

Garsington Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2035



October 2024

Acknowledgments

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Settlement Boundary prepared by the South Oxfordshire District Council's Corporate GIS Team, January 2024

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List of Abbreviations

CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment.
GNPWP	Garsington Neighbourhood Plan Working Party.
GPC	Garsington Parish Council.
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment.
Mbps	Megabits per second.
NP	Neighbourhood Plan.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
PC	Parish Council.
RES	Rural Exception Site.
ROSPA	The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.
S&SC	Sports and Social Club.
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council.
SOHA	South Oxfordshire Housing Association.
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.
VDSL	Very high speed digital subscriber line.
WI	Women's Institute

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List of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

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Garsington Neighbourhood Plan – 2022 to 2035

Executive Summary

This Neighbourhood Plan (2022 to 2035) has been developed by a working party involving residents and members of Garsington Parish Council.

This plan reports on the findings of a number of surveys, consultations and meetings with residents and other key stakeholders (SODC /SOHA/Landowners).

A need has been identified for 16 affordable houses within the village.

A number of policies have been proposed related to housing and green spaces within the village.

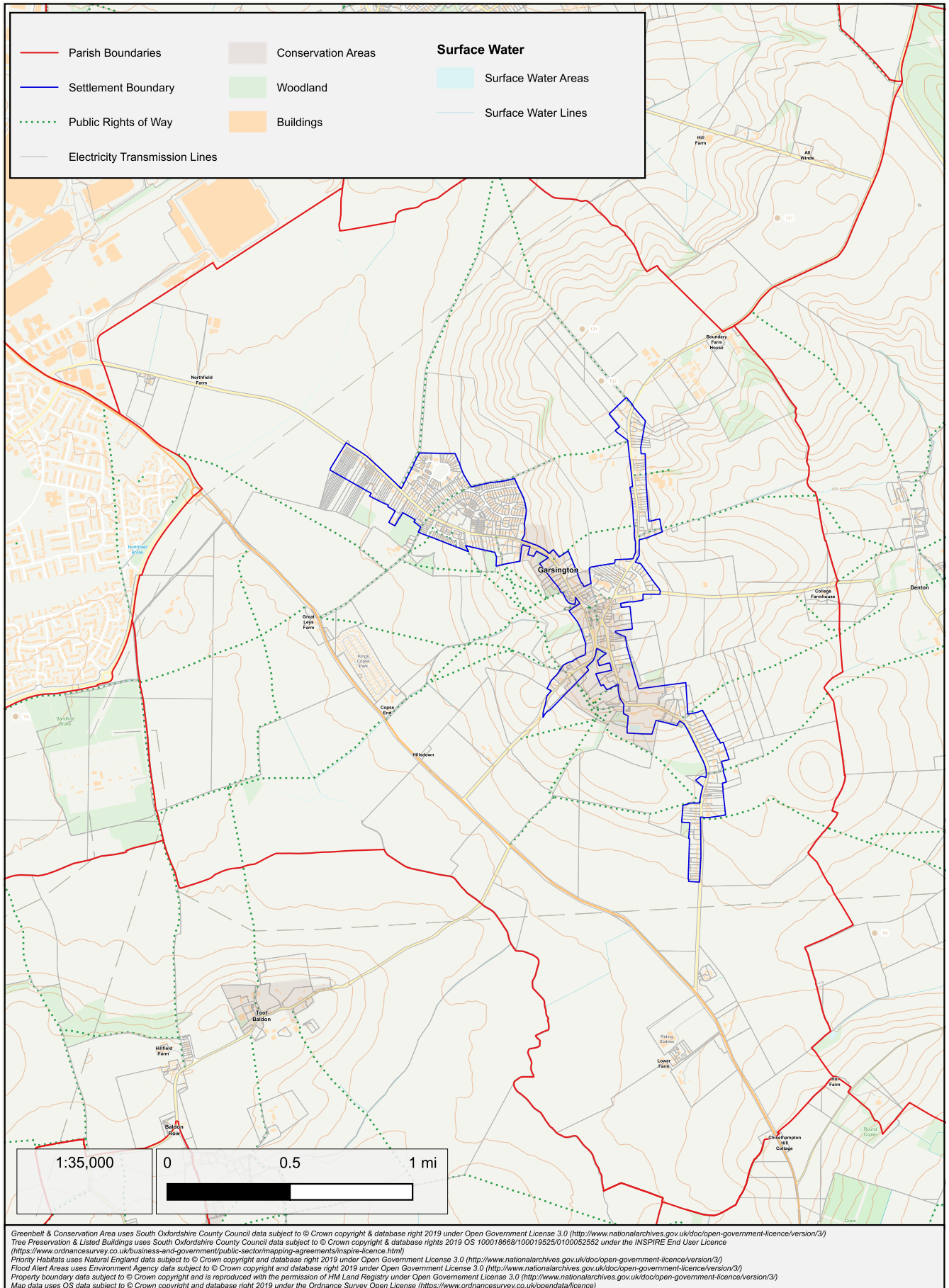
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1. Introduction to the Plan

Garsington is a village located on the South East of the City of Oxford in the constituency of Henley-on-Thames, South Oxfordshire. The village is surrounded by open rural farmland with a conservation area covering the majority of the historic buildings at its centre. The whole of the village is situated in the Oxfordshire Green Belt, which provides a natural barrier between the village and the adjacent city. It is clear, at both a national and regional level, that more housing is required to accommodate a growing population. Garsington within reason cannot escape their share of this and neither do they wish to do so. However, it is highly desirable that the residents of Garsington have a say in the extent, the size, the location and the design of new housing so that our priceless heritage – built environment, local farming industry and landscape character as well as our social cohesion – can be preserved and enhanced.

In the context of these development pressures, Garsington Parish Council wished to strengthen its powers when deciding how to protect and support the interests of villagers. A Neighbourhood Plan is a recognised route to securing such powers and, in order to give residents the opportunity to have their say about one particular issue known to be of concern, namely *affordable housing*, the Parish Council decided to commit the effort required to produce this plan. The Neighbourhood Plan formally covers the Parish of Garsington, which is illustrated in Map 1. The Plan period is 2022 to 2035

Map 1 - Garsington Parish Boundary



Garsington Neighbourhood Plan – 2022 to 2035

2. Background, Vision and Objectives

2.1. Background

Local Communities are being encouraged to develop Neighbourhood Plans as part of the Government's commitment to future planning in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. This aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area and more importantly provides an opportunity to influence the future development of their Parish. A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of the Parish until 2035. The Government's Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, which all enable communities to influence developments taking place in the parish in which they reside. If approved at referendum a neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan. Therefore, planning applications must be determined in accordance with it as part of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

At its meeting on the 4th December 2017 the Garsington Parish Council (GPC), with the support of South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), resolved to go ahead with creating a Neighbourhood Plan. Following requests for volunteers in the Parish Newsletter, a working party consisting of Parish Councillors and residents of the Parish got together to prepare the plan. A draft scoping proposal was presented by the working party to the GPC at a later Council meeting at which it was adopted. The Plan period is 2022 to 2035. This corresponds with the period covered by the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

2.2. The Vision

Garsington is an attractive village in a prime location that is much loved by its residents. The foundation of what makes Garsington so desirable and what it is are two-fold. These are the semi-rural environment and the good demographic, social & cultural mix of its residents. The primary aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to set out support for limited development within the village that will meet the identified need for affordable housing, sensitively delivered such that it protects the environment and ensures the residential mix is maintained over the next 20 years.

