

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN** FOR **APPLETON WITH EATON**

Appleton with Eaton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan

2020-2031





Note:

This document should be read alongside the following appendices:

Appendix 1: Village Character Assessment

Appendix 2: Green Spaces Assessment

Appendix 3: Village Facilities

Appendix 4: Community Connectivity Assessment

Evidence Base and Scoping Report

Consultation Statement

Contents

Foreword by the Parish Council Chairman	4
Section 1: Introduction and purpose	5
Section 2: About Appleton with Eaton	8
Section 3: Local Issues	12
Section 4: Vision and Objectives	14
Section 5: Developing the Plan	15
Section 6: Policies	16
6.1 Design, character and context	16
6.2 Local Green Spaces	18
6.3 Village Facilities	21
6.4 Public houses	25
6.5 Business and Employment	27
6.6 Community Access	28
6.7 Community Projects	29
Section 7: Monitoring and Implementation	31
Acknowledgements	31

Foreword by the Parish Council Chairman

The history of the Parish of Appleton with Eaton records events dating back to the 9th century. We can follow these historical records up to the present day, where we find the Parish continues to exist as a small community set in the rural area of the Oxfordshire Corallian ridge overlooking the River Thames. The current residents of the Parish are proud to regard Appleton with Eaton as an attractive and popular place to live and work, with the Parish exhibiting a strong community spirit.

In 2014, the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan Part 1 allocated two sites situated in the Green Belt in Appleton with Eaton Parish as a precursor to future development. Although the community acknowledged that the Parish should evolve to meet the needs of current and future residents, it was felt that the Vale of White Horse District Council's strategy did not fit with the community's vision for the future development of Appleton with Eaton.

These sites were not taken forward by the Vale of White Horse District Council. However, the Parish Council agreed that producing a Neighbourhood Plan would help to identify and preserve the special character of the Parish that is highly valued by the community, and to shape future development in Appleton with Eaton. The Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated in June 2016.

Reflecting the strong sense of community and the collaborative nature of Appleton with Eaton residents, the Neighbourhood Plan has been researched, developed and produced primarily by volunteers from the Parish with the support of the Parish Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council and Community First Oxfordshire. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to preserve and enhance the special rural character of Appleton with Eaton and to safeguard current facilities and amenities while ensuring the opportunity exists to improve these for the benefit of current and future residents.

The Parish Council wishes to thank the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the designated sub-groups for their invaluable time, efforts and input throughout the entire process and also to express gratitude to the many other members of the Parish who have given their time to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mark Richards

Chairman of Appleton with Eaton Parish Council

Section 1:

Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by the Appleton with Eaton Parish Council under section 116 of the Localism Act 2011. Upon being made, it will form part of the development plan and will sit alongside and complement the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 (the Local Plan) as part of the current development plan for Appleton with Eaton Parish. Under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all applications for planning permission in the designated Neighbourhood Plan area must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.2 Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations. They must also have appropriate regard for National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); contribute to sustainable development ¹; and conform generally to the strategic policies found in the Vale of White Horse District Council's Adopted Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2.

1.3 The Vale of White Horse screened the Plan and determined, following consultation with the statutory authorities ², that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) were not required for the Neighbourhood Plan. There are no site allocations for development proposed in the Plan and none were indicated by the SEA questionnaire submitted by the Parish Council. These factors, among others, led the VWHDC to conclude that there were no aspects of the Plan with the potential for likely significant environmental effects.

1.4 The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan area was designated on 10th June 2016 by the local planning authority, VWHDC, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area is shown on Map 1. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period up to 2031, in line with the VWHDC Local Plan.

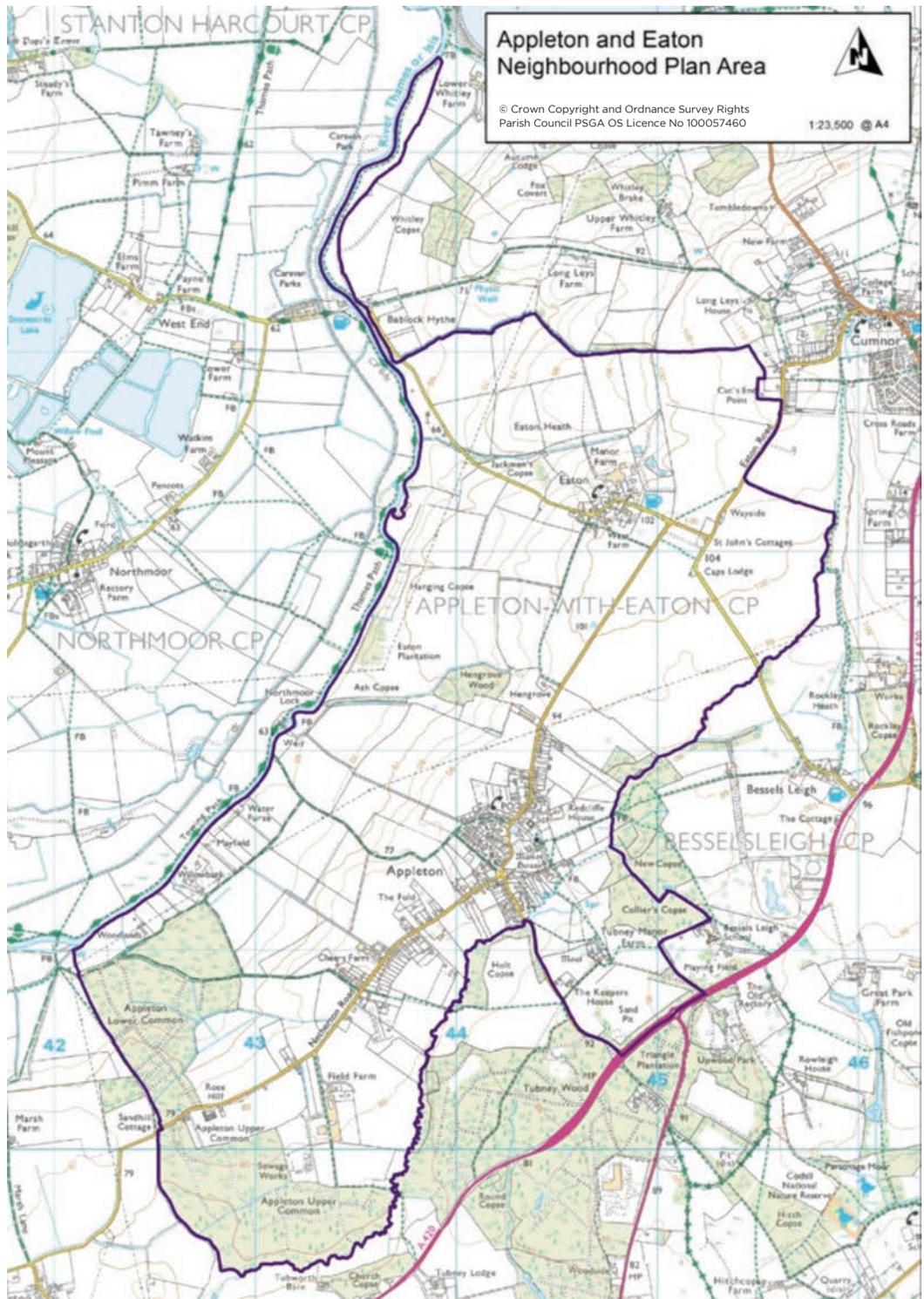
1.5 Neighbourhood Plans can only deal with land use issues and therefore all other matters are referred to in the rest of this document as 'Community Projects'.

