

Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Our Parish – Our Future – Our Say

2011 - 2031



Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2031

Regulation 14 Consultation

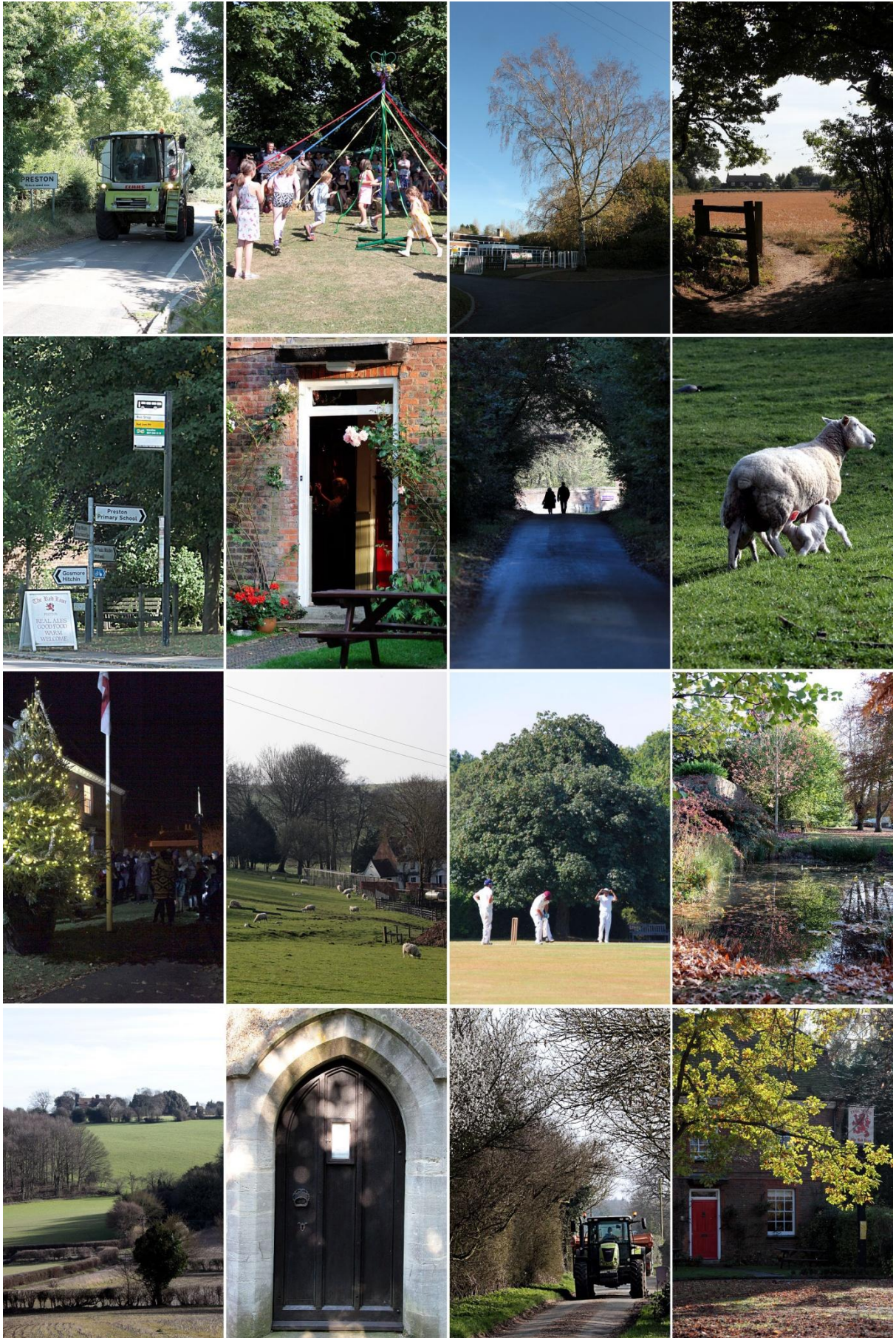
8 January to 18 February 2018

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	5
PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DESIGNATED AREA	6
2. HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WAS PREPARED – OUR JOURNEY BEGINS	7
EVIDENCE BASE	9
3. PRESTON PARISH	11
4. THE VISION FOR PRESTON PARISH TO 2031	15
5. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN	17
LIVING IN PRESTON (QUALITY OF LIFE)	17
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES	17
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT	18
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE	19
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION	19
6. POLICIES	21
COMMUNITY RIGHTS	21
7. LIVING IN PRESTON (QUALITY OF LIFE)	23
8. AMENITIES AND FACILITIES	25
9. HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT	27
10. ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE	35
11. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS	41
12. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	45

Appendices

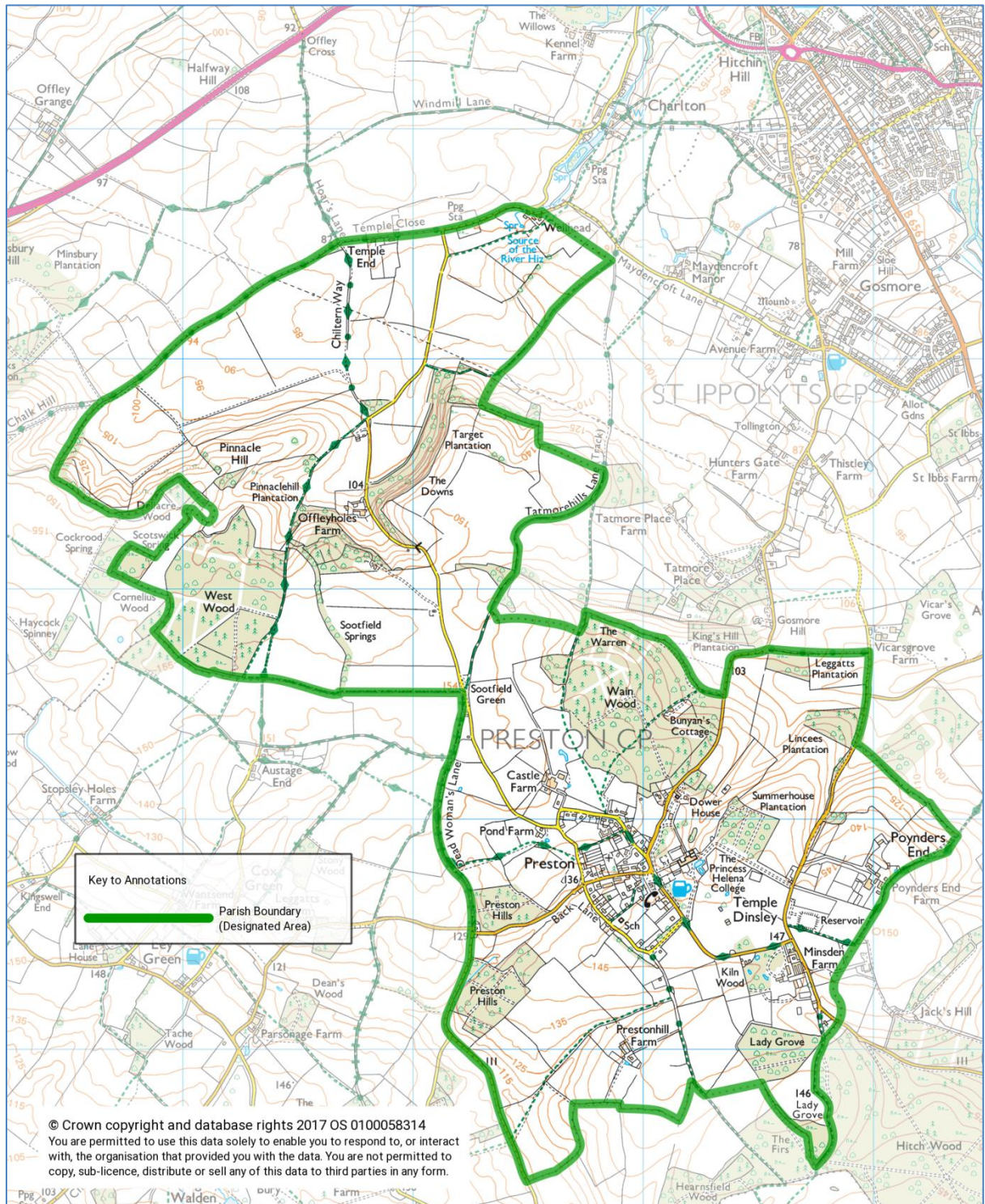
A. PEOPLE	49
A.1 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM	49
A.2 OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS	50
A.3 OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS	50
B. SURVEY	51
C. ENVIRONMENT	53
C.1 CONTEXT	53
C.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	56
C.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT	62
D. CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	71
D.1 DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING SITES OF SIGNIFICANT BIODIVERSITY INTEREST	72
D.2 SITES OF ACKNOWLEDGED NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE	72
D.3 NETWORKS OF BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	73
D.4 ECOLOGICAL SURVEY STANDARDS	74
D.5 WILDLIFE AND LIGHTING	75
D.6 WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPING	75
E. REFERENCE BOOKS AND MAPS CONSULTED	77
F. PRESTON PARISH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	79




1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It forms part of the Government's current approach to planning.
- 1.2 The Plan has been developed under the Localism Act (2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation (2012), which was introduced to regulate the formation and approval of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.3 The Plan has been developed in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Our plan has also been developed in accordance with the saved policies of the 1996 North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) Local Plan which do not conflict with the NPPF. In addition, our plan's policies conform to the emerging NHDC Local Plan which is expected to be finalised and adopted in 2018.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood planning now provides an opportunity for the community to have a real say over local decision making, to achieve its long-standing goals through the planning system and address the challenges and opportunities facing the future vitality of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on extensive research and influenced by robust engagement with the local community. When the Plan is made it will have very significant weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan was commissioned by Preston Parish Council following a Parish Meeting on 26 June 2016 and part funded by them. Other funding came from a Locality Grant from central Government and a grant from NHDC. A Steering Group of local residents developed the Plan based on the principles of sustainable development.
- 1.6 Sustainable development is about positive growth; making economic, social and environmental progress for present and future generations. The Steering Group has taken due regard of these three dimensions which constitute what is sustainable in planning terms.
 - Economic: contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
 - Social: supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
 - Environmental: contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- 1.7 The policies and projects in the Plan reflect the views of local people gathered through a series of consultation events, questionnaires, detailed stakeholder sessions and examination of relevant documents. The Plan references the qualitative and quantitative outputs from these activities, particularly in relation to the provision of evidence in support of the policies and projects. The Steering Group is grateful to all residents and organisations who have contributed to the evidence, objectives and policies for the plan.
- 1.8 Some of the points raised by local people are not within the remit of either the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council: Aircraft noise and pollution and lights from Luton Airport.

Preston Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



2. How the Neighbourhood Plan was Prepared – Our Journey Begins

June 14 2016	Designated Area approved
June 26 2016	Village Meeting decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan
July 14 2016	Steering Group Inaugural Meeting
October 2016	CPRE Training Day
November 5 2016	Drop in session – draft of Adult Questionnaire piloted
November 6 2016	The Insight Fountain engaged
December 2016	Young Residents' Questionnaire piloted Questionnaires designed and printing commissioned
January 12 to 15 2017	Main delivery phase of Questionnaires
Jan 16 to 7 Feb 2017	Continued delivery of outstanding Questionnaires
Jan 28 to Feb 10 2017	Collection of completed Questionnaires
February 13 2017	Analysis begun
March 6 2017	Initial analysis results review with The Insight Fountain
March 9 2017	Additional analysis of open questions
April 2017	Report completed and printed
April 30 2017	Report presented to Parishioners
October 5 & 7 2017	Village 'Drop In' Sessions: Proposed Vision and Objectives
	
October 8 - 21 2017	Online Village Consultation: Proposed Vision and Objectives
Jan 8 – Feb 18 2018	Regulation 14 Consultation

- 2.1 The Steering Group recognised that effective communication and community engagement were essential to informing and involving residents in the development of the Plan. The mechanisms to achieve this are summarised below.
- 2.2 The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Website www.preston-np.org.uk has been central to the Neighbourhood Plan communication process. The website keeps residents and other interested parties informed during each phase of the development of the Plan. It contains up to date news, information on developing the plan, all Steering Group papers, Minutes of meetings, consultation results, all Neighbourhood Plan documents and contact information.
- 2.3 Updates on progress have also been provided in the free parish magazine which is hand delivered monthly to all households in the parish, as well as being published on the village website. www.prestonvillageherts.com
- 2.4 Throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan the Steering Group has kept in close communication with Officers and local Councillors from NHDC.
- 2.5 The Steering Group has also used posters displayed on notice boards within the Parish and flyers delivered to every household, updates at all Parish Council meetings, drop in sessions to share updates and garner opinions from parishioners and word of mouth to spread news of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Please see examples in the Consultation Statement Appendix.
- 2.6 Following the Parish Meeting, the Parish Council asked residents to come forward if they were interested in being part of a Steering Group to guide and produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on Thursday 16 July 2016 comprising a Chairman, Vice Chair, Parish Council representative, Clerk and 2 other members. During the following two months the Steering Group developed a Constitution, Code of Conduct and Project Plan.
- 2.7 Between August and the end of the year the focus was on the development of a comprehensive Questionnaire. During the drafting stage, five key themes emerged: Quality of Life, Amenities and Facilities, Housing and Development, Environment and Heritage and Transport and Communication.
- 2.8 In January 2017 the Questionnaire was personally distributed to every household in the parish. One Questionnaire for each adult of 16 years or older, one Youth Questionnaire for each young person aged 10-15 and all under 10's were invited to write or draw something that depicted why they liked living in Preston. The results were again collected personally by a band of volunteers. 150 out of 165 Households took part with a 91% response rate. 302 out of 336 adults took part, giving a 90% individual adult response rate. 24 out of 28 young people took part giving an 86% individual youth response rate.
- 2.9 The results were analysed during February and March by Becky Lewis of The Insight Fountain who said "We can be confident that the data is robust and is based on a sample that is representative of the population of Preston in 2017 giving reliable and valid results." The full Questionnaire and Analysis Report can be found in the Consultation Statement Appendix.

- 2.10** In April 2017 the Report was completed and printed and on 30 April it was presented at a Village Meeting following which every household in the parish was given a full copy of the Report. The meeting was publicised: online, in newsletters, via e-mails and with flyers – as part of which any business, resident in the parish, were also asked to express their views.
- 2.11** In October 2017 two drop in sessions (one on a weekday evening and one on a Saturday morning) were held, to gain residents' views on the draft Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. The drafts were also hosted on the web site for residents to leave views and comments. All known local landowners were also invited. Not all of these acknowledged our communication and of those who did only the St. Paul's Walden Estate attended.
- 2.12** The extensive community engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan survey helped to prepare a draft vision and set of objectives that were subsequently supported by residents. The policies in the plan show how these objectives will be achieved in order to fulfil residents' aspirations.
- 2.13** A Consultation Statement has been produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. The statement outlines the process of community engagement, lists consultees, and describes the engagement techniques used and events held, including reports of engagement events.

Evidence Base

Evidence to support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was gathered continuously throughout the preparation process. The analysis, objectives and policies in the plan have drawn on a wide variety of sources. These include:

- The evidence base for North Herts District Plan
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Office for National Statistics: 2011 Census
- English Heritage
- Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
- The views of local residents, landowners and businesses from questionnaire responses, exhibitions and meetings
- Neighbourhood Plans from Parish Councils throughout England
- Environmental research on the Wildlife of the Parish carried out by Dr. Jane Sears
- Information from a History of Preston in Hertfordshire by Philip Wray
- HCC: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
- NHDC: North Hertfordshire Museum
- Ordnance Survey
- National Biodiversity Network data

More detailed information on the evidence base can be found in the Consultation Statement and in the Appendices and supporting documents accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan.



3. Preston Parish

- 3.1 The Parish of Preston is located in the North Hertfordshire District of Hertfordshire. It is 4 miles south of Hitchin at the north east end of the Chiltern Hills and 38 miles north of Central London. The parish covers an area of 6,823,272 square metres.
- 3.2 Historically, Preston was part of the parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish covers the village and surrounding countryside.
- 3.3 The parish is a 'Chiltern' parish as, despite its small size, it stretches across the Chiltern escarpment, from the foot of the scarp slope at Wellhead Farm and its spring source of the river Hiz, up the short steep scarp slope by Offley Holes Farm, and then southwards gently down the dip slope to the village and on down to Hitch Wood and the B651 road. These landscape changes in altitude and gradient give subtly changing vistas across the length and breadth of the parish.
- 3.4 Human habitation here for centuries gives us today a man-made landscape of woodland, grassland, hedges and much arable farmland. This varied land use adds to the visual attractiveness of the parish.
- 3.5 Hitch Wood, Wain Wood and West Wood are today the remnants of more extensive forests which provided fuel and food for families as well as hunting and shooting opportunities for the gentry.
- 3.6 One of Preston's charms is that the village is not overlooked or dominated by hills or high ground. At 143 metres, the village is only 10 metres below the highest point of Hertfordshire. The drawback to this sense of spaciousness is Preston's exposure to the bleak easterly winds that sweep in seemingly unchecked from Siberia. www.prestonherts.co.uk/page148.html
- 3.7 Documents, artefacts and structures which survive from, or, in this parish give us today a glimpse of the life of our predecessors here. Perhaps two periods of significance in the last 1200 years are uniquely interesting: the medieval and Tudor era from c. 1140 – 1540, and the early 20th Century from 1900 – 1927. Little remains from the earlier period; from the later period, much can be seen and is still in use today.
- 3.8 The name Prestune is first mentioned in a document in 1185, but the manor of Dinsley is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, and it may well have existed for decades before that date. This manor was taken over by the new King, William I, and the entry records that 180 people lived there in about 40 houses; it was a sizeable population.
- 3.9 The King then gave his large manor of Hitchin to a loyal aristocratic family, the de Balliols. In c.1095 Bernard de Balliol built Dinsley Castle in this area. This structure, probably of flint walls and timber roofs, may have lasted for 200 years; its presence gave status to the agricultural village. No trace of its foundations now exists; its legacy is in the name, Castle Farm.

