

Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2013-2031

Submission Version



Rockbeare Parish Council

January 2018

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Cover Photograph:
'Rockbears Village in its rural setting', January 2018
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Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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Foreword

The Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a working group of volunteers on behalf of Rockbeare Parish Council. It is the product of much research, community surveys, consultation and discussion. It represents a shared vision for the area. Its purpose is to help realise that vision by shaping development and growth of the local area. The Neighbourhood Plan should ensure that we get the right type of development in the right place.

We must adhere to national planning policy and conform to the strategic policies of the East Devon Local Plan. Beyond that, we are free to set the neighbourhood planning policies that we feel are necessary. The policies in the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan are those that the community feels are necessary to inform development decisions in the best interests of the parish of Rockbeare, its community and its sustainable development.

Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Rockbeare has been a community effort. The aims and the objectives reflect a positive attitude to development and change, which should ensure the Parish continues to offer a high quality and sustainable way of living in an attractive rural environment as it has done so for so many years.

I would like to record my thanks and those of the Parish Council to everybody that has made a positive contribution to the preparation of the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan. I hope those that must interpret and react to the policies of the Plan will appreciate what we are trying to achieve and work with us in the best interests of Rockbeare.

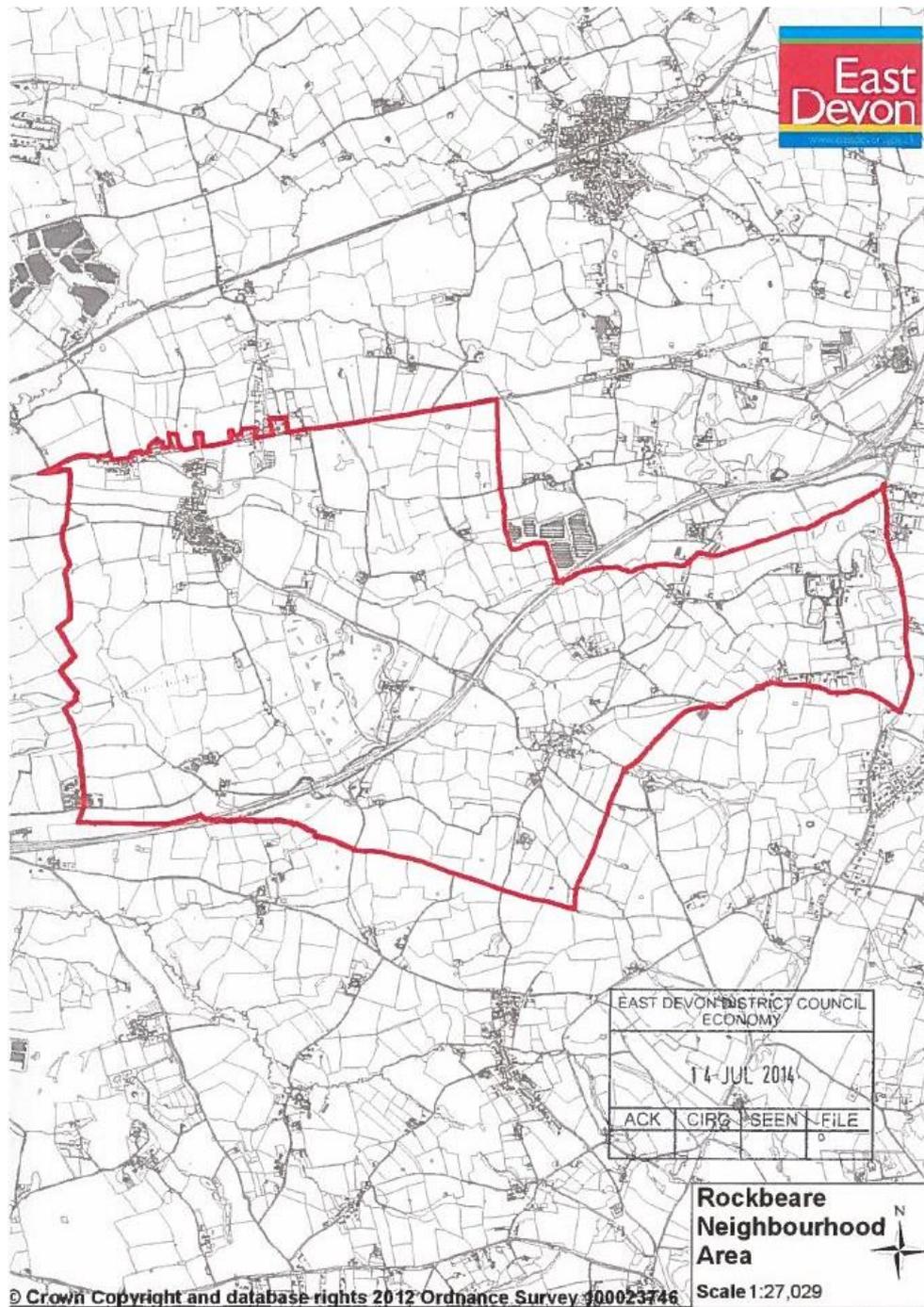
Mark Readman
Chair, Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

1. Introduction

The Plan Area

- 1.1 The Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan applies to the parished area that is under the jurisdiction of Rockbeare Parish Council. The plan area, designated as a neighbourhood area by East Devon District Council on 3rd September 2014, is shown on map 1 below (delineated by the red boundary).
- 1.2 In the interest of clarity, all references to 'Rockbeare' in this document apply to the whole of the Parish. The Village of Rockbeare, the main settlement area in the Parish, is referred to throughout the document as 'Rockbeare village'. Other settlement areas are referred to by their name.

Rockbeare NP Map 1



2. Rockbeare in 2017

Our Parish

- 2.1 Rockbeare is the name of a village and parish located in east Devon, approximately 5 miles east of Exeter. The parish is made up of the main settlement of Rockbeare, a smaller settlement of Marsh Green and several other smaller hamlets and farms. The whole of the Parish of Rockbeare is the area covered by the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 Originally a “*wholly agricultural*”¹ parish adjacent to a Roman Road, Rockbeare still has two working farms within the village itself with several others spread throughout the Parish. However, agriculture is no longer a main source of employment, with many local people now working in Exeter and surrounding towns. The A30 sweeps through the north-western corner of the Parish, whilst the A3052 runs along the southern border.
- 2.3 Despite having so many out-commuters, the Parish still has a strong sense of community. The Parish has two village halls, which a range of community groups make use of. It also has a village, Church of England, Primary School and a Church that continues to serve the community. There is a play park for young children and extensive playing fields.
- 2.4 Rockbeare Parish is still primarily a rural area despite being only a few miles from the centre of Exeter and being bordered to the north by the new town development of Cranbrook. The central area of the Parish is occupied by the 18th century Rockbeare Manor, currently being refurbished under a 50-year lease as a wedding venue.
- 2.5 The Parish rises to the east to Rockbeare Hill which forms a northern outlier to the ‘pebble heath’ landscapes found further south. This higher area contains a quarry and a small area of National Trust open land. The Parish has a number of woodlands that are worthy of protection.
- 2.6 Rockbeare Parish had a resident population of 914 and 356 dwellings at the last Census (2011). The demographic profile shows that over a quarter of the population was over the age of 60. Despite this, around a fifth of the local population (21%) was under the age of 16 and a third of all households had dependent children. A little over 1 in 5 households in the Parish were single persons.
- 2.7 Being situated so close to the regional capital and even closer to its main growth area (for business as well as dwellings) means that the parishioners are not short of job opportunities within a very reasonable travelling distance. Most people in work travel out of the Parish to do so. This travel is aided by the Parish being very well connected. With proximity to the M5 and the A30 and an international airport within 5 miles. These links, combined with mainline train stations in Whimble and another in Cranbrook, make not having a vehicle (6% of households), arguably, not a disadvantage. Other forms of public transport are infrequent, and the vast majority of parishioners travel to work by driving a car or van (73%).

¹ "ROCKBEARE, a parish in the hundred of East Budleigh, county Devon, 6½ miles N.E. of Exeter, its post town, and 5½ W. of Ottery St. Mary. The village, which is of small extent, is situated on the high road from Honiton to Exeter, and is wholly agricultural. The parish comprises the hamlets of Marsh Green, Pithead, Allicombe, and Little Silver. The land is nearly evenly divided between arable and pasture, with about 200 acres of common. The living is a vicarage* in the diocese of Exeter, value £148, in the patronage of the bishop. The church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, or St. Mary, is an ancient edifice, with a tower crowned with four pinnacles, and containing five bells. The parochial charities produce about £9 per annum. There is a village school of -recent erection, endowed with an annuity of £25 by Mrs. Bigwood. There is a place of worship for the Independents at Marsh Green. Rockbeare House and Rockbeare Court are the principal residences. T. Porter, Esq., is lord of the manor." Description(s) from The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (1868)

- 2.8 Rockbeare Parish is under real threat from all sides. This threat from the North is in the form of expansion of the new town of Cranbrook which, when built to its full extent of 8,000 houses, will dwarf Rockbeare village and has the potential of being joined to Rockbeare thus causing the village and its setting to lose its character. Currently the village is protected by an area designated by East Devon District Council (EDDC) as a 'green wedge'. The Parish Plan 2012 sets out unequivocally the position of the community, *"Rockbeare Parish wants to be kept physically separate from the proposed developments in East Devon's West End and any perceived detrimental impact (e.g. urbanisation) that they may bring with them"*.
- 2.9 The threat from the East and West of the Parish is in the form of flooding. Rockbeare village in particular, has been prone to recent floods. The Rockbeare Parish News in January 2016 reported that *"the 'once in a hundred year's storm' now seems to be a once a year one... since mid-December we (the village) have received over 12 inches of rain with very little respite, this had led to some flooding, roads being closed and one instance in late December when the effects of the rain were so great that rivers of flood water were seen running down Rockbeare streets due to run off from local fields and the drains being unable to cope with the large amounts of rain water"*. Most soils in the Parish are clay based with poor drainage in wet periods. This combined with streams feeding the parish area running through both Rockbeare and Marsh Green has led to some difficult times.
- 2.10 The central and southern part of the Parish lies under the flight path to Exeter airport and is therefore unlikely to be built on in the near future. Nevertheless, as Exeter expands and the surrounding areas develop, increased use of the airport may develop into a potentially significant nuisance in years to come.
- 2.11 The airport location is also serving as a magnet for major development projects and makes Rockbeare Parish even more vulnerable to development. The latest and closest to us is the FAB Project² (AC/DC) Converter Station, which has been granted outline planning permission for development on land to the east of the Harrier Court Industrial Estate on Long Lane. Despite its scale³, the local planning authority confirmed in January 2016 that this application does not require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It seems that much of the land in proximity to the airport is seen as suitable for major development. This puts Rockbeare's essential characteristics of rurality and tranquillity under threat, unless it can be screened by effective landscaping and the most important views and vistas protected.

