



## Sunningwell Parish

### Neighbourhood Development Plan – 2026-41



## Policy Consultation

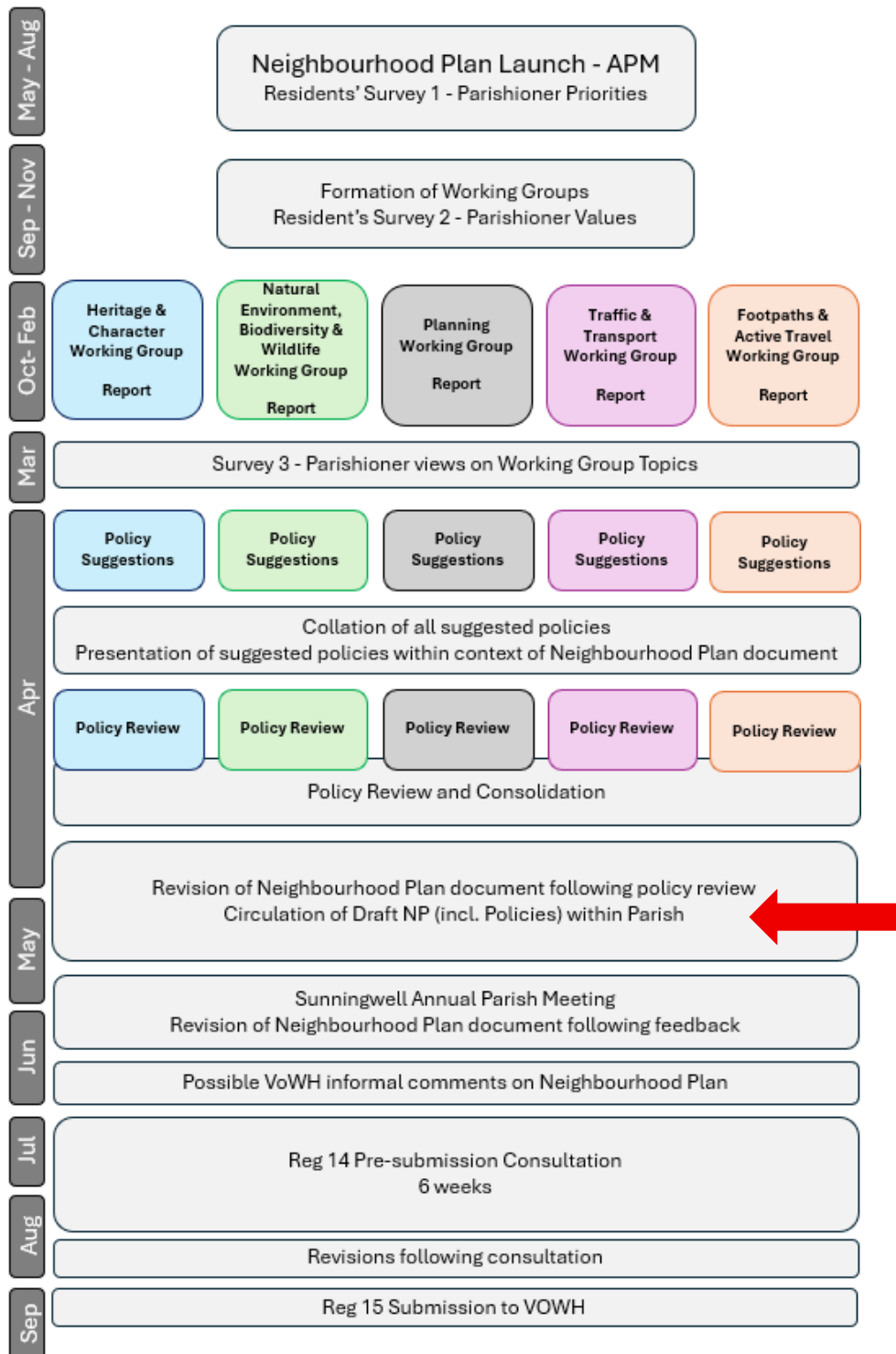
May 2026

Prepared by: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group behalf of Sunningwell Parish Council

## Purpose of Present Document

The primary consultation on the full Sunningwell Parish Neighbourhood Plan, called the “Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation”, is a formal 6-week process which will take place in July and August 2026 as indicated below.

The present document (red arrow below) is a Draft of this “Reg 14” document, with the proposed Policies in the context of the full plan, for parishioner comment in May 2026.



## Foreword

The Sunningwell Parish neighbourhood plan has been created to help guide development and future growth across our area, aiming to enhance the quality of life for those who live in, work in or visit the parish.

This plan is significant as it provides a local roadmap, allowing our four communities to have a say over its future.

Through extensive community engagement, notably in open meetings in multiple locations across the parish; e-mailed updates in both the Sunningwell Parish Council monthly letter, plus additional updates to those expressing an interest in the development of the plan; leaflets hand-delivered to all addresses in the parish; surveys, both on-paper and on-line; publicity on third-party social media (e.g. Sunningwell Scene, Bayworth News, and Boars Hill Association); and door-to-door conversations; we have gathered insight and positive feedback from over 25% of the dwellings in the parish which have shaped our vision for the future:

*To preserve and enhance Sunningwell Parish's distinctive character, heritage, green environment and amenities amid growing surrounding urban development, while ensuring it can continue to evolve and thrive as a unique place to live, work and visit for current and future generations.*

We extend our gratitude to the many parishioners who have generously donated their time, enthusiasm and considerable expertise to the formation of this plan. Particular thanks go to those who have served on the five Working Groups and on the Steering Groups. The resulting plan is a detailed and true reflection of the collective aspirations of parish residents.

## Sources

This plan incorporates information from the following agencies and public bodies in whom copyright resides:

Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright and database rights 2025 OS data licensed under the Public Service Geospatial Agreement, Licence No:

Environment Agency maps and data © Environment Agency 2025

Natural England <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Office for National Statistics: licensed under the Open Government Licence V.3.0

## Contents

1.	Introduction and Background .....	6
1.1	Neighbourhood Plan Status .....	6
1.2	Submitting Body .....	6
1.3	Designation .....	6
1.4	Basic Conditions .....	8
1.5	Plan Period, Monitoring and Review .....	9
1.6	Neighbourhood Plan Stages .....	9
2.	Planning Policy Context .....	10
2.1	National Planning Policy .....	10
2.2	Planning Practice Guidance .....	11
2.3	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 .....	11
2.4	The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan .....	13
3.	The Neighbourhood Plan Area .....	14
3.1	Overview of Sunningwell Parish .....	14
3.2	Sunningwell Parish Through History .....	17
3.3	Historical Development .....	21
3.4	Sunningwell Parish Profile .....	33
4.1	Overview .....	39
4.2	Land Use Issues .....	40
4.3	Non- Land Use Issues .....	41
4.3	Vision and Objectives .....	41
5.	Policies .....	43
5.1	List of Policies and Community Aspirations .....	43
5.2	Green Belt .....	44
5.3	Separation of Settlements .....	46
5.4	Heritage Assets .....	50
5.5	Community Assets .....	56
5.6	Important Views and Vistas .....	58
5.7	Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancement .....	63
5.8	Green Habitats, Networks and Corridors .....	71
5.9	Water Environment, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk .....	73

## SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

5.10	Dark Skies and Nocturnal Wildlife .....	75
5.11	General Design Principles .....	77
5.12	Sustainable Development.....	78
5.13	Extensions and Alterations.....	80
5.14	Infill Development .....	80
5.15	Transport and Infrastructure.....	82
5.16	Safer Routes .....	89
5.17	Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision .....	90
5.18	Footpaths & Active Travel.....	93
6.	Community Aspirations .....	96
6.1	Preserving the Community.....	96
6.2	Traffic Management.....	96
6.3	Sustainable Transport.....	97
6.4	Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision .....	97

## 1. Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Neighbourhood Plan Status

1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011, along with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), established neighbourhood planning within England's planning framework, empowering communities to have a say in local development.

1.1.2 Once a neighbourhood plan is approved through a referendum, it becomes part of the development plan. This plan will then be integrated into the district planning framework and utilised by Vale of White Horse District Council to evaluate and determine planning applications. It aligns with and supports the strategic policies outlined in the adopted local plan, containing specific planning policies for the development and use of land. Broader community aspirations, while important, are not planning policies and are addressed separately in the relevant sections.

### 1.2 Submitting Body

1.2.1 Sunningwell Parish Council serves as the qualifying body tasked with preparing the neighbourhood plan and is thus responsible for submitting it to the District Council for examination. The term 'qualifying body' is defined by the Localism Act 2011, referring to the entity responsible for neighbourhood planning within the designated neighbourhood area.

### 1.3 Designation

1.3.1 On 28 January 2015 Sunningwell Parish Council resolved to commence the Neighbourhood Plan process (minute 16/15) and further resolved on 13 May 2015 to contact the District Councillor (minute 96/15). The need to contact all parishioners was noted on 29 July 2015 (minute 124/15) and on 30 September 2015 the results of a survey delivered to all addresses in the parish were presented (minute 142/15).

1.3.2 On 28 October 2015 the request from Abingdon-on-Thames to include parts of Sunningwell in their Neighbourhood Plan was discussed (minute 162/15).

1.3.3 On 25 November 2015 Sunningwell Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan based on the then-existing parish boundary and agreed to apply for the appropriate area designation (minute 181/15).

1.3.4 On 30 March 2016 a request to include Foxcombe Lane and part of Lincombe Lane in the Sunningwell Neighbourhood Plan was declined by Wootton Parish Council (minute 45/15).

1.3.5 On 1 July 2016 the Vale of White Horse officially designated the Neighbourhood Plan area with a modified boundary as shown in Figure 1.

# SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

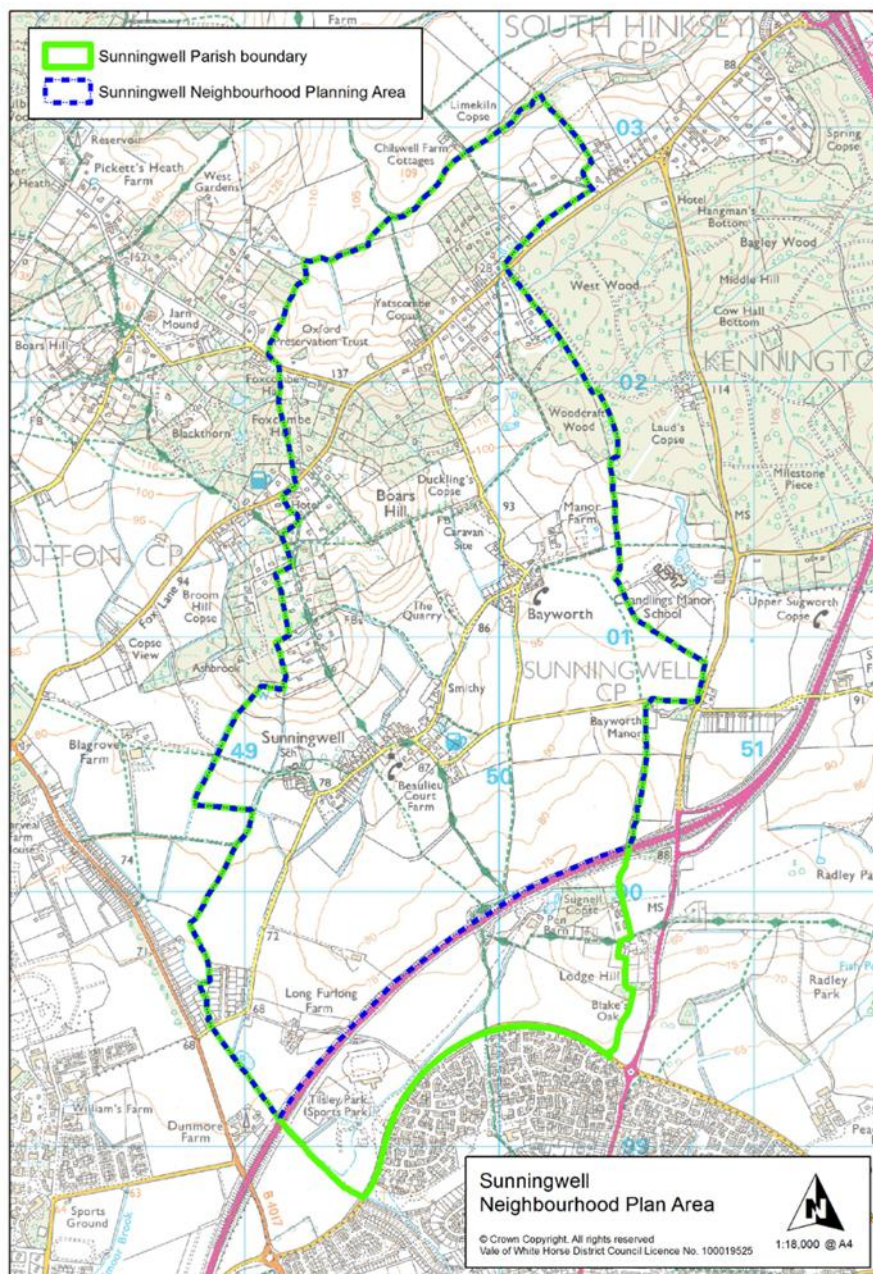


Figure 1.1. Map of Designated Neighbourhood Area (2016) (to be updated when new version available on VoWH website)

1.3.6 Meetings and publicity took place in 2016 and 2017, but limited parishioner engagement was achieved.

1.3.7 Following a request from Vale of White Horse for an update on progress on 6 March 2018, the Vale reclassified Sunningwell's neighbourhood plan as paused, with the Parish Council also formally pausing efforts at their meeting on 28 October 2019 (minute 135/19).

1.3.8 On 29 May 2025 a proposal to re-start the Neighbourhood Plan process was presented at the Sunningwell Annual Parish Meeting to the 40-50 attendees. All who commented were in favour, with 39 completing survey forms on the evening.

1.3.9 All addresses in the parish were circulated with a leaflet in July 2025, and over 100 positive responses were received representing approximately 26% of dwellings with a good geographic spread across the parish

1.3.10 On 31 July 2025 Sunningwell Parish Council formally took the decision to re-commence Neighbourhood Plan preparation, using the previously designated area shown in Figure 1. Following informal discussions with potential volunteers, a structure of one Steering Group and five topic-specific Working Groups was agreed at the parish council meeting on 25 September 2025 (minute 125/25 and presented at an open meeting on 28 September 2025).

1.3.11 Sunningwell Parish Council gave formal approval to the existence, Terms of Reference and membership of the Steering Group and the Working Groups on 30 October 2025.

### 1.4 Basic Conditions

1.4.1 Neighbourhood plans must adhere to the 'Basic Conditions'. These Basic Conditions are outlined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and include the following criteria:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations as incorporated into UK law.
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

1.4.2 Schedule 4B (8(6)) of the Town and Country Planning Act also states that examiners must consider whether the neighbourhood plan is "compatible with the Convention rights". The interpretation section (s.17) in Schedule 4B clarifies that "the Convention rights" carries the same meaning as defined in the Human Rights Act 1998.

## 1.5 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

1.5.1 The neighbourhood plan has been produced to cover the period 2026–2041.

1.5.2 It is important to recognise that this plan will evolve over time to address changing needs and requirements. Through regular review processes, we are dedicated to monitoring the effectiveness of the documents that support this plan. An annual review will evaluate the plan’s relevance and highlight areas for enhancement. This commitment to ongoing assessment ensures that the plan remains effective in fostering a vibrant future for Sunningwell Parish.

## 1.6 Neighbourhood Plan Stages

1.6.1 Figure 2 below depicts the progression of this neighbourhood plan from its initial conception to its eventual implementation. We are currently at the pre-submission draft consultation stage, with one more draft to be consulted on prior to independent assessment. This is an opportunity for the community to provide valuable feedback and influence the future of the community up to 2041.

1.6.2 Not all stages shown in Figure 2 are compulsory. Statutory stages, meaning they are legally required under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), are distinguished by a red border.

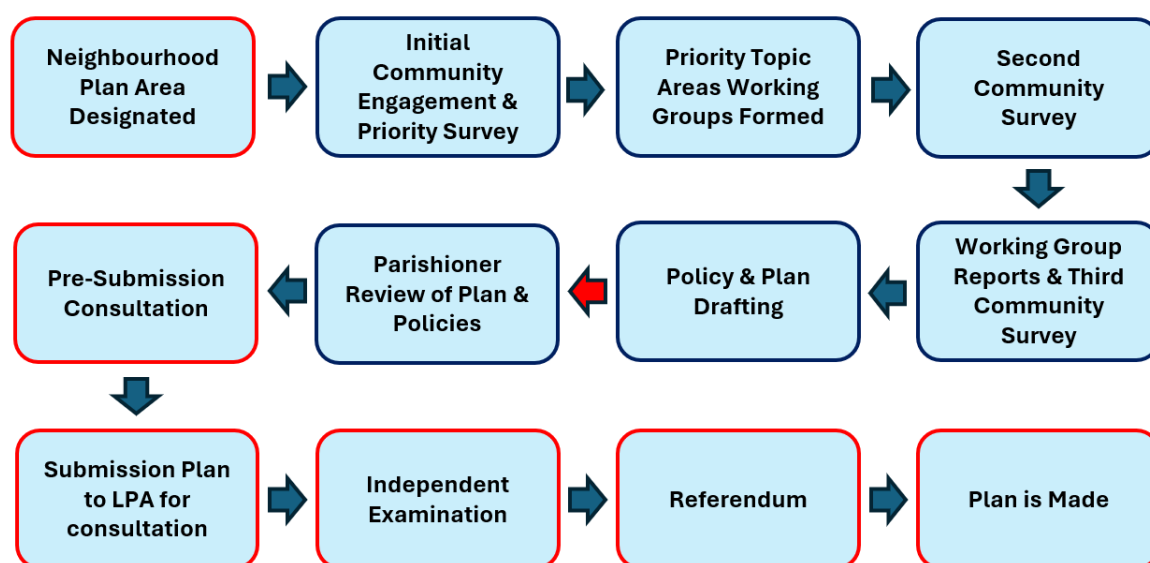


Figure 1.2. Neighbourhood Plan Process

1.6.3 Following this pre-submission stage, the neighbourhood plan and supporting documents will be submitted to Vale of White Horse and from there, they will run a period of publicity on the submission draft of the neighbourhood plan for a minimum of six weeks. All feedback will be collated and passed to the examiner for consideration as part of the examination process.

1.6.4 Vale of White Horse District Council will then appoint an independent examiner, whose appointment is to be agreed by the qualifying body, who will review the plan and supporting information. The examiner will assess whether the plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions. At the end of the examination, the examiner will issue their report with any recommended modifications required to meet basic conditions. This report will be reviewed, alongside the plan, by Vale of White Horse District Council who have the responsibility of deciding what action to take in response to the examiner's recommendations and whether the plan should proceed to referendum.

1.6.5 The referendum will be organised by Vale of White Horse District Council and people on the electoral register within the referendum area, usually the same as the designated neighbourhood area, will be entitled to vote on whether they want the neighbourhood plan to be used to help determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area. If more than 50% of votes cast are in favour ('yes'), the plan becomes part of the development plan.

## 2. Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in December 2024, and revised in February 2025, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. It sets out the Government's policy in relation to land use planning matters.

2.1.2 The neighbourhood plan must demonstrate that it has had regard to the provisions of the NPPF. The relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are set out alongside the policies contained within the neighbourhood plan in Section 5.

2.1.3 As stated in the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as set out in Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

2.1.4 The planning system has three overarching objectives described in the NPPF (Paragraph 8); these have been related to the plan area:

- an economic objective – this neighbourhood plan seeks to provide policies which assist in building a strong, economy. Through public consultation and talking to business owners this neighbourhood plan seeks to assist with the future needs in Sunningwell Parish.
- a social objective – this neighbourhood plan aims to preserve and highlight the significance of local community facilities and to encourage proposals that would

seek to create new facilities that would meet an identified need within Sunningwell Parish.

- an environmental objective – this neighbourhood plan includes several policies aimed at ensuring the protection and, when appropriate, the enhancement of nationally and locally significant habitats, which aims to conserve the rural character of Sunningwell Parish.

2.1.5 The NPPF sets out that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. This neighbourhood plan has been prepared to complement the strategic policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan by providing additional locally specific information. It reflects the unique context, character, needs and opportunities of Sunningwell Parish.

## 2.2 Planning Practice Guidance

2.2.1 In preparing this neighbourhood plan, regard has been given to the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which provides detailed guidance on implementing national planning policy. The PPG covers topics including housing, design, environmental protection, infrastructure and community engagement and is intended to support neighbourhood plans in delivering sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.2.2 The policies in this neighbourhood plan have been informed by the PPG, particularly in relation to:

- gathering and using evidence to support policies;
- assessing the impact of development on local character, heritage and the environment;
- promoting sustainable transport, community facilities and infrastructure provision; and
- ensuring policies are clear, deliverable and capable of supporting development management decisions.

2.2.3 Where relevant, reference has been made to the PPG to ensure that the neighbourhood plan aligns with national guidance while addressing the unique context, character and needs of Sunningwell Parish. This ensures that policies are consistent with the Development Plan and contribute positively to sustainable development in the area.

## 2.3 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031

2.3.1 Sunningwell Parish is located within the Local Planning Authority area of Vale of White Horse. The overall vision of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is:

*“By 2031 the Vale of White Horse will have thriving and prosperous communities that have benefited from economic growth and our strength in science and innovation continues to be internationally recognised. The Science Vale area will have become a first choice location for high value added business and research. New residential and economic growth will have been focused on the Science Vale area and will have delivered balanced and sustainable growth that has made a significant contribution to delivering important infrastructure. Strategic road and rail improvements will have been implemented, including those at Harwell, west of Didcot and at Wantage. The Vale’s main settlements will provide healthy and sustainable communities where everyone has a decent place to live and work with good access to leisure and community services and facilities. The service centre roles of Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage will have been maintained and enhanced. The Vale’s villages will continue to provide thriving rural communities where appropriate growth has supported local services. New development will have respected the local character of the Vale, protecting its outstanding and distinctive historic, natural and built environment. The important historic heritage of the Vale will have been, and will continue to be, conserved and enhanced. High design and environmental standards will have been achieved through new development, which will be resilient to the likely impacts of climate change.”*

2.3.2 The adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 outlines a series of strategic objectives which underpin the Local Plan. These objectives seek to balance the core pillars of sustainable development, including the protection of the environment and the need to provide sufficient development to meet the needs of the existing and future population. The objectives are set out below.