- 3.10** The international monastic and military Order of the Knights Templar in the person of its first Grand Master, Hugh de Payens, reached England from the continent in 1127. Before 1142, this Order had established a religious house and estate at Dinsley. In that year, generous gifts of land, money, two mills, certain rights and privileges, and of 'the men of the land' were given by King Stephen and by Bernard de Balliol, to this house. It became 'the most important preceptory of the Templars in the British Isles outside London'. Its buildings included a hall, a bake house, a chapel, a smithy, and also a graveyard. Between 1200 and 1310, several important annual assemblies or Chapters of the Order in England were held at Temple Dinsley. Thus, living quarters for the Preceptor and his staff, for the visiting knights and their servants, and their horses, must have been available on the estate. King Henry III and his entourage paid one visit to a Chapter meeting at Temple Dinsley.
- 3.11** After the dissolution of this Order in 1307, the estate was transferred to the Order of the Knights Hospitaller, and they remained as owners until 1540. Some documents, and a few artefacts – an effigy and a grave cover, both in the valuable Purbeck marble, and 17 medieval glazed floor tiles, survive from this period of high status for this area. No trace of these buildings now exists above ground level; again, the legacy is in the name, Temple Dinsley, for a later house on the site, and also Temple End, at the northern boundary of the parish.
- 3.12** The Temple Dinsley house and its estate continued to be the economic and social focus of the parish from 1542 through to 1935. A succession of families or their tenants made their home there; some were able to enlarge the house and its outbuildings, and to develop the gardens and the park. Several individuals held county or national positions of influence, and several, by their own philanthropy, contributed to the built environment of the village we enjoy today.
- 3.13** Benedict Ithell, banker, built a new mansion in 1714, Elizabeth Darton built the National school in 1818, and William Henry Darton, her grandson, paid for the sinking of a well to a depth of 211' on The Green in 1872. A sale catalogue of 1873 tells us that the estate comprised the mansion and its park, 3 farms, 40 cottages and The Chequers Inn. In 1874, Henry Pryor gave just over six acres of his land for about 30 new allotments off School Lane, and then, in 1900, his son, Ralston, gave one acre of land for the site of the new church.
- 3.14** The early 20th century saw a spate of high quality developments, mostly from the owners of Temple Dinsley. The Macmillan family, book publishers, contributed generously to the building and furnishing of St. Martin's church in 1900, James Barrington White, lawyer, built a pair of cottages, one for the village constable, at Crunnells Green in 1905, and his family's mausoleum in the churchyard in 1906.
- 3.15** Away from the village centre, two substantial houses were constructed at this time, both on high ground with commanding views of open countryside: in the north of the parish, Offley Holes House in the 1890s for the Curling family, and, further east, in 1905, Poynders End by Geoffry Lucas for Hugh Seebom, banker, and his family. The former house was burned down in 1919; Poynders End still stands. Both of these new 'country houses' were built near to older existing farmhouses with their barns and yards, Offley Holes Farm and Poynders End Farm, now Tudor House.

- 3.16** Herbert and Violet Fenwick, bankers, purchased the Temple Dinsley estate in 1908, and quickly engaged the services of Edwin Lutyens, architect, to enlarge the house, and Gertrude Jekyll, designer, to refashion the gardens. Both of these professionals were nationally highly respected for their skills; their work remains today. The Fenwicks continued to employ the Lutyens practice, with the construction of the 'model farm' at Ladygrove with its two lodges, the small terrace of Chequers Cottages, Kiln Wood Cottage and number 3 Crunnells Green within this parish, and other premises just beyond the parish boundary. The innovative and distinctive designs of these buildings must have caused surprise to some villagers, but they provided new facilities and comfort. Douglas Vickers, politician, built Crunnells Green House in 1919 for his estate manager, Reginald Dawson, the Village Hall and four adjacent bungalows in the 1920s, and in 1921 a new Pavilion on his meadow, now the Recreation Field.
- 3.17** Princess Helena College, a private day and boarding school for girls, purchased the Temple Dinsley estate in 1935, and still today enjoys this handsome house and its attractive gardens and park. A Nursery School now makes lively use of the Village Hall on four days each week.
- 3.18** Since the 1950s, the housing stock of the village has increased. For example, pairs of new council houses, using Swedish timber, were built in Chequers Lane. Elsewhere, a small meadow now has four detached houses, a large garden now has a new house and garage, the old school of 1849 was demolished and a new one built in Back Lane, and two new properties built upon the site, short ribbons of new houses were developed along Butchers Lane and Back Lane. The Edwardian farm buildings at Ladygrove have been converted to provide 15 new homes. On the north side of the village, the new short Templars Lane led to space for six bungalows and Castlefield for six more family homes with gardens and garages. Small extensions, conservatories, new garages and one swimming pool, have recently been added to our village landscape. See table in paragraph 5.1.
- 3.19** Philanthropy has continued, with the purchase of The Red Lion public house by many villagers in 1983, the restoration of St. Martin's church and its East window between 1993 and 2001, the building of the new Cricket Club pavilion on the Recreation Field, contributions to the new classrooms and equipment at the Primary School, and, very recently, the provision of an improved broadband service. Created in 1990, the Preston Trust, a registered charity, has amongst its aims the preservation of features of historic or public interest, and the promotion of high standards of planning and architecture, in the parish.
- 3.20** There are 63 listed buildings and structures within the Parish on 41 sites. Thirty three of these are situated in the designated Conservation Area. Two buildings, Princess Helena College, in the Conservation area, and Tudor House are Grade II*, with the remaining 61 being Grade II.
- 3.21** This is a considerable wealth of buildings of national merit within a small parish. The 13 listed houses include two, Tudor House and Sadleirs End, with material dating back to the early 16th century. The 21 cottages also include two with material of this date, Fig Tree Cottage and Reeves Cottage. The three outlying farms each have several barns of the 17th century. New listed structures from the 20th century, outside the complex at Temple Dinsley, include St. Martin's church with its mausoleum and its lychgate, two pairs of fine gate piers and flanking walls at the entrance to Temple Dinsley in 1908, and the telephone kiosk on The Green from 1935.

3.22 This account of the landscape and architectural history of the parish, and the interests of its residents past and present, provides the setting for planning our Objectives and Policies for future decades.

3.23 The demographic data in the Questionnaire is in line with the census data collected in 2011. At the 2011 census the population of the parish of Preston was 420 and there were 158 dwellings in the parish. Data taken from the Questionnaire shows that there are slightly less people aged 46-65 than in the census, and more aged 66+, which could represent an ageing population in Preston. Just over a quarter of households in Preston currently have children aged under 16 in them, with around one in ten households having a child at school or nursery in Preston.

From 2011 Census	In our Questionnaire
16% adults aged 16-25	13% adults aged 16-25
23% adults aged 26-45	23% adults aged 26-45
44% adults aged 46-65	35% adults aged 46-65
18% adults aged 66+	28% adults aged 66+

In the Questionnaire the average age of adults in Preston is 52.

3.24 Over half the houses currently in Preston are detached and owner occupied. Around a fifth to a quarter is rented. Houses typically have three bedrooms. On average households have two cars. (Car ownership as at 2011 census was 1.98 cars per household).

3.25 Preston has been designated as a Category 'A' village for planning purposes within the NHDC emerging Local Plan. Development will only be allowed within the village boundary. The remainder of the parish is designated as Green Belt.

3.26 A very high response rate (91%) was achieved to the Questionnaire so we can be confident that the people who completed the survey reflect, and are representative of the people currently living in Preston. This gives a high degree of validity in the data, and confidence that the opinions collected in this survey reflect the opinions of people living in Preston in 2017.

4. The Vision for Preston Parish to 2031

Preston Parish thrives socially, economically and environmentally as a safe, tranquil, rural community where any development should be sustainable and of good, intelligent design to enhance its distinctive character. The heritage, biodiversity and position in the landscape should be respected and enhanced.

We will achieve this vision by:

- Encouraging a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all its residents
- Promoting a distinctive and flourishing local economy that exhibits vitality and dynamism
- Supporting measured, proportionate, timely and sustainable development to meet the requirements of both the village and the parish
- Endorsing policies that have a positive effect on the environment, including those that mitigate climate change and reduce our carbon footprint
- Maintaining the high quality natural environment with its protected wildlife interests

5. Objectives of the Plan

- 5.1** The community understands the need to accommodate housing growth over the next 13 years and accepts the development target proposed in the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031 of 21 units on land off Templars Lane. Taking into account 17 completions and permissions since 2011 the parish is estimated to see 38 additional dwellings over the Plan period. Residents feel strongly that new development should not detract from the character of the parish and should provide local benefits. There was no housing allocation for Preston in the 1996 NHDC Local Plan.

Completions and permissions since 2011

Location	Number of dwellings
Ladygrove Mews, Hitchwood Lane	10
Castlefield	6
Back Lane	1

- 5.2** From the various consultations, a series of objectives were developed to achieve the Aims and deliver the Vision in a sustainable way. The objectives address how to enhance the community, manage change and provide a starting point for the development of policies.
- 5.3** The objectives have been grouped into the following five themes –
Living in Preston (Quality of Life), Amenities and Facilities, Housing and Development, Environment and Heritage, Transport and Communication.

Living in Preston (Quality of Life)

Objective Q1: To encourage the provision of opportunities for social interaction through cultural, leisure, sport and commercial activities for all members of the community.

Objective Q2: To promote a community quality of life including clean air and water, enjoyment of open spaces, conservation of wildlife and natural resources, security from crime and protection from toxic substances. See paragraph 7.3.

Objective Q3: To prioritise local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth.

Amenities and Facilities

Objective A1: To support all existing amenities, facilities and services available in the parish and new ventures where appropriate for the benefit of the community.

Objective A2: To support existing businesses and promote businesses and employment opportunities on a scale compatible with Preston parish's rural character.

Housing and Development

Objective H1: To ensure that any development is sensitively planned and phased over the period of the Plan, protecting and enriching the landscape and built setting.

Objective H2: To ensure the integration of new residents into the village, new developments should link into or enhance paths and rights of way.

Objective H3: To ensure that any development delivers a range of housing to buy or to rent to meet local needs including affordable housing.

Objective H4: To support developments which have a low carbon footprint and are eco-friendly.

Objective H5: To encourage the provision of suitable storage areas for refuse, bicycles and mobility scooters.

Objective H6: To ensure that each property has the benefit of a garden.

Objective H7: To seek to ensure that the impact of new development on sewage, surface water drainage and water pressure is assessed and that infrastructure, services and utilities to existing houses are improved or at least not exacerbated.

Objective H8: To seek to ensure that individual extensions are of an appropriate scale for the site and maintain or enhance village amenities.

Objective H9: To seek to ensure any new housing scheme or infill development is of an appropriate scale and maintains or enhances the character of the village.

Objective H10: To seek to ensure that all development meets the requirements of the relevant Housing and Development Policies contained within this Plan in order to reduce the impact of building construction for local residents, surrounding properties and the narrow lanes within the village.

Environment and Heritage

Objective E1: To protect and enhance the rural environment of the parish, and its varied landscapes.

Objective E2: To maintain and protect good access to the countryside by means of footpaths and bridleways.

Objective E3: To protect 'greenspace' e.g The Green and all verges, within and around the village, so as to maintain and enhance the appearance of this rural settlement.

Objective E4: To recognise all merits of the built environment across the parish, and to seek to protect this architectural heritage, especially that of the many Listed Buildings.

Objective E5: To take special care of the Conservation Area, and to raise awareness of the relevant legislation.

Objective E6: To ensure new developments do not create flood risk and problems with the sewerage system and surface water drainage, while at the same time ensuring that any existing problems are not exacerbated.

Objective E7: To support the conservation of flora and fauna and to maintain and enhance the different habitats and their distinctive and varied species.

Transport and Communication

Objective T1: To support and encourage sustainable transport, including walking, and cycling.

Objective T2: To support and encourage safe use of roads, paths and bridleways for all users: walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as being safe for motorised vehicles.

Objective T3: To support the development of efficient and effective broadband speed and mobile coverage throughout the parish, while maintaining a good landline service, meeting the domestic, social and business needs of the community.

Objective T4: To support the maintenance of the rural character of the lanes in the parish.

Objective T5: To support on-going improvements to transport, to utility infrastructure and to digital coverage consistent with other objectives.



6. Policies

To deliver the Plan's objectives (Section 5), a set of policies has been developed with the community to ensure Preston Parish develops in a sustainable way.

- 6.1** The policies seek to achieve the objectives and deliver the Vision of the Plan and are grouped into the same five themes. Some policies apply to more than one theme.
- 6.2** The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the Government's guidance set out in the NPPF They exist to:
- Reflect the needs and priorities of the local community (paragraph 1)
 - Support strategic development set out in the Local Plan (paragraph 16)
 - Identify green areas for special protection (paragraph 76)
 - Set out requirements in advance for new development in an area (paragraph 58)
 - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications (paragraph 183)
 - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole (paragraphs 58, 70, 109, 126)
- 6.3** To aid decision-makers and planning applicants, the policies under each objective are accompanied by explanatory text and supporting evidence.
- 6.4** As expected, during consultation events, the local community identified a number of projects that fall outside the remit of the planning system. Where relevant, these appear in a white box below the policies and, if appropriate, will be taken forward by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It is recognised that some suggestions may not be within the powers of either the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council. Prospective ventures proposed by local residents but which fall outside the remit of the Parish Council, will be supported as much as possible.

Community Rights

- 6.5** The parishioners of Preston have a proven track record of pioneering community ventures.
- 6.6** In response to proposals to develop the Red Lion, in a way which was unacceptable to the majority of the community, in 1983 Preston became the first village in Britain to buy its Public House from a Brewery. This facility has been successfully maintained as a community asset, as demonstrated by the responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey in 2017.
- 6.7** Supported by the Parish Council, a group of local residents successfully lobbied BT which resulted in the adoption of a new approach to rural broadband. We then partnered with them to obtain the first part community funded fibre broadband installation. The approach is now a core BT policy and in January 2017 over 100 rural communities were benefiting from this initiative.

- 6.8** There are four Community Rights contained within the Localism Act that came into effect in 2012 devolving power from government to communities, local authorities and individuals. They are right to bid, to build, to challenge and to reclaim land. Three of these four may be employed by the Parish Council, individuals and parish organisations in support of the other policies in this plan as set out in the following Policies: CR1 to CR3.

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/what-are-the-community-rights/>

Policy CR1: Community Right to Bid:

In the event that a building or land that the parish wish to preserve or use for a purpose or venture which supports one or more of the Objectives in this plan, then this right may be used to "pause" the sale while the community attempt to acquire the land or building.

For example: if a community led project develops a business model for a village store, new village hall or other community hub.

Or, to ensure that a development meets the community requirements for a mix of housing and affordability.

Policy CR2: Community Right to Build:

Combined with other rights, this right may be used to ensure that any development within the parish is consistent with the needs and wants identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2017 and any subsequent consultations.

Policy CR3: Community Right to Reclaim Land:

If the local authority is not developing land designated for some development, rather than use the Community Right to Bid the community may instead reclaim the land to use for community led housing or other community facilities.

7. Living in Preston (Quality of Life)

- 7.1** The results from the Questionnaire show that there is currently very high satisfaction (91%) with living in Preston. Residents love it for the green spaces and access to the countryside that it offers. For a community of walkers, many with dogs, the rural setting is an ideal.
- 7.2** Quality of life is the satisfaction in life that comes from having good health, comfort, good relationships rather than from money. It is satisfaction with the environmental, cultural or intellectual conditions under which we live.
- 7.3** The concept of community quality of life is often used to explore community factors, resources and services that are observed by residents as factors influencing their life quality. A community quality of life is the shared characteristics residents experience in places, which might include air and water quality, traffic or recreational opportunities and the subjective evaluations residents make of these conditions.
- 7.4** Preston is quiet, peaceful and tranquil. There is a good community spirit and neighbours are considered friendly, helpful and welcoming. There is a good local pub owned by villagers and easy access to more facilities and amenities in Hitchin as well as transport links to London.
- 7.5** Being part of a unique community enhances the quality of life for local residents who appreciate the character of the village with its variety of housing, both in style and age, as well as local lanes and footpaths and the green spaces of both the village and the parish. The historic and heritage aspects are important as they are key factors in the distinctiveness of the village and must be maintained.



Objective Q1: To encourage the provision of opportunities for social interaction through cultural, leisure, sports and commercial activities for all members of the community.

Policy QL1: Social Interaction:

The provision of premises or other opportunities for cultural, leisure, sport or commercial activities, which encourage social interaction for all members of the community, will be supported. Development proposals should improve, maintain or make alternative provision for social interaction.

See also Policy AF1 and Policy AF2

Objective Q2: To promote a community quality of life including clean air and water, enjoyment of open spaces, conservation of wildlife and natural resources, security from crime and protection from toxic substances.

Policy QL2: Community Quality of Life:

No development should have a net adverse effect on access to clean air, water and open spaces. No development should be permitted which may increase the risk of crime, exposure to toxic substances or adverse effects on wildlife and natural resources.

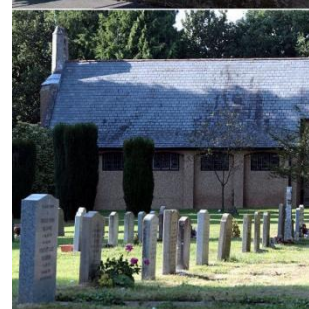
Objective Q3: To prioritise local distinctiveness in every element of change and growth.

