

Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2030



2024

Prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Team
on behalf of Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council

- Front cover photographs -

*Top row, left-right: The Walnut Tree Public House, Bonnington Road, Church Lane Middle
row, left-right; Roman Road, New Road Hill Bonnington, St. Rumwold Church Bottom row,
left-right: Forge Hill, Bank Road, Aldington Primary School*

FOREWORD

This Neighbourhood Plan came into being after a period in which Aldington grew rapidly and local people felt that their views about this were ignored. The resulting population expansion took several years to be assimilated into the community, and a campaign group was formed to lobby Ashford Borough Council for planning policy to preserve the neighbourhood area's rural characteristics. Planning has remained a contentious topic in the joint parishes of Aldington & Bonnington ever since.

In 2019 the parishes voted for neighbourhood planning designation, and work began to survey residents' views, identify the primary issues and collect evidence to write the policies contained herein. The community is a blend of families with historic connection to the villages and new residents drawn hereby the rural environment and proximity to a road and rail network, which enables employment in nearby towns as well as London. Both long-term and more recent residents overwhelmingly value the rural characteristics of our parishes that this Neighbourhood Plan strives to preserve.

During the development of the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan there have been many changes to National Planning Policy, some of which have elevated the status of neighbourhood plans. We hope that these changes will pass into the National Planning Policy Framework upon which planning decisions are made in England and Wales. Aldington & Bonnington will thus be well placed, having started this work ahead of time, and will see the value of its Neighbourhood Plan in coming years. I would like to extend my personal thanks to the

small but dedicated team that have produced this document: Sheila Garrard of Copperhurst, Knoll Hill; Glyn Byant, formerly of Noel Coward Gardens; John and Trisha Underwood of Howarths, Dicksons Bourne; Ray Boulding of Mount Pleasant, a long-standing member of the Parish Council; Lita Guy of Goddard's Farm; and Peter Setterfield, Parish Clerk. My thanks also go to Martin Newcombe of Brackenhurst, Knoll Hill, Louise Jessup of Longsfield, Nick Hulme of Wheatfields, and Andy Llanwarne of both Dundee and Copperhurst for their time and helpful input at various stages of the Plan's production, as well as to Alison Eardley and Jim Boot, our planning consultants, whose support has been invaluable. And I cannot forget the late Martin Boulden, a native of Aldington, local farmer and former Chairman of the Parish Council, for his extensive knowledge of every hedge, hill and building in the neighbourhood area. Initially sceptical about the project, he was drawn in by the attention to detail and intrigued by the process. Finally, a big 'Thank You!' to every resident who took the time to return our questionnaires and to attend events to contribute to the Neighbourhood Plan as it progressed. Without your input we could not have brought this Plan together.

Planning law is an ever-changing landscape. We will need to update this document regularly to keep its recommendations relevant. I very much hope that Aldington & Bonnington will continue to invest in the formal documentation of local opinion that this document represents.



Cllr Linda Harman

Chair of the Aldington & Bonnington
Neighbourhood Plan steering team



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan (ABNP). It sets out planning and land-use policy for the villages and wider area over the period 2022 to 2030 and forms part of the Development Plan for the borough of Ashford.
- 1.2 Ashford Borough Council (ABC), as the local planning authority, designated the neighbourhood area for Aldington on 7 November 2019. The neighbourhood area shares its boundary with that of the parishes of Aldington and Bonnington (*Figure 1*), which collectively are represented by a single parish council.
- 1.3 The ABNP has been prepared in accordance with the *Town & Country Planning Act 1990*, the *Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the *Localism Act 2011* and the *Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012* (as amended). The Parish Council, as the qualifying body, set up a Neighbourhood Plan steering team comprising local councillors and volunteers from the community to lead on the preparation of the Plan. In consultation with the community and local businesses, the steering team has established a vision and framework for the future of the designated area and has set out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the period 2022 to 2030.
- 1.4 The ABNP policies form part of the development plan for ABC and must be considered by any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within Aldington & Bonnington. The ABNP policies also set out how land should be considered, in planning terms, locally, and is a material planning consideration in the determination of applications.
- 1.5 The hierarchy of national, local and neighbourhood planning is as shown in *Figure 2*. *The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* sets out national policy that applies to the whole of England; the Ashford Local Plan 2030 sets out planning policies for Ashford borough and the ABNP sets out detail regarding how both national and local planning policy applies to Aldington & Bonnington.
- 1.6 During the process of producing the ABNP the steering team has sought to involve the community as widely as possible, and the different topic areas within the Plan are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to residents. Within each policy section, there is a summary of what the policy seeks to achieve and a justification, which provides the necessary understanding of why the policy is needed and how it should be applied. The policies themselves are clearly presented in blue boxes; these policies will be used to determine planning applications. To understand the full context for any individual policy, it should be read alongside the supporting text and evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the ABNP. Beneath each policy is a conformity reference, listing the policies in the ABC adopted Local Plan 2030, the objectives of the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan and the paragraphs of the NPPF that the policy is in conformity with.

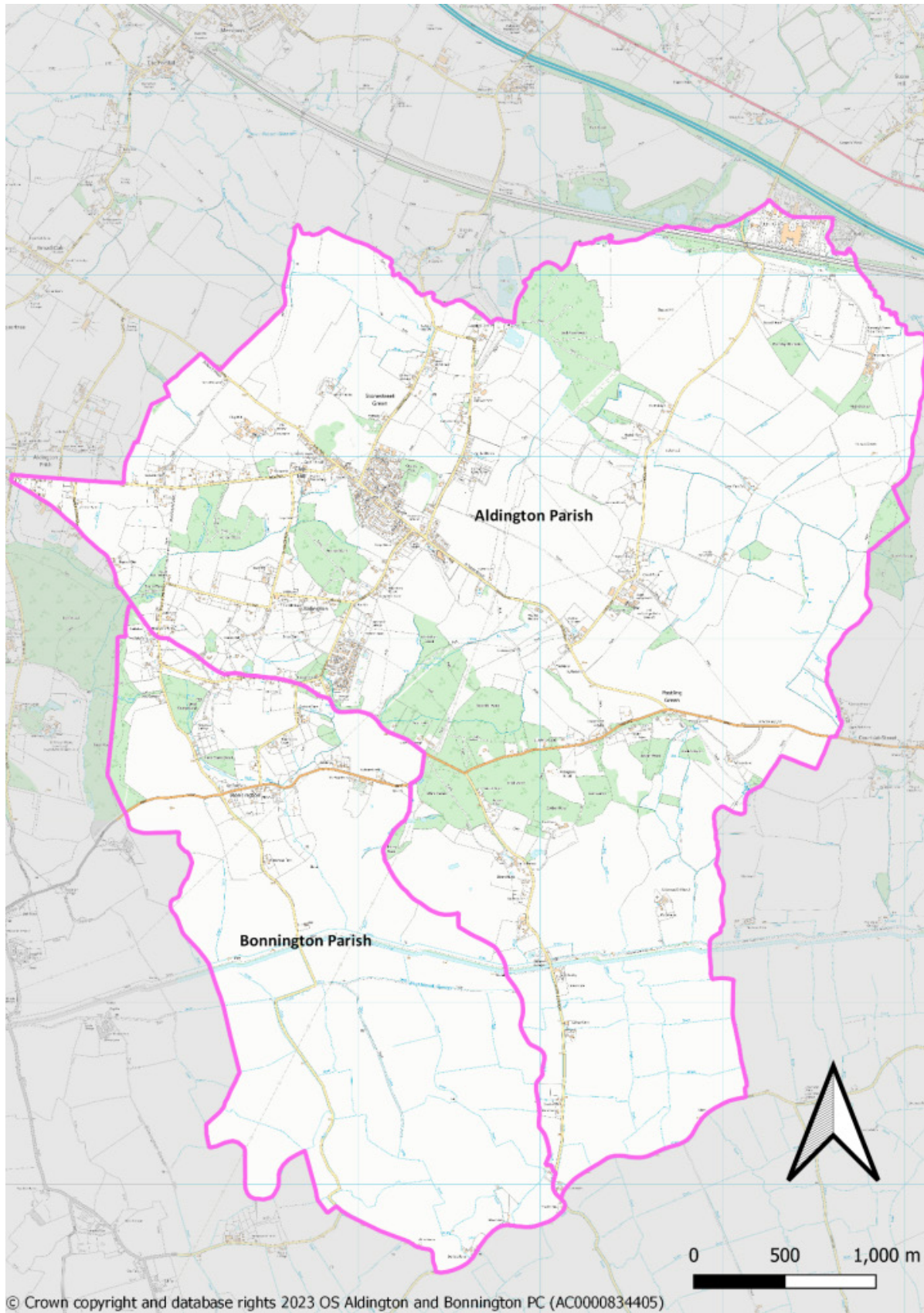


Figure 1: *Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan designated area*

- 1.7 The separate Parish Plan, prepared by the Parish Council, identifies local community projects that are not met through planning policy, but which are important to the wellbeing of the community. The Parish Plan is updated on a four-yearly basis, at the beginning of each new administrative period following local elections for borough and parish councillors. The Parish Council also prepares a Highways Infrastructure Plan to which developer contributions should be allocated to facilitate the funding of changes to roads and junctions that the community have identified as needing improvement.
- 1.8 A framework for the monitoring and implementation of the ABNP is contained in Chapter 9.

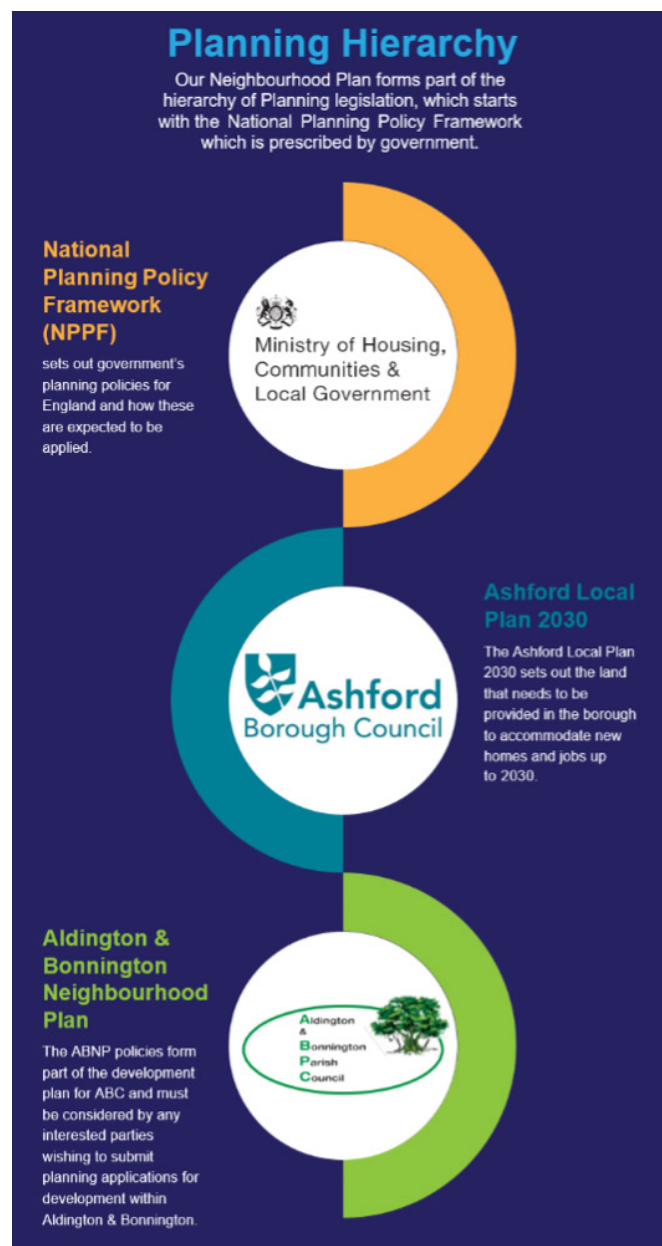


Figure 2: The hierarchy of national, local and neighbourhood planning

Guide to the Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan (ABNP)

1.9 The policies contained within the ABNP support the six objectives that aim to achieve the Vision as shown in Figure 3.

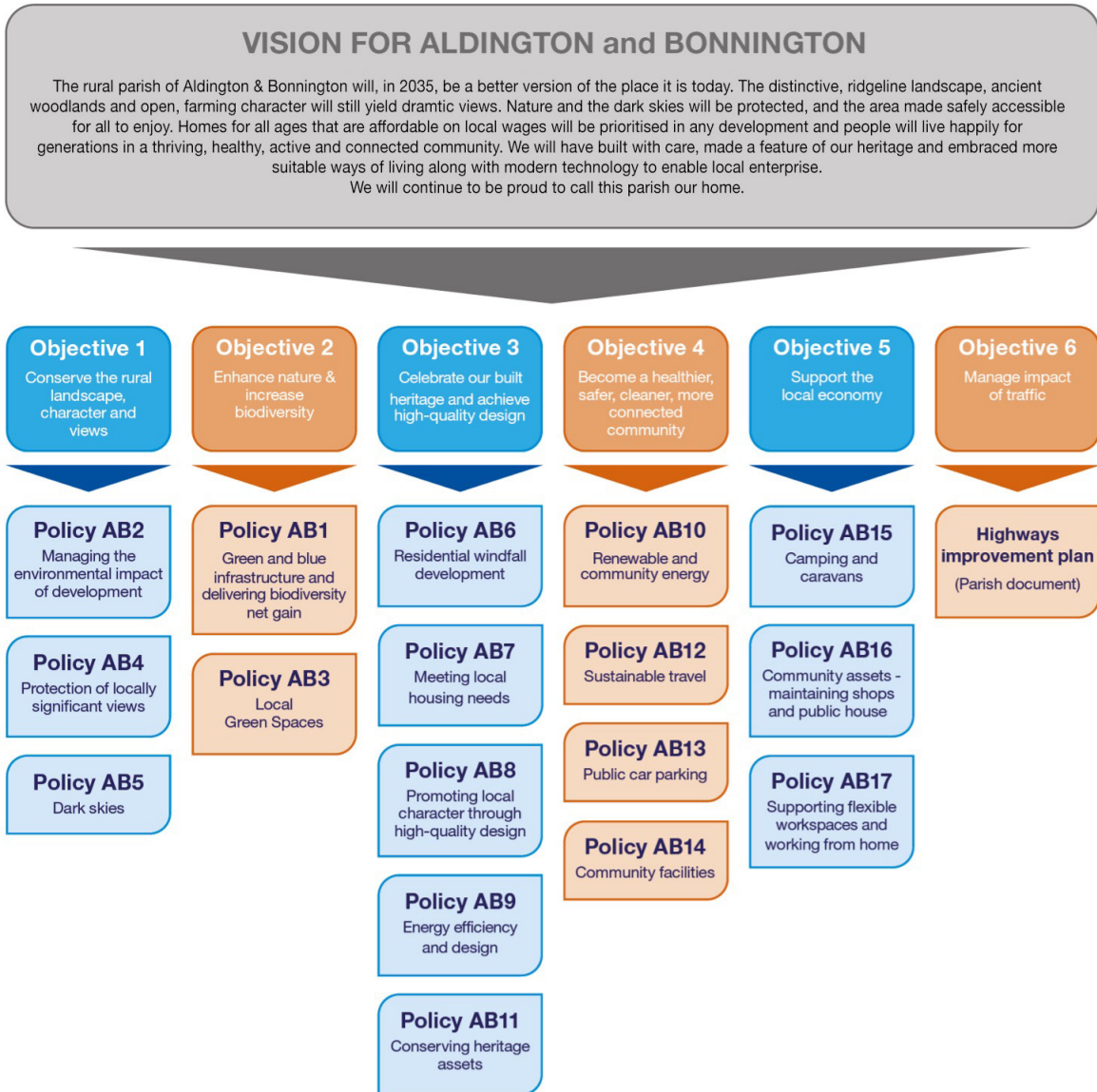


Figure 3: Policies roadmap

Note: A number of the policies in the Plan have specific policy-related notations on the Policies Maps (Figures 20 and 21). It is recommended that the policies should be read alongside the Policies Maps.

The planning policy context

National planning policy

1.10 The ABNP has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF (most recently revised in December 2023). Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the NPPF state:

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. **Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies¹.**

Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, **the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict**; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently. [Our emphasis]

¹Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area [outlined in paragraph 13 of the revised NPPF].

Local planning policy

1.11 The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Ashford Local Plan. The Development Plan for Ashford borough comprises:

- The Ashford Local Plan to 2030 (adopted 2019)
- Chilmington Green Area Action Plan
- Any adopted neighbourhood plans
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013–30 (Early Partial Review 2020).

1.12 Strategic policies in the Local Plan are those starting ‘SP’. Other policies referred to in this Neighbourhood Plan are not strategic. The Local Plan has identified an overall housing target for the borough, reflecting the objectively assessed housing need, requiring 16,872 dwellings to be delivered between 2011 and 2030. Between 2011 and end-March 2018, 3,754 homes had been delivered, leaving a residual number of 13,118 still to be delivered across the borough. The focus of this development is Ashford itself and the urban surrounding areas.

1.13 The NPPF states, in paragraph 67, that local authorities should provide neighbourhood plan areas with a definitive or an indicative number of houses to plan for over the neighbourhood plan period. ABC has fulfilled that requirement by providing the Parish Council with a figure of 18 dwellings to be accommodated within the neighbourhood plan area by the end of the plan period. This will be accomplished via the two allocated sites:

- Policy S51 – Aldington – Land North of Church View: approximately 6 dwellings
- Policy S52 – Aldington – Land South of Goldwell Manor Farm: approximately 12 dwellings.

- 1.14 There is therefore no requirement for the ABNP to allocate additional sites in the Neighbourhood Plan, a position that has been agreed with ABC. This position will be monitored and reviewed, for instance in the context of the Ashford Local Plan Review.
- 1.15 Additional development may come in the form of windfall. Ashford Local Plan Policy HOU3a (Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements) states that residential development and infilling of a scale that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement will be acceptable. This policy relates to the built-up confines of Aldington. Bonnington is not considered within this policy as it is a dispersed settlement without a village centre and thus does not have confines within which to define sustainable development. Furthermore, Ashford Local Plan Policy HOU5 (Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside) states that proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built-up confines will also be acceptable in Aldington. Development proposed for Bonnington is considered development in the countryside and must, under HOU5 prove extraordinary need, for example to support sustainable agricultural activity, re-use heritage assets or redundant buildings, or replace an existing dwelling, or must be of exceptional quality or innovative design.
- 1.16 In terms of economic development, Policy SP3 seeks to deliver 63 hectares of new employment land and a total of 11,100 jobs in the borough between 2014 and 2030. For the neighbourhood area, the strategy is to retain existing employment opportunities and, where appropriate according to criteria, support the extension of existing employment, the conversion of rural buildings to provide employment and, in certain situations, the creation of new employment activities.
- 1.17 The Ashford Local Plan is currently in the process of being formally reviewed, to ensure that the wider policy position is suitably up to date and the development envisaged – and supporting infrastructure – has been delivered. A decision whether to revise this Neighbourhood Plan will be taken no later than five years from the adoption of the revised Local Plan. It is anticipated that the revised Local Plan will be adopted in 2027.
- 1.18 In terms of minerals and waste, such matters sit outside the scope of the ABNP as they are within the remit of Kent County Council (KCC). The authority advises that there are three types of safeguarded land-won minerals in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Land-won mineral safeguarding is a planning constraint, and any development proposed that coincides with any of the three safeguarded land-won minerals will require a Minerals Assessment to address potential needless sterilisation that may occur. Further information can be found in the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (Early Partial Review 2020).

The Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021–2026

- 1.19 Much of the southern part of the neighbourhood area falls within the Kent Downs National Landscape. This excludes the core village of Aldington. The Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan is prepared by the National Landscape Unit and Joint Advisory Committee on behalf of the local authorities within the Kent Downs. The objectives of the Management Plan have been considered in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan, where relevant, as has the advice contained in the other National Landscape Management Guidance documents.

Community engagement

1.20 From the beginning, work on the ABNP has been guided by engagement with the local community. Efforts have been made to reach those people who are often more difficult to involve in formal consultations. Apart from the statutory requirements for public consultation at various stages, measures to draw in a wider range of contributions included presentations, parish surveys, workshops and exhibitions. These are set out in the Consultation Statement, which accompanied the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan. A timeline of activity is summarised in *Table 1*.

Table 1: *Engagement activity timeline*

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2019	The Parish Council decides to prepare a neighbourhood plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood area designated • Steering team established
2020 & 2021	Evidence and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First public meeting • Household questionnaire 1 issued • Virtual Vision and Objectives workshops • Local walkabout • Vision and Objectives public display • Local housing needs assessment undertaken • Design guidance produced • Local housing needs survey undertaken
2022 & 2023	Development of the Plan Pre-submission version (Regulation 14) Plan published Submission version (Regulation 16) Plan published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘How Green is Your Plan?’ workshop • Strategic Environmental and Habitats Regulations Assessments screening prepared • Pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation • Plan amended appropriately into submission version and submitted, with supporting documents, to ABC • Regulation 16 consultation run by ABC
2024	Examination Referendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan independently examined • Plan finalised for referendum • Plan ‘made’ and forming part of the strategic development plan

- 1.21 Discussions with ABC and the Kent Downs National Landscape Unit have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the Plan. In addition, communication with local groups and neighbouring parishes has taken place.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.22 To be ‘made’, a neighbourhood plan must meet certain ‘basic conditions’. These include that the making of the plan ‘does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations’. One of these obligations relates to Directive 2001/42/EC ‘on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’. This is often referred to as the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) Directive. The SEA Directive seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes. The SEA Directive is transposed into English law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (the SEA Regulations) and it is these regulations that the plan will need to be compatible with.
- 1.23 The ABNP has been screened to ascertain whether an SEA is required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency for five weeks from 20 December 2022.
- 1.24 The screening determination statement has concluded that the *ABNP is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects* and therefore does not require an SEA. Nevertheless, environmental matters and the potential impacts of the policies have been considered throughout the plan-making process.
- 1.25 Another element of the basic conditions relates to Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, often referred to as the Habitats Directive. Under the Habitats Regulations that implement the Directive, an assessment referred to as an appropriate assessment must be undertaken if the plan in question is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site.
- 1.26 The determination statement determines that the ABNP is unlikely to result in significant effects on any European sites and consequently the Plan does not require habitats regulations assessment (HRA).
- 1.27 A copy of the screening determination letter can be found on the Parish Council website. Further information about the SEA and Habitats Regulations can be found on the Locality website.

2 ABOUT ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON



Images show: Top, L–R: View across The Royal Military Canal, Bonnington; St Martin’s Church, Aldington; View across to the coast from The Knoll, Aldington. Bottom, L–R: Bonnington Village Green and Old School House; Bluebells in Whites Wood, Aldington; View from behind Aldington Primary School at sunset

- 2.1 Aldington and Bonnington parishes are located in the district of Ashford in the county of Kent. The village of Aldington lies between Ashford and Hythe, being eight miles to the east of Ashford and seven miles to the West of Hythe. Adjacent villages include Bonnington to the south, Smeeth to the north, Bilsington to the south-west and Mersham to the west, with Court-at-Street and Lympne to the east.
- 2.2 The southern part of the neighbourhood area falls within the Kent Downs National Landscape, with all the remainder lying within the setting of the National Landscape, which surrounds it on three sides.
- 2.3 The neighbourhood area is severely impacted by increased traffic during any disruption to the M20 or A20, which are nationally significant infrastructure due to the port connections. The A20/M20 motorway and corridor borders the village to the north, providing highway connections to Maidstone to the north-west, and Folkestone, Dover and the Channel Tunnel to the east. The neighbouring village of Mersham is adjacent to the new Inland Border Facility at M20 Junction 10a, created following Brexit. The facility has introduced heavy goods vehicle traffic to local roads and brought development scheduled in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 into reality far sooner than anticipated and in a very different format.
- 2.4 The eastern boundary of Aldington is immediately adjacent to the proposed new town, Otterpool Park. This proposal, part of the adopted Folkestone & Hythe District Core Strategy suggests a swathe of currently open countryside will be developed into a town of 10,000 homes. When built out, this development will further increase traffic pressures in the neighbourhood area, as it is proposed that traffic will be able to access Otterpool Park via the B2067.

This can be reached from Roman Road and passes down Knoll Hill in Aldington and through Bonnington and so brings the realistic expectation of increased traffic movements through the neighbourhood area.

- 2.5 Aldington is therefore vulnerable to future impact from growth of both Ashford and Folkestone & Hythe districts. Sellindge is also close to Aldington, to the north. Part of Folkestone & Hythe District, this village is growing rapidly, with recent expansion across the A20. These factors combine to reduce open countryside in the approach to Aldington, bringing urban spread closer, a factor that has been considered in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6 Aldington village centre is formed along Roman Road and includes a village hall, primary school, Post Office store, a pub, a butcher and a small fire station. The village is home to the Poulton Wood Local Nature Reserve and has several other ancient woodlands. Separate from the main village, in Church Lane is St. Martin's Church, one of the most historic buildings in the neighbourhood area and the centre of the Church Lane Conservation Area.
- 2.7 Important routes run through Aldington, north-west to Ashford and west-east along the hills flanking the north of Romney Marsh, giving the area a very long history that development over the years has variously exposed. A collection of Mesolithic flints (c. 10,000–4,000 BC) including scrapers, blades and points is known from Knoll Farm. Prehistoric pits and a hearth were also found at HMP Aldington in 2000. Several examples of Bronze Age and Iron Age metalwork have been found, and it is almost certain that other prehistoric sites lie undiscovered in the area. There have been numerous Roman discoveries in the area as Aldington lies close to Portus Lemanis, the Roman fort and port at Lympne, and was on the main route connecting the area with the iron-producing areas of the Weald, but also the Roman road connecting Portus Lemanis with north Kent. The original Roman road itself may have been detected in excavation in 2005 during cabling works close to Cobb's Hall. The most important Roman site is perhaps the probable Roman burial barrow at Aldington Knoll. This Scheduled Monument consisted of an earthen barrow that contained at least one burial. A probable mixed inhumation/cremation Roman cemetery was found at Postling Green in 1914 and Roman flue tiles and bricks were found in April 1935 and 1936 during construction of a tennis court at New Haytors. Fragments of brick, Romano-British in date, were found at Marwood Farm in the 1960s. Finally, cropmarks of possible Roman walled cemetery have been seen from Forge Hill, Aldington. Taken together, these sites show the importance of the area in the Roman period and the considerable potential for further discoveries. For more recent periods, there is of course much more information. The area contains almost 30 historic buildings dating to the medieval period including Grade I listed buildings at St Martin's and St Rumwold's churches. Other buildings include farms and barns, high-status buildings and cottages. Archaeological sites include the former St Leonard's church, the church at Hurst, ruined apparently by fire since 1530. The most imposing monument from the post medieval period is the Royal Military Canal, constructed between 1804 and 1809, a Scheduled Monument and still a highly visible marker in the landscape.
- 2.8 The history and natural environment (particularly the abundant water supply of past times) of Aldington is indicated by many of its ancient road names: Forge Hill; Mill Lane/Road; Kiln Road; Bourne Road; Camber Bourne Road; Rocky Bourne Road; Dicksons Bourne;

Calleywell Lane; Goldwell Lane; (Spring) Bank Road; Roman Road; Frith Road; Gigger's Green Road. Boat Lane is probably a corruption of Bot or, variously, Botts Lane, which indicates an area of common woodland. As an aside, the 'Aldington' onstream water storage reservoir, which forms part of the flood alleviation scheme for Ashford, is actually just outside the neighbourhood area boundary, in Smeeth, as are the scenic 'Aldington Lakes', which lie just the other side of the railway line. With the exception of Cherry Orchard Lane and Frogmore Lane, Bonnington seems not to have had, or retained, ancient road names.

- 2.9 In the 20th century, road naming often paid tribute to former well-known residents or their farms. For example, Earlsfield, after the local quarry-owning Earl family, or Pattison Farm and Close, with its 16th-century farmhouse, which is all that remains of the working farm that was requisitioned by the War Department during World War II to be used as an army camp, primarily for Canadian and New Zealand troops. The barracks thereafter housed prisoners of war and later became a detention centre (information gathered from Peter J.F. Wood's to-be-published work on the history of Aldington, *Aldington Millennium*). Other examples include Longsfield and Celak Close (CELAK was the logo of the Long brothers – CE Long, Aldington, Kent – who were market gardeners). This practice continued into the 21st century, with (Lord) Bill Deedes Way, named after the eminent local journalist, or roads named after famous incomers who made Aldington their home, as in Noel Coward Gardens, after the famous playwright, composer, director, actor and singer, and Joseph Conrad Drive, after the great novelist.
- 2.10 Due to the level of services, provided by the two shops, primary school and public house, Aldington is designated as suitable for growth in the Ashford Local Plan 2030. The population has increased significantly over the period 2011–2021 through the addition of several new developments, most notably Aldington Meadows, Wheatfields, Badgers Close and Saxon Heights.
- 2.11 The village of Bonnington is a dispersed settlement of very rural character located at the south-western border of Aldington. Bonnington is bordered by Bilsington to the west and Newchurch to the south. Bonnington is located on the northern edge of Romney Marsh, which covers approximately 40% of the parish, giving the landscape special designation. Bonnington does not have a discernible village centre and relies on Aldington for essential facilities and services. It is an historic place, whose most distinguished features are the ancient church of St. Rumwold, the Royal Military Canal and the Old Law Oak. The latter stands adjacent to the village green and is believed to be about 900 years old. Many of the house names refer to past building uses, which indicate that there was once a school and a rectory as well as many farms. There was also a shop, The Old Post Office, though this was located close to Easton's Corner – which is the junction between Boat Lane and New Road Hill and thus lies on the very boundary between Aldington and Bonnington. The Old Post Office made way for The Nook in 2001.
- 2.12 In terms of transport, the nearest railway station is Ashford International (approximately 6 miles from the centre of Aldington), which provides regular services to central London, Canterbury, Sandwich, Margate, Ramsgate, Eastbourne, Folkestone, Dover, Maidstone and Sevenoaks. The smaller stations of Westenhanger (approximately 5 miles) and Sandling (approximately 7 miles) connect into the mainline services, albeit with longer journey times.

