

Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Our Parish – Our Future – Our Say

2018 – 2031



Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2031

December 2019

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Foreword

In a relatively short timescale for such a huge body of work, the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to make Preston a great place to live, now and for future generations. It covers the whole area of the Parish for the time period to 2031.

The Localism Act, which came into being in November 2011, devolves greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions that affect them, hence the theme adopted for the Plan of Our Parish - Our Future - Our Say.

The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the whole Parish and to help deliver the local community's wishes and needs for the plan period 2018 – 2031. The Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that will be incorporated into the District Planning Framework and must be used by North Herts District Council in determining planning applications. As well as policies for housing and development needs, the vision and objectives include plans for social and environmental issues such as transport, landscape, heritage and wildlife.

Our plan has been produced by a Steering Group, acting on behalf of the Parish Council, incorporating the views of the residents of the Parish of Preston. The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has consulted and listened to the community on a wide range of issues that will influence the wellbeing, sustainability and long-term preservation of our small rural community. Every effort has been made to make sure that the views and policies contained in our Neighbourhood Plan reflect those of the majority of the residents of the Parish.

By consulting with North Herts District Council and other key stakeholders, we have ensured that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the objectives of the Localism Act 2011. Once the Plan has been made, following a favourable local referendum, it will sit alongside North Herts District Council's Local Plan. Both of these will be used when deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

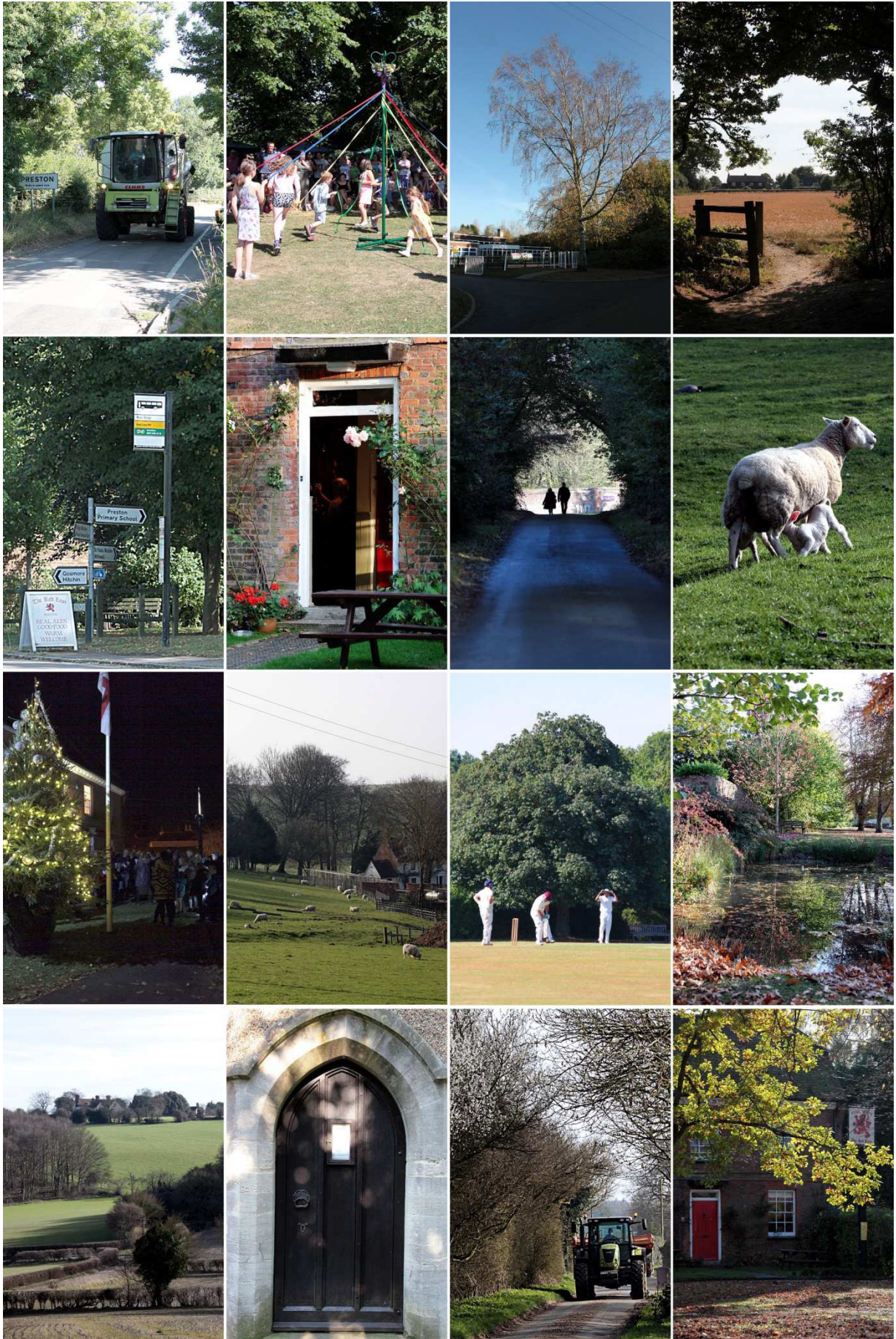
On behalf of Preston Parish Council, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Steering Group:

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

who have worked tremendously hard for the past two and a half years to produce this Plan.

My sincere thanks also to the many others, too numerous to mention here, who have been involved in and committed to the production of our Neighbourhood Plan. They are named and their inputs acknowledged in Appendix A of the Plan.

John Healey
Chairman, Preston Parish Council
February 2019

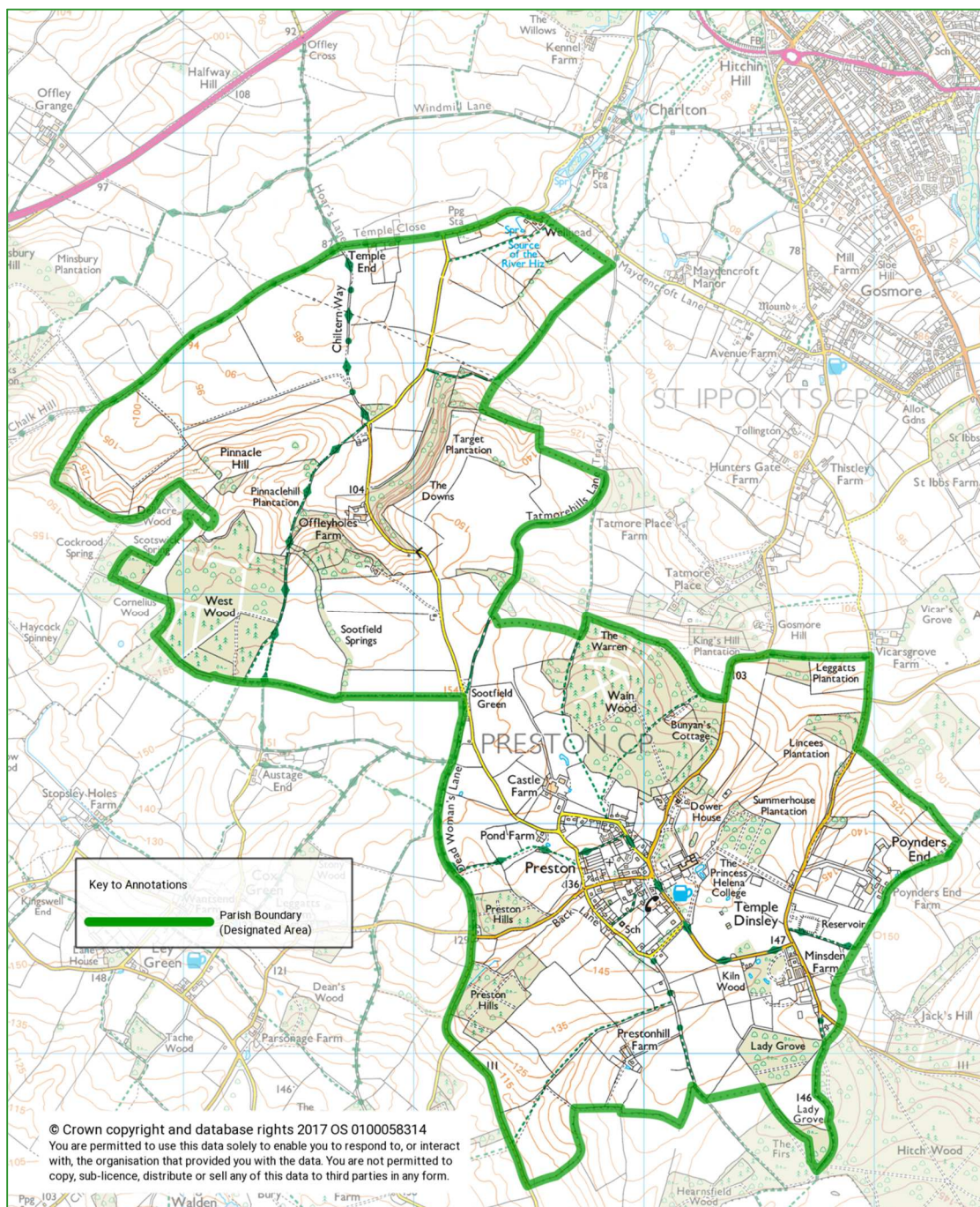


1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It forms part of the Government's current approach to planning.
- 1.2 The Plan has been developed under the Localism Act (2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation (2012), which was introduced to regulate the formation and approval of neighbourhood plans.
- 1.3 The Plan has been developed in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Our plan has also been developed in accordance with the saved policies of the 1996 North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) Local Plan which do not conflict with the NPPF. In addition, our plan's policies conform to the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood planning now provides an opportunity for the community to have a real say over local decision making, to achieve its long-standing goals through the planning system and address the challenges and opportunities facing the future vitality of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on extensive research and influenced by robust engagement with the local community. When the Plan is made it will have very significant weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan was commissioned by Preston Parish Council following a Parish Meeting on 26 June 2016 and part funded by them. Other funding came from a Locality Grant from central Government and a grant from NHDC. A Steering Group of local residents developed the Plan based on the principles of sustainable development.
- 1.6 Sustainable development is about positive growth; making economic, social and environmental progress for present and future generations. The Steering Group has taken due regard of these three dimensions which constitute what is sustainable in planning terms, according to the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - a. an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b. a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c. an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 1.7 The policies and projects in the Plan reflect the views of local people gathered through a series of consultation events, questionnaires, detailed stakeholder sessions and examination of relevant documents. The Plan references the qualitative and quantitative outputs from these activities, particularly in relation to the provision of evidence in support of the policies and projects. The Steering Group is grateful to all residents and organisations who have contributed to the evidence, objectives and policies for the Plan.
- 1.8 Some of the points raised by local people are not within the remit of either the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council: aircraft noise and pollution and lights from Luton Airport. Other points and ideas raised during the Regulation 14 Consultation have been incorporated into a Project List which is contained in Appendix G on page 107.

Preston Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



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

June 14 2016	Designated Area approved
June 26 2016	Village Meeting decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan
July 14 2016	Steering Group Inaugural Meeting
September 8 2016	Neighbourhood Plan website launched



October 2016	CPRE Training Day
November 5 2016	Drop in session – draft of Adult Questionnaire piloted
November 6 2016	The Insight Fountain engaged
December 2016	Young Residents' Questionnaire piloted Questionnaires designed and printing commissioned
January 12 – 15 2017	Main delivery phase of Questionnaires



Jan 16 – Feb 7 2017	Continued delivery of outstanding Questionnaires
Jan 28 – Feb 10 2017	Collection of completed Questionnaires
February 13 2017	Analysis begun
March 6 2017	Initial analysis results review with The Insight Fountain
March 9 2017	Additional analysis of open questions
April 2017	Report completed and printed
April 30 2017	Report presented to Parishioners

October 5 & 7 2017

Village Drop In Sessions: Proposed Vision and Objectives



October 8 - 21 2017

Online Village Consultation: Proposed Vision and Objectives

Jan 1 – Feb 18 2018

Publicity for Regulation 14 Consultation (electronic, print and posters)



Jan 8 – Feb 18 2018

Regulation 14 Consultation

January 11 & 13 and
February 8 & 10 2018

Village Drop In Sessions: Regulation 14 Consultation. A total of 36 people attended: 9 in January and 27 in February



January 8 2018

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination Consultation, organised by NHDC

February –
March 2018

All comments considered. Spreadsheet of comments and actions prepared. Regulation 14 draft amended to Submission draft

April 27 2018

Submission Version – 2018, submitted to NHDC

May 24 – July 5 2018

Regulation 16 Consultation

- 2.1 The Steering Group recognised that effective communication and community engagement were essential to informing and involving residents in the development of the Plan. The mechanisms to achieve this are summarised below.
- 2.2 The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Website www.preston-np.org.uk has been central to the Neighbourhood Plan communication process. The website keeps residents and other interested parties informed during each phase of the development of the Plan. It contains up to date news, information on developing the Plan, all Steering Group papers, minutes of meetings, consultation results, all Neighbourhood Plan documents and contact information.
- 2.3 Updates on progress have also been provided in the free parish magazine which is hand delivered monthly to all households in the parish, as well as being published on the village website. www.prestonvillageherts.com
- 2.4 Throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan the Steering Group has kept in close communication with Officers and local Councillors from NHDC.
- 2.5 The Steering Group has also used posters displayed on notice boards within the parish and flyers delivered to every household, updates at all Parish Council meetings, drop in sessions to share updates and garner opinions from parishioners and word of mouth to spread news of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Please see examples in the Consultation Statement Appendix.
- 2.6 Following the Parish Meeting, the Parish Council asked residents to come forward if they were interested in being part of a Steering Group to guide and produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on Thursday 16 July 2016 comprising a Chairman, Vice Chair, Parish Council representative, Clerk and 2 other members. During the following two months the Steering Group developed a Constitution, Code of Conduct and Project Plan.
- 2.7 Between August and the end of the year the focus was on the development of a comprehensive Questionnaire. During the drafting stage, five key themes emerged: Quality of Life, Amenities and Facilities, Housing and Development, Environment and Heritage and Transport and Communication.
- 2.8 In January 2017 the Questionnaire was personally distributed to every household in the parish. One Questionnaire for each adult of 16 years or older, one Youth Questionnaire for each young person aged 10-15 and all under 10's were invited to write or draw something that depicted why they liked living in Preston. The results were again collected personally by a band of volunteers. 150 out of 165 Households took part with a 91% response rate. 302 out of 336 adults took part, giving a 90% individual adult response rate. 24 out of 28 young people took part giving an 86% individual youth response rate.
- 2.9 The results were analysed during February and March by Becky Lewis of The Insight Fountain who said, "We can be confident that the data is robust and is based on a sample that is representative of the population of Preston in 2017 giving reliable and valid results." The full Questionnaire and Analysis Report can be found in the Consultation Statement Appendix.
- 2.10 In April 2017 the Report was completed and printed and on 30 April it was presented at a Village Meeting following which every household in the parish was given a full copy of the Report. The meeting was publicised: online, in newsletters, via e-mails and with flyers – as part of which any business, resident in the parish, was also asked to express their views.

- 2.11** In October 2017 two drop in sessions (one on a weekday evening and one on a Saturday morning) were held, to gain residents' views on the draft Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. The drafts were also hosted on the website for residents to leave views and comments. All known local landowners were also invited. Not all of these acknowledged our communication and of those who did only the St. Paul's Walden Estate attended.
- 2.12** A Consultation Statement has been produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. The statement outlines the process of community engagement, lists consultees, and describes the consultation techniques used and events held, including reports of events.
- 2.13** The extensive community engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan survey helped to prepare a draft vision and set of objectives that were subsequently supported by residents. In particular, the presentation that was given to residents on April 30 2017 used the survey results to draw out what was important to the community and what improvements they would like to see. For example, the survey provided evidence on the preference that was expressed for small developments of homes to suit a variety of local needs; this was translated into Objectives H1 and H3. (The Neighbourhood Plan Survey Meeting Results Presentation can be found at Appendix 10 of the Consultation Statement).
- 2.14** The policies in the plan set out how these objectives will be achieved in order to fulfil residents' aspirations. For example, Policies HD1, HD3 and HD4 have been written to guide the size, type and tenure of new homes.
- 2.15** Regulation 14 Consultation took place between 8 January and 18 February 2018. This included four drop-in sessions with 36 attendees. Comments were received from a total of 75 individuals and organisations. In addition to the comments which provided support for the Neighbourhood Plan, over 120 helpful suggestions were made.
- 2.16** The publicity for the Regulation 14 Consultation included contacting parishioners through the Village Newsletter, by email through the Parish Council and Preston Trust email lists, posters throughout the parish and via the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Website. The website hosted a copy of the draft Neighbourhood Plan and a comments form. Hard copies of the draft Plan were also available to borrow and a copy was available in The Red Lion. There was also a telephone line (01462 434403) open daily from 9 am to 8 pm. Four drop in sessions were held in the Village Hall on 11 and 13 January and 8 and 10 February 2018 (two on a Thursday evening and two on a Saturday morning) and the community were encouraged to attend to talk through the draft Plan and ask questions to clarify understanding or to discuss specific issues. Three computer stations with monitors were set up for anyone who wished to run through the draft Plan and complete the comments form there and then.
- 2.17** In January 2018 a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination report was commissioned by North Herts District Council which concluded that The Preston Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore a SEA is not required.
- 2.18** The Regulation 16 Consultation, organised by NHDC, was conducted for a six week period from May 24 to July 5 2018. Responses were made available online by NHDC and were used by the Steering Group to amend and enhance the Neighbourhood Plan and to ensure it complied with the policies of the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011- 2031.

2.19 Following the publication of the Inspector’s main modifications to the NHDC Local Plan Submission, the Parish Council decided to review the modifications and make appropriate changes to this Neighbourhood Plan in line with the emerging Local Plan. The Second Submission draft was sent to NHDC on February 11 2019.

2.20 In January 2019, a second Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination report was commissioned by North Herts District Council.

Evidence Base

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

- The evidence base for North Herts District Plan
- The NPPF published in July 2018
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Office for National Statistics: 2011 Census
- English Heritage
- Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
- The views of local residents, landowners and businesses from questionnaire responses, exhibitions and meetings
- Neighbourhood Plans from Parish Councils throughout England
- Environmental research on the Wildlife of the Parish carried out by Dr. Jane Sears
- Information from a History of Preston in Hertfordshire by Philip Wray
- HCC: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
- NHDC: North Hertfordshire Museum
- Ordnance Survey
- National Biodiversity Network data
- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust

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



3. Preston Parish

- 3.1 The Parish of Preston is located in the North Hertfordshire District of Hertfordshire. It is 4 miles south of Hitchin at the north east end of the Chiltern Hills and 38 miles north of Central London. The parish covers an area of 682 hectares.
- 3.2 Historically, Preston was part of the Parish of Hitchin, becoming a separate civil parish in 1894. The parish covers the village and surrounding countryside.
- 3.3 The parish is a 'Chiltern' parish as, despite its small size, it stretches across the Chiltern escarpment, from the foot of the scarp slope at Wellhead Farm and its spring source of the river Hiz, up the short steep scarp slope by Offley Holes Farm, and then southwards gently down the dip slope to the village and on down to Hitch Wood and the B651 road. These landscape changes in altitude and gradient give subtly changing vistas across the length and breadth of the parish.
- 3.4 Human habitation here for centuries gives us today a man-made landscape of woodland, grassland, hedges and much arable farmland. This varied land use adds to the visual attractiveness of the parish.
- 3.5 Hitch Wood, Wain Wood and West Wood are today the remnants of more extensive forests which provided fuel and food for families as well as hunting and shooting opportunities for the gentry.
- 3.6 One of Preston's charms is that the village is not overlooked or dominated by hills or high ground. At 143 metres, the village is only 10 metres below the highest point of Hertfordshire. The drawback to this sense of spaciousness is Preston's exposure to the bleak easterly winds that sweep in seemingly unchecked from Siberia. www.prestonherts.co.uk/page148.html
- 3.7 Documents, artefacts and structures which survive from or in this parish give us today a glimpse of the life of our predecessors here. Perhaps two periods of significance in the last 1200 years are uniquely interesting: the medieval and Tudor era from c. 1140 – 1540, and the early 20th Century from 1900 – 1927. Little remains from the earlier period; from the later period, much can be seen and is still in use today.
- 3.8 The name Prestune is first mentioned in a document in 1185, but the manor of Dinsley is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, and it may well have existed for decades before that date. This manor was taken over by the new King, William I, and the entry records that 180 people lived there in about 40 houses; it was a sizeable population.
- 3.9 The King then gave his large manor of Hitchin to a loyal aristocratic family, the de Balliols. In c.1095 Bernard de Balliol built Dinsley Castle in this area. This structure, probably of flint walls and timber roofs, may have lasted for 200 years; its presence gave status to the agricultural village. No trace of its foundations now exists; its legacy is in the name, Castle Farm.