1.6 The purpose of the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan is to make planning policies that can be used to guide planning applications in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan's policies are aimed at protecting and enhancing the special character of the Parish.

¹ Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. NPPF February 2019. See paragraph 2.7

² Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency

Map 1: Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Area



1.7 The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the villages and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period 2020-2031. Unlike the Appleton with Eaton Community Plan (2010), upon which it builds, the Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document which will be incorporated into the district planning frameworks and become part of the considerations applied by the VWHDC when determining planning applications.

1.8 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan for the area and will carry full weight in how planning applications are decided. Plans must therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

1.9 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, plans must meet the basic conditions that apply to Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant basic conditions are:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or Neighbourhood Plan).
- the making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- the making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- the making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.
- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or Neighbourhood Plan).
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

1.10 In addition, the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that local people and other relevant organisations have been properly consulted during the process of making the Plan and that the relevant regulations have been followed. A Consultation Statement has therefore been prepared that describes all that has been done, both formally and informally, throughout the project to engage people in the making of the Plan.

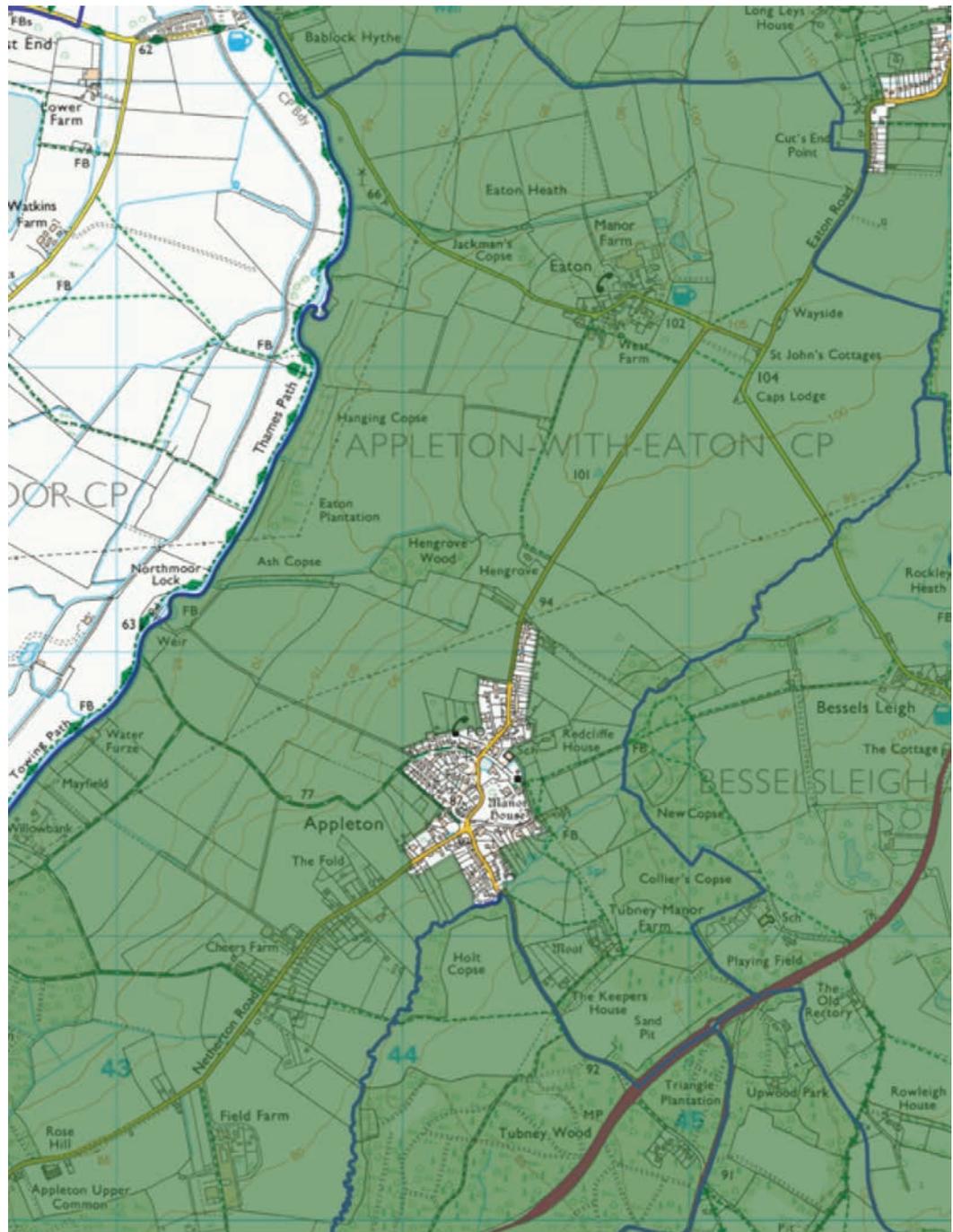
Section 2:

About Appleton with Eaton

2.1 The Parish of Appleton with Eaton is set in a rural area in the Vale of White Horse 6.5 miles from the centre of Oxford. Part of Appleton village is inset into the Oxford Green Belt, which washes over the remainder of the Parish, including the whole of the village of Eaton (Map 2).

