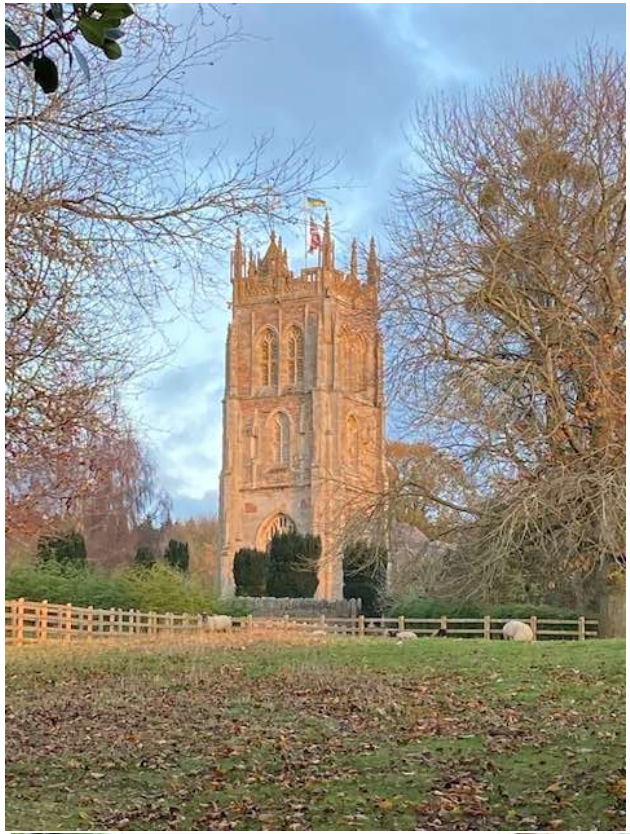
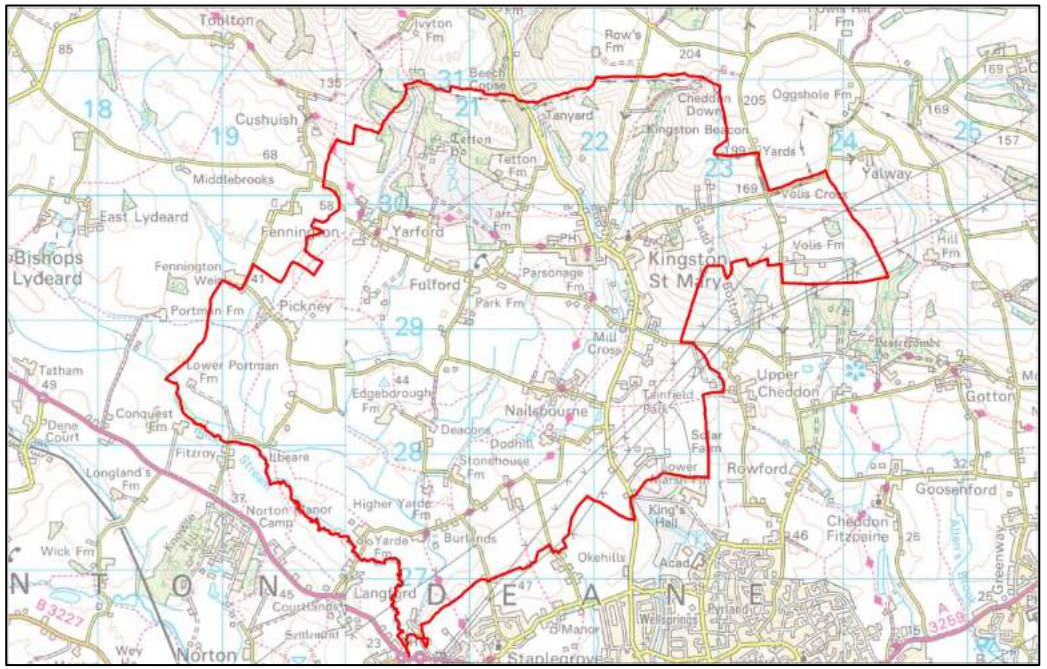


# Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan 2023 - 2028







# Acknowledgements

To develop this Neighbourhood Plan, Kingston St Mary Parish Council established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Group's work of researching and writing the Plan included two Parish Councillors, a District Councillor, members of Kingston Area Pedestrian and Cycle Campaign (KAPACC) and a number of local volunteers who provided project management skills, guidance on heritage issues and much needed input and support.

They were all greatly assisted by many other members of the community. Many thanks go to all those involved in the production of this Neighbourhood Plan for Kingston St Mary Parish which will, if adopted, give the local community a powerful tool to guide the future of Kingston St Mary Parish over the next fifteen to twenty years.

Thanks also to those who completed the local surveys and participated in the public meetings, giving their views on what they value in the Parish and how they would like to see the parish develop. These views have formed the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Steering Group has also drawn on information from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in comparing Census data over the years; from Somerset Council and previous District Councils; from the Quantock Quantock Hills National Landscape and Quantock Landscape Partnership; and from the Primary School on school roles.

**Locality**, a national organisation supporting local community organisations, provided a grant of £10,000 to research and produce the Plan. Kingston St Mary Parish Council have also given a grant of £1500, as well as funding the Housing Needs and the Climate Change surveys in 2021 on which much of the Plan is based.

The Active Travel Feasibility Study was carried out by Sustrans, and the ongoing work on the safe cycle and pedestrian route to Taunton is supported by KAPACC and Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC).

An Action Plan will be generated to plan ongoing work over the years, again leaning on the good services of community volunteers (including our councillors), and funding for projects large and small. We thank all those in advance for their continued commitment to the community of Kingston St Mary Parish.

Work on the Themes were led by:

Character Assessment: Cllr Paul Townsend

Separation: Cllr David Stripp

Trees & Hedgerows: Cllr David Stripp

Active Travel: Marion Nieuwenhuizen

Climate Change: Cllr Dixie Darch/ Tom Bedford

Flood Mitigation: Cllr Dixie Darch

Green Spaces: Cllr Paul Townsend

Dark Skies: Cllr David Stripp

Transport: David Taylor

Housing: Cllr David Stripp

Management of NP process and coordination: Cllr David Stripp

(The Plan was 'Made' by Somerset Council on 23rd May 2024).

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# 1. Introduction




## 1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced as part of the government's 2011 Localism Act. They are a relatively new approach to planning and provide local people with a greater degree of say and control over development in their area.

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) allows the community to grow whilst protecting existing community assets. It also identifies and makes provision for the realisation of community aspirations for the future. The NP becomes part of the planning framework, influencing the form and content of any new development. The advantages of having a NP are that community assets, such as conservation areas, remain protected and community aspirations become more achievable.

A Neighbourhood Plan has advantages over other kinds of plan (such as parish or community plans) because it enables communities to take the lead in their own neighbourhoods in producing part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Neighbourhood Plans have real legal force. After being formally examined by an Independent Examiner, and passed by more than 50% of voters at local referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted (Made) by Somerset Council.

It will also provide homeowners and prospective developers with clarity in terms of what development is supported and suitable. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long term future of Kingston St Mary Parish.

Current Local Development Plan documents for the former SWT Council will remain part of the Development Plan until they are replaced either wholly or in part by the Somerset Local Plan. As such the Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to the existing strategic policy and adopted plans:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (often referred to as the NPPF) and related Planning Practice Guidance.
- TDBC's adopted Core Strategy 2011 – 2028, and
- The Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

A 'Made' (i.e. adopted) Neighbourhood Plan must be used in law to determine planning applications in Kingston St Mary Parish. It will form part of Somerset Council's Development Plan, which will guide the local planning authority when making decisions about planning applications and development issues.

The policies of a Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan together form the statutory development plan for the area and will be used as a basis for making decisions on planning applications.

## 1.2 Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan Area

Following an application by the Parish Council, the entire Parish of Kingston St Mary was designated by Somerset West and Taunton Council, as the then competent authority, as the Neighbourhood Plan Area for the purpose of undertaking this Neighbourhood Plan on 21st December 2021.

Following the boundary changes resulting from the formation of Taunton Town Council on 1st April 2023 Kingston St Mary Parish's boundary has been changed, relinquishing a part of the Staplegrove East urban development site to Taunton Town Council, while inheriting a rural area of Staplegrove. The application to Somerset Council to amend the designated Neighbourhood Area (NA) to reflect these changes was approved on 30th May 2023.
The NA Designation Decision Notice is shown in Appendix 5.

## 1.3 Policies vs Statements of Intent

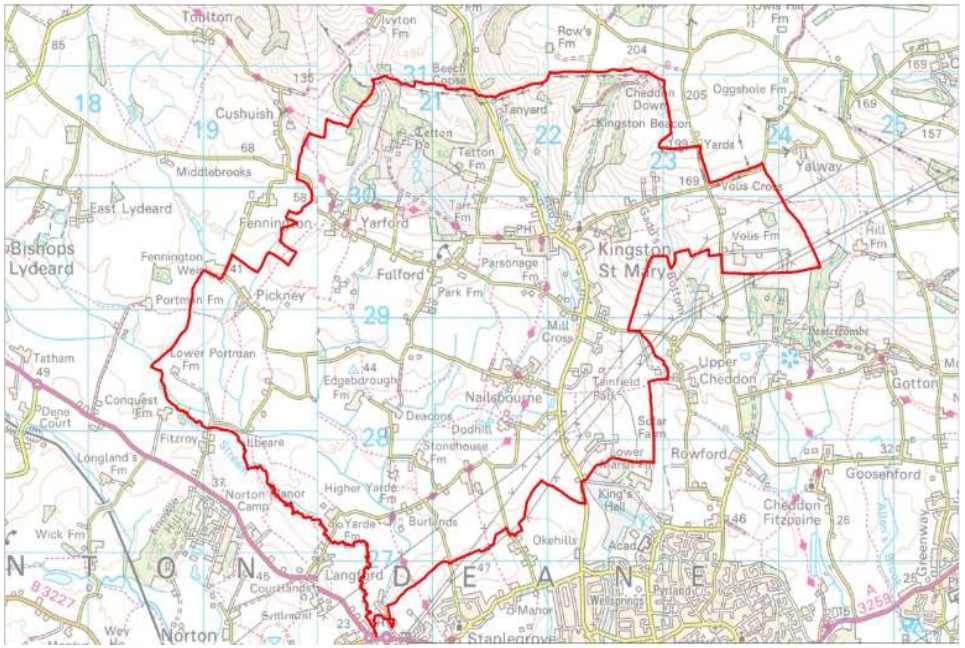
The Neighbourhood Plan includes twelve policies which planners will take into account when reviewing planning applications. Also included in the Neighbourhood Plan are five Statements of Intent which will guide the Parish Council in its approach to areas in addition to or instead of Policies. These will populate an Action List to monitor progress on the implementation of the Plan, where action is required.

## 1.4 Duration

The Neighbourhood Plan will remain in place and be used to assess planning applications until it is reviewed and replaced by a new neighbourhood plan.

The next Local Plan is due by 2028 and this will be a useful time to review this Plan against updates to Somerset Council's Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Map 1 below shows the new (post 1st April 2023) Parish Boundary, and the area re-designated as the Neighbourhood Area on 30th May 2023.



# 1.5 Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Plan is the culmination of work on areas of greatest concern to the community expressed in the 2017 Community Plan, and the 2021 Housing Needs and Climate Change Surveys:

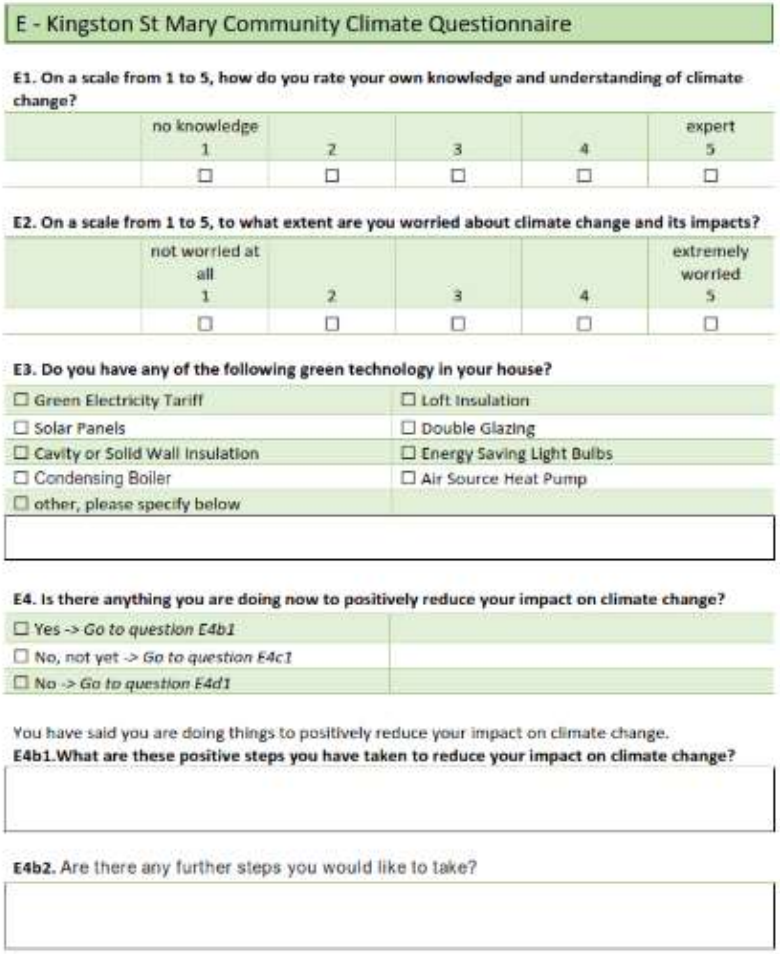
**Climate Change:** Responding to climate change and the ecological emergency is a central tenet of our Neighbourhood Plan. Views expressed in the Kingston St Mary Climate Change Survey of 2021 highlighted the community's concerns on Climate Change, and the measures being taken to offset the impacts. 72% of participants were extremely worried or worried about climate change and many had changed their patterns of consumption and behaviour. Challenges to going further in response to the climate emergency included limited public transport, unsafe cycle routes, limited local Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and a lack of local shops. Some residents had made efforts to retrofit their homes, including insulation, installation of solar PV and heat pumps, but many felt the age and size of their homes made this difficult, including those living in listed buildings.

Our aim is to create a low carbon community, to promote environmental protection and increase our community's resilience to climate impacts. We therefore support sustainable development alongside our social, environmental and economic objectives.

The thread of addressing climate change therefore runs through all sections of the Plan.

**Housing:**

The Housing Needs Survey of 2021 highlighted the gaps in the Parish's housing stock for those of all age groups, and the needs arising. The impact of housing on the demography of the Parish is considered alongside the results of the 2021 Census, and allows comparisons over previous decades.



E - Kingston St Mary Community Climate Questionnaire

**E1. On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate your own knowledge and understanding of climate change?**

| | no knowledge 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | expert 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**E2. On a scale from 1 to 5, to what extent are you worried about climate change and its impacts?**

| | not worried at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | extremely worried 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**E3. Do you have any of the following green technology in your house?**

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Green Electricity Tariff | ☐ Loft Insulation |
| ☐ Solar Panels | ☐ Double Glazing |
| ☐ Cavity or Solid Wall Insulation | ☐ Energy Saving Light Bulbs |
| ☐ Condensing Boiler | ☐ Air Source Heat Pump |
| ☐ other, please specify below | |

**E4. Is there anything you are doing now to positively reduce your impact on climate change?**

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Yes -> *Go to question E4b1* | |
| ☐ No, not yet -> *Go to question E4c1* | |
| ☐ No -> *Go to question E4d1* | |

You have said you are doing things to positively reduce your impact on climate change.
**E4b1.What are these positive steps you have taken to reduce your impact on climate change?**

**E4b2.** Are there any further steps you would like to take?

# 1.6 Community Engagement

Engagement with the community of Kingston St Mary has been an ongoing process since 2016, with a Household Survey forming the basis of the 2017 Community Plan. This focused on the nine work streams shown under the 2016 heading in the diagram on the following page:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Living in the Parish | Housing | Environment |
| Traffic Volume & Speeds | Community Assistance | Transport |
| Broadband & Business | Facilities | Youth |

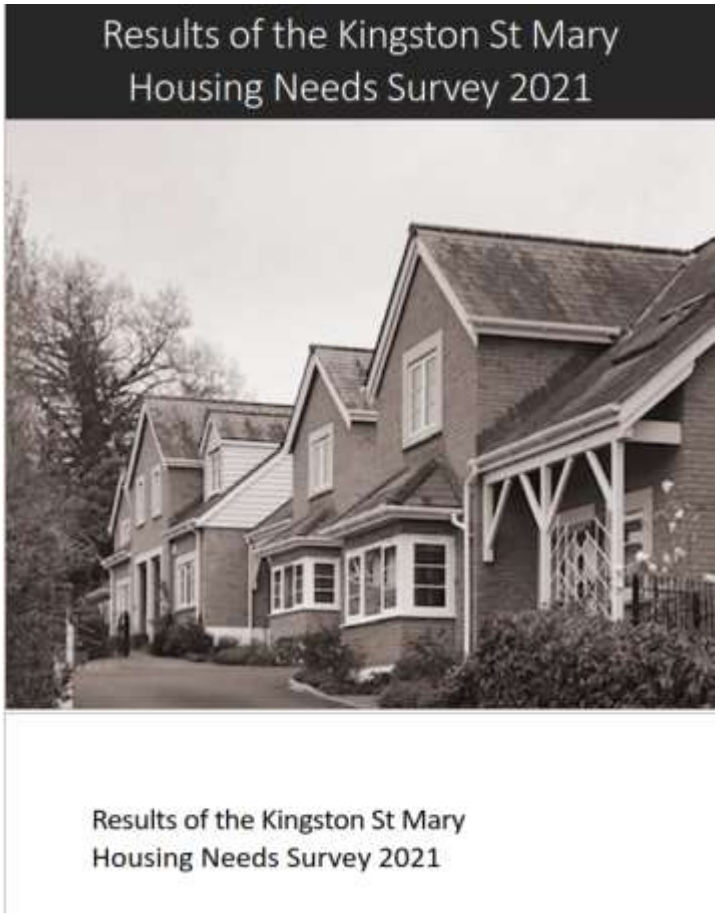
Following the release of the Community Plan, **Kingston Community Partnership** was formed to implement the recommendations of the Plan.

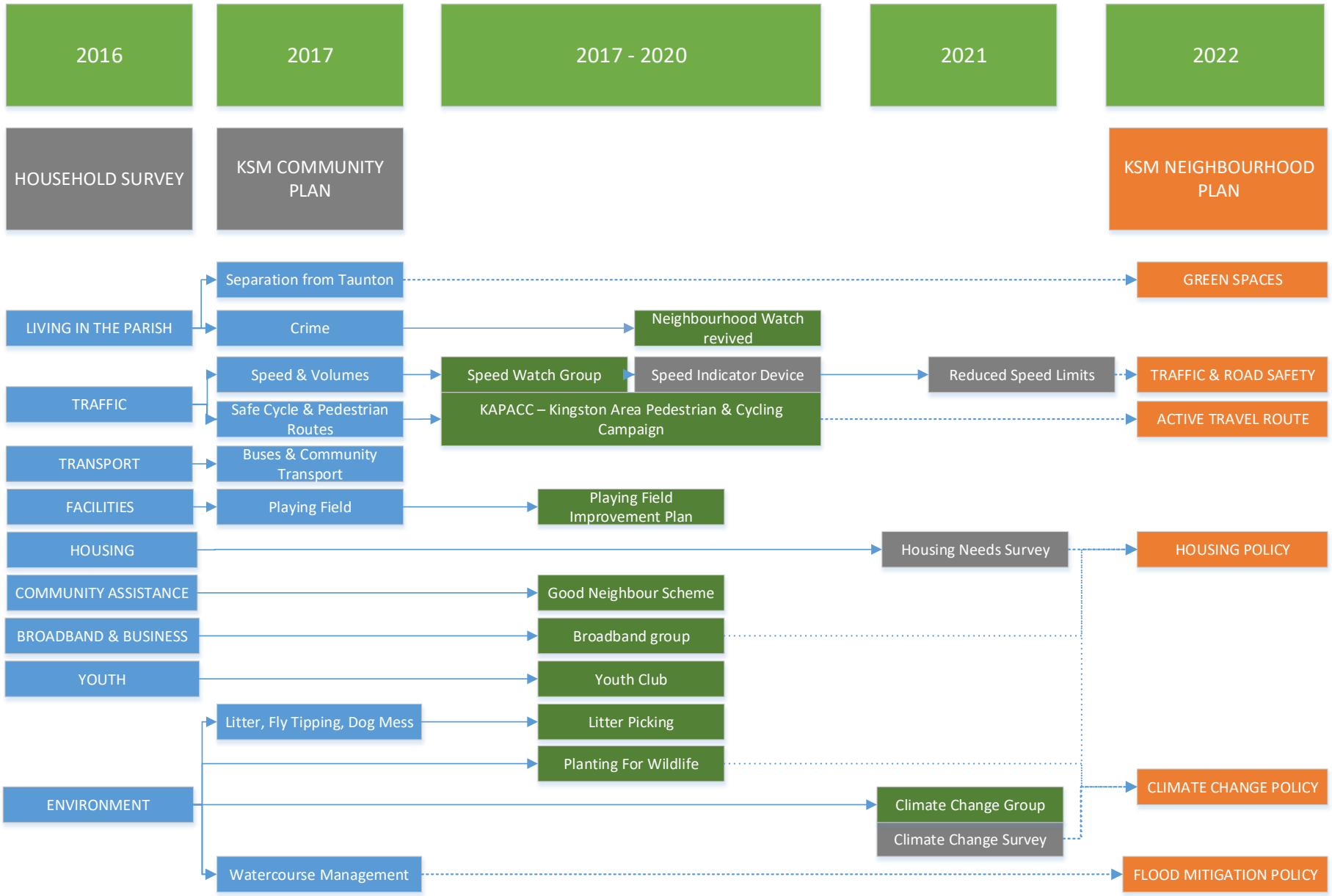
The diagram on the following page shows progress since 2017 across each of the workstreams, including the formation of new groups – Good Neighbours, the Youth Group, Kingston Area Pedestrian & Cycling Campaign ( KAPACC), Climate Change and Planting for Wildlife Groups.

This has since been followed up by the 2021 Housing Needs and Climate Change Surveys.

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is a natural development of this work, which will formalise policies for Character Assessment, Separation, Housing, Climate Change and Flood Mitigation, Transport, including Active Travel, Green Spaces, Dark Skies, and the Natural Environment.

The graphic on the following page shows how issues raised in the 2017 Community Plan have been addressed over the years since, and how the community has got to this point.




2016
2017
2017 - 2020
2021
2022
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY
KSM COMMUNITY PLAN
KSM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
LIVING IN THE PARISH
Separation from Taunton
Crime
Neighbourhood Watch revived
GREEN SPACES
TRAFFIC
Speed & Volumes
Safe Cycle & Pedestrian Routes
Speed Watch Group
Speed Indicator Device
KAPACC – Kingston Area Pedestrian & Cycling Campaign
Reduced Speed Limits
TRAFFIC & ROAD SAFETY
ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE
TRANSPORT
Buses & Community Transport
FACILITIES
Playing Field
Playing Field Improvement Plan
HOUSING
Housing Needs Survey
HOUSING POLICY
COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE
Good Neighbour Scheme
BROADBAND & BUSINESS
Broadband group
YOUTH
Youth Club
Litter, Fly Tipping, Dog Mess
Litter Picking
Planting For Wildlife
ENVIRONMENT
Climate Change Group
Climate Change Survey
CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY
Watercourse Management
FLOOD MITIGATION POLICY

Everything being put forward in the NP reflects views expressed by the community in the 2016 Household Survey, the 2021 Housing Needs and Climate Change Surveys, Public meetings and further work on Character Assessment, Green Spaces, Housing, etc carried out as part of the NP process.

The intention to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was agreed by the Parish Council in December 2021. The Local Planning authority agreed the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area in December 2021 and the Steering Group held its first meeting on zoom on 19th January 2022.

Articles were published in Link Up, the Parish magazine, Local Facebook pages and on the Kingston St Mary website to announce this and attract volunteers. Posters were also displayed on the Parish Notice Boards.

Parish Council reports mentioned the NP in December 2021, January and March 2022. Articles requesting community support and giving updates were published in Link Up in February, March, April, July, October and December 2022 and 2023. These were also shown on the website.

The first Public meeting due to be held on 17th March 2022 was deferred due to the high incidence of Covid, and rearranged to coincide with the Annual Parish meeting on 19th May 2022. It was widely advertised in Link Up, on the website, on the Parish Notice Boards, and subject to a Parish-wide leaflet drop. The purpose was to encourage the wider involvement of Kingston residents to help frame the Plan, and the meeting attracted 50 members of the community.

The CAT (Character Assessment Team) sought engagement with their work which attracted eight volunteers and contributions of photographs.

A second public meeting was held on 20th October 2022 to give a progress update, and a representative of Middlemarch Community-Led Housing also gave a talk on Community Land Trusts, and how they might be applicable to Kingston St Mary.

