

Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan



*Produced by: Stinsford Parish Council & Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Version 1 – November 2020*

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SUMMARY – what this plan (and the consultation on it) is all about...

Our Neighbourhood Plan has been created by people living in the parish. We have engaged with the people and businesses in the parish, to understand what kind of place we all want Stinsford parish to be in the future, and what changes need to be made to planning policies to ensure that the right type of development is allowed, in the right places, at the right time. If and when it is agreed, our Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for our area.

Our area is a very rural parish, on the edge of the county town of Dorchester. It has not had a great deal of development over recent years – although this could change if Dorset Council decide to press ahead with their ideas of a northern extension to Dorchester. But otherwise there is no expectation that our parish should have much, if any, development at all. The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard and enhance the Parish's outstanding environment and heritage.

Having said this, there may be good reason for development – if it could help make our parish an even better place to live, work and visit. So we are at the point in our plan drafting where we have reached a crossroads, and we need to engage with the wider community once again, so that you can help us make some key choices.

The key question we are asking is whether local people would like us to identify areas in or around our villages and hamlets, where some genuinely affordable housing could be built (regardless of whether Dorset Council decide to have more development north of the town). We know from our earlier consultations that local residents would support some (but very limited) new housing in the parish, and there is certainly a need for affordable homes. There are various factors we need to consider. So we need you to tell us how you want this plan to go forward – and we have included some options for you to comment on – see [**pages 26 - 28**].

Linked to this, is the **question whether there could or should be a little more flexibility to allow new businesses to set up here** – providing more job opportunities and possibly more services that could benefit our community. Kingston Maurward College are hoping to create business incubation units at Stinsford Farm to support local entrepreneurial development and link with the college syllabus, and there are other possible options. Whilst there is no obvious pent-up demand from existing businesses that are already located here, there is potential demand from new businesses that choose to set up or re-locate here (and many have in the past, because it is a quiet, rural location yet not far from Dorchester). For more information on the options, see [**pages 28 - 29**].

We have asked ourselves whether we need to do anything more to support the provision of local services. With the countryside on our doorstep, the public rights of way network, the Local Nature Reserve at Thorncome Woods and other outdoor recreation opportunities are obvious benefits of living in the parish. Unfortunately, whilst local people would be happy to see a shop or pub set up here, at the current time there is no obvious commercial interest in running such a venture. However, **Kingston Maurward College hope to create a new multi-purpose hall** that could be hired for community uses – see [**page 29**] for more information – so if you like this idea, we can make clear our support through our Neighbourhood Plan.

Linked to all of these points, is getting out and about around the parish. Whilst we have a major road running through our area, most of our roads are very rural in nature, so we don't have pavements or cycleways, and we do have walkers and cyclists sharing our lanes with cars, lorries and tractors. **We have pulled together some information on the traffic problems this creates, and how we could create a better network of safer, off-road walking and cycling routes.** We want your feedback on these - see [pages 34 - 41].

Most of the plan, not surprisingly, is about our natural and historic environment. The beautiful countryside, the peace and tranquillity, the variety of wildlife, the historic buildings, and the cultural connections (particularly with Thomas Hardy) are points that almost everyone said they felt were special about our parish. So we want our plan to reflect these attributes. We have done a lot of research and have drafted various policies that cover:

- Protecting and strengthening our local wildlife habitats - see [pages 6 - 8]
- Reinforcing the local landscape character (including the tranquillity of the countryside and dark skies, and the undeveloped gaps between settlements) - see [pages 8 - 13]
- Protecting our important local views - see [pages 14 - 16]
- Encouraging appropriate recreational access to the countryside - see [pages 17 - 18]
- Protecting Stinsford's historic environment and positively managing the Thomas Hardy connection - see [pages 18 - 25]
- Better building design (that balances the importance of our beautiful places with the need to build sustainably) - see [pages 30 - 33]
- Protection of groundwater resources - see [page 33]

So at this stage of the process, we want you to look at what we have written, and check that we have captured the most important points in our Plan. **If we have missed anything, or got the balance wrong, now is the time to tell us!**

1. Introduction

What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why do we need one?

1.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area. The process, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, allows local communities to create policies which will shape the places where they live and work; allowing residents to influence the future of their parish, focusing on the issues that are important to them. It will be subject to examination by an Independent Examiner and a referendum vote by the residents of the parish. Once approved by residents, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Local Development Plan: a statutory status giving it far more weight than previous local planning documents such as the Parish Plan.

How did it all begin?

1.2 The Parish Council decided to start work on a Neighbourhood Plan in 2017, with the area (based on the parish boundary) formally approved in the September of that year. The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group of volunteer residents was established in March 2018, reporting to the Parish Council. At a number of public events, and through a process of Residents and Business Questionnaires, consultations with Dorset Council and discussions with the MP for West Dorset, a **Shared Vision** for the parish for the period to 2036 was established, from which the community's values, hopes and needs have been translated into a list of **Objectives** to support the Vision and, in turn, into **Policies** to carry those Objectives through.

1.3 During 2018 the Local Plan Review ‘preferred options’ were published, and this included Policy DOR15, proposing a significant expansion north of Dorchester, in Stinsford parish. This was for 3,500 homes as well as employment land, a local centre and a range of community facilities such as schools and healthcare. There was considerable opposition to these proposals. STAND (Save The Area North of Dorchester) emerged as the vehicle for opposition to that development. Whilst acknowledging the strong feelings about this proposal, whether it goes ahead or not is a strategic decision which cannot be decided through a Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4 At the Stinsford Michaelmas Fayre in 2018, we asked the people of the parish and visitors to tell us about the words they associate with Stinsford. The word clouds show the feedback by scale, and told us much about the ‘Sense of Place’.

1.5 In 2019, two surveys were conducted: one for residents and one for businesses. Over half of the resident population (in terms of households) responded (56% of the 126 occupied properties). The survey highlighted the main concerns as traffic, the threat of over-



Residents' words

Visitors' words

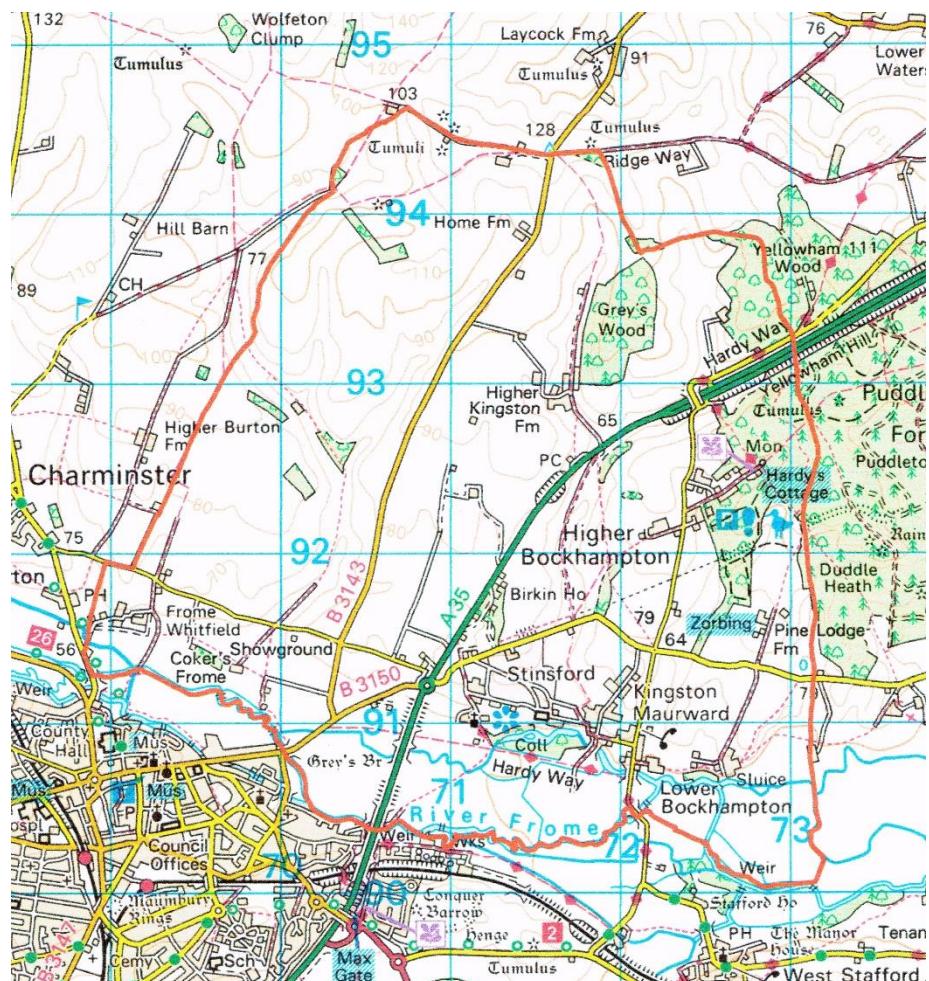
development, and the lack of facilities. Just under half (20 of the 52 businesses that were known to be based in the parish) responded to the business survey. This survey showed a wide range of business size and activities, and that there were very few who considered that they would be relocating, but some were planning to enlarge their premises. All of the data, thoughts and opinions from these consultations has helped to inform the production of this Neighbourhood Plan. More details about these consultations is available in the Consultation Statement.

What area does it cover?

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the parish of Stinsford. It covers an area of land to the north and east of Dorchester of 1,352 hectares (3,336 acres).

1.7 The parish boundary (and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan area) is marked by a red boundary on the map:

Figure 1. The Parish of Stinsford



A bit of Local Context...

1.8 The northern parish boundary follows the route of the Ridgeway at Waterston, where nearby there are two tumuli. Here the land lies approximately 125 metres above sea level with far reaching views. The River Frome, running west to east at around 50 metres above sea level, marks the southern boundary of the parish. The western boundary follows long established field boundaries, passing Three Cornered Copse in the north down to join the River Frome below Frome Whitfield. The eastern boundary runs down from the Ridgeway to the northern edge of Grey's Wood, through Yellowham Woods and the western fringe of Puddletown Forest, taking in Rushy Pond and Heedless William's Pond, before continuing south to join the River Frome west of Duddle Farm.

1.9 From west to east the landscape changes from chalk downland to heathland formed on tertiary sands and clays. Some of the soils are amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land.

1.10 Bridleways and footpaths cross the area offering far reaching views. The Hardy Way, a long distance circular walk of some 220 miles, enters the parish to the north of Higher Bockhampton and ends at Stinsford Church.

1.11 The parish has one major road running through it: the busy A35, part of the Highways England trunk road network. This connects from Bere Regis (where the road splits off to the A31 to connect up to Wimborne and on to the M27, or continues on to the Poole / Bournemouth conurbation) through to Stinsford, around the Dorchester bypass and on into Devon. This no longer follows the route of the Roman Road, a scheduled monument, which also runs through the parish from the Stinsford roundabout to Tincleton, and connected Dorchester (Durnovaria) with Badbury Rings (Vindocladia), near Wimborne.



1.12 The River Frome, from Greys Bridge flowing east, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, important for its aquatic and bankside vegetation, invertebrates, fish and breeding riverside birds. The wider swathe of water meadows are also rich in wildlife, and contain the hatches once used in the 'drowning' of the meadows to encourage early growth. Significant mixed, ancient woodland occurs within Grey's, Yellowham and Thorncombe Woods. Heathland and forest form part of the landscape before giving way to green pastures and the Frome valley.

1.13 Amongst the important monuments in the parish today are Kingston Maurward Old Manor, Kingston Maurward House, and Stinsford Church. There are conservation areas in and around Stinsford, Lower Bockhampton and Higher Kingston, together with a wide variety of Listed Buildings. The road into the parish from the county town of Dorchester is over the scheduled monument of Grey's Bridge, and the parkland around Kingston Maurward is of national importance.

1.14 The parish is especially well known for being the birthplace and home of the novelist and poet Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928), in the heart of Hardy's fictional 'Wessex'. The parish is considered to be his fictional 'Mellstock' and features in many of his works.



1.15 Within this rural setting live some 330 or so people. During the last 20 years, there has been very little new housing in the parish, other than a small number of barn and farm building conversions.

1.16 The main settlements are Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton, with smaller settlements at Higher Kingston, Bhompson, Higher Bockhampton and Frome Whitfield, most of which are mentioned in the Domesday Book. During term time, however, the parish is temporary home to up to 45 student boarders at Kingston Maurward College. The College, awarded an "Outstanding" assessment in its 2019 OFSTED Inspection, is one of only two centres in South West England specializing in teaching land-based skills, and attracts many hundreds of students to its courses each year. More recently Dorset Studio School has been set up (co-located with the college) and provides a similar land and environment focused education for secondary school age students. The College is also home to a popular Animal Park with a cafe and beautiful gardens and a small business centre. There are two other business parks in the parish, as well as holiday accommodation, cafés and an award-winning restaurant.

The Planning Context

1.17 Neighbourhood Plans are required to have regard to national policy and guidance and be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (which in our case would be the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan that was adopted in October 2015).

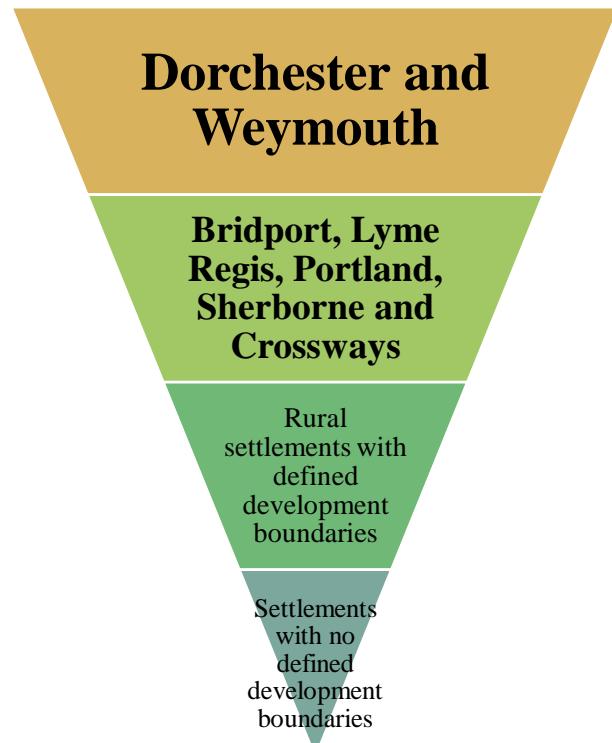
1.18 National planning policy sets out how plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area, and that they should be sufficiently flexible to adapt changes in the economy. There is a lot of guidance on how plans should help:

- Deliver a sufficient supply of homes (and it is very clear that Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than proposed through the strategic policies for the area)
- Promote healthy and safe communities and sustainable transport
- Achieve well-designed places
- Meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment

1.19 The Local Plan covers a wide area stretching from Tolpuddle to LymeRegis, and from Portland up to Sherborne, and has considered the level of housing, employment and infrastructure needed up to 2031. It sets out the hierarchy of settlements, with the main towns of Dorchester and Weymouth being the main locations for new development; down to rural settlements that may have some growth to meet their local needs, but where in general development will be strictly controlled. Major site allocations have been made at the main towns.

1.20 There were no site allocations made in Stinsford parish, and all of the settlements within our parish fall within this lowest tier of the settlement hierarchy (having no defined development boundaries). Therefore there is little expectation that they should change significantly unless there is a clear local need for development.

1.21 The Inspector who examined the Local Plan noted that development proposals for Dorchester would fall short of meeting the anticipated needs towards the end of the plan period, and as a result asked for the plan to clearly state that options for meeting the future needs of Dorchester would be considered through an early review of the plan. This review started in 2018, with the Local Plan Review ‘Preferred Options’ consultation proposing a major expansion of the town to its north side, going north of the River Frome (so a lot of the development would be in Stinsford parish). Whilst the review was set aside in 2019 to focus on the production of a Dorset-wide Local Plan, it is clear that there could be significant changes impacting on our parish in the future. However no decisions



have yet been made on the nature and timescales (and indeed the principle) of such development. The next consultation on the Local Plan is scheduled for January 2021.

1.22 In August 2020 the Government announced its intention to make major reforms to the planning system, which would impact on both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. It is clear that the Government continues to see an important role for Neighbourhood Plans in the new system, but at the time of drafting this document, the details about how the new zoning system would work, and when it would come into play, are as yet unclear. Watch this space...

2. *Vision, Aim, and Objectives*

2.1 The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan will have at its core a **shared vision** for the protection and development of the Parish, that reflects and meets the community's values, hopes and needs for the period to 2036. The following aim and objectives were testing through the early consultations, and received a high degree of support.

