

# Chesham Bois Parish Council Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2045

#### **26 SEPTEMBER 2025**

This document has been produced using Microsoft Word 365 with imported figures and charts.

Large 14pt Calibri font has been used in most of the document.

Those needing assistance with reading this document are requested to contact the Clerk to the Parish Council:

Tel: 01494 432585 E mail: clerk@cheshamboispc.org.uk

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PUBLISHED BY Chesham Bois Parish Council for Pre-Submission consultation under (as amended) the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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## **Glossary**

**CBSAC:** Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

**ASC:** Area of Special Character

**HA:** Heritage Asset

**LGS:** Local Green Spaces

**LNRS:** Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Metroland: Suburbs that developed around the Metropolitan Railway Line

**NDHA:** Non-designated heritage asset

**NPPF:** National Planning Framework

#### INTRODUCTION

#### A. BACKGROUND

**1.1** The purpose of the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan is to provide residents with the ability to shape the future development of the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Area and protect the key characteristics and features of its unique, semi-rural nature.

The Neighbourhood Plan will help us to identify and address local priorities over time as well as the infrastructure to meet our future community needs.

- **1.2** Where a Parish Council exists, it is responsible for leading the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Chesham Bois Parish Council resolved to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Chesham Bois in 2024. Buckinghamshire Council subsequently approved the boundary of the 'Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Area' which serves to define the area in which the Neighbourhood Plan applies.
- **1.3** The Parish Council set up a Steering Group to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. The group is comprised of local volunteers as well as members of the parish council elected to represent the local community.
- **1.4** The Steering Group has arranged surveys and community events for residents to participate in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The information and feedback that has been collected has been used as evidence to draft policies.

- **1.5** The project to develop a Neighbourhood Plan has been recognised by Buckinghamshire Council as the Local Planning Authority and professional consultants were engaged to support and advise the Steering Group and Parish Council.
- **1.6** The final version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be published for approval by local residents in a local referendum which will be arranged by Buckinghamshire Council.

The approved version of the final Neighbourhood Plan will be a document that Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Officers must consult in making decisions about any planning applications along with the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire and the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF).

#### THE PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

- **1.7** This Pre-Submission Consultation document is intended to be an opportunity for the Parish Council to formally consult with residents about the proposed vision, objectives and policies for the draft Neighbourhood Plan, over a period of six weeks from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
- **1.8** The information included in this document is based upon the output of surveys and evidence that has been researched and collated by the Steering Group, details of which are published separately in the evidence base documents.
- **1.9** The professional planning consultants engaged to support the development of a Neighbourhood Plan have also provided details of relevant national and local planning policies that should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan for Chesham Bois.
- **1.10** Buckinghamshire Council confirmed on 16 June 2025 that the scope of the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment or a Habitat Regulations Assessment.
- **1.11** After the consultation period ends for this Pre-Submission Document, the Steering Group will review any feedback; consider whether amendments may be required or not; and update the Neighbourhood Plan, (if necessary), for approval by the Parish Council.

**1.12** The draft Neighbourhood Plan approved by the Parish Council will be submitted to Buckinghamshire Council for further consultation and to arrange further examination by an independent Examiner.

If the Examiner is satisfied that the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets all the basic conditions, Buckinghamshire Council will then facilitate the Referendum for residents to vote to accept the implementation of the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan.

#### DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF FEEDBACK

If you wish to submit any feedback after reading the draft Neighbourhood Plan as set out in this document, please respond by **23.59 on Friday, 7**<sup>th</sup> **November 2025** in one of the following ways:

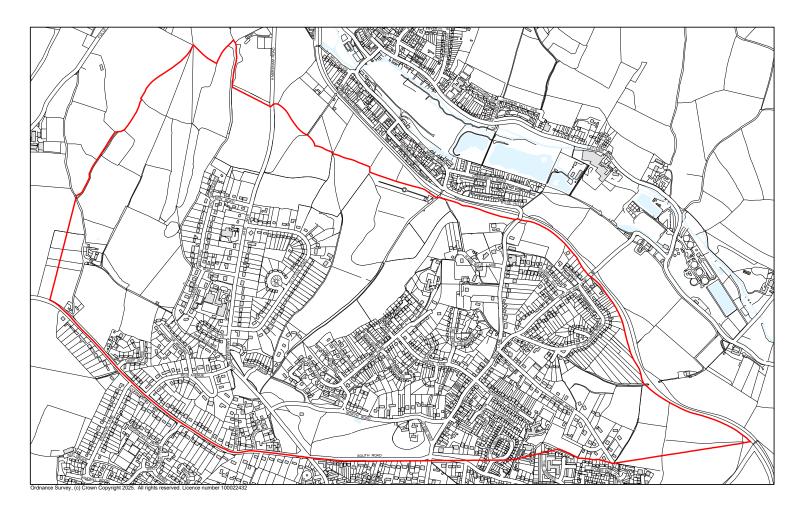
By email to: clerk@cheshamboispc.org.uk

**By post to:** Clerk to Chesham Bois Parish Council, Parish Council Office, Glebe Way, Chesham Bois, Amersham HP6 5ND Please include your post code in the submission.

Further information about Neighbourhood Plans plus background information relating to this document can be found here:

A Neighbourhood Plan for Chesham Bois | Chesham Bois PC

#### 2. THE CHESHAM BOIS NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA



- 2.1 Chesham Bois is an historic village in the Chilterns that lies between the towns of Amersham and Chesham in Buckinghamshire. It is a tranquil, semi-rural residential village which includes Ancient Woodland and part of the Chilterns National Landscape within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.2 The heart of the village is a designated Conservation Area and includes the War Memorial on a triangle of Common Land bordered by Glebe Way; Bois Lane; North Road; Bricky Pond; and a designated Area of Special Character.
- 2.3 Chesham Bois Common (the Common) is owned and managed by the Parish Council. The Common is comprised of some 40 acres of woodland; open areas of grass; and freshwater ponds, including Bricky

- Pond adjacent to North Road. The woodland has been defined as Priority (deciduous) Woodland Habitat (DEFRA/MAGIC maps) and supports a range of native wildlife including protected species.
- 2. 4 Chesham Bois Common surrounds a parcel of land owned by the Diocese of Oxford where the crowd-funded parish centre was built in 1937 in a traditional Chilterns design. The community building has a single vehicle entrance onto Glebe Way. Adjacent to the parish centre is one of the most recent houses to be built in Chesham Bois, the New Rectory, constructed in 1980's to a traditional design as required by Chiltern District Council. The former rectory, built in the 1730's, was sold at auction in the 1980's and is now a private dwelling on North Road.
- 2.5 The parish council leases a parcel of land to Chesham Bois Cricket Club (est. 1800's) which includes a pavilion in the middle of the Common.
- 2.6 The Parish Council organises a biennial village fete on the Common which is held on a Saturday in the month of June. This event is held on the open, grassed area known as the Jubilee Field, adjacent to North Road. Additional community events are organised by the Parish Council on the Common during the summer months.
- **2.7** The area in the immediate vicinity of the War Memorial is a designated Established Area of Residential Character that includes historic, listed houses.
- 2.8 Amenities within the Neighbourhood Area include five schools, a scout hall, cemetery, two churches and a parish centre for community use.
  In addition, the Neighbourhood Area includes a section of the Chilterns
  Cycle Path and there are numerous public footpaths and bridle paths.

