

Churton Neighbourhood Plan



2026 - 2041

Revision History

No.	Date	Details
1	20/01/2026	First draft assembled
2	25/01/2026	First draft "standardised"
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6	18/04/2026	Typos corrected

Contents

1. Introduction

2. A Brief History of Churton

3. Plan Development, Vision and Objectives

4. Policies

Summary of Policies

Topic 1 - Protecting the Built Environment

Topic 2 – Homes to meet the Needs of the Village

Topic 3 – Protection & Enhancement of Churton’s Natural Environment and Landscape

Topic 4 – Facilities for Local People

Topic 5 - Employment

Topic 6 – Transport and Communications

5. Conclusion and Next Steps

6. Appendix – Churton Design Code

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Our village of Churton, whilst not a chocolate box picture village, is much loved by its community which is keen to preserve its character and indeed improve it by providing guidance to anyone seeking to develop the village further. With support from the community the Parish Council cast around for a way in which to influence such future development and elected to investigate the then possibility of producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning is a process introduced in 2011 by the Localism Act 2011 and is recognised as an important part of Planning Law and Regulation in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. This legislation was designed to encourage local communities such as ours to influence the planning system in such a way as to promote sustainable development appropriate to their individual communities.

Such Neighbourhood Plans must however be in general conformity with the Local Development Plan for the overall local area and have regard to national planning policy and guidance.

The Parish Council therefore decided in 2023 to set up a Steering Committee of local residents which advised that such a plan should be developed with the aid of central government grant funding. In the meantime, we have had a change of central government accompanied by significant changes in overall planning policy resulting in the new build housing target imposed on Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) rising from around 500 new builds each year to over 1900 per year. In addition, CWaC are currently embarked on a process of revising Part One of the Borough's Local Plan with a consultation process ongoing as this introduction is being written.

There can hardly be a more important time for the community of Churton to bring some influence to bear on the future. We cannot hope to prevent all development as some might wish. Indeed, to improve sustainability and provision of services some growth is inevitable, but we are at the least hopeful that this plan will beneficially influence the new Local Plan.

The Steering Committee has had the benefit of government funding to obtain expert reports in the fields of Housing Need, the Landscape and Environment, the Village Heritage and last but by no means least Design Codes for the built environment of the future.

The Parish Council and the Steering Committee have, as this plan has been developed, endeavoured to fully consult the whole community by means of newsletters and open day meetings. The individual specialist reports have been published on the Parish Council website for all to read and comment upon and in due course there will be a formal referendum when all residents will have the opportunity to vote to support and approve the plan or reject it.

We hope that the individual reports will both make interesting reading but also challenge perceptions of the village community and its future. The report proposing Design Codes is however in our view of overriding importance influenced and guided as it is by the other 3 reports.

1.2 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- Neighbourhood plans can help to influence the use and development of land in a specific area.
- They are designed to give local communities a direct say in the future development of their area.
- They can include general policies for the development and use of land and bring forward sites for development.
- They can decide where and what type of development should happen within the designated plan area.
- They can be used to help protect local assets such as important green spaces and historical assets.
- They can be used to help guide the design of new buildings.
- The plan preparation process is designed to ensure that any policies reflect the local area's specific needs.
- Once adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) a Neighbourhood Plan has legal status and is used when determining planning applications.

1.3 What a Neighbourhood Plan cannot do?

- They cannot include any policies that would conflict with the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan or national planning policy.
- They cannot be used to prevent development.

1.4 Why a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document that helps to determine how a local area is developed. It is typically created by a parish or town council and includes policies that the local community wish to use to control what gets built, where it is built, and what it looks like. The policies in a Neighbourhood Plan are important because any proposals for development will be judged against them, if proposals do not accord with the Neighbourhood Plan, they will most likely be refused. A Neighbourhood Plan must be prepared in consultation with the local community and agreed by a simple majority in a local referendum. However, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot be a wish list of policies in isolation – all policies must conform with other statutory plans and legislation including the relevant Local Plan and National Planning Policy.

The purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan is to bring decision making closer to the people who live in a particular area and who are therefore best placed to know what is of value in making that area a good place to live. The policies in a Neighbourhood Plan add an extra layer of detail to those already contained in a statutory Local Plan such as prescribing a particular site for development, identifying areas for protection, or providing detailed guidance on the design and character of any new developments.