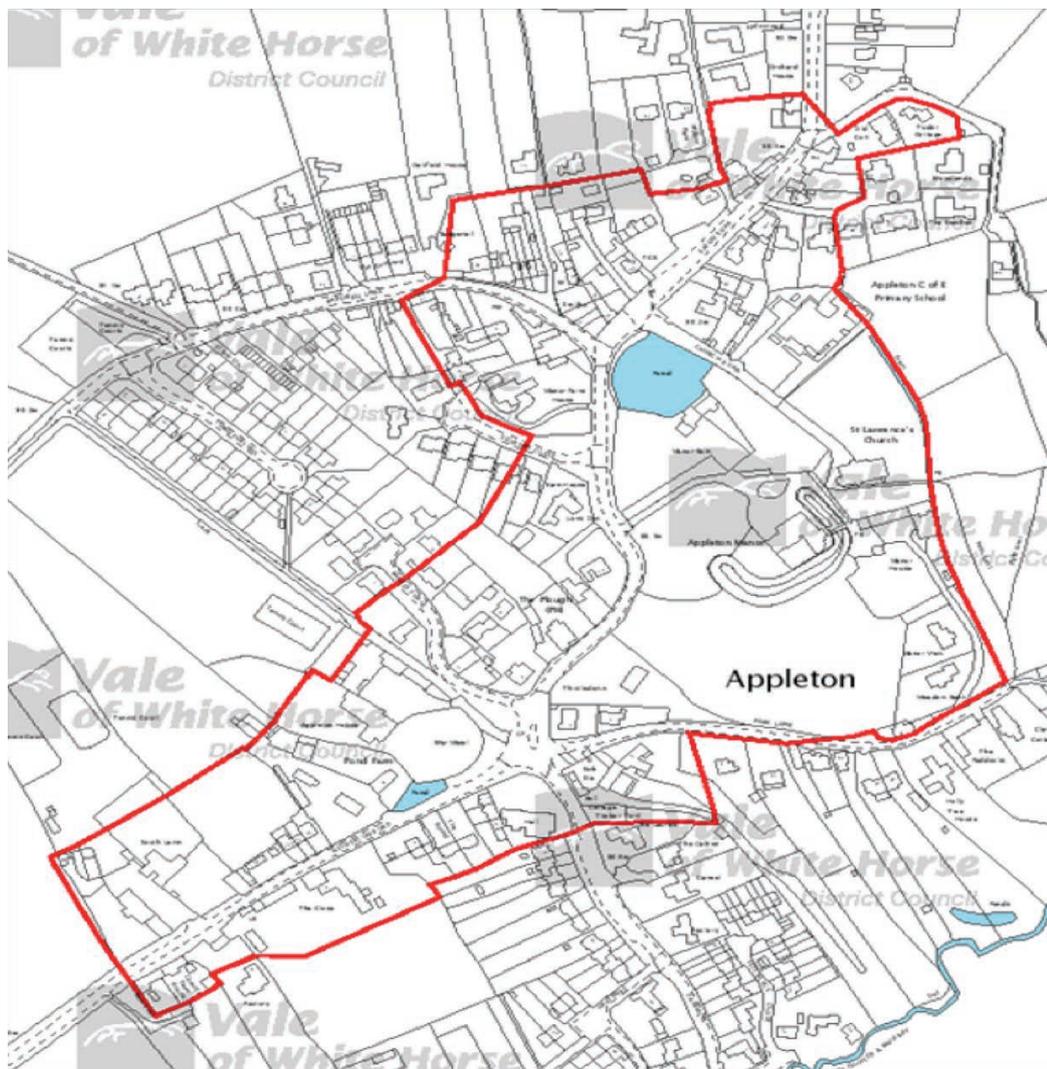
Map 2: Green Belt boundary
(Source: Appleton with Eaton Steering Group)

© Crown copyright & Ordnance Survey Rights
Parish Council PSGA OS
Licence no 100057460



2.2 At the time of the 2011 census, 915 people lived in the Parish in 370 households. Since then, another 7 houses have been built and the area of the Parish has increased to include the houses around Tubney Manor Farm. Part of Appleton village is designated as a Conservation Area ³ – one of 52 in the Vale (Map 3). Both villages contain several listed buildings both within and outside of the Appleton Conservation Area. (Figs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 has not designated any sites, nor has it made any changes to the Green Belt boundaries, for development in the Parish of Appleton with Eaton.

³ Vale of White Horse Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 2031 Core Policy 39



Map 3: Appleton Conservation Area

Source: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/09/appleton2.pdf

2.3 The Parish has a significantly higher proportion of people over the working age than the national average, with 20.5% of the population compared with 16.3% nationally (2011 census), but also a higher proportion of 0-15 year olds (20.7% compared to 18.9% nationally). Most of the working age population have jobs outside the Parish, though businesses in the Parish include four working farms, a long-established bell-hanging firm, a building company, an electrical systems firm, two pubs, a community shop and post office and an increasing number of small businesses run from home. ⁴

⁴ Community Insight Profile, AWE area, Oxfordshire Parish Reports 26 January 2018

