

# SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2019 – 2034



**MAY 2019**

Published by Sydenham Parish Council  
under the Neighbourhood Planning  
(General) Regulations 2012

# **SYDENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019-2034**

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## **CONTENTS**

Foreword

List of Policies

1. Introduction	5
2. The Neighbourhood Area	8
3. Planning Policy Context	16
4. Community Views on Planning Issues	24
5. Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies	26
6. Implementation	48

Policies Map & Insets

Appendix A

Schedule of Local Heritage Assets

## **FOREWORD**

This Neighbourhood Plan prepared by a group of villagers from the Parish of Sydenham focuses primarily on the aspect of future development of houses within the area, and most particularly the village of Sydenham.

This approach was felt appropriate mainly because of the relatively small designated area it covers but also in recognition that it is predominantly a rural community with a mix of people, with no retail or commercial enterprises within its boundaries other than farming and whose main concern is housing and appropriate development.

Sydenham lies between the expanding market town of Thame and the significantly developed (and developing) large village of Chinnor. Indeed, it forms the rural break between the two.

As a place to live, it retains its rural village environment with a strong, active and caring community. It maintains a church, with a strong choir, two busy and popular pubs (each running teams for the Oxfordshire pub game - Aunt Sally), a WI, cricket club, book club and many other social organisations that use the Old School Room (the village hall) for events. Every year it organises a very successful, and much envied locally, traditional Fayre to raise funds for local causes and organisations.

The people who live in the village tend to stay for many years, moving within the village as their needs dictate. They all feel that Sydenham is a "special place" and recognise the importance of a balanced mix of housing encouraging both young and old to live and add to the sustainability of the Parish.

This Neighbourhood plan reflects the views of villagers and their aspirations to ensure that this distinct community retains its identity and character.

This plan should be read in conjunction with its accompanying documents of the Character Appraisal, Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement.

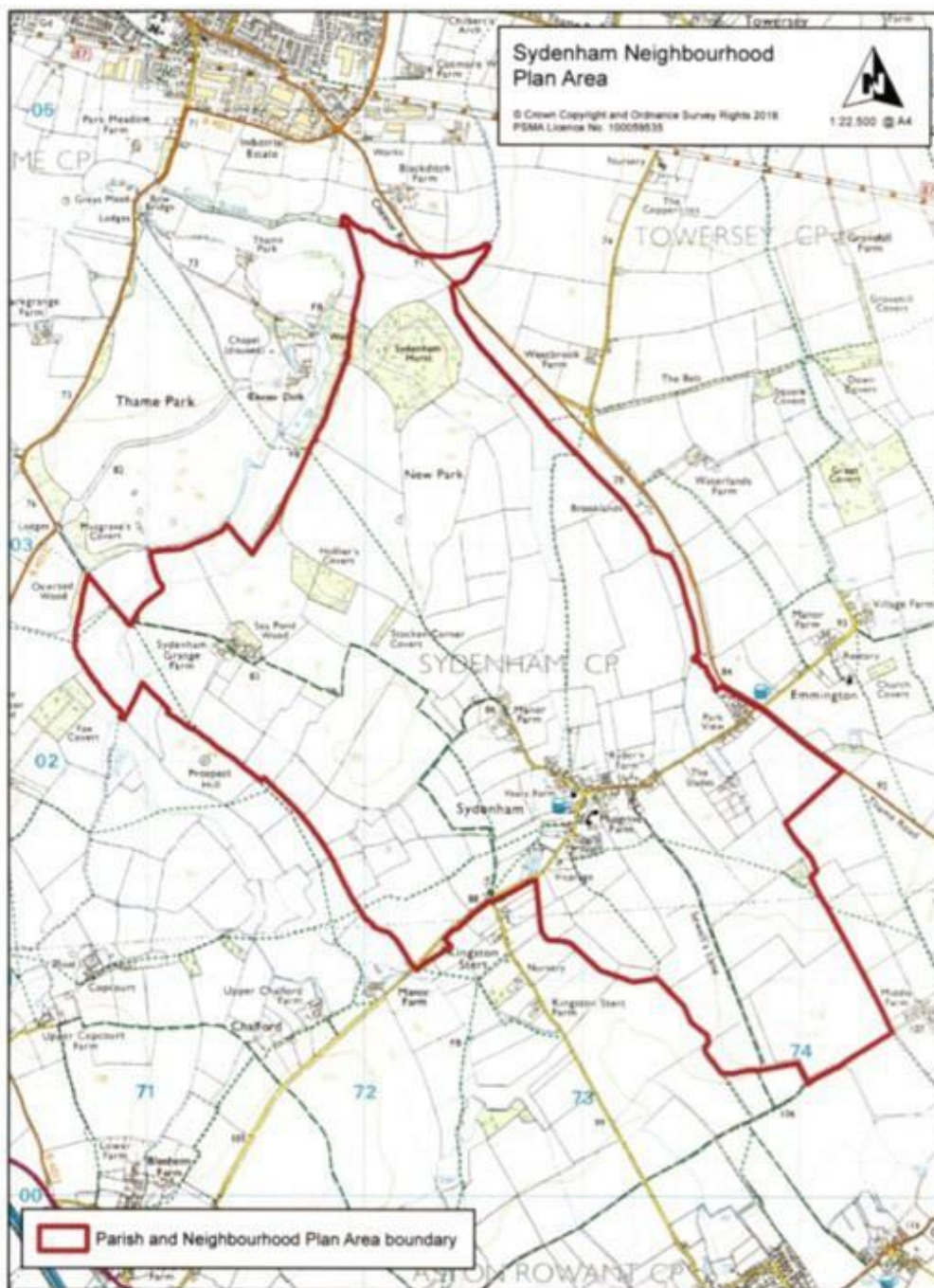
We would like to thank South Oxfordshire District Council for its support and Neil Homer of O'Neil Homer for his advice and help in producing this plan.

## LIST OF POLICIES

<b>POLICY NO.</b>	<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE NO.</b>
SYD1	Village Boundary & Infill Development	28
SYD2	Housing Mix	31
SYD3	Design	33
SYD4	Local Heritage Assets	35
SYD5	Local Green Space	37
SYD6	Local Gap	40
SYD7	Important Views	43
SYD8	Community Facilities	45

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sydenham Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, South Oxfordshire District Council, on 2 March 2018. The plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).
- 1.2 The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A below).



Plan A: Designated Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.3 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used by the District Council to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2034. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will protect the key characteristics of the village and its surrounding landscape while planning for sustainable development in the parish to 2034.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities, like Sydenham, with the chance to manage the quality of development of their areas and to shape future development of their area.
- 1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. In essence, the conditions are:
  - Is the Plan consistent with the national planning policy?
  - Is the Plan consistent with local planning policy?
  - Does the plan promote the principles of sustainable development?
  - Has the process of making the plan met the requirements of European law?
- 1.6 In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the local area.

## **Sustainability Appraisal & the Habitats Regulations**

- 1.7 South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) has determined that the Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC (see the Basic Conditions Statement for further details).