2.2 The **aim** of the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard and enhance the Parish's outstanding environment and heritage, whilst encouraging appropriate development and acknowledging the demands of climate change, by pursuing the following **objectives**:

- to maintain, protect and improve the beauty, tranquillity and accessibility of our rural landscape, together with its diverse wildlife, that residents and visitors value so highly;
- to care for its historic and literary heritage and to welcome appropriate numbers of visitors;
- to respond to the need for a demographically mixed population, a viable economy, and training, education and employment opportunities within the parish;
- to provide appropriate levels of housing and other facilities to meet the needs of the local community;
- to uphold principles of sustainable development and good and climate-friendly building design;
- to promote good and safe access links for walkers, cyclists and other road users, whilst working to reduce the reliance on fossil-fuel transport.



3. The Natural Environment

To maintain, protect and improve the beauty, tranquillity and accessibility of our rural landscape, together with its diverse wildlife, that residents and visitors value so highly

Key policies:

- Protecting and strengthening our local wildlife habitats
- Reinforcing the local landscape character (including the tranquillity of the countryside and dark skies, and the undeveloped gaps between settlements)
- Protecting our important local views
- Encouraging appropriate recreational access to the countryside

Projects:

- Woodland Survey
- New and improved recreational routes and green spaces

Local Wildlife

3.1 Stinsford parish has a far greater wildlife value than perhaps suggested by its small size. It hosts a range of different habitats, including patches of ancient and broadleaved woodland; the water meadows associated with the River Frome along the southern edge of the plan area (which is a nationally designated wildlife site), the calcareous grassland around Waterston Ridgeway in the north, and the dry heathland edging Thorncombe Wood in the east.

Thorncombe Wood is a mix of ancient and deciduous woodland and heathland, and has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve. All



of these habitats in turn host a wide variety of birds, insects, invertebrates, fish and mammals. For example, kingfishers can be seen along the river, there are owls hunting at dusk, as well as signs of badgers and smaller mammals include the dormouse, water vole and the water shrew. More information on the range of notable wildlife species found in the parish is described in Table 1.



Table 1. Wildlife research findings

Mammals

Badgers, foxes and roe deer are quite frequently sighted when they emerge from cover, and otters have made a major comeback - a DEFRA survey of 2001/2002 reported widespread signs of them on the River Frome. Occasional sightings continue to be made along the river near to Lower Bockhampton.

Smaller mammals include the dormouse, the water vole and the water shrew.

Birds.

Many of the bird species are associated with water: notably Kingfisher, Water Rail, Grey Wagtail, Marsh Tit and Mute Swan; also Reed, Sedge and Cetti's Warblers. Local raptors include Little, Barn and Tawny owls as well as Sparrow Hawks and Kestrels, with Buzzards being the most often seen. Nightjars are seen and heard each summer on the heathland. Large numbers of Jackdaws gather in the oriental Plane Tree next to Stinsford Church, before roosting on nearby roofs, and there is a large rookery next to the A35 south of Higher Kingston Farm.

Reptiles and Amphibians

All 3 British Snakes - Adders, Grass and Smooth Snakes - have been sighted; and Palmate and Smooth Newts are found in a number of our ponds.

Butterflies and Moths

Butterfly Conservation has recorded 28 butterfly species within the parish: of these, the most spectacular is the Silver Washed Fritillary (Thorncome Wood), a species noted for its spectacular courtship flight; a less common species is the Silver Studded Blue found on the dry heath near Thorncome Wood

Insects and Spiders

The Green Tiger Beetle is noted on the dry heath near Thorncome Wood. The watery habitats are good for dragonflies including Emperor and Golden Ringed Dragonflies, and the less common Four Spotted Chaser. Also associated with water are the Wolf Spider and the more fully aquatic Raft Spider - one of Britain's largest species.

Fish

With good water quality reported there are a number of species seen including Brown Trout and Salmon. Grayling , Dace and Roach breed in the Stinsford Branch of the River Frome. Eels and Lampreys have been seen.

3.2 Research¹ has shown that, whilst Dorset is particularly rich in wildlife (and this in itself attracts a large numbers of tourists, who benefit the local economy), Dorset's environment has been seriously degraded over the past 80 years, for example through the significant loss of neutral and calcareous grasslands, impacts of nitrogen deposition and habitat fragmentation. This is likely to apply equally to Stinsford. Whilst a lot of this is due to changing agricultural practices, these impacts and possible mitigation measures are something that this Neighbourhood Plan must take into account. Poole Harbour (which the River Frome flows into) is an important European wildlife site, but has been deteriorating due to the increased nitrogen levels from sewage and agricultural practices in the surrounding area that gradually make their way to the harbour.

3.3 The **Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour** Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in April 2017 to ensure that any new development within the hydrological catchment of Poole Harbour is 'nitrogen neutral'. As all of Stinsford parish is within the catchment zone, all new residential development, tourism attractions and tourism accommodation will need to be nitrogen neutral. This can be achieved via improvements to sewage treatment mechanisms so that they remove more nitrogen, or through changing the management of agricultural land to a use that requires less nitrogen input.

NB at the current time Natural England has raised concerns about the lag in Dorset Council's delivery of the mitigation – so this may need to reflected in the above overview

¹ Valuing Nature Research Project Report - Trends in Natural Capital, Ecosystem Services and Economic Development in Dorset”

3.4 Lower Bockhampton and Bhompston also lie within 5km of protected European heathland sites, and evidence has shown that people in this area will tend to visit the heathland areas (unless other more attractive spaces are available nearby), leading to increased damage and wildlife disturbance to those sites. The accepted solution, explained in the **Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework** SPD, is to put in place measures to divert recreational pressure away from heathland.

Policy SNP1. Protecting and strengthening our local wildlife habitats

Development should protect and, where practicable, enhance biodiversity to secure an overall biodiversity gain, through an understanding of the wildlife interest and habitats in the local area.

Measures to support the ecological improvement of wildlife habitats, including their climate change resilience, will be supported. This could include:

- *wildlife-friendly farming approaches*
- *habitat enhancement schemes*
- *improvement and expansion of the network of wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stones.*

Development must avoid having an adverse effect on the integrity of European and internationally important wildlife sites.

Local Landscape Character

3.5 Stinsford parish lies just beyond the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which runs through the Piddle Valley at Piddlehinton to the north of the parish, and to the south side of the A352 through Winterborne Came and Whitcombe. The AONB was designated more than 60 years ago (in 1959), and the reasons for why the boundary was drawn where it was are no longer known. The case of a National Park for Dorset² highlights the importance of Egdon Heath and Stinsford parish, in that this landscape forms ‘the heart of Hardy’s Wessex’ – and suggests that, if it is to be preserved for posterity, then the parishes of Stratton, Charminster, Stinsford and Puddletown, that currently lie outside of the AONB, all need to be included in the National Park.

3.6 The landscape of Stinsford parish is characterised by contours that create discrete parcels of land, which in turn hide and reveal many beautiful vistas, crisscrossed by ribbons of hedgerows subdividing the field systems and a scattering of woodlands.

3.7 The varied topography, soils and history have brought about a rich mix of landscapes, primarily based on small-scale farming, with very few large fields (the average field size is around 10ha), with many of the boundaries relatively unchanged from Saxon times.

3.8 The parish has three main landscape types (as defined in the local landscape character assessments undertaken by the Local Planning Authority), whose main characteristics are described in Table 2 below:

- river valley pasture (associated with the River Frome and its flood plain) – much of which is included as land of local landscape importance in the Local Plan, but extends slightly further north to include the first fields to the north side of the road that connecte Frome Whitfield and Cokers Frome to Slyers Lane, and eastwards across to Stinsford roundabout, as well as Stinsford itself and up to the southern limits of Lower Bockhampton and Bhompston.,

² <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/thomas-hardy-heritage>

- chalk valley and downland, becoming more open to the north (this landscape includes the northern part of the parish and the settlements of Lower and Higher Bockhampton, Bhopmston and Higher Kingston)
- heath / forest mosaic (covering Puddletown Forest and the area around Greys and Yellowham Woods)

Table 2. Local landscape characteristics

Landscape characteristic	river pasture	chalk	heath / forest
peaceful, tranquil character	✓	in part *	in part *
small, dispersed settlements, separated by large undeveloped areas	✓	✓	✓
rural lanes that run along historic transport routes	✓	✓	
intricate network of public rights of way and private access tracks			✓
predominantly open landscape	✓	✓	
relatively small-scale fields bordered by hedgerows	✓	in part	
water channels / meadows and associated historic structures	✓	in part	
small deciduous woodlands / copses, including ancient woodland	✓	in part	
extensive tree cover			✓
patches of lowland heath			✓

* the tranquillity is disturbed within the A35 noise corridor - <http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>

3.9 It is important that development respects the local landscape characteristics. The peace and tranquil nature of the area was a particular characteristic noted by local residents – although the areas closest to the A35 main road are affected by noise from the traffic using the A35 main road.

3.10 The river valley corridor (including the Land of Local Landscape Importance (LLLI)) and the separation of the settlements and open spaces between these



is shown diagrammatically on Figure 2. In particular the notably vulnerable gaps, as listed in Table 3, are considered particularly fragile due to their limited length. Whilst there may be a general policy of restraint towards development in the open countryside, some development (such as new farm buildings) may still be permitted, and it is therefore important that such development does not take place in these most vulnerable gaps.

Table 3. Important Open Gaps

Gap	Description	Length
Frome Whitfield to Lower Burton	The gap between Frome Whitfield and Burton has historically been quite narrow, with part of the gap located beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst farm buildings along the westward-leading track have been converted and added to, further infill, or development on the fields to the north, would be particularly harmful in reducing the feeling of separation between these two settlements.	< 200m

Frome Whitfield to Dorchester	Whilst most of the gap here is within the flood plain, and therefore is unlikely to be developed, the prospect of a northern extension to the town could increase pressure for infrastructure through this gap which would diminish its value as a gap.	500m
Kingston Maurward and Lower Bockhampton to Higher Bockhampton	The northward extension of Kingston Maurward College towards Bockhampton Cross has greatly reduced the feeling of separation between the two Bockhamptons. There has also been pressure for further development at and around Hampton Farm Business Park and Greenwood Grange. Given the rural setting of the Cross and the rising topography, further infill development to the north side of the Cross would be particularly harmful.	800m
Lower Bockhampton to Bhompston	The gap between Lower Bockhampton to Bhompston has historically been quite narrow, and further diminished with the westward spread of farm building at Bhompston. Further development, particular within the undeveloped field to the east of Lower Bockhampton Farm, would be particularly harmful in reducing the feeling of separation between these two settlements.	200m

3.11 All of the river valley pasture has a particularly rural, agricultural feel, and this characteristic is central to the setting of the string of settlements along its length, as well as the wider setting of Dorchester. Whilst no decision has yet been made on the possible northern extension to Dorchester, there would be a clear tension between trying to locate development close to the town, whilst respecting this river valley landscape setting.

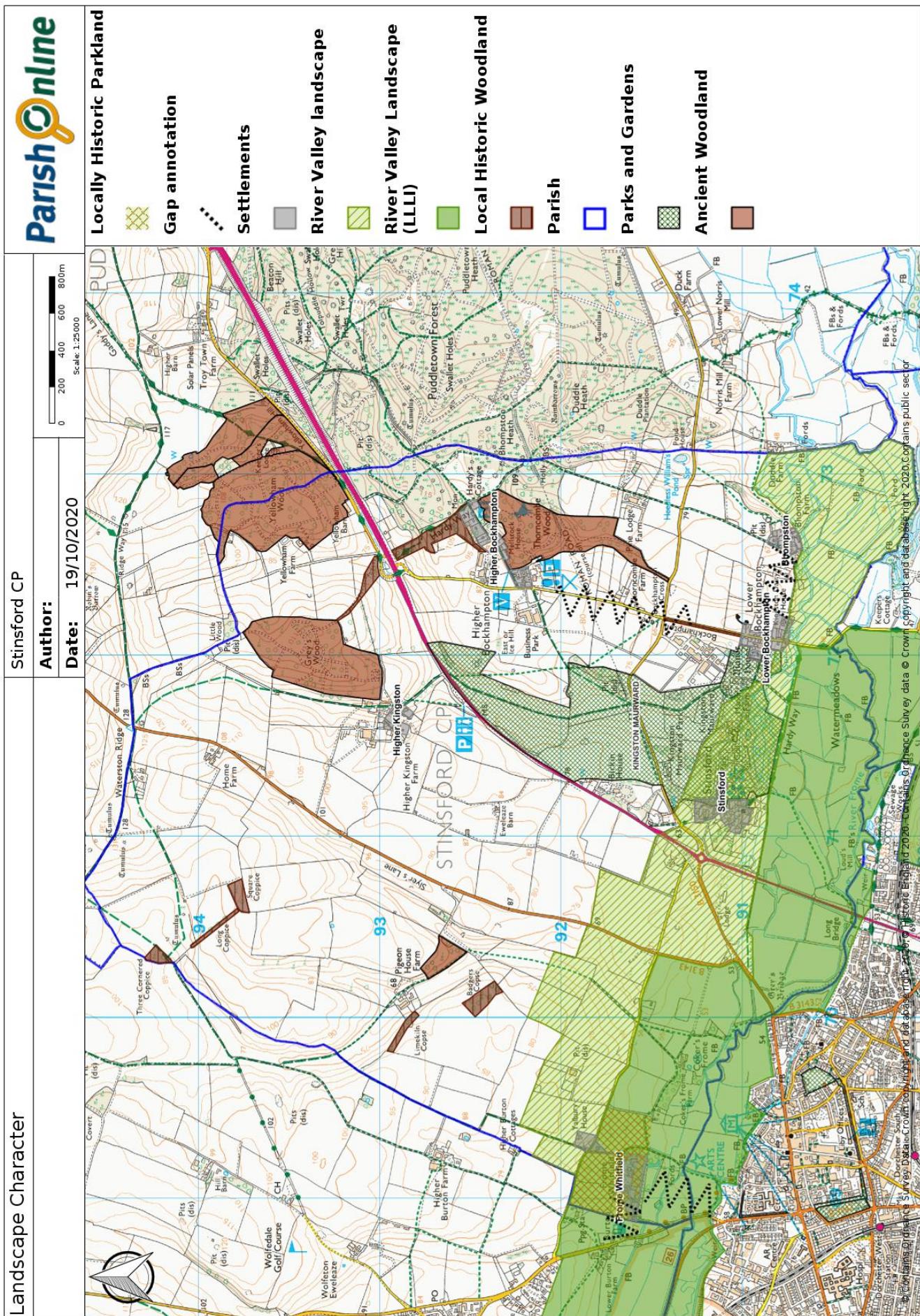
3.12 The gap between Frome Whitfield and Cokers Frome is not specifically listed in Table 3, because Cokers Frome is not a settlement in the same historic or current sense, and its associated buildings are much more scattered and considered to be part of this river valley landscape. It should however be noted that the remnants of parkland associated with Frome Whitfield House, containing a number of specimen trees, adds a particular character to this area. This has created an ornamental agricultural appearance, recognized in the 2018 Local Plan options consultation as significant to the setting of Dorchester's Conservation Area. In the recent past a number of the trees have been lost.



FP at Frome Whitfield looking North East

3.13 The gap between Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton is also not specifically listed in Table 3 – as its character is primarily related to the presence of the Elizabethan Manor and Kingston Maurward House and their associated grounds, and these grounds are statutorily designated on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Today much of this area is part of the College's estate, and any development would need to respect the particular historic significance of the gardens and parkland.

Figure 2. Key landscape characteristics and green gaps diagram



3.14 Opportunities should be taken, where possible, to enhance the rural character of the area. In particular there are opportunities for planting to help screen some of the larger buildings that have intruded into the more open countryside. For example, the replacement planting of the parkland trees at Frome Whitfield which would help reinforce the historic landscape character of this settlement, and native hedgerow and tree planting to the south side of Mellstock Business Park would bring about substantial benefits in screening the business units. Similarly additional landscaping around the Studio School would help reduce its impact on the rural setting of Bockhampton Cross.

3.15 Information on the historical and cultural links to the landscape is included in section 4.

Policy SNP2. Local Landscape Character

Development will respect and where possible enhance the rural character of the local landscape.

In particular:

- the peaceful, tranquil character of much of the countryside should be retained, and measures supported to reduce noise disturbance from existing sources;*
- the pattern of small scale farmed fields should be respected, with particular efforts taken to protect field boundaries that have been unaltered historic times;*
- the open and expansive nature of the chalk downland should be respected;*
- the network of lanes and tracks should remain rural in character, and not become urbanized (for example through the introduction of lighting, kerbed pavements or large metal signage);*
- the river corridors, streams and ditches with their associated vegetation, remnants of managed water meadows and small humped bridges should be protected;*
- areas of ancient woodland should be retained, and additional woodland and hedgerow planting should be sought, characteristic of the scale and species found in the area. Where appropriate this should be used to soften the visual impact of more visually intrusive development in wider views.*

Policy SNP3. The Landscape Setting of the Settlements

The string of small settlements along the river valley should retain their individual character, and care should be taken to avoid reducing the undeveloped nature of the gaps between the settlements, particularly with reference to those described in Table 3.

