



# Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2031 Submission Version

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# Foreword

Monks Kirby Parish Council committed, in 2019, to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. This topic had been discussed over preceding years and previously the Council had decided that developing a Neighbourhood Plan needed a lot of very scarce resource, both from Councillors and Parishioners and that the value from developing such a Plan was not sufficient to warrant the investment of resource. However, discussions in 2019 about the value the Neighbourhood Plan could bring to the Parish in terms of protecting the features of the Parish that are highly valued and having some measure of control over future developments convinced the Council that a Neighbourhood Planning process should be started. This was further validated when the Council sought and received funding to procure external expertise to help create the Plan. It was acknowledged that creation of a Neighbourhood Plan would be a long process and would involve volunteers both from the Council and the wider Parish. The advent of the Covid epidemic just as the planning process was underway in 2020/21 added further complication and delays but the team managed their way through this very successfully.

The process of creating this Plan is part of the Government's approach to planning contained in the Localism Act of 2011. Local people now have a greater say about what happens in the area in which they live by preparing a neighbourhood plan that sets out policies that meet the needs of the community whilst having regard for local, national and EU policies. The aim of this Plan is to put forward the wishes of the community regarding future development and to deliver local aspirations within the context of the strategic planning framework. The Parish Council has overseen its development but has delegated the preparation of this Plan to a Steering Group

This Plan contains a number of policies, including some areas where the Parish Council will support development activity, and other areas such as 'Local Green Spaces' that the community wish to protect. These policies have been drafted following engagement with the residents, landowners and other stakeholders within the Parish.

We are grateful to officers from Rugby Borough Council who have attended meetings and supported us fully as the Neighbourhood Plan has progressed, and to our community for engaging in the process. Many hours of volunteer time and expertise have made this Plan possible. The Parish Council expresses sincere thanks to all the Parishioners who contributed to the development of this Plan.

**Tim Washington - Chair, Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee**

# 1. Introduction

The Monks Kirby Neighbourhood plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, which brings together members of the local community and Parish Councillors.

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

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

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the Parish of Monks Kirby (Figure 1). It sits alongside the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) to provide more detailed development 'planning' related policies to help achieve locally identified aims and objectives.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a long-term approach for the development of Monks Kirby, and clear development related policies to realise this.

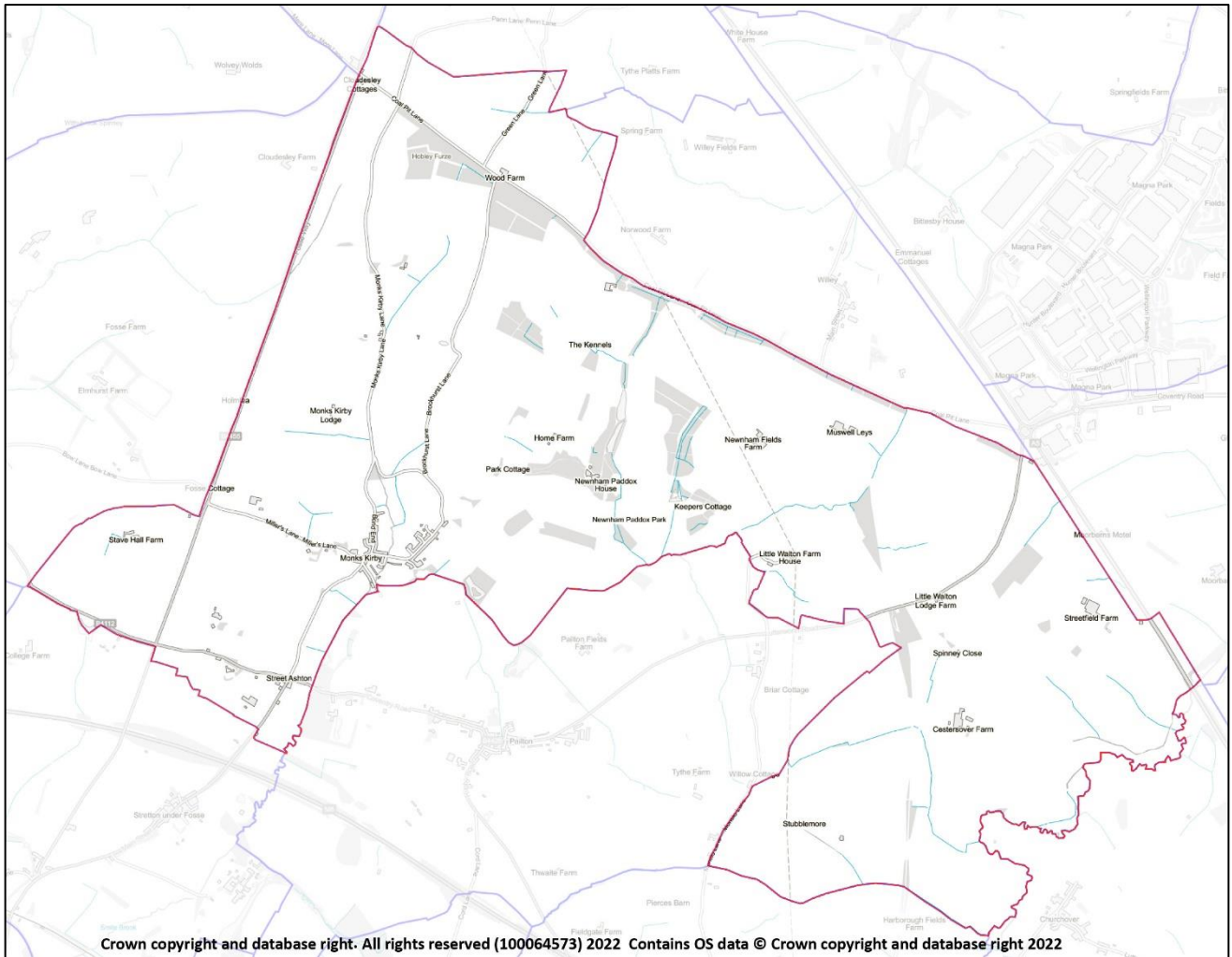
In preparing a neighbourhood plan, a community is not working from 'a blank piece of paper'. Legislation requires that the Neighbourhood Plan, and the policies it contains, must be prepared in a certain manner; in particular, the policies must be in general conformity with relevant national and local (i.e. Rugby) planning policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now at the formal pre-submission stage. All comments received from a wide range of stakeholders will be recorded and responded to, indicating where the Neighbourhood Plan has changed, as appropriate.

It will then be submitted to Rugby Borough Council who will undertake further statutory consultation before the Neighbourhood Plan is subject to an Independent Examination. Once all recommendations have been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan, it will be brought back to Monks Kirby where a referendum will be held. It will pass if it achieves over 50% of the votes cast.

Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Rugby. This means that it must be taken into account when considering planning applications affecting Monks Kirby.

Fig. 1 Neighbourhood area – Designated on 8 June 2021



## 2. How the Plan fits into the planning system

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation.

A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

One of the main rules governing the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it must be in line with European regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations which are retained under EU law. It must have regard for national planning policy and also be in general conformity with borough-wide (i.e. Rugby) planning policies. This means that it cannot be prepared in isolation. It will need to take into account, and generally work with, the grain of the borough-wide and national policies unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

The Neighbourhood Plan, once made, sits within the Rugby Development Plan Documents which currently comprise the Rugby Local Plan (2011-31), Warwickshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plans and a collection of Supplementary Planning Documents.

Also important is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was updated in July 2021. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to encourage sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development:

- An economic dimension – policies should contribute to economic development;
- A social dimension – policies should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services; and
- An environmental dimension – policies should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own social, economic and environmental needs.

# 3. How the Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable development

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to meet its commitment to promoting sustainable development in the following ways:

## **a) Economic**

- To protect existing employment uses;
- To ensure effective broadband speeds in new development;
- To support appropriate small-scale farm diversification and business development; and
- To encourage appropriate start-up businesses and home working.

## **b) Social**

- To safeguard existing open space for the enjoyment of residents;
- To protect existing community facilities; and
- To ensure that any new housing meets the needs of present and future generations.

## **c) Environmental**

- To ensure that housing development does not harm but instead positively reflects the existing and historic character of the area;
- To protect important open spaces from development;
- To ensure that the design of development enhances the Parish's special character and identity;
- To protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats; and
- To make provision for improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

## 4. About Monks Kirby

The Village of Monks Kirby is situated 4 miles south of the centre of Roman England at High Cross where the Roman Watling Street and Fosse Way intersect. Here there was a Roman posting station called Venonae. The history of Monks Kirby is inextricably linked to the Church which dominates the skyline. Originally dedicated to The Blessed Virgin and St Denys and now to St Edith. This indicates that Monks Kirby was once of significant importance as opposed to the quiet rural village we find today. Indeed, Monks Kirby was once the second largest Parish in England and included Rugby within its boundary.

There was a Saxon settlement and place of worship established prior to the Norman conquest. The Domesday Book (1086) refers to Chirchberie which is probably the settlement of Cyricbyrig founded in 917 by Ethelfleda of Mercia, daughter of Alfred the Great. Recorded history of the Church begins in 1077 with the arrival of Benedictine monks from Angers, France, at the invitation of Geoffrey de la Guerche, a supporter of William the Conqueror. A priory was established, and the ruined Saxon Church was rebuilt. The monks remained in Monks Kirby until 1414 and the Church, which has been rebuilt several times, remains the dominant building in the village.

By 1217 Monks Kirby had become one of the wealthiest of the alien priories and brought prosperity to the village which had grown into a small town with a weekly Wednesday market and a 3-day Midsummer Fair. The Midsummer Fair is still held annually in Monks Kirby on the nearest Sunday to Midsummer Day. In 1337 with the advent of the 100 Years War with France the French monks were gradually withdrawn and the Church was re-dedicated to Our Lady and St Edith of Polesworth to be more appropriate as St Denys was the patron saint of France. In the aftermath of the Black Death (1349) the Church was rebuilt. The patronage of Monks Kirby was granted by Henry VIII to Trinity College, Cambridge and this has continued to the present time.



*Duck Puddle - now Bell Lane*



*Main Street*

Up to the advent of the railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the village was effectively by-passed, Monks Kirby was one of the most important villages in this part of Warwickshire. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century the "Hundred of Knightlow", a main administrative division, was divided into four constable divisions:



Kenilworth, Monks Kirby, Rugby and Southam which status Monks Kirby retained until 1828. Monks Kirby District Council was created in 1894 to include the Parishes of Copston Magna, Monks Kirby, Pailton, Stretton-under-Fosse, Wibtoft and Willey. Monks Kirby District Council was abolished in 1932 and merged into Rugby Rural District Council. Monks Kirby is now one of the parished areas of Rugby Borough Council with its own Parish Council and included in the Fosse Ward of Warwickshire County Council.

In 1433 the Feilding family, later to become Earls of Denbigh, had settled at Newnham Paddox, a mile outside the main settlement. The holding included ownership of most of the village and an extensive



*Brockhurst School pre-1912*

area of land. The family, who still live at Newnham Paddox has had a strong influence on the development of the area. The 8<sup>th</sup> Earl brought the Catholic Church to Monks Kirby, founding the present Catholic Parish and St Joseph's Convent and School in 1873. The 8<sup>th</sup> Earl's twin sister, Lady Mary Feilding, however supported the Brockhurst Church of England School which was rebuilt in 1912. Monks Kirby was the first place in the country to share a Catholic Infants School and a Church of England Junior School. Both schools are now amalgamated as the Revel Church of England (Aided) Primary School

which still uses the 1912 building together with a modern block built in 1973.

There is a mix of architectural styles in the village and parish ranging from old cottages through 19<sup>th</sup> Century brick-built properties, originally tenanted by Estate employees or attached to tenant farms on the Estate, to a few Rugby Borough Council owned dwellings and some modern housing. Most of the properties are now privately owned with older ones converted for modern use. Small developments have been built since 1950, each reflecting the decade of their build.

The parish lies almost entirely within the Green Belt and the village together with some of the adjoining farmland is a designated Village Conservation Area and also covered by a Parish Plan.

There is a strong community ethos in the parish contributed to by both parishioners of long-standing and newer residents many of whom have young families growing up in the community.

## 2011 Census data

At the time of the 2011 Census, the Monks Kirby Parish was home to around 445 residents living in 181 households. Analysis of the Census suggests that between 2001 and 2011 the population grew by around 2% (10 people). During this period, it is estimated the number of dwellings increased by 8% (14).

There is evidence of an ageing population with the number of over 65-year-olds rising by 65%, up from 14% of total population in 2001 to 23% in 2011. In line with national trends the local population is likely

to get older as average life expectancy continues to rise.

Home ownership levels are high with around 70% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan and at 8% the share of households living in social rented accommodation is very low when compared with regional and national rates.

There is a predominance of large detached and an under representation of housing for single people with just 3% of dwellings having one bedroom.

Land Registry data indicates some new build housing market activity over recent years. The cost of housing in the parish is high with house prices above the regional and national averages. Accessing affordable housing will be an issue for many first-time buyers and people on lower incomes.

Deprivation is not a significant issue, but IMD domain data suggests that some residents may find it difficult to access owner-occupation or access the private rental market.

## 5. Vision and objectives

The Plan area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Monks Kirby and covers the period up to 2031, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) whose evidence base has been used to provide the justification for the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The main purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not to duplicate national or Rugby strategic planning policies, but to sit alongside these, to add additional or more detailed policies specific to Monks Kirby Parish. Where there are national and county-wide planning policies that meet the needs and requirements of the Parish they are not repeated here.

A vision statement has been prepared by the Advisory Committee as follows

Monks Kirby is a Warwickshire parish a few miles to the north-west of Rugby, generally regarded as an exceptionally attractive place. The village is accessible but lies off the district's major roads. The parish covers a large area and is irregularly shaped. Settlements comprise Monks Kirby village – which is a Village Conservation Area, some small hamlets, scattered farms, and a few isolated houses. The land is agricultural and woodland. Much is included in the Green Belt. Landscape features are gentle with shallow valleys, draining into the Avon and Trent, and land rising slightly at the northern end of the parish. Traditionally employment has been agriculturally based, though this has been overtaken numerically by a population which commutes to the surrounding towns.

We seek in this Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that Monks Kirby continues to develop in a way that:

- a) Maintains/protects and enhances the inherent character and diversity of the landscape, preserves the sense of tranquillity and open space, both in the village and wider Parish
- b) manages considered incremental development to meet local need whilst retaining/maintaining the essential characteristics of the Parish
- c) protects the open spaces and heritage assets of our parish and the views/sight lines into/out of and around the village/Parish
- d) maintains the strong community spirit and social cohesion that the village enjoys
- e) protects the environmental features of and drives sustainability in the Parish and
- f) protects the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, as well as motorists

We have established a series of objectives to help deliver this vision.

- a) To provide a balanced range of housing choices which meet the diverse needs of all generations, by increasing the supply of smaller homes and homes for elderly 'down-sizers';
- b) To encourage high-quality design reflecting the rural character of the village;
- c) To protect and enhance the provision of current facilities and assets which contribute to a

vibrant community spirit;

- d) To promote the development of new community facilities which enhance and enrich community life;
- e) To safeguard the most valued and 'special' open spaces in the parish from inappropriate development;
- f) To enhance the biodiversity characteristics of the parish;
- g) To promote development that is safe and that respects the character of neighbouring properties and preserves the rural aspect of the village providing a strong 'sense of place';
- h) To improve broadband to support village employment opportunities;
- i) To ensure that all listed buildings and any identified community or environmental heritage 'assets' are protected and improved;
- j) To ensure development is compliant within the NPPF and the Core Strategy/strategic policies in the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) and target growth identified by Rugby Borough Council.

When using the Plan to form a view on a development proposal or a policy issue the whole document and the policies contained in it must be considered together.

While every effort has been made to make the main parts of this Plan easy to read and understand, the wording of the actual policies is necessarily more formal, so that it complies with statutory requirements.

The Plan will be kept under review and may change over time in response to new and changing needs and requirements.

## 6. How the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared.

The Parish Council decided to undertake the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Monks Kirby in February 2020 and appointed an Advisory Committee to take the process forward.