It is of note that local schools have been issued with Forest School licences by the Parish Council to access the woodland and Common on a regular basis for educational and recreational purposes.

- 2.9 Although semi-rural, the parish is well located for commuters, being within a mile of Amersham Railway Station. Services to London are provided by Transport for London's Metropolitan Line and Chiltern Railways operate a service between Aylesbury and London.

  The M40 is within 6 miles of Chesham Bois which facilitates access to London and Heathrow airport via the M25 heading south and to the M4, Marlow and the Midlands travelling north.

  Public transport for residents of Chesham Boi, however, is limited to an infrequent bus service.
- 2.10 Information sourced from the 2011 Census states that there were 3,117 residents at the time the census was taken and 1,110 houses.
  The 2021 Census data revealed that the number of residents had dropped to 2, 962. Link: <a href="https://censusdata.uk/e04001570-chesham-bois">https://censusdata.uk/e04001570-chesham-bois</a>
- **2.11.** Chesham Bois could best be described as an aspirational residential area due to its setting and the predominance of detached dwellings (72%) on large parcels of land. However, the housing mix also includes historic, small cottages, semi-detached (15%), terraced (7%) and flats (5.5%) as well as link- detached houses.

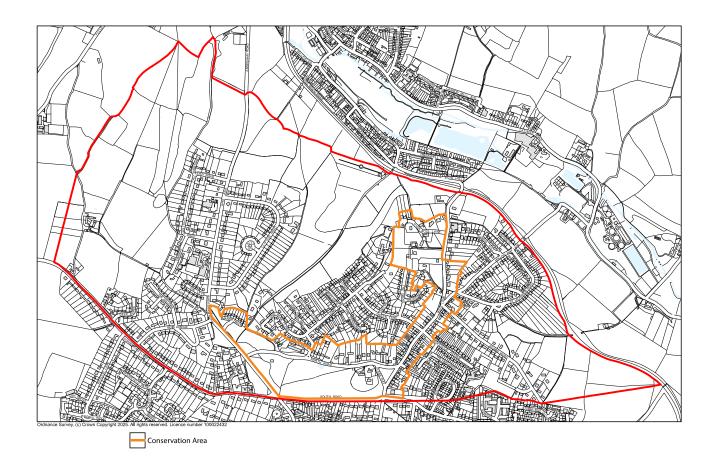
(Source: Nomis - Local Area Report - Chesham Bois Parish)

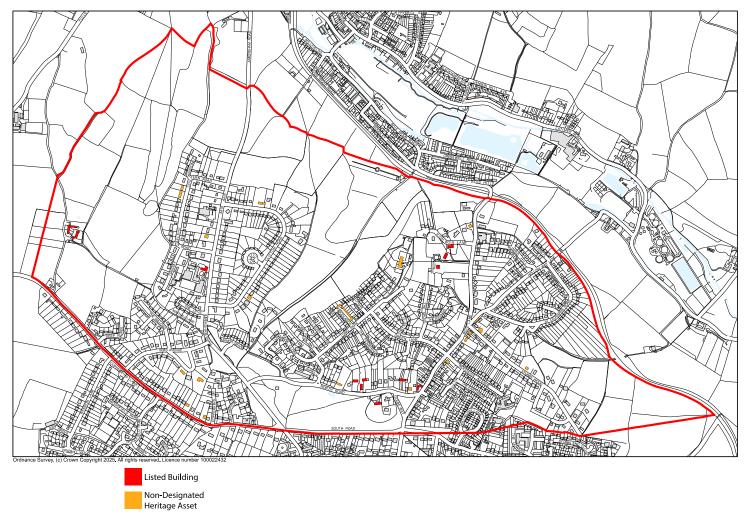
#### 3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHESHAM BOIS

3.1 For centuries, Chesham Bois was a thinly populated, hillside area with a scatter of farms, common land and woodland. There was no village centre, and the area remained completely rural until the 1890s and the arrival of the Metropolitan Railway which extended into the Chilterns from Marylebone in West London. Until well into the twentieth century, when Amersham-on-the-Hill developed, Chesham Bois was much more strongly

connected to Chesham and its fairs and market than to Amersham.

- **3.2** A small manor in the parish of Cestreham (Chesham) was first recorded in the Doomsday records and by 1213, in the reign of King John, it was held by a William du Bois, giving the settlement the name of Chesham Bois. The oldest building in the village is the parish church of St Leonard, founded in 1215 as a chapel for Bois Manor.
- 3.3 The 18th and early 19th centuries saw little development with a population of around 130 but the arrival of the railway bought rapid change to the area. Farmland was suddenly far more valuable as building plots with local landowners made substantial profits. The most desirable land was around Chesham Bois Common.
- **3.4** By the time of the 1911 census, the population had increased to 1,253 and the parish church had to be expanded to seat 200. The majority of new houses were either in the style of traditional Edwardian villas or in the newly fashionable Arts and Craft Style.
- 3.5 The completion of the Coleshill Water Tower in 1915 meant that mains water could be supplied and a building boom occurred between the wars, resulting in the area being known as Metroland. The term was coined by the marketing department of the Metropolitan Railway. Amersham-on-the-Hill expanded rapidly during this time providing shops, a cinema and other amenities within easy walking distance of Chesham Bois.
- **3.6** Since WWI, new development in the parish has been fairly limited. The largest recent development is Laurel Court, off North Road, which stands on the site of the former Ken House Hotel.
- **3.7** In 1992, Chiltern District Council established the Chesham Bois Conservation Area and three further areas as Established Residential Areas of Special Character.
- **3.8** Chesham Bois Common is at the heart of the Conservation Area has been owned by the Parish Council since 1979 and managed as amenity land for residents and visitors to the village.





**3.9** In addition to the 19 listed buildings in the parish, a further 22 buildings have been locally listed as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

#### 4. GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**4.1** Chesham Bois is situated on a large ridge of the Chiltern Hills that divides the valley of the Chess from the Misbourne Valley and includes land which is designated as being part of the Chilterns National Landscape.