Aldington is served by the 125 bus, which provides sporadic services to Ashford that run only Monday–Friday daytimes. There are currently no public bus services in the evenings or at weekends. Residents living in Bonnington, or outside the core village in Aldington, have to walk considerable distances along rural roads to reach a bus stop. The very restricted nature of public transport to and from Aldington & Bonnington means that residents are car reliant. Resident Questionnaire 1 establishes that most people drive to and from work, which is predominantly outside the village. This is the case even if people work in London or other towns, as public transport options do not enable commuters to live in the neighbourhood area and travel to work elsewhere.

- 2.13 In terms of work opportunities, there are many small businesses operating in the neighbourhood area, with many home-based services and tradespeople living in the area. Resource Rail are based in Goldwell Lane, where the Eco Centre provides a meetings venue that is well used by many organisations from outside the neighbourhood area. Hy-TEX (UK) Limited is an established family business that supplies technical and biodegradable textiles for building and agricultural works and is based in the old Aldington Mill in Mill Lane. Bank Farm provides local produce through its self-dispensing farm shop. There are over 20 small businesses listing Aldington as their registered address, including builders, accountants and communications consultancies. The Walnut Tree pub, Post Office stores and Aldington Fresh Foods all provide small amounts of employment.
- 2.14 The statistics show that in the 2021 Census the neighbourhood plan area had a total of approximately 1,600 residents.

Opportunities and challenges facing Aldington & Bonnington

2.15 The following list of current opportunities and challenges is the outcome of discussions in workshops and from surveys led by the Neighbourhood Plan steering team:

- Meeting the demands of an ageing population in terms of ensuring housing, health services and facilities that are accessible and suited to their needs.
- Addressing the gap between average incomes and house prices within the joint parishes.
- Ensuring Local Plan site allocations within the existing village bring benefit to the community; and managing windfall development.
- Supporting the ongoing viability and vitality of the village centre.
- Supporting employment that exists in the neighbourhood area, including opportunities for those wishing to work from home or more flexibly.
- Conserving and enhancing the valued ridge landscape of the Kent Downs National Landscape and its setting, including its contribution to biodiversity, recreation, tranquillity and local landscape character.
- Maintaining the identity of the village, and its smaller hamlets, as distinct from other neighbouring areas.
- Conserving the village's historic assets, which contribute to local character.
- Improving accessibility within the village and to nearby settlements – through the provision and improvement of footpaths, cycle paths and public transport – in order to reduce over-reliance on car use.
- Encouraging high-quality development that contributes to the mitigation of climate change and strengthens local vernacular.
- Managing the increase in traffic, especially given the development of Otterpool Park.
- Protecting the rural characteristics that people in Aldington & Bonnington love, including dark skies.
- Resisting gradual urbanisation.
- Creating a destination for walkers through the dense network of Public Rights of Way (PROWs).



3 A VISION FOR ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 After consultation with the community, the Vision for the neighbourhood area up to 2030 is:

The rural parish of Aldington & Bonnington will, in 2030, be a better version of the place it is today. The distinctive, ridgeline landscape, ancient woodlands and open, farming character will still yield dramatic views. Nature and dark skies will be protected, and the area made safely accessible for all to enjoy. Any development will prioritise homes for all ages that are affordable on local wages and people will live happily for generations in a thriving, healthy, active and connected community. We will have built with care, made a feature of our heritage and embraced more sustainable ways of living, along with modern technology to facilitate local enterprise. We will continue to be proud to call this parish our home.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2 The six objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Objective 1:

Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

The views into and out of Aldington village arise from the open landscape character of Aldington Ridge and will be safeguarded, in particular those afforded along Roman Road, Calleywell Lane and Goldwell Lane. The hamlets shall be protected from coalescence. Ancient hedgerows are a key part of the landscape character, so will be protected and encouraged.

Objective 2:

Enhance nature and increase biodiversity

Living close to nature is the reason so many people love our area. We aim to enhance and protect nature through the creation of improved habitats for wildlife, maintenance of native hedgerows and planting more trees and wildflowers. Dark skies are rare and will be actively preserved in our neighbourhood area through detailed local application of ABC's Dark Skies Policy. Aldington & Bonnington will be known for its pro-active approach to the environment.

Objective 3:**Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design**

Development in our neighbourhood area should encourage healthy lifestyles and conserve the architectural and historical features of the area. A full *Design Guide* will encourage use of a palette of appropriate materials and styles, including ragstone and Kent peg tiles. All listed and non-listed heritage assets will be documented as part of a celebration of Aldington & Bonnington's history. Consideration will be given to community housing provision for both young and older people and to conserving existing single-story housing within the village confines. The urban cul-de-sac model will be discouraged. Building will be appropriate in density and happen at a sustainable scale and pace.

Objective 4:**Become a healthier, safer, cleaner and more connected community**

Homes within the village confines should link to facilities by safe, attractive and inviting walkable routes to encourage healthy lifestyles. Traffic calming will reduce speeding on unmonitored roads. Services will bring something for everyone. In the village centre, support networks will enable elders to live in their own homes. Young families will have safe places to play, walk and cycle. Events will build unity and community spirit. We will encourage use of the village hall as a community hub. Clean energy use in the villages will be welcomed. The health and well-being of our community will be a priority. Communications (mobile phone and internet connectivity) will be improved.

Objective 5:**Support the local economy**

Small businesses, retail and farming will be encouraged and supported to thrive. The improvement of local routes for rural pursuits will bring business to the neighbourhood area. A community hub will provide small business services. We will build on our rural heritage with a 'Think & Eat Local' strategy to encourage the use of our local amenities and farm produce. Improved digital connection will support the growing trend for home working.

Objective 6:**Manage the impact of traffic**

There is much concern about the increased amount and speed of traffic using our rural roads. We aim to work with Kent Highways to ensure there is control of speed to that which is appropriate to the location. Parking issues will be evaluated, and solutions explored. We will also work with Kent Highways to contribute to and implement the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

4 THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy AB1: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain

Objective 1: Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

Objective 2: Enhance nature and increase biodiversity

Purpose

- 4.1 This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of the area's green and blue spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity, and in off-setting the effects of air pollution – are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. They will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development. As the southern part of the neighbourhood area is located in the Kent Downs National Landscape and the northern parts, whilst not in the Kent Downs, contribute to the National Landscape's setting, this is important.

POLICY AB1: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- A. Proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green and blue spaces. They should connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, with the aim of delivering a measurable biodiversity net gain of 20%, where possible, but at a minimum, a net gain of at least 10%. The measurable biodiversity net gain must be demonstrated by utilising the current DEFRA biodiversity metric. Where this is not demonstrated, permission for planning or for change should be refused unless other material planning considerations demonstrate the need for development.**
- B. Measures to secure Biodiversity Net Gain will be approved by the Borough Council, in consultation with the Parish Council and other consultees, and will include arrangements for the monitoring of post-development habitat management for a minimum of 30 years, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. Where net gain cannot be delivered on site, locations off-site within the neighbourhood area (as identified in Figures 4 and 5) should be sought in the first instance, in advance of seeking biodiversity net gain credits.**
- C. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged, to enhance the green infrastructure of the neighbourhood area. Proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified biodiversity opportunity areas (Figures 5 and 6) will be supported. Conversely, proposals that threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.**

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 1, 2; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3a and b, ENV5; NPPF: 180–183, 185, 186

Justification

- 4.2 From a landscape perspective, the southern part of the parish of Aldington & Bonnington falls within the Kent Downs National Landscape. There are also a number of other local landscape character areas, as defined by Kent County Council, found within the neighbourhood area. These are shown in *Figure 4*. Development proposals should be mindful of the prevailing landscape character and related management objectives; further detail can be found in the Ashford Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.3 The NPPF states that plans should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including by identifying and mapping habitats and networks. The Environment Act 2021 includes provision for a mandatory requirement for new major developments to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. The Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) is promoting the adoption of a 20% biodiversity net gain requirement across the county, and the Parish Council, through Policy AB1, supports this. To assist this, the KNP has undertaken a strategic level viability assessment for 15% and 20% requirements. The assessment has found that a shift from 10% to 15% or 20% biodiversity net gain will not materially affect viability in the majority of instances when delivered onsite or offsite. Further detail can be found in its report, *Viability Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent – June 2022*.
- 4.4 Smaller developments will also be required to deliver a net gain, but the detail of what this entails has yet to be clarified.
- 4.5 *The Environment Act 2021* also recognises the need to protect existing biodiversity and what it describes as ‘Nature Recovery Networks’: a joined-up system of places that are important for wildlife on land and at sea.

The DEFRA biodiversity metric has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post-development increase in biodiversity units of a minimum of 10%. The mechanism allows the ecological value of existing habitats to be determined so that biodiversity net gain can be determined. The mitigation hierarchy will still need to be applied in all cases.

Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with best practice guidance including BS 42020 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

There was a phased introduction for biodiversity net gain, with small sites having until April 2024 to comply with the regulations. This extension gave local planning authorities and smaller developers more time to prepare and apply best practice from activity on major development sites.

(Text draws from Government press release on biodiversity net gain)

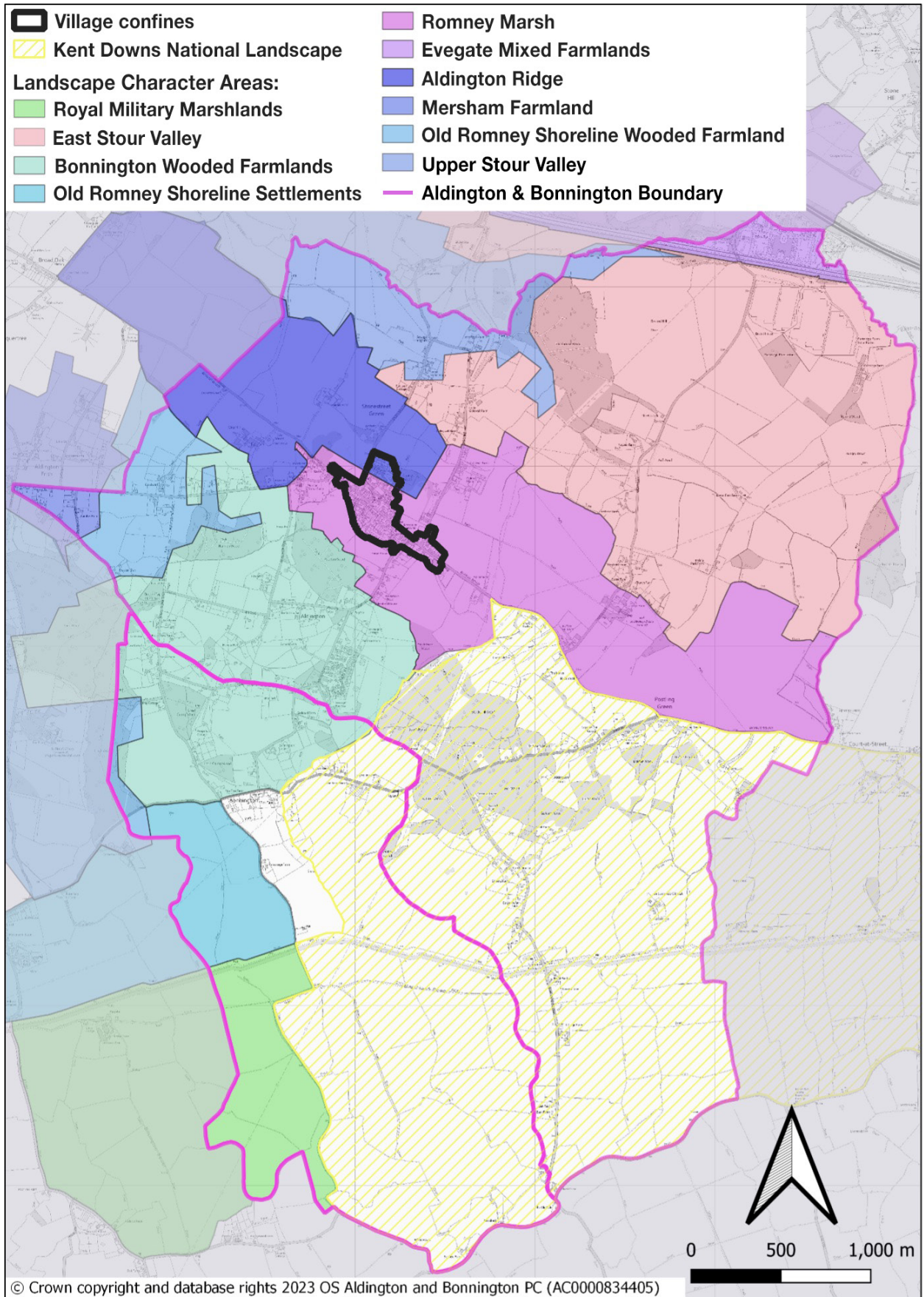


Figure 4: Landscape character areas in the neighbourhood area

- 4.6 *Figure 5* identifies on a map the strategic green and blue stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken corridors within the area. It has been informed by the Kent Downs Management Plan, the Ashford Green and Blue Grid Strategy, information from the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre and information gathered by the steering team.
- 4.7 These are important spaces for the local community for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area, threading through the villages and wider countryside. Access to open spaces is important for well-being and mental health – 90% of residents responding to the Community Survey, Questionnaire 1 considered access to natural space as very important. Improving people’s health leads to economic benefits in terms of reduced costs to the health service, increased years of healthy lives lived and improved work attendance and productivity, and so is important when planning for places. Green and blue spaces also provide wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife, such as bats, preventing species becoming isolated.
- 4.8 The green and blue infrastructure assets of the neighbourhood area should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community.
- 4.9 If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 4.10 Planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees and trees of a high conservation value (having national, regional or global significance), unless there is no satisfactory alternative and the public need and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. Losses and deterioration of irreplaceable habitats cannot be accounted for through the Defra biodiversity metric and would have to be considered separately.



Images illustrating the varying landscape of the neighbourhood area

Biodiversity opportunity areas within Aldington & Bonnington

- 4.11 All development is encouraged to deliver biodiversity net gain on site; however, this is not always possible. Where this is the case, opportunities to enhance other parts of the neighbourhood area should be explored. It is therefore useful to consider where biodiversity opportunity areas (BOAs) exist within the neighbourhood area.
- 4.12 At a strategic level, in 2015 the Kent Nature Partnership mapped out the BOAs across Kent. These are shown in *Figure 5*. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy, published in 2020 builds on this earlier work, and provides information about the management, creation and restoration of different types of habitat.
- 4.13 Mid Kent Greensand and Gault – this opportunity area partially falls into the northernmost part of the neighbourhood area. It is defined by thin, sandy soils supporting lowland heathland and acid grassland. It is a distinctive landscape, which supports specific wildlife and vegetation and needs to be protected to thrive.
- 4.14 Low Weald Woodland – crossing the central part of the neighbourhood area, much of this landscape falls within the Kent Downs National Landscape. The landscape is characterised by small blocks of woodland, springs and ponds and open pastoral landscape. The wooded greensand scarp is prominent in views. Development should seek to retain the mosaic of small irregular fields and woodlands within a strong network of hedges and hedgerow trees.
- 4.15 Romney Marshes – stretching between the counties of Kent and East Sussex, Romney Marsh is one of England’s most distinctive and unique landscapes. Much of the area lies below sea level and the landscape is one of wide fields, endless skies, meandering ditches, isolated farms and villages.
- 4.16 An important element of the Romney Marsh landscape is ponds, which are important wildlife habitats that support a variety of wetland plants and animals, including species like great crested newt and medicinal leech. Opportunities to create new ponds in this part of the neighbourhood area would be supported.
- 4.17 The Royal Military Canal - stretching 28 miles in total between Seabrook near Folkestone and Cliff End near Hastings, sits along the northern edge of Romney Marsh. The canal corridor is a Scheduled Monument and Local Wildlife Site. There is a public footpath running along its length, which forms a part of the longer Saxon Shore Way. It is a haven for wildlife, including kingfishers, dragonflies and marsh frogs. Opportunities to enhance the footpath as a walking route and cycling route should be sought, where this can be achieved sympathetically from a wildlife and heritage perspective.
- 4.18 In addition to these BOAs identified at a strategic level, the local community with the support of a local ecologist (Martin Newcombe) has identified further areas of importance for flora and fauna that should be conserved, enhanced and where possible better connected. These are mapped in *Figure 6* and described in *Table 2*.

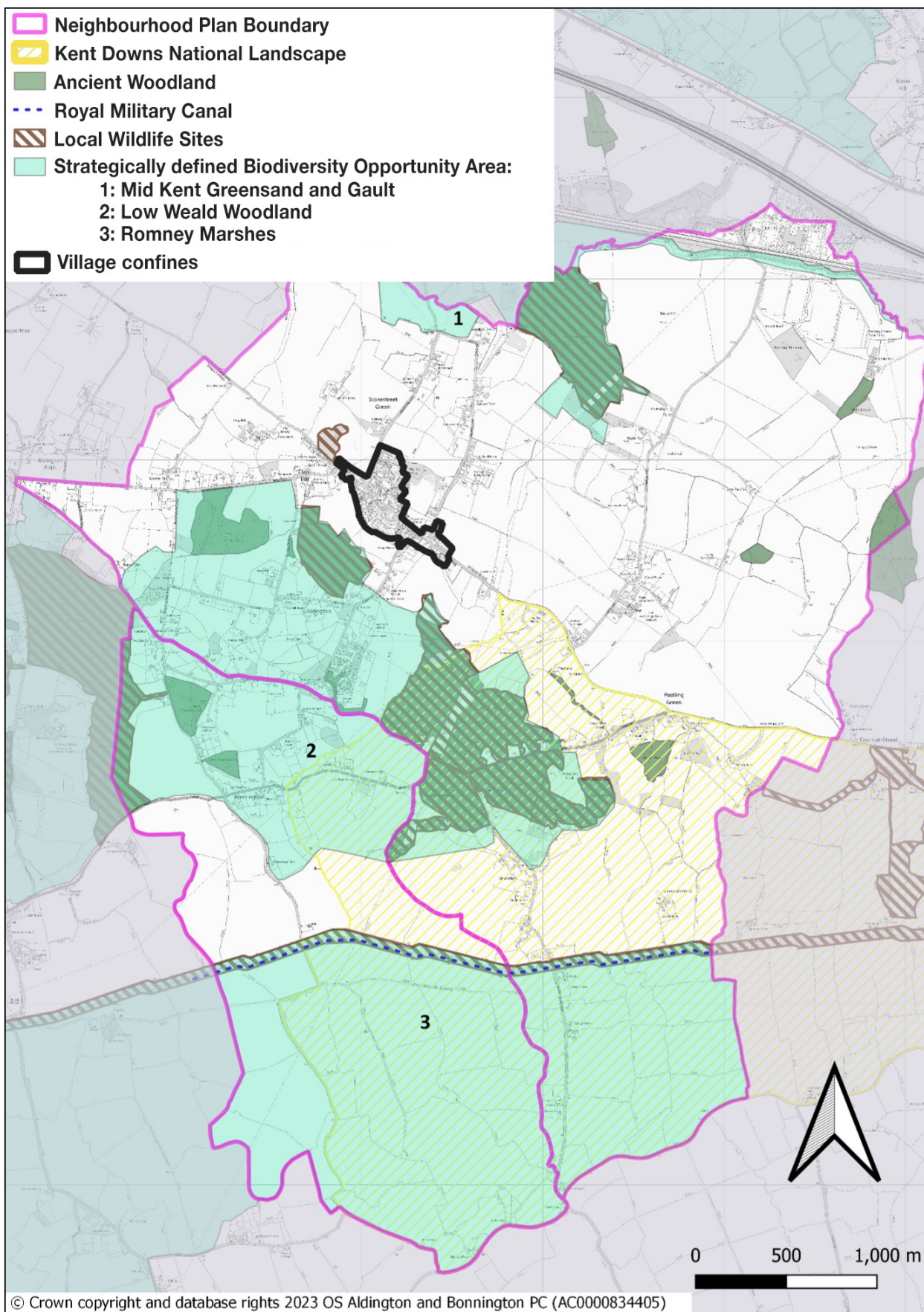


Figure 5: Green and blue infrastructure and strategically identified biodiversity opportunity areas

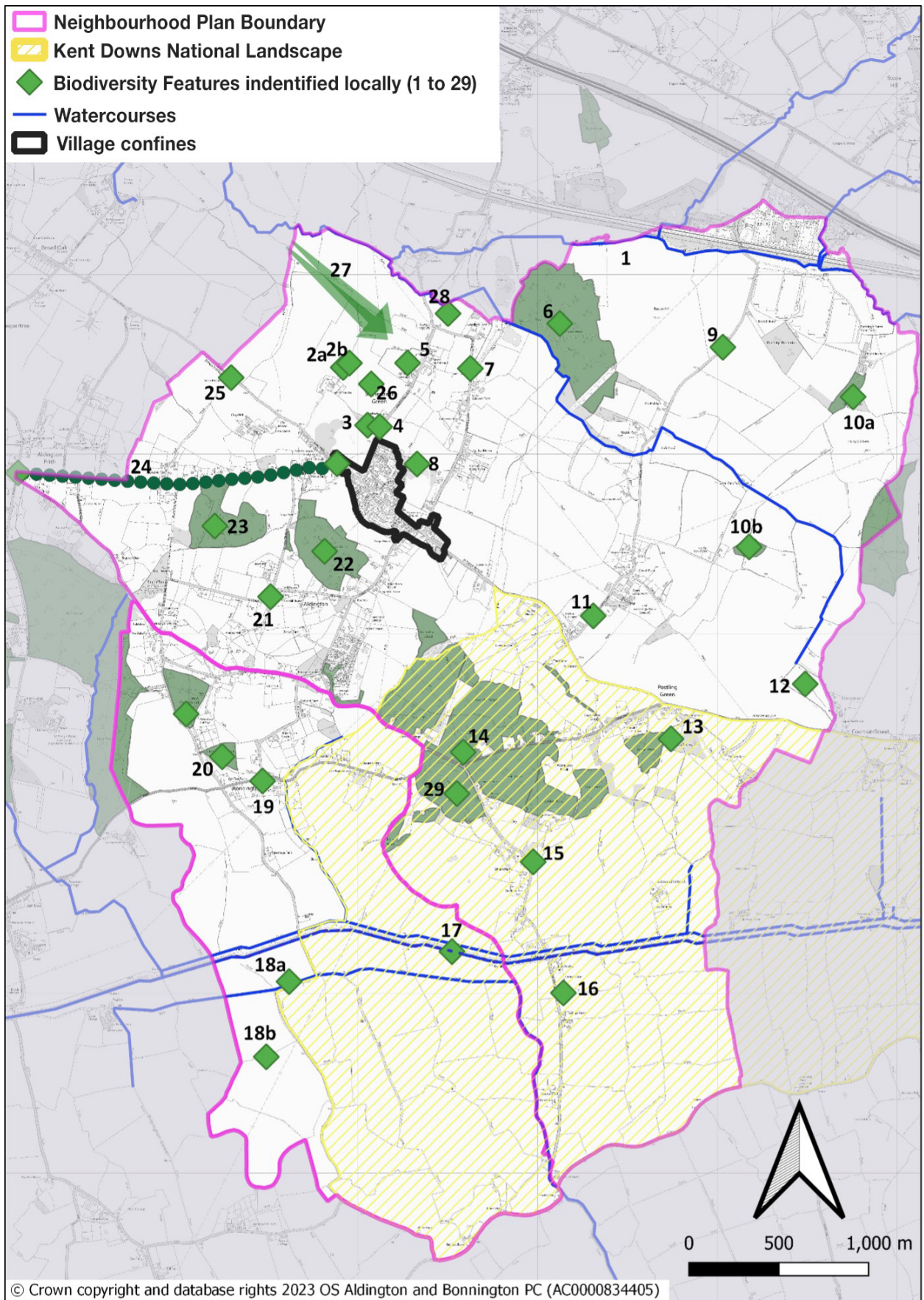


Figure 6: Locally identified biodiversity opportunity areas (see Table 2 for Key)

Table 2: *Locally identified biodiversity features*

Ref.	Name of Feature	Commentary
1	River Stour	Modified chalk stream with associated flora and fauna: the banks, as well as the river itself, provide an important habitat and wildlife corridor, as do some of the smaller drainage channels where the banks are well vegetated. These stretches could be extended and better connected with one another to create additional wildlife corridors across the East Stour Valley
2a 2b	Ponds NE of Handen Farm	Amphibians
3	Clap Hill quarry	Woodland bird breeding habitat
4	Calleywell Lane (NW verge)	Wet roadside verge vegetation
5	Calleywell Lane (NW side)	Unimproved grassland with associated flora and fauna, including old grassland fungi
6	Backhouse Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland; plantation on ancient woodland site (floodplain woodland).
7	Goldwell Lane (both sides)	Ancient hedgerows
8	Quarry Wood, pond and Reynolds Playing Field	Community woodland/pond; recreational facility with wildlife, including notable waxcap fungi
9	Church Lane hedgerows	Ancient hedgerows
10	a) Round Wood; b) Middle Park Farm woodlands	Relict woodland with associated flora and fauna
11	Hedgerow between Ruffins Hill and Aldington church	Ancient hedgerows
12	Field NW of Upper Park Farm	Semi-improved grassland; associated flora and fauna
13	Aldington Knoll to downland SE of Postling Green	Downland landscape with scattered copses and springs, including Dunk's Rough, Boulden Wood, Aldington Knoll; geomorphological features and associated flora and fauna, including rookery
14	Blackthorn Wood, Stockshill, Whites Wood, Knoll Woods	Ancient woodland, including County Wildlife Site with associated flora and fauna, historical botanical sites
15	Row of old pollarded oaks	These contain protected stag beetles /other entomological interest
16	Dyke	Relict marshland flora

Table 2: *Locally identified biodiversity features*

17	Royal Military Canal	County Wildlife Site notable for dragonflies and Daubenton's bats
18	a) and b) Dykes	Relict marshland flora
19	Bonnington Law Oak	Ancient oak
20	Woodlands NW of Bonnington	Woodland with associated flora and fauna
21	Mill Road	Small, hedged pastures with associated flora and fauna of woodland origin
22	Poulton Wood	Local Nature Reserve; woodland with associated flora and fauna
23	Handen Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland and plantation on an ancient woodland site with associated flora and fauna
24	Frith Road (entire length)	Fragmented ancient woodland-derived hedgerows
25	Bank Road	Ancient woodland-derived hedgerows
26	Stonestreet Green field	Opportunity to enhance the wetland environment
27	Ashford Green Corridor	Opportunity to extend the Ashford Green Corridor into the neighbourhood area to connect with the local green infrastructure network
28	Flood Field	Opportunity to enhance habitats including the watery field, which is frequented by birds (waterfowl and Canada geese), and the ancient hedgerow
29	Whites Wood Farm	Opportunity to explore routes to designate as a Local Nature Reserve

Note for Table 2: All data approximate; 'ancient hedgerow' implies derivation from ancient semi-natural woodland with associated flora and fauna; parishes in general: significant local populations of badgers, bats, dormice and woodland birds.

4.19 It is expected that land used for off-site biodiversity net gain delivery will be secured for the length of the net gain agreement, either via Section 106 agreements, or a conservation covenant. The Parish Council is exploring options to become a net gain provider and encourage other local landowners to do so. The Parish Council intends to submit key BOAs for inclusion in the ABC Local Plan 2041. Applicants are encouraged to discuss biodiversity net gain commitments with the Parish Council to establish opportunities available within the neighbourhood area.

Policy AB2: Managing the environmental impact of development

Objective 1: Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

Objective 2: Enhance nature and increase biodiversity

Purpose

4.20 This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals have considered how they can enhance the natural environment – both flora and fauna – including the features of it that are particularly distinctive to Aldington & Bonnington. This is particularly important in the context of the neighbourhood area being located partially within the Kent Downs National Landscape and otherwise being within the setting of it. The policy also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space and wildlife-friendly features.

POLICY AB2: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals should seek to maintain and, where practicable, conserve, enhance and incorporate natural features typical of the neighbourhood area, for instance ponds, hedgerows, verges and trees.

B. Proposals for residential development or overnight accommodation will only be supported if it demonstrates nutrient neutrality regarding the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA), both in relation to phosphorus and nitrogen.

C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:

Trees and woodland:

- i. There is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development. Ancient or veteran trees must not be removed except in exceptional circumstances and, in that case, they should be replaced with trees of a similar potential size and native species elsewhere on the site, unless this is clearly not possible.**
- ii. For new trees and/or shrubs, or where trees and/or shrubs are replaced with new plantings, native or locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife must be used.**

Hedgerows:

- iii. There should be no net loss of hedgerow. Development that would result in the loss or deterioration in quality of hedgerows will not be supported, with the exception of removal for vehicular access. When loss of hedgerow cannot be avoided, mitigation should consist of either an onsite replacement of similar size and species, or a tree, or other means of appropriate landscaping.**
- iv. Where access is created through hedgerow, trees should be planted at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown.**

Fauna:

- v. There is provision of hedgehog holes in new residential fencing between properties.**
- vi. There is provision of integrated bird and bat nesting-boxes.**
- vii. There is provision of wildlife-friendly communal green spaces within new major developments.**

Justification

- 4.21 The NPPF, at para 186, stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment including requiring net gain in biodiversity. The local community, too, places a high importance on this, with 90% of respondents to Community Questionnaire 1 agreeing that the natural environment and its features should be protected. Natural assets afforded a level of protection in the neighbourhood area are shown in *Table 3*.