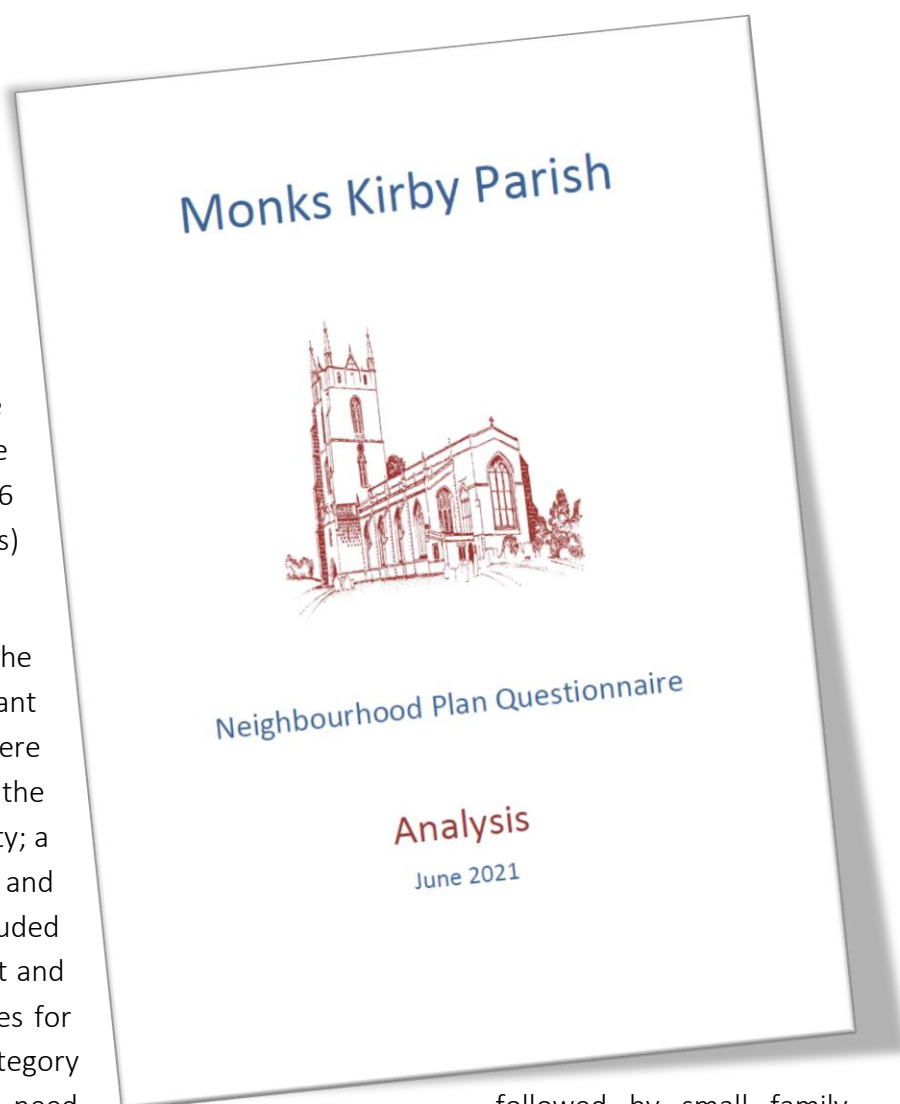
The mandate of the Advisory Committee was to drive the process, consult with the local community, gather evidence to support the development of policies and deliver the plan.

Monks Kirby applied to be a Qualifying Body for neighbourhood planning purposes on 8 December 2020. The whole of the Parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by Rugby Borough Council on 8 June 2021.

Arrangements to progress the Neighbourhood Plan were delayed by the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic and opportunities to consult with the community were reduced.

Nonetheless, the Advisory Committee continued to meet via Zoom. A questionnaire was distributed throughout Monks Kirby in the spring of 2021. 79 completed questionnaires were returned representing 20 % of the population aged 16 or over (276 residents as at the 2011 Census) and up to 43% of households.

Some key findings included the following: The most important features of Monks Kirby were identified as access to the countryside; peace and tranquillity; a lack of major through roads and village character. Concerns included fly tipping, unlawful development and an abuse of the greenbelt. Homes for young people were the top category when asked about housing need, homes and homes for older people. Owner-Occupied housing was welcomed followed by Affordable Housing for Sale.



followed by small family

When restrictions were relaxed in July 2021, two Theme Groups were launched to explore potential policy options in greater detail and to begin to gather evidence. A total of 11 residents attended the launch event and signed up to groups which were facilitated by our Neighbourhood Planning consultants YourLocale.



All of the analyses of the consultation processes are available on the Parish Council website. An Open Event was held on 1 May 2022 to share the draft Plan with the community and to receive feedback.

*Launch of Theme Groups July 2021*

## 7. Policies

### A. Housing and the Built Environment

Much of the Parish outside of the Settlement Boundary is designated as Green Belt in the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031).

The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by protecting the open character of land designated as such. Within the Green Belt there are additional planning controls over the type of development, which can take place within it. As the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) states 'New development will be resisted; only where national policy on Green Belt allows will development be permitted' (Policy GP2: Settlement Hierarchy).

National Planning policy is also clear in its support for the Green Belt, emphasising, "that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence" (NPPF para 137).

National Planning Policy also states that inappropriate development (such as the construction of new buildings), which is harmful to the role and function of the Green Belt, should be approved only in very special circumstances and that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where very special circumstances are fully evidenced.

The Green Belt designation of much of the Parish means that it will continue to be protected by borough and national planning policy. Once an area has been designated as Green Belt, national planning policy is explicit that its boundaries should only be altered in very special circumstances.

While the community has shown strong support for the continued role and function of the Green Belt in the local area, national rules governing the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan mean that it cannot have a specific policy on the Green Belt. Furthermore, it is not appropriate or necessary to have a policy that repeats what already exists especially in the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031).

It should also be noted that the whole of Monks Kirby village is designated as a Conservation Area, which means that there are additional strict planning controls on the nature, design and location of development that can take place within it. The Green Belt designation of much of the Parish and the Conservation Area status of Monks Kirby does not mean that no development will take place in the village and the wider Parish. National and local planning policy allows for some limited and carefully controlled development.

The Plan cannot, nor does it seek to, prevent this type of development, but seeks to positively guide and influence any such future development proposals. Generally, any development that takes place will be small-scale, meet a local need and should not have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the character of Monks Kirby. It should also be compatible with and, where possible, enhance the special and distinctive qualities of Monks Kirby Parish, including its attractive natural and built environment.

Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan (2011-2031) sets out the Borough's strategy for the overall housing targets for the Parish.

The Local Plan for Rugby (2011-2031) has updated the housing need across the Borough and the allocation of housing within it. It states that there is a requirement to provide for at least 12,400 new dwellings between 2011 and 2031 across the Borough.

The Local Plan (2011-2031) establishes a hierarchy of settlements to help to determine the most appropriate locations for the remaining development.

On the basis of this hierarchy, Monks Kirby is classified as a Rural Village. Paragraph 3.12 of the Local Plan (2011-2031) says 'Rural Villages will not play a role in helping to deliver Rugby Borough's strategic growth. The level of services within Rural Villages is more limited than that of Main Rural Settlements and as such the development strategy affords Rural Villages a greater restriction limiting new development to within existing settlement boundaries'.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports this policy intent.

## Settlement Boundary

In historical terms, rural villages like Monks Kirby have often been protected by the designation of a settlement boundary adopted in a statutory Local Plan. With a settlement boundary in place, development is only permitted inside of the envelope or outside of it in carefully controlled circumstances (for example to provide affordable housing or to meet the needs of the rural community). Settlement boundaries help to ensure that sufficient land is identified to meet residential need and that this is available in the most sustainable locations.

Settlement boundaries were originally established by Rugby Borough Council in order to clarify where all new development activity is best located. They have been used to define the extent of a built-up part of a settlement and to distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, development would be acceptable in principle, such as in the main settlements, and where it would not be acceptable, generally in the least sustainable locations such as in the open countryside. Such unfettered and/or unsustainable growth would risk ribbon or piecemeal development and the merging of distinct settlements to the detriment of the community and visual amenity of the built-up area.

Through the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there was considerable discussion about future growth in the Parish. There was a recognition that Monks Kirby had witnessed incremental growth throughout its history and that even the most recent developments had integrated well into the settlement pattern of the village.

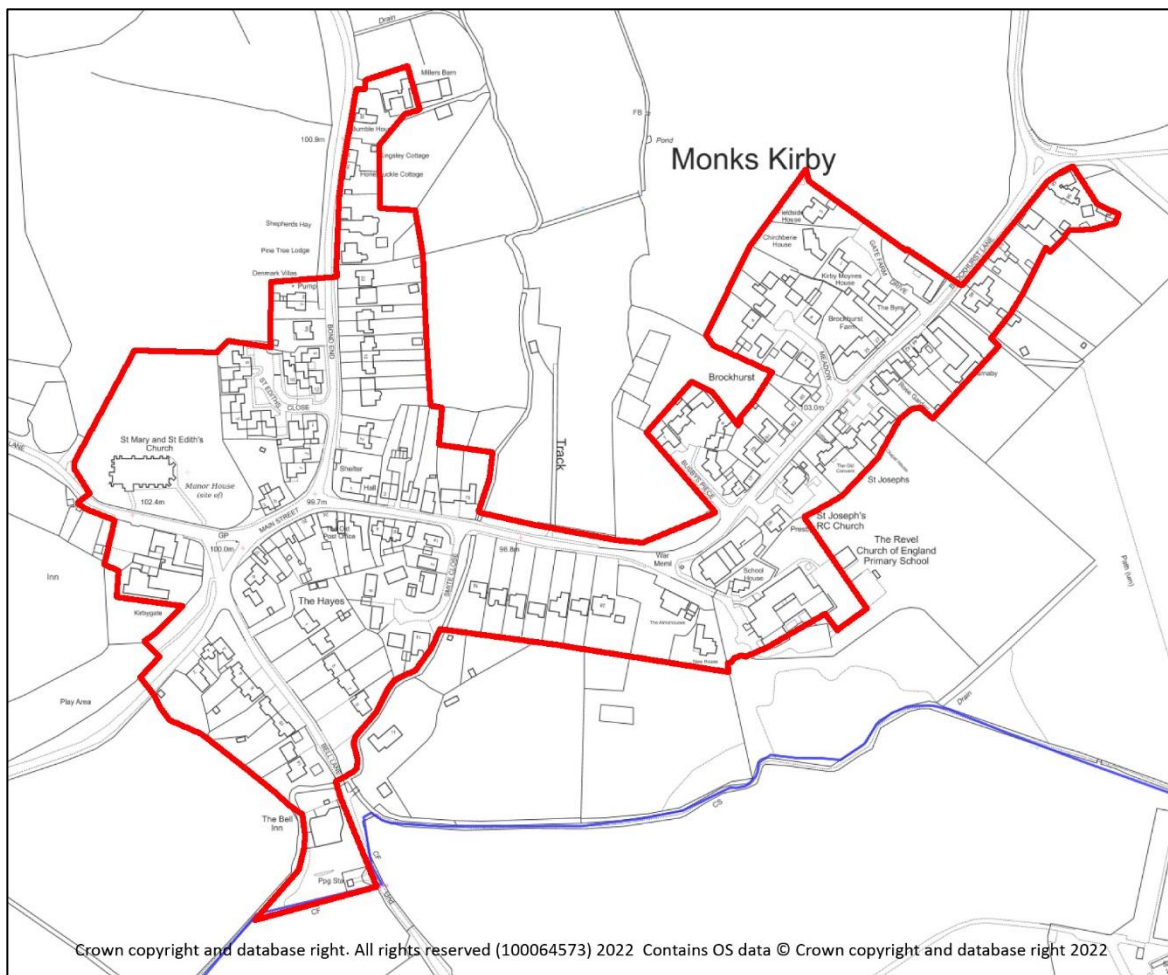
There was some support for facilitating further small-scale growth into the future, but it was also recognised that the wrapping of the village by the green belt would render such aspirations redundant.

Reluctantly, therefore, it has been agreed to retain the existing settlement boundary as identified in the Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) unless a review of the Green Belt is undertaken in which the Parish



Council will contribute its thoughts.

Figure 2: Settlement boundary for Monks Kirby



**POLICY HBE1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY** - development proposals within the Settlement Boundary in figure 2 will be supported where they comply with other policies in this Plan.

Land outside the defined Settlement Boundary is Green Belt, where development will be carefully managed in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

## Housing Mix

At the time of the 2011 Census, home ownership levels in the parish were high with around 70% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan. This was in line with the borough but higher than regional (65%) and national (63%) rates. Around 17% of households live in private rented accommodation which was in line with the national average but higher than the borough and region (14%) rates.

Data from the 2011 Census shows the majority (59%) of residential dwellings were detached which was considerably higher than the borough (28%), regional (24%) and national (22%) shares. Semi-detached housing accounted for 31% of the housing stock against 33% for the borough, 37% for the region and 31% nationally. Terraced housing, flats and apartments provide just 10% of accommodation

spaces which was lower than the borough (38%), region (39%) and national (47%) shares.

More than two fifths (44%) of households live in houses with four or more bedrooms which is significantly higher than the borough (23%), regional (18%) and national (19%) averages.

There is evidence of under occupancy in the local area (having more bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard). Analysis of the 2011 Census shows that around 55% of all occupied households in Monks Kirby had two or more spare bedrooms and around 33% have one spare bedroom. Under occupancy is higher than borough, regional and national averages.

Under occupancy is particularly evident in larger properties with around 46% of households with 4 or more bedrooms occupied by just one or two people. This is higher than borough (43%), regional and England (41%) rates.

Census data also suggests that older person households are more likely to under-occupy their dwellings. Data from the 2011 Census allows us to investigate this using the bedroom standard. In total, around 68% of pensioner households had an occupancy rating of +2 or more (meaning there are at least two more bedrooms that are technically required by the household) and was higher than the 52% non-pensioner household rate.

Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) Policy H1: Informing Housing Mix says ‘to deliver a wide choice of high quality market homes across the Borough residential development proposals must form a mix of market housing house types and sizes consistent with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment’. The policy also allows alternative mixes where an alternative need is clearly demonstrated.

Paragraph 5.10 of the Local Plan (2011-2031) sets the market housing mix for the borough as follows:

<b>SHMA Recommended Mix of Market Housing in Rugby Borough</b>			
1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ -bed
5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%

When asked in the Community Questionnaire, there was support for smaller houses of 2-3 bedrooms (45% of respondents scoring small family homes of 2/3 bedrooms 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5).

Appendix 1 includes the census and land registry data in support of these figures. Appendix 2 is a housing needs report undertaken in 2021.

**POLICY HBE 2: HOUSING MIX - New development should provide for a mixture of housing types having regard to identified local housing needs. The provision of bungalows suitable for elderly people and dwellings of up to three bedrooms will be particularly supported.**

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

## Affordable Housing

The latest housing affordability data for England and Wales shows that on average, full-time workers could expect to pay an estimated 7.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home in 2019. This is an improvement from the previous year when the ratio was 8.0.

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

Workplace-based earnings are not available at parish level but as the average 2018 house price in Monks Kirby is above the district, regional and national rates it is presumed the affordability gap also continues to widen. It should be noted, however, that comparisons against larger geographies should be treated with caution.

Latest available figures suggest the 2019 average house price in the Monks Kirby Parish stood at around £513,750 which is higher than the borough average (£273,900) and national (£301,000) average figures (Land Registry Standard Reports, Aug 2020).

Just 8% of households live in social rented accommodation which was lower than the borough (14%), regional (19%) and national (18%) rates.

The Rugby Local Plan (2011-2031) states in relation to Rural Exception Sites:

‘The development of affordable housing that meets the needs of local people will be permitted as a Rural Exception Site adjacent to defined rural settlement boundaries, where development is normally resisted, if all of the following criteria are met:

- a) It is clearly demonstrated that there is a local need for affordable housing which outweighs other policy considerations;
- b) It is demonstrated no suitable alternative sites exist within the defined settlement boundary;
- c) The development consists exclusively of affordable housing;
- d) Developments do not have an adverse impact on the character and/or appearance of settlements, their setting or the surrounding countryside; and
- e) Safeguards are in place to ensure homes remain affordable in perpetuity.