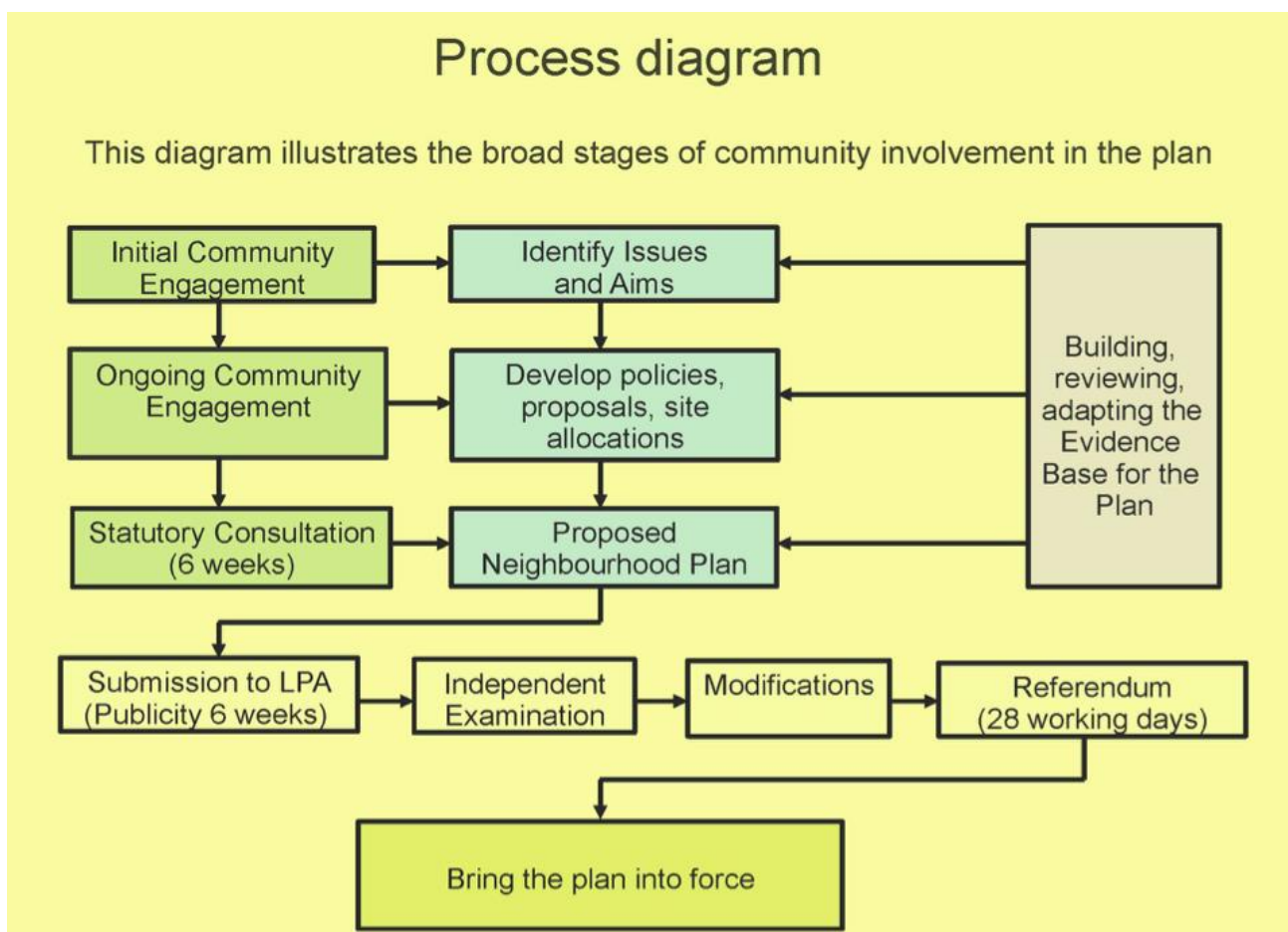
Neighbourhood Plans typically have a lifetime of 15 years, but they are subject to review every five years to ensure they remain relevant.

As a statutory document a Neighbourhood Plan must be developed and approved through a formal process controlled by the local authority. The key stages are as follows:

- i) Designation of the Plan area (Churton Parish area)
- ii) Evidence gathering and community engagement

- iii) Draft Plan produced including, objectives, and policies
- iv) Formal pre-submission publicity and consultation on the draft Plan, and revision as necessary following consultation
- v) Submission of the plan to the Local Planning Authority
- vi) Independent examination of the Plan to ensure it has been prepared properly and meets the required conditions of conformity
- vii) A local referendum to seek approval for the Plan
- viii) Adoption the Plan by the Local Planning Authority.

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in consultation with the community of Churton. Their views and comments have helped inform the policies in this Plan alongside the guidance and evidence from experts on several topics including building design, conservation area appraisal, housing needs, and enhancement of the natural environment.



2. A Brief History of Churton

The parish of Churton is located in Cheshire, approximately eight miles south of the English city of Chester and eight mile north-east of the Welsh city of Wrexham. At the heart lies the village of Churton.

Churton of today reflects the changes over the centuries, the latest additions being a War Memorial in 2018 to commemorate those men from Churton who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars. More recently, in 2024/2025 a care farm, workspaces and conversion of barns to residential is planned for Churton Hall farm, the only surviving building of medieval origin in the village, dating from c1569. Despite its development over the centuries Churton village centre remains historic and compact. The village streets maintain a tranquil, rural charm, featuring mature trees, neatly trimmed hedgerows and well-maintained front gardens.

The village is thought to date from the late Saxon / medieval period, being formed from two townships that date from the 11th / 12th century, Churton by Aldford (in the Aldford parish, part of the Grosvenor Estate) to the north and Churton by Farndon (in the Farndon parish, part of the Barnston Estate) to the south.

In 2015 the two parishes were abolished and incorporated into Churton civil parish. However, the influence of the two Estates (Grosvenor and Barnston) has resulted in some distinct building types unique to each Estate.

The medieval bridge between Farndon (just under two miles south of Churton) and Holt, in Wrexham, meant that there was easy access across the River Dee to the south of Chester between England and Wales. It was constructed c1338 – 9 although the bridge today is largely of 15th and 16th century date. The route forms part of an historic route from Farndon to Aldford to Huntington, Chester and runs through the centre of Churton (B5130). Little is know about Churton in the 17th century. The Old Post Office Cottage, identified by small panel oak framing and a thatched roof, typical of the area, was probably built in the mid 17th century. Church House (north side of Pump Lane) was built in 1682 in local brick with a slate roof.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw further development of Churton; Churton Lodge was built in the 19th century with its walled garden, furnace house, greenhouses and its grotto. Churton became part of the turnpike road between Chester and Worthenbury between 1854-1876, Cross Cottage (on the junction of Pump Lane and Chester Road), an early 19th century building, was used for a time as the toll cottage.

By 1850 Churton was described as a small township and village within the Parish of Aldford with 48 housed and 254 inhabitants. The Primitive Methodist Church had been erected on Hob Lane and there is a record of a beer house, the White Lion, blacksmith, boot and shoemaker, joiner, two shopkeepers and farmers. By contrast Churton by Farndon was described (in 1850) as a village principally consisting of a “straggling street” with many houses displaying “marks of considerable antiquity”. This part contained 28 houses and 132 inhabitants. There is record of the Red Lion, boot and shoemaker, joiner, tailors, wheelwright and farmers. In 1864 a schoolhouse and school masters house were built on Stannage Lane, Parkers Row being built in the latter part of the 19th century. The village continued to gradually expand and increase in density by 1911 with the introduction of Nos 1-5 Rowley Place on Chester Road, Stannage Cottages on Stannage Lane and Kingsmead on Chester Road. Subsequently the village has developed largely by

means of small-scale infill and today consists of some 141 households, the residents having a similar age structure to CWaC but with a slightly older population overall. The village is a premium housing market with significantly higher median and lower quartile prices compared to CWaC.