Table 3: *Land-based designations in the neighbourhood area*

Designation	Sites in the Neighbourhood Area
Kent Downs National Landscape	Covering much of the southern part of the area; although excluding Aldington village, it includes most of Bonnington
Local Nature Reserve	Poulton Wood, Whites Wood
Ancient woodland	Backhouse Wood, Round Wood, Long Brook Rough Wood, Burchs Rough, Bolding Wood, Well Field Wood, Stockhill/Curtis Wood, South Hurst/St John's Wood, Boat Shaw, Little Crump Wood, Great Crump Wood, Poulton Wood, Handen Wood, Roughground Wood, Shave, Blackthorn Wood
Local Wildlife Sites	Royal Military Canal, Backhouse Wood, Aldington sandpit, Aldington Woods, Bilsington Woods and pasture (partially in the neighbourhood area)
Local Green Spaces	As set out in Policy AB3 (Local Green Spaces)

- 4.22 There are, however, other distinctive natural features particular to Aldington & Bonnington that, whilst not protected through statutory designations, provide vital habitats for flora and fauna. These include veteran and mature trees and established woodland, ancient hedgerows, ponds, streams, mature planted gardens and green verges alongside roads.
- 4.23 Such features contribute to the network of corridors for many animals and birds, especially those migrating, to safely navigate around their domains. Information from the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre shows sightings within the area of a variety of protected species including the marsh frog, smooth newt, slow-worm, grass snake, badger and various species of bat. There are also numerous protected plant species including many orchids, for instance the bee orchid, early purple orchid and greater butterfly orchid, as well as bluebell and common twayblade.
- 4.24 The habitats, and the species that they house, have evolved in response to local geology and land use, and can take many hundreds of years to establish. As a result, they are difficult, often impossible, to replace in any meaningful way. Although they have no statutory protection, they need to be considered in the planning process. Notable features, including how they might be improved from a biodiversity perspective, are described below.

Trees and ancient woodland

- 4.25 The neighbourhood area is home to a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees and ancient woodland. As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 131, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character.
- 4.26 Ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats, which have both heritage and cultural value. Natural England advises that development that would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 186(c) of the NPPF. Natural England also advises that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. It is also important to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, thereby providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.
- 4.27 The planting, replanting and renewal of trees and hedgerows is beneficial to biodiversity and is a recognised rural feature.

Hedgerows

- 4.28 Species-rich hedgerows are typically found in the neighbourhood area, with 83% of residents considering them an important feature to both preserve and add to (Q.5 of the Aldington & Bonnington Questionnaire 1). Whilst many hedgerows have been removed over the years to make way for housing, roads and other small-scale development, there are areas that remain – some undisturbed – and these provide a haven for biodiversity; they comprise many habitats including elements of woodland, pasture and meadow grassland, the latter often bordered by hedgerows. They can also include areas of scrub.
- 4.29 Aside from the planning system, hedgerows are offered some protection under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (ref. 2). This complex mechanism offers some protection for hedgerows of more than 20 metres in length or that join other hedgerows, provided that they adjoin agricultural land, forestry, paddocks, common land, village greens, a site of special scientific interest or a Local Nature Reserve.
- 4.30 Development applicants are encouraged to prepare a landscape and visual impact assessment, including a map showing existing hedgerows on site.

Ponds

- 4.31 The neighbourhood area is home to an abundance of ponds, which provide a valuable habitat for biodiversity action plan species such as great crested newts and emerald dragonflies. The ponds provide connectivity as part of the wider freshwater ‘patchwork’. Species such as birds, amphibians and invertebrates use these waterbodies as stepping-stones across the landscape.

Use of native species

- 4.32 Enhancements should involve the planting of new trees and hedgerows of native species around ponds in communal areas and near roadsides, where practicable, which will provide the added benefit of screening against road noise and traffic fumes. Species characteristic of the area include traditional mixed hedge of hawthorn, field maple, beech and hornbeam, sometimes with trees such as oak, native cherry or ash. In addition, species such as laurel, hazel, holly, yew, box, hornbeam and beech are typical of the village streetscape.

Wildlife-friendly features

- 4.33 Provision for wildlife needs on-site includes, for example, bird and bat nesting-boxes, and hedgehog holes in fencing.

Flooding and drainage

- 4.34 Whilst the villages of Aldington and Bonnington themselves are not at risk from river flooding, the Environment Agency advises that the neighbourhood plan area does include a significant area of Flood Zone 3. Flooding and drainage matters are considered at the national and strategic policy level, and applicants should follow national planning policy and avoid development in the floodplain. The Environment Agency is in the process of updating the flood risk model in Ashford, with results expected to be available in 2024. All planning applications will be expected to take account of the latest information available.
- 4.35 In terms of drainage, KCC, as the Flood Authority, advises that good practice supports drainage that has multiple functions (for instance to support biodiversity) and is integrated within open space. This is supported in the NPPF, which promotes drainage systems that are multi-functional. For example, biodiversity, landscape and amenity benefits can be provided through surface pond systems rather than below-ground rate attenuation. Drainage matters and the use of sustainable urban drainage are considered in ABC policies.

Policy AB3: Local Green Spaces

Objective 1: Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

Objective 2: Enhance nature and increase biodiversity

Purpose

4.36 The policy designates Local Green Spaces within the neighbourhood area that are demonstrably special to the local community.

POLICY AB3: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following eight green places, mapped in Figure 7 and detailed in Appendix A, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. Reynolds Playing Field
2. Quarry Field and Wood
3. Green in Walnut Ridge
4. Roman Road verges
5. Wheatfields green
6. Aldington Meadows play area
7. Aldington Meadows green
8. Forge Hill allotments

Development proposals in the eight designated Local Green Spaces listed above and defined in Figure 7 will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 1, 2; ABC Local Plan: SP1, SP6; NPPF: 105–107, 152–156

Justification

4.37 Under the NPPF, neighbourhood plans can designate Local Green Spaces that are of particular importance to the community. This will afford them protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 105 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

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

4.38 Building on feedback from the local community via surveys and workshops, the steering team reviewed the green spaces across the neighbourhood area to ascertain whether each might be suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. The following eight areas, which are considered to fulfil all the criteria of the NPPF, are shown in *Figure 7*.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Reynolds Playing Field | 5. Wheatfields green |
| 2. Quarry Field and Wood | 6. Aldington Meadows play area |
| 3. Green in Walnut Ridge | 7. Aldington Meadows green |
| 4. Roman Road verges | 8. Forge Hill allotments |

4.39 Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix A, along with a full description as to how each meets the NPPF criteria.

4.40 Several green spaces that are considered important to the local community have not been proposed for designation as a Local Green Space. This is because they are already adequately protected from inappropriate development by other mechanisms, such as designation as a Local Nature Reserve or ancient woodland. An example is Bonnington Green, which is already designated as a Village Green. Evidence of this is provided in Appendix A.



Images show: Reynolds Playing Field, Aldington Meadows play area, and Forge Hill allotments

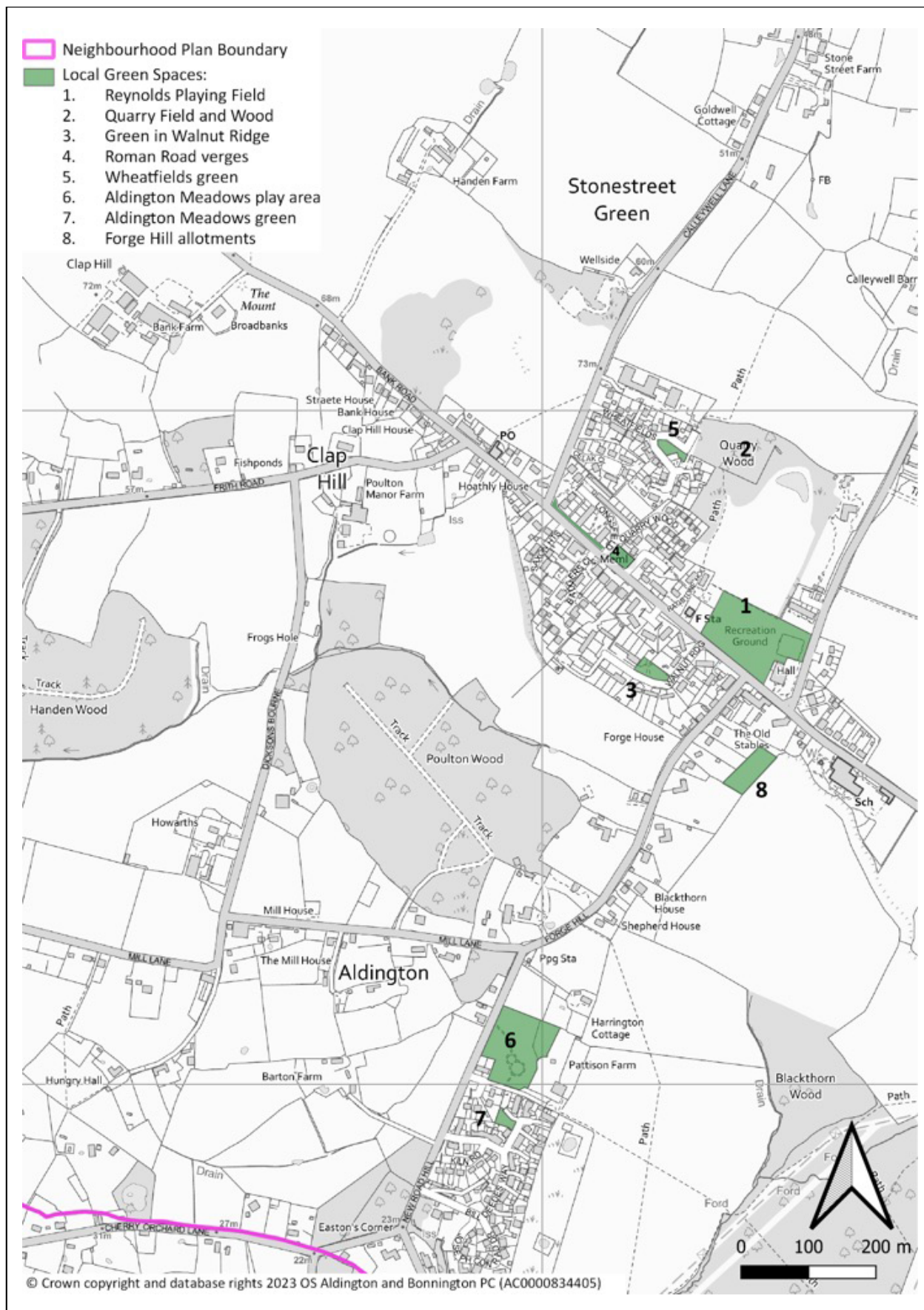


Figure 7: Local Green Spaces

Policy AB4: Protection of locally significant views

Objective 1: Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

Purpose

4.41 This policy sets out a series of views in and across the neighbourhood area, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard. The policy seeks to protect the views from inappropriate development.

POLICY AB4: PROTECTION OF LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

A. The setting of the settlements within the neighbourhood area contributes greatly to their local character. Long-distance views from the ridgeline and the main approaches to the villages play key roles in their settings. Proposals with significant harmful impacts on the setting of the neighbourhood area will not be supported.

B. In addition, the Plan identifies 13 locally significant views (and view clusters), shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10, with descriptions contained in Appendix B. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various views shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10 should be designed in a way that demonstrates how the proposal has taken into consideration the importance of the locally significant view or views, in the layout, design or masterplanning of the site(s), and mitigates any adverse impact on those views.

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 1; ABC Local Plan: SP1, SP6; NPPF: 131, 132, 135



Panorama across the East Stour Valley up towards Aldington Ridgeline

Justification

4.42 The area comprises the historic parishes of Aldington and Bonnington, nestled both within and adjacent to the Kent Downs National Landscape, which is situated just outside the neighbourhood area boundaries to the north and east, while its southernmost tip extends across much of the southern half of the joint parishes. Views towards the Kent Downs are afforded from various viewpoints along the Aldington Ridge running from east to west. The ridge lies roughly parallel with the North Downs, with its highest point running along Roman Road through Aldington village. This geophysical characteristic of the area creates the outstanding long views both into and out of the villages of Aldington and Bonnington. In addition, there are important local views taking in historic assets, notably St Martin's Church, and natural features such as Aldington Knoll.

4.43 In consultation with the community, 13 particularly important views, view clusters and vistas have been identified, shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10. These illustrate the location and the direction of the view, with a fan shape to indicate the lateral extent of the view. These are only indicative and should be considered in conjunction with the detailed descriptions given in Appendix B. Views across the open landscape are a defining characteristic of the area and a key reason cited by residents for choosing Aldington or Bonnington as a place to live. Each view is accessible from the public realm and the Parish Council will work with KCC's Rights of Way team to ensure that rights of way are maintained to enable the views to be enjoyed by all. Detailed descriptions of each view and why they are important are contained in Appendix B. The views are listed in *Table 4*.

Table 4: *Locally significant views in the neighbourhood area*

Views no.	Location
1	From Station Road: panorama across the East Stour Valley up towards Aldington Ridgeline
2a, 2b	From Goldwell Lane towards St Martin's Church along PROW AE474 and the reverse
3	From PROW AE475 northwards towards Kent Downs National Landscape
4	From the rear of St Martin's Church
5	From Roman Road and Knoll Hill where they meet at Postling Green, northwards
6a, 6b	From Roman Road and PROW AE449, northwards
7	A series of views southwards going down Forge Hill from Roman Road
8	From Calleywell Lane and PROW AE446, looking north-to-north-westwards
9	From Roman Road between telephone exchange and Sheraton Cottage, southwards
10	From Bank Road and PROWs AE370, AE377 and AE445, northwards
11a, 11b	From Aldington Knoll, south-east and north-east
12	From Bonnington Village Green, northwards towards Aldington
13	From Boat Lane, south-west towards Bonnington Village Green

- 4.44 Other important views identified by the community are not included in the list above as they are adequately protected: for instance, views within the Conservation Area or within the Kent Downs National Landscape. The list above has focused primarily on those views from the ridgeline that are core to Aldington village and that look across land that would not be afforded other protections.
- 4.45 The policy requires that development proposals are designed in a way that safeguards, where possible, the locally significant view or views concerned. This will help to prevent developments that block important local views. The policy attempts to provide the flexibility required for the range of development proposals that will come forward within the plan period.
- 4.46 In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have a significant impact on an identified significant view, the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment. It is accepted that, in some areas, views will be compromised, but developers should seek to incorporate views within proposals. This will assist in embedding a landscape approach to development and perpetuate a sense of place, connecting the neighbourhood area with the Kent Downs National Landscape.
- 4.47 It is recognised that some of the shaded arcs identified stretch into neighbouring parishes, particularly to the south, and that it is only views up to the neighbourhood area boundary that can be safeguarded. Nevertheless, it is the intention of the Parish Council to discuss with neighbouring parishes the impact on views in their area if development is planned for those areas.

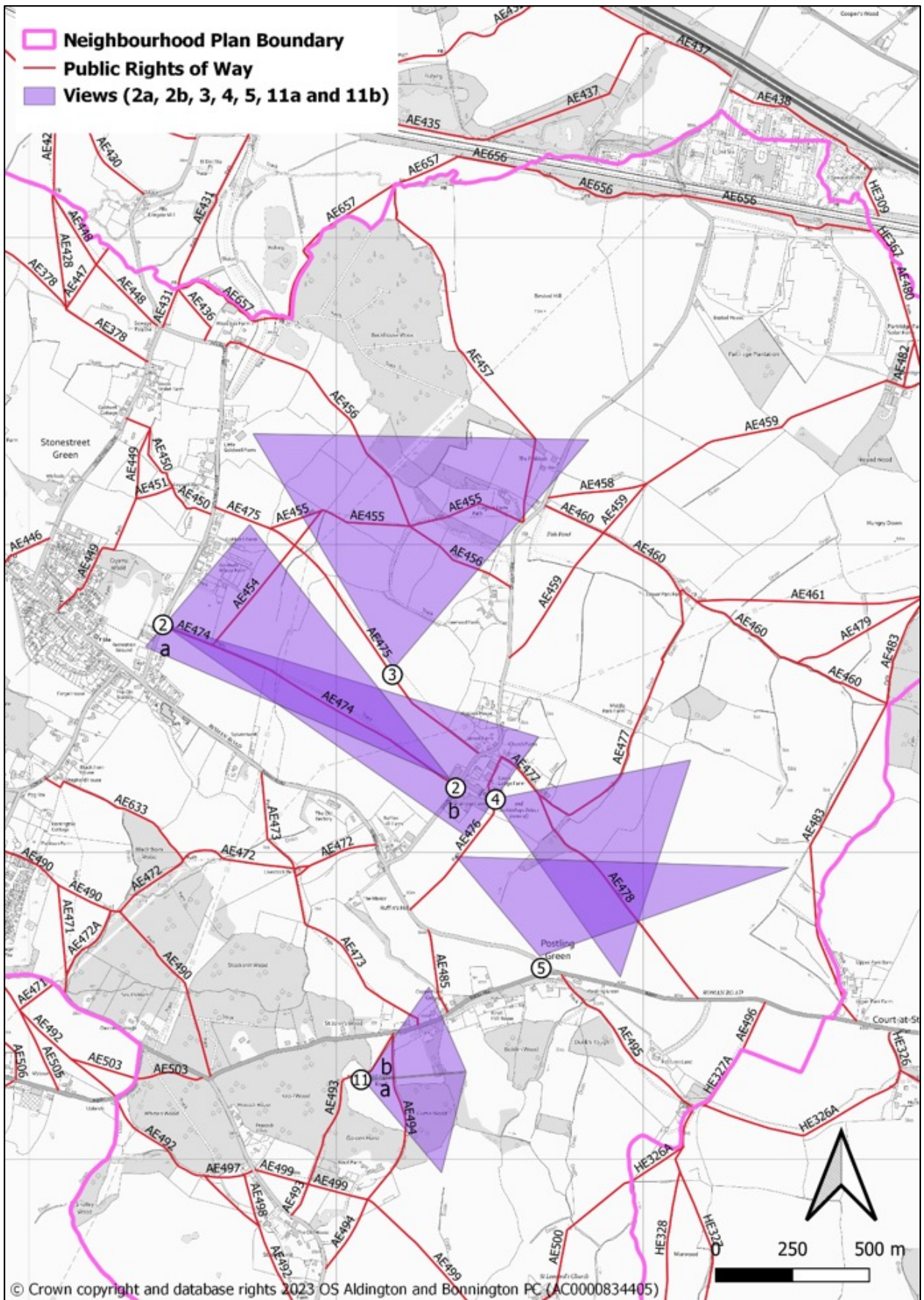


Figure 9: Locally significant views to the east of the neighbourhood area

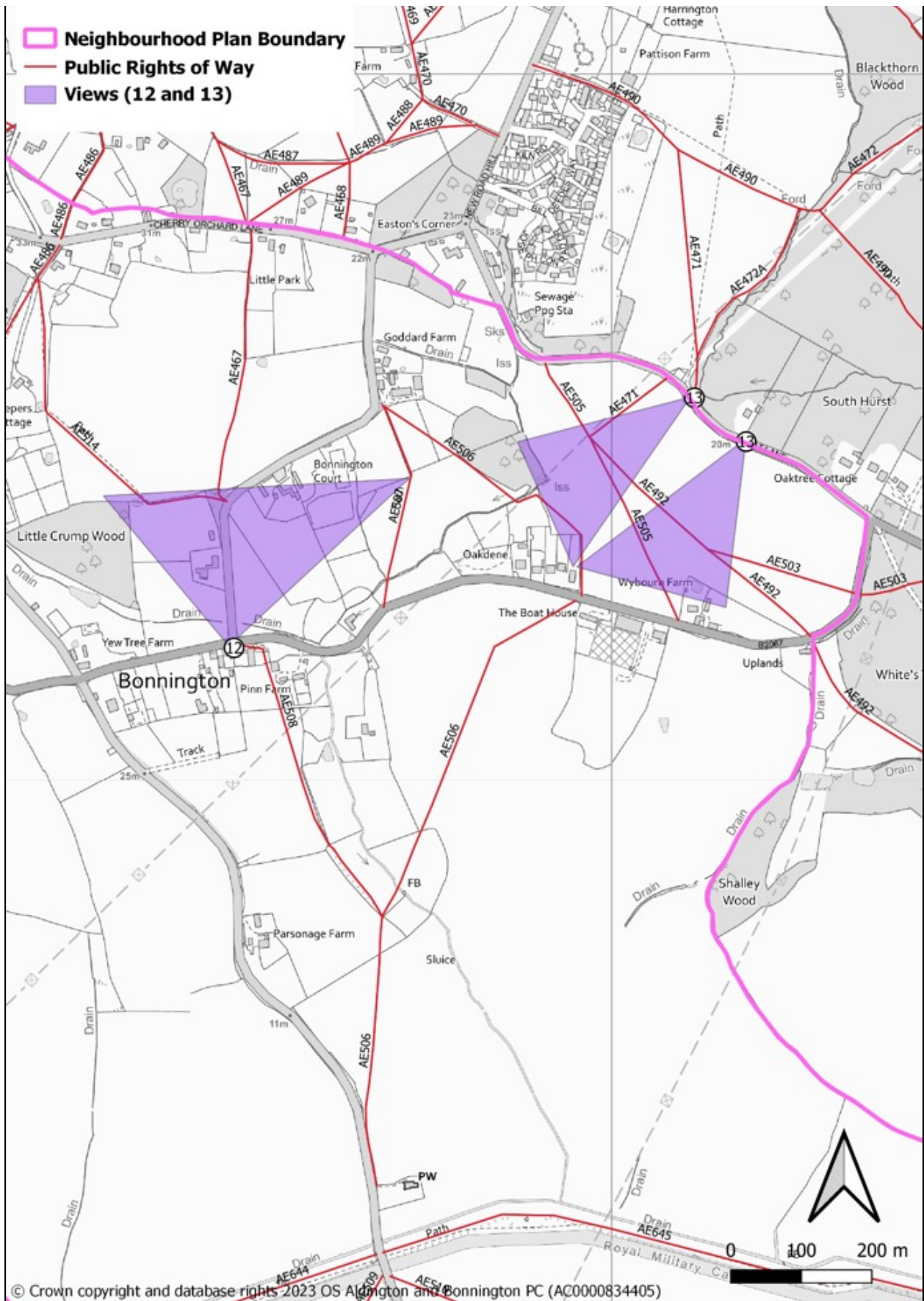


Figure 10: Locally significant views in and around Bonnington

Policy AB5: Dark skies

Objective 1: Conserve the rural landscape, character and views

Purpose

4.48 Situated partially within the Kent Downs National Landscape, significant parts of Aldington & Bonnington neighbourhood area provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of the neighbourhood area.

POLICY AB5: DARK SKIES

Notwithstanding permitted development, proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution, and where:

- i. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;
- ii. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing;
- iii. street lighting is by bollards no higher than 750mm;
- iv. the use of skylights is limited and light emissions managed;
- v. impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets and the wider landscape is minimised; and
- vi. the guidance on lighting provided in the Institution of Lighting Professionals' Guidance Note 01/21: For the reduction of obtrusive light (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to.

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 1; ABC Local Plan: SP1, SP6, ENV4; NPPF: 191

Justification

4.49 Given its rural location, large swathes of the neighbourhood area remain largely unlit (Figure 11), most significantly the areas of woodland and agricultural land away from the centre of Aldington. Even here, street lighting is minimal, though modern living is increasing light spillage through increased use of velux windows and large glass doors. National infrastructure projects to both the east and the west of Aldington have bleached the skies on the horizons. Looking toward the coast, the dark night skies are predominantly unspoilt and it is important that they are kept that way.

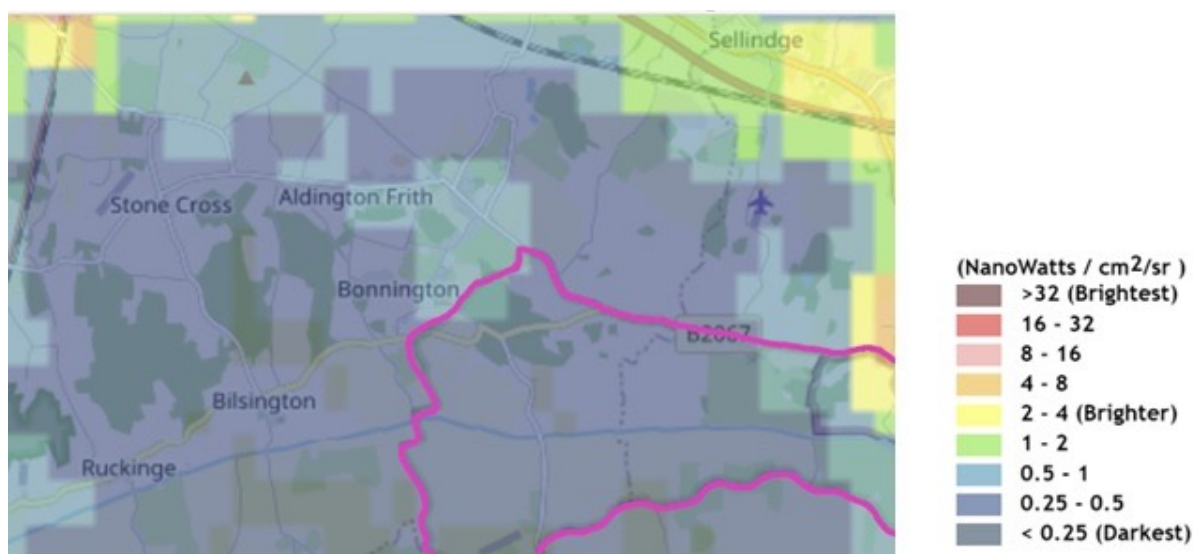


Figure 11: Map showing levels of radiance for the neighbourhood area (source: CPRE Light Pollution and Dark Skies map, 2016). Each pixel shows the levels of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky. The pink line denotes the National Landscape

4.50 The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:

- enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration;
- health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress;
- wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals;
- energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the neighbourhood area’s carbon footprint.

- 4.51 The Kent Downs Management Plan highlights the importance of dark skies and the need to both protect and extend them. It quotes the 2016 CPRE survey, which documents the loss of dark night skies through badly designed and sited night lighting.
- 4.52 The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded. Light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of conservation areas and listed buildings or their settings. Artificial lighting has an impact on biodiversity especially for nocturnal animals, and invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light at even very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.
- 4.53 Whilst the Local Plan designates a dark sky zone, which includes the whole of the neighbourhood area, the associated Policy ENV4 (Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies) has not been consistently applied in the past within Aldington. An example is the Quarry House development, which, at night, was clearly visible from some miles as a result of the extensive lighting on the site, prior to negotiation with management.
- 4.54 Precedents have been set in the neighbourhood area to improve on lighting solutions within developments. For instance, planning conditions were applied to the Wheatfields development, requiring the use of bollard style, low-level, downward-facing, street lighting, to minimise light pollution.
- 4.55 The Institution of Lighting Professionals produces guidance on light pollution, and this should be consulted when preparing development proposals. Of particular relevance are: Guidance Note 01/21: For the reduction of obtrusive light and Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. There is also Best Practice Guidance on Security Lights, which should be consulted to assist in determining whether lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security considerations.
- 4.56 Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they come on only when needed.
- 4.57 Many National Landscapes encourage their parishes to include a dark skies policy in their neighbourhood plan, and policy AB4 is based on guidance from the Kent Downs National Landscape Unit.



5

HOUSING

Quantity of housing

- 5.1 Policy SP2 (The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery) of the Ashford Local Plan seeks to deliver a total housing target of 13,118 net additional dwellings across the borough between 1 April 2018 and early 2030. This will be delivered through a combination of committed schemes, site allocations and suitable windfall proposals.
- 5.2 The NPPF requires, through paragraph 66, local authorities to provide neighbourhood groups with a definitive or an indicative number of houses to plan for over the neighbourhood plan period. Ashford has fulfilled that requirement by providing Aldington with a figure of 18 dwellings to be accommodated within the neighbourhood plan area by the end of the plan period, which is 2030 to coincide with the Local Plan period.
- 5.3 In 2011 Aldington & Bonnington combined parish had a population of 1,248 people in 558 properties. At about this time, residents started to move into the 72 new homes in Aldington Meadows. Forty two new homes were added in Wheatfields and 12 in Badgers Close, both in 2015, followed by Quarry House in 2016 (33 assisted-living flats) and Saxon Heights in 2018 (10 houses).
- 5.4 Four bungalows were added to Ragstone Hollow in 2019. There are two sites, S51 and S52, allocated in the Local Plan which, when built out, will bring a further 17 new homes on Goldwell Lane (S51 delivering one fewer new homes than allocated by ABC).
- 5.5 Several other single dwellings have brought the current total to approximately 680 dwellings in the parishes today (approx. 630 in Aldington and approx. 55 in Bonnington). The 2021 census records a population that has grown to 1,600 people. The rapid growth over the decade 2011–2021 put strain on the community in ways that have taken years to address. Village culture was damaged as new residents took time to adapt to rural realities that long-term residents accepted. In recent years development has slowed. This slowdown in population growth has enabled village culture to rebuild as new residents have been absorbed into the community.
- 5.6 Since the requirement for new homes will have been delivered within the neighbourhood plan period, as explained above, the ABNP does not seek to allocate additional sites for housing. Instead, its policies are aimed at influencing the type, size, mix and design of new homes that will be delivered across the plan period.
- 5.7 This situation will be reconsidered as part of a future review of the Neighbourhood Plan, which may be triggered, for instance, by a review of the Ashford Local Plan. Further information about this is contained in Section 9.

