manage the impact of the additional demand and runoff.

5A.15 Areas of the Parish are also at risk of flooding from the River Cam. In December 2020, there was flooding to farms and properties on Ryalls Lane near the junction of the River Cam and the canal. This demonstrates how vulnerable the river is to neglect and forced over capacity. Detail of flooding events linked to flooding from the river is included in the Slimbridge Parish Flooding Report (2023) and the Stroud Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2019).

5A.16 One of the major impacts of a changing climate is a further increased risk of flooding and hence also infiltration into the sewerage system. Paragraph 167 of the NPPF sets out that new development should make use of opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, where appropriate through the use of natural flood management techniques. Emerging Stroud Local Plan policy ES4 requires development in areas with known surface water flooding issues to use appropriate flood mitigation and construction methods. This should apply to all those areas shown on Figures 3a and 3b at risk from surface water flooding, and to any developments which could increase the frequency or intensity of flooding in "at risk" areas.

5A.17 Environmental design can help alleviate surface water flooding through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), for example permeable paving, green roofs and retention ponds, or green space that serves as both a floodplain and a recreational area.

5A.18 When managing rainfall, the SuDS network should be designed to match natural drainage routes, infiltration rates and discharge rates as far as possible. Therefore, in line with emerging Stroud Local Plan policy ES4, the aim must be for water to be discharged as high up the drainage hierarchy[8] as possible:

* into the ground (infiltration);
* to a surface water body;
* to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
* to a combined sewer.

5A.19 Section 6 of the emerging Stroud Local Plan (Our Environment and Surroundings) includes policies (notably Delivery Policy ES4 Water resources, quality and flood risk) that provide strong and detailed policies on managing flood risk. The favoured approach in Stroud District is Natural Flood Management for dealing with surface water. Policy SCE1 includes local detail adding to that included in the emerging Stroud District policy framework.

5A.20 For ditches not maintained by Internal Drainage Boards, it is the responsibility of land owners to be aware of and to maintain any features that are part of the drainage system. Riparian land owners must keep drainage ditches free running and not build on or fill up drainage ditches. Proactive management and maintenance of ditches must be a priority.

7 Severn Trent Slimbridge Infiltration Reduction (2019)

8 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change

Relevant objective(s): O2

Policy SCE1: Natural Flood Management in Slimbridge Parish

Where development proposals are in areas with known surface water flooding issues as shown in Figures 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d and 3e shall be subject to a sequential test, other than for minor development and changes of use, to avoid placing people and property at risk from flooding, in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraphs 165- 175 of the NPPF (the version issued on 5th September 2023) and, where permitted, should include appropriate mitigation and construction methods.

Developments which might affect the capacity of the sewerage systems shall be assessed by Severn Trent. If Severn Trent cannot confirm the development can be managed without exacerbating flooding problems then the development will not be supported.

Development that addresses specific local flooding issues will be supported.

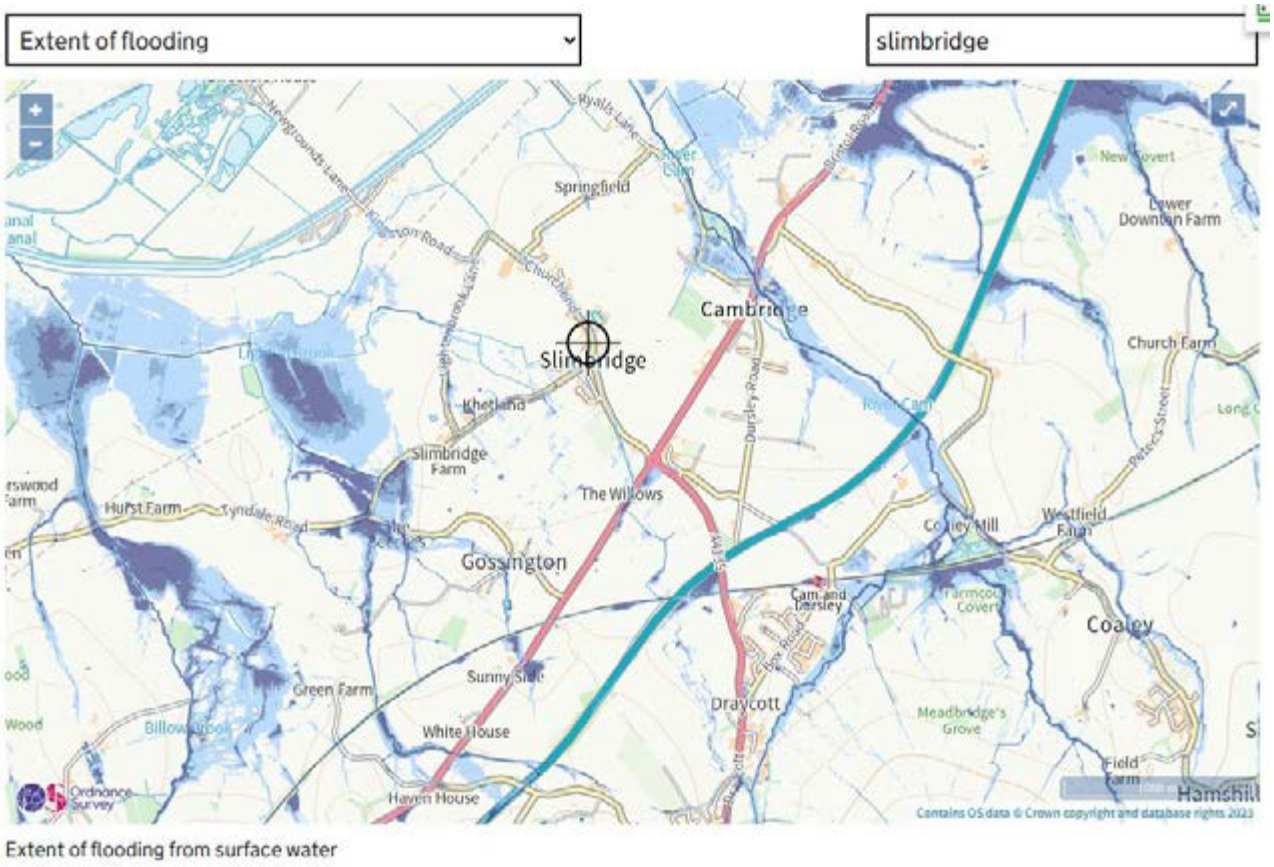


Figure 3a - Environment Agency: Risk of Surface Water Flooding in Slimbridge Parish

Figure 3b	Slimbridge	
Slimbridge Roads - recorded flooding locations	**Author:**	0 100 200 300 400m Scale: 1:20000
	Date: 09/07/2023	

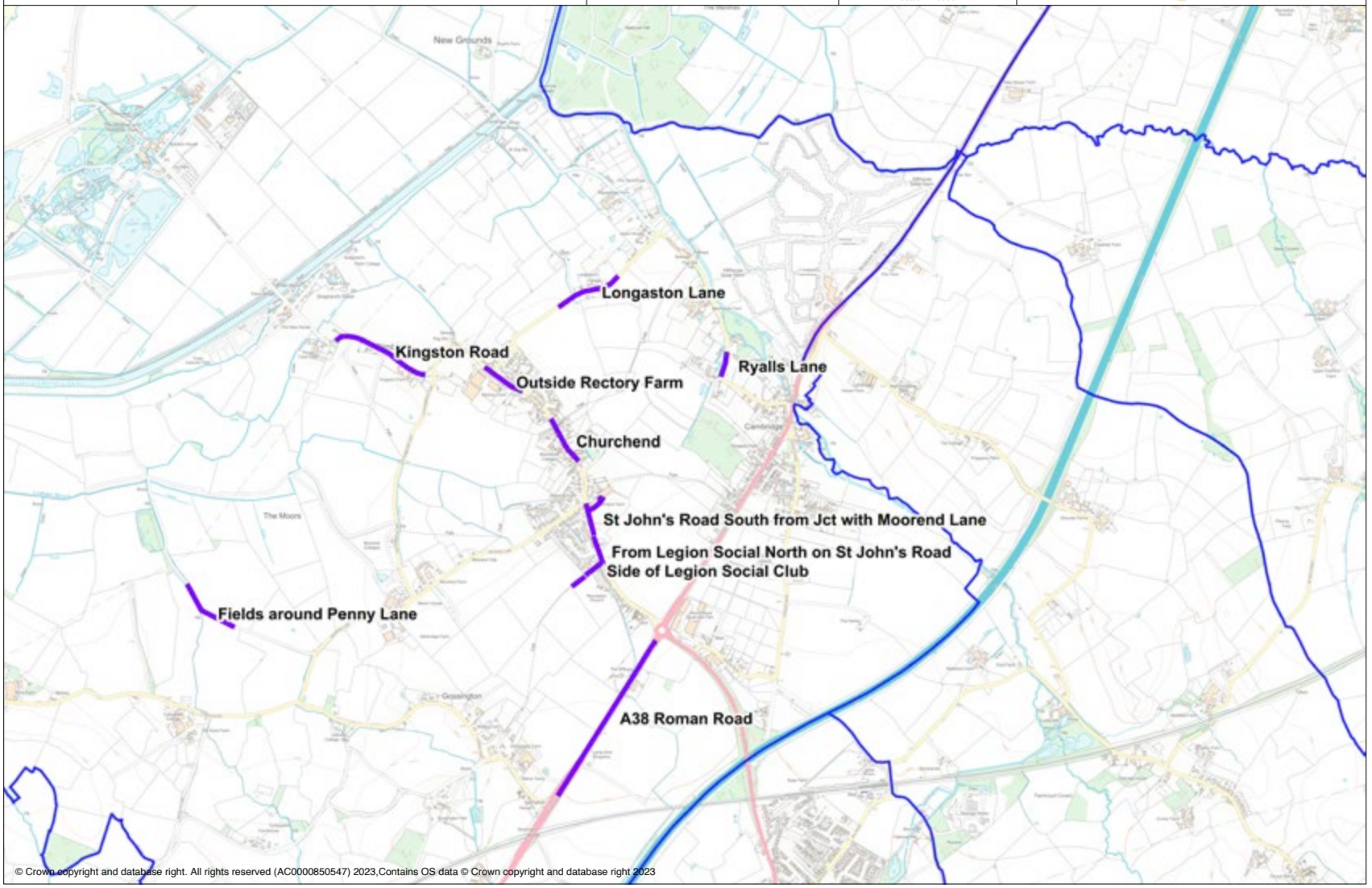


Figure 3b Recorded Flood Outlines

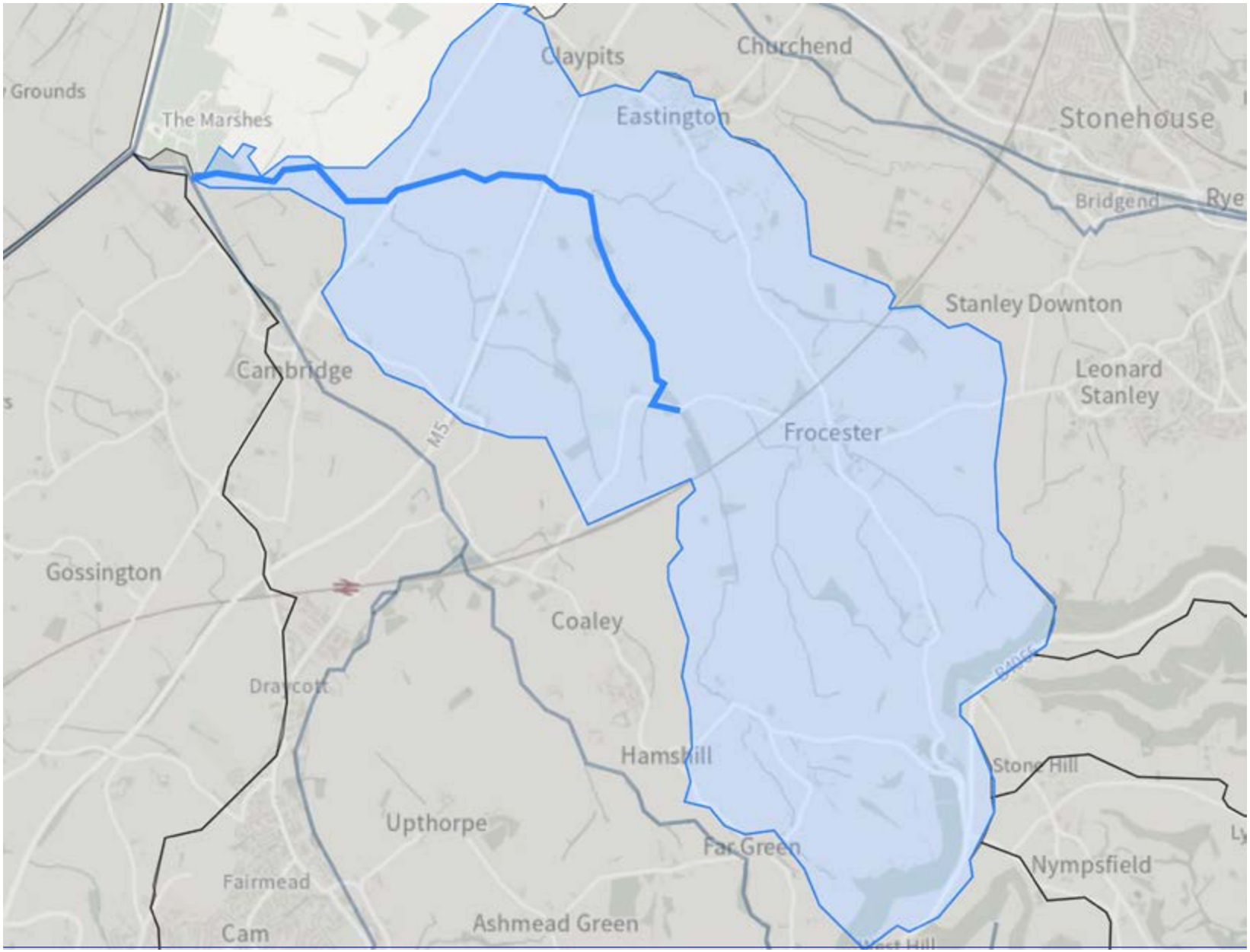


Figure 3c Wicksters Brook catchment areas

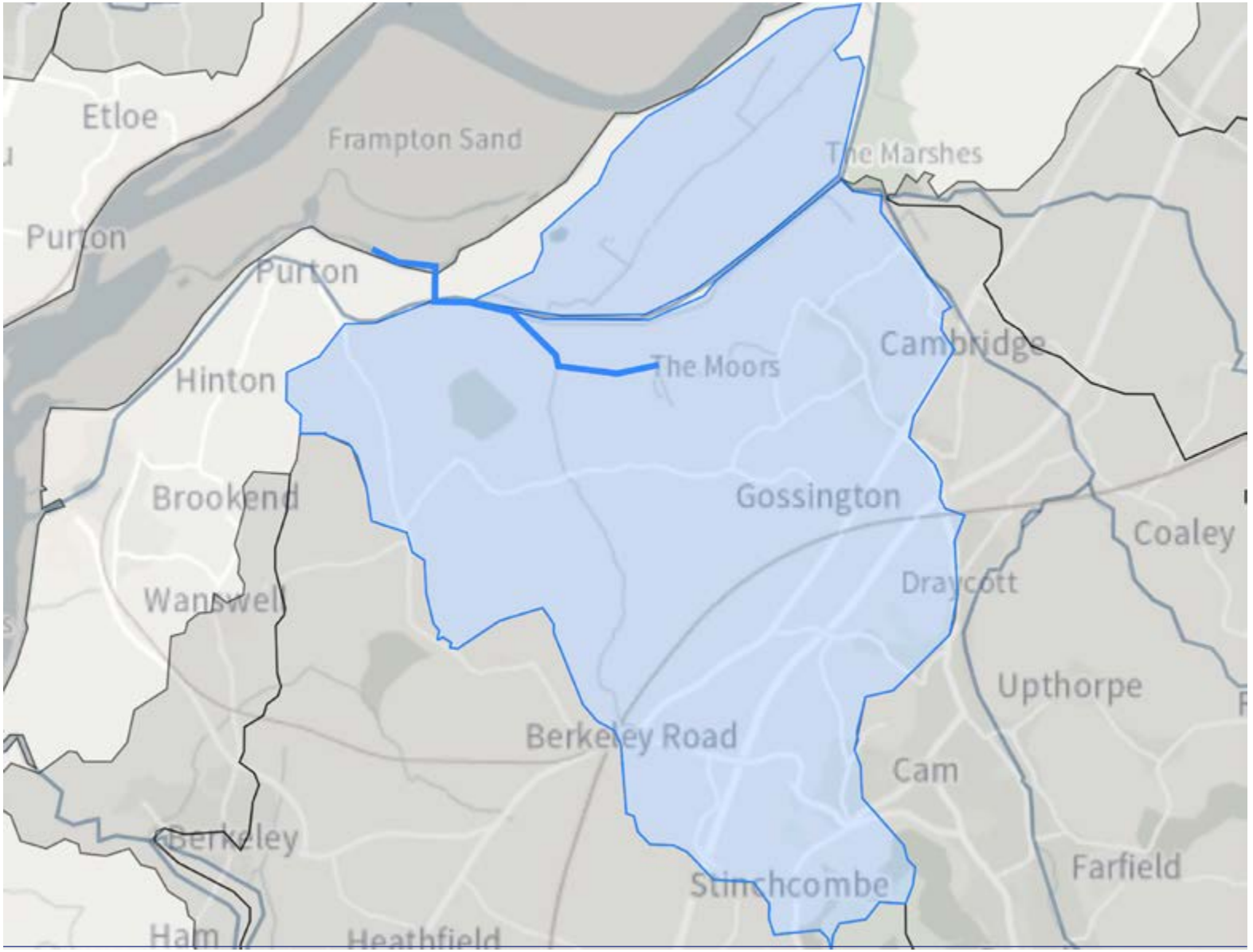


Figure 3d Gilgal, which includes Lightenbrook catchment areas

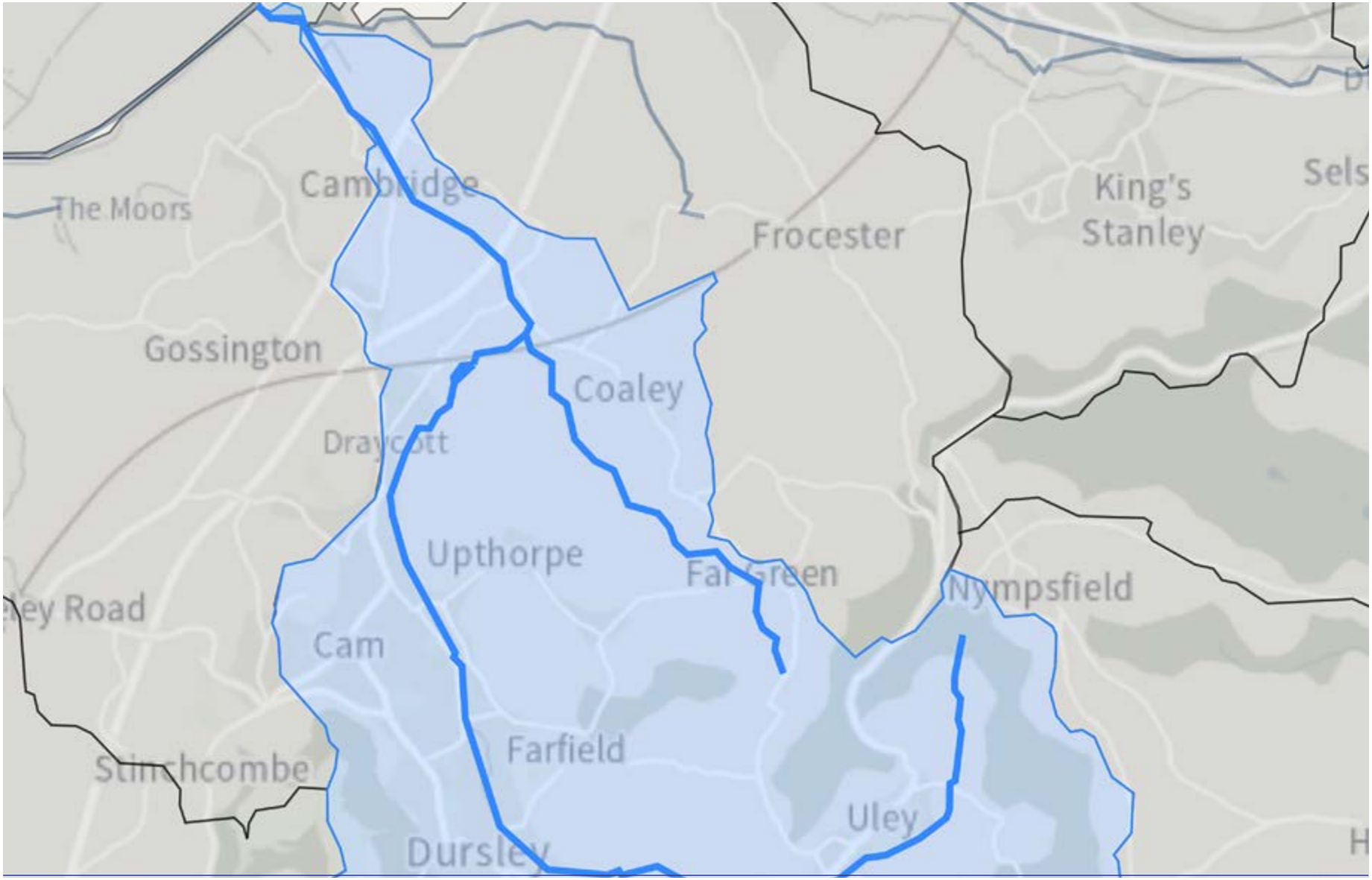


Figure 3e River Cam catchment areas

Retrofitting Existing Buildings to Improve Energy Efficiency

5A.21 Energy use in homes accounts for about 14% of UK greenhouse gas emissions[9]. In Slimbridge, carbon emissions[10] from the use of energy in our homes accounts for more than a quarter of our overall carbon emissions. Information on energy consumption in Slimbridge Parish is included in the Addressing the Climate Emergency Evidence Base Report (2022).