1878 Historic Map of Churton



1900 Historic Map of Churton



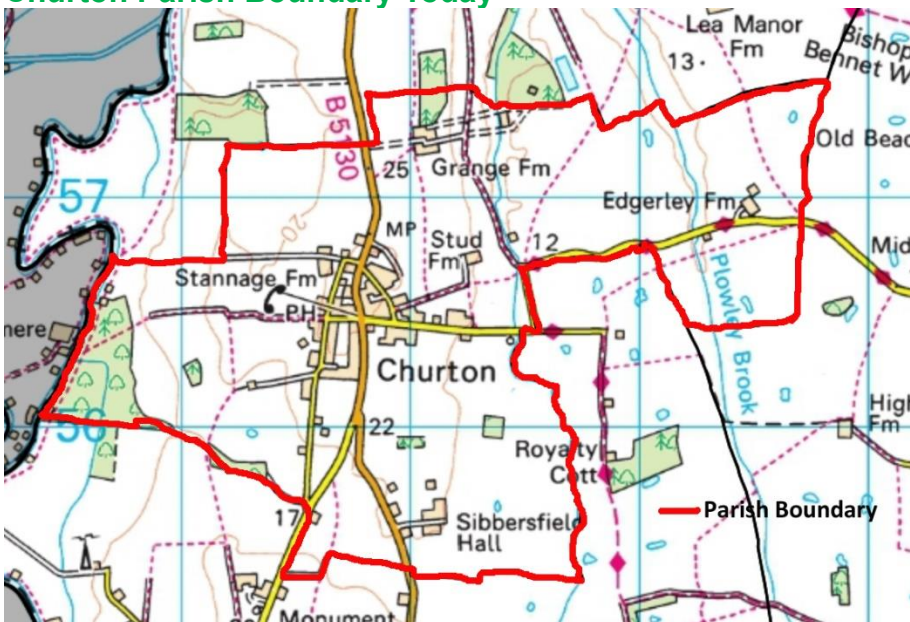
1954 Historic Map of Churton



1966 Historic Map of Churton



Churton Parish Boundary Today





A drawing of Churton Hall dated 1793 by John Ingleby with the listed Walled Garden to the right



The Grade II Listed Old Post Office (looking good with its new ornamental block ridge)

3. Our Plan Development, Vision and Objectives

3.1 Plan Development

In August 2022 an Initial Consultation was held to gauge the support of the community for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and to seek views on the policies that we should include. Responses strongly supported the preparation of a plan and stressed the importance of controlling the type and design of any new development within the village.

With grant aid the Parish Council therefore commissioned AECOM to prepare a Village Design Code, Henderson Heritage to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal, Cheshire Community Action to prepare a Housing Needs Report and Cheshire Wildlife Trust to prepare recommendations for Protecting and Enhancing Churton's Natural Environment. These were completed in April 2025 and considered and approved at the Parish Council meeting in May 2025 and uploaded to the Parish website. The link to access these reports is <https://churtonparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>.

The July 2025 Parish Council Newsletter, which is delivered to all residents, included the link to access these reports and advised of a Drop-In session to be held in the village hall on 13 September 2025. Access to the reports and the invitation to the Drop-In session were also posted on the Village Facebook page and WhatsApp groups. There was a good attendance at this session, and the reports were supported with both the verbal and Post-it note comments received.

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan was completed in February 2026 and submitted to the Parish Council and approved at their March meeting.

The next steps are a formal, minimum 6-week consultation period to get feedback on the draft plan from the community and stakeholders and final approval by the Parish Council. The plan will then be submitted to the local authority, followed by an independent examination to ensure it meets legal requirements and finally a community referendum will be held. If more than 50% vote "yes," the local authority officially "makes" (adopts) the plan, making it part of the statutory development plan.

3.2 Our Vision

In twenty years, Churton will still be a rural village with a strong community ethos. It will value its heritage, countryside and surroundings while providing people with a safe and sustainable environment. Churton will be a welcoming place providing local employment and encouraging visitors.

3.2 Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the special character of the built environment of the village.
- To ensure that residential development will meet the identified needs of the village and adds value and vitality to the community.
- To protect the quality and character of the village conservation area.
- To preserve the provision of public amenities and services in the village and to promote community cohesion and sustainability.

- To protect and improve transport links within the village for pedestrians and cyclists and access to public transport.
- To reduce the impact of development on nature conservation and assets of landscape and increase biodiversity.
- To ensure that development is sustainable and minimises and reduces the effect on global warming.

4. Policies

4.1 Policy Development

The policies in the Churton Neighbourhood Plan follow directly from consultations held around the Parish ranging from the results of household questionnaire(s) and comments at meeting(s) with residents.

It is appreciated that the government has set pre-conditions for the policies to be included in Neighbourhood Plans which are land-use and development related, and it is in this context that six policies – built environment, homes, landscape and environment, facilities, employment and transport and communications - have been developed.

Each policy is described separately, and each is considered in the context of the Parish; its location, history, residents and their views, relevant national legislation, local planning policies and advice from bodies such as Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Residents believe that taken together the six policies support development that is sustainable and consequently, planning proposals must conform to them. The Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and developers to ensure Churton remains a discrete rural village with a vibrant sense of self and belonging.

4.2 Summary of Policies

- Protecting the built environment.
- Homes to meet the needs of the village.
- Protection and enhancement of Churton's natural environment and landscape.
- Facilities for local people.
- Employment.
- Transport and communications.

Topic 1. Policies Protecting the Built Environment

1.1 Parish Wide Design Code

Background

During the various consultations prior to and during the preparation of this Plan residents have consistently expressed the view that guidance must be included to ensure that that development preserves and enhances the special character of the Conservation Area, the Village and wider Parish.

The Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM3 Design, Character and Visual Amenity only gives general guidance. It was therefore agreed that this should be enhanced with more detailed guidance relevant to Churton. The Parish Council therefore commissioned the following independent reports:

- Churton Design Code
- Churton Conservation Area Appraisal

These form the basis of the Design Policies.

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the special character of the built environment of the Village and wider Parish
- To protect the quality and character of the village Conservation Area
- To ensure development is sustainable and minimises the effect on global warming

Policies

Development within the Parish must comply with the Churton Design Code Section 3 Design Codes and Guidance which forms part of this Plan and is included as an Appendix.

The relevant sections are:

3.2 Area Type 1 Design Codes and Guidance

This section gives requirements and guidance for Building Heights, Density, Enclosure and the Form of Development.

3.3 Area Type 2 Design Codes and Guidance

This section gives requirements and guidance for Building Heights, Density, Enclosure and Protection/Enhancement of Views

3.4 Area Type 3 Design Codes and Guidance

This section gives requirements and guidance for the Preservation of Historic Buildings, Design of the Courtyard formed by the existing farm buildings, the need for Community Benefit and Landscaping.

3.5 Area Type 4 Design Codes and Guidance

This section gives requirements and guidance for Sustainability, Biodiversity, Screening, Access/Movement, Lighting, Noise/Air Quality, Materials and Architectural Design

3.6 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Respecting the Rural Setting

This section gives requirements and guidance for Peripheral Development, the Transition between the Village and Countryside, Settlement Edge Gateways, Building Layout, Avoidance of the use of Close Boarded Fencing, Protection and Creation of New Views,

Use of Stepped Rooflines, Protecting Views at the Settlement Edge and Protection of Dark Skies.

3.7 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Protecting the Historic Character

This section gives requirements and guidance for Local Context, Design Approaches, Characteristic Features, Facades and Fenestration, Building Line and Setbacks, the importance of Active Frontages, reflecting the Urban Grain, Bin Storage, Extensions to Heritage Assets, Front and Rear Extensions, Outbuildings, Loft Conversions and the influence of the Grosvenor Estate properties.

3.8 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Championing Sustainability

This section gives requirements and guidance for Resilience, Alternative Energy Sources, Building Form, Passive Cooling, Sustainable Drainage Solutions and use of Permeable Surfaces

3.9 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Improving Health and Wellbeing

This section gives requirements and guidance for Encouraging Walking, Reduction of Vehicle Speeds, Inclusive Design, Legibility, Wayfinding and Signage, Street Surfaces, Cycling (including Storage) and Parking.

3.10 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Enhancing the Natural Environment

This section gives requirements and guidance for Hedges, Gardens, Open Spaces, Tree Planting (including ecological considerations and integration into the landscape) and Invasive Species.

3.11 Parish-Wide Design Codes and Guidance - Nurturing a Vibrant Community

This section gives requirements and guidance for Public Seating, Public Art and Cultural Celebrations, Community Gardens, Community Spaces, Public Electric Vehicle Charging and Public Open Spaces.

The Design Code is to be used as follows:

1. By Applicants Developers and Land Owners

As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design in order to establish a degree of certainty. This document must be followed as a material consideration when planning consent is sought.

2. By the Local Planning Authority

As a material consideration, embedded in policy together with the neighbourhood plan, against which to assess planning applications. This document should be considered during any pre-application discussions.

3. By the Parish Council

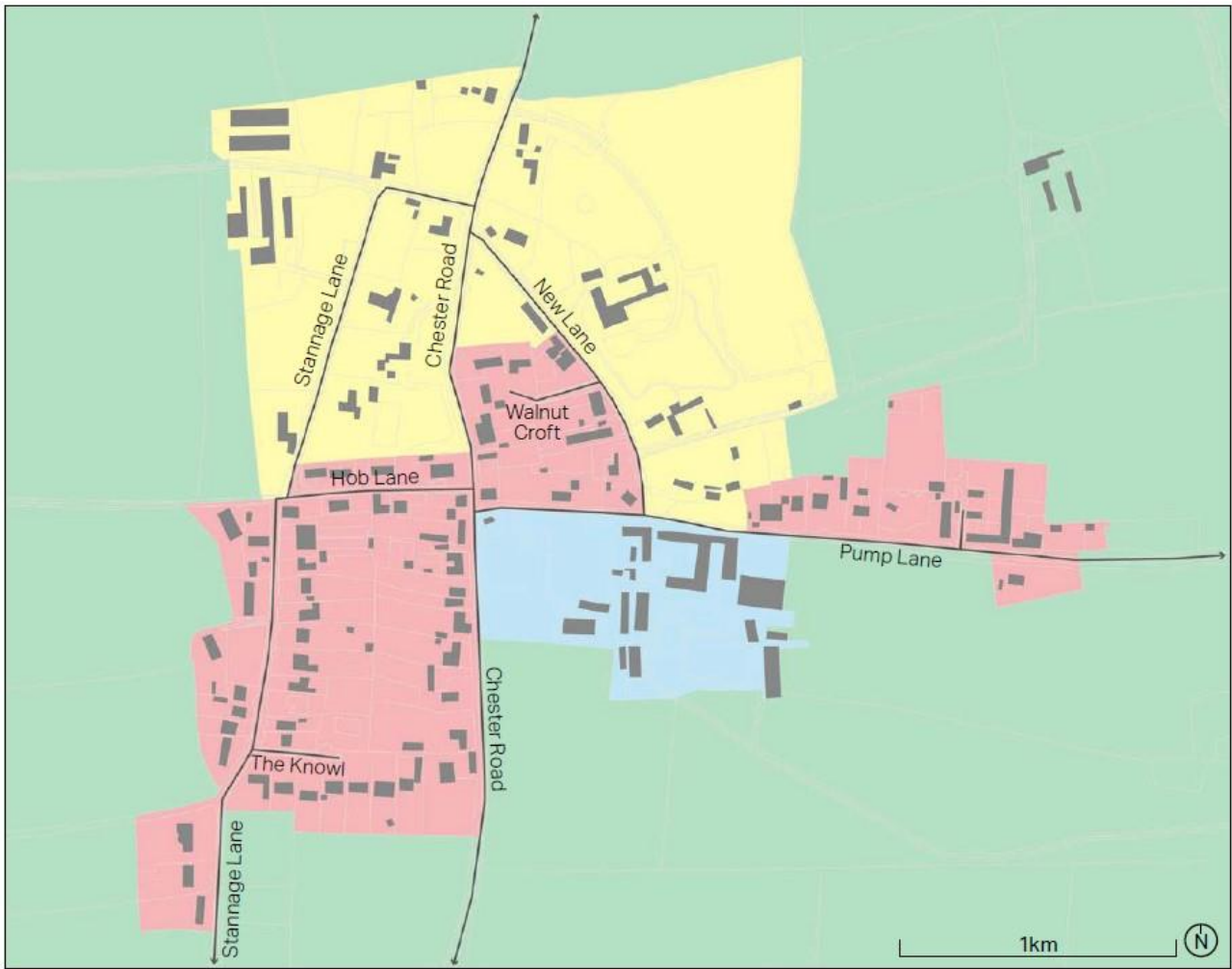
As a tool to help structure comments on planning applications by highlighting the issues of key importance, to assess whether applications are positive or negative, and to indicate where further considerations are required.