- 5.8 In the meantime, there is an intention by the Parish Council to explore the potential for rural exception sites, which could deliver against identified housing need.

Addressing nutrient neutrality

- 5.9 All proposals for new residential development in the plan area, including those covered by the policies in this section of the Plan and those contained in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030 for the plan area, will be required to take full account of the advice published by Natural England and the Borough Council on the measures necessary to demonstrate that the proposals satisfactorily mitigate any potential adverse effects on the designated Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation/ Special Protection Area.
- 5.10 All planning applications for new residential development in the plan area will be assessed on the basis of such advice, and in due course in the context of the Stodmarsh Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared by the Borough Council.

Policy AB6 Residential windfall development

Objective 3: Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design

Purpose

5.11 The Ashford Local Plan depends on some windfall development coming forward to contribute to the delivery of its overall housing need. It contains two policies that manage how that residential windfall development is considered within settlements:

- Policy HOU3a (Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements) of the Local Plan states that residential development and infilling of a scale that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement will be acceptable within the built confines of settlements, including Aldington (*Figure 12*).

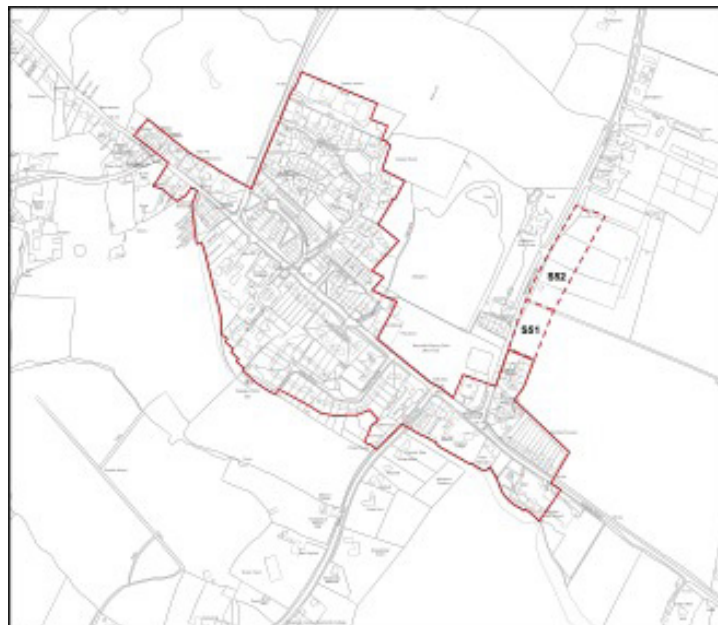


Figure 12: Map showing the built confines for Aldington village (in red) (source: Ashford Local Plan)

- Policy HOU5 (Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside) states that proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built confines might also be acceptable, subject to a list of criteria. Since the adoption of the Ashford Local Plan in February 2019, it is considered that this policy has not always been consistently applied by ABC in planning decisions.
- 5.12 Policy AB6 seeks to provide additional local detail to support the application of Policies HOU3a and HOU5 in the Aldington context. It does not seek to place additional constraints on the Local Plan policy; rather, it supports the interpretation of the policies in the context of Aldington and Bonnington parishes. Whilst the ‘built confines’ of Aldington village are clearly defined, the definition of ‘close to’ those confines is less clear, as is the location of

‘services’. The village is linear in character, leading to developers choosing services at one end of the village or the other – depending on which lies closest to the proposed development. Distances to ‘services’ are often subject to debate and provide an inconsistent guide to the definition of ‘sustainable development’, given many variables such as topography and provision, or not, of suitable footpaths in rural areas. Policy AB6 seeks to ensure that windfall development in the countryside is undertaken in a manner that is appropriate to Aldington.

POLICY AB6: RESIDENTIAL WINDFALL DEVELOPMENT

A. Within the built confines of Aldington, development proposals should be sensitive to the surrounding context in terms of scale, architectural details and materials, in order to preserve the local vernacular and rural character of the village.

B. Development proposals outside the built confines of Aldington village will only be supported where:

- i. it is a site no larger than 1.0 hectare in size, in accordance with NPPF para 70;**
- ii. it is located within easy walking distance of services and facilities within Aldington village, including local bus stops, as shown on Figure 13; and**
- iii. safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, access is ensured; and**
- iv. it does not individually or cumulatively result in the loss of character and separate identity of Aldington and its neighbouring hamlets such as Stone Street Green, Church Lane and Aldington Meadows (Figure 14); and**
- v. it is in accordance with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.**

C. Where development sites abut or sit within open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, this should be achieved through the siting of lower density development at the rural boundary of the site in order to provide a gradual transition from the built form to open countryside, or by other means such as through a layout that clearly minimises the visual impact of any larger buildings.

D. The open landscape character and long views of Aldington Ridge must be protected and enhanced.

E. Proposals should make the best use of suitable brownfield land, where available, before greenfield land is released.

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 3; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP2, SP7, HOU3, HOU5, TRA4, ENV12; NPPF: 28, 60, 64, 70, 71, 83, 96, 97, 109, 123–125, 128, 135

Justification

5.13 The built confines (or envelope as it is sometimes referred to), refers to a line that is drawn on a plan around the built core of a village that reflects its built form and differentiates it from the wider, open countryside. In 2020, ABC wrote to every Parish Council, following adoption of the Ashford Local Plan, to confirm the defined built confines for each

settlement. The built confines are used as a policy tool to define the area wherein a set of plan policies are to be applied.

- 5.14 The built confines for Aldington village are shown in *Figure 12*.
- 5.15 Infilling within the built confines will be acceptable where it is in conformity with the policies of the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan. Existing brownfield sites present a preferred source of development land.
- 5.16 Beyond the built confines, Local Plan Policy HOU5 sets out broad criteria that must be adhered to in planning proposals in addition to those clauses in HOU3a. In the context of Policy AB6 of the ABNP, work was undertaken by the steering team, in consultation with the local community, to consider how Policy HOU5 should be applied specifically within the Aldington village context. Table 5 sets this out in more detail and this is illustrated in *Figure 13*.
- 5.17 *Figure 14* shows the nearby smaller hamlets, where coalescence should be avoided.

Table 5: Description of the built confines (Local Plan policy HOU5) as it applies to Aldington village

Local Plan policy HOU5 criterion	As Applied to Aldington Village
<p>a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day-to-day service provision currently available and commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;</p>	<p><i>The Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes</i> requires development proposals to be sensitive to the surrounding context in terms of scale, architectural details and materials, in order to preserve the local vernacular and rural character of the village.</p> <p>For development in Aldington parish, small-medium scale development (as per NPPF para 70) is considered appropriate, as opposed to major development.</p> <p>The detrimental impact that development can have on local character and appearance and heritage was cited as a reason to refuse a planning appeal along Calleywell Lane (Ref: APP/E2205/W/20/3264220 Land to the west of Calleywell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, TN25 7DA).</p> <p>The density of any scheme should reflect its context in terms of whether it is in the centre or edge of a town or village, or in a smaller settlement in the rural area. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities whilst making efficient use of land. Development at the rural edge of Aldington village should mitigate its visual impact on the open countryside, either through a lower density of properties to reflect a gradual transition from the built core to the countryside, or through a layout that minimises the impact of larger buildings.</p>
<p>b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;</p>	<p>This is to be defined as less than 800m from the key facilities. There are few key facilities within Aldington: the Post Office stores, bus stops and the primary school. In the context of the linear nature of Aldington, and the fact that the key facilities are spread throughout the village, the Roman Road bus stops opposite and adjacent to Aldington Fire Station should be taken as the central point from which to measure, in respect of ease of access to services.</p>

Local Plan policy HOU5 criterion	As Applied to Aldington Village
<p>c) The development can be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;</p> <p>d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;</p>	<p>All new developments should ensure safe pedestrian and, where possible, cycle access to link up with the existing footpaths and public transport network, as defined in Figure 13. They should improve sustainable transport options for the parishes. Development should be designed to provide connective routes that promote walkable/cyclable habits for daily village life.</p>
<p>e) The development must conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality;</p>	<p>It should conform to the <i>Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes</i> and meet the requirements of Policies AB1, AB2, AB3 and AB10, which relate to the natural and built environment.</p>
<p>f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high-quality design and meets the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape, ii. it preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement, iii. it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside, iv. it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used, v. it does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents, vi. it would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and/or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1. 	<p>It should meet the requirement of Policies AB7 (Design and local character) and AB8 (Sustainable design) and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p>



Figure 14: *Historic hamlets in the neighbourhood area where coalescence should be avoided*

Policy AB7: Meeting local housing needs

Objective 3: Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design

Purpose

5.18 This policy seeks to ensure that there is a range of general housing that is designed to be capable of meeting the specific housing needs of the neighbourhood area.

POLICY AB7: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

A. Other than in development designed to meet an identified specialist housing need, the mix of housing sizes, types, tenures and affordability in proposed development should, insofar as it is reasonably practicable and subject to viability, assist in meeting needs identified in the most recently available Aldington Housing Needs Assessment. In particular, the following provision will be supported:

- i. delivery by all new residential development within Aldington of a quantity of affordable housing in line with the requirements contained within the Ashford Local Plan. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The provision, mix and tenures of affordable housing to be provided within the Plan area should reflect the requirements set out in Policy HOU1 in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, including the provision of First Homes in accordance with national policy;**
- ii. proposals that will deliver smaller one-, two- and three-bedroom dwellings, including bungalows, to address the needs of single people, young couples, smaller families and the elderly, and accord with Policy AB8 (Promoting local character through high-quality design).**

B. Residential development that could reasonably be expected to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it has reflected the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles.

C. Subject to the other policies of this Plan, proposals for self- and custom-build housing will be supported.

Conformity reference: NP Objective: 3; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP2, HOU1, HOU18; NPPF: 60–63, 65, 70

Justification

5.19 It is important that any new residential development within the area addresses local housing needs. Policy HOU18 (Providing a Range and Mix of Dwelling Types and Sizes) of the Ashford Local Plan states that ‘Development proposals of 10 or more dwellings will be required to deliver a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs’. It suggests that ‘the specific range and mix of dwellings to be provided should be informed by proportionate evidence that is robust, up to date and provides an assessment of need’.

5.20 To inform the ABNP, two pieces of evidence were commissioned to provide a more accurate picture of housing need at the neighbourhood level. The first was the Aldington Housing

Needs Assessment (AHNA), prepared by consultants AECOM, using existing datasets to consider:

- what quantity and tenures of affordable housing should be planned for over the Neighbourhood Plan period; and
- what type (terrace, semi, bungalow, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing (both affordable and market) is appropriate for the plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period.

5.21 The second was an Aldington Housing Needs Survey (AHNS) report provided by Action for Communities in Rural Kent to establish likely affordable housing needs over the next few years, based on a community-wide housing survey.

5.22 The findings are summarised below, and the policy seeks to address these

5.23 **Affordability of properties in the area is a challenge for many:** the price-paid information assembled for the AHNA report indicates that there is a price premium for property in Aldington & Bonnington, in particular for homes at the median and lower quartile scale, which makes affordability a greater issue for the area than in other parts of the borough.

5.24 From a purchasing perspective, households with incomes between £57,760 and £65,571 are able to rent in the market but unable to buy. The income required to buy an average market home for sale is more than that available to those on average household incomes. Therefore, affordable home-ownership products, including discounted market sale, shared ownership and First Homes (at appropriate discounts) may meet their needs.

5.25 From a rental perspective, entry-level market rents are affordable to those on average incomes which suggests that Rent-to-Buy might offer a route to home ownership for households who struggle to save for a deposit. For low-income households, however, affordable rent and social rents become the only viable options, and some will require subsidy through housing benefit to access these tenures.

5.26 The AHNS found that (during the survey period) there was only one property for sale in the neighbourhood area under £500,000, which was a retirement property, and only one property to rent. The community survey revealed a need for 17 affordable homes (for seven single people, four couples and six families). Of these, 10 should be rented, five shared ownership and two provided as First Homes. Five of those in need were older owner-occupiers, expressing a desire to find a smaller, more manageable home to which to downsize.

5.27 The Ashford Local Plan requires 40% of homes on sites of 10+ dwellings (and on sites of 0.5 hectares or more) to be provided as affordable homes, with a tenure mix ratio of 25% affordable/social rented: 75% affordable home-ownership products. Bearing in mind the rural context of the neighbourhood area and the particular challenges faced, the AHNA concluded that in fact 75% of affordable homes should be provided as rented tenures, with the remaining 25% as affordable home-ownership products (First Homes).

5.28 To address this, the AHNA suggests that, at the neighbourhood level, the first 25% of affordable homes should be First Homes. Of the remaining 75%, 25% should be provided as affordable homes to purchase and 75% as rented as rented tenures. This aligns with the direction of proposed national policy, which includes a mandated minimum level of delivery of the Government's new First Homes affordable home-ownership product.

- 5.29 **There is an imbalance of property sizes available within Aldington & Bonnington:** in terms of housing size, the neighbourhood area has a relatively higher share of large homes with over seven rooms, when compared to Ashford borough, which has a high share of medium- to large-sized homes with four–six rooms. However, both Aldington and Bonnington have a low share of the smallest homes.
- 5.30 The results of a life-stage modelling exercise carried out for the AHNA suggest that, in terms of demographic change, new development in Aldington might prioritise smaller housing (up to three bedrooms) owing to the ageing population and the predicted decreases in average household sizes over time, which is consistent with the recommendations outlined in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment prepared by ABC in 2017.
- 5.31 This chimes with the community survey findings, which revealed a desire for some smaller properties to be built – to serve both younger people and small families, as well as those wishing to downsize.
- 5.32 **Homes should be suitable for residents at all stages of their life:** as with many villages in the south-east, there is a significant elderly population and fewer young people in the neighbourhood area, though the rapid growth in 2011 –2021 brought many new families.
- 5.33 The Ashford Local Plan makes provision for specialist housing, including care and extra care spaces, to serve those in the borough. In addition, Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) has, since 2009, developed a series of principles for good design of housing. Many of the principles are recognisable from good design generally – good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage – but they have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons’ housing, which needs to offer both an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs. The 10 principles are:
- Space and flexibility
 - Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
 - Balconies and outdoor space
 - Adaptability and ‘care ready’ design
 - Positive use of circulation space
 - Shared facilities and ‘hubs’
 - Plants, trees and the natural environment
 - Energy efficiency and sustainable design
 - Storage for belongings and bicycles
 - External shared surfaces and ‘home zones’.
- 5.34 Good design to deliver these criteria is particularly important for smaller dwellings, including smaller homes (in terms of bedroom numbers), apartments and bungalows. Such developments must ensure that they are aimed at meeting the needs of older people as well as the younger working population.



6 CHARACTER, DESIGN AND HERITAGE

Policy AB8: Promoting local character through high-quality design

Objective 3: Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design

Purpose

- 6.1 Good quality housing design can improve social well-being and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. The policy seeks to encourage development proposals within the neighbourhood area to comply with the highest design standards, adhere to the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Guidance and the locally specific Design Codes prepared for Aldington & Bonnington (Appendix C). The policy and its supporting text add greater detail to the Local Plan policies, in particular SP6 (Promoting High Quality Design), which requires development to reflect local distinctiveness but does not provide guidance specific to the neighbourhood level.

POLICY AB8: PROMOTING LOCAL CHARACTER THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN

A. Where practicable, proposals for development should preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area or Character Area in which it is located (as shown in Figure 15 and described in the *Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes*), reflecting architectural variety found locally and using materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the immediate locality. This will help to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the plan area. Innovation in design will be supported, where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form.

B. Special attention should be paid to boundary treatments, which should reflect rural characteristics. Picket-fencing styles are recommended; panel fencing should not be used. Front gardens should be visible from the street. Hedges and low ragstone walls are key local characteristics and should be retained.

C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the following matters:

- i. being guided by the principles of Building for a Healthy Life, unless alternative principles would otherwise result in a higher quality of design. Development proposals will be supported where they achieve the quality mark;
- ii. the guidance contained within the National Design Guide, Kent Design Guide, Kent Downs Management Guidance, Conservation Area Appraisals and the Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes;
- iii. designing layouts of safe and secure dwellings that meet the requirements of Secured by Design, minimising the likelihood and fear of crime;

Continues...

- iv. **site context:**
 - a. **siting, layout, density, spacing, orientation and landscaping that respects site characteristics, including its topography, natural features, relationship with immediate surroundings, historic setting and views into and out of the site;**
 - b. **the compatibility of the scale, form, height, massing, proportions, external appearance and use of materials with existing buildings, building lines, landscape, treescape, roofscapes and skylines;**
- v. **residential amenity: proposals should not cause significant harm to the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties and should provide adequate residential amenity for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that:**
 - a. **development does not result in, or is not exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity, vehicular movements or overlooking; and**
 - b. **the built form does not create an overbearing impact or unacceptable loss of privacy, outlook or daylight and sunlight enjoyed by the occupiers of adjacent/ nearby properties, in accordance with the National Model Design Code; and**
 - c. **car parking and/or servicing is appropriate to site context and designed and located so as not to cause material harm to visual amenity and does not dominate the street scene and/or public realm;**
- vi. **landscaping, biodiversity and open space: proposals should conserve and sensitively incorporate existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows within the site, with the aim of delivering a net environmental benefit for local people and wildlife, in accordance with Policy AB1 (Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain);**
- vii. **incorporating open space that is:**
 - a. **in usable parcels of land and not fragmented;**
 - b. **safe, easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier;**
 - c. **accessible to the general public;**
 - d. **creative of a safe environment considering lighting and layout;**
 - e. **complemented by soft landscaping;**
- viii. **providing suitably sized rooms and overall floorspace that allows for adequate storage and movement within the building as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard, with external spaces for recycling, refuse and cycle storage.**

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 3; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP6, HOU8–10, HOU12, HOU14, HOU15, TRA3, ENV3a; NPPF: 28, 96, 131–137, 139, 180

Justification

- 6.2 Past generations of people and development have created the features that give the parishes and villages their identity today. This process has been gradual, taking place over many centuries, and the settlement that exists today has a distinctiveness that derives from variety. The village contains heritage assets of all kinds, including characterful buildings, historic landmarks and archaeological features, both exposed and still beneath the ground.

- 6.3 The importance of good design has received renewed attention over recent years. In October 2019, a new National Design Guide was launched, forming part of the Government’s collection of Planning Practice Guidance. The document sets out the 10 characteristics necessary for creating a well designed place, contributing to its physical character, developing a sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. The National Model Design Code expands on the 10 characteristics and was used in the creation of the Aldington & Bonnington Design guidance.
- 6.4 Furthermore the guide, Building for a Healthy Life 2020 is the government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. It should be used to inform development proposals along with other policies contained within this plan to achieve the industry standard’s ‘Building for a Healthy Life’ commendation. The criteria also link to other standards for design, including the Streets for a Healthy Life guidance and Secured by Design.
- 6.5 It is important that development is designed from a landscape-led perspective, and the Kent Downs Management Guidance suite of documents provide a comprehensive set of advice, specific to the characteristics of the landscape, to promote well designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape and its setting. Equally, developments should be designed to be accessible from the public rights of way network, and opportunities to improvement this network will be sought with key partners, including KCC.
- 6.6 To add additional local detail to strategic policy, the Neighbourhood Plan steering team commissioned consultants, AECOM, to develop a more localised set of design guidelines and codes for Aldington & Bonnington. The Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes forms an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.7 The guidance sets out detailed design considerations for 11 identified Character Areas, that should be taken into account within any development proposals. These are summarised in Table 6 below and their locations are shown in *Figure 15*.

Table 6: Local Character Areas

Local Character Area

CA1: Clap Hill Conservation Area: located to the western end of Roman Road, this area was designated as a conservation area in 1973. This area is a former hamlet which formed, along with Aldington Corner hamlet, the area known today as the village of Aldington. Key features in the area include the three Grade II listed buildings that reflect the medieval origins of Aldington settlement, the Post Office, which has existed since the mid- to late-1800s, and the strong use of two locally distinctive materials: the ragstone on boundary walls and the chequered bricks on building facades.



Local Character Area

CA2: Church Lane Conservation

Area: located along Church Lane to the eastern side of Aldington parish, this was designated as a conservation area in 1973 and it is one of the oldest hamlets in the neighbourhood area. Key features in the area include the Grade I listed church of St Martin's and its 16th-century tower, the Grade II* listed Court Lodge Farmhouse and the remains of the Archbishop's Palace located behind the church. In addition, there are Grade II listed cottages and barns, as well as a lychgate and quadrant walls attached to the churchyard. The use of ragstone is quite prevalent in this Character Area and can be found on boundary walls and building facades. Lastly, Court Lodge farm, located adjacent to the church, is one of the two remaining working farms in the neighbourhood area.



CA3: Stone Street Green – hamlet ends of Calleywell Lane and Goldwell Lane

CA5: Frith Road

CA8: Old Hurst

CA9: Cherry Orchard Lane, Bonnington

CA11: Rural Bonnington – Frogmore Lane

These Character Areas share similar characteristics and include hamlets or isolated farmhouses and individual dwellings situated along rural roads that traverse the neighbourhood area. A key feature for each Character Area is the landscape within which it lies: Stone Street Green falls into Upper and East Stour Valley; Frith Road is within Aldington Ridge Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmland and Bonnington Wooded Farmlands; Old Hurst lies fully within the south-western section of the Kent Downs National Landscape; Cherry Orchard Lane is within Bonnington Wooded Farmlands; and Rural Bonnington falls into Old Romney



Local Character Area

Shoreline Settlements and Royal Military Marshlands. Other key features in these areas are the numerous Grade II listed buildings, the Grade I listed church of St Rumwold, historic assets including the Bonnington bridge and Gigger's Green bridge along the Royal Military Canal, and Aldington Knoll, a Roman barrow and later beacon. Lastly, the architectural interest of these Character Areas includes strong use of ragstone on boundary walls and building facades, as well as Kent peg tiles, timber framing, off-white render and chequered bricks.



CA4: Aldington village centre (Roman Road and all roads off it/ top ends of Calleywell and Goldwell Lanes): this includes the central core of the neighbourhood area, where the main settlement is. There is a good range of local facilities along the main road, Roman Road, which follows the route of the ridge, running north-west to south-east, overlooking Romney Marsh in places. This also offers the opportunity for many long-distance views over arable farmland to the north and west, as well as some fine vistas to the east towards St Martin's church. Other key features in this Character Area are the two Grade II listed buildings, as well as Aldington village hall and the primary school. The use of ragstone and chequered bricks on building facades and walls is a characteristic technique in this Character Area too.



CA6: Wheatfields: located to the north of Roman Road and to the east of Calleywell Lane, this includes a recent development of 42 dwellings and a 33-unit care home that was completed in 2016. A key feature of the area is that it sits on the Aldington Ridge, which offers extensive views north to Mersham, west and north-west to Ashford and the North Downs, respectively, and south to Dungeness. It is apparent that there is a strong use of red brick and weatherboarding, whilst there is no example of the use of locally distinctive materials like ragstone and chequered bricks.



Local Character Area

CA7: Aldington Meadows: located to the south of Forge Hill and to the east of New Road Hill, the area includes a recent development of 72 houses which was completed in 2010/11. A key feature in the area is the landscape, Bonnington Wooded Farmlands, which is characterised by narrow and hedge-lined roads creating a strong sense of enclosure. This creates a green buffer along the road, limiting the views to the buildings and, therefore, preserving the rural character of the neighbourhood area. There is a Grade II listed farmhouse in this Character Area and nine allotments, located to the north, offered by the Parish Council, as well as playground equipment for small children.



CA10: Bonnington Green – hamlet by the Old Law Oak: located to the north of Bonnington neighbourhood area boundary, this area lies along the B2067. Key features of the area include a Grade II listed building, Pinn Farmhouse, located behind the former school house, as well as the village sign and the ancient Law Oak.

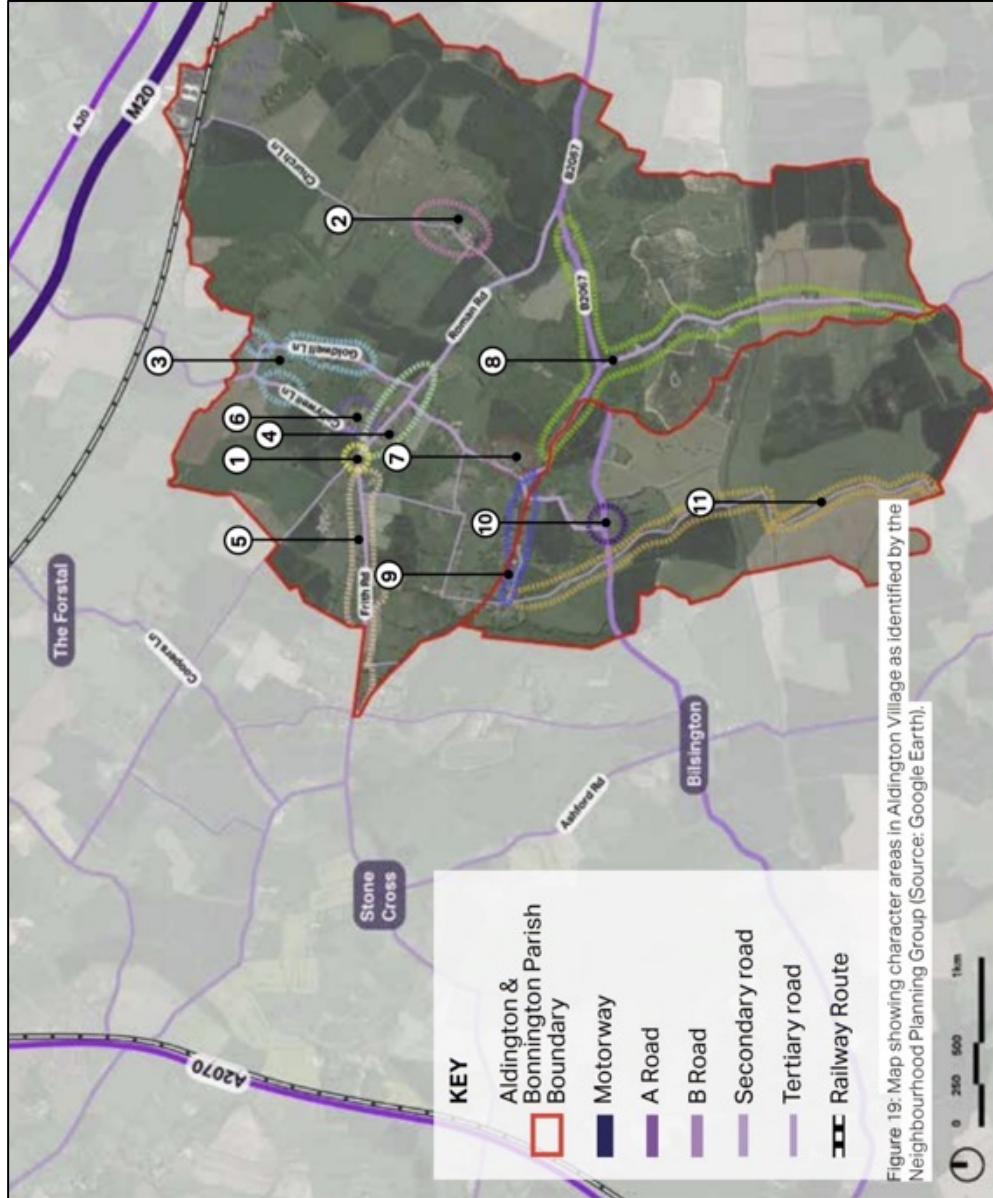


Figure 15: Map showing the Character Areas (Extract from: Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes)

The Neighbourhood Planning Group has identified 11 character areas within Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood area. These are:

1. Clap Hill Conservation Area;
2. Church Lane Conservation Area;
3. Stone Street Green - hamlet ends of Calleywell Lane and Goldwell;
4. Aldington village centre (Roman Road and all roads off it/ top ends of Calleywell and Goldwell);
5. Frith Road;
6. Wheatfields;
7. Aldington Meadows;
8. Old 'Hurst' - Knoll Hill/ Giggers Green/ Boat Lane;
9. Cherry Orchard Lane, Bonnington;
10. Bonnington Green - hamlet by the Old Law Oak; and
11. Rural Bonnington - Frogmore Lane.

The next pages will present a brief analysis of those character areas based on street patterns, layout and age of buildings, rooflines, car parking layouts, landscape and environment.



- 6.8 *The Aldington & Bonnington Design Guidelines and Codes* also sets out general principles for future development that consider the local character and can enhance local distinctiveness. These consider the themes: strategic principles and best practice design; built form; pedestrian-friendly routes, cycle connectivity and parking; and environment and energy efficiency.
- 6.9 The character across each Character Area ranges in style, age, size and housing densities. For each area to maintain its character, a balance needs to be struck between the scale, bulk, density and height of the built form and that of open green spaces and, where relevant, the countryside.
- 6.10 All development should be designed to a high quality and reinforce and enhance local character, heritage assets and the rural setting of the area. The density of development should create a character that is appropriate to the site’s context, including the landscape in which it is set, whilst making the best use of the land available. Lower density housing should be located towards the outer edges of the settlement where it abuts open countryside, to maintain views from and into the individual settlements.
- 6.11 There have been examples of property owners removing Kentish ragstone. This material is a particular local and historical characteristic of the neighbourhood area and should, where possible, be retained. Historic England’s publication, *Kent – Building Stones of England*, provides additional detail on the importance of this hard sandy limestone and its significance in the county as a whole. Such is the importance of the stone locally, that ragstone walls are designated in Policy AB11 as non-designated heritage assets, on the advice of the ABC Conservation Team. A list of ragstone walls is provided in Appendix D.
- 6.12 As an associated action, the Parish Council is working with ABC to consider whether a



Images of ragstone walls in the neighbourhood area

conservation area in the Forge Hill/top of Roman Road area of Aldington village could be progressed.

