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MILTON ERNEST
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2020 – 2030

SUBMISSION VERSION

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2020 – 2030

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For more information please visit the Parish Council website:

<https://miltonernest-pc.gov.uk/>

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Foreword

The 2011 Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. *“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need”.*

In July 2013, Milton Ernest Parish Council was successful with its application to become designated by Bedford Borough Council (BBC) as an ‘approved’ Neighbourhood Area.

The local planning process was somewhat complicated by the inclusion of a potential ‘new village’ within the parish. A consortium representing Twinwoods Business Park presented the option of 4,000 - 6,000 new homes, business premises, schools and associated infrastructure on the site. Whilst work continued on our local plan the potential impact of such a development prevented significant progress until the outcome of its future was unknown. Any decision for such a development has effectively been placed on hold. Consequently, the Parish Council and Steering Group have pressed on to produce the Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan, setting out a positive vision for the future that supports growth in a way that protects the landscape in and around our village and ensures key services and infrastructure are not ignored.

The Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future, bringing them together with census information, strategic and statistical evidence into a “living promise” that mirrors the community’s overwhelming desire to make Milton Ernest an even better place to live and work, both now and for future generations.

The plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group including Parish Council members and community volunteers, on behalf of the Parish Council. The value and commitment of these few people has been immense. Additional help has been provided by professional planning experts, particularly Troy Planning + Design and AECOM. Further support and guidance has been afforded by planning officers from Bedford Borough Council.

Once the Plan has been finalised, and following a favourable local referendum, the Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan and become, with the Borough Council’s Local Plan, the starting point for deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

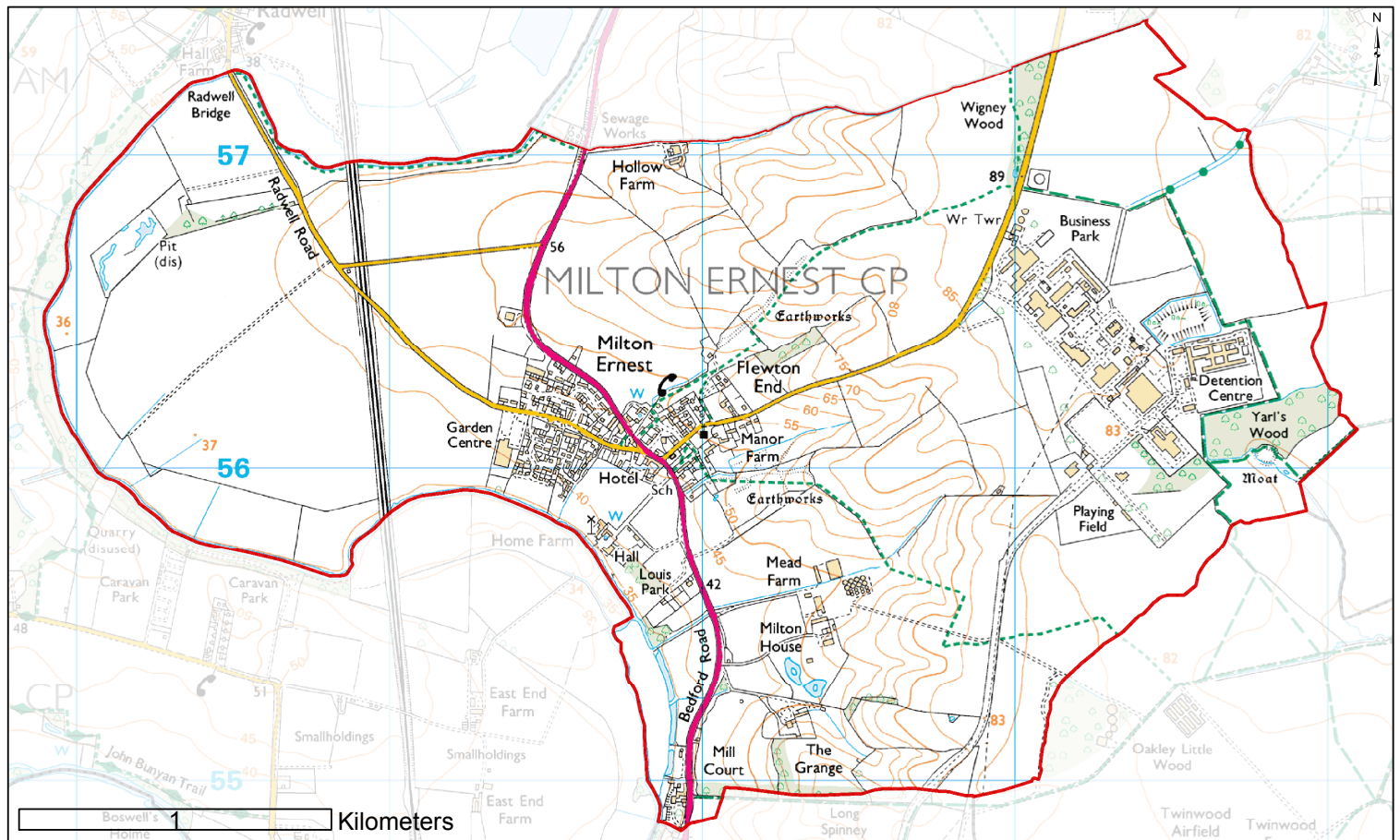
1. Introduction

A new plan for Milton Ernest Parish

- 1.1 This is the submission Neighbourhood Plan for Milton Ernest. It covers the entire Parish, as illustrated in Figure 1. It sets out the local community's aspirations for Milton Ernest over the period to 2030¹ and establishes policies relating to land use and development. These are policies that will influence future planning applications and decisions in the area. But the Neighbourhood Plan is much more than this. It represents the community's manifesto for the Parish, bringing together more than just traditional planning matters.
- 1.2 The purpose of neighbourhood planning is to give local people and businesses a much greater say in how the places they live and work should change and develop over time. Neighbourhood planning is designed to give local people a very real voice in shaping the look and feel of an area.
- 1.3 Milton Ernest Parish was formally designated as an area for neighbourhood planning purposes in July 2013². The Milton Ernest Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee has surveyed, spoken to and listened to members of the community, and has used the issues, and opportunities, raised during that process to help inform production of the policies and projects now presented in this draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 There are a number of stages involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Following earlier consultation, this version of the Plan has been submitted to Bedford Borough Council for the purposes of independent examination. Subsequent to the examination a referendum will be held, where all people of voting age residing in the Parish will be able to cast a vote on whether they think the Neighbourhood Plan should be brought into force ('made'). If more than 50% of those people who turnout vote 'yes', the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help shape planning decisions and applications in Milton Ernest.

¹ This aligns with the period covered by the Bedford Borough Local Plan adopted in January 2020. This Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored and updated to keep it up-to-date and aligned with District level planning policy.

² The Localism Act 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>) gave communities the power to develop neighbourhood plans, to be progressed by Town and Parish councils, or neighbourhood forums, as opposed to the local authority.



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Area

1:16,000

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Figure 1: The designated Neighbourhood Plan area for Milton Ernest

Structure of the plan

- 1.5 Following this introduction, the draft Neighbourhood Plan comprises nine further sections. These are:
- Section 2: 'Milton Ernest today', presents an overview of the area covered by the draft Neighbourhood Plan, what existing planning policy says for the area, key issues and comments raised during consultation.
 - Section 3: 'Milton Ernest tomorrow', presents the vision and objectives for the Plan area.
 - Sections 4 – 9 These sections present the policies and associated projects for Milton Ernest Parish. These are grouped based upon the objectives outlined in Section 3.
 - Section 10: 'Next steps' outlines the current stage in the plan making process, how to respond to the draft Plan, and what the future steps in the process are.
- 1.6 For the avoidance of doubt, within sections 4 – 9, each topic area includes some introductory and explanatory text, followed by one or both of the following:

Policy Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan establishes land use and development management policies for Milton Ernest. These are contained in green shaded policy boxes, like this one. They are used for proposals that require planning permission.

Project / Aspiration Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan covers more than just traditional planning matters as it presents the community's vision for the area. Items that the community are seeking, but that cannot be delivered through planning policy, are identified and contained in blue shaded project boxes, like this one. These are included within the body of the report, rather than being presented in a separate chapter or appendix, because they relate to the objectives and form a clear and important part of the story.

2. Milton Ernest ‘today’

Location and context

- 2.1 Milton Ernest is a village and civil parish in Bedfordshire, England, about five miles (8.0 km) north of Bedford itself. Censuses show that it had a population of 754 in 2001 that had risen to 761. The village is situated on the east bank of the River Great Ouse, and includes the site of Milton Ernest Hall, which was used as the United States Eighth Air Force's support command headquarters in the Second World War.
- 2.2 Main vehicular access to and from Milton Ernest is via the A6/Bedford Road, which runs north to south through the Village. This route connects Milton Ernest with Bedford to the south and Rushden to the north. The nearest train station to Milton Ernest is in Bedford.
- 2.3 The village benefits from a cluster of local services, including the Church, Village Hall, School and the Queens Head pub, focussed around the junction of Thurleigh Road and Bedford Road / Rushden Road. This comprises the ‘social heart’ and centre of the village.

History and character of the area

- 2.4 A character assessment of the village has been prepared to support the evolution of the Neighbourhood Plan. It presents a brief history of the village in development terms and how the historical context has shaped its character.
- 2.5 The character assessment draws upon the book “The Importance of Milton Ernest” (Newman, 2006), being a comprehensive and invaluable resource, charting the development of the village and identifying heritage assets.
- 2.6 Although today Milton Ernest appears relatively ‘nucleated’ when viewed in ‘plan’ form (that is, from aerial photography), the assessment of historic records and mapping indicates this is not reflective of the past. The position of farmsteads (both historic and remaining) plus analysis of place names (for example, ‘London End’, ‘Flewton End’) indicate that, historically, the village was more loosely knit around a series of ‘Ends’ each with differences in location, function and character. This is not uncommon in Bedfordshire villages. A key element of the setting of Milton Ernest is the Shrunk Medieval Village either side of Thurleigh Road, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument. The two sites comprising the Scheduled Monument formed part of the original village of Milton Ernest and stood at the centre of an extensive agricultural area.
- 2.7 Although the original medieval village declined as a result of changes in agricultural activity and population declined, later growth, including more gradual phases of

development and redevelopment appear to have eroded the gaps between many of the different 'Ends' occurring across Milton Ernest. However, different locations within the village retain some key buildings and features keeping intact local character even where separation has been reduced. These different phases of recent development have their own intrinsic character as well as a relationship with older parts of the village.