- Objective 1 – Building healthy and sustainable communities
- Objective 2 – Supporting economic prosperity
- Objective 3 – Sustainable transport and accessibility
- Objective 4 – Protecting the environment and responding to climate change

2.3.3 Sunningwell sits within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-area of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Core Policy 8 states that: *“Our over-arching priority for this Sub-Area is to maintain the service and employment centre roles for Abingdon-on-Thames and Botley and ensure growth is managed to minimise pressure on the highway network, whilst protecting the Oxford Green Belt”.*

2.3.4 Core Policy 13 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 states that:

*“The Oxford Green Belt area in the Vale, as amended following the local Green Belt Review, will continue to be protected to maintain its openness and permanence” and that “Proposals for inappropriate development will not be approved except in very*

*special circumstances*.\* *‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF, Paragraph 88).’*

Core Policy 13 also lists a number of developments which will not be considered inappropriate.

2.3.5 Core Policy 3 of the Adopted Local Plan 2031 identifies Sunningwell village as a “Smaller Village”, with the remainder of the parish being classed as “Open Countryside”.

2.3.6 Core Policy 4 of the Adopted Local Plan 2031 states that “*Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy*”.

2.3.7 Core Policy 4 of the Adopted Local Plan 2031 further states that for “*Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities*”.

#### 2.3.8 Smaller and Other Villages:

Smaller and Other Villages have no defined requirement to contribute towards delivering additional housing (beyond windfall and infill development) to meet the overall housing requirement of Vale of White Horse

While there is no requirement to allocate housing, communities may choose to do so. This is because allocating housing can enable the funding of community projects or allow the plan to guide the type and mix of homes that best reflect the area’s specific needs. Vale of White Horse District Council’s strategy supports this approach, provided that any proposed growth is proportionate to the scale and character of the settlement.

## 2.4 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

2.4.1 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy was adopted on 12th September 2017 and sets out the vision, objectives, spatial planning strategy and policies for meeting development requirements for the supply of minerals and the management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031.

2.4.2 It should be noted that the neighbourhood plan does not cover minerals and waste matters as this is undertaken by the County Council as a separate matter. This is highlighted where relevant in the policy section below.

## 3. The Neighbourhood Plan Area

### 3.1 Overview of Sunningwell Parish

3.1.1 Sunningwell Parish is an ancient rural area containing the village of Sunningwell, the hamlet of Bayworth, the north-western part of Long Furlong, and the eastern part of Boars Hill.

Bordering the Town of Abingdon in the south, and with a parish boundary that is less than three miles from the centre of the City of Oxford to the north-east, the parish offers rural respite from these busy and growing urban areas.

One of the distinctive and valued features of the parish is that the settlements remain well separated from each other by a rural landscape, such that each is surrounded by green fields. Each of the settlements has its own distinctive character.

Sunningwell Village is the archetypal English village with a range of building styles and ages which have happily coexisted and remained largely unspoilt for the last hundred years.

Eastern Boars Hill is characterised by signature dwellings of a range of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century vintages, mostly set in large plots with many trees. Like the rest of Boars Hill, its character has been shaped by the many eminent residents from academia and the literary, artistic, and media worlds. The views are famous, with those towards Oxford captured by many artists including JMW Turner, and are still enjoyed by residents and visitors today.

The ancient settlement of Bayworth has been largely rebuilt since just before the Second World War, with many of these dwellings originally being council houses.

Long Furlong is a more recent development from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century characterised by bungalows and low-rise detached houses.

3.1.2 Land use across the area is predominantly agricultural and residential, with substantial areas dedicated to community use, notably the Old Berkeley Golf Course (owned by Oxford Preservation Trust), Sunningwell Village Green (Parish Council owned) and Sunningwell Cricket Club (held in trust).

3.1.3 Sunningwell Parish lies entirely within the Oxford Greenbelt. The parish lies within a setting that features rolling fields, woodlands and views from to and from Boars Hill contributing to its distinct local identity.

3.1.4 Of the four residential areas in the parish, only Sunningwell Village appears in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 where it is recognised as a Smaller Village.



Sunningwell village with the view north towards Boars Hill



Sunningwell village with view south towards Abingdon



Bayworth with view north to Boars Hill (centre) and west to Sunningwell village (left)

Figure 3.1 – All images © Lucy Roberts Photography

## SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

3.1.5 The parish has four population centres of Bayworth, Boars Hill, Long Furlong and Sunningwell village. It is a distinctive and treasured characteristic of the parish that the four individual populated areas within it remain separated by open fields.

3.1.6 Sunningwell Parish is served by a range of key local facilities and infrastructure that contribute to the community's character and wellbeing enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. These include:

- Extensive network of footpaths and bridleways
- Old Berkeley Golf Course
- Sunningwell Cricket Club & Playground
- Sunningwell Deer Park and Deer & Forest School
- Sunningwell C of E Primary School
- Sunningwell School of Art
- Opera Anywhere & Sunningwell Festival
- Church Farm Barn Café
- St Leonards Church & bellringers
- Flowing Well Pub

as well as frequent clubs and events in Sunningwell Village Hall and Bayworth Chapel Hall.

3.1.7 These are integral to daily life and support the needs of residents. The availability and quality of these amenities play a significant role in shaping Sunningwell Parish's development and will be considered when formulating policies in the neighbourhood plan.

3.1.8 One of the reasons that Sunningwell is so distinctive is its contrast to the ever more populous urban market town of Abingdon. It acts as a 'lung' for the town population, and many walks set out by crossing the bridge over the A 34 into the parish. The parish is characterised by its narrow lanes, its many hedgerows which abut the roads and divide fields, and its fine views across the parish to the north, south, east and west.

3.1.9 The characters of each of its four communities, Bayworth, Boars Hill, Long Furlong and Sunningwell Village are distinctive and add to its diversity. Agriculture, primarily arable and venison production, are also characteristic of a community whose farms, up to the late 20th century, have provided the livelihoods of most of its inhabitants. This landscape, with many footpaths crossing the parish, many sites of bio-diversity, including Lincombe Lane conservation area and the close proximity to Bagley Wood, together with its many historic buildings make Sunningwell parish a special place valued by both its residents and those in neighbouring urban areas.

## 3.2 Sunningwell Parish Through History

3.2.1 The earliest archaeological find in the parish of Sunningwell, was an ‘un-urned’ prehistoric (date could range from 4000BC–42AD) cremation pit, found whilst work took place on the Wootton–Abingdon pipeline (Ref: Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Monument/Building Record PRN 15681). Although difficult to precisely date (c800BC–42AD), a later ‘pit’ find, in the garden of ‘Ridgeway’ in Lincombe Lane, Boars Hill, revealed animal bones, struck flints and sherds of iron age pottery (Ref: OCC PRN 7681).

3.2.2 A Romano-British inhumation burial revealed two grey-ware carinated and pedestalled beakers, in the Boars Hill area. Indeed, there have been several recorded finds, in the OCC records, of grey-ware pottery kilns on Boars Hill, around Lincombe Lane and Foxcombe Hill. Pottery from the 1945 excavation is housed in the Ashmolean Museum. Oxford was a known centre for grey-ware pottery production and in fact the area has enormous quantities of grey clay in the landscape. There must have been much pottery production using local clay in the Lincombe Lane area and pottery fragments can be regularly found in the spinney by ‘The Burrows’ just north of the deer farm boundary with the Oxfordshire Preservation Trust field.

3.2.3 The first documentary evidence of the parish can be found in the Charters of Abingdon Abbey, dated 956AD. In the Abingdon Abbey Charters, King Eadwig or Eadred gave 25 hides of land to Abbot Aethelwold. This is one of the earliest mentions of Bayworth (Saxon Baeganwyrthe) Estate which included Sunningwell and Wootton. Sunningwell was also mentioned in the Domesday Book with Bayworth being worth ten hides, yet Sunningwell was only worth five hides. After the Norman Conquest it is interesting to see how land was divided up with such men as a ‘De Sandford’, who founded the Priory of Littlemore and a ‘De Seacourt’ from the lost village of Seacourt, after which the ‘towers of Botley’ take their name. One such was Eskil of Seacourt who took part in a rebellion against William Rufus and having been captured was ‘encarcerated in conditions of some rigour and died a few days later.’ His wife and heirs were dispossessed of their lands. The story has a ‘happy ending’, in that Eskil’s widow became the mistress of Henry I and upon the death of William Rufus in a hunting ‘accident’ had her lands restored to the dower lands of Bayworth.

3.2.4 There is mention of the ‘outlaws of Bagley Wood’, an Oxfordshire equivalent to Robin Hood and his Merry Men. In 1327, after a riot in Abingdon, the Abbot was seized, taken to Bagley Wood, and ransomed, ‘lest his head be taken from his body.’ In the reign of Henry III, a significant ‘breach of the peace’ occurred, more akin to a pillaging raid of Henry V’s wars in France, when Richard de Rucote and others came to Adam de Kerseye’s houses in Bayworth and took away his goods and chattles.

3.2.5 In 1540, Henry VIII assigned the manors of Sunningwell and Bayworth to a group of merchants. Their heirs in 1597 sold the Manor of Bayworth to one of Elizabeth I's generals, Sir Thomas Baskerville, the man who buried Sir Francis Drake in the Atlantic after an unsuccessful raid on the Spanish Main. The Baskervilles of Bayworth, Thomas's son Hannibal and then his son, another Thomas, became well known as charitable squires and as antiquaries. Thomas junior's travelogues, some written in hilarious doggerel verse, have recently been rediscovered. Eventually the final heir, in 1721, died heavily in debt, and by 1727 the house was a ruin and 'quarried' for stone. Their lordship of the manor passed to the landowners at Radley, in the 18th century the Stonhouses and in the 19th century the Bowyers. Hence forward, half a dozen farms, centred in Sunningwell, would see that village, around the church, become the major residential area compared to Bayworth.

3.2.6 St Leonard's Church, a building which dates from various periods in the later Middle Ages, had its modest share in the protestant Reformation: its rector in the 1550s was John Jewel, who became one of the leading spokesmen for the Elizabethan church settlement and the establishment of Anglicanism. Reputedly he had our unique seven-sided porch constructed, though we have no proof of this. Equally murky are the stories, in circulation by this time, that the brilliantly original and controversial 13th century philosopher Roger Bacon used Sunningwell tower (evidently not the present one, which dates from after 1400) to make astronomical observations, and perhaps indulge in some black magic. A subsequent rector, Joseph Benet, more demonstrably helped the young J.M.W. Turner, who lodged in Sunningwell for extended periods with his aunt and uncle, to make his way as an artist in the last decades of the 18th century. The church had a sympathetic restoration in the 1870s, when it acquired its beautiful and rare encaustic tiles and pretty east window. Most villagers seem to have remained loyal to the Anglican establishment, but in Bayworth a Baptist congregation laid the foundation stone for its chapel in 1900.

3.2.7 At that date agriculture was still the vital employer of almost all within the Sunningwell parish. Even in the 1920s the newly-founded Women's Institute sported a banner bearing the motto, 'God Speed the Plough'! Yet working conditions had been slowly changing. Sunningwell was already enclosed by Act of Parliament in the 1720s, which brought to an end the open-field system of farming (though the surviving ridge and furrow pattern on the green still reminds us of it). Besides the local trades associated with village life, such as blacksmiths and carriers, there were brickworks using the clays on Boars Hill. And a larger transformation was on the horizon: one Sunningwell villager had a famous grandson, William Morris, the carmaker and multi-millionaire philanthropist.

3.2.8 Just as Morris began to construct his first motor vehicle, in 1912, almost the whole of Sunningwell was put up for sale.



Figure 3.2 – Sale document for The Disney Estate

3.2.9 Its landlords by then were a non-resident gentry family, the Disneys of Ingatestone in Essex, and their estates were encumbered with debt as a result of the great depression in farming. Many tenants could now own their houses and meanwhile plots of land on Boars Hill were fast being acquired for building (initially on 999-year leases). Then came the Great War. Some 60 men from the parish served, of whom almost one third did not return. Their names are recorded on a memorial in the church, and also in the village hall, which had been built just a few years earlier – initially with a gallery for shooting practice – and which was now rededicated in their honour.

3.2.10 The 20th century witnessed vast expansion in the parish, above all in the part of it which extends across Boars Hill, where the spread of roomy residences was limited only by a desire for leafy privacy and by the emergence of a conservancy movement centred on the Oxford Preservation Trust (founded there in 1927). New housing also

developed on a smaller scale from the inter-war years on in Bayworth and at Long Furlong. As transportation was transformed by the (Morris and other brands of) motor car, so employment linked the parish more and more to Abingdon and above all to Oxford. And local culture and amenity were transformed too. There had been a village school at least since 1871, when its building beside the pond was opened. After this school moved to a new site in 1972, its old premises could be acquired by a body of painters, potters and sculptors who turned them into the notably successful Sunningwell School of Art. Cricket had certainly flourished here by the late 19th century. In 1915 the ground was made over, in memory of a World War I casualty, to a trust to ensure the game should be played there in perpetuity. In the 1950s the parish acquired its first public house – previously thirst seems to have been quenched at the Fox, just across the boundary with Wootton – in a building, now rechristened the Flowing Well, which had been constructed earlier in the century by a bachelor rector for purposes unknown.

3.2.11 The first of the houses in Long Furlong that are recognisable today were the ‘800 sq. ft.’ bungalows built in the 1930’s. The proximity to the end of runway 08/26 at RAF Abingdon meant strict height restrictions giving rise to the distinctively ‘low-rise’ character of the area that remains evident today, even though many houses have been added or remodelled since the war. Long Furlong Farm has long been associated with the Greening family who were notable benefactors and philanthropists, and whose donations include the 42 acres on which Tilsley Park leisure centre is built in memory of their son, John Tilsley Greening, who was tragically killed in a road accident in Wootton in 1979.

3.2.12 By the start of the new millennium most of the village and Bayworth had been rebuilt, their old cottages replaced as no longer fit for purpose; and there were no independent farms in the parish, although many of their buildings could be adapted as residential accommodation. The bulk of the land was worked from Blagrove, also based across the boundary in Wootton. However, Church Farm has recently been re-established to raise deer on the slopes of Boars Hill. One ten-acre parcel passed into collective public ownership after a landmark lawsuit. The church’s glebe was scheduled by the diocese to be sold for housing but was successfully claimed as common land and purchased by the parish. Nothing in its more than thousand-year history so raised the profile of the place as the Sunningwell Case, concluded at the House of Lords in 1999. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199899/ldjudgmt/jd990624/sun.htm>

### 3.3 Historical Development

3.3.1 Until the 1980's Sunningwell Parish boundary remained essentially unchanged from that first documented in 1838, with the only change being that a small encircled area of the parish of St Nicolas was transferred to Sunningwell in 1883.

3.3.2 Since the 1980s over 1,800 new homes have been built on the land that was part of Sunningwell Parish. This has all occurred at the southern end of the parish and has been accompanied by transfer of that land from Sunningwell to the town of Abingdon.

3.3.3 The three areas transferred in the 1980s,1990s and 2010s are shown in purple superimposed on a present-day map below.

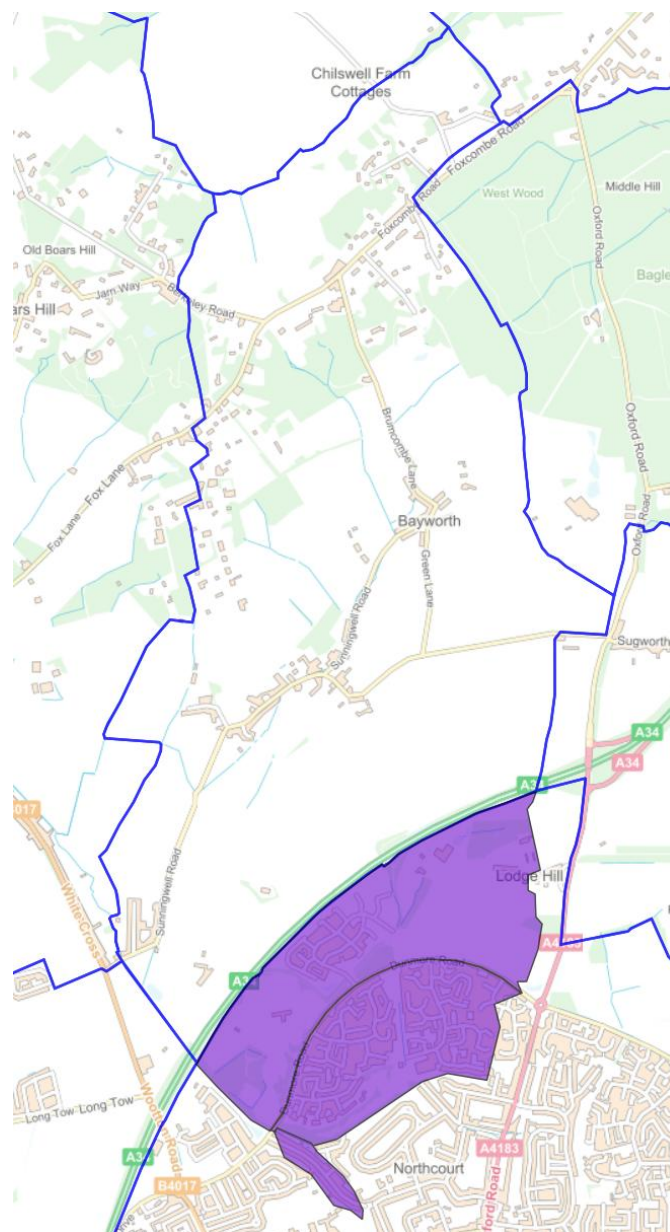


Figure 3.3 - The three areas ceded from Sunningwell to Abingdon since the 1980s shown in purple

3.3.4 The area of Sunningwell remaining is a combination of rural agricultural and residential. Almost half of the working population do so primarily from home (50% greater than the national average). The proportion of managers, directors and senior officials is twice the national average, and includes a notable fraction of business owners in the consulting and construction trades.

### Bayworth hamlet

3.3.5 Despite a history stretching back over 1,000 years, Bayworth retains only two buildings in excess of 100 years old, shown below



Figure 3.4 – Buildings older than 100 years in Bayworth © Mike Osborne & Facebook

3.3.6 Many of the more modern dwellings are semi-detached, and built in a coherent style typical of their era, with the examples below from the late 1940s and the 1960s. These were originally built as council houses and approximately half remain as social housing with the other half now being privately owned.



Figure 3.5 – Typical houses in Bayworth © Google Maps

3.3.7 There are other houses, both terraced and detached, from similar eras, and one block of 1960s maisonettes.

3.3.8 Bayworth has the highest population density in the parish, approaching 50 people per hectare.

3.3.9 As evidenced in the demographics shown in section 3.4 the area is characterised by a large number of self-employed and business-owners in building, catering and automotive trades.

3.3.10 Bayworth has an active residents' association (Bayworth Residents Association) that organises social and community activities, such as those illustrated on page 30.

3.3.11 Bayworth Triangle is a small triangular patch of grass at the heart of the hamlet and is owned by the parish council. As well as being a pleasant green space, this is a valued gathering place for local events.



Figure 3.6 - Bayworth Triangle from above © Google Maps

### Boars Hill

3.3.12 Boars Hill's chief residential characteristic is its interesting mix of signature dwellings of a range of late 19th and 20th century vintages, mostly set in large plots with many trees, and a peaceful feel because of its rural setting. This is illustrated by the aerial image below, and results in a population density of only five people per hectare.



Figure 3.7 – Boars Hill, typified by signature detached residences in a range of styles set in large leafy plots © Google Maps

3.3.13 Eastern Boars Hill is an unusual and distinctive mix of the residential and the rural sitting on a narrow ridge which affords it its most striking feature, the Old Berkeley Golf Course, now open access land owned by the Oxford Preservation Trust and much enjoyed by residents and visitors.



Figure 3.8 - Old Berkeley Golf Course © Wikipedia Commons

3.3.14 Until the latter half of the 19th century Boars Hill, which straddles the parishes of Sunningwell, Wootton and Cumnor, was largely uninhabited heathland grazed by farmers from the surrounding villages. It was and still is famous for its views northwards to the city of Oxford, southwards to the Downs and westwards to the upper Thames Valley. These views of Oxford inspired Matthew Arnold's famous phrase in *Thyrsis* of 'the dreaming spires', which encouraged people to visit the hill and settle there.

3.3.15 Consequently, from the late 19th century the hill was developed, generally characterised by substantial dwellings situated in large leafy plots. Many of these have since been rebuilt, so that the hill has a wide variety of architecture with many unique signature dwellings. Some locally coherent stylistic groups exist, for example the 14 Voysey-influenced Arts and Crafts Movement houses on Foxcombe Road.

3.3.16 Many of the dwellings on the hill have associations with its past famous residents including Gilbert Murray, a classicist and campaigner for the League of Nations and for the establishment of Oxfam; Catherine Octavia Stevens, a notable astronomer; the botanist Sir Frederick Keeble and his wife the actress Lillah McCarthy, as well as renowned Oxford academics: Geoffrey Blackman, Sibthorpean professor of rural economy and legendary gardener, along with his artist wife Audrey; the bacteriologist Roy Vollum, after whom the most deadly strain of anthrax is named; the Assyriologist Oliver Gurney, scholar of Hittite and Akkadian; and the philosopher Edgar Carritt with his remarkable family all devoted to left-wing causes.

3.3.17 The views from Boars Hill are renowned, and those made famous by Matthew Arnold have remained intact since being painted by J.M.W. Turner and W. Turner in the first half of the 19th century.



Figure 3.9 - W. Turner - Oxford from Hinksey Hill c.1840



Figure 3.10 - Oxford viewed from Boars Hill © Wikipedia Commons

3.3.17 Boars Hill has a long-established association for residents (Boars Hill Association) representing the interests of the area which spans three parishes.

### Long Furlong

3.3.18 Long Furlong is a close-knit community of bungalow and low-rise detached dwellings, with a population density of approximately 30 people per hectare.

3.3.19 The height restrictions on buildings in the area originate from the houses being directly in line with runway 08/26 at the nearby RAF Abingdon (now Dalton Barracks).

3.3.20 Many of the original '800 sq. ft' houses from the 1930s have since been rebuilt or remodelled, but the common characteristic style remains and is immediately apparent even though there is house-to-house variability.

3.3.21 This characteristic style continued with further houses added in between 1950 and 1970.



Figure 3.11 – Low-rise detached houses typical of Long Furlong © Google Maps

3.3.22 The area has a high proportion of people who have lived there for many years, with some having been born there in the 1930s. As shown in the Planning Working Group Report, this leads to a significant proportion of the population being above 55 years old.

3.3.23 The proximity of Long Furlong to the B4017 Abingdon–Wootton road means that it is the only part of the parish to be within 500m of a daily bus service.

### Sunningwell village

3.3.24 Sunningwell village has a population density of approximately 20 people per hectare and benefits from many of the features and amenities that would be considered desirable in the archetypal English village. These include the St Leonard's Church, a medieval building with a prominent tower of local stone and a unique seven-sided porch added in c1560; the primary school, first established opposite the church in the 1870s, relocated to the edge of the village in 1972 which has its own archaeological project, Shrieve Cottage, courtesy of a gift from the friends of Sunningwell School; and the village hall, given just before World War I by the Shawcross family of Boars Hill and then enlarged as a memorial to the fallen.