Historic, geological information is set out below and was sourced from:

#### Timeline of the Chilterns | Chilterns National Landscape

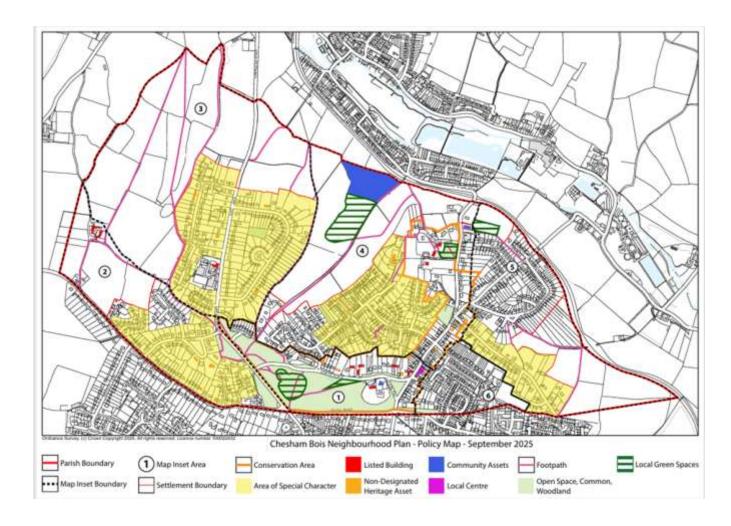
'Around 100 million years ago, when dinosaurs ruled the Earth, the area that would eventually become the Chilterns was submerged under a clear, subtropical sea. Soft, white limestone was slowly laid down under this sea as the remains of millions of coccolithophores (microscopic algae) fell to the seabed. Warm seas covered the area for more than 20 million years, and the chalk beds grew thick. The famous flint of the Chiltern Hills is a type of silica that was also

formed during this period. Silica-rich organisms like sponges and diatoms died and fell to the seabed, their silica replacing chalk that had dissolved or been burrowed away. Eventually, flint nodules formed in these gaps.

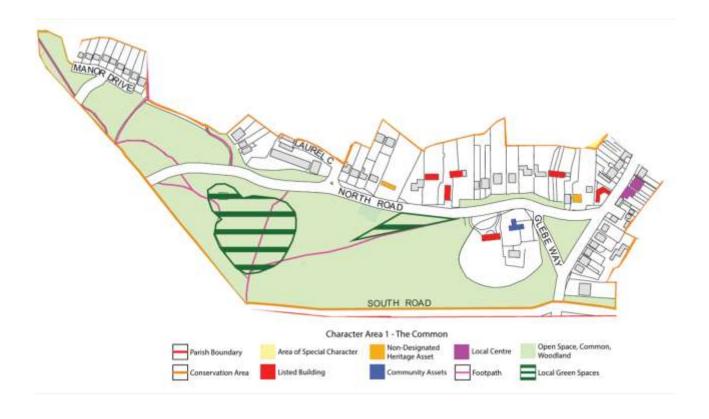
The same tectonic movements of the Earth's crust that formed the Alps caused the chalk to buckle and fold, and these sedimentary rocks emerged from the receding sea. Over millions of years, wind and water eroded the soft limestone that was laid during the age of the dinosaurs, leading to the formation of the steep chalk scarp and shallower dip-slope that can be seen today.

In 1965, the Chilterns was designated as an <u>Area of Outstanding Beauty</u>
(AONB) in recognition of the importance of its landscape and wildlife.. In 2024
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were rebranded as National Landscapes.'

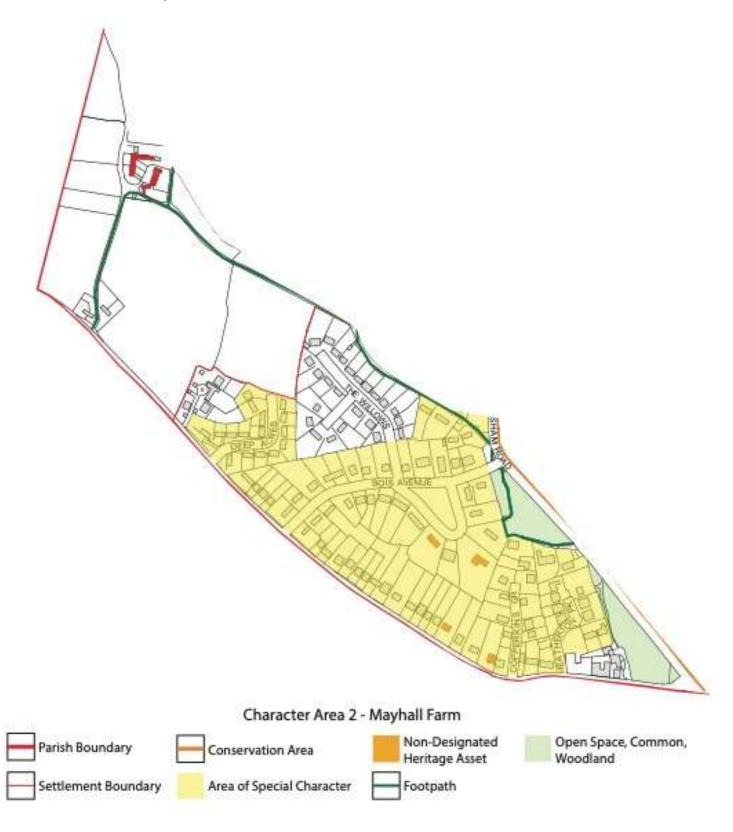
**4.2** The landscape of the whole Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Area (map below) has developed around six, historic settlements areas, see six further maps overleaf.