The role of the river valley pasture (formed by the LLLI and its buffer area) in the setting of both Dorchester and the Stinsford river valley settlements setting should be respected.

For consultation - have we identified the most important characteristics, and are there any we have missed or that you disagree with?

3.16 Many of the woodlands, large and small, consist of ageing trees and there are concerns that without a management plan and replacement planting, many of these could become depleted to the detriment of the landscape quality of the parish. A survey of the parish's woodlands that are not in active management is therefore suggested as a first step to understanding this potential threat.

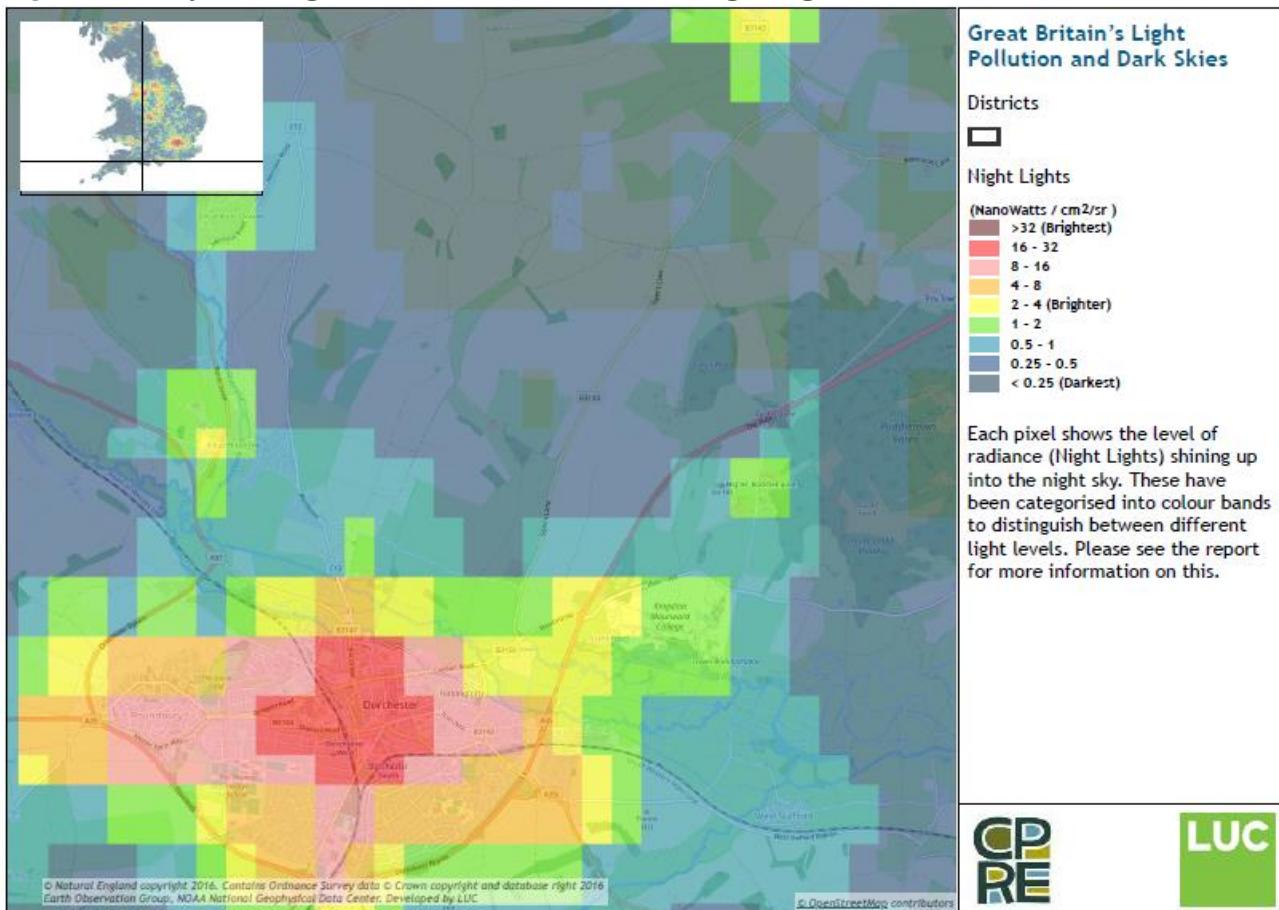
Project P1. Woodland Survey

The Parish Council will investigate undertaking a survey of the parish's woodlands, so that appropriate management can be encouraged.

Stinsford's Dark Skies

3.17 The area enjoys dark night skies for the most part, as illustrated on the following map (courtesy of the CPRE / LUC) although light spill from Dorchester does intrude into the parish. There is no street lighting in Stinsford, and no desire for this to change.

Figure 3. Stinsford's Light Pollution and Dark Skies: Nightblight



3.18 Whilst there are limitations on what can and cannot be achieved³, this shouldn't stop us from encouraging the best approach for our area. Where lighting is considered necessary, the choice of lighting should consider how best to avoid light spillage and glare. Movement sensitive and timed PIR lights, down-lighters or 'wall washers' are examples of lighting schemes that generally have less adverse impact whilst providing appropriate illumination. In general, light sources should be fully shielded and pointed downwards, so that light is not emitted above the horizontal.

Policy SNP4. Dark Skies

Development should be designed to retain the dark skies, through minimizing exterior lighting / illuminations and including measures to control light spillage and glare, particularly in areas of open countryside and on the edge of settlements. Street lighting should not be provided in developments unless required to address site-specific safety or operational issues.

³ impacts of light pollution show little respect for boundaries, and can be seen from considerable distances. Moreover, the planning system has little control over the installation of external lighting when these are installed on existing buildings.

Important Local Views

3.19 Whilst “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”, some aspects of the landscape within the parish have universal appeal. This is reflected in the consultations on the plan, which show how much residents value the peaceful rurality of the parish. As part of the 2019 Residents Survey, we asked people to tell us about their favourite views in the parish. The views suggested naturally reflect those parts of the parish that people tend to visit more – such as those areas closest to the settlements and well-used rights of way. The findings in particular highlighted that views from the Frome river path across the associated water meadows are very popular, as is the southerly view from the Roman Road in Thornccombe Wood. Views from less well-trodden paths may have received fewer mentions, but perhaps are no less deserving of protection.

3.20 The main views are shown in the following map and described in Table 4. Other views also mentioned by local residents are noted on the map.

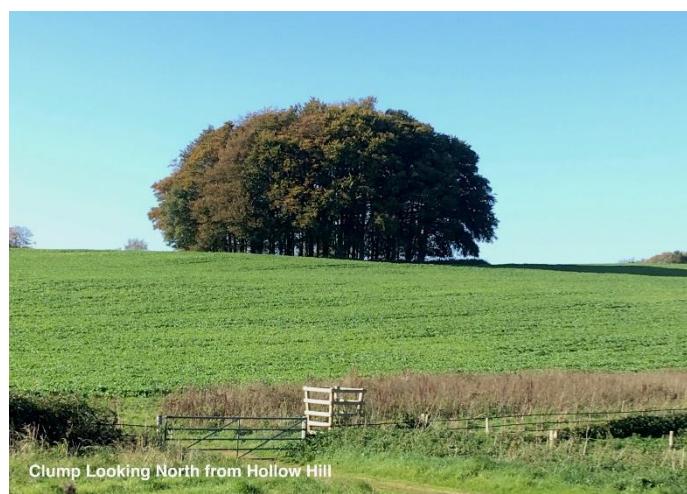


Table 4. Important Local Views

Viewpoint/s	Location / users	Description	Notable landmarks
Hollow Hill	Junction of four public rights of way (S40/3, S40/8, S40/9 and S40/19) with the highway	The farmland rising to the north through a shallow vale draws out the gradual transition from Kingston Maurward’s parkland, over the College’s sports fields, to the open arable and grazing land, creating an uninterrupted vista into the far distance.	Kingston Maurward House to the south Kingston Maurward Parkland, with iconic wooded clump, to the north.
Lovers' Lane [including the link from Hangmans Cottage in Dorchester up to Frome Whitfield]	Footpath S40/16 and Bridleway S40/17, moderately well used by walkers and equestrians, with high use in the area closest to Dorchester	Panoramic views from what was an old drove road that runs north past the historic settlement of Frome Whitfield, through fields and up onto the rolling chalk land linking to the Ridgeway. Parts of the route are full of bluebells and wild flowers in spring.	Expansive views back towards Dorchester. Frome House. More panoramic views looking north to the ridge and across Cokers Farm.

River Frome Walk	5 km long route including S40/10, S40/12 and S40/22 plus permissive path to Grey's Bridge, well used by walkers, cyclists and equestrians	Extensive, timeless, rural views across the water meadows and adjoining farmland, with associated bridges and water channels. Glimpsed views into the nearby historic settlements.	Stinsford Church Grey's Bridge Lower Bockhampton Bridge The Dorchester skyline
Thorncome Wood Roman Road	In Puddletown Forest, close to Hardy's Cottage, popular with locals and visitors alike	Elevated viewpoint on the very eastern edge of the parish boundary, giving distant views towards the southern ridgeway, are unspoilt and unequalled in West Dorset	Rushy Pond Roman Road crossing Duddle Heath Lower Bockhampton
Waterston Ridge Way	Junction of Bridleways S39/39 and S40/3, well used by walkers and equestrians, and to a lesser extent by cyclists	Panoramic views looking from the elevated vantage of the Ridge Way in a southerly direction across rolling chalk farmland and ancient woodland, unspoilt as far as the eye can see.	Grey's Wood
Higher Kingston junction / A35 layby	A35 and rights of way S40/3 and S40/9 near the layby / junction for Higher Kingston	Iconic view of Kingston Maurward College across its parkland, as seen from the A35 by many visitors approaching Dorchester	Kingston Maurward College

3.21 Whilst it would not be possible or indeed appropriate to stop any development within these views (particular in the long term if the northern extension of Dorchester is given the go-ahead, which would be apparent from a number of the viewpoints suggested). Nor is it possible to identify every viewpoint that residents enjoy. However it is important that the impact of development on these views is properly balanced in the planning decision, with moderate to significant weight given to their protection. In particular, attention should be paid to the extent to which the enjoyment of the view may be impacted, taking into account the focal points and/or wide expanse of the view and the number of people who regularly enjoy the view. It may be possible, through landscaping or the careful siting, scale and design of development, to significantly reduce the adverse impact of development.

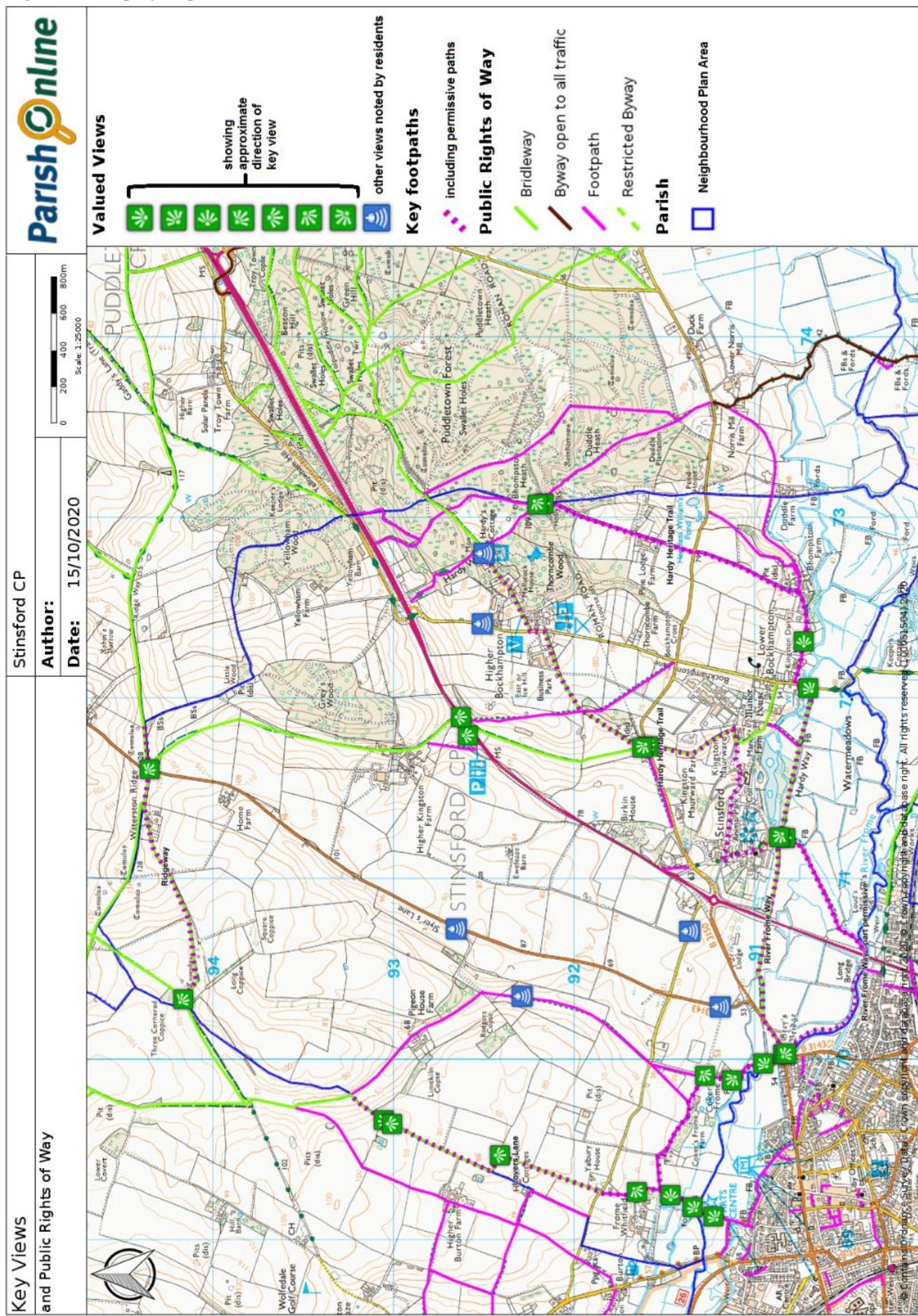
Policy SNP5. Protecting our important local views

The design and layout of development should minimise adverse impacts on views from public rights of way and permissive paths, including those described in Table 4.

Development that would have a significant adverse impact on an Important Local Views (as shown on Figure 4) should be avoided, unless there would be a clear and over-riding public benefit and all reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate the impact.

For consultation - have we identified the most important views, and are there any we have missed or that you disagree with?

Figure 4. Map of Important Local Views



Recreational access to the countryside

3.22 The parish is crisscrossed by a comprehensive network of footpaths and bridleways giving access to the countryside to walkers, horse riders and cyclists. This brings multiple benefits, for health (both in terms of people's physical and mental well-being), the local economy (as a major resource and attraction for visitors who may stay locally or use the local services) and wildlife (which uses the green corridors these routes create). They are also important in providing access to some of the most spectacular views in the area (see Table 4 in locally important views).

3.23 However these paths and places are themselves vulnerable to over-use, as has been witnessed along the River Path which has been eroded in places (as a result of the level of users and localized flooding). Likewise, visitors to Thorncome Woods (which is next to the very popular visitor attraction of Hardy's Cottage) has increased significantly in recent years, and whilst income generated can help fund the site's management, it is important that increasing the number of visitors does not adversely impact on the biodiversity and quiet enjoyment of this site. There are also some paths on the network that end on, or have to cross, a busy highway, where the highway verge is not particularly safe.

3.24 Whilst the amount of housing development required to meet local need within Stinsford is unlikely to trigger the need for additional recreational open space provision, further pressure on the existing sites could potentially arise from the further expansion of the school, visitor pressure and the growth of Dorchester's population. It is highly unlikely that improvements to the existing sites would mitigate this impact, and indeed our existing open spaces such as Thorncome Wood may struggle to cater for any increase in demand, to their detriment. It is therefore important that further sites for additional open space of an appropriate quality is identified and brought forward in a timely manner to soak up any such increase in demand.

Policy SNP6. Encouraging appropriate recreational access to the countryside

The improvement and expansion of the existing public rights of way network, permissive paths and open access land within the parish will be supported, and should focus on:

- creating a joined-up network of paths and spaces that provide a wide variety of options in terms of circular routes, including options that are suitable for use of people with mobility difficulties, wheelchairs or buggies;*
- providing effective management for visitor and wildlife benefit, and reducing the pressure on those paths and sites that are most vulnerable to over-use.*

Development that would adversely impact on access to, and the health and wildlife benefits of, the public rights of way network in the parish will not be supported.

Did you know...

Dorset Council is responsible for maintaining the surface of rights of way according to their status, and clearing any surface vegetation or undergrowth from the path.