- 2.8 The frontages of buildings along Radwell Road show a historic trend of linear development. Many of these older buildings remain, albeit interspersed with modern additions or redevelopment. This creates a different character and more active road frontage. At different times, various facilities (for example, shops, public houses) appear to have been located at different points along this route, providing some connection between different 'Ends' of the village. Features such as traffic volumes and the closer proximity of the river may have influenced this pattern of development.
- 2.9 The Rushden Road (A6) is undoubtedly a historically important North-South route through the village. Patterns of development show limited linear development along this route (perhaps due to the location further away from the river) but different land uses and buildings (for example, the Oakley Hunt Kennels) had openings onto the route. In recent times, following redevelopment and increases in road movement, buildings have 'turned their back' on the A6, giving a limited role and purpose to this route for non-motorised road-users and limiting the connection with activity in the village.
- 2.10 The character assessment identifies six 'character areas' in Milton Ernest, being:
- Historic median: displaying strong local character with many links to the Milton Ernest heritage trail
 - Historic eastern: low density, irregular plots;
 - Pre 1960s: regular layout with weak reference to traditional character
 - 70s-80s: some reference to traditional character and materials
 - 80s-90s: compatibility to traditional character
 - Village edge: no reference to traditional character or materials
- 2.11 These character areas are shown on Figure 2 and inform policies in respect of heritage, character and design presented in the Neighbourhood Plan. The significance of the historic growth and evolution of Milton Ernest is clearly indicated in the Heritage Trail, illustrated in Figure 3, showing the distribution of heritage assets around the village and thus the importance of responding positively to these when bringing forward opportunities for new development. The trail also indicates the location of historic buildings in Milton Ernest, including All Saints Church and Milton Ernest hall, both of which are Grade I listed and thus of exceptional interest

nationally. Other listed and unlisted buildings contribute to the unique character of the village, reflected in the scale, appearance and materials as reported in the Milton Ernest Character Assessment. Listed buildings and other statutory heritage assets In Milton Ernest are presented in Appendix A of the Plan.



Milton Ernest

Character Areas

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ● Historic Median
Strong local character
Heritage Trail | ● Historic Eastern
Low Density
Irregular plots | ● Pre-60s
Regular layout with weak
reference to traditional character |
| ● 70s-80s
With some reference to
traditional character or materials | ● 80s-90s
Compatibility to
traditional character | ● Village Edge
No reference to traditional
character or materials |

Figure 2: Character areas in Milton Ernest, as presented in the supporting Character Assessment

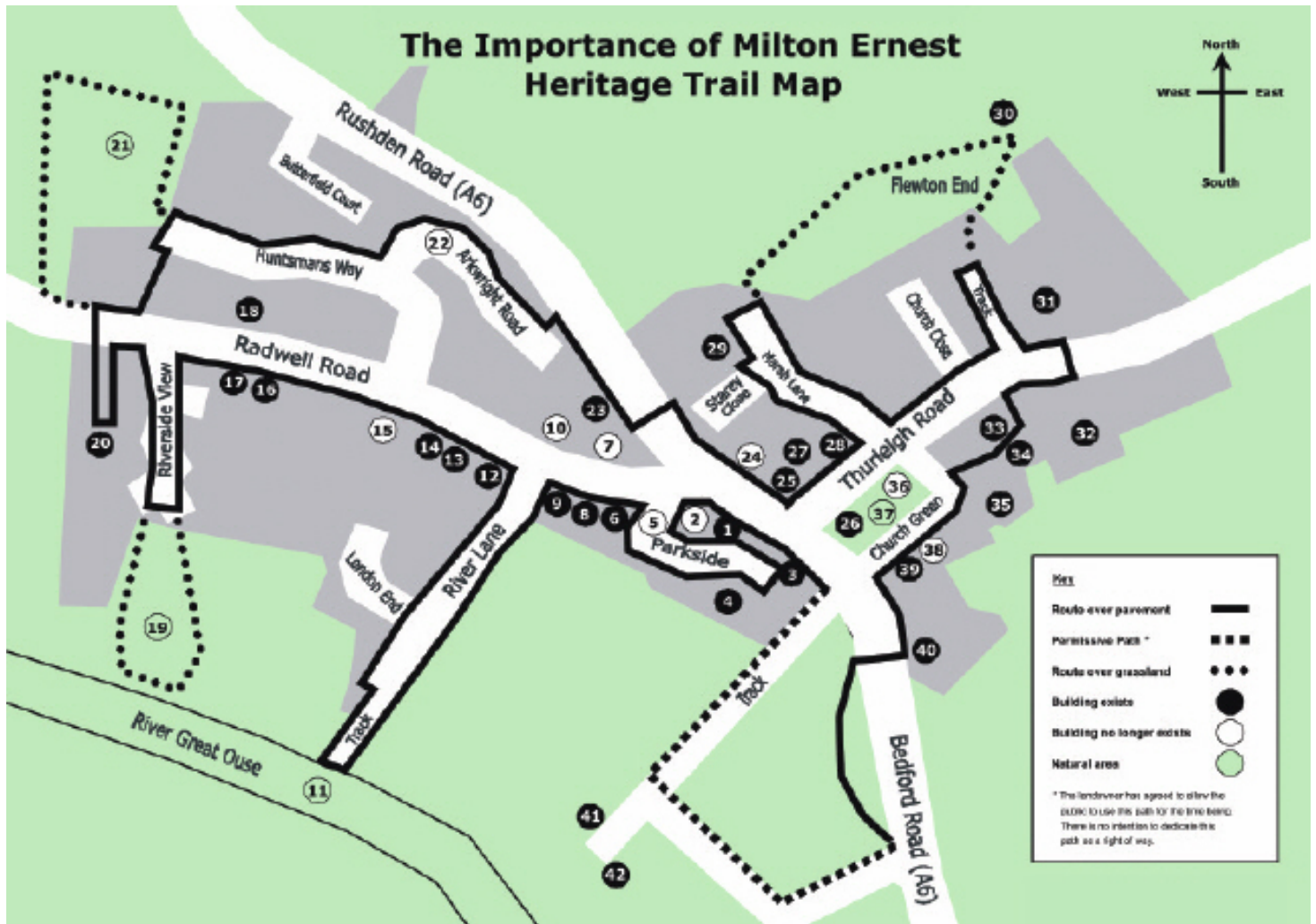


Figure 3: Plan of heritage assets across Milton Ernest (source: The Importance of Milton Ernest)

Traffic and Transport

- 2.12 In many ways, roads and traffic are one of the defining characteristics of the village. The A6 is a primary strategic north/south route that splits the community in half. A traffic survey by Bedfordshire Police in December 2017 showed that 120,000 vehicles used the A6 through the village over a seven-day period.
- 2.13 This has significant impacts in terms of separation, noise, the environment together with actual and perceived safety risks. Milton Ernest is the only settlement on the A6 between Luton and Rushden that has not been bypassed. It is a continual disappointment that proposals for the A6 appear to focus primarily on through traffic and not on community impacts. This was particularly apparent in the transport analysis associated with the potential new development around Sharnbrook (which was considered but eventually not included in the Local Plan 2030). In addition, BBC has no plan nor programme for a bypass.
- 2.14 Other transport related issues identified by residents include during the production of the Neighbourhood Plan include:
- The volume and speed of traffic along Radwell Road (which enables a direct route to Radwell, Felmersham and other Ouse Valley villages); and
 - the volume of traffic along Thurleigh Road, with particular concern around the number of lorries and goods vehicles.
- 2.15 In addition, facilities for cycling are limited. There is a shared cycleway/footway that runs eastwards, on the south side of the A6, between the centre of Milton Ernest and the outskirts of the village. However, to continue safely it is necessary to cross the A6 - but no facility is provided for this. In peak times it can take up to 15 minutes to be able to cross safely. This does nothing to encourage cycling into Bedford. Through the Neighbourhood Plan we would like to see solutions put in place that break this barrier to movement and which make walking and cycling a safer and more attractive proposition for all. Proposals for new developments should incorporate active travel measures wherever possible. Monies received through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could be directed towards such schemes. This is included as a project / aspiration in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Wider Planning Context

- 2.16 The Settlement Policy Area (SPA) is an important definition in planning terms as, it provides a spatial limit to the areas of potential development. The current SPA for Milton Ernest is illustrated in Figure 4.
- 2.17 The Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan (MENP) is designed to achieve the vision (see next section) for Milton Ernest through to 2030. This duration is aligned with the Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030. It is part of the approach to planning, set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area.
- 2.18 The MENP is consistent with the following key statutory requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance:
- it has regard to national policies and does not constrain the delivery of important national policy objectives;
 - it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and
 - it is in general conformity with the development plan of the local planning authority (Bedford Borough Council).
- 2.19 It must also be compatible with European regulations, particularly European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken in certain circumstances. The draft Neighbourhood Plan has been screened for SEA purposes and concluded that such an assessment was not required. It has also been subject to Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- 2.20 The HRA concluded that, while there are likely significant effects to the Natura 2000 sites of Portholme Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and The Ouse Washes SAC/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site (Wetland of International Importance) from the MENP, this is only in combination with other plans. On the recommendation of the HRA, the Neighbourhood Plan has included wording to ensure that those effects are mitigated.
- 2.21 Bedford Borough Council adopted the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 in January 2020 (subsequently referred as the Local Plan 2030). Its purpose is to plan for the borough's growth needs until the end of 2030.
- 2.22 Whilst much of the BBC's plans for new housing are focused within the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, there is significant allocation within the rural hinterland. In this respect, the strategy defines three types of rural settlements:

- Key service centres: these contain a good range of services and are well connected to larger town centres by regular public transport. They provide a strong service role for the local community and surrounding area.
- Rural service centres: these have fewer facilities and provide a more localised convenience and service role to meet day to day needs of residents and businesses in the rural areas.
- Small and dispersed settlements: these have very limited, if any, facilities.

- 2.23 Policy 4S outlines that the total allocation of new dwellings within the plan period is (a minimum of) 3,169. Of this, 2,000 have been allocated to key service centres and 260 to rural service centres.
- 2.24 Milton Ernest has been defined as a 'rural service centre' and a site (or sites) must be identified to provide for 25-50 additional homes by 2030.
- 2.25 The MENP must be in general conformity with the Local Plan 2030 and so must demonstrate locations where 25-50 homes could be provided. If sites are not identified in the MENP within 12 months of the adoption of the Local Plan 2030 (which will be January 2021), then they may be allocated by BBC. Through this Neighbourhood Plan the Parish has taken the opportunity to consider the most appropriate locations and scale of growth, and how this might influence wider improvements and delivery of new infrastructure in Milton Ernest. It thus represents a community-led and positive approach to planning for change.

Twinwoods

- 2.26 The area referred to as Twinwoods comprises the Twinwoods Business Park and the Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre together with associated roads and buildings, as shown on Figure 5. In March 2019, the vertical spinning tunnel within the site was listed at Grade II. The Yaris Wood Hermitage and Moated Site Scheduled Monument is located to the south east of Twinwoods.
- 2.27 Twinwoods is within the parish of Milton Ernest but outside the boundaries of the SPA. As part of its development of the preparation of the Local Plan 2030, BBC asked developers to identify sites where new garden villages could be provided. One of those sites was at Twinwoods – the proposal was for up to 6,000 houses together with employment, education, leisure and other facilities. It included a by-pass for Milton Ernest. In the event, large settlements do not feature in the Local Plan 2030, although this is still a possibility for future housing provision within Bedford borough. Should this position be reviewed in the next iteration of the Local Plan so this Neighbourhood Plan will also be updated and amended as appropriate. Until such a time, the policies in the Bedford Local Plan and the MENP apply as appropriate to future development at Twinwoods.