2.3. The Objectives

- a. To protect the rural nature of the village.
- b. To identify the need for affordable housing by residents and their families.
- c. To set out policies to ensure any future developments are consistent with the rural nature of the village, have limited impact or even enhance the local environment and habitats, and with a preference for affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community.
- d. To set out desirable enhancements to the village's community facilities and environmental assets such as green-spaces, foot and cycle-paths.

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3. The Planning Context

The Neighbourhood Plan has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority. In this case, the development plan is the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. In addition, the Plan should have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Another important document to the community is the Garsington Village Plan 2015. This document does not form part of the development plan and the Neighbourhood Plan won't be tested against it, however it provides invaluable background material, covering the following topics:

- Housing and the built environment,
- Transport and Connectivity,
- Traffic and Road Safety,
- External Communications,
- Services and Amenities,
- Social and Cultural priorities,
- the Environment,
- Conservation and Sustainability,
- Supporting New and Emerging Village Groups, and
- Making Garsington a better place to live.

The outstanding result from the Garsington Village Plan survey questionnaire in 2014 was the response to the question: “How important to you is it that Garsington remains ‘separate’ from Oxford, and does not become part of some bigger urban development?” Overall, 92% of the nearly 800 people who responded to that question said that it was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ that Garsington remains “separate” as a community. It is clear that residents of all ages and from all parts of the village regard this as a matter of extremely high priority.

Issues identified by the Village Plan have resulted in a number of investments by the parish council. These have been:

- a) the Children's Playground in Denton Lane;
- b) the purchase and preparing for use of an extension to St Mary's Burial ground;
- c) improved pedestrian access from the car park at the Three Horseshoes to the village school
- d) defibrillators, speed cameras, kissing gates and
- e) the painting of yellow lines at the bottom of Pettiwell.

In addition, for a relatively short period, the council invested in the local bus service.

At the same time some areas of concern identified in the plan have not been addressed and additional issues are now of high priority namely:

- The removal of Northfield from the Green Belt and its allocation as a strategic housing site which will all but destroy the open space between Garsington and the City and so harm the rural status of the village.
- Lack of affordable (both social and smaller scale) housing in the village, damaging the socio-demographic profile of the population.
- Loss of local employment.
- Activities for young people.

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The Garsington Village Plan was however essentially an aspirational document seeking to address a wide range of mainly social questions. It could not – nor was it originally intended to - tackle developmental issues: this is the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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4. Process and Consultation

4.1. Working Party

This plan has been developed and produced on behalf of the Garsington Parish Council by the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (GNPWP). This consists of all the parish councillors in post at the commencement of the process together with the advisory team members as set out in Table 1. The members were all or have been Garsington residents.

Table 1 - Garsington Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

Parish Councillors	Advisory Team
Chris Wright (chair)	Liz Dain
Matthew Dovey (vice-chair)	John Hall
Ian Ashley	Mike Hardwick
Richard Betteridge	Richard Jeffery
Paul Bolam	Jonathan Kay
Anne Eastwood	Martin Kelly
Judy Westgate	David Mather
Mike Patrick	
Lorna Stevenson (clerk)	

4.2. Process

The process, consultations and events included in the development of the Garsington Neighbourhood Plan are set out in the timeline below in Table 2. Results and more details about the surveys are given in Annex A, Annex F and Annex H.

Table 2 - Neighbourhood Plan Timeline

Date	Event / Process / Decision	Outcome
December 2017	PC decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.	GNPWP formed, chaired by the Chair of the PC, formed of PC members and co-opted local residents.
28 th March 2018	Community First Oxford consulted.	Helpful advice on constructing a plan and the Local SODC / SOHA context provided.
3 rd April 2018	South Oxfordshire Housing Association consulted.	Support in principle to be a Social Housing partner, could provide funding. (see Annex B).
May 2018	SODC Planning Facilitator workshop.	Provided advice on the gathering and analysis of information and views from the community by various means including meetings, mailshots, leaflets, web presence and structured surveys.

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Date	Event / Process / Decision	Outcome
July 2018	First Residents Survey distributed at Village Fete and subsequent events over a week.	Overwhelming support for protection of Garsington's rural status, protection of the Green Belt and for affordable housing.
14 th September 2018	Residents meeting with over 80 attendees at the village-hall.	Presentation of the 1 st survey results and update on the NP development, launch of the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).
14 th September – 12 th October 2018	HNA carried out, published in Garsington Newsletter, on website and delivered to each household.	161 responses – forms sent to Stratford-Upon-Avon District Council, who provided a professional analysis service.
January 2019	Analysis of the HNA carried out by Stratford-Upon-Avon District Council.	Professional report produced on the statistical data and narrative comments. This showed high level of support for appropriate private and affordable (rental/shared ownership) housing within the existing community.
January – February 2019	Many local landowners approached.	A short-list of owners who would consider supporting locally focussed residential development.
January 2019	SODC launch Local Development Plan 2034 consultation.	Northfield and Grenoble Road development included, requirement for villages to provide housing dropped. Plan opposed by GPC.
June 2019-end of 2020	Draft Neighbourhood Plan sent to SODC for comments	Neighbourhood Plan revised following feedback.
March 2022	Meeting held in the village hall attended by about 50 people, to hear about two proposals drafted by village residents around housing and development in the village. These were the Garsington Declaration and a Northfield Vision. Following a presentation, a motion to endorse the two proposals was strongly supported on a show of hands	These are incorporated in the Consultation Statement
April – May 2022	Pre-submission consultation of local residents, businesses and statutory bodies.	Revised plan based on recommendations in the Consultation Statement

The process has been supported by SODC with both advice and financial help.

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4.3. Consultations

4.3.1. SOHA

The South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA), who have extensive experience of the provision of affordable housing and who already own houses within the village, were consulted at an early stage on the 3rd April 2018. SOHA is a not-for-private-profit provider of affordable residential housing in South Oxfordshire. They commission finance and administer their stock of affordable and social housing. Their land-bank was given a start by the transfer of SODC holdings with the remit to find funds and build and manage appropriate accommodation as identified by needs surveys across the area. (For further comments on the SOHA policy see Annex B).

4.3.2. Community First Oxford

Community First Oxford was also consulted.

4.3.3. Residents' Surveys

Two housing surveys have been carried out within the village (full details of these are included in the Appendices).

The first stage, the Residents' Consultation, was carried out in July and August 2018. The purpose of this consultation was to ask open-ended questions to elicit a wide range of responses. A summary of the results both of this survey and the later Housing Needs Assessment is given in Annex A. A key finding of the Residents' Survey was that 78% of respondents, a number equivalent to 23% of households assuming one reply per household, felt the village needed more affordable/social housing to accommodate younger people, and smaller properties for older members of the parish to downsize.

The second stage was a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), launched at a meeting in the village hall on 14th September 2018, and carried out from 14th September to 12th October.

One hundred and sixty-one responses, equivalent to 21% of the number of houses in the village, were received and the information provided from the survey was processed by Stratford-Upon-Avon District Council. Amongst these respondents, 24% were wishing or planning to move house and of these people 42% wanted access to affordable housing either buying a dwelling through an affordable housing scheme or renting from a housing association. This resulted in a total unsatisfied demand for affordable dwellings of 16 dwellings within the village. In addition to these people there were a further number who wished to downsize to smaller dwellings. For a more detailed analysis of the data behind this number please see Annex A. For a definition of the phrase 'affordable housing' in the context of this plan see Annex E.

