

Farrington Gurney Parish Council



FARRINGTON GURNEY

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2026 – 2045

Regulation 14 Consultation DRAFT

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Foreword

Welcome to our Neighbourhood Plan. This has been produced in order to ensure that the voice of residents is heard and reflected in the development decisions made about our community.

This plan has been developed by a group of Farrington Gurney parish councillors and residents at pains to take into account as many views, experiences and perspectives as possible. These have been sought and developed through surveys, Parish Council meetings, drop-in sessions and planning workshops to ensure that every resident has had multiple opportunities to participate and contribute.

Through these processes what we have heard is that you:

- Accept that some new housing is wanted in the village, to allow for downsizing, upsizing and to make our contribution to the national housing crisis;
- Have deep concerns for the pace and scale of housing;
- Value the social connectedness of our community built up over many years, and have a strong desire to protect and develop this as a vital asset to be strengthened carefully;
- Put tremendous value on Farrington Gurney's identity as a **rural community**;
- Appreciate and wish to preserve the small scale of the local school and the social cohesion it nurtures in the village as a whole;
- Cherish the distinctive and ancient qualities of both the built and natural environment which makes the village an attractive and safe place to live and bring up families;
- Have deep and abiding concerns about the risks and dangers posed by poor air quality, increasing traffic congestion that threatens the rural nature of the village and the inadequate, discriminatory public transportation links which reduce opportunities for young and elderly people; and
- Want to make appropriate contributions to addressing climate change and wish change to be sustainable and proportionate.

We are very grateful to all the residents who have taken the time and trouble to tell us about their future priorities for the Parish. This Neighbourhood Plan captures the defining characteristics of our village and sets out a vision, objectives and policies to ensure that the priorities of residents are considered in all future planning decisions.

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Farrington Gurney Parish Council**

1 Introduction

What is the Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.1 The Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document that will guide and influence future development in the Parish for the period 2026-2045. The Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in **Figure 1** below and reflects the Parish boundary.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is a tool that will help ensure new development is shaped and directed to take into account the shared vision of the community. Once it is formally adopted it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the Parish area and sit alongside the Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Local Plan. Decisions on planning applications will be made using policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, BANES Local Plan, and any other material planning considerations.

Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan contains the following sections:
 - **Section 2: Planning Context** – summarises the over-arching legislative and policy framework that relates to the neighbourhood plan area.
 - **Section 3: Our Parish** – details the history of the Parish, what makes it special and the key challenges into the future.
 - **Section 4: Vision and Objectives** – sets out the long-term vision for the Neighbourhood Plan and the corresponding objectives to achieve the vision.
 - **Section 5: Neighbourhood Plan Policies** – includes the Neighbourhood Plan policies alongside supporting text that will be used to assess future development proposals.
 - **Section 6: Neighbourhood Plan Review** – Considers the potential need and scope of any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group

- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is made up of Parish Councillors and residents that have been given delegated authority to prepare and co-ordinate a Neighbourhood Plan for Farrington Gurney for sign off by the Parish Council and referendum by the local community. The group has been responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan consultation activities and drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan with the help of appointed planning consultants.

Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan



Figure 1 - Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area (outlined red)

2 Planning Context

- 2.1 The following section contains an overview of the relevant policy context that has been considered when preparing the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, which includes both Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Neighbourhood Planning, introduced through the Localism Act, therefore provides an opportunity for communities to plan positively for their area and ensure new development addresses their priorities.
- 2.3 Underpinning all aspects of plan making is sustainability and the need to balance economic, social and environmental objectives. Community engagement is crucial to their preparation, with the Neighbourhood Plan only approved following examination and local referendum.
- 2.4 To be acceptable at examination a Neighbourhood Plan must comply with “basic conditions”. These include:
- Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the adopted Development Plan (i.e. BANES Local Plan)
 - Have regard to national planning policy and guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - Contribute to achieving sustainable development.
 - Be compatible with relevant European law and human rights obligations.

Explaining Strategic and Non-Strategic Policies

- 2.5 The status of policies in a Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan vary in that the Local Plan can also include “strategic” as well as “non-strategic” policies. Strategic policies are defined in the NPPF at paragraphs 20-23 and include those that set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of new development across the different places in an authority area. Strategic Policies will often also include major allocations that are important to deliver the spatial strategy.
- 2.6 Non-Strategic Policies can be included in both Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and set out more detailed policies for specific areas or address specific local issues. Non-strategic policies however cannot promote less development or undermine adopted Local Plan strategic policies.
- 2.7 Both strategic and non-strategic policies therefore sit alongside each other as part of the overall Development Plans for the area. NPPF paragraph 31 is clear that once a Neighbourhood Plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over any existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan, if they are in

conflict. This is unless they are superseded by either strategic or non-strategic policies that are subsequently adopted later.

Adopted Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan

- 2.8 The Adopted Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (2014), Placemaking Plan (2017) and Local Plan Partial Update (2023). Together these set out the spatial strategy and allocations for growth across the district up to 2029, as well as topic specific policies that development is assessed against. In terms of housing growth, the Development Plan seeks to deliver 13,000 new homes over the plan period.
- 2.9 Farrington Gurney is identified as a village under the Rural Areas section of the Development Plan and meets the criteria under Strategic Policy RA1 – ‘Development in the villages meeting the listed criteria’. The Plan includes enabling the development of around 50 dwellings at this category of villages, although no subsequent allocations were made through the Placemaking Plan at Farrington Gurney due to infrastructure constraints.
- 2.10 As is required by the basic conditions, policies within this Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared to be consistent with strategic policies within the adopted Development Plan.

Emerging Local Plan

- 2.11 BANES Council commenced work on the emerging Local Plan in 2022 and undertook options consultation in Spring 2024. Following the changes introduced by the December 2024 NPPF (in particular, how housing need is calculated), preparation of the Local Plan was however ‘reset’ and additional consultation carried out.
- 2.12 The latest regulation 18 consultation was carried out from October 2025 and included a range of approaches to seek to meet around 27,000 new homes over an eighteen-year plan period. As part of the consultation two options for Farrington Gurney were presented for land to the south of the village, option 1 for 400-500 homes, and option 2 for around 50 homes. The significant difference in the scale of these 2 options under consideration by BANES relates to infrastructure capacity constraints and is discussed further in section 3 below.
- 2.13 A number of key evidence base studies are still ongoing to inform the plan and decisions in relation to spatial strategy/preferred allocations. This includes a Green Belt assessment (stage 1 and 2) to address the significant NPPF changes to Green Belt policy, and transport modelling to consider the individual and cumulative impacts of potential development sites and committed development on the transport network.
- 2.14 At time of writing, the draft plan is expected to be consulted on in summer 2026, with adoption planned for the end of 2027.

3 Our Parish

- 3.1 Informed by consultation with the community this section of the Neighbourhood Plan provides a summary of the history of the Parish, what makes the area special, and future challenges. Supporting maps can be viewed in **Appendix A**. Further details are also expanded upon in the justification text for policies later in Section 5.

History

- 3.2 Today Farrington Gurney is a lively, rural village of some 1,000 inhabitants who greatly appreciate its friendly rural community and countryside character, cherishing its peace, quiet and ancient history. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) and its double name derives from Ferentone (fern hill) and the name of the de Gournay family who owned the land until 1338. At that point - either because of Thomas de Gournay's involvement in the assassination of Edward II or due to the childlessness of Thomas's successor, Matthew - the land reverted to the Crown and was given by Edward III to the Duchy of Cornwall who remain the majority local landowner to this day. In 1338, at the time of the Black Death, farmsteads and small cottages moved west of the original Norman Church to the areas now known as Church Lane and Main Street.

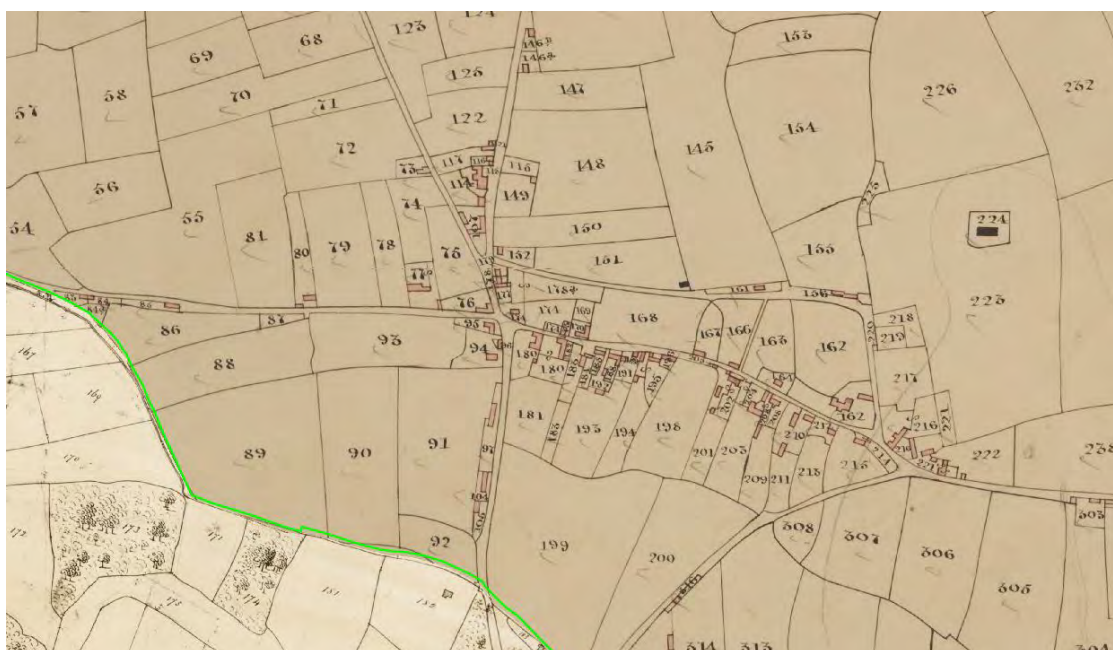


Figure 2 – Tithe Map (c. 1840) showing the historical built up area of the main village around Main Street (Somerset Historical Environment Record).

- 3.3 For much of its history, the village depended on farming and coal. In medieval times and as late as 1616, the village still had three great open-field farms. Coal was mined here from as early as the 14th century and the industry grew until 1921. At that time, 50 unemployed men put up a share of £5 each to start a drift mine at Marsh Lane which, in its best years, produced up to 120 tons per week until 1949 when it became uneconomic.

- 3.4 Throughout its long history, the village has developed piecemeal, slowly and gently, acquiring a pub, a cattle market, a new Church (1843) a school (1852) a Methodist Church (1880) and a railway station (1927). The most dramatic alteration to the village occurred in the late 1980s, when the A362 bypass took the A37 traffic around the village and away from Main Street, thus preserving its rural identity and creating a greater area for housing. As a consequence, new houses were slowly added to the village between 1980 and 2000, in small, distinct developments (**Figure 3**).
- 3.5 This phase began with the creation of Farrington Way, when 23 houses were built. In retrospect, it was thought that these had been built too quickly, and with too little attention to local styles and materials, an error that subsequent developments mostly avoided. Gournay Court, with first 16 and later an additional 15 houses, was built more carefully over a period of 10 years. At roughly the same time, the creation of Manor Close created 16 houses and of Meadow Close 17. At no time in the modern history of the village have more than 20 houses been added at one time. Together with some infill housing, the period between the 1980s and the 2000s saw the fastest expansion of the village in its history, but over that time, the design, materials and quality of development visibly improved.

