



Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2011-2041

Submission version, July 2025



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Foreword

1. Within the Localism Act introduced in 2011, there is provision for communities to shape their own future at a local level through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. In late 2021, Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council made the decision to take up this opportunity and on 7 February 2022, Rugby Borough Council approved the Parish as a Designated Area for the purposes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. An Advisory Committee was established and met for the first time on 12 May 2022.
2. As well as time spent gathering evidence through the analysis of strategic documents, the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee has carried out many hours of consultation with residents. This work has resulted in a Plan which you are now invited to read, and which sets out a vision for the Parish which will help to ensure that it continues to develop as a vibrant community whilst retaining its rural character for future generations.
3. Alongside the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, three Theme Groups have been established, including Parish Councillors and community representatives. It is appropriate to record thanks to all of those who contributed many hours in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, including consultants, Yourlocale, and Officers of Rugby Borough Council who provided support as the Neighbourhood Plan evolved.
4. The Parish Council has worked hard to reflect circumstances across the whole of the neighbourhood area. This includes a major strategic site of 6,200 homes that is in the process of being constructed. By the time we commenced the Neighbourhood Plan the development had already been subject to a detailed Masterplan and therefore the opportunities for influencing the area, known as Houlton, was extremely limited. Nonetheless we have incorporated policies that impact the whole Parish where possible to do so.
5. Once the Plan has been 'made' following a favourable referendum, the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan will take its place alongside the Rugby Local Plan Part 2 as the reference point for the determination of planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2011 – 2041, in line with the emerging Rugby Local Plan.
6. As well as the built environment, the Plan also considers environmental issues, community facilities and services, as well as transport and employment, all of which are important to the quality of life in Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish during the years up to 2041 and beyond.
7. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of *Policies* and *Community Actions*. The policies will be used by Rugby Borough Council to help determine planning applications within the Parish. Community Actions are not planning policies and are not subject to Examination. They reflect future work activities that it is proposed be undertaken within the Parish which will involve a wide range of third parties to help improve the Parish in line with the outcome of community consultation.

8. The Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore is an attractive and popular place in which to live and work, and the contribution from people who care about their community and want to make it better for generations to come is greatly appreciated.

9. High resolution versions of all maps are available on the Parish Council website to be viewed alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

Lesley Edwards

Chair

Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

Alan Harris

**Chair (at the commencement of the
Neighbourhood plan)**

Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council

1 About this Neighbourhood Plan

Background

1.1. As a key part of the Government's Localism agenda, a Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how their community develops, now and in the future. This includes, for example, where new homes and businesses should be built; what new buildings and extensions should look like, and which areas of land should be protected from development.

1.2. As the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011 states, "Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live".

1.3. This Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore. It sets out a long-term approach for the development of the Parish and sets out clear development-related policies to realise this.

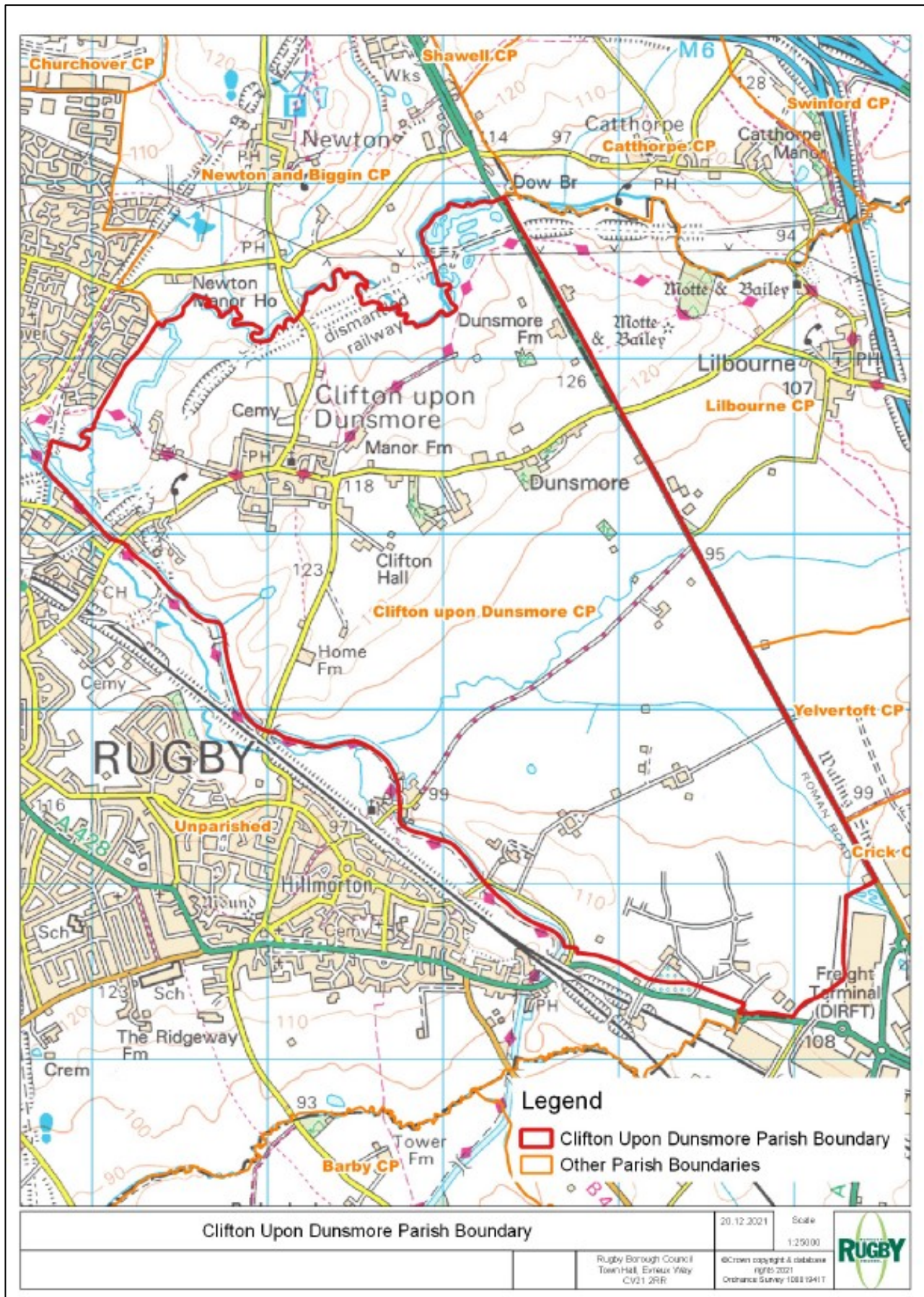
1.4. In preparing a Neighbourhood Plan a community is not working from 'a blank piece of paper'. Legislation requires that the Plan, and the policies it contains, must be prepared in a prescribed manner; in particular, the policies must be in general conformity with relevant national and local planning authority-wide (i.e. Rugby Borough Council) approved strategic planning policies.

1.5. The Plan has now completed pre-submission consultation where it was sent to statutory and local consultees as well as being made available to the local community. All comments received have been considered and the Plan changed where appropriate before being formally submitted to Rugby Borough Council who will undertake a further round of consultation.

1.6. Having successfully passed this stage, it will then be sent to an Independent Examiner, who will check to see that it meets a number of tests called the 'basic conditions', primarily making sure that the Plan meets statutory requirement relating to conformity with the Local Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Once the examiner's recommendations have been accepted, the Plan will be put forward to referendum. Those on the electoral register in the Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish will be invited to vote on whether or not they support it. Over 50% of those voting must approve it for the Plan to become a 'Made' statutory planning document.

1.7. Whilst planning applications will still be determined by Rugby Borough Council, the production of a Neighbourhood Plan will mean that they must have regard to the provisions of the Plan and the relevant locally formulated criteria when reaching planning decisions that affect the Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish. This means that the residents of the Parish will have a far greater control over where development takes place, and what it looks like.

Figure 1 Designated area



Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

1.8 The Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee was fully established by the Parish Council and held its inaugural meeting on 12 May 2022. This group comprises both Parish Councillors and other volunteers from the community. The Committee members were approved by the Parish Council and given the authority and responsibility to deliver the Plan. The Group worked hard to drive the process forward, assisted by YourLocale Neighbourhood Plan consultancy.

1.9 Three Theme Groups of local volunteers were formed through the process of delivering the Neighbourhood Plan to draw up policies that will inform and guide the future development within the Parish. The first meeting of the Theme Groups took place on 15 August 2022. They focussed on the following Themes:

- Housing and the Built Environment
- The Natural and Historic Environment
- Sustainability – community facilities, employment and transport

1.10 The groups were guided by facilitators provided by YourLocale. They reported back to the Advisory Committee, met regularly and gathered information to support the formation of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies. Much of the information, which supported the decisions and provided evidence bases, has been gleaned from the extensive research, consultation and local knowledge of the group members.

Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish history

1.11 The village community of Clifton Upon Dunsmore dates to at least the Middle Ages but there are references to Roman Times. The settlement has grown organically and developed over time into its current state. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book as having circa 30 houses of timber, mud and thatch and a population of circa 70. Now the village has a population of 1300 (as per the 2011 Census). It is now the most easterly village in Warwickshire, and of the entire West Midlands region. Predominantly a dormitory settlement, there are some modest local retail and service businesses and despite its proximity to Rugby, Clifton upon Dunsmore has a countryside setting.

1.12 The village first came into existence when the Celts settled the Avon Valley. They chose a place that was easy to defend, had natural drainage and an assured source of clean water. It was a remote, quiet, agricultural settlement, just one of six such settlements that surrounded the tiny Iron Age market village of Rugby.

1.13 When the Romans built what is now called Watling Street they by-passed the tiny village of Clifton upon Dunsmore and established a legionary depot at Tripontium. It is possible that the present layout of North Road and South Road in the village date back from this period.

1.14 At the time of the Domesday Book there was a small church dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin of which nothing now remains. The present stone building stands on the site of the original church. It was first constructed in the 13th Century and many additions have been made since then. The Church was important in the area during Norman times when it was the Mother Church in Rugby.

1.15 In the fourteenth century the village came into the ownership of Robert Whitney of Whitney on Wye in Herefordshire and his descendants continued as absentee Lords of the Manor of Clifton upon Dunsmore until they sold to the Bridgeman family in 1663.

1.16 In 1604 the village was devastated by the plague, 84 people died out of an estimated population of 122. This was a terrible loss of labour in a village based on self-sufficiency but within ten years there were about 130 people living in the village. The rapid increase was as a result of a high birth rate and new people moving into the village. The village survived but many of the old family names never appear again in the church register.

1.17 Agriculture at that time was by the inefficient medieval open field strip farming system, the vestiges of which can still be seen in the fields bordering the River Avon. This produced enough to live on but little surplus. In the 17th century farming practices began to change; this change was welcomed in Clifton upon Dunsmore and in 1648 the village agreed with the absentee landlord to enclose the open fields and for the smaller fields to be owned by influential villagers. In 1654 there were 40 houses. Most were of wooden frames filled with wattle and daub; they had thatched roofs and were not much of an advance on 1086 when the Domesday Book was written. By 1730 the number of houses was the same but some were now built of brick and slate, evidence of limited population growth but increased affluence.

1.18 In the years prior to enclosure the Whitney family got into financial difficulties. To raise money they sold their estate and the rectory in Clifton upon Dunsmore to Sir Orlando Bridgeman and to his son John who eventually became the new Lord of the Manor, which included the right to appoint the vicar. The Bridgemans kept the estate until 1790 and then it was broken up and sold to several different buyers. The Manor House and manorial rights went to the Townsend family but the rights to appoint the Vicar stayed with the Bridgemans.

1.19 The Townsends came from Lawford in 1743 and stayed in the village until 1984. They had an important influence on the village throughout that time, in particular Thomas Sutton Townsend, who was born in the village in 1847 and educated at Rugby School. In 1885 he built what is now known as the Townsend Memorial Hall on the site of the Red Lion Inn and in 1894 he paid for urgent repairs to St Mary's Church. He also extended and altered the Manor House.

1.20 The Lords of the Manor were important historical figures as were some of the Vicars that they appointed. James Moor was perhaps the longest serving vicar ministering to the village for fifty years from 1803 to 1853. He was a master at Rugby School, co-founder of St Matthews Church Rugby, Rural Dean of Rugby and founder of what is now known as Clifton School. He spoke Greek, Latin and Hebrew, translated the whole of the bible from its original languages and preached fearsome sermons based on his studies. He was twice married and the father of fourteen children most of whom lived for part

of their lives with him at The Elms in Main Street. He was a significant presence in the village, revered, admired and a little frightening.

1.21 The affluence of the railway age brought expansion to the village. Sir Joseph Muntz, the Birmingham industrialist, commissioned Dunsmore House in 1881. The farm opposite belonged to the estate and was used as a stud farm. Some of the horses that were bred here, such as Dunsmore Gloaming, were owned by the Prince of Wales, who visited Clifton upon Dunsmore and bought horses. Following the death of Sir Joseph Muntz the estate was bought by Col. Little, who in turn sold it to Rugby District Council who intended to turn it into a nursing home. Although work started on the nurses' accommodation (now Magpie Lodge) nothing was done to the big house or other properties which were left empty for some time. Shortly after the war the property was occupied by American families, whose children went to school at Bruntingthorpe. Following a couple more changes of hands the estate sold for £9,000 in 1951 and was split up and sold as separate lots. The main house was split into two and occupied by private families; then the main accommodation was sold to a nursing home who later bought the old servants quarters, thus reuniting the main house under single ownership. The nursing home closed some years ago, and following a period when it stood empty for some time the main house is now being renovated as a single private dwelling. Built in the Tudor-Gothic revival style it is now a Grade II listed building of outstanding architectural interest set within a conservation area and landscaped grounds of about 2.6 hectares.

1.22 In 1890 John Bird Chirnside, who made his money sheep farming in Australia, moved into Clifton Hall. Colonel Mulliner, the owner of a coach-building firm in Coventry, re-developed a farmhouse out on the Lilbourne Road, renamed it Clifton Court and moved there in 1905.

1.23 In 1926 Rugby Radio Station GBR transmitter opened for service. It was situated at Hillmorton, and a short distance from Rugby. Rugby Radio station transmitted official news broadcasts across the globe.

1.24 In 1927 a new service was introduced transmitting 'time signals' generated by the Royal Greenwich Observatory. This service provided massive benefit to navigation and safety at sea, enabling ships all over the world to accurately set their chronometers to GMT, giving them access to a precise understanding of their Longitude and Latitude.

1.25 On the 7th January 1927, Rugby Radio Station's second long wave transmitter (60 kHz/call-sign 'GBT') opened the world's first telephone service across the Atlantic. The first telephone call came to Rugby Radio Station from London by landline and then, transmitted to the Houlton Receiving Station in Maine, USA and then, onto New York.

1.26 The Post Office had been experimenting with 'short wave' for use on telephony services, when in 1928, Archibald Gill and his colleagues took over the Handley Cross farmhouse on the Rugby site to continue with the development work on telephony transmitters and directional aerials.

1.27 A short-wave transmitter was installed which was key to the first 'short wave transatlantic telephone service' which was launched on the 6th July 1928. Together with the long wave service, Rugby Radio Station now had two telephony channels to the USA. Within a year, a second short wave

transmitter had been installed which allowed the creation of a third transatlantic service in 1929 and was later used for experimental services to South Africa and Australia.

1.28 The British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced on the 3rd September 1939 a state of war between Britain and Germany. All telephone circuits, with the exception of one circuit to the USA, were converted to telegraphy for use by the armed forces.

1.29 Although the Rugby Radio Station was never actually bombed during the conflict, it did suffer two major disasters. The first caused by the extremely cold winter of 1940 which caused a build up of ice on the station's Long Wave Aerial, bringing it crashing to the ground. The second was a fire in the large wooden Aerial Tuning Inductor (ATI) which completely destroyed the roof and seriously damaged both the GBR and GBT Long Wave Transmitters located in the room below.

1.30 Despite problems and hardship, from 1943 to 1945, Rugby Radio Station's 'A' building played a vital role in Operation CORONA which was to aid British bombers in their raids over Germany by using High Power Short Wave Transmitters with the intention of misleading German night fighters by spreading misinformation and causing confusion within their defence strategies.

1.31 Since 1927, time signals had been transmitted across the world by the GBR 16 kHz transmitter. In the late 1940s the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) at Teddington pressed for time signals to be more readily available to people and establishments within this country. It was at this point that the GPO was approached to set up the MSF Time Signal service. Unlike the GBR time signals, which were sent by landline from the Royal Greenwich Observatory, the MSF time signals were generated at Rugby. The post-war period saw demand for overseas telephone circuits increase dramatically. Although the Post Office had taken over all British Cable & Wireless Radio Stations in 1950, most of the radio-telephone circuits still came through Rugby, so an expansion was required. A further 700 acres of land was purchased on the Northamptonshire side of the A5 Watling Street where the 'B' building was constructed to house 28 short wave (high frequency) transmitters. New directional rhombic aerials were created, giving almost 360 degrees coverage to anywhere in the world.

1.32 With a total of 57 transmitters, Rugby Radio Station was at its peak in the mid-1950s and generally considered to be the largest transatlantic transmitting station in the world. The new 'B' building was opened in 1955 by the Postmaster General Dr Charles Hill. In his opening speech he talked about the first transatlantic telephone cable which was set to launch in September 1956. Sadly, this undersea cable was destined to be the undoing of Rugby Radio Station.

1.33 By the early 1990s an increasing amount of short wave maritime traffic was switching to satellite, reducing Rugby's services which led to all the remaining services being housed in the 'B' building.

1.34 By the end of 1992, Rugby 'A' building had officially closed as a transmitter site.

1.35 In 2007, the transmission moved from Rugby to Anthorn Radio Station, near Carlisle, ending 80 years of time signals coming from Rugby Radio Station. Today the site is scheduled to become the area

of the expansion of Daventry International Freight Terminal, known as DIRFT III. The Rugby Radio Station has now been converted into a new Secondary School in the Houlton Development.

The Parish Today

1.36 Hillmorton Locks is a very small community based around the North Oxford canal, originally developing from wharf warehousing and boat repair and adjacent housing. The canal opened in 1790. The Wharf side now provides updated accommodation for a diverse range of small business units (see supporting information), which includes the Canal Chef a long-established canal side café.

1.37 Houlton is being built on the old mast site, which serviced shortwave radio transmissions in a pre-satellite era. The Urban and Civic Master plan for the Houlton development will ultimately create 6,200 homes over the next 15-20 years with the first resident having arrived in December 2017. When complete the development will include other infrastructure and community facilities including three Primary Schools, a Secondary School, a GP health centre, and the link road into Rugby. There are several community features in the development at Dollman Farm with a shared working environment and meeting spaces for hire. Some small businesses will be developed in terms of low-rise office accommodation or leisure and catering outlets but there is no intent to develop significant manufacturing or logistics businesses inside the parish. Houlton is situated adjacent to the major developments warehousing and logistics sites along the A5 and M1 Junction18 including the Daventry international rail freight terminal (DIRFT).

1.38 The 2021 Census data gives a population figure of 2,993 for the Parish – indicating population growth of around 1,689 individuals, representing 130% growth since 2011. Almost all of this is attributable to a major new development at Houlton, south of the parish (at the former Rugby Radio strategic site) planned for up to 6,200 homes.

1.39 There has been significant development in Clifton-upon-Dunsmore since 2011, with the delivery of 1,269 dwellings. These include 16 dwellings in the village of Clifton- upon-Dunsmore and the rest are within the major urban extension at Houlton. No affordable housing has been delivered in the Parish recently however Houlton is expected to provide new affordable housing units with plans for 158 units currently under way.

2 The Consultation Process

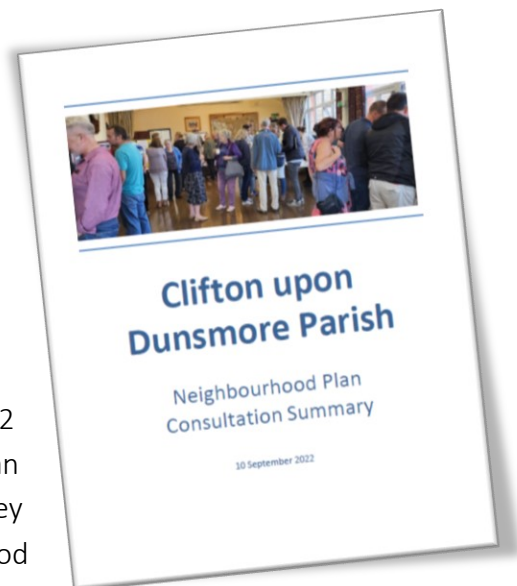
2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee's mandate was to drive the process, consult with the local community, gather evidence to support emerging policies and prepare the Plan for consideration and ultimately approval by Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish Council. A detailed chronology of the approach to consultation and the outcomes is contained within the Consultation Statement that will be included in the documentation with the Submission Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 An Open Event was held at the Townsend Memorial Hall on 10 September 2022 attended by 91 people, with 19 signing up to become involved in the process. The event was very successful with a lot of discussion taking place and comments shared about the priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.3 A community questionnaire produced in late 2022 represented the comments of 104 residents of the Parish, an excellent response, and this helped to identify some of the key issues that would need to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.4 The Advisory Committee also gathered statistical information about the Parish from a range of sources to provide a body of evidence on which to base the Plan's emerging Policies.

2.5 From October 2022 onwards, 'Theme Groups' were formed of members of the Advisory Committee along with other residents and stakeholders. The groups met over the following 6 months or so and gathered the evidence needed to progress ideas and to formulate policies.



2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan was developed from these discussions, from all the other consultations and interviews conducted by members of the Advisory Committee and from research and evidence collected. Further Open Events took place in May 2024 to share the emerging policies with the community.

3. A Plan for Clifton upon Dunsmore Parish

3.1 The policies of the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan are set within the context of the plan-making framework for England. The scope and content of the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan has been shaped by the priorities and aspirations of the local community, led by the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee. This Plan covers the period up to 2041.

3.2 In drawing up this Plan, the following vision and objectives have been prepared:

A Vision for 2041

3.3 The Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore is situated to the east of Rugby and within easy reach of the M6, M1, A5, A14 and the West Coast Main Line (Rugby Railway Station). Its population in 2011 was 1304, rising to 2,991 at the 2021 Census. The Parish includes the Houlton Development which by 2031 aims to create 6,200 new homes on the old Rugby BT Radio Station site.