Figure 2.2.1:
Appleton listed buildings

Source:
<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

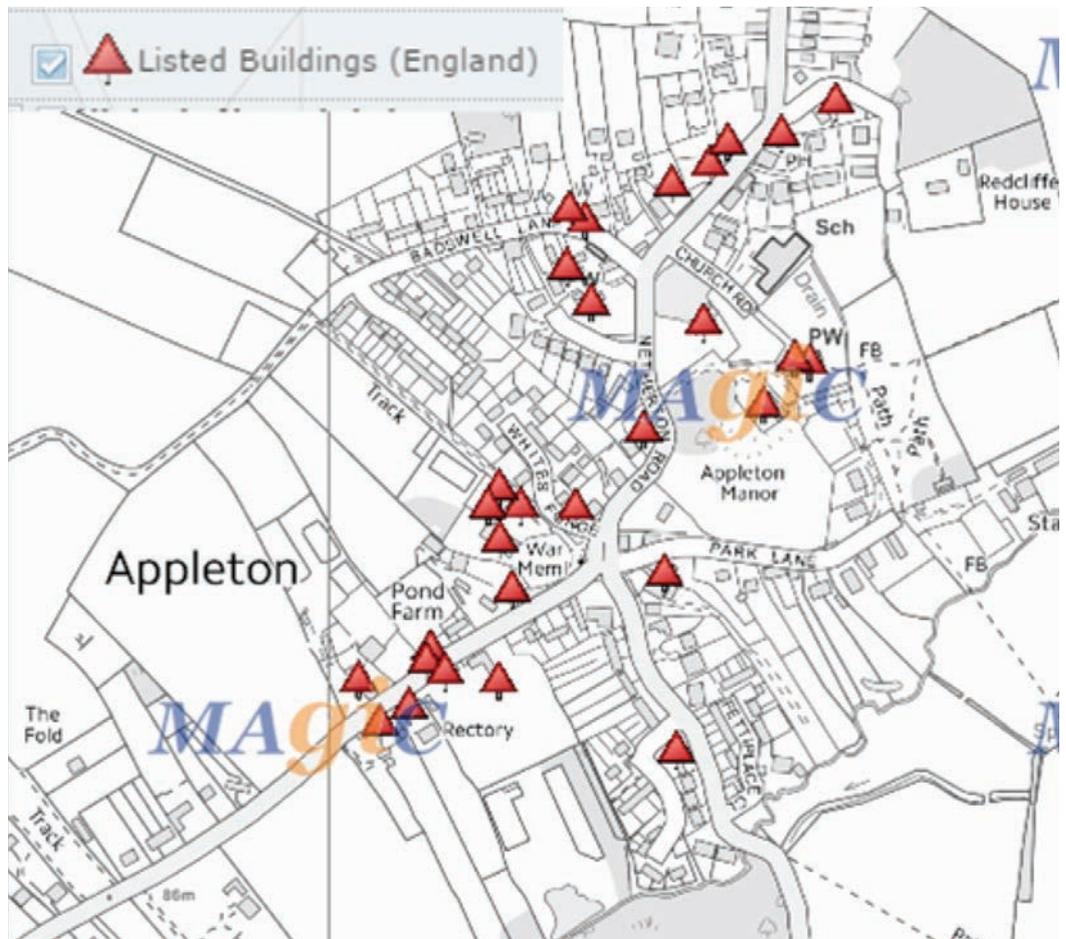
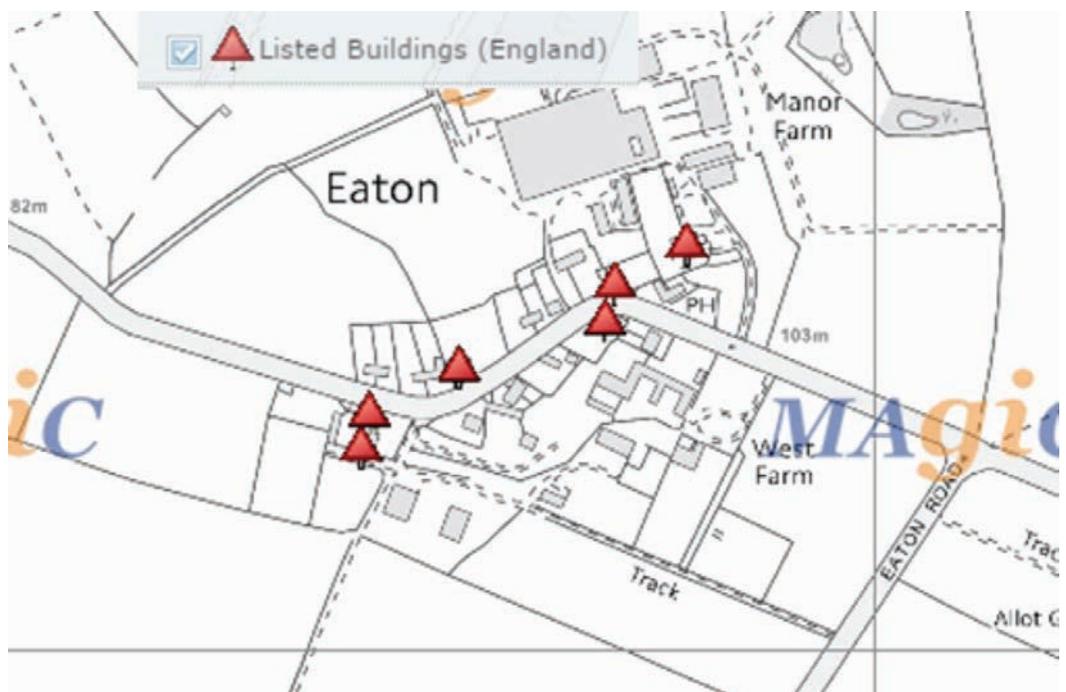


Figure 2.2.2:
Eaton listed buildings

Source:
<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>



2.4 The Parish is fortunate to have many community facilities. It has a primary school, church and chapel, village hall, sportsfield, tennis club and children's playground. From 2016 the Parish was not served by public transport and it was a general concern that public transport could only be accessed by narrow, unlit national speed limit roads without pavements. In September 2020 a limited bus service was reintroduced but on a trial basis only for 12 months.

2.5 The River Thames forms the western edge of the Parish. The majority of houses sit above the Corallian Ridge and are not visible from the river, nor is the river visible from most of the built area of the Parish.

2.6 Appleton with Eaton is enclosed by fields and woods and has an enviable range of habitats and wildlife. The geology is of Lower Corallian Beds further away from the River Thames and Oxford Clay closer to the River Thames.

2.7 There are areas of regional and national significance in the Parish including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) **5** in Appleton Lower Common and an Oxfordshire Wildlife Site in Besselsleigh Woods. Part of these woods, including Lower England's Copse, lie within the Parish boundary. Woods which consist of lowland mixed deciduous woodland are priority habitats for conservation in the UK (Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats). Wetter habitat, with alder and willow, is also recognised as nationally important for conservation.

2.8 Significant Iron Age archaeological remains have recently been uncovered in Broadmoor Field on Netherton Road. A project jointly run by the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education and the Appleton with Eaton History Group has unearthed evidence of an Iron Age community settled over a long period of time.

5 Vale of White Horse Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 2031 Core Policy 46

Section 3:

Local Issues

The following were raised as local issues to the Steering Group, through a survey and by comments at events held during the production of the Plan. They informed the vision and objectives and the Plan Policies which followed.