5A.22 Whilst our residents' survey undertaken during the preparation of the NDP suggested that most respondents lived in homes that are well insulated and draft free, there is still much work to be done to make our homes more energy efficient. In their 2019 report, 'UK Housing: Fit for the Future?', the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) warns: "We will not meet our targets for emissions reduction without near complete decarbonisation of the housing stock."

5A.23 The Nongasmap[11] website suggests quite a high proportion (45%) of properties in Slimbridge Parish are off the gas network and reliant on oil – not only is this a fossil fuel which produces more CO2 than gas, but also one of the most expensive options available. Very few respondents to our residents' survey have considered alternative methods to heat their homes.

5A.24 There are many historic buildings in our Parish, many of which are listed buildings, and the sensitive retrofitting of these historic buildings is supported. Improving the energy efficiency of existing homes in the Parish will contribute to tackling the climate crisis as well as keeping down energy bills in people's homes.

5A.25 The LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide [12] provides some key guidance on how we can retrofit our homes to make them fit for the future and support the Stroud District Council's Net Zero targets.

5A.26 Small scale domestic renewable energy generation is the generation of electricity or heat on a small scale, typically for domestic use and by methods that do not contribute to the depletion of natural resources, for example solar panels.

9 https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/uk-housing-fit-for-the-future/

10 https://impact-tool.org.uk/footprint/footprint?regionId=E04004376&geography=Parish&footprintType=consumption&scale=per-household

11 https://www.nongasmap.org.uk/

12 https://www.leti.london/_files/ugd/252d09_c71428bafc3d42fbac34f9ad0cd6262b.pdf

Relevant objective(s): O1

Policy SCE2: Retrofitting of Existing Buildings to Improve Energy Efficiency

The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of small scale domestic-renewables in existing buildings will be supported. This includes the retrofitting of historic and listed buildings and buildings of solid wall or traditional construction, whilst safeguarding the special characteristics of the individual heritage assets and the wider area for the future.

They should also conform with Landscape and Heritage policies within this plan.

The retrofitting of existing buildings is encouraged incorporating methods and reaching targets as set out in the LET1 Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide (see Appendix 4), where viable.

Natural Capital, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

5A.27 The protection of and investment in our local natural environment is vital, not only to make direct positive contributions towards addressing the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish, but also to enhance our community's health and wellbeing. The combined crisies of climate emergency and biodiversity loss highlights the importance of nature-based solutions being core to future development.

5A.28 Ecosystem Services are the multiple benefits that the natural environment provides. These include, just for example, flood management, food and water production, space for recreation and maintenance of biodiversity. An ecosystem services approach helps us to identify the benefits we get from nature, to value them and to build them into planning, decision making and land management.

5A.29 The natural capital and ecosystem services of Slimbridge Parish are part of a network of green and blue infrastructure that is locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important. From the internationally important wetlands of the Severn Estuary designated Ramsar site, the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, to our roadside verges and garden ponds; our green and blue assets are all connected and provide a wealth of different benefits.

What is Ramsar?

A Ramsar site is an area of land listed as a 'Wetland of International Importance' under The Ramsar Convention. The Convention is the international treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Severn Estuary designated Ramsar Site covers the coastline and wetland area within our Neighbourhood Area.

5A.30 The Gloucestershire Natural Capital Mapping Project[13] has identified thirteen key ecosystem services which we benefit from directly as a result of the county's natural environment. The majority have both a baseline map showing the extent of the existing service, and an opportunity map showing the degree to which a service is being delivered where it is needed. The services fall within four main categories and are derived from a wide range of source data and methodologies.

5A.31 Detail of benefits and ecosystem services provided by the environment in Slimbridge Parish is included in the Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022), the Slimbridge Parish Local Green Space Report (2023) and the Slimbridge Parish Play and Recreation Areas Report (2022) which are part of the evidence base of the NDP. These include:

- The Severn Estuary, an internationally important wildlife site:
  * Important wintering grounds for significant numbers of Dunlin, Berwick Swans, European White-fronted Geese, Wigeon, Gadwell, Shoveller and Pochard
  * A key part of migration route for many fish species, particularly the Atlantic Salmon and Common Eel and Elver
- The WWT Slimbridge is a nationally recognised tourist attraction which brings visitors who support some of the local economy
- A wealth of mature trees, many of which are covered by TPOs, including Ancient Trees (e.g. veteran willows along the Canal) that provide shade, wildlife habitats and improvements to air quality
- A network of traditional orchards that contribute to local food production and are a key part of our local heritage and identity
- A significant flood plain and network of ditches and rhynes which act as flood management
- Valued public green spaces, such as the Recreation Ground and Rosie's Wood, that the local community can use for recreation, sports and social activities.

5A.32 There are also specific areas and opportunities where the Parish would like to see an uplift and improvement in our local natural capital, these are detailed in the Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022), some identified on Figure 5, and summarised below.

- Continued improvement of wetland habitats at Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust through the Severn / Slimbridge Waterscapes work.
- Encouraging farming practices that incorporate vegetation with deeper roots, woodlands and hedgerows to reduce surface water run-off.
- Promoting the planting of more, and better management of, native and mixed hedgerows, in gardens and in agricultural fields across the Parish.
- Identifying suitable areas for tree planting,

13 https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/#

and promoting planting of native local tree species for example the Cambridge Queening fruit tree.

- Better management and maintenance of our existing orchards, to include proper pruning and replacement of trees where they have fallen.
- Encouraging local people to create their own pond or rain garden to reduce pressure on our rivers and floodplains.
- Better management of ditches, rhynes and verges to protect and support biodiversity, particularly:
  * Ensuring waterways are free from invasive species, such as the Himalayan Balsam
  * Monitoring nutrient run-off from nearby agricultural land
  * Not cutting verges and grass around ditches, particularly around Ryalls Lane where there is a known small community of glow worms.
- Identifying land for allotments; there are no allotments in the Parish
- Sensitive management of our public green spaces.
- Encouraging local environmentally friendly gardening practices, such as composting, setting aside a small 'wild' area within gardens, creating 'hedgehog highways' and avoiding pesticides.

A natural orchard

5A.33 Local food production is a particular aspect of Slimbridge Parish's natural capital which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance. Supporting local food production is a key element of emerging Stroud Local Plan policy on delivering Carbon Neutral by 2030 (see policy DCP1).

5A.34 Gloucestershire is an important cider and perry producing district, and traditional orchards are a key part of the heritage and landscape of Slimbridge Parish. There are a number of existing traditional orchards within the Parish, shown on Figure 6. These orchards provide a wealth of ecosystem services, including contributing towards our local heritage as well as providing valuable Priority Habitat for local wildlife populations. More information on traditional orchards in the Parish can be found in the Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022).

5A.35 Traditional orchards are a valuable resource and have unique ecological, cultural and genetic value. But during the past 50 years, 75% of Gloucestershire's traditional orchards have been lost[14] due to land use change, development, and the shift in the ways our food is produced, distributed and sold.

5A.36 Cambridge village gave its name to the Cambridge Quoining / Quinning / Queening cider and cooking apple. The Damson Plum, which is used for jam making, is grown on the New Grounds, Slimbridge, which is the only known site for this plum in Gloucestershire[15].

5A.37 The majority of Traditional Orchards shown on Figure 6 are privately owned and are not publicly accessible. Responses to the Residents Questionnaire identified a real community interest in setting up and maintaining a Community Orchard that could be publicly accessible and an opportunity for local people to learn more about this locally important traditional practice.

5A.38 The Stroud Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study identifies a gap in access to allotments within Slimbridge. Indeed there are no known allotment sites within

14 https://glosorchards.org/home/

15 https://glosorchards.org/home/fruitvarieties/plums-and-cherries/

Rosie's Wood

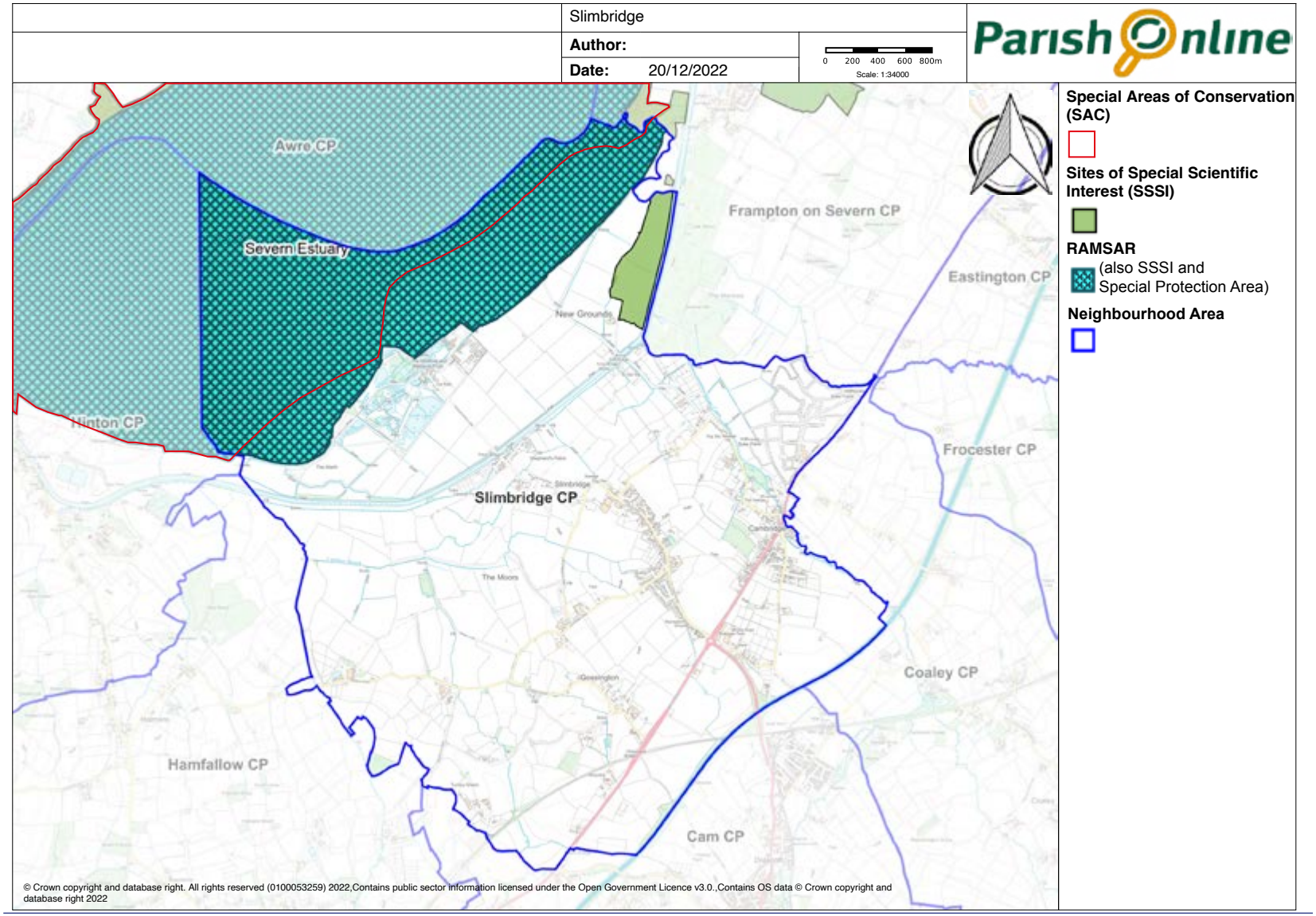


Figure 4 Existing Natural Capital Assets in Slimbridge Parish

Slimbridge Parish
Ecosystem Services:
Biodiversity opportunities

Low opportunity > > > High opportunity

Existing Priority Habitats

About Ecosystem Services modelling

Biodiversity is treated as a natural capital 'bundled benefit', comprising the ability of a habitat to support a diverse range of species, thus providing a variety of environmental, social, and economic benefits.

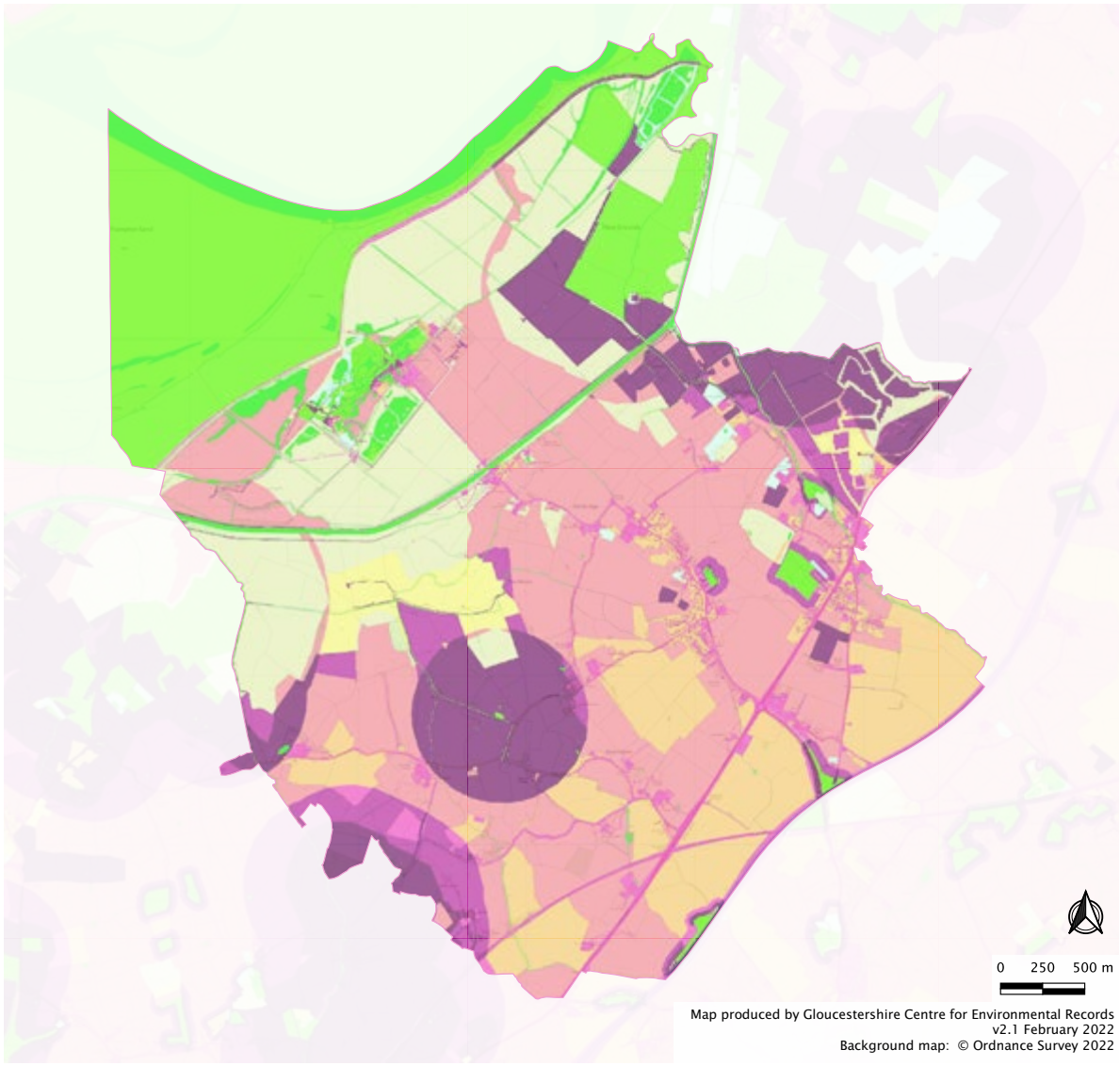
Biodiversity has both a baseline and an opportunity map. The maps are relational, with both the underlying habitat inventory and other factors being taken into account for scoring. Note that these maps are models, and do NOT always follow the underlying map/field outlines.

Anomalies in the models may sometimes occur where the underlying data is inaccurate or ambiguous. In spite of this the model usually gives a good overall impression of where the best opportunities lie.

For the opportunity layer, the Nature Recovery Network was used as a modifier, along with potential connectivity gains and a blanket category of existing Core Habitats. Thus the areas of highest opportunity are darkest/ warmest on the map, but existing (assumed low opportunity) Priority Habitats are highlighted in green.

Rings of high or low opportunity can surround existing core habitats, especially where that habitat would be improved by being extended into the surrounding area.

For more information, please see the Map Metadata section of the Gloucestershire Natural Capital Mapping Project website: https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/



Map produced by Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records
v2.1 February 2022
Background map: © Ordnance Survey 2022

Figure 5 Biodiversity Opportunities

the Parish. The emerging Stroud Local Plan (policy DES2 Green Infrastructure)[16] sets out the approach to increasing the functionality whilst improving the quality of, and access to, green infrastructure in the district. Allotments are identified as a key element of the green infrastructure network.

5A.39 Around 40 respondents to the Residents Questionnaire stated that they would be interested in renting and using an allotment if it were available. The Residents Survey identified a clear demand for local community food production opportunities; an accessible community orchard or allotment site would provide this.

5A.40 Policy SCE3 asks that new development, or changes to existing properties that require planning permission, include Ecosystem Services actions to the benefit of people and wildlife in the sensitive environment of the parish.

16 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1070619/cluster-analysis-part-2-v5_berkeley-cluster.pdf

Relevant objective(s): O3, 04, O5

Policy SCE3: Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

The integrity, multi-functionality, quality and connectivity of the natural environment will be protected, managed and enhanced. For the purpose of promoting nature recovery, mitigating climate change and ensuring that natural resources are protected, development proposals will be expected to have an overall positive impact on the natural environment and ecosystem services. In Slimbridge this includes delivering opportunities to:

- Protect and provide more, better and joined up habitats as shown on the Gloucestershire Natural Capital Mapping Project opportunity maps (Figure 5);
- Protect and enhance the significant 'blue infrastructure' of the flood plain and network of ditches and rhynes which provide flood defence and carbon sequestration;
- Connect into and where possible extend the wider network of the Green (e.g. Rosie's Wood / recreation ground / hedges / verges) infrastructures;
- Protect existing woodland and trees, and plant more in appropriate locations (the right tree in the right place);
- Incorporate habitat features of value to wildlife within the development and building design, including those which meet the needs of local species (such as native trees or shrubs for hedging) provision of hedgehog access places, and native pollinator-friendly planting in landscaping proposals);
- Protect and where possible extend the local network of traditional orchards;
- Provide allotments where appropriate;
- Provide opportunities for access to the natural resources which contribute to the special qualities of the area and people's health and wellbeing.

Possible actions related to householder planning application could include some of the following: -

- Install green roofs or rain-gardens to capture, filter and manage excess water;
- Create new habitats on site, including ponds and bog gardens to deal with heavy rain fall;
- Use permeable surfacing;
- Increase areas of planting including. a diverse mixture of native species to intercept surface water;
- Create a compost heap to compost waste and improve soils;
- Create new habitats including; ponds, bog gardens, areas with log piles and long grass;

- Create new wildlife friendly linear features (e.g. native, mixed-species hedgerows) particularly along the edges of roads, to improve air quality;
- Select plants to provide a variety of food for wildlife e.g. nectar rich/berries/grasses;
- Protect and retain existing mature trees, especially orchard trees;
- Increase tree cover with local orchard species;
- Minimise areas of heavily managed amenity grass considering using wildflower and meadow mixes on less intensively used areas.

Proportional to the size and nature of the proposal, development proposals should demonstrate how the development proposal impacts, both positively and negatively, on the natural environment and local ecosystem services. Special attention must be given to farmland which supports over wintering birds, including protected species such as curlews, for resting and feeding (functionally linked land) to the special protections in the estuary environment.