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

- 3.16** Herbert and Violet Fenwick, bankers, purchased the Temple Dinsley estate in 1908, and quickly engaged the services of Edwin Lutyens, architect, to enlarge the house, and Gertrude Jekyll, designer, to refashion the gardens. Both of these professionals were nationally highly respected for their skills; their work remains today. The Fenwicks continued to employ the Lutyens practice, with the construction of the 'model farm' at Ladygrove with its two lodges, the small terrace of Chequers Cottages, Kiln Wood Cottage, and Hitchwood Cottage 1-2, within this parish, and other premises just beyond the parish boundary. The innovative and distinctive designs of these buildings must have caused surprise to some villagers, but they provided new facilities and comfort. Douglas Vickers, politician, built Crunnells Green House in 1919 for his estate manager, Reginald Dawson, the Village Hall and four adjacent bungalows in the 1920s, and in 1921 a new Cricket Pavilion on his meadow, now the Recreation Ground.
- 3.17** PHC, formerly Princess Helena College, a private day and boarding school for girls and boys, purchased the Temple Dinsley estate in 1935, and still today enjoys this handsome house and its attractive gardens and park. A Nursery School now makes lively use of the Village Hall on four days each week.
- 3.18** Since the 1950s, the housing stock of the village has increased. For example, pairs of new council houses, using Swedish timber, were built in Chequers Lane. Elsewhere, a small meadow now has four detached houses, a large garden now has a new house and garage, the old school of 1849 was demolished and a new one built in Back Lane, and two new properties built upon the site, short ribbons of new houses were developed along Butchers Lane and Back Lane. The Edwardian farm buildings at Ladygrove have been converted to provide 15 new homes. On the north side of the village, the new short Templars Lane led to space for six bungalows and Castlefield for six more family homes with gardens and garages. Small extensions, conservatories, new garages and one swimming pool, have recently been added to our village landscape. See table in paragraph 5.2 on page 21.
- 3.19** Philanthropy has continued, with the purchase of The Red Lion public house by many villagers in 1983, the restoration of St. Martin's Church and its East window between 1993 and 2001, the building of the new pavilion on the Recreation Ground, contributions to the new classrooms and equipment at the Primary School, and, very recently, the provision of an improved broadband service. Created in 1990, the Preston Trust, a registered charity, has amongst its aims the preservation of features of historic or public interest, and the promotion of high standards of planning and architecture, in the parish.
- 3.20** There are 63 listed buildings and structures within the parish on 42 sites. Thirty three of these are situated in the designated Conservation Areas. Two buildings, PHC, in the Preston Conservation area, and Tudor House are Grade II*, with the remaining 61 being Grade II.
- 3.21** This is a considerable wealth of buildings of national merit within a small parish. The 13 listed houses in the parish include two, Tudor House and Sadleirs End, with material dating back to the early 16th century. The 21 listed cottages in the parish also include two with material of this date, Fig Tree Cottage and Reeves Cottage. The three outlying farms each have several barns of the 17th century. New listed structures from the 20th century, outside the complex at Temple Dinsley, include St. Martin's Church with its mausoleum and its lychgate, two pairs of fine gate piers and flanking walls at the entrance to Temple Dinsley in 1908, and the telephone kiosk on The Green from 1935.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The Vision for Preston Parish to 2031

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

We will achieve this vision by:

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



5. Objectives of the Plan

- 5.1** The majority of the community understands the need to accommodate housing growth over the next 13 years and accepts the development target proposed in the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031 of 21 units on land off Templars Lane, which is owned by the District Council. It is noted that there were 44 objections to site PR1 in response to the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Proposed Submission. Of these, 35 suggested alternative sites within the village or infilling. Only 7 wanted no development in Preston.
- 5.2** Taking into account 24 completions and permissions since 2011 the parish is estimated to see 45 additional dwellings over the Plan period. Residents feel strongly that new development should not detract from the character of the parish and should provide local benefits. There was no housing allocation for Preston in the 1996 NHDC Local Plan.

Completions and permissions since 2011

Location	Number of dwellings
Ladygrove Mews, Hitchwood Lane	10
Castlefield	6
Back Lane	1
Dower House, Hitchin Road	6
Chequers Lane	1

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

Living in Preston (Quality of Life)

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

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

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

Amenities and Facilities

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

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

Housing and Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objective H7: To seek to ensure that the impact of new development on sewage, surface water drainage and water pressure is assessed and that infrastructure, services and utilities to existing houses are improved or at least not exacerbated. To also ensure that new developments do not create flood risk and problems with the sewerage system and surface water drainage, while at the same time ensuring that any existing problems are not exacerbated.

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

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

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

Environment and Heritage

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

Objective E2: To recognise all merits of the built environment across the parish, and to seek to protect this architectural heritage, especially that of the many Heritage Assets and their settings.

Objective E3: To take special care of the Conservation Areas, ensure that development in a Conservation Area or its setting is of an appropriate scale and maintains or enhances its character, and to raise awareness of the relevant legislation.

Objective E4: To protect and improve 'greenspace' e.g. The Green and all verges, within and around the village, to protect and enhance the features of the local environment, its views and vistas and to maintain the current level of tranquillity, so as to maintain and enhance the appearance of this rural settlement.

Objective E5: To maintain and protect good access to the countryside by means of statutory and permissive footpaths and bridleways.

Objective E6: To support the conservation of flora and fauna and to maintain and enhance the different habitats and their distinctive and varied species.

Transport and Communication

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

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

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

Objective T4: To support on-going improvements to transport and utility infrastructure.



6. Introduction to Policies and Community Rights

Policies

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

- 6.1** The policies seek to achieve the objectives and deliver the Vision of the Plan and are grouped into the same five themes (see pages 21-23). Some policies apply to more than one theme.
- 6.2** The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the Government's guidance set out in the NPPF. They exist to:
- Reflect the needs and priorities of the local community (paragraphs 9, 16, 29, 91 and 92)
 - Support strategic development set out in the Local Plan (paragraph 26)
 - Identify green areas for special protection (paragraphs 99, 100 and 170)
 - Identify heritage assets for special protection (paragraphs 189 and 190)
 - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (paragraphs 140, 141)
 - Set out requirements in advance for new development in an area (paragraph 30)
 - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications (paragraph 40)
 - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole (paragraphs 8, 29, 98 and 99, 112, and 124)
- 6.3** To aid decision-makers and planning applicants, the policies under each objective are accompanied by explanatory text and supporting evidence.
- 6.4** As expected, during consultation events, the local community identified a number of projects that fall outside the remit of the planning system. Where relevant, these appear in a white box below the policies and, if appropriate, will be taken forward by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It is recognised that some suggestions may not be within the powers of either the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council. Prospective ventures proposed by local residents but which fall outside of the remit of the Parish Council are listed in the Project List which can be found in Appendix G on page 107.

Community Rights

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

- 6.8 Other community initiatives include the construction of a new pavilion on the Recreation Ground funded by a Lottery Grant which has supported Preston Cricket Club to field 6 teams during the season.
- 6.9 Another project involving local residents was the re-roofing and refurbishment of St. Martin's Church, with the addition of two new stained glass windows, both designed by Peter Caller, a local resident. Exact details of the work can be found in the information pamphlets, which are available in St Martin's for visitors. Although St Martin's is one of a very few Arts & Crafts Churches, it is not considered by English Heritage and others to be sufficiently ancient to attract grants. Hence, the work was funded by local endeavours which raised a total of £90 000 between 1985 and 2003. The restoration of the East window in 2005 cost £12 500, funded from a public appeal to the parish. Other work has been funded by families involved in the Church and internal decoration was undertaken by volunteers from the village.
- 6.10 There are four Community Rights contained within the Localism Act that came into effect in 2012 devolving power from government to communities, local authorities and individuals. They are the right to bid, to build, to challenge and to reclaim land. Three of these four may be employed by the Parish Council, individuals and parish organisations in support of the other policies in this Plan.

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

A) Community Right to Bid:

In the event that a building or land that the parish wish to preserve or use for a purpose or venture which supports one or more of the Objectives in this Plan, then this right may be used to "pause" the sale while the community attempt to raise funding to bid to acquire the land or building. For example: if a community led project develops a business model for a village store, the premises for the store may be acquired through this process.

In order for this part of the Localism Act to be used, the land or building must first have been added to the List of Assets of Community Value (ACV) held by the District Council. The assessment of possible land or buildings that could be ACVs has been added to the Project List.

B) Community Right to Build:

Combined with other rights, this right may be used to ensure that any development within the parish is consistent with the needs and wants identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2017 and any subsequent consultations. It would involve the community carrying out the building project and may, for example, ensure that a development meets the community requirements for a mix of housing and affordability or provides a new village hall.

C) Community Right to Reclaim Land:

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

7. Living in Preston (Quality of Life)

Policy QL1: Social Interaction:	28
Policy QL2: Community Quality of Life:	28
Policy QL3: Local Distinctiveness:	28

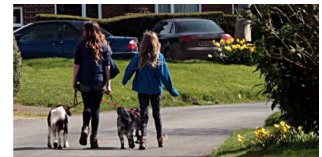
7.1 The results from the Questionnaire show that there is currently very high satisfaction (91%) with living in Preston. Residents love it for the green spaces and access to the countryside that it offers. For a community of walkers, many with dogs, the rural setting is an ideal.

7.2 Quality of life is the satisfaction in life that comes from having good health, comfort, good relationships rather than from money. It is satisfaction with the environmental, cultural or intellectual conditions under which we live.

7.3 The concept of community quality of life is often used to explore community factors, resources and services that are observed by residents as factors influencing their life quality. A community quality of life is the shared characteristics residents experience in places, which might include air and water quality, traffic or recreational opportunities and the subjective evaluations residents make of these conditions.

Policy QL2 highlights the need for certain proposals to be designed in a way in which crime prevention measures are incorporated from the outset. Where this is the case early consultation is encouraged with the Hertfordshire Constabulary Crime Design Advisor.

7.4 Preston is quiet, peaceful and tranquil. There is a good community spirit and neighbours are considered friendly, helpful and welcoming. There is a good local pub owned by villagers and easy access to more facilities and amenities in Hitchin as well as transport links to London.



- 7.5** Being part of a unique community enhances the quality of life for local residents who appreciate the character of the village with its variety of housing, both in style and age, as well as local lanes and footpaths and the green spaces of both the village and the parish. The historic and heritage aspects are important as they are key factors in the distinctiveness of the village and must be maintained.

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

Policy QL1: Social Interaction:

Development proposals for cultural, leisure, sport or commercial activities will be supported where they improve, maintain or make alternative provision for social interaction.

See also Policy AF1 and Policy AF2

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

Policy QL2: Community Quality of Life:

Development proposals should ensure that development will not have any unacceptable and adverse effect on access to clean air, water and open spaces. Development proposals will only be supported where their design and layout does not cause an unacceptable increase to the risk of exposure to toxic substances, adverse effects on wildlife and natural resources. Where appropriate to the scale and nature of the development concerned, crime prevention measures should be incorporated into the design and layout of the proposal.

See also Policies EH3, EH4, EH6, EH7 and EH8

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

Policy QL3: Local Distinctiveness:

The architecture of, and landscaping schemes in, all new developments should preserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, historic features, and rural character, thereby promoting community identity and preserving local distinctiveness.

See also Policies HD9, HD10, HD12, EH1, EH2, EH7

8. Amenities and Facilities

Policy AF1: New and Improved Community Facilities:	30
Policy AF2: Community Facility Change of Use:	30
Policy AF3: Home-based and Small Businesses:	30

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



- 8.8** For the purpose of the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan, a community facility is a building, land or other structure that provides a service or facilitates recreation for the inhabitants of Preston.
- 8.9** An important objective for this plan is to sustain and support, where appropriate, the development of facilities for the parish, particularly as the number of inhabitants will increase with potential new development.
- 8.10** Economic development is important for the future of the parish to ensure it remains a thriving community. Thirteen percent of adult residents run a business from home and one percent run a business from other premises in Preston. Connectivity is vitally important to enable these and potentially new businesses to be sustainable. See Policy TC2 on page 55.

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

Policy AF1: New and Improved Community Facilities:

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

See also Community Rights paragraphs A & B

Policy AF2: Community Facility Change of Use:

Proposals for a change of use of an existing community facility to a non-community use will not be supported unless either:

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

Proposals for a change of use of part of an existing dwelling to provide a community facility or village shop will be supported providing it is consistent with the other policies.

See also Policy QL1

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

Policy AF3: Home-based and Small Businesses:

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the change of use of all or part of a dwelling for home office use or a craft/artisan workshop, will be supported, subject to satisfying considerations in relation to design and car parking and other policies in this plan which protect the amenities of neighbours.

See also Policies HD6, HD9, TC1

9. Housing and Development

Policy HD1: Residential Development:	37
Policy HD2: Pedestrian Links and Rights of Way:	38
Policy HD3: Housing Types:	38
Policy HD4: Tenure of Housing:	38
Policy HD5: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:	39
Policy HD6: Design:	39
Policy HD7: Gardens:	39
Policy HD8: Flood Risk and Drainage Provisions:	40
Policy HD9: Residential Extensions:	40
Policy HD10: New Housing Development:	41



- 9.1** The overarching aim of this section of the plan is to deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Preston. The objectives, policies and supporting paragraphs provide the basis for appropriate housing growth in support of the District Council's housing strategy and policies.
- 9.2** The results of the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2017 provided an insight into the future housing needs of the existing population in Preston. Generally, people plan to continue living in Preston over the next 13 years, with only 8% of households likely to move out. However, residents may move out if they need a smaller property that isn't available in Preston (14%), or because they need to have better access to amenities and public transport (16%). When asked what size property people might need over the next 13 years, some said a house or a bungalow with one or two bedrooms or even retirement housing whilst an almost equal number of others might require properties with 3 or more bedrooms.

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

It is important to note that when responding to the questionnaire residents were able to choose more than one category in each question, resulting in totals of over 100%. This information represents the housing preferences of local residents recorded in the survey and does not represent a housing need.

- 9.3** As far as development is concerned, there is a preference for: smaller developments of less than five houses (63%) rather than one big development; in multiple response format preference was for two (58%) and three (63%) bedroom houses; houses to be similar in style to neighbouring properties (37%) but with some variation of styles (28%); semi-detached (59%) and detached (50%) housing and bungalows (31%); with 76% of respondents saying that all developments should have gardens. (This question was asked in relation to 5 or more houses in the survey in error. It is assumed that the same number of respondents would have indicated the need for all homes to have a garden without reference to 5 or more houses.)
- 9.4** There is support for homes to be constructed and to be run with a low carbon footprint (62% and 64% respectively) and for other sustainable features to be conditional on permissions for new homes.
- 9.5** Again, in a multiple response format, three fifths of residents asked that new houses be available for each of: families (62%); local people (60%); and first-time buyers (60%). Additionally, there was support for houses suitable for the elderly (46%) and houses suitable for downsizing (42%). There is also support for a range of tenures: owner occupied (69%), affordable/social rented housing (36%) and shared ownership (30%).

In addition, 76% of residents agreed that for developments of five houses or more that they should all have gardens. Only 2% preferred communal gardens and 10% thought some units should have gardens.

- 9.6** The results of the Neighbourhood Plan survey reflect the outcome of the Preston Housing Needs Survey 2010 which concluded that there is a requirement for 1, 2, and 3 bed units for single people and two person households who are looking to set up independent homes.
- 9.7** To achieve this, a thoughtful and innovative approach is required, which works positively with landowners and developers taking a continuing interest in the future of the village.

- 9.8** This is the approach proposed in the Plan and on the basis of this the Parish Council will look to engage positively with the statutory planning process to guide future development to provide for the housing needs and requirements of existing residents.
- 9.9** People living in Preston appreciate the special qualities the village possesses. It is a great place to live and in accommodating housing growth it will be vital that the qualities, which make Preston so successful, are protected. It will be important to ensure that historic and heritage aspects are enhanced and maintained as it is these key factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of the parish.
- 9.10** Policy HD7 comments about the provision of gardens associated with new dwellings. They are an important component of the character of the village. For the purposes of this policy a garden is defined as ‘a piece of land next to a house, with flowers, vegetables, other plants, and often grass’.
- 9.11** Policy HD9 provides policy guidance on the extension of existing houses. Proposals which are of a small scale and which are permitted development are also encouraged to follow the same design principles.
- 9.12** Landscaping issues are a key element of the design and appearance of new housing sites. They should be considered carefully as part of the determination of relevant planning applications. Landscape details should either be incorporated within planning applications or be agreed as part of the discharge of planning conditions.
- 9.13** Local people accept that new people will want to come and live in Preston and this is important to any thriving and evolving community. New housing developments should be linked into or enhance the existing village network of paths and rights of way to ensure integration with the existing community.
- 9.14** This plan is not anti-development and the community understands the need to accommodate housing growth. However, there is great concern that new development in Preston could erode the very qualities that make the village and parish special if it is not carefully managed in terms of its scale and design. This next layer of growth must create a development of quality, contributing to the character of the village and providing local benefit. It must be more than an exercise in meeting housing supply ‘numbers’ by the addition of inappropriate properties. Our objective, therefore, is to enable the provision of a choice of new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community in a manner which respects the character of the village and wider parish.
- 9.15** To ensure that these principles are met, applications for development must identify and make proposals to address any adverse impacts such development will have on the character of Preston and its facilities, as well as on parking and public transport. Section 106 agreements should be created to support appropriate proposals.

9.16 The general trend in recent years has been for new developments nationally to be built at high densities and on a large scale. There is a strong wish within the community to retain the village feel, which means plenty of green space and small-scale development. The preference of people living in the parish is for developments of less than 5 homes as this is felt to be more suited to the village environment and a number of smaller developments will tend to support incremental development over the period of the Plan.

9.17 It should be particularly noted that the need for housing for the elderly, first time buyers and those wishing to downsize has been identified throughout the consultation process as essential during the next 15-20 years in order to support and maintain a sustainable and vibrant community. It will help future-proof the imbalance of an ageing population and declining numbers of working age adults by allowing older people to remain in the community and attract young families to settle in it.

Without more appropriate housing, older residents will either have to remain in larger houses which are difficult for them to manage or move out of the village in order to find more suitable accommodation.

Without appropriate housing for younger families, including social housing, young people will continue to be priced out of living in the village.

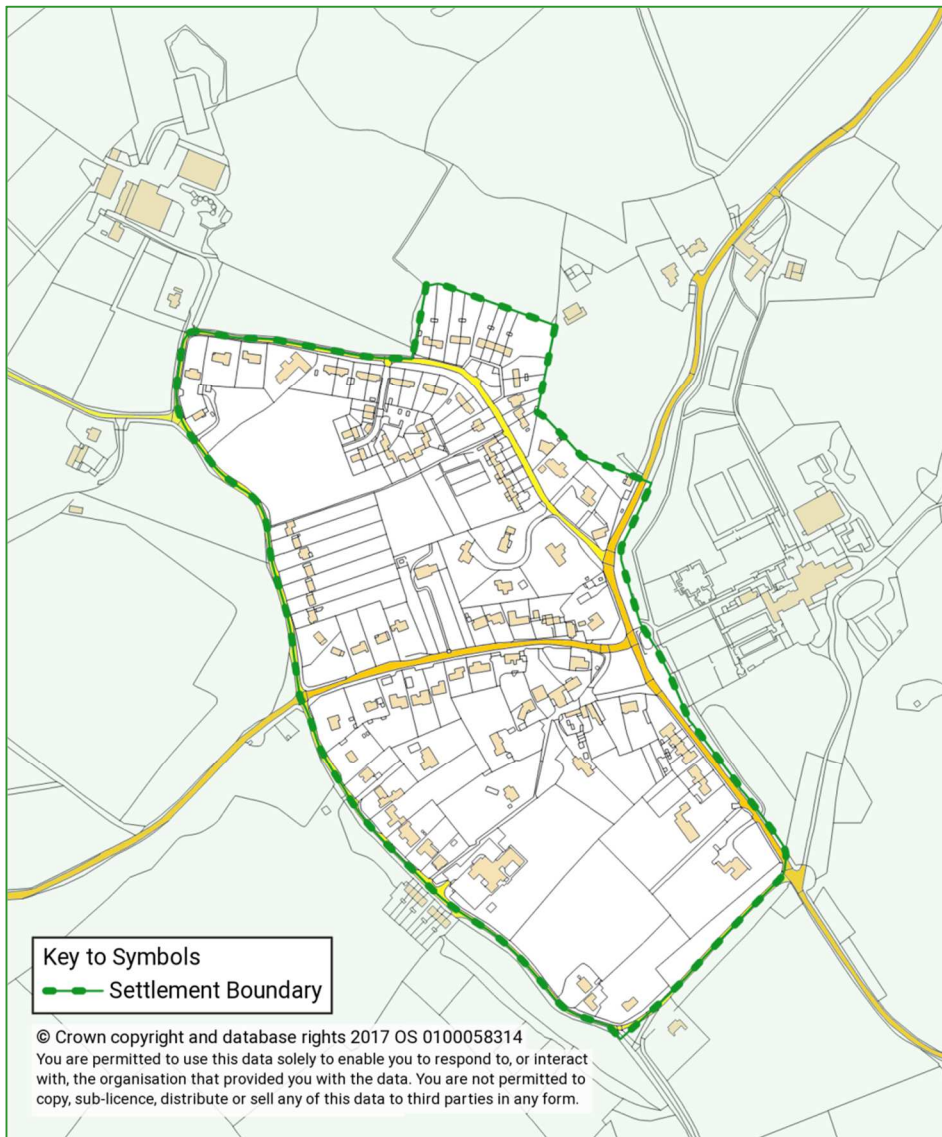
9.18 Any development undertaken in the parish must meet the requirements of the relevant Housing and Development Policies contained within this Plan in order to reduce the impact of building construction for local residents, surrounding properties and the narrow lanes within the village. In addition, the policies contained within the NHDC Local Plan 1996, the emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework must be adhered to. Developers must consult with power providers at the planning stage of any proposal.