- 6.13 Policy AB8 has a close relationship with Policy AB9 (Energy efficiency and design) of this Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so, developments should take account of both policies.

Policy AB9: Energy efficiency and design

Objective 3: Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design

Purpose

6.14 This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050.

POLICY AB9: ENERGY EFFICENCY AND DESIGN

A. Development proposals that design in environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and climate effects will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan.

B. Proposals that incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views:

- i. siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain;
- ii. the use of high-quality, thermally efficient building materials;
- iii. installation of energy-efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing;
- iv. incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground source heating and energy generation, etc.;
- v. reducing water consumption using water re-use measures, including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems;
- vi. providing low-carbon sustainable design and avoiding or mitigating all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low-energy heating systems), on-site zero-carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.

Where a development cannot achieve one or more of the criteria above (for practical reasons), this would not render the scheme unacceptable, provided that a robust justification can be provided by the developer.

C. Sensitive measures to alter historic buildings (listed or non-designated heritage assets), should be guided by Historic England’s guidance note, Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings. Proposals that seek to achieve improved energy efficiency and generation of renewable energy, and compliance with current sustainable design guidance and construction standards, will be supported, subject to other policies in this Plan.

Justification

- 6.15 On 12 June 2019 the Government voted to amend the *Climate Change Act 2008* by introducing a new target for at least 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. This is a demanding target, which will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. As part of this, the Government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.
- 6.16 Being '2050 ready' means that new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions. Unlike local plans, neighbourhood plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must conform to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. Building regulations have not yet caught up with government policy commitments to achieving net zero; the ABNP therefore strongly encourages the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to maximise the opportunities to generate renewable energy. Innovative designs consistent with the design guide that help to achieve this would be welcomed, for example by drawing on the Passive House Standard (see Glossary). The introduction of the *Future Homes Standard* in 2025 should support this.
- 6.17 KCC recognised the UK climate emergency in 2019, as a response to the need to act locally and in the context of climate change impacts being observed at the local level: dry riverbeds, reduced water supply, intense weather events, localised flooding and loss of habitats and species. It supports a range of projects designed to help adapt to climate change and these have informed the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.18 At the local level, the 'How Green Is Your Plan?' Workshop revealed a desire among residents to press for sustainable design within new developments. Opportunities to improve and promote sustainability in the neighbourhood area, which would help to deliver the Government's climate change targets, include: following basic passive environmental design including use of efficient and insulative materials; integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings; reducing water consumption including through grey water systems; and promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6.19 It should be noted that there is no mains gas supply within the neighbourhood area. This means that developments have had to install solutions that rely on tanker lorry deliveries numerous times per year to fill up communal oil/liquid gas tanks. Such an approach is neither sustainable in the longer term nor appropriate for the rural lanes in the neighbourhood area, and further emphasises the need for new developments to identify and incorporate renewable energy solutions at the planning stage.
- 6.20 It should also be noted that it is now unnecessary for planning policy to require the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on individual dwellings, as this is a recently introduced requirement imposed by Part S of the Building Regulations.

Policy AB10: Renewable and community energy

Objective 4: Become a healthier, safer, cleaner and more connected community

Purpose

6.21 This policy sets out the types of renewable energy projects that would fit well with the character of the area and would therefore be supported. It also sets out the criteria to be considered as part of any renewable energy schemes in the neighbourhood area.

POLICY AB10: RENEWABLE AND COMMUNITY ENERGY

A. Proposals for commercial solar photovoltaic (PV) development will only be supported where it meets the requirements of Ashford Local Plan Policy ENV10 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) and:

- i. the applicant can demonstrate that any harm to the local landscape and environment will be minimised and, where necessary, mitigated. Applicants should use ABC's Supplementary Planning Document, *Renewable Energy Planning Guidance v2*, and the relevant landscape descriptions contained within the *Ashford Landscape Character Study 2005* to inform their landscape and visual impact assessment; and**
- ii. the applicant can demonstrate that the proposals do not adversely affect residential amenity through noise generation or overbearing visual impact. Proposals should seek to screen installations naturally, taking into account views onto the site from within the neighbourhood area, notably the ridgeline, and panoramic long views across the East Stour Valley; and**
- iii. existing rights of way are retained. Where not possible, redirection within the site will be considered. Opportunities will be sought to enhance access for walking, cycling and equestrianism within and across the site to provide linkages to local amenities and neighbouring settlements; and**
- iv. there are opportunities to provide a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with Policy AB1; and**
- v. the benefits of renewable energy can be proven to outweigh the landscape and environmental impacts; and**
- vi. it demonstrates in particular how land beneath or surrounding the panels will be managed and how the applicant has avoided land with high potential for agriculture ('Best and Most Versatile Land').**

B. Proposals for individual and community-scale energy from hydroelectricity, solar PV panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digestion and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and**
- ii. there is suitable road access, and traffic generated is appropriate for the rural setting; and**

Continues...

- iii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenity of local residents; and
- iv. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 4; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP6, TRA7, TRA9, ENV3, ENV10; NPPF: 104, 131, 157–163

Justification

Renewable energy

6.22 Renewable energy is a source of power that comes from clean and natural resources.

This means that it does not harm the environment around it, nor will it ever run dry.

6.23 Aldington's location, adjacent to the national grid via the substation at Sellindge, as well as being close to both the A20 and the M20 motorway, means that is attractive to renewable energy providers, particularly solar providers. There is already one small solar installation within the neighbourhood area boundary, south of the railway line in Church Lane, known as Sellindge Solar.

6.24 The 'How Green is Your Plan?' Workshop revealed that within the neighbourhood area there is recognition and support for smaller-scale renewable projects, for instance, domestic and farm solar installations that utilise roof space, and air source and ground source heat pumps at a domestic or small-development level. The scale of such developments should not distract from nor negatively impact the setting of the village. The existing solar installation, for instance, has limited visual impact because of its small scale, the lie of the land and the screening by trees and other vegetation.

6.25 Further proposals for solar installations have been made in the neighbourhood area (see *Figure 16*):

- **EDF Renewables** proposed a new solar installation on land south of the M20 and north-east of Aldington, connecting to the National Grid at Sellindge substation. Capable of generating up to 49.9 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity, it would be enough to meet the equivalent needs of approximately 17,000 homes in the borough of Ashford every year. The whole site totals approximately 102ha (252 acres) – this includes land that may be used for planting and biodiversity improvements as well as solar panels. The application was refused by ABC. Policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, which was emerging, contributed to the decision.
- **Evolution Power Limited** is proposing to develop a solar and battery storage project on land in Aldington, to be known as Stonestreet Green Solar. The development would generate renewable power through PV (solar) panels which, if built, would have a generating capacity of 165MW and an export capacity of 99.9MW – enough to power around 48,000 homes. The project would comprise an array of solar PV modules, energy storage batteries and associated development infrastructure. With a proposed generating capacity of over 50MW, Stonestreet Green Solar is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The project must therefore apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) through the NSIP planning process.

Consents for the solar panels, battery storage, cable routes and grid connection will be included in the DCO.

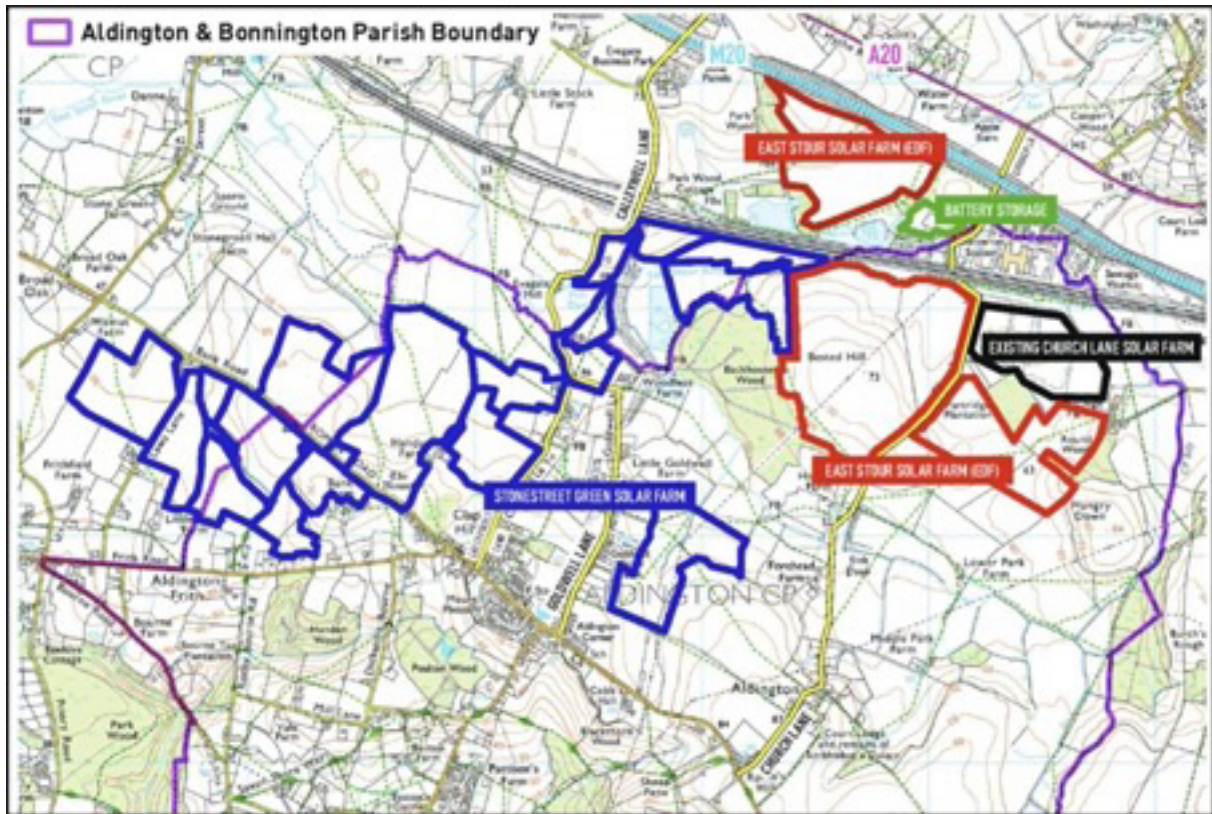


Figure 16: Existing and proposed solar installations in the neighbourhood area (© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS Aldington and Bonnington PC (AC0000834405))

- 6.26 The community workshop revealed that such large-scale solar installations are not desirable, as they would detract significantly from the setting of the village across the valley of the East Stour River, and from the view out from the ridgeline across farmland towards the North Downs. They would transform the rural character of the neighbourhood plan area and the visual relationship with neighbouring parishes.
- 6.27 The challenge for such schemes is that not all will be decided using the policies of the local development plan. Above a threshold (set out in Section 15 of the *Planning Act 2008*) of more than 50MW for onshore and more than 100MW for offshore generation, solar installations will be treated as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, for which a DCO must be sought from the Secretary of State. The proposal by Evolution Power Ltd falls into this category. Below this threshold, schemes are determined by local plan policies.
- 6.28 Regardless of which planning route is used to determine such schemes, the community workshop revealed factors that should be considered by decision makers. The following should be considered in parallel with the advice contained in ABC's *Renewable Energy Planning Guidance v2*:
- The local community should be fully engaged to assist in shaping proposals.
 - Schemes that offer direct community benefits, for instance community energy schemes or contributions to electric bus schemes, would be welcomed.

- The height, scale, orientation, and density of the panels should be designed to optimise solar gain while minimising impacts on the grazing capacity within a site, on biodiversity (if for instance less light can filter through) and on the visual impact from neighbouring properties and viewpoints further afield.
- Natural screening should be used to minimise visual and noise impacts. This could include the planting of trees and hedgerows and also the provision of green buffers to the edges of installations. Consideration should be given to how the site will be viewed from all parts of the neighbourhood area, in particular the ridgeline. If fencing is to be used, it should be camouflaged with natural planting to blend into the natural environment, where possible using natural materials and suitable colours if man-made. Industrial fencing will not be acceptable.
- Public Rights of Way are the responsibility of KCC. Where they cross proposed sites they must be safeguarded. The neighbourhood area has a notably dense network of PROW footpaths, that is treasured as illustration of historic routes between parishes, farmsteads and churches. Rerouting of paths (suitable for use by those on foot, bicycle or horseback) or the creation of additional paths may be supported, where this offers benefits in reaching community facilities, nearby villages (for instance Mersham) and the wider countryside. The County Council's *Rights of Way Improvement Plan* provides an opportunity to enshrine these routes in policy and ensure that they are safeguarded and well maintained.
- Opportunities to improve biodiversity must be taken and, where possible, to create and improve connectivity of habitats. Improvements should be accompanied by a management plan for the lifespan of the scheme and a system to measure that the improvements have happened over that period.

Community energy

- 6.29 Community energy refers to the delivery of community-led renewable energy, energy demand reduction and energy supply projects, whether wholly owned and/or controlled by communities or through partnership with commercial or public sector partners. Community energy puts people at the heart of the energy system.
- 6.30 There could be scope for some community renewable energy projects, for example utilising waste from farming and land management together with local food waste to power an anaerobic digester, producing gas to power a community heat facility. This would be most cost-effective when a residential or small industrial development is being designed and built. Exemplar renewable energy projects in the neighbourhood area, which would benefit the community, relate well to its character and complement existing economic activities, would be supported.

Policy AB11: Conserving heritage assets

Objective 3: Celebrate our built heritage and achieve high-quality design

Purpose

6.31 This policy recognises the important contribution that heritage assets – designated and non-designated – make to the local character and distinctiveness of Aldington and Bonnington, both individually and collectively. Where possible, they should be conserved, enhanced, and celebrated.

POLICY AB11: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS

A. The following buildings and structures as shown in Figure 18 (and detailed in Appendix D) are identified as non-designated heritage assets:

1. The Post Office stores
2. Aldington primary school
3. The Reynolds Playing Field gate
4. The War Memorial
5. The Millennium Stone
6. The Mission Hall
7. Kentish ragstone walling
8. Coopers Cottage

B. Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets (*Figure 17*) either directly or indirectly, should preserve or enhance the significance of the asset, including those elements of the setting that do not contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard given to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in the local area. Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets will be assessed having regard to the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the heritage asset.

C. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken into account the potential impact on above and below-ground archaeological deposits to ensure that evidence that could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared in support of planning applications.

D. A proactive stance will be taken to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back into optimum viable use.

E. Particular care should be taken in the Conservation Areas to ensure that alterations and new buildings contribute to the enhancement of the historic environment, in accordance with the guidance set out in the Conservation Area Appraisals and consistent with their conservation.

Conformity Reference: NP Objectives: 3; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP6, ENV13–ENV15; NPPF: 195, 196, 200, 201, 203, 205–210

Justification

- 6.32 Within the neighbourhood area, there are 61 individual/groups of buildings and assets that are recognised through a listing or scheduling by Historic England for their contribution to national heritage (see Appendix D). There are several heritage assets, however, that contribute to the historic local context and story of the parishes, but which are not nationally important enough to be included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Government. The designated heritage assets are shown in *Figure 17*.
- 6.33 The National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraphs 018–039) supports the identification of non-designated heritage assets through the neighbourhood planning process. The community was asked to consider whether there were such assets that should be recognised for their value to the local character and history of the neighbourhood area. Nominations were carefully considered by the steering team, who considered each against the criteria recommended by Historic England in their Advice Note 7: Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage.
- 6.34. The following non-designated heritage assets have been selected and identified with photographs and descriptions provided in Appendix D:
1. The Post Office stores
 2. Aldington primary school
 3. The Reynolds Playing Field gate
 4. The War Memorial
 5. The Millennium Stone
 6. The Mission Hall
 7. Kentish ragstone walling
 8. Coopers Cottage
- 6.35 *Figure 18* shows the location of the non-designated heritage assets on a map.
- 6.36 In addition, the *Historic Environment Record*, accessed via the Heritage Gateway, contains details of additional assets, some of which are not nationally listed. The record should be consulted by prospective developers to establish and, where necessary, protect and conserve the local significant historic environment. The Neighbourhood Plan area is notably rich in historic assets due to its association with the Roman port of Lympne.
- 6.37 In parallel with this policy, it is proposed that these assets be considered by ABC for inclusion in its list of local heritage assets, once this is prepared. However, the inclusion of any building or structure on such a register is not necessary for the application of this policy.
- 6.38 All proposals affecting heritage assets within the neighbourhood area should be guided by the Validation Checklist published by ABC. This will ensure that the heritage assets within the neighbourhood area are conserved for future generations to enjoy, contributing to the aims of the borough-wide Heritage Strategy.

Local Heritage at Risk

- 6.39 Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. Whilst no assets within the neighbourhood area have been identified at this time, an audit of buildings and assets should be undertaken in partnership with ABC and, where necessary, opportunities to restore assets should be taken when they arise, in partnership with the owner.

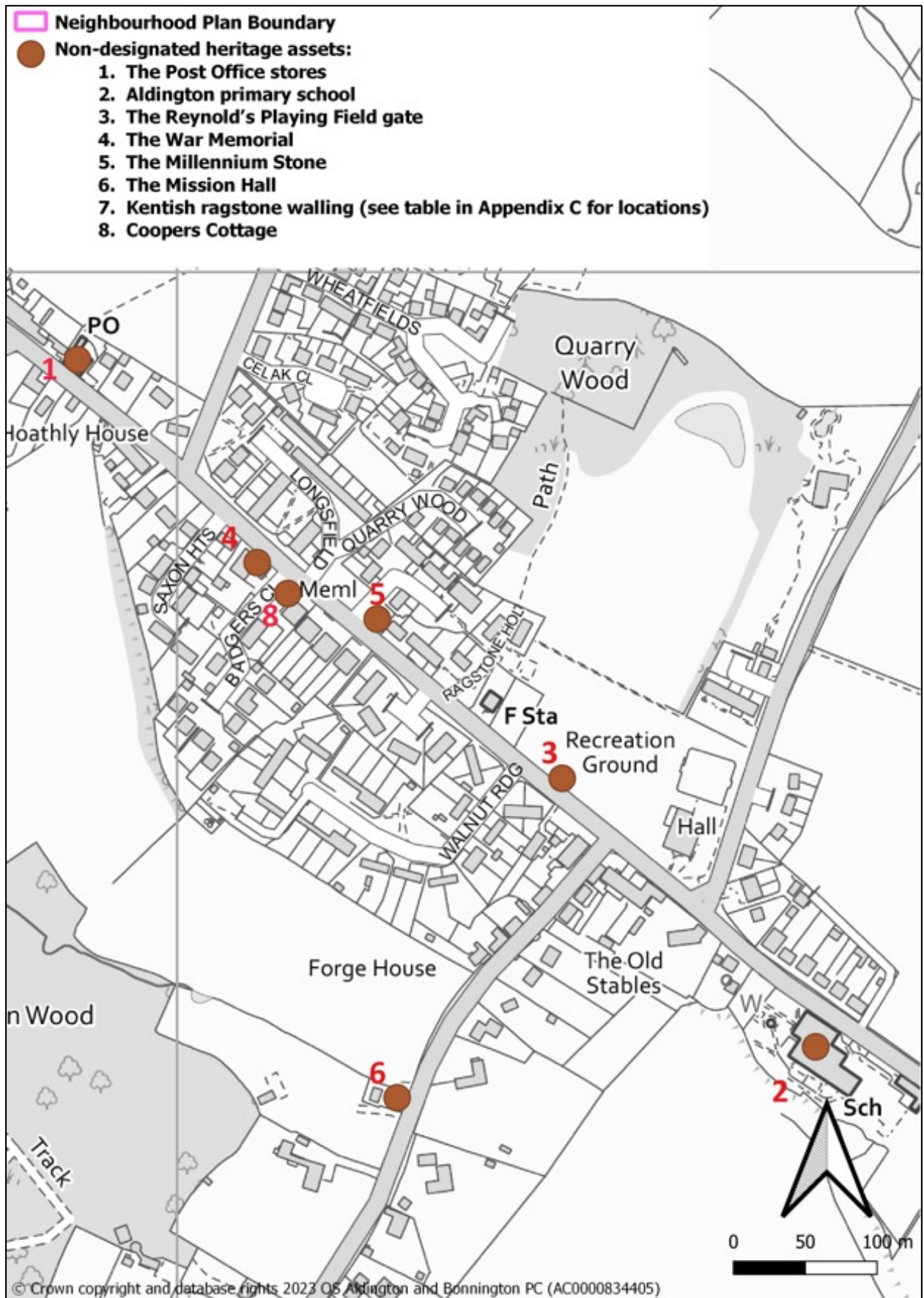


Figure 18: Non-designated heritage assets

- 6.40 While Policy AB11 relates to architectural and historic heritage assets, it complements the emphasis in Section 4 on protecting and promoting natural heritage and Local Green Spaces, and in Section 6 (Policy AB8) on promoting the character of the local built environment through high-quality design. Together, the conservation of these local heritage assets can provide an authentic basis on which to build sustainable tourism, as described in Policy AB15.
- 6.41 As an associated action to this policy, the Parish Council is in early discussions with ABC about the designation of a new conservation area along part of Forge Hill, to where it meets Roman Road. Officers have commented that there may be some support in principle from Heritage England, although assurances or timescales cannot be given for a new conservation area designation in Aldington. The ABNP would support such a designation.

7 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Policy AB12: Sustainable travel

Objective 4: Become a healthier, safer, cleaner and more connected community

Purpose

- 7.1 This policy seeks to enhance walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities along routes that are most likely to encourage a shift away from the private car for shorter, practical and recreational journeys in and around the neighbourhood area. This accords with the strategic transport priorities for the area, as set out in the *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016 to 2031* (p.30–31), published by KCC. It also supports the implementation of the County Council's *Rights of Way Improvement Plan*.
- 7.2 The policy also relates directly to the aspirations in the Vision that 'people will live happily for generations in a thriving, healthy, active and connected community' and 'We will have ... embraced more sustainable ways of living'. Active forms of travel make a major contribution to people's health and happiness, and to facilitating community interactions.

POLICY AB12: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- A.** To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, school, retail and other important facilities in Aldington & Bonnington and in neighbouring settlements in a sustainable and safe way, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, access to link up with the existing pavements and/or public rights of way and public transport nodes, as defined in Appendix E and shown in *Figure 19*.
- B.** The provision of new, or the enhancement of existing, cycle and pedestrian routes, as shown in *Figure 19*, that are, where feasible, physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should be of permeable material and ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.
- C.** The design and layout of works related to the widening of footways and/or the provision of traffic-calming measures should enhance the rural, village character, for example retaining and/or providing hedgerows, trees and soft verges where possible. Materials and layout must be sympathetic to local character, in accordance with Policy AB8 (Promoting local character through high-quality design) of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- D.** Proposals for new bridleways will be supported wherever possible; in all new developments existing bridleways must be retained or, alternatively, new or amended bridleway links provided, together with safe road crossing points that enable connectivity between the village and the wider countryside. Provision for equestrian users should be separated from those on foot/cycle.
- E.** Residential development proposals should provide secure undercover bicycle storage spaces appropriate to the anticipated size of household.

Justification

- 7.3 The rural history of Aldington & Bonnington has left the neighbourhood area with a legacy of footpaths and bridleways throughout. Despite this, the network of paths and bridleways for the most part requires walkers, cyclists and horse-riders to make use of narrow local roads to complete circular routes. Most of the paths are not suitable for use by novice walkers, who may not be confident of finding a route and may be deterred by the poor maintenance of many sections of paths and the related furniture such as signposts, stiles and gates. Therefore, there is an unintended elitism limiting access to the countryside, which inevitably diminishes the benefits that the path network should provide for everyone in the community. *The Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan* provides a mechanism to identify and fund improvements, and the Parish Council will liaise with KCC on this.
- 7.4 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot prevent people from using their cars, encouraging walking and cycling, particularly for journeys within the neighbourhood area and to nearby settlements such as Mersham and, in future years, Otterpool Park, will be important. This will be helpful for members of the community and those visiting the neighbourhood area, perhaps parking in the village hall car park, and then exploring more widely by foot and cycle.
- 7.5 This can be achieved by:
- ensuring that all new housing developments have a direct link to a pavement or public right of way to enable those living in them to access the key facilities – such as the Post Office, the school and other community facilities – and the wider countryside, by foot or cycle, and where possible and safe, on horseback; and
 - maintaining and improving existing walking, cycling and equestrian routes to ensure that they are pleasant, safe and accessible; and
 - acknowledging the role that the public rights of way network has in promoting active travel, and identifying new routes to enhance this; and
 - improving signage and providing accessible information.
- 7.6 Detail on potential improvements and new routes is contained in Appendix E. *Figure 19* illustrates these, in the context of the current rights of way, on a map.
- 7.7 An associated action will be to explore, with KCC and others, funds available to enable identified improvements contained in the neighbourhood area *Highways Improvement Plan*.

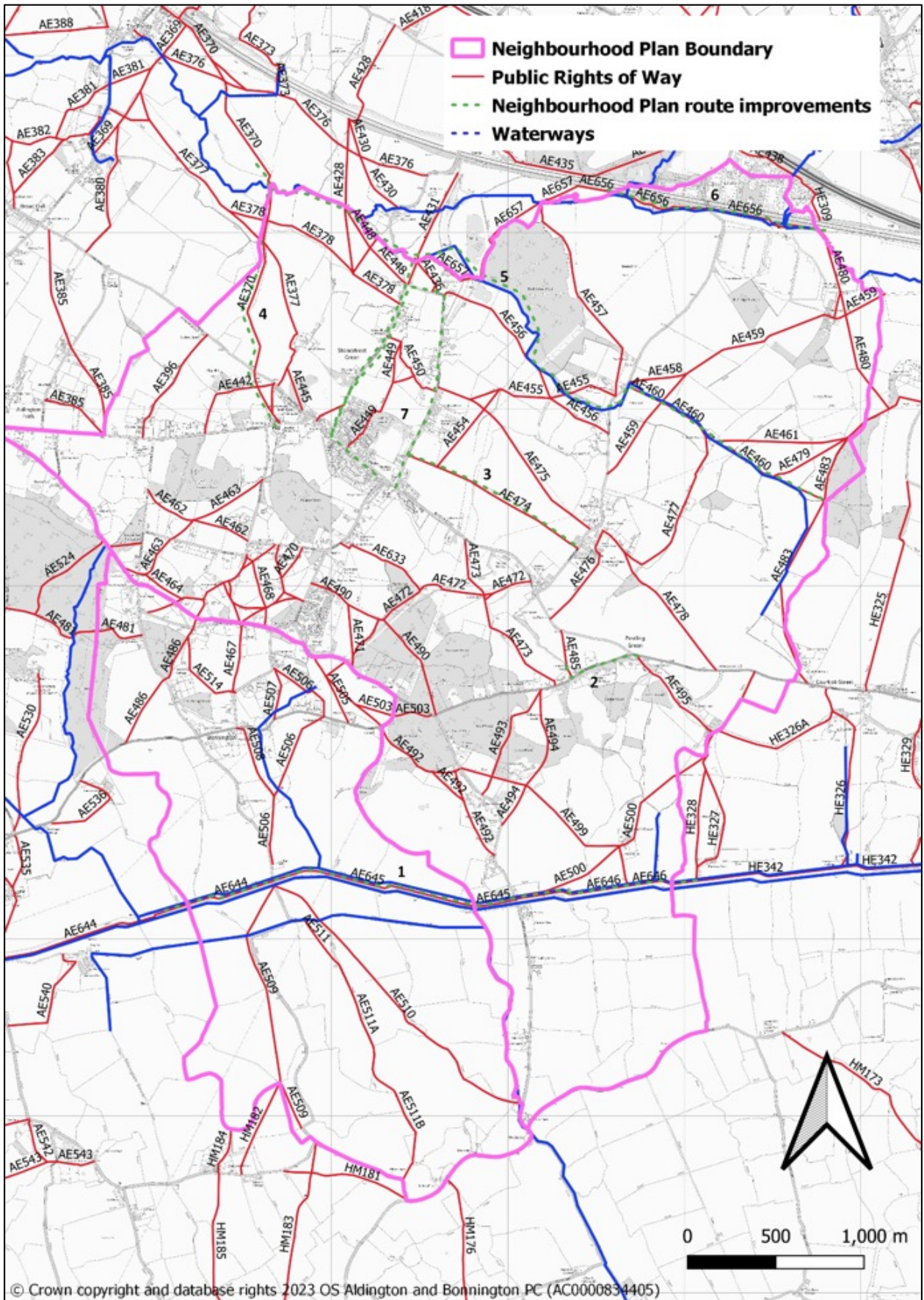


Figure 19: Existing public rights of way and areas highlighted for improvement (key Neighbourhood Plan route improvements are detailed in Appendix E)

Public and community transport

- 7.8 Public transport options for residents living in Aldington and Bonnington are strictly limited. The 125 service operates a circuit from Ashford to Aldington and back to Ashford six times each weekday, with two-hourly gaps between services.
- 7.9 There are no bus services in the evenings or at weekends. Children using public transport to go to school must leave the village at 7.30am to arrive at school on time and the last service from Ashford International Station departs at 17.35, so is unsuitable for commuters.
- 7.10 The most usable service takes residents to Tesco Crooksfoot, with a return service that provides two hours in which to complete shopping. The same service can be used to visit the William Harvey Hospital, which is walkable from the Tesco Crooksfoot bus stop, and provides a last service returning to the village at 16.55. Visits to Ashford town centre are constrained by a last service at 17.06, so evening visits to the cinema or restaurants are impossible by public transport, and anyone whose office hours end at 5pm will need to be very close to the Park Street bus stop. For Bonnington residents, the closest bus stop is at Eastons Corner – which means that a lengthy walk along rural lanes is necessary to reach the bus stop.
- 7.11 The planned development of Otterpool Park may result in additional public transport options for Aldington & Bonnington residents. Routes could become available in the future that are not currently financially viable. The weekly 111 service to Folkestone was a recent victim of cuts to KCC funding for rural bus routes and might be able to be reinstated, for example. Otterpool Park is a new Garden Town founded on a sustainable model that proposes improvements at Westenhanger Station as well as to cycleways and footpaths to create a ‘walkable village’ that might be reachable from Aldington.
- 7.12 Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council are very aware of the lack of public transport options. Whilst addressing this concern sits outside the scope of planning, it is directly related to it and will be considered in the Parish Plan. Instigating a regular community bus service and options for funding to support such a service should be explored.