Policy QL3: Local Distinctiveness:

Promote community identity by preserving heritage and historic features, making architecture and landscape schemes respond to their context.

8. Amenities and Facilities

- 8.1** The Red Lion is at the heart of life in Preston, with most residents visiting it sometimes and half of residents visiting it at least monthly.
- 8.2** Many people also visit the Village Hall, St. Martins Church, Preston Cricket Club and the schools. Green spaces are enjoyed by many, especially the Village Green, but also the Recreation Ground and Church Meadow Playground.
- 8.3** Walking is popular in Preston and footpaths are well used, with a fifth of residents using key footpaths in the community at least once a week. Over half the residents of Preston use a pathway to Wain Wood at least once a month. Seven in ten residents of Preston use pathways between the Village Green and Primary School and the Hitch Wood Trail at least once a year.
- 8.4** The community spirit in Preston is evident by the popularity of village events such as Village Day, which around four fifths of the community regularly attend. Open Gardens, the Harvest Auction and Christmas Carols also attract substantial numbers most years.
- 8.5** Walking, rambling and dog walking are very popular pastimes, with at least three quarters of residents doing one or more of them at least once a month. Residents also enjoy the countryside by jogging, cycling and horse riding. Swimming in the open-air pool at Princess Helena College and cricket are other notable activities to take part in. Even the young people like to be outside, meeting friends and walking.
- 8.6** Residents of Preston would like a shop! Although many acknowledge the impracticalities of a local store, it is certainly the addition to the village most desired. Following that, there is a desire for more activities for young people, especially teenagers, and some demand for tennis courts or a football pitch / club.
- 8.7** Most residents (92%) said that they liked living in Preston because of its rural character and atmosphere and feeling part of a community. Residents appreciate the community facilities within the village and there is strong support for retaining them.
- 8.8** For the purpose of the Preston Neighbourhood Plan, a community facility is a building, land or other structure that provides a service or facilitates recreation for the inhabitants of Preston.
- 8.9** An important objective for this plan is to sustain and support, where appropriate, the development of facilities for the parish, particularly as the number of inhabitants will increase with potential new development.



- 8.10** Economic development is important for the future of the parish to ensure it remains a thriving community. Thirteen percent of adult residents run a business from home and 1% run a business from other premises in Preston. Connectivity is vitally important to enable these and potentially new businesses to be sustainable. See Policy TC2 on page 43.

Objective A1: To support all existing amenities, facilities and services available in the parish and new ventures where appropriate for the benefit of the community.

POLICY AF1: New and Improved Community Facilities:

Proposals for new or improved community facilities which fulfil the needs of existing and new residents will be supported unless any adverse impacts would significantly outweigh the benefits. Improvements should improve accessibility for children, the elderly and those with disabilities.

See also Policy CR1 and Policy CR2

POLICY AF2: Community Facility Change of Use:

Change of use of an existing community facility to a non-community use will be resisted unless either:

- a. The facility will be (or has been) replaced by an equivalent or better community facility; or
- b. It can be shown that the existing community use is not viable and no alternative community use is viable.

Change of use of part of an existing dwelling to provide a community facility or village shop will be permitted, providing it is consistent with the other policies.

See also Policy QL1

Objective A2: To support existing businesses and promote businesses and employment opportunities on a scale compatible with Preston parish's rural character.

POLICY AF3: Home-based and Small Businesses:

Existing home-based and small businesses and new homes or home extensions, which provide space for a home office or craft/artisan workshops, will be supported subject to satisfying considerations in relation to design and car parking and other policies in this plan which protect the amenities of neighbours.

9. Housing and Development



9.1 The overarching aim of this section of the plan is to deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Preston. The objectives, policies and supporting paragraphs provide the basis for appropriate housing growth in support of the District Council's housing strategy and policies.

9.2 The results of the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2017 provided an insight into the future housing needs of the existing population in Preston. Generally, people plan to continue living in Preston over the next 13 years, with only 8% of households likely to move out. However, residents may move out if they need a smaller property that isn't available in Preston (14%), or because they need to have better access to amenities and public transport (16%). When asked what size property people might need over the next 13 years, some said a house or a bungalow with one or two bedrooms or even retirement housing whilst an almost equal number of others might require properties with 3 or more bedrooms .

Other reasons given for considering moving away from Preston were if it becomes over developed (13%) or if they could not afford to move within the parish (11%).

9.3 As far as development is concerned, there is a preference for: smaller developments of less than five houses (63%) rather than one big development; two (58%) and three (63%) bedroom houses; houses to be similar in style to neighbouring properties (37%) but with some variation of styles (28%); semi-detached (59%) and detached (50%) housing and bungalows (31%); with 76% of respondents saying that all developments of five or more homes should have gardens.

9.4 There is support for homes to be constructed and to be run with a low carbon footprint (62% and 64% respectively) and for other sustainable features to be conditional on permissions for new homes.

- 9.5** Three fifths of residents asked that new houses be available for each of: families (62%); local people (60%); and first time buyers (60%). There is also support for a range of tenures: owner occupied (69%), affordable/social rented housing (36%) and shared ownership (30%).
- 9.6** To achieve this, a thoughtful and innovative approach is required, which works positively with landowners and developers taking a continuing interest in the future of the village.
- 9.7** This is the approach proposed in the Plan and on the basis of this the Parish Council will look to engage positively with the statutory planning process to guide future development to provide for the housing needs and requirements of existing residents.
- 9.8** People living in Preston appreciate the special qualities the village possesses. It is a great place to live and in accommodating housing growth it will be vital that the qualities, which make Preston so successful, are protected. It will be important to ensure that historic and heritage aspects are enhanced and maintained as it is these key factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of the parish.
- 9.9** Local people accept that new people will want to come and live in Preston and this is important to any thriving and evolving community. New housing developments should be linked into or enhance the existing village network of paths and rights of way to ensure integration with the existing community.
- 9.10** This plan is not anti-development and the community understands the need to accommodate housing growth. However, there is great concern that new development in Preston could erode the very qualities that make the village and parish special if it is not carefully managed in terms of its scale and design. This next layer of growth must create a development of quality, contributing to the character of the village and providing local benefit. It must be more than an exercise in meeting housing supply 'numbers' by the addition of inappropriate properties. Our objective, therefore, is to enable the provision of a choice of new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community in a manner which respects the character of the village and wider parish.
- 9.11** The general trend in recent years has been for new developments nationally to be built at high densities and on a large scale. There is a strong wish within the community to retain the village feel, which means plenty of green space and small-scale development. The preference of people living in the parish is for developments of less than 5 homes as this is felt to be more suited to the village environment and a number of smaller developments will tend to support incremental development over the period of the Plan.
- 9.12** A housing development must be carefully considered and will only be acceptable where it reflects these principles and is consistent with the neighbourhood plan taken as a whole.
- 9.13** Any development undertaken in the parish must meet the requirements of the relevant Housing and Development Policies contained within this Plan in order to reduce the impact of building construction for local residents, surrounding properties and the narrow lanes within the village. In addition, the policies contained within the NHDC Local Plan 1996, the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework must be adhered to.

9.14 National policy requires local plans to provide for a mix of housing that meets the requirements of different groups within the community. The emerging NHDC Local Plan states:

- Prospective applicants should be mindful of emerging and adopted neighbourhood plans in the parish or settlement where the site is located. (Paragraph 8.5)
- On most sites, targets to provide up to 40% affordable housing can be supported. (Paragraph 8.9)
- The plan will seek to deliver a broad balance between smaller (defined as 2-bed or less) and larger (3-bed or more) homes over the plan period. (Paragraph 8.18)

9.15 The emerging NHDC Local Plan includes one Local Housing Allocation in Preston in paragraph 13.272 (Site reference PR1 – Land off Templars Lane) for 21 homes. The policies in the Preston Neighbourhood Plan will help to achieve appropriate and sustainable development on the site in addition to the three specific criteria stated in the Local Plan allocation:

- Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon nearby Wain Wood SSSI;
- Sensitive design that considers any impacts upon the setting of Preston Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings;
- Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery.



9.16 The Parish Council recognise and support Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) sustainable development guide for the County, 'Building Futures' the preparation of which was commenced in Summer 2005 through a partnership with HCC and a number of Hertfordshire local authorities. The application of the principles of 'Building Futures' is important to help meet the key strategic objectives which cover ways to improve and sustain the quality of the environment. Preston Parish Council will maintain a watching brief to assist the achievement of the aims of 'Building Futures' wherever possible.

The aims quoted by the Building Futures Partnership are to:

- Place sustainable design at the heart of planning and new development
- Create an integrated and consistent approach to sustainable design
- Improve the quality of new development

The Objectives cover ways to improve and sustain the quality of the environment including:

- Promoting local distinctiveness
- Achieving sustainable development and carbon reductions in the built environment
- Creating well designed places for people to live
- Creating built environments that are responsive to the context of Hertfordshire
- Minimising the consumption of water
- Making use of alternative water sources
- Effective management of surface water
- Improvement of water quality
- Minimising wastage
- Using reclaimed/reused or recycled materials where possible

9.17 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, mixed and inclusive community. Consultation showed that residents want to have a range of types of accommodation within the parish to meet their changing needs, with families wishing to move to larger homes, older residents able to down-size and young people to have independent accommodation. For first-time buyers within the parish, it is important that they can buy locally and not have to look beyond their own community. [The average house price in Preston was £742,500 compared with the Land Registry UK average house price of £223,807, as at October 2017.]

Objective H1: To ensure that any development is sensitively planned and phased over the period of the Plan protecting and enriching the landscape and built setting.

See also Policy EH1 for protecting and enriching the landscape and built setting.

POLICY HD1: Size of Individual Development:

Small-scale proposals of less than five homes are preferred for any development at any one time up to 2031 unless there is a sound need-based justification for additional dwellings, for example additional affordable homes or information from a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Objective H2: To ensure the integration of new residents into the village new developments should link into or enhance paths and rights of way.

POLICY HD2: Pedestrian Links and Rights of Way:

Any new development should respect the need for rights of way that link different areas within the village. New pathways that encourage these links should integrate with existing rights of way.

References:

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: ENV2, P29

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: ECON 6, P 30

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: SOC 1, P30

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Policy SP1: ci, P31

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: HS3, a i, b, P 95

Objective H3: To ensure that any development delivers a range of housing to buy or rent to meet local needs including affordable housing.

POLICY HD3: Housing Types:

Developments must include a variety of styles, in keeping with neighbouring properties and the village as a whole while also providing houses and bungalows in a range of sizes, suitable for families, local people and first time buyers.

See also Policies CR1, CR2 and CR3

Reference: Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: SOC 1, P30

POLICY HD4: Tenure of Housing:

Proposals should provide a mix of homes, including an element of social and affordable housing, in accordance with local needs, taking into account the high market value of property in Preston in relation to the average salary.

See also Policies CR1, CR2 and CR3

Reference: Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: SOC 1, P30

Objective H4: To support developments which have a low carbon footprint and are eco-friendly.

POLICY HD5: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:

Provision of measures for water conservation and landscape schemes that improve biodiversity will be encouraged. Proposals with a low carbon footprint will be supported. The provision of electric car charging points for all new homes will also be supported as will proposals that enable residents to work from home.

Objective H5: To encourage the provision of suitable storage areas for refuse, bicycles and mobility scooters.

POLICY HD6: Design:

New housing schemes should be designed to incorporate appropriate storage facilities for refuse bins, bicycles and mobility scooters.

References

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objectives: ENV2 and ENV4: P29

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Policy SP1: cii, P31

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Policy SP9: a, d, P52

Objective H6: To ensure each property has the benefit of a garden.

POLICY HD7: Gardens:

All new homes should have the benefit of a private garden.

Objective H7: To seek to ensure that the impact of new development on sewage, surface water drainage and water pressure is assessed and that infrastructure, services and utilities to existing houses, are improved or at least not exacerbated.

POLICY HD8: Drainage Provisions:

All new developments should take advantage of modern drainage methods to avoid creating or contributing to localised flooding and should ensure that suitable and sufficient foul sewage disposal provisions will be available before any property is occupied. There are existing drainage problems in some parts of the village, namely in Castlefield, Templars Close, Chequers Lane, Church Lane and Butchers Lane. Whilst not excluding any other area in the parish where problems might emerge in the future, a developer must mitigate against exacerbating such problems.

See also Policy EH9

References

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission: Strategic Objectives: ENV4, P29

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission: Strategic Objectives: ECON 8, P30

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP7, ai, b: P44

Objective H8: To seek to ensure that individual extensions are of an appropriate scale for the site and maintain or enhance village amenities.

POLICY HD9: Residential Extensions:

Residential extensions, excluding those covered by permitted development, will be supported where they fit unobtrusively with the existing building and the character of the lane in which it is situated. Materials used should be complimentary to the original building and the pitch and form of the roof should conform to local character. The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents must be safeguarded and the extension must be one metre away from the boundary of the property.

Objective H9: To seek to ensure any new housing scheme or infill development is of an appropriate scale and maintains or enhances the character of the village.

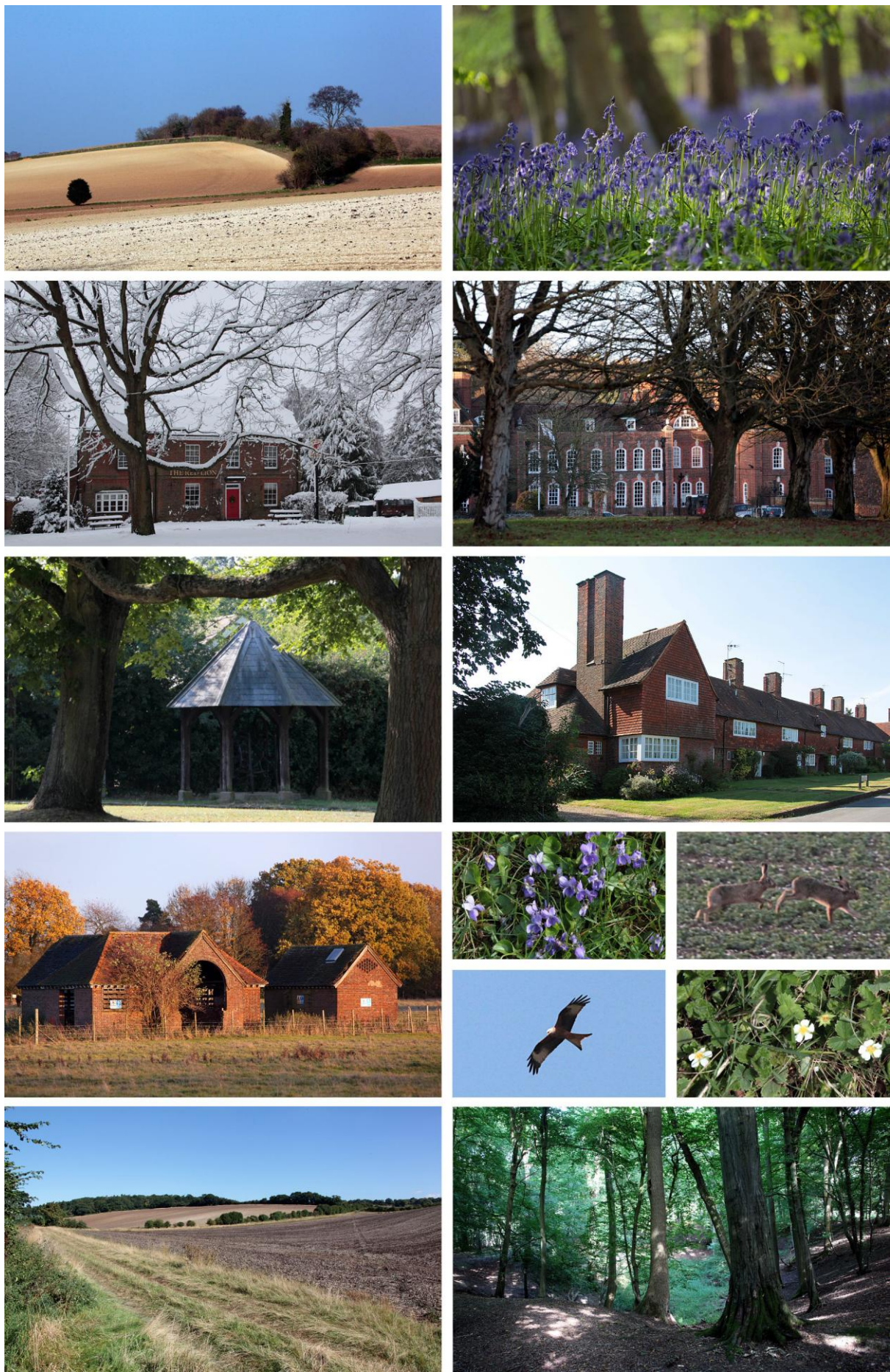
Objective H10: To seek to ensure that all development meets the requirements of the relevant Housing and Development Policies contained within this Plan in order to reduce the impact of building construction for local residents, surrounding properties and the narrow lanes within the village.

POLICY HD10: New Housing Development:

New dwellings on infill sites and new housing schemes will be supported where the proposal maintains and contributes to the local character of Preston, while at the same time meeting the requirements of the policies contained within this plan. New homes should be grouped in such a way that the green spaces of the village are protected and landscaped appropriately. The maintenance responsibility for each landscaped area must be agreed before approval is granted.