4. By Community Groups and Local Residents

As a tool to allow the local community to highlight their key issues and concerns and ensure that development has a positive impact on the character of the neighbourhood plan area.

5. By Statutory consultees

As a reference point when commenting on planning applications by providing an overview on the neighbourhood plan area and its character and by indicating the local community's main areas of concern.



Area Types Map (from the Design Code)

Key

- Area Type 1 - Village Core
- Area Type 2 - North Churton
- Area Type 3 - Churton Hall
- Area Type 4 - Surrounding Countryside

1.2 The Conservation Area

Objectives

- To maintain the overall character of the village and surrounding area as it has developed over centuries, influenced in large part both by the historic road pattern and by the adjoining Grosvenor and Barnston estates, into four distinct character areas.
- To retain and where appropriate expand the existing Conservation Area which is an important heritage asset.
- To seek a balance between conservation of historic heritage and climate change mitigation.
- To preserve the rural character of the village including its grass verges and treescape.

In formulating the above objectives and the following policies that are designed to achieve the same we have had careful regard to the detailed report/Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Henderson Heritage and dated April 2025. It contains a wealth of historical perspective and is a valuable guide to both past and future Churton village development.

Policies

Development in the Conservation Area must comply with the following recommendations included in the Churton Area Conservation Appraisal as listed below.

1. Ensure that any new development within the Conservation Area or within the setting of the Conservation Area preserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area and ties in with the Character Areas in the Churton Conservation Area Appraisal.
2. Carefully scrutinise and when appropriate constructively object and comment on planning proposals affecting the Churton Conservation Area.
3. Avoid any development that would deleteriously affect the historic Listed Buildings and structures which lie within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.
4. To preserve and maintain existing structures and buildings of merit to the village character where they are not already subject to formal Listed Building status.
5. Maintain front garden areas as green unpaved spaces traditional in character and style.
6. Preserve and expand upon the use of Red Sandstone boundary walls and quoins.
7. Replacement windows, doors, gates, roofing materials and guttering must conform to traditional design and materials found within the Conservation Area and be appropriate to the character of both the building and the character area within which it lies
8. Where solar power installations are proposed to encourage their construction to be flush to the roof surface and to be located when reasonably possible on rear or side elevations. When this is not possible planning permission must be sought to achieve a balance between heritage conservation and climate change mitigation

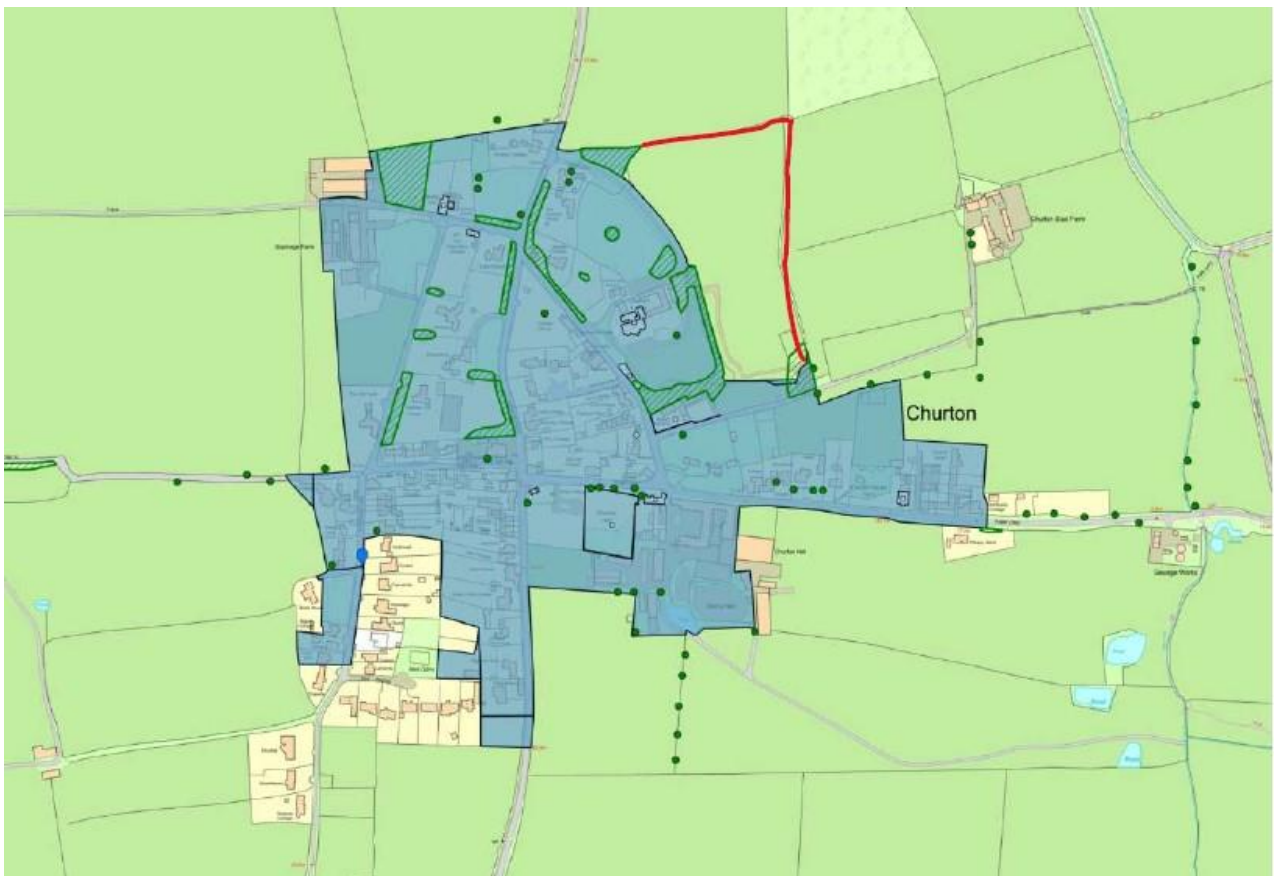
9. Discourage the parking of vehicles on grass verges within the village boundary and ensure that new development incorporates off road parking of a size appropriate to the development in question.