Policy AB13: Public car parking

Objective 4: Become a healthier, safer, cleaner and more connected community

Purpose

7.13 The policy has two main objectives: it seeks to safeguard existing public car parking and also supports the provision of additional space to serve the two parish churches and visitors to the Royal Military Canal, with broad locations identified. Parking can be problematic in Aldington village – notably around the school at peak times and in the area near to the Post Office. Whilst no specific locations for additional parking have been identified, the policy supports additional provision serving these areas.

POLICY AB13: PUBLIC CAR PARKING

A. Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported.

B. Proposals to provide additional public parking for people accessing St Martin’s and St Rumwold’s Churches will be strongly supported subject to appropriate vehicular access and landscape mitigation measures. Additional parking provision to serve Aldington village (notably near to the school and near to the Post Office) will be supported.

C. Within existing and alongside any new public car parking facilities, the provision of the following, where possible, will be strongly supported:

- i. dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points, covered and secure; and**
- ii. future-proofed electric vehicle charging points.**

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 4; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP7, TRA2; NPPF: 96, 97, 108

Justification

7.14 **Existing parking:** in a rural area such as Aldington & Bonnington, unsurprisingly, car ownership is high. Reliance on the car to get around is exacerbated by the very limited bus service. Whilst the ANBP seeks to maximise opportunities for active travel, it is accepted that for many journeys parishioners will have no choice but to use a motor vehicle to access key facilities and amenities. This includes attending church or visiting the local GP surgeries, which are outside the neighbourhood area.

7.15 The village of Aldington is spread out, with facilities located at each end. This does not necessarily lend itself to those who are less able to walk. There are also people coming into the village from surrounding areas, for instance to access the school, which has many pupils who live in neighbouring villages or come from Ashford. The village hall car park provides a limited amount of off-road parking and has recently had a public electric vehicle charging point installed.

- 7.16 The policy would support additional car parking provision within Aldington village, notably to alleviate pressure around the school at peak times and at the area near to the Post Office. There are, however, limited opportunities to provide this.
- 7.17 An objective of the Neighbourhood Plan, therefore, is to retain, manage and improve the quality of the existing car parking areas available in the neighbourhood area, especially where they are off-street
- 7.18 **Additional parking:** outside the core village, the two churches are key historic buildings and would benefit from provision of more suitable parking areas.
- 7.19 At St Martin's Church, Church Lane, parking is currently permitted by Court Lodge Farm on adjacent hard standing. The visual amenity of the area would be improved in this Conservation Area by the formalisation of this arrangement. Cars also park alongside the church wall, on a verge which is rutted and muddy. Better surfacing would improve the street scene and make the church more attractive for ceremonial occasions. Parking could be improved here.
- 7.20 At St Rumwold's Church in Bonnington there is a particularly acute need for formal parking at seasonal peaks or when events are held on the Royal Military Canal. Current parking is on verges of the narrow country lane, which causes obstructions. A simple base-covered area off the road would be a considerable improvement.
- 7.21 The provision of car parking in this location would not only improve visitor access to the historic building, but also to the surrounding countryside and Royal Military Canal. This in turn would encourage walking and cycling in this part of the neighbourhood area, contributing to rural tourism and the local economy.

8 VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Policy AB14: Community facilities

Objective 4: Become a healthier, safer, cleaner and more connected community

Purpose

8.1 This policy seeks to ensure that those living and working in, and visiting, the neighbourhood area are adequately served with a range of good quality facilities and activities and that there are opportunities for residents to shape this.

POLICY AB14: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. Proposals for new community recreational, cultural and leisure facilities, or the improvement of existing facilities – in particular an expansion/redevelopment of the village hall to enable a flexible space for a range of uses – will be supported where:

- i. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
- ii. the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road network; and**
- ii. the proposal would not have harmful impacts on the heritage aspects, including the setting, of the facility.**

B. The provision of new and upgraded play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages, in accordance with ABC’s Local Plan/Open Space Study standards, and designed in accordance with Sport England’s design guidance notes, will be supported. Where possible, these should incorporate areas for ‘natural play’ (play provision with natural environments as opposed to man-made ones).

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 4; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP7, COM1, COM2; NPPF: 96, 97

Justification

8.2 The community facilities within the neighbourhood area provide an important resource for residents, both old and young. They enable a range of activities and services to be run, which are important for people’s well-being and day-to-day needs. Policy COM1 of the Ashford Local Plan provides general support for new and expanded community facilities as well as resisting the loss of key services and facilities. Policy AB14 provides additional local detail, with three priorities: supporting proposals to enhance the village hall space; supporting proposals to install and upgrade playground facilities; and safeguarding those facilities that have been identified or nominated for designation as community assets and which are therefore felt to be particularly important to the local community.

- 8.3 **Aldington village hall:** the village hall is located within Aldington village and offers a selection of hall and committee rooms for hire. It is a much-valued asset within the community. It is managed by the Village Hall Management Committee and the Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee. It is the regular venue used for village meetings and a coffee morning.
- 8.4 The Parish Council, working with the Management Committee, is keen to enhance the village hall to provide a more modern, flexible space that could host a range of uses to bring additional community facilities and services to the neighbourhood area, for instance, a health hub, a meeting place, additional coffee mornings and space for recreational activities. The policy supports proposals that would achieve this.
- 8.5 Alongside the policy, the Parish Council is actively seeking funding to enable upgrades to be made.



Aldington village hall

- 8.6 **Improved play areas:** proposals to support the upgrading of existing play areas for children and young teens, as well as the development of new ones within any major development, will be supported.
- 8.7 Where new sporting facilities are introduced, these should be designed in accordance with Sport England's design guidance notes.

Policy AB15: Camping and caravans

Objective 5: Support the local economy

Purpose

- 8.8 Aldington & Bonnington's attractive rural countryside, and its proximity to resorts around the south-east Kent coast, make it a favoured destination for day visitors, campers and caravanners and overnight stays. The Ashford Local Plan encourages rural tourism provided that this would not be harmful to the character of the environment that attracts visitors in the first place.
- 8.9 Objective 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support the local economy by encouraging the use of local shops and services and purchase of farm produce by leisure visitors to the neighbourhood area. There is a small but growing demand for tourist accommodation in the area in the form of caravanning and camping sites, and Policy AB15 responds to this need.

POLICY AB15: CAMPING AND CARAVANS

Proposals for camping and caravanning sites to provide tourist accommodation will be supported where they meet all of the following criteria:

- i. The site is situated in a location that would not be intrusive in the landscape, and the scale of the proposal is appropriate to that location; and**
- ii. the site has good access by road and to the public rights of way network; and**
- iii. access to the site avoids routes through residential or other sensitive areas where traffic movements would be detrimental to the living conditions of residents; and the proposal would not cause harm to designated heritage or other environmental assets; and
the proposal would not generate excessive noise or lead to other nuisance that would cause harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties or enjoyment of public areas, including rights of way; and**
- iv. there will be no new permanent structures for ancillary uses such as toilets and showers. The conversion of existing buildings for ancillary uses will be considered on individual merits, having regard to other policies in the Plan.**

Conformity reference: NP Objective: 5; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP3, EMP4, EMP11, ENV13; NPPF: 88, 89

Justification

- 8.10 Whilst suitable proposals will be supported, it is important to avoid development that will spoil the surrounding countryside. Policy AB15 addresses this need by seeking to ensure that, where planning permission is required for such development, the impact on the character of the surrounding countryside is not harmful and the amenity of neighbouring residents is safeguarded. Large-scale developments would be out of character with sensitive, small-scale field patterns and open landscapes.

- 8.11 Rural roads are often unsuitable for additional heavy traffic, particularly caravans and trailers, while the peace and quiet enjoyed by residents and people walking in the countryside can be disturbed by an inappropriately located camping or caravan site. It should be noted, however, that tents and caravans generally stay for only short periods of time and therefore have no lasting impact on the countryside.
- 8.12 Ancillary facilities like toilets and showers will often be in permanent buildings. Policy AB15 seeks to prevent such buildings spoiling the open character of rural areas.



Image shows the bridge over the Royal Military Canal, Frogmore Lane, Bonnington

Policy AB16: Community assets – maintaining shops and public house

Objective 5: Support the local economy

Purpose

8.13 Villages across the country are losing services as small shops, pubs and other businesses struggle to remain viable. Increased legislation around drink-driving and smoking had a direct impact on the viability of pubs. They were also hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. With running costs increasing and customer base shrinking, all are having to work very hard to stay open. When a pub closes, a village loses its heart as it is not only a place to purchase refreshment and food, but it is also the hub at which people meet. Similarly, small shops struggle to compete with supermarkets, but their loss removes the Post Office and corner shop services for all, but especially for older people, for whom a trip into town is more complicated.

POLICY AB16: COMMUNITY ASSETS – MAINTAINING SHOPS AND PUBLIC HOUSE

Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities – notably the Post Office and the Walnut Tree Inn – will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. **it is suitable and/or comparable alternative provision is available within the locality;**
- ii. **for commercial uses:**
 - a) **it is not viable, or unlikely to become commercially viable, to operate the number of existing services/facilities within the locality; and**
 - b) **the facility has been the subject of appropriate marketing for a period of at least 18 months and consideration has been given to other alternative commercial uses.**

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 5; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP7, EMP2, EMP10, COM1, COM2; NPPF: 96, 97

Justification

8.14 **Important community assets:** In Aldington there are two facilities that are felt to be particularly significant in terms of their offer to the community and which are not owned either by the Parish Council or a trust or similar, and therefore could potentially be threatened in the future:

- The Post Office stores, Claphill – the current use is as the village Post Office and general stores. In addition to its retail offer, the venue provides a facility for the collection of medicines prescribed by local doctors' surgeries. The Post Office and stores are a lifeline to those who do not drive as there is only a very limited bus service to Ashford.
- The Walnut Tree Inn, Forge Hill – this is the only remaining public house in the parishes. The venue also operates a restaurant. Regular events such as quiz nights are held, with proceeds going to local charities. The Inn is also a popular meeting point for many local clubs and societies. It therefore plays a valuable role in the community.'



Images show the Post Office Stores, Claphill (left) and The Walnut Tree Inn (right)

8.15 Both assets are listed with ABC as Assets of Community Value. Policy AB16 recognises these two important assets and safeguards them against loss. This is not to suggest that the other community and leisure facilities are not important, but Policies COM1 and COM2 of the Local Plan already resist the loss of certain key services and facilities, such as sports and recreational facilities. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of one of these assets, the application should be supported by a viability report:

- prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts to promote, improve and market the facility/property, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value that reflects the existing use and condition of the building (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful, and that the use is no longer viable; and
- which also includes: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the property; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements and dates (showing that the property has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received, with reasons for being rejected; and
- which provides evidence of the marketing of the property; the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted. This period is longer than the 6 months expressed for the borough as a whole in Local Plan policy EMP10. The longer period is considered to reflect market conditions that have evolved since the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and general lack of investment in the rural economy. Requiring a longer marketing period will provide the greatest opportunity to retain these facilities in their current use classes, thus helping to ensure that the village services survive.

A Review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

Policy AB17: Supporting flexible workspaces and working from home

Objective 5: Support the local economy

Purpose

8.16 Many people who live in Aldington & Bonnington commute to work in adjacent towns or London. Following Covid-19 lockdown, working practices have changed and hybrid working has led to a demand for home offices and services that support working from home.

POLICY AB17: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND WORKING FROM HOME

- A. Proposals to improve digital connectivity that supports enterprise will be encouraged.**
- B. Proposals that provide working spaces that encourage homeworking, co-working and creative small industries, for instance through incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported where such proposals conform with other relevant policies in this Plan and in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.**

Conformity reference: NP Objectives: 5; Ashford Local Plan: SP1, SP3, EMP1, EMP3, EMP4, EMP5; NPPF: 86–89

Justification

- 8.17 A notable feature of the parishes is the number of small businesses and sole traders operating locally, many from their own homes. The intention of the policy is to support the provision of flexible workspaces and also homeworking. This would include allowing non-residents to be employed from the domestic premises, albeit subject to the activity meeting the limitations set out in the final paragraph of the policy.
- 8.18 The policy gives encouragement to economic activity within the parishes whilst incorporating controls to prevent activities having a detrimental impact on the amenity of the locality.
- 8.19 For homeworking, this policy only applies where the scale of activity is such that there is a need for planning permission, as much working from home can take place without planning consent being required.





9 IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

- 9.1 Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.2 Once the Plan has been ‘made’, there will be a series of actions required to ensure that the policies within the ABNP are being interpreted and used in the way intended. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan’s policies. Finally, any non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified will need to be prioritised for delivery, in partnership with other organisations.
- 9.3 Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:
- Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the Plan – these are set out in the Parish Plan, prepared by the Parish Council. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects, and there will be a need for a co-ordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to ensure an understanding of the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as the Big Lottery Fund.
 - Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the Neighbourhood Plan area – the Parish Council has a role in ensuring that the ABNP policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the parishes. A meeting with local councillors, planning committee members and planning officers at ABC would assist in ensuring that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties and that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.
 - Monitoring the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure that they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications – there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which it is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Parish Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which Neighbourhood Plan policies have informed the Parish Council’s response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with ABC regarding the timing and content of the Local Plan Review – it will be important to consider policies in the emerging document, when available, to review and reflect upon how any changes may impact the ABNP

policies. The adoption of the new Ashford Local Plan may trigger a light-touch review of the ABNP.

- Maintaining a dialogue with ABC and the promoters/developers of the sites allocated within the Local Plan.
- Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape – changes at national level may impact upon the policies contained in the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as it could also provide a trigger to undertake a light-touch review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring parishes on cross-boundary projects.
- Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the plan implementation – ensuring that all records of how the Plan has been used should be made public. It is also recommended that a regular update – for instance at the Annual Parish Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursuance of projects.
- Considering gaps in the Neighbourhood Plan – local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the Plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

9.4 Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be for any of the reasons noted above. A light-touch review will enable the Parish Council to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in general terms and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. The emerging review of the Ashford Local Plan will cover the period from 2030 up to 2041, and any future review of this Neighbourhood Plan will need to take into account the policies and proposals within the new Local Plan, which is expected to be adopted in 2027. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

9.5 The Parish Council will consider how best to progress these actions.

10 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

- 10.1 The Parish Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of its powers under national legislation and planning guidance.
- 10.2 There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):
- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of the *1990 Town & Country Planning Act*) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
 - A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the *Highways Act 1980* that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site, levied by the Borough Council. Different charge rates would apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a 'made' neighbourhood plan, the local community would benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from the neighbourhood area.
- 10.3 ABC has not yet implemented the CIL, however the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill is seeking to introduce a new Infrastructure Levy, and local authorities would be required to implement this. As with the CIL, a proportion (25%) of the new Infrastructure Levy would be directed to local (town and parish) councils.
- 10.4 Transport-infrastructure-related spending priorities for the neighbourhood area are set out in the Highways Improvement Plan, which is prepared by the Parish Council and updated on a regular basis (last update Summer 2022). Further community projects that have been prioritised locally are contained in the Parish Plan. Both documents are available to view on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council will work in partnership with KCC to consider and address transport infrastructure matters, in line with the strategy set out in the Local Transport Plan and the commitments contained in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 10.5 The Parish Council intends regularly to review its spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comments from the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Parish Council website and in relevant literature.



ALDINGTON



11 POLICIES MAPS

Key to all policies maps:

-  Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
-  Kent Downs National Landscape
-  Strategic (Ashford-identified) Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (AB1)
-  Ashford Green Corridor (AB1)
-  Biodiversity features (AB1)
-  Notable hedge (AB1)
-  Watercourses
-  Royal Military Canal
-  Wildlife Site (AB2)
-  Ancient woodland (AB2)
-  Local Green Space (AB3)
-  Village built confines (AB6)
-  Allocated site (in Ashford Local Plan)
-  Conservation Area (AB11)
 -  Listed buildings (AB11)
 -  Non-Designated Heritage Assets (AB11)
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Public Rights of Way (AB12)
-  Proposed route improvements (AB12)
-  Local facility



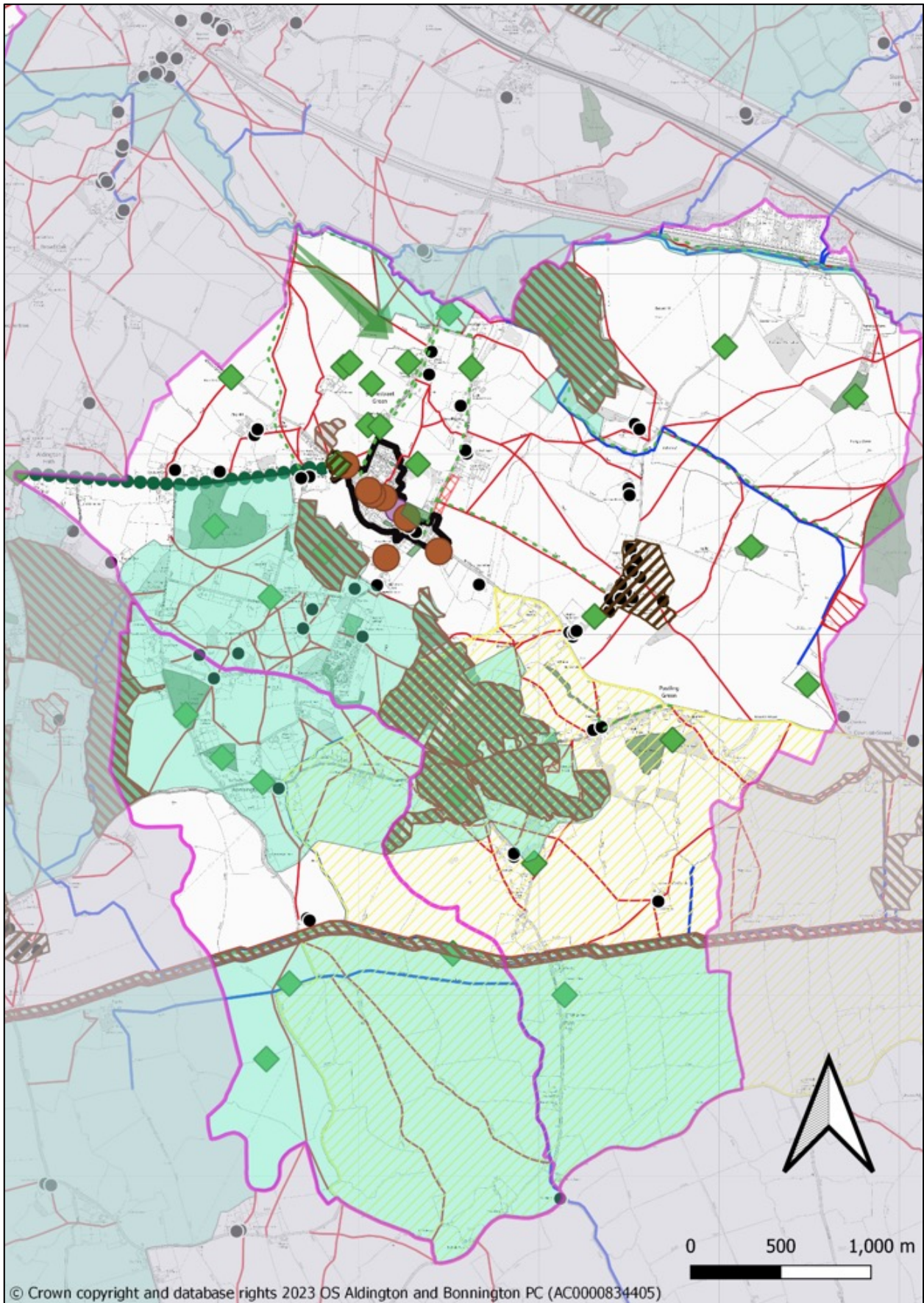


Figure 20: Policies map

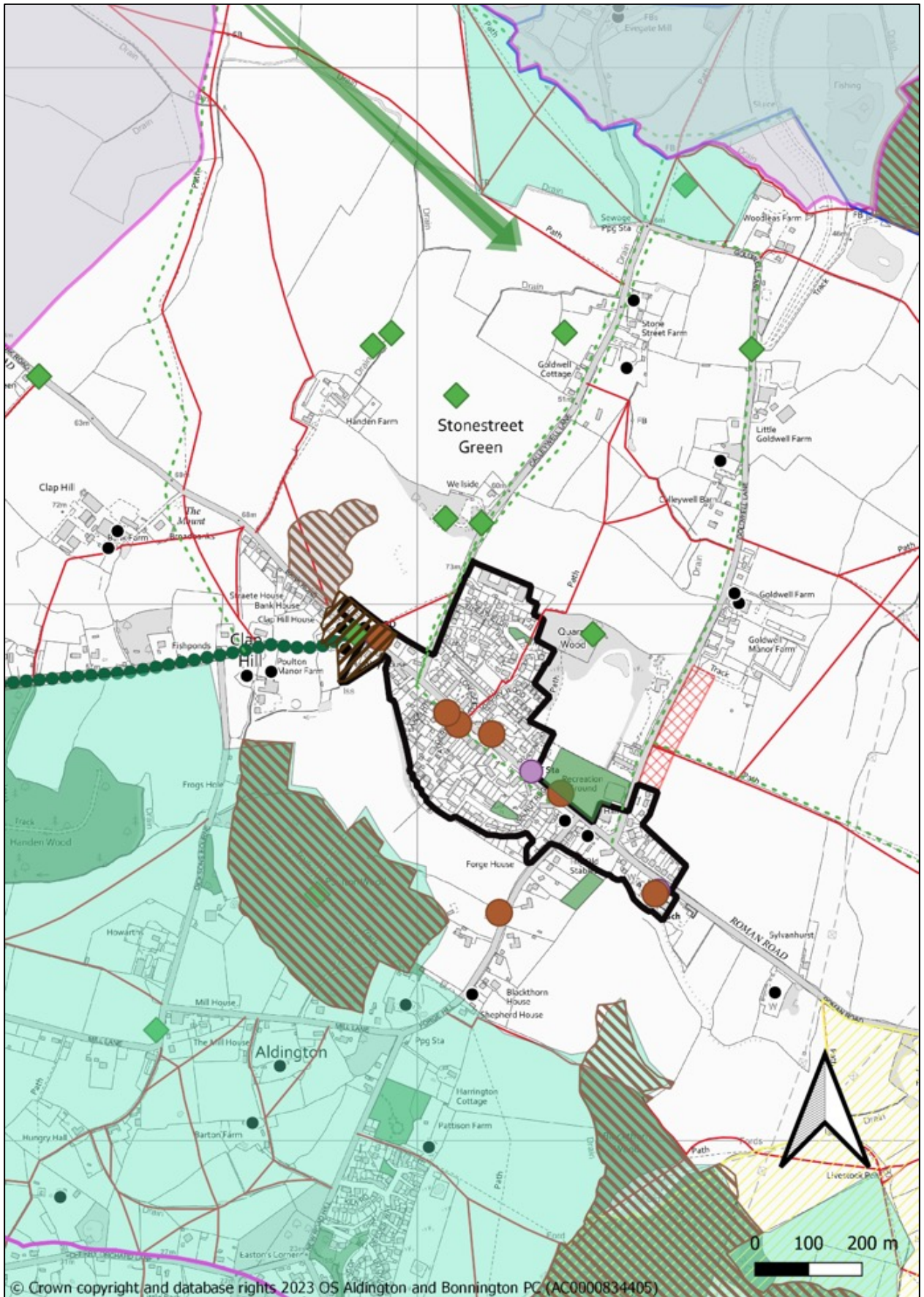


Figure 21: Policies map – Aldington village

12

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing:	Social rented, affordable rented, intermediate housing, and First Homes provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
Allocated site:	A site that is included for development in the Ashford Local Plan
Ancient or veteran tree/tree of arboricultural value:	A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life stage
Archaeological interest:	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point
Brownfield land/previously developed land	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure
Change of use:	A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a ‘use class’
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):	A fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by ABC
Conservation Area:	An area of notable environmental, architectural or historical interest or importance that is protected by law against undesirable changes
Designated heritage asset:	A world heritage site, scheduled monument, listed building, protected wreck site, registered park or garden, registered battlefield or conservation area designated under the relevant legislation
Disability:	There is no single definition for ‘disability’. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities
Green and blue infrastructure:	Trees, shrubs, hedgerows, meadows (green) and waterways, ponds, etc. (blue). The term comes from urban planning and land-use planning.
Green spaces:	A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, that is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality-of-life benefits for local communities. The term comes from urban planning and land-use planning

Heritage asset:	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. This includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)
Kent County Council (KCC):	The county-wide authority has responsibility for strategic matters including waste and minerals planning, maintaining the public rights of way network, education, health and social services, libraries and roads
Limits to built development:	These identify the areas of primarily built form, rather than countryside. They identify areas within which development of brown-field land may normally be appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with government policy and guidance (NPPF and the National Planning Practice Guidance online resource). They do not include a presumption for the development of greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do not necessarily include all existing developed areas
Local housing need:	The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance
Local plan:	Local plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as local plans (together with any neighbourhood development plans that have been made) are the starting point for considering whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to have an up-to-date local plan in place to positively guide development decisions
Major development:	For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m ² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):	The national planning policy document, which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied
Nature Recovery Network:	An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife-rich habitats as well as landscape recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats
Non-strategic policies:	Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan, that are not strategic policies

Older people:	People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly, and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs
Passive House Standard:	Dwelling that meets certain criteria relating to energy efficiency, including space heating energy demand, airtightness and thermal comfort. Further information can be found on the Passive House Institute website
Permitted development:	Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Most houses have permitted development rights, but flats and maisonettes do not, so planning permission is required. A further example is the conversion of offices, for instance to flats, without the need for planning permission
Previously developed land/ brownfield land:	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure
Section 106 agreement:	A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not be otherwise, through provision of mitigation to enhance services or infrastructure
SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises):	The UK definition of an SME is generally a small or medium-sized organisation with fewer than 250 employees. The EU definition for SME is a business with fewer than 250 employees and a turnover of less than €50 million, or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million. Within this umbrella there are three different categories: medium-sized, small and micro-businesses. These categories are defined by turnover and number of employees
Speculative development:	An application to build on land that is not included in the Local Plan. This is often known as ‘windfall development’
Supplementary planning documents (SPDs):	Supplementary planning documents may cover a range of issues, both topic- and site-specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained in a development plan document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery
Use Classes Order:	The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended in 1995, 2005 and 2013) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class
Windfall development:	A site that was not specifically allocated for development in the local plan but for which a planning application is put forward, usually for residential development

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC:	Ashford Borough Council
ABNP:	Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan
AHNA:	Aldington Housing Needs Assessment
AHNS:	Aldington Housing Needs Survey
BOA:	Biodiversity opportunity area
HRA:	Habitats regulations assessment
KCC:	Kent County Council
KNP:	Kent Nature Partnership
PV:	Photovoltaic
NPPF:	National Planning Policy Framework
NSIP:	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
SAC:	Special Area of Conservation
SEA:	Strategic environmental assessment
PROW:	Public right of way
WWII:	World War II/Second World War

13 LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

All links correct at December 2023. Evidence documents are also available on the Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council website.