There are existing drainage problems in some parts of the village, namely in Castlefield, Templars Lane, Chequers Lane, Church Lane and Butchers Lane. Whilst not excluding any other area in the parish where problems might emerge in the future, a developer must mitigate against exacerbating such problems.

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

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

9.20 Policy HD1 provides a context for future development within the neighbourhood area in general, and within the village in particular. It identifies a settlement boundary. It is the same boundary as that proposed in the emerging Local Plan. It provides a logical and well-defined feature within the local environment. The definition of a settlement boundary provides the basis for a spatial strategy for the neighbourhood area which seeks to concentrate new development in the village itself. This will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development in both the village and the wider neighbourhood area.



The settlement boundary includes the parcel of land proposed as a housing allocation in the emerging Local Plan (Policy PR1). The Local Plan will provide specific details on its development.

These details will need to be applied to resulting development proposals in association with the criteria in the second paragraph of the policy.

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

The aims quoted by the Building Futures Partnership are to:

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

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

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

The SuDS hierarchy as set out in the NHDC emerging Local Plan will also be followed:

1. store rainwater for later use
2. use infiltration techniques, such as porous surfaces in non-clay areas
3. attenuate rainwater in ponds or open water features for gradual release
4. attenuate rainwater by storing in tanks or sealed water features for gradual release
5. discharge rainwater direct to a watercourse
6. discharge rainwater to a surface water sewer/drain
7. discharge rainwater to the foul water sewer.

9.22 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, mixed and inclusive community. Consultation showed that residents want to have a range of types of accommodation within the parish to meet their changing needs, with families wishing to move to larger homes, older residents able to down size and young people to have independent accommodation. For first-time buyers within the parish, it is important that they can buy locally and not have to look beyond their own community. [In January 2019 the average house price in Preston was £1,033,106 compared with the Hertfordshire average price of £508,210 and the national average price of £309,922, with information taken from Zoopla.]

9.23 Other than for householder development, there will be a requirement for all proposals to submit a Construction Management Plan with the planning application whatever the size of the development. The detail contained in the Construction Management Plan should be appropriate to the size of the proposal and the potential level of impact on either residential amenities and / or obstruction to the highway, irrespective of the number of residents who will be inconvenienced.

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

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

Policy HD1: Residential Development:

The Plan defines a settlement boundary for Preston Village, see map on page 35. Proposals for residential development within the settlement boundary will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- Their height, scale and massing reflect the character of the village and its rural setting;
- Within the conservation area they preserve or enhance its special architectural or historic interest;
- Their density and layout take account of other buildings in their immediate locality; and
- They incorporate vernacular materials and characteristic design features found within the village as appropriate to their scale and location within the village.

Development proposals outside the settlement boundary will only be supported where they comply with national and local policies for development in the countryside.

See also policy HD4

References:

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: HS2, P93

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

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

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

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

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

Policy HD2: Pedestrian Links and Rights of Way:

New development proposals will be supported where they maintain the existing network and provide publicly accessible links from the development to the wider footpath network.

References:

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

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

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

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

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

Policy HD3: Housing Types:

Proposals for new homes should demonstrate the way in which they would address local housing needs. Proposals for or which include, two- and three-bedroom houses suitable for families, local people and first-time buyers will be supported.

See also Community Rights paragraphs A, B & C

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

Policy HD4: Tenure of Housing:

Development proposals for new dwellings should deliver a mix of homes, including an element of social and affordable housing, which takes account of the most up to date study of housing needs in the neighbourhood area.

See also Policy HD1

See also Community Rights paragraphs A, B & C

References

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

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Strategic Objective: HS2, P93

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

Policy HD5: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:

Proposals for the provision of measures for water conservation and landscape schemes that improve biodiversity will be encouraged. Proposals with a low carbon footprint will be encouraged. The provision of electric car charging points for all new homes will also be supported as will proposals that enable residents to work from home. Prior to occupation, each residential property shall incorporate an Electric Vehicle (EV) ready, domestic charging point.

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

Policy HD6: Design:

New housing schemes should be designed to incorporate appropriate storage facilities for refuse bins, bicycles and mobility scooters. They should also provide a minimum of 1 secure, covered cycle parking space per new residential unit.

References

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

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

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

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

Policy HD7: Gardens:

Proposals for new homes should incorporate the provision of a private garden of a size proportionate to the size of the house concerned. The provision of shared gardens will be supported where they relate to housing for the elderly in general, and for sheltered housing schemes in particular.

Objective H7: To seek to ensure that the impact of new development on sewage, surface water drainage and water pressure is assessed and that infrastructure, services and utilities to existing houses are improved or at least not exacerbated. To also ensure that new developments do not create flood risk and problems with the sewerage system and surface water drainage, while at the same time ensuring that any existing problems are not exacerbated.

Policy HD8: Flood Risk and Drainage Provisions:

Development proposals in locations at the highest risk of flooding will not be supported. Where any development proposal can be demonstrated to be necessary in such areas the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

In other parts of the neighbourhood area beyond the locations at the highest risk of flooding, development proposals will be supported where they do not increase flood risk elsewhere in the neighbourhood area, and within Castlefield, Templars Lane, Chequers Lane, Church Lane and Butchers Lane in particular.

Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems within their design and layout unless there is clear evidence that this would not be appropriate either within the neighbourhood area or on the site concerned.

See also Policy QL2

References

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

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

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

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

Policy HD9: Residential Extensions:

Residential extensions will be supported where they are sympathetic to the scale, form and design of the original building and do not have an adverse impact on the street scene.

Materials used should be complementary to the original building and the pitch and form of the roof should conform to the original building and local character. The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents must be safeguarded. Rear extensions must not dominate and floor levels must be well related to adjoining properties.

The dwelling must continue to meet the parking standards of Policy TC1 by providing a minimum of 2 off road parking spaces for dwellings up to 3 bedrooms and a minimum of 3 parking spaces for 4+ bedrooms.

See also Policy TC1

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

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

Policy HD10: New Housing Development:

New dwellings will be supported where the proposal maintains and contributes to the local character of Preston. Development schemes should be designed in such a way that the green spaces and green lanes of the village are protected and landscaped appropriately. New access arrangements should be safe and take account of the character of the rural lanes in the parish.



10. Environment and Heritage

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- 10.1** Our small rural parish lies at the north-eastern end of the Chiltern Hills, a chalk escarpment. One small chalk quarry, now much overgrown with scrub, is still visible, at TL 177259. From its northern end, the parish stretches from Wellhead Farm at only 73m above sea level, for about three miles across changing scenery to the edge of Hitch Wood, one of Hertfordshire's largest areas of ancient deciduous woodland. The soils are mostly poorly draining clay-with-flints. Small zones of 'brick earth' are found, as at Kiln Wood, and, on the steep scarp slope of the escarpment, are nutrient poor chalky soils in Target Plantation. This variety in the surface geology gives rise to a diversity of natural plant communities. The River Hiz, draining north to the River Ivel, then into the River Ouse and, after 90 miles, to The Wash, rises from a spring in a meadow close to Wellhead Farm; the parish thus has a few yards of this small and shallow 'chalk stream' that is a rare aquatic habitat in England. Water is scarce elsewhere in the parish; the clay soil, when used to create surface ponds for man or beast, can be 'puddled' to give an impermeable lining.
- 10.2** Today's man-made landscape includes many small woods and plantations, as well as the arable fields and grassland of the farms. Hazel and hawthorn hedges with oak and holly trees divide the fields and line the lanes. With narrow winding lanes, bridle paths and footpaths, and a scatter of outlying farmsteads, this landscape is typical of the Chilterns.
- 10.3** Farm livestock is almost an endangered species in Hertfordshire. This parish is very fortunate that we have had, and still have, farmers capable of succeeding in this branch of farming. Douglas Vickers had a famous herd of Wessex Saddleback pigs at Castle Farm in the 1940s; Ian and David Clark had the prizewinning Prescas herd of pedigree Holstein dairy cows. Horses and ponies now graze the former cattle pastures at Castle Farm. Pilkington Farm Partnership use land at Offley Holes Farm to graze their animals and farmers from outside the parish have cattle in the Park of PHC, formerly Princess Helena College. These three zones of long established pastures add scenic variety, and support a diversity of wildlife, in the parish.

- 10.4** Located between the expanding towns of Hitchin and Stevenage not far to the east, and the large urban centre of Luton to the west, this parish is now buffeted between the different claims of the many people in this local population: the farmer, the forester, the gamekeeper, the rambler and the dog-walker, the horse rider, the commuter, and the ecologist. The location of the parish makes it available to serve the leisure needs of non-residents. Ramblers use the northern extension of The Chiltern Way and our many quiet and litter-free paths, often heading for our community owned Red Lion public house on The Green. Threads of cyclists regularly traverse our winding lanes. In late April or early May, carloads of visitors fill up Hitchwood Lane at the weekends to marvel at the sight of the many millions of bluebells in Hitch Wood. Our well-maintained Recreation Ground and the long established Cricket Club attract many visiting players, and their supporters, on summer weekends. Education facilities in the parish also draw in, by car, the parents and their children from beyond the parish, to attend the Nursery School, the Primary School and PHC, every day during term time.
- 10.5** Neighbouring parishes are also vulnerable to similar pressures. The task now is to monitor and assess, to conserve and enhance what we value and wish to maintain.
- 10.6** ‘Heritage’ is something we make from those habitats, structures and materials, which the past has bequeathed to us. Preservation, by law, of prehistoric sites and buildings, and some iconic landscapes, started over a century ago; preservation, by law, of habitats and individual species has been introduced only in recent decades. This is a reflection of our national values and ‘cultural mood’. Both man-made and natural features need recognition and maintenance, either by local residents or by statutory bodies.
- 10.7** In this parish, an early Victorian botanist, Henry Brown, from Hitchin recorded a plant colony in Wain Wood in 1838, and its descendants are still growing there. Brown’s herbarium, with the Wain Wood specimen, is now at the Natural History Museum in London. Several Victorian and Edwardian amateur naturalists from Hitchin, also visited the area and recorded their findings; Thomas Bates Blow noted orchids in the parish in the 1870s. Reginald Hine, in his book, *The Natural History of the Hitchin Region*, published in 1934, refers to others. The prize-winning scrapbook compiled by the Preston and Langley Women’s Institute in 1953 gives us a later glimpse of species then common: the birds - goldcrest, greater spotted woodpecker, tree creeper, nightingales, and the butterflies - wall brown, meadow brown, small tortoiseshell and the comma. The yellow pimpernel and the creeping moneywort were identified along Dead Woman’s Lane. The lady members thought that ‘The bluebells are Preston’s crowning glory’, and ‘In winter, nowhere in all England are there Holly Trees to compare with those around Preston’. This is evidence that, more than 60 years ago, some local villagers noticed, recognised and valued their local wildlife species.
- 10.8** John Dony, in his book, *The Flora of Hertfordshire*, published in 1967, was well aware of the loss of plant diversity along the wayside verges, the falling water table and the shrinkage of springs and ponds, the pressure from the human population and the abrasive effects of their footwear and motor vehicle tyres. He conducted a special Habitat Study in Wain Wood in May and June 1962, and listed the ground flora: 6 ‘frequent’ species, 12 ‘occasional’ species and 23 ‘rare’ species. Ecologists know that wildlife is intrinsically dynamic – there will be gains as well as losses. Gardeners and walkers in the parish have noticed recent changes: fewer hedgehogs and thrushes, more red kites and black squirrels, and just as many hungry muntjac deer.

10.9 National and local concerns have recently brought much legislation from central government, and many initiatives from ecologists in this county. Following the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, in 2011-2013, a new Hertfordshire Habitat Inventory listed and mapped the latest data. A new relationship with farmers is evolving; they are required to be stewards of the landscape and conservators of the wildlife, as well as producers of food.

The results of recent decades of both environmental and heritage legislation now give us a framework of Environmental Assets for Preston Parish. This Framework can be seen in Appendix C starting on page 63.

10.10 More information relating to an Environmental Study with information on the statutory and the non-statutory Sites, and on the species of flora and fauna of the parish is contained in Appendix C Section C.2 Natural Environment, starting on page 68.

10.11 There is a clear visual and physical break between the village of Preston and villages and hamlets of neighbouring parishes. The open rolling countryside and woodland encircling the village is highly valued and richly biodiverse. At 143 metres the village is only 10 metres below the highest point in Hertfordshire which provides exceptional and highly appreciated views down and across the surrounding countryside. These views contribute to the distinct setting of Preston recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and must be maintained. Coalescence needs to be prevented including through visual intrusion which reduces the openness between villages and hamlets. See maps and photographs in Appendix C “Views and Vistas” and “Distinct Villages”, pages 65 to 67.

Policy EH1 sets out to ensure that development does not affect the separation between Preston and its surrounding settlements (Gosmore, St. Paul’s Walden and Langley). It complements the spatial approach incorporated in Policy HD1.

Policy EH6 provides advice to developers on this important matter. Any landscape and visual impact assessments which are required to support planning applications should be produced in accordance with ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013 or any successor document’.

10.12 Preston enjoys the benefits of a Conservation Area, many listed buildings and a number of undesignated buildings that have the potential to be considered heritage assets. These are mostly located in and around the village. See maps and lists in Appendix C Built Environment, pages 85 to 96.

10.13 It is important to ensure that local character, including its relationship with the countryside, is preserved and where appropriate enhanced. New development that is at odds with a distinctive local character can be harmful so should be treated cautiously. See maps and lists in Appendix C Built Environment, pages 85 to 96.

10.14 Designated heritage assets of particular importance include the Grade II* Listed PHC, formerly Princess Helena College, and Tudor House and the Grade II* Listed Temple Dinsley Registered Park and Garden. The wall and gate piers to PHC form an important part of the street scene along School Lane. It is important that any development in the Conservation Area is well managed so that the most appropriate design is found for the site having regard to local character to ensure that all development is of high quality and reflects the character and setting of the areas around them in spatial layout, scale density, materials, design and landscape terms.

- 10.15** New development must take account of known surface and sub-surface archaeology and ensure unknown and potentially significant deposits are identified and appropriately considered during development. Lack of current evidence of sub-surface archaeology must not be taken as proof of absence.
- 10.16** Planning applications for development which may affect one of the Areas of Archaeological Significance listed in Appendix C, page 84, should be submitted with a desk top archaeological survey and where necessary a field evaluation undertaken by an appropriate qualified specialist so that the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets can be assessed. This may indicate that further pre-determination field evaluation, excavation and or mitigation secured by condition are required. Mitigation may take the form of further excavation, an archaeological watching brief, or the preservation in situ of significant archaeological remains.
- 10.17** In addition to consultation with the archaeological planning advisory service and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, specialists undertaking such surveys should consult with Preston Parish Council which holds local knowledge on these sites.

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

- 10.18** Not surprisingly, it is very important for residents of Preston to protect the green spaces and views that they have and love.
- 10.19** The rural setting is why people choose to live in Preston and walking in the countryside is a popular activity. 98% agree it is important to have 'green space' such as woodlands and fields between Preston and neighbouring villages and towns; and 95% agree it is important to minimise the impact of development on woodland, hedges, footpaths, bridleways, green lanes, ponds, streams, verges and geological features.
- 10.20** There are no streetlights in the village, which means that night skies are dark, allowing wonderful views of the moon and stars on clear evenings. This darkness also guarantees regular feeding opportunities for moths, bats and owls.
- 10.21** During consultation, residents identified certain views and vistas they considered to be of particular importance. These are noted on the Views and Vistas Map in Appendix C page 65.
- 10.22** Residents place great importance on the green infrastructure in and around the parish. It is the network of open spaces, including woodlands, hedgerows, pastures and associated buffer zones, and green corridors, in addition to the protected sites and open countryside that make Preston such a unique place. Green infrastructure refers to all assets within and between towns and villages, both urban and rural.
- 10.23** Benefits to be gained from green infrastructure include a healthy environment, improved biodiversity value, climate change mitigation and flood attenuation as well as enhanced networks for walking and cycling, which contributes to a carbon neutral development. The retention of substantial connected networks of green space in adjacent countryside areas to serve growing communities is vitally important in ensuring these benefits are maximised.

10.24 Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development of green areas of particular importance to our local community. In considering the Green Spaces within our Parish we acknowledge that they provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to identify and protect Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. It allows such designation where the green space is:

- a. in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b. 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
- c. local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Policy EH4 designates seven parcels of land as local green space and then applies the restrictive national policy approach towards development proposals on designated local green spaces. Very special circumstances can be considered by NHDC on a case-by-case basis. However very special circumstances may include if the proposal is of a limited nature and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of an identified Local Green Space.

Reference: NPPF paragraphs 99 and 100

10.25 The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has provided the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Preston Parish Council with a set of working principles along with justification for those working principles, in relation to conserving and enhancing the natural environment (See Appendix D, page 97). Preston Parish Council supports these working principles, wherever they are relevant to Preston.

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

Policy EH1: Village Boundary, Rural Character and Setting:

Development proposals should retain a clear visual separation between Preston and nearby villages and settlements. In addition, they should ensure that the open countryside, woodlands, hedgerows and green corridors are protected and, where practicable, enhanced. Development proposals which would unacceptably impact on these environmental assets will not be supported.

See map: Appendix C, page 67

See also Policy QL3

References

Emerging NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031: Policy SP5, P41

Emerging NHDC Local Plan, Policy SP12, and paragraph 4.145, P56

NPPF, 143-147

Objective E2: To recognise all merits of the built environment across the parish, and to seek to protect this architectural heritage, especially that of the many Heritage Assets and their settings.

Objective E3: To take special care of the Conservation Areas, ensure that development in the Conservation Areas or their settings is of an appropriate scale and maintains or enhances its character, and to raise awareness of the relevant legislation.

Policy EH2: Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets:

All development proposals, including new build, must demonstrate how the particular environment of Preston has been taken into account during conception and evolution of the design. Proposals that do not positively contribute to the local character must explain why and demonstrate the reasons behind the alternative approach.

All development within a conservation area and within the setting of other designated and non-designated heritage assets must take account of the historic fabric of these areas and conserve, and where appropriate enhance, their character and appearance.

Proposals should provide a statement containing an appropriate level of detail for the importance of the asset, including:

- The significance of any heritage asset(s) affected
- Any adverse impacts the development may have on the asset(s) and their setting and any proposed mitigation measures
- How it will contribute to the character and setting of the relevant heritage asset(s)
- Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist so that the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets can be assessed and, where necessary, carry out a field evaluation.
- The design of any new build should have regard to prevailing scale, massing and density of properties in the Conservation area and be in harmony with the character of the location in which it is being constructed. Materials used should be complementary and similar to neighbouring properties.

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

Objective E4: To protect and improve 'greenspace' e.g. The Green and all verges, within and around the village, to protect and enhance the features of the local environment, its views and vistas and to maintain the current level of tranquillity, so as to maintain and enhance the appearance of this rural settlement.

Policy EH3: Open and Green Spaces:

New development should not have an unacceptable negative impact on the uses and functions of existing green infrastructure (i.e. all types of green space, large or small, public or private) within the village and wider parish. Where it is demonstrated through assessment that a development will have a detrimental impact on the quantity or function of existing green infrastructure, then the development will not be supported unless replacement provision is made that is of equal or greater value than that which will be lost through development. Development that fails to exploit opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure will not be supported.

Where appropriate to their location and scale proposals for new development should incorporate green infrastructure to provide permeability for wildlife through and around the development. Green infrastructure should be connective and functional as wildlife habitat in its own right not just as a link between habitats. Development that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), will not be supported unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy is incorporated within the wider proposal.

*See also an inventory and maps of important green and blue spaces in Appendix C starting on page 71
See also paragraphs 10.19, 10.20 and 10.21 on page 46*

References

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

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

Policy EH4: Local Green Spaces:

The following areas, as shown in Appendix C, of this Neighbourhood Plan are designated as Local Green Spaces. Proposals for development on a Local Green Space will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

- Recreation Ground
- Verge against PHC Wall, including Village Pond
- Verge between Preston House and the Village Green
- The Village Green and Well
- Verges along Crunnells Green
- Church Meadow
- Chiltern Way Extension Footpath

See also the Local Green Space Assessment in Appendix C.2, page 77

Reference: NPPF paragraphs 99 and 100

Policy EH5: Tranquillity and Dark Skies:

Proposals for development should respect the tranquil character of the neighbourhood area. Proposals which would generate an unacceptable detrimental impact on its tranquillity through noise, generated traffic or light pollution will not be supported.