Figure 3.12 - The seven-sided Jewel Porch at St. Leonard's Church Sunningwell – believed to be unique and the first ecclesiastical building to combine Gothic and Renaissance styles.

3.3.25 As the images below show, central Sunningwell has remained unspoilt for over a hundred years.



Figure 3.13 - St Leonard's Church and pond, Sunningwell. Top, present day ©Wikipedia, and bottom in 1907.



Figure 3.14 – Historic Hollytree and Rowan Cottages in Sunningwell village – present day © Google Maps, and circa 1900

3.3.26 There is also the pond, the village green, the cricket club and children's playground, the Flowing Well public house, and The Barn, Farm Shop and Café at Church Farm, images of which these are shown in other parts of this report. All of the listed buildings within the parish are within Sunningwell village and these are shown in Section 4.

3.3.27 It also has amenities that are less common, including a School of Art, located in the former primary school premises since the 1970s and serving a clientele well beyond the bounds of the parish; a deer farm, attractively situated in its parkland on the slopes of Boars Hill; and an opera company which has provided entertainment in venues near and far for over twenty years.

3.3.28 Further from the centre of Sunningwell, other styles of house are found, sometimes with a coherent style, but often with a mix of styles and vintages.



Figure 3.15 - Cricket Lane, Sunningwell – early 20th century © Richard Youdale



Figure 3.16 - Sunningwell Road – range of ages © Google Maps



Figure 3.17 - Dark Lane – c1930s © Richard Youdale

### Outlying areas

3.3.29 The old Quarry is situated between Bayworth and Sunningwell village. It is defined and constrained by the topography created by the quarrying work. With two dwellings, it is home to both Turner's Coal and Garden and to Opera Anywhere, a successful and popular travelling opera company. The Quarry garden provides a unique setting for summer musical performances that are well supported by locals and visitors alike. (see Section 5).

3.3.30 The views from the Quarry footpath extend to reach Goring Gap. The (never-completed) quarry canal running south from the quarry in the direction of Abingdon is a valuable flood-mitigation feature and a potential wildlife haven.

3.3.31 Church Farm is situated off the end of Dark Lane to the west of Sunningwell village. It is a working deer farm, that also runs educational events, some for adults and many for children including Deer School and Forest School in the holidays.

3.3.32 Long Furlong Farm is isolated together with one house at the very southern end of the parish, with two converted barns a short distance away.

3.3.33 Manor Farm is the historic location of Bayworth Manor, just to the east of the main hamlet of Bayworth, with earthworks dating back to Roman times. The farm house and two adjacent barns have now been converted to residential use.

3.3.34 Bayworth Residential Park is located a little north of the hamlet of Bayworth. Historically a caravan park, this is now a thriving community that embraces both its proximity to Bayworth, and the beauty of its views from its elevated position part way up Boars Hill.



Figure 3.18 - Sunset from Bayworth Residential Park © Katherine Rhodes

### Adjacent Developments

3.3.35 At present Sunningwell Parish continues to retain its character but is under increasing pressure from the adjacent developments. In addition to the 1,800 new homes to the south of the parish, an additional 5,250 have been proposed at Dalton Barracks to the south west. Sunningwell sits in a direct line between these and the city of Oxford.

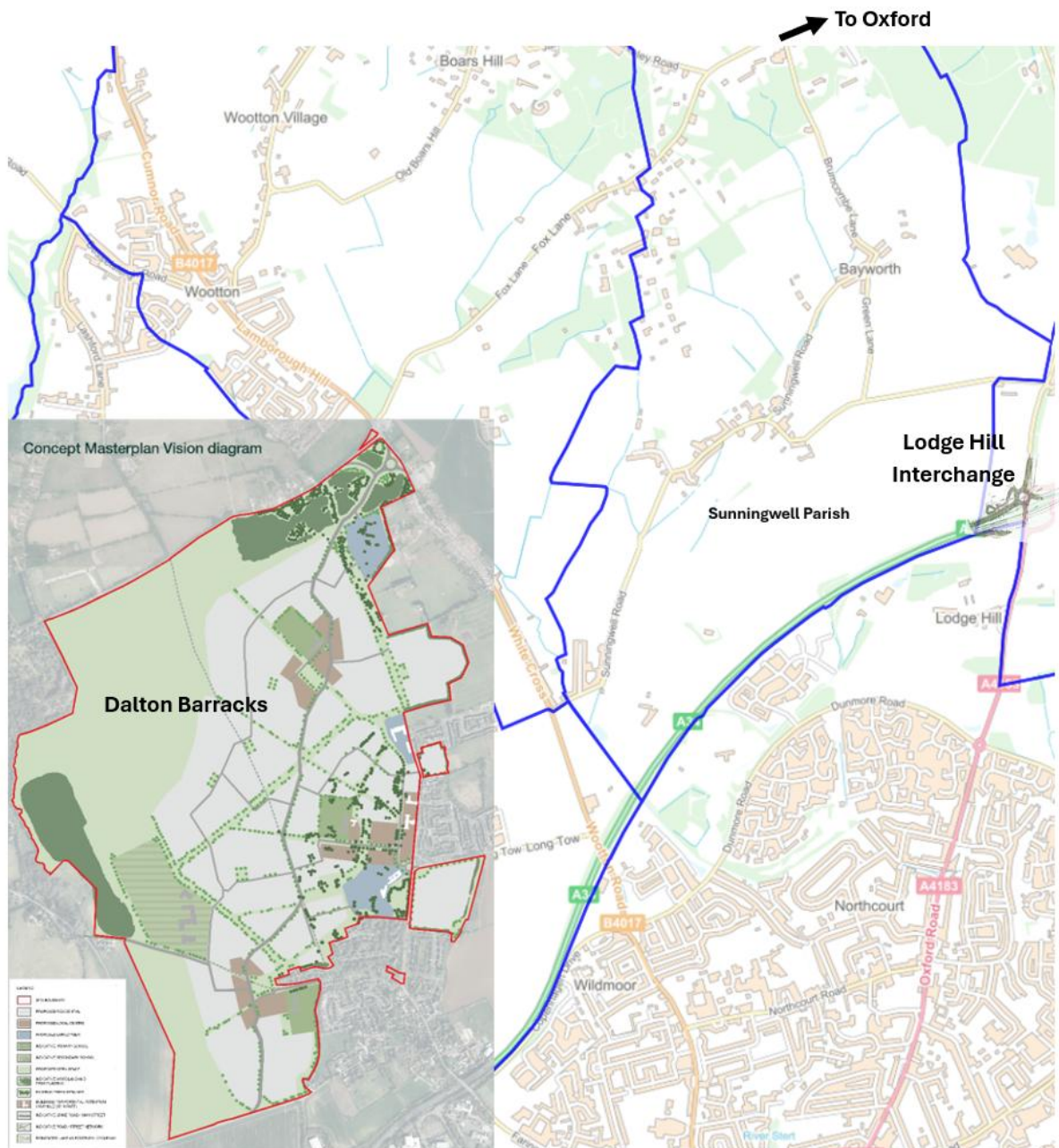


Figure 3.19 - Dalton Barracks & Lodge Hill Interchange

3.3.36 These new developments, and the traffic that they will bring, will place increasing demands on the amenities and travel routes in Sunningwell parish.

3.3.37 There is only one classified road in the parish which is the C10432 (Class III Road) which connects the B4017 Wootton Road to the A4183 Oxford Road and is known as Foxcombe Road. All other routes are narrow country lanes which in most cases are also the only pedestrian routes between the settlements within the parish.

3.3.38 Pedestrian access to the amenities located in Sunningwell Village involves walking these lanes.



Figure 3.20 - Bayworth Lane – Vehicle and Pedestrian Route from Bayworth to Boars Hill, predicted to experience a 360% increase in traffic due to Lodge Hill Interchange © Google maps

3.3.39 Even neglecting the new houses, the changes to Lodge Hill Interchange which are currently being implemented are predicted to significantly increase the traffic on many of these lanes. For example, in the PM Peak the traffic on the narrow and steep Bayworth Lane, above, is predicted to increase by 360%. This lane is the pedestrian route between Bayworth and Boars Hill, and the site of a 2013 road fatality.

### 3.4 Sunningwell Parish Profile

3.4.1 The following sections set out the demographic characteristics of our area, which have been used as the basis for many of our policies. Data is presented for the parish as a whole, and also for the four distinct regions within the parish indicated on the population centroid image below.

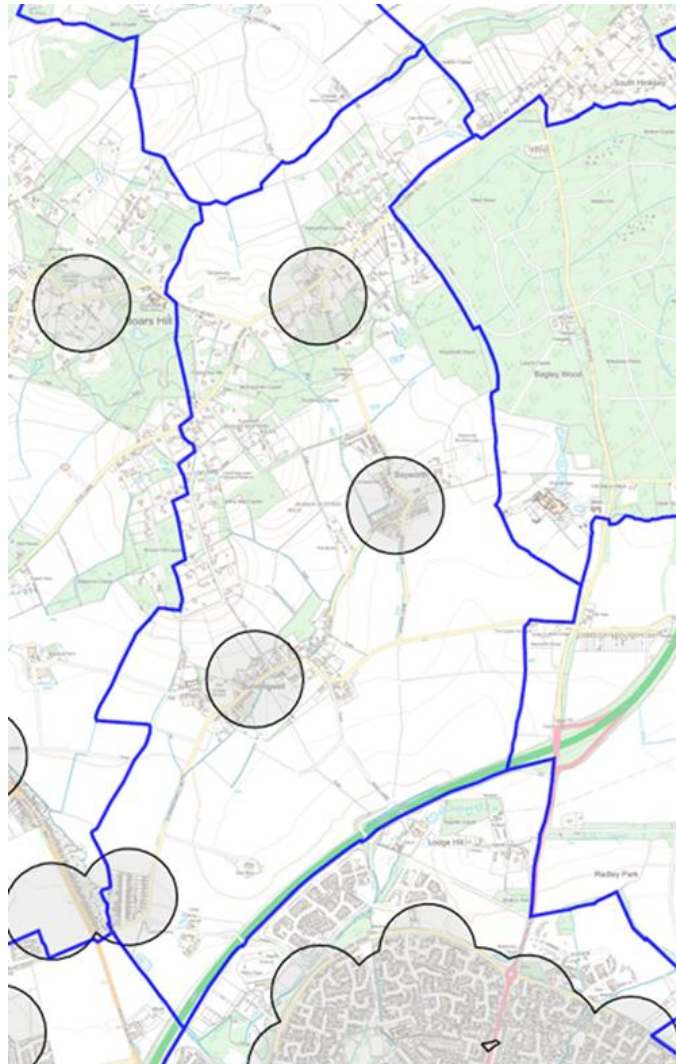


Figure 3.20 - Population Centroids in Sunningwell Parish

#### Sunningwell Parish Overall

3.4.2 Based on 2021 census data, the mid-2022 population of the parish of Sunningwell was 902 people in 359 households which is essentially the same as in 2011 when the census data showed 904 residents. Earlier census results show larger numbers, for example 1,554 in 2001, but this was based on a wider parish boundary prior to some areas being ceded to Abingdon.

**Area map**



**Population**

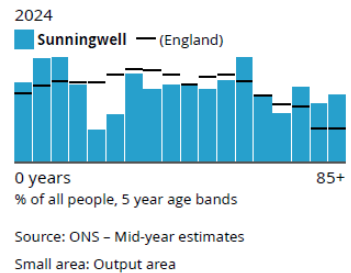
2022

**902**

people

Source – ONS Census 2021

**Age profile**

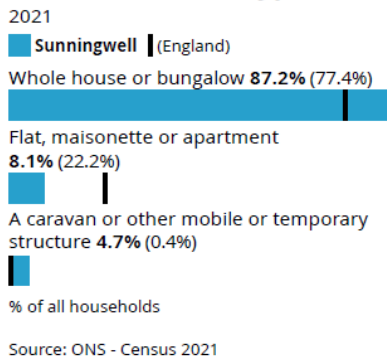


3.4.3 Age profiles show that there are approximately twice the number of people in the over-75 age bands compared to the national average.

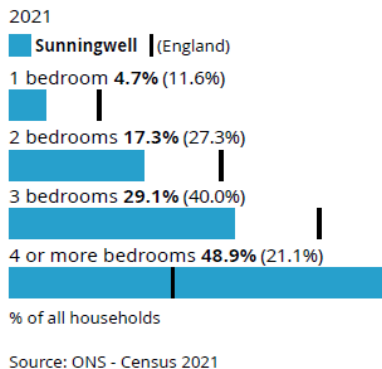
3.4.4 There is also a marked shortage of people in the 20-30 age band, being less than half the national average.

3.4.5 The parish has an unusually wide demographic range across its 359 dwellings, with the number of 4-bed and larger houses being more than twice the national average, combined with the number of caravan, mobile or temporary homes being ten times the national average.

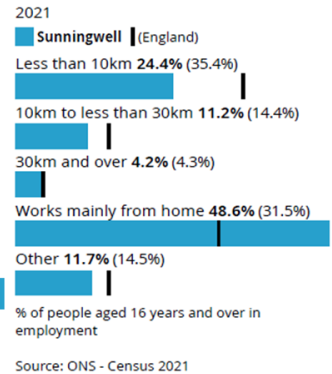
**Accommodation type**



**Number of bedrooms**



**Distance travelled to work**



3.4.6 Census data also show a higher-than-average L1, L2 and L3 socio-economic population and occupations at manager, director and professional levels, together with a higher-than-average proportion of people working from home.

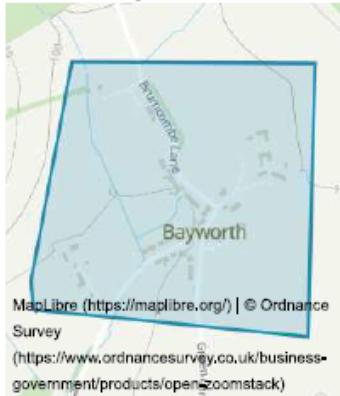
3.4.7 Qualification levels are higher than the national average, and a large fraction of residents work from home (48.6%) compared to the national average of 31.5%..

3.4.8 Levels of health and disability align closely with the national average, as shown below.

### Bayworth Hamlet

3.4.9 Bayworth hamlet has 202 residents in 89 households, equating to 22% of the population of the parish. The population density is relatively high, approaching 50 people per hectare.

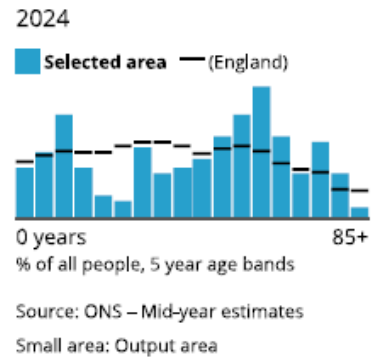
#### Area map



#### Population

2024  
**202**  
 people  
**58,620,101** people in England  
 Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates  
 Small area: Output area

#### Age profile



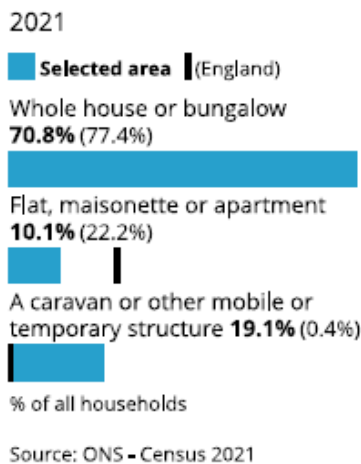
3.4.10 For Bayworth, the deficit of young adults is particularly marked, and extends across all working ages.

3.4.11 The general health is below the national average, and the levels of disability and the quantity of unpaid care are higher.

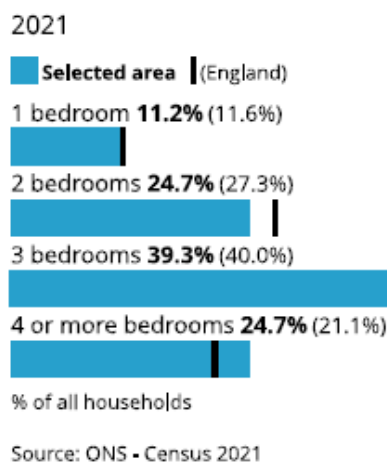
3.4.12 Qualification levels are marginally below the national average and there are fewer professionals, although a higher-than-average number of senior managers and directors.

3.4.13 Bayworth is home to the majority of the parish’s temporary homes, although it still has above the national average of four or more bedroom dwellings.

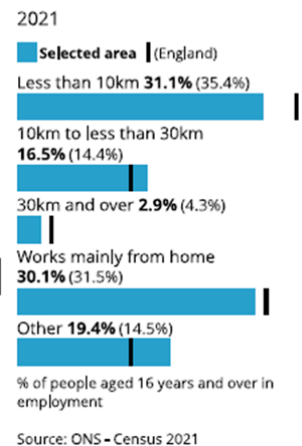
#### Accommodation type



#### Number of bedrooms



#### Distance travelled to work



3.4.14 The reliance on car-based transport is reflected in the fact that few households have no cars, with more than average having more than one, and working from home is marginally below the national average.

### Boars Hill – eastern section in Sunningwell parish

3.4.15 The Boars Hill area includes 336 residents in 114 dwellings, amounting to 37% of the parish population. The population is thinly spread, at approximately 5 people per hectare.

#### Area map



#### Population

2024

**336**

people

**58,620,101** people in England

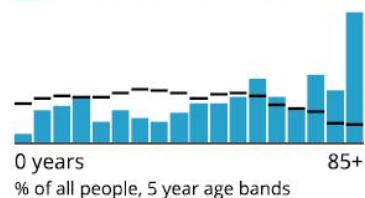
Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

#### Age profile

2024

Selected area (England)



Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

3.4.16 This region shows a large proportion of the population above 75 years, with all groups below 55 years being below average.

3.1.17 This is partly due to the presence of a residential care home in the region, which may also explain the larger than average proportion of people in the 'very bad health' category, although the overall level of people in good or very good health remains high.

3.4.18 More than 71% of houses in Boars Hill have four or more bedrooms, more than three times the national average. It also has a very high proportion of people who primarily work from home at 64%, more than twice the national average.

#### Accommodation type

2021

Selected area (England)

Whole house or bungalow  
**87.8%** (77.4%)

Flat, maisonette or apartment  
**12.2%** (22.2%)

A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure  
**0.0%** (0.4%)

% of all households

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

#### Number of bedrooms

2021

Selected area (England)

1 bedroom **4.5%** (11.6%)

2 bedrooms **13.5%** (27.3%)

3 bedrooms **10.8%** (40.0%)

4 or more bedrooms **71.2%** (21.1%)

% of all households

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

#### Distance travelled to work

2021

Selected area (England)

Less than 10km **12.3%** (35.4%)

10km to less than 30km  
**11.4%** (14.4%)

30km and over **5.3%** (4.3%)

Works mainly from home  
**64.0%** (31.5%)

Other **7.0%** (14.5%)

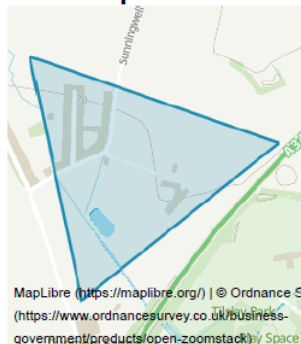
% of people aged 16 years and over in employment

3.4.19 Levels of occupation, socio-economic classification and qualifications are also high, with percentages in the highest section of each category being more than twice the national average.

## Long Furlong

3.4.20 Long Furlong is home to 104 people in 46 dwellings, being 12% of the parish population, at a density of about 30 people per hectare.

### Area map



### Population

2024

**104**

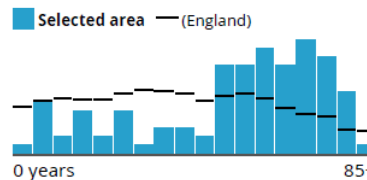
people

58,620,101 people in England

Source: ONS - Mid-year estimates  
Small area: Output area

### Age profile

2024



Source: ONS - Mid-year estimates  
Small area: Output area

3.4.21 The vast majority of the population is over 50 years old.

3.4.22 Health and disability levels are broadly in-line with the national average.

3.4.23 Accommodation is exclusively in houses, with the majority having three, or four or more bedrooms.

3.4.24 Significantly more than average work from home.

### Accommodation type

2021

Selected area (England)

Whole house or bungalow 100.0% (77.4%)

Flat, maisonette or apartment 0.0% (22.2%)

A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure 0.0% (0.4%)

% of all households

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

### Number of bedrooms

2021

Selected area (England)

1 bedroom 2.3% (11.6%)

2 bedrooms 15.9% (27.3%)

3 bedrooms 43.2% (40.0%)

4 or more bedrooms 38.6% (21.1%)

% of all households

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

### Distance travelled to work

2021

Selected area (England)

Less than 10km 24.3% (35.4%)

10km to less than 30km 13.5% (14.4%)

30km and over 0.0% (4.3%)

Works mainly from home 48.6% (31.5%)

Other 13.5% (14.5%)

% of people aged 16 years and over in employment

3.4.25 Levels of occupation, socio-economic classification and qualifications are also higher than the national average.

## Sunningwell Village

3.4.26 Sunningwell village is home to 260 residents in 112 households, equating to 29% of the population of the parish and distributed at about 20 people per hectare.

### Area map



### Population

2022

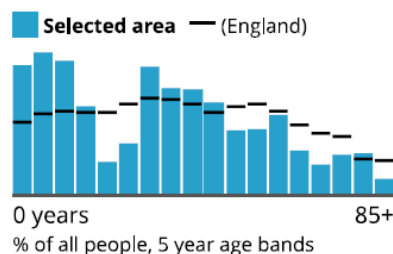
**260**

people

Source – ONS Census 2021

### Age profile

2024



Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

3.4.27 Sunningwell village, home to the only primary school in the parish, has a higher-than-average population under the age of 15, although the deficit in the 20-30 age group remains.

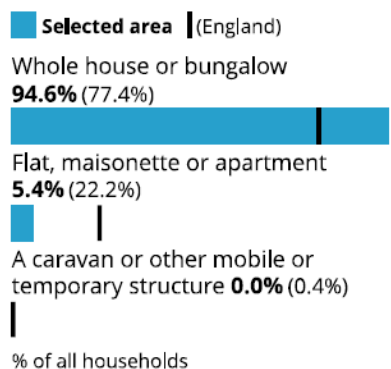
3.4.28 Health and disability compare favourably with the national average.

3.4.29 Accommodation is predominantly houses, with 50% having four or more bedrooms, more than twice the national average.