3.4 The village of Clifton upon Dunsmore is a small, vibrant, rural community surrounded by green open spaces and farmland with views that are enjoyed by residents and visitors. Our aim is that it continues to be an attractive, thriving, and sustainable place for people to live and work, characterised by a mix of housing to meet a local need, high quality buildings, appropriate local services and a range of local employment opportunities to help keep its character as a rural village of historic significance.

3.5 The development of Houlton should be in line with the agreed Masterplan with the creation and retention of the identified open spaces and play areas. Any new development proposals should be shaped in such a way so that the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore can retain its independent, rural identity in its locality and its distinctiveness as a community. Houlton should develop alongside and in harmony with Clifton upon Dunsmore, whilst remaining a separate settlement. Key points for the vision are that:

- Houlton, Rugby, and Clifton upon Dunsmore each have their own individual characteristics that will require a maintaining an appropriate level of separation, with the specific aim of avoiding each of the entities merging.
- Development will be high-quality, eco-friendly in design and operation and help to meet a local need.
- To link these communities, new walkways and cycle ways are needed between the village and Houlton, particularly along Hillmorton Lane and Lilbourne Road.
- Existing community facilities will be protected and new and enhanced facilities to meet the changing needs of the population supported.
- Land use and development activity are consistent with and reflect the essential character of Clifton upon Dunsmore village as a whole in accordance with an agreed design statement that meets the

needs of the community with its already designated conservation area. Future development in Houlton must also follow the guidance within the design statement.

- Hedgerows define the landscape and provide a valuable habitat for local flora and fauna along with open green spaces need to be preserved. These also must provide a clear separation from surrounding developments and provide essential space for recreation, for example walking the common land, Clifton upon Dunsmore Playing Field, the play areas at Houlton and fields along the river Avon.
- Similarly, for the benefit of residents as well as local wildlife, the green spaces designated within and around Houlton need to be retained and not encroached upon maintaining the rural landscape surrounding the development.
- The vistas from Clifton upon Dunsmore are as important as are the outlooks within the village itself and which should be retained.
- Current employment opportunities will be protected and new employment opportunities that are appropriate to the Parish will be supported.
- It is important that traffic and parking issues are managed to ensure the safety of all road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. Clifton upon Dunsmore should not become a conduit for traffic serving other developments. The main throughfare through the village is already congested and has issues (despite the recent introduction of traffic calming measures) with speeding and inappropriate traffic; this should not be added to without appropriate mitigation.

A rapidly changing Parish

3.6 The designated Neighbourhood Area coincides, primarily for administrative reasons, with the civil parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore. From its establishment in 1894 until the late 1990s, and despite the construction of the 650 hectares Hillmorton (Rugby) radio station in 1926, the parish has been a rural village surrounded by open countryside, historically the farmland upon which the people of Clifton, Hillmorton, and several now 'lost' medieval hamlets, had depended for over a millennium. The population (2011 census, before Houlton) was 1304.

3.7 Most English parish Neighbourhood Plans have policies which reflect the community values of and sustainable development needs of a 21st-century version of this kind of spatial relationship between a fairly small, tightly bounded, rural village and its open countryside. Villages have heritage assets, a layout that has evolved historically and well-established, designated sport and recreation open spaces, while the countryside is the village's historic hinterland, has recreational and landscape values for the residents, sites with biodiversity significance, and farming is part of the local economy. The proportion of built-up to open land is normally less than 10% by area.

3.8 In contrast, the strategic urban extension of Houlton already (March 2024) has over 1300 houses and will on completion be a self-contained 'small town' of 6200 homes (population 15,000 or more) with no heritage, no historic relationship with surrounding countryside (open space 'buffers' between houses and countryside are part of the masterplan), recovering rather than established

biodiversity, and designed green/open spaces rather than long-established community sport and recreation amenities.

3.9 The Neighbourhood Plan has tried to take this situation into account and reflect the different characteristics of both the new development at Houlton and the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore. Settlement Boundaries have been drawn for both built-up areas, and policies have taken both areas into account where appropriate.

3.10 However, the policy on Design relates primarily to Clifton upon Dunsmore as Houlton is subject to a detailed Masterplan. Similarly, the policy on Housing mix applies to Clifton upon Dunsmore village only, as the housing mix for Houlton is determined by the Masterplan and subsequent planning applications.

3.11 Other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan apply across the Neighbourhood Area.

Planning Context

3.12 The procedure for the making of a Neighbourhood Plan is prescribed within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Regulations have informed the preparation of policies for the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan, in particular ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Rugby Local Plan and has regard for the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 (NPPF), as well as meeting a range of EU obligations, now incorporated into UK law.

Sustainable Development

3.13 A definition of sustainable development is provided within the NPPF. It describes three dimensions to sustainable development and that these dimensions give rise to the need for planning to perform a number of roles:

An economic role

3.14 Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.

3.15 The community of Clifton upon Dunsmore is primarily residential, but there is a strong desire to safeguard its employment locations, including the farming community. We therefore wish to retain the current level of employment and develop it further where possible and appropriate in line with the Rugby Local Plan

A social role

3.16 Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by promoting the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations through support for the strategic planning policies contained in the Rugby Local Plan and by maintaining a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

3.17 The Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan does not anticipate more than limited residential development outside of Houlton over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan.

An environmental role

3.18 Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. As part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including supporting the move to a low carbon economy. In order to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, we are seeking to ensure that:

- Special open spaces within the Neighbourhood Area are protected from development, to protect the village identity and retain the rural nature of its surroundings.
- Development preserves and contributes to the attractive local countryside including replacement of any natural boundaries lost, improvement of existing hedging and encouraging new planting.
- Development recognises the need to protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats and includes adding hedging to boundaries of new developments.

4. Policies

A. General

Introduction

4.1 The purpose of the UK Planning System as set out in the NPPF is to achieve sustainable development. 'Sustainable' is defined in the NPPF as ensuring that providing for the needs of the current generation does not make life worse for future generations. The Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan is a key part of securing sustainable development. The NPPF states that all plans should be based on and reflect the presumption of sustainable development and that neighbourhoods should plan positively to support local development.

4.2 When considering development proposals, the Plan will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.3 Through the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, consideration has been given to the type and extent of new development required to meet the needs of the local community, where it should be located in the Parish, and how it should be designed.

4.4 A Settlement Boundary has been drawn and updated from that contained in the Local Plan to enable appropriate housing and business growth within the Parish up to 2041. In addition, a design guide has been produced to ensure that development is of a high standard and is in keeping with the character of the village.

4.5 The design guide will not apply to the development at Houlton which is subject to a detailed masterplan and design guide. Settlement Boundaries have been established both for the built-up area of Clifton upon Dunsmore village and for the approach roads into the village.

Settlement Boundary

4.6 The purpose of the Settlement Boundary is to ensure that sufficient housing and economic activity land is available in appropriate locations that can be supported by existing transport infrastructure and avoid impinging into the local countryside.

4.7 Settlement Boundaries were established by Rugby Borough Council in order to clarify where new development activity is best located. They are used to define the extent of a built-up part of a settlement and distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, development would be acceptable in principle, such as in the main settlements, and where it would not be acceptable, generally in the least sustainable locations such as in the open countryside. Such growth would risk ribbon development and the merging of settlements to the detriment of the community and visual amenity of the Neighbourhood Plan area's surroundings.

4.8 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the retention of a Settlement Boundary for the built-up part of Clifton on Dunsmore. The Settlement Boundary that was drawn up by Rugby Borough Council in 2011 has been reviewed and updated through the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to reflect recent developments and to allow for suitable growth within the red- line boundary and therefore to accommodate limited organic growth.

4.9 A Settlement Boundary has also been drawn for the strategic development site at Houlton to frame the development site and to reinforce the separation with Clifton upon Dunsmore village.

4.10 Within the defined Settlement Boundary an appropriate amount of suitably designed and located development will be acceptable in principle, although some sites within this area are protected from development and all development will be required to take into account the policies within this Plan.

4.11 The Parish is predominately rural in nature with the built-up area of Clifton upon Dunsmore village surrounded by open and attractive countryside, up to the extensive strategic development at Houlton.

4.12 In planning terms, land outside a defined Settlement Boundary, including any small groups of buildings or small settlements, is treated as countryside.

4.13 It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully controlled. Supporting “the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it” is identified as a core planning principle in the National Planning Policy Framework, for example. This approach is also supported by this Plan, in particular, because it will help ensure that development is focused in more sustainable settlements with a greater range of services and facilities and infrastructure that has capacity for the expansion, as well as helping to maintain the special landscape character of the Parish and protecting the countryside for its own sake as an attractive, accessible and non-renewable natural resource.

4.14 Focusing development within the agreed Settlement Boundary will help to support existing services within the village centre and help to protect the countryside and the remainder of the Neighbourhood Plan area from inappropriate development. The updated Settlement Boundary have been determined using the following criteria:

- a) Development sites with an extant planning permission for residential development have been incorporated within the boundary;
- b) Defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, woodland, gardens, streams, brooks, formal leisure uses, roads and significant changes in levels have been used as the defined boundaries;
- c) Non-residential land, which is countryside, agricultural, paddock, meadow, woodland and/or another green-field use has been excluded;
- d) Isolated development which is physically or visually detached from the settlement has been excluded;

- e) Sections of large curtilages of buildings which relate more to the character of the countryside than the built form have been excluded;
- f) The curtilages of buildings which closely relate to the character of the built form and have enclosing features have been included.

POLICY G1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES – Development proposals within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported on sites within the settlement boundaries as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 where the proposal complies with the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Land outside the defined settlement boundaries will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

Appropriate development in the countryside includes:

- a) For the purposes of agriculture – including farm diversification and other land- based rural businesses;
- b) For the provision of affordable housing through a rural exception site, where local need has been identified;
- c) For the provision of formal recreation or sport use or for rural tourism that respects the character of the countryside.

Figure 2 - Settlement boundary for Clifton upon Dunsmore village

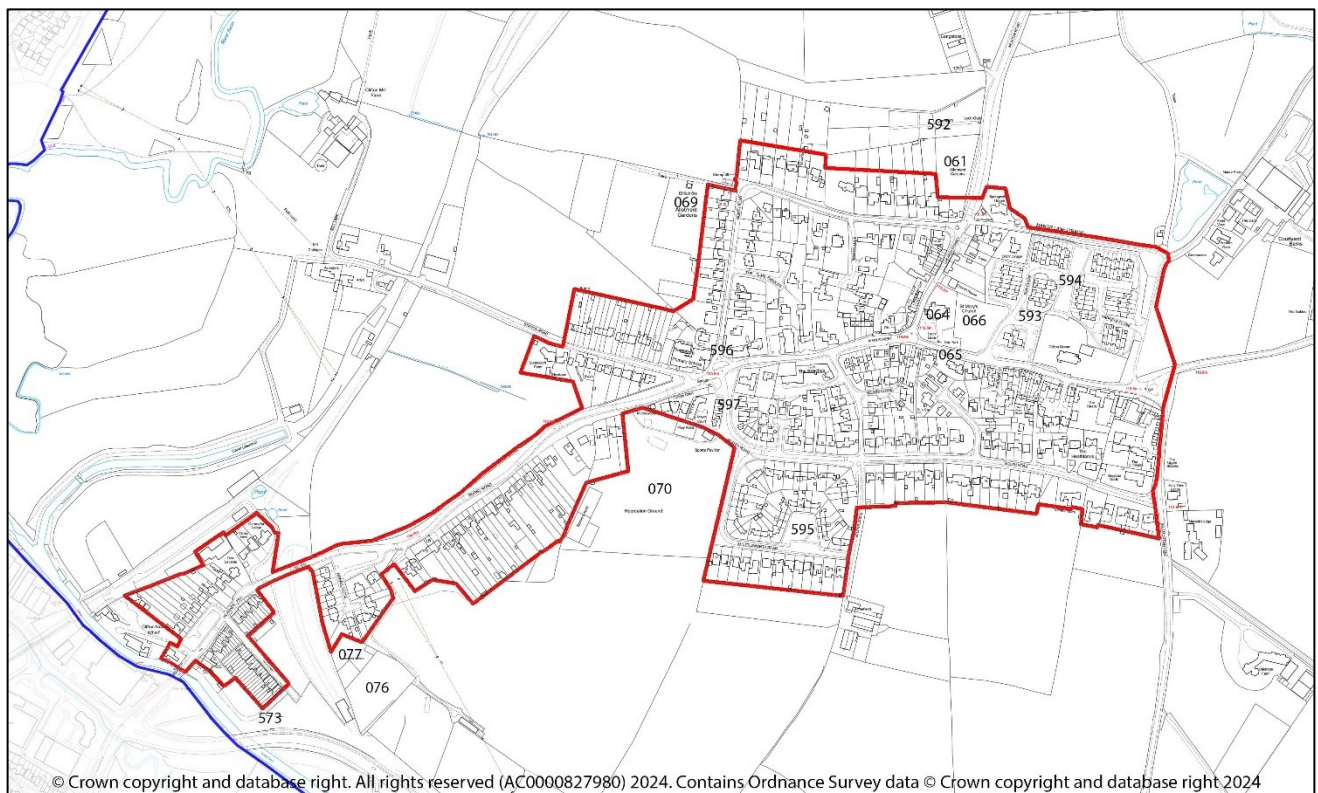
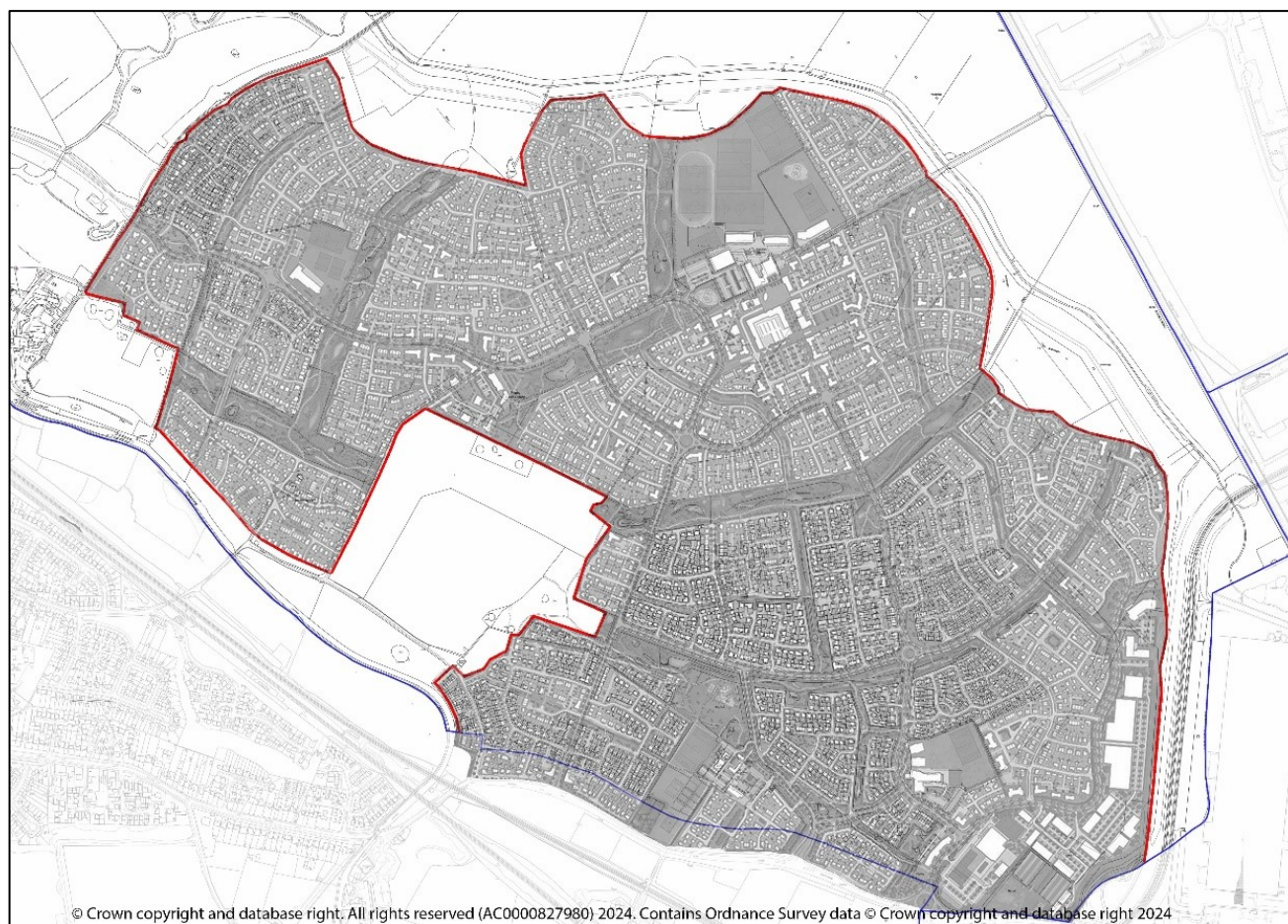


Figure 3 – Settlement Boundary for Houlton (based on developers' masterplan)



Building Design Principles

4.15 Consultation has shown that many people value the built environment and have expressed concern that it is conserved from insensitively located or designed development.

4.16 The built form of the old village of Clifton upon Dunsmore boasts an interesting mix of architectural styles, much of it historic. This adds to the village's vibrancy and informs its distinctive character. The new development at Houlton is subject to a detailed Masterplan which contains design principles. This policy therefore applies primarily to development outside of Houlton.

4.17 It is important that new building benefits from high-quality design so that it makes a positive contribution to enhancing this distinctive character. It should take inspiration from the rich heritage of the village. This includes ensuring that it would not lead to a significant adverse impact on key heritage assets (both nationally and locally designated).

4.18 In addition, the Plan encourages the use of materials and design that promotes sustainable development that is in keeping with the character of the area. It is crucial for its future success that Clifton upon Dunsmore embraces the need for sustainability and that it becomes a prime consideration in design proposals, for its economic value to residents as well as environmental benefits.

4.19 To ensure this new development will be assessed against the criteria in Policy G2. This is in line with national planning policy which promotes good quality design. Policy G2 also provides further detail

to design policies in the Rugby Local Plan. The NPPF (2024) notes that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies.

4.20 The design guidelines and principles in this section seek to reflect the design priorities which the community believes will help to achieve this aim. They reflect the outcome of consultations and of the Housing Theme Group which specifically focused on relevant issues. The overall aim is to protect the old village of Clifton upon Dunsmore so that it retains its character within a unique and distinctive Parish. This can be achieved by the use of the planning system to respond sensitively to the range of historic buildings, structures, landscapes and archaeology situated within the Parish. These assets form many of the key characteristics of the Parish, and future development should seek to enhance, reinforce and preserve this distinctive historic environment.

POLICY G2: BUILDING DESIGN - All new development proposals outside of Houlton, including replacement dwellings and extensions, must demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and use of materials in order to make a positive contribution to the special character of the Parish and should demonstrate regard to the building design principles and requirements as stated in the Design Guide and Codes, in particular the specific design codes described on pages 30-51 of the Design Guide and Codes (Appendix 2).

B Housing

Housing Need

4.21 Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan sets out the Borough's strategy for the overall housing targets for the Parish.

4.22 The Local Plan for Rugby has updated the housing need across the Borough and the allocation of housing within it. It states that there is a requirement to provide at least 12,400 new dwellings between 2011 and 2031 across the Borough. However, a new Local Plan for Rugby is in preparation, and this will manage development activity up to 2041.

4.23 The Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for the remaining development. Clifton Upon Dunsmore is categorised as a 'Main Rural Settlement' along with 8 other settlements with a 'good range of services'. Development 'will be permitted within the existing boundaries of all Main Rural Settlements and on allocated sites'. Sustainable growth of main rural settlements will take place to meet the housing needs of the rural population and provide support for rural infrastructure and services.

4.24 There is no housing requirement for Clifton-on Dunsmore from within the Adopted Local Plan, however a strategic development site within the Parish at the old Rugby Radio Station site (now called Houlton) will see around 6,200 new homes constructed, which are subject to an agreed Masterplan and therefore unable to be influenced by the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.25 The Neighbourhood Plan is being written at a time of great uncertainty in the field of planning, with the new Labour Government making clear its intention to stimulate economic growth through housing development, a new NPPF and a new Local Plan under consideration.

4.26 Against this backdrop, Rugby Borough Council was asked to provide a housing figure for the Neighbourhood Area over the plan period for the emerging Local Plan. They indicated that around 150 dwellings would be required to meet an indicative housing need for the Parish. This requirement is met in full by the sites allocated in the emerging Local Plan.

4.27 Nonetheless, the opportunity was taken through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to test the market to see what sites were available for potential development to help meet a local housing need and to sustain local services.

4.28 The Parish Council, therefore, through its housing theme group, ran a 'call for sites', where all local landowners were invited to submit their land for consideration to help determine whether or not a residential allocation would be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.29 The call for sites notification identified the need for a site for a small-scale residential development to help meet a local need.

4.30 Only one site came forward, which was some way outside the built-up area of Clifton upon Dunsmore Village and was for a larger area than was needed to meet local requirements. When shared

with the local planning authority, they commented that the site was relatively isolated from the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore and shared concerns about the distance and accessibility to the local community and the likely dependency on private vehicles alongside a lack of existing safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes. The local planning authority noted the refusal of a planning application recently on an adjacent site.

4.31 Taking all these factors into account, the Parish Council decided against allocating a site for residential development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Housing Mix

4.32 The Rugby Local Plan seeks to provide a mix of market housing house types and sizes. Policy H1 requires new residential development to contribute to the overall mix of housing in the locality, taking into account the current need, particularly for older people and first-time buyers, current demand and existing housing stock.

4.33 The Housing Needs Assessment carried out in 2023 revealed that Clifton-upon-Dunsmore's current tenure mix shows a high degree of owner occupation compared to the wider borough and the national average with correspondingly lower proportions of private and affordable rents.

4.34 Home values in the parish have risen over the long term with the average entry-level home now costing around £105,938 more than it did in 2012. The overall average price grew by 58% in the period 2012 to 2021. There is a £59,935 (or 25%) price differential between the lower quartile property price (currently £244,938) and the median price (£304,873). Clifton-upon-Dunsmore housing stock is dominated by larger detached and semi-detached homes with relatively smaller proportions of terraces and flats.