² The France-Alderney-Britain ("FAB") project is an electricity cable that will connect France and Britain via the Channel Island of Alderney.

³ *"The total area of the development site inclusive of landscaping is 4.9 ha, of which up to approximately 1.1 ha will be occupied by the converter station buildings. The converter station operational compound area is expected to be up to 3.6ha. The converter station will have up to two halls of up to 20 m in overall height and with a building footprint of up to approximately 11,000 m2."* – FAB Project Summary, July 2016

3. The Strategic Context

- 3.1 In preparing our Neighbourhood Plan we are obliged, by law, to:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we have been cognisant of the current national planning framework. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁴ sets out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*". It states that neighbourhood plans should "*...support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development...*" and "*...plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan*". The NPPF goes on to say that "*The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.*" Outside of strategic policies however, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan.

East Devon Local Plan

- 3.3 The local strategic context is provided by the East Devon Local Plan. The Local Plan was adopted on the 28th January 2016, with the purpose of guiding development in the district up until 2031. It comprises both strategic policies and development management policies. The strategic policies of the Local Plan, with which the Neighbourhood Plan must conform, number up to 50. We have been mindful to ensure that our neighbourhood plan policies conform. Where relevant, we have identified which strategic policy the neighbourhood plan policy relates to, and how it conforms and complements the strategic policy.
- 3.4 Our right to introduce local policies for the neighbourhood area is recognised in the Local Plan. It makes several references to the role of a neighbourhood plan including confirmation that "*through a Neighbourhood Plan a Parish Council or relevant neighbourhood group can produce a local plan for their area that supersedes some or all of the policies in this part of the local plan*".

Rockbeare Parish Council - Position Statement

- 3.5 The Parish Council has prepared its Neighbourhood Plan as a positive planning document that seeks to guide and facilitate sustainable development within the context of the strategic development needs of the area as set out in the Local Plan.
- 3.6 The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states that neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.
- 3.7 As far as Rockbeare is concerned, this alignment means recognising that Rockbeare is a rural area, which lies outside of the growth area referred to in the Local Plan as East Devon's West End, and should remain so.

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012

- 3.8 The Parish Plan 2012 set out the position of the community, which remains true to this day. *“Rockbeare Parish wants to be kept physically separate from the proposed developments in East Devon’s West End and any perceived detrimental impact (e.g. urbanisation) that they may bring with them. This is particularly true of the Cranbrook development. In this context it is vital for the parish that EDDC maintains the Green Wedge between Rockbeare and the new settlement as specified in the 2006 EDDC adopted Plan, and carried forward in the 2011 LDF draft. Those who own land in the Green Wedge may well disagree with this position because of the very significant benefits they would derive from obtaining planning permission to develop the land. However, it is clear that the Green Wedge is meant to stop the coalescence of Rockbeare and Cranbrook and the vast majority of parishioners want to see the wedge maintained”*.
- 3.9 The East Devon Local Plan, adopted as recently as January 2016, accepted that the Green Wedge should remain and that the further development of Cranbrook should take place outside of the Rockbeare neighbourhood area. This important tenet is shared by recently formed Cranbrook Town Council which *“has no desire for Cranbrook to be a threat to Rockbeare..... Development of Cranbrook must be kept physically separate from the village of Rockbeare and Cranbrook Town Council supports Rockbeare Parish Council in this regard”*⁵.
- 3.10 As a community we feel threatened and extremely vulnerable to major development proposals. A prime purpose of our Neighbourhood Plan is to remind developers and planners that in Rockbeare Parish there is a long-established functioning community which still lives in harmony with its rural environment and takes its responsibility as steward and protector of this important area of Devon countryside very seriously.
- 3.11 The Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan is based on realising a vision for the Parish that resists unnecessary incursions and sees development of an appropriate scale and type taking place in an incremental and sustainable manner in the interests of protecting and reinforcing the distinction of and enhancing the rural area that lies outside of a much-enlarged Exeter.

4. Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 Neighbourhood planning is intended to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of the local area. The NPPG says that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Council, as a qualifying body is able to *“choose where it wants new homes, shops and offices to be built, have our say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings it wants to see go ahead”*.

The Neighbourhood Planning Process

- 4.2 We approached the task with an open-mind as to what the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan would cover and what its themes and purposes would be. We understood from the outset that it would have to meet a number of basic conditions:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
 - is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area – the East Devon Local Plan

⁵ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Cranbrook Town Council, 15 Nov 2017

- does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations
- 4.3 With these conditions in mind, we have consulted widely and engaged with our local community to understand what is needed and what it is possible to influence and effect via a set of neighbourhood planning policies. We have considered carefully the policies of the Local Plan and assessed, on the basis of our agreed objectives, whether a more localised or detailed neighbourhood plan policy is necessary. In several instances, we have concluded that the Local Plan policy is sufficient. We have only introduced a neighbourhood plan policy where it will help ensure the area develops in the way we wish it to.
- 4.4 The resultant Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out how we would like to see the area developed over the next 15 to 20 years and, through its policies, shape and direct sustainable development that will benefit those that live, work or visit in our area.
- 4.5 The development and preparation of the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken by a Steering Group comprised of local people and parish councillors, under the auspices of the Parish Council.
- 4.6 It was understood from the outset that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the area and to be *the community's plan*, we needed to carry out a thorough and on-going consultation process with those who live and work in the area and those that visit here on a regular basis. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit and an interest in the area.
- 4.7 The process and the types of consultation exercise and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in our **Consultation Statement** which accompanies the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The key methods we have used have included:
- Public exhibitions, meetings and events
 - Articles in the parish newsletter
 - Pages on parish website
 - Noticeboards and established poster sites
 - Focus groups and workshops
 - Surveys and discussions with local businesses and community groups
 - Correspondence with wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in our planning issues
 - Two consultations during which comments have been invited on draft documents
- 4.8 The development of the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan was based on a desire to be open and to welcome comments and contributions from all quarters. Our intent has been to encourage and foster discussion and debate within the community about the issues and opportunities that face us and strive to achieve a community consensus. This Plan represents the product of this process.

The Plan's Status

- 4.9 This Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be a statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant influence when it comes to being used by the local planning authority to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in our Parish. It sits with the district-wide Local Plan, produced by East Devon District Council (also a statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as the main planning policy documents relevant to the Rockbeare parish area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.
- 4.10 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies cannot guarantee that a development proposal will be refused nor be granted permission, but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the NPPF and the East Devon Local Plan when weighing up the appropriateness of the development proposal in question.

5. The Structure of Our Plan

- 5.1 Our Plan includes the neighbourhood planning aims and objectives for the neighbourhood area, which have been developed following a dialogue with the community and shaped by existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies.
- 5.2 Having explained our rationale for these, the Plan sets out our local planning policies on a topic by topic basis. The brief introduction to each topic is based on the findings of the research, surveys and consultations that have taken place as part of the neighbourhood planning process. More detail can be found in our Local Evidence Report 2016⁶.
- 5.3 Under each topic heading we summarise the characteristics of that topic and the key issues which have been identified and set out the agreed objectives the neighbourhood planning policies are seeking to achieve.
- 5.4 It should be noted that we have given due consideration to the policies of the adopted East Devon Local Plan. We are wholly in accord with the Local Plan's recognition of the Parish of Rockbeare as countryside and appreciate the policies within the Local Plan that are aimed at protecting its essential rural character and separateness. We have introduced a neighbourhood plan policy only where we feel it strengthens or brings local specificity to the Local Plan.
- 5.5 For each neighbourhood plan policy that follows we set out:
- the policy statement; and
 - our explanation of and justification for the policy, including reference to the other planning policies in national and district planning documents which relate to that policy.
- 5.6 It is important to note that, while we have set out policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered, as policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.

⁶ See full report at:

<http://www.rockbeareparishcouncil.co.uk/RockbearePC/UserFiles/Files/ROCKBEARE%20NP%20Local%20Evidence%20Report%20Oct%202016%20NEW%20VERSION.pdf>

- 5.7 Our Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Plan, a glossary which seeks to demystify some of the planning terminology used in our Plan.

Companion Documents

- 5.8 A number of other documents have been prepared to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. We are obliged to produce a:
- **Consultation Statement**
 - **Basic Conditions Statement**
- 5.9 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to testing as it was developed to help determine its positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the neighbourhood area. If significant environmental effects are identified an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 5.10 A 'screening opinion' on the environmental effects of the Plan and its policies was sought from the local planning authority, East Devon District Council. It reported in September 2017 that, based on the pre-submission version *"the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Neighbourhood Plan does not promote development over and above the provision in the Local Plan and will not otherwise impact upon internationally or nationally important features which would be deemed to have a significant environmental effect"*.
- 5.11 The screening also considered whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitat Regulation Assessment. It concluded that *"the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have an adverse effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (d), alone or in combination with other plans and projects. It does not propose a level of development significantly over and above that in the adopted Local Plan (which was itself subject to HRA)"*.
- 5.12 The Environment Agency and Natural England have both concurred with the District Council's conclusion that the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significant or negative impact that would warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitat Regulations Assessment to be undertaken. The Screening Opinion, based on this submission version of the Plan, was re-affirmed by East Devon District Council in January 2018.

6. Vision, Aims and Objectives

Establishing a Neighbourhood Plan Framework

- 6.1 The framework for the Rockbeare Parish Neighbourhood Plan comprises:
- a **vision** - for the long-term future of Rockbeare;
 - the **aims** - that it is hoped that the Plan can help achieve; and
 - the **objectives** - that we expect the Plan to attain by the application of appropriate neighbourhood planning policies

Our Vision

- 6.2 A neighbourhood plan should set out a vision for the future of its neighbourhood. The vision should reflect a desired end state that is consistent with the values and overall priorities of the community. This is encapsulated in our vision statement below:

Responsible, distinctive and sustainable habitation in the countryside

The Aims and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan



- 6.3 The process of arriving at an agreed set of aims and objectives started with a ‘workshop’ event at which members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group examined the evidence and the response we had received to surveys and other consultation activities. Much of the community-based evidence came from the results of a community consultation undertaken during the Spring of 2014.
- 6.4 The workshop process and outcomes can be found described fully in a Workshop Report, July 2016⁷. A draft set of aims and objectives was the focus of a community consultation event in the Parish during November 2016. The response we received was positive and encouraging. As a result of the reaction and comments, a number of revisions were made to the draft aims and objectives. The final set (see overleaf) was approved by Rockbeare Parish Council in January 2017. We believe it reflects the community’s neighbourhood planning and development agenda. It is this agenda that underpins the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies.
- 6.5 We recognise that not all the objectives that were derived through the consultative process would lead to a neighbourhood planning policy. A number have been categorised as ‘Community Actions’ and referred to the Parish Council separately for further consideration.

⁷ See Workshop Report at http://www.rockbeareparishcouncil.co.uk/RockbearePC/neighbourhood_plan-6066.aspx

Natural Environment	
Aims	Objectives
Protect and respect habitats	Protect local woodlands
	Encourage traditional hedge-laying
	Protect Devon banks and hedgerows
Improve public access to the countryside	Protect and enhance footpaths and bridleways
Minimise flood risk	Enable measures that increase flood resilience

Built Environment and Housing	
Aims	Objectives
Retain the rural character of the Parish	Maintain character of built-up area
	Influence building styles
	Control scale of infilling and gardens development
	Protect important vistas
	Respect heritage assets
Influence the scale of new development	Control numbers and type of dwellings
	Allow appropriate extensions and out-buildings
	Require sufficient off-street parking spaces
Limit development options	Maintain green wedge
	Control development on London Road
Minimise flood risk	Avoid developing in areas of flood risk
	Use of permeable surfaces wherever possible

Community Facilities and Activities	
Aims	Objectives
Protect and improve community spaces and facilities	Enable broader use of community facilities
	Promote allotments development
	Provide more facilities for young people
	Enable development at primary school
Improve local sport and recreation opportunities	Provide more facilities and equipment at playing fields
	Support additional recreation space when needed
	Increase number of cycle routes

Traffic and Transport	
Aims	Objectives
Make walking and cycling safer	Enable footpath and cycleway link to main road
	Provide more pavements
	Reduce speed limits at key locations
	Discourage through traffic
	Address on-road parking issues

Business and Jobs	
Aims	Objectives
Improve local business facilities	Support appropriate home-working and artisan units
	Ensure all properties have access to superfast broadband

7. Natural Environment

Overview

- 7.1 Rockbeare Parish is primarily a rural parish, despite being only a few miles from the centre of Exeter and bordered to the north by the new town development of Cranbrook. It comprises three landscape character areas:
- Lower rolling farmed and settled slopes, which forms most of the open land of the Parish
 - Lowland Plains, which is the area most prone to flooding and as such is better preserved as meadowland and open space free from building
 - Pebble Bed Heaths, which is the main area requiring protection. It is already under the ownership of the National Trust.
- 7.2 Much of the land is used for mixed agriculture, with low lying areas tending to be meadows with cattle and sheep, and better drained areas used for cereals and maize. The Parish does include good quality farming land i.e. grade 2 and 3b. Much of the soil is clay-based, with poor drainage in wet periods. Drainage through the Parish is primarily east to west. Some areas are liable to flooding near to streams flowing through Rockbeare village and Marsh Green. Flood Risk is a significant and on-going concern for residents.
- 7.3 A central area of the Parish is occupied by Rockbeare Manor, recently refurbished under a 50-year lease as a wedding venue with extensive grounds. The woodland areas in the Parish primarily belong to Rockbeare Manor, adjacent to managed parkland, and along the ridge of Rockbeare Hill. The Manor does have a permissive path around its boundary which does allow the public an extensive recreational path for walking and riding around the Manor boundary. The National Trust area also allows access to an area of woodland on Rockbeare Hill.
- 7.4 The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre has confirmed that there are no statutory sites within Rockbeare parish i.e. sites with a legal status warranting protection. We do however have several sites of local significance including County Wildlife Sites (CWS) and a County Geological Site (CGS). The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre tells us that there are also have several Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites (UWS)⁸: these are sites identified as having possible interest and in need of some protection, but not fully surveyed.
- 7.5 Countryside footpaths are not extensive in the Parish. Walkers and cyclists generally must resort to using the lanes and roads.
- 7.6 The main threats to the wellbeing of our local countryside is undoubtedly the impact of the expansion of Cranbrook. The central part of the Parish lies under the flight path to Exeter airport, which means that local flora and fauna is vulnerable to on-going noise and air pollution, although the land is unlikely to be built on anytime soon because of it.
- 7.7 The Local Plan states that “*development will need to be undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to, and helps conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of, the natural and historic landscape character of East Devon*”⁹. East Devon District Council has published a landscape character assessment¹⁰, which identifies what needs to be protected and/or enhanced and has informed the policies in this Plan.

⁸ Wildlife Site Resource Map and Species Information for Neighbourhood Planning – Rockbeare Parish, Devon Biodiversity Records Centre, 2016

http://www.rockbeareparishcouncil.co.uk/RockbearePC/neighbourhood_plan-6066.aspx

⁹ East Devon Local Plan, Strategy 46, East Devon District Council, Jan 2016

¹⁰ <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1226222/guide-to-landscape-character.pdf>

- 7.8 Our policies complement those in the Local Plan in supporting measures that will help protect the character of the rural area we inhabit and enhance the essential features that help define that character. At the same time, we would like to increase public access to the countryside where it can be accommodated without causing damage.
- 7.9 An area of the Parish to the west of Rockbeare has been designated in the Local Plan as part of the Clyst Valley Regional Park. The provision of SANGS is to provide alternative natural greenspace for use by the new residents as compensation for perceived impacts resulting from an increase in the local population on the two local European designations. The Local Plan Policy S10 states “... *Mitigation measures needed to comply with Habitat Regulation assessment will need to accord with measures set out in the ‘South-east Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy’¹¹. Provision of SANGS will be an essential part of the overall West End development. Where possible SANGS should dovetail with wider Green Infrastructure policies and be compatible with neighbouring authorities’ plans. The functionality of any potential SANGS and its contribution to the avoidance of a likely significant effect must be clearly demonstrated.*” We expect the changes made to create a functional SANGS to recognise that this area is part of the rural setting we value so much and ensure that it complements the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our Neighbourhood Plan Policies and their Explanation/Justification

Policy No. Rock01 Local Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

Development proposals that will cause the loss of or damage to trees, woodland or hedgerows (including hedgerows of importance) that contribute positively to the character and amenity of the area must provide for appropriate replacement planting, together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting.

The areas of natural woodland listed below (and delineated on Map 2) are regarded as important natural features. Any development proposals that would result in the loss, damage or deterioration of these woodlands will be resisted.

- A. Beggars Roost**
- B. Home Covert**
- C. Linear Wood**
- D. Percy Wakley Wood**
- E. Prickly Pear Blossom Park**
- F. Robins Nest**
- G. Silver Lane (bridle path)**

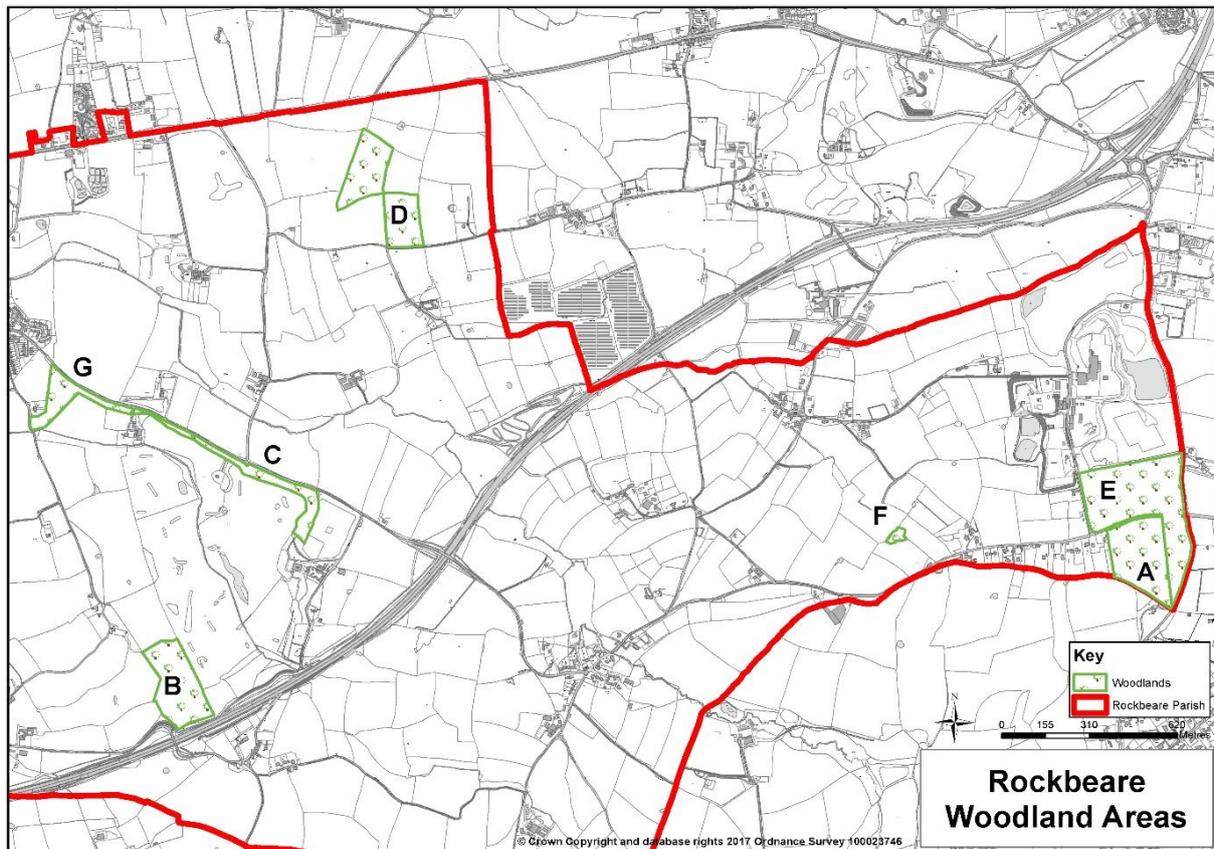
- 7.10 The Parish is a well-wooded rural area. Tree groups are part of the essential character of the area as described by the East Devon Landscape Character Assessment¹². Much of the area is categorised as ‘lower rolling farmed and settled slopes’, which has a wooded appearance, due to the many hedgerow oaks and small copses; or ‘lowland plain’ wide hedges, often elm-dominated, and distinctive hedge banks often with prominent hedgerow oaks. The wooded ridge of Rockbeare Hill provides a prominent tree boundary line to the east of the Parish.

¹¹ <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/369997/exe-overarching-report-9th-june-2014.pdf>

¹² East Devon and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and East Devon District Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidelines, 2008

- 7.11 The NPPF (para. 118) makes clear that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland.
- 7.12 Policy Rock01 identifies those woodland areas that are regarded as significant contributors to the character of the area, important local habitats and worthy of protection.

Rockbears NP Map 2



Policy No. Rock02 Devon Banks

Where change to existing traditional Devon banks is unavoidable, proposals for development which affect traditional Devon hedges will only be supported where it is demonstrated that options have been assessed and, as a result, the least damaging option is proposed (to the hedgerow / bank, setting in the landscape, biodiversity and habitats).

Wherever suitable, boundaries for new development should include the use of native species of trees and hedges and be constructed using traditional techniques.

- 7.13 The NPPF (para. 109) says the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. The lanes of the Parish are lined with traditional Devon banks. These contribute to the essential character of the Parish and provide important wildlife habitats and corridors. They are generally well maintained and should be protected from development. Policy Rock02 is only supportive of loss or alteration to a Devon bank if it cannot be avoided.

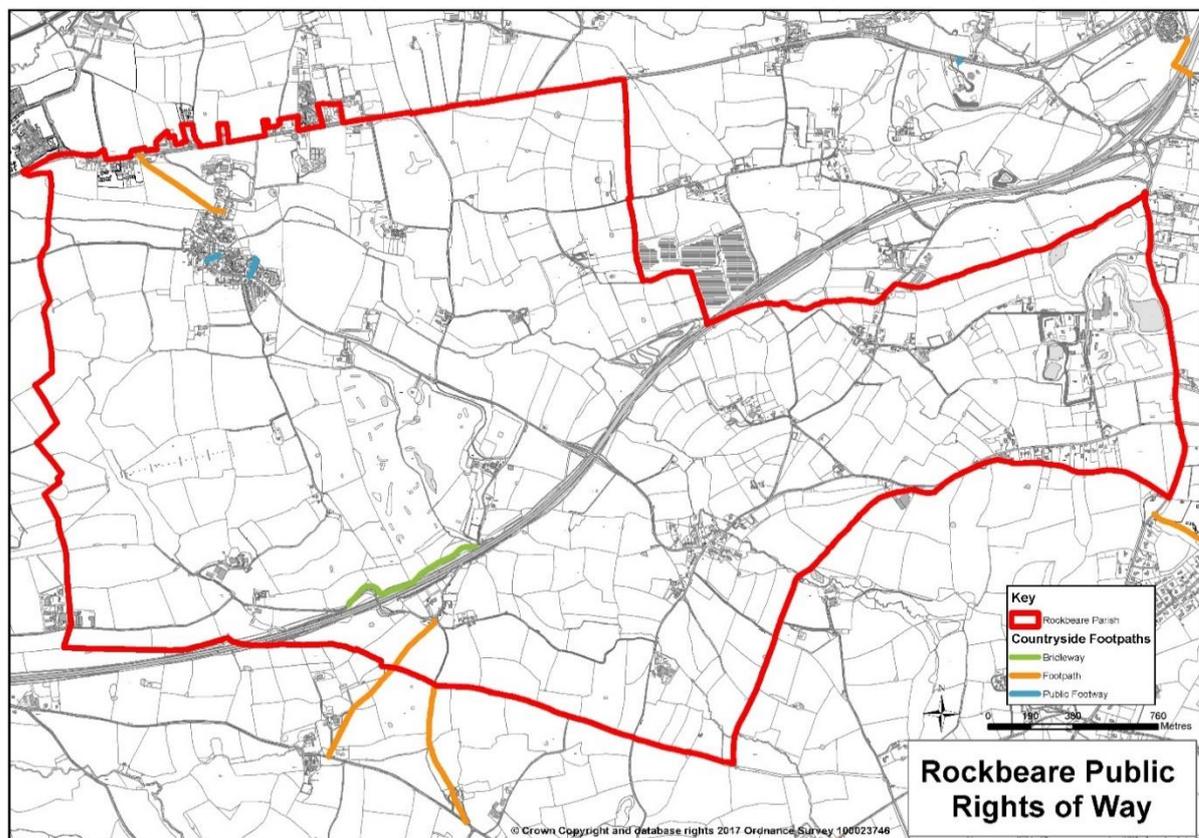
- 7.14 National policy protects many of the longer lengths of countryside hedging in the Parish under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997¹³, which is enforced by the local planning authority.
- 7.15 To help maintain the character of the area, we expect the boundaries of new development to be formed by native species of trees and hedging by using traditional techniques, wherever it is possible to do so and where such boundary treatment is appropriate to its context and surroundings.

Policy No. Rock03 Public Rights of Way and Bridleways

The improvement and enhancement of public rights of way and bridleways will be supported as long as their value as wildlife corridors is not harmed.

- 7.16 The NPPF states that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. There are only three public rights of way (including one bridleway) in the Parish (see map 3). The lanes provide the main walking routes for many people because of their relative ease and accessibility. Improvements and enhancements to routeways across the local countryside that make them more accessible and usable and assist local people to enjoy the countryside are welcomed. The NPPF states that we should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.
- 7.17 Linear routeways through the countryside can form important wildlife corridors. We do not want improved public access to be at the cost of the ecological value. Any development work should take care not to harm the local ecology and to mitigate any disturbance or damage.

Rockbears NP Map 3



¹³ For instance: a countryside hedgerow is protected if it is: a boundary line of trees and shrubs that at one time was a continuous line; more than 20m long with gaps of 20m or less in its length; less than 20m long, but meets another hedge at each end; less than 5m at its base.

Proposals to improve river management and construct new defences to reduce flooding will generally be supported. In improving flood defences, opportunities should be taken to enhance biodiversity.

- 7.18 The NPPF (para. 93) states that *“planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change”*. Flooding of parts of the Parish is a real and regular problem, particularly to the northern part of Rockbeare village, so much so that *“the once in a hundred years’ storm now seems to be a once a year one”*¹⁴.
- 7.19 95% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire 2015 told us that flood alleviation was an important matter to address. Cranbrook Town Council have also expressed concerns about local flood risks and the impact that the further development of Cranbrook could have on the Parish. *“It is imperative that the development of the town does not make matters worse for the village of Rockbeare.”*¹⁵
- 7.20 The Parish Council continues to exert pressure to ensure that drains and gullies remain fit for purpose. It will also work with farmers to prevent rapid run-off from fields. The Environment Agency reports that *“not only can run-off from fields result in increased flooding problems downslope it can also have an adverse impact on water quality. We are pleased to see a commitment to work with farmers to reduce run-off from fields”*¹⁶. Policy Rock04 is aimed at facilitating any development work that is necessary to strengthen our flood defences. We shall support schemes that do not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape or sensitive natural habitats. The Environment Agency is also pleased to see that the policy *“includes taking opportunities to enhance biodiversity as part of flood defence improvements”*.

There are important panoramas, vistas and views within Rockbeare, or views to and from the Parish that contribute to its rural character and the quality of the countryside which should not be harmed by development.

Development should not compromise the following panoramas, vistas and views:

- A. View south east from Silver Lane**
 - B. View of Southwood and Home Covert**
 - C. View along Parsons Lane towards Rockbeare**
 - D. View towards Rockbeare from Lions Farm**
 - E. View northwards from Long Lane**
-

- 7.21 Development that takes place should not harm the rural character of the area. Because much of the area is relatively flat, it affords some significant views which are part of the essential character. We are concerned to ensure that development that does take place in the Parish, does as little harm as possible to the rural outlook we value so highly. Sadly, some of the views and vistas we used to enjoy and rate highly, have been impaired, or lost, in recent years because of developments outside the parish boundary. We shall continue to regard the open views across the Parish as an important part of the area’s essential

¹⁴ Rockbeare Parish News - Jan. 2016

¹⁵ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Cranbrook Town Council, 15 Nov 2017

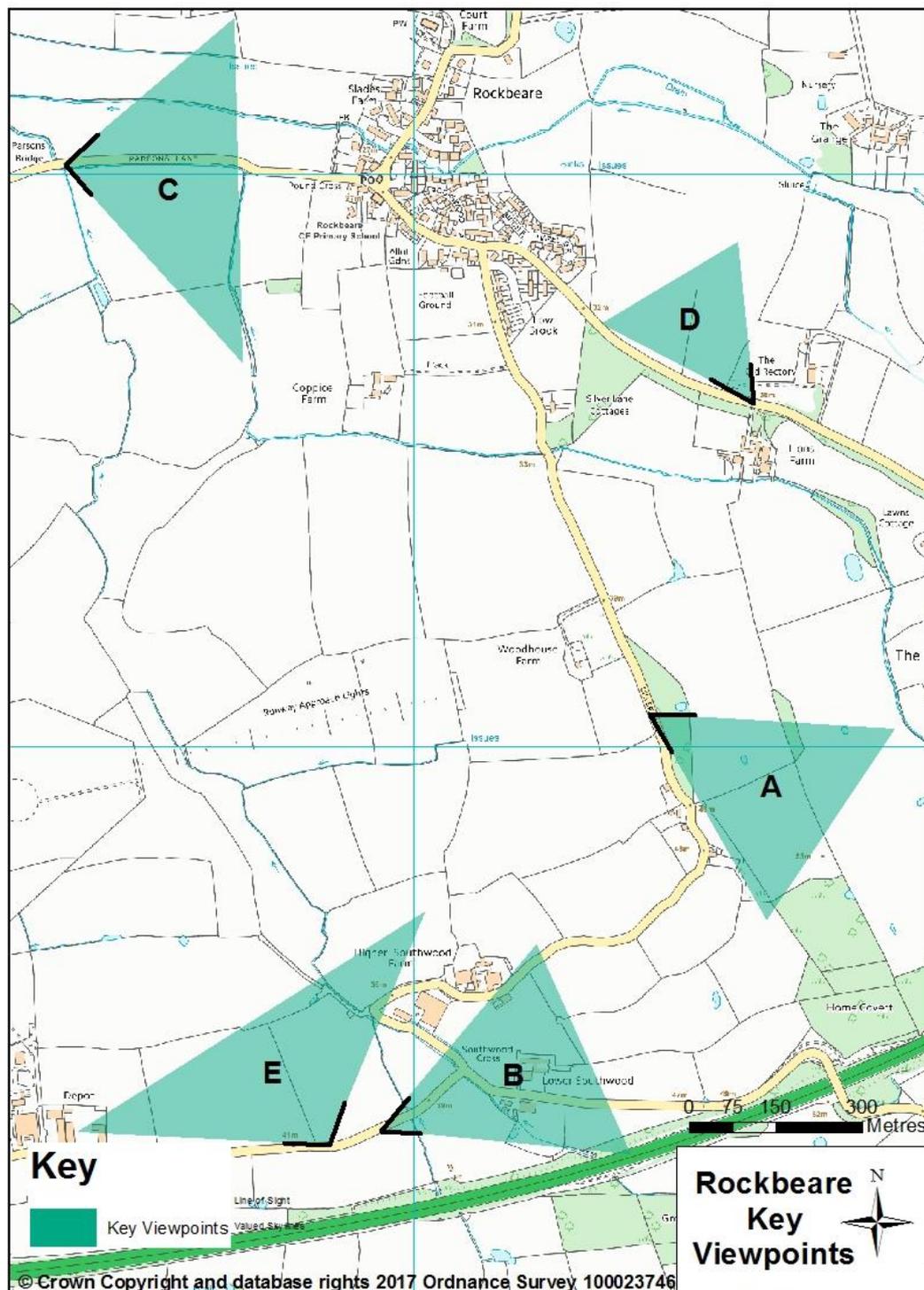
¹⁶ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Environment Agency, 4 Dec 2017

character and worthy of protection. We may object to development proposals, either in or adjacent to the Parish, on the basis that they threaten to ruin a significant view or vista.

7.22 To aid the design and development process, we have identified in policy Rock05 and on map 4, the most significant views and vistas. We believe that these should not be compromised by development and could, where appropriate, be used to improve the overall quality of any new development. The Parish Council will use these to assess the visual impact of a development proposal, whether it takes place in the Parish or beyond.

7.23 We expect designers and developers to be sensitive to this matter, and where development is likely to impinge on these views and vistas to take whatever mitigation measures are necessary and acceptable to the local planning authority to minimise their visual impact.

Rockbeare NP Map 4



8. Built Environment and Housing

Overview

- 8.1 Rockbeare Parish had a resident population of 914 and 356 dwellings in 2011. The demographic profile shows that over a quarter of the population is over the age of 60. Despite this, around a fifth of the local population (21%) is under the age of 16 and a third of all households have dependent children. A little over 1 in 5 households in the Parish are single persons.
- 8.2 Rockbeare village is the main settlement area. It is nucleated around a crossing of a tributary of the River Clyst. It has an historic core, but 20th century development has expanded Rockbeare village significantly, especially to the South-East over the lowland plains above the immediate floodplain. Over 60% of the parish population live in and around Rockbeare village. The other settlement areas are the hamlets of Marsh Green, Westcott, Rockbeare Hill and Allercombe.
- 8.3 There has also been regular sporadic development along London Road, the old A30. Much of this has been commercial and does not relate directly to Rockbeare village itself.
- 8.4 Whilst they are all historic settlement areas, the Parish has seen an increase of over 100 dwellings, or roughly a third of all homes within the Parish, within the last quarter of a century.
- 8.5 The commitment to develop the new town of Cranbrook has had a marked effect on the Parish of Rockbeare. Indeed, part of the historic parish area of Rockbeare was included in the Cranbrook development area and has now been ceded to a new parish area that is under the aegis of the recently formed Cranbrook Town Council. The town will grow to nearly 8,000 dwellings by 2031. Future development of Cranbrook is to be subject to a master-planning exercise, which will lead not only to a Master Plan but to a Development Plan Document (DPD). An important element of that Plan should be to ensure that *“the further expansion/intensification of Cranbrook to accommodate..... houses and associated jobs, social, community and education facilities and infrastructure [takes place] outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas of Rockbeare, Broadclyst and Clyst Honiton”*, in accordance with Strategy 12 of the East Devon Local Plan. To ensure that this is the case for Rockbeare, a Green Wedge area was designated in the Local Plan. An area is designated as *“land separating the villages of Rockbeare and Whimble from the new community site”* (see map 5). Local Plan Strategy 8 states that *“within Green Wedges..... development will not be permitted if it would add to existing sporadic or isolated development or damage the individual identity of a settlement or could lead to or encourage settlement coalescence”*. Uncomfortably, part of Rockbeare Parish today, is included within the master-planning area.
- 8.6 The development of Cranbrook has not been without benefits for the Parish of Rockbeare. It has given us nearby access to additional high-class community facilities, a railway station and more job opportunities. It has provided opportunities for new local households to have access to affordable housing nearby. It has, arguably, satisfied and will continue to satisfy, most of our local housing and employment needs.
- 8.7 Whilst the new town of Cranbrook has been the focus of development over the past decade, land in the Parish continues to appeal to developers. Most notably the Parish has recently been faced with a large application in the neighbourhood area, for 250 dwellings at Rockbeare Court Farm along with commercial floorspace and public open space. The Parish Council objected to the proposal at outline stage on the basis that it was clearly contrary to the agreed policy of ensuring that there exists a clear separation between the rapidly

developing new community of Cranbrook and Rockbeare village by having a green wedge between the two communities. It would also see the effective merger of Rockbeare village with Cranbrook, something strongly opposed by Rockbeare residents and businesses. The Parish Council has consistently supported this Green Wedge policy throughout the preparation and examination of the Local Plan. The Parish Council also considers that such a large development would place great and unacceptable demands on the local infrastructure.

- 8.8 It should be noted that Rockbeare village has become more prone to flooding in recent years. The Rockbeare Parish News in January 2016 commented that *“the ‘once in a hundred years’ storm’ now seems to be a once a year one”*.
- 8.9 It is clear from our consultations that the community feels under threat from development because of Cranbrook-related pressures. As a community, we feel strongly that retaining separation is important to protect the local environment and the long-established settlements and communities of the Parish.

Our Neighbourhood Plan Policies and their Explanation/Justification

Policy No. Rock06 Green Wedge

Development proposals in the designated Green Wedge area (shown on map 5) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that no harm to the character or purpose of this area will occur and development is:

- i) for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or**
- ii) within an existing residential or employment site curtilage and**
- iii) proportionate to its location in scale and type.**

- 8.10 The development implications of Cranbrook have over-shadowed planning in Rockbeare. Part of the Parish is within the ‘Cranbrook Plan Area’ for which a Cranbrook DPD¹⁷ is currently being prepared.
- 8.11 The East Devon Local Plan has recognised that the settlements of the Parish i.e. Rockbeare village and the hamlets of Marsh Green, Westcott, Rockbeare Hill and Allercombe, are part of a historic network of rural settlements that are worthy of protection. For this reason, the Local Plan has designated the northern part of the Parish as a ‘Green Wedge’. Its purpose is to prevent *“creeping development”* that could lead to *“the coalescence of adjacent or neighbouring settlements, villages or towns”*. To prevent such coalescence, the Local Plan says, *“it is important that open land between settlements is retained thus helping them maintain their separate identities, their landscape settings and to avoid the creation of unrelieved development”*. It identifies land separating the villages of Rockbeare and Whimble from Cranbrook as one of the key locations for its green wedge policy S8. This states that within green wedges *“development will not be permitted if it would add to existing sporadic or isolated development or damage the individual identity of a settlement or could lead to or encourage settlement coalescence”*¹⁸. The area that is subject to policy S8 in Rockbeare is shown on map 5.
- 8.12 95% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire 2015 told us that protecting the green wedge was important. A similar proportion, 94%, felt it important to protect the ‘village’

¹⁷ DPD = Development Plan Document. A formal planning policy document to explicitly guide and regulate development.

¹⁸ East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf>

identity. We undertook a further survey of local opinion in June 2017. Policy Rock06 was shared with the community via a questionnaire to every household. People were asked how important it was that we should keep a Green Wedge between Rockbeare village and Cranbrook. We heard from at least 30% of the population. 98% of respondents to the survey indicated that it was “*very important*” to keep the Green Wedge. 97% of respondents indicated that they thought it was “*appropriate*” to restrict development in the area between Rockbeare village and London Road to that needed for the purposes of farming, or minor extensions to existing dwellings or businesses.

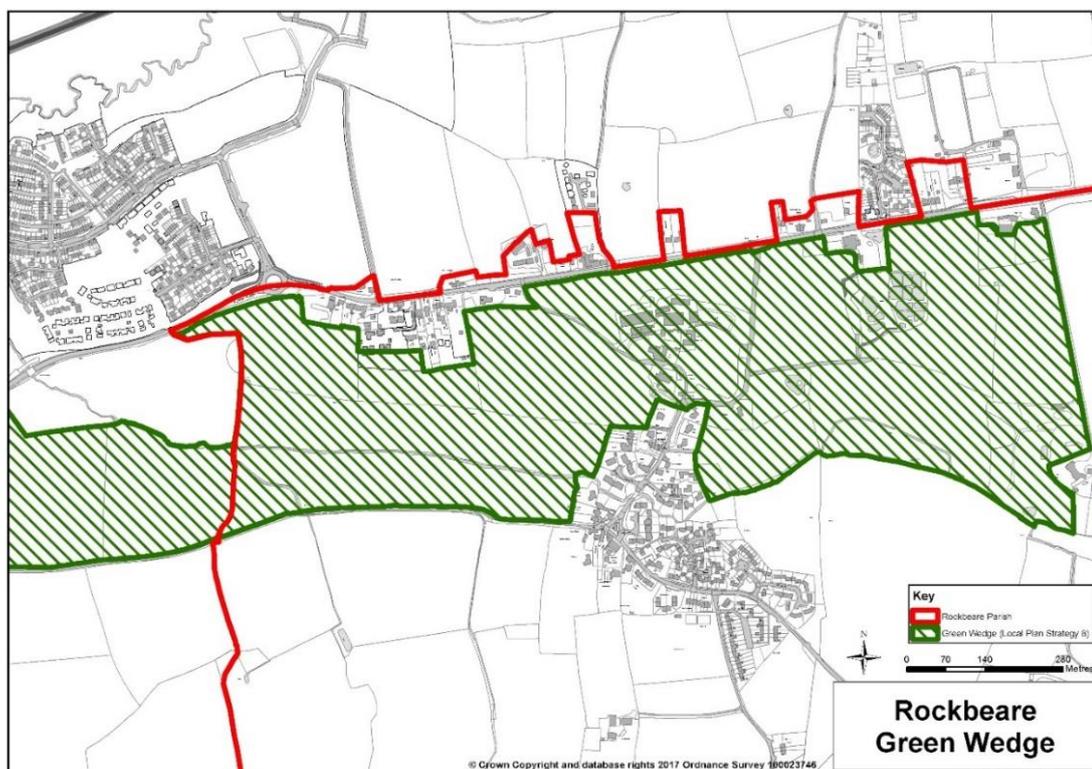
8.13 Neighbouring Aylesbeare and Whimble Parish Councils agree that maintaining the green wedge is important¹⁹. Cranbrook Town Council shares our standpoint on the Green Wedge and the need “*to maintain their individuality, sovereignty and separation including the presence of effective green wedges to prevent risk of coalescence*”. It is clear in its view that the “*development of Cranbrook must be kept physically separate from the village of Rockbeare and CTC supports Rockbeare PC in this regard*”.²⁰

8.14 The Green Wedge is considered essential. To the parishioners of Rockbeare it serves several important functions that are not dissimilar purposes to a green belt i.e.

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- to prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic settlements

Policy Rock06 is an endorsement of the Local Plan Policy S8, but makes it plain that, whilst isolated new development or incursions into the green wedge area will be resisted, we recognise there may be a need and justification for minor development in the interests of ensuring that existing properties and business within the green wedge can continue to function properly. We note that it is proposed that the underground high voltage cable route goes through the Green Wedge area.

Rockbeare NP Map 5



¹⁹ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NPs, 21 Nov 2017 and 4 Dec 2017

²⁰ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Cranbrook Town Council, 15 Nov 2017

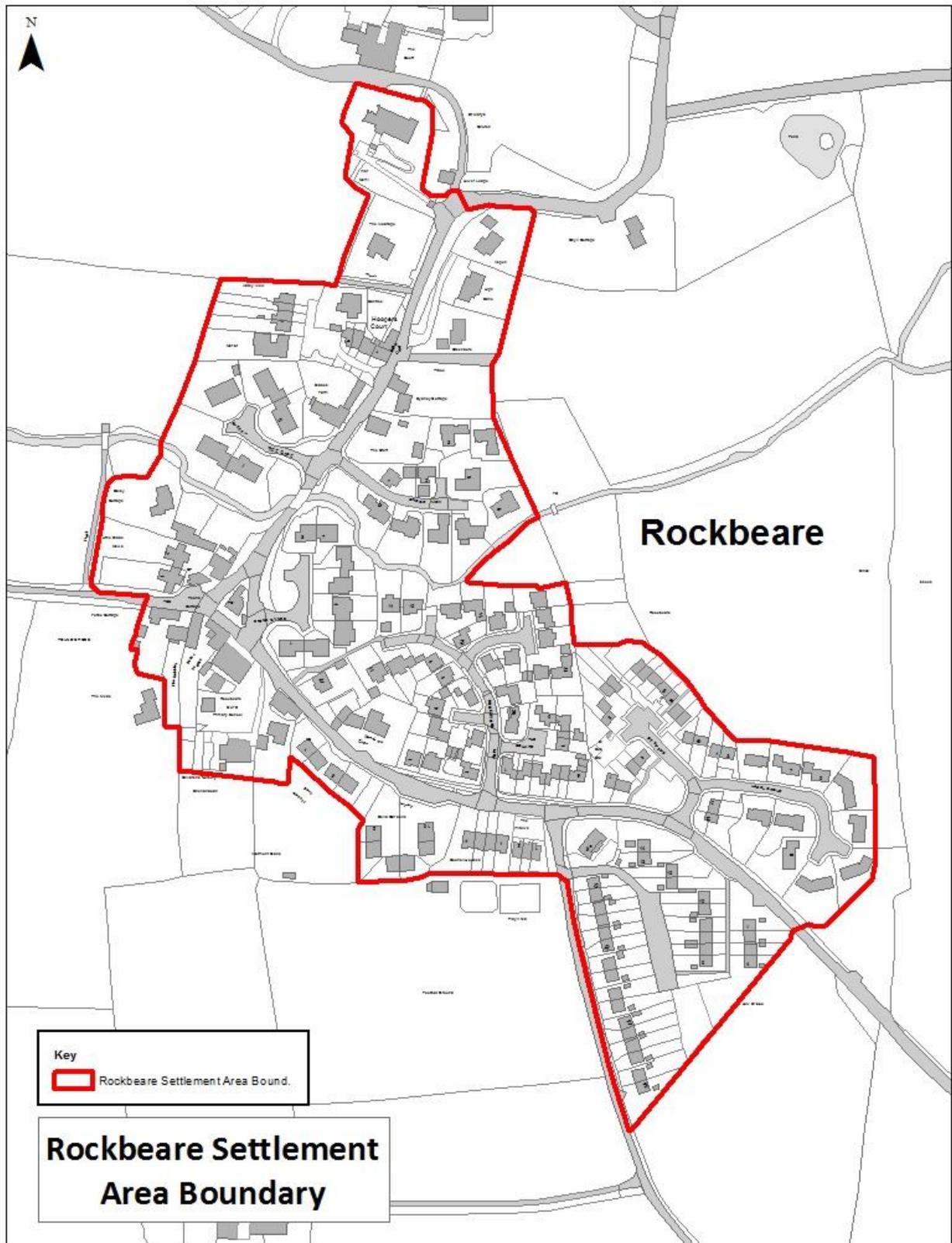
Development proposals on land within the defined settlement area of Rockbeare (see map 6) will be supported where the development:

- i) benefits from a safe and suitable access;**
- ii) does not impact upon the privacy of any adjoining properties;**
- iii) is consistent with the character of the locality; and**
- iv) does not increase flood risk;**

and is generally in compliance with other policies in the development plan.

Areas outside the settlement boundary will be regarded as countryside. In exceptional circumstances, proposals for new buildings outside of this boundary may be supported. In these circumstances where the need for new buildings is justified, they must be well-related to the village and sensitively designed to respect and enhance the character of the local area.

- 8.15 Rockbeare and Marsh Green are old rural settlements that have experienced significant a growth in dwelling numbers over the past 25 years. Further expansion has been constrained by the flood plain and is now made largely unnecessary by the availability of almost every type of dwelling at Cranbrook.
- 8.16 The nearby new town will continue to offer a plentiful supply of affordable and full market housing for many years to come. We see no reason therefore to introduce policies in the Neighbourhood Plan to promote major housing development in the Parish. We are satisfied that the East Devon Local Plan Policy S7 that applies to development in the countryside is generally appropriate.
- 8.17 We do recognise however that all plans are required to promote development and have a degree of flexibility in terms of the future use of land, to accommodate needs and circumstances that may not have been anticipated when the plan was written. A recent survey of the community showed that two-thirds of respondents from Rockbeare village were supportive of small-scale residential development on large garden plots or to fill gaps within the existing settlement area; respondents from Marsh Green were divided as to whether it was appropriate to encourage further development in a settlement that the Local Plan does not consider sustainable and suitable for further development.
- 8.18 Rockbeare village is the main settlement in the area and the only one with established community infrastructure. We feel it appropriate therefore to concentrate any new residential development within the village of Rockbeare. Map 6 defines the current settlement area for Rockbeare. Policy Rock07 facilitates infill development and redevelopment in Rockbeare village if it becomes necessary, as long as the development proposal is appropriate to its location. Policy Rock07 reflects the NPPF requirement to ensure development that does take place will add to the overall quality of the area, helps establish a strong sense of place and responds to the local character and history of the Parish.
- 8.19 There could be circumstances where development, as an exception to this policy, may be supported outside the defined settlement area. The most likely ‘exceptions’ to be supported adjoining or just outside the settlement boundary of Rockbeare, relate to the provision of affordable housing on what is known as a ‘rural exception site’, new business development (provided it would be acceptable in all other regards), and community uses – such as a play area, allotments, recycling centres or the like.



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0 0.015 0.03 0.06 0.09 0.12 Kilometers



- 8.20 We recognise that should a proven local need for affordable housing arise, which cannot and should not be met at nearby Cranbrook, then East Devon Local Plan Policy S35 would allow consideration of a mixed affordable and open market housing scheme on a site close to the current settlement area.
- 8.21 Policy Rock07 also recognises the ever-present risk of flood in and around the village of Rockbeare. We do not support development taking place on land known to be on a floodplain within Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3²¹, without satisfactory measures to mitigate flood risk in the vicinity and further downstream being included. The policy has the support of the Environment Agency: *“we welcome the support within policy Rock07 for development to not increase flood risks”*²².

Policy No. Rock08	Garden Development
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Proposals to intensify existing residential plots will only be supported where this can be achieved through good design and without harming local character and amenity.

Where garden development is proposed, special regard must be paid to:

- i) the density and height of the proposal;**
- ii) the character of the local area;**
- iii) the privacy and outlook from existing dwellings and gardens;**
- iv) the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers, which should not be adversely affected through overlooking, loss of light or outlook, over-dominance or disturbance;**
- v) the need to maintain a consistent road frontage;**
- vi) access and egress arrangements, so as not to cause nuisance to neighbouring properties or safety issues;**
- vii) sufficient garden depth and area being retained by existing dwellings commensurate with their size and character;**
- viii) the provision of sufficient off-road parking;**
- ix) the layout, scale and form of housing visible from the road being compatible with the predominant scale of housing on that road; and,**
- x) the effect and cumulative impact of the development on the loss of garden habitats and biodiversity.**

8.22 In accordance with our strategy of generally restricting development to within existing settlement areas, we recognise that there are some substantial garden plots in the Parish that may be large enough to accommodate an additional dwelling.

8.23 Policy Rock08 sets criteria to ensure that any proposal to build an additional dwelling, or more, within a residential garden area does not cause the harm that is alluded to in the NPPF (para. 53), which states that we should resist inappropriate development. By setting the criteria we have, we intend to avoid any negative impact particularly on character and visual appearance, on neighbouring users and on the safety of the road network.

²¹ There are 3 flood zones defined by the Environment Agency: Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3, with flood zone 1 areas least likely to flood (low probability) and flood zone 3 areas more likely to flood (high probability).

²² Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Environment Agency, 4 Dec 2017

Where practicable and appropriate, development proposals should incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) to minimise flood risk.

- 8.24 The issue of flooding and the heightened flood risk of recent years is well documented. Our concern is reflected in the fact that there are two policies, Rock04 and Rock09, in the Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF (paras. 100 and 103) requires measures to be in place to manage flood risk and to ensure that development in one place does not heighten flood risk elsewhere. The Environment Agency is clear that we should be “*avoiding development in the areas at risk of flooding*”²³.
- 8.25 Where development is permitted and wherever practicable, we expect new development to incorporate a sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) approach that is consistent with the current industry standard best practice²⁴. This could include measures to prevent water pollution, reduce surface water run-off at source and provide a range of physical structures designed to receive the run-off, and reinstate and improve and maintain existing ponds.

²³ Response to Pre-Submission Version of the Rockbeare NP, Environment Agency, 4 Dec 2017

²⁴ Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidance for Devon can be found here:
<https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/sustainable-drainage/>

9. Community Facilities and Activities

Overview

- 9.1 Rockbeare has a range of community buildings including community halls, church and primary school and a pub which are generally felt to be a sufficient array to meet local needs and make us sustainable as a community. This is despite the nearest shop being outside of the Parish. Rockbeare village also contains a playing field, children’s play area, allotments, amenity open space, and an informal ball court.
- 9.2 We are proud of our village halls, both of which are very well used. **Rockbeare Village Hall** was built in 1925, and together with the playing field, is leased from the Rockbeare Manor Estate. The hall comprises one large room with kitchen and lavatories. It is run by a committee of elected voluntary charity trustees. **Marsh Green Village Hall** is situated outside of the settlement area of Marsh Green, at Upcott. The hall is also leased from Rockbeare Manor and run by a committee of Marsh Green villagers, under the aegis of a charitable trust. It has a limited capacity and an even more limited area for car parking.
- 9.3 **Rockbeare Church of England Primary School and Pre-School** lies at the heart of Rockbeare village and the community which serves. It was established some time before 1872. The School caters for children from 2 years to 11 years. It is a very popular education establishment and currently operates at close to capacity. There is an increasing number of enquiries being received by the school, many from nearby Cranbrook.
- 9.4 With regards to High School, children feed into Clyst Vale Community College, for which there is a school bus service (chargeable to parents) or to Kings School, Ottery (no school bus service). 2016 saw the opening of the Cranbrook Education Campus, which is within walking distance of Rockbeare village. The school also has access to its own on-site playing field.
- 9.5 Rockbeare and the wider parish are served by the **Church of St. Mary with St. Andrew Church**. Services are held here on the 1st and third Sunday of each month, with additional services on other notable occasions. The Church has close ties to the School.
- 9.6 Local people have to travel a minimum of 3 miles to a Health Centre. Fortunately, less than 5% of parishioners, according to the 2011 Census, are in bad health. The lack of local health services and limited bus service is a problem to those who are ill or in poor health. It is also an inconvenience for families with young children.
- 9.7 The focus of outdoor recreation activity in the Parish is Rockbeare Playing Fields on Silver Lane. It contains:
- play park for children
 - half-sized outdoor basketball court
 - 1 full size football pitch
 - capacity for 2 mini football pitches
 - a cricket pavilion
- The Playing Field is used to hold the summer fete, weekend sporting events, car boot sales and as over flow car parking for the Village Hall on occasions.
- 9.8 Rockbeare and Marsh Green are rural areas, so green spaces are plentiful. Marsh Green has the Prickly Pear (National Trust) Woodland; Rockbeare has a variety of permissive pathways and small wooded areas which are popular, as well as the playing field. The school also has access to an on-site playing field.
- 9.9 Rockbeare has a small number of allotments, on a single site owned by Rockbeare Estates. All plots are actively used.

- 9.10 East Devon District Council carried out an open space supply analysis by parish. It showed that whilst Rockbeare may be over-provided for in total hectares using accepted standards per head of population, it is short of general amenity space, outdoor pitches, parks and play space. The survey report also suggested that both the Allotments and the Playing Field needed improvements.
- 9.11 The Community Survey in 2015 identified a dissatisfaction with the quality of outdoor facilities and the need for better maintenance and an up-grading of local facilities. This is echoed in the approved actions in East Devon District Council's 2015 Playing Pitch Strategy²⁵.

Our Neighbourhood Plan Policies and their Explanation/Justification

Policy No. Rock10 Community Buildings

Proposals which seek to improve or extend the existing local community facilities and assets, or provide for appropriate shared use, will be supported where:

- i) there is a demonstrable need for them; and**
- ii) there is no significant adverse impact upon nearby residents and uses.**

- 9.12 The Parish is fortunate to have a small number of community buildings that help ensure a range of community activities take place and we can retain a sense of being a community. The two village halls are managed and maintained by charitable trusts, run by local people. They are very well used. The Church of St Mary with St Andrew in Rockbeare village is seeking ways, besides services, to broaden its use for the benefit of the community. The Primary School has served local children for well over a century.
- 9.13 We do not want to lose these precious community facilities of which we are proud. We want them to continue to be at the heart of community life for many years to come. The NPPF (para. 70) says we should ensure that established facilities and services can develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community.
- 9.14 Policy Rock10 recognises that the facilities may need to change and adapt to remain relevant i.e. to meet local needs. We support development at these facilities, of an appropriate scale, as long as it does not result in activities that would constitute an unacceptable nuisance to nearby residents and uses and conforms with the design requirements of the East Devon Local Plan.

Policy No. Rock11 Allotments

Proposals to provide an area for allotments and community composting to meet community demands will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on adjoining users.

- 9.15 There is one allotment site in the Parish, in Rockbeare village. Whilst there is no current waiting list (Nov. 2016), we believe that a sustainable community should provide sufficient plots to enable local people, that want to do so, to grow their own food and benefit from horticultural activity. The NPPF (para. 70) encourages us to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- 9.16 Policy Rock11 provides support for an additional allotment site to be developed in response to a local demand.

²⁵ <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1182367/adopted-east-devon-pps-2015.pdf>

Policy No. Rock12 Outdoor Recreation Space

Development proposals to improve facilities and amenities on, and accessibility to, existing play and recreation areas will be supported where there is a demonstrable need for them and where they do not have an adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents in terms of noise, light and visual appearance.

- 9.17 There is one sports and recreation site in the Parish, the playing fields on Silver Lane in Rockbeare village. The site is over two hectares of outdoor sports pitches a youth multi-sports area and a junior playground. There is plenty of scope, and much community support, for improvements. With the development of new sports and recreation facilities nearby on Cranbrook, there appears no real need to increase the number of local facilities. Focus should be on making sure that the local facility we do have is well cared for and subject to continuous improvements/enhancements improved to meet a range of local needs and encourage local participation in sport and recreation. This is a stated aim of the East Devon Playing Pitches Strategy 2015.
- 9.18 The NPPF (para. 73) says access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. In response to the Rockbeare Parish Community Questionnaire 2015, residents expressed a need to protect the playing fields, public house as a local hub.
- 9.19 69% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire 2015 told us that improving recreational and sports facilities was important.
- 9.20 Policy Rock12 is supportive of changes and additions to the recreation areas of the Parish as long as any development is appropriate, and it does not result in activities that would constitute an unacceptable nuisance to nearby residents and uses.

Policy No. Rock13 Cycle Routes

Proposals to improve and extend existing cycle routes and link them to the wider network will be supported.

- 9.21 The Cranbrook development includes cycle routes that connect Cranbrook to Exeter and the national network. Cycling is a significant aspect of the new town's sustainable travel plan. Cycling is becoming an increasingly popular recreation pursuit. The NPPF (para. 35) says we should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements.
- 9.22 The lanes of the Parish are attracting more and more cyclists, which is likely to increase exponentially as Cranbrook grows. The area would benefit from a network of safe cycle routes, which would combine dedicated lanes, off-road tracks and traffic calming measures. This would encourage more local people to enjoy the health benefits of cycling and provide an alternative travel mode if the local network was connected to Cranbrook and the wider network. There are currently no cycleways or multi-use routes in the Parish.
- 9.23 The response to the community questionnaire in 2015 showed a clear interest in a local network of footpaths and cycleways. 72% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire 2015 told us that improving footpaths and cycle routes was important.
- 9.24 Policy Rock13 supports local initiatives to provide local cycle routes and connect them to the wider network.

10. Traffic and Transport

Overview

- 10.1 Rockbeare is a very well-connected Parish, with proximity to the M5 and the A30 trunk road and an international airport within 5 miles. It is however also a largely rural parish with typical Devon lanes lined by Devon banks, and we wish it to remain so. These are not conducive to large traffic flows of modern vehicles. The use of the road network by the ever-growing traffic generated by Cranbrook is becoming a real nuisance and safety issue. We also experience a high incidence of large agricultural vehicles using local roads and causing potholes and damage to road edges and verges.
- 10.2 Rockbeare Primary School in the heart of Rockbeare village is an additional cause of traffic nuisance and hazard at the beginning and end of every school day.
- 10.3 Walking safely around the Parish is not easy. There is just one public right of way, which links Rockbeare to the 'Jack-in-the-Green' (gastro-pub). There are a limited number of footpaths in Rockbeare village and Marsh Green has no public footpaths.
- 10.4 Community surveys in 2012 and 2015 both identified a real concern amongst local people about the safety of road users in the Parish and the need to provide more pedestrian-friendly and car-free routes. This is reflected in the objectives agreed for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.5 Our policies are designed to facilitate vital improvements to the network, which could include measures to discourage unnecessary car journeys in the Parish and reduce the volume and speed of traffic.

Our Neighbourhood Plan Policies and their Explanation/Justification

Policy No. Rock14	Footpaths
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Measures to provide wider and safer footpaths and shared pedestrian and cycle links between settlement areas will be supported.
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- 10.6 There are few pavements alongside the roads of Rockbeare, just a few within Rockbeare village. There are no pavements in Marsh Green. This lack of footways came up repeatedly in the questionnaire (2015) and consultation events as a matter that needed improvement, particularly in the interests of safety. The NPPF (para. 35) says that, in planning, we should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, in order to promote sustainable transport modes.
- 10.7 Policy Rock14 facilitates improvements to the local network so people can move around the area more safely and feel they don't always need to use the car for local journeys.

Development proposals to facilitate traffic management schemes in the interest of increasing safety for all road users in the Parish and which are proven to have the backing of the community will be supported.

- 10.8 Rockbeare Parish is rural and thus the main traffic problems relate to the condition of country roads and their suitability to cope with ever-growing use, due mainly to the expansion of the east side of Exeter and the development of Cranbrook. As the new town develops to its full size, there is a fear that the use of the roads through the villages of Rockbeare and Marsh Green as short cuts to Exeter Airport and Ottery St Mary will only become even more of a nuisance and safety hazard. The lanes of the Parish, particularly Long Lane, cannot, and should not have to, cope with the volume and scale of construction traffic to and from the major development projects that surround the Parish and 'weight limits' are being pursued by the Parish Council.
- 10.9 The community questionnaire 2015 highlighted local concerns about traffic volume and speeds, which because of a lack of footpaths, necessitate traffic management measures. Opinion seems to be divided about what measures are necessary or would be effective. We would concur with the 2008 East Devon Landscape Character Assessment that advises we should *"resist pressures to widen or straighten the characteristic winding lanes, especially (a) within settlements, where junction improvements can dilute the organic street pattern; (b) where it would result in the destruction of ditches and verges"*²⁶.
- 10.10 The NPPF (para. 35) says we should create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians. Policy Rock15 is supportive of appropriate traffic management measures that will bring about a calmer and safer local environment, as long as it has been subject to a proper consultation with local people i.e. those who know the road network and its shortcomings best

²⁶ East Devon and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and East Devon District Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidelines, 2008

11. Business and Jobs

Overview

- 11.1 Being situated so close to the regional capital and even closer to its main growth area (for business as well as dwellings) means that the parishioners of Rockbeare are not short of job opportunities within a very reasonable travelling distance. Most people in work travel out of the Parish to do so and mostly by car.
- 11.2 70% of the Parish's working population was in full-time employment in 2011. Women were more likely to be in part-time employment than men. In 2011 the number of persons working regularly from home was only 44. This figure is likely to have increased since that time because much demanded improvements in the local broadband and telecommunication service has occurred. The speed and reliability of the local communication network is cited in all our community consultation as being essential for the wellbeing of local businesses.
- 11.3 The Parish is still home to many businesses (29 were recorded in mid-2016). Most are small although one local business employs over 600 persons engaged in civil engineering and building services, with around 100 based at Rockbeare Hill. Most of the larger business operations in the Parish are located on London Road, in premises that are a legacy of when this was the A30 trunk road and tourist route to and from London and Bristol. Several local businesses operate private residences.
- 11.4 In response to the community consultation, the purpose of our policies is to remove barriers and facilitate local and home-working.

Our Neighbourhood Plan Policies and their Explanation/Justification

Policy No. Rock16	Home-Working
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Proposals for development that combines living and small-scale employment space for office and/or light industrial uses through:

- i) the use of part of a dwelling; or**
- ii) extensions to the dwelling; or**
- iii) a small-scale, free standing building within its curtilage; or**
- iv) conversion of outbuildings**

will be supported provided there is no adverse impact on the character and amenity of nearby residential areas.

Employment space permitted under clauses (iv) of this policy must remain as its approved use unless it has been actively marketed for two years and it can be demonstrated that no demand exists for its continuation for employment purposes. In such cases, the redundant space should revert to its former use.

- 11.5 There is a discernible interest amongst the local population in home-working, which we are happy to encourage. A sustainable community should be reducing the need to travel to work daily and maintaining local services and its economic base. The NPPF (para. 28) encourages neighbourhood plans to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas to promote a strong rural economy. The Local Plan (policy S31) is also encouraging of development that provides for home-working.
- 11.6 Policy Rock16 is supportive of minor development to provide a satisfactory working space for those that wish to work regularly from home. This could be in the form of conversion or

minor extensions. Any conversion of an existing outbuilding should be exclusively for business purposes.

Policy No. Rock17 Communications

1. Development to provide a super-fast communication infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed.

2. All new residential, educational and business premises development should endeavour to make adequate provision for high speed broadband and other communication networks.

- 11.7 The availability of a 'superfast' broadband service is becoming an essential tool for communication and access to on-line services for business as well as domestic purposes. With the growing interest in working from home so the demand for super-fast connectivity grows. The NPPF (para. 42) recognises that high speed broadband technology and other communications networks play a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.
- 11.8 Increasing use of the mobile phone network for internet access will rely on the extension of coverage from appropriately sited aerial arrays and ultimately satellites. Policy Rock17 is there to support the on-going provision of the best possible service for the people and businesses in the Parish whilst ensuring that the required infrastructure does not despoil the visual amenity and the character of the area.

12. Monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan

- 12.1 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies to be monitored.
- 12.2 Rockbears Parish Council will monitor the impact of policies on change in the neighbourhood area by considering the effectiveness of the policies in the planning application decision-making process. We will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. We will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, and comment from the Parish Council together with the eventual outcome of the application.
- 12.3 A full or partial review of this Plan may be triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or county-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and/or existing neighbourhood plan policies. Five years from the date the Plan is made, we will consider the need and value in undertaking some form of Review.

13. Glossary

The following terms may be used in the Rockbears Neighbourhood Plan:

Affordable Housing - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Ancient Woodland – a woodland which has existed since the year 1600 or earlier.

Bridleways - are footpaths, but additionally users are permitted to ride or lead a horse, and ride bicycles. Horse drawn vehicles are not allowed. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians and horse-riders. Motorcycling is not allowed.

Biodiversity - is the term used to describe the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes not only all species of plants and animals, but also the complex ecosystems they live within. It ranges from species and habitats which are considered commonplace to those considered critically endangered.

County Geological Site - sometimes also called a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) County Geological Site. The geological or geomorphological equivalent of a CWS. They are non-statutory and identified by a group of experts called the Devon RIGS Group.

County Wildlife Site (CWS) - an area of significance for its wildlife in at least a county context i.e. it may be of county, regional or even national importance.

Curtilage - The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

Devon Bank – walling with soil giving added weight and stability, originating in Devon.

Economically Active - Persons in work or actively seeking work.

Flood Risk Assessment - An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

Flood Zones - have been created by the Environment Agency to be used within the planning process as a starting point in determining how likely somewhere is to flood. A flood zone is predominantly a planning tool and doesn't necessarily mean somewhere will or won't flood.

General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) - The Town and Country Planning GPDO 1995 provides permitted development rights for a specified range of development, meaning that those activities do not require an application for planning permission. However, agricultural buildings and certain telecommunications equipment covered by permitted development rights are also subject to a prior approval procedure.

Green Wedge - Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between settlements, which maintain the links between built-up-areas and the countryside, prevent the coalescence (merging) of settlements and provide recreational opportunities. The key wedges are areas of strategic

importance to the setting and identity of the settlements, providing several functions in the interests of protecting and promoting access to the countryside.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) - A HRA tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects.

Landscape Character Area (LCA) - Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a specific landscape type.

Listed Buildings - Buildings which have been recognised by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as having special architectural or historic interest.

Local Green Space - Green areas of particular importance to local communities, which meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 77), designated as 'local green space' to provide special protection against development.

Local Plan - A portfolio or folder of documents (Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out the planning strategy for a local planning authority area.

Local Planning Authority - The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a specific area. All references to local planning authority apply in this Plan to East Devon District Council

Master Plan – A plan for the overall land use of a specific area. A master plan allocates land area for different functions such as housing, industry or retail.

NPPF - The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of communities.

NPPG - The National Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

Neighbourhood Plan - A plan prepared by a town or parish council or a neighbourhood forum for a specific neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Permissive Paths - It is possible for landowners to allow access over their land without dedicating a right of way. These accesses are called permissive paths. To the user, they are often indistinguishable from normal highways, but there are some important differences:

- A permissive path must have some sign or similar indication that it is not intended to be a right of way
- The landowner can close off or divert the path if they wish to do so, without any legal process being involved
- The landowner can make restrictions which would not normally apply to highways, for example to allow horse riding but not cycling, or the other way around

Public Right of Way - is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

Qualifying Body - Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.

Use Classes - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 put uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

SANGS - Existing open greenspace that can be enhanced to provide an attractive and local environment for people as an alternative to using nearby European sites.

Section 106 - The section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that provided for the creation of planning obligations, now replaced by Section 46 of the 2004 Act. Section 106 agreements allow local authorities to ensure that developers provide the infrastructure needed to support new developments. Often referred to as "planning gain".

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

SUDS - A solution which manages surface and groundwater sustainably by mimicking natural drainage regimes and avoiding the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses. SUDS aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on sustainable development objectives.

Sustainable Development - is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.