3.4.30 The number of people working from home is also significantly higher than the national average.

### Accommodation type

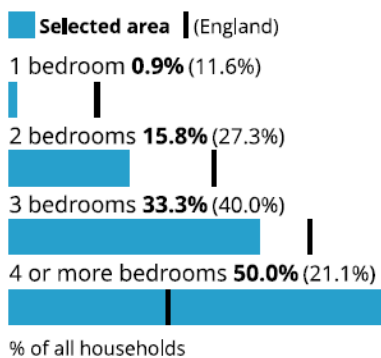
2021



Source: ONS - Census 2021

### Number of bedrooms

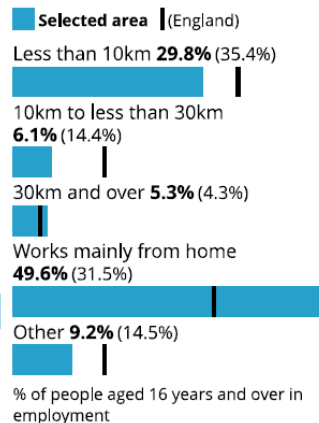
2021



Source: ONS - Census 2021

### Distance travelled to work

2021



% of people aged 16 years and over in employment

3.4.31 Levels of occupation, socio-economic classification and qualifications are also higher than the national average.

## 4. Issues and Opportunities

### 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 To understand the needs of Sunningwell Parish and the priorities of residents over the neighbourhood plan period, an initial public consultation was undertaken between May and July 2025.

4.1.2 The consultation was launched at the Annual Parish Meeting on 29 May 2025 where an overview of Neighbourhood Plan benefits and logistics was presented, with guest speakers from adjacent parishes who had Neighbourhood Plans in place, and from our local Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire County Council councillors.

4.1.3 This meeting was advertised in advance, both on the parish Council web-site and electronic newsletter, and on a leaflet delivered to every address in the parish.

4.1.4 Following a Q&A session, attendees were invited to complete a questionnaire identifying what they saw as priorities. This was available in both paper and online versions.

4.1.5 This survey was further promoted by the delivery of a further leaflet to every address in the parish in the month of July 2025.

4.1.6 More than 25% of dwellings responded positively to the survey, and the results are summarised in the graphic below.

4.1.7 Once the survey closed, all responses were compiled, analysed and published on the Sunningwell Parish Council website. To further engage residents and explore emerging themes the results were presented at the Working Group launch meeting on 28 September 2025 in Sunningwell Village Hall.

4.1.8 As can be seen, there is a good level of commonality between the priorities of the different geographies within the parish. The responses from Sunningwell Village and Boars Hill are remarkably similar. Those from Bayworth also share the same top three priorities. Responses from Long Furlong are similar, although the topics of planning and housing (new and old) score more highly, possibly due to the closer proximity to the proposed significant housing development (e.g. Dalton Barracks).

4.1.9 The survey also included a free-text box for respondents to indicate other priorities. The most frequent responses in this box related to heritage and character of the parish.

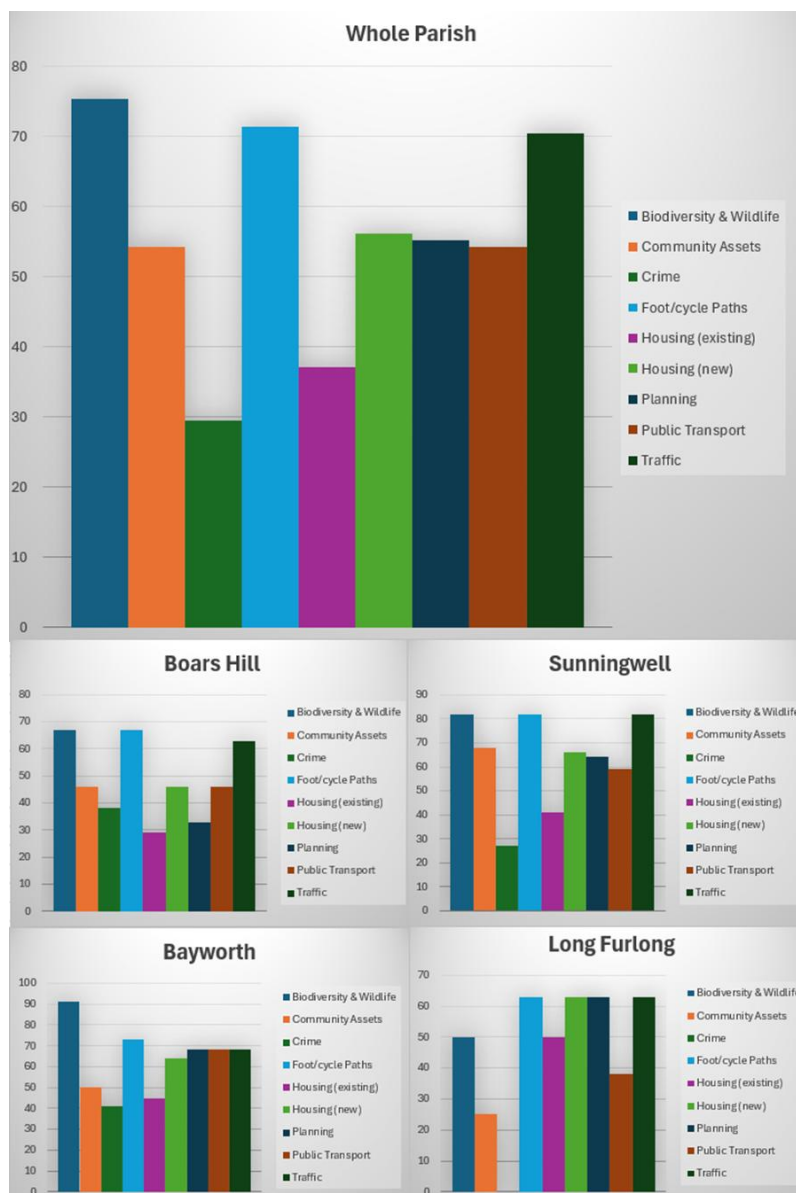


Figure 4.1 - Priorities identified, and split by geography

## 4.2 Land Use Issues

### 4.2.1 The primary land-use issues identified were:

- Heritage & Character,
- Biodiversity and Wildlife,
- Foot/cycle Paths.

These were followed by four closely ranked issues:

- New housing,
- Planning,
- Existing Housing, and
- Community Assets.

### 4.3 Non- Land Use Issues

4.3.1 Neighbourhood plans are focused on land use planning policies related to the development and use of land. As a result, important issues that are of particular interest to the local community - but do not fall within the remit of planning policy - are often not addressed directly.

4.2.2 However, Sunningwell Parish Council recognises the significance of these non-planning matters to residents and has chosen to highlight them within this plan as community aspirations. These aspirations represent key concerns the community wishes to see progressed and may be pursued through appropriate bodies within the Parish. The major non-land use issues identified through community consultation were related to traffic and its impact on safety and noise

- Traffic– speeding and safety of local lanes; and
- Traffic Noise

### 4.3 Vision and Objectives

4.3.1 To address the priorities identified, five Working Groups were formed, being Heritage and Character; Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Wildlife; Footpaths and Active Travel; Planning; and Traffic and Transport.

4.3.2 Each Working Group defined both Aims and Scope for their topic area. These were publicised in the Neighbourhood Plan section of the parish Council website. The Aims and Scope were also checked against, and confirmed by, the results of the Second Residents' Survey.

4.3.3 The Working Group Aims, Scope and findings were further tested against parishioner views by the publication of the Working Group Reports, and the associated Third Residents' Survey where over 3,500 individual question responses were received.

4.3.4 Following this confirmation the Working Group Aims became the topic-area objectives as shown in the graphic below, with only minor grammatical modifications required by the change in context.

4.3.5 Based on these objectives, and the confirmations and views expressed in the three Residents' Surveys, the Steering Group summarised the over-arching vision as indicated in the graphic.

4.3.6 Policies and community aspirations were developed from these objectives as shown in the graphic below.

4.3.7 Consultation on the Vision, Objectives and Policies was through the circulation of both the draft Neighbourhood Plan document and also a shorter Policy Summary

SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

document with a month-long consultation period, all publicised by a leaflet delivered to every address in the parish.

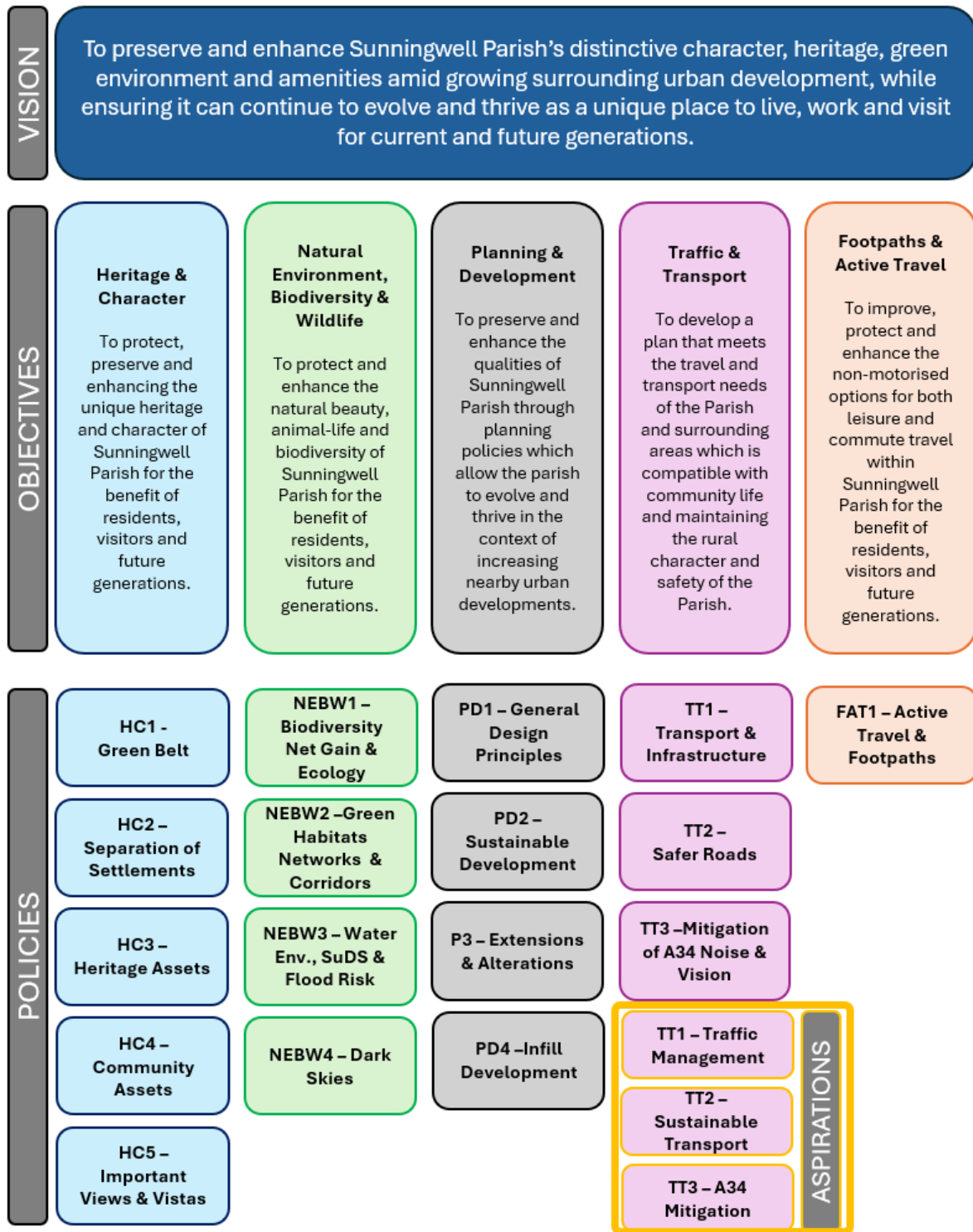


Figure 4.2 - Vision, Objectives, Polices & Community Aspirations

## 5. Policies

### 5.1 List of Policies and Community Aspirations

5.1.1 The following Policies and Community Aspirations have been devised in response to the Vision and Objectives and the community engagement and consultations that have taken place to date.

#	Policy	Policy Title
1	HC1	Green Belt
2	HC2	Separation of Settlements
3	HC3	Heritage Assets
4	HC4	Community Assets
5	HC5	Important Views and Vistas
6	NEBW1	Biodiversity Net Gain & Ecological Enhancement
7	NEBW2	Green Habitats, Networks and Corridors
8	NEBW3	Water Environment, Sustainable Drainage & Flood Risk
9	NEBW4	Dark Skies and Nocturnal Wildlife
10	PD1	General Design Principles
11	PD2	Sustainable Development
12	PD3	Extensions and Alterations
13	PD4	Infill Development
14	TT1	Transport and Infrastructure
15	TT2	Safer Roads
16	TT3	Mitigation of A34 Noise and Vision
17	FAT1	Active Travel & Footpaths

#	Community Aspiration	Community Aspiration Title
1	TT1	Traffic Management
2	TT2	Sustainable Transport
3	TT3	Mitigation of A34 Noise and Vision



## SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

5.2.3 Section 143 of the NPPF defines the 5 purposes of the Green Belt as:

1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. to assist in urban regeneration, by the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.2.4 To the north, west and east, Sunningwell borders other Green Belt parishes. However, the southern border of Sunningwell is with Abingdon town which is not Green Belt. It is of relevance to Sunningwell that while Oxford has been considered a 'large built-up area' in the context of purpose 1, Abingdon has not, meaning that expansion of Abingdon into the Green Belt has not been considered to be in violation of purpose 1.

5.2.5 The images below show the growth of north Abingdon into the Green Belt between 2015 and 2025, as well as the expansion of Radley and Kennington.

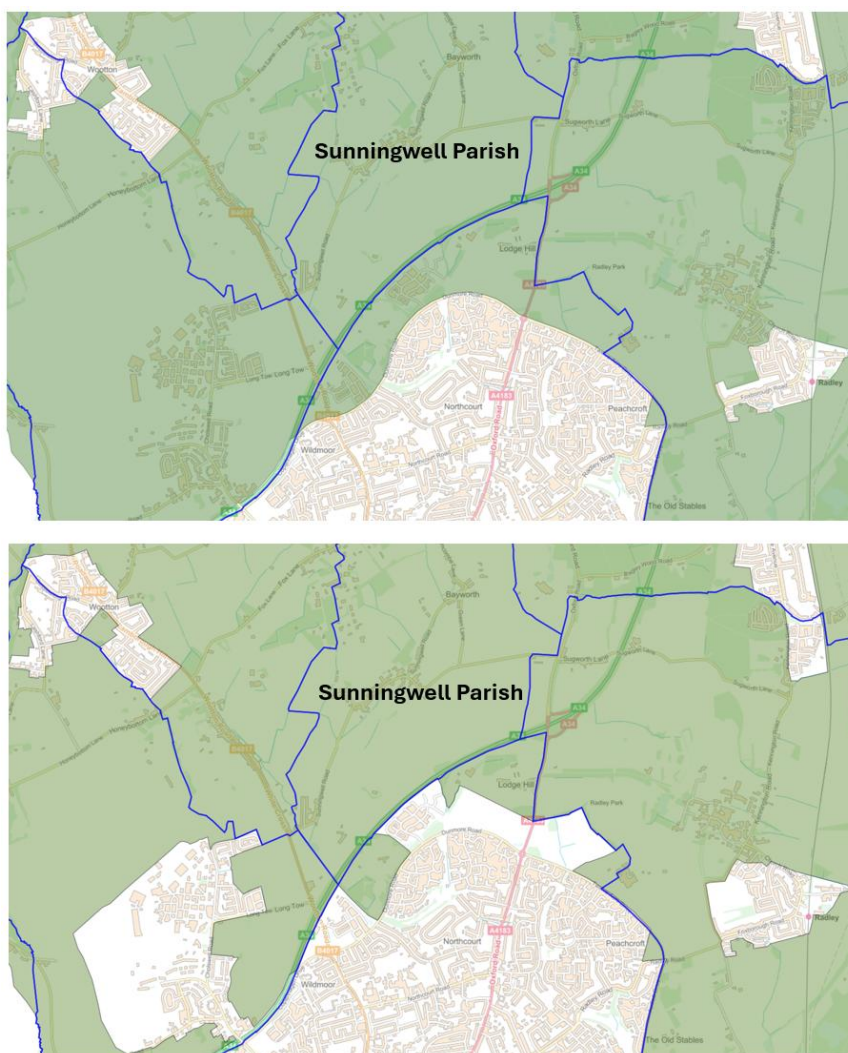


Figure 5.2 - Oxford Green Belt 2015 (top) and 2025 (bottom)

### Policy HC1: Green Belt

The Green Belt will continue to be protected to maintain its openness and permanence. Development proposal in the Green Belt will be determined against principles set out in Core Policy 13: The Oxford Green Belt in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1.

## 5.3 Separation of Settlements

5.3.1 The parish has four distinct population centres of Bayworth, Boars Hill, Long Furlong and Sunningwell village as indicated below.

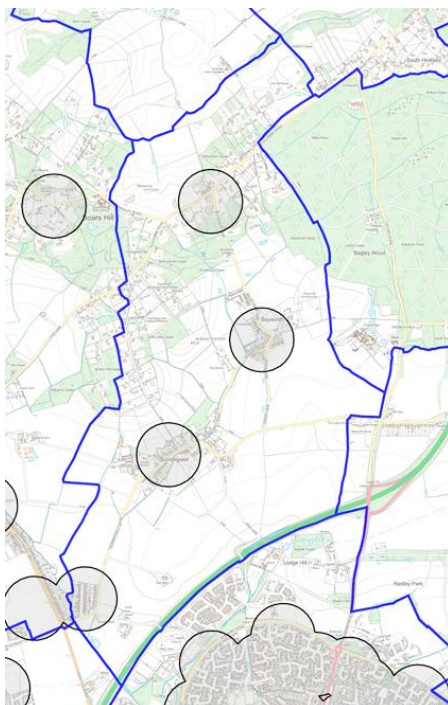


Figure 5.3 - Population Centroids within Sunningwell Parish

5.3.2 It is a distinctive and treasured characteristic of the parish that the four distinct populated areas within it remain separated by open fields.

5.3.3 The residents of Sunningwell parish would like to express their gratitude to the landowners, both current and previous generations, who have kept and maintained these treasured green buffer areas.

5.3.4 Public consultation within Sunningwell parish has consistently highlighted strong support for preventing development creep into the surrounding countryside. The plan seeks to preserve the green buffer areas, while recognising that there will be development pressures from neighbouring Abingdon and Dalton Barracks.

SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Gaps between Sunningwell (foreground) and Abingdon (background)



Gap between Sunningwell (right foreground) and Boars Hill (left background)



Gaps between Bayworth (left background), the Quarry (left foreground), and Sunningwell village (right) with Abingdon in the distance

Figure 5.4 - All images © Lucy Roberts Photography

5.3.5 The priority is to safeguard the countryside and rural character of the parish, ensuring that it is not compromised by major development which would be out of keeping with the local character.

5.3.6 In order to maintain the separation of settlements a number of important gaps have been identified, as shown below.

### **Policy HC2: Separation of Settlements**

Development proposals in the neighbourhood area should demonstrate that the character of any particular settlement is retained, and that a physical and visual separation is maintained between different settlements. In particular new development should maintain the separation between the following settlements in the neighbourhood area;

- Between Boars Hill and Oxford
- Between Sunningwell and Abingdon
- Between Boars Hill and Bayworth
- Between Boars Hill and Sunningwell
- Between Sunningwell and Long Furlong
- Between Sunningwell and Bayworth
- Between Sunningwell and the Quarry
- Between Bayworth and the Quarry
- Between Bayworth and the Residential Park
- Between Bayworth and Manor Farm
- Between Bayworth and Chandlings
- Between Sunningwell Dark Lane and Blagrove Farm (and Lincombe Lane to Whitecross)

Development proposals will be considered in the context of Core Policy 4 in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031:Part 1, and in addition, will only be supported where;

- the physical and visual separation between two separate settlements is not unacceptably diminished;
- cumulatively, with other existing or proposed development, it does not compromise the physical and visual separation between settlements; and
- it does not lead to a loss of environmental or historical assets that individually or collectively contribute towards their local identity.

5.3.7 These gaps respond to areas where the setting of the settlement areas could be significantly affected by development. Gaps include only the land necessary to fulfil this function, reflecting the elevated topography, important views and historic character of the settlement.

# SUNNINGWELL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

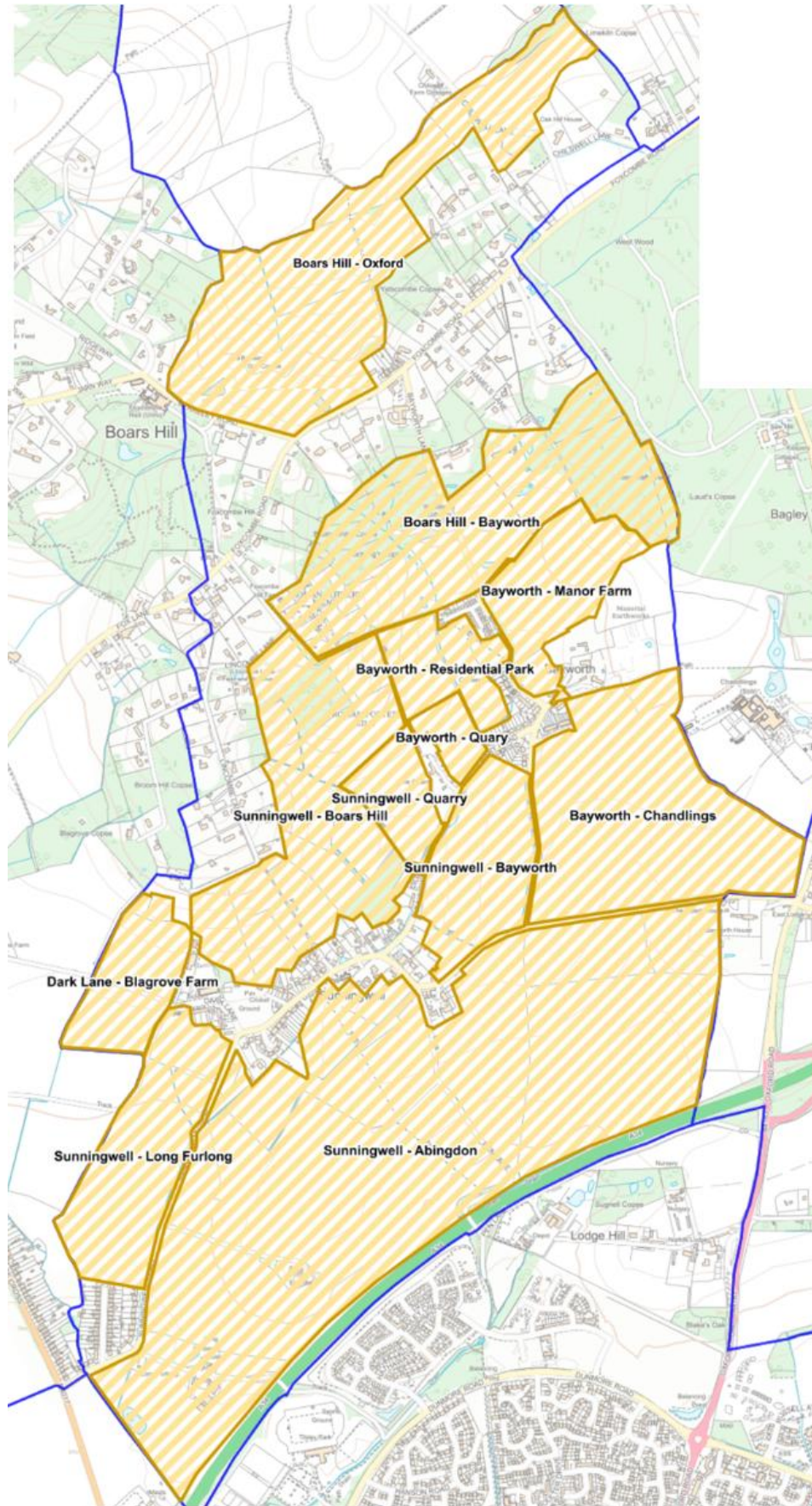


Figure 5.5 - Critical gaps providing separation of settlements

## 5.4 Heritage Assets

5.4.1 In Sunningwell Parish there are seven listed buildings, of which five are Grade II and two are Grade II\*.

### Listed Buildings

Grade II*	St Leonard's Church, Sunningwell
Grade II*	The Old Manor, Sunningwell
Grade II	Sunningwell House, Sunningwell
Grade II	Beaulieu Court Farmhouse, Sunningwell
Grade II	The Old Rectory, Sunningwell
Grade II	Church Farmhouse, Sunningwell
Grade II	The Thatched Barn, Sunningwell

5.4.2 Understanding the heritage of a settlement is essential to shaping its successful future. It is crucial that the significance of listed buildings and their settings is recognised, as this awareness supports their ongoing maintenance and protection. Increased knowledge also enables the architectural and historic value of these buildings to be celebrated and reflected in future development across Sunningwell Parish.