Village character	The village has a good community spirit, with many all-age events held. Volunteers are willing to work to provide amenities and protect the character of the village.
Conserving the physical environment	Appleton Conservation Area provides an attractive heart to the village. There are many historic and listed buildings in Appleton and Eaton.
Green Spaces	Loss of green space and loss of access to green space were a concern for 17% of survey respondents.
Green Belt	Appleton is inset into the Oxford Green Belt which washes over Eaton and the remainder of the Parish.
Amenities	The primary school is at the heart of the village. The pre-school closed, owing to current circumstances, in August 2020. The sportsfield is located on the edge of the Parish.
Clubs	The Parish is rich in clubs and societies for a full range of age groups.
Lack of accessible public transport	The local bus service was discontinued in 2016 following Oxfordshire County Council's removal of bus subsidies. A limited bus service to Oxford was reintroduced in September 2020 on a trial basis for 12 months. Otherwise villagers must walk to the A420 or walk or drive to Cumnor to catch commercial services. The Oxfordshire Comet Bus makes one return journey to Abingdon each week primarily for elderly residents.

Village shop and post office	The shop is an essential amenity, particularly given the lack of an accessible bus service. It performs a vital social function for people who may not have access to public transport.
Pubs	The Plough Inn in Appleton and the Eight Bells in Eaton are valued social amenities. Their gardens provide valuable space for village events.
Doctor's Surgery (which is now closed)	The Malthouse branch surgery provided an essential amenity for people who cannot travel to the main surgery in Abingdon. The Parish Council wrote several times to the surgery and the Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group. For a variety of reasons including patient safety, the NHS is not prepared to reinstate the surgery.
Access to the countryside	Open space can be accessed by way of a network of public rights of way which afford residents the ability to access open space around the Parish.
Access to the Thames Path	The Thames is accessible only at the edges of the Parish and there is no access to the Thames Path from within the Parish.
Safe access to the A420	The current access to the A420 is via Oaksmere which is a narrow national speed limit road without pavements and is unlit.
Traffic	Access is good to the road and rail network. This is balanced by concerns about the speed and volume of traffic, particularly in Eaton Road, Netherton Road and in Oaksmere.

Section 4:

Vision and Objectives

Our vision is to retain and enhance the rural setting and unique character of the Parish of Appleton with Eaton until 2031 and beyond and to ensure sustainable growth and good design which will conserve and enhance the special qualities and features that create this small and thriving community. This vision translates into the key themes and objectives for the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan.

The policies developed to achieve these objectives and attain the Plan's overall vision are itemised in the table below.

	THEMES	OBJECTIVES
POLICY 1	Character	1. To safeguard the village character and to ensure that any potential development will enhance this. 2. To maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.
POLICY 2		3. To safeguard the landscape setting and views and to ensure that any potential development will enhance these. 4. To protect, enhance and conserve existing Green Spaces to maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.
POLICY 3	Facilities	5. To ensure that current and future residents will benefit from village facilities which serve as valuable community assets and to support the enhancement of village facilities.
POLICY 4		
POLICY 5		
POLICY 6	Businesses	7. To provide businesses with the opportunity to operate and develop within Appleton with Eaton, taking care to ensure that they preserve or enhance the character of the Parish, the amenity of neighbours and the safety of pedestrians and other road users.
POLICY 7	Community Connectivity	8. To ensure that public access within Appleton with Eaton is preserved for the use of the community and enhanced where possible.
	Community Projects	9. To ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and Section 106 agreements associated with any future development are used for the benefit of the community

Section 5:

Developing the Plan

5.1 On 11th January 2016 Appleton with Eaton Parish Council resolved to create a Neighbourhood Plan and formed a Steering Group to develop the Plan. The Parish Council held a meeting on 16th April 2016 to introduce the Neighbourhood Plan to the community and ascertain priorities. The Steering Group comprised 6 (later 5) Parish Councillors and 9 members of the community, 4 of whom remained on the Steering Group throughout the process. The group was supported by Community First Oxfordshire and by the District Council.

5.2 At a meeting on 8th June 2016, four working groups were set up to be responsible for events, communications, evidence and surveys, each chaired by a member of the Steering Group. The events and communications groups were later combined.

5.3 Minutes of the Steering Group's meetings were published on the village noticeboard and on the village website. Residents were kept up to date by reports in the Advertiser (the Parish newsletter) which is delivered to every household. A survey was conducted and four dedicated village events were held. The Steering Group took Hattie, the Neighbourhood Plan scarecrow, to village events ensuring that all age groups were consulted. ⁶

⁶ See the Consultation Statement for more detail

Section 6:

Policies

6.1 Design, character and context

6.1.1 Well-designed buildings and spaces are vital to an area's character and distinctiveness. Policy 1 aims to ensure that any new development within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area protects, enhances and promotes the special qualities, character and local distinctiveness of both Appleton and Eaton. It is important that the identity and sense of place is not jeopardised.

Objective 1 is to safeguard the village character and to ensure that any potential development will enhance this.

Objective 2 is to maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.

Objective 3 is to safeguard the landscape setting and views and to ensure that any potential development will enhance these.

6.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 places good design, the enhancement of local distinctiveness, landscape character and conservation of the natural and historic environment at the heart of sustainable development and good planning in rural areas. It also stresses the importance of retaining and enhancing local character and distinctiveness.

6.1.3 Appendix 1, the Appleton with Eaton Village Character Assessment, identifies features which contribute positively to the character of the Parish and to good design in keeping with the nature of the village.

6.1.4 The scoping survey results showed that a significant proportion of the people surveyed recognised the need for small scale development to meet Parish needs of a type that would be integral to the village. An even greater number opposed the development of "large scale housing". ⁷

⁷ See Evidence Base and Scoping Report Section 2.6 SWOT Analysis

Development at Pond Farm, Netherton Road, Appleton



6.1.5 The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan has not allocated sites for development owing to restrictions set out in national Green Belt policy and the Parish’s position in the settlement hierarchy. ⁸ Appleton is classed as a small village in CP3 and CP4 advises that limited infill may be appropriate in these locations, subject also to Green Belt restrictions. However, all other settlements within the Parish are classed as open countryside where CP4 advises that development is generally not appropriate. A Neighbourhood Plan is subordinate to strategic planning policy and must comply with it.

⁸ Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Core Policies 3 and 4: Settlement Hierarchy.

The NPPF 2019 states that ⁹

“once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including Neighbourhood Plans.”

⁹ NPPF 2019 Paragraph 136.

No such need for changes to relevant Green Belt boundaries have been established at a strategic level.

6.1.6 Good design is the starting point for all development. The context, location and history of any development site should help determine density, scale, plot positioning, frontage setbacks, design of building, materials and landscaping. All proposals for new development should consider how existing spaces, buildings, views, greenery, landscape features and light combine to give a rounded site context. Inspiration for new development should draw on the context of the site.