The third Public Meeting coincided with the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting, and the release of the draft Regulation 14 Consultation version of the NP. Feedback from the consultation has been incorporated into the version of the NP being submitted to Somerset Council.

# How Would You Describe Kingston St. Mary?




Work has begun on a Neighbourhood Plan for Kingston St Mary.

We need to assess the **character** of the Parish to inform the Plan.

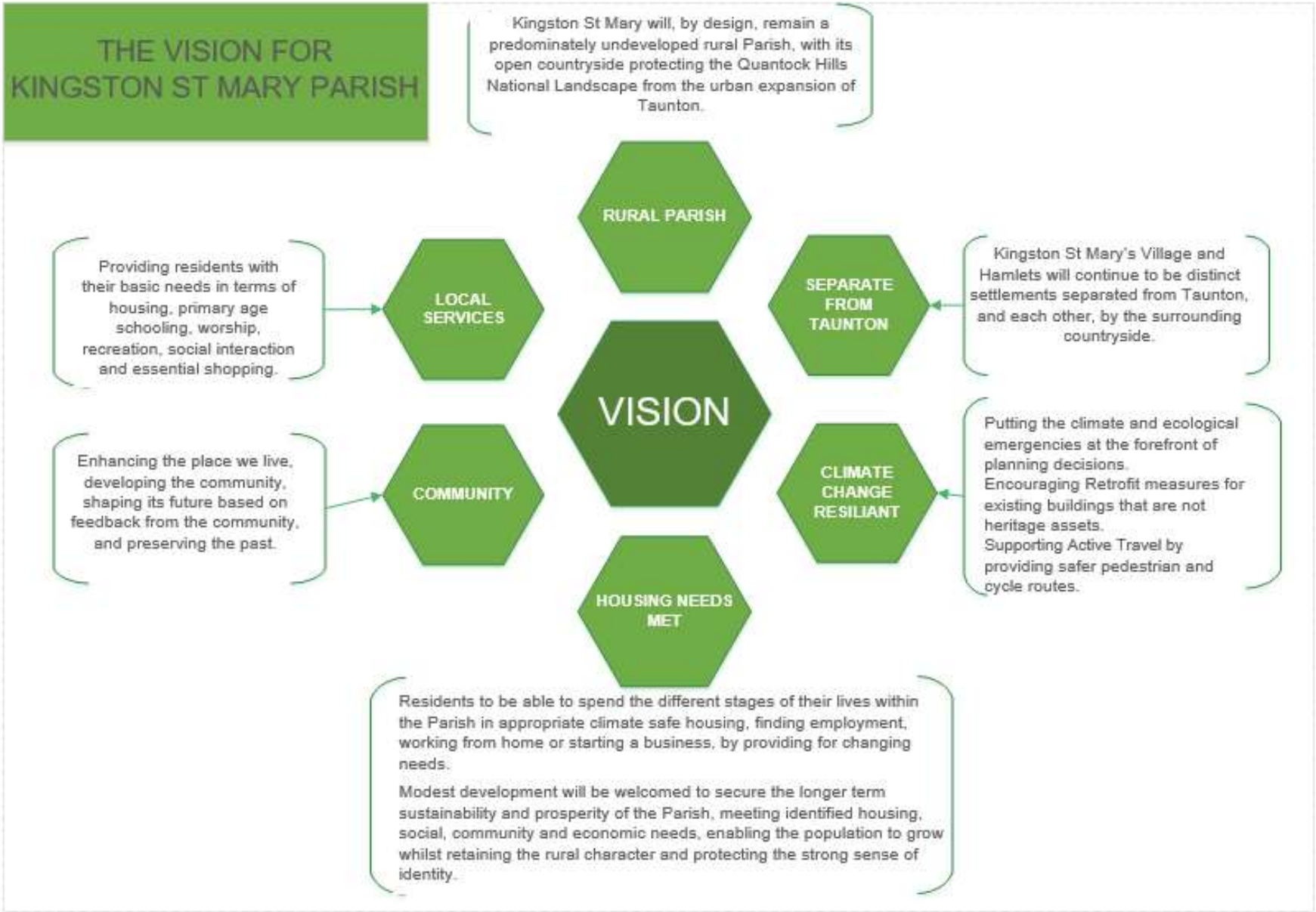
**Volunteers** are sought to help with this work.

Do you have old pictures, postcards or maps of the Parish?
Do you have an interest in history, architecture, photography?
Would you simply like to explore the local area?

To express your interest please contact Paul Townsend.
Email:paul.townsend@ksmpc.org.uk; Phone: 451986

First meeting of the Character Assessment Team
Wednesday 13 April, 5pm at The Swan pub, Kingston St. Mary.

# 2. The Vision


THE VISION FOR KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH
Kingston St Mary will, by design, remain a predominately undeveloped rural Parish, with its open countryside protecting the Quantock Hills National Landscape from the urban expansion of Taunton.
RURAL PARISH
LOCAL SERVICES
Providing residents with their basic needs in terms of housing, primary age schooling, worship, recreation, social interaction and essential shopping.
SEPARATE FROM TAUNTON
Kingston St Mary's Village and Hamlets will continue to be distinct settlements separated from Taunton, and each other, by the surrounding countryside.
VISION
COMMUNITY
Enhancing the place we live, developing the community, shaping its future based on feedback from the community, and preserving the past.
CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIANT
Putting the climate and ecological emergencies at the forefront of planning decisions.
Encouraging Retrofit measures for existing buildings that are not heritage assets.
Supporting Active Travel by providing safer pedestrian and cycle routes.
HOUSING NEEDS MET
Residents to be able to spend the different stages of their lives within the Parish in appropriate climate safe housing, finding employment, working from home or starting a business, by providing for changing needs.
Modest development will be welcomed to secure the longer term sustainability and prosperity of the Parish, meeting identified housing, social, community and economic needs, enabling the population to grow whilst retaining the rural character and protecting the strong sense of identity.

# 2.1 The Vision Statement

The **'Vision'** for Kingston St Mary Parish, is based on the preferences of its residents, the character of where they live and the UK Government's ambition to transition to a low carbon economy. This encompasses protecting the landscape, with the village and hamlets remaining separated from Taunton, and each other, by the surrounding open countryside, preserving the Parish's built heritage, and enhancing what residents value most, whilst delivering what the community needs to become sustainable and safe, in a post pandemic climate changing environment.




Consequently the Vision Statement is that:

**Kingston St Mary Parish will retain its unique and distinctive rural character, separated from Taunton, mitigating climate change, having organically developed by sympathetically meeting identified housing, social, community and economic needs, whilst preserving its heritage, character and the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside."**

# 3.0 Kingston St Mary – A Background

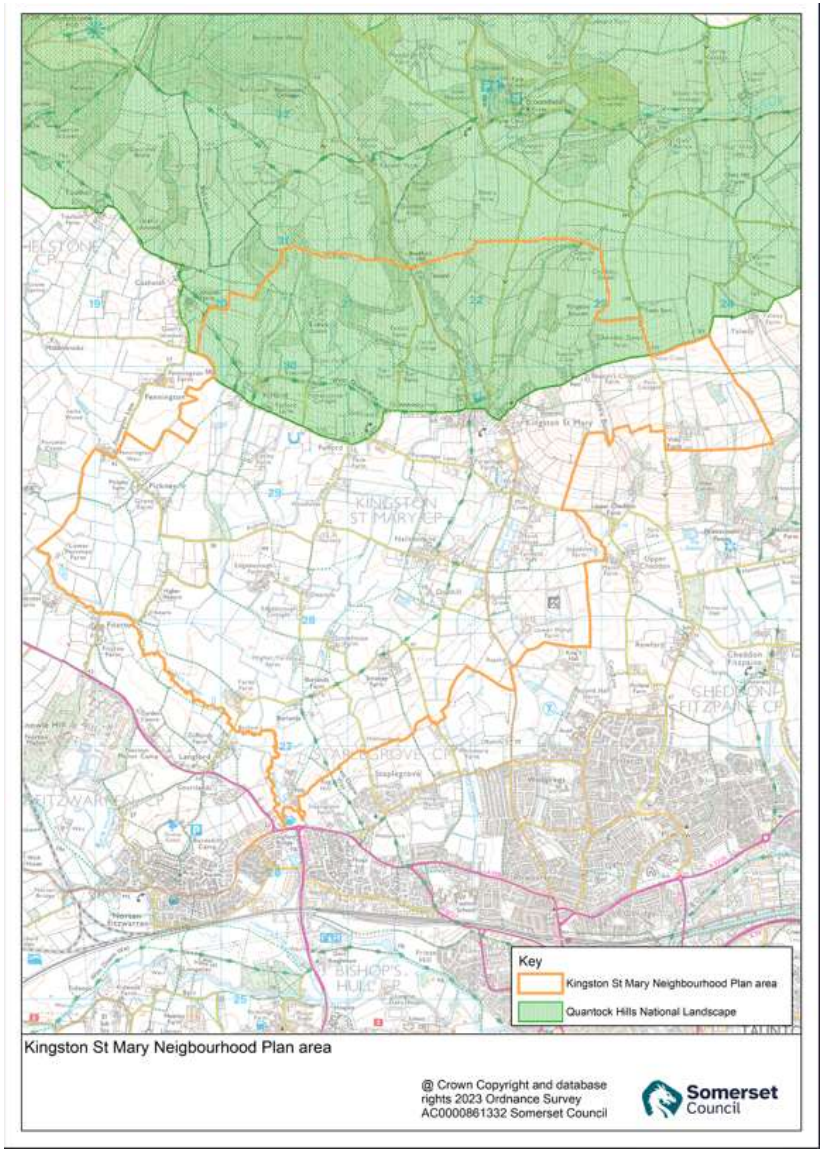
## 3.1 Introduction to the Parish

Kingston St Mary is a Civil Parish in Somerset, situated at the southern end of the Quantock Hills, four miles north of Taunton. The Parish includes Kingston St Mary Village, a number of small hamlets, notably Nailsbourne, Fulford, Yarford and Pickney, a number of working farms, the Tetton Estate and the Woodland Trust Spinney. Kingston St Mary is an entry point for the the Quantock Hills National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) whose boundary passes through the Village and Parish.

The Parish of Kingston was part of the Taunton Deane Hundred. The first part of the village/ parish name comes from ***the kings settlement*** having belonged to the kings of the West Saxons before being ceded to the Bishop of Winchester as part of the Manor of Taunton Deane. The Church's dedication was added in the 20th century.

Kingston St Mary Parish contains the southern reaches of the Quantock Hills National Landscape, the boundary being formed by Church Lane, Kingston Road, Greenway and Yarford Road. Part of Kingston St Mary Village is also designated as a Conservation Area, which includes the oldest part of the settlement.

Map 2 reflects the post-April 2023 Parish boundary in orange, and the Quantock Hills National Landscape area in green.



Chapter 16 of the previous Taunton Deane Local Plan published in 2004 provides background information relating to Kingston St Mary and reflects the Parish and village as it still is (subject to the changes listed below):

"16.1 Kingston St Mary nestles at the foot of the Quantocks, where two streams from the hills meet. The village straddles the boundary between the Landscape Character Areas of the Quantocks to the north and Low Vale to the south.

16.2 Kingston St Mary is nucleated in form, with development tightly clustered within the historic core of the village, with more recent development on the fringes.

16.3 The quality of the local environment is the major feature of Kingston St Mary, and the northern part of the village is within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The majority of the village is within a conservation area (see map on Page 93 – Appendix 4), the boundaries of which also coincide with the boundary of an Area of High Archaeological Potential. There are a number of listed buildings within the village, including most notably the Church of St Mary (a grade 1 listed church dating from the thirteenth century) and Kingston Manor (grade 2*). Hill Farm farmhouse is also listed (grade 2) but in a poor state of repair[1]. It occupies a prominent position astride the northern entrance to the village.

There are several important Tree Groups, which help to define the character of the village. The most substantial groupings are found within the grounds of The Grange and adjoining the road towards Buncombe[2]. Many groupings (and individual specimens) are protected by Tree Preservation Orders[3]

16.4 Kingston St Mary has a reasonable level of local services, with a primary school, village hall, public house, church, part-time post office[4] and a garage. A regular weekday bus service to Taunton, although there are no services at the weekend."

[1] Now restored. and prominent within a new development.
[2] Additionally the Neighbourhood Plan highlights substantial groupings associated with the Spinney (see green spaces on page 54) and the Tetton estate
3 Oak, beech and ash are the predominant species with many fine ancient specimens surviving in the fields and hedge-banks also defining feature
4 Now closed

# 3.2 Demographics

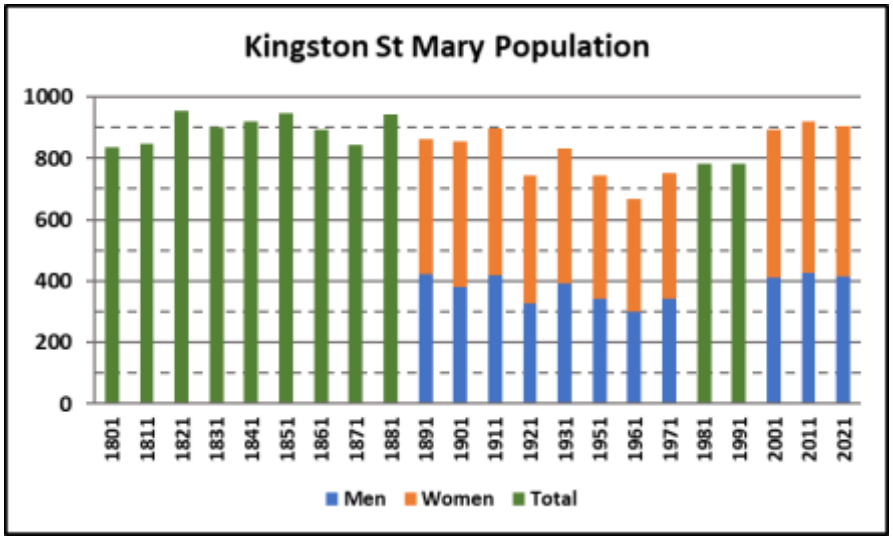
A major driver for the Kingston St Mary Housing Needs Survey was to assess the impact of housing on the future demography of the parish, with a view to guiding the development of our facilities (school, pub, Village Hall and Playing Field, and businesses).

Household Makeup data from respondents to the Housing Needs Survey showed that:

- 26% of the respondents' households have dependent children.
- A quarter (24%) is a one-person household
- 50% is a household with at least 2 adults.
- Respondents reflect an ageing population, with 48% aged 55 and above.

## 3.2.1 Population Change

Table 3: Population Change

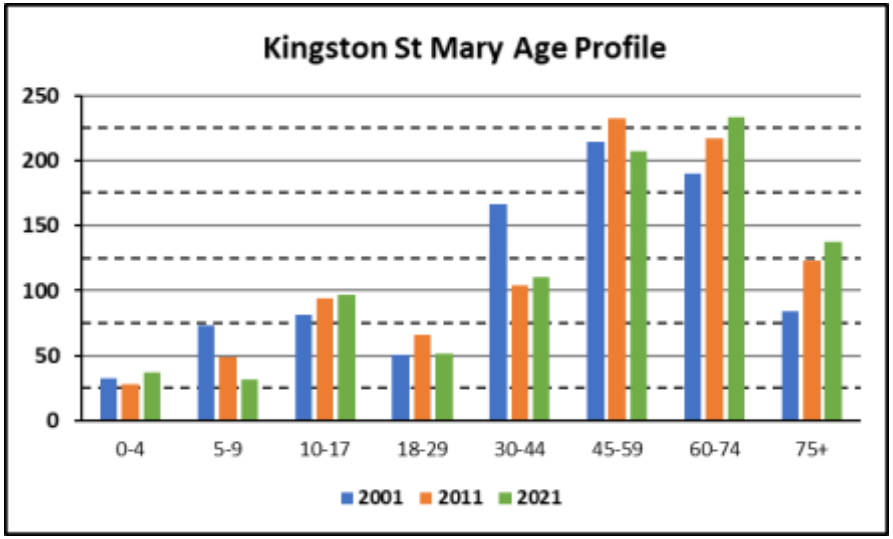



## 3.2.2 Age Profile

This data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) confirms that the age profile of the Parish increased in the ten years between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, and the trend continued to 2021.

The ONS data showed that the number of 30-44 year olds in the Parish reduced by 62 between 2001 and 2011, with a marginal increase of 6 in 2021.

Table 4: Age Profile



This increasing age profile is also reflected in the percentage of local children from within the parish of Kingston St Mary attending the Primary School falling from 58% in 2001 to 28% in 2021.

The table below compares school roll numbers with statistics from the ONS on children of primary school age in the parish of Kingston St Mary.

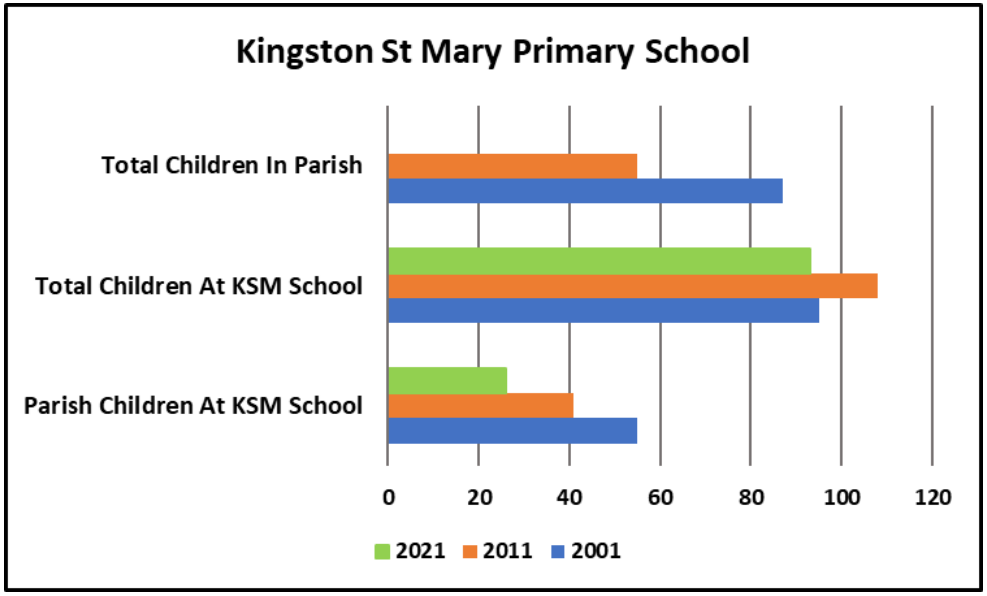
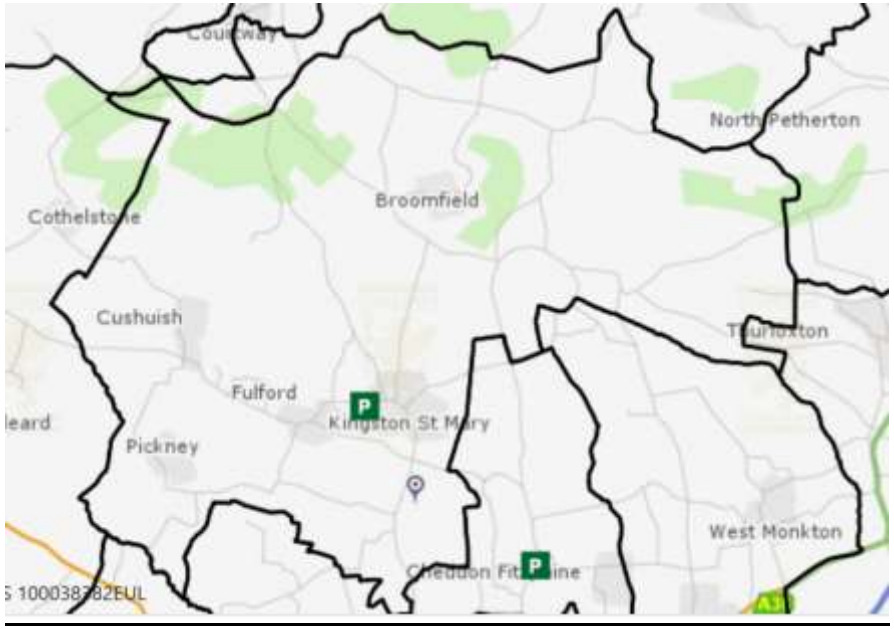



Table 5. Children from the Parish attending Kingston St Mary Primary School (N.B. the details of children of primary school age from the 2021 census are not yet available).

The Catchment area of Kingston St Mary CofE Primary School includes neighbouring parishes and is not felt to have changed for at least 25 years.

Map 3: Kingston St Mary CoE Primary School catchment area




In May 2023 the school have 42 children (31 families) living in catchment, and 57 children (42 families) living outside.

## 3.3 Comparison of Census Key Statistics 2001/2011/2021

*Please note: Not all 2021 data is yet available at parish level. We hope this will be available before the Plan goes to referendum.*

The 2011 Census showed an increase in those aged 75 + years from

84 in 2001 to
123 in 2011
And to 137 in 2021

This reflects an increase in percentage terms from 9.4% of the population in 2001 to 15.1% 2021, compared to a 2021 average of 11.8% for Somerset as a whole. Figures for 60-74 year olds show similar increases.

Recent Censuses have shown a reduction in the number of children in the age band 5-9 years of age, from

**73** in 2001 to
49 in 2011 and to
**32 in 2021**

ONS data showed that the number of 30-44 year olds in the Parish reduced by 62 between 2001 and 2011 (increasing by 6 in 2021) which then highlights the reduction in the number of primary school aged children as shown above. Some of these changes may be attributed to housing, as could some of the solutions.

Housing statistics showed:

- a reduction in Social Rented housing from 56 (14.7% of the housing stock) in 2001 to 42 (10.2%) in 2011, to **32 in 2021**
- and that Houses with no usual resident - vacant/ 2nd home/holiday let – increased from 18 in 2001 to 51 in 2011. The development of Mill Meadow only accounts for thirteen of these.

In 2001 94.1 % of residents were White English /Welsh /Scottish /NI /British. In 2011 it was 97.3%.

A table of other census information comparing data between 2001, 2011 and 2021 is show as **Appendix 1**.

# 4. Neighbourhood Plan Themes

## T 1 Character Assessment



### Introduction

"A character assessment is a document that describes the distinct appearance and feel of a settlement or an area. It communicates the key physical features and characteristics that combine to give a particular settlement or an area its local distinctiveness and unique identity."[2]

It is intended to be used as a reference point to help ensure that all future development and change in the Parish is well designed, appropriate, sympathetic and complementary to the distinct and special character of the local area.

Kingston St Mary Village : The information provided below is summarised from the 'Kingston St Mary Parish Character Assessment Report', which can be viewed at KSM Character Assessment - Final Report v2.pdf.

[2] Planning Aid England, Royal Town Planning Institute.

# Information Gathering

The Character Assessment of Kingston St Mary Parish has been informed by the guidance provided by Historic England's 'Your Place Matters: Community Planning Toolkit'. The assessment also draws on Natural England's National Character Area Profiles for the Quantock Hills (No. 144) and the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Hills (No. 146) , together with Taunton Dean District Council's Landscape Character Assessment .

These documents, together with local knowledge, have greatly assisted this Character Assessment, which seeks to sub-divide the Parish into a finer grain of characterisation by articulating its historical development d providing a summary of the five main character areas within the Parish.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening

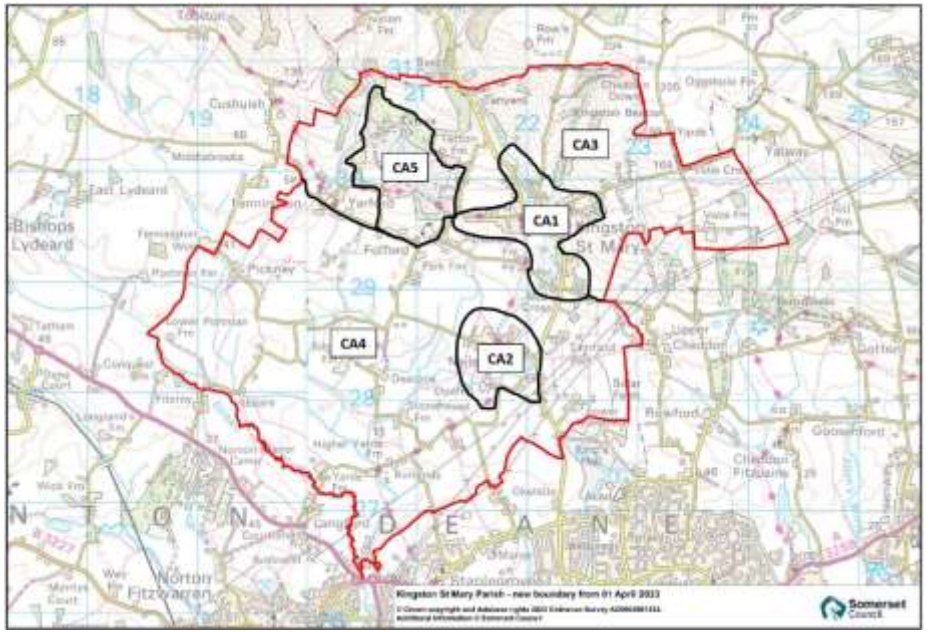
The initial Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening of the Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan concluded that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan could be screened out of the HRA process.; that no further assessment was required; and should not be screened into the SEA process.