Policy EH6: Views and Vistas:

The Plan identifies a series of key views and vistas as listed below and shown on Map on page 65

- A. Pinnacle Hill and Chalk Hill
- B. The Downs
- C. Pinnacle Hill
- D. West of Dead Woman's Lane
- E. Village Green
- F. Towards Preston Hills
- G. From Tatmore Hills towards Temple End
- H. Kings Hill / Wain Wood
- I. Across the fields towards Wain Wood
- J. Recreation Ground
- K. Towards Temple Dinsley
- L. Towards Ladygrove

Where appropriate, development proposals should safeguard, respect and where practicable enhance the identified key views and vistas through their location, design, scale, height and massing.

Where the proposed development would have an impact on any identified key 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. Any such development proposals will only be supported where appropriate mitigation measures are incorporated within their design. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on any identified key view will not be supported.

Reference: NPPF 170 (a) and (b)

Objective E5: To maintain and protect good access to the countryside by means of statutory and permissive footpaths and bridleways.

Objective E6: To support the conservation of flora and fauna and to maintain and enhance the different habitats and their distinctive and varied species.

Policy EH7: Protecting and Enhancing the Local and Natural Environment:

Development proposals should maintain and where practicable enhance the elements of the natural environment as identified in Appendix C2 (pages 68 to 84). Where appropriate development proposals should also incorporate measures to ensure their connectivity to the wider habitats in the neighbourhood area.

Where significant harm to biodiversity arising from a proposed development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated for, any such proposals will not be supported.

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

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

Policy EH8: Hedgerows, Trees and Verges:

Where appropriate and relevant to the site concerned development proposals should retain and maintain existing trees and hedgerows within the site and along its boundaries. If their removal is necessary, they should be replaced in an appropriate location with trees of no less arboriculture or amenity value.

Where the boundary of a new development has existing hedgerows and trees these should be protected to give it a green and soft edge, with additional landscaping and planting to minimise the visual impact of the new development. Landscaping should be incorporated in the design of all new development to mitigate the visual impact of development and ensure that the development is sensitively incorporated into the existing village context. Landscaping schemes should include predominately native species.

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



11. Transport and Communications

Policy TC1: Safe and Sustainable Transport: 55

Policy TC2: Broadband and Mobile Coverage: 55

- 11.1** The biggest concern under this heading for residents of Preston is the problems connected with traffic, transport and travel. People are concerned about speeding, especially on certain roads and over half of residents responding to the Preston Survey 2017 would like speed limit reductions to 20mph. Heavy traffic is also an issue at certain times of the day. For some, this is exacerbated by a lack of pavements and street lighting in certain places (although others highlight these as positives about living in Preston). Indeed, the main worry for some young people about their safety in the village is roads and pavements with 65% concerned about lack of pavements, 45% concerned about the width of pavement and 52% concerned about speeding traffic. A poor bus service and badly maintained roads are other bugbears raised by residents of all ages, with 69% of young people concerned about an inadequate bus service.
- 11.2** Preston lies approximately five miles to the west of the A1M at Junction 8 and approximately eight miles from the M1 at Luton. The main road through the village runs east-west and is a small country lane which barely allows vehicles to pass in many places. All of the feeder roads to the nearby towns of Luton and Hitchin from the village are country lanes which are little more than tarmac covered historic cart tracks, with informal passing places, as are all of the other roads in the parish. The nature of the roads in the parish makes them unsuitable for significant increases in traffic within and through the village.
- 11.3** Because there are only rural lanes within the parish there is huge concern locally about the increase in traffic which will inevitably occur if the proposed developments for East of Luton go ahead as well as the planned expansion to Luton airport. In addition to the planned and agreed increase in numbers to 18 million passengers per year, a recently submitted planning application requests that this number should increase to 38 million. The much greater volume of traffic through Preston as a result of these developments will have a huge impact on the quality of life for local residents.
- 11.4** Transport is an emotive issue in Preston. Most people rely on the car to be able to get to work or school. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey in 2017 illustrated that households in Preston have two cars on average: 51% have 2 cars and 23% have 3 or more vehicles. Several households with two adults have three cars. With a poor bus service, cars are a lifeline to amenities and facilities outside of the parish as well as to work, school and shops. Policy TC1 addresses this important matter. Where necessary Traffic Impact Assessments should be submitted with planning applications which have the potential to generate significant increases in traffic in and around the village.
- 11.5** On road parking is currently seen as a problem in some areas of the village and throughout the consultation process respondents have expressed concerns about this. Car parking standards have, therefore, been carefully considered and are included in the Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC1 to take into account the high levels of car ownership in the parish, the rural location and the limited availability of public transport.

- 11.6 Other than the two central roads in the village, Church Lane and School Lane, the other roads are predominantly single track with some passing places and in view of this new developments should provide off road parking for a minimum of two cars per unit for homes with 2-3 bedrooms and a minimum of 3 spaces for 4 + bedroom homes.
- 11.7 One of the concerns for local inhabitants is the amount of traffic in both directions on Church Lane at peak times. This includes morning and evening rush hour and an after school peak between 3.30 and 4.30 p.m. The majority of this traffic is passing through the village en route to or from Luton, Hitchin and Stevenage. Local research by the Parish Council has shown the number of vehicles passing through the village is very high in proportion to the number of households. (See table below)

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

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

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

- 11.8 The improved Internet service is appreciated and three quarters of residents now have high speed broadband. Improved mobile phone coverage is seen as more important than a fixed telephone line (especially by those taking part in the Young Residents Survey), and many residents would like an improved mobile phone signal in Preston.
- 11.9 In conjunction with BT, a project was started in July 2010 to bring fibre optic broadband to the village. Questionnaires were completed, a village meeting was held and local residents contributed £37,830, including VAT, to the project. BT paid the remainder. This was the first such initiative in the country and a trial to see what was possible for other rural communities. The first householder was connected to super-fast broadband on 26 July 2012 with other residents following soon afterwards. Those living nearest to the box get the fastest broadband, gradually reducing for properties further away.
- 11.10 A new box was installed opposite the Recreation Ground to provide the fibre optic service but as there was not enough capacity within the old copper box for the number of lines required, the system has been fraught with problems since its inception. Engineers were on site most days and problems for individual householders took considerable time to be resolved. This led to the replacement of the box in July 2017 and hopefully a more consistent service for most residents. However, there are still improvements to be made. The survey indicated that seventy-nine percent of homes required faster broadband. Mobile coverage is also not adequate in many parts of the Parish of Preston. Eighty two percent of respondents said they required a better mobile signal.

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

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

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

Policy TC1: Safe and Sustainable Transport:

Residential and community development proposals will be supported where amenities in the village can be readily and safely accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. In addition development proposals should conform to the following criteria:

- a) development proposals should not generate an unacceptable increase in traffic volume and movements within or through the village and
- b) development proposals should not generate unacceptable highway safety risks and
- c) development proposals should provide a minimum of 2 off-road parking spaces per new residential unit with 2-3 bedrooms and a minimum of 3 parking spaces for 4+ bedroom residential units.

See also Policy HD2 and Policy EH8

References:

Local Plan proposed Submission 2011- 2031: Policy SP6: c,g: P43

NHDC Vehicle Parking at New Development: Supplementary Planning Guidance; September 2011, P17

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

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

Policy TC2: Broadband and Mobile Coverage:

Provision of facilities to support the delivery of efficient and effective landline, broadband and mobile coverage throughout the parish will be supported provided they are sensitively designed and located in accord with other policies in this Plan.

Objective T4: To seek on-going improvements to transport and utility infrastructure.

This objective will be achieved through the Implementation Plan and the Project Plan.

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

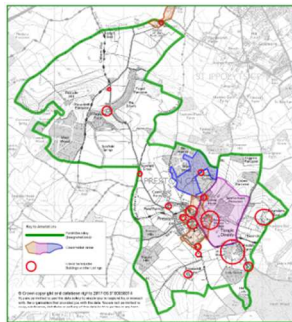
It is recognised and acknowledged that many residents would like the speed limit reduced to 20mph in some areas of the village. Preston Parish Council attempted to do this in June 2017. Having consulted the available data, Hertfordshire Highways and the Police, it has concluded that the lanes in Preston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

12. Implementation and Monitoring

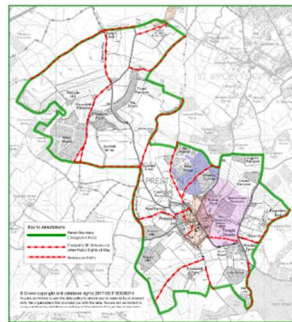
The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2018 to 2031. It provides a direction for change through its vision, objectives and policies, while at the same time protecting the environmental and historic aspects of the parish which are highly valued and appreciated by the community. It is flexible to allow for new challenges and opportunities which may arise over the Plan period.

- 12.1** The developments that take place during this time will need to take account of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. It is important to ensure this is monitored and that community projects identified through the neighbourhood planning process are achieved.
- 12.2** Preston Parish Council will work with NHDC to identify and use effectively any section 106 monies available as a result of new development.
- 12.3** As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, an Implementation Plan has been developed which will require the coordinated input of the community and statutory agencies over the period of the plan. This can be found in Appendix F on page 104.
- 12.4** A Project List has been compiled to include items raised by local residents which do not fall within the remit of either the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council. This can be found in Appendix G on page 107.
- 12.5** Preston Parish Council will lead on and monitor the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan with a full review every five years to ensure that the policies remain in line with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and any changes to national legislation. Within the context provided by the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 the Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a review of the neighbourhood plan within twelve months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.

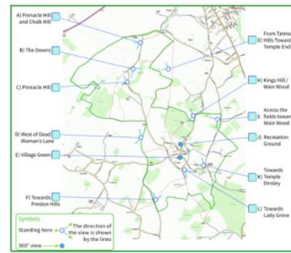
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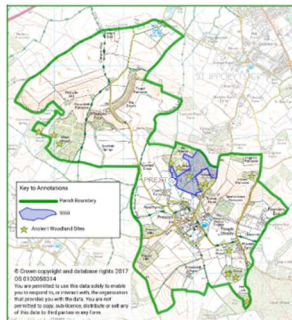
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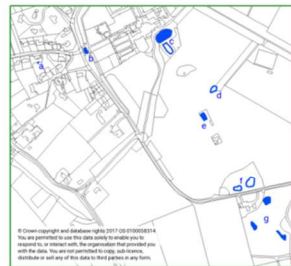
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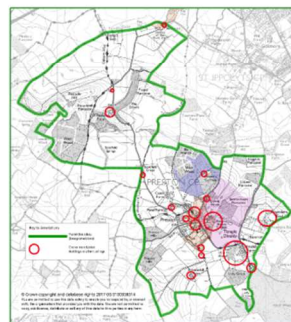
Preston Hill Farm and River Hiz, p73



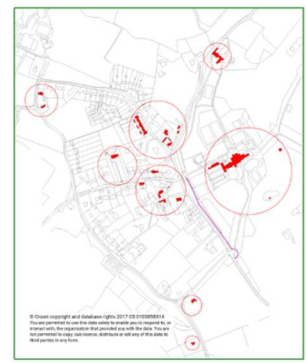
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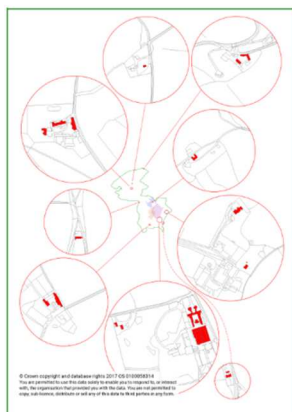
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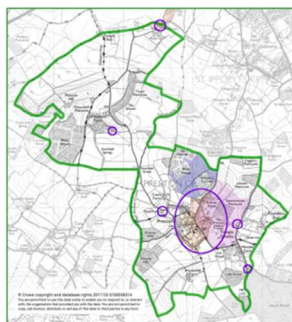
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A. People

A.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Team

Our thanks to all of the team.

The Steering Group

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

The Volunteers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frances Drew - the 63 Listed Buildings of the parish

Dr. Jane Sears - the natural environment of the parish

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

A.2 Other Individuals and Organisations

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

Becky Lewis, Insight Fountain

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Hertfordshire Branch

Claire Skeels, North Herts District Council (NHDC)

Colin Kendal, Creamers Print and Design

Donna Moles, Moles Consulting

English Heritage

Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre (HERC)

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Records (HHER)

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

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

Jacqueline Veater, Independent Planning Consultant

Kate Harwood, Conservation and Planning Officer - Hertfordshire Gardens Trust

Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, Archaeology Officer, NHDC Museum Service

Ordnance Survey Office

Preston News Service (PNS)

PHC (formerly Princess Helena College)

Wally Steele Limited - Website, Graphic Design, Photography and IT Support.

A.3 Other Neighbourhood Plans

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

B. Survey

The survey provides an important part of the evidence base for the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan. As a major part of the consultation process it is detailed in the Consultation Statement.

Electronic copies of the questionnaires (Adult, Young Resident and Under 10's) and the analysis report are available as separate documents. The results presentation is included as an Appendix to the Consultation Statement.

This plan and all accompanying documents are available to view and/or download from the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan website as PDF files. They will also be available from the Neighbourhood Planning section of the North Herts District Council website.

At the time of this Second Submission Draft the URLs for the relevant web pages are:

www.preston-np.org.uk/your-say/

www.north-herts.gov.uk/approved-neighbourhood-areas-preston

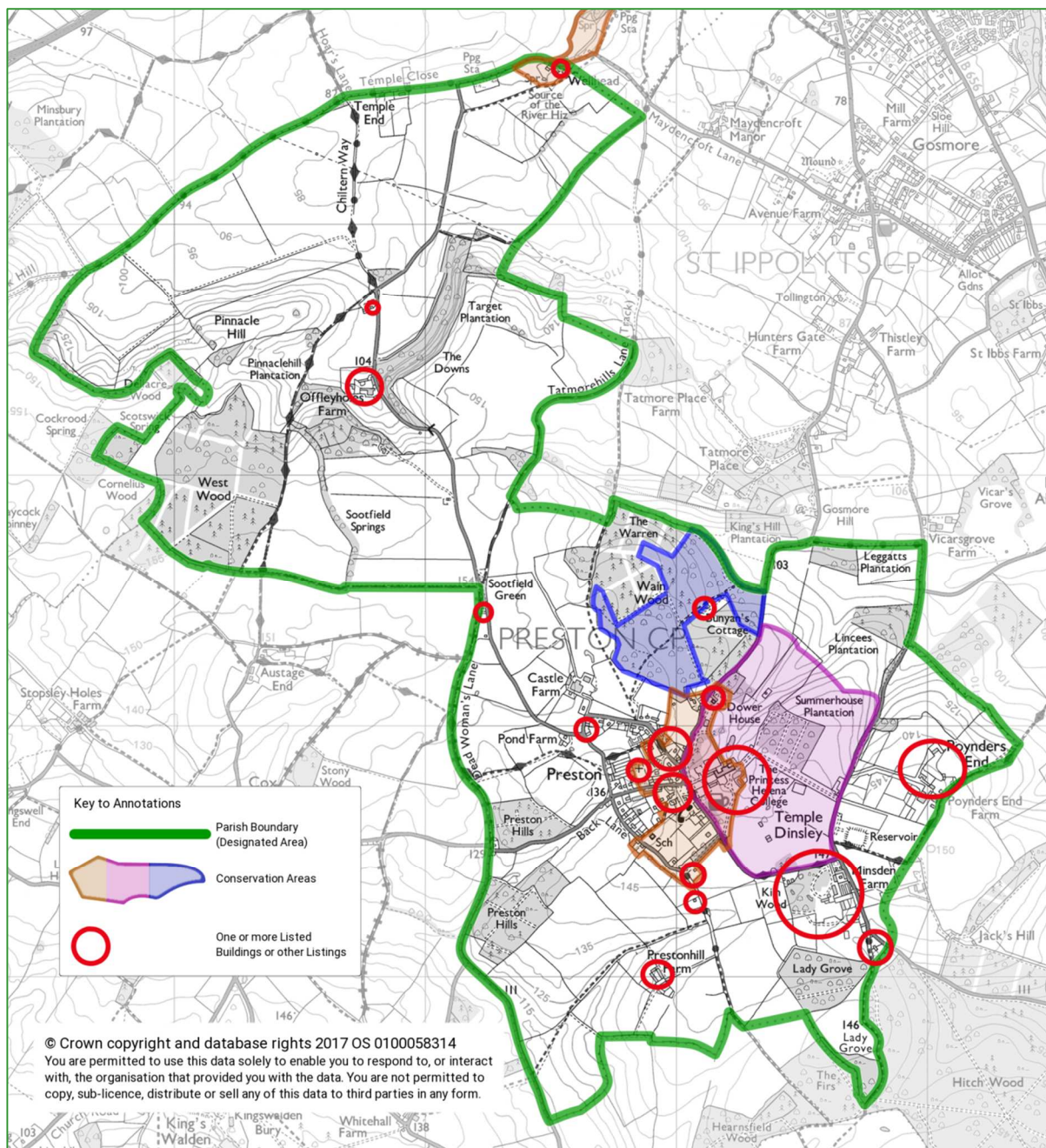


C. Environment

C.1 Context

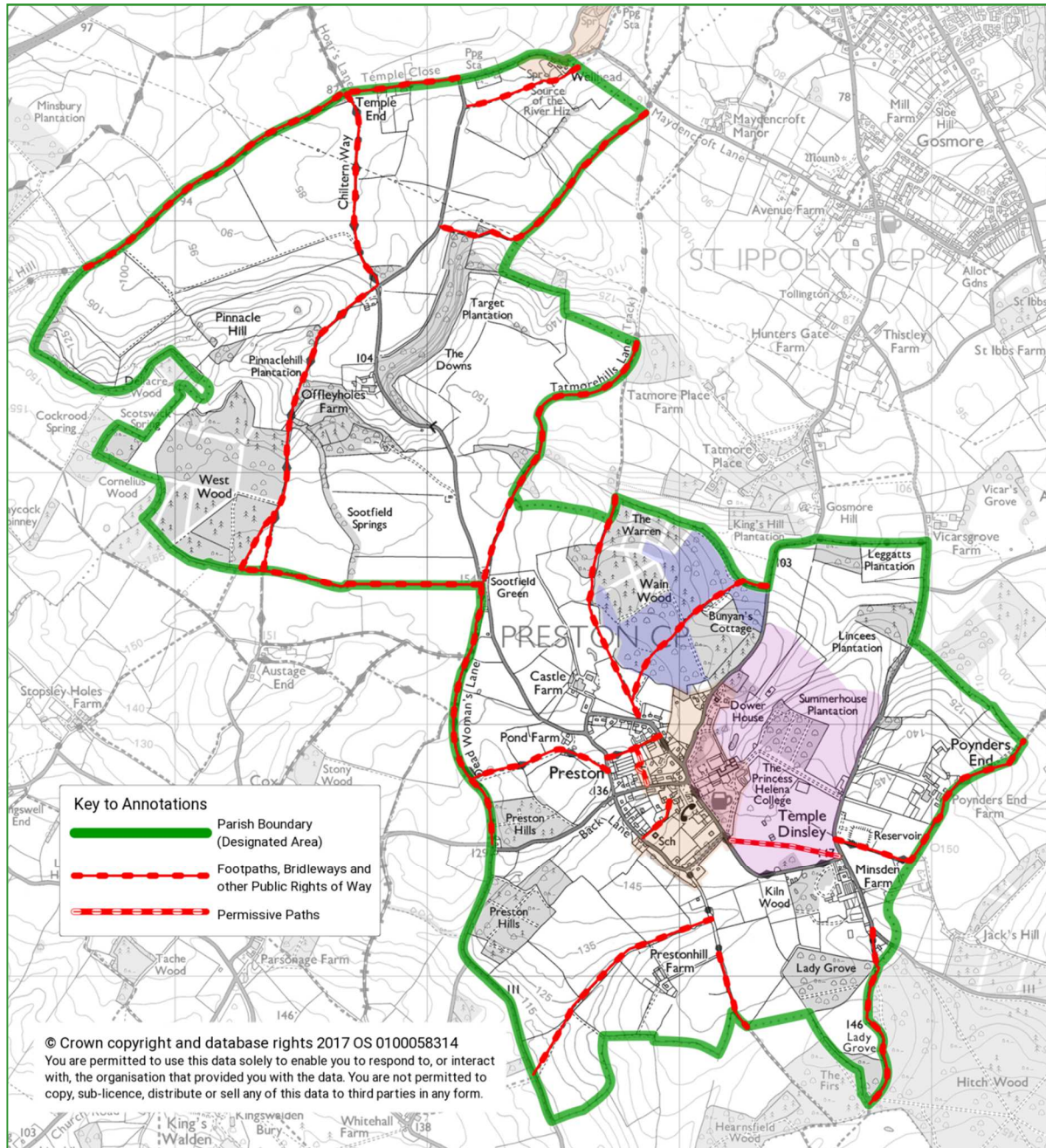
This small and oddly shaped parish stretches about 3 miles across the Chiltern escarpment. Variations in altitude and gradient, and in soil type and depth, give a constant change in scenery, as one travels through the parish, on foot, horse, cycle or by car. These subtle changes are reflected in the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