In all cases arrangements for the management and occupation of dwellings must be made to ensure that all dwellings provided will be and will remain available for occupancy by eligible local people at an affordable cost and at a range of tenures, both initially and in perpetuity.

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

When asked in the Community Questionnaire, 40% of respondents were opposed to affordable housing with 36% expressing support. 36% supported Affordable Housing when asked what type of housing was needed in the Parish.

The Parish Council has supported the development of exception sites where a local need can be identified, and this policy reinforces that support.

**Policy HBE3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING – To meet identified needs within the community, the provision of high-quality affordable housing through an exception site will be supported where the following criteria are met:**

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

First Homes and self-build proposals will be welcomed.

## Windfall development

A windfall site is defined in the NPPF as one which has not been specifically identified as available through the local or neighbourhood plan process. Sites often comprise previously developed land that has unexpectedly become available.

To help protect the character of the Parish, development in Monks Kirby will be restricted to windfall sites as described in policy HBE4.

**POLICY HBE 4: WINDFALL SITES - Small scale development proposals for infill housing will be supported where:**

- a) It is within the Settlement Boundary;
- b) It helps to meet the identified housing requirement for Monks Kirby Parish;
- c) It respects the shape and form of the village in order to maintain its distinctive character and enhance it where possible;
- d) It is of an appropriate scale which reflects the size, character and level of service provision within the Parish;

- e) It retains, where possible, existing important natural boundaries such as trees, hedges and streams;
- f) It provides for a safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site, and contains off-road parking in line with Rugby Local Plan requirements; and
- g) It does not reduce garden space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the area, the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the dwelling or has a significant detrimental heritage or environmental impact.

Cul-de-Sac development is to be avoided unless it connects residents with the wider village by footpaths.

## Design

Design, including the scale and positioning of new buildings (and changes to existing buildings), materials and detailing, is key to making sure that development preserves and enhances the character, appearance and integrity of the area.

The Parish of Monks Kirby has a long and interesting history, with evidence that it has been inhabited since before the Norman Conquest. As a consequence, the settlements and the surrounding rural areas of the Parish are rich in buildings and structures of historical and architectural significance.

These buildings and structures date from many different periods, with individual buildings clustered around historic street patterns.

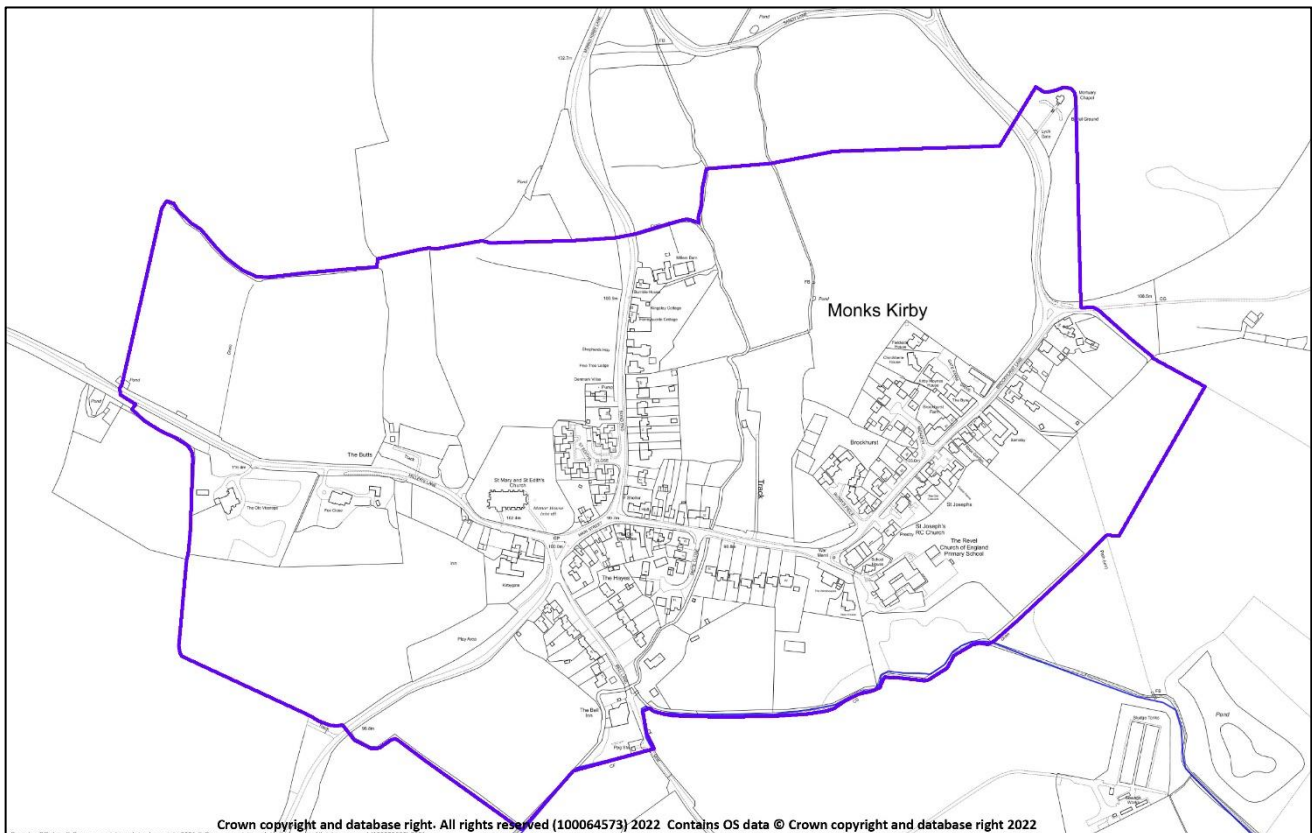
Monks Kirby nestles in the valley folds, almost invisible from every direction from more than a couple of hundred yards. Only the Church, built on a knoll projecting out from the rising ground on the west, indicates the presence of the village. Most of the other village buildings are sited with respect for the gentle contours and are anyway screened by the surrounding fields' hedgerows and the surviving forest trees.

Many buildings and structures have been designated as Listed Buildings. There is also a designated Conservation Area which extends beyond the settlement boundary.

Consultation shows that this historic and attractive built heritage is highly prized and cherished by the local community. It is a source of pride, and a key element in the unique, distinctive and attractive character of the Parish.

The community wishes to ensure that future development preserves and enhances this built heritage and the general rural character of the Parish. This encompasses not only the design and appearance of new buildings, but also their layout and siting. The Plan seeks to ensure that all new development (including minor works) is of good quality and designed to respect the existing character and various building styles of Monks Kirby Parish, particularly where located within or in close proximity to the Conservation Area (which extends beyond the settlement boundary) or affecting a Listed Building or its setting.

Figure 3: *Monks Kirby Conservation Area* (redrawn for clarity from the RBC Appraisal)



Existing settlement patterns have grown incrementally over time. The buildings date from many different periods, providing a richness and variety of styles and materials. This traditional rural character should be enhanced by new development and schemes should be designed to ensure that new buildings sit comfortably within the existing settlement pattern and are respectful of their surroundings.

It is not considered necessary to have a uniform series of properties from new development that all look the same, rather to ensure that new developments respect the features of buildings which make Monks Kirby a desirable place in which to live.

New development proposals should be designed sensitively to ensure that the high-quality built environment of the Parish is maintained and enhanced. New designs should respond in a positive way to the local character through careful and appropriate use of high-quality materials and detail. Proposals should also demonstrate consideration of height, scale and massing, to ensure that new development delivers a positive contribution to the street scene and adds value to the distinctive character of the area.

**POLICY HBE 5: DESIGN – Development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and use of materials in order to make a positive contribution to the special character of the Parish and are encouraged to have regard to the building design principles and requirements as stated in the Design Guide in Appendix 4 to a degree that is proportionate to the development.**

# B The Natural, Historical and Social Environment

## Introduction

This chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan deals mainly with the *environmental* objectives of *sustainable development*, together with open spaces of community value in the *social* objective, as described in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021), paragraph 8. The chapter aims to balance the requirement for appropriate development in the Plan Area against the value of environmental and other features that are both *special* – appreciated, in their own right and as community assets, by local people – and *significant* for their wildlife and history. It also deals with broader environmental issues of concern to the community, including protection and enhancement of biodiversity, planning for resilience to climate change, and approaches to renewable energy generation.

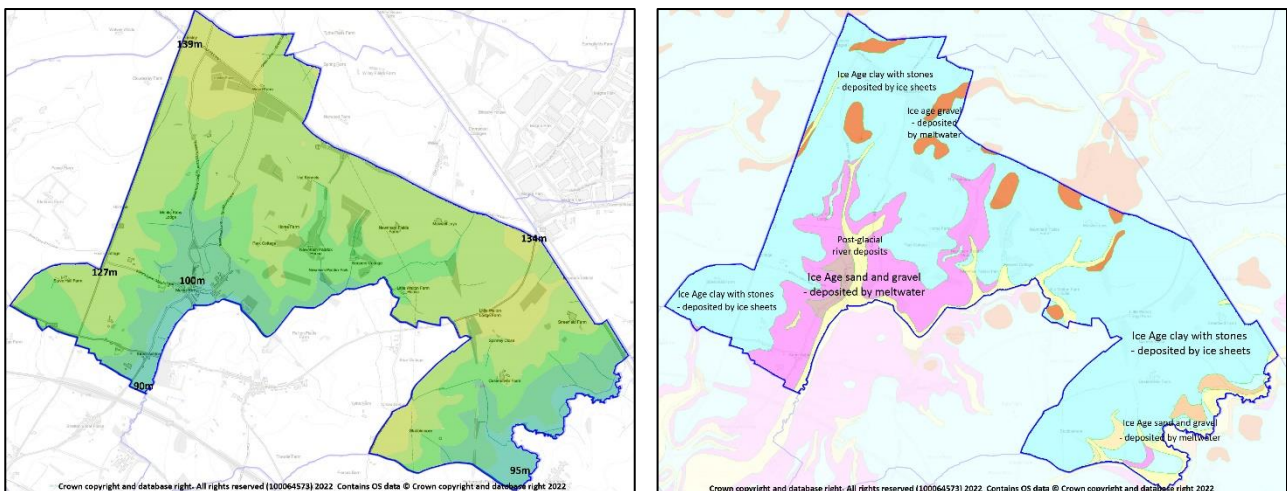
Care was taken during preparation of the Plan to ensure that the policies (and the sites and areas of environmental significance covered by them) were not unduly restrictive on development during the Plan’s lifetime. About 12% by area of all the open and currently undeveloped land in the parish is protected through the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies, and the planning system generally, from potential environmentally damaging development:

1. Total area of Neighbourhood Plan Area	c.1830 ha
2. Open countryside and Green Belt (undeveloped land)	c.1817 ha
3. Area designated or recognised in this Plan for <i>environmental</i> protection	c.220 ha

## Landscape, geology and setting

Figures 4.1 and 4.2: Topography (left) and geology of the Plan Area

Note: a set of full-size versions of all maps is provided in a separate folder in the supporting information



The Plan Area, which coincides with the civil parish of Monks Kirby (the largest in Warwickshire), consists of a dissected, tilted plateau falling from about 140 metres above sea level in the north to 90 metres in the south. The north and west boundaries generally follow three ancient routeways: Roman Watling Street and Fosse Way and the (possibly prehistoric, certainly Anglo-Saxon) Mere Road, here called Coal Pit Lane; the southern edges are mostly on the natural boundaries of watercourses: the Smite Brook, the River Swift and other tributaries of the Rivers Sowe and Avon. Although the difference in height across the Plan Area is relatively modest, the open aspect of the landscape provides a number of valued views, southward from the several roads and footpaths leading toward the village, and from various viewpoints closer to Monks Kirby.

Geologically the landscape of the Plan Area is the legacy of events during the Ice Ages, when (between 1 million and 14 thousand years ago) a succession of very cold periods resulted in sheets of rock debris, clay, sand and gravel being deposited by ice sheets, glaciers and meltwater rivers, by cold tundra wind and in lakes of water dammed by glaciers. In historical times the clay provided the arable and pastoral farmland on which the local economy has depended, while the sand, gravel and brickearth (windblown deposits) have been a local resource as well as providing suitable locations for settlements (particularly Monks Kirby itself) to be established where house footings and residents' feet could be kept clear of the sticky clay.

## Historical environment

Although excavations and finds show that the Plan Area has been inhabited since prehistoric times and through the Roman period, it is the place-name of Monks Kirby (panel at right) which shows that the present pattern of villages, hamlets and land use was established by, at the latest, the 8<sup>th</sup> century – with Monks Kirby itself probably a re-naming of an older Anglo-Saxon settlement with an early Christian church. During the Middle Ages the Plan Area comprised a number of 'townships', including Kirby, Brockhurst, Street Ashton, Newnham, Newbold, Cestersover and Walton. Of these only Kirby and Brockhurst remain as substantial settlements, now almost merged as one but still with their thousand-years-old street plans; the others were either deserted (following population decline resulting from the Black Death and climate change) or depopulated by landowners wishing to create sheepwalks, parks or estates for themselves. Earthworks preserving the house platforms and streets of several of the lost villages survive and are

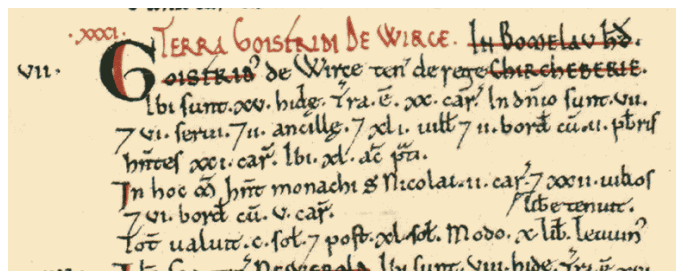
### Monks Kirby 'Church farm/settlement'

#### Elements and their meanings

- **kirkja** (Old Norse) A church.
- **by** (Old Norse) A farmstead, a village.  
+ **monke** (Middle English) A monk.

Source: <http://kep.n.nottingham.ac.uk/>

The Old Norse place-name suggests that Kirby was established on its present site soon after the Danes arrived in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.



Still recorded as 'Chircheberie' in Domesday Book in 1086, the Middle English prefix 'Monks' was presumably added after the present St Edith's church was established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.



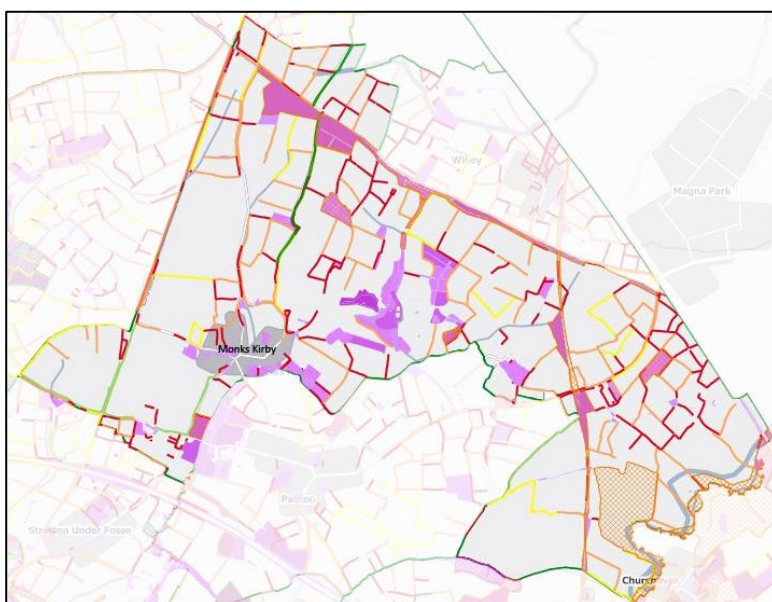
recorded as heritage assets, as are some areas of ridge and furrow, the traces of the medieval ploughlands tilled by the people who lived in the villages.