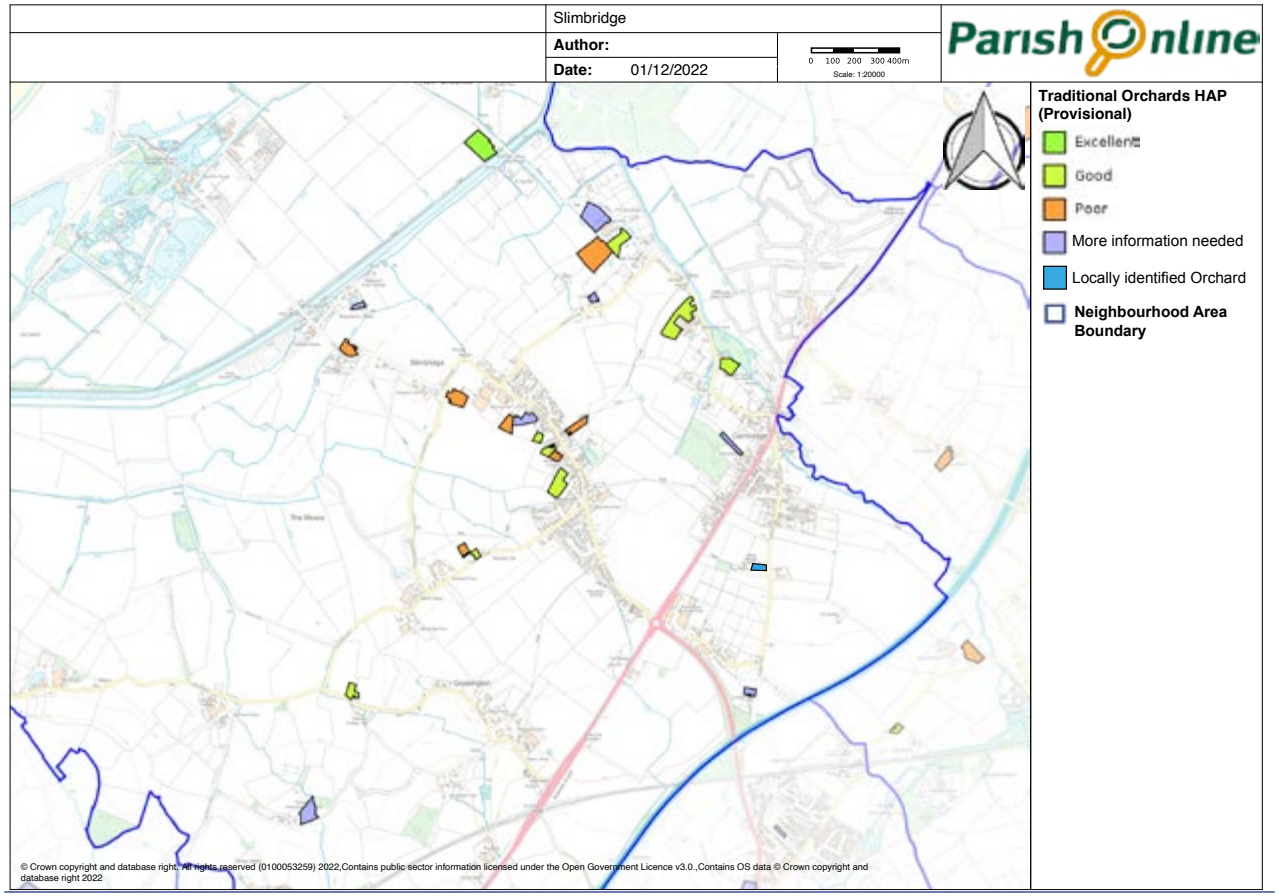


Figure 6 Traditional Orchards

Woodland and Veteran Trees

5A.41 Woodland, hedgerow and trees (including those within our Traditional Orchards) provide a range of ecosystem services in Slimbridge Parish, including:

- Local food production
- Providing shade
- Air quality management
- Biodiversity value
- Helping with other adaptations to the effects of climate change, such as sustainable drainage and flood management.

5A.42 Slimbridge Parish already has a number of trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), notably within and around St John's Church and the Old Rectory, others sited in what was known as Merrets Orchard, one at Yew Tree House and Church End Farm. Local woodland, orchards and Veteran trees are identified on Figures 6 and 7, as well as on Stroud District Council's Tree Preservation Order map. These figures identify trees (individual and groups of trees) which are trees that have local interest or value and should be protected where possible. Veteran willow trees can be found at Map references SO 72759 04247; SO 72689 04204; SO 72591 04139. These ancient trees are shown on Figures 7 and 7A. [17].

5A.43 Overall tree canopy coverage in the Berkeley Vale Ward (which includes the majority of Slimbridge Parish) is estimated to be an average of 11.8%, which has been calculated using the i-tree canopy tool[18]. Further information on woodland and trees in the Parish can be found in the Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022). The woodland at the WWT is shown in greater detail at figure 7b.

5A.44 Retaining trees and hedgerows can influence both the design and layout of any development, and arrangements for their protection should be made during the construction phase. Designs should also take into account the long term setting for existing trees (which include the trees identified as having a local interest or value) and how they will relate to the use of the area in the future. It is important to note here that a Neighbourhood Plan in itself cannot protect a tree from being felled, unless it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is within the Conservation Area.

5A.45 Where tree loss is unavoidable, a Tree Replacement Standard can be used to inform the number of replacement trees for the loss in canopy cover. Whilst a particular site or design approach to trees will inform the number and approach to tree planting, the standard above is an established methodology to underpin discussions on the replacement of these key assets.

Tree Replacement Standard[19]	
Trunk Diameter of Tree lost to development (cm measured at 1.5 metres above ground level)	Number of Replacement Trees
Less than 15	0-1
15-19.9	1
20 - 29.9	2
30 - 39.9	3
40 - 49.9	4
50 - 59.9	5
60 - 69.9	6
70 - 79.9	7
80+	8

Cambridge Queening Apple Tree planting

17 https://stroud.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f0a09333db6b43e592288452e6969147

18 https://www.itreetools.org/

19 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34520/SPD+Final+Doc+Dec2012.pdf/daf75908-50fd-4138-afed-770310a6a431

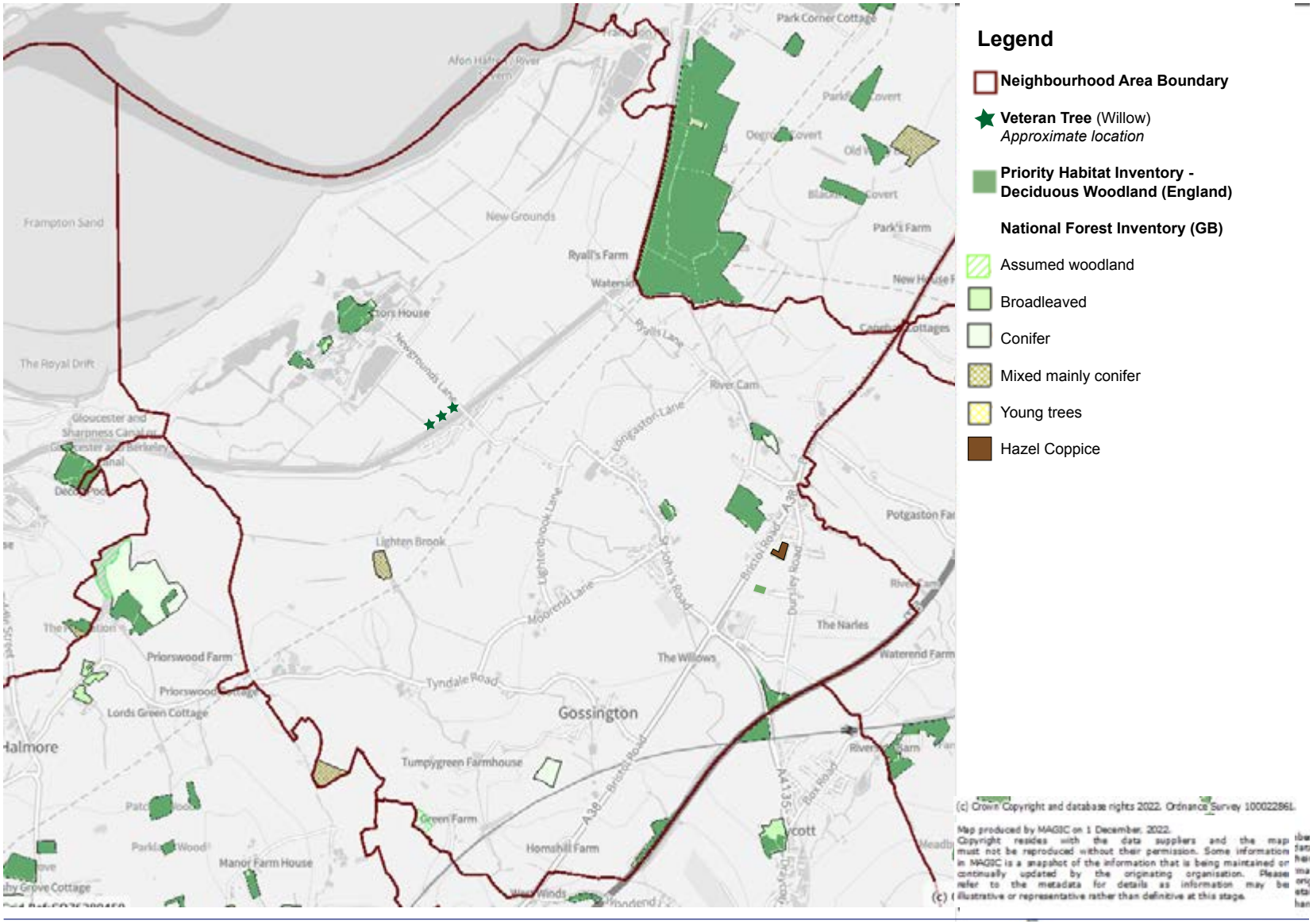


Figure 7 Woodland and Veteran Trees

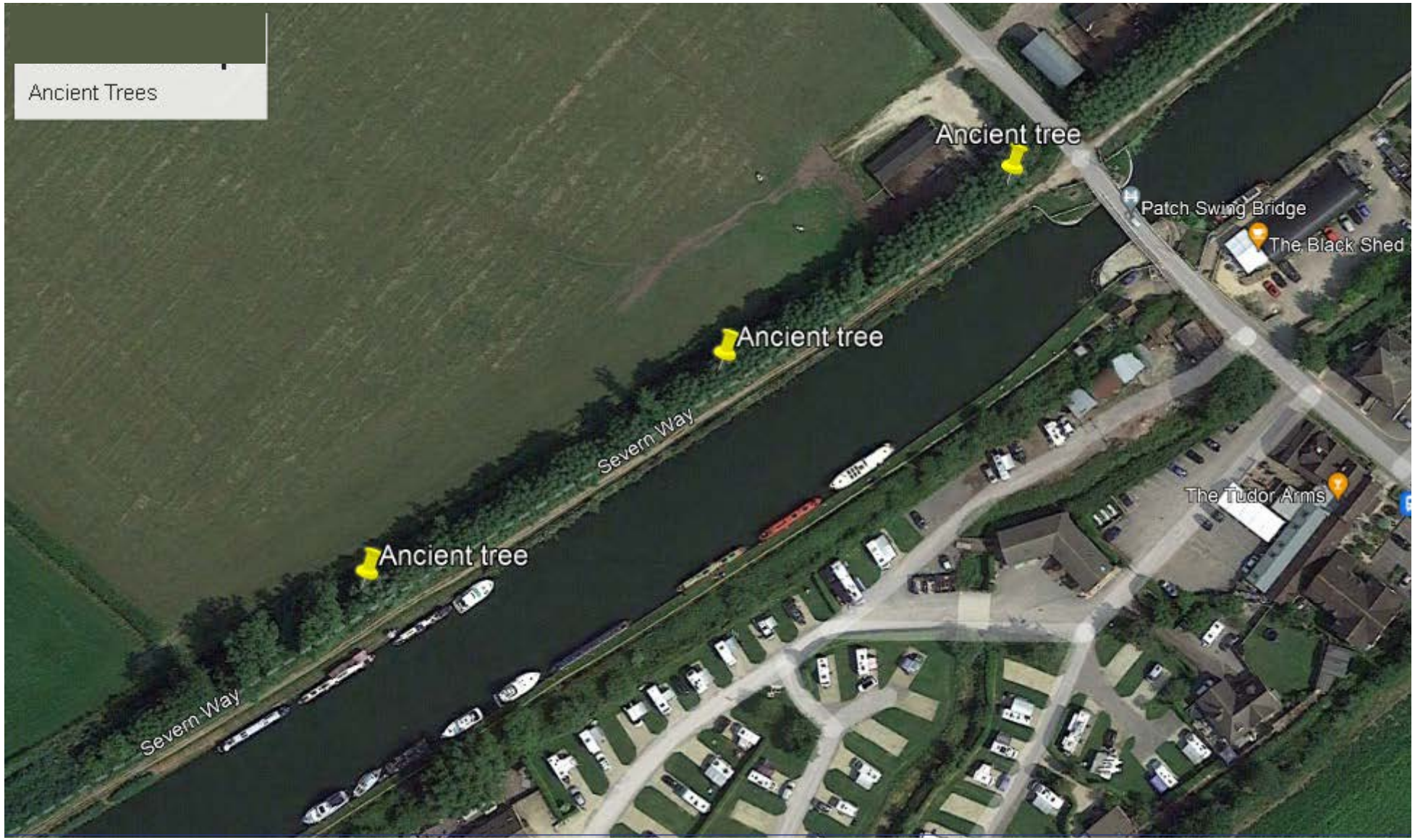


Figure 7a Ancient willows on the bank of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal

Figure 7b WWT Woodland Area

Relevant Objective(s): 03,05

Policy SCE4: Trees and Woodland

Ancient and Veteran Trees

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate no loss or deterioration of Ancient or Veteran Trees (as shown on Figure 7). Development proposals directly or indirectly affecting ancient trees or veteran trees identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be resisted except where there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Other Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Locally valued trees and hedgerows on development sites are identified on Figures 6, 7, 7a and 7b and where relevant, these should be considered throughout the design process to be retained and incorporated as placemaking features and as part of the local Green Infrastructure Network in new development.. Protection before and after development should be in accordance with British Standard BS5837. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, the number and type of replacement trees should be informed by the quality and size of the lost trees.

New Trees

New tree planting, in development proposals and throughout the built and natural environments of the Plan area, to maintain and increase the overall tree canopy cover of the Neighbourhood Area, will be supported.

Community Led Renewable or Low Carbon Energy

5A.46 The emerging Stroud Local Plan evidence base includes maps identifying suitable areas for onshore wind and solar energy generation, and shows potentially suitable areas in Slimbridge Parish[20]. Maps to show these are included in Appendix 3.

5A.47 Delivery Policy ES2 (Renewable or low carbon energy generation) in the emerging Local Plan sets out criteria subject to which Stroud District Council will support proposals that maximise the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources. It also sets out that community renewable energy schemes will be particularly welcomed where they comply with this policy. The evidence base behind these policies was prepared for Stroud District Council by CSE and Land Use Consultants.

5A.48 Within the Parish there is potential for a range of renewable and low carbon energy technologies. As well as areas identified as suitable for small scale wind development or solar development, Slimbridge Parish also often provides ideal conditions for ground source heat pumps due to the high water table and often standing water in the local area. Due to Slimbridge Parish being a largely agricultural area, there is also potential to explore the use of biomass fuel for energy generation, using plant and animal matter and agricultural residues. However, there were several comments from local community members who responded to the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft version of this Plan who support solar panels on roofs but are not supportive of community energy schemes or wind turbines. The potential for renewable or low carbon energy generation in Slimbridge Parish is explored further in the Addressing the Climate Emergency Evidence Base Report (2022).

5A.49 Planning Practice guidance for 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy' sets out information on how to assess and mitigate the impact of glare and glint from solar panels on residents and other receptors, which can be a problem locally. The key receptors with respect to glint and glare are residents in surrounding dwellings, road users, train infrastructure (including train drivers), and aviation infrastructure.

20 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34520/SPD+Final+Doc+Dec2012.pdf/daf75908-50fd-4138-afed-770310a6a431

Relevant objective(s): O6

Policy SCE5: Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation in Slimbridge Parish

Proposals for renewable, or low carbon energy schemes in Slimbridge Parish will be supported where they comply with other policies within the NDP, and do not have adverse landscape or environmental impacts including cumulative impact:

All proposals are expected to demonstrate that any adverse impacts to the local landscape, environment and heritage are avoided and where necessary, mitigated and made acceptable.

Particular support will be given to local renewable and low carbon energy developments that:

- Are integrated so that the energy generated can be supplied directly to domestic, business and other buildings in the Parish, demonstrated by direct reduction to buildings' energy consumption.
- Use discreet technologies such as ground, air or water source heat pumps and/or biomass fuel or roof-top solar.

5B Locally Responsive Development and Design

Introduction

5B.1 The Parish of Slimbridge was mentioned in Doomsday Book and has changed and developed over the centuries, not necessarily by planned development. This has resulted in villages and hamlets which have a distinct ambience and character. The setting in the peaceful Severn Vale countryside and the historical connection to the land, combined with the very strong community spirit, has resulted in a quirky, unique and to the residents a highly valued place to live.

5B.2 One of the results of the survey organised by the NDP Steering Group was the view, expressed by many Parishioners, that they did not want change and were very happy with the "status quo". However, it was also recognised that change will happen and that it was important to embrace change and ensure that all developments, both commercial and residential, meet the needs of and benefit the local community.

Renewable Energy Hill House Solar Farm

5B.3 The settlement boundaries are viewed as important and ensure that urban sprawl does not overwhelm and coalesce the communities and should be rigorously enforced under all circumstances in line with the SDC policies for Tier 3b (Slimbridge) and Tier 4a (Cambridge) settlements.

5B.4 Because change will happen in the Parish, Slimbridge Parish Council has adopted the Slimbridge Parish Pre-Application Engagement Protocol (see Appendix 2). The Protocol is seen as a vital tool to work with prospective developers to ensure that new developments and changes to existing buildings will be of high quality design, built with appropriate materials, which complement and enhance the distinctive character of each village and hamlet and follow the adopted design codes.

5B.5 The type and mix of future housing is seen by residents as very important and can be satisfied by a combination of open market and affordable housing in small developments. This can be supplemented by self build or custom built houses which will increase choice and help satisfy housing needs in the Parish. The NDP survey found very little support for large developments, but if strategic sites such as PS37 (Wisloe Green) are brought forward as part of the Stroud District Council Local Plan, the policies in the NDP will guide and control development to ensure maximum benefit, not just for future residents of Wisloe Green, but also for existing residents of the Parish.

Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

5B.6 In 2019 the Government published a 'National Design Guide'[21] which highlights the importance of understanding and responding to local character. In 2021 a National Model Design Code[22] was introduced as part of the government's planning practice guidance. It expands the National Design Guide and reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

5B.7 The December 2023 update of the NPPF also underscores the importance of high quality design: "the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve." The NPPF sets out that "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development".

21 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf

22 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code

5B.8 An in-depth analysis of the locally distinctive character and design of the built and natural environment of Slimbridge Parish is summarised in the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement (2022), which provides an update to our previous Slimbridge Village Design Statement and forms Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5B.9 The core of the Parish Design Statement is a description and analysis of important and locally distinctive features of the Parish as a whole and the distinctive areas within it. The document reflects local aspirations and sets out how the identified special qualities and locally distinctive characteristics should be reflected in development proposals.

5B.10 The Slimbridge Parish Design Statement should be used at the earliest possible stages of design and as part of early pre-application community engagement (see also Policy SD2 below).

5B.11 For Slimbridge Parish Council, 'high quality' design is synonymous with sustainable and zero carbon design, and there is a need to ensure that new development is built to net zero carbon standards as soon as possible. A second key reference for this policy is therefore the Net Zero Carbon Framework (2021)[23] which has been created to make Net Zero carbon new build and retrofit more accessible. It has been created for building professionals (developers, contractors, architects and engineers) and is also relevant to self -builders, planning officers and other housing professionals. The UK Green Building Council also provides a framework definition to help guide the implementation of net zero building.

5B.12 'High quality' design also means inclusive design that is accessible and responds to the needs of residents of all ages and abilities

5B.13 Waterside development has also been raised as a particular sensitivity for the Parish. The following guiding principles should be taken into account so that, where appropriate, new waterside development should:

- Positively address the water.
- Integrate the towing path and open up access to the water.
- Link waterside space and the waterspace.
- Use the waterspace itself.
- Incorporate access and other improvements.
- Engage with and tease out the qualities and benefits of being by water.
- Reflect the scale of the local waterway corridor to the wider neighbourhood

Cambridge Gateway

23 https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/2ddb125k/net-zero-carbon-toolkit.pdf

Relevant objective(s): O1, O7, O12

Policy SD1: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

In order to create high quality buildings and In places that are beautiful, inclusive and enduring, development proposals should respond positively and distinctively to the National Model Design Code, the National Design Guide and the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement as appropriate to their scale, nature and location. In particular, development proposals should be designed in a way which takes account of their built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments.

Development which features innovative designs will be supported where they respect their surroundings and complement the setting of other buildings in terms of their height, massing and use of materials.

Developments are encouraged to be designed to reduce carbon emissions and energy demand. High standards of sustainable design and construction will be supported. Both new build and refurbishment of existing homes are encouraged to meet the energy use targets as set out in the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit (2021).

New developments should demonstrate that they are water efficient, incorporating water efficiency and re-use measures and that the estimated consumption of wholesome water per dwelling is calculated in accordance with the methodology in the water efficiency calculator, not exceeding 110 litres/person/day.