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



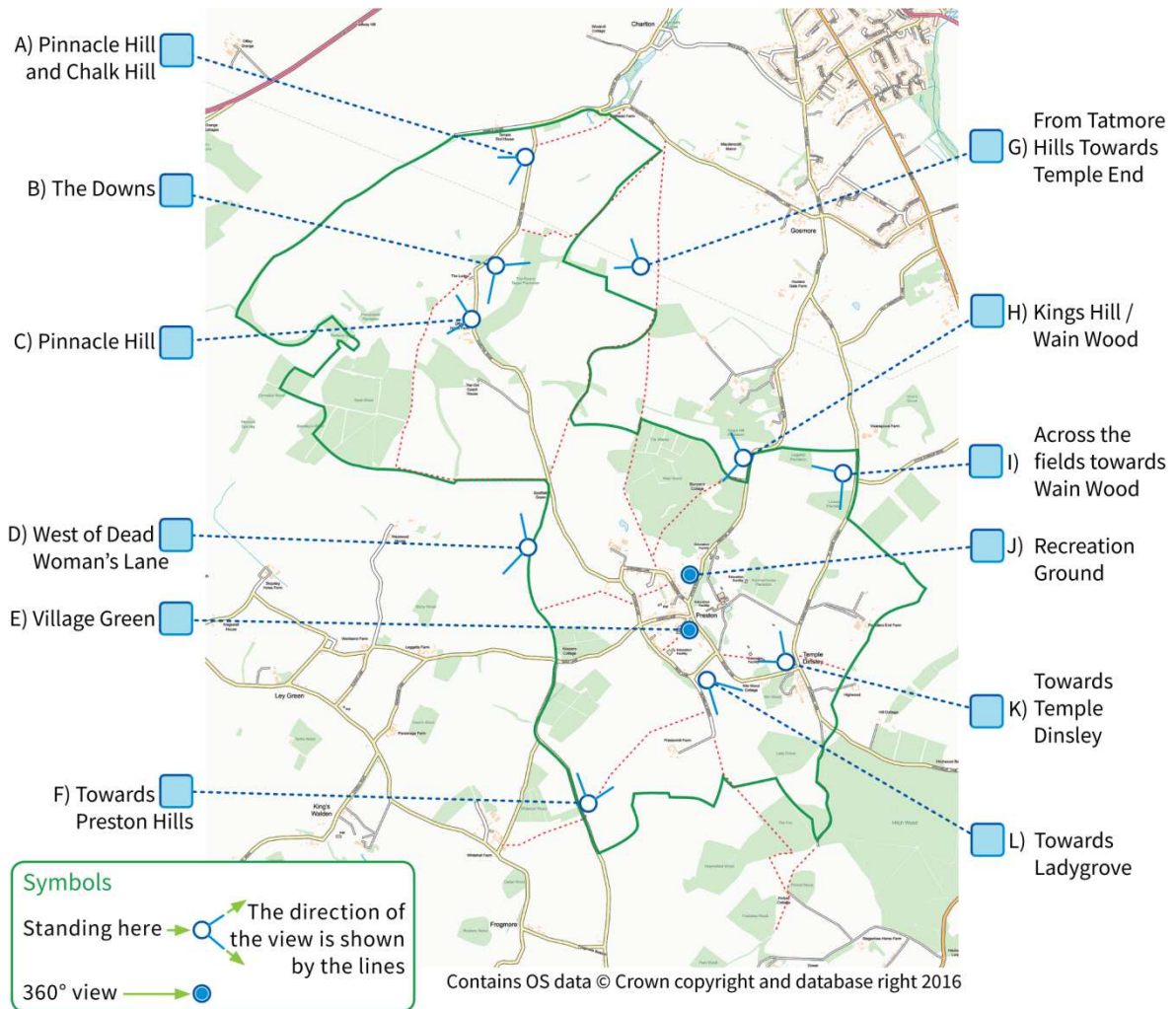
Footpaths, Bridleways and Green Lanes

There is a well-used network of Public Rights of Way (including part of the Chiltern Way, many footpaths, bridleways and green lanes) as well as permissive paths through the churchyard to Church Meadow and across a field in the grounds of PHC, formerly known as Princess Helena College.



Views and Vistas

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



The following photographs illustrate some of the views and vistas from the above map and the Distinct Villages map on page 67





C) Pinnacle Hill



B) The Downs



K) Towards Temple Dinsley



Line of sight to Sandy Heath Transmitter

Biggleswade

A1(M)

Hitchin

Letchworth and Baldock

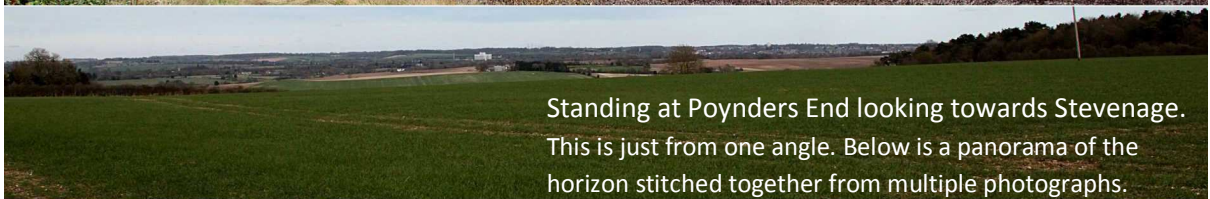
Poynders End, Preston



Looking South from Sootfield Green



F) Towards Preston Hills

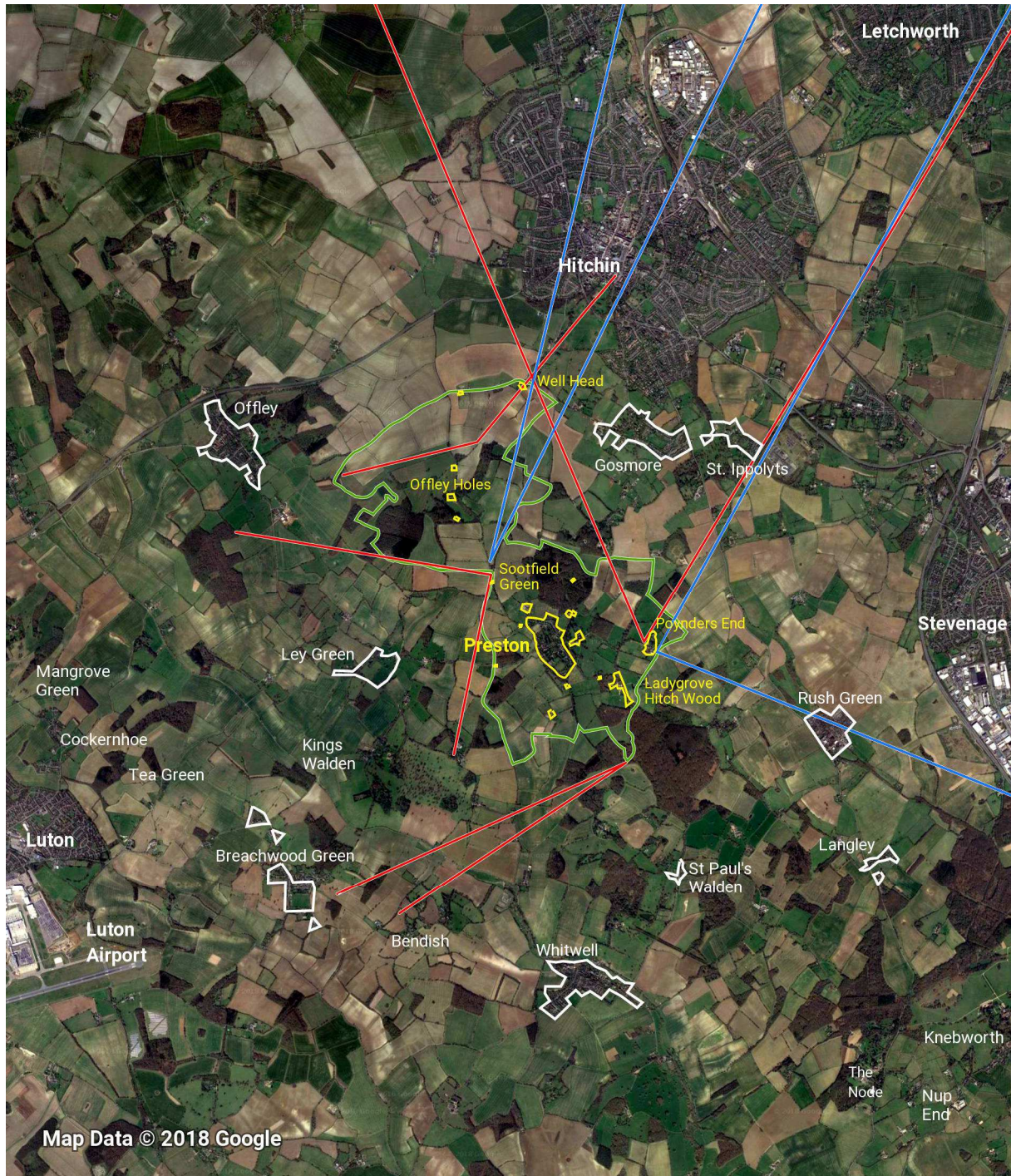


Standing at Poynders End looking towards Stevenage. This is just from one angle. Below is a panorama of the horizon stitched together from multiple photographs.



Distinct Villages

The views from Preston across open countryside are highly appreciated by residents and visitors alike. To the east and north in particular they stretch beyond the neighbouring town of Hitchin to open countryside. From Sootfield Green and Poynders End the Sandy Heath Transmitting Station, some 15 miles (24 Km) to the north as the crow flies, can be seen. To the west the views flow down and across the valley to where cows and sheep graze and to woodland beyond.

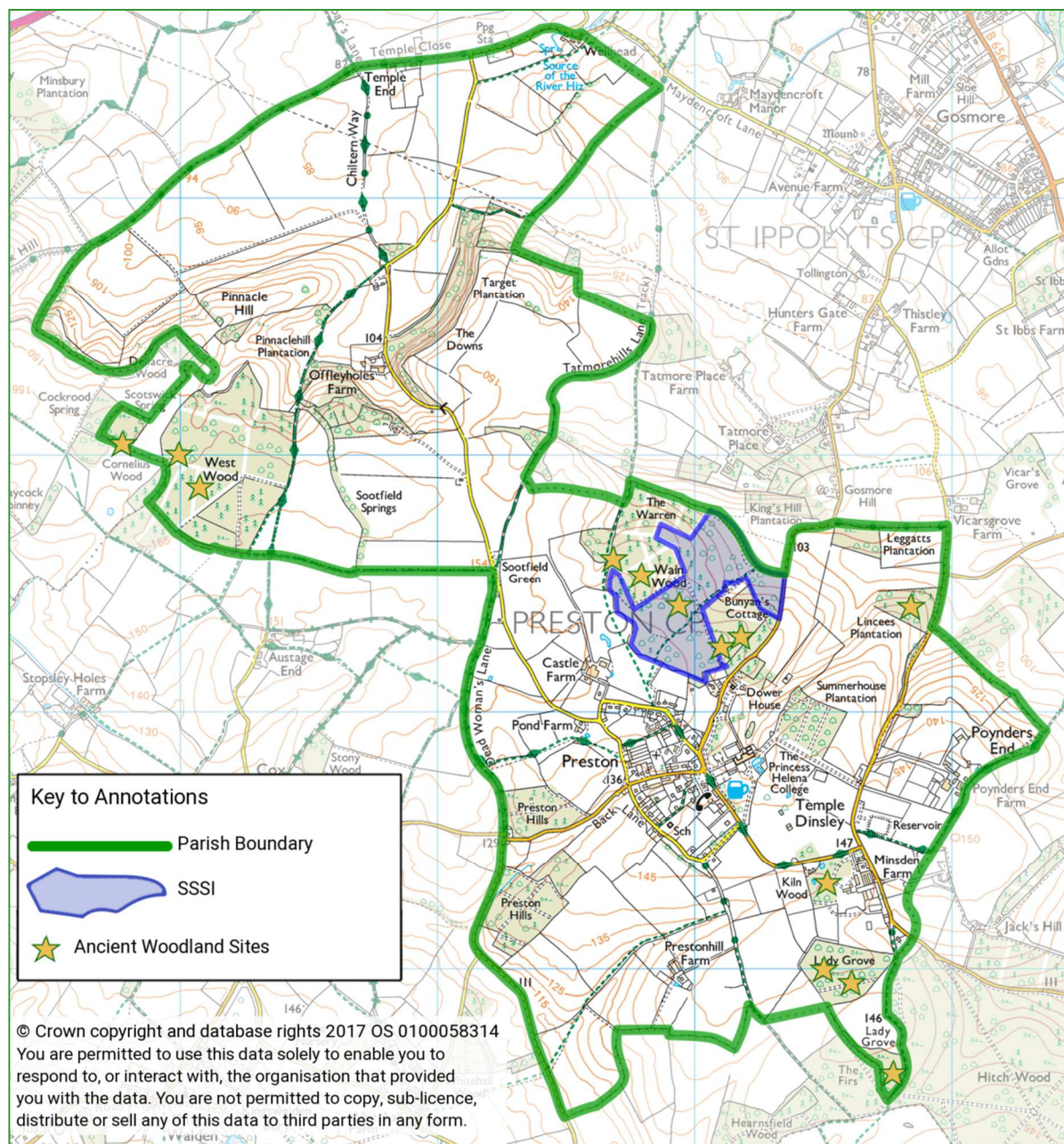


Some of the views are suggested by straight lines. Preston Village, smaller settlements and individual farms/houses within the parish are shown with a yellow border. Preston Parish boundary is shown in green. The more noticeable of the neighbouring settlements have a white border.

C.2 Natural Environment

Areas, habitats and species with legal protection.

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



Site of Special Scientific Interest

Natural England has designated part of Wain Wood as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (shaded blue on the above map). It is an area of diverse flora and ancient deciduous woodland, known to have existed before 1600. The SSSI zone is only 19.03 hectares of the total wood of 31.02 hectares. Felling and removal of conifers in the summer of 2017 from the areas of ancient woodland surrounding the SSSI zone may enrich the biodiversity of this valuable habitat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites

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

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

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

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

PAWS = Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site
 ASNW = Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland

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

The Local Wildlife Sites

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

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

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

Although Local Wildlife Sites have no statutory protection, they need to be considered in the planning process through the guidance provided by the National Planning and Policy Framework, which states that to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, and promote their preservation and restoration. Plans should be concerned not only with designated areas, but also with other land of conservation value and the possible provision of new habitats.

Other Non-Statutory Sites of Parish Importance

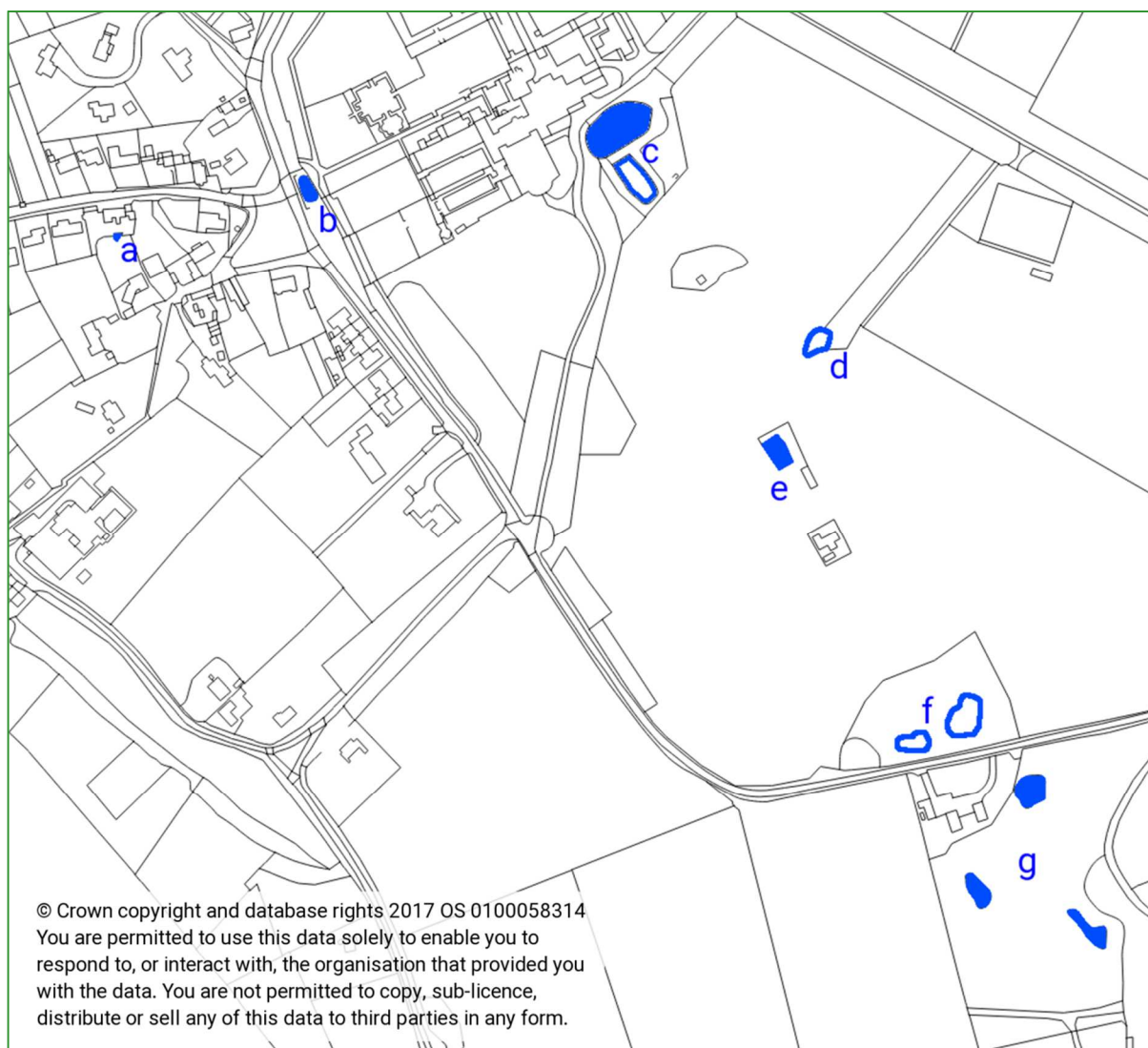
These are sites of conservation importance which require protection from any changes which may lessen their ecological importance.

1. Woodland: 1

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

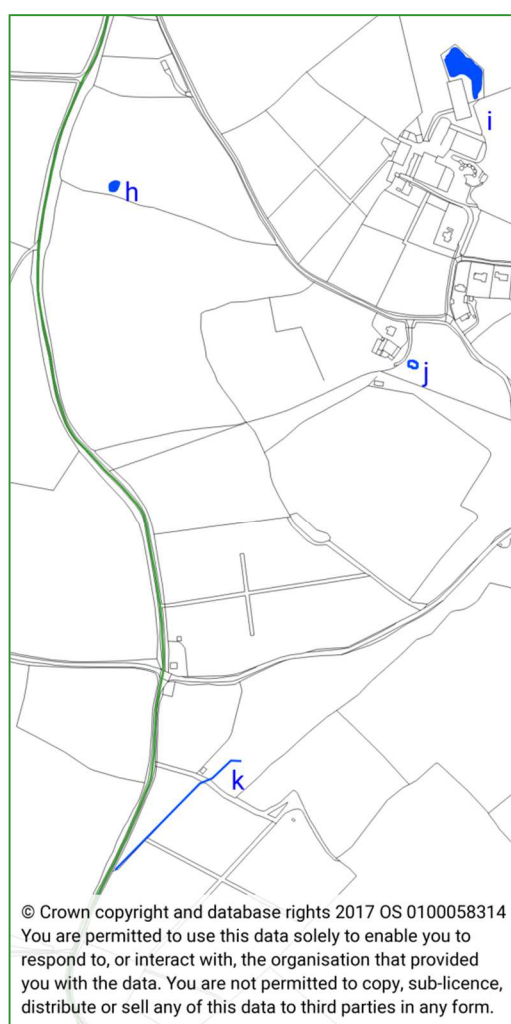
2. Ponds: 11 and Streams: 2

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



See list of ponds with map grid references on following page.