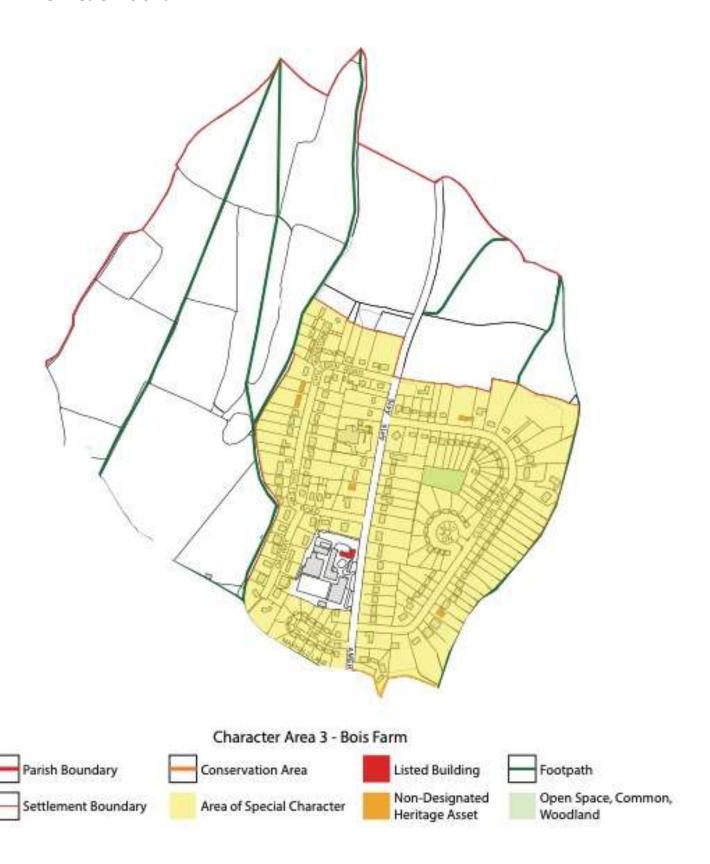
# **4.3** Area 1: Chesham Bois Common



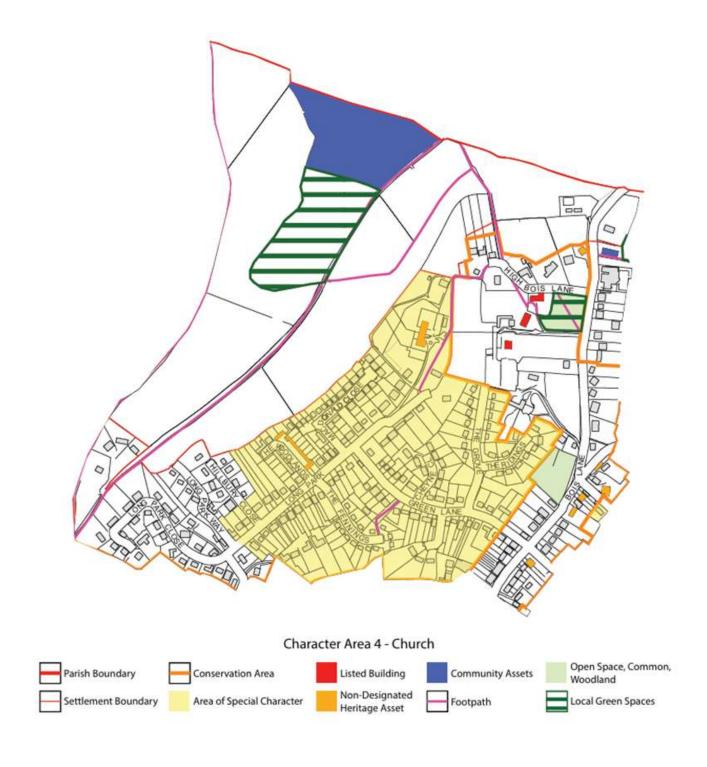
# 4.4 Area 2: MayHall Farm



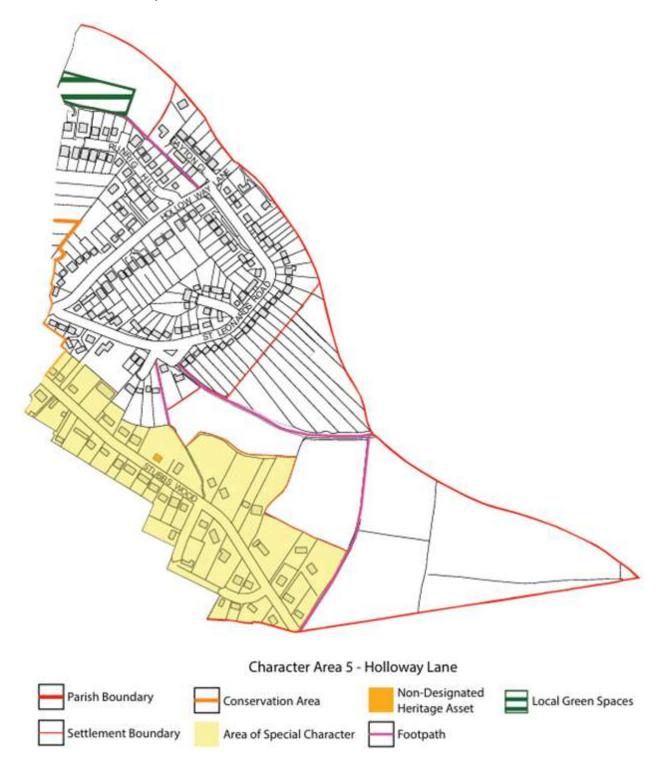
#### 4.5 Area 3: Bois Farm



# 4.6 Area 4: St. Leonard's Church



# 4.7 Area 5: Holloway Lane



# 4.8 Area 6: Elangeni School



**4.9** The Neighbourhood Area includes the Thomas Harding Meadow, a designated Local Wildlife Site (LWS); designated Priority (deciduous ) Woodland (ref. DEFRA/Magic Map); part of the Chilterns National Landscape; and a variety of wildlife ranging from different species of amphibians and bees; woodland birds; native deer; and protected species

**4.10** As at May 2025, the published level of Flood Risk is very low.

Link: Flood risk summary - Check your long term flood risk - GOV.UK

#### 5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

**5.1** Chesham Bois lies within the county of Buckinghamshire. The unitary Buckinghamshire Council was formed in 2021 and replaced the local Chiltern District Council as the Local Planning Authority for the Neighbourhood Area.

#### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

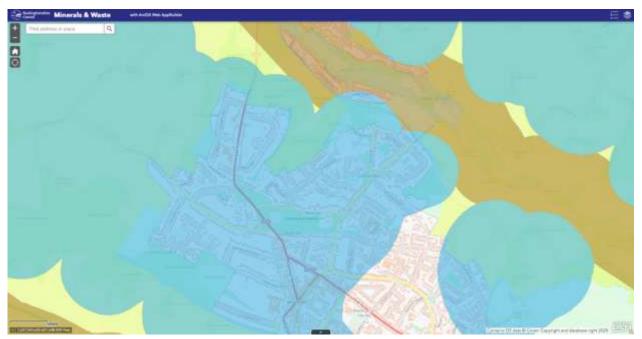
- **5.2** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government is an important guide in the preparation of local and Neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs of the latest NPPF version published in December 2024 are considered especially relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan:
  - Plan-making (§16, §30 §31)
  - Promoting healthy and safe communities (§96 §97)
  - Open space and recreation (§103 §104)
  - Promoting sustainable travel (§109)
  - High quality design (§135)
  - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (§187 §189)
  - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (§202 §216)

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

**5.3** The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the 2011 Core Strategy and some saved policies from the 1997 Local Plan of the former Chiltern District Council. All of these policies predate the NPPF, but most are considered to be consistent with it and so until they are replaced, either by this

Neighbourhood Plan or by the new Bucks Local Plan (BLP), they will continue to operate in determining planning applications.