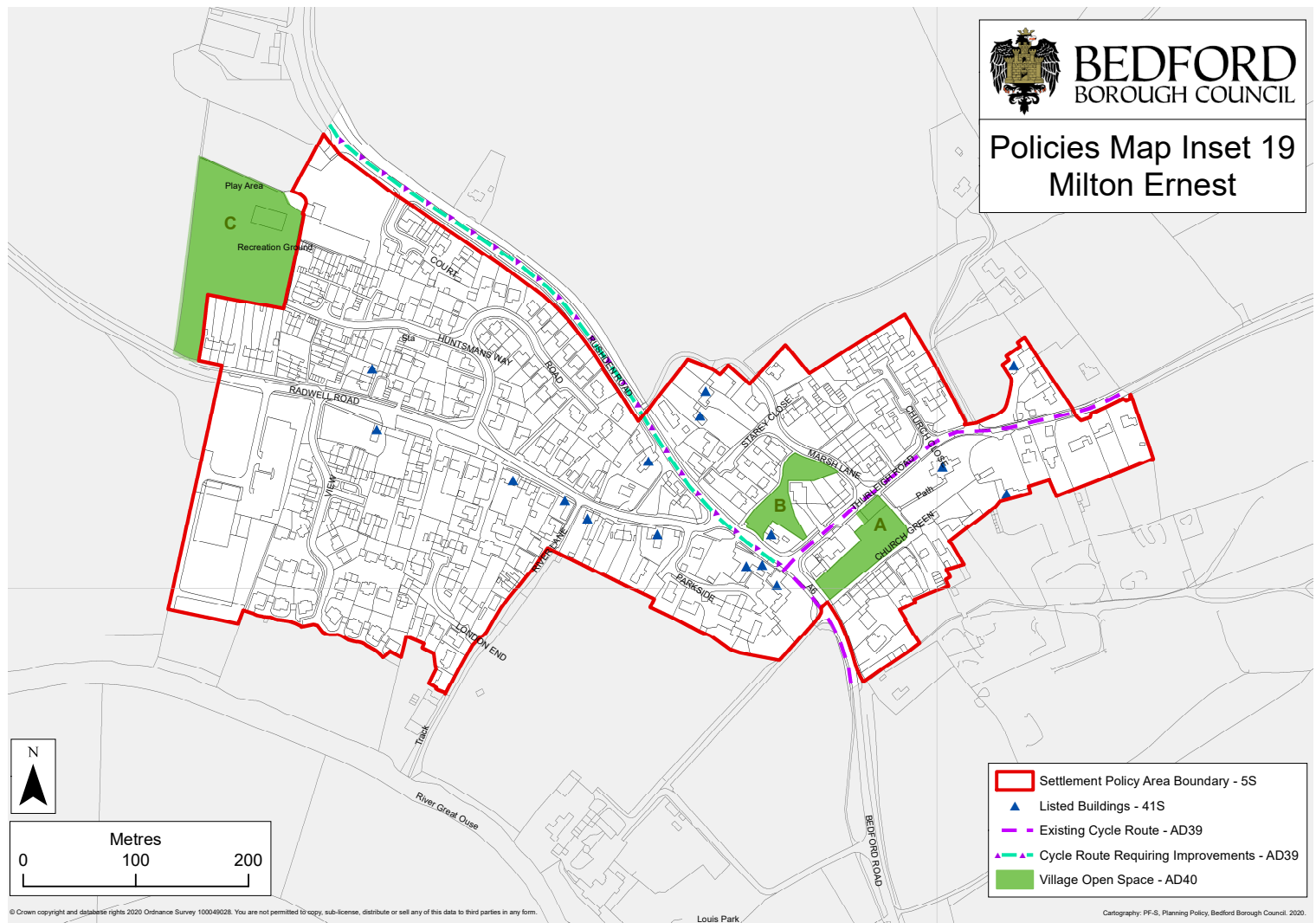


Figure 4: Bedford Local Plan policies map for Milton Ernest, indicating open spaces and the extent of the Settlement Policy Area (SPA). The location of the Milton Ernest Shrunken Medieval Village Schedule Monument is shown on Figure 6.

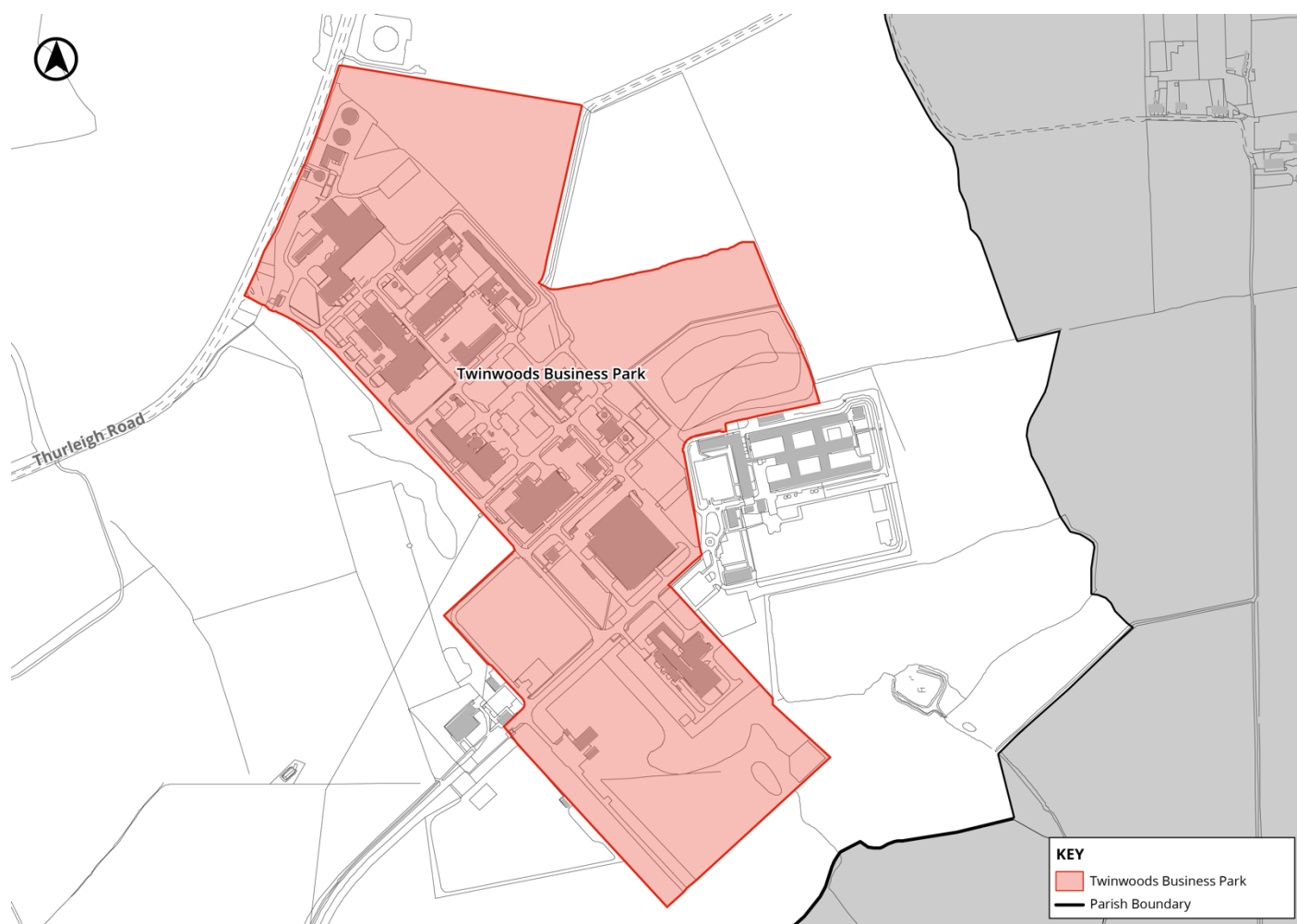


Figure 5: area covered by Twinwoods

3. Milton Ernest 'tomorrow'

- 3.1 This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the vision and objectives for Milton Ernest Parish. It has been informed through consultation and establishes the community's aspirations for the future of the area.

What you told us

- 3.2 In 2014, a consultation even was carried out at the village hall and there was a stall at the village fete. At that time, the key areas of interest or concern were:
- Traffic and transport;
 - Twinwoods (primarily because of a proposal for an incinerator);
 - Cycle and footpaths;
 - Community facilities;
 - Green spaces; and
 - Green energy.
- 3.3 In the summer of 2015, a questionnaire was sent to all houses within the village. A total of 225 responses were returned.
- 3.4 The questionnaire sought views on what people liked about living in Milton Ernest, their appetite for development (and its type and design) and other important issues that should be covered by the neighbourhood plan. The key results from that exercise are set out below.

Living in the village

- The MENP should seek to retain the rural atmosphere, size and feeling of the community

Housing development

- The MENP should support new development of up to around 25 houses.
- New housing should be focused on new and medium sized developments within the existing village SPA (Settlement Policy Area). Larger developments outside the current SPA are not desirable.
- New building should, wherever possible, be undertaken on brown field sites.

- Development should be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of size, height and style with the impact on the privacy on adjacent properties limited.
- It is important that sufficient off-road parking is provided so as not to add to the existing pressure on on-street parking.
- Buildings should be well-designed and future-proofed for a range of potential occupants, with good levels of natural lighting, thermal comfort and security.
- Plot sizes and design should provide sufficient space for general usage, mitigate noise and nuisance and minimise any reduction of natural light.
- It is important that the local community is consulted and listened to at the early stages of project development.
- Developments should, as far as possible, be carbon-neutral with a particular focus on reducing energy and water consumption and running costs, protecting the existing environment and mitigating flood risk.
- In addition, construction plans should seek to reduce the environmental impact of the construction works.
- The focus should be on lower-cost homes that provide for older people (including downsizing) and for family homes.

Business and commercial development

- The MENP should support the maintenance of business and commercial development in the village and, where appropriate, facilitate additional development.
- Business, commercial and industrial development should predominantly be focused at Twinwoods with any other development being on brownfield sites. This requirement would not, however, apply to the provision of appropriate community facilities.
- Any new business, commercial and industrial development must limit noise to acceptable levels, have effective plans for monitoring and controlling pollution and must demonstrate clearly that traffic generation will not have an unacceptable impact on the village in terms of congestion and safety.

Transport

- The opportunity of development should be used to support cycle routes, bus services and to improve sustainable connectivity between villages

Environment and open areas

- The retention of green spaces and wildlife areas is important. Access to the countryside must be maintained and improved.

3.5 The findings of the village questionnaire have had a strong influence on the development of the policies set out in this plan. The Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan – Summary of Questionnaire Results is included as an appendix to the Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation Statement

Vision

3.6 Following from consultation events and analysis of the area, a vision has been established for Milton Ernest. This frames the policies and projects in the plan, and is presented below:

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that Milton Ernest remains a safe, successful and rural village with a balanced and diverse community. It will reflect the aspirations of the community and ensure that facilities and services are provided should any additional housing or business development be required and that such development retains and improves its character and value.