*Public meeting of Neighbourhood Plan in village Old School Room*

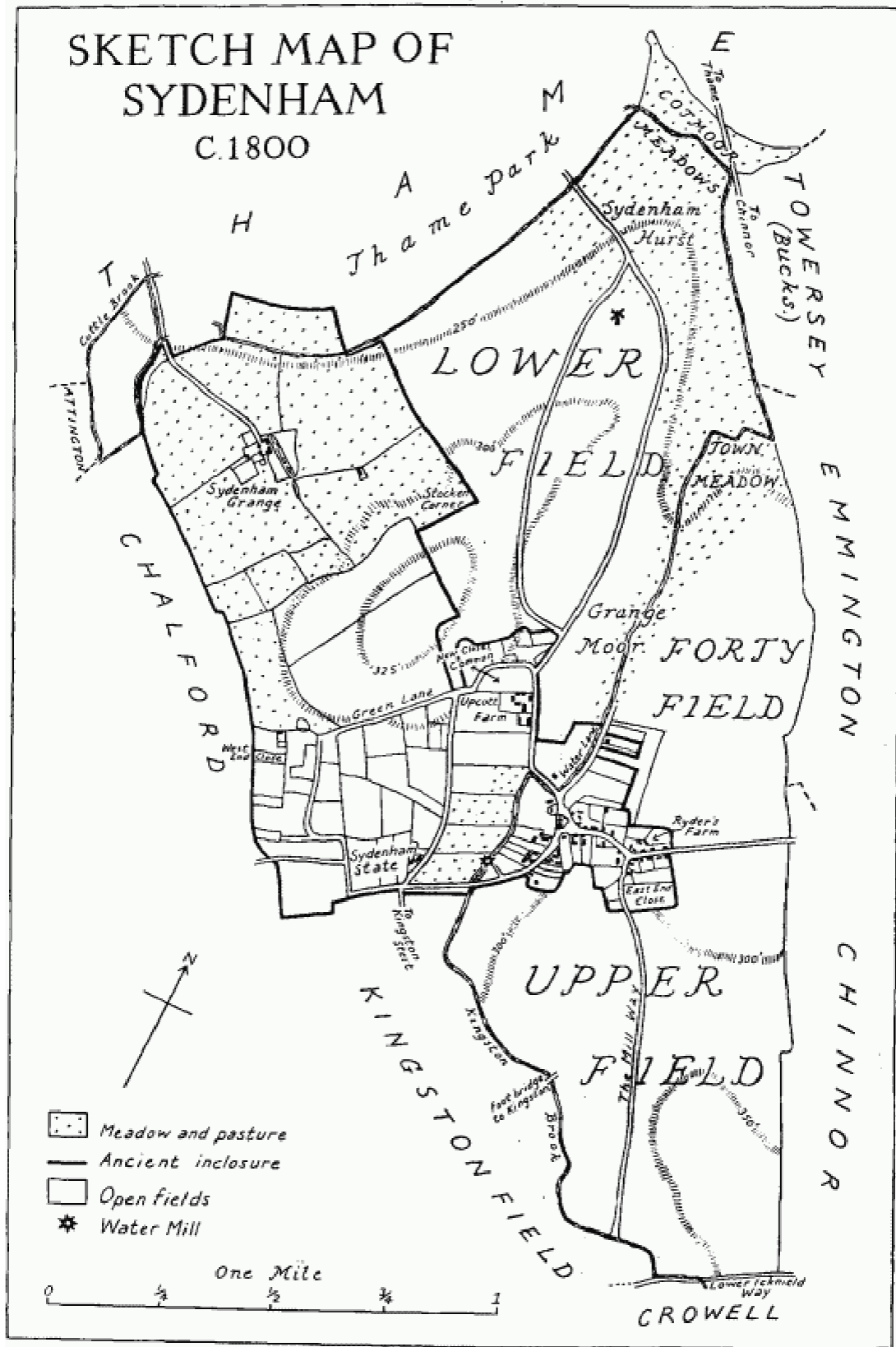
## **2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

*(Based on A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 8, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1964, and gratefully acknowledged)*

- 2.1 The parish covers 1,548 acres and lies in the plain between the market-town of Thame, about 3 miles to the north-west, and the foot of the Chiltern hills, about 2 miles to the south.
- 2.2 Sydenham (Sidreham in 1086, Sidenham in 1216, Sydham in 1237 and various other spellings) means 'by the wide water meadow'. The Domesday book records that there was land for 14 ploughs and 60 acres of meadow land. The manor of Sydenham was acquired by the Cistercian monks of Thame Abbey in the middle of the 12th century. After the dissolution of the monasteries the estate went to Sir John Williams, then to his daughter Margaret and her husband Sir Henry Norreys and later to the Wenmans and their heirs. Most of it was sold in 1917 when many of the tenants were able to buy their farms and cottages. Until comparatively recently Sydenham was dependent on agriculture and this led to great poverty. To help alleviate this, several families were assisted to emigrate to Australia in 1843 and 1844. The men were given a shovel and the ladies enough cloth to make a petticoat. Most of them survived and prospered and in the past few years their descendants have contacted the village when tracing their roots. Many of the family names still exist in the village.
- 2.3 By the early Middle Ages Sydenham was a chapelry of Thame, a connection which probably preceded the Conquest, but it was feudally bound to Chinnor, its neighbour on the south-east, being a member of Chinnor manor. The chief interest, however, of the parish's history has been the long connection with the abbots of Thame and their successors at Thame Park. This can be traced from the 12th century to 1917. Otherwise, no persons of national importance have related to the place. Nor has it been connected with any events of importance except during the Civil War. Although off the main lines of communication the village can hardly have escaped from the foraging parties of both Parliamentary and Royalist troops stationed in the vicinity, but no record of their depredations has survived.

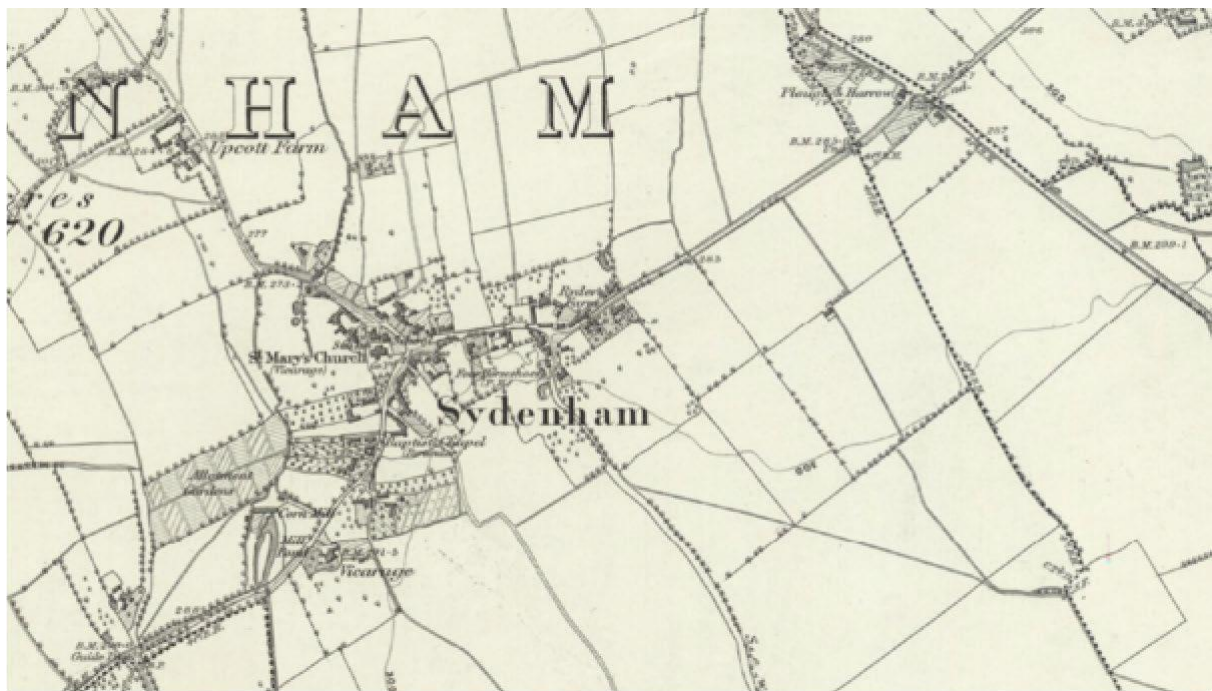


2.4 There have been no recorded boundary changes and the parish bounds must be substantially the same as they were in Anglo-Saxon times. The short southern boundary follows the ancient trackway, the Lower Icknield Way, and until 1932 when Towersey was transferred from Buckinghamshire to Oxfordshire part of the north- eastern boundary was the county boundary. Small brooks, notably Crowell Brook and its continuation Kingston Brook, as they were called in the 18th century, form parts of the rest of the boundary. This brook also flowed through the centre of the parish and drove the mill lying to the south of the village. There its waters were dammed up to form the mill-pond and it was bridged on the Chalford road by a bridge long known as Grimbaud's Bridge after its 12th- and 13th- century millers. Where the brook crossed the village street to the north of the church the bridge was called Church Bridge in 1627. Another large pond once in the north of the parish has disappeared. It is now just marshland and its site is marked by Sea Pond Wood.