4.3.4. Consultation on the SODC Local Plan

The SODC Local Plan was issued in January 2019 and it elicited a large number of negative responses from villagers objecting to development in the Green Belt at Northfield and at Grenoble Road. At least 700 villagers wrote to SODC to place on record their objections to any development in the Green Belt separating the Village from the City.

The reaction to the SODC plan and the potential large-scale development on the north-side of the village has had an impact on the content of the Neighbourhood Plan, as set out set out policies designed ensure any future developments are consistent with the rural nature of the village (POLICY GARS5 and POLICY GARS7), have limited impact or even enhance the local environment and habitats (POLICY GARS8), and with a preference for affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community (POLICY GARS6).

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4.3.5. Consultation with land-owners for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan

During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the owners of land with the potential for the building of affordable housing were consulted even though it was eventually decided not to allocate a site for this purpose.

4.3.6. Pre-submission consultation process

The pre-submission consultation took place from 13th April 2022 until the 25th May 2022 and involved local residents, local businesses and statutory bodies. The consultation process was announced in the Garsington Newsletter that is delivered to every house and business in the village in the first week of April 2022. Parish Council minutes, publicized on notice boards in the village and on a village website (<https://plan.garsington.org.uk>), also indicated the timing of public consultation. Announcements were made on the Garsington Greatness Facebook page. Furthermore, each meeting of the NDP steering committee was reported to the Parish Council, the minutes of which, are freely available on line and in hard copy format. Approximately ten copies of the plan and the supporting documents were printed and the plan was uploaded to the village website.

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5. Environment and the Landscape Character

5.1. The Parish

The parish of Garsington lies about four and a half kilometres south-east of Oxford on the eastern boundaries of Littlemore and Sandford and consists of about 900 hectares. It is embedded in the Green Belt. The old Roman road (Dorchester to Alchester), now a footpath, partly bounds it on the west; the Baldon Brook, flowing southwards to the Thame, forms its southwest boundary with Toot Baldon. Part of its boundary is highly irregular which is likely to have been dictated by the pattern of the already existing furlongs in the open fields.

Except in the north, the land at the circumference of the parish lies at about 60 metres above sea level. However, it rises steeply to the ridge that sweeps north from Garsington village to City Farm and round to Hill Farm, once South End Farm, at the south end and just over the Chiselhampton border. At its highest point the ridge reaches 131 metres.

The village and parish command wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. Virtually the whole of the ridge of the Chilterns is visible, from Luton/Dunstable in the northeast to Henley/Reading in the southwest, forming the horizon for a large part of the outlook. To the west are the Baldons and to the northwest are views of Wytham Woods and the city of Oxford.

The geological structure is interesting and accounts for the numerous springs after which so many of the fields have been named: Priestwell, Ellwell (Elfwell), Combewell, etc.

The Parish is criss-crossed with a very high density of public footpaths and bridleways. These interconnect Garsington with local villages including The Baldons, Horspath and Shotover, Cuddesdon (and then Wheatley), Denton and Chippinghurst. They also provide access from different parts of the parish and outlying properties to the centre of the village (principally the Church). Many of the footpaths in the parish are marked by ancient stone stiles.

Annex G contains a landscape assessment prepared by SODC.

5.2. The Village

Garsington is an ancient parish of ~1800 people with a central conservation area surrounded by mixed farms supporting much wildlife.

The parish, being located firmly in the green belt, consists principally of farmland, most of which is arable. Parts of the village were at one time given over to market gardens that supplied Oxford Colleges with produce.

The village consists of essentially 4 roads (Wheatley Road, Oxford Road, Southend and Pettiwell), plus the three estates off the Oxford Road, leading to the centre of the village and conservation area at the top of the hill. The village is organised such that the principal roads lead off in all directions into the farmland and thus virtually every house in the village is within a few tens of metres of fields. The high density of footpaths and bridle paths gives everyone easy access to the open countryside and its wildlife.

Despite the closeness to Cowley/Oxford, the protection furnished by the Green Belt has meant that the village maintains the atmosphere of a rural and a strongly cohesive community, as exemplified by the many village organisations and activities (see Annex D).

Principal buildings within the village are Garsington Manor (Photographs 3, 2 and 1), St Mary's Church (Photograph 6), with its high quality east window, the Rectory, the medieval Cross (Photograph 11), the Kennels and the Old School (Photograph 4). These are all described in detail in Pevsner's "The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire".

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There are 40 listed buildings within the village (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>) and for the vast majority of the buildings their context and topographical setting (i.e. the way they look down onto uninterrupted farmland) is an essential part of their cultural contribution. Furthermore a report on the conservation status of Garsington by SODC (Garsington Conservation Area: a character study, SODC 23/05/01 – see Annex G) argued strongly for “uninterrupted views from the surrounding valley bottoms towards the critical buildings clustered around the centre of the village.”

The rural nature and protection of the Green Belt is also reflected in the rich diversity of wildlife in the parish and village. Being embedded in farmland, the village benefits from wildlife associated with gardens, farmland and woodland.

Photograph 1 - Garsington Manor



Photograph 2 - Garsington Manor



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Photograph 3 - Garsington Manor



Photograph 4 - The Old School



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6. Final Submission Policies: August 2022

6.1. Introduction

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan comprises its land use policies to be used to help the District Council determine planning applications. Care has been taken to avoid any unnecessary duplication or repetition of Local Plan policies or of national planning policy, though inevitably there will be some overlap in order to present a series of coherent policies aligned to the vision and objectives of the plan.

Each policy is numbered to be unique to the Neighbourhood Plan so they are easy to understand and cite alongside policies of the Local Plan. Their titles convey their scope and they are presented in bold italics, with the use of clauses where a policy serves more than one purpose. In some cases, some introductory text is included to frame the policy but each is followed by supporting text that explains how it should be interpreted and applied. Most of the policies apply to specific land and locations in the Parish, and this is shown on Map 5 – Policies Map at the end of the document.

6.2. Community Assets

POLICY GARS1 COMMUNITY ASSETS

GARS1.1. Development proposals should assess their impact on the operation of the following defined Community Facilities, as shown on Map 5 – Policies Map:

- 1.1.1. St Mary's Church
- 1.1.2. The Village Hall
- 1.1.3. Garsington Primary School
- 1.1.4. The village Pub
- 1.1.5. The Sports and Social Club
- 1.1.6. The Village Playgrounds

GARS1.2. Development proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility listed in part 1 of this policy through a change of use or redevelopment will only be supported if:

- 1.2.1. it would lead to the significant improvement of an existing facility or the replacement of an existing facility equally convenient to the local community it serves and with an equivalent or improved facility; or
- 1.2.2. information is available to identify that the facility is no longer needed, or in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.

GARS1.3. Proposals for the improvement, extension and renewal of a Community Facility will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated they:

- 1.3.1. meet the definition of appropriate development in the Green Belt;
- 1.3.2. would clearly meet an identified local need; and
- 1.3.3. they are accessible for all members of the community and will promote social inclusion in the Parish.

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GARS1.4. Development proposals should assess their impact on the operation of the following defined Community Spaces, as shown on Map 5 – Policies Map:

- 1.4.1. Burial Ground and Churchyard (Grid Reference: SP58100201)
- 1.4.2. Gizzel Pond (Grid Reference: SP58150198; Common Land Register: CL62¹)
- 1.4.3. Field immediately surrounding the church and burial ground (Grid Reference: SP58000200)
- 1.4.4. Village Cross (Grid Reference: SP5808402318; Village Green Register: VL76) and Green (Grid Reference: SP5811002294; Village Green Register: VL77)
- 1.4.5. Pettiwell Green (Grid Reference: SP57940212; Village Green Register: VL75)
- 1.4.6. Memorial Playing Field and Playground (Grid Reference: SP58370252)
- 1.4.7. Phipps Well (Grid Reference: SP57940238)
- 1.4.8. Parsler's Piece (Grid Reference: SP57570258)
- 1.4.9. Poplar Close Green (Grid Reference: SP57420293)

GARS1.5. Development proposals on a Community Space that would undermine its essential social value will not be supported.