Objectives

- 3.7 Linked to the vision, seven objectives have also been created, which are fundamental to the development of the Plan. They are presented below.
- 3.8 The policies, and projects, within this Neighbourhood Plan intend to deliver on these objectives. The following sections of the Neighbourhood Plan present these, ordered in response to the objectives.
- 3.9 **It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole and in conjunction with the Bedford Borough Council's development plan documents³. All policies should be viewed together in the preparation and consideration of planning applications.**

³ The Bedford Borough Council development plan documents can be found via the following webpage:
<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/development-plan-documents>

Objective 01:

Character: To preserve, protect and enhance the green and rural identity of our surroundings and the distinct character of our village and its historic environment.

Objective 02:

Natural environment: To protect the ecological value and increase biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and also maintain the integrity of designated sites downstream on the River Great Ouse.

Objective 03:

Community Facilities: To seek to maintain, enhance and increase appropriate community facilities within and around the village.

Objective 04:

Sustainable Development: To ensure that any future development, including employment sites, within the parish contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

Objective 05:

Housing need: To meet any new and identified housing demand in a way that is appropriate to the needs of the local community.

Objective 06:

Transport: To improve the safety, sustainability and convenience of all forms of transport within the village and to reduce any negative impacts to the local community.

Objective 07:

Community well-being: To ensure that the local environment enables residents to have an enjoyable, safe, and peaceful place to live, including mitigating severance of the community by the A6.

4. Character

Objective 01:

To preserve, protect and enhance the green and rural identity of our surroundings and the distinct character of our village and its historic environment.

- 4.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:
- To maintain the green separation between our neighbouring villages and between existing development and Twinwoods.
 - To ensure the design and layout of new development respects and enhances the existing built and historic environment as identified within the Milton Ernest Character Assessment of January 2017 (subsequently referred to as the Character Assessment).
 - To retain existing green areas as nationally defined Local Green Space, Village Open Space, Village Green or Milton Ernest Natural Areas.
 - To retain the defining scale and rural village nature of Milton Ernest.

Setting and character

- 4.2 One of the key messages from consultation events was that Milton Ernest should retain its rural character and identity. This is reflected through its setting and historic growth over time, as presented in the Character Assessment and discussed in Section 2 of this Neighbourhood Plan (Milton Ernest today). This includes the contribution to character made by the scheduled earthworks and former settlement activity. Equally, the parkland character of the grounds of Milton Ernest hall, which are visible on the approach to Milton Ernest from the south, make an important contribution to local character.
- 4.3 However, change and growth will take place and, indeed, the Local Plan requires this. At present, this includes a Settlement Policy Area drawn tightly around the built-form and where new development, other than for small scale infill, is difficult to accommodate. As such, and through the review of development sites received through the 'Call for Sites' process (see more in Section 8, Housing), land has been allocated in this Neighbourhood Plan for future growth at Rushden Road. To reflect this the Neighbourhood Plan redraws the Settlement Policy Area (see Figure 9), with all policies in the Neighbourhood Plan applying to this revised area. These policies extend to the quality and design of new development, which should reflect best-

practice urban design principles and respond to the existing character and best qualities of Milton Ernest as set out in the Character Assessment and expressed in terms of layout, scale, connectivity, materials and landscaping.

Policy ME C1: Settlement Policy Area

Development or redevelopment within the Milton Ernest Settlement Policy Area (SPA) as indicated on Figure 9 will be acceptable in principle provided that it is consistent with other policies in this plan. This includes development on land allocated at Rushden Road for 25 homes and open space. Development outside the SPA will not be permitted, except where otherwise stated within this document or in accordance with Bedford Borough Council's development plan policies.

Policy ME C2: Design quality, context and amenity

Development must be sympathetic to and respond to the best qualities of the surrounding environment and built-form, as described in the Character Assessment (appended to this Plan), and expressed in terms of size, height, style and historic growth, as well as the presence and setting of statutory and non-statutory designated heritage assets, and impact on the privacy on adjacent properties, respecting local residential amenity. Notwithstanding this, the design of new buildings may incorporate contemporary design principles where appropriate.

Proposals will be supported where they:

- Take account of the most recent evidence of heritage significance where development could better reveal their significance;
- Take account of potential harm to the significance of non-designated heritage assets (including those identified in the Character Assessment and any future Local List); and
- Preserve the heritage significance of heritage assets through any proposed new alterations or new development in their setting, except where any loss of significance accords with local and national policy requirements.

Project / Aspiration ME C1: Non-statutory heritage assets

As indicated in the Character Assessment, the presence of non-statutory heritage assets contributes to the sense of place and local distinctiveness of Milton Ernest. As an ongoing project, the Parish will consider preparing a local list of such assets which make an important contribution to the character of the village.

Green spaces

- 4.4 The term Local Green Spaces has a particular relevance in relation to land use planning. Paragraph 99 of the NPPF 2019 (National Planning Policy Framework) says: *The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.*
- 4.5 Paragraph 100 states: The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 4.6 Through the MENP the following Local Green Spaces are designated:
- The playing field; and
 - Riverside Meadow: a demonstrably special area for the village in terms of recreational value, tranquillity and wildlife.
- 4.7 Further details of the justifications are given in the supporting key document 'Natural Spaces in Milton Ernest'.

Policy ME C3: Local Green Spaces

The following areas, as identified on Figure 6, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. The playing field
2. Riverside Meadow

Planning applications for development on the Locally Designated Green Spaces will not be permitted unless they perform a supplementary and supporting function to the Green Space.

- 4.8 In addition to the Local Green Spaces designated above the 2013 Allocations and Designations Local Plan BBC identified Village Open Spaces within the borough. These spaces had to meet at least one of five criteria and development that adversely affected the reason for designation was prohibited. In Milton Ernest three sites were designated as village open spaces: the playing field, the village green and triangles of land off Marsh Lane. The area between the church, the school and Church Green has been registered as Village Green and, as such, is protected from development by legislation.
- 4.9 However, there remain a number of natural areas in Milton Ernest that are important to the life of community but have no protection from the BBC designations above – the MENP defines these as Milton Ernest Natural Areas. The criteria for a MENA is:
- it is a small area (not more than 1000m²);
 - it is grassed or otherwise natural areas;
 - since establishment, it has not been subjected to development; and
 - there is community benefit to the site, natural and undeveloped.
- 4.10 The following sites (as shown on Figure 6) are designated as MENA:
- seven sites within Huntsman's Way area development;
 - three sites at the junction of Radwell Road and the A6; and
 - land between terraced housing and Marsh Lane.
- 4.11 Further information about the rationale behind these designations is given in attached document 'Natural Spaces in Milton Ernest'.

Policy ME C4: Natural Areas

Development that would have an adverse impact on the Milton Ernest Natural Areas (MENA), as shown on Figure 6, that cannot be mitigated will not be approved.

These include:

- Seven sites within Huntsman's Way area development;
- Three sites at the junction of Radwell Road and the A6; and
- Land between terraced housing and Marsh Lane.

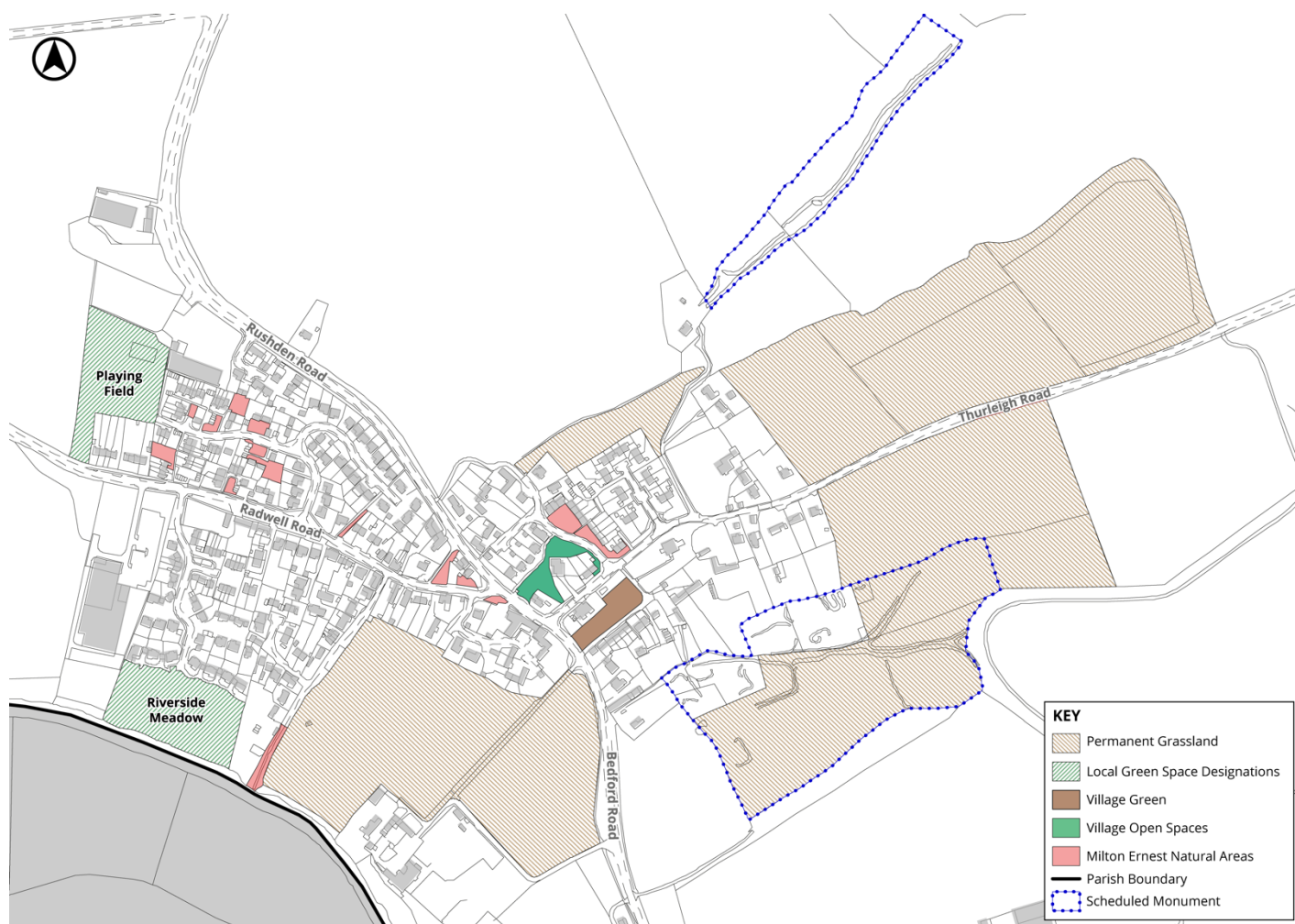


Figure 6: Green space in Milton Ernest, including Local Green Space designations and Milton Ernest Natural Areas. Areas of permanent grassland include the scheduled monuments and surrounding earthworks which, although not forming part of the scheduling, form part of the setting of the Shrunken Medieval Village and thus play an important role in preserving the historic environment in Milton Ernest.