The present St Edith's church (Grade I Listed) stands on a mounded site of considerable historical significance: it probably originated as an early Christian (or pre-Christian) 'dark ages' sacred place, the first known church was founded in 917; it became a Benedictine priory in 1077 and was substantially rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at which time its dedication was changed to St Edith. The immediate site is also the location of a Roman settlement and one of Kirby's medieval manor houses. The present layout of Monks Kirby village also dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the wealth and power of the priory apparently resulted in a planned rebuilding of the settlement. Other heritage assets of later dates include 'hills and holes' earthworks on the sites of old brick-clay, sand and gravel pits (local building and road-mending resources), the nationally significant, 18<sup>th</sup>-century ornamental grounds of Newnham Paddox, and the remains of the Midland Counties Railway line from Leicester to Rugby.

The attractive mix of building styles in Monks Kirby includes a group of 'Arts & Crafts' houses and community buildings constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by the Feilding family, Earls of Denbigh and Lords of the Manor at the time. Otherwise the mix comprises buildings from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

## Natural environment

Occupation of the present Plan Area and farming of most of its territory since prehistoric times (probably) and for the past 1500 years (certainly) means nowhere is fully 'wild'. The same is generally true for every parish in the Rugby Council area, but nature has adapted and evolved to live among humans: despite some 90% by area of Monks Kirby being arable farmland or built on, and even in the context of the known huge declines in (for example) farmland birds, there are still areas of at least locally significant semi-natural habitat. These include mature woodland plantations and shelter belts, hedgerows, stream-sides, permanent pasture, Newnham Paddox parkland (Registered Park and Gardens), ponds, gardens and churchyards.



(Left) The *Warwickshire Habitat Biodiversity Audit* (from c.1995) showed the extent of significant natural environment sites and features in Monks Kirby. There has been further reduction since.

These surviving sites and features are highly valued by the community, and they make an essential local contribution to preserving England’s biodiversity and have a role for carbon sequestration; they should be protected wherever possible by the planning system as a vital component of sustainable development.

## Existing environmental designations

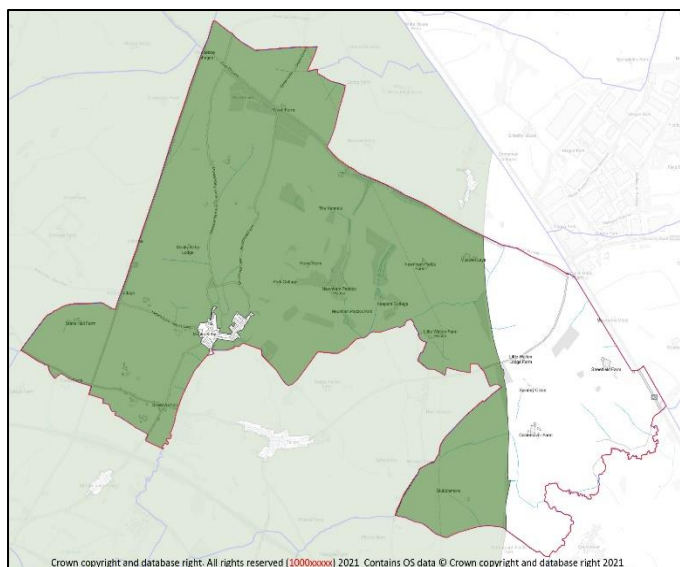


Figure 5: extent of Green Belt land in Monks Kirby

Most of the Plan Area is Green Belt land (2019-20 revision) (figure 5). Monks Kirby is located in National Character Area (NCA) 94 Leicestershire Vales. NCAs are landscape areas defined by Natural England for planning purposes. It is also located in two Rugby Landscape Character Areas (High Cross Plateau, open and High Cross Plateau, village farmlands). In the natural environment there are 18 areas of Priority Habitat and national Forest Inventory (as defined by Natural England), together with two candidate Local Wildlife Sites (cLWS) and 25 further areas of conservation value in the Warwickshire Biological Records database. In the historical

environment there are 14 Listed Buildings and some 30 further sites and features of historical environment significance (Historic England and Warwickshire Historic Environment Record), of which 11 are of direct relevance to this Neighbourhood Plan’s environmental policies. A Conservation Area recognising the historical and architectural features of the village was designated in 2010.

## Local Green Spaces

Of the 200 (approximately) parcels of open land in the Plan Area, some 80 have been identified as having environmental significance at local level or higher (Appendix A). Of these, two sites (Table 1) meet the requirements for designation as Local Green Space, as outlined in National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 101-102.

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

**POLICY ENV 1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces (Table 1) will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances.**

**001 Churchyard of St Edith’s church**

006.1/006.2 The Fishponds community wildlife area, open space, children’s play area, verges and ‘Oak Trees green’

Table 1: Local Green Space evidence base

REF	DESCRIPTION / EVIDENCE	NPPF (2021) LOCAL GREEN SPACE CRITERIA							TOTAL /25
		LOCAL BOUNDED, NOT EXTENSIVE YES/NO	SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY (Max 10)				LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE (Max 10)		
			PROXIMITY 0 - 5	BEAUTY 0 - 3	TRANQUIL 0 - 2	REC. VALUE 0 - 5	HISTORY 0 - 5	WILDLIFE 0 - 5	
001	<a href="#">Churchyard of St Edith’s church</a>	Y	5	3	2	3	5	3	21

**Description, with reference to NPPF (2021) criteria**

Churchyard of St Edith’s church: Setting of the *Listed Grade I* 12<sup>th</sup> century priory church, set on a small mound which is likely an older sacred site. The church occupies the southern part of the large churchyard, which has avenues of yew trees and headstones (some 18<sup>th</sup> century Swithland Slate) in position or rearranged at the side of the plot.

Village centre, geographically, historically and culturally. Attractive and tranquil; serves as a contemplative public open space; also a resource for e.g. family history research.

Includes sites of (with potential buried archaeology) a) a possible Roman settlement Warks HER MWA 4241), b) the medieval Priory (Warks HER MWA4242) to the NE of the present church, in existence 1077 to mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. Parts of the buildings were incorporated in later extensions of the church, while others may have been adapted to become c) a manor house on the same site (MWA3521).

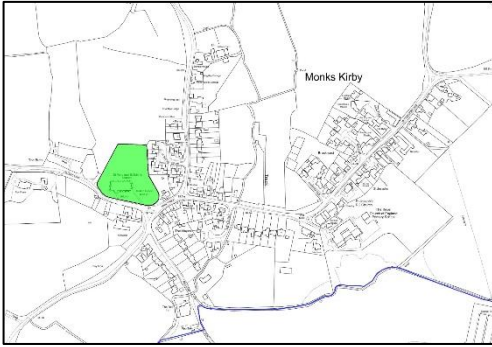
Mown and rough grass, coniferous and deciduous trees. Abundant wildlife including 5 BAP species birds, bats, etc. Warwickshire Green Infrastructure: Phase II survey habitat site (County level significance)



Viewed from the south



Site from the air



Location map



Site plan

REF	DESCRIPTION / EVIDENCE	NPPF (2021) LOCAL GREEN SPACE CRITERIA							TOTAL /25
		LOCAL BOUNDED, NOT EXTENSIVE YES/NO	SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY (Max 10)				LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE (Max 10)		
			PROXIMITY 0 - 5	BEAUTY 0 - 3	TRANQUIL 0 - 2	REC. VALUE 0 - 5	HISTORY 0 - 5	WILDLIFE 0 - 5	
006 1/2	Fishpond community park with children's play area, verges and 'oak trees green'	Y	5	2	1	5	1	3	17

**Description, with reference to NPPF (2021) criteria**

The oak tree triangle includes three very mature and important trees (three remaining from seven) framing the church and the village pub. Area where the community gathers for Christmas tree lighting and other events.

The Fishpond area is well used by local children and by visitors to the Denbigh Arms. Leased by the Parish Council (currently until 2031) and managed as a small informal park. There are plans for a sensory area to be added for local children with visual impairments and cerebral palsy.

Warwickshire Green Infrastructure: Phase I survey habitat site (County level significance)

Fishpond community park entrance



Fishpond community park – interpretative signage

Fishpond community park – children's play area



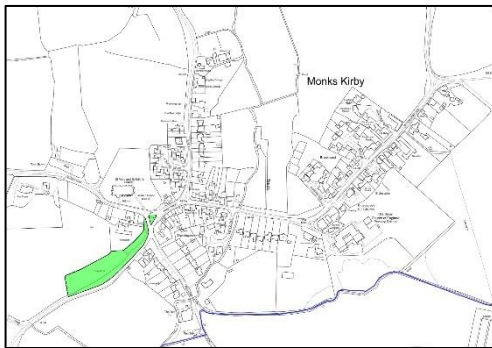
Fishpond community park – wildlife area



Oak trees green, January 2022



Verge south of fishpond park



Location map



Site plan

## Important Open Spaces

A group of sites assessed in the environmental inventory for this Plan (Appendix A) has significant community value as open space for amenity, sport & recreation, children’s play, etc., as allotments, or for their natural environment or village landscape value. Five are already recognised as Open Space, Sport & Recreation sites in Part 4 of the Rugby BC *Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Study, 2015*, and some are shown on the inset (settlements) map for Monks Kirby in the Local Plan; of the five, however, two are designated as Local Green Spaces in this Neighbourhood Plan and are thus now covered by policy ENV 1. Three further *de facto* important open spaces in Monks Kirby have been identified in fieldwork, community consultations and in Parish records, and are added to Policy ENV 2

below. All the Important Open Spaces recognised in this Neighbourhood Plan have been allocated to the appropriate RBC Open Space typologies listed in the 2015 Study.

The Monks Kirby Conservation Area appraisal (2010) was supported by a map showing 'important open areas' within the C.A. (figure 6.2). They approximately coincide (there are three areas of difference) with the undeveloped areas of Green Belt Land (figure 5) in the Conservation Area. Their continued protection, as open space making an essential contribution to the setting and character of Monks Kirby (including separating the main village from the historically distinct Brockhurst hamlet), is covered by paragraph 2 of Policy ENV 2 to augment the protection afforded by their location in the Green Belt.

All these sites' values as open space within and close to the built-up areas and/or their actual or potential value as community resources are recognised in Policy ENV 2 (details, Appendix A). The policy is in conformity with, and adds local detail to, Rugby BC Local Plan policy HS4.

**POLICY ENV 2: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES – (1) The following open spaces (locations, figure 6.1) are of high local value for recreation, beauty, amenity, or tranquillity within or close to the built-up area. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.**

**The Revel C of E Primary School grounds and wildlife area.** Inventory sites 005 and 014. (In part) Rugby BC Open Space *Outdoor sports facilities* plus (in part) this NP designation as *Outdoor sports facilities / Natural and semi-natural green space*

**War memorial green** Inventory site 015. This NP designation *Amenity green space*

**Catholic burial ground, frontage and verges** Inventory site 008. This NP designation *Cemeteries and closed churchyards*

**(2) Development proposals affecting the additional open spaces shown in figure 6.2, which make an essential contribution to the setting and character of Monks Kirby Conservation Area, will comply with NPPF 2021 paragraphs 147-151 and (if not otherwise 'inappropriate', or not on Green Belt land) will be required to demonstrate that the benefit of the development outweighs the value of the open space to the Conservation Area, to the character of the village overall, or to the community.**

Figure 6.1: Important Open Spaces

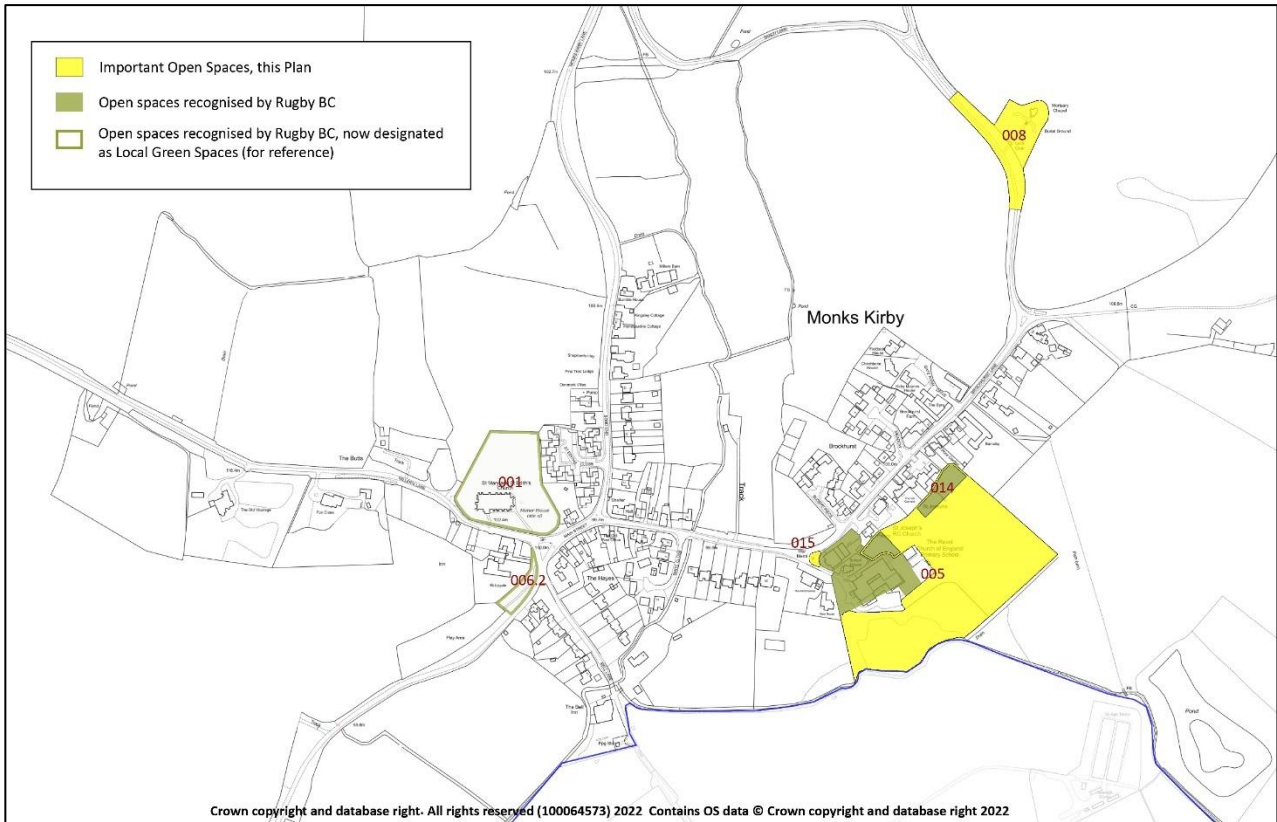
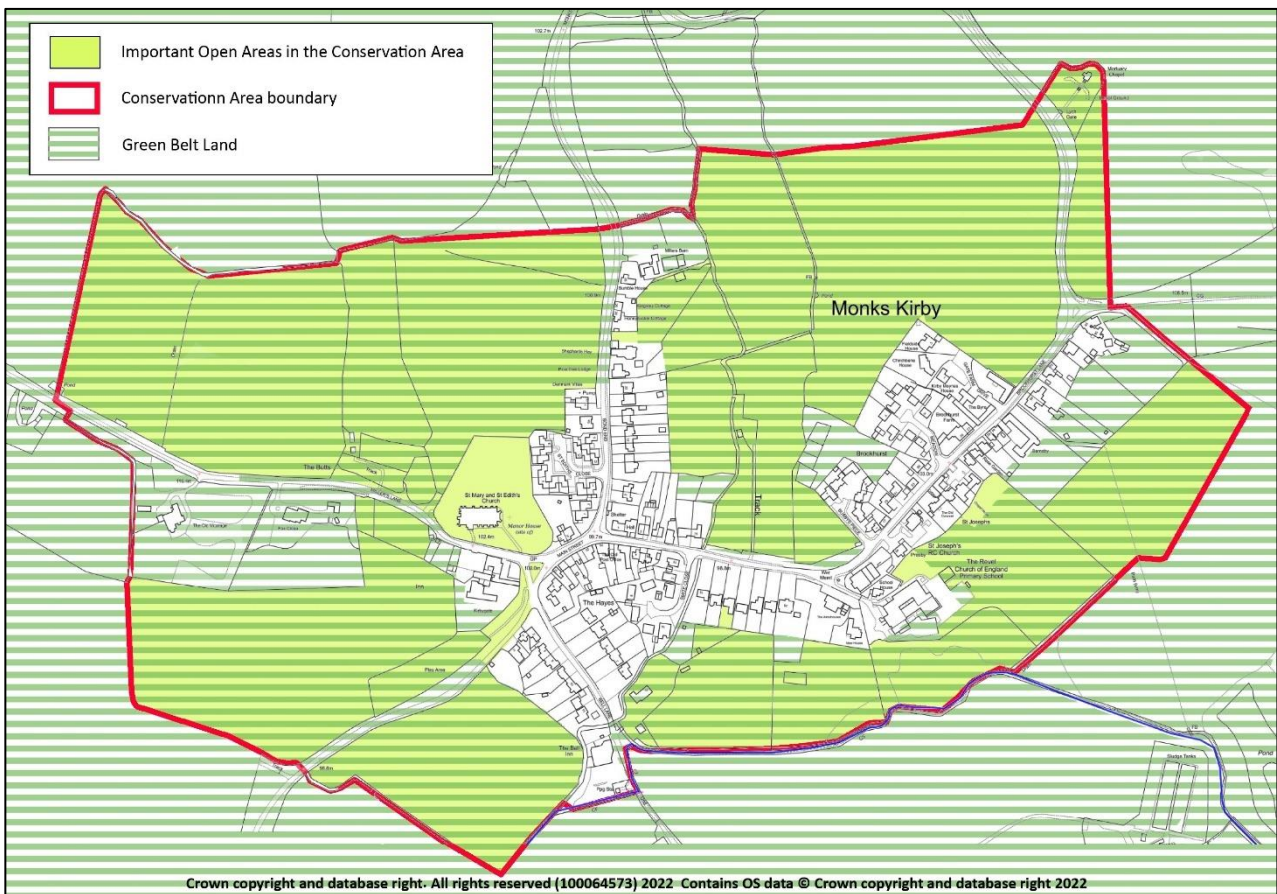


