

# Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan - Policy Rock05

## Background

Rockbeare Parish is recognised by the Local Plan as a rural area, which lies outside of the growth area referred to in the Local Plan as East Devon's West End. The whole area is subject to Local Plan policy S7 and regarded as countryside where development "*will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such development and where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities within which it is located*".

The process of developing the aims and objectives for the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan confirmed that parishioners of Rockbeare Parish wish to retain and protect the rural character of the area, which was felt by many parishioners to be becoming more and more at risk from major development proposals in and around to the neighbourhood area. Almost every month it seems we are presented with a major planning application or development strategy that threatens to impinge negatively and permanently on the historic rural character of the Parish. Too often, Rockbeare Parish Council has had to make representations to the local planning authority about the insensitivity and over-bearing nature of development proposals.

The Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan is based on realising an agreed community vision for the Parish that resists unnecessary incursions and facilitates 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.

We cannot prevent development proposals from outside the parish boundaries from coming forward. We can influence the nature of proposals within the Parish. It was decided that one way we could respond to the community's call to value and protect the rurality of the area was to identify those features that contribute so much to its essential character and ensure that these were not harmed unnecessarily by development. Views of the countryside and the setting of the settlement areas, are an important element of that defining character, which are enjoyed daily by those that live and work in the Parish and serve as a reminder to all those that visit or pass through the area what a special environment we have custody over.

## Process

Members of the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group travelled the roads, lanes and footpaths of the area with a brief to identify and capture those most important and significant views. We agreed that the number of views to be included in the policy should be limited in number, should have a special quality or feature, should be accessible and should be one that is regularly enjoyed by parishioners and visitors. Because of the survey work and subsequent consultation on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council has agreed to the inclusion of five key views, that are symbolic of the rural character of the Parish, to be subject to a specific policy, Rock05, in the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan.

## A. View south east from Silver Lane

### Focus and Features

The view is south from Silver Lane. It includes the permissive path around Rockbears Manor and ancient woodland that is designated as a site of special scientific interest.

### Value

Many parishioners make use of the area for walks and recreation. The view helps us appreciate how close to nature we live and the responsibility we have for looking after local habitats.



## B. View of Southwood and Home Covert

### Focus and Features

This view along the low ridge on Silver Lane includes ancient woodland and Grade II listed building at Little Silver.

### Value

Silver Lane is used by Rockbears residents as a major recreational lane for walks, running and cycling. The view symbolises the rural character of the Parish and helps us appreciate the heritage of the Parish.



### C. View along Parsons Lane towards Rockbeare

#### Focus and Features

The view is east along Parsons Lane across the fields to Rockbeare village. The landscape, rural lanes and hedgerows are characteristic of the area.

#### Value

The view shows the rural character of the approaches to Rockbeare village. It demonstrates how the village is part of the rural landscape and the significance of the countryside and agricultural activity around the village in confirming that we remain a rural community.



### D. View towards Rockbeare from Lions Farm

#### Focus and Features

The view looks west towards Rockbeare village. It shows the setting of the village and the rural nature of the approaches.

#### Value

The view demonstrates how comfortably Rockbeare village sits in the landscape and the significance of the countryside (green wedge) in providing a backdrop to the village.



## E. View northwards from Long Lane

### Focus and Features

The view is north-east from Silver Lane out of the Parish towards Cranbrook, which is appearing on the ridge. It serves to put distance between Rockbeare and the urban area. It also helps set the Parish in its wider context with a view across to the slopes of the Exe Valley.

### Value

The view demonstrates the rural character of the Parish. The right-hand side of the view shows the 'green wedge' area immediately to the west of Rockbeare village and emphasises the importance of maintaining this area if the Cranbrook development is to preserve the distinction between the village and the development.