Plan B: Sketch map of Sydenham c.1800  
(based on Davis's map (1797) and the Enclosure award and map (1826))

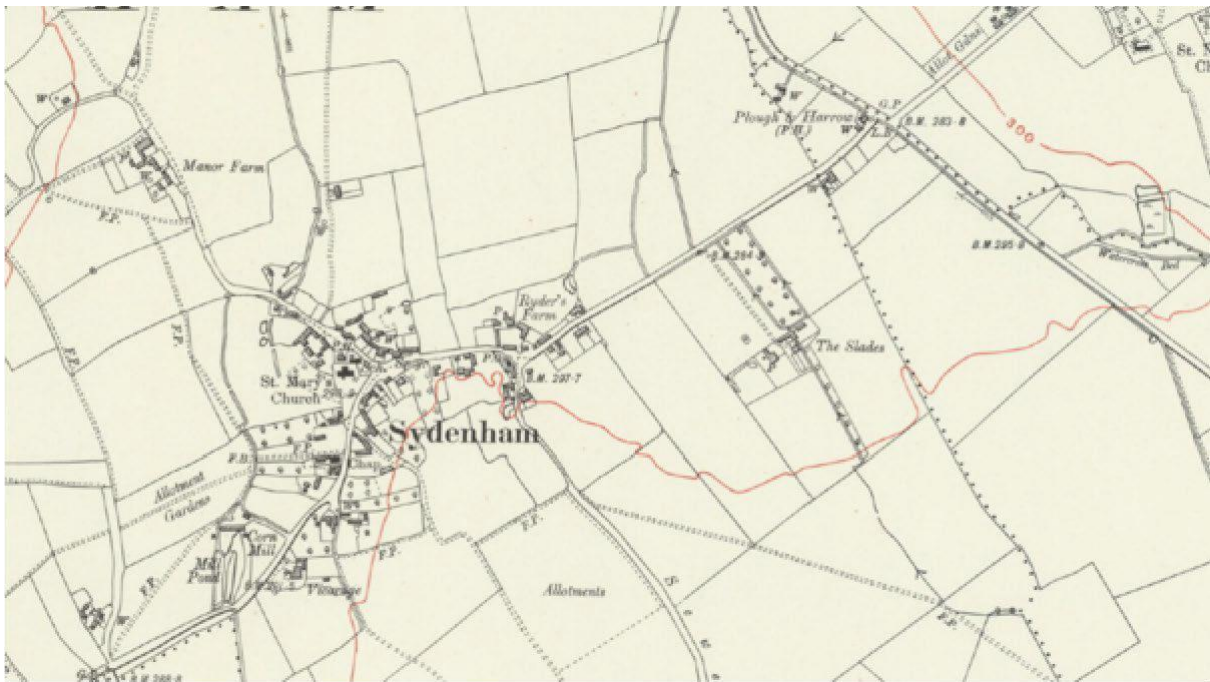
- 2.5 The chief road in the parish runs from Chalford through the village to Emmington and links the main London road with a minor road from Thame to Chinnor. The last was probably the royal road (*via regia*) mentioned in a 13th-century charter and along which some of Thame Abbey's land lay. Sewell Lane, running south from the village towards Crowell, used to be called the Mill Way, since it was no doubt used by the Crowell villagers to go to Sydenham mill.
- 2.6 It is clearly the brook by which it lies that determined the village's situation. It was a fairly large settlement both in the Middle Ages and in the 17th century when 41 of its householders paid tax on 81 hearths for the hearth tax of 1662. Not all these houses, however, were in the village. There were two big outlying farms at the Grange and Upcot (now Manor Farm) that probably had cottages adjoining and there were perhaps a few cottages at West End and at Sydenham Stert.



*Plan C: Sydenham, 1885*

*(Source: Buckinghamshire XXXVI (includes: Aston Rowant; Sydenham; Tetsworth; Thame.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, National Library of Scotland)*

2.7 Many 16th–17th-century cottages have also survived in the village. At the south end, Vicarage End as it is called, there are a couple of timber-framed cottages of this period; they have brick (sometimes herring-boned) or lath-and-plaster infilling and are thatched; a row of three timber-framed cottages, now used as one house, are thatched and also mostly built of brick, although there are traces of older construction. Some lath and plaster survive and at the gable-end of the oldest cottage there are crutch beams. Other ancient cottages, including the very picturesque post office which is built of rubble stone, lie on the Emmington road. Some cottages here, built of mud, were demolished in 1950. In the 18th century most of the farmhouses in the village were rebuilt and some entirely new cottages were erected. A good example is the farmhouse at Vicarage End that belonged to the Musgrave estate and was still called Musgrave Farm in the early 20th century.



*Plan D: Sydenham, 1922*

*(Source: Buckinghamshire XXXVI (includes: Aston Rowant; Sydenham; Tetsworth; Thame.) - Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, National Library of Scotland)*

- 2.8 In 1849 a National School was built. It closed in 1948 and is now used as the village hall. Events and gatherings are organised in the evenings and at weekends, the highlight of the year being Sydenham Fayre which occurs every year, around the hall and the village greens, on the first Saturday in June. Two nonconformist chapels were erected in the first half of the 19th century; one was rebuilt of cheap red brick in 1881.
- 2.9 Munday's Charity was established in 1660 (i.e. six years before the Great Fire of London!) when land was given to the village by Robert Munday to provide allotments for the benefit of the villagers. The actual land was re-allocated at the time of the mid-1800s Enclosures Acts resulting in the Charity owning two parcels of land extending to 16 acres, some of which is used as allotments and the rest is farmed. The playing field was given to the village by Cdr Henry Montague Burrows and opened in 1982. It now has swings, a climbing frame, cricket nets and space for ball games.
- 2.10 Increasing population and prosperity in the first half of the 19th century led to rebuilding and expansion. By 1841 there were 86 dwellings in the parish compared with 60 in 1811. Some of these were outside the village: six new houses, for instance, were built at Cassilty Row on the Emmington road and at some distance away. But a well-built row of brick cottages was also added to the village street.



Sydenham, 1961

(Source: Sheet 159, The Chilterns - Ordnance Survey One-inch to the mile maps of Great Britain, Seventh Series, 1952-1961, National Library of Scotland)

2.11 The 20th century contributed eight Council houses at Sydenham Grove: they are built in pairs and lie off the Emmington road, though a scheme has recently been approved to redevelop the site for open market homes. There is a row of former council houses, called Park View, outside the village along the road to Emmington. Currently there are approximately 144 households and a population of about 340. Much of the village lies within a conservation area and housing development has been restricted, so retaining its' rural appeal. This together with ease of access to road and rail networks (lying close to the M40 just off the B4445 between Thame and Chinnor and two miles from Postcombe, off the A40: and with a good train service provided by Chiltern Railways at Princes Risborough) and an active community spirit make Sydenham a much sought-after place to live.

2.12 There are now only two active farms left in Sydenham – Musgrave and Sydenham Grange, and two pubs, The Inn at Emmington and The Crown. The Sun, the Windmill and The Four Horseshoes have all been converted into homes, as have many of the old farm houses and barns. The Crown Inn was purchased by a consortium of villagers in 2008 to stop its loss to the village.

### **3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 The parish lies within the South Oxfordshire District Council area in the county of Oxfordshire.

#### **National Planning Policy**

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), originally published in 2012 by the Government, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. A revised Framework was published in February 2019 and this new Framework applies for the purpose of the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

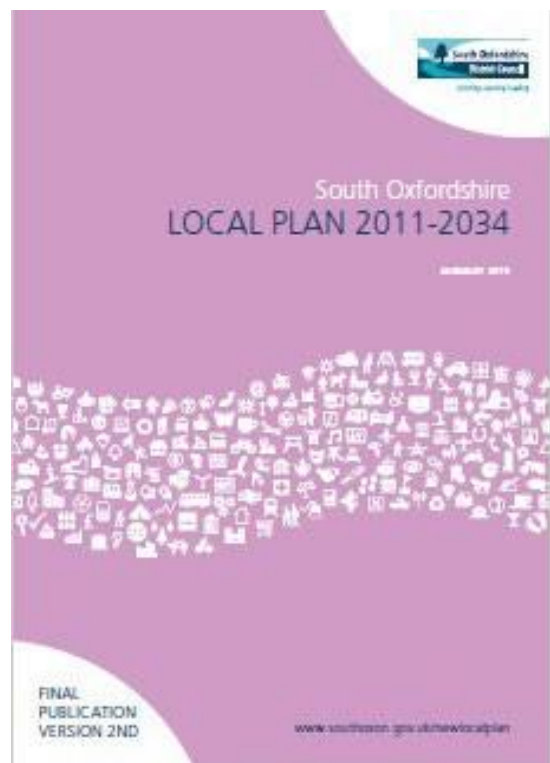
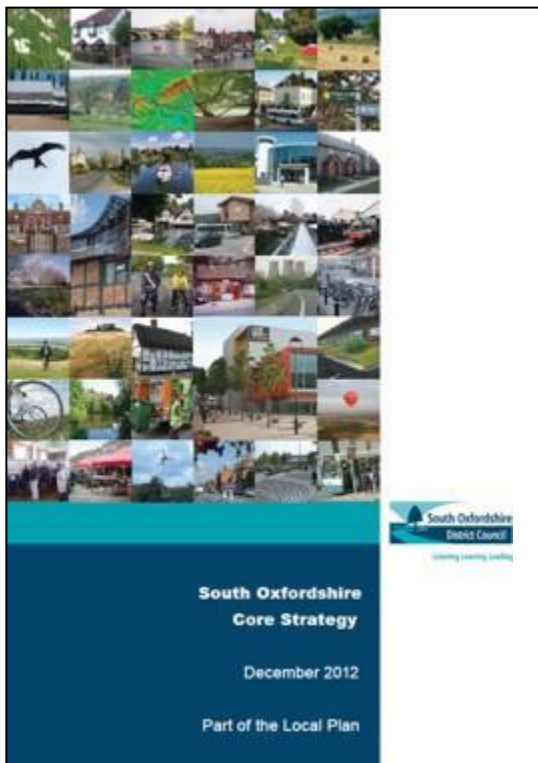
The following paragraphs of the NPPF 2019 are considered especially relevant:

- Rural Housing (§77-§79)
- Promoting healthy and safe communities (§91)
- Community Facilities (§92)
- Local Green Spaces (§99 - §101)
- High quality design (§124 etc)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (§170)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (§184)

#### **Strategic Planning Policy**

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan must also be able to show that its policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which currently comprises the Core Strategy adopted in 2012 (covering the period to 2027) and several saved policies from the Local Plan adopted in 2006. There are also minerals and waste policies adopted by Oxfordshire County Council, but none are considered relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council is presently developing a new Local Plan to cover the period to 2034, which it is anticipated will be adopted in 2019/2020, after the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, as far as is possible, the Neighbourhood Plan has taken the reasoning and evidence of the new Local Plan into account.





### South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012

3.4 The Core Strategy provides a set of strategic policies aligned to the provisions of NPPF 2012. Under the settlement hierarchy policy CSR1, the historic part of the village (The Crown end) is classified as a 'smaller village', with the newer part (Emmington Inn end) being considered by the District Council in conjunction with Emmington and being classified as "other village". For 'smaller villages' with a Neighbourhood Plan, the aim is for a 5% increase in dwelling numbers above those recorded in the 2011 census. For 'other village' it is none. The criteria for new housing considered suitable for the two parts of the village are shown in the policy on the next page.

### Policy CSR1 Housing in villages

In order to contribute to the present and future economic, environmental, and social sustainability of the villages, housing will be allowed where the scale and nature of the development is as follows:

	<b>Allocations</b>	<b>Infill</b>	<b>Rural exceptions</b>
Larger villages	Yes	Yes - no limit	Yes if need shown
Smaller villages	No	Sites of up to 0.2ha*	Yes, if need shown
Other villages	No	Sites of up to 0.1ha**	Yes if need shown
All other places not listed	No	No	No
* Equivalent to 5-6 houses ** Equivalent to 2-3 houses		See Appendix 4 for list of settlements within each category	

3.5 For the purpose of this policy, 'infill development' is defined as:

*"... the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings..."* (§13.10)

3.6 There are some other policies in the Core Strategy that are relevant to various degrees:

CSEN1 - Landscape protection

CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing

CSH4 - Meeting housing needs

CSQ3 - Design

CSR3 - Community facilities and rural transport

#### South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

3.7 The District Council has also saved a number of older policies from the Local Plan of 2006. Those that are considered to be especially relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan are:

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements

CON5 - Setting of a listed building

CON7 - conservation areas

CON16 - preservation of common land, village greens, etc.

D1 - Principles of good design and local distinctiveness

G3 - Location strategy

G4 - Protection of countryside

H4 - New homes in the towns and villages

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

## Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

- 3.8 The new Local Plan will replace both the Core Strategy and the saved Local Plan policies. The Local Plan has now been submitted by SODC for its examination, though this will not be completed before the Neighbourhood Plan examination is completed. In which case, the Neighbourhood Plan will be judged against the policies of the Core Strategy and Local Plan 2011.
- 3.9 The Crown end and the Emmington Inn end remain classified by Policy H8 (Appendix 7) as “smaller” and “other” village respectively. As currently drafted, the rural housing policies in the emerging Local Plan have a significant difference to the Core Strategy policies, particularly in relation to The Crown end of the village. Policy H8 now states that “*smaller villages have no defined requirement to contribute towards delivering additional housing (beyond windfall and infill development) to meet the overall housing requirement of South Oxfordshire*” The H8 policy in relation to “other” villages - the Emmington end – remains similar to that in the core strategy “ *it is not generally expected that those settlements classified as other villages will provide a significant source of housing supply. However, it is possible that some development proposals may come forward during the plan period, such as single dwellings, infilling and conversions from other uses.*” The settlement infill development policy is H16 and is essentially very similar to policy CSR1:

**Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. The scale of infill should be appropriate to its location and this will be directed, in part, by the settlement hierarchy, as follows:**

<b>Settlement type</b>	<b>Infill limit</b>
Towns/Larger	No limit
Villages Smaller	Sites of up to 0.2Ha (equivalent to 5-6 homes)
Villages	Sites of up to 0.1Ha (equivalent to 2-3 homes)

3.10 The District Council's aspirations regarding policy H16 are:

"The policy [H16] does not mean that every space within the settlements will be developed. In particular it provides protection against developments that:

- *"harm important open space of public, environmental, historic or ecological value or important public views"*
- *"constitute backland development that would create problems of privacy and access and would extend the built limits of the settlement"*

3.11 As currently drafted, there are other policies in the emerging Local Plan that may be relevant, including:

H11 – Housing Mix

TRANS5 – Consideration of Development Proposals (Transport)

ENV1 – Landscape and countryside

ENV6 – Historic Environment

ENV7 – Listed Buildings

ENV8 - Conservation Areas

DES1 - Delivering high quality development

DES2 - Enhancing local character

CF1 - Safeguarding community facilities

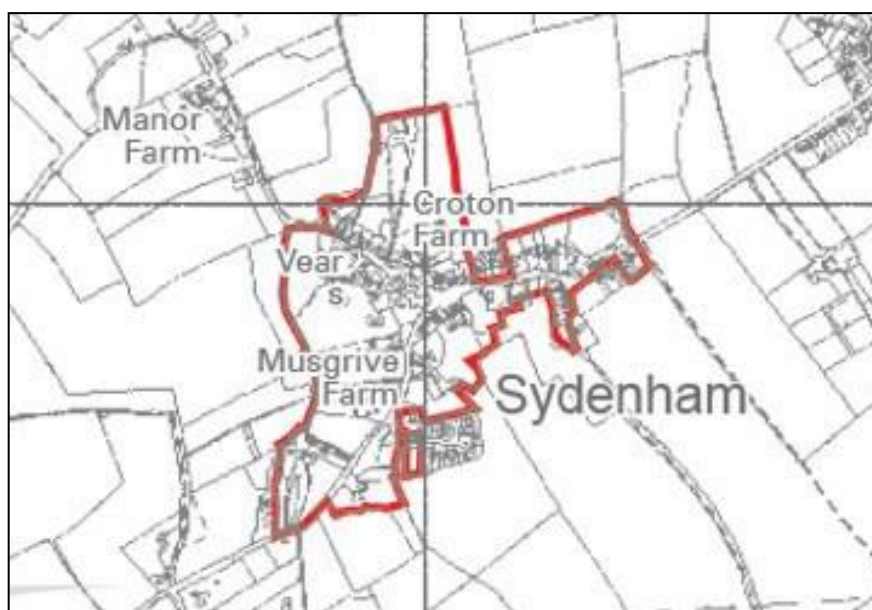
CF4 - Existing open space, Sport and recreational facilities

### **Adjacent Neighbourhood Plans**

3.12 Neighbourhood planning is popular in South Oxfordshire and a number of plans have been made, or are in preparation, in the vicinity of the Parish. These include the preparation of a plan in the neighbouring parishes of Tetsworth, Towersey and Aston Rowant and a review of the made Neighbourhood Plan at Chinnor. None are considered to comprise proposals that directly affect this Neighbourhood Plan.

### **The Sydenham Conservation Area**

3.13 The Conservation Area was designated by South Oxfordshire District Council on 11 December 1984 (see Plan B below). Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, to protect areas of special interest as opposed to individual buildings. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 72 in the South Oxfordshire District. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries. Such areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.