GARS1.6. Development proposals adjacent to a Community Space should respond positively to the community space concerned and be designed to complement its essential social value. Development proposals adjacent to a Community Space which would undermine the essential social value of the space will not be supported.

This policy identifies two types of community asset – facilities and spaces – that support the social and community groups in the village and the more general well-being of its community. These are an essential part of the character and culture of the village and what makes it the place it is. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and promote these facilities and spaces. The Plan considers them all to be essential assets of the village and as such would consider all of them to be protected in accordance with the Local Plan policies CF1, CF2 and CF4. Some of the facilities have been, and remain, under threat and any significant development within the village that would support or could enhance these assets would be welcomed.

6.2.1. Village Facilities

These facilities (see Maps 2, 3 and 4) are:

Garsington Primary School (Church of England), part of the River Learning Trust

Located in a modern (c1982) building in the centre of the village, the school is very popular and fully subscribed. There is a high proportion of non-Garsington children at the school which has some impact on the involvement of pupils and parents in village life, as well as contributing to considerable traffic congestion at peak 'school-run' times. The school is a major attraction for the village, therefore new

¹ Note, in the register of Common Land "Gizzel" is misspelt "Gissel" (in particular the area is designated as "the Gissel Pond")

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housing that enabled more young families to live in the village would be of benefit. There is a potential threat to the school's future due to unknown competition with facilities at Northfield.

Photograph 5 - Garsington Primary School



St Mary's Parish Church (Church of England)

The Church dates from the late twelfth century but much of the current interior stems from a restoration around 1849. The church occupies an imposing site at the edge of the original village centre on a raised hilltop, the site of a Saxon look-out post, with superb views towards the Baldons and across the Thames valley to Wittenham Clumps and beyond to the Chilterns. The picturesque building and attractive views are not only a benefit for the villagers but also attract a large number of visitors, both casual and in groups, such as bell-ringers. There is a regular congregation for Sunday services (generally 9.30 each Sunday), and the venue is valued as their parish church by many villagers for baptisms, weddings and funerals. It is also used for other village events, such as a regular coffee morning, plays and concerts. Other events supported by the Church community in the village include the annual Summer Fete (held alternate years in the Vicarage or Manor Grounds), and Safari Suppers.

Photograph 6 - St Mary's Church



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Garsington Sports and Social Club

The Sports and Social Club, located on Denton Lane, has a club-house with 2 function rooms and bars. This is also in a prime location towards the edge of the centre of the village on the hill-top. The site has grand views across to Cuddesdon and the Miltons and the Ridgeway. There is a well-maintained cricket square and football pitch. In addition to the local football and cricket teams, the club is home to the Garsington Darts and Aunt Sally teams, two Pool teams and a Table Tennis club, as well as hosting the Senior Citizens twice a month plus regular social events (Quiz evening, Music nights, Private Functions etc). The Club facilities are regularly used by Garsington School.

Core supporters are drawn from within and outside the village (approx. 50/50). There are active football and cricket teams for different age groups, though the number of youth teams has reduced in recent years. As with the school, this may be linked to the lower number of young families living in the village, an issue the Neighbourhood Plan hopes to address.

Photograph 7 - Garsington Sports and Social Club (viewed from playground)



The Manor Bar and Restaurant (previously the Three Horseshoes)

This is Garsington's only remaining pub, two others having closed in the last eight years (The Plough and The Red Lion). It occupies a prime site in the heart of the village being on the Green and in the conservation area. From what was once a thriving focal point for much of the village's social life, the Manor Bar and Restaurant has suffered in common with many village pubs in recent years although it has recently been refurbished. The local situation was not helped by a tie to the landlord and, over the last decade, a succession of over 20 changes in licensee. The pub has been registered as a Community Asset and at the present time (June 2024) a process of re-registration is being pursued.

Any opportunities to extend the scope of the services and increase the viability of the pub as a business are strongly supported within the Neighbourhood Plan.

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Photograph 8 - The Manor Bar and Restaurant (previously the Three Horseshoes)



Garsington Village Hall

The village hall is located, almost literally, in the bosom of the village, sitting on a tight site in the crook of a steep hairpin at the junction of the Oxford Road and The Hill. Built in 1911, it was extensively refurbished and extended in 2011, with support from the Parish Council, SODC, WREN and local fundraising. It is owned by a charitable trust and run by a committee of dedicated villagers who maintain the high standard of the facility, which includes a modern kitchen, flexible staging and a meeting room. It is heavily used for private functions, public events such as music evenings and drama productions, and regular village bookings such as Parish Council Meetings, the WI, the Village Choir, exercise classes and the monthly Lunch Club, to name a few.

Photograph 9 - Garsington Village Hall



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Village Playgrounds

There is a well-equipped childrens' playground in the village supported and maintained by the Parish Council. This is located on Denton Lane above the Sports & Social Club playing fields. It consists of a fenced area containing many pieces of playground equipment (see Photographs 10 and 12); it commands wonderful views over to the Chilterns (Photograph 7) and is extensively used by villagers and visitors from afar.

There are two other 'green areas' in the village, although not formally described as 'playgrounds' and without playground equipment, that are frequently used by young people as play areas. These are the green in Poplar Close (see Map 2 and Photograph 14) and a field to the south of Oxford Road, Parsler's Piece (see Map 2 and Photograph 13).

It is clear that for development in the village to be successful and enhance the experience of existing and new residents, sustainable community facilities must be maintained and if possible improved. All of the facilities listed above would benefit from the changes in the population of the village supported within this plan, in particular an increase in the number of younger people able to move into in the village and older people seeking to 'downsize' but remain in the village.

Photograph 10 - Playground



6.2.2. Community Spaces

Within Garsington there are a number of spaces characterised either as Village Greens, Common Land or pre-enclosure highways or as green spaces owned by the parish council or the Church. They have an important role in the community life of the village; they have historic and cultural significance and they make a major contribution to village and landscape character.

As a village that is 'washed over' by the Green Belt, these spaces already have protection from harmful development, unless very special circumstances can be met, as per national policy for the Green Belt. In which case, although each would have qualified for a Local Green Space designation (as per NPPF §102), there is no need for such a proposal. However, there may be proposals for development that is deemed appropriate in the Green Belt, and their community value (aside from their contribution to the essential purposes of the Green Belt) must also be recognised. Each is considered an essential and enduring asset for the village.

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These community spaces (see Maps 2, 3 and 4) are:

Burial Ground and Churchyard

These grounds are immediately adjacent to the parish church, their significance lies in their continuing use, their historic links to the current community and the beauty both of the grounds and their outlook.

Gizzel Common

The small parcel of land is bounded by the ancient Manor House and gardens and a public footpath between Southend and the Church Burial Grounds, the Church Yard and a network of village footpaths below the Church. This small piece of land nestles in a beautiful spot and provides recreational access for the local community.

Field immediately surrounding church and burial ground

The small parcel of land is bounded on the east side by St Mary's church and the burial ground and stretches nearly from Pettiwell to the Gizzel. There is a network of village footpaths which provide access to the four points of the compass. This small piece of land has beautiful views and provides recreational access for the local community.