Figure 5.6 - Location of Listed Buildings in Sunningwell village



Figure 5.7 - St Leonard's Church, Sunningwell village © Lucy Roberts Photography



Figure 5.8 - St Leonard's Church (left), Church Farm House (centre), the Thatched Barn (right), and The Old Rectory and Wellingtonia (right), Sunningwell © Historic England



Figure 5.9 - The Old Manor – Sunningwell © Google Maps



Figure 5.10 - Sunningwell House © Google Maps



Figure 5.11 - Beaulieu Court Farmhouse, Sunningwell Village



Figure 5.12 - The Thatched Barn, Sunningwell

5.4.3 The neighbourhood plan has identified a series of non-designated heritage assets across Sunningwell Parish. Non-designated heritage assets are locally identified 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated assets' (PPG, paragraph: 039).



Figure 5.13 - Examples of Voysey-inspired Arts and Crafts houses in Boars Hill © Rachel Nuttall



Figure 5.14 - Examples of historic dwellings typical of Sunningwell © Google Maps

5.4.4 Although non-designated heritage assets carry less statutory weight than designated assets, they remain important components of the local historic environment and/or character of particular parts of the parish. The NPPF requires that the significance of non-designated heritage assets be considered when determining planning applications that may affect them. Where harm to or loss of such assets is proposed, a balanced judgment must be made, considering both the scale of the harm or loss and the heritage value of the asset.

5.4.5 Policy HC3 seeks to protect the significance of locally important heritage assets and their settings, where appropriate. According to the NPPF, significance is defined as: *“the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

5.4.6 Historic England describes conservation as *“the process of maintaining and managing change to heritage assets in a way that sustains and enhances their significance”*.

5.4.7 The assets which have been identified within Sunningwell Parish are considered by residents to be of local importance, owing to their age, character, appearance or historical associations. The identified non-designated assets are detailed in Appendix XX

### **Policy HC3: Heritage Assets**

Any development proposal that would have a direct or indirect effect on the significance of a heritage asset should demonstrate how the proposal will conserve the heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its significance and demonstrate how the development would make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness.

Development proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets, for example through the provision of open or public space, or by taking opportunities to improve appropriate public access, will be supported. Conversely, development proposals that crowd, overshadow, obscure or otherwise adversely affect the significance of heritage assets will not be supported.

For the purposes of this policy the following are the currently identified non-designated heritage assets in the neighbourhood area are detailed in Appendix XX.

## 5.5 Community Assets

5.5.1 Community services and facilities play a vital role in supporting the social, spiritual and physical well-being of residents. They are central to the vitality and long-term viability of Sunningwell Parish, contributing to a strong sense of place and enhancing overall quality of life. These spaces often serve as key hubs for social interaction and community cohesion.

5.5.2 The NPPF emphasises that valued community facilities should be retained where possible. Paragraph 98 sets out how planning policies and decision “should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments”.

5.5.3 Sunningwell Parish contains a range of services and facilities, the following facilities are important to the community as highlighted by the community consultation:

- St Leonard’s Church
- Sunningwell Village Hall
- Heelas Heating Hall
- Flowing Well Public House
- Church Farm Shop & Café
- Church Farm Deer Farm and Schol
- Beaumont Care Home
- Bayworth Triangle
- Sunningwell Village Green
- Old Berkeley Golf Course (Oxford Preservation Trust)
- Lincombe Lane Field (Oxford Preservation Trust)
- Sunningwell Cricket Club & Field
- Children’s Playground
- Sunningwell C of E School
- The Quarry event venue
- Sunningwell Art School

5.5.4 The shops and services are greatly valued by the community. Therefore, any proposals which are submitted which would enhance provision of, and create better accessibility to, these services would be supported in principle.

5.5.5 The public consultation results highlighted the need for additional services such as an early morning and late afternoon bus service to Abingdon and Oxford.

#### **Policy HC4: Community Assets**

Development proposals which will result in the loss of, or cause unacceptable harm to a parish facility or amenity will not be supported unless:

- It would lead to the significant improvement of an existing facility, or the replacement of an existing facility with another equally convenient to the local community it serves and with equivalent or improved facilities; or
- The facility is no longer economically viable for the established use, or there is a suitable and sustainable alternative that is located nearby; or
- The facility is no longer required.

Development proposals which would provide additional services, facilities and amenities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- they will not have unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in accordance with Development Policy 23 in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2;
- they do not create an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will be acceptable;
- access arrangements and off-street parking can be provided in accordance with adopted standards; and
- their design has regard to the character and heritage of Sunningwell Parish and to location within the parish.

For the purposes of this policy the following are the currently identified Community Assets are listed in Section 5.5.3 of this Neighbourhood Plan.

## 5.6 Important Views and Vistas

5.6.1 Sunningwell Parish is characterised by a wide variety of key views, which are described in greater detail in the Heritage and Character Working Group Report and in Appendix YY.

5.6.2 This policy identifies views within Sunningwell Parish established through extensive consultations with residents and stakeholders who recognised them as being of particular significance.

5.6.3 These views have been deemed significant due to their contribution to:

- **Landscape and Built Character:** Preserving the unique character of individual settlements and the landscape between them within the plan area.
- **Heritage Assets:** Recognising the proximity to designated heritage assets.
- **Visual Amenity:** The aesthetic value of the undulating landscape setting with a number of views gained from elevated points.

5.6.4 When considering development proposals within the plan area, careful consideration must be given to the potential impact on the identified significant views.

5.6.5 This policy does not seek to prevent all development within the view but to ensure that the scale, massing and height of proposals do not result in the integrity of the view being undermined. Further information on the Important Views and the reasons for their inclusion can be found in the Appendix YY.

### Long-distance views

5.6.6 The high ground in the parish means that it benefits from many long-distance views that extend well beyond the boundaries of the parish, taking in a considerable area of the Thames Valley and Vale of the White Horse.

5.6.7 Although there are views in every direction, perhaps the most notable are the four indicated below.

5.6.8 These long-distance views that attract many walkers and ramblers to the area. Each is visible from a range of vantage points, offering walkers a subtly changing perspective as they proceed.

5.6.9 **Dreaming spires** - The most famous view from the parish is from Boars Hill towards Oxford, setting the 'dreaming spires' between the green fields in the foreground and the rolling green hills in the background.



Figure 5.15 – Oxford's 'Dreaming Spires' from Boars Hill

5.6.11 Goring Gap - Extensive vistas to the south are available from several locations in the parish, notably from the end of Lincombe Lane, and the escarpment of the Old Quarry, with views stretching as far as Goring Gap (23km) and beyond.



Figure 5.16 - Goring Gap from Lincombe Lane © Mike Osborne

5.6.12 Rolling hills are visible in many directions, with the example blow looking north from Berkeley Old Golf Course.



View 5.17 -Rolling hills to the north of the Old Golf Course © Lindsay Judson

5.6.13 Ridgeway - Clear views to the Ridgeway, some 20km distant are visible from many points in the parish, with the image below showing from view from the observation chair installed at the edge of Woodcraft Wood above Bayworth.



Figure 5.18 - View over the Vale to Ridgeway and viewing chair © Katherine Rhodes

## Local Views

5.6.14 The layout of the dwellings within the parish means that almost every one is either in an isolated location, or sits at the edge of a settlement, yielding views in at least one direction.

5.6.15 From Boars Hill, variations of the long-distance views above are enjoyed by many.

5.6.16 For Bayworth, Long Furlong and Sunningwell village the views are often towards higher ground. These views are an essential part of the character of the area.

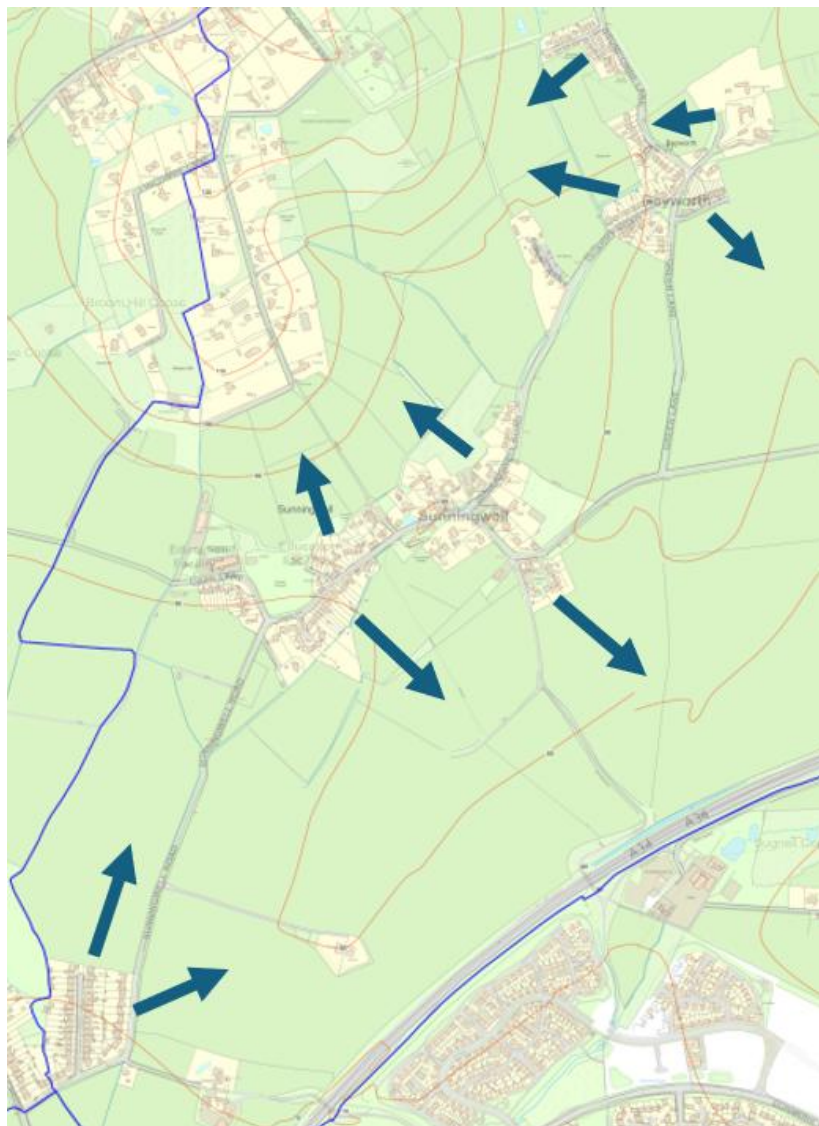


Figure 5.19 - Local views – often towards higher ground

5.6.17 The nature of the terrain means that the reverse of all of the above views are also valued as characteristic of the parish.

5.6.18 A typical example of a local view is shown below, towards Boars Hill from Bayworth Residential Park.



Figure 5.20 - View from Bayworth Residential Park to Boars Hill © Katherine Rhodes

### Views into the parish

5.6.19 Views of the parish are valued beyond the parish boundaries – the example below is from the Vale of White Horse (VoWH) ‘Dalton Barracks Strategic Allocation’ document where preservation of the view to Boars Hill is a named objective.

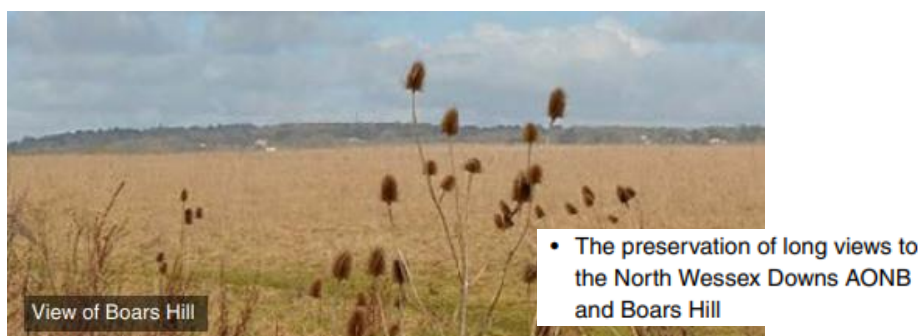


Figure 5.21 -Extract from VoWH ‘Dalton Barracks Strategic Allocation’

### Policy HC5 – Important Views and Vistas

Even where development is otherwise acceptable within the neighbourhood area development the design, height, massing, and layout of development proposals should acknowledge and respond positively to the identified views. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an important view will not be supported.

For the purposes of this policy important views and vistas are described in Appendix YY.

## 5.7 Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancement

5.7.1 Sunningwell Parish is predominantly Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (LDAGR), with areas of Ancient Woodland, both natural and replanted. There are no urban areas within the parish.

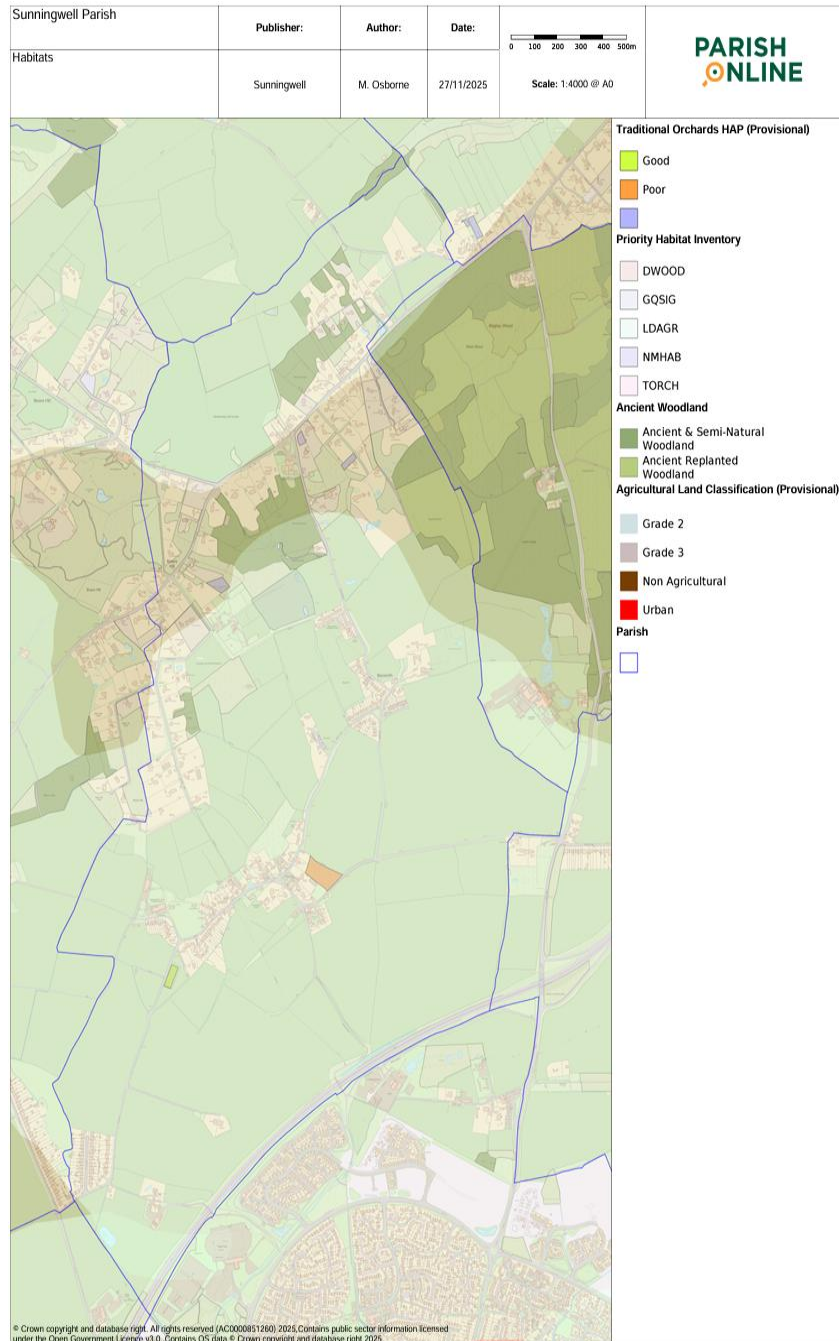


Figure 5.22 – Habitat regions within the parish

5.7.2 The vast majority of the farmed land in Sunningwell Parish is managed under a Countryside Stewardship Agreement.

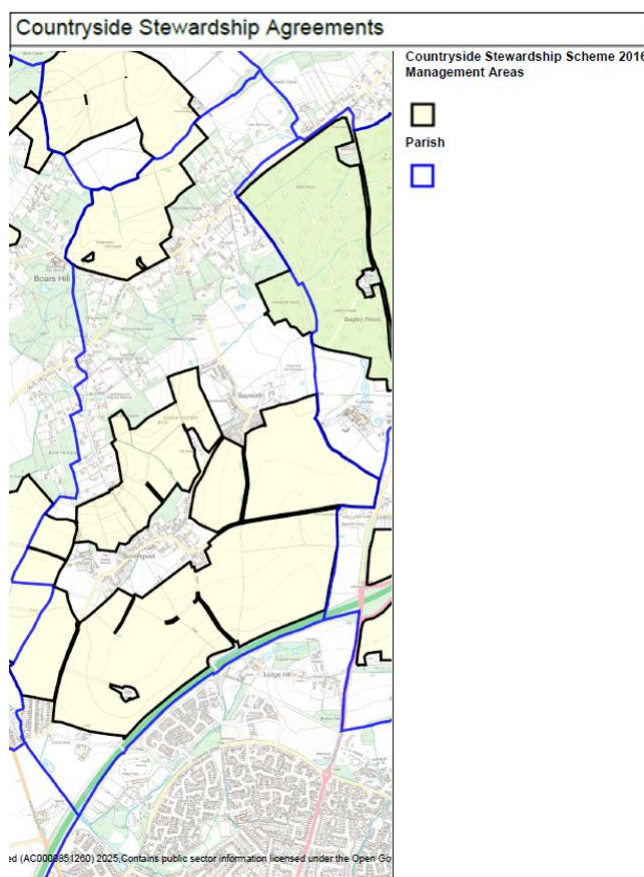


Figure 5.23 – Countryside stewardship areas within the parish

5.7.3 Much of the parish is made up of farmland, including both arable fields and a commercial deer farm, all of which shape the local landscape. For the parish’s plan to succeed, it will be vital to work closely with these landowners and tenant farmers, building strong partnerships that support the protection of nature.

5.7.4 There are approximately 30 identified Green Assets which are detailed in the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Wildlife Working Group Report.

5.7.5 Some of the more significant ones are described below

5.7.6 Sunningwell village green is a 10.2 acre site that was once two separate fields: Upper and Lower Bury Close. As part of the historic open-field system, the land still shows traces of its past, with areas of ridge and furrow visible today. The parish council purchased the site in 2017, and it is now officially designated as a village green.

5.7.7 Today, the green is a largely open landscape framed by mature trees, offering an important space for both people and wildlife. Recent planting of native species has helped to increase biodiversity, and the site is cared for by the village green warden. At the lower edge of the green, a small stream provides valuable habitat and supports a variety of local wildlife, adding to the ecological richness of the area.



was believed to have healing properties. Over the years, the pond has served many practical purposes, including providing water for the local smithy and for horses, and has helped to support duck and fowl breeding.



Figure 5.26 - Sunningwell Pond

5.7.10 The pond continues to play an important ecological role. Its water vole population fluctuates and is monitored by Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT); activity was particularly strong in 2022–23, though sightings have since become more occasional. A wide range of wildlife depends on the pond, including mallards, moorhens, sticklebacks, herons, and the occasional kingfisher and grey wagtail. Active management, such as periodic dredging and careful vegetation pruning, helps maintain and improve the habitat, ensuring the pond remains a thriving part of the village’s natural environment.

5.7.11 Pilkington Pocket is a small piece of woodland beside Sunningwell village hall. Although currently overgrown and unused, it has the potential to become a welcoming public space. With some careful management, such as clearing a path to the gate, opening up the bramble-covered areas, and creating a small wooded glade, the site could offer a peaceful spot for residents, perhaps with a bench for quiet enjoyment. Planting native bluebells and snowdrops would add seasonal colour and support local pollinators.



Figure 5.27 -Pilkington Pocket

5.7.12 Bayworth Triangle functions as a small village green, offering open space with a handful of trees that attract birds and provide habitat for pollinators. Though modest in size, it contributes to the parish's network of green spaces.

5.7.13 Church Farm Wood, once part of the historic Church Farm, was planted in 2005 with a mix of ash, oak, maple, and willow. It is managed alongside Foxcombe Wood, which lies just beyond the parish's north-west boundary. Access is by permit through an annual subscription, and the woodland supports a range of wildlife including wild deer, rabbits, and game birds. Plans for the future include a wetland area.