However this has since been reconsidered by Natural England in the case of the HRA, and as a result highlighted their concern regarding the Plan's possible effects on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site and its component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) given the Plan area's location within the zone where nutrients generated as a result of new development could have an adverse impact on the Ramsar.

A subsequent Environmental Report dated November 2023 concluded that the Plan is not expected to result in any significant environmental impacts on the environment. This formed part of the Regulation 16 consultation to which Natural England and other statutory consultees responded and raised no concerns.

# T 1.1 Character Assessment Areas

Map 4 Designation of CA areas post 01/04/23 boundary change




Kingston St Mary Parish consists of five distinct character areas, as follows.

| | |
|---|---|
| Area 1 – Kingston St Mary Village: | Kingston St Mary Village is the main settlement within the Parish. The Conservation Area includes the oldest part of the Village and the area north of Greenway and Church Lane are part of the Quantock Hills National Landscape. |
| Area 2 – Nailsbourne & Dodhill: | The hamlets of Nailsbourne and Dodhill are physically separate and architecturally distinct from Kingston St Mary Village, being more rural in nature. |
| Area 3 – Kingston High Vale: | Kingston High Vale is sparsely populated high ground consisting of combes, valleys and woodland and includes the Yarford hamlet. Apart from the area south of Church Lane, the High Vale is within the Quantock Hills National Landscape. |
| Area 4 – Quantock Fringe: | The Quantock Fringe is sparsely populated relatively flat farmland and includes the hamlets of Pickney, Fulford and Edgeborough. |
| Area 5 – Tetton Estate: | Tetton is a historic estate, with a grade II* House and Terrace. The grounds resemble a parkland and are used for grazing cattle and sheep. |

The local landscape is a highly valued resource, not only the nationally protected Quantock Hills National Landscape, but also other areas of the Parish. The Parish's far reaching views represent a vital connection with the rural countryside and the Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to preserve and where possible enhance the local landscape. For more on the Parish's green spaces, refer to Work Stream 5 below.

Key landscape and settlement features which make each area distinct are shown below.

# Kingston St Mary Village

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location Setting and Views** | The Village of Kingston St Mary lies on the southern edge of the Quantock Hills, a couple of miles north of Taunton. The historic core of the village is designated as a Conservation Area (see the map on page 104) and the area north of Greenway and Church Lane are part of the Quantock Hills National Landscape.<br><br>A linear Village in its origins, now nucleated in form, with development tightly clustered within the Village's historic core, with more recent development on the fringes. Surrounded by countryside.<br><br>Views from within the Village are of a settlement set in a wooded combe where the Kingston High Vale transitions into the Quantock Fringe. Consequently, views to the north are towards the Quantock Hills and in the south towards a relatively flat, expansive and largely empty rural landscape. (Viewpoints 1 &2 shown in map below). |
| **Landscape Character and Vegetation** | Strong connection and views up into the Quantock Hills and, as you head north into the Quantocks, increasing views and connection across to the Blackdown Hills over the Vale of Taunton.<br><br>Significant tree coverage, many of which are mature.<br><br>Long-standing green spaces and diverse range of enclosed private gardens. |
| **Built Form** | Most houses are parallel to the road, many set back from the road and on different levels, reflecting topography.<br><br>The centre of the Village is dominated by older buildings, mostly two storeys.<br><br>Houses mostly of stone construction or rubble and cob, some with painted render. Most frequent stone type is red sandstone and morte slates. Some more recent development is in brick.<br><br>Various render colours, including white, off-white, yellow, pink and light blue.<br><br>Pitched roofs, with slate, clay and cement tiles. Historically, virtually all of the roofs would have been thatched, but very few thatched roofs remain today.<br><br>Development in recent decades has tended not to respond so closely to the character of development within the Village's conservation area, including a mixture of styles. |
| **Boundary Treatment** | Stone walls are common throughout the Village, of varying heights.<br><br>Notable lack of pavements through the centre of the Village.<br><br>Most private gardens are enclosed, though some of the more recent estates have open front gardens. |


Kingston St Mary Village


Bobbetts


The Thatched Cottage


Lodes


The Swan Inn

# Nailsbourne and Dodhill

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location Setting and Views** | Surrounded by agricultural land, Nailsbourne is about 3 miles from the centre of Taunton, a mile south of Kingston St Mary Village. The hamlets of Nailsbourne and Dodhill are physically separate and architecturally distinct from Kingston St Mary Village, being more rural in nature.<br>Dodhill was a separate farm on the hill above Nailsbourne, approached by its own road off the Taunton road but closely linked to Nailsbourne.<br>Between the two is Dodhill Green, once open land but now enclosed.<br>When approaching Kingston St Mary from Nailsbourne and Dodhill the Church can be seen rising above the treeline, with the Quantock Hills National Landscape in the background. (Viewpoint 3 shown in map below).<br>When approaching Nailsbourne and Dodhill from Kingston St Mary, views are vast overlooking a flat rural landscape of working farms with hills in the far distance. (Viewpoint 4 shown in map below). |
| **Landscape Character and Vegetation** | Land is largely flat, with elevated flood risk.<br>Road headed down to Nailsbourne from Kingston Road drops down, with steep banks of ferns, shrubs and trees. Sunken lanes a common feature.<br>Private gardens, many of which are relatively large.<br>Nailsbourne does not have any communal green spaces, other than routes linked with rights of way.<br>Nailsbourne stream snakes through the Hamlet. |
| **Built Form** | Orientation of houses relative to the road varies; most are set back from the road, many on slopes to reduce the risk of flooding.<br>Bungalows are common.<br>Various barn conversions.<br>Oldest properties are of stone construction or rubble and cob, some with painted render. Compared with Kingston St Mary Village, there is a greater proportion of more recent properties, some of which are made of brick. |
| **Boundary Treatment** | Stone walls and hedges.<br>Most private gardens are enclosed. |


Nailsbourne


Nailsbourne Bungalow


Dodhill Firs

# Kingston High Vale

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location Setting and Views** | The most elevated and northerly section of the Parish, on the edge of, and dominated by the Quantock Hills. Kingston High Vale is sparsely populated high ground consisting of combes, valleys and woodland and includes the Yarford hamlet.<br><br>Views are often vast over an open landscape looking towards the Vale of Taunton, with the Blackdown Hills in the distance. Views become restricted when descending into enclosed wooded combes. (Viewpoint 5 shown in map below). |
| **Landscape Character and Vegetation** | The landscape becomes more rural as one heads into the Quantocks, with sunken lanes.<br><br>Significant tree cover, broadleaved and coniferous. Some remaining mature trees, in broken lines within fields, give a visual clue to now lost hedgerows.<br><br>Fields are generally large and rectangular.<br><br>South-facing sloping landform defined by predominantly arable use.<br><br>Narrow, wooded combes cut through the land. |
| **Built Form** | Large country houses and their associated parkland and extensive grounds.<br><br>Houses on different levels reflecting topography.<br><br>Dwellings mostly of stone construction, rubble and/or cob, some with painted render. Stone tends to be red sandstone and Morte slates.<br><br>Some roofs remain thatched, alongside natural slate and clay tiles. |
| **Boundary Treatment** | Many stone faced banks topped with beech trees.<br><br>Some high walls (of sandstone and morte slates) defining property boundaries.<br><br>Significant hedgerow loss has created large sweeping fields. Fields are mostly bounded by 'flailed hedgerows' of mixed native species. |

**Buncombe Hill**



**Down Farm**



# Quantock Fringe

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location Setting and Views** | The southern section of the Parish, borders the northern edge of Taunton Town Council's Staplegrove Ward.The Quantock Fringe is sparsely populated relatively flat farmland and includes the Pickney, Fulford and Edgeborough hamlets. Views to the north are vast with big skies, looking over a predominately flat landscape, towards the Quantock Hills National Landscape. (Viewpoint 6 shown in map below). |
| **Landscape Character and Vegetation** | Flat, predominantly agricultural land – a mixture of dairying, stock rearing, arable, fruit cropping and fields of miscanthus, for biofuel and animal bedding. Fields tend to be medium to large in size.<br>Tributary streams of the River Tone cut through the landscape. The hills form a strong backdrop.<br>This landscape character extends to the northern edge of Taunton Town Council's Staplegrove Ward, with a southern boundary defined by the course of the Back Stream and the northern boundary of the proposed Staplegrove housing development. |
| **Built Form** | The farmland is interspersed with few settlements and individual farms. Stone construction, some with painted render, rubble and cob. Stone commonly red sandstone. Some properties remain thatched. |
| **Boundary Treatment** | Hedgerows, generally on low banks, and multiple, mature hedgerow oaks. |






# Tetton Estate

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location Setting and Views** | A discreet section of the northern part of the Parish, significantly influenced by Tetton House and its gardens. Tetton is a historic estate, with a grade II* House and Terrace. The grounds resemble a parkland and are used for grazing cattle and sheep.<br>Views are across an open undulating formal park like landscape, looking towards higher wooded ground. (Viewpoint 7 shown in map below). |
| **Landscape Character and Vegetation** | Largely agricultural, sloping land, most of which is only accessible on foot.<br>Trees cloaking the steeply incised valley sides create a strong sense of enclosure. |
| **Built Form** | Most buildings of stone construction, largely not rendered, frequently red sandstone. Roofs tend to be of thatch or slate. |
| **Boundary Treatment** | Hedgerows, generally on low banks. |

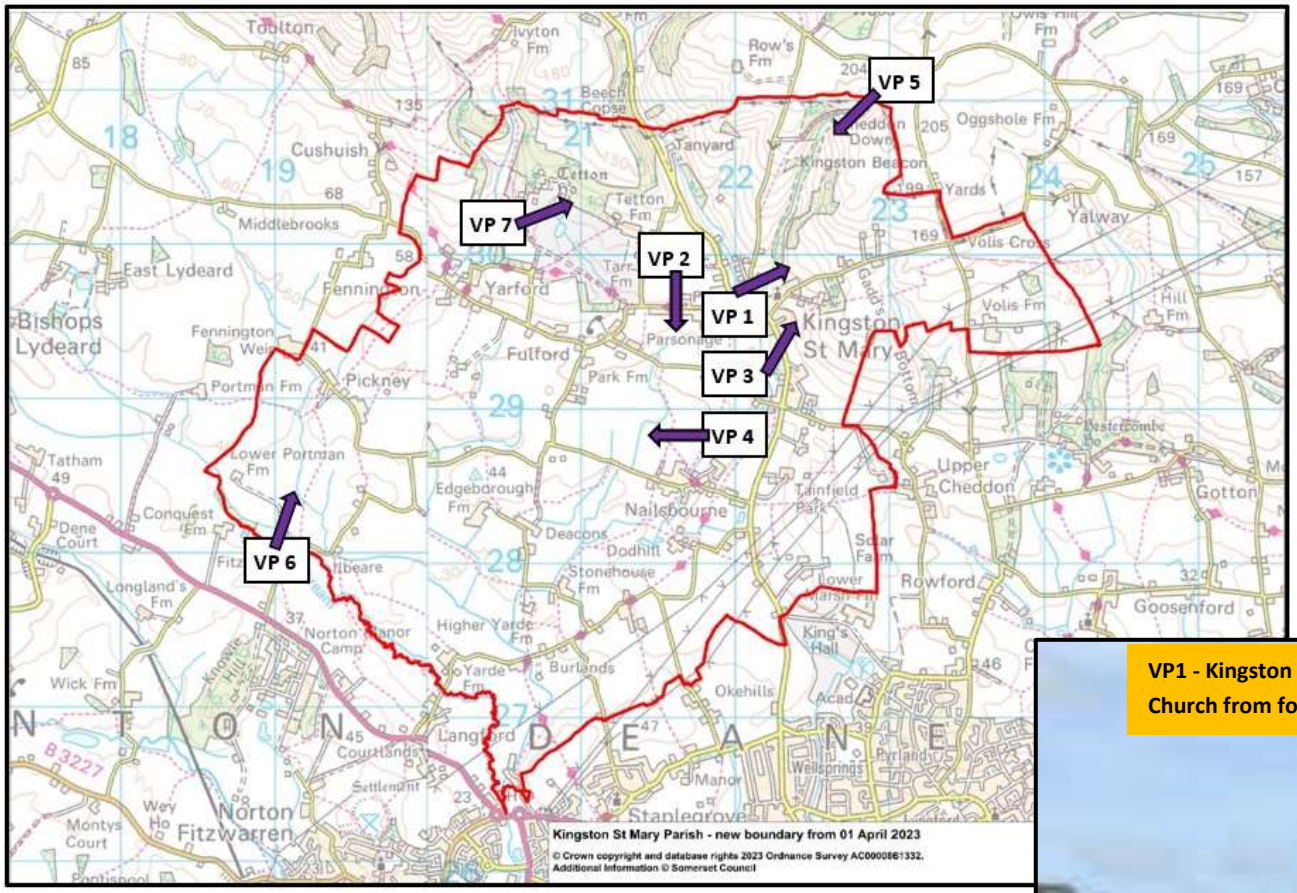








## T 1.2 Views Map 5. Map of View Points




Views from all the Character Assessment Areas are a window into the past, portraying a landscape which has seen little change over hundreds of years and are intrinsic to the rural character of the Parish. The conservation and preservation of these views is therefore essential for the Parish of Kingston St Mary to retain its own rural identity.

The views to and from the rural, undeveloped landscape have been identified as intrinsic and special aspects of the area. Care should therefore be taken to maintain the character of the landscape, the quality and nature of the views and the setting of the Village and Hamlets.

The most significant features in the Parish include not only the various listed buildings and the Hamlets, but also the rural landscape, trees, hedgerows and sunken narrow country lanes.



**VP1 - Kingston St Mary's Church from footpath T15/41**

| Views | Grid Reference | what3words |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint 1 - Looking towards Kingston St Mary's Church from footpath T15/41 by the Playing Field.** | **ST 21964 29492** | **pulse.piano.bossy** |
| **Viewpoint 2 - looking south towards the Quantock Fringe from Greenway.** | **ST 21523 29606** | **cared.dull.juices** |
| **TableViewpoint 3 - Looking towards Kingston St Mary's Church from footpath T15/41 by Parsonage Farm** | **ST 21973 29297** | **snacks.jolly.delay** |
| **Viewpoint 4 - Looking east from footpath T15/25 when approaching Nailsbourne and Dodhill.** | **ST 21913 28965** | **galaxy.badly.skill** |
| **Viewpoint 5 - Looking from the high ground above Downs Farm over the Quantock Fringe and the Vale of Taunton beyond, with the Blackdown Hills in the distance.** | **ST 22922 31021** | **town.stack.friday** |
| **Viewpoint 6 - Looking north from the start of footpath T15/51 towards Pickney Farm, with the Quantock Hills in the background**. | **ST 19128 28046** | **feast.bulb.most** |
| **Viewpoint 7 - Looking over Tetton Park from footpath T15/37 leading to Tetton House.** | **ST 21084 29796** | **across.belong.maybe** |

Table 6.



**VP2 – looking south towards the Quantock Fringe from Greenway**

VP3 – Kingston St Mary's Church from footpath T15/41



VP4 – View East from footpath T15/25



VP6 – View north from footpath T15/51



VP5 – View above Downs Farm



VP7 - Tetton Park from footpath T15/37



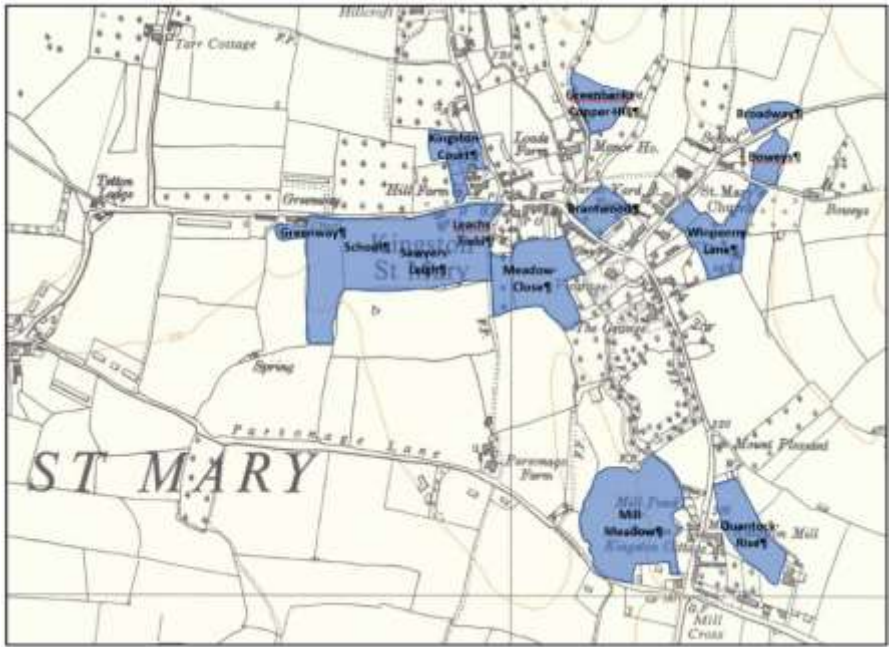
## T 1.3 Historic and Built Environment

The local historic environment plays a key role in shaping local distinctiveness, in particular (but not limited to) the Parish's heritage assets. Currently, there are 32 designated heritage assets in the Parish of Kingston St Mary, including:

- 1 GI Listed Building – The Church;
- 1 GI Park and Garden – Hestercombe Park and Garden;
- 2 GII* Listed Buildings – The Manor House; Tetton House & Terrace;
- 27 GII Listed Buildings;
- Kingston St Mary Conservation Area. The conservation area was designated on 16 April 1975 and revised on 11 August 1993. To date, no Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared.

The centre of Kingston St Mary village has changed little over the past 200 years, where there remains a sense of timelessness. The walk from the church of St. Mary, down past The Green, and bending round to the right to the Swan Inn, will have a similar feel now as it did in the 19th century, except for the impact of the car. 100 years ago the village roads would have been made up largely of compressed stone and mud.

The Village's growth over the last 100 years, as shown in the map below, has been primarily through small and infill developments. This modest growth is seen as being beneficial to achieve a more balanced and sustainable community.




Map 6 above highlights growth in the village over the last 100 years.

With limited scope for further development within the 'Settlement Limits', as defined in the Local Plan, alternative growth sites may need to be found or the settlement limits revisited, while adhering to the policies in the Development Plan.

It is recognised that houses built during the 20th and 21st centuries have reflected the designs and materials of the period. While there is no one single architectural style for the Parish, many buildings are of stone construction or facing, often including red sandstone and morte slates; and when rendering (or part-rendering) and/or painting, there is a palette of colours that are commonly used.

Without being prescriptive, the examples shown below illustrate what is considered appropriate design and materials for new developments within the Conservation Area, depending on the setting.


Kingston Court


Brantwood – Lodes Lane


Grange Firs – Kingston Road


Cock & Hen Wall – Kingston Court

Kingston St Mary Village:

Then



Now







Village Green





The Swan at Kingston





The Manor House





View of Church





Any new development (including conversions, extensions and new properties) should respect the style and scale of surrounding properties and the local context and ensure that building materials, including boundary treatments (such as front or side walls, hedges and fences) are in keeping with the prevailing design and materials used.

While ham stone is used for a small number of buildings, most notably 'The Grange', the vibrant yellow of new ham stone will take a long time to blend in with existing development. New development should also make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

## Protecting Local Character

This Character Assessment has identified the key features and characteristics that make up the topography of Kingston St Mary Parish. The following Policy sets out the factors that should be taken into consideration to ensure that change can be accommodated in a way that reinforces and enhances the distinctive character of the Parish. The justification for this Policy is supported by the evidence in the Character Assessment Report[3], together with National and Regional Character Assessments.

Outstanding and innovative design is supported where the proposal does not have an unacceptable effect on local character and where high levels of sustainability are demonstrated. The most up-to-date standards at the time of writing are the prevailing Building Regulations, though these may be superseded by new planning policy or legislation, also taking into account relevant guidance[4].

Climate change mitigation and adaptation is a theme that informs various work streams in the Neighbourhood Plan.

[3] KSM Character Assessment - Final Report v2.pdf

[4] Including but not limited to the Districtwide Design Guide and local or other exemplary guidance linked with net zero, e.g. Net Zero Carbon Toolkit

## KSM Policy 1: Protecting Local Character

1. Development proposals throughout the Parish will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:
   a) takes into account the overall massing, density and layout of the surrounding built environment;
   b) has no significant adverse impact on the surrounding built and historic environment and landscape setting, or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated through effective design, landscaping, screening and/or planting;
   c) avoids harm to the landscape and built character and takes account of, and conserves, the key features of the views and vistas defined in Map 4 on Page 25 and described in the Plan;
   d) causes no significant harm to the significance of designated heritage assets and local heritage assets, including their setting, and where achievable enhances their significance or appreciation;
   e) has no adverse impacts on local amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses (factors such as noise, tranquillity, light pollution, and enjoyment of space), or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated; and,
   f) has taken fully into account the Kingston St Mary Character Assessment.

2. In addition development proposals in the Conservation Area and its setting will only be supported where it is demonstrated that the proposal:
   a. is in keeping with and complements the form, character and scale of the surrounding built environment or demonstrates outstanding and innovative design in accordance with criterion 3.
   b) Preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Kingston St Mary Conservation Area and its setting and has taken any relevant guidance and appraisals into account. The Conservation Area is shown in Appendix 5.

3. Outstanding and innovative design is supported and particularly encouraged to include the highest standards of sustainability through design.

## T 1.4 Maintaining separation between Taunton and the village of Kingston St Mary and its hamlets

A key aspect of the character across all character areas, relates to the open and rural nature of the Parish, taking account of the separation between Taunton and Kingston St Mary Village, and within the Parish between each of the Hamlets and the Village.

This separation is acknowledged in more detail in the **Quantocks Landscape Partnership Scheme's Landscape Character Assessment** (QLPS LCA), which extends beyond the Quantock Hills National Landscape boundary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Quantock character through consideration of the landscape setting to the Hills.

To quote from the LCA: "This wider area, known as the **Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme area (QLPS area)** has been defined to ensure the landscapes sitting beyond the designated area, which share many of the same combination of elements, features and characteristics as the Quantock Hills National Landscape, are taken into account as part of a bigger picture. These landscapes are also greatly influenced by their proximity to, and immediate views of, the prominent hill and ridge landform of the Quantock Hills National Landscape such that they feel inherently 'Quantock' in character – perceptually part of the Quantock Hills landscape."

The QLPS area has been divided into twelve landscape types. Kingston St Mary Parish includes two of these types: the **Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes,** and **the Agricultural Foothills**. Much of the Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes landscape type is characterised by large Country Houses and estates.

As stated in the QLPS LCA: "Divided land ownership of a number of these properties has seen inconsistent and insensitive management, leading to a loss of the historic fabric that is so important to understanding the history of this part of the Quantock landscape."