Figure 6.2 'Additional open areas' in the Monks Kirby Conservation Area



# Sites and features of Natural Environment significance

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

Policy ENV 3 delivers site-specific compliance in the Plan Area with the relevant Rugby Borough Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and (as and when current) the European Habitats and Species Directives, any 'saved' post-2021 UK legislation and/or the legislation resulting from the draft UK Environment Bill 2019-20.

Figure 7.1: Sites and features of Natural Environment significance

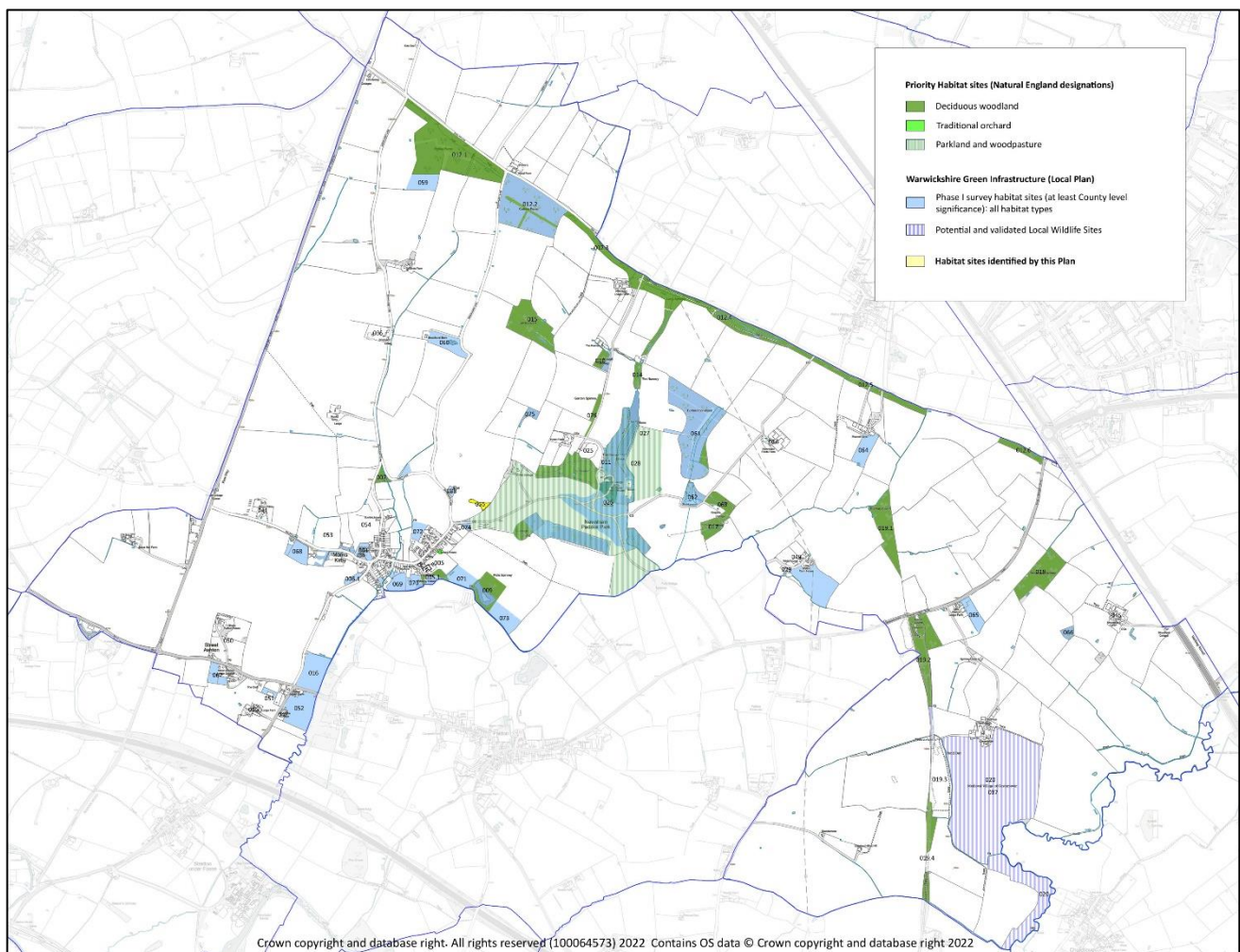
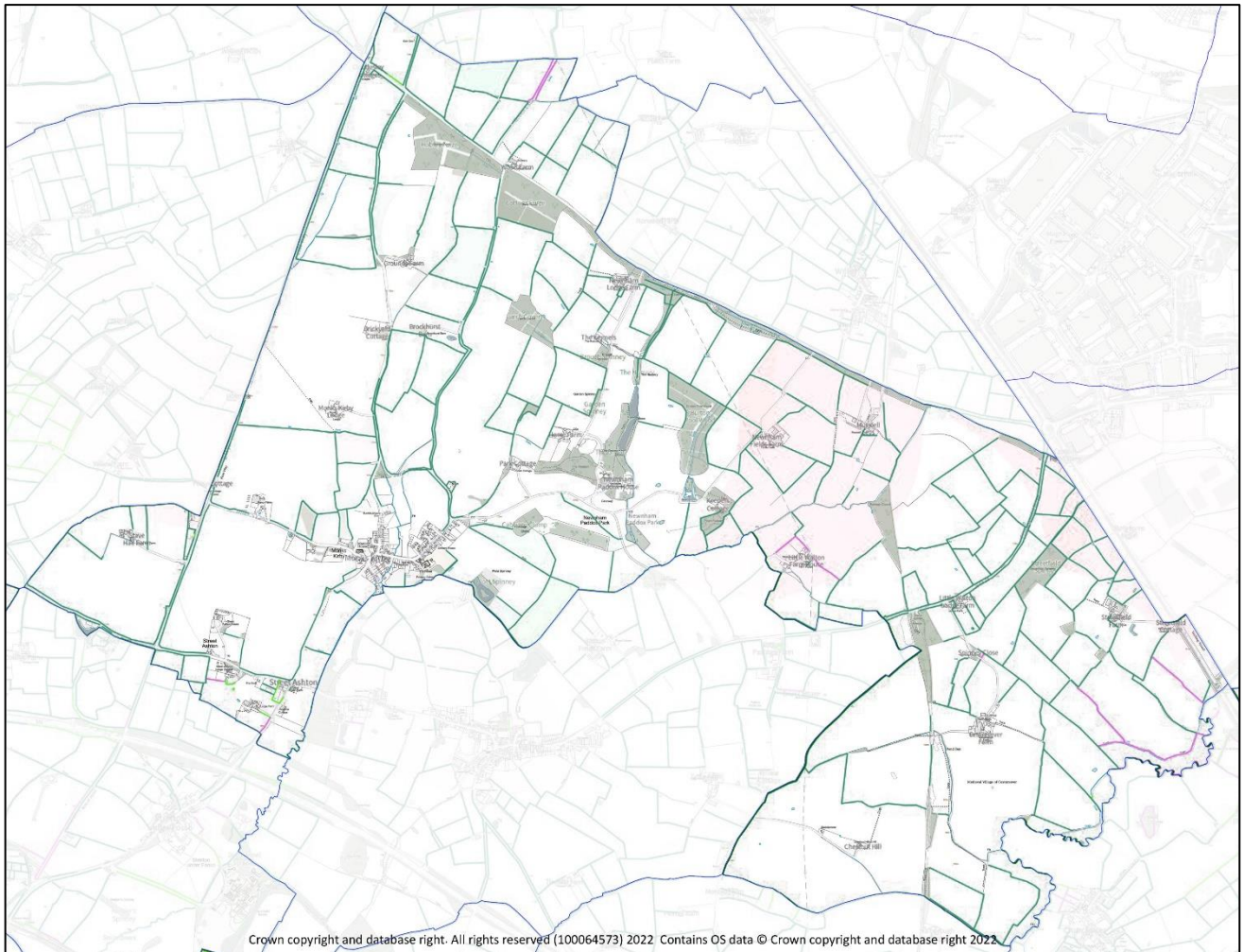




Figure 7.2: Hedges of biodiversity and landscape significance



**POLICY ENV 3: SITES AND FEATURES OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE** – The sites and features mapped here (figures 7.1, 7.2) are of at least local significance for their natural environment significance. They are ecologically important in their own right, make a local contribution to carbon sequestration, and are locally valued. The network of hedges (figure 7.2) has been identified in the Warwickshire Habitat Biodiversity Audit as being particularly characteristic and of value to wildlife connectivity, biodiversity and the landscape. The significance of the species, habitats, hedges and other natural environment features should be weighed against the benefit of any development that would adversely affect them.

## Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity

It might be said that Monks Kirby is a ‘typical’ area of English Midlands countryside because it has no nationally important wildlife hotspots, and thus that it has little or no biodiversity significance to be taken into account in the Planning system. This would be a misunderstanding of the concept of biodiversity. England’s biodiversity is entirely and only the sum of the wildlife in all of its individual parishes: Monks Kirby is as important in this regard as every other parish, and residents want it to play its essential part in protecting what remains of England’s threatened and diminishing biodiversity.

While policy ENV 3 delivers site-specific compliance in the Plan Area with the relevant Rugby Borough Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017-2019 and the UK Environment Act 2021, this policy (ENV 4) does the same for strategic planning and future development proposals across the Plan Area. It also refers to the DEFRA *Guidance* of July 7, 2021 in respect of the use of the *biodiversity metric* approach to assessing the value of a development site to wildlife. The policy is explicitly supported by National Planning Policy Framework (2021) paragraphs 174 (a) and (d); 175; 179 and 180(a), on which this policy's wording is partly based.

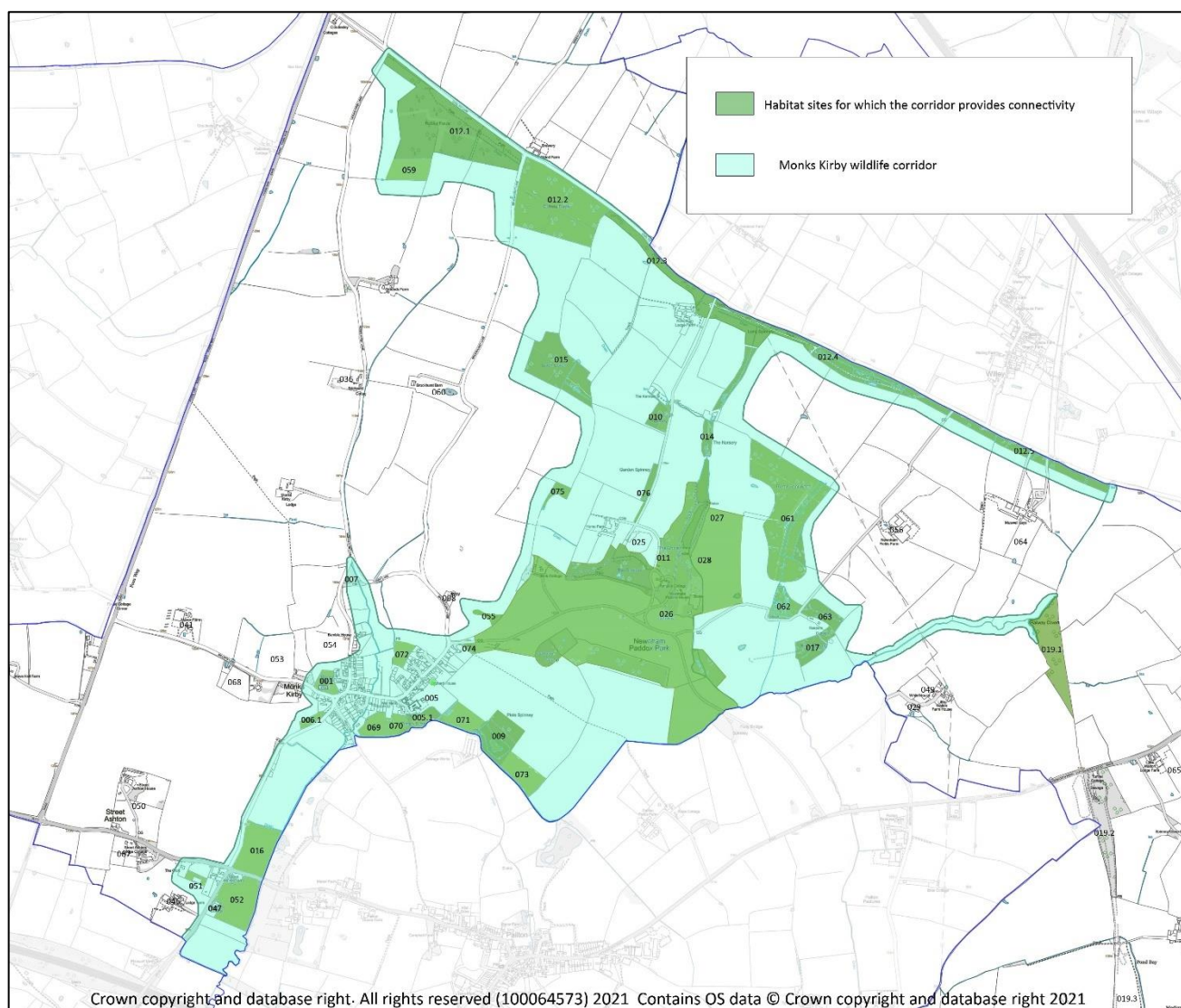
The community also expects all planning strategies, proposals and decisions affecting Monks Kirby to comply with the requirements of the *Climate Change Act 2008*, to follow the spirit of the *Paris Agreement* (UK ratification 2017) and the UK's *25 year environment plan (2018)*, and to plan for biodiversity net gain through the mechanisms described in the *Environment Act 2021*.