Document/Evidence	Author	Year
ABC Heritage Strategy https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/50edc0ta/adoptedashfordheritagestrategy.pdf	ABC	2017
Ancient Tree Guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest? https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1836/what-are-ancient-trees.pdf	Woodland Trust	2008
Ashford Green and Blue Grid Strategy https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/288418/6705381.1/PDF/-/Ashford_Green__Blue_Grid_Strategy__Final_Report_low_res.pdf	ABC	2008
Ashford Landscape Character Assessment https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/cwfb40/cd-5-4-ashford_landscape_character_assessment_2009.pdf	ABC	2009
Ashford Local Plan to 2030 https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/jw3nbvq1/adopted-ashford-local-plan-2030.pdf	ABC	2019
Assets of Community Value List, Ashford Borough https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/community-right-to-bid/assets-of-community-value/	ABC	ongoing
Building for a Healthy Life 2020 https://www.designforhomes.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BFL-2020-Brochure.pdf	Design for Homes	2020
Census	Office for National Statistics	2011 updated 2021
Chilmington Green Area Action Plan https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/chilmington-green-area-action-plan/	ABC	2013
Climate Change Act 2008 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/conten	HM Government	2008
Community Survey, Questionnaire 1 https://abpc.org.uk/wp-content/plugins/download-attachments/includes/download.php?id=1801	Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council	2020

Document/Evidence	Author	Year
Defra Biodiversity Metric https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development	Defra/Natural England	2021
Design and Cost Guidance for Sports Facilities https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance	Sport England	no date
Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings – How to improve energy efficiency https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/	Historic England	2018
Environment Act 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted	HM Government	2021
Future Homes Standard Consultation: Government response https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956094/Government_response_to_Future_Homes_Standard_consultation.pdf	HM Government	2021
Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Resources/ilp-guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting-compressed.pdf?v=1542109349	Bat Conservation Trust/ Institution of Lighting Professionals	2018
Guidance Note 01/21: For the reduction of obtrusive light https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2021
The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (ref. 2) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/contents/made	HM Government	1997
Heritage at Risk Register https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/	Historic England	Ongoing
Historic Environment Record https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=95&id=4762	Historic England in partnership with ALGAO and IHBC	Ongoing
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/	Housing LIN	2012
<i>Housing Standards Review</i>	HM Government	2012 (anmended)

Document/Evidence	Author	Year
'How Green Is Your Plan?' Workshop https://abpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Workshop-outcomes.pdf	Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council	2022
<i>Kent – Building stones of England</i>	Historic England	2017
Kent Downs Management Guidance https://kentdowns.org.uk/landscape-management/management-publications/	National Landscape Partnership	various
Kent Downs Management Plan https://kentdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Kent-Downs-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-2026-Adopted.pdf	National Landscape Partnership	2021 to 2026
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013–30 https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/112585/Kent-Minerals-and-Waste-Local-Plan-2013-2030.pdf	KCC	2020
Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045 https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s96710/20-00025%20-%20Kent%20Biodiversity%20Strategy%20March%202020.pdf	Kent Nature Partnership	2020 to 2045
Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering growth without gridlock 2016 to 2031 https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/72668/Local-transport-plan-4.pdf	KCC	2016 to 2031
Localism Act 2011 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted	HM Government	2011
Minerals and Waste Local Plan https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/112585/Kent-Minerals-and-Waste-Local-Plan-2013-2030.pdf	KCC	Adopted 2016, modified in 2020
National Design Guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	2019
National Model Design Code https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code	Department for LevellingUp, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	2021

Document/Evidence	Author	Year
National Planning Policy Framework (amended September 2023) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf	HM Government	Amended September 2023
Neighbourhood Area Designation Letter https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/srwbxvxi/aldington-and-bonnington-area-designation-notice.pdf	ABC	2019
Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made	HM Government	2012
<i>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</i> https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents	HM Government	2004
Renewable Energy Planning Guidance Note 2: The development of large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/iawi5uah/2_large-scale-solar-pv.pdf	ABC (based on guidance prepared by Cornwall Council)	2013
Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/environment-and-waste-policies/environmental-policies/countryside-policies-and-reports/public-rights-of-way-improvement-plan	KCC	2018–2028
Secured by Design https://www.securedbydesign.com/	Police Crime Prevention Initiatives	2023
Streets for a Healthy Life https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1089852/Streets-for-a-Healthy-Life.pdf	Homes England	2022
<i>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</i> https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/contents	HM Government	1990
Urban Air Quality https://www.palmstead.co.uk/content/downloads/Urban-air-quality-report-Woodland-Trust-2012.pdf	Woodland Trust	2012
Use Classes https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use	Planning Portal	2021
Validation Checklist https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/dsply4qw/ashford-borough-council-planning-validation-checklist.pdf	ABC	ongoing

APPENDIX A - LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Eight spaces are designated as a Local Green Space. The table below provide the high-level justification for the Local Green Space designations.

Ref. No.	Name	Location	Value
1	Reynolds Playing Field	Roman Road	Recreation
2	Quarry Field and Quarry Wood	Behind Reynolds Playing Field	Recreation, wild life conservation, woodland
3	Green in Walnut Ridge	Walnut Ridge	Recreation
4	Roman Road verges	Roman Road	Local amenity
5	Wheatfields green	Centre of Wheatfields	Recreation
6	Aldington Meadows play area	New Road Hill	Recreation
7	Aldington Meadows green	Noel Coward Gardens	Recreation, local amenity
8	Forge Hill allotments	Forge Hill	Recreation

More detailed descriptions for each space follow below.

To note, Bonnington Green was considered as a potential Local Green Space, but is already adequately protected by way of two Village Green designations, as shown in the documentation overleaf:

COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965

Note: This section contains the registration of the land comprised in this register unit.

Registering authority **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

Register unit No. **VG 185**

Edition No.

Register of TOWN OR VILLAGE GREENS

COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
REGISTER OF TOWN OR VILLAGE GREENS

See Overleaf for Plans

LAND SECTION—Sheet No.

No. and date of entry	Description of the land, reference to the register map, registration particulars etc.
5.3.70	The piece of land known as Bonnington Green in the Parish of Bonnington in the Rural District of East Ashford, as marked with a green verge line inside the boundary on sheet 06 of the register map and distinguished by the number of this register unit. Registered pursuant to application no. 601(23) made on 31st December 1969 by Mrs. Anne Wilks of 3 Hedden Avenue, Whitstable. (Registration-provisional)
4.9.72	The registration at entry No.1 above, being unopposed, became final on 1st August, 1972.



Village Green designation VG185

Form 1
15

COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965 (SECTION 13)

Note: This section contains the registration of the land comprised in this register unit.

Registration authority KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Register of **TOWN OR VILLAGE GREENS**

COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
10 APR 1999

Register unit No. VG 230
Edition No.

Site Created for Maps

LAND SECTION—Sheet No.

No. and date of entry	Description of the land, reference to the register map, registration particulars etc.
1. 10.4.91	The piece of land known as The Plain is the land of Aldington and Bonnington in the Borough of Ashford, is marked with a green verge line inside the boundary on sheet 86 of the register map and designated by the number of this register unit. Registered pursuant to application No 368 made on 10th April 1991 by Mrs Denise Bailey of the White House, Cherry Garden, Bonnington, Nr. Ashford, Kent. (Announced registration)
2. 20.12.91	The registration at entry No 1. above, became final on 20th December 1991.



Village Green designation VG230

1. Reynolds Playing Field

Address and location	Goldwell Close, Aldington, TN25 7DY
Ownership details	Reynolds Association/Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council
Description and purpose/current use	
<p>Reynolds Playing Field was donated to the community by Captain Reynolds in 1955 and is named in memory of the benefactor. It is, in effect, Aldington's Village Green and is used most days by families in the village as well as many others whose children attend Aldington Primary School.</p> <p>It houses the most central children's play area as well as a Multi-use Games Area and is the scene for all village events as it abuts the village hall. In the summer months the cricket field is used by the local cricket club.</p> <p>During Covid restrictions, groups could be seen meeting on Reynolds Playing Field to maintain activities outside, even craft groups such as Stitch and Natter as well as several physical fitness groups.</p> <p>Every morning the playing field and the adjacent Quarry Field are used by dog walkers and, after school, on good weather days, children let off steam in the play area whilst parents perch on the benches to chat in groups.</p> <p>It is common to see family groups picnicking on the field during school holidays and on summer evenings, when spontaneous use of the field often occurs with informal rounders matches and football kick-about.</p>	
Designations	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The field is centrally located in the built-up part of Aldington Village. The site is accessible to all.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>History: the field was gifted to the village by Captain Reynolds, a war hero and former resident.</p> <p>Recreation: the space is used for formal (including cricket) and informal (picnics, dog walking) recreation. Located next to the village hall, it is also used to host community events and activities.</p>
Local in character?	Yes



Reynolds Playing Field

2. Quarry Field and Quarry Wood

Address and location

Behind the Reynolds Playing Field

Ownership details

Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council

Description and purpose/current use

Quarry Field and Quarry Wood were reclaimed from their former use as a ragstone quarry and then landfill site to become the field and woodland that they are today. Prior to that, this land was quarried for ragstone, a material that was plentiful locally, as can be seen in many of the historic listed and older properties in the parishes.

The family that owned the quarry and surrounding land was called Earl; hence, the road named Earlsfield that runs off Walnut Ridge alludes to land that was also owned by the same family. After quarrying stopped, the site was acquired by Ashford Rural District Council and used as a refuse landfill site. Waste soil from the construction of Stanhope Estate in Ashford and the M20 motorway led to the creation of a large area of land that the parish council of the time campaigned to take ownership of for the purpose of providing a suitable pitch for Aldington Football Club.

One of the conditions of the land donation to the community was that there should also be parts that would benefit wildlife, so a nature pond was created to improve ground drainage and a woodland was planted. Both are now established and known as Quarry Pond and Quarry Wood.

Designations	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The space is centrally located in the built-up part of Aldington village. The site accessible to all

Demonstrably Special?


Recreation: Quarry Field is used for formal (including football) and informal (picnics, dog walking) recreation. The wood also provides a recreational area for local residents.

Wildlife: the site provides a number of important habitats for flora and fauna, including the woodland and the nature pond. The pond provides a rich and very natural habitat for a wide range of threatened freshwater species such as: great crested newt, natterjack toad, pillwort, starfruit, marsh clubmoss and medicinal leech. The Parish Council is working with a local ecologist and the East Kent Badger Group to enhance biodiversity at the pond.

Local in character?	Yes
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3. Green in Walnut Ridge

Address and location	Walnut Ridge, off Roman Road
Ownership details	ABC
Description and purpose/current use	
<p>The green in Walnut Ridge is a very low quality, grassed area which contains one tree.</p> <p>There are council-owned garage buildings behind the land and a road in front that is generally used only by vehicles visiting or belonging to residents in Walnut Ridge or Earlsfield.</p> <p>There is a footpath that runs from the grassed area, down the side of the garages to emerge in Roman Road, providing a cut-through that is well used.</p> <p>The grassed area is used as a meeting place and play space by local children most days when the weather is conducive. Until recently an improvised swing had been made by tying a tyre to a branch of the tree.</p> <p>The area creates a safe space for children that is visible from their family homes and could provide a convenient meeting place to help reduce social isolation. It should be protected and improved to better fulfil this role.</p>	
Designation	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The space is centrally located in the built-up part of Aldington village. Located on Walnut Ridge, it is surrounded by houses.
Demonstrably Special?	
<p>Recreation: the space is well used by local children for informal recreation. It also provides an outdoor space to socialise. It is an important space for those living in the surrounding homes.</p>	
Local in character?	Yes
	

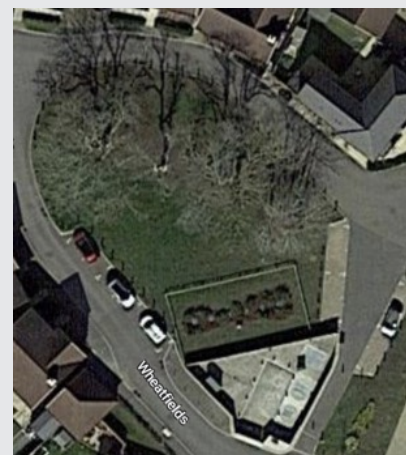
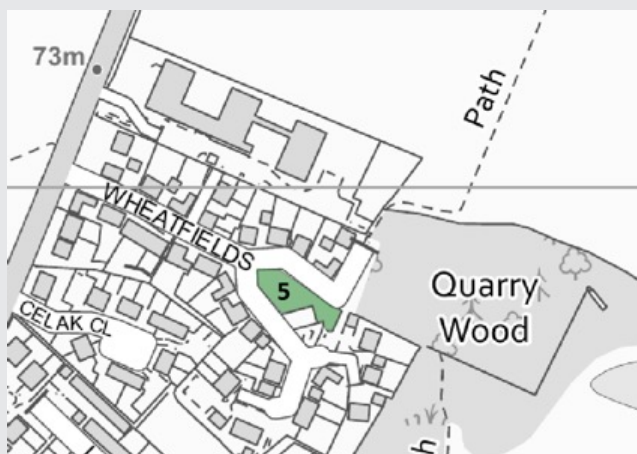
4. Roman Road verges

Address and location	Roman Road
Ownership details	ABC
Description and purpose/current use	
<p>There is a wide verge on the northern side of Roman Road that extends from Calleywell Lane to Ragstone Hollow at Aldington Fire Station. The verge houses one of the Parish Council notice boards and the Millennium Stone, as well as several benches, trees and raised flower beds that are maintained by volunteers. Benches on the verge are used by older residents for respite when walking to and from the shops. The broad verge widens the perspective when looking along Roman Road and provides the possibility to consider further planting of street trees in the future.</p>	
Designation	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The verges are located along Roman Road in the centre of Aldington village within a few hundred metres of key services.
Demonstrably Special?	
<p>Recreation: more than simply being verges, these spaces provide an important focal point for the community, housing the parish notice boards and Millennium Stone. They are attractively planted, and the benches are used particularly by older residents to rest en route to destination points (in the context of the community facilities being spread across the village), for socialising and for sharing local information.</p> <p>Wildlife: the verges provide an important green corridor through the village for wildlife.</p>	
Local in character?	Yes



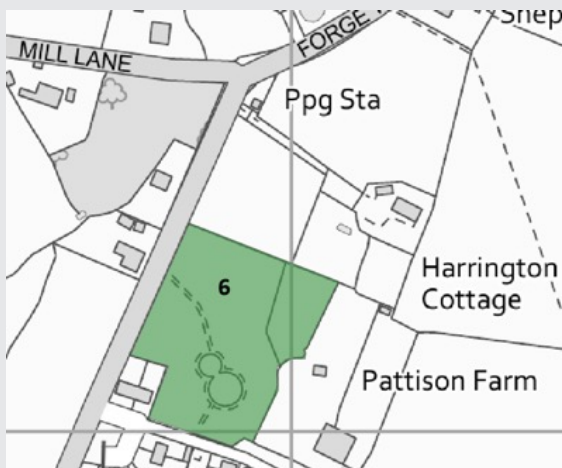
5. Wheatfields green

Address and location	Green space within Wheatfields
Ownership details	Wheatfields Residents Association
Description and purpose/current use	
<p>The green area in the centre of the Wheatfields development was designated a community space as part of planning approval for the development in 2015.</p> <p>There are several mature trees, which have recently been given preservation orders, as well as a recently revised pumping station that provides waste services for houses in this development and is screened by planting from the proposed green space.</p> <p>The green in the centre of Wheatfields is used for meeting up, recreation and play and provides an open area that strengthens the sense of space in this development. It provides a place for play that is visible from children's homes and is relatively safe from traffic.</p>	
Designation	Some of the trees have tree preservation orders.
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The green is surrounded by housing within the Wheatfields development along Calleywell Lane.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: the green is an important safe space within the housing area and well used by local residents for informal recreation and socialising.
Local in character?	Yes



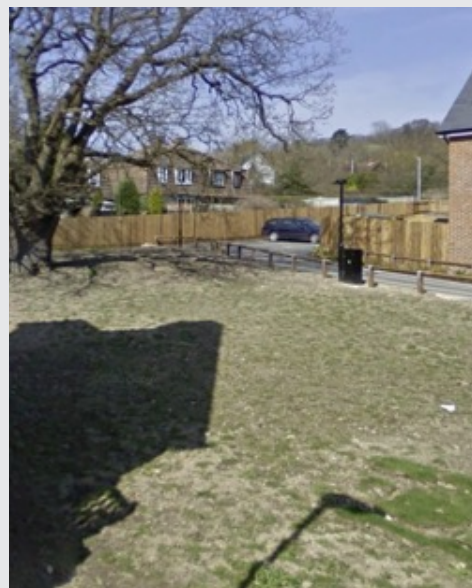
6. Aldington Meadows play area

Address and location	Green space between New Road Hill and Pattison Farm Close
Designation	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The space is located within 200m of homes in Aldington Meadows.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: this is a much-valued space for informal recreation, including dog walking, family games and so on. There are nine allotment plots here, which provide an opportunity for people to grow their own produce, socialise and gain access to the fresh air.</p> <p>Wildlife: as an allotment space that has been in situ since 2011, the space is considered an important habitat for a range of flora and fauna.</p>
Local in character?	Yes



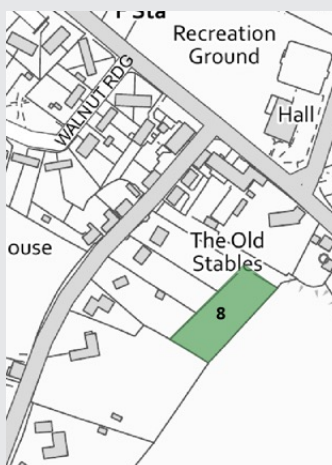
7. Aldington Meadows green

Address and location	Noel Coward Gardens
Ownership details	Bellway Homes
Description and purpose/current use	The green in the Aldington Meadows development was designated as a community space at the time of planning approval in 2014.
Designation	Central to the space is a large oak tree that is subject to a tree preservation order.
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The green space is surrounded by homes.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: the space is used by children living nearby, though no ball games are allowed. It creates a meeting place and open area for smaller children to play, or for older children to meet.
Local in character?	Yes



8. Forge Hill allotments

Address and location	Land to the rear of properties along Forge Hill
Ownership details	Privately owned
Description and purpose/current use	The land has been leased to the Parish Council for the last 10 years for use as community allotments. There are seven allotment sites.
Designation	Allotment land
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions	None
Access and proximity, including how close to the community it serves	The allotments are located within Aldington village and are used by members of the community.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: the allotments provide a much-valued community facility within Aldington village and are well used. They enable users to grow their own food, encouraging self-sufficiency. The facility provides a space for social interaction and is beneficial to the mental and physical well-being of its users.</p> <p>Wildlife: the space provides a habitat for a range of both flora and fauna.</p>
Local in character?	Yes



APPENDIX B – LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The following illustrated views have been identified by the community as locally significant in Aldington & Bonnington. It is important to note that the camera tends to flatten out long-distance and wide, expansive views and fails to highlight landmarks that appear clearly visible to the eye: a photograph is no substitute for the real thing.

The viewpoints are marked on the three maps, *Figures 8, 9 and 10*, in this Plan under Policy AB4: Protection of locally significant views. These maps illustrate the location and the direction of the view, with a fan shape to indicate the lateral extent of the view. These, too, are only indicative, and should be considered in conjunction with the detailed descriptions in this Appendix.

View 1: From Station Road: panorama across the East Stour Valley up towards Aldington Ridgeline

This extensive view into Aldington begins on the approach from Station Road, just outside the neighbourhood area boundary. The undulating landscape provides sweeping and expansive views of rolling fields and woodland leading up to the Aldington Ridgeline and round towards Mersham in the north-west. The view continues during the descent into the valley. At the Aldington entry sign, the view remains open and expansive, with buildings at Bank Farm (Bank Road) visible on the horizon.



View 1: Looking up towards Aldington Ridgeline from Station Road

Views 2a and 2b: From Goldwell Lane towards St Martin’s Church along PROW AE474 and the reverse

Walkers on PROW AE474 from either direction can enjoy these views as they gradually change, along the path.

Depending on the height and density of the hedgerow at different times of the year, there are views at various points along Goldwell Lane towards Grade-I-listed St Martin’s Church across open fields. The most significant view here (View 2a) is along PROW AE474, where the church is clearly visible on the horizon.



View 2a: Looking towards St Martin’s Church along PROW AE474

From the higher, St. Martin’s Church, end of PROW AE474, a panoramic view across open fields takes in Aldington to the west and benefits from the landscape rising in the far distance to extend across to Mersham in the north-west and include the Kent Downs National Landscape on the northern horizon (View 2b).



View 2b: Looking towards Aldington



View 2b: Looking towards the Kent Downs National Landscape

View 3: From PROW AE475 northwards towards Kent Downs National Landscape

PROW AE475 also crosses between Goldwell Lane and Church Lane, but to the north of AE474. This means that, at the higher part of the route, approximately 300m north-west of Church Lane, it provides a more open view northwards across the fields of the East Stour Valley towards the Kent Downs National Landscape. Bested Hill and Hungry Down are seen at close distance, to the north and north-east, with the location of the traditional annual Point-to-Point event lying between them.



View 3: Looking north-west towards the East Stour Valley

View 4: From the rear of St Martin's Church

The pasture to the rear of St Martin's Church is the site of Thomas Becket's Archbishop's Palace, although to the untrained eye there is no sign of it now. From this elevated location there is an expansive view to the north, east and south. Hungry Down can be seen to the north-east, with Kent Downs National Landscape in the distance. The view extends eastwards beyond Grove Cottages towards Harringe Lane over farmland owned and tended by families that have resided in the neighbourhood area for generations. A network of Public Rights of Way connects the church to several farmsteads, close to the site of a fish pond dating from Tudor times, illustrating the historic connection between church and agriculture. Two more paths lead southwards over open farmland, one passing the nearby former parsonage, dating from the 14th century, towards Postling Green. At night, lighting at the Sellindge Converter Station bleaches the sky beyond Bested Hill, but looking towards the coast is rewarded with dark skies.



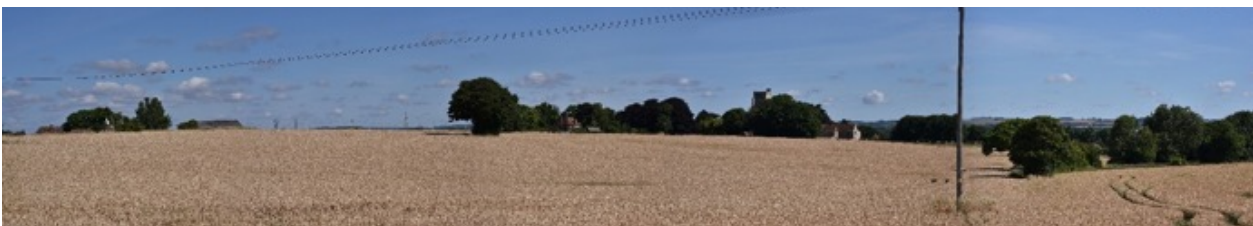
View 4: Looking East from the back of St Martin's Church

View 5: From Roman Road and Knoll Hill where they meet at Postling Green, northwards

There are expansive views north, north-eastwards and north-westwards across open hedgerow-lined fields with the Kent Downs National Landscape rising on the horizon. Views extend into the Church Lane Conservation Area and include St Martin’s Church, with the bell tower clearly visible.



View 5: Looking towards St Martin’s Church and the Kent Downs National Landscape



View 5: Looking towards St Martin’s Church

Views 6a and 6b: From Roman Road and PROW AE449, northwards

From Roman Road, in the centre of Aldington, Reynolds Playing Field and Quarry Field provide an expansive open viewpoint at the highest point of Aldington Ridge (View 6a). Enjoyed from the garden of The Walnut Tree public house, this is very much a village view: mature trees edge the ‘village green’ and fill the middle ground; the children’s play area is visible in the foreground; and there are views of the Kent Downs National Landscape in the distance across gently rising farmland. This more distant view is best appreciated from PROW AE449, which runs down the field beyond Reynolds Playing Field and Quarry Wood (View 6b).



View 6a: Looking north-north-east across Reynolds Playing Field towards the Kent Downs National Landscape



View 6a: Looking north-east across Reynolds Playing Field towards the village hall and tennis courts



View 6b: Looking north from PROW AE449, over the East Stour Valley towards the Kent Downs National Landscape



View 6b: The walking route here offers views towards the Kent Downs National Landscape

View 7: A series of views southwards going down Forge Hill from Roman Road

The top of Forge Hill provides a panoramic view across woodland to Romney Marsh and the Kent coastline in the distance. These long-distance views are possible for about a 100-meter length of Forge Hill from Roman Road. A similar view can be found from Aldington Primary School car park, but this is excluded from the list because it is not publicly accessible.



View 7: Looking south down Forge Hill towards Romney Marsh

View 8: From Calleywell Lane and PROW AE446, looking north-to-north-westwards

The field entrance at the Roman Road end of Calleywell Lane and PROW AE446 that traverses the field provide expansive and long-distance views. These range northwards and north-westwards over open farmland and wooded copses in the valley of the East Stour towards the neighbouring village of Mersham, including the Norman church of St John. Ashford is in the far distance.



View 8: Looking north-west towards Mersham from PROW AE446

View 9: From Roman Road between telephone exchange and Sheraton Cottage, southwards

This is a narrow viewpoint. It looks across open grassed fields to the Local Nature Reserve at Poulton Wood. It is the last remaining public view southwards from this end of Roman Road following development of Saxon Heights and Badgers Close. It falls within the Clap Hill Conservation Area and should be preserved.



View 9: Looking through the gap from Roman Road towards Poulton Wood

View 10: From Bank Road and PROWs AE370, AE377 and AE445, northwards

Gaps in the hedgerow along Bank Road, and all three footpaths to the north, provide a cluster of extensive views across the East Stour Valley up to the Kent Downs National Landscape, which lines the northern horizon. The sweeping open landscape rolls gently away from the ridgeline providing a view that extends from beyond Mersham, to the north-west, right across towards Aldington Reservoir and Church Lane to the north-east.



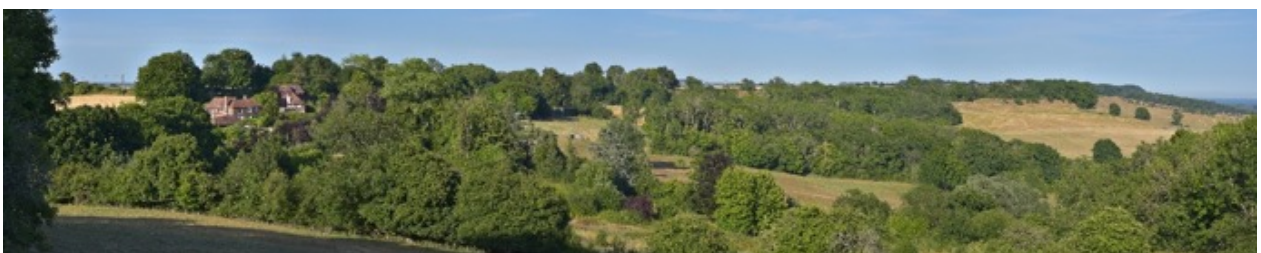
View 10: Looking north across the East Stour Valley towards the Kent Downs National Landscape

Views 11a and 11b: From Aldington Knoll, south-east and north-east

Knoll Hill is an attractive tree-lined sunken country lane that cuts into the ancient woodland of Stockhill Wood and Knoll Wood and joins Roman Road at Postling Green (see View 5). Aldington Knoll is an ancient monument situated at the highest point south of Knoll Hill, accessed from public footpath AE493 and providing extensive views south-eastwards across Romney Marsh towards the coast at Dymchurch and north-eastwards along the Aldington Ridgeline towards Port Lympne.



View 11a: Looking south-east from Aldington Knoll towards Romney Marsh and Dymchurch



View 11b: Looking north-east from Aldington Knoll along the Aldington Ridge towards Port Lympne

View 12: From Bonnington Village Green, northwards towards Aldington

With the Old Law Oak behind you, this view looks across open fields and wooded hedgerows to the rising land of the Aldington Ridge in the far distance. It takes in the Crooked Barn and other Bonnington Court Farm buildings in the middle distance as well as several ancient trees. In the nearer distance, the view is towards Yew Tree Farm.



View 12: Looking north from Bonnington Green towards Yew Tree Farm and Bonnington Court Farm

View 13: From Boat Lane, south-west towards Bonnington Village Green

This view is between the parish of Aldington and that of Bonnington. From Boat Lane there are extensive views across to Bonnington, taking in the backs of Oakdene and neighbouring properties. It is an open rural view that is criss-crossed by several PROWs, most significantly AE492 and AE505.



View 13: Looking south-west across cereal fields towards Bonnington Village Green

APPENDIX C – DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CODES FOR ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON

The Design Guidelines and Codes for Aldington & Bonnington form an integral part of the ABNP. Due to their size, they are contained as a separate Appendix and can be found on the *ABNP website*: <https://abpc.org.uk/np/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2.-Aldington-and-Bonnington-Design-Guidance-and-Codes.pdf> or as a separate booklet.

APPENDIX D – DESIGNATED AND NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Table 7 shows the listed and scheduled assets in the neighbourhood area as at end-2023. The Historic Environment Record for Kent includes additional assets, some of which are not nationally designated.