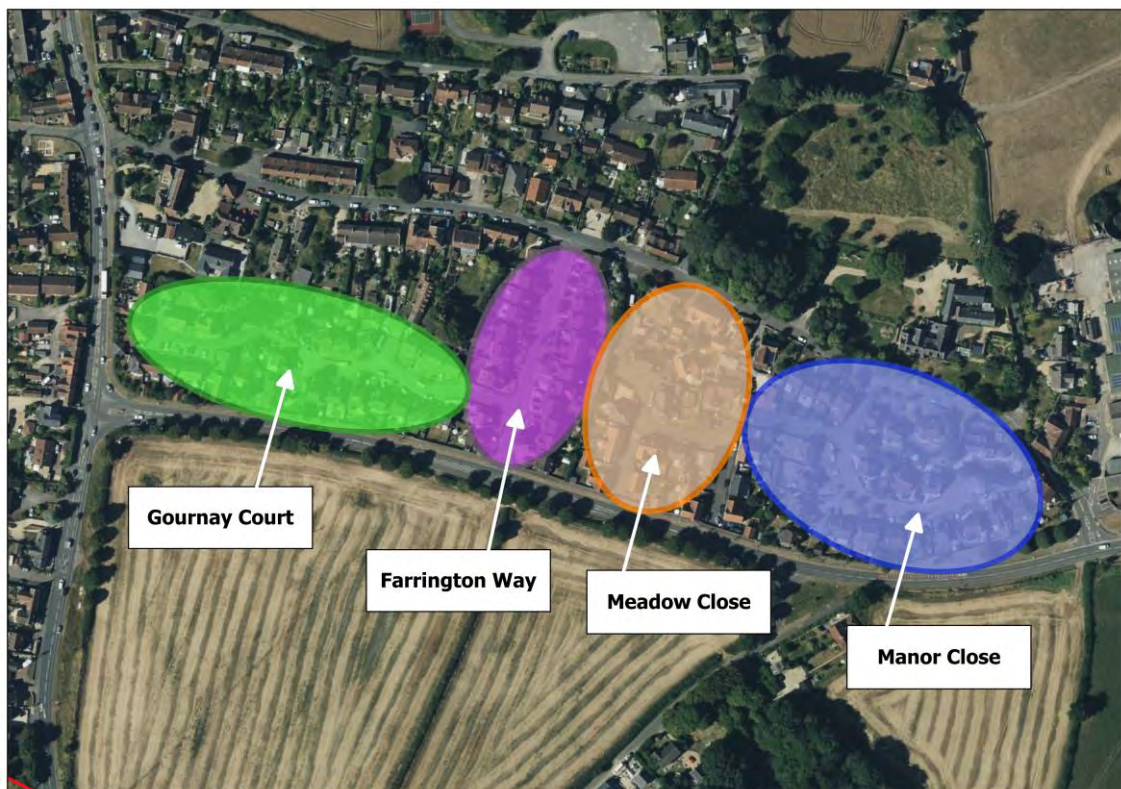


Figure 3 – areas of incremental development between Main Street and the A362 bypass since the 1980's.

What makes Farrington Gurney Special

Social Cohesion

3.6 It is to that slow and thoughtful development described above that the community owes its cohesion and wellbeing, as reflected in feedback from the village survey (**Figure 4**). It is well understood that the development of social capital - the social norms of generosity, reciprocity and trust - is associated with substantial increases in



Figure 4 – WordCloud of what it is like to live in Farrington Gurney from village survey.

wellbeing, help protect against stress and deteriorating mental health and that, by contrast, loneliness is as deadly as smoking¹. Communities with high social capital show increased economic productivity, higher educational attainment, lower rates of crime and fear of crime. They are also places where it is easier to start new, small businesses, to get help from neighbours, where politics are less toxic and residents find it easier to save money². Smaller social settings increase social mixing and help break down socio-economic divides and provide higher degrees of resilience. These intangible yet measurable benefits depend fundamentally on time: on common experiences, repeated interactions, consistency of relationships and the gradual development of trust.

3.7 Farrington Gurney today is a village comprised of a diverse population, in terms of income, background, educational attainment and employment. Few residents have, on face value, much in common. They don't work for the same employer, in the same industry, profession, trade, location or city. For only a few families has the village been home for multiple generations. Rather it is the size of the community that has made it easier for newcomers to meet their neighbours. The small primary school is a fundamental social connector, where



Figure 5 – The village school, first established in the mid 19th century, is a key hub for the community.

¹ Andy Haldane and David Halpern, *Social Capital 2025: The Hidden Wealth of Nations*, published by Demos, Local trust and 3ni: the national network for neighbourhood improvement, January 2025.

² Eric Sandelands, (Neighbourly Lab, 2024; Federation of Small Businesses, 2025; British Red Cross community resilience report, 2025; Electoral Commission, 2024 local election debrief)

children make friends and their parents get to know one another. The Parish Council brings people together, fundraising for the BMX track and playground improvements. The Village Hall is where residents come together to socialize, exercise, and celebrate; its playground and playing field serve young and old alike. The village club hosts fetes and commemorates national events. The volunteers of Farrington Green create community around environmental issues, biodiversity projects, carbon emission reductions, litter picking and running a Village Larder to reduce food waste. More recently, running and walking groups have formed, serving a cross-section of residents. All of these activities bring people together, building social capital slowly, contributing to the health, safety and productivity of the entire community. It is that dynamic cohesion which we wish to preserve above all.

Natural and Built Environment

3.8 The village is surrounded by gently rolling countryside with an escarpment to the south up to Rush Hill Wood. The western boundary is marked by a change in topography to the flatter landscape of Hollow Marsh. There are a number of watercourses in the area, including the Wellow Brook, that runs along the southern boundary of the Parish. The surrounding countryside is criss-crossed by an extensive public right of way network. The open nature of the landscape provides a rural setting to the village and serves to provide views to surrounding ridges and St John Church from a range of vantage points within the Parish. In terms of biodiversity the parish is in close proximity to Hollow Marsh Nature reserve to the west, and Sites of Nature Conservations Importance close to the village (Marsh Lane Colliery). The wider countryside includes hedgerows and areas of woodland which provide important interconnecting habitat for a range of protected species. The parish also falls within the consideration zones for lesser Horseshoe Bats.

3.9 The farmland around Farrington Gurney is unique in its quality with virtually the whole parish identified as being Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. How this important finite natural resource is used is vital to sustainable development and food security in terms of consistency, yield and range of food crops that can be grown. Considering just the highest grade of land (Grade 1), 67% of the Parish area is covered by Grade 1 land according to Natural England Mapping³. This compares to just 7% of the area that is Grade 1 across the whole BANES Council area (**see Map A.3, Appendix A**).

3.10 In terms of the built environment, the village includes a number of important listed buildings that are key to the heritage of area. There are also a range of non-designated heritage assets that



Figure 6 – St John's Church is a key building in the village with a unique setting.

³ ALC Grades (Provisional) Mapping, Natural England

have been identified through community consultation that are considered of local significance. In relation to local character and distinctiveness, there is a diverse but consistent range of styles in the village, reflecting different eras and including duchy and miners style cottages. Stone features prominently on both buildings and in the public realm through a variety of diverse but compatible styles.

Future Challenges

- 3.11 Future development pressures being considered as part of the emerging BANES Local Plan present a number of key challenges for the community. Whilst decisions are yet to be made stark options have been presented between development that can be accommodated within the capacity of the existing school (around 50 dwellings), to a much larger quantum of development (around 400-500 dwellings) that would be required if it were to facilitate delivery of a new school and accommodate the increased population of primary age children. It is understood development of a scale in between these ranges could not be accommodated in the existing school and would not be at a viable level to fund the delivery of a new school. The scales of development under consideration are therefore clearly very different choices in the context of the existing village, with a current housing stock of only 376 dwellings⁴. The implications of this infrastructure 'tipping point' is a key concern for the community.

Threats to Social Cohesion

- 3.12 Social cohesion is fragile; built up slowly over time, it is easily fractured and hard to repair. That is why its sources need protection and reinforcement and its threats require constant vigilance.
- 3.13 To that end, the community support the provision of new housing in line with the number of children which the existing primary school can accommodate, which we estimate to top out at 15 new children per year group. This would keep the school roughly at the number that it has served throughout its history. That pupil population would translate to a maximum of 50 new dwellings⁵. Based on the housing need assessment there is a clear need to provide appropriately sized properties that meet both the needs of new younger households as well as older persons looking to downsize.
- 3.14 Any additional housing above the 50 dwellings threshold creates a tipping point at which the spatial requirements and economic justification for a new school pushes the housing numbers to a level of around 400+, more than doubling the size of the village.
- 3.15 Disruption on this scale has the potential to destroy social cohesion in Farrington Gurney. The identity of the village and its inhabitants would cease to be rural, and the loss of agricultural land, the increase in traffic, pollution and noise could destroy the character and social fabric carefully woven in Farrington Gurney over centuries. It would also leave the local authority with a permanent transport obligation to carry a

⁴ Farrington Gurney Housing Needs Assessment, April 2025

⁵ Refer to education note – Appendix C

significantly increased number of students to the secondary school, located outside the Parish.

Traffic

- 3.16 Whilst being a rural parish Farrington Gurney sits on the strategic road network at the junction of the A37 and A362, resulting in very significant traffic flows through the village from both LGV/HGV movements and people commuting to key employment centres at Bristol and Bath. The junction of the A roads at the village acts as a physical bottleneck. Whilst traffic reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, data shows it steadily increasing year on year since. As of 2024, average annual daily flows on the A37 were around 15,000 vehicles. Comparatively a larger proportion of vehicles travelling through the village are also LGV's/HGV's, making up 27% of all vehicles. This compares to figures under 20% on many other A-Roads elsewhere in BANES.⁶
- 3.17 Further exacerbation of existing traffic congestions problems and its associated impacts (e.g. noise, air quality) as a result of new development is therefore a key community concern. This relates to both development within Farrington Gurney itself but also cumulative impacts with other major development being considered in adjacent Parish areas.

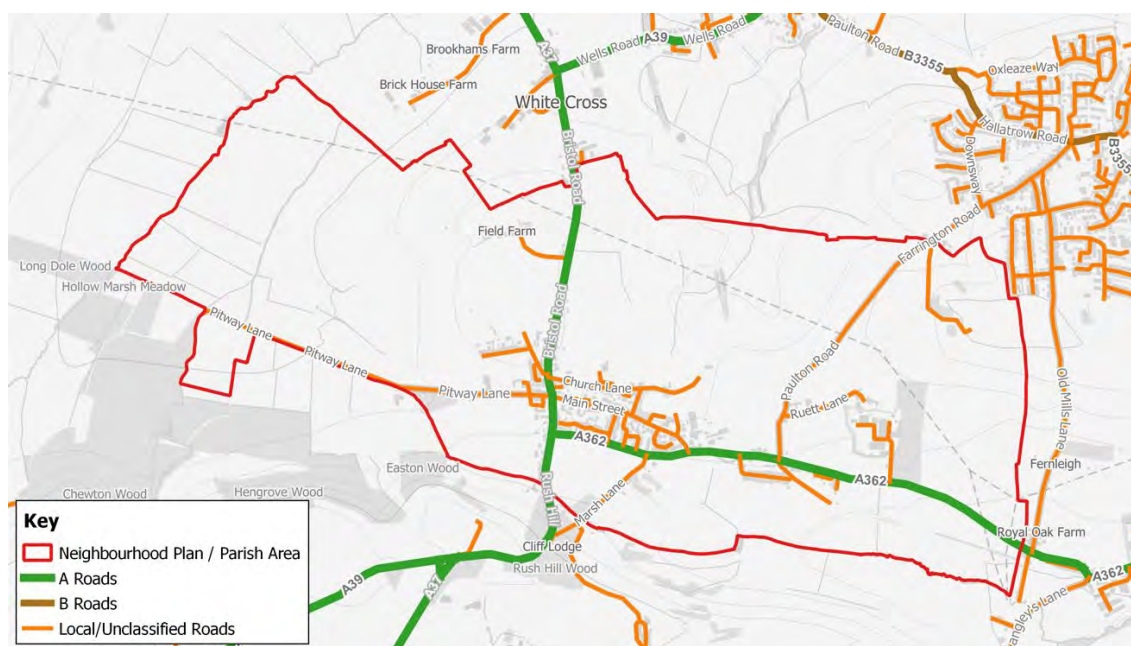


Figure 7 – Location of Farrington Gurney at the junction of A37 and A362

⁶ Road traffic statistics, available at: <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/>