- **5.4** There are also a number of development policies that cover a wide range of matters affecting the Parish, including its Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Ancient Woodlands.
- **5.5** A submitted Chiltern and South Bucks. Local Plan was withdrawn from examination in 2021 and will not be resubmitted. That Local Plan made no site allocation proposals in the Parish.
- **5.6** Buckinghamshire Council has begun the process of bringing forward its first Local Plan for the county of Buckinghamshire. The current Local Development Scheme proposes to adopt the new Plan by 2027. It is therefore at too early a stage to inform the Neighbourhood Plan; however, some updated evidence has been published which has informed the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- **5.7** Under a previous method for calculating housing requirements, Buckinghamshire Council was expected to deliver 2,912 homes per year. Under the new standard method, introduced at the end of 2024, this number has increased to 4,332 dwellings each year to 2045.
- **5.8** The Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016-2036 also forms part of the Development Plan and apply in the neighbourhood area. The vast majority of the Parish lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for clay-withflints. Their normal effect is to sterilise land from development prior to extraction unless it is clear that the development site will not prejudice the economic extraction of the mineral.



Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies Map Chesham Bois extract

(https://buckscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1520ce1d2157466d87c92461 c4d138aa&%20Waste=)

**5.9** The Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) is a European-designated site located near Chesham Bois. It comprises a series of ancient beech woodlands that are recognised for their international ecological importance. In accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), development proposals in Chesham Bois must consider potential impacts on the CBSAC, particularly in relation to recreational pressure and air quality effects.

Buckinghamshire Council has introduced a Mitigation Strategy (https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-or-improving-your-property/chiltern-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation-faqs/) to ensure that development does not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC. This may require developers to make financial contributions towards strategic access management and monitoring measures or demonstrate how proposals will avoid or mitigate adverse effects. As Chesham Bois lies within the Zone of Influence for the SAC, future development will need to comply with these requirements to ensure the protection of this important ecological site.

#### **5.10** The Neighbourhood Plan contains seven policies:

- i. Development Policy
- ii. Local Heritage Assets Policy
- iii. Sustainability Performance Gap Policy
- iv. Green Infrastructure Policy
- v. Community Assets Policy
- vi. Local Centre Policy
- vii. Travel Policy Policy

See section 9.

#### 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **6.1.** Activities to engage community include:
  - Flyers distributed at the Village Summer Fete held in June 2024 to raise awareness
  - Dedicated page set up on the parish council website
  - Online survey conducted in September 2024
  - Posters on noticeboards
  - Community event held in parish hall on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025
  - Information about the emerging Neighbourhood Plan published in editions of Your Amersham, (a free, local magazine delivered to all households).
- **6.2** Policies to be included in the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan are based upon the output of community surveys and engagement and local knowledge of the Neighbourhood Area, provided by different organisations and individuals.
- 6.3 A government grant of £10,000 was awarded to the Parish Council in the financial year 2024/5 to start the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and the unspent balance was returned, as required. The Parish Council resolved to allocate funds from reserves to complete the project in 2025/6 after the government that was elected in 2024 decided not to continue funding the development of Neighbourhood Plans.

#### 7. CHALLENGES FACING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

- **7.1** The current challenges reported by residents of Chesham Bois are listed below. It is important to note that not every issue is within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan which focuses on matters pertaining to planning proposals.
  - a. Increasing volume of traffic caused by vehicles seeking to avoid queues on the A416 Amersham to Chesham road
  - b. Increasing traffic generated by five schools in the Neighbourhood Area and bottle neck along Bois Lane adjacent to parade of shops. especially during rush hours.
  - c. Trees in residential gardens expensive to maintain and occasionally removed to the detriment of the woodland environment of Chesham Bois, especially where no planning permission is required and no Tree Protection Order is in place.
  - d. Replacement of hedgerows with panel fencing and other hard fencing, impeding passage of wildlife and reducing biodiversity.
  - e. Increasing use of hardstanding, generating more rainwater run off
  - f. Degradation of verges due to inconsiderate driving and parking.
  - g. Backfill and infill development extending into woodland.
  - h. Increasing urbanisation, noise and light pollution to the detriment of the semi-rural, tranquil environment of Chesham Bois, wildlife and amenity of the quality of life of residents.
  - i. Failure to consider alignment with the immediate environment with regard to new build or extensions and alterations to property.
  - j. Threat to building on undeveloped land and green spaces by opportunistic, private developers who are not required to adhere to any ecological guidelines when purchasing parcels of land prior to submitting planning applications, (a gap in national planning policy framework).
  - k. Maintaining footpaths
  - I. Requirements to protect and enhance biodiversity
  - m. Anti-social behaviour e.g. graffiti and littering
  - n. Traffic accidents at road junctions and where bottlenecks occur

#### 8. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### 8.1 The Vision for the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan is:

'To protect and enhance the unique character and identity of Chesham Bois Parish as a tranquil, semi-rural environment between the towns of Amersham and Chesham; ensuring that any future development plans are appropriate in design and scale with regard to the existing environment with particular reference to the requirements of the Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings, local history and natural woodland setting and the Chilterns National Landscape within the boundary.'

- **8.2** Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan, derived from community engagement, are listed below:
  - i. Environment: To protect, manage and enhance the natural environment enjoyed by residents of Chesham Bois and the wide range of habitat for a variety of flora and fauna including protected species, to include: Chesham Bois Common; designated Priority (deciduous) Woodland Habitat (DEFRA/MAGIC map); a designated Local Wildlife Site (the Thomas Harding Meadow); managed woodland (on behalf of The Woodland Trust); ponds; cemetery; open green space; and wildlife.
  - **ii. Housing:** To protect the existing area of Established Residential Character; listed building; requirements of the Conservation Area; density of development; height of buildings; and a high standard of design to complement the character of the street scene.
  - **iii. Design and Heritage:** To manage, protect and enhance heritage assets and public spaces to ensure that future development is attractive and in keeping with the character of the Parish as a semi-rural, tranquil village.
  - **iv. Business and economic activity:** To support and sustain the business community operating within the Parish, ensuring that hours of operation do not conflict with the semi-rural, tranquil environment.
  - v. Leisure and recreation: To maintain the woodlands, meadow, ponds and open space natural environments available for residents, visitors, local organisations and schools to explore and enjoy; and to protect existing community assets such as the Scout Hall and Parish Centre in line

with local community requirements.

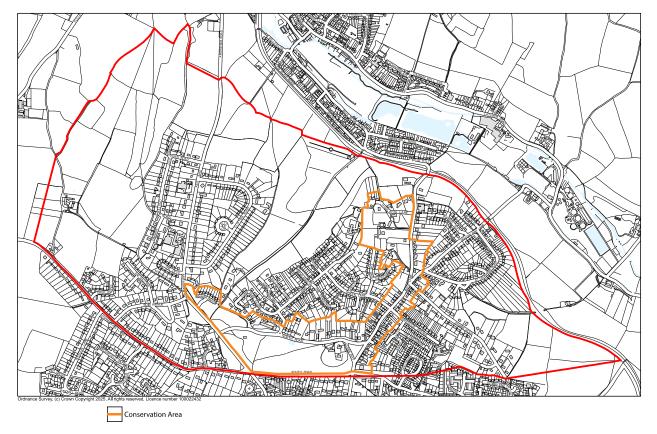
vi. Traffic and transport: To ensure traffic speeds, volume and parking requirements are sensitive to the unique character of the Parish and capacity of roads across the Parish; promote public safety; and maintain public footpaths.