Village Cross and Green

This small area of land includes the remaining part of the old village cross, is of local significance and shapes the historic character of the old centre of the village.

Photograph 11 - The Old Cross



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Pettiwell Green

This is a small area of land near the heart of the old village, where a footpath from Southend and the Manor via the church crosses Pettiwell and proceeds to Parsler's Piece and Oxford Road.

Memorial Playing Field and Playground

This land is in constant use by the community, providing a safe, well equipped and maintained playground for children and a sports and social facility for the adults. It is a Memorial Field of historical significance to the community, and a place of beauty with open views toward the Chiltern Hills.

Photograph 12 - Playground



Phipps Well and green adjacent to Oxford Road

A small piece of land at the location of a natural spring surrounded by old trees. The site is one of a number of ancient springs on either side of the village which provided fresh water to the community before the installation of pumped main water supplies as late as the middle of the 20th century. Another spring feeds the Gizzel Pond. At the turn from the Oxford Road there is a bank of green land which is included in this space.

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Parsler's Piece

A landscaped Piece providing open space bounded by trees and hedgerows linking the Oxford Road to the village network of footpaths. In continual use by local residents seeking relaxation in a rural idyll, as well as those wanting open space for play, or simply going for a walk.

Photograph 13 - Parsler's Piece



Poplar Close Green

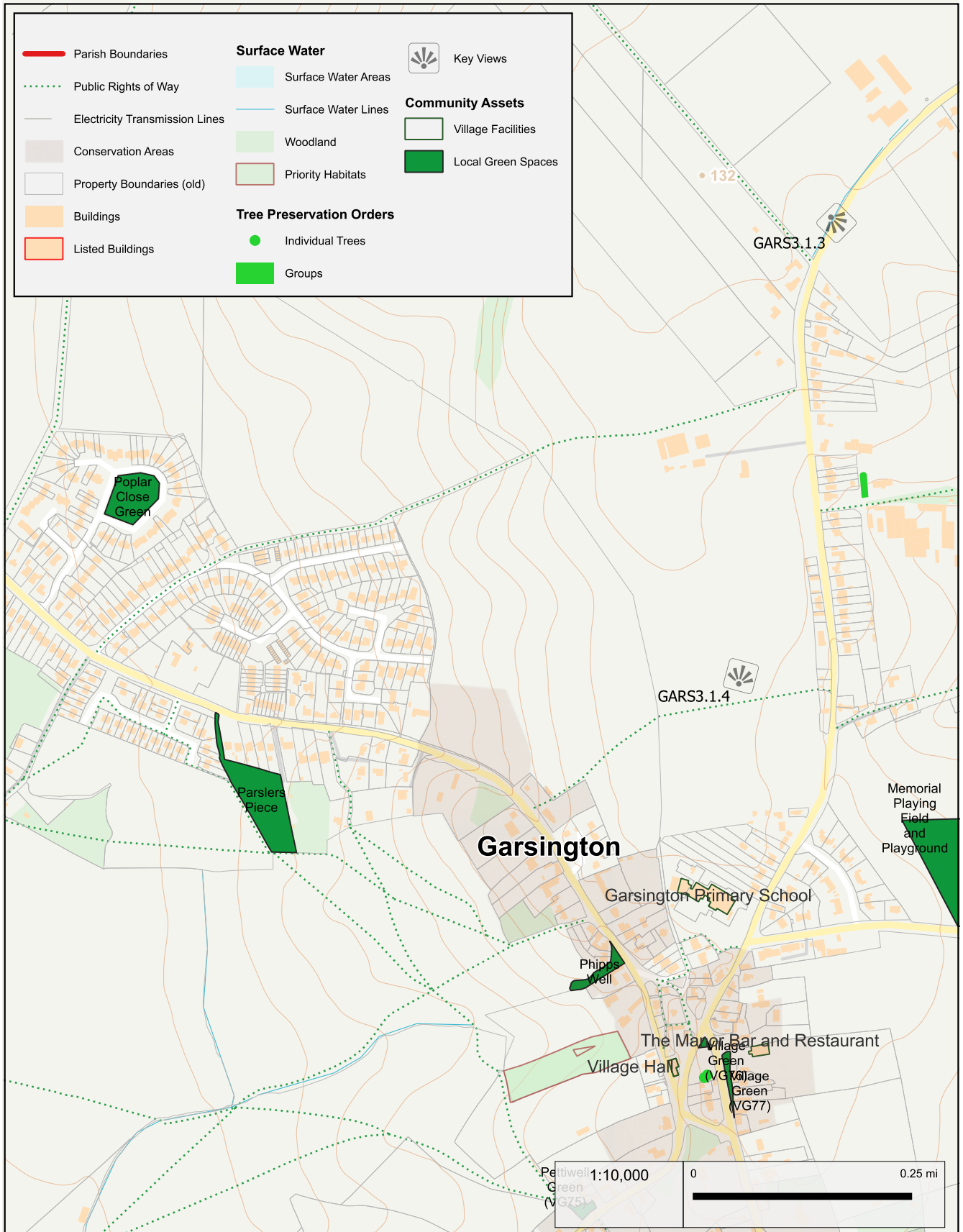
It is an open space accessible to residents and their children on the other side of the Oxford Road from Parsler's Piece, providing a safe play area away from the main road. Ringed with trees it is an attractive Green and in continual use by the community.

Photograph 14 - Poplar Close



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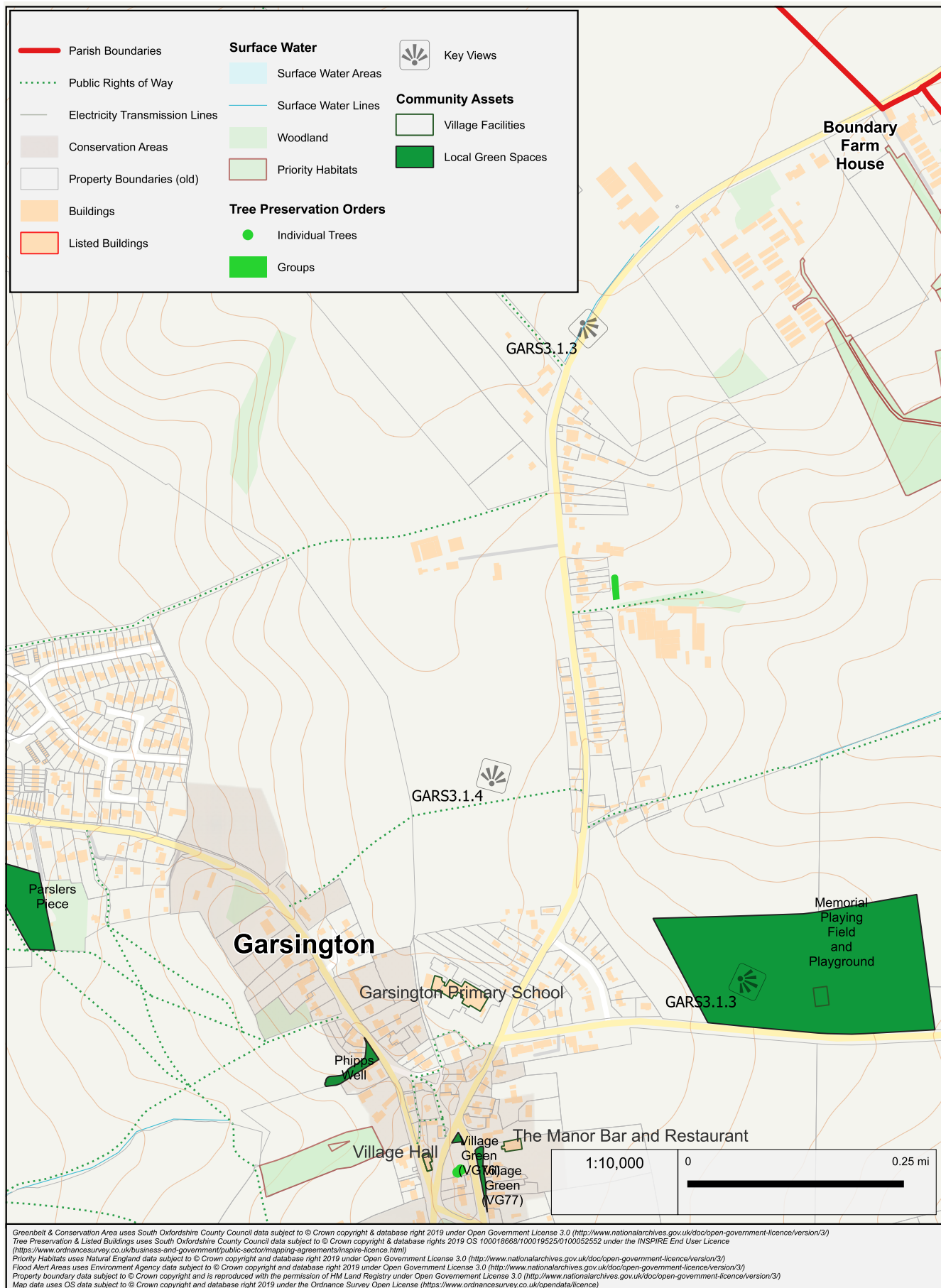
Map 2 – Community Assets and Views (North-West)