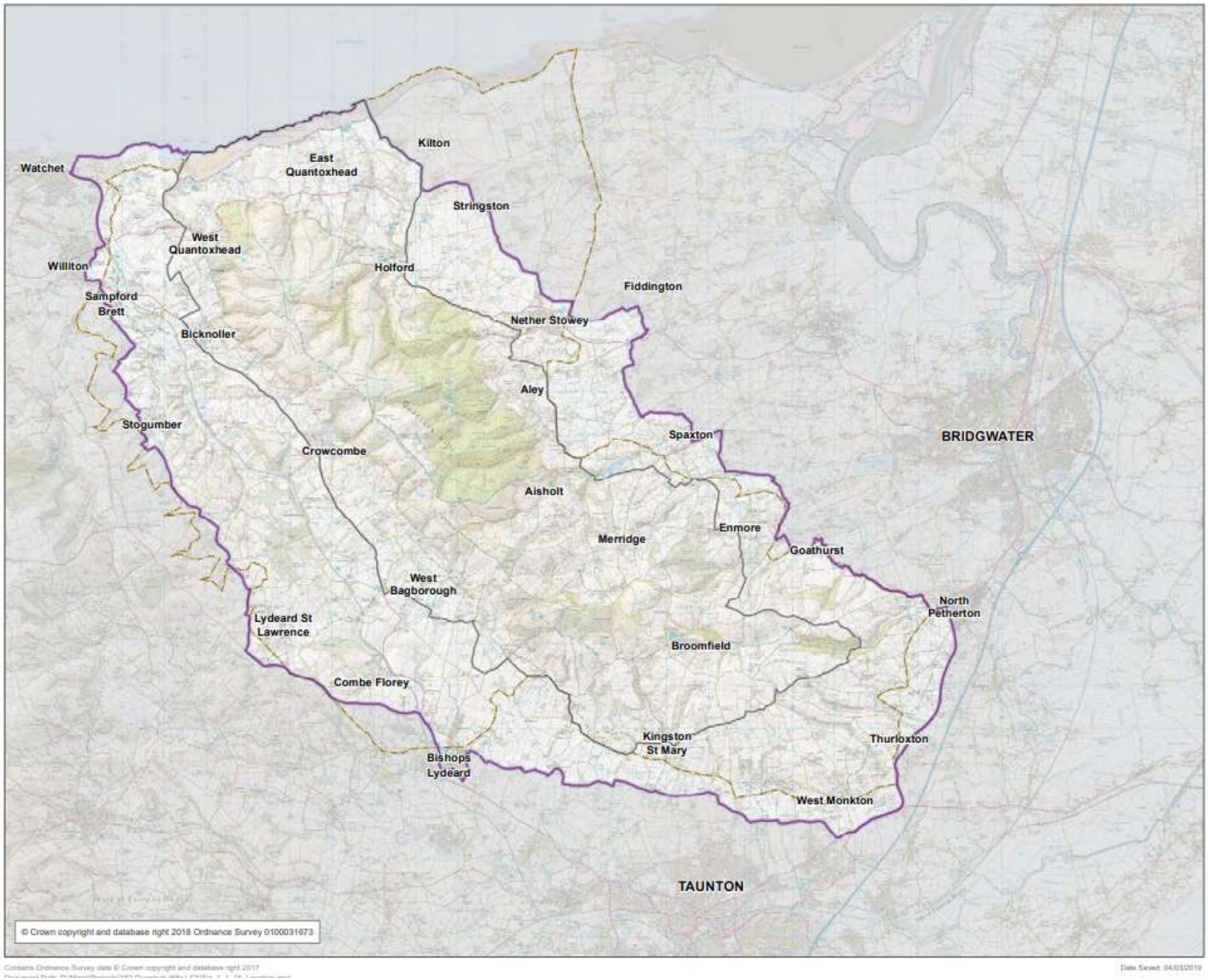
"This is a landscape type that transcends the designated Quantock Hills National Landscape boundary, continuing its repeating pattern of deep combes and exaggerated rounded terrain, gradually giving way to more subtle slopes and undulations of the Quantock Foothills"

The Agricultural Foothills are exclusive to the area outside of the Quantock Hills National Landscape boundary – abutting the designated landscape of the Quantock Hills but not crossing into it. The QLPS LCA states that this is a transitional landscape type that separates the pronounced and rolling hills from the vale landscapes that surround Bridgwater to the north and Taunton to the south. Quoting from the LCA:

"This is a farmed landscape – the fields patterns reflecting medieval or earlier enclosure but with numerous fields having changed shape and been enlarged due to historic hedgerow removal."

"This is a landscape of moderate character. There has been significant loss of key features such as hedgerow trees and orchards and the management (flailing) of surviving hedgerows has seen their decline such that the structure of the landscape pattern has significantly weakened. Whilst much of the landscape retains its rural character, urban fringe and infrastructure impart their influence on the foothills with main road corridors and features such a pylon tracts affecting levels of tranquillity and quality of views. The overall visible condition of the landscape is judged to be **moderate to poor** overall."

Map 7




**THE QUANTOCK LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP**

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Figure 1.1: Study Area**

- Quantock Hills AONB
- Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Area (the Study Area)
- Original (draft) Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Area

0 1 2 3 Km

Scale: 1:85,000 at A3

COOKSON&TICKNER

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**What does this mean for the Neighbourhood Plan?**

The QLPS LCA reinforces the need to take the area beyond the Quantock Hills National Landscape boundary into account as part of a bigger picture, also considering views to and from the hills as outlined in the character assessment report informing this Neighbourhood Plan.

Residents of the Parish share the QLPS concerns that:

i. the estates characterising much of the Quantock Hills landscape (and its immediate setting) is under threat of being broken up, and
ii. there are risks of progressive decline or loss of key features or special qualities of the Quantocks, such as heritage features of the designed parklands and the rich tapestry of the agricultural landscapes.

The Neighbourhood Plan takes a robust approach in seeking to maintain separation between the county town, the village of Kingston St Mary and its hamlets. This is expressed from the outset, in the Vision (Pages 10&11). Kingston St Mary's village and hamlets will continue to be distinct settlements separated from Taunton, and each other, by the surrounding countryside.

While there is a recognition that Neighbourhood Plans cannot stop development, the plan can and does emphasise the rural nature of the Parish and the role of Kingston St Mary in preserving and where possible enhancing or restoring valued features of the Quantock Hills National Landscape, including those in its setting.

This approach also takes into account:

- **Somerset West & Taunton Council's Core Strategy:** Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that: "*…Kingston St Mary…will retain settlement boundaries, as shown on the Proposals Map insets, and* ***have no further allocations made through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD****, but some scope for small scale proposals within settlement limits*".
- **Taunton Town Council Governance Review**: In relation to the Governance Review and the formation of a Taunton Town Council the Parish Council's response, following a community meeting, was to exclude the area of the proposed Staplegrove East development from the Parish, i.e. for the Parish to retain its rural character. The proposed boundary changes are now in place and the Neighbourhood Plan designated area has been amended to account for the boundary change. The area of Staplegrove inherited from Staplegrove Parish Council is rural in character, mainly farmland, while the Staplegrove East development will sit within the new Taunton Town Council, and so not impact either on the rural nature or housing in the Parish of Kingston St Mary.
- **Kingston St Mary's Community Plan 2017** achieved a 56% response rate. Of those respondents, 9 in 10 attached the highest importance to the separation of Kingston St Mary Parish from Taunton and the surrounding villages (hamlets) by fields and countryside.

The QLPS's Landscape Character Assessment concludes that on a priority scale of 1 to 5 as a guide for prioritising changes to their management approach (1 being the highest priority), the **Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes areas** are judged to be priority 4 but the **Agricultural Foothills areas are deemed to be a level 2 priority**, and so of greater concern**.**

In summary, in response to the QLPS's LCA , the 2017 Community Plan and as a response to the Governance Review, the intention is to work with the Quantock Hills National Landscape team and the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) to conserve & enhance the area of Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes landscape, but a higher priority is to enhance & restore the area of Agricultural Foothills which fall within the Parish of Kingston St Mary.

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**The Policy** on Separation supports QLP's vision and also our own, i.e. that 'Kingston St Mary will, by design, remain a predominantly undeveloped rural Parish, with its open countryside protecting the Quantock Hills National Landscape from the urban expansion of Taunton.'

## KSM Policy 2:

## Protecting the Character: Separation

To protect the open and rural nature of the Parish, and the separate identity and character of the settlements within it, separation between those hamlets and villages should be retained.

This necessarily involves maintaining visual and physical gaps between hamlets within Kingston St Mary Parish boundary and between the built areas of the Parish and any new development within Taunton Town Council's new boundary.

Any development proposals in the gaps between hamlets, and Taunton Town Council's boundary should be located and designed to maintain separation and to complement the relevant landscape characteristics of the gaps, through:

(a) Locating structures where they will be viewed against existing built form

(b) Retaining the proportion and scale of built structures and the space between them

(c) Reference to the built vernacular of the neighbourhood area, and in proportion to the expressed housing needs of the community, and

(d) Conservation and restoration of traditional boundary treatments, including the use of appropriate indigenous plant species to integrate with the rural character.

## T 1.5 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Minimising the impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, and improving resilience to current and future pressures is critical in this area which includes the Quantock Hills National Landscape and the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme area (QLPS area).

Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, as well as the ecology of the Parish.

The aim of the Natural Environment Policy is to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability, while the Trees & Hedges Policy looks to protect and restore trees and hedgerows.

## T 1.6 Protecting and restoring trees and hedgerows

The description of the **Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes landscape type** in the QLPS LCA includes:

Native mixed-species hedgerows, comprising a mix of hawthorn, blackthorn, oak and ash, typically bound the fields. The intact pattern of small irregular fields is of considerable historic interest representing, in some cases, Iron Age landscape patterns or phases of Saxon and Medieval expansion.

Issues and threats to this landscape type are quoted as being:

9.17. The management of the landscape has resulted in a loss of landscape pattern (particularly smaller hedged pasture converted to larger field under arable cropping).

- Weakening of the field pattern - historic removal of hedgerow, poor management and excessive flailing of the surviving hedgerow network.
- Localised decline of beech hedge banks and loss of mature trees.
- Loss of orchards across the landscape.
- Ash die back is likely to have a significant impact on some ash-dominated woodlands with the probable loss of a large proportion of the mature trees over the next decade.

The Description of the **Agricultural Foothills** landscape focuses on the loss of trees in the landscape, particularly hedgerow trees and historic orchards. The evaluation of this landscape quotes:

18.11 …There has been significant loss of key features such as hedgerow trees and orchards and the management (flailing) of surviving hedgerows has seen their decline such that the structure of the landscape pattern has significantly weakened.

18.5…Fields are often divided by post and wire and post and rail fencing (or tape) to create horse paddocks. Growth of miscanthus (elephant grass) is common, more so in the south around Fennington. Here for much of the year, once open views are now crowded out by this fast growing, tall crop.

The **Natural Environment Policy** supports QLP's vision for the Agricultural Foothills area :

**Landscape Character Vision and Future Management**

The vision is for a landscape whose structure and sense of intactness is enhanced through for example increasing the number of hedgerow trees, replanting orchards and encouraging hedge laying as opposed to flailing. This will increase both the strength of character and condition of the foothills, thereby improving the quality of the landscape overall. There is a need to focus on the interface of the suburban areas and transport corridors with the rural landscape.

# KSM POLICY 3:

# Protecting the Character : Natural Environment

All new building will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development in line with the most up-to-date national requirements for biodiversity net gain.

Activity whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) will be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons (where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat) and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

New housing will also demonstrate nutrient neutrality, in order to protect against adverse effects on the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar site or on any other Habitat sites.

**Trees and hedgerows**

a) Development that damages or results in the loss of **trees or hedgerows** of arboricultural and amenity value will not be supported.
b) Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or orchards will not be supported. Development proposals must be designed to retain ancient trees or trees or and hedgerows of good arboricultural and amenity value. A minimum buffer of at least 15 metres in width should be maintained between ancient woodland and any development boundary;
c) Development proposals should be guided by the findings of a tree survey and 'Tree Constraints Plan' and be accompanied where appropriate by an Arboricultural Method Statement. The Tree Survey should establish the health, longevity and quality of any affected trees or hedgerows and should recommend a management plan to demonstrate how they should be maintained;
d) Conservation and restoration of traditional boundary treatments, and the planting of new indigenous trees and hedgerows incorporating appropriate plant species, and orchards to integrate with the rural character will be supported.

**Bats** Development proposals will only be supported where they conserve and enhance the habitats that support the bat population and further the conservation objectives of Hestercombe House SAC1 by ensuring that the bats suffer no adverse impact from:

a) loss of feeding habitat; and/or
b) severance of flight lines; and/or
c) light affecting summer roosts; and/or
d) commuting routes and feeding areas; and/or
e) loss damage or disturbance of night roosts

# T 2 Transport

## Traffic Impact, Road Safety & Active Travel

Feedback from the Community to the 2016 Community Plan highlighted the concerns of the large majority of parishioners about the volume of vehicles travelling through Kingston St Mary, the speed at which they travel, and the dangers to pedestrians and cyclists travelling around the Parish, but particularly on the Kingston Road between Kingston St Mary village and Taunton.

The survey explored the importance of safe off-road pedestrian and cycle routes outside of the village centre - joining Kingston St Mary village and the wider parish to North Taunton, and also routes to connect up the various parts of the parish. A sizeable majority indicated it is important to them to have safe active travel routes that join Kingston St Mary village and the wider parish with North Taunton.

# T2a Traffic Impact & Road Safety

## Background

The widespread concern in the Community about the volume of traffic and the speed of some vehicles through Kingston St Mary village and other settlements in the Parish was confirmed by the Community Plan.

Having investigated the possibilities of a footway through the Village of Kingston St Mary to improve safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, without success, the Parish Council installed a Speed Indicator device at the gateway to the 30mph zone. In 2022 they then funded a reduction in speed limits to 20mph through the centre of the village and a 40mph zone on Kingston Road from Taunton to Kingston St Mary. This improves safety on the road itself and also helps to slow traffic as it arrives at Mill Cross, a dangerous junction on the southern edge of Kingston St Mary.

The Community Plan called for Speedwatch to be resumed and it is being operated by volunteers drawing attention to the speed limits in Kingston St Mary and on Kingston Road, and further traffic and road safety improvements are sought by the Community.

> ‘Have got to the point where I regard it as too dangerous to cycle or walk into town - it’s very limiting.’
> ‘Having safer cycle routes would encourage us all to cycle more often.’

**Information Gathering and Evidence**

At peak times about 100 vehicles an hour drive through Kingston St Mary in each direction. The daily average of vehicles is 1,290 travelling into Kingston St Mary from Taunton and 1,384 leaving Kingston St Mary towards Taunton (data collected by the SID at Mill Cross during early Dec 22, figures may have been affected by road closures in the area).

There is a serious concern that this traffic volume could be increased significantly by the proposed Staplegrove development of about 1,700 houses between the North of Taunton and Kingston St Mary.

It is accepted that the development itself will generate vehicle movements. The planned Staplegrove development and the roads within it are outside the Neighbourhood Area (NA). If the roads just provide access to and from the development there will be little impact on the NA.
However, parishioners' concerns are that should the roads in the development form a spine road which generates through traffic unconnected with the development, that traffic might then use Kingston Road and Kingston St Mary village as a shortcut to Bridgwater or to J24 of the M5.

Whilst the Staplegrove development is outside the NA, a spine road generating through traffic could increase the volume of traffic within, and have a significant adverse impact on the NA. Indeed the Quantock Landscape Partnership's Landscape Character Assessment states that this area of Agricultural Foothills within the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme area (QLPS) described in the previous section is one in which:
"Rural lanes are frequently used as rat runs to avoid congestion in urban areas."

**Issues**
The large scale residential development in Taunton continues at a pace generating more vehicle movements.

Historically there has been discussion around a possible Northern Orbital Road around Taunton but it is not currently a project that Somerset Council is considering and the possible route is unknown.

Whether such a proposal may come forward in the life of The Plan, and whether or not the route would pass through the NA is unknown. However, a Northern Orbital Road around Taunton could benefit the NA significantly by enabling through traffic to stay on main roads rather than trafficking the NA.

Parishioners wish to maintain the rural feel of Kingston St Mary. They value the absence of street lighting and only appropriate road signage to avoid an urban feel. These views are consistent with the preservation of the Quantock Hills National Landscape . No street lighting means that traffic calming measures, such as road narrowing, are not permitted.



## Recommendations/Proposed Improvements/On Going Work Areas

The following are examples of road safety improvements to be sought, the list is not exhaustive:

- 20mph through Nailsbourne
- Extend the 30mph zone on Parsonage Lane to beyond the blind summit and public footpath crossing
- 30mph through Fulford and Yarford
- A 'Gate' on Kingston Road as the 30mph zone starts to make it more obvious to drivers that they are entering a residential area. Re-mount the cast iron Village signs on the gate.
- Mill Cross junction improvements as follows:
    - Red road surface
    - Permanent SID
    - Double yellow lines adjacent to post box near Mill Cross
    - Reduce the splay of the road opposite Parsonage Lane to improve the safety of the private driveways right on the corner
- Red road surface at the beginning of the 20mph in front of Cala
- The permanent SID at Mill Cross would release the existing mobile SID which would then be rotated between other sites in Kingston St Mary and on Kingston Road. The speed limits in Nailsbourne and Fulford and Yarford would enable the SID to also be operated there.

Should commuter traffic become more heavy through Kingston St Mary consideration could be given to providing a footway through the Village. This would only be possible by narrowing the road with one way signalised traffic control. The one way system with signalised traffic control on the road near the church in Dunster is an example. This would cause congestion and inconvenience for the community and local traffic but it would encourage some through traffic to avoid Kingston St Mary altogether by staying on more major roads.

## Statement of Intent : Traffic & Road Safety

The Parish Council will work proactively with stakeholders, including the local highways authority, local residents, applicants and others as appropriate, on traffic management, road infrastructure and road safety measures and/or schemes, seeking to:

a) Minimise the increase in traffic volume through the village of Kingston St Mary. Commuter and other vehicles not requiring local access or access to the Quantock Hills National Landscape will be encouraged to use more major roads; and

b) Manage the necessary traffic volume and develop infrastructure to improve road safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

**References:** National road infrastructure and speed limit criteria. The Community Plan is available to be viewed on the Kingston St Mary website @ www.kstm.uk

# T2b. Active Travel Route

## Background

Active Travel includes walking, wheeling and cycling.

The 2016 household survey showed that cycling and walking from the village towards Taunton along the Kingston Road is a major negative for residents. Some cyclists get around the safety issues by taking a longer route via the country lanes; those who would like to walk are less likely to do so because it adds significantly to the journey time. People recognised that cycling and walking has health benefits and that encouraging walking and cycling would reduce dependence on car usage and lower traffic volumes through the village. Residents would highly value the addition of a safe off-road route into Taunton for pedestrians and cyclists.




Residents also raised the point that the North Taunton Development, and the Hinckley C project will lead to increased traffic volumes along Kingston Road and the resultant implications for safety to walkers and cyclists on the route into Taunton. Cycling and walking along the main (Kingston) road is a dangerous and unpleasant experience and is likely to worsen over time. People are concerned about their children and grand-children using the road network. Many respondents commented that the roads are too dangerous and that they do not use Kingston Road, or avoid cycling altogether.

> 'Cycling into Taunton should be easy, not life-threatening on Kingston Road. So dangerous to commute on bike at the moment, but potentially would reduce traffic significantly if cycle route improved.'

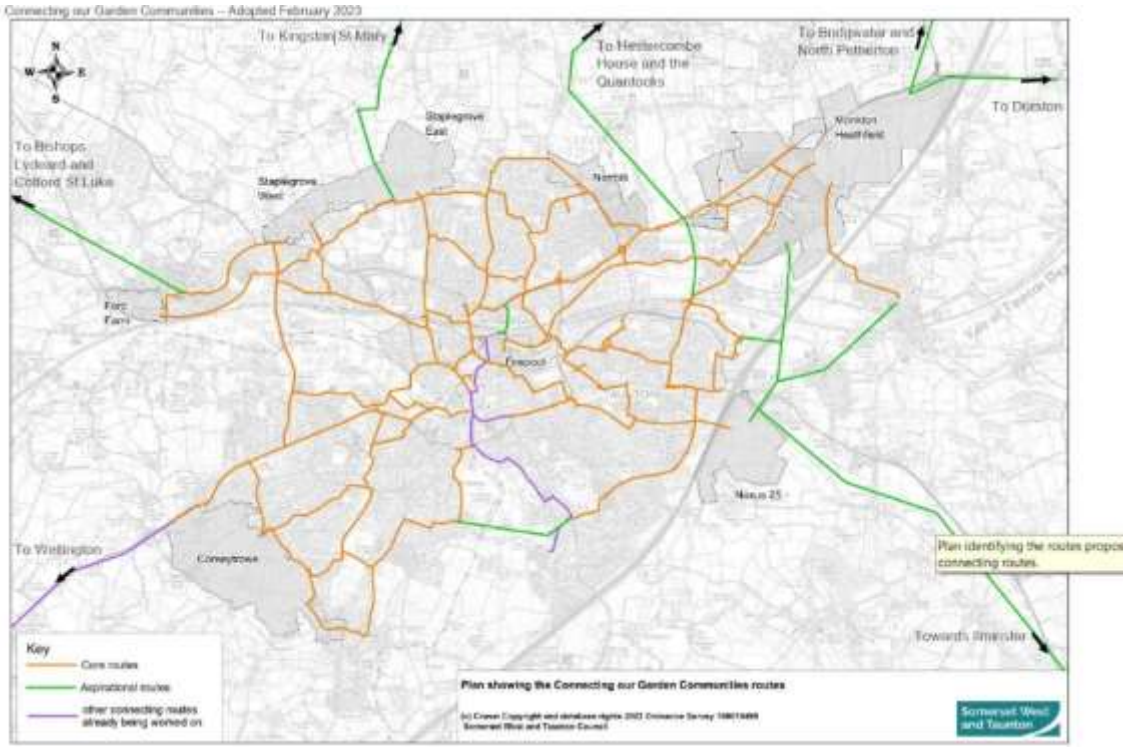
**Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)** are focused, 10-year plans for developing a cycle and walking network within a local area. The LCWIP for Taunton was published in 2021. One of the aims is to provide a network that could form the foundation of cycling and walking links to surrounding settlements such as Bishop's Lydeard, Kingston St. Mary, Ruishton and Wellington. In 2022 further audits have been carried out on routes through the urban extensions, including the Staplegrove developments.

The **Taunton Deane Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy 2011-2028** states:

Vision for the Borough: Our public transport networks will be improved whilst well connected and integrated walking and cycling networks will provide those living and working within the Borough with further alternatives to the private car.

Policy CP6 relates to: 'Improving accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking to key destinations such as Taunton and Wellington town centres, new employment areas, Somerset College and Musgrove Park Hospital, especially from North Taunton and Taunton East, and from rural centres and villages to the main towns.

The **Connecting our Garden Communities plan** was adopted by Full Council on 7 February 2023, it includes the identification of a link between Taunton and Kingston St Mary.




Map 8. SWT - Connecting our Garden Communities

The **Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC)** published a Taunton Cycle Network Quality Map. Blue routes are safe to ride, red routes are dangerous.

The goal is to ‘Turn the network blue’.

## Actions/ Suggestions/ Solutions put forward

- Work with the local council to prioritize the installation of good quality cycle/pedestrian routes within the development area of the North Taunton (Staplegrove) urban extension. The development will give the perfect opportunity to link with an Active Travel route through the development in order to create a parallel off-road route directly between Kingston St Mary village and Taunton town.
- Explore further opportunities to extend the above link to quiet lanes around the established parish settlements, by utilizing existing bridleways and ‘green lanes’ where roads do not currently connect.
- Create a recognized and clearly sign-posted cycle network within the parish utilizing existing quiet lanes. This will help establish Kingston as a sustainable village, where car users will get used to seeing cyclists, and most importantly children, frequently out on their bikes. It is hoped that this would slow traffic speeds and increase courtesy shown to walkers, riders and cyclists.
- Establish a cycle network. Kingston St Mary parish will be pro-active in extending the influence of the Quantock Hills National Landscape for its potential to offer quality outdoor leisure opportunities to its own residents and to visitors from outside the parish, and help promote Kingston St Mary’s status as ‘gateway to the Quantocks’.




Map 9: TACC Taunton Cycle Network Quality Map

**Feasibility study**

In January 2017 a voluntary group run by local residents was set up, the Kingston Area Pedestrian And Cycle Campaign (KAPACC). The aim of this group is to campaign for safer, better and more walking and cycling in the Kingston Area.

In 2022 KAPACC and the Kingston St Mary Parish Council commissioned Sustrans, a charity encouraging people to walk and cycle, to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate potential options for a

multi user path of approximately 3km long, connecting the village of Kingston St Mary with Taunton and onwards onto National Cycle Network route 3.

Sustrans was given the following background information:

The Taunton LCWIP states that the northern side of Taunton is much less well served with cycling routes than the south, east and west. The LCWIP identifies Kingston St Mary -Taunton as within the 10-year scheme programme profile but low priority.

A safe pedestrian and cycling route to town was a key request from the resident survey which fed into the 2017 Kingston Community Plan.

The Staplegrove housing development, which felt imminent at the time, was one way a route could be realised at the Taunton end, with cycling infrastructure built into the eastern development and funded by the developer. However, phosphates and Covid have halted progress on the application for the first phase of the western side and realistically, a cycling route resulting from the eastern development looks a very long way off indeed.

The new speed restrictions on the Kingston Road and the main road through Kingston are very welcome and will help, but they will not necessarily result in a safe cycle route to Taunton. 20 mph has been installed for the centre of the village, 30mph on the approaches and 40mph between Taunton and Kingston St Mary edge of village.

The parish council and community are working hard on actions to respond to the climate and ecological crisis. Transport remains a key stumbling block for us in encouraging residents out of their cars, the number of which have increased significantly over the last ten years.

Families are keen to cycle as evidenced by the success or our annual Family Cycle Day around the lanes of Kingston. However, feedback from the Community Plan is that walking through Kingston (especially from the Spinney to the village hall) or cycling to Taunton is considered too dangerous for children and for many nervous adults.

Kingston village centre is only 1.8 miles from Corkscrew Lane junction i.e., it would be a relatively easy ‘gain’, against a backdrop of ever worsening commuter and commercial traffic, using what is effectively a minor country road as a main route.

**Outputs from the feasibility study**

- An analysis of the route options, shown on large scale maps at 1:10,000 scale and utilizing photographs to describe the proposed alignment.
- A description of the route options presented in tabular format. Each route will be broken down into sections. Each section will be described, i.e., the proposed surface type, path width and layout will be given.
- Broad brush costs
- A short report with necessary appendices
- Liaison with the client team
- An onsite project start meeting
- At least two (on line) meetings during the course of the study as key stages to be agreed
- Draft project report for client team comment
- A list of registered landowners affected by each of the route options. Recommendation on which route option or options to take forward at this stage with a description of the associated risks for each.