5. Natural Environment

Objective 02:

To protect the ecological value and increase biodiversity of our area, our local wildlife and its habitat and also maintain the integrity of designated sites downstream on the River Great Ouse.

5.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:

- To ensure that features of ecological value including hedgerows, watercourses, woodland and other habitat that supports wildlife are unaffected or enhanced by development.
- To encourage the provision of new features and habitat to underpin an increase in the ecological value.
- To retain the trees along the A6 corridor.
- To retain and enhance the ecological value of the riverbanks and natural areas alongside the River Great Ouse and other watercourses.
- To retain and protect the County Wildlife Sites and areas of Permanent Grassland in Milton Ernest.
- To support biodiversity enhancements through the Biodiversity Opportunity Network.

Ecology and views

5.2 The parish of Milton Ernest contains important wildlife and grassland areas with a large variety of animal and plant species. In 2014 the Bedford and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC) carried out a survey of biodiversity in the parish.

5.3 It identified the following:

- County Wildlife Sites (CWS): these are sites that have been recognised as important for wildlife when assessed against a set of criteria. The selection guidelines consider aspects of the site such as size, diversity, rarity, fragility, typicality and recorded history.

- Permanent Grassland: these are areas that have avoided ploughing and cultivation over, at least, the last 25 years and, as a result, are rich in terms of plants which, along with hedgerows, provide important habitat links.
- Biodiversity Opportunity Network: these are areas where biodiversity enhancements would be most beneficial. The aim is to buffer and link existing wildlife rich areas, so creating a landscape through which species can move.
- Locations of recorded species.

- 5.4 Figure 7 below shows the results of the survey. It recorded 737 species including 476 species of plants, 82 species of birds and 18 species of mammals. Two CWSs wholly within the parish were identified. These are Milton Ernest pits and Yarl's Wood. Subsequently, the Local Sites Partnership Group has identified another CWS, at The Glebe (see Figure 5). In addition, 94 hectares of Permanent Grassland, covering 11 sites, were identified.
- 5.5 It is clear from the community engagement exercises that residents of Milton Ernest very much support the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. This means avoiding negative impacts on the CWSs and the areas of permanent grassland, as well as, where possible, utilising the Biodiversity Opportunity Network. The objectives and policies in the MENP reflect those intentions. Milton Ernest sits in a loop of the River Great Ouse and any development must ensure that the river and watercourses feeding into it are protected. This is especially important because of the Natura 2000 sites (Portholme SAC and The Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar) downstream of Milton Ernest that are protected by law.
- 5.6 The setting of Milton Ernest is highly valued and rich in biodiversity. It also benefits from a number of important views that reflect the relationship between the village and surrounding countryside. These are presented in the Character Assessment and are important to the setting and identity of Milton Ernest. They include views of All Saints Church, as seen from Church Green and Church Close, of the Old Vicarage, as seen from Thurleigh Road, views of the open countryside north of Milton Ernest, and of the river corridor. These are features that define the rural nature and historic character of Milton Ernest. These extend to include the public rights of way that run through the village and the sites of the Shrunken Medieval Village either side of Thurleigh Road.

Policy ME NE1: Ecology

Other than for minor householder extensions, new developments must provide a biodiversity net gain, enhancing features of significant ecological value and habitats including (but not limited to) existing ecological corridors, natural landscape features, watercourses and woodland.

Policy ME NE2: Natural Environment and Views

New development must maintain, and where applicable enhance the amenity of the natural environment. Open views to key historical and natural features that define the village, as described in the Character Assessment, must be maintained and include:

- Views of the church, church green and the associated area.
- Views of Milton Ernest Hall (currently limited to the upper floor and chimneys).
- Views to the river.
- Views of open countryside from Radwell Road towards Radwell village.

Policy ME NE3: Characteristic Features

New developments must protect features of the natural environment so as to maintain the character of the village. These features include (but are not necessarily limited to) the trees and verges along the A6 and Radwell Road, and the tall trees around the vicarage of All Saints Church. Retention of such features shall reinforce the rural setting of the village and built form.

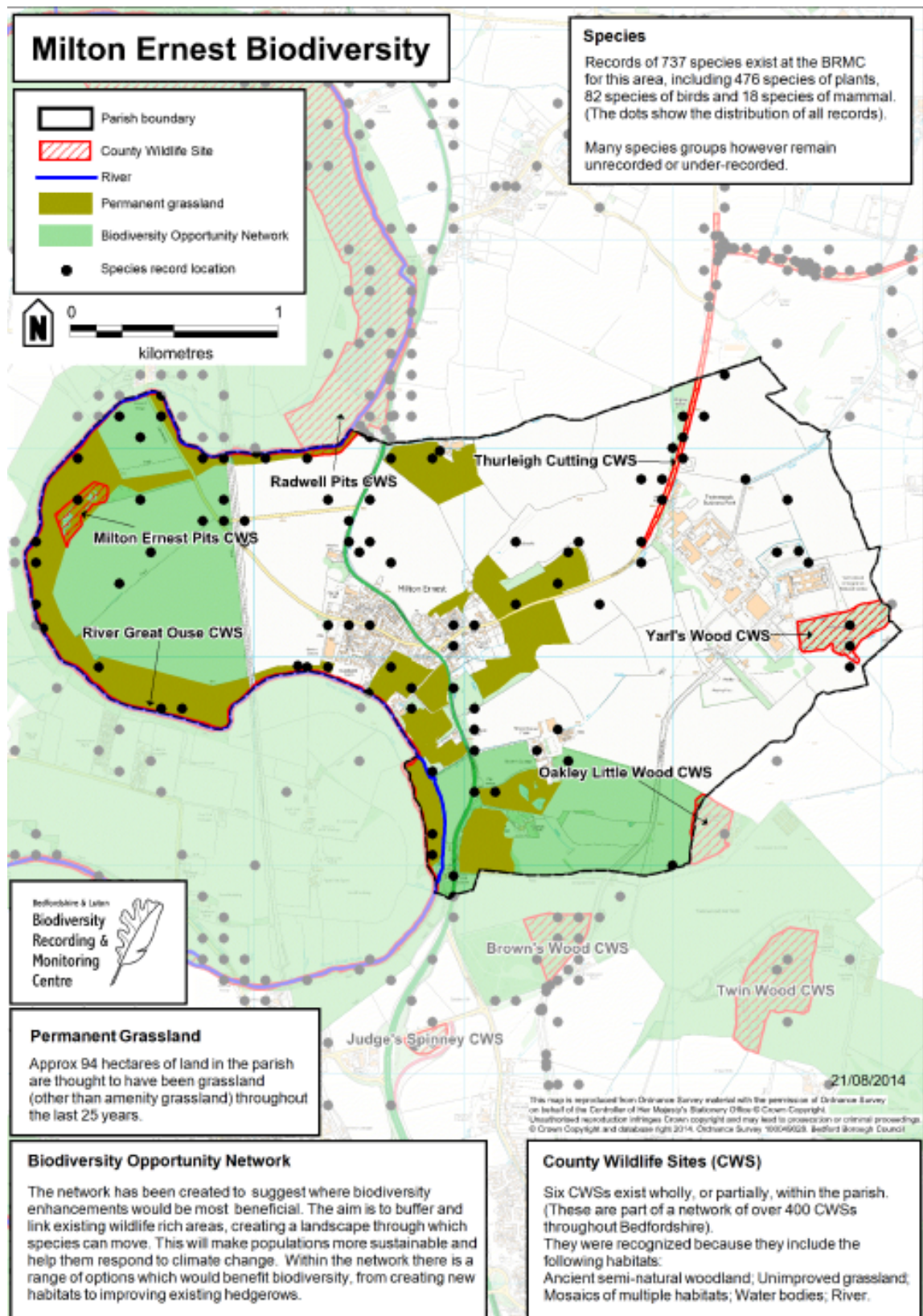


Figure 7 Milton Ernest Biodiversity Map (note: since production of this map an additional County Wildlife Site has been added)

Dark skies

- 5.7 The Parish Council supports measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area, recognising the benefits it brings in terms of health and well-being for residents and wildlife. Meanwhile, excessive lighting (security lights, floodlights, streetlights) wastes energy whilst disrupting the behaviour patterns of people and wildlife.⁴
- 5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) states that planning policies and conditions should “*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*”. This is supported by National Planning Policy Guidance on Light Pollution (2019). The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Night Blight Map indicates that much of Milton Ernest has light levels above 2 nanowatts/cm²/sr⁵, higher than those in neighbouring villages such as Pavenham and Felmersham. This is in large part due to the light pollution emitted by the Yarl’s Wood Immigration Removal Centre within the Parish. It is therefore important that future development proposals within the neighbourhood area are mindful of the impact lighting has on the surrounding environment.
- 5.9 High Kelvin rated lighting can create a harsh glare, disrupt sleep and disturb nocturnal wildlife and their habitats. The International Dark-sky Association (IDA) advises that outdoor lighting should not exceed a rating of 3000 Kelvins. Equally, the IDA recommends that any light fixtures with an output above 500 lumens should be fully shielded and pointing downward to minimise glare and skyglow.

Policy ME NE4: Lighting

Proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution through:

- The number, design, specification and position of lamps;
- Full shielding (at the horizontal and above) of any outdoor lighting fixture exceeding 500 initial lumens and evidence of limited impact of unshielded lighting through use of adaptive controls; and
- Limiting the correlated colour temperature of lamps to 3000 Kelvins or less.

Any lighting scheme must not impact negatively, particularly near edges of areas of ecological value including woodland and green spaces – specifically near habitats used by bats and other light-sensitive protected species.

⁴ CPRE Night Blight. See: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>. Brightness values are measured in nanowatts: the higher the measure of nanowatts the brighter the light

⁵ *ibid*

6. Community Facilities

Objective 03:

To seek to maintain, enhance and increase appropriate community facilities within and around the village

6.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:

- To seek to retain the following community facilities; and
- to develop improved access to countryside facilities and amenities.

Services and facilities

- 6.2 The presence and provision of social and community infrastructure is critical to sustaining and meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents, providing access to essential services and facilities, and helping to maintain a high quality of life. Such facilities, which include schools, healthcare, churches, sports and community centres, also have an important role to play in strengthening social networks, sense of community and identity.
- 6.3 Milton Ernest currently thrives socially because of its range of community facilities and services, which should be preserved. This message was highlighted through consultation exercises with residents expressing a high level of satisfaction with regard to available facilities. However, many thought more could be done to promote and improve the role and quality of facilities, local clubs and societies.
- 6.4 Policy ME CF1 below lists important facilities, which are illustrated in Figure 8, within Milton Ernest that should be protected from loss. Where appropriate, the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy payable to the Parish Council may be used to support the ongoing maintenance and improvement of these facilities.