How does Policy SD1 contribute towards tackling the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

The policy refers to the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement and the National Model Design Code as key guidance documents. Both of these documents include detailed guidance on many aspects of sustainable design, for example incorporating biodiversity, sustainable drainage, trees and cycle parking into developments.

Pre-Application Community Engagement

5B.14 The importance and benefit of community engagement is widely acknowledged as key to shaping good places to live. The NPPF stresses that "Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community".

5B.15 Early discussion between applicants and the local community, as well as with Stroud District Council, from the earliest stages enables a more collaborative approach to the process of preparing a development proposal that will need to balance many factors as the design evolves; "Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot." (NPPF)

5B.16 The National Planning Practice Guidance note on design[24] also highlights the role and importance of community engagement in shaping the use and development of land.

5B.17 Whilst it is acknowledged that in the early stages of considering a development proposal, applicants may wish for any discussions with Stroud District Council to be confidential, involvement of the local community should happen at the earliest possible stage. The Slimbridge Parish Pre-application Engagement Protocol (see Appendix 2) is intended to facilitate a structured approach to enable effective, positive and early involvement of the local community in outline and full planning applications addressing all aspects of a proposal. It also defines why the protocol is proportionate and effective..

Sustainable Development to meet Local Housing Needs

5B.18 Evidence gathered during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan indicated that there is a locally significant demand for housing within the Parish for people hoping to buy a starter home on the open market. Typically, these are young people who are struggling to afford to buy a home in the place where they grew up – this is a trend seen commonly around the country.

24 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design

5B.19 Both Slimbridge and Cambridge have a defined Settlement Development Limit (SDL). These are shown on Figure 8. Emerging Local Plan policies DHC1 and DHC2 allow for limited infill and redevelopment inside the SDL, and, exceptionally, adjacent to the SDL, subject to detailed policy criteria summarised below:

- proposed housing seeks to address demographic imbalances and/or specific housing needs identified in a Parish housing needs survey;
- the proposed site adjoins the SDL or would fill an otherwise built up frontage close to the SDL, in a way that is in keeping with the local character and environment;
- the proposal is supported by the Parish Council, and
- the proposal does not lead to a cumulative increase of more than 10% of the settlement housing stock (as at 2020).

This Stroud-level approach is taken with a view to sustaining or enhancing the role and function of the villages. Please note that Settlement Development Limits are set to change in the next version of the SDC Local Plan.

5B.20 Significantly for our Parish, the emerging Local Plan potentially allocates large scale strategic development of a new settlement within the Neighbourhood Area. Draft proposals in the emerging Stroud District Local Plan include approximately 1,500 homes, along with other uses. If this allocation goes ahead, the evidenced local housing need for Slimbridge Parish would be met.

5B.21 Separate to this potential strategic allocation, the Neighbourhood Plan supports locally appropriate sustainable housing development, in order to underpin the continued vitality of rural life in our Parish for current and future generations. Policy SD3 sets out the criteria that proposals for any such development would need to meet.

5B.22 Detailed local housing needs evidence can be found in the Slimbridge Parish Local Housing Needs Report (2022), which includes the Slimbridge Parish Housing Needs Survey Report (2022) and the Slimbridge NDP Questionnaire Housing Needs Survey (2021). Applicants for housing development within the Parish are expected to demonstrate how local housing needs are met through their proposals.

Relevant Objective: O8

Policy SD2: Sustainable Development to Meet Local Housing Needs

Proposals for housing developments to meet evidenced local housing need, as set out in the Slimbridge Parish Local Housing Needs Report (2022), or any subsequent equivalent study, will be supported provided that development complies with other policies within the Development Plan (both this NDP and the adopted Stroud Local Plan).

How does Policy SD3 contribute towards addressing the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

By supporting sustainable development within and near to the settlement boundaries, the policy contributes towards creating compact neighbourhoods in Slimbridge Parish, reducing carbon emissions from private vehicles.

Supporting Alternative Housing Delivery Models in Slimbridge Parish

Relevant Objectives: O8, O11

What are Rural Exceptions Sites?

Rural exception sites are a mechanism to bring forward 100% affordable housing on sites that would not usually be used for housing (i.e. they are 'exceptions' to the policies included in the Local Development Plan).

A rural exception site offers an opportunity for a local Community Land Trust or other organisation such as a Housing Association to deliver affordable housing to meet evidenced local need in Slimbridge Parish.

Emerging Local Plan Policy HC4 supports this approach and sets out detailed expectations for any such development. The Parish Council supports the provisions of emerging policy HC4 in principle, as a contribution towards meeting the local housing needs of our community.

Self and Custom Build Development

There is a growing interest and demand for sites for self-build (in the sense that a site owner personally builds their home) or custom-build (in the sense that a designer and builder are commissioned to construct the house for the eventual owner).

The government introduced the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) to support the delivery of self-build and custom-build housing and define it in planning terms. In accordance with this Act, Stroud District Council has responsibility for keeping a self and custom-build housebuilding register.

Emerging Local Plan Policy HC3 supports the provision of self and custom build housing subject to a number of criteria. The Neighbourhood Plan supports this approach.

There are many potential community benefits in supporting self and custom build in Slimbridge, for example:

Self-build often allows development of what would otherwise be derelict land, many self builds are brownfield.

This form of development contributes to local housing need in an often unique and more sympathetic way

Self-builders are often locals, and so are generally more aware of their local environment and work to minimise any disruption of the locality.

Self-builders will often use local labour and resources bringing revenue and work to local people.

Community Consultation 2022

Aerial view of Slimbridge 2003

5C Living and Working

Introduction

5C.1 Slimbridge Parish is considered a lovely place to live in by its residents with a strong feeling of community. There are a number of community facilities and local green spaces that are valued by local people, though there is a recognised gap in provision for facilities for young people. The large number of footpaths and bridleways across the Parish provides opportunities for residents and visitors to exercise and enjoy the beautiful countryside.

5C.2 Within the Parish there are employment opportunities through tourism and the local business parks. However, the demographics of Parishioners means that most of the employment is taken up by non-residents. The main employment is that generated by the various tourist and leisure attractions, the business parks and farms. The Parish has a high number of retired people and others who work outside of the Parish. Although there are plenty of jobs in the Parish (over 300) less than 16% are taken by residents.

5C.3 There are some residents who have businesses based at home and the COVID-19 pandemic led to home working for many. The recent provision of high speed broadband throughout the Parish will further encourage this trend. The environment is right for starting new businesses, particularly from home. However, there are not the premises available if required. Policies should, where suitable, encourage the provision of premises suitable for higher paying knowledge-based occupations.

5C.4 WWT Slimbridge is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the area. It has been expanded to increase the visitor numbers. In addition, there are a number of visitor attractions and large caravan sites near the Tudor Lodge and the George Inn. Slimbridge is also well located as a base to explore the area. As a result, there are large numbers of day visitors throughout the year and plenty of seasonal longer stay tourists.

5C.5 This has created opportunities and challenges for the Parish. Visitors mainly arrive by car though Slimbridge village. The nearest Rail Station (Cam & Dursley) is 2 miles away, however the pedestrian and cyclist route between the station and WWT Slimbridge is little used as it is considered hazardous to cyclists and pedestrians and there is only a limited bus service on Saturdays and Sundays. Stroud District Council is supporting a Greenway walking and cycling route from the Station to Slimbridge as an important strategic connection to be brought forward.

5C.6 The local inns and cafés prosper from visitors and there are several bed and breakfast opportunities and holiday home rentals. However, the volume of traffic generated has impacts on residents. The Parish Council is looking to improve collaboration with the WWT Slimbridge and other local businesses to manage the impact on the Parish. It is also developing a strategy to deal with the impact of the increased use of the canal. In Spring 2022, Stroud District Council consulted on its draft Canal Strategy, which identifies potential short and long term initiatives to improve the canal network across the whole of Stroud District, including specific ideas for the stretches of canal located within Slimbridge Parish.

5C.7 The Parish Council encourages new development to be inclusive and meet the needs of residents of all ages and physical abilities. Improvements to existing buildings and facilities to meet the same needs will be supported.

Community Facilities

5C.8 Emerging Stroud District policy categorises Slimbridge village as a Tier 3b settlement; a medium-size village with a good basic level of local community facilities and services. Cambridge village is categorised as a Tier 4a settlement; a small settlement which has minimal local services and facilities itself, though is well connected to the provision of facilities and services elsewhere in Slimbridge and further afield in Cam and Dursley.

5C.9 The Neighbourhood Plan survey identified that the Village Hall and Parish Church are the most valued community facilities amongst the local community. The Village Hall provides a hub for local groups and events.

5C.10 Slimbridge Primary School is well located for most children who live in the Parish to be able to walk to and from school. However, most children at the primary school do not live within the Parish itself. The playing field

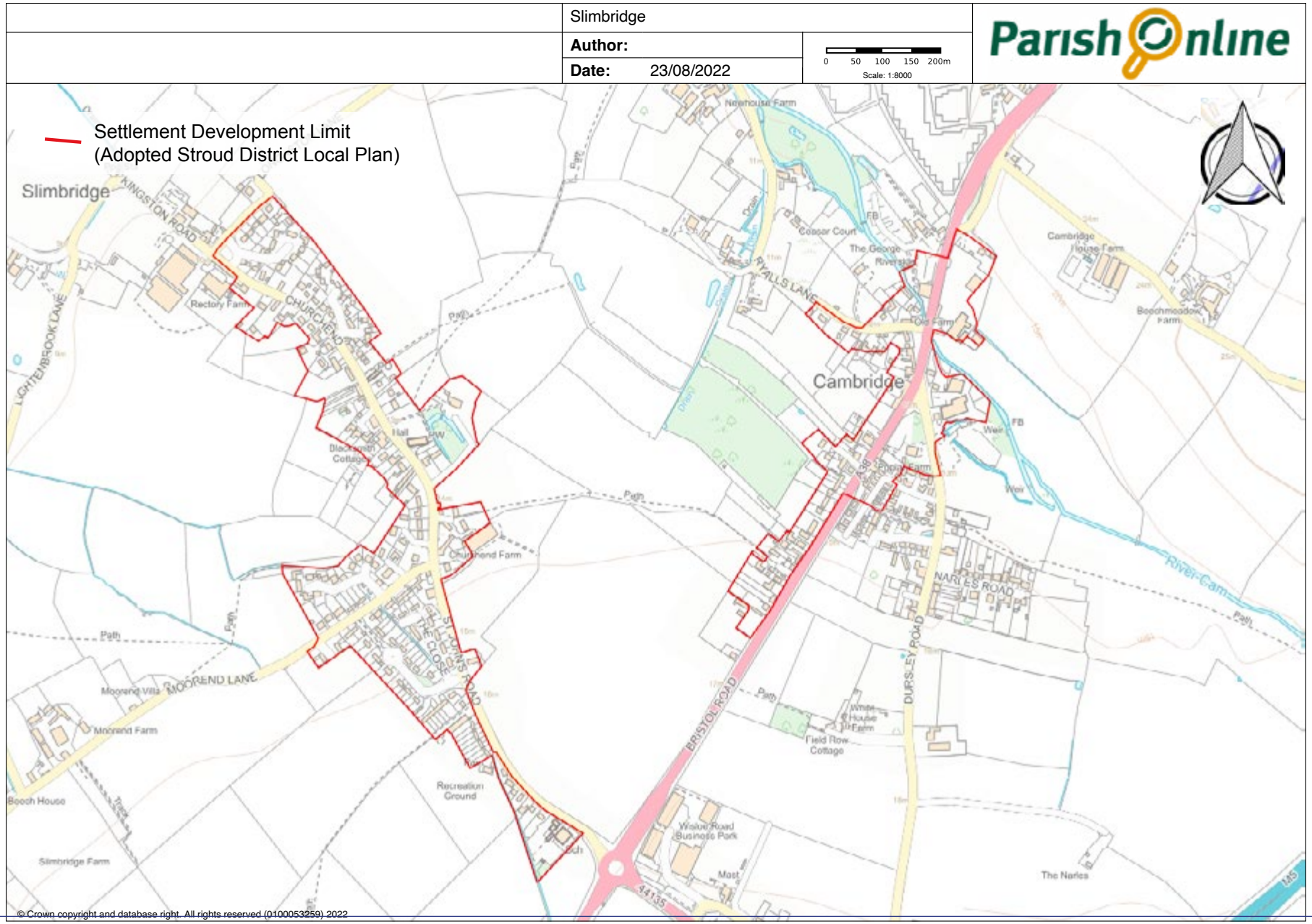


Figure 8 Settlements Development Limits

has a children's play area, an amphitheatre, football and cricket pitches. The Parish Council is planning to improve the facilities in the sports pavilion to encourage community events. It is recognised that there is a lack of youth facilities, and the provision of further facilities for young people is encouraged by Policy SLW1.

5C.11 The Neighbourhood Plan survey also identified a local need for a Parish community hub, cafe and/or shop. Policy SLW1 encourages the provision of this in principle.

5C.12 Existing community facilities are valued by the local community and should be protected. The Slimbridge Parish Community Facilities Report (2022) provides further detail on the existing community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area.

Relevant objective: O13

Policy SLW1: Community Facilities

Proposals that will harm or result in the loss of a local community facility as shown on Figure 9 and detailed in the Slimbridge Parish Community Facilities Report will be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- All reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use and no other potential occupier can be found; or
- Secure arrangements are in place to ensure that the service or facility will be replaced by a similar one of equal or greater value to the community; or
- The service or facility is no longer needed by the community and the premises would not be appropriate for alternative community use.

Development of an existing Community facility to provide extra facilities/services for local residents will be supported including:

- Facilities for young people,
- A community hub/cafe,
- Village shop.
- Allotments and Community orchards.

Facilities should be provided in tandem with population growth and in safe and accessible locations that will facilitate safe routes to the venue for both new and existing communities and be directly accessible to a pedestrian and cycle network.

How does Policy SLW1 contribute towards tackling the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

Supporting our local community facilities reduces the need for local people to travel further afield for day-to-day activities like shopping and socialising. Cars are one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions. By protecting and encouraging use of our valued local amenities, such as the Village Hall and Church, we reduce the need for people to get in their cars to carry out their daily business, and support the aim of providing an increased range of daily needs within a short walk or cycle from where people live.

Local Green Spaces

5C.13 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the designation of Local Green Spaces. The designation, introduced by the NPPF, provides special protection against development for green areas of importance to communities. The designation can be used where:

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

5C.14 Local Green Spaces do not have to be publicly accessible, and do not need to be in

public ownership.

5C.15 There are a number of special green spaces in Slimbridge Parish which the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to designate as Local Green Spaces. Rosie's Wood is an area of woodland by the river Cam which provides a tranquil area for walking and a place for community musical events. The playing field provides a large area for exercise and recreation. The Parish Council is enhancing Cambridge Green with the planting of a "Cambridge Queening" apple tree and Jubilee tree. The small green between the A38 and Dursley Road is being developed as a wild flower site.

5C.16 A full explanation of the methodology, evidence and justification to support the proposed designation of the draft Local Green Spaces is set out in the Slimbridge Parish Local Green Space Report (2023).

5C.17 Only those spaces which meet the Local Green Space criteria above are included in the draft designations in Policy SLW2.

5C.18 Whilst not all open spaces can meet the criteria to be protected Local Green Space, the Parish contains numerous incidental open and green spaces which also contribute to local amenity and character. A number of these spaces are identified in the Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022).

Relevant objective: O14

Policy SLW2: Local Green Spaces

The green spaces shown in Figure 10 and supporting figures 10a to 10f and detailed in the Slimbridge Parish Local Green Space Report, are designated as Local Green Spaces, in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 101-103.

These spaces will be protected from built development except in exceptional circumstances and where the proposals enhance the existing use of the space, particularly regarding the characteristics that underpin designation.

Local green space designations:

- LGS1 Rosie's Wood
- LGS2 Cambridge Green
- LGS3 Gossington Green
- LGS4 Playing Field
- LGS5 Humpty Dumpty Wood
- LGS6 Wildlife Space, Ryalls Lane

Development of flood resilience schemes within local green spaces will be supported provided the schemes do not adversely impact the primary function of the green space.

How does Policy SLW2 contribute towards tackling the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

Green spaces in our Parish are of paramount importance and they perform a range of functions in tackling the local impacts of climate change. One green space can have multiple positive functions, for example flood management, supporting biodiversity, space for trees to provide shade and cooling, and local food production. Protecting locally valued green spaces from development protects and maintains these valued functions.

Getting Around

5C.19 Active travel - the term used for making journeys by being physically active, such as by walking and cycling - has many benefits. Whilst increased physical activity is good for our local community's health and wellbeing, the reduction in car journeys that comes with it contributes positively towards reducing our carbon footprint.

5C.20 There is a large network of footpaths and bridleways in the Neighbourhood Area, which provides excellent opportunities to explore the whole of Slimbridge Parish. The definitive Public Right of Way network is detailed on Gloucester County Council's definitive right of way map[25]. There are also a number of well used paths that are not currently designated as Public Right of Way, but are of local importance. The Parish

25 Accessible at https://maps.gloucestershire.gov.uk/MapThatPublic/Default.aspx.

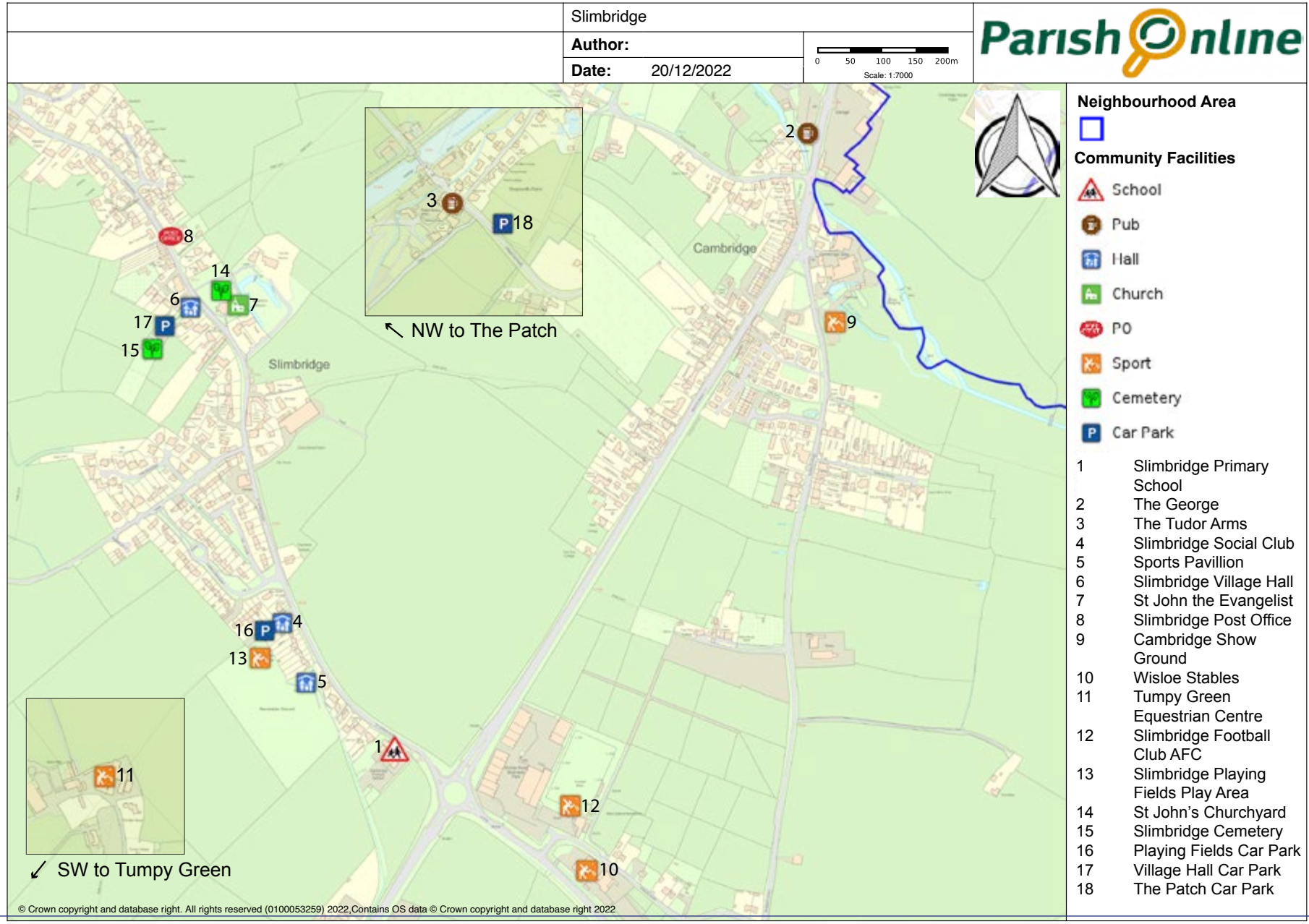


Figure 9 Community Facilities

Council is working to register these routes as Public Rights of Way.

5C.21 However, a number of these routes are in a poor state and there is a project to report on and improve the condition of the paths. Jubilee routes will be promoted by the Parish Council to further encourage use.

5C.22 There are no dedicated cycleways in the Parish but the lanes are used frequently by cyclists and Sustrans route 41 passes through Slimbridge village.