Air Quality

- 3.18 Since 2018, the village has been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts and is recognised as a contributing factor in heart disease and cancers. Poor air quality particularly impacts the most vulnerable in society—children and older people.
- 3.19 While some improvement in air quality was seen during the Covid-19 pandemic due to the reduction of traffic, as described above levels have been steadily increasing. The development of the SVEZ could result in an estimated increase of some 4,000 cars or lorries daily. Relative to other roads LGV/HGVs constitute a large proportion of the traffic, but while 1 in 12 cars sold in the UK is battery/electric, just 1 in 38 is the ratio for commercial vehicles and HGVs. The development of alternatively fuelled powertrains lags the development of electric vehicles by 14 years, which is why national government does not expect to be able to phase out non-zero emissions HGVs in the near future⁷. In the context of significant planned growth being considered in the Somer Valley area this augers poorly for air quality improvement over the next 20 years in Farrington Gurney.
- 3.20 As described above, Farrington Gurney sits in a vice created by the A37 and the A362. Although some road improvements (such as a roundabout) might improve the flow of traffic, both natural and manmade structures along these roads make it impossible to widen them to aid traffic flow further. A large increase in homes, in a village which due to its rural location typically has 2 cars per household, would further degrade air quality and human health.

⁷ Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 'Fuelling the Fleet: Delivering Commercial Vehicle Decarbonization' 2021. <https://www.smmmt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SMMT-Fuelling-the-Fleet-Driving-Commercial-Vehicle-Decarbonisation.pdf>

4 Vision and Objectives

Introduction

- 4.1 The following section sets out a positive vision for how we want our community to develop over the coming decades in ways that meet identified local needs and address our key priorities and challenges. This has informed the planning policies (section 5) that seek to deliver the vision through new development.

Vision

- 4.2 The vision for the Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan was developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Group and through a visioning workshop with members of the community. The vision is as follows:

To preserve and enhance Farrington Gurney's rural character and heritage through gradual, proportionate, appropriate and sympathetic development that supports and enhances social cohesion, health, diversity and sustainability for every resident.

Objectives

- 4.3 In order to deliver the long-term vision above for the Neighbourhood Plan Area, the following over-arching objectives have been identified for the Neighbourhood Plan:
1. Development sustains and enhances social cohesion through proportionate and well-planned development.
 2. The pace and scale of development is conducive and proportionate to the maintenance of a safe and healthy community.
 3. The types and size of new housing supports mixed and balanced communities, as evidenced from the Housing Needs Assessment.
 4. The rural and historic significance of the village and its landscape setting should be protected and enhanced.
 5. Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, which characterises and surrounds the village, should be protected.
 6. The natural environment within the parish, including its biodiversity, is protected and enhanced and new buildings increase resilience and adaptation to climate change.
 7. Air quality in the village is improved and is not jeopardized by new development.
 8. New development addresses traffic congestion and improves opportunities to travel by sustainable modes for work, study and essential facilities.

5 Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Introduction

- 5.1 Informed by the vision and objectives this section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the local policies that will be used to assess new development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Policy FG1: Social Cohesion

Policy FG1

New development within the parish should seek to sustain and enhance social cohesion, promoting opportunities for social interaction and help foster strong and positive relationships within the community.

Planning applications for major residential development should provide evidence of how the new communities created will be positively integrated with existing communities within the Neighbourhood Plan Area and contribute to the achievement of social cohesion objectives. Considerations should include:

- How the dwelling tenure and sizes proposed will achieve mixed and balanced communities and meet the housing needs of the population, as evidenced in the Farrington Gurney Housing Needs Assessment.
- How the development will promote shared use of any facilities and open spaces by all.
- Breaking down any spatial barriers, including providing safe and legible walking and cycling links between the development and the existing community, including existing and any new facilities.
- How a proactive approach has been taken through site layout and design to prevent crime and foster community cohesion, including preventing segregation of different house tenure types.
- How social interaction will be promoted through the provision of high-quality public spaces and active street frontages.

Justification

- 5.2 Feedback from the community through both the village survey and workshop has highlighted above all the existing sense of community and importance of social cohesion. The NPPF promotes healthy and safe communities as a key consideration for both planning policies and decisions, and that development should not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

- 5.3 In this context social cohesion is a key overarching priority of the Neighbourhood Plan which crosscuts other policies in this section. With the potential for increased housing development, there is a need to prevent risk of polarisation of existing or new communities. New housing development should also contribute to the creation of socially balanced and inclusive communities. Buildings, streets and spaces should promote social interaction and inclusion, and be valued by the community and accessible to all.
- 5.4 The Farrington Gurney Housing Needs Assessment⁸ indicates that the parish currently has an aging population, with the greatest population increase between 2011 and 2021 for people aged 65-84 years. Into the future, projected household growth is however expected to be driven by both the youngest and oldest households. Up to 2045, households with a reference person aged 65+ are projected to increase by 55%, whilst both those aged 24 and under and 25-34 are projected to increase by 40%.
- 5.5 The dwelling mix of any new housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan area is therefore expected to need to meet a wide range of different needs. From younger newly forming householders to older persons looking to downsize later in life to accommodation more suitable for their needs. The tenure, type and size of the dwelling mix, and the public spaces and facilities delivered alongside, should therefore meet the needs of all aspects of the community going forward. The housing need assessment identified in particular a need to focus on delivery of small and medium sized properties as part of the dwelling mix, rather than larger 4+ bedroom properties. This was tightly aligned with the feedback received from the community in the village survey.

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2021)	Suggested mix (end of Plan period)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix	Indicative policy range
1	4.9%	12.2%	30.7%	25-35%
2	13.6%	23.2%	45.1%	40-50%
3	42.1%	40.9%	24.1%	20-30%
4+	39.4%	23.8%	0.0%	0-10%

Figure 8 – Suggesting dwellings size mix to 2045 from Housing Needs Assessment

⁸ AECOM, Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment, April 2025

Policy FG2: Housing Development

Policy FG2

Housing proposals for infill, subdivision and conversion within the adopted housing development boundary will be supported where it is appropriate in terms of scale, design and character of the village and does not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses. To contribute to the housing needs of the Parish, proposals that create annexes and additional residential dwellings, rather than holiday lets, will be particularly supported.

To ensure any significant new housing growth is commensurate with the scale and role and function of the village, outside but adjoining the housing development boundary provision for up to 50 new dwellings is supported (from one or more sites), where proposals are consistent with other Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Justification

- 5.6 Consistent with BANES Local Plan policy RA1 Policy FG2 looks to support appropriate residential development within the Housing Development Boundary (HDB). The HDB is shown in the policies map in **Appendix B**. Taking into account the need to provide more permanent housing within the community (as evidenced in the housing needs assessment), support will be particularly given to proposals that create additional residential dwellings or annexes, rather than holiday lets. Local Plan RE7 is also relevant in this respect which seeks to protect existing housing stock and ensure holiday accommodation does not result in a reduction in the number of dwelling spaces.
- 5.7 The supporting text to BANES Local Plan policy RA1 (paragraph 67) indicates that villages with the level of facilities as Farrington Gurney should look to delivery around 50 dwellings each in addition to windfall sites within the HDB. No allocations were taken forward as part of the BANES placemaking plan, principally due to capacity constraints at the school and its inability to expand. More recent discussions (see **Appendix C**) however indicate that there is now sufficient space to accommodate up to 50 additional dwellings within the capacity of the existing primary school. In this context there is a need to plan positively to meet the communities future housing needs and play a role in addressing the national housing crisis. Policy FG2 therefore identifies this level of housing to come forward adjoining the HDB where it is consistent with other Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- 5.8 Whilst an upper limit of 50 dwellings has been identified a decision has been made to not allocate a specific site as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. As part of the site options being considered in the emerging Local Plan, land to the south for the village has been identified as a preferred area as it is likely to not fall fully within the highest grade agricultural land (grade 1). In terms of allocating there still remains uncertainty however regarding whether land to the south is still best and most versatile agricultural land (i.e. grade 1, 2, or 3a), which may influence the scale of any development that is

suitable versus directing significant development to other settlements with poorer quality agricultural land (as directed by the NPPF). In this regard any proposals should therefore accord with Policy FG3 below.

5.9 As described in section 3, the community are not supportive of scales of housing development above 50 dwellings outside the HDB given it would necessitate a jump to a scheme of around 400-500 dwellings in order to be able to facilitate a new school. The community would not consider such a scale of housing development to be sustainable, including for the following reasons:

- It would not be commensurate with the scale and role and function of Farrington Gurney (current 376 dwellings) and therefore wouldn't foster the social cohesion identified as the key priority by the community.
- Whilst there are opportunities to improve sustainable transport locally (e.g. Somer Valley Links project) the village is essentially rural and acknowledged as being less sustainable than the northern part of the BANES, being further afield (and more poorly connected by sustainable transport modes) from Bristol and Bath, where a significant proportion of residents commute to for work and study.
- Linked to the point above, the large increase in private vehicles would exacerbate existing road congestion and likely worsen air quality issues.
- Other than a new school, the scale of development alongside existing dwellings numbers would still be unlikely to deliver additional facilities (e.g. a GP surgery) that would make a measurable difference to the existing self-containment of the village, or reliance of other settlements for essential facilities.
- It would leave a significant permanent obligation on the Council to transport secondary school age pupils to Midsomer Norton, who would not be able to reach school using active modes of travel.

5.10 Many of the reasons above are acknowledged in the Sustainable Appraisal work that has been undertaken as part of the emerging BANES Local Plan⁹.

⁹ AECOM, Sustainability Appraisal for the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan – Interim SA report, October 2025, paragraphs 4.3.1 (Health and wellbeing), 4.3.32 (Transportation), 4.3.56 (Natural resources), 4.3.68 (Climate change)

Policy FG3: Agricultural Land

Policy WF3

A sequential approach should be taken to the avoidance of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. New development outside of the housing development boundary which results in loss of best and most versatile agricultural land will not be permitted where there are suitable alternative sites adjoining the housing development boundary located on lower quality agricultural land.

Where there is uncertainty regarding the agricultural land classification of a site that hasn't been confirmed through the plan making process, applications should be supported by a detailed site level Agricultural Land Classification assessment, carried out by a soil specialist, and in line with Natural England guidance.

Justification

- 5.11 The uniqueness of Farrington Gurney in terms of the amount of BMV agricultural land within the Parish, in particular Grade 1 land, is considered to justify a specific local policy seeking to protect this important resource (see **Map A.3, Appendix A**). It was also identified as the most important consideration to protect as part by the community through the village survey. NPPF 188 and Natural England guidance¹⁰ recognise the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land and that areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of higher quality.
- 5.12 Given the high-level nature of the provisional mapping, there is currently some uncertainty over whether some land to the south of the village falls outside the definition of BMV, with the provisional mapping suggesting areas of both grade 1 and grade 3 transcending field boundaries. The provisional mapping does not differentiate between grade 3a and 3b, with 3a also being considered BMV. Where there is uncertainty over the classifications based on the available mapping, Policy FG3 therefore requires a site level assessment following Natural England guidance¹¹.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

¹¹ Natural England, Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Guidelines for grading the quality of agricultural land, December 2025

Policy FG4: Air Quality

Policy FG4

Development proposals should be consistent with the requirements of the Farrington Gurney Air Quality Action Plan.