10. Trees contribute greatly to the appearance of the Conservation Area and are considered to make a significant contribution to the conservation area's character. Unnecessary removal or works that may be considered detrimental should be resisted. Where removal is essential then an appropriate replanting scheme will be encouraged to mitigate any detrimental effects on the character of the Conservation Area.

11. Maintain a photographic record so as to be aware of and manage change affecting the Conservation Area.

12. Seek agreement to the expansion of the Conservation Area where appropriate.

13. Ensure that these objectives and policies are reflected in the Design Codes as annexed to this Neighbourhood Plan.



**Churton Conservation Area
(Extension proposed in Conservation Area Assessment indicated in red)**

Topic 2. Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village

Background

The nature and character of our village is the result of steady organic growth over more than two centuries, it is precious to all those who live here and visit the village, and in order to preserve its distinctiveness any new development must be limited in both scale and location. Whilst the village benefits from both a local pub and a village hall, it lacks any other service provision and as such it cannot sustain larger scale development.

The government has set out a clear agenda to significantly increase the supply of new housing during the current parliament, and as such local authorities are tasked with identifying sites for new development. Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) is currently (2025) consulting on a preferred strategic approach for the location of new housing developments. All options under consideration focus on major urban areas and key service centres, the nearest of which is Farndon, just one mile from Churton. The CWaC proposal is for at least 500 new homes in Farndon over the next Local Plan lifetime, and potentially significantly more, up to 1500 under one strategic option.

Small rural villages such as Churton do not have housing targets as part of this strategic consultation. However, because of our close proximity to Farndon we are likely to feel the impact of any significant new housing areas (and potentially any new employment areas) on our boundary, be that because of skyline changes, increased traffic, additional noise, increased pollution, and demand on utilities and local services. The pressure to identify sites for new housing in Farndon risks pushing development towards Churton and potentially eroding the very essence of our village. Our current settlement boundary ensures that there is at least some separation between Churton and Farndon and as such serves to help preserve the distinctive nature of Churton as a rural village. It is essential that we maintain our settlement boundary.

The housing policies in this plan support only limited infill development within the current settlement boundary. The plan does not seek to identify specific sites for development and would encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites as a priority over small scale infill sites. Any development should be proportionate in scale and comply with the Village Design Code. The plan specifically does not support any larger scale developments, and any significant loss of garden land would not be supported as this provides essential amenity and landscape value for the village.

In 2024 the Parish Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey. The survey identified that there were 10 households who expressed a likely demand for new accommodation in the next 5 years with the main priority being for 3 bed homes, followed by support for 4 bed homes and finally 2 bed homes. It also found that most households would prefer market home purchases. It was noted (CWaC housing register) that there is very limited supply of affordable housing (three properties) in the village but similarly a very small number (two) within the village of current applicants for affordable housing. The demographic data showed that Churton has a slightly older population than CWaC generally, and that the village has a larger proportion of families than the CWaC average.

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the character and nature of the village by restricting any new development to the existing settlement area.

- To ensure that residential development will meet the identified needs of the village and add value and vitality to the community.

Policies

1. Support development on brownfield sites as a priority and proportionate development on small infill sites.
2. Priorities for house size to reflect identified local needs.
3. Development must comply with the Village Design Code and respect the character of the village in terms of layout, scale, massing, design, and materials.
4. Development must be limited to sites within the current settlement boundary.
5. New development should include reasonable measures to help reduce the impact of climate change.
6. Development causing significant loss of garden land would not be supported as this provides essential amenity and landscape value for the village



Churton Settlement Boundary

Topic 3. Protection and Enhancement of Churton's Natural Environment

Background

Churton is a village much appreciated for its wooded character and surrounding open countryside including areas of valuable wetland and grassland.

Protection and enhancement of Churton's natural assets including the views from Churton village is of the utmost importance for nature conservation, ecosystem services and for the long-term wellbeing and enjoyment of future generations.

Any future development within the Parish/ Neighbourhood Plan boundary to be such that it respects and prioritises the natural environment and landscape in terms of bio-diversity, landform and historical/cultural background.

In formulating the objectives and the following policies designed to achieve same, we have had careful regard to the report of The Cheshire Wildlife Trust dated February 2025 and also to the views of Parish residents expressed at the drop-in consultation session held in September 2025.

Consideration has also been given to the potential expansion of the Parish Boundary and thus the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary to encompass land to either side of Marsh Lane which may include Royalty Wood (a broadleaf unmanaged wood of uncertain age) which is probably an area of significant biodiversity as yet unmapped and will contribute materially to the full extent of wildlife corridors within the Parish.