5C.23 Whilst it is acknowledged that car travel will continue to be an important way in which people get about, particularly for journeys outside of the Parish, there is a clear need to use more sustainable transport options. The various tourist attractions within the Parish e.g. the WWT Slimbridge, the Tudor caravan park and the various canal attractions bring high volumes of vehicles through Slimbridge Village, and contribute towards conditions that are unfriendly to pedestrians and cyclists.

5C.24 Slimbridge Parish Council has set up the Road Safety (formerly Quiet Lanes) project, which is aimed at reducing speeds and improving road user behaviours so that the cyclists, horse riders and walkers can share the Parish roads safely with vehicles.

5C.25 Further to encouraging more people to choose means of transport other than the private car, the Parish Council also supports more people to switch to using low or zero emission vehicles. This is an important driver in the reduction of emissions that contribute towards pollution and climate change at a local level. The NPPF sets out the need for developments to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations. Emerging Stroud District Policy ES1 requires development proposals to enable electric vehicle charging in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards.

5C.26 Policy SLW3 contributes towards the Vision set out in Stroud Sustainable Transport Strategy[26], to 'Enable mobility for all, prioritising sustainable and low carbon modes of transport, allowing healthy and prosperous communities and economy to thrive, whilst continuing to be an environmentally responsible district'.

5C.27 The Canals and Rivers Trust will continue to seek funding for and promote improvements to the canal towpath to improve it as an active transport route in both directions

26 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1485395/stroud-sustainable-transport-strategy-main-report_redacted.pdf

Historical View along A38 with Cambridge Green and the George Inn

Relevant objective: O15, O16

Policy SLW3: Getting Around

Applications for developments that are adjacent to Public Rights of Way should, where it is appropriate, ensure links to those routes are provided.

Applicants are encouraged to make contributions to other local routes adjacent to or near to those sites that could ensure a more fully linked local network.

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways are supported so long as their value as biodiversity corridors is recognised, protected and efforts are made to enhance biodiversity as part of the development work wherever appropriate

How does Policy SLW3 contribute towards tackling the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

Transport is now the biggest carbon emitting sector in the UK. By protecting and improving our active travel network, we can encourage more local people to walk and cycle where possible, cutting our carbon emissions and improving the health and wellbeing of our community.

Local Economy

5C.28 Supporting the economy is a key element of delivering sustainable development, economic growth and prosperity. The emerging Local Plan sets out key points

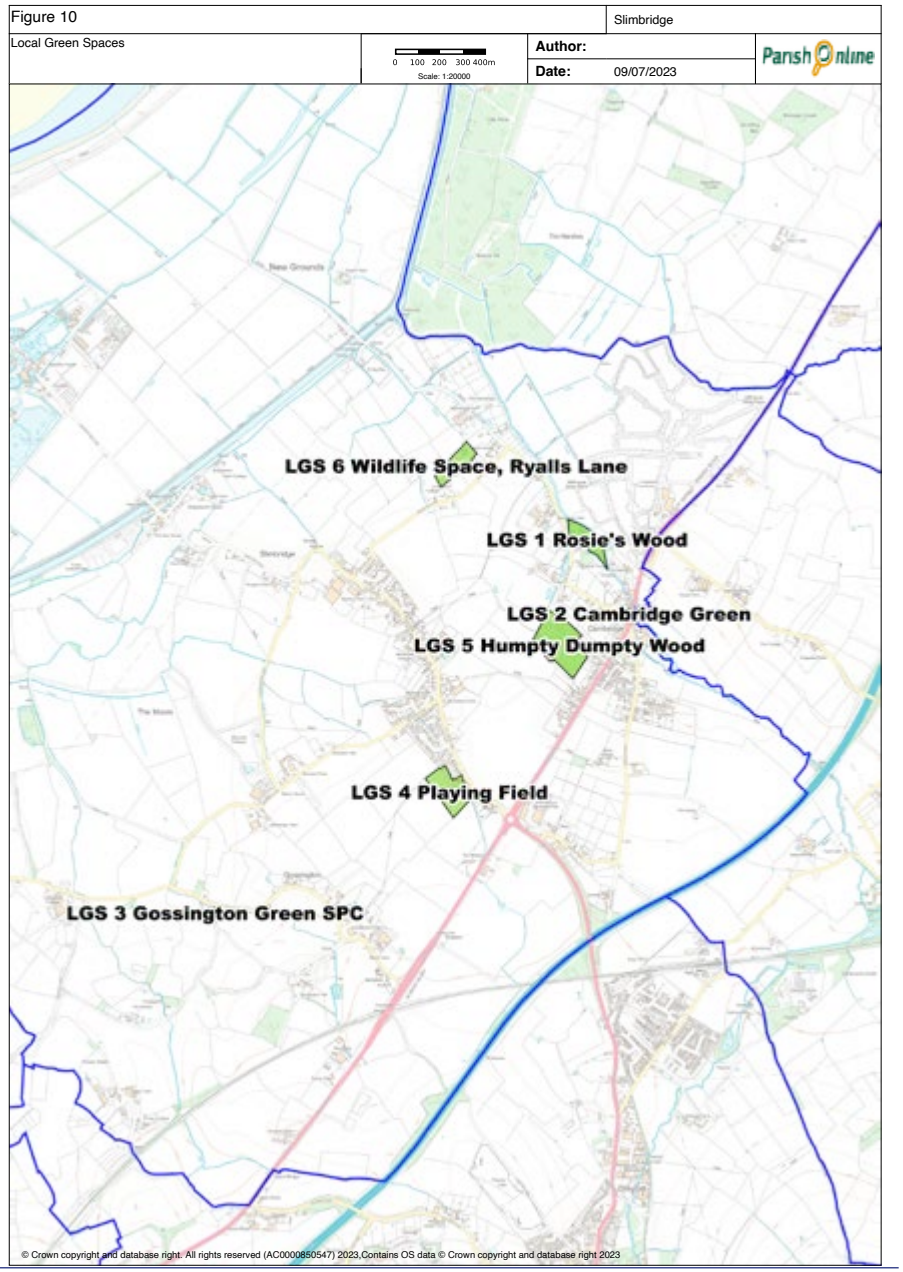


Figure 10 Proposed Local Green Space Designations

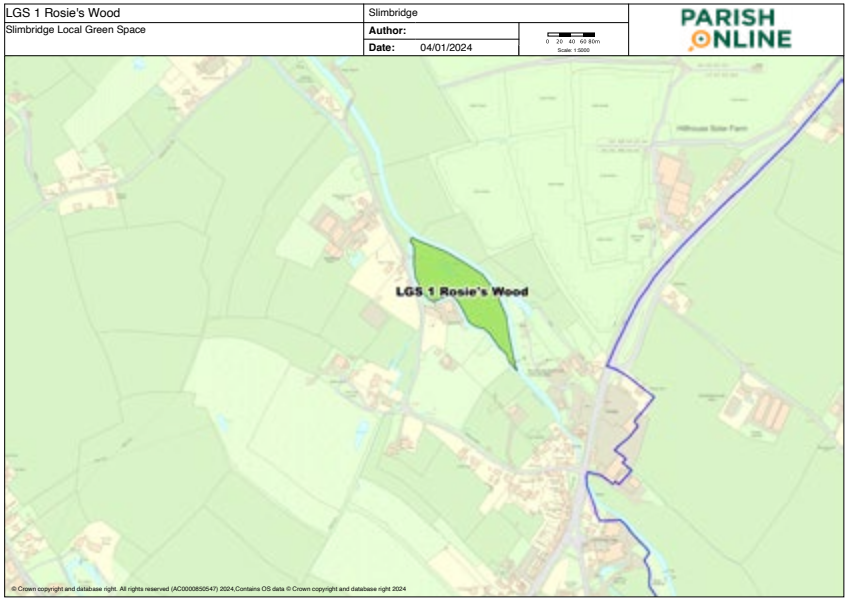


Figure 10a LGS1 (Local Green Space) Rosie's Wood

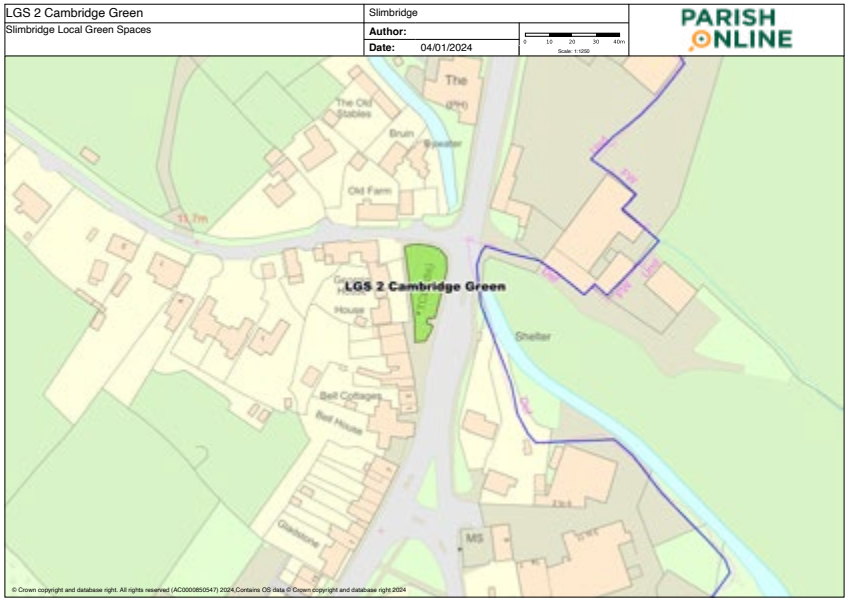


Figure 10b LGS2 Cambridge Green

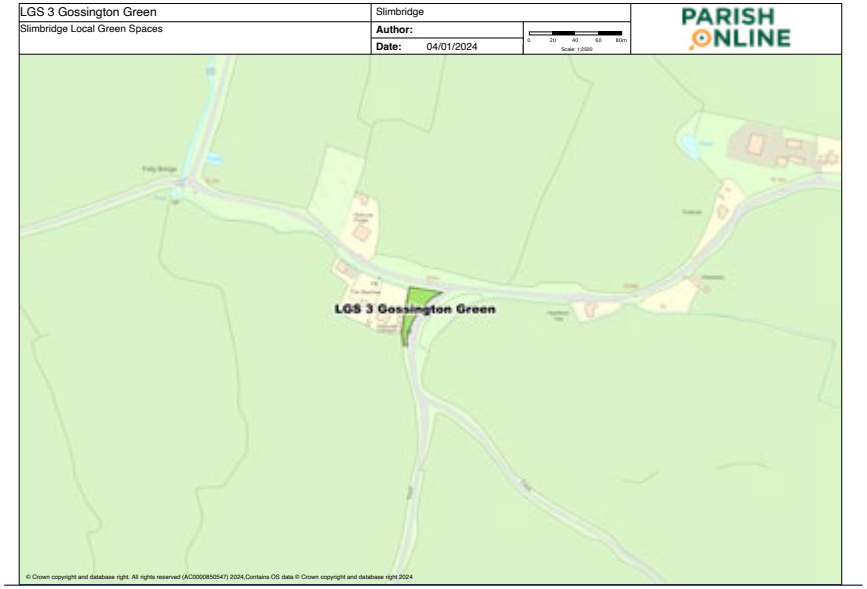


Figure 10c LG3 Gossington Green

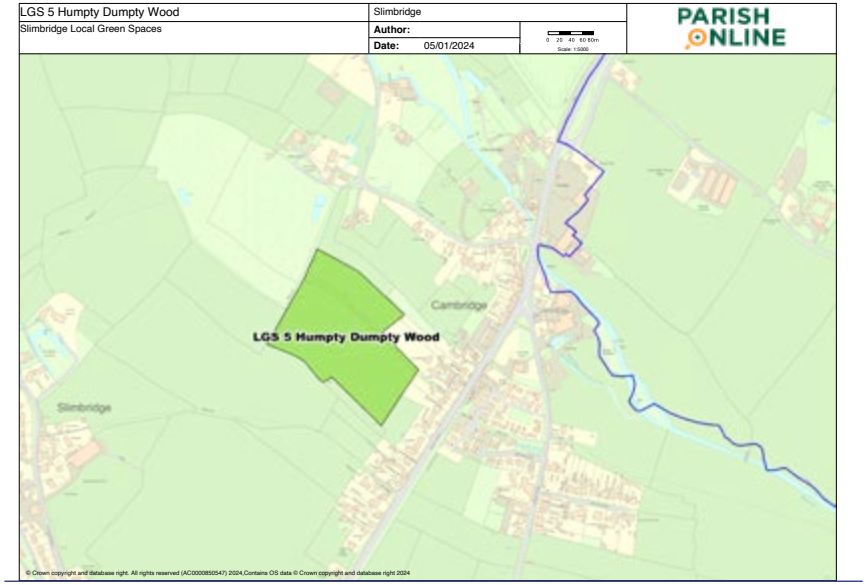


Figure 10e LGS 5 Humpty Dumpty Wood

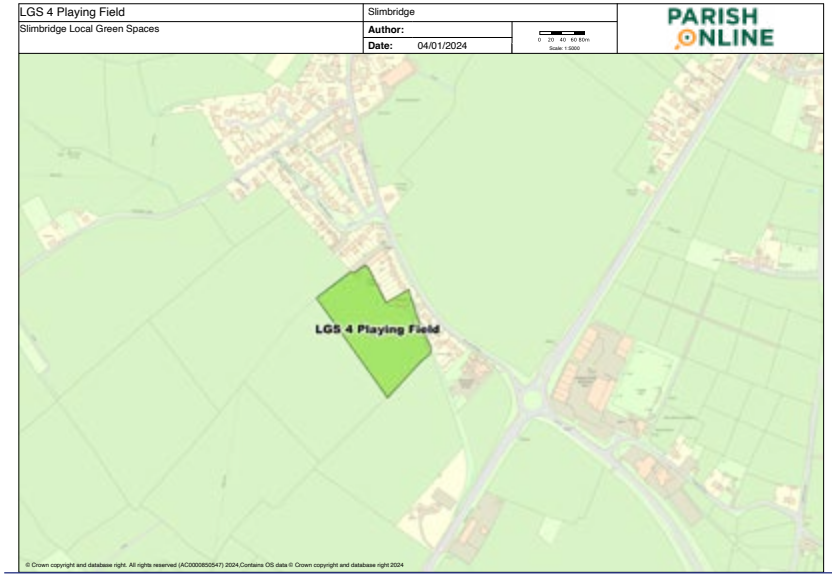


Figure 10d LGS4 Playing Field

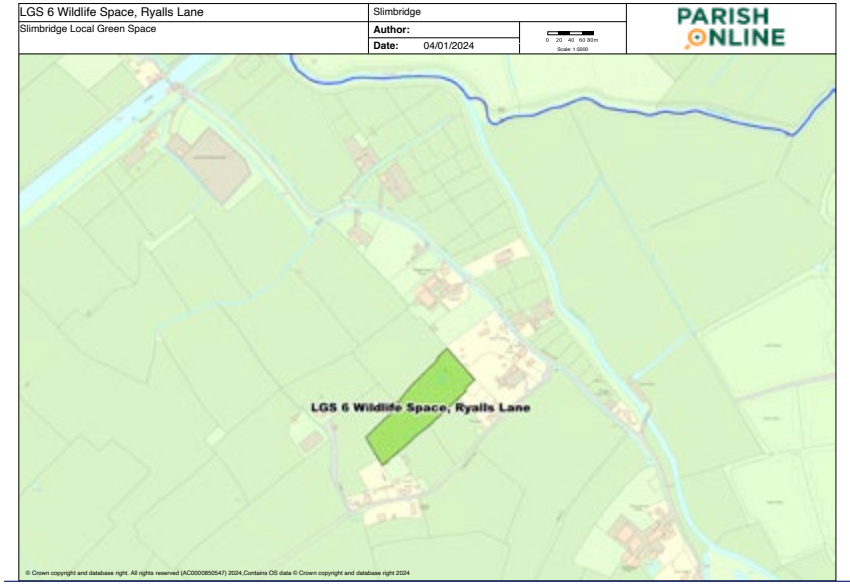


Figure 10f LGS6 Wildlife Space Ryalls Lane

Cambridge Green February 2022

Footpath FP31 Gravel Path

about employment within the key issues and top priorities for the future of the 'Berkeley Cluster', within which Slimbridge Parish is located. These include providing for local job opportunities, supporting small scale and start-up businesses, improving IT connectivity and infrastructure and promoting tourist opportunities in the Severn Valley.

5C.29 Slimbridge Parish offers a large number of opportunities for employment, both part time and full time, across farming, industry, tourism and other sectors. There is also a good level of planned recruitment from local businesses in the near future. However, due to demographics, currently a relatively small number of staff employed within Slimbridge Parish (approximately 16%) actually reside within the Parish. More detail on existing businesses within the Parish, including number of employees and planned recruitment for the future, is included in the Businesses in the Parish Report (2021).

5C.30 The Businesses in the Parish Report (2021) found that currently, small businesses with between 1-5 employees represent the largest percentage of local businesses in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan supports small businesses, and encourages the diversification of the local economy, particularly through promotion of opportunities for start up businesses and home working, and the infrastructure that supports them. It also fully supports local businesses to be able to offer apprenticeships, providing work and skills development opportunities for local young people.

Recently cleared footpath bridge over ditch

5C.31 The Covid-19 pandemic shifted the way that many businesses operate, with higher numbers of people nationally working from home and/or more flexibly. The recent provision of high speed broadband in Slimbridge Parish has and will continue to encourage this trend.

5C.32 Emerging Stroud District policy CP11 safeguards existing employment sites. Neighbourhood Plan policy SLW4 seeks to encourage the diversification of the local economy by supporting homeworking and new and start-up businesses within the Parish.

Relevant objective: O17, O18

Policy SLW4: Local Economy

Homeworking

Proposals that increase opportunities for residents to work from home (such as a home office for remote working) and/or to work from within the Parish will be supported. Where planning permission is required, any proposal for small scale development that falls within Use Class E will be supported where;

- There will be no unacceptable impact on the amenities of residential properties in the immediate locality; and
- Measures to mitigate any adverse impact of traffic generation, noise and odours are included, where required

Any such proposals should clearly demonstrate that the work area for its occupants:

- Is ancillary to the primary residential use, and
- Does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of residential properties in the immediate locality, and
- Incorporates measures to mitigate the impact of traffic generation, noise and odours.

New and Start-up Businesses

The provision of local employment, the expansion of the Parish's small employers and the establishment of new start-up businesses will be supported in principle, subject to an assessment of the impact of the proposals and any severe impacts are appropriately mitigated. The proposals may impact

- Residential amenity; and/or
- The transport network and parking conditions; and/or
- Biodiversity and the environment.

Proposals will be expected to be supported by proportionate and appropriate information to enable an assessment of these impacts and mitigations to be undertaken.

How does Policy SLW4 contribute towards tackling the climate emergency in Slimbridge Parish?

Currently many people travel elsewhere outside of the Parish for work. Supporting local economic activity and employment opportunities in Slimbridge Parish reduces the need for local people to commute long distances. By protecting and diversifying local employment opportunities, we can encourage people to work within the Parish, reducing car journeys and time spent on the road.

An increased number of people working from within the Parish will continue to support our local facilities and businesses, strengthening our local network and opportunities for people to carry out more of their day-to-day activities within the Neighbourhood Area.

Managing Tourism and Rural Diversification in Slimbridge Parish

5C.33 Slimbridge Parish is a great place to visit as well as a great place to live. Tourism is important to the Parish, making a significant contribution to the local economy, creating employment opportunities and assisting in attracting investment. Tourism also helps to support rural areas and rural diversification.

5C.34 Within the Parish there are a number of important features that serve to attract visitors, such as the Slimbridge WWT and the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. The Slimbridge WWT site is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the area; attracting around 250,000 visitors per year. It has

recently been expanded to increase visitor numbers. In addition, there are a number of visitor attractions and large caravan sites near the Tudor Lodge and the George Inn. A number of special events further enhance the Parish as an important tourist attraction, including the Little Vintage Show. The Parish also contains a wide range of visitor accommodation in terms of size and quality that plays a central role in attracting visitors to the Parish and in supporting the tourist related attractions and activities.

5C.35 The high quality of the Parish's countryside and the attractions and activities it has to offer attracts a large number of people each year wanting to spend time and stay in the Parish. Visitors to the Parish include the holidaymaker, the business visitor and the leisure day tripper.

5C.36 However, there can be drawbacks arising from tourism, including additional public authority costs, traffic and parking congestion, commercialisation of the rural environment and conflicts of uses in the countryside. The Parish Council's approach is, therefore, to encourage the expansion and improvement of the range and type of tourist facilities in a sustainable manner that safeguards the Parish's environment. More detail on the tourist attractions within the Parish and their associated impacts is included in the Slimbridge Parish Tourism Report (2021).

5C.37 Policy SLW5 seeks to influence tourism development within the Parish to encourage sustainable development that minimises its impact on the environment, local communities and the highway network.

5C.38 In line with Neighbourhood Plan policy SLW3, tourism development proposals should facilitate non-car travel and provide links to our existing active travel network. The Parish Council also encourages proposals to wherever possible make best use of any existing local public transport services in the vicinity of the application site.