*Plan B: Sydenham Conservation Area*

*(Source: Extract from adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 Policies Map)*

3.14 The main attributes that define the special character of an area are its physical appearance and history, i.e. the form and features of buildings and the spaces between them, their former uses and historical development. Where there are a number of periods of historical development, the character of individual parts of the conservation area may differ. Contrasts between the appearance of areas and the combination of buildings of various ages, materials and styles may contribute to its special character.

3.15 Policies which seek to preserve or enhance the special character of the council's 72 conservation areas, are contained in South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan. Unfortunately, all the South Oxfordshire District Council records concerning the Sydenham Conservation Area were lost in the 2015 fire. However, an appraisal of the Area was never undertaken following its designation, and so a new Character Appraisal report has been prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan (see separate report).

#### **4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES**

- 4.1 Sydenham Parish Council asked for volunteers to form a group (SNPG) to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish in November 2017. A village meeting was held on Tuesday 20 February 2018 where the process for Sydenham's Neighbourhood Plan was explained. It was agreed that Sydenham's Neighbourhood Plan would focusing solely on future housing development.
- 4.2 Draft survey questions were developed by the SNPG, which were discussed with both South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) Community engagement team (in August 2018) and the consultant advising the SNPG; along with the process for the consultation (eg hard copies as well as digital, people vs households). This informed the development of the survey.
- 4.3 The final survey, which was open for four weeks, was launched to the Parishioners at a village meeting on Tuesday 4th September 2018. It was explained that key to the process was consultation with and feedback from the Parishioners, including feedback in the form of a survey. Hard copies were left in both village pubs as well as posted though the letter box of every dwelling in the village. Reminders to complete the survey were sent out both by email, in the village newsletter and put on the village Facebook page.
- 4.4 Sydenham has 144 dwellings in the parish with 336 villagers (2011 census, all ages). There were 108 responses (32% individual response rate) from 84 households (58% household response rate).
- 4.5 There was overwhelming strong agreement or agreement with the draft proposed vision for Sydenham (98%) and with the four draft proposed objectives for Sydenham (97%, 95%, 96% and 97% respectively).
- 4.6 In terms of the type of housing most suitable for local families in the next 15 years, the strongest response was for 2 bed room started homes (with 46% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that these were most suitable). 78% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that executive (4+ bed homes) were suitable for their families. In terms of



the type of home that should be encouraged in Sydenham, the strongest response was for low cost housing for local people (with 64% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that these should be encouraged). Privately owned houses were second, with 54% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

- 4.7 99% of respondents said it was very important/fairly important that any new buildings should be in keeping with the existing styles of surrounding buildings. 59% of respondents were against modern building styles or materials. In terms of what type of site development should occur 75% were in favour of in-fill development between existing buildings; 69% would support brownfield development and 82% the development of barns and other farm buildings. 96% were against development on greenfield sites and 83% against any back-fill behind existing buildings.

## 5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

### Vision

5.1 The Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan provides a framework to guide development within the Parish until 2033. The Vision is largely inspired by the responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, the feedback responses and, more broadly, by the consultation with parishioners during the preparation of the plan.

5.2 This framework is based on and supports the following Vision:

*"To preserve Sydenham Parish's rural village environment, by ensuring that appropriate development occurs within the area, recognising the need for a balanced community."*

### Objectives

5.3 In order to achieve the above Vision, a number of objectives have been identified:

1. To provide good quality housing at all levels of affordability that respects the distinct characteristics of the village, using styles and materials that currently exist within the village
2. To conserve and enhance the essential rural character of Sydenham Parish by growing the village in small places that form part of the established pattern of development and by conserving the existing network of green spaces, trees, and hedgerows
3. To sustain the sensitive landscape setting of Sydenham Parish and the intrinsic relationship between 'village' and green spaces, by avoiding harmful development and by preventing any further elongation of the village into the countryside or precious village green spaces
4. To sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings of Sydenham Parish and their settings

## **Land Use Policies**

- 5.4 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged, in terms of, for example, their design or access.
- 5.5 The purpose of these policies is to encourage planning applications to be made for potential development that reflect the Vision and Objectives, as outlined at the beginning of this section. The policies have been clearly written so that they can be easily interpreted and applied in the consideration and determination of planning applications.
- 5.6 The Neighbourhood Plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents, the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the South Oxfordshire Development Plan will continue to be used.

## **POLICY SYD1 VILLAGE BOUNDARY & INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

***The Neighbourhood Plan defines two Village Boundaries for Sydenham (The Crown end and the Emmington Inn end), as shown on the Policies Maps.***

***Proposals for small scale, infill development within the village boundaries will be supported, relative to their specific settlement hierarchy classifications and requirements, provided they accord with the design and development management policies of the development plan and other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.***

***Proposals for development outside the boundaries will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with local development plan policies.***

- 5.7 This policy is intended to distinguish between the built-up areas of the two parts of the village and their surrounding countryside to manage development proposals accordingly. The boundary has been drawn using the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal and the conventions deployed by other local planning authorities that use this development management tool, but essentially it follows the observed village edge formed by buildings.



*Part of Sydenham Road on north east side of village*

- 5.8 In defining the boundary on the Policies Map, applicants, the local community, and the local planning authority will have certainty of how the policy should be applied when preparing, commenting on, and determining planning applications respectively. This is consistent with a number of Core Strategy and Local Plan policies to encourage sustainable forms of development in the rural areas.
- 5.9 Most new development will be acceptable in principle within the defined boundaries, subject to complying with the NP policies and to it being appropriate in terms of its design and other arrangements. This will be small scale, infill housing and other uses that are appropriate in scale to very small villages with a severely limited road network and no effective public transport services. For the purpose of this policy 'small scale' is defined for the boundary comprising The Crown PH end of the village as sites of less than 0.2 Ha and for the Emmington Inn end of the village sites of less than 0.1Ha (as per Core Strategy Policy CSR1 on housing in villages and the emerging Local Plan Policy H16 on infill development) to reflect the limited opportunities and plot sizes for infill development in the village. For clarity, 'infill' is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. In respect of infill, there is no established pattern of land-locked, 'backland' development that is not part of a cluster of established (often former agricultural) buildings and proposals as such would not be acceptable. The proposed design of schemes will be judged using the policies of the adopted Development Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to each part of the village.
- 5.10 The policy requires that development proposals outside the defined village boundaries should comprise land uses that are appropriate to a countryside location and that their appearance protects the local landscape and character of the natural environment. This recognises the valued function of the countryside and working farmland in shaping rural character. Existing suitable countryside uses include paddocks, recreational facilities, agricultural units and individual dwellings. The policy does not seek to prevent other such similar uses nor to prevent the improvement or appropriate extension of those uses. However, it does not consider isolated housing schemes as meeting this

test, other than for proposals that accord with NPPF §79 in terms of their exceptional quality.

5.11 The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any housing site allocations as the District Council has confirmed that the 'indicative housing figure' for the Parish is zero (as per NPPF §66). However, the boundaries will allow for infill opportunities for smaller homes (see Policy SYD2) on suitable sites as expected of a "small/other" villages like Sydenham by Core Strategy Policy CSR1 and by Policy H8 of the emerging Local Plan. In any event, consent has already been granted for 8 new homes in the village since 2011 (a 5% increase), a trend with which the policy is also broadly consistent.

## **POLICY SYD2 HOUSING MIX**

**All new infill residential developments will comprise dwellings with 2 or 3 bedrooms only.**

5.12 This policy refines Core Strategy Policy CSH4 on housing mix (and emerging Local Plan Policy H11) by setting a specific requirement for all new homes in the Parish. It is necessary to start to rebalance the current mix of homes so that it better reflects local housing needs.



*New houses in Holliers Close*

5.13 There are 144 homes in the Parish. Table A below compares the types of those homes (by number of bedrooms) with the most recent analysis of what mix of housing types South Oxfordshire should plan for to 2033.

	<b>Total No. of Homes by No. of Bedrooms &amp; % Mix</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4+</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Sydenham</b>	5 (3%)	16 (11%)	59 (41%)	64 (45%)	144
<b>South Oxfordshire Target</b>	6%	27%	43%	24%	-

*Table A: Comparison of Housing Mix of Sydenham with South Oxfordshire*

5.14 The data shows a significant imbalance between the number of 4+ bedroom homes (almost double the target) and of 2 bedroom homes (less than half the target). To an extent, this is to be expected of a remote, small village with few local services. However, the infill residential development provided for by Policy SYD1 can be used to begin to correct this imbalance. If all the new infill homes are 2 or 3 bedroom types, this will lead to a more sustainable community, with greater opportunities for younger people and 'downsizers' to be able to access housing in the village. These smaller homes will also enable a more efficient use of scarce infill development land. In the Neighbourhood Plan survey, the strongest response was for 2 bed room started homes (with 46% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that these were most suitable).



