

Chardstock

Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2013–2031



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1 A vision for Chardstock

Chardstock is an attractive, small rural parish. It offers a good quality of life and has a tradition of self-help, participation and interdependency, which provides the social “glue” that binds the community together and which is key to our continued vitality.

Because of weak infrastructure, the Local Planning Authority has concluded that the parish is not sustainable in planning terms. This seriously limits our potential for growth and our capacity to absorb development, though there may still be scope for additional small-scale growth, as provided for by the Local Plan, to meet local housing needs. We should therefore plan our future in order to ensure our continued success and to look after the built and natural environments that give our parish its unique sense of place. Chardstock is demonstrably a viable community.

There are strong economic, social and environmental reasons to encourage the growth of suitable small businesses in the parish, particularly where working from home is practical and environmentally sound. This can help to lessen the expansion in motor vehicle use, while supporting the local economy. Encouraging suitable entrepreneurial activity will contribute to the well-being of the community without placing further stress on its infrastructure.

Chardstock’s built and natural assets, particularly the Conservation Area, and the parish’s position in the Blackdown Hills AONB are central to its sense of place. Even relatively minor development on existing sites, therefore, has to be seen in the context not only of the demands it places on infrastructure and the quality of life of present and future residents but also of the stewardship of those assets. There is no reason needlessly to compromise them. This plan provides specific guidance in avoiding that risk.

The position on sustainability should control any risk of environmental erosion by further development. However, to remain healthy, Chardstock will endeavour to meet the needs of those requiring smaller or more affordable homes. The options for providing essential small-scale development will be constantly under review, while balancing proven need with any potential consequences for our infrastructure and the environment.

Chardstock must be able both to look after what it has and is and to ensure that it remains a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can settle and contribute to its continued well-being as a viable and successful small community. By doing so, we will maintain those features which make this parish both a desirable place to live and a destination for visitors.

This Neighbourhood Plan is fully evidenced and is the result of close collaboration within the community as a whole. It reflects the best available professional and expert opinion and properly researched local aspirations and priorities – namely to preserve what is best about the parish, to prevent development from running ahead of the infrastructure’s ability to support it, and to limit gratuitous damage to our living environment. It is part of the statutory development plan.

As a community we will hold our elected representatives to account for the plan’s delivery. As individuals we will actively support them in achieving its objectives.

Chardstock Parish Council

January 2017



2 Introduction to the plan

The decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 With the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, Chardstock Parish Council (CPC) decided that a Neighbourhood Plan would provide an opportunity for the community to exercise more influence over development, housing needs, and the broader environmental and sustainability issues facing the community.

CPC registered the Parish of Chardstock as a Neighbourhood Area on 28 June 2012. After a consultation period, during which no objections were raised, this registration was approved by East Devon District Council (EDDC) on 16 October 2012.

- 2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, comprising nine core members and other participants as the occasion demanded, was established. Membership¹ comprised both parish councillors and people drawn from the wider community.
- 2.3 CPC also joined a consortium of other parishes in the Blackdown Hills AONB which were all producing neighbourhood plans in order to optimise costs and identify common issues. This group appointed a single firm of external consultants to advise on technical aspects of neighbourhood planning and to help develop each individual plan.



¹ See acknowledgements.

2.4 Timeline for major events during the project

Event	Date
1 Launch event	4–5 July 2014
2 Publication of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire	July–August 2014
3 Questionnaire feedback and key issues event	24–5 October 2014
4 Consultations with external stakeholders	July 2014
5 Production of draft plan, Issues Paper, Basic Conditions Statement and Communication Statement ²	September 2014
6 Test of draft plan by sustainability appraisal	September 2014
7 Circulation of pre-publication draft to focus group	March 2016
8 Submission to EDDC for opinion about broad conformity with strategic policies of the Local Plan	April 2016
9 Publication of final draft plan for consultation with residents and other stakeholders	September 2016
10 Publication of Examination Draft Plan and submission to Planning Inspector.	January 2017
11 Publication of Referendum Draft Plan for community approval	
12 Referendum	
13 Publication of the approved Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan	
14 Formal adoption by East Devon District Council as planning guidance	

- 2.5 The prime objective of this Neighbourhood Plan is to manage development in the light of the economic, social and environmental issues facing the parish and the acceptance that, in terms of the EDDC Local Plan, Chardstock is not a sustainable settlement.³ Local housing needs and economic welfare are major concerns, as is the fact that further development has the potential to make unsustainable new demands on infrastructure and to damage our unique environment.
- 2.6 Targeted local development management policies will help to ensure that development has only locally beneficial, defensible and predictable outcomes.

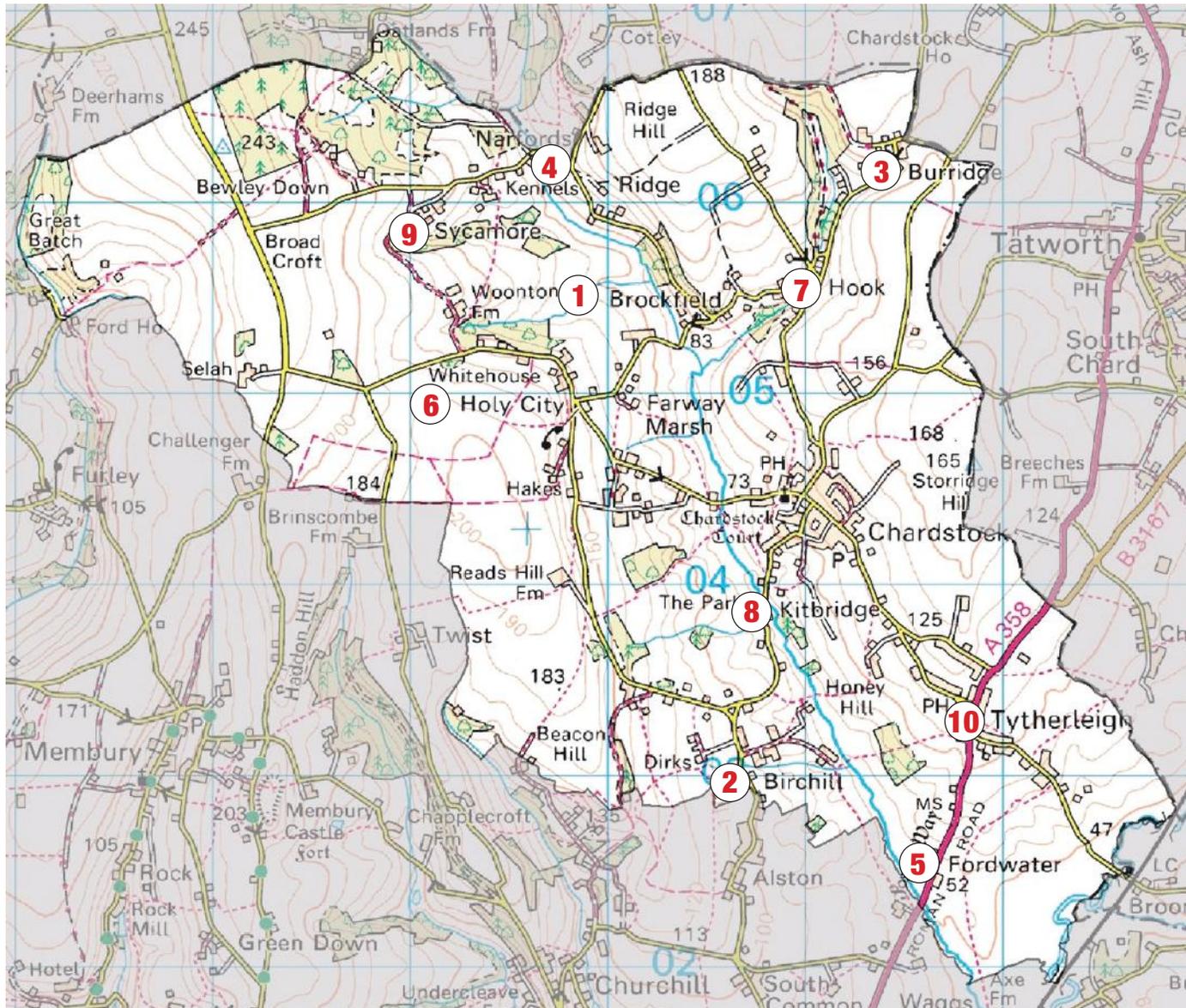
² The consultation and communication plan is in the Consultation Statement.

³ Sustainability Report: Chardstock Village and Associated Hamlets, 2016.

3 Chardstock – map and some relevant statistics

Chardstock is a rural parish in East Devon, between Chard in Somerset and Axminster in Devon, with a population of fewer than 1,000. It has been designated as unsustainable and unsuitable for further growth in East Devon District Council's adopted Local Plan 2013–2031.

3.1 Neighbourhood Plan Area



3.2 Statistics

Name of Parish:	Chardstock
OS Grid Reference:	ST 30945 04481 (The George Inn)
Approximate Size:	c. 1560 hectares (5,360 acres)
Local Planning Authority (LPA):	East Devon District Council (EDDC)
East Devon District Council Ward:	Yarty
Population:	828 ⁴
Number of Households:	388 ⁵
Main Settlement:	Chardstock Village
(total = 200 dwellings)	
Hamlets:	1) Brockfield, 2) Birchill, 3) Burr ridge, 4) Cotley Wash (Bewley Down), 5) Fordwater, 6) Holy City, 7) Hook, 8) Kitbridge, 9) Sycamore, 10) Tytherleigh (Total = 188 dwellings)

85 per cent of the parish is in the Blackdown Hills AONB. Chardstock Village has a Conservation Area. Much land in the parish comprises statutory or non-statutory sites of biodiversity interest.⁶

Chardstock has a Parish Council with up to six members. The Council published a Parish Plan in 2011, which was endorsed by the Local Planning Authority.

⁴ 2011 Census.

⁵ *Parish of Chardstock Housing Needs Report* (Devon Communities Together/Devon Rural Housing Partnership), October 2015, §4.3.

⁶ C. Martin Drake, *Parish Biodiversity Audit for Chardstock*, 2014.

4 Chardstock – summary of planning and development issues

For a description of the parish and more detailed discussion of these issues, please refer to the “Introduction to Chardstock and Associated Planning Issues”.

4.1 Housing

4.1.1 The *Housing Needs Report* shows that Chardstock requires two “affordable” houses at some future date: “Due to this low level of need, the Parish Council will need to decide how to take this further and whether this need should be addressed at all.”⁷ If either should become necessary, the Local Plan does permit small mixed-market and affordable housing schemes, to meet local housing needs, and some small-scale economic development alongside agricultural or forestry workers’ dwellings.⁸



4.2 Sustainability

4.2.1 In 2014, East Devon District Council reviewed the services and facilities available in the district’s smaller settlements (the STVDSA)⁹ and assessed each one against 12 criteria, of which two – whether there was a primary school and whether there was public transport – were regarded as being the most important. Chardstock did not meet seven of these criteria, notably the requirement for public transport, and so was judged unsustainable and unsuitable for development.



Conversion of the old school building, Chardstock

4.2.2 These findings were confirmed by a local Sustainability Report,¹⁰ which was carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan. This report confirmed the STVDSA material and highlighted other issues, such as poor roads, lack of mains gas and foul water drainage, land drainage and localised flooding, and slow, unreliable broadband and patchy mobile phone coverage. A recent upgrade to the service has meant that those in the village now have access to superfast broadband, although those living more than 2.2 km from the street cabinet outside the George Inn will not see any improvement.

4.3 The built environment

4.3.1 Chardstock encompasses a highly valued Conservation Area. It has a wide range of historically significant buildings dating from the last 500 years and features examples of streets where the (usually Victorian) streetscape has remained intact since designation in 1974.¹¹ Since 2012, however, modern development has encroached on and into the Conservation Area. Parish residents have registered disquiet over this and wish to see the Conservation Area and all our other heritage assets (such as the 52 listed buildings)¹² offered a better level of protection overall.¹³

4.3.2 Elsewhere, it is important that development shows great respect for the design, density and spacing of pre-existing buildings, many of which are also historically important.

⁷ *Parish of Chardstock Housing Needs Report* p. 12.

⁸ EDDC Local Plan, strategy 35.

⁹ EDDC, *Small Towns and Villages Development Suitability Assessment*, 2014.

¹⁰ *Sustainability Report: Chardstock Village and Associated Hamlets*, 2016.

¹¹ Chardstock Historical Records Group.

¹² www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/devon/chardstock; 23 of these are in the village, 29 elsewhere in the parish.

¹³ 95.3% of respondents: Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan: A Summary of the Main Output from the Issues Questionnaire, October 2014, p. 5.

4.3.3 Chardstock is a small parish with a small village at its heart. The community wishes to see the local economy flourish but has concerns about the way that new business ventures can be approved without adequate concern for the local environment. Issues include light and noise pollution and the road safety standards applied to new access points.¹⁴

4.4 The natural environment

4.4.1 In 2014, a local professional ecologist conducted an ecological survey for the parish.¹⁵

4.4.2 Most of the parish is in the Blackdown Hills AONB.¹⁶ This is a point of importance to the community.¹⁷ The lack of housing need, the condition of unsustainability, and the proximity to the AONB and, at the northern end, to the Conservation Area all militate against any further development of land in and around the village.



4.4.3 The countryside on three sides of the village is in the AONB, much of it designated either as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation or as one of several County Wildlife Sites. Habitats include water courses, wet, sometimes heathy grazing pasture, woodland, and unimproved grassland with green lanes and hedges. Among species observed are dormouse, otter, badger, fox, hare, deer, barn owl and bats.

¹⁴ 95.7% of respondents commented on the lack of light pollution making the parish a special place to live; there were many comments concerning the current safety of the roads; Issues Questionnaire, pp. 20, 13–18.

¹⁵ C. Martin Drake, *Parish Biodiversity Audit for Chardstock*.

¹⁶ www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/Maps.html.

¹⁷ 94.5% of respondents: Issues Questionnaire, p. 19.

The River Kit runs through the parish before joining the River Axe; it is home to brook lamprey, brown trout, bullhead, eels and Atlantic salmon.

4.4.4 This largely unpolluted environment requires protection, so speculative development would be inappropriate.



5 Chardstock's planning objectives

Since there is no immediate need for additional housing,¹⁸ proposals for development should by and large comprise the modification or conversion of, or other changes to, existing sites, including farm buildings. This Neighbourhood Plan's prime objective is to ensure that development:

- 5.1 helps to support and sustain local businesses, including farming, and encourages local employment rather than commuting, recognising that, subject to some constraints, working from home has an important role to play in the local economy;
- 5.2 contributes to reducing the parish's carbon footprint wherever possible by not increasing the use of private cars on local roads and by encouraging the adoption of high levels of energy efficiency and the use of alternative energy sources such as solar power and ground/air-source heat pumps, as well as water conservation by using rainwater harvesting measures;
- 5.3 protects the integrity of Chardstock's Conservation Area, its buildings, spacing and street environment; these are a proven high priority with the local community;¹⁹
- 5.4 protects all listed buildings in the parish;

¹⁸ *Parish of Chardstock Housing Needs Report*.

¹⁹ 95.3% of respondents: Issues Questionnaire,

- 5.5 retains the design and spacing between existing buildings in the parish as a whole and respects the appearance and street setting in the area of development;
- 5.6 places no further significant stress on the parish's road system and does not cause a significant increase to either the amount or the speed of traffic on our roads; prioritises road safety at entrances, junctions, crossings and other points of risk;
- 5.7 is properly controlled to ensure that it does not disturb the peaceful, rural atmosphere of the parish and maintains "dark skies" at night (according to the map of light pollution produced by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Chardstock parish falls into the second darkest of the nine colour bands, and the intention is that this level should be maintained);²⁰
- 5.8 protects all natural environments and habitats, particularly in the AONB, including distinctive landscape and ecology, as assets for the present and future.

6 Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan – development management policies

6.1 Advisory

6.1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan is part of the statutory development plan.



- 6.1.2 Strategy 35 of the Local Plan makes some general provision for affordable housing schemes to meet local housing needs, as well as appropriate, small-scale economic development, should the local community deem either of these to be necessary. However, references to "development" in the policies below more usually mean the modification, conversion, reconstruction or restoration of existing premises, including farm buildings.
- 6.1.3 This plan does not put forward proposals for any new housing. If the need for new affordable housing becomes greater, the community will review the available options, balancing proven housing need at the time with the ability of the parish, and the village in particular, to provide a suitable environment for the level of overall

²⁰ CPRE, *Night Blight: Mapping England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies*, 2016.

development that would be needed to meet demand, while taking account of our limited services and facilities and the weak infrastructure of the parish. To quote the Local Plan: "For [development] land to be released, however, rigorous stipulations will be applied to avoid prejudicing the environmental conservation policies of the plan. Development of such sites will not be regarded as creating a precedent for future expansion to meet other housing needs."²¹

6.1.4 The four development management policies set out below are numbered CPNP 01 to CPNP 04. The prefix CPNP (Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan) is to distinguish between policies established by this Neighbourhood Plan and other planning policies established elsewhere.

6.2 Development management policies

Policy no.	Policy
CPNP 01	Sustainable development
	a) Development should take account of the need to place minimal additional stress on the infrastructure of the parish, in particular roads and drainage.
	b) Where development is for commercial use, it should aim to enable local employment rather than commuting and reliance on private vehicles, thus contributing to enhancing sustainability.
	c) Proposals for development to enable "home-working" should be encouraged when the enterprise is appropriate and small in scale and places very limited extra pressure on infrastructure. Proposals should be tested for a broadly neutral or beneficial effect on the local environment and infrastructure before approval is given.
	d) Where appropriate, design should facilitate high levels of energy and resource efficiency and environmentally sound methods of energy generation (such as solar and ground/air-source heat pumps) and rainwater harvesting.

CPNP 01 justification:

- 1) Sustainability is at the heart of national planning policy, which defines what is required to ensure that new development has been responsibly conceived and delivered. It is also at the heart of this Neighbourhood Plan.²²

²¹ EDDC Local Plan, "Schemes for exceptions mixed market and affordable homes in rural areas", 16.27.

²² Issues Questionnaire, p. 28.

- 2) New development proposals should be tailored to the realities of local infrastructure and contain enough meaningful detail for a reasoned judgement to be made about the effect the development will have on the community.²³
- 3) There is a compelling case for encouraging suitable businesses, including farming, that define much of our local economy, and there is a strong case for enabling local, home-based businesses, since the latter tend to reduce the need for regular, work-related car travel and place little other additional stress on infrastructure. Controlling, and preferably reducing, commuting makes a valuable contribution to reducing our carbon footprint.²⁴



- 4) Encouraging high standards of local energy conservation and other efficiencies such as alternative energy sources and water-saving measures will contribute to achieving the government's carbon reduction and other environmental targets.²⁵

Relevant policies in the NPPF:

NPPF document, p. 2, "Achieving sustainable development"; §§17.6, 95, 97.

²³ Issues Questionnaire, pp. 3,7,29.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 21, 25, 29.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 8--9

Relevant policies in the EDDC Local Plan:

Strategy 3, in particular §§a) and b); Strategy 5; Strategy 7; Strategy 38; Key Issues and Objectives, 4.1, 1d); Development Management Policies D1; D6, 21.13; E5.

Policy no.	Policy
CPNP 02	Protecting the Conservation Area and other heritage assets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development within the Conservation Area should be permitted only where it preserves or enhances the historical and architectural character and setting of the area. b) Development affecting any listed building, within or outside the Conservation Area, should be permitted only where it will offer a specific and measurable improvement to the historical integrity of the area and avoid harm to the setting of a heritage asset. c) Development affecting listed buildings in the parish, whether within or outside the Conservation Area, should be sympathetic and harmonious, with respect in particular to density and spacing, and not intrusive or out of proportion.

CPNP 02 justification:

- 1) Chardstock's built and heritage assets consist of its designated Conservation Area and a number of listed and other historically important buildings elsewhere in the parish. The local community has made it clear that these are of the greatest importance to them and that they want them to be preserved undamaged.²⁶
- 2) Development needs to be controlled when it directly or indirectly affects the Conservation Area or a listed or historically important building.
- 3) Demolition of a heritage asset, in whole or in part, can only reduce its historical integrity, which would be inconsistent with the original purpose of its designation.

Relevant policies in the NPPF: §§58.2, 58.4, 58.6, 132–5.

Relevant policies in the EDDC Local Plan: Strategy 5; Strategy 7; Key Issues and Objectives, 4.1, 9p).

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 5, 25, 29

Policy no.	Policy
CPNP 03	Protecting the built environment
a)	Development should be sensitive to the parish's streetscene, open spacing, rural aspect and unique appearance and should respect the character, materials and building density of surrounding properties, taking into account the recommendations of the Blackdown Hills AONB <i>Design Guide for Houses</i> . ²⁷
b)	Development should be designed with road safety as a priority, in particular taking into account access points and blind corners.
c)	Development of commercial premises should not disturb the peaceful, rural atmosphere of the parish. Specifically, noise should be strictly controlled and light pollution should not be allowed to prejudice the prevalence of "dark skies" at night.
d)	The introduction of, or conversion to, new residential development shall not introduce any risk of sensitivity (to light, noise, air/water pollution or amenity) that would be in conflict with the reasonable expectation for impacts arising from existing permitted development of land uses in a small rural community or in a designated area such as the Blackdown Hills AONB.

CPNP 03 justification:

- 1) Development must be seen to respect the identity of the local built environment and to be designed to complement the existing generally open and relaxed streetscene. Clumsy or insensitive modifications or restoration can do irreparable damage.²⁸
- 2) In many places in the parish there are narrow roads, blind entrances and dangerous corners – it goes with the historical and rural setting. Design needs to recognise this and not increase the hazards to road users and pedestrians.²⁹
- 3) Much of the parish is still free of intrusive artificial lighting at night. This enhances its rural and peaceful environment and should be protected.³⁰

²⁷ Blackdown Hills AONB, *Design Guide for Houses*, March 2012

²⁸ Issues Questionnaire, pp. 6, 28

²⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 20, 24

Relevant policies in the NPPF: §§17.5, 32.3, 58.4, 110, 123, 125.

Relevant Policies in the EDDC Local Plan: Strategy 7, especially §6.23; Development Management Policies D1, E5, EN10, TC2, TC7.

Policy no.	Policy
CPNP 04	Protecting the natural environment
a)	Development, including for agriculture, should not encroach upon, interfere with, or lead to the deterioration of existing rare or important habitats or watercourses, or degrade the visual appeal of the rural landscape. In particular, protecting the well-documented biodiversity and established geodiversity of the parish should be regarded as a very high priority.
b)	Most of the parish is within the Blackdown Hills AONB, and the small part which is not nonetheless presents a very similar landscape. In considering any possible future development, including extensions to existing buildings, great weight should be given to conserving this landscape, which is itself contiguous with the scenic beauty

CPNP 04 justification:

- 1) Preserving and protecting the Blackdown Hills AONB and the landscape in near proximity is a local priority³¹.
- 2) The landscape throughout the parish contains numerous designated sites and habitats. There is no justification for arbitrarily interfering with or degrading them³².
- 3) Design should aim to minimise the impact of any eligible commercial or residential development on the broader environment and the AONB.
- 4) Chardstock is not a sustainable settlement in planning terms, has no Built Up Area Boundary and does not currently have a level of housing need to justify a Rural Exception Site.

Relevant Policies in the NPPF: §§109, 110, 115, 123, 125.

Relevant Policies in the EDDC Local Plan: Strategy 3, in particular §§a) and b); Strategy 5, especially §§6.17, 6.18; Strategy 7, §6.23; Key Issues and Objectives, 4.1, 6m); Development Management Policy EN4.

³¹ Ibid., p. 19.

³² Ibid., p. 24.

7 Glossary

Acronyms and shortened titles used in the plan

Acronym	Full title
CPC	Chardstock Parish Council
CPNP	Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan
EDDC	East Devon District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
STVDSA	Small Towns and Villages Development Suitability Assessment

Shortened title	Full title
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Conditions Statement	<i>Chardstock Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement</i>
EDDC Local Plan	<i>East Devon Local Plan 2016</i> (East Devon District Council, 2012 to 2015)
Housing Survey	<i>The Parish of Chardstock Housing Needs Report</i> (Devon Communities Together/the Devon Rural Housing Partnership, 2015)
Sustainability Report	<i>Chardstock Parish – Sustainability Report</i> (Chardstock Neighbourhood Plan Group, 2015)

Main documents referenced in the text

Chardstock:

Biodiversity Audit 2014 – Dr M. Drake, FRES

Neighbourhood Plan – Issues Questionnaire

Neighbourhood Plan – Introduction to Chardstock and associated planning issues

Neighbourhood Plan – Sustainability Report (2015, revised 2016)

Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement

Neighbourhood Plan – Communication Plan

Parish Plan (Chardstock Parish Council, 2011)

District/County and National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; Department of Communities and Local Government, 2012)

The East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 2031 (East Devon District Council, 2016)

Small Towns and Villages Development Suitability Assessment (East Devon District Council, 2014)



8 Acknowledgements

Chardstock Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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