5C.39 Support will also be given to proposals linked to the long-term conservation and enjoyment of publicly accessible natural and cultural heritage assets. This could involve the development of facilities (e.g. information centre, public amenities etc.) to support visitors to a particular landscape feature, archaeological site or historical building. In all cases, the scale and nature of facilities proposed must be in keeping with the character of the site and not harm the value of the asset they are catering for.

5C.40 The NPPF seeks to support sustainable rural tourism that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respects the character of the countryside. This includes supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

5C.41 Emerging Stroud District policies look to encourage tourism and accommodation around the river estuary. Emerging policy EI10 sets out criteria that proposals for tourist facilities in rural areas are required to meet, including that they provide adequate access to local infrastructure and opportunities (e.g. existing walking and cycling network) and do not detract from the biodiversity interest, character or appearance of the landscape.

5C.42 Whilst the benefits of the tourist economy in the Parish are recognised, it is important that any future tourism development is managed and does not exacerbate existing issues nor cause negative impacts for residents. It is important to work with stakeholders to ensure that this happens.

Wisloe Industrial Estate

Slimbridge Post Office

N-Virocycle Yard

Relevant objective: O19

Policy SLW5: Managing Tourism and Rural Diversification in Slimbridge Parish

Development proposals to provide new, or to improve or expand existing, tourist facilities or accommodation in Slimbridge Parish will be supported provided that development accords with the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and Stroud Local Plan and:

- Has appropriate regard to the Slimbridge Parish Design Statement, and
- involves the reuse of existing buildings or well-designed new buildings, and
- does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of residential properties in the immediate locality, and
- results in an improvement to the range and quality of attractions and/or visitor accommodation in the area, benefits the local economy and helps to protect local services and
- does not cause unacceptable traffic generation.

Where new development would give rise to increased traffic that would adversely impact on the safe use of the highway, a scheme of mitigation should be proposed for consideration by the Local Highway Authority and contributions may be sought towards the implementation of traffic calming and other measures (including the initiatives identified in the practical projects section) as necessary to avoid an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or to ensure that any residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe.

Junction of A38 at Cambridge Green

5D Landscape and Heritage

Introduction

5D.1 The Parish of Slimbridge is located between the Cotswold Escarpment and the River Severn with its salt marshes and Slimbridge WWT. The ground is predominantly flat with some higher ground to the South around Gossington and Tumpy Green. A large area in the West of the Parish is unoccupied, with no public access and prone to flooding. The flat and open landscape leads to many panoramic views of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Forest of Dean across the River Severn. Some of these views were opened up by the death of elm trees in the 1970s and 80s. Looking to the Northeast there are views as far as Haresfield Beacon some 10 kilometres away.

5D.2 As a rural Parish the landscape is heavily influenced by farming practices. Until the arrival of the turnpike, canal and railway there were no large population centres, transport was difficult and hence agriculture concentrated on non-perishable goods; there were many orchards which have now disappeared, the ploughing of fields is revealed by the "Ridge and Furrow"[27] marks in many fields and sheep would have supplied wool for the mills of Dursley. With the arrival of the canal (1827) and railway (1844) transport was improved with milk becoming a key product; much of the milk was (and still is) sold to Cadburys who at one time had a Chocolate Crumb Factory on the canal bank at Frampton. Along with grazing, the production of cereal, straw and hay for the cattle is a major activity.

5D.3 The Parish boundary runs along the centre of the Severn and includes the salt marshes and the area known as "New Grounds" is where Sir Peter Scott founded "The Wildfowl Trust" in 1946, this subsequently became the "Wildfowl and Wetland Trust" (WWT) and currently Slimbridge WWT. The "New Grounds" were formed by the movement of silt and soil from the opposite bank as the River Severn changed its course in about 1600. Lord Berkeley chose to claim it, leading to an unsuccessful legal challenge by the Parish of Awre to reclaim it. The area was subsequently enclosed, resulting in riots in the mid C17th as the "Diggers" tore down the fences, this resulted in a troop of horses being quartered in Slimbridge and Frampton to restore order.

5D.4 The area inland from the New Grounds, "Shepherd's Patch", is busy with people visiting WWT Slimbridge, the local hospitality, and enjoying walks along the canal. A project to highlight the history of the area is being considered.

5D.5 The two most imposing old buildings in the Parish are Gossington Hall and St. John the Evangelist Church. Gossington Hall was built in 1695 according to the official listing, but there exists a record of its sale to the

27 The Ridge and Furrow pattern is a result of repeated ploughing with a one-sided plough, the practice ended c17th Century and the remaining pattern can only be seen in fields which have not been ploughed using more modern machinery

Leisure Activity Signs at the Canal Bridge, Black Shed

WWT

The George Inn

Slimbridge Vicar, Lawrence Bridger, in 1620.

5D.6 St John's was built in the 13th century; it is a large church, an imposing Grade 1* listed building and its tall spire is visible from many areas of the Parish. Adjacent to the graveyard is a moated enclosure which held a Manor House sometime before the present Rectory was built. The church was well connected and supplied the Church of England with three bishops, one of whom anointed Queen Elizabeth 1st at her Coronation. The graveyard has records of 5,463 burials the earliest being in 1635 and includes soldiers killed in the English Civil War and both World Wars. It is almost certain the site was a place of worship long before the present church was built.

5D.7 The village of Cambridge is shaped by transport. The old Roman road (A38) became a turnpike and was widened in the 1950s leading to the loss of some buildings. There were at one time four Public Houses in Cambridge; the White Lion and the George were coaching inns with stabling, The "Drovers Arms" speaks for itself, while the Bell Inn had a number of uses in its time and stopped being an Inn in the 1920s. The "Cambridge Arm" of the Canal came up to Wharf Farm just north of the George and was built to take materials (e.g. coal for the mills of Dursley, wood for the sawmill at Cambridge) up to the road from where it could be distributed. It struggled to compete with the railway.

5D.8 Domesday Book (1086) referenced Slimbridge as "Heslinbruge" which is a Viking term for a settlement with a short jetty, however there is no corroborating evidence as there is very little recorded history of the area in this period. The A38 is known to follow the line of the Roman road from Gloucester (Glevum) to Sea Mills (Abona) and there is evidence of Roman activity on the land to the east of Lanes End bungalow. Recently a Roman villa has been found on a building site in Cam near the station. Roman coins are often found around Slimbridge, but it was not until a detectorist rally unearthed and pillaged large quantities of Roman artefacts that investigations began nearer the river.

5D.9 Additional metal detecting surveys (with the finds logged) and a series of magnetic anomaly surveys were carried out in two fields close to the river. The geophysical surveys identified a number of sub-surface features which were interpreted as a combination of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman buildings.

5D.10 Over the last three years a series of archaeological "digs" were carried out with increasing scope. The finds from the 2022 dig will be analysed over the winter months, but the highlights include:

- Excavations of a corner of a walled compound approximately 40m by 80m. There were indications of regular features which might have been roof supports.
- Some of the building material has been dated to the 1st century AD and specific pottery identified as having been produced by a particular potter between 135 and 185 AD.
- Roman Republic Coins have been found together with British Iron Age Coins.

5D.11 Although the location of the building is now some distance from the river it is on a spit of slightly higher land; it is postulated that the course of the river might have changed and the building might have been close to the river and possibly a port or trading post. The river above Slimbridge is difficult to navigate and a port at this point would make sense. The colocation of Republic and British coins raises the possibility that trading was taking place before the Roman occupation and the Roman building might have been built where there was an existing encampment – evidenced by the Bronze and Iron Age buildings.

5D.12 Slimbridge Local History Society will continue coordinating this work dovetailing the interests of tenant farmers, landowners, professional archaeologists and the Gloucestershire Archaeology Service. Progress will continue to be reported to people living in Slimbridge Parish through Heritage Events.

Locally Valued Key Views

5D.13 The flat and open landscape of Slimbridge Parish affords us with many panoramic views out in multiple directions; towards the Cotswold escarpment, across the River Severn towards the Forest of Dean, and as far as Haresfield Beacon to the north east. These views are integral to the character of Slimbridge Parish and highly valued by local people. Views within the Parish towards the Church spire are also locally valued, indeed as noted in the Parish Design Statement,

'when we see Slimbridge Spire, we know we are home'.

5D.14 The Slimbridge Neighbourhood Area is located within the Severn and Avon Vales National Landscape Character Area. The Stroud District Landscape Assessment (2020)[28] identifies three landscape character types within the Neighbourhood Area: Lowland Plain, Severn Vale Grazing Marshland, and Wooded Lowlands. The Stroud District Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study (2019)[29] includes detail about the characteristics of each landscape type, as well as key priorities for each.

5D.15 Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2016)[30] notes that landscape parcels around Slimbridge village are all considered to be highly sensitive in terms of landscape and visual factors, noting particularly the importance of views towards the church spire from the A38.

5D.16 Emerging Local Plan policy CP14 supports high quality development where it is of appropriate design and appearance which is respectful of the surroundings, including the local topography, built environment and heritage. Emerging Local Plan policy ES7 requires development proposals to conserve or enhance the special features and diversity of different landscape types; protecting landscape character, retaining natural features that contribute towards landscape character and setting, and avoiding detrimental effects on landscape types, patterns and features.

5D.17 Slimbridge Parish is located near to, and within the setting of, the Cotswold AONB, where the requirements of emerging Local Plan policy ES7 are particularly important. Emerging Policy ES7 prioritises the conservation and enhancement of the natural and special qualities of the AONB, including landscape quality / landscape beauty, tranquillity; dark skies; natural heritage and cultural heritage.

5D.18 The Slimbridge Parish Locally Valued Key Views Report (2023) has been prepared as part of the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan and identifies views that are valued by the local community. The report adds local detail to the Stroud-level landscape assessments and policy by pinpointing specific views of local importance and identifying why they are special. These are shown on Figures 12a and 12b.

5D.19 For clarity, a view is defined as what can be seen from a particular place. Both specific 'Exceptional Key Views' (selected for the quality of the view and normally having a particular subject)) and 'Typical Views' (chosen to represent views which are less than exceptional but typical of the views within and around Slimbridge Parish) are identified.

28 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1070964/stroud-district-landscape-assessment-spg-november-2000.pdf

29 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1070619/cluster-analysis-part-2-v5_berkeley-cluster.pdf

30 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/240802/stroud-landscape-sensitivity-assessment-part-1.pdf

Relevant objective: O20

Policy SLH1: Locally Valued Key Views

Any development proposal that is likely to affect any of the Locally Valued Key Views, as shown on Figures 12a and 12b, should demonstrate impact of the proposal on the view and demonstrate how the proposal would alter the view.

Proposals which have a significant adverse effect on any of the Locally Valued Key Views, which cannot be adquately mitigated, will not be supported.

Development proposals are encouraged to maintain or create views out to the wider landscape, or towards heritage assets, from public spaces within developments.

Heritage Assets and Archaeology

5D.20 Slimbridge Parish has a rich and interesting heritage, with a long history of traditional farming practices and orchards. The Slimbridge Parish Local Heritage Report (2024) has been collated to bring together a range of evidence on local heritage. A copy of the Historic Environment Record for Slimbridge Parish (2022) has also been obtained from Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan's evidence base.

5D.21 Roman remains can be found over most of England, however Roman inhabitation of the area between Slimbridge Village and the Severn was not expected but has

recently been confirmed. This is of significant historical interest. There are known Roman archaeological remains and a suspected high grade Roman Settlement in the fields southeast of the A38 between Gossington Bridge and Slimbridge.

5D.22 The remains of a Roman Villa have recently been found on a housing development in Cam, on the other side of the railway, so it is known there were Roman settlements in the area.

5D.23 Roman coins are regularly found in Slimbridge. Following a detectorist rally, where there were many finds, a geophysical survey found indications indicative of previous occupations. Excavations over the last three years have identified the walls and roof supports of a large building (20m by 80m, possibly a storage or industrial facility), and what is thought to be the end of a Villa. A few small-scale excavations have found evidence of walls, but nothing identifying exactly what the building was. More detail on archaeology in the Parish is included in the Slimbridge Parish Local Heritage Report (2024).

5D.24 Emerging Local Plan policy ES10 supports proposals which conserve and, where appropriate, enhance any undesignated archaeology of national significance, and any iron age and Roman settlements and remains. Whilst conclusive evidence of a Roman settlement in Slimbridge Parish has not yet been found, dig findings suggest this is a real possibility. This is an integral part of the history of the Parish and so development proposals must pay particular attention to their impact on any potential archaeological sites.

Relevant objective: O21

Policy SLH2: Heritage Assets and Archaeology

Development proposals shall have due regard to the potential for unidentified archaeological remains, particularly in relation to Roman and Iron Age remains around Lighten Brook, Lynch Field and Stanborough Mead as shown in Figure 11.

Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets

5D.25 There are a range of other physical features evident in the fabric of the Parish today which represent Slimbridge Parish's very local sense of heritage, such as the Slimbridge Roundabout sculpture, features along the canal, and even traditional phone and post boxes.

5D.26 Non-designated, but locally valued and distinctive elements of Slimbridge Parish contribute to a sense of local character and identity, which should be conserved and where possible, enhanced. Policy SLH3 and Part 1 of the Slimbridge Parish Local Heritage Report (2024) (which forms part of the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan) identify features that make 'positive contributions' to the historic character of the Parish, and are valued locally.

5D.27 Part 1 of the Slimbridge Parish Local Heritage Report (Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets) (2024) sets out how local buildings or features which are not formally designated (as Grade I or Grade II etc.) are distinctive elements of our very local Parish historic environment. These non-designated heritage assets are important and valued as part of our community's collected sense of place and history. They are shown on Figures 13a and 13b.

Footpath from Ballards Lane through Humpty Dumpty Woods

5D.28 Traditional farming practices are evident particularly in the 'ridge and furrow' fields, of which the best examples in the Parish are probably in the Glebe Fields between Slimbridge and Cambridge. Historic England identifies 'ridge and furrow' field systems as important heritage assets that are physical manifestations of ancient farming practices. The distinctive pattern on the ground is the result of ploughing open field systems with a single-sided plough. The pattern is only visible if, when ploughing ceased, the fields were used as pasture and not subsequently

ploughed using more modern equipment. These fields make a key contribution to the local landscape and heritage of Slimbridge Parish.

5D.29 In conformity with paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (including footnote 68), all surviving Ridge and Furrow in the Plan area should be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and accordingly taken into account in the planning system; these fields are visible evidence of an element of national heritage. Policy SLH3 identifies a representative number of locations of the Ridge and Furrow fields within the Parish. There are additional instances of Ridge and Furrow fields within the Parish, but the locations of these have not yet been verified.

5D.30 Emerging Local Plan policy ES10 supports proposals which protect and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of locally identified heritage assets. Policy SLH3 adds local detail to this by identifying what those locally identified heritage assets are in Slimbridge Parish. Identifying non-designated heritage assets of local significance is a process encouraged by the Heritage Strategy for Stroud District Supplementary Planning Advice document (2018)[31].

31 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1164372/heritage-strategy_feb-2018_updated-jan-2020.pdf

Relevant objective: O21

Policy SLH3: Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the buildings, structures and features listed below and shown on Figures 13a and 13b as Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets.

Any development proposals that would affect the character, setting or integrity of the identified Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Asset(s) should:

- Be accompanied by a description of the Asset's significance in sufficient detail to allow the scale of any harm or loss to be adequately assessed against the significance of the asset; and
- Be sympathetic to the building or structure concerned and propose its creative reuse and adaptation; and
- Ensure that recording and interpretation is undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance.

Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets are:

HA01 Cambridge House.

HA02 Bell House Cambridge.

HA03 Cambridge Milestone.

HA04 Cambridge Flood Depth Post.

HA05 Slimbridge Primary School.

HA06 Wisloe Homes for Heroes.

HA07 The Nest Slimbridge Roundabout (removed from the schedule)

HA08 Gossington Hall Stew Pond.

HA09 Gossington Baptist Chapel.

HA10 Gossington Victorian Postbox.

HA11 War Memorial - St John's Graveyard.

HA12 Samuel Hadley Memorial.

HA13 James and May Harding Grave.

HA14 Lamp post in Slimbridge Churchyard.

HA15 Gloucester & Sharpness Canal canal channel, its banks and towpath

HA16 Gloucester & Sharpness Canal Milepost at NGR SO737050

HA17 Rails from World War 1 Munitions Store.

HA18 Medieval ridge and furrow fields.

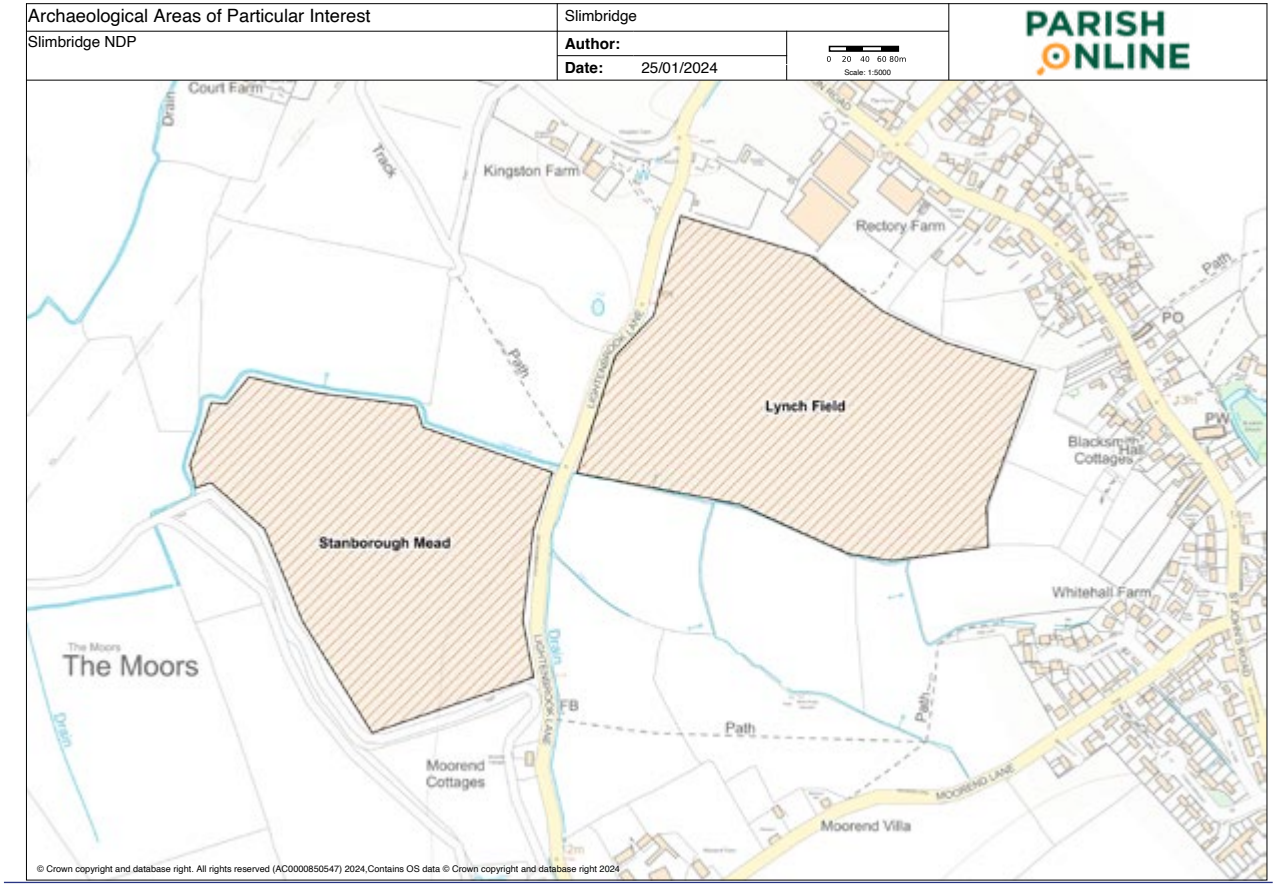


Figure 11 Archaeological Areas of Particular Interest

Looking towards Cotswold Escarpment from Footpath CSL2 near Shepherd's Patch Cottage April 2020