4.35 Recent development in Houlton has doubled the Parish's housing stock and has helped to bring forward some flats and terraced homes, but the overall development has tended to favour larger homes with detached and semi-detached dwellings currently forming three quarters of the total stock. This is also reflected in the size of new development which has tended to favour 3 and 4 bedroom units (77% of stock).

4.36 There may be capacity to usefully increase the number of homes with 2-3 bedrooms given the affordability findings above. Delivering more small to medium housing, such as 2-3 bedroom terraces, may offer an appropriately affordable choice for young families and smaller flats (e.g. 1 bedroom) would also help accommodate young people seeking more affordable options.

4.37 The age structure of the population is a key indicator of the future need for housing. As of 2021 Clifton-upon-Dunsmore has a relatively well-balanced population, evenly split between those aged 0-44 and those aged 45 plus. Notably there has been a significant increase since 2011 in the number of young children (91% growth). The proportion of residents aged 65 and over grew by 31% with substantial growth (44%) in the 85 plus cohort. This pattern of growth is likely to be influenced by the large new development at Houlton.

4.38 To best meet the needs of the large cohort of older households expected to be present by the end of the Plan period, the Housing Needs Assessment concluded that variety should be sought within the mid-sized homes that come forward in future to attract both newly forming households on lower budgets and older households with substantial equity from their existing larger homes. Facilitating downsizing among older households may release those larger homes for use by families who need more bedrooms.

4.39 At an open event held in September 2022, people expressed concern that new housing should meet the needs of an ageing population, be affordable, sustainable and in keeping with the character of the village.

4.40 In the community questionnaire from autumn 2022, a question was asked about what type of housing was needed in the Parish. The highest response was for bungalows (32%), followed by family homes (3/4 beds) at 19% and smaller homes (1/2 beds) at 18%.

4.41 In summary, there is a higher-than-average share of detached housing and houses with 4 or more bedrooms. Home ownership levels are also high.

4.42 This suggests a need for smaller homes of up to 3 bedrooms which would be suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market which would be suitable for growing families.

POLICY H1: HOUSING MIX - New development should provide for a mixture of housing types having regard to identified local housing needs as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment (2023) for Clifton upon Dunsmore or later document updating these findings. The provision of bungalows suitable for elderly people and dwellings of up to three bedrooms will be particularly supported. Placing a restrictive covenant on each bungalow which prevents the conversion into a house with one or more upper storeys is supported.

The inclusion of four-bedroom or larger houses in housing developments will be supported where they are subservient in number to one, two and three-bedroom accommodation and where there is a proven housing need.

Windfall Sites

4.43 A windfall site is defined in the NPPF as one which has not been specifically identified in the development plan. The sites usually comprise previously developed land or open spaces within the Settlement Boundary that have unexpectedly become available.

4.44 The Local Plan defines windfall development as follows: A site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which unexpectedly becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan’.

4.45 Most "windfalls" are referred to in a housing context. They tend to be very small sites for one or a small number of homes'. Paragraph 4.13 refers to windfall sites being 'less than 5 dwellings.

4.46 Such sites have made a regular contribution towards the housing supply in the Parish over the last two decades and it is considered that they will continue to make a contribution to housing provision in the Parish over the lifetime of the Plan.

POLICY H2: WINDFALL SITES – Small scale development proposals for infill and redevelopment sites (up to four dwellings) will be supported where it is within the Settlement Boundary and where:

- a) It respects the shape and form of Clifton upon Dunsmore village and Houlton in order to maintain their distinctive character and enhance it where possible;
- b) It retains existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;
- c) It provides for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site; and
- d) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring occupiers by reason of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion or noise;

Affordable Housing

4.47 The NPPF defines Affordable Housing as: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).

4.48 The latest housing affordability data for England and Wales shows that on average, full-time workers could expect to pay an estimated 7.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home in 2019.

4.49 The housing affordability gap continues to widen between the most and least affordable areas. In Rugby the gap has worsened with average house prices estimated at being 7.7 times workplace-based average annual earnings in 2019 compared with 3.1 times in 1999.

4.50 The Housing Needs Assessment concluded that home values in the parish have risen over the long term with the average entry-level home now costing around £105,938 more than it did in 2012. The overall average price grew by 58% in the period 2012 to 2021. There is a £59,935 (or 25%) price differential between the lower quartile property price (currently £244,938) and the median price (£304,873).

4.51 The Housing Needs Assessment has estimated the annual income required to afford various tenures of housing in the parish. These thresholds are compared to local incomes to determine which options are the most appropriate for local people going forward. The average household income in Clifton-upon-Dunsmore is £50,300 and the lower quartile income (per person) for Rugby is £18,139.

4.52 It was found that a household would need an income comfortably above the average (or a very

large deposit) to qualify for a mortgage even for an entry-level home in the Parish. Home ownership through the mainstream market is not an option for the majority of local people.

4.53 The Housing Needs Assessment proposes an indicative Affordable Housing tenure mix of 60% affordable home ownership and 40% affordable rent. It further went on to assess the most appropriate level of discount for First Homes and concluded that a discount of 40% would extend affordable ownership options to the widest number of households in the neighbourhood area.

4.54 The Rugby Local Plan says, 'Affordable housing should be provided on all sites of at least 0.36 hectares in size or capable of accommodating 11 (net) dwelling units or more (including conversions and subdivisions)'.

4.55 It is unlikely there will be development on this scale in Clifton upon Dunsmore outside of the strategic development site at Houlton.

4.56 However, Local Plan Policy H4 says 'The development of affordable housing that meets the needs of local people will be permitted as a Rural Exception Site adjacent to defined rural settlement boundaries ...' This is allowed where there is a local need, there are no suitable alternative sites within the settlement boundary and safeguards are in place to ensure the homes remain affordable in perpetuity. A small number of market homes are allowed if needed for viability reasons.

4.57 Clifton Parish Housing is a charitable organisation run by Trustees.

4.58 There have been almshouses in the United Kingdom for more than 1000 years, with the oldest almshouse charity foundation still in existence being the Hospital of St Oswald in Worcester founded in 990. Many are old, often beautiful historic buildings, others are more modern and some are newly built. What they all have in common is their provision of affordable housing and support for the needy or vulnerable, often older people.

4.59 The charity known as Clifton Parish Houses comprised in conveyance and trust deeds dated 2nd May 1899, 4th February 1925 and 23rd September 1930 and the Charity known as the Nurses Residence comprised in a conveyance and trust deed dated 20th March 1933 were approved and established as the Parish Houses Charity Housing Association by the Charity Commissioners on 24th September 1997. The name of the charity was changed to Clifton Parish Houses in 2012.

4.60 The object of the Charity is the relief of poverty and/or sickness by the provision of housing accommodation for persons who are inhabitants of the Parish of Clifton-upon-Dunsmore or whose spouse, parent, child, brother or sister shall reside in the area of benefit on terms according to their means.

4.61 The Charity currently has sixteen properties under management in the village, 2 in Church Street, 6 in South Road and 8 in Mayo Court.

4.62 Additionally, Sophia Catherine Marriott in 1860 left funds in her will to establish the Marriott almshouses. The present site on Lillbourne Road was purchased in 1894 when the 2 houses were built.

4.63 The almshouses were built for the benefit of the poor widows and spinsters resident in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary, Clifton upon Dunsmore and which continues to the current day.

4.64 The charity is run by trustees who are responsible for controlling the work, management and administration of the charity on behalf of its beneficiaries.

4.65 The properties have recently been modernised to improve the structural integrity of the buildings, extend the upstairs accommodation over the kitchen, install a shower room and separate toilet, refit the downstairs toilet and extend the kitchen area.

4.66 Rural Affordable Housing is intended to help communities by offering local families, couples and single people the chance to live in the place where they have strong connections. This can be:

- those currently living in the Parish;
- those previously living in the Parish;
- people permanently employed in the Parish;
- those with close connections to people still living in the Parish.

4.67 In some circumstances a small proportion of open market housing may be allowed where it can be shown that the scheme will deliver significant affordable housing and viability is a key constraint.

4.68 The Parish Council supports the development of an exception site where a local need can be identified, and this policy reinforces that support.

Policy H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING – To meet identified needs within the community, the provision of high-quality affordable housing through an exception site will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- a) The site adjoins the Settlement Boundary;
- b) The type and scale of affordable housing is justified by evidence of need from a local housing needs survey;
- c) A tenure mix of 60% affordable home ownership and 40% affordable rent is supported;
- d) Planning obligations will be used to ensure that the affordable housing is available in perpetuity for people with a local connection to the Plan area; and
- e) The development consists entirely of affordable housing or is for a mixed-tenure scheme where an element of market housing is essential to the delivery of the affordable housing. The market housing must be the minimum necessary to make the scheme viable and be of a type and size that will meet a specific locally identified housing need for low-cost market housing.

First Homes (at a discount of 40%, subject to viability) are welcomed.

5 The Natural, Historical and Social Environment

Introduction

5.1 This chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan deals mainly with the *environmental* objectives of *sustainable development*, together with open spaces of community value in the *social* objective, as described in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2023), page 5. The chapter aims to balance the requirement for appropriate development in the Plan Area against the value of environmental and other features that are both *special* – appreciated, in their own right and as community assets, by local people – and *significant* for their wildlife and history. It also deals with broader environmental issues of concern to the community, including protection and enhancement of biodiversity, avoidance of deleterious effects of new development on the best views, planning for resilience to flooding and climate change, and approaches to renewable energy generation.

5.2 Care was taken during preparation of the Plan to ensure that the policies (and the sites and areas of environmental significance covered by them) were not unduly restrictive on development during the Plan’s lifetime. Including much of the ‘informal open space’ in the Houlton masterplan as well as sites with more formal protective designations, and bearing in mind that the built-up area of Houlton covers 25% of the whole Neighbourhood Area, approximately 24% by area of all the remaining open and undeveloped land in the Area is, or will be, protected through the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies and the planning system generally from potential environmentally damaging development:

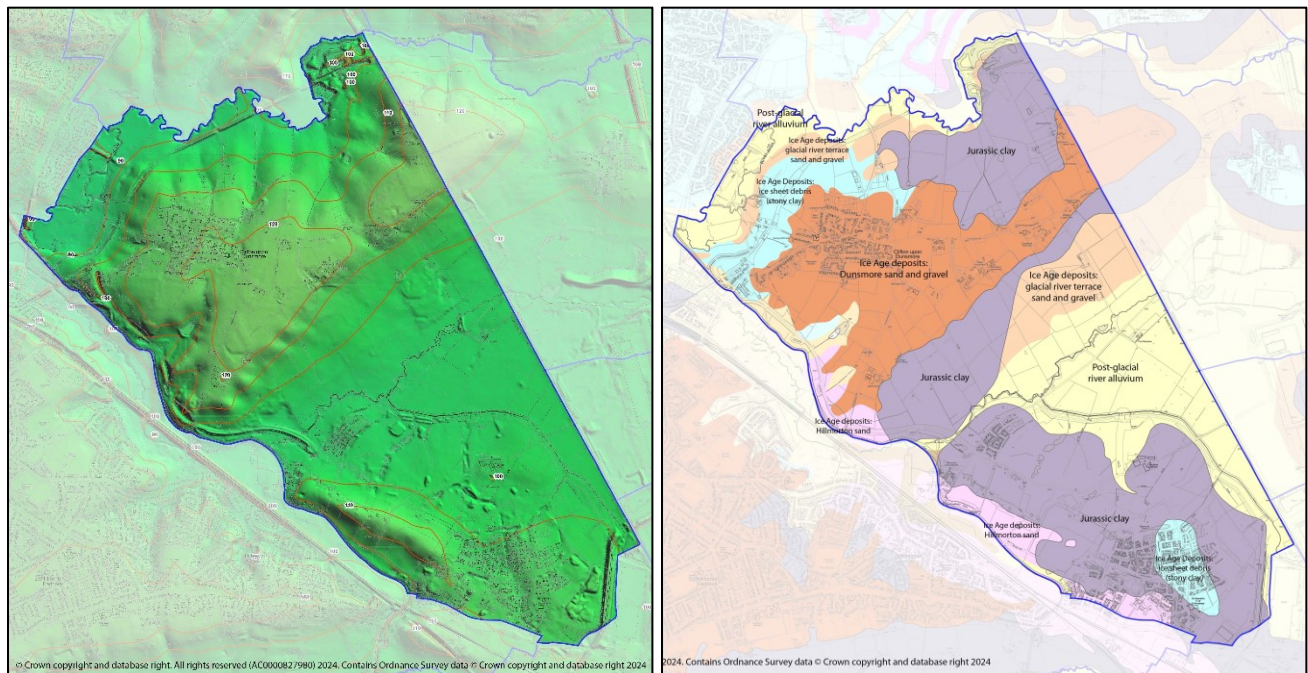
1. Total area of Neighbourhood Plan Area	c.1079 ha
2. Open countryside (and other undeveloped land)	c.789 ha
3. Area designated or recognised in this Plan for <i>environmental</i> protection	c.192 ha

Topography, landscape character and geology

5.3 The gently undulating topography of the Area is a product of its underlying and near-surface geology. The bedrock of the whole parish is an up to 200 metres-thick layer of lithified clay of Jurassic age (around 190 million years old) in the *Charmouth Mudstone Formation*. Its homogeneity and low resistance to erosion means watercourses before the Ice Ages (2 million years ago) lowered the land surface evenly, without steep valley sides or prominent hills. During the Ice Ages this modest landscape was at times completely covered by vast icesheets, at other times by glacial lakes, braided meltwater rivers or open tundra. The icesheets dumped rock debris (clay and boulders) while the rivers and lakes deposited spreads of gravel, sand and wind-blown dust. Since the Ice Age, these deposits have been partly eroded away by the ‘modern’ rivers; one, the *Dunsmore Sand and Gravel*, being the most resistant, has been left standing above the surrounding valleys – the eastern end of the historic heath and forest of Dunsmore. Its well-drained nature has made it an obvious choice for human settlement since prehistoric times, and provided the site for the Anglo-Saxon village of Clifton. This contrasts with the rest of the Area, where (except for the alluvium in the Avon and Clifton Brook floodplains and a gravelly ridge on which Hillmorton stands) the clay subsoils are impermeable and often waterlogged.

They made good farmland in medieval times, but (historically) not such good places to live; new residents of Houlton, which is on the clay, have been discovering this for themselves.

Topography (left) and geology of the Plan Area, for information



Historical environment

5.4 A general summary of the history of the parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore is in Section 1. This section refers to the local history that is represented by heritage assets, which are the surviving physical evidence for historical events and the places where people lived and worked, and which can be recognised and protected in planning policies (nationally, and in Local and Neighbourhood Plans).

History from placenames

Clifton upon Dunsmore “cliff settlement on Dunn’s moor”

Elements and their meanings:

- **Clif** (Old English) An escarpment, a hill-slope; a river-bank.
- **Tūn** (Old English) An enclosure; a farmstead; a village; an estate.
- **Super** (Latin) On, above.
- **pers.n.** (Old English) **pers.n.** Personal name Dunn
- **mōr** (Old English) Barren upland.

Houlton

Named after Houlton, Maine, USA, the American town which received the first transatlantic phone call from Rugby radio station in 1927

5.5 The landscape now covered by the Neighbourhood Area has been frequented by humans since prehistoric times, as shown by finds of Palaeolithic to Bronze Age stone implements and excavated features of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British ages. The layout of Clifton itself, and its name, are a record of its foundation in the early medieval period (the ‘dark ages’), as are the areas of earthworks and ridge and furrow close to the village and in its hinterland that preserve the house

platforms, lanes and ploughlands of the post-Conquest medieval settlement. Of later date are earthworks and other remains of landscape gardens (18th to 20th centuries) and the routes, buildings and other heritage assets associated with railways and canals. Of considerable importance in and around Houlton, however, is what remains of the site of Rugby/Hillmorton Radio Station, in particular the footprints of the masts (which were a landmark to travellers on the M1) and buildings.

5.6 All of the above are recorded in the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record as *monuments*. Also in the Warks HER are several Iron Age to Roman and later (to 19th century) settlement sites that were excavated and recorded in the preparatory stages of the Houlton development, but although finds were collected the sites no longer exist.

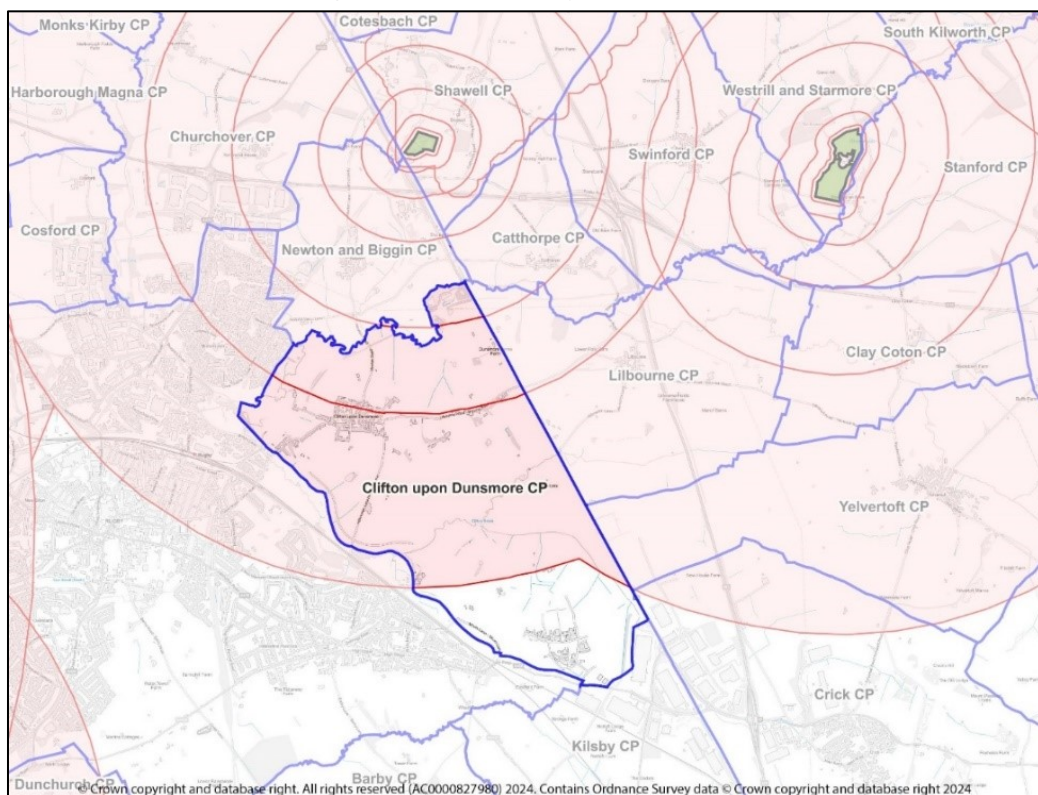
Natural environment

5.7 For historical reasons (manorial, medieval and economic) there are relatively few sites of high biodiversity significance in the Neighbourhood Area. Disused gravel pits in the north corner are now important for a wide range of plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals (including newts, otters and bats). A group of 'water meadows' along the Avon valley has wet ditches, floodplain grazing marsh and woodland, while a wide strip of permanent grass fields along Clifton Brook and round the north side of Houlton is naturally improving as riparian and grassland habitat.

Existing environmental designations

5.8 The Neighbourhood Area is located in National Character Areas (NCA) 95 *Northamptonshire Uplands* and 96 *Dunsmore and Feldon*. NCAs are landscape areas defined by Natural England for planning purposes.

Figure 4: SSSIs and Impact Risk Zones



5.9 In the natural environment, there are no nationally important wildlife sites (SSSIs), although two in neighbouring parishes and their impact risk zones (IRZs; the closest SSSI is 3 kms away, see Figure 4) may be relevant for development proposals in the northern half of the Plan Area (Houlton is located outside any IRZs).

5.10 There are 19 areas of *Priority Habitat* and national *Forest Inventory* (as defined by Natural England), together with nine *Local Wildlife Sites* (LWS; sites and linear features) in the Warwickshire Green Infrastructure database. In the historical environment there are eight *Listed Buildings* and some 26 further *sites and features of historical environment significance* (Historic England and/or Warwickshire Historic Environment Record), of which 14 are of direct relevance to this Neighbourhood Plan's environmental policies. Two *Conservation Areas* wholly or partly in the Plan Area were designated in 2010.

Local Green Spaces

5.11 Of the 267 parcels of open land in the Plan Area, some 139 have been identified as having environmental significance at local level or higher (see Appendix 3 *Inventory of Sites of Environmental Significance*). Of these, two sites (figure 5.1 and 5.2; details in Appendix 4) meet the requirements for designation as Local Green Space, as outlined in NPPF (2024) paragraphs 105-106. They were identified by members of the community and scored highly in the inventory under relevant NPPF criteria; their candidacy was ratified independently by the consultants employed to advise the parish council on preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the NP Committee's detailed proposals were confirmed by local people at drop-in events in May 2024 and by the Pre-submission Plan's Regulation 14 consultation.

5.12 The statutory protection afforded by Policy ENV 1 will ensure these sites are protected for future generations.

Figure 5.1: Clifton Recreation Ground Local Green Space

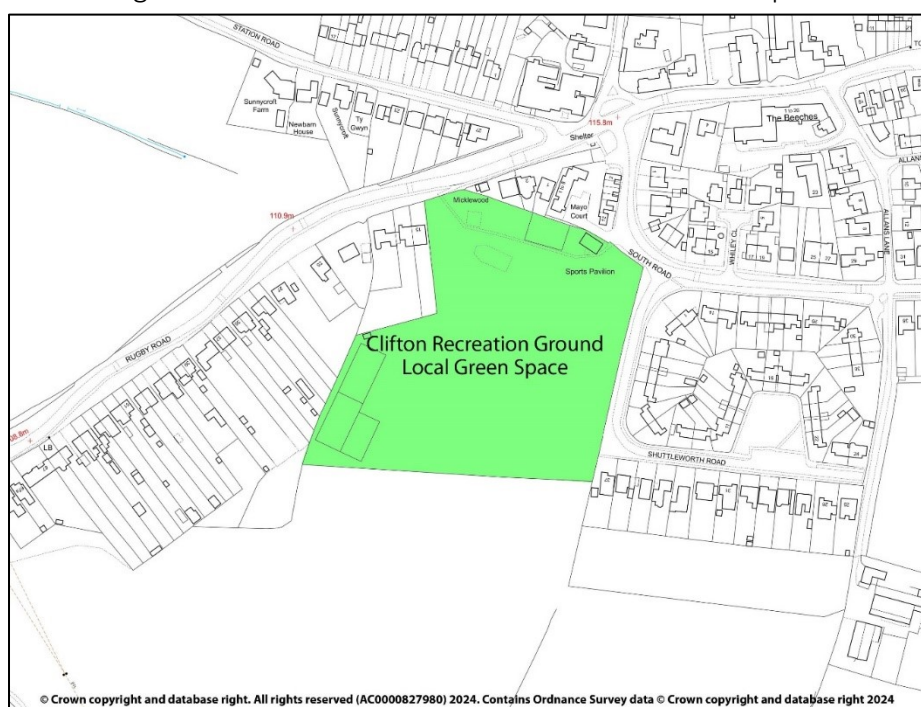


Figure 5.2 Houlton Park Local Green Space



POLICY ENV 1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces (details Appendix 4; locations figures 5.1 and 5.2) will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances.