6.1.7 Well-designed buildings and spaces are vital to an area’s character and distinctiveness. Policy 1 aims to ensure that any new development within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan protects, enhances and promotes the special qualities, character and local distinctiveness of both Appleton and Eaton. It is important that their identity and sense of place are not jeopardised.

6.1.8 In particular, future development should have regard to the character features identified in the Village Character Assessment (Appendix 1). The following have been identified as contributing positively to the character of Appleton with Eaton and to good design:

- Existing buildings
- Spaces
- Views
- Landscaping
- Ambience

6.1.9 Core Policy 40 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is also noted which requires that design incorporates climate change adaption (i.e. improved energy efficiency and flood resilience measures to combat the effects of changing weather patterns).

POLICY 1: DESIGN, CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

New development proposals, including additions, alterations and change of use which demonstrably respect the overall character and features of the area (as set out in the Appleton with Eaton Village Character Assessment) will be supported.

Conforms with Core Policies: CP37 Design and Local Distinctiveness, CP39 The Historic Environment, CP40 Sustainable Design and Construction and CP44 Landscape in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

6.2 Local Green Spaces

Objective 4 is to protect, enhance and conserve existing Green Spaces to maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.

¹⁰ See NPPF 2019 paragraph 99.

Residents express a desire to protect the look and feel of the villages and place great value on Green Spaces and open views. ¹⁰

6.2.1 The NPPF encourages local communities to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space, local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Ordnance Survey Open Green Spaces data shows that Appleton with Eaton has only 0.6% green coverage compared to an average of 1.7% for communities in Oxfordshire and 2.2% in England. However, the Parish sits within the Green Belt which offers the same protection as a designation as Local Green Space. Several of the Green Spaces identified in Appendix 2: Green Spaces Assessment are already protected by their Green Belt status.

Remnant of the Great Green, Eaton Road, Appleton



6.2.2 The Evidence Base and Scoping Report identified the key role of many Green Spaces over the villages' long histories. Many Green Spaces have been lost over the years. The lack of a village green means that open space which can be used by the community is valued highly by this active community for socialising, sport, leisure, biodiversity and generally enhancing the village character today. The loss of Green Spaces was identified as a threat in survey responses, and this is recorded in the Evidence Base and Scoping Report. ¹¹

¹¹ See NPPF 2019 paragraph 99.

The Evidence Base and Scoping Report summarises local concerns:

“How can we protect our Green Spaces as tranquil amenity areas for the benefit of residents while accommodating sustainable development? We do not want to lose the natural green landscape valued by residents and visitors for varied recreational activities and the farmed landscape in the Parish”.

The importance of green space in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is recognised.

6.2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan protects existing Green Spaces from development by designating them as Local Green Spaces. Appendix 2 provides an assessment against the criteria in the NPPF for each of the proposed Local Green Spaces.

6.2.4 Policy 2 aims to protect valued Green Spaces for the benefit of current and future residents by protecting them from harmful change or development. Policy 2 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the District Council. In particular it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the ‘very special circumstances’ required by the policy.

POLICY 2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Spaces (Map 4):

- 1. Appleton Green (War Memorial and pond)**
(Grid ref 51.709318, -1.361700)
- 2. Remnant of the Great Green, Eaton Road, Appleton**
(Grid ref 51.712125, -1.361700)
- 3. The corner of Oaksmere and Fettiplace Close**
(Grid ref 51.707504, - 1.359787)

New development will not be supported on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances.

Conforms with Core Policies: CP45 Green Infrastructure and CP46 Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity, in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

Map 4: Local Green Spaces

© Crown copyright & Ordnance survey rights
Parish Council PSGA OS
Licence no 100057460



6.3 Village Facilities

Objective 5 is to ensure that current and future residents will benefit from village facilities which serve as valuable community assets and to support the enhancement of village facilities.

The facilities covered by this objective include:

- Appleton Community Shop and Post Office
- Appleton Primary School
- The Plough Inn
- The Eight Bells Public House
- Appleton Village Hall
- St Laurence Church
- Appleton Chapel
- Appleton Sportsfield
- Appleton with Eaton Tennis Club
- Jubilee Park Playground
- Allotments

The doctor's surgery is now closed. The Parish Council wrote several times to the Malthouse Surgery and the Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group. For a variety of reasons including patient safety, the NHS is not prepared to reinstate the surgery.

Appleton Village Pre School: the Pre School had operated in Appleton Village Hall since 1968 but has recently been forced by current circumstances to close.

6.3.1 The village facilities' policies aim to retain and support village facilities and amenities and to encourage the development of business enterprise provided it does not adversely impact upon the character of the Parish or the amenity of neighbours.

6.3.2 Appleton is designated as a 'smaller village' in the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy. The definition of a smaller village is those that have '*a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs*'. Eaton is considered, in the same policy, to form part of the open countryside. The adopted Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 also states that one of the three main strands of the Spatial Strategy is to: '*promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character*'.



Appleton Sportsfield

6.3.3 The loss of community assets/facilities and businesses in Appleton with Eaton would inevitably increase the need for car journeys and disadvantage residents who have limited access to transport. The starting presumption of the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan is that a business and community asset will continue to operate unless the proposed change of use involves other non-residential uses that benefit the community. Such loss would also result in a loss of heritage and would have a negative impact on the character of the village. The September 2016 scoping survey (see also Appendix E to the Consultation Statement), like the 2010 Community Plan survey, noted a very strong feeling amongst parishioners that these facilities were of significant value to the Parish and that the loss of any of these assets would represent a significant loss to the community. There was also a desire to encourage new business.

6.3.4 The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan aims to safeguard the countryside and village character and ensures that any potential development will primarily meet the needs of the residents of Appleton and Eaton villages.

6.3.5 The Steering Group concluded that the maintenance and development of certain village amenities will also have a significant impact on both the retention of existing business and the development of new business by bringing potential customers and employees to the Parish. These include: -

- Access to the River Thames
- Footpaths (33% of respondents to the 2016 scoping survey expressed concerns about footpaths and access to and from the Parish.)
- Public transport (loss of a public bus service was mentioned as a very significant concern by 60% of respondents)

All efforts should be made to improve and enhance these facilities and amenities.

6.3.6 Policy 3 aims to preserve and enhance existing village facilities and to ensure that additional services enhance the existing community and meet community needs.