In August 2022 KAPACC and the Kingston St Mary Parish Council received the final report. The full Sustrans Feasibility study document is available to be viewed @ https://kapacc.kstm.uk/ on the KAPACC website.

Three routes were identified:

1. Kingston Road route (blue)
2. Right of Way route (red)
3. Dodhill Route (orange)

1. Kingston Road route (described north to south) :

   Starting in Kingston St Mary, this route runs southwards along Taunton Road without deviation until it reaches the junction with Corkscrew Lane at the north of Taunton. This would then link into the existing signed cycle route to the town centre and NCN 3 beyond.

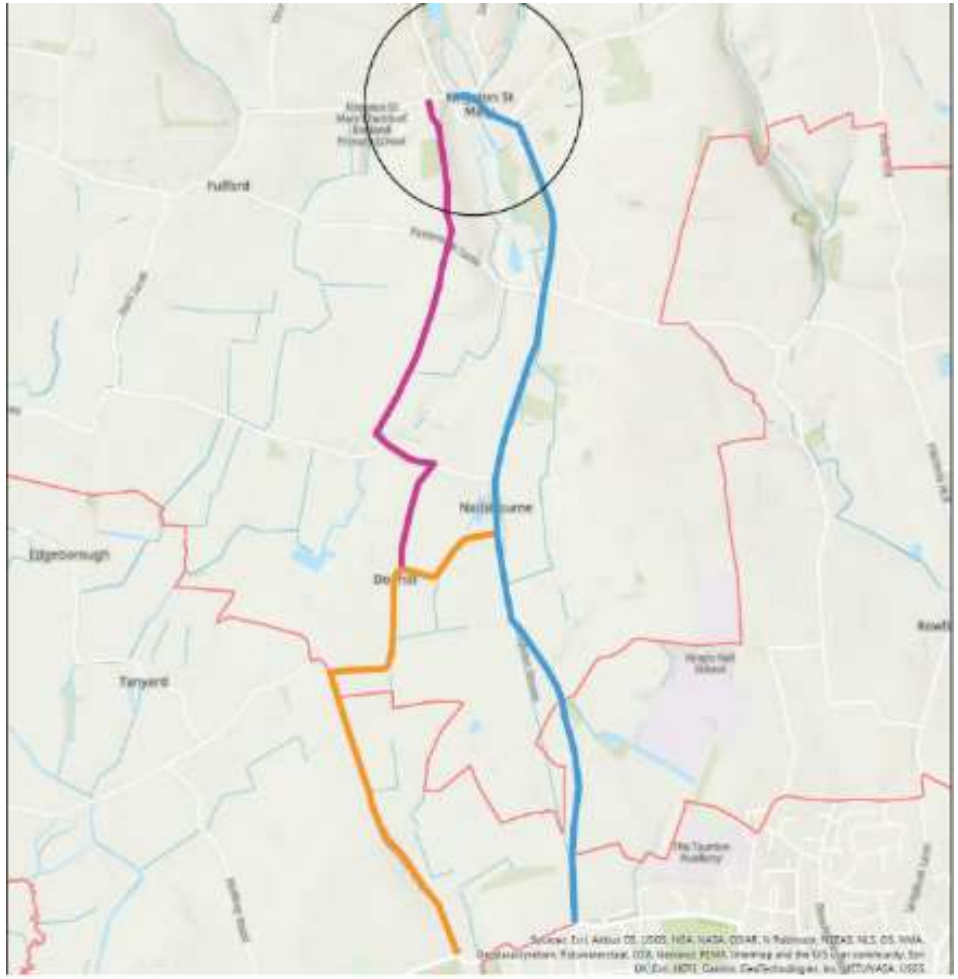
2. Right of Way route (described north to south)

   A public footpath provides an alternative option leaving Kingston St Mary to the south. This route is essentially parallel to Taunton Road until reaching Nailsbourne where it joins Nailsbourne Road. From here there is another footpath leading south towards Dodhill, where it would link with option 3, or it could continue on to Taunton Road linking with either route option south.

3. Dodhill Route (described north to south)

   This option starts along the same route as option 1 until reaching the Dodhill junction. At this point, it turns to the west onto Dodhill Road. After a few twists and turns, this route turns south onto Whitmore Lane and continues on until reaching the start of a traffic free path at Corkscrew Lane. From here the route continues east until reaching the existing signed route into Taunton town centre.

Map 10. Routes Suggested by Sustrans



At this stage, the most feasible, practical and pragmatic route, based on local knowledge, is a combination of the Kingston Road Route (with an off-road section between Mill Cross and Nailsbourne Lane) and the Dodhill Route.

However the environmental impact of an Active Travel route will play an important role on the decision about the route. Dark skies policies, ecology, impact on flooding, maintenance issues and how the path fits with the surrounding area will all be taken into account.

The Quantock Hills National Landscape also intend to be commissioning SUSTRANS in 2024/5 to do a feasibility report to continue the Active Travel Route from the Swan up onto the Quantocks, potentially creating a continuous active route from Taunton right onto the Quantocks, and possibly onto North Petherton.

The thought is that if landowners were willing to donate or sell land towards an Active Travel route Kingston Community Land Trust could take ownership to secure the land until funding to construct the route has been found. The NP Steering Group will continue discussions with landowners, and continue to seek funding for such a project, although this could take some time.

## KSM Policy 4: Active Travel

Within the Plan area, the delivery of a multiuser path to enable active travel between Kingston St Mary and key facilities and services within the Staplegrove Garden Community and Taunton will be supported, subject to:

a) Satisfactory routing and

b) The design of the route is coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive, taking account of the open, rural character of the area.

The satisfactory upgrading of existing or delivery of new footpaths and/or multiuser paths, will also be supported.

# T 3 Climate Change

## Background

One of the key aims outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 is to create a planning system that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. To effectively contribute to this we in Kingston St Mary Parish have an obligation to ensure that changes in the community serve to achieve social, environmental and economic objectives.

The Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan therefore outlines key strategic objectives which consider these wider aims to promote environmental protection, create a low-carbon community and increase our community's resilience to climate impacts.

As Kingston St Mary residents we produce damaging greenhouse gases from five main sources:

- The fuel we use to heat our homes
- The electricity we require to keep our houses energised
- The fuel we use to travel
- The food we eat
- The embedded emissions of the goods and services we purchase

## Climate Change: Information Gathering

The Kingston St Mary Climate Change Survey of 2021 attracted 165 responses and highlighted concerns of the community in this regard, and the measures being taken to offset the impacts:

- 72% of participants were extremely worried or worried about climate change
- Only 2% of participants did not have any green tech in their houses

Respondents to the Survey confirmed that

- 65% had actively changed the way they consumed
- 47% had changed their diet or how they consume food
- 40% had changed their houses to be more climate friendly
- 37% had actively engaged in nature based projects
- 3% gave money philanthropically

92% use energy saving light bulbs
86% have double glazing
30% have green energy tariffs
87% have loft insulation
40% have condensing boilers or wall insulation
16% have Solar Panels

**Responses to the survey on:**

Energy: Only 16% of the Kingston St Mary community currently has solar PV on their properties. Several members of the community supported the creation of community owned energy initiatives within the local area.

Housing: 59% of people wanted to reduce the impact their homes had on climate change, but only 40% of properties have new boilers or cavity wall insulation. However, a major barrier to enabling people to reduce their emissions was the nature of their properties. Kingston St Mary has a number of listed buildings which under the current planning guidance carries some restrictions to retrofit. Very few properties are fitted with air or ground source heat pumps and some are still dependent on oil. Older larger properties are more expensive to retrofit, requiring bespoke windows, for example.

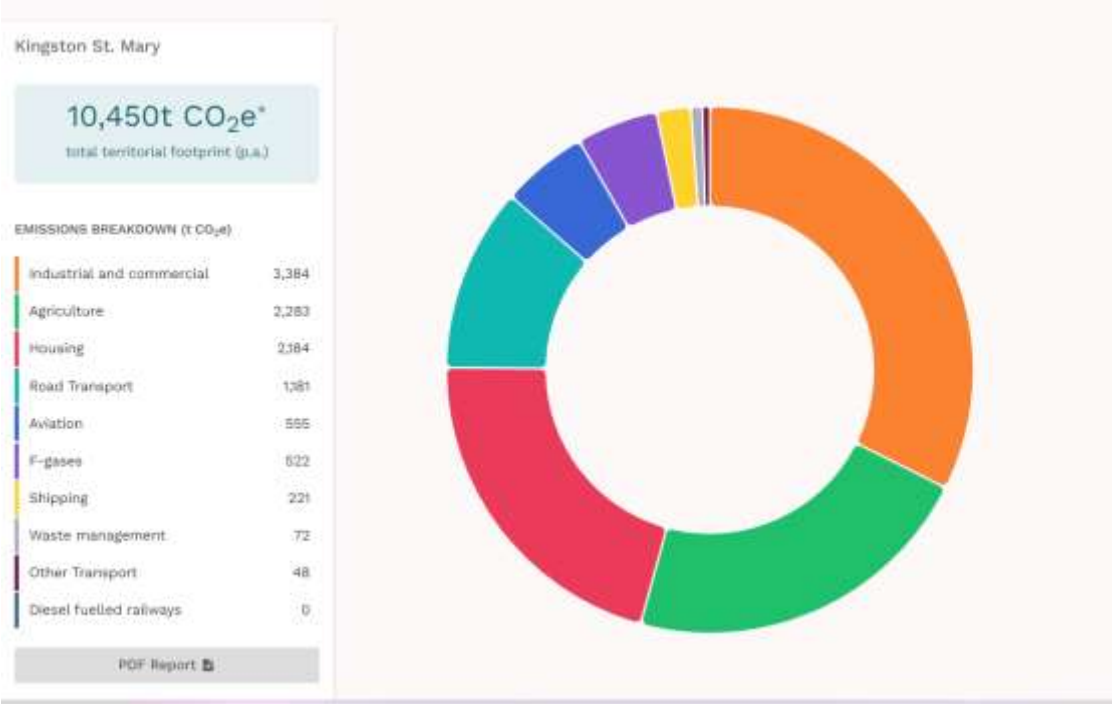
Transport: Residents of Kingston St Mary are eager to reduce the emissions they produce from transport, with 51% wanting to reduce their transport emissions. However, several concerns were raised by local people which limit their likelihood of reducing their travel emissions namely:

- Unsafe cycle routes
- Poor public transport links
- Lack of electric vehicle charging infrastructure*

There is scope for behaviour change in terms of lift sharing and the types of vehicles favoured by residents, as well as the possibility of car clubs. Proximity to Taunton train station means that rail travel is already a good (if expensive) option for longer journeys but again, this could be normalised as a popular form of transport. The bus service to Taunton town centre is currently limited but greater demand through behaviour change could improve this provision as it relies on commercial viability.

*Since the survey was completed EVCP infrastructure has improved in Taunton and nationally although there is still some way to go.
Many homes in Kingston St Mary have off road parking suitable for home charging and a number of residents have moved to EVs with home chargers.

Consumption: In Kingston St Mary, 65% of the community has already changed the way they consume to reduce emissions. However, many feel they have been constrained by a lack of local produce to purchase and the costs associated with climate friendly consumption.




The Government's new Future Homes Standard (which takes into account future grid decarbonisation) will eventually ensure that all new homes built will reach net zero carbon. In the short term we expect developers to implement guidance from the District Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit. Technology and construction practice will need to adapt and deliver cost effective solutions which may not be immediately available.

# Climate Change - Evidence

**How does Kingston compare?**

The picture from IMPACT – the Community Carbon Calculator - gives a picture of our emissions, and our consumption.

Impact | Community carbon calculator (impact-tool.org.uk)

Average use of energy in our homes results in annual carbon emissions per Kingston St Mary household of **5.6** t $CO_2e$.

This compares with **3.9** t $CO_2e$ for the SW&T area; **3.5** t $CO_2e$ at the national level.

In the average UK home,

- 64% of energy is used for space heating,
- 17% for heating water,
- 16% for lighting and appliances,
- and 3% for cooking.

As such a large proportion of household energy is used for heating, the type of heating system (i.e. is it low carbon?) and how well the home retains heat are critical factors shaping the scale of a home's emissions.

How well a home retains heat depends on a number of factors, including:

- when and how it was built;
- how much insulation has been installed;
- how draughty the home is;
- the efficiency of the windows;
- and the behaviour of the residents.

There is a clear scientific consensus that allowing global temperatures to rise above 1.5°C will cause substantially worse impacts. Therefore we should be striving to achieve the Climate Change target of 1.5°C emissions by halving our emissions by 2030.

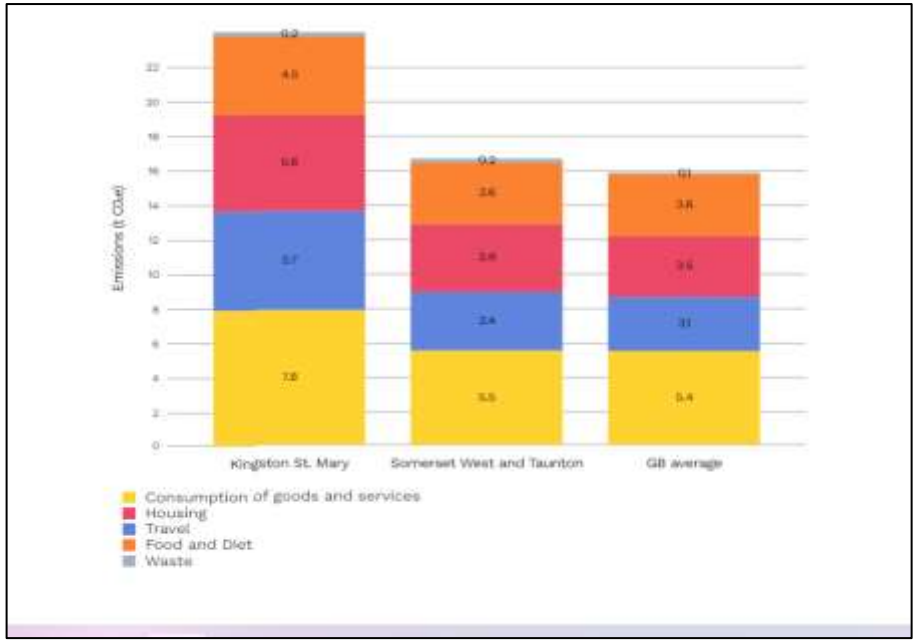
# Climate Change - Conclusions

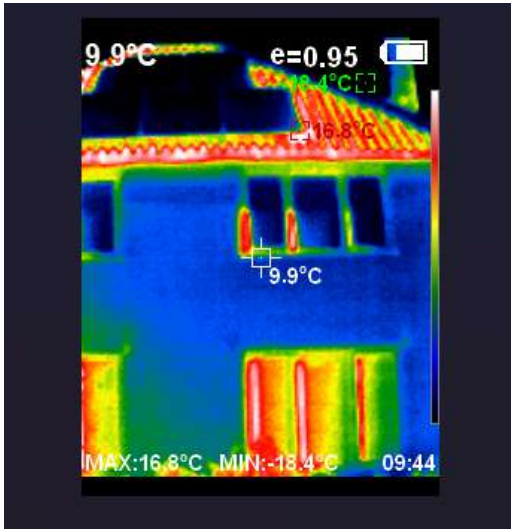
As a relatively wealthy community Kingston St Mary contributes substantially more emissions per head than other communities across the UK (and globally), but conversely is likely to have a greater propensity to spend on goods which can mitigate emissions such as insulation or solar panels.

We have contributed more historically than poorer communities to the overall problem of climate change. However, the position Kingston St Mary finds itself in should also empower it to lead the way in creating a climate friendly village and community.

Areas that could contribute to reducing emissions towards the Government's target of 78% by 2035 and SWT's target of making the area carbon neutral by 2030, and increase sustainability include approaches to:

- Planning Decisions
- Sustainable Building
- Sustainable Transport
- Renewable Energy
- Low Carbon Consumption and Services
- Promotion of Biodiversity
- Ecology
- Climate Adaptation
- Procurement




A Thermal Imaging Camera has been purchased for use by residents to gauge the effectiveness of their home insulation.

# KSM Policy 5: Climate Change: Energy Hierarchy

The Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan puts the climate and ecological emergencies at the forefront of planning decisions.

**Applying the energy hierarchy**

Planning applications for new builds and extensions/alterations are encouraged to support the move towards zero carbon buildings. Following a sustainable energy hierarchy in the design and construction process is key to achieving highly efficient, low energy and low carbon buildings, which in turn help to tackle climate change, fuel poverty and create healthier places to live, work and play. Designing in line with the energy hierarchy from the outset can help to reduce costs and improve environmental outcomes.

Developments are encouraged to adhere to the energy hierarchy, whereby:

a) Energy use is avoided and minimised in the first instance, through use of passive design principles which consider siting, orientation, massing and shading and taking a fabric first approach to reduce or negate the reliance on services requiring additional energy;
b) Energy efficiency is maximised through use of low carbon and highly efficient building services (e.g. heating, ventilation and water systems) where these are required, and high efficiency, low energy appliances should be utilised;
c) Residual energy demand is met from renewable or low carbon energy sources through integration of on-plot and/or site-wide solutions

Retrofit measures will be encouraged for existing buildings, acknowledging that changes to buildings within the Parish must be designed with energy in mind. Where the proposal relates to a heritage asset or is within the conservation area, proposals will need to be sensitively designed not to harm the historic or heritage value of the building or its setting.

Applicants should refer to the Somerset West and Taunton District Wide Design Guide SPD and Net Zero Carbon Toolkit for further guidance on how to apply the energy hierarchy and work towards delivery of zero carbon buildings both in new build and retrofit projects.

# KSM Policy 6: Climate Change: Renewable Energy

Proposals for low carbon or renewable individual(domestic) and community scale energy will be supported subject to the following criteria:

a) the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and
b) the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and
c) the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.

# Statement of Intent : Climate Change

**Natural environment**

All new building will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development in line with the most up-to-date national requirements for biodiversity net gain (BNG). Where possible this should link with the priorities of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**Low carbon consumption and services**

Development proposals that contribute to the delivery of locally provided services will be supported, in principle. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) Viable broadband, supporting home working

b) Proposals linked with a local community shop, sourcing locally produced goods. The proposal for a community shop was supported in the Housing Needs Survey.

**Climate Adaptation**

Parish Council processes will be reviewed to take account of the impacts of climate change. Examples include:

a) a new checklist for planning decisions, covering the impacts of building work on flooding, water flows, impermeable driveways, and the impact on neighbouring properties.

b) ongoing monitoring of emission levels for Kingston St Mary Parish using the IMPACT Community Carbon Calculator.

c) The practice of requiring a carbon estimate on quotes for goods and services will set a standard and encourage providers to review their processes.

# T 4 Flood Mitigation

## Background

For the parish of Kingston St Mary Somerset Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and Local Planning Authority (LPA) as such works closely with other key stakeholders including the Environment Agency (EA), Wessex Water, SRA and Landowners.

The EA flood risk maps indicate flood risk zones associated with the main streams which flow down from the Quantocks, through the NP area, and eventually into the River Tone. In essence these streams flow as follows:

- Tetton/Fulford flowing to Smokey Farm and Staplegrove.
- Buncombe through Kingston St Mary village and Nailbourne thence to Staplegrove.
- Lodes Lane to Mill Cross then splitting to Lower Marsh or Dodhill before continuing to Wellsprings in Taunton.
- Church Lane to Mill Cross then as above.

Generally, the Kingston St Mary parish is vulnerable to surface water flooding due to the shallow and relatively impermeable bedrock which results in rapid runoff. This has been evidenced in recent winters where water has swept off the fields and overwhelmed the road drainage system.

Local flooding has covered more extensive areas than those indicated on the Environment Agency flood maps.

Map 11. Environment Agency Flood Map



# Flood Mitigation - Information Gathering

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched in January 2015 as a response to floods on the Somerset levels during winter 2013/14. The SRA's remit includes the whole of Somerset and its purpose is to provide an extra level of river flood protection and resilience to communities through a partnership model with other authorities such as the Environment Agency, Somerset council and the Internal Drainage Boards. The Environment Agency collect data on River Flooding and the Lead Local Flood Authority on Ground/Surface Water Flooding and the Sewage undertaker on sewer flooding.

The SRA funds a number of flood mitigation projects, including the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW)'s work to maximise the benefits from catchment sensitive farming, especially regarding run-off in the upper catchment. This being of particular relevance for Kingston St Mary.

The Hills to Levels partnership was established in May 2015, as a partnership between wildlife Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), FWAG SW and The Royal Bath & West of England Society.

The work of this partnership includes advising landowners on ways in which they can 'slow the flow' of run-off to help reduce flood peaks, improve water quality, decrease soil erosion, and increase wildlife.

The Hill to Levels project has identified over 200 natural flood management features to install in the landscape including: leaky ponds, leaky woody dams, filter fences, filter dams, tree planting, new hedge banks, flow spreaders, soil bunds and check dams. Much information about these is available from FWAG.

# Flood Mitigation - Evidence

Flood Action Plan "targets" relevant to this NP Policy include managing urban runoff by ensuring best practice in planning and SUDS implementation, which can be found in West of England Sustainable Drainage Systems Developer Guidance and sustainable drainage activities - Sustainable Drainage in Somerset

This will include the use of 'swales', which are shallow, broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey run-off and remove pollutants. They can, for instance, be constructed to run parallel with roads, foot and cycle paths.

Flood action targets include:

- to sustain and enhance business and community resilience.
- to ensure strong local leadership with full engagement of local partners and communities.
- proposals which include swales, water butts and other rainwater capture features such as ponds and wetland areas.
- up-stream flood attenuation* measures such as "weepy dams", hedge and tree planting to 'slow the flow' of water run-off to be co-ordinated with local partners.

*this may be outside the development area. (Reference: Environment Agency Standing Advice).

The Environment Agency currently requires that runoff from any new development in the Tone Catchment area, during a critical duration of 1 in 100-year plus climate change rainfall event, should not exceed 2 litres/second/hectare.

The NPPF Flood Risk Guidance and the SWAT District Wide Design Guide chapters on flood resilience are particularly relevant to development in this Parish, given past surface water flood risk.

# Statement of Intent :Flood Mitigation

The Parish Council consider that development should incorporate sustainable design and construction measures to reduce the risk and effects of flooding in the Parish. We encourage proposals which feature swales, water butts and other rain water capture features such as ponds and wetland areas. Where appropriate up-stream flood attenuation measures such as leaky dams, hedge and tree planting to “slow the flow” of water run-off are advised. Permeable parking areas and a limit to hard landscaping are also encouraged.

The recommendation is to follow the Core Strategy & NPPF guidance.

The creation of sustainable homes must also include measures to attenuate extreme rainfall events (which often adversely impact the NP area due to its position at the foot of the Quantock Hills) by working closely with partner organisations such as FWAG and Somerset Wildlife Trust to reduce the overall flow of upstream floodwater down into the NP area and further downstream.

Decisions will be made with reference, in particular, to:

a) Core Strategy Policy CP8 (Environment), which seeks to reduce flood risk through the adoption of Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SUDS);
b) Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Climate Change, paragraph f), which requires development to incorporate design and construction measures to reduce the effects of flooding; and
c) Section 14 of the NPPF which specifically deals with flooding issues as they relate to planning; or
d) any successor policies to the above.

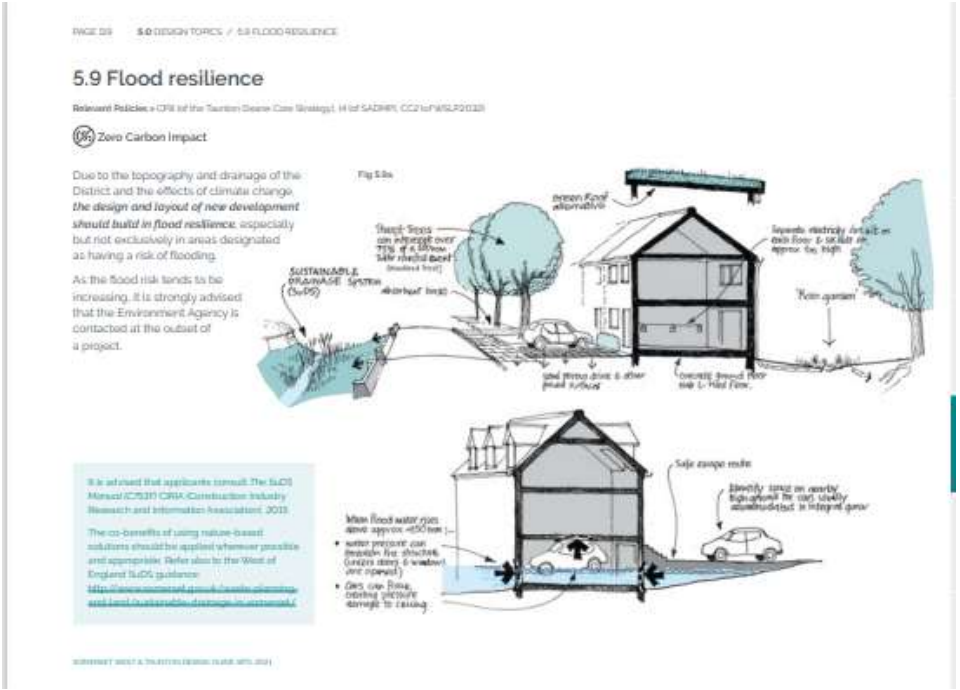
Developers, residents and businesses will be encouraged to install and manage SUDS to minimise run off and its impact from both existing and proposed developments, principally for flood risk management benefits.