Objectives

- To reduce the impact of development on nature conservation and assets of landscape and increase biodiversity.
- To ensure development is sustainable and minimises the effect on global warming.

Policies

1. Create and expand links between the current wildlife corridor network and improve the quality of such network.
2. Avoid disruption of the wildlife corridor network by development or otherwise.
3. Protect, enhance and connect to the current wildlife corridor network those areas within the parish identified as being areas of medium to high bio-diversity value.
4. Protect the existing hedgerow network.
5. Protect the open views to the East towards Peckforton/Beeston and to the West towards the Dee Valley and Welsh Hills.
6. Protect and expand existing woodland having careful regard to the avoidance of any adverse impact on areas of habitat of special value to specific types of wildlife.
7. Undertake habitat mapping in areas not currently studied in detail.

8. Ensure that any development is designed to both secure biodiversity and achieve a net gain in the same with due mitigating steps taken to protect and improve existing biodiversity.



Knowl Plantation with the wooded area by the River Dee in the background



Knowl Lane (FP2) a significant wildlife corridor

Topic 4. Facilities for Local People

Background

Churton being a small village cannot support local shopping or other facilities, but most day-to-day needs can be met in either Farndon or Holt. A visit to the supermarket requires a trip to Chester or Wrexham. The recent opening of Usher's Bakehouse on 3 mornings a week at The White Horse is a welcome addition to the shopping provision. The local Farndon primary school and doctors' surgery are situated in Farndon. Saughton CofE Primary School is another option that will suit some parents. Aldford school offers a fee paying alternative. There is concern that these public services will come under increasing pressure with the expected additional housing development there. There is not a church in Churton but there are churches in Farndon and Aldford.

The Village Hall was originally a Schoolhouse and then a Mission Hall and is a Grade II listed building. It is situated at the northern end of Stannage Lane on the outskirts of the village. It comprises a reasonably sized main hall together with a kitchen, storage area and toilets. There is a good-sized car parking area and a large grassed area all of which are leased to the Parish Council by the Grosvenor Estate.

It is a valuable resource to the community and is rented out for parties, fitness training, dance classes and other activities. It has been used for first aid courses and defibrillator training sessions, and the village Summer Fete is held in the grounds. However the decoration, fixtures and fittings are looking worn and in need of refurbishment/upgrading. There is a plan to replace the kitchen, but a more comprehensive refurbishment would make it more welcoming.

There are no play facilities in the village, but a scheme has been considered on ground to the rear of the Village Hall. A more attractive option might be to make use of the Old Forge site in New Lane.

Our local pub closed during the Covid pandemic and did not reopen after lockdown ended. We are lucky that Elite Bistros were keen to open their first pub and were able to raise funds through Kickstarter to refurbish and reopen the pub.

The White Horse is now both a local pub and a high-quality restaurant with special events such as their celebrated Chef's Nights. It hosts a local Book Club has regular quiz nights, and it also arranges events such as Christmas Wreath Making and Sip and Paint. Their Christmas Fair, Christmas Carols and Summer Fair are popular local events. Their awards include:

- SME Business Elite Awards (2025): Winner for Best Contemporary Country Pub – Cheshire.
- Estrella Damm's Top 50 Gastropubs (2024): Featured on the list of 100 best food-focused pubs in the UK.
- The Good Food Guide (2025): Selected as one of the "Best Pubs for a Family Celebration".
- Taste Cheshire Awards (2023): Awarded Bronze for Best Cheshire Pub.
- Cheshire West Design Award (2025)

There is no doubt that the White Horse is an important community facility worthy of support.

Currently the only publicly accessible green space in the village is by the Village Hall. This is on the outskirts of the village, away from the centre and tucked away behind the Hall. A public green space in the centre would encourage community activities and cohesion. The Old Forge site on the corner of Pump Lane and New Lane by the village pump would be ideal but other areas should also be considered.

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the provision of public amenities and services in the village and to promote community cohesion and sustainability

Policies

1. Protect and enhance the Village Hall and Grounds.
2. Support The White Horse and encourage close ties with the community.
3. Support the creation of a public green space in centre of the village.



The Village Hall



The White Horse

Topic 5. Employment

Background

Historically agriculture (and supporting businesses) was the most prominent business sector and employer in the area. Although a number of local people still work in agriculture there are many fewer employees.

The local economy is almost a mirror of the local facilities which comprises of a public house with a pop-up bakery three days a week and a number of surrounding farms. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that while the majority of residents work outside of the village, the local economy should be supported by encouraging opportunities that are in keeping with the village character and are not detrimental to the rural nature of the Parish, by supporting facilities to allow home working and by protecting existing employment land and premises.

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the special character of built environment in the village
- To protect the quality and character of the Conservation Area.
- To preserve the provision of public amenities and services in the village and to promote community cohesion and sustainability.

Policies

1. Protect existing employment land and premises.

Proposals which result in the loss of employment premises will be required to demonstrate that:

- the premises have been empty and actively marketed of at least twelve months at a reasonable rate; and
- the premises are no longer viable for any employment.

The loss of employment premises within Churton itself to wholly residential use will be resisted subject to the right of development which would be permitted under the General Permitted Development Order.

The re-use of existing rural buildings outside the “settlement boundary” especially for economic purposes will be supported.

2. Promote employment opportunities.

Proposal for the development of new business or expansion of existing businesses will be supported where the development:

- involves the redevelopment of “previously developed land” within the settlement boundary subject to Local Plan Policy or
- is a sympathetic conversion of existing rural buildings for employment purposes.

Proposals for new or expanded businesses should respect the local character of Churton itself and especially the Conservation Areas.

3. Promote ability to work from home.

Proposals for the improvement of communication facilities, in particular the provision of broadband and mobile phone services will be supported where the proposal respects the local character of Churton itself and especially the Conservation Areas.