#### 9. POLICIES

#### **CBNP-1: DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

- A. Development proposals are required to have full regard to the Chesham Bois Neighbourhood Plan Design Code, (Appendix I) relevant to the location of a site within one of six sections of the Neighbourhood Area as well as the scale, design, elevation and nature of the proposal.
- B. Development proposals will be supported when it can be demonstrated that they will have full regard to protecting and enhancing the immediate, local streetscape, biodiversity and views that contribute to the character and quality of the area.
- C. The Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code recognise the semi-rural character of the existing, long established Chesham Bois Conservation Area as shown in the map and the associated requirements stated in the Chesham Bois Conservation Area Guide with regard to planning applications, (Appendix III)
- D. Development proposals in the Chesham Bois Conservation Area will be supported if they are aligned to and consistent with its essential characteristics that contribute to the significance of its local architectural and historic interest and respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Proposals which would involve the loss of buildings that contribute to the significance of a Conservation Area and/or which propose inappropriate extensions or alterations to existing buildings will not be supported unless the harm is demonstrably outweighed by the public benefits of that proposal.



E. Established Areas of Special Character are unique to Chesham Bois and any proposals to alter existing buildings or build new properties will be supported if they aesthetically align with the design of the established street scene.

In addition, the proposed elevation of any new properties will only be supported if they do not exceed that of adjacent and nearby properties within sight of the proposed development and any extensions or alterations to existing properties will not be supported if they exceed the original elevation.

F. Planning applications for 'backland development' will be considered but only supported when the scale, elevation and type of the development would be aligned in each respect with adjoining properties to avoid 'cramming' and intrusion on the amenity and privacy of existing properties.

Note: Backland development is defined as development on land behind the rear building line of existing housing or other development and is usually land that has previously been used as gardens or is partially enclosed by gardens.

G. Planning applications for 'infill development' will be considered but would only be permitted when the scale, elevation and type of the development would be aligned in each respect with adjoining properties to avoid 'cramming' and intrusion on the amenity and privacy of existing properties.

Note: Infill development typically refers to frontage plots and side gardens of existing houses and will result in densities much higher than the prevailing levels in the village and potentially lead to the 'cramming' of sites.

- **9.2** This policy responds to the Government's advice that neighbourhood plans should set out local design guidance by refining saved Local Plan Policy GC1 'Design of Development' and Core Strategy Policy CS20 'Design and Environmental Quality'; and in respect of its Conservation Areas and Areas of Special Character by refining saved Local Plan Policy CA1 'Works to Buildings in Conservation Areas'; to provide a compendium of design guidance in the form of a Code that covers all of the Parish.
- **9.3** The Code has brought together in one place a range of guidance published by the former Chiltern District and Buckinghamshire County Councils since 2007 but only some of which has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance for development management purposes.
- **9.4** The Code takes guidance from the following documents:-
  - 2024 National Planning Policy Framework;
  - 2021 National Model Design Code;
  - 2021 National Design Guide;
  - 2020 Building for a Healthy Life;
  - 2017 and 2018 Chiltern & South Bucks Townscape Character Study
  - (not adopted); and
  - 2010 Chilterns Building Design Guide (adopted)
- **9.5** For clarity, as the Chesham Bois Design Code has been prepared and consulted on as part of the Plan, its content carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.
- **9.6** Any planning applications will be required to have acknowledged, understood and responded positively to the Chesham Bois Design Code as relevant to the location, scale and nature of the proposal. Where a proposal

does not follow the requirements of the Chesham Bois Design Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why any exception should be considered.

- **9.7** There are a number of attractive local streetscape views within the Character Areas 1 to 6 which contribute to the character and quality of the Parish. The policy therefore requires applicants to demonstrate that proposed schemes have avoided interrupting, disrupting or detracting from local street streetscape views; and where proposals' visual impacts extend beyond the immediate street, to demonstrate how attractive local streetscape views have been protected or enhanced.
- **9.8** Given the planning policy context in the Neighbourhood Area, infill development and redevelopment schemes would be expected over time. However, it will be important to retain the character of the locality, the amenity of neighbouring properties and the potential for overdevelopment to be properly managed. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that a planning condition, removing permitted development rights, on such schemes is considered when permission is granted for such schemes, where appropriate.
- **9.9** Development proposals in a defined Area of Special Character should demonstrate that they have had full regard to the essential characteristics which contribute to the significance of its local architectural and historic interest.

#### **POLICY CBNP - 2: LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS**

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of buildings and structures as set out in Appendix II as Local Heritage Assets. Proposals that will result in harm or the unnecessary loss of a Local Heritage Asset will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overwhelming public benefit that outweighs the harm or loss.

**9.11** The policy identifies a number of local ('non-designated') heritage assets in the parish that, whilst not statutorily listed, have some local heritage value for the purposes of applying §216 of the NPPF on the historic environment. The owners of the heritage assets properties have already been notified of the proposed inclusion on this list and their responses have been considered.

It is acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Plan will be periodically reviewed and reviewed in the event of a significant threat to a Local Heritage Asset.

**9.12** The assets have been identified from a number of sources and have been evaluated against the criteria advocated by Historic England in its 2019 guidance note. A description of the value of each asset is provided in Appendix II along with the source. Buckinghamshire Council has its own Local Heritage List project, which shares the same aims of this policy.

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#### POLICY CBNP - 3: ADDRESSING THE SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE GAP

A. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause B. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.

B. Buildings proposed to be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15kwh/m2/year will not be subject to the provisions of Clause A. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.

C. All development should be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.

D. A Sustainability Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for householder applications). The statement will include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic

information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

E. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.

**9.13** One of the most important measures that can be taken to tackle climate change is for buildings to be designed to ensure they are 'zero carbon ready'.

Clause A of the policy therefore requires that every building in a consented housing development scheme of any size is subject to a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) including actual metered energy use, and to submit the report to the local planning authority. It will be implemented by attaching a planning condition, which will only be discharged once the report has been submitted and any recommended actions to rectify any performance gap with the design stage assessment are carried out by the developer. There is no current adopted development plan policy which seeks to deal with the performance gap.

In the absence of supplementary guidance from Buckinghamshire Council on POE, guidance has been included in Appendix I. Passivhaus certified schemes will not fail in this way and they are therefore exempted from this policy requirement. PassivHaus is the most common and rigorous design approach, although the build cost is slightly higher than normal, the ongoing energy cost to occupiers is a fraction of the cost now (so avoiding fuel poverty).