## **POLICY SYD3 DESIGN**

*Proposals for development will be supported, provided they sustain and enhance the distinctiveness of the village and, where appropriate, the character and appearance of the Sydenham Conservation Area and its setting. The use of building forms and materials that reflect the vernacular of the Parish and that use sustainable methods of construction are encouraged. Development proposals should also have full regard to the following design principles, where relevant to their location in the Parish:*

- the importance to defining the essential character of the village of two storey, semi-detached dwellings fronting on to the main road and Brookstones and set back on a variety of building lines*
- the prominence in the street scene of large complexes of former agricultural buildings of a variety of heights and shapes retaining their original building materials and essential forms*
- the importance of a small number of long views to the Church and other listed buildings from within the village*
- the importance of mostly short and punctuated views along the main road into and through the village towards its centre, requiring attention to be paid to the location of buildings within their plot*
- the importance of the group value of heritage assets, other buildings and structures, open spaces, mature trees, and tall hedges to defining the village centre in front of St. Mary's Church and the former village green at the junction of the main road with Sewell's Lane*
- the importance of mature trees and tall hedges along the frontage boundaries of plots,*
- requiring the landscaping and access proposals of schemes to avoid or to minimise the loss of existing vegetation, or to provide new trees and tall hedges if currently absent*
- the common use in the most important heritage assets in the village of traditional red brick, thatch, flint and flared brick headers in building and boundary materials,*
- the common use of half hip roof forms, clay and slate roof tiles and timber window frames set within a deep reveal to accentuate shadowing*
- the importance of rare glimpse views from the main road through plots to the open countryside beyond, requiring the layout of proposals to avoid siting new buildings that will obstruct such views*

5.15 This policy establishes the importance of the design of new development in the village to maintaining its essential, for the most part, historic character. In doing so, it refines the design quality principles of Core Strategy Policy CSQ3 and of emerging Local Plan Policies DES1 and DES2. It also identifies the key characteristics of listed buildings and the Conservation Area for the application of Core Strategy Policy CSEN3 and emerging Local Plan Policies ENV6 – ENV8.



*Brookstones*



*Sewells Lane*

5.16 The policy highlights a series of development principles that are drawn from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal of the village. Those principles set out those features of the village that make it distinctive from its neighbouring villages and help define the significance of the Conservation Area. It therefore informs the Design & Access Statements prepared for planning applications in demonstrating that, where relevant to the nature and location of the proposal, regard has been paid to those principles. Although it allows for modern architectural responses to the vernacular, it makes clear that 'pattern book' housing forms that dominate urban and suburban towns will not be appropriate and the village survey has indicated a strong preference that any new buildings should be in keeping with existing styles, with a preference against modern building styles/materials.

## POLICY SYD4 LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

***The Neighbourhood Plan identifies buildings as Local Heritage Assets, as included in the Appendix A schedule and as shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals that affect a Local Heritage Asset will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.***

5.17 This policy identifies several buildings in the Parish that, whilst not designated as listed buildings, either have some local heritage value or, often together with other buildings, play an important role in defining the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting. They are set out in the schedule in Appendix A, with a short description for their inclusion, as derived from the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal.



*St Mary's Sydenham*

5.18 Policy CSEN3 of the Core Strategy on the historic environment states that, "Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset." The emerging Local Plan Policy ENV6 makes a similar requirement and both articulate the provisions of § 197 of

the NPPF in respect of 'non-designated heritage assets.' At present, the District Council does not maintain a list of such assets.

## **POLICY SYD5 LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

***The Neighbourhood Plan designates the field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End, as shown on the Policies Map, as Local Green Space. Development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.***

5.19 This policy designates a much cherished and historically important field in a prominent location in the Conservation Area as a Local Green Space in accordance with §99 and §100 of the NPPF. The justification of how this area meets the three NPPF criteria is set out below. The policy has the effect of managing development proposals in line with the NPPF provisions in the Green Belt, which prevent any development of the land unless the 'very special circumstances' test can be met.



*Field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End*

5.20 The field is identified and described in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal and is the only remaining green gap in the village, breaking up an otherwise continuous street-scape thus reinforcing the village "feel" and providing an important view reflecting the rural character of the village. It maintains the direct connection, in the centre of the village, between the built environment and the countryside and provides the only rural vista from the main road.

It lies in very close proximity to the local community, the pub, the village hall, and the church, is on the main through road and is the only green space in the village accessible via a footpath. It is not considered to be an extensive tract of land, given it is only 0.8 Hectares, and has a strong boundary definition on all four sides – the main road, Musgrave Cottage, Chapel End and Crowell Brook. Crowell Brook and part of the field are within flood zones 2 & 3, as identified by the Environment Agency.

Its existence and use as grazing land reinforce its rural connection and compliments the heritage setting of both the old Methodist Chapel (Chapel End) and the listed Musgrave cottages, a relationship which has not changed for centuries.

The public footpath running along the edge of the field (shown as 378/5 on the Oxfordshire Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way), which leads to the village allotments beyond, is the most used in the village by dog walkers and families (thousands of times a year) to access the countryside. The field plays an integral part in the enjoyment of the village, has been used for Village Fayre events and is considered special to the local community. In the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, the field was identified as one where the most respondents (75%) did not want development to occur.



*Field adjoining Musgrave Cottages and Chapel End*

## POLICY SYD6 LOCAL GAP

***The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Local Gap, as shown on the Policies Map, to prevent the visual coalescence of the two parts of the village and to protect its open character and rural setting. Development proposals should ensure the retention of the open character of the Local Gap. Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where they would preserve the separation between the villages.***

5.21 This policy identifies the attractive landscape setting of the space between the two boundaries of the village as a Local Gap, in that it forms an important local landscape feature that contributes to the visual and historic character and appearance of the village. As such, it warrants protection from harmful development, as per Policy C4 of the 2011 Local Plan and more generally Core Strategy Policy CSEN1 on landscape. Only the minimum area of land necessary to prevent coalescence has been included in the policy boundary.



*Aerial view of the local gap*



5.22 The value of this space has been tested by recent development proposals in 2017/18, all of which have been refused and appeals dismissed.

In relation to the land adjoining Park Villa (APP/Q3115/W/18/3198439), the Inspector noted "a notable gap that separates the two built up parts of the settlement. The site makes a positive contribution to the defining open and rural character of the area". As a result, there was "identified harm to the character and appearance of the area, which (he/she) finds to be significant" and that "the development would extend the built development between the 2 parts of the settlement and therefore would have an urbanising effect, even if proportionally the overall reduction in the size of the gap would not be substantial."

In relation to the land north of Sydenham Road, Sydenham, Chinnor (APP/Q3115/W/18/3207066), the Inspector noted "the appeal site is part of the open, grazing fields broadly to the north west of Sydenham Road. On this side of the road, the appeal site contributes to the undeveloped gap between this section of Sydenham and the main village. The open aspect and views across the flat, grazing land, of which the appeal site forms part, make a significant contribution to the character and setting of this section of the settlement. The front boundary hedge provides a clear division between the road with the ribbon of housing to the south and the appeal site which forms part of the open countryside broadly to the northwest"

5.23 In the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, between 43% - 59% of respondents identified the fields either side of the road as areas where they did not want development to occur.



*Fields adjoining local gap*

## **POLICY SYD7 IMPORTANT VIEWS**

***The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Important Views on the Policies Map. Development proposals that are located within or immediately adjoining an Important View will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that they do not comprise buildings or other structures, the height and/or mass of which will obstruct or undermine their open character.***

5.24 This policy (and the Policies Map) identifies a series of views from public vantage points around the edge of the village that are considered in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal as especially important in defining the relationship between the two parts of the village and its rural hinterland.

5.25 These views are particularly distinctive of the rural landscape setting, with the village lying low within it but with long views into the countryside, especially to the Chilterns AONB escarpment to the south. The policy does not seek to prevent any development lying within a view but requires that proposals recognise and take account of these in their design. In each case, only the minimum area of land necessary to define the view has been identified.