Topic 6. Transport and Communication

Background

Traffic and Road Safety

Churton village has developed alongside the B5130 Chester Road, the main road connecting Chester and our neighbouring villages of Aldford and Farndon. To the south, this road also links to the A534 and onwards to Wrexham industrial estate – a significant employment centre and traffic generator. Chester Road carries a considerable amount of traffic at all times of the day. Over recent years traffic volumes have increased noticeably as some 500 new houses have been built in Farndon, and this will increase further as (at least) another 500 houses are proposed in the forthcoming Local Plan. Whilst the speed limit is 30mph through the village, this is frequently ignored thereby increasing danger, noise, and pollution for the village.

Along the length of village there are five junctions on to Chester Road, all are compromised either because of poor visibility, junctions immediately opposite, limited space for simultaneous turn in and turn out, or limited safe areas for pedestrians. Also, in the centre of the village, immediately adjacent to the Hob Lane junction, is access to the White Horse pub car park.

Speed monitoring has taken place at regular intervals over recent years providing comprehensive evidence of continued excess vehicle speed, and despite the implementation of some measures to discourage speeding, it remains a major safety issue for the village.

Apart from a pavement on Chester Road, which is substandard in part, there are no pavements in the village and therefore all users of Stannage Lane, New Lane, Hob Lane and Pump Lane must share the same road space placing pedestrians and cyclists at most risk.

For the above reasons any development within the Parish area will be subject to detailed assessment to ensure that it does not further compromise poor road safety.

Footpath and Cycle Links

The villages of Aldford to the north and Farndon to the south are only a mile or so distant from Churton and yet there are no safe and accessible routes for pedestrians and 'occasional' cyclists to reach either village. Farndon is a local service centre and whilst there is a pavement alongside the main 50mph road, it is narrow making it dangerous for all users and especially so for children, the infirm, those with pushchairs, and dog walkers. Heading north the pavement alongside Chester Road goes only half-way to Aldford village and then stops altogether, rendering it largely pointless - continuation by foot on the road is not advisable. The Lower Lane bridleway is very overgrown at the Churton end.

For 'occasional' cyclists the road routes to Aldford and Farndon are far from ideal as both use 50mph roads. Towards Aldford the road has several sweeping bends and narrows in places.

Safe and accessible routes to both villages would be hugely beneficial but in-particular a safe link to Farndon where there is a primary school, health clinic, chemist and post office

would be welcome. There are field and track paths to both villages, but they are indirect, not 'accessible' and largely impassible in wet conditions - they are unsuitable for occasional cyclists.

Options to either widen the existing roadside pavement to Farndon, or the creation of a separate hard surfaced path should be explored with the relevant authorities and landowners. Towards Aldford options should be explored with the Grosvenor Estate who already have farm estate roads and rough surfaced tracks in the area that could potentially be used.

Regular maintenance and improvement to the field paths are also needed. For instance, there are kissing gates leading directly onto the busy Chester Road at points without a pavement – these gates need to be set back from the roadside to give users a safe refuge to wait before crossing the road.

Public Transport

The village has only one bus service that runs between the centres of Wrexham and Chester linking with the local service centres of Farndon and Huntington. This is a vital service for those without access to private transport, and the Parish Council will continue to work with the relevant public transport authority to ensure this service is maintained and improved where possible.

Communications Infrastructure

The Parish Council is working on a project to provide a superfast fibre optic infrastructure for the village. Broadband speeds would be significantly increased thereby enabling access to services that might, for instance, open-up new employment opportunities, enable working from home, provide enhanced learning media, or simply provide improved entertainment and leisure options. Fibre optic infrastructure in rural villages is dependent on government support to cover the costs of installation. The Parish Council will continue to work with the relevant agencies to ensure that the Full Fibre-To-Property infrastructure is implemented.

Objectives

- To protect and improve transport links within the village for pedestrians and cyclists and access to public transport.
- To preserve the provision of public amenities and services in the village and to promote community cohesion and sustainability.

Policies

In order to:

- Improve the safety and convenience for all users of roads and paths throughout the parish;
- Improve off-road links to neighbouring service centres; and
- Improve the IT infrastructure enabling high speed internet usage

The following will be required:

Road Safety

1. Any new development must demonstrate that it will not negatively impact on road safety and is to include the provision of off-road parking for each new housing unit.
2. The Parish Council will work with CWAC highways authority to identify and implement measures to improve road safety, especially measures that discourage excess vehicle speed.

Sustainable transport (off-road links)

3. The Parish Council will work with the relevant land-owners, adjacent parish councils, and the CWAC local authority to improve the provision of safe and accessible off-road connections to the neighbouring service centres of Farndon and Aldford.
4. The Parish Council will work with the relevant landowners, adjacent parish councils and the CWAC local authority to improve the condition and maintenance of field paths that cross and connect with the parish council area.

Public Transport

5. The Parish Council will work with the relevant public transport authority to maintain and improve the provision of public transport connections to the local and key service centres.

Broadband connectivity

6. The Parish Council will seek to implement high speed broadband connectivity through the installation of Full Fibre to The Property infrastructure.
7. New development should provide the means by which cables can be easily laid from the curtilage of the property to the premises.
8. Utility infrastructure companies will be encouraged to lay spare conduits that may aid future cable installation as and when they undertake works in the parish.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

Delivering the Vision

This Neighbourhood Plan represents the culmination of four years of community engagement, evidence gathering, and collaborative drafting. Its policies are designed to ensure that Churton remains a vibrant, sustainable, and high-quality place to live and work until 2041. The plan provides a clear roadmap for how all stakeholders wish the village to develop.

Statutory Weight

Upon successful completion of the Independent Examination and a positive Local Referendum result, this document will become part of the Statutory Development Plan. This means that Cheshire West and Chester must determine planning applications in accordance with these policies, giving our community a direct voice in the planning system.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Parish Council will take an active role in the plan's delivery. They will work with the Local Authority and residents to ensure that the objectives are met. Progress will be monitored every five years, and a formal review of the plan will be triggered if there are significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or the Local Plan.

Community Legacy

We would like to thank the residents and stakeholders who contributed their time and expertise. This plan is not just a regulatory document; it is a statement of our collective pride in our neighbourhood and our commitment to its future.