Figure 8 Community Facilities

Policy ME CF1: Social and Community facilities

The following existing social and community facilities, should be protected from loss:

- The Queens Head public house;
- The Church of All Saints;
- Milton Ernest Lower School;
- The village hall;
- The playing field;
- The riverside frontage and other open spaces, as shown on Figure 6; and
- The coffee shop, post office and village shop (currently located within the garden centre).

Proposals for new or improved social and community facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- The proposal would not have a significant negative impact on the surrounding amenity nor local environment.
- The proposal should be accessible to all and be designed with flexibility in mind such that it can be adapted for multiple use and activity over time.
- The proposal would preserve the significance of any affected designated heritage asset.

Access to the countryside

- 6.5 The village of Milton Ernest is surrounded by attractive countryside, providing opportunities for leisure and recreation for all to enjoy - it also benefits from a network of footpaths and public rights of way. These complement the road network and connect the village to the surrounding countryside and neighbouring settlements.
- 6.6 Public Rights of Way in Milton Ernest include the A3 Footpath running north east out of the village to Wigney Wood and the A4 footpath running south east out of the village to Oakley Little Wood. Both these routes connect up with a wider Public Right of Way (PRoW) network that runs throughout Bedford and includes bridleways, footpaths, cycleways and byways.
- 6.7 All existing routes that form part of the PRoW network should be retained and incorporated, wherever possible, within proposals for development. Any diversion or stopping up of an existing route will be subject to an application for permission.

- 6.8 Any proposed new routes that complement the existing network of public rights of way in Milton Ernest, or improvements proposed to existing routes, should be delivered in accordance with best practice principles for design and maintenance. Sustrans, for example, recommends that cycle routes should include a smooth surface with good drainage properties and long-term durability. Handbooks for cycle route design⁶ and greenway management⁷ published by Sustrans are a source of best practice for implementing and maintaining routes for all.

Policy ME CF2: Public Rights of Way

Where existing routes forming part of the Public Right of Way network run through proposed development sites the route shall be retained and incorporated into the development proposals. Such routes should be well integrated with the development, such that they are safe and attractive for all to use. The stopping up of green routes will not be permitted. Any proposal that would result in harm to or loss of a green route must be justified, and any harm minimised.

Project / Aspiration ME CF1: Access to the countryside

The provision of improved routes as part of the Public Right of Way network and, where possible, new routes, is strongly encouraged. Where new routes, or improvements to existing routes, are provided, they should accord with best practice design principles, including that established by Sustrans in the 'Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design' and 'Greenway Management handbook'.

The Parish Council is keen to work with partner organisations, such as the Highways Authority and Sustrans, to explore the feasibility of delivering new or improved routes to and from the countryside, including:

- A footpath/footway/cycle way linking Milton Ernest and Radwell;
- Access along the whole of the riverbank area within the village, including new information boards about the importance of its protection.
- A linear park/nature area to the north of the proposed new development site on the A6 (see Figure 9); and
- Establishment of a circular walking route of around five miles all within the parish envelope.

⁶ Sustrans, April 2014, Sustrans design manual: Handbook for cycle-friendly design

⁷ Sustrans, June 2016, Sustrans design manual: Greenway management handbook

7. Sustainable Development

Objective 04:

To ensure that any future development, including employment sites, within the parish contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

7.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:

- To deliver, as far as possible, development that has a low environmental impact (including, but not limited to, climate change). This includes emissions from: the construction products used, the construction process, in-use maintenance of the fabric, operational energy and water demand, and end-of-life emissions from demolition, recycling and disposal.
- For developments to be, as far as possible, low or zero carbon (CO₂e) with a particular focus on reducing operational energy consumption, operational water consumption and operational running costs.
- To mitigate any unreasonable nuisance from developments, both during construction and subsequently.
- To minimise the impact of traffic arising from developments including safety, pollution, noise and congestion.
- To support and encourage the use of non-car travel modes (active travel).
- To preserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Sustainable design and construction

7.2 A high proportion of carbon dioxide emissions come from heating, cooling and powering buildings. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollutants will contribute to objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the effects of man-made climate change.

7.3 Growth in population and employment is likely to make it challenging to reduce emissions. However, growth also provides a number of opportunities for securing reduced emissions, including the construction of highly energy efficient homes.

- 7.4 All development in Milton Ernest will be expected to make use of the best available sustainable design and technology. Proposals for development are expected to minimise the use of resources, mitigate against and be resilient to the impact of climate change.
- 7.5 The Home Quality Mark⁸ has been developed by BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) to provide an indication of the quality and environmental performance of a new home. Housebuilders are encouraged to use this assessment method.
- 7.6 Similarly, Passivhaus standards and methodology are encouraged⁹. Passivhaus is “a building in which thermal comfort can be achieved solely by post-heating or post-cooling the fresh air flow required for a good indoor air quality, without the need for additional recirculation of air.” In doing so, the building uses very little energy, depending on the following elements:
- High levels of insulation
 - High performance windows with insulated frames
 - Airtight building fabric
 - A mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery
 - Carefully positioned windows and doors to moderate sun exposure in summer
- 7.7 Development should be encouraged to meet high standards of sustainability through consideration of the highest ‘BREEAM’ standards, Home Quality Mark and ‘Passivhaus’ standards.
- 7.8 The impact of any proposed development on existing residential amenity, including those impacts caused during the construction phase, should be assessed as part of the proposal. To help understand and mitigate impacts, and to inform good quality development and design, applicants are encouraged to engage with the community during the pre-application phase. Current validation requirements set out by Bedford Borough Council recommends that applicants for larger schemes or schemes of a sensitive nature undertake community involvement with the affected local community. The statement should show how the views of the local community have been sought and taken into account in the formulation of development proposals. For the purposes of this Neighbourhood Plan, this is taken to relate to major development (housing proposals for ten or more units) and any scheme in the setting of a heritage asset.

⁸ See: <https://www.homequalitymark.com/>

⁹ See: <https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/>

Policy ME SD1: Sustainable building design

Applications for development are encouraged to demonstrate accordance with the appropriate BREEAM standards in use at the time of submission. Encouragement is also given to schemes that meet Passivhaus standards.

Housebuilders are encouraged to register for assessment under the Home Quality Mark. This should show how resource efficiencies and climate change adaptation measures will be incorporated through aspects such as the layout of the proposed development, orientation, massing, landscaping and building materials.

Project / Aspiration ME SD1: Construction

During construction the developer should take positive action to reduce and mitigate nuisance. Planning applications must include details of measures that will be taken to mitigate nuisance. For larger developments, it is likely that such measures will include membership of the Considerate Constructors scheme

Policy ME SD2: Development impacts

Any new business, commercial and industrial development must demonstrate that the design mitigates operational noise, dust, smells, traffic, artificial light, pollution and other nuisances as far as possible. Applications must demonstrate that traffic connected to the development will not have an unacceptable impact on the village in terms of congestion and safety. In addition, applications must demonstrate that adequate parking for customers and staff will be provided.

Project / Aspiration ME SD2: Statement of Community Involvement

Community involvement will help shape more locally responsive planning proposals. Applications for major development and or those in the setting of a heritage asset must be accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement. The Statement must include:

- How consultation was carried out and why the method of consultation was appropriate;
- The responses to the consultation; and
- How the proposals have taken into account the responses

Flood risk

- 7.9 Due to its location adjacent to the River Great Ouse, development within Milton Ernest is vulnerable to fluvial flooding, particularly properties situated on the eastern bank of the river which, according to the Environment Agency, reside in Flood Zone 2¹⁰.
- 7.10 Surface water flooding is also an issue in Milton Ernest, particularly along the less permeable main roads, namely Bedford Road, Radwell Road and Thurleigh Road, where Flood Risk is either high or medium¹¹. The existing drains several of which run east to west across the Parish are also susceptible to overflowing.

Policy ME SD3: Flood risk

Developments shall avoid being in areas of medium or high flood risk as defined by the Environment Agency. Any proposals for development in these areas will need to be supported by sequential and exceptions testing. Development shall not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere downstream of the development.

Proposals for development must incorporate measures that manage and minimise flood risk and surface water run-off. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated in and form an integral part of new open space and the network of green infrastructure wherever possible. These should be designed in line with guidance from Bedford Borough Council and may incorporate, but not be limited to, the following measures:

- Attenuation ponds.
- Raingardens within the urban realm.
- Green walls and roofs.
- Permeable surfaces in areas of parking.
- Planting of trees.

Where SuDs are to be provided, they should be designed such that they are in harmony with the surrounding landscape.

¹⁰ <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

¹¹ *ibid*

8. Housing

Objective 05:

To meet any new and identified housing demand in a way that is appropriate to the needs of the local community

8.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:

- To facilitate the delivery of Bedford Borough Council's housing allocation of 25-50 houses in Milton Ernest within the Local Plan 2030 period.
- The mix and size of new homes to be consistent with the preferences expressed through the village questionnaire undertaken in support of the Neighbourhood Plan, with the focus should be on: (i) lower cost homes (for example, starter homes), (ii) housing for older people and (iii) family homes.
- To ensure that new housing does not cause additional on-street parking.
- Developments are designed to minimise any negative impacts on nearby properties.
- Development designs help create safe, attractive and well-designed environments.
- To preserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Housing allocations

8.2 The Local Plan 2030 requires a site or sites for 25 to 50 houses to be identified within Milton Ernest. Through the call for sites and masterplanning process outlined below and in supporting documents to the Neighbourhood Plan one site, at Rushden Road, has been considered suitable for 25 homes and is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. This is a scale of development that the community has also indicated that they are comfortable with.

8.3 As part of its preparation for the Local Plan, Bedford Borough Council (BBC) undertook a Call for Sites process. This is a process whereby landowners are asked to identify sites where potential housing and/or other development could place. The Parish Council undertook an assessment of the submitted sites to identify which should be allocated. The process followed guidance established by the Ministry of

Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as that contained in the Locality produced Neighbourhood Planning guidance material. The assessment included consideration of the twelve sustainability appraisal objectives established by BBC and considered the following:

- **Availability:** Owner's support to take forward the site for housing and/or employment use.
- **Achievability:** The capacity and configuration of the site and any major development constraints (for example, highways or flooding) that would prohibit the site from being developed.
- **Suitability:** The site relationship with current and emerging development plan policy, environmental/amenity constraints.

8.4 The assessment of all sites is presented in the Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report. This is a free-standing document that provides supporting evidence to the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.5 Land at Rushden Road, as illustrated in Figure 9, is allocated for development of 25 homes. Through the technical support provided through the Locality Neighbourhood Planning programme a concept masterplan has been prepared for the site. The Milton Ernest Masterplanning Report (April 2018) is a key supporting document to this Neighbourhood Plan. This illustrates key principles that should be reflected in development proposals for the site. These include:

- Development of a maximum of 25 new dwellings, with the design reflecting the local character and best qualities of the built form of Milton Ernest.
- Vehicular access to be via the A6 and subject to further discussions with the highway authority as to safe access and egress for all modes.
- Provision of a 5-metre-thick buffer to screen the new buildings from overlooking residential properties to the west, south, and east. This should ideally be planted.
- Provision of a wider 10-metre-thick buffer to protect the setting of the two listed properties to the south of the site from the new development to preserve their historic character. This could either be a gap or landscaped strip, potentially including allotments.
- Undeveloped land to serve as informal green space for the community, for example woodland or allotments with access, the management and maintenance of which will be agreed through the planning application process.