The creation of sustainable homes must also include measures to attenuate extreme rainfall events (which often adversely impact the NP area due to its position at the foot of the Quantock Hills) by working closely with partner organisations such as FWAG and Somerset Wildlife Trust to reduce the overall flow of upstream floodwater down into the NP area and further downstream."

**Extract from NPPF Flood Risk Guidance - 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**

166. Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.

167. All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.



PAGE 59 5.0 DESIGN TOPICS / 5.9 FLOOD RESILIENCE

## 5.9 Flood resilience

Relevant Policies: CP8 (of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy), H (of SADMP), CC2 (of WSLP2028)

Zero Carbon Impact

Due to the topography and drainage of the District and the effects of climate change, ***the design and layout of new development should build in flood resilience***, especially but not exclusively in areas designated as having a risk of flooding.

As the flood risk tends to be increasing, it is strongly advised that the Environment Agency is contacted at the outset of a project.

Fig 5.6a



It is advised that applicants consult The SuDS Manual (C753) CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) 2013.

The co-benefits of using nature-based solutions should be applied wherever possible and appropriate. Refer also to the West of England SuDS guidance:

http://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/sustainable-drainage-in-somerset/

**How will this help?**

This will help to create ‘sustainable places’ by attenuating extreme rainfall events which are likely to become more frequent in the future due to climate change. It will thereby help to reduce flooding both locally within the NP area and in other areas of Somerset downstream of the NP area. The Policy will also contribute to the delivery of the overall objective for this section and serve as guidance for the parish council when considering planning issues, particularly regarding flood attenuation.

Somerset West and Taunton

heart of the south west

Somerset Rivers Authority

Environment Agency



Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme Project (TSFAI).

# T 5 Green Spaces

## Background

The designation of land as a Local Green Space through local and Neighbourhood Plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them[5], where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.

The recently revised December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises[6] that, access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

The NPPF sets out the requirements for designating Local Green Spaces,[7] as follows:

- Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
  a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

[5] Paragraph 105 National Planning Policy Framework – December 2023
[6] Paragraph 102 National Planning Policy Framework – December 2023

### Information Gathering

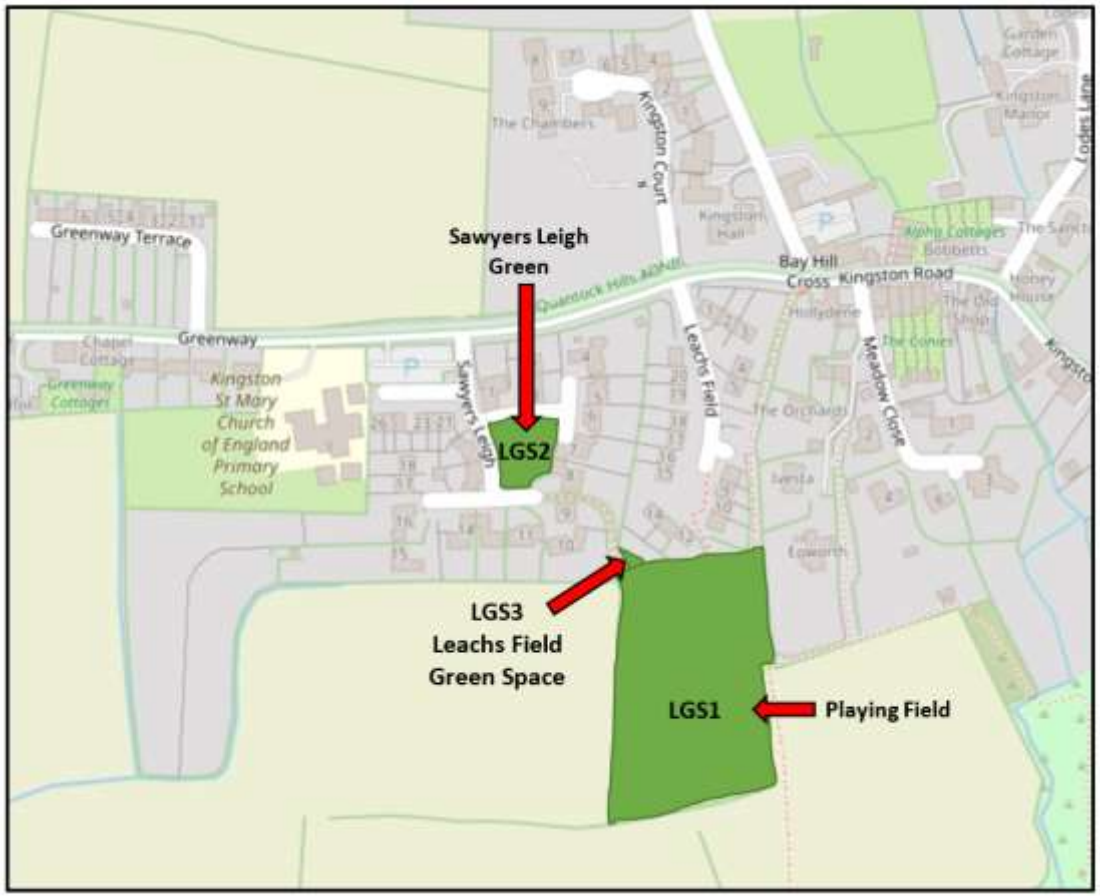
The **Local Green Space audit shown as Appendix 2** demonstrates how the designated Local Green Spaces satisfy the NPPF criteria.

Evidence: **An audit (shown in Appendix 3)** was undertaken within Kingston St Mary Village to identify green spaces of particular importance to the community and using the above NPPF criteria, the following were identified as eligible for designation as a Local Green Space.

- LGS1 Kingston St Mary Playing Field.
- LGS2 Sawyers Leigh Green.
- LGS3 Leachs Field Green Space.
- LGS4 Village Green.
- LGS5 St Mary's Church Yard.
- LGS6 St Mary's Church Cemetery.
- LGS7 St Mary's Church Field.
- LGS8 The Spinney.

[7] Paragraph 106 National Planning Policy Framework – December 2023

**LGS Map 1**




**LGS1:- Playing Field**



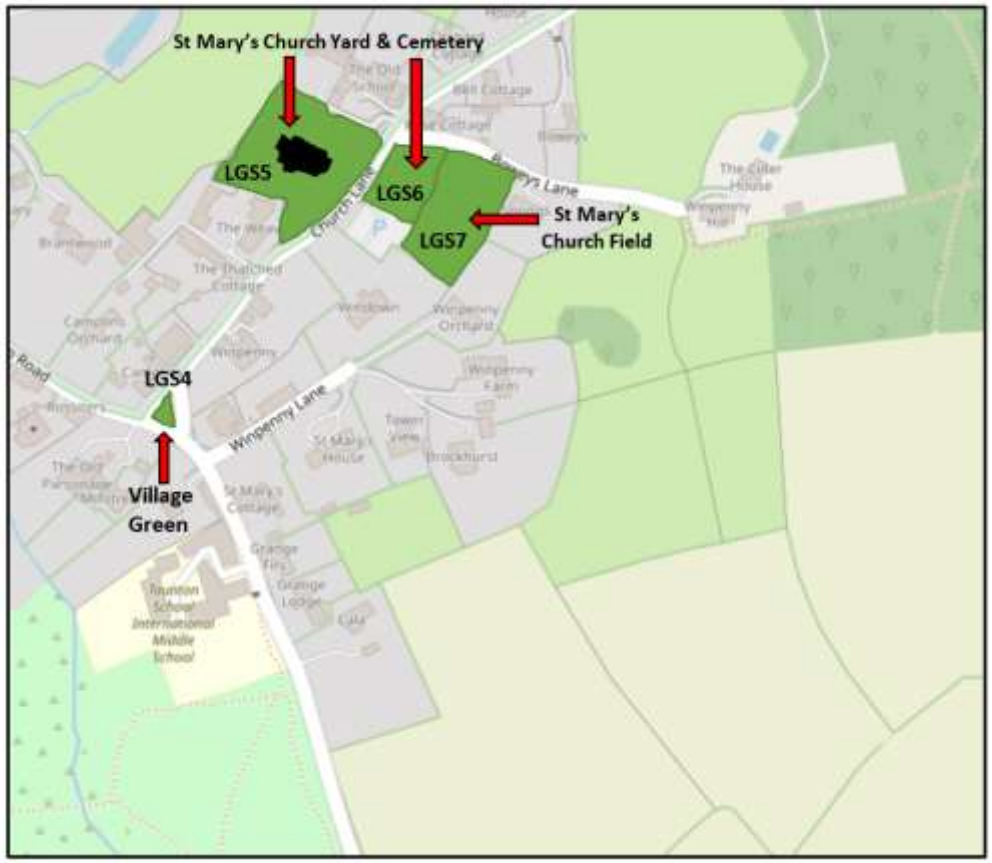
**LGS2:- Sawyers Leigh Green**



**LGS3:- Leachs Field Green Space**



**LGS Map 2**



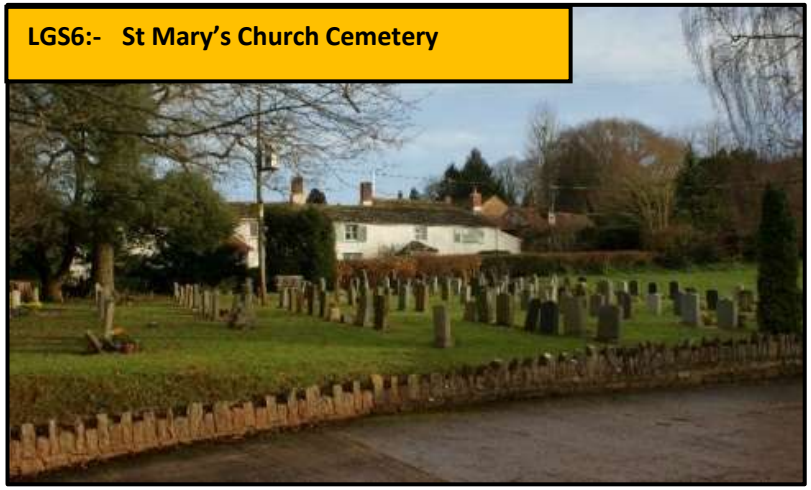

**LGS4:- Village Green**



**LGS5:- St Mary's Church Yard**



**LGS6:- St Mary's Church Cemetery**



**LGS7: St Mary's Church Field**



**LGS Map 3**




## KSM Policy 7: Designation of Local Green Spaces

The following sites as shown in figures 1-3 above are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS1 Kingston St Mary Playing Field.
- LGS2 Sawyers Leigh Green.
- LGS3 Leachs Field Green Space.
- LGS4 Village Green.
- LGS5 St Mary's Church Yard.
- LGS6 St Mary's Church Cemetery.
- LGS7 St Mary's Church Field.
- LGS8 The Spinney.

***Development within a***

Local Green Space will be managed and consistent with national policy on Green Belts.

The National Planning Policy Framework issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2023 has been consulted to frame the Designation of Local Green Spaces Policy. With reference to Section 8. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities (page 28), specifically Open Space and Recreation (page 30) paragraphs 102. – 107.

# T 6 Dark Skies

## Background

The introduction to the Gov.UK Guidance on Light Pollution which advises on how to consider light within the planning system states:

"Artificial light provides valuable benefits to society…….. However, for maximum benefit, it is important to get the right light, in the right place and for it to be used at the right time.

Artificial light is not always necessary. It has the potential to become what is termed 'light pollution' or 'obtrusive light', and not all modern lighting is suitable in all locations. It can be a source of annoyance to people, harmful to wildlife and undermine enjoyment of the countryside or the night sky, especially in areas with intrinsically dark landscapes.

When using exterior lighting, we need to consider the wider environment: the effects it will have on the surrounding landscape and the darkness of the night sky. It is important to consider not just the immediate area to be illuminated, but also the effects further away. In some cases lighting may not be appropriate, no matter how well designed, because the presence of light itself can significantly affect the surrounding environment.

## Information Gathering

Other sources of information on light pollution include:

1. **TOWARDS A DARK SKY STANDARD**: A lighting guide to protect dark skies: from local need to landscape impact, by

**The UK Dark Skies Partnership (UKDSP, ukdarkskies.org.uk),** a collaborative forum of UK dark-sky places, including those with International Dark-Sky Association designations; relevant professional organisations; the Commission for Dark Skies; CPRE, the Countryside Charity; the Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Society of Light and Lighting. All support the work of the APPG of MPs for Dark Skies co-chaired by Andrew Griffith MP and the Astronomer Royal Lord Rees (appgdarkskies.co.uk). The primary aim of the UKDSP is to improve sky quality by reducing unnecessary and inappropriate light pollution through effective behavioural change, education and promotion of environmentally sensitive lighting.

2. **Exmoor - Dark Sky Reserve & Protecting our night skies (exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)**

Exmoor National Park has some of the darkest skies in the UK. In 2011 Exmoor became the first area in Europe to be designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR). The dark night sky is one of Exmoor's special qualities and the National Park Authority uses its role as a planning authority to protect the dark skies above Exmoor just as it aims to protect the landscape on the ground. Exmoor National Park promote **TOWARDS A DARK SKY STANDARD.**

3. **"Quantock Hills and Exmoor among England's top dark skies" –** Somerset County Gazette 16.06.2016**.** Exmoor National Park is the second darkest place in England with 92 per cent pristine dark skies……And 95.5 per cent of the Quantock Hills ranks within the two darkest categories out of a total

of nine. This is reflected in Quantock Hills National Landscape **Management Plan Policy DPIP7**: Protect the dark skies and tranquillity of the area.

4. All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies: **Ten Dark Sky Policies for the Government**
APPG+for+Dark+Skies+-+10+dark+sky+policies.pdf (squarespace.com)

# Evidence

With the Parish of Kingston St Mary being largely within the Quantock Hills National Landscape Dark Skies has been a major consideration. Not far from the parish boundary is the Hestercombe House Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which houses lesser horseshoe bats. Bats use trees and hedgerows for food source, to navigation and shelter; and as landmarks. Artificial lighting of bat foraging pathways can be extremely disturbing to them. Other bat species are found in the Parish (see https://records.nbnatlas.org/explore/your-area#51.0609928|-3.1145714|15|ALL_SPECIES ).

As well as the ecological and landscape reasons, evidence supporting a Dark Skies Policy for Kingston St Mary was initially established in the Household survey on which the Community Plan was based, as shown in the extract below.

In considering the need for traffic management measures also raised in the Community Plan of 2017 to limit vehicle speeds through the village a major factor has been the unsuitability of schemes requiring street lighting.

The recent reduction in street lighting in the Sawyers Leigh development was funded by the Parish Council following a survey of residents in September 2022. 15 out of 25 Sawyers Leigh residents responded of whom 80% supported the reduction.

Majority support was shown for either all or some lights to be removed (as shown below), and that the rest are switched off between the hours of 11.00pm and 6.30am.

- For the parish as a whole, 80% of households say they are satisfied with levels of light pollution. Comments indicate that residents value dark skies at night and the rural feel of an unlit village.

| Comments from the survey |
|---|
| "Any street lighting would detract from the rural environment." |
| "I moved to the country to get away from street lighting." |

However, postcode analysis shows that, in areas where there is street lighting (Leeches Field and Sawyers Leigh) there is a high level of dissatisfaction: 53% of respondents are dissatisfied compared to only 17% in all other postcode areas.

| Comments from the survey |
|---|
| "No more street lights. Switch off the street light in Sawyers Lee." |
| "Lights left on all night in Sawyers Leigh." |
| "Way too much street lighting in Sawyers Leigh and too bright" |
| "Light pollution in Sawyers Leigh affects Kingston Court." |

WHAT FURTHER RESEARCH HAS SHOWN

Apart from Sawyers Leigh, there appears to be agreement among parishioners that the village should remain largely unlit. (But see section 4 on low level lighting in Church Lane). Looking at respondents' comments, it appears that all the negative statements regarding high levels of pollution refer to Sawyers Leigh. No negative comments were recorded about Leeches Field, which has fewer street lights than Sawyers Leigh.

NEXT STEPS

| Topic | Action | Key participants |
|---|---|---|
| Light pollution | Investigate the possibility of reducing levels of street lighting in Sawyers Leigh and/or reducing hours of operation. Assess options available in discussion with SCC Highways Dept. | Environment Working Group, SCC Highways |

The only other streetlights in the Parish are four in Leaches Field, an area of sheltered social housing, and four around the speed reduction chicane entering the village.

The Dark Skies Policy for Kingston St Mary Parish is based on guidance in the positioning statement for the Mendip Hills National Landscape .

**QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

1. There are twelve lights serving 25 houses. Please tell us how you feel about the QUANTITY of lights in the street. (tick only one answer).

| | No | % |
|---|---|---|
| I am happy with the number of lights as they are | 3 | 20% |
| I would like some lights but fewer | 7 | 47% |
| I would like no lights at all, except around the school car park area | 5 | 33% |
| Total responses | 15 | 100 |

# KSM POLICY 8: DARK SKIES

Applications for new development requiring a lighting scheme, new flood lighting, new lighting on listed buildings, or on new extensions/enlargement of dwellings, annexes, and garden buildings that fall outside Permitted Developments will only be supported where they demonstrate how dark skies will be protected, and cause minimise additional light pollution. In practice this means:

a) Ensuring external lighting shall only be erected or installed in the Parish if it can be shown to be essential for security and safety, and only using the minimum quantity of lighting to achieve it;
b) Lighting must only use the minimum quantity of lighting utilising suitable methods such as dimming technology, movement sensors, part-time running, timeclocks;
c) Ensuring that external lighting should be designed, shielded, and installed to prevent upward, sideways, or outward spillage in accordance with up to date Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance;
d) Ensuring the colour and intensity of lighting is appropriate for the wider setting;
e) Ensuring that external lighting avoids highlighting a structure or feature that would have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding landscape;
f) Utilising the most energy- and pollution-efficient equipment reasonably available.
g) Ensuring design and quantity of fenestration is carefully selected to minimise light glow and spillage.
h) The height, direction, colour and lux levels of lighting should follow best practice for minimising light pollution and effects on wildlife. Where lighting is needed but the area is sensitive for bats, red lamps could also be used as bats are not affected by red light.

# T 7 Housing

## Background

The Housing section of the Neighbourhood Plan brings together community survey results from 2017 and 2021 with their comments and those recommendations from other sections of the Neighbourhood Plan relating to housing, particularly Character Assessment, Climate Change, and Flood Mitigation.

The focus on Housing in the Neighbourhood Plan is to develop a Housing Policy which, subject to acceptance by the Independent Examiner and through the community referendum, will be incorporated within the Development Plan to specify the types of future development, their style and sustainability. These will then be taken into account by the Parish Council and Local Authority in their decision taking.

## Information Gathering:

**Community Surveys**

**The Housing Needs Survey (HNS) 2021** was undertaken by the Kingston Community Partnership (KCP) to follow up on the community's views expressed in the **2016 Household Survey**, on which the 2017 Community Plan was based, and to identify any gaps in the housing stock for residents of the parish of Kingston across the age groups. The survey attracted a 35% response rate, strong for a Housing Needs Survey, and analysis showed that the data is representative of the composition of Kingston households, age groups and tenure of dwelling.

A major driver for the HNS 2021 was to assess the impact of housing on the future demographic of the parish, with a view to guiding the development of our facilities (pre-school, school, pub, church, Village Hall and Playing Field, and businesses).

**Further research** has established trends impacting our facilities that could have been affected by housing. The example in the Introduction is that the percentage of local children from within the Parish of Kingston attending the Primary School has fallen from 58% in 2001 to 28% in 2021.

## Evidence

**What the Housing Needs Survey Established**:

- 58% want to see more affordable housing for people with a local connection to buy; 47% for people with a local connection to rent
- 54% want to see more homes to downsize to,
- 49% want to see more starter homes, and 50% of households with dependent children want more family houses
- only 2% felt there was need for more executive homes

Respondents' views about their own housing situation were:

- 92% of respondents are satisfied with their own housing situation
- But 26% see a need to move in the foreseeable future, of whom 89% want to stay in Kingston, 68% want to downsize, and 18% want to upsize.

**Housing Tenure:**
The most common tenure of dwelling in Kingston St Mary is owner occupation (83%).

The collective proportion of private renters and social renters is 13%.

**Housing Stock**:
Responses showed a weighting of four + bedroom homes (54%), a low percentage of two bedroom houses (20%), which included a number of bungalows (e.g. Leaches Field).

Further research on the actual housing stock of the parish based on Council Tax Bands reflects these responses and shows an imbalance and gaps in Kingston's housing stock. Homes in Bands A to D (into which affordable /starter/family homes would fall) represent 42% of the housing stock while homes in Bands E and above represent 58%, in the table below.

In terms of provision of Affordable housing Kingston St Mary currently has thirty two Somerset Council owned Social Rent properties built between 1922 and 1976 and one bungalow provided for rent in 1986.

Willowtree Housing Association have six rental properties (a mix of social and affordable lets) included on the Sawyers Leigh development, built in 1999, and a bungalow in Leaches Field. No affordable housing has been built since. Together these represent 10.7% of the housing stock.

| %ages | Confirmed Bands* Numbers | 2021 Values** |
|---|---|---|
| 4.35 | Total For Band A 18 | <142,855 |
| 17.87 | Total For Band B 74 | 142,855 - 211,000 |
| 10.63 | Total For Band C 44 | 211,000 - 295,450 |
| 8.94 | Total For Band D 37 | 295,450 - 399,340 |
| 17.39 | Total For Band E 72 | 399,340 - 525,965 |
| 16.18 | Total For Band F 67 | 525,965 - 724,000 |
| 23.43 | Total For Band G 97 | 724,000 - 1,052,000 |
| 1.2 | Total For Band H 5 | 1,052,000 - 1,376,600 |
| | Total for Band I 0 | > 1,376,600 |

Table 7. *Somerset West & Taunton Council
**based on the 1991 value on which Council Tax bands were based indexed using Nationwide's House Price Index Indicator. Percentage change: 324.67%

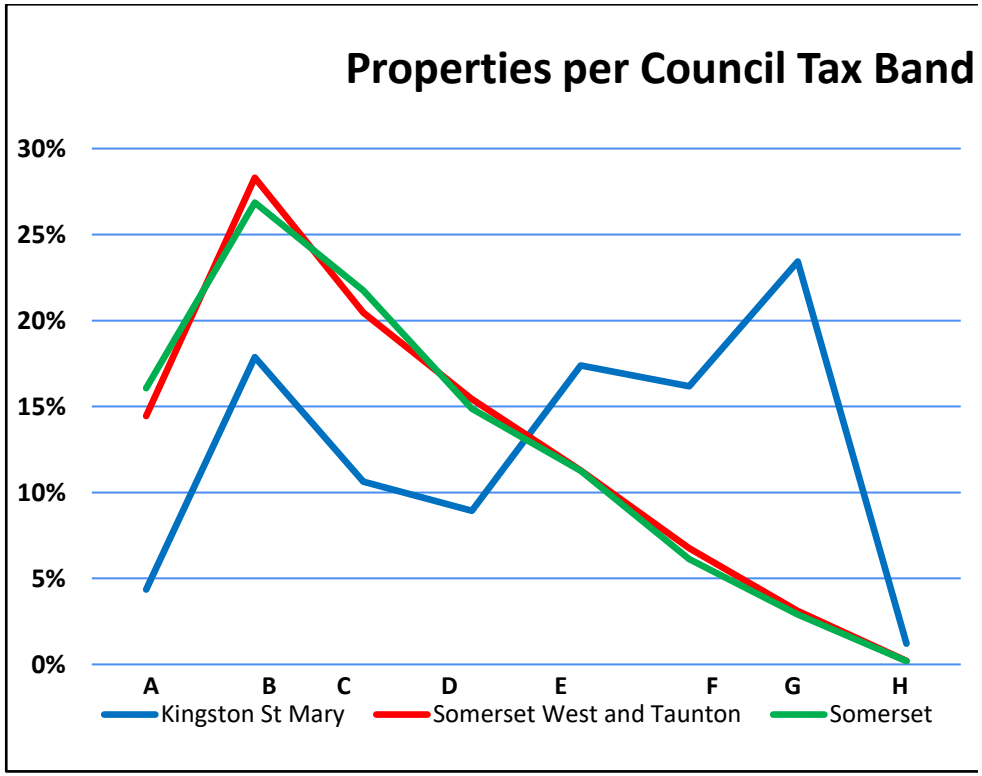



Table 8, provided by Somerset Council comparing Kingston St Mary's Housing stock compared with Somerset West & Taunton and Somerset by Council Tax Band.