5.7.14 The Old Berkeley Golf Course is owned and managed by the Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) the old golf course has a long and distinctive history. The private course was originally created around 1900 by the 8th Earl of Berkeley, and in 1927 it became the first site purchased by the OPT to prevent development. The area has since been expanded to include a lowland field to the north and the neighbouring Abraham Wood. Its landscape consists of rough grassland, small boggy areas, hedges, and two copses that have bluebells each spring. Current work, supported by the Abingdon Green Gym, is focused on restoring the lower section of the site to fenland.



Figure 5.28 - Old Berkeley Golf Course

5.7.15 Lincombe Lane Field, also owned by the Oxford Preservation Trust since the late 1930s, is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The upper section is a grazed field, while the lower area contains a small valley fen that is currently undergoing restoration to improve its ecological value.



Figure 5.29 - Lincombe Lane Field

5.7.16 Lime Kiln Copse and its adjoining valley lie partly within Sunningwell parish, with the remainder in South Hinksey and Cumnor. Also designated as a Local Wildlife Site, it is the most easterly of the five valley fens on the north side of Boars Hill. The land is privately owned and unmanaged, but it includes a secluded and attractive pond at the Sunningwell end.

5.7.17 Brumcombe Copse and Ducklings Copse, together covering around 14 acres, form a dense woodland area with a large pool and a history of being managed as a woodland garden. Classified as semi-natural ancient woodland, the presence of ridge and furrow suggests the land was cleared in medieval times. Although the whole area holds ancient woodland status, different sections vary considerably, with some areas recently cleared and regenerating with a mix of species, including some invasive plants.

5.7.18 St Leonard's churchyard contains several trees and hedgerows along two of its boundaries as well as an ancient, still very vigorous yew. Introducing a patch of medium-length grassland could allow more wild plants to flower, providing additional pollen and nectar for insects while enhancing the churchyard's natural character.



Figure 5.30 - St Leonard's Church and churchyard

5.7.19 Sunningwell School sits within a mature landscape of trees and hedgerows that offer valuable habitat connectivity. The grounds include a small nature reserve managed exclusively for pupils, giving children hands-on opportunities for outdoor

education and engagement with wildlife. The nearby deer farm and surrounding green fields further enhance the site's ecological value, linking it to wider wildlife corridors. The school grounds already support birds, pollinators, and small mammals, and there is scope for further biodiversity improvements. Managing boundary hedgerows, maintaining the nature reserve, and adding items such as bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog highways, and insect habitats would all help guide future enhancements.

5.7.20 Sunningwell cricket field is a large open grassed area kept short throughout the year. It is bordered by roads on two sides and the deer farm on another, with trees and hedgerows on its perimeter. Biodiversity could be further enhanced by managing existing hedgerows, exploring the creation of wildflower patches or corridors outside the playing area, installing bird and bat boxes on suitable boundary trees, and considering pesticide-free management practices.



Figure 5.31 - Sunningwell cricket field

5.7.21 These habitats are critical for supporting local ecosystems, providing essential resources for various plant and animal species, such as hare, fox, badger and wild deer.

5.7.22 To protect and enhance these habitats which are crucial to the character of the parish, the following policies have been agreed.

### **Policy NEBW1: Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancement**

All development proposals within Sunningwell Parish must demonstrate the effective integration of biodiversity within site design, ensuring that ecological considerations are embedded from the outset and contribute to the delivery of high quality, sustainable development.

Proposals must deliver a minimum of 20% measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), calculated using the latest DEFRA Biodiversity Metric and secured for a minimum period of 30 years.

Proposals should prioritise on site biodiversity enhancements through the creation of native habitats such as hedgerows, trees, wildflower meadows, ponds and species rich grassland, and must demonstrate how they will strengthen ecological connectivity by linking to existing habitats and wildlife corridors within the parish.

Development must also incorporate features that support wildlife within the built environment, including, where appropriate, bat and bird boxes, swift bricks, bee bricks and measures to enable the movement of species such as hedgehogs between green spaces, with all such features integrated into the design of buildings and landscaping in a manner that ensures their long term functionality and effectiveness.

Where it is not feasible to deliver biodiversity gains on site, the parish council will support efforts to identify suitable sites and implement biodiversity net gain within the parish.

Development proposals that fail to demonstrate meaningful biodiversity integration, fail to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain, or result in a net loss of biodiversity will not be supported.

## **5.8 Green Habitats, Networks and Corridors**

5.8.1 There are opportunities for habitat restoration, management of invasive species and the creation of buffer zones in and around these areas, notably in [identified locations in need of restoration and/or management].

5.8.2 The local community is keen to ensure that existing nature and wildlife resources in the plan are safeguarded to encourage and maintain wildlife and biodiversity. The protection of existing hedgerows, flora and fauna and other natural habitats of significance is particularly important.

5.8.3 The neighbourhood plan policy sets out below that the relationship between new development and the surrounding natural environment is an important consideration

within Sunningwell Parish. Existing biodiversity features, such as native trees, shrubs and wildflower areas make a significant contribution to local character, ecological connectivity and landscape quality. Retaining such features wherever possible helps to maintain habitat value and minimise ecological disruption.

5.8.4 Where vegetation cannot be retained due to development requirements, ecological best practice highlights the importance of appropriate replacement planting. Using native species that are characteristic of the local landscape supports habitat restoration and helps ensure long-term resilience, particularly where the future use of the site may place pressures on existing green infrastructure.

5.8.5 Hedgerows also play a key role in the area's ecological network, providing habitat, screening and landscape structure. In cases where existing hedges are lost, ecological guidance suggests that replanting with diverse native species can help to reinstate ecological function and maintain the rural character of the neighbourhood.

### **Policy NEBW2: Green Habitats, Networks and Corridors**

#### **Biodiversity, Habitats, and Green Networks and Corridors**

Development proposals must protect, restore and enhance the parish's biodiversity, ecological networks and corridors, and landscape character. Priority must be given to the conservation of habitats, species, trees, hedgerows, and wildlife corridors, ensuring a connected and resilient natural environment.

#### **Protection of Priority Habitats**

Development must safeguard priority habitats, including: ancient woodland, hedgerows and mature or veteran trees, species-rich grassland and ponds, wetlands, and watercourses, recognising that these features form part of a continuous and interdependent ecological network and should not be considered in isolation.

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) must be provided where habitats may be affected; a minimum 50m buffer must be maintained around ancient woodland and harm must be avoided as the first priority; mitigation and compensation will only be considered where impacts are demonstrably unavoidable.

Development resulting in the loss or degradation of irreplaceable habitats will not be supported.

#### **Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Networks**

Development proposals must protect, restore, and enhance the parish's ecological network as a continuous and interconnected system. For the purposes of this policy, ecological networks and corridors comprise the interconnected mosaic of habitats and landscape features, including hedgerows, trees, woodlands, green lanes, field

margins, watercourses, ponds, wetlands, and other semi-natural areas, that enable the movement, dispersal, and interaction of species.

Proposals will be supported where they: retain and strengthen existing wildlife corridors, including hedgerows, green lanes, and watercourses; provide buffer zones of at least 10–20 metres along key corridors; maintain key movement routes, including bat commuting routes; and incorporate well-connected green networks and corridors into site design. Individual features should not be considered in isolation but recognised as consecutive and functionally linked components of a wider ecological network. Development that results in the fragmentation or severance of ecological corridors will not be supported.

**Trees, Hedgerows, and Landscape Character**

Development proposals must conserve and enhance the parish’s tree and hedgerow network by: retaining mature and veteran trees wherever possible, providing replacement planting at a minimum ratio of 3:1, using native species, where loss is unavoidable, contributing to an overall increase in tree canopy cover of 16.5% by 2050 (Environment Act 2021), and retaining and strengthening existing hedgerows, and using native hedgerows in new development instead of fencing unless clearly justified.

**5.9 Water Environment, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk**

5.9.1 Local Plan Policy EP4 sets out details on minimising the risk and impact of flooding, highlighting the importance of Flood Risk Assessments and when they should be used. The NPPF guides development to areas with minimal flood risk. The following policy does not need to repeat the national position on this; it highlights the importance of flood risk management and surface water drainage strategies at a local level.

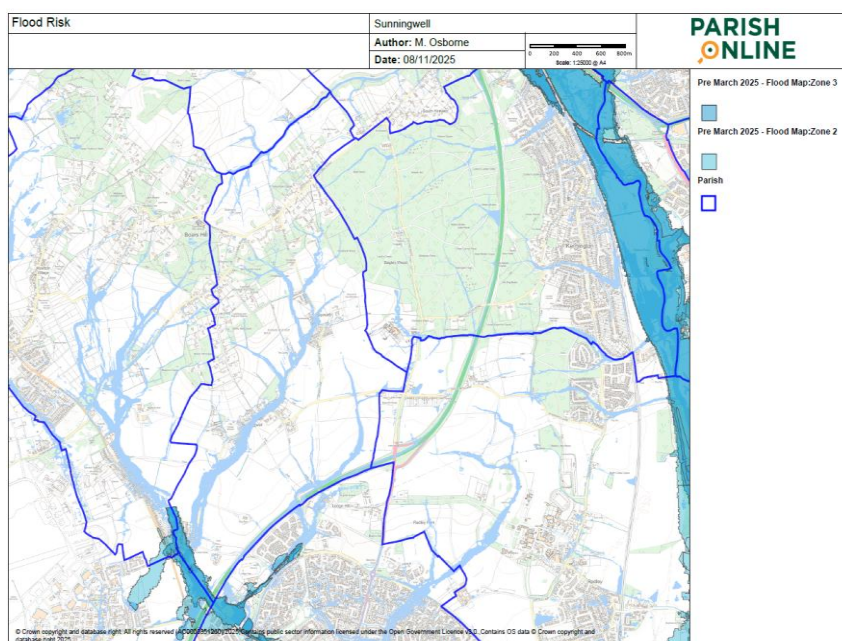


Figure 5.32 - Flooding Map

5.9.2 As illustrated in Figure 5.32 several areas within Sunningwell Parish are susceptible to surface water flooding. In locations prone to flooding, any new development should be designed to avoid exacerbating existing drainage challenges.

5.9.3 The sewerage system into and through Sunningwell Village is already overstretched leading to overflowing sewers depositing raw sewage on gardens and into the main surface water channels, polluting everything downstream. Post event treatment from Thames Water amounts to collecting 'solids' and spraying with Jeyes Fluid, which is hardly satisfactory in ecological terms.

5.9.4 The repeated comment from Thames Water engineers attending is that the problem is 'hydraulic overload' and the solution is an additional pumping station. However, the financial straits of the water company are such that this does not seem imminent. The issue is recorded in both the S19 Flood Investigation Report of October 2023, and the Addendum of November 2024. It is crucial that any new development does not exacerbate this already critical situation.

### **Policy NEBW3: Water Environment, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk**

All development proposals must demonstrate that they will not increase flood risk either on-site or elsewhere and must, where possible, contribute to the enhancement of local water management, surface water attenuation and overall water environment quality.

Proposals will be required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, swales, permeable paving, rain gardens, green roofs, detention and retention basins, and other attenuation features designed to mimic natural drainage processes and reduce surface water run-off. SuDS should be designed to provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, including biodiversity enhancement and landscape integration.

Development must maintain appropriate buffer zones alongside all watercourses, ponds and other water features, with a minimum width of 10 to 15 metres, unless otherwise justified through site-specific assessment and agreed with the relevant drainage authority. These buffers should remain free from built development and be managed to enhance habitat value, water quality and ecological connectivity.

Existing ponds, streams, ditches and other water features must be protected from harm and, where opportunities arise, enhanced through restoration, de-culverting, naturalisation or improved management. Development proposals must also demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on existing sewerage infrastructure, and that sufficient capacity is available or can be provided without increasing flood risk or environmental pressure.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required for proposals located in areas of known flood risk or where otherwise identified by the relevant flood risk authorities. This assessment must demonstrate that flood risk has been fully considered and appropriately mitigated through the design and layout of the development.

All development proposals must demonstrate that there is, or will be, adequate water supply and water treatment infrastructure in place to serve the entire development. For phased developments, each phase must show sufficient water supply and treatment capacity before proceeding.

Development that results in an increase in flood risk, either on the application site or elsewhere within the wider catchment, will not be supported.

## 5.10 Dark Skies and Nocturnal Wildlife

5.10.1 There is no authority-maintained street lighting within Sunningwell Parish. This allows the parish to benefit from relatively dark night-time skies – a feature overwhelmingly appreciated by residents.

5.10.2 The CPRE Dark Skies Mapping provides a map indicating the level of light pollution within the area showing Sunningwell Parish as a dark oasis between the bright lights of Abingdon and Oxford.

5.10.3 The region's relatively dark skies have a long history, including Catherine Octavia Stevens, for six years the Director of the British Astronomical Association Meteor Section, setting up her private observatory in the parish in Boars Hill in 1910.

5.10.4 Development proposals should carefully consider the requirements set out in the policy. Prior to submitting a planning application applicants should consider the type of artificial lighting proposed, the location, the hours of operation, the quantity of lights proposed, brightness, control and direction of the beam.

5.10.5 Where planning permission is required and where lighting is deemed necessary, appropriate mitigation and control measures can be secured through planning conditions to prevent unnecessary light pollution. These may include:

- Limiting hours of operation through the use of automatic timers and nighttime dimming settings.
- Ensuring all lighting incorporates shielding or hoods that direct beams downward, below horizontal level.
- Using non-reflective surface materials to reduce glare and light reflection.
- Introducing appropriate planting or landscaping to help contain light spill.

- Adhering to the latest best practice guidance regarding lighting specifications, including lumens, wattage, beam angle, mounting height, colour temperature and warmth.

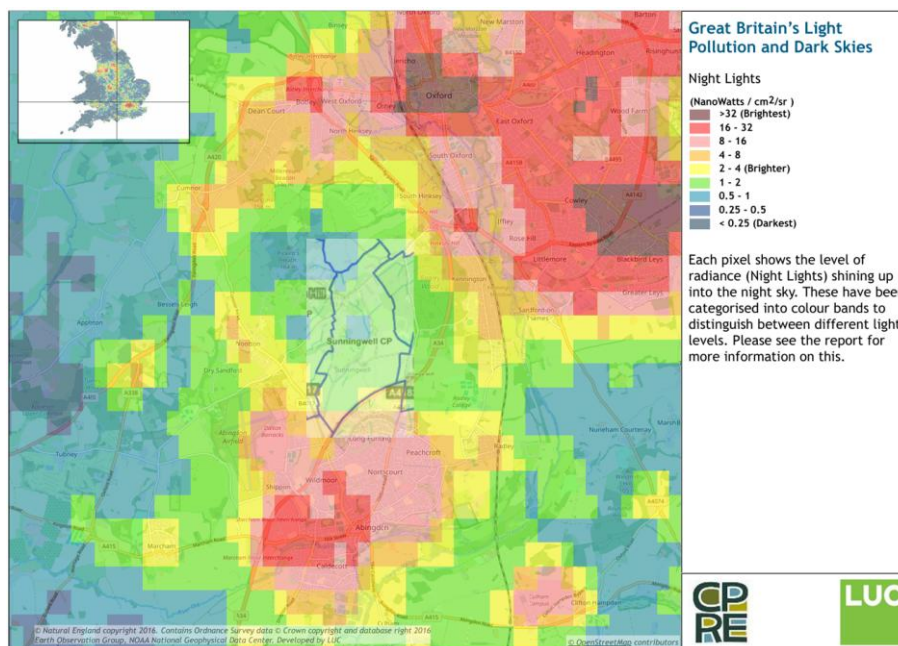


Figure 5.33- Map of Light Pollution in and around Sunningwell Parish

### Policy NEBW4 – Dark Skies and Nocturnal Wildlife

Development proposals must protect the parish’s dark skies and minimise impacts on nocturnal wildlife.

External lighting schemes must:

- Use warm lighting (below 2700K)
- Be fully shielded and directed downward
- Avoid light spill into sensitive habitats and neighbouring properties
- Use timers or motion sensors to minimise illumination

Lighting will not be supported in:

- Bat commuting routes
- Woodland edges
- Other ecologically sensitive areas

A Lighting Impact Assessment will be required where development may affect sensitive habitats.

## 5.11 General Design Principles

5.11.1 The National Design Guide was published in 2019 and sets out the characteristics which create the physical character of an area and a sense of place and community. These characteristics are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings.
- Identity – attractiveness and distinctive.
- Built Form – a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Public Spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses – mixed and integrated.
- Homes and Buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources – efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan – made to last.

5.11.2 The National Model Design Code (NMDC) was produced in June 2021 and forms part of the government’s planning practice guidance. It is intended to be read alongside the NPPF, National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and the National Design Guide.

5.11.3 The Joint Design Guide was adopted in June 2022 and is a supplementary Planning Document that is a material consideration when determining planning applications. The guide explores overarching themes including; place and setting, natural environment, movement and connectivity, space and layout, built form and climate and sustainability.

5.11.4 The above documents should be viewed in conjunction with this neighbourhood plan. Together these documents form the Design Principles for each of the settlement areas identified within plan.

5.11.5 In order to protect and preserve the character of Sunningwell Parish, the following General Design Principles will apply.

### **Policy PD1 – General Design Principles**

Proposed development should complement, reinforce and where practicable enhance the local distinctiveness of the relevant settlement. Where appropriate, development proposals should be designed to enhance the landscape setting of these settlements.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate the following design considerations:

- Regard for good quality locally characteristic building materials and vernacular building styles;
- Being in keeping with the character of neighbouring properties, as appropriate;
- Conservation and enhancement of the settlement's designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground, including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas;
- Acknowledgement of the significance of and avoidance of harm or loss to any non-designated historic assets;
- Regard for historic plot boundaries, hedgerows and enclosure walls;
- Regard for existing settlement patterns and character;
- Boundary treatments to highways and village lanes should comprise the use of native hedgerow, stone, brick or flint boundary walls or iron railings as appropriate to the immediate context of the site;
- Landscaping schemes which include local indigenous trees and features that already form part of the immediate locality;
- Environmentally friendly materials, methods and energy sources should be incorporated, provided that there are no significant adverse effects the local character or the amenity of neighbouring sites.

## 5.12 Sustainable Development

5.12.1 Sustainability is a cornerstone of both national and local planning policy. The Joint Nature and Climate Action Plan 2025-29 presents a set of actions to help the district achieve their goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 (district-wide).

5.12.2 As a result of this initiative and in recognition of the significance of climate change and its effects to the public health and environment, sustainable development is a key focus of this neighbourhood plan.

5.12.3 The Joint Nature and Climate Action Plan 2025-29 sets out several actions for the District Council to implement to help businesses and members of the community ensure that the carbon neutrality targets are met. These include providing advice and guidance on:

- reducing carbon emissions to businesses and residents;
- energy efficient operations;
- climate friendly lifestyle changes, including ways of making homes more energy efficient;

- climate funding opportunities for businesses; and
- relevant housing energy efficiency schemes.

5.12.4 It will be important to ensure that measures to mitigate the effects of climate change are incorporated into the design of new development in the plan area, as this will help the district with meeting their carbon neutral targets.

5.12.5 New developments should be designed to minimise both embodied carbon during construction and operational carbon emissions, following a ‘Fabric First’ approach.

5.12.6 A ‘Fabric First’ design strategy prioritises the performance of building materials and components before introducing mechanical or electrical systems. Future applicants should consider the following principles:

- Reduce the use of high carbon-intensity materials such as concrete, cement and steel.
- Increase the use of sustainable materials like timber, hemp or other plant-based fibres.
- Apply modern design standards such as EnerPHit for retrofits and Passivhaus for new buildings to ensure excellent airtightness and insulation.

### **Policy PD2 – Sustainable Development**

In determining the acceptability of development proposals, the following points should be used to guide the delivery of sustainable development. Where appropriate, development proposals should show how they:

- Contribute to the vitality and viability of Sunningwell Parish;
- Complement the local vernacular and character of the location and its rural setting;
- Maintain, restore or enhance the local landscape character, paying special attention important views (see HC5);
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and
- Make development easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport to all local facilities.

Measures to improve the sustainability of existing buildings, including retrofitting to increase its energy efficiency and the appropriate use of micro-renewables, is encouraged.

## 5.13 Extensions and Alterations

5.13.1 Extensions should be subservient to the main dwelling in both scale and design. This approach helps maintain the character and architectural integrity of the original dwelling and prevents over-development that could dominate the street scene or harm visual amenity. Extensions should preserve the established built form to plot size ratio characteristic of the surrounding area.

5.13.2 The design of extensions should be sympathetic to the original dwelling, neighbouring dwellings and the character of the area, using a complementary palette of materials and architectural details.

5.13.3 Where possible, care should be taken to retain the existing stock of home sizes. Ideally, proposed extensions should not result in a significant increase in the overall size of the dwelling, to maintain housing mix and affordability within the community.

### Policy PD3 – Extensions and Alterations

Extensions and alterations to a building that require planning permission should be designed to the highest sustainability standards and reflect the character of nearby buildings and their design. This will require particular attention to:

- the choice of materials;
- the scale of development including roof heights; and
- layout within the plot.

Proposed additions or extensions to properties that reduce the on-site parking will not be supported where the resulting on-site parking for vehicles and cycles is less than would be mandated for a new build property of the same size as the extended property.

## 5.14 Infill Development

5.14.1 In accordance with Local Plan Policy H16, infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location.

5.14.2 It is important to note that many open spaces and gaps between buildings contribute positively to the character and setting of the settlement, including views of and from designated and non-designated heritage assets. Where appropriate, other policies in the neighbourhood plan have sought to protect these important spaces.

Inappropriate development in these areas may result in significant harm to the local character.

5.14.3 Any proposals for infill or redevelopment must demonstrate high-quality design and be sympathetic to their surroundings. Key considerations should include the siting, scale, massing, form and appearance of new buildings, ensuring they reflect the established character of the area.

5.14.4 Proposals should consider how to integrate with neighbouring properties, existing landscape features and the overall streetscape. Sensitive and responsive design will be essential in maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness.

5.14.5 Infill development will be supported where it is of an appropriate scale and respects the existing pattern of development.

#### **Policy PD4 – Infill Development**

Infill development, redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings and backfill development (together “infill”) will be supported provided development proposals accord with the design and development management policies of the VOWH Local Plan 2031.

Proposals for infill development proposals should conserve the character of the relevant locality and be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the location.

In particular development proposals should take account of:

- the size of any gaps in otherwise continuously built-up frontages;
- appropriate scale, massing, density, layout and design of the site in relation to closely surrounding buildings;
- respecting built limits and characteristic settlement pattern; and
- mitigation of visual impact of the development proposals upon nearby historic or listed buildings.