Clifton Recreation Ground (070)

Houlton Park (536/537)

Important Open Spaces

5.13 A group of sites in and close to Clifton upon Dunsmore village were assessed in the environmental inventory for this Plan (Appendix 3). They have significant and demonstrable community value as open space for amenity, sport & recreation, children's play, etc., as allotments and burial grounds, or for their value as natural environment sites accessible by the public. They have been identified through fieldwork and in community consultations; eight are already recognised as Open Space, Sport & Recreation (OSSR) sites in Part 4 of the Rugby BC *Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Study, 2015*, and three more are shown on the inset (settlements) map for Clifton upon Dunsmore in the Local Plan.

5.14 In addition to these open spaces in the settlement and countryside of Clifton, a significant number of new open spaces in the Houlton Sustainable Urban Extension were an intrinsic component of the outline proposals and subsequent planning applications and are shown in the approved developers' masterplans (e.g. 2019, 2023). At the time of drafting of this Plan (2024) some are now completed, others are under development, and the remainder are earmarked for completion (subject to minor modifications) as each phase of Houlton is built.

5.15 All these sites' values as open space within and close to the two built-up areas and/or their actual or potential value to the communities are recognised in Policy ENV 2 (details, Appendix B). The policy is in conformity with, and adds local detail to, Rugby BC Local Plan policy HS4. It consists of three paragraphs, to take account of the crucial differences between the ways *existing OSSRs*, *Natural and semi-natural green spaces*, and *future open spaces* of all kinds can be protected when development proposals are being prepared, scrutinised and determined.

5.16 For clarity when Policy ENV 2 is being applied, all the Important Open Spaces in this Neighbourhood Plan have been allocated to the appropriate RBC Open Space typologies, as listed in the 2015 Study.

Figure 6.1 Important Open Spaces, Clifton upon Dunsmore

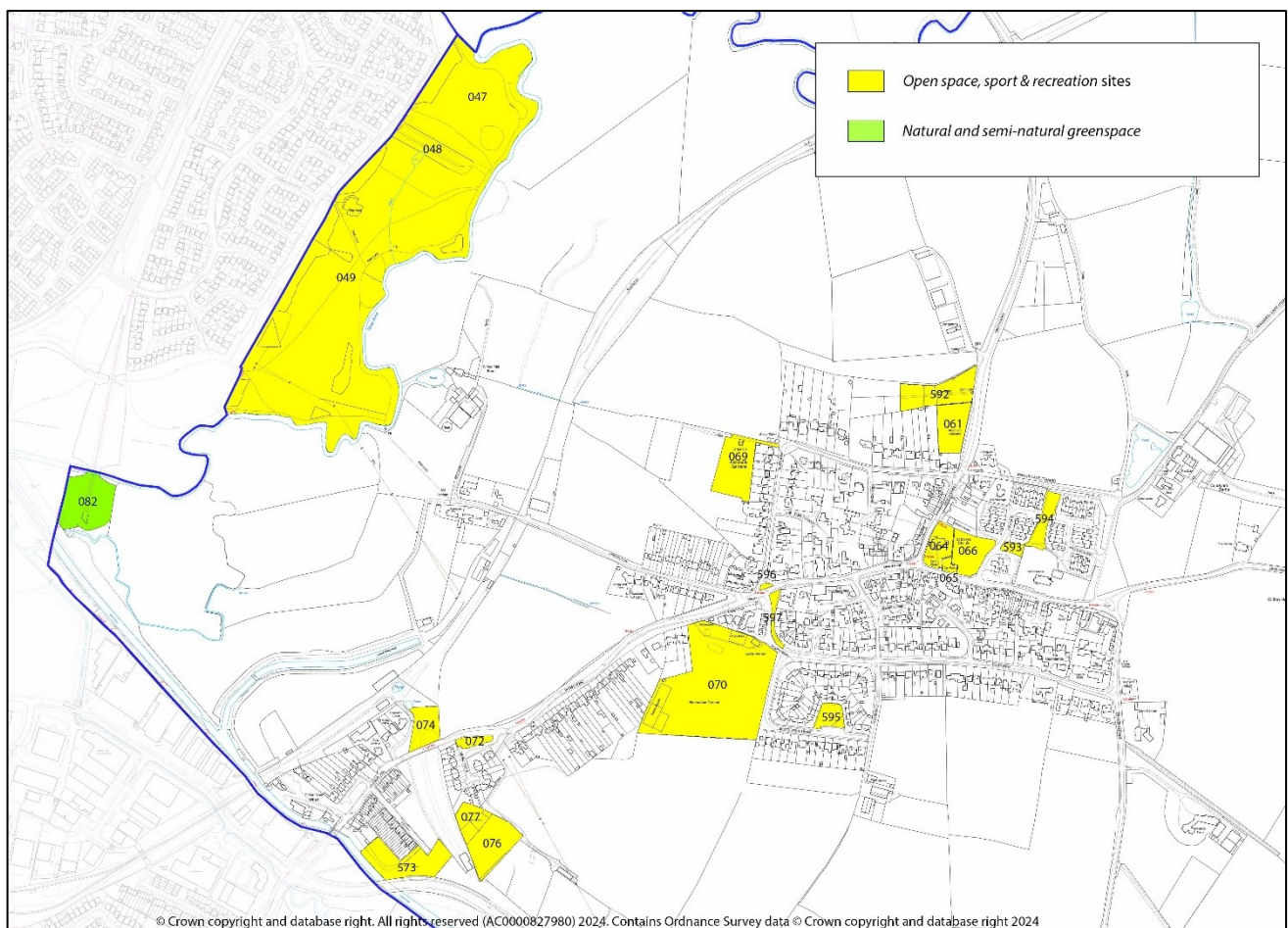
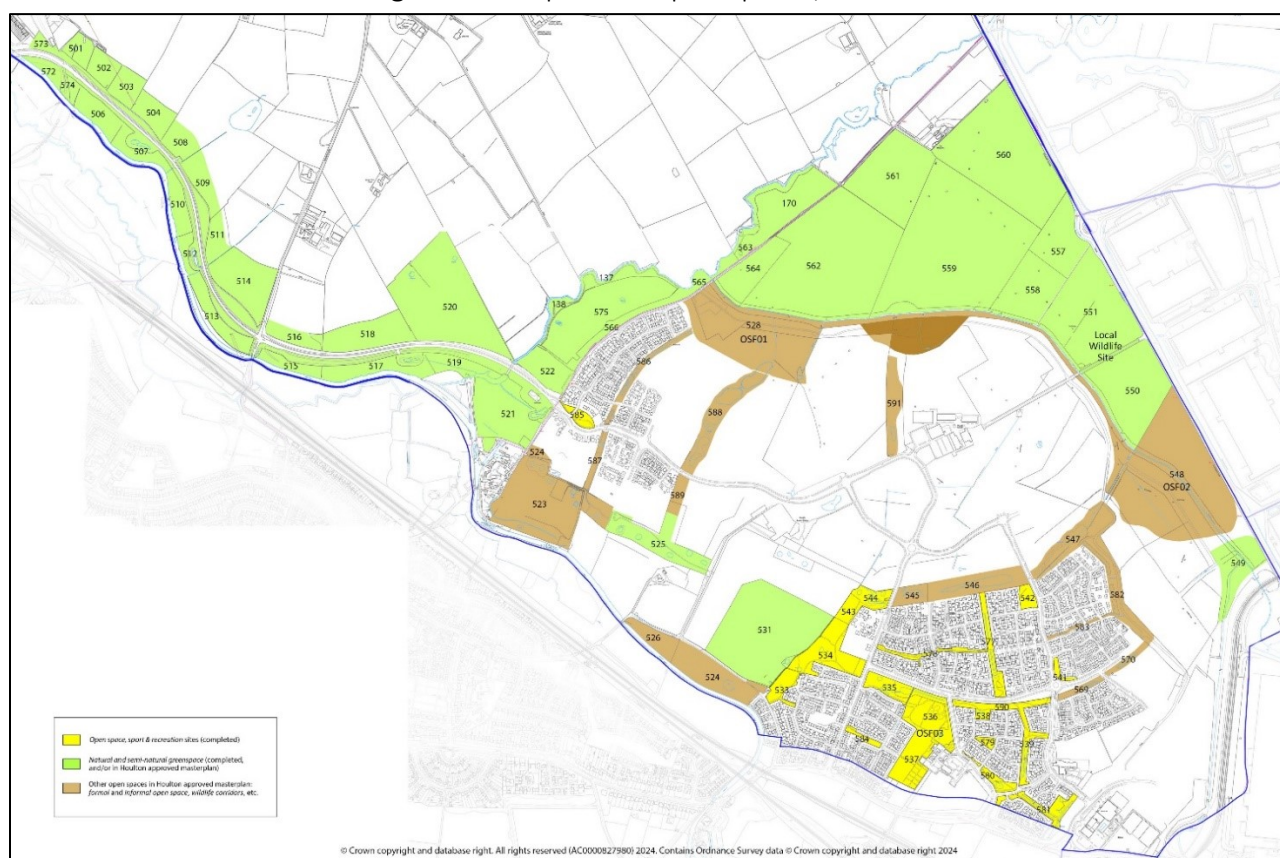


Figure 6.2: Important Open Spaces, Houlton



POLICY ENV 2: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES

2.1 Open Space, Sport & Recreation: the following open spaces (shaded yellow in figures 6.1 and 6.2) are of high value for recreation, sport and/or amenity. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.

Clifton upon Dunsmore

Brownsover / River Avon open space including Charwelton Drive Play Area Inventory reference 047/048/049. In RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Amenity Greenspace* typology) but not on Local Plan inset map. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace* and *Children's Play and Youth Provision*, this Plan

Newton Road allotments, Clifton Inventory reference 061. In RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Allotment Gardens* typology) but not on Local Plan inset map. Confirmed as *Allotment Gardens*, this Plan

St Mary's churchyard, Clifton Inventory reference 064. On Local Plan inset map but not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Cemetery/Burial Ground*, this Plan

Church car park, Clifton Inventory reference 065. On Local Plan inset map but not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Robertson Close open space ('the pocket park'), Clifton Inventory reference 066. RBC OSSR in 2015 audit (*Amenity Greenspace*) and on Local Plan inset map. Confirmed as *Amenity greenspace*, this Plan

North Road allotments, Clifton Inventory reference 069. East section is in RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Allotment Gardens*) but not on Local Plan inset map; west section and access track is

not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit or on Local Plan inset map. Whole site confirmed as OSSR (*Allotment Gardens*), this Plan

Clifton Recreation Ground and Play Area, Clifton: Inventory reference 070. In RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Parks and Gardens* typology) but not on Local Plan inset map. Confirmed as *Outdoor sport, Amenity Greenspace* and *Children's Play and Youth Provision*, this Plan

Newell Close Open Space Inventory reference 072. Not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Vicarage Hill Open Space Inventory reference 074. Not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Newell Close allotments, Clifton Inventory reference 076/077. In RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Allotments and Community Gardens*) but not on Local Plan inset map Confirmed as *Allotment Gardens*, this Plan

Avon Street allotments, Clifton Inventory reference 573. In RBC OSSR audit 2015 (*Allotments and Community Gardens*) but not on Local Plan inset map Confirmed as *Allotment Gardens*, this Plan

Clifton upon Dunsmore cemetery, Newton Road, Clifton Inventory reference 592. Not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit or on Local Plan inset map. New OSSR (*Cemetery / Burial Ground*), this Plan

Shuttleworth Road open space, Clifton Inventory reference 595. On Local Plan inset map but not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

North Road/Main Street triangle, Clifton Inventory reference 596. New OSSR, *Amenity green space*, this Plan

South road/Rugby Road junction open space and verge, Clifton Inventory reference 597. On Local Plan inset map but not in RBC 2015 OSSR audit. Confirmed as *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Houlton

Lincoln Drive open space, Houlton Inventory reference 533. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Normandy View open space west, Houlton Inventory reference 534. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Normandy View open space east, Houlton Inventory reference 535. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Houlton Park, Houlton Inventory reference 536/537. *Outdoor sport, Amenity Greenspace, Allotments and community gardens* and *Children's Play and Youth Provision*, this Plan

Milnerton Close open space, Houlton Inventory reference 538. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Hughes Drive open space, Houlton Inventory reference 539. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Houlton Way/Maine Street corner open space, Houlton Inventory reference 541. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Houlton Way play area, Houlton Inventory reference 542. *Amenity Greenspace* and *Children's Play and Youth Provision*, this Plan

Green corridor west, Houlton Inventory reference 543. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Green corridor north, Houlton Inventory reference 544. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Gill Crescent open space, Houlton Inventory reference 577. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Mountbatten View/Florence Avenue open space, Houlton Inventory reference 578. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Faulkner Road 'Green' open space, Houlton Inventory reference 579. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Dollman Road corner open space, Houlton Inventory reference 580. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Copt Oak Road open space, Houlton Inventory reference 581. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Station Road/Stonegrave open spaces, Houlton Inventory reference 584. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Houlton Way open space, Houlton west Inventory reference 585. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

Maine Street verges central, Houlton Inventory reference 590. *Amenity Greenspace*, this Plan

2.2 Natural and semi-natural greenspace: the following parcels of land (shaded green in figures 6.1. and 6.2) have (a) been classified as *natural and semi-natural green space* in the 2015 Rugby Borough Council audit, or (b) have been proposed as such in the masterplan for the Houlton Strategic Development because of their existing, known biodiversity value. When development proposals that would result in their loss or have a significant adverse effect on them are under consideration, the significance of the species, habitats or features present, and their value to the community as natural habitats, should be fully balanced against the benefit of the development. Development proposals on the identified sites will be expected to include evidence-based, measurable proposals for delivering *biodiversity net gain* at a minimum 10%.

Great Central Walk (north section, south end) Inventory reference 082. RBC OSSR in 2015 audit (*Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace* typology) but not on Local Plan inset map

Normandy Hill, pasture field, ridge and furrow, historical site: Inventory reference 531. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field, riparian habitats Inventory reference 136. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field, riparian habitats Inventory reference 137. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field, riparian habitats Inventory reference 170. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 501. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 502. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 503. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 504. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 506. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 507. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 508. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 509. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 510. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 511. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 512. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 513. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 514. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 515. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 516. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 517. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 518. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 520. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field with scrub and wetland features Inventory reference 521. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field, riparian habitats Inventory reference 522. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field with deciduous trees Inventory reference 525. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 531. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 549. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field. Local Wildlife Site Inventory reference 550. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field. Local Wildlife Site Inventory reference 551. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 557. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 558. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 559. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 560. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 561. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 562. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 563. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 564. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field, riparian habitats Inventory reference 565. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 572. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 574. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

Pasture field Inventory reference 575. *Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*, this Plan

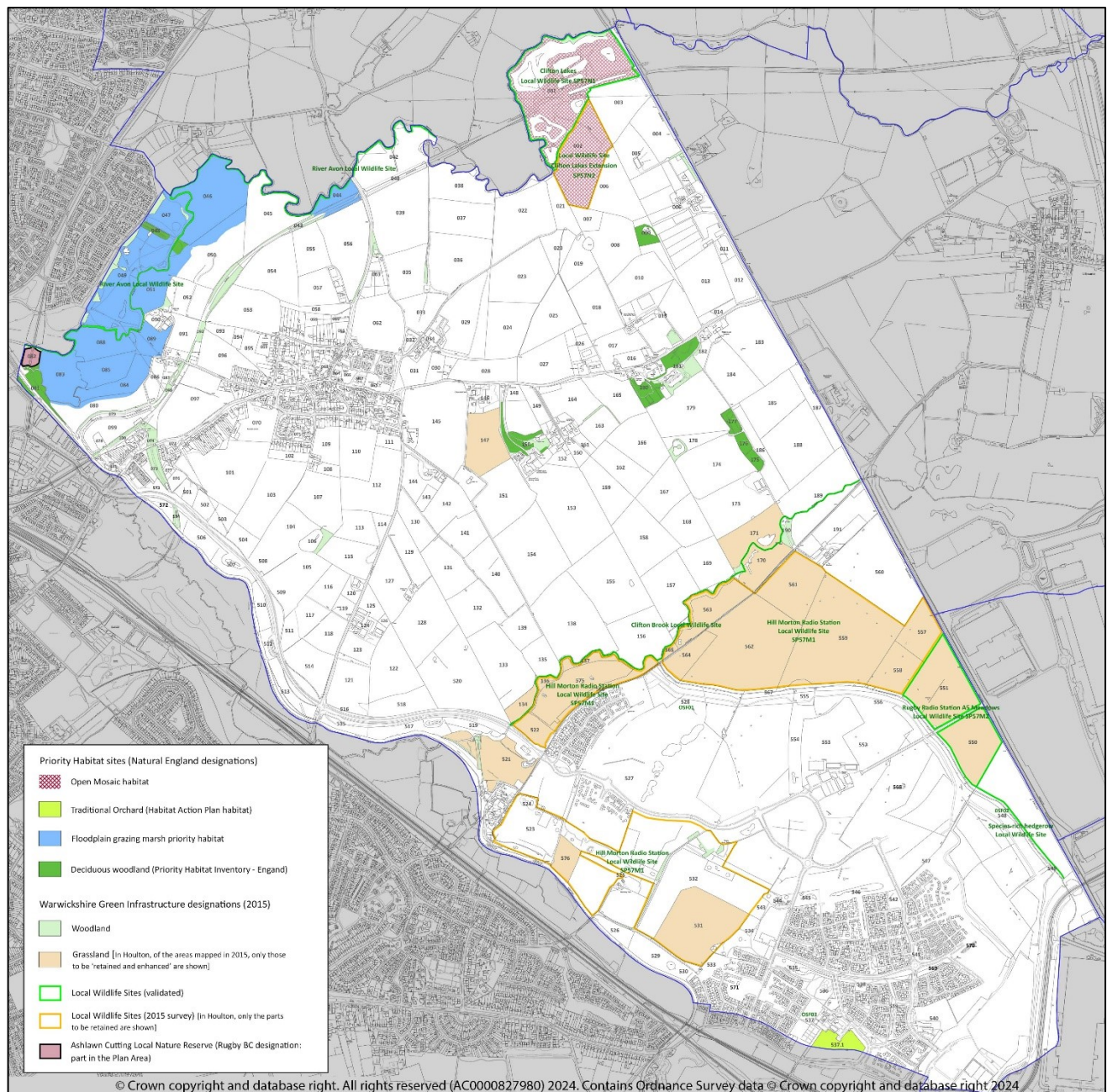
2.3 Open space in new development:

- a) in approved development proposals and masterplans: on completion, the sites shaded brown in figure 6.2 (and any other sites with OSSR functions or amenities within the Houlton development site boundary resulting from development consent modifications) will be subject to the protections afforded by paragraph 2.1 of this Neighbourhood Plan policy.
- b) in future development proposals: size-appropriate development proposals will be required to include open spaces (OSSRs and Natural and semi-natural greenspaces) to meet national and local targets. On completion, the sites will be protected under paragraph 2.1 of this Neighbourhood Plan policy.

Sites and features of Natural Environment significance

5.17 A number of sites in the Neighbourhood Area are important for wildlife (biodiversity). The features and designations for which they have been identified comprise a) sites where *priority habitats* and National *Forest Inventory* sites occur (Natural England mapping) or where several *biodiversity action plan (BAP) species* have been recorded; b) sites identified as ecologically significant by Warwickshire County Council, including Local Wildlife Sites, and c) sites identified during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as being of high biodiversity significance in the context of the Neighbourhood Area. The map (figure 7) shows their locations.

Figure 7: Sites and features of Natural Environment significance



5.18 Policy ENV 3 delivers site-specific compliance in the Plan Area with the relevant Rugby Borough Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Natural Environment and

Rural Communities Act 2006, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017-2019, and the UK Environment Act 2021. It has direct regard for National Planning Policy Framework 2023 policies 174, 179 and 180. It also refers to the DEFRA *Guidance* of July 7, 2021, in respect of the use of the *biodiversity metric* approach for assessing the wildlife value of development sites.

POLICY ENV 3: SITES AND FEATURES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE – The sites and features mapped in figure 7 (details in Appendix 3) have been identified as being of local or greater significance for the natural environment. They are ecologically important in their own right and are locally valued. The significance of the species, habitats or features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would adversely affect them. Development proposals on the identified sites will be expected to include evidence-based, measurable proposals for delivering *biodiversity net gain* at a minimum 10%.

If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through relocating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated by net gain as above, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused, having regard for paragraphs 180(a) and (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Woodland, notable trees and hedges of arboricultural, biodiversity and landscape importance should be protected from loss or damage in development proposals, and where possible integrated into their design. Proposals which use trees and hedges to enhance their appearance, amenity and biodiversity value will be supported. Development proposals adversely affecting trees and hedges should be accompanied by a tree survey (BS5837 or its current equivalent) to establish their health and longevity. Where damage or loss is unavoidable, the developer should provide or arrange for replacement trees and/or hedges of at least equivalent quantity, type and/or scale to deliver biodiversity net gain.

Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity

5.19 It might be argued that Clifton upon Dunsmore parish is a ‘typical’ area of English Midlands countryside because it has no nationally-rare species or large-scale, nationally important wildlife hotspots, and thus that it has little or no biodiversity significance to be taken into account in the Planning system. This would be a misunderstanding of the concept of biodiversity. England’s biodiversity is entirely and only the sum of the wildlife in all of its individual Parishes: The Neighbourhood Area is as important in this regard as every other Parish, and residents want it to play its essential part in protecting what remains of England’s threatened and diminishing biodiversity.

5.20 Trees and woodland: The scarcity of trees, and especially woodland, in the Neighbourhood Area means that all surviving individuals, groups and areas, including but not restricted to those already designated (e.g. as Local Wildlife Site or priority habitat) are a vital component of the Area’s biodiversity value and a bulwark against further biodiversity net loss. Development proposals, and decisions made in response to them, should always consider, and act on, the avoidance of destruction of trees and woodland.

5.21 Habitat connectivity is delivered by wildlife corridors, which are designated to prevent obstacles to the movement or spread of animals and plants that would otherwise be imposed by new developments. They also help to re-connect populations and habitats within Parishes and more widely. A wildlife corridor is mapped in this Plan (figure 8); its effective functioning in future should be taken into account when development proposals within it are under consideration.

5.22 While policy ENV 3 delivers *site-specific* compliance in the Neighbourhood Area with all the relevant national and local authority policies, this policy (ENV 4) does the same for *strategic planning* and the scrutiny of all future development proposals across the whole Neighbourhood Area. It also refers to the DEFRA *Guidance* of July 7, 2021, in respect of the use of the *biodiversity metric* approach to assessing the value to wildlife survival of virtually every potential development site.

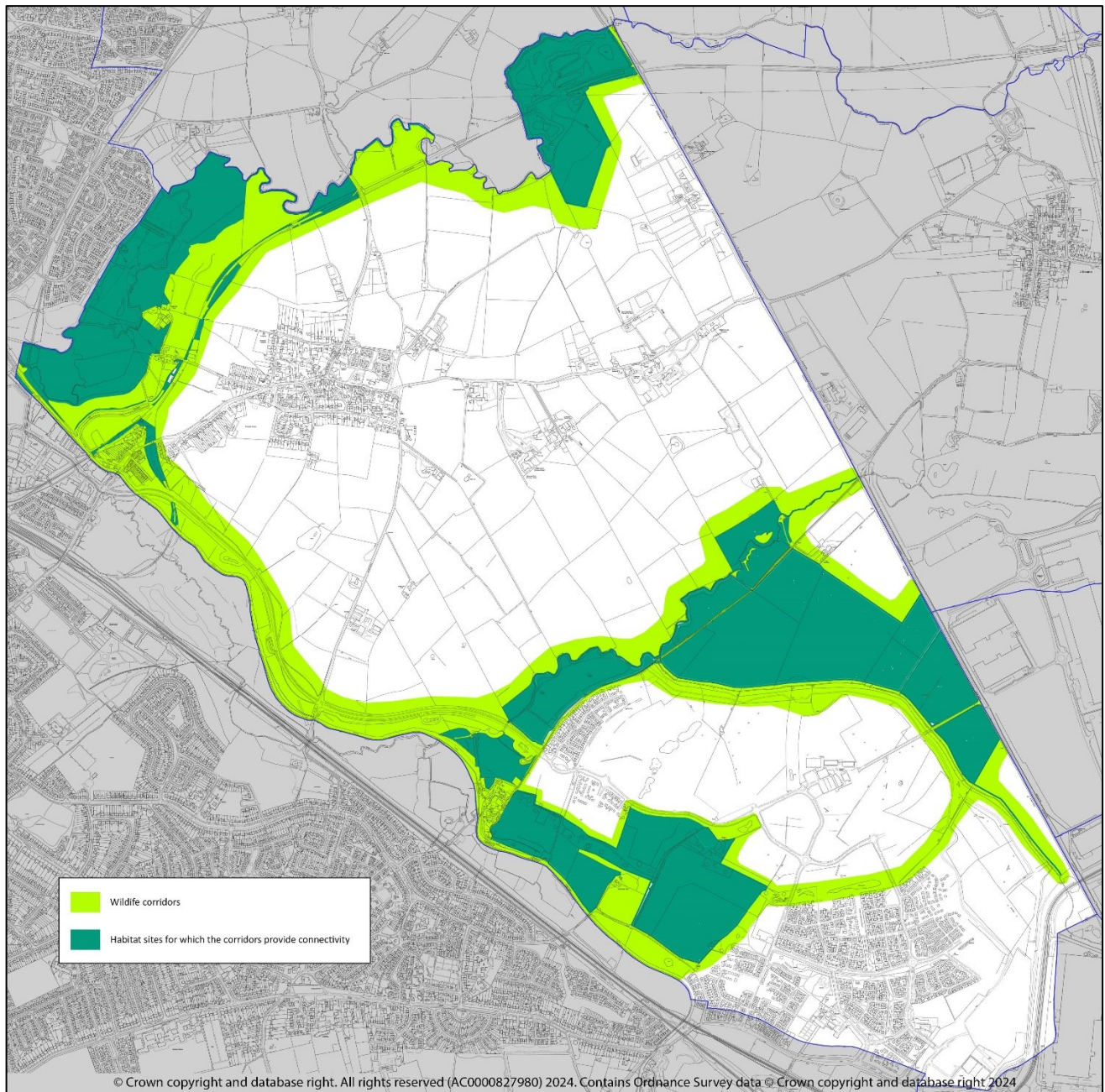
POLICY ENV 4: BIODIVERSITY ACROSS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

a. All new development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area will be expected to safeguard habitats and species, including those of local significance, and to deliver biodiversity net gain. If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through relocating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or dealt with through onsite or offsite enhancement (via biodiversity net gain at minimum 10%), planning permission should be refused, having regard for paragraph 180a of the National Planning Policy Framework.

b. Notable trees (veteran, ancient, those with TPO designations, and those regarded as significant by the community) on sites proposed for development across the Neighbourhood Area should be protected from felling, uprooting or damage unless they have been independently judged by a qualified arboriculturist to present an unmanageable public safety risk. Development proposals that would damage or result in the loss of woodland will not be supported unless the environmental and ecological harm is demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of the development. Development proposals affecting trees or woodland should be accompanied by a full tree Survey that establishes the health and longevity of all trees within the site. When fulfilment of biodiversity net gain involves replacement of trees or woodland, compensatory plantings should be of native or appropriate ornamental species and should take account of current best practice regarding plant disease control and aftercare.

c. Development proposals will only be supported if they do not adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors identified in figure 8.

Figure 8: Wildlife corridors

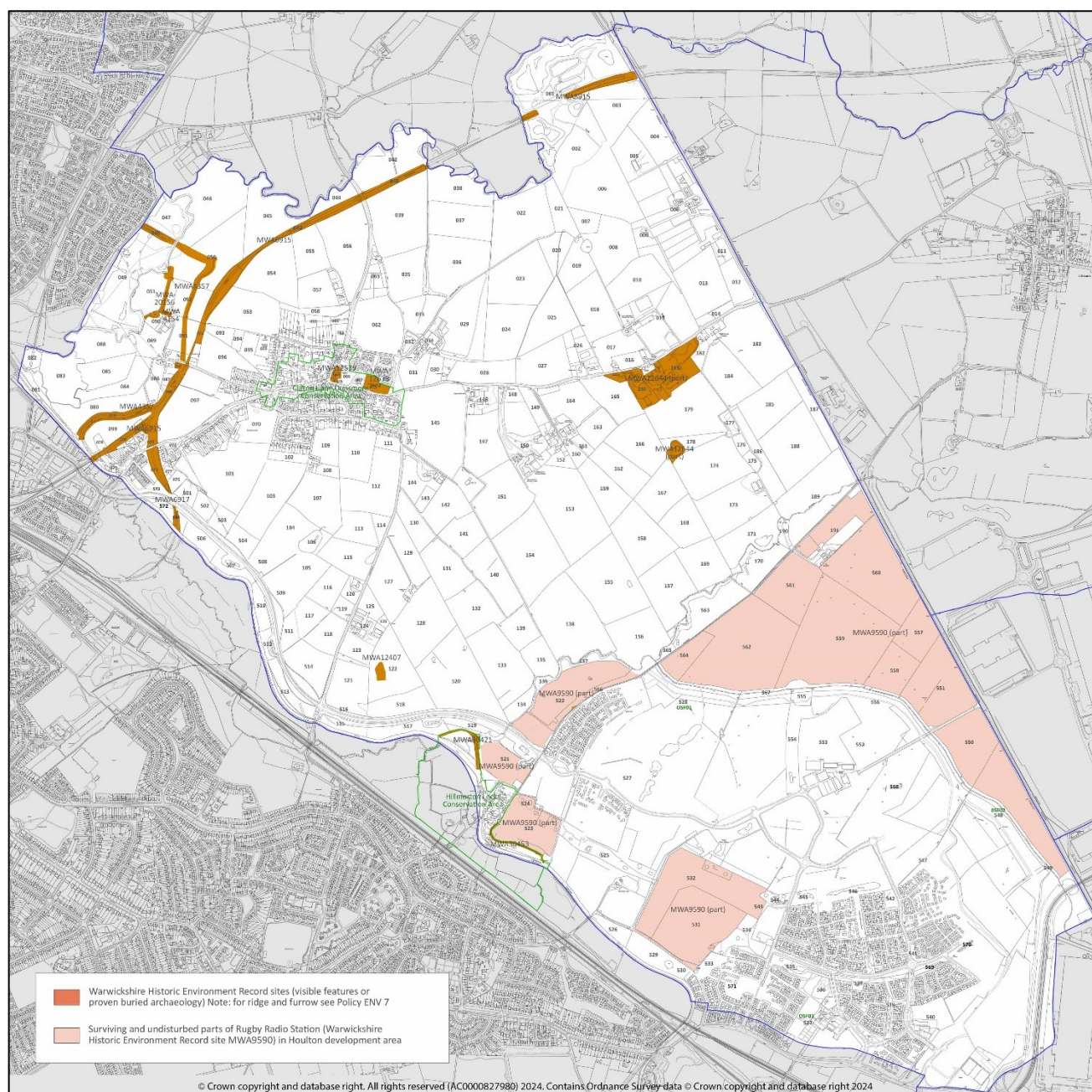


Sites of Historical Environment significance

5.23 A number of sites in Clifton upon Dunsmore are important for (at least local) heritage and history. They comprise sites and features of relevance to Neighbourhood Plan policies in the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England databases, and a further set identified (from fieldwork and local history publications and knowledge) in the preparation of the Plan. The map (figure 8) shows their locations.

POLICY ENV 5: SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE - The sites mapped in figure 9 (details in Appendix 3) are of at least local significance for their historical features. The features are extant and have visible expression or there is proven buried archaeology on the site, and they are locally valued. The significance of the features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would affect or damage them.

Figure 9: Sites of Historical Environment significance



Ridge and furrow

5.24 The medieval township of Clifton upon Dunsmore was farmed using the *Open Field* system. All the open land, except small fields (closes) backing onto the houses, the floodplain meadows, and areas of woodland or waste, was worked in a seasonal and yearly rotation of arable crops (cereals, beans), grazing and fallow. Medieval ploughs were pulled by oxen and, because they were not reversible, the plough always turned the soil rightwards as the plough team progressed up and down the furlongs, producing a corrugated pattern of ridges and furrows whose dimensions increased with every season.

5.25 The open field system was practised for most of the medieval period until changes in land ownership and use gave rise to a change from large open fields to enclosed smaller fields with hedged boundaries, and a change from arable to pastoral (livestock) farming. The land in the Plan Area was

enclosed in this way in several phases, probably beginning in the 14th century and completed by Clifton upon Dunsmore's Parliamentary Enclosure in 1756.

5.26 The result of the enclosures was to 'fossilise' the ridges and furrows under grass and hedgerows, and this situation persisted until the mid-20th century, when a second agricultural revolution after the Second World War effectively reversed the first one. British governments, and later the European Union, encouraged farmers, mainly through subsidies, to plough the pastures and turn them over to intensive arable production. Wherever this happened, modern reversible ploughs quickly obliterated the ridge and furrow. In most English open field parishes, the loss of ridge and furrow since 1950 has been over 90%. In the late 1990s, English Heritage (now Historic England), realising the scale of this destruction, undertook the first of a series of surveys (*'Turning the Plough'*) across the Midlands, including Warwickshire, and made recommendations for protection and management.

5.27 The extent of ridge and furrow in Clifton upon Dunsmore in 1945 can be seen on 1945 RAF aerial imagery (figure 10.1). Its extent in the late 1990s was mapped for the *Turning the Plough* (Historic England) survey (figure 10.2), and this provided the baseline for a new survey undertaken for this Plan in 2023 (figure 10.3). The summary results show the decline since World War II and since 1999: despite a few small areas having been omitted in 1999 but re-confirmed in 2023, the situation is now as follows:

1756	c.283 ha (as 'about 700 acres' in <i>Victoria County History</i>)
1945	c.240 ha (from RAF aerial imagery)
1999	c.145 ha
2023	c.48 ha

5.28 The large and (historically) potentially significant area of preserved ridge and furrow still present in the south of the parish in 1999 (figure 10.2) has, with two (arguably tokenistic) exceptions, been obliterated by the permitted Houlton urban extension.

5.29 In English legislation ridge and furrow fields (except for the few that are Scheduled Monuments) are not statutorily protected, despite recognition that, in view of the level of loss since the mid-20th century, "*as the open field system was once commonplace in NW Europe, these [surviving] sites take on an international importance*" (English Heritage, 2001).

5.30 While the ten individual fields with surviving ridge and furrow in the Neighbourhood Area are not claimed to be of international importance, their rarity across the Midlands and their relationship with other medieval heritage assets in the Area means that any further, avoidable, loss would be irreversibly detrimental. In conformity with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (including footnote 63) and following the recommendation of Historic England, all surviving ridge and furrow in the Plan Area (figure 10.3) should now be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and taken into account in the planning system as the visible evidence of a component of national heritage comparable in significance to that of surviving medieval buildings. In future, and whenever possible, increased local housing need or new targets required at a higher level in the planning system should only be fulfilled by allocating development to available sites where there is no surviving ridge and furrow. Some recognition of the merits of this argument is afforded by the protection being given (as designated open space) to two areas of ridge and furrow in the Houlton strategic development's masterplan.

Figure 10.1: Ridge and furrow in Clifton upon Dunsmore, 1945
From RAF aerial imagery

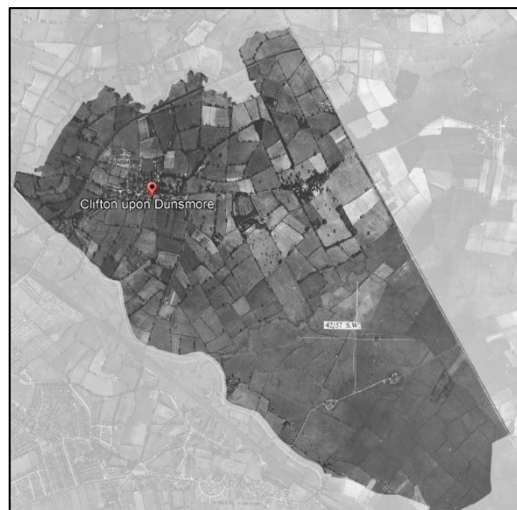


Figure 10.2: Ridge and furrow in Clifton upon Dunsmore
c.1999
(Midlands Open Field Project (Turning the Plough) survey, English Heritage,
via Warwickshire HER)

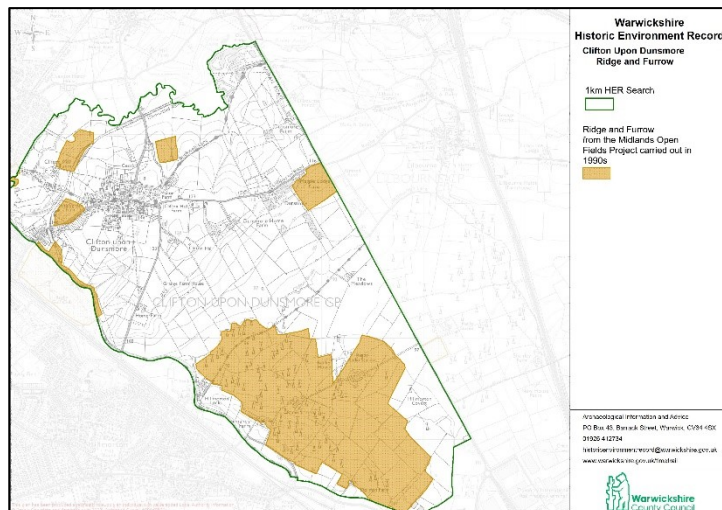
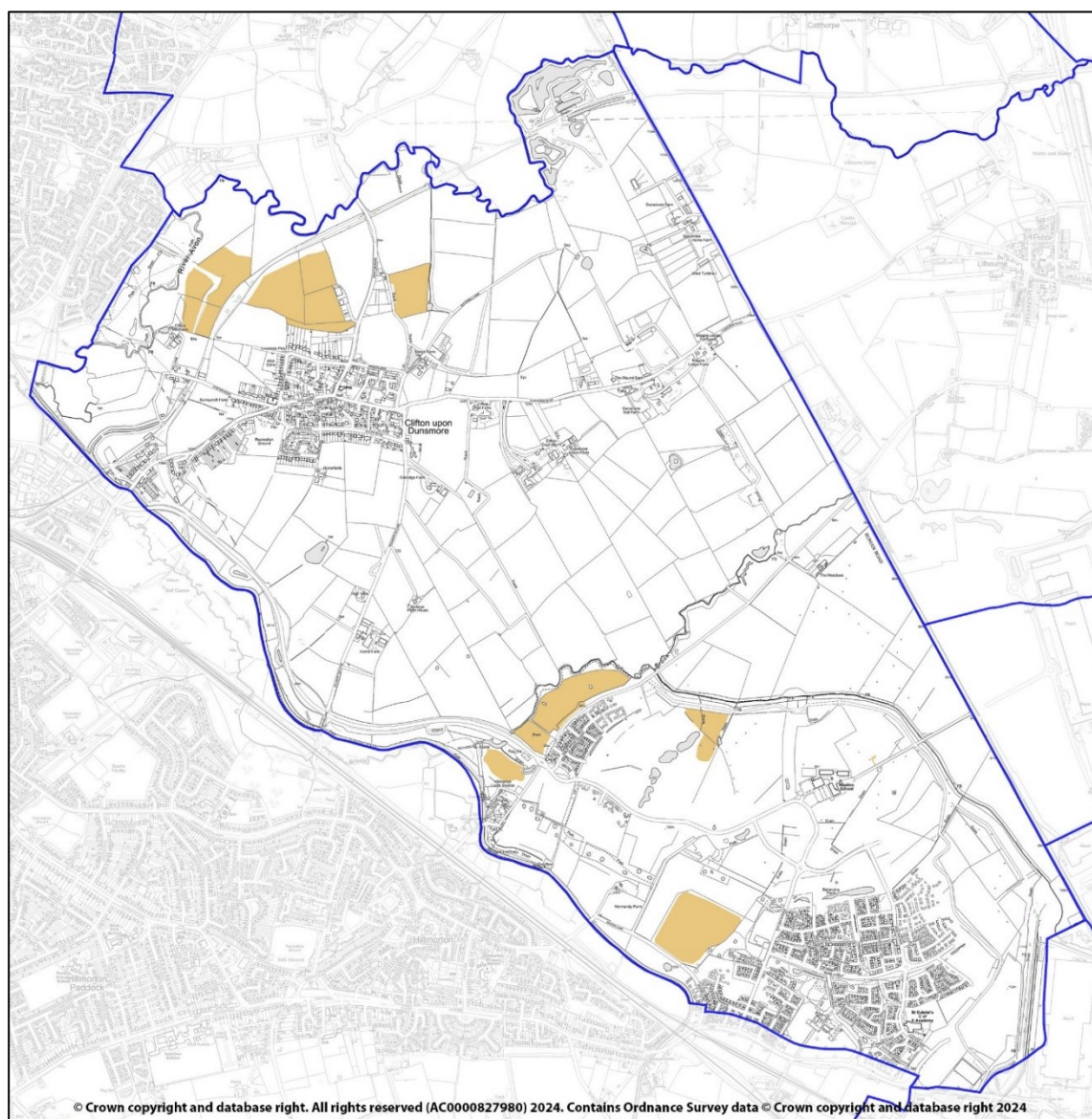


Figure 10.3: Ridge and furrow in Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Area 2023 (surveyed for this Plan)
Further areas of ridge and furrow in Houlton were recorded in 2023 but are not protected in the approved masterplan



POLICY ENV 6: RIDGE AND FURROW – The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks mapped in figure 10.3 are non-designated local heritage assets.

Any loss or damage arising from a development proposal (or a change of land use requiring planning permission) is to be avoided; the significance of the ridge and furrow features as heritage assets must be balanced against the benefits of such development.

Statutorily protected Heritage Assets

5.31 Nine buildings and structures in the Plan Area have statutory protection through Listing at Grade II* or II. The Neighbourhood Plan lists them here for reference, and to note that all new development proposals will be required to take into account their *settings*, as defined on a case-by-case basis by Historic England.