All major development should include an air quality assessment or be supported by a screening assessment clearly evidencing why an air quality assessment is not required with reference to the Institute of Air Quality Management guidance.

Development proposals will not be permitted which give rise to unacceptable impacts on air quality or are at risk of being adversely affected by existing sources of air pollution. This should include consideration of both construction phase impacts and during operation. Where appropriate, assessments should consider the potential for cumulative impacts (including from traffic generation) resulting from separate individual development sites that could impact on air quality within the Parish.

Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified where required, including through local highway improvements, travel plan measures, tree planting and other green infrastructure enhancements.

Justification

- 5.13 Farrington Gurney was identified as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2018 as a result in exceedances in the annual average of Nitrogen dioxide. The AQMA is the result of congestion and idling on the A37 which has significant and sustained traffic flows throughout the day. This is further exacerbated by the A37/A362 signalised junction, which interrupts flow leading to queuing. Health complications associated with high levels of nitrogen dioxide include inflammation of the airways and reduced lung development and function, particularly in children.

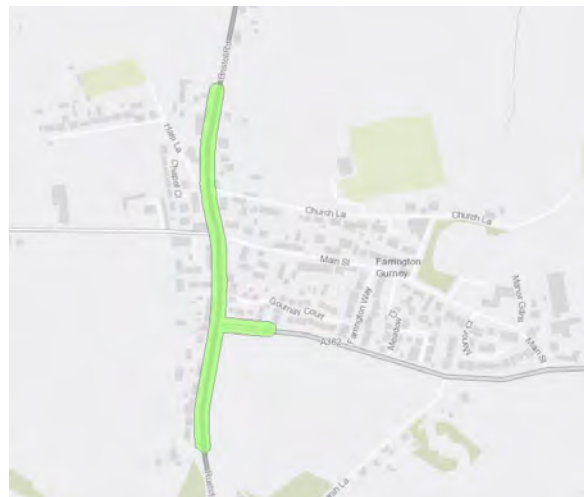


Figure 9 – AQMA through the village associated with A37 and A362

- 5.14 Monitoring of the AQMA in more recent years has indicated the air quality objective in relation to nitrogen dioxide is now being met, which had led to proposals to revoke the AQMA in BANES's most recent Annual Air Quality Report (2025). However there remains considerable concern within the community given increasing traffic trends since Covid-19, and the potential impacts on air quality from both planned

development and large-scale development options being considered as part of the emerging Local Plan in the wider Somer Valley area. In terms of planned development, the SVEZ in particular is likely to contribute considerable additional traffic flows but with much uncertainty regarding the nature and levels of traffic generated, given the flexibility of the approved Local Development Order (LDO). The LDO also provided no confirmation on the number of vehicle movements associated with the construction phase.

- 5.15 These considerations, alongside any major development within Farrington Gurney Parish itself, has the potential to contribute to the existing air quality problems through the generation of additional vehicle trips on the network, including new residents commuting to key employment hubs (e.g. Bristol and Bath).

Policy FG5: Transport and Traffic

Policy FG5

Given its rural location major development should support and implement measures that as far as possible reduce the need and desire to travel by car, and maximise opportunities for use of public transport, walking and cycling.

To address the existing barriers to sustainable travel within the Parish, improvements should in particular be focused on:

- Improving the availability, frequency and travel time of bus transport on key commuter routes to urban centres, in particular Bristol and Bath, where residents work and study, but where there remains a high level of car dependency.
- Improving available sustainable travel options to essential services at nearby settlements, which residents rely on to meet their day-to-day needs.

Development proposals should demonstrate how congestion and safety impacts on the highway network will be acceptable mitigated, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists. Given the context of existing congestion issues on the A37/A362, development which results in severe impacts on the road network, including as a result of cumulative impacts with other development, should be refused. Development proposals which include measures to reduce the volume of traffic within the Neighbourhood Plan Area will be supported where consistent with other Development Plan policies.

Proposals should demonstrate how new development integrates into the existing and planned cycling, walking and wheeling network and include necessary improvements or new provision, including where appropriate contributing to the delivery of the BANES Active Travel Masterplan and Somer Valley Links Project.

Justification

- 5.16 Farrington Gurney is a vibrant community with a number of local facilities that support the day-to-day needs of residents. Travel outside of the parish to other settlements is however still required to access a number of essential facilities, including doctors, dentists and secondary and further/higher education. Transport challenges are considered to affect all groups but the aging population within the Parish presents additional challenges, with facilities in nearby settlements being beyond a reasonable walking distance, and this cohort perhaps less likely (or able) to cycle. Public transport links are also discriminatory in the sense that young people living in Farrington Gurney do not have the access via this means to educational institutions like Bath College.
- 5.17 Whilst there are some local employers, a significant proportion of working residents (and those that study) commute to larger centres, in particular Bath and Bristol. Whilst regular bus services are available to Bristol, services to Bath and Midsomer Norton from Farrington Gurney are currently much more limited and less direct compared to other villages. An outbound route to Bath only operates early morning (up to 7am), with return required via Bristol. Outside early morning times, the only way to get to Bath is to first walk for 20 minutes outside the Parish to the Wells Road bus stop. Given the rural location, travel time by bus to Bristol takes approximately 1 hours, to Bath approximately 1:30 hours. These public transport challenges and travel times to key employment centres are borne out in Census data (**figure 10**), which show relatively higher proportions of residents travelling between 10 and 30km, and relying much more on private vehicles when compared to the BANES area as a whole.

Farrington Gurney

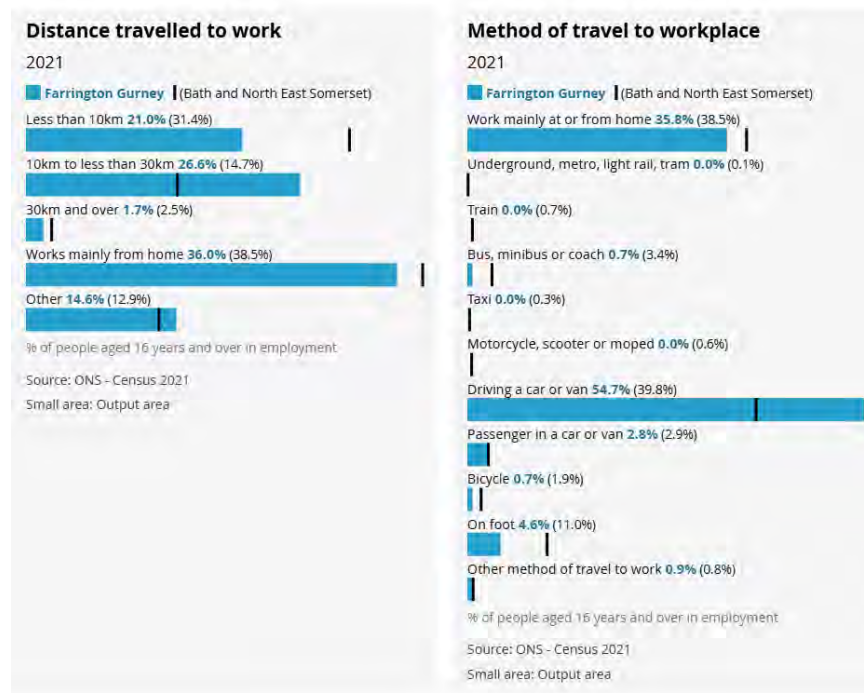


Figure 10 – Census 2021 travel to work distances and method of travel

- 5.18 Given this context there is likely to continue to be some reliance on private vehicles and expectations needs to be managed regarding the scale of modal shift to more sustainable travel methods that can be realistically achieved. Nevertheless, opportunities to improve connectivity through new development should be taken wherever possible and in this regard Policy FG5 looks to prioritise improvements to key commuter routes and the essential facilities in nearby settlements. Developments should also look to integrate and improve the existing active travel network and align with ongoing projects (e.g. Somer Valley Links).
- 5.19 Highway safety and traffic volumes are really important issues for the community given the thousands of vehicles that currently travel per day through the village along the A37 and A362. In this regard Policy FG5 sets out the clear expectation that new developments consider and address highway safety and the cumulative impacts of traffic volumes on the road network.

Policy FG6: Historic Environment

Policy FG6

Designated Heritage Assets

New development should be located so as to avoid harm to the significance of designated heritage assets and their setting. Designated heritage assets within the Parish are listed below and shown on Map A.5 (Appendix A):

- Church of St John
- The Manor and Little Manor
- School View
- Rose Cottage
- The Old Parsonage
- Roland's Farm
- Pitway Farmhouse
- Farrington Inn

Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) and avoid heritage harm will be supported where consistent with other Development Plan policies. Where harm is identified this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals and the significance of the designated asset and/or its setting.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets of Local Significance

Development proposals should take into account their effect on non-designated heritage assets of local significance. The weight to be given to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets will be based on the asset's significance and the magnitude of any harm. Non-designated assets identified as being of particular local significance to the community are listed below and are shown on map A.6 (Appendix A). Applicants should also refer to the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

- Arnhem Airbourne Memorial
- Deserted medieval settlement (near Church of St John)
- Former Miners Arms (Spice Dunes) inc. former GWR ticket office
- Marsh Lane Colliery
- Farrington C of E Primary School

Justification

- 5.20 Farrington Gurney does not have a conservation area but there are a number of important listed buildings associated with the historic core of the village. Policy FG6 seeks to prevent harm and sustain and enhance the significance of these heritage assets.

- 5.21 As shown on Map A.5 (**Appendix A**) the listed buildings are principally clustered around the northern side of the village, including St John's Church which is a particularly key feature in the landscape with a unique setting. In terms of any development outside the HDB, there is therefore opportunity to avoid significant development to the north of the village, which is likely to harm the setting of designated heritage assets including the church.
- 5.22 As part of engagement on the Neighbourhood Plan a number of non-designated heritage assets have been identified which are of particular local significance to the community. Some (but not all) of these are identified on the Somerset Historic Environment Record. They are therefore listed in Policy FG6 and show on Map A.6 (**Appendix A**). Consistent with the NPPF, non-designated heritage assets should be taken into account when determining applications and weighed accordingly, having regard to the scale of any harm and the heritage assets local significance.

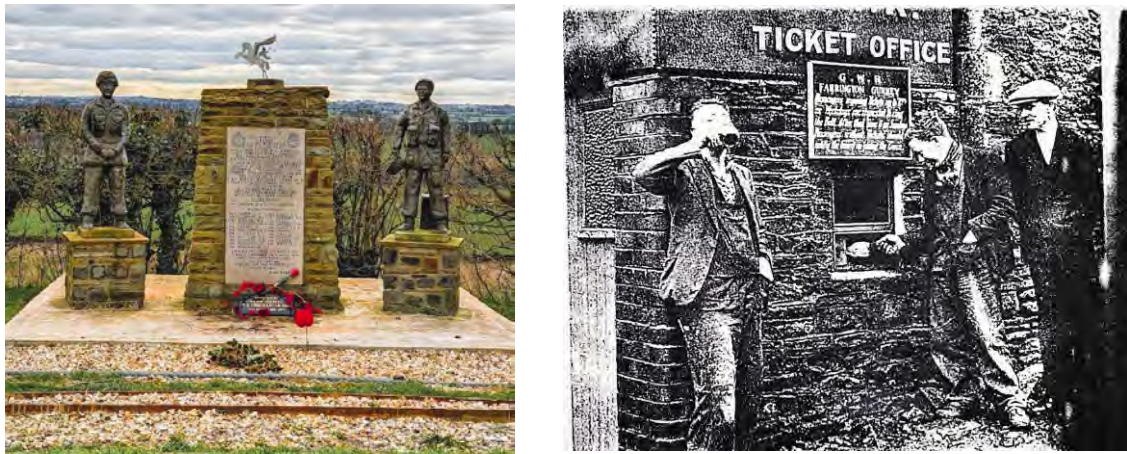


Figure 11 – The Arnhem Memorial and former GWR ticket office (attached to the Miners Arms) have both been identified by the community as being of local significance.