Proposals for development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage will not be considered infill and will not be supported.

## 5.15 Transport and Infrastructure

5.15.1 Sunningwell Parish is rural in character with relatively few publicly maintained roads, shown in red below.

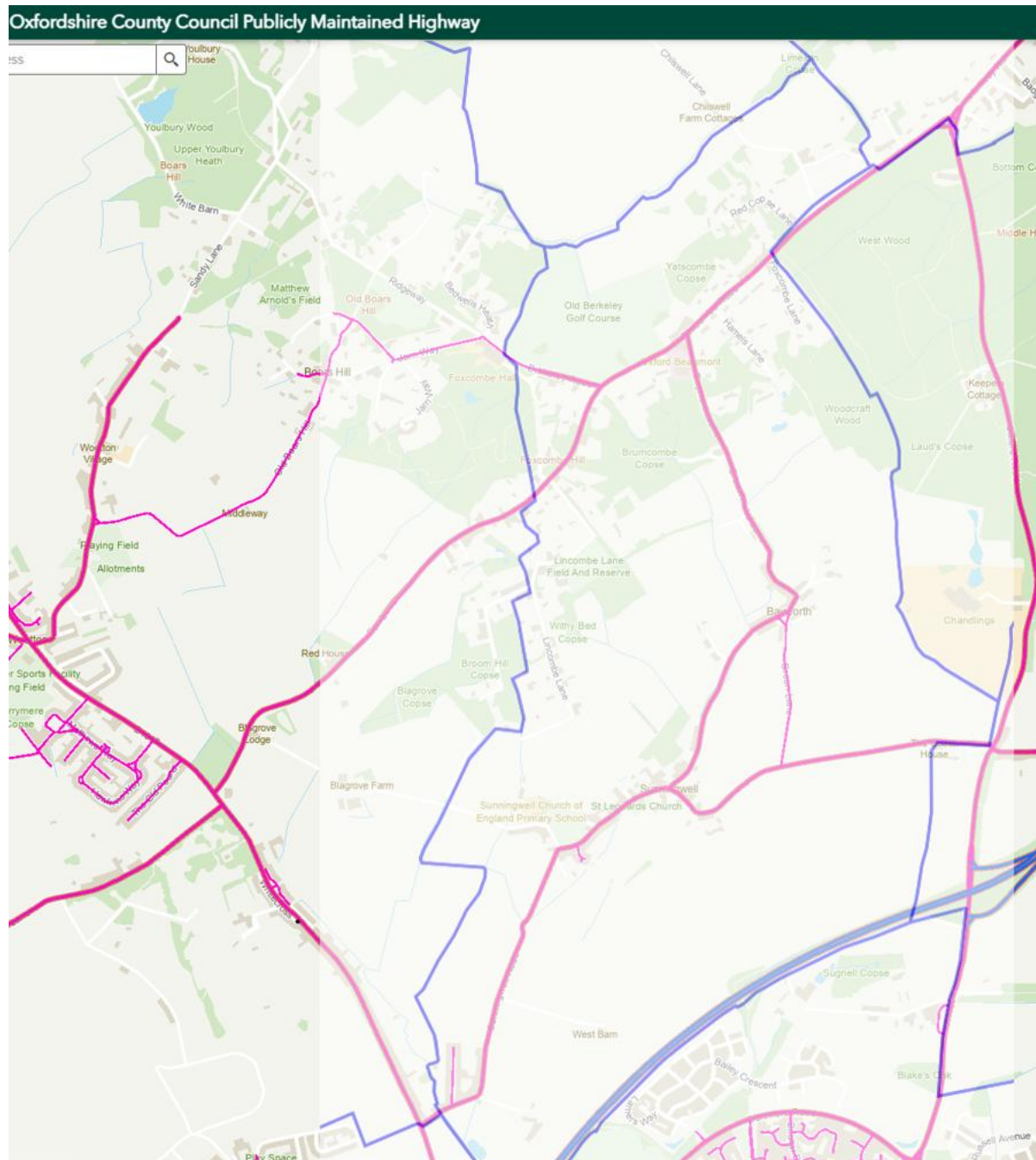


Figure 5.34 - Publicly maintained roads (shown in red)

5.20.2 The only classified road in the parish is the C10432 (Class III Road) which connects the B4017 Wootton Road to the A4183 Oxford Road and is known as Foxcombe Road. This road has a central white line and is 30mph throughout the parish.

5.15.3 The A4183 (A Road) runs from Oxford to Abingdon to the east of the parish but is not in the parish.

5.15.4 The B4017 (B Road) runs from Abingdon to Wootton to the west of the parish but is not in the parish.

5.15.5 The A34 (Trunk Road) which effectively marks the southern boundary lies outside the parish.

5.15.6 All other highways are unclassified lanes, generally without any road markings. Speed limits are 20mph within Sunningwell village and in Bayworth, 30mph in Long Furlong and national speed limit (60mph) elsewhere.

5.15.7 These lanes are single-track in many places (width less than 3.5m), with blind bends, and are unsuitable for anything beyond light traffic both in terms of size, and method of construction/repair.

5.15.8 They are also shared use, being the only pedestrian route between the settlements of Long Furlong, Sunningwell and Bayworth.

5.15.9 The NPPF highlights the importance of the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and encourages walking and cycling to enable and support healthy lifestyles. It states that planning policies should “*provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)*”.

5.15.10 Moreover “*planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails*”.

5.15.11 The improvements to Lodge Hill interchange which are due to be completed in 2026 are predicted by Oxfordshire County Council to increase traffic by over 300% on roads that also serve as pedestrian routes.

5.15.12 Developments adjacent to Sunningwell parish are greatly increasing the population within ten minutes’ drive of the amenities and rural countryside of Sunningwell village which will result in increased usage and traffic. Cycling is currently not a safe option, sharing narrow roads with 60mph vehicles.

5.15.13 The following three figures show the regions accessible within five, ten and 15 minutes from central Sunningwell, where the majority of the parish’s amenities are located, by car, by bicycle, and on foot.

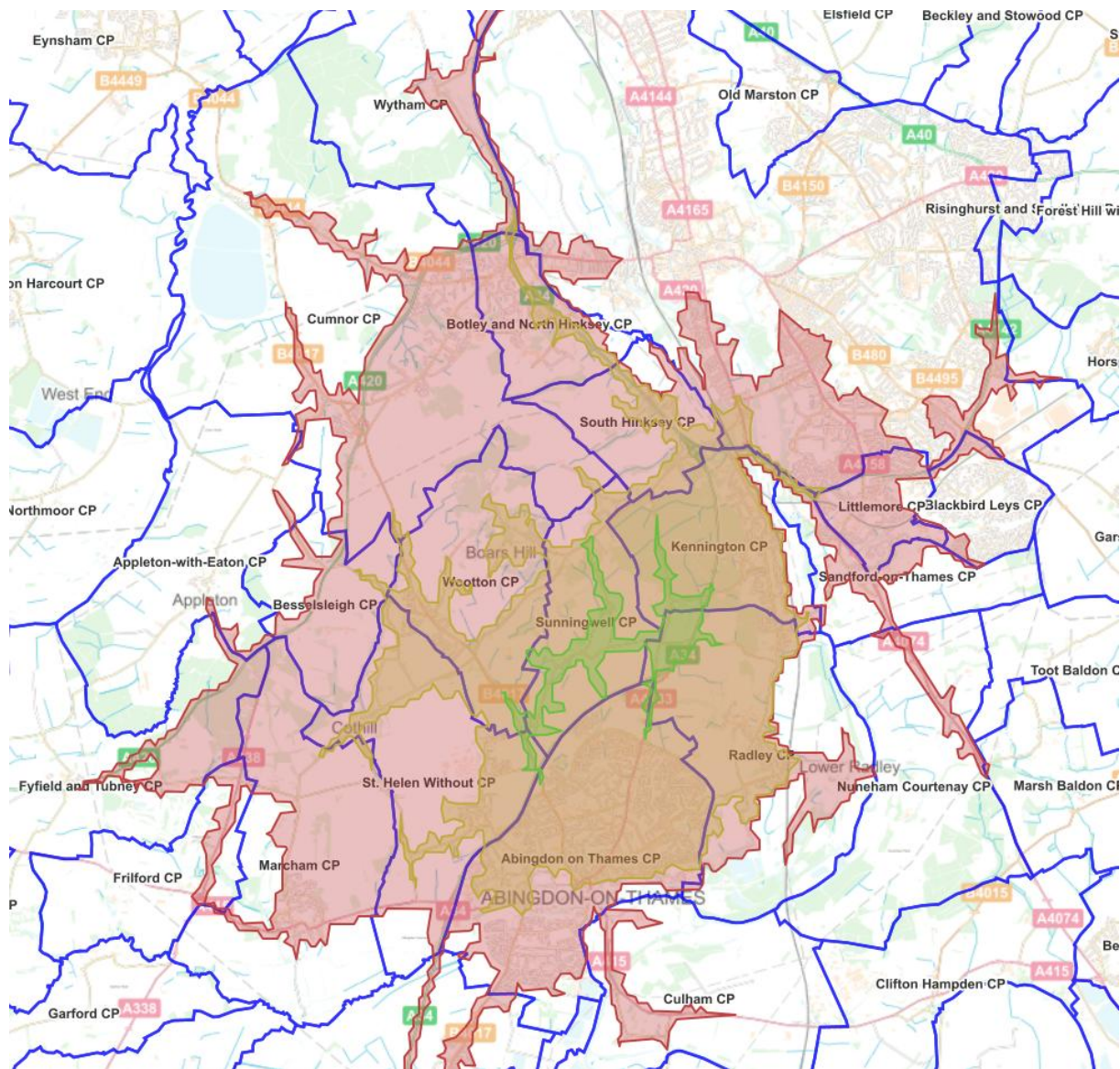


Figure 5.35 - Five, ten and 15 minutes by car from the centre of Sunningwell village

5.15.14 Currently the area of the Dalton Barracks development shows as an island being more than ten minutes away, but this is due to the lack of accessible roads in this area. Once roads are in place, this will also be within ten minutes. Kennington is also within ten minutes.

5.15.15 Fifteen minutes brings all of Abingdon, Botley, Hinksey and the southern parts of Oxford City within reach.

5.15.16 Conversely, due to the limited nature of the roads within the parish, five minutes is barely sufficient to reach the parish borders.

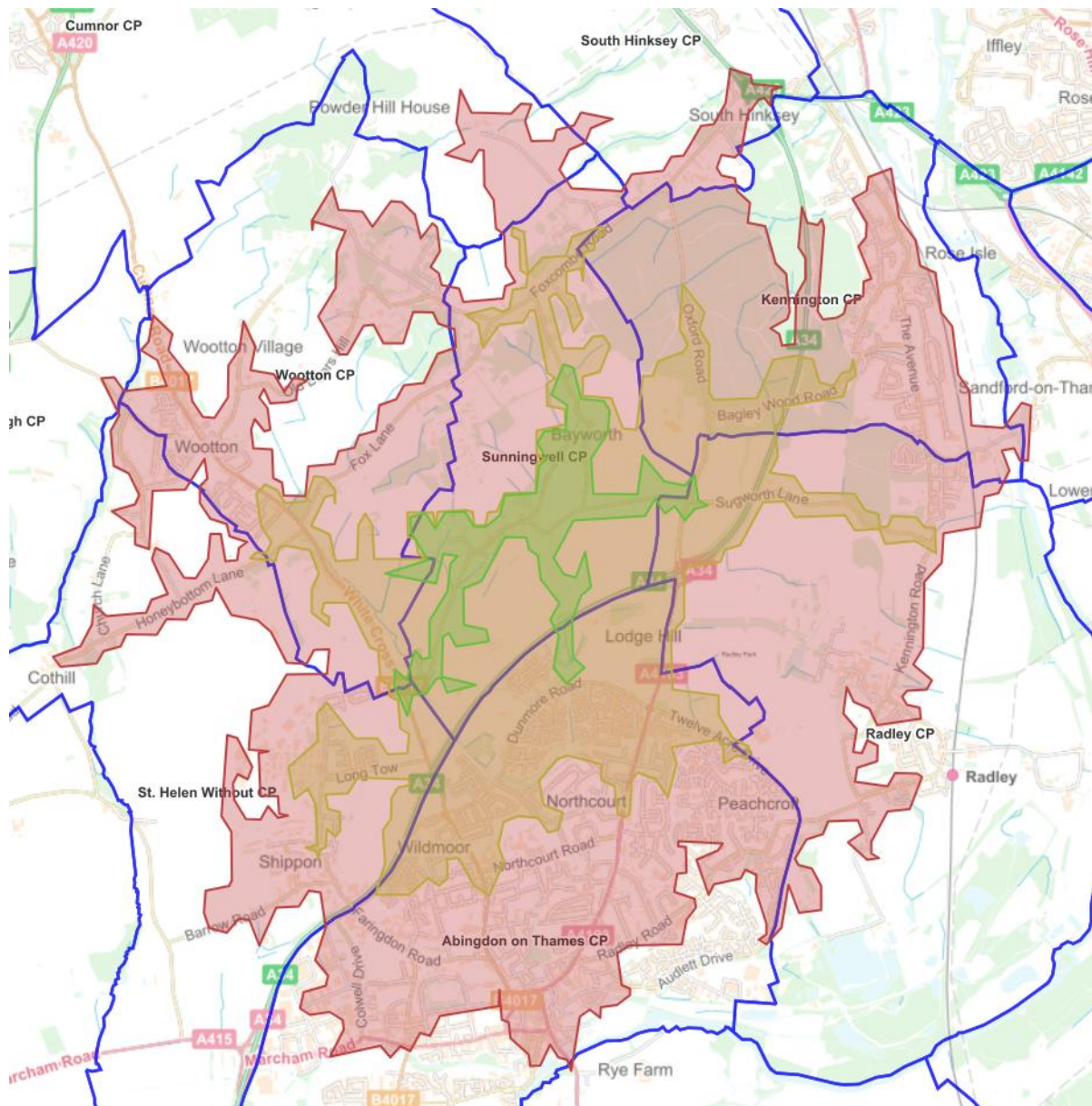


Figure 5.36 - Five, ten and 15 minutes by bicycle from the centre of Sunningwell

5.15.17 It is an indication of the lane-nature of the roads that 15 minutes of cycling is sufficient to access an area very similar to that which can be reached in ten minutes in a car.

5.15.18 Ten minutes of cycling reaches the north Abingdon new developments. These developments can also be reached within 15 minutes of walking. Dalton Barracks is a 40-minute walk.

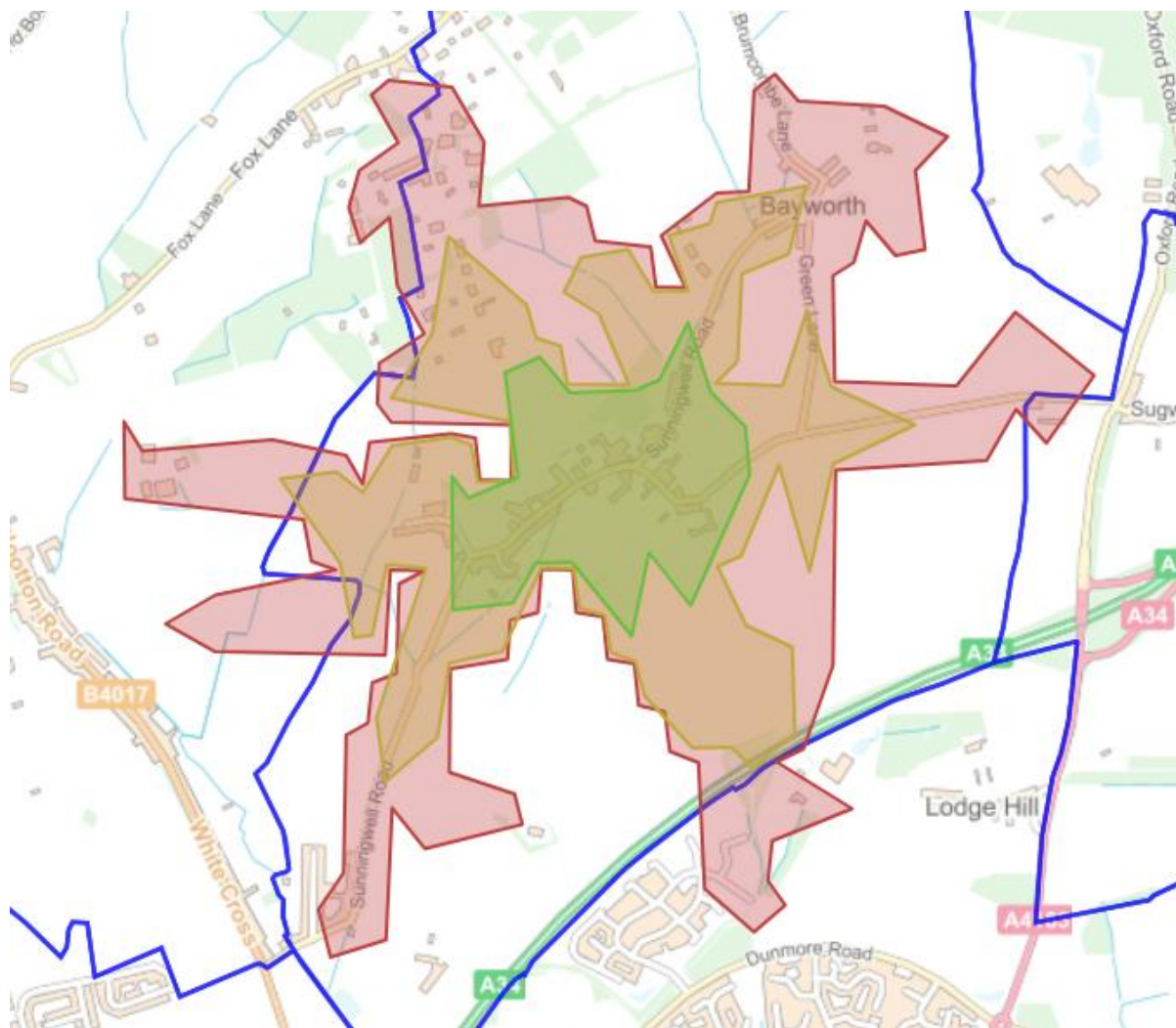


Figure 5.37 - Five, ten and 15 minutes of walking

5.15.19 For someone in the new development at Dalton Barracks the facilities in Sunningwell will be seen as within easy reach by car (less than ten minutes), but rather too far to walk for most people (40 minutes) unless walking is the purpose.

5.15.20 Cycling is a viable alternative in terms of time, but many will feel the roads to and from Sunningwell are not safe for cyclists to share with traffic which may be travelling at 60mph on narrow roads where passing is problematic.

5.15.21 Sunningwell is not well suited to through traffic. However, there is a likelihood that this will increase for several reasons:

- The shortest distance route from Dalton Barracks to Oxford passes through the lanes of Sunningwell. Unless other attractive routes are provided this will result in a significant increase in traffic.
- The increase in traffic on the north Abingdon ring Road (Dunmore Road) caused by the north Abingdon developments, the improved Lodge Hill interchange, and traffic from Dalton Barracks may make this route very unfavourable, causing

people to seek ‘back-route’ alternatives, which will likely mean through Sunningwell. The recent experience with the closure of Foxcombe Road for gas works has demonstrated that this will occur, even if signage trying to prevent it is posted.

- A similar situation is expected at the Hinksey Hill interchange with the A34. When this becomes backed-up, traffic will divert down the unsuitable lanes of Bayworth.
- When a major road is blocked, e.g. A34 or Dunmore Road.

5.15.22 On the C10432 (Foxcombe Road) four highly visible radar speed signs were installed along the 30mph Foxcombe Road in March 2022 in the locations below. This followed manual speed monitoring which indicated numerous cars exceeding 60mph, with the highest speed being 80mph.

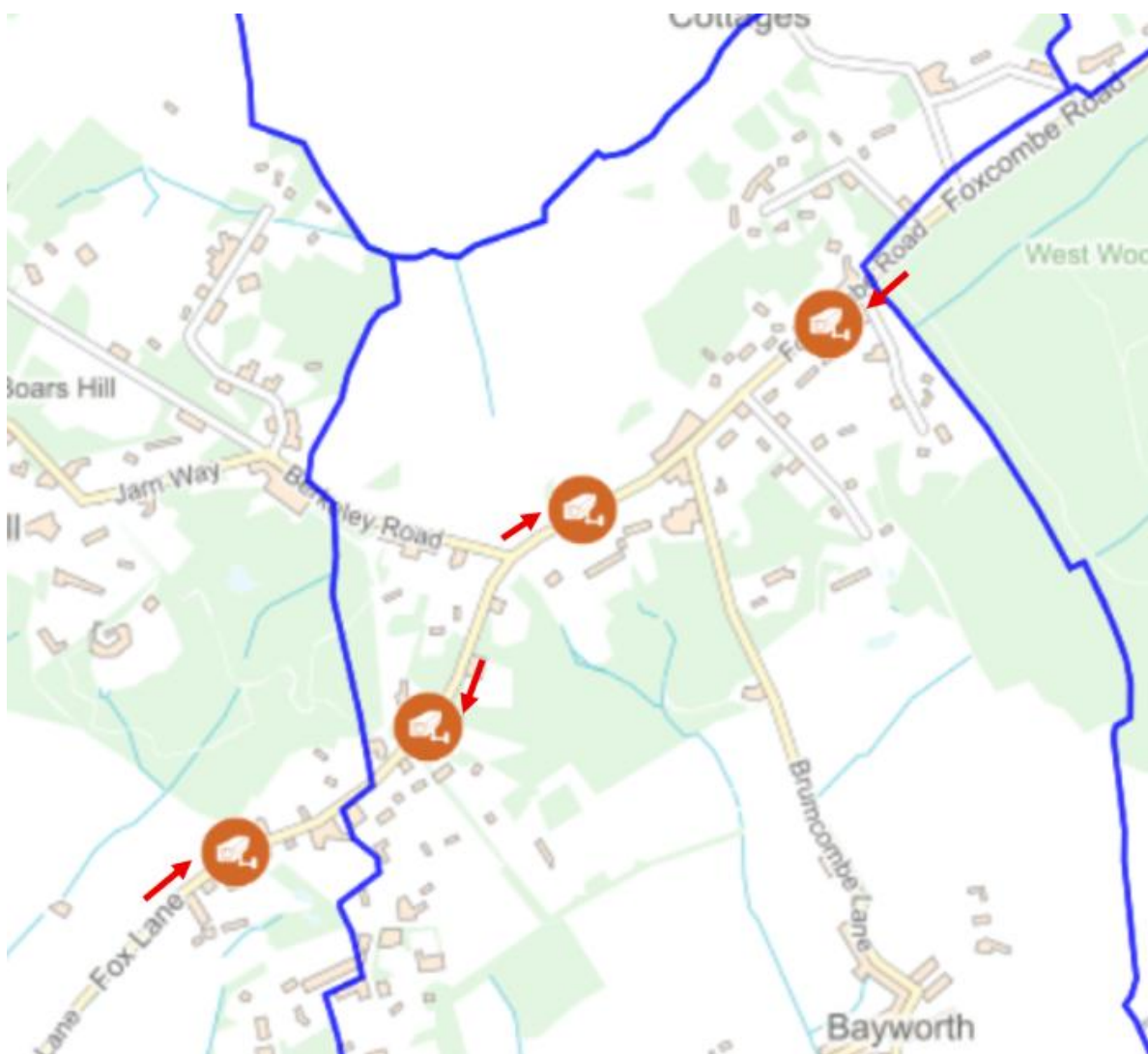


Figure 5.38 - Location of radar speed signs

5.15.23 Each sign displays the measured speed only to traffic travelling in the direction of the red arrows, but measures and stores speed data in both directions.