DUNSMORE HOUSE

List Entry Number: 1233704

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: DUNSMORE HOUSE, LILBOURNE ROAD, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

CLIFTON MANOR

List Entry Number: 1233442

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: CLIFTON MANOR, MAIN STREET, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

GROUP OF 2 CHEST TOMBS APPROXIMATELY 4 METRES SOUTH OF EAST END OF CHANCEL OF CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN

List Entry Number: 1233441

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: GROUP OF 2 CHEST TOMBS APPROXIMATELY 4 METRES SOUTH OF EAST END OF CHANCEL OF CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, CHURCH STREET, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

SHELTER SHED APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES SOUTH WEST OF NUMBER 2 (NOT INCLUDED) AND ATTACHED WALL

List Entry Number: 1233483

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: SHELTER SHED APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES SOUTH WEST OF NUMBER 2 (NOT INCLUDED) AND ATTACHED WALL, NORTH ROAD, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

SUNNYSIDE

List Entry Number: 1233443

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: SUNNYSIDE, 9, MAIN STREET, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

THE OLD HALL

List Entry Number: 1233481

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: THE OLD HALL, MAIN STREET, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN

List Entry Number: 1233440

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II*

Location: CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, CHURCH STREET, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

HILLMORTON BOTTOM LOCK (LOCKS 2 AND 3), FORMER OXFORD CANAL

List Entry Number: 1393797

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: HILLMORTON BOTTOM LOCK (LOCKS 2 AND 3), FORMER OXFORD CANAL, Clifton upon Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire

RUGBY RADIO STATION

List Entry Number: 1391243

Heritage Category: Listing

Grade: II

Location: Rugby Radio Station, Clifton upon Dunsmore, HILLMORTON, Rugby, Warwickshire

[Information downloaded from <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> on 26-3-24]

Important views

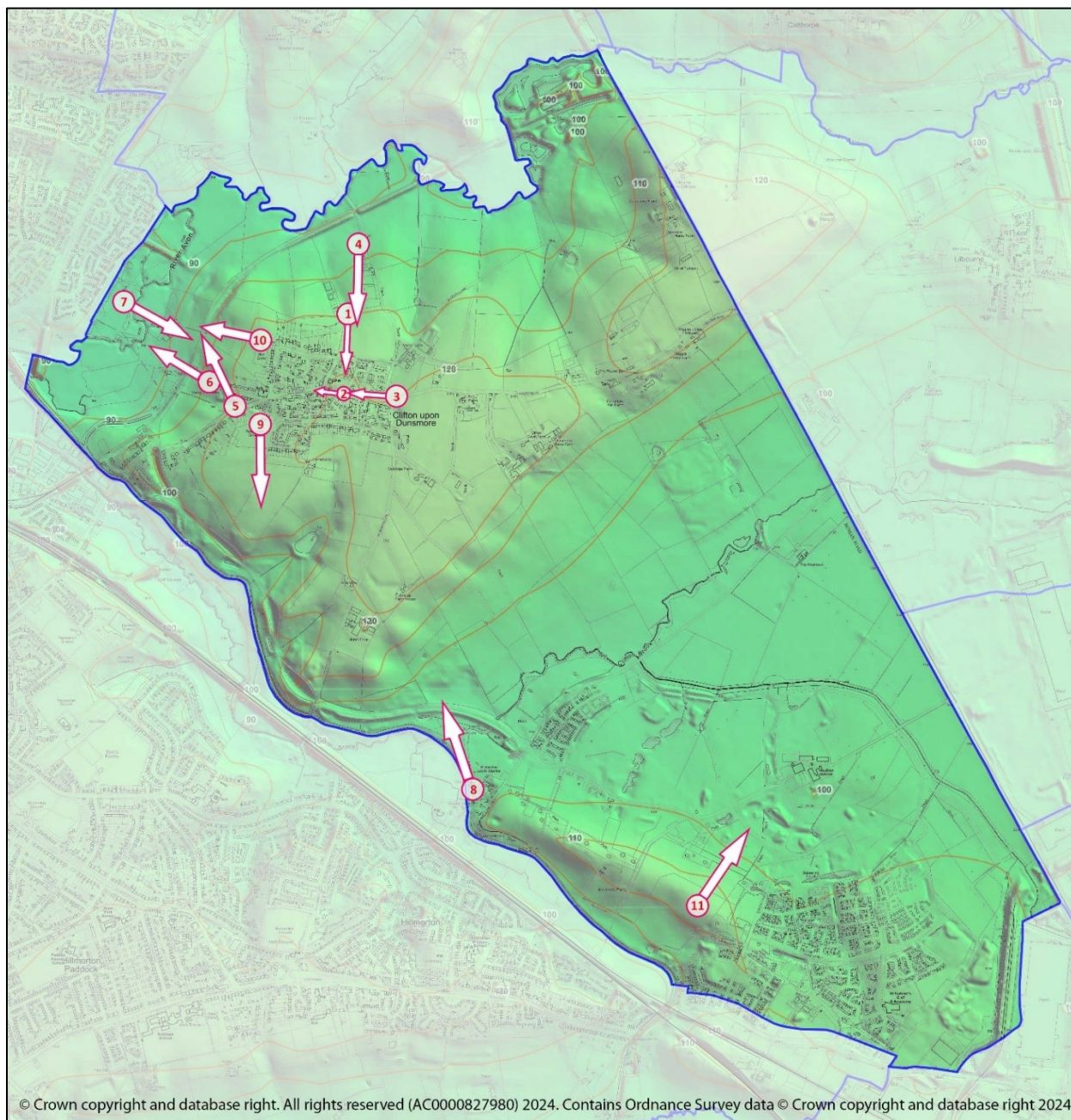
5.32 Consultation during the Neighbourhood Plan's preparation identified a widely held wish to protect the largely rural settings of Clifton upon Dunsmore and Houlton, in particular their visual relationship with the surrounding countryside, including the distinctive landscapes of National Character Areas *95 Northamptonshire Uplands* and *96 Dunsmore and Feldon*. One of the main ways in which residents expressed this wish was by describing several highly valued views within and around Clifton and Houlton, and toward the surrounding countryside. These consultation findings were supported by the fieldwork for this chapter of the Plan, which although principally aimed at identifying sites of environmental significance also confirmed the sightlines of the suggested views and mapped them (figure 11).

POLICY ENV 7: IMPORTANT VIEWS – The following views (map figure 11, details Appendix 5) are important to the setting and character of the village. Development proposals should respect and whenever possible protect them. Development which would have an adverse impact on the identified views will not be supported.

1. Gateway view (south) of Clifton upon Dunsmore village from Newton Road
2. Village view west in the centre of Clifton upon Dunsmore

3. Gateway view (west) into Clifton upon Dunsmore village from Lilbourne Road, with Old Hall Cottage and The Green
4. Distant view south from Newton Road of Clifton upon Dunsmore village and surrounding fields
5. From Rugby Road on the west side of the village. south over the River Avon valley
6. From Station Road, Clifton, toward the River Avon open space
7. From River Avon open space, distant view of Clifton upon Dunsmore village
8. From Hillmorton Locks northeast to Allan's Farm and (on skyline) Clifton upon Dunsmore village
9. From Clifton Recreation Ground, views south and southwest to Bluebell wood, Clifton Brook valley, the Oxford Canal (and Rugby)
- 10 From the entrance to Cow Field, off North Road, Clifton, west across open countryside to the parish boundary
11. From Normandy Hill, Houlton, extensive views north and east over Houlton and the historic site of Rugby Radio Station, including the protected buildings

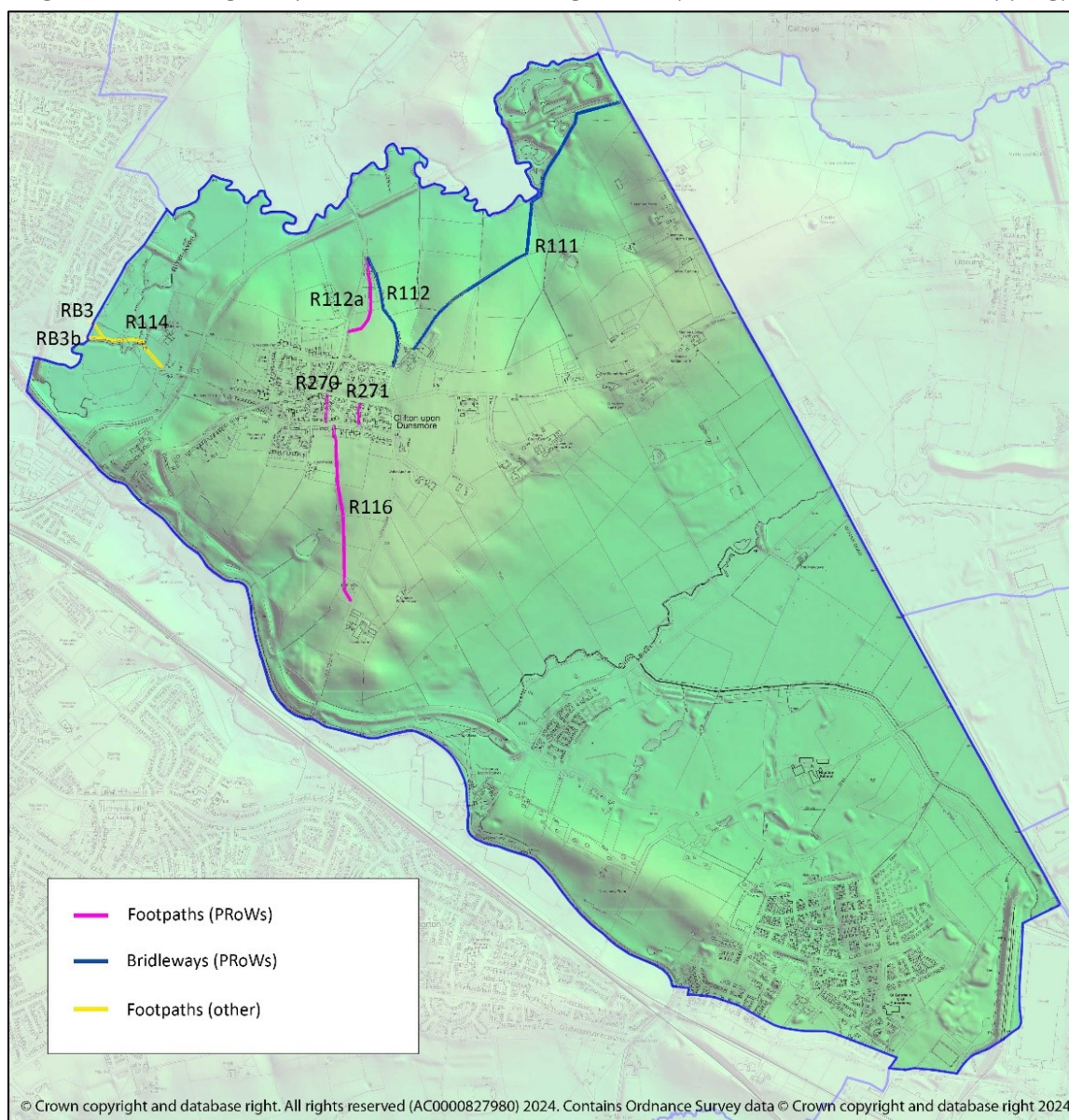
Figure 11: Important views



Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways

5.33 The network of footpaths and other rights of way in the Neighbourhood Area is severely limited, and therefore not generally conducive to recreational use, particularly compared with most other parishes in east Warwickshire. Because walking routes everywhere tend to be survivors from around the time of the 18th century enclosure of the farmed landscape and from before the development of paved motor roads, there are historical reasons for this, including in the case of Clifton upon Dunsmore the manorial and agricultural history of the parish and the creation of Rugby Radio Station in the southern half of the Area. But in the opinion of the communities this is not appropriate for the second quarter of the 21st century. There are no opportunities for circular walks anywhere without the use of busy roads, and there are no safe non-driving links between Clifton and Houlton. With modern recognition of the value of walking and cycling for health and wellbeing and for the environment and the drive to carbon-neutrality generally, the lack is unfortunate and any adverse effects on the network's extent and character from new development will be very strongly resisted.

Figure 12: Existing footpaths and other walking routes (from Warwickshire CC mapping)



- 5.34 Moreover, it has been noted that (as well as the lack of off-road walking/cycling links between Houlton and Clifton) the footpaths network in Houlton now being delivered (2024) is disjointed, with blind-ended cul-de-sacs at the edges of individual developers' sections where pedestrian footpaths are fenced off from the open spaces and footpaths in immediately adjoining sections.
- 5.35 Foot and towpaths exist through the parish and are well used. Cycling in the parish is mainly for leisure use and is exclusively along the roads. Further information on existing rights of way can be found at <https://rowreporting.warwickshire.gov.uk/CAMSWeb/standardmap.aspx>
- 5.36 Many villagers mentioned the importance of footpaths and walking for leisure. As the village grows it will be important to establish a means by which these can be maintained and enhanced.
- 5.37 Community consultation showed parishioners believe that more foot/cycle paths should be created within the Parish, not least to connect Clifton village with the new Houlton development. It is felt that all new development must have footpaths that provide a direct path of travel to the important community assets and facilities, enabling a practical alternative to car use.
- 5.38 A foot/cycle path along Hillmorton Lane to the Houlton Way is a very popular request. As the number of village children using Houlton secondary school will increase over the next few years the importance of such a pathway will also increase.
- 5.39 The central and historic Lion Path in the centre of the village is in poor condition.
- 5.40 The provision of pedestrian pavements in the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore is sporadic with certain roads having no footpaths forcing people to walk on the road for example along Hillmorton lane between South Road and Lilbourne Road along Buckwell Lane.
- 5.41 There is also a missing footpath where the public footpath across South Road fields joints Hillmorton Lane and the junction with the Houlton Way.
- 5.42 The future plan for roadside pavements is not clear and this needs to be prioritised in any planning to ensure that the parish is properly connected with footpaths cycle ways and bridleways.

Community Action 1: Footpaths

New and existing footpaths should be of good quality and access standards – and be properly maintained to encourage use throughout the year.

Creation of a pavement/cycle path between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Houlton Way.

Aim to fill in the missing footpath link in Clifton upon Dunsmore.

POLICY ENV 8: FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (figure 12) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

Major development proposals (including those amending already consented outline or full proposals) will not be supported if the footpaths and cycleways proposed do not deliver a coherent network providing usable routes within the development and between it and other destinations.

Proposals to enhance the networks of footpaths, bridleways and cycling routes will be supported. Where appropriate having regard to the scale and location of the proposal, new developments will be required to take advantage of opportunities to incorporate improvements to the network of footpaths and cycleways into their proposals or may be required to contribute to such improvements through a planning obligation, where the legal requirements are met.

Flood risk resilience and climate change

5.43 Even if international cooperation and national strategies and policies eventually succeed in halting the human and industrial contributions towards climate change, the effects of recent and current warming on weather events will likely persist for decades. It is therefore desirable to plan for at least a medium-term future, in which weather events will continue to become more extreme, by putting in place measures that manage the effects of climate change on flooding for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. This objective is explicitly supported by the Environment Agency *National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England* (2019), in which the strategic emphasis shifts from mitigation to resilience; in other words from requiring new development to *reduce* its adverse effects on flood risk to requiring it to *avoid creating or adding to flood risk at all*.

5.44 In light of all the above, it is particularly important that the locations (with respect to known flood risk) and technical standards of all new development proposals in the Plan Area should in future be judged on their likely contribution to flooding in a climate change world. To complement this objective, the community will support proposals to improve the infrastructure within the built-up areas for managing flooding from the river and from surface water run-off events, providing this is not unduly detrimental to the historic built environment, biodiversity sites, or open and green spaces.

This policy is in general conformity with Rugby BC Local Plan Policies SDC5 and SDC6.

POLICY ENV 9: FLOOD RISK RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

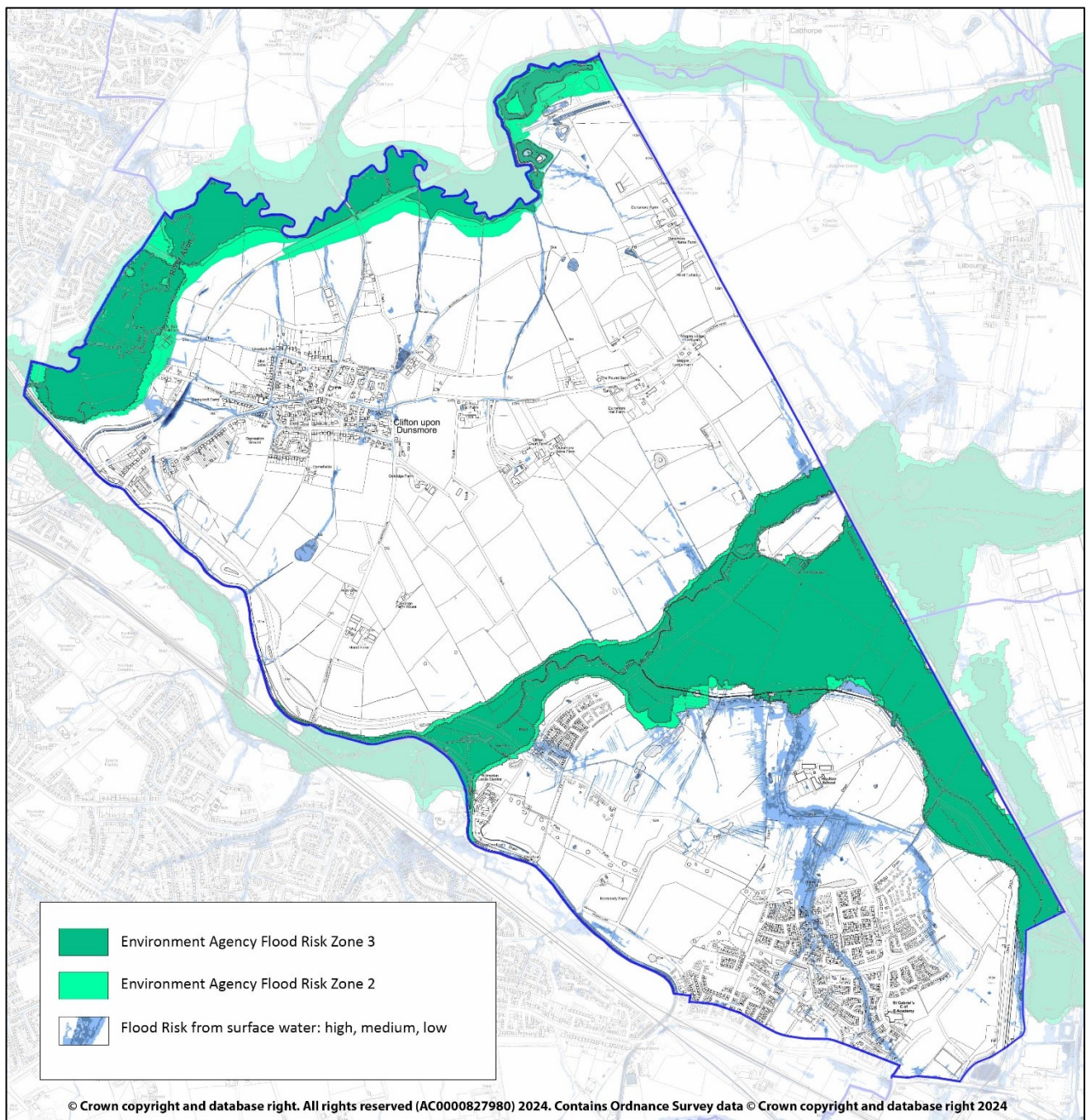
a) Development proposals within or adjacent to the areas indicated as being at risk of flooding from main rivers, other watercourses or surface water in Figure 13 will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the benefit of development outweighs the harm it causes in relation to its adverse impact on flooding in the Neighbourhood Area, or on Rugby Borough Council and national climate change targets, and on the likelihood of it conflicting with locally applicable flood mitigation strategies and infrastructure.

b) Proposals to construct new (or modify or improve existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within or close to the built-up areas, will be supported, provided they do not adversely affect important green and open spaces, or sites and features of natural or historical environment significance.

c) Development proposals of one or more dwellings and/or for employment or agricultural development should demonstrate that:

- if in a location susceptible to flooding from rivers or surface water (figure 13), no alternative site is available;
- its location and design respect the geology, flood risk and natural drainage characteristics of the immediate area and is accompanied by a hydrological study whose findings must be complied with in respect of design, groundworks and construction;
- it includes a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which demonstrates that the proposed drainage scheme, and site layout and design, will prevent properties from flooding from surface water, including allowing for climate change effects, and that flood risk elsewhere will not be exacerbated by increased levels of surface water runoff and that the development will not threaten other natural habitats and water systems;
- its design includes, as appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) with ongoing maintenance provision, other surface water management measures and permeable surfaces;
- proposed SuDS infrastructure includes, where practicable, habitat creation comprising e.g. landscaping, access and egress for aquatic and terrestrial animals, and native species planting;
- it does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties; and
- it takes the effects of climate change into account.

Figure 13: Risk of flooding from rivers and surface water
Composite map from Environment Agency mapping



Renewable Energy Generation Infrastructure

5.45 The landscape of the Plan Area is dominated by two topographic areas (see paragraph 5.3), both largely open and with wide views: in the northwest the Avon valley and the higher ridge of the eastern end of historic Dunsmore, and in the southeast the low ground drained by Clifton Brook. Their open aspect might make them technically suitable for wind and solar generation, but the general absence of topographic basins and little woodland means there are almost no locations that are not in plain sight from the village and most of the parish.

5.46 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) paragraphs 158 – 160 make it clear that all communities are responsible for reducing emissions as part of the necessary approach to mitigating

and adapting to climate change. Residents of Clifton upon Dunsmore wish to play their part, but at a scale appropriate to the landscape sensitivity of the Plan Area. The impact of wind generation infrastructure on communities has been recognised by the government: a Ministerial Statement (18 June 2015) says that suitable areas for wind energy development must be identified in local plans and (separately) that any such developments must have the support of local communities.