Policy FG7: Landscape and Biodiversity

Policy FG7

New development should conserve and enhance the network of habitats, green infrastructure and distinctive landscapes that are important local defining features within and around Farrington Gurney. These include:

- Open landscapes with views to surrounding ridges and distant churches
- Local watercourses and tributaries
- Late medieval field patterns and enclosures and their associated hedgerow and land drainage.
- Relicts of the former mining industry

Development proposals that are consistent with other policies in the Development Plan will be supported where they do not have a significant adverse impact on locally valued views (as identified in the Local Visual Landscape and Views Report, Appendix D), and should conserve, and where possible, enhance these views.

Tree planting within new developments will be encouraged within existing and proposed hedge lines. New streets should be tree-lined unless there are clear and justifiable reasons why this would be inappropriate.

National and local biodiversity designations and focus areas for nature recovery within the Parish are identified on Map A.7 (Appendix A). Development should accord with relevant BANES Local Plan Policies when considering impacts on protected species and their habitat and contribute as appropriate to the outcomes of the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy within the Parish.

Where provision of biodiversity net gain (BNG) is required, to ensure benefits to local ecosystems, priority should be given in the first instance to achieving BNG on site, followed by local off-site provision, in line with the Biodiversity Gain spatial hierarchy.

Justification

- 5.23 The village is set within the Farrington Gurney Farmlands landscape character area¹² which consists of gently rolling arable farmland with its distinctive red soils. Hedgerows are prominent and fields are typically angular and irregular in form. Evidence of the former mining industry is clearly evident, including the Marsh Lane Coal Tip located south of the village. Policy FG7 identifies the locally defining features of the landscape and cross-references to key local biodiversity designations (**Map A.7, Appendix A**) that new development should seek to conserve and enhance. For information, **Appendix B** also shows areas currently designated as Local Green Space through the

¹² LUC, Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment, 2021

BANES Local Plan. There are no current intentions to amend or identify additional areas of Local Green Space through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.24 The NPPF is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The open character of the landscape around Farrington Gurney lends itself to long distance views from various points around the Parish. As part of engagement with the community feedback has been sought on views that are considered particularly important locally, either because of the landscape they frame or the contribution they make to the setting of the village and its character. These have been identified and evidenced through the accompanying Local Visual and Landscape and Views Report (**Appendix D**), including identifying their special characteristics. Several of the views identified are further protected by BANES Local Plan Policy NE2A due to their specific contribution to the landscape setting of the village (see **Appendix B**). Given its rural character, locally valued views are a key component of what gives our Parish its identity and makes it a high-quality environment for residents and visitors. Development should seek conserve and enhance these views:

- Views to and from St John's Church
- Views to the south of the village up to Rush Hill Wood Ridge
- Views from Pitway Lane and Ham Lane towards Chew Valley, Hollow Marsh, the woods and across agricultural fields towards Hinton Blewett Church.
- Views north towards Hallatrow
- Views looking south over the Wellow Brook

Policy FG8: High Quality and Sustainable Design

Policy FG8

Development that is of high quality design and is sympathetic to the traditional built character of the Parish will be supported. New development will need to demonstrate how any new proposed building(s) will contribute positively to the character of the existing built form and public realm, including through the following where applicable:

- Scale, massing and building heights that respond appropriately and are harmonious with the historic grain and morphology of the settlement.
- Ensure a mixed palette of locally distinctive external materials that positively responds to local character and architectural styles, including where appropriate the use of local stone for boundary treatments, facades and detailing within key views and frontages;
- Appropriate and mixed densities to reflect the varied built form, setting and context of the village; and
- New hedgerow and tree planting of appropriate species to reflect the existing street scenes within the village and provide natural shading.

To increase resilience and adaption to climate change new developments are encouraged to seek to maximise energy efficiency through the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials and incorporation of on-site renewable and low carbon energy generation (e.g. solar panels, air and ground source heat pumps). As far as feasible the siting, orientation and design of buildings should look to optimise opportunities for passive solar gain in winter and natural ventilation in summer.

Proposals for new buildings that achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption (Passivhaus standards) will be supported.

Justification

- 5.25 The unique character to Farrington Gurney as a rural village is really important to the community. In addition to its landscape setting, its local identity is strongly reinforced by the built form of the village. Feedback from the community workshop highlighted that whilst no two rows of houses are the same, collectively they result in a distinctive local character, with a diverse but compatible range of styles and materials used (see **Figure 12** below). As highlighted by attendees at the workshop, the built form can be described as “quirky”, and not uniform. In this context Policy FG8 seeks to complement existing Local Plan design policies (e.g. Policy D2), whilst emphasising the need for a mixed palette of external materials and varied housing densities to reinforce this diverse local character in Farrington Gurney.

5.26 In terms of key considerations local stone features throughout the village, including through extensive stone boundary walls which are often complemented with hedgerow or tree planting. Properties principally have either stone or render facades, with use of brick generally secondary and only used for detailing. Where stone is used on properties there are a variety of different stone masonry styles used on buildings facades, reflecting different eras and construction approaches. Features such as external cornerstone (quoins), stone coping and dressings around windows are prominent on many properties.



Figure 12: Some examples to illustrate the external materials and detailing of the built environment around Farrington Gurney.

5.27 With regarding to climate change and energy efficiency standards, the BANES Local Plan already includes a suite of policies (Policy SCR6 and SCR7) which sets specific standards for new development, exceeding the baseline established through current building regulations for energy efficiency. Through consultation on the revised NPPF, there are however Government proposals to seek to limit the ability of Local Plans to

require local standards for energy efficiency that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations¹³.

- 5.28 Given this potentially changing policy context, policy FG8 seeks to encourage new development to maximise energy efficiency through both the building fabric and onsite renewables. Support for the use of domestic solar was particularly highlighted by respondents to the village survey. The policy has been specifically worded to encourage rather than require developers in relation to energy efficiency measures. This is to ensure the policy continues to remain relevant should Government implement the proposed changes to limit the setting of local standards for energy efficiency.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

6 Neighbourhood Plan Review

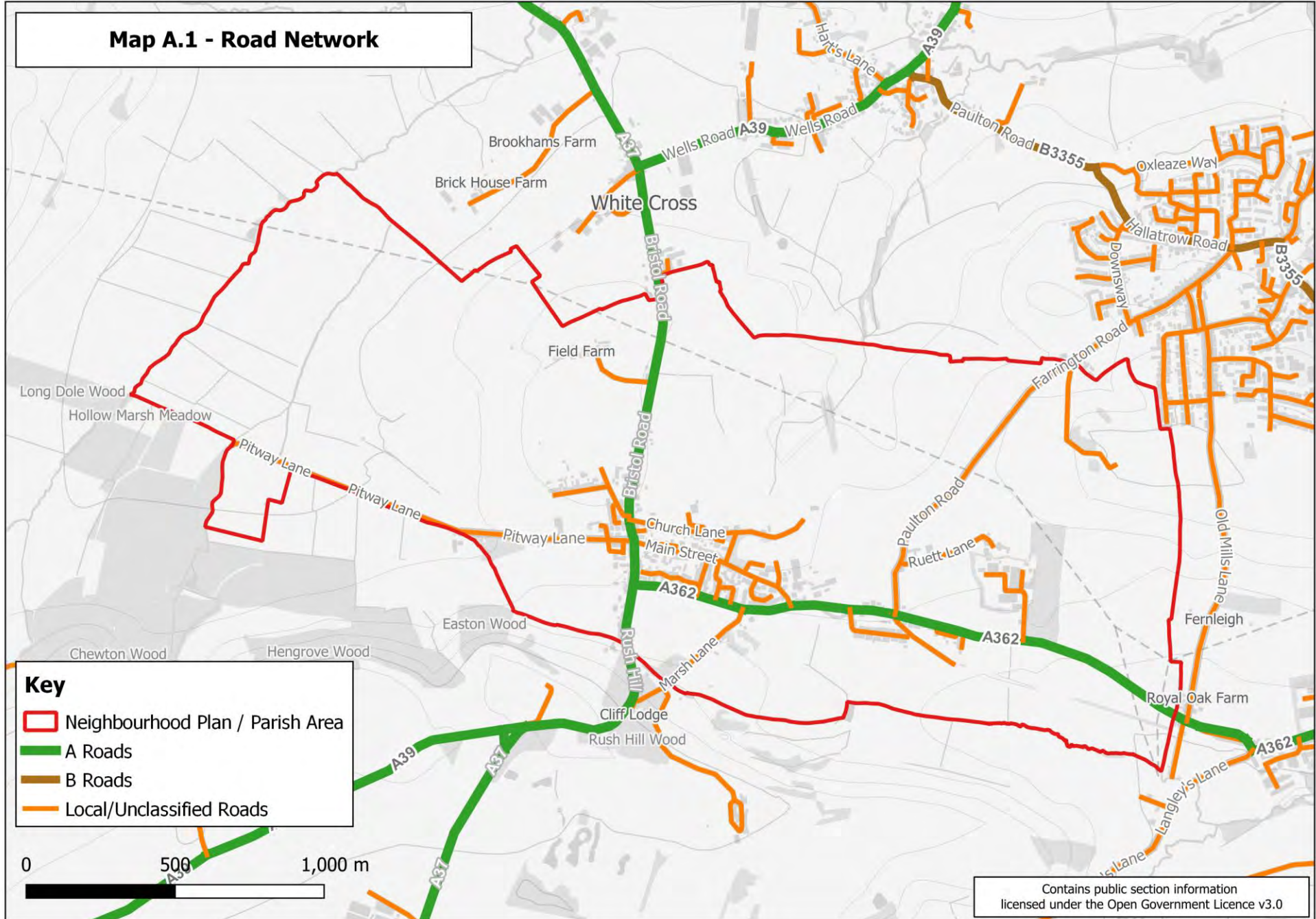
When is a review required?

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of adopted strategic Development Plan Policies and the current NPPF. It cannot fully predict future amendments to local and national policies and neither is it required to do so.
- 6.2 The Parish Council will periodically monitor the effectiveness of policies on influencing planning decisions. The Parish Council will also consider whether the weight given to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan changes because of updates to either national policy or the new policies introduced through the emerging BANES Local Plan.
- 6.3 Where inconsistencies arise, or there is evidence of policies being given reduced weight in decision making, this will likely act as a trigger for either a partial or full review of the Neighbourhood Plan, as is necessary. It is also acknowledged that as time progresses and local circumstances change, policies may need to be updated, or new policies introduced to reflect changing community priorities. Therefore, in any case, a review of the Neighbourhood Plan is recommended every five years, reflecting the review timescales for Local Plans.