Roman Coin discovered in Slimbridge Parish

Archaeological Investigation 2022

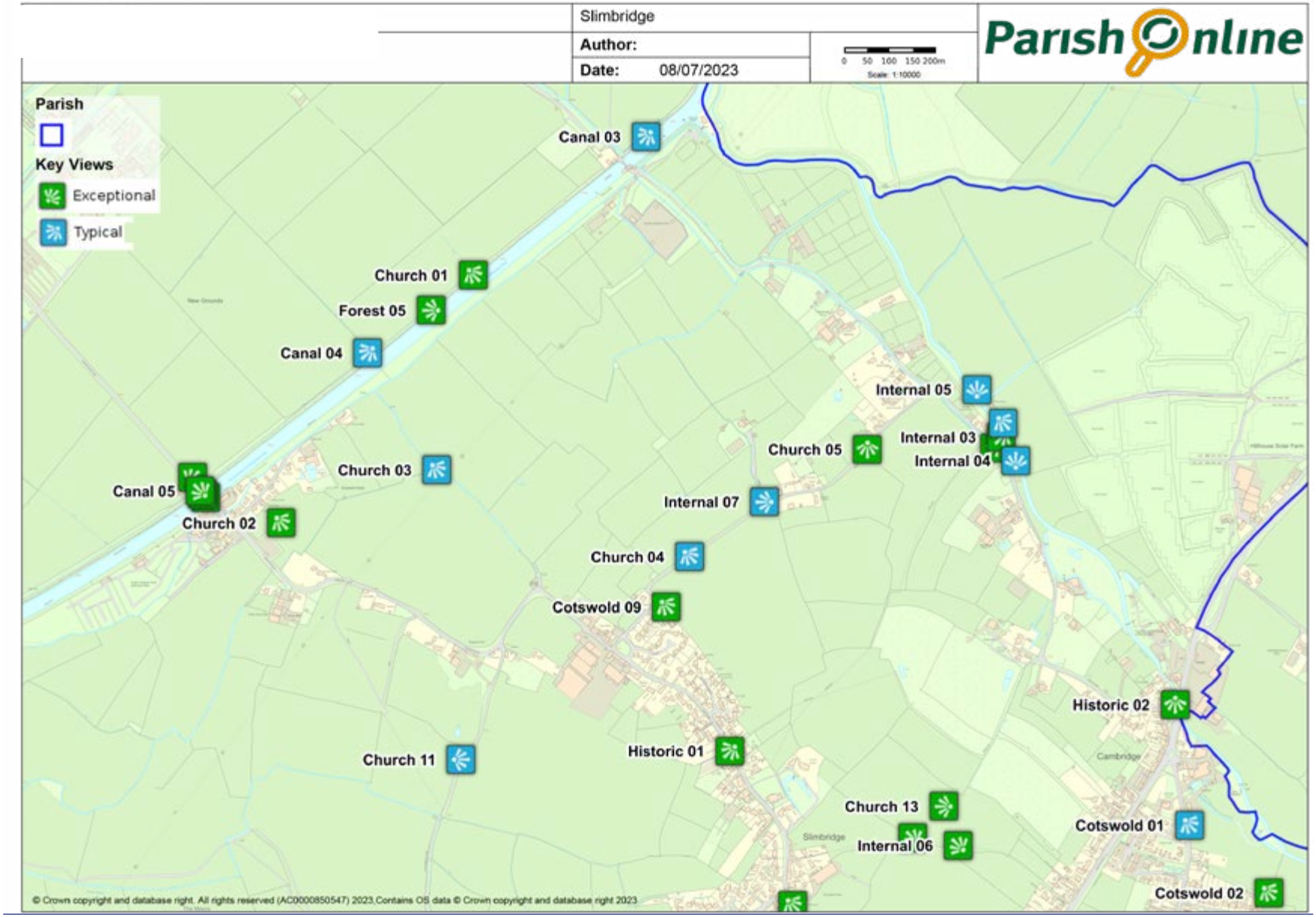


Figure 12a Locally Valued Key Views North

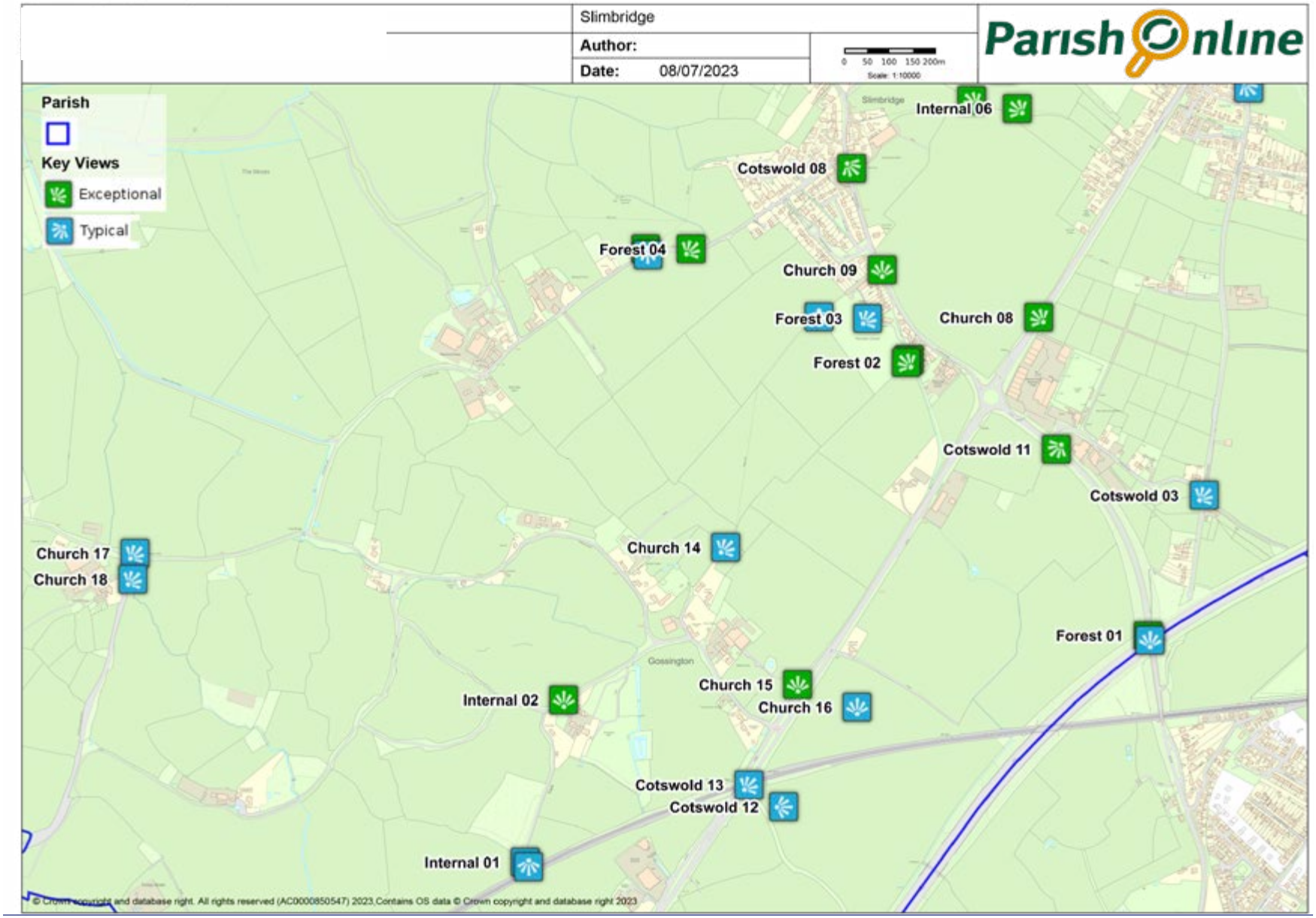
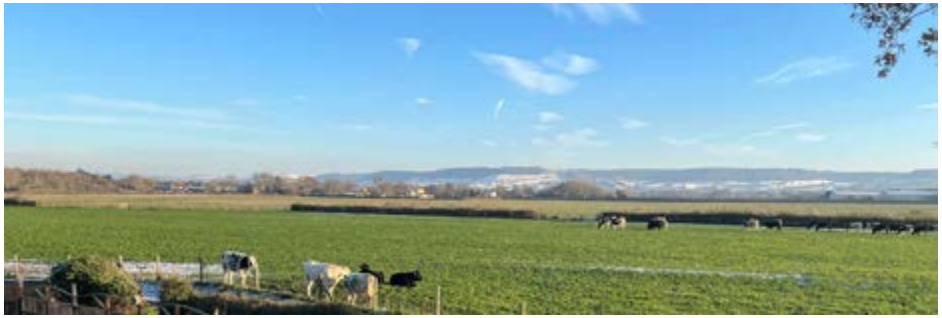


Figure 12b Locally Valued Key Views South

View of Cotswold Escaprment taken from Moorend Lane

View to Slimbridge Church Spire from A38

From Canal Towpath between Cambridge Arms and Patch Bridges, WWT Tower with Forest of Dean on Horizon June 2022



View from Slimbridge towards Cambridge, Cotswolds on the horizon, December 2022

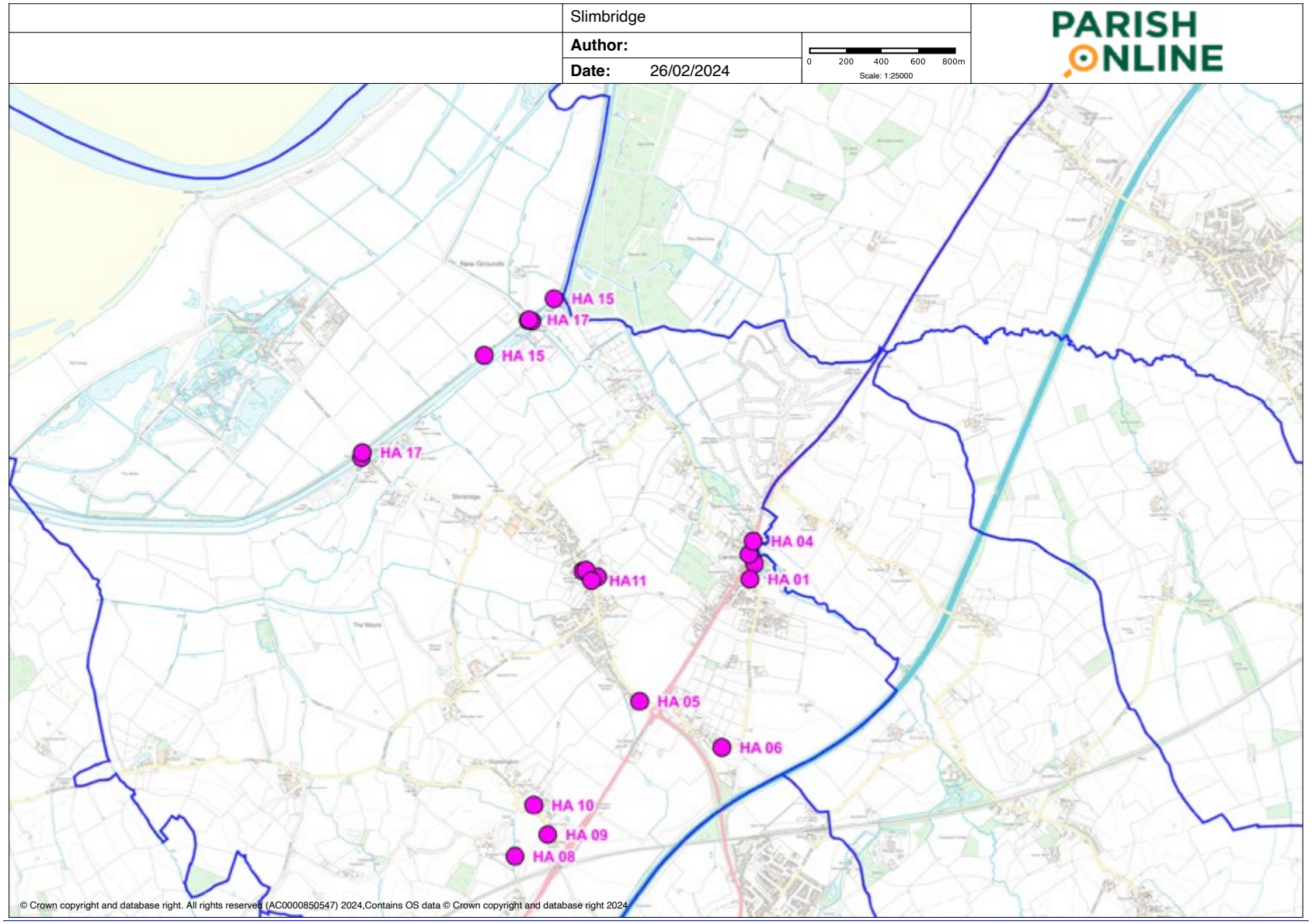


Figure 13a Heritage Assets

	Slimbridge	
	Author:	0 200 400 600 800m Scale: 1:25000
	Date: 26/02/2024	

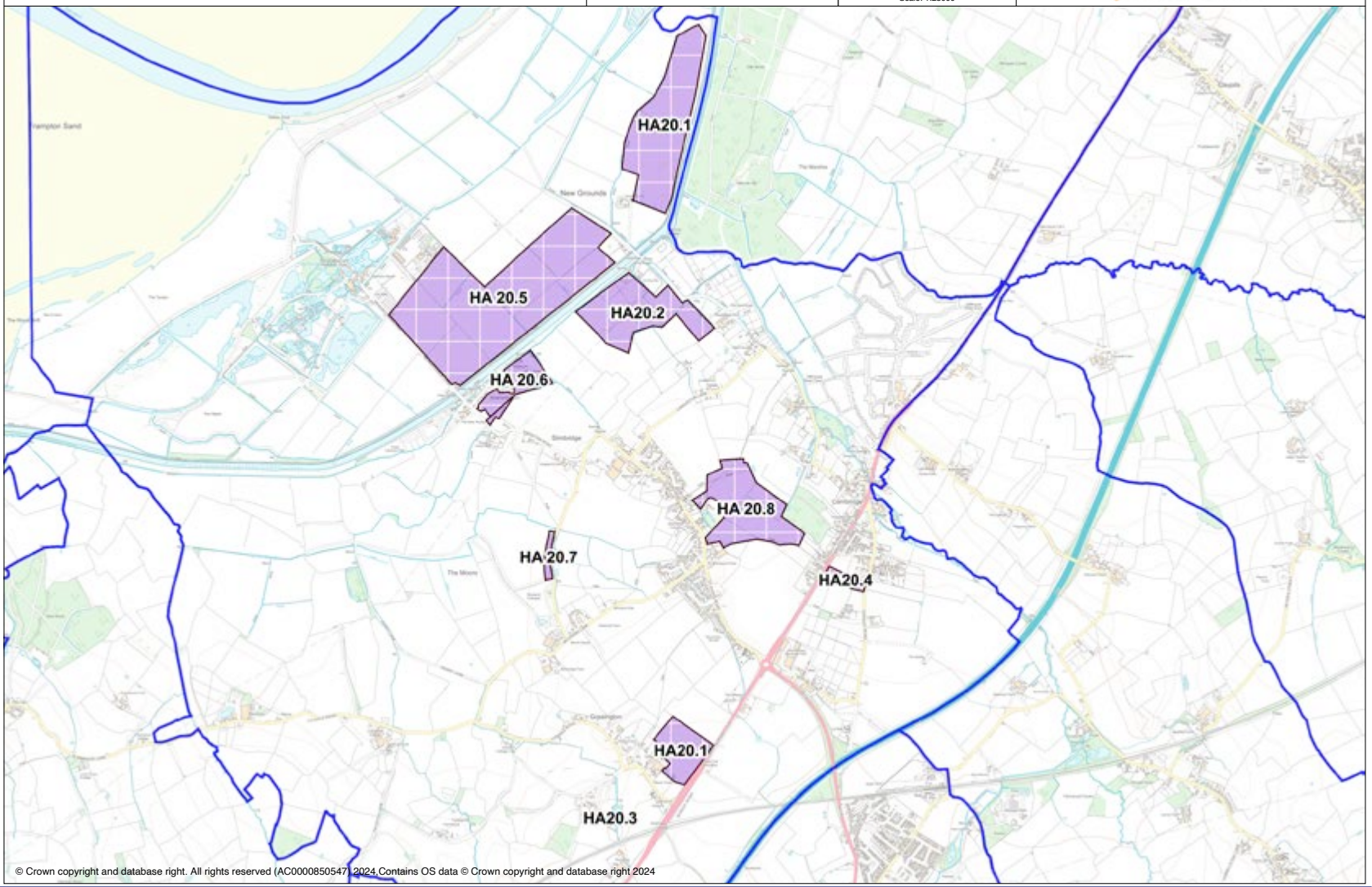


Figure 13b Ridge and Furrow

3

PART 3 PRACTICAL PROJECTS

6 Practical Projects

6 This section includes information on Practical Projects that are related to the key themes and policies of the NDP, but relate to issues that cannot be directly influenced by land-use planning policies. The practical projects cover ideas, topics and actions that are important to the community and in some cases are already underway, so it's important that they are included here.

6.1 The following is a list of practical projects which are defined based on the responses to the Residents' Questionnaire and further evidence collected to fill the gaps identified and the Parish Council Strategic Plan. Some have been completed, some are ongoing and well defined whilst others are still at the "aspirational" stage. Many of the Practical Projects included below are included in the Slimbridge Parish Council Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

Addressing the Climate Emergency: Actions to date

6.2 On the 14th February 2022, Slimbridge Parish Council (SPC) declared a Climate Emergency.

- In March 2022, Slimbridge Parish Council adopted the Climate Emergency Plan, which includes many of the practical projects included below.
- Oak trees were planted in the Patch Car Park for the Queen's Jubilee. A further oak tree, which was donated by a Parishioner, was planted in the Parish Council land in Gossington.
- Links have been made both with GOS and PTES regarding advice and information of previous orchards within the Parish. Known orchards are recognised in the Parish Design Statement and included in the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base.

Addressing the Climate Emergency: Practical Projects

6.3 Allotments:

- Continue search for suitable allotment sites. The Parish Council is currently looking at the feasibility of land in close proximity to the playing field, to engage in discussions with ECT and Berkeley Estates as to availability of land. The PC has previously asked Parishioners whether any Parishioner has a piece of land that could be used as allotments. The PC own two pieces of land within the Parish, unfortunately these are fully planted with trees and the root balls would make allotment land impractical.

6.4 Orchards:

- Undertake an up-to-date survey of all orchards within the Parish with the view to finding a site for a Community Orchard.

6.5 Hedgerows and Verges

- Care more fully for our Parish hedgerows and find more areas in which to plant trees and wild flowers in verges and small areas, as one way of ameliorating the problem of Climate Change by improving both biodiversity and carbon storage.
- Work with farmers to improve biodiversity within and alongside hedges, examining cutting times, and replanting damaged areas with a more varied mix of suitable hedging. Encourage applications for funding under the Countryside Hedgerow Management Scheme and adopt (or better) the recommendations of Hedgelink's "Adopting the Hedgerow Cycle Management" plan as the base for all hedgerows in the parish.
- Encourage groups of interested Parishioners to manage roadsie verges and green spaces in line with Plantlife's Managing grassland road verges, 2019.
- Trees:
  * Plant appropriate trees in suitable locations for both commemorative and local interest.
- Slimbridge Wildlife Group:
  * Encourage and enable people to become familiar, knowledgeable and supportive of the wildlife in the Parish.

Locally Responsive Development and Design:

6.6 Self and Custom Build Development:

- Support the delivery of local self and custom build development, in line with policy requirements. More detail can be found in 'Supporting Alternative Housing Delivery Models in Slimbridge Parish' above

6.7 Entrance to the Parish:

- Work in partnership with WWT Slimbridge to enhance the roundabout. The new sculpture is now in place.

- Enhance the entrances to Slimbridge and Cambridge, using methods such as Village Gateways and planters (as already in place, organised by The Quiet Lanes group).
- Inclusivity:
  * A disability champion has been appointed.

Living and Working

6.8 The Pavilion

- Provide an extension of the Pavilion to provide storage facilities for the football and cricket clubs.
- Upgrade of the Pavilion facilities including new kitchen, new tables and chairs.
- Better utilise the Pavilion, especially by the Parish council.
- Provide CCTV for the Pavilion
- Provide wi-fi and broadband at the Pavilion.
- Conduct an energy audit of Pavilion, plan and cost for potential changes, possibly using solar panels.

6.9 The Playing Field

- Support the PARCS (Play Area Regeneration Committee) project to put together design for new play equipment and acquire new equipment.
- Provide new footpath on the playing field to the school back entrance.
- Plan for long term maintenance and replacement of equipment in areas such as the playing area, and office equipment.

6.10 Bus shelters:

- Rejuvenate the bus shelters.

6.11 Community Hub:

- Investigate the possibility of a shop/café/community hub.

6.12 Youth Facilities:

- Engage with young people and provide better youth facilities.

6.13 Community Events:

- Continue "Tidy Village" community events, and support the Events Working Group.

6.14 Footpaths Project: Promote and Improve Footpaths around the Parish

- An informal group of volunteers walked and reported on every footpath, bridleway and restricted byway in the Parish. A report on each path was published on the Parish website. Any relevant issues were reported to Highways.
- A working party was formed to improve and maintain the footpaths and consult with the relevant landowners and farmers. Training and equipment was provided by the Protected Rights of Way (PRoW) team from Gloucestershire County Council Highways.
- A number of stiles and bridges have been cleared to make access easier. ProW have installed a new railing on a potentially dangerous bridge.
- It was agreed to relaunch the coloured circular paths for the Jubilee. The Orange path was withdrawn due to the danger of it crossing the railway line in two places and because part of it went along an often very muddy bridleway. Instead, a new, shorter stile free Purple path will be introduced in honour of the Queen's Jubilee.
- Updated descriptions and maps have been produced for the Blue, Green and Red paths.
- The working party have been concentrating on these paths to clear them and address any issues. New colour coded waymarkers will be used to mark the routes.
- Slimbridge is fortunate to have an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. However many of them are not easily accessible. Stiles are high, there are very few provisions for large dog access and there is no provision for disabled access. Even when stiles and accessways have been improved by the landowners they have not taken this into account. Ideally, a plan to convert stiles into accessible gateways would be good. Some landowners actively discourage people from using their footpaths.