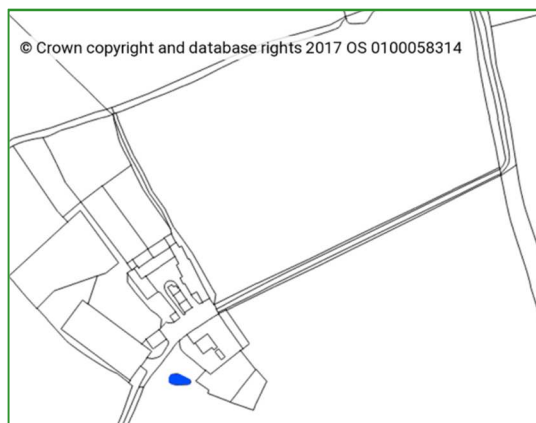
a	TL179247	Pond behind Old Forge
b	TL180247	Village Green Pond – <i>for more detail see Local Blue Space Assessment, page 78</i>
c	TL182248	Pond(s) adjacent to Temple Dinsley House <i>OS Maps and Data show two ponds, aerial imaging shows only the north of the two having water</i>
d	TL183246	Pond in PHC Field <i>OS Maps and Data show a pond, aerial imaging shows a surface feature but cannot see water – possibly now seasonal or dried up</i>
e	TL183246	Pond <i>Believed to have been dug as a reservoir when the Estate water supply (using the header tank in the adjoining barn) was constructed in the early years of the 20th Century. Shows as water on aerial imagery, regular shape on OS Master Map Data, does not show on OS 1:25000 map</i>
f	TL184244	Ponds or standing water <i>Visible from School Lane – possibly seasonal. Not shown on OS Master Map data or 1:25000 Map</i>
g	TL185244 TL184243 TL185243	3 Ponds in Ladygrove North (Kiln Wood)



Ponds and Stream to West of Village

h	TL172251	Pond near Sootfield Green, in field between Dead Woman’s Lane and Charlton Road
i	TL176252	Pond to north of buildings at Castle Farm
j	TL175249	Evidence of former pond at The Pond Farmhouse <i>Still shown on OS maps and data but aerial imagery and observations from public footpath only show evidence of a former pond</i>
k	TL173243 TL172242	OS 1:25000 map shows a stream or watercourse <i>Aerial imagery shows features that may once have been a watercourse – water has been seen flowing from the wood into the roadside gully in living memory</i>

Preston Hill Farm Pond - TL179239



Source of the River Hiz - TL174275



3. St. Martin’s Churchyard TL178248

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

4. Green Lanes: 2

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

5. A Former Park: 1

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

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

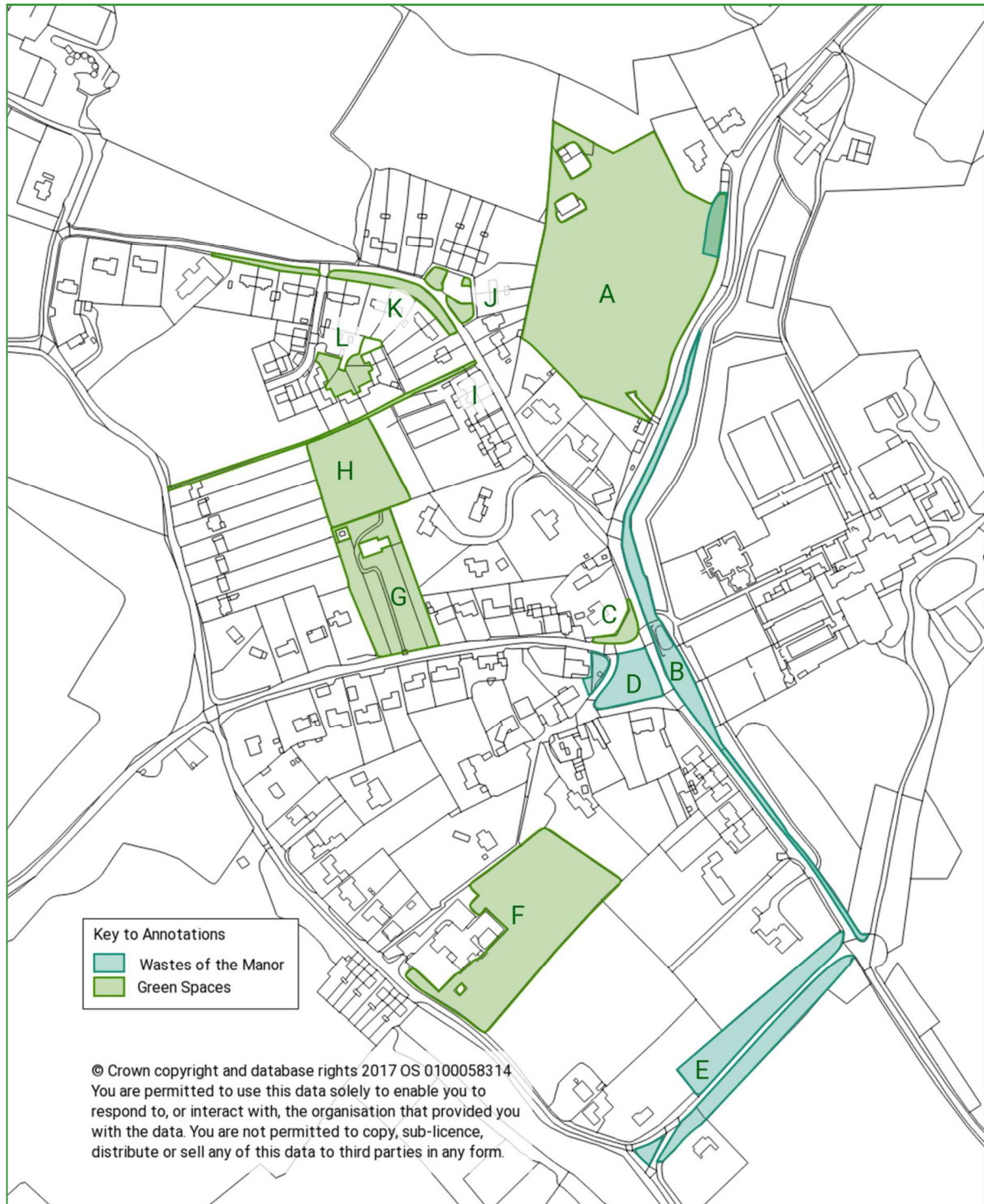
Cattle and sheep now regularly graze this pasture, a rare sight in the farming scenes in North Hertfordshire today. This grassland also provides a valuable food supply for small mammals, insects and grassland birds, amongst the arable acreage in the north of the parish.

6. Green Spaces

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

Green Spaces: 12 plus verges

The village benefits from the following green spaces, some of which are “Wastes of the Manor”.



A	Recreation Ground – adjacent to Hitchin Road. One corner is also a Waste of the Manor – <i>for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 77</i>	
B	The verge running from opposite the Recreation Ground to the entrance of PHC and including the Village Green Pond <i>– for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 78</i>	Waste of the Manor
C	The grass verge between Preston House and the Village Green. <i>– for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 79</i>	
D	The Village Green, including the area with the Village Well and Telephone Box <i>– for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 79</i>	Waste of the Manor
E	The verges either side of the lane and the triangle in the fork of the lane along Crunnells Green – <i>for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 80</i>	Waste of the Manor
F	Preston Primary School Playing Fields	
G	St. Martin’s Churchyard	
H	Church Meadow – accessible via the Churchyard and Chiltern Way Extension Footpath – <i>for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 81</i>	
I	Chiltern Way Extension Footpath – At the Chequers Lane end and Church Meadow this is wide enough to be considered a green space as well as a path <i>– for more detail see Local Green Space Assessment, page 81</i>	
J	The grass verges around the car park in Chequers Lane	TL179249
K	The grass verges in front of 15 to 25 Chequers Lane	
L	The grass area enclosed by 1 to 6 Templars Lane	

In addition to these, many of the roadside verges throughout the village are green spaces that provide vantage points to view the countryside, refuge from traffic for pedestrians, as well as in some places a surface on which dogs and humans can walk. Some of the verges merge seamlessly into frontages and gardens. All of this forms a key part of the rural character of the lanes in the parish.

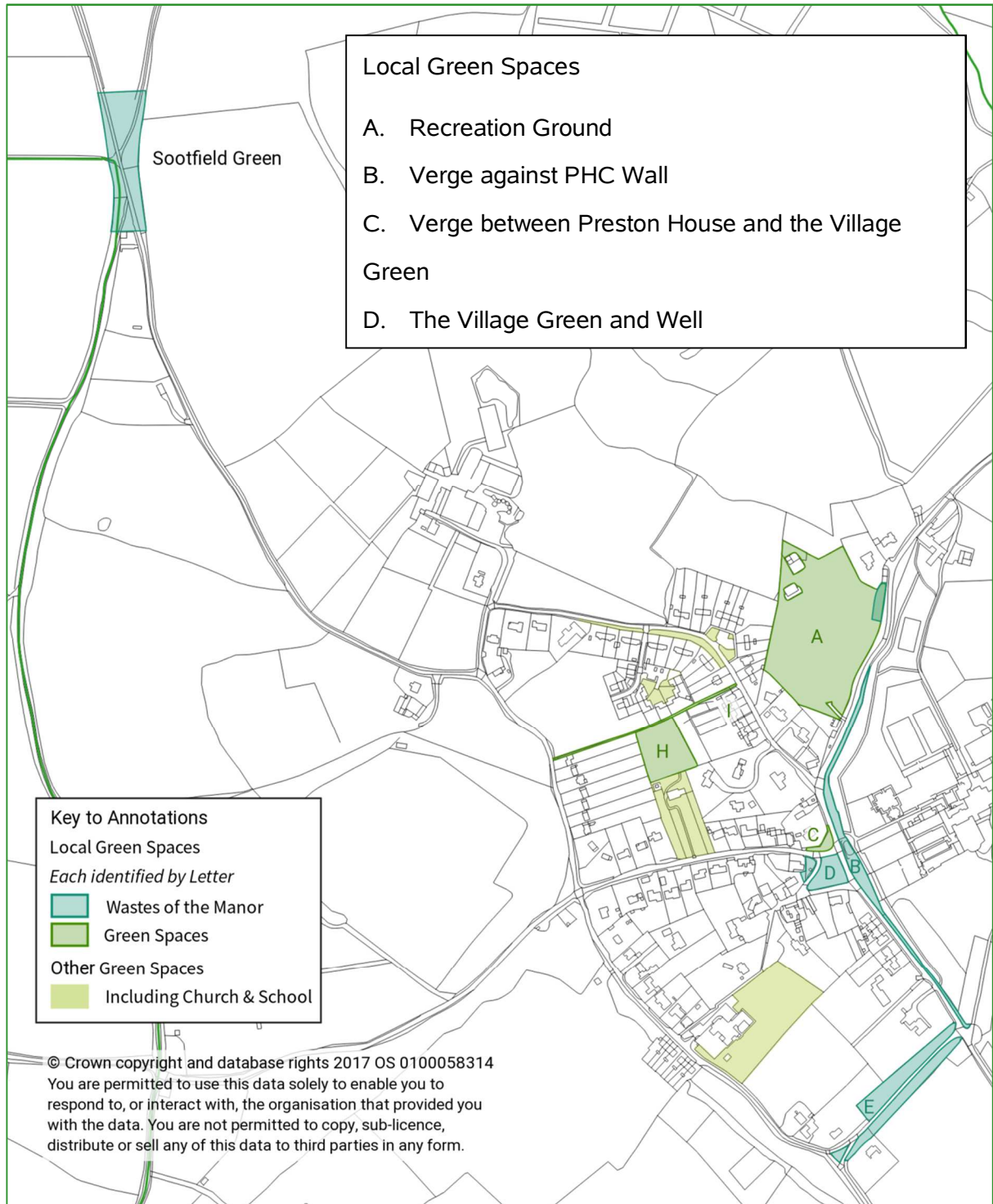
The footpaths, bridleways and green lanes are often wide enough to be considered as green spaces as well as Rights of Way.

There is also a Waste of the Manor at Sootfield Green as shown in the map on the right.



Map of Local Green Space Assessment

in the context of all other green spaces



Local Green and Blue Space Assessment

Site	Recreation Ground
Address / Location	Entrance from and adjacent to Hitchin Road. Also backs on to Wain Wood.
Ref in this plan	Green Space A
Section / Page Ref	Appendix C.2, page 73
Grid Ref	TL180249 (of Entrance)
Description and purpose	An open playing field, surrounded by woodland and gardens. Bounded by hedges including a cob hedge to Hitchin Road. It contains: Recreation Equipment for Older Children; Sports Pavilion; Cricket Pitch, Practice Nets and Electronic Scoreboard.
Ownership	Preston Parish Council - One corner is also a Waste of the Manor
Check List	
Statutory designations (e.g. SSSI)	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area. Adjoins Wain Wood SSSI.
Site Allocations (give details)	None
Planning permissions (give details)	None
NPPF Criteria	
Proximity to the community it serves	Within main settlement of Village
Local Significance	
Recreation Value	Open space for walking and sports. Cricket - matches, practice and junior team coaching; Recreation space for older children.
Beauty	The ground affords a 360 degree panoramic view of trees and hedges.
Historic Value	Home of Preston Cricket Club, first founded in 1882 and playing at this site since 1919. The Pavilion is listed as an Undesignated Heritage Asset and may be worthy of listing in future.
Tranquillity	The ground is often quiet providing a space for walking and reflection.
Wildlife	Surrounded by hedges and woodland with a Cob Hedge adjoining Hitchin Road. This provides a large open habitat for birds and small mammals as with any space occasionally used by people.
Extensive Tract	No

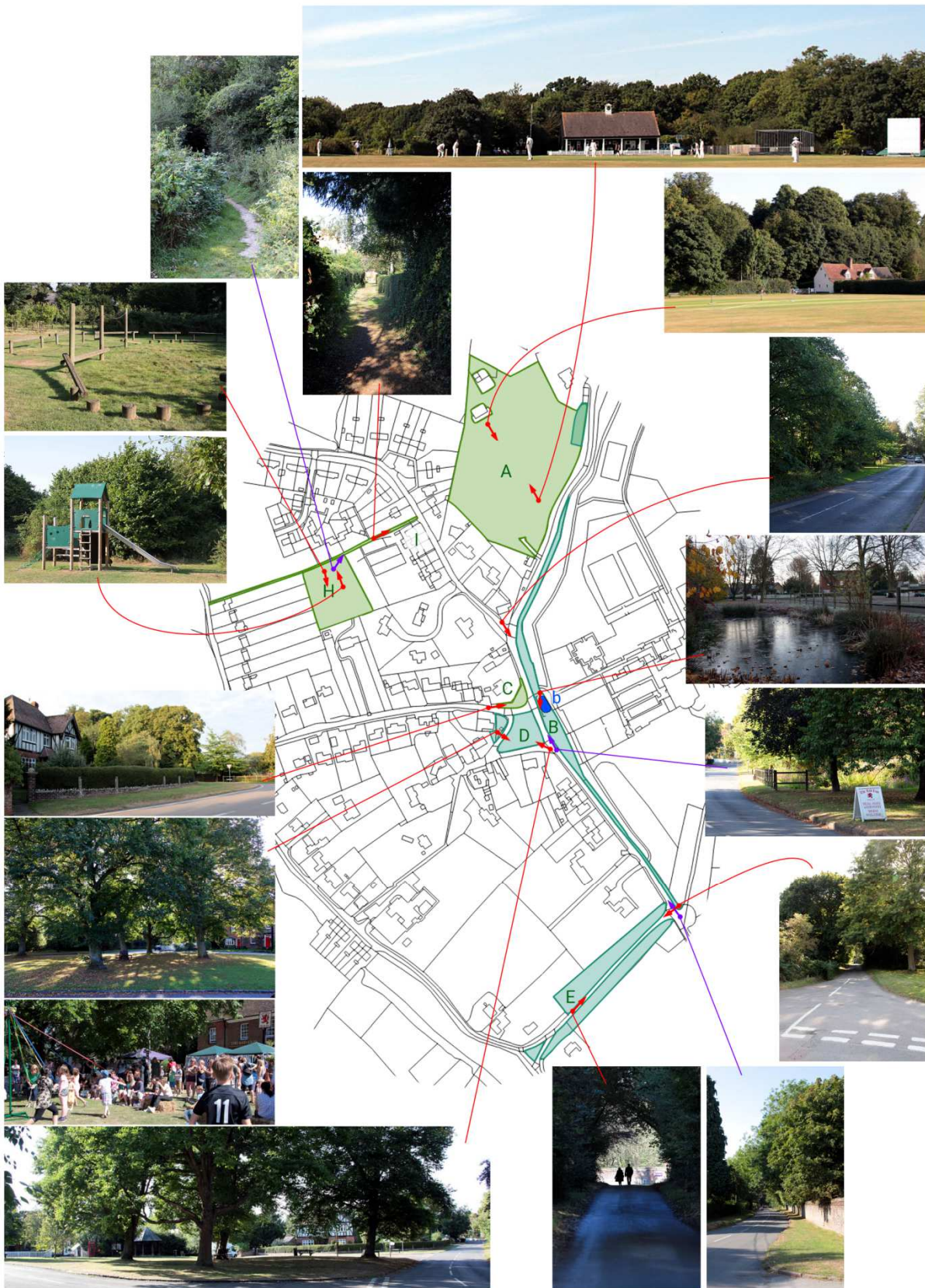
Site	Verge against PHC Wall	Village Pond (Blue Space)
Address / Location	The verge running from opposite the Recreation Ground to the entrance of PHC and including the Village Green Pond.	Located on the "Verge against PHC Wall" opposite the Village Green.
Ref in this plan	Green Space B	Blue Space b <i>(note lower case key used for blue spaces)</i>
Section / Page Ref	Appendix C.2, page 73	Appendix C.2, page 71
Grid Ref	TL180249 to TL181245	TL180247
Description and purpose	A wide verge ranging from hedgerow and scrub to mown lawn with ornamental trees and planted bulbs. The verge provides refuge for pedestrians, places to sit, extra space for events on the village green and visual amenity. The old cart pond is sited on this verge - see Village Pond.	This is the former cart pond. It has been partially restored and provides run off of rain water that would otherwise flood Hitchin Road. It provides visual amenity with seating in the form of a bench on the south side.
Ownership	Waste of the Manor	Waste of the Manor
Check List		
Statutory designations (e.g. SSSI)	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area. Adjoins Temple Dinsley - Register of Historic Parks and Gardens under which the wall and gate piers are Grade II listed.	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area. Adjoins Temple Dinsley.
Site Allocations (give details)	None	None
Planning permissions (give details)	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Proximity to the community it serves	Within main settlement of Village	Within main settlement of Village
Local Significance		
Recreation Value	Open Space for walking, sitting and extra space for village events.	None
Beauty	Affords views of PHC Wall, a space from which to enjoy looking across the Village Green and of high visual amenity in its own right.	Enhances the verge and Village Green.
Historic Value	The Wall is Grade II listed.	Partially restored cart pond - photographic records from late 19 th /early 20 th century show size and location. It was filled in during the 1950s and restored in 2008 without cart access.
Tranquillity	Absorbs road noise enhancing tranquillity of the village.	Part of the tranquillity of the setting.
Wildlife	Provides a green corridor from opposite the Recreation Ground to Crunnells Green.	Provides water for birds and animals as well as a habitat for aquatic and amphibious species.
Extensive Tract	No	No

Site	Verge between Preston House and the Village Green	The Village Green and Well
Address / Location	Between Preston House and The Village Green - on the corner of Church Lane and School Lane.	The Village Green, including the area with the Grade II Village Well and Grade II Listed Telephone Box. Bounded by: The Red Lion public house (Grade II listed) to the South; School Lane and PHC Wall to the East; Church Lane to the North.
Ref in this plan	Green Space C	Green Space D
Section / Page Ref	Appendix C.2, page 73	Appendix C.2, page 73
Grid Ref	TL180247	TL180247
Description and purpose	This is a mown lawn verge with a footpath running across to a matching drop kerb on the green. It provides a refuge for foot traffic, additional space for village events on the Green and visual amenity.	The Village Green, including the area with the Village Well, Telephone Box and Parish Noticeboard. An area of mown lawn with a canopy of mature trees and newer plantings. Provides a meeting point for social interactions. Hosts events such as Village Day, Open Gardens Refreshments and Plant Stall. Green space for informal play and relaxation. Provides visual amenity.
Ownership	Hertfordshire County Council	Waste of the Manor
Check List		
Statutory designations (e.g. SSSI)	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area.	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area.
Site Allocations (give details)	None	None
Planning permissions (give details)	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Proximity to the community it serves	Within main settlement of Village	Within main settlement of Village
Local Significance		
Recreation Value	Additional space for village events.	Hosts events such as Village Day, Open Gardens Refreshments and Plant Stall. Green space for informal play and relaxation.
Beauty	Adds to general openness and enhances the setting of the Green.	This is the rural heart of the Village. To many it defines what Preston is about visually. See: front cover of Neighbourhood Plan, images of Maypole Dancing, The Well, Phone Box and Red Lion on pages 6, 14, 40 and 48.
Historic Value	None	Photographic evidence of grazing early 20th century.
Tranquillity	Part of the tranquillity of the setting.	A tranquil heart of the village - even dampening noise when hosting village events.
Wildlife	Minimal	The tree canopy provides a habitat for birds and insects.
Extensive Tract	No	No