Appendix A - Neighbourhood Plan Area Maps

Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan

Map A.1 - Road Network



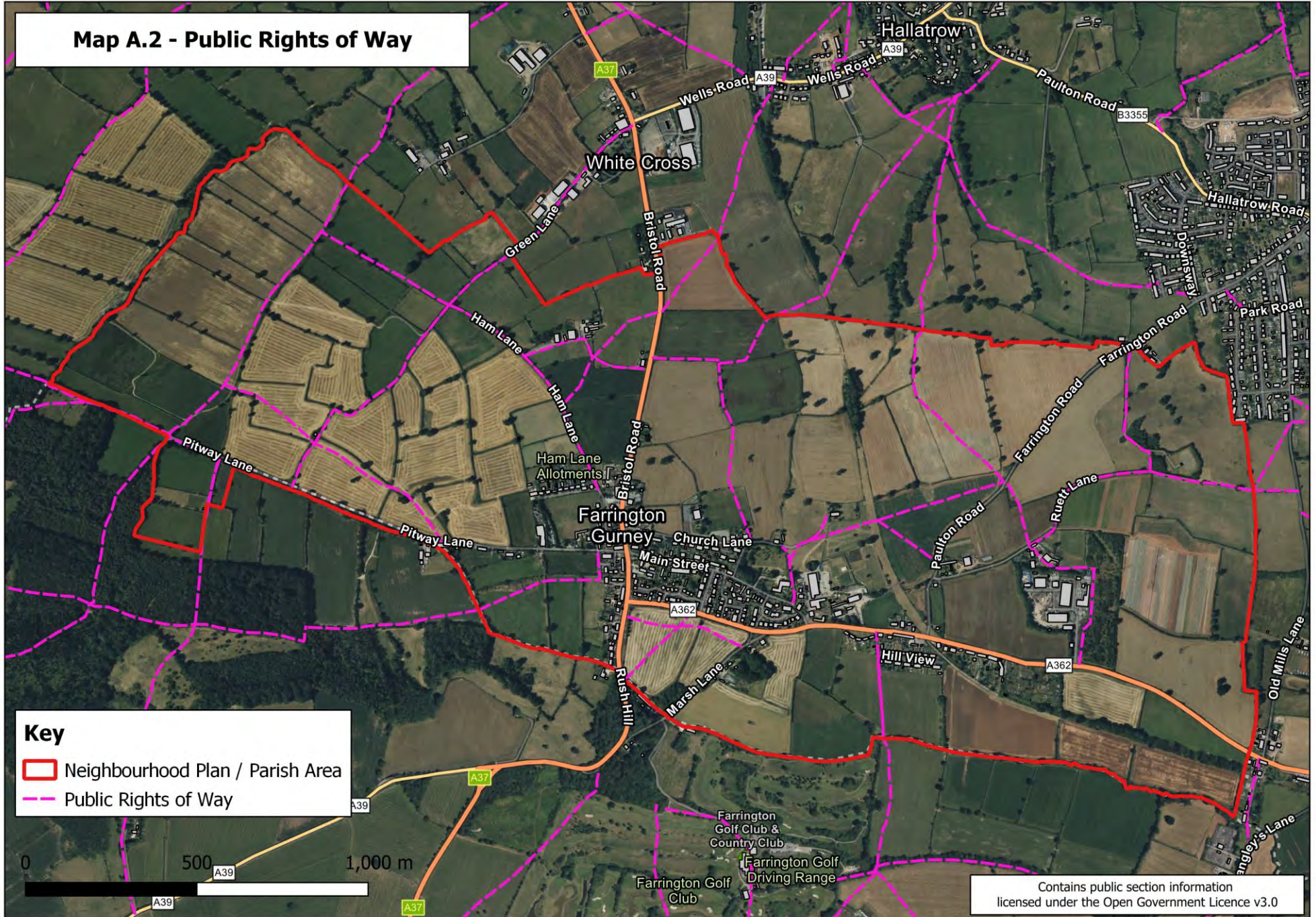
Key

- Neighbourhood Plan / Parish Area
- A Roads
- B Roads
- Local/Unclassified Roads

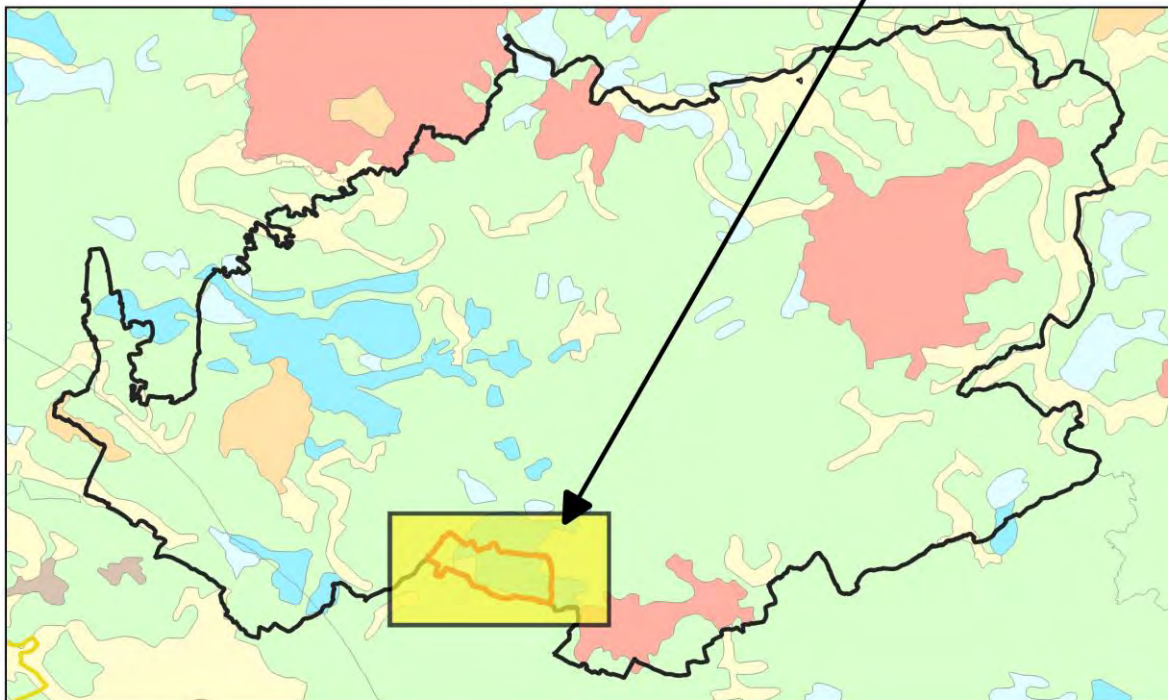


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




Map A.2 - Public Rights of Way



Map A.3 - Agricultural Land

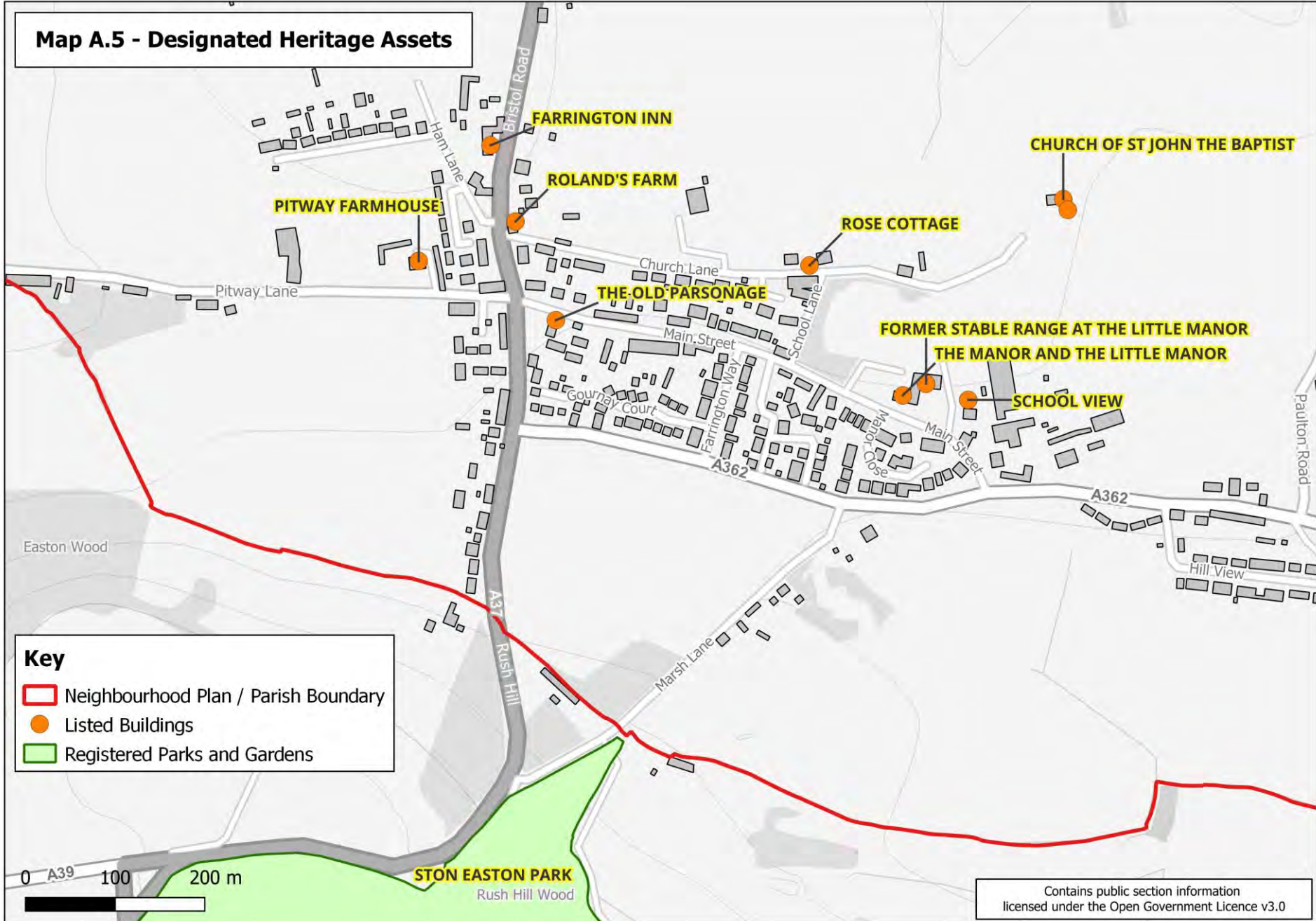


Key

-  BANES boundary
-  Neighbourhood Plan / Parish Area
- ALC Grades (Provisional) © ADAS & Defra
 -  Grade 1
 -  Grade 2
 -  Grade 3
 -  Grade 4
 -  Grade 5
 -  Non Agricultural
 -  Urban