Connectivity is an essential component of biodiversity. Isolated populations of animals and plants are at risk of destruction or of simply 'dying out'. Wildlife Corridors aim to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. A corridor connecting the woodlands in the north of the Plan Area via the system of species-rich hedgerows in the fields east of Brockhurst Lane and the habitat areas in Newnham Paddock park to Monks Kirby village and the watercourse and banks of Smite Brook. All of these biodiversity sites and features have been identified as part of part of the *Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Green Infrastructure* and they, and the specific connectivity route provided by the corridor, should be taken into account in the planning system.

**POLICY ENV 4 BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY**– All new development proposals will be expected to safeguard habitats and species, including those of local significance, by planning for *net biodiversity gain*. If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through relocating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused, in conformity with paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Development proposals should not adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridor identified in figure 8.

Figure 8: Monks Kirby wildlife corridor



## Sites of Historical Environment significance

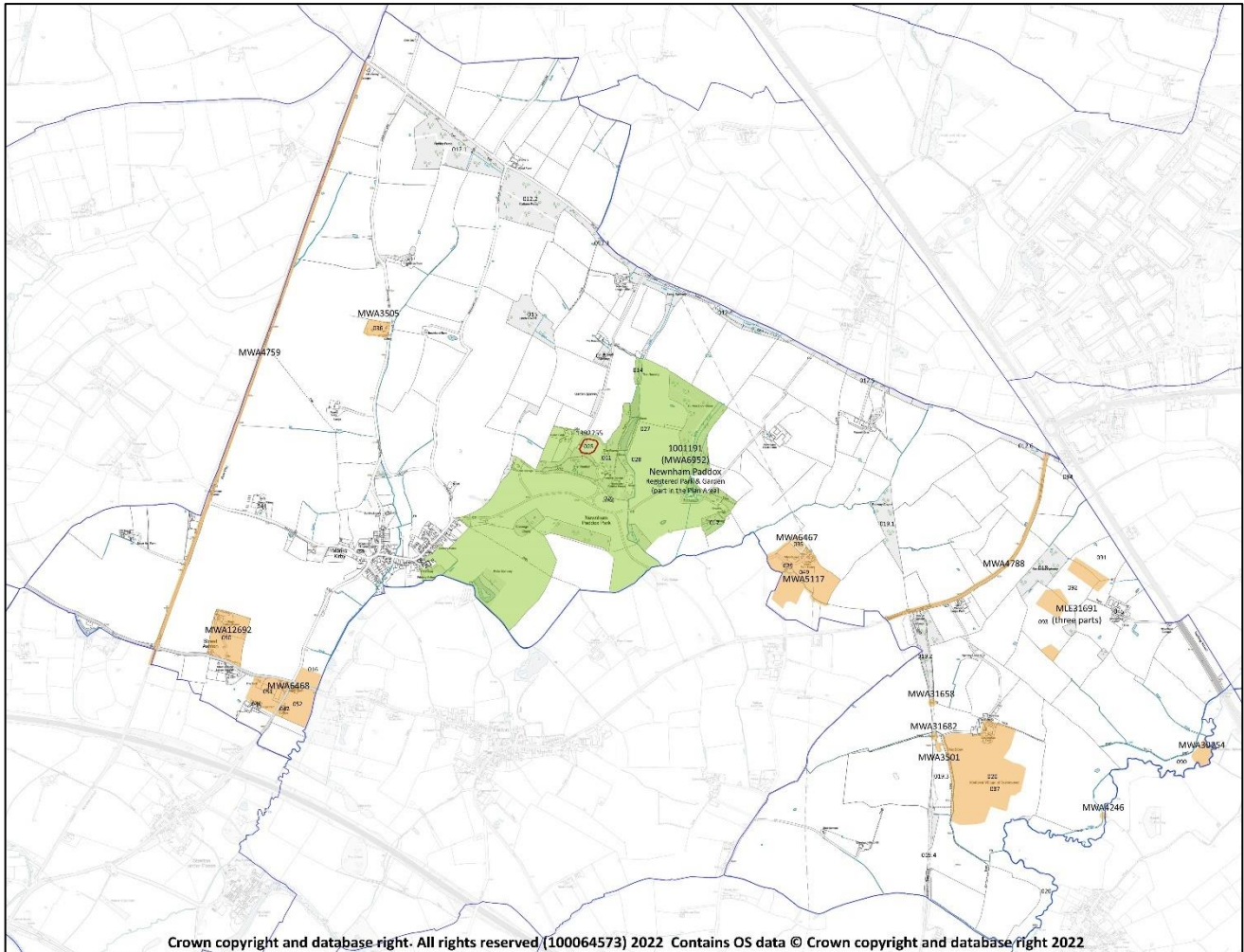
A number of sites in Monks Kirby are important for (at least local) heritage and history. They comprise sites and features of relevance to Neighbourhood Plan policies in the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England databases, and a further set identified (from fieldwork and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

**POLICY ENV 6: SITES OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT SIGNIFICANCE** - The sites mapped in figure 9 (details in Appendix x) are of at least local significance for their historical features. The features are extant and have visible expression or there is proven buried archaeology on the site, and they are locally valued. The significance of the features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would affect or damage them.

Development proposals should take full account of known surface and sub-surface archaeology, ensure that unknown and potentially significant deposits are identified and, after consultation with

Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER), appropriately considered during development. Lack of current evidence of sub-surface archaeology should not be taken as proof of absence.

Figure 9: Sites of Historical Environment significance



## Ridge and furrow

The early medieval townships of Monks Kirby, Brockhurst, Street Ashton, Newnham, Newbold, Cestersover and Walton are assumed to have been farmed using the *Open Field* system. All the open land, except small fields (closes) backing onto the houses, floodplain meadows and marshland of the Swift valley, and areas of woodland or waste, was worked in a seasonal and yearly rotation of arable crops (cereals, beans), grazing and fallow. Medieval ploughs were pulled by oxen and, because they were not reversible, the soil was always turned rightwards as the plough team progressed up and down the furlongs, producing a corrugated pattern of ridges and furrows whose dimensions increased with every season. Ridge and Furrow also allowed for better drainage and increased the surface area of the ground.

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

the Monks Kirby Plan Area was enclosed in this way, but because of the complexities of multiple townships, ‘lost’ villages and appropriation by wealthy landowners it happened here in several phases and separately in the several townships and manors, probably beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and completed with the Parliamentary Enclosure Awards of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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

One result of Monks Kirby’s long history of open fields enclosure could be that, unlike most midlands parishes, ridge and furrow earthworks has never been ubiquitous. The extent of ridge and furrow in Monks Kirby mapped from the mid-1990s and in the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (figure 10.1) provided the baseline for a new survey undertaken for this Plan in 2021-2 (figure 10.2). The summary results show the decline since World War II (extent estimated from local history information and maps) and since 1999; although the 2021/2 survey identified on the ground a few small areas omitted from the Warks. HER mapping, the situation is now as follows:

1950s	[estimated 500 ha]
1995	c.108 ha
2022	c.84 ha

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

While the 21 individual fields with surviving ridge and furrow in Monks Kirby are not claimed to be of international importance, their rarity across the Midlands and their relationship with the other important medieval heritage assets in the Plan Area, including the lost villages, means that any further, avoidable, loss would be irreversibly detrimental. In conformity with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (including footnote 63) and following the recommendation of Historic England, all surviving ridge and furrow in the Plan Area (figure 10.2) should now be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and taken into account in the planning system as the visible evidence of a component of national heritage comparable in significance to that of surviving medieval buildings. In future, and whenever possible, increased local housing need or new targets required at a higher level in the planning system should only be fulfilled by allocating development to available sites where there is no surviving ridge and furrow.

Figure 10.1: Ridge and furrow in Monks Kirby c. 1995  
(From *Warwickshire Historic Environment Record*)

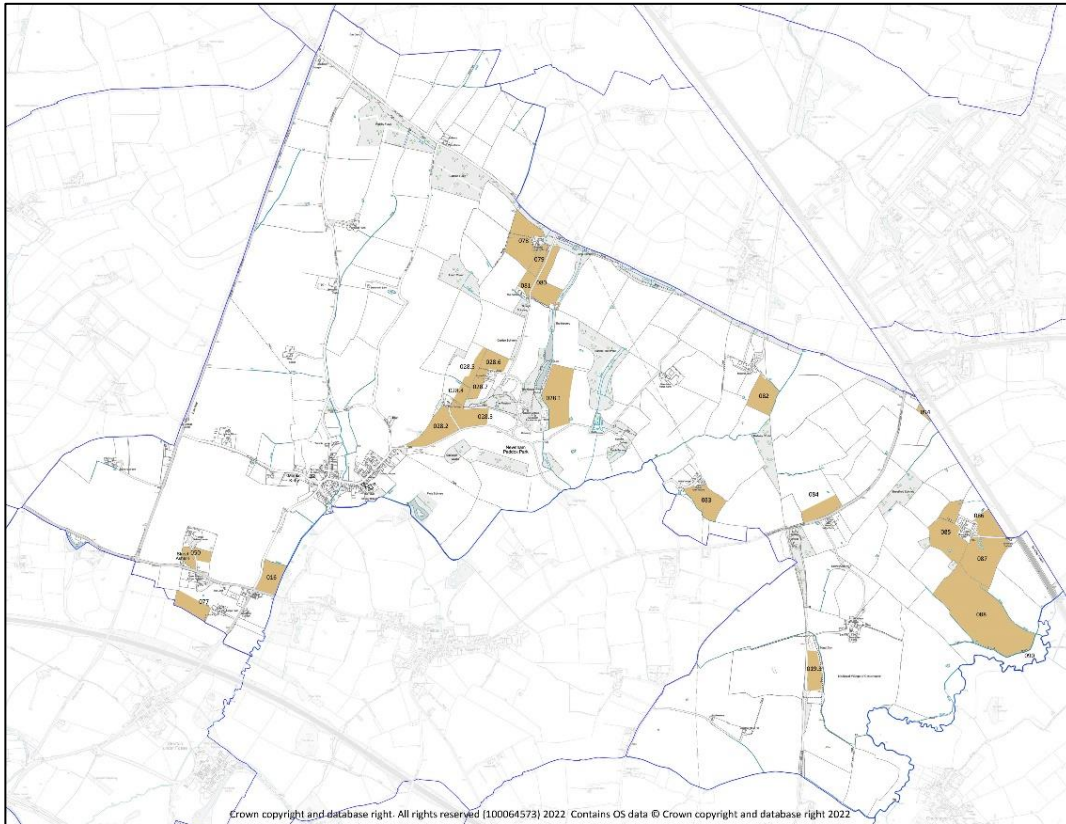
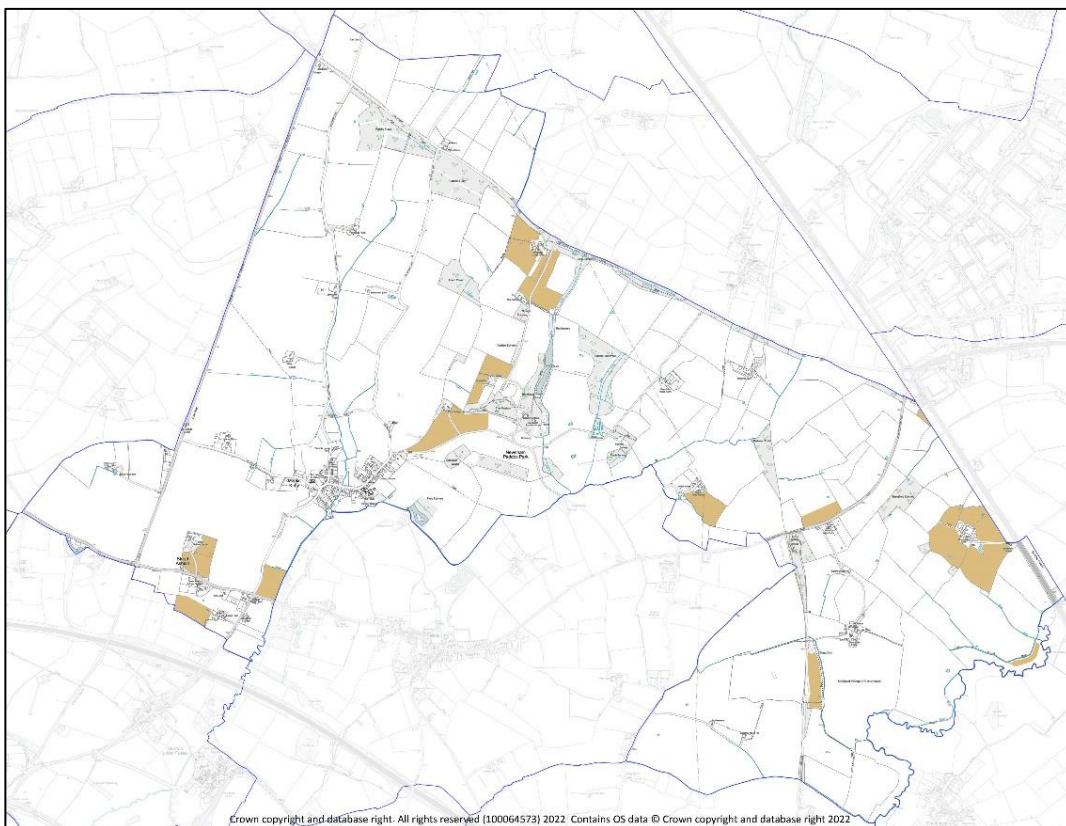


Figure 10.2: Ridge and furrow in Monks Kirby 2021/2 (confirmed for this Plan)



**POLICY ENV 7: RIDGE AND FURROW** – The areas of ridge and furrow earthworks mapped in figure 9.2 are non-designated heritage assets.

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

## Statutorily protected Heritage Assets

Fourteen buildings and structures in the Plan Area have statutory protection through Listing at Grade I or II. The Neighbourhood Plan lists them here for reference, and to note that all new development proposals will be required to take into account their *settings*, as defined on a case-by-case basis by Historic England. [Numbers refer to figures 11.1 and 11.2]

### 1. THE OLD POST OFFICE

- List Entry Number: 1365103
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: THE OLD POST OFFICE, MAIN STREET, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

### 2. 12-20, MAIN STREET

- List Entry Number: 1365105
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: 12-20, MAIN STREET, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

### 3. 8, MAIN STREET

- List Entry Number: 1034854
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: 8, MAIN STREET, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

### 4. CHURCH OF ST EDITH

- List Entry Number: 1034855
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: I
- Location: CHURCH OF ST EDITH, MILLERS LANE, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

### 5. CHAPEL OF THE SACRED HEART

- List Entry Number: 1392656
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: CHAPEL OF THE SACRED HEART, BROCKHURST LANE, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **6. HONEYSUCKLE COTTAGE KINGSLEY COTTAGE**

- List Entry Number: 1034851
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: HONEYSUCKLE COTTAGE, 25, BOND END, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **7. MANOR FARMHOUSE**

- List Entry Number: 1186155
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: MANOR FARMHOUSE, MILLERS LANE, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **8. LODGE FARMHOUSE**

- List Entry Number: 1034853
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: LODGE FARMHOUSE, COVENTRY ROAD, Monks Kirby, STREET ASHTON, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **9. FOUR WINDS (now Woodbine Cottage)**

- List Entry Number: 1034852
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: FOUR WINDS, COVENTRY ROAD, Monks Kirby, STREET ASHTON, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **10. THE WALLED GARDEN C160 METRES NORTH-WEST OF THE STABLES AT NEWNHAM PADDOX**

- List Entry Number: 1392755
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: THE WALLED GARDEN C160 METRES NORTH-WEST OF THE STABLES AT NEWNHAM PADDOX, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **11. ICEHOUSE AT SP 4819 8389**

- List Entry Number: 1365106
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: ICEHOUSE AT SP 4819 8389, Monks Kirby, NEWNHAM PADDOX PARK, Rugby, Warwickshire

## **12. SCREEN, GATES AND GATE PIERS**

- List Entry Number: 1186169
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: I
- Location: SCREEN, GATES AND GATE PIERS, Monks Kirby, NEWNHAM PADDOX PARK, Rugby, Warwickshire



### 13. THE COTTAGE

- List Entry Number: 1365104
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: THE COTTAGE, Monks Kirby, LITTLE WALTON, Rugby, Warwickshire

### 14. STREETFIELD FARMHOUSE AND ATTACHED FARM BUILDINGS

- List Entry Number: 1034856
- Heritage Category: Listing
- Grade: II
- Location: STREETFIELD FARMHOUSE AND ATTACHED FARM BUILDINGS, WATLING STREET, Monks Kirby, Rugby, Warwickshire

## Non-designated heritage assets

A number of buildings and structures of local significance (i.e. not statutorily Listed) were noted in the Monks Kirby Conservation Area Appraisal, and these, together with further candidates within the village and in the wider open countryside, have been documented as part of this Neighbourhood Plan's background information. See Appendix 6.