POLICY HD11: Construction Management:

Appropriate Construction Management Plans should be produced for all new homes and other new developments, to ensure that the amenities of existing residents are protected and a viable route for construction vehicles is agreed prior to the grant of planning permission. Developers will be encouraged to comply with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. (<https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>)



10. Environment and Heritage

- 10.1** Our small rural parish lies at the north-eastern end of the Chiltern Hills, a chalk escarpment. One small chalk quarry, now much overgrown with scrub, is still visible, at TL 177259. From its northern end, the parish stretches from Wellhead Farm at only 73m above sea level, for about three miles across changing scenery to the edge of Hitch Wood, one of Hertfordshire's largest areas of ancient deciduous woodland. The soils are mostly the poorly draining clay-with-flints. Small zones of 'brick earth' are found, as at Kiln Wood, and, on the steep scarp slope of the escarpment, are nutrient poor chalky soils in Target Plantation. This variety in the surface geology gives rise to a diversity of natural plant communities. The River Hiz, draining north to the River Ivel, then into the River Ouse and, after 90 miles, to The Wash, rises from a spring in a meadow close to Wellhead Farm; the parish thus has a few yards of this small and shallow 'chalk stream' this is a rare aquatic habitat in England. Water is scarce elsewhere in the parish; the clay soil, when used to create surface ponds for man or beast, can be 'puddled' to give an impermeable lining.
- 10.2** Today's man-made landscape includes many small woods and plantations, as well as the arable fields and grassland of the farms. Hazel and hawthorn hedges with oak and holly trees divide the fields and line the lanes. With narrow winding lanes, bridle paths and footpaths, and a scatter of outlying farmsteads, this landscape is typical of the Chilterns.
- 10.3** Farm livestock is almost an endangered species in Hertfordshire. This parish is very fortunate that we have had, and still have, farmers capable of succeeding in this branch of farming. Douglas Vickers had a famous herd of Wessex Saddleback pigs at Castle Farm in the 1940s; Ian and David Clark had the prizewinning Prescas herd of pedigree Holstein dairy cows. Horses and ponies now graze the former cattle pastures at Castle Farm. Pilkington Farm Partnership use land at Offley Holes Farm to graze their animals and farmers from outside the parish have cattle in the Park of Princess Helena College. These three zones of long established pastures add scenic variety, and support a diversity of wildlife, in the parish.
- 10.4** Located between the expanding towns of Hitchin and Stevenage not far to the east, and the large urban centre of Luton to the west, this parish is now buffeted between the different claims of the many people in this local population: the farmer, the forester, the gamekeeper, the ramblers and the dog-walker, the horse rider, the commuter, and the ecologist. The location of the parish makes it available to serve the leisure needs of non- residents. Ramblers use the northern extension of The Chiltern Way and our many quiet and litter-free paths, often heading for our community owned Red Lion public house on The Green; threads of cyclists regularly traverse our winding lanes, and, in late April or early May, carloads of visitors fill up Hitchwood Lane at the weekends to marvel at the sight of the many millions of bluebells in Hitch Wood. Our well maintained Recreation Field and the long established Cricket Club attract many visiting players and their supporters, on summer weekends. Education facilities in the parish also draw in, by car, the parents and their children from beyond the parish to attend the Nursery School and the Primary School, every day during term time.
- 10.5** Neighbouring parishes are also vulnerable to similar pressures. The task now is to monitor and assess, to conserve and enhance what we value and wish to maintain.

- 10.6** 'Heritage' is something we make from those habitats, structures and materials, which the past has bequeathed to us. Preservation, by law, of prehistoric sites and buildings, and some iconic landscapes, started over a century ago; preservation, by law, of habitats and individual species has been introduced only in recent decades. This is a reflection of our national values and 'cultural mood'. Both man-made and natural features need recognition and maintenance, either by local residents or by statutory bodies.
- 10.7** In this parish, an early Victorian botanist, Henry Brown, from Hitchin recorded a plant colony in Wain Wood in 1838, and its descendants are still growing there. Brown's herbarium, with the Wain Wood specimen, is now at the Natural History Museum in London. Several Victorian and Edwardian amateur naturalists from Hitchin, also visited the area and recorded their findings; Thomas Bates Blow noted orchids in the parish in the 1870s. Reginald Hine, in his book, *The Natural History of the Hitchin Region*, published in 1934, refers to others. The prize-winning scrapbook compiled by the Preston and Langley Women's Institute in 1953 gives us a later glimpse of species then common: the birds - goldcrest, greater spotted woodpecker, tree creeper, nightingales, and the butterflies - Wall Brown, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell and the Comma. The yellow pimpernel and the creeping moneywort were identified along Dead Woman's Lane. The lady members thought that 'The bluebells are Preston's crowning glory', and 'In winter, nowhere in all England are there Holly Trees to compare with those around Preston'. This is evidence that, more than 60 years ago, some local villagers noticed, recognised and valued their local wildlife species.
- 10.8** John Dony, in his book, *The Flora of Hertfordshire*, published in 1967, was well aware of the loss of plant diversity along the wayside verges, the falling water table and the shrinkage of springs and ponds, the pressure from the human population and the abrasive effects of their footwear and motor vehicle tyres. He conducted a special Habitat Study in Wain Wood in May and June 1962, and listed the ground flora: 6 'frequent' species, 12 'occasional' species and 23 'rare' species. Ecologists know that wildlife is intrinsically dynamic – there will be gains as well as losses. Gardeners and walkers in the parish have noticed recent changes: fewer hedgehogs and thrushes, more red kites and black squirrels, and just as many hungry muntjac deer.
- 10.9** National and local concerns have recently brought much legislation from central government, and many initiatives from ecologists in this county. Following the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, in 2011-2013, a new Hertfordshire Habitat Inventory listed and mapped the latest data. A new relationship with farmers is evolving; they are required to be stewards of the landscape and conservators of the wildlife, as well as producers of food.
- The results of recent decades of both environmental and heritage legislation now gives us a framework of Environmental Assets for Preston parish. This Framework can be seen in Appendix C starting on page 53.
- 10.10** More information relating to an Environmental Study with information on Wildlife Sites including bats, birds, butterflies, amphibians, flora, fauna and mammals of the parish is contained in Appendix C section 2 starting on page 56.
- 10.11** There are no streetlights in the village, which means that night skies are dark, allowing wonderful views of the moon and stars on clear evenings. This darkness also guarantees regular feeding opportunities for moths, bats and owls.

- 10.12** Not surprisingly, it is very important for residents of Preston to protect the green spaces and views that they have and love.
- 10.13** There is a clear visual and physical break between the village of Preston and villages and hamlets of neighbouring parishes. Coalescence needs to be prevented.
- 10.14** The rural setting is why people choose to live in Preston and walking in the countryside is a popular activity. 98% agree it is important to have 'green space' such as woodlands and fields between Preston and neighbouring villages and towns; and 95% agree it is important to minimise the impact of development on woodland, hedges, footpaths, bridleways, green lanes, ponds, streams, verges and geological features.

Objective E1: To protect and enhance the rural environment of the parish, and its varied landscapes.

POLICY EH1: Village Boundary:

In the NHDC emerging Local plan 2011- 2031, Preston is classed as a Category 'A' village, with a boundary within which development will be allowed. The remainder of the parish is designated as Green Belt. Any development outside the village boundary and therefore within the Green Belt will have to demonstrate exceptional circumstances, as well as proven need which is supported by evidence commissioned by Preston Parish Council. Any application for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Green Belt must adhere to the policies contained within the Preston Neighbourhood Plan, the NHDC emerging Local Plan and the NPPF.

References

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission: Development Management Policies: CGB2, p84

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission: Development Management Policies: CGB4, p87

NPPF: Paragraphs 83, 87, 89

Objective E2: To maintain and protect good access to the countryside by means of footpaths and bridleways.

POLICY EH2: Access to the Countryside:

New development should recognise and respect the importance of walking routes in Preston, ensuring that the enjoyment of paths and bridleways is maintained. These include specifically but not exclusively; footpaths to and through Wain Wood (Footpath 13 and Footpath 14); Footpath 3 from The Green to Preston Primary School and; the Hitch Wood Nature Trail (Permissive Path). (See also the Footpath Map in Appendix C on page 54)

Objective E3: To protect 'greenspace' e.g. The Green and all verges, within and around the village, so as to maintain and enhance the appearance of this rural settlement.

POLICY EH3: Open and Green Spaces: New development should not impact on the uses and functions of existing green infrastructure (i.e. all types of green space, large or small, public or private) within the village and wider parish. Where it is demonstrated through assessment that a development will have a detrimental impact on the quantity or function of existing green infrastructure, then the development will not be permitted unless replacement provision is made that is of equal or greater value than that which will be lost through development. Development that

fails to exploit opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure will not be considered appropriate. Of particular importance are The Green, the Recreation Ground, St. Martin's churchyard and Church Meadow. (See also an inventory of important green spaces in Appendix C on page 59)

References

Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP10: f, P 53

Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP12: a, c, P 56

POLICY EH4: Distinct Villages:

A clear visual break must be retained between Preston and nearby villages/settlements, for example, Gosmore, St. Paul's Walden and Langley. Development that significantly reduces this separation will not be permitted.

POLICY EH5: Tranquillity and Dark Skies:

Given the importance Preston residents place on the quiet, peaceful nature of the parish and its dark skies, any new development should not significantly disturb this tranquillity through the creation of excess noise, increases in traffic or light pollution. Preston Parish Council has a long-standing policy that there will be no streetlights within the parish.

POLICY EH6: Protecting and Enhancing the Local Environment:

Development should not adversely impact on areas of particular local ecological importance (for example, water courses, significant ponds, wildlife corridors, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites). Proposals should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, ecological networks and habitat connectivity.

Reference: Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP12: b, P56

Policies on Community Rights may be employed if a community led development can be set up to ensure an environmentally sensitive development.

Objective E4: To recognise all merits of the built environment across the parish, and to seek to protect this architectural heritage, especially that of the many Listed Buildings.

Objective E5: To take special care of the Conservation Area, and to raise awareness of the relevant legislation.

POLICY EH7: Conservation Areas and Heritage:

All development within the Conservation Area and within the setting of other designated and non-designated heritage assets must take account of the historic fabric of these areas and preserve, and where possible, enhance their character and appearance. A statement containing an appropriate level of detail for the importance of the asset must be provided in support of all such development proposals that describes a. The significance of any heritage asset(s) affected; b. Any adverse impacts the development may have on the asset(s) and their setting and any proposed mitigation measures; and c. How it will contribute to the character and setting of the relevant heritage asset(s).

Designated heritage assets of particular importance include the II* Listed Princess Helena College and Tudor House and the II* Listed Temple Dinsley Registered Garden. The wall and gate piers to Princess Helena College form an important part of the street scene along School Lane.

Reference: Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP13: a, P57

- 10.15** During consultation, residents identified certain views and vistas they considered to be of particular importance. These are noted on the Views and Vistas Map in the Appendix.
- 10.16** Residents place great importance on the green infrastructure in and around the parish. It is the network of open spaces, including woodlands, hedgerows, pastures and associated buffer zones, and green corridors, in addition to the protected sites and open countryside that make Preston such a unique place. Green infrastructure refers to all assets within and between towns and villages, both urban and rural.
- 10.17** Benefits to be gained from green infrastructure include a healthy environment, improved biodiversity value, climate change mitigation and flood attenuation as well as enhanced networks for walking and cycling, which contributes to a carbon neutral development. The retention of substantial connected networks of green space in adjacent countryside areas to serve growing communities is vitally important in ensuring these benefits are maximised.

POLICY EH8: Views and Vistas:

Any development proposal should include an assessment of the impact of the development on the key views and vistas or harm to the landscape. Proposals where a harmful impact is identified will only be permitted where appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered.

- 10.18** In the face of climate change, the risk of surface water flooding is likely to increase. The sewerage system is also locally subject to overflowing and backflow. Some areas of the village are affected by internal and external sewage spill and poor water pressure.

Objective E6: To ensure new developments do not create flood risk and problems with the sewerage system and surface water drainage, while at the same time ensuring that any existing problems are not exacerbated.

POLICY EH9: Flood Risk and Drainage:

All development should avoid areas at risk of flooding from any source, but where development is necessary, it should be demonstrated that these risks can be adequately managed. Future development should not cause or contribute to the problem of flooding or drainage issues, including sewerage, or pollution. Should new development cause issues with existing drainage, the developer must mitigate against such occurrences.

See also Policy HD8

- 10.19** The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) has provided the Preston Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Preston Parish Council with a set of detailed policies, along with justification for those policies, in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural environment (See Appendix D, page 71). Preston Parish Council (PPC) supports these policies, wherever they are relevant to Preston.

Objective E7: To support the conservation of flora and fauna, and to maintain and enhance the different habitats and their distinctive and varied species.

POLICY EH10: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment:

Development should not adversely impact on areas of particular local ecological importance (for example, water courses, significant ponds (Castle Farm pond, Princess Helena College pond and Preston Green pond) and wildlife corridors). Proposals should seek to maintain and enhance ecological networks and habitat connectivity.

POLICY EH11: Wildlife Sites:

In accordance with the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, all statutory sites as listed by Natural England including Wain Wood SSSI, the 13 Ancient Woodlands and all Local Wildlife Sites as listed by NHDC (including Lady Grove Wood areas of chalk grassland and other woodland listed in Appendix C (starting on page 53) will be protected from any harmful development.

POLICY EH12: Biodiversity:

Development should preferably avoid any negative impact on biodiversity. If this is not achievable proposals should mitigate for or, as a last resort, compensate for impacts on biodiversity. When requested, proposals for development must clearly demonstrate how they will deliver measurable net gain to biodiversity (see appendix D starting on page 71 for details)

Reference: Local Plan 2011-2031: Proposed Submission: Policy SP12: b, P56

Policies on Community Rights may be employed if a community led development can be set up to ensure an environmentally sensitive development.

11. Transport and Communications



- 11.1** The biggest concern for residents of Preston is the problems connected with traffic, transport and travel. People are concerned about speeding, especially on certain roads and over half of residents responding to the Preston Survey 2017 would like speed limit reductions to 20pmh. Heavy traffic is also an issue at certain times of the day. For some, this is exacerbated by a lack of pavements and street lighting in certain places (although others highlight these as positives about living in Preston). Indeed, the main worry for some young people about their safety in the village is roads and pavements with 65% concerned about lack of pavements, 45% concerned about the width of pavement and 52% concerned about speeding traffic. A poor bus service and badly maintained roads are other bugbears raised by residents of all ages, with 69% of young people concerned about an inadequate bus service.
- 11.2** Preston lies approximately five miles to the west of the A1M at Junction 8 and approximately eight miles from the M1 at Luton. The main road through the village runs east-west and is a small country lane which barely allows vehicles to pass in many places. All of the feeder roads to the nearby towns of Luton and Hitchin from the village are country lanes which are little more than tarmac covered historic cart tracks, with informal passing places, as are all of the other roads in the parish. The nature of the roads in the parish makes them unsuitable for significant increases in traffic within and through the village.
- 11.3** Because there are only rural lanes within the Parish there is huge concern locally about the increase in traffic which will inevitably occur if the proposed developments for East of Luton go ahead as well as the planned expansion to Luton airport. In addition to the planned and agreed increase in numbers to 18 million passengers per year, a recently submitted planning application requests that this number should increase to 25 million. The much greater volume of traffic through Preston as a result of these developments will have a huge impact on the quality of life for local residents.
- 11.4** Transport is an emotive issue in Preston. Most people rely on the car to be able to get to work or school. Households have two cars on average. Several households with two adults have three cars. With a poor bus service, cars are a lifeline to amenities and facilities outside of the parish as well as to work, school and shops.

11.5 Other than the two central roads in the village, Church Lane and School Lane, the other roads are predominantly single track with some passing places and in view of this new developments should provide off road parking for a minimum of two cars per unit.

11.6 One of the concerns for local inhabitants is the amount of traffic in both directions on Church Lane at peak times. This includes morning and evening rush hour and an after school peak between 3.30 and 4.30 p.m. The majority of this traffic is passing through the village en route to or from Luton, Hitchin and Stevenage. Local research by the Parish Council has shown the number of vehicles passing through the village is very high in proportion to the number of households. (See table below)

Date	Time	Vehicles* travelling	
		from Ley Green	towards Ley Green
Monday 10 October 2016	08.04 - 08.54	123	120
Tuesday 11 October 2016	15.00 - 16.15	60	83
Tuesday 18 October 2016	16.35 - 18.05	189	126

* The volume of traffic is much higher than could be expected taking into account the total number of households in the parish is 165.

This survey was undertaken at the Church Lane side of The Green

11.7 The improved Internet service is appreciated and three quarters of residents now have high speed broadband. Improved mobile phone coverage is seen as more important than a fixed telephone line (especially by those taking part in the Young Residents Survey), and many residents would like an improved mobile phone signal in Preston.

11.8 In conjunction with BT, a project was started in July 2010 to bring fibre optic broadband to the village. Questionnaires were completed, a village meeting was held and local residents contributed £37,830, including VAT, to the project. BT paid the remainder. This was the first such initiative in the country and a trial to see what was possible for other rural communities. The first householder was connected to super-fast broadband on 26 July 2012 with other residents following soon afterwards. Those living nearest to the box get the fastest broadband, gradually reducing for properties further away.

11.9 A new box was installed opposite the recreation ground to provide the fibre optic service but as there was not enough capacity within the old copper box for the number of lines required, the system has been fraught with problems since its inception. Engineers were on site most days and problems for individual householders took considerable time to be resolved. This led to the replacement of the box in July 2017 and hopefully a more consistent service for most residents. However, there are still improvements to be made. The survey indicated that seventy-nine percent of homes required faster broadband. Mobile coverage is also not adequate in many parts of the parish of Preston. Eighty two percent of respondents said they required a better mobile signal.

11.10 In light of the above issues, provision of facilities to support the delivery of efficient and effective broadband and mobile coverage throughout the parish will be supported provided they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan.

Objective T1: To support and encourage safe and sustainable transport, including walking and cycling.

Objective T2: To support and encourage safe use of roads, paths and bridleways for all users: walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as being safe for motorised vehicles.