POLICY 3: VILLAGE FACILITIES

Development proposals which will result in the loss of, or cause unacceptable harm to, a village facility or amenity will not be supported unless:

- it would lead to the significant improvement of an existing facility, or the replacement of an existing facility with another equally convenient to the local community it serves and with equivalent or improved facilities; or
- the facility is no longer economically viable for the established use, or there is a suitable and sustainable alternative that is located nearby; or
- the facility is no longer required.

Development proposals which would provide additional services, facilities and amenities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- they will not have unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in accordance with Development Policy 23 in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031;
- they will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will be acceptable;
- access arrangements and off-street parking can be provided in accordance with adopted standards; and
- their design has regard to the Village Character Assessment.

Conforms with Core Policies: CP32 Retail Development and Other Main Town Centre Uses, in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Conforms with Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Development Policies 8 (Community Services and Facilities).

Appleton Community Shop and Post Office

6.3.7 Appleton Community Shop and Post Office holds a particularly important place at the heart of the Parish. It is a social hub, providing a good point of social contact, especially for members of the community who live alone.

Since the loss of a regular bus service, the community shop has become a necessity for people without a car, for the elderly, as well as for people working in the village. While it is a mainly volunteer-run enterprise, it also provides employment in the Parish for several local people and provides an income for local suppliers.

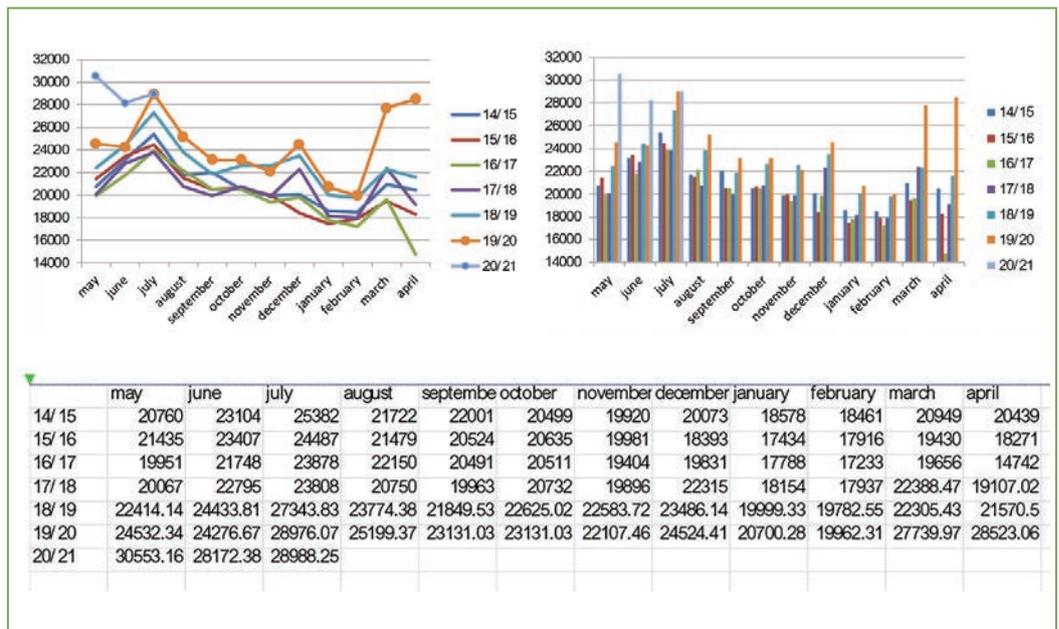
For those reasons the Appleton Community Shop and Post Office merits its own policy

6.3.8 Policy 4 aims to preserve and maintain the shop as a key facility in the Parish.

**Appleton
Community Shop
and Post Office**



**Appleton
Community Shop
and Post Office
turnover figures**



POLICY 4: APPLETON COMMUNITY SHOP AND POST OFFICE

Development proposals which enhance the shop as a community-run facility and result in the improvement of the shop and post office will be supported.

Conforms with Core Policies: CP32 Retail Development and Other Main Town Centre Uses, in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Development Policies 8 (Community Services and Facilities), 13 (Change of Use of Retail Units to Other Uses) and 14 (Village and Local Shops).

6.4 Public houses

Objective 6 is to ensure the protection of The Plough Inn, Appleton and The Eight Bells, Eaton with their gardens and to preserve their function as valuable community assets for current and future residents.

6.4.1 Public houses are an integral component of British village life and act as focal points for community interaction. The NPPF promotes “*the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship*”. ¹²

¹² NPPF 2019
Paragraph 83 (d).

6.4.2 The Plough Inn in Appleton and The Eight Bells in Eaton are the two remaining public houses in the Parish and are very important social spaces in their respective localities. The garden of The Plough Inn has been the subject of repeated unsuccessful planning applications in recent years and villagers have demonstrated their eagerness to maintain the pub and its garden at the heart of village life. The most recent planning application, the third to be submitted, and the subsequent appeal resulted in villagers making over 180 submissions to the planning officers involved and the Planning Appeal Inspector.

6.4.3 Both pubs serve as a hub for individuals, families, groups and clubs to gather for a drink and to dine. The pub gardens are popular meeting places in the summer both for families with children and villagers simply enjoying being outdoors.

6.4.4 The gardens of both public houses are used as venues for events. The Plough Inn and The Eight Bells hold outdoor music events while The Plough Inn with its extensive garden hosts clubs and societies either for or after their meetings and for special events. The Eight Bells has an Aunt Sally team and the Plough Inn is busy rebuilding its team after a few years of neglect.



**The Plough Inn,
Eaton Road,
Appleton**

6.4.5 Both public houses are currently registered as Assets of Community Value (ACV).

6.4.6 Where a proposal involves a recognised Asset of Community Value as determined by the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, this recognition may be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application related to it. The Public Houses policy has been constructed to be compatible with these pre-existing planning provisions. Policy 5 sets out the Plan's approach to this matter. Ideally any marketing exercise should be organised as a public house free of tie and restrictive covenant and for an alternative use as another type of community facility. Similarly, the marketing exercise should be undertaken by an agency with experience and expertise of property values for public houses and associated community uses. There are several means of undertaking a viability appraisal. The CAMRA Public House Viability Test is one which is favoured by the Parish Council.

For the reasons set out above the public houses merit their own policy.