Landowners are responsible for cutting back hedges, trees or shrubs overhanging a public right of way.

Landowners are responsible for maintaining stiles or gates, but Dorset Council may help with funding.

To report a problem -

<https://mapping.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/rightsofway/reportproblem>



There are also some paths on the network that end on, or have to cross, a busy highway, where the highway verge is not particularly safe.

Where new development would generate an adverse level of demand on the existing recreational network of accessible green spaces and rights of way, additional provision will be sought in order to mitigate any substantial cumulative harm, at a level appropriate to the scale and likely impact of the development.

For consultation - have we got the balance right on recreational access to the countryside?

3.25 Kingston Maurward College is investigating the improvement of signage and route marking across its estate, linking from Hardy's Cottage in at the northeastern edge of the estate to his house, Max Gate, in Dorchester. Other suggestions raised through the Neighbourhood Plan include the potential for a safer link to West Stafford, as Bockhampton Lane can become busy as a rat run and is relatively narrow, particularly where the lane crosses over bridges.

3.26 Should the option to expand Dorchester into Stinsford Parish be included in the next iteration of the Local Plan, it is clear that the development will need to provide a significant level of public open space and improvements to the existing recreational routes across the parish in its masterplanning.

Project P2. Investigating new and improved recreational routes and accessible green spaces

The Parish Council will work with local landowners to investigate potential options to provide new and improved recreational routes and accessible green spaces.

4. The Cultural and Historic Environment

To care for its historic and literary heritage and to welcome appropriate numbers of visitors.

Key policies:

- Protecting Stinsford's Historic Environment
- Positively managing the Thomas Hardy connection

The Historic and Cultural Context

4.1 Stinsford's history has an incredible time-depth. To the north of the parish along Waterston Ridge there are a number of barrows and tumuli thought to date to the Bronze Age (c.2000-700 BC). The course of the Roman Road runs through the parish, which originally linked Dorchester to Badbury Rings and beyond. In fact, the book of Stinsford also records evidence of an even earlier Roman Road running slightly to the south, which was unearthed in excavations by Kingston Maurward College in the late 1980s, and potentially ran across the parish from Grey's Bridge to Tinckleton Road (by Heedless William's Pond).

4.2 There are remains of a medieval settlement at Frome Whitfield, and many of the settlements are mentioned in the Domesday Book. Stinsford Church is probably the oldest surviving building in the parish, with parts dating back to Norman times. The area is especially rich in Manor and country houses, farmhouses and labourers' cottages, with the various estates having a major influence over the development of their land. Thomas Hardy's literature has also brought many parts of the parish to a world-wide audience. A review of the area's heritage assets by settlement, and including both designated and undesignated buildings of interest, follows. A full list of the designated and undesignated heritage assets are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Table 5. A review of the main historic and cultural associations with the parish

Bhompston

Bhompston is recorded in the Domesday Book as Frome, gaining the Bonevile name tag from the 13th century. It is recorded as part of the Stinsford estate under the ownership of John Strangways and subsequently the Earl of Ilchester, but today the farm is in the ownership of the Wakely family. **Bhompston Old Farmhouse** (unlisted) was the inspiration for ‘Blooms End’ the Yeobright’s house in Hardy’s novel ‘The Return of the Native’.



Coker's Frome

Sir William Whitfield & Wife Margery of Frome Whitfield left part of the estate, “Cokers Frome” to their daughter Alice in 1335, as they had no male heir (and the estate would revert to the King). Alice’s descendants became part of the Coker family, and early records mention a Manor belonging to the Coker family from 1433.

Land around Coker’s Frome was added to the Stinsford parish in 1894. The Mayo family have farmed this area for over 150 years, and at one point owned land as far north as Waterston Ridge. Today Coker’s Frome is perhaps most famous as the **Dorset County Showground**, with the history of the show dating back some 180 years. The county show takes place annually on the fields either side of Slyers Lane, and has been its current location since the turn of the century.



Frome Whitfield

Mentioned as Frome in the Domesday Book, land north of Dorchester was granted to Robert Whitfield in 1189, from whence it takes its name. The settlement includes the site of **the medieval village and St Nicholas Church** (an unscheduled monument, believed to have been destroyed by 1549) in a field called ‘Chapel Close’. Frome Whitfield was a parish in its own right until 1610 when its depopulation caused it to merge with the parish of Holy Trinity Church, Dorchester before being added to the parish of Stinsford in 1894.

The Civil War Politician, Denzil Holles, whose mausoleum is in St Peters Church Dorchester, owned and lived at Frome Whitfield when it was known as Holles Frome. There is a wall plaque commemorating his ownership, dated 1658. Frome Whitfield was bought by the Dorset Henning family in 1799 and **Frome (Whitfield) House** (unlisted), a new Georgian style house was built replacing the older house on that site. The parkland with its fine trees still defines the character of this hamlet and is overlooked by **Yalbury Lodge**, a late Victorian characterful cottage mainly built of Broadmayne brick under a plain clay tiled roof, and the more recent Yalbury House. To the south-west lies **Frome Whitfield Lodge**, its wall plaque dating it to 1879 and marking one entrance into the estate. The **Blue Bridge**, a Victorian iron bridge constructed in 1877, provides easy walking passage to Dorchester across the River Frome.



Blue Bridge looking North

Higher Bockhampton

The first cottage at Higher Bockhampton is believed to have been built in the 1800s. This hamlet has very strong associations with Thomas Hardy. **Hardy's Cottage** (Grade II Listed), the attractive cob and thatched cottage at the end of the lane in Higher Bockhampton was built by Thomas Hardy's great-grandfather at the beginning of the 19th century, but belonged to the Kingston Maurward estate (it is



recorded in their records as East Lodge). Hardy's father carried out his building business from a small office here, and it was home to the famous novelist and poet who was born here in 1840. It was where he grew up and a place to which throughout his life he constantly returned. "Under the Greenwood Tree" and "Far from the Madding Crowd" were written whilst living at the Cottage. In his poem 'Domicilium' Hardy describes the Cottage which today backs on to Puddletown Forest yet in Hardy's day this was mostly heathland. Other places nearby – such as Rushy pond – also feature in his works. The Cottage today is owned by the National Trust, who bought it in 1948.

The private approach lane to the cottage has several attractive houses and 19th century cottages. **Woodlands** (a pair of cottages since converted into a single residence) is another original building thought to have survived along with Hardy's Cottage. **Greenwood** is believed to have been built as a pair of brick cottages by the Hardy family. The brick-built quadrangle of barns in the centre of the **Greenwood Grange** holiday complex are understood to have been constructed by Hardy's father in 1849 for Francis Martin, then owner of the Kingston Maurward estate. Thorncome Woods forms the backdrop to the hamlet, with woodland walks and the Roman road passing through it about 400m to the south.

Higher Kingston

Higher Kingston was part of the Kingston Estate owned by the Pitt Family who were based at Kingston Maurward. The farmhouse **Higher Kingston House** (Grade II Listed) is believed to have been constructed by the turn of the 19th century. When the estate was sold to Cecil Hanbury in 1914, Major Balfour retained the farm. He subsequently sold this in 1920 and the farm since 1938 has been in the ownership of the Holland Family. The area was designated as a Conservation Area in 1990, but does not benefit from a Conservation Area Appraisal.

Kingston Maurward

The place name of Kingeston / Kyngeston Marlevard was first recorded in the 13th century, linked to Geoffrey Mauregard, and suggests that it was part of the royal manor. The **Old Manor House** (Grade I Listed) is Elizabethan, built in 1591 by the Grey Family who some years earlier had married the Maurward or Marlewarde family heiress. It passed down to the family heiress Lora Grey, who married George Pitt of Stratfield Saye in 1700, and who in 1748 commissioned the construction of **Grey's Bridge** (Grade 2 Listed). It is referred to as Knapwater House in Thomas Hardy's Desperate Remedies, his first published novel. Augusta Way, thought to be the inspiration Tess of the d'Urbervilles, moved here in the 1880s. There is a **plaque to George Singer**, on the wall of the Manor House, commemorating his birth here in 1847. He made his fortune from sewing machines but also pioneered the manufacture of cycles and cars.

Kingston Maurward

House (Grade I Listed) was commissioned by George Pitt and built during 1717-1720. It was at the time constructed of brick and in the late 18th century clad in Portland stone by



John Pitt (who was MP for Wareham and Dorchester for 34 years, and had inherited the estate as it was passed down the family). Approached via the Lodge House (which is Listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of the House). The parkland and lake in the valley below the mansion was also laid around this time. The Prime Minister William Pitt (to whom he was related) visited the house a number of times. Thomas Hardy visited Kingston House when it was in the hands of Francis and Julia Martin, the latter who claimed 'taught Tom his letters'. Lady Hanbury instigated the formal gardens to the west of the house after the conclusion of the First World War (all Grade II* historic parkland). There is a Hanbury monument in Stinsford Church in the north aisle.

The grounds of Kingston Maurward Park were used as a military camp in World War II, clearly visible on aerial photographs from that time. It is understood that the Royal Army Medical Corps were stationed here after their evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940, and later the 1st Division of the US Army. The estate was purchased by the Dorset County Council and opened in 1949 as a post war agricultural college, which has now been expanded to include the Dorset Studio School on the campus.

Lower Bockhampton

Bockhampton is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Much of the land was controlled by John Pitt in the late 18th century, after Benjamin Pryce undertook a full survey of the manor in 1774 (reported more fully on in the Book of Stinsford). The land became part of the Kingston Maurward Estate in 1803 when it was sold to William Morton Pitt, and at the turn of the century a number of properties bore a Kingstone rather than Bockhampton name tag. Today the village is

no longer part of the estate. Whilst the village has no buildings earlier than the 18th century, it is possible that it existed earlier as an adjunct to the Elizabethan Old Manor. During the 19th century there was a Reading Room, **Post Office** (Grade II Listed) and a **Victorian School House** (unlisted) which Thomas Hardy attended at the age of eight (when it opened in 1848). The school closed in 1961, but its bell can still be seen above the door.



It is described as a linear settlement in the Conservation Area Appraisal, with about twenty properties (mainly thatched and slate cottages built from rendered cob, brick or limestone rubble) strung out in a ribbon along Bockhampton Lane. The properties on the western side of the Lane are mainly detached and set further back off the road with front and rear gardens, and include the former school. **Bockhampton House** (unlisted) is set at right angles to the Lane, facing the river, seemingly an accretion of several cottages of various materials and dates. Thomas Hardy recollects that there was a cluster of cottages and farm buildings to its south side (shown on the 1774 map) which were pulled down in the early part of the 20th century.

Apart from **Lower Bockhampton Farm** (unlisted), the older, eastern properties all lie on or close to the road edge. Lower Bockhampton Farm is an exception, as a substantial brick house, and may have been built by Thomas Hardy's father. Otherwise most properties are modest, semi-detached or terraced cottages, with **Yalbury Cottage** (Grade II Listed), formerly two cottages, now a restaurant and accommodation. The **Cottage and Morello**, and **Bockton and Pump Cottages** are also Grade II Listed (Bockton Cottage is believed to have been built partly on the site of the poor house which existed there in 1774), and the row of four rendered cottages, from **Hillcrest to Gardeners**

Cottage (unlisted), are specifically mentioned in the appraisal as contributing to the character of the Conservation Area. The southernmost property, **Bridge Cottage** (Grade II Listed) was both a blacksmiths and a beer shop in the mid 19th century – the pub that never was!



Going north towards Bockhampton Cross, the **avenue of trees** is a notable local feature that has “deeper cultural roots” in that the limes that are now standing replaced an avenue of elms that

once lined that lane. Bockhampton Cross is also believed to be the setting of Thomas Hardy's poem 'By Mellstock Cross at the Year's End', which was published in December 1919.

Stinsford

Stinsford is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a small, nucleated settlement. It is recorded in the Domesday book as being two parcels: Stitsford and Stincteford. It is centred around **Stinsford Manor House** (Grade II Listed), a large gentry house built in a long succession of rooms, facing south over small walled gardens and with two north-south wings. It was restored following a fire in the late 19th century. From 1963 to 1984 it was used as a school for boys, before being granted permission to convert it into a number privately owned apartments in 1997. To the west, on the far side of the Dorchester bypass, **Eagle Lodge** (unlisted) is the gate lodge to Stinsford House, thought to have been built together with the two stone piers originally with eagle finials in 1861. Both House and Lodge are considered to be the places mentioned in Hardy's poem 'The Widow Betrothed'.

There are long-standing links between Stinsford Manor House (which was owned by Thomas Strangways, following his marriage to the estate's heiress, Eleanor (Alianor) Talboys, in the late 15th century) and Melbury House at Evershot (which was acquired by his son) and later becoming part of the Ilchester Estate. The Honourable Mrs Charlotte Townshend, the current owner of Ilchester Estates, is patron of St Michael's Church.

The Church of St. Michael (Grade I Listed) is a pre-reformation church dating back to the 13th century, although elements such as the tower, south and north aisles were added in the 14th, 15th and 17th centuries, and further alterations in the 19th century. It features as the "Mellstock Church" in Thomas Hardy's novels, and his heart was buried in the churchyard in 1928. The churchyard is also home to the memorial slate of Cecil Day-Lewis, author and poet Laureate, and a great admirer of Thomas Hardy. To the north east, built on glebe land in circa 1837, is the '**The Old Vicarage**' (unlisted), a smaller gentry house.



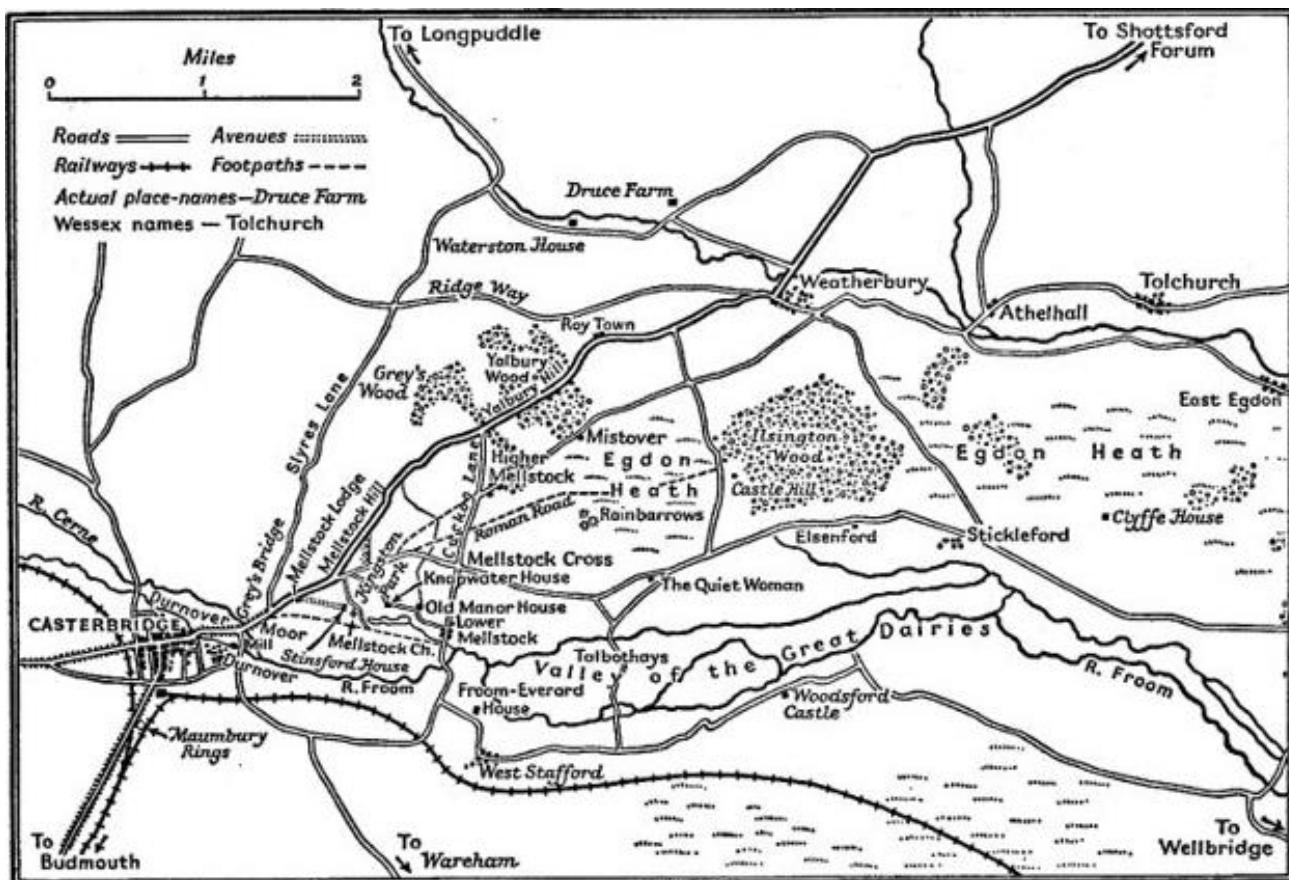
Further south, **Three Bears Cottage** (unlisted), a much extended thatched cottage formerly referred to as Gardener's Cottage, marks the southern limits of the village, and would have been passed frequently by the young Thomas Hardy on his daily walk to and from Dorchester.