Table 7: Listed assets in the neighbourhood area

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(1)	Old Chestnut House	1300185	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300185	Listing	II	Old Chestnut House, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(2)	Copperhurst	1071223	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071223	Listing	II	Copperhurst, Knoll Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(3)	Church of St Martin	1071208	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071208	Listing	I	Church of St Martin, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(4)	Aldington Knoll Roman Barrow and Later Beacon	1012216	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012216	Scheduling	n/a	Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(5)	Parsonage Farmhouse	1071207	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071207	Listing	II	Parsonage Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(6)	Pattisons Farmhouse	1300112	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300112	Listing	II	Pattisons Farmhouse, 1 and 2 New Road Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(7)	Former Dairy Building about 25 metres north-west of Hogben Farmhouse	1071213	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071213	Listing	II	Former Dairy Building about 25 metres north-west of Hogben Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(8)	Hand Pump about 5 metres west of Quedsted's Cottage	1071219	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071219	Listing	II	Hand Pump about 5 metres west of Quedsted's Cottage, Frith Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(9)	Little Copperhurst	1300109	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300109	Listing	II	Little Copperhurst, Knoll Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(10)	Cherry Orchard	1362774	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362774	Listing	II	Cherry Orchard, Cherry Orchard Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(11)	Granary/ Stowage about 35 metres north-east of Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse	1362782	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362782	Listing	II	Granary/ Stowage about 35 metres north- east of Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(12)	Wykhurst	1071224	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071224	Listing	II	Wykhurst, Mill Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(13)	Barn and Cartsheds about 50 metres south-west of Court Lodge Farmhouse	1362776	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362776	Listing	II	Barn and Cartsheds about 50 metres south- west of Court Lodge Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(14)	Forehead Farmhouse	1362779	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362779	Listing	II	Forehead Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(15)	Stable/ Outhouse about 10 metres north of Goldwell	1362780	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362780	Listing	II	Stable/Outhouse about 10 metres north of Goldwell, Goldwell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(16)	Barton Farm	1362781	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362781	Listing	II	Barton Farm, New Road Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(17)	Homelands	1071218	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071218	Listing	II	Homelands, Forge Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(18)	Symnells and Walled Forecourt	1184484	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184484	Listing	II	Symnells and Walled Forecourt, Goldwell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(19)	Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse and Walls Projecting	1184521	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184521	Listing	II*	Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse and Walls Projecting, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(20)	By The Way	1184361	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184361	Listing	II	By The Way, Clap Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(21)	Barn about 30 metres north-west of Hogben Farmhouse	1300208	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300208	Listing	II	Barn about 30 metres north-west of Hogben Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(22)	Stable/Barn about 50 metres west of Court Lodge Farm house	1071210	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071210	Listing	II	Stable/Barn about 50 metres west of Court Lodge Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(23)	Grove Cottage	1071212	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071212	Listing	II	Grove Cottage, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(24)	Barn about 20 metres east of Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse	1071225	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071225	Listing	II	Barn about 20 metres east of Ruffyn's Hill, Farmhouse, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(25)	Stable/Stock House about 20 metres north-east of Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse	1184539	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184539	Listing	II	Stable/Stock House about 20 metres north-east of Ruffyn's Hill Farmhouse, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(26)	Church Hill Cottage	1184281	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184281	Listing	II	Church Hill Cottage, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(27)	Quested's Cottage	1184383	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184383	Listing	II	Quested's Cottage, Frith Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(28)	Oast House about 50 metres west of Poulton Farmhouse	1300148	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300148	Listing	II	Oast House about 50 metres west of Poulton Farmhouse, Frith Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(29)	Tickner Cottage	1184279	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184279	Listing	II	Tickner Cottage, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(30)	Stock Yard and Sheds about 75 metres west of Court Lodge Farmhouse	1362777	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362777	Listing	II	Stock Yard and Sheds about 75 metres west of Court Lodge Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(31)	Walnut Tree Inn	1300164	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300164	Listing	II	Walnut Tree Inn, Forge Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(32)	Shepherd's Cottage Shepherd's House	1071217	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071217	Listing	II	Shepherd's House, Forge Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(33)	The Old Cottage	1071249	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071249	Listing	II	The Old Cottage, Calleywell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(34)	1 and 2, Clap Hill	1184334	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184334	Listing	II	1 and 2 Clap Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(35)	Street Farmhouse	1071215	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071215	Listing	II	Street Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(36)	Clap Hill House Harold Cottages	1071216	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071216	Listing	II	Harold Cottages, Clap Hill, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(37)	Goodwin Farmhouse	1300136	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300136	Listing	II	Goodwin Farmhouse, Frith Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(38)	Oak House	1300182	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1300182	Listing	II	Oak House, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(39)	Church Farmhouse	1071211	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071211	Listing	II	Church Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(40)	Barn and 2 Stable Ranges Attached, about 20 metres north of Bank Farmhouse	1071248	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071248	Listing	II	Barn and 2 Stable Ranges Attached, about 20 metres north of Bank Farmhouse, Bank Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(41)	Hogben Farmhouse	1362778	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362778	Listing	II	Hogben Farmhouse, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(42)	Hogben House	1071214	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071214	Listing	II	Hogben House, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(43)	Falconhurst Farmhouse	1071247	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071247	Listing	II	Falconhurst Farmhouse, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(44)	Bank Farmhouse and Walls Attached	1362752	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362752	Listing	II	Bank Farmhouse and Walls Attached, Bank Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(45)	Poulton Farmhouse	1071220	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071220	Listing	II	Poulton Farmhouse, Frith Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(46)	Goldenhurst, The Old House	1071222	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071222	Listing	II	Goldenhurst, The Old House, Gigger's Green Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(47)	Belarica Cottage Beulah	1071226	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071226	Listing	II	Beulah, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(48)	Lychgate and Quadrant Walls Attached to Churchyard of St Martin	1362775	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362775	Listing	II	Lychgate and Quadrant Walls Attached to Churchyard of St Martin, Church Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(49)	Cobb's Hall	1184555	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184555	Listing	II*	Cobb's Hall, Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(50)	Goldwell	1184459	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184459	Listing	II	Goldwell, Goldwell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(51)	Goldenhurst Manor	1071221	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071221	Listing	II*	Goldenhurst Manor, Gigger's Green Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent

Bil.	List entry number	List entry number	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
(52)	Symnel Cottage	1362753	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1362753	Listing	II	Symnel Cottage, Calleywell Lane, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(53)	Goldenhurst Manor	1071221	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071221	Listing	II*	Goldenhurst Manor, Gigger's Green Road, Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(54)	Romano-British Building south of Burch's Rough	1004216	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1004216	Scheduling	n/a	Lympne, Folkestone and Hythe, Kent (extending into Aldington & Bonnington)
(55)	Royal Military Canal, Bonnington Bridge to Gigger's Green Bridge	1005129	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1005129	Scheduling	n/a	Aldington, Ashford, Kent
(56)	Royal Military Canal, Gigger's Green Bridge to Honeypot Cottage	1005130	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1005130	Scheduling	n/a	Burmarsh, Folkestone and Hythe, Kent (extending into Aldington & Bonnington)
(57)	Headstone to William Jordan about 10 metres south-east of Church of St Rumwold	1184908	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1184908	Listing	II	Headstone to William Jordan about 10 metres south-east of Church of St Rumwold, Bonnington, Ashford Kent
(58)	The Old Oak	1071195	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071195	Listing	II	The Old Oak, Bonnington, Ashford, Kent
(59)	Cherry Orchard Cottage	1071196	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071196	Listing	II	Cherry Orchard Cottage, Cherry Orchard Lane, Bonnington, Ashford, Kent
(60)	Church of St Rumwold	1071194	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1071194	Listing	I	Church of St Rumwold, Bonnington, Ashford, Kent
(61)	Thatched Cottage	1238051	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1238051	Listing	II	Thatched Cottage, Bonnington, Ashford, Kent

Historic England suggests that there may be many buildings and sites in a local planning authority's area that make a positive contribution to its local character and sense of place because of their heritage value. Although such heritage assets may not be nationally designated or even located within the boundaries of a conservation area, they may be offered some level of protection by the local planning authority identifying them on a formally adopted list of local heritage assets.

Whilst a local listing provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site is on a local list means that its conservation as a heritage asset is an objective of the NPPF and a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application. The buildings and structures of merit included in the policy were identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan's engagement process, and the reasons for their inclusion are set out in the tables below, based on the guidance and categorisation provided by Historic England.

ABC offers advice to owners of heritage buildings and buildings that are in the two Conservation Areas. Development in conservation areas is more strictly controlled than elsewhere, the intention being not to prevent change but to ensure that the main features of the area are conserved and that new development respects local character. Owners of properties in Clap Hill or Church Lane Conservation Areas will need to apply for planning permission for certain alterations which would normally be 'permitted development'. For example, when any of the following are proposed:

- erecting or altering a building, such as a garden shed, in the curtilage of a dwelling house which is larger than 10 square metres and more than 20 metres from the rear of the dwelling or sits beyond the side wall of the dwelling;
- installing external cladding such as weatherboarding or false stone;
- installing roof dormers.

Planning permission is required to demolish a building that exceeds 115 cubic metres or to take down any wall, gate or fence exceeding 1 metre high where it abuts a highway, or more than 2 metres high elsewhere.

The buildings detailed on the following pages are those that are neither nationally nor locally listed, but which are considered sufficiently important historically, architecturally or archeologically to be worthy of note and are thus nominated as non-designated heritage assets in the ABNP. Thanks to Sheila Garrard for access to information compiled by the late Peter Wood, a former borough councillor and Chair of Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council.

1. Aldington Post Office stores



Address/OS reference

Aldington Post Office stores, Claphill,
Aldington, Ashford, Kent
TN25 7DA

Ownership details (including contact information)

Privately owned

Short description

Aldington Post Office stores is the original village convenience store. The building dates from about 1900, possibly earlier, and is white rendered with three sash windows to the front elevation, painted in corporate green colours. The two-storey building has a plain tiled roof with large chimney breasts to both ends. Whilst not a listed building, the structure is key to the Conservation Area in which it is sited. There has been an extension to the rear of the property. The light-coloured rendering is part of the local vernacular, and the contrasting dark window surrounds, canopy and doors provide strong local identity. The shop and Post Office services provide the local community with everyday convenience shopping and banking services that are increasingly rare in rural communities.

Date of construction (if known)

Circa 1847–1890

Architectural significance

The white-rendered building, with its distinctive contrasting window surrounds and shop canopy, have formed part of the street scene for generations.

Over the years the shop has lost its associated land to development, retaining a small area for car parking.

Historical significance

In the past every village had a local shop, though few remain today. In living memory, there was a shop in Bonnington known as The Old Post Office. It was located at Easton’s Corner, which lies at the junction between Boat Lane and New Road Hill and is thus on the very boundary between Aldington and Bonnington. The Old Post Office made way for The Nook in 2001.

Aldington is recorded as having its own Post Office and shop in various census documents. Circa 1875, Robert Scott is recorded as passing his business on to a John Francis, who in turn passed it on in around 1890 to James Rayner, whose son Edward is commemorated on the Aldington War Memorial (though the family had moved to Ashford at the time of his death). The village Post Office store at Aldington Corner, owned and run by James Rayner, boasted not only groceries and W.&A. Gilbey Wines and Spirits, but also ‘post, money order, telegraphic, express delivery, parcel post, savings bank, annuity and insurance’ services. The village also had daily collections (including Sundays) from wall letterboxes at Ruffins Hill and the Frith.

Villagescape significance

Aldington Post Office is a key building in the Clap Hill Conservation Area and, although not a listed building, is key to the local character. Its location is central to the Conservation Area and thus the external appearance of the building is important.

Social significance

The building was recently nominated by the Parish Council to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. It provides a vital function for the community as a whole, as a Post Office and bank as well as small shop for a village that has few public services, including very limited transport options into Ashford. Listing as a community asset was accepted by ABC in 2022.

2. Aldington Primary School



Address/OS reference	Roman Road, Aldington, Ashford TN25 7EE
Ownership details (including contact information)	KCC
Short description	A coeducational primary school for children aged 5–11 years that has been part of Aldington since 1842.
Date of construction (if known)	1842–1844
Architectural significance	Built from local ragstone, Aldington Primary School forms a key part of the street scene at the eastern end of Roman Road. With its Victorian white-painted facias and ragstone construction and perimeter wall, it is typical of its period and now forms an unlisted but distinctly historic building. The school has been extended several times, but its strong Victorian identity has remained.
Historical significance	The school in Aldington was originally established by Mr W. Holmes, who in 1790 took a class of 10 pupils at the Lady Chapel in St. Martin's Church. By 1815 the class progressed to include 20 of Aldington's poor children and by 1818 a further 21 girls joined the school. By 1841 the school became too large to be held in the church and on Christmas Eve 1841 the Parish Vestry meeting formed a committee to meet William Deedes Esq., an ancestor of the Late Lord Deedes, to discuss 'the building of School Rooms and endowing the same'. William Deedes paid for a school to be built. In 1897 William Deedes again supported the school and it was extended. The works also included a new

toilet block, albeit a separate structure requiring the user to brave exposure to the elements in order to utilise the ‘bucket loos’. This lavatory block, which was prone to frozen and burst pipes, was finally demolished in October 1993 to be replaced by modern purpose-built facilities. In 1903 the school passed from the Church of England to KCC and in 1948 it became a primary school. More facilities were added in 1994, including temporary classrooms, which were only pulled down in 2003. In 2004 Aldington Primary School finally had permanent classrooms built and a new hall.

Villagescape significance

The school is a local landmark and, as a (comparatively) large building made from ragstone, is a characteristic of the neighbourhood area vernacular.

Social significance

Having a primary school in the village is important to the community; it enables young families to get to know each other and children to develop friendship groups. Having a strong community and services within the village is vital. Beyond primary education, all local children have to travel to school in either Ashford, Folkestone or Canterbury.

3. The Reynolds Playing Field gate



Address/OS reference	Roman Road, Aldington
Ownership details (including contact information)	Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council/ Reynolds Association
Short description	The gate stands at the entrance to Reynolds Playing Field. It was built by the Parish Council from local ragstone as a landmark and memorial.
Date of construction (if known)	1956
Architectural significance	The gate is built from local ragstone and wood, like many key buildings and local memorials. It was made by local craftsmen to acknowledge the significance of the Reynolds Playing Field, which was gifted to the Parish Council by Capt. John Wells Reynolds. Reynolds Playing Field lies adjacent to Quarry Field, the latter being created on the ragstone quarry that had once dominated and divided the village. The wooden arch and original gate were made by carpenter Percy Hooker of Roman Road, whose family worked on the Deedes Estate (Aldington – A brief history, 3rd ed.). The gate is currently being refurbished by Rod Gibbs of Church Lane.

Historical significance

The Reynolds gate is an historical reminder of a former resident family and their generous gift to the neighbourhood area.

‘John Wells Reynolds was born in Lincolnshire in 1881. At the age of thirty-three, he joined the county regiment, was commissioned and rose to the rank of Captain. During the terrible battle of Loos, he was seriously wounded and lay for days in no-man’s-land.

He was eventually discovered by the Germans and taken to hospital, where his left arm was amputated. He was partially blinded in one eye, lost several fingers in the remaining hand and retained shrapnel in his body for the rest of his long life. Under a Red Cross agreement, he was consequently repatriated via Switzerland.

John Reynolds became Secretary of the Doncaster Branch of the NFU in April 1921. It was then struggling for recognition as the farmers’ voice. He also went into politics as Conservative candidate for Doncaster and was narrowly defeated by Labour’s Tom Williams, who later became a renowned Minister of Agriculture during the Second World War (WWII).

He came south to Kent and settled in Aldington in 1927. The county was then a minor bastion of the NFU and, in subsequent years, John did much to strengthen its position in the national organisation.

He had married Hilda Trotter and they had a son, Bernard. They lived for some time at Tudor Cottage, Calleywell Lane, later moving to The Dukes, Bank Road.

A keen Army man, Captain Reynolds was delighted when his son, Bernard, chose to make a career in the Service. It came, therefore, as a particularly bitter blow to him and Mrs Reynolds when their son died after being badly burned in a tent fire during a Territorial Army Camp at Bridlington in 1934.

Bernard Wells Reynolds ‘of Tudor Cottage, Aldington’ was the son of John Reynolds and Hilda Trotter. Born in 1909, he died in a fire on 19 August 1934 at Bridlington, Yorkshire, whilst in service with the Armed Forces and was buried in St Martin’s Churchyard, Aldington. Probate was granted to his father John Wells Reynolds ‘retired captain H.M. Army’ in March 1955 (Probate Calendar 1955). He used the money to purchase the field adjacent to the village hall from KCC, also in 1955, which he bequeathed on his death that same year to the village for sport and recreational use in memory of his son.

Capt. John Reynolds devoted his energy to many local organisations, including The Royal British Legion, the Nursing Association and the Home Guard. During WWII, Aldington, in common with all other villages and towns, was required to organise civil defence measures. In Aldington’s case this included the establishment and maintenance of 6 Air Raid Wardens based at the ‘Quarry Hut’ and under the command of Capt. J.M. Reynolds, 4 First Aid Wardens with their aid post at the Walnut Tree, 125 registered Firefighters, 106 members of the W.V.S., a rest centre at the village hall and a clothing depot at Wardenhurst. In addition, D. Hooker and G.L. Boulden acted as Special Constables, while most women were engaged in fire watching.

John Reynolds was also a Sidesman of St. Martin’s Church, President of the Village Hall Committee, a Parish Councillor and President of both the cricket and football teams as well as being Chairman of the Aldington & Bonnington Ex-Servicemen’s Club for twenty-two years.’ (Abridged from *Aldington – A brief history*, 3rd ed., by John Wood and Christine Rayner)

The Reynolds gate started life as the entrance to the field that was bought by Capt. John Reynolds and presented to the youth of the village just before his death in October 1955. The wooden arch and original gate were made by carpenter Percy Hooker and were officially unveiled on 11 November 1956.

Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council commissioned the surrounding ragstone walls that today frame the Reynolds gate as a physical memorial to Capt. John Reynolds, his son Bernard and all who gave their lives in service to their country 1914–2014. The wider tribute is carried on a plaque on the rear of the wall. Built by local craftsmen from local materials, the gate is maintained by the Parish Council. Though secondary to the Aldington War Memorial, and never used as a gate due to the open access onto Reynolds Field, it commemorates significant events and personalities from the past. It thus provides an intriguing memorial to a part of the history of Aldington.

Villagescape significance

The Reynolds gate is highly visible from Roman Road, lying close to the Reynolds children's play area and flanked by regularly used benches that face the cricket pitch.

Social significance

Whilst no longer an actual gateway, due to the open nature of the public playing field, the Reynolds gate forms a memorial to the family that donated Reynolds Field and to the war efforts of this community. Reynolds Playing Field is central to the village and to this day is the place where the community gathers on sunny days to relax, stage informal family games and let children play. It is the scene for community events such as the annual village fete and is the home ground for Aldington Cricket Club.

4. Aldington War Memorial



Address/OS reference	Roman Road, Aldington
Ownership details (including contact information)	Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council
Short description	The War Memorial commemorates 49 men and one woman from Aldington, Bonnington and Hurst who lost their lives during the two World Wars.
Date of construction (if known)	Dedicated 2 July 2016
Architectural significance	<p>The 9ft-high monument, shaped as an ‘A’, was designed by Phil Cowell, who then lived in Quarry Wood, and is made from Kent ragstone and Bethersden marble, a hard, decorative stone found in and around the Ashford area. It was constructed by local builders, Lloyd Jason and Taylor Earnshaw. Both the stone and the marble were donated by Martin Boulden, a local farmer and then Chairman of the Parish Council, who was approached by the instigator of the memorial, David Hughes, for support and suggested the dressed stone might be suitable, given Aldington’s historic link with ragstone quarrying. All stone was retrieved from Boulden farmed land. The ragstone was the remains of an 1830s’ barn that had been damaged by fire. Ragstone has historic significance given the quarrying that took place in Aldington and was one of the main local industries, aside from farming, at the beginning of the 20th century.</p>

Historical significance

The War Memorial is the only place that all 50 Aldington, Bonnington and Hurst residents are named. It was built following a long campaign by local resident David Hughes, who, when he was a child, was approached by a family from London looking to lay flowers on the village war memorial. He told them that Aldington did not have one and, instead, led them to a plaque in the local chapel. The family told him that their deceased relative was not listed. He later discovered that there were 23 names missing from the church and chapel plaques because the deceased, or their families, did not regularly attend local places of worship. He determined that the village would have a war memorial.

Villagescape significance

The War Memorial is central to Roman Road and built as a community asset as part of the development of Badgers Close. It is managed as a community garden.

Social significance

The War Memorial is the location for community gathering and remembrance on Remembrance Sunday each year and for other commemorative occasions relevant to World War anniversaries.

The incorporated benches and flowerbeds are maintained by the community and provide a place to rest and to reflect.

The flagpole is used to raise and lower flags to join in moments of national significance.

5. Aldington War Memorial



Address/OS reference	Roman Road/Ragstone Hollow, Aldington
Ownership details (including contact information)	Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council
Short description	The memorial stone was put in place by the Parish Council in 2000 as a landmark and memorial.
Date of construction (if known)	2000
Architectural significance	The slab of ragstone came from Nichol's quarry, a local site nearby, and was installed at the request of Aldington & Bonnington Parish Council. Ragstone is a locally significant material due to the quarrying that took place in the village for many years.
Historical significance	<p>The stone commemorates the Millennium – the change of century was felt very significant at the time, and the Parish Council wished to mark the occasion. The Aldington Millennium Stone was unveiled by Lord Deedes of Aldington (William Francis Deedes), journalist and politician (born 1 June 1913; died 17 August 2007). Bill Deedes, of New Hayters, Forge Hill, held several roles in government up to 1962, after which he chaired a select committee until the Conservatives were defeated. He then became the editor of the Daily Telegraph from 1974 to 1985.</p>
Villagescape significance	The Millennium Stone is situated on a green space adjacent to Roman Road, so creates a prominent feature. It stands opposite the War Memorial and a short distance west of the Reynolds gate, these monuments forming a trio in the heart of the village.
Social significance	The Stone commemorates the turn of the 20th to the 21st century and provides a local landmark.

6. The Mission Hall



Address/OS reference	1 Forge Hill, Aldington, Ashford TN25 7DT
Ownership details (including contact information)	Aldington Evangelical Mission
Short description	Church hall and meeting place on Forge Hill
Date of construction (if known)	1896 (date on front of building, though research suggests this building was constructed in 1922)
<p>Architectural significance Made from red brick, the building is most significant for its heritage as a Quaker Friends Meeting Hall and subsequently for its use as a Baptist and Evangelical church.</p>	
<p>Historical significance The Mission Hall on Forge Hill has a long history as a community building that dates back to its use for Quaker mission work in the late 18th century. In the 17th century, Quakers were persecuted for refusing to attend worship in the ‘steeple houses’ of the established church and resisting payment of tithes and other taxes. Eminent Quakers John Stubbs and William Caxton visited Ashford in 1655, establishing a group in Ashford and surrounding villages, including Wye and Mersham. Towards the end of the 19th century the movement began to grow again, based upon an evangelical revival that was mirrored in many other non-conformist groups. In Ashford, this resulted in the development of the Mission Halls in Aldington and Challock.</p> <p>Aldington Mission Hall was bought in 1890 and the original building inaugurated in 1896. The mission work was so successful that in 1908 a Friend was appointed to live in Aldington to promote the work in the village and the current hall was built in 1922 as a Friends (Quaker) Meeting Hall. It then passed to the Baptists in 1942 and is now an Evangelical Mission Hall. Nearby, in what is now the southern end of the Walnut Tree public house garden, a Methodist cemetery was established in 1665.</p>	
<p>Villagescape significance - The Mission Hall is one of two community meeting spaces in Aldington. It is a landmark building.</p>	
<p>Social significance The Mission Hall is evidence of the presence of the Quaker movement in Ashford. Its use as a church continues today and, for the last 10–15 years, it has been the location of the office for Aldington & Bonnington Parish Clerk. The building contains a War Memorial to those who lost their lives in the two Great Wars and whose families were members of this church.</p>	

7. Kentish ragstone walling



Address/OS reference	See table below for locations
Ownership details (including contact information)	As above
Short description	<p>Kentish ragstone is decorative, medium-grey limestone, occasionally with associated nodular or bedded chert layers. Variations in the proportions of quartz grains, glauconite and carbonate cement/matrix have contributed to the differing workability and weathering characteristics of the stone.</p> <p>There are numerous examples of the use of the stone in the neighbourhood area, adding greatly to the recognisable local character.</p>
Date of construction (if known)	<p>The Hythe Beds of Kent, stretching from Folkestone to Maidstone and beyond, have been a source of limestone for hundreds of years. Ragstone has been used across Kent since Roman times. It is therefore difficult to date the many walls. Materials as valuable as ragstone were also often reused in rural communities. The Brabourne archives show that, when Bank Farm was purchased by the estate in 1828, the farm included a stone quarry and lime kiln.</p> <p>Aldington Primary School was built using ragstone in 1842, showing that use of the stone was prevalent at this time.</p>
Architectural significance	<p>The material is characteristic of the area and across Kent (and further afield). There is only one working ragstone quarry remaining in the county and the material is therefore in short supply.</p>

Historical significance

Ragstone’s use is widespread across Kent. In addition to its use locally, this building stone was transported in substantial quantities by boat along the Rivers Medway and Thames to London, where it was used extensively for building in the city and in neighbouring counties from Roman times to the 19th century.

Aldington has a particular historic link to ragstone quarrying, which was one of the main local industries, aside from farming, through the 19th and 20th centuries. There was more than one quarry in Aldington, although use of ragstone for building pre-dates them. The best quality stone was used as a prestigious building material by the Saxons and Normans, as can be seen in the oldest parts of St. Martin’s Church. Small-scale artisanal use of ragstone gave way to industrial use for road building in the late 19th century. Ragstone used for boundary walls will almost certainly have originated from the local quarries. The War Memorial is made from re-purposed ragstone donated from an old and collapsing barn.

Villagescape significance

The ragstone walls provide an important visual aspect of the village. There is discussion ongoing with ABC to designate part of the village (along part of Forge Hill, to where it meets Roman Road), as a Conservation Area, which would recognise the value of the ragstone walling. Ragstone walling is identified as a key feature in this area in the Ashford Landscape Character Appraisal 2005 (p.42), being characteristic of the Wealden Greensand Character Area.

Social significance

As noted above, ragstone quarrying was a key industry in Aldington in the early 20th century. It remains in living memory as an historic part of Aldington, though the more recent quarrying was to supply stone for road building. Ragstone use in local properties is reflective of the status of the family within, given the cost and work involved in quarrying the stone.

Ragstone walling can be found around both parishes. Those at the following locations contribute significantly to the built form of the core village, and their maintenance is particularly important:

Road	Property Name	Notes
Forge Hill	Walnut Tree public house	Listed building with painted ragstone boundary wall onto Roman Road
	Cliffe House	Boundary wall
	Forge House	Boundary wall
	Forge Cottage	Boundary wall
	(Shepherd Meadow)	Low front boundary wall here until June 2023
	Cloud End	Boundary wall
	Glyfada	Boundary wall
	Wayside	Boundary wall
	Porter Field	Boundary wall
	Crispins Rise	Boundary wall
	St. Martins Bungalow	Small boundary wall by garden gate
Roman Road	St. Martins House	Small boundary wall by garden gate
	St. Martins Cottage	Boundary wall
	Belerica Cottage	Boundary wall
	Tosca	Small remnant to left of property
	Chestnut Lodge	Boundary wall
	Allendale	Boundary wall
	Aldington Primary School	Original parts of building and boundary wall



Address/OS reference	Roman Road, Aldington, TN25 7DH
Ownership details (including contact information)	Quinton Holdings Limited Camburgh House, 27 New Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3DN
Short description	Semi-detached, two-storey, late 18th-century cottage, tile clad with vertical hung Kent peg tiles, typical of the Kentish vernacular.
Date of construction (if known)	Late 18th century or earlier
Architectural significance	Materials include: white render, timber doors and windows, and clay tiles. There is a ragstone boundary wall to the front of the property. The cottage received planning permission for a glass link extension and alterations to external features in February 2023, subject to the use of particular materials. This was to safeguard the characteristics, historic fabric and appearance of what was described by Planning Officers as a non-designated heritage asset.
Historical significance	ABC considers Coopers Cottage to be a non-designated heritage asset, owing to its age and historical significance within the village. This is noted in the Officer Report relating to a previous planning application at the site: (https://ashfordboroughcouncil.my.site.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0h8d000000aYp7AAE/pa20222414?tabset=9095e=3).
Villagescape significance	The historic cottage is located in the central part of Aldington village.
Social Significance	The cottage has been in situ for some centuries and forms a notable historic asset in the centre of the village. Its name is most likely associated with the Cooper family, who operated in the village as family butchers from 1934. The house was previously associated with an abattoir and shop that would have been central to the rural scene of Aldington and neighbouring villages. The abattoir was demolished when Badgers Close was built. The shop remains and is today a separate business known as Aldington Fresh Foods.

APPENDIX E – POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Table 8 sets out potential improvements to the public rights of way network to be discussed with KCC's Rights of Way Team. The map key reference refers to Figure 19.

Table 8: Potential improvements to the public rights of way network

Map key ref.	Path	Potential cost	Benefits
1.	Royal Military Canal Path: upgrade, with car parking provision at the canal bridge on Frogmore Lane, also serving St Rumwold's Church, thus improving active travel links to neighbouring parishes and Wildlife Park.	Low–medium, straightforward.	High – easily accessible, level route, firm foundations, already a high-profile PROW.
2.	Saxon Shore Way: redirect to the previous (original) field route between Fostums and Copperhurst, to minimise the distance along the side of dangerous B2067.	Low–medium: depends on current attitude of landowners.	High – it is a prestigious long-distance path and could attract more recreational users. Alternatives: speed limits and signage, along with installation of a roadside path.
3.	PROW AE474 between Goldwell Lane and Aldington Church: upgrade, ideally to enable use by bikes, wheelchairs and pushchairs.	High – potential to access Sustrans funding.	High – accessed directly from village, potentially many users, avoids road, especially if an off-road circuit can be created.
4.	Aldington to Mersham: create an off-road link through the East Stour Valley and connecting to the Ashford Green Corridor (multiple paths already exist, but would need agreement with landowners on a preferred route to upgrade for bikes, etc.).	High – but could be facilitated with CIL, if the solar installation gets approval.	High – a longer route, but an important one, which would demonstrate ABC's commitment to providing a district-wide network of green routes.

Map key ref.	Path	Potential cost	Benefits
5.	East Stour Valley: create a walkable route along the valley, connecting Ashford Green Corridor with Otterpool Park; strengthen links between the neighbourhood area and Otterpool Park – e.g. by creating a walkable verge along Church Lane.	High – could also be facilitated with CIL, from the new town.	High – would enable residents of the new town to benefit from access to the Aldington & Bonnington paths network and thereby to the local facilities.
6.	PROWs obstructed by the converter station in the north: restore.	Medium – should be funded by station operators.	Medium – would improve links to Sellindge and through to North Downs.
7.	Goldwell Lane/Calleywell Lane circuit: make it one-way, or a 20 mph zone (with the rest of the village), with the roadsides maintained for safer use by walkers and cyclists.	Low–medium, but would have to persuade local residents and KCC to change traffic arrangements.	Discussions should be proposed with KCC’s Active Travel Lead to devise an innovative solution that could operate as a pilot, with potential for wider introduction in the county.

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