*View of St Mary's from village green*

## **POLICY SYD8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

*The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following community facilities, as shown on the Policies Map.*

**Zeroth**    *The Crown public house*

**First**      *The Inn at Emmington public house*

**Second**   *St Mary's Church*

**Third**     *Village Hall/Old School Room*

**Fourth**   *Recreation and children's play area adjoining Sewell's Lane*

**Fifth**      *Allotments rear of April Cottage*

*Proposals that help to sustain the viability of a community facility will be supported, provided they conform to other land use policies. Proposals that will result in either the loss of, or significant harm to an identified community facility, will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the facility, or of another community use of the facility or land, is no longer economically viable, or that there is an alternative, accessible location within or adjoining the Village Boundary of Policy SYD1.*



The Crown Public House

5.26 This policy seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities. It identifies several buildings in the village that form an essential part of community life. Given the remote and small nature of the village, the loss of any of these facilities would be significantly detrimental, so even though a specific type of community use may no longer be viable, the opportunity to retain the premises or land in this use cannot be lost.



*Recreation and children's play area*

5.27 Adopted development plan policies allow for facilities to be lost without considering the ongoing community value of their established use and without requiring their re-provision close by. This policy addresses those weaknesses by ensuring that those making proposals provide clear evidence that the location, as well as the current facility operations, is no longer viable for community use before its change of use and redevelopment are supported. However, it does allow for the relocation of established uses without this test being passed, provided the relocation proposal benefits local people by being within or adjoining the village, and is not lost to other parishes.

## Monitoring and reviewing the policies

5.28 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by SODC and the Parish Council, using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at a Parish level, relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the Plan will be formerly reviewed on a five-yearly cycle or to coincide with the development and review of the Local Plan if this cycle is different.



*Sydenham Fayre outside Old School Room*

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the local planning authority's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish.

### **Development Management**

- 6.2 The Parish Council will use a combination of the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.
- 6.3 Where necessary, the Parish Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Parish Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.





*Barns in Brookstones*

### **Local Infrastructure Improvements**

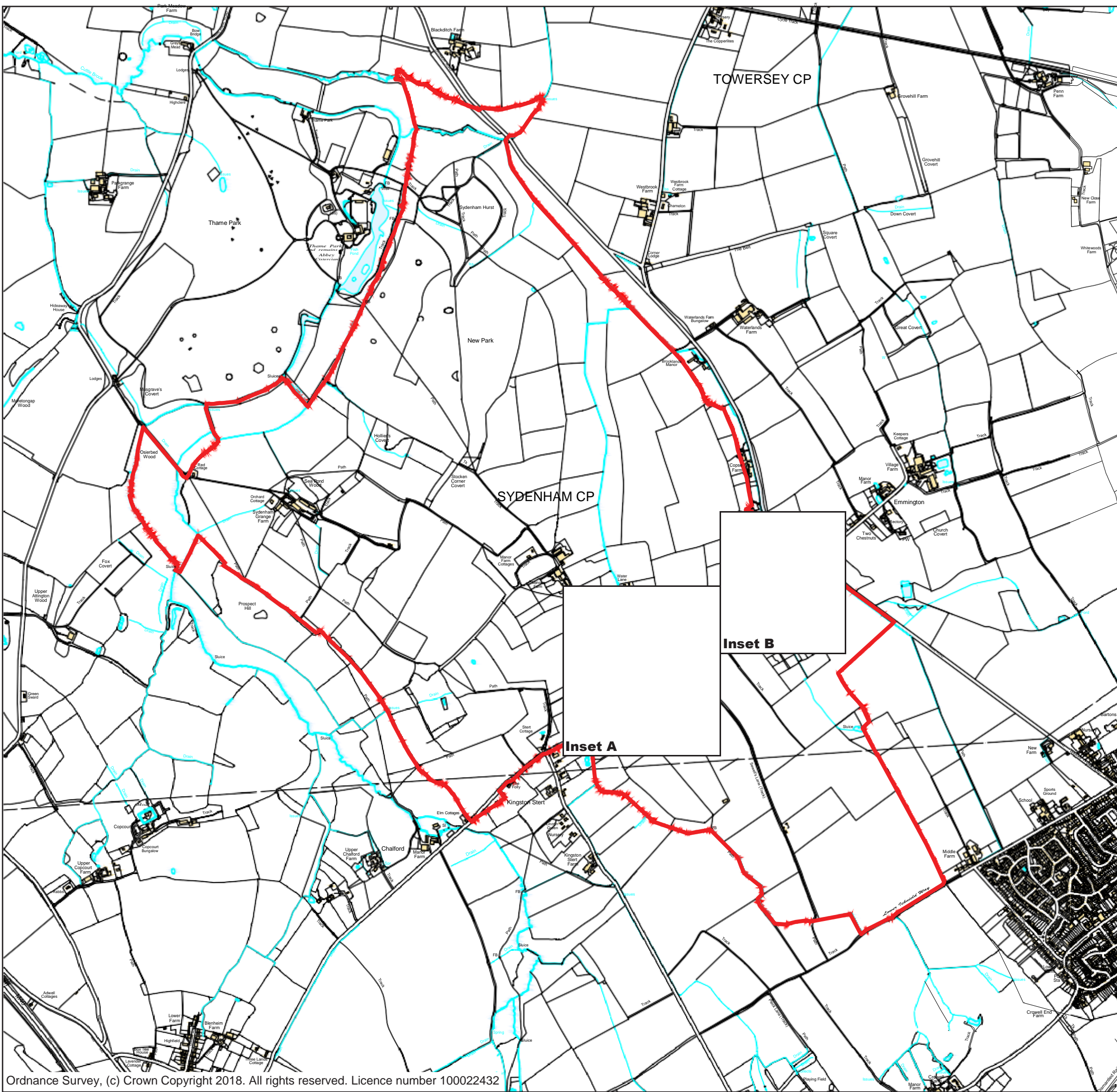
6.4 Although the scale of development likely to be consented in the parish during the plan period is likely to be very limited, there may be opportunities through S106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Should an opportunity arise, the Parish Council will review the evidence base and community consultations for the neighbourhood plan to inform its view in liaising with South Oxfordshire District Council.

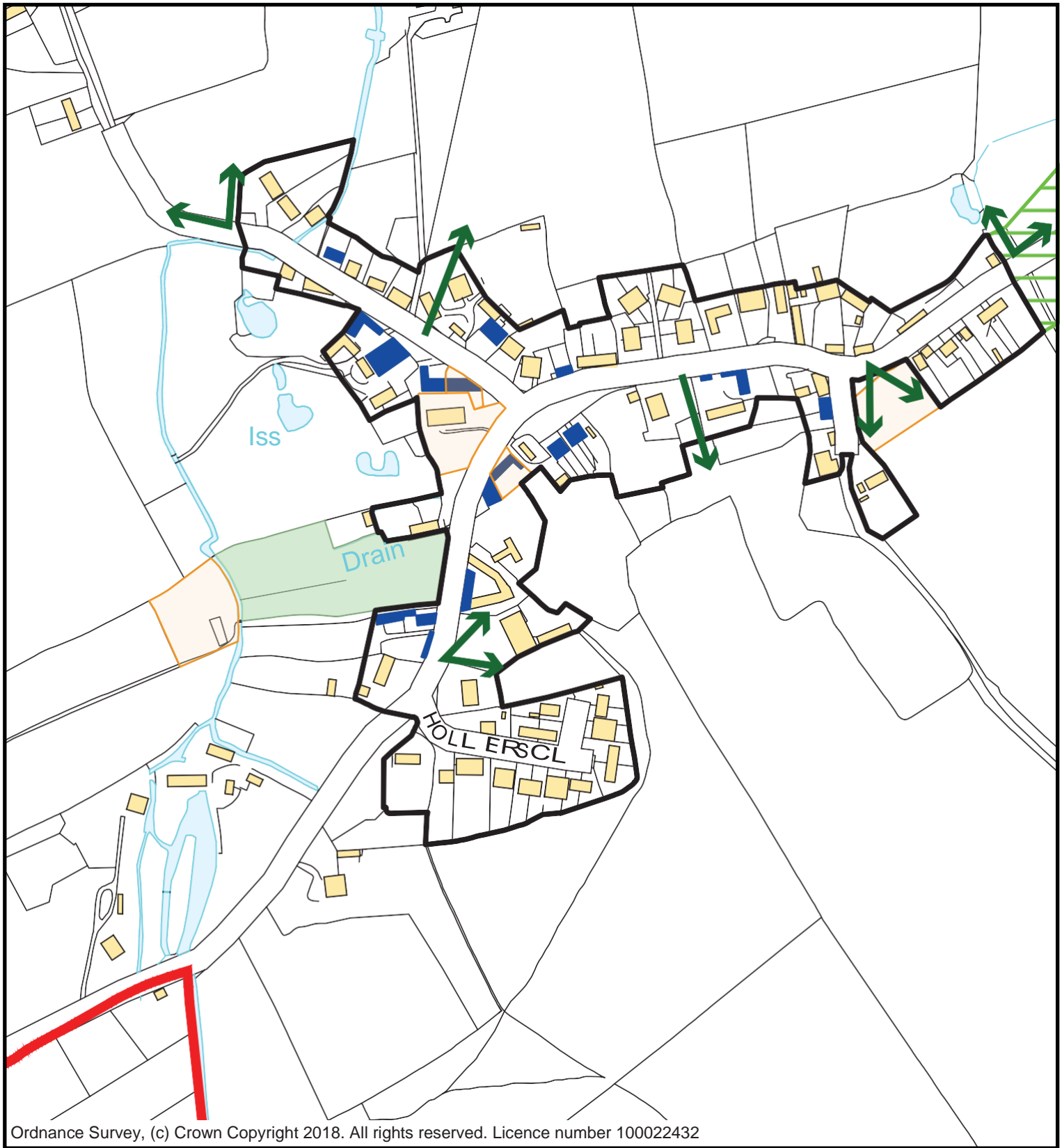
### **Other Non-Planning Matters**

6.5 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Parish Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties.

# Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Submission Plan Policies Map 2019

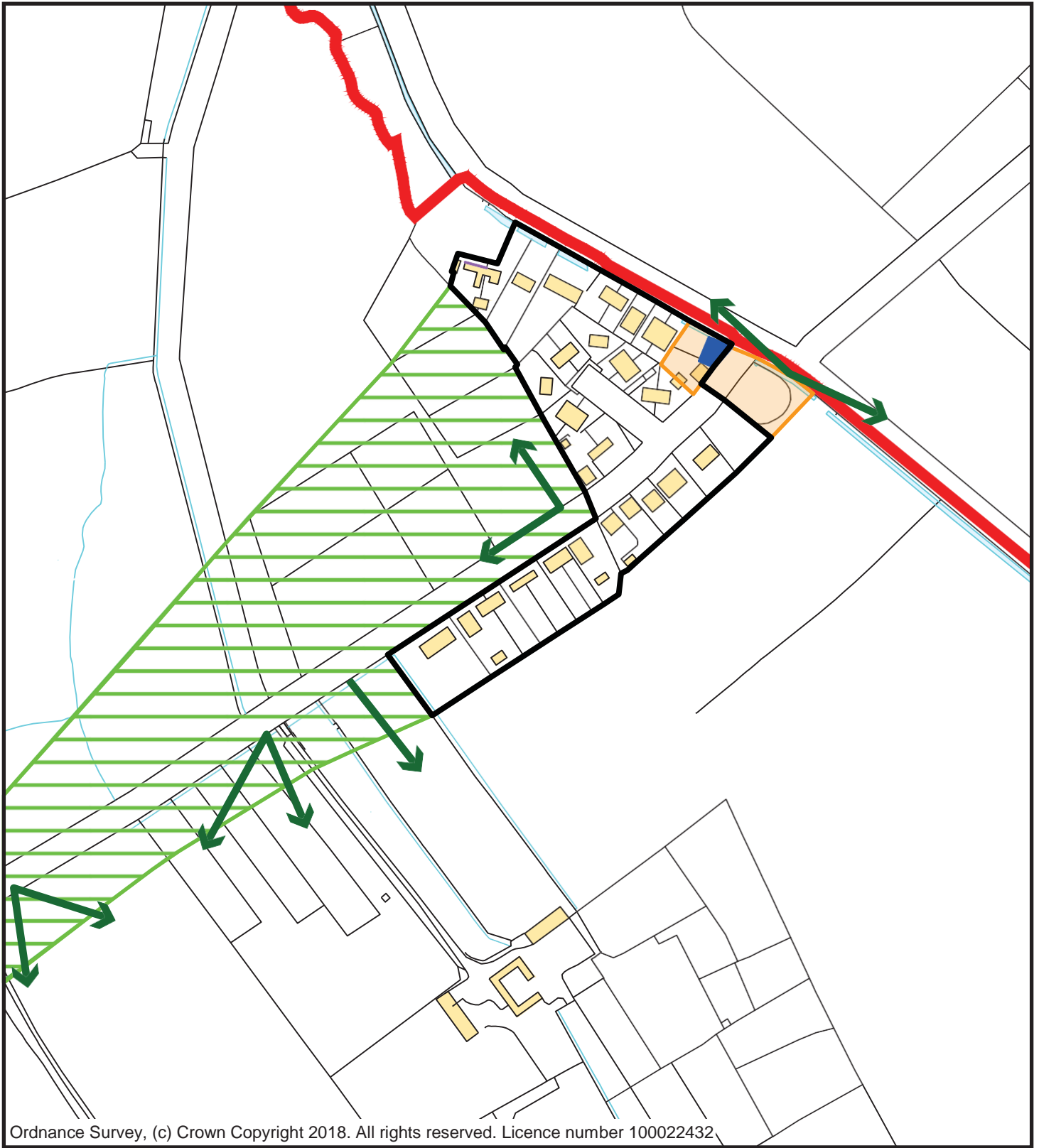
## Key








## Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Submission Plan Inset A - May 2019

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  Parish Boundary |  SYD1 Village Boundary & Infill Development |  SYD4 Local Heritage Asset |  SYD5 Local Green Space |
|  SYD6 Local Gap  |  SYD7 Important Views                       |  SYD8 Community Facilities |  |



## Sydenham Neighbourhood Plan Submission Plan Inset B - May 2019

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Parish Boundary      |  SYD1 Village Boundary & Infill Development |  SYD4 Local Heritage Asset |  SYD6 Local Gap |
|  SYD7 Important Views |  SYD8 Community Facilities                  |   |  |

## APPENDIX A

### Schedule of Local Heritage Assets (Policy SYD4)

Name	Description and Heritage Value
Sydenham Mill	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD. Monastic site. No remains of mill work. Upper two storeys weather boarded. House conversion in 1930s. (HER Ref 330). Archaeological value
Medieval Shrunken Village	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD to 1900 AD. Earthworks in two fields, including holloway, platforms, croft boundaries, and boundary ditch immediately SW of church and further platforms, holloways, boundary ditch and couple of detached crofts to north of Manor Farm road. Not many house sites are evident; present village is substantial, and degree of shrinkage must be slight. (HER Ref 9218)
Wykenhams Barns, Brookstones	Agricultural character and prominent in views along street
The Sun, Brookstones	Former public house and prominent in views along street local historic building and group value together with The Old School Room and St. Mary's Church
The Forge, Brookstones	Local historic building and group value together with Crossways and Croton Farmhouse
Croton Farmhouse	Local historic building, group value together with Crossways and The Forge, agricultural character and main barn and lower frontage barn are prominent in views along street
Old School Room, Crossways	Local historic building, prominent gable end to Crossways and group value together with St. Mary's Church and The Sun
The Old Smithy, Crossways	Group value with Crossways, Barn End Cottage, Forge Cottage and The Barn on Sydenham, prominent by way of forward building line and helps define the space at Crossways with buildings opposite
The Barn House, Sydenham	Prominent barns on road frontage with agricultural character
Rose Cottage, Sewell's Lane	Group value with The Old Post Office and Vine Cottage and helps define former village green space at Sydenham/Sewell's Lane junction

Vine Cottage, Sewell's Lane	Group value with The Old Post Office and Rose Cottage
The Inn at Emmington (former Plough & Harrow PH), Sydenham	Prominent in views from Sydenham by way of forward building line and revealed at entrance to village from B4445
2 The Green, Crossways (south side)	Group value with Thatched Cottage and 4 The Green and helps define the space at Crossways with buildings opposite
4 The Green, Crossways (south side)	Local historic building, group value with 2 The Green and Thatched Cottage and helps define the space at Crossways with buildings opposite
The Bakery, Sydenham	Local historic building, group value with Musgrove Farmhouse, The Crown PH and St. Mary's Church and prominent at entrance to core historic village by way of orientation to the main road
The Crown PH, Sydenham	Local historic building, group value with St. Mary's Church, The Bakery and Thatched Cottage
Musgrove Farm Barns, Sydenham	Prominent barns on road frontage with agricultural character and complementary in setting to the listed Musgrove Farmhouse
Former chapel, Sydenham	Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with April Cottage and White House
April Cottage, Sydenham	Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with former Chapel and White House
White House, Sydenham	Local historic building, prominent in views from core historic village and group value with former Chapel and Vicarage End