# Conclusions of the Housing Needs Survey

The most significant feedback from the survey related to Downsizing, Family homes and Affordable housing.

**Downsizing:** While there is a high level of satisfaction with respondents' current housing situations (92%), a quarter of households (26%) want to move house in the foreseeable future. Two thirds of those wishing to move need a smaller home/ less maintenance/ lower running costs and remain in Kingston.

**85% of those wishing to move and remain in Kingston will be looking for two to three bedroom houses/bungalows**.

**Family/Starter Homes**: Analysis showed that 50% of households with dependent children supported the need for more family houses.

Information from Rightmove would indicate that in the seven years between 2016 when the Community Plan was undertaken and March 2023
93 properties were sold or put on the market (an average of 13.3 pa):

25 x 5 to 9 bedrooms 29 x 4 beds 30 x 3 beds 9 x 2 beds

| House Types | 2001 Census | 2011 Census | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Houses with 1+usual resident | 387 | 391 | 395 |
| Houses with no usual resident- vacant/ 2nd home/holiday let | 18 (4.7%) | 51 (11.5%) | TBC |
| Detached House or Bungalow | 204 (52.7%) | 222 (50.2%) | 223 |
| Semi–detached House or Bungalow | 112 (28.9%) | 126 (28.5%) | 114 |
| Terraced House or Bungalow | 52 (13.4%) | 48 (10.9%) | 46 |
| Flat, Maisonette or Apartment | 37 (9.6%) | 46 (10.2%) | 10 |
| Average Household size | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.2 |
| Average number of rooms | 6.8 | 7.2 | TBC |
| **Tenure** | | | |
| Owned | 285 (73.6%) | 294 (75%) | 304 |
| Shared Ownership | 0 | 2 (0.5%) | 0 |
| Social Rented | 56 (14.5%) | 42 (10.7%) | 32 |
| Private Rented | 46 (11.9%) | 53 (13.5%) | 58 |

Table 9.

**Affordable Housing**: Housing statistics from the 2001 and 2011 Census showed a reduction in Social Rented housing from 56 (14.7% of the housing stock) in 2001 to 42 (10.7%) in 2011. The Housing Needs Survey showed that support for more affordable housing for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market is consistent with the Household Survey of 2016 at 58% (affordable housing to buy) and 47% (affordable housing to rent).

The survey similarly showed ten respondents who have family who had to leave Kingston due to the lack of suitable or affordable housing, of whom eight would consider returning.

Further investigation shows that ten families registered on the Somerset Homefinder Housing Register (as at July 2022- N.B. this number fluctuates as it is a live table of data) chose Kingston St Mary as their favoured location, of whom seven had an existing connection with Kingston, through work or family (unvetted). These include one household already living in the Parish.

| Eligible Bedsize | No of Applicants expressing Kingston St Mary as Parish preference and selected a local connection to the parish (unvetted) | No of Applicants expressing Kingston St Mary as Parish preference with and without selecting 'Local Connection' |
|---|---|---|
| 1 bed | 11 | 11 |
| 2 bed | 8 | 8 |
| 3 bed | 3 | 7 |
| 4 bed | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 26 | 28 |

Table 10. Figures from Somerset Council as at May 2023

The **conclusions** of the Housing Needs Survey and subsequent research are that:

- Kingston lacks good quality smaller homes available for the older more affluent members of the community to downsize to, which in turn reduces the availability of larger homes for families to occupy.

- The provision of housing for lower earners is poor at 10.7% of the housing stock.

In housing terms **Affordable** can include houses for:

- Social renting
- Affordable renting
- Shared ownership
- Discounted Open Market

and infer discounts of at least 20% to local market rents or values. Starter Homes are included within the term Affordable Housing.

**Appendix 7** shows the full NPPF definitions of types of Affordable Housing. **Appendix 8** is the NPPF definition of a Rural Exception site.

- Responses also showed a reduction in the level of support for more executive houses from 6% to 2% of respondents. The percentage of houses in Council Tax Band E shown above would support this.

- There is therefore competition for the limited supply of 2/3 bed houses which has to be shared between downsizers, upsizers, renters who want to buy, and families with dependent children looking to return or move to Kingston.

- It is felt that the numbers of new houses needed to address gaps would not be significant, and suggestions are being explored to minimise the impact of limited development. Examples include looking at sites already earmarked for development.

- Looking at affordability from a wider perspective affordability can be an issue for all families looking to buy or rent in Kingston St Mary Parish as the cost of properties average £350-400 per square foot compared with Taunton's average of £300 per square foot for all house types. However data from Land Registry (figures from Land Insight courtesy of Sequence UK Ltd) compares the market cost per square foot of semi-detached and terraced housing within a 1.0 mile radius of the centre of Taunton @ £274p sq ft with properties within 1.0 mile of the centre of Kingston St Mary @ £409 p sq ft. On this basis the premium to buy a semi/terraced house in Kingston St Mary Parish is **49%**.

- Property Market Update from Link Up (February 2023): 'Properties in Kingston St. Mary had an overall average price of £563,312 over the last year. The majority of sales in Kingston St. Mary during the last year were detached properties, selling for an average price of £694,000. Terraced properties sold for an average of £328,250, with semi-detached properties fetching £380,000. Overall, sold prices in Kingston St. Mary over the last year were 3% up on the previous year and 3% up on the 2019 peak of £549,125.'

| Quotes from Community Surveys |
|---|
| "We could do with more affordable houses for young villagers BUT where would they be built without destroying the ambiance of the village." |
| "A few more affordable housing ventures would help the social profile of the community." |
| "Each year there should be some limited development to help to sustain and enrich the community." |
| "The loss of the Grange has left a big gap for the elderly who want to downsize but not leave the village." |
| "I do not believe that Kingston St Mary needs much more residential development and moreover think that such development runs the risk of changing the overall feel of the village to its detriment." |
| "Need to stop the village becoming an elitist area which would lead to the loss of a proper village community and mix." |

- Providing for young families on average salaries through starter homes, shared equity or discounted open market housing would bring in young families who could help to support and protect the future of the school, the pre-school and other village facilities.
- The survey supported consideration of small scale development. However, there are no obvious development sites within the settlement limits and the likelihood is that most development will come within the boundaries of existing properties. It is therefore envisaged that it will mainly be these properties which will be affected by a Housing Policy.

- The survey asked for suggestions for sites and a small number were put forward. It was however felt that there may be localised resistance to particular sites suggested by survey respondents.

- A Community Land Trust (CLT) could give a degree of control to the community over what is built and could give preference to those with a local connection, keep assets within the control of the community in perpetuity, and may also generate surpluses to benefit the community. 13% of respondents from the online questionnaire would consider membership of a CLT or similar. **(See Appendix 5)**

- 17% of respondents to the Housing Needs Survey were interested in self build

- The reference to second homes made in the comments was of interest and an element not included in the survey. ONS Housing statistics showed that Houses with no usual resident - vacant/ 2nd home/holiday lets – increased from 18 in the 2001 Census to **51** in the 2011 Census. The development of Mill Meadow only currently accounts for eleven.

Second homes could impact on the house supply for local people, which could possibly be addressed to some extent by a small Community Land Trust or Exception site development.

**Other comments** were that:

- Larger houses freed up as a result of downsizing are likely to attract new families, but the price band of larger houses suggests those families might not necessarily have children of primary school age, or may choose to educate their children privately.

- The survey indicates that a greater percentage of residents will work from home more regularly post pandemic, which is likely to create a need for work space in the home, reliable broadband and potentially a communal office/workspace.

- An increase in traffic volume generated by any development could be reduced by this increase in home working and could be mitigated further by an Active Travel route to Taunton.

**Somerset West & Taunton Council's Core Strategy**

Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that: "*…Kingston St Mary…will retain settlement boundaries, as shown on the Proposals Map insets, and have no further allocations made through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD, but some scope for small scale proposals within settlement limits*".

**Alterations to Kingston St Mary's Settlement Limits**

It is also worth noting that a consultation document was prepared by the Parish Council in 2021 in respect of the Settlement Limits.

However it was decided that the preferred mechanism for a review of the settlement limits is through the Local Development Plan process where proposals will be subject to consultation, legal tests, and examination. It is important to note that this Plan does not propose any changes to the Settlement Limits which are those found in the SADMP.

# What Is Needed?

The Housing Needs Survey highlighted the gaps in the current housing stock which are not being met by recent development. The comparison of Council Tax Band properties highlights the almost 40/60 split between Band A to D and Band E to I properties, which is the reverse of national and local averages.

More 2/3 bedroom houses in price brackets up to £400,000 are needed to meet the requirements of the fifteen residents who wish to downsize (to 2/3 beds) in the next 3 to 5 years and remain in the parish of Kingston, those 5 who wish to upsize from 2 to 3 beds in the same time frame, and those renters who would like to buy. A further eight residents would like to downsize from larger houses in the Parish to two/three bed properties costing up to £500,000.

| From/To | 1 bedroom | 2 bedroom | 3 bedroom | 4 bedroom | 5 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 bedroom | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 bedroom | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 bedroom | 1 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 or more | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals | **2** (8%) | **12** (40%) | **13** (45%) | **1** (4%) | **1** (4%) |
| Requirements of Respondents wanting to move and remain in Kingston | | | | | |

Table 11.

It has been established that 8 households registered with Homefinder Somerset stating Kingston St Mary as their preference have a connection with the Parish, through work, family etc.

Issues here are that the limited supply of 2/3 bed houses has to be shared between those wishing to downsize, those wishing to upsize, those renting who want to buy and families with dependent children looking to return or move to Kingston, and the premium prices attracted by semi- detached and terraced housing locally.

Feedback from surveys shows that the current supply of houses in Council Tax Bands E and above is not a concern. Support for more Executive homes reduced from 6% of respondents to the 2017 Community Plan survey to 2% of Housing Needs Survey respondents. An executive home can be considered as one which would provide the occupants with higher-than-average levels of comfort, quality and convenience, four to six or more bedroom houses, generally over 2,000 sq ft (198 sq m) of space and having at least four bedrooms and double or triple garages with driveways to park at least two cars.

The link between housing and support for our amenities/facilities is apparent. The falling numbers of children of primary school age and of those children attending the primary school (which could indicate that more are educated privately), and the reducing number of 30-44 year olds highlights the change in demographic and the increase in Kingston's age profile over the last twenty years. Some of this change can be attributed to housing, as can some of the solutions.

The survey shows a demand for a small development of downsizing / family and starter homes for the open market which could then cross-subsidise the building of affordable homes. Starter homes would encourage young families while retirement housing would enable long term residents to downsize within Kingston to free up larger family houses for new families. Such a development could include a community café/shop, the idea of which was supported in the survey, and Live/Work units which could bring employment and services without a commute.

# How This Ties in with Planning Policy

This ties in with **SWT's 2021 Local Housing Needs Assessment** (for the period 2020 -2040)

Single person households represent ……49% of the overall 2020-2040 household growth in Somerset West & Taunton (SWT).

Therefore 66% of the household growth for SWT is associated with households who require smaller (1-2 bedroom) dwellings.

SWT's Local Housing Needs Assessment (for the period 2020 -2040) – August 2021.

This also links to **TDBC Core Strategy DM2** and the **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)** in respect of Rural Housing:

Para 78. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

And Para 79: To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services…….

Para 80. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply: a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting; d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: - is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

# What a Housing Policy for Kingston St Mary Needs To Achieve:

A Housing Policy will guide future housing development across the Parish of Kingston St Mary, and on approval by the independent examiner and acceptance by the community in a referendum will be incorporated into Planning Policy and the Local Plan.

The policy is intended to

- to address the gaps in Kingston's housing stock
- to help maintain a balanced, vibrant and healthy community
- to support local services
- to allow residents to spend the different stages of their lives within the Parish
- in appropriate climate safe housing
- while minimising the impact of new development on the natural and built environment.

New development should protect and enhance the area's heritage, landscape, and wildlife assets: support initiatives to combat the effects of climate change and support nature recovery

- enhance the historic environment and preserve the significance of historic assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, non-designated historic assets and important archaeological sites;
- increase the provision of outdoor and indoor recreation and community facilities to meet the needs of the local community whilst protecting against loss or degradation of habitat.

The approach to developing a Housing Policy has been to establish the demand, the preferred types, styles and construction of new development based on the results of, and additional work on the community surveys, the Character Assessment exercise, the Climate Change and Flood Management policies, and National and Local Planning & Design plans.

# What the Housing Policy for Kingston St Mary has Taken Account of:

Input from the Neighbourhood Plan process in relation to Housing came from the work on:

Community Surveys: Informed by feedback from the Community Plan, the Housing Needs surveys and the breakdown of the current housing stock there is currently no requirement for any new executive houses in the Parish.

In fact the completion of sites already granted planning permissions (subject to amendment where necessary) could potentially accommodate seventeen or more new builds with the least impact on the natural, built and historic environment, and will address a large proportion of the housing needs identified in the 2021 Housing Needs Survey.

Character Assessment: While the character of the Conservation area has remained largely unchanged for 200 years, the Character Assessment exercise has highlighted the significant developments across the Parish over the last 60 years - Leaches Field (19 bungalows), Quantock Rise (2 houses and 8 bungalows),- and over the last 30 years - Sawyers Leigh (26 houses), Kingston Court (11/23 houses built), Mill Meadow (13/22 built), as well as smaller development in Church Lane, Lodes Lane and elsewhere. It also highlights the variety of styles of build - "there is no one single architectural style for the Parish, with relatively recent development reflecting the design and materials prevailing at the time the properties were built." The Character Assessment work has highlighted good examples of recent development using traditional materials.

The Village's growth over the last 100 years has been primarily through small and infill developments. This modest growth is seen as being beneficial to

achieve a more balanced and sustainable community. However with limited scope for further development within the 'Settlement Limits', as defined in the Local Plan, it is anticipated that most development will take place within the curtilage of existing properties.

It is imperative to retain the character of the Conservation area. Outside that it is envisaged that development will "reflect the design and materials prevailing at the time properties are built", especially as new materials are developed and used to improve sustainability, albeit subject to being sympathetic to the surrounding built and historic environment and landscape setting.

Affordability: The Housing Needs Survey established affordability for those wishing to downsize and remain in Kingston St Mary.

| Price range | <£200K | £200-300K | £300-£400K | £400-500K | 500-750 | £750+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Equivalent Council Tax Bands | A to D | | | E to I | | |
| Number of respondents | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 1 |

Table 12.

Families on average incomes would generally be looking for two bed properties of approximately 70sq metres (750 sq ft*); 3 bed properties of 75-93sq metres (800 to 1000 sq ft) in Council Tax bands up to D, or 4 bed properties up to 116 sq metres (1250 sq ft). (Figures from Connells Group)

For those wishing to downsize from larger properties in the Parish the need for two /three bed houses, or bungalows (where they suit a site), may extend to the current Council Tax Band E.

Sustainability: Nationally, buildings account for around 45% of all energy use, and heating accounts for 37% of emissions; which clearly demonstrates the scale of the issue. This highlights the need to ensure that new buildings do not further add to this problem and that the existing built stock will require retrofitting in terms of energy efficiency and heat sources.

The National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) first published on 27 March 2012 and last updated 19th December 2023 quotes the following:

" 2. Achieving Sustainable Development
Para 8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching, interdependent objectives:

a) an **economic** objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy…..
b) **social** objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations….
c) an **environmental** objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Para 11. For plan-making this means that:

(a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
(b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas [6], unless:

(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area [7]; or

(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

With the built environment generally accounting for 45% of total carbon emissions, designers, developers and all applicants can make significant and essential contributions to the reduction of carbon achieving the aim of net zero carbon in the decisions made from the outset, in the design and construction of development projects, whether new build or refurbishment.

Flood Protection: Most new houses are intended to last for at least 60 years, and many will still be there in 100 years. In that time it is expected that there will be significant changes in the climate which will impact on the water environment and increase flood risks, particularly in an area attracting run off from the Quantock Hills.

Developers, residents and businesses will be encouraged to install and manage Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) to minimise run off and its impact from both existing and proposed developments, principally for flood risk management benefits.

Traffic Impact and Road Safety/Active Travel: Encouraging the use of bicycles and electric bikes, along with the Active Travel route will help to reduce vehicle journeys, especially into Taunton. Ensuring safe storage and charging points for bikes within house design will help.

Households with a Local Connection: Policy 11 relates to priorities for households with a local connection in respect of affordable housing. However the Parish Council will also encourage developers of open market properties, wherever possible, to give priority to those who grew up, have, or had, close family living in Kingston St Mary Parish, or have family with historic links to or those who regularly work in the Parish

Live/Work Units

Policy 12 seeks to support flexible and small-scale employment opportunities through live-work properties. Working from home has become more popular in recent years. While predominantly the case for office-based jobs (where planning permission would not be required to work from home in most cases), opportunities should also be offered for other types of job and business to benefit from working from home, and this may particularly be the case for small, micro businesses which might need a workshop set-up or consulting room.

Live-work units will be acceptable where there is no adverse effect on the day to day living environment within a property. In cases where a live-work unit is converted from an existing building used solely for employment, the new dwelling space should not impose an unacceptable loss of existing supply of employment space. Live-work units typically comprise one floor for use as a workshop or studio and one floor as a one or two-bedroom dwelling, often a flat. They are not the same thing as a dwelling in which someone simply uses a spare bedroom or study from which they operate their business which does not require planning permission. (See Supporting Guidance: Somerset West & Taunton District Wide Design Guide: 5.3 Lifetime Homes, Ergonomic and Universal Design).

Policy 12 is designed to facilitate the appropriate development of live-work space, often developed from conversion of an existing employment unit, shop or other building space. This type of development is particularly well-suited to the Parish as it can help to support both the local economy and sustainability, reducing the need to travel, by car, to a place of work.

We consider that for conversion of existing employment space to form a live-work unit not detrimental to the local economy, proposals should seek to minimise any negative impact on it. This is difficult to demonstrate as space is not necessarily an indicator of how an employment use either benefits or impacts negatively on the economy, while jobs, profit of a company or

turnover (which are not necessarily considered as material to a planning application) might.

We would suggest, however, that a business owner should be able to live comfortably in the live-work unit and, depending on the size of the unit in question, the living area might equate to around 50% of the internal floorspace area. For example, a workshop may take up the ground floor and the living accommodation an upper floor, or vice-versa.

The policy also seeks to safeguard the use of live-work units, and not for the development of such units to be an easy or alternative route for small-scale developers to obtain permission for a dwelling. One of these measures is for vacant live-work units to be marketed for sale or rent as such for a period of 12 months prior to loss to an alternative use, which we consider reflects the nature of the commercial and employment premises market, than a shorter period which might be associated with turnover in the housing market.

The policy is clear that, while we encourage the development of live-work units, their acceptance should not be to the cost of the factors that we value in the Parish, and so all relevant protections referenced in other policies, where relevant to a proposal, and others specifically referenced in the policy, should be adhered to.

Self Build and Custom Build

The Housing Needs Survey 2021 showed the level of interest in self build, as shown in the extract from the Housing Needs Survey Report:

Table 3.3 Would you be interested in a self-build project for your own occupation either individually or part of a group if there was a suitable site? (percentages, n=136)

| | |
|---|---|
| yes, an individual self-build | 17 |
| yes, a group self-build | 1 |
| no | 82 |

## New-build options and locations

About a fifth of respondents (18%) are interested in a self-build project for self-occupation, mostly if it's built individually (17%).

Policy KSM 12 reflects this but specifies the circumstances under which they will be supported.

In combination with the other policies and recommendations from the NP work streams it is felt that this Housing policy will help towards the goals of :

- addressing the gaps in Kingston's housing stock
- helping to maintain a balanced, vibrant and healthy community
- supporting local services
- allowing residents to spend the different stages of their lives within the Parish,
- living in appropriate climate safe housing
- while minimising the impact of new development on the natural, historic and built environment

Putting both the climate and ecological emergency at the forefront of planning decisions.

Housing Requirement identified by the Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey 2021 showed new dwellings required to meet demand for those wishing to move and remain in Kingston include:

- x 1 bed;
- 12 x 2 bed;
- 13 x 3 bed and
- 1x 4 bed properties.

Community Land Trusts: While it has been demonstrated that some small scale development is required to maintain a balanced, vibrant and healthy community it is also clear that a degree of control is needed to ensure that such development does not impact unduly on the character of the Parish.

One way of controlling development in the long term is for land for development to be owned by a Community Land Trust (CLT) to ensure that the community continue to have a say in the use of that land in perpetuity.

Apart from housing, a Community Land Trust for Kingston St Mary would be able to look at other assets – community orchard, community shop/café, community allotments, community pub, etc. A CLT may also be able to secure land for the Active Travel Route proposed in this Plan.



Kingston St Mary Parish Council supports the concept of Community Land Trusts (CLTs), where they are relevant. More details of CLTs are shown as Appendix 3.





# KSM Policy 9: Housing

**Development Sites:** Limited development within the defined settlement limits or a qualifying rural exception site bordering the settlement area around Kingston village will be supported to meet the latest identified local housing need subject to environmental impacts.

**Housing Types:** Proposals for new two or three bedroomed dwellings will be supported within the defined settlement limits or on rural exceptions sites.

Other housing will be supported in the following circumstances:

a) Conversion or reversion of holiday homes to full residential; or
b) The division of existing housing into smaller units;

Within the context of sustainable development, proposals will also be supported where they are:

a) lifetime homes which will allow people to remain in their houses across the stages of life;
b) live/work units to facilitate local employment and services without a commute;
c) an exception site which includes a community shop and café;
d) new housing will demonstrate nutrient neutrality.

Design considerations: Design will be supported that includes facilities to support sustainability, particularly:

a) Homeworking

b) Safe Cycle storage

c) Storage for segregated recycling

d) Electric car charging points

Reference should be made to the Somerset West & Taunton District Wide Design Guide: 5.7 Storage.
While the design of new builds and alterations outside the Conservation Area should have no significant adverse impact on the surrounding built and historic environment, a high quality of design is required and the creation of a pastiche of the neighbouring built environment should be avoided.

# Statement of Intent : Housing

- The Parish Council will continue to establish the need for Affordable Housing, primarily through Social Rent and low cost home ownership for households with a local interest, promote affordable housing opportunities to local people when they arise. and enable housing to fill that need.
- The Parish Council will hold a Housing Needs Survey on a ten yearly basis in line with the Census to monitor Housing Needs alongside the demography of the Parish.
- Developers will be encouraged to give priority to households with a local connection, and property built/owned as part of a Community Land Trust can stipulate such a priority.
- Developers, residents and businesses will be encouraged to install and manage Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) to minimise run off and its impact from both existing and proposed developments, principally for flood risk management benefits.
- Feedback from the community has emphasised the wish of residents to maintain the rural nature of the Parish, reflected in giving up the area of the Parish to be developed within the Staplegrove East development to Taunton Town Council. While it is therefore the intent for new build housing to be limited to the needs expressed in the Housing Needs Survey and the needs established for affordable housing for households with a local interest, a degree of flexibility is required to reflect the nuances of changes to housing needs and housing markets.
  And for that new housing to be discreet and in proportion to the existing built environment.

# KSM Policy 10: Housing: Households with a Local Connection

New affordable housing delivered within the Neighbourhood Plan area, should be occupied by a person/persons and their dependents in housing need and meet local connection criteria giving priority to people with an established local connection to the parish.

The Local Connection in order of priority means:

a) immediately prior to the allocation of an Affordable Housing Unit an ordinarily resident within the Parish of Kingston St Mary

b) have strong local connections with the Parish of Kingston St Mary including having a Close Family Association (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) in the said parish and/or any periods of ordinary residence in the said parish not immediately before the date upon which any Affordable Housing Unit becomes vacant and/or such persons who have permanent employment in the Parish of Kingston St Mary

c) immediately prior to the allocation of an Affordable Housing Unit have been ordinarily resident or have a Close Family Association or permanent employment within the adjoining parishes to Kingston St Mary

d) any person registered on the Homefinder Somerset Register or any person approved in writing by the Council's designated affordable housing officers (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld).

# KSM Policy 11: Housing : Live Work Units

Live/work units will facilitate local employment and services without a commute.

1. Development proposals which enable working and living in the same building will be supported within the defined settlement limits or a qualifying exceptions site and should demonstrate that:
   (a) the proposed units would be well-related to the uses of the surrounding land and buildings;
   (b) the employment floorspace would be equal or greater than that of the residential living space;
   (c) the proposed uses would not cause adverse impact on the local amenity of neighbouring premises / properties, or such impacts should be satisfactorily mitigated; and,
   (d) the proposed development provides satisfactory living conditions for future occupants.

2. Proposals which seek the change of use of existing employment space to form a live-work unit must demonstrate that such changes:
   (a) retain existing ground floor employment space; and,
   (b) the occupancy of the living space is restricted to a person(s) directly involved with the business being operated.