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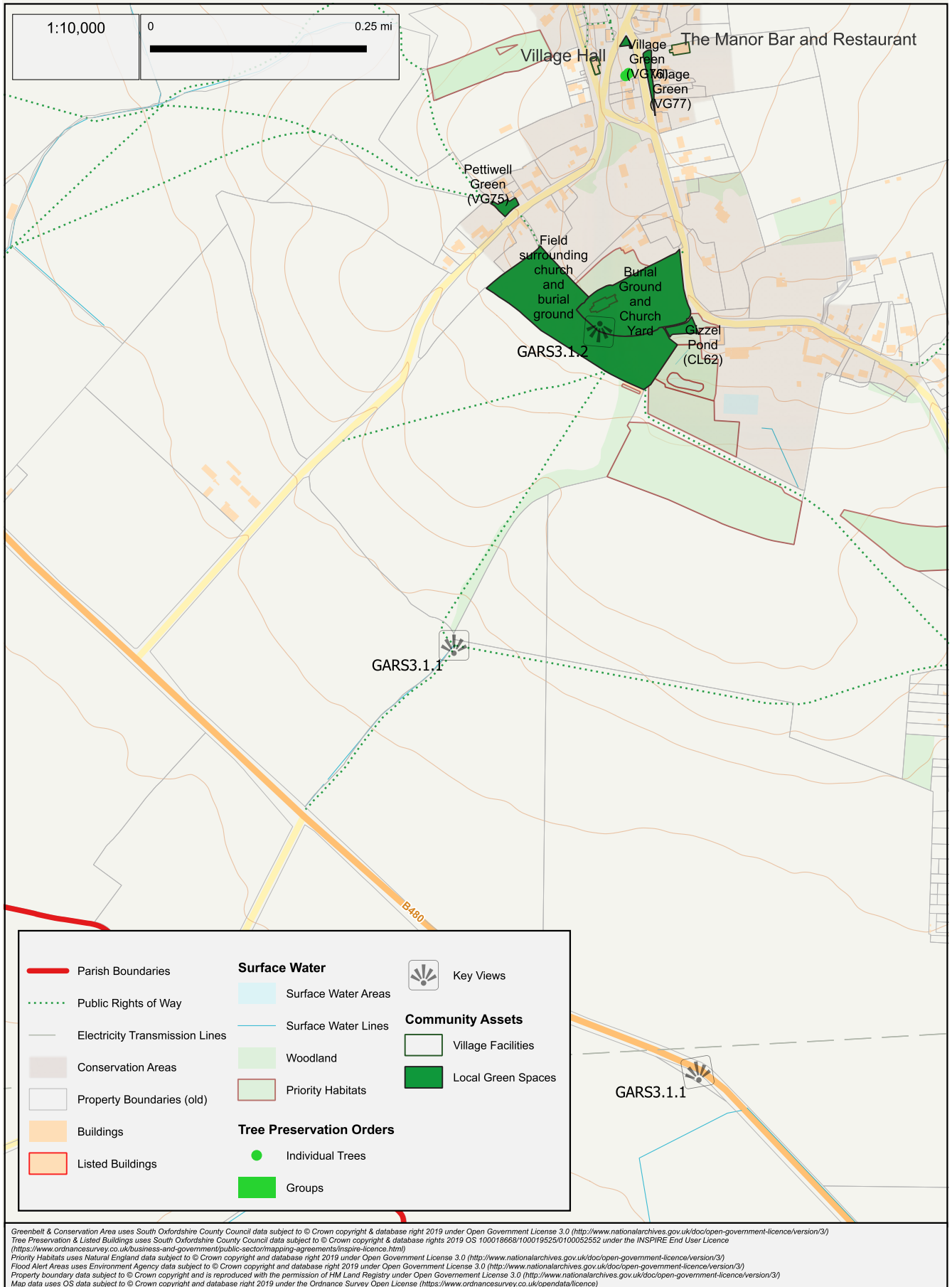
Garsington Neighbourhood Plan – 2022 to 2035

Map 3 - Community Assets and Views (North-East)



Garsington Neighbourhood Plan – 2022 to 2035

Map 4 - Community Assets and Views (South)



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6.3. Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways

POLICY GARS2 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS

- GARS2.1.* Development proposals should respect and conserve the parish's footpaths and bridleways. Any proposed developments that affect existing paths should demonstrate how the route and its character will be protected, or an appropriate alternative route of comparable character will be delivered.
- GARS2.2.* As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, and where it is practicable to do so, development proposals should provide safe pedestrian and cycle access to connect with existing or proposed footpaths and cycle routes.
- GARS2.3.* Development proposals should be designed to support and encourage active travel as the first-choice mode of transport for local residents. In addition there should be provision of benches, accessible gates and cycle-friendly road adaptations where possible, to increase accessibility.

This policy seeks to ensure that safe pedestrian/cycle access to the village centre is an intrinsic consideration in any new residential development. Footpaths are an essential aspect of the rural nature of the village and as such their routing and environment should be protected. Furthermore, consideration of new foot, cycle and bridle paths to enhance connectivity throughout the village would be a welcome feature in any new development plans.

6.4. Important Views

POLICY GARS3 IMPORTANT VIEWS

- GARS3.1.* The scale, massing and height of development proposals should be designed to preserve or, where practicable, to enhance the local character of the landscape and respond positively to following important views as shown on Map 5 – Policies Map:
- 3.1.1. Views of the Church and the Manor across from Watlington Road
 - 3.1.2. View from by St Mary's Church south-west towards Wittenham Clumps, Wantage, Toot Baldon, Boars Hill, and Wytham Woods
 - 3.1.3. View from the childrens' playground area in the Memorial field on Denton Lane and from Wheatley Road looking south-east towards Ripon College in Cuddesdon and the line of the Chilterns from Ivanhoe Beacon through to Streatley
 - 3.1.4. View from the footpath between the Oxford Road and Wheatley Road towards Wheatley windmill

This policy identifies a small number of views within the Parish that are considered to be essential to framing its distinct rural character. Although all of the Parish lies in the Green Belt there may be proposals for appropriate development, the location, scale, massing or height of which may undermine the character of a view. The policy requires that proposals demonstrate that they have acknowledged, understood and responded positively to the character of a view, insofar as is relevant to their location and nature.