## Important views

Consultation during the Neighbourhood Plan's preparation identified a widely held wish to protect Monks Kirby's rural setting, in particular its visual relationship with the surrounding landscape, based on its location in the landscapes of Natural England National Character Area *94 Leicestershire Vale* and the two Rugby Landscape Character Areas *High Cross Plateau, open* and *High Cross Plateau, village farmlands*.

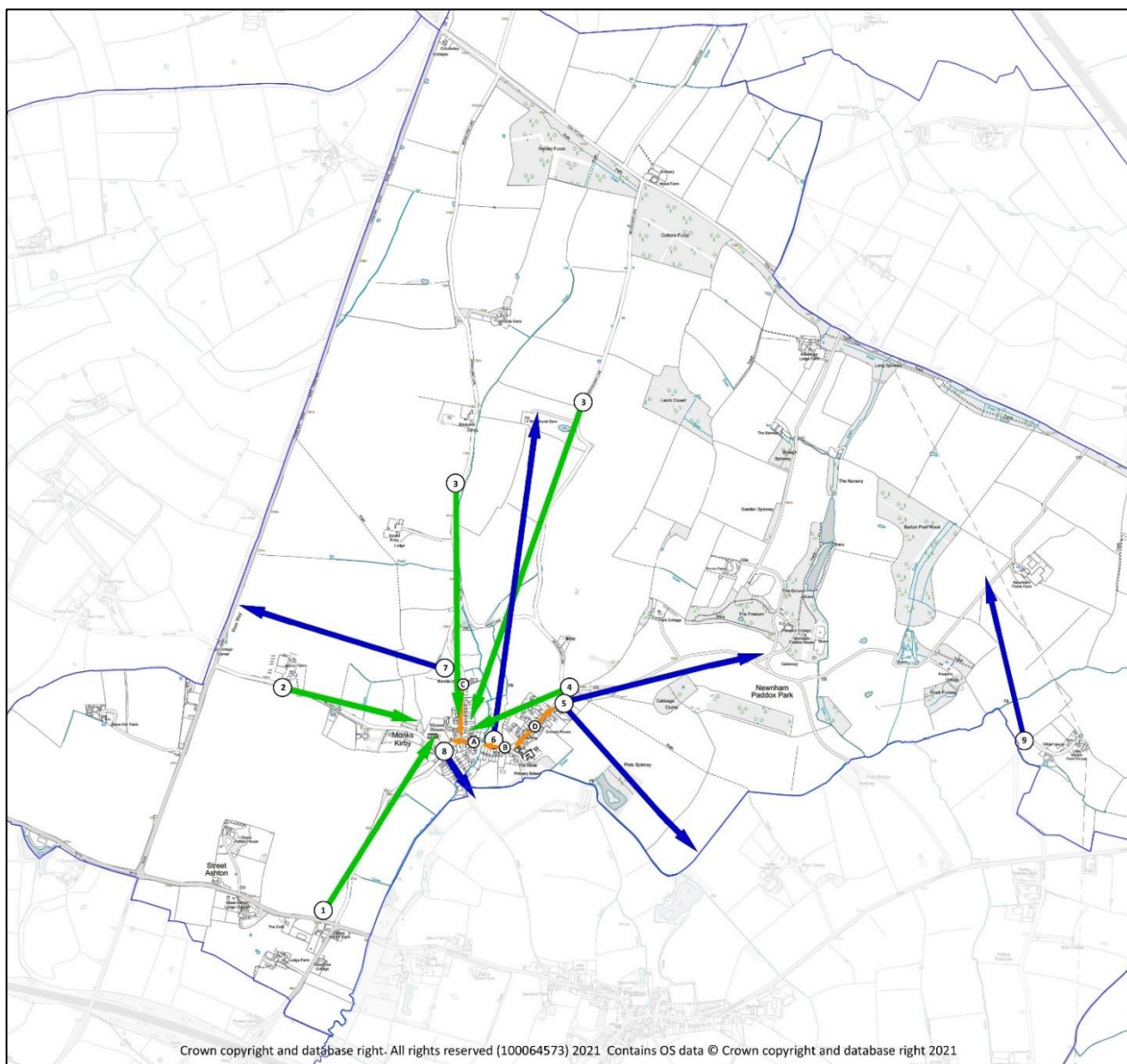
The Monks Kirby *Village Design Statement* (VDS, 1999) is available as a document download supporting Rugby Borough Council Planning Strategy. It identified 17 highly valued views within and around the village and toward the village from the surrounding countryside. The views remain essentially as described, and the most significant of them form the basis of Policy ENV 9 in this Neighbourhood Plan (details appendix 8, locations figure 11).

**POLICY ENV 8: IMPORTANT VIEWS – The following views (map figure 11, details Appendix 7) are important to the setting and character of the village. Development proposals should respect and whenever possible protect them. Development which would have an adverse impact on the identified views will not be supported.**

1. Into the village from Street Ashton
2. Into the village from Miller's Lane
3. Into the village from the north
4. Into the village from Newnham Paddox drive

- 5. Out of the village to Newnham Paddox parkland
- 6. Out of the village east and southeast from Brockhurst Lane
- 7. Out of the village from Bond End to the Fosse Way
- 8. View out of the village down Bell Lane
- 9. View looking north from Little Walton Lane to the east part of Newnham Paddox Park
- A. Within the village: village centre
- B. Within the village: war memorial to the village green
- C: Within the village: Main Street
- D: Within the village: Brockhurst Lane, both directions

Figure 11: Important views

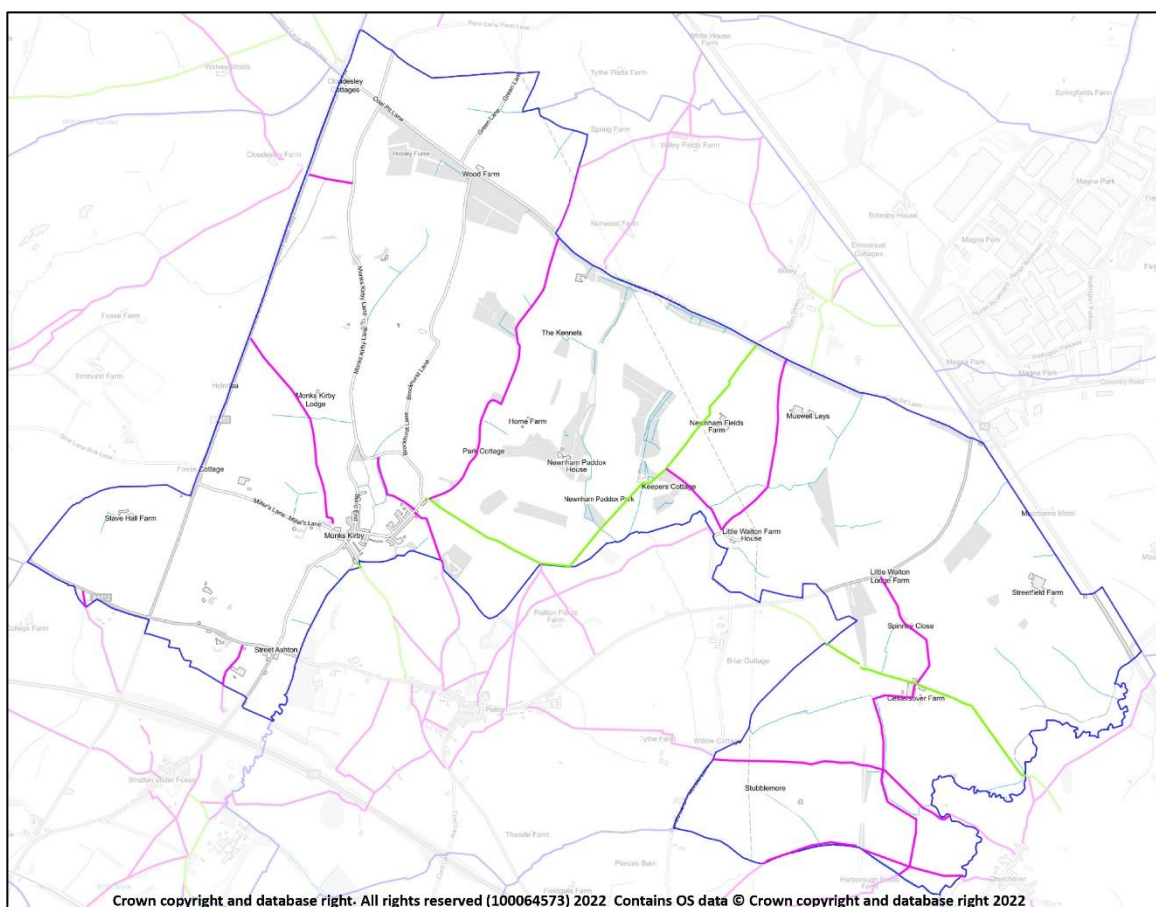


## Footpaths and other walking routes

The network of footpaths and other rights of way in the Plan Area, although not extensive, is popular for recreational use. Because walking routes everywhere tend to be survivors from around the time of

the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enclosure of the farmed landscape and from before the development of paved motor roads, there are good historical reasons for their relative scarcity, including in the case of Monks Kirby the presence of the Newnham Paddox estate and the manorial and agricultural history of the parish. However, with modern recognition of the value of walking routes for health and wellbeing, the lack is unfortunate and any erosion of the network's extent and character will be resisted.

Figure 12: Footpaths and other walking routes (Warwickshire CC mapping)



**POLICY ENV 9: FOOTPATHS AND OTHER WALKING ROUTES** - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths (figure 12) will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.

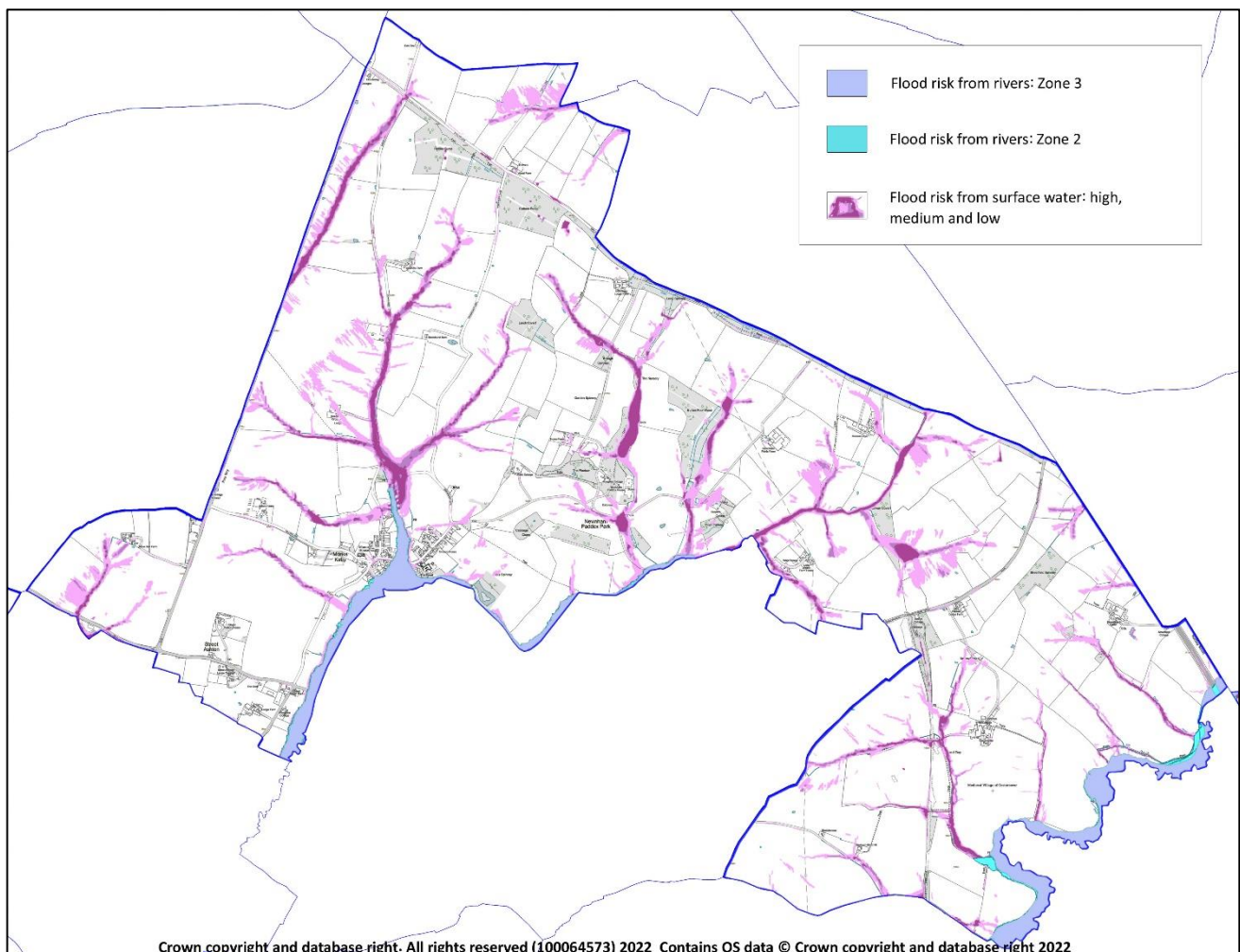
## Flood risk resilience and climate change

Even if international cooperation and national strategies and policies eventually succeed in halting the human and industrial contributions towards climate change, the effects of recent and current warming on weather events will likely persist for decades. It is therefore desirable to plan for at least a medium-term future, in which weather events will continue to become more extreme, by putting in place measures that manage the effects of climate change on flooding for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. This objective is explicitly supported by the Environment Agency (EA) draft *National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England* (2019), in which the strategic emphasis shifts from

mitigation to resilience; in other words from requiring new development to reduce its adverse effects on flood risk and to avoiding creating or adding to flood risk at all.

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

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



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

**POLICY ENV 10: FLOOD RISK RESILIENCE** – Development proposals within the areas indicated in Figure 13 will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the benefit of development outweighs the harm in relation to its adverse impact on climate change targets, and on the likelihood of it conflicting with locally applicable flood mitigation strategies and infrastructure.

Proposals to construct new (or modify existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within or close to the built-up area, will be supported,

provided they do not adversely affect sites and features of natural or historical environment significance.

Proposals to re-profile and re-wild suitable sections of the Smite Brook and River Swift will be supported.

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

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

## Renewable Energy Generation Infrastructure

The parts of the Plan Area within Green Belt land are covered by National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 151: 'elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development [...] and] developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances'.

The landscape of the Plan Area is dominated by four main topographic areas, all largely open and with wide views: from north to south, these are:

- the High Cross ridge, with extensive woodland
- The gently sloping plateau, with large arable fields and isolated farms
- Newnham Paddox parkland (including its area of influence)
- Monks Kirby settlement and the area including Street Ashton

Their generally open appearance and southerly aspect might make them technically suitable for wind and solar generation, but the paucity of screening woodland (except in the far north and in the Newnham Paddox parkland) and absence of topographic basins means there are almost no locations that are not in plain sight from the village and most of the parish.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 paragraphs 152-154 make it clear that, including through their Neighbourhood Plans, communities should take responsibility for reducing emissions as part of the recognised need to mitigate for and adapt to climate change. Residents of Monks Kirby wish to play their part, but at a scale and in locations appropriate to the landscape sensitivity of the Plan Area.

Pertinently, the impact of wind generation infrastructure on communities has been recognised by the government: a Ministerial Statement (18 June 2015) says that suitable areas for wind energy development must be identified in local plans and that any such developments must have the support of local communities.