To the north side, **Stinsford Farm House** (Grade II Listed) was the former dairy house to Stinsford House and is now operated as a Business Centre. **Birkin House** (Grade II Listed) is further north still, and set slightly apart from the main village. This was built as a Victorian country house in 1874, for the banker Reginald Thornton. There are also four small blocks of cottages in its locality, including **Stinsford Cottages** (Grade II Listed) that face across a green towards the A35 London Road.

4.3 Hardy's influence is not limited to the buildings listed in Table 5 – his books and his experiences span the wider landscapes in and around Stinsford (Hardy's Mellstock). The richness

by which Thomas Hardy observed and described the natural world in fine detail have helped us to identify some of the people and locations in his works, although others are still debated. Appendix 3 included some of the places associated with Hardy's fictional characters who traversed the hamlets, paths, bridleways, tracks, and roads of 'Mellstock' during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Figure 5. Hardy's Mellstock (source: A Hardy Companion, FB Pinion)



Policy SNP7. Protecting Stinsford's Historic Environment

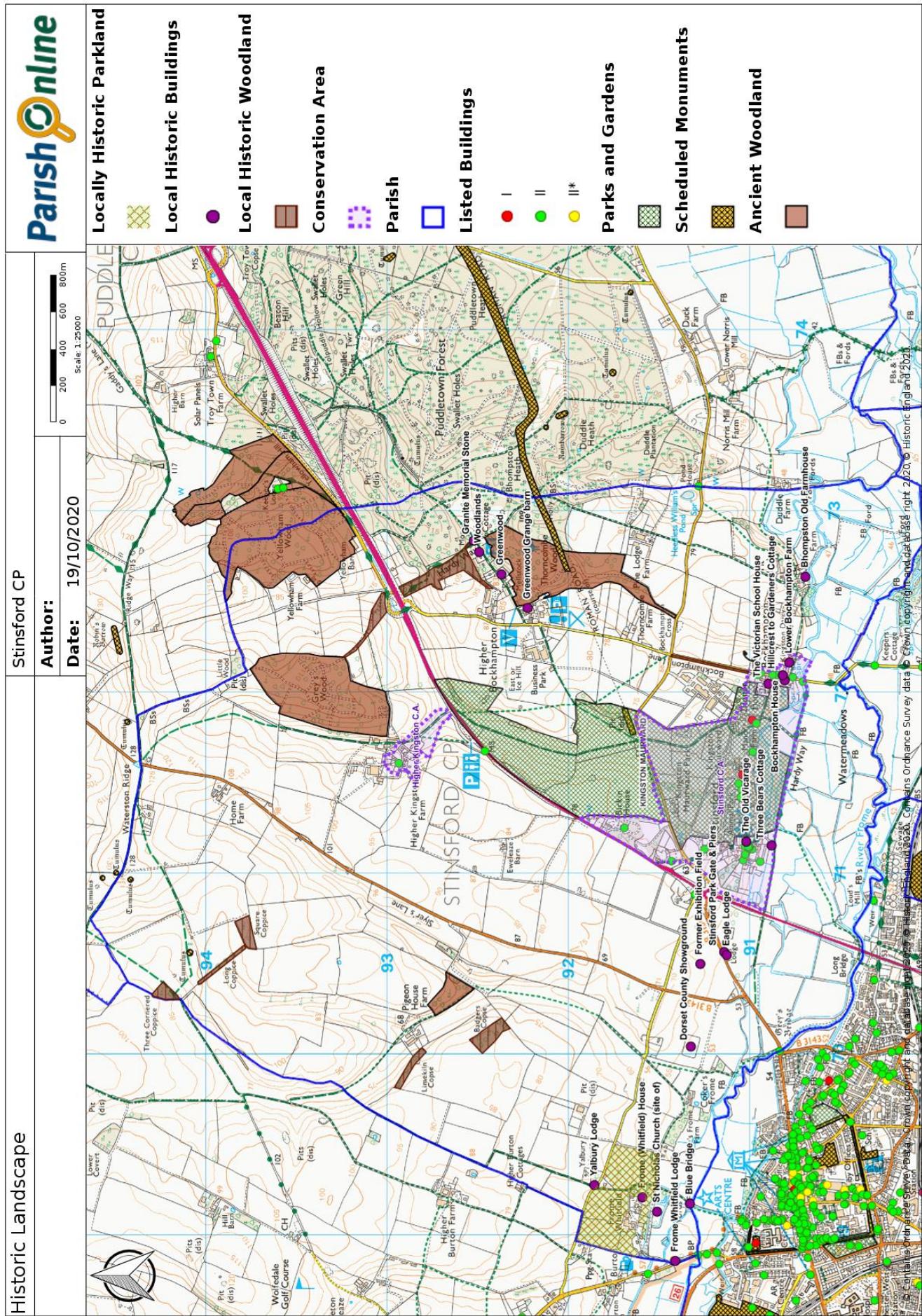
Development should respect and where possible raise awareness of the history of the parish and its individual settlements, including the many undesignated heritage assets and associations with Thomas Hardy, such as those described in Appendices 1 - 3.

Policy SNP8. Positively managing the Thomas Hardy connection

Tourism initiatives relating to the history and cultural associations with Thomas Hardy should receive favourable consideration, provided that these would not cause substantial harm to the environment or character of the area, either directly or indirectly (through increased visitor pressure).

For consultation - have we identified the most important historic characteristics of the parish, and have we got the balance right between visitor benefits and pressures associated with the Hardy Connection?

Figure 6. Local History Map



5. Housing, Employment and Community Facilities

To respond to the need for a demographically mixed population, a viable economy, and training, education and employment opportunities within the parish.

To provide appropriate levels of housing and other facilities to meet the needs of the local community.

Key policies:

- What development is needed, and where...
 - Supporting the provision of affordable housing in the parish
 - Supporting local employment opportunities
 - Protecting and enhancing our community facilities

What development is needed

Housing

5.1 There is no set housing or development target currently in the adopted Local Plan. When the review of the Local Plan started, this proposed a formula for calculating an appropriate level of housing in Neighbourhood Plan area. The level of growth in a rural Neighbourhood Plan area such as Stinsford, where there are no large settlements with defined development boundaries, was to be based on a minimum of 2% growth in the population over a twenty year period. The calculation for Stinsford is shown below:

- Parish population (2018 mid year estimate, ONS) 312 persons
- 2% growth $312 \times 2\% = 6.24$ persons
- Household growth equivalent* $6.24 / 2.16 = 3$ houses (rounded)
* at average occupancy rate of 2.16 (2011 census)

5.2 On this basis, the minimum level of growth would be 3 new dwellings over 20 years. With the prospect of the strategic development north of Dorchester, as well as possible conversions that can take place under permitted development rights, there would be no strategic need for further sites to be allocated through this plan. So in this Neighbourhood Plan we have focused on whether there is any obvious local need for further growth.

5.3 In the early consultations we took the opportunity to ask local residents what level of housing growth they felt would be good for the parish. We gave a number of options, the results of which are shown in the following table. Whilst the most ‘popular’ answer was to have no development, the majority of those responding did want some housing development. The weighted average scores take into account the ‘range’ suggested, and provide one way to estimate a possible consensus on the level of development, which could suggest that an appropriate level of development over the plan period could be around 16 new homes, of which at least 50% should be provided as affordable homes.

Table 6. Housing growth options – what local residents said

	Weighting	Affordable homes		Open market homes	
None	(0)	Responses	%	Responses	%

Between 0 to 1 per 5-year period (maximum 3 up to 2036)	(2)	9	12%	14	19%
Between 0 to 1 per year (maximum 15 up to 2036)	(9)	19	26%	16	21%
Between 1 to 2 per year (maximum 30 up to 2036)	(23)	16	22%	13	17%
More than 30	(35)	3	4%	2	3%
Median		up to 1 dwelling p.a.			up to 1 dwelling / 5yrs
Weighted average		9			7

5.4 Independent research on local housing needs, undertaken by AECOM in 2017 as part of the Neighbourhood Plan support programme, concluded that the plan should focus on delivering more affordable housing, in particular social and affordable rented homes, and entry-level market rent housing options. Whilst shared ownership options could also help provide an affordable path to home ownership, this tenure would still be out of reach to those on the lowest incomes in the Parish. It should be possible (and would be appropriate) to give priority to local people and for the affordable housing to remain affordable in perpetuity. House sizes (of all types) should focus on delivering smaller dwelling types (given the high number of larger homes with four or more bedrooms already in the parish).

5.5 Kingston Maurward College has indicated that it needs to sell some land for housing in order to finance its continued existence. Its latest masterplan (July 2019) shows 17 - 19 homes (including some low cost / affordable housing options). Whilst the need for a masterplan for the future development and expansion of Kingston Maurward College within the college estate was included in the Local Plan Review, and the current draft has no status as a planning document, elements of it could be included in our Neighbourhood Plan. There were no other sites promoted through the Local Planning Authority's latest call for sites that have been assessed as being potentially suitable for development⁴.

Policy SNP9. Supporting the provision of affordable housing in the parish

Policy to be drafted following consultation

For consultation - the feedback so far indicates that local residents would support some (but very limited) new housing in the parish, and there is certainly a need for affordable homes. The options therefore that we need to consider are:

- (1) Do nothing – the Local Plan would allow some open market housing through conversions, and would not prevent a landowner from putting forward their own proposals for an affordable housing site on land adjoining a settlement.*
- (2) Identifying specific sites within the parish for this need, which could deliver some affordable homes (perhaps with some open market homes to support their delivery), with the aim to identify sufficient land to build up to 16 houses in total. This would consider the sites promoted by Kingston Maurward College or any new site options put forward through for consideration by Dorset Council in their 2019 call for sites.*

⁴ As published in the September 2019 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/evidence/land-availability.aspx>

- (3) *Middle ground option - identify those settlements where an affordable housing site would be appropriate given their size, location and sustainability, and where open market housing could be included to help with the viability of an affordable housing scheme, but without identifying specific parcels of land for development*

In all cases it would be important to consider the impacts – and some key questions are suggested below as a starting point:

- ***How the affordable homes are grouped and managed?*** In particular, housing associations tend to want a cluster of at least 5 homes to ensure that they can manage their housing stock efficiently.
- ***Would development contribute to the settlement's sustainability?*** This is in broader terms – our policies on design are likely to emphasize achieving the highest possible environmental standards in new buildings.
- ***Are there any brownfield sites, which should be prioritized over greenfield options?***
- ***Could it be accommodated without spoiling the charm, history and identity of that settlement?*** Whilst it is not for the Neighbourhood to determine the actual design, it is clear that any new building should fit with the nature of the settlement, and not intrude into open countryside between settlements.

Employment

5.6 Kingston Maurward College is the largest employer based in the parish. It employs over 300 members of staff (140 full time, 195 part time), most of whom reside within the Dorchester – Weymouth area. At least 50 other local businesses were also identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan’s research. Whilst some businesses operate from home, there are three distinct employment clusters in the parish: Stinsford Business Centre, Hampton Business Park and also Mellstock Business Park.

5.7 The College has indicated that it wishes to create additional business incubation units for small businesses to support local entrepreneurial development and links with college syllabus at Stinsford Enterprise Park. The Local Plan policy would allow the conversion or replacement of the existing buildings for business use. It does not support the creation of new business premises (as evidenced by the refused of an additional unit at Hampton Business Park in 2020⁵).

Policy SNP10. Supporting local employment opportunities

Policy to be drafted following consultation

For consultation - whilst the feedback so far from existing businesses is that their needs can mainly be met through expanding existing premises, there is a perceived demand for new premises in the area that this Neighbourhood Plan could support. The options therefore that we need to consider are:

- (1) *Do nothing – extensions, conversions and replacements as envisaged by the Local Plan will be supported (including the proposals for Stinsford Enterprise Park), but no new-build units should be allowed.*

⁵ WD/D/19/001982

(2) Identify whether the expansion of one or more of the existing business parks should be supported, and if so what checks or restrictions should be contained in the policies.

Community Facilities

5.8 Perhaps because of the proximity of Dorchester, two miles away, there are currently no shops, pubs, or village halls in the Parish. The beer-shop at Lower Bockhampton closed in the 1860s, the primary school in 1961 and the Post Office closed some ten years later. The church of St Michael, in the village of Stinsford itself, continues to provide a place of worship in the parish. And Kingston Maurward College (together with the Studio School), not only provides locally-based education and training, but also runs a number of facilities that are available for community use, including room hire for functions and events. There are also a number of eating establishments in the area, such as Yalbury Cottage, Pine Lodge Farm, the Greenwood Tree Café and the café at the Kingston Maurward Animal Park & Gardens. The lack of facilities is certainly an issue that the local community ‘dislike’ and would want to change. A community hall / meeting place was the top suggestion, followed by a shop and a pub.

5.9 Recreational opportunities are perhaps more widely available, mainly through access to the countryside via the public rights of way network, and the Local Nature Reserve at Thorncombe Woods. St Michael's Churchyard and the Cecil Hanbury Memorial Garden in Stinsford provide places for quiet reflection. There is also a playground in Lower Bockhampton that is held in trust by the National Playing Fields Association and managed by the Parish Council, and an indoor play barn at the Kingston Maurward Animal Park & Gardens. The Equestrian Centre in the College (at the Manor Stables) runs riding lessons for children and adults of all abilities.

5.10 It is clear that any new facilities need to be economically viable, which is linked to having a sufficiently large catchment population that will use their services. At the current time there is no obvious commercial interest in running a shop or pub. However, as part of the College Plans, they are proposing to create a new multi-purpose hall to the south side of (and to replace) the Outdoor Activities Centre. The building would be around 400m² comprising a large hall and a small number of separate meeting rooms, and would be available for hire for community uses.

Policy SNP11. Protecting and enhancing our community facilities

Policy to be drafted following consultation

For consultation – are the proposals for a multi-use venue to for college and community use, in the grounds of Kingston Maurward College, supported? Are there any other opportunities (or existing facilities) that we have missed?

Possible major growth North of Dorchester

5.11 As explained in the introduction to this plan, whether the suggestion for major growth in the form of a whole new ‘neighbourhood; north of Dorchester goes ahead or not is a strategic decision which cannot be decided through a Neighbourhood Plan. We realise that many local residents are vehemently opposed to this idea, and their concerns have been voiced, and will continue to be voiced, by Stinsford Parish Council in the responses to the Local Plan consultations.

6. Sustainable Development and Climate Change

To uphold principles of sustainable development and good and climate-friendly building design

Key policies:

- Better building design (that balances the importance of our beautiful places with the need to build sustainably)
- Protection of groundwater resources

Building Design and Layout

6.1 Given the range of building types and ages across the parish, there is no one clearly defined style or building material that should form the basis of future designs.

Perhaps the greatest emphasis on design should be retaining the rural character and history of the area, with its range of grand gentry homes, farmhouses and cottages, many of them grouped together to make coherent clusters within the wider landscape. Much of this is reflected in the earlier policies on landscape and heritage.



6.2 There is a rich palette of building materials and detailing found in the area, as described in the Conservation Area statement for Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton. This includes local oolitic limestone, chalk-based cob, smooth render (traditionally lime-based), flint and local clay brick (brown to grey in colour), thatch, clay plain tiles and pantiles, as well as slate and occasionally stone tiles. Boundaries are typically marked by hedgerows, walls or wrought / cast iron work. Porches, window detailing, ridgelines and chimneys all add further interest and variety.



6.3 But whilst new building should look to fit comfortably within this setting, it need not simply mirror what has gone before. In the UK, 49% of annual carbon emissions are attributable to how we construct and use buildings. It is more important than ever to take the best of the 21st century building design skills to ensure that all new buildings are truly sustainable in terms of their carbon footprint and use of materials.



6.4 Whilst some of the measures that go into achieving zero carbon homes (such as cavity wall insulation and low energy lighting) are detailed matters that have little bearing on the design and layout of buildings, thinking about how to achieve zero carbon effectively starts at a much higher level and therefore needs to be considered at the planning stage. The landscaping and surfacing of the site is also relevant, for example in terms of the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems, native planting that can provide both biodiversity and climate benefits.