Site	Verges along Crunnells Green
Address / Location	Either side of Crunnells Green (a lane connecting School Lane to Back Lane), including a triangle of land in the road at the junction of Crunnells Green and Back Lane.
Ref in this plan	Green Space E
Section / Page Ref	Appendix C.2, page 73
Grid Ref	TL181245 to TL180244
Description and purpose	The verges consist of secondary woodland (giving a canopy across the lane) and the triangle of land has rough grass with trees providing a canopy. No purpose other than providing the setting of a rural lane.
Ownership	Waste of the Manor
Check List	
Statutory designations (e.g. SSSI)	Sits within the Preston Conservation Area.
Site Allocations (give details)	None
Planning permissions (give details)	None
NPPF Criteria	
Proximity to the community it serves	Within main settlement of Village
Local Significance	
Recreation Value	None
Beauty	Providing the setting of a rural lane. See image of couple walking along Crunnells Green on page 6.
Historic Value	None
Tranquillity	Verges absorb noise.
Wildlife	Provides much needed habitat of undisturbed deep hedgerows and secondary woodland.
Extensive Tract	No

Site	Church Meadow	Chiltern Way Extension Footpath
Address / Location	Not bounded by any roads. Accessible via the Churchyard and Chiltern Way Extension Footpath. Lies to the North of the Churchyard.	Connects Butchers Lane, Castlefield Foot Entrance, Church Meadow and Chequers Lane (with rear access for Chequers Cottages).
Ref in this plan	Green Space H	Green Space I
Section / Page Ref	Appendix C.2, page 73	Appendix C.2, page 73
Grid Ref	TL178248	TL177248 to TL179249
Description and purpose	A parcel of land which has been rescued from brambles to include a play area for young children, an orchard, and a footpath connecting the rear of the churchyard with the Chiltern Way Extension. Much of the wilderness has been retained to mitigate noise from play and encourage wildlife.	Public Right of Way - see Address above for locations served. At the Chequers Lane end and Church Meadow this is wide enough to be considered a green space as well as a path.
Ownership	NHDC - Leased to Preston Parish Council	Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way
Check List		
Statutory designations (e.g. SSSI)	Adjoins the Preston Conservation Area.	Eastern End within the Preston Conservation Area.
Site Allocations (give details)	None	None
Planning permissions (give details)	None	None
NPPF Criteria		
Proximity to the community it serves	Within main settlement of Village	Within main settlement of Village
Local Significance		
Recreation Value	Playground with equipment for younger children. Fruit trees for use by local residents.	Part of longer walk which provides relaxation and leisure for many people not only Preston residents.
Beauty	Provides a green oasis between the surrounding residential properties of Church Lane, Chequers Lane (including Templars Lane) and Butchers Lane.	Attractive at the Chequers Lane end where protected by the Conservation Area. Marred at the other end by a tall green metal fence separating it from the meadow of Castlefield.
Historic Value	None	None known
Tranquillity	Parents comment that it is so quiet it helps the children calm down.	Provides a quiet pedestrian route.
Wildlife	Provides a diverse range of habitats supporting native species of plants, small mammals, birds and insects.	A corridor for wildlife affording hedgerow habitats.
Extensive Tract	No	No

Photographs of Local Open Green and Blue Spaces



Each photograph taken from the position of the circle looking in direction of the arrow

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Species Data for the Parish

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Farming and the Environment

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

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

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

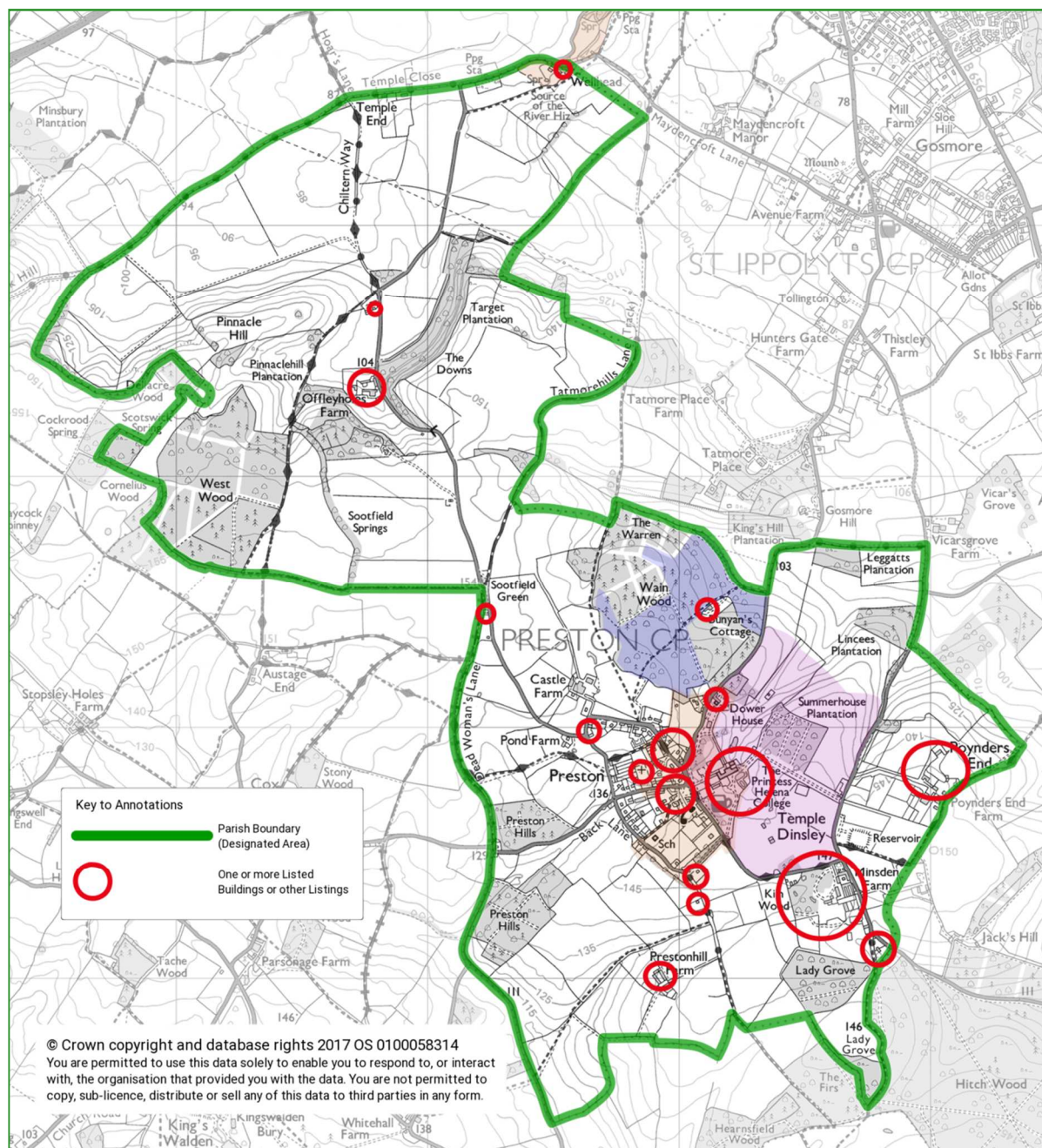
Fauna and flora do not recognise parish boundaries. The habitats straddle across our parish boundaries, for example, woodland continues into St. Paul's Walden Parish, and chalk downland continues along the Chiltern scarp slope into Offley Parish.

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

C.3 Built Environment

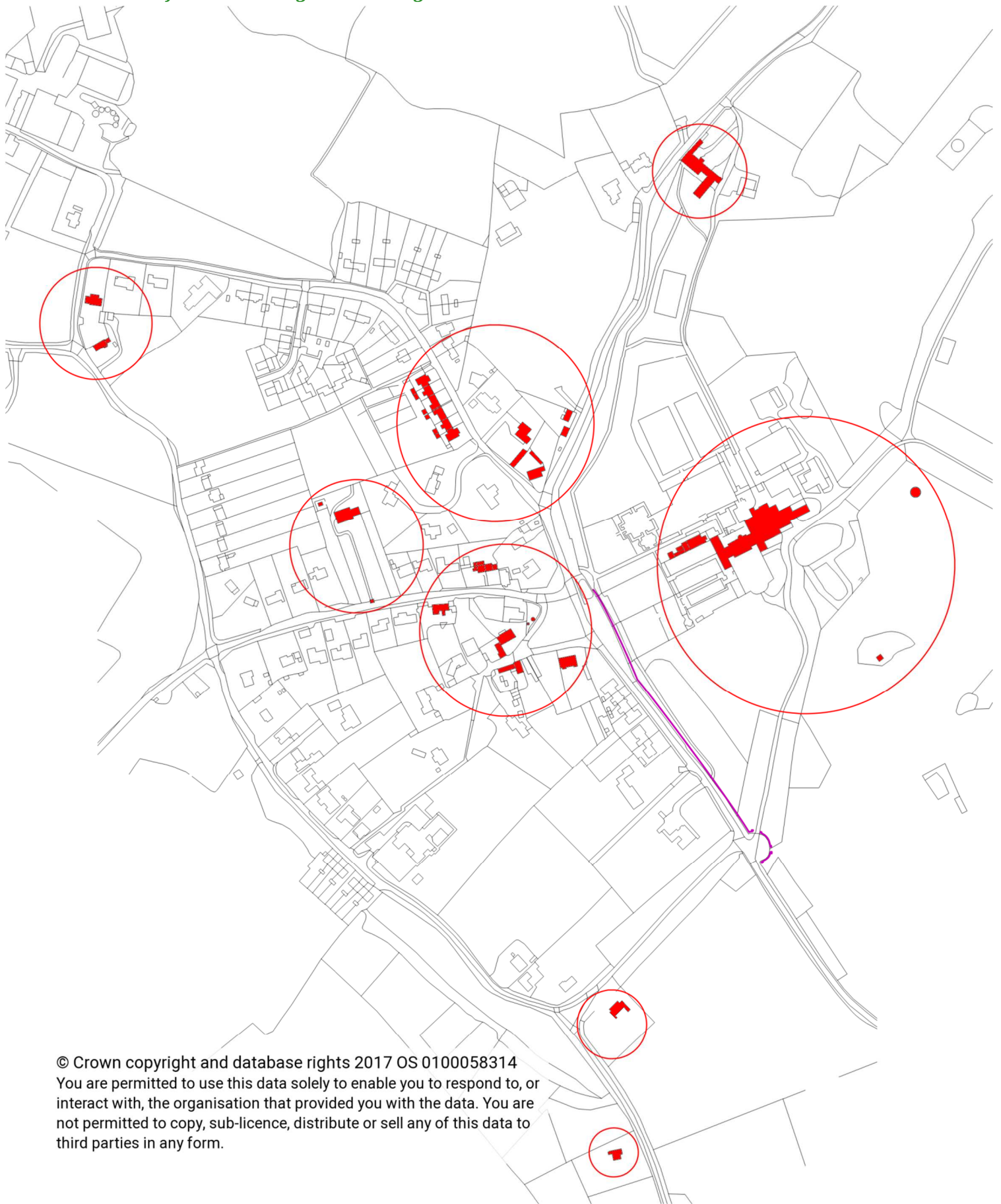
Listed Buildings

This is a National status, and applies to 63 buildings on 42 sites in this small parish. 61 are Grade II. Two are Grade II*, which are ‘particularly important buildings of more than special interest’.



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

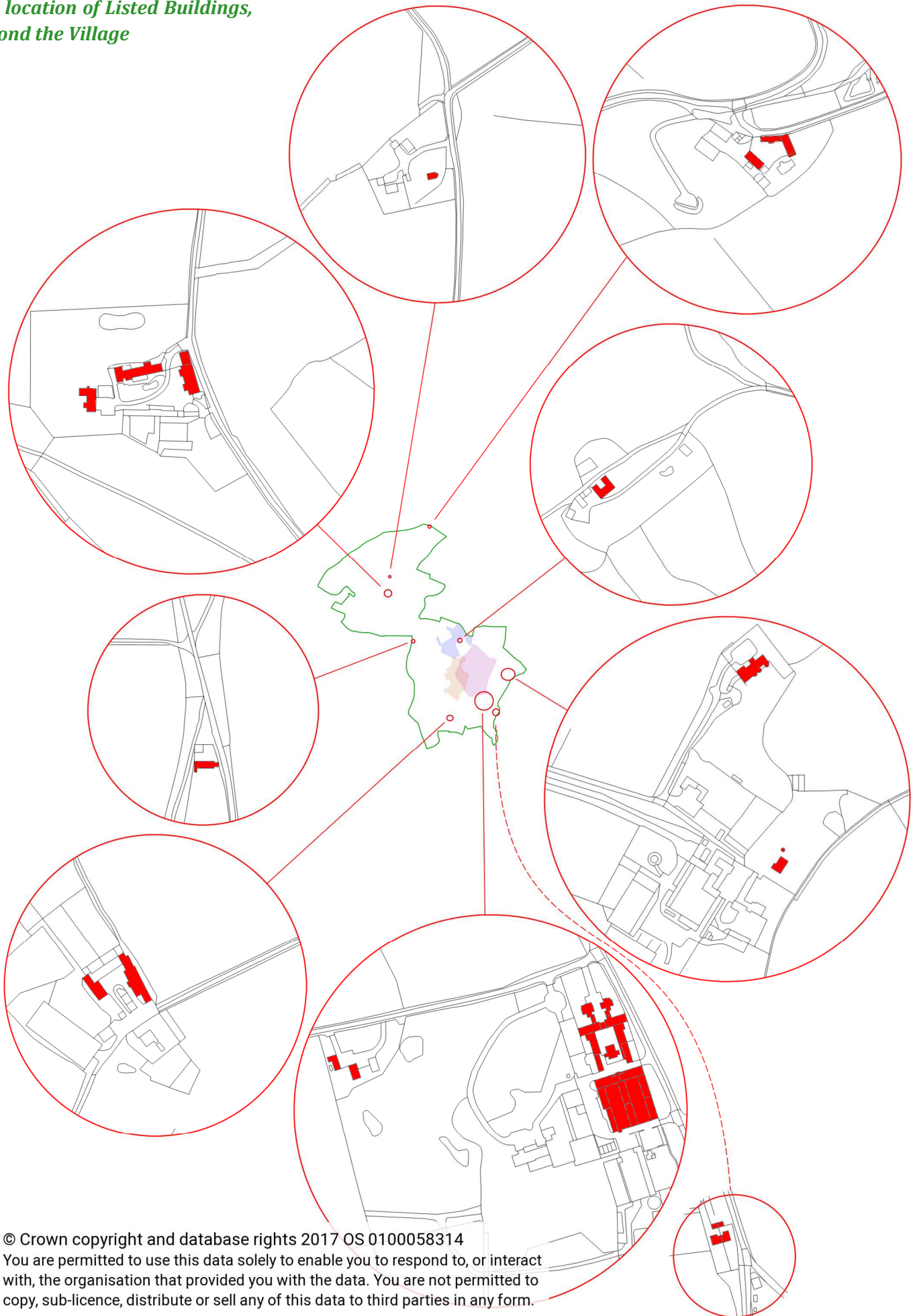
The Location of Listed Buildings in the Village



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

The location of Listed Buildings, beyond the Village



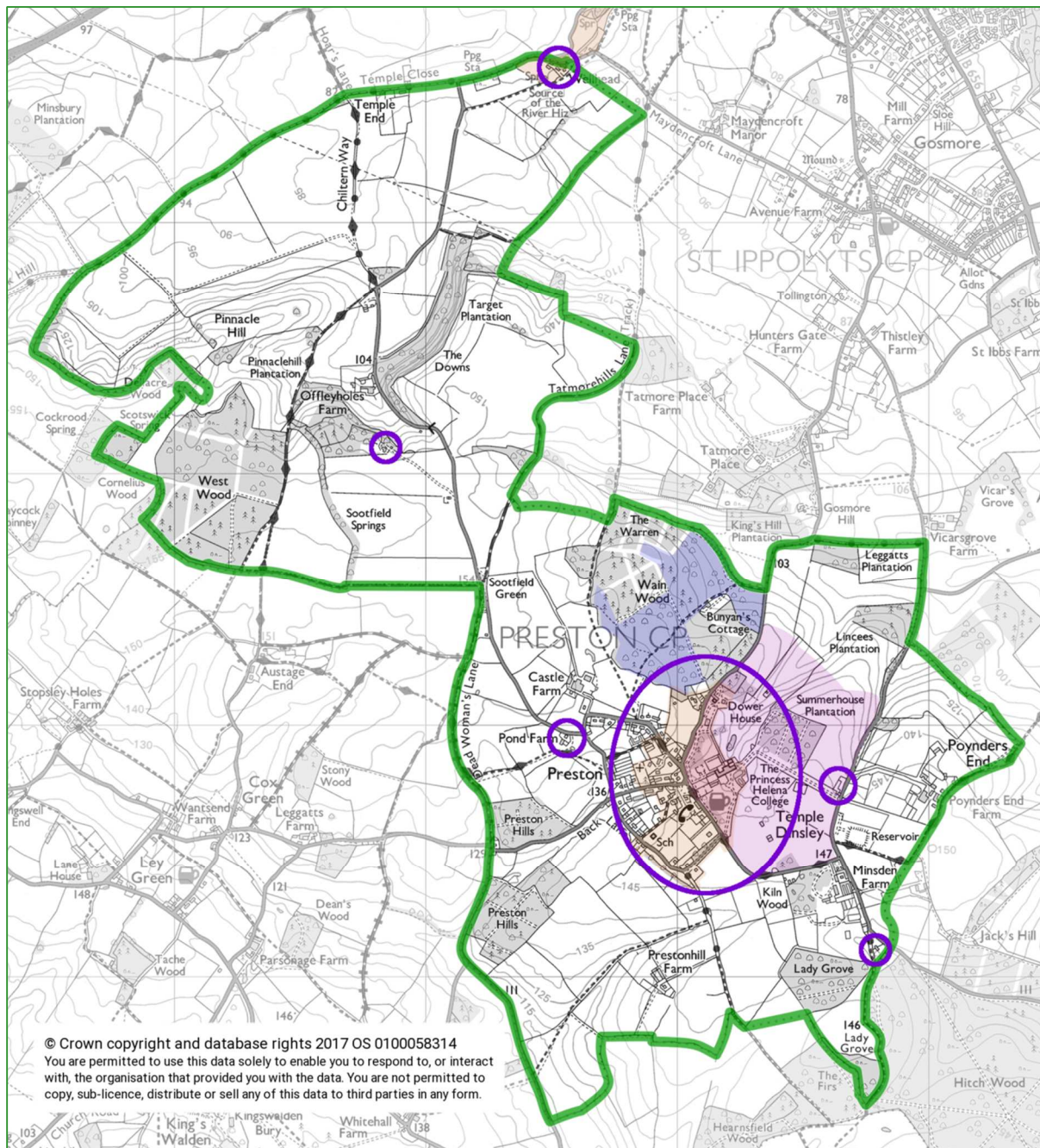
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Index of Listed Buildings:

Name	Listed Entry Number from Historic England
Bunyan's Cottage	LEN 1347489
Chequers Cottages 1-6 and 3 linked rear outhouses	LEN 1176623
Crunnells Green Cottage	LEN 1102423
Fir (Fig) Tree Cottage	LEN 1102426
Hitchwood Cottage 1-2 and outhouse	LEN 1176749
Kiln Wood Cottage and linked outhouse	LEN 1102433
Laburnam Lodge (Joyners Cottage as at April 2018)	LEN 1347481
Ladygrove Stud Farm, Dairy Cottage, Kiln Wood Lodge, Ladygrove Lodge	LEN 1176799
Offley Holes Barn and Cartshed	LEN 1102429
Offley Holes Barns	LEN 1176723
Offley Holes Farm House	LEN 1307781
Offley Holes 'The Lodge'	LEN 1347484
Poynders End House	LEN 1102431
Poynders End: Tudor House	LEN 1102430 GRADE II*
Poynders End: Tudor House Octagonal Dairy	LEN 1176732
Preston Hill Farm: West Barn	LEN 1347485
Preston Hill Farm: East Barn	LEN 1176739
Princess Helena College: Ice House	LEN 1176789
Princess Helena College: House and Formal Gardens	LEN 1307766 GRADE II*
Princess Helena College: Gate Posts and Park Wall	LEN 1102432
Princess Helena College: The Piggery	LEN 1347448
Princess Helena College: The Dower House	LEN 1102427
Princess Helena College: Temple Dinsley	LEN 1000919 Parkland GRADE II*
Red Lion Public House	LEN 1102425
Reeves Cottage	LEN 1102424
Rose Cottage	LEN 1102460
Sadleirs End	LEN 1347463
Sootfield Green	LEN 1389610
Spindle Cottage Barn	LEN 1102428
Spindle Cottage	LEN 1176712
St. Martin's Church: The Lychgate	LEN 1102461
St. Martin's Church (C. of E.)	LEN 1176631
St. Martin's Church: The Mausoleum	LEN 1102420
St. Martin's Place	LEN 1102421
Telephone Kiosk	LEN 1103249
The Old Forge	LEN 1102422
The Well on The Green	LEN 1176692
The Wilderness	LEN 1307843
The Chequers, with Wall and Outhouse	LEN 1307773
Vine Cottage	LEN 1347482
Wellhead Farm: Granary and Barn	LEN 1102459
Wellhead Farm: South-West Barn	LEN 1307809