5.15.24 Examples of the maximum speeds recorded in half-hour increments by the camera third from the left are shown below for a nine-month period in 2024-25.

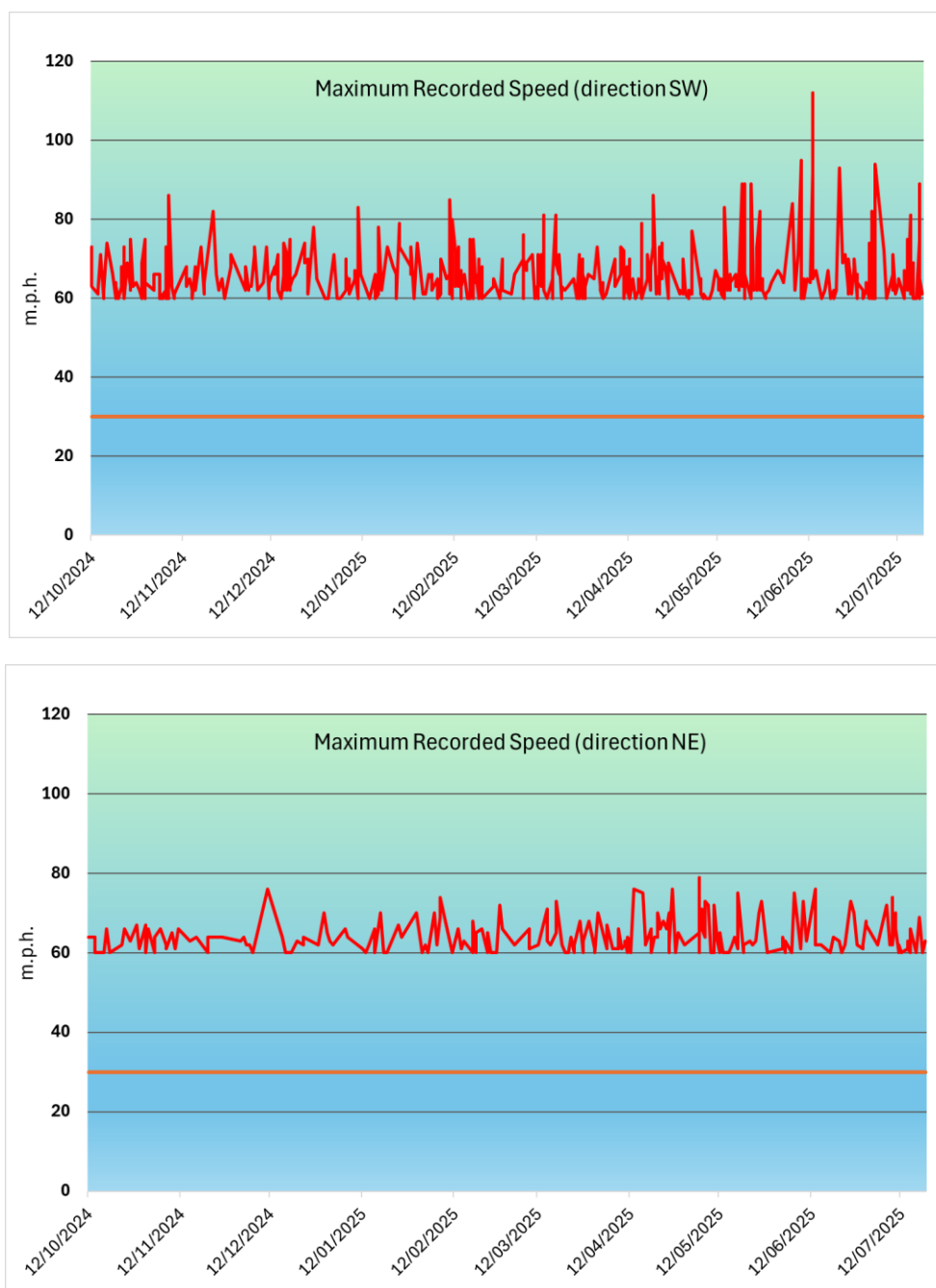


Figure 5.39 - Recorded speeds in excess of twice the 30mph speed limit

5.15.23 Speeds above twice the 30mph speed limit are common in both directions. Travelling south-west, where the approach to the sign is straighter, and where the sign does not display in the direction of the driver, there are many cases of speeds above 80mph, and an increasing number in excess of 90mph in the summer months.

5.15.25 These data provide clear evidence of a reckless and dangerous disregard for the posted speed limits.

5.15.26 Addressing this hazard could be through improved enforcement (by either manual or automated means) or through physical means (e.g. roundabout(s)). As these lie outside the scope of Neighbourhood Plan policies, they will be pursued as pursued as Community Aspirations.

### Policy TT1 – Transport and Infrastructure

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals in and near to the neighbourhood area should:

- a) be designed to avoid adverse impacts on road safety within the neighbourhood area, particularly in locations identified as being of concern;
- b) include adequate off-road parking to prevent additional on-street parking problems;
- c) where justified, incorporate road safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists that are sensitive to the local character and do not detract from the area’s rural or distinctive setting;
- d) maximise opportunities for sustainable travel within and between settlements and the surrounding area, including improvements to public rights of way and pedestrian/cycle networks; and
- e) be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate how any increase in traffic, including HGV movements, can be safely accommodated, together with appropriate mitigation measures.

Traffic calming measures, where required, should be designed to avoid increased noise, urbanisation of the area or unacceptable impacts on residents or users of the route.

Proposals for new pedestrian or cycle links that improve connectivity between settlements will be supported, subject to compliance with other relevant Development Plan policies.

## 5.16 Safer Routes

5.16.1 Walking is the primary means of transport in many parts of the parish and contributes significantly to the local character. However, this is under threat from the increased traffic levels, particularly as walking route often entail sharing the highway with vehicles, cyclists and horse riders.

5.16.2 In the words of one resident, *“The traffic does not need to get much worse before I decide that walking my daughter the 300yards to her ballet lesson in the village hall is no longer safe”*

### Policy TT2 – Safer Routes

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, and where practicable to do so, development proposals may be supported where they:

- include safe, continuous, and well-signposted walking and cycling routes that connect key community areas, including the school, leisure facilities, the public house and art school;
- contribute to the creation of ‘Safe Routes to School’ programmes, including a dedicated pathway, and signage to encourage walking and cycling for pupils;
- deliver designated cycle lanes along main routes such as between settlements;
- are designed as low traffic speed environments or incorporate traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, road narrowing, or chicanes to ensure safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists;
- demonstrate how pedestrian crossings and enhanced visibility at junctions will be implemented to protect road users; and
- integrate green spaces along walking and cycling routes to provide resting points, promote active travel, and improve environmental quality.

## 5.17 Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision

5.17.1 The A34 is the dominant noise source in the parish, as shown in the 24-hour noise plot below which pre-dates the Lodge Hill Interchange works

5.17.2 Sound barriers have been installed to the south of the A34, but these have the effect of reflecting noise north towards Sunningwell, Bayworth and Long Furlong. This, together with the removal of vegetation to the north of the road has resulted in the noise levels in Sunningwell parish increasing substantially.

5.17.3 This is evident from the increased number of complaints but also in quantitative measurements. Individual measurements are affected by wind direction, temperature and humidity, complicating precise like-for-like comparisons. However, current measured levels at Beaulieu Court now reach 70dB, very much higher than the historic average of around 40dB.

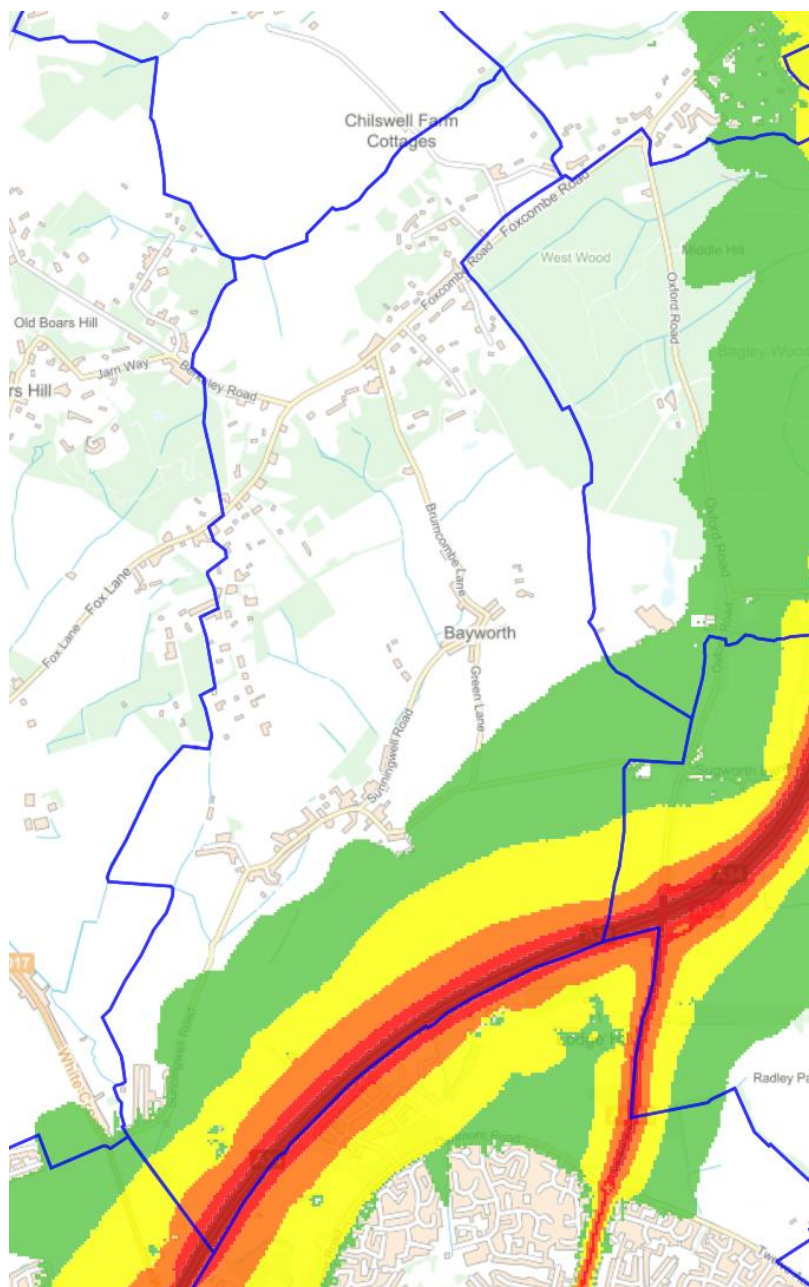


Figure 5.40 - 24-hour noise plot

5.17.4 In the UK, BS 8233:2014 states that for residential amenity areas (gardens, patios, balconies) noise levels should not exceed about 50dB LAeq,T (equivalent continuous sound level) with 55dB LAeq,T treated as an upper guideline in noisier environments.

5.17.5 These values are used in planning noise assessments for new housing to judge whether the outdoor environment is suitable or whether mitigation (e.g. barriers, layout changes) is needed.

5.17.6 These values are also in line with World Health Organisation recommended noise levels for outdoor noise at home (e.g. in gardens, balconies, or at the building

façade) which are that it should be kept below 45–55dB(A) in the day, and less than 40dB(A) in the night.

5.17.7 The World Health organisation notes that:

*Noise is an underestimated threat that can cause a number of short- and long-term health problems, such as, for example, sleep disturbance, cardiovascular effects, poorer work and school performance, hearing impairment, etc..*

5.17.8 In summary, 70dB noise levels currently being experienced are well in excess of both UK planning and World health Organisation guidelines.

5.17.9 The planned replanting may go some way to reducing noise but it is feared that this will be both insufficient and, as already stated, take many years to come into effect.

### **Policy TT3 – Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision**

Proposals which increase the extent or effectiveness of A34 traffic noise screening will be supported. Preference will be given to natural planting as the screen. Any proposed development which reduces noise screening will not be supported.

Proposals which increase the extent or effectiveness of A34 visual screening through natural planting will be supported. Any proposed development which reduces visual screening will not be supported.

## 5.18 Footpaths & Active Travel

5.18.1 Sunningwell Parish benefits from an extensive network of rural footpaths and bridleways as shown below.

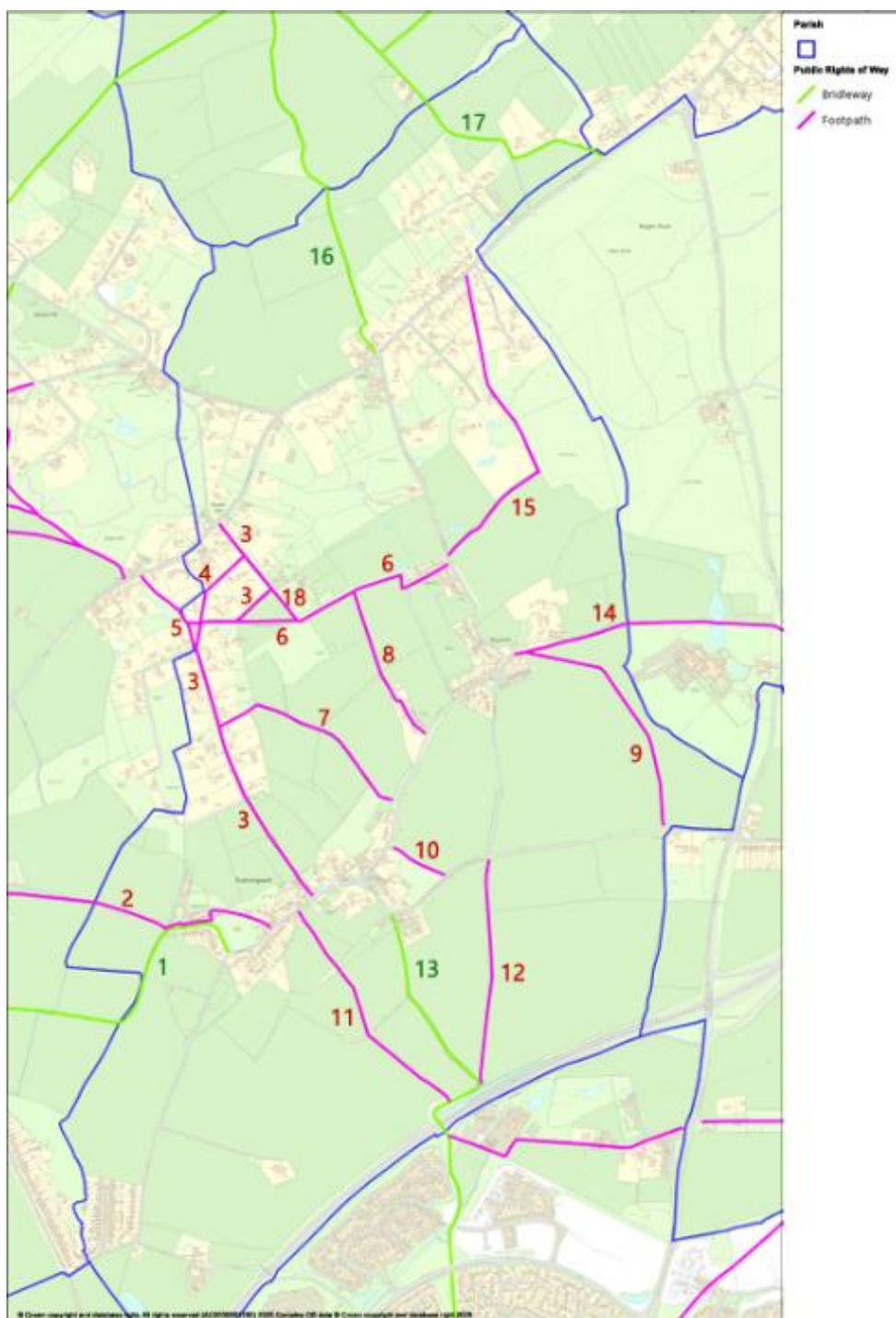


Figure 5.41 – Footpaths and Bridleways within Sunningwell Parish

5.18.2 This map does not show the re-routing of the very north end of path 11 made on 11 August 2025, nor footpath 19 joining footpaths 2 and 3 which was registered on 15 September 2025.

5.18.3 Bridleway 13, and paths 13, 3 and 5 form part of the designated Oxford Green Belt Way.

5.18.4 Bridleways, cycleways, footpaths and roadside pavements are essential infrastructure for recreation and exercise, as well as providing an alternative to motor vehicles for local travel within the parish and neighbouring parishes. Sunningwell parish is blessed with an extensive network of well-used registered rights of way as well as unregistered footpaths.

5.18.5 However, the following factors mean they are not utilised as much as they should be:

- **Condition:** many rights of way become virtually impassable from November to April due to their muddy condition. While this is partly a product of nature (seasonal rainfall and clay soil), it also reflects design and land-use (enclosure with fencing by landowners). We believe there is scope for improvement.
- **Connectivity:** many rights of way do not connect, forcing pedestrians to walk on country roads without roadside pavements. The communities of Long Furlong, Sunningwell village and Bayworth are not connected by roadside pavement or direct footpaths.

5.18.6 Improving the condition and connectivity of rights of way is an even greater priority given the significant housing development in surrounding parishes (Dalton Barracks, North Abingdon (Tilsley Park to Lodge Hill), Radley, Kennington) resulting in:

- **Demand:** increased visits to the parish to enjoy its amenities (cricket club, St Leonard's Church, Flowing Well, Art School, Barn Café, Village Hall) and countryside (village green, Boars Hill and Bagley Wood, within and outside the parish)
- **Vehicle traffic:** increased visitor and through-traffic anticipated from surrounding developments, which could be materially mitigated through rights of way improvements promoting greater use of foot and cycle instead of motor vehicles.

5.18.7 The residents of Sunningwell would like to pay express their gratitude to landowners past and present who have maintained the network of footpaths and bridleways that are so appreciated and treasures by residents and visitors alike.

5.18.8 In order to preserve and enhance this much valued asset, the following Footpaths policy is proposed.

### **Policy FAT1: Active Travel and Footpaths**

Consistent with VOWH Core Policy 35 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, and without undermining the rural character of the parish, the Parish Council supports the provision of new and improvements to existing footpaths, roadside pavements, cycleways and bridleways, which:

- improve connectivity and safe travel by pedestrians and cyclists between the parish's principal communities (Bayworth, Sunningwell, Long Furlong) and peripheral housing, where currently no footpath / roadside pavement provision exists
- improve connectivity and safe travel by pedestrians and cyclists with surrounding population centres and new developments outside the parish
- improve surface quality and drainage, so that rights of way are fully accessible throughout the year.

To achieve the above objectives, the Parish Council:

- supports and promotes constructive and collaborative engagement with landowners where:
  - registered and permissive rights of way cross their land, ensuring respectful use while safeguarding the ongoing public benefit.
  - applications are made by members of the public to register commonly used footpaths as rights of way, where deemed appropriate and in the absence of suitable alternatives.
- supports the Oxford Greenways Project, while stating a preference for the alternatives proposed in the Corridor 3 Boars Hill Greenway which connect with Sunningwell and Bayworth.

## 6. Community Aspirations

### 6.1 Preserving the Community

6.1.1 As indicated previously, the primary Community Aspirations within Sunningwell Parish are around trying to ensure that the increased traffic does not destroy the character of the parish and make pedestrian access to amenities and neighbours both unpleasant and dangerous.

### 6.2 Traffic Management

6.2.1 The Community Aspiration below summarises activities directed towards improving the safety of the lanes and roads within Sunningwell Parish.

#### Community Aspiration TT1 – Traffic Management

##### **Unclassified Dual-use Lanes**

Support will be given to activities and initiatives to improve the safety and experience of pedestrians and cyclists on the dual-use lanes within the neighbourhood area.

This will include consideration of:

- Lower speed limits,
- Improvements to speed limit enforcement,
- Installation of speed-limiting structures,
- Schemes to reduce through traffic on lanes,
- One-way systems,
- Low-traffic neighbourhood (LTN), and
- Improvements and additions to pedestrian routes that are not dependent on walking on roads open to traffic.

##### **Classified Roads and Lanes with Pavements**

Support will be given to activities and initiatives to improve the safety and experience of pedestrians and cyclists on classified roads and lanes with pavements within the parish.

This will include consideration of:

- Lower speed limits,
- Improvements to speed limit enforcement,
- Installation of speed-limiting structures,
- Improvements and additions to the pedestrian pavement.

Issues of accessibility in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (2005) will also be given high priority.

6.2.2 Particular improvements will be site specific but can be broadly split between what will be appropriate for the dual-use lanes, and what will be appropriate for the classified road.

### 6.3 Sustainable Transport

6.3.1 The Community Aspiration below is designed to reduce traffic within the parish and make it more sustainable.

#### **Community Aspiration TT2 – Sustainable Transport**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, and where practicable to do so, development proposals may be supported where they:

- include electric vehicle charging points, cycle storage facilities, and low-emission transport initiatives,
- introduce charging facilities for electric cycles and cars at key destinations, such as Sunningwell Village Hall,
- explore car sharing schemes to reduce traffic in the parish,
- support more frequent public transport.

### 6.4 Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision

6.4.1 Noise from the A34 has increased considerably since the installation of sound barriers to the South of the road, which serve to reflect noise back towards the parish, and the removal of the vegetation that bordered the northern edge of the road as part of the Lodge Hill Interchange improvement scheme.

6.4.2 While some replanting is planned, it is expected that this will take many years to take effect, and even then will be less effective than what was previously in place. Consequently, the following Community Aspiration has been determined.

#### **Community Aspiration TT3 – Mitigation of A34 Traffic Noise and Vision**

Support will be given to initiatives to reduce the noise from the A34. This includes:

- Support for additional noise screening (particularly through natural planting)
- Support for additional visual screening through natural planting
- Support for initiatives to install a lower-noise road surface
- Support for initiatives to reduce noise levels by reducing the speed limit