5.47 Rugby Borough Council has, in conformity with national guidelines and the Ministerial Statement noted above, identified (a) the sensitivity (fragility of inherent character, visibility and overall sensitivity) to general development of the ten *Landscape Character Types* in the Borough (including *Dunsmore, Plateau fringe* and *Feldon, Vale farmlands*, in which Clifton upon Dunsmore is situated) in *Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments* (2011) (see figures 14); these are supporting documents for the Local Plan. Similar mapped assessments of landscape sensitivity to solar arrays had not been carried out at the time of drafting this Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 14.1: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy development in the Plan Area
(Extract from RBC Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments, 2011)

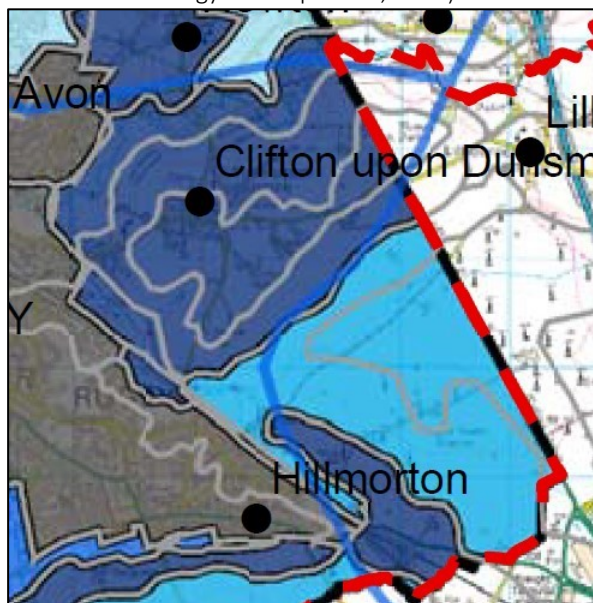
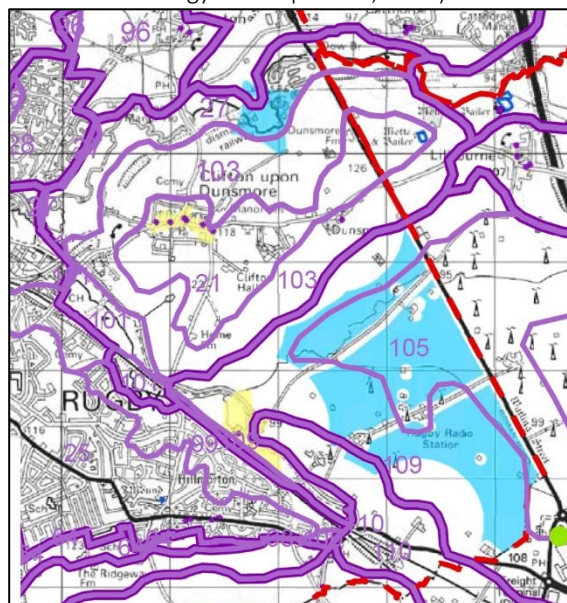


Figure 14.2: Assessment of suitability for turbines in the Plan Area
(Extract from RBC Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments, 2011)



5.48 This Neighbourhood Plan's Policy ENV 12 is in general conformity with Rugby BC Local Plan Policy SDC8. For both wind and solar energy generation infrastructure it takes its guidance from the two RBC documents mentioned above, and from the descriptions and assessments of the adverse effects of 'drivers of change' in the Natural England *National Character Area Profiles 95 Northamptonshire Uplands* and *96 Dunsmore & Feldon*.

5.49 The Parish is in favour of green energy and making a positive impact on Co² emissions and supporting homeowners/ businesses be more efficient with their energy usage. New homes/ premises and extensions should at least comply or exceed current guidelines on energy efficiency.

5.50 Nevertheless, any devices that facilitate green energy and efficiency, for example: heat pumps, solar panels, wind turbines should not be invasive and be positioned sympathetically within the parish. We would support the installation of solar panels, heat pumps and local personal wind turbines where

these are not overtly intrusive. We would expect that, for example, personal wind turbines should only be in rural areas and not within the settlement boundaries and of a size where visual and noise impacts can be negated. Similarly, the installation of solar panels should not be intrusive and detrimental to the street scene and in new builds should be incorporated as an integral part of the roof structure.

5.51 In the Parish, the introduction of large commercial wind and solar farms is considered to be problematic. Houlton's development and the associated land usage provides no realistic locations for extensive commercial installations within the Parish Boundary that would not be intrusive in terms of visual impact, noise and nuisance and would be imposing in terms of scarce land use. It is also felt that commercial solar farms should be discouraged on productive farmland. There are opportunities to use the many hectares of unused roof space on the many large warehouses and distribution centres adjacent to the parish which are currently underutilised/ unused before taking agricultural acreage out of production impacting food security.

POLICY ENV 10: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE – Proposals for small-scale, solar and wind generation infrastructure proposals instigated by local residents, businesses, or the community will be supported, subject to their complying with the following conditions:

- a) The landscape impact of the development is minimised and mitigated against;
- b) The development links to a specific demand through a decentralised energy network or where this is not possible, the necessary infrastructure is provided to supply power to the National Grid;
- c) The siting of development avoids harm to the significance of a heritage asset and its setting in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF;
- d) The siting of development does not significantly adversely affect the amenity of existing, or proposed, residential dwellings and/or businesses, either in isolation or cumulatively, by reason of noise, odour intrusion, dust, traffic generation, visual impact or shadow flicker;
- e) The development does not result in an adverse impact on the capacity and safety of the highways network and of public rights of way;
- f) The development includes a managed programme of measures to mitigate against any adverse impacts on the built and natural environment resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of any equipment/infrastructure;
- g) The development does not create a significant adverse cumulative noise or visual impact when considered in conjunction with other developments planned within Rugby Borough and adjoining local authority areas;
- h) The development retains and enhances on-site biodiversity and supports the enlargement of, and/or connection to, existing biodiversity assets such as wildlife corridors, where possible;
- i) Proposals for Solar Photovoltaic farms avoid the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Medium- and large-scale development proposals (for more than one turbine, and/or of tip height more than 30 m; solar arrays of more than 10 ha area) will not be supported.

Proposals for ground source heat pumps will be supported provided there is no adverse effect on biodiversity (habitats and species), the best and most versatile agricultural land, or the historic environment.

D Sustainability

6.1 This chapter headed 'sustainability' captures those subjects that, together, help to sustain the local community, be it through business that helps to provide local employment opportunities, community facilities that bring people together or transport and travel options that enable alternatives to motorised journeys.

6.2 The Parish of Clifton Upon Dunsmore is very diverse based around the historic community of the Village of Clifton Upon Dunsmore, Hillmorton Locks and the new development of Houlton, which forms one of two wards along with Clifton upon Dunsmore.

6.3 A current challenge for the Parish is to link the development of the disparate communities to maintain and sustain distinctiveness but to integrate them in terms of a shared environment and access to facilities. The entire Parish has indicated through the Neighbourhood Planning process that they want to maintain their individuality and not be subsumed into a large single conurbation.

6.4 A common goal is to sustain an overall sense that the Parish as a place to live with most work being focused outside of the Parish in organisations that do not have facilities based here. We live in a world where working practises have changed, people utilising technology to work from home for part of a working week. To sustain a good quality of life it is important that leisure facilities and green spaces are available to all and that distinctive separation is maintained between the various communities but that environmentally sound transport links join these various localities together. The development of pathways and cycleways is seen as one key area that could link the communities and their green spaces to provide a network to be explored and enjoyed by all.

6.5 The community of the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore see the importance of sustaining their environment through voluntary work and alignment with the Parish Council in terms of a conservation group. The community participates in small landscaping and village improvement activities including tidying and picking litter on a regular basis. Such community groups are also under development in Houlton, through the resident's association, however landscaping and housekeeping activities in the locale are separately paid for and maintained by Houlton's Development Corporation.

6.6 We recognise that, as our communities grow, it is important to ensure that the infrastructure grows with it, and the facilities, amenities and environment are not only retained and protected but also enhanced. This is integral to sustaining a healthy community, its cohesion, vitality, safety, and general wellbeing.

Facilities and Amenities

6.7 The community facilities and amenities that exist in the Parish of Clifton Upon Dunsmore are diverse but make a significant contribution to the sense of 'community'.

6.8 They have a positive impact on our sustainability, enhancing the quality of life for residents and providing the potential for social interaction.

6.9 Our Neighbourhood Plan community survey received 135 responses from residents within the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore. It shows that many villagers were most concerned about the importance of ensuring that, as the village grows, the facilities and amenities are upgraded and developed. The new communities coming into the Parish are concerned that their amenities and facilities promised are delivered in a timely manner.

St Mary's Parish Church and churchyard

6.10 The survey shows that 48% of respondents felt that the church was important and a central focus within the village. The church is a grade II listed building that stands on the site of the original 11th century wooden church. It was reconstructed in stone in the 13th century, and many additions have been made to it since then, including a major Victorian restoration and an extension to the north wing that complies with the architecture of 13th century building that now has a disability access and toilet facilities.

6.11 The refurbished weathervane and newly painted clock were part of the millennium project, and the newly donated seating shows the regard, which local residents hold for this tranquil area.

6.12 The churchyard was closed to burials 11th of July 1877 and holds two grade II listed table tombs in the grounds. The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard and a grounds-person is employed for grass cutting and weed maintenance from March to October. An Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with St Mary's Parochial Church Council, which remains responsible for the gravestones and table tombs within the Churchyard.

Joint Clifton and Newton cemetery

6.13 The cemetery is accessed from Newton Road, Clifton up Dunsmore and is in a peaceful location, which has views across the Avon flood plain.

6.14 The closed section of the cemetery from the Lych Gate to the first hedge is owned and maintained by Rugby Borough Council. This area contains some commonwealth war graves.

6.15 The open cemetery is owned and managed by the Clifton and Newton Joint Burial Committee, which is formed of Members of both Clifton and Newton Parish Councils. The cemetery area is largely consecrated ground however there is an area, which is not consecrated which is available for secular burials. The joint burial ground committee meet on a regular basis to discuss the upkeep of the cemetery and ensure it is maintained to a high standard. A grounds-person is employed to keep it looking tidy throughout the year.

Dollman Farm Houlton

6.16 Dollman Farm provides a hub for the Houlton community that accommodates the Tuning Fork

restaurant and co-op supermarket set in the newly created Dollman Farm Courtyard, The Exchange is a co-working space that provides residents of the Parish, local entrepreneurs, students and professionals with more flexibility to work in a safe, comfortable environment, The Barn, which is the new community centre and The Old Station Nursery which accommodates babies, toddlers and pre-school children. There is a very good modern playground at this facility.

Townsend Memorial Hall

6.17 The hall and cottages form a distinctive family of buildings surrounding a sheltered green space at the heart of the village.

6.18 Thomas Sutton Townsend bought the Red Lion pub and the cottages beside it in 1885. He reconfigured the site to create the village hall in the same year. This provided a smoking and reading room, library, kitchen, and caretaker's cottage. In 1922, Mrs Roscoe, daughter of Mr Townsend, presented the hall and caretakers cottage to the village in memory of her father who had been killed in that year. It was renamed the Townsend Memorial Hall and is now a well-established and active community facility where the Parish Council hold their monthly meetings and also accommodates WI meetings, Clifton history group meetings, yoga classes and baby sensory classes; it is available for hire for children's parties and is used for village events like the jubilee village picnic in 2022 which moved indoors due to bad weather on the day.

6.19 Plans to refurbish the hall are in place and planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council. The plans include an extension to the rear of the building to accommodate a lift to provide easier access to the first floor for people with mobility problems as well as upstairs toilet facilities. Many of the damp issues will be addressed as well as internal improvements to the ground floor meeting room. The frontage will be improved with the provision of a ramp as well as creating a feature over the door that replicates the Lychgate at St Mary's Church. It is anticipated that work will be completed in phases and will commence in late 2025/2026. Improvements to the building reflect the importance of this facility to the community with 83% supporting this within the survey.

6.20 The path running alongside of the hall from Lilbourne Road to South Road is called the Lion Path after the buildings original purpose. The pathway is managed by Warwickshire County Council as is the path leading from South Road along the public footpath to the fields. Both pathways would benefit from improvements, which would greatly enhance accessibility in the village.

Healthcare facilities

6.21 There is no doctor or dentists in the Parish. The nearest medical facility is in Rugby where most parishioners have a GP. New parishioners within Houlton find it increasingly difficult to enrol with a GP and NHS dentists are even less available. There is a plan for a GP health centre in Houlton but numbers need to meet the required resident allocation of 3,000 therefore neither the timing nor scope of this is confirmed. These concerns have frequently been raised by Houlton residents. As Houlton Grows it is critical that medical and dentistry facilities within or close to the parish are available

to support such a significant increase in population.

6.22 Accident and emergencies are accommodated at University of Coventry Hospital and Hospital of St Cross.

Telephone box

6.23 The Parish Plan for 2004 states that the K6 phone box located on Main Street 'should be preserved and is an important feature in the village centre'. The phone box is in a poor state of repair and whilst it has been used as a seed exchange this has proved unsuccessful. It is therefore proposed to move the telephone box to a more accessible place and to use it as a book exchange. This however is subject to cost.

Sports & Leisure

Clifton playing field, pavilion, tennis courts and playground.

6.24 The playing field is accessed from Rugby Road, South Road and Shuttleworth Road and serves a variety of needs within the village but also for visitors. There is a marked-out football pitch which is used regularly during the football season, children's play area, basketball court, pickleball (mini tennis) court, skate park plus gym equipment around the park and a popular private tennis club that has two tennis courts. The Parish Council is responsible for the playground, repairing and replacing equipment on an ongoing basis. The pavilion was constructed in the 1990s and contains storage, changing facilities, showers, and toilets.

6.25 The importance of the playing field is shown in the survey, which had 86% of the respondents supporting it as well as 49% supporting the importance of the tennis courts.

Staveley Way Fields

6.26 The River Avon forms the northern boundary of the parish forming a flood and a protected green space. These fields are considered a very important community asset, which are especially well used by walkers and dog walkers from the Parish and Brownsover.

South Road Fields public footpath

6.27 This public footpath through several privately owned fields is widely valued by walkers and dog walkers. The footpath provides a route to the canal and leads onto Hillmorton Road which, due to lack of a pedestrian pavement, can be dangerous especially for dog walkers.

6.28 The survey shows that footpaths and walking routes are important to 96% of respondents.

Houlton Children's play Facilities

6.29 There are plans through the Development Corporation to build children's play facilities at key locations within the Houlton Development. The plans currently focus on primary school aged children with little or no provision for secondary school aged children and youths. (policy about facilities for older children?)

Houlton David Lloyd Leisure centre

6.30 This facility opened in August 2023 and includes a state-of-the-art gym, indoor and outdoor pools, spa and spa garden, tennis and paddle courts, group classes, DL Kids classes and activities plus a club house and business area to ensure members have a space for the whole day, every day.

Clifton upon Dunsmore Allotments and Grazing Land

6.31 The Parish Council has three allotments in the village: Newton Road (known as the Glebe) has 30 plots and 3 vacancies, North Road has 27 plots and 5 vacancies as well as grazing land and Newall Close has 2 working plots, with the rest having been taken over as grazing land. A new committee has recently been formed to enable the allotment holders to manage the allotments and to ensure they are maintained to a high standard. Users rent the allotment plots from the Parish Council on a yearly basis. There is running water available, and users have a selection of small sheds or greenhouses. The Parish Council manages the grazing land, which is rented on an annual basis.

Houlton Allotments

6.34 In November 2022 Houlton residents celebrated the launch of their first allotments. Each resident signing up to be an allotment holder received a starter pack featuring gardening gloves, seed packets and flower scissors. The welcome packs also included a QR code which links residents to an exclusive Allotments WhatsApp group – a shared platform where the group can continue networking, swapping stories and sharing tips and tricks for success.

Community Action 2: Communication

The Parish will work to enhance communication to maximise knowledge and use of community facilities. For example: the availability of leisure facilities for all.

POLICY CF1: THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Development leading to the loss of existing community facilities: Townsend Memorial Hall, St Mary's Parish Church, The Bull Inn, Houlton Children's play facilities, Village allotments and Houlton allotments and grazing land, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or
- b) The existing community facility is, demonstrably, no longer economically viable or able to be supported by the community – such viability and support includes fundraising and volunteering by parishioners and others; or

- c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish which complies with the other general policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

New and improved community facilities

6.35 As a community we are keen to develop and enhance our community facilities to meet the growing needs of the residents; for example, a Doctor's surgery and pharmacy.

POLICY CF2: NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES - Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities, will be supported provided that the development:

- a) Meets the design criteria in Policy G2;
- b) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements or other disturbance, to nearby residential properties;
- c) Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for
- d) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality;
- e) Is conveniently accessible for residents of the parish wishing to walk or cycle;
- f) Takes into full account the needs of people with disabilities;
- g) Can demonstrate that it is environmentally sustainable.

The Canal

North Oxford Canal - Eastern Boundary of the Parish

6.36 The canal and its towpaths and environs provide a footpath traversing between Rugby the bottom of Clifton upon Dunsmore and into Houlton and the leisure amenity for narrow boating and fishing. It is also an important wildlife corridor. Additionally, it provides moorings for tourists and semi-permanent residents as well as outlets for directly and indirectly associated businesses. The canal is managed by the Canal and River Trust and relies mainly on volunteers for its upkeep. It is a highly valued community asset.

Hillmorton Locks & facilities

6.37 Hillmorton Locks is officially the busiest flight of locks in the country and lock number 2 is of particular interest as it retains the now rare cast-iron gates and is therefore Grade II Listed. Whilst the canal is used for leisure purposes the site is home to a 3,163 sq ft business centre that accommodates 11 units. The units range in size from 250sq ft to 1,000sq ft and are currently fully let. A list of the business can be seen in the supporting information.

Clifton Cruisers

6.38 Established in 1972 this family run boatyard offers a choice of narrow boats, ranging from two berths to six berths ideal for couples, families or groups of friends. All are fitted to a high standard and enjoy a setting near Rugby in the heart of the Warwickshire countryside, yet with convenient access from both M1 and M6 motorways.

POLICY CF3: THE CANAL - Development proposals affecting the biodiversity, historic heritage or setting of the canal, including its business and leisure and recreational activities, will be required to protect or enhance those features.

Education

Houlton School

6.39 Houlton School opened 1 September 2021 with its first cohort of 180 year 7 students. It is a co-educational secondary school and sixth form located in Houlton. The school's buildings have been developed on the historic site of the Grade II listed former Rugby Radio Station. Three new teaching blocks have also been created with capacity to accommodate 1,200 students however, at the September 2022 intake the school currently has 360 pupils in Year 7 and 8. The pupil numbers are expected to increase over the years with the transition of pupils from St Gabriel's and Clifton's Primary Schools. The survey shows that 61% of respondents recognise the importance of the school as a community asset.

6.40 The School is a member of the Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) and in addition to its traditional academic programme will offer qualifications in broadcast and new media. This pays homage to campus heritage as a global centre for communications, for example the school has a professional standard digital radio station.

Houlton Primary Schools

6.41 St Gabriel's CoE Academy opened September 2018 and caters for children aged 4-11. It is a non-selective school that serves the community of Houlton, as well as neighbouring villages and the town of Rugby.

6.42 As part of the Houlton Church of England Multi Academy Trust, St Gabriel's CofE Academy aims to provide an inclusive high-quality education and an outstanding community facility for local children and families.

The Clifton Playgroup Limited

6.43 The playgroup opened in August 2010 and provided quality early years education for children aged between 2½ and 4 years in and around the Parish. Due to a change in government policy regarding early years education, Children aged 3 and 4 years will now attend the Clifton upon Dunsmore Church

of England Pre-School as from September 2024. The Pre-school will be accommodated within the Playgroup building which is owned by Warwickshire County Council and was leased by the Playgroup. As a consequence, the Playgroup closed on the 17th July 2024.

Houlton Playgroup

6.44 The Old Station Nursery based at Dollman Farm accommodates babies, toddlers and pre-school children. The playgroup accommodates children from 0 – 5 years and benefits from its transition to St Gabriel's Primary School. Car parking is accessible; it's in close proximity to Houlton Play Park and the new Co-op, and with easy access to the main Crick Road.

Clifton Upon Dunsmore Church of England Primary School

6.45 Standing prominently at the southern end of Main Street, the school was built in 1850 in typical Victorian gothic style, on land donated by the church.

6.46 In the 1990s, the school was saved from closure as part of the rationalisation of primary education in Warwickshire and was instead expanded. A further expansion has been built to accommodate the growing number of children within the catchment area.

6.47 The expansion of the school has been designed to reflect the history and character of the school using polychromatic brickwork steep pitch roofs and fenestration of the original school.

6.48 The school has an active PTA who organise regular fund-raising events for the school's children and their families, such as school discos, Christmas fairs, afternoon teas and quiz nights.

6.49 The school has been rated Outstanding in its most recent Ofsted inspection. The school is very popular and sought after, but has limited capability to grow within its existing footprint.

6.50 The major issue of lack of outdoor space for play and outdoor learning is dealt with in part by the use, for PE lessons, of the playing fields approximately 100meters away across the road. The walk to this facility has been made less dangerous by the recent provision of a traffic light crossing.

6.51 Some additional land was purchased from the adjacent farm in the past and it is noted that there remains an area of farmland adjacent to the school, which is not currently farmed and which, if purchased, could add to the available outdoor learning space.

6.52 The survey shows that 66% of respondents feel the School and playgroup is very important especially, as many of the children would then go on to attend the Primary School.

POLICY E1: SCHOOLS - Proposals for the expansion of existing schools in the Parish will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, unless suitable mitigation measures are brought forward as part of the proposal and adequate parking is available on site;

- b) there is no significant loss of outdoor recreation space at the school; and
- c) the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users and is in keeping with the character, scale and form to the current building.

Proposals to increase the available outdoor area at the Clifton upon Dunsmore C of E Primary School will be supported where the land is adjacent to the School.

The establishment of an Early Years Play Group within the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore is supported.

Transport

6.53 Clifton upon Dunsmore is situated just off the A5, with close proximity to Junction 1 of the M6 and between junction 18 / 19 of the M1 and the A14, making it an excellent hub for connections and the reason for the nearby situation of Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT). The Oxford canal passes through the Parish and was once a significant means of travel and commerce for the Parish. It is now well used for leisure purposes.

6.54 The private car is the major form of transport for parishioners especially for work and shopping in nearby larger conurbations such as Rugby. The number 9 bus provides public transport from Clifton and Houlton to Rugby throughout the day.

6.55 The Rugby train station is 20 minutes' walk to the centre of Clifton upon Dunsmore village – the steep gradient tends to increase the duration of the walk home. This station is on the West Coast main line with quick journey times to London (50 mins) and Birmingham (40 mins). A significant number of people commute to London from this station.

Rugby Parkway Railway Station

6.56 Rugby Parkway is a proposed railway station on the eastern outskirts of Rugby just outside the Parish boundary but of significant importance. Promoted by Warwickshire County Council. It was the subject of a high-level feasibility study, which recommended the station to be located on the Northampton Loop Line, near the Hillmorton area of Rugby, and close to Houlton and DIRFT.

6.57 This is seen as a good and popular move with the local community as it gives further access to the rail network from Houlton especially. It is important that this is seen as and becomes a transport interchange to access bus services in and out of Rugby and into DIRFT and Junction 18 Logistics and warehousing businesses to discourage the use of cars for this purpose.