- 8.6 The landscaping buffers will delineate the new edge of the built-up area from the countryside to the north (as shown in Policy ME C1: Settlement Policy Area), in order to ensure the sympathetic village edge transition.
- 8.7 Furthermore, the allocation site forms part of the wider rural setting of the Grade I listed parish Church of All Saints and the Scheduled Monument of the Shrunkon Medieval village at Milton Ernest. Proposals for development will need to be subject to consultation with Historic England and require a Statement of Significance and Impact Assessment to accompany any planning application. This shall include assessments of Lindham Court, Barn and Outhouse, Stone Cottage, the Church and Scheduled Monument. Given the archaeological potential of the site itself, this Statement will also need to include the results of an archaeological evaluation.
- 8.8 The Bedford Borough Council Open Space SPD 2013 sets standards for the amount of allotment space that should be provided for local residents at 0.35ha per 1000 people, accessible on foot within 15 minutes. Any allotments should be designed in line with BBC's guidance, as laid out in the Open Space SPD 2013.¹²
- 8.9 The Bedford Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2016 establishes the Full Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for Market Housing and Affordable Housing for Bedford Borough over the 20-year period 2015-2035. Across the wider Borough, most of the housing need is for housing rather than flats; in particular, three- and four-bedroom houses are in short supply. A total affordable housing supply of 5,500 will also be needed across the plan period, with one-bedroom flats and two- and three-bedroom houses making up the majority of the need.¹³

¹² Open Space Supplementary Planning Document, 2013; Bedford Borough Council

¹³ Bedford Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2016

Policy ME H1: Rushden Road housing allocation

Land at Rushden Road, identified on Figure 9 is allocated for a maximum of 25 homes. The layout and scheme design must reflect the principles established in the Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan Masterplanning report, being:

- a) Vehicular access must only be provided from the A6. For the avoidance of doubt, no vehicular access (with the exception of bicycles) from Marsh Lane will be permitted.
- b) The design of the scheme and development density must reflect the Character Area 'compatible to traditional character' as described in the Character Assessment.
- c) A permanent 'buffer zone' at least 10 metres wide of public amenity land must be created along the entire boundary with the adjacent farmland and shared boundaries with the two listed buildings (in order to preserve their significance). This could be achieved, for example, by the provision of a woodland area or public allotments.

Proposals for development on land at Rushden Road should provide a mix of housing types, predominantly including a mix of starter homes, family homes (3/4 bedrooms) and homes specifically for older people.

A heritage Statement of Significance and Impact Assessment will be required in order to describe the significance of the surrounding heritage assets and the likely impacts upon them. This document will need to incorporate or be accompanied by the results of a pre-determination archaeological evaluation.

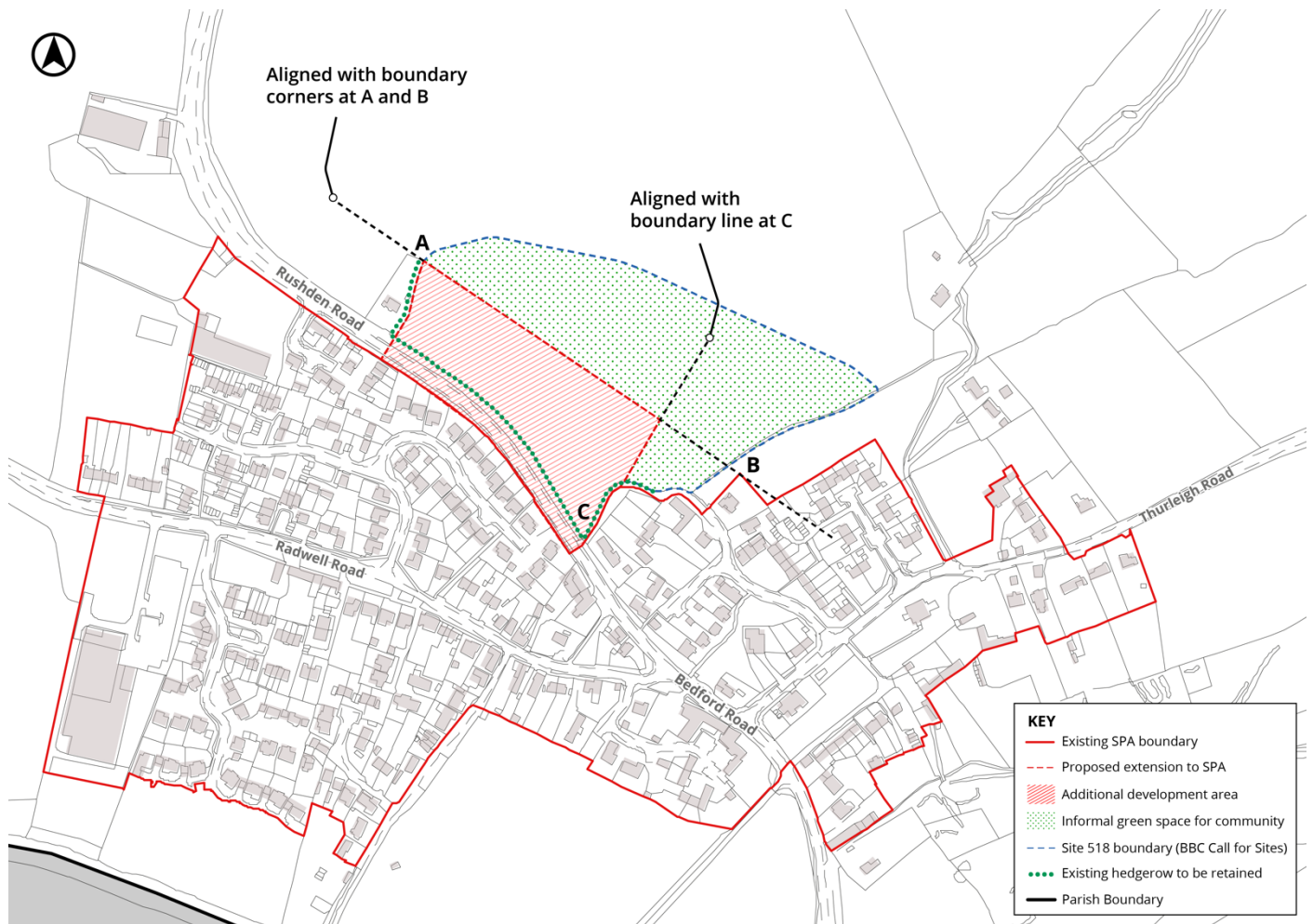


Figure 9 Rushden Road Site Allocation and revised SPA

Housing quality and design

- 8.10 It is likely that, over the life of the Plan, smaller sites in addition to the Rushden Road allocation may come forward for development, which, if approved, would provide additional housing. All new housing development, whether on the allocated site or not, should reflect best practice urban design principles.
- 8.11 Good design has a major role in contributing to quality of life and creating attractive, liveable places. The achievement of high-quality design is a core principle of the NPPF. It states, at paragraph 124, that *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps makes development acceptable to communities'*. The importance of the design of the built environment and its contribution to making better places for people is emphasised. It goes on to note that *'Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development'* (paragraph 125).
- 8.12 In short, good design will help create high quality, safe and successful places where people enjoy living, working and visiting. This is emphasised in the National Design Guide¹⁴, which should be referred to by all involved in the planning system when shaping, responding to and considering applications for planning permission. This recognises the importance of local character and the role of the community in the design process. It states that:
- 'Local communities can play a vital role in achieving well-designed places and buildings and making sure there is a relationship between the built environment and quality of life'* (paragraph 17).
- 8.13 Planning Practice Guidance¹⁵ notes that there are a variety of specialist housing types that can meet the needs of older people. This includes, but is not limited to, (1) age restricted general market housing, (2) retirement living or sheltered housing, (3) extra care housing or housing with care, and (4) residential care homes and nursing homes.
- 8.14 Housing for the elderly in Milton Ernest should ideally offer easy access to community facilities, services and good public transport. The design of homes for the elderly should reflect the principles of inclusive design outlined in Planning Practice Guidance¹⁶ and those established in the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) report¹⁷ which are applicable to housing for elderly people and age friendly places.

¹⁴ MHCLG, September 2019, National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places

¹⁵ MHCLG, June 2019, PPG: Housing for older and disabled people

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>

Policy ME H2: Design

All proposals for new development must reflect best practice design principles as established in the National Design Guide.

In Milton Ernest, the design of new development must be appropriate to the location and the character of the area as described in the Character Assessment, taking into account:

- The appropriate housing density.
- The historical context.
- Good compatibility with local character and natural surroundings.

Where affordable housing is to be provided these should be designed such that they are tenure-blind (that is, they are indistinguishable from market housing).

Where there is an up-to-date evidenced need, the proposal should provide units suitable for senior residents. Such housing provision should be located within easy access of shops, facilities and public transport services. Housing should be well-integrated within the wider neighbourhood and be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.

Policy ME H3: Parking

Proposals for new development shall provide parking in line with standards and design guidance established in the Bedford Borough Council Supplementary Planning Document (Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities) or a subsequent update of this.

The preference is for car parking spaces to be provided off-road so as not to add to existing pressures. Parking should, where required, be close to the home to avoid on-street parking and should be set back from the main building line to avoid parked cars from visually dominating the street scene.

Car parking spaces should be water permeable or drained off-road parking to prevent run-off.

Parking courts should be avoided where possible. In the event that these are the only practicable solution, the parking spaces should be limited in number and be overlooked by active development frontages.

Policy ME H4: Housing Standards

Each dwelling must be designed to be suitable for, or easily adaptable for, a range of potential occupants. Good levels of space, natural lighting, thermal comfort, privacy and security should be provided. New developments must contribute to safe environments and support crime prevention. Encouragement is given to schemes that meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.

9. Transport

Objective 06:

To improve the safety, sustainability and convenience of all forms of transport within the village and to reduce any negative impacts to the local community

Objective 07:

To ensure that the local environment enables residents to have an enjoyable, safe, and peaceful place to live, including mitigating severance of the community by the A6.

9.1 Policies and projects included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan respond to the following aims:

- To encourage active and sustainable forms of transport.
- To ensure a safe environment, with appropriate speed limits, for all highway users including, specifically, pedestrians and cyclists.
- To minimise the impact to residents on the parish's two residential through roads (Radwell Road and Thurleigh Road) of traffic arising from new developments.
- To support facilities that contribute within the parish towards cyclists being able to safely access Clapham, Oakley and Bedford, including a safe crossing of the A6 at the eastern end of the existing shared cycle/footway and/or a new cycle/footway on the northern side of the A6.
- To support facilities that contribute within the parish towards cyclists being able to safely access Sharnbrook (which includes a secondary school serving Milton Ernest).
- To seek to ensure that new developments in the parish (including changes of use) do not significantly increase the amount of traffic using Thurleigh Road and Radwell Road.
- To support the use of public transport to and from the parish, including the provision of suitable bus shelters in the right places.
- To minimise the noise, pollution and safety impact of traffic, particularly that using the A6.