**9.14** To further incentivise the use of the Passivhaus, or equivalent standard, Clause B of the policy acknowledges that there may sometimes be a trade-off between its objectives and local design policy. Although meeting these standards ought not to compromise a scheme fitting in with the character of a local area, on occasions this may be the case. It therefore allows for some degree of flexibility in meeting the adopted design guidance, especially in terms of prevalent building orientation and density. Proposals seeking to apply the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) must also be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'preconstruction compliance check' completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by

condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.

**9.15** Clause C of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design.

'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial decisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost.

Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, WODC and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt (link).

- 9.16 Clause E requires a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate compliance with the policy along with the passive design capacity assessment, it is anticipated that designers will demonstrate compliance using a design for performance methodology such as the PHPP or CIBSE TM34 Operational Energy. Achieving this level of performance will make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change that the Neighbourhood Plan can help deliver. Many developers and housebuilders are 'pricing in' the need to meet such standards within the next five years anticipating that the Government will need to make national requirements as part of its climate change obligations. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.
- **9.17** In the absence of any current, adopted policy from Buckinghamshire Council covering the energy performance of new buildings, Clause E also requires all development proposals that are not householder applications to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emissions Assessment, RICS methodology is preferred (<u>link</u>). The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequences of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly; contributing to resource efficiency (as per Clause C of the policy) and contributing to the 'circular economy'.

- **9.18** These requirements will be added to the Buckinghamshire Council Validation Checklist for outline and full planning applications applying to proposals in the parish until such a time that there is a district-wide requirement.
- **9.19** Every new build or redevelopment project in the parish provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting national climate change targets. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.

## POLICY CBNP - 4: Green Infrastructure & Local Green Spaces

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan designates the Chesham Bois Green Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Policies Map below, for the purpose of promoting nature recovery and helping to mitigate climate change. The Network comprises Common Land, cemeteries and religious grounds, playing fields, woodland (including ancient woodland), designated Priority Habitats and Local Green Spaces.
- B. The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of public recreation, the protection of local flora and fauna and for protecting the tranquil nature of the Neighbourhood Area; as referenced in the Policies and Green Infrastructure Maps and in 9.23 below.
- C. Development proposals are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving the nature and functionality of the Network, including delivering a net gain to biodiversity, in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space provisions.
- D. Proposals that will harm the nature, functionality or connectivity of the Network, including the loss of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, and ancient wood pasture which are irreplaceable habitats, will not be supported.
- E. Development proposals that will lead to an extension of the Network including the proper management of ancient woodland; ancient and veteran trees; and ancient wood pasture as irreplaceable habitats will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.

- F. The Policies Map shows the Local Green Spaces that are also known or likely to have biodiversity value. For the purpose of calculating Biodiversity Net Gain requirements using DEFRA's latest metric, development proposals located within or adjoining that part of the Network should anticipate achieving at least a medium distinctiveness multiplier score.
- G. Any proposal that can demonstrate that off-site compensation to mitigate for biodiversity loss is necessary must follow a sequential approach to its delivery. The gain should be delivered within or adjoining the network where the land is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain. If this is not practical, then gain should be delivered on land within an adjoining parish that is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain. Only if it can be shown that this is not practical may the gain be delivered on other land.
- H. Development proposals that will lead to the felling of one or more feature, healthy trees including any that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this is impractical and the use of alternative green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs and walls) is feasible and can be used if they deliver equivalent benefit to protect biodiversity.
- I. Developments, (including buildings, hardstanding and landscaping), that have a boundary with irreplaceable wildlife habitat and which would cause irrevocable harm to wildlife, by generating new noise or light pollution for example, will not be supported.

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- **9.15:** The policy defines the presence of Local Green Spaces as well as green and blue infrastructure assets in the Parish which have multiple roles including carbon sinking, flood alleviation, climate change mitigation and biodiversity net gain. The Policies Map shows the extent of the Network, which allows applications to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. The Parish Council should take an active role in ensuring that development proposals are complying with the policy.
- **9.16** Important areas of land supporting biodiversity and local wildlife Networks within the Neighbourhood Area include:
  - a. Chesham Bois Common including freshwater ponds
  - b. Common Land owned and managed by the Parish Council
  - c. Thomas Harding Meadow

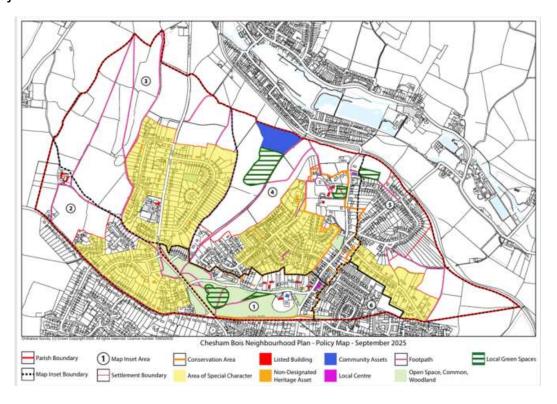
- d. Chesham Bois Burial Ground
- e. Tenterden Spinney
- f. St. Leonard's Church Field, Bois Lane
- **9.17** The policy requires that all development proposals that lie within the Network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. This may mean that development layouts are designed to contribute to the network's effectiveness. The policy also requires a biodiversity net gain to be delivered. This is expected to be in line with national provisions which is expected to be a minimum of 10% as identified in the Environment Act 2021. Net gain will be measured using DEFRA's latest biodiversity metric.
- **9.18** The policy also recognises that the provisions of the NPPF on irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees) applies in the designated neighbourhood area. Proper management of this special resource will be expected to be in line with Natural England and the Forestry Commission's standing advice on this matter<sup>[1]</sup>.
- **9.19** Clauses E and F respond to the biodiversity net gain (BNG) provisions of the Environment Act 2021 which became a statutory part of plan making and development management in February 2024 and April 2024 for small sites. The statutory BNG Metric provides the means for applicants to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of the application site in determining the net gain requirement of their proposals.
- **9.20** Clause E relates to those parts of the Network of biodiversity value. Given it includes all defined Priority Habitats, woodland and ancient woodland, the clause anticipates that the distinctiveness multiplier score of the BNG Metric (from very low to very high) will likely be at least 'medium'.
- **9.21** The policy sets out how the loss of biodiversity value will be addressed through a sequential approach. The new biodiversity net gain requirement of at least 10% (as set out by the Environment Act of 2021 and the Biodiversity Net Gain SPD) should be delivered either onsite or within or adjoining the Network so that the benefits of development are accrued as close as possible. In every case, attention should be paid to schemes avoiding undermining the openness of the Green Belt. However, it is accepted that the Network in the Parish may not be suited to delivering every type of required off-site gain. In such cases

Clause F allows for the gain to be delivered in adjoining parishes to Chesham Bois or, as a final resort, on land elsewhere.