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Each view is described in more detail below (see also Maps 2, 3 and 4):

GARS3.1.1. Views of the Church and the Manor across from Watlington Road. These views up the hill to the medieval church and Elizabethan manor are little-changed since Elizabethan times (see Photographs 15 and 16).

Photograph 15 - View of the church from the footpath between the church and Watlington Road



Photograph 16 - View of Garsington Manor, dovecote and church from Watlington Road



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- GARS3.1.2.** View from by St Mary's Church south-west towards Wittenham Clumps, Wantage, Toot Baldon, Boars Hill, and Wytham Woods (see Photograph 17). This magnificent view again, epitomises the nature of the 'medieval village on a hill' and indeed the clear view of Wittenham Clumps suggests a link with pre-Roman times and a view that has little changed since Roman times.

Photograph 17 - View of Wittenham Clumps and the Ridgeway from Garsington Parish Church



- GARS3.1.3.** View from the children's playground area in the Memorial field on Denton Lane (see Photographs 7 and 12) and from Wheatley Road looking south-east towards Ripon College in Cuddesdon and the line of the Chilterns from Ivanhoe Beacon through to Streatley (see Photograph 18). This magnificent view looking east shows the continuation of the ridgeway (see also view 4) and the relationship with our neighbouring village on a hill, Cuddesdon. This view can be appreciated from most of Wheatley Road.

Photograph 18 - View of the Chilterns from Wheatley Road



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GARS3.1.4. View from the footpath between the Oxford Road and Wheatley Road towards Wheatley windmill (see Photograph 19).

Photograph 19 - View towards Wheatley Windmill from opposite Wheatley Road



6.5. Settlement Identity

POLICY GARS4 SETTLEMENT IDENTITY

GARS4.1. Development proposals, including the re-use of rural buildings, should preserve the character, setting and location of Garsington. In particular, new development should not unacceptably detract, either individually or cumulatively, from the separation between Garsington and:

- 4.1.1. Oxford City, taking account of the strategic allocation at Northfield (SODC Local Plan 2035 – Policy STRAT12);
- 4.1.2. Development at and around Kings Copse Park; and
- 4.1.3. Development at and around the Riding Stables.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the character of Garsington as a physically and visually separate settlement is maintained. This policy does not seek to prevent development that may otherwise be appropriate to these identified locations.

The separation between Garsington and Oxford is especially sensitive to change in light of the Local Plan strategic allocation at Northfield, which the policy acknowledges, and which will result in the separation between Garsington and Oxford being narrower than it is currently.

Development at and around the Riding Stables is considered to constitute the area on B480 Watlington Road between the junction with Southend Garsington and the bottom of Chiselhampton Hill.

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6.6. Meeting Local Housing Needs: Housing Types & Mix

Garsington needs to plan for any future growth in the number of dwellings in the village both to cater for its own needs and to have a framework in which all planning applications can be considered.

The responses to both the Residents Consultation Paper carried out in July August 2018 and the Housing Needs Assessment carried out in September and October 2018 (see Annex H), show that future housing development should focus on smaller and affordable houses rather than larger homes so as to support a mixed and vibrant community. In order to maintain village amenities such as the school, the housing stock should be rebalanced to reflect the needs of younger people whilst at the same time offering more choice to older members of the parish who wish to downsize. The village cannot retain a vibrant community based around continuing growth of larger properties.

The Garsington Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) demonstrated a clear requirement for affordable homes within the parish. 86% of respondents to the housing needs questionnaire produced to support the HNA expressed that affordable housing should ideally be provided in small sites scattered throughout the parish. Affordable homes means different things to different people, but within this plan the definition of the NPPF must be adopted. Very broadly this term encompasses housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers i.e. key workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- Affordable housing for rent
- Starter homes
- Discounted market sales housing
- Other affordable routes to home ownership

The HNA report identified an unsatisfied need for a number of types of accommodation which fell within the NPPF definition of affordable housing, namely social housing for rent, low-cost homes for sale and housing available for part purchase. There was a further need for housing into which people could downsize within the village e.g. bungalows, maisonettes, sheltered housing. Currently 82% of properties in the village have three or more bedrooms and 75% of dwellings are lived in by one or two people (See charts 1 and 2 of the HNA Report). 56% of households responding contain residents who are aged 61 or over.

In summary, the total need for affordable housing explicitly identified by this survey was 16 dwellings. This comprised 5 family units to rent from a housing association and 11 family units to buy through an affordable housing scheme. In addition the data revealed a further requirement of dwellings which would enable people to downsize i.e. bungalow/sheltered/retirement flat//maisonette. The Neighbourhood Plan goals are therefore to encourage proposals that provide a mixture of housing types and sizes that substantially contribute to the identified local needs for affordable housing within the parish, and to meet the needs of an ageing population in respect of accessibility and downsizing. The community will especially welcome proposals for the type of smaller homes (i.e. up to three bedrooms) suited to young families and older people who wish to downsize and those that provide affordable housing for people with a local connection in perpetuity.

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POLICY GARS5 HOUSING MIX

GARS5.1. Proposals for new residential development will be supported where the mix of dwelling types:

- 5.1.1. is appropriate to the site in terms of character and size of dwelling;
- 5.1.2. address the shortage of smaller and affordable houses, as identified in the Garsington Housing Needs Assessment; and
- 5.1.3. considers the needs of current and future households in Garsington by meeting the needs of younger people, young families and those of an ageing population in respect of accessibility and downsizing.

This policy is intended to encourage proposals that recognise the need for smaller dwellings and comprise single houses, terraced cottages or groups of small detached or semi-detached dwellings, with a maximum of 3 bedrooms. Proposals may also provide an element of affordable housing for people with a local connection but should be subject to conditions that will lead to a reasonable prospect of ensuring similar provision remains in perpetuity. The following criteria will usually be used to define local connection as per the Local Plan (§4.47 or subsequent):

- The applicant must have lived in the parish for 5 out of the last 8 years; or
- The applicant's parent or child to be currently resident in the parish, and to have at least 10 years' continuous residence; or
- The applicant has worked full time for 2 years in the parish, or equivalent in part time (this may include voluntary work), and there is evidence of continuing commitment.

A combination of Local Plan policies STRAT6 and H8 allows for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in some small Green Belt villages, the amount depending on the size of the village. Planning permission will not be granted for development within the Oxford Green Belt that is contrary to national policy guidance in the NPPF and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Pre-planning public consultation within the parish will be encouraged for any proposed developments of more than one dwelling. This will enable those requirements raised by the consultative process to be incorporated into the formal planning application.

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POLICY GARS6 NEW HOUSING

GARS6.1. Proposals for residential development on infill sites within the settlement boundary of the village will be supported, provided they:

- 6.1.1. will fill a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage buildings or on other sites within the built-up area boundary of the village where the site is closely surrounded by buildings; and
- 6.1.2. do not comprise the tandem development of land to the rear of a developed frontage unless it can be demonstrated that the privacy of existing and future residents will not be harmed and that a suitable means of access can be achieved without harming the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

GARS6.2. Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural or forestry related development and minor extensions to dwellings outside the built-up area boundary will be supported, provided they:

- 6.2.1. retain the rural character of the parish;
- 6.2.2. retain the valued qualities of the separation between settlements; and
- 6.2.3. retain the individual identities of settlements.