POLICY TC1: Safe and Sustainable Transport :

Residential and community development proposals should be able to demonstrate that amenities in the village can be readily and safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. Development should:

- a) not unduly increase traffic volumes within or through the village (an appropriate Traffic Impact Assessment should be submitted with all planning applications) and
- b) not create additional safety risks (an appropriate Road Safety Assessment should be submitted with all planning applications) and
- c) provide a minimum of 2 off-road parking spaces per new residential unit to ensure no undue hindrance to traffic or safety issues.

References:

Local Plan proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Policy SP6: c,g: P41

NHDC Vehicle Parking at New Development: Supplementary Planning Guidance; September 2011, P 17

NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031: Proposed Submission, Appendix 4, P243: Car Parking Standards

Objective T3: To support the development of efficient and effective broadband speed and mobile coverage throughout the parish while maintaining a good landline service, meeting the domestic, social and business needs of the community.

Policy TC2: Broadband and Mobile Coverage:

Provision of facilities to support the delivery of efficient and effective landline, broadband and mobile coverage throughout the parish will be supported provided they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan. Proposals for new residential, commercial or community developments should include meeting the broadband and mobile phone needs of occupiers without any adverse impact on broadband speed or mobile phone coverage for the wider community.

Objective T4: To support the maintenance of the rural character of the lanes in the parish.

Objective T5: To seek on-going improvements to transport, to utility infrastructure and to digital coverage consistent with other objectives.

Change from 30mph speed limit to 20mph for certain roads.

It is recognised and acknowledged that many residents would like the speed limit reduced to 20mph in some areas of the village. Preston Parish Council attempted to do this in June 2017. Having consulted the available data, Hertfordshire Highways and the Police, they have concluded that the lanes in Preston do not meet the criteria for speed limit reduction.

12. Implementation and Monitoring

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2011 to 2031. It provides a direction for change through its vision, objectives and policies, while at the same time protecting the environmental and historic aspects of the parish which are highly valued and appreciated by the community. It is flexible to allow for new challenges and opportunities which may arise over the Plan period.

- 12.1 The developments that take place during this time will need to take account of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. It is important to ensure this is monitored and that community projects identified through the Neighbourhood Planning process are achieved.
- 12.2 As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, an Implementation Plan is being developed. This will require the coordinated input of the community and statutory agencies.
- 12.3 Preston Parish Council will lead on and monitor the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan with a full review every five years to ensure that the policies remain in line with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and any changes to national legislation.

Appendices

A. PEOPLE	49
A.1 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM	49
THE STEERING GROUP	49
THE VOLUNTEERS	49
A.2 OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS	50
A.3 OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS	50
B. SURVEY	51
C. ENVIRONMENT	53
C.1 CONTEXT	53
FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND GREEN LANES	54
VIEWS AND VISTAS	55
C.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	56
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	56
THE ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY SITES	57
THE LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES	58
OTHER NON-STATUTORY SITES OF PARISH IMPORTANCE	59
SPECIES DATA FOR THE PARISH	60
FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT	61
C.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT	62
LISTED BUILDINGS	62
TEMPLE DINSLEY / PRINCESS HELENA COLLEGE	66
PRESTON CONSERVATION AREA	67
CHARLTON CONSERVATION AREA	67
FORMER GARDENS OF MERIT	67
AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE (AAS)	67
D. CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	71
D.1 DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING SITES OF SIGNIFICANT BIODIVERSITY INTEREST	72
D.2 SITES OF ACKNOWLEDGED NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE	72
D.3 NETWORKS OF BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	73
D.4 ECOLOGICAL SURVEY STANDARDS	74
D.5 WILDLIFE AND LIGHTING	75
D.6 WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPING	75
E. REFERENCE BOOKS AND MAPS CONSULTED	77
F. PRESTON PARISH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	79

A. People

A.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Team

Our thanks to all of the team.

The Steering Group

- Wally Steele (Chairman)
- Di Day (Vice Chair)
- Margaret Trinder (Parish Council Liaison)
- Fay Higgin (Clerk)
- Malcolm Gomm
- Alexandra Higgin
- Liz Hunter
- Rae Reynolds

The Volunteers

1. Residents who deliver every month the Church and Village Newsletter to all households in the parish:

Margaret Cashin, Patrick Diamond, David and Frances Drew, John and Stephanie Healey, Sue Kellard, Ann Lowle, Doreen Sansom, Ros Welch

Production of newsletter: Howard Trinder – editor. Liz Madden – arranges photocopying in the office at PHC. Doreen Sansom – allocates the copies needed for each ‘delivery area’.

2. Residents who volunteered to deliver and to collect the NP Questionnaires, in January and February 2017:

All the people above, and in addition, the following:

Richard and Di Blockley, Adrian and Chris Hardy, Mike Kellard, Ita Leaver, David Morgan, Christina Nurthen, Sandra Palmer, Meta Reeves, Richard Woolfson.

3. Residents and friends of the parish who have made other contributions:

Frances Drew - the 63 Listed Buildings of the parish

Dr. Jane Sears - the natural environment of the parish

Philip Wray (author of A history of Preston in Hertfordshire) – who gave permission for use of his research, reviewed aspects of our research and analysis.

A.2 Other Individuals and Organisations

Our thanks to the other people and organisations who we consulted that provided information and/or services in the development of our neighbourhood plan.

Becky Lewis, Insight Fountain

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

Claire Skeels, North Herts District Council (NHDC)

Colin Kendal, Creamers Print and Design

Donna Moles, Moles Consulting

English Heritage

Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre (HERC)

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Records (HHER)

- which is a section of the Planning Dept. of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

Jacqueline Veater, Independent Consultant

Kate Harwood, Conservation and Planning Officer - Hertfordshire Gardens Trust

NHDC Museum Services

Ordnance Survey Office

Preston News Service (PNS)

Princess Helena College

A.3 Other Neighbourhood Plans

Our thanks also go to the communities and steering groups of other neighbourhoods who have produced plans which we used as a resource: Braughing, Mattishall, Pirton, Tattenhall and Walkern Parish Councils – we have read and learnt from your Neighbourhood Plans.

B. Survey

The survey provides an important part of the evidence base for the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan. As a major part of the consultation process it is detailed in the Consultation Statement. Copies of the questionnaires (Adult, Young Resident and Under 10's), the results presentation and analysis report are attachments to the Consultation Statement.

Please see: **Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Draft Consultation Statement (Regulation 14)**

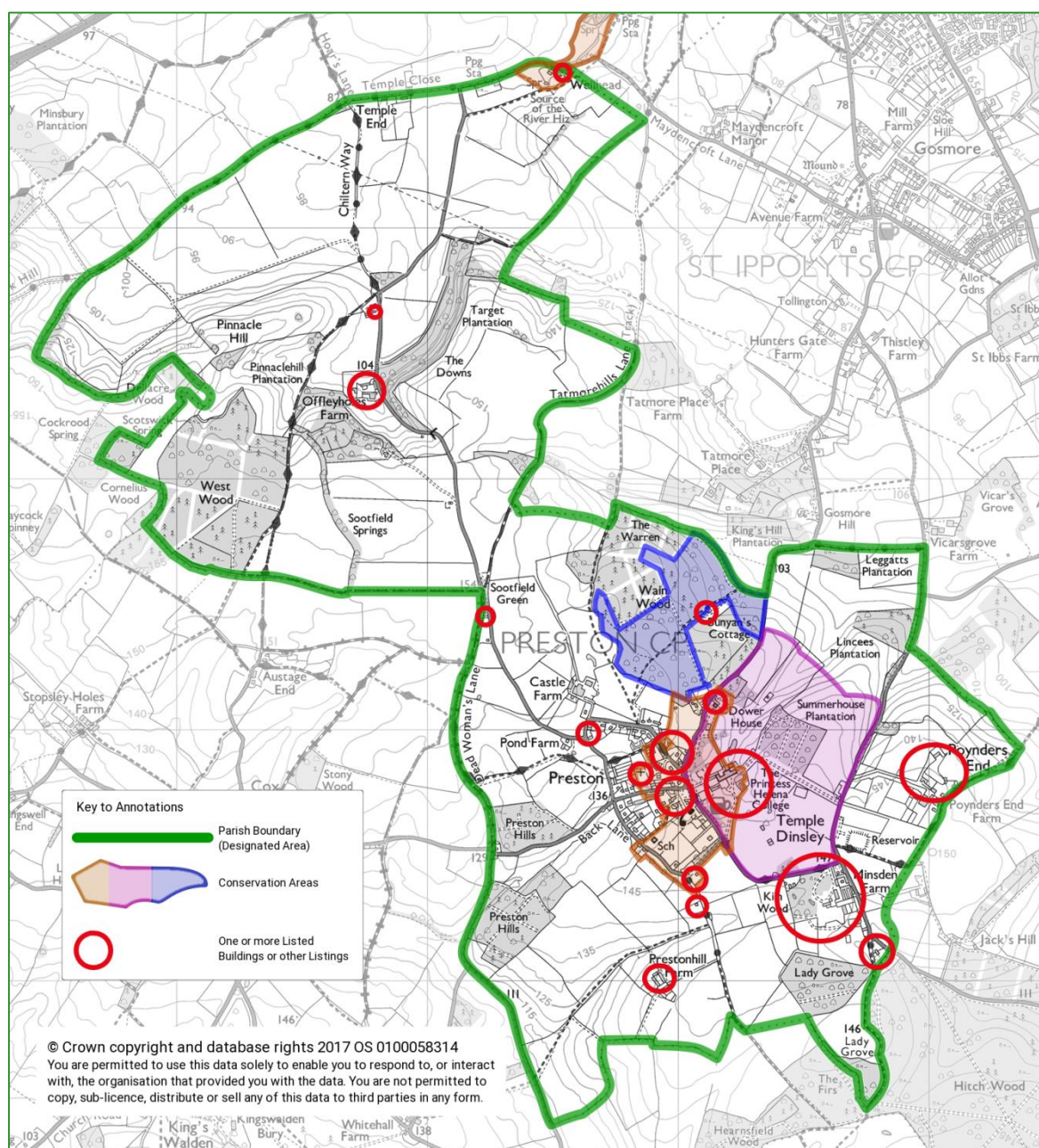
Filename: **PRESTON NP Consultation Statement with Appendices Reg 14 [version].docx**
where [version] will be the version number of the current version

C. Environment

C.1 Context

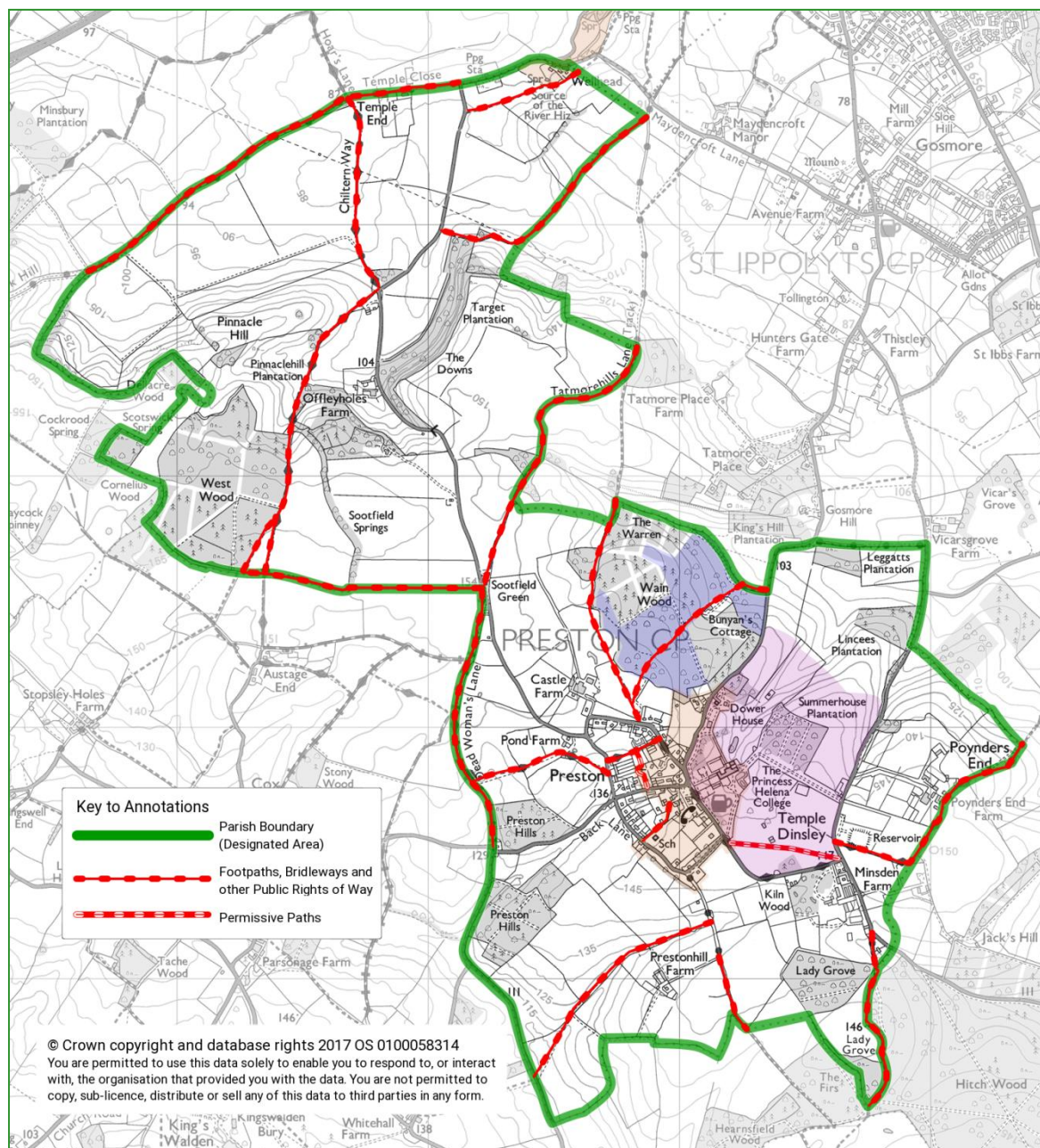
This small and oddly shaped parish stretches about 3 miles across the Chiltern escarpment. Variations in altitude and gradient, and in soil type and depth, give a constant change in scenery, as one travels through the parish, on foot, horse, cycle or by car. These subtle changes are reflected in the pattern of habitats which now exist. Throughout at least ten centuries, people have lived and worked in this short and narrow slice of Hertfordshire's countryside.

As discussed further in this appendix the parish contains 2 Landscape Conservation Areas, a Registered Historic Landscape Park, 63 Listed Buildings, as well as 1 Site of Special Scientific Interest.



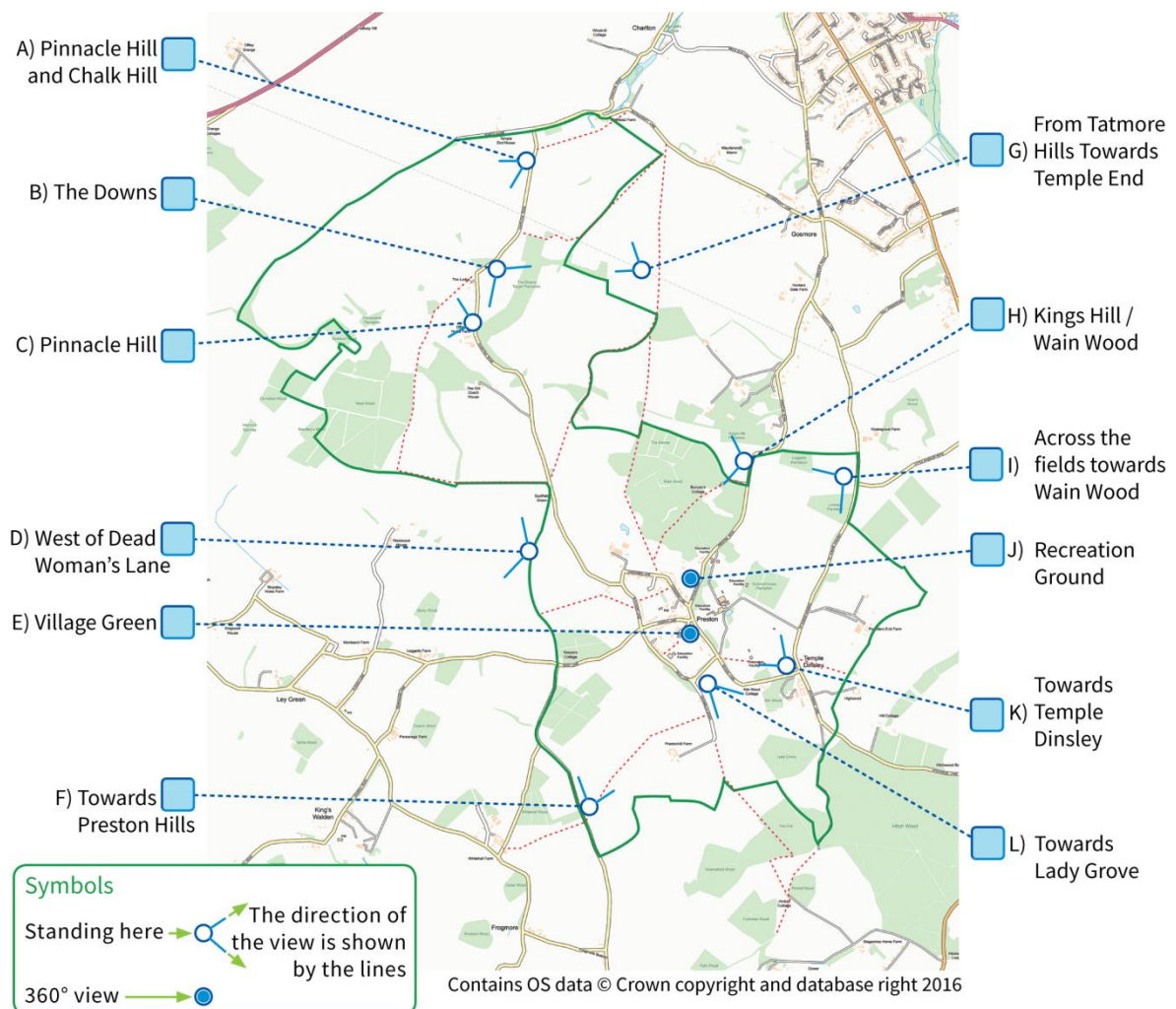
Footpaths, Bridleways and Green Lanes

There is a well used network of Public Rights of Way (including part of the Chiltern Way, many footpaths, bridleways and green lanes) as well as permissive paths through the Churchyard to the Millennium Meadow and across a field in the grounds of Princess Helena College:



Views and Vistas

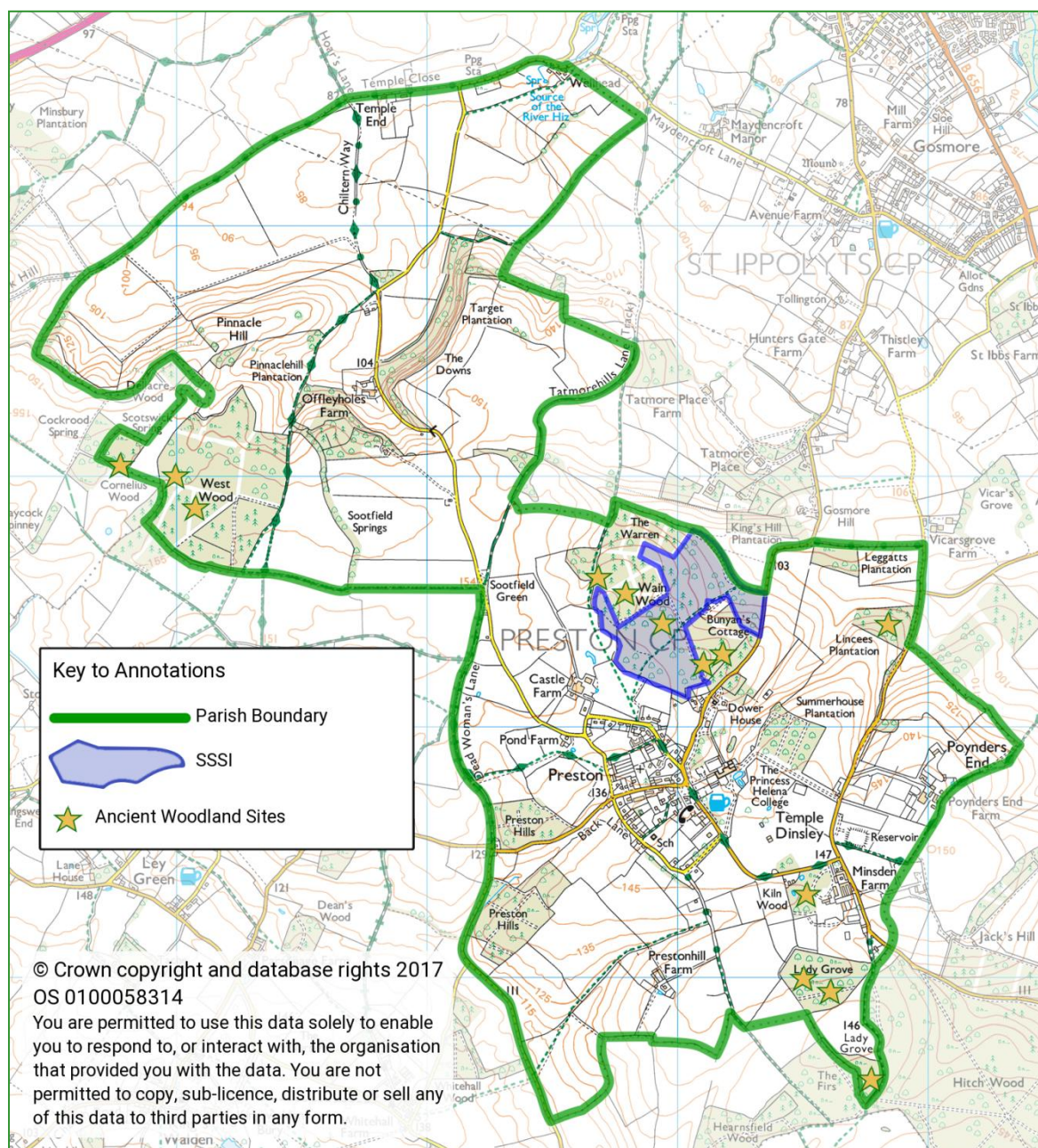
The residents value the views and vistas afforded by our setting. Below is a map from the survey which is indicative of the views, not definitive.



C.2 Natural Environment

Areas, habitats and species with legal protection.

This Appendix gives data which supplements that given in Section 10, Environment and Heritage, in the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan.



Site of Special Scientific Interest

Natural England has designated part of Wain Wood as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (shaded blue on the above map). It is an area of diverse flora and ancient deciduous woodland, known to have existed before 1600. The SSSI zone is only 19.03 hectares of the total wood. Felling and removal of conifers this summer, 2017, from the areas of ancient woodland surrounding the SSSI zone may enrich the biodiversity of this valuable habitat.

The details of the designation (as of December 2017) are as follows:

Wain Wood (TL 180255, Area: 19.2 ha, 47.4 acres) is the only SSSI in the parish. An ancient seat natural oak/hornbeam (*Quercus species/Carpinus betulus*) woodland, which is notable as it is near the northern limit of its natural range, and is a habitat that is now much reduced in extent nationally through woodland clearance or felling and restocking with conifers.

The stand comprises mature pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and sessile oak *Quercus petraea* with hornbeam standards in the south and wild cherry *Prunus avium* frequent in the north. Thinly developed hornbeam coppice dominates the shrub layer throughout with elder *Sambucus nigra* also present. Here the sparse ground flora is composed of bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and bryophytes. A disused pit near the centre of the wood is surrounded by standard ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wild cherry with abundant dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* as ground cover.

A damp open ride in the south of the wood is characteristic of unimproved acidic grassland with sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and common centaury *Centaureum erythraea*. Elsewhere, drier more base-rich conditions support a ride flora indicative of calcareous grassland. Species present include field scabious *Knautia arvensis*, hairy St John's wort *Hypericum hirsutum*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* and eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis*.

The wood is said to support an interesting butterfly community, including the near threatened and scarce purple hairstreak butterfly, *Thecla quercus*, but there are no recent records.

The accounts of the woodward, John Merrit, 1739-1767 survive and are part of the Delme Radcliffe Collection at the County Archive Office, Hertford. Within the wood is a large and deep natural amphitheatre, known as Bunyan's Dell, because John Bunyan, (1628-1688), the Bedfordshire Baptist preacher, held clandestine gatherings here for his followers. Bunyan is thought to have stayed overnight at Bunyan's Cottage, a timber-framed 17th century building in the wood.

The Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites

Ancient woodland is land that has had a continuous cover of woodland since at least 1600. There are two categories:

ASNW Ancient semi-natural woodland or ASNW sites: 6 in Preston parish. These include parts of Hitch Wood and of Hearnfield Wood, and one part of West Wood and Goodley's Wood.

PAWS Planted ancient woodland site or PAWS sites: 7 in Preston parish. These are sites where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, probably of conifers in the 20th century. These include parts of Wain Wood, the Lincas Plantation, and in the north west of the parish, Cockrood Springs and Scotswick Springs, and the larger part, 24 hectares, of West Wood and Goodley's Wood.

	Site name	Grid Ref.	Category	Total area (ha.)
1.	Linces Plantation	TL188255	PAWS	0.40
2.	Wain Wood	TL182254	PAWS	0.73
3.	Wain Wood	TL178255	PAWS	5.46
4.	The Warren	TL176256	ASNW	1.19
5.	Wain Wood	TL 179254	ASNW	19.10
6.	Ladygrove North	TL185243	PAWS	1.78
7.	Wain Wood	TL 181253	PAWS	4.54
8.	Cockrood/Scotswick Spring	TL 156260	ASNW	2.41
9.	Ladygrove South	TL186239	ASNW	2.61
10.	Hitch Wood	TL191234	ASNW	65.38
11.	Ladygrove South	TL185240	PAWS	3.24
12.	Goodleys Wood	TL160260	ASNW	6.21
13.	West Wood	TL161259	PAWS	24.29

PAWS = Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site

ASNW = Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland

Note: Only a very small area of the Hitch Wood/The Firs/Ladygrove South/Hearnsfield Wood complex of woodlands lies within Preston parish.

The Local Wildlife Sites

There are 9 Local Wildlife Sites. The habitats include woodland, ponds and chalk grassland.

The local wildlife sites are non-statutory sites designated at County and District level as being of conservation importance. The aim of this identification is twofold: to protect such sites from land management changes which may lessen their nature conservation interest, and to encourage sensitive management to maintain and enhance their importance.

In Hertfordshire, ecologists seek permission from landowners to access areas; they then use robust, scientifically determined criteria and detailed surveys to identify potential sites. The selection of sites is based on the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context. Ratification of each selected site is awarded by the Hertfordshire Local Wildlife Sites Partnership; this status is recognised by Natural England.

Although the Local Wildlife Sites have no statutory protection, they need to be considered in the planning process through the Planning Policy Guidance, such as PP9 which refers to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 30. This states that nature conservation issues should be included in the surveys of local authority areas to ensure that the plans are based on fully adequate information about local species, habitats, geology and landforms. Plans should be concerned not only with designated areas, but also with other land of conservation value and the possible provision of new habitats.

Other Non-Statutory Sites of Parish Importance

These are sites of conservation importance which require protection from any changes which may lessen their ecological importance.

1. Woodland: 1

Preston Hills Wood TL173246, buzzards and red kites breeding here.

2. Ponds: 3

- a. Castle Farm pond TL177253
- b. Princess Helena College pond TL183246
- c. Preston Green pond TL181247

Historically, Preston parish has had more ponds, due to rainwater collecting in natural depressions in the clay soil, the maintenance of a 'puddled' clay lining, and the need for livestock to thrive, before a piped water supply became available.

3. St. Martin's Churchyard TL178248

On this one acre of land, there is an avenue of Irish yews, planted soon after 1900 and recently coppiced, tall conifers with an understorey of brambles along the boundary fence, and, on the gravestones, many lichens. Hedgehogs, tawny owls and green woodpeckers are recent recordings.

4. Green Lanes: 2

Dead Woman's Lane and its northern extension, Tatmore Hills Lane, are ancient trackways with tall hedges and solid banks; they act today as vital corridors of shelter and food supply for many species. Bats, linnets, yellowhammers, and among the flora, ransoms, dog's mercury, red bartsia, knapweed as well as bluebells have all been recorded.

5. Green Spaces:

Public green spaces, such as The Green, the Recreation Field and Church Meadow, and privately owned green spaces such as the churchyard, the 'overgrown' meadow off Back Lane and the abundance of gardens across the village, not only contribute visually to the open spacious feel of the 'village scape', but now contribute generously to the food and shelter available to many wildlife species, especially birds, insects, amphibians and small mammals.

6. A Former Park: 1

To the north of the 17th Century Offley Holes Farmhouse, lies an area of pasture with occasional trees, partly edged by metal railings. This is the legacy of a small landscape park of the 19th century, when there were over 200 parks throughout Hertfordshire. Hugh Prince charts its development, as follows:

Size in acres	Owner	Source
50	Rev. Lynch Burroughs	Bryant's Map of Hertfordshire, 1821
40	Richard Marsh	OS 1 st edition, 6" map, 1863-1881

Cattle and sheep now regularly graze this pasture, a rare sight in the farming scenes in North Hertfordshire today. This grassland also provides a valuable food supply for small mammals, insects and grassland birds, amongst the arable acreage in the north of the parish.

Species Data for the Parish

The National Biodiversity Network Trust, a registered charity, organises nationally, the collation of biodiversity data and maintains the NBN Atlas. The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre at St. Albans collaborates with the NBNT. The NBN database records 13,375 entries for this parish; these entries are submitted by both professional and expert amateur ecologists, after fieldwork surveys in the parish.

The number of species (shown in brackets) of the flora and the fauna give us an insight into what is living in, and sharing, the environment of our parish:

Animals:	Mammals (21)	Birds (86)	Amphibians (3)	Reptiles (1)
Insects:	Beetles (7)	Butterflies (21)	Moths (22)	True bugs (5)
Plants:	Conifers (4)	Ferns (2)	Flowering plants (329)	Horsetail (1)
Bryophytes & Algae:		Lichens (34)	Liverworts (2)	Mosses (23)

Total number of different species: 561, all having been seen and identified in this parish in recent decades. It is likely that this seemingly high figure is not the full total. Expertise and time are needed to notice and to identify all species, in every season, year by year; the availability of skilled ecologists/observers is essential for a fuller recording of all species.

Within the fauna, the parish has some species which are protected under both national and European legislation:

The NERC Act is the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act of 2006.

- **Amphibians:** common frog, common toad and smooth newt: all are Species of Principal Importance, Section 41 NERC Act.
- **Birds:** willow tit, lesser spotted woodpecker, lesser redpoll: all are 'Woodland Red Listed Birds', and Species of Principal Importance, Section 41 NERC Act.
- **Birds:** grey partridge, spotted flycatcher, yellowhammer, corn bunting, linnet: all are 'Grassland Birds of Conservation Concern Red listed species', and Species of Principal Importance, Section 41 NERC Act.
- **Birds:** swift, short-eared owl: these are 'Birds of Conservation Concern Amber listed species'.
- **Lichens:** The lichen, *Flavoplaca dichroa*, was recorded in the parish in 2012, and is 'Nationally Scarce'.
- **Reptiles:** The slow worm, *Anguis fragilis*, has been recorded, and is a Species of Principal Importance, Section 41 NERC Act.
- **Mammals:** brown hare: this is a Species of Principal Importance, Section 41, NERC Act.
- **Mammals:** bats: 5 species have been recorded in the parish: all are European Protected Species, also Species of Principal Importance, Section 41 NERC Act. The 5 species are: common pipistrelle, brown long-eared, *Myotis* spp., the natterer, the daubenton.

Farming and the Environment

For centuries, farming has had a greater effect on the landscape and all habitats than any other human activity. Recent changes in farming practice have often degraded the landscape and many habitats. We need to ensure that the farms have the capacity to produce food and so sustain the nation's human population. But, since the Department of the Environment's 'Countryside Survey' in the 1980s, government legislation has, through the Set-Aside Schemes, required farmers to give greater consideration to the flora and the fauna of their local farmland.

In 2016, a new Countryside Stewardship Scheme, with Single Farm Payments offering capital grants towards supporting and enhancing environmental sustainability, has taken this policy a step further.

Within this small parish, there is a wide diversity of habitats. We need to ensure that these are maintained, restored and enriched. With detailed ecological data available, sites can be identified for habitat creation. The new Stewardship Scheme can assist with creating 'wildlife corridors' within and across the parish, linking one grassland with another, one woodland with another, along a network of botanically diverse hedgerows, verges and bridleways. Sufficient well maintained ponds are needed to enable many species to survive, breed and thrive. This concept of a 'Green Infrastructure' across the parish and the wider landscape, gives some priority to the basic needs of the wildlife.

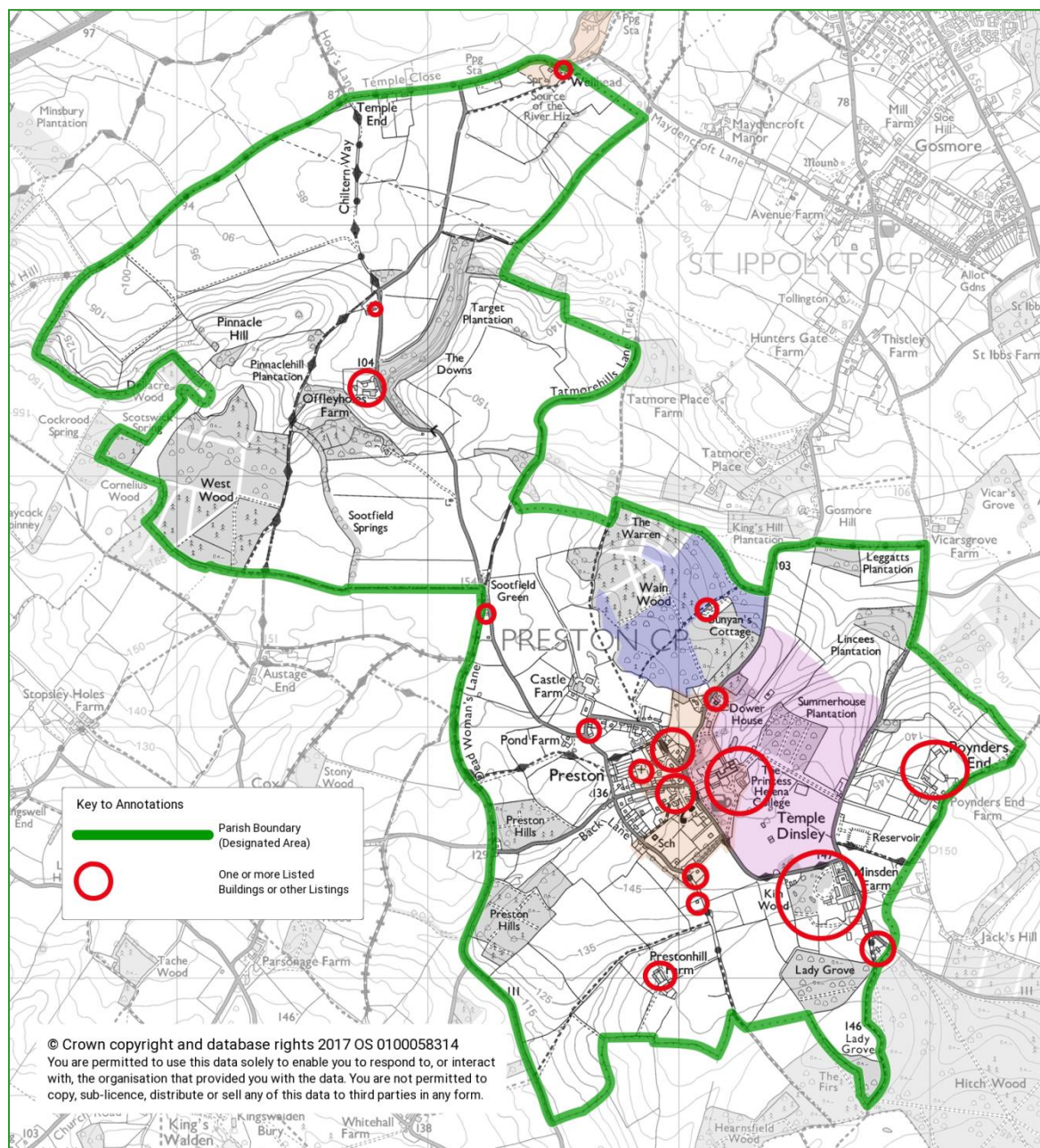
Fauna and flora do not recognise parish boundaries. The habitats straddle across our parish boundaries, for example, woodland continues into St. Paul's Walden parish, and chalk downland continues along the Chiltern scarp slope into Offley parish.