POLICY 5: PUBLIC HOUSES

Other than where specifically permitted as a result of existing permitted development rights or insofar as planning permission is required, proposals to redevelop any part of the property of The Plough Inn or The Eight Bells public houses or to change their use will not be supported, unless evidence has been provided to satisfy the following criteria:

a) the retention of the public house is not economically viable and it can be demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let the property as a public house on the open market at a realistic price;

and

b) there is no reasonable likelihood of a suitable alternative facility or service of benefit to the local community making use of the building.

Conforms with Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Development Policies 8 (Community Services & Facilities) and 9 (Public Houses).

**The garden at
The Plough Inn,
Eaton Road,
Appleton**



The Eight Bells,
Eaton



6.5 Business

Objective 7 is to provide businesses with the opportunity to operate and develop within Appleton with Eaton, taking care to ensure that they preserve or enhance the character of the Parish, the amenity of neighbours and the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

6.5.1 The purpose of Policy 6 is to safeguard businesses in the Parish and ensure that expansion of existing businesses or any new business enterprise will not adversely impact upon the character of the villages, the amenity of neighbours or the safety of pedestrians and road users. Businesses are defined as enterprises that grow, produce, make, buy or sell goods or services and provide employment.

POLICY 6: BUSINESS

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals to improve existing businesses and encourage new businesses will be supported where they are in accordance with the development plan and where they would not cause unacceptable harm to:

- the amenity of neighbouring properties; and
- highway safety

Conforms with Core Policies: CP28 New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites, and CP31 Development to Support the Visitor Economy, in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1, and Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Development Policy 100 Ancillary Uses on Employment Land.

6.6 Community Connectivity and Access

Objective 8 is to ensure that public access within Appleton with Eaton is preserved for the use of the community and enhanced where possible.

6.6.1 Residents can access open space around the Parish by way of a network of public rights of way. These are identified in Appendix 4. Paths are used for recreational purposes: keeping fit, dog walking, observing wildlife and enjoying nature. A third of respondents to the September 2016 scoping survey identified access to the countryside as a current weakness or deficiency, with 28% highlighting lack of river access.

6.6.2 The Steering Group reviewed all routes in the villages and considered access to amenities within the villages, to amenities outside the Parish and to public transport. Appendix 4: Community Connectivity Assessment identifies residents' priorities. In accordance with those priorities the purpose of Policy 7 is to:

- i. To provide safe access to daily public transport
- ii. To provide direct access from Appleton to the Thames Path
- iii. To provide sustainable pedestrian access to open spaces and amenities within and outside the Parish.

Funding for these projects will be sought through Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements from any qualifying development during the life of the Plan.

6.6.3 New development should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport such as walking and cycling. Appendix 4: Community Connectivity Assessment highlights several routes in need of improvement. Development proposals should consider the needs of the village as set out in the Connectivity Assessment and seek to maximise the opportunities identified there. Policy 7 has been designed to have regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. In particular Regulation 122 requires that any developer contributions should be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. The Parish Council will have the ability to use its local element of Community Infrastructure Levy funding towards the costs of the projects listed in Appendix 4 of the Plan as it sees fit.

View from Green Lane, Appleton to the River Thames valley



POLICY 7: CONNECTIVITY

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should make provision for, or where practicable assist in the delivery of, the Aspirations listed in the Community Connectivity Assessment (Appendix 4 of the Plan).

Proposals to create new pedestrian and cycle links from adjoining development schemes to a public footpath or bridleway will be supported, provided they avoid or minimise the loss of mature trees and hedgerows and use materials that are consistent with a rural location.

Conforms with Core Policies: CP33, Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility, CP35, Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking and CP37, Design and Local Distinctiveness in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

6.7 Priority Community Projects

Objective 9 is to ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and Section 106 agreements associated with any future development are used for the benefit of the community.

6.7.1 The following list of community projects was compiled from feedback from the Evidence Base and Scoping Report, and comments collected at events and meetings. They are actions which residents feel will maintain or enhance the vibrancy of the Parish or counter a weakness but are outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan because they are not land use planning issues. They will require positive action from the Parish Council either to fund them or to work with or lobby other authorities to provide them. This is not a closed list. Other community projects may come forward during the life of the Plan.

PRIORITY COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions from any future development should be used for the benefit of the community, including the priority projects listed on page 30 to the extent that they satisfy CIL regulatory tests.

Conforms with Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Core Policy 7 (Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Service).

COMMUNITY PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION
Change of location of the speed limits in the village	Parish Council direct action	Conduct traffic/parking/speed surveys and take appropriate action
Bus service through the village	Parish Council with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	Continue liaising with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), bus service providers (noting the existing Comet bus service) and MPs
Pavement to the A420	Parish Council with OCC	Implement a temporary solution by improving the verges and pursue a permanent solution with the Highway Authority
Extend Netherton Road pavement to the sportsfield	Parish Council with OCC	Continue a dialogue with OCC and conduct a viability study
Improve cycling provision, pavements and provide safe road crossing points	Parish Council with OCC	Conduct a survey of cycling provision, pavements and crossing points within the Parish
Access to the Thames Path from Appleton	Parish Council	Application made to OCC re access to the Thames Path via Northmoor Lock using a Definitive Map Modification Order
Access to Thames Path via ferry at Bablock Hythe and Appleton Landing	Parish Council with OCC	Conduct discussions with the Environment Agency to explore possible long-term solutions

Section 7:

Monitoring and Implementation

7.1 The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan will run concurrently with the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2 and apply until 2031. It is a response to the aspirations of the community as understood in 2019 and it is understood that the community's concerns are likely to change in the intervening years.

7.2 The Steering Group is concerned to ensure that this Neighbourhood Plan is actively managed during its life. The Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it takes into account possible future changes in national planning policy or to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.

7.3 Appleton with Eaton Parish Council will monitor the Neighbourhood Plan and its associated implementation plan to check progress in terms of meeting the community's objectives. Each Annual Parish Council Meeting after the Plan's implementation will include a detailed report "Updates to the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan" which will monitor the progress of the Plan in the previous year and the likely implementation and impact of the Plan in the forthcoming year.

Appendix 1: Village Character Assessment

Appendix 2: Green Spaces Assessment

Appendix 3: Village Facilities

Appendix 4: Community Connectivity Assessment

Acknowledgements

Appleton with Eaton Parish Council acknowledges the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a number of other volunteers, the Vale of White Horse District Council and the help of Community First Oxfordshire in the production of this Plan.