Rugby Borough Council has, in conformity with national guidelines and the Ministerial Statement noted above, identified (a) the sensitivity (fragility of inherent character, ecological sensitivity, visibility and overall sensitivity) to general development of the ten *Landscape Character Types* in the Borough (including the two *High Cross Type* areas, in which Monks Kirby is situated) in *Landscape Assessment of the Borough of Rugby: Sensitivity and Condition Study* (2006), and (b) areas suitable for turbines in *Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments* (2011); these documents support the Local Plan.

Open plateau Landscape Character Type (Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2006: RBC): self-evidently sensitive to turbines and large solar arrays



Table 2: RBC *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* 2006

Plateau farmlands Landscape Character Type			
Cultural	Ecological	Visibility	Overall
Moderate	Low*	Moderate	Moderate

Open plateau Landscape Character Type			
Cultural	Ecological	Visibility	Overall
Moderate	Low*	Moderate	Moderate

\* 'Low' sensitivity should now be updated to 'moderate' to reflect biodiversity loss, in response to relevant measures in the Environment Bill 2021.

Policy ENV 14 takes account of NPPF paragraph 151 and is otherwise in general conformity with Rugby BC Local Plan Policy SDC8. For both wind and solar energy generation infrastructure it takes its guidance from the two RBC documents mentioned above, and from the descriptions and assessments of the adverse effects of 'drivers of change' in Natural England *National Character Area Profile 94 Leicestershire Vales*.

**POLICY ENV 11: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE** – Provided they comply with the restrictions associated with Green Belt land in the areas so designated, proposals for small-scale, solar and wind generation infrastructure proposals instigated by local residents, businesses, or the community will be supported, subject to their also complying with the following conditions:

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

Medium- and large-scale development proposals (for more than two turbines, and/or of tip height more than 35 m; solar arrays of larger area than that needed to generate the local (see above) proposer's on-site consumption requirement, based on current technology) will not be supported.

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

All proposals for residential or agricultural development should incorporate an appropriate solar roofing system.



# C Sustainability

This chapter looks at aspects of village life including: - Community facilities; Traffic management & road safety (including parking); and Business & employment.

## 1. Community facilities and amenities

Community facilities and amenities provide important infrastructure for the residents of Monks Kirby, supporting and enhancing the quality of daily life and contributing to the vitality of the village.

Some of these facilities and amenities offer local employment opportunities whilst others provide a focal point for social interaction and support important services; thereby reducing the need to travel, which is particularly important for those who do not have access to a car.

The limited range of facilities in Monks Kirby increases the need to travel, often by car, to nearby settlements. The need to travel outside the Parish to access basic services is one of the main reasons for the high levels of car ownership in the Parish (only 5.5% of households have no car or van compared to 17.5% across the borough according to the 2011 Census). It also creates challenges for those residents without access to a car. Reductions in the frequency of local bus services compound the issue.

The loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is, however, a common dilemma for rural communities. The viability of many rural services is likely to be challenged further in future as a consequence of squeezed local authority budgets and more car owning residents commuting to work, driving to retail centres and accessing leisure facilities and other amenities further afield.

Rugby Local Plan Policy HS3 supports the protection of community facilities and services. This policy adds local detail.

In the community questionnaire 77.2% of respondents identified local facilities as being something they liked about living in the Parish. 53.2% cited the school.

The facilities in Monks Kirby include the following:

### **Revel Church of England (Aided) School**

The school is vitally important to the village attracting young families and helping to maintain a mix of age groups in the community. The old School buildings are a focal point in the village scene, built in 1912 in the Arts and Crafts style. The newer school buildings built by WCC in 1973 sit along a driveway and away from the public highway. There are dedicated parking places for staff and extensive playgrounds both hard surfaced and grassland including a conservation area. The rear of the school overlooks open countryside which includes a large tract of Grade II Listed Parkland. The school is available for community use for larger gatherings. Parking is limited immediately around the school.

### **St Edith's Church**

St Edith's has a lengthy history built in 1077 and is the most important building in the village. The Church dominates the skyline and defines the village and the community. The Trinity Room is available, used mainly for Church related events. A recent survey of 109 people living in or connected to Monks Kirby and St Edith's – 92.5% strongly agreed the importance of protecting St Edith's as part of the local heritage. Comments received included *“a beautiful and historic landmark in a beautiful village”*; *“The most important building in the village that needs to be treasured and maintained.”*

### **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church**

A modern Church built in 1992 with a small carpark to the rear. The Church won a Rugby Civic Society Design Award in 1993. Extremely well supported covering a Catholic Parish more extensive than Monks Kirby Anglican Parish. St Joseph's brings people to the village especially those with young children to take advantage of Catholic teaching at the Church and a presence at the Revel School.

### **Pubs/Hospitality**

Sitting directly opposite St Edith's Church in the centre of the village is the Denbigh Arms; this is an important meeting place for social interaction and provides a venue for local events. The Denbigh Arms and The Barn (pub and micro-brewery), situated on Coalpit Lane, attract people to visit Monks Kirby and therefore bring an economic benefit. Ashton Lodge is a specialist weddings event location which also brings economic benefit and local employment.

### **Chapel of the Sacred Heart**

Catholic cemetery for Monks Kirby Parish but also available to Catholics from a wider area. The Chapel was built in 1888 to a design by Thomas Wyatt but is no longer used as a chapel.

### **Bus Service**

This is an essential service to be maintained, necessary for anyone without transport and others wishing to reduce car use. The intermittent but daily service provides a valuable link to both Rugby and Coventry hospitals.

### **Fishponds Community Park**

A unique asset to residents and visitors alike. The area provides play equipment for a wide age range and also includes a quieter space and nature area. The Community Park is something between a conservation area and a park.

### **Village Hall**

This much appreciated community meeting place is host to Mother and Toddler groups, Gardening Club, Women's Institute, Parish Council meetings and also informal coffee mornings and afternoon sessions for all age ranges. A venue for varied social events e.g. birthday parties, wedding receptions, funeral receptions and fundraising events.

## Footpaths and Bridleways

Many and varied throughout the Parish, generally maintained in good condition and passable in all seasons.

## Traffic

The main advantage is that there is no major road through the village which preserves the village community. Monks Kirby is not on a route to any major place of work or habitation that cannot be more easily reached by other routes.

**POLICY CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (including The Revel School, the Village Hall, the Denbigh Arms St Edith's Church and St Joseph's Church) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that any of the following apply:**

- a) There is no longer any proven need or demand for the existing community facility;
- b) The existing community facility is no longer economically viable and there are no alternative uses for the building that meet a community need;
- c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish which complies with the other general policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Small scale proposals to enhance the provision of community facilities to meet an identified local need will be supported.

## 2. Employment

### Existing and new employment opportunities

The strength of the local economy and of the community go hand in hand. Supporting the growth of a stronger local economy is recognised as an important theme of the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 6.2 of the Rugby Local Plan says 'Where the prospect of new employment development in rural areas is proposed to support the rural economy, including farm diversification and leisure and tourism proposals, policies are included to guide any such proposals and ensure any negative impacts of development are kept to an absolute minimum'.

Monks Kirby has a number of established businesses which are run from home-based facilities within the village. There is an increasing trend for residents to work from home (8.6% of people living in the parish (aged 16-74) compared to 3.8% in Rugby) and with continuing changing employment patterns nationally, particularly in light of the Coronavirus, this trend is likely to continue.

For the majority of workers resident in the parish the lack of significant local employment opportunity

means that their only option is to work away from the area, commuting increasingly greater distances to secure employment. In view of the rural nature of the village, 43% of residents go to work by car.

Where there are buildings dedicated to business use in the parish it is important that they are protected against being lost to other uses. It should be clearly demonstrated that there is little prospect of existing building or land generating employment before allowing demolition or redevelopment.

Meanwhile, new employment initiatives in the right location can greatly help to boost and diversify the local economy and to provide more local employment opportunities.

Overall, maintaining the rural nature of the parish strongly mitigates against any larger scale business development.

Any new employment initiatives should be sensitive to the character of the parish. Employment proposals should only be seen as acceptable if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important such as air quality, green spaces, increased traffic flows, parking, residential amenity, the preservation of historic/heritage assets and the local environment.

There is, however, a need to recognise and support the increasing numbers of people who conduct their businesses from home. The Neighbourhood Plan reflects this in its proposals to provide a wider range of housing and to both support conversion of redundant commercial buildings and the development of local business premises where appropriate.

In the community questionnaire, 61% of respondents welcomed more business to the parish. Businesses that would be welcomed to the Parish by 50% or more respondents to the Community Questionnaire include Cottage industry/home based services; agricultural businesses, shops and workshops.

**POLICY E1: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, an existing employment use will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the site or building is no longer suitable for employment use.**

**Proposals for employment-related development (for new and/or expansion of employment uses) will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development will not generate unacceptable disturbance, noise, fumes, smell or traffic; has appropriate off-road parking; that it will respect and be compatible with the local character and surrounding uses; and that it will, where appropriate, protect residential amenity.**

## Working from home

The reduction of CO2 omissions to net zero by 2050 is now enshrined in law, so it is important to consider new employment opportunities in the right location for the residents of Monks Kirby in order to help reduce vehicle usage and carbon footprint. The last census of 2011 identified 12.9% residents as self-employed and 8.6% working mainly from home. 141 people regularly drove to work and back making a total of almost 300 vehicle journeys per day.

It has been demonstrated that there is support for those people who wish to conduct their business from within the village. Again, through the consultation process this will only be seen as acceptable if it avoids impact on other matters that are considered equally important, such as increased traffic flows, parking, retaining the residential amenities, the local environment and the preservation of historic and heritage assets.

The neighbourhood plan therefore supports the rural economy by allowing for new employment planning applications in residential dwellings to provide or safeguard local jobs.

**POLICY E2: WORKING FROM HOME - Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for small scale freestanding buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses, will be supported where:**

- a) The commercial development of the property is for the primary use of the property residents only and where the proposed commercial use remains ancillary to the main use of the building as a residential dwelling;
- b) Any extension or free-standing building does not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction; and
- c) Such development will not result in significantly increased traffic movements, that appropriate parking provision is made, and there is no significant and adverse impact to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity.

## Farm diversification

The conversion of former agricultural buildings enables farm diversification, leads to the sustainable reuse of vacant buildings and provides opportunities for the establishment and development of small businesses which generate income and employment opportunities for local people. This is a national trend, which the Parish Council would like to encourage within the Plan area to maintain a balanced and vibrant community, subject to the proper consideration of residential amenity for nearby houses, visual impact on the countryside and highway safety issues. New business development in the countryside is covered in Policy E1.

To help maintain the rural economy and protect the open countryside from inappropriate development, the Plan supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise through the development and where appropriate conversion of existing farm buildings in the countryside. Specifically, this is intended to: Promote a viable and sustainable farming and rural economy in the neighbourhood area and the diversification of rural businesses; encourage new businesses to provide a wider range of local produce, services and leisure facilities, to provide local employment and attract both visitors and tourists to the parish and maintain and enhance the local environment of rural and agricultural lands.

The change of use of some rural buildings to new uses is already permitted under the General Permitted Development Orders. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 allows, under certain circumstances, the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use and change of use of agricultural buildings to registered nurseries providing childcare or state-funded schools, under the prior approval system. The policy allows for circumstances where planning permission is required.

**POLICY E3: REUSE OF AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS** - The reuse, conversion and adaptation of rural buildings for small businesses, recreation, or tourism purposes will be supported where:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location;
- b) The conversion/adaptation works respect the character of the surrounding area;
- c) The development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological, architectural, historic or environmental features;
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate parking can be accommodated within the site; and
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

## Broadband

The Local Plan Policy SDC9 recognises the importance of broadband infrastructure. This neighbourhood plan recognises the fundamental importance of ultra-fast broadband to the development of the local economy and that rural communities must not be disadvantaged with a poor communication infrastructure. Such facilities are particularly important for promoting and developing homeworking as outlined in policy E3.

53% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire said the Broadband speed was adequate. Only 39% said similarly about the mobile phone signal.

**POLICY E5: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE** - Proposals to provide increased access to a super-fast or ultra-fast broadband service (including future developments at present unforeseen) and improve the mobile telecommunication network that will serve businesses and other properties within the parish will be actively supported. This may require above ground network installations, which must be sympathetically located and designed to integrate into the landscape and not be located in or near to open landscapes. In addition:

- a) All new developments should have access to superfast broadband (of at least 30Mbps). Developers should take active steps to incorporate superfast broadband at the pre-planning phase and should engage with telecoms providers to ensure superfast broadband is available as soon as soon as the initial build on the development is complete; and
- b) Telecommunication providers will be encouraged to improve existing mobile coverage and provide new 5G services.

## School expansion

The Revel Church of England Aided School is not just a village primary school, it serves a very wide community with children arriving at school by bus and private car from not only the Revel group of villages but also Wolvey. Monks Kirby and Wolvey Primary Schools are joined in a Federation, and across the county boundary from Leicestershire. The school is an extremely important part of the Monks Kirby community but it's growth and popularity over recent has come with its own challenges, primarily traffic and parking.

There are many and continuing efforts by the school, the Parish Council and the community to mitigate these traffic issues but like all rural village schools, there is not a simple solution. There is a high volume of traffic at peak school times and a voluntary circular traffic routing system operates which significantly helps the situation when used properly. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support and encourage the school in its development whilst trying to manage the potentially adverse impacts on the local community.

**POLICY E6: SCHOOL - Proposals for the expansion of the Primary School will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**

- a) Expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, unless suitable mitigation measures are brought forward as part of the proposal;
- b) There is no significant loss of outdoor recreation space at the school; and
- c) The development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users and is in character, scale and form to the current building.

## 3. Traffic

### Traffic management

Traffic concerns have been raised by residents including speeding, road safety, the condition of roads and limiting HGV travel through the village.

The Local Plan promotes improved bus services and facilities, extension and improvement of the cycle network and pedestrian facilities and other forms of sustainable transport.

It seeks to reduce the dependency on the car where possible by providing linkages through footpaths and accessing public transport.

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

- a) Be designed to minimise additional traffic generation and movement;
- b) Incorporate sufficient off-road parking in line with Highways requirements;
- c) Provide any necessary improvements to site access and the highway network either directly or by sufficient financial contributions; and
- d) Consider, where appropriate, the improvement and where possible the creation of footpaths, pedestrian facilities and cycleways to key village services.

## Electric car charging

The UK government has recently announced its intention to ban sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to combat rising levels of air pollution (in particular NOx) and address climate change concerns. The implication is that the number of 'pure' (i.e. not hybrid) electric vehicles (EVs) on the road will increase rapidly; there is some evidence this is already starting. This raises the crucial question for the planning system of providing infrastructure for EV battery recharging.

This issue is already influencing planning and building regulations and it would seem wise to include such requirements for new developments in Monks Kirby, if rural communities are not to be left behind. Similarly, commercial rapid charging facilities are growing across the country (making use of 3-phase supply not possible at the domestic level and reducing the 7kW re-charge time by a factor of 3). These could be utilised in Monks Kirby for example by installation in a permanent parking area as described above, providing re-charging for residents with no off-road parking, and allowing opportunity fast re-charge for all residents.

The Community Questionnaire revealed that 25% of respondents owned an electric or hybrid vehicle. Local Plan Policy HS5 requires new development to consider including provision for electric vehicle charging capability.

**POLICY T4: ELECTRIC VEHICLES** - Residential development should, where practical, provide 7kW (or current best practice) cabling to a vehicle-accessible location on the exterior of each dwelling to facilitate subsequent installation of a home electric vehicle charging point.

The provision of communal vehicular charging points within the Parish will be supported where there is universal access, and their presence does not impact negatively on existing available parking in the Parish.



## 8. Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood plan will last up to 2037. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which the Plan seeks to address will change.

The Neighbourhood plan will be regularly monitored. This will be led by Monks Kirby Parish Council on at least an annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the Neighbourhood plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the Neighbourhood plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review the Neighbourhood plan on a three-year cycle commencing in 2025 or to coincide with the review of the Development Plan if this cycle is different.