Figure 7. Extract on buildings and details, from the 2006 Conservation Area Appraisal

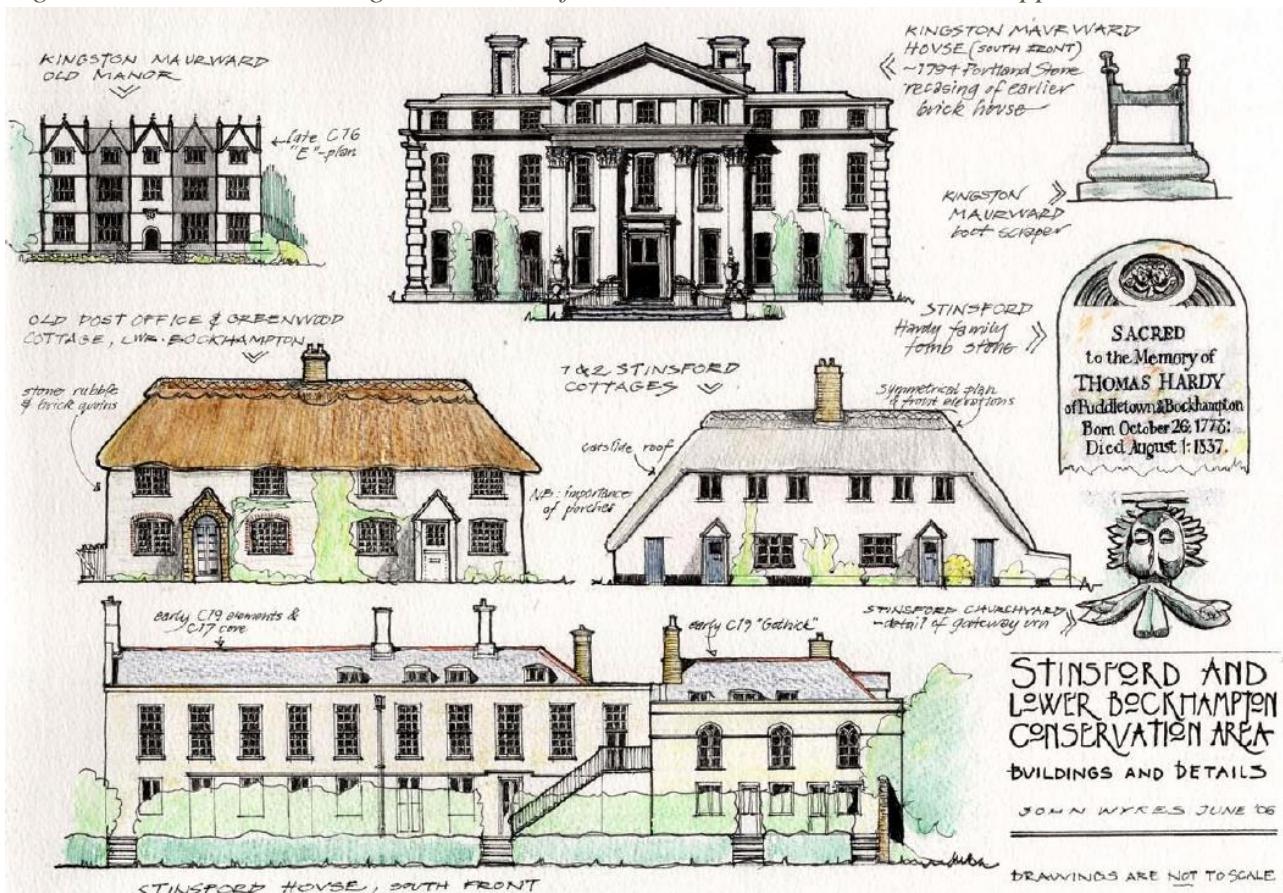


Table 7. Sustainability checklist

Built element	Sustainability considerations
Building type, size and layout	<p>A building's form will influence the ratio of its external surface area to floorspace. The greater the ratio, the greater the energy demand. Semi-detached and terraced homes are likely to be more efficient than detached homes.</p> <p>The built form will also influence the overall size and internal layout. Developments should provide adequate space for users to go about their day-to-day life relevant to how we live today – so should include flexible space that can be used for working from home and/or designs that allow easy reconfiguration / re-modelling internally.</p>
Building orientation and placement on the plot	<p>A southerly site orientation means that the benefits of both passive and active solar features can be maximized. This should also be considered in the building layout - placing the most frequently used rooms on the south side of the building.</p> <p>Where the building is placed on the plot will also impact on what landscaping and planting can be established, which in turn can impact on shading and act as shelter belts in more exposed locations.</p>
Building materials	<p>The choice of materials will impact on their thermal mass / insulation values reducing the need for further insulation as part of the build, as well as their longevity. Different building materials will also have different levels of embodied carbon and durability – those with high levels of embodied carbon, or low levels of durability, should be avoided. The use of locally sourced or recycled materials (including the reuse of materials where buildings are</p>

	<p>replaced) will reduce the use of energy to transport material long distances, as well as supporting a sustainable local economy. BRE's Green Guide https://www.bregroup.com/greenguide provides a simple ranking system of most construction materials.</p> <p>The roof form and materials will impact on the extent to which solar / photovoltaic panels can be integral to the initial build (which is both more economic and reduces their visual impact) – or indeed the potential use of green roofs. It is expected that most new builds should include solar panels, and these should be clearly specified on the plans.</p>
Windows and doors	The extent and depth of glazing (and therefore the recesses in the building design) should be considered, to reduce heat / energy loss whilst ensuring there are good levels of natural light
Chimneys	Are a characteristic feature of many houses in the area, and whilst increasing limitations on gas / wood / oil fired boilers and wood-burning stoves may make them appear less essential at this time, their inclusion can provide one means of managing ventilation requirements, and may help future-proof options.
Architectural features	Can have a purpose, such as providing shading or to incorporate rainwater capture. The appropriate use of overhangs, awnings and shutters, gutters / downpipes and venting can contribute positively to a building's character and interest and the placement and material used should be included in the detailed design drawings.
Parking provision	Ensuring that there is sufficient room for cycle storage, and that low energy cars have easy access to a charging point
Sustainable Drainage	The provision of swales, ponds, reed beds and other green spaces designed to temporarily hold and soak in rain water runoff within a development can be included as part of a sustainable drainage system, reducing flood risk and also enhancing biodiversity and water quality.
Landscaping	The inclusion of planting areas within the design should also be considered at an early stage, as some elements (such as trees) will require space, and there may be opportunities to provide shading where this may help cooling in summer, link a series of green corridors together for wildlife and sustainable drainage benefits.

6.5 Whilst many of the buildings in the parish are Listed or lie within the Conservation Area, proposals to alter or extend these buildings should still consider the energy efficiency and carbon impact of the proposed changes, balanced with the conservation of their character and appearance.

Policy SNP12. Better Building Design

New development should respond to the area's local character and history to reinforce the sense of place, and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, with a high standard of amenity.

Within and adjoining established settlements, the layout and boundary treatments should reflect the character of that settlement. A mix of building styles and materials is encouraged, where appropriate respecting the tendency for cohesive groups. Affordable housing should be indistinguishable in character and quality from open market homes.

The layout should provide sufficient parking (so as to not dominate the street scene), and sufficient private garden areas (proportionate to the dwelling size, and providing sufficient space for an outdoor clothes line, to store bins, cycles and gardening equipment, and space to sit outside without excessive shade, and, in respect of family homes, space for children to play).

New buildings, and alterations and extensions to existing buildings, should seek to minimise the carbon footprint of the development, and address inefficiencies where opportunities exist, that would not have a detrimental impact on the historic character of the area. Sustainable technology (such as solar panels), bin stores, meter boxes and similar utility requirements should be clearly shown on the planning application drawings to demonstrate how these are successfully integrated into the property. A sustainability statement should be submitted with applications to provide details of the sustainable design and construction measures included within the proposal, addressing the elements listed in Table 7, detailing in particular how design, construction and operation has sought to:

- a) Reduce the use of fossil fuels.*
- b) Promote the efficient use of natural resources, the re-use and recycling of resources, and the production and consumption of renewable energy.*
- c) Adopt and facilitate the flexible development of low and zero carbon energy through a range of technologies.*
- d) Adopt best practice in sustainable urban drainage.*

For consultation – do you agree with the approach to better building design – is there anything we have missed?

Groundwater.

6.6 Boreholes within Stinsford parish supply drinking water, not only for many homes and businesses in the parish, but also for Kingston Maurward College and a large proportion of Dorchester residents. The continued availability of unpolluted groundwater is therefore a matter of great importance to the health and sustainability of these communities today and in the future.

6.7 Development can impact on groundwater levels through the use and design of soakaways and drainage systems (which can help replenish groundwater in a managed way) and the incorporation of ground source heating systems (which could cause the groundwater to become polluted). It is therefore important that particular attention is paid to their design. Guidance on groundwater protection, including the protection of water intended for human consumption, and specifically the possible hazards associated with the use of ground source heating and cooling, is provided by the Environment Agency (see list of supporting documents). Issues with nitrate pollution are also a concern, particularly in relation to the indirect impacts on Poole Harbour (see Section 3).

Policy SNP13. Protection of Groundwater

The ongoing maintenance and management of drainage systems and ground source heating systems should ensure against the potential for groundwater pollution.

7. Safe and Accessible Travel

To promote good and safe access links for walkers, cyclists and other road users, whilst working to reduce the reliance on fossil-fuel transport.

Key policies:

- Road traffic on the rural lanes: traffic management and transport assessments
- Planning for a robust and effective cycle network: improving cycle routes

Projects:

- Traffic management measures
- Cycle infrastructure improvements

7.1 Being a rural parish it is not surprising that the car is the dominant form of transport for Stinsford residents, with over 85% of people responding to the 2019 survey saying it was their main form of transport. According to the 2011 Census, over half (59%) of the working population commute by car⁶ – although this was slightly lower than the previous census (seemingly due to the rise in home working). There is no regular bus service to the settlements, although the X12 and 187 services stop on the A35 near the Stinsford Roundabout, and the X11 stops at the Sun Inn on the C12 near Charminster.

7.2 Few people cycle or walk to work in Stinsford, which may also be a feature of a lack of cycle routes and the seemingly busy, narrow lanes. There are no dedicated cycle routes in the parish – the one advisory cycle route⁷ is on-road, coming onto the parish from the Puddletown direction using the Tinleton Road as far as Bockhampton Cross, turning south onto Bockhampton Lane before heading west via the permissive route through the Kingston Maurward Estate as far as Stinsford. It stops short of reaching Dorchester.

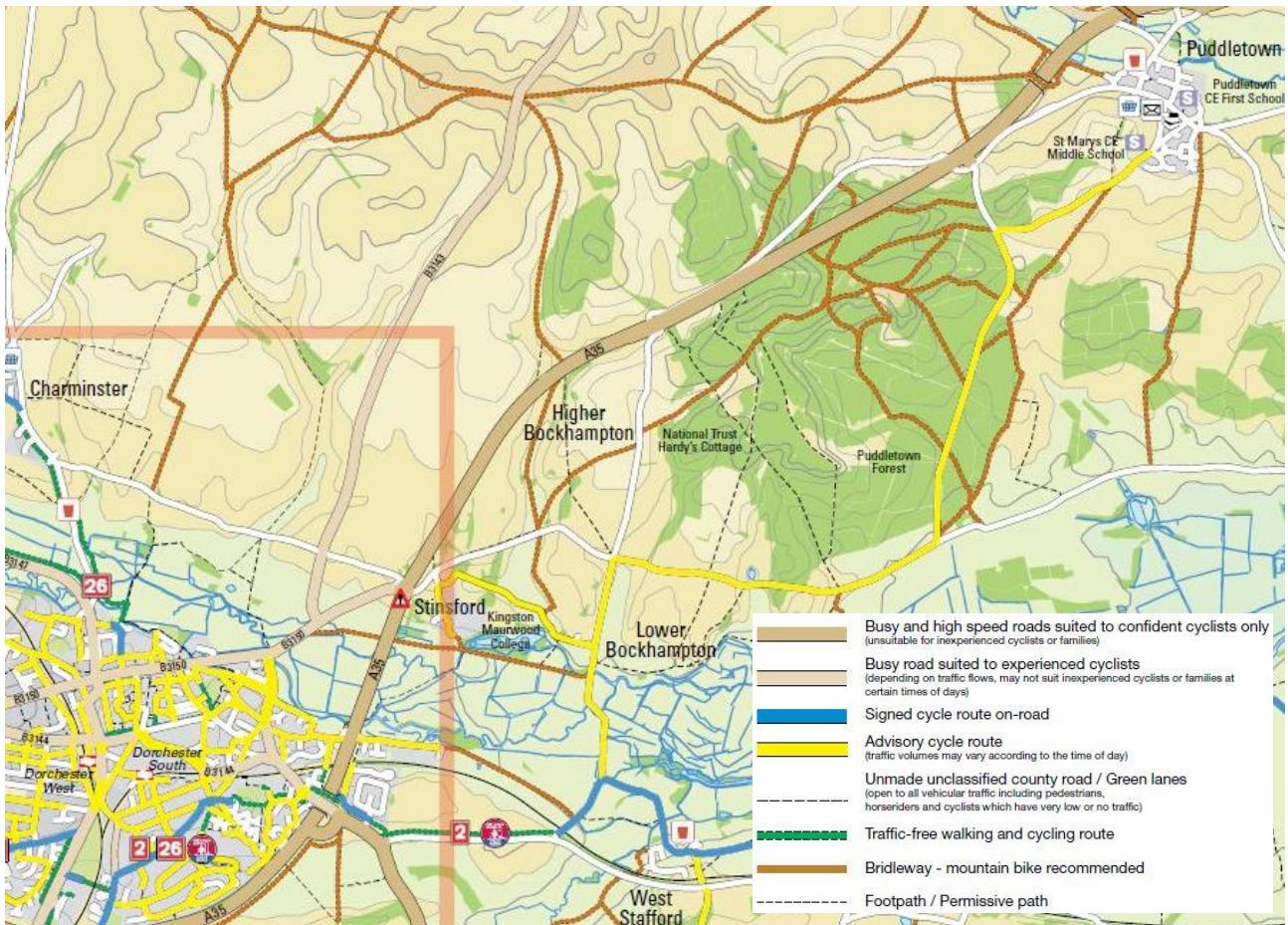
7.3 The same car-dominance applies to visitors. Whilst some may undertake the bulk of their journey by coach or train, their journey through Stinsford Parish is generally by car. As visitor numbers to Thorncome Wood and Hardy's Cottage and Visitor Centre have increased over recent years, parking has become an issue and frequently in the summer, visitors leave their cars in passing places and on verges (which further hampers the safe movement of traffic). Most businesses said that the number of visitors and deliveries was likely to stay the same or increase in the future.



⁶ 2011 and 2001 census based statistics from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> including QS701EW - Method of travel to work and KS015 - Travel to work

⁷ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/sport-leisure/cycling/documents/dorchester-cycling-routes-map.pdf>

Figure 8. Extract from the Dorchester & Surrounding Villages Walking & Cycling Map



7.4 The same car-dominance applies to visitors. Whilst some may undertake the bulk of their journey by coach or train, their journey through Stinsford Parish is generally by car. As visitor numbers to Thorncome Wood and Hardy's Cottage and Visitor Centre have increased over recent years, parking has become an issue and frequently in the summer, visitors leave their cars in passing places and on verges (which further hampers the safe movement of traffic). Most businesses said that the number of visitors and deliveries was likely to stay the same or increase in the future.

7.5 Traffic was the number one factor highlighted by residents (91%) when asked what they disliked most about living in Stinsford. Just over half of the businesses responding to the local business survey also said that they had problems with traffic and access. The main problems mentioned were:

- Speed – traffic speeds in the parish were too high – many of the roads are set at the default national speed limit
- Amount and size – the general volume of traffic was too high, particularly during the holidays, weekends and at peak times, and this was particularly an issue for larger heavy goods vehicles and school buses using the narrow country lanes
- Rat-running – was also mentioned, particularly relevant to Cuckoo Lane when the A35 is closed, and through Cokers Frome / Frome Whitfield where the lane is used as an “unofficial northern bypass”

As a result a number of local residents said that they were put off walking or cycling, as the roads were simply seen to be too dangerous.

7.6 According to reported crashes⁸, and excluding the main road, the location with the highest number of serious accidents in the parish is Bockhampton Cross (with two serious accidents the last 10 years, as well as a slight collision in the last 5 years), and the main place for cycle accidents has been Hollow Hill and the Stinsford Roundabout, as well as being the other major hotspot for collisions (including a pedestrian hit by a car when the driver was unable to see clearly due to the bright sunlight and shade).

7.7 The following map shows the main areas of traffic safety concern as expressed by local residents and businesses, which are explained in more detail in Table 8.