Access and movement

- 9.2 In response to consultation comments and the aims outlined above, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage the uptake of active transportation opportunities (walking and cycling) for those living and working in Milton Ernest.
- 9.3 In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, cycling and walking infrastructure has become more important than ever, providing a way for people to travel and exercise whilst maintaining social distance from others. In line with *Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19*¹⁸, this neighbourhood plan looks to take advantage of this opportunity to deliver “transformative change” and fundamentally alter the travel habits of Milton Ernest residents.
- 9.4 All routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be safe and attractive, for all people, of all ages, making these an appealing proposition for people to use. In particular, all walking routes should reflect the ‘Five Cs’:
- **Connected:** good pedestrian routes which link the places where people want to go, and form a network
 - **Convenient:** direct routes following desire lines, with easy-to-use crossings
 - **Comfortable:** good quality footways, with adequate widths and without obstructions
 - **Convivial:** attractive well-lit and safe, and with variety along the route
 - **Conspicuous:** legible routes easy to find and follow, with surface treatments and signs to guide pedestrians
- 9.5 New or improved cycling infrastructure should reflect best practice principles, drawing on the summary principles for cycle infrastructure design as laid out in the Department for Transport’s ‘Gear Change’ strategy¹⁹. This includes:
- Treating cyclists as vehicles, not pedestrians.
 - Physically separating cyclists from high volume motor traffic.
 - Joining cycling infrastructure together to create a seamless network between nodes.

¹⁸ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

¹⁹ Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking. Department for Transport, 2020.

- 9.6 Examples from the Netherlands and Denmark²⁰, where cycling is a far more prevalent mode of transport, should also be used for inspiration and guidance. In parallel with improved cycling routes, so development should also include improved provision of cycle parking. Safe and secure parking facilities should be accommodated within the public realm, though designed such that provision responds positively to the character and quality of the built environment. Covered cycle parking is also encouraged, particularly within new commercial and development and community facilities, which should also provide shower and locker facilities for cyclists where appropriate.

Policy ME T1: Traffic mitigation

Proposed developments must demonstrate what measures will be put in place to mitigate against any increase in traffic, or changes in traffic patterns on Radwell Road or Thurleigh Road as a result of that development. This could include journey planning advice, cycle storage or improved access to a bus stop.

Any proposed traffic measures shall be designed such that they do not impact on the setting of heritage assets.

Policy ME T2: Active travel

Support will be given to proposals for development that incorporate improved and extended footpaths and cycle paths where appropriate. They should be direct, convenient and safe to use.

Wherever possible, proposed new development should provide natural surveillance of public spaces and a safe pedestrian environment.

Proposals for non-residential use should support and enable active travel through inclusion of safe, secure and convenient cycle parking as well as changing facilities where appropriate.

Proposals for development that reduce the capacity or safety of existing active travel infrastructure, including footpath or cycle space, will not be considered favourably.

²⁰ The London Cycling Design Standards (Transport for London, 2014, updated 2016) includes guidance and advice for delivery of cycle friendly infrastructure based upon best practice lessons learnt from cities in The Netherlands and Denmark amongst others. This should be used as a guide for delivering improved cycling conditions in Milton Ernest. The document is available via: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/streets-toolkit>

Project/Aspiration ME T1: Crossing the A6

The Parish Council will investigate the potential for a public realm improvement scheme along the A6 in partnership with Bedford Borough Council. Any such scheme would be subject to community involvement, with the intention being to minimise the impact of vehicular traffic on the setting of the A6 and to help facilitate a safer environment. Specifically, it will include arrangements for safer cycling to Clapham and beyond through an effective cycle crossing facility of the A6 or a footway/cycle path on the northern side or a combination of such arrangements.

Additionally, any scheme would create a better balance between pedestrian and vehicle space and reduce the severance caused by the A6. This could, at least partially, be achieved by narrowing the road with the created space used for planting, seating or other environmental benefits.

10. Evidence and next steps

Supporting documents

- 10.1 A suite of documents have been prepared that support the draft Neighbourhood Plan and which are available to view on the neighbourhood planning page of the Parish Council website. These include:
- **The Milton Ernest Character Assessment 2017:** a detailed analysis of the historical, built and natural character of the village.
 - **The Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report:** analysis and evaluation of the sites identified from BBC's Call for Sites exercises in 2014/2015 and 2017.
 - **The Milton Ernest Masterplanning Report** (April 2018): options for development of the preferred site.
 - **Natural Spaces in Milton Ernest:** rationale behind the designation of Local Green Spaces and Milton Ernest Natural Areas.
 - **SEA Screening / Habitats Regulation:** prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning regulations, these review the potential social and environmental impacts of the proposed policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.2 In addition to the above the technical documents and material prepared in support of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan have been utilised as appropriate in the production of this Neighbourhood Plan. They are available to view on the planning policy pages of the Borough Council website.
- 10.3 Following consultation on this draft Neighbourhood Plan a set of additional documents will also be prepared for submission to Bedford Borough Council which will enable the 'examination process' to commence. These include:
- **Basic conditions statement:** evidence that the plan is in conformity with national and local planning requirements
 - **Consultation statement:** description of consultation undertaken and evidence of how the results have fed into the plan.

Next Steps

- 10.4 This is the submission version Neighbourhood Plan for Milton Ernest. Bedford Council will formally consult on this and appoint an independent examiner to review the Plan and any comments made in response to it. Following this, the examiner will issue a report to the Borough Council advising whether:
- The Plan should proceed to referendum.
 - The Plan should proceed to referendum subject to modification.
 - The Plan should not proceed to referendum.
- 10.5 For the examiner to advise that the Plan proceed to referendum it will need to be demonstrated that the Plan meets what are called the 'Basic Conditions'. These include showing that the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the Local Development Plan (i.e.: the Bedford Local Plan).
- 10.6 Bedford Council will organise the referendum. All people of voting age in the Parish are eligible to vote on whether the Plan should be brought into force ('made') or not. If more than 50% of all people who turnout vote in favour of making the Plan, then it will become part of the suite of planning policies used by Bedford Council to help shape and determine planning applications in the Parish.

Monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan

- 10.7 MEPC will ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is actively managed during its intended life. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it addresses any changes in both national and local planning policies.
- 10.8 Each Annual Parish Council meeting after implementation of the MENP will include a report on the effectiveness of the MENP in the previous year and the likely implications and impact of the Plan for the forthcoming year. The Parish Council website will include a copy of these annual reports.
- 10.9 Five years after the MENP is implemented, a thorough review of the effectiveness of the MENP will be undertaken by MEPC, including seeking the views of the community. This review will guide MEPC as to whether an amendment to the MENP is required. It is intended that this will coincide with the review of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan.

Appendix A: Statutory Heritage Assets

This appendix includes a list of all heritage assets in Milton Ernest, as recorded by Historic England.

Title	Link	Heritage Category	Grade	Location
DOVECOTE AT MILTON ERNEST HALL	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159789	Listing	II	DOVECOTE AT MILTON ERNEST HALL BEDFORD ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
MILTON ERNEST HALL	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1310881	Listing	I	MILTON ERNEST HALL BEDFORD ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
HOUSE, FORMERLY STABLE BLOCK, AT MILTON ERNEST HALL	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114299	Listing	II	HOUSE FORMERLY STABLE BLOCK AT MILTON ERNEST HALL BEDFORD ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
WALL TO GROUNDS OF MILTON ERNEST HALL ON EASTERN SIDE BORDERING A6 TRUNK ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114300	Listing	II	WALL TO GROUNDS OF MILTON ERNEST HALL ON EASTERN SIDE BORDERING A6 TRUNK ROAD BEDFORD ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
MILTON MILL	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321516	Listing	II	MILTON MILL BEDFORD ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
Shrunken medieval village at Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1009554	Scheduling		Milton Ernest Bedford
Vertical spinning tunnel	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1457464	Listing	II	36 Twinwoods Business Park Thurleigh Road Milton Ernest Bedford MK44 1FD Milton Ernest Bedford
7, RUSHDEN ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114306	Listing	II	7 RUSHDEN ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
BARN ADJACENT TO HOME FARMHOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114304	Listing	II	BARN ADJACENT TO HOME FARMHOUSE RUSHDEN ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
QUEENS HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321519	Listing	II	QUEENS HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE RUSHDEN ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
BARN AND OUTHOUSE AT LINDHAM COURT	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114307	Listing	II	BARN AND OUTHOUSE AT LINDHAM COURT STAREY CLOSE Milton Ernest Bedford
13, RADWELL ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159803	Listing	II	13 RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
3, RADWELL ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114301	Listing	II	3 RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
FORGE COTTAGE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114305	Listing	II	FORGE COTTAGE RUSHDEN ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
LINDHAM COURT	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321520	Listing	II	LINDHAM COURT STAREY CLOSE Milton Ernest Bedford
STONE COTTAGE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159800	Listing	II	STONE COTTAGE FLEWTON END Milton Ernest Bedford
15, RADWELL ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321517	Listing	II	15 RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
VILLAGE FARMHOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114302	Listing	II	VILLAGE FARMHOUSE RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
25, RADWELL ROAD	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/11310865	Listing	II	25 RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
MANOR FARMHOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114303	Listing	II	MANOR FARMHOUSE 52-56 RADWELL ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321521	Listing	I	PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS THURLEIGH ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
MANOR FARMHOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1114308	Listing	II	MANOR FARMHOUSE THURLEIGH ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
HOME FARMHOUSE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321518	Listing	II	HOME FARMHOUSE RUSHDEN ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
WOODLANDS	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159833	Listing	II	WOODLANDS THURLEIGH ROAD Milton Ernest Bedford
Chicheley War Memorial	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1445289	Listing	II	Hall Lane Chicheley Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK16 9JE Chicheley Milton Keynes
Yarl's Wood hermitage and moated site	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012057	Scheduling		Milton Ernest Bedford
RADWELL BRIDGE	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159240	Listing	II	RADWELL BRIDGE FELMERSHAM ROAD Milton Ernest RADWELL Bedford
QUEEN ANNES ALMSHOUSES	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1380128	Listing	II	QUEEN ANNES ALMSHOUSES 34-42 ST JOHN STREET Newport Pagnell Milton Keynes
Silvergates and attached terrace, well-head and walls	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1434490	Listing	II	Silvergates 52 The Drive Craigweil-on-Sea Aldwick Arun West Sussex
THE DELL, THE DIAMOND AND THE CAUSEWAY, PORT SUNLIGHT	https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001637	Park and Garden	II	Wirral

Appendix B: Character Assessment

The Character Assessment forms a free-standing appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Milton Ernest Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan for Milton Ernest, 2020-2030

Submission version: January 2021

Milton Ernest Parish Council

<https://miltonernest-pc.gov.uk/>