This policy responds to Local Plan Policy H16 providing for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in Green Belt villages like Garsington, in line with national Green Belt policy. However, in historic villages like Garsington that have evolved over many centuries, it is difficult to discern through their shape and edges where is the ‘built up area’. To bring clarity and certainty in decision making, Map 5 – Policies Map shows the Garsington Settlement Boundary which circumscribes the area for which this policy applies.

The boundary has been defined tightly around the built form of the settlement and, where possible, follows defined features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, and roads. The settlement boundary excludes open spaces, sports and recreational facilities on the edge of the settlement, uses associated with the countryside, and sections of large curtilages of buildings (including gardens, such as those on Oxford Road) which relate more to the character of the countryside than the built form of Garsington. The cluster of buildings to the north along Wheatley Road have not been included within the settlement boundary as they are historically associated with countryside uses.

Should there be opportunities for plot redesign, sub-division or redevelopment to deliver new homes they must fit well with the existing grain and character of the village. It is also important that the amenity enjoyed by existing residents is maintained and a high quality of amenity is created for the occupiers of the new homes to ensure strong community cohesion. The policy does not support proposals for tandem development, i.e. where houses are built behind an existing house and off the street frontage unless the opportunity to do so allows for a proper new road access and will not harm residential amenity in terms of traffic movements or in overlooking.

Pre-planning public consultation within the parish will be encouraged for any proposed developments of more than one dwelling. This will enable those requirements raised by the consultative process to be incorporated into the formal planning application.

Any proposals to deliver new homes through the re-use of agricultural and other buildings in the countryside that require planning permission (i.e. they do not qualify for ‘permitted development

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rights’) must not undermine the rural character of the landscape or undermine the essential openness of the Green Belt or the Parish.

6.7. Quality Design Standards

The Garsington Neighbourhood Plan supports the National Planning Policy Framework’s (para 127) objective to achieve excellence in design, especially design that will help establish a ‘strong sense of place’ and ‘create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit’.

POLICY GARS7 DESIGN GUIDANCE

GARS7.1. New development should demonstrate good quality design and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respond to, and integrate with, their local surroundings and comply with the following design principles:

- 7.1.1. using good quality durable materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within the area
- 7.1.2. respecting established building set-back and arrangements of front gardens
- 7.1.3. using stone walling, green hedging and/or trees for highway boundaries, or in keeping with the existing streetscape if different
- 7.1.4. ensuring safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and road users
- 7.1.5. providing adequate refuse and recycling storage incorporated into the scheme to minimise visual impact
- 7.1.6. using innovative design that is sustainable in its design, construction and operation
- 7.1.7. ensuring that proposals do not lead to increases in flood risk or drainage problems
- 7.1.8. protecting and enhancing nature conservation, watercourses, wildlife habitat, trees and landscape character
- 7.1.9. adopting the principles of sustainable urban drainage, within the village envelope
- 7.1.10. address climate change considerations by including renewable energy generation and by adopting a Fabric First approach to their design to minimise their carbon emissions and as a minimum meet the energy efficiency requirements set out in the Local Plan
- 7.1.11. ensuring adequate parking provision having regard to the most recently published standards of Oxfordshire County Council including accommodation of electric vehicle charging

GARS7.2. New developments shall be similar in density, plot width, footprint, separation, scale, and bulk to the buildings in the surrounding area generally and of neighbouring properties, unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would not harm local character or would compromise the efficient use of land.

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This policy establishes the goals for achieving a high-quality standard of design in the Parish that reflects its distinct character and Green Belt location. There is already a rich variety of architectural styles in the village and new developments should contribute to this variety. At the same time new developments should be sympathetic to the existing character of the area regarding density, scale and bulk of new builds. It does not necessarily restrict development, rather, it requires developers to deliver innovative development of high-quality design that responds to its surroundings and is appropriate for the area.

The intent is to encourage any new development to deliver creative and high-quality designs that sit comfortably with the existing buildings and natural environment. Also, to ensure that new development, especially that intended for family occupation, includes sufficient garden areas to serve future residents and to reflect the current character of the area.

Most of the built-up parts of the parish have developed at relatively low densities. There are substantial areas of verge and other green spaces, and many properties are within relatively large grounds and gardens. The spaces between and around these buildings contribute significantly to the character of the parish and to maintaining residential amenity. When considering development proposals, it is therefore important to have regard to the impact the proposed development will have on the setting and layout of the surrounding area.

Applicants should also take into account waste and wastewater upgrades proposed by Thames Water and should be aware that that where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades. SODC already seeks (in its Local Plan Policy INF4) to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments and that where there is a capacity constraint it will apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

6.8. Garsington Village Environmental Plan

GPC has a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and government guidance on the Act includes recommendations to identify local sites of importance for biodiversity and to protect and enhance biodiversity within the management of local authority land holdings. Garsington community and GPC recognise that activities and developments in the village can have an impact on the environment. The community therefore strives to both minimise any adverse environmental impacts, and maximise any environmental gains associated with its activities and any developments. GPC will aim to make a positive contribution to both protecting and enhancing the local and global environment and increasing local biodiversity. These ideas are captured in the following policy.

POLICY GARS8 BIODIVERSITY

- GARS8.1.* The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a variety of woodlands, priority habitats and tree preservation orders, as shown on Map 5 – Policies Map. Development proposals which result in a loss of or harm to any of these biodiversity assets, as well as to any other non-designated biodiversity assets, will not be supported unless the provisions of Local Plan Policy ENV2(3) are met.
- GARS8.2.* Proposals that will enhance the biodiversity of the land in the Parish through Local Nature Recovery schemes and through biodiversity offsetting from schemes within and beyond the Parish will be encouraged and supported.

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This policy derives directly from the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and GPC's legal responsibilities. It has a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and government guidance on the Act includes recommendations to identify local sites of importance for biodiversity and to protect and enhance biodiversity within the management of local authority land holdings.

Garsington community and GPC recognise that activities and developments in the village can have an impact on the environment. The community therefore strives to both minimise any adverse environmental impacts, and maximise any environmental gains associated with its activities and any developments. GPC will aim to make a positive contribution to both protecting and enhancing the local and global environment and increasing local biodiversity. It is concerned that not all biodiversity value is designated, publicly mapped or even known about and so the policy does not only apply to known assets. It will endeavour to work with other agencies and landowners to bring all the current mapping up to date.

This policy promotes Garsington Parish as a sustainable home to a thriving community that is strongly linked to its environment. To that end, acknowledging the biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery initiatives in the Environment Act 2021, which was enacted in 2023, the policy encourages developers and SODC to consider the Parish as a suitable location in principle for delivering biodiversity gain projects. Developments in the Parish that require to offset some of their net gain obligations off-site should first look to land within the Parish if it is suited to the type of required offset. Schemes outside the Parish may also find suitable land within the Parish for offsetting.

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7 Summary and Conclusion

During the consultation and engagement that the Parish Council has had with the village, strong support has been shown for developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The surveys indicate that the plan should have a twofold purpose. It should support the protection of the village's rural environment and separation from Oxford and neighbouring communities whilst also supporting the development of housing that will meet the needs of existing villagers.

The plan aims to do this by providing guidance for potential developers and high-lighting the social and cultural environment of Garsington that would-be developments and developers should take into account in any proposals.

Map 5 - Policies Map