6.58 An application for outline planning permission for Rugby Parkway Station was submitted in late 2023.

Road Junctions

6.59 Particular areas of concern include Hillmorton Lane and Houlton Way junction and Houlton Way and Clifton Road junction. At both junctions, right-hand turns are prohibited and this is a source

of much discontent by villagers due to the inability to get home from Houlton. With no left turn from Hillmorton at the Hillmorton Lane and Houlton Way junction, traffic bound for the main business and retail park areas in Rugby is forced to travel along a much longer route through the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore.

6.60 Efforts to link up Houlton and Clifton are discouraged by the right-hand turn restrictions.

6.61 Consideration of growth in Clifton village traffic levels will need to be taken removing the current right-hand turn restriction.

6.62 The Hillmorton Lane and Houlton Way junction prevents left hand turn when travelling from Hillmorton.

6.63 Houlton Way has been adopted by Warwickshire County Council with a proposed left turn from Hillmorton Lane (from the Kent) to Houlton Way and a right turn from Houlton Way to Hillmorton Lane (to the Kent) and right turn from Hillmorton Lane (from Clifton) to Houlton Way.

Speed of traffic

6.64 Community consultation has shown that parishioners feel the speed of traffic travelling through the Parish is a problem.

6.65 The parish is adjacent to numerous large distribution centres, with many more in construction/planning. This generates growing numbers of cars, commercial vehicles and HGVs looking for through routes and short cuts to the trunk road and motorway network. Clifton Village is a 20mph Zone posted on road entrances, along with speed humps and cushions in the roads. A 7.5 tonne weight limit (except for access) restriction is signposted at various locations when approaching the village. Both have had a positive impact on traffic in the Village, but this could be improved. Houlton speed signage is confusing, with 30mph gate signs on all entrances to the town but with 20mph repeater speed limit signs on lamp posts on the same road. Many roads still do not yet have a top surface layer, but speed restrictions are reinforced by the intrinsic road design. There are also repeater signs on lampposts and a 20mph zone around the high school as well as speed measuring light up signs (set to 20mph). There is a temporary “No HGV” sign at the Houlton Way /Rugby Road junction and Dolman Road A428 Junctions.

6.66 During community consultation, parishioners observed there are no 20 mph repeater signs in Clifton Village hence no visual reinforcement of the limit. The speed cushions in the village are seen as inadequate encouraging weaving in the road to straddle the cushions. Additional traffic calming to further reduce/reinforce vehicle speed compliance would be welcome.

6.67 The location of weight restriction signs could also be improved, particularly on Newton Manor Lane, coming from the A5. The signs are currently located away from the junction after Peri Ltd.’s entrance, with no realistic opportunity for HGVs to divert. Placing them on the junction would enable HGVs on the A5 to reroute before making the turn.

6.68 The parishioners also consider that Houlton should have clear unambiguous speed signage

and repeater signs clearly marking residential areas with a 20mph speed limits as well as permanent HGV 7.5tonne restriction signage in place on the entrance junctions into the town. At these junctions traffic comes onto modern wide carriageways which rapidly turns into a residential road. These roads have limited capacity for large vehicles to turn around once enroute.

POLICY T1: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT - With regard to the rural highway network of the Parish and the need to minimise any increase in vehicular traffic all development must:

- a) Be designed to minimize additional traffic generation and movement through the village;
- b) Incorporate sufficient off-road parking;
- c) Not remove or compromise the use of any existing off-road parking areas, including garages, unless a suitable equivalent alternative is provided;
- d) Provide any necessary improvements to site access, communal parking and the highway network either directly or by financial contributions;
- e) Where practicable, improve and create footpaths and cycle ways to improve access to key Parish services;
- f) Ensure and enhance the interconnectivity of the communities within the parish; and

Major development proposals must demonstrate that the traffic generation and parking impact created by the proposal do not result in a severe direct or cumulative impact on congestion or road and pedestrian safety.

Parking

6.69 Parking for centre of Clifton upon Dunsmore to visit The Bull, Townsend Memorial Hall, the church and village shops (especially the increasingly popular Clifton village stores) can cause a build-up of parked vehicles at different times. Cars often park in the layby designated as a bus stop, causing buses to stop in the road holding up traffic.

6.70 Many of the existing small cottages rely on street parking even on the Main Street which causes congestion,

6.71 The church car parks are available to use for members of the public visiting local shops and could perhaps be better signposted for those drivers who don't know of its availability. An additional pedestrian crossing in the centre of the village may also enable and encourage safer walking.



6.72 Congestion around the school, twice each weekday in term time, is an issue; parents are asked to park at the Bull Inn car park and walk their children to school. The school car park is insufficient for the number of staff, thus some staff park on either Station or North Road. The school is short of playground space. Reducing this further for more staff parking would be an unpopular decision.

6.73 Parishioners have questioned whether a primary school bus for residents of Newton/Butlers leap/Strawberry Fields an option and a way could be to reduce the use of cars for the school run.



6.74 Parking at the sports ground is a problem when sporting events are taking place. The location and covenants covering the use of the grounds make providing more car parking quite difficult.

6.75 It is important that any new developments have suitable amounts of off-road parking to minimise parking on footpaths and blocking streets.

POLICY T2: OFF-ROAD PARKING SPACES - for new developments will enable the road infrastructure to be free from congestion and improve access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

- a) Development proposals of one or more dwellings should provide off-road car parking in line with Rugby Highways car parking standards;
- b) Allocated spaces on driveways within a plot boundary should not be in tandem;
- c) Where a development includes garage provision, each single garage space will count as one off-road parking space provided that it is of a sufficient size to accommodate a modern family car. Garage sizes less than those scheduled below will not be classed as off-road parking as they are too small to allow drivers to exit their cars once parked in the garage:
 - i. Single garages (with internal spaces less than 6m x 3m, with a minimum door width of 2.3m);
 - ii. Double garages (with internal spaces less than 6m x 6m with a minimum door width of 4.2m).

Bus services and public transport

6.76 The Lilbourne Community Minibus operates once on Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat through the Parish. The nearest bus service for Hillmorton Locks is the No 1 / 2 operating Mondays to Sundays.

6.77 Rugby train station is 20 mins from Clifton upon Dunsmore and provides regular services to London and Birmingham.

6.78 The No 9 Flexibus runs every 38 minutes from 7.33am to approximately 18.35 Monday to

Saturday within the village of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The route covers many of the wards within Rugby ensuring that residents have access to the town centre and out of town shopping.

6.79 Stagecoach runs the 3A route from Newbold/Overslade to Hillmorton which provides public transport access for residents at Hillmorton Locks.

6.80 The 96 bus route runs from Rugby to Northampton with stops at Houlton, Radio Station by the school. Services on the route run from 6.33am to 23.45 Monday to Sunday and can be accessed in Rugby Town Centre either at Church Street or Clifton Road.

When surveyed about public transport 25% felt that public transport could be improved.

Community Action 3: Public Transport - The Parish will work with partners to maintain and enhance the current bus services in the parish and will support the development of the Rugby Parkway train station.

Electric Vehicles

6.81 The UK government has recently announced its intention to ban sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035 to combat rising levels of air pollution and address climate change concerns. The implication is that the number of 'pure' (i.e., not hybrid) electric vehicles (EVs) on the road will certainly increase rapidly (there is some evidence this is already starting). If EVs are to have a similar range to today's petrol/diesel cars, they will need to have large capacity batteries installed.

6.82 This raises the crucial question of battery recharging. Residential charging is probably the current norm but using a typical generator size of 3.7kW (as currently installed as standard on board EVs and similar electrical usage as a domestic kettle), this would take 19 hours to re-charge the battery (assuming a typical run-down state of 25% of maximum). The lower capacity (and lower range <100miles) Nissan Leaf would take about 6 hours.

6.83 The availability of larger capacity on-board generators (7kW) is emerging, which would halve these times, but this is then the maximum that would be possible using current standard domestic electricity supply (single phase 240volt). However, residential charging is only allowed where off-road parking is available and there is a significant amount of housing which does not have off-road parking. This issue is already influencing planning and building regulations, for example in London any new development that includes more than 5 parking spaces must include electric charging points in greater than 5% of these.

6.84 Similarly, commercial/communal rapid charging facilities are growing across the country (making use of 3-phase supply not possible at the domestic level and reducing the 7KW re-charge time by a factor of 3). These could be utilized in the Parish for example by installation in a permanent parking area as described above, providing re-charging for residents with no off-road parking, and allowing fast re-charge for all residents. Charging points have been installed in Houlton behind the new Co-op store.

POLICY T3: ELECTRIC VEHICLES - The provision of communal vehicular charging points within the Parish will be supported so long as there is universal access and minimises negative impact on the availability of existing parking within the Parish.

Businesses and employment

The local economy

6.85 Clifton upon Dunsmore has traditionally been an agricultural community. Today, there are still active farms within the parish; most of the land is used for sheep, dairy and beef cattle, with some arable farming and market gardening. Whilst farming has ceased to be a major employee it remains an important part of the local economy and essential to the maintenance of the area is more of character.

6.86 The presence of the canal and West Coast mainline to the south of the village has also provided valuable employment in the past and has contributed to the ribbon development of the village along Rugby Road to the railway cottages at the Vicarage Hill. The railway connection has long passed, although in the past there was a station cottage and level crossing at the bottom of Station Road, providing all the main ways of travelling to Rugby and Market Harborough. Clifton cruisers at the bottom of Vicarage Hill is a well-established local business meeting the modern demand for narrow boat holidays on the canals.

6.87 The Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore has seen a significant change in its overall geography with the development of Houlton on the old mast site and the mushrooming of distribution centres around the boundary of the Parish.

6.88 Employment within the Parish comprises mostly of small to medium enterprises: of shops and a pub with a cluster of small businesses grouped around the canal. For example, the construction and servicing of narrow boats and the use of Canalside buildings for small businesses, based at Hillmorton locks and Clifton Cruisers. The Parish also houses several care homes, which use large manor house type buildings. It also has rural type businesses including farming, both arable and livestock and leisure activities, fishing ponds, based on and around the river Avon, which forms the upper boundary of the Parish.

6.89 The existing village of Clifton upon Dunsmore and the new Houlton development are primarily dormitory's serving the external businesses and major distribution hubs outside of the Parish. It is therefore important that there is transport and infrastructure that can help effectively move people between and their place of work and where they live sustainably and safely.

6.90 Local shops and amenities are important in providing food, goods and other local services. The Plan supports the development of other retail outlets within the Parish to help reduce unnecessary car journeys to and from shops outside the Parish.

6.91 It is also important that the necessary infrastructure exists to support existing enterprises to protect and strengthen the economic base within the Parish. Where there are buildings dedicated to business use in the Parish, they should be protected against being lost to other uses e.g., converting to dwellings, namely the business units and outlets at Hillmorton locks and the shops, Townshend Memorial Hall and The Bull Inn Pub and its car park at the centre of Clifton upon Dunsmore.

6.92 For economic activity to thrive in the Parish, it is important that the necessary infrastructure exists, including sufficient fast and stable internet connections. Consequently, in order to protect and strengthen the economic base within the Parish, where there are buildings dedicated to business use in the Parish, they should be protected against being lost to other uses.

Leisure and dining

The Bull Inn

6.93 A former farmhouse at the centre of the village. In 1835, beer was served out of a wooden barrel from an opening in the wall, a common practice that usually led to the building becoming an inn. For some time, it was run as both farm and inn, but it was sold as a public house in 1848. The Bull Inn and the Red Lion before it was demolished were important venues for village meetings - local courts, inquests, anniversary dinners and meetings of friendly societies were all held at The Bull.

6.94 The Bull was recently refurbished and now comprises a large L shaped bar/lounge with up to 60 covers. It's still remains the centre of the community with 59% of survey respondents supporting the importance of the Bull, which provides a large secure patio and a children's play area/equipment. There's extensive parking to the rear, good food served, private events catered and live music. The pub is dog friendly.

The Lounge at Clifton Wharf

6.95 The Lounge is a cosy kitchen and bar that is located by the canal and Clifton Cruisers. It is a popular venue with 72% of survey respondents valuing its place in the community. The Lounge support community breakfasts and provides quality meals as well as themed nights with food and live entertainment.

Tuning Fork Café Houlton

6.96 A popular café venue Based at Dollman Farm that serves breakfast, lunch and evening meals. The premises have disability access as well as being child friendly. There is outdoor seating and on-line ordering available.

The Houlton Paddle

6.97 A recently opened café located at Dollman Farm serving fresh, handmade pizza and gelato. The café is open from noon Tuesday to Saturday providing indoor seating or takeaway.

Canal Chef Café - Hillmorton Locks

6.98 This is a friendly little café located at Badsey's Wharf, Hillmorton Locks. The Café sits alongside the Oxford canal and provides British and Vegetarian food - serving breakfast, lunch and evening meals. Parking is available with outside eating, an extensive menu that is prepared to order.

POLICY BE1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - There will be a presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land that provides employment. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 24 months; and
- b) The commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment-generating uses. This will be demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Support for new businesses and employment

6.99 New employment initiatives can help to boost and diversify the local economy, thus providing more local employment opportunities.

6.100 Parishioners have been clear that any new employment initiatives should be small-scale, such as individual shops and offices. Employment proposals should only be approved if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important.

6.101 Traffic through the village has been a major concern especially with the increasing number of adjacent distribution hubs and heavy goods vehicles that introduces to local road systems. Commercial development should only be allowed if it could be shown not to increase heavy goods traffic, not to be detrimental to visual amenity and not to have a negative environmental impact on neighbouring properties.

POLICY BE2: SUPPORT FOR NEW BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT - In supporting additional employment opportunities, new development will be required to:

- a) Be of a size and scale not adversely affecting the character, infrastructure and environment of the Parish, including the countryside;
- b) Not generate unacceptable levels of traffic movement and on road parking and make appropriate off-road parking provision;
- c) Fall within the boundary of planned limits of development for the Parish, unless it relates to small-scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial/employment related development appropriate to a countryside location;
- d) Where possible, development should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land;
- e) Not involve the loss of dwellings;
- f) Not increase noise levels or light pollution or introduce any pollution to an extent that they

would unacceptably disturb occupants of nearby residential property; and

- g) Contribute to the character, the design of the local built environment and the vitality of the local area.

Retail

Clifton Village Stores

6.102 This is a key facility in the village and is very popular. They sell groceries, fresh meals to take home to cook, newsprint and have a popular deli counter where they prepare food and hot drinks to parishioners, passing trade and local businesses. The store also has a small café facility and can cater for external events.

Other Clifton shopping facilities

6.103 Shopping facilities along Main Street include Baked Brownies, which had previously been the local Post Office. The building reflects features found on the Townsend Memorial Hall and cottages with hanging tiles at first floor level and a steeply pitched roof – these buildings form an important grouping at the heart of the village. Other facilities include the Therapy Rooms, which recently relocated from Hillmorton Locks, Pink Chocolate and, alongside the canal, The Fish Tank, opened in late 2022 selling live fish and other aquatic products.

6.104 The survey recognised that 99% of respondents feel that the shops within the village are important and used on a daily basis especially, the Village Store.

The Houlton Co-op

6.105 Opened in the ward of Houlton on 17th September 2021, the store features a cash point, elf-scan till points, Costa Coffee and Tango Ice Blast machines, as well as customer toilets and a lifesaving defibrillator available to the local community – this is the third defibrillator available in the Parish.

6.106 It is focused on selling groceries & household goods, with an emphasis on social responsibility. The store has invested in green technology that includes special eco-friendly fridges and lighting, which is part of the retailer's eco-friendly ethos.

Shop Frontages and Signage

6.107 The visual appearance of shops and businesses in the village centre is important in maintaining its character.

6.108 Where some existing shop fronts are of indifferent or poor design, replacement with shop fronts of high quality design and materials which complement the design and proportions of the host building will be encouraged.

6.109 Run down or broken shop fronts should be repaired rather than replaced where they make an important contribution to the local distinctiveness of the building or area.

6.110 Signage is also an important feature of the village centre. All signage must be designed to fit sympathetically with the local character. Internally illuminated box signs that are fixed externally to a building are not in keeping and will not normally be permitted.

6.111 The eclectic mix of frontages and signage at present suggests that it is not currently subject to regulations or guidance. It is felt that greater influence over this could significantly improve the overall visual appearance of the village centre, which, in turn, could enhance the footfall and profitability of businesses.

POLICY BE3: SHOP FRONTS & SIGNAGE - Development proposals to alter or replace any existing shop frontage or create a new shop frontage will be supported where they:

- a) Conserve and enhance the special qualities and significance of the building and area; and relate well to their context in terms of design, quality, scale, material and colour;
- b) Do not remove, replace or substantially harm shop fronts or the frontages of buildings by poor, inappropriate or indifferent design; and
- c) Have regard to the guidelines set out in Clifton Upon Dunsmore Design Policy G2

Home working

6.112 There is an increasing trend for residents to work from home, accelerated by the pandemic. Some of these are full-time workers working entirely from home, others splitting their existing work between office and home locations.

6.113 With improving internet connectivity locally and changing employment patterns nationally, this trend is likely to continue and potentially accelerates, making the Parish a place where a greater percentage of the population are spending more of their time within the Parish. This could create opportunities - for joint working, business hubs, support groups and room hire for meetings.

6.114 A key benefit of supporting home working is that it helps to promote local employment activities whilst reducing dependency on the car for journeys to employment sites outside the Parish. This, in turn, can help to reduce traffic volume within the Parish.

6.115 However, it is recognised that people may not have a suitable space within their home from which to run a business, or they may wish to separate their work and living spaces distinctly and deliberately. The construction of extensions, the conversion of outbuildings, and the development of new freestanding buildings in gardens from which businesses can operate will be supported. This is intended to maximise the opportunities for entrepreneurial activity and employment in Clifton-upon-Dunsmore Parish.

POLICY BE4: HOME WORKING - Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for small-scale free-standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or

conversion of outbuildings for those uses, will be supported where:

- a) Such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and that appropriate parking provision is made;
- b) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity; and
- c) Any extension or free-standing building shall be designed having regard to policies in this Plan and should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction.

Visitors and tourism

6.116 Clifton upon Dunsmore Village, church, Townsend Memorial Hall and other facilities attract visitors who often use car parking at the church and in centre of the village. The church yard is also a popular waypoint with cyclists. The Clifton playing fields are also used for Sunday league football, which attracts players to the village.

6.117 In general, we would seek to encourage visitors to Clifton to bring much needed income to local businesses. An element of control is required to ensure visitors gain the best possible experience and, equally, to minimize any negative impact on the Parish.

POLICY BE5: TOURISM - Tourism developments will be supported provided that they demonstrate that:

- a) They are of an appropriate scale so as not to have an adverse effect on the character or vistas of the immediate location; and
- b) Such development will not result in significantly increased traffic movements and makes adequate provision for off-road parking; and
- c) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity; and
- d) Where feasible, the development involves the re-use of existing buildings or is part of farm diversification.

The net loss of tourism and leisure facilities will not be supported unless they are no longer viable or alternative provision is made available.

Farming and Agriculture

6.118 Originally Agriculture was inefficient with the medieval open field strip farming system, the result of which can still be seen in the fields bordering the river Avon. This produced sufficient supplies to survive on, but efficiency improved in the seventeenth century through the enclosure of open fields.

6.119 Until the second half of the twentieth century the Parish had an agriculturally based economy and the traditional landscape was one of regular hedged field boundaries. Current farming businesses are fewer in number but cover large areas with the majority of farming in the parish predominantly

grazing and livestock, rather than arable.

6.120 There is general support for farm diversification. The conversion of former agricultural buildings could enable diversification and lead to the sustainable re-use of vacant buildings providing opportunities for the establishment and development of small businesses that generate local employment opportunities.

POLICY BE6: FARM DIVERSIFICATION - To support farm diversification and the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings and/or change of use of agricultural land will be supported where:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location; and
- b) Conversion/adaptation works does not have a detrimental effect on the distinctive rural character of the Parish; and
- c) Any development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological; and architectural, historic or environmental features; and
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and does not adversely affect the Parish infrastructure, particularly local road networks, water supply and sewerage, and will meet parking requirements within the curtilage of the farm; and
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

Communications

6.121 Over recent years, access to high quality communications, networks and infrastructure have become increasingly essential to many businesses, services and households within the Parish. Currently, the Parish is reasonably well served with telephone and broadband infrastructure at commercially competitive pricing delivered to most premises by a combination of landlines and fibre.

6.122 Openreach are in the process of replacing the old Copper/Aluminum wire infrastructure nationally with fiber cable allowing for a more stable connection and giving faster speeds by December 2026. Currently parts of the Parish are unable to get fibre connectivity as there are capacity issues within the old Openreach infrastructure.

6.123 Various ISP's have access to the Openreach infrastructure within the Parish to supply a broadband service to households and businesses. The Parish has good 4G mobile coverage and a limited 5G at the moment.

POLICY C1: COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE - Improvements to communications infrastructure services will be supported.

Where it becomes necessary to install new masts or equipment in clear sight, to minimize visual impact and intrusion; these should be shared by more than one provider wherever feasible.

Preferably, new or refurbished infrastructure should be delivered to premises in a visually unobtrusive manner such as via underground conduits rather than by external aerial wiring to telegraph posts.

Infrastructure improvements requiring above ground installations, must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the existing buildings and landscape, for example, mobile masts not to be in or near to open landscapes.

Community Action 4: Community Transport

Many residents are reliant on the bus service to reach nearby towns and find the service restricted (26 comments). There is the potential to develop a community transport system to support villagers who do not have cars with transport to opticians, dentists, hospital appointments etc.

5. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 This Neighbourhood Plan covers the period up to 2031. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which this Plan seeks to address will change.
- 8.2 This Neighbourhood Plan will be regularly monitored for its continued relevance. The policies and measures contained in this Neighbourhood Plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level, relevant to the delivery of this Neighbourhood Plan, will also be included.
- 8.3 The Parish Council proposes to formally review this Neighbourhood Plan on a four-year cycle commencing in 2028 or to coincide with the review of the Local Plan, if this cycle is different.
- 8.4 The Parish Council will appoint a group made up of Councillors and residents to perform the monitoring task to report to the Parish Council.

6. Acknowledgements

7. Thank you to everyone on the Advisory Committee and Theme Groups that contributed to the development of the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Without your knowledge, perseverance and commitment to the Parish, this document would still be an idea we talk about in the pub!

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