6.15 Tourism and Traffic

- Clarify 'unacceptable traffic generation' and what 'measures to mitigate the impact of traffic generation including air quality' might be.
  * A car park has been opened at Shepherds Patch for day visitors.
  * Yellow lines have been introduced in St Johns Road and at Shepherds Patch and New Grounds to alleviate the on road parking issues.
- The Slimbridge Road Safety Group (formerly known as the Quiet Lanes for the Community Group) was formed in 2019. The volunteers have worked closely

with both GCC Highways and the local community to address traffic issues.

- VAS cameras have been purchased and deployed to collect data and manage vehicle speeds.
- Gateways have been set up at the boundaries of the Parish.
- GCC Highways agreed to a 20 is Plenty campaign.
- A submission was made to GCC Highways for Traffic Regulation Orders to introduce 20 mph and Quiet Lanes across the Parish. This process is currently on hold as GCC are introducing a new proposition for 20 mph speed limits in residential areas and road safety on rural roads. The Road Safety Group have lobbied GCC and Parish councils to include 20 mph speed limits for rural roads.
- Attempts have been made to stop parking on the Ryalls Lane verges and to reinstate them but this has not had the support of GCC Highways.
- Discussions have been held with the WWT Slimbridge to improve relations and to get dialogue underway to address any issues.
- A working party has been formed to understand all the opportunities and issues that tourism brings to Slimbridge and, in particular, the impact on Shepherds Patch.
- Parking restrictions outside the Slimbridge Primary school:
  * The Parish Council will monitor the situation following the implementation of the double yellow lines. This has been the topic of many discussions at PC meetings, the problem being allocation of land to facilitate additional car parking.

The Tourism Group will investigate:

* Whilst Slimbridge is a tourist destination, many parishioners do not benefit from it and the businesses that do, do not appear to want to contribute to village improvements or appear to consider the impact their business has on the people who live in the village.
* Traffic volume through Slimbridge village is considerable. There is only one way in and one way out. Vehicles are large and roads are narrow, with no foot paths. Traffic travels too fast and there are no traffic calming measures. Entry to and from the village at school times is almost impossible.
* If tourism is to continue at current levels, or increase, then relationships with local providers need to be improved to encourage them to support the safety and well-being of parishioners.

Local Employment:

6.16 Encourage businesses within the Parish to hire local people and promote more apprenticeships in the Parish.

Quick Response (QR) Code Project

6.17 The objective is to use QR (Quick Response) codes to provide quick and easy access to information at a location where it will be immediately relevant. Whereas emails, websites, social media have a role to play they frequently rely on people remembering their existence and possibly searching back through numerous posts to find the information at the time they need it.

Current Position

A few codes have been developed to examine the potential; these have been well received. Slimbridge Parish Council formally supported the proposal at their meeting in August 2022, subject to clarification of a number of issues such as which websites will be used and where/ how they will be located.

As a trial a number of laminated sheets have been prepared showing the routes of the newly created Jubilee footpaths, these sheets will be available at the local pubs and caravan parks to encourage visitors to explore Slimbridge. Results from this trial will assist the project development.

Future Plans

A number of potential uses have been identified, for example:

On stiles and gates to identify fields with Ridge and Furrow field markings, and their history,

Around Patch Bridge to explain the story of the Slimbridge Munitions Store (located between the Main Railway Line and the Black Shed). Rails from the line are used to support wooden fences there and at Cambridge Arms Bridge.

To highlight the history of a number of features and buildings around the Parish

These and other uses will be developed as experience and feedback develops.

Landscape and Heritage

6.18 Archaeological Investigations:

Current Position

A number of "Detectorist" rallies were held in a number of Slimbridge fields, from the A38 alongside St John's Road down towards the River. It was realised that large quantities of items from the Roman era were being found but rather than being catalogued they were quickly being sold.

The tenant farmer was concerned that the Village Heritage was being lost. Slimbridge Local History Society has been working with the Tenant Farmers and Landowners to investigate and record the hidden heritage. A number of detector sweeps have been carried out (with the finds recorded and catalogued) and magnetic gradiometry surveys have been carried out which suggest the existence of Roman buildings and earlier roundhouses.

The work was constrained by the pandemic and access is limited to periods when the land is free of growing crops. A dig was carried out in 2020 which unearthed a number of Roman items but was inconclusive. Further digs were carried out in September 2022 and Spring 2023 locating interesting features which were further investigated later in 2023.

Future Plans

Slimbridge Local History Society plans to continue coordinating the investigations involving the landowners, tenant farmers, professional archaeologists, local villagers and schoolchildren. The results will be presented to the local population through regular "Heritage Days/Weekends" and annual updates. The most recent update took place in September 2023 at the Heritage Weekend. Formal reports will be issued in due course.

This heritage belongs firstly to the Parish and Slimbridge Local History Society intend to remain involved in and/or leading the work to ensure the heritage information is retained and available, and local schoolchildren are involved as an educational activity.

6.19 Interpretation at Shepherd's Patch:

- Explore opportunity to highlight the history of the area to visitors and residents.

4

PART 4 USING AND REVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

7 Next Steps

7.1 Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory development plan, meaning that it will be used in the determination of planning applications within Slimbridge Parish. The Parish Council will consider the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and refer to relevant parts when commenting on planning applications in the area.

7.2 Any new development will be monitored closely through the planning process to ensure that policies are adhered to. After the Plan is made, each Annual Parish Council Meeting will include an update to monitor the use of the Plan in the previous year by both the Parish Council and Stroud District Council in terms of planning applications and environmental projects, together with the likely implementation and impact of the Plan for the forthcoming year. The Parish Council website will carry the annual reports on the Plan's use during its lifetime.

7.3 Responsibility for providing the leadership in the future for the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan will rest with Slimbridge Parish Council.

7.4 There is no requirement to review or update a Neighbourhood Plan. However, policies in a Neighbourhood Plan may become out of date, for example if they conflict with policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area that is adopted after the making of the Neighbourhood Plan, or because of changed local circumstances or priorities. A Neighbourhood Plan can be updated in whole or in part.

7.5 Any final application, a thorough report – a full report - describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, Slimbridge Parish Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it.

Caravan Park at the George

Slimbridge Village Gateway

Valley Floor, Slimbridge Church shown

Local farmland flooded

Ridge and Furrow North of Cambridge Arm

Ridge and Furrow Glebe Fields

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Evidence List

Slimbridge Parish Flooding Report (2023)

Addressing the Climate Emergency Evidence Base Report (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Natural Environment Report (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Play and Recreation Areas Report (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Design Statement (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Local Housing Needs Report (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Community Facilities Report (2022)

Slimbridge Parish Local Green Space Report (2023)

Businesses in the Parish Report (2021)

Slimbridge Parish Tourism Report (2021)

Slimbridge Parish Locally Valued Key Views Report (2023)

Slimbridge Parish Local Heritage Report (2024)

Historic Environment Record for Slimbridge Parish (2022)

Appendix 2 Slimbridge Parish Pre-application Engagement Protocol

The aim of the Protocol is to do all possible so that new development in Slimbridge Parish helps to shape good quality places to live and work and as a means of working towards improved outcomes for the current and future communities. One particularly effective way of achieving this is through early, planned engagement with the community via the Parish Council.

Use of this Protocol is without prejudice to the eventual judgement of Slimbridge Parish Council on the merits of any final application, even if a good engagement process has been agreed and followed.

Context

National Planning Policy and Guidance: The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) makes several mentions of the considerable value of pre-application involvement, for example in paragraph 39:

"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

The Planning Practice Guidance Note Design: process and tools (2019) also highlights the importance and benefits of early engagement:

"Communities can effectively shape both design policies and development through a collaborative process of meaningful participation. Early engagement and linking engagement activities to key stages of design decision-making and plan-making can empower people to inform the vision, design policies and the design of schemes."

"It is important that local planning authorities or applicants demonstrate how all views are listened to and considered."

Stroud District Council – Statement of Community Involvement (2019): The SCI sets out the ways in which the District Council will inform, engage and consult people when formulating planning policies and considering planning applications and how feed back will be given to the community on the results. The District Council emphasises the importance of the community and other stakeholders having the opportunity to get involved and have their say.

The 10 Commitments for Effective Pre-application Engagement published by a group representing planning, industry and community groups states that:

"Early, collaborative discussions between developers, public sector agencies and the communities affected by a new development can help to shape better quality, more accepted schemes and ensure improved outcomes for the community. These discussions also avoid wasted effort and costs."

Whilst there is an emphasis on early and positive pre-application engagement in 'major development' proposals, it is the view of Slimbridge Parish Council that, for their community, the above should also apply to smaller developments in the

Parish because these can have at least as much impact as larger ones. Slimbridge Parish Council fully support and endorse all of the above and will play their appropriate role in delivering high quality pre-application engagement with themselves and the wider Slimbridge Parish community as proposals come forward.

Process

Drawing from the 10 Commitments and other guidance on best practice, potential applicants should work with Slimbridge Parish Council to fulfil the following principles:

- 'Day One' contact: By far the best results for all emerge when contact is made with our Parish Council, and through us with our local community, at the very start of any process; consulting people late with already prepared schemes is not productive.
- Agreed Process: A key aim of this early contact is to discuss and agree the nature, scope, timetable, information and so forth of the engagement – i.e. the process to be followed.
- Applicant Leadership but Shared Responsibility: Although it is the applicant's role to lead and fund engagement, the Parish Council will offer as much support as possible to any agreed process; for example by providing local information, contact details for local groups, advice on meeting places, access to newsletters and so forth.
- Openness and Transparency: Building trust between all and ensuring an agreed outcome depend heavily on having a process that is as open as possible on all sides, though the Parish Council will respect any issues of clear commercial confidentiality.
- Agreed Community: A project may have an impact on a limited number of people or on all of the Parish. The details of those to be involved will need to be discussed and agreed for any project, as will the potential ways to contact and engage them.
- Agreed Scope: There will also need to be agreement about the scope of the engagement, i.e. what is and is not open to change (e.g. layout, quantum of development, design etc.).
- Proportionality: The nature and scale of engagement will be balanced in appropriate proportion to the scale and likely impact of any proposals.
- Final Reporting: The applicant should submit, with any final application, a thorough report – a full report - describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, Slimbridge Parish Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it.
- Any final application, a thorough report – a full report - describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, Slimbridge Parish Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it.
- Initial contact should be made at the very outset with the Parish Council via the Clerk: clerk@slimbridge-pc.gov.uk

The Parish Council commits to doing all possible to arrange an initial meeting as soon as possible following this contact.

There is considerable benefit for applicants in also sharing any process with Stroud District Council, as planning authority, and securing their agreement to it. As per the opening proviso, endorsement of an engagement process and results does not necessarily mean support for the resulting proposals.

Appendix 3 Opportunities for Solar Development and Opportunities for Wind Development

Maps are extracted from the emerging Stroud District Council Local Plan evidence base[32]:

32 https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1485612/part-8b-e_pre-submission-draft-plan-2021_final-25-05-21.pdf

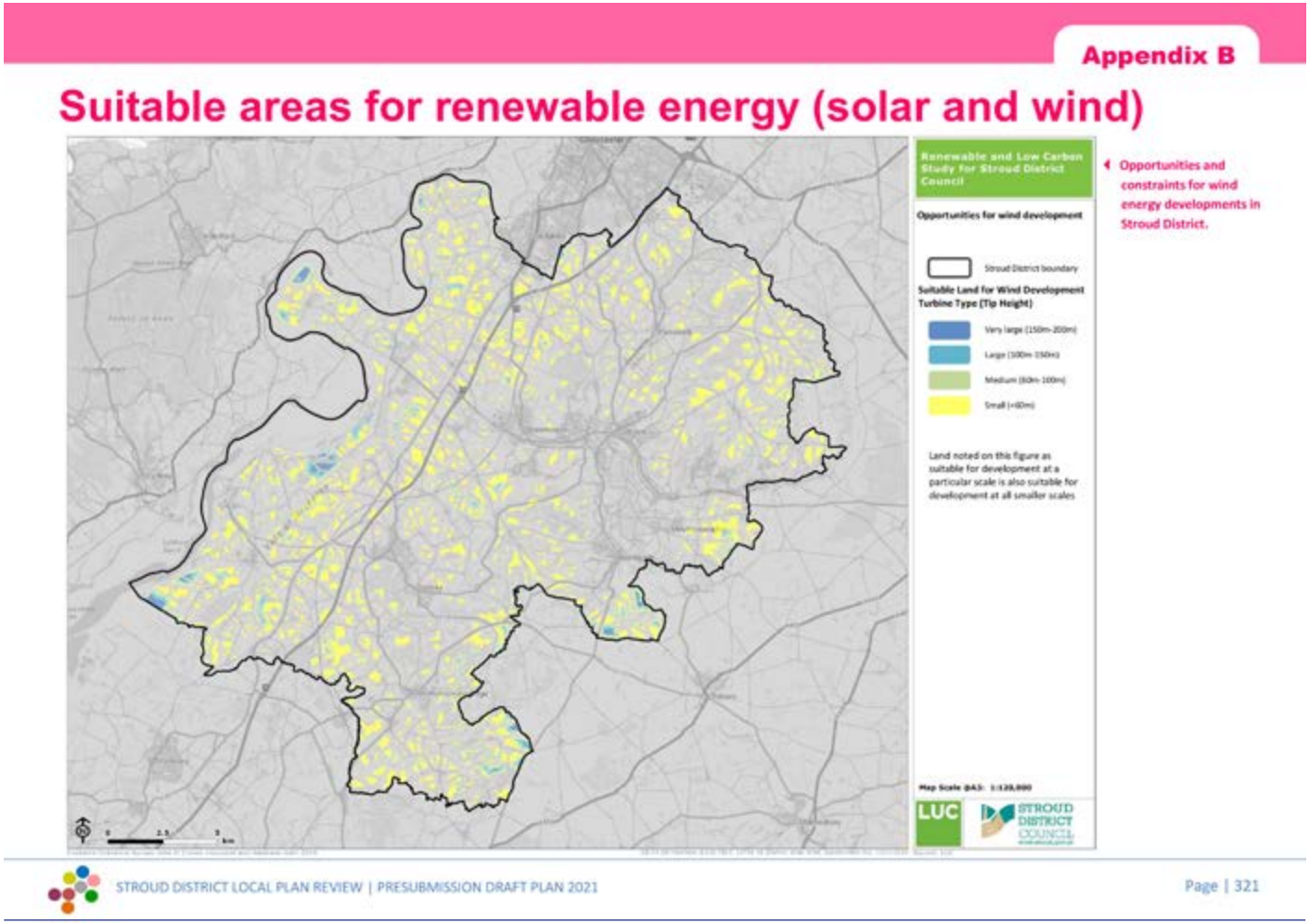


Figure 14a Opportunities for Wind Development

Suitable areas for renewable energy (solar and wind)

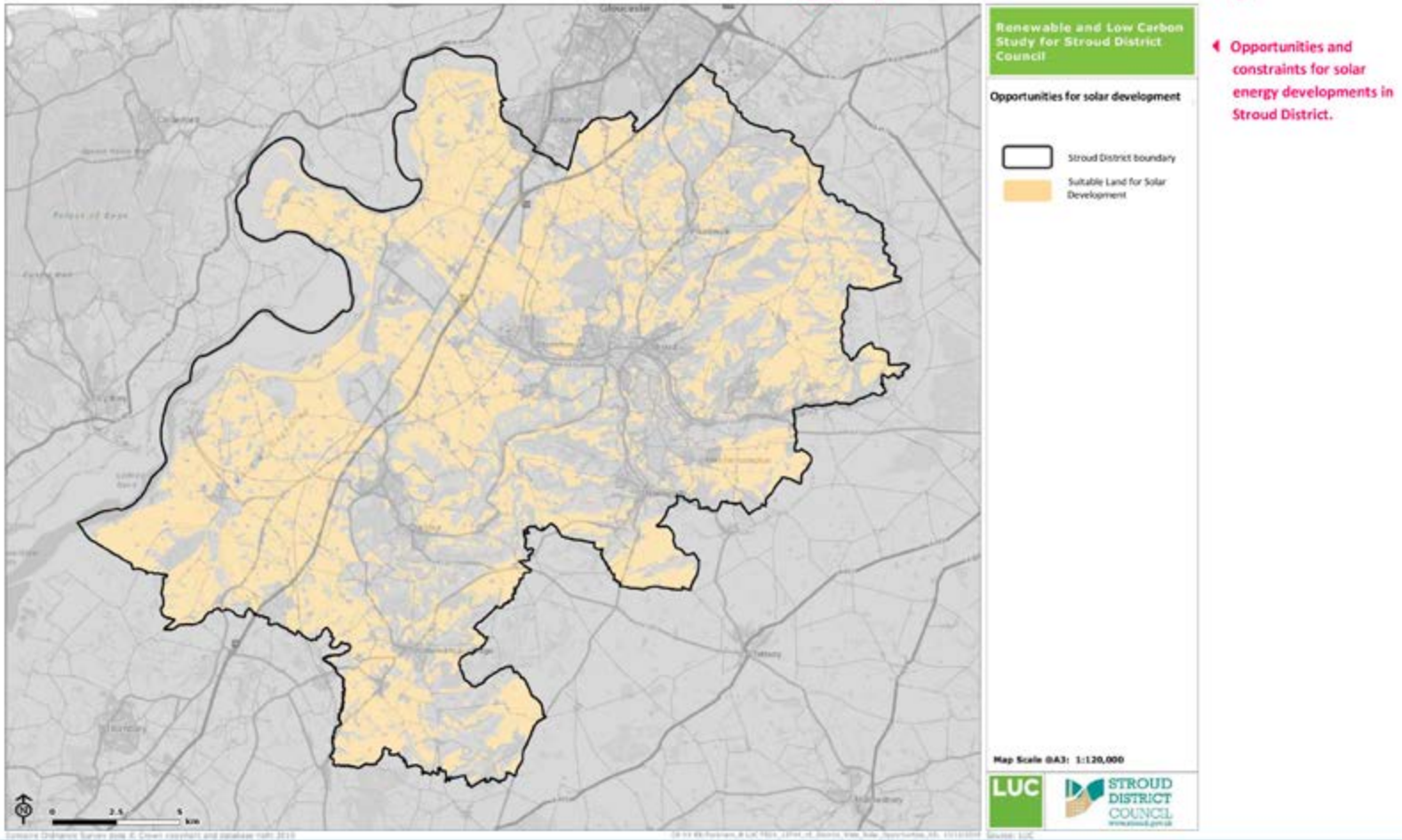


Figure 14b Opportunities for Solar Development

Appendix 4 LETI Initiative

Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) is a voluntary network of over 1,000 built environment professionals, who have produced a number of guides to achieving a zero carbon future.

LETI home retrofit targets - 4.3 Constituent element method			LETI best practice		LETI exemplar
Building element		Retrofit actions	Constrained retrofit	**Unconstrained retrofit** (cool temperate climate)	**All retrofit types**
Walls	Cavity	External, cavity or Internal insulation	0.24 W/m2.K	0.18 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K
	Solid uninsulated	External or Internal insulation	0.32 W/m2.K	0.18 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K
	Timber frame	External or Internal insulation	0.21 W/m2.K	0.18 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K
Roofs	Cold	Insulate	0.12 W/m2.K	0.12 W/m2.K	0.12 W/m2.K
	Warm/flat	Insulate	0.22 W/m2.K	0.12 W/m2.K	0.12 W/m2.K
Floors	Suspended timber	Insulate between joists	0.20 W/m2.K	0.18 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K
	Solid uninsulated	Excavate and insulate below	0.80 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K	0.15 W/m2.K
Windows and doors	Windows	Replace	1.30 W/m2.K	1.00 W/m2.K	0.80 W/m2.K
	Doors	Replace	1.00 W/m2.K	0.80.K	0.80 W/m2.K
General envelope	Thermal bridging	Mitigate where possible	0.10 W/m.K	0.10 W/m.K	0.08 W/m.K
	Airtightness	Draught proofing, sealing of chimneys and vents	3.0 ach@50Pa	2.0 ach@50Pa	1.0 ach@50Pa
Systems	Systems and appliances	Fossil fuel free home	Fossil fuel free	Fossil fuel free	Fossil fuel free
	Ventilation type	Install and remove extract fans	MVHR	MVHR	MVHR
	Lighting power	Replace lamps and fittings	50 lm/W	100 lm/W	100 lm/W
Hot water	Hot water tank	Increase insulation or replace	1.5 W/K	1.5 W/K	1.5 W/K
	Primary pipework	Insulate all pipework	90% of pipework insulated	90% of pipework insulated	90% of pipework insulated
	Shower demands	Low flow fittings	16 litres/per day	16 litres/per day	16 litres/per day
	Other demands	Low flow fittings	9 litres/per day	9 litres/per day	9 litres/per day
Renewables	Photovoltaic generation	Rooftop installation	0% of roof area covered in PV panels	40% of roof area covered in PV panels	40% of roof area covered in PV panels

Looking SW up River Cam/Cambridge Arms. Footpath CSL19. February 2022

This document has been prepared by the Slimbridge Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group on behalf of the community of Slimbridge Parish and the Parish Council. May 2024