On a wider landscape scale, within a few miles of this parish, we have a scattering of medium and smaller size woods and spinneys, and a mosaic of historic landscaped parks. These include: Hitchin Priory Park, St. Ibbs Park, St. Paul's Walden Bury, Kings Walden Park, Offley Place and Putteridge Bury as well as our own Temple Dinsley Park. Ecologically similar habitats can be identified, and wildlife networks created and maintained. Opportunities exist to restore and generously to enrich the local environment, for the benefit of all.

C.3 Built Environment

Listed Buildings

This is a National status, and applies to 63 buildings in this small parish. 61 are Grade II. Two are Grade II*, which are 'particularly important buildings of more than special interest'.



The map above and following detailed maps clearly show the present number and distribution of buildings and structures of national merit in the parish. The high number is evidence of the wealth of past residents, and of the availability of tradesmen and craftsmen to construct such premises of quality.

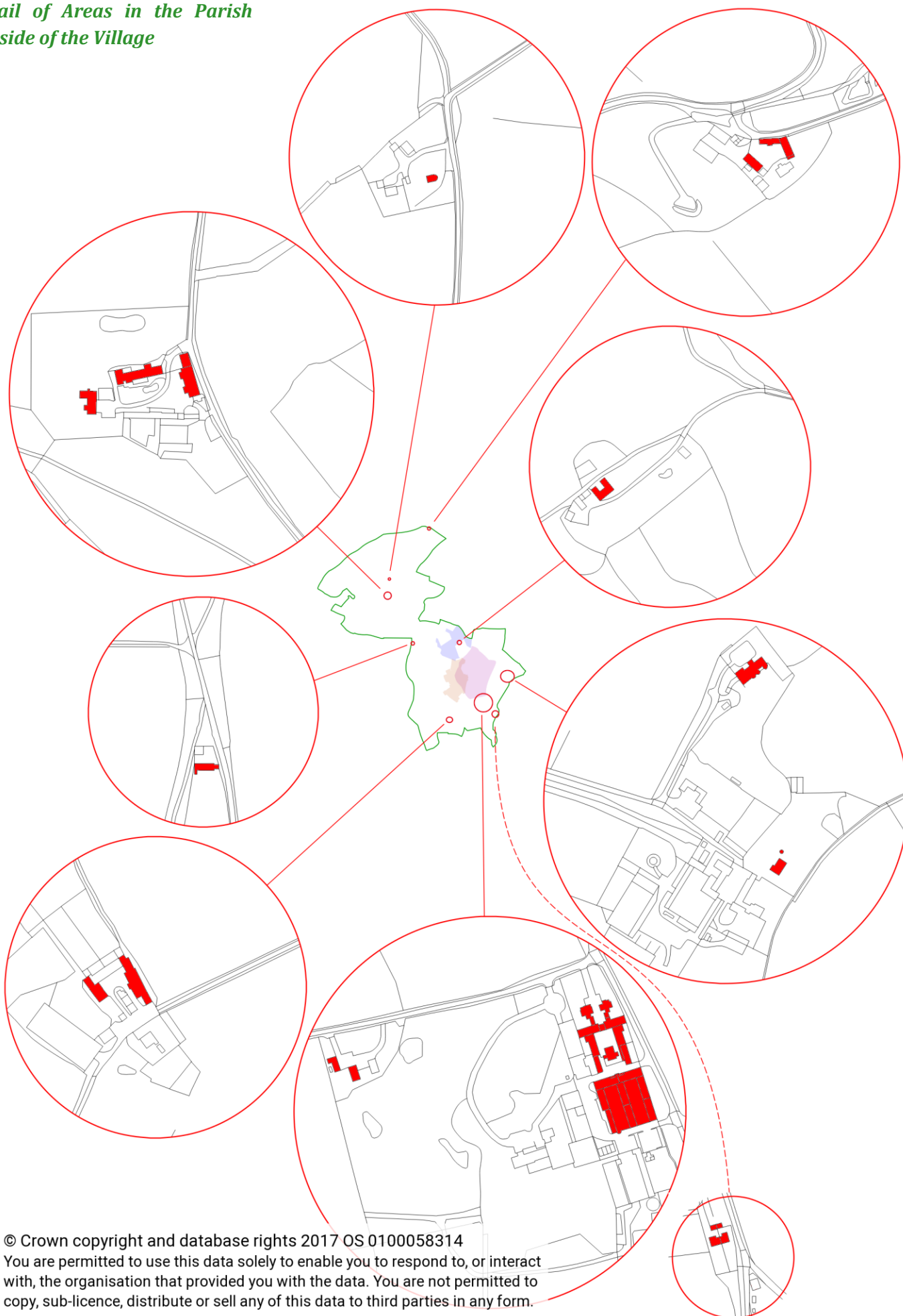
Detail of Areas in the Village



© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100058314
You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Note: the wall and gate piers shown in magenta are also listed.

*Detail of Areas in the Parish
Outside of the Village*

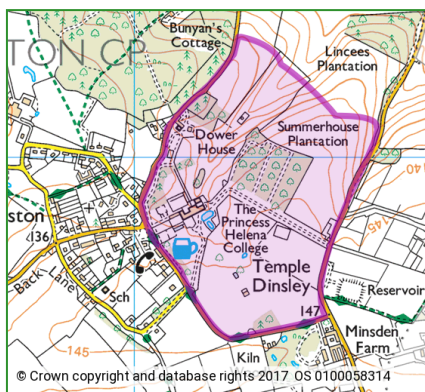


© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100058314
You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Index of Listed Buildings:

Name	Listed Entry Number from Historic England
Bunyan's Cottage	LEN 1347489
Chequers Cottages 1-6	LEN 1176623
Crunnells Green Cottage	LEN 1102423
Fir (Fig) Tree Cottage	LEN 1102426
Hitchwood Cottage 1-2	LEN 1176749
Kilnwood Cottage	LEN 1102433
Laburnam Cottage	LEN 1347481
Ladygrove Stud, Dairy and Lodges	LEN 1176799
Offley Holes Barn and Cartshed	LEN 1102429
Offley Holes Barns	LEN 1176723
Offley Holes Farm House	LEN 1307781
Offley Holes 'The Lodge'	LEN 1347484
Poynders End House	LEN 1102431
Poynders End: Tudor House	LEN 1102430 GRADE II*
Poynders End: Tudor House Octagonal Dairy	LEN 1176732
Preston Hill Farm: West Barn	LEN 1347485
Preston Hill Farm: East Barn	LEN 1176739
Princess Helena College: Ice House	LEN 1176789
Princess Helena College: House and Formal Gardens	LEN 1307766 GRADE II*
Princess Helena College: Gate Posts and Park Wall	LEN 1102432
Princess Helena College: The Piggery	LEN 1347448
Princess Helena College: The Dower House	LEN 1102427
Princess Helena College: Temple Dinsley	LEN 1000919 Parkland GRADE II*
Red Lion Public House	LEN 1102425
Reeves Cottage	LEN 1102424
Rose Cottage	LEN 1102460
Sadleirs End	LEN 1347463
Sootfield Green	LEN 1389610
Spindle Cottage Barn	LEN 1102428
Spindle Cottage	LEN 1176712
St. Martin's Church: The Lychgate	LEN 1102461
St. Martin's Church (C. of E.)	LEN 1176631
St. Martin's Church: The Mausoleum	LEN 1102420
St. Martin's Place	LEN 1102421
Telephone Kiosk	LEN 1103249
The Old Forge	LEN 1102422
The Well on The Green	LEN 1176692
The Wilderness	LEN 1307843
The Chequers, with Wall and Outhouse	LEN 1307773
Vine Cottage	LEN 1347482
Wellhead Farm: Granary and Barn	LEN 1102459
Wellhead Farm: South-West Barn	LEN 1307809

Temple Dinsley / Princess Helena College



The garden and other land at Temple Dinsley are registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest (marked in magenta/pink).

Temple Dinsley has an 18th century park, and an early 20th century garden, of national merit, both are on the English Heritage Register as Grade II*.

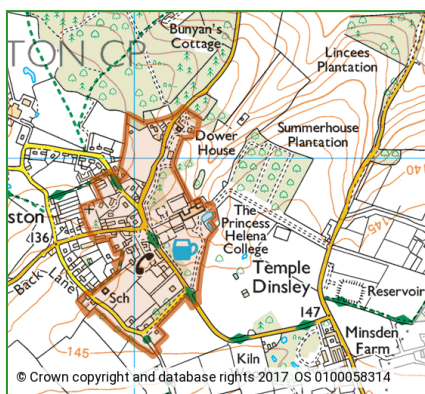
It is not known exactly when the 18th century park was formed. An 18th century brick ice house still exists in the park, and it is listed. Hugh Prince in his book, 'Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500' charts the development of this landscape, as follows:

Size in acres	Owner	Source
65	Thomas Harwood	Bryant's Map of Hertfordshire, 1821
50	William H. Darton	OS 1 st edition, 6" map, 1863-1881
70	Countess of Carnarvon	OS 5 th edition, 1" map, 1932-33

The historic Landscape Park and Gardens are now registered as 200 hectares in size. Temple Farm homestead in the southern part of the park was demolished in the early years of the 20th Century. In c.1908 Edwin Lutyens was commissioned to design and have built 'The Piggery', a small brick building with pyramidal roof, as an 'eyecatcher' feature, clearly visible from the south drive and the house. The park is laid to pasture and woodland, with the Summerhouse Plantation created in the early 20th century; these, with two small ponds, form valuable habitats for wildlife, to the south east of the village settlement. The listed 18th century Dower House stands north of Temple Dinsley house, within the registered park. The two fine pairs of gate piers and flanking walls at the entrance to the south drive, also designed by Lutyens in c.1908, are listed, as is the park wall.

The Gardens and Pleasure Grounds were laid out by Lutyens, with planting designs by Gertrude Jekyll, c.1909-1910. No planting plans still exist. The hard landscaping of brick walls and terraces, the York stone steps and paths, the brick loggia and belvedere are all to be seen in situ today, and make clear the 8 main compartments or 'rooms' of the original plan: the Rose Garden, the 2nd Rose Garden, the Herbaceous Garden, the smaller Herbaceous Garden, the Diamond Garden, the Spring Garden, the Pool Garden and the Pergola Garden. Lutyens's ornamental pool has become a swimming pool for the Princess Helena College students; this is much enjoyed by the residents of the parish and their families in the summer holidays. The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust assisted with some restoration of The Rose Garden in 1993, and the rose growers, Harkness of Hitchin, supplied new rose bushes, as the firm had done in 1909. Today, the planting throughout the gardens is much simplified from the exuberance of the Edwardian days, when labour was cheaper.

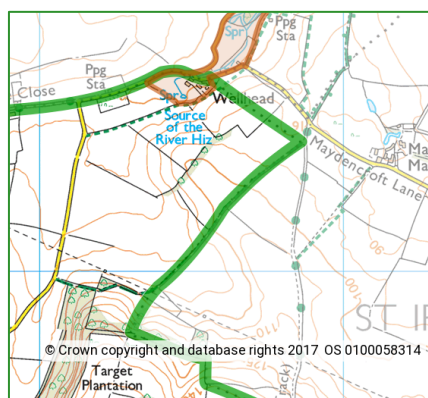
Preston Conservation Area



Much of the present village, the house and gardens of Temple Dinsley lie within the Preston Conservation Area.

This is a National status. The central core of this historic village was awarded this designation on 8th June 1970. This area (marked in orange) includes houses of different ages, sizes and materials, with their gardens, The Green and the four lanes and the one footpath which all converge there, and, also, the house and formal gardens of Princess Helena College. There are 33 Listed Buildings within the designated Conservation Area.

Charlton Conservation Area



The area was designated on 12th September 1977. The southernmost tip of this area falls inside the Parish of Preston. The sloping fields surrounding the Wellhead Farm spring source of the River Hiz, allow rainwater to percolate through the soil and thus contribute to the volume and flow in the spring. The valley shape is shallow, the river channel narrow, and the flow of water now much more irregular than it was 30 years ago, but, in an otherwise somewhat dry landscape, this feature is of real significance and deserves full protection.

Former Gardens of Merit

- a. Offley Holes House: the house was designed by W.L. Lucas, and built in 1894. He may have also designed the garden.
- b. Poynders End House: the house was designed by Geoffry Lucas of Hitchin, and built in 1905. It is not yet known who designed the garden.

Research on both sites is continuing. Neither site is registered by Historic England.

Areas of Archaeological Significance (AAS)

This is a County and District status, devised in the 1980s by NHDC Museum Service's Field Archaeology Officer, Gilbert Burleigh, and the NHDC Planning Department.

List of 'Monument Sites' i.e. Earthworks and Landscape Features

HHER no.	Description
12597	Possible Saxon 'sacred place', Wain Wood
9121	AAS 188: Possible site of 'Welei', a deserted medieval village, sherds of 11th/12thC. pottery and a medieval roof tile
1956	AAS 99: Possible site of an early medieval 'Preston Castle'. Also the site of a 'fortified' 18thC house, with literary associations: Lawrence Sterne's 'Tristram Shandy'
17252	Cropmark of pits, Sootfield Green
18756	Cropmarks of several enclosures and a trackway, possibly a Romano-British farmstead, Sootfield Springs
1721	Burial, unknown date
17249	Cropmarks of enclosures, ditches and pits, possibly an extensive 'farmed landscape' of prehistoric date
17250	As above
17251	As above
6577	Cropmark of a straight linear feature, aligned East-West
4756	AAS 192 Possible terraced 'house platforms' from former cottages
10834	Site of post-medieval kilns, with ponds in the former clay pits
4600	Part of a 'supposed Roman road' from Verulamium to Ickleford, and beyond; not proven
4604	As above
Temple Dinsley: 10 Monument sites, and 1 Landscape site	
2883	AA 168 Site of the Preceptory of the Knights Templar and of the Knights Hospitaller, and of the 16th century manor house at Temple Dinsley
11933	Supposed site of the 16thC manor house at Temple Dinsley
1835	Possible deserted medieval settlement, and an undated 'holloway', or sunken lane
18228	Substantial post medieval field boundary ditch, and other linear earthworks and possible enclosures
18229	Post medieval trackway: the access route to the former Temple Farmhouse, its barns and yards
18231	Group of post medieval clay extraction pits, presumably connected with the kilns in Kiln Wood
13053	Site of Temple Farm, a post medieval farmstead, demolished c. 1910
18230	Post medieval sub-rectangular pond, within the cartilage of the former Temple Farm
18226	Site of early 20thC sewage tanks, Temple Dinsley: the 2 small rectangular structures were replaced by a circular structure by 1924, and this was not in use by 1981
18227	Site of an extraction pit or quarry, Summerhouse Plantation, Temple Dinsley
7341	A 'LANDSCAPE' site: the 18thC Park and the 20thC Gardens of Temple Dinsley; upgraded to Grade 2* in July 2002

AAS sites for which we do not have HHER reference numbers

AAS 146 South of Charlton – A cropmark of an enclosure of unknown date and function
AAS 202 Sootfield Green – Evidence for a medieval and post medieval settlement
AAS 238 Wellhead – Evidence for a Roman and medieval settlement
AAS 239 South of Temple Close – Strip lynchets, visible on aerial photographs

HHER = Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record number

AAS = Area of Archaeological Significance – a designation devised in the 1980s by the NHDC Museum Service and the Planning Department.

List of Archaeological Artefacts or Objects Found in the Parish

In the last 200 years, and now stored in 4 locations: the NHDC North Hertfordshire Museum in Hitchin, St. Martin's church in Preston, St. Mary's church in Hitchin, and The British Museum in London.