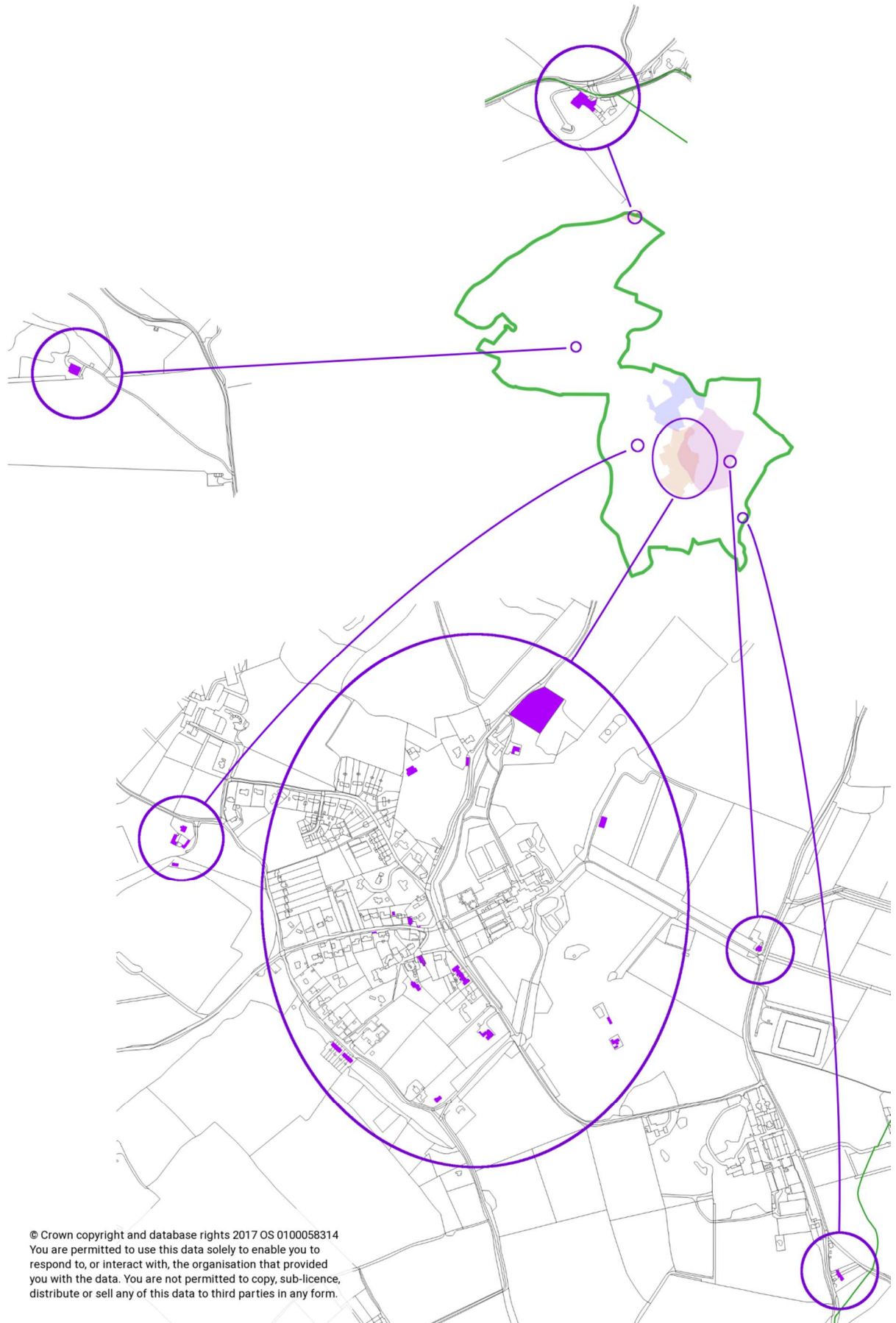
Undesignated Heritage Assets

In addition to the listed buildings there are a number of undesignated buildings that have the potential to be considered as heritage assets. These are mostly located in and around the village. Areas containing the undesignated heritage assets are shown by the purple circles and oval below.



Investigating the assets and their heritage potential is a project to be undertaken outside of the Neighbourhood Plan if there are parties interested and the opportunity to do so.

Locations of Undesignated Heritage Assets

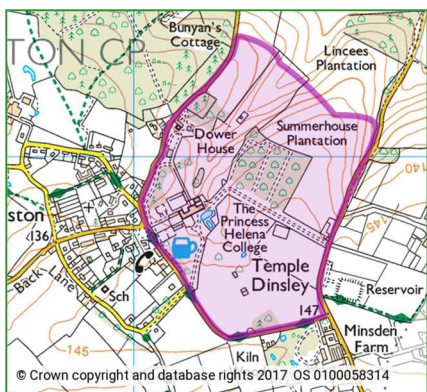


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List of Undesignated Heritage Assets

TL175276	Wellhead Farm – Barns and farm buildings other than those already Grade II
TL168260	Former Coach House of Offley Holes House
TL175248	Open Sided Barn or Coach House at The Pond Farmhouse
TL175249	The Pond Farmhouse and Barns / Outbuildings
TL178245	Holly Cottages, Back Lane
TL180244	3 Crunnells Green
TL181245	Crunnells Green House
TL187241	5 to 7 Hitchwood Lane (Hitchwood Cottages)
TL183245	Barns or Agricultural Buildings in field with Permissive path in grounds of PHC
TL183249	Barn or Agricultural Building in Summerhouse Plantation
TL186247	1 and 2 Lodge, Temple Dinsley
TL181250	Barn at the Dower House
TL182251	Walled Garden (derelict) adjacent to Dower House and Preston Road
TL180250	Barn (Conversion) beside road at the Hartings
TL179250	Pavilion, Recreation Ground
TL180247	Section of brick wall to garden of Preston House and Church Lane
TL179247	John Bunyan Chapel - Now Redmayne Bentley Stock Brokers
TL179247	Barn at St. Martin's Place, Church Lane
TL179247	Barn at The Old Forge, Church Lane
TL180247	Outbuilding at The Red Lion
TL180247	Kenward Cottage
TL179246	Pryor House
TL180246	Village Hall and The Bungalows, School Lane

Temple Dinsley / PHC, formerly Princess Helena College



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

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

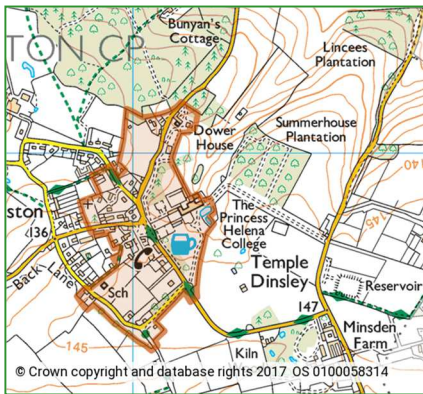
It is not known exactly when the 18th century park was formed. An 18th century brick ice house still exists in the park, and it is listed. Hugh Prince in his book, 'Parks in Hertfordshire since 1500' charts the development of this landscape, as follows:

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

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

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

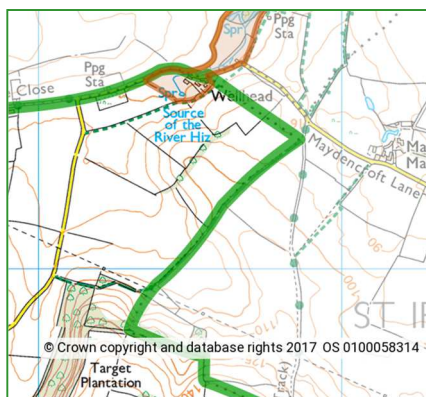
Preston Conservation Area



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

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

Charlton Conservation Area



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

Former Gardens of Merit

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

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

Areas of Archaeological Significance (AAS)

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

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

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

AAS sites for which we do not have HHER reference numbers

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

HHER = Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record number

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

List of Archaeological Artefacts or Objects Found in the Parish

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

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

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

HHER = Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record number

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

2. St. Martin's Church, Preston:

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

3. St. Mary's Church, Hitchin:

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

4. The British Museum, London:

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

D. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The following information and working principles have been provided to the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Preston Parish Council by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. The Parish Council confirms its agreement to, and support of, the following working principles for biodiversity. In the event that any inconsistencies arise between the land use policies in this Plan and any or all of the working principles the land use policies will be applied in the determination of planning applications.

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

Working Principle HERC1: When determining development proposals Preston Parish Council will ensure that decisions will minimise impacts and result in net gains to biodiversity. Net ecological impact will be determined by applying the DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Calculator and/or any revised methodology approved by DEFRA or any relevant successor authority. Only net positive ecological unit scores will be permitted. Ecological compensation may be delivered on or off site,

¹ Environment Bank Biodiversity Impact Calculator 2015 v2 or as amended

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

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

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

D.2 Sites of Acknowledged Nature Conservation Value

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

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

D.3 Networks of Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

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

Working Principle HERC4: In considering development proposals Preston Parish Council will expect Green Infrastructure to provide permeability for wildlife through and around development. Green Infrastructure should be connective and functional as wildlife habitat in its own right not just as a link between habitats.

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

Working Principle HERC6: In considering development proposals that negatively impact upon bat movement corridors Preston Parish Council expects that these corridors are identified, protected and enhanced to ensure continued ecological functionality of bat populations.

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

D.4 Ecological Survey Standards

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

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

D.5 Wildlife And Lighting

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

Working Principle HERC9: In considering development involving potentially adverse lighting impacts to wildlife Preston Parish Council will expect surveys to identify movement corridors and ensure that these corridors are protected and enhanced.

D.6 Wildlife And Landscaping

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

Working Principle HERC10: In considering landscaping schemes Preston Parish Council will expect that appropriate native species are used whenever possible and that benefits to biodiversity are maximised.

The Steering Group are informed that recent research by the Royal Horticultural Society has shown that mixes are more valuable than single species and accordingly advice to Preston Parish Council is that an appropriate mix of native species should be used.

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

Books and written reference material:

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

Maps:

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23. Maps were produced with the volumes by H. Chauncy, and N. Salmon, as above.

 24. Dury and Andrews' Map of Hertfordshire: Society and Landscape in the 18th century, by A. Macnair, A. Rowe and T. Williamson, Oxbow Books 2016. Included with this book, is a digitised version of the original 1766 map, on a DVD.

 - 25 'The County of Hertfordshire from an actual survey', by Arthur Bryant, scale 1 ½" to 1 mile, 1821, facsimile published by the Hertfordshire Record Society, 2003.

 - 26 'Past and Present Map' series: Letchworth, Stevenage, Hitchin and Baldock, including Great Offley, Pirton, Preston, Old Knebworth, Walkern and Weston. 4 maps at 1 : 50,000 scale from Ordnance Survey maps of 1834, 1896, 1919/1920, and 1974/2006, published by Cassini Publishing Ltd., 2006.

F. Preston Parish Implementation Plan

- F.1** The Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered over a period of 12 years (2019 – 2031) by adopting a partnership approach between the Preston Parish Council, North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), developers and the residents of Preston. It is only by harnessing the strengths of these groups that the Objectives of the Plan will become a reality.
- F.2** The Neighbourhood Plan provides a direction for change through its vision, objectives and policies, while at the same time protecting the environmental and historic aspects of the parish which are highly valued and appreciated by the community. It is flexible to allow for new challenges and opportunities which may arise over the Plan period.
- F.3** Any development that takes place during this time will need to take account of the Neighbourhood Plan policies. It is important to ensure this is monitored and that community projects identified through the neighbourhood planning process are achieved.
- F.4** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies that have been developed from the priorities identified through community consultation. They include **Quality of Life, Amenities and Facilities, Housing and Development, Environment and Heritage** and **Transport and Communication**.
- F.5** The Plan's Housing and Development Policies have been developed to ensure that housing growth takes place in a managed and appropriate manner, which is directly linked to the needs of the community. The Parish Council will work in partnership with NHDC to achieve successful implementation of the Plan's housing policies.
- F.6** The next layer of growth in the parish must create a development of quality, contributing to the character of the village and providing local benefit. It must be more than an exercise in meeting housing supply 'numbers' by the addition of characterless properties. The objective, therefore, is to enable the provision of a choice of new homes to meet the needs of all sections of the community in a manner which respects the character of the village and wider parish.
- F.7** The Parish Council will scrutinise and advise on the appropriateness of planning applications for compliance with the Plan's policies.
- F.8** Preston Parish Council will lead on and monitor the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan with a full review every five years to ensure that the policies remain in line with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and any changes to national legislation. Within the context provided by the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 the Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a review of the Neighbourhood Plan within twelve months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.
- F.9** The following table illustrates the actions required and by whom to realise the objectives of the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan. It will be reviewed on a regular basis as and when objectives are achieved or are changed through future community consultation.

Implementation Plan				
Category	Policy	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Community Rights	Paragraphs A-C inclusive	Monitor and if felt necessary implement one or more of these Community Rights in support of other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC
Quality of Life	Policy QL1	Support the provision of opportunities for social interaction.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC
	Policy QL2	To promote a community quality of life.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC
	Policy QL3	Promote community identity by preserving heritage and historic features.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
Amenities and Facilities	Policy AL1	Support proposals for new or improved community facilities which fulfil the needs of existing and new residents.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
	Policy AL2	Sustain and support the development of facilities for the parish.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
	Policy AL3	Support developments that encourage and sustain economic growth and creation of jobs.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
Housing and Development	All Housing and Development policies Numbered HD1-HD10 inclusive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor all planning applications against all Housing and Development Policies. Engage with any pre-applications and consultations. 2. The overarching aims of the Housing and Development Policies are to deliver a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Preston. 3. Ensure that historic and heritage aspects are enhanced and maintained as it is these key factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of the parish. 4. Ensure proposals provide flood risk assessment and that suitable and sufficient foul sewage disposal provisions are made before any property is occupied and that no existing problems are exacerbated. The Parish Council to liaise with Anglian Water and Thames Water, if deemed appropriate, to support this policy. 5. Ensure that developers comply with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. 6. Provide support for measures of water conservation and landscape schemes that improve biodiversity and also plans for low carbon footprints. 7. Maintain a watching brief to assist the achievement of the aims of 'Building Futures' wherever possible. 	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC

Implementation Plan				
Category	Policy	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Environment and Heritage	All Environment and Heritage policies numbered EH1-EH8 inclusive	1. Monitor planning applications against the Environment and Heritage Policies.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
		2. Support developments that respect, protect and preserve the local landscape and rural character of the parish.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
		3. Ensure all development is environmentally sustainable and supports the principles of sustainability.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
		4. Monitor all planning applications in areas of Archaeological Significance ensuring they are submitted with a desk top archaeological survey and where necessary a field valuation.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
Transport and Communication	Policy TC1 Policy TC2	1. To support and encourage safe use of roads, paths and bridleways for all users.	Ongoing 2019-2031	NHDC and Preston PC
		2. To support the development of efficient and effective broadband speed and mobile coverage.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC
		3. The Parish Council will continue to liaise with the Police and Hertfordshire Highways on an ongoing basis with regard to the speed of traffic on village lanes.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC
		4. The Parish Council will liaise with BT, BT Open Reach and mobile phone providers with regard to broadband speed and mobile phone coverage.	Ongoing 2019-2031	Preston PC

G. Preston Parish Project List

- G.1** Other points and ideas raised through the Neighbourhood Plan Survey and during the Regulation 14 Consultation have been incorporated into a Project List. These ideas fall outside of the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan but may be taken forward by interested parties and some may be guided by the Parish Council.

Project List

Category	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
<p>Construction Management Plan and Considerate Constructors Scheme</p>	<p>In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway, the Parish Council should request that a Construction Management Plan, at the appropriate level of detail for the size of development, should be prepared for all new developments (with the exception of householder development). The following key points should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amenities of existing residents are protected • the character of the narrow lanes in the village are protected and damage to those lanes and their verges is avoided • the developer is aware of the required standards regarding the maintenance of the public right of way and safety during construction • the public rights of way along the carriageway and footways remain unobstructed by vehicles, machinery, materials and other aspects of construction works • a means of access for construction vehicles is agreed <p>Developers should be encouraged to comply with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/).</p> <p>In the event of any damage being caused to the verges and surrounding areas, it will be expected that suitable reinstatement is undertaken upon completion of the development (Section 131 of the Highways Act 1980).</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Preston Parish Council in conjunction with NHDC</p>

Project List			
Category	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
HGV Ban	The Parish Council last investigated this in November 2015. They were told that Preston wasn't covered by the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan under which weight limits are covered. The Clerk was informed that it would be difficult to justify the implementation of a weight restriction in Preston because the majority of the HGVs have genuine business and would not be prosecuted under a weight limit prohibition. During the previous 12 years the police had not received any HGV related complaints at Preston. Preston Parish Council to review this every 5 years and decide whether it is appropriate to further investigate this issue. Next review: 2020	Every 5 years	Preston Parish Council
New Conservation Area	<p>Investigation into the possibility of an additional Conservation Area to be designated to include all the Listed Buildings near Ladygrove Farm, including woodlands.</p> <p>The current Conservation Area was studied prior to its establishment in 1980. These studies were conducted to evaluate and describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings of local interest, including listed buildings and previously listed Grade III buildings • Statutory listed walls, gates and railings • Recent buildings, post 1939 • Important building line • Trees of high, medium and low amenity value • Areas of high landscape and townscape value • Important pedestrian ways • Important views • Focal points 	Timescale identified by group taking on project	Interested groups, possibly Preston Trust, should contact Preston Parish Council with their plan. The Parish Council to decide who best to carry out the investigation.
Conservation Area Appraisal	The production of a Conservation Area Appraisal document which sets out what it is in the Conservation Area which should be preserved or enhanced to maintain the character and appearance of the area. Work previously completed may be used as a starting point into this investigation.	By 2020	Preston Parish Council in conjunction with the NHDC Conservation Officer.

Project List			
Category	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Planning Guidance	<p>Consideration to be given to a Supplementary Planning Guidance to cover two specific areas:</p> <p>8. 'The Location and Design of Small Residential Developments'</p> <p>9. 'Historic Buildings: Repairs, Alterations and Extensions'</p> <p>Such guidance would encourage a high standard of design appropriate to the character of Preston.</p> <p>There may be an overlap with the Conservation Area Appraisal that presents opportunities to re-use or share work.</p>	Timescale identified by group taking on project	Interested groups, possibly Preston Trust, should contact Preston Parish Council with their plan. The Parish Council to decide who best to carry out this guidance.
Identify projects to improve infrastructure Section 106	Identify projects for infrastructure improvements throughout the parish that could be achieved by using Section 106 monies resulting from developments, ensuring that they meet the criteria agreed between NHDC, the developer and the Parish Council.	Ongoing	Preston Parish Council in conjunction with NHDC.
Community projects Section 106	Identify projects that could be proposed to improve facilities that would serve and benefit the community using Section 106 monies, ensuring that they meet the criteria agreed between NHDC, the developer and the Parish Council.	Ongoing	Preston Parish Council in conjunction with NHDC.
Community Projects General	Investigate general projects (future and identified in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations) that could improve facilities to serve and benefit the community - see village shop and village hall below.	As opportunity arises	Preston Parish Council and/or interested groups who wish to pursue initiatives.
Village Shop	Many residents have highlighted the need for a village shop. Any individual or group wishing to provide one should develop a business plan to ensure that it is a viable project.	As the need arises	Interested groups who wish to pursue this initiative.

Project List			
Category	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Village Hall	Many residents have highlighted the need for a new, larger village hall. Any individual or group wishing to investigate the feasibility of this should contact the Parish Council with a detailed business plan. The Parish Council are custodians of the Village Hall which is owned by the Seebohm Trust, a registered charity which ensures that the Village Hall is maintained for use by the residents of Preston.	At an appropriate time for the interested groups.	Interested groups who wish to investigate this should present a viable business plan to the Parish Council.
Undesignated Heritage Assets	A list of Undesignated Heritage Assets is in Appendix C.3, page 89. There is an opportunity for an interested group of residents to compile the details with photographs of these assets for future reference.	At an appropriate time for the interested groups.	Interested groups who wish to pursue this initiative.



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