Figure 9. Traffic safety concerns – the hot spots

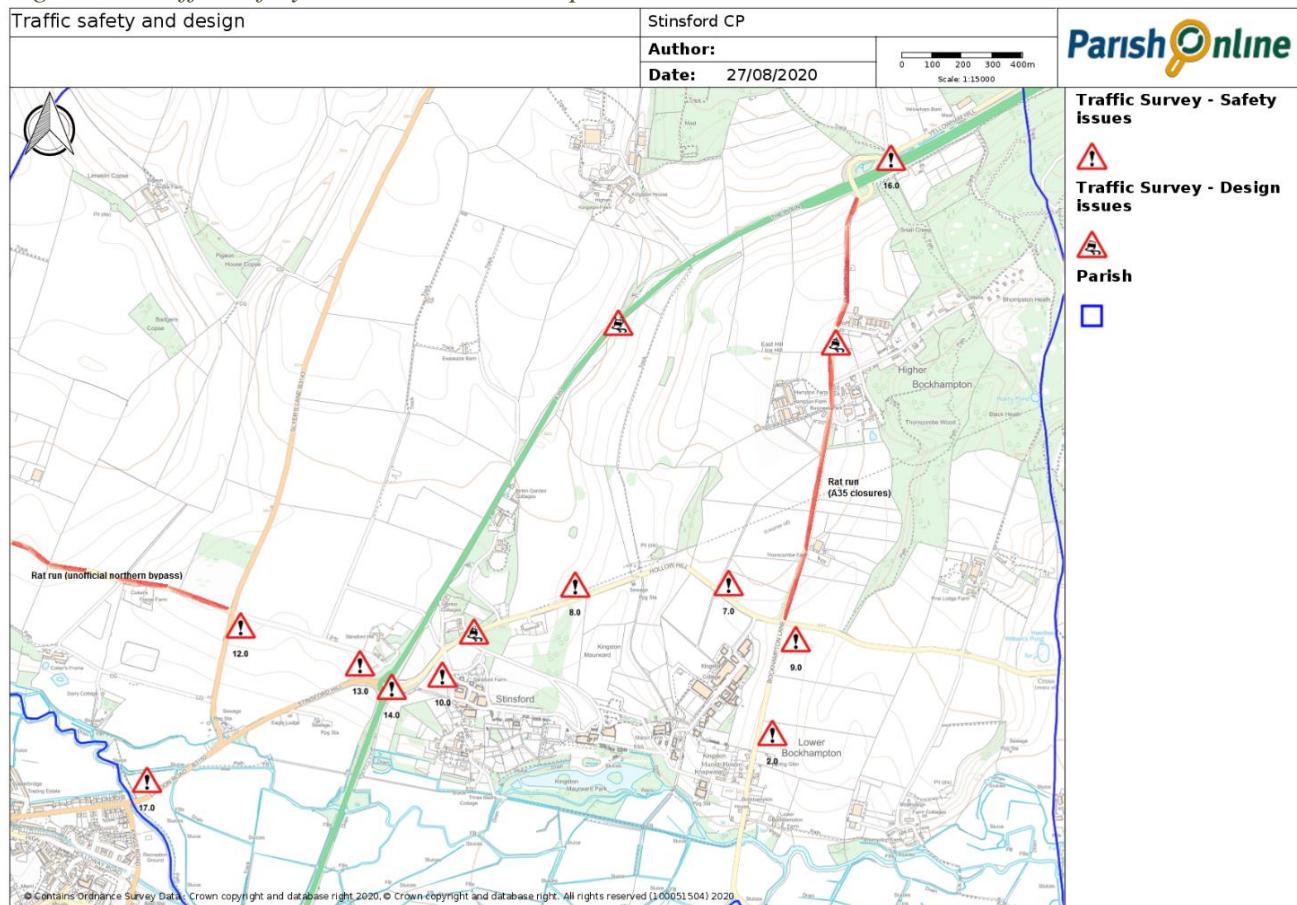


Table 8. Road safety concerns

Ref	Location	Issue
1	Lower Bockhampton south	The bridge has been repeatedly damaged by heavy and speeding traffic; there is also a difficult exit from the bridleway for horses, cyclists, pedestrians.
2	Lower Bockhampton north	Traffic arrives at village at an excessive speed, created by a long, straight access road.
3	Higher Bockhampton	There is considerable traffic generated by Hardy's Cottage and Visitor's Centre - when the main car park is full and this creates overspill and access problems.
4	Cuckoo Lane / Bockhampton Lane	There is poor provision of passing spaces; those that exist are badly signed and managed; and the verges have been damaged

⁸ <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>

5	Cuckoo Lane	When the A35 trunk road is blocked by accident or heavy traffic, large numbers of vehicles use the lane as an alternative route. Speed is a particular issue with driver frustration.
6	Kingston Maurward main entrance	This entrance involves a difficult right turn across traffic with poor visibility, for those travelling from the west.
7	Kingston Maurward rear entrance, Hollow Hill	There is poor visibility with blind bends in both directions. There has been a considerable increase in traffic since the Studio School opened and the College re-organised its bus routes.
8	Hollow Hill	The high volume of double decker buses and narrow functional road width makes two-way traffic difficult. This often forces other traffic onto the verges, causing further degradation. The sunlight and shade created by the trees can also reduce the driver's vision
9	Bockhampton Cross	Collisions have been caused by speeding traffic from all directions.
10	Stinsford, Kingston Maurward exit	Access to the village is affected by traffic from the A35 exiting at high speeds and there is very poor visibility.
11	De Facto Northern Bypass (DNBP)	This is a 'rat run' for both commercial and private traffic which makes resident access difficult and dangerous.
12	DNBP-B3143 junction	At this junction, high levels of traffic cross a busy, fast road. The crossing has low visibility and no signage. This has caused accidents in the past.
13	Right turn from Dorchester Road to access DNBP	The turning is within 20 metres of the A35 roundabout where improvements to the roundabout have increased the speed of traffic entering and exiting. This has caused accidents in the past.
14	A35 Stinsford Roundabout	The dual lanes on the roundabout are regularly used as an overtaking opportunity for both east and west-bound traffic on the A35 and this has increased the speed and unpredictable nature of traffic at all exits, making this dangerous for both cars and pedestrians travelling to / from Hollow Hill.
15	A35 lay-by	This effectively a 'service point' but it is poorly accessed and turning vehicles can block traffic in both directions.
16	A35 - old Puddletown Road access	There are no slip roads to access the run-off and the exit road is poorly signposted from the A35. There have been a number of collisions in this location
17	Grey's Bridge	There is a hidden footpath entrance directly onto London Road and the adjoining pavement is only a foot wide. Pedestrians face a very difficult crossing.

7.8 The recent establishment of the Studio School at the Bockhampton crossroads, without effective amelioration of the impact of increased traffic, is an example of the importance of understanding and addressing the impact of traffic through planning. The transport statement that accompanied the planning application in 2013 estimated an additional 131 vehicle movements in the morning and afternoon peak hours (of which about 50 would be buses), with the vast majority of trips routed along Hollow Hill to the Stinsford roundabout. It didn't consider the suitability of the functional road widths – which are generally around 5.0m for much of its length (typical bus and lorry dimensions are 2.5m plus wing mirrors, so 5.5m is generally considered the appropriate

width for roads where buses and lorries will be passing⁹). As a result, whilst there are no accidents per se, there are plenty of conflicts between vehicles on this stretch of road (so the road feels much less safe for vulnerable road users) and the road edges are breaking-up. These issues have been raised at meetings of the Parish Council, and taken up with the School, but it is uncertain what, if anything, the School can do to resolve the problems.

7.9 The following policies therefore seek to ensure that in assessing the impacts of development, the rural nature of, and existing problems known, on the many lanes in the parish are fully considered and that appropriate traffic management is encouraged.

Policy SNP14. Traffic Management

Traffic management proposals will be supported, where these will contribute to the following objectives:

- *contribute to the safety and attractiveness of the pedestrian and cycle routes, so that more people are encouraged to walk or cycle locally*
- *create layouts that allow traffic flows to be safely distributed and discourage rat-running*
- *discourage on-street parking in locations where this impedes traffic to the detriment of the safety of pedestrians and cyclists*
- *help reduce traffic speeds*
- *adhere to the Dorset Rural Roads Protocol, so that the designs are sympathetic to the character of the rural settlements*

Policy SNP15. Transport Assessments

Transport assessments, where required, should

- *be informed by traffic counts that reflect the peak volumes generated by holiday and school traffic*
- *include clear consideration of the likely size and volume of the vehicles accessing the site and functional width of the roads that they will use, including the availability of passing places, and including the impact on pedestrians and cyclists using the highway, where there are no pavements or accessible verges*
- *take into account the highway safety issues raised in Table 8.*

Project P3. Traffic Management Measures

The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the Highways Authority to identify and prioritize traffic management measures that will address the concerns raised by local residents and businesses as described in Table 8. This may include:

- *Placing gateway entrances, appropriate road markings and signage at the entrances to the various settlements where these do not currently exist*
- *Supporting measures to reduce speeds to 20mph within the settlement limits, around the college/school and where bridleways exit onto the road*
- *Including road markings to emphasise the narrow nature of the rural lanes*
- *Providing additional passing places (suitably signed and located)*

⁹ Guidance taken from Manual for Streets https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

For consultation – have we identified the main issues for highway safety for local residents and businesses? And would you support the above initiatives? We know that in the past Dorset Council have resisted introducing 20mph zones in rural areas where there are no street lights, but there are lots of other ways to encourage drivers to reduce speed and drive with care that we could bring forward in partnership

Creating more and safer opportunities for cycling

7.10 A safe and effective cycle network is one which:

- is physically separated from high volume and/or fast motorized traffic, and ideally separated from pedestrians;
- has smooth, all-weather surfacing (but designed in a manner consistent with Stinsford's mainly rural nature);
- provides a joined-up network of routes that take account of how users actually behave, the main destinations and the priority to provide credible alternatives for the most dangerous routes / junctions.

7.11 From comments made on the 2019 survey it is clear that residents consider the Stinsford roundabout to be unsafe for cyclists (with the high volume of fast moving traffic). The narrow nature and levels of fast moving traffic along many of the rural roads are off-putting to cyclists. On road, it is important to reduce traffic speeds, and improve the level of road maintenance (particularly at the road margins). They also felt that the bridleway that runs from Greys Bridge into Stinsford is not to be of suitable quality for most cyclists, particularly as in the winter the surface is only suitable for off-road bicycles. Off-road, there would be a real benefit from having more cycle paths.

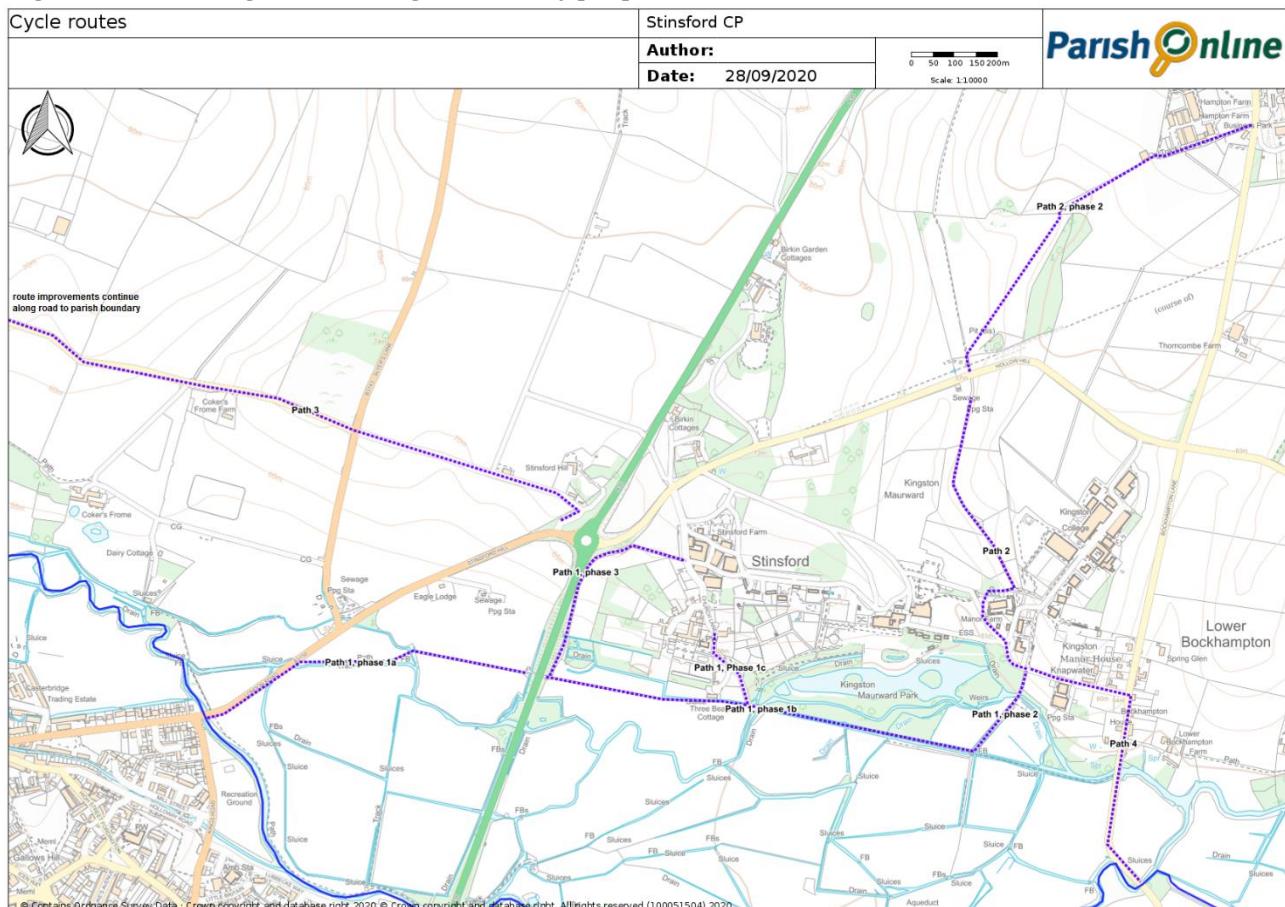
7.12 Local residents and cyclists have worked together to identify a number of potential improvements that could be made to provide alternative safer and more comprehensive network of routes for cyclists, as listed in Table 9. Upgrading the bridleway running from Greys Bridge to Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton to a suitable quality for most cyclists (so it is not limited to off-road bicycles) would have major benefits (particularly given the potential use of this route by school-aged children), and provides the basis for future links to Higher Bockhampton (to both the employment and recreation opportunities there).

Table 9. Improvement opportunities: cycle routes

Ref	Aim	Location	Works required
1	Improve links between Dorchester and Kingston Maurward College. Studio School, also	1a: Greys Bridge along of B3150 London Road, and bridleway S40/22 to underpass	Create shared pavement on south side of road to start of bridleway, upgrade path to all-weather surface to underpass, rural in style, wide enough for shared use.,
		1b: Underpass to bottom of Cow Track using bridleway S40/22	Upgrade path to all-weather surface, rural in style, wide enough for shared use. Undertake repairs and anti-flood measures at bridges near 3 Bears Cottage.
		1c: Bridleway S40/13 from river path to Church Lane	Upgrade path to all-weather surface, rural in style

	Include connection to Lower Bockhampton	2: Cow Track (footpath S40/23)	Designate as Bridleway. Upgrade path to all-weather surface, rural in style.
	Include connection to Stinsford hamlet	3: Private 'Machine track', from underpass uphill to Church Lane by Stinford Farm	Negotiate consent to use as permissive route. Upgrade path to all-weather surface.
2	Improve access to Hardy's Birthplace, Thorncome Woods and Puddletown	1: Bridleway S40/3 from top of Cow Track to Hollow Hill near Pump House	Upgrade path to all-weather surface, rural in style
	Forest (and alternative onward route to Puddletown avoiding Bockhampton Cross).	2: Bridleway S40/3 from Hollow Hill to Cuckoo Lane	Upgrade path to all-weather surface, rural in style
3	Improve links to the westernmost settlements and national cycle network 26	Along D20661 from Stinsford Hill to Frome Whitfield (and beyond to link with national cycle network)	Likely to require off-road alternative to the 'unofficial northern bypass' (and would need to be considered as part of any strategic decision for development in this area).
4	Improve links to national cycle network route 2 and West Stafford.	From top of Cow Track along Bridleway S40/3 and Bockhampton Lane towards West Stafford.	Better signage (and potentially including traffic calming measures) on Bockhampton Lane through and south of Lower Bockhampton.

Figure 10. Diagram showing location of proposed routes



Policy SNP16. Improving cycle infrastructure

The improvement and expansion of the cycle route network within the parish will be supported, and should focus on:

- *The improvement opportunities to cycle routes identified in Table 9;*
- *Providing cycle storage facilities at key visitor, community and workplace destinations within the parish.*

Project P4. Cycle Project

The Parish Council will work with local landowners and the Highways Authority to bring forward the cycle route improvements identified in Table 9 as funding and resources permit.