1. The NHDC North Hertfordshire Museum, Brand Street, Hitchin:

HHER no.	Description	
555	Palaeolithic flint implement	
1722	Flint implements	
1429	Roman coins, and a 5" high biscuit coloured 'urn'	
1428	Sherds from 4 Romano-British pottery vessels, 1st – 2nd C. AD	
1481	Roman brooch, c.200 AD	
4009	Medieval brown earthenware 'bowl on a foot': a chafing dish	
LM Acc.no.		
LM 2055	Pottery sherds, from Romano-British to the 19 th C.	Not donated.
LM 2054	Possible head of a shepherd's crook	Not donated.
LM 2556	Medieval copper alloy 'strap-end', for a belt	Not donated.
LM 804	12 medieval glazed floor tiles from Temple Dinsley	

HHER = Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record number

LM/HM Acc. No. = Letchworth Museum /Hitchin Museum Accession number, now combined in the collection at the North Hertfordshire Museum, Hitchin

2. St. Martin's Church, Preston:

Part of the lid of a medieval stone coffin, in Purbeck marble, decorated with a floriated cross on its upper side and a simple cross on its underside. Probably from a 'tomb-chest' grave of a Master of the Knights Templar Preceptory at Temple Dinsley. This very significant artefact is now on display in the church; it has been erected on an oak frame, in memory of Christopher Sansom, a local resident and historian.

3. St. Mary's Church, Hitchin:

Three medieval defaced limestone effigies, with one, possibly, of a Templar knight, all now recumbent on a windowsill in the north aisle of St. Mary's church. Nathaniel Salmon, writing in 1728, records that '...three several Figures lying, cut in a coarse stone, are said to be brought down from Temple Dinsley when that Chapel was pulled down....' Sir Benedict Ithell had purchased the Temple Dinsley estate in 1714; he had pulled down the earlier house and built the present mansion. During the building works, his builders may well have disturbed the graveyard of the Templars and Hospitallers, and found the effigies. It would have been respectful and appropriate, at that time, for Sir Benedict to have given them to the nearest church for safe keeping. Sir Benedict was a subscriber to Nathaniel Salmon's new volume of 1728. Bridget Cherry, writing in 1977, records the 'three defaced stone effigies, one from the mid 13thC and two from the late 14thC', but she does not confirm that one is that of a Knight Templar.

4. The British Museum, London:

- a. Fragmentary chalice and paten, from Temple Dinsley
- b. Five medieval glazed floor tiles, from Temple Dinsley

D. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The following information and Policies have been provided to the Preston Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Preston Parish Council by Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre. The Preston Parish Council (PPC) confirms their agreement to, and support of, the following Policies for Biodiversity.

- D.1** The Parish of Preston supports a rich variety of natural habitats and species. Many of these are of regional and national significance. The PPC expects that the planning system should contribute to the conservation and enhancement of these and to the ecological systems that support them. In accordance with the NPPF, development policies will seek to maximise the benefits of planning decisions to biodiversity, within the context of sustainable development.
- D.2** In order to accurately determine whether no net loss and enhancement to biodiversity can be delivered by development the PPC expects that, when requested, precise ecological assessment by suitably qualified people to accepted national standards be undertaken, sufficient to determine net gain.
- D.3** The DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Calculator¹ has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure no net loss and where possible net gain. This is considered the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering net ecological gain.

Policy HERC1: When determining development proposals the PPC will ensure that decisions will minimise impacts and result in net gains to biodiversity. Net ecological impact will be determined by applying the DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Calculator. Only net positive ecological unit scores will be permitted. Ecological compensation may be delivered on or off site.

¹ Environment Bank Biodiversity Impact Calculator 2015 v2 or as amended

D.1 Determining Planning Applications Affecting Sites of Significant Biodiversity Interest

- D.4** When determining planning applications where there is a requirement to conserve and enhance biodiversity the following principles will be applied.
- D.5** If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (by locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission will be refused.
- D.6** Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as; ancient woodland, traditional orchards, aged, veteran, champion trees, or trees of a high conservation value located outside ancient woodland, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance substantial compensation consistent with the DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Calculator will be expected.

Policy HERC2: In considering development resulting in significant ecological impact there will be a presumption against such development unless clear and significant ecological gains can be demonstrated using the Biodiversity Impact Calculator.

D.2 Sites of Acknowledged Nature Conservation Value

- D.7** Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are non-statutory designated sites that occur within Preston. There are also many non-designated sites that conform to the definition of Priority Habitat, as defined by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. These are of varying degree of importance for nature conservation and receive varying degrees of protection.
- D.8** The Herts Environmental Records Centre hold records of all known sites of nature conservation value in Hertfordshire.
- D.9** There are also many known sites of critical importance to species of national and international importance, such as bat roosts. Records of these are held by HERC and/or specialist recording groups.
- D.10** The Preston Parish Council (PPC) will consider applications for development affecting any of these sites against criteria commensurate with their relative ecological status and protection within a local, national and international status. Their local context is particularly important. Therefore a particular habitat or species may be nationally frequent but extremely rare locally or nationally scarce and locally frequent. Examples of this include water vole, otter or barbastelle bat. Development affecting any of these sites or species is expected to result in a net gain to their area or populations.

Policy HERC3: In determining development proposals affecting designated sites and Priority Habitats or Species, the PPC will ensure that their nature conservation value is protected in accordance with their status. Development affecting such sites is expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. In granting permission North Herts District Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations that secure appropriate management regimes to deliver biodiversity gain in-perpetuity.

D.3 Networks of Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- D.11** The protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets is dependent on robust networks of Green Infrastructure (GI) which facilitate movement and genetic exchange.
- D.12** GI is expected to positively contribute to the conservation, restoration, re-creation and enhancement of networks of biodiversity on a landscape scale. The size and location of GI is expected to be suitable for the function it is intended to fulfil. Where required, GI should ensure permeability for wildlife through development and provide sufficient beneficial habitat to support target species, independent of its connective function.
- D.13** Monitoring of GI and habitat creation to ensure that it develops in accordance with its stated intention will be expected. If it is not achieving satisfactory condition within stipulated timeframes, remedial measures will be required. Mechanisms to achieve this must be outlined in development proposals.
- D.14** Buffering of watercourses is important to protect the aquatic environment from pollution and disturbance, and to create movement and habitat corridors for wildlife. Development will not be permitted within 8m of a watercourse.
- D.15** Many species are entirely dependent on human habitation for their reproductive success. Modern housing standards virtually eliminate opportunities for these species. Consequently where appropriate, features for biodiversity within development will be expected. Simple inexpensive measures can result in significant gains such as, integrated bat roost cavities, integrated swift or house martin boxes. These measures, if required, are expected to be permanent in order to deliver meaningful ecological gain. Therefore these features will be expected to be built in to suitable structures rather than provided as vulnerable, isolated and temporary boxes.
- D.16** Bat populations are particularly sensitive to development that severs or disturbs movement corridors. Where appropriate, flight corridors should be identified and protected or enhanced to ensure the ecological functionality of bat populations. Examples of suitable measures include green bridges, underpasses or tunnels that are situated on the exact traditional routes of bat populations and free from disturbance.

Policy HERC4: In considering development proposals the PPC will expect Green Infrastructure to provide permeability for wildlife through and around development. GI should be connective and functional as wildlife habitat in its own right not just as a link between habitats.

Policy HERC5: All suitable development will be expected to include integrated bat and bird roosting devices within the fabric of the brickwork.

Policy HERC6: In considering development proposals that negatively impact upon bat movement corridors the PPC expects that these corridors are identified, protected and enhanced to ensure continued ecological functionality of bat populations.

Policy HERC7: Development will not be permitted within 8m of a watercourse.

D.4 Ecological Survey Standards

- D.17** The provision of quality ecological information is critical in determining the impacts of development and securing meaningful ecological gains. Survey and mitigation measures must therefore conform to the following principles:
- D.18** Ecological information must be provided by suitably qualified personnel. Details of qualifications and experience must be provided with all ecological reports.
- D.19** Ecological surveys must answer the following questions; what features are present, what is the ecological value of these features, how will these features be affected by the development proposals, how can these impacts be avoided, mitigated or compensated so that there is a net gain to biodiversity.
- D.20** Survey methodology and reporting must conform with nationally accepted standards. All surveys and reporting must be conducted in accordance with British Standard 42020: Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.
- D.21** In certain circumstances divergence from these standards may be acceptable but this must be agreed with appropriate officers at North Herts District Council before commencement. Unauthorised deviation from these survey standards will not be accepted and may be reported to The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management - CIEEM.
- D.22** Appropriate environmental records searches are expected in support of planning applications. When submitting ecological information the PPC expects that records searches, consistent with the rules of the professional body governing ecological consultants (CIEEM), are supplied to enable adequate ecological assessment.
- D.23** Where European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences are required, answers to the 3 tests of the licence must be supplied for consideration by the PPC. Failure to do so will result in applications being refused as the PPC will be unable to meet its obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Policy HERC8: In considering ecological information in support of planning applications the PPC expects that surveys are undertaken by suitably qualified personnel and are consistent with nationally accepted standards i.e. British Standard 42020: Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.

D.5 Wildlife And Lighting

- D.24** Lighting within and around development is expected to respect the ecological functionality of movement corridors. Certain species of invertebrate and mammal are highly sensitive to inappropriate lighting. In these circumstances surveys are expected to determine where these movement corridors are and measures put forward that demonstrate how these will be protected and enhanced.

Policy HERC9: In considering development involving potentially adverse lighting impacts to wildlife the PPC will expect surveys to identify movement corridors and ensure that these corridors are protected and enhanced.

D.6 Wildlife And Landscaping

- D.25** Landscaping design can have a significant beneficial effect on wildlife. Landscaping schemes will be expected to maximise opportunities for wildlife. The PPC expects the selection of ecologically appropriate species in such schemes, of local provenance where possible.
- D.26** Tree planting schemes where the primary purpose is to provide ecological enhancement should look to maximise diversity of species. Species selected should be suitable to the soil conditions and be comprised of appropriate vegetation communities consistent with National Vegetation Communities (NVC).
- D.27** Naturalistic tree planting should not be in straight lines.
- D.28** The establishment and management regimes of naturalistic planting schemes are critical to their success. These must be stipulated in development proposals together with mechanisms to monitor and address any deficiencies in the fulfilment of their stated objective.

Policy HERC10: In considering landscaping schemes the PPC will expect that appropriate native species are used whenever possible and that benefits to biodiversity are maximised.

E. Reference Books and Maps Consulted for Sections 3 and 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan

Books and written reference material:

1. The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire by Sir Henry Chauncy, 1st edition London 1700, 2nd edition Bishop's Stortford 1826, facsimile edition Dorking 1975.
2. The History of Hertfordshire by Nathaniel Salmon, London 1728.
3. An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire, published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1909.
4. The Natural History of the Hitchin Region, edited by R.L. Hine and 7 contributors, published by the Hitchin and District Regional Survey Association, 1934.
5. The place names of Hertfordshire, by J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, Cambridge University Press, 1938.
6. The Preston and Langley Village Scrapbook, created by members of The Preston and Langley Women's Institute, 1953.
7. Flora of Hertfordshire, by John G. Dony, published by Hitchin Urban District Council, 1967.
8. Hertfordshire, in the Buildings of England series, by Bridget Cherry, Penguin Books 1977.
9. The Hertfordshire Landscape, by Lionel M. Munby, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977.
10. A Survey of the Ancient Woodlands of Hertfordshire, by Dr. Nigel Agar, Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. (no date given).
11. Gardens of a Golden Afternoon: The story of a partnership: Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, by Jane Brown, Penguin Books, 1985.
12. The Wild Flower Habitats of Hertfordshire: Past, Present and Future, by Brian Sawford, Castlemead Publications, 1990.
13. English Houses, 1200-1800: The Hertfordshire Evidence, by J.T. Smith, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England, 1992.
14. The Chilterns, by Leslie W. Hepple and Alison M. Doggett, Phillimore 2001.
15. Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape: The complete history of Trees, Woods and Hedgerows, by Dr. Oliver Rackham, Phoenix 2001.
16. The Knights Templar in Britain, by Dr. Evelyn Lord, Pearson Education Ltd., 2002.
17. A Report on Temple Dinsley, its park and gardens, by Dr. Diana Kingham, Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, 2004.
18. Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500, by Dr. Hugh Prince, University of Hertfordshire, 2008.
19. Flora of Hertfordshire, by Trevor James, Hertfordshire Natural History Society, 2009.
20. A History of Preston in Hertfordshire, by Philip J. Wray, Berforts Information Press, 2015.
21. St. Martin's Church, Preston in Hertfordshire, by Philip J. Wray, privately printed, 2015.
22. Butterflies of Hertfordshire and Middlesex, by Andrew Wood, Hertfordshire Natural History Society, 2016.

Maps:

-
23. Maps were produced with the volumes by H. Chauncy, and N. Salmon, as above.
 24. Dury and Andrews' Map of Hertfordshire: Society and Landscape in the 18thC., by A. Macnair, A. Rowe and T. Williamson, Oxbow Books 2016. Included with this book, is a digitised version of the original 1766 map, on a DVD.
 25. 'The County of Hertfordshire from an actual survey', by Arthur Bryant, scale 1 ½" to 1 mile, 1821, facsimile published by the Hertfordshire Record Society, 2003.
 26. 'Past and Present Map' series: Letchworth, Stevenage, Hitchin and Baldock, including Great Offley, Pirton, Preston, Old Knebworth, Walkern and Weston. 4 maps at 1 : 50,000 scale from Ordnance Survey maps of 1834, 1896, 1919/1920, and 1974/2006, published by Cassini Publishing Ltd., 2006.

F. Preston Parish Implementation Plan

- F.1** The Preston Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered by adopting a partnership approach between the Preston Parish Council (PPC), North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), developers and the residents of Preston. It is only by harnessing the strengths of these groups that the Objectives of the Plan will become a reality.
- F.2** The Neighbourhood Plan provides a direction for change through its vision, objectives and policies, while at the same time protecting the environmental and historic aspects of the Parish which are highly valued and appreciated by the community. It is flexible to allow for new challenges and opportunities which may arise over the Plan period.
- F.3** Any development that takes place during this time will need to take account of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. It is important to ensure this is monitored and that community projects identified through the Neighbourhood Planning process are achieved.
- F.4** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies that have been developed from the priorities identified through community consultation. They include **Quality of Life, Amenities and Facilities, Housing and Development, Environment and Heritage** and **Transport and Communication**.
- F.5** The Plan's Housing and Development Policies have been developed to ensure that housing growth takes place in a managed and appropriate manner, which is directly linked to the needs of the community. The Parish Council will work in partnership with NHDC to achieve successful implementation of the Plan's housing policies.
- F.6** The next layer of growth in the Parish must create a development of quality, contributing to the character of the village and providing local benefit. It must be more than an exercise in meeting housing supply 'numbers' by the addition of characterless properties. The objective, therefore, is to enable the provision of a choice of new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community in a manner which respects the character of the village and wider parish.
- F.7** The Parish Council will scrutinise and advise on the appropriateness of planning applications for compliance with the Plan's policies.
- F.8** Preston Parish Council will lead on and monitor the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan with a full review every five years to ensure that the policies remain in line with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and any changes to national legislation.
- F.9** The following table illustrates the actions required and by whom to realise the objectives of the Preston Neighbourhood Plan. It will be reviewed on a regular basis as and when objectives are achieved or are changed through future community consultation.

Category	Policy	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Community Rights	Policies CR1-CR3 inclusive	Monitor and if felt necessary implement one or more of these policies in support of other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.	Ongoing 2018-2031	Preston PC
Quality of Life	Policy QL1	Support the provision of opportunities for social interaction	Ongoing 2018-2031	Preston PC
	Policy QL2	To promote a community quality of life	Ongoing 2018-2031	Preston PC
	Policy QL3	Promote community identity by preserving heritage and historic features	Ongoing 2018-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
Amenities and Facilities	Policy AL1	Support proposals for new or improved community facilities which fulfil the needs of existing and new residents	Ongoing 2018-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
	Policy AL2	Sustain and support the development of facilities for the parish	Ongoing 2018-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
	Policy AL3	Support developments that encourage and sustain economic growth and creation of jobs	Ongoing 2018-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
Housing and Development	All Housing and Development policies Numbered HD1-HD11 inclusive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor all planning applications against all Housing and Development Policies. Engage with any pre-applications and consultations. 2. The overarching aims of the Housing & Development Policies are to deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Preston. 3. Ensure that historic and heritage aspects are enhanced and maintained as it is these key factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of the parish. 4. Ensure proposals provide flood risk assessment and that suitable & sufficient foul sewage disposal provisions are made before any property is occupied and that no existing problems are exacerbated. The Parish Council to liaise with Anglian Water and Thames Water, if deemed appropriate, to support this policy. 5. Ensure that developers comply with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. 6. Provide support for measures of water conservation and landscape schemes that improve biodiversity and also plans for low carbon footprints. 7. Maintain a watching brief to assist the achievement of the aims of 'Building Futures' wherever possible. 	Ongoing 2018-2031	NHDC and Preston PC

Appendix F - Preston Parish Implementation Plan

Category	Policy	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Environment and Heritage	All Environment and Heritage policies numbered EH1-EH12 inclusive	1. Monitor Planning applications against the Environment & Heritage Policies.	Ongoing 2018-2031	1. NHDC and Preston PC
		2. Support developments that respect, protect and preserve the local landscape and rural character of the parish.	Ongoing 2018-2031	2. NHDC and Preston PC
		3. Ensure all development is environmentally sustainable and supports the principles of sustainability.	Ongoing 2018-2031	3. NHDC and Preston PC
Transport and Communication	Policy TC1 Policy TC2	1. To support and encourage safe use of roads, paths and bridleways for all users.	Ongoing 2018-2031	1. NHDC and Preston PC
		2. To support the development of efficient and effective broadband speed and mobile coverage	Ongoing 2018-2031	2. Preston PC
		3. The Parish Council will continue to liaise with the Police and Hertfordshire Highways on an ongoing basis with regard to the speed of traffic on village lanes.	Ongoing 2018-2031	3. Preston PC
		4. The Parish Council will liaise with BT, BT Open Reach and mobile phone providers with regard to broadband speed and mobile phone coverage.	Ongoing 2018-2031	4. Preston PC