3. Applications to change a live-work unit to wholly residential use must demonstrate:
   (a) that the unit has been actively marketed for live-work for 12 months;
   (b) that no demand exists for its continued use for live-work; and,
   (c) the proposed change of use would be well-related to the uses of surrounding land and buildings.

# KSM Policy 12: Housing: Self-build (and custom build)

1. Development proposals for self-build (and custom build) housing will be supported where:

   a) the proposed development is within the defined settlement limits or a qualifying exceptions site
   b) the proposal comprises 2 dwellings or less;
   c) the local authority's self-build register / Housing Needs Survey demonstrates a demand for self-build in the parish;
   d) development is completed within 3 years of the plot or site being purchased by the self-builder (enforced through planning conditions);
   e) each plot has legal access to a public highway;
   f) each plot has at least water, foul drainage and electricity supply available at the plot boundary;
   g) the plot is accessible to construction vehicles necessary for the completion of the dwelling;
   h) they constitute high quality design or of an agreed "plot passport" (simplified design code), and meet the requirements of policies KSM1;
   i) the dwellings remain as such in perpetuity;

2. Where appropriate, the above criteria will be enforced through planning conditions.

3. Residential development should respond positively, or reflect, or be compliant with Natural England's phosphates planning advice and the most up-to-date local planning authority guidance on the assessment of impact and advice on potential solutions.

4. They conserve and enhance the habitats that support the bat population and further the conservation objectives of Hestercombe House SAC1 by ensuring that the bats suffer no adverse impact from:
   a) loss of feeding habitat; and/or
   b) severance of flight lines; and/or
   c) light affecting summer roosts; and/or
   d) commuting routes and feeding areas; and/or
   e) loss damage or disturbance of night roosts

5. Where serviced plots are to be offered for purchase as self-build plots on the open market, the applicant will demonstrate that there is sufficient demand for the plots and that there is an effective marketing plan in place to provide certainty of intended use.

6. For self-build development on exceptions sites for affordable housing, land ownership should remain with or be transferred to the local authority, Community Land Trust or Registered Provider (such as a housing association) in perpetuity and leased back to the occupier(s) where they are on the self-build register, have a strong local connection (as defined in policy KSM10), and will provide a home for themselves as their principal residence for a minimum of three years.

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# Statement of Intent: Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust

Kingston St Mary Parish Council supports the concept of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to enable small scale development to be controlled in the long term, give a degree of control to the community over what is built and give preference to those with a local connection, keep assets within the control of the community in perpetuity, and may also generate surpluses to benefit the community. A Community Land Trust for Kingston St Mary would look at other community projects, such as securing land for an Active Travel route and a community shop, both of which were supported in community surveys.

Where new sites are identified for development the first approach will be to determine whether it is viable to develop that site within Kingston St Mary Community Land Trust.

# 5. Supporting guidance:

## General

Kingston St Mary 2017 Community Plan (Abbreviated)
KSM-Community-Plan-2017.pdf (kstm.uk)

Full Community Plan 2017 Final-Full-KSM-Community-Plan-Report-2017.pdf (kstm.uk)

## Character Assessment

Kingston St Mary Character Assessment Report
www.kstm.uk/content/parishcouncil/np/download/KSM-Character-Assessment.pdf

Natural England's National Character Area Profiles for the Quantock Hills (No. 144)
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5904553266380800?category=587130

Natural England's National Character Area Profiles for the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Hills (No. 146)
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6601735426539520?category=587130

Taunton Dean District Council's Landscape Character Assessment
https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/1343/taunton-deane-landscape-character-assessment.pdf

Quantock Landscape Partnership's Landscape Character Assessment
https://qlps.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/QLPS_LCA_Low_Res_Optimised.pdf

## Climate Change

Kingston St Mary 2021 Climate Change Survey Results
www.kstm.uk/content/parishcouncil/np/download/KSM-Climate-Change-Survey.pdf

DWDG SPD - Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide SPD

Net Zero Carbon Toolkit - https://staging.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/other-design-and-technical-guidance/net-zero-carbon-toolkit-in-somerset-west-and-taunton/

## Transport

National road infrastructure and speed limit criteria.
Setting local speed limits - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Taunton LCWIP Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) (somerset.gov.uk)

## Housing

SWT Design Guide
SCC - Public - SWT - Districtwide Design Guide SPD .pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

SWT Core Strategy
SCC - Public - SWT - Taunton Core Strategy 2011-2028.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

SWT Local Plan Topic Paper 2 – Settlement Limits
SCC - Public - issues-and-options-topic-paper-2.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

KSM-Housing-Survey-2021-Conclusions
www.kstm.uk/content/parishcouncil/np/download/KSM-Housing-Survey-2021-Conclusions.pdf

Kingston St Mary Settlement Boundary Report 2023
www.kstm.uk/content/parishcouncil/np/download/KSM-Settlement-Boundary.pdf

# 6.0 Appendices

## **Appendix 1**: Office of National Statistics (ONS) Census Data

| Age Profile | 2001 | | 2011 | | 2021 | | 2021 Somerset Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All usual residents | 892 | 100% | 921 | 100% | 900/904 | 100% | |
| 0-4 | 33 | 3.7% | 28 | 3% | 37 | **4.1%** | 4.7% |
| 5-9 | 73 | 8.2% | 49 | 5.6% | 32 | **3.5%** | 5.3% |
| 10-17 | 81 | 9.1% | 94 | 10.2% | 70 | **8.3%** | 20.7% |
| 18-29 | 51 | 5.7% | 66 | 8.1% | 70 | **8.1%** | |
| 30-44 | 166 | 18.6% | 104 | 11.3% | 110 | **12.2%** | 16.6% |
| 45-59 | 214 | 24% | 232 | 25.2% | 207 | 22.9% | 21% |
| 60-74 | 190 | 21.3% | 217 | 14.6% | 233 | **25.8%** | 19.8% |
| 75 > | 84 | 9.4% | 123 | 13.4% | 137 | **15.1%** | 11.8% |
| Average Age | | | 47.7 years | | 49.0 years | | |

| | 2001 | 2011 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| All usual residents 16+ | 729 | 781 | 771 |
| Gender Split | | | |
| M | 413 (46.3% ) | 428 (46.5%) | 416 (46.0%) |
| F | 479 (53.7%) | 493 (53.5%) | 488 (54.0%) |
| School children/students 16+ | 34 | 33 | 33 |
| Marital /Civil Ptnrship Status | | | |
| Married | 453 | 487 | 450 (58%) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single ( never married or registered a civil p'ship) | 139 | 164 | 190 (24.3%) |
| Separated/Divorced/Widowed | 137 | 130 | 138 (17.7%) |
| Living Arrangements | | | |
| Married/Same sex relationship /Civil Partnership | 448 | 470 | 451 |
| Cohabiting | 62 | 78 | Not yet available |
| Living alone | 219 | 232 | 23.5% |
| Houses | | | |
| Houses with 1+usual resident | 387 | 391 | 395 |
| Houses with no usual resident-vacant/ 2nd home/holiday let | 18 (4.7%) | 51 (11.5%) | Not yet available |
| Detached House or Bungalow | 204 (52.7%) | 222 (50.2%) | 223 (56.5%) |
| Semi–detached House or Bungalow | 112 (28.9%) | 126 (28.5%) | 114 (28.9%) |
| Terraced House or Bungalow | 52 (13.4%) | 48 (10.9%) | 46 (11.6%) |
| Flat, Maisonette or Apartment | 37 (9.6%) | 46 (10.2%) | 10 (2.8%) |
| Average Household size | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.2 |
| Average number of rooms | 6.8 | 7.2 | 3.2 |
| Tenure | | | |
| Owned | 285 (73.6%) | 294 (75%) | 304 (76.7%) |
| Shared Ownership | 0 | 2 (0.5%) | 0 |
| Social Rented | 56 (14.5%) | 42 (10.7%) | 32 (8.1%) |
| Private Rented | 46 (11.9%) | 53 (13.5%) | 58 (15.2%) |
| NB absolute numbers for 2021 are rounded estimates based on the percentual breakdown from the 2021 Census. | | | |
| Religion | | | |
| All usual residents | 890 | 921 | 904 |
| Has religion | 776 (88.2%) | 605 (65.7%) | 495 (54.8%) |
| No religion | 114 (12.8%) | 254 (27.6%) | 344 (38.1%) |
| Christian | 717 (80.6%) | 594 (64.5%) | 483 (53.5%) |

| Car / Van Availability | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Households | 387 | 391 | 400 |
| 0 Car or Van | 42 | 35 | 25 (6.3%) |
| 1 Car or Van | 144 | 121 | 131 (33%) |
| 2 Cars or Vans | 152 | 155 | 157 (39%) |
| 3 Cars or Vans | 37 | 59 | 85 (21.4%) |
| 4+ Cars or Vans | 12 | 21 | |
| Total Cars/Vans in the Parish | 613 | 715 | 710 |
| **Economic Activity** | | | |
| All usual residents 16 to 74 | 645 | 658 | 780 (=all 16 plus = age 16-100) |
| Employed full/p'time<br>Self 'ed | 269<br>113 | 292<br>102 | only total: 390 (all employed 16 plus) |
| Retired | 151 | 158 | 282 |
| School children 16 to 17 Full time Students | 17 | 30 | 40 (age 16 plus) |
| School children 18+ Full time Students | 13 | 21 | |
| **Industries : Residents Employment** | | | |
| Accommodation, Food services | 14 | 20 | Not yet available |
| Admin support services | - | 14 | Not yet available |
| Agriculture, forestry,fishing | 36 | 22 | Not yet available |
| Construction | 19 | 17 | Not yet available |
| Education | 43 | 71 | Not yet available |
| Electricity, gas, air con supply | 3 | 2 | Not yet available |
| Human Health, social work | 64 | 67 | Not yet available |
| Finance & insurance | 14 | 9 | Not yet available |
| Information & Communication | - | 13 | Not yet available |
| Manufacturing | 27 | 26 | Not yet available |
| Mining & Quarrying | 0 | 0 | Not yet available |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professional, Scientific, Tech | - | 31 | Not yet available |
| Public admin, defence | 31 | 31 | Not yet available |
| Real Estate | 51 | 8 | Not yet available |
| Transport & Storage | 21 | 7 | Not yet available |
| Water supply, Sewage, Waste | - | 4 | Not yet available |
| Wholesale, retail, motor vehicles/cycles | 51 | 51 | Not yet available |
| Other | 22 | 21 | Not yet available |

| Date | Kingston St Mary Primary School Total on Roll | Children living in Kingston Parish attending the Primary School | Children living in Kingston St Mary Parish as %age of the School Roll | Census Numbers of Children aged 5-10 living in Kingston St Mary Parish | %age of local children 5-10 attending Kingston St Mary Primary School | Total Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| mid **2001** | 95 | 55 | 58% | 87 | 63% | 892 |
| mid **2011** | 108 | 41 | 38% | 55 | 75% | 921 |
| mid 2019 | | | | 56 | | 910 |
| mid **2021** | 93 | 26 | 28% | tbc* | 46%* | 904 |

Table 4 *mid 2021 school numbers vs 2019 census numbers – awaiting 2021 Census data on 5-10 year olds at parish level.

# **Appendix 2**: Green Spaces Audit

| Local Green Space | Ref | Distance from Settlement | Area ha | Local Significance | | | Existing Statutory Designations | NPPF Designation Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Landscape Value | Historic Significance | Recreation Value | | |
| **Playing Field** | **LGS1** | adjoining | 0.81 | **High** | **High** | **High** | None | The 2 acre Playing Field is appreciated by the community for its recreational value. The facilities include a Pavilion, croquet lawns, football pitch, children's play area and various items of play equipment. The Playing Field was gifted in Trust to provide the inhabitants of Kingston St Mary with a recreation ground in 1948 by the Hon Mrs Mary Herbert of Tetton House. The Trust became a registered charity in 1984 and in 2014 Kingston St Mary Parish Council became Trustees, who oversee this recreation ground on behalf of the Parish. The Playing Field is uniquely positioned offering far reaching views over open countryside, the conservation area and the Quantock Hills National Landscape. |
| **Sawyers Leigh Green** | **LGS2** | adjoining | 0.08 | Low | Low | **High** | None | Sawyers Leigh is a relatively recent housing development adjacent to Kingston St Mary's primary school with a central green space, which provides an informal recreational community space, predominately for young people who enjoy outdoor activities. |
| **Leachs Field Green Space** | **LGS3** | adjoining | 0.03 | **High** | Low | **Medium** | None | Leachs Field consist of a number of bungalows for the elderly and is predominantly local authority owned. This small green space provides the opportunity for an informal recreational community space for older people. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Village Green** | **LGS4** | adjoining | 0.01 | Low | **High** | Low | Conservation Area | Although small the Village Green, boasts a large oak tree planted on 18 December 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The seat around the tree celebrates the Millennium. Its iron work shows various aspects of Kingston life, including the Kingston Black cider apple grown in local orchards in days gone by. |
| **St Mary's Church Yard** | **LGS5** | adjoining | 0.35 | **High** | **High** | **Medium** | Grade 1 Listed Conservation Area Quantock Hills National Landscape | The Churchyard is located within the Conservation Area and the Quantock Hills National Landscape and is of historical significance, providing the setting for the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary. It also provides a place for quiet contemplation and commemoration of those of Kingston who gave their lives in two World Wars. The Church of St Mary with its fine tower still dominates the village as it has done for many centuries. The body of the church dates from the 13th century and the tower of c.1490 is perhaps the best of the well-known group of Somerset towers, which have been called 'among the greatest masterpieces of English architecture. |
| **St Mary's Church Cemetery** | **LGS6** | adjoining | 0.12 | **Medium** | **High** | **Medium** | Conservation Area | The Church's Cemetery contains many ancient and modern gravestones and is still used for burials, providing a place for quiet contemplation. Its location within the Conservation Area adjacent to the Church of St Mary, can be viewed as an extension to the ancient Church Yard separated by a narrow country lane. |
| **St Mary's Church Field** | **LGS7** | adjoining | 0.20 | **Medium** | Low | **High** | Conservation Area | The Church Field, located with the Conservation Area, adjoins the Cemetery and has recently become the focus of a local recreational initiative to rewild this green space with native wild flowers and plants. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Spinney** | **LGS8** | adjoining | 3.00 | **Medium** | **High** | **High** | Conservation Area | The Spinney' is a Woodland Trust property situated within the Conservation Area, planted with many fine trees and shrubs by the original owner of The Grange. The Grange is a grade II listed building built around 1862, by Sir George Gilbert Scott and the former holiday home of British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden. The Spinney is open to the public for recreational purposes e.g. dog walking and provides a safe route for pedestrians to reach the centre of the Village avoiding Kingston Road. |

# **Appendix 3**: Community Land Trusts

## How a Community Land Trust Could Work for Kingston

The 2021 Kingston St Mary Housing Needs Survey has indicated a level of interest from respondents in being part of a Community Land Trust (CLT) for Kingston which could help to address our local housing needs. The Community Plan of 2017 and the Housing Needs survey have highlighted the need for more starter and family homes, affordable housing for people with a local connection, and for retirement housing to allow for downsizing in later life.

**The aims of a CLT for Kingston**

- To build on the wishes and expressed needs of Kingston residents captured in the Kingston St Mary Community Plan (2017) and the Housing Needs Survey (2021)
- to find smart solutions to the gaps in Kingston's housing stock – 2/3 bed homes in Council Tax bands A to E
- to minimise the impact of new housing on the look and feel of the village and the parish
- to provide for those residents who wish to downsize and remain in the parish
- to give the community a degree of control and ownership of new development in perpetuity, by having an asset lock over the land, with the houses being leasehold
- having a say in the style and look of new housing, and giving priority to those with a local connection
- to provide a framework to hold other community assets in the future- shop, pub, café, Active Travel route, etc
- to enable surpluses generated to go back to the community

Socially the aim is to reverse the demographic trends identified in relation to falling numbers of 30-44 year olds and of children of primary school age which impact on Kingston St Mary's facilities, through the provision of housing for low/ mid income families with a local connection, and thereby encouraging diversity and retaining vibrancy in the community.

**Community land trusts** are not-for-profit, community-based organisations designed to ensure longer term stewardship of the land for the benefit of the community. Community land trusts are set up and run by ordinary people and are primarily used to ensure long-term housing affordability but can also be used for other community assets – community pubs, community shops and cafes, and other community facilities. To do so, the trust acquires land (and potentially property) and maintains ownership of it in perpetuity.

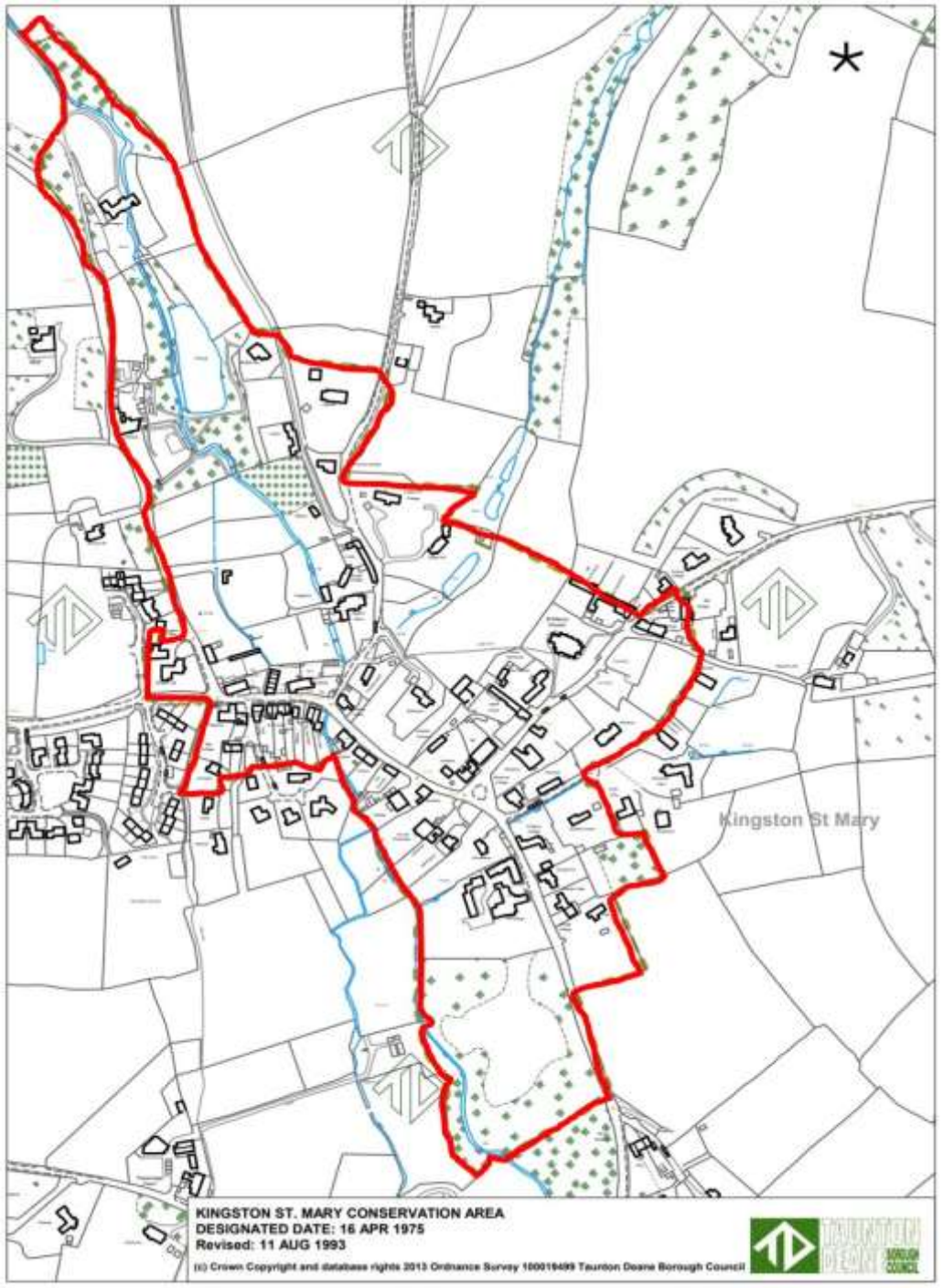
Today, there are around 300 community land trusts across England and Wales. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulate those CLTs established as Community Benefit Societies, which make up approx two thirds of all current CLTs. Other types of CLTs, such as Community Interest Companies (CICs) and charities are regulated by other regulators.

CLTs can play a critical role in building community wealth:

- CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable for local people, not just for now but for every future occupier.
- They provide low- and moderate-income people with the opportunity to build equity through homeownership.
- CLTs can be custodians of other community assets, such as pubs, shop, cafes.
- Membership of CLTs is open to anyone who lives or works locally who agrees with the stated objectives of the CLT, allowing for direct grassroots participation in decision-making and community control of local assets. Land trust's boards are composed mainly of community residents.
- Apart from the social benefits brought to the community by a CLT, any surpluses generated would be used for the benefit of the community.

**Appendix 4**: Map 12:

Kingston St Mary Conservation Area



# **Appendix 5**: Decision Notice for the Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

The Kingston St Mary parish boundary changed on 1 April 2023 as a result of the Boundary Review and formation of Taunton Parish Council. The Parish Council request (28 April 2023) for the whole area of the Parish to be re-designated as a Neighbourhood Area was approved on 30 May 2023.

Somerset Council

## Designation of a Neighbourhood Area

### Decision:

Kingston St Mary Parish Council has written to Somerset Council (SC) to request that the area of the entire Parish of Kingston St Mary be designated a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In accordance with the statute and guidance SC has considered that application and the Assistant Director Strategic Place & Plan has approved the Designation of the Neighbourhood Area for Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan.

Under the Somerset Council Chief Executive's Scheme of Delegation to Officers, Alison Blom-Cooper (Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning) is authorised to discharge responsibilities as they relate to Somerset Council functions under Town and Country Planning and Localism legislation and policy guidance.

### Reasons for the decision:

Neighbourhood Development Plans and Orders were introduced under the Localism Act 2011. The Act allows Parish Councils and groups of people from the community, called neighbourhood forums, to make community-led local planning policy.

A Neighbourhood Area must be designated to define the geographical area that the Neighbourhood Development Plan or Order relates to.

It is a statutory requirement for a Local Planning Authority to designate a Neighbourhood Area under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). SC has the power to Designate and/or amend an existing Neighbourhood Area under Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Section 61G(1).

Kingston St Mary Parish Council has written to SC to request that the area of the entire Parish of Kingston St Mary be designated a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Parish Council is a Qualifying Body and Relevant Authority under statute and is therefore authorised to act in relation to neighbourhood areas. SC therefore has no ruling to make in that regard. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Section 61F.

The Neighbourhood Area applied for is the whole Parish. There is an existing Neighbourhood Area designated for Kingston St Mary Neighbourhood Plan designated in December 2021, however, this predates the new boundary of the Parish of Kingston St Mary which came into being on 1 April 2023 following a boundary review. The Parish Council wish to progress a Neighbourhood Plan for the entirety of their new Parish area.

In accordance with the statute and guidance SC is required to designate without delay a Neighbourhood Area where the application is by a Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Area consists of or includes the whole or any part of the area of that Relevant Authority. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Section 61G(1). Under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended, Section 6 and 6A, the LPA does not have to consult on such a designation.

To not designate the Neighbourhood Area for the whole of the Parish of Kingston St Mary is contrary to SC's duty under statute. SC has no legal grounds not to designate the requested Neighbourhood Area. To not designate the Neighbourhood Area risks Judicial Review.

A Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to deliver on all of the priorities in the Somerset Council Plan 2023-2027.

### Neighbourhood Area:

See following page for map of Neighbourhood Area.

### Decision taken by:

Alison Blom-Cooper (Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning)

### Date of Decision:

30 May 2023

# **Appendix 6**: NPPF 2023 Glossary definition of affordable homes

## Affordable housing

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

**(a) Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

**(b) Starter homes:** is as specified in sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

**(c) Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

**(d) Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

# **Appendix 7** : Definition of Rural Exception Sites

The National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023 defines Rural Exception Sites (RES) as small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

In addition, our local definition means that such sites have been used by many CLH organisations (particularly community land trusts) to provide homes for local people.

- Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of a local community by accommodating households which are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection
- A major advantage of rural exception sites is that people with a local connection and with a housing need are given priority in the affordable housing allocation process. In the first instance, and for any future vacancies, exception site housing must always be offered to households in the parish within which it is located
- Small numbers of market homes may be allowed on rural exception sites at the local authority' s discretion, for example where it is essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding
- Rural exception sites work because the land coming forward will not obtain planning permission for 100% market housing, but it would provide a significant uplift in value compared with agricultural land
- The development and occupancy of each rural exception site is controlled through a legal agreement, which the developer signs with the Council prior to the issue of the planning application decision notice. This agreement ensures that the houses developed on the exception site remain affordable in perpetuity, once the first occupiers have moved on
- The affordable housing provided on rural exception sites should only be used to meet a clearly identified local housing need and is subject to strict occupancy clauses. The affordable housing is also required to remain affordable 'in perpetuity.'