For consultation – would you support the above initiatives?

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 The decision to review the Plan will need to be made by the Parish Council (as the responsible body), with local residents involved in the review process, as they have been with the drafting of this Plan. The consideration of the timing of the review will depend on:

- the timing and proposals contained with the new Local Plan,
- the extent to which the proposed planning reforms (first announced in August 2020) may shape the future role and influence of Neighbourhood Plans,
- the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan is seen to be influencing planning decisions when considered against this plan's objectives,
- the extent to which new planning matters may come to light which would justify making changes to the plan.

9. List of Supporting Documents

2011 Census results for Stinsford, Summary by Stinsford NPG, 2019

http://www.stinsfordnplan.org.uk/uploads/1/2/4/3/124360045/2011_census_results.pdf and Area Profile for Stinsford <https://apps.geowessex.com/insights/AreaProfiles/Parish/stinsford>

Basic Conditions Statement (to be completed)

Consultation Statement (to be completed – will include report of 2019 Stinsford Residents Survey and report of 2019 Stinsford Business Survey)

Dorset Explorer mapped constraints, Dorset Council <https://explorer.geowessex.com/>

Dorset Road traffic collision data website <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/road-safety/road-traffic-collision-map.aspx> supplemented by CrashMap data <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>

Dorset's Ecological Networks <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/dorsets-ecological-networks/>

Geology of Britain viewer

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=puddletown>

Great Britain's Light Pollution and Dark Skies, CPRE

<https://www.nightlight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

Landscape Character Assessment, Dorset Council,

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/the-dorset-landscape/landscape-character-assessment-map.aspx>

National Heritage List for England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning practice guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Puddletown, Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton and Tolpuddle Conservation Area

Appraisal, December 2007, West Dorset District Council

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/conservation-areas/west-dorset/pdfs/puddletown-stinsford-and-lower-bockhampton-and-tolpuddle-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf>

Stinsford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), AECOM, 2019

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Appendix 1: Designated Heritage Assets in the parish

Settlement	Description	Category	Grade	HE Ref
Higher Bockhampton	Hardy's Cottage	Listing	II	1119859
Kingston Maurward	Kingston Maurward	Parkland	II*	1000719
	2 Flights of Stone Steps 50m W Kingston Maurward House	Listing	II	1119860
	The Old Manor House	Listing	I	1119861
	Dorset College Of Agriculture, Kingston Maurward House	Listing	I	1154732
	Pair Stone Piers, 100m W of Kingston Maurward House	Listing	II	1154755

Settlement	Description	Category	Grade	HE Ref
	Stone Steps 7m S of Kingston Maurward House	Listing	II	1154758
	Walls and Steps to terrace in front of Old Manor House, and Boundary Wall to the South	Listing	II	1154768
	Kingston House	Listing	II	1323622
	Garden Temple 130m ESE of Kingston Maurward House	Listing	II	1323652
	Walls and Steps to Walled Garden, immediately west of Kingston Maurward House	Listing	II	1323653
Lower Bockhampton	The Cottage, And Morello	Listing	II	1119863
	Bockton Cottage, Pump Cottage	Listing	II	1154774
	Bridge Cottage Including Outbuilding On Right	Listing	II	1154845
	Greenwood Cottage, Old Post Office	Listing	II	1303674
	Yalbury Cottage	Listing	II	1323654
	Lower Bockhampton Bridge	Listing	II	1425920
Stinsford	Gate Piers 30m West Of Stinsford House, And Dwarf Walls Linking These To The House	Listing	II	1002691
	Gate Piers At Entrance To Churchyard Of The Church Of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1004562
	3 Hardy Monuments, in the Churchyard Immediately N of the 4 Headstones (Item 8/127)	Listing	II	1017262
	Meaden Monument, and one unidentified Monument, in the Churchyard, 50m N of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1019408
	4 Hardy Monuments, in the Churchyard immediately N of the Thomas Brooks Monument (Item 8/126)	Listing	II	1110616
	Unidentified Monument, in the Churchyard, 30m NE of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1119091
	Stinsford Cottages	Listing	II	1119852
	William Cox Monument, in the Churchyard 2m N of the John Cox Monument (Item 8/124)	Listing	II	1119854
	Cull Monument, in the Churchyard 5m S Of The South Wall of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1119856
	Birkin House	Listing	II	1119862
	Boundary and Garden Walls, Steps And Alcoves, South And South East Of Stinsford House, Including Boundary Wall To Churchyard	Listing	II	1119864
	William Jacob Monument, in the Churchyard, 3.5m N of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1119865
	John Cox Monument, in the Churchyard, 6m N of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1154590
	Church Of Saint Michael	Listing	I	1154863
	Thomas and Martha Brooks Monuments, in the Churchyard 14m N of the Church of Saint Michael	Listing	II	1323623
	Stinsford Farm House	Listing	II	1323650
	Stinsford House	Listing	II	1323651
n/a	Bell Barrow 70m West of Fidler's Green	Scheduling		1119092
	Roman Road In Kingston Park	Scheduling		1119093

Settlement	Description	Category	Grade	HE Ref
	Milestone	Listing	II	1119851
	Remains Of Cross, At SY 730915, Near Parish Boundary	Listing	II	1119853
	Roman Road over Thorncome Wood and Black Heath	Scheduling		1119855
	Grey's Bridge	Listing	II	1119857
	Bridge Over River Frome Backwater on Charminster Road 200 Yards North Of Junction With A37 (Maiden Newton Road)	Listing	II	1119858
	Three Bowl Barrows at the Western End of Waterston Ridge, 360m North West Of Fidler's Green Farm	Scheduling		1154598
	Milestone	Listing	II	1154889

Appendix 2: Undesignated Heritage Assets in the parish

Name	Location	Description
Bhompston Old Farmhouse	Bhompston	The inspiration for ‘Blooms End’ the Yeobright’s house in Hardy’s novel ‘The Return of the Native’
Blue Bridge	South of Frome House	A Victorian iron bridge built in 1877
Bockhampton House	Lower Bockhampton	A handsome brick house early/mid 19 th century range (formerly separate cottages) of brick and stone, with a detached former coach house or stable.
Dorset County Showground	Coker's Frome Farm / North of Stinsford Hill	Of key cultural importance to the local agricultural industry – the exhibition ground was on the field to the east in Thomas Hardy’s time.
Eagle Lodge	Stinsford Hill	Gate lodge to Stinsford House, thought to have been built together with the two stone piers originally with eagle finials in 1861, and mentioned in Hardy’s poem ‘The Widow Betrothed’.
Frome (Whitfield) House	Frome Whitfield	A new Georgian style house that replaced the older house on that site
Frome Whitfield Lodge	Old Sherborne Road, close to River Frome backwater	Lodge / gatehouse with wall plaque dating it to 1879 and marking the southern entrance into the estate
Granite Memorial Stone	Behind Hardy's Cottage	Erected to Thomas Hardy by American Admirers in 1932
Greenwood	Higher Bockhampton	19 th century brick cottages believed to have been built as a pair by the Hardy family
Greenwood Grange barn	Higher Bockhampton	The brick-built quadrangle of barns understood to have been constructed by Hardy’s father in 1849 for Francis Martin
Hillcrest to Gardeners Cottage	East of Bockhampton Lane	All with front porches, casements and tall chimneys and pots; of group value; these were apparently single storey and thatched until substantially rebuilt in 1894;

Lower Bockhampton Farm	Along the track off Bockhampton Lane	A substantial Victorian brick block house with a central entrance (the house may have been built by Thomas Hardy's father); two 19 th century barns, of brick and with pantiled roofs to the rear
St Nicholas Church (site of)	Frome Whitfield	Settlement remains
Stinsford Park Gate & Piers	SY705911	Mid 1800s formally with Eagles on each pier
The Old Vicarage	Church Lane	A mid/late 19 th century brick detached house, with central door and wooden sashes, a large return wing off the lane entrance and attached service buildings. A handsome and unspoilt building, in a key position adjacent to the Church and churchyard.
The Victorian School House	Lower Bockhampton	Handsome early Victorian stone and tile Tudor house and schoolroom: altered and extended, but of real presence and with Thomas Hardy connections (he attended the school);
Three Bears Cottage	Continuation of Church Lane	Formerly Gardener's Cottage, much extended thatched cottage that dates back to the late 19 th century
Woodlands	Higher Bockhampton	A pair of 19 th century cottages since converted into a single residence
Yalbury Lodge	Slyer's Lane, Frome Whitfield	A late Victorian characterful cottage mainly built of Broadmayne brick under a plain clay tiled roof.

Appendix 3: Literary Associations with the Landscape, The Heart of Hardy's Wessex

Stinsford Parish provides the background for many scenes in Thomas Hardy's novels and poetry. In the numerous references that have been made some of the more well-known are mentioned here.

Hardy created a 'partly real partly dream country' and many scholars have identified the people and locations in his works, others are debated. Walk along his 'embowered' path by a tributary of the river 'Froom' to fully enjoy this favourite local footpath. Listen perhaps to 'Moaning Hill' said to take its name from the wind among the trees which cover it. Or do as the author and lean 'upon a coppice gate' in the depth of winter and hear '*The Darkling Thrush*' the bird's powerful song at this time is described as of 'joy illimitable'. (the poem is dated 31 December 1900). The image of the thrush today adorns the left side of the West door on the tower of St Michael's.

Casterbridge (Dorchester) and its relationship with the Landscape

If one stands at the Top o' Town in the county town of Dorchester, Hardy's 'Casterbridge', and looks down the High Street the town and parish can be seen as Hardy described it in his novel 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'. Greys Bridge gives way to a view of 'deep green'. Meadows, Lime and Horse Chestnut trees form the edge of this part of the parish. "Casterbridge was the complement of the rural life around not its urban opposite. Bees and butterflies in the cornfields at the top of the town, who desired to get to the meads at the bottom took no circuitous course but flew straight down High Street without any apparent consciousness that they were traversing strange latitudes." "Country and town met at a mathematical line".

Over Durnover Moor – the landscape north of Grey's Bridge to Waterston Ridge

At Greys Bridge by ‘Durnover Moor’ (deriving from the Roman name Durnovaria) looking a few meters north along the River ‘Froom’ is ‘Ten Hatches Weir’ today a riverside beauty spot and nearby this part of the river is used as a local swimming pool. The hatches are mentioned in the poem ‘*Before My Friend Arrived*’ which commemorates the burial of Horace Moule, son of the vicar of Fordington “the eve-lit weir, Which gurgled with sobs and sighs”.



The Fennel's Cottage, Higher Crowstairs, Henry Macbeth-Raeburn's frontispiece for *Wessex Tales*, Vol XIII in the Complete Uniform Edition of the Wessex Novels, (1896)

landscape to the south and east are views over much of the action of ‘*Far From the Madding Crowd*’ one of Hardy’s best loved novels whilst to the south west the Elizabethan Wolfeton Manor becomes the home of ‘Lady Penelope’ in one of Hardy’s stories from a ‘*Group of Noble Dames*’.

Mellstock Hill – the landscape east of Grey's Bridge

From Greys Bridge along the London Road to the Stinsford roundabout is ‘Mellstock Hill.’ Hardy often walked this way and many of his characters including ‘Farmer Boldwood’, ‘Fanny Robin’, and ‘Sergeant Troy’ in ‘*Far From the Madding Crowd*’, and ‘Michael Henchard’ and ‘Farfrae’ in ‘*The Mayor of Casterbridge*’. The hill features in the poem ‘*The Widow Betrothed*’ as the author passes the ‘lodge’ and the ‘avenue’ of trees leading to Stinsford House. It also features in the poem ‘*On Stinsford Hill at Midnight*’.

Lower Mellstock and the watermeadows – the river valley below Stinsford

The stories of the ‘Mellstock Quire’ are many as Hardy recounts them in various poems and locations around the parish especially when ‘Going The Rounds’ carol singing at Christmas along the ‘embowered’ path by the ‘Froom’ which runs from Church Lane to Lower Bockhampton bridge. It follows a course below Kingston Maurward House.

The poem ‘*The Third Kissing Gate*’ tells the story of one young couple’s romantic meeting at dusk. There were once five gates of this type, along the path from Grey’s Bridge to Lower Bockhampton, which allows people but not stock to pass through. The path is by “the Mead of Memories” of the “Quire” and through the water meadows.

On reaching the bridge the view to the east looks towards “the Vale of Great Dairies” of ‘*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*’ where Angel Clare and Tess spent their happiest times.

Northward along Bockhampton Lane there is a track and footpath to the right which leads to Bhompston. This route passes through cottages and farm buildings to reach lush meadows with

Further along the river is Hatch Cottage, then Dairy Cottage, barns, farm house and buildings and the hamlet of Frome Whitfield with its parkland trees. The river Cerne comes in and joins the Frome from the north west and all give way to the gentle rise of fields towards Higher Waterston. Over this landscape are three ancient coppices, named Long, Square and Three Cornered and two copses, named Limekiln and Badgers. Hardy’s ‘Higher Crowstairs’ is here and Fiddler’s Green where you find the site of ‘Shepherd Fennel’s cottage’ which features in the short story ‘*The Three Strangers*’.

On reaching the Wessex Ridgeway across the landscape to the south and east are views over much of the action of ‘*Far From the Madding Crowd*’ one of Hardy’s best loved novels whilst to the south west the Elizabethan Wolfeton Manor becomes the home of ‘Lady Penelope’ in one of Hardy’s stories from a ‘*Group of Noble Dames*’.

good views over the River Frome. Looking across from here to the right is considered to be where ‘Angel Clare’ carried the milkmaids including ‘Tess’ over the floods on their way to church

Mellstock Cross, Upper Mellstock and on to Egdon Heath – around Higher Bockhampton

Bockhampton Lane runs to the north to Bockhampton Cross which intersects the Stinsford to Tincleton road running east below ‘Egdon Heath’. This is ‘Mellstock Cross’. Further North is Cuckoo Lane leading to Higher Bockhampton ‘Upper Mellstock’.

A turning at the top of this lane to the right goes down to the magnificent Thorcombe Woods and to Hardy’s Cottage, today owned by the National Trust, where the novelist and poet was born and where the Hardy’s lived for over a century. This area is considered to be the setting for the poem ‘*The Oxen*’ ‘In the lonely barton by yonder coombe Our childhood used to know’. The cottage itself is bordered at the back by heathland and the poem ‘*Childhood Among the Ferns*’ recounts the time before trees were grown here. Whilst living at the cottage Hardy wrote ‘*Far From the Madding Crowd*’ and ‘*Under the Greenwood Tree*’ in the latter the cottage becomes the fictional Tranters house. Several characters in this novel relate to the real residents living here along this lane as well as in the parish at the time. The poem ‘*Domicilium*’ describes the cottage as it was told by his grandmother ‘when first we settled here’. From the mixed woodland close by the cottage and Thorcombe Woods, paths lead up to Rushy-Pond and the route of the Roman Road. Also to three Rainbarrows the most prominent of which is the ‘Rainbarrow’ that features in ‘*The Return of the Native*’. ‘It formed the pole and axis of this heathery world’. Standing here there are good views of furze, heather and water courses and the characteristics of the heath which was chalky and open in Hardy’s day with no afforested areas.

Knapwater House ‘on a hill beside a lake’ – through the Kingston Maurward Estate

The footpaths and bridleways which Hardy trod on his way to Dorchester, Kingston Maurward or other surrounding parts could take several routes. Just off the top of Cuckoo Lane one path leads down across the ‘Eweleaze’ which offers views of the Kingston Maurward Estate. It continues down to join another part of the course of the Roman road which runs to the side of Hollow Hill, along the Tincleton road. Other routes would have lead through the estate, where Thomas Hardy frequented. The poem ‘*The Harvest Supper*’ tells of one such occasion.

Kingston House features as ‘Knapwater House’ in ‘*Desperate Remedies*’ Hardy’s first published novel. To the south of the house ‘the broad, graceful slope’, runs down from the terrace. ‘The Fane’, summerhouse, built in the form of a Grecian temple, still exists overlooking the lake as does the ‘weir’ to the east. Both the House and Old Manor match Hardy’s descriptions in the novel.

When on the estate you are in the territory of two of Hardy’s early works ‘*Desperate Remedies*’ and ‘*Under the Greenwood Tree*’ and in this novel the House is referred to as ‘the Manor’.

Returning to the top of ‘Mellstock Hill’ and taking the second turning off the roundabout towards ‘Casterbridge’. A turning immediately to the right brings you along a narrow road overlooking Exhibition Field which takes its name from when the Bath and West and Southern Counties Show was held here during Hardy’s lifetime recorded as 1872, 1887, 1908 and 1928. The views over the meadows, river, town and surrounding countryside of Hardy’s Wessex are outstanding.

Acknowledgements:

A Hardy Companion, FB Pinion

The Hardy Way, Margaret Marande.

The Thomas Hardy Society