- **9.22** Trees give Chesham Bois its distinctive woodland character and it is important that the loss of any trees is avoided unless it can be demonstrated that the loss of one or more trees is unavoidable and satisfactory mitigation measures are put in place.
- **9.23** The NPPF, as amended in December 2024 paras. 106 to 108, introduced a Local Green Space designation (LGS) to protect local green areas of particular importance to local communities. The defining characteristic of Chesham Bois is its semi-rural, tranquil environment and this Neighbourhood Plan serves to designate the following Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Area to protect the unique nature of the Area which is of benefit to the well-being of its residents and visitors.
- Jubilee Field on Chesham Bois Common; This informal area of open grassland on the Common and surrounded by woodland, adjacent to North Road, is in the heart of the village and has been in use as a recreational area for residents and visitors for more than 100 years. The biennial Village Fete is held on the Jubilee Field as well as other community events hosted by the Parish Council during the summer months.
- Chesham Bois Cricket Ground, (leased by the Parish Council to the Cricket Club); This site dates back to 1880's and is located on part of the common off North Road, accessed by footpaths through the woodland surrounding the pitch. The ground is in regular use as a recreational area for residents and visitors and has a particularly beautiful, tranquil setting being surrounded by trees.
- **St. Leonard's Church Field**, **Bois Lane**; This area of open grassland is adjacent to the chapel which was originally tied to a manor house and referenced as the parish church by 1470.
- Thomas Harding Meadow; This small, chalk grassland meadow is a
  designated Local Wildlife Site, located adjacent to Chesham Bois Burial
  Ground and a public bridle path. The meadow is set on a hillside and
  provides spectacular views of the surrounding area. It is in regular use as a
  recreational area by members of the community and visitors.

• **Pioneer Hall Field, Bois Lane**: The open, green space behind the Pioneer Hall is primarily used as a recreational space on a regular basis by the popular, local scout groups that use the hall as a venue for meetings.

Local wildlife in all the locations referenced above includes protected species of mammals. The designated LGS areas provide an oasis for wildlife and serve to protect habitat from the increasing urbanisation of the adjacent towns of Chesham and Amersham.



#### **POLICY CBNP - 5: COMMUNITY ASSETS**

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of community facilities, listed below and shown on the Policies Map:

- i. Pioneer (Scout) Hall
- ii. Chesham Bois Burial Ground
- iii. St. Leonard's Parish Centre
- B. Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of these premises to a different or significantly intensified use will be resisted, unless there is clear evidence submitted that the existing premises and/or the use of those premises are no longer economically viable through the production of

evidence that genuine and sustained efforts to promote, improve and market the commercial, business and service use at a reasonable value have been undertaken over a twelve-month period.

C. This Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of high-speed broadband and utilities to support communications, provided schemes are in accordance with policies related to visual impact, street scene and green space and all other relevant policies.

D. Buildings including their entire curtilage or land currently or last occupied for community use should be retained in community use.

**9.23** The Local Community Uses list identified in Appendix IV is comprised of a mix of a cemetery and community centres. The Use Class Order of September 2020 now deems such uses as either Class F2 ('Local Community Uses'), in the case of the Scout Hall and Parish Centre and Sui Generis in the case of the cemetery.

**9.24** The policy identifies community facilities to be protected from loss. As finding land for such uses is often difficult, it is important that established land is retained in that use, even if the current occupier is not viable.

A description of each facility and its community value is provided in Appendix IV. Collectively these facilities are cherished by the community and offer a valuable and vital resource to support community life and therefore warrant the protection of the Policy.

**9.25** New commercial developments with a community value should aim to involve the community in the management of the development.

#### **POLICY CBNP - 6: LOCAL CENTRE**

A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Local Centre on Bois Lane, (a parade of shops) as shown on the policies map. Proposals for a change of use that will result in the loss of an active commercial, business or service use of a ground floor frontage in the Local Centre will be resisted.

B. Mixed use development schemes lying within Local Centre which retains an active commercial, business or service use of a ground floor frontage and

# contribute to the functionality of Local Centre through public realm enhancements will be supported.

**9.26** The local shopping parade on Bois Lane is essential for meeting the day to day needs of local residents. It comprises a small but critical mass of shops that if lost could undermine its viability as a local centre. The policy also protects the centre from an unnecessary loss of ground floor frontages.

#### **POLICY CBNP - 7: TRAVEL NETWORK**

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing footpath network, as shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals that would unacceptably harm the functioning or connectivity of the footpath network will not be supported.

- B. Identifying opportunities for direct investment to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport are to be encouraged.
- C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should seek to minimise the potential impact on the local road network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.
- **9.27** Identifying opportunities for investment to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport are to be encouraged for new development proposals.

Note: Current public transport is very limited, both in terms of routes through the village and hours of operation.

- **9.28** The Policies Map shows the extent of the footpath network and local road infrastructure. Where proposals include provision for new means of access, new layouts or an increase in density on a site there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve traffic management in the Neighbourhood Area, which should be taken into consideration.
- **9.29** In some cases, proposals will enable the creation of new connections and/or the delivery of opportunities for improvement that extend the benefits of the existing travel networks. These proposals will be supported provided they are appropriate in other respects.

- **9.30** This policy requires that proposals that will overwhelm or undermine the existing travel network will be refused permission.
- **9.31** Proposals may find it useful to refer to the <u>Cycle Infrastructure Design</u> (<u>LTN 1/20</u>) <u>Guide</u> which sets out key principles for designing high quality and safe cycle infrastructure. Additionally, the <u>Buckinghamshire Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</u> is currently in development which envisages the development of a countywide active travel network for Buckinghamshire. It provides strategic opportunities for linking local networks, focussing on links through and between villages and towns.

#### 10. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- **10.1** The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by Buckinghamshire Council as the local planning authority.
- **10.2** Buckinghamshire Council will use a combination of the policies of the Chiltern District Local Plan and Core Strategy (until it is replaced by a new Buckinghamshire Local Plan) and this Neighbourhood Plan to help inform and determine its planning application decisions.
- **10.3** The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made for sites in the Parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by Buckinghamshire Council. The Parish Council will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.
- **10.4** Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to apply to the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers to be in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the Local Planning Authority has decided to approve.
- **10.5** The Parish Council may resolve to seek to apply to the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.

- **10.6** Initial consultations with local residents and users of local facilities demonstrated the importance of infrastructure improvements including community facilities. Opportunities may arise through S106 agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. When the Neighbourhood Plan is made, the Parish Council will be able to determine how and where 25% of the CIL collected from schemes in the parish is spent (currently only 15%).
- **10.7** The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed by the Parish Council every five years starting from the date on which it is adopted or more frequently if deemed necessary.

**END**