Map A.4 - Air Quality Management Area





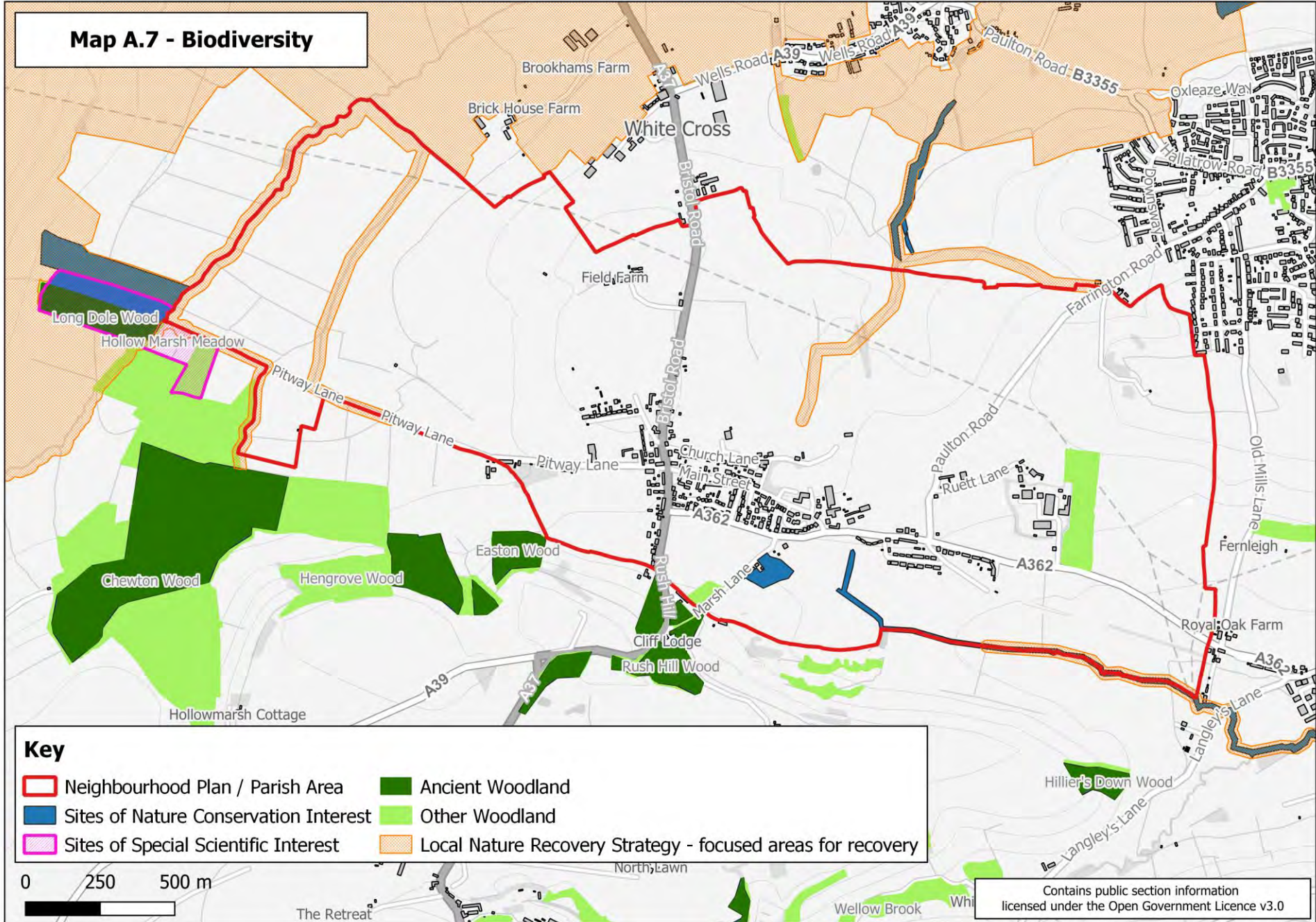
Map A.6 - Other Heritage Assets of Importance to the Community



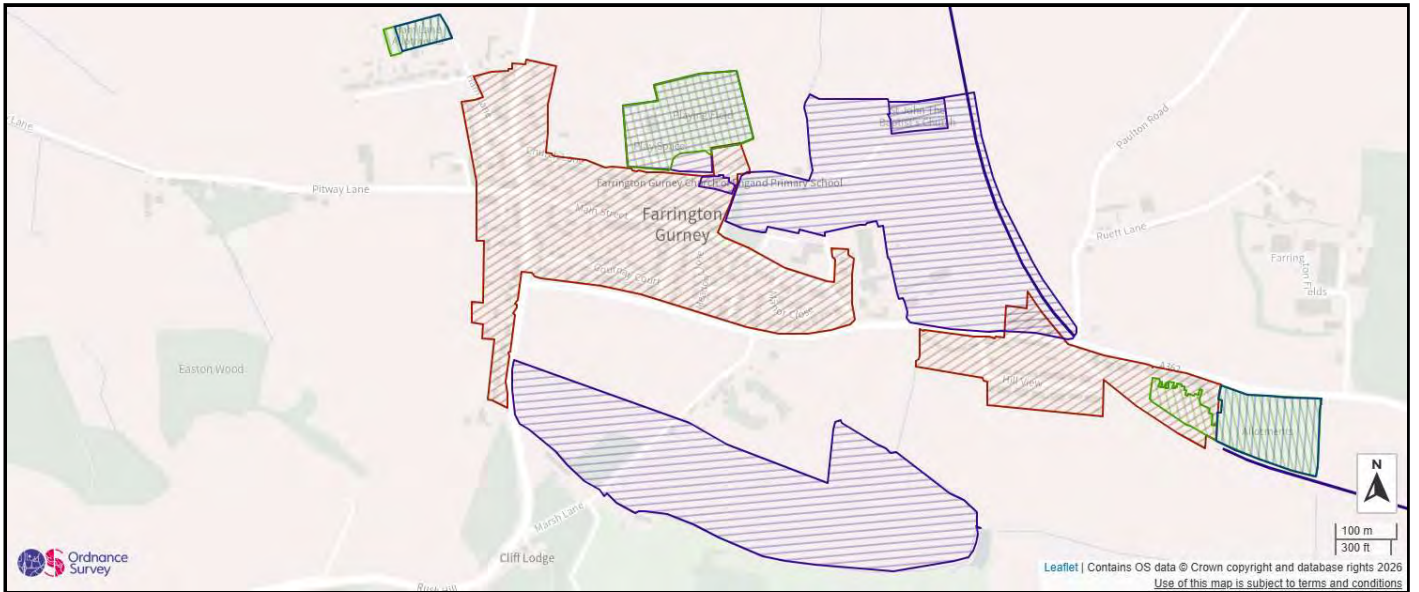
Key

- Neighbourhood Plan / Parish Boundary
- Other non-designated heritage assets of importance to the community

Map A.7 - Biodiversity



Appendix B - BANES Policies Map




Planning

Housing and Economic Development

 Housing Development Boundary


Landscape and Environment

 Landscape Setting of Settlements (NE2A)


Local Community Safeguarding and Recreation

 Allotments (LCR8)

 Local Green Spaces (LCR6A)

 Safeguarded Land for Sport and Recreational Facilities (LCR5)

Sustainable Transport

 Sustainable Transport (ST2)

Appendix C - Education Topic Paper

Education Topic Paper – Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan

March 2026

1. This topic paper summarises how different scales of housing development at Farrington Gurney would impact on primary and secondary school capacity and provide further detail on admissions policies, infrastructure requirements and feasibility of expanding or replacing the existing primary school. The topic paper has been informed following engagement with BANES education.
2. The topic paper has been prepared in the context of the initial two growth options set out in the BANES Local Plan consultation (September 2025) for 400-500 homes alongside a new primary school (option 1) vs around 50 dwellings within the capacity of the current school (option 2). It also follows previous Neighbourhood Plan consultation, preparation of a policy principles document and a workshop on the 28th September 2025. Getting clarity on school capacity issues and concerns over impacts of larger scales of development on community cohesion were highlighted in these previous activities.

Background and Community Perspectives

3. Community consultation to date has highlighted the importance of social cohesion a strong preference for smaller-scale residential development on this basis. Community concerns include that larger scales of development proposed would more than double the size of the existing village and fundamentally change its character. The important role of the existing smaller school within the village acting as a social hub have also been highlighted. At the same time the benefits of modest growth have been acknowledged, for example by supporting downsizing for older residents, housing for new families and helping to maintain school viability amid falling birth rates.

Existing Primary School Capacity and Admissions

4. Through engagement with BANES education existing primary school capacity has been confirmed as follows:
 - Small village school with 15 places per year group (105 total)
 - In terms of pupils on roll and spare capacity the school typically has 2 spare places per year group.
 - Most pupils attending are from a Farrington Gurney address, but some pupils also from surrounding areas based on school admissions policy (further details below)
 - School would not have the ability to expand based on physical constraints/village centre location
5. In relation to school admissions the school is an academy currently run by Midsomer Norton School's Partnership Trust. The trust is responsible for the admissions policy. The current policy is based on distance but allows admissions from outside the village based on parental preference, sibling priority etc. This helps to keep number in the school buoyant and ensure it is viable to run, as this would be unlikely to be the case if admissions were exclusively only for children living within Farrington Gurney. If new housing resulted in more children from within Farrington Gurney attending the school, they would generally be given priority based on distance over pupils living further away. The exceptions being children in care, or those with a current sibling already at the school. Also, existing children already within the school and working their way through the system of course cannot be displaced. The admissions policy is summarise below:

Farrington Gurney Church of England Primary School

Status	Academy	Age Range	4 - 11	PAN	15
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Priority A - Children Looked After – Children who are in the care of a Local Authority or have previously been but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, a child arrangement order, or special guardianship order. (*see additional notes)

Priority B - (The 2 categories in this criterion will be given equal consideration).

- Children who live within a 1.5 mile radius* of the school and for whom there will be a sibling in attendance on the admission date at the preferred school.
- Children who live outside a 1.5 mile radius* of the school but it is their closest school and for whom there will be a sibling in attendance on the admission date at the preferred school.

Priority C - Children who live closest to the school as measured in a direct line.

Primary School – Capacity for new development

6. 50 new dwellings would be expected to generate around 16 primary-age children. This equates to roughly 2 per year group, similar to the spare capacity within the existing school. It is expected that up to 50 new dwellings could therefore be absorbed without the need to expand the school.
7. Beyond 50 dwellings there would be a need to look at a whole new school. A viable new primary would need to be a 210-place school. This would equate to needing a development of at least 350+ dwellings to generate enough pupils (around 105 additional) to support the school, alongside existing pupil numbers. A larger scale development is also necessary to have the ability to secure land/financial contributions to its delivery, as developers cannot be required to fund more school capacity than their development generates. It also creates the question over what would happen to the existing school building. It's for these reasons there is a big chasm between the LPA options being considered to either keep development more modest and within the capacity of the existing school, or go larger to be able to facilitate the delivery of the new school.

Secondary School Capacity & Transport

8. The implications on growth on secondary school transport were discussed as part of engagement with BANES education officers. Farrington Gurney is within the Norton Hill School Catchment (Midsomer Norton). The statutory walking distance is three miles for children over 8. This also needs to be along a safe route in terms of not being considered hazardous (e.g. no continuous pavement). If these criteria aren't met the Council is obliged to provide home school transport.
9. BANES education have confirmed that the distance to be over 3 miles (approx. 3.4miles) to the school, and the route as is would likely be considered hazardous with no continuous pavement. Implications for 50 dwellings would be around 10 additional pupils and likely to be manageable. However larger development of say 350-400 would be around 67+ further secondary age pupils, generating significantly higher ongoing transport costs and be generally less sustainable in terms of school transport.
10. Proposals for improved cycle routes and connectivity between Farrington Gurney and Mid Somerset Norton and what implications this would have were also discussed with BANES education. It has been clarified that if it still be beyond the 3 mile distance the council would

need to cover transport costs anyway. It would therefore still incur significant permanent costs to the council in terms of transporting children on a budget that's already very lent upon. Even if certain parts of the development are just within the 3 miles, there is a wider point anyway on how likely it is for children to walk/cycle the distance vs car dependency. This brings into question whether such an approach aligns with the Council's wider climate emergency commitments.

Alternative Option to consider: Infant + Junior School Split

11. Feedback received during the community workshop flagged whether there is an opportunity to have the existing primary school as an infant school, and then deliver a new junior school. Such an approach may help with social cohesion and mean alternative scales of development could be considered.
12. This could work theoretically in terms of the size of the current school, for example having 90 pupils in the infant school and 120 in the junior. The money would still need to be found to build the 120-place junior. BANES education identified however that there are other practical challenges, in that it is much more operationally inefficient and costly than a single 210 primary school, particularly given the schools would not be next to each other. You need to double up on facilities such as open space, hall, kitchen etc. The academy trust would also need to agree to such an approach and based on experiences elsewhere in BANES it is likely to be extremely challenging. The pattern recently has instead been for infant and junior to be amalgamated to reduce costs. There is also the logistical difficulties in terms of families with multiple children needing to do two drop-offs/pickups at two different sites etc. Overall whilst an interesting idea, the practicalities and cost of having an infant and junior school is unlikely to be favoured in practice.

Summary

13. Based on the above considerations, the following summarises the key conclusions in relation to education following community consultation and engagement with BANES officers.
14. Up to approx. 50 dwellings
 - a. Works within existing primary capacity
 - b. Generates manageable secondary school transport demand
 - c. Supports sustainability/viability of existing school
15. Above 50 dwellings
 - a. Triggers need for a new school (210 places)
 - b. Development would need to be large enough to support delivery and be justified based on additional pupil numbers (350+ dwellings)
 - c. Creates secondary school transport burdens

Appendix D - Local Visual Landscape and Views Report

DRAFT Local Visual Landscape and Views Report

Farrington Gurney Neighbourhood Plan

March 2026

Introduction

1. This report documents the views and vistas which are particularly valued by the community. Given its rural location certain views make an important contribution to the local distinctiveness of Farrington Gurney and are of particular importance locally, either because of the landscape they frame or the contribution they make to the village setting and appreciation of its built environment.
2. Valued views have been identified based on the local knowledge of Steering Group members along with significant dialogue with the community, including at the September 2025 workshop event. To help understand relevant context other key evidence has also been reviewed, including the Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2021), and Natural England's MAGIC online mapping.
3. This report documents the location of the valued views and includes photographs and descriptions to explain why they have been identified as being particularly important in the context of Farrington Gurney.
4. To complement the perspectives of both the Steering Group and the community the following criteria have also been considered as part of the selection and assessment process:
 - Framing of the view
 - Landscape character
 - Sense of openness
 - Built form and character
 - How its reveals the historic environment
 - Topography and vantage points
 - Contribution to setting of the village
 - Line of sight and vanishing point
 - Panoramic nature of the views
 - Why is it valued / special?

Location and Visual Assessment of Views

5. The map in **Appendix 1** identifies the location of valued views with reference numbers corresponding to the photographs set out below. The map also includes "view cones" to illustrate the direction of each view. Those identified have been agreed as locally valued views by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
6. The photographs that follow illustrate these views and help to articulate the reasons why they are valued and important to the community.

View / Photo A1: View of St John's across the playing fields



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

A particularly cherished view looking east towards St John's Church and its wider setting, with the playing fields in the foreground. This view is particularly important given its vantage point at the Memorial Hall and recreation ground, meaning it is enjoyed by many in the community.

View / Photo A2: View of St John's from Church Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

A key view of the church from the cattle grid at the eastern end of Church Lane. This view offers a park like vista with the sweeping track up to the church. The vantage point is a key location where those walking the route transition from the built-up area of the village into the surrounding countryside.

View / Photo A3: View of St John's from footpath CL10/2



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

View from the footpath from Hallatrow, looking southeast towards the church and Home Farm. The view is particularly valued due to its sense of openness and the long-distance vista it provides of the church and its setting, including the surrounding undulating farmland and treed setting of the main village.

View / Photo A4: View of St John's from Farrington's



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

View looking northwards towards the church and wider farmland from Farrington's. This view provides a wide panoramic vista showing the extent of the rolling farmland between the church and villages further north (Hallatrow, Temple Cloud, High Littleton).

View / Photo A5: View of St John's from footpath CL10/17



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

View from footpath CP10/17 coming up the valley from Hallatrow on the eastern approach to the village. Travelling from this direction the church is a key distinguishing feature in an otherwise rural landscape, acting as a wayfinder for those walking to Farrington Gurney.

View / Photo B1: View along Church Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

View looking eastwards along Church Lane, including the listed dwelling (Rose Cottage) and the school. This is a focal point for the community, with the historic buildings and backdrop of mature trees creating an attractive street scene and highlighting the rural charm of the village.

View / Photo B2: View looking east along Main Street



View / Photo B3: View looking west along Main Street



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

Main Street forms part of the historic core of the village and this is reflected in the picturesque street scene. Historic dwellings are set behind stone boundary walls, interspersed with a variety of hedgerows and trees. The views looking both east and west are important in showcasing the character of the historic built environment of the village.

View / Photo C1: View looking south from the A362



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

Views looking south in the direction of the Mendip Hills are available from the pavement running along the A362 and the entrance to the public footpath (CL10/11). The view takes in the deciduous broad leaf trees of the ancient wood of Rush Hill (located on the ridge) and the rolling farmland either side of Marsh Lane. There is a clear sense of the changing topography from the view in this direction which is important to the landscape setting of the village.

View / Photo C2: View from Marsh Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

This point looking east from Marsh Lane provides a wide-ranging view taking in the farmland, properties at Hill View and Sunnyside, and tree cover which follows the route of the former GWR line and the route of the Wellow Brook.

View / Photo C3: View looking south from the A362 near the Junction with Main Street



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

This view looking south at this location provides a valued long-distance view across farmland towards the golf course, taking in the treed landscape and dramatic change in topography up to the ridge.

View / Photo C4: View looking east from Hill View



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

The view south eastwards down the valley towards Midsomer Norton takes in the former route of the GWR line in the direction of Radstock, a key part of the industrial heritage of Farrington Gurney. Trees in the middle of the view mark the route of the Wellow Brook. The view is bordered to the south by the treelined bridleway of Langley Down Lane.

View / Photo D1: View from Pitway Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

Long distance views of the change from the undulating farmland to the flat meadow landscape of Hollow Marsh can be observed as you walk down Pitway Lane. Here the flat landform is evident, with more distant views of fields then rising up to the elevated plateau around Hinton Blewett. The view along Pitway Lane is an important part of the agricultural heritage of the Parish, with the ancient meadow land historically let to surrounding parishes to gather a hay crop.

View / Photo D2: View from Ham Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

The higher vantage point at Ham Lane provides a breathtaking panoramic view over the flat meadow land with Easton and Chewton woods off to the South, Hollow Marsh nature reserve, and Long Dole wood beyond. In the distance the land rises dramatically to the plateau around Hinton Blewett.

View / Photo D3: View along Pitway Lane



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

The flat meadow landscape of Hollow Marsh can be observed as you walk down Pitway Lane with the elevated plateau in the distance. Travelling west the lane becomes even more rural, with tree cover along the southern boundary and predominantly hedgerows on the northern boundary. The landscape character and view along the lane is valued by local walkers.

View / Photo D4: View looking east at junction of Pitway Lane with footpath CL10/8



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

The long-distance view looking east back towards Farrington Gurney takes in the flat Hollow Marsh landscape before the landform rises to the more undulating farmland around the village. The topography and in-field trees create an attractive and valued view back across the Parish.

View / Photo D5: View looking north along footpath CL10/17



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

A valued long-distance view looking north in the direction of Hallatrow with gently rolling farmland along the route of the footpath. The rural setting and openness of the view along this route make it particularly valued by the community.

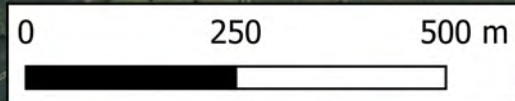
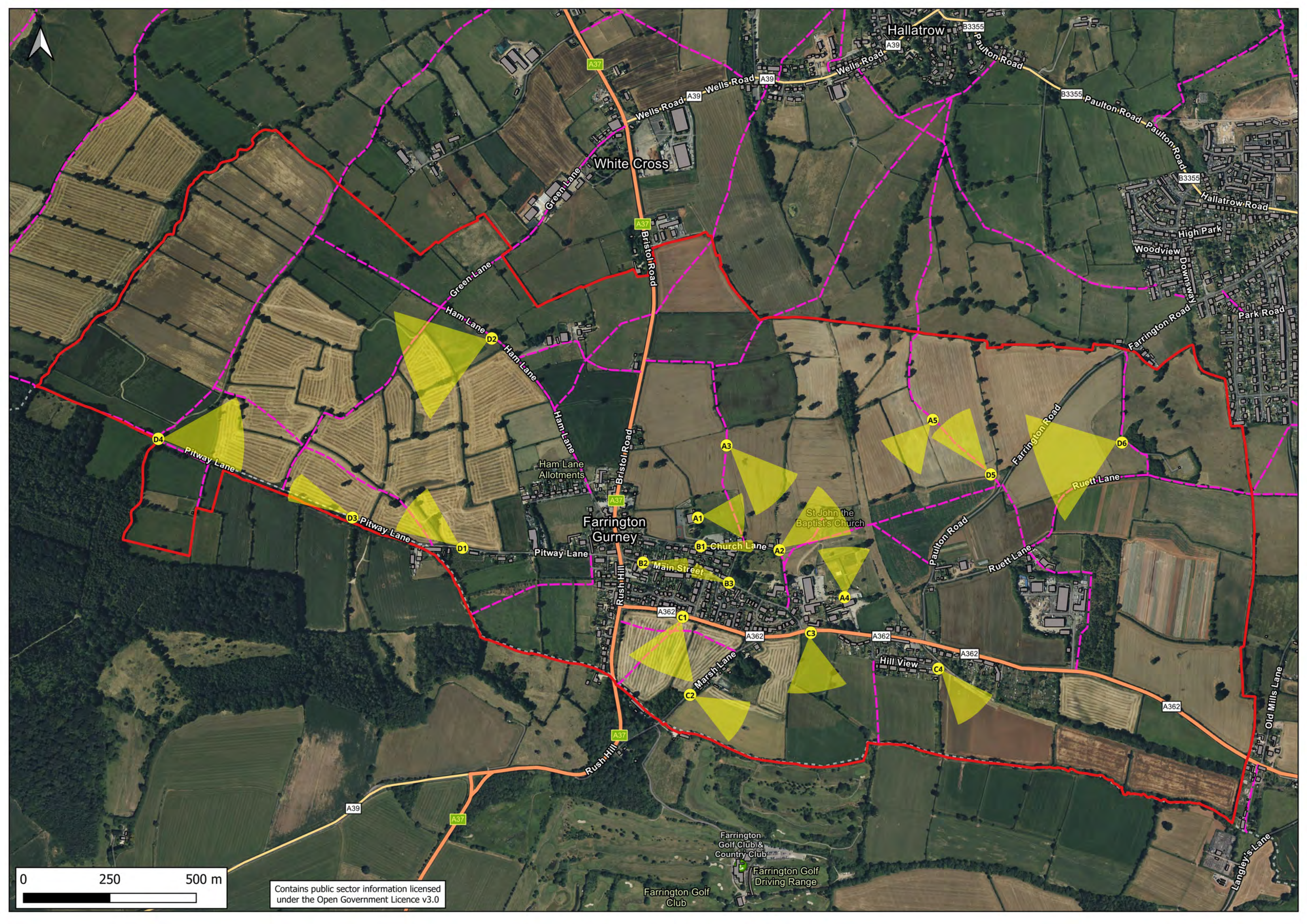
View / Photo D6: View from footpath CL10/21, near the covered reservoir



Description and reasons why the view is locally valued:

This higher vantage point provides a breathtaking panoramic view across the Parish that includes the setting of the whole village and long-distance views of the surrounding ridges.

Appendix 1 – Map of Locally Valued Views



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Farrington Golf Club

Farrington Golf Club & Country